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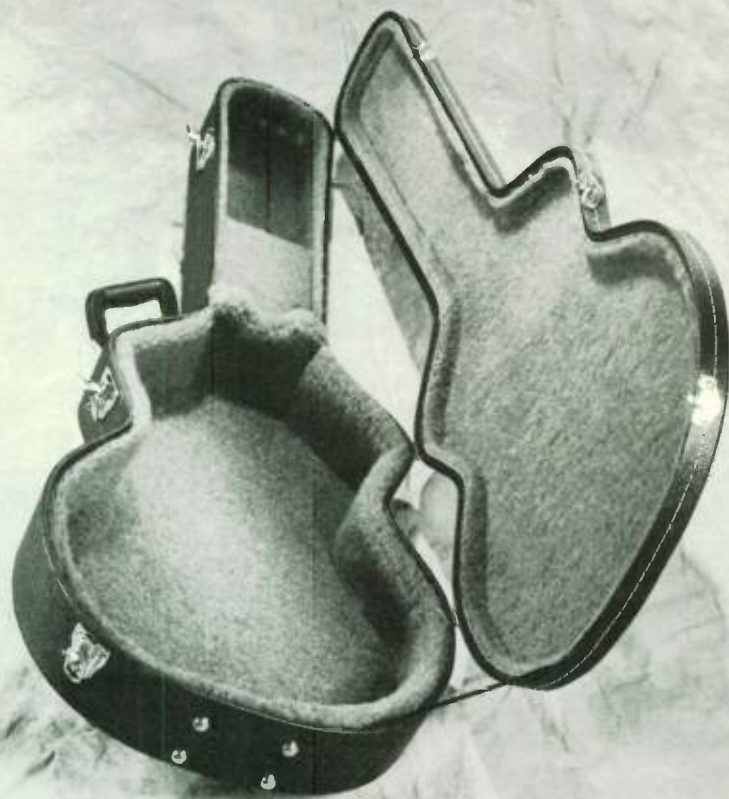
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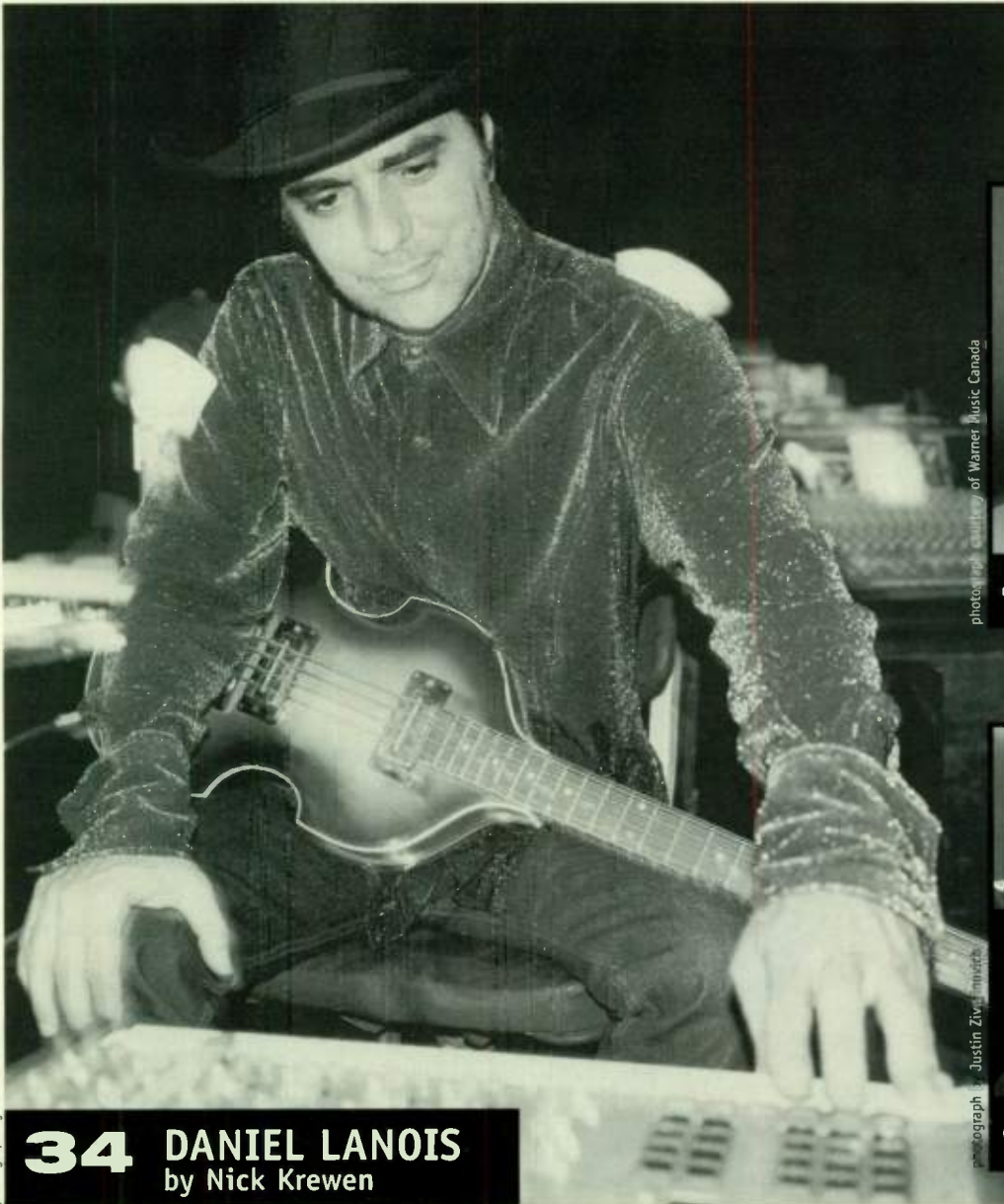
For Showcase '97 submission forms and/or a CCMA membership application, get in touch with us today:

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S E P T E M B E R 5 T H T O 8 T H , H A M I L T O N , O N T A R I O



photograph by Matthew Welch

photograph courtesy of Warner Music Canada



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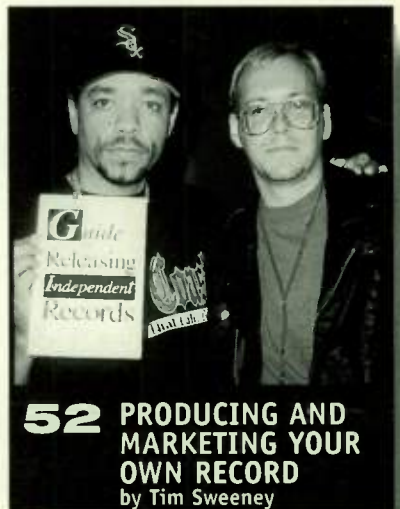
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**52** PRODUCING AND  
MARKETING YOUR  
OWN RECORD  
by Tim Sweeney

We Set out  
to Build an  
Economy  
Speaker  
System  
(But, we  
failed...)

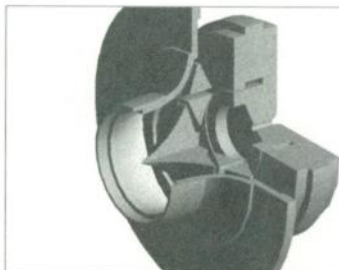
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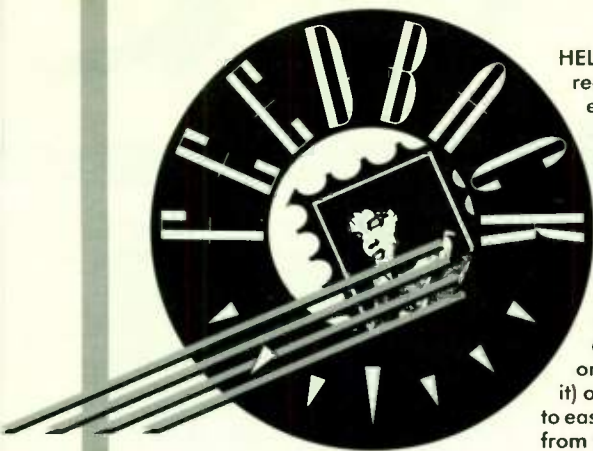
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## Band Tension

HELP! My name is Andrelle Henderson and I'm 14 years old. My band could really use some help and criticism, and your magazine is focused and dedicated to musicians, so I turn to you!

My band is pretty good, and all of my bandmates are very talented, but we have a terrible time writing songs together. It's like some of us expect things to just happen, but don't want to work for it. There is also some conflict within the band, like the singer is only good at singing in monotone (mind you — she's pretty good at it) and the guitarist is really unfocused (all he wants to do is play Jimi Hendrix and slack off while the rest of us work). The bassist and myself (the drummer) feel like we're doing all the work, and it's not easy!

It probably sounds hopeless — it does to me — but I don't want to give up on the band. I love to play, and I want us to progress by entering contests, getting gigs, etc. I guess what I'm really trying to ask here is if I should move on and try to find new bandmates as dedicated as I am (and if so, how to go about it) or should we stick it out? Do you have any helpful hints or suggestions on how to ease the conflict and create some new material? I would really appreciate hearing from you, and I know my bandmates would be grateful as well.

*Andrelle Henderson, Oshawa, ON*

**\*Ed:** First of all, take solace in the fact that many bands out there share the exact same problem you just outlined. When several people come together to work on a creative project, questions will arise as to how motivated, dedicated, committed, etc. some members of the team are in comparison to others.

This does not mean to just sit back and tolerate the guitarist noodling around during precious rehearsal time, and not addressing what aspects of each person's contribution to the project should be improved. Have you discussed your sentiments with each member of your band? Are they aware that you are unhappy with your current situation? You must let these people know how you feel before making any drastic decisions.

Sit down and discuss the fact that you want to progress to a higher level with this musical ensemble. Find out if everyone else in the band shares your line of thinking. If they do, set realistic goals for your band along the way — be it that you will write one new song per week, that you will get a gig by next month, whatever — and work towards them. If, after a little while, you find that you are still not achieving your goals, sit down again and decide why you aren't where you set out to be.

If you discover that not everyone in the band is on the same wavelength as you (ie. some members are in it strictly for pleasure, not performance), then perhaps it is time to move on. There is nothing wrong with someone who wants to play in their basement and nowhere else, but if you want to hit the stage and pursue music as a career, you must surround yourself with people who are progressing towards the same goal. Seek out musicians who are moving ahead in music courses at school, who believe that there is always room for improvement in their playing styles, and see whether they want to get together to jam.

Finally: Although it's not fair that right now you are being held back from what you know you want to do, it's also not fair to withhold your thoughts from your bandmates. Communicating openly can work wonders.

Good luck!

## Write To Us!

Address your letters to

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c/o *Canadian Musician*,

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FAX: (905) 641-1648

Contacting us by modem?

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WWW- <http://nor.com/cm>

## What About the Prairies?

I have read many an edition of *Canadian Musician* over the years, and I salute you for your continued focus on Canadian music and musicians. However, from time to time I find myself thinking that the mag should be re-named *Toronto Musician*. Granted, T.O. has a large population and dare I say "thriving" music scene, but come on guys — how about the rest of Canada? Now, I don't mean Vancouver or Montreal, I mean OTHER cities and towns in this big country. I know you get regional reports, but where is Saskatchewan (already I hear the smirks). Maybe you should check out Wide Mouth Mason, Jay Semko or Line Up In Paris. The last I checked we were still part of Canada, even though the Reform Party seems to have overrun us.

*Gord Hildebrand, North Battleford, SK*

**\*Ed:** No smirking here — there are talented musicians holed up in downtown Toronto apartments, as well as scattered throughout the plains of Western Canada. Many of the artists we cover were, at one time, members of small communities from various parts of Canada (check out this issue for k.d. lang, a native Albertan who now divides her time between Vancouver and L.A.).

Our goal is to provide you, the reader, with valuable opinions and information from Canada's and the world's top musicians, regardless of where their current residences may be, or the location of their hometowns — the talented acts from your region included.

# BREAKS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

... **Primal Beat**, Southam New Media's web site designed specifically for musicians, is offering Canadian artists the opportunity to market their bands on the Internet. The site, which boasts over 400 artists to date, was developed in the fall of 1995 and provides Canadian music news, special awards sites, links to hundreds of music sites, and national tour schedules. Primal Beat is divided alphabetically and by genre to make it easier for Net surfers to find what they are looking for.

**Primal Beat** is currently looking for bands/artists who wish to have an Internet presence of their own. Southam New Media offers this service free of charge, providing that musicians meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Submission of a band photo
- ✓ A short sound file (approximately 30 seconds in length)
- ✓ A short video (if available; approximately one minute in length)
- ✓ News articles on the band/artist previously run in Southam-owned newspapers

For more information, contact: Primal Beat, c/o New Media Centre, 10006 101st St., Edmonton, AB T5J 0S1 (403) 429-5423, E-Mail: Primal@thejournal.southam.ca. Web Address: <http://www/theindependent.ca>

... **DKD! Spectacle**, an entertainment brokerage firm based in Montreal, Quebec, is offering a professional entertainment purchasing service representing club owners, corporations, conventions, plus school and festival talent buyers for Quebec's club, festival and CEGEP/University circuit. They are also involved in the "Le Beat" Molson Dry club program, which offers Molson licensees access to a list of domestic and international club attractions, as well as media exposure and Internet links to concert listings from the Molson web site.

For more information, contact: DKD! Spectacle Entertainment Brokers, 1445 Lambert-Closse, #200, Montreal, PQ H3H 1Z5 (514) 939-2554, Ext. 276, FAX (514) 939-2778.

... In other Net-related news, Ace Ruskin Productions is also soliciting bands who want to be on the Internet. The service, entitled **The Independent**, provides a web site for indie bands for a \$25 start-up fee and then a \$50 annual charge. For this cost, bands receive two pictures on the site, the band logo, up to 2,000 words of text and two real audio clips. The Independent will customize the site to the band's specifications.

For more information, contact: Ace Ruskin Productions, 24 Yongeview Ave., Richmond Hill, ON L4C 7A4 (416) 331-4318, FAX (905) 889-2027, E-Mail: [theindependent@ica.net](mailto:theindependent@ica.net), Web Address: <http://www.theindependent.ca>



... The Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Records (FACTOR) recently released their program and deadline schedule. The following is a list of some of their programs, along with application deadlines. For the purposes of the evaluation, musical genres to be considered are Alternative, Pop/Rock, Rock, Country, Reggae, Worldbeat, Classical, Children's, Roots (Folk, Blues and Traditional), Easy Listening (AC and New Age), Jazz (Traditional, Contemporary, Acid), Dance/Rap (Hip-Hop, Euro/House, Urban/R&B, Commercial Dance).

Professional Publishers & Songwriters Demo Award Program  
Next Deadline: July 31, 1997.

Professional Demo Award Program  
Next Deadline: July 31, 1997.

Independent Artists Recording Loan Program  
Next Deadline: July 31, 1997.

FACTOR Loan Program  
Next Deadline: July 31, 1997.

Direct Board Approval Program  
Next Deadline: July 31, 1997.

Video Grant Program  
Next Deadline: August 29, 1997.

Domestic Showcase Support Program  
Next Deadline: October 31, 1997.

Domestic Tour Support Program  
Next Deadline: August 29, 1997.

International Showcase Support Program  
Next Deadline: August 29, 1997.

International Tour Support Program  
Next Deadline: August 29, 1997.

For more information, contact: Foundation to Assistant Canadian Talent on Record (FACTOR), 125 George St., 2nd Fl., Toronto, ON M5A 2N4 (416) 368-8678, FAX (416) 363-5021, E-Mail: [factor@factor.ca](mailto:factor@factor.ca), Web Address: <http://www.factor.ca>

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(604) 980-5341, FAX (604) 984-3162

## NATIONAL GUITAR SUMMER WORKSHOP (NGSW)

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(800) 234-6479/(615) 254-3333,  
FAX (615) 254-5488  
E-Mail: [ngsw@aol.com](mailto:ngsw@aol.com)

## CHICAGO'S NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL

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E-Mail: [indie@indiefest.org](mailto:indie@indiefest.org)

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August 1-3, 1997  
(303) 449-6007, FAX (303) 823-0849

## 1997 INTERNATIONAL PERCUSSION WORKSHOP

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(800) 541-8401, FAX (514) 485-0532

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC EXPO

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FAX (561) 338-5517

## MIAC CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Montreal, PQ  
August 10-11, 1997  
(416) 490-1871, FAX (416) 490-9739  
E-Mail: [kowalenko@musiccanada.com](mailto:kowalenko@musiccanada.com)  
Web Address: <http://www.musiccanada.com/miac>

## NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL AT SEA

Cunard's Queen Elizabeth 2  
August 13-18, 1997  
(212) 880-7500, FAX (212) 949-0915

## 7TH ANNUAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL

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August 22-24, 1997  
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## PACIFIC CIRCLE MUSIC CONVENTION

Sydney, Australia  
September 20-25, 1997  
61.2.9380 6864, FAX 61.2.9380 6754

## 14TH ANNUAL BRAZILIAN INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FAIR EXPOMUSIC 1997

Sao Paulo, Brazil  
September 24-28, 1997  
5511 210-0661, FAX 5511 21-0661

## AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL MUSIC SHOW

Sydney, Australia  
October 2-5, 1997  
613 9867 4222, FAX 613 9867 4111

## PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION (PASIC '97)

Anaheim, CA  
November 19-22, 1997  
(405) 353-1455, FAX (405) 353-1456

## HAMILTON MUSIC SCENE '97

Hamilton, ON  
November 20-23, 1997  
(905) 304-5000

## MID-WEST INTERNATIONAL BAND & ORCHESTRA CLINIC

Chicago, IL  
December 16-20, 1997  
(708) 729-4629, FAX (708) 729-4635

## 25TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAZZ EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

New York, NY  
January 7-10, 1998  
(913) 776-8744, FAX (913) 776-6190

## NAMM INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MART

Los Angeles, CA  
January 29- February 1, 1998  
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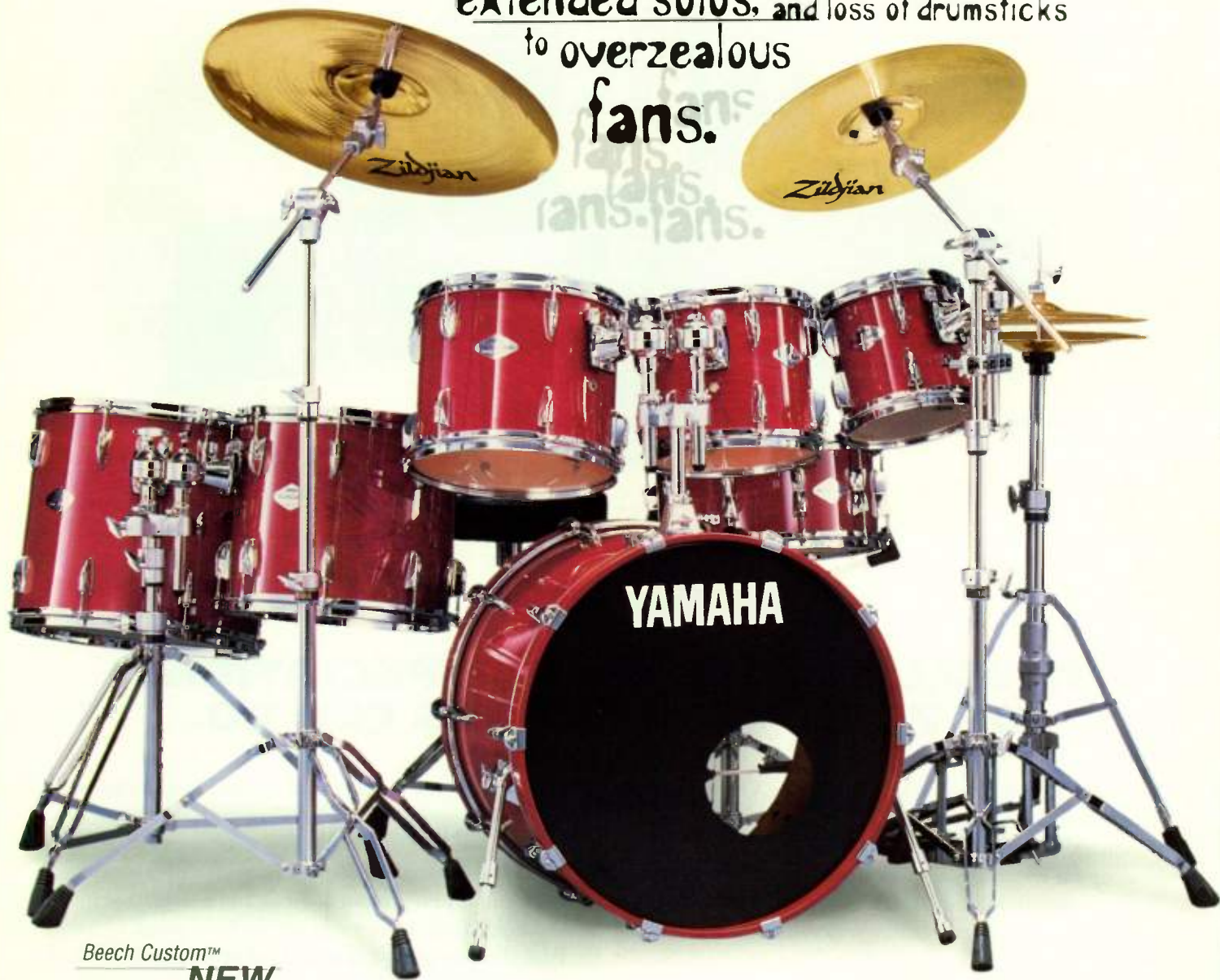
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World Radio History

# S O U N D     C H E C K

by John Albani

## Ednaswap

**Wacko Magneto**  
(A&M/Island Records)

Three and a half year old, Los Angeles-based Ednaswap is comprised of Anne Preven (vocals), Rusty Anderson (guitars), Scott Cutler (guitars), Paul Bushnell (bass), and Carla Azar (drums). *Wacko Magneto* was recorded at Compass Point, engineered by Bryan Carlstrom and produced by Dave Jerden, who's recent projects included Jane's Addiction, Alice in Chains, early Talking Heads and Brian Eno. This album is described in the band's bio as "a smorgasbord of post modern, neo-psychedelic, pre-apocalyptic rock, punk, folk, metal, tribal, funk — a Burroughsian scrap heap of the last two decades pop culture." I'm glad I listened to the CD before reading the bio.

Let me start by saying, I wish every band about to go into the studio to record their album do themselves and their producer a favour by listening to this album. It's the best example of a driving two-guitar band who has the discipline to work out what each other is doing so it works as a whole. Lately, if a band comes to me and wants to record with all their effects to tape and have two guitarists as well, I know it's going to be a recording nightmare. No one listens to what anyone else in the same band is doing and with only 180 degrees to position parts in a mix, everyone is stepping on everyone else's parts. Not to mention you end up with a washy and confusing mix.

