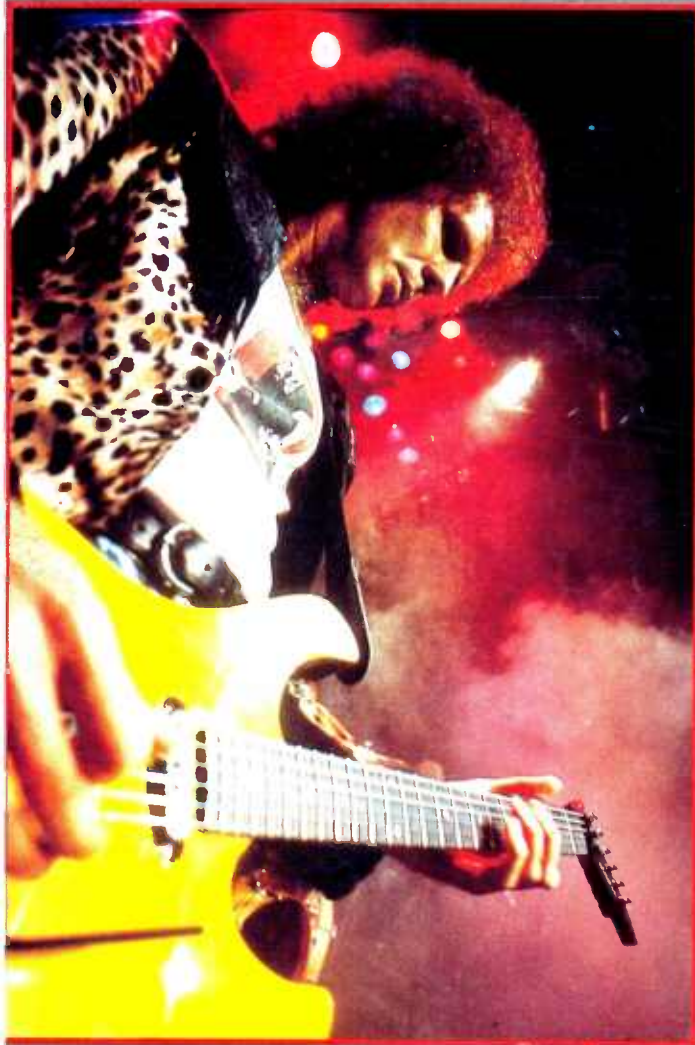


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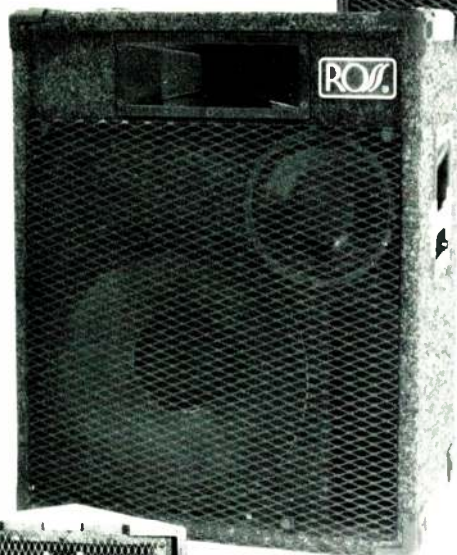
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PHOTOS: JAMES O'MARA

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INSIDE CM

STYLE AND SONGS

S style and songs. They are the two most critical elements in shaping a pop artist's career. Yet, they are often low on musician's list of priorities; somewhere between getting new strings and buying a new front tire for the band truck.

Personal style and songwriting are clearly the most intimate side of being a musician. They both should mirror your inner-most passions and reflect your years of experience - musical and otherwise. This is where so many musicians fall short. In music, as in life, what you put in, is what you get out.

The most successful pop musicians today, with staying power beyond their next hit, are continually searching for what makes people and the world tick. They are continually adjusting their attitudes about the world and themselves. They tend to be active observers of popular and alternative cultures and live their lives to the fullest.

It seems logical enough. If you as an artist want your songs, and what you are as a person, embraced by the masses, you must understand people; what moves and inspires them. You must have your own vision of the world and know what precisely you have to offer it. You must know who you are, who you want to be, and how you fit in.

All this can be a tall order for many musicians who would rather have a few drinks with the boys, or labour over their latest sequencer program, or debate the virtues of Fender versus Gibson. The point is that these relatively minor issues become major preoccupations to many musicians. They should be focussing on exploring their inner selves and the world around them.

These thoughts came to mind as we assembled the current issue of *Canadian Musician*. A number of the articles in this issue focus directly or indirectly on style and songs.

Perry Stern takes a look at style in his article *Rock Fashion - Style Is Substance*. The article dissects the widely accepted premise: If "clothes make the man, and the man (or, of course woman) makes music, then it is also true that clothes make the music." This is a solid extrapolation of a time-worn saying. But, what to wear, when and how?

Perry talked with fashion expert Tim Blanks of *Toronto Life Fashion* magazine, who happens to be equally at home in the pop world, having written for *Canadian Musician* and other music magazines. While Tim is quite specific about rock and roll garb, his

most interesting comment in the article relates to the basic point stated earlier: "If you have faith in your music and you look the way you look, it should translate into an image. Anything studied looks desperate and nothing is more unattractive than desperation."

Four other articles in this issue focus on coming up with great songs: *Loveboy*, *The Nylons*, *Grapes of Wrath* and *Haywire*.

Loveboy has never aspired to be anything other than a great rock and roll band. Songs of wisdom and insight were never their forte. But their basic balls-to-the-walls approach is pure rock and roll, and their fans love it.

As is customary for *Loveboy*, they toured extensively to support their last album, *Lovin' Every Minute Of It*. While they may have loved every minute of it, the gruelling road schedule left little time, energy or inspiration to write songs for their current album *Wildside*. Virtually every song on this album is written or co-written by someone outside of the band. They could have easily thrown together a bunch of mediocre songs and made a mediocre album, but they showed rare intelligence for a rock band and sought out some great songwriters: Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora, Todd Cerney, Taylor Rhodes, Brian McLeod, Zappacosta and Bryan Adams. The results represent *Loveboy's* most emotionally charged album to date. The band was clearly inspired by these outside influences.

Haywire was in a similar rut, having written songs for their latest album that were for the most part rejected by their record company for not being strong enough. *Haywire* were accused by Attic's A&R man Brian Allen of "self-plagiarism." Taylor Rhodes was brought in to help and the results can now be heard on the radio and seen on the charts. *Haywire* are hot - but they easily could have stalled without the outside songwriting.

The *Nylons'* dilemma is entirely different. Their two recent hits are covers of hits from the sixties. The band desperately wants to release their own songs as singles but their American label is resisting. Their problem is clear. They are doomed to become a novelty act if they can't break one of their self-penned songs. But few people believe the combination of their acappella style and original material will fare well with the public. Time will tell.

Ted Burley
Editor

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FEEDBACK

Your Magazine Is A Disgrace

I think your magazine is a pitiful and desperate disgrace to this country, as is 98% of the music industry here. Why would I want another subscription? This one was a gift from someone, so I never really wanted your magazine. It's pretty embarrassing when you come home to a picture of those Platinum Blonde faggots on your doorstep.

I never once even read one of your useless-ly irrelevant articles. Don't mail me any junk mail or pitches to get me to resubscribe, it should be quite evident that I wouldn't wrap a dead fish in that glossy rag.

Tom Sarantos
Toronto, ON

Columbia Academy Was Overlooked

With regards to two items in your August 1987 edition, the first re: a letter from the President of the Institute of Communication Arts. The article he referred to also overlooked Columbia Academy of Radio, Television and Recording Arts which has been established in the industry for over 20 years and has placed thousands of its graduates into successful careers. We were obviously omitted from Mr. Hartwig-Neilson's letter as we are his Institute's major competitor in this marketplace.

Re: your article in the same issue (August '87) entitled "Choosing a Recording School." Again, no mention was made of Columbia Academy, which is the largest competitor of both Trebas and I.C.A. Columbia Academy provides professional facilities to its students that would be a delight to any commercial user. Columbia Academy owns three professional consoles, three professionally built studios as well as a 48 track fully digital studio. It is not surprising that Dave Leonard would state that theory must override practical experience since Trebas does not own any of its own recording facilities. The importance of theory cannot be understated, however, any reputable recording course provides not only theory but the necessary practical experience as well.

Alison Medd
Columbia Academy
Vancouver, BC

Zappacosta A Victim Of Poor Live Sound

I just came away from Zappacosta's opening night concert at Ontario Place (August '87). I had to write - unfortunately out of frustration and anger. I applaud Zappacosta for his creative songwriting, his powerful and alluring stage presence, and of course, his sensational voice. I had been watching out for a live performance by him for a long time. Unfortunately, he was plagued by inferior sound quality; squealing mics, annoying speaker buzz and the ever popular case of four very strong singers screaming vocals into microphones that weren't there only to be drowned out by a deafening wall of sound called a backup band. I came very close to passing a note to the sound man with the message "WAKE UP!" Where was the sensitivity and the dynamics Zappacosta's material deserved? I know all of the musicians involved are solid players - that's why Zappacosta chose them. I've seen most of them perform around town in their own venues. But if someone had come along and unplugged at least one guitar amp, I for one would have been grateful. Sorry guys, but your names weren't on the marquee this time.

Everyone's a critic? Maybe. But I've been in many situations as a lead and backup singer over the past seven years where the sound was less than great and the musicians thought they were greater. I know the battle and I fully understand that look Zappacosta had on his face the whole evening - frustration.

Alfie Zappacosta has one of the most brilliant rock-pop voices today, anywhere. I missed that tonight. I sat through the whole concert thinking how fantastic it would have been if he would have traded in that wall of sound for a grand piano, and simply presented his songs and his voice - because they can stand up well on their own.

Paula Whitlock
Toronto, ON

RECORDING

STRANGE ADVANCE RETAINING THE SPARK OF THE DEMO

By Joe Primeau

A successful record needs great songs and performances to really make it happen. Sometimes the best part of a song is the demo. The original spark of inspiration, one time performances while locked away in your basement studio, etc. It's now possible with the improved quality of so-called "semi-pro" recording gear to keep the magic of the demo and transfer this to the more standard 24 track format.

My partner, Howard Aye and I have a small studio based around the Akai MG-1214. This is a 12 track tape deck that uses cassette tapes which look almost identical to the beta video format. Two extra tracks are provided for sync code (SMPTE in our case) and the machine's internal control code which runs the autolocator and memory functions. All of this is built into a very functional 12 input mixer.

When we spoke to Strange Advance's Drew Arnott about the possibility of co-producing the next album with him, we talked about using the Akai MG-1214 for demo purposes. Drew acquired one for home use and we started recording in the two locations.

After recording a few songs, we realized there were tracks that we would want to keep. We had been running sequencers (QXI, Commodore 64 with Sonus' Super Sequencer) from the SBX-80 Synchronizer which was running off SMPTE recorded on tape. This meant that locking up the 1214 to the 24 track would be no problem in the studio.

To ensure the quality of the 12 track recording, we used a Tube-Tech Equalizer and though we experimented with different microphones for vocals, we decided on one of our own AKG-535s. We were also working with the PCM-70 digital effects unit, storing programs for use later in the recording or the mix.

A lack of pressure is one of the benefits of recording outside the studio. Darryl Kromm (vocalist, guitarist with Strange Advance) felt very relaxed singing at Do Re Mi and it showed in the tracks. We brought in drummers (Greg Critchley and Owen Tennyson) and bassists (Steve Webster and Howard Aye) to rough out their parts (which



PHOTO: LARRY FITZPATRICK

(l to r) Joe Primeau, Drew Arnott, Darryl Kromm, Howard Aye

would be redone at Phase One). The important thing is that the attitude of the songs was established at an early stage. Drew would take the tapes home to work out sounds and parts, then record the keyboards with the advantage of having final vocals, guitars, etc. to work with.

Most of the remaining work was done at Phase One studios in Toronto. We transferred our 12 track recordings to 24 track using the S.S.L. console in Studio B. The gates and compressors on every input insured a clean transfer, although I found the 12 track extremely quiet due to its built-in dbx noise reduction.

We printed fresh SMPTE on the 24 track then slaved the 24 track to the 12 track via a pair of Lynx synchronisers, which are fast and simple to use. Thanks to Kirk Elliot and Mick Walsh at Phase One. I was able to operate the 12 track from an extra remote on the S.S.L., which allowed me to instantly make the change from transferring to recording mode. Once I heard the quality of the final transfer, any doubts in the back of my mind were gone.

Live drums and bass were then recorded in Studio A, which has a warm E.Q. courtesy of an old Neve console and a large recording room to complement the drum sound. We hauled in the keyboards to finish things off (an Emulator II, Akai 5900, Roland Super Jupiter, D-50, and a very old Mellotron to mention a few). Due to the lock-up capability, we were able to go back to the 12 track for any additional parts needed.

Mixing the record was done in Studio B on the 48 input S.S.L. with automation. We augmented the S.S.L.'s E.Q. with Massenburg and Focusrite. The S.S.L.'s total recall comes in very handy, especially when it's time for 12" remixes.

Using the Akai MG-1214 was one of the highlights in making this record (along with having Alan Holdsworth drop by to play some guitar!). It is possible to make a great record and not lose the demo's spark. And if you're lucky, millions of people will hear the results.

(Joe Primeau is a Toronto producer and engineer).



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RECORDING

PRODUCT REVIEW: FOSTEX MODEL 460 RECORDER/MIXER

By Kent Fraser

Right now, I am feeling sorry for myself. I went through my youth harbouring the secret dream that one day I would be the next Roy Thomas Baker, and that one day, the world would revel in the sounds of my sonic masterpieces culled from my brilliant basement tapes. It was not to be. My musical pursuits were thwarted by my lack of access to suitable technology. (After all, who would buy records recorded on a MarvelTone cassette deck?) Now, my kind has been replaced by a generation blessed with the existence of numerous companies who churn out professional-quality recording gear (which used to cost zillions of dollars), for the price of a good haircut. I didn't have a chance.

One of these miracle companies is Fostex. Along with TEAC/Tascam, they virtually pioneered the home recording boom; making it possible for closet Phil Ramones to make their mark on society. Fostex's latest entry into the home-recording game is no less spectacular than the original cassette four-tracks were in all-in-one studios capable of delivering recordings of sonic excellence. It ain't digital, but for a cassette-based system,

the results defy logical explanation.

The heart of the 460 lies in a sophisticated cassette transport system, that allows rock-steady tape movement. It is for this reason that the 460 can be used in conjunction with other outboard gear to provide synchronization with time code. This feature alone has, up until now been largely associated only with units costing thousands more. The transport has two speeds (one faster for improved sonic capability), easily switchable on the front panel of the 460. An unbelievable feature here is a terrific autolocator/recorder control panel, which can auto-locate two points and can be programmed to loop passages (ideal for overdub passages, or rehearsal of a part). All controls are I.C. logic controlled for smooth operation and accuracy.

The mixer itself is not to be taken lightly. It is 8 in x 4 x 2, which has a rather ingenious internal routing system allowing one to group tracks together before sending them to tape, as well as permitting groups of tracks to be mixed directly to stereo, for mix-down purposes, or sound reinforcement applications. It is an extremely quiet mixer, with a typically good EQ section, a la Fostex equipment in

general. Inputs are switchable from line to tape, so that you may listen to effects or mixes without a lot of needless re-patching when its time to record again. I especially liked the quasi "Patchbay" at the top of the 460, which enables access to various patchpoints in the chain, for effects and what-not.

Each channel sports an overload indicator, which doubles as a solo light. The other unusual feature (in this price range) is the ability to independently control monitoring level for headphones, master monitor out, solo and metering. As well, one can select exactly what is to be monitored (e.g. buses, effects, stereo out, etc.). The VU meters are clear, liquid crystals. Dolby B or C rounds out the package.

The beauty of the 460 is its ability to be used as a low-cost studio centre, capable of slave synchronization to film or video. The sound quality is easily of finished quality for any application short of broadcast.

As if that's not enough, the 460 can be used as a stand alone mixer, if you like, able to mix down to the internal cassette, from an external source.

