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Vol. XXVI No. 6



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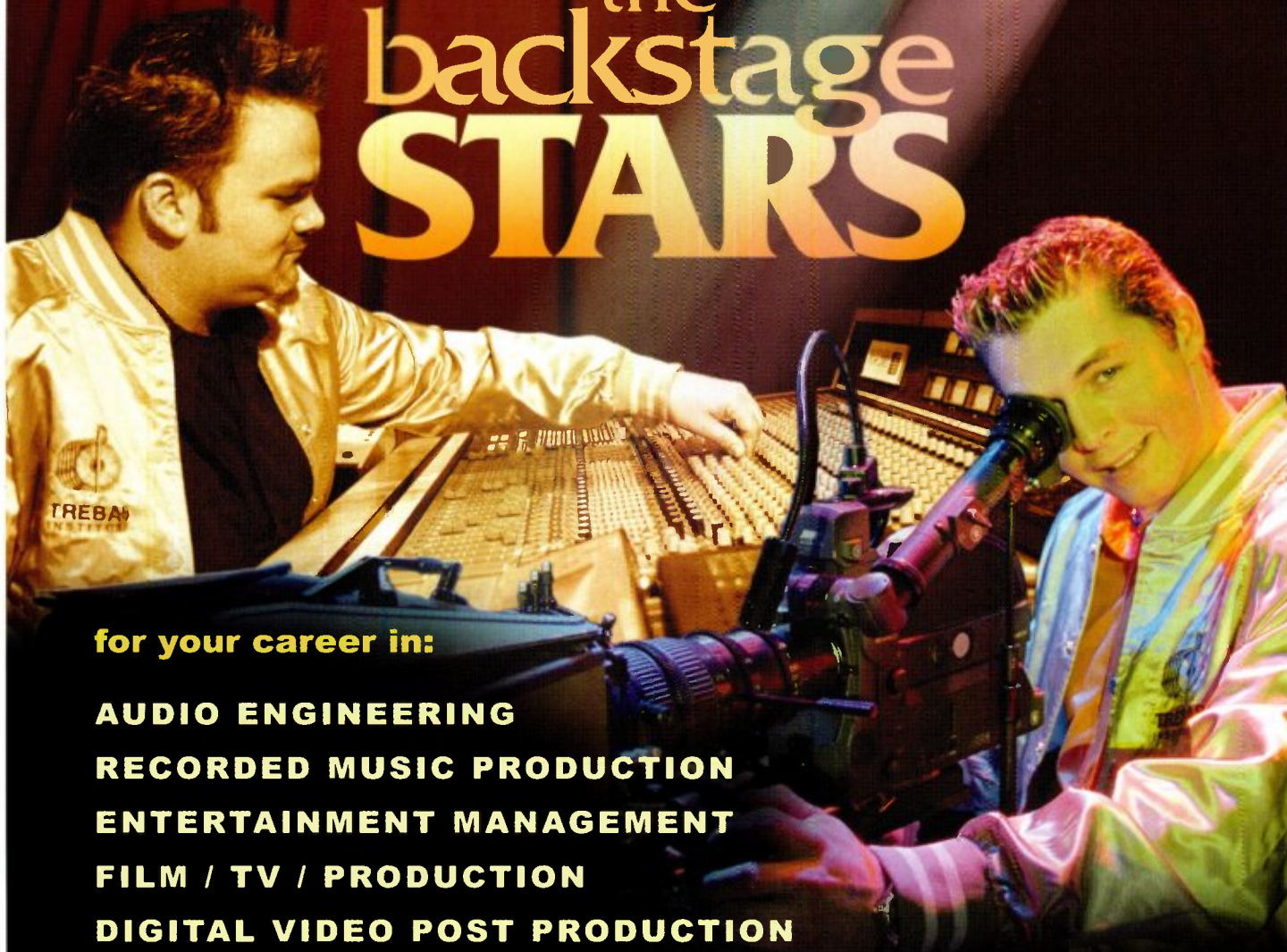
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Producer Bob Rock helps this Montreal-based band record their sophomore album.

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k-os shares how *Joyful Rebellion*, his latest recording, helped him achieve his goals by moving forward both lyrically and musically.

49 Drummers of the (Almost) Lost Art
by Chris Taylor-Munro

For its annual focus on percussion, CM talks to four legendary drummers, Ed Thigpen, Johnny Vidacovich, Paul Delong and Rick Lazar, about how they developed their playing styles. Could their styles of playing possibly be on their way to extinction?

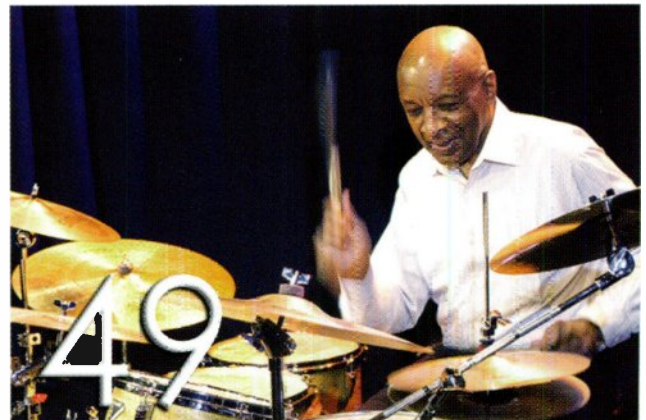
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FREE PRODUCT INFO

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 please see page 69 or visit www.canadianmusician.com.

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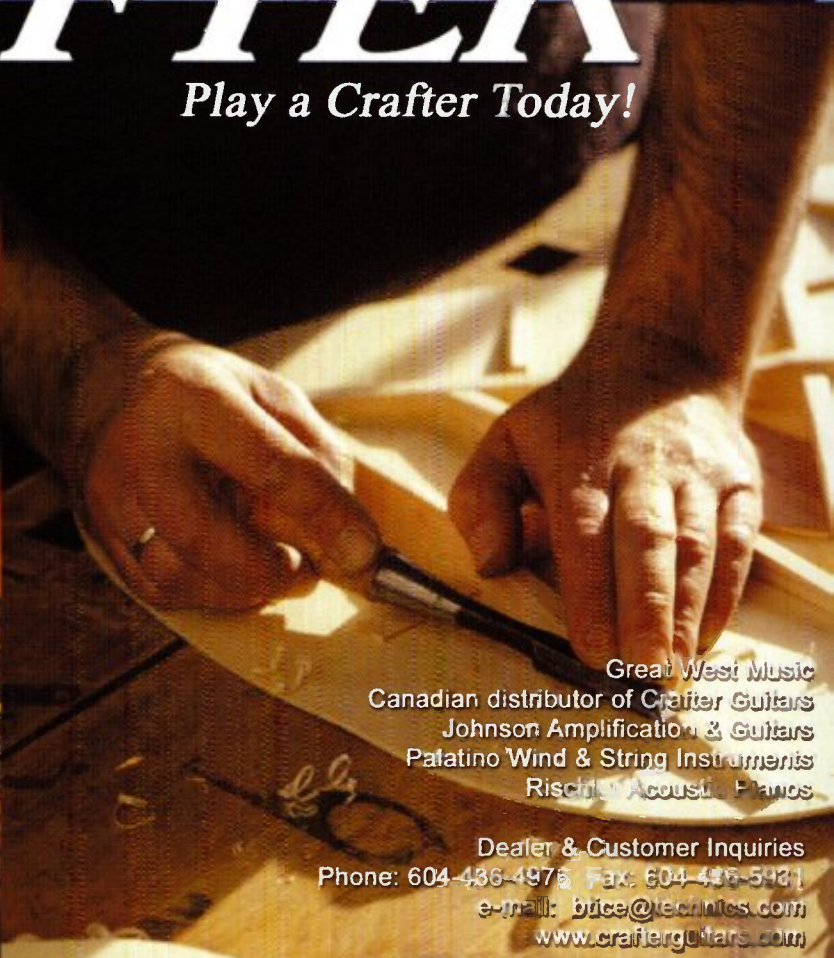
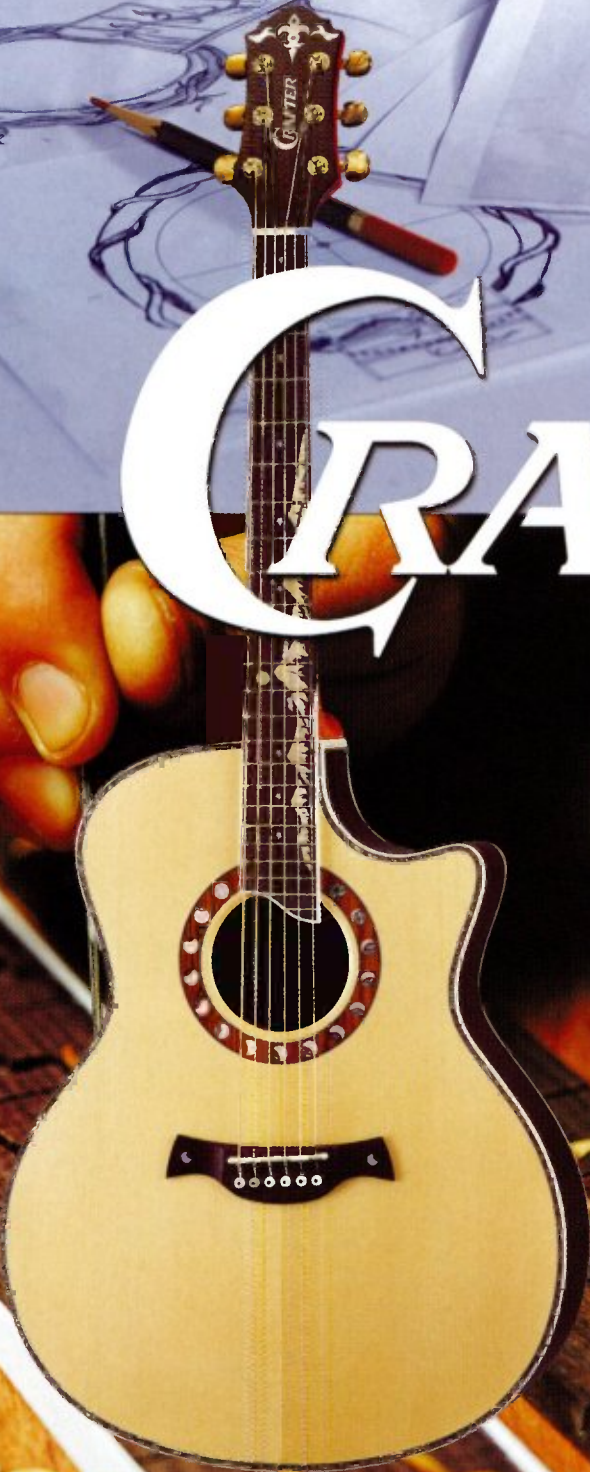
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BY ALEC WATSON

Elementary My Dear Watson

Dear CM,

I am a geek musician with great interest in digital audio and enjoy a simple home studio. I think your magazine provides a wealth of information for all musicians and is very well written. However, after reading Vol. XXVI No. 5, my usual distaste for Alec Watson increased substantially. I would have enjoyed the "How to Build a Home Studio" much more without having to scan past inane jokes in every paragraph. I found it to be nearly unreadable. His article on wordlocks was a waste of time and insulting to my intelligence. His tone comes across as condescending and his jokes aren't funny. There are geeks that have a good interpersonal manner and are helpful, and those that constantly tell non-clever jokes at every turn until you want to slap them. We've all worked with this type. (Hint: If you haven't worked with this type, you are that type.)

I am a professional and need to read many articles to stay on the edge of technology. This may seem harsh, but simply exchange the bad jokes for white space and the quality of the articles will vastly improve.

I would be happy to give Alec another chance if he gives up his quest to be a humourist. Leave the Dave Barry style to Dave Barry. I wish you the best of luck and keep up the serious work.

Jayson Ambrose
Ottawa, ON

Ouch. I can't say that the bulk of letters we've received about Alec's writing agree with your point of view, Jayson. Quite a few people have sent in positive comments about his writing, stating it was helpful to them. He's simply trying to make an article a little more entertaining to read with his style of writing, not audition for Comedy Central. Don't forget to smile Jayson!

Electronic Drums Neglected?

Dear CM,

Just wanted to drop a note to let you guys know how much I enjoy reading your magazine. I'm an aspiring drummer – I also play a little bass – and the technical articles, round table discussions and monthly columns really help me out. I particularly liked the one a couple of issues ago on the importance of staying in shape and eating well, and how important that is to all musicians – especially drummers. I like to think of drumming as almost a sport in its physical demands on the body. I've since started eating less junk food and now try to run a little and lift some light weights everyday, and the difference in my endurance, posture and general comfort behind the kit have really improved.

I wanted to mention that in addition to playing acoustic drums I also have an electric kit. I'd like to see something in a future article on what some professional drummers think of electric kits these days. The technology has come a long way but I still don't see too many drummers using them live even though they are easier to transport, easier for the sound guy to mix (less bleeding into other mics on stage) and are way more versatile in terms of choice of sounds. Anyway, it's just an idea.

In the meantime I'm looking forward to whatever tips your next issue holds, not to mention the annual focus on drumming you do.

Glenn M.
Kamloops, BC

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changes

Thomas Lang Tours Canada

Thomas Lang performs at the Toronto stop of his *Creative Control* tour.



Thomas Lang, left, with Scott Atkins of Coast Music.

Thomas Lang, an Austrian musician who recently released a DVD titled *Thomas Lang: Creative Control*, recently conducted a tour of Canadian music stores as part of a world tour. Each stop on the tour consisted of a two-hour clinic that was hosted by Canadian Sonor drum dealers, along with sponsors Coast Music, Vic Firth Drumsticks, Meinl Cymbals, Remo Drumheads and Hudson Music (manufacturers of his DVD). Providing a mix of question and answer periods with performance and education, attendees were offered a close-up look at Lang's incredible technique. Stops on the tour included cities from Surrey, BC, to St. John's, NF. A true cross-country tour! Venues included select Long & McQuade stores, Centre Musical Italmelodie, Denis Musique, Buckley's Music and Music City.

For more information, visit www.sticktrix.com.

An advertisement for Ernie Ball featuring a repeating pattern of the letters "EB" and the words "Stinky Strings" in a cursive font. In the center is a shield-shaped logo with a laurel wreath border. The shield is divided into four quadrants: top-left is black with "EB" in white, top-right is pink, bottom-left is orange with a white circle, and bottom-right is black with a white circle. At the bottom of the shield is a small globe icon. Below the shield, the text "ERNE BALL" is written in a bold, serif font, with "GUITAR STRINGS AND ACCESSORIES" in a smaller font underneath.

David Usher Joins MapleMusic



MapleMusic recently announced that Canadian artist David Usher will join the label for the release of his fourth solo album.

Usher has enjoyed a long career as a Canadian artist, first with the band Moist, then as a solo artist. "David is a remarkable talent and an incredible addition to our roster," exclaims Grant Dexter, President and CEO of MapleCore Ltd. "Maple is thrilled to be working with David and his amazing team."

Usher is in familiar company at Maple, having already toured with one of their artists, Pilate. Other artists on the label include Not By Choice, Lowest of the Low, Kathleen Edwards, Boy and The Dears.

Visit www.maplemusicrecordings.com for more information.



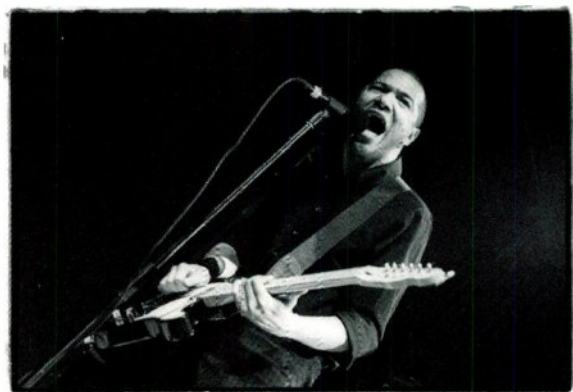
Danko Jones Signs Deal With Razor & Tie

Razor & Tie Records out of New York, NY, recently signed Canadian power trio Danko Jones to a record deal.

After experiencing great success in Europe, the band is ready to push into the US. "This band will blow the roof off of every place they play," exclaims Josh Zieman, General Manager of Razor & Tie. "We are beyond excited to be working with them. Danko Jones rules!"

Danko Jones has built a tremendous reputation based on their headlining tours in Europe, having played most every summer festival in the UK and Europe. Based in Toronto, the band is signed to Bad Taste Records in Lund, Sweden. The deal with Razor & Tie will see the group's third release, *We Sweat Blood*, will be released for the first time in the US.

For more information, visit www.dankojones.com.



Danko Jones

PRS Hosts Clinics In Canada

PRS Guitars recently held a number of clinics in Canada that featured an opportunity for musicians to meet Paul Reed Smith in person.

Three locations in Canada hosted the clinics: Le Swimming Club in Montreal, PQ (sponsored by Steve's Music); CEGEP Auditorium in Quebec City, PQ (sponsored by Musique Gagne); and lastly at the Hard Rock Café in Toronto, ON (sponsored by Long & McQuade).

Lasting an hour in length, each session was attended by approximately 125 people who listened to Paul Reed Smith during a discussion and question and answer period. As you can expect, audience participation was no problem. Paul would then perform for the crowd with a band for another hour.

"They received standing ovations at each event and all went very well," exclaims David Magagna, International Sales Manger for Paul Reed Smith Guitars. "At the end of each session, Paul would sign autographs in addition to talking to musicians who had more questions for him."

For more information, visit www.prsguitars.com.

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Roland Canada Hosting 'Grand Affair'

Roland Canada Music will be hosting a series of events across Canada in November 2004.

Titled "Grand Affair," internationally acclaimed pianist and organist Tony Fenelon joins Roland to bring what they're promising to be "an exceptional opportunity to enjoy some of Roland's finest instruments in concert, including the Roland Digital Grand piano and Music Atelier organ."

Fenelon's performances include a balance between the contemporary and the classics including music from films, stage shows, jazz and standards. Over the course of his career, Fenelon has performed numerous times with the Australian Pops and Australian Philharmonic Orchestras in such world-renowned venues as the famous Sydney Opera House. His many achievements include being awarded the "Organist of the Year 2002" by the American Theatre Organ Society, the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his service to music. He also has 22 recordings and 4 gold records to his name.

Here's a list of the dates and cities where you can attend these events.

November 8/04 Vancouver, BC
November 9/04 Edmonton, AB
November 10/04 Calgary, AB
November 12/04 Guelph, ON
November 14/04 Montreal, PQ (South Shore)
November 16/04 Montreal, PQ (Laval)

For more details such as venue information, visit www.roland.ca/events.

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Ibanez Guitars Signs OEM Deal With D'Addario

Ibanez Guitars recently announced that they will be shipping all of their guitars with D'Addario strings as standard equipment.

Electric Ibanez guitars now feature D'Addario XL nickel-plated steel strings. Acoustic guitars will bear D'Addario's EXP Extended Play 80/20 Bronze strings. "How a guitar plays, sounds, and feels is vital to that all-important first impression," states Ibanez President Bill Rein. "That's why we carefully inspect every guitar, no matter what the price, before it leaves for our retailers. That's why the setup of our guitars includes D'Addario strings. D'Addario has the quality, consistency and brand name recognition that players appreciate and respect."

For more information, visit www.ibanez.com or www.daddario.com.

CRIA Names New President

After serving the Canadian Recording Industry Association since 1974, Brian Robertson has stepped down as President of CRIA.

During his tenure, Robertson was one of the founders of the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) and has been a strong supporter of Canadian artists and culture. Through his many contributions, he is credited with moving the recording industry forward in a time of tremendous change and growth.

"This is the 30th year of my relationship with CRIA and the Canadian recording industry," recalls Robertson. "I am deeply grateful to the current and past CRIA board members for allowing me the privilege of assuming this challenging role for such an extended period and I look forward to continuing in a consulting role."

Robertson will remain with CRIA in a consulting capacity into 2005 as Chairman Emeritus.

Graham Henderson, formerly a music industry lawyer in private practice and currently Senior Vice-President of Business Affairs and eCommerce at Universal Music Canada, assumed the role of President on November 15, 2004. Henderson has been a passionate advocate for the Canadian artistic community throughout his career and was a founder of the Recording Artists Associations of Canada. He brings with him a wealth of experience from his work with artists, writers, record labels and developing e-commerce entities.

For more information, visit www.cria.ca.

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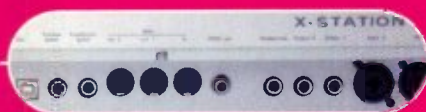
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Doug & The Slugs Frontman Passes Away

Doug Bennett, lead singer of Doug & The Slugs, passed away at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary, AB on October 16, 2004. Bennett was admitted to the hospital on October 9, suffering from acute symptoms from a long-standing illness. Shortly following his arrival at the hospital, Bennett lost consciousness and remained in a coma on life support until he passed away.

Bennett was born in Toronto in 1951 and moved to Vancouver in 1973 where, in 1977, he formed Doug & The Slugs. Touring with The Slugs throughout Canada and the US for the past 27 years, Bennett wrote a number of the band's hits, including *Too Bad*, *Day By Day*, *Making It Work*, *Tomcat Prowl*, and more.

For more information, visit www.dougandtheslugs.com.

Recording Arts Program Of Canada Expands



Three years ago, the Quebec-based sector of Recording Arts Canada (RAC) made a big move from the small town of St. Anne du Lac to the booming city of Montreal. With its success, it only made sense to do the same with the Ontario-based RAC.

After spending 20 years nestled within Stoney Creek's orchards inside of a comfortable home, Ontario's RAC relocated to Toronto's downtown on Peter St. this past February stationing itself into a larger facility. With the new transition, RAC is now able to maintain a strong industry connection while being convenient and accessible to some of Canada's industry leaders.

The new facility is equipped with a 5.1 Dolby Digital Certified Surround Sound mixing theatre as well as one of the largest Foley rooms in North America.

In addition to the move, RAC is looking to further develop by becoming involved with digital art. To accompany their well-established Sound and Music Recording diploma program, RAC will be launching a new diploma program entailing Digital Media, which will cover the audio aspects as well as the graphic and video aspects of media. This program will commence in January 2005.

RAC students whom graduate from these programs are well-equipped with the skills they need to be successful within the demanding fields of audio and music, enabling them to find employment in the computer and digital media business, along with sound for radio, film and television, theatre, sound installation, the live event industry, and many other functions linking to sound and music production. As for the digital arts fields, graduates from RAC are prepared to enter the gaming, 3-D, interactivity and virtual simulation fields.

Over the years, RAC has shaped one of the best learning environments for people who consider themselves creative and want to work with powerful digital sound and imaging technologies. RAC offers their Sound and Music Recording students a chance to learn how to produce inspiring audio and music landscapes, keep up with the latest sounds and grooves and create astounding sound designs. As for students enrolled in RAC's Digital Imaging program, they are throwing themselves into the creation of remarkable digital graphic designs using the most up-to-date 3-D, interactivity and simulation tools.

RAC, a host to students from across Canada, as well as numerous international and American students, offers a "one student per workstation" ratio, enabling every student to have hands-on experience. The Digital Sound and Music facilities embrace more than 40 studios, workstations and labs. The Digital Media studios feature the newest in computer and software technologies and their Dolby Certified Surround mixing theatres and Foley Studio have hosted highly praised film clients including *The Matrix Reloaded*, *Tribulation Force*, *Jason X* and many more.

In addition to its set of courses, RAC's staff and faculty comprise top, award-winning industry professionals. The programs at RAC are designed with the help of leading technology companies, industry professionals, and artists in music, sound and digital imaging.

For more information, visit www.recordingarts.com.



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cms@music.org,
www.music.org

Percussive Arts Society International Convention

Nashville, TN
November 10-13, 2004
(580) 353-1455,
FAX (580) 353-1456
percarts@pas.org,
www.pasic.org

Montreal Drum Fest 2004

Montreal, PQ
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angelillo@videotron.ca,
www.montrealdrumfest.com

CINARS 2004

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www.cinars.org

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Ernie Ball Music Man Bongo Bass

by Jeff Pearce

Sometimes I have trouble really loving basses I am reviewing. There are a lot of expensive instruments out there, and sometimes the price just doesn't make sense to me. I sometimes feel "Well, sure it plays good and sounds good, but what else is it going to do for me?" And when an instrument like the Bongo comes into my hands I feel completely justified. The Bongo is everything a \$2,000 bass should be and represents a step forward in bass guitar technology and design. And I am not just talking about its unique body shape, although I may as well start there.

Ernie Ball isn't the first company to experiment with different body designs for bass guitars. But when Leo Fender founded Music Man (which was later purchased by Ernie Ball) he began making basses that were very similar to his original Fender Precision, in shape and design. Most of the world's basses pay homage to that shape. But a couple years ago the developers at Ernie Ball started tinkering with a new preamp/pickup system that used magnets made of neodymium instead of alnico. They came up with something they thought was pretty cool, and decided that perhaps these new pickups actually deserved to be installed in a bass that looked as modern as it sounded. Instead of merely doing it themselves, Ernie Ball's people met up with design people from automaker BMW and challenged them with creating a new body design. The result is a nod to the bass shapes of the past, less of a departure than say a Gibson Thunderbird, or a Steinberger, but with a decidedly "retro-modern" flair, reminiscent of the way robots were illustrated on the covers of '50s sci-fi novels. But the design maintains the practicality of the double cut-away, the shape is purely cosmetic and doesn't make playing it harder or easier. The more I look at it, the less strange it seems. It is available in 14 colours and with 10 pickguard options, all with a Rosewood fretted or fretless neck, which plays very easily and offers unparalleled access all the way to the 24th fret.

