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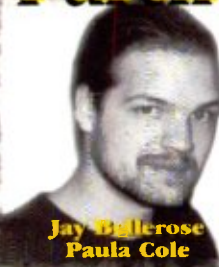
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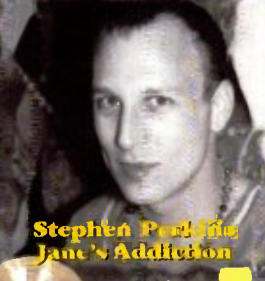
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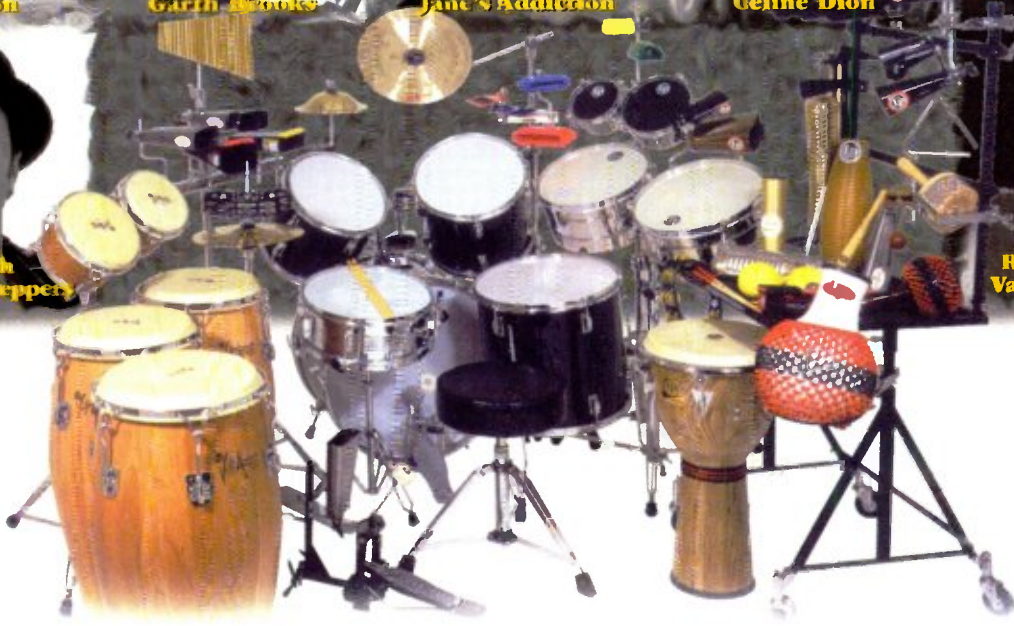
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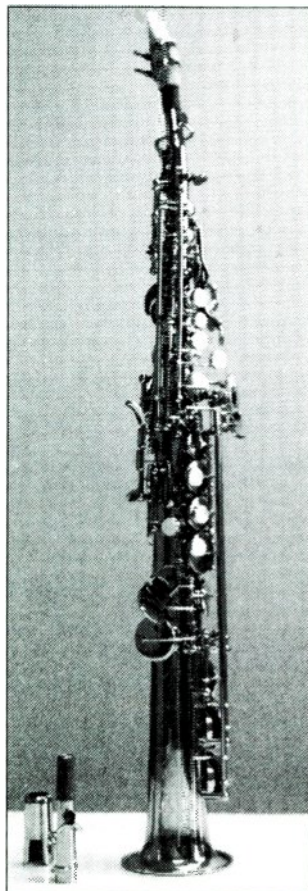
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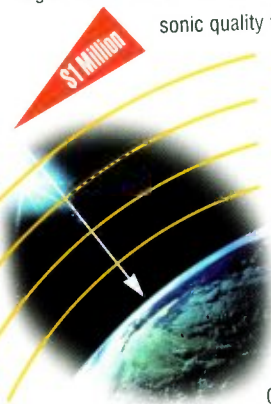
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In Pursuit Of A Publishing Deal

Dear CM,

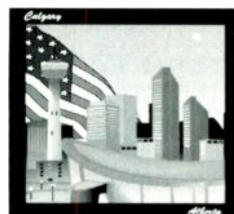
I just started reading your magazine and I love it! It's so great to read a magazine covering so many different aspects of music. I have question for you. I'm a singer/songwriter and I'm wondering how does one get a publishing deal and what exactly is a publishing deal? If you could give this struggling wannabe a hand, I would really appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Steven Charbonneau, Sudbury, ON

*Ed. - Give SOCAN a call. They handle music publishing. You can reach them at (416) 445-8700. Glad you like our work.

Recording
Contract



Confused Calgarian

Dear CM,

I honestly believe the Canadian music scene is currently one of the best in the world at present with bands like Transistor Sound and Lighting Co., The Weakerthans, Matthew Good Band, National Dust, The Primods and Sianspheric. I cannot understand what would possess your magazine to put Bryan Adams on the cover of your magazine. Sure he was born in Canada, but I don't think he qualifies as a Canadian anymore than Jim Carrey. Not to mention the fact that "I Want To Be Your Underwear", or "The Only Thing That Looks Good On Me Is You" are the worst pieces of bile I have ever heard. Let's get

some quality control boys, not all of your readers are head-banging longhair tech-heads who can't let go of their Kim Mitchell CDs. How about some bands on the cover who are actually trying to write their own quality tunes.

Thanks.

Korban Schwab, Calgary, AB

*Ed. - Bryan Adams still lives in Vancouver. And didn't he just build a brand-new recording studio there? That's right, it's called the Warehouse. I think that's more patriotic than bands that travel South of the border to record their albums. Lastly, the article was about keeping your band together. Other than Rush, name a Canadian band that's been together as long as Bryan's band - without breaking up and re-forming. In terms of quality control, head-bangers Holly McNarland and Wide Mouth Mason were featured in the same issue.

Canadian Music Not Worth Taping?

Dear CM,

I heard with dismay that the government will start taxing \$1.50 per blank tape because they feel we are stealing music. Well let me tell you that Canadians are pretty pretentious if they think we would buy tapes to record their music. If Canadian music were the only music on the air, we would be in a sore state. Canadians might have, if lucky, one per cent of music copied. I own some 300 original CDs and perhaps 10 are Canadian. Where do musicians get off with the idea we are going out of our way to steal their music? Should you not have something we want to steal first?

If they are going to charge a royalty, I hope it goes to the musicians who are being copied. Let me assure you that is not Canadians.

Claude Bisson, Brunkild, MB

*Ed. - Check out the Changes section this issue where we have an article on this subject. I'm sure it was brought up to counter bootlegging so musicians won't lose out on royalties and will be paid for their work. We tend to disagree with your opinion on Canadian music, but thanks for writing.



Spice Girl Wannabe

Dear CM,

Hello. My name is Crystal Danielle Leak. I'm 14 years old and interested in forming a musical group. I am very talented and want to start my career while I'm still young. I'm mostly interested in becoming a part of a rock group like the Spice Girls or Hanson. But being part of a rock group like Matchbox 20 would be just as good. I'll be purchasing a guitar soon so whether or not the group plays instruments doesn't matter.

The main reason I'm writing this letter is to ask you for help. If you or anyone you know has information on major labels please have them contact me. Or, if you know of any other teens that have the same interest as me, please have them contact me. I would like to know things such as where I should send a demo tape, and ways to get signed. Thank you for taking your time to read this letter. I truly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Crystal Leak, Charlotte, NC

*Ed. - I suggest you buy your guitar and learn to play before doing anything else. Who knows - you may not even like playing the guitar. Check your local music stores for potential bandmates - they sometimes have bulletin boards for such things.

Error: Last issue Canadian Musician made a mistake in our feature on the Wild Strawberries. Page 48, 3rd column, 3 paragraphs down, it should read "the drummer has a KAT" instead of "the drummer has a DAT". We apologize to Roberta and Ken of the Strawberries for this mistake.



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The Evolution Of Independent Manufacturing

by Lindsay Gillespie



For several years now, the major record labels have been scooping up artists who have already enjoyed measurable success as independents. Great Big Sea, Ashley MacIsaac, The Barenaked Ladies are just a few of the acts who sold real numbers of their indie releases prior to their major label careers. Affordable recording and access to low cost, quality manufacturing has meant that a record release is within the reach of almost everyone. In addition, a responsive retail network and willing consumer means that people can actually find and buy an indie release.

It wasn't always this easy.

Flashback 20 years to 1979. Digital home based recording wasn't available yet, and a decent 24-track recording studio cost around \$100 or more per hour. Even a reel of two-inch tape in those days cost almost \$100. You could record cheaper in a basement studio, maybe using only eight tracks but most independent releases recorded on the cheap ended up sounding 'independent'.

Manufacturing choices were similarly limited. The cassette had yet to achieve any significant market share and the CD wasn't even invented! Vinyl was the only way to go but there were several lacquer mastering facilities (only one remains today), and a few pressing plants (none of which remain today) to choose from. There were even a handful of full service custom houses though none offered the range of products and services available today.

Computer-based design was not yet a reality. In fact, the personal computer wasn't even powerful enough or cheap enough to play any part in the process. Cut and paste artwork was the order of the day and the IBM 'Selectric' typewriter was a favourite for typesetting because you could change the font easily. Even the sheer size of the 12" record jacket made film and printing an expensive proposition. As can be imagined, many independent releases even looked 'independent'.

Because it could be so expensive to release a full album, there were more 7" singles being made and sold. Ironically, in today's market where the record companies have so far been unable to develop a CD single business, the independent 7" vinyl market continues to thrive!

The advent of the compact disc in the **early '80s** had no immediate effect on the independent scene. First off, it took a few years for CD players to reach significant home penetration and secondly, the discs were too expensive to manufacture. Imagine paying \$2,500 for a glass master plus a per unit cost of \$2.50, and a delivery time of 6 to 8 weeks! These were major label prices and delivery! Forget about servicing the independents.

One direct impact that the CD made was to reduce the major labels' demand for vinyl, resulting in the eventual closure of every record pressing plant in Canada. With CDs too expensive, and vinyl not available, by the **late '80s** the cassette was by default the format of choice for independents but this created a new dilemma: radio did not play cassettes because of playback quality. Buying your way on to a radio compilation CD was an option for airplay, but the dubious success rate of these promotional tools soon meant that to be taken seriously, an artist had to release a CD. Fortunately, the cost of CD manufacturing had come down to an affordable price due to increased capacity, new manufacturing technology, and the buying power of the burgeoning custom manufacturing sector. Independent has never had it so good. Inexpensive, high quality digital gear has made great sounding recording anywhere an affordable reality. Computer based editing, mastering and design means that creativity need not be stifled by budget. CD manufacturing prices have never been lower, with an abundance of pressing capacity meaning fast delivery cycles. Vinyl is back with two pressing plants open in Canada, and even



the major labels wonder if they should never have tried to kill it off. Digitally duplicated cassettes have narrowed the sound quality gap keeping that format alive and viable.

New products like recordable CDs make it possible to hear your CD at home before you press, or you can order small quantities of professional looking CDs with delivery in 24 hours or less. DVD may open up a whole new world of creative expression, and the Internet may even make manufactured product obsolete.

Today most, custom houses can take care of manufacturing and product management needs under one roof with direct pipelines to the major manufacturers not just in Canada, but around the world.

It's no wonder that the record companies know where to find their next big acts!

Lindsay Gillespie is President of Music Manufacturing Services in Toronto, ON.

IS THE Pentium Mightier THAN THE CD?

musicians who want to know about releasing music on the web in a CD quality electronic format should visit www.criminalforce.com. Criminal Force is an Australian group who last year officially became the first group in the world to release their album on the web in CD-quality MP3 format. Close to 40,000 downloads are now apparent and the number of site visits continues to grow. This unsigned group has received more exposure and delivered more songs out to the world than many professionally marketed and financed musicians. The site holds valuable information for those seeking to get their music to the world.

ATTENTION Canadian Independent Bands!

Toronto's new rock radio station Edge 102 is accepting submissions for The Indie Hour, a weekly showcase of unsigned talent heard every Thursday at 11 p.m. EST. The show is broadcast around the world RealAudio at the Edge's website, www.edge.passport.ca.

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Secrets to Winning Showcase Slot

No up-and-coming band can amaze the music festival masses without first winning over a smaller, more select audience – the music festival screeners. It won't matter how good your act is live if you can't impress the people who grant festival space based on a solid application or recording. *Canadian Musician* asked those in charge of picking acts for some of Canada's most prominent music festivals their advice on ways to improve, or sabotage, your chances of performing at their next event.

INTRODUCING THE 48



Jean-Paul Gauthier

Director, Hamilton MusicScene

In terms of actual materials, we won't even consider many of the recordings that come in on cassette. People will record a song straight onto cassette in their living room, you can hear the cat and the coffee maker going off, and they'll say if it's accepted they'll go into the studio and record it. We can't conditionally accept anything like that.

Tina Routsalainen

New Music West Jury member, music writer

Follow the submission instructions! Follow up if possible (without being annoying), but do it in a timely fashion – not in the middle of the day or on Friday. Make it look pro – spend a little money to get a good picture and a good recording. It's easier to concentrate on the music when you're not distracted by a bad recording on a cheap tape. Clearly mark the material that you want heard and be clear of the style for category. Be available to answer calls – does your answering machine work?

Chris Teeter

Festival Coordinator, Canadian Music Week

I don't care for novelties. Throwing in a T-shirt is fine, but it doesn't sway my opinion. If I don't like your band, I'm never going to wear your T-shirt anyway.

Nick Bragg

A&R, Zulu Records

Quality has no effect on my judgement. Present ideas clearly. Is it original? I won't read the press clippings unless I'm interested in the music.

Jean-Paul Gauthier

Director, Hamilton MusicScene

Although it may be expensive, I think that glossy pictures are important. Really cool pictures stand a better chance. We try to give as many bands as much exposure as possible, and I do think the glossy is important for that reason, as well as a biography with at least three coherent paragraphs.

John Donnelly

Producer, NewMusicWest98

Lead with your hits! Try to present your strongest material and leave the rest. CD is always better but if you use cassette try to have it cued up. You can get a one-off CD very cheaply these days. Presentation is important for first impressions but try to keep the paper to a minimum. There isn't a lot of time to peruse every detail.

Andy McLean, Yvonne Matsell

Directors, NxNE

Don't submit tapes without rewinding them first. We hate that. Don't make up quotes and reviews by people we know haven't seen you. If you've really only done one gig, say you've only done one gig. We can accept the truth much easier than we can accept fabrications.

Chris Teeter

Festival Coordinator, Canadian Music Week

The songs are most important. Too many bands spend too much time blowing all their money on production as opposed to thinking about what they're doing and writing good songs. As long as you can hear everything properly, that's all that matters.

Colin Mackenzie

Director of Talent, Halifax On Music

A general disregard for the application process is a pain in the ass. Some people just kind of put something together without filling out the application, stick it to the CD, and for some reason, think that they're going to get in. They don't get in.

Flavio Monopoli

NMW Jury member

Not a lot of paper, concise info, picture, don't send every article you've ever been in, just quotes from: select articles – all info on the band on one page. It's difficult to spend time on one submission when you have to process 300 of them. Cue the cassette to the material you want



heard – put the songs in order, having to fast forward and rewind doesn't endear me. CD is much preferred.

Andy McLean, Yvonne Matsell

Directors, NxNE

Put your strongest songs first. Bands are often not the best judge of their own music. The band should get as much objective feedback from as many people possible. Once there is a consensus, the strongest song should be moved to the first track on the recording.

Julie Colero

NMW Jury member, Zulu Records

I'm looking for something not too polished – it has to be honest sounding. It can't be judged by packaging. I don't read press quotes. CDs are more convenient for sure. It's always nice if the tapes are cued up.

Colin Mackenzie

Director of Talent, Halifax On Music

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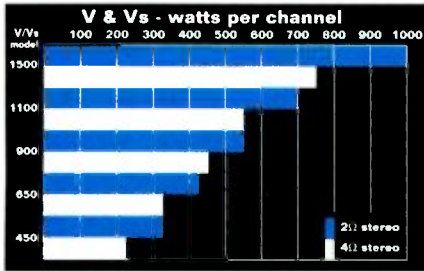
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New CD From Alanis Morissette In November



The long-awaited follow up to Alanis Morissette's 1995 "debut" CD *Jagged Little Pill* is scheduled for a November 3rd release date. The Ottawa native will support the as-yet untitled release with a small-scale tour of select clubs in Canada and the US. While no dates or venues have been named, the club tour is expected to follow a full-fledge tour of new material in 1999.

Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* and Garth Brooks' *No Fences*, were recently ranked as the two best selling albums of the '90s by the Recording Industry Association of America. Both recordings have shipped 16 million copies each to date. Morissette's album also ties Boston's 1976 self-titled release as the biggest-selling debut album of all time.

Recording Media Price Increase

The federal government will be raising the price of blank tapes and other recording media in an effort to give Canadian songwriters, performers and producers an additional source of royalties for their work. Beginning January 1, 1999, levies will be added to the sale of all blank audio recording media in Canada, including analog audio cassettes, DAT cassettes, CD-Rs, CD-RWs and Minidisks. The legislation has been created to counter the loss of revenue to Canadian composers and performers caused by the unauthorized duplication of their recordings. Levies added to the sales price of blank audio recording media will range from 25¢ for a 15-minute analog cassette to \$4.00 for a two-hour digital cassette, CD-R or Minidisc.

For more information, contact: Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), Industry Canada, Place du Portage I, 50 Victoria St., 2nd Floor, Hull, PQ K1A 0C9 (819) 997-1936, FAX (819) 953-7620, cipo.contact@ic.gc.ca.

CHANGES

Southern Success For Scarborough's Ladies

After years of hoping to capture the elusive US Market, the Barenaked Ladies' persistence south of the border is finally paying off. The band's fifth album, *Stunt*, debuted in the third spot of *Billboard's* Top 200, chalking up sales of over 142,000 albums in its first week of release. The album's first single, "One Week", was strong enough to beat out the Beastie Boys' "Intergalactic" as the most added modern rock radio song among American radio stations. Over 70 stations added the track to their playlists within the first five days of its release.

The group has supported *Stunt* with appearances on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and as co-headliners with Blues Traveler on this past summer's H.O.R.D.E. Festival.



JoyDrop Signs Distribution Deal, Releases Album

Toronto-based band JoyDrop signed a distribution deal with BMG Music Canada. The band is signed to Tommy Boy Records in New York, NY. JoyDrop released *Metasexual* – their debut album – in July. Since then they've been touring to support the album joining, of course, summer festivals. The band joined Our Lady Peace's Summersault for the St. John's, NF show, and also played Up Yer Grand in Dunnville, ON with the Tea Party, 54•40 and the Killjoys (among others).



JoyDrop



Choclair Signs With Virgin

Toronto Hip Hop artist Choclair recently signed a world-wide recording deal with Virgin Music Canada. Following his acceptance speech for Best Male Hip Hop Single Of The Year at the Canadian Urban Music Awards, Choclair announced the deal with Virgin's Geoff Kulawick and Russ Hergert, who presented the artist with a Virgin/Choclair jersey onstage.

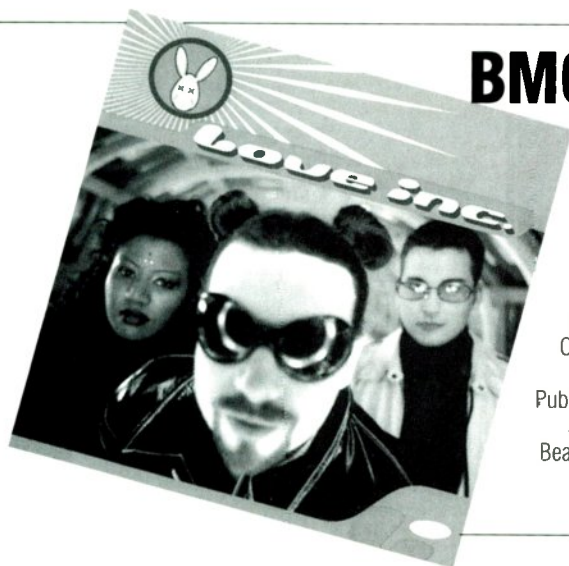
Choclair, whose previous projects include the 1996 indie EP *What It Takes* and five singles, is currently working on his debut album set for release early next year.

Recent Canadian Certifications

(courtesy of the Canadian Recording Industry Association)



Sloan, Navy Blues (Universal) – Gold
The Philosopher Kings, Famous, Rich and Beautiful (Sony) – Gold
David Usher, Little Songs (EMI) – Gold
Hagood Hardy, Alone (Solitudes) – Gold



BMG To Distribute Chris Sheppard

Following the success of his Love Inc. project and series of dance music CDs, DJ Chris Sheppard has signed a worldwide and multi-year publishing deal with BMG Publishing Canada. Sheppard joins other BMG acts and songwriters including My Brilliant Beast, Vince Degiorgio, Bradley Daymond and Aaron Quist.

Rheos Sing For Children

The Rheostatics are currently working on a children's album, with accompanying storybook, for an early '99 release. The project will follow the band's next release, a CD featuring CBC radio performances and interviews, which is expected to be out sometime this fall.

BeatFactory Moves

Urban music record label BeatFactory Music has moved to a new Toronto location. The new address is:
 119 Spadina Ave.
 Toronto, ON
 M5V 2L1

Founded in 1996 by Ivan Berry, Rupert Gayle and the Dream Warriors' DJ Luv, the independent record label supports the multi-level development of urban music in Canada. BeatFactory Management's roster has included such noted acts as Michie Mee & L.A. Luv, Index, Love & Sas, Devon, Rupert Gayle, Split Personality, Rumble and Kuya. Its most famous and notable client is hip hop group Dream Warriors.