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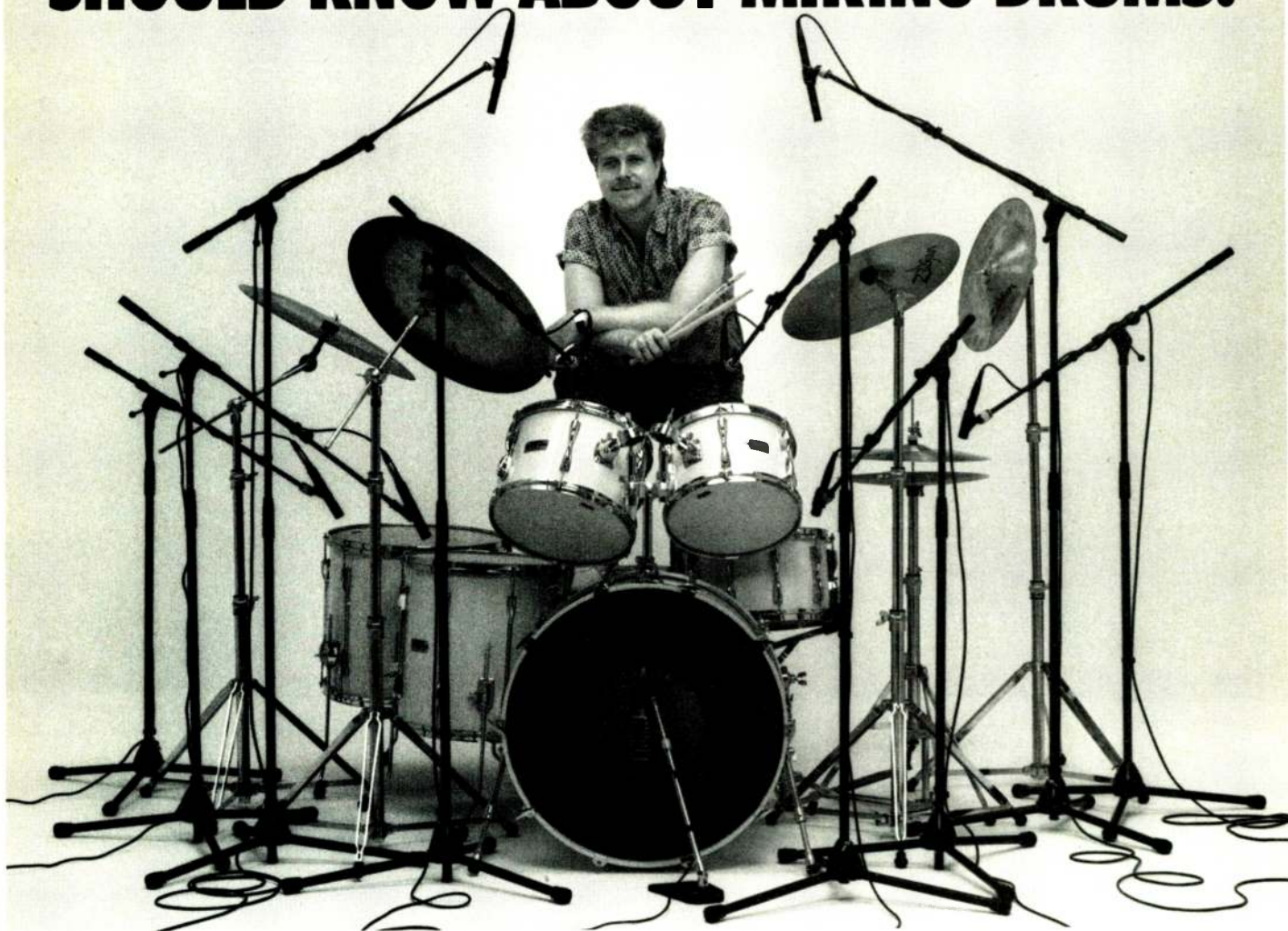
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RECORDING

KEEPING A HOME STUDIO ORGANIZED

By Barry Lubotta

Every professional 24 track studio uses track sheets to indicate which instruments are recorded where on a multi-track tape, saving precious time at the onset and during each session. So what's to stop four, eight, twelve and sixteen trackers from making their own personalized track sheets, if they haven't already. Starting with an 8½ x 11" sheet of paper and a ruler, draw lines at the top for 1) name of song, 2) name of artist, 3) name of writer, 4) recording date, 5) songs' running time, 6) engineer and producer and any other pertinent information. Even if you are the artist, engineer writer and producer, write it down! It's never too early to start practicing your autograph. Below this information, draw vertical and horizontal lines that intersect to form boxes for the number of tracks you have and number each box accordingly. After making photocopies of your blank master, you'll have plenty on hand for future songs. Your track sheet becomes your ultimate reference for each song, providing useful information that will benefit

mixes and remixes months later. Besides instrument location, use each box to mark EQ settings and effects used, as well as other data, that your busy mind is likely to forget. At songs completion, file each track sheet with a copy of lyrics and chord changes for permanent record of the non vinyl sort.

When I started working with recording gear, I would stick pieces of coloured tape near the plugs at the ends of each cable for easy channel identification. In time this inspired touch of genius wasn't much appreciated as the tape began to unravel into a gooey mess which was difficult to remove. One day I stumbled across Monster Cable's "Cable Helpers" in a high end stereo store. These are half yellow, half white cloth stick-ons made especially to label cable, all preprinted with numbers 1-13, or identifiers such as "AMP AC", TAPE IN, TAPE OUT, etc. While designed for home hi-fi, they do a real nice job in the studio and I won't tell anyone if you don't. For twenty bucks I became the proud owner of a product that helped "systematize"

my studio. I obviously was on a roll because I soon discovered DYMO label makers, the type that are sold in office supply stores for about \$25. What a boon to the studio! Channel numbers too small to read on my mixer? I zapped numbered labels over the existing ones. Worried that the grease pencil markings on my patch bay would emigrate to my clothing? I wiped the markings into oblivion and replaced them with quarter inch DYMO tape which was good for five letters per box. Concerned that my power bars were unhappy with all those three prongers never going into the same socket twice? I set matters right by sticking on labels telling me what went where. Get the picture. For a few weeks I was preoccupied labelling everything in the studio that didn't crawl or fly. This effort not only made it easier for me to see what was going on, but it enabled an outside engineer who came by to get a feel for my setup in minutes.

(Barry Lubotta owns and operates Pizzazzudio in Toronto).



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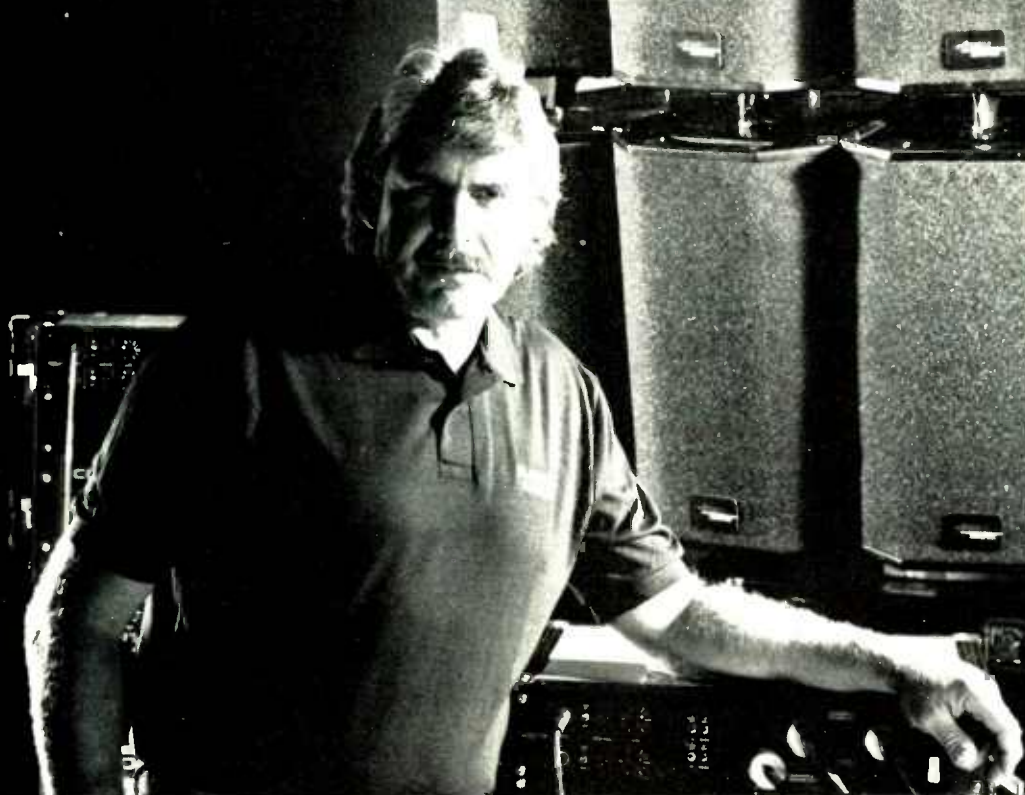


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IMAGING

LIGHT PAINTING FEATURED ON CURRENT CHALK CIRCLE VIDEO

By Roy Pike

Video is the current whipping boy of the music industry. Everyone bitches about them and proclaims their stupidity. At the same time, everyone watches them. Seems to be a strange sort of MacDonal'd's syndrome.

It's true that videos are downright dumb sometimes. It is also true that they eradicate the listener's potential for creating their own imagery. Personally, I don't care. I've seen a lot of great videos. Great videos are a blast. I've watched those great videos and for the life of me can't figure out what makes them tick. Unlike movies, they seem to defy analysis. That said, I ask myself what can I do when offered the opportunity to direct a video? I never know. The only thing to do is listen to the music and react. I try to act as a sounding board. First, by putting myself into the shoes of the audience (the record buyer), and, secondly by talking to the creators of the music to understand where the music came from. It's an attempt to get on the proper wave-length, to avoid any confusion later on.

The most recent project I've worked on was Chalk Circle's "20th Century Boy." In this case everything just fell into place. At first listen (long before the video project) I loved the song. Secondly, when I met the band we really hit it off. It was a fun meeting. I realized they weren't egotistically trying to change the world. They were just having fun, playing rock 'n roll music.

With this in mind I returned a few days later with a handful of ideas. We bounced them around and naturally new ideas were spawned. Collectively a theme was agreed upon - Rock 'n Roll. Our visuals would be a loosely connected homage to a generation that grew up with TV, cars, and *that* music. To me the video would have the same heart as the record jacket for "Exile On Main Street" - lots of junk piled into three minutes or so of video.

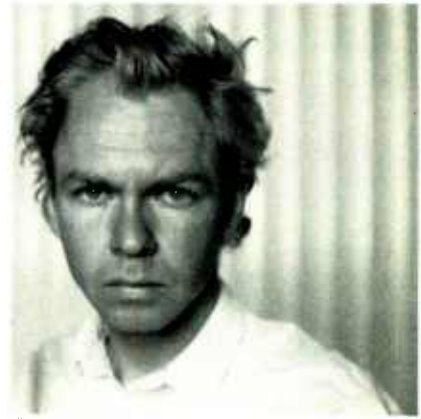
Naturally, the song is the basis on which the visuals will stand. In the case of "20th Century" Boy the most apparent ingredients are the out-landish guitar and pulsing bass. They screamed for something visually crazy. The drum beat was so prominent that fast paced

editing would be redundant. The visual loyalty was to the music, not the lyrics. The lyrics are fun (but vapid), and everyone agreed that a literal message would be trite.

There are several ways to accentuate (or contrast) music: specifically rhythmic editing, camera movement, action (performance), and lighting. We were attempting to avoid the video cliché i.e. flashy performance sometimes intercut with dramatic vignettes. Lip sync would be a taboo. The least obvious way of controlling pace and rhythm appeared to be lighting.

The intent of video, ideally I suppose, is to drive the song. The stimulation of more senses to push the brain. One would assume the best way to push the brain is to challenge it. A barrage of information could do just that. There are thirty different pictures in each second of video and with pixilation techniques (frames photographed individually) each frame is a new creation. Pixilation offers the opportunity to pile in lots of information, although there is a danger of confusing the viewer. The solution for this is an evolution of change. Each frame should be markedly different from the previous yet a consistency of content and composition should be maintained. The audience would be supplied something concrete to grasp while they were being splattered with weirdness. As well the speed of information must be gradually increased so as not to block the viewer's perceptions. Colour and luminance will stimulate or at least alter the pacing.

With consideration to the theoretical mumbo-jumbo, we looked for a way to marry lighting and pixilation. We settled on a technique we called "light painting." Light painting is a combination of animation and time-lapse photography. Each frame is separately photographed and is lit exclusively with narrow beam lights. These narrow beams are used to stroke light into selected areas as if they were paint brushes, in effect painting with light. Because no two frames can be lit the same way, there is a fluctuation of light. The light dances and pulsates. Each frame is different but the physical composition of the scene remains the same. The audience is offered oodles of infor-



Roy Pike

mation (through light changes), yet is comfortably guided by the stability of the compositions. This is sort of a visual style much like the "hook" in the song.

Personality is one of rock 'n roll's attributes. The challenge is to show or enhance the personality yet hold something back to create a mystique. It's a delicate balance. Video brings the performer into peoples' homes. The viewer is quite sensitive to their presence and etiquette must be maintained. Because we were employing something flamboyant for our "hook," we thought that the personal or real-life segments should be stripped of lighting and visual style. The lighting in the opening segment is flat, almost institutional. There is some visual appeal to the scene in that the set design (colour) maintains the light hearted nature. We chose a sort of early '60s tacky motif. This design period is nicely kooky, it feels right, and is definitely rock 'n roll.

At this point we had covered a few conceptual bases. Personality was represented; we had a technique to drive the music, but we still had some holes to fill. One of rock 'n roll's legacies is the reported decadence of its heroes. A quasi-Medieval banquet had the right feel. It could be sort of weird yet light hearted, so we penciled that scene in as well.

The segments were not really scripted. We began shooting with a list of ideas and notes. One of the realities of making video in Canada is that the budgets are not overwhelming. The myth of film and video production is that one needs money to achieve so called production value. This slickness requires lots of planning and scripting. However, all the best plans run into problems, and more often than not, the solution is money. It is my preference to throw money out the window and to circumvent any problems as opposed to confronting them. If your scripted idea can't be altered, you either compromise or blow the budget.

(20th CENTURY BOY was Directed by Roy Pike, Produced by Scott Dobson, Art Directed by Sandra McGuire, and the production company is Sensibility. Roy has recently Directed Paul Phenamanal, Tall New Buildings, and is currently working with Junior Gone Wild!!)

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JITTERS PAVE ROCKY ROAD TO SUCCESS

By Dara Rowland

Seven years ago, Blair Packham, lead vocalist and guitarist for The Jitters, sat before Bryan Adams at Toronto's El Mocambo club, engineering the then obscure performer's Q107 broadcast radio concert. With barely 50 people in the audience, Packham recalls, "and they sounded less than that over the air," Adams' performance, charismatic personality, and determination had a profound effect on him.

"I was just forming The Jitters, and I figured, if he can stick it out before an audience of 50 people and still perform like that, we could too. That's the one thing I can always say about The Jitters, we stuck it out to get our recording contract." The course of that accomplishment, as he now looks back, truly tested the group's strength.

Since schoolmates Packham, Daniel Levy (lead guitar, vocals) and friend Matthew Greenberg (bass, vocals), formed The Jitters in 1981, life has been a hectic routine of rehearsals, performances, recording demos during studio downtime, and relentlessly plugging away at record companies.

As a member of his high school choir, Packham received "discipline and ear training. I naturally had a stronger voice than most in my class, and I got respect for that, so I took it more seriously. I figured I may not be the best guitar player, but I had a good voice." During his four years behind the boards at Comfort Sound in Toronto, Packham became familiar with all the public relations and marketing people from all the record companies. "They'd always be calling

up to order copies of cassettes, and after about the fourth call you get friendly. Of course then I'd say, 'I've got this band....' It never worked, but I knew those people when it came time to shop our demos."

While he was slugging it out with the band for six years on the college and club circuit, he spent his days at Comfort, engineering live club and concert broadcasts for Toronto radio stations CHUM-FM, Q107, and CFNY, and assisting on 1980's Heatwave Festival which featured Elvis Costello, the Pretenders, and Nick Lowe. Such experience, he feels, greatly enhanced his recording decisions when working on The Jitters.

"Working at Comfort gave me a real sense of all aspects of recording. I worked on live music, studio projects and became familiar with the process of duplicating masters for cassettes. I could hear how they were sequenced and why," he comments, noting that in The Jitters' debut LP, "the record company changed the sequence of two songs at the last minute. I don't know why, but I guess they just thought it would sound better."

"I had a real understanding boss in Doug McClement," he says, explaining he arranged with McClement to record in studio downtime and pay for the favour if the demos were released. "We probably made more 24 track demos than any other independent band at the time."

The band's 1986 Q107 Homegrown Contest third place showing was responsible for raising the spirits of the band when they were

about to pack it in. After years of frustration plugging away at the record companies and playing the club scene locally, they found themselves entering their late twenties and growing impatient.

"Our strategy was to get a record contract, the club scene was secondary," says Packham. "Between the time we entered the Q-107 contest in early 1986 to when we were announced as one of the winners, we thought of breaking up. It had been a rocky road filled with self doubt. We didn't take the top prize, but I think we got the most mileage out of our win. Our club audience, at least, doubled immediately."

In February of this year, The Jitters were in the studio again. This time it was Phase One in Toronto, laying down the four tracks they would shop to record companies. Phase One owner Paul Gross (producer for their album) was good enough to offer the band the same deal as McClement.

"There was no reason to think the companies would be interested. They knew our stuff, I'd been to every A&R guy before. We figured this album might be an independent release, although we wanted a contract." Capitol Records, their first stop, picked them up, signing the band on the strength of the four "singles" The Jitters walked in with.

"It really confirmed the way we were doing things," says Packham. "And it was good from a songwriting standpoint when we gave them the four-song demo and they said, 'okay, we've got our singles, now give us more of the same, the rest of the LP tracks.'"



PHOTO BY DEBORAH SAMUEL

THE NYLONS BREAK OUT WITH COVER TUNE



By Tim O'Connor

When The Nylons' Paul Cooper suggested the group record "Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye," the '69 Steam hit, it set off yet another battle within the band about its dependence on cover tunes to crack radio.

While fellow Nylon Marc Connors said the group initially recoiled at the suggestion, it discovered the song had a "singable" verse. "The other half of it is, yes, it's a popular tune. And (pausing) damn it, we don't always want to be shunted aside as 'Oh yeah, it's a

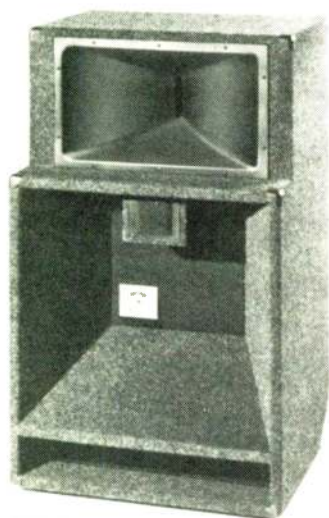
cappella,'" exclaimed Connors, his voice rising.