The design team didn't just stop after overhauling the body and the pickups. The bass has many other thoughtful design features. The truss rod protrudes half a centimetre past the neck and ends in a large perforated metal nut. This means the truss rod can be adjusted without taking off the strings, and without tracking down any kind of special truss tool.

Any small screwdriver, Allen key, or other piece of straight metal will do. The two 9-volt batteries required to power the bass are housed in inset battery boxes, so the main cavity cover doesn't need to be opened. Batteries could be changed in a matter of seconds.

The new pickups are actually passive, but the batteries power active preamps built into the instrument. The Bongo is available in a wide range of pickup configurations, including single humbucker, double humbucker, and one humbucker and one single coil. Any dual-pickup configuration including the addition of the optional piezo electronics will have a 4-band EQ, while the single-pickup version will be equipped with the standard 3-band EQ.

The test model had twin humbuckers and offered an incredibly wide range of beautiful tones. Dialing in the bridge pickup alone made the Bongo sound like the classic Music Man Stingray, with a growl-y and aggressive midrange. Dialing in the neck pickup changed the Bongo's tone to something more reminiscent of a Fender Jazz or Precision, with warm lows and delicate highs. The 4-band EQ was extremely responsive, especially the hi-mid and low-mid controls that subtly changed the Bongo sound while leaving the definition of the higher tones and the thump of the lower tones alone. Scientifically no one has told me why making magnets out of the neodymium material would make this bass better than basses of old, but I simply loved the way this bass sounded. I loved the way the bass played and after a while I loved the way the bass looked.

With my apologies to Latin percussionists, the name Bongo doesn't do justice to the sound of this bass. And the name is printed in big letters right across the top of the headstock, almost daring anyone to make fun of it. The sound is not Bongo. Sure, it sounds great when you slap it – percussive, compressed and tight. But when picked it is growl-y and aggressive. And when fingered it is deep and round. Overall, this is an extremely versatile, well crafted and designed instrument, and worthy of both the Music Man name, and the \$2,160 suggested retail price. It is also available in a 5-string model.

For more information, contact: MOL Marketing, 6773 Wallace Dr., Brentwood Bay, BC V8M 1A2 (250) 544-4864, FAX (250) 544-4865, info@molmarketing.net, www.molmarketing.net.



Manufacturer's Comments

Just a couple of things we wish to add ... in the third paragraph Jeff discusses the truss rod adjustment wheel and the accessibility of the battery box – these are actually included on all of Music Man's basses. Not just the Bongo!

We totally agree about the name Bongo. It IS put on the headstock as if it is daring someone to make fun of it. No one in the industry has reacted well to the name, but now I can't even imagine Bongo having any other name than Bongo. It's kind of like The Beatles – when they first came out everyone was like "The Beatles?!?! Like a bug only spelled with 'beat'?!?! How horrific!" Now, could you imagine if The Beatles were called something else? You couldn't think of them in any other way, huh? That's how Bongo has grown on me, everyone else who warms up to the Bongo, and the cult of following that has emerged since Bongo's release. I think Bongo is much more than a name. Bongo is a bass, a sound, a movement in the direction of bass enlightenment. Bongo is a way of life.

Beth, Music Man

Jeff Pearce is a Toronto-based musician best known for his work with Rye, David Usber and Moist.

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BOSS BR-1600CD

by Nathan Chamberland

It arrived! The BOSS BR-1600CD sits proudly on my desk unpacked and in all its glory. I have been waiting to play with this toy for so very long. As a previous owner of the original BOSS BR-8, major advances, modifications and additions have indeed been made. It is a beautiful piece of art, even to simply look at. Inside this aesthetically pleasing machine however, lies untold adventures and millions of ideas just pleading to become manifest. As the name suggests, the BOSS BR-1600CD is a fully functional 16-track digital recorder with the added bonus of a CD-R/RW drive right on board. This device comes with loads of on-board vocal and instrument effects to play with. The effects are all fully programmable and sound great. The BR-1600CD uses an internal 40 GB hard drive to save the works you create, but at a rate of 44.1 kHz and 16 bits (CD quality). I am personally glad that BOSS went with the hard drive as opposed to the original 100 MB Zip Disk which only held a four-minute song when recorded at 44.1 kHz and 16 bits. One would have to optimize every minute in order to fit the larger songs on the disk. The BR-1600CD has complete non-destructive editing with approximately 10,000 "Undo" operations. Performing an undo erases the last recording steps or edits. This was one of the reasons that I did not keep my original BR-8 very long. With the new built-in 40 GB hard drive and the CD R/RW on board, the space problem is no longer an issue. Another great feature I love about the BR line is the V-tracks. V-tracks are like multiple takes of a single track. The BR-1600CD has 16 V-tracks per track, which allows you to compare 16 different takes of a single track and choose the best one. Optimizing deletes the "undo" history list which increases the amount of free space on the hard drive.

The ease of use is astounding. After one night of playing around, even the freshest neophyte can have a pretty good working knowledge of this unit. Every step is intuitive.

The BR-1600CD also boasts eight XLR balanced inputs, eight quarter-inch unbalanced inputs and one Hi-Z guitar/bass input. The eight XLR inputs have the option of phantom power as well, and you can record eight tracks at once which excites me to no end. Now I can plug in my condenser microphones on the go without an external preamp. There are also two headphone outputs which makes things a lot easier to record people as you probably well know. Since the unit is digital, having digital inputs and outputs is a must-have so I'm glad to see this feature.

The BR-1600CD is completely MIDI ready so you can connect your sequencer, keyboard, com-

puter or whatever MIDI gear you have in your home studio and have the BR-1600CD provide MIDI synchronization. A USB output for use with a computer is a great addition to this line. Packed with assignable foot-switch and expression pedal ins, complete with COSM guitar and bass amp simulators, the BR-1600CD is all you need to start making productions. COSM is Roland's solution to speaker, microphone and effect simulators. COSM stands for Composite Object Sound Modeling. COSM uses multiple modelling technology to model the individual components of a sound (like a guitar preamp's gain, tone controls, mic position and cabinet design) while also modeling the interaction of these separate objects, just as they would in the real world. So, when recording an electric guitar, you don't need to haul out your amp, effects, microphones and stands- Just simply plug it into the Hi-Z input and the rest is all on board.

Fully programmable drums and bass also come loaded onto the BR-1600CD, so you don't have to go looking for a drum machine.

I wonder how many of you out there reading this remember or currently own a cassette-tape recording studio? Since you only had four or eight tracks to work with, bouncing tracks was only way to cram more tracks into a production. The BR-1600CD has a dedicated bouncing function, which is entirely non-degrading since it is all transferred internally and digital. No loss, just pristine CD quality bounces every time.

I could literally go on and on about the features of this product and write well past the "Classifieds" section of this magazine but I think you get the drift. This has to be one of the best portable home studios on the market right now and I give it my full recommendation. It is machines like the BR-1600CD that inspire creativity and art within individuals. With this tool one can create and live in another world for a time, where you can rule that time without worrying about a high-priced studio's clock ticking to focus on creating your masterpiece. If you are shopping for your next musical purchase, I suggest you check out the BOSS BR-1600CD!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the BOSS BR-1600 CD is \$2,195.

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



Manufacturer's Comments

It should be noted that although this reviewer's recording needs exceeded the BOSS BR-8's capabilities, there are many satisfied BR-8 customers who still use their BR recorders today.

As Nathan has mentioned, the BR-1600CD features a "bounce" recording mode to simplify the mixdown process. The BR-1600CD also features a "mastering" mode with the Mastering toolkit derived from the "flagship" Roland VS-2480DVD. There are many Mastering Presets to help even a novice create professional mastered mixes.

For vocalists, the BR-1600CD features Vocal Toolbox with "real-time pitch correction," and a "harmony sequencer" that lets users program their own three-part harmonies from a single recorded vocal track.

For bands, the BR-1600CD's 8-track simultaneous recording abilities and automatic "Level Calibration" function helps them set the optimum recording levels. And the on-board "Loop Arranger" lets you easily assemble backing tracks from .wav/.aiff loops imported from the CD-RW drive or through USB. It even comes with 190 loops pre-loaded on the hard drive.

Paul McCabe, Roland Canada Music

Nathan Chamberland is the lead guitar player and co-writer for the band Godrocket (www.godrocket.com). He is a Producer and Engineer at his own professional recording studio (Sonic Myst Labs). Nathan is also a jingle writer and a music educator. You can reach Nathan by e-mail at Nathan@godrocket.com.

TC Electronic PowerCore Compact

by Alec Watson

So What Is It?

From one of the most revered names in audio plug-ins comes the latest incarnation of hardware/software plug-in processing ... and this time it's portable. For those of you that don't know what the PowerCore system is, it is a hardware processor that runs high quality software plug-ins in order to take some of the heavy processor load off of your computer. This current version, the "PowerCore Compact," was designed with the laptop owner in mind, and I can attest to the fact that it interfaces easily with a laptop via FireWire. Of course, the PowerCore Compact interfaces with a desktop computer via FireWire too.

How Well Does It Work?

Now initially, I have to admit that although I do record with my laptop via an external USB mic-pre, I wasn't sure I could see myself lugging along yet another piece of gear in my laptop bag. However, being the gadgetarian that I am, I certainly wasn't against trying. I have always had an affinity for the TC plug-ins and the PowerCore Compact comes with a bunch of them. In fact, this unit comes with 12 plug-ins that are easily worth the value of the hardware unit itself (those sneaky marketers). In the past, I have always been a little reluctant to use my laptop for "bigger" remote recording as it is just not designed for the job. Things like CPU cooling, hard drive speed and limited processing power (in comparison to one of my bigger workstations) always forced me to make sub-mixes of projects. It's always nice to go record a piano track on the big Steinway at the concert hall, but it's a lot of work getting the laptop to be able to play the tracks back properly so the pianist can play along (unless I mix all the tracks down to a stereo mix - which is fine if you happen to do it in a way that the pianist likes ... if not - ooops!). This is now a concern of the past however, because I have tried it out (an overdub onto a full multi-track recording on my laptop) ... fanfare please: my fairly cheap and surprisingly reliable Emachines laptop was able to play back 24 tracks of audio with scads of compression, EQ, and a very nice reverb, without the little laptop fan even bursting into a roar. The little 40 GB internal hard drive, not surprisingly, struggled; which could be fixed by carrying yet another piece of gear - an external hard drive, but I wanted to try keeping things to a minimum.

What Do You Get For Your Hard-Earned Cash?

The hardware unit itself is about the size of a 5.25" hard drive enclosure. I imagine significant thought went into the weight of this unit as it feels solid (expensive), but also has to be portable. As a laugh-

able side note, when I first saw it I immediately thought "well that's nice but there are no lights to make it look cool" (this is a running joke around the studio as cool lights are about as important as headlights on a lawnmower - have you ever cut the grass at night?), of course on power up, it delighted my useless need for audio gear to appeal to the aesthetic senses by reminding me of a year 2000 Cylon. Full marks for useless visual appeal!

So How About The Really Important Stuff ... How Does It Sound?

The 12 included plug-ins are:

- 24/7*C** - a very good vintage compressor
- Character** - this is somewhat like a BBE, though I would not replace my BBE for bottom end. I found this far superior in the top end
- Chorus*Delay** - a powerful set of chorusing tools that is also found in their Pro Tools line
- Classic Verb** - this reminds me of a fairly expensive '90s Lexicon
- EQSat** - a good EQ also from their Pro Tools line
- Filtroid** - a set of analog filter banks
- MasterX3** - this is a virtual version of the original "Finalizer"
- Megareverb** - I really like this reverb. It's nice to have a high-end reverb at this price ... and especially be able to run it on my laptop
- PowerCore 01** - synthesizer
- Tubifex** - guitar amp simulator
- Vintage CL** - a compressor limiter with more control than you would find on a "real" vintage compressor
- VoiceStrip** - this is basically a full console "strip" with dynamics, EQ, and gating

Does It Fall Short?

There are not a lot of shortcomings with the PowerCore compact. It has a very reasonable price for a LOT of good quality plug-ins. There are also many more great plug-ins available from TC Electronic and third party vendors like Sony Oxford. My Xmas wish list would include a good gate to be able to plug in before using their excellent dynamics processors. There is a fairly simple gate included in the Voicestrip, but not in the Vintage CL (it would be nice to gate a snare or kick track before using their compressors AND do it with one plug-in). I would also like to see some VST instruments (I am sure this is in the works). To make the PowerCore compact indispensable on my road trips, I would like it to take up the processing power of big piano samples or



Leslie and B3 simulators so that my laptop can easily be a more powerful tool for live gigs. Lastly, I wish it didn't need external power ... yet another power supply to haul around. These complaints, however valid, are not that big when you look at what you get and are for the most part easily addressable.

Conclusion

Well worth the money for its power, reliability and plug-ins, I highly recommend the PowerCore Compact for the producer/engineer on the go.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the PowerCore Compact is \$995 US.

For more product information, contact: Power Group, 6415 Northwest Dr., #22, Mississauga, ON L4V 1X1 (905) 405-1229, FAX (905) 405-1885, sales@power-music.com, www.power-music.com.

Manufacturer's Comments

We must admit, TC Electronic shares Alec's affinity for cool lights on gear. But more importantly, we strive to get great processing in as many hands as possible. The PowerCore platform has allowed us to do that in a big way for the computer recordist. And now, with products like the MD3 Stereo Mastering package, we're bringing algorithms from our flagship processors like System 6000 into that world.

We would also like to point out that there already are some VST instruments available ... Virus/PowerCore by Access is currently available and Novation VStation will soon be released. ...

TC Electronic

Alec Watson is a Producer/Engineer that works out of his destination studio on Vancouver Island. Find him online at goldcreekstudios@shaw.ca.

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Practicing With Purpose

A common problem I run into when teaching guitar students, either privately or in clinics, is the lack of purpose in regards to their practicing routine. Without a definite goal in mind, it is easy to spend hours noodling aimlessly on your instrument, either jamming on tunes and riffs. Although I strongly believe in jamming on familiar tunes and learning new ones, if a guitarist (or any instrumentalist for that matter) wants to progress on their instrument, having specific goals and a strategy to reach them is a must. Any musician who has spent the time and discipline mastering their instrument will no doubt agree to the fact that you can accomplish much more in one hour of purposeful practice than four hours of playing without direction.

Following are a few tips that can help you set goals for a better and more effective practicing time.

1. Notes On The Fretboard. It seems that every other instrumentalist other than the guitarist know the notes of their instrument. Learning the notes of your guitar is the foundation for learning everything else (chords, soloing, scales, etc.) and without note knowledge you are greatly limited. Rather than trying to memorize the insurmountable amounts of notes chromatically (eg. E, F, F#, G etc.) try learning them per fret. An example would be to learn all the notes on the first fret, starting from the lowest note to the highest. You can also start by taking one note eg. "E" then locate it

on each string. Then do the same to F, F# etc. Use this exercise as a warm up on your guitar, which generally takes about five to seven minutes.

2. Chord Knowledge. Once you've learned power, barre and open chords, it's time to learn extended chords. Extended chords are chords that you often see written as E9 or A13 etc. (There are tons of books available as resources for all types of chords.) Although a lot of these chords are used in jazz and some blues, they appear in all genres of music and make your playing more interesting. Spend time learning the formula of chords and how chords are formed, which brings me to my next point.

3. Theory. Power is knowledge and studying theory helps you understand the structure of music and demystifies it. Once you understand how chords and scales are created and the function they have in songs, you will feel much more in control of what you are doing and know where you are heading.

4. Reading. This is one area that most guitarists greatly lack in. Since guitarists tend to learn mostly by ear (or tablature), reading (manuscript) is one area that most guitarists greatly lack in. Although at first reading seems to be a little tedious, it can open the doors to a lot of opportunities and is the sign of a true professional. Learn to work with a metronome whenever you read music. At first, practice reading chords throughout and then work on reading notes. There are also many books available on reading and/or you can work with a teacher.

5. Ear Training. As previously mentioned, guitarists seem to mostly use their ears for learning the guitar, but ear training takes it one step further. You should be able to identify intervals (the distance between two notes) and know the different sounds of chords, (if they are major, minor, dominant etc.) It's also a good practice to sing with your guitar. An example would be to play a chord and then sing all the notes individually as you play them. This is a great exercise to develop your ear.

6. Improvising. Scales are the basis for learning to improvise (solo) on the guitar. Although, you don't want to sound like you are playing a scale while soloing, you want to become familiar with the available notes and use them as a guide. Usually the first scales guitarists will learn for modern music is the

Pentatonic Minor scales. Major Pentatonic scales are also popular as well as the Dorian mode (used frequently in rock). For Blues you can learn the blues scale or the Minor Pentatonic. All of these scales can be found in scale books or you can look on the Internet for sites that post scales. Record a progression on a tape recorder (with a metronome or a drum machine) and then use it to practice your scales. Immediately incorporate scales into songs using bends, pull-offs, hammer-ons etc. to make your solo interesting.

7. Right And Left Hand Technique. Developing independence in your Right and Left hand will allow you a more smooth execution while playing your guitar. This means that you teach your fingers to be able to play individually and to play slow and clean sounding. A good exercise for the left hand is to take a riff that you know and play it very slowly allowing very little movement of your fingers. Your fingers should hover just above the strings and only move when they strike the note. Each finger should get its own fret and there should also be little movement with your pick. Always use a metronome which not only teaches you how to keep time (which many guitarists have a hard time with) but by increasing the beats incrementally, allows you to slowly pick up your speed. Keep in mind that sloppy technique can be corrected only by learning to first practice slowly and gradually increasing the tempo while maintaining accuracy and smoothness.

Other points that will help in your practice routine are:

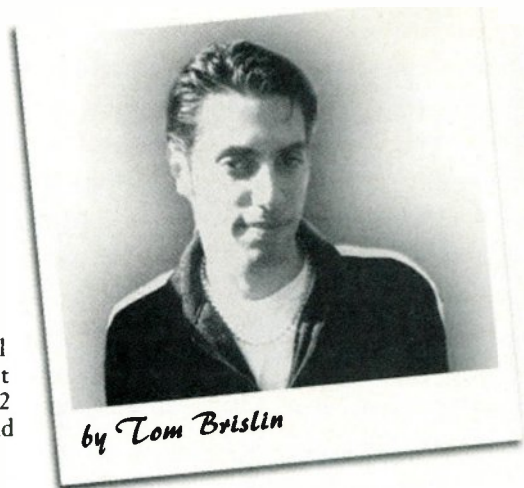
- Log your practicing routine, what you play and how long you play on a calendar therefore you can identify your progress.
 - Split up your time doing some of the points one day and then whatever is left do the next day.
 - Systemize your practicing routine in a way that works for you and start with the basics building from there.
 - Keep updating and changing your routine as necessary to accommodate your progress.
- Remember to always learn exercises that you can quickly put into the context of a song – since the ultimate goal is to play great songs. Good luck and happy practicing!



by Vivian Clement

Vivian Clement is a jazz/blues guitarist performing in the Toronto area and recording in her studio "Exodus Studios" in Mississauga, ON. Her Web site is www.vivianclement.com or www.exodusstudio.ca.

Chromatic Scale Warm Up



The pattern in this exercise uses the chromatic scale. Play slowly at first, paying special attention to controlling evenness of volume. Keep that control when bringing it up to speed. When memorizing the chromatic scale and its patterns, notice the finger 2 landings (circled). In the right hand, finger 2 plays C and F and, in the left hand, E and B. Both hands play all other white keys with finger 1 and black keys with finger 3.

The exercise consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. Each system shows a chromatic scale in both directions. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3. Finger 2 landings are circled. The piano part uses a 4/4 time signature.

Chord Toner Tips

Memorize the harmonized scale below. These are the diatonic 7th chords in the key of F Major. Try to make a smooth transition from chord to chord, sounding all chord tones at the exact same time and holding them for two full beats each.

The chord toner exercise shows a sequence of diatonic 7th chords in the key of F Major: FMaj7, Gmin7, Amin7, B^bMaj7, C7, Dmin7, Emin7^b5, and FMaj7. The notation includes piano and bass clef staves with chord symbols and fingering for the piano part.

Tom Brislin is a keyboardist, vocalist and songwriter who appears regularly in the New York and New Jersey areas. He has performed and/or recorded with artists in many styles of music including Meat Loaf, Glen Burtnik and Michael Brecker. These warm-ups are excerpted from his book 30-Day Keyboard Workout, published by Alfred.

Deconstructing Watt – To Pick Or Not To Pick?



B
S
S
E
D

CM continues its series of columns with legendary bassist Mike Watt...

Canadian Musician: You used to play with a pick in *The Minutemen*; do you still play with a pick?

Mike Watt: No. I wish I did. You have to use it all the time or you lose the sensibility. J Mascis asked me to help him out a while ago with some music and asked me to play with a pick. I hadn't done that in 17 years. The best world would be to do it both ways. I used to use one right at the beginning of *Minutemen* because punk was too fast and then I didn't do it again for a long time until J asked me again in 2000. It's very difficult; the way to hold it, how far away to hold it – just grabbing onto the strings is a little more earthy and a little easier in a way because you've got this touch thing working. In a best-case situation it'd be good to do both. I saw [John] Entwistle from *The Who* do that. He used pick and fingers in the same song! That guy would go through all of these different techniques in one tune, which to me is kind of like vocabulary. You don't have to replace one word with another – you just have more words.

CM: Are there a lot of benefits to not playing with a pick?

MW: [laughing] Well, you don't have to worry about losing them. It may be a little easier on the strings. A pick puts a lot of attack on the strings. I know I broke a lot more in *Minutemen*. I don't break as many now, but that's also because I'm less young and can't hit as hard. You can also do the thing with a forefinger and thumb that you can't do with a pick. You can get more than one string going which I do from time to time particularly in *Dos*. With *Dos* you can get into a lot of these nuances that wouldn't get heard necessarily in a rock band.

CM: Can you explain *Dos*?

MW: *Dos* was an experiment. When I was young, there was an inferiority complex in most bassists. Maybe it was the culture at the time, but I found out that bass was kind of like the right field in little league; where they'd put the lame guy. It all changed with punk because everybody was lame [laughing] so all of a sudden the bass player was equal. *Dos* was kind of an extension of that. Sort of "Hey, let's see what this thing can do." Again, this notion of playing with more than one person – ensemble playing – "Let's set up conversations between two bass guitars." Kira [Roessler] had been in *Black Flag* and I'd been in *Minutemen* and we had our established points there, but we wanted to see what it was like when we removed everything else. We wanted to see if less could be more. Because it's just two basses, the composition is really important because the frequency is so narrow and if you aren't careful it'll get all muddy. So we'll write parts that ping-pong each other and leave holes and let the other one play in the holes – that's stuff I'm exploring more. *Dos* has been a huge part of my music because there's no mysteries in that band – you can't hide behind anything. It's always forced me to do my best and not really lay back on any kind of cliché or whatever.

CM: Are yours and Kira's styles very different?

MW: Yeah. But it's not like one's rhythm and one's lead guitar. We split up the parts pretty evenly although she may do more soloing than me. We don't relegate it though. We trade places a lot. It's also a challenge because, given where the frequencies are, it's loud, but people can talk over it. We don't play super loud in *Dos*, so you have to hold their attention or they can talk right over you. With a rock band you can drown that out, but this puts your ass on the line a little more.

CM: Is less more with *Dos*?

MW: Yeah, in some ways. You have to take on jobs the other guys were doing. Like, you both have to be kind of like drummers. Nobody's holding the time for you. And you're not just padding chords – you have to be melodic too. You're kind of more of a drummer and more of a melody man; a trumpet or trombone man in a way. It's all about expression and I think the bass is still largely unmapped territory. With *Dos*, we can delve into that as deeply as we want. I like the bass; it's kind of like glue. What's glue with nothing to stick to? Just a puddle. We've got twice as much glue in *Dos* [laughing] and a stronger bond because it's a double contact. It's kind of a built-in humbler but it's also still a bit mysterious. People don't know exactly what it's supposed to be all the way yet. So you're almost free to reinvent the deal to suit yourself where the other instruments are almost clichéd out. You have to play these roles and of course there is a role for the bass player but it's still kind of murky especially when you talk to listeners. Non-music people feel it more than hear it at gigs. It's kind of trippy; the most mysterious thing on the stage. They don't really know how it works all the way. Maybe it's good for us not to know how it works all the way too.



with Mike Watt

Next issue: Watt warms up and hits the deck.

P

Lunch With Lucas

percussion

Back in 1996 I had the pleasure of meeting Lucas VanMewijk. A Dutch, Spanish speaking drummer teaching with me in Germany at the second Drummers Summer Camp. Lucas and I hit it off right from the get go and talked about a multitude of things for a couple days before I had even heard him play a note.

One of the things that really intrigued me about Lucas was his love for Latin music. At some point, he decided to pack up and go to Cuba to learn all that he could about Cuban/Latin music. He didn't know anyone and didn't bring anything with him except a pair of sticks and his will to seek out instruction. Something to remember is that Lucas didn't speak the language. Zero Spanish.

This didn't slow him down much. He went on to explain that he spent countless hours with his instructor tapping out a rhythm on his left shoulder and when he was able to successfully play the groove (with feel), his instructor would go to the next limb and tap out what he was supposed to do there. Latin grooves can be quite complex so you can imagine what he must have gone through. Plus, this wasn't a technical exercise, it was all about feel. So, not only did he have to play the part, but it had to feel right!

After a year or so he got a pretty good handle on things, learned to speak the language and was taking many of the premier gigs as well. When he returned to Holland, it didn't take long before he had put together his own Latin band and with a passion unsurpassed, dominated the Latin scene in Holland.