EVENTS

Country Music Week '98

Calgary, AB, September 11-14, 1998
 (905) 850-1122

American Drummers Achievement Awards

Boston, MA, September 13, 1998
 (781) 237-2277

Calgary International Music Expo

Calgary, AB, September 25-October 3, 1998
 (403) 247-4837

Calgary International Organ Festival & Competition

Calgary, AB, September 18-October 3, 1998
 (403) 543-5115/(800) 213-9750
 FAX (403) 543-5129
 info@ciof.com, www.ciof.com

Songwriters Expo

Los Angeles, CA, October 2-4, 1998
 (213) 463-7178

Celtic Colours International Festival

Cape Breton, NS, October 9-17, 1998
 (902) 562-6700, FAX (902) 539-9388,
 colours@chatsubo.com,
 www.chatsubo.com/colours

Midwest Regional Folk Alliance Meeting

Wadsworth, OH, October 16-18, 1998
 (202) 835-3655, FAX (202) 835-3656

Arlington Guitar Show 1998

Arlington, VA, October 17-19, 1998
 (817) 473-6087

College Music Society Annual Conference

San Juan, Puerto Rico, October 22-25, 1998
 (405) 353-1455

Hamilton MusicScene 98

Hamilton, ON, October 22-25, 1998
 (905) 304-5000, FAX (905) 304-5005

American Musicological Society Annual Meeting

Boston, MA, October 29 - November 1, 1998
 (215) 898-8698, FAX (215) 573-3673,
 musdra.ucdavis.edu/documents/ams/
 ams.html

JazzTimes Convention '98

New York, NY, October 30-November 2, 1998
 (301) 588-4114, ext. 10, FAX (301) 588-5531

Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC)

Orlando, FL, November 4-7, 1998
 (405) 353-1455

Northeast Regional Folk Alliance Meeting

Lake Harmony, PA, November 13-15, 1998
 (202) 835-3655, FAX (202) 835-3656

Montreal Drum Fest '98

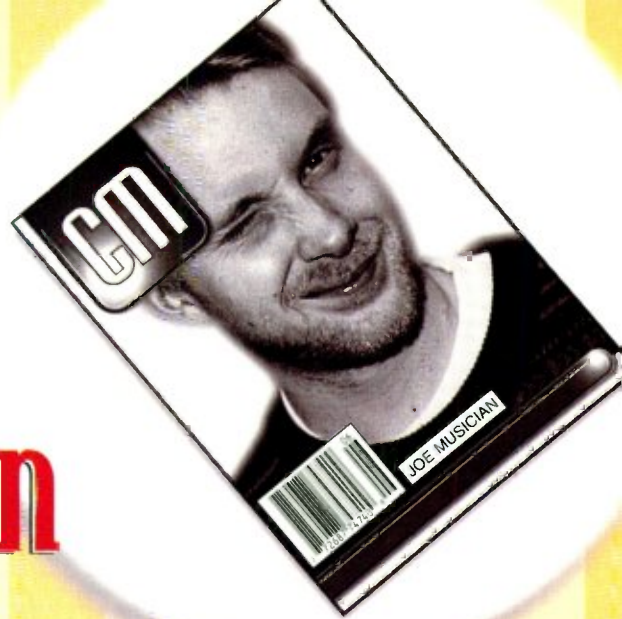
Montreal, PQ, November 14-15, 1998
 (450) 928-1726, FAX (450) 670-8683

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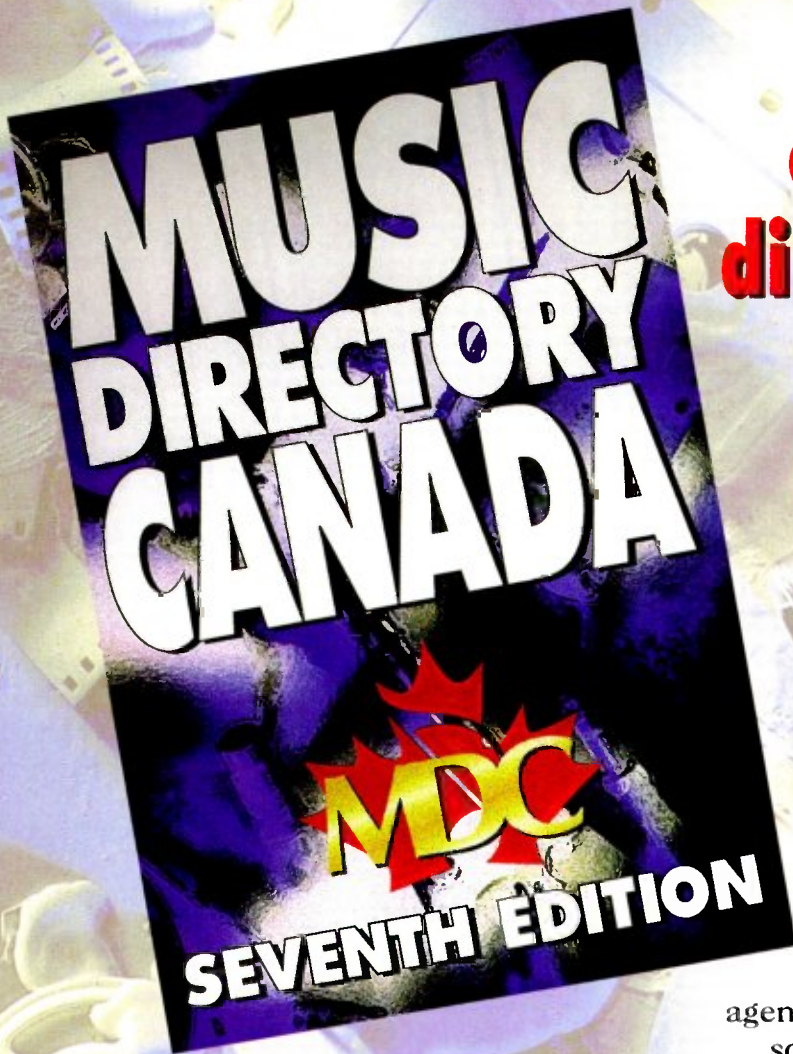
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america update online



Every few weeks, I get a disk in the mail from America Online and they usually get tossed. I have been a member of Compuserve and AOL off and on since 1982 but I generally do not recommend any of the Online services for Internet access because of the cost. The offer said 100 free hours so I thought, what the heck. The installation was a snap. It came on one diskette and after entering personal information, including a credit card, it dials an 800 number and prompts you to choose a local access number. It then reconnects and you are online. Any additional components or updates that you need including their web browser, are downloaded automatically as required. Navigation once online is very friendly and you have the choice of several subject-specific channels or search capabilities.

There are two main reasons to have an America Online account, possibly in addition to your regular account with a local provider:



(1) The quality and organization of the content is superior to most websites out there since it is a paid service.

There are extensive areas on business, travel, computers and software including The Mac Software Centre which is a bonanza for Mac users.

There are also areas focused on music and audio. For example, Digidesign has its own area with

a message board, software and information on all of their products. The PC Music and Sound Forum includes extensive MIDI resources, downloads and information on MIDI products.

(2) If you travel a lot with your notebook, you can use AOL for your local access. They provide local access in 1,500 cities in over 100 countries. Your local provider can't do that. You can at least receive and send mail but night and day surfing will cost you big bucks.

So next time you get an AOL disk in the mail, give it a try for the trial period or download the software at <http://www.aol.com>. You might find it great online resource. There must be reason why millions of users have made it the largest single group on the Internet.

Resources

... Steinberg North America has moved their website to <http://www.us.steinberg.net>. Featured are sections on their whole range of products as well as a complete dealer list.

... Speed up your Internet connection with iSpeed for Windows 95/NT. The free program optimizes your TCP/IP settings and increases your surfing speed by 30 per cent or more. Download at www.dimensional.com/~cstone/ispeed.htm.

... Check out MusicStaff.com for listings of over 4,500 music teachers. Teachers can submit a list-

ing as well. The site is only US in content but they will be adding Canadian teachers in the future. Visit at www.musicstaff.com.

... Canada Country is a directory of Canadian country artists and Canadian and international music industry resources. If you are a country artist with a web site, you can add your listing to the site. Drop by at www3.sympatico.ca/hock/canadacountry.htm.

... If you are looking for a photographer to do promo shots, try the Global Photographers Search at www.photographers.com/default.asp. The site lists over 7,000 photographers and you can search by city and key word to find photographers who specialize in music in your area.

... If you are attending LDI in Phoenix this year, visit their website at www.etcnyc.net/ldihome.htm. You will find information on exhibitors, workshops and special events and you can register online.

... If you have access to a browser, but not to e-mail, one answer is Hotmail at www.hotmail.com. For instance, I am writing this column at Kinko's in

Nashville and their machines do not have Internet e-mail capabilities and I need to get the file to our office. Enter Hotmail. For free, you can set up an e-mail account where you can send and retrieve mail from your browser and keep a personal address book. You can even set up 4 POP mail accounts so that you can read your e-mail at home or the office. It receives your POP mail instantly and in a format that is superior to most e-mail programs. Try it out.

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Danelectro

by Jagori Tanna

It's about time! Ever since the Danelectro company resurfaced (under new ownership) with the introduction of their ultra-cool line of colourful stompboxes, you just knew that their trademark guitars would surely follow. The first offering is a near-faithful recreation of one of their classics. The original U2, from some 40-odd years ago, is still considered by many to be the finest model that Danelectro made. However, an old one would run you over a grand, that is, if you could even find one! This guitar is incredibly affordable and as close to an original U2 as you're likely to get. What more could you ask for? This guitar is so light that when I first picked it up, I thought that I was sent an empty box! Thankfully, I opened up the case and found one of the coolest looking guitars I've seen in a long time. The 56U2's single cutaway body has a masonite top and back supported by a plywood frame. The model I reviewed came in an awesome Aqua Burst, but is available in many other retro colours such as Beatnik Burgandy, Daddy'O Yellow, Copper Burst or Commie Red!

The bridge is a sturdy metal alloy plate secured to the body with three adjustable screws with a strip of wood serving as the saddle for all six strings. While intonation and action cannot be adjusted for individual strings, general changes can be made easily and effectively enough. The electronics are extremely simple as well. The familiar lipstick-tube pickups, (with alnico magnets) are thankfully present, along with two big plastic, dual function tone/volume controls. A big three-way toggle switch is also on hand for pickup selection. The 56U2 has a beefy maple neck with an adjustable truss rod, (painted the same colour as the body) is capped with a very flat rosewood fingerboard. The 21 medium jumbo frets were nicely shaped and polished, although a few had some rough edges. Definitely not a problem though! The 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ " aluminum nut copies the original although a hair wider, and was neatly cut. Although I'm not a huge fan of flat fingerboards, I found myself totally at home on this neck, great job here.

Lastly, we find some sturdy closed back tuners in place of the original's open ones, placed on the stylish 'coke bottle' headstock. These tuners worked great at holding this thing in tune even

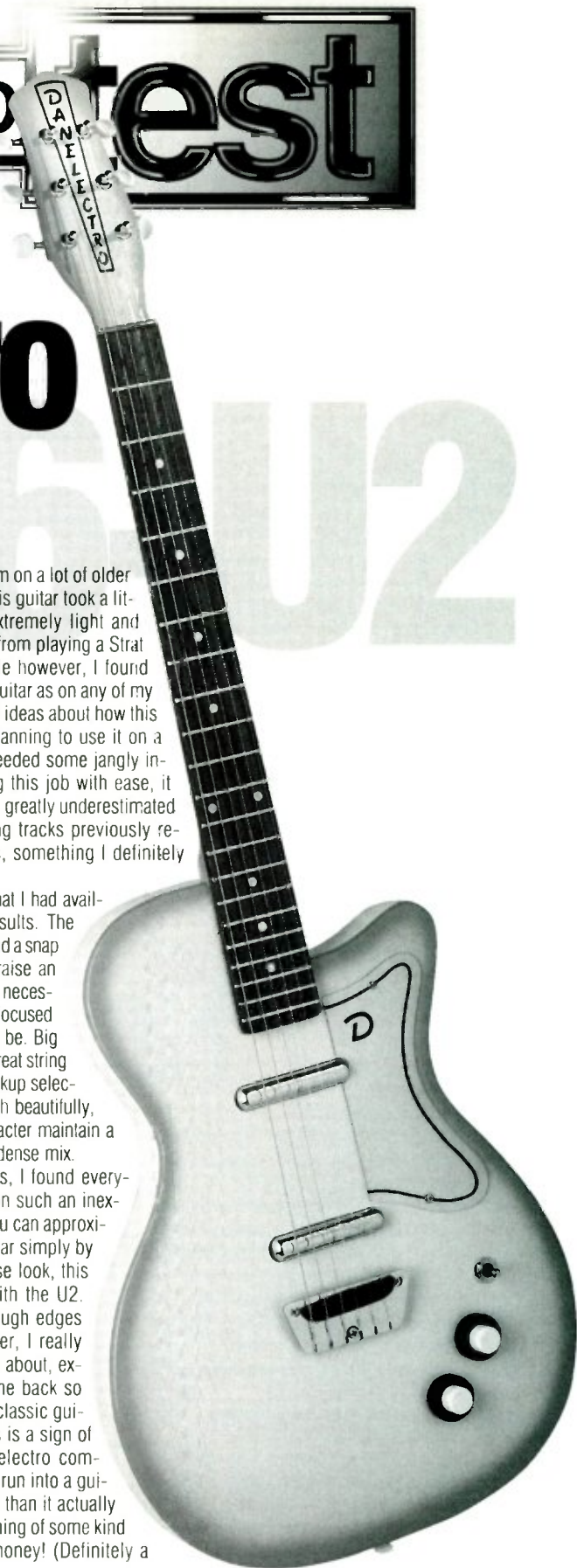
when played hard, a big problem on a lot of older and cheaper guitars. Playing this guitar took a little getting used to, as it is extremely light and couldn't be any more different from playing a Strat or Les Paul. After a short while however, I found myself as comfortable on this guitar as on any of my own. I had some pre-conceived ideas about how this thing might sound, and was planning to use it on a simple overdub session that needed some jangly incidental guitar. While handling this job with ease, it was immediately clear that I had greatly underestimated its potential. I started replacing tracks previously recorded using Strats and Teles, something I definitely thought would never happen!

I put it through every amp that I had available with surprisingly good results. The 56U2 boasted crystalline highs and a snap that might make Tele fanatics raise an eyebrow. The bottom, while not necessarily huge, was bigger and more focused than I thought it would or could be. Big distorted chords demonstrated great string to string clarity, regardless of pickup selection, and single lines cut through beautifully, letting this guitar's special character maintain a definite presence within a fairly dense mix.

As far as construction goes, I found everything to be surprisingly solid on such an inexpensive instrument. Usually, you can approximate the general value of a guitar simply by picking it up, and taking a close look, this was definitely not the case with the U2. With the exception of those rough edges on the frets I mentioned earlier, I really can't find anything to complain about, except that I have to give this one back so soon! By reintroducing such a classic guitar, one can only hope that this is a sign of things to come from the Danelectro company. It's not too often that you run into a guitar that sounds more expensive than it actually is. I hope this signals the beginning of some kind of trend... More guitar, less money! (Definitely a double meaning, I think.)

For more product information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 West Wilmot St., #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (905) 889-0116, FAX (905) 889-9998, daddariocan@globalserve.net.

Jagori Tanna is guitarist and producer for I Mother Earth.



Korg D8 Digital Recorder

ROAD test

You can open up any music magazine these days and be overwhelmed by the number of digital workstations available. However, most of the products available serve the "pro" user instead of the "amateur", and costs about the same as a used car! Finally, some companies are addressing this obvious problem, and are introducing products within the price range of most project studios, hopefully without cutting too many corners. Let's see how Korg managed to pull this off!

The compact D8 has a completely familiar layout. You'll find the usual assortment of rubber buttons (47 to be exact), a large data wheel, transport controls (some serving double duty in scrub mode, song beginning and end), and eight sturdy faders. There are also the usual locate buttons, giving three points per song and 100 mark points, which are also used for setting auto punch points. The unit's built in metronome/rhythm pattern control can also be found here.

On the recessed front panel, you'll find two 1/4" TRS channel inputs with their own separate trim controls, a guitar/line switch, and jacks for both headphones (with level control), and remote footswitch.

There are six mono channels and one stereo channel, each with its own fader, pan, EQ, track status switch and effect send controls. You can only record a maximum of two adjacent tracks at a time, (e.g. 1/2, 3/4, 5/6...). This shouldn't be a real hindrance once you get used to the idea and find ways to work around it.

The unit's dual shelving EQ is adjustable by +/-15 dB at 100 Hz and 10 kHz, and works smoothly and effectively. A sweepable mid control would be a definite plus here but wasn't entirely missed.

There are 50 onboard effect types, (all 24-bit) with 65 preset patches and 65 available for custom tweaking and storing. There are also some useful multi-effects chains that sounded quite good. Some of the effects available include distortion, amp simulation, various reverbs and delays, phasing, tremolo, chorus and limiting. Even some far out effects such as low-fi, telephone voice, auto wah, doppler and a ring modulator are at your fingertips. Basically, every type of effect you may need for creative tracking can be found right in the box, and that's not all!

The unit comes with a 1.4 GB internal hard drive, giving you 34 minutes of 16-bit, 8-track recording. A SCSI port, optical S/PDIF I/O and MIDI In and Out also come at no additional cost, keeping this unit flexible and allowing for growth as your budget sees fit.

The D8 can output MTC and MIDI clock, using beat map, tap tempo or by using a sequencer re-



by Jagori Tanna

coding clock put into the unit. The unit responds to MMC Data but will not slave to timecode, which would probably jack the price up and out of reach for some people. Overall though, it's flexible enough for almost any demo situation.

Some other nice touches on this box include snapshot automation, with the ability to store up to 20 different scenes. This took a little getting used to but didn't pose any major problem. Not only can the levels be automated, but EQ, pan, aux send and effect send as well. Not too shabby. The now standard editing features such as cut, copy, insert, delete and swap are also thankfully present, and easy to use.

A fair size display will help you keep track of all activity with meters for channel, effect and master activity. The rest of the window is used for a nice big counter display, and editing work. One of the only things that bugged me about the unit was working with the display. I wish that the display showed a little bit more information when searching for things or for editing. Also, I can't understand why the display isn't backlit when the rest of the unit seems so well thought out. It may sound a little trivial to have a gripe about cosmetics but hey, after a couple of hours of working on this thing, you might get a little frustrated by this too. If a cosmetic problem is the only gripe that I have, I guess it also serves as a compliment!

Getting up and running on the D8 was extremely easy. Simply select a track, plug in and start recording. OK, maybe not that easy, but easy enough to

get rolling without even a casual glance at the manual. When I eventually did look at the manual, it proved to be well thought out and totally understandable. I was able to get everything on the D8 going within an hour, with most of that hour spent figuring out the automation and editing features.

It was incredibly quick and easy getting a usable demo together, building tracks with lush textures and character via the D8's many interesting effects. I'm not saying that the effects found here are groundbreaking, or that you should throw away your favourite rack gear, but having all of the various sounds readily available really helps the demo process move along quickly and spontaneously... all of the things a demo should be!

I am currently using a workstation that is more than double the price of this one, yet it really doesn't sound that much different, only handles differently. Korg seems to have put a lot of thought into which luxuries to exclude to keep this thing affordable. With the exception of a few of those same luxuries, I was just as happy to work on the D8.

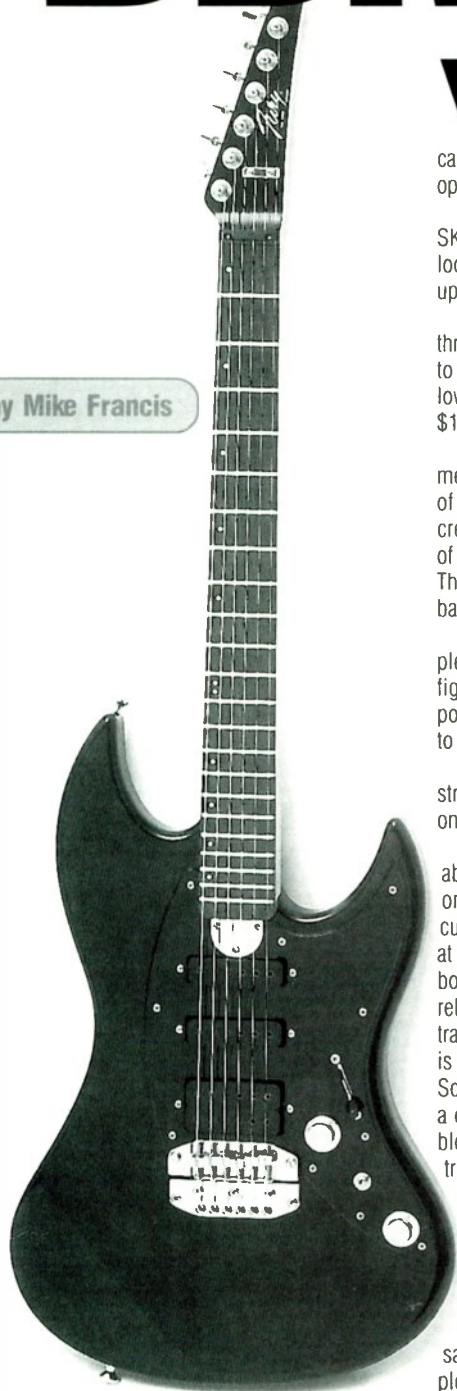
The bottom line is that you get all of the above features, with the ability to expand, all for the price of a multitrack cassette recorder. Which way would you go?

For more product information, contact: Korg Canada, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, korgcanada@jam-ind.com.

Jagori Tanna is guitarist and producer for I Mother Earth.

ROAD test

Fury BBM Guitar



by Mike Francis

We all know that Canadian Luthiers make some amazing and world-class acoustic guitars, but now we can claim the same thing about electrics. I had the opportunity to test the new Fury (Strat-style) electric.

The Fury Guitar Company located in Saskatoon, SK have developed a very high-end product that looks and feels custom from the moment you open up the case.

All the signs are right with the Fury BBM, a three-pickup electric solid-body that is easily equal to the excellent Tom Anderson guitars, yet priced lower. The suggested retail on the BBM model is \$1,449 with hard shell case.

Fury Guitars has been making quality instruments in Canada since 1962. Under the guidance of design engineer Glenn McDougall, Fury has created a line of guitars that live up to their claim of making "noticeably finer musical instruments." Their line includes other six-string models plus a baritone, a 12-string and a bass.

Each body style in the brochure is unique and pleasing to the eye, plus numerous pick-up configurations and customized accessories make it possible to have your own guitar built specifically to your taste and style.

The patented Fury ZP pickups actually increase string motion by concentrating the magnetic force on the outer rim of the pole pieces.

On this Strat-style I'm testing, the quality is absolutely first class. The colour is emerald green on this model. The 1 1/2 inch thick offset double cutaway body is beautiful, and elegantly contoured at the back (the "belly cut") as well as across the bout where your right arm rests. The body is also relieved under the base of the neck, giving you extraordinary access to the upper frets. The neck edge is ideal for thumb placement during string bends. Soft maple is used for most of the body to produce a creamy tone, but it is constructed with a centre block of hard maple for increased sustain. The nitrocellulose and acrylic lacquer finish was superb (and the company offers it in 18 colour choices).

The four-screw bolt-on neck has the reassuring solidity that comes from Eastern rock maple and it has been shaped to be halfway between a big "half a baseball bat" style neck and a thin shredder's neck. It has also been finely sanded to perfection and lacquered to a highly pleasing sheen. The nine-inch radius is comfortable and permits fast playing and accurate string bending.

With an unusual scale length of 25.064 inches, the guitar splits the difference between the short scale Gibson style (24 3/4 inches) and the standard scale Fender style (25 1/2 inches). The deep cutaway is at the 22nd fret, allowing you access to the entire fingerboard. The jumbo frets are set and finished as nicely as any you'll see.

Using what the company calls a Balanced High-Mass Bridge/Tailpiece, the unit is machined from solid mill-rolled brass, then plated in chrome or gold. The bridge saddles are among the longer ones on the market, permitting precise intonation adjustment no matter what gauge of strings you prefer. Adjusting the height of the bridge is quite simple. Controls are conventionally placed and include tone, volume, five-way pickup selector switch, and a humbucker coil tap toggle.

The headstock utilizes a four-hole string tree and six in-line Schaller tuners. The hard acrylic Uninut is a special design by the company and is cut quite deep. It also seems more solid than most and lets open string notes ring out with clarity. The deeply-cut grooves make for softer playing action at the first fret.

The only components on the guitar not made at the factory are the Schaller Machine Heads, that's it. This is an all Canadian instrument and McDougall and Garchinski at the Fury Guitar Company have a lot to be proud of. (Enough flag waving).

The two single coils and one humbucker on this model are another design exclusively called the Fury ZP. As noted above, the tubular pole pieces eliminate magnetic force in the center, instead pulling the string from the outer edge to lower resistance to string motion. Combined with sensitive attack dynamic, a lack of microphonics and total isolation of the pickup structure from transient resonance all contribute to what can only be called a monstrous sound. Played straight into an amp, the Fury produces nice varieties of tones, from glassy quiver to a glorious grind.

I recommend that every guitar player check this thing out. Regardless of what style you play you'll have fun with this guitar.

For more product information, contact: Fury Guitars, 743 Costigan Pl., Saskatoon, SK S7J 3R3 (306) 653-FURY, FAX (306) 374-0633, info@furyguitar.com, www.furyguitar.com.

Mike Francis is a Toronto-based freelance session guitarist and producer.