"We want to be up there (on the charts)," he said. "We've been frustrated and we've been doing it a long time. And now it's time!"

The Nylons are another in an increasingly long line of artists who have recently found success by doing a cover, including Los Lobos, Pseudo Echo, Kim Wilde, Tiffany, Run D.M.C., Bananarama and Club Nouveau. Sprucing up an old hit is about the only way a new or a mid-level artist can get on radio.

"There's a whole spate of records coming out right now and all of these artists seem to be trying to find a song that will make it easier for them to gain access to radio," said David Farrell, publisher of *The Record*, Canada's music industry weekly.

Australia's Pseudo Echo was unknown in North America until it covered "Funky Town" (by Lipps Inc., 1980). Britain's Bananarama turned "Venus" (Shocking Blue, 1970) into a disco hit. It wasn't until Los Lobos covered "La Bamba" (Ritchie Valens,



V-35

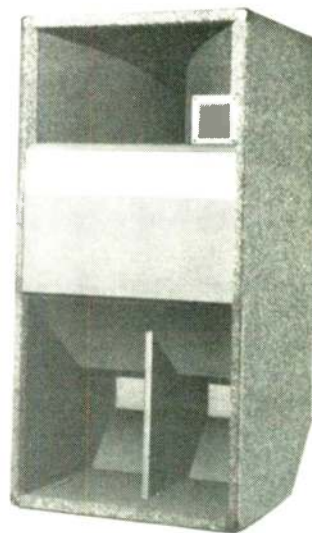
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BUSINESS

1959) that the acclaimed band reached more than a cult audience.

Covers have become a tool to crack radio. It's part of a record industry strategy to tap into nostalgia-minded radio and consumers without reissuing the old songs. It started about three years ago when radio stations turned to playing lots of old hits and some new songs by established artists to bring the 24-to 54-year old listeners to advertisers. But that doesn't leave much room for artists searching for that first hit.

Record companies also know that radio programmers, inundated with new records, have limited time and may be more willing to listen to a cover than a new song from an unknown band. "You get a recognition factor with an old song," said Greg Torrington, music director of CHEZ-FM in Ottawa. He said artists and programmers know "it's safe to use a proven song."

Connors said: "You've got the public out there, but you have to get by about 3,000 or 4,000 people who work in radio first and you better appeal to them."

Now that rock is about 30 years old, there's also a treasure trove of great old songs to search through. As rock matured in the '60s, songwriting developed as an art form and groups recorded originals for singles almost exclusively. Cover tunes were usually done

just as album cuts or for live albums. Bands did them to pay tribute to their influences or to have fun interpreting an old song. Led Zeppelin turned up the volume on bluesman Willie Dixon's "I Can't Quit You Baby", for example.

It depends on taste naturally, but many old songs can be given a new life: Run D.M.C.'s cover of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way", for example. Yet some covers can be downright irritating, especially when nuggets have been "disco-ized" like Kim Wilde's version of "You Keep Me Hangin' On."

"We're taking good songs and ruining them because they (groups) feel they're getting the airplay and programmers think it's a safe bet," said Jason Sniderman of Roblans Distributors, which supplies the Sam the Record Man chain.

While many bands may get their foot in radio's door with a cover, they eventually have to deliver their own hits if they want to earn royalties.

There's also the risk of being labelled a novelty act. Quiet Riot found early success covering three Slade tunes, but since it started pushing original songs it has faded away.

The Nylons finally got a Top 20 U.S. hit by covering "Kiss Him Goodbye." It was perfect for radio. They reworked a familiar song in a

peculiar way -- a cappella -- that had become a modern anthem at sports stadiums. For the next single, Attic Records wanted to release an original Nylons tune, but its American distributor (A&M) said U.S. radio wanted their cover of "Happy Together" (Turtles, 1967).

Attic President Alexander Mair said he is "quite concerned" The Nylons might be seen as a novelty act if they can't get a hit with an original song. "It's a quandry for record companies."

Connors said the band is aware of the risks of doing covers, and it causes tension within the quartet. "But there's a realistic understanding that cover tunes are the ones that are picked up (on radio) by us," he said. "And there isn't a lot of time or respect placed on our original material even though I think it's very good."

"But make no mistake. We want to be commercial. When we have guaranteed sales of 500,000 to a million, then we can do something because we want to do it," he said. "Until that time, we just want to recoup our costs."

"But nobody wants to be a hack. We want to inject our personality and artistry into the music all the while we're trying to make it popular. And I think with the oldies, it's important we try to reveal that song in a way it's not been done before and play with it and make it our own."

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BUSINESS

THE WORST OF DEJA VOODOO

By Howard Druckman

"It's funny," says Gerard Van Herk, the guitar-playing half of Montreal sludgeabilly band Deja Voodoo, and co-manager of their indie label, Og Records. "We decided to quit our day jobs making sandwiches at a cafe to become big-time rock stars, and three months later we're com-

pletely broke."

But that's temporary, because Og is one of the cagiest, busiest indie labels in Canada. This year Van Herk and drummer Tony Dewald released their own *Swamp of Love* LP, put out the Gruesomes' *Tyrants of Teen Trash* debut album, played 13 dates in 17

days across 7,500 miles of western Canada, and spent the summer touring Europe for the first time. Though only Greek and Finnish gigs materialized, the band released a mini-LP in Finland (on the Gaga Goodies label). It was called, appropriately, *Gotta Have Money*.

But they still had to release two more records this year before going bust: their own *Worst of Deja Voodoo* and Volume 3 of their cool 'n' trashy *It Came From Canada* compilation series.

Worst of is a kind of grab-bag, including studio versions of unreleased live favourites such as "Raised By Wolves," new songs like "Feed That Thing," and new versions of their old, out-of-print EP and cassette tracks such as "Lizard" and "Sigmund Freud."

"We wanted to discontinue the cassettes from the Og catalogue," Gerard explains. "We weren't selling enough to have them duplicated again, but we were selling too many to just leave them sitting at home and not bother mailing them out on order."

The new versions are somewhat faster, and some of the new "songs" are even shorter than before. "Peace, Love and Flowers" clocks in at 43 seconds, "Van Gogh's Ear" at 25, while "Oh Yeah" and "If You're So Smart" are three-second punchlines to invisible jokes.

"Those happen when we're getting near the end of a reel of tape," says Gerard. "It's just us saying 'Hey, we gotta do something really short!'"

The record was culled from 45 songs recorded in two weeks in Deja Voodoo's dirt-floor basement. Luckily, they completed the sessions just before that killer, late summer rainstorm in Montreal covered the floor with almost a foot of water.

"It was like Abbott and Costello," says Gerard. "I was running around the basement in my underwear, carrying stuff upstairs, standing over a pipe with water gushing out on my foot. And the extension cords were all plugged in with the ends in the water! We lost a tape machine, but at least it wasn't a really good one."

It Came From Canada Vol.3 was put together somewhat less chaotically, with sludge/trash/garage/'60s bands sending in tapes from across the country for inclusion. Oddly enough, there seem to be more bands than ever leaning towards a minimal, drums-and-guitar sludgeabilly approach. House of Knives, Salmon Breath, and the Laughing Kaddafys are all part of the new breed, and Chris Houston is backed only by a drummer these days.

"People are realizing," explains Gerard, "that once you have enough guys to do the rhythm and the chord changes, you're set! I think we're going to see more of that. Mojo Nixon and Skid Roper have proven that it works, and I'm glad they're doing well with it. Billy Bragg, too."

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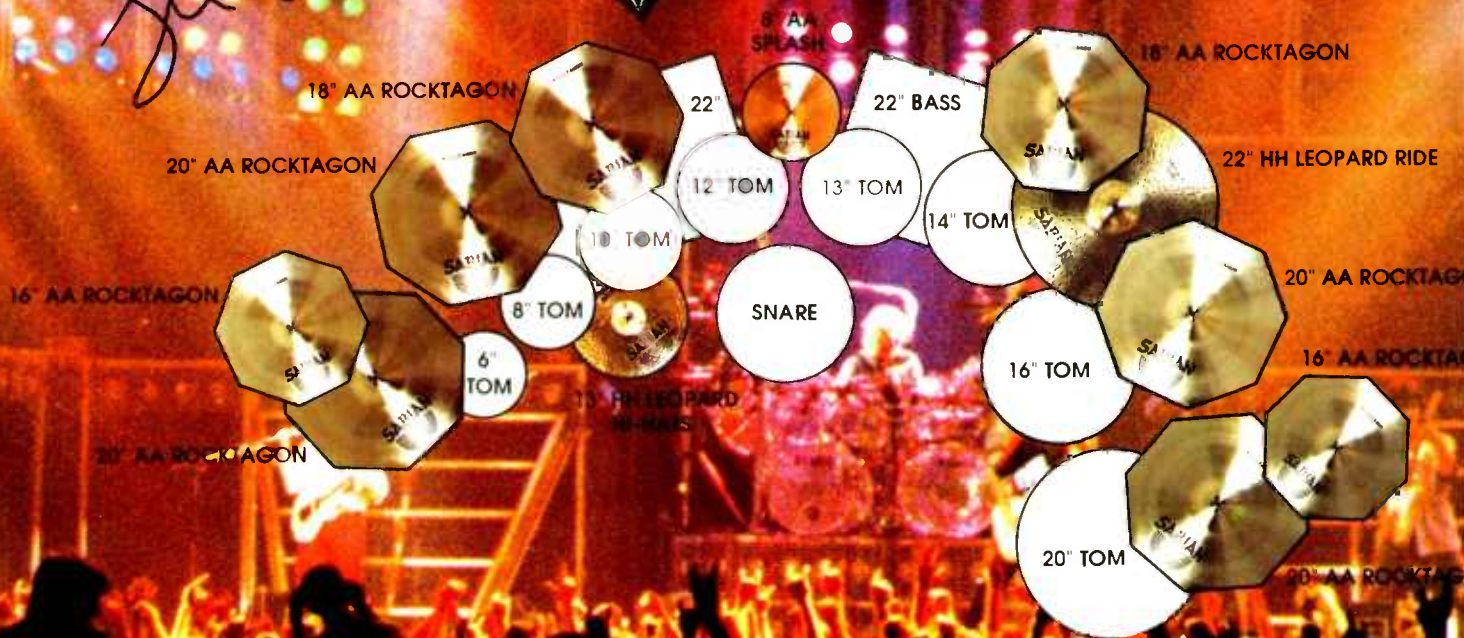
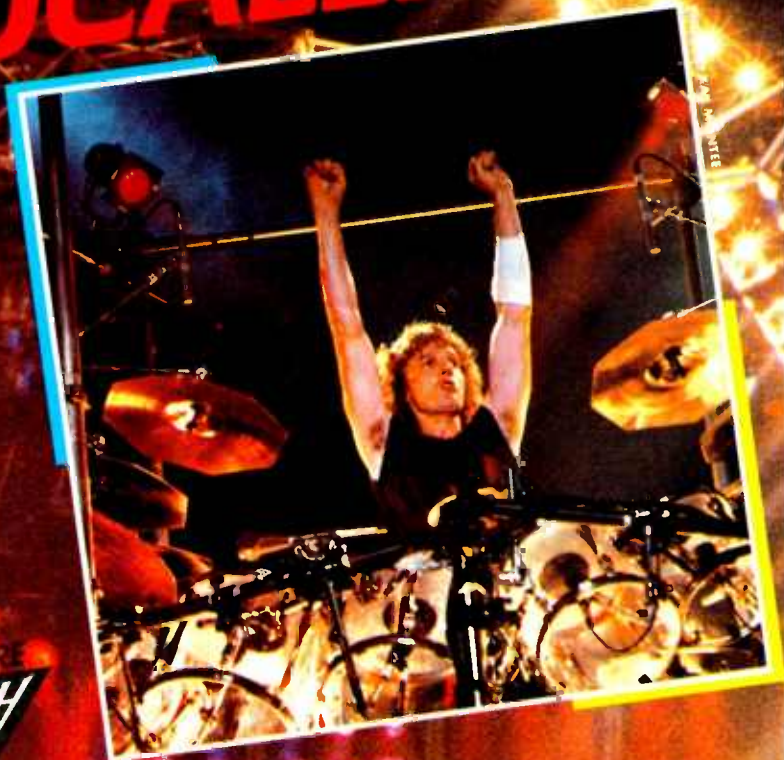
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LIVE SOUND

PRODUCT REVIEW

EXCELLENT VALUE WITH ROSS H215CD SPEAKERS

By Frank Koka

Ross Systems is a company known for pro audio products in what I term the "excellent value for the money" realm. This is not a slight against Ross because they do supply a real need for affordable sound systems. Yet with their debut in the loudspeaker market they go well beyond simply making an affordable speaker.

The Hurricane H215CD is a 3-way enclosure loaded with two 15" drivers, an 8" mid and two horn tweeters. Constructed from 3/4" five ply birch plywood, the carpet covered cabinet has plastic corner caps with plastic strips protecting the front to back edges. A heavy gauge steel grill protects the front loaded woofers and two recessed handles on either side facilitate easy handling. Two 1" x 2" struts brace the interior along with two more reinforcing the handles. With no weight specified, I can only estimate an approximate weight of 100 lb.

The Hurricane series is the brain child of Harvey Gerst. His extensive experience with Acoustic Control and JBL (designing the D-serious speakers) shows in the careful design of the 215's components. The 15" and 8" drivers utilize flat wound, copper voice coils, cast aluminum frames and hefty magnetic structures. Much to my surprise, these speakers are made for Ross by Eminence, a name usually associated with cheap stamped frame speakers. In fact, Eminence has excellent production facilities and together with Ross' R&D department builds very respectable components.

The first thing that strikes you when listening to the 215 is its thunderous bass response. Certainly this speaker does reproduce useable frequencies down to the rated response of 37 Hz. The overall sound is well balanced and doesn't betray an artificially induced bottom end found in inferior designs. Mids are well defined and smooth. Poor mid horns tend to be cutting and painful in the 800 Hz to 2 KHz area, especially with high transient vocals. Ross avoids this problem by crossing-over outside this frequency area at 300 Hz and 4 KHz. This combined with an 8" cone driver delivers mids with very good intelligibility and even dispersion. Unknown to me when testing these speakers, the tweeters use piezo drivers that are uncharacteristically flat in response.

Running 500 watts of program, the 215 delivered excellent transient response with no clipping and it shouldn't since it is rated at a whopping 800 watts program. And being a four ohm cabinet, you'll get the most efficient performance from your power amp.

I do have a few minor criticisms. For an enclosure of this size, 1" x 2" bracing seems rather flimsy, but I'm told by Ross that they will be upgrading to 2" x 4" braces. Also, steel corner caps would be preferable to plastic, which tend to self-destruct after one drop. And why didn't Ross make the 215 available

in mirrored pairs. These are all improvements that would add little to production costs.

(Frank Koka is a sales consultant in the P.A. and recording department of Steve's Music Store in Toronto.)



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CHOOSING YOUR MUSIC COMPUTER

By Chris Chahley

It is increasingly obvious that the application of computer technology in our daily lives is here to stay. Many musicians that currently use this technology would not have had the faintest idea five years ago that the personal computer would play such an important part in their work. And I'll bet that none of them are looking back!! The rate of development in the MIDI hardware and software industry has been downright astounding. If you've been on an extended tour north of the 60th parallel for the last few years, take a walk through the keyboard department of any major music store. Things just ain't the way they used to be!

Most working musicians have seen computers in action at a recording studio, production facility, on stage with a touring group or maybe at a friend's basement studio. And most musicians own a piece of equipment that has a built-in microprocessor - be it a digital delay, MIDI synth, or drum machine. A recent survey conducted in *Keyboard Magazine* has indicated that a computer purchase is at the top of their readers' shopping list. It takes a pretty big commitment to even begin to keep up with the current developments in this area. This article will suggest a few ground rules that should help you feel more comfortable about making a decision on the system that will satisfy your needs - both today and down the road.

The standard advice during the early days of the industry was "buy the software application that you need first, then find a computer that it will run on". This made sense at the time for a very good reason. There were not enough different applications to be sure the program you were looking for even existed. And if it was available, what were the hardware requirements?

Let's back up a couple of years to when interest in computers and music was really warming up. The fact that there were more advertisements and "vaporware" than finished software products, left most people feeling a bit unsure about which way to turn. The Apple Macintosh looked the most promising for the professional musician. Digidesign had the area of digital sample editing covered and Opcode was rolling out an impressive line of patch editors and librarians. However, there seemed to be a problem bringing a dependable Mac sequencer to market. With the introduction of Mark of the Unicorn's 'Performer' sequencer in first months of 1986, the choice was clear. Almost every production house in town was looking

for a Mac system and Performer - and why not? Even with the \$5,000 plus price tag for a Macintosh, MIDI interface and a selection of three or four software programs, the Macintosh was the only system that offered a complete solution. Today that has changed - dramatically. There will always be users that prefer System X to System Y but one thing has become clear: the MIDI software industry has matured to the point that there are professional quality applications available for all the major brands of computers. Great - so which computer should you buy?

Value for the dollar is a concern to most hard working mortals. Let's place that at the top of our selection criteria. The trend in the computer industry has been to provide more bang for the buck - good news for us. Processing power and memory capacity are two important variables that indicate

*"Value for
the dollar
should be
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the level of performance you can expect from a computer. Without a fast processor, you may find yourself constantly twiddling your thumbs while the program performs even minor editing operations. Memory limitations can be a real drag if you are working with large songs, scores or sample data files. Some programs will not even run on memory configurations of less than a megabyte.