The first thing you notice about Ednaswap's debut album is the absence of reverbs and the usual common studio tricks. This album is punchy as hell thanks to the foundation of bass and drums which individually sound great, but together — because of the arrangements — are thunderous. In speaking with guitarist Scott Cutler I found both himself and fellow guitarist Rusty Anderson naturally work out arrangements while writing. This has always made writing a song take a little longer for them but it's well worth it. Dave Jerden was the band's only choice for producer and if they couldn't get him interested they probably were not going to record. They performed a special showcase date in town and only invited him as far as producers go. Lucky for all, he went for it.

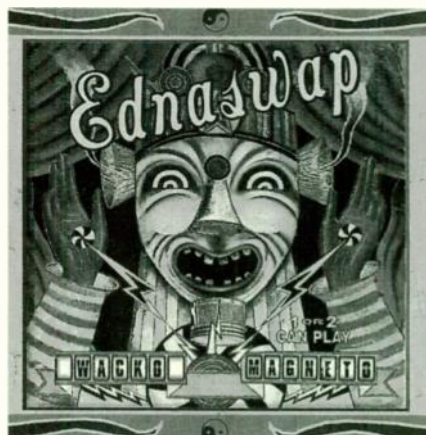
Scott also tells me that Dave and the band felt the songs were already well enough arranged and that they only used three days for pre-production before starting the record. The guitar work really stands out. Both Scott and Rusty are great rhythm and lead gui-

tarists. Without giving away too many secrets, they both use tons of pedals — no racks here. Scott (right side of mix) uses an old Fender Bassman, usually complimented with a Bogner amp which produces a full mid-range crunch. Rusty, as I had suspected, uses a Mar-

shall accompanied by a Vox AC-30 (my favourite) which produces a huge, even-toned biting sound. Scott usually is responsible for the rhythmic foundation of the tracks, where Rusty finds the most clever ways to compliment Scott by filling in the holes with the coolest choices of effects and doubling him with the perfect sound to fill out the tracks. Check out Track #2, "Clown Show", for a great example of Scott and Rusty at their finest. This track is also the lead off with a video just completed.

I also have to mention that the drummer, Carla Azar, blew me away. She is anything but a typical drummer. This is probably a result of an early Stewart Copeland (The Police) influence. Between herself, and sometimes four-cabinet user bassist Paul Bushnell, the tracks all have killer grooves. Add the raspy powerful vocals and very cool lyrics of New York native Anne Preven and this album has never a dull moment. Anne came up with the band's name from a dream in which she was singing in a band that really sucked named Ednaswap.

Scott and Anne have been writing since they met in L.A. some 10 years ago. With the music business being the relay race it is, I feel Ednaswap is far in the lead and has handed one fine baton into the hands of the industry who will now run with it. I only pray they don't trip and drop it.



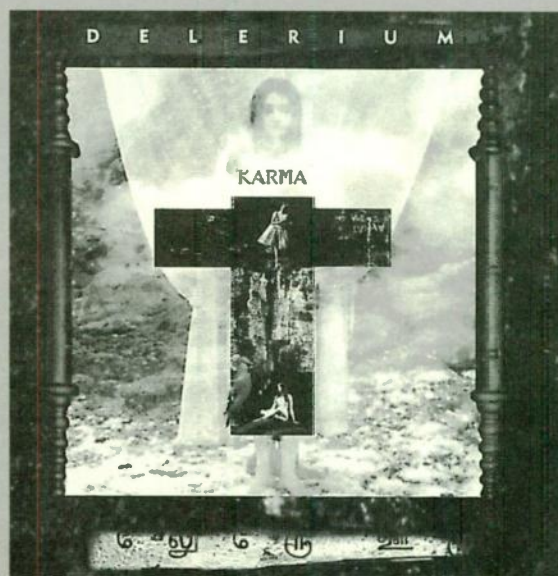
## Delerium

**Karma**

(Nettwerk Records)

The music for this New Age album was written by Bill Leeb and Rhys Fulber with lyric and vocal contributions by Sarah McLachlan, Jacqui Hunt (Single Gun Theory), Kirsty Thirsk (formerly of The Rose Chronicles), Lisa Gerrard (Dead Can Dance) and Camile Henderson. It was produced by Delerium and Greg Reely at Slack/Cryogenics Studio and mixed at Hipposonic Studio and The Warehouse Studio in Vancouver.

This album has quite a selection of interesting sounds such as the Baka Forest Pygmies, Ritual music samples and some Dead Can Dance clips — used with kind permission of course. I found this to be a very relaxing album to listen to. There is always some new sound that catches you off guard. The selection of sounds are well thought out and the mix is quite good. Most of the vocal tracks are used more like instrument textures blended in rather than out front and on top the mix creating an exotic atmosphere. My only real complaint about this record is that every song has almost the exact arrangement. They all start with an interesting sound fading in or starting off and then in a few bars the drum machine starts. The album is so full of interesting sounds that one would think you could come up with a few different arrangement techniques. By the time I got to the fourth song I started to lose interest. Arrangements aside, I do feel this is an album worth checking out.



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## Levon Ichkhanian *After Hours*

(Mediterrano Productions)

Jazz fans: If you haven't got this album yet, shame on you. Canadian/Armenian guitarist/composer Levon Ichkhanian has released his inevitable solo album entitled *After Hours*. This album was produced by Wilson Laurencin, Levon Ichkhanian and Edouard Ichkhanian and recorded at #9 Studios by Jeff Wolpert, Zolis Audio by Jim Zolis, S.G.M., New York by Sergio Garcia-Marruz, Picture Beat Productions by Richard Uglow and Mark Nakamura and V.M. Studios by Vatche.

For those not familiar with Levon, he grew up in Lebanon under the musical direction of his uncle Joseph and at the age of 12 immigrated to Canada. At the age of 13 he started playing in his father's band. At 16 he won the Canadian All Star Jazz Award. He has toured extensively around the world and has appeared in such festivals as Peter Gabriel's Womad. He is a recipient of the Governor General of Canada's acknowledgement for musical excellence and has been recognized as a musical ambassador to Canada. Having stated that, I recommend you just go get the album. Levon is truly an incredible guitarist to listen to and if you see him appearing near your town you had better get tickets early.

Levon's CD features world renowned musicians Wilson Laurencin (drums), John Patitucci (bass), Doug Riley (organ), and Paquito D'Rivera (sax/clarinet). Also, for the first time ever together are the doudouk (American wind instrument), tabla, bouzouki and accordion.

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## Promoting Your Band

### On The Net

The Internet has opened up a new world of promotional opportunities for indie artists. As with any other type of promotion, it will do you little good if you have nothing to promote and audiences are flocking away from your gigs in droves and ignoring your CDs in the stores. The time might be better spent working on your songwriting, your next recording and your live show.

The first step is, if you are not already, getting connected to the Internet and establishing an e-mail address. Have your e-mail address included in all promotional materials including bios, business cards, posters, photos and advertising. Compose a "signature" that appears at the bottom of all your e-mail messages that tells people who you are and where to find you. Establish an electronic mailing list and send out a regular newsletter advising your fans of live appearances, new CD releases and other information on your act.

Read relevant newsgroups and post messages and responses again using a "signature" promoting your music. Many websites provide classified ads where you can post your own messages. To find these, visit Yahoo at <http://yahoo.com> and look under Entertainment:Music:Classifieds.

When you have enough to talk about, considering starting your own web site. This will enable you to provide bios, pictures, video, sound clips, real-time audio, press releases, tour dates, CD release info and anything else of interest to your fans, the media and the music industry. Using programs such as Liquid Audio, the capability now exists to sell dolby-quality audio files of your music over the Internet.

To attract a regular audience, your site must have compelling content, be updated frequently, be well-designed and must download quickly. Visit a lot of other sites for ideas. A selected list of artist sites is featured on Music & Audio Connection at <http://maac.com/music>.

Unless you want to spend all of your time at your computer, have someone who is experienced and competent build and maintain your site for you. Your time is better spent on your music. Your Internet provider can usually help and there are several Internet Presence Providers who can construct your site, host it and maintain it at a reasonable cost.

Once you're open for business, you have to promote your site. The web address should appear on all of your printed materials, send a press release to the media, post its presence on relevant newsgroups, have it included in Internet search engines and directories and get listed on music-related sites. Web promotion is easily more time consuming than building and maintaining your site, so if you ever want to see your instrument or write another song, you will probably need some help. The *Canadian Musician* site (<http://nor.com/cm>) features a list of Canadian artists and we would be glad to receive your submission.

Like any other part of your career, Internet promotion takes a lot of hard work and careful attention to detail. Start small and develop a long range plan and you will find it another valuable addition to your promotional arsenal. If you have any questions, please send them to [info@nor.com](mailto:info@nor.com) or FAX to 905-641-1648.

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BY TREVOR C. COPPEN

In the nineties, the record-buying and concert-going public expects great things for their dollar. Natural sound reproduction is possible in both live and pre-recorded environments. One tool that helps make it possible is the C-Ducer. C-Ducers are contact condenser microphones. These micro-

phones can be placed on any desired surface with the supplied contact tape. A long cable lead from the microphone to the mixing console allows versatility in placement.

Their are a couple of different models of C-Ducers available, and I was fortunate enough to try a few of them.

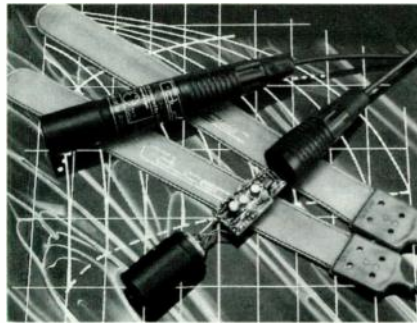
## C-Ducer CPS/8 Contact Condenser Microphone

First, the professional series CPS/8 is a stereo pair of 8" contact mics that come with 600 ohm XLR connectors on a 6' lead. These microphones require phantom power on a standard pin-1 ground, pin-2 live, pin-3 return configuration. If required this pattern can be altered with an unbalanced power supply, allowing a pin-1 ground, pin-2 live, pin-3 disconnected configuration. This stereo set is recommended for piano, harp, and small keyboard instruments.

I found the output of these mics to be very strong and very true to the source sound. The mics are capable of reproducing a bandwidth of 0.1Hz to 1MHz. This output is restricted by the pre-amp to minimize induced noise and interference. The mics have a dynamic range of >155dB, which make them accessible to percussion and other instruments of a large dynamic nature.

I've had good luck with these microphones on harp and piano in a live environment. On the harp I affixed the mic to the plucking side, placing one microphone on the upper register and the other on the lower register. This resulted in a great blend of all the notes on this traditional-sounding instrument. The only thing necessary after that was an HPF on the associated channel, to be tuned on both the upper and lower microphones, and very slight equalization to fit the instrument into the right space in the mix.

I then tried these microphones on a piano, once again in a live environment. The piano took a little more ex-



perimentation. The piano was a baby grand which the performer played mostly in the middle of the keyboard, making the typical placement of microphones at either end of the keyboard unwise. Placing one C-Ducer close to the hammers in the middle of the keyboard and one directly behind it — away from the contact of the hammers — created a great mix of the attacking sound and the resonant sound of the piano.

In both live situations, I was fortunate to have a quiet performance level which did not require a lot of monitor or P.A. volume. This allowed me to keep the mics close to their original sound without having to over-equalize to compensate for volume.

Another positive feature of this product is that you don't need to fret about a mic stand or an expensive mic clip replacement. These mics are low profile and are mounted with an adhesive tape that is supplied with purchase. They can be permanently mounted to an instrument with a heavy duty adhesive tape, also supplied.

I did not have the opportunity, but would be very keen of hearing the results of these microphones in a controlled environment. The studio would allow the full appreciation of these mics. There are other applications, somewhat controlled, that would also allow these mics to be used. Using these mics to ambient mic for foley work, sampling, or a live recording, perhaps even as the supplied literature recommends: miking an engine block. C-Ducers could also be used in a boardroom, taped to a table or podium to pick up those important moments of a director's meeting. Their non-obtrusive packaging allows for this sort of versatility. Keep in mind that you do not need to feel obligated to use these mics as a constant stereo pair; a mic can be used by itself still achieving the same results.

The CPS/8 mics come in a handled hard plastic case which includes replacement adhesive tape and a strong adhesive tape for a permanent installation. Along with the clearly laid out applications and technical information, the supplied paperwork also refers to the notable people who use the C-Ducer contact microphone system. They allow a good portion of the desired miking area to be covered, the only limits being your own creativity. If you are serious about sound in the home studio or the live environment, these microphones are a great option.

For more information contact: Audio Distributors International (ADI), PO Box 99030, 1748 Marie Victorin, Longueuil, PQ J4G 2S6 (514) 646-5181, FAX (514) 646-5181.



# C-Ducer B1000/8-3

BY TREVOR C. COPPEN



The B1000 Gigster Series is a High Z output contact condenser microphone designed with many applications in mind. The >155dB dynamic range allows the variation in applications, only being limited by your imagination. The 8" and 3" length allows versatility for string instruments, ie. guitar, banjo, cello, ukulele, Latin percussion instruments.

The 0.1Hz-1MHz response is limited by the preamp to reduce interference and handling noise. The Gigster Series offers a "Tape Tuner" feature which is essentially a bass roll off attenuator that will accommodate proximity to sound holes and/or bass strings. A 3V lithium battery encased in the 1/4" jack connector is engaged only when your patch cable is plugged into it, much like guitar effects pedals and other battery powered units. Using this jack only when necessary, will be sure to give you the most of your estimated 1000 hours of battery life. Not to worry, the technical information for the battery replacement is given in the supplied manual along with other uses and placement information for these contact microphones. The unit being a High-Z output means that it will be a 1/4" output. The same as a guitar cable. To have this run through most consoles will mean running it through a direct box.

The C-Ducer microphones are equipped with enough adhesive tape to apply, and re-apply to the miked surface in case of a mistake or a change of instrument.

One observation I was able to make was that when attaching this system to your instrument, because of its responsiveness, I would be sure to mount it in such a manner that will not be in the line of contact with hands or picks, if using it with string instruments. I even found that if the attached 6' lead to the microphone was agitated it was audible and rather annoying. I think creativity in even attaching the lead so that it is not too active will benefit the end result of your sound. This is definitely a down fall of the C-Ducer series of contact microphones. That is a small sacrifice to pay for the natural timbre that these microphones are capable of reproducing.

The three-inch length would be my recommendation for most smaller string instruments like an acoustic guitar, banjo, or fiddle. The eight inch tape may be better suited to larger instruments such as a cello, or upright bass guitar, allowing yourself to cover more of the instrument and receive more of the acoustic information that a larger acoustic body delivers.

The beauty of these mics apart from their sound is that they are contact mics, therefore they are low profile — making them invisible on stage, eliminating mic stands and the fear of breaking or losing mic clips. The irony of the mic clip dilemma is the use of the adhesive tape. A permanent installation to your source is the answer here.

These mics would not be recommended for those in a loud environment, requiring a loud monitor volume, or in an area where there are other loud sounds surrounding you and your instrument. If you find yourself constantly finding monitoring problems with this product I would suggest internal pick-ups in your instrument.

The C-Ducer B1000 series of mics could also make your home recordings pretty pleasing. Try recording, for instance, with an acoustic guitar, one track of the higher notes, rolling off the low end, then a second track of the lower notes, EQ-ing out the high notes, and then mixing them together. The possibilities are endless with repositioning of the C-Ducer and the "Tape Tuner" feature.

In retrospect I would like to say that the B1000 series of microphones are great sounding mics to record with or do a solo performance, but not the optimum decision in a loud environment.

For more information contact: Audio Distributors International (ADI), PO Box 99030, 1748 Marie Victorin, Longueuil, PQ J4G 2S6 (514) 646-5181, FAX (514) 646-5181.

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BY NICK BLAGONA

# Drawmer 1962 A/D Converter

The 1962, the latest addition to the Drawmer line, retains all the features that you would expect from a manufacturer that specializes in tube gear. It does go further, though, in the use of a converter with the multi-inputs and the multi-outputs.

The converter provides 16, 18, 20 and 24-bit wordlength outputs in both AES/EBU and S/PDIF formats with enough selectable dither controls to keep a lot of people who don't understand digital technology busy — if not darn right confused. It also includes an ADAT optical interface and a Tascam T-DIF interface. Word sync in and out is provided between 48 kHz, 44.1 kHz and externally clocked sample rates.

I would have to agree with Drawmer that the one major advantage of this hybrid approach is that it combines the dynamic range and stability of today's solid state design with the warmth needed in this cold digital world of ours. The balanced mic input stages feature extremely low noise circuitry followed by a high voltage tube amplifier. This enables modern microphones to take on the characteristics of older tube models. Phantom power (48V) and phase switch are also provided.

The line/instrument pre-amps are compatible with most outputs from electric guitars to stereo keyboards/synths.

There are two dual-stage tubes in the audio path and in order to maintain optimum signal purity, the EQ enhancement and tube drive stages may be switched out. This is to provide the best S/N performance.

Twenty-four-element LED metering is provided along with peak O/L LEDs. Output level metering and gain control is provided and each has a switchable limiter (particularly useful when trying to get the best possible level on digital). A gain reduction LED monitors limiter action and console-style insert points on the rear panel allow some additional processing or additional inputs.

OK — that's enough of the manual chatter. Let's get down to some sounds.

No matter how you slice it, I love tubes. The even harmonics become more apparent, the music sings a little more and you can make things spit out of the speakers. The 1962

has all of these qualities.

The only drawback, from my perspective, is that this unit has a little too much "ear candy". The low and high enhancement section, for example — use it carefully, otherwise each track may be overly enhanced. The tube drive, on the other hand, is great, with just enough "stuff" to make digital sound musical. Again, don't overuse it, unless you believe in the old Rock Credo: "If it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing."

As a Mastering Engineer, I'm not that crazy about the EQ. It's like someone out of a Hi-Fi. You've got your bottoms, your mids and highs. A four band parametric EQ would be wonderful. But, with the insert points you can always use an external EQ.

I had no problem with the limiter. It had a softness to it perfect for digital multitracks. The same thing is true of the low and high pass filters.

The converter is a Drawmer design using a Motorola DSP. It seems to do the job, especially at 24 bits, but the dithering — oh boy! The manual does give a concise selector option but potentially too many choices for the amateur. In mastering I'm quite happy with seven selections of dither. It seems to overkill with 16.

If you've got three ADATs or three Tascam's, a Mackie and a whole lot of sequencing gear, this unit is perfect for you: mic inputs, line inputs, a DI box and a punchier sound. The Drawmer 1962 will be a wonderful tool for location recording, say, to a portable DAT recorder or even for the smaller studios. Personally, I have no use for the Drawmer 1962. Why? I have no need for all the multi-inputs and outputs and I'm quite happy with the Drawmer 1961 as one of my EQs, plus I have a choice of three different converters at my disposal.

All in all this is quite a good little unit. In fact, it's a mini-mixer in a box.

For more information, contact: GerrAudio Distribution Inc., 2 Thorncliffe Park Dr., #9, Toronto, ON M4H 1H2 (888) 462-8346, FAX (888) 329-4377.

NICK BLAGONA IS THE CHIEF MASTERING ENGINEER AT METALWORKS STUDIOS IN MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO.

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meaning.

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The place: a local music store. Time: today. The patrons of this store have just noticed something different – even strange – something they've never seen, and yet something they are all very familiar with.

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WITH STEVE HACKETT  
INTERVIEW BY CAROLYN HEINZE

Earning the reputation of being one of Britain's finest guitarists and composers, Steve Hackett became renowned for his stint with Genesis. Hackett's first solo album was recorded in 1975 and has been followed by 11 releases since, including two collections of acoustic guitar work. In the late 80s, he collaborated with Steve Howe in GTR, which generated a platinum-selling album and attracted a fair amount of media coverage. Hackett's ability to bridge classical, acoustic guitar with modern electric playing has resulted in his receiving immense respect from music circles globally.



## THE TRANSITION FROM ELECTRIC TO ACOUSTIC

"In modern electric guitar playing as we know it, it reduces the instrument to a single line, much the same as a saxophone or a trumpet. The classical or acoustic guitar is a polyphonic experience. That's part of its charm and appeal — the fact that it is self-sufficient.

"Although they are very different, to be good at one doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to be good

at another. But, it is possible to enjoy the two. It's just that if you are a single-line player, what seems to come very hard if you are going to move on to the acoustic is the necessity of dampening the strings naturally. If you are doing single-line work on the electric, you have to basically produce that modulation between the strings in order for each note to speak like the human voice.

## STARTING OUT ON ACOUSTIC/CLASSICAL

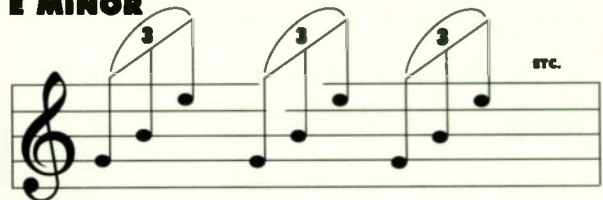
"I think the thing that's kindest to the fingernails is having a nylon guitar, because at least initially if you have a nylon guitar it won't pull them off. Also, taking good care of the nails is important: have a good collection of nail files, and buff your nails to help get rid of the jagged edges which catch. Nail care is something you'll really find out about.

"Beyond that, I started out using the thumb and forefinger at first. I didn't really incorporate the other fingers into it until much later. They tell you to go from one, to two, to three, to four.

"I've developed a technique, which I gather is the same technique which Chet Atkins uses, a three-fingered technique — something you would normally use to do triplets on the guitar. It goes basically from thumb, to forefinger, to middle finger, and it rotates again (SEE FIGURE). It's using the right hand in a triplet figure, and once you get comfortable enough in doing that, you can do very fast

runs. I think in order to achieve good fluency on guitar it's important to have a right-hand technique.

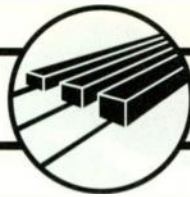
### E MINOR



"It's hard at first, but when you get it right it starts to sound like a galloping horse. It's very difficult to achieve independence of movement between the second string and the first string, but once you get it, it's so easy and it sounds fast. It's the idea of the arpeggio being mightier than the run."

STEVE HACKETT RECENTLY RELEASED *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, HIS LATEST CLASSICAL GUITAR PROJECT.

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keyboard

WITH BOB WISEMAN  
INTERVIEW BY DANTE DAMIANI

# Soloing

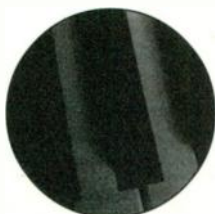
## the "no-method" approach

Bob Wiseman, former keyboard player with Blue Rodeo, is currently working as a solo artist.

He takes his own approach to writing a keyboard solo which may or may not be every musician's cup of tea.

However, his no-method approach is a combination of passion, experimentation and raw performance which produces astounding results.

In an effort to add more texture to sound, he has enlisted the aid of rolls of tape, his fists and other body parts.