P.J. Ballantine

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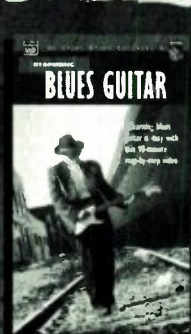
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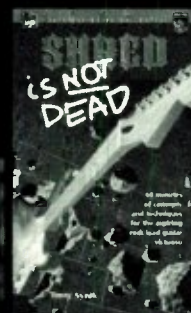
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G

guitar

the story of our loves



by Craig Northey and Keith Scott

Years ago, Pat Steward (former drummer for Bryan Adams, currently drumming with The Odds) introduced Keith Scott to Craig Northey and, as per usual, musicians started talking about life, music and gear. We've been friends ever since and we're still talking about gear. Musical gear but mostly hockey gear (sometimes even Richard Gere). Why this fascination with gear? It rhymes with beer? Maybe it's deeper than that. Hendrix used to sleep with his guitar. Glenn Gould had those stinky, fingerless gloves he mumbled into. Dumbo had his feather. Somewhere deep in the solar plexus of every artist lies that sentimental and superstitious place. When a piece of equipment, let's call them "tools of the trade", gets involved, then weird and wonderful things can result. All those signature artists seemed to have some signature instrument. Most of these instruments get cool nicknames like "Lucille", "Blackie", "Lenny", "the Log" or maybe even "Rosebud". Every musician, whether they know it or not, wants to find something he or she loves that much. No one can love a musician like an inanimate object. Gepetto turned that hunk of wood into a real boy and so something you connect with can really come to life.

keith

"the beast"— 1976 Fender Stratocaster, originally white, now a nicotine yellow with a maple neck.

I spied it hanging by its neck in the Long & McQuade store in Vancouver in the fall of 1976. I rescued it from the noose and made off with the parting words, "can I rent this for a couple of months?" Renting turned to rutting. Our time together ended up costing me \$543 with case. We spent many hours alone together. It was a newer instrument so I didn't have the kind of respect for it that a seasoned axe would

command. I would deface it with marker, pen knife, galf tape, cigarette lighters, and on one strange night in Fort St. John, it was shot several times by a 22 calibre Derringer. I even took a saw to it at one time. I guess I never had the guts to get a tattoo or pierce my nipples. The guitar was an easy target. The neck, bridge and pick-ups have been replaced several times. Celebrities and friends have carved or burned their names into the body creating a "lover's etched in the tree trunk" effect. More cigarettes have been put out on it than a bus depot floor. No matter what abuse it endured, it still survived and sounded better than everything else. Later I'm sure they made a movie about it called "The Terminator". Not the most romantic reason to love somebody, but hey, it takes a lot to live with me!

craig

"boog"— 1958 Fender Esquire, originally white, now mostly green and grunge over white with a maple neck.

I have always given every guitar a name in hopes that this one might be "the one". Then I found it and lost it. Ain't that always the way. The bass player in my old band (circa 1986) owned this legendary old guitar that he bought as a teenager in Riverside, CA for a case of beer and less than \$100. He then followed his teenage fancies and spray-painted it gold. He grew tired of that and painted it green. Neither of these paints were the type you should use on a guitar and since then have worn off in all areas of use to create the shape of a green dinosaur on a bed of rice. He let me play it for as long as the band lasted then it moved onto the guitar player for his next band. I mourned for years. Every gui-

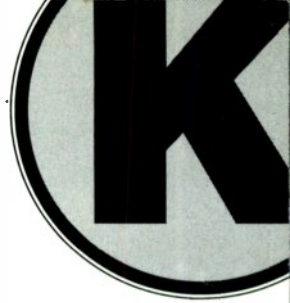
tar player Dave (the bass player) ever played with added their hoodoo to the guitar. He said he would never part with it so I said "well if you ever do ... then call me first." Unfortunately for Dave, that day came a couple of years ago. Our reunion was glorious and I do everything with that guitar. It's so "worn-in" that it melts into your hands after a few seconds. My son asked me why I play that old beat-up guitar when I have better looking ones. I told him that all the people who have played it have added their talents to it and given it magic powers. Now he has to rub it before he heads off to tiny-tot hockey because "that's where the goals come from".

So Keith and I get the two "gals" together for a tea party every once in awhile. The two guitars have so much in common — old Fenders, originally white in colour and witness to every one of our foibles and escapades. The two guitars must be looking at each other and talking about when they'll find a human that will treat them right.

Just keep looking and you'll find your "Billy Barue" and it probably won't be all shiny and new.

Keith Scott is guitarist for Bryan Adams and Craig Northey is guitarist for The Odds.

improving your left hand performance



Keyboards



by Kevin Young

Last year in mid summer I injured my hand in a small, but painful, accident involving a skateboard, an indeterminate object hidden somewhere in the darkness, and some swiftly approaching concrete. I fell badly ... with all my weight on one hand, and directly in front of a packed patio of suitably amused tourists. Although it wasn't a serious injury, (I could still play – just not very well) for a couple of weeks afterwards I felt as if I were playing with two good, strong fingers and three half cooked hot dogs sloppily duct taped to my remaining knuckles. In an effort to bring my errant fingers back up to snuff I began revisiting old exercises and technique and generally spending more time than usual with my left hand. Tried and true, scales, arpeggios and inversions etc. are a great workout, but the tedium of repetition may get to you after a while. If so, here are a few other options to enhance dexterity and strengthen a sagging left hand.

Substitute another structure as the basis for your practice. Written music in any style provides enough of a framework from which to draw from and develop your own exercises and can be far less monotonous than traditional technique. Although any sheet music will do the job, a collection of charts or a book of transcribed solos is a good place to start. The more choices you have, the more likely you are to find something that focuses heavily on the area you want to work on. Old Bebop charts and transcriptions are particularly useful owing to their swift and varied melodic and harmonic movement. The whole idea of these exercises is to keep the player entertained and thinking, rather than simply blasting through scales. Tricky fingering, large leaps, rhythmic complexity and odd

voicings in the head are a plus, the more challenging the piece, the better.

Begin simply; run through the chart a couple of times providing only basic accompaniment in the left hand; either a walking line, or just the changes in block chords on the beat just to get comfortable with the harmonic movement and the timing. Now drop the right hand and play the melody in the left hand. Aim for fluency to begin with and then slowly work up to speed. Your left hand may not be as used to ripping through the same sort of sequences your right hand is and this kind of practice (particularly with a variety of charts) can do quite a bit to increase your dexterity. When you get the melody to the point where it is smooth and fairly effortless to play transpose it into all keys. If a specific passage or type of movement in the head is particularly hard to get your fingers around, isolate it and play the problem passage first in simple repetition and then transpose it according to the harmonic changes of the tune you've chosen.

Now work through the changes only, first in block chords and then arpeggios. Try to string the arpeggios together in such a way as to make the movement from chord to chord as simple and fluent as possible. It's probably a good idea to do this exercise in time and allow the chart to dictate how long each arpeggio will be. If you have a simple II-V-I progression over the course of one bar (say F# min7-B7-F maj 7) use an ascending pattern for the first chord, descending for the second, then ascending and descending for the third, and so on. Now take this new set of exercises you've created, alter their feel and rhythm (ie. straight and swung eighths, triplets etc.) and then transpose them as well.

If you can achieve the same ease and fluency with these exercises that you strive for with scales and traditional technique then you'll greatly increase your dexterity and strength as well as entrench a library of licks in your physical memory that are sure to come in useful.

The previous exercises focus on speed and dexterity but if you wish to put more emphasis on accuracy and comping there's no need to run back to working through inversions; a chart can come in handy for that as well. This time begin with just the harmonic movement as the basis for your drill. Try to avoid looking at the keyboard at all. Keeping your hand completely relaxed, and adopting a comfortable (and hopefully correct) posture, move through the changes allowing your hand to rise and fall to the keyboard confidently, as if you knew exactly where they were to land. Chances are that the first few times through you won't and this can be frustrating, but with time it pays off. It's important to keep your hand relaxed and accept the inevitable wrong notes without tensing up, or stopping and starting over. Stay in time and go back and work on the problem areas once you've made it through the head a couple of times.

Start with the chords in a relatively simple form (ie. root on the bottom and no more than four parts) and build up from there. This type of chordal movement may seem a little exaggerated but it's the exaggeration that makes this portion of the exercise so effective. When this becomes comfortable move on to the next inversion, building the chord from the third, then the fifth, and so on. How far you get into extensions is up to you.

Now return to the top and in the same manner play through the changes again making movement from chord to chord as economical as possible; identifying and utilizing shared notes and visualizing the shape of the next chord before you reach for it. Remember to try to avoid looking at the keys. For continued practice, transpose the changes into all keys.

Using a chart is just one structure on which to base these drills. You may find that substituting a piece you have learned entirely by ear or a structure of your own devising more suited to your specific needs. The intent is to find something entertaining and challenging to expand your grasp of technique, and by extension, your chops.

Kevin Young is keyboardist for Moist.

B

bas

techniques for recording better



by Chowder

drummers are human

Even the best drummer playing to a click will move on the beat a little. This is called character, and this is why a real drummer is used. You want a machine? You program a machine. What a bass player has to do is work with that character. So know your drummer. I spend a lot of time with Chris, just him and I in rehearsal going over songs. I know what his kick is doing and I know his rolls. The better I know where he's going, the better we play together. But that isn't always enough. It's you and a drum track on the monitors and every little mistake you make is right out there for everybody to hear, humility ... oh the pain. Now if you have the luxury of time, try this. Get a board mix of the drum tracks and, if possible, have a ghost track of the melody. And go home and learn it. When you know where your drummer 'sits' in the time you'll be able to match up better. The result is a tight rhythm section.

Some of these techniques never occurred to me before, but have changed the way I play as a whole. My technique is better and my 'voice' has more range. And next time I record I'll be able to cut down stress and the time that it takes to do the job. Little things often go a long way.

**For more on technique see Hugh McMillan's article in volume XX number 3*

Chowder is bassist for Glueleg.

Pack up everything that you own. Load it in the van. Drive down to the studio and set it all up. Mic it, fresh strings, new gear. Then borrow the oldest, cheapest, ugliest bass you can find and DI it right into the board. Not quite what you expected to hear now was it? Recording time is when you are really working at the art of music. The songs come together and you get to express yourself fully through your medium of choice. When you go on the road you recreate the magic captured on tape. So to make the studio experience a good one, be prepared.

This involves everything from your gear to your physical and mental state. Service your basses and amps if they need it. Make sure you have everything that you need, including back-ups. The physical and mental thing, get lots of sleep and eat right. Know your songs.

There are two ways to look at your gear and the sound. I don't have signature sound like Jaco or Billy Sheehan. I like to work with the song. Some songs are over-driven while some have huge subs and no attack. To get sounds with all the toys, we would sit and discuss the kind of tone that we wanted for a song. Whatever the verdict, we'd set up the gear and start to work on it. Some tracks started with a DI and an amp. One song had an active bass crammed into the HiWatt. The tone was monstrous and dirty while fed through a Marshall 4x12 guitar cabinet (a bottom cabinet). Something wasn't quite right, so I used a pick. The sound fit the song to a tee! On some tracks we used a DI alone, and the result was a warm woody tone. At one point I stood the bass on a box and played it like a double bass so my fingers would hit the strings and then the fret board for that upright type attack and sound.

hand position

Where your right hand strikes the string will drastically affect the tone. Pay close at-

ention. Simply move your right hand around the bass. Just try this. Move your hand from over the bridge pick-up (playing quarter notes) and move it towards the neck, playing all the way. Notice how the tone changes. From a tight midrange sound to a brassy bass with a slight metallic attack to a deep warm bass at the neck. See how that works? Also look at the way that you attack the strings with your right hand. Place your hand, thumb on pick-up, palm flat against the bass and start playing. Notice how when you play with your hand close to the body you pull the strings down leading to more fret noise. But as you move your hand up off the body the tone gets cleaner and even further you'll notice that you'll start to pluck, kind of like a pop, as your fingers move under the strings. It's a great tool when the EQ isn't quite getting what you want. Once you pick a right hand position 'landmark' where it is. Your tone will change and your producer will look up and say 'what did you do? What happened to the sound?'

muting

That renegade ringing string might slip by undetected in a loud live situation. But when the tape is rolling you won't be able to hide it. The overtones that it creates might cause some undesirable dissonance with the melody instruments. Muting can be done with you left-hand for the upper strings. For your right-hand as you go up the strings move you thumb from the pickup to the E-string. From there your-right hand playing fingers will mute until you are on the G-string. Now the A-string has nothing to keep it from ringing. (Pick up your bass and check it out) Use your left-hand ring finger to mute that string. It's probably curled up under your right-hand so force it down. This will take some getting used to but once you get it you'll wonder why you never did it before.* Now that your hands are doing what they are told you can finally get to listening to the drummer.

...and your name is?



By Vince Ditrich

Want to impress an audience? Want to impress other musicians? Well, there is a sure-fire way to do it. You can do it by playing, and playing well, with people whom you've never met before, playing music you've never played before. Sounds like a parlour trick to the uninitiated, but it is the bread and butter of the working drummer.

On dozens of occasions I have arrived at a club not knowing anyone on the gig, and have played the whole night without any trouble. There have even been times that I have been called-in to sub for someone sick and I've not learned all the players names until after the gig is over. Incredible? Not at all. There are plenty of players that do it all the time. But how?

The first thing you have to do is listen and listen carefully. Make sure that you can hear everyone properly, and in the correct mix. You'll need to hear the progression and the melody so that you can help supply the groove. This will also let you know what to play, when to play it, and how to express it. If you have a monitor mix make sure that the appropriate instruments are dialed up to your liking. If there isn't one you can ask players to turn their amps a little in your direction.

You will need to find one member of the combo who can briefly describe the songs you're about to play. Nothing in depth, you merely need to know the tempo, the style (swing, country, oompah

... whatever!) and any special items of note ("watch for anticipated shot in bridge"; or "sixteenths on the hat"). The rest is simply a matter of listening to what the other players are doing and complimenting it with your own playing.

I've had people say to me that they could never get on stage and play without some form of rehearsal. But to me this is like saying that they couldn't hold someone in conversation without first getting a background briefing. If you are confident in your role as a drummer, meaning that you understand what your musical responsibilities are, there is little to fear. Every song that succeeds as a "pop" song uses similar logic. No matter what the composition it still has a beginning, a middle and an end; it establishes motifs, builds dynamically, climaxes, and finishes. Once you have learned this form, you need only plug each successive song into it.

When looked at in this manner, popular music – whether it is Al Jolson or Pearl Jam – is all very similar. It is the things that are dissimilar which you should look at when doing a quick overview – just as in the Sunday supplement Word Search when one starts by looking for less common words that contain an X or a Z.

Your imagination is important, too. As an example let's use Blues bands that specialize in shuffles. If I were to take the vague instructions I get literally ("Shuffle in "E"...2, 3, 4...") I would play the same pattern all night until I, with everyone else, was bored to tears. But, by listening to the bass, the rhythm guitar, the melodic hook, the vocalist's phrasing, I am able to shift and alter the "stock" shuffle pattern, customizing it for that particular song. As a result of many years of this discipline I can now play hundreds of permutations of the classic shuffle.

So, then, you need a broad knowledge of the styles, and more specifically the patterns, you may be required to play upon demand. In a sense you have to come prepared not for the gig but for your career. It won't do to turn down Salsa gigs because you can't play Latin. You must acknowledge that you are a bit weak in the basics of Latin, and then learn some. Ask other players for tips. Often they'll say something like "Oh, there's this great album that I have ..." Borrow it and take a few notes! If you give yourself this challenge you will soon be prepared for nearly anything tossed at you.

Listening closely to music on the radio or the television is invaluable, too. Why just let songs drift around in your head when you can be cataloguing them in your mind for later reference? You'll never know when you will be asked to play the very song you were listening to a minute ago.

Another tremendously important factor is to be "heads up". By now you're listening carefully, but you should be watching carefully, too. You can be conducted flawlessly through shots, ritards, rests and endings if you are keeping a sharp lookout for body language. Generally, in a situation like this, one of the players will take the job of alerting you to these things. If this is the case, you're home free. Even a quirky arrangement is manageable with a little advance eye contact.

So now, you're listening, you're watching, you're using your imagination and you're drawing upon your storehouse of knowledge; you're making beautiful music with people you've never met before. Magic! Now, if you could only magically improve the pay...

Vince Ditrich is percussionist for Spirit of the West.

Over tones

In this article, I describe, in basic detail, the mechanical functioning of a brass instrument, and then discuss the overtone series, upon which all brass instruments are based. Although not strictly necessary in order to learn how to play, it can be useful to understand why the instrument works the way it does.

valves, slides, positions

Each valve on a brass instrument has a slide attached to it. When you push down the valve, air is channeled through its slide, effectively lengthening the tubing of the instrument. The longer the tubing, the lower the pitch becomes. On a trombone, the slide itself is pushed out to lengthen the tubing.

The second valve slide is the shortest, and will lower pitch by one half-step. The first valve slide is twice as long, and will lower pitch by one whole step. The third valve slide is one-and-a-half times as long, and lowers pitch by one-and-a-half steps. It can be seen that the length of the third slide equals the length of the first and second slides put together. These are theoretical ratios, however, and in reality the slides are made just a bit longer to adjust intonation, so the two valve combinations are not identical in length, and 1 and 2 is the standard fingering in most situations. You will find more on this in the next chapter.

There are seven possible valve combinations. (3rd valve alone is not used in standard fingering.) Not coincidentally, there are seven positions available on a trombone slide. The descending order of valve combinations is:

O(open); 2; 1; 1&2; 2&3; 1&3; and 1,2&3.

Each combination adds additional tubing in a length roughly equivalent to the second valve slide, thus dropping the pitch a half-step. Starting from any open note, running through this series of valve combinations will drop pitch progressively by half-steps, which produces a chromatic scale. In theory this is a great system, but in practice it is flawed.

over tones

All brass instruments are based on the overtone series. This is a series of pitches, called harmonics or partials, extending up in progressively smaller intervals from the funda-

mental note. When you hear any pitch, (with the exception of a pure electronic tone), you are hearing not only the fundamental note, but also upper harmonics that give the pitch its timbre.

exercise

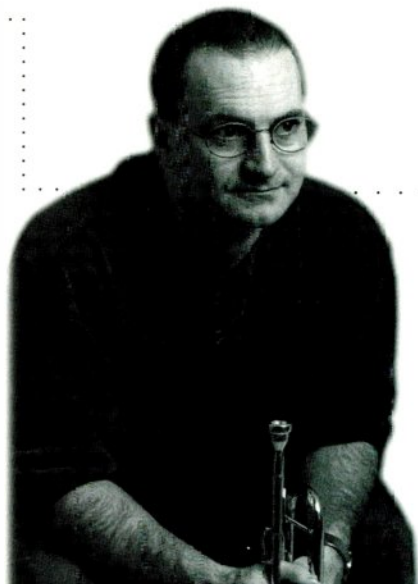
Sit at a grand piano with the lid up, and hold down the sustain pedal. With your trumpet, play a loud, short note right into the piano. Move your ear near the strings and listen for other pitches than the note you played. These strings are vibrating sympathetically in response to the upper harmonics in your note.

When you play all the open notes on a trumpet, you are reproducing the overtone series. The only note missing is the fundamental, which, on the open horn, is pedal C, an octave below low C. This note is not on the instrument, (though we can play it, after a fashion. See Pedal Tones). The first note in the overtone series that we use is the second harmonic, an octave above the fundamental, or low C. The next interval in the series is a perfect 5th, which gives us the next open note: 2nd line G. Following that is a 4th, which sounds third space C. Next a major third: E; a minor third: G; a very flat minor third: B \flat , and a major second: high C. Let's number the partials, all played open, (no valves.) Note that each successive interval becomes smaller, and the notes become closer together.

- 1st partial: Pedal C
- 2nd partial: Low C
- 3rd partial: 2nd line G
- 4th partial: 3rd space C
- 5th partial: 4th space E
- 6th partial: Top staff G
- 7th partial: High B (very flat)
- 8th partial: High C
- 9th partial: High D
- 10th partial: High E
- 11th partial: High F# (very flat)
- 12th partial: High G

historical tidbit

During the Baroque period of music, (1600-1750), trumpets had no valves. This limited them to the notes of one harmonic series. Certain players, called clarini, (plural of clarino), became specialists at playing in the upper register, because it provided many



by Chase Sanborn

more available notes, closer together. This increased the melodic possibilities, not to mention the risk of hernias.

bring them down

When you press down the 2nd valve, it lowers all the open tones one half-step, effectively creating another complete overtone series a half-step lower than the open one. Multiply this times the seven valve combinations, and we get seven different overtone series. Put together, this allows a three-valved brass instrument to produce all of the notes of the chromatic scale, and in fact there are a number of overlaps where a given pitch can be produced with more than one fingering. Each alternate, or false, fingering, will usually produce a note that is slightly sharper or flatter than standard pitch. For this reason, some false fingerings can be used to the player's advantage to improve the intonation of the instrument, (which is inherently flawed.) For instance: third valve will bring down a sharp low E or high A. One and two can bring up a flat E at the top of the staff or above it. Two and three can do the same for E \flat . False fingerings can also be used to facilitate tricky finger passages or to create an effect. A chart of all possible alternate fingerings and their effect on pitch can be found in *Brass Tactics*.

Chase Sanborn is a freelance trumpet player in Toronto. He teaches privately and in the Jazz Degree Program at the University of Toronto. He can be contacted at: chasesan@idirect.com. Chase is the author of BRASS TACTICS which can be found at <http://webhome.idirect.com/~chasesan>.

musical-grid for improvisers



by Bill McBirnie

beginning improvisers often attempt to create interest in their solos without a clear notion of what it is they are trying to accomplish and/or they become so preoccupied with trying to be “hip” that they conclude their commitment and dedication to making an original or personal statement justifies whatever it is they are doing.

More and more, I find that my own musical efforts are better served by concentrating on basic musical elements because, in an effort to be “innovative”, I (like anyone else) can end up sounding just plain bad when, with the proper focus and direction, I can produce a result that is very pleasing – even if the result (like anyone else’s) is not as earth-shattering as I might have hoped.

Ultimately, you cannot conceal bad musicianship from your listener. Likewise, you cannot conceal good musicianship from your listener (even on those occasions when you are not are playing at your best). In short, your musicianship is there for all to hear. You can’t hide it! The best way to begin analyzing the elements that contribute to a pleasing musical result is in a non-technical way. Learn to recognize these basic elements and observe how they function and relate to one another. These basics, by definition, are not complicated and, what’s more, they are not necessarily that difficult to execute. Moreover, it is often the basic musical elements

that make some things work. Indeed, the most obvious things can produce remarkably interesting (i.e., musical) results. The key is to identify the most basic contrasting elements and then learn to exploit these contrasting elements in a thoughtful and balanced way when you are soloing.

All music has sources of tension and release (i.e., dissonance and consonance). Developing an awareness of these sources of tension and release is the first thing that you must do. Then learn to manipulate these sources of tension and release in an expressive and meaningful way.

Musical elements can be examined on two levels; i.e., on a performance level and on a structural level.

Some of the elements of performance that will serve as sources of relaxation and tension are set out below. Note that these elements are non-technical. Read them slowly and carefully. (Do not make the mistake of dismissing them as obvious!) Listen for these elements in the work of musicians whom you admire and observe how they exploit these elements.