Let me say right up front, and very clearly, I have nothing against the IBM PC or earlier Commodore and Apple machines. There is a wide selection of excellent MIDI software available for those machines - and a lot of people using it! The fact of the matter is that with the price of hardware falling, one should probably purchase the most technologically advanced system within their budget.

In today's 32 bit world, I recommend that the first time buyer take a serious look at computers based around the 68000 series

microprocessor, with a megabyte of RAM. This group includes the Atari 1040 ST and Mega ST, Apple Macintosh Plus and SE and Commodore Amiga. The new IBM PC II series looks mighty interesting, but software available at this time does not take advantage of its impressive capabilities. And if you're talking real power, the Macintosh II promises to evolve into an multi-tasking music/video powerhouse. For the purposes of this article we'll keep to systems well below the approximately \$11,000 list price for a fully equipped Macintosh II.

Acceptance within the industry is the other critical consideration when choosing your computer. This factor determines the range of choices for present and future software applications. I've already mentioned that the Macintosh was an early favorite for MIDI software developers, and the list of great Mac music software continues to grow. The friendly user interface on the Mac set it apart from earlier computers. Today, the familiar "mouse" has become the standard device for cursor control on most computer systems. Both the Macintosh Plus and SE come with a standard one megabyte of RAM configuration.

Atari must be credited for their forward thinking when they included a built-in MIDI interface in the ST series. At the June '87 NAMM Show in Chicago, Atari assembled an impressive display and took the honor of being the first computer manufacturer to appear at the show. The Atari 1040 ST (one meg of RAM) has been very well received and all the major software manufacturers at NAMM were showing new ST products. The new Mega ST (2 or 4 megabytes of RAM) provides a memory capacity that will handle extremely large song files (useful in live performance) or very long digital samples.

The just released Amiga 500 may also be purchased with a megabyte of RAM. At this writing the Amiga is a little light on professional music software. However, a Toronto company called Sound Quest has been doing a lot to change that situation. Their new Editor/Librarians for the Yamaha DX7II, DX7 and Roland D50 utilize clever graphics with pop-up menus and take advantage of the Amiga's multi-tasking capabilities. Sound Quest is also working on an Amiga version of the popular IBM program "Texture". This could be the sequencer that will really get the Amiga off the ground.

(Chris Chahley is President of Musicware Distributors.)

SONGWRITING

GRAPES OF WRATH GETTING HOMETOWN REVENGE



PHOTO KEVIN WESTENBERG

By Howard Druckman

The Grapes of Wrath are an excellent, melodic pop trio who happen to hail from the small town of Kelowna, B.C., north of Vancouver. Being from Kelowna (pop. about 70,000) is no big deal; but almost every pop hack and wag across Canada who's dealt with the band so far has found it to be the oh-so-convenient hook.

So why, despite the fact that the Grapes have admittedly soured on the topic, am I leading with Kelowna?

Because that's what *they* lead with on their new album, *Treehouse*. The trilogy of songs that opens the record all cover little-town life from the perspective of an escapee to the big city. "O Lucky Man" finds the small town boys getting home town revenge by chasing "famous dreams" in the metropolis; natives are so trapped in "Backward Town" that one of the boys abandons his girlfriend in the urgent rush to get away; "How Long" sees childhood friends pursuing a familiar rut of driving around and drinking out of boredom every weekend.

"It gets to be a drag after a while," says bassist/vocalist/songwriter Tom Hooper. "You go back and see the people you graduated from high school with, and they're doing the same things they did then. Sometimes it seems terrible what their life is like. And they don't know anything else; they enjoy what they're doing."

Tom's brother and band drummer Chris Hooper agrees. "It's become kind of a ghost town now. The downtown is dead because of all the big malls located in the outskirts.

There are, *literally*, tumbleweeds rolling down the main strip now, and windows boarded up on a lot of stores. It's not too thriving anymore."

Unlike the Grapes themselves, who were recently signed from Vancouver's alternative, Capitol-distributed Nettwerk stable over to Capitol Records itself. "Nettwerk is still managing us," says Tom. "And that's good," adds Chris, "because they're in between us and the record company, and they can fight for us to be able to do what we want." Tom continues: "There's not that big a change now, other than the label and great support."

But that support is crucial. Though Nettwerk paid about \$55,000 to record *Treehouse*, and Capitol only signed the band to a standard five-year contract *after* they heard the tapes, the major label is promoting the record with enough muscle to ensure that it gets widely heard.

Capitol released *Treehouse* in the United States three weeks after the Canadian date, set up interviews in Los Angeles with several nationally syndicated radio shows, and pushed the single "Peace of Mind" into Canadian CHR Top 40 playlists (and the video into Much Music medium rotation) from sea to sea.

"It's great hearing yourself on 'The Fox' (Vancouver's CFOX)," says Chris. "Amidst all the trashy Top 40 stuff," says Tom. "Not to put down Top 40, but most of it is total crap. Too much of it after a while can wear you out.

"We were really surprised," he continues, "that Capitol picked 'Peace of Mind' as the

first single. It was weird, 'cause we couldn't imagine it as a single. It's really personal, those kind of words."

In fact, most of the songs offer "those" kind of words. Despite such exceptions as the tale-of-an-acid-trip exuberance in "A very Special Day" and the inchoate hope of "Try," most of *Treehouse*'s lyrics deal in pain.

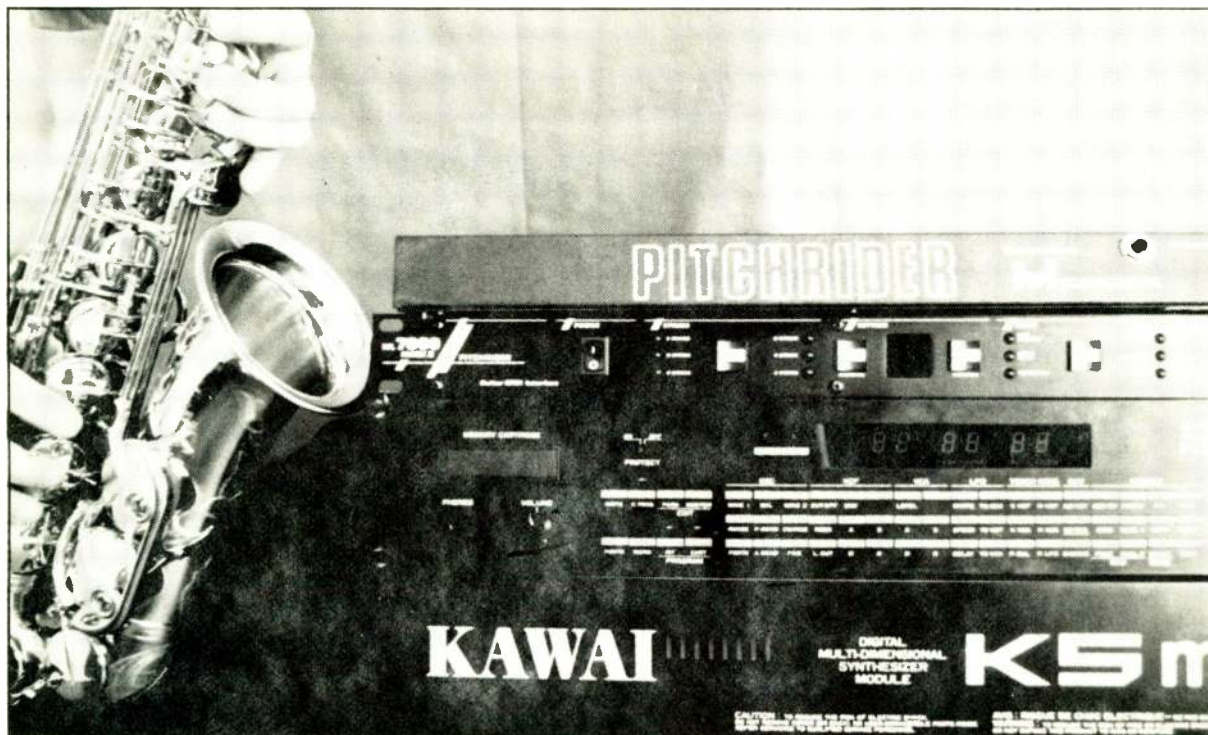
The Kelowna trilogy is none-too-pleasant: the side-closers, "At Your Soul" and "Completely Lost" are waltzing dirges about the loss of faith on one hand and of control on the other; "Amused" is about a suicide.

"I don't know why we write that way," says Tom, who -- along with guitarist Kevin Kane -- provides the band's lyrics. "We're not depressed people; we're probably the opposite of what people think. But I can't write words unless something's happened that's pissed me off or affected me. I can't just sit down and write a song about anything, out of the blue. It has to be something that affects you personally. And that isn't usually 'I had a great day today.'"

Then again, we can't really separate word and sound, can we? And the Grapes of Wrath's music is gloriously melodic, hook-laden acoustic guitar pop, overlaid with some of the most achingly lovely harmonies this side of the Hollies. Pitting sweet form against bitter content as well as anyone has since the prime of young Elvis Costello, the Grapes achieve a sublime melancholy that practically enjoys its own depths.

It's there when Kevin Kane's guitar does the drone, the jangle, the shimmer, and the

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SONGWRITING

chime; and especially in the buoyant, cathedral harmonies that lift the songs to glory. When Kane arrives at the words "get away" in "Backward Town," the gorgeous, unexpected harmonies send it soaring. The voices on "Completely Lost" and "At Your Soul" arch and sway with a yearning beauty. In "How Long" and "Try," the background vocals fall in superb counterpoint to the lead, echoing key lines or singing different words.

"After we get the song down," says Tom, "Kevin and I will start trying different harmonies in practice." Adds Chris: "We'll go over and over it, thinking of ideas where harmonies will fit. I might sit there behind the drums and say 'No, that one's not happening.' There's a lot of input all around."

"A lot of the counter-harmonies are done in the studio. As you're recording you add different stuff to the vocals, overdubbing. Finding whatever fits the song."

Treehouse producer Tom Cochrane apparently enjoyed the harmony work. "He really wanted to go for the vocals on this, and we did too," says Tom Hooper. "On stuff like 'Backward Town' he wanted us to do a lot of background vocals. The word he always used for the sound was 'noble': 'That sounds really noble!' It's a good description."

And it would be easy to fault *Treehouse* for that sort of thing. Sure, I've just shot my wad

over their harmonies, but most of my colleagues and friends dismiss the record on many understandable grounds: it sounds too polished, too commercial; the "nobility" of sound is too anthemic, too sentimental, too calculated; the lyrics are too inevitably depressing; the band sounds too much like REM for its own good; it's all too easy or unimaginative.

Well, I like it, and could give a flying poke at a rolling donut about the opinion of colleagues and friends. Once you've heard "Peace of Mind" on the radio -- a representative foundation of the *Treehouse* -- you'll no doubt decide for yourself. But whatever we all think, it appears the Grapes of Wrath are on the rise and in it for the long run.

As far back as a year ago, Capitol was already suggesting that the band record *Treehouse* in Wales, with Lenny Kaye (of Patti Smith fame) or Paul Hardeman (of Lloyd Cole and the Commotions notoriety) producing. Around the same time, a friend of the band traded a signed copy of one of their singles to a fan, in exchange for a case of 24 beer. "That was hilarious," says Tom, "but we didn't get any beer ourselves!" "Story of our life," adds Chris. "We didn't even get a bottle."

Kidding aside, the Grapes of Wrath might well be on the verge of making an international pop splash. *Treehouse* is a good album,

and an accessible one.

"That's good," says Tom, "because we really didn't do anything we didn't want to do in order to arrive at that." "But at the same time," adds Chris, "it's not totally underground, where it can't be played."

What about the alternative/indie backlash? "We used to really worry about what people thought," says Tom. "They think we're selling out, blah, blah." But we don't pay much attention to that anymore. We're content now just to do our music the way we want."

"No matter what your music's like," says Chris, "once it starts getting played on Top 40 some people are just going to hate you anyways."

Tom is nonetheless enthusiastic about alternative/indie bands making it to AM airwaves. "It's not just a college thing anymore, which is good," he says. "Finally, a lot of fine bands are getting on AOR now, and I think that's where they should be."

Mightn't Capitol be pushing the Grapes to fruition too fast? "That can't happen," says Chris, "if you're being promoted and marketed properly. We're comfortable with what we're doing, and Capitol doesn't seem to really expect a huge, sudden response. They're willing to work on it over a few years."

"We just want to go at our own pace," he says, "and whatever happens, happens."

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SONGWRITING

WRITING FOR A SINGER'S EFFECTIVE RANGE

By Harvey Wolfe

There are certain general rules that apply to marketing. Whether you're selling vacuum cleaners, air to air missiles or rock ballads, you have to have the right product for your prospective client. Since you aren't pitching your material to housewives or South American dictators, we can safely narrow it down to publishers, A&R, producers and recording artists whose nod of approval you ultimately want to get.

You already know that popular recording artists get a lot more material than they need, and that you have to deliver something outstanding to get over a small mountain of other cassettes. It still comes down to the right product, and in songwriting for singers that means writing material that is going to highlight the singer's strengths, not the writer's.

As simple as it sounds, it is a fact that eludes a lot of talented and potentially successful writers. You could write a great melody, but if the singer can't hit all the notes (and

hit them well) it's game over. do not collect \$200,000.

Every singer has a specific vocal range. It is a finite (although training may change it) range of notes that a singer can reach. As a writer, it is crucial to be familiar with this range but there is another range to be familiar with as well. This is what we'll call a singer's 'effective' vocal range: the smaller group of notes that are a singer's strong point, the best part of their batting order, so to speak. If you can incorporate that knowledge into the writing of your material, you increase your ability to deliver the right product. A side benefit is that you're on the way to building a framework and establishing a focus on your songwriting goal which can be very elusive. This also applies if you write material for yourself. You are in the position to highlight your strengths, and yet many singers don't take advantage. Put on any Dire Straits album and you can listen to someone (Mark Knopfler) with an extremely limited

vocal range singing expressive and melodically pleasing music. You will not catch him with a silver sequin glove on his hand. He knows what he can and cannot do and is a perfect example of successfully working within limitations. Too many writers will not compromise a melody and end up losing in the big picture. It brings to mind the old medical joke, "the operation was successful, but the patient died."

We use Mark Knopfler as an example of a singer with a small vocal range. Mike Reno on the other hand has a very extensive range, likes to stretch out, and that should be a consideration if you were to write for Loverboy.

By listening to the artist's albums, demos, or performances you should be able to come away with information that will give you an edge when you get down to writing.

(Harvey Wolfe is a musician and regular CM contributor).

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BILL HENDERSON'S TRIBUTE TO EMILY CARR

By Bill Henderson

A little over a year ago actress Joy Coghill phoned me up and asked if I'd be interested in writing the music for her new play based on the life of B.C. artist Emily Carr. Joy and I had worked together on a number of theatre projects in the '60s, including George Ryga's *Grass and Wild Strawberries* with The Collectors. Her new play, *Song Of This Place*, was to weave the power of puppets, masks, music and acting together into a completely new type of performance. As I considered my response, I realized I felt like I'd been having difficulty with the old rock and roll muse for a couple of years. Lots of ideas, fragments of songs, but no fully developed songs that I was really happy with. So an opportunity to explore some new musical territory and a break from the demands and limitations of pop music seemed like a great idea. I said 'yes'.

To approach the music for this play, I looked at Emily Carr's paintings, absorbed a number of her writings and particularly focused on her journals, *Hundreds and Thousands*, where her version of the artist's 'journey' is laid out. Reading of her struggles with many of the same problems faced by myself and others around me was very inspiring. Here was an acknowledged great artist revealing how frustrated and unable she often felt to put on canvas in the real world what she saw in her head. How she was scorned for trying new things that didn't work right off, and how she survived long dry stretches and the certainty that she'd never paint anything great, still to finally come up with continued incredibly powerful work. I was excited. Songs started to emerge. The first occurred in a dramatic sort of way. One day while I was driving my car I got a mental picture (they used to call them visions). It was a meadow on the edge of the forest, tall grass and over reaching branches, waving in the wind in the darkness. As I watched the picture while threading my way through traffic,

a melody came which seemed to contain the haunting power of the wind in the leaves and grass. That was eighteen months ago. Since then many other melodies tried to attach themselves to this one. They wanted to be the chorus or the bridge or whatever. Mostly they came and went but finally a couple seemed to have the right magnetic qualities and they stuck. They became what is now the last song in the play, the finale.

Then I wrote a couple of narrative type songs that describe the characters. There's a song for Harold, who 'knows' but can't say. He got kicked in the head by a horse once and a piece of him died. Harold's song has melody lines that are short and repetitive so it sort of stutters, and it's accompanied by strummed violin. Then there's Sophie who's had twenty babies that all died, and in spite of the pain of all that, she retains a real warm and earthy love of life, kind of like a songwriter who writes fifty songs and they all get rejected but he keeps writing because he loves music. Lyrically her song is just the cold facts of her life balanced against a warm melody with soft acoustic guitar accompaniment. These two songs were written in one evening.

In the play Sophie carves a wooden bird for her friend Harold. Sophie says the bird is in the wood, all you have to do is carve enough away to set it free. Songwriting should be like that. To really get it right you have to help the bird, or in this case, the song, to emerge. What often happens when you get a song idea is you grab two or three other similar ideas, put them together and call it a song. Sometimes it is. But more often the individual parts are subtly warring with each other, undermining the total effect in spite of their quality. It's a bit like sticking a bunch of seeds together in the hope that it will be a tree. Whereas if you gently coax the original idea to develop, eventually the song will emerge, just as a tree grows from a single seed. And as a result of that natural process there will

be a rightness about it; the song will have its own life.