He had passed on one of his recordings for me to listen to and I wasted no time in popping it into my DiscMan. Of course, we were at a drum camp and I will admit to having some degree of brain deficiency. For some reason I was expecting a torrent of Weckle-esque poly rhythms and independence. What I heard instead was pure music. The kind of music where the drums are barely noticed but leaves you wanting to sing and dance.

The next day at breakfast, myself, Dom Famularo, Lucas and Wolfgang Hafner sat at the table and talked more about Lucas's experiences in Cuba, Holland, America and Germany. I was struck by his optimism. It seemed that he pulled something positive out of every experience, no matter how difficult it may have been. I couldn't wait to hear what he would have to say from behind his kit as it was his clinic night at the camp.

That night, I was standing in the back of the classroom waiting for the moment to happen where I would get to see this marvelous personality behind the kit. I really wanted to hear him speak, musically. Within seconds of his sitting behind the kit it was clear. Bozzio meets Puente meets Monk.

Lucas's playing matched his personality perfectly. It was joyful, musical and at the same time, technical mastery. The cool thing was that the technical end of his playing was never in the forefront. There was a constant flow of musicality. Once again, I watched, listened and learned.

A few days later, on the last day of camp, I had arranged an evening where we, the teachers would all play together. Half the room was taken up with drums and Lucas walked in with four congas. He said he wanted to colour. We played and Lucas was the ultimate

team player right down to the last note. The camp ended and we all went our separate ways. We stayed in touch and I tried to hook up with him whenever I was overseas.

Two years later I was on my way back to the M+T Summer Drummers Camp and delighted to know that Lucas was going to be there as well. I had flown over with Rick and Maureen Gratton, (which is a subject for yet another part in this series) and most of the way there I went on about Lucas. Sure enough, within about three minutes of arriving at the camp, Rick, Maureen and Lucas hit it off and talks began about what we could do to bring Lucas to Canada. We thought of many ideas but to date, we haven't been able to make it happen.

I could go on and on with this but I must get to the point. Lucas is one of many, many musicians that contribute unprecedented excellence to music that many of us will never hear because he/they are not in the mainstream. Lucas is one of the many drummers names that I can mention here in North America and have people look at me like a deer in headlights. Lucas, his playing, and his humour, augmented what I thought and what I think about music in general. He taught without teaching.

There are many such musicians on the planet and we have a very small window in which to find them. Spending the day downloading samples from cdbaby.com is one way of finding them but another is to take a few chances. Next time your looking through the local rag to see what's going on and who is playing where, expand your horizons, go see someone you've never heard of, take a chance that you might make a discovery! Spread the word if you do!

With any luck, one day you'll see the name Lucas VanMewijk. Go see him play and say hi from Mitch and ask about the time he was in LA. Sit back and let him entertain you.

Mitch has held the drum throne with Crash Test Dummies since 1991 and is a touring clinician for SABIAN cymbals and Pearl Drums. Check out www.mitchdorge.com for more information about his solo recording, As Trees Walking, as well as his video, Mitch Dorge, Downsampling Perception.



by Mitch Dorge

Reed 'Em And Weep



by Alex Dean

I had a student over the other day that is in the process of changing from one mouthpiece to another. During the discussion we got onto the topic of reeds and how people prepare them. This is something that changes depending on what seems to work for you at the time. I have a couple of things that work for me so I thought I would pass them along.

To paraphrase an old guitar joke, "I think I spend 90 per cent of my time looking for a good reed and 10 per cent of my time playing on bad reeds." I've spoken to older musicians about "the state of cane," and they always say it used to be much better. I don't know if this is nostalgia talking or the truth. However, there seem to be a lot more people playing reed instruments now, and I'm sure that has to effect the cane supply somehow.

One aspect that I hadn't thought of is how well the reed seals on the mouthpiece. Apparently the material that mouthpieces are made of (metal or rubber) is relatively soft and over time can change. As the reed vibrates it can alter and warp the lay of the mouthpiece. If you are having a lot of trouble with reeds, it could be because the mouthpiece is warped and the reed isn't sealing evenly. In that case the only thing to do is to get it refaced. There are a couple of guys that will do that and it's not that expensive, but it does take time.

All right ... down to business. What I do with a box of reeds takes a little time

but it seems to help me. First, I soak all the reeds in a cup of water for 5 or 10 minutes then I lay them on a piece of glass (I had this made up at a window place - 4" x 4"), and I leave them to dry for a day or two. I do this three times using water, then I do it a fourth time using saliva (I try to use my own), and play through all the reeds for about five minutes. As a reed gets soaked its fibres expand and shrink as it dries out. That's why a reed that feels great when you first play it starts to feel soft the more

you play. By soaking it so many times I'm trying to minimize the amount it changes. Each time you soak it the reed changes a little less. I leave the reeds to dry out one more day and the next time I play them I start to separate the reeds into those that play, ones that are too hard, and ones that are too soft. At this point I put the reeds that play (sometimes only one) into a reed keeper and start to play it. The others I mark with an H for hard and an S for too soft and I put them away until I need to find a new reed.

This seems like a lot of trouble but it helps me organize my reeds. I know what to expect from them. I haven't found a way to make a reed that's unplayable work, but this at least balances them out for me.

I have tried other things in the past, including trying to bake them in the oven to help age them, but all I did was burn them. I have some friends that soak them right out of the box in a little jar with a lid so you can carry it around and never let them dry out. You have to put a little drop of Listerine in the water so they don't get mouldy. I've also heard about taking them out of the box and doing figure eights on a flat surface 50 times clock-wise and 50 times counter clock-wise to try to seal the reed so it won't change too much. I think that whatever works for you is great. Sometimes when the cane just won't settle for me I'll do anything rather than throw them out.

When I adjust the reeds I just try to balance them. I use a reed knife to take the cane off. Some players like to use a very fine sand paper or a reed file. You use the sand

paper on the front of the reed and a reed file on the back. I take a look at the reed in a strong light to see how even the heart of the cane is. I shave the side of the reed that is a little darker trying not to take off too much. I've ruined a lot off reeds by taking too much off, so I try to leave the reed a little hard and it usually breaks in. When I'm finished with the reed I give it a couple of scrapes on the side, right where the bark is cut. I started to do this a number of years ago and it seems to make the reed vibrate a little more.

Most of the playing I do is in jazz or commercial music so I like the reed to buzz a bit. If I was playing different music I would be careful not to scrape the sides too much (this may make the sound too bright). I have a friend who likes to drill a round hole about half an inch wide and an eighth of an inch into the heart of the reed. He says it really frees up the sound. It didn't work for me. For about a minute, there was a theory that if you put tiny slits in the reed it would vibrate more freely. Unfortunately it just made me squeak a lot.

These days there are a lot of different makes of reeds out there. The easiest thing for me is to try to find a brand of reeds I can live with and try not to do too much cutting. I've found through experience that any wood you take off a reed is really hard to put back on later!

Reedman Alex Dean has been described as "one of Canada's foremost Jazz Saxophonists," has been a mainstay of the Canadian music scene for many years. He has played with Gil Evans, Kenny Wheeler, Dave Liebman, Ernie Watts, Mel Torme, Ray Charles, Pat Labarbera, Nick Brignola, and the Toronto Symphony. Alex is a member of Rob McConnell's 'Tenet'. He also holds the tenor saxophone chair with Rob McConnell's "Grammy award winning" BOSS Brass. His numerous recordings include Grammy and Juno award winners and he is the bandleader of the explosive Tenor Madness, Alex Dean Quintet, and "power trio", DEW East. Alex is the Canadian Artist Representative and clinician for Boosey & Hawkes, promoting Keilworth Saxophones and Rico Reeds. He is also the Artistic Director of the highly regarded Kincardine Summer Jazz Program on Lake Huron, ON. Alex is a member of the Jazz Faculty at the University of Toronto and Humber College. He is a widely respected clinician/ adjudicator in Canada and the US.

WOODWINDS

The 4 T's

Part I

The jazz musician needs two basic abilities in order to improvise a solo:

- She must be able to play what she hears.
- She must be able to hear something worth playing.

The following "4-T" approach to practicing jazz will develop both your ability to play what you hear, and to hear something worth playing. Each day you should:

- Learn music by ear (Transcribe)
- Memorize Tunes
- Transpose: develop your key fluency
- Study musical Theory and harmony

Learn By Ear (Transcribe)

Music should be learned by ear. Explaining to a student that a C7(b9) chord calls for a diminished scale is virtually useless until she not only recognizes the sound of that chord and scale, but has heard it used in context. Every day you should learn something by ear, simply trying to reproduce on your instrument what you hear. Even though the majority jazz musicians today have had the benefit of jazz education, most will tell you that they really learned to improvise by listening and copying, rather than by reading jazz improv texts or practicing scales and patterns.

Start with nursery rhymes or "Happy Birthday", a melody that is already deeply ingrained in your mind. Pick a starting note, and sing the melody, then try to figure out the notes on your instrument. It doesn't matter how many mistakes you make, as long as you eventually get it. Once you figure it out, pick another starting note and try it in another key, remembering to sing it first. (Brass players can buzz it on the mouthpiece.) Eventually you'll get over your fear of playing without music in front of you. Next, try transcribing a simple jazz solo. Solo transcription is the most important part of learning to improvise. If you do nothing else but transcribe solos, you will learn to improvise. If you do everything else but do not transcribe, there is NO guarantee you will ever sound like anything other than a robot, spitting out scales and patterns but not making any real music.

Which solos should you transcribe? That is up to you. You will develop your own musical vocabulary based on the players you listen to. It behooves everybody, however, to spend some time studying players who speak the straight-ahead vocabulary of jazz, clearly delineating the chord changes. If you love late-'60s Miles, you must realize that he didn't learn to play the way he did on "Bitches Brew" without first knowing how to play on "Stella By Starlight", and neither will you. Learn the basics of the language before veering off towards the outer fringes. Besides, there will be a lot more gigs playing "All The Things You Are" than "Ascension".

Initially, choose solos that are simple to hear and to play; it is important to be successful in your first attempts at transcription, not get bogged down trying to figure out a slew of 16th notes in the first bar. If you come to a section that is too difficult to hear, skip it and move on. A year from now you may find that you can hear it without difficulty. Chet Baker is my choice for initial attempts at transcription, since his solos are always melodic and lyrical. Some of Miles' solos on "Kind of Blue" are also good to start with.

Whether to write the solos down is a subject of some discussion. It is most important to get the solo into your head and then out your horn, but trying to notate what you hear is good for you. Also, you'll have some record for posterity of all your hard work. Learn chunks of the solo (or the whole solo) by memory first, then write it down, rather than jotting down one note at a time. This forces you to learn phrases and improves your powers of memorization. Don't fret about whether the solos are perfectly notated – the written transcription serves primarily to remind you of what you already have in your head.

Once you have transcribed the solo, play along with the recording many times, trying to match the soloist as closely as possible. In this way, you'll get the feeling of playing a great solo, and will gain insight into the mind of a jazz soloist. Try "trading fours" with the artist. Just think how much you'd learn by trading fours with Charlie Parker or Clifford Brown! You'll have to ignore the fact that they play right through your fours.

By copying your musical heroes, you will learn from each one. Little by little, your style will emerge as a product of your influences. As Clark Terry so aptly said: imitate, assimilate, innovate.

Next issue CM brings you the conclusion of this article ... covering Memorizing Tunes, Transposing and Theory to complete the 4 T's.

*Chase Sanborn is a trumpet player, teacher and author based in Canada. He is a familiar face in the recording studios and jazz clubs of Toronto, and is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T. His books, *Jazz Tactics* and *Brass Tactics* explore the world of jazz improvisation and brass playing, offering real-world advice with a casual, humorous dialog. Coming soon: the *Jazz Tactics* DVD, featuring the Chase Sanborn Quartet. For more information, visit www.chasesanborn.com.*



by Chase Sanborn

Vocal Tuning Tips

Having earned my stripes in Nashville, a city which takes pride in “telling the story” through vocal performance, I find a lot of my attention in production, whether it’s pop, country or rock, focuses on supporting the vocal. With the vocal as the foundation of almost all popular music, I am often confounded by the fact that there are producer/engineers that make their vocalists sound like musicians that never figured out how to play an instrument (no, this is not a drummer joke) by drawing attention to their tuned vocals. The reality is that it has become easier to hear a poorly sung or produced vocal because of artifacts in auto-tuning. So why do it?

The original concept in tuning vocals was the possibility that a line that had a great performance could be kept over a line with merely good pitch. Since conception, this ideal has sometimes devolved into a method of adding yet more sterility to modern recordings. I happen to believe in the benefits of tuning, but have found them to be slightly incongruous to merely achieving perfect pitch. An unexpected benefit of careful tuning is that I can often get a better vocal performance from a vocalist. Enabling the vocalist to get into a performing state-of-mind rather than worrying about the mechanics of their craft, not only gets a better vocal performance, but often surprisingly improves their pitch too. This sometimes negates the need for tuning the track and gives a much more colourful performance.

So how does one mysteriously straddle the line between the hack on the corner, who just downloaded the cracked version of the latest tuning plug-in, and an engineer that can be considered a craftsman because of attention to detail and a strong distaste for unintentional artifacts?

The first step seems obvious, but it is of the greatest importance – record a great vocal! If you’re recording to a hard drive, you have almost infinite tracks; don’t be afraid to use a few. Rather than punching, give the vocalist a bunch of passes and comp a master vocal. Inspire the vocalist by making it sound the way they want in the headphones while making the vocal big and rich in the control room when they come in for a listen. You should try, wherever possible when comping your lead vocal, to edit at zero crossings. Not surprisingly, zero crossings have very little to do with chickens and roads. It has lots to do with the fact that if your digital to analog converters are not outputting any voltage, you are not going to hear the edits as they jump from one track to another on your master vocal track.

Listen to your edit, not to see if you can hear it. We know you can’t (it was cut in at a zero crossing). Listen like you’re the vocalist. Does the phrasing match? Is the timbre of the vocal consistent in your edits? Is the inserted edit rushing or dragging? *Note to vocalists* ... you must now skip to the next paragraph; conniving engineers may read on. You can always give the edit a little slide to the left or right. Don’t let the singer see you do this, and don’t worry, if you do it right and get it sitting nicely in the groove the vocalist will take all the credit.

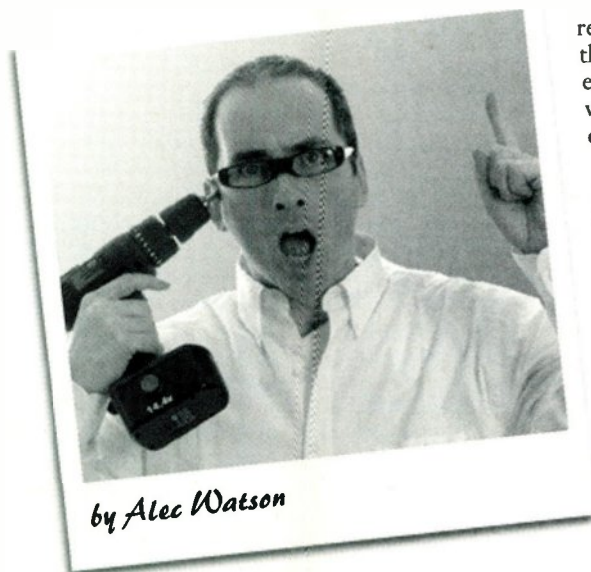
Now for that big auto-tuning trick that gives you the pitch perfect track with no artifacts! First, understand the controls on the tuning software. I like to stick with chromatic tuning. If your vocalist is so pitchy that you need to enter the key of the song to correct to the right note, you need the vocalist to re-sing.

Slow down the amount of time that the software takes to pitch correct. Our ears are quite used to hearing vocalists reach for notes and then tune themselves on key as they sing the note. The software can emulate the same effect and it’s much more likely to sound natural this way. Don’t tune the entire track. If your ear says it doesn’t need tuning, don’t tune it.

And because I am a lousy magician, here I’ll reveal a couple of tricks that you can try: For big backing vocals that sound naturally well sung, rather than Wilson Phillips-ish, double track each harmony. Try tuning one, leaving the other alone; this usually creates a nice natural sounding chorus between the tracks. If you need the tuning tighter, try tuning them both, but change the tuning time for one track (slow it down) so they are tuned at different rates and detune one slightly 1 or 2 cents. This will keep your backing vocals tuned, but it will keep the backgrounds sounding bigger and not so artificial.

Bottom line: use tuning sparingly. Make it the cherry on top rather than a main ingredient. Until next time, keep the crumbs out of the keyboard and tell those vocalists to keep their greasy fingers off the computer screen!

Alec is a producer/engineer in Nanaimo, BC. He can be reached at Alec@Vinsynch.com.



by Alec Watson



A Vocation Of Vocals

Part 3

If the name Colm Wilkinson eludes recognition, one mention of *The Phantom of the Opera* will bring his voice to mind. *CM* concludes its three-part interview with the renowned vocalist...

CM: In which genre do you tend to compose?

I've written music for movies, and just finished the theme song for a movie based on a Canadian boxer called Tommy Burns. I just get an idea and try to put music to it. I just express myself. Whatever comes out is it.

CM: What would you say are your fortes in regard to your voice and vocal style?

I think I have what a lot of people underestimate in this business: I have consistency. You can't be just on form one night. You have to be on form every night. If you absolutely love the business, and you have to be in it, and the only thing you can do is sing. But if you've got another job you can go to, if you enjoy that job and have a passion for that job, that's where you should go. I say to my kids, because I think this business is all about packages and images, it's not really about music anymore. You are basically at the whim of the public in this business. It's a people driven business. You must have a passion and a love for what you do. Forget about the head and think about the heart and go for what you have a passion for doing, because the rest will follow. You must love this business to even stay in it, because the ups and downs of this business are brutal. I say to my kids, if you had all the money and choices in the world, what would you do? That's what you do.

CM: How do you record vocals?

For my latest recording, *Some Of My Best Friends Are Songs*, when the band was rehearsing the song in the studio, I would be in the control booth with a microphone and I would sing with the band. I do about five, six or seven different passes while they're rehearsing it, because with the excitement of that, the first time, usually we get the song right there. I don't like too much reverb - I find that's unnatural. I do like just a touch of what I call "halo" on the voice because I think that's the way your voice sounds naturally.

Normally, I sing with one of the earpieces on the headphones off. I do have to pull back slightly. Because I've been involved with dramatic singing, I have to learn not to try and hit the back wall in recording, because I don't have to. They can pick up emotion very quickly in the studio, whereas when I'm on stage, you're actually emoting physically as well as emotionally, so it's a different thing.

CM: Do you have any quirks about recording?

I like to just get into the song. I like the lights down. I like to think about the lyrics and get into the story. What's really important in the studio is having good people around you. It's very important to be relaxed in the studio and trust the guys you're with and have a good relationship with them.

CM: Do you find that they bring out the best in you?

Yes. Well, I bring the best out in them as well. [Laughs] I have to say, I was very fortunate to get a guy called Greg Calbi in New York to do the mastering on the CD. Calbi has worked with John Lennon up to Paul Simon. He did a fantastic job on putting that extra touch on the album. The recording engineer, Jeremy Darby, had great form and was fabulous in the studio.

CM: You've recorded in Abbey Road Studios, right?

Yes. We did that album in three weeks. There are 16 songs on that album, and we put the tracks down in a week and the backing tracks down in a week. I sang with the orchestra sometimes. I did the 16 songs in a week, and we mixed in a week. It's probably one of the best vocal albums I've ever done in my life.

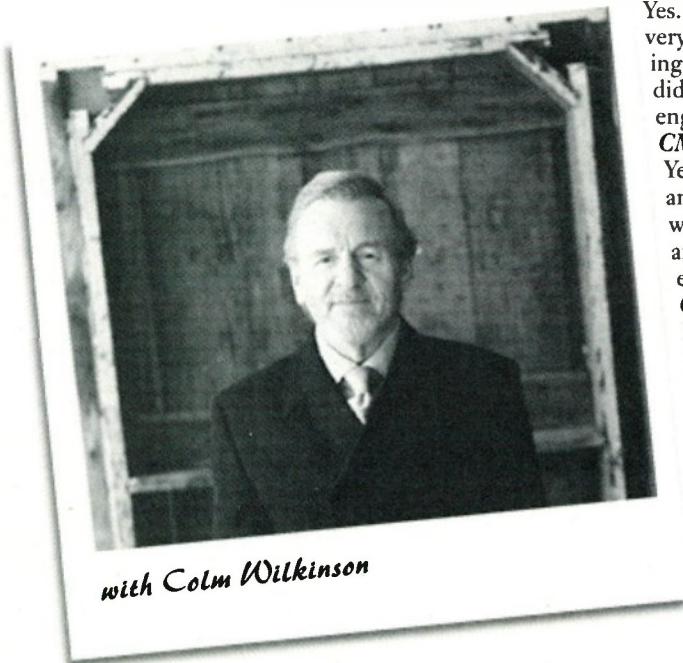
CM: What was it like to record in the same studio as the Beatles?

It was pretty neat to be there, but I have to say this: when you're working, you're working, and you don't really have time to say, 'Hey, wow, this is where the Beatles sang.' It's more like, listen, this is the next verse of that song and we have to nail it in 10 minutes, so it's a different vibe.

CM: To what music do you tend to listen?

I listen to all kinds of music: opera, jazz, blues and country. I just love it when it hits you in the heart. I have diverse tastes in music. Whatever moves me is what I like. I listen to the Doobie Brothers, Blood Sweat and Tears; *Drops of Jupiter* by Train is one of my favorite songs, it totally knocked me out. I'm interested in classical music. I went to see *Rigoletto* last night and was absolutely knocked out by the singing there. The rest of the cast was amazing, but Laura Claycomb was just unbelievable. She had a voice that was just from heaven. I could be

as knocked out listening to Mahalia Jackson as listening to her.



with Colm Wilkinson

vocals



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STILL NOT GETTING SIMPLE PLAN

Simple Plan's new album, *Still Not Getting Any...*, is still not mastered when Coalition Management sequesters this writer in its boardroom on a mid-September afternoon and cranks up the final mixes. Co-manager Eric Lawrence then presents print-outs of the three different album graphics – a main one and two limited edition – along with the accompanying liner notes, lyrics and all.

The photos show the Montreal-based rock band – singer Pierre Bouvier, guitarist Sebastien Lefebvre, guitarist Jeff Stinco, bassist David Desrosiers, and drummer Chuck Comeau – currently (mid-twenties), then in middle age and, finally, as old men (complete with wheelchairs, walkers, cardigans, plaid suits). Quite hilarious – or scary. "I hope we're still friends then," Comeau comments.

Comeau, who has hitched a ride to the office – a considerable haul north of Toronto – takes care of some business until it's time to head back downtown to hook up with Bouvier to do the sanctioned interview. The pair has been friends for more than a decade, since it formed a band called Stone Garden, which eventually became Reset, touring and recording independently. Together, they write the bulk of the songs in Simple Plan.

Lawrence pushes 'play' and the boisterous rock of the lead track, "Shut Up", spits from the speaker with its big, catchy chorus: "So shut up/Shut up Shut up/Don't wanna hear it/Get Out Get out Get out/Step up Step up Step up/You'll never stop me/Nothing you say today/Is gonna bring me down."

The band has a knack for writing simple, sing-along lyrics that speak volumes about subjects that are a bit different, yet universal – backstabbers, broken promises, the disenfranchised, the lost, the

self-absorbed, the jealous, even the terrorists.

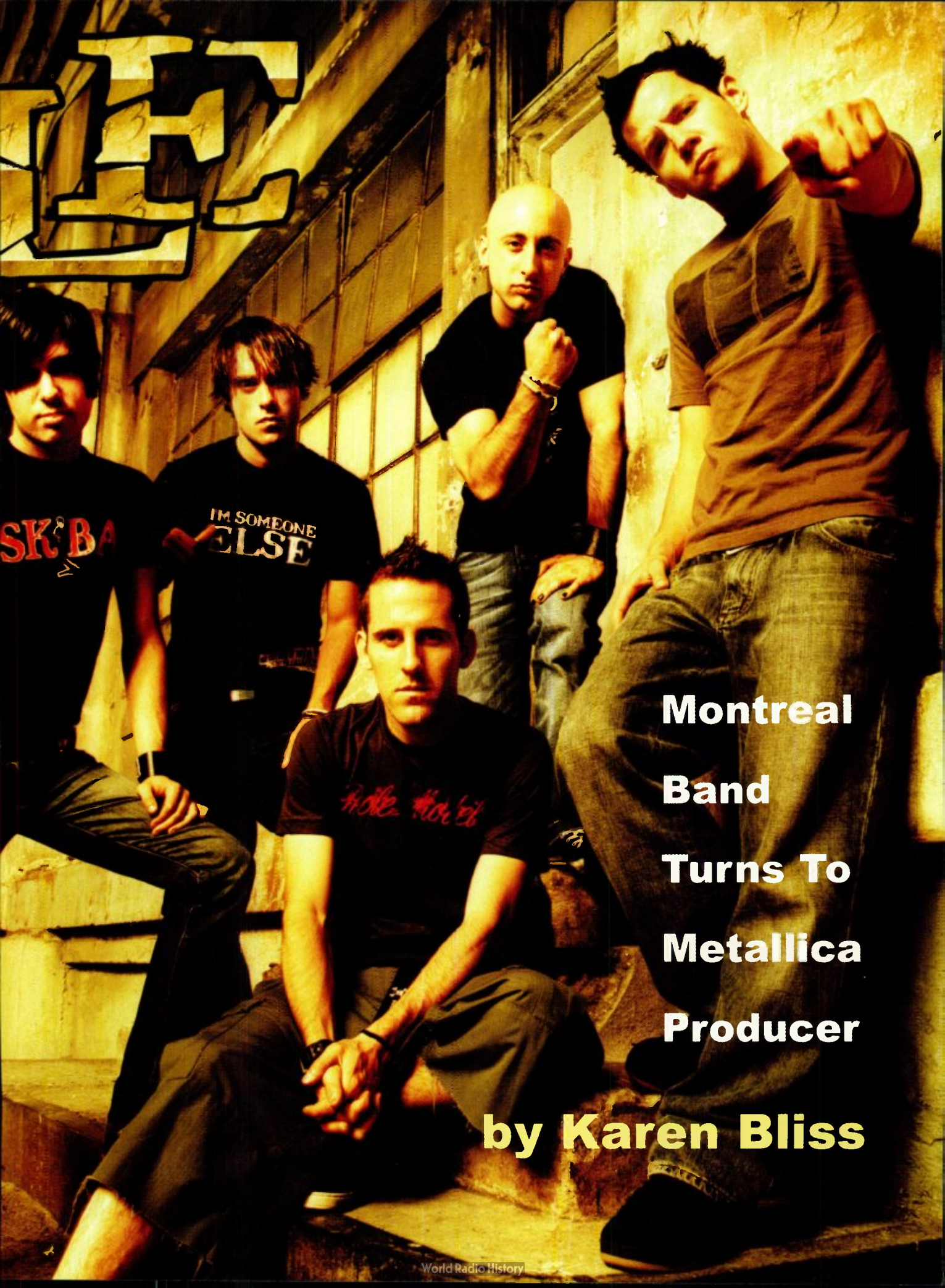
As Bouvier and Comeau later explain, the lyrics aren't fictional, but many have double meanings, highly personal and specific for them, and more broad perhaps for the listener. Comeau prefers writing about more negative topics, believes they are more meaningful and less "fluffy" than happy happy happy. "We kind of want to write a song that makes you shiver," he explains.