Note that the elements in each line are directly contrasting. Note also that the entries in each line become progressively more textural. These basic elements are present in all idioms – whether sophisticated or primitive. It doesn’t matter if the playing context is Jazz, Pop, Rock, C&W, Worldbeat ... or Free – all of these elements of relaxation and tension are functioning on some level or another.

after identifying these basic contrasting elements, you must explore the many ways in which these elements can be combined – and re-combined. Then you must utilize those combinations and re-combinations as sensitively as you can when you are improvising (being mindful of the context in which you are playing). To illustrate what I mean by all of this, just think of some of the worst solos that you have ever heard and, by reference to the above Relaxation/Tension grid, consider why they struck you as being so bad. You will likely find that the soloist was working one side of the grid only. Indeed, in the most extreme case you can think of, I hazard to guess that the soloist was resorting exclusively to the elements set out in the right side of the above grid in a vain effort to create interest.

Accordingly, I would stress the importance of relying on relaxation as the point of reference in your soloing. Only use tension as a means of creating balance and sustaining interest – not as an end in itself. With the proper focus and direction, you will be able to structure your performance such that there is a logical sequence and development that typically (though not necessarily) evolves as follows: Relaxation – Tension – Relaxation.

Bill McBirnie has performed with Herbie Mann, Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie and recorded with Memo Acevedo and the Junior Mance Quintet.

sources relaxation vs. sources tension	
Soft	Loud
Low	High
Slow	Fast
Long	Short
Rest	Motion
Unadorned	Embellished
Joined	Detached
Plain	Inflected
Simple	Complex
Gradual	Sudden
Sparse	Dense
Compress	Swell
Smooth	Rough
Silence	Noise

D

digital music

make

more

MIDI sound

human

I have assembled a series of tips for musicians working in MIDI and digital recording medium who want to put that spark back into their creative process. If you are tired of hearing your recordings coming out "flat" or missing the human edge simply because you are utilizing digital technology, here are some suggestions for studio applications that can help your creations come to life.

1 If you are trying to recreate the punch of early '70s analog synthesizer recordings, try running your favourite vintage synth module through an amplifier and miking it. You will be surprised at the difference in tone and natural compression that comes from a bass amp or keyboard amplifier. Also, remember that the analog synths of the '70s were not touch-sensitive. Try turning the velocity up to 127 and hear that wussy PCM sample roar to life!

2 Most PCM-based synth modules make extensive use of internal digital effects to mask the inadequacies and loop points of the original samples. Needless to say, the tiny on-board chorus/reverb/flange/echo chip is rarely of the highest quality, and the end result is similar to putting the signal from your \$2,000 super MIDI module through a \$100 multi-effects unit. Try turning off all of the internal effects and experimenting with your outboard effects units. You may be surprised at how nice your old Korg M1 sounds through your new digital chorus.

3 If you are using MIDI to recreate guitar parts, here are a couple of suggestions. Try a wah-wah pedal! In addition to creating those super-fine funky quacking noises, a wah-wah pedal can give you dramatic control over tone and timbre. A lack-lustre clavinet or synth guitar can jump to life with a bit of judicious pumping. Also, remember that for a realistic lead guitar sound there is nothing that beats a real grungy fuzz box like an Ibanez Tube Screamer. If you are going for the ultimate search and destroy overdrive sound, experiment with other patches as well.

4 Keyboard players have a natural handicap when it comes to the bass guitar.

Pianists approach the bass with an urge to arpeggiate and show off, while the great bassists are models of subtlety and understatement. If you want your bass parts to sound real, listen to the kick drum and follow it! A bass guitar is a fairly unexciting sound taken by itself, but the end result in a mix is thrilling. If you are shooting for a realistic effect, avoid bass patches that are so exciting that they will sound synthetic in the final analysis. The Alesis Nano-bass is a great example of a MIDI module with patches designed to hide out in the mix and sound like real bass guitars!

5 The same lesson goes for recording drum tracks. Keyboard players approach drum patterns with the enthusiasm of a five-year-old; there are all these wonderful sounds, and they are determined to use every last one of them! If your song doesn't absolutely cry out for bongos, congas, cowbells, etc., give them a miss. It is no wonder that real percussionists recoil in horror from the lumbering monstrosities that come out of MIDI laboratories. Remember, many of the great studio drummers are sought after for the spartan elegance of their playing. Next time that you start on your rhythm bed, think Mick Fleetwood rather than Bill Bruford. (Unless you have just been hired to play in the reunion tour of a '70s prog-rock band, of course!)

6 When people talk about digital recording as sounding cold and sterile, the silent killer is often the least likely suspect; COMPRESSION! Digital compression is an essential component of much popular music, adding a glossy, slick, commercial sound. On the other hand, if you don't want these elements, avoid digital compression like the plague. If you are working in a traditional medium like jazz, country or R&B, digital compression can destroy your work. You will also want to make sure that the people mastering your disk don't sneak it into the equation because they are "trying to do you a favour". In some genres of music, nothing beats an old-fashioned tube compressor even if the ultimate recording medium is digital.



by Paul Lau

7 Organ sounds. The classic Hammond/farfisa/vox sound comes in and out of vogue every few years. The one thing that all great electric organs have in common is that they sound wonderful through a Leslie "rotating horn" system, while sounding like boiled cheese without one. The solution for the manufacturers of synth modules has been to turn up the vibrato and cover the organ samples with vibrato and chorus. Organists of the world fight back: your existing patches sound great; all they need is a Leslie! If you want that classic sound, put it through a rotating horn speaker, and work the speed control to add emphasis.

8 The final tip is directed towards people starting out in digital sampling medium. The great lost command of the punk/new wave movement was "DO IT YOURSELF!". If you have a recent personal computer with a high-end consumer sound card you own a digital production studio with amazing editing capabilities. If you own a digital 8-track with a small Mackie mixer, in many aspects you have superior equipment to that used by the Beatles and Rolling Stones in the '60s. There is no longer any excuse to plagiarize the songs and sounds of the past. Why swipe a classic drum track or vocal off a record when you can create something more interesting yourself? It's time to stop reading about digital recording and get out there to make the great albums of tomorrow!

Paul Lau is a MIDI/Internet Creative Consultant based in Toronto. He can be reached by e-mail at: docaudio@inforamp.net.



by Holly McNarland

warm ups that work

don't fucking smoke. That's the best advice I can offer anyone who sings. Yes I do smoke, but I'm quitting soon. I know it's the worst thing any vocalist can do to their voice. I've quit several times, and my voice improves when I do. This isn't a column to teach you about how to quit smoking. It's on what I do to take care of my voice. When I quit smoking, my voice is ten times better and I know that.

It's so tempting to light up after a show. I come off stage and I'm just usually so excited and pumped and I'm like "give me a drag" to my band. It's the worst possible time to have a cigarette. I used to have a Jagermeister and a cigarette after a show. I know – not exactly the perfect picture of

lessons. I just didn't like it. The guy was really weird – he scared me. He was a big opera singer and he had a machine – like a karaoke machine now – that would isolate vocals in a song. I brought in 'When Doves Cry' by Prince, and he told me it was too old for me. That was all it took for me not to like the guy. That was the end of that teacher.

When I was 17, I saw Sarah McLachlan sing at the Spectrum in Vancouver with my mom and some friends. She sounded so beautiful. I was thinking 'I bet she doesn't smoke'. I asked Sarah's back-up singer if Sarah smoked, and she said neither of them did. My mom made a bet with me, if I quit smoking, she would send me back to vocal lessons. It sort of drove me

jazz. She also told me I could already sing and I just needed to do my own thing. Still one of the greatest compliments I've received. So I stopped taking lessons once again and kept singing on my own.

I have taken a few lessons since then, just little stints here and there. Before I recorded my last album, *Stuff*, I went to a vocal trainer who taught me how to warm up. I didn't know how to warm up properly. She gave me a tape to use. I still use it today, I never go without it. When I first got the tape, I thought it was really dumb. I was like 'fuck this, this is a waste of time'. I have to do it an hour and a half before my show or before I sing at all (it takes half an hour the first time). Then I do it again half an hour before my show for 15 minutes this time. I pull my jaw – just sort of drop it with my hand – to loosen it up. For another exercise I hold my tongue – using a Kleenex – and I pull it out (not hard) to stretch it. I started doing these every other night, and I noticed such a huge difference that I have to do it every time now. I'm addicted to them. It's like a crutch for me. I can't do a show without doing the tape first. Other exercises on the tape include buzzing my lips (kind of like a horse) really loosely – helps a lot. There are also scales that I run up and down to limber up my voice. All these techniques help me, but I still have to quit smoking. I'm losing my bottom range because of it. Several songs we perform have had to be moved up a fret on my guitar. Everything starts to go up if you don't take care of your voice.

So don't smoke.

Holly McNarland is a Juno award winning vocalist/songwriter.

'I'm just not the type for any kind of formal training'

health. I don't drink anymore, and my voice has improved because of that.

Other vocalists have said to get lots of rest, talk quietly during interviews, drink lots of water, don't eat any dairy on a show day etc. I don't really follow all those "rules". I do drink lots of water after a show now (better than Jagermeister).

I've tried taking lessons several times in my life, and it's never worked out. I'm just not the type for any kind of formal training. I just sang around the house my whole life. I've never taken formal training for any length of time. When I was around nine years old, my mom put me into vocal

to quit. So I was back in vocal lessons. I had another opera singer-esque teacher again. She was nice, but she wouldn't let me put my hands behind my back and things like that. I lasted for about two weeks – probably two or three lessons. Then I went to this young jazz singer lady. I really, really liked her. She seemed really bored after a while. She seemed really confused what to do. She started giving me songs to learn, which wasn't really helping me much. Then she'd give me exercises to do, and I'd come back and she'd say 'okay'. Finally she just said I was wasting my time and my money. She told me I didn't need to learn

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writing

there's no such thing as writer's block



by Stompin' Tom Connors

I wrote my first song when I was 11. Since then, a few folks have asked me if I've ever had writer's block. I think writer's block is something that happens to people who try to be 'songwriters'. People who set out to write songs to make a vocation of it force the issue. They may go for a while and take a spurt and then all of a sudden they dry up for a spell. If that is what is happening to them it is probably due to them forcing it because they need something. If anyone lets it come naturally they can sit down anytime and jot down songs here or there about almost anything. The more you do it the more natural it becomes, then it just becomes a matter of funneling a million ideas into maybe a half a dozen songs.

Keep in mind that it is pretty hard to write about something you know nothing about. You can't just read a book and become a good songwriter. A lot of songs today are written that way, instead of by going out and talking to the people and doing the jobs that they do. It's pretty hard to write a truck drivin' song if you've never driven a truck. You cannot write a song about the sea if you have never been on it. You have to get out there and do some of those things.

I have a fountain of experience from my past - hitch-hikin' and bummin' and thumbin' the road and hoboin' and all this jazz. I can write because I have a good memory and a well of experience to draw from.

Getting your ideas shouldn't be tricky, but sometimes fitting those ideas into a finished song can be. It's not always easy to give a song its final polish. It's probably more difficult for me to actually finish a song off, to put the finishing touches

on it than to actually write it. Sometimes you find that if you cannot finish it on one verse, maybe you add a verse to get the proper finish in. Sometimes you just sort of sing it to yourself, upside down and inside out and all over the place until finally you get the right twist. As you say a line over to yourself a multitude of different ways, the melody sort of finds itself.

When you're writing a song, you should relax about the whole thing and let it come. If you find that you do not have a natural thing for it, then you are pushing it and you are apt to run into writer's block and that kind of thing. There has to be a certain amount of natural talent involved. Not just anybody can decide that they are going to become a songwriter and then go ahead and do it. They may write thousands of songs and never come up with a good one.

There has never been such an animal as a 'songwriter'. People have natural talents and they just sit down and write poetry or they sit down and write song lyrics. They may never know they were a songwriter until later on when the song gets recorded and sung. All of a sudden, they become known as a great songwriter.

Writing is a natural thing. You shouldn't purposely go looking for ideas. Things float into my mind all the time. People come up with phrases, ideas, or things that have never been written before. The ideas are growing on trees; they're everywhere.

Stompin' Tom Connors is a Canadian icon who has been singing and writing songs for over 40 years. Tom is on a cross-Canada tour until the end of October.

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Of Antiques And Air Neve

by Sarah Chauncey

photos by Roy Timm

Since When?

Since 1980, when Neil Osborne and Brad Merritt became the first incarnation of 54·40.

Since 1914, when a pianomaker crafted an upright grand that never imagined itself on a rock album.

Since 1972, when Neil Young released *Harvest*, which appears to be the spiritual forefather of this album.

Early Neil Young? 54·40? Are you kidding? No. And — hang on here — other parts of *Since When* bring to mind the Beach Boys' "Sloop John B", Tommy James and the Shondelles, and even the ghost-like call-and-response canticles of Simon and Garfunkel.

Since When is almost a sonic cousin of the Skydiggers' 1995 *Road Radio*. The difference is that the Skydiggers are a folk band who went for a rock groove; 54·40 are most definitely a rock band, but with their ninth album, the one *JAM! Showbiz*' Denise Sheppard predicts will "likely be the most successful disc the band has released in years," they head into folk land.

What happened to the kick-ass punk band that put out *Smilin' Buddha Cabaret*? Or even the guitar-driven power pop of *Trusted By Millions*? Simple. They've already done that. In fact, after 18 years, there isn't much the foursome hasn't done, and in the interest of keeping themselves creatively challenged, they decided to develop *Since When* in a completely different way than any previous album. "It's either do this," explains singer Neil Osborne from his Vancouver home, "or recycle something we weren't really interested in. We thought, 'We have to do whatever feels right, and wherever it takes us is where it takes us.'" Hey, any band that can make it through the entire '80s — and the accompanying hairstyle — and are still earning well-deserved respect nearing the millennium should be entitled to make any kind of album they want. Especially when it sounds this good.

The Ingredients

If you haven't heard *Since When* yet, brace yourself. Of the 12 tracks, five feature complex string arrangements by Finn Manniche. Seven include women on harmony, most notably Sarah McLachlan's backup singer, Camille Henderson. Three songs don't even have drums, and another credits drummer Matt Johnson with "bongo and shaker." Only one song, "Pay for Living", is played by the four '40s themselves. "Runaway John", with just Osborne, Henderson and a Martin acoustic guitar, sounds like it could have been written by Woody Guthrie. And harmony singer/guitarist/keyboardist/trumpet player/virtuoso Phil Comparelli adds organ, lap steel and a really old piano to the mix.

What's most notable about *Since When*, though, is that it sounds downright exuberant, even through all the minor chords and melancholy melodies. This album reeks of fun.

54.40



40

RoadHockeyProducer

The band knew producer (GG)Garth Richardson (Rage Against the Machine, Catherine Wheel, Jesus Lizard, Ozzy Osbourne, Red Hot Chili Peppers) from Vancouver: he had mixed a couple of songs on *Trusted By Millions*, and they felt comfortable with him. "Sometimes you work with a producer and they automatically take the role of either flaky genius or babysitter. Garth is just one of the guys we played road hockey with 20 years ago." Richardson comes by his producing genes naturally; his father is legendary producer Jack Richardson.

When Osborne sat down to discuss the album with Richardson, the two came to a straightforward conclusion. "Neither of us had anything to prove," states the singer. That became a freeing concept for the band. But the selection of Richardson, who is best known for his aggressive rock work, led some people to expect the heaviest 54•40 record so far. Oops.

"As far as the content, the feel and the vibe," Osborne continues, "it's still 54•40, it's as true as any song on any record. But in terms of the delivery and the style and the attitude, that's adjusted a little bit. We sort of laid back a lot, in terms of not trying to force something into the sound waves, just more or less sculpt what was almost already there."

Then there are all those tricky music-industry words like "demographics," "singles" and "branding". "Obviously, there is some concern from agents, record companies, managers," Osborne admits. "Some people initially thought, 'Oh guys, what are you doing? You just put yourself right out of business.' And maybe that still might be the case, but it just feels right. It didn't matter." And there are plenty of radio-friendly tunes on the disc, including the lead single "Since When", the almost-title-track "Lost & Lazy" and even the is-it-Greenpeace-or-is-it-a-metaphor "Pay for Living". The '40s know how to write hits; they just decided to approach it a bit differently this time.

FocusOnMelody

For their last album, 1996's *Trusted By Millions*, Osborne explains, the band developed the material via sound checks during a European tour with Midnight Oil. Their goal then was to "put the songs forth in a power pop mentality." And power pop it was, spawning the hit singles "Crossing A Canyon" and "Lies to Me".

On *Since When*, the band deliberately shook up their approach. "We never demoed these songs," he points out, adding that most of the material became melody-structured. "This is what I'm singing, this melody, and what can we do with this?"

The band made a conscious decision to approach this album differently from anything they'd done before. "Normally, we would all bash away at the same chord," Osborne notes, adding that the quartet worked towards texturing the songs differently, whether that meant drummer Matt Johnson sitting out a song or three ("I don't think we even *had* a record [until now] that had a song without drums on it. So that was a big thing for us."), or bass player Brad Merritt going pick-less for the whole album. "We just wanted to create a lot of space in the songs and leave room for possible production ideas. Also when you leave the space, you hear what's there more: it sounds bigger."

GettingTheVibe

Setting up at a basement in Vancouver's Yaletown Studios, the band quickly decided to bring in additional gear. They exchanged the equipment at Yaletown for Bryan Adams' Mobile One, and because of producer Garth Richardson's health problems, they decided not to bother with pre-production. "We said, 'we don't need it,' and he said 'you don't need it.'" They hadn't demoed any of the songs, they didn't know how they'd turn out, and they had a producer who'd never heard the songs. This they regarded as a good thing. "Quite often, you make your demos," Osborne clarifies, "and there's kind of a coolness to them, because it's the first time you really get to hear them. Then you go to make the record, and [*in a whiny voice*] 'It doesn't sound as good as the demos!' It's fine, but it doesn't have that vibe." They worked on the fly, with Garth deciding on mics as he heard each song, and "by the end of the day we'd have it, or we'd have two or three, or we'd come back, listen to it and do it again." The net result of this process was that "It was more like a creative process in itself, rather than trying to get the best production out of songs. It became a creative process — we didn't know where they were going to end up." Osborne enthusiastically declares that this was the first time since *Set the Fire* (1984) and *The Green Album* (1986) that the recording process itself felt engaging and creative. "It was where I wanted to be, and where everyone in the band wanted to be at that moment."

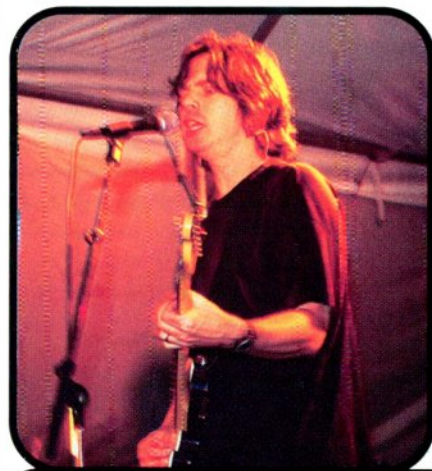
Osborne admits that the experiences the '40s have shared over the past two decades has given them a bit of perspective. "You make eight records [together], you know the sun's going to shine in the morning, and if it doesn't, it's not because you didn't make a good record."

The band's passion for production lasted through the entire process. Even during sequencing, Osborne notes, "I loved going to the studio, and usually by the second mix, I'm going 'I can't stand this any more, this record is way too long, I'm sick of it.'" And whereas that usual boredom precedes a year or two of touring behind the same songs, "This time out, we're really excited to see what happens." It's easy to see from their live shows — which are a study in how to play as a tight band — how much they love this material. And you know you've got really great songs when your techs are all dancing along and mouthing the words as they tune the next guitar or adjust the monitor mix.

InstrumentalRisks

Elvis Costello, The Afghan Whigs and Smashing Pumpkins were among the first artists to add strings to rock music, and although the idea has recently become increasingly popular, on *Since When*, it sounds as though the combination was custom-made for 54•40. Originally, the band had only planned to put strings on "Greatest Mistake". But they contacted Finn Manniche and "We thought 'well, hell, why don't we just give him some more songs to arrange,'" says Osborne. They did, and he did, and "it sort of fell into place as we went." They wound up with up to 12 violin, cello and viola players on five tracks.

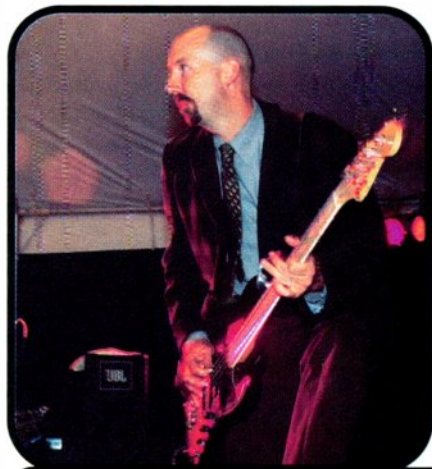
That's not to say that every idea worked. "We tried a horn section on three songs, and it just didn't fit. It just seemed like they were trying to force their way in." Osborne recalls that they kept coming up



Neil Osborne, Vocals & Guitar



Phil Comporelli, Guitar, Keyboards, Trumpet, Vocals



Brad Merritt, Bass



Matt Johnson, Percussion

with ideas and kept trying them out, but the band was careful only to keep what really seemed to suit the song.

Osborne equates the process of discovering a good song with drilling for oil. "You strike a nerve. When Garth came on, we just sort of tapped into this nerve that just responded really well, and we just kept going with it. I was really sad the day we sequenced the record, because it was over."

ManualMixing

The sentence in the liner notes is unassuming: "Mixes performed manually on the 'Air Neve' console at the Warehouse Studio." That hardly does justice to the exacting process, although it does emphasize the *performed* that, according to Osborne, is the appropriate word.

First, a brief history of the Air Neve console: In the mid '70s ("after the Beatles broke up"), Sir George Martin and Rupert Neve decided to build "these awesome boards, copper wiring and all." Neve boards, he explains, have always been the benchmark of vintage sound, while SSL boards yield a result that's "a little more polished and shiny." The Martin-Neve

A Board Called Bonnie

It seems only appropriate that such a rootsy-sounding album, with songs that were borne organically, should have vintage analog equipment behind it. The band found an old Ampex 16-track from 1972 at a fire-sale-of-sorts, so they grabbed it for a low price, but as Osborne notes, it was a "very sensitive machine. We basically had two technicians making sure the thing worked every day." The technicians, he adds, were obsessively into the console.

And, just like a vintage car, they named the board. "Darren [Grahn, engineer] said, 'This needs a name,' and Brad said, 'Bonnie,' and that was it," Osborne laughs.

An Octagenarian Piano

There's vintage, and then there's antique. While 54•40 was setting up in the studio, they decided to find Comparelli an old piano. An old piano. They went to a piano restoration company and found a 1914 upright grand. "It just had this vibe of like — where has this piano been? It might have been in a bar, might have been in a house, who knows?" They received a crash course in piano restoration from "guys who were totally into restoring pianos. That was their whole life and world, explaining how the strings need to be polished and tightened." Other than some of the original ivory needing to be repaired, the piano arrived at the studio virtually as it was constructed 83 years previously.

Notes Osborne earnestly, "It looks old."

Of Riffs And Rhodes

Several people have commented that the keyboard intro to the single, "Since When" is strikingly similar to the first line of Tommy James' "Hanky Panky". In fact, the influence couldn't be more different. "Since When" is built on Phil's riff on the Rhodes, end of story," Osborne declares. "That song was sort of a blues song that I'd brought in, and it was more like "Train in Vain" by the Clash, and I said, "Phil, play that," and he came up with that riff, and the song totally became alive." The result is a riff that is perhaps the catchiest since the Guess Who's "These Eyes".