"I think a keyboard solo is a heavy musical experience. People are moved by it. By writing from the heart, its translation is authentic and genuine.

"Even if it doesn't sound like it's working for you, it might be working for your audience. The idea is to give into what you're feeling. When it's not working, the trick is to be graceful, otherwise it can be a potentially embarrassing situation. Remember, you can always sit down later and rework the solo.

"Playing music on a commercial level can sometimes be uninteresting, and if it's not where you're at musically, it can feel awkward. There are certain restraints that can't be ignored, however, a solo is an opportunity to experiment, so try not to be affected by what is going on around you.

"For me, writing a keyboard solo is an outlet for my thoughts. It's kind of a spiritual thing. The approach I take is as if I were entering unfamiliar territory. It's easy to play something you already know, but trying something new is an altogether different experience.

"I approach it as if I'm moulding my sound — similar to a sculptor creating a work of art. You are continuously adding and then taking away until you've accomplished the desired sound. It's much more satisfying than simply playing the same old thing.

"The result is spontaneous, and never the same thing twice, but, that's not to say you don't maintain a structure.

"If I am performing live, the solo is where I completely forget about the audience. It's like turning on the automatic pilot switch.

"The ability to write a solo stems from the ability to hear what's going on inside you. My advice for anyone trying to write a solo is to listen, make music on the spot, and try to hear it in your head before you play it."



CM



BY MARK BROWNE

# FRETLESS

## ARTICULATION AND NUANCE



MARK BROWNE HAS TOURED AND RECORDED WITH SIMPLE MINDS, MELISSA ETHERIDGE, JEWEL AND PAULA COLE. AS OF THIS ARTICLE, MARK IS ON TOUR WITH PAULA COLE.

One of the greatest things about fretless bass is that everyone creates their own signature (sound) on the instrument. By the nature of its fretless neck there are unlimited possibilities for individual nuance and expression. I would like to share a few of the concepts that were inspirational to me in creating my own personal vocabulary on the fretless bass.

**Y**ears ago I had a roommate that was (and still is) an exceptional musician. He helped me become aware of having a strong concept of musical articulation. Articulation can be rhythmic or melodic. It has to do with the nature and character of sounding a note on your instrument, and how it relates to the other notes around it. When learning to play fretless bass I concentrated on developing articulation. Examples of articulation include sliding up to a note(s), slurring down to a note(s) and other expressions such as vibrato or a variety of note durations.

Sliding, slurring and approach notes all give a wide variety of character to how a note is initiated. This technique includes controlling rise and fall times (the time it takes from the start of the slide or slur until the deserved pitch is achieved). The tempo of the piece of music as well as rhythmic motifs are strong governing factors in choosing the right feel for these approaches as possible. In singing a phrase or line, one can feel the natural tendencies of the human voice to fall subtly into notes. Emulating this looseness in phrasing can add interesting tensions and drama to static lines, ostinatos and solo phrases.

Let's think a moment about vibrato. This is one of the most overly-exploited expressions on the fretless bass. Try to be aware of the nature of vibrato and its use in all the music you listen to (guitar solos, saxophone, violin, vocals, etc.).

This could mean a choice by the instrumentalist NOT to use vibrato as well. A vibrato can have characteristics of speed and depth (how much the pitch is oscillated sharp and flat). Some fretless players unconsciously mask pitch with too "nervous" or fast of a vibrato, others will use vibrato every note they play. Use vibratos consciously and with subtlety. Be aware that too much depth in your vibrato (pitch modulation) will blur intonation and make your playing with other instruments sound "out of tune". Practice both slow and fast vibratos in the context of phrases and lines. Don't disregard intonation. Be subtle and aware of your vibrato in relationship with the tempo of the music. A little vibrato goes a long way.

A vibrato can initiate immediately as the note is sounded or begin later while the note is sustaining. A great instrument to listen to and study for vibrato ideas is the human voice. Check out Stevie Nicks (Fleetwood Mac) — she's a good example of a fast vibrato. A good example of a slower approach to vibrato is Chrissie Hines (The Pretenders). Each of these vocalists exhibit strong vibrato characteristics, both approaches are equally valuable examples to emulate in one's playing. Their key words here are "both approaches are equally valuable". Variety in expression can be one of the most dynamic nuances.

Duration of notes within a phrase is another strong source of individual nu-

ance. I find that the fretless bass allows wonderful control over note duration and character. By taking a simple scale, or almost any phrase, one can practice a mixture of note durations. Try rhythmic ideas in your music. It's not speed I'm talking about, it's note duration. Listen to other styles of music for new ideas. Gary Willis (in my opinion one of the true masters of the fretless bass) is a player that has an exciting grasp of rhythmic phrasing and displays an awesome prowess in the use of note duration. His solos contain a wide variety of note articulation from 32nd note durations to whole note legato phrases.

By practising with imagination, you'll continually discover the expressive powers of the fretless bass. Seek new music and discover its articulations and nuance. Try these discoveries in your music to build a more powerful vocabulary for expression. I used the example of the human voice singing phrases twice in this article. It's always been my source of inspiration for bass lines and solos on the fretless bass. When creating bass lines, try singing your idea first — trust your natural phrasing instincts. Use your imagination and try a variety of nuances and articulations to add individual character to your lines. Soon your fretless lines will be as original and distinct as your personality.

CM



BY RICK GRATTON

# RHYTHMIC ILLUSIONS WITH ODD NOTE GROUPINGS

Have you ever watched a magician perform a trick that totally dumbfounded you, and then when the trick was revealed your next impression was "Ah, that's it? Even I can do that!"?

The following exercises deal with odd note groupings (those tricky little 3's, 5's and 7's) played in common rhythms — 16ths and triplets.

Your first impression is to feel that you're hearing some kind of odd time signature,

but in actuality it really is just 4/4. Each example will have its basic rhythm with accents written for the snare drum (use any sticking of your choice) and then a groove idea will be voiced on the drumset. Each grouping is shown in brackets underneath the groove idea.

Once mastered, you too can become the next David Copperfield of the musical world (Claudia Schiffer not included!)

Here we have a one-bar pattern accent every note.



Next: five note accents — every 5th note is accented.



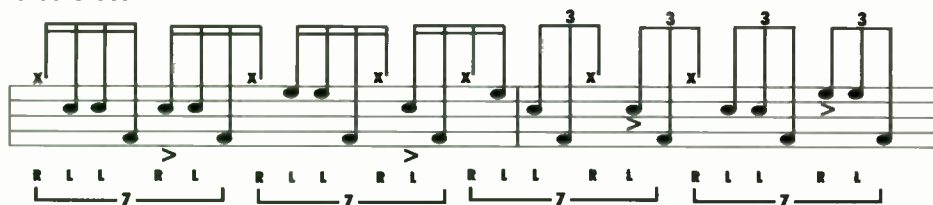
Every 6th note is now accented.



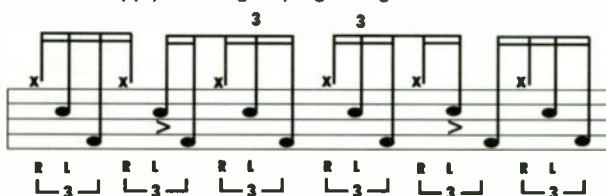
Every 7th note is accented.



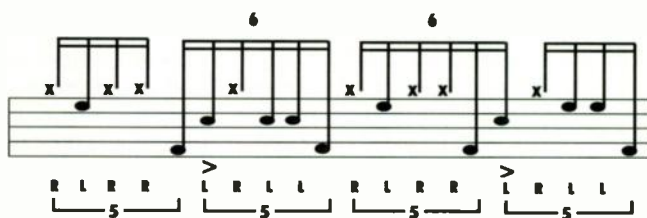
Groove idea



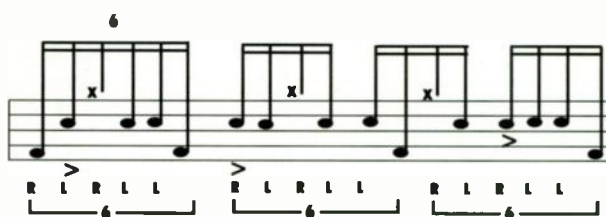
Now let's apply a note grouping as a groove idea.



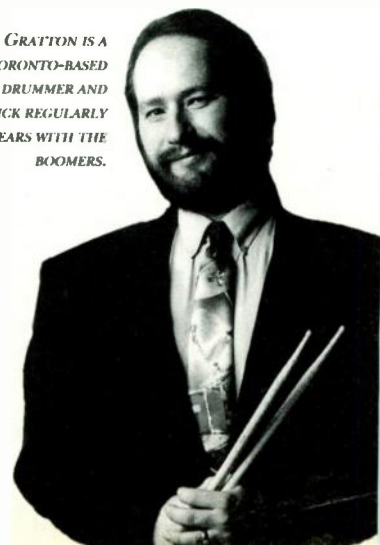
Groove idea.



Groove idea



RICK GRATTON IS A TORONTO-BASED FREELANCE DRUMMER AND TEACHER. RICK REGULARLY APPEARS WITH THE BOOMERS.



Well... there you have it. Until next time, remember — "Giant leaps take small steps!"

BY EVAN CRANLEY

# EXERCISES FOR THE POP-ROCK TROMBONE PLAYER



EVAN CRANLEY IS THE TROMBONE PLAYER FOR THE TORONTO-BASED GYPSY SOUL. THEY ARE GEARING UP FOR A TOUR OF NORTH AMERICA, SET TO KICK OFF THIS FALL.

I would like to start off by saying that I'm not a traditional jazz player. My approach to playing differs from traditional standpoints. My background comes from the tonal and atonal classical era and pop-rock veins. So, sonic qualities are quite important to me. Sonic manipulation, texture, distortion, etc. — anything to "freak" the sound to keep the listener involved in the playing.

I would suggest obscure guitar pedals: Chorus, Flanger, Big Muff, Mistress, Overdrive and so on, to work your sound. Be innovative. The Brecker Bros. are quite exceptional at achieving this type of playing. The trombone isn't just for the back of a symphony anymore. Don't be afraid to "screw" with the sonic proportions.

As far as practice exercises are concerned, I've written some passages that are helpful to enhance endurance, tone, dexterity, attack and speed. I find arpeggiated exercises especially useful for increasing speed and dexterity.

Actually, cello or trombone concertos really help my endurance and overall playing. I think it's essential for any trombone player to play these types of music — no matter what genre they are focused on. It's amazing how relative the sonatas are to pop-rock playing. Connecting both styles

will help your tone and arranging skills, not to mention your musicality.

When applying the exercise to arranging in a pop-rock setting, make sure you take into account the value of the "song". Be as tasteful as possible, but keep it interesting. I write and arrange with my partner for songwriters in my ensemble. This challenges me to achieve qualities the writer is looking for. Writing for "song"- oriented players is a lot different than the trombone player who plays in a jazz or traditional classical setting. Remember: it gives you the chance to achieve a very physical performance, keeping the listener interested in your style of playing. Have fun with it!

When preparing yourself for a performance, warm up backstage with a "siren" sound on your mouthpiece. Combine it with "long tones" through your horn, make a dent in the wall — be forceful without over-playing.

## Practise in all keys

both major and minor.

The image contains three staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff shows five arpeggiated exercises labeled C+, D+, E+, F+, and G+. The second staff shows two more arpeggiated exercises labeled F+ and G+. The third staff shows chromatic exercises with slurs and accidentals (b, #) for 'long tones', ending with 'etc.'.

For "long tones", attack and timbre, slurred in chromatic fashion.

BY ANDY WYSE

# PREPARING FOR A GIG: MUSICALLY & TECHNICALLY



photo by Gordon Hawkins

So, you're taking the show on the road? Seeing the light of day after spending countless months staring relentlessly at the concrete walls of your rehearsal space seemed like an eternity away, but now it's reality and you feel ready to go. You've done your final undie check (yup, seven clean pairs), kissed your loved ones good-bye, and with that you pull your drummer out of bed and pile into the bus with your entourage. The quick-paced tempo of life on the road can be very overwhelming, but you can find salvation in knowing that you are prepared musically as well as technically.

Before I go on tour with my band, Glueleg, to prepare myself musically I like to spend most of my time (when I'm not writing music) on personal practice, because on the road it's pretty much next to impossible to do any (I suppose if you wanted you could wind out in a hotel room, but it would probably result in a pretty irritated road manager having to deal with extremely irritated hotel people).

I find that staple technical exercises involving scales and modes are a good way of keeping my chops up. The exercise outlined below is one that Steve Lederer, a previous sax teacher of mine, showed me in high school. This exercise should be learned in every key, starting at a moderate tempo. It is a valuable little clip because it outlines the diatonic 7th chords that lie within any particular major scale. There are several good publications that have excellent exercises as well. I like to work from a book called *The Saxophonist's Workbook* (Encore Publications), by Larry Teal. It's a book of fundamental sax exercises, which covers the full range of the horn. Jamming along with whatever grooves I find interesting is another valuable way of staying in shape. The remainder of my practice time goes to full band rehearsal so that I know my material inside and out.

## Cycle of 7ths

CMaj7                  Dmin7                  Emin7

FMaj7                  G7                  Amin7

Bm7(b5)                  CMaj7



On to gear: When purchasing equipment, always research it fully. Find out its capabilities and its limitations. Always buy from reputable dealers and ask lots of questions: Is it durable? Does the manufacturer have a good service reputation? Renting before buying is a good idea, because sometimes when you bring a piece of equipment into a live situation, it responds quite differently than it did within the confines of the music store.

Like any craftsman, the condition that you keep your tools in is very important. Most of my equipment maintenance happens before I leave my rehearsal space. Things like picking out reeds, pad replacement and instrument adjustment if done in advance will save headaches and hassle on the road. I use a wireless rig to mic my sax, so I keep a supply of fresh batteries on hand. For my keyboard rig I check all my cables for breaks, and clean all of my jacks and pots with contact cleaner. A good dust brush is essential for helping to keep dust build-up on keyboards and mixers to a minimum. Remember: dust is electronic equipment's worst enemy.

Once at the venue, getting all your gear up and running should be a breeze. An important thing to keep in mind is for your band to be efficient at sound check. The sound tech will appreciate this and be a little more willing to take the time to work out any existing bugs. (By the way, a good way of getting "in" with the soundman is to approach him and start "talking gear". Trust me, you'll have a friend for life!)

When playing at the sound level that my band pushes live, getting my sax monitor level up to where I can hear it on stage usually results in the sound tech having to spend extra time eliminating feedback from my monitors. However, with the cheesy underpowered rigs in some clubs, you just have to grin and bear a monitor level that's a little less than adequate. In these situations I find that earplugs help me to hear my sax through bone conduction in my head.

This outline of preparatory steps for touring is a tried and true method that works for me. All of these tips should help you feel a little more organized on the road, and give you peace of mind that your set of shows will come off without a hitch.

ANDY WYSE IS THE SAXOPHONE AND KEYBOARD PLAYER FOR TORONTO'S GLUELEG. GLUELEG IS CURRENTLY ON TOUR IN PROMOTION OF THEIR LATEST LIQUID/EMI RELEASE, CLODHOOPER.

with Michelle Wright  
Interview by Carolyn Heinze

Country music icon Michelle Wright, born of a musical family, has been singing all of her life. Starting her professional singing career as a teenager, Michelle has grown into one of Canada's most celebrated female artists, and is known internationally for her strong vocal abilities. Although she confesses that she doesn't over-analyse her singing, Michelle has offered a few thoughts on how to take care of your voice, and to avoid future vocal problems.

## Avoiding Vocal Damage



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAVANNAH MUSIC

"One time in the early days, I was having problems with my voice. I went to a teacher in Sudbury and asked her: 'What's going on here?'"

"I was singing in keys that were out of my range, as I have a lower voice. In my naiveté, I was learning the songs that the band played off the radio exactly — this was before I was writing my own material. I thought it was unfair to ask them to change the keys, so I would just sing a song in the key that the singer on the radio was singing it in. That was not a good idea, because my voice is a lot lower than a lot of the girls."

"I have had nodules, and I had one laser surgery operation about three or four years ago. That was just because I was going too hard. Nodules are caused by the vibration of your vocal chords hitting one another — there are two vocal chords. If you are straining too much, or not opening up your wind pipe enough for air to come through, those two chords start banging together like a vibration and callouses will develop. It is caused by bad technique."

"Getting your hearing tested is another good thing to do. Getting your ears cleaned is also important. One of the reasons that I had nodules was that my right ear was clogged completely. So I was pushing harder because I wasn't hearing as well."

"Singing from your diaphragm is really important, as opposed to singing from your throat. I put a belt underneath my clothes around my diaphragm to make sure that I could feel myself pushing up against the belt. That's how I know that I am using my diaphragm."

"Making sure that your monitors are loud enough so that you can hear yourself singing is essential as well. I've started using ear monitors — I quit smoking and got ear monitors at the same time. As a result of those two investments, I have had no voice trouble at all on this tour."

**CM**

BY PAUL LAU

# GENERATIVE MUSIC COMPOSITION

There is an ancient Chinese Daoist aphorism that music composition and wood carving are very similar. When a carving is complete, it has been created at the expense of all the wood that has been carved away. To the wise listener, only the Music of Nature is complete and undiminished.

This less is more philosophy of music seems foreign to musicians raised in a Western tradition where virtuoso performances and technically challenging compositions are the greatest of accomplishments.

Most music software reflects this bias, assuming that the typical end user is a commercial studio musician with chops and a background in recording technology. Successive waves of sequencing software have produced few fresh ideas or interfaces. In fact, software manufacturers seem out of step with their consumers, many of whom are enthusiasts of new forms of electronic music which owe more to the compositional techniques of the Avante Garde than the traditions of the Royal Conservatory.

With the ascendancy of the Internet Generation, there is an increased impatience with the notion that electronic composition should remain the exclusive medium of academics and professional musicians. Electronic Music has become the folk music of the Internet, with pioneers like Kraftwerk, Tangerine Dream, Eno and Devo attaining almost mythical status on the World Wide Web.

Ambient music, or music designed for specific environments, has its roots in the *Musique d'ameusement* (background music) experiments of Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud in the early 1920s. Where Satie's experiments with furniture music ended with an overly-attentive audience refusing to treat his pieces as part of the ambience, the proliferation of Muzak has made the idea of programmed music commonplace. Much contemporary ambient music has its roots in the modal experiments of John Cage in the late 1940s (particularly evocative piano pieces such as "Dream" and "In a Landscape").

Many of the compositional techniques and ideas developed by pioneers such as Cage were adopted in the Ambient recordings released on the EG label in the late 1970s and early 1980s under the sponsorship of Brian Eno. The Ambient series introduced listeners to a variety of new music composers including Jon Hassell, Harold Budd and Laraaji, (and the soon to be commercially formidable

Eno/Dan Lanois production team.) With the subsequent discovery that electronic compositions presented a perfect background wash for sampled drum loops, Ambient dance music was born.

Given his patronage of new music over the past 30 years, it is little wonder that Brian Eno's enthusiastic endorsement of a new computer-based software package would stir interest in Internet music circles. Since 1995, Sseyo Music in the United Kingdom have been selling and distributing their unique music authoring systems through the Internet, bypassing the music retail process altogether.

Eno has coined a new catch phrase generative music to describe the products of Sseyo's flagship software packages; the powerful Koan Pro, and the hip, icon-based Koan X. In actuality, both software packages are artsy algorithmic composition tools which produce tonal ambient music with or without drum loops. The generational label seems to be an attempt to put some distance between the Koan packages and their recent ancestors, the Macintosh based M, Max and Jam Factory software.

In fact, the Koan packages are different, in their populist approach to music production; adopting themselves exclusively to a PC based environment and taking maximum advantage of Creative Labs Awe 32 Soundblaster sound cards. This software is designed for both the non-musician and the experienced composer bored with traditional software tools.

Sseyo go out of their way to stress the non-Western nature of their software, sometimes bordering on the silly. As an example, Koan Music can be thought of as being comparable to a ball bearing travelling down a guide or chute. Each time the ball bearing makes the journey it will travel a different path, but the available paths are constrained by the chute.

While the New Age tone of the Koan web site may put off some visitors, the software is remarkable.

Koan Pro is an overwhelming powerhouse of user definable parameters and musical templates, which can be customized or randomized to produce striking and original pieces. While the graphic interface owes much to earlier Mac-based algorithmic composition programs, the number of possible permutations and styles (and the ease of using the program with an ordinary sound card) make it irresistible. Exotic scales and modes are supported. Results are both personal and un-



predictable. This is a serious tool for budding composers willing to spend the time and effort to experiment and master the interface.

Koan X is a funky junior version of Koan Pro, with a delightfully strange graphic interface which resembles a video game. It is addictive and tremendous fun. To create new compositions, you can rely on the program's random generator to pick instruments and mode, or drag small icons representing different mixable phrases into the composition. Additional styles can be purchased in packages bundled for different sound cards.

By placing icons in the center of the screen, the user can define pitch, amplitude and stereo positioning. Alternately, you can send individual phrases floating around the screen like bumper cars bouncing into each other for a dramatic stereo effect. The software is clearly geared towards the techno market and the more casual user.

While listening to your new computer generated compositions, I leave you with a final Daoist aphorism; Sound itself is devoid of emotion. It is only from a person's point of view that music acquires its emotions. You may come to find your new synthetic compositions surprisingly human.

PAUL LAU IS FORMERLY A ROLAND CANADA MUSIC SPECIALIST, AND PRESENTLY A MIDI/INTERNET CONSULTANT IN TORONTO. PAUL RECENTLY RELEASED A NEW GOSPEL/POP ALBUM ON HALO RECORDS, ENTITLED *STANDING ON THE EDGE OF TIME*.



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photographs by Matthew Welch

# DANIEL LANOIS

by Nick Krewen

ON RECORDING

Over the years, Daniel Lanois has chosen some pretty exotic locales to conduct his business: a New Orleans mansion, a Mexican cliff side dwelling, and a converted Californian porn theatre among them.

The reason for his choices, however, isn't as scientific as one might presume. "Hey, you've got to keep yourself amused," chuckles Lanois, whose multifaceted career as musician, composer, recording artist and producer has placed him at the vanguard of contemporary music.

Although the Hull-born, Hamilton-raised French Canadian has graced us with a couple of imaginative and critically lauded solo albums in the folk-sculpted *Acadie* and the elegant *For the Beauty of Wynona*, as well as the moody score for the Miramax motion picture *Sling Blade*—Lanois admittedly has made more of a mark for his production expertise.

With sales approaching 30 million copies alone for U2's troika of breakthrough commercial successes, *The Unforgettable Fire*, *The Joshua Tree* and *Achtung Baby*, co-produced with Brian Eno, as well as Peter Gabriel's landmark *So* and *Us* albums, Lanois' profile and reputation in the late '80s was irrefutable. He brought new respectability to Robbie Robertson, The Neville Brothers and Bob Dylan as solo artists, and in the '90s is helping Emmylou Harris reinvent her own creative wheel, as indicated by 1995's wonderful *Wrecking Ball*.