Recorded at Montreal's Studio Piccolo by producer Bob Rock (Metallica, Bon Jovi, Our Lady Peace, The Tea Party), the album kicks into one potential hit after another — the first single, "Welcome To My Life"; the thunderous "Thank You", heavy also on sarcasm; "Crazy", a chart-bound anthem about the ills of society from superficial beauty to workaholic parents to street kids.

For the final song, a ballad called "Untitled", complete with strings and piano, management and Comeau come into the room to listen. The band just cut the song a week ago, while assembled at Vancouver's Warehouse Studios for the mixing phase of the album by Randy Staub. It's so fresh that all the artwork is already complete so the lyrics won't appear in the booklet, only in the flip-side DVD, even though the song title did make the track listing on the back of the CD.

Everyone is pleased. The song is a stunning, majestic, um, tearjerker (for some), in an emotionally charged, not sappy way.

During the car ride back, Comeau plays the new album again. Bouvier is waiting in the restaurant of his hotel, bags packed, ready for the two to head to MuchMusic for a visit, then straight to New York for a week of promo. The band has barely taken a break since releasing its Arnold Lanni-produced debut



SK BA

I'M SOMEONE
ELSE

Roots

**Montreal
Band
Turns To
Metallica
Producer**

by Karen Bliss

SIMPLE PLAN

album, *No Pads, No Helmets ... Just Balls*, in March of 2002, which went on to sell more than 1.7 million copies worldwide.

In these throw-against-the-wall-and-see-if-it-sticks times in the music industry, Simple Plan is an example of label commitment. Lava/Atlantic (Warner Music Canada here) stuck with the band for months after *No Pads, No Helmets ... Just Balls*. "We owe that to the fact that Jason Flom's kids love our band. God bless Jason Flom," says Bouvier of Lava's founder and former President, who is now Chairman and CEO of Atlantic Records Group.

"He just kept going (with us). Obviously, you see it all the time. You go out and the first single flops and they get dropped a few months later, but it took nine months before anything happened. He said, 'I don't care how long it takes. I know it's going to happen.' To have that behind you is something most bands don't have, and we want to work hard and we want to be a big band, and we want to be a band that people know."

Still working *No Pads...* the band's first official writing session was last November in Vancouver and yielded a song and a half, "Shut Up" and the chorus to "Untitled" which came in a super heavy rock version and softer version with a verse and pre-chorus "we didn't like," says Comeau.

"I think when we first started writing this record in November, we were lost," admits Bouvier. "We hadn't written in a long time and we had a few good ideas, but we didn't know how to develop them properly, and had forgotten how to do the whole thing."

"After we did that for a few weeks, and had a couple of good ideas, we stopped for a few months, and then, in February, we got back together. We needed to get this done, so I got my computer, got Pro Tools, and we started recording some demos and this just all came together."

The first batch included the "fast, pop punk-y feel" of "Shut Up", the "slower" vibed "Crazy", the heavier "Perfect World" and "Welcome To My Life" which contained some acoustic guitar.

"I really love stuff that's memorable and catchy, so we really try and go with that," says Bouvier.

"Catchy, but not fluffy," Comeau clarifies.

"I like songs where if I hear it, as soon as it's done, I can sing a part to you right now. I hate songs where I heard it five times and still can't sing you a fuckin' line from it," says Bouvier.

"Sometimes you write a song and you

think, 'This is just too busy. We need to slow it down.' Every song we ever wrote, they didn't come out like that. We take a long time to write songs – aside from 'Crazy', which came out really quickly."

Meanwhile, management mate Our Lady Peace was recording its new album once again with Rock in Maui and then in Los Angeles. Lawrence asked him if he'd like to hear the new Simple Plan demos. Rock had taken note of the band on MTV, and thought

GEAR LIST

Sebastien Lefebvre:

Framus Renegade guitars, Framus Dragon amps and cabs, D'Addario strings, Robert Keeley effect pedals, Takamine acoustic guitars.

Jeff Stinco:

Fender Custom Shop Telecaster with two humbuckers, DiMarzio Air Zone and Air Norton pickups, D'Addario strings, GCX amp switchers, Mesa Boogie Roadking amplifier and Fender Twin Reverb for clean tones, Robert Keeley effects, Dunlop picks.

David Desrosiers:

Fender Precision basses, Ampeg SVT classic bass heads, Dean Markley strings, Dunlop picks.

Chuck Comeau:

DW Drums, Zildjian cymbals, Pro-Mark drumsticks.

The whole band uses Sennheiser wireless microphones.

"They have something," he says on the phone from Hawaii.

"The first song that was sent to me, I was floored. It was just *together*," Rock says of "Perfect World".

The demo was basically as it sounds on *Still Not Getting Any...*, says Rock, only "beefed up."

"To me, these guys are a rock act," says Rock. "They have a heavy side to them. If anything else, they tempered that a bit with what they want to achieve and the songs they want to write. To me, they have a lot more in common with Bon Jovi, than Metallica. They're a pop act and they like that. For me, it was a joy to do an album as quick as we did and work with songwriters. To me, it was like working with Bon Jovi."

After speaking with Rock on the phone, the band, wanting to stay close to friends and family, asked if he'd be willing to produce the

album in Montreal. He was. The band sent him the equipment setup for Studios Piccolo and asked if it was good enough.

"Don't even fuckin' worry about it. It's going to sound amazing," Comeau reports he said of Studio A, which has the Neve Series 80 with flying faders and 24-bit Pro Tools. Rock just brought some mics and Neve strips – and his engineer, Eric Helmkamp.

"Studios Piccolo has a great big huge room and it's got a Neve console. It was just perfect for what we needed," says Rock. "The board was a little small for me, because of the way we did it – we didn't cut all the drum tracks and then overdub everything. We did it in groups of four, so sometimes it was a little difficult to get around, but it's a great sounding room, great sounding board, and the people are super nice."

"And it was wonderful to be in Montreal," adds Rock, whose family came to visit for six weeks. The Winnipeg native had never spent more than two days in the city when he played with the Payola\$ and Rock And Hyde back in the day.

"It's nice to go back to where the first record was written and you're home," says Comeau of recording in Montreal. "It's just a waste of money and it's stupid to go to New York or LA. It's just a distraction. You're spending \$2,500 US a day on studio time. Here, we get to stay at home and it cost us \$800 Canadian."

"The last record, I sang in a small studio where there was shit lying around," offers Bouvier. "You put a mic in front of an amp and you sing in front of a microphone. The only thing you actually need is a certain room for the drum sound and we had a big room there. That's it."

While Simple Plan had between 20 to 25 songs that it could have finished, it only had eight it was happy with, and decided to record in batches – four songs from June 20 to July 18; another four August 1 to August 20, then the last two, written while in the studio, until September 5.

There was no pre-production with Rock. They sent him the demos and then they were ready to go.

"The demos were basic minimum – two guitars on each side and a couple of leads here and there," says Bouvier. "We just demoed them, as a guide, and then we added stuff together."

Stinco, a gear freak with some 25 guitars and amps, brought in his collection. "We didn't use that much," says Bouvier.

"Bob heard the demos and knows how to make it how you hear it in your head,"

says Comeau. "Everything is how I dreamed it, every single thing, every detail. The drum sound, the leads, the vocals."

"I can't even tell you what idea was an idea of whose. 'Okay, let's change this kick pattern. Add a cool sound here.' It's really about making the record better," says Bouvier.

"Bob was able to capture the best of the band really quickly. He knows that we've been playing for a while. He knows that we know what we have to do, and he comes from the time where they used tape and it wasn't all cut up. So he used Pro Tools as a tape machine basically. There are a lot of parts where it's not perfect. It's not cut up. It's really rock and it's really raw.

"And the vocals were really quick. I used to take hours and hours and hours doing vocals. Now, he'd make me sing for a half-hour. And then he'd say, 'I'll be back in a second.' He cuts it up. 'Listen to that.' 'Fuck, I never sounded so good.' He's like, 'I let you do your thing and that was it.'"

"He understood what we wanted to do," says Comeau. "The first time on the phone, I remember we explained to him where we were coming from with the first record and where we wanted to go with the songs. We wanted to be more like a live band and be more real and be more powerful. I think there's a huge difference between the first and second record. The first record we felt, the songs..."

"It was too polished," Bouvier interjects. "We don't sound that polished."

Comeau: "We want to make a *BIG* sounding record," he says, stretching out the word 'big,' emphatically. "We want it to sound like *Metallica*, the 'black album' that he made, or *Motley Crue*. We want to have the catchiest songs possible that sound the biggest.

"To me, what we learned from him was to let go and don't follow any rules. If you want to do a solo in a song, you do it, and if you want to do a gang vocal somewhere, just do it. Let's just worry about songs and let's capture those songs in their essence and the way that they will sound the best."

Comeau says Rock is also very "fatherly" and "chilled," and made them feel comfortable. "When we had to write a bunch of songs and were freaking out and stressed out because we're making the record, but we have to write at the same time, he was like, 'You know what? Don't worry about it.'"

"Yeah," chimes Bouvier. "I remember we were in this little garage studio thing (at Piccolo) and we were writing these last songs and we were like, 'Fuck, these have to be great,' so we were like, 'Bob come in here. We've got a verse and we've got an intro,' and he walks in and he's like, 'Fuckin' great.' We're like, 'Are you sure?' 'Yeah, fuckin' go man!'"

That yielded "Promise" and "One", then the first week of September the band was off

to Vancouver for the mixing.

The eleventh song, Rock reveals, was supposed to be the Butch Walker-produced "Don't Wanna Think About You" from 2004's *Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed* soundtrack, but it didn't really fit with the new album. Instead, Comeau and Bouvier, wanted to write a big ballad.

"They had a chorus and I kept telling them to finish the song because we wanted to have that eleventh song. As we finished up other stuff, I said, 'You know, it doesn't really need to be big. It doesn't need to be a big bombastic song. Why not write something that's kind of chill?'" recalls Rock.

"Because we've got some strings to do some work on the song 'One', it's a three-hour call. That will probably take about an hour, and then we probably have the strings for two hours. So why don't you finish off that song? We'll do a piano track and then we'll put the strings on.' That's what I like about them that they took that challenge. They were intrigued by the idea and they went for it."

Bouvier recalls Rock recommending they do something with a "Glycerine" (by Bush) vibe. They had two days before the string players (arranged by Bob Buckley) were coming to the Warehouse. In a day, they finished the verse and pre-chorus, and laid it down by 7 p.m., reports Comeau proudly.

"There's nothing really to lay down. The song has basically piano, which was played by a professional piano player, Bill Sample, because I played the parts, and I wrote it, but I didn't want to play it because I'm not that great at it. We got him to play it, and I sang," says Bouvier.

"And then there's three guitar parts – Jeff and Seb are on it, but they're basically

just chords. We sent out the recording, the rough version, to Bob Buckley. That night he wrote all the parts for it, and the next day they came into the studio and played it all."

"Yeah, the next day, there were like 16 people making it sound like the most beautiful thing I've ever heard," says Comeau.

In all, the recording of *Still Not Getting Any...* took nine weeks versus six months for *No Pads, No Helmets ... Just Balls*.

"Chuck and Pierre, who do most of the writing, to be quite honest, for their age and everything, it's kind of staggering how mature they are about it, and how regimented," says Rock. "The whole band, with the amount of years unfortunately I've been around in this business (laughs), they're a rare find. They're really into what they do and they do it well and they're really disciplined."

"Being with Bob, made us realize that music is really simple when you know where you're going and you know what you want and you get the right guy behind you. It's all about vision," says Comeau. "He was really awesome to work with and we really bonded. You could probably put it on paper that we're going to make the next record with him." ●



Toronto-based music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian news correspondent for *RollingStone.com*, and operates a Canadian music industry news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/jamColumnBliss/home.html>. She also edits *Gasoline*, and contributes to *Elle Canada*, *Audience*, *Tribute*, *Words & Music* and others.

**Recorded at
Montreal's
Studios Piccolo
by producer
Bob Rock,
the album
kicks
into one
potential
hit
after
another...**



“I’m surprised

we got a record out of it,” laughs Sue Foley modestly. “I just recorded some shows and was really just screwing around. We had some shows coming up at the time and I invited a friend of mine to record the nights. The record was, first and foremost, all about fun.”

Foley is, of course, referring to her latest album *Change*; a new acoustic record that was the result of a set that she played at Toronto’s Hugh’s Room almost a year ago. The record, Foley’s ninth in a 12-year career, is a totally acoustic effort and marks a great departure for the 36-year-old guitarist in both form and decibel levels. For *Change*, Foley left her signature paisley Telecaster in its case and stepped on stage with a Martin D-35 for a single set. “We did three shows around the time that *Change* was recorded and it turned out that we liked the acoustic night the best,” Foley gushes. “I didn’t even play acoustically at the time; we were just doing a special show at Hugh’s Room. Originally I just thought I’d put something out for the fans because I get a lot of requests for a live album. I thought I’d put out some of the more popular songs on an EP or something but when we got the tapes back, we liked the acoustic night so well that we decided to put out a whole new record based around that and go out and tour acoustically for a while to switch it up. It’s a total step out for me. After playing electric all the time, playing acoustic all night is really hard on the hands. I don’t practice on my Martin at home so when I take it on stage I usually beat myself up for a couple of nights. I get a little sore.”

Sue Foley discovered she had the blues in her blood thanks to both one of the least likely of places and one of the most likely places at the same time. In 1985, Foley’s love of The Clash was slowly turning her into a punk rocker when one of her friends showed her something that blew her mind. “I was listening to a lot of British punk bands when I was about 15 and a friend of mine was into the Stones. We drew a parallel between the two,” explains Foley. “Then I realized that the early Stones were actually playing blues – or trying to play it – and speeding it up. It was kind of like punk in a way. They sped it up like crazy! It was wonderful.”

From there, Foley worked backwards to find the music that inspired the Stones and discovered the early Chess stable that included Jimmy Rogers, Little Walter and Muddy Waters as well as Memphis Minnie and Robert Johnson. Foley never went back to punk rock; she was hooked. Foley began playing wherever she could around her native Ottawa and learned still more from local bluesmen like the late Back Alley John and

Tony D among others. It’s around this time that Foley began playing in a Piedmont blues style reminiscent of her heroes.

With the nation’s capital quickly growing too small to contain her aspirations, when she was 18, Foley moved west to Vancouver and almost immediately found gigs as both a solo act and as a member of the all-female roots band The Dots. While in Vancouver, Foley acquired the pink paisley Fender Telecaster that would become her favorite guitar; appearing both on stage and, while she didn’t know it yet, every one of her records. She also worked on and off as guitarist for West Coast harp player Mark Hummel on his Canadian dates and when he invited the then 21-year-old Foley along to Memphis to play his gigs during the Handy awards, she immediately jumped at the chance to visit the home of the blues that she loved. As it turned out, it was also the birthplace of Foley’s recording career. One night she got the chance to sit in with Duke Roubillard and their incendiary set was witnessed by Clifford Antone; who asked her to put together a demo tape and send it down to him in Austin. As soon as she

Sue Foley discovered she had the blues in her blood thanks to both one of the least likely of places and one of the most likely places at the same time.

got back to Vancouver, Foley made a demo tape and sent it to Antone who signed her. “I was really inspired by Texas blues,” explains Foley of her next move. “There was a real resurgence of really good blues and rock that was coming out of Austin. I just had to go. When Antone invited me, I just decided to stay. It was just being closer to the music I loved. It was important for me to be there. I liken it to my university education; you know, being in your formative years and just soaking stuff up. I had a really good time and was there for eight years.”

After the birth of her son Joseph, Sue decided to return to Canada and with a couple of label changes, has wound up where she is now: releasing her first record on Justin Time Records. Foley is quick to point out that what you hear on *Change* is not a whole show, but rather a single set from the night. Unlike her other records, cover tunes factor into this record more than they ever have before. *Change* features selected covers by some of Foley’s favourite musicians from over the years including Memphis Minnie, Jimmy Reed and George Harrison all delivered

with Foley’s unique contralto vocal-esc. Foley feels that the CD accurately defines the experience of going to a Sue Foley show even if it was a step out of the norm for her. “There are normally this many cover songs in a single set,” explains Foley. “This is such an old-time-y record and those were the takes that I liked the best. What you hear on the CD is basically one set. It’s got a beginning, a middle and a barn-burning end to it where the band and I have a lot of fun and do the rock and roll big ending. I’m actually really proud of my band for that because those songs were, for the most part, ones they’d never played before and I was either just finished writing them or they were my favourite songs that I play around the house and have been playing for years. They pulled it off beautifully.”

The thought of some of these classic cover tunes being included in the canon of great blues never even occurred to Foley. After all, how can a Canadian white woman effectively sing the music that was originally invented by Southern black slaves? Moreover, how does she keep that music sounding fresh? “Well, blues could be considered race music, but I never saw it that way,” explains Foley, laughing. “For me it never really mattered. I never identified with the troubles of the southern black man; I mean I’m a white girl from Ottawa. What got me about the blues is that it moved me more than anything I had ever heard. All I knew was that I felt the calling to play and to someday move someone the way I’d been moved when I saw my first blues show. The music is transcendent. It transcends your background, your race, your sex; it’s the power of the music. I think what can make the blues stale is imitation. Like playing it EXACTLY like Muddy plays it or getting stuck on a form that they just can’t play like themselves or they can’t make their expression in something. The *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Soundtrack had a real vitality to it and didn’t sound stale at all. Just because you’re a traditionalist doesn’t mean it has to sound stale or dated. I think for the blues to stay vibrant and alive, players have to stick to their guns and not be afraid of just being themselves and telling their story. If your story relates to something in a song from 1932, then so be it. Like I’m covering Memphis Minnie’s ‘Bad Luck Woman’. I relate to that song. It’s old and kitschy and funny but I feel like it suits me. I think stagnation is in that reverent attitude that ‘These are the gods. We can’t change anything about them. They’re the heroes and we have to be so respectful that we can’t even be ourselves.’ That’s a typical attitude; there’s a lot of that in blues and I think it’s killing the blues. You have to keep it relevant to today too so throwing some hip-hop or loops in are



Sue Foley

by Bill Adams

– well, Muddy Waters would have done that if he was a young man right now. He wouldn't have tried to play like his grandpa."

With all that said, Foley has made a concerted effort to let anything that catches her interest be influence on her music. She has recently begun learning flamenco guitar and incorporating the new strains into her music. When *Change* was released, Foley says that she was already halfway through another studio album, tentatively titled *Absolution*, as well as having a couple of other records already in the can. While she has taken a great deal of inspiration from her heroes, Foley maintains that her lyrics are based on her own experience and as such do not contain any of the formal clichés that normally surround a lot of contemporary blues. "Sure there are some tunes about love and love lost, but not many," says Foley, clearly disliking self-analysis. "Yeah, whatever. There's more stuff about just getting along. Life. I'm really inspired by the work of a mythologist named Joseph Campbell. He talks about celebrating the feelings and that's what I think blues is. That's what inspires me. Even if there's a lot of pain involved, there's still a lot to express about it."

Another outlet that has proven to be a significant mine of inspiration for Foley has been her *Guitar Woman* project. A few years ago, Foley noticed that there wasn't a lot of literature investigating the contributions of female guitarists and, upon some research, found that there was in fact a large void just aching to be filled. "The idea came to me as I was researching a potential album project in 1998," explains Foley. "Having been inspired in my teen years by the work of Memphis Minnie, Sister Rosetta Thorpe and other influential female guitarists, I wanted to record an album consisting of some of their songs mixed with a few of my own written in their unique styles. To round out the album, I wanted to cut a track by an obscure Brazilian guitarist I had discovered named Helena Mereilles. I forgot about it for a while though. In 2001, when I was doing an interview with Don Wilcock, I said something off the cuff about how he should write a book about female guitarists. At the time, off the top of my head I could list off about 20 female guitarists and the more research I did, I realized that there was this gigantic gap in reporting. Overlooked, forgotten, who knows but I sent out some e-mails and I kept getting a ton back. That's when I realized how big this project was."

At that point, Foley took the tape recorder she normally used for recording

little bits of music and ideas at her kitchen table and began compiling interviews for a book about female guitarists. "Everyone I talked to told me about someone else and now I think I'm about a third of the way done," enthuses Foley. "Well, maybe half way. I



want to interview about 50 players. I'd say there should be some historical and cultural aspects to discuss as well in it. It's really interesting. I've been talking to these players and writing it in their own words. Right now, I've included bassists and guitarists, but perhaps it'll branch into other stringed instruments like sitar as I go along. I want

I'm really inspired by the work of a mythologist named Joseph Campbell. He talks about celebrating the feelings and that's what I think blues is.

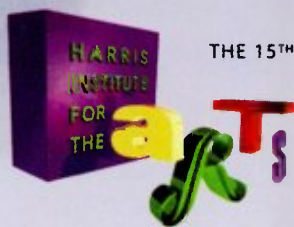
to do a really cross-cultural thing. I'd like to transcend the whole sexuality issue. It's more about the music for these players but I want to transcend cultural boundaries because I've discovered women from all over the world: Africa, Greece, France, Germany and South America; there are some great players. I get scared to death when I think about it because there's so much and it's so much bigger than

I am. Everyone is giving me a lot of energy about it and everyone I've talked to has been really supportive."

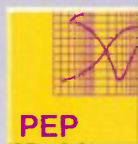
While *Guitar Woman* is currently being scheduled for completion and release in 2006, as time has worn on and Foley's enthusiasm for the project has grown it has ceased to simply be a concept for a book and slowly become a multimedia and cultural event. Foley says that she plans on attempting to get more female guitarists out to her shows to play and showcasing their talents. As well, Foley would like to take a video camera along for some of the interviews to capture the experience on film. "What I want to do is when I release the book, I'd like to release some film footage to go with it," enthuses Foley. "I'm thinking maybe an album with a DVD to go along with the book maybe. When I release the book, I'd like to do a series of concerts celebrating women in guitar. It'd be a diverse thing; some jazz, maybe rock, blues and classical all together. The whole thing keeps getting built up and keeps getting more and more interesting; I'd really like people to see it. Knowing now from the last several years of researching this subject as well as having been on the circuit for the last 20 years, this is the time to tell the story. The world needs to know and these women need to be heard and know about each other."

If *Change* is any indication, clearly the interviews and research have had an effect on Foley's music as well. The first track on *Change*, "Goin' Down The Road Again", was written after Sue Foley interviewed Etta Baker while on tour. "Etta Baker was a lot of fun for me," says Foley, clearly excited. "I went to her house. She's 91 years old and from North Carolina. She's basically a legend. I really like old people – especially to interview because they've been through so much and usually if they've been around that long they're very humble and interesting. I even got to play a bit with her. Those experiences I really treasure because I get to see where these people live and things. I do most of my interviews on the phone, but it's nice to meet people. I'm starting to tour so I have to put the book aside a bit although I am trying to incorporate it into the live shows. Hopefully I can do it side by side and if I go to an area where I know there's someone I want to talk to, maybe I can slip away and meet them." ●

Bill Adams is a freelance writer.



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he first time I saw a k-os show was in a crowded Legion Hall on Vancouver Island. It was one of his early tours in support of 2002's, *Exit*. Though it was early days and he hadn't yet begun the more intensive of touring that characterized the later life of the record, he worked the crowd as if it was already second nature. With only k-os and guitarist Russell Kline on stage, it was an intimate set. Early days, maybe, but it was clear there was easily as much charm in his live show as there was on tape.

At the time the Toronto-based artist was managed by long time supporter and former BMG rep, Sol Guy. Though they still work together – on their imprint label, The Love Movement, k-os has since moved on and is now managed by Chris Smith. "I think that that was an evolution we both had to make," he says. "Everyone's still family; we're still working together in the best way we could, which is on an independent basis. That's how this all got started."

As far as where things started, he continues, Chris Smith had been there in some ways from even earlier days. "I've known Chris for years. He stopped me when I was like 23 and said, 'Yo, you need to put some stuff in the store, man. You need to figure out what you're going to do. You need to not lie to yourself about what your goals are.' He was just really amped on the project and he did his best to kind of create a buzz. So he always helped me outside of me knowing that he was helping me."