The Gear Behind The Sound

Matt Johnson, Percussion: 4pc Yamaha Custom Drum Kit, Sabian cymbals, Ayotte Custom wood snare, DW Drum Throne & Chain drive pedal, Rimshot Sticks

Brad Merritt, Bass: Samson Wireless, Korg DT1 Tuner, Ampeg SVT Classic head, Ampeg 8x10 cabinet

Neil Osborne, Vocals & Guitar: Samson Wireless, Korg DT1 Tuner, Fender Iwin, SansAmp pedal, 2 Fender Telecaster Plus, Larrivee Acoustic

Phil Comparelli, Guitar, Keyboards, Trumpet, Vocals: 2 Peavey 5150 4x12 cabs, Peavey Ultra Head, Peavey 5150 Head, Samson Wireless, Korg DT1 tuner, Cry Baby Wah Pedal, Sovtek Big Muff Pedal, 2 Fender Eric Clapton Strat, 1970's Rhodes Electric Piano, Boss Octave Pedal (for Rhodes), Reissue Fender Bassman (for Rhodes)

54•40 use Shure in-ear monitors, Ernie Ball strings, Jim Dunlop picks, Graph Tech saddles, Levy's Leathers guitar straps, M.I.N.E. Custom flight cases.

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Neil Osborne (L) onstage with Coco Love Alcorn

duo came up with three boards that were supposed to be prototypes of what they planned to call the "Air Series." The boards were hand-constructed, "like Roll's-Royce boards." Martin opened three studios, one each in London, Monaco and France, built

around these boards. Ultimately, the line proved too expensive, and what Neve released was a scaled-down version. But the original three remained, and one wound up in the ownership of Vancouverite Bryan Adams, via A&M. Adams built his Warehouse Studio around the Air Neve.

Osborne adds that Adams designed the Warehouse Studio with the Air Neve as a tracking console. "They've got the latest, greatest computer SSL board in the mixing room." But the band went in and decided to mix on the Air Neve. Which is no small feat — the board isn't automated, so Randy Staub had to manually mix the board. Osborne recalls the moment Staub grasped the secret of the Neve — "he said at first it was a bit weird, but then he said, 'You know what you have to do? You have to listen to the whole song, from beginning to end.' You can't just zero in on little sections."

Even with the painstaking process of manually mixing each song, the band only spent 15 days riding the board. They hit a groove with the Air Neve and finished roughly one song each day.

"Mixing the song 'Stormy' was just awesome," Osborne recalls, giving an example of a typical session, "because there were five of us, sitting across the board. Garth had the charts to the strings, so he's basically conducting them again, in terms of what you hear where and how loud; we're all — I'm riding vocals, and Brad's riding whatever, and we're just doing this — it's performance. The mixing now becomes performance."

When In Doubt, Throw A Party

To pre-empt the potential "What the hell is this?" response from the music industry, the band held a series of record-release parties all the way across Canada. In addition to free food and booze — always a big draw — the parties gave people the opportunity to chat with the band about this different vein. "I want to bring down any walls that might even be alluded to," explains Osborne.

For the showcases, 54•40 brought along Toronto singer Coco Love Alcorn, whose soaring voice seems a natural complement to those of Osborne and Comparelli, even more so than Camille Henderson's on the album.

"She's amazing," Osborne says of his newest back-up. "She came on board, and she's so quick, she said, 'What if you do 'Ocean Pearl' this way?' And all of a sudden, we're doing all new songs — the showcase is like half new songs and half old songs done completely different, featuring Coco. The showcase isn't really like the record. It's just us having fun. It's almost like showcasing a different record altogether."

Judging from the response at three concerts in Toronto, audiences were a bit surprised at the new material, but the enthusiastic applause and cheers soon assuaged the harshest cynic's doubts about the marketability of *Since When*. And regardless of the response, Osborne adds,

"One thing we do know is the record's good. You can't take that away from us. Whatever happens, we know we made a good record." Critics know it, too: *The Express*' Mike Ross calls *Since When* "[54•40's] best album since *Smilin' Buddha Cabaret*."

Creating Opportunities

Aside from perhaps a classical album, what's left for the '40s to explore? "Musically, it seems like this could go on longer than our lifetime," says Osborne. "Knowing that is a good thing, knowing there's always something to explore. And that's the foundation of where we're at." He reiterates that all four musicians consider themselves "very, very lucky and privileged" to make their living playing music, and that their ability to do so over nearly two decades is something the band doesn't take for granted.

"Our goal has always been to create an opportunity to make the next record," he adds. But what that next record is, the band has yet to determine. "I have no idea what we're going to do [next]. I'm not really thinking about it." Of course. They're still having way too much fun with this material.

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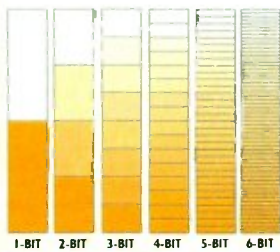
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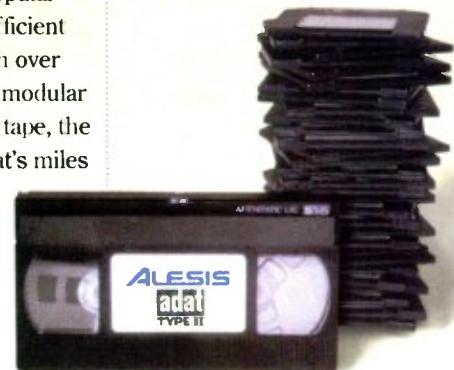
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photo by Gil Reynolds

recording the frankins

by *Cindy Waxer*



"Change is very important. You can't stick to the same format all the time. You have to constantly try to invent new ways to represent your music creatively," says Jimmy of The Rankins, referring to the quintet's latest release, *Uprooted*. These words slip easily off the tongues of anonymous musicians who have nothing to lose, no fans to disappoint and an absence of sales records to break. The Rankins, however, are a completely different story.

Natives of Mabou, a small village on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island, all 12 of the Rankin children were raised in a traditional Roman Catholic family. Nurtured by a community steeped in musical traditions, it seemed inevitable that siblings Cookie, Heather, Raylene, Jimmy and John Morris would eventually form a band of their own in 1989. Since then, the group has earned record sales close to two million units in the last six years, five Juno Awards, over a dozen East Coast Music Awards, five SOCAN Awards and two Canadian Country Music Awards.

But today's boxes full of bronze statuettes are in sharp contrast to the group's humble beginnings. Whereas these days, everybody and his grandma plays the fiddle, The Rankins' three-part harmonies, country music undertones, dance-hall grooves, raucous fiddle arrangements and Gaelic lyrics were relatively new in the 1980s.

"I remember going to radio stations with our first record [*The Rankin Family*], ... and they told us to go to Nashville and make a more country-sounding record," says Jimmy, without a hint of bitterness.

Yet it's precisely these radio stations that eventually saw fit to play The Rankins' second release, *Fare Thee Well*, which has since enjoyed quintuple-platinum sales in Canada. It's a victory that not only garnered The Rankins critical acclaim, but also opened the doors for a slew of equally talented East Coast artists.

"It became very hip to play the fiddle and guys like Ashley [MacIsaac] just blew it out of the water and Natalie [MacMaster] is out there making waves and Great Big Sea is out there now playing Celtic-inspired music," says Jimmy.

Not to mention the fact that The Rankins' success single-handedly released the East Coast's music industry from the clutches of the Dark Ages. Says Jimmy: "You end up going through a lot of accountants and lawyers and they charge you by the hour and it can be very costly. Fortunately, you learn from that. And on the East Coast, where there was really no infrastructure there beforehand, there is now. There are accountants who know about the entertainment industry, there are lawyers that can draw contracts. So people learn from that vicariously."

Ironically, it's The Rankins' reputation as East Coast pioneers that renders the recent changes in the band's personal lives and musical directions all the more significant. On a personal note, Kathleen Rankin, mother to all 12 of the Rankin siblings, died in December of last year, only to be followed by the birth of Raylene's son a few

months later. But the changes that occurred on a professional level were no less a part of the natural evolution of The Rankins and their distinctive brand of music.

Uprooted, the band's seventh and edgiest album to date, sharply digresses from the siblings' much-anticipated three-part harmonies and raucous fiddle arrangements. Instead, the album showcases a selection of spoken word performances, raw instrumental arrangements and raspy vocals. But while each member of The Rankins offers a different explanation for such experimentation, the band's smooth departure from the past is unanimously credited to the album's producer, George Massenburg.

"[Massenburg] was the first producer that came to our town and did weeks of preproduction, weeks of sitting down and taping everything and really getting into what we were and really getting to know us and where we were coming from and where we wanted to go before we started anything," says Cookie.

Massenburg, however, who has also produced albums for Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt and Little Feat, prefers to offer modest explanations of his unique approach to producing albums. Says Massenburg: "I start with trying to understand what the artist is 'hearing' — the songs, which musicians are to be involved and the setting — studio or

O2Rs will full digital interfaces from the first day of tracking. Among other things, we could remember what all of the mixes were for the roughs that we accumulated. I used a Sonic Solutions workstation for more complicated edits, for some recording and for compilation," he recalls.

Needless to say, The Rankins were more than a little impressed. Says John Morris who is primarily responsible for the band's reeling piano and fiddle arrangements: "At Omni and Petewood, [Massenburg] used all of his own stuff. He's got his own board and travels with his own gear. He's very much a master of what he does. He gets the best possible sound he can out of any acoustic instrument or electric for that matter."

But while Jimmy and John Morris marveled at Massenburg's suitcase full of gear, Cookie, Heather and Raylene were equally impressed with his appreciation for each of the sisters' unique vocal stylings.

"[Massenburg] had this great sensitivity to the individual qualities of each voice and he had this ability to sort of direct you in a direction you never thought you could go with your voice before," says Heather.

However, Massenburg is not the type to covet technical secrets. As if pulling back the curtain to reveal the true identity of the Wizard Of Oz, he

Rankins, Massenburg and a host of studio musicians is a 14-track album with an edge unprecedented by the Cape Breton band. Granted, there is still the group's standard fare including the traditional Gaelic songs, 'O Tha Mo Dhuil Ruit (Oh How I Love Thee)' and 'An Innis Aigh (The Happy Isle)'. After all, the Rankin family's Scottish and Irish roots extend seven generations into the soil of Cape Breton Island. But somewhere along the way, it's obvious that The Rankins have decidedly veered off into uncharted territory.

'Movin' On', written by Jimmy, adopts a rather uncharacteristic 'couldn't-care-less' approach to pre-empted romance. And the caustic lyrics to 'Long Way To Go', also written by Jimmy, showcase a grittier and surprisingly more natural side to Heather's typically sweet vocal stylings.

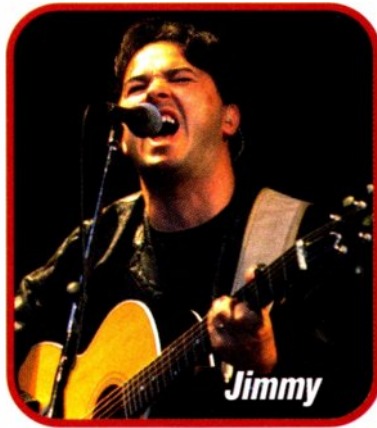
"That's one of the album's songs that was written almost entirely on the road and in hotel rooms and backstage and it's kind of a cynical and sarcastic look at our industry," says Jimmy.

Another surprise on the album is the inclusion of Bruce Cockburn's 'One Day I Walk', especially in light of the band's repertoire of primarily original works.

"It was a song we remember hearing as kids in the '70s and our oldest sister bought the 45 and we used to listen to it and I hadn't heard it for years. So when



Heather



Jimmy



Cookie



John Morris

venue. If it's my first time with an artist, I'll listen to their older records. If we can talk about influences and they're new to me, I'll listen to other well thought of efforts in that genre. When Linda [Ronstadt] did *Mariachi*, I immersed myself in the records of the '50s and '60s," he explains.

However, more than simply acquainting himself with The Rankins' musical influences and new directions, Massenburg allotted enormous time and effort to the creation of *Uprooted*. The album was tracked at Nashville's Omnisound Studios from October to mid-November of 1997. Following this, vocals and instrumental overdubs were conducted at Petewood/Georkel Recording in Williamson County, a studio that Massenburg himself helped to build along with Peter Wasner, known for his work with country artist Vince Gill. Orchestral string arrangements were recorded at Nashville's Ocean Way studios. And in March, Massenburg recorded the last few vocals and group overdubs at Solar Audio in Halifax, only to return later to Petewood/Georkel to mix the record throughout a ten-day period.

As if this weren't already a sign of dedication, Massenburg used much of his own recording equipment throughout the production process to ensure the album's top-notch quality: "Everything was done through the same recording chain which I carry along with me. Good mics, and GML analog processing and conversion. I used from one to three Yamaha

explains: "I think what Heather's talking about is having a really good vocal chain — Neumann U-67 with Stephen Paul 0.7u diaphragm, Mastering Lab tube mic pre, GML EQ, Dynamics Control and A/D conversion — to listen to in her headphones."

Technical wizardry aside, Massenburg also hand-picked a group of studio musicians that he felt best suited The Rankins' new directions: "The good thing about George is that he had a good idea of musicians he thought would be sensitive to what we were doing — like Dean Parks for instance and Viktor Krauss who plays stand-up and electric bass and Gerry Douglas for lap steel guitar and Sam Bush, of course," says Jimmy.

As for The Rankins themselves, Massenburg claims that the band reinstated his faith in working with a team of musicians where diplomacy, endless negotiations and power plays are too often the norm.

"Bands are usually somewhat more difficult than a solo artist," confesses Massenburg. "I had said after Bill Payne and I produced *Toto 7* that I'd never work with a band again, but The Rankins are different. They are a family, and they love each other — they've already sorted out the group dynamic. Many differences were resolved by having everyone listen to alternatives and choose as a group. The rather long list of tunes was narrowed on at least three occasions by a group vote."

The result of endless collaborations between The

I heard it again, I said, 'This song is still beautiful.' So I was really gung-ho to cover it," says Cookie.

The sombre 'Cold Winds', penned by Heather, is a surprisingly personal composition for The Rankins with its moody cello arrangements and melancholic references to 'final farewells,' 'broken wings' and 'bitter winter skies.' But whereas Heather's poignant lyrics undoubtedly reflect the death and dying that were surrounding her at the time, the song conjures drastically different memories for Raylene who was pregnant while the song was being recorded.

"It was funny. We were recording the vocals for 'Cold Winds' and Heather has more of a high-pitched voice. As a result, the baby made somersaults the whole time and he still moves when I play it," she says.

However, *Uprooted* contains much more obvious examples of The Rankins' thirst for experimentation. Take for example, 'The Parlour Medley', a song written by John Morris. The unique piece incorporates port-a-beul, or Gaelic mouth-music, which uses the human voice to impersonate the sounds of pipes and fiddlers.

"['The Parlour Medley'] started with three different riffs and we built on that with vocals. We took a couple of different Gaelic harmonies the girls had known and changed the timing of them to accommodate the metre of the instrumentals," explains John Morris.

And then there's the most unusual track

photos by Clint Adam Smyth



Raylene (L) and Heather

'Weddings, Wakes and Funerals', written by Jimmy. The song begins with the church choir harmonies of Cookie, Raylene and Heather and leads into the wails of obviously perturbed crows, welcomes the rhythmic drums of Scott Ferguson, makes room for the spoken word performance of Jimmy, introduces the sample of a priest reciting 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' and eventually erupts in an ambush of sound.

"I ended up getting some sounds from the CBC like the crows. We ended up actually using a priest for the sample 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' He's a guy in Mabou who graciously agreed to read off wedding vows and last rites ... so we used that and made it into a kind of cool chant," says Jimmy, noting that Cookie was elected to record the priest in a local church using a DAT machine.

As for Massenburg's delicate approach to the recording of 'Weddings, Wakes and Funerals', he explains: "[The song] more or less evolved in the studio. Several key elements — among which were the Cors loop and [Jim Corr's] rhythm guitar — were even added later by Gordie Sampson in Sydney on a DA-88."

Needless to say, it's not the type of composition one would expect from The Rankins. This is not, however, to suggest that the band's new directions seem the least bit contrived or part of a million-dollar marketing ploy. After all, these East Coast natives have garnered plenty of success by sticking to a tried-and-true formula. So why the sudden changes?

"It was very liberating in a way because once you sort of break out of a mould, you say, 'Oh, well we can try anything.' But it's also very healthy to know that you can go beyond the limits that you set for yourself," says Cookie.

Or rather the limits that the public has set for the band. After all, The Rankins are all siblings, a predicament that is not entirely 'cool' in this age of rebellion, angst, misanthropy and individuality at any given cost.

"Image is very important. There's no way you can avoid it in this business ... and to a certain extent there is a stigma attached to being a family. Sometimes there's suspicion that it's too clean or too pure. The fact that we are a family sometimes scares people off. I mean how many times have you heard that Partridge Family, Brady Bunch comparison? It really ticks you off. We have individual personalities," remarks Heather.

In fact, the circumstances under which the Rankin siblings were raised couldn't be further from the fictitious lives of television sitcom characters. Despite strong familial ties and a close-knit artistic community, this family of 14 inevitably experienced its fair share of hard times.

"There is a very dark side to where we come from and what we are and I think that we're finally coming to terms with that or becoming more confident in expressing it. There's a sarcasm, there's a dark humour, there's a hard side to us that has not been shown to audiences that I think is necessary," says Cookie.

How audiences will react to The Rankins' fresh musical directions remains to be seen. For one thing, Cookie, Raylene and Heather are determined to make

the public see past their white bread family image, petite-frames and high-pitched voices for the sake of their hard-earned musical integrity.

"For so long we've been seen as a sweet family sister and brother wholesome band and really we curse and swear like everybody else and we fight and we argue and we get pissed off, the whole bit. So I think [*Uprooted*] portrays us as we really are," declares Cookie.

But even more importantly, the album is arguably one of the more truthful representations of the band's musical talent. There are still the much-anticipated traditional Gaelic tunes, raucous fiddle arrangements, luscious harmonies and the lyrical imagery of Cape Breton Island. It's just that this time, it's not to the exclusion of experimental tunes such as 'The Parlour Medley' and 'Weddings, Wakes and Funerals'.

Says Raylene: "[*Uprooted*] reminds me of a con-

tinuum because it has the more traditional songs on the one end and then it really branches off into different genres on the other end."

Yet despite these new directions, there is no mistaking The Rankins' distinctive style. It is, after all, what has earned the band multi-platinum record sales, a collection of bronze statuettes, a league of loyal fans and ultimately, the courage to risk it all for the sake of creative reinvention.

But Heather sums it up best when she says, "When we went in to make our first record, we just sang songs and played the way we normally would. But after you make a few records, you realize what's possible and that the options are endless."



Cindy Waxer is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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most music schools and books about the music business seem to concentrate on making music and technical aspects of doing deals.

Those subjects are very valuable indeed, but it's equally important to arm oneself with the knowledge of the street — some practical advice that may be passed over in books and classrooms or passed down incorrectly through “generations” of musicians.

While I could probably write chapters on these subjects, I'll do what I can to give you a leg up in the next few pages. Think of this as the Cliff Notes version. If you don't know what Cliff Notes are, then you're probably too smart to be reading this article!

How Good Do Your Demos Really Have To Be?

“Good” is a subjective term. It can mean a couple of things when used in the context of making demo tapes. “Good” can mean the song (with a slant toward “hit” potential), or it can mean the engineering or production values on the tape. If the ultimate use of your demo is to land a record deal, shut your eyes and imagine this scenario:

The vice-president of A&R of a major record label is sitting in his comfy leather chair in his corner office listening to tapes (which by the way is how they typically spend less than ten per cent of their time at work). The first thing he pops into his CD player sounds great. The lead vocal cuts right through the mix. The guitars are warm, but edgy. The bass is round, fat and punchy. The kick drum gives you a heart attack with each beat. The snare pierces like a hollow point bullet. The mix is perfect. The musicianship is superb. The song is very good and the packaging is top-shelf. Four colour artwork on the cover. Great liner notes. Very professional.

The next product is a cassette with a hand written label. A little sloppy on the presentation. The drums sound distant and a little muffled. The guitars are raunchy. The bass is okay. The musicianship is sub par, but it has some feel and emotion to it. The song however, is unlike anything this man has ever heard. It's truly unique, and very infectious. The lead vocal is captivating and the singer is sweating emotion from every pore.

Which of these demos will the A&R person sign? The latter. Why? Because it's a hit song. The first demo had everything going right for it but the song. Record companies are in business to make money. They bet a portion of the farm on every release. You can bet dollars to donuts that they would much rather bet on a hit song than a demo with great engineering, great production and a fancy cover. You can also bet that they would rather put their money on an artist who has “star quality” than one who obviously spent a small fortune on their demo.

What's the lesson here? Buy yourself a home studio system that you can afford, and learn to use it well. You'll spend a few (maybe several) thousand dollars in the process, but you would have to spend that on one round of demos anyway.

Remember, it's not important to become a gear junkie. Gear won't get you signed to a record deal. Great songwriting will. A unique artistic vision will. Star quality will. A zillion dollars worth of gear will not.

For your purpose, the use of your home studio requires that you get as familiar with it as you are with your car. Feel comfortable with it. Have a good command of it, but don't plan on driving it in the Indy 500. You only need the gear to make a good clean demo of your music.

Assuming you master your studio, there are some other things you'll need to know. First and foremost, songwriter demos don't need much production. A solid rhythm track with a great lead vocal is often all you'll need. A full production can often hurt a song pitch more than it can help. Leave some room for the listener's imagination to do its thing. If a song demo is fully produced, it leaves the listener with only one way to hear it — your way.

continued on page 49



Michael Laskow

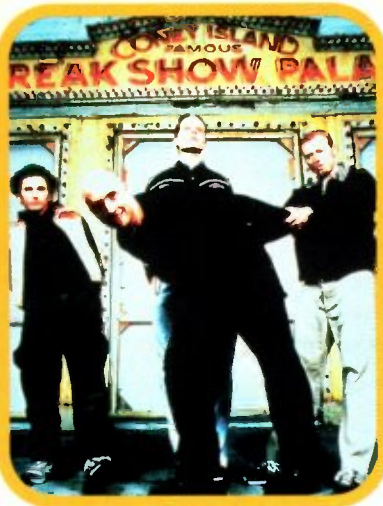
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how to get
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by Michael Laskow

Signing Tips by Sarah Chauncey



Civ - Charlie Garriga

Guitarist Charlie Garriga calls punk band Civ's signing 'The Great Rock & Roll Swindle, Part II'. "The bottom line, especially in New York, is it's who you know," he admits. "And as harsh a reality as it is for young bands, it's the truth. You can get out there and play and play and play, but for Civ, we never even performed live, and we had people bidding to sign the band."

Three old friends and punk veterans had gotten together to lure their friend Civ, formerly of Gorilla Biscuits, back into the music biz. "He'd opened a tattoo shop, he hadn't done anything musical at all. And he wasn't going to, but we got him back in the mix. We started rehearsing stuff, and we wrote some songs — we decided we're going to do a 7" on this independent label, Revelation."

"Especially in New York City," he continues, "Once you get a buzz going, everyone's talking shit. No one knows what they're talking about, but it's cool to talk about something new."

Ultimately, the band signed with Atlantic, because "they knew where we were coming from, they knew the history."

But a big concern of every band has come true for Civ. "Atlantic has changed. [Our A&R] guy got fired. Right now, our relationship with them is totally up in the air." He notes, "Record labels aren't always fair, and they're not always supportive. Right now, for us, Atlantic is not doing shit."



Emm Gryner

"I've always wanted my music to be international," says singer/songwriter Emm Gryner. Fate played a hand, and Gryner wound up with a US-based deal for worldwide distribution ... with one exception [see below].