It's a very subtle thing trying to capture a song as it emerges. In her journals Emily talks a lot about that process, in relation to painting, of course. And in the play she says, "Grasp the bird and it flies. Enchant it and it stays." And with that in mind, when an idea would emerge, I'd watch it, touch it and test it very gently. If an idea came up that I didn't understand, I didn't cut it out, I just gave it time. Often it takes the brain a while to understand the wisdom of intuitive thought. It can be scary and requires faith in yourself. The easy route is to throw out anything that doesn't make immediate logical sense, and that so often is how strong innovative ideas are lost or diluted. Working with Joy made this easier because in her work she exercises a great deal of courage and trust in herself. It requires a lot of faith in the muse, which after all is where the word 'music' comes from.

In the play there's a combination of written and improvised pieces, and as it unfolds the nature of the music changes and becomes less narrative. One song called "All That Stuff" is all kinds of rhythm instruments played through a computer (shaker, cabassa, tympani) blended with a kind of gasping breathing pattern from the east. I also incorporate binaural recordings of natural sounds of the Pacific Northwest, particularly bird songs. I'm using a sampler, keyboards, acoustic instruments, flutes and percussion.

The old question of 'do I sit around and wait for inspiration or do I go in there and work to produce what I know will be popular?' was relevant for me in writing the music for this play. I usually find that the latter process results in boring stuff, but it's largely a matter of touch. You have to use your mental power to court the muse.

(Bill Henderson is widely known as leader of rock band Chilliwack).



Bill Henderson and Puppet Harold manipulated
by Debra Thorne

PHOTOGRAPH BY MAY HENDERSON

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

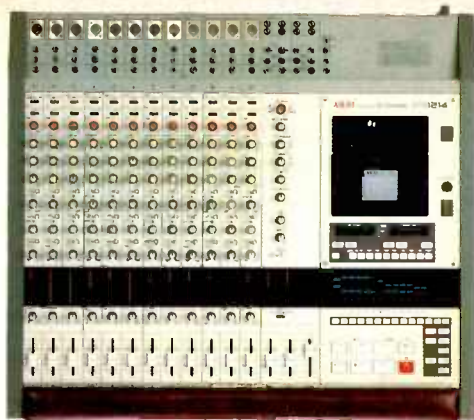
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World Radio History

ARRANGING

COMPOSING SOUNDTRACK FOR HANDICAPPED OLYMPICS VIDEO

By Jerry Tupis

Occasionally in the wacky world of music composition an opportunity arises that offers you both a challenge and a purpose. Such was the case when Jim Hough and Ihor Macijewsky of Cinemaction approached me about composing the music for the Handicapped Olympics video "Dare to Dream". In this article I will try to relate some of the experience and some of the decisions made during the course of creating this soundtrack.

The first stage was of course viewing the video in order to get a feeling and an understanding of what was to be the underlying theme or "feel". The video consists of a wide variety of athletic endeavours and training programs ranging from skiing, to swimming, to high jumping etc., all of which are performed by people with various handicaps. It also profiles three of the athletes in depth. There is narration running throughout the video and it runs for just under twelve minutes. After several viewings Ihor gave me his ideas and tried to relate to me what it was that he wanted the music to do. The theme or feel was to create an aura of hope and progress. But, he pointed out in this case that that was not to be done with brassy fanfares and driving rhythms. The music was to consist of natural sounding instruments, specifically: piano, flute, strings, acoustic guitar, and bass, rather than "synthesized" sound, and that it was to smoothly weave its way through the video in a supporting role. Then at the end there was to be a collage of stop action shots with accompanying vocals to close.

The gear I used consisted of a Fostex 8 track, Korg EX-800, Yamaha DX21, Yamaha CX5M, Korg DDD-1 drum machine, Roland SRV-2000 digital reverb, TEAC spring reverb and acoustic guitar.

The original time allotted for writing and recording the music was two weeks, which was promptly cut to four days. Now, this brings out the importance of organization. Given the parameters within which to work a general layout or game plan of ideas was in order. While viewing the video repeatedly I

broke it down into sections. On a large paper or blackboard, if available, I like to draw a rough section by section sketch of the music to be, charting mood changes, scene changes, volume changes, crossfade sections, stand alone sections and initial instrument sounds. Then, while watching the visuals and following along with the general layout alterations can be quickly made without getting stuck on specific notes. This process is to familiarize yourself with the video and create direction. Also, it must be realized that scoring for film is not the same as writing a song. In this case the music is not the star of the show. It must not stand out and detract from the narration, and yet it must maintain the mood, and still at times when called upon it must indeed stand on its own for brief moments. This might seem to make the job easier but it is in fact exactly the reverse. Eleven plus minutes of music must be composed without the luxury of verses, choruses, bridges, etc., to take you through the gamut of three minute concentration spans.

Synchronizing scene changes on this project was interesting. Without the use of SMPTE time code equipment to hit all the scene changes dead on I had to allow for slight timing differences between the video equipment and the audio equipment. So in order to make smooth musical transitions from scene to scene there were points where crossfading one piece of music into the other had to be a little wider so that if necessary the soundtrack could be adjusted accordingly (sped up or slowed down) in order to fit when being mixed with the visual. The decision was made to try doing it this way instead of fading in and out with short pieces in order to maintain a good flow.

Now it was time to analyse the character of the specific sounds or instruments to be used, and how they could be used to bring out certain emotions. I should make the point that I believe any emotion can be achieved with any sound or instrument in the hands of an accomplished player, but given specifics with which to work and unfortunately not be-



Handicapped Olympics medal winner with the Flames' Lanny McDonald

ing the master of all leaves one a little limited. Also, notes are notes. They can be made into music or they can remain notes. Every composer or writer has his or her style or method for creating their work, so with that in mind I shall not expound on mine. However, during the composition period there were certain considerations and decisions to be made. Care had to be taken not to overuse an instrument or a theme. Simplicity was called for but there had to be brief transitory moments in which the music had to make itself noticed in order not to become a sleeper. Tempo and theme changes had to move smoothly to maintain the flow, and, depending on the subject in longer profiles where the theme stayed the same for an extended time, instruments had to be appropriately allotted to take turns playing the melody, again in order to stay interesting.

Having done all these things the music track was complete except for the mixing stage. Now it was time to put the vocals in. I particularly enjoyed this segment. While watching silent pictures you write lyric to tell the story. However no matter how great the lyrics are you need a voice that can relay their meaning and the feeling of the project to the viewer, and the fact that the vocal segment is the last part that will be heard in the video finding such a person is crucial. In this case though the choice was easy. On incredibly short notice Rena Gayle took the time to sing the vocal part, and made the closing moments of the video.

After the final mixing of the soundtrack it was now time to merge it with the visual. This was done at MASTER'S WORKSHOP and the skill experience and patience of an engineer at this point is essential. Luckily Yuri Gorbachow is an engineer with these qualities and was able to mix the sound and picture into a smooth presentation. So, if all comes together you end up with the desired effect, and in this case we did, but, not without dedication.

(Jerry Tupis is a Toronto based musician with a small home studio.)

O N T H E W

LOVERBOY



I L D S I D E

B Y T O M H A R R I S O N

The first thing you noticed when Loverboy began the first song of its three night stand at the 86 Street Music Hall was how much this was the way it used to be.

Here was a five piece band playing stripped down rock and roll again. There was none of the over-arranged stuff, nothing that was calculated for effect. It was just Paul Dean, Mike Reno, Scott Smith, Doug Johnson and Matt Frenette expertly romping through a collection of new songs with an abandon that was welcome, missed and promising.

In anticipation of its next recording, Loverboy had decided to get back to the bars -- to re-discover itself. Ten of the songs which dominated the sets on those three nights in the 1,200 capacity hall were planned for what has become the new *Wildside* album. They had the hard, propulsive drive of the early albums and the early days of the band. They were a reminder that, behind the smokescreen of corporate maneuvering and the flashy, if uninspiring, veneer protecting the musicians, Loverboy is a formidable, genuine rock and roll band.

Almost nine years ago, Loverboy was Paul Dean's 13th or 17th attempt to get the balance right. Yet within months of its formation, his new band hit its stride and, against the staggering odds of '78-79 pop and rock, was gathering momentum. Being an unrepentant mainstream band comprised of musicians who'd been branded by the rock of the late 1960s and early '70s was the bane of the new wave movement of the time. But they were just what American radio was looking for as a panacea to the twin onslaught of disco and punk. And that, as every Canadian rock type knows, was the beginning of a career which has rivalled or surpassed any milestone ever set by a Canuck band.

The problem for Loverboy since 1983, however, has been to keep it up. The band slipped with the self-same *Keep It Up* album, an album over which there is still debate within the Loverboy fort, and regained its footing with *Lovin' Every Minute*, the album that gave the band its first two top 10 hits and put it back on the road in 1986 after a two year break.

Despite its impact and the customary tour-to-infinity to support the album, *Lovin' Every Minute Of It* was not a success by the multi-

million sales standard of the first two Loverboy albums. It managed to sell a respectable million and a half copies in the U.S. and had a quiet, short-lived run in Canada. Even the top 10 success of "Heaven In Your Eyes", a single lifted from the *Top Gun* soundtrack, was offset by the news that keyboard player Doug Johnson had refused to take part in its recording because he did not agree with its pro-military theme and implicit propaganda.

Lovin' Every Minute Of It was more a rally than a comeback. It attempted to take Loverboy in a number of directions: To emphasize guitar, to experiment with technology, to get heavier, to record ballads, to present a different Loverboy from that of the *Keep It Up* album. Yet it cost the group mightily in the time it took just to make it and the strain created within the group. For a band whose primary virtue was its ability to communicate to its fans directly, the distance that now existed between Loverboy and the audience could not afford to become wider.

Loverboy saw this for itself. Bruce Fairbairn confirmed it. Bruce had produced the first three Loverboy albums, which had set him up for the hot stuff rep he now enjoys, praise the gods of platinum and pass the *Slippery When Wet* LP. Realizing that Loverboy had lost its fighting trim, he approached the group about the possibility of working with it again.

In the meantime, Paul Dean already was on the hunt for songs. During the summer of '86 he visited Jon Bon Jovi at his New Jersey home and wrote songs with Jon and his guitarist Richie Sambora. The outcome of this quest was *Wildside's* first single, "Notorious". Dean also struck up a friendship with two Nashville-based writers, Todd Cerney and Taylor Rhodes, who, in some capacity, have credits on five of the 11 songs heard on the cassette or compact disc (the vinyl disc has 10). Former Headpin, Brian Macleod, wrote with Mike Reno, Doug Johnson contributed a song and Alfie Zappacosta kicked in another. Austin Roberts, another Nashville writer came up with "Don't Keep Me In The Dark", the ballad which is only on the CD and cassette. And Bryan Adams had a hand in "Hometown Hero", the last song to be completed for *Wildside*. Now, as Reno and Dean sit at the table in the conference room of

managers Lou Blair and Bruce Allen describing the assembly of songs for *Wildside* you get this wild image of rock stars in sports cars rocketing around the countryside and handing off cassette tapes to one another. Most of *Wildside* seems to have been conceived in a car.

But then again, so were so many of Loverboy's fans.

Mike: This was a fun record to make.

CM: Hold it, Mike, you said that about *Lovin' Every Minute Of It*.

Mike: Tom (Allom, producer of *Lovin' Every Minute Of It*) was fun to work with, but it took too long to make that record. When we went in to do the record previous to *Wildside* I think a lot of the songs weren't completed and we were fighting for different lyrics and fighting for different arrangements. This time we didn't fight for anything; it was natural.

Paul: With the last album we spent half the time and half the budget working on "This Could Be The Night". That tune cost us. It did well. No way did it pay for itself but it's a good song so you can't put a dollar on it. It wasn't a matter of having it pay for itself, anyway; it was a matter of getting it right no matter what it cost. We weren't going to put it out 'til it sounded good. It's unfortunate it cost a lot of dough but so what, Mike's rich.

CM: Was *Lovin' Every Minute Of It* an attempt to get harder, to play heavy metal. When you started the LP, metal was everywhere on FM radio. Also, Tom Allom is known as a metal-rock producer.

Paul: I think if you look at tunes like "Bullet in the Chamber" and "Too Much Too Soon" they were a definite case of "I wanna play metal on the guitar now, so here's the songs. You got anything better? No? Then let's put it out because we've been off the road too long."

CM: After going through several studios and producers and enduring various setbacks to complete the previous LP, this one required only two months to complete. Did you compile a list of do's and don'ts for this one?

Paul: Yeah, it said, "Paul Dean will not produce this album."

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Loverboy

MIKE: As you know, we worked with Bruce Fairbairn for the first three Loverboy albums and then we decided to try something different for the sake of trying something different. Bruce Fairbairn was so into doing our next record, he came to us, and said, "Listen, I want to do the next album." He had just come off the Bon Jovi thing, which was doing fabulous. The one thing I noticed about working with Bruce this time was that he's really learned a lot along the way. He's very patient; he gets the job done without having to fight for it.

PAUL: He's real conscious about the pennies, too. I mean, that's what a producer is supposed to do, besides putting the best performances by everybody on to tape. You're supposed to be conscious of the money. At one point we had 10 songs down and we felt that we needed one more. We wanted to get another fast one that we could play onstage. So we started working on "Hometown Hero" in the studio and I think he said to himself, "OK, I'll give these guys an hour. If they don't get something in an hour, they're out of here." We gathered in a circle and started rehearsing the way we do in our warehouse. An hour went by and it's, like, two hundred bucks an hour in the studio, and he says, "OK, forget it, you guys don't know what you're doing."

CM: So you went back to the warehouse and completed the song. I heard that Fairbairn had gone to see Dokken be-

cause Dokken wanted to use him, but he saw you and wanted to produce you instead.

PAUL: Yeah, Dokken was opening for us in California.

MIKE: We were kicking around ideas about who we wanted to produce this new album when we got home from the tour, and it just turned out that way. He said one thing to me, "I haven't heard you guys sound this good. I thought you'd be blown out at the end of the tour." He said something personally to me, that, "Your range is really up there. I haven't seen you guys in about a year and a half and it's really nice to see you."

PAUL: And that was the second last show in a tour of 115 shows or something.

CM: By the time your tour got to Vancouver last year, you were playing only three or four songs from the LP whereas you'd intended to make an album of songs you could play live.

PAUL: We always do. That's the bottom line. For us, if you can't play them live there is no point in putting them on a record.

MIKE: We test them, too, with the audience.

PAUL: We did this time, for the new album.

MIKE: But the last time, the way we tested them was on tour. If they didn't get a big response we kinda x'ed 'em out of the set. For this album we played three concerts in Vancouver and played all our new material before we recorded it. That was a real plus for us.

CM: The 86 Street shows were more spontaneous than anything I've seen you

do in years, particularly the portions devoted to the new material.

MIKE: We never changed anything from that. All we did was record it better, technically.

PAUL: Everything at that point was written and arranged but "Hometown Hero."

CM: How about "Notorious," a song co-written with Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora and Todd Cerney?

Paul: I went to New Jersey to write songs with Bon Jovi. We wrote for three days and came up with three songs. For "Notorious" we ended up using two thirds of the chorus and a couple of the lyrics for the body of the song. A lot of times our songs are made from different pieces of other songs. This one is from three pieces. This won't mean much to anyone else, but our fans in Vancouver might remember that we used to have a song called "Loverboy" that we opened with in clubs. The riff from that became the bridge and the verse was written almost as a country song by Todd Cerney.

CM: "Hometown Hero", the song you managed to complete in time for the LP.

PAUL: That started off with Bryan Adams and myself. He wrote the melody for the verse and then we re-wrote it a million times, took a bunch of parts that Todd and Taylor and I had written for other songs, pieced 'em together like a puzzle. Most of these tunes are like that, like puzzles: A bridge from this, a verse from that, a chorus and intro. If they're all in the same tempo you usually can find a way to put them all together.