But the journey began long before the Grammys and his ownership of the impressive New Orleans mansion studio Kingsway;

before his groundbreaking exploration of ambient music pathways with the aforementioned Mr. Eno; and even before the 1977 establishment of his renowned Grant Avenue Studio nestled within the heart of Hamilton. It began with a dream, his brother Bob, and a small four-track studio in the laundry room of his mother's Ancaster, Ontario house in 1970. The brothers Lanois recorded everyone from country artists to Haitian choirs. Early clients included Buffalo's future funk master Rick James and Talking Heads. It was in the early '80s that Grant Avenue became the sonic laboratory for Brian Eno's research into ambience and related treatments.

"With Brian, he always manages to get a result, even with limited tools," says Lanois. "It's a good lesson. Sometimes we have preconceptions about what we need to be able to operate, but limitations can be your friend as well."

After a year or so of completing several ambient album landmarks, including *On Land*, *The Pearl* (with Harold Budd), and *Apollo: Atmospheres & Soundtracks* (with Roger Eno), Eno got the call from U2 to produce *The Unforgettable Fire* and took Lanois with him to Ireland.

Now 45, Lanois has never looked back.

A restless nomad who for the moment calls Jamaica home, Lanois' gifted combination of consummate musicianship and creative telepathy evokes soulfully passionate performances from his clients, persuading them to rise to the challenge within. "I guess my sense of commitment is really what rubs off on people, what seems to hang in the atmosphere, and people respond to that," Lanois

suggests over the phone from California. "What I choose to work with project wise will be something that I care about. That promotes performance better than anything I know."

Twelve years after breaking the international barrier with *The Unforgettable Fire*, Dan Lanois is busier than ever. He's just wrapped Bob Dylan's latest album *Time Out of Mind* in Miami, and produced Emmylou and Emmylou-less versions of "Blue-Eyed Jane" for Dylan's upcoming *The Songs of Jimmie Rodgers: A Tribute*. He's embarked on a promotional West Coast concert swing with Harris and Hamilton songwriter Tim Gibbons for *Sling Blade*, and recorded demos with model and *The Fifth Element* actress/singer Milla Jovovich and soulful British singer Seal. He's also booked to produce New Orleans drummer Brian Blade's debut album for Blue Note, a label for which he serves as an A&R consultant.

*"For me, the ambient recordings that took place in the early '80s in Hamilton were really the backbone of my experimentation. That was the most exciting time for me, in regards to experimentation. I didn't have a lot going on around me in the sense of distraction. Nobody knew who I was, and I sat comfortably in my laboratory spending late nights working on equipment. That was a real luxury. At that time I met Brian Eno. There was really a concentrated period of experimentation from '79 to '84, and I have to say those were the real driving years for making methodic discoveries. Now there's an ambient music resurgence, with beats and whatnot. But I feel that those records were part of the pioneer days for ambience."*

*N.K.: "I think also maybe the pioneer days for pop, because there's an ambient texture and feel to every record you've produced. I look at that as the line of consistency in your work."*

*"That's a good point. When Brian Eno and I went to Ireland to work with U2, we took that sound with us. It was the sound we were excited about. They were looking to begin a new chapter for themselves, and it worked very well with their music. I think there was some kind of synchronicity in the air. If you remember there was a Simple Minds' record called New Gold Dream that very much had that sound to it as well. I don't know if it was synchronicity or coincidence, but the mid-'80s welcomed that sound we were already experimenting with."*

Lanois took an hour to speak with *Canadian Musician* from the studio he shares with protégé Mark Howard in Oxnard, California, before resuming sessions for his as-yet untitled third solo album, due this Fall.

"I rent a theatre in California — the Boulevard Theatre — and it's an old Mexican pornographic cinema, about 7,000 square feet of open space. And I rent that with Mark Howard and it's fully intact — it's got the screen there and the projection room. What we've done is we've picked up some old movies, and we're projecting them onto the screen. While we're working on music, we keep ourselves amused by doing the projections. We have slide projections and '60s light shows complete with oil wheels and mirror balls. It's fantastic to listen to music and have these visuals coming at you, and it's really got me thinking about how I can incorporate all of this into my future live shows. I like the idea of the installation, sort of combining cinema with live performance, so somebody can actually sit down and have an amazing time for an hour and a half or two hours."

"Location, location, location!" well may be the mantra of the real estate agent, but Lanois has probably done more for customizing unlikely environments for potential recording sites than anyone else. His most striking discovery was a picturesque perch near Cabo, Mexico. "It was carved out of the top of the mountain," says Lanois. "It was half inside and half outside. If you kept walking to the back of the control room, eventually you'd just be exposed to the elements." He laughs. "It was like recording in this big Spanish courtyard. It was in the Baja. We had a provisional working space we called The Birdhouse, because it was so open there were birds and critters in there all the time. It was something special."

However, Lanois says he's not fastidious when it comes to choosing potential locations. "I've made music in all kinds of dif-

ferent places, and some of them were unlikely places," he says. "I also have to say that I really like tiny rooms. Tiny rooms give you a focus you don't get in a bigger space." The choice usually varies according to situation. "I've always wanted to go to Mexico, so that was just a dream that came true. With Luscious Jackson, it was 'Hey, they were already in that room, so I'll bring some equipment in.' Sometimes there's sort of a grand dream associated with it. Other times, it's right down to practicality."

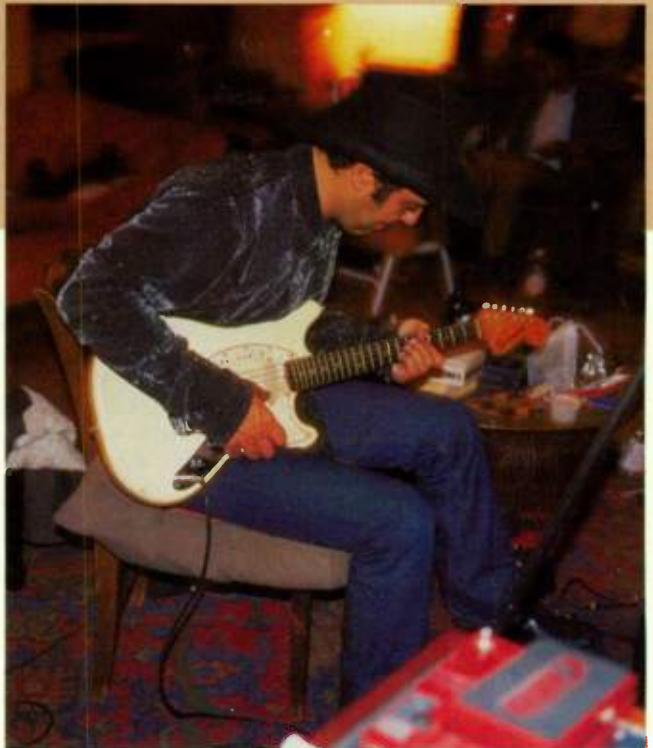
If the studio is going to be a high traffic area due to a flow of musicians and friends dropping by, Lanois recommends shooting for a bigger space. "Probably one of the most difficult locations was the Luscious Jackson record *Fever In Fever Out*. We did the bulk of it in the drummer's apartment, which was my suggestion, because they were rehearsing there," he laughs. "It was really cramped. We had too much equipment. It was ridiculous. But some nice things came out of there, even though it was physically uncomfortable. "Big spaces are good and tend to promote performance. But these intimate rooms are pretty cool too. The Neville Brothers' *Yellow Moon* was done in an intimate (house) setting. "I think in the end we're just trying to keep ourselves interested."

Of course, the result is only as good as the equipment you employ.

Whenever the tape is rolling — and with Lanois, the tape is ALWAYS rolling — he favours the Neve 8068 as his console of choice. "It's got a lot of headroom, which means you can really overdrive it, and you won't get nasty distortion," he explains. "You'll get musical distortion. That pretty much comes down to the groove amplifiers that are used in most consoles. They're without integrated circuitry. You get a certain kind of sound in the wiring. No chips.

"I also rely on Neves and APs to go to tape, monitoring on two consoles. The other one is an Amek. The Amek gets all the effects, and all the extra return I need."

Lanois believes the Neve 8068 is more dynamic. "It's what you get when you have a lot of headroom, headroom meaning you can put a lot into it, and it won't break down. If it does break, it does



so in the musical tension. I think that's what adds up to the warmth. Overdrive, amplifiers and the mids.

"From what I can tell, what happens is the mid-range disintegrates a little bit, so it allows the bottom and the top to come through more, and that gets translated as a warmer sound. Whereas, if you were really to overdrive a more modern circuit and amplifiers, its personality would not change that much, but at a certain



point it would just choke and give up, and you'd get no musical distortion. So it's almost like a ceiling or a threshold.

"This older gear doesn't have a ceiling. It just changes its colour to accommodate the abuse," he chuckles. That accounts for the warmth? "It's a hard thing to describe," he admits. "With digital recording, it either likes what you do or it doesn't. It doesn't have any in-between appreciation. So if you distort — if you send too much information to the digital format, it just flips out at a certain point, and just gives you a — BRAACK! — this interesting crackle." Lanois emits a blaring vocal sound over the phone to illustrate the BRAACK!

"Whereas an analog or an analog kind of format will accommodate level, and it won't go — BRAACK! It won't scream at you, or make a nasty sound. So that's the personality."

"There's a lot of processing equipment that I've used to make things more interesting. Sometimes I'll do it while recording, sometimes I'll do it after the fact. Rhythm boxes, beat machines and samplers are more interesting when they're amplified. You put a sample through an 18" speaker, and it's going to pack a certain punch it won't have if you just record it straight into the console. I'd like to promote re-amplification.

"I also have this mixing idea that I'm starting to experiment with that I'm very excited about. Traditionally, the way mixing is done is that you take your tracks, and you put 'em back through the console, and you re-brand them. But what that doesn't give you is depth of field. No amount of EQ or even a reverb, creates the same depth of field you get when you mic a bunch of musicians in a room and everybody's standing at a different distance from the microphone. My latest thought is that you take your 24 tracks, or whatever you've got, and you put each track back through an amplifier and into a speaker. So you take your bass and you pipe it through an 18" speaker, take your hi-hat and you pipe it through a small Bose speaker and on and on, and you adjust your speakers in such a way that you create a sonic environment that you re-mic with your stereo microphone. And you get all your depth of field, — exactly what you're hearing — at that moment, which is what you will essentially get on your tape."

Lanois says the most important sonic aspect for recording is your source. "The instruments you use and the tones you have are at the front of the chain, and then the mics that you use, the pre-amps — I think those are the real personality bits of the process," he explains. "I'm a fan of the Cole's Ribbon Mic. That's a currently made and available English mic. I really like the RCA Ribbon mics, which are not made

anymore. Ribbon mics really handle transience and bass very well. It's kind of like the stylus of a record player. It follows like a needle will follow a groove, whereas this is a ribbon that follows the sound wave that it sees. So it's sort of this little floating flag inside. It's a very organic sound, and dynamic. You really hear it in the mix."

Lanois says the ribbon microphone's greatest response is in the low mid-range. "From 100 to 900 Htz the ribbon microphone is really good at handling those frequencies. Those happen to be really musical frequencies that's usually the bulk of your sound, certainly in the way of a voice or a drum or a bass guitar."

Other microphones of preference include Neumann tube mics. "I have a great assortment of them," he says. "I have two great U47s and great U49s. If you get anywhere near the drum kit with one of these, that's going through a Neve pre-amp and a really good compressor, you can't miss. There's no mystery to it. You're going to get a recording that sounds as good as anything ever made from the '60s and the early '70s... and those happen to be the drum sounds that are forever sampled.

"People are still scratching their heads as to how we came up with them. That's usually the case, you know, in the great old recordings. You have the great drum kit, and the great mic, somewhere near the kit. It's not usually tight miking."

If you're wondering how he repeatedly manages to capture that warm vocal intimacy, Lanois says he has no set rule of thumb. "I don't have a formula," he confesses. "It's different for every song. If you're doing a live vocal, as we did with Emmylou Harris, you need a microphone that the singer can get close to, or else you're going to end up with too trashy a sound. You'll get more drum in the vocal mic than you will in the drum mics. Some of that is okay, but if you have too much, it becomes junky.

"So I like to use a vocal mic that you can sing close to: the Sony C-37-A is such a microphone. That's really a great tube mic with a large diaphragm. Failing that, a Shure Beta '58 is really good, too. Then it takes care of itself in the mix."

Lanois stresses the type of recording device you choose for the session is less important than you might think. "I find that the tape recorder, or the recording device, is almost the link of the chain with the least personality," he shrugs. "It's the link in the chain that gets talked about the most — Are we going to do it digital? Are we going to do it analog? Should we use Dolby SR? Or do we go Dolby A? Should we do it at 15, or should we do it at 30? Should we use an Alesis? Should we use

Tascam? Should we use the radar system? You know, there's 20 different really great recording devices out there, and they all sound good to me. I did some recording recently on a 8-track little digital Tascam, and it sounds great. I record on my 24-track with Dolby A, at 15 ips, and it sounds amazing.

"So that link in the chain is not nearly as important as all the other links. If you start at the front, the front would be the instrument or the voice — talk about acoustic recording — the instrument or the voice; microphones are next on the chain. If you were to put a Cole's mic against an AKG 414, the sound difference would be astronomical. You're going to hear like a 700 percent sound shift. Whereas if you were A-B, the difference between an 8-track digital Tascam and a 24-track Studer with Dolby A at 15, you might hear a 2% personality shift.

"The kind of harmonica, or how you tune the drum, is real important. The kind of microphone you use and where you place it is real important. I use a Neve 1066 pre-amp. The early '70s models are really great, with great EQs. Again, that's a huge part of the personality."

Lanois also recommends quite a few compressors: the LA2A, the LA4A, and the 1176 Erie. "If you open up your pre-amp quite a bit and you hit one of these compressors, that will be a different kind of sound than just going straight onto tape. All of those links on the chain are really important."

Lanois says personality can also be derived from samplers. "If you use a cheaper sampler, it's grainier," he says. "If you use an old Lexicon Prime Time delay, it has no top end, and that's what's cool about it. All that stuff for me, that's really the personality of the sound. The recorder just has to do his job and not distort."

For both musical and production purposes, Lanois says his effects and unusual guitar sounds are usually generated from the source. "What I use isn't really that different from what anyone else has access to: different pedals. I tend to gravitate towards the Les Pauls of the '50s that have P-90 pickups. They give me my dark sound. Then if I want a sweeter, more hi-fi sound that is chrome-bucking, then I use this little Fender Mustang that allows you to throw the two pick-ups out of phase, giving it a little humbucking. I find the Fender Jazzmaster does the same thing. It's a two-pickup instrument, and if you put the three-way switch in the center, and the two pick-ups are out of phase, there's no hum. It's nice for delicate things.

"I use a Gibson Firebird for my whammy instrument because it's got a really good whammy on it. Then it just comes



down to guitar amps. That's a huge part of the personality. I prefer old VOX AC30s, but I also quite like a 1959 410 Bassman. The tube amps can give pretty good results. Then as far as effects and the racks, I use all the modern stuff: Eventide 4000 is a pretty good box."

*N.K.: "Creative tension is an important aspect of your work. How do you see your role? It's your responsibility to get the best performance out of the artist. Is there anything taken for granted or not credited in that role?"*

*"That's a funny word you mentioned—tension," Lanois replies. "I used to think that tension didn't have much to do with good music — that music was about good vibes and relaxation. Those are good ingredients to have, but tension is part of the recording process, as are differences of opinion. If you have a high regard for someone you're working with, and they have a different opinion than yours, then it's a difference you also have to respect. I've often yielded to such a difference, and found that they were correct in the end."*

*"My most recent experience with that was Bob Dylan. He's one of the greatest poets ever, so of course I have to admire his point of view. When there is a difference of opinion, I have to digest it and decipher it, and decide whether he's overlooking something, or maybe he knows something that I don't. The way that I solve that problem is that I don't fight every fight. I'll only fight the fights that really mean a lot to me and I'll let some of the others go. What that means is when you do put up a good fight, then you have extra weight for your argument. Somebody's likely going to listen to you. They're not going to consider you a nig."*

Preparation is the key to success, and Lanois infers that any pet peeves that get under his skin are technical ones. "I don't have pet peeves about people," he swears. "People are forever interesting to me. Shall I name the three most important ingredients to a successful recording? In a recording room, you have to have about 300 power outlets evenly spread out. You require power outlets that accommodate the new generation of power supplies, and you need them all over the room, because the first thing that happens when a musician walks in is they open their case, sit down, and wonder 'Where's the power?' So you usually end up scrambling around looking for power. You want to have power everywhere.

"The next thing you need is about 200 really excellent 15-footer guitar cords. There's always a shortage of guitar cords, and they're often broken. So you need some brand new ones.

"Then you need about 400 25-footer high quality microphone cables. Microphone cables get used or all the effects and for microphones. They become the lines for all the interfacing.

"The last thing that is really important is the device my brother and I invented. It's called the Neudorff Box, after somebody who used to work with me named Bill Neudorff. The Neudorff Box is kind of like a Y jack, but with every possible connector on it.

"So let's say you walked in and you said, 'Dan, I've got a little cassette here that has a mini output, and I need to go to this DAT machine that only has an XLR input.' Normally, somebody would say, 'Well, you're going to have to go to Radio Shack and buy an adapter.' But if you have one of these boxes, it has a mini-connector on it and an XLR, and an RCA, and a Bennett, and a banana. Every connector is on this box, so you can go from anything to anything. That's going to solve and prevent a

lot of running around. In my experience, those are the things that will cause slow-ups in studios."

Lanois says the important of interfacing can't be over-emphasized. He says it was the most significant lesson learned during his own apprenticeship. "Technically, interfacing is how to tie one piece of equipment to another. It might be somewhat of an unorthodox concept: Interfacing is something that doesn't get talked about a lot, but I think is really important — the chain, and how you place your gear in the chain.

"I learned most of that from my brother Bob. He's really good at interfacing. The rest of it is pretty psychological — who you're going to have in the room with you. . .how you treat them as people. . .how you respect them. . .what kind of communication you're

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going to have. All that kind of stuff is wrapped up in the spirit of the moment."

For the mastering stage, Lanois recommends that you keep in mind that the ultimate goal is enhancement. "I like the idea of mastering a lot," he says. "There's been a trend in the last decade I guess to brighten things considerably. The thing to remember with any equalization is what you bring to the forefront of the picture, be it top or mid-range or bottom — whatever you choose to do, that will grab the attention of those ears."

"So by adding something, you may actually be subtracting something else. You have to be aware."

*"People often ask me, how did you get started? How did you get to this place? What did you do that a lot of other people never got around to doing? I think the answer is, I took an interest quite early on in my work. I wasn't juggling around. I wasn't a keyboard player for a while, and then the manager of a record store, and this and that. I really stuck to my thing. I made a decision — it was going to be music, I was going to be a guitar player and I was going to be this recording guy. I haven't budged. I've stuck to my dream and my commitment. I think it's really important to be aware of interest. It's only really through interest that you can then develop skills. Skills are really important. Then when you've got your skills together, then you have a chance at noticing luck. People have said to me, 'Man, you really got lucky, didn't you?' It's true. But I was also prepared. I'd put in ten years of hard work, nobody knew who I was, and I think it's really important to devote and make a decision and stick with it. That's probably the best advice to anybody who's thinking of getting started. Find something you love and go after it."*

Concerning musicians pondering a future association with a producer, Lanois says that quality of the experience should be their first interest. "I think if somebody wants to record, it's important for them to hook in with someone who is real good. They may very well be just one of the members of the band. People have equipment at home these days."

"In my experience, there's always somebody out there who's really dedicated and interested, and they hit on a sound. I would just encourage people to work with somebody like that. I don't think it has to be somebody established. If somebody's going to be good, they already are. They're not well known yet. If you find somebody like that, they'll be very affordable."

Comfort is also important. "I have two favourite approaches for recording. One is stay in the rehearsal room and bring some equipment in, so your work space becomes your recording space. The good thing is that the rehearsal room usually feels comfortable, you get settled in and you get a sound, so you don't have to uproot yourself

just to go to a studio. I think that's probably a solid piece of advice.

"Next, if you're going to go to a studio, make sure you go some place where there's interesting people and interesting technique," counsels Lanois. "There's nothing worse than coming up with something sterile. You want to come up with something exciting. That pretty much comes down to an individual running equipment, more so than about equipment, because interfacing and what you do on all that stuff is everything."

"I work with engineers differently than other people, because I already know how to do all that stuff. I can trust a newcomer, because I can correct any mistakes that are being made. I can lean over and say, 'Let's not do it this way. Let's do it that way.' Or 'Let me

hear what you've got and I'll help you with it. I can nurture somebody along, and for me, I'd rather have somebody who is just getting started, but has a lot of go power. The results that I get from people like that are just as good as results from somebody established."

Lanois' generous streak has helped catapult a number of Canadian musicians and engineers to international careers: Malcolm Burn, David Bottrill, Bill Dillon, and Mark Howard head a growing list. "I keep my ears open for anything that comes around that sounds like quality," says Lanois. "It's nice to give folks a break along the way if you can. A couple people have done it for me. You just have to use your taste and keep your ear to the ground."