The new record, *Joyful Rebellion*, even more so than *Exit*, seems to be made by an artist who knows

"I'll be very honest: what I've realized is that artists think in terms of connecting with people, and music industry people think of selling records, and the only reason there can be any relationship between the two is because those two things basically translate to be the same thing."

what his goals are. It brings a variety of styles together, celebrating k-os' past and present musical influences. It's as informed by straight ahead rock (A k-os/Sam Roberts collaboration, "Dirty Water" is included on the record) as it is by the pop music of k-os' youth, current artists like Sarah Slean and Broken Social Scene and hip-hop luminaries Lauryn Hill and The Roots. Both lyrically and musically *Joyful Rebellion* is about moving forward.

Traditionally, his heroes have been revolutionaries and he found the transition from independent to major label artist overwhelming. The struggle was to find his place both personally and artistically has been an ongoing battle... "I have a record called *Missing Links*, I got signed to BMG records around 1994 or 1995, when Sol was working there in A&R in the black music department." The record never came out, and the deal fell through, but experience prompted some serious self-examination. "At that point, I was about 25 years old, I looked at the music I was doing and I realized everything that I'd done – I went through my whole catalogue from every demo to the record. It was all just this kid trying to create something for himself to talk about; things he never knew about. I had to take the next, you know, four years. My kind of going up on the mountain and figure out how I was going to speak with my own voice."

It's a theme that comes up on *Joyful Rebellion* – He found that voice by going back and recapturing the man he used to be. "That time – from age 0 to 25 – I was into pop music and what was on the radio. That's informing my decisions musically now, but I'm more in control of how. Before I was trying to imitate it and now I'm like 'wow.' It was kind of cool when I liked music for the sake of melody – like, before call display you just were happy to pick up the phone because someone was calling you. But now you're like, I don't know if I want to answer this. It's the same with music. When you're a kid you're just

happy when you hear a great song."

The trouble, he implies, is not so much conforming, as worrying so much about whether you're conforming or imitating that you can't find your own true self in the mix and start limiting yourself. "You start having this intense resentment for anything that's pop culture, because it's things you don't fit into. But once you figure out that you have the ability to transform that by being you then you don't give as much power to the machine. It takes time to find your way around, how to express your own self, how to vibe off something and not just take it. As John Lennon said: good artists plagiarize, great artists steal. You know what I mean? Taking that thing and no one really knowing that it was ever from there."

One of the most important things k-os took from his greatest influences is the inspiration to make this record. While working *Exit*, there were times when he wasn't sure whether or not to he was going to make another record. "You gotta understand, going into this touring with Roots scenario – my favourite hip-hop band of all time. I went to Sweden with them and I couldn't believe the audiences. There were people who weren't trying to dress hip-hop and weren't trying to pose into the culture, but knew every lyric. We went to Sweden, Belgium, Paris, you know? All these places, and I can't believe I'm complaining: here I am on my first record and these guys are on their eighth and they're still rocking and being positive about it. They have crazy stories about their label not allowing things to come out and delaying advances and stuff like that. That was my inspiration for coming back home and starting to write this new record, to see these dudes still doing it after all this time."

"On tour with the Roots, I think that got into my bloodstream and so I came back I came back with this idea of making hip-hop songs; like A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Black Sheep..."

"Peter, my sound engineer, borrowed my computer for so long that I think he paid me back by downloading his musical compilation into my computer; Jeff Buckley, Sarah Slean – I never heard her whole record – I'm checking out Sam Roberts and I started thinking: You know I play a little guitar. I play a little piano and I started approaching it from there, coming up with some chord progressions with a beat. Then when I get a loop I'd be: 'Okay, maybe I can get a drummer to play the loop like this.' It just started from a songwriting basis, where the songs were there first and then I figured out what kind of instrumentation, bringing in a special keyboard player for this song and a horn player for this specific song. That's where the whole idea for the album came about." In addition to capturing stellar performances from a variety of players, k-os laid down some piano and guitar himself. "Just really simple things – I don't know notes. I have no musical training so I just go with what I feel. Russ claims," k-os says, flatly, "me being ignorant just kind of adds something to the whole thing."

As much as the recording process involved the musicians vibing off one another to take the material in new directions, the interplay between k-os and engineer/mixer, Greg O'Shea, was equally important to getting the joy on tape. When producing the record k-os focused on arrangement and making sure it all fit into a hip-hop context. The approach, he says, even when recording digital, was always analog: the beautiful thing about him (Greg) was that he always tried to shine it up, to take it to the next level. I couldn't



World Radio History

K-O-S

A Joyful Rebellion

by Kevin Young

have made the record without him, simply because everybody knows you need that person to bounce ideas off of. I think one thing that he totally respected was that everything had to fit to a hip-hop context. Even down to the mixing. It's kind of like George Martin and DJ Premier. It was like those attitudes coming together. His whole idea about engineering was about trying to get things sounding as big as possible and then I just limited it, based on the fact that hip-hop music was always made in the basement, you know?"

That being said, there were times when tracking *Joyful Rebellion* took k-os and company out of the basement and upstairs – the record was made in a number of places including Toronto's Umbrella Sound, k-os' own small studio, Vancouver's Hipposonic Studios and Bryan Adam's Warehouse Studios. It was at the latter, The Warehouse, recording a song entitled "Crucial" where they got the magic on tape in a way k-os says he will never forget. "We used that old Neve board ... that night ... the guitar sounds we were getting and the drum sounds we were getting is coming through so '60s and kind of, like, surfer. As musicians this is what you live for, to be in a place like this. I thank him for building that little institution so that we could be inspired – sometimes just having

people feel energy in that way. I think what's important to me is that everything turns up a notch."

Whether it's stripped bare down to its most basic elements, k-os wants to be certain that he be true to what he wants to get across. "I don't like to compete with things on stage. Sonically, the dimension the Tabla player had was just enough drums; impactful and rhythmic enough, but it left enough space for my voice and my lyrics to be heard. I want to make a point. I don't want it to be another hip-hop show where you're just hearing a voice. I think that's the battle right now. I think the format of a rock show's a beautiful thing, but I think everybody does it."

Whatever the final decision on live instrumentation, he wants that vibe and belief they captured in the studio present on stage – "I don't want anyone playing in a scenario that they don't want to play in. You want everybody to be as passionate as possible. Including the crowd ... I'm just more concerned about maintaining certain ideas about; the show is the show and the record is the record. I believe that if you wanna hear the record, put it on. If you wanna come to the show then let's take it to a different dimension, you know?"

"I think that was the hardest thing for me, to accept that I was just a kid trying to figure it out. By the time I got my record deal I was 28 and I thought I had it figured out. Then you meet other people and they have these little pieces of wisdom that you need to be open to, meeting other rappers I looked up to,



A Joyful Rebellion

a place like that creates vibes – people might already have the vibes, but once they get in there they really start believing in it."

From the sounds of things the players had no trouble believing, regardless of where they were working – particularly on tracks like the album's closer, "Papercutz". The track features a rollicking jam on which k-os plays piano. On this song, he says, he surprised himself with his playing while vibing off bassist, Maury Lafoy, "It was just me and him kind of, not battling, but just playing off each other. That was cool, and then songs like 'Crabuckit', little guitar lines – just really simple things – I'm not the best guitar player in the world, you know. I'm gonna try to pull it out for this tour. I learn a lot from Russ. k-os is quick to credit the other players on his record as well; "Santosh Naido plays with the Tabla Ensemble. And Toby Peter, who played with Russ in a band called Salvador Dreams, well, those three have been playing as a rhythm section for 15 years so all that came to the record. Chris Gestrin, he plays a lot of the keyboards." There are many others, as well, brought in to lend their specific talents to the depth of the mix...

The question now is, having come from such a stripped down place previously, how will this new record play on stage?

"That's the debate. I believe the last jazz festival we did with a bass player and keyboard player, that ensemble is very unique. I like drums: drums is just where it's at as far as controlling energy and making

who all were like, 'It's always going to be like that. You just have to find out how you're going to fit into it.' That was the evolution for me."

He describes this as being more a process of coming to a truce with himself than with the music industry. "I'll be very honest: what I've realized is that artists think in terms of connecting with people, and music industry people think of selling records, and the only reason there can be any relationship between the two is because those two things basically translate to be the same thing. Once you think in terms of connecting with people then it doesn't matter what your chart position is, it matters how you feel when you go to sleep at night. The more power you give to people to affect reality the more they do; I think before I was kind of scared that I would work for them, but I'm really sure now that they're working for me, not in a condescending, or hierarchical way, but just the idea that I no longer fear that the machine is bigger than myself."

Time's have changed some too, he says, citing a certain insecurity that comes along with taking a stance that in some ways runs contrary to popular hip-hop, talking, as he puts it, about "anti bling bling" things. Plenty of independent hip-hop artists were on it, but not so many major label acts. "I think things like the Lauryn Hill record and the Roots ... Now it's okay to talk about certain subjects on the radio and time and evolution. And that's allowed me also to be a bit more calm about my position because I know I'm not just alone anymore too.

Though he may have felt alone at times, after *Exit*

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began to sink in to listeners, he was certainly wasn't: The 2003 Source award for International Album of the Year, acknowledgement from US television heavyweights, BET and MTV and a high profile collaboration on the Chemical Brothers *Get Yourself High* followed. There were tours with Nelly Furtado, The Roots, De La Soul – it was a learning curve for k-os. The experiences, particularly with Roots, were a revelation to him. Those experiences may have fueled the creative process for *Joyful Rebellion*, but the inspiration long predated that. After moving to Vancouver in the late '90s, one thing that often came up in long philosophical conversations musician friends – most specifically with Russ – was a desire to make music that, while rebellious, was never so dark it disguised the joy of the people making it. "I think both of us somehow put this idea of making music that still had that joyful thing, but is rebellious in nature. It was still rude. It was still crucial, but at the same time that there's no doubt that the people behind the instruments were happy people." And that, he says, is what he hoped to put to tape this time out.

All told he sounds at peace with himself and ready to take his revolution on the road and spread the word as far as he can. Bringing Canadian hip-hop to America doesn't faze him.

"You know, whatever's in the water here, it's

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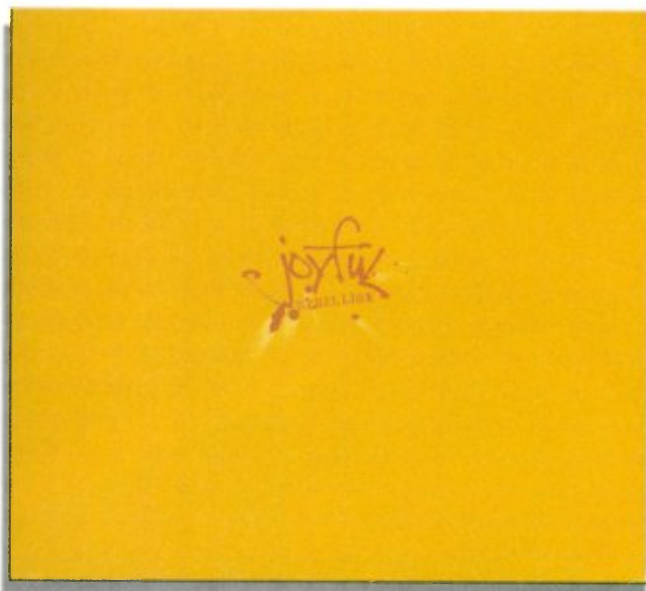
created; Broken Social Scene, Shania Twain, Avril Lavigne, Jim Carey. At this point, America knows that Canada can't really be fucked with as far as a pool of talent. Now, going back to the idea of it's not what you do, it's how you do it, it's not that Canada doesn't have talented people from Kardinal to Socrates to the Rascalz to Maestro to Jellystone ... It's just how do you talk to a culture that's not your own? How do you make it cool when that culture is based on a melting pot? I mean every Canadian kid was listening to different types of music. I think it's bigger than hip-hop. The universal law is that if you're just yourself, it's undeniable, if you're just yourself and I think Canadians have that problem because we're always overshadowed by the news and the BET and the MTV and so being ourselves hasn't been our classic kind of idea. That's all this record is, just a kid who loved all these types of music and put his influences and his favourite songs all together in a jumble. I think when people in hip-hop are able to have that confidence and not have to watch BET to figure out how they should rap then they'll be ahead of the game and not play catch up."

k-os is also quick to point out that, in many ways, working for the greater success and acceptance of his music and Canadian hip-hop in general is just as important here at home. "Just on the other side, as a quick point, you have cats that

work at radio stations for years and they know a great rock song, because they grew up with rock. They don't necessarily know a great hip-hop song. So when it comes across their desk they look at the American charts and they say, okay if I hear something that sounds like this and it's Canadian I'll play it. Otherwise, I'm not gonna take a chance. So that forces Canadian emcees to come up with music that sounds American just to get played on their own stations. So that's the other side of it. We can blame American pop culture and imitation all we want, but that creates the whole conundrum right there."

A recurring theme on record and in conversation with k-os is that, while it's important to recognize the things that need some changing – it's important to know where to start. On the opening track of *Joyful Rebellion*, Emcee Murdah, he sings "I don't want to change the world / I only want to stop pretending." It's a lyric he's not the least bit hesitant to explain...

"That line can be taken two ways: I think people feel like that in romantic relationships. People get to the point where they just want to be themselves. That it's not about changing the world, sometimes you're thinking about things way beyond yourself and you just want to stop pretending in your own life and do what you need to do. Right? That's maybe first listen. But me listening to



it, myself, I realized I don't want to change the world, I only want to stop pretending to change the world. How do you change the world? You know you change yourself. If you checked a lot of the imagery (on *Exit*) it's a guy running away from things. He's looking for the door to get out because he's really concerned about where the world is and changing things. This is more about a guy that realizes music is his passion and grabbing the mic, or chasing the mic now. That running away has turned into pursuit. I think that's what it comes down to. Not to get too metaphysical, but since we all are millions of years of instinct and behaviour; once you change yourself you've actually changed the world because you've changed the jealousies, the envies, the hatreds inside yourself. Then as I've sort of experienced, people start reacting to you differently because they sense you've kind of conquered the inner beast that causes these problems in the first place. And having a bit of knowledge of self, you know?" ●



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



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World Radio History

DRUMMERS

of the
(almost) **LOST ART**

PAUL DELONG • JOHNNY VIDACOVICH • ED THIGPEN • RICK SHADRACH LAZAR

When I think back to when I was five years old beating my parents' foot stools to hell and back with wooden spoons I realize why I would consider myself to be a rock-pop drummer: that was the music that first tripped my trigger so to speak. Peter Criss playing simple yet very effective parts to KISS' rock and roll anthems was, for me, an emotional experience I couldn't keep inside. I became obsessed with thunderous tom-tom fills and huge cymbal finales that seemed to get stadiums full of fans on their feet screaming for drum solos. So my folks stepped bravely up to the plate and bought me a, get this, "Black Diamond" (KISS fans unite) drum kit from a German department store. That was the beginning or the end depending on my parent's perspective for my love of drums and pretty much all things that make noise. Call it a product of your environment if you will, but most

musicians get their initial inspiration from the culture they live in and are exposed to. So I would like to introduce four masters of their craft with the hopes of exposing their life experiences to encourage drummers of all ages to keep these niche styles alive and well for generations to come.

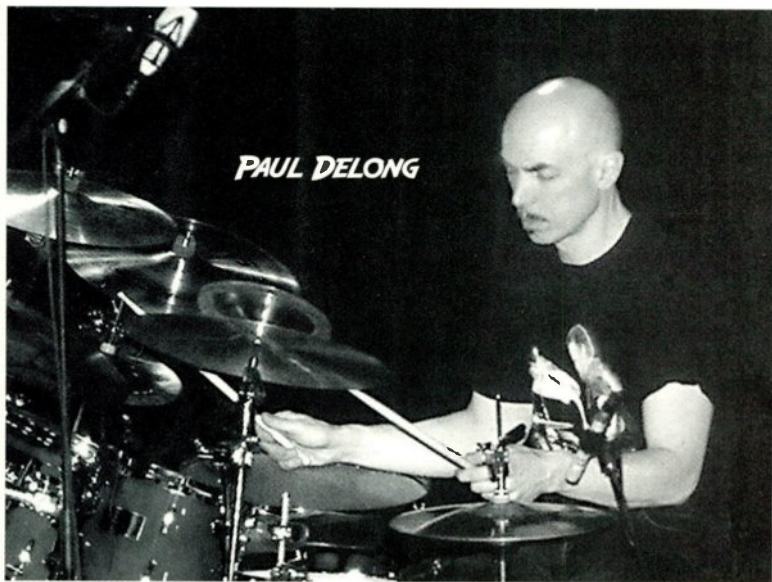
Our first of two Torontonians we'll get to know has as diverse of a resume as any drummer can hope to have; a true testament to the purpose of writing this piece. His work with Kim Mitchell was my first introduction (as it was with many other Canadian musicians) to Juno award winner Paul Delong and thankfully he has been a fixture on the scene and busy man ever since. Paul has been teaching part-time at Humber College for 17 years, performed countless clinics for SABIAN and Pearl, featured at drum fests in Montreal and Los Angeles and, as of late, been touring with all the top shows such as The Lion King, The Who's Tommy and most recently *Hairspray*.

by Chris Taylor-Munro

DRUMMERS of the (almost) LOST ART

Paul has the dubious honour of talking about fusion drumming and the important influence it has had on his life as a drummer. Paul's fusion band, The Code, has two discs, the most recent titled *Figli di Baia*, with a third on its way.

Fusion by one of its definitions is "a blend of two distinct elements." This is becoming more and more prevalent in today's music with the advancement in technology and collaboration of artists from around the world, but I want to address the first time this genre of music was given the moniker and that was with the marriage of jazz and rock. Two very exciting styles



of music that when combined you probably either love or hate. Nonetheless you have got to have some respectable chops to venture into this territory, hence Paul.

"I learned to play the drums listening to Ringo, Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell, Carmine Appice, John Bonham and Ian Paice. At the same time my dad was playing me his old albums of Chick Webb, Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich so I learned to like jazz as well. Then when I was 19, I started to study with Pete Magadini who turned me on to Elvin (Jones), Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette. So in 1972 when I heard Billy Cobham with The Mahavishnu Orchestra playing "Meeting of the Spirits" (the first track on *The Inner Mounting Flame*) I was instantly hooked. This was music that had the power, speed and aggression of rock and the compositional, harmonic and rhythmic depth of jazz. For me it was the perfect mixture."

Fusion has yielded a heap of awesome players that were able to express themselves without boundaries. I asked Paul to give his list of essential listening and if you aren't already aware of some of the groups and musicians he recommends you'll be giddy and probably even a bit freaked out at the calibre of playing when you check them out. That's a good thing if you're looking for some new inspiration.

"After wearing out copies of the first two Mahavishnu albums I went out and got *Return to Forever – The Hymn*

of the *Seventh Galaxy* with Lenny White on drums and again this music blew me away. Over the next few years there were some landmark fusion albums, my favourites being: Pat Martino – *Joyous Lake* with Kenwood Dennard on drums; Mahavishnu Orchestra – *Visions Of The Emerald Beyond* with Narada Michael Walden on drums; Tony Williams Lifetime – *Believe It* with Allan Holdsworth on guitar; *Return To Forever – The Romantic Warrior* again with Lenny White on drums (and to this day the best drum sound that I've ever heard); Chick Corea – *The Leprechaun* with Steve Gadd on drums; Michael Urbaniak – *Fusion Three* with Steve Gadd and Gerry Brown on drums; Herbie Hancock – *Thrust* with Mike Clark on drums and of course Weather Report – *Black Market* and *Heavy Weather* with Alex Acuna on drums and later *Night Passage* with Peter Erskine on drums. These albums cover the period of 1972-1980 and of course there were many great fusion drummers after that."

It is interesting to note that fusion itself would spawn bands that would become more mainstream and gain much more commercial success than many of its pioneers would be credited for. Paul continues, "Fusion's influence was big on rock musicians such as Jeff Beck (check out *Blow By Blow* and *Wired*) and on prog rock bands such as Genesis, Yes and King Crimson."

The musicians infected with this ultra-muso style would be some of the who's who of today's first-call session players. "The next wave included Terry Bozzio, Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Wackerman, Gary Husband, Steve Smith and Omar Hakim." Paul adds.

A commonality among fusion drummers was the grandiose drum kits that would sprawl across the stage completely surrounding the player. This wasn't exclusive to fusion players, but the origins of "more is better" can be attributed to the genre. I asked Paul to describe some of the techniques used by fusion players and how they have evolved. "At the time because of their mega-tom set-ups Cobham and White both played matched grip. With this grip you could get around the kit faster and with more power. In addition they both played open-handed (left-hand lead on a right-handed kit) which again seemed to make a lot of sense."

Carter Beauford (Dave Matthews Band) can be seen riding with the left hand, making it look easy I might add, and has a fairly extensive setup to boot. Wonder if the fusion guys had any influence on him? You don't need to have a massive kit to be a fusion monster, though. "I would say that in the old days you had to have a huge multi-tom set preferably with double kick and of course a Chinese cymbal or two thrown in for good measure! Today great music is being made on more minimalist kits so I really don't think it's about the equipment anymore. If anything I could see playing a small kit but adding a lot of different sound sources (specialty cymbals, Latin percussion, electronics etc.) for more tonal colour."

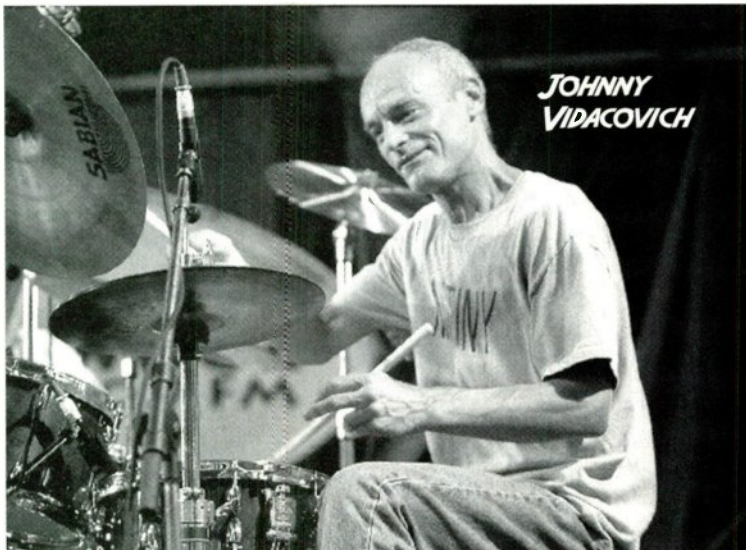
Popularity-wise, fusion may not be what it once was during its heyday, but the technical aspect of the music pushed drumming to new heights that seem to raise the bar even higher for today's drummers. "Now, drum gladiators like Virgil Donati, Marco Minneman and Thomas Lang are taking what the early fusion drummers did to a whole new level, playing seemingly impossible

things with their feet alone – never mind their hands!” Paul does lament somewhat about the early days of fusion, but has a positive outlook for the future. “I think what I miss most about the original fusion music was the depth of the writing. Some say it was complex for the sake of being complex but it always connected with me in a very emotional way. A lot of so-called fusion that came later seemed to consist of some throw-away head, then an endless vamp on one or two chords while the guitarist soloed over some static groove. Thank God that people like Allan Holdsworth are still putting out music that has some of the original fusion vibe to it.”

In closing he adds, “Now with bands like The Bad Plus with David King on drums, I think a new fusion music has been created which is very exciting and different than anything that’s been done before.”

Let’s head down into the Deep South to the city beneath the sea, New Orleans. With its hot, and at times, unbearable humidity this city is the cradle for contemporary (the last hundred years I mean) drumming and the home of one of the grooviest players ever, Johnny Vidacovich. Johnny is renown for many styles of drumming that when summed up can be described as New Orleans drumming. A combination of second line, funk, marching, jazz and Dixie is what makes this style a virtual gumbo of genres.

Johnny’s presence stretches from the bayou all the way up to Stony Lake, Ontario (just north of Peterborough) where he recently recorded with boogie-woogie pianist Michael Kaeshammer on his latest release *Strut* (Alma Records, Universal Canada). Johnny shares his gift with the students of Loyola University, New Orleans University, and of course the rest of the world on his instructional video, *Street Beats: New Orleans Drumming*. Folks looking for a night of dancing in the courtyards of the French Quarter can be fortunate enough to catch him live with New Orleans’ best. He has worked with countless artists such as John Schofield, Professor Longhair, Charlie Miller just to name a few, has released several CDs with his group Astral Project and three CDs of his own, the latest being the self titled CD, *Vidacovich* (New Orleans Music Factory, 2002).



Imagine waking up to a parade early on a Sunday morning right outside your front door. “The fact that so many parades started in my neighborhood when I was growing up I was attracted to the drums in particular. Drumming has always been and *is* a constant part of my daily life because of the culture, the ethnic backgrounds and all the great players in the vicinity. I had a wonderful instructor by the name of Charles Suhor and would hang with this rock and roll drummer named Johnny Spade. I was getting it both from an academic point of view and a street point of view, you dig? Charlie had me listening to Max Roach with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and Johnny (Spade) was showing me all the street stuff and the funk/R&B stuff like Ernie Cato, Lee Dorsey and Jesse Hill.”