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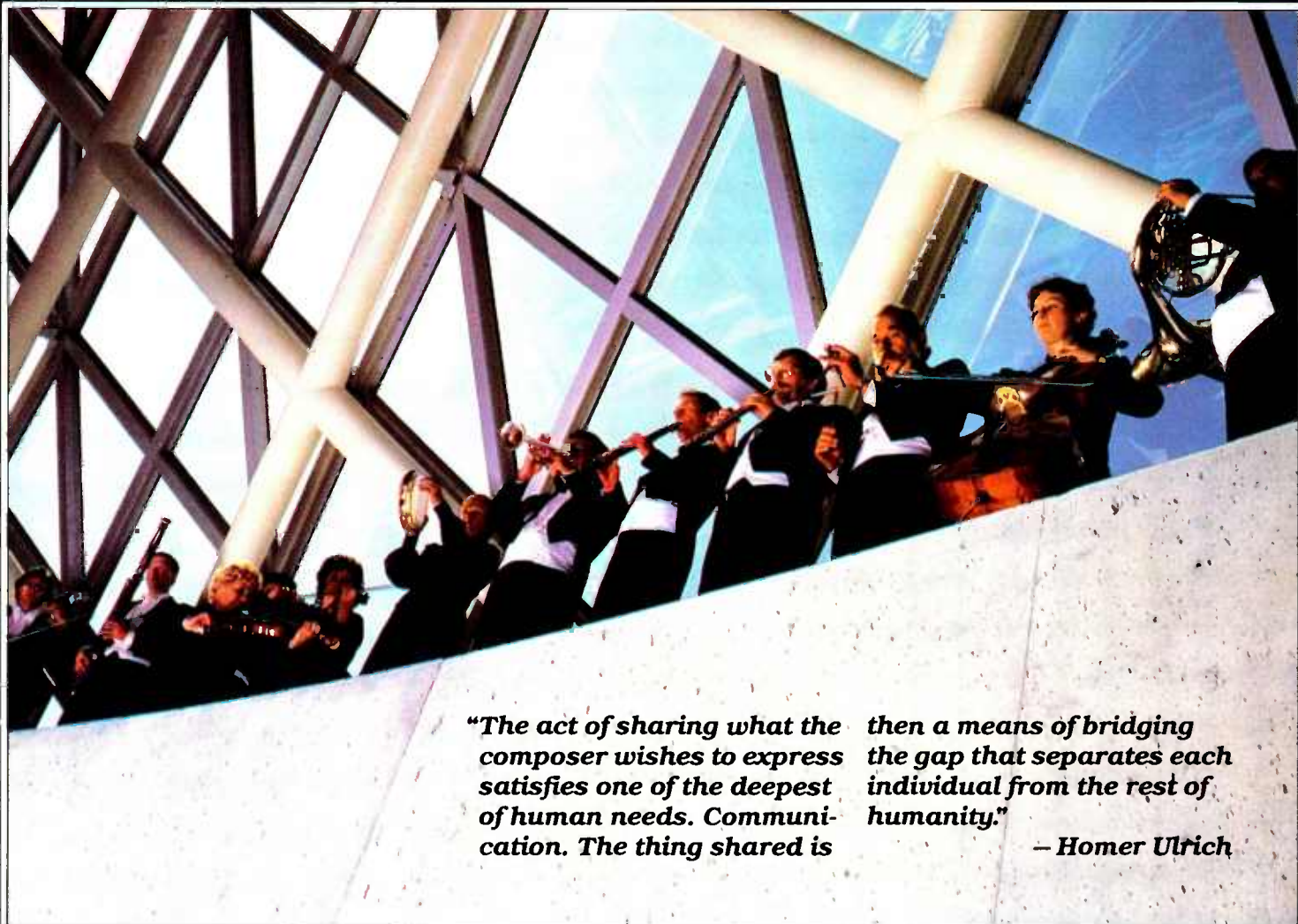
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Loverboy

CM: It's become prevalent among bands within your spectrum of rock, bands such as Heart and Starship, to use outside writers.

MIKE: Some of these writers -- some of the guys Paul works with -- don't even have a desire to be in a band anymore, like they used to. They just want to write songs.

PAUL: They work for a publishing company, show up everyday.

MIKE: They have their rhyming dictionaries and they roam from town to town.

We'll take a good song wherever we can get it. We try our best to write songs and we write as many as we can. We write a lot of songs that don't get used because we don't think they're great enough.

PAUL: Or they're not new enough or different enough.

MIKE: Plus Paul writes in a lot of different styles and so do I. I write a lot of, uh, middle-of-the-road stuff, which would be nice if I do a solo record but I don't know if I want to put it on a Loverboy record.

CM: There is more room on this album for the band, especially the rhythm section, which I've always thought was one of the band's heaviest weapons.

MIKE: I thought the bass playing on this album was exceptional, especially hearing it on the CD. There's some great parts. The rhythm section is accented on this album more than on any other. Scott's really playing. We kept a lot of the bass parts from the bed

tracks, which may be why I like it so much. Which goes back to the Bruce Fairbairn approach. He said, "If you have to play it more than four times, the song might not make the record, so let's just play it, don't even think about it, go for it, play what you want, make some mistakes, it's fun."

CM: Was this approach a reaction to *Lovin' Every Minute Of It*?

Paul: I think it's a refining of it. We've got a new definition of Loverboy in our minds. For me, first of all, I wanted an album that Mike could sing and sing lyrics he believed in. I think he has a problem with things like "Steal The Thunder". Bless the guy for tryin' it, but I don't think he really wants to sing about teenage rebellion that much.

MIKE: He said it. While I was singing that song, I didn't believe it. "Steal the thunder... you want to drag me under." I was going, "Geeez," like, acting for this one. We didn't do any of that on this record. We said, "If you can't sing it, fuck, it's history. Next!"

I like it like that. We've had a pretty good run of success and hits and stuff but now everybody is getting to know one another really well. When he was working with those guys from Nashville...

PAUL: ...and Bon Jovi...

MIKE: He said, "Listen, think about this Mike Reno guy. If he can't sing it, it's not going to happen."

CM: Yet the singing sounds tougher on this record.

MIKE: You know what I did? I smoked and I wailed and I said, "Now tape it," just about as

my voice was ready to go.

PAUL: He sang real hard, too. I was taking singing lessons at the time he was doing the vocals on the album and I asked him if I could sit in there and watch him. He was singing real hard. It doesn't sound like that on tape but if you were to listen to his voice it's totally ratched but when it comes to compressors and electronics it's a lot smoother, but, yeah, he's really beltin'.

MIKE: My voice is very durable. I can sing for a long time and it's sweet. Sweet. Nice. I said to myself, "I don't want to sound nice for this one. I want to sound hard." So I growled. I worked the voice 'til it was just about bleeding and then I taped the tracks.

PAUL: They were good songs for Mike to sing in, which was another lesson from the last album. The third album was a keyboard album. That's the way it worked out. I was in a really dry spell, I wasn't working with any outside writers, we wanted to keep it in-house, and Doug wrote four songs.

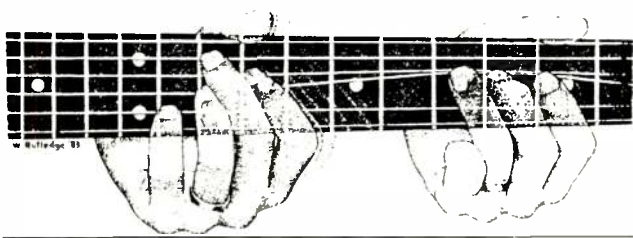
The next album was a guitar album. I figured it was my turn, so everything was written around the guitar riffs. If it was little too high for Mike, well, too bad, that's the guitar key. So, "Put out, guy, and keep up."

CM: Do you jam a lot?

MIKE: We jam quite a bit. We end up jamming funk, though.

PAUL: I think the essence of Loverboy is that we're a funk band. I turn down, I play "chicka-chicka" on my guitar, Mike sings blues riffs, Doug plays every keyboard that he's ever known and Scott's playing real

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TAPE C	Purple Haze - All Along The Watchtower - Foxy Lady - Voodoo Child (Slight Return) - The Wind - Cries Mary - Little Wing - Star Spangled Banner - Red House I
TAPE D	Dazed And Confused I - Since I Been Lovin' You - Achilles Last Stand - Moby Dick - Starway To Heaven - Heartbreaker - Good Times, Bad Times - Black Dog - The Rover - Whole Lotta Love - Rock And Roll
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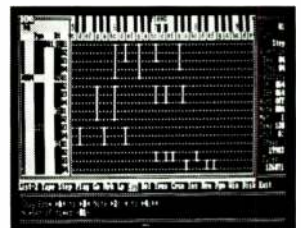
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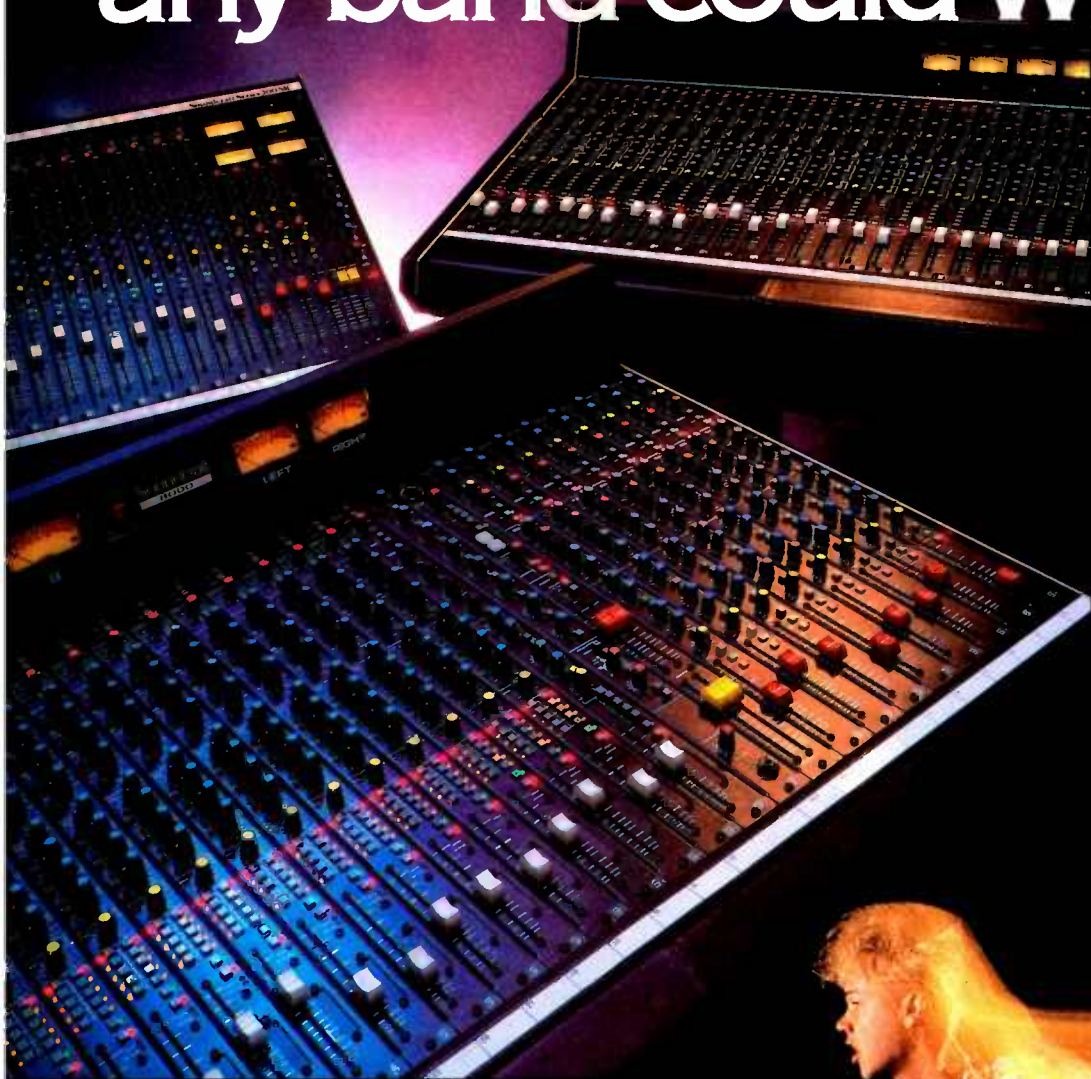
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World Radio History

Loverboy

funky lines and syncopated stuff.

MIKE: And then we say, "Hold it! Rock band, rock band, rock band!"

PAUL: We've tried to make it work outside rehearsals and it just doesn't happen. It goes along and we have a great time but it just never goes anywhere. It never really develops into a song. We've tried. The one time it happened, I think, was "It's Your Life." That came out of a jam and it had five guys credited.

MIKE: We did an hour and 10 minute jam one time.

PAUL: Oh, it was great. Of "It's Your Life" as a matter of fact.

MIKE: You should hear how far this thing got. It had all these effects on it, all these vocal things.

PAUL: Lots of echo and effects.

MIKE: Really spacey, and then it goes to everybody playing again and then it just goes on and on and on and it sounded killer. Mind you, we had to make a four minute song out of it somewhere along the way. (Laughs).

PAUL: You just see the serious side of the band. I don't really like to say the commercial side. Commercial isn't a bad word; it just means that a lot of people like it. But there's a lot more you really don't get to see. We just don't put out our reggae songs or our country songs or our blues songs.

CM: The four takes rule seems to have kept the band more loose, which is in contrast to the previous two records.

PAUL: Mattie got five beds done in one day. We had to re-do "Love Will Rise Again." He was kinda disappointed that he had to re-do one tune, but that was his all-time record, five beds in one day.

MIKE: Sometimes when you do something more than five times you remember what's coming next and you don't play what you feel. You start thinking about it too much. We just played it and had fun.

PAUL: If you listen near the end of "Notorious" you can even hear Mattie laughing. He does a big smash after the big Rock Ending Number Four and there's this "ha ha ha ha."

MIKE: It's free. There's a lot of stuff in there like that.

PAUL: I was trying to open up on the guitar a lot rather than play so strict. I wanted to make a few mistakes and be a little bit out of tune, do a couple more licks where normally I would play a stock rhythm part. I'm trying to do that as my career goes along -- open up. I think the word is to be more free.

Whereas before everything had to be so perfect. Especially with the last album; that album was flawless. We spent two weeks getting the digital glitches out of the beds. It had to be perfect. That's why we did it digitally and that's why it took two years and cost me 18 years of my life.

MIKE: The record company has said that this is the record Loverboy should have done three years ago, in keeping with the excitement of the first two. I believe that because that's kind of how I felt when we were doing it.

CM: That's hindsight talking. I remember you reached a point at the third LP where, as you've said, you were going through a dry spell and after years of touring you were tired and needed to make a change.

MIKE: But they asked us to change. They almost said, "You guys sound too much like Loverboy," and that used to drive me crazy. That's like telling the Beach Boys they sound too much like the Beach Boys. They wanted to hear something different so we gave it to them. Now we can say we shouldn't have done that: we should've kept doing what we do because that's what we do.

CM: Has the band's identity changed much over the years?

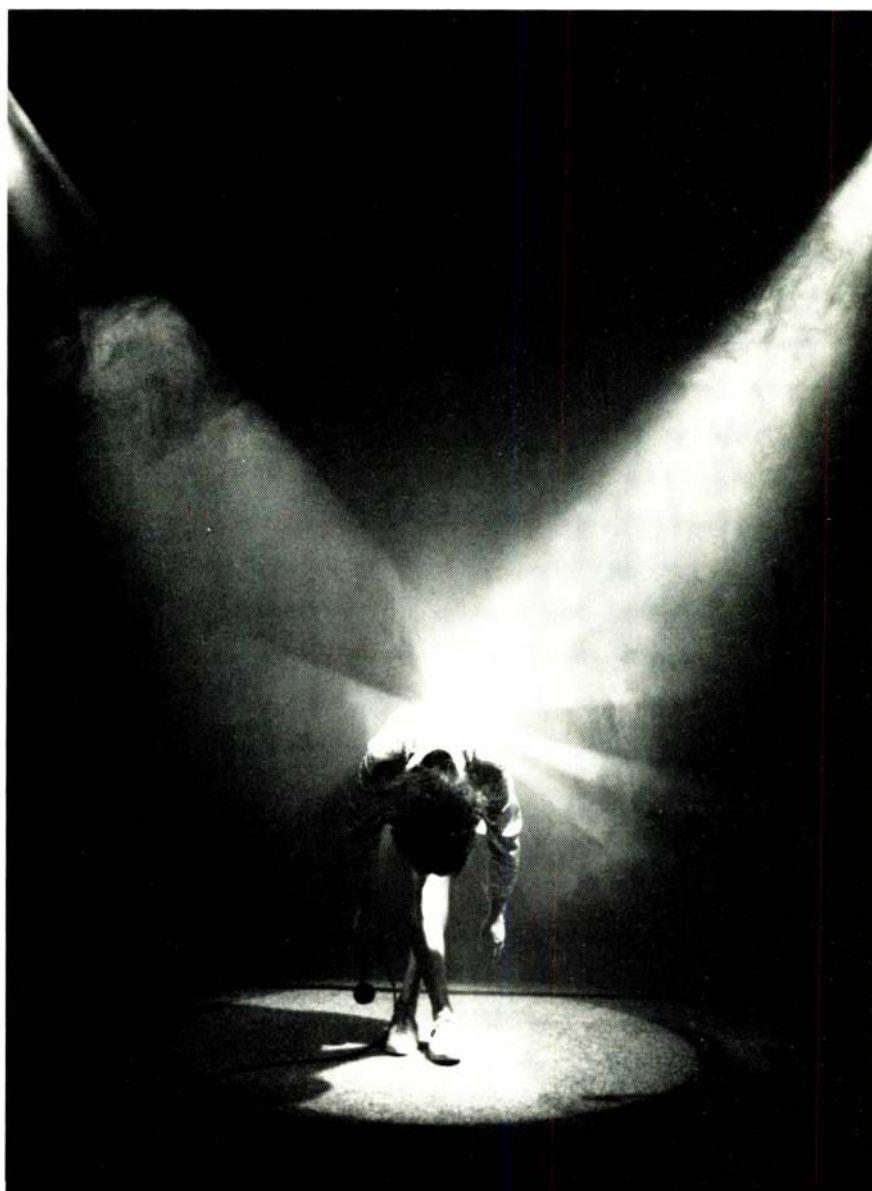
PAUL: I don't know how people perceive us

anymore. I think we split the audience more than we used to. People either really like us or they don't like us; there is a polarity whereas before they either really liked us or they didn't care.

CM: After close to nine years the band has become established. It must be hard to get people excited about a new Loverboy album.

MIKE: We're not the new kids on the block, that's for sure.

PAUL: Where we live in West Van, people see us on the street and they've already got our autograph twice and they've already taken pictures with their kids and they've already sat and talked with us, so now it's "How ya doin'?" Like you say, after nine years, it's "Yeah, it's Loverboy, no big deal."



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FAWZ





PULLING GOLD FROM THE WELL

B Y T I M O ' C O N N O R

Writing songs is a little like fetching water; you can only go to the well so often.

It's an analogy that Haywire could relate to earlier this year. When the Charlottetown band presented about 30 songs it had written for its second album to Attic Records, the company wasn't satisfied. Attic wanted some stronger songs. Four or five more.