CM

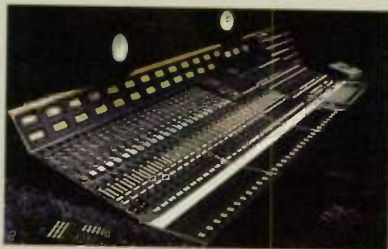
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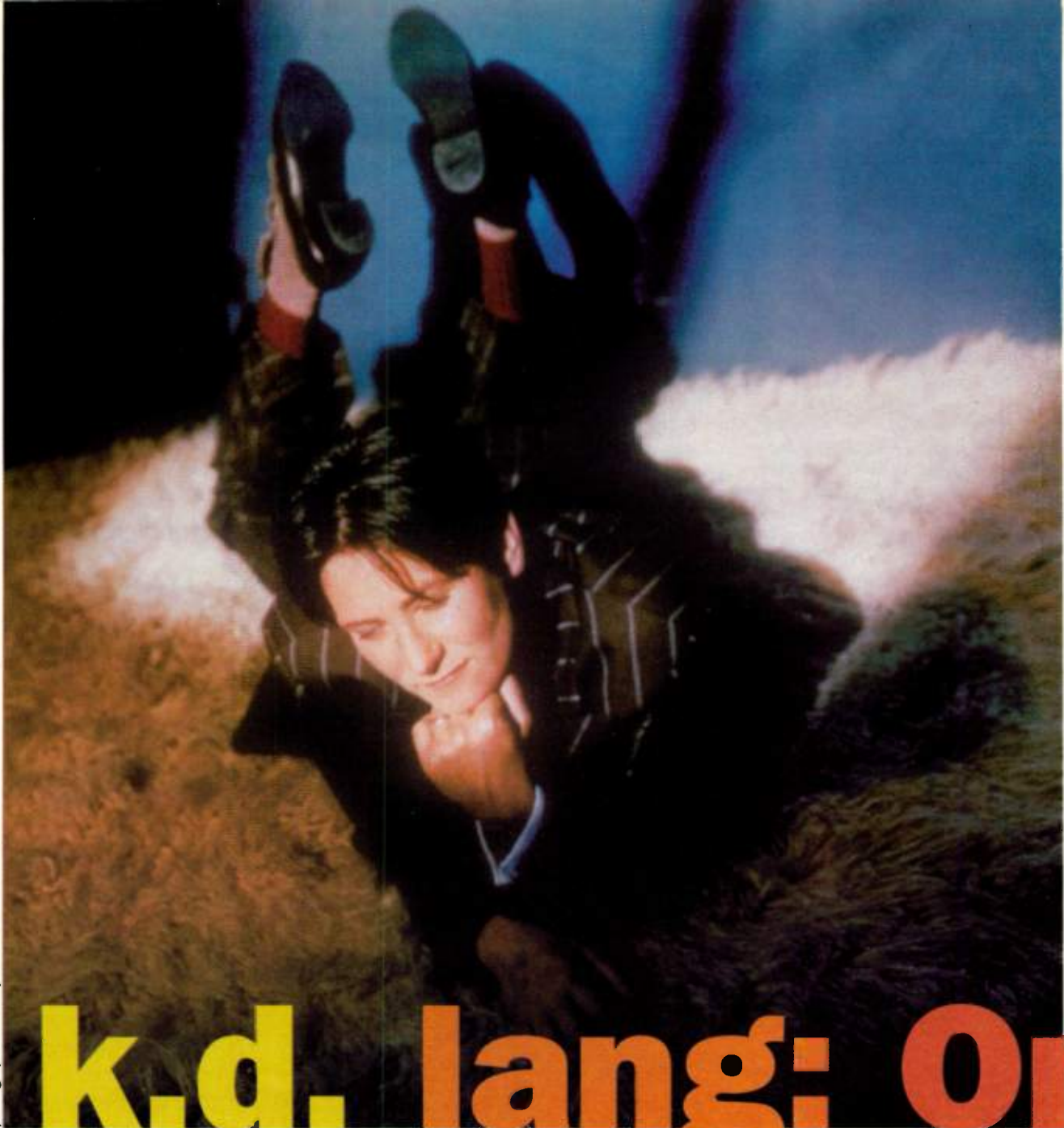
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The 36-year-old lang remains unruffled by such a prospect.

"I don't really care, if that's what people need to do for themselves," she audibly shrugs down the line from Boston, as she prepares for an appearance with The Boston Pops Orchestra. "That's not why I did it. I did it as a conceptual piece."

It is at this point that Consort, Alberta's most accomplished emissary reminds us despite the accolades — a fistful of Grammys and Junos and more recently, an appointment to the Order Of Canada — and notwithstanding the millions of copies sold of *Ingénue*, *All You Can Eat*, and the five remaining albums in her impressive repertoire, the woman who has charmed the globe with a voice unparalleled in pop music has

never envisioned her role as conventional nor convenient. "I've basically been a performance artist, a conceptual artist, since Day One," she insists. "So I really feel much better when I have a framework."

For kathryn dawn lang, the thematic thread that runs through *Drag* is a lifelong obsession with smoking songs — at least, superficially. The album's dozen songs mix classic re-definitions of old-time standards like "Don't Smoke in Bed" and "Smoke Dreams" and '70s nuggets "The Air That I Breathe" and "The Joker" with newer material from exceptional songwriters Boo Hewerdine ("My Last Cigarette") and Jane Siberry ("Hain't It Funny").

But as anyone who has followed lang's career from her halcyon days as country punk's version of Olive Oyl to her current unlikely status as spokesperson for Toronto-based MAC Cosmetics should know, never judge a book by its cover.

"I started thinking about how there's correlation between *Drag* and cigarette smoking, and how cigarette smoking is, to me, more of a metaphor," lang explains. "A cigarette is symbolic of life. It's very short-lived, like a love affair. You smoke it and it feels good temporarily, but it's killing you, or can kill

by Nick Krewen



you. Even though you know that, you go for it anyway. I just find it very fascinating as a metaphorical springboard.

"I started to do some nosing around for cigarette songs. In my search, I found a very interesting road that, in the '40s and the '50s led from being kind of a light denial of cigarette smoking — from 'Puff Puff Puff, Puff Your Cares Away' to the 1997 version, which would be like 'My Old Addiction' — songs that deal heavily with addiction, which to me is what the record is more about: human need, and how we like to bury our emotional selves with other little distractions such as addiction."

Although lang seems to be placing herself on the firing line through the hostile attention the cancer stick has been receiving in these health-conscious '90s, she makes it clear the act is not a personal or musical issue on *Drag*.

"It really isn't judgmental one way or the other," says lang. "I don't care if people smoke or not. I think tobacco smoking is something that's been an age-old spiritual practice. I am, however, against manipulation in advertising, and adding addictive chemicals to the tobacco, but smoking itself is a very private and spiritual choice. So, to me it's not about cigarette smoking at all. But being aware of popular consciousness, cigarette smoking is very much in the news, and in some ways I like to be — as certain painters — very aware of what's happening in contemporary consciousness."

As a patriotic, headstrong, outspoken, woman-loving, anti-carnivorous entertainer that divides her time between Vancouver and Los Angeles, lang has often had to bare the brunt of criticism for her choices. Sometimes, the air of calculation accompanying the controversy has been amusing.

Who can forget lang accepting her Juno for Most Promising Female Vocalist by galloping onstage in a wedding dress? Or the famous cover of *Vanity Fair* that featured a swim-suited Cindy Crawford offering Miss Chatelaine a close shave?

On other occasions, the attention has backfired. Remember the ruckus surrounding the vegan lang for appearing in an advertisement slamming the consumption of Alberta beef? Not a popular move.

Yet lang has always managed to turn adversity into triumph, largely on the strength of *The Voice*. It's a remarkable instrument, an awe-inspiring cascade of rainbow-coloured hues that's simultaneously powerful, emotive and as sturdy as a rock. A sublime stylist, and one of the few to successfully bridge the chasm between country and pop, k.d. has im-

pressed everyone from the late Nashville pillar Minnie Pearl, who praised her as "an enormous talent" through revitalized crooner Tony Bennett.

1988, and riveted the late Roy Orbison with a show-stopping performance of "Crying" that carries on his legacy today. Whether the wacky Patsy Cline reincarnate of yesteryear or the dapper, confident chanteuse of today, lang's integrity is the beacon that shines consistently through albums such as stylistically diverse as *Absolute Torch and Twang* and *All You Can Eat*.

*Drag* is no exception; a unique record for a number of reasons. It's the first album since 1988's *Shadowland* where lang has felt comfortable shedding the role of composer.

"I wasn't in the mood at all to write for this record," she insists. "I just didn't feel any inspiration. I really just wanted to go in and sing and interpret, another form of art that I'm very fascinated with."

There is one other character trait *Drag* shares with *Shadowland*: both are a collection of torch songs. "My voice dominates that direction more than anything," asserts lang. "It's certainly easy for my voice. It's a style of music that I love very much mainly because it's very song-oriented. The lyrics are very strong in them, and that's very inspiring, because I love having the lyrics dominate your thoughts when you're performing or interpreting them."

Some familiar faces of the k.d. lang posse helped out on *Drag* — notably steel guitarist Greg Leisz, keyboardist Teddy Borowiecki and bassist David Piltch — as well as new creative input from Toronto guitarist Kevin Breit, extraordinary drummer Abe Laboriel Jr. and guitar effects specialist David Torn — to round out the core band. Guest spots from former Prince associates Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman on guitar and keyboard respectively, veteran saxophonist Joe Lovano and trumpeter Jon Hassell add a special timbre to the album's lush sound.

Notable by his absence however is Ben Mink, lang's creative companion and musical cohort since 1988's *Angel With a Lariat*. "It was strange," k.d. admits. "Ben's just had his second baby girl. He's pretty busy with family life in Vancouver, and I'm pretty busy roaming around and meeting new people. So it was a natural progression, but it was weird."

lang harbors no doubt that her partnership with Mink will eventually resume, with absence making the heart grow fonder and the creativity grow stronger. "Ben and I have a very, very strong creative relationship. I think the experience of living your life freely is ultimately best for the relationship."

lang says the fruition of *Drag* began with spontaneous inspiration, and once she formulated the theme, she had a spe-

# e Killer Voice

pressed everyone from the late Nashville pillar Minnie Pearl, who praised her as "an enormous talent" through revitalized crooner Tony Bennett.

"I love her," said Bennett recently. "She reminds me of Hank Williams or Edith Piaf, or Billie Holiday. There are certain singers that just aren't going for hit records. They're just born to sing. Even Bing Crosby had that quality. When you heard him sing, you could just sense that he got into another mode that had nothing to do with ambition or power. He just sang because he liked to sing. And he was blessed with that gift of enjoying it so much. He just knew how to do it. To me, k.d. lang is like that. She's just a natural singer. She's a joy to listen to as far as I'm concerned. When you hear her sing, you know that she's feeling it."

She brought them to their feet at her premiere Grand Ole Opry performance, almost stole the stage from underneath Bruce Springsteen, Sting and Peter Gabriel during the memorable Amnesty International Tour in

cific guideline concerning song selection. "It had to coincide with what my vision and concept of the album was, either in a humorous or very literal or in a more ambiguous sense," confirms lang. "Lyrically it was very important for me to say something. We recorded 14 songs and I was going to stop at 11, but then I heard 'Love Is Like A Cigarette,' which kind of epitomizes the whole album thematically, and it just felt right.

"Don't Smoke in Bed' is a song that I've loved forever and ever and ever, and then I heard the Les Paul/Mary Ford song 'Smoke Dreams,'" says lang. "I realize I've been fascinated with cigarette songs for a while cause I've done 'Three Cigarettes in an Ashtray' and 'Down to my Last Cigarette' on previous albums. Even though I'm an avid non-smoker, I find myself fascinated with cigarette imagery."

Jane Siberry's contribution, 'Hain't It Funny,' was an eleventh-hour addition.

"I'm a huge fan of Jane Siberry ballads," she enthuses. "In fact, probably one of my favourite songs is 'Earth is The



Valley' on *Bound by the Beauty*. I think Jane is extremely talented and a little misunderstood. I had an instinct that Jane could write a song for this record, so I called her. She hemmed and hawed, and said 'I'll call you back,' and two months later I heard from her. By that time, we were almost finished the record. In fact, some of the musicians had gone home. I said 'Jane, we're finished recording.' She said, 'Well, I do have this one song.' She sent it to me the next day. It was 'Hain't It Funny,' and I just loved it. I just chopped off the last verse and ended it at the "smokes" part, recorded it with a couple of other people, and that's the story."

There's even an affectionate tribute to the partner of her Grammy-winning duet, the immortal Roy Orbison. "'Til The Heart Caves In' is one of the last Roy Orbison songs ever written," k.d. says. "He wrote it with T-Bone Burnett and Bob Neuwirth for the Sam Shepard play that was off-Broadway. That's kind of an emotional tip of the hat to Roy. I had to change a bit of the lyrics because it was more about morphine, so I kind of made it more broadly about addiction."

John Hiatt, André Previn and Ned Washington are some of the other remarkable songwriters that contribute to the billowing intimacy of *Drag*, an engaging and adoringly lush record whose understated approach was largely nurtured by co-producer Craig Street, noteworthy for his exemplary work on *Temptation*, the Holly Cole tribute to gruff-throated American songwriter Tom Waits. lang says he was the ideal fit. "I had a very, very strong vision for what I wanted the album to sound like, and part of that called for a small jazz ingredient with very minimal organic tracks. I was a big fan of *New Moon Daughter* by Cassandra Wilson (also produced by Street). My A&R person, Joe McEwen in New York, had wanted Craig and I to work together for a while. So I guess the combination of both of those things led us together." Recorded in Los Angeles at Sunset Sound, lang says *Drag* was stress-free fun. "It was a very, very excellent experience — a very easy record," says lang. "It was not emotionally draining at all. The whole process took us from pushing the red button to mastering, three months. So it was pretty quick."

Danny Kopelson served as engineer, Patrick McCarthy mixed and Greg Calbi mastered, and k.d. says each role gave her a deeper appreciation of recording from start to finish. "Greg Calbi mas-

tered at MasterDisc, and now I know a lot more regarding the process," she says. "I realized that everything makes a difference — each converter, right down to the types of cables you use. I even discovered that mastering makes a difference in how you manufacture it. Everyone's job is more important."

It also gave her a new perspective in the old argument of recording analog vs. digital. "After this experience, I'm completely sold on analog," says lang. "We used an API board and mixed on a Neve, and the strength analog gave me a much more warmer response with my band."

Another unexpected inspiration was an experience she had shortly before she

written, we've always tried to develop these very cross-hybridized styles of music, taking different genres and mixing them all together," lang explains. "Even though we did that in *Drag*, it wasn't like my baby being dressed funny, so in a way you weren't quite so protective. On *Drag* you'd go: 'okay, let's throw a trumpet and steel together without questioning it'."

Although the sonic alchemy on *Drag* is gorgeous, it's *The Voice* that's the main attraction. lang says she developed its seasoned splendour through years of absorption while growing up in Consort.

"I tried to emulate everything I ever heard," affirms the daughter of a pharmacist and a schoolteacher. "My first big influence probably would have been Anne Murray, who has a beautifully rich voice. I listen to (Linda) Ronstadt, to Joni Mitchell, Kate Bush. Those would be the earliest influences. When I got to college I really started to expand because I was around a lot of different musicians, so I started listening to a lot of different people.

"My big teachers in the last 15 years were Peggy Lee, Carmen McCrae and Patsy (Cline), of course — but that's more of the country style. Even if I don't like a singer, I would pay particular attention to how they're using their voice, and what they're doing. I really try to stay open and understand the voice in a complete aspect: mental, physical, spiritual, sexual, and textbook."

Although she'll admit to a year or two of vocal training when she enrolled at Red Deer College for music, lang says her talent comes naturally. "I'd say I'm 98% natural. I did take two years — actually, I'd say about a year— of vocal coaching in college."

lang didn't stick around Red Deer long enough to write final exams. She says it was a personal choice. "I certainly wouldn't want

to be a negative influence on youth, but I just didn't feel that it had any application to my direction." She eventually wound up in Edmonton, bumping into future manager Larry Wanagas and recording her first album for Bumstead Productions, *A Truly Western Experience*, with her band the reclines.

As for practising, lang says it's not habitual.

"I practice very, very, very, very, very little," she confesses. "But I sing all the time. There's a big difference. To me, singing is more free and more spiritual than practice. Practice is more of a cranial exercise. Singing freely is probably the best practice there is for me. I don't like to think when I'm singing. It should be very natural and very emotional.



*"I warm up every day, even when I'm not performing for a month or two. I'm always warming my voice with very smooth humming exercises that keep my vocal cords loose. I sing everyday in the car, when I'm walking around, staying in hotels, wherever."*

entered the studio to record *Drag*. She accepted an invitation from The Murmurs to producer six songs for their album *Pristine Smut*, released June 24th. "They've now expanded into an all-girl band, kind of a Veruca Salt meets The Go-Gos," says lang. "I really loved being solely in the producer's seat. I've been producing as long as I've been professionally recording, so I really felt like I could sit back and really help the girls get their best performances — not from a producer's standpoint necessarily, but from a performer's point of view."

In turn, lang says working with The Murmurs helped develop her perception of *Drag*, allowing her to slightly ease the creative reins. "When you're writing something as the way Ben and I have

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# BIG SUGAR

Music history has generally been good to intrepid pioneers who dare to combine diverse influences in new ways. Regurgitating existing formulae and current chart-toppers can yield short-term rewards but won't pave the way for long-term success. Artists who forge their own style by drawing on the strength of their roots, however, can gradually carve out their own market and change music in the process. Big Sugar are one such band, currently distinguishing themselves in a new league of their own making. Their recipe combines blues and reggae on a bed of rock, just as a fine curry blends spices in a way that honours each ingredient whilst blending them all into a single, complex flavour. The Big Sugar sound is fresh, yet familiar: a combination that has served the band well, especially since the release of their highly-successful third album, *Hemi-Vision*.

Gordie Johnson, an upstanding member of the tiny Club of Canadian Guitar Heroes, fronts the band in style. His wardrobe of Hugo Boss suits and passion for vintage cars are almost as well-known as his playing and singing. Garry Lowe, president of the Canadian Society for Reggae Bass Legends, guards the bottom end. Kelly

by Peter Murray

Hoppe holds his own in the Association of Authentic Camick Blues Blowers, adding an important dose of harmonica and saxophone to the mix. Until recently, pop pounder Paul Brennan rounded out the lineup on drums; at press time, original drummer Al Cross is filling the seat but no permanent replacement has been announced.

According to Gordie, the stylistic mix that makes up the band's sound developed very organically. "It was all stuff that I dug anyway.

It wasn't like I sat down to think 'what would go well together?' like planning a dinner party or something. It wasn't just to go out and grab whatever disparate musical elements and toss them together, it was actually stuff that I had an affinity for."

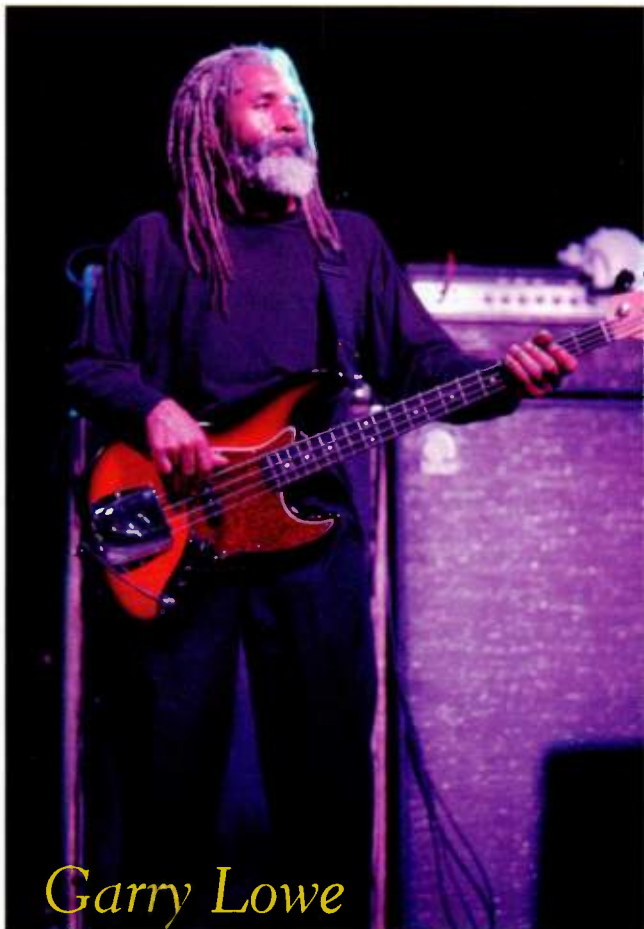
The story behind how the current band came into being contains almost fairy-tale quantities of irony. Gordie was a bassist when he first met harpist Kelly in their home town of Windsor. Kelly needed a guitarist and Gordie volunteered despite a lack of guitar background; he needed a primer in blues, which Kelly provided willingly. "I gave him some Freddy King instrumental albums," Kelly recalls, "and he came back and he knew it all. It wasn't so much that he played note for note, he just played it with a lot of passion. He really dug it. Then I gave him some John Lee Hooker albums and he came back with the whole John Lee Hooker thing, the whole attitude of stompin' the foot, playin' the guitar by yourself — that kind of thing."

The two gigged together for years in the Windsor Dukes until Gordie relocated to Toronto. There, he kept busy playing mostly blues and jazz in varied circumstances and founded Big Sugar, surviving many lineup changes. Through this period, Gordie and Kelly kept in touch and continued collaborating, finally officially reuniting in Big Sugar in 1994. "He sometimes refers to me as a mentor," Kelly admits, "But it's neat to see that here it is 10 or 12 years down the road and now I'm in a band with him, but he's the band leader!"

Gordie had been feeding his reggae fan ship with regular live doses in Toronto and came to love the style and sound of local mainstay bassist Garry Lowe. Garry played with Leroy Sibbles, Culture Shock



Gordie Johnson



Garry Lowe

# GARRY'S

## *Sweet Blend*

and Truths and Rights, as well as top backup bands Livestock and Hit Squad, backing up touring artists from Jamaica. "I think every reggae show I ever went to Garry was playing bass — no matter who the band was or where they were from," says Gordie. "I got to be a real fan of Garry's. I had hired all of these different bass players and someone finally said, 'why don't you just go and hire Garry Lowe instead of trying to make all of these guys play like him!' Because nobody could, and that was the sound I had in my head. I thought, there's no way he's going to take a gig playing with me. He's the man! But I called him up and he basically said yes over the phone."

It just so turns out that Garry was quite available. "It was a little bit of a surprise," Garry admits. "I had met Gordie before and he was a cool guy and a great musician. When he asked me, I didn't have a gig at the time. I was like, 'Great! I'm willin' to try something else.' You want to be versatile and aware of different musical styles — which I wasn't really until then. I've always admired him as a player; the few times I saw him, I thought he was great. So I was really surprised he liked my playing, it was kind of flattering."

What emerged was something of a supergroup, but with all the tamed ego of a mutual admiration society: a burgeoning guitar icon

mixing it up with his blues mentor on harp and reggae hero on bass. But if only the drum quarter could settle as firmly. For a while, drummer Al Cross had co-defined the Big Sugar sound, but since he left to "do the family thing," the drum chair has rotated with unsettling, almost Spinal-Tappish speed. Drummers Skeeto Gibbs and Stitch Winston both took turns, as did Crash Morgan until his tragic death mid-tour. Most recently, Paul Brennan (ex-drummer for Odds and Mae Moore) took on the post, bringing a crisper pop edge to the band—but his tenure didn't last either.

Gordie connects road fatigue and loud volumes to Paul's departure: "I think it was really stressful on his hearing. Being the drummer, he's the closest one to the noise, really. My amps are behind me; if I had to face them it would be a different story. But the drummer, he's got the cymbals right up there in his face; and Paul's not a light stroker; he hits pretty hard. I think he just overdid on it." He'll be missed, according to Garry. "He's a great drummer, if you ask me. I wish Paul was still with us, too bad he can't be." But don't expect drummer transience to slow the band down. "They've been solidifying continually as a unit and as a result, streamlining their new music fusion. Kelly explains, "That's what [Gordie] wanted, was to have a band of guys that wanted to go on the road, wanted to record and bring to the musical party what they had to contribute." Garry adds, "I like the fact that we have a sense of it being a band, instead of just being hired musicians."

How does the sound come together? "I'd say just three years worth of gigs would do that to a band," says Gordie. "We never play from a set list, it's not like we had a house gig anywhere, we were never playing to the same people, we were always playing in a different city. You play every night and the music starts to evolve and shift, different people come in the band and they bring a little something and leave something behind. That makes a difference."