To absorb the multitude of styles and library of music that makes New Orleans drumming what it is will take years of listening and no doubt practice, but Johnny recommends some of the following as a good starting point. “All the people I’ve mentioned so far and especially The Meters (often referred



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DRUMMERS

(almost) *LOST ART*

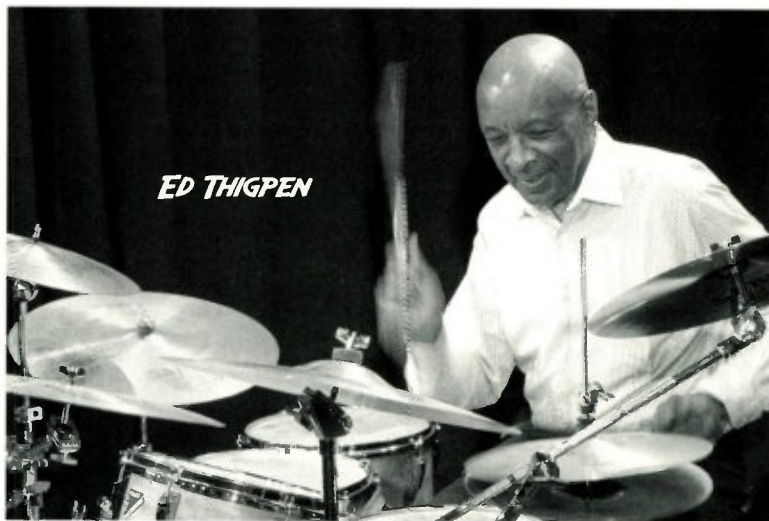
to as the true originators of funk), Joseph "Smokey" Johnson and all the recordings he played on. (Check out "It Ain't My Fault" one of New Orleans funkier beats of all time.) Listen to the Bill Evans Trio, especially his early trios with Scott LaFaro on bass and Paul Motian on drums, John Coltrane's live underground stuff and of course Kinda Blue, Miles Davis. Any Miles Davis is good to listen to."

Many of the musicians Johnny mentions are not from New Orleans at all, but have been inspired technique-wise by the spirit and essence of New Orleans drumming. "Besides learning the proper way to play drums we should also apply our imagination and learn how to play more lyrically, more melodically or what I call melodic rhythm. Learn to use the effects of the drums more like a small orchestra for instance the edges, middle and centre of the head to make the drums sound different." Johnny credits the brass band and bar drummers for some of his techniques. "Buzzes and drags particularly across the edges of the drum which are not what I would call legitimate drumming, but what I call 'street slop' are cool to create a long sound. There's a way of doing it with grace and getting the drum to sing."

New Orleans drumming often has a laid back feel that seems to go along with its culture, but always maintains an intensity to its rhythm. It is subtle at times, but instantly recognizable.

Moving on to another form of drumming that may be the most subtle of all styles dynamically, but also the most expressive; brushes. A young student of mine brought the song "Miss You" by Blink 182 into a lesson and wanted to know how to play Travis Barker's pattern. I said "Oh! It sounds like he's using brushes or at least one and a stick." My student was not sure if I was joking or being serious because he had yet to be introduced to brushwork. I'm sure this is when I figured that writing a piece about some of the more pronounced styles of drumming would be a good idea. New Orleans drumming certainly includes brushwork, but we're going across the pond to Copenhagen, Denmark to visit the master of brushwork, Edmund Thigpen.

Ed was born in Chicago in 1930, but did most of his growing up years in a Los Angeles boarding house after his parents split up until moving to St. Louis, Missouri to join his father, drummer Ben Thigpen, known for his work with the Andy Kirk band in the 1930s and '40s. In 1951 he decided to make the move to New York where he landed a seat with the Cootie Williams band at the Savoy Ballroom. From 1954 to 1958 he toured with artists such as Dinah Washington and Johnny Hodges and in 1959 joined the Oscar Peterson trio and would record over 50 (50!) albums. Many consider Oscar (piano), Ray Brown (bass) and Ed to be the finest trio in jazz ... period! In 1959 *DownBeat* magazine's jazz critics voted Ed and Elvin Jones as the "New Star on Drums" winners in a tie. He is a consummate educator and has been ever since his involvement with The Advanced School of Contemporary Music (Toronto)



started by Oscar, Ray and composer Phil Nimmons in 1959. The school had to be shut down as a result of the Oscar Peterson trio's heavy touring schedule. The world wanted to see these fabulous musicians live and in person. Can you blame them?

"Brushes were a part of the accoutrements drummers used when I was in grade school and high school during the late 1930s and '40s. It was the Swing era and whomever you went to the theatre to see play used them. So in high school we would play stock arrangements from the book

Resources To Check Out

The Sound of Brushes

- Book/CD by Ed Thigpen (Warner Bros.)

The Essence of Brushes

- VHS/DVD Ed Thigpen (Warner Bros.)

Street Beats: Modern Applications to New Orleans Drumming

- VHS by Johnny Vidacovich (DCI)

The Art of Bop Drumming

- Book/CD by John Riley (Warner)

Beyond Bop Drumming

- Book/CD by John Riley (Warner Bros.)

Drum Set Techniques/History of the US Beat

- double DVD set by Steve Smith (Hudson)

World Fusion Drumming

- by Skip Hadden (Warner Bros.)

Drums By Design

- video by Billy Cobham (Warner Bros.)

Travelling Through Time

- DVD by Giovanni Hidalgo & "El Negro" Hernandez (Warner Bros.)

African Beats

- Video by Kalani and Friends (Warner Bros.)

These materials can be found online at
www.musicbooksplus.com

of Duke Ellington and Count Basie that came out on record. When be-bop came out it was Dizzy Gillespie, Boyd Rayburn, Stan Kenton and brushes were again an integral part of playing, but the big influence was when I met Jo Jones (Billie Holiday, Basie, Ellington, Art Tatum) through my dad."

One of the greatest joys of playing brushes is that's basically all you need ... no extra gear. "I would try and emulate the smooth sound I was hearing on records on a piece of paper, cardboard or on my snare drum when I finally got a snare drum," he says laughing. "I didn't see how they did it, but I was able to duplicate the sound on my own." With Ed's instructional books such as *The Sound of Brushes* or the video/DVD *The Essence of Brushes*, players today can study the brush patterns and have both a visual reference and audio reference. "A lot of my own techniques came from me adapting to the situation I was in ... to blend and make it musical. Each of us adds our own spice to things and it's a lot like cooking: you get the essence of things and season to taste."

Over the span of Ed's career the brush techniques themselves have not changed so much, but the surface, and by that I mean the drumhead itself, has come a long way. Ed gives me the lowdown on the basic necessity for a good performance. "Good drum heads! Not the clear plastic heads because you can't get a sound. They make many different heads, but my preference are the Fibreskin 3s (Remo) because they're about as close as you can get to the calfskin heads I grew up with. If I'm using the coated heads I usually take a fine piece of sandpaper and just take off some (Not all!) of the rough coating. It helps to ease up



the sound and not make it so brash."

Ed's final words are "Be open-minded. We're not one-dimensional entities. The main thing is to do things correctly and be effective. That's why we have these different tools."

We're coming full circle back to Toronto to talk with a player who has brought the world of percussion to our doorstep, Rick Shadrach Lazar. When I say "world" I literally mean his knowledge of percussion spans Afro-Latin-Brazilian-Arabic and New World Fusion and he masters them all. I had the privilege of seeing Rick perform with one of his groups, Samba

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Squad in tandem with Flamenco guitarist, Jesse Cook and his band. Awesome! The concert hall was on its feet and dancing in the aisles ... nobody with a pulse good keep their bodies from exploding into a frenzy of movement. Rick has shared his talents with artists such as Loreena McKennitt, Bruce Cockburn, Barry White, fellow Thunder Bay celebrity Paul Shaffer (David Letterman's Late Show band), Blues Brothers, Moe Koffman, and as I mentioned, Jesse Cook. That's the short list, anyway. He has been on faculty at Humber College and York University for the last decade leading ensembles and teaching privately all the while giving highly energetic clinics on all types of percussion to ensure his knowledge is passed on.

"My main areas of interest are Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, Arabic, West African and Jazz. My forte is that I have knowledge and expertise in these various areas and my style is based on combining these into a personal mix/sound. What drew me into these areas? I grew up with Arabic music and the main thing was that the music, particularly the rhythm and voice made me feel good, gave me a natural high."

Growing up in Thunder Bay one might assume Rick would be somewhat limited to the exposure of different cultures and so many styles of music. I asked Rick to explain how he became the multifaceted player he is today. "Musically, Bernard Purdy was the drummer who got me into the whole funk thing. Buddy Rich was the door for jazz, leading to Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Roy Hanes, etc. Mongo Santamaria opened the doors to the Afro-Cuban music. Arabic was the music I grew up with, but the drummer who influenced me most was Hossam Ramzy who I met through recording work with Loreena McKennitt at Real World Studios. One thing leads to another and you get serious and dig deeper and deeper."

Here are Rick's recommendations for essential listening with respect to each genre. "Latin Afro-Cuban percussionists and drummers: Dafnis Prieto, Changuito, Giovanni Hidalgo, Potato, Los Papines, and Daniel Ponce. As far as groups: Ira Kere, Los Van Van. For Brazilian: Escolas de Samba, Mangueira, Imperatriz, Grande Rio, and Padre Miguel. Arabic: Hossam Ramzy, Om Kalsoum, and Mohammed El Bakkar. Funk: James Brown, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, and King Curtis."

Again, no one can expect to go out and learn any of the styles mentioned and be proficient from the get-go without investing the time and practice. There's more to it than just reading books. They definitely help, but Rick points out "the main thing is to learn the traditional vibe of each style and then incorporate it into your own voice."

Being a percussionist can be a completely different experience than say a kit player especially if you happen to be sharing the musical space around you with a fellow drummer. You need to find your place in the groove and embellish, not convolute, the rhythm or the other instruments for that matter. Think of adding textures for effect. You'll get your moment to shine as we all do when playing as a group.

I asked Rick how the role of percussionist has

Events

Montreal Drum Fest 2003

Montreal, PQ
November 12-14, 2004
(450) 928-1726, FAX (450) 670-8683
angelillo@videotron.ca,
www.montrealdrumfest.com

Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC)

Louisville, KY
November 10-13, 2004
(580) 353-1455, FAX (580) 353-1456
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

Cape Breton Drum Festival

Cape Breton, NS
April 30-May 1, 2005
(902) 727-2337
bruce@cbdumfest.com, www.cbdumfest.com



Elvin Jones, 1927-2004

May was a rather emotional month for drummers around the world as our community lost a great among the great. When I first discussed this article with *Canadian Musician*, the first person I wanted to have contributing was Elvin. Sadly it would not come to fruition. He passed away on May 18, 2004.

Watching Elvin play was even more delightful than, dare I say it, *just* listening? He would literally fall into his toms and create huge thundering rolls to the point I thought the drums would crumble beneath him then play so softly, eyes closed, as if it were the last few drops of rain falling and then come roaring back with the thunder. It was a dynamic roller coaster.

Early in Elvin's career his playing was considered somewhat unorthodox. What can initially be seen as a hurdle may in fact be what separates individuals from the crowd in the long run. From Elvin's humble beginnings with his musical family in Pontiac, Michigan, then joining the Army Corps marching band at age 18 to his affiliation with John Coltrane starting in 1960 some may have deemed him worthy of the title jazz legend, but at age 33 Elvin was just getting started. Elvin spent another 44 years touring the world, recording with musicians of all genres and leaves behind a body of work to be cherished, indeed.

BACK ISSUES

The Early Years

canadian musician



- 1979
 - March/April - Burton Cummings, Murray McLauchlan, Shopping for a Synthesizer, Recording Studio Design, Notables' Stereos
 - September/October - Domenic Troiano, Prism, Irish Rovers, Moe Koffman, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Keyboard Combinations
- 1980
 - January/February - Trooper, Segarini, Ronnie Prophet, Andrew Davis, Managers, Vintage Organs
 - March/April - Triumph, Jerry Doucette, Ginette Reno, Torn Mawhinny, Show Playing for Guitar - Part I, Record Piracy
 - July/August - Dan Hill, FM, Henry Cuesta, Powder Blues, Radio Airplay, Show Playing for Guitar - Part III
 - September/October - David Clayton-Thomas, Downchild Blues Band, Nash the Slash, Hearing Loss, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Jazz Clubs
 - November/December - April Wine, Dianne Heatherinegton, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Bobby Edwards, Troubleshooting Your Gear Part I, Bass Players' Choice
- 1982
 - May/June - Chillwack, Shari Ulrich, Daniel Laviole, Performing Rights - Part I, Songwriters' Market Guide
 - September/October - Diane Tell, Doug Bennett, David Wilcox, Linda Manzler, Anvil
 - November/December - Loverboy, Andrew Hermant, Wayne Rostad, V.E.J.I., Canadian Recording Studio Guide
- 1983
 - March/April - Rough Trade, Rob McConnel and the Boss Brass, Dick Damron, Terry Crawford, Sam Moon, Do it Yourself Percussion - Part I
 - May/June - Liona Boyd, The Spoons, Rafli, Do it Yourself Percussion-Part II
 - September/October - Bruce Cockburn, Ian Thomas, Lydia Taylor, Image - Part I
 - November/December - Oscar Peterson, The Lincolns, Wildroot Orchestra, Jarvis Benoit Quartet, Image - Part II
- 1984
 - July/August - Triumph, Aldo Nova, Uzeb, Chillwack, Grokking Electronics
- 1985
 - May/June - Corey Hart, Murray McLauchlan, L'Etranger, The Electronic Drum Jungle, Tile Canadian Musician Lighting Guide Part I
 - September/October - M + M, CM Lighting Guide Part III, Electronic Percussion Accessories, Spotlight on Vancouver, Vancouver from the Air, Bruce Allen, Idle Eyes, Nettwerk Records, Headpins, DQA
- 1986
 - January/February - Joni Mitchell, Loverboy, Creating That Buzz, The New Music, Focus on Pro Keyboards
 - July/August - Luba, 54-40, Musicians' Money, Cover Bands, Computer Music Revolution
- 1987
 - July/August - Bryan Adams, Gowari, How to Work Overseas Markets, Focus on Recording
- 1988
 - September/October - Red Rider, Ari Bergman, Jeff Healey, The State of the Guitar
 - November/December - Disaster Proofing Your Band Part I: On the Road, Anne Murray, k. d. lang, Live Sound
- 1989
 - March/April - 10th Anniversary Edition, The Artists, The Business, Selected Artist Index, The Equipment
 - November/December - David Wilcox, 54-40, Kevin MacMichael, How to Avoid Getting Ripped Off, Putting a Sound System Together
- 1990
 - January/February - Jane Siberry, Daniel Lanois, The Scramblers, A&R Directors, What are they looking for?, Life After Music Education
 - March/April - Rush, George Fox, Oliver Jones, Booking Agents: What Makes Them Tick?, Keyboards in the Nineties
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changed since his beginnings. "The main evolution is in technique. Today everyone has lots of chops. The important thing is to use it musically. The other evolution is the access to information. Today it's easy to get information, either through the wide range of books, CDs and videos that are available or through personal instruction that is available in specialized music camps, workshops and clinics."

To explore the world of percussion will give all musicians, not just drum set players, a much broader sense of what takes place rhythmically in

any style music is needed. A few key pointers from Rick if you're thinking of getting into percussion: "Good skin heads for the congas, bongos and djembes. In terms of a career, you need to stay fresh, be humble so you can keep learning, and remember the reason you got into music is that you love it."

Each of these players have many things in common, but what is most significant is that they not only became extraordinary players in their field, but they have all taken the time to pass their knowledge on to the next generation of drummers. They

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Web Sites

www.marching.com

A great site for anyone involved with marching bands. Features links to performing bands from Canada to around the world.

www.drummersweb.com

A source of links to sites pertaining to the various percussion products available, books/videos, teachers and even schools.

www.drumbum.com

Tips, merchandise, resources, to help you improve your drumming.

www.drumset.com

An online community for drummers featuring a chat room, forums, resources etc.

www.harmony-central.com/Drums

Lessons, tips, forums, new products ... this site has it all for the practicing drummer.

www.taiko.com

A site dedicated to, big surprise here, Taiko drumming.

www.drumlesson.com

The site's Web address says it all: they offer drum lessons.

www.musicbooksplus.com

Music Books Plus offers over 6,000 titles of books, CD-ROMs, DVDs etc. Pretty much anything you could think of to read up on drumming and percussion.

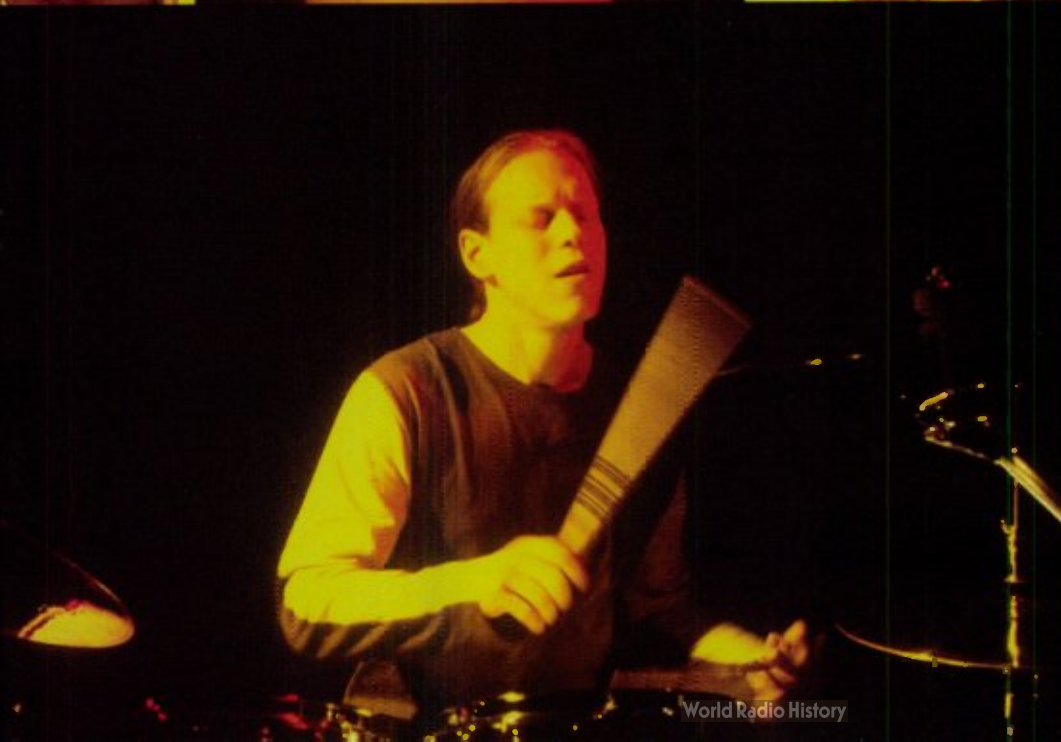
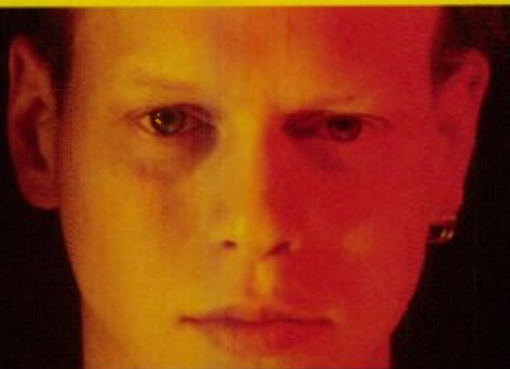
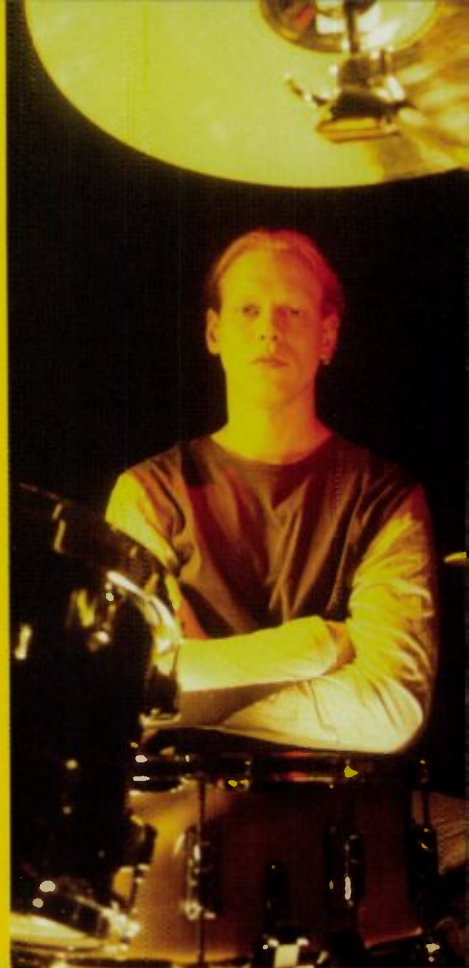
were not born to this world with super human powers, but started with the fundamentals and made it a mission to listen, learn, love and eventually compliment the drummers and percussionists before them. There's a lot of amazing music out there so make an effort to listen to a particular style you haven't up to this point and discover what it can do for your own creativity. Now, go play your drums! ●



Musician Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based freelance writer who drummed for Hydrofoil and David Usher/Moist.

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Music Just Escapes Me

Despite having a lot of formal education in music, spending five years as a music book reviewer, and being a very analytical person in general, I find it completely embarrassing that I still have no idea where songs come from.

So, since this is my first songwriting column for *CM*, I decided to explore some of the things about songwriting that I have done battle with in the past, and that I'm still struggling to fully comprehend today. In future issues, I will then write about the "nuts and bolts" of song craft, which is what I am academically educated in and usually write about.

Songwriting and I have been strange companions since I began writing as a teenager. I have loved it, longed for it, kept it private, showed it off in public, sold it for money, used it to make friends and influence people and even hated it, for the fickle friend that it is by nature.

Songwriting was, and always will be, the greatest anomaly in my life, yet it also, almost completely defines me.

All through my life I have attempted to assess my songwriting in terms of success and failure, much as I have also made an ongoing mental evaluation of my life as a working guitarist but also as a husband, father, brother, son, friend, neighbour, and ultimately as a person.

For me, what defined success in songwriting for the longest time was money, successful songwriters made money from their songs and unsuccessful ones did not.

Successful songwriters had hit songs, had fans, just like rock stars did, and made a point of staying as far away as possible, from what I once heard someone in publishing refer to as "non earners."

Successful songwriters could also write just about anything, and have it become another brilliant link in their chain of greatness. It was what we commonly called "artistic license." Without it, it seemed that you could not do anything right, but those who possessed it, seemed to be incapable of doing anything wrong.

Ironically, it was right around the same time when I was about to achieve the kind of success as a songwriter that I have just described above, that I was forced to completely rethink my definition of success as a music creator.

About 10 years ago I got a call that one of my songs was on the short list to be cut by a major celebrity artist in the US. Sadly, I spent only seconds celebrating this achievement and promptly went to work on capitalizing on my good fortune.

I was so completely consumed by the hot pursuit of the opportunities that surrounded this cut that I almost sacrificed everything I already had going for me, including my family, our life savings, my job, my health, my sense of all things real, and ultimately even the very song craft that had opened that door for me in the first place.

I was quite attracted to the validation that I thought this would bring to me as an artist but I was also pretty excited about the money that would come with that validation and it wasn't so much that I thought that the money was the key to happiness but I decided that if I made enough money I would go and have a key made.

My song eventually got dropped in the final cuts and "fame and fortune" eluded me in the end but instead of thinking of it as "the one that got away" I was irreversibly altered by a new sense of what was possible.

At this very intersection of life and art, I had a *Jerry McGuire* moment whereby I began to look at high rotation radio music and determined that this was not the kind of music that I wanted to write anyway. I had already grown out of this music artistically by virtue of the natural aging process.

I also decided to create my own definition, of success in songwriting, based on writing good songs and not just the mining of them for financial gain. I couldn't have pinpointed the exact moment when the honesty and integrity fell out of my songs but I could tell the very second that the magic seemed to just climb right back into them.

This column is titled "Music Just Escapes Me" because I now understand that when I manipulated art so that I could control the outcome of its commercial use, it ended up sounding as contrived as its intent.

However, songs grown wild from unpredictable imagination, that spring from inspiration alone will certainly stand the greatest chance of inspiring every emotionally receptive person within earshot, including their writer.

I hope that music just escapes you as well.



By James Linderman

James Linderman lives and works at thebarmonyhouse, a music lesson, songwriting and recording pre-production facility in Newmarket, ON. James writes songwriting articles and music book reviews for The Muse's Muse Web magazine, www.musesmuse.com (3 million readers monthly), Canadian Musician magazine, Songwriters magazine, Professional Musician magazine, Songwriters of Wisconsin International and The Dallas Songwriters Association. His writing is also featured in the James Linderman Wing of the library at www.songu.com. James has a Canadian University and American College education in music theory and composition and is also pretty good at making up songs and playing the guitar. Contact James at thebarmonyhouse@rogers.com.

Recording Acoustic Guitars



Recording

In past articles, we have tackled recording vocals and electric guitars. Let's look at setting up to record acoustic guitars.

The Instrument

Naturally a properly-tuned, rich sounding acoustic guitar sounds better than the old cracked beach guitar. The intonation, neck and frets must be up to professional standards, with no buzzes, fret noise or other distractions. If the instrument is not up to par, consider renting a quality instrument. A rental is a couple of days. A recording is forever.

Placing The Player

For an overdub, place the player in the middle of the room aimed toward the control room. Place a couple of baffles around the back and sides of the player. Perhaps throw a rug on the floor to lessen the room ambience in the microphone. Recording an acoustic guitar in highly reflective places such as the bathroom generates lots of short reflections, or slapback. If needed, this effect, can always be added later.

Some engineers prefer to record in totally dead spaces, eliminating the natural reverb of a room, for more variation when it comes time to mix. Using an overly dry absorbent space may suck up some the luster of a guitar, especially if the guitar is not close miked. A natural sounding space with a small degree of inherent room ambience works well to capture a full sounding track.