"We said 'Geez, we're all tapped out,'" said singer Paul MacAusland.

Keyboardist David Rashed, one half of the band's main writing team with guitarist Marvin Birt, said they had been writing for four months and "by the end of that we were just so exhausted. It was disappointing because we thought we had a lot of good hooky tunes. We just told him (A&R director Brian Allen) we couldn't write anymore."

The company suggested the band write some songs with Taylor Rhodes of Nashville who's written with Honeymoon Suite and most recently co-wrote a few tunes on Loverboy's new *Wildside* LP. With Rhodes coming off the bench with fresh legs, the group came up with the additional songs Attic wanted for the new record *Just Don't Stand There*. It's just the thing to build on the momentum of the 1986 debut *Bad Boys* which went gold and established the unabashedly mainstream quintet as mid-level contenders in Canada.

Any fears about the second album jinx have been nixed with *Just Don't Stand There*. The LP looks certain to eclipse *Bad Boys* in sales, but it's also vaulted the band into the "next big thing" sweepstakes. These commercial rockers mine similar ground as Glass Tiger, always digging for that great hook, and

they've tapped a rich melodic vein.

They've also gone an important step forward; they've developed their own sound and made many people forget this was the band critics said sounded too much like Honeymoon Suite and Loverboy. They've refined their pop side, but they've also beefed up the rhythm end as evidenced by "Dance Desire," the first single. The song's success on radio and in discos has broadened the band's appeal from the 14-year-old screamers who pack Haywire concerts to night-clubbing dancers.

Yet, it was a tough labour. "As an act gains success in its field, each successive album becomes a little more of a painstaking creative process," said Allen, who returned as producer for the new LP. "It's really tough to expand. You tend to take a little more time to make sure everything is right."

And that included sending Haywire back to the drawing board after it had delivered the initial batch of songs. Allen said: "We didn't feel they had written up to their potential at that point."

He said most groups which write their own songs have to go through the "whittling process." In conjunction with the band, the producer and record company executives throw out the duds and the songs that sound too similar ("self-plagiarism" Allen calls it). Allen said the group needed a minimum of 10 songs for the album and two extra.

"They had been writing their buns off and when you get locked away with an idea and you read it over enough times, you may be convinced it's great. But someone comes in and says 'Hang on, this piece goes nowhere, while this one is fine.' And you're going 'Shit,

I thought this was great,'" said Allen, who played guitar and was the main writer in the band Toronto for five years.

To help the band get those creative juices flowing again, Attic suggested they try writing with Rhodes. "There was no sense of sending them back into the same room with the same pens and same guitars and expect them to come up with something fresh. Sometimes collaboration between various parties can unlock various areas of your mind you haven't used," he said. "And not only did they end up writing some good songs, but it also helped the predominant writing members of the band to look at things from a different angle."

But he's quick to point out that Attic didn't doubt the band's songwriting ability. "They're damn good writers. That's one of the reasons I wanted to sign the act."

Allen also liked the dedication and professionalism the band had shown since MacAusland, Rashed, Birt, bassist Ron Switzer and drummer Sean Kilbride formed Haywire in 1982. After two years on the roads of the Atlantic provinces, it won a band competition sponsored by a Darmouth, N.S., radio station. The band won studio time to record a single, but invested its own money and recorded a five-song EP. Released in June 1985, the self-titled record sold more than 5,000 copies in the Maritimes.

It was the first step in a series of good breaks that led to their signing with Attic in January 1986. *Bad Boys*, with four songs re-recorded from the EP, was released the following August and went gold only four months later. Already well-known on the East Coast, a national tour supporting Kim

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Haywire

Mitchell introduced Haywire to a national audience. But now it's spreading beyond Canadian borders: earlier this year, the band represented Canada at the Yamaha World Popular Song Festival in Tokyo. Pepsi was so impressed, it sponsored their 22-date tour of the Maritimes in September. Haywire was also nominated best new group for the 1987 Juno Awards.

Allen said the members of Haywire have accomplished most of this on their own. He said Attic has not had to "shape" the band's stage show or lead it by the hand through the studio or songwriting. "They know the essence of writing a good song. I was attracted by their obvious energy and they're genuine (on stage). They don't feel fake to me at all."

Nevertheless, it took Allen to establish the direction of the group's new material after he noticed something special the band did during an opening set for Mitchell in Toronto in the summer of 1986. Haywire had made little changes in many of the songs from *Bad Boys*, including a "funk-rock thing - The band all of a sudden cooked a little more than they did with their normal stuff. They were smiling a lot and having fun, plus they had cooked up this little tongue-in-cheek choreography thing."

Allen told them later how much he loved the tune and routine, and they told him they love doing it. "I said this could be part of the

new Haywire approach. So we developed that further in the writing stage. And the guys became more confident with that idea of hyping up the bottom end a little more and becoming a lot more rhythmic, (while) still incorporating a lot of pop-rock sensibilities into the stuff. This was one of the major turning points toward a conscious effort to steer it into a direction on this album."

That sense of fun also carried into the three studios where *Just Don't Stand There* was recorded. The first album was hard work because Allen and the band didn't know each other that well, but this time "we knew what each other's socks smelled like," Allen said. He said he played all roles as producer, from "overseer" to "suggestion-maker" to "the person pushing for a better performance." Nevertheless, it was painstaking work and they ran overtime in the studios.

Recording began at Metalworks in Mississauga, Ont., but they ran out of time and went to Manta Sound in Toronto for three or four days. They finally finished up at Morin Heights near Montreal. "With this album, we were a little more picky and choosy with the songs," Rashed said. "On the first album, if a part wasn't right, it might have been good enough. But now with the experience of being in the studio, we took the time to do it right even at the cost of going over two weeks in the studio."

Whether it's the band's studio savvy or popularity, it still comes as a bit of a surprise to Toronto types who think the only thing to ever come out of P.E.I. was a cute story about

a red-haired girl. "We've already proved you can make it from P.E.I.," said MacAusland. "Attic has asked us 'Why don't you move to Toronto and be where the music scene is?' But I think that would probably hurt us more than it would do us any good. Back there, we're used to our own environment and you feel really relaxed when you get back there. When you're up here (Toronto), you find out the ups and downs of the music business. Like, say your single wasn't doing as well as you expected. You'd be disappointed. And that goes right to heart. And if I had to do a concert a couple days later, I couldn't perform as well."

The band hasn't limited itself by staying based in Charlottetown, MacAusland said, even though it must pay increased costs to transport equipment across the country and all its phone calls with Attic are long distance. And Allen notes Attic executives are in "daily contact" with retailers and radio stations across the country. A&M also distributes Attic nationally.

But Rashed and MacAusland aren't interested in being equated with a region or being labelled. "I don't look at us as a commercial band," Rashed said. "Our music appeals to a lot more people than if we were doing really radical music. We just write the songs that feel natural to do at the time. We're just writing about what we're doing and feeling at the time ... just good clean fun."

"It doesn't matter what you look like or where you're from. What it comes down to is really good songs." □

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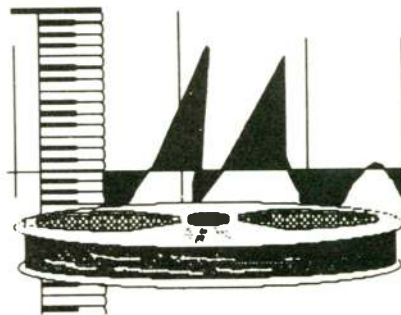
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Rock

FASHION

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New Regime

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Have symphonies dispensed with their string sections? Has the guitar been supplanted by the lyre as the instrument of choice for folksingers? No. It's much more serious than that. It's about studded bracelets.

The word comes from photographer Pat Harbron. Noted for his work with many of Canada's top and aspiring-to-top stars in the music industry, Harbron learned of the cataclysmic change while on assignment with Heavy Metal thunderers, Anvil. "I was amazed," he confides, plainly still reeling from the disclosure.

While dressing the band for a sleeve photo Harbron laid in his usual supply of HM paraphernalia, generally enough to keep a modestly sized S & M specialty shop well stocked. Handing one of the Anvils the Fetish, an act Harbron's performed for every metal act he's ever photographed, he was dumbfounded at being refused. It was then that he got the word. Harbron recounts the moment: "We were almost ready to start shooting when I handed one to one of the guys. He just shook his head and told me, 'Studded bracelets are out, man.' So we lost them." You'd think he was refusing a stick of gum!

There you have it. It is one of nature's wonders that most changes are so gradual as to be imperceptible to the human eye. Erosion takes centuries, evolution occurs through milleniums. But here, before our very eyes, something that seemed so stable, so reliable, so *predictable* has been altered, never to be the same again. "Studded bracelets are out." One shudders at the consequences. What could be next: Springsteen in polyester?

More importantly, though, especially for the hordes of metalheads still at home, still practicing, still shopping for things like studded bracelets, is the question: How were we to know? If it weren't for the lucky accident of reading this article some poor wrist-bound kids would be fruitlessly working towards an impossible career, victims of their own fashion ignorance.

And what about the others? Who's to tell them that lame is out; that skinny ties don't cut it anymore; that they should leave their sister's makeup alone? In an ever more fashion conscious music industry, sartorial suicide is only a photo session away.

The latest trend in the endlessly microscopic analysis of the music business is trying to establish the role of "imaging" in music marketing. Putting album graphics aside for the moment, since imaging can be reduced, albeit simplistically, to meaning how one looks, the bottom line of it must be Fashion. If, as the saying goes, "Clothes make the man," and the man (or, of course, woman) makes music, then is it also true that, "Clothes make the music?" Some would argue. "Yes."

Remarking on the comparative speed in which a total promotion package (record, video, tour -- not necessarily in that order) is foisted on the public, photographer Harbron makes an astute observation: "People see hit singles before they hear them these days." This being the case, a cottage industry of stylists, fashion co-ordinators and image consultants has gained credibility among record and management companies.

And who can blame them? On the musician's end of the stick you have people who have, to varying degrees, devoted themselves to their craft. Playing an instrument, writing a song, that's more than enough to keep a body busy. On the management end they're busy checking demographics, arguing with bank managers,

phoning the Mercedes dealer looking to replace a stolen hood ornament. Who has time for fashion? With the possible exception of Ray Danniels, have you ever seen a manager dressed well? But as the record-buying public has become increasingly educated in the language of fashion (through TV, films and a plethora of fashion magazines), their demands on the appearance of their favourite groups have become remarkably sophisticated as well. The bands have to keep up.

Kevin Connelly is the frontman for New Regime. When the band first surfaced a couple of years ago they wore the big haircuts and loud clothes that were *de rigueur* at the time. These days they appear in varying degrees of leather and denim, which, not coincidentally, is *de rigueur* now. Look at Platinum Blonde, Loverboy, 54-40, Haywire, Spoons, and on and on. Everybody is dressing down these days.

"For the first LP," Connelly contends, "we were trying to stick out from the voices in the crowd using exaggerated dress to do it. In a business that is as extreme as this you're not just dressing up, you're dressing out." Now the band has gone for what is generally referred to as the "modified street look," clothes that can be worn both on- and off-stage. What they're saying to their audience is: we're one of you (but we're up here and you're not).

But the current trend of democratizing fashions for rock-oriented bands is not paralleled by trends in other styles of music and dress. Funk and R&B bands still rely on an exotic combination of slick high fashion formal wear and lingerie for their "look," inspired most obviously by Prince. "Big" bands, usually long established ones with older musicians, like Genesis, including our own Rush and Triumph rely on a kind of relaxed, casual look that has become the leisure suit of the eighties. And Heavy Metal



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Rock Fashion



Liona Boyd

is as Heavy Metal has always been (except for the lost bracelets): a blantant cop of the New York Dolls and KISS with a bit of Hell's Angels thrown in for good measure. Each style of music has its own set of fashion conventions, which means each "look" has a distinctive voice that speaks to the audience.

But, what's being said? And perhaps more importantly, how can someone who knows music but can't dress well to save his/her life get into the conversation?

Molly Johnson, *chanteuse extraordinaire*, lives in the heart of Toronto's bohemia, Queen Street West. Dividing her time between her band, the aggressively funky Alta Moda, and her lounge act (which performed for a week at the prestigious Imperial Room in the Royal York Hotel

earlier this year) Blue Monday, Johnson is an example of how different fashions work more effectively for different styles of music.

"When I'm doing Blue Monday," she explains, "I'll wear vintage clothing, usually something old I've picked up in Kensington Market for next to nothing." In the slinky gowns of bygone eras Johnson evokes the image of her blues predecessors, most particularly Billie Holliday. But when she's kicking out with Alta Moda, Johnson needs something flash, something astonishing, and, as she states pragmatically, "Something I can sweat in." A fragile bit of linen that won't make it past the first dry cleaning may be gorgeous, but totally impractical.

For her Alta Moda gear, Johnson looks to the young fashion designers whose shops litter the Queen Street area. "If you're going to be a billboard," she notes, remarking on the increasing reliance on musicians as fashion trendsetters, "then why not be a billboard for your friends?" On any given night you might see the singer in dresses by some of Canada's best young designers including Comrags, Bent Boys and Price Roman, none of which are exclusive to Toronto.

Often Johnson will borrow outfits, cleaning and returning them the next day, so that there's always something new to see, always a surprise. She has also come to rely on a stylist, Sharmain Beddoe (also her best friend), to hustle up outfits from various designers. Eventually hunting for clothes became too demanding on Johnson's time: "I hate to think about clothes, it's too

distracting."

But Johnson is a fashion natural, someone who always looks stylish and is secure about her personal and professional fashion statements. Others are not quite so confident. Until recently Strange Advance wouldn't even allow their photograph to appear on their album jackets. For their latest release Current Records called in a stylist, Myles Rogers, to appropriate a look for the band. For photographer Pat Harbron, it presented an interesting challenge.

"Because I'm the guy who's responsible for the immediate visuals," he explains, "if they come to me and say they want something new it's very exciting." Harbron prefers to work with a stylist because at least then there's some expertise involved in the choices being made. For Strange Advance nothing too outrageous was needed, just something that



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Rock Fashion

would convey the mood of the music and the style of the band. The end result was a subdued portrait of Darryl Kromm and Drew Arnett that shows them to be serious while not intense, and stylish without being too flashy. Just like their songs.

The decisions made about a band's image often include input from sources outside of the band, namely management and record company flacks. Since the onset of the stylist boom bands have had to deal with a phenomenal amount of scrutiny on their overall appearance and its ultimate effect. Gerry Young, who manages both Alta Moda and Strange Advance, would prefer to leave the bands to their own devices, but he recognizes that the scrounging abilities of the stylist is a major factor in his use of them: "Most bands," he explains, "can't afford the clothes it takes to make them look good."

Another reason why management companies are looking more and more towards stylists is that with rosters of talent that include diverse styles, one person in the organization would have to be conversant in too many fashion languages. Even if a manager knew enough about fashion to outfit one band, could he be expected to dress two or three more? At TBA where the management team of Bruce Barrow and Tony Tsavbaris just finished toning down Platinum Blonde, they're also busy gussying up the new High-NRG combo Tu.

In the last couple of years a few established

Canadian acts have gone through major image overhauls. Anne Murray (from rural coziness to urban chic), Liona Boyd (from rigid formality to a softer more leisurely look), and Platinum Blonde (from extravagant leathers and makeup to the aforementioned modified street look) are but three examples of image reappraisals that have gotten more than their share of media attention. While it would be hard to find three more divergent acts to illustrate a point, it's important to note that all three made their decisions for the same combination of reasons: to broaden their audience by changing the way people see them. And all three were equally concerned that they might be making the biggest mistake of their careers.

Tim Blanks, a regular contributor to *Canadian Musician* knows a thing or two about the subject. Recently he became the editor of *To-*

ronto Life Fashion, the country's pre-eminent fashion magazine and his observations on both fashion and music are heeded in both camps. Of the two dozens of Canadian music he states: "Anne Murray's decision didn't hurt her. So she lost a few peasant fans and gained 25 billion new fans. And Liona Boyd? It was a ridiculous move because it was so artificial." For Blanks it's not just the look but the motive that can make or break an image changeover. For him Platinum Blonde will get away with their new look because, "The audience can relate to: 'I'm sick of squeezing myself into leather drainpipes every Saturday night.' Why not put on a pair of old denims and a t-shirt, it's comfortable."

When changing looks, or simply establishing one for yourself Blanks offers this advice: "The star who changes his image all the time might get respect and admiration, but he'll



Platinum Blonde

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Rock Fashion

never get adulation. The great thing about Cary Grant was that he was always Cary Grant. That's something that stars who are bigger than stars have ever been. like Madonna or Springsteen, know."

While he admits that, "Force of personality can subsume a visual image," Blanks will not underestimate the value of having a strong sense of personal fashion. "Having an original look," he claims, "requires as much genius as having an original sound."

In North America there is the apparent need to convey that everything about a performer's look comes naturally to that individual, something that doesn't necessarily hold true around the world. So many styles and trends that come from abroad are accepted here, but not all of the strategies are. In an environment such as London, where fashion means everything on a social level, Blanks points out that, "It's impossible to be in the forefront anymore," so the emphasis is on using trends, not establishing them. As Pat Harbron says, "While groups are often the arbiters of fashions and fads, they're influenced by what's around them as well."

The English are not as hung up on "originality" as we are. "To get attention," Blanks says, "a band will be conspicuous wearing designers that everyone knows cost a fortune. They are following a fashion statement being made by someone else and that shows their upward mobility."