Their second album, *500 Pounds* (prior to the arrival of Garry on the scene) had hinted at the band's direction. Kelly explains, "Gordie was playing bass on the record and trying to sound like Garry Lowe, like on 'I'm A Ram.'" The grooving track in question in fact proved to be a defining moment for the band. "I think 'I'm A Ram' is still the quintessential song to describe Big Sugar," adds Gordie. "I mean, you've got an old Memphis rhythm section kind of



*Al Cross*



*Kelly Hoppe*

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Shot on location at Long Island Rock, Massapequa, NY.

song, off the first Al Green album. Take that and put the big Motor City guitars on it, dance hall reggae beats and drums that sound like the Meters or something. That's just the way it ended up — and with a country singer singing it!"

Garry's arrival further imprinted the reggae groove on Big Sugar's aesthetic, and Kelly's traditional touches preserved the music's blues roots. As Gordie puts it, "Whenever Garry's involved, there's a reggae influence, it just can't be helped. It's not like you can write that into the recipe. Whatever song we play, if Garry's playing bass — that's what he plays: he plays reggae music. And Kelly, whatever he puts his hand to is going to have a rhythm and blues approach to it. It's all he knows."

It follows that none in the band is a purist of any kind. But all three went through years of "study" in their respective traditions. Kelly learned a reverence for classic blues. "I just started playing what I liked, and then the band I had become considered a sort of purist band. But maybe it's obvious I wouldn't have joined Big Sugar if that had been something that I was holding onto for dear life." Blues purism, he explains, diminishes the contributions of the genre's greatest legends. "Muddy Waters took the Delta sound and electrified it in Chicago — it must have seemed revolutionary at the time. It must have been, at that time, something that really pushed the boundaries. Now we look back on it and say: 'man, that's real traditional blues!' but in 1951 it must have had quite an impact. From everything I've read

about it, it was really electrifying literally and figuratively."

Garry, before joining the band, had devoted his musical growth almost entirely to reggae. "I wasn't playing anything else but reggae and ska. Maybe a little bit of other stuff now and then, but just mainly reggae. So playing with Gordie was like a different thing. And the blues is so natural, it's almost the same thing! We call it instinct music! So Gordie, with that kind of basis in his music, was perfect for me. And with the blues you can practically play anything, if you just play it that way. Which was another eye-opener; because reggae's more rigid in certain ways, in the sense that it has more definite parts."

For those who might think of reggae and rock as an odd combo, Gordie recalls some precedents: "The Clash did a fair bit of that. They would sort of do punk, and then they would do a reggae song; or they would cover a reggae standard. But for me, that stuff is a little too literal — here's the rock part, here's the reggae part. The Police I thought did it very well, as far as making a style out of it is concerned. I thought that with them, it wasn't so easy to separate."

The big blues-based guitar sound of Gordie Johnson has many influences, but no simple provenance. He makes no bones about his frustration with superficial, clichéd comparisons to famous guitar legends. "I actually gave away my Strat for that reason. I had a Stratocaster for years, and geez, every time someone hears a Stratocaster they say 'Play Stevie Ray or Jimi Hendrix!' You know, I like both of those guys, but give me a

Gibson any day! Still, it's amazing, some reviewers, if it has any blues in it at all, they go 'with the deep Texas sound of Big Sugar.' What? I was in Texas and they all thought I was from England. I might as well have been from Jupiter when I showed up there — I'm so un-Texas! Even if I wear a cowboy hat, I don't look like I'm from Texas. And it's just funny to get your record reviewed by a newspaper in Edmonton saying 'oh yeah, they have a real Texas shuffle sound.' What?! There's not a shuffle in the whole repertoire!"

Wow, you guys don't have any shuffles, do you? "No!" insists Gordie emphatically. "We don't have any 12-bar blues, either. There's no 12-bar blues on our records. There might be 13 bars, or 15 bars, or one bar, you know, one chord that goes for ever and ever — I like that. If you look at my record collection, I don't have a lot of 12-bar blues type stuff in there. I've got all this John Lee Hooker and Lightnin' Hopkins. Even the Howlin' Wolf stuff I have is all that one chord, scary stuff. I'm more into that sort of thing."

The cross-cultural music exchange within Big Sugar makes for interesting tour soundtracks. "Oh yeah!" enthuses Gordie. "You should hear the music in the tour bus, it's fantastic, the stuff we listen to over a long trip. You come out of there with so much new music — it's like food for your brain, all this great reggae music and stuff." Garry, now turned on to Miles Davis and a healthy diet of rhythm and blues, agrees. "On a musical level, it's good music for me. It's a chance to grow and expand my horizons."

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Rocks



With all this cross-pollination going on, over the course of extensive touring, you would think that the next album will represent an even thicker intertwining of musical styles. "Yeah, I should think that the next album will be more fully-formed stylistically," agrees Gordie. "On *500 Pounds*, there's like a traditional blues song, a rock song, a song that sounds like some British rock thing, traditional blues — every couple of songs it would change. On *Hemi-Vision*, it's not as much like that. There are a few, like 'Tired All The Time' thrown in there just for colour, but more or less each song combines all the elements. I think though that by the next record that will be even more seamless."

The band experience for Big Sugar is an intense one, and jobbing drummers should think twice before considering applying. "Music is an ongoing thing," states Gordie philosophically. "You can't just punch the clock in a band. Maybe in some bands you can, if you're just jobbin' around. But our band is so demanding on a person, musically and spiritually. There's a lot of hours on the tour bus. The shows can be as long as two hours and 45 minutes, without a set-list, without a net. You have to be completely in tune to each other for that whole time. So it's taxing on a person and it's not for everybody. It suits me and Garry and Kelly — so far I've managed to find three guys that are really up to that. I mean the kinds of reggae shows that Garry has played — there's a pretty unrelenting music. You stay up there for four hours, and if you're playing the bass

you're basically holding up the stage on your shoulders. So it's pretty hard for me to wear out Garry! And Kelly — we both grew up in Windsor and played music also in Detroit. In those days, you had to bring your own P.A. system, even in really big clubs. You had the whole day loading it in, setting it up, sound checking; then do four 45-minute sets and then after everyone leaves the bar, tear down the P.A. system and bring it back. Every night. I did that for years. So now I have technicians who tune my guitars

**Their recipe combines blues and reggae on a bed of rock and blends them all into a single, complex flavour.**

and set up all the gear, and they unload it; I never have to touch a guitar case. And — I only play two hours and 45 minutes. Luxury! But some guys are just huffing and puffing at the end of it."

Anyone who's witnessed any of Big Sugar's intense live performances knows to expect both loud and heavy bass and guitar. Garry says of Gordie: "He needs a really bassy bass to play on, because he's got such a heavy sound. If you don't play with a heavy bass, then his guitar's going to kill your sound! So I think it works really well in that sense, because reggae bass tends to be thicker in the bottom. So I'm occupying that space that he's not really going to. It gives a fuller spectrum of sound."

Meanwhile, Gordie notoriously preserves rock tradition by running through fully-

cranked Marshall cabinets, which he insists must be played on full for optimum tone quality. Strangely, amidst all the wonderful din, he doesn't use vocal monitors — at all. "For a lot of sound guys it can take them months and months to grasp the concept of not using vocal monitors." Understandable to most singers and sound techs. So why no vocal monitors, Gordie? "Well, Ray Charles didn't need vocal monitors," he retorts, "I sure as hell don't. You know? If it's okay for Little Richard, it must be okay for me. I don't know, I just came up playing in clubs where there were bad monitors, no monitors, great monitors. . . no monitors, more often than not. So I just got used to hearing that sound. Now if I walk out on stage and they have a quarter-million dollar monitor rig, I'm not used to that. I don't want it to sound like a recording studio up here, it's a live gig! I want to just hear it out in the house. It's just what I'm used to. If I don't have monitors for a whole tour, I can sing every night for three weeks. I don't need a day off, I don't lose my voice. As soon as someone thinks they're doing me a favour and they start pumping monitor sound onto the stage, I've gotta tell them to turn it off, and they turn it up; and I say no, turn it off and they turn it up — then I'll have lost my voice by the end of the first hour. I'm just not used to 'hearing' it."

All in front of your fully-revved Marshall stacks? "Oh yeah," continues Gordie. "Sure, man! There was no such thing as monitors until after Woodstock, were there? Look at old pictures of The Who and Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin! There's no monitors in front of the stage! Those guys are just up



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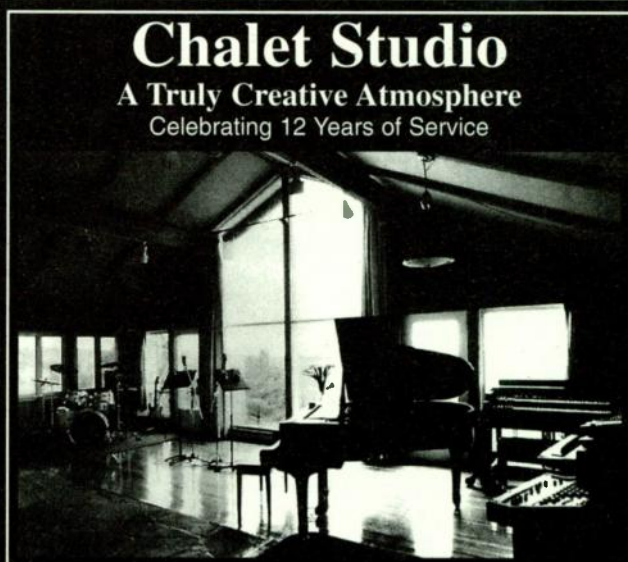
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there singing through little Shure Vocal-master P.A. systems and things like that. Eric Clapton and Cream, look at any old pictures you can find, man, there's just a big bare stage. So I figured, well, I'm not going to be at the mercy of somebody else's equipment and somebody else's taste in monitor mixes every night, I'll be fine just by myself. Anytime I had soundmen who said, 'well, if you're gonna play that loud I won't be able to put you in the P.A. system.' Big threat! Big deal! I have a bigger P.A. system than you do! It's just part of being self-sufficient, I guess. That's where it started."

Does your soundman understand? "Actually our soundman now has become a pretty integral part of the band as well. For years, we used different sound guys, and they were all good, but I had a different approach to our presentation. But the sound guy we have now has been mixing reggae his whole career, since he was a teenager. He's the reggae dub mixer, the dance hall don: the guy's great. Because we do lots of dub remix in the show, if you've got someone who's only mixed rock and roll before, they're just like 'Whoa, what do you want me to do? How come you guys keep stopping?' You know, they just don't get it. But Jeffrey Holdip, that's his specialty. He's like a fifth band member to me."

You might think that under the circumstances, Gordie might be going a trifle deaf. But apparently not. "My hearing's good," he claims. "It's the funniest thing — when I was playing jazz gigs in Toronto, I'd sit down with Al [Cross] and Terry Wilkins and we'd be playing jazz standards all night. Do you know, I got tinnitus doing that? Having that ride cymbal in my car all night, every night, I got really bad ringing in one of my ears. It really messed me up for a long time. I never told anybody about it — but I kept gigging. Since I've been doing this [Big Sugar], I haven't been having any problems. Plus, I like the sound, too. I think that's part of it, if you're hearing a sound that you like. To me, that's the biggest thrill there is: as soon as I hit the standby switch and hear that 'hhhhh...' It's like a fire-breathing dragon back there, the 'breath' from those amplifiers!"

Informed of the focus of this month's issue, making and promoting your own recording, Gordie doesn't mince words when asked for advice. "I have to be honest with you: it's not a popular view to have anymore, but I've never been fond of the D.I.Y. thing. I embrace the recording industry. I don't long for days of playing in little intimate clubs and indie labels and things like that. I'm in it for money, too. The more records I sell, the more money I get; but that also means more people have heard my music. I can take that money and put it back into the presentation — I can put on a bigger show. It just means more music to me. More money means more music, more people to play for."

"Hopefully your final goal is to get with a major record label and learn what that's about a little bit: it's a business. It's just like getting into the car business or the computer business. You should know a little bit

about that. Not to be a party pooper or anything; I mean it's great to be in a band with all your buddies. You can play in someone's basement or at your neighbourhood pub, and it's lots of fun; and it never has to go beyond that. That's fine. If that's what you want to do, you can do that. But if you're going to start playing in the deep water pool, then you've gotta learn how to swim in there. That's not a downhearted, jaded thing to say, it's just the way it is. When you can finally get with that reality, then you can start to work it.

"I always run into musicians who just whine about the injustice in the music industry — 'record labels this, and record labels that', and then 'this record label didn't do anything. . . Hey! You know what? The answer is, it all came down to dollars. There's

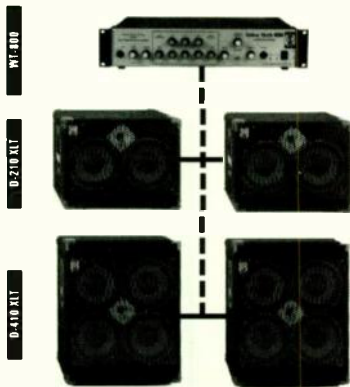
no injustice in it; someone has to make money, someone has to answer to the accountant at the end of the day. Put yourself in that quotient, figure out where you fit in there. Then when the record company doesn't give you half a million dollars, they only want to give you a quarter of a million dollars, or a quarter of a thousand dollars or whatever, look at your product and say: 'Okay, why would a record company give me a million dollars?' They're not giving it to the needy! You have to see where you fit into things and how you can make yourself worth more to a record company. If you can do that, then you start to turn the wheels yourself a bit." **CM**

*Peter Murray is a bass teacher, session player and producer in Toronto, and is the author of Essential Bass Technique. His band, surrender dorothy, has just released its debut album, Serum, in Canada on Ozmusis/Universal Records.*

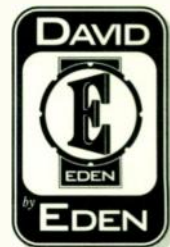


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From L-R: ICE T WITH TIM SWEENEY

# PRODUCING & MARKETING YOUR OWN RECORD

**A**s you are well aware of, the state of the music industry is in dramatic change. For many years, the so called "major labels" controlled the industry and what music has been listened to. Now we are seeing a dramatic shift. Once, the description of a major label was a record company that was profitable and could control its own distribution. Well I hate to tell you, but anyone can build their own major label using that description. It's no great secret, even though the majors have kept it one for years. Now the description of a major has changed to any company that is posting over a million dollars of sales.

Again the signs of transformation are in the air. Once we referred to the major labels in the U.S. as the "Big Six." Now there are 18 labels that fit the description. What's the difference? Simple. People have

put their will and determination along with what they have learned into breaking artists that are not the status quo.

Remarkably, many of the new successful companies have artists that have succeeded with little or no exposure through radio, print, or video. Artists analysed what the market wanted, built their own record companies and became successful producing and promoting their style of music.

In this article, I am going to outline the points which you need to learn to build your own major label and make the kind of money you always wanted in this business.

First you have to understand that what you have learned about the business over the years is wrong! Many of the ideas and stories are false. They are designed to discourage you from trying to be successful on your own. For example, the truth behind the beginning of most major labels is that they are identical to where you are right now! Many, if not most, started in someone's house or apartment and was built on the success of one or two artists. Most of the major label presidents were not even musicians. They were just good business people. They didn't have millions of dollars to start with. They just had their limited financial resources and their determination to make their favourite artist sell a lot of records.

If you are going to build your own success story in this business, you have to take your basic knowledge of the music industry and use your will, determination and your belief in your music to achieve the goals you want. So here is where we start.

## Understanding the Music Business

When you look at major labels and why they are so successful — whether you like their artists or not — their success is based on one philosophy. The major labels are corporations owned by shareholders who do not care if the world is filled with beautiful music. They only care about how many records an artist can sell. Welcome to reality!

I hope you didn't think that all those tapes and CDs you sent in to A&R people were being reviewed for their musical abilities! No. They were asking themselves this key question: If we spend the money on this artist, how many of their CDs can we sell? I like to say, this is the business of making money by selling music. I'm sorry if this comes as a shock to you, but all of your favourite artists love to make the music you enjoy but they all want to get paid. Don't you?

by Tim Sweeney  
sidebars by Karen Bliss

### MATTHEW GOOD BAND

*Signed to EMI Music Publishing, Matthew Good Band's 1995 indie CD, Last of the Ghetto Astronauts has sold 20,000 copies. It was followed by an EP, Raygun. The Vancouver-based band also completed the recording of its next album independently, at Greenhouse Studios with Warne Livesey (Midnight Oil, Talk Talk, The The).*

Advice from singer-guitarist Matthew Good:

*"To get into a mid-range studio in this country is not that difficult. We recorded Last Of The Ghetto Astronauts for \$7,000. (Producer) John Shepp did one hell of a job and we worked our asses off to do it, but we just trusted our ears. Compared to anywhere on this planet, you can do extremely well in this country independently. There is absolutely no need to go further than a P&D (press and distribution) deal, if you think you can do it on your own. A lot of people have this belief that suddenly somebody signs you to a record deal and the limo pulls up in your driveway and you're living the high life. I'll tell you one thing, you get up onstage and there's a packed house in front of you, and you know it's because of what you did by yourself, it's a hell of a lot more rewarding. And it's empowering too. In the position that we're in now, if people approach us from labels, what do I have to lose? I have nothing to lose. I can release this record independently if I want, it will do better than the last one. More people should do it, really."*

The biggest problem with artists from the past and present is, they discount themselves from being anything other than a songwriter or a musician. The key to this business is education. Starting today, you will get the information the major labels don't want you to know. Why? Because you will become a success on your own and you won't need them!

## Step #1: Build Your Own Company

I know that most of you just fainted or passed out. First, I will tell you that your hopes and dreams of everyone loving your music will bring you everything you always wanted is not true, and now you have to start your own company!

If you are serious about succeeding in this business and making the kind of money you want, even if it's only to work for yourself, you have to take this step.

Starting your own company, whether you are a songwriter, performer or musician or all of these, is one of the most impor-

tant steps in your career. Having your own company has many advantages. It allows you to structure your career and product the way you want as well as allowing you the necessary benefits at tax time to help you keep more of the money you make throughout the year. You will need a tax break because you will be making a good amount of money!

Now before you pass out again, stop and carefully read what I am saying. You do not need millions of dollars to start your own company. This does not require a trip to the bank to ask for a loan or to rob it! This requires will and determination. Ready? Here we go.

**1. Choose a name.** Not difficult. Something short and sweet and memorable. Remember, you will have this business for a long time. Pick a name you can live with and that people can understand.

**2. Establish an official address.** Either out of the house, apartment or even a postal centre where you can accept UPS and delivery packages. **DO NOT GO AND GET AN OFFICE IN A BUILDING!** You don't need it.

**3. Set up your home office.** Your home office is critical. Why? Because the tax people will give you a tax break for operating a business out of the house. For example, whatever percentage of space you are dedicating to your business (check with the tax people to see if there is a limit) can be calculated against your rent and returned to you as a tax break. If you paid a \$1,000 a month for your house or rent and 15% of the space was being used for the business, you will get a tax benefit of \$150 per month. Times the number of months in the year (12), which equals \$1,800. Almost two months of free rent a year! A good accountant will give you a list of additional benefits you can work with.

When setting up your home office, you will need simple office furniture like, a desk, phone, computer, file cabinet, etc. — most of the stuff in the house right now that the laundry is sitting on. Build your own office that you can effectively work in and will enjoy working from.

Now that you have your home office built and the company set up, its time to go to work.

## Step #2: Making Product

Yes, the word "product" refers to your record or the artist you are going to be putting out for world consumption. You will find that everyone (radio, retail, distributors) will refer to your record as "product". It's the "product" that you want to sell to the end user (the person who buys your record).

Major labels are not going to sign you as an artist just from you playing shows. Yes, I know that you have heard all the stories of people getting signed off of demo tapes and playing shows, but most of these stories are from the '60s, when

recording studios were more costly to record in and difficult to have access to. Record companies are companies. They need to sell records. If you can show them you can sell plenty of records on your own and you don't need them, you may get the deal you want. Believe me, you don't want any deal offered from a company based on a demo tape or your group just playing live. Now that you understand that, it's high time you gathered up the guys and gals in the band and record a CD. Now comes the research. You will need the following elements to make a good CD for the marketplace. You need to find a good studio that fits your budget. A good engineer and maybe a producer and place to master.

Let's start with the studio. You need a studio where you will be comfortable recording and where you can work with good quality people who can get the sound on the recording you want. Remember all these people are going to be working for you. Interview them. You need to spend as little time and hassle in the studio as possible. Find people you like and make sure your group is ready to get in the studio



photograph courtesy of CARAS

### MOIST

*Moist's 1993 self-titled indie cassette, recorded in a matter of days with Kevin Hamilton, included eventual hits "Push" and "Believe Me", and was used to get gigs, press and A&R interest. By the end of the year, Moist, then stationed in Vancouver, landed a publishing deal with EMI Music Publishing and recorded 1994's debut CD, Silver, using half the songs off the cassette plus another five. With the release of a video for "Push" and the enormous support of MuchMusic, it sold 5,000 copies in six weeks, before EMI Music Canada signed the band and re-released Silver "as is" — then it sold a whopping 360,000 copies. Moist's first official major label album is the current Creature.*

Advice from guitarist Mark Makoway:

*"In order to get to play even showcase gigs, you've generally got to have a demo. It's just a means to capture people's attention (i.e. club owners, campus radio DJs, and, hopefully, big powerful A&R types). Fortunately, there are many affordable ways to record. Basement studios are common and there are many affordable 16 and 24 track 'professional studios'. There are quite a few young producers/engineers who can wrangle unbelievably cheap studio time (often the after 12:00 a.m. slot) and are willing to work very cheaply for the experience. Talk to other bands, friends, whoever. It's surprising how many people out there 'know somebody'. And when you get into the studio, set up and play like it's a live performance. Energy and vibe speak much more loudly than perfection — just check out Nirvana's Bleach. Also, pick up a copy of All You Need To Know About The Music Business by Donald Passman. (Schirmer)."*



and get out. You are not going to make a better sounding record by spending more time in the studio!

Once you have the recording, it's time to get it mastered — the major step to making the record sound “radio ready”. A

good mastering studio will bring the record more to life than the engineer and producer. Again, interview people and sit with them while they master your record. Get the sound you want. Not what they want to hear.

Now the critical time. This is where 80% of all group's futures are lost! CD manufacturing. Press up CDs, not records. In addition, press up only CDs and not cassettes unless you are playing a style of music that has a large cassette-buying audience. You will make more off the sale of CDs. A minor detail like most new cars next year will only have CD players in them should make a difference in your choice.

This is the area where most bands get ripped off. Do not pay more than \$1.70/each for a good quality package. \$1.50 is a better price for

a normal run of only 1,000 CDs. (based on U.S. pricing) If you can't find that deal around you, call me and I will find it for you! Do not buy package deals. They are not what you need! Press up approximately 2,500 CDs. This is the real number you need to start.

The artwork. Design it so it shows the real you and what your music is about. Make sure you are happy with it. It will be the first material the radio, press and retail people will see before they listen to your music. You want them to like the artwork as much as they will the music inside.