Producer Warren Bruleigh (Violent Femmes), a Nova Scotia native living in New York, read a review of her indie CD, *The Original Leap Year* in a Canadian publication. He bought the CD and liked it so much, he copied it for his friend Alison Hamamura, an A&R rep at Mercury. "It came about pretty quickly. Alison came to see me play in Toronto, and after that, it was just a few months of wrapping up paperwork." Although Gryner spoke with other labels "after the fact," Mercury was her first choice. "I just felt like they were the size of company I wanted to go with, but more importantly, I felt like the support was there." Gryner was able to work a unique clause into her contract with Mercury: Public, her major-label debut, will not be sold or distributed in China, as a form of protest against the oppression of Tibet. "Since I felt like there was such genuine support from Mercury, I felt like I could ask for almost whatever I wanted." Although she doesn't consider herself political, Gryner says it was her way of making a statement on an issue she feels strongly about. "I'm not big enough to play the Tibetan Freedom Concert," she admits.



Rusty - Ken McNeil

Many bands decide to release their CDs on their own labels, but for Rusty and their manager, Jeff Rogers, the label — Handsome Boy — has expanded well beyond the one band. In 1992, the previous incarnation of Rusty, One Free Fall, "wanted to make a record," recalls singer Ken McNeil. "We had some money from publishing, so we recorded it on our own. And then we just had to put it out, so we said, we'll just put it out on our own, and you [Jeff] can get BMG to distribute it." Rogers then released a mail-order CD by John Oswald, which was the label's second project. "Then when Rusty did their demo, which became our first record, that's when it really became a label," McNeil adds. "It all started as a necessity to put our records out."

As for advice about signing, McNeil cautions bands to be wary. "If it doesn't work out, and they don't sell a lot of records, especially if they spend a lot of money, you're probably not going to get to make another one." He agrees that not all bands need to sign with a major. "Because there's so many other ways to get your name out there, that you've got to realize, once you're signed to a label, it's all about profit," McNeil adds. "If you don't make the profit, maybe they'll make two records, but maybe they'll only make one. Maybe they'll even make one, put out one single, then bail on you. Then you're fucked." He points out that expectations are much higher for bands on major labels. "A signed band can't sell consistently, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 records and expect to stay signed."



Moist - Kevin Young

In the case of Moist, the hype that preceded them turned out to be detrimental. Explains Kevin Young, "[When] we went out on our first tour, we had a fair amount of interest from a variety of labels. We came to Toronto amidst all these expectations that we were a blisteringly tight band, and we weren't nearly as good as those people had been told we were, and some of the interest fell off."

So Moist took an increasingly popular approach: they signed with EMI Publishing, who gave them support, but they continued to do their indie thing. "There's such a thriving indie scene that bands are able to make their own records, make their own videos, put their own tours together," Young explains. Labels often prefer this, because they can see how much a band is willing to put into their future. "And I think that affords the band a chance to get to know each other, to get to know the road a little bit. It draws the band together, and I think that was very important for it to be us together, first."

When interest piqued in the band, they made a conscious decision to sign domestically. "We had wanted to sign with a Canadian label, because it's very important, in the country that you're doing rather well, to have the support and to have the label on your side. You're theirs. You're not someone else's from another country."

When "Push" came to shove (pun intended), the band signed with EMI Canada, because they "were willing to give us a certain amount of autonomy, because we were used to doing things on our own, and we wanted to retain that role."

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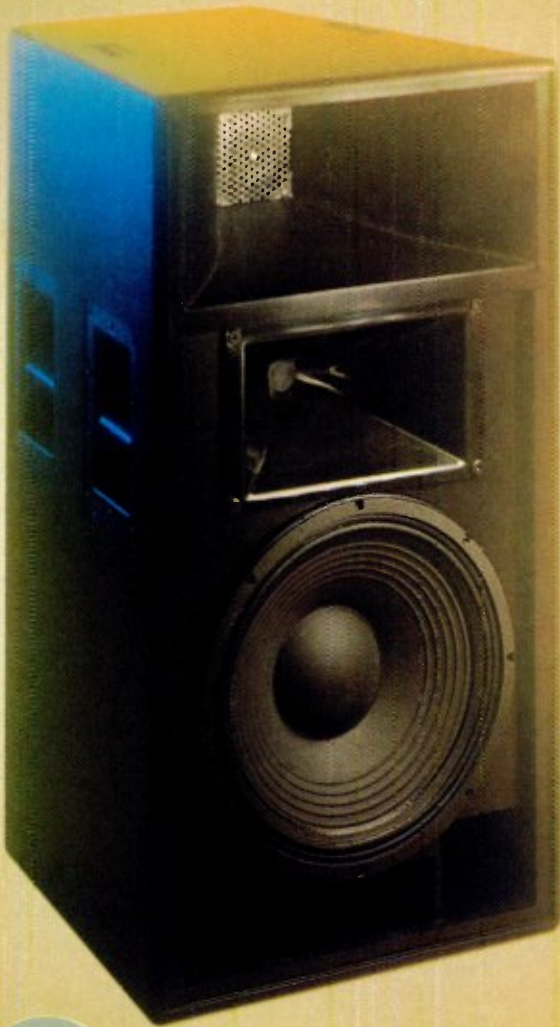
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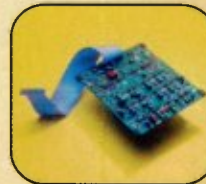
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The second rule of demo production for songwriters is to match the gender and basic style of the lead vocalist with the gender and style of the artist you want to pitch to. For song pitches, the lead vocal is crucial. No flat notes. No lackluster performances. Sell the song. Sing with your entire being, but don't go overboard and over sell. And please, don't be shy about mixing the lead vocal nice and hot in the mix. The lyrics are very important. The guitar part is not.

Artist or band demos should be a little more produced, but again, don't feel compelled to include the kitchen sink unless the kitchen sink is absolutely necessary to make the song's point. Record companies generally aren't looking for great guitar players or great drummers. They are looking for artists with a unique sound that makes you want to instantly rewind the tape for another listen.

What else should go in to a demo package? If it's a song pitch, all you need to include is a lyric sheet. Make sure the lyric sheet and the tape display the copyright symbol, the name the song is copyrighted under, and the year the copyright was registered.

For an artist or demo, it's always a good idea to include a photo and a bio. The reason the record company will want to see a photo is so they can see if you have that elusive "star quality". An 8 x 10 glossy has always been the standard for photo presentation, but it's much cheaper to scan your photo and print it on your bio page. Don't skimp on photography though. When sending out to media outlets, a lot of magazines won't accept anything but a glossy photo for quality reasons. (Ed. - including CM)

What does a record company want to see in a bio? Anything that will show them that you are successful in your own back yard. News clippings from successful shows. Proof of radio airplay. Better yet — proof that you've sold a few thousand tapes or CDs in your hometown or surrounding area is the best ammo you can have to snag a record deal. Mentioning that you were Mrs. McGillicutty's star pupil in your fourth grade music class won't help you snag anything but a few laughs. Leave it out.

How many songs should be on your tape? Just one if you're pitching your material to another artist. If you have more than one song to pitch, put them on separate tapes. Nobody likes to search a tape for the song they want to hear. If they don't like song number one, they'll hate you every time they have to search the tape for song number two.

If you are pitching yourself as an artist or band, three songs are plenty. Many people are compelled to slip in a fourth or fifth song. Not a good idea. It makes you look like you don't know the rules the industry likes to see you play by. Ultimately, it makes you look unprofessional. Stick to three songs, and always put your best song first. The theory is, if they don't hear a hit when they listen to the first song, they won't be motivated to listen to the second and third songs. Good theory.

Some people believe that you should present your listener with your strongest song last. Last song, best impression. Yeah, right! What makes you think they'll make it to the last song? Best song first. No argument.

Remember, the single most important aspect of any demo package is the song or songs. All the bells and whistles won't do you any good if the

music isn't great.

But, what good is a great demo and a great package if the companies you want to submit to don't accept unsolicited material?

Make Them Beg To Sign You

I think it's a pretty safe assumption that nearly every person reading this (let alone every songwriter, band and artist on the planet) would love to know how to make themselves instantly signable. Better yet, how about a way to make record companies hunt you down? That's right, I know the secret that will make them seek you out — stalk you, and then offer you a deal.

Sounds ideal doesn't it? And, it's absolutely achievable. The problem is, not that many people can pull it off.

Some artists have, and you know them well. Hootie and the Blowfish for one. Dave Matthews for another. So what do they know that you don't? What's the secret formula? It's hard work! What? Did you think this was going to be easy?!

Record companies used to "develop" new artists. Development meant that they would sign an artist or band, pair them up with the right producer, make a record, release the record, promote the record to radio stations (beg them to play it, or give them payola), and hype it to the record stores. If the record stiffered, that was okay. At least some people heard about the record. The hope (and to some extent the reality) was that the few people who did

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buy the record would tell their friends about it and the next record would sell more copies.

If the second record sold more units than the first, but still wasn't a hit that was okay too. Record companies realized that it was a process to break new artists, and that it often took three records and lots of touring to make a new act a household word.

A good example that dates back to the heyday of artist development is James Taylor. Most people became aware of him when they heard his "first" album, *Sweet Baby James*. Guess what? It wasn't his first. If memory serves correct (and my memory ain't what it used to be), it was his third album. It took three attempts before radio and the American public caught on.

Today, most labels talk a good game when it comes to development, but few actually do it. What that means is that you have to do it yourself. That's the

hard part. But it can be done. Look at Ani DiFranco. Record companies are begging her to sign with them.

Here's the formula (ssshhhh ... don't tell anybody). Make your own record. If you have a good home studio, it'll be a cheap thrill. If you don't, not so cheap. Next step, press up a couple thousand CDs. Still not a big ticket item. Maybe a few thousand bucks.

Now for the hard part — sell those CDs. Do you have a marketing plan? Better get one. Why would anybody buy a CD from an unknown band whose CD they can't find in a record store? And, they've never heard it on the radio.

Oh, I see. You got it played one time on a local radio station during their local talent hour. Yeah, but wasn't that on Sunday night when nobody was listening? Better than not getting played but hardly enough airplay to attract any attention.

You could beg a couple of local record stores to take some units on consignment. Good idea. Now, how's anybody going to know that your record is buried in the generic bin under the letter "J"? How will they know it's even been released? Good questions both. Without a lot of press, some advertising and lots of airplay, your CD is invisible.

Sounds like you're going to need to go on the road and build a following. That's how it is done. Hootie and Dave Matthews spent about three hundred days a year on the road to build their fan bases. Most baby bands signed to major labels spend about two grand a week to stay on the road, and I'm not talking Lear Jets and luxury hotels. Plan on spending some nights sleeping in the van, and if you're lucky, maybe some Motel 6, four people to a room nights. Remember, most gigs will only pay about a hundred bucks a night.

But look at the bright side. You'll be able to sell your CDs at the gig. Figure about ten units a night if you're lucky. But after a while, word will begin to spread. You'll begin to build a following. More money per gig. More units sold at each gig.

Oh yeah, I forgot one little detail. While you're out playing road warrior, who's going to pay your rent at home? You could always move your stuff into your parents' house. Then again, maybe your wife or girlfriend (or husband or boyfriend) won't mind picking up the tab while you're gone. Hopefully that's the only thing they're picking up while you're gone.

Assuming everything goes as planned, after a year or so, you should be selling enough CDs at gigs and making enough of a name for yourself that you can start moving some units in record stores in the towns you play in. Cool. You've got yourself a distributor, they're stocking the stores. Radio stations begin to hear about you. Now, they'll play your record. Bam! It's a hit. Units begin to fly out of the stores.

But wait, the distributors are out of stock. They need another 10,000 units and they need them quick. Oops! I forgot to mention that the distributor hasn't paid you for the units sold yet, because they haven't been paid by the record stores yet.

Now you're beginning to realize why businesses have cash flow problems. They have to wait 30, 60, maybe even 90 days before they get paid. How will you order 10,000 more units, get them manufactured in time, and pay for them fast enough to get them in the stores while the radio stations are still hot on your record?

I'm not sure, but let's say that you solve that problem. All is good. Let's say for argument's sake that you sell 10,000 copies of your CD. Let's also assume that you were smart enough to put a UPC barcode on your CD so every time one is sold, it shows up on Soundscan's (they track actual record store sales numbers) computer. Now you're cooking with gas!

Now you can sit back and relax, because I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts that some beady-eyed person with really thick glasses is sitting in a dimly lit office at a major record company looking at Soundscan reports. And when he sees that you've sold 10,000 units, he's going to start calling records stores and clubs along your tour route. He's going to find out that you've developed a following. In fact you've done what record companies rarely do these days. You've done artist development. You've shouldered all the risk. You've done their work for them.

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Now, you're on their radar screens and they're going to want to sign you! See? I told you it was easy.

Pretty exciting isn't it? Hey! Is that the phone I hear ringing? Gee, I'll bet it's an executive from a major record label. What should you say? Or...

What shouldn't you say to an A&R person?

Are you dying of curiosity? Want to know what the single most unintelligent thing you could possibly say to an A&R person is? Are you on the edge of your seat? Well then, here it is: "I write (or have songs) in many different styles." Seems innocuous enough, but it's very lethal.

Here's why. The music business is, as I said earlier, a business. Record companies are in business to make a profit. Records sell more units when they are played on the radio. Airplay is critical to the success of most records.

Radio stations are segregated by genre. There are Rock stations, Pop stations, R&B stations, Jazz stations, Alternative stations — all kinds of stations, and almost all are genre specific. They have a clearly defined format that draws a fairly well-defined audience, that buys a certain type or range of products, which brings in advertising dollars from companies that cater to the needs of those specific demographics. See, I told you it was all about business!

If you tell an A&R person that you write Rock, Pop and R&B, they'll run the other way. How could they effectively pitch you to a radio station. You're a rock artist, kind of. You're an R&B artist, kind of. Oh yeah, you're a pop artist ... kind of. You get the idea.

Besides, you should know what genre you're in! I can't tell you how many times people have asked me or someone on my staff to tell them what genre their music is in. Do you think Garth Brooks knows what genre he's in? How about Aerosmith? Mariah Carey?

Okay, I admit that some artists aren't easily defined. There are gray areas like Adult Album Alternative, alternative and pop. These formats have become blurred because AAA has emerged as a testing ground for new artists and the better ones ultimately cross over to Pop radio.

But nonetheless, it's incumbent upon you to know what genre you are working in, and it's critical that you can articulate it a succinct sentence or two to an A&R person if you get the magical call. Here's how I would respond: "We're a classic R&B band with horns and a female singer. Kind of like Earth, Wind and Fire with a female lead."

Here's the wrong way to converse with an A&R person. "Hey man, how ya doin'? Glad you called. I was wondering how long it would take someone in the industry to figure out how amazing we are. Check it out dude, we've got over 90 songs demoed. We've got a bunch of R&B songs, some rock — we really like doing the rock stuff, but our drummer got arrested for drug possession last year so we quit doing the rock stuff until he gets out of jail. We tried another drummer, but then he got in to a car accident and couldn't play for a while. We thought about using a drum machine ... have you ever heard the Bonzai 626? It's amazing. We didn't like the sound of the cymbals, but the kick drum

was awesome. Anyway, we don't really gig out much, but we will when Johnny gets out of jail. Till then, we've decided to try our hand at jazz."

Don't laugh. This is not an over dramatization. This is one of the reasons A&R people don't often take calls from the public at large, and may be the primary reason they don't listen to unsolicited tapes. Art Linkletter may have been right about kids saying the darndest things, but he would drop his dentures if he were to spend a few minutes on the phone with some of the people I've spoken to. If you get a call from Clive Davis, tell him everything he needs to know in a couple of short sentences that are direct and to the point. He'll like you better for it.

So, there you have it. Now you know that your demos probably don't have to be nearly as elaborate as you thought they did. You have a concrete plan

that will induce industry big wigs to track you down and beg you to sign with them, and I've demystified the music industry phone conversation. Are you ready to go out and hunt bear? That's up to you. Are you writing hit songs?



Michael Laskow is the founder and president of TAXI, the leader in independent A&R (www.taxi.com). He spends his days helping unsigned bands, artists and songwriters get through industry doors. He spends his nights writing the occasional article.

Sarah Chauncey is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



The musicians of Sloan are members of Local 571, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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Live Sound How To Sound Great

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sidebars by Sarah Chauncey

how do you decide what musicians really need to know? How do you write a piece that could be useful to musicians in all music categories? How do you offer something of interest to both the one-man act playing coffee houses and musicians that already have become very successful?

Hopefully all *CM* readers will find something of benefit in the following sections. Best of all though, we can speak for live sound technicians everywhere when we take issue with certain electric guitar players that insist on having a stage volume that is way too loud. An overly loud stage volume makes you too loud in the room (mix), causes needless leakage through all the microphones on stage which puts guitar through every drum and vocal mic channel on the mixing console as well as back into the stage monitors further compounding the problem.

The sound technician often has no choice but to turn off the guitar channel on the mixing console and even with this drastic measure, the guitar can still be too loud in the room. In this scenario, your guitar is probably drowning out your band mates for the first few rows of the audience and making it impossible

for the sound person to adjust any aspect of your sound. This is due to the fact that your guitar is coming through every microphone channel on the mixing console, *except your own!* We have all heard the argument — “It’s how I get my sound!” There is little point in “having a sound” if the band’s overall presentation suffers and people stop coming out to your shows!

Not all guitar players are guilty of this. Most jazz, blues, R&B and country guitarists have a good sense of stage sound and as a result sound exceptional live. However, if you play in the heavier music categories and take not less than one *four twelve cabinet* to play even the smallest venue, we will offer up some potentially livable solutions a little further on.

Renting Vs. Leasing Vs. Buying

In an effort to explain how sound reinforcement equipment can grow with your music career, we must first break down the typical PA system into key components. Remember that the quality of your PA system and sound technician can make or break your musical presentation, so do not skimp on either.

Microphones and direct boxes are attainable for musicians looking to purchase some of the less expensive items that will be necessary to perform live. You can talk to a professional sound technician at almost any sound company to some get some real-world advice on what make and model will suit your needs before you talk to a salesperson.

These days, vocalists are often buying VHF wireless microphone systems (\$1,200 for good quality). If you are considering this purchase, bear in mind that a dual diversity antenna system on the receiver will maximize the signal reception.

Additionally, always replace the battery(s) before every show. UHF wireless microphone systems are typically more expensive (\$2,400 and up) than VHF. However, the UHF receivers operate at much higher frequencies that can virtually eliminate the possibility of the receiver picking up interference.

On to the mixing console. For some musicians consoles are cost prohibitive — the exception being small four- to eight-channel low priced mixers (\$400 and up).

Additionally, the new digital boards (\$2,500 and up) are packed with compressors, gates, reverbs and delay which can help you make good quality demo in your home studio and double as a live sound mixing console in small- to mid-sized clubs. The entire professional sound industry was built on the need for reliable equipment, so the next time someone offers you a seemingly “amazing deal” on a used console, talk to a non-partial sound technician and ask the question — Should I buy this? In the typical club rig you should find outboard dynamics processing (compressors, gates etc.), outboard effects (reverb, delay, chorus etc.), equalization for both the main PA and each monitor mix as well as an electronic crossover (frequency dividing device).

Most “tour approved” units in the effects rack carry a cost in excess of \$1,000 per unit and as such are best left in the renting as required column. Good quality stage monitors are one of the few large ticket items that we encourage musicians to invest in. They will be used in the rehearsal suite, on stage as monitors and, in a pinch, could



Rusty - Ken McNeil

Nearly every musician we spoke with said the most essential element in getting good live sound was “A sound person.” For Rusty, a band that plays everything from tiny clubs to enormous festivals, a solid sound engineer was a priority from early on. “We’ve always spent a lot of money on our sound man,” explains singer Ken McNeil, “because we have a good one. We try and do everything we can to fit him in our budget, so he can come with us. Maybe we’ll be flying somewhere where we can’t [afford to take] any crew; we’ll take him, whereas a lot of bands wouldn’t do that — they’d take their stage guy or their tour manager. What are we here for? We’re here to play live.”

As for how to find a good live sound engineer, McNeil advises bands to listen to their friends. “You play to your friends a million times, you use a different guy, and your friends will go, “Man, that sounded good tonight.”

The goal, McNeil points out, is consistency. And aside from having the same person mix you every night, he suggests, “Don’t use other people’s gear. Don’t let people use your gear. You go to shows, and everyone’s borrowing everyone’s gear. They don’t understand why they don’t sound good, it’s like, well it’s not your gear.” The rooms will change, the PA will change, but “the most you can keep consistent every night, the better. That’s what we try to do. Use your own gear, and use your own sound man, and keep it the same every night.”

be elevated and pointed towards the audience in a small vocal sound reinforcement application (\$500 each and up). The main speaker system should be rented if the venue does not already have it in place. The exception to this rule might be the jazz or R&B combo that does not plan to grow beyond the hundred-seat venue. The main PA “stack” should be capable of covering the entire width of the venue while still projecting sound to the back of the room. Each professional speaker manufacturer will usually publish specifications on horizontal and vertical dispersion characteristics as well as: maximum sound pressure level (SPL rated in decibels or dB). Using a simple formula (the inverse square law) will tell you the approximate maximum SPL at various distances in the venues that you are playing. (Subtract 6 dB every time you double the distance.)

The only significant part of a PA system left to discuss is amplification. In point of fact, there are several other factors that have to be considered when designing a professional sound rig but this article is not intended to read like a technical manual so we won’t go there. Professional power amplifiers have a completely different design philosophy from home or DJ power amps. Reliability,

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Moist - Kevin Young

"It's got to be someone you trust, not just someone you get along with, but someone you trust with being able to make you sound the way you want to sound every night, regardless of the situation." That's how Moist keyboardist Kevin Young sums up the ideal live sound engineer. Moist did what most bands do: they hired the guy who made them sound the best and made them comfortable. They've been working with engineer Mark Finkelstein for years and have "no plans to make any changes."

Other qualities Young cites are "A good ear, someone who can do their job efficiently, quickly and [someone who can] improvise." Like many Canadian bands, Moist might play a stadium in Calgary one night, then head to "some small bar in the middle of America, where there's nothing but a cockroach-ridden mixing board and sad-looking and sad-sounding speakers." A good sound man or woman will "be able to pull it off very swiftly and work with what they have." Communication, too, is key. "[Mark] always keeps us in the loop about what's going on sound-wise," explains Young, "and we know what to expect."

Find someone whose personality meshes with the people in your band. Says Young, "When you're comfortable with a group of people, it always takes a little time to let someone else into that, for you to feel comfortable with them and them to feel comfortable with you. Which happened very quickly with Mark." Laughing, Young adds, "He's sarcastic as hell, and that works very well for us."

power, stability, sound quality and efficiency are key design considerations. Price tags ranging from \$1,500 to over \$8,000 for the amplifiers most commonly found in professional sound reinforcement mean that you should let your local sound company make this investment and rent from them!

Modest Beginnings To A Career In Music

The rehearsal room is an ideal place to learn several important lessons that you will carry with you for your entire career. If you play in a band with percussion, your stage volume should be equal to but not greater than the (non-amplified) drums. This applies to keyboard players, guitar players (mentioned previously) bassists, vocalists and all others. If you and your fellow musicians learn how to create a modest stage volume where everyone can hear themselves and each other, you will get tighter faster and put on more professional concerts.

Rehearsal is also the place to work on dynamics and the band's overall sound (tonality) as these represent the fundamentals of a great mix regardless of the size of the PA. Garbage in means garbage out! In order to correctly position your vocal monitor(s) to avoid feedback, place your mic stand in your desired position and put the monitor wedge in front of the stand facing directly at you. Keeping your vocal monitor from firing directly at the windscreen (diaphragm) will reduce the potential for feedback. Vocalists can also work on their mic technique which is to say that singers should be as close to the mic as possible (within one inch) most of the time! Seasoned veterans may pull the mic away when singing loudly because they have a solid understanding of vocal dynamics.