As with vocals, dim the lights, set up a table and music stand to create a more intimate atmosphere. Make the effort to pamper the player a bit.

Choosing The Microphone

Condenser microphones work well on all stringed instruments due to their wide frequency range and smooth pickup characteristics. Many dynamic microphones won't have the appropriate high-end capabilities, plus they may introduce certain unwanted frequency boosts. That being said, sometimes a dynamic microphone is perfect for the situation. Or consider a ribbon microphone – whatever the situation calls for. If there is access to a tube microphone, try it over other microphones. A tube microphone has warmth, and records acoustic instruments, such as strings, piano and vocals very well. Listen to what works best for your situation.

The polar pattern depends on the surrounding environment. An omni-directional pattern picks up the complete sound field, making the guitar sound a bit more live – depending on room design. Plus it has no proximity effect. The cardioid pattern, which mostly captures what is placed directly in front of it, might work better in a poorly designed space, or, of course, if more than one player is in the room.

Placing The Microphones

Once the player is set up and ready to play, get down on your knees, put your finger in one ear (yours, not the player's) and listen. As he plays, move the microphone around to locate the spot with the richest sound. Place the microphone there. Look down the so-called barrel (if applicable) of the microphone, and aim it to where the guitar pick (if used) meets the strings.

Close microphone placement, one foot or less, results in a "harder" sound, (an emphasis the upper midrange) and more boom-y-ness thanks to proximity effect and pickup of the sound hole resonance. As well, the player must stay relatively still for the sound not to change.

Moving the microphone farther away from the guitar in an acoustically suitable room will yield a rounder warmer sound, picking up all the parts of the guitar that are missed with close miking. A single microphone placed from 12 to 18 inches away and aimed toward the instrument is a reliable starting point. However, too much room sound and the guitar gets lost in a busy mix.

Consider the part. Is this track a core part of the sound or is it there to just add a bit of sparkle? A less important sparkle track might need less fullness than a featured acoustic guitar track. Insert a roll-off, or aim the microphone toward the higher strings to capture more harmonics and less of the boom. Since the idea is to get the best sounds without a lot of processing, record the instrument appropriately for how it will sound and where it will be placed in the final mix.

Final placement depends on the style of music. A jazz acoustic would not be miked the way a pop acoustic would be. Country picking guitar would use a different placement than a love song might. Slow songs may be miked differently than fast songs. All situations are unique.

Two Microphone Setups

Adding a second distant microphone increases ambience and placement due to the natural delay created. Check the phasing between close and far microphones. When using two or more microphones on an acoustic guitar, the temptation is always there to make a real stereo sound. Be warned that stereo tracks tend to lose the effect as more instruments are introduced to the mix.

Try using one microphone to capture the higher frequencies and another for the lower frequencies, then adjust for proper highs and lows with the level faders rather than with equalization.

If there is a pickup in the guitar, as many acoustic guitars have, run the signal through an amplifier, and then place a microphone in front of the amplifier. Combine the microphone on the instrument and the microphone on the amplifier at the console, changing it to more of an electric sound than an acoustic one.

Use a single microphone to capture all the rich lows, and the direct signal to capture the nice highs. Acoustic pickups are great for live situations, but in the studio, if you have a choice, a well-placed microphone will sound better. Perhaps record the pickup on a separate track, then pan them left and right for a stereo effect. You decide.



by Tim Crich

Tim Crich wrote the bestseller Assistant Engineers Handbook. He has over 20 years of experience in the recording studio, and has worked on records by Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, KISS, Billy Joel, Bryan Adams, Cher, Bon Jovi and many more. This article is excerpted with permission from his new book Recording Tips for Engineers, available through musicbooksplus.com. For more information, see www.aehandbook.com.

Mixing Tips

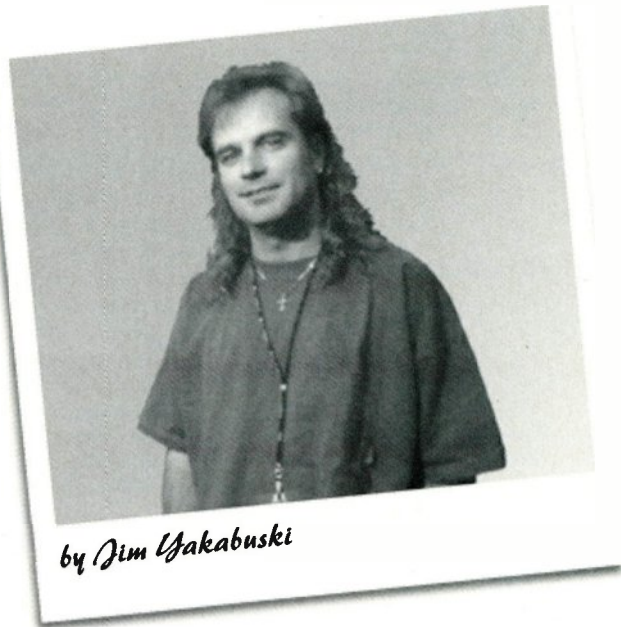
Don't Shout Before You Speak

The lights go down. The dry ice creeps over the front of the stage. The crowd is frantic as a low rumble builds and builds until the ceiling tiles are falling out of the roof and people are ready to run from the building. Just as you think you can't take it any more, the rumble builds to a deafening, throbbing crescendo and then is abruptly cut off by blinding light and a band on stage that sounds as if it is playing through a transistor radio.

Sound familiar? Hey, it has happened to me. The darned intro tape can kill you every time. And why is it that bands always want to use something that has 4 Hz in it to open the show? Go figure.

The problem that causes this discrepancy in level is usually SPL reference. During the afternoon when you soundchecked the band in an empty room the volume of the intro tape seemed quite substantial. But after an opening act and the roar of the audience as the house lights go off, you find yourself pushing the level of that intro tape higher and higher, leaving the band to come out sounding less than impressive.

You need to establish the maximum level that the intro "rumble" DAT can go before it upstages your band's first song power level, and not be freaked out if it doesn't sound loud enough as it's rolling. It's better to start out with the intro sounding a bit low and the band sounding a little loud than the other way around. I refuse to let all the frequency bands through when this type of tape is handed to me. If the bottom end of the band doesn't usually live in the 30-40 Hz region for most of the show, then I'm going to high-pass my DAT intro tape to at least 40 or 50 Hz. You want the audience to remember the first note the band plays with an overwhelmed feeling, so let it be good and powerful. Don't let a silly tape that was produced and mixed at Skywalker Ranch give your sub-bass speakers too much of a workout before the real deal comes on stage. Save the best for last and lighten up on intro overload.



by Jim Yakabuski

Stop The Bleeding

This is one of those things that hopefully only happens to you once in your audio lifetime, and if it does happen, you hope that it does so during a soundcheck and not during the show.

To communicate to the stage throughout the day, and to speak to the artist during soundcheck, we set up a 'talkback' mic that is routed through the snake to the monitor board so that the Front of House guy can have his voice magically appear in the monitors on stage. This useful process can considerably extend the life of a Front of House mixer's vocal cords, as he or she doesn't have to yell 100 feet to the stage all day long. The danger of having this mic is that if you happen to leave it on while you have the PA roaring away, there will be a ton of bleed back to the monitors and the monitor guy will begin pulling his hair out trying to find the root of the problem. This really is more of a warning to the monitor engineers out there, but the fault lies with the Front of House mixer. We all hate having our talkback mics shut off by the monitor guy because we are then forced to scream loud enough for someone to turn it back on. Therefore, we must be res

The simplest solution is to get a mic with an on/off switch and always have it in the off position when you aren't speaking to the stage. One simple rule of thumb that ensures that the show will not have this problem is unplugging the talkback completely from the mic cable before the show starts. The monitor guy should always have the talkback channel muted once the show begins, but this is an extra safety measure to ensure the front-of-house mix does not find its way back on stage.

This article is excerpted from Jim Yakabuski's book entitled Professional Sound Reinforcement Techniques. The book is published by MixBooks, an imprint of artistpro.com. You can also find the book online at www.mixbooks.com and www.musicbooksplus.com.

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World Radio History

Producer "Spec" Deals

The views and opinions expressed in this article are not meant to substitute for legal advice which should be sought in each particular instance.

Introduction

Often record producers are approached by recording artists who do not have the funds to record professional sounding demos. The artist needs to have good sounding demos to attract record company interest but cannot afford the producer fees or sometimes the studio costs to produce the required demos.

This article describes the terms and provisions of what is commonly termed a, "producer 'spec' deal" wherein the producer has foregone immediate fees in the hope that the artist will secure record company (or publishing company) interest. Later, when the artist secures the record deal, the producer is financially compensated.

With the help of legal counsel the parties can draft a brief, effective agreement which protects both parties' interest in the event that the production of the demo masters assist in securing record company interest for the artist.

Term/Delivery Commitment

The agreement should describe how many masters are going to be produced. Typically an artist will require three to six demos to attract record company interest. This provision should describe approximately when

the demos will start and when they will be delivered.

As an artist you want to confirm that the final demos will be commercially and technically satisfactory.

Normally the parties will agree that the demos are to be used to solicit recording company interest for a particular period (6-12 months). If the record deal is secured during this period then the specific compensation provisions of the agreement would apply. The theory behind this time limited period is that a record deal will only be reasonably related to recent/fresh demos that have been used to solicit record company interest.

Recording Agreement Definition

Your Agreement should clearly define which types of "recording agreement(s)" would entitle the producer to claim future income from the Artist. A small recording agreement with a very small independent record company may not qualify; whereas, an agreement with a "Major" record company will normally suffice. You may also want to address what would happen if the Artist elects to merely sell the demos "off stage" at a later date.

Studio Costs

The agreement should be clear about who is responsible for studio costs. Ideally the parties would attach a mutually approved budget to the agreement. If substantial studio costs are also incurred by the producer, the producer may justifiably argue for more compensation than outlined hereinbelow.

Compensation

The agreement can be structured to address a variety of circumstances when (and if) a recording agreement is secured:

i) No masters used/Producer not retained

The record company may want to sign the artist to a record deal but may *not* be interested in using any of the demo masters as part of the artist's delivery commitment under the recording agreement. It may also be possible that the artist and

the record company do not want the producer to produce further recordings for the artist. In this circumstance the producer will normally be paid a fee for his services previously provided on spec. Usually this fee (\$1,000-\$3,000 per master) will take into account the risk and speculative nature of the producer's previous efforts which can result in a higher fee than the producer might normally charge for services when a fee is paid up front on initial delivery.

ii) Masters used/Producer not retained

The record company and the artist may not want the producer to produce further masters for the artist but may want to use the demo masters as part of the artist's delivery commitment under the recording agreement. In this case the producer could be paid a flat fee for his services related to production of the masters (\$1,000-\$3,000 per master) and a pro-rated royalty related to sales of the demo master(s) in question. Briefly, this royalty can be expressed as 3 per cent of suggested retail price which is pro-rated according to the total number of masters on the applicable LP. (For a more detailed review of royalty structures in a typical producer agreement see, *Paul Sanderson, "Musicians and the Law in Canada" (Carswell)*)

iii) Producer retained

In a perfect world for the producer he/she is retained by the artist and the company to produce the first LP for the record company and artist. Sometimes the producer and artist might agree in the spec agreement to predetermine the fees and royalties that the producer will be entitled to when the producer is asked to produce the LP at this juncture. Other times, the artist and producer might agree in the spec deal to negotiate the terms and conditions of the producer agreement in good faith.

Some producers will suggest that they should automatically be retained to produce an artist's first LP under their recording agreement which is secured, at least partially, due to the demo masters produced on spec for the artist. For the typical producer working on spec it is unfair for them to force themselves on a new artist and record company who may not want to retain their services further. The buyout provisions outlined above illustrate a fair compromise to compensate the producer for working without guaranteed payment without unduly jeopardizing the artist's career.



by Chris Taylor

Chris Taylor is a lawyer with the music law firm of Sanderson Taylor and represents Nelly Furtado, Avril Lavigne, Sum 41, Three Days Grace, Billy Talent, Sam Roberts, and others ... for more info. see: www.sandersontaylor.com.

The Very Best Of

The Early Years



- 1979**
- March/April - Burton Cummings, Murray McLauchlan, Shopping for a Synthesizer, Recording Studio Design, Notables' Stereos
- September/October - Domenico Troiano, Prism, Irish Rovers, Moe Koffman, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Keyboard Combinations
- 1980**
- January/February - Trooper, Segarini, Ronnie Prophet, Andrew Davis, Managers, Vintage Organs
- March/April - Triumph, Jerry Doucette, Ginette Reno, Tom Mawhinny, Show Playing for Guitar - Part I, Record Piracy
- July/August - Dan Hill, FM, Henry Cuesta, Powder Blues, Radio Airplay, Show Playing for Guitar - Part III
- September/October - David Clayton-Thomas, Downchild Blues Band, Nash the Slash, Hearing Loss, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Jazz Clubs
- November/December - April Wine, Dianne Heatherington, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Bobby Edwards, Troubleshooting Your Gear - Part I, Bass Players' Choice
- 1982**
- May/June - Chillwack, Shari Ulrich, Daniel Lavoie, Performing Rights - Part I, Songwriters' Market Guide
- September/October - Diane Tell, Doug Bennett, David Wilcox, Linda Manzer, Anvil
- November/December - Loverboy, Andrew Hermant, Wayne Rostad, VE, J.I., Canadian Recording Studio Guide
- 1983**
- March/April - Rough Trade, Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass, Dick Damron, Terry Crawford, Sam Moon, Do It Yourself Percussion - Part I
- May/June - Lorna Boyd, The Spoons, Rafi, Do It Yourself Percussion - Part II
- September/October - Bruce Cockburn, Ian Thomas, Lydia Taylor, Image - Part I
- November/December - Oscar Peterson, The Lincolns, Wildroot Orchestra, Jarvis Benoit Quartet, Image - Part II
- 1984**
- July/August - Triumph, Aldo Nova, Uzeb, Chillwack, Grokking Electronics
- 1985**
- May/June - Corey Hart, Murray McLauchlan, L'Étranger, The Electronic Drum Jungle, The Canadian Musician Lighting Guide Part I
- September/October - M + M, CM Lighting Guide Part II, Electronic Percussion Accessories, Spotlight on Vancouver: Vancouver from the Air, Bruce Allen, Idle Eyes, Neitwerk Records, Headpins, DOA
- 1986**
- January/February - Jon Mitchell, Loverboy, Creating That Buzz, The New Music, Focus on Pro Keyboards
- July/August - Luba, 54-40, Musicians' Money, Cover Bands, Computer Music Revolution
- 1987**
- July/August - Bryan Adams, Gowan, How to Work Overseas Markets, Focus on Recording
- 1988**
- September/October - Red Rider, Art Bergman, Jeff Healey, The State of the Guitar
- November/December - Disaster Proofing Your Band Part I: On the Road, Anne Murray, k.d. lang, Live Sound
- 1989**
- March/April - 10th Anniversary Edition, The Artists, The Business, Selected Artist Index, The Equipment
- November/December - David Wilcox, 54-40, Kevin MacMichael, How to Avoid Getting Ripped Off, Putting a Sound System Together
- 1990**
- January/February - Jane Siberry, Daniel Lanois, The Scramblers, A&R Directors, What are they looking for?, Life After Music Education
- March/April - Rush, George Fox, Oliver Jones, Booking Agents: What Makes Them Tick?, Keyboards in the Nineties
- September/October - The Jeff Healey Band, The Northern Pikes, Celine Dion, Learning From Lawyers Part 1, From Demo to Master

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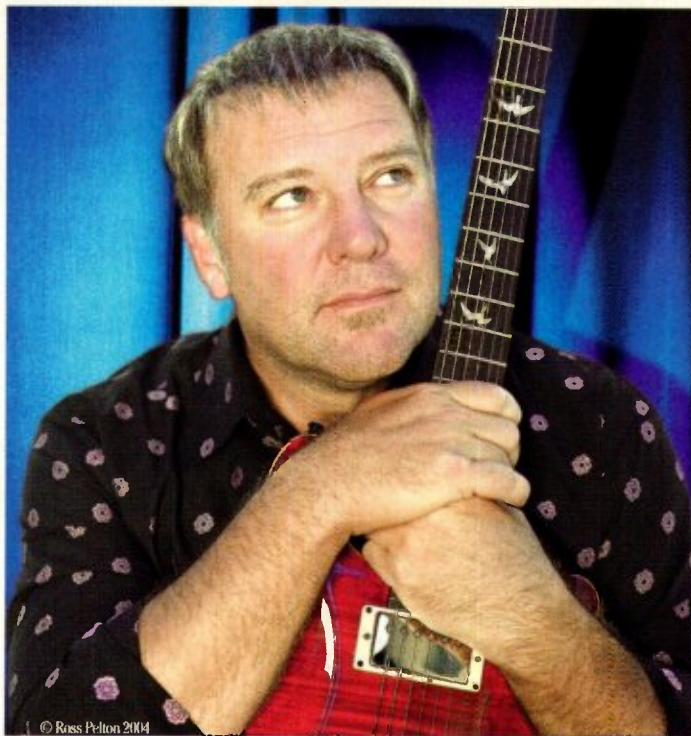
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Step 1 Starting at either the treble or bass side, loosen and remove the first string to be replaced. Take note of how the bridge pin is positioned in the bridge saddle slot. Insert the string in its proper hole in the bridge. Keep the heavier portion of the double winding facing away from the sound hole.

Step 2 The string should be positioned into the front edge of the bridge pin hole and the corresponding notch in the bridge pin. Push the ball end of the string down into the hole approximately 1-2 inches. Position the string.

Step 3 The string is held in place at the bridge by a small notch in the front edge of the bridge pin hole. Push the bridge pin all the way into the bridge. Then pull up on the string to make sure that the ball end of the string is pulled tightly up against the inside of the top of the guitar. (Older guitars may have small dots in the front of the bridge pin holes, but these are no longer necessary with these new style bridge pins.) After covering the string and wire, a firm push with your thumb on the pin is all that is needed to keep it in place.

Step 4 Note: Most bridge saddles are not glued to the bridge middle plate. The tension of the string will hold the saddle in place and the strings in their proper alignment. The tension of the string will hold the saddle in place.

Step 5 It's time to attach each string to its correct tuning peg (as shown in photo). The string is passed through the string hole located on the top of the tuning peg. Leave enough slack in the string so there will be 2 or 3 wraps around the tuning peg when tuned to pitch. The string is passed through the string hole.

Step 6 After going through the string hole, the end of the string is wound one-half way in the reverse direction around the tuning peg (check wire for the three bass strings, counter-clockwise for the three treble strings). This will enable you to form a lock on the string to avoid slipping. (See next step.) The end of the string is wound back, one-half way around the string peg.

Step 7 (Note: The position of the guitar is reversed to show how the string is locked onto the shaft.) After passing under the longer part of the string, the shorter portion is bent back over the long part. As you tune up the string, you will notice that this step forms a lock that will prevent string slippage.

Step 8 After the string is brought up to pitch (standard A-440 tuning), the extra length of string may be clipped off, usually about 1/4" above the last bend. Note that a string should pass around the shaft at least two to three full turns. Each winding should be under the previous one, or closer to the base of the peg. This holds the strings in tune better and holds each easier. The string is wound two to three times around the tuning peg. You might occasionally encounter an older guitar with a thin bridge or a string with a longer double winding adjacent to the ball end. As contact with the bridge saddle by this winding is not recommended, we have shown an old tuner's trick or remedy. As a extra ball from an old string is placed over the string and drawn against the first ball. This will effectively lock the string into the bridge, covering the heavy area of the string from direct saddle contact.

Dean Markley Strings, Inc. - manufacturer and distributor of world famous Dean Markley electric, Acoustic, Bass, Classical, banjo, and Mandolin, 12-string, Pedal Steel and Bajo Sexto Strings. Dean Markley also has a complete line of guitar accessories which include Acoustical pickups, featuring the award winning ProMag all-wood housing soundhole pickups. Dean Markley's new high end line of West Coast Series acoustic guitar amplification pickup systems is setting the acoustic field on fire. Be sure to check out the new "Buy Swag Direct" section on the www.DeanMarkley.com website. Now you can get Dean Markley T-shirts, Jackets, Turbo-Tune string winders and Drum key winders. There are many other accessories which you can get directly from the company. Check it out.

Dean Markley is among a very small group of string companies that make their own strings. We have a manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan that makes Dean Markley strings, as well as strings for a number of other companies.

Dean Markley originated as a very small string company that focused on quality and original design concepts which produce superior products. Dean Markley has grown into one of the industry's major string manufacturers without compromising these ideals and standards. In a "me too" industry, Dean Markley made his own rules, creating innovative products such as the Blue Steel string line, Promag acoustic pickups, SR2000 bass strings, and the Enviro Electric and Formula 82/R Acoustic string lines. Basically every product that the Dean Markley company makes is the very best in its field.

Alex Lifeson needs no introduction. As the guitarist for progressive rock pioneers Rush, Alex knows a thing or two about guitars (and guitar strings). "I have been a user of Dean Markley strings for over 20 years and hope to continue for another 20 years. They are simply, the best!"

A MODERN DAY WARRIOR: Young Alex in the early days



No question, strings are an essential part of the sound of a guitar. With the exception of a rare few, the majority of players will agree that their guitars sound noticeably better with new strings. Though it's no secret, this fact is frequently overlooked and taken for granted. Changing strings is probably the cheapest and simplest way to improve your tone. So if you're not entirely happy with the sound of your guitar you may want to consider trying another type of string before replacing pickups or blaming the amp or your new player. Since different strings may give your guitar an entirely new sound and feel. Remember, the string is really where the sound of your guitar begins. It's the vibration of the string that initiates everything.

A string is constructed of a core, the center around which the windings of the string are wrapped, and the windings, the way of wire around the center core. The core is usually either round or hexagonal in shape, while the windings come in three shapes: round-wound, half-round (which are also known as polished or ground-round wound), and flat-round. Round-wound is the most common of all string types and produces the brightest and clearest sound. A half-round string is constructed from a round-wound string that has had the outer round wire ground or burnished down to create a more even and flatter surface. The smoother surface allows the hand to glide more freely with less squeaking as it moves across the strings, and are generally not quite as bright as round-wounds. Flat-round strings have a completely smooth outer wrap to provide the sleekest and most fluid surface for effortless sliding without squeaks. Flat-wounds produce a flat and dark sound and are most frequently used by traditional jazz players.

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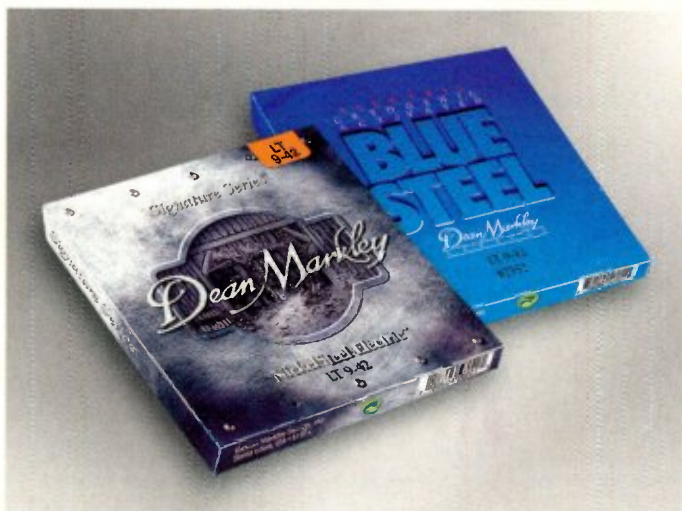
Starting with the very finest quality materials, Blue Steel strings are frozen to minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit, then held there for an exact period of time. Finally, they are slowly and carefully brought back to their original temperature. This unique Cryogenic treatment realigns the molecular structure of the string, giving Blue Steel more highs and lows, a longer life, and a greater ability to stay in tune.



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The first thing that most people assume when their guitar won't stay in tune is that the tuners are slipping, or sometimes not doing their job. A logical enough assumption, but 99.9% of the time it is wrong. Given that all the necessary factors we have discussed are accounted for, making the instrument capable of staying in tune in the first place, the most common reason guitars go out of tune is our old friend... strings. "But I put new strings on today," you cry. Yes, but did you stretch them? Of course, you protest. Let's see that guitar. Well look at this. One pluck on the low E and the pitch drops a step and a half. If your average guitar repairman had a nickel for every time that scenario took place, he would be working from a mansion in Martha's vineyard by the back of the local car show.

In all, this may seem like a lot to deal with, but if you keep your strings new and stretched you will probably never have. And just in case-keep that electronic tuner handy and full of fresh batteries.

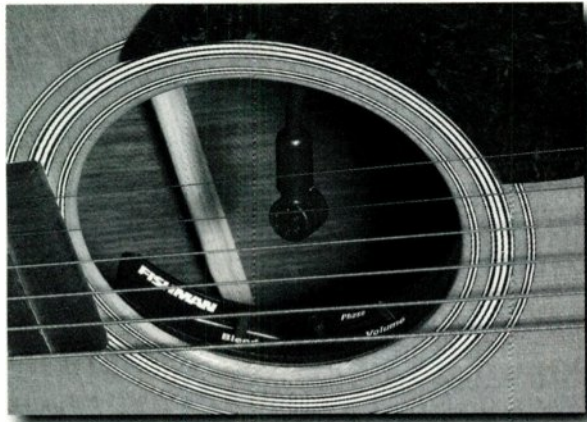


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Picks.....	Eb
Alchemy.....	F#



Fishman Ellipse Blend System



Fishman recently introduced the Ellipse Blend System – a device giving acoustic players blending abilities for their Acoustic Matrix or Powerjack-equipped guitar.