The bar code. The most critical element of your CD package. File with the UPC and get a proper one. DO NOT get one from the CD manufacturer!! It's their code and shows them as the owner. The bar code is critical to make sure the distributors and record stores know how many records they have sold, how many more they need and making sure you get paid! It is very important you have one and it belongs to you.

Now that you have decided to be a “mover and shaker” in the business and not just sit around waiting for God to save you and your career, here's the next step.

### Step #3: Promotion and Marketing

Now that Mom can't park the car in the garage or you can't walk through the living room because the UPS man dropped off 100 boxes of CDs, it's time to sell them. Well let's see. There's Mom, she'll buy one and Grandma, she's good for one and the guys in the band, they all have parents and family, so that could be a total of ten. Wow! Come on! This is where you will put yourself on the map! The place where you will surpass all the other groups around. This is where you conquer the music world. This is where the major labels become afraid of you!

What did he say! The major labels become afraid of me? Why is that? While they want you to succeed selling CDs, they don't want you to sell too many that you don't need them anymore or they will have to pay you a million dollars to sign with their company.

So now that the moment of truth is here, let's get started with reaping the rewards of all the hard work you started.

Item one on the promotion and marketing list: design a plan of action. This is one of the most important parts of your new release. You must design a plan that will include all your goals and what your budget limitations are, while taking into consideration how you are going to accomplish all the new tasks ahead.

When drawing up your plan, the best policy is to understand the people you are going to be working with. No, not the people in the band and their girlfriends. The people like distributors and retailers, radio and press. The more you understand what these guys can offer you and how they actually work, the better off you are.

Distribution. The one element that most musicians complain is the hardest to get. Actually it's the easiest. Here is the common mistake most people make: They send a CD, a press kit and a poorly written cover letter to the contact at the various distributors and wait for them to call. This is the problem. The distributors don't have time to look at the material and listen to your music! They want to know how you are going to sell the records to the stores and the public, and how much they are going to make.

The best thing you can do is understand how a distributor works. Their job is to take records from you and place them in various stores that they believe it will sell in, or stores that contact them for the record. Distributors do not market or promote the release. They take records from you and ship them to the stores that will sell them. That's it. It's your job to get the stores interested. So what is a distributor good for? Convenience. Stores like to get all of their product from preferably one or two suppliers and pay as few suppliers as possible. This is what a distributor offers you.

If you want a distributor, find out from the stores where it will sell and what distributors they like. Send a package with a CD (so they can review the artwork and package) and a cover letter regarding how much the CD will sell for in the store, what they will make and how you are going to promote it. Simple. Got it? Good.

Retailers. This is the term used to describe the record stores. A record store's only job is to have your record available for the people

photograph courtesy of SolRoc Music



### CARLOS MORGAN

*Toronto singer Carlos Morgan's independent CD, Feelin' Alright won the 1997 Juno Award for Best R&B/Soul Recording. Released in September of '96, along with remixes on 12-inch vinyl, the album has sold 3,000 copies to date. Both singles "Baby C'mon" and new "Give It 2 U" have received airplay on commercial and college radio, and video exposure on MuchMusic. Morgan is the only act on upstart indie label, D-Tone.*

**Advice from Carlos Morgan:**

*"Prioritize your budget. Don't sacrifice on something that will end up in a sub-standard sounding, finished product. Good producers, mixing and pressing is also important. You can try to maximize your dollar in the production area by negotiating an exchange of services in lieu of money or if you own your own studio or a friend has a small set up, you can do production there. Lay down the bass and melody tracks and save the embellishments for the larger studio where the time can really add up, or try and get a flat rate fee for studio time. Make your packaging appealing and go for it! Remember to create the buzz first with radio play and get club DJs to spin your tracks, as those two avenues tend to break new artists, and support that with media coverage of all kinds and promo appearances in live venues so word of mouth can build. Distribution is important to ensure that your product is available in stores once the demand is there. Always remember, keep your head up, persevere and surround yourself with people who believe in you."*

who come in and want to buy it. Nothing else. They don't promote or market it to people, they just stock it. When trying to understand how a record store works, think of the supermarket. The market doesn't have people walking around trying to get you to buy a certain kind of cereal. The record store and grocery store are the same. The record is in the store if you want to buy it, along with thousands of others.

**Radio.** The most confusing of the elements. The confusion arises from the lack of understanding that all radio stations are not equal in power and popularity. Radio stations differ just like any business. They try to play different styles of music to capture a kind of listener in the market they are broadcasting to. Stations also range in the distance and clarity of their signal. Some stations cover a large part of the market and surrounding cities while others cover only a select area.

Radio can typically be divided into two areas: college and commercial. Commercial stations are the most effective in helping you sell records. College stations are those free of commercials that are more adventurous in playing various styles of music. Unfortunately college stations divide themselves by whether they are community-oriented (more news and talk programs with specialty shows), cable current or cable (stations that only broadcast to students on campus or on information channels on the TV) and the regular college stations (which have a good broadcast range). You need to find out from the record stores where their customers come from and what radio stations impact the customers to buy records. Typically college radio has little or no impact anymore on the sale of records. However, it could be used to show a developing story to commercial stations in the area that the record is getting played and has been accepted. If you want commercial airplay, find out what determines whether a commercial station will play a record. Then go and fill the requirements they have told you. Keep in mind that the station's income comes from advertisements. Your music is just a vehicle to keep people listening so they can hit them with ads.

**The press.** Here is the best way to look at the press: If you can't deliver an interesting story that is already developing, forget it for now. The press doesn't discover anything. They jump on the bandwagon when the story is underway. Keep in mind that you probably wouldn't buy a record of a group you never heard of just because a magazine told you to.

These are the key players you have to deal with. But I have left out an important part that will sell you more records than anything else. Playing live shows. While by themselves they won't get you the record deal you want, they will give you the opportunity to build a fan base and make extra money from the clubs.

Playing live can often be a disaster for many groups. People don't come to shows. The clubs get mad and the band can't play there anymore. But here is the trick you need: Hand out sample tapes of your music to any potential audience member in the street. People who don't know you are not going to come to your show because you hand them a flyer. Give them a cassette of your music. One or two songs to whet their appetite so they will drive around in the car and either come to the show with their friends or stop and buy your CD at the store. Let people see what they're buying! But understand this one major point about clubs: Like the radio stations, the stores and distributors who are not interested in the sound of your music, the club owners and bookers are the same. They want you to bring in as many people as possible so they can sell them as many drinks as possible. That's how they make their money. Understand it.

Now that you know the players and what they do it's time to draw up your own plan. Here's where I leave you: Start local. Build up the story of your group and CD in your home city. The cost of the promotion in your home market is far less expensive than trying a national campaign. Build up the story at home. Sell a lot of CDs. Get radio airplay. Reviews in the press and get people to your shows! When you feel you have accomplished all



photograph courtesy of Sony Music

## 54.40

*Vancouver's 54.40's first three releases were recorded independently on the artist-run collective MO=DA=MU label, including 1981's four-song sampler LP, Things Are Coming Ashore, 1982's six-song 12-inch EP, Selection, and 1984's vinyl album, Set The Fire. Shortly after the release of Set The Fire, the rock band charted at college radio in Canada and the U.S. It led to a record deal with Reprise/Warner, for whom 54.40 released three studio albums and a compilation. The band signed to Sony in 1992, and has released another two studio albums to date. The label has recently compiled Selection and Set The Fire onto one CD, titled The Sound Of Truth: The Independent Collection. A new album is in the works.*

**Advice from bassist Brad Merritt:**

*"Always think in terms of making music; don't think in terms of making demos. Whatever you feel you have to do. Our first record, essentially (lead vocalist-guitarist) Neil (Osborne) put in \$2,000 and then each of the band members chipped in \$400 from our jobs. It was \$3,200 and that was our record. At the time, studio time was more expensive in real terms. We were recording in the middle of the night, from midnight to 8 a.m., and were paying \$50 an hour. Now, there's ADAT studios. You can be paying less and get prime time and a similar kind of quality. You don't have to be in a hurry to record. Spend some time playing live before you spend your money in a studio. When the album's completed, an (artist-run) label like we had with MO=DA=MU is a wonderful way to go. There's a synergy and an energy that happens that you can't create on your own. Whenever someone wanted to do something, all they got was encouragement and there's a "database" of contacts, knowledge you can share. Everything is right there or a phone call away. It's very reassuring."*

**YOUR  
NAME  
HERE**

photograph by Joseph Cullice



**THE TEA PARTY**

*The Tea Party's 1991 eponymous debut CD was produced by singer-guitarist Jeff Martin and included "Save Me", "Midsummer Day", "Sun Going Down", "Winter Solstice" and "Dreams of Reason", all of which were re-recorded on the band's 1993 EMI Music Canada debut, Splendor Solis. Along with the Windsor-born rock trio's powerful live show, it was the indie CD which enticed EMI. The band has since released three major label albums, Splendor Solis, 1995's The Edges of Twilight and brand new Transmission which Martin self-produced.*

Advice from singer-guitarist Jeff Martin:

*"If the band is confident enough in its own material and the arrangements that it has, just hire a good engineer and don't be afraid to spend a little extra money on getting the proper equipment. I'm all for lo-fi endeavours when it's cool and the vibe calls for it, but sometimes the music that bands want to make calls for recordings that are true to what the band's trying to reproduce, and, in order to pull that off, you need to make sure you have a great engineer to deal with all the technical aspects of what you're doing — ie. microphones, preamps and mic placement, which are really important."*

you can there, move the efforts to the neighbouring cities and markets. Expand to areas where you feel comfortable travelling to on a regular basis.

When you have built your own success story, you will have a wonderful advantage. When a major label comes calling, you will have a position of strength to negotiate from. You have radio air-play, CD sales, people coming to shows; you're making money. What do you need them for? What can they offer you that you can't do yourself? You will probably find that you are better off without the big record companies.

Here is the last bit of truth. The average major label artist(s) sold 702 CDs last year in the U.S. They received an approximate royalty rate of \$1 per CD sold after they sold 30,000 copies. Since they didn't sell that many they owe the record company money! However, you can build your company, record the music you want. Make CDs for \$1.70, sell themselves for \$12 or to a distributor for \$7. In either case, you are making more money selling yourself than if you were signed to a major. After all, 93% of all major label releases fail in a year. Do you want them to take your career over? **CM**

Tim Sweeney is the author of *Tim Sweeney's Guide to Releasing Independent Records* and *Tim Sweeney's Guide to Music Conventions*.

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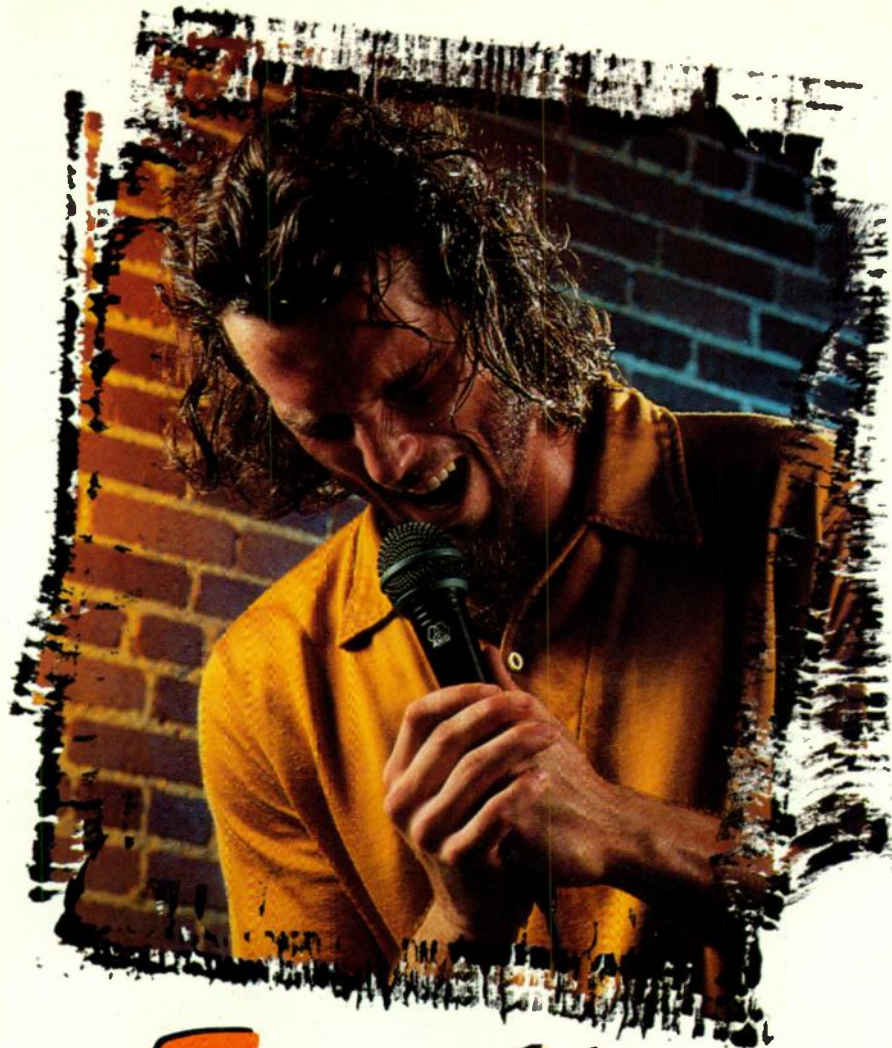
- How to decide which conventions to attend
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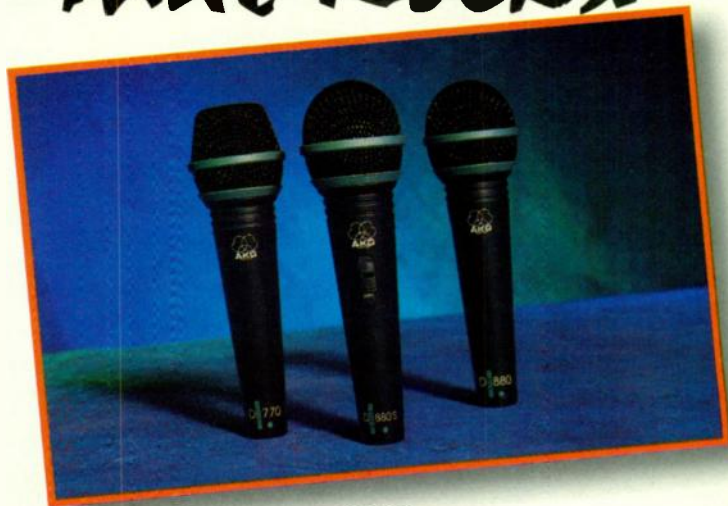


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Neodymium magnet assemblies also mean that these mics produce some serious output, ensuring that your vocals soar over even the heaviest rhythm section and your instruments retain their crisp presence without getting stuck in the mud. With AKG's Doubleflex™ antivibration system, handling noise is all but eliminated, while superior gain-before-feedback prevents your PA from howling even when the guitars crank up to eleven.

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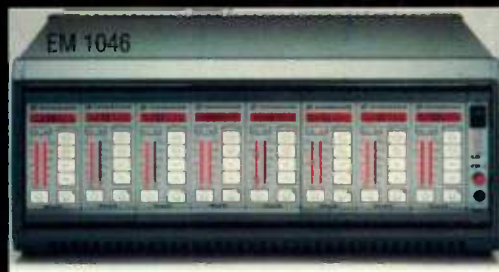


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With Ron Sexsmith  
Interview by Carolyn Heinze

Revered by songwriting greats such as Elvis Costello, native Ontarian Ron Sexsmith has been the object of attention in international songwriting circles as of late. During the last two years, Sexsmith has shared the stage with the aforementioned Costello, The Chieftains, Sarah McLachlan, The Cardigans and Radiohead.



PHOTO BY ANDREW McNAUGHTON

# CARRYING OUT YOUR IDEAS

"The first time I found myself in the middle of writing a bunch of songs was around 1985. There were a lot of changes going on in my life, and all of a sudden I was writing like a maniac — I had all these songs coming and going at the same time. I think that's a great feeling, because there is always this scary idea that this is going to be your last batch of songs, and after that you won't have any ideas anymore. I have had these stretches of time where I don't have any ideas at all. I'm really miserable if I'm not in the middle of a bunch of songs.

"I had a songwriter friend who said that the best thing to do when you're not writing is to learn other peoples' songs. I'm always figuring out a song, and that's a good thing to do. It can get you out of your slump.

"Each song has its own circumstances around it. It could be something that you've overheard, and then maybe you get an idea for a song, or maybe an idea of a melody. It's just a case of taking it where you find it. To be more specific, there is a song on my record called 'Clown in Broad Daylight' which is basically something I saw looking out of the window on a bus. You never really know when you are going to see or hear something like that — it's just a matter of being ready when you get an idea, to either jot something down and start working on it.

"These days, I'm on the road a lot so it's a bit harder to write, because I'm always in the van with somebody. But it's my job now, so I try to take the time. When I have a little bit of free time, I sit down with my songs and see if I can get further with them.

"The lyrics are always the hardest part. You get the initial idea or inspiration, and then you're kind of left alone with it. It's kind of up to you to finish it. I try to finish everything that I start, and I try to be really particular about each song so that even the dumbest song is as good as it can be."

RON SEXSMITH IS CURRENTLY ON TOUR IN PROMOTION OF HIS LATEST  
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*"I had a  
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friend who  
said that  
the best  
thing to  
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peoples'  
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BY CHRIS TAYLOR

# PUBLISHING AGREEMENTS: PART I

Songwriting and publishing is where the real money is made in the record business.

The rumours around about the disparities in successful bands where some of the members write the tunes and the others perform as mere members of the band can become a reality if you are not informed on the subject. The songwriters can afford to fly in the plane while the non-songwriter members ride in the tour bus. Sometimes the songwriters themselves are left at the side of the road when they fail to protect themselves and their songs in negotiating a publishing deal. The discussion below takes a look at some of the potholes along the road.

In order to fully understand publishing, we must first understand the sources of publishing income and their relative importance. There are primarily four sources of publishing income: **Mechanical Licensing Fees, Performance Royalties, Synchronization License Fees and Print/Other Income.** Following a brief discussion of these four areas, we will proceed to analyze some typical provisions found in the Publishing Agreement (see the next issue of *Canadian Musician*).

## Mechanical Licensing Fees

This is one of the primary sources of income for songwriters and publishers. In Canada, basically every time someone makes a recording of one of your songs (CD, cassette, 12" — whatever) they must pay a mechanical licensing fee to the copyright owner, which is often represented on a non-exclusive basis by the Canadian Mechanical Rights and Reproduction Agency (CMRRA). The current fee today is 6.6 cents per track. This fee is set as a result of negotiations between the CMRRA and the record companies.

For example, if Polygram or even your independent record company, like Squirtgun or Sonic Unyon, manufactures a record with 10 of your songs on it, they must pay a mechanical licensing fee to the CMRRA of  $10 \times \$0.066 = \$0.66$  per record. If they manufactured 5,000 records they would have to pay  $5,000 \times \$0.66 = \$3,300.00$ . It's easy to recognize that these numbers can really add up when you start to sell a significant number of records. (\*This is a simplified example and does not address the complex issue of the controlled composition clause which is beyond the scope of this article).

Other countries have reciprocal arrangements with CMRRA (ie. Harry Fox Agency in the States) and which also collect the mechanical royalties on your behalf. After deducting an administration fee, they pass on your royalties to the CMRRA who ensures that you get your cash.

## Performance Royalties

Another primary source of songwriting in-

come comes from performance income. This is income you receive as a result of radio or television airplay for the use of your music in live performances, for example, or anytime your music is performed in public.

The users of music (ie. radio stations, night clubs, etc.) pay fees to the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) for the use of the music. This results in a huge pool of cash which SOCAN distributes to its members: songwriters and publishers. SOCAN distributes this cash based on complex computer logging formulas and statistical samplings of music used. Generally, the more your song has been used, the more you are paid. Payments are made on a quarterly basis.

SOCAN has international affiliates throughout the world (ASCAP and BMI in the States) who collect similar royalties on behalf of the songwriters and ensure that they are paid whenever their music is used throughout the world.

It is difficult to calculate exactly how much performance income will be generated by a particular song, but a rule of thumb throughout the industry is that a #1 single on the *Billboard* charts can be worth as much as a \$1,000 earning in performance income whereas a #1 single on the Canadian charts is worth \$100.

## Synchronization License Fees

Simply put, whenever someone wants to use your music in conjunction with a visual image (ie. in a film, television program or computer game) they must pay for the rights to do so. Generally, in Canada the license is negotiated with the CMRRA or the publisher directly who pay this money to the songwriter and publisher after deducting an administrative fee.

The fees for synchronization license varies widely depending on a number of factors, including: the budget of the entire project, the positioning of the song (ie. does it figure prominently in the film? Is it the title theme song?) and the popularity of the individual artist and song.

It is difficult to set out general fees in this area but a good friend of mine who works in the field of Film/TV music publishing once gave me this formula, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{entire budget of the film}}{100} = \text{music budget}$$

$$\frac{\text{music budget}}{\# \text{ of songs in film}} = \text{money available for synch license}$$

A film with a \$4 million budget would typically have a \$40,000 music budget and might use 12 songs throughout the film. This leaves approximately \$1,666.67 for the synch

license. When you factor in the music supervisor's percentage you are probably left with around \$1,500 for the synchronization license.

This formula is not going to be accurate all the time due to factors I have outlined above, but at least it gives you a sense of the ballpark on this point. The biggest the budget, the bigger the artist, the more prominent the song, the bigger the money.

## Print and Other Sources of Income

A detailed discussion of print income is beyond the scope of this article. Generally, music publishers "farm out" this aspect of the music publishing business to companies dedicated to selling printed music. These are generally song books that you can buy in the music store when you need to learn the words of a particular song, or if you want to figure out a difficult chord progression. Before the wide use of the phonograph and the radio, this was the primary way for a songwriter or publisher to earn money. Today, this source of income is declining in importance for obvious reasons. The money paid out on this source is typically expressed as a percentage rate of suggested retail list price around 10%-20%.

Other sources of income do not play such an important role at the present time, but the advent of new technologies may result in future income streams we could never dream of. Although the four most important income streams are listed above, it is important to address this area when negotiating publishing agreements. Some agreements choose to select a current income stream by analogy and apply it to "any and all future income streams whether known or not at the time of this agreement".

It is important to be informed about how the publishing industry works before entering into negotiations concerning publishing rights. So far, we've outlined the basic sources of publishing income as: **1. Mechanical Royalties; 2. Performance Royalties; 3. Synchronization Licenses and; 4. Print and Other Income.** Next issue we will examine how this income is divided amongst songwriters and publishers under a typical music publishing agreement.

Join us next issue to see if the streets are paved with gold!