While a sound technician can add compression to the voice of vocalists to keep the level constant, it is preferable to minimize the amount of compression used. Staying on top of a vocal mic ensures maximum signal from the mic to the mixing console, reducing the amount of gain being added on the vocal channel, reducing the amount of sound

with differing monitor mixes if your rehearsal PA has more than one monitor send (auxiliary) on the console. The advantage of having separate monitor mixes for each vocalist is that they can hear them-

selves better, meaning that they are less likely to waiver off the note or be out of key all together. Bands will often tour with their own monitor rig so they can rely on a consistent stage sound.



Hootie & The Blowfish

Hootie and the Blowfish may be multi-platinum chart-toppers now, but they were once a college band that played bar gigs. In addition to the ubiquitous suggestion of getting a good live sound person, drummer Jim "Soni" Sonefeld suggests drummers learn to tour with minimal equipment. "If you're a traveling band and you're just starting out, learn how to play a three-piece drum set," he says. "It's easier to load out, you don't annoy your band-mates taking up half the stage, and you should be able to make a great song with a snare, a kick drum, a hi-hat and tom." Along the same lines, adds bandmate and guitarist Mark Bryan, "Make sure you're also able to bring one 12" speaker amp with you. When you play small places, or if you do a lot of quick flying around, you need to be able to make it happen with just a small rig. We did the whole Asian and European tour with one 12" speaker and a little combo. On the big tours, I'll use four 12" cabinets and two heads, to get the real sound that I love, but I can also find a sound that's close and satisfactory with a small amp, if it's necessary. Be able to make it happen in a compact situation, because there are times when you'll need to."

In terms of absolutely essential-to-own gear, both answer together: "A tuner." Explains Soni, "We went years without tuners. It's a big deal, when you're making no money, \$60 for a good tuner is not the easiest thing to come by. It made a world of difference, because after that, at least we knew the guitars were in tune, even if we were singing bad."

Showcasing In The Small Club

By small club we are talking in terms of an audience size under 100 persons and mixing "side stage". The first step is to duplicate as closely as possible the conditions you have become accustomed to in your rehearsal space. During your sound check, ensure that your band has a balanced stage volume and that everyone can hear one another. While the band can be heard out in the room nicely, the vocals will need to be reinforced with two professional speakers.

For the best coverage and to avoid feedback, place these speakers at each side and a little in front of the stage at a height just over the heads of people standing or dancing in front of the stage. You may accomplish this by using speaker stands or by stacking them on cases but either way make sure that they cannot be knocked over by accident. You should use a two-channel graphic equalizer with at least 15 bands (centre frequencies) to "EQ the mains" (the PA speakers) and "ring out your monitors". Equalizing the mains means compensating for the room's acoustic anomalies while ringing out the monitors means that you have dropped frequencies that could create feedback. You are best to have both of these procedures demonstrated to you by a professional sound technician in order to fully grasp the concepts as I do not feel that a short explanation here will do them justice.

Note that small PA speakers may not handle too much of a boost to frequencies below 80 Hz. You are now ready to do a sound check of the vocals through both the stage monitors and the main PA speakers. As you approach an audience size of 75 or so you might want to add a pair of sub-woofers (two extra 15- or 18-inch speakers) to the main PA especially if you plan to introduce the drums, keyboards or bass guitar to the mix.

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in terms of their dimensions. No longer will stage volume be adequate so it becomes necessary to have all the instruments coming out of the PA along with the vocals. This means that a four-piece band with two vocalists will require at least nine mics on stage. Setting your stage volume remains the key to good sound. As mentioned in the introduction, loud instrument amplifiers or separate speaker cabinets should not be pointed at the audience. Try laying the cabinet on its back with a block propping it up much like a stage monitor pointing straight at the guitar player's ears. At least raise the cabinet to ear level so that the brunt of the *four twelve* sound hits the guitarist instead of the audience. The bonus of this setup is that the sound of the cabinet is not being fired at all the mics on stage which reduces the guitar sound leaking into all the other mic channels of the mixing console. It is probable that if your guitar player takes some of these steps he can be controlled in the room mix and the band will have better sound, pleasing more people, netting more and higher paying gigs.

The minimum system that you would want to have in these venues would have one monitor per player, at least two monitor mixes, three channels of EQ, at least 16 if not a 24-channel console with four channels of comp/gate, two multi-effects units (reverb), a two way crossover, bi-amplified main speakers composed of four 18-inch subwoofers, four 15-inch mid-bass drivers and two high frequency horns (or equivalent). No longer would it be practical to mix "side stage" so we move the console and processing rack to what is referred to the "Front Of House" mix position. Enter the "House PA Tech". In order to get them to do their best work for you, remember the following: 1) Leave your ego at home! 2) Be on time or a little early for set up and sound check. 3) Ask, if there is anything you can do to help. 4) Be polite! 5) Learn the jargon. Examples — Can you bring the vocals up in the mix? Can we get some more reverb on the vocals? I am having trouble hearing myself in the monitors but I can hear everyone else. Can you bring me up a little? 6) Thank them, regardless of whether you liked their work or not because some of these guys work more than one club and you do not want to burn any bridges.

Although most legitimate sound technicians do not subscribe to the practice, sabotaging the opening act can happen for the following reasons: 1) It was intentional. The classic scenario is that the main speaker system is quieter or some of the subwoofers are turned off to diminish the impact of the music. 2) There is a problem with the system and the tech is working on it while the opener is on stage. 3) The system lacks the necessary channels to do separate sound checks for both the opener and the headlining act. 4) Even though the headlining act would have allowed the opener to use their sound checked equipment, the opening act brings amps and drums of their own onto the stage.

Touring Large Clubs

You are headlining in venues that will hold from 400 to 800 people. The mixing console probably has 32 to 40 channels with 10 "auxs". The processing rack is full of stuff that you may not recognize. There are eight monitors, "drum blow" and "side wash" speakers on the stage and the main PA has eight 18", eight 15" with four horns on each side of the stage. You have reached the point where you have to hire a sound tech. The best can be found working for sound companies or touring acts. They often have bios as long as your arm indicating that they have worked for some big names. Does this mean that you take them on the road with you? NO! This means that they have passed the first step.

The next step is to audition them. First see a show that they are working on. Next have them work a local show or go into a pre-production suite with your band to set up a system and mix the show to see if they are as good as their bio says. Hiring a sound tech should be like hiring an additional member of the band. You may have to spend a lot of time on the road with this person, so ensure that he or she fits with the other personalities associated with the band. Although there are always exceptions, recording engineers may not suit your needs as well as you might think. In live sound, trucks are late, beer fridge compressors and stage lighting dimmer packs can induce noise on AC lines, wireless mics act up and these conditions can unravel people that are not accustomed to trouble shooting or doing a sound check on a tight time line. Though the venue is large

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Chris Stills

Blues-folk rocker Chris Stills reminds artists to lower their stage volume. "These guys, they get up on stage and they turn it up to 11, and the sound sucks, because you've got a big blanket [of sound] around the stage, and it's bleeding through the microphones, it's going into the PA." He qualifies his rant by adding, "You can turn it up a little bit, but some people just turn it up insanely loud. It's a guaranteed mix for a bad stage sound." Once you follow that axiom, he says, "Everything else will take care of itself."

And — surprise, surprise — he adds, "Get a good sound man."



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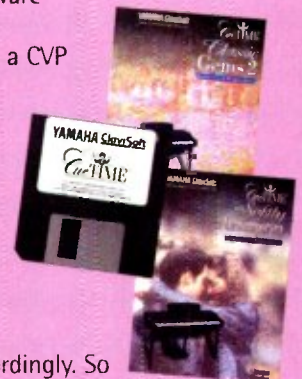
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enough to put lots of people in, the system that they own may not meet the standard of quality that you have come to expect. You will need to sit down with your sound tech and create a technical rider that will indicate to the venue operator what additional equipment they will have to supply in order for your band to perform at their venue.

Concert Venues

This audience size is now 800 to 5,000. Larger venues mean more speakers in the system, possibly "flown" over each side of the stage with "down fill" to cover the audience up front. Just as the systems grow in the larger venues, the personnel to truck, move, set up, operate and strike the show do as well. You should be hiring a monitor technician to give the band their stage mix. You will need a road manager in order to coordinate the entire crew and to act as a liaison between your operators and the unionized labour that some of these venues will insist be utilized.

Arenas

These vary in size from 5,000 to 20,000 seats and as with all the other categories there is more of everything. The total crew complement may exceed 20 persons with personnel specifically for staging, back line (instruments), lighting, video and of course sound. "Delay stacks" could be used to get the sound to the very back of the venue while a "centre cluster" projects sound at the audience "in the floors" at centre stage. New to the market and designed for large stages are UHF wireless monitor systems. These have an ear-piece that fits in the vocalist's ear, offer exceptional fidelity, reduce the stage volume and give the artist more freedom to move around the stage without being in a zone (on or off stage) where the monitor mix is less than ideal.

Stadiums

More of everything is needed to perform for 20,000 to 75,000 people. It is conceivable that the opening act may be supplied with a console at the FOH for their use while the headlining band may have two or more "linked" consoles that are automated. The band could have one monitor console and operator per player with a variety of zoned mixes. The head PA tech has to deal with feeds for live recording, television satellite up link and internet or FM simulcasts; so be nice to him!

Outdoor Festivals

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Richard van Steenburgh and Ted Baker are from Show Pro — a Toronto-based company specializing in professional sound reinforcement, lighting systems and services.

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Recording

drum miking techniques



by Karen Kane

In the last ten years, I've had the pleasure of engineering many African percussion albums. Through these projects, I learned a lot about the art of recording live percussion and its been an amazing experience to capture the energy of passionate, talented percussionists. I thought I'd pass along some tips and valuable experiences.

One the most common mistakes I've seen in the miking of certain drums – such as djembe or any other drum with a strong low end – results from the misconception that one microphone alone on top of the drum will do the trick. Unlike the typical one microphone method of miking toms in a drum kit, miking just the top of most other drums will not necessarily get the best sound for the situation. Using only a top microphone will give you plenty of “slap” but not enough of the bass. Most of these drums are usually played slightly off the floor that makes it easy to put another mic directly up into the drum from the

EQ the bottom mic by taking out a lot of the mid-range and highs, leaving a very muddy track when you hear it by itself. However, when you add this muddy track to the top microphone you end up with a crisp, fat drum sound. If you don't have enough tracks, EQ the bottom mic similarly, record the two microphones to one track balancing them according to the situation.

Recently, I co-produced and engineered an album entitled *Dance The Spiral Dance* in Woodstock, NY with artist Ubaka Hill, a master of percussion. While I utilized the above tip very effectively on this album, in this next story, you'll see a situation where an additional technique helped enhance the sound even more. One of the pieces was a djembe duo, so I set-up four microphones. Two for the top of each drum and two for the bottom of each drum. The sound was great but a little voice kept saying to me “this could be better still” but I wasn't sure how. The stu-

placed it about four feet above both drummers ... and wow! The sound difference was night and day. I was glad I listened to that little voice. Moral of the story: it's important to get the most out of a good sounding “live” room by considering the use of distant microphones as well as close microphones.

Another song, presented yet another challenge. Here's a quote from Ubaka's CD insert notes regarding this song; “This is the first time in drum and percussion recorded music in the US that women of many different ancestral bloodlines have recorded together.” In fact, there were 33 women drummers playing at the same time in one large room. From an engineering standpoint, this was an enormous challenge. Without a doubt, the theory that “less is more” played a very important role in my approach to miking this extravaganza. The drummers were placed in three sections (right next to one another) according to which part they were playing, “bass, middle or melody”. In front of each section, I placed two microphones in an “XY” stereo configuration approximately “ear” height. High above the room, I also placed two microphones, one in each corner. In addition, I randomly chose two drummers in each section to place bottom microphones under their drums so that I would have some low end to work with in the mix. The end result – the raw energy captured on tape – is quite remarkable.

Karen Kane has been engineering and producing music since 1974. Her credits, profile, and other published articles can be seen at her website: www.total.net/~mixmama

Using only a top microphone will give you plenty of “slap” but not enough of the bass

bottom. A Sennheiser 421 microphone or an AKG D112 works extremely well for this. For the top of the drum, the 421 works well but any good condenser microphone also works well. Ideally, if tracks are available, I always put the two microphones on two separate tracks. That way, in the mix, I can balance the two microphones to my taste. During recording, I

dio in Woodstock has a particularly “live” room with great acoustics and it occurred to me that we weren't capturing the ambience of the room. I wanted it to sound like you were IN the room with them. After two takes with the original set-up, I asked for a five-minute break to follow my instincts. I set-up an extremely high quality stereo condenser microphone and

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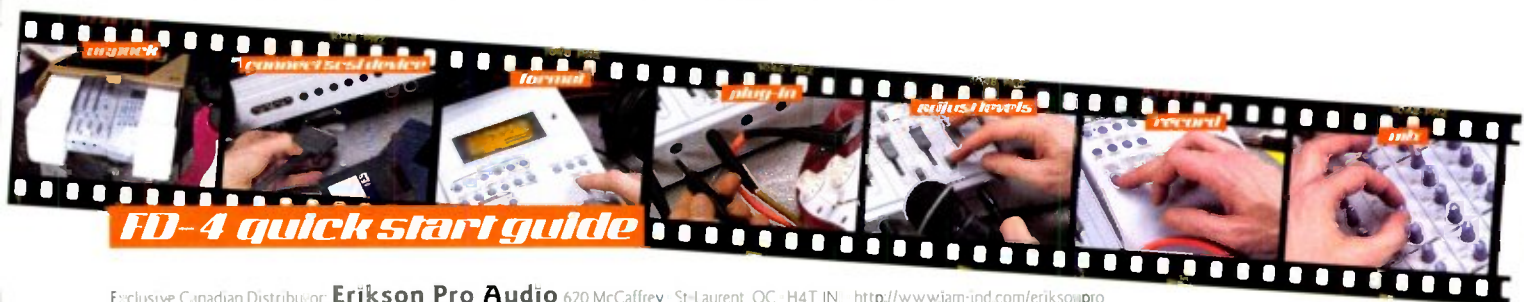
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in “you’re entertainment business”



by Sander Shalinsky

breaking a new band is my favourite part of our business. It's very hands on. It gives me a chance to reconnect with what's happening on the street. With our new act, Crimson, I've had the opportunity lately to get reacquainted with talent buyers (the people that book bands into the bars) between Montreal and Buffalo. I usually let our agent deal with the bars, but in the initial stages of a new project I like to roll up my sleeves and get into the muck too! As an aside, I've got to give credit to all the bands that book themselves. I also have a new respect and understanding for what agents do on a daily basis – it's really tough to get gigs!

Buyers are leery of booking unproven acts while their bars are losing their shirts. Fans have been steadily moving away from live venues. “Bands are boring,” announced my 18-year-old cousin. Sadly she's partly right. And a lot of other concert-goers seem to be feeling the same way. People come to shows to be entertained. This may seem obvious, but after seeing literally thousands of bands in recent years, it doesn't seem as obvious as one might think.

I had the opportunity to spend Canada Day at Toronto's EDGEfest. The band that really stood out for me was Green Day. They were as good as any band I've seen. What was it that made them good? First of all, They had enough hits to make

a 70-minute show rock. Even though a band like the Foo Fighters were as good a band, they just didn't have the hits to continue to pummel the audience with. I remember last year at the CNE an inexperienced manager was trying to insert his unknown independent band into a full hour slot on the side stage. He was successful, but the band crashed and burned.

Songs in themselves were not the magical element for Green Day though. We've all seen artists that we've never heard of before and had them blow us away. I still believe those bands are out there.

On Canada Day, however, Green Day crystallized what concerts are all about. There were 35,000 people at Molson Park in Barrie, ON for the show. We all wanted to have a good time, and from the moment Green Day hit the stage they assumed their role as party convenors. They made sure everybody had a phenomenal time. They interacted with the audience, sometimes using cliché antics, but for the most part were just plain entertaining. It wasn't just about the songs, or about being at EDGEfest. Moreover it was about being at a great party. Green Day was the party coordinator.

Now I'm sure a lot of you are saying, “Green Day sucks.” Yes, Green Day's music is derivative. Yes, I've got original Clash albums and have been to see the Buzzcocks and the Damned. Even though Green Day were not breaking any new ground creatively, their show was distinctive because they took seriously the undertaking of entertaining the audience.

If a fan is going to part with, a buck of his or her hard-earned dineros, it's going to be because they want to be entertained. If they wanted to listen to your songs they would go out and buy the CD. But that's not all they want. They're bringing a date. They want to show their friend from out

of town a good time. They want to be able to tell everyone at school the next day how awesome the show was. They want to discover the next wicked band. We in the music business don't take seriously enough the fact that we are a subset of the entertainment business.

That's right, we are all in the entertainment business. Like it or not you are competing with all the movie theatres, television, video games, go-kart tracks, shopping malls, hockey, basketball, and baseball games and every restaurant in town. Not only that, but also most of the people reading this article are complete unknowns. That puts you at a huge disadvantage – Seinfeld, Pizza Hut and *Titanic* are not unknown commodities. Everyone knows what they're going to get which is why they keep going back for more. You need to be that much better.

Here are a few helpful hints to get you started – remember you're selling stardom. Don't get on stage in anything but what you would wear on Halloween if you were dressing like a rockstar. Grunge is over. Being a rock star means look like one too.

Let people know who you are, get a banner. Put it on your drums. Tell people the name of your band between songs.

Don't just play like you mean it: Look like you're playing like you really mean it.

Interact with the audience – speak. There's nothing worse than a lead singer who spends the entire set looking down into the mic. If you're not getting the reaction you want do something to get it.

Sander Shalinsky is co-owner of Hunt the Sandman Inc., the management company that represents the Killjoys, Wendy Lands and Crimson. Sander is also an adjunct professor at the University of Western Ontario Law School in entertainment law. He can be reached by e-mail at: zippy@interlog.com.



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For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound Ltd., 550 Granite Crt, Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481, FAX (905) 837-8746, yssales@yorkville.com, www.yorkville.com.

Conn 44B-SP and 41B-SP Trumpets

United Musical Instruments USA Inc. introduces two new trumpets for 1998, the Conn CONNstellation 44B-SP B \flat trumpet, with .459" bore. A reverse leadpipe makes it easy to lock on to the right sound; and a single-radius, rounded tuning slide crook lets the musician blow free and easy without distortion. The seamless yellow brass sheet bell has the acoustic properties of a one-piece and a first slide saddle is standard. The new CONNstellations come with a unique UMI modular valve weight system.

There are two weights for each valve – six in all – which can be attached to the trumpet's bottom valve caps to give the musician total tone control: bright, dark and in-between. Other features include ultra-thin valve buttons for short, fast action with no finger skating; heavy top and bottom valve caps and computer-controlled piston porting for better overall performance. Both models have a silver-plated finish.

For more information, contact: United Musical Instruments, 1000 Industrial Pkwy., Elkhart, IN 46516 (219) 295-0079, FAX (219) 295-8613, www.unitedmusical.com.



Q-MIX



HM-6

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OZ audio™

The Q-Mix HM-6 headpiece matrix amp/mixer lets 6 musicians create their own individual headphone mixes: from up to 5 sources – plus effects! For just \$559.95 sugg. Cdn. retail.

The conventional part: Plug your main stereo mix into Q-Mix and drive six separate high-output headphone amps.

The Oz Audio difference: You can route four MORE mono inputs to the Q-Mix. For example, 4 mixer sub-groups such as drums, background

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vocals or keyboards. Or an assortment of aux sends, individual channels, or a click/scratch track. The musicians dial in their own input levels – and stop constantly nagging the control room.

It gets even better: The Q-Mix HM-6 also includes a separate 5-channel mixer. Connect its output to an effects processor and return the signal to the HM-6. Every Q-Mix channel has its own stereo effects return, so all

6 performers can dial in their own effects. And you can concentrate on engineering instead of dealing with constant cries of "More vocals!", "More effects!" or that old standby "More ME!" OH! and, by the way, it's built like a tank!

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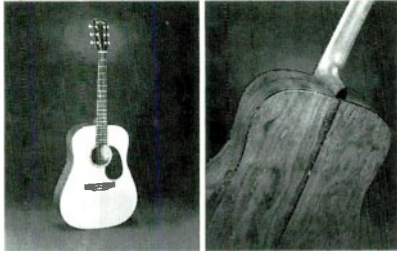
C.F. Martin Certified Wood Acoustic Guitar

C.F. Martin & Co. announces the introduction of the SED Certified Wood guitar, the first certified wood model ever offered by Martin.

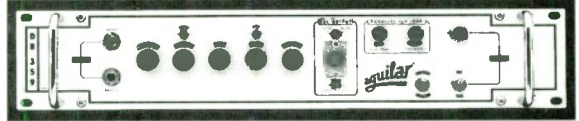
The woods used for the guitar originate from certified forests that have been independently evaluated to ensure that they meet internationally recognized environmental, social and economic standards.

Certified cherry is utilized for the back, sides, neck and interior blocks of the SWD model. Cherry has a warm natural visual beauty, especially when combined with Martin's traditional dark staining. As a tonewood, cherry yields a strong, projective, and balanced sound, with many of the best attributes of more traditional guitar woods like rosewood, koa, and mahogany.

For more information, contact: Kief Music Ltd., 12387 84 Ave., Surrey, BC V3W 3G8 (604) 590-3344, FAX (604) 590-6999.



Aguilar DB 359 All-Tube Bass Head



The Aguilar DB 359 is a two-rack space powerhouse of fat, warm bass tone. The solid steel chassis means this amp will be on the road for a long time. The DB 359's preamp design employs the same tube gain stages as the DB 680. Also, the DB 728 amp design was used in the power section of the new head. These features combine with Aguilar's reputation for quality in design and manufacture make the new DB 359 Bass Head an important milestone in bass amplification.

The DB 359 features an all-tube preamp, 200 watt (4 or 8 ohms) power section and it only takes up two rack spaces.

For more information, contact: Aguilar Amplification, 1600 Broadway, #1004 T, New York, NY 10019 (212) 757-2823, FAX (212) 757-2452, aguilar@interport.net, www.aguilaramp.com.

Music Industries RS-958 Studio Rack Stands



Music Industries Corp. introduces the new RS-958 14-space adjustable rack stand to their line of professional studio rack stands.

The New RS-958 14-space adjustable rack stand can be used in either the home or professional studio. Suitable for all rackmountable equipment, such as modules, processors and mixers, the RS-958 can support up to 200 lbs. of rack equipment in an easily accessible, centralized area. The complete 14-space rack is fully angle adjustable via Quik-Lok's exclusive "Dino-Bite" locking mechanism. The user can easily customize the angle position of all 14-spaces of equipment in the stand by simply rotating one knob on the side of the rack.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, ericksonmi@jam-ind.com.

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Meinl B18 Bronze Cymbals



Meinl's new generation of student range B18 Bronze cymbals feature two sizes of groove hats, a cool ride, mega crashes, hype splashes and a fat China. Complete sets include 14" hi-hats and a 16" crash, 14" hi-hats and a 20" ride or 14" hi-hats, 16" crash and a 20" ride. All sets include a professional cymbal bag, featuring a stick pocket, hi-hat pocket and a shoulder belt for ultimate protection and ease of transport.

For more information, contact: Calato's Direct Music Supply, 4500 Queen St., Niagara Falls, ON L2E 67B (800) 828-1601, FAX (716) 285-8760.



Generalmusic SK76, SK88 and WK4 Synthesizers



Generalmusic Corp. is now offering 'Power Station II' versions of their SK76, SK88 and WK4 synthesizers.

Aside from their standard 3.5" disc drives, the Power Station II models are equipped with internal 540 MB hard disks that allow massive storage and high-speed access to data. The hard disk allows users to store songs, performances and styles without the need for a floppy disk.