The Ellipse Blend creates simplicity in upgrading to a complete onboard blending system, including added audio quality and responsiveness of a high-quality condenser microphone. The Ellipse Blend can be mounted inside of the instrument's soundhole very discretely, fitting most round soundholes. Once installed, it isn't visible. The Ellipse Blend's flexible soundhole-mount condenser mini-microphone features blend, volume and phase controls for maximum tone shaping and is operated by 9V batteries.

For more information, contact: Kief Music, 13139 80th Ave., Surrey, BC V3W 4N5 (604) 590-3344, FAX (604) 590-6999, info@kiefmusic.com.

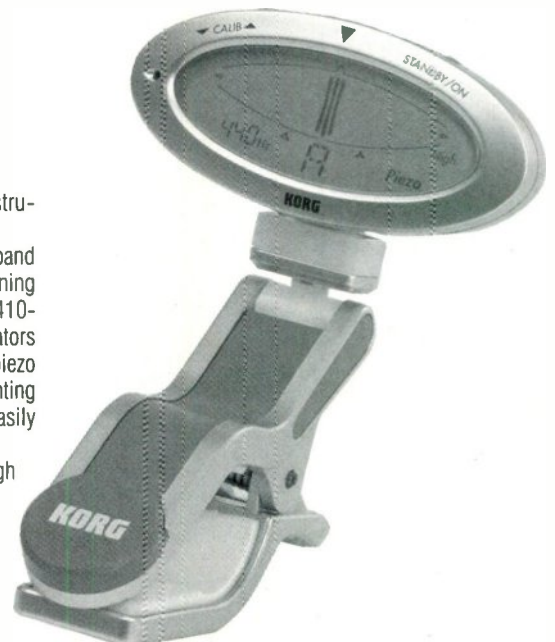
Korg AW-1 Micro Tuner

Korg recently unveiled the AW-1 Micro Tuner, offering accuracy and flexibility for acoustic instruments.

The AW-1, compact and lightweight, offers fast, precise, auto-chromatic tuning of any traditional band and orchestra instruments, along with acoustic guitar and bass. The Micro Tuner provides a wide tuning range with support for 12 equal temperaments. Additionally, it offers a wide calibration adjustment of 410-480 Hz, along with a brightly coloured, easy-to-read display indicating both cents and marked indicators for major and minor third tuning. Players have the option of using the internal mic or the included piezo pickup mic for picking up direct vibration from an instrument. They can also choose from two mounting clips (large and small) for fastening to a variety of instrument types. The Micro Tuner can also be easily mounted to a mic or music stand.

A Meter Reverse Function enables players to decide whether the LCD pitch display indicates high to low readings from left to right, or in the opposite direction. The AW-1, which runs on a standard Lithium battery, comes complete with a carrying case and mounting clips. Additionally, Auto Power Off and a Memory Backup Function are also provided.

For more information, contact: Korg Canada, 21000 Trans-Canada Hwy., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457-4681, support@korgcanada.com, www.korgcanada.com.





LP Mountable RMV Tomborim And Pandeiro

Latin Percussion recently released the RMV Mountable Tamborim and Pandeiro. Players can now attach the Tamborim and Pandeiro using the LP240 Percussion Mount or the LP236C Mount All Bracket to stands or percussion tables easily, making both instruments accessible to players who aren't able to grasp the instrument in traditional fashion. Drummers or multi-percussionists will enjoy the RMV mountable and find them very convenient, according to Latin Percussion.

The RMV Tamborim is a 6" mountable-headed instrument carrying a snare effect and is tunable via 11 key-operated tuning screws. The key is included. The RMV 10" Mountable Pandeiro features a mount for attachment to a range of stand tubes or tables. Coming complete with five sturdy sets of jingles and a strong snare effect, it is tunable via 10 tuning screws.

For more information, contact: B&J Music Ltd., 2360 Tedlo St., Mississauga, ON L5A 3V3 (905) 896-3001, (800) 268-8147, FAX (905) 896-4554, FAX (800) 777-3265, bjmusic-kmc@kaman.com.

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Peavey Cirrus BXP Bass



Peavey Electronics Corp. recently released the Cirrus BXP bass guitars – available in 4- and 5-string models.

All of the BXP models possess on-board, active 3-band EQ with bass/variable mid/treble boost and cut, two internally active VFL pickups, dual-compression finger bridge, 18 Volt low impedance output and 24 frets. They also feature a 35" scale neck-through body construction, two Peavey VFL active pickups, Gold hardware, hand-rubbed oil finish neck and more.

For more information, contact: Peavey Electronics Corporation, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301 (601) 483-5365, FAX (601) 486-1278, www.peavey.com.

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- Promotional release by Warner Music Canada

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- Garrison G-30-CE Sitka Spruce Acoustic Guitar w/ Hard Shell Road Case
- Sennheiser Studio/Live package including: E 865 condenser vocal microphone, stand, cable, and HD 280 professional headphones
- A copy of MasterWriter – a complete collection of writing tools for the modern songwriter
- An all-expense paid weekend at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel
- Delegate passes to Canadian Music Week Conference & Festival
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- Invitation to an intimate SONGWRITERS SHOWCASE - March 5th in Toronto
- All entrants receive a one-year subscription to *Canadian Musician Magazine*

Who Can Enter

Aspiring or proficient songwriters – self-published or unpublished who are looking for a chance to get their material recorded and/or published. Entrants must submit to the closest participating radio station.

How to Enter

- Send a cassette/CD of one (1) song, including typed lyric sheet, along with your name and address and telephone number to the participating radio station in your area.
- Song must be original and not published or distributed previous to competition.
- Check with participating stations in your area for entry deadlines.
- Contest is void where prohibited by law.

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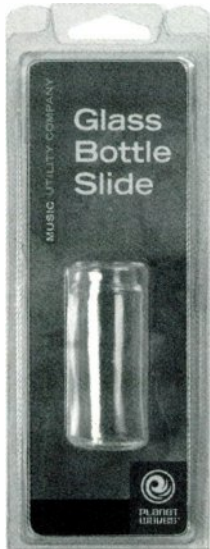
For full contest details, pick up an application at participating radio stations and music stores nationwide or visit www.canadianmusician.com.



World Radio History



Planet Waves Glass Bottle Slide



Planet Waves recently introduced a glass bottle slide replicating the renowned "Co-ricidin" bottle slides of the past.

The latest glass bottle slide from Planet Waves possesses the same unique and slightly asymmetrical surface that turned the originals into well-known accessories. Additionally, the lightweight of the glass enables guitarists to set their string action lower than with metal slides, improving playability.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 West Wilmot, #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (905) 889-0116, FAX (905) 889-8998, orders@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.

DigiTech RP-80 Guitar Processor



DigiTech recently introduced the RP80 amp modelling guitar effects processor, mixing the tones of 12 vintage and modern amp and acoustic guitar models.

A palette of programmable studio quality effects (up to nine at one time) is also included with a built-in expression pedal for incomparable real-time control of your sound. The RP80's possesses a simple interface allowing users to simply select the effect and dial in one of the pre-programmed settings. A great tool for practicing is the built-in Drum Machine; with its easy-to-use 13-LED array tuner, users are in tune at all times. Additionally, the RP80 provides users with 40 Factory Presets and 40 User Presets.

The rear panel includes a single 1/4" input, 1/4" left and right outputs, and a 1/8" stereo headphone output and can be run using the power supply provided – or for up to 15 hours on 6 AA batteries.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 21000 Trans-Canada Hwy., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457-4681, info@eriksonmusic.com, www.eriksonmusic.com.

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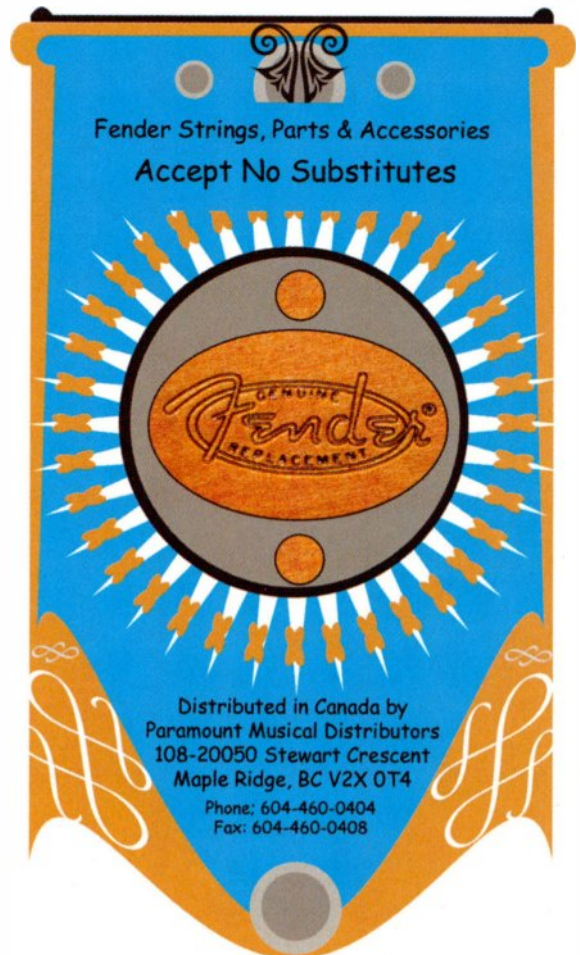
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Fender 50th Anniversary Golden Stratocaster Guitar



Fender recently released their 50th Anniversary Golden Stratocaster guitar in commemoration of the Stratocaster guitar itself, which turned half of a century this past January.

This tribute model is based on the renowned Classic Series '50s Stratocaster guitar and is available with an Aztec Gold finish, gold hardware, gold anodized pickguard and a deluxe 50th Anniversary vintage tweed gig bag.

For more information, contact: Fender Musical Instruments Corp., 8860 E. Chaparral Rd., #100, Scottsdale, AZ 85250 (480) 596-9690, www.fender.com.



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- Go to www.canadianmusician.com and click on "PRODUCT INFO"
- Circle numbers requested and include your contact info, FAX this page to: (905) 641-1648
- Circle numbers requested and mail this page including your complete contact info to: Reader Service, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3
- Give us a Call at 1-877-RING-NWC (746-4692)



SABIAN XS20 Complete Set Cymbals



SABIAN recently unveiled the XS20 Complete Set of cymbals including a line up of a 10" Splash, 14" Hi-Hats, 16" and 18" Medium Thin Crashes, and 18" Chinese and a 20" Medium Ride.

The Complete Set is based on a setup configuration that many leading players are using today. The XS20 cymbals are manufactured from B20 cast bronze.

For more information, contact: SABIAN Ltd., 219 Main St., Meductic, NB E6H 2L5 (506) 272-2019, FAX (506) 272-1265, sabian@sabian.com, www.sabian.com.

Roland FP-2 Digital Piano



Roland recently introduced the FP-2, the latest addition to the FP-Series. This 88-note Progressive Hammer-Action Keyboard offers players the feel of a concert grand, yet stands with a space-saving design, both compact and fashionable. The FP-2 also features Roland's Session Partner auto-accompaniment, a new Sound Control feature and USB.

Enhancing the lower register, Roland's new Sound Control function creates quality tone as the 4-band digital equalizer enables users to further adjust the piano sounds. The FP-2's 64-voice sound engine features expressive acoustic and electric piano sounds, as well as newly sampled bass, harpsichord, etc.

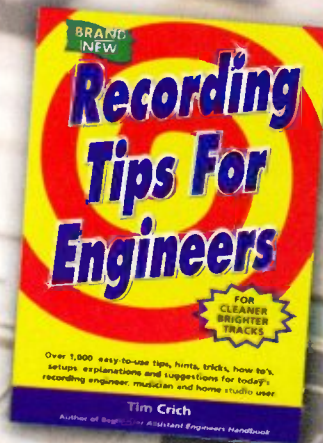
All sounds are playable from the 88-note Progressive Hammer-Action Keyboard. Additionally, Roland's Session Partner offers players a choice of accompaniment in several different styles – 80 patterns in total – and can supply backing chords, bass lines and drums with preset or user chord progressions. Last but not least, the USB port makes it feasible to use the FP-2 as a controller or sound module when sequencing on a computer. The FP-2 is also GM2-compliant, therefore being ideal for use with Standard MIDI Files.

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

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The DP-01FX adds an effects control strip with multiple reverb types, each with variable parameters.

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Headphone output with level control.

Master fader with Master/Track Bounce switches.

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TASCAM GigaStudio 3.0

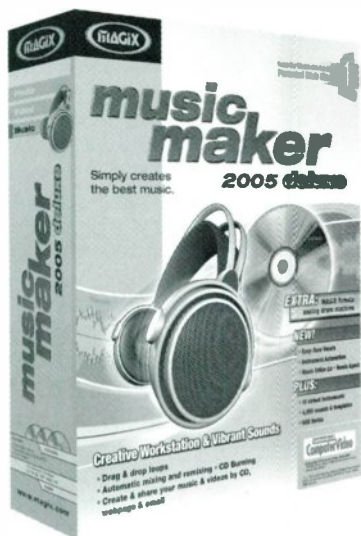
TASCAM recently released the GigaStudio 3.0 – a major update to what TASCAM feels is the most powerful software-sampling program to date.

A complete rewrite of the original application, GS3, with all main functions refurbished, has experienced several enhancements including a sleek ergonomic UI as well as the addition of many innovative features. With dozens of new features for sound designers, composers and music producers, the GS3 is available in three different versions – Orchestra, Ensemble and Solo. Additional features that the GS3 has to offer is the fresh new look of the revamped editing and mixing interface; unlimited polyphony; 24-bit/96 kHz sampling support; support for Rewire and VST plug-ins; new GigaPulse Technology; a large bundled library sample, and more.

For more information, contact: TEAC Canada Ltd., 5939 Wallace St., Mississauga, ON L4Z 1Z8 (905) 890-8008, FAX (905) 890-9888, info@teac-ca.com, www.tascam.com.



MAGIX Music Maker 2005 Deluxe



MAGIX recently introduced the MAGIX Music Maker 2005 Deluxe – the latest version of MAGIX's music creation software.

MAGIX Music Maker 2005 Deluxe enables users to produce high-quality music and professional seeming music videos with little to no musical knowledge. Featuring a wide range of functions and sounds, Music Maker 2005 Deluxe provides users with limitless opportunities to create music in any style and for any occasion. Additionally, Music Maker 2005 Deluxe includes 96 stereo music tracks, video clips, MIDI file support, text and images, effect templates and many new loops and samples. Afterwards, CD masters can be burned, sounding like a professional in a music studio created them. Ideal for musicians and DJs, some other features include MAGIX Robota drum feature, a vocal tuner, and virtual instrument automation; remix agent and the new MAGIX Music Editor 2.0 with real-time editing, effects and noise filters.

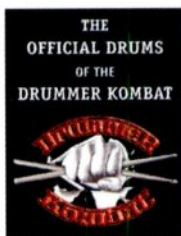
For more information, contact: MAGIX, 1680 Michigan Ave., #900, Miami Beach, FL 33130 (305) 695-6363, FAX (305) 695-6330, mailmaster@magix.net, www.magix.com.

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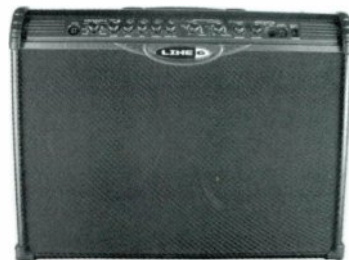
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Line 6 Spider II



Line 6 recently released the Spider II amplifiers crammed with guitar tones that range from Clean to Insane.

The Spider II amplifiers include built-in effects and are available in various sizes: 15, 30, 112, 210 and 212. The Spider II 212 model delivers a force of two custom 12" speakers backed by 150 W of stereo; the Spider II 210 is jam-packed with 12 amp models, seven effects, two 10" speakers and 150 W of stereo; the Spider II 112 possesses 12 amp models, 7 effects and 75 W; the Spider II 30 features a distortion boost, noise gate and Smart Control FX and also provides four independent amp channel models to throw to the audience – Clean, Crunch, Metal and Insane; last but not least, the Spider II 15, delivering a range of tones for its compact size. It features four independent amp channel modes much like the Spider II 30 model and also comes with a distortion boost, noise gate and Smart Control FX.

For more information, contact: Power Group Ltd., 6415 Northwest Dr., #22, Mississauga, ON L4V 1X1 (905) 405-1229, FAX (905) 405-1885, sales@power-music.com, www.power-music.com.

Denon DJ Products

Denon DJ recently released three new products geared towards the professional DJ market with advanced tools for enhancing creativity in a variety of venues – the DN-S1000, DN-X100 and DN-X300.

The DN-S1000 Compact CD/MP3 player is intended to provide similar features and benefits of Denon's tabletop DN-S3000 in a portable package. The DN-S1000 features a pressure sensitive platter, which can be used to scratch, brake, backspin, mix, search and manipulate as if it were an analog turntable. The DN-X300 is one of the more flexible scratch mixers accessible, providing countless creative possibilities when used with either analog or digital turntables. The DN-X100 is the smallest professional-quality DJ mixer available today, according to Denon. It's also easily portable and intended as the perfect "travelling companion" for Denon's DN-S1000 CD/MP3 player.

For more information, contact: Denon Canada Inc., 5-505 Apple Creek Blvd., Markham, ON L3R 5B1 (905) 475-4085, FAX (905) 475-4159, www.denon.ca.

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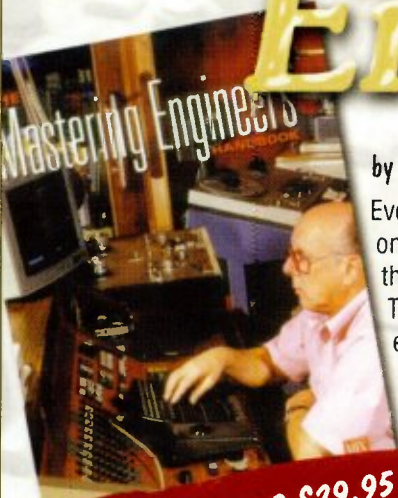
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by Karen Bliss

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Daniel Victor

Who: Daniel Victor

Where: Windsor, ON, and assorted locales

What: a death-defying collaboration

Contact: Coalition Entertainment, (905) 508-0025, www.coalitionent.com, www.nwlmusic.com.

This is an extraordinary undertaking, an ambitious project that began as a wish-list of vocalists and met every expectation. To explain, Daniel Victor, a multi-instrumentalist and songwriter composed all the songs and then basically cold-called or mailed the track to his chosen singer to lay down the vocals. Among those who said yes are Our Lady Peace's Raine Maida, Finger Eleven's Scott Anderson, Switchfoot's Jonathan Foreman, Ours' Jimmy Gnecco, Mogwai, Todd Kerns, Bif Naked, 311's Nick Hexum, and SuperGarage's Marco Defelice. Entitled "Never Ending White Lights: Act 1 – Goodbye Friends Of The Heavenly Bodies", the low-key melancholic music has a death theme. Produced and recorded by Victor at his studio, The Wave, he sings, plays piano, Rhodes, electric and acoustic guitars, e-bow, bells, synths, mellotron, organ, strings, bass, drums, percussion, as well as coins, a vacuum cleaner, and other effects. Along the way, he scored management with Coalition (OLP, F-11, Simple Plan) and is now seeking a label brave enough to put it out



Magneta Lane

Who: Magneta Lane

Where: Toronto

What: medusa music

Contact: Paper Bag Records, Inc. 455 Spadina Ave., #306, Toronto, ON M5S 2G8 (416) 260-1515, FAX (416) 260-0492, www.magnetalanec.com.

Finally, a cool Canadian all-female rock band that has a vocalist with some power and oomph. No la la la flighty, wispy cutesy stuff happening here; singer/guitarist Lexi Valentine is reminiscent of the Pretenders' mother of rock attitude, Chrissie Hynde, and musically it has the scrappy attack and simplicity of the Strokes. Formed by Valentine and drummer Nadia King in the fall of 2003, Magneta Lane soon added bassist/guitarist French (who goes by one name only) to the fold. After some local shows the trio was signed to Canadian independent label, Paper Bag, in the spring of 2004. Armed with six songs, the 19-year-olds went into Toronto's Signal 2 Noise studio with Jon Drew of label mates Uncut, who produced, recorded, mixed and mastered what would become Magneta Lane's debut EP *The Constant Lover*. Valentine, who collaborated with King but handles the lyrics herself, writes about a gal who can't find real love in the title track to what sounds like the night of a streetwalker in "Kissing Is Easy" and a manipulative go-go girl in "Medusa". Magnetic.



Satellite Rides

Who: Satellite Rides

Where: Halifax, NS

What: rough riders

Contact: 6170 Chebucto Road, Apt. A, Halifax, NS B3L 1K5 (902) 802-1514, www.satelliterides.com.

The two most prominent parts of this band are Jason Mingo's parched rough-voice with a tinge of Tom Petty-ness and the implementation of synthesizer in all its new wave pop glory. Influenced by everyone from Ryan Adams to Weezer and Neil Young, with a dose of the Cars thrown in, Satellite Rides could easily share a stage with The Weekend or Hot

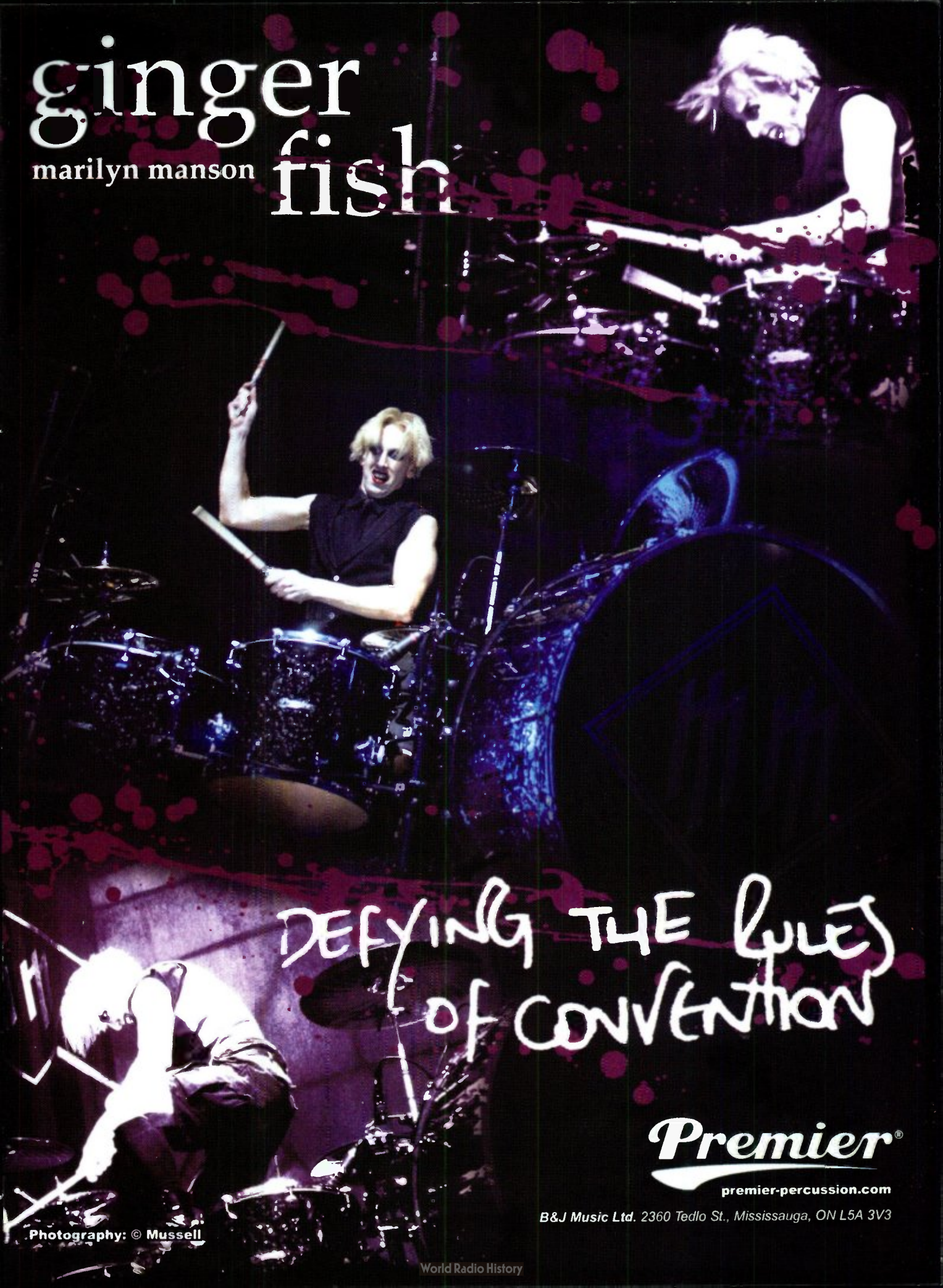


Heat if the synth remains in the live show. In its year-plus together, it hasn't done too badly, however, scoring slots with such Canadian acts as Blue Rodeo, Hawksley Workman, Matt Mays and Driveway. Comprised of main songwriter Mingo on vocals and guitar, guitarist Jason MacIsaac, bassist/vocalist Adam MacIsaac, and drummer/vocalist Shane Gyorfi, the band went into Ultramagnetic Studios in Halifax and recorded these six songs with Charles Austin (Super Friendz, Neusiland), and graematter (a DJ, who works with Buck 65) co-produced with the band. Andrew Glencross of Buck 65 and Neusiland added the synth and organ to three of the tracks – "Love Is All That Matters", "Ever Be The Same", and "Man For You". Ride On.



Toronto-based music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian news correspondent for *Rollingstone.com*, and operates a Canadian music industry news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/Jam/ColumnBliss/home.html>. She also edits *Gasoline*, and contributes to *Elle Canada*, *Audience*, *Tribute*, *Words & Music* and others.

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