CHRIS TAYLOR IS THE FORMER LEAD VOCALIST FOR THE JUNO-NOMINATED ACT ONE. PRESENTLY, CHRIS IS A LAWYER AT PAUL SANDERSON & ASSOCIATES. HE IS CURRENTLY PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HIS FIRST BOOK, *AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MUSIC BUSINESS: AS TOLD BY PEOPLE WHO LIVE IT*, SCHEDULED TO APPEAR IN STORES THIS FALL.

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# HOT GEAR

## MEINL MARCHING CYMBALS

The Meinl Company has introduced some new products within their Classics Cymbal Line, including Meinl Marching Cymbals. The Marching Cymbals come in three sizes: 14", 15" and 16". All cymbals are delivered with straps, felts and a gigbag.

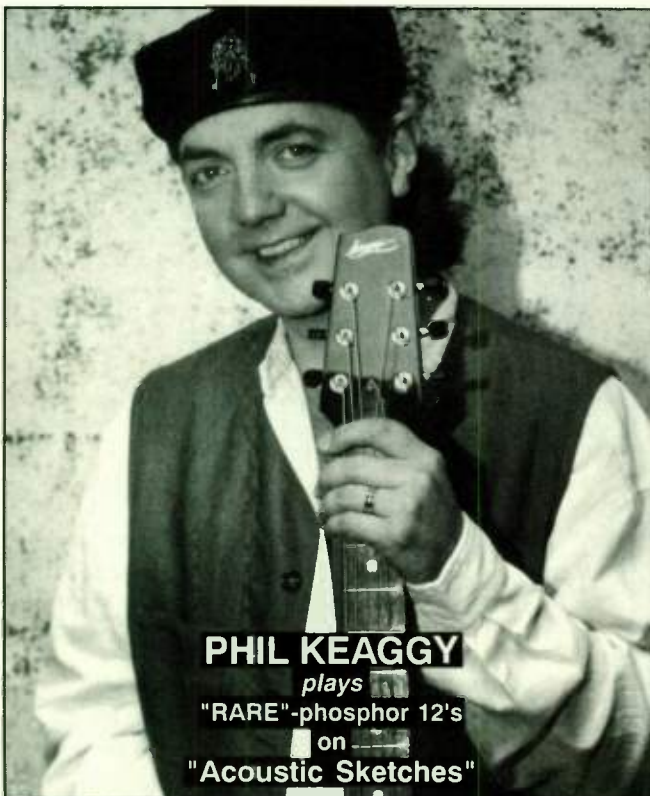
For more information, contact: Direct Music Supply, PO Box 341, 4500 Queen St. Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6T8 (800) 828-1601, FAX (716) 285-8760 (Supplier effective July 1, 1997).



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Evans recently introduced their Pre-Paks, configured to replace the batter heads in the most frequently purchased drum sets. They include three tom-tom batter heads (Genera G2s) plus a free Genera G1 coated snare batter head and a free Clip Key. Evans Pre-Paks are available in hanging packages, designed for display on all walls or in Evans' drumhead displays.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 West Wilmot St., #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (905) 889-0116/(800) 268-6855, FAX (905) 889-8998.

## PREMIER PERCUSSION 75TH ANNIVERSARY KITS

Premier Percussion has introduced a new limited edition Genista drum kit in celebration of the company's 75th Anniversary. Finished in white marine pearl and featuring inlaid bass drum hoops, all kits carry a serial-numbered anniversary badge. Configuration is 10" x 8" tom, 15" x 13" floor tom, 20" x 16" bass drum and a 14" x 5.5" snare drum. All toms carry the RIMS system and all Genista Limited Edition 75th Anniversary kits sport the original Premier script logo on the front head.

For more information, contact: Scott's Highland Services Ltd., 1464 Beckworth Ave., London, ON N5V 2K7 (519) 453-0892, FAX (519) 453-6303, E-Mail: highland@icis.on.ca



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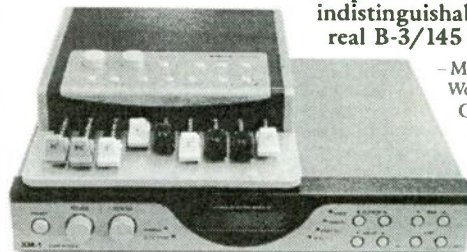
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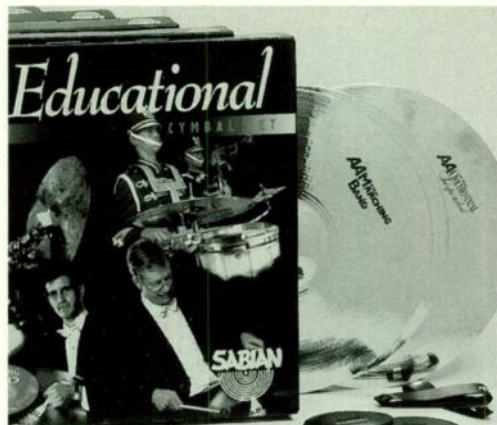
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## SABIAN EDUCATIONAL CYMBAL SETS

Sabian recently announced the debut of their new series of Educational Cymbal Sets. Consisting of nine different pre-packaged offerings for concert bands, orchestras and marching bands, the sets are designed to meet the musical requirements and budget of educators. Available in the HH Hand Hammered and AA professional series as well as in the B8 Pro and B8 student series, many of the sets contain a set of leather cymbal straps and pads.

For more information, contact: Sabian Ltd., Meductic, NB, E0H 1L0 (506) 272-2019, FAX (506) 272-2081, E-Mail: sabmark@nbnet.nb.ca

## SOUNDTECH DJ MIXER



SoundTech recently introduced the DJ6 Professional DJ Mixer, designed for music playback applications.

Dual VU meters provide readings of program level and energy content, while five-band graphic equalizers allow the user to shape their sound to the room. The DJ microphone channel incorporates a dedicated two-band shelving EQ, plus an "Auto-Talkover" feature, designed to automatically "dip" the music level whenever the DJ speaks. The "Recovery Time" adjustment controls how soon the music will return to the full level. Dual independent stereo outputs gives the user the ability to control two separate zones.

For more information, contact: SoundTech (A Division of Washburn International), 255 Corporate Woods Pkwy., Vernon Hills, IL 60061 (847) 913-5511, FAX (847) 913-7772, E-Mail: prosound@juno.com

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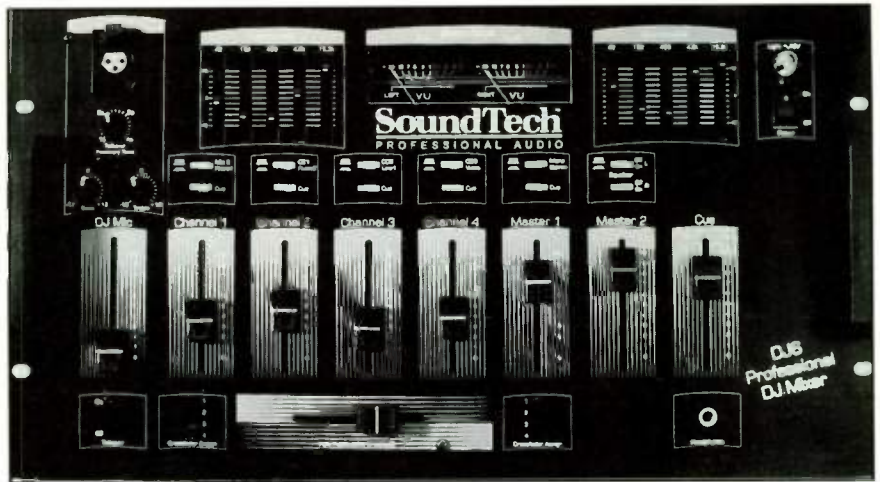
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## BOSS CT-6 TUNER

Boss recently introduced the CT-6 Guitar/Bass Auto Tuner. The CT-6 features, according to the manufacturer, a wide tuning range, quick response and a built-in microphone with LED technology. The unit also offers "flat" tuning capability and directly readable standard pitch (438 Hz-445 Hz).

For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music Ltd., 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V6V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552.



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## SONY MDM-X4 MULTITRACK RECORDER

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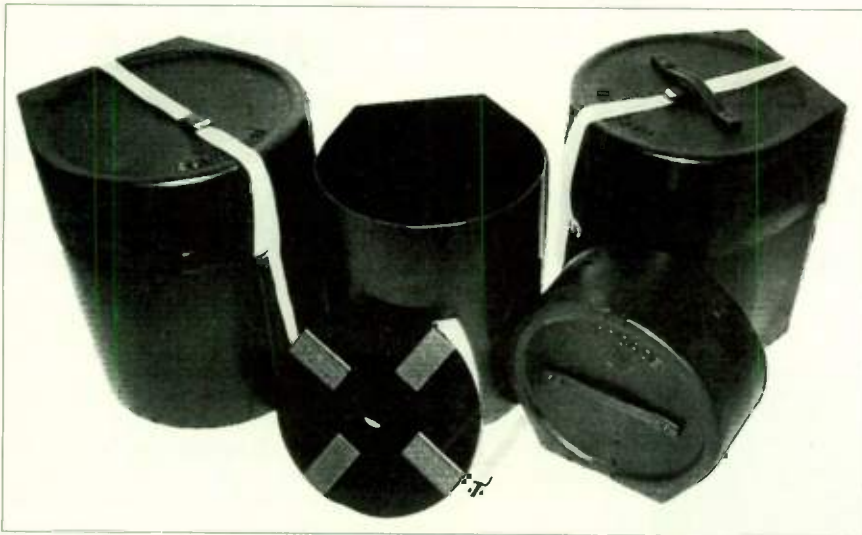
Features include three levels of editing: Track Edit, Section Edit and Song Edit; a Mix Write function, which allows the user to add audio to an existing track and; a Virtual Mix mode that enables recording and mixing of more than four tracks on the disk, permitting the user to record eight, 12 or 16 virtual tracks, and then combining them or cloning copies down to a two or 4-track mixdown.

For more information, contact: Sony of Canada Ltd., 405 Gordon Baker Rd., Willowdale, ON M2H 2S6 (416) 499-1414. FAX (416) 499-7534.

## NEW DRUM CASES FROM HARDCASE

Hardcase recently introduced three new drum case products. Among the new Hardcase products are a tom tom case that holds an 8" drum with a depth of between 7"-9"; a tom tom combo case that will carry two drums ranging from 8" by 10" up to 14" X 15"; and a third case designed to fit a 10" snare drum with a maximum depth of 6" and a snare drum with a maximum depth of 7".

For more information, contact: MBT International/Musicorp, PO Box 30819, Charleston, SC 29417, (803) 763-9083, FAX (803) 763-9096.



*Alex Acuña*

Alex Acuña

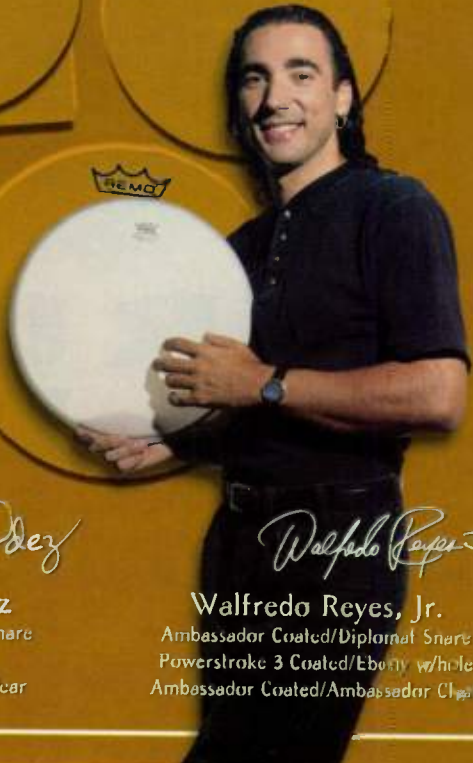
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Walfredo Reyes, Jr.

Ambassador Coated/Diplomat Snare  
Powerstroke 3 Coated/Ebony w/hole  
Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Clear

## MINI-BELL RIDE FROM SABIAN

Sabian recently announced the introduction of their 22" Jack DeJohnette Encore Mini-Bell Ride cymbal, designed by DeJohnette and Sabian craftsmen. Developed from castings of Sabian B20 bronze and boasting a gold satin finish, the cymbals are Auto-Hand Hammered, designed for increased tonal complexity.

For more information, contact: Sabian Ltd., Meductic, NB E0H 1L0 (506) 272-2019, FAX (506) 272-2081, E-Mail: sabmark@nbnet.nb.ca



## NEW GIBSON ACOUSTIC MODELS

Gibson's Montana Division recently introduced the new Custom Acoustic Line and several additions to their Historic Line of guitars as well.

The CL Series has a new dreadnought shape. Included in the line are the CL-20 Standard, CL-30 Deluxe, CL-40 Artist and CL-60 Supreme. All models come standard with a built-in transducer pickup, solid spruce top and arched back in various premium woods.

Gibson's Historic acoustic line is enhanced by some new models which are exact replicas of some of the more popular models in the company's history. Newly released replicas of the 1950s include the Super Jumbo 200, 1960s Dove, 1936 Advanced Jumbo, Early 60s Hummingbird, J-180 and Early J-45.

For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound, 550 Granite Ct., Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481, FAX (905) 837-5776, E-Mail: gibson@yorkville.com

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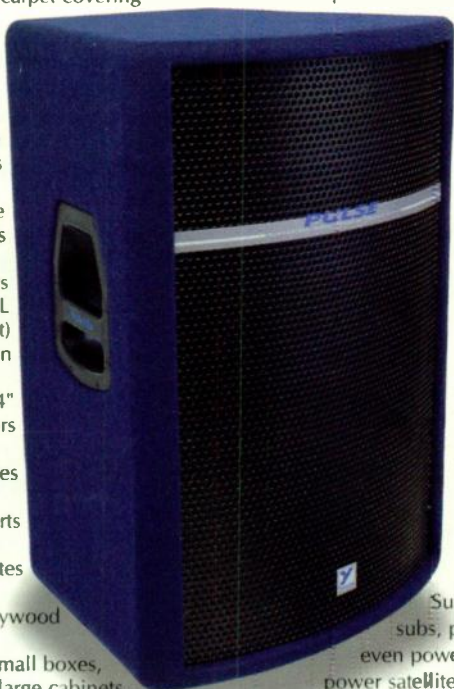
arrayable, full range trapezoidal cabinets and rectangular subwoofers

All cabinets feature CAD design and are computer tested for sonic consistency

'PL' Models feature high SPL for live sound

'PR' Models feature extended response for recorded sound

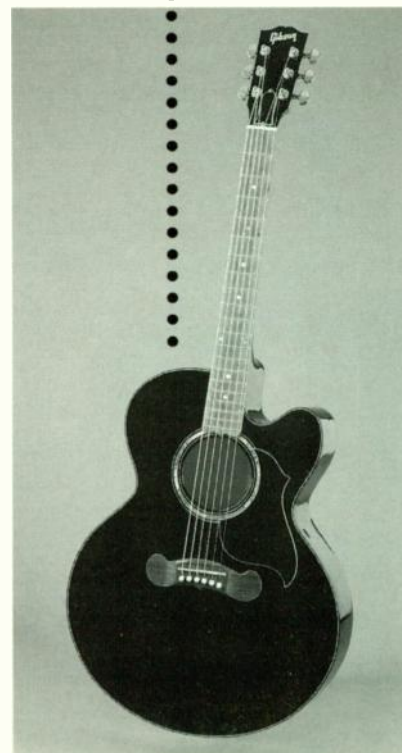
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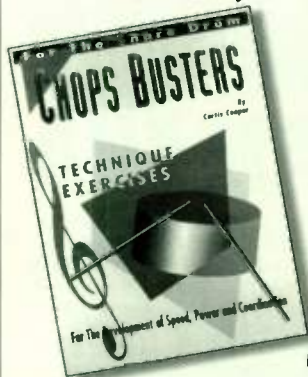
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## NEW FROM EPIPHONE



Epiphone is now shipping three new entry-level guitars. Known as the Junior Series, all feature a single P-90 pickup, wrap-around tailpiece, chrome hardware and bolt-on mahogany neck with rosewood fingerboard.

There are two new Les Paul models in this series: the Les Paul Junior and the Les Paul Junior Double Cutaway. The Les Paul Junior is available in ebony and vintage sunburst and the Double Cutaway version comes in ebony and TV yellow. The SG Junior has the same features as the Les Paul models, and is available in an ebony finish.

For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound, 550 Granite Ct., Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481. FAX (905) 837-5776, E-Mail: [epiphone@yorkville.com](mailto:epiphone@yorkville.com)



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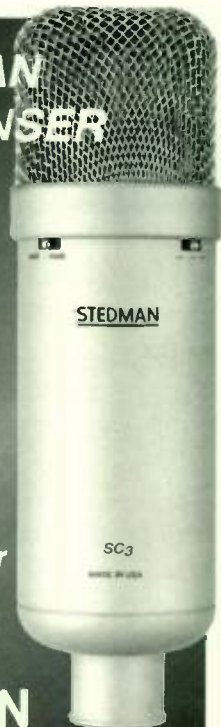
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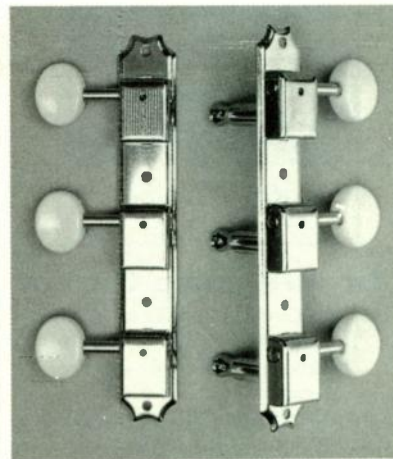


UMI recently introduced the Musica Pocket Trumpet, a compact instrument designed to make travelling with the instrument a little easier.

This portable B-flat model is the same overall length as a standard model trumpet, but is only 8-3/4" long from the tip of the mouthpiece to the rim of the bell. Other features include: a .460" bore, 3-3/4" bell, three nickel-plated, nickel-silver pistons with single indexing, adjustable third slide with finger ring and an extended tuning slide for flexible tuning. The trumpet also comes with a gig bag and accessory pocket.

For more information, contact: United Musical Instruments U.S.A. Inc. (UMI), 1000 Industrial Pkwy., Elkhart, IN 46516 (219) 295-0079, FAX (219) 295-8613

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For more information contact: Audio Distributors International (A.D.I.), PO Box 99030, 1748 Marie Victorin, Longueuil, PQ J4G 2S6 (514) 646-5181, FAX (514) 646-5181.



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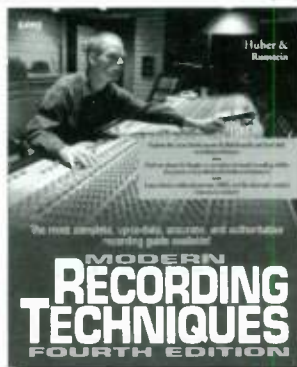
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# Showcase

••••• by Karen Bliss

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## Carlos Morgan

**Style:** seductive; use protection

**Line-Up:** Carlos Morgan (vocals); all instruments played/programmed by Darrin & Tone Z

**Contact:** Solroc Music, Tracey D. Human, 66 Broadway Ave., #415, Toronto, ON, M4P 1T6 (416) 489-6485 FAX (416) 489-3749

Winner of the 1997 Juno Award for Best R&B/Soul Recording for *Feelin' Alright*, Carlos Morgan's debut album is still collecting steam like warm bodies in silk sheets. Morgan, who once earned praise from mighty romancer Luther Vandross after a private performance, has a sweet, caressing voice, often prone to acrobatics. The album also features the guest vocals of other on-the-rise Canadian R&B talent like Glenn Lewis, Michelle Brown and Mischke. Produced by Darrin & Tone Z for TazzDab Productions, the Toronto-based artist sings soulfully over upbeat thumping grooves on the single "Baby C'mon", which has helped propel sales beyond 3,000 copies. And while he swings with the funk on "Don't Let This Thing Slide" and the new single "Give It To You", he's just as capable of dimming the lights on "Forever For You" and "Feelin' Alright". Three of the strongest songs — the power and soul of "What I've Done To You", the perfect ballad "When 2 Become 1" and vibe-heavy hip-hop soul of "Freak It With Me" — demonstrate Morgan's diversity within the R&B genre. In all, *Feelin' Alright* is a steamy debut from a world class artist.



## The Paper Route

**Style:** If pop could rock...

**Line-Up:** Simon Nixon (guitar; vocals); Brad Maclean (bass, vocals); Cam Maclean (drums)

**Contact:** SSG Records 124 McGill St., #400, Montreal, PQ, H2Y 2E5 (514) 397-0450 FAX (514) 397-0083, E-mail [vicenet@total.net](mailto:vicenet@total.net)

These transplanted Torontonians have been playing together for aeons, first in Rocktopus (which also featured I Mother Earth bassist Bruce Gordon) and, of late, in Perm. For its alternative project, The Paper Route, the Montreal-based trio snazzily suits-up in blazers, bow and skinny ties, to deliver its bolted-own hard pop. The oft quoted Elvis Costello rockin' to The Figgs description is uncannily perfect. On The Paper Route's debut, *Go Get It*, its rock is a kind that is tight and heavy but doesn't bleed and rage, while Nixon's voice has a hoarse-adenoidal character. Production is clean, but still lets the fire through. Truly one of the best indie albums around. The title-track, "Can't Be Satisfied", "Clean Me Soapy", "Children Of The Revolution", "Come Around", heck, the whole album, is cool. Produced by Johnson C. and engineered by Howard Bilerman with assistant engineer Eric Shenfield at Mom & Pop Sounds. Distributed by Page Music.



## David Gogo

**Style:** beer-'n'-smoke-soaked blues

**Line-up:** David Gogo (guitar, vocals); Rick Hopkins (organ); Dennis Marcenko (bass); Billy Hicks (drums)

**Contact:** John Hamilton & Associates, 823 W. 20th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1Y3; (604) 879-7773 FAX (604) 879-0245, E-mail: [jhamilton@pop.lynx.bc.ca](mailto:jhamilton@pop.lynx.bc.ca)

Since parting ways with EMI Music Canada, 28 year-old blues-rocker David Gogo has recorded a CD, *Dine Under The Stars*, live without overdubs. To date, the whisky-voiced singer-guitarist has sold 4,000 copies independently. Engineered by Rick Salt, Joel Spillette and Shaun McCracken at the Queen's Hotel in Gogo's native Nanaimo, BC, by Island Pacific Studios, the eight-song album features all but one cover. With his band (formerly with Colin James and k.d. lang), the former "whiz kid" who dazzled Stevie Ray Vaughan at age 15 and EMI at age 21, still has the fiery chops to guarantee a long career. From Albert Collins "Don't Lose Your Cool" to Son House "Death Letter" and B.B. King's "Sweet Little Angel", Gogo smokes out these songs like tear gas does an assassin.

If you are unsigned and would like to be a part of **Showcase**, send us a complete bio, glossy black & white photo and a cassette/CD of your music. Also include an address and phone number where you can be reached. Send your complete package to: **Showcase**, *Canadian Musician*, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3.

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