The Power Station II hard disk also comes pre-loaded with an enormous quantity of software including 156 new accompaniment styles (including the new PROFILES and a selection from the fully compatible WX/SX library), plus 50 MB of new sounds (ready to be instantly loaded into the pre-installed 2 MB battery-backed D-RAM), including pads, vintage organs, acoustic pianos, choirs, strings, orchestral, accordions, basses, drum kits, techno, grooves, sound effects, ethnic instruments and many more.

For more information, contact: Elkay Music Group, 2165 46th Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872.

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Ludwig Rocker Pro Series

Ludwig Industries introduces its new line of drums designed for the semi-professional and advancing drummer, the New Rocker Pro Series.

The LR2605EC 5-Piece Rocker Pro Jazz Outfit includes a 16x22" floor tom, 5x14" matching snare, and toms of 8x10" and 10x12". The LR2625EC has a 16x22" bass, 16x16" floor tom, 6.5x14" snare, and toms of 10x12" and 11x13".

The shells are 7 mm, 7-ply Birch and Italian Poplar fitted with the new Mini-Lugs. Other features include the Elite Tom Holder, Elite Bass Drum Spurs and double Silver Keystone Badges. Hardware includes the 800 Series Ludwig Modular Stands and the Modular LM914FP Foot Pedal.

New satin natural finishes include Midnight Black (#16), Hunter Green (#17), Natural Birch (#18), and Sea Blue (#19). Component Drums available include: bass drums; 16x20", 16x22", floor toms 14x14", 16x16", 16x18", tom-toms; 8x8", 8x10", 10x12", 11x13" and 12x14" and snare drums; 5x14", 6.5x14". Rocker Pro Series Drums are fitted as standard with genuine Ludwig Weather Master Drumheads.

For more information, contact: London Music Sales, 17 Hammond Dr., London, ON N5X 1A5, (519) 439-3817, FAX (519) 439-0037.

(hot)gear



Yamaha FG Jr. Guitar



Yamaha Guitars announces an addition to the FG family of steel string folk guitars. The FG Jr., with its smaller (3/4" scale) FG shape, is ideal for smaller players or those who prefer the comfort of a smaller guitar – without sacrificing the superb tone quality and warmth of the full-sized FG series. The FG Jr. sports a Spruce top, back and sides of Meranti, Nato neck, Rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and nickel-covered hardware. The guitar has a natural finish.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Toronto, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732.

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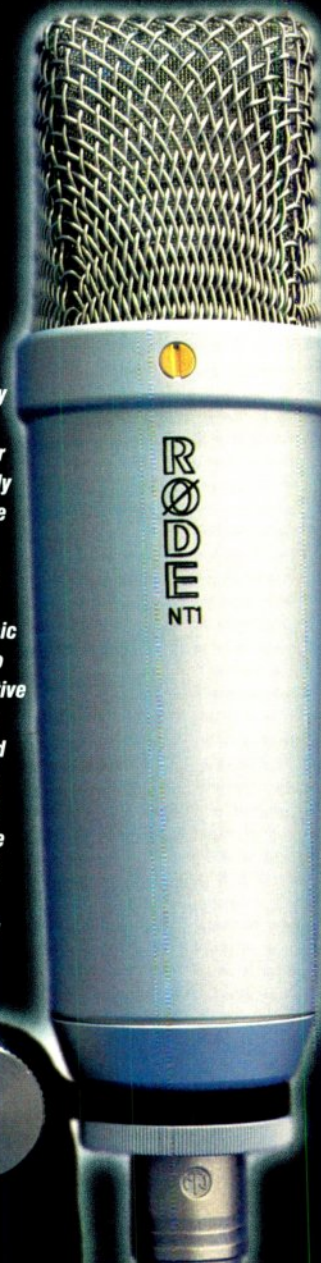
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Cubase VST/24 4.0

Steinberg introduces Cubase VST/24 4.0 native audio processing and MIDI sequencing software for Power Macintosh.

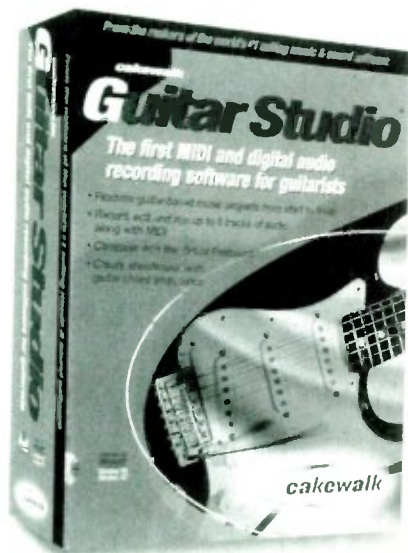
Cubase VST/24 4.0 offers 96 tracks of digital audio in 24-bit, 96 kHz quality with each channel able to utilize up to four bands of EQ for maximum dynamic range and subtle sound design. Recordings can be shaped with up to four plug-in inserts per channel, plus 8 aux sends for addressing up to 8 effects or plug-ins in the aux effects rack. The new group mixers offer four insert slots for effects and plug-ins

allowing easy grouping while providing a general overview of the production process. The master section offers bussing to the individual outputs of a wide range of supported digital audio cards like the Korg 1212, Sonorus STUD I/O, Lexicon Studio, and Yamaha's DSP Factory. The internal resolution has been increased to 15360ppqn (pulses per quarter note) for precise cutting of audio segments.

Cubase VST/24 4.0's MIDI and audio editing functions include a controller editor for detailed editing of recording parameters, and a new MIDI track mixer and drag and drop throughout the entire program for both audio parts and MIDI events.

For more information, contact: Steinberg Canada, 580 Marlee Ave. Toronto, ON M6B 3J5 (416) 789-7100, FAX (416) 789-1667, info@ca.steinberg.net, www.ca.steinberg.net.

Cakewalk Guitar Studio



Cakewalk has introduced Cakewalk Guitar Studio for Windows 95/NT, the first multi-track MIDI and audio recording software designed for guitarists. Guitar Studio provides an intuitive set of tools for recording, editing, mixing, and notating guitar-based music on a PC. Cakewalk Guitar Studio is a key component of the Guitar Technology Alliance between Cakewalk, Fender, and Roland – also announced today. The alliance was formed to bridge the gap between guitar players and music software.

The first solution from the alliance is the combination of three distinct products optimized to work together; Cakewalk Guitar Studio: the Roland GR-30 Guitar Synthesizer and the Fender Roland-Ready Stratocaster, a classic Strat with built-in Roland divided pickup. Key features include a multi-track recorder, global track editor, virtual fretboard and synchronized notation.

For more information, contact: Thinkware, 2405 de Celles St., #4B, Quebec, PQ G2C 1K7 (418) 842-3725, FAX (418) 842-3834, twarecnd@clic.net, www.thinkware.com.



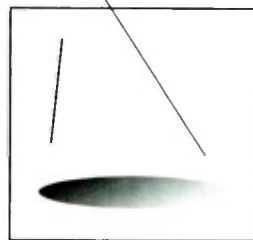
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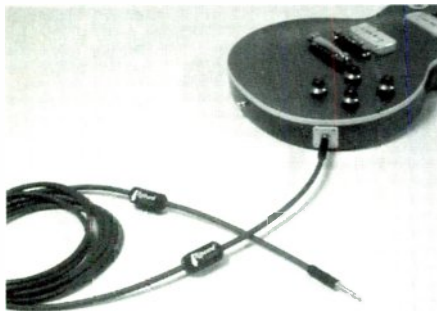
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Music Interface Technologies Guitar And Power Cables



Music Interface Technologies enters the MI market with the release of Ripcord guitar and bass cables, Terminator speaker interface cables, and Z-Cord power cords.

Ripcords incorporate a high quality cable and proprietary passive network design to remove noise and produce a signal with more attack and pleasing tonal balance with all harmonics in their proper relative proportions.

GAS Terminator cables incorporate proprietary

passive network box technology to extend bass frequencies while gaining articulation and increasing transparency of the midrange.

Z-Cord power cords are feature double shielding, incorporating a foil and dense braid configuration that provides maximum EMI and RFI shielding. Featuring proprietary ferrite cores designed to remove high-frequency noise from 500 kHz to 1 MHz, Z-cords are manufactured with industrial-grade

crimped and moulded connectors, creating a solid connection that is insulated from corrosion and maximizes current flow.

Ripcords are available in 10-foot (and longer) lengths, GAS cables in two-metre lengths, and Z-cords in two-metre lengths.

For more information, contact: Music Interface Technologies, 13620 Lincoln Way, #320, Auburn, CA 95603, (530) 888-0394.



Randall RG150 Stack

Randall introduces the RG150 stack, including the RG150H preamp, and RA412D and RS215D cabinets.

The RG150H features mid level and mid frequency controls, a nine-band active EQ and independent active EQs for each of the RG150H's two channels. The RA412 is a slightly larger, angled top cabinet loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s. The RS215D, is a slightly larger straight bottom cabinet and contains two specially designed 15" Randall Jaguar 200 watt RMS woofers, and a specially designed crossover built in to direct the frequencies and hold the bass.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, eriksonsonmi@jam-ind.com.

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Washburn Paul Stanley Series Additions



Washburn Guitars announces the additions of the PS500B and PS100B to the Paul Stanley Signature Series of guitars.

The PS500B is crafted with a solid mahogany, multi-bound tapered body, mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard, grover tuners, and includes Washburn Series pickups and an exclusive chrome PST25 star tailpiece. The model comes in a deluxe hard-shell case.

The PS100 features a solid body, maple neck, rosewood fingerboard, grover tuners, Washburn humbucker pickups, stop tailpiece, and comes in a deluxe padded gig bag case.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, ericksonmi@jam-ind.com.

Yamaha YT150 Tuner

To appeal to the value-conscious guitar or bass player, Yamaha announces the launch of the YT150 Guitar/Bass Auto Tuner. The new tuner employs Yamaha innovation to provide features normally found only in more expensive tuners. The YT150 offers a high-resolution liquid-crystal metre display for quick, accurate tuning plus sharp/flat/in-tune LED indicators for tuning in the dark or from a distance.

The tuner has both a condenser microphone and in/out jacks, allowing it to tune any electric guitar, acoustic guitar, or any 4-, 5-, or 6-string bass guitar in either manual or auto mode. A separate bass mode displays bass string notes at the touch of a button for more intuitive tuning of bass guitars. A 9-volt battery is included, and Yamaha provides a two-year warranty.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Toronto, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311. FAX (416) 292-0732.



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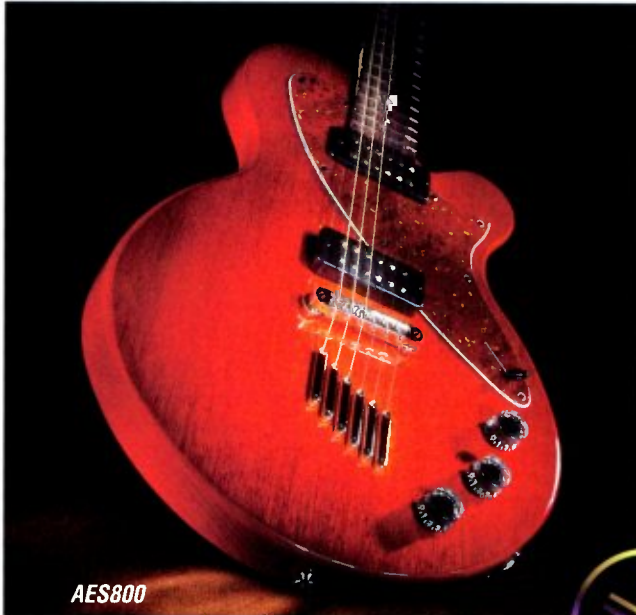


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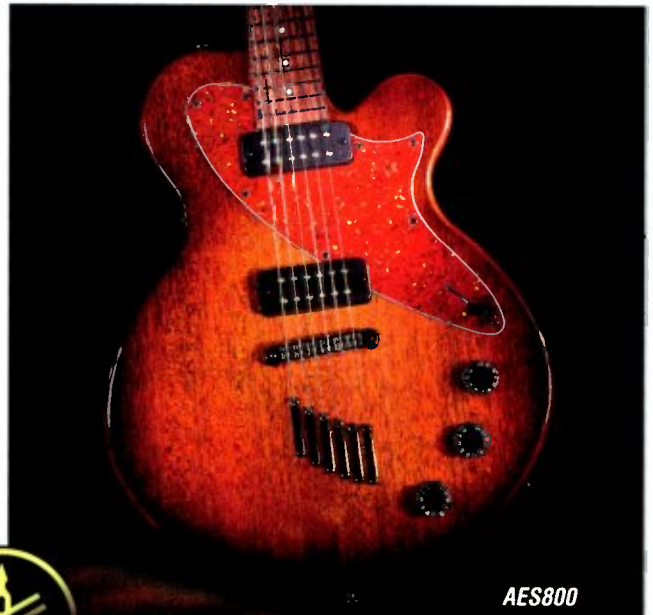




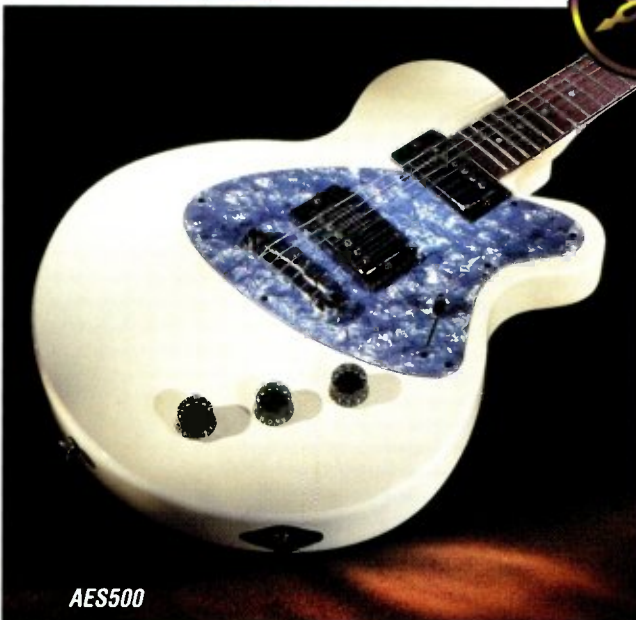
GUTS AND GLORY.



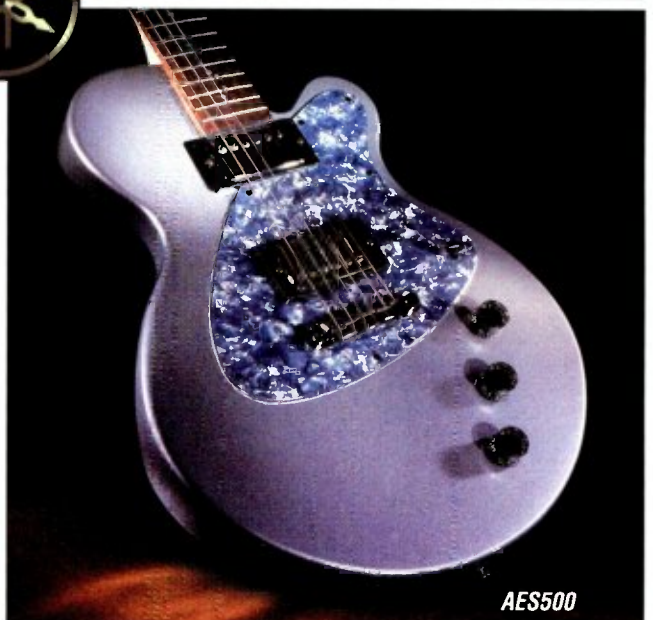
AES800



AES800



AES500



AES500

Provocative curves and sharp detailing recall the great solidbodies of the '50s and '60s. Solid tone-wood bodies, super-tight neck joints and beefy pickups capture the weighty chunk and smooth sustain of the classic dual-humbucker axes. But new sounds lurk behind the retro-cool looks: The AES800's unique realtime phase control lets you combine the DiMarzio® Q-100 pickups in exciting new configurations. Meanwhile, the simplified AES500 nails the primal punch of the original rock-and-roll machines at an unbeatable price. Catch a blast of future past at your Yamaha dealer.



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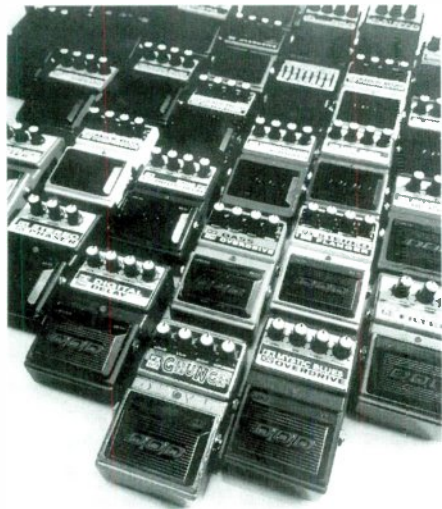
AKG Wireless Microphone System

The VHF-based WMS 60 system offers the choice of three handheld AKG transducer capsules, each of which can be changed to provide the highest degree of sonic flexibility ever seen in a wireless microphone system.

Featuring both balanced and unbalanced outputs and Line-to-Mic switchability, the WMS 60's flexible receiver works well with musical instruments, while the hand-held and bodypack transmitters each offer features to keep controls set and stable during even the most active performances.

For more information, contact: Erickson Pro Audio, 620 McCaffrey, St Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, jcarman@jam-ind.com.

DOD FX Series



DOD announces the complete redesign of its entire FX Series of guitar and bass effect pedals, including the FX84 Milk Box. Renamed the FX84 Milk Box Compressor, the pedal now provides users with a more tangible idea of the FX84's overall function. Its former rotary controls labels – Quartz, Cream, Pasteurization and Spill – have been replaced with Level, compress, Hi Exp and Attack to more clearly depict what each control knob does.

In addition to making labels on all FX Series more readable and more uniform in design, the signal-to-noise performance on all pedals has been improved to eliminate sweeping and hissing background noise.

For more information, contact: Erickson Music, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069, ericksonmi@jam-ind.com.

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A Man, A Plan, A Guitar **NEIL CHAPMAN!**

This is about my friend, guitarist Neil Chapman. He has played with some of the top names in Canadian music: Buffy Sainte-Marie (a present cohort), Leonard Cohen, Akunnah Myles, Carole Pope, and Rita MacNeil, among others; is a founding member of bands Neotone and Zombo Zombo; and is currently at work on a solo album.

Neil's technique and the types of gear he uses are certainly important, but what I'm focusing on is Neil himself. Or, more specifically, what personality traits and ideals make him an exemplary musician, and why he's an inspiration to me. Naturally I'm a bit biased, but people who know Neil would probably agree with me that:

- He's absolutely dedicated to music. Since he was 13, Neil wanted to be a guitarist, and he focused on that goal with a maniacal kind of single-mindedness. As a mature musician, he still possesses the same drive, the same perfectionist attitude.
- He's spiritual, viewing music as something sacred and enigmatic, full of mystery and magic.
- He sees music as a way to awaken people's humanity. "The politicians can't do it," says Neil. So it's the job of musicians to enlighten the world by diligently plying their trade reaching one listener at a time.
- He's original. Creative and spontaneous, he often takes songs in wildly unexpected directions, keeping band members on their toes.
- He enjoys music in a sensual way. Swaying, rocking, jumping. He feels the music with his whole body, seeming to reach orgasmic heights of passion during his flighty solos.
- He's unabashedly emotional. In a society where men are supposedly guided by cold logic, Neil is somewhat of an anomaly; being acutely attuned to feelings and intuitions, and able to express that in his playing.
- He gives of himself. Dynamic, high-spirited, the life of any party — that's Neil for sure. But he's also a nurturer: someone committed to his family, fiercely loyal to his friends and gracious to strangers. In performance, he gives everything he has, many times emerging from the stage drenched in sweat.
- He's persistent. While continually upgrading his skills, he never changes his style to fit some passing fad or to appease critics.
- He's fun, easily engaging audiences with his good-natured (if offbeat) humour.
- He's genuine. "What you see is what you get," as he says. Which is not to say that he's simple, but that he's honest, sometimes to a fault. There's no pretension in his life or art; he is who he is.

One of many outstanding Canadian musicians, my friend, Neil Chapman.

By Laurel Federbush

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SHOWCase

by Sarah Chauncey

Talk about guest stars. Among the guests on Bob Kemmis' debut album, *Kemmisutra*, are three members of Odds (the fourth, Steven Drake, co-produced and mixed the CD) and Ryan Dahle (Age of Electric, Limblifter).

Four of the seven songs were recorded on the Neve console at Greenhouse Studios in Vancouver; the same half was mixed at The Factory because, as Kemmis explains, "Greenhouse sold the Neve and The Factory was the only other studio in town who had one available." Maintaining consistency with the board was important "to Steven because of its warm characteristics."


The liner notes credit the other three songs to "Now Suck! Studios" which, Kemmis wryly notes, "Is the term of endearment that we gave to the ever-changing surroundings that the portability supplied us with." The 'portability' came in the form of Northey's 8-track hard drive recorder, which Kemmis and co. set up wherever they could – the basement of Vancouver's Roxy, the homes of Craig Northey (Odds) and pianist Simon Kendall, among other places.

Craig Waddell (Moist) mastered the album, in one fell swoop, at Gotham City Studios. Kemmis notes, "[That] helped to give the songs a continuity and consistency that might not have occurred if we had mixed and mastered in the same patchwork style that we recorded in."



Tribe: Just Bob
Tunes: Melodic singer/songwriter, sometimes with band, sometimes without
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Bob Kemmis



Tribe: Pam Brennan (vocals, percussion, keyboards), Rory Dyck (vocals, guitars), Ari Tapiero (drums, percussion), Stuart Watkins (bass, vocals)
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Hennessey

Dyck's guitars (a Paul Reed Smith and "an old Ovation with really thick strings") and a large part of the vocals were laid down at Sound of One Hand in the capital city.

The band then headed to London for a three-day mixing session: with Dan Broadbeck, who Dyck had worked with and trusted. Broadbeck tweaked the band's sound – which is not unlike a more melodic Letters to Cleo – And the rest is Music Night in Canada.

Toronto-based iQue Vida! recorded their debut EP, *New Shots From the Indestructible* in a extremely creative and cost-efficient manner. First, the quartet laid down bed tracks on ADAT with Eric Ratz (Big Sugar) at his studio, The Opium Den. They then did a sub mix-down, which gave them two tracks of drums and one of percussion, which they recorded to a Fostex D90. Kurtz then took the D90 to his house, where he uploaded the tracks onto his Mac clone computer.

For the rest of the tracks, the band moved to Five Star Studios (a/k/a Kurtz's house). "We ended up doing vocals in the bathroom, putting guitar amps in the bedroom closets, etc.," he explains. They recorded to the D90, and "once I'd filled up the D90 with eight tracks, I'd move them digitally over to my computer using Pro Tools."

In what Kurtz calls "the coolest part" of the process, he borrowed a CD-writer and saved the five songs on five CDs. They took the CDs to Phase One, then synched the tracks up with the original ADAT bed tracks and "ran them through really old tube-y kind of gear." They got the best of both worlds and managed to come in under \$6,000. "I'm not really a big fan of digital stuff," Kurtz explains, "... but if you take advantage of what the digital part actually gives you, editing and synching up a bunch of stuff without any hassles, that's the best part of it. And it translates to almost-as-good sound quality and very affordable recording."



Tribe: Andrew Whiteman (guitar, vocals); Dan Kurtz (bass, vocals); Daniel Stone (percussion, vocals); Josh Hicks (drums)
Tunes: self-described "Latin sleaze"
To contact: Paul Davies (416) 469-1600

iQue Vida!

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Sarah Chauncey is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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