If wearing, and affording, designer fashions is more than some new band blowing in from Saskatchewan can bear, then Blanks has this advice to offer:

- 'Option' is the key word in the fashion kingdom, and it's the same thing with pop. Nothing is more versatile than neutrality. But neutrality needn't be wimpiness, that's a mistake that they all make. I mean, Sade did it brilliantly. She was a blank canvas on which any audience anywhere could project its dreams or aspirations.

- If you're insecure, start with the simplest. A strong sense of self is very evident in the way you look.

- You have to dress honestly so that you're not fussing about yourself. People always respond to honesty. They'll respond to hype, but not forever.

- Don't pick up on a look, because chances are you don't have the good sense to know when it's finished, and nothing dates you faster.

While it may be well nigh impossible to tell whether or not a performer's dress effects record and ticket sales, there are certain examples that illustrate Blanks' points. Larry Gowan, for example. It is Blanks' opinion that Gowan's contrived, comic-book image and highly stylized stage persona will perpetually keep him back: "You get the real sense that someone told him: 'This is your good side.' You get that sense that it's very calculated, very studied and very uncomfortable."

On the other hand, though, Blanks notes that breaking from traditionalism just for change's sake can also be a mistake. "Irony," he explains, "puts a North American audi-



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Rock Fashion



Gowan

ence off. Heavy Metal in a tux just wouldn't work. The audience's expectations are defined by the style of music.

"Fifteen years ago David Bowie did Ziggy Stardust. Since then there's been a real coming together of art, fashion, music and film. It's much more of a cultural stew than ever. And with video the cross-referencing is going on at such a rate that you see a David Lynch

film one day and the next you see twelve videos with borrowed images from it." Because of the constant repetition of videos and the ready availability of most new fashions, creating a blatant or outrageous image grows old faster than a sick joke.

A few years back American rocker Billy Squire tried to broaden his appeal by dressing more "fashionably" in one of his videos. In a ripped pink tank top a la *Flashdance* and

a pair of painted on pants he careened about his stage set like a whirling dervish. That video, and that look, almost buried his career. Says Blanks: "If David Bowie said, 'Should I come out in a tu-tu?' You're going to say: 'You can do anything, the more theatrical the better.' But if Billy Squire says: 'Should I come out in a *Flashdance* outfit?' You'd say: 'Billy, get off the pot, the audience is going to hate that.'" Obviously it was a question Squire neglected to ask.

The music business is easily as subject to whim and change as the fashion business is. Sometimes appearance is the be all and end all. Sometimes a nice set of clothes isn't worth a tinker's damn. Needless to say the music has to come first, but once you've established that the art is in place, it's time to get your act together.

Tim Blanks says that there are five basic fashion themes to choose from. 1. Expensive classic; 2. Japanese influence; 3. Body conscious; 4. Street; and 5. Eccentric. While he states rock stylists (as opposed to stylists with a fashion background like Rogers and Beddoe, the two stylists mentioned above) are unnecessary ("They're all failed fashion designers."), he accepts that they will generally draw their inspiration from one of these five themes.

He also stresses that honesty is the best policy: "Don't jump on a bandwagon. If you have faith in your music and you look the way you look, it should translate into an image. Anything studied looks desperate and nothing is more unattractive than desperation." □

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Choosing A Sound System

If there was one thing better about buying sound systems ten years ago, it was making the final decision on what to get. This was by virtue of the fact that you had a much shorter list to choose from to begin with. Nowadays that list has grown exponentially and a whole new factor is present: obsolescence. In the old days A7 enclosures were passed down from generation to generation but there appear to be no new industry mainstays. In fact, in each interview we conducted for this section we asked if anyone thought there was a single new product that would stand the test of time. We drew

the same negative response in each case.

The silver lining is that between cost effective technology and a competitive marketplace, musicians have the opportunity to get their hands on hi-tech and formerly high ticket gear at prices within their grasps.

But there is no sure hedge against obsolescence. Mind you, there are a couple of characteristics to look for in equipment that can lead to long and productive service: equipment that is modular and versatile. There is a prevailing paranoia that the equipment you are purchasing is in the process of being outdated and devalued moments after the cash register rings and locks shut. This is not true. It happens months (years?) earlier when the grandson of a Kamikaze pilot working in R and D across the world proudly walks into his boss' office. He is holding the new, improved model that replaces the one that you will be the first on the block to own, eight months later.

The idea is to generate as much foresight as you can in choosing equipment. For younger bands this means choosing a power amp for your sound system that works well in tandem with others. As you graduate to larger rooms you'll be half way there, or have a solid amp for monitor purposes.

Bands that have outgrown their eight and twelve channel mixers because they need two extra inputs may think their only option is a sixteen input console. Rather than going

for the sixteen (and probably running out of inputs soon after) they might consider a unit that has space for twenty four input modules and purchase it with just the fourteen they need, expanding when necessary.

Another area of sound reinforcement that is going through a deceptive stage is outboard gear. It is by far the most unstable of the links that make up a sound system, in terms of obsolescence. While MIDI was establishing a solid foothold on the synthesizer/sampler/drum machine market, manufacturers kept churning out new and improved digital delays, choruses, reverbs etc. without those funny plugs on the back. In our research we have found that most sound people still haven't MIDified their racks but the tide is turning. Consequently there will be some excellent deals on good quality delays etc., from people who want totally MIDI effects racks, but before you get bullish (I always wanted to write for *The Wall Street Journal*) on these units, take a look down the road and try to establish where you see yourself.

Finally, there is one more area to touch on. Where once you could add a musician to your group and needed one more mike and an input on the console, you now can drop two people but require six more inputs because of a new keyboard or rack set-up. So when you're choosing a new system remember to keep open as many options as possible, and a year down the line you'll be glad you did.

SOUND ON SOUND

Yamaha series 2000 and 3000 mixers which he is very pleased with. "They allow one person to do more," he stated. "The subgrouping features offer lots of flexibility."

Before ending our trans-continental conversation with Joey Wolpert we asked him if there was anything he'd like to add, possibly in the form of advice, to younger sound engineers getting their careers under way. He thought for a moment before solemnly answering.

"Don't bend over the back of a piece of equipment looking for a problem and light a match," he advised. "Many a soundman has set his head on fire. Carry a flashlight."

Brad Mulligan: Mercenary of Sound

"I call myself a mercenary of sound," Brad Mulligan admitted in a recent conversation. "I just did a two hour live to air mix for Global and CHIN. Before that I was out for a month with an industrial tour and most of my spring was taken up doing theatrical shows. I've been working with several bands as well."

These bands include Chalk Circle, The Rhythm Twins, Tom Cochrane and Jane Siberry who he devotes a lot of his time to.

Brad may call himself a mercenary but he's also what might be called a renaissance (sound) man, well versed in the techniques and equipment for most live sound situations. He also operates, along with four partners, Reel Time Productions, a company that supplies a variety of sound services.

"I guess you could say I'm a real Lexicon lover," Brad said in discussing his outboard rack which includes a Lexicon PCM42, PCM60, and a PCM70. He also uses a

*"Garbage in,
garbage out."*

Brad Mulligan

Valley People 802 processing rack with Kepex, Gain Brains, e.q. and noise gates.

"I use a Yamaha Master MIDI Station to control my PCM70, Rev 7 and a DH1500 and plan on using it extensively on the next Jane Siberry tour."

Working on Siberry's sound system is a big pre-occupation of Brad's that he spends a lot of time on.

"Jane is a very demanding artist and she knows what she wants," he explained. "When

I work with her, the system is quite extensive because she has such high standards and is very finicky about her monitors."

At the moment Brad is in the planning stages of a monitor system for the next Siberry tour that is a drastic departure from the norm. It would have her wearing wireless, walkman-like ear implants.

It is a system similar to the one currently being used by Stevie Wonder and when Wonder was recently in town, Brad was given a tour of the set-up by Bruce Drysdale.

"There's a guy under the stage that does Stevie Wonder's mix and a second guy looking after the FM transmission equipment to the wireless earphones," he explained. "Well as you can imagine I'm trying to do the same thing but on a Canadian budget."

Scratch two guys under the stage, not to mention an additional subterranean thirty thousand dollar mixer. Brad is in the process of tackling that problem as well and believes he has an angle on bringing the system in at a reasonable cost.

When asked what he felt about technology possibly being a crutch that performers could successfully take advantage of to hide weaknesses, Brad had definite views on the subject.

"Garbage in, garbage out," he believes. "The bottom line is that you have to have it and you can't buy it, no matter how much technology you have. One of the biggest jokes soundmen share goes: when the band has a bad night — the sound was terrible."

Brad Mulligan's eclectic sound engineering

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skills were well put to the test at an outdoor show in Fort Erie. An all day affair with ten thousand people in attendance, the performances were supplied by a day of rock and roll bands followed by the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra with The Toronto Mendelsohn Choir.

"We had a two hour changeover from a basic rock and roll set-up to an orchestra and choir involving over one hundred and twenty microphones," Brad said of the show he worked on with Band Aid. "No sound check either."

By using a C.D. player and lots of classical compact discs, the system had to be re-equalized during the changeover while ten thousand patiently waited.

"I had the assistant conductors of the orchestra and the choir going over the score, cueing me on parts," he said recalling one of the most exhilarating jobs of his career.

Brad believes that a wealth of information is available for those interested, just for the price of asking.

"When I was in high school and bands would come to play, I'd be there when they showed up in the afternoon and I'd offer to help out the soundman for free. They were usually very receptive and I learned a lot from some good people including Paul DeVilliers (who went on to produce Mr. Mister and Yes) and it was one of the greatest ways to figure out how it all fits together," he continued. "But I don't see that today. I've never had somebody come up to me and ask questions. I'd be glad to help anyone looking for some information."



Michael Barlow

Michael Barlow: Road Warrior

While many live sound engineers work in a variety of styles and applications, Michael Barlow could definitely be considered a specialist. Although he is well versed in most aspects of live sound, his chosen field of endeavor is rock and roll.

Although his allegiance is to Platinum Blonde, who he's been with through thick and thin, he's managed to do live work with Lee

Aaron, New Regime, Glass Tiger and Eye Eye, keeping on track with his rock and roll preferences.

And don't for a second think that his hard rock infatuation is representative of a "let's party" attitude. His approach to sound is both studied and methodical.

"I learned a lot from seeing soundmen doing things right, and doing things wrong," he recalled. After an initiation into the music biz with Blue Max that had him doing sound and lights, he worked with more Toronto-based bands improving his skills while on the road.

Last summer "the road" took him to Europe with Lee Aaron where Murphy's Law

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came into play.

His personal rack which contains a Lexicon PCM70, three SPX90s, a Roland SRV2000 and various Ashley and DBX compressors and gates, was damaged in shipping.

"The PCM70 was the master MIDI controller and of course the unit that was damaged," he said. With shows to do and little time to react, he had to program all his effects manually. This incident did not sour his attitude towards MIDI and he's investigating new MIDI applications.

"I'm looking forward to experimenting with the DMP7, the new digital mixing processor built by Yamaha that allows for automated and MIDI based mixing," he claimed. "I hope to have one on tour with The Blondes this time, and use it as an auxiliary mixer to try different approaches."

Michael also believes that performers should be disencumbered of technical tasks when on stage, and is planning a fully MIDI system for Platinum Blonde where the keyboard and percussion signals are transferred through MIDI to a master MIDI section off stage, with an operator controlling all of the sounds.

With Platinum Blonde leaning towards more elaborate arrangements on their new album, Michael knows these changes have to shine in live performance and it is a part of his job to be sure the right gear is being im-

plemented.

"In the console department I find the Yamaha PM3000 and the Soundcraft Series 4 to be outstanding quality products and since my livelihood depends on whether or not the mix happens, I prefer to use either of those," he said.

With the improved quality of home audio and the advent of the compact disc, standards have increased dramatically in the last few years. Barlow believes that concert goers expect, and are entitled to attend high fidelity live performances.

"The tools are there and in working with the players you can reproduce what they did in the studio, or a different version live if it's desired, but with equal quality."

As much as he pursues state of the art live sound, Michael still has a rocker's attitude towards what a concert should be and makes sure he can hold up his end of the bargain. He goes for the sub-sonic bins on the floor to take care of the lows and to move air, for more feel.

When it comes to the road Michael knows hard work and sweat are no strangers to the people that keep the wheels of live music in motion, the crews. Sadly, greedy and deceptive management are no strangers either.

"I'd like to create a contract for road crew people that would protect them from being denied payment for work rendered," he said, remarking on a concept he's had in mind for a while. Meanwhile his work is cut out for him, preparing for a Platinum Blonde tour and wherever the road leads.

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fully!), the retailers. They deal with the demands, the desires and the dollars of musicians everywhere, and we spoke with a selection of them from around the country.

Steve Coster: Kostar, Montreal

From his vantage point as one of Montreal's main live sound equipment sources, Steve Coster is seeing a shift in direction.

"Bands are getting away from the massive modular systems, the ones with bulky components such as butterfly cabinets," he says. "Normally those were long throw systems. In club work there are people sitting ten to fifteen feet in front of the speakers, and a short throw speaker is more appropriate."

The long standing axiom that many club bands lived by prescribed going for "the highest common denominator" in choosing a live sound reinforcement system. One set-up that took care of your most demanding conditions, and that you tolerated the rest of the time.

"People are going to an all-in-one-box, usually front loaded and smaller," he says, and Kostar meets these demands with Turbo Sound cabinets which he rents exclusively. He finds them adaptable to a large variety of live sound applications.

"We'll rent them to a club band and when we have a major show we'll put sixteen together."

To go with the Turbo Sound cabinets, Coster has found that Soundcraft consoles and QSC power amps create a winning combination.

Kostar rents a variety of equipment and MIDI is not a major factor in most requests.

"A lot of musicians are very naive about sound," Steve believes. "Players that are up on elaborate keyboard and guitar set-ups, know very little about sound or even system wiring."

He also doesn't believe that a large percentage of soundmen are as knowledgeable as they should be. A lot of musicians put their sound in hands that are not the most capable.

"They leave it up to the soundmen, a lot of whom are not up to par with the musicians they work with."

In the processing department, he sees several new products that he believes are standouts, both technically and value-wise.

"A company in the United States called CDT makes a great product called the Polyframe," he says. "It contains eight effects in one double rack space including two compressors, two quad noise gates and other effects like the Dynex, a device that prevents the leakage of drums into vocal mics. It works very well for singing drummers." The Polyframe, including eight effects, retails for twenty-seven hundred dollars.

Steve also thinks very highly of Alesis and Lexicon products, having a general preference for the sound of American processing

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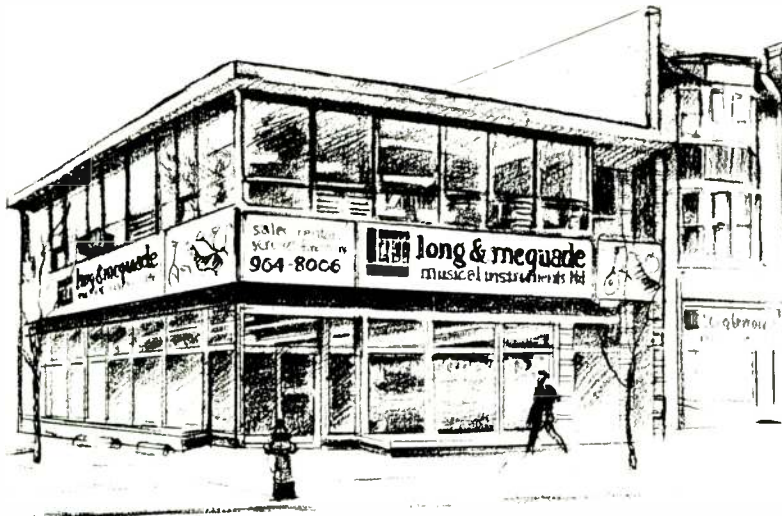
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SOUND ON SOUND

equipment, as opposed to the Japanese products which have gained a firm grip on the market.

He also sees another factor affecting live sound reinforcement decisions and it has nothing to do with sound.

"More of band's budgets are going into elaborate lighting set-up," he claims, "and most club owners concur. The nicer clubs don't want huge speaker stacks that take away from table space. They don't mind lights, because they sit on stage and are visually exciting."

Dave "Benny" Bennett: Westbury Sound

Westbury Sound in Toronto supplies systems to an elite and varied group of performers that include Gowan, Honeymoon Suite and Raffi. Performers that expect the most up to date gear in the systems that they take out. CM asked Benny at Westbury about technology and obsolescence in sound equipment.

"It is definitely reaching a point where it's useful life is shorter," he replied. "We used to get five or six years out of a console and it was still considered reasonably state of the art. These days the technology that you see in keyboard equipment is showing up in live mixing consoles which haven't been touched until recently. I can see the mixing consoles of today and tomorrow having a useful life of a couple of years."

With all the technology starting to be aimed at the core of any sound system — the console — and most effects now being manufactured fully MIDI, we wondered if sound engineers were taking advantage of the technology already waiting at their fingertips. "There aren't many soundmen using it yet," Benny said. "We just finished a tour with Honeymoon Suite and their sound engineer Al Robb has racks of MIDI equipment ganged together. He uses a remote unit that sits on top of the console and definitely takes advantage of MIDI."

"With most of the other sound engineers we work with, they will have half a dozen effects, and use one for one song and another unit for the next."

Benny himself sees the writing on the wall, and although Westbury doesn't have any MIDI consoles as of yet, he believes they will be more visible in the marketplace in the next six months to a year.

He also believes the new generation of effects are reliable under "industrial use" road conditions, but "it's starting to get to the point where your average technician can't repair them anymore."

"Most technicians are more familiar with analog signal processing and now the equip-

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ment utilizes the microprocessor," he continued. "Since the equipment is all so different, you'd be better off sending it back to the manufacturer where the tech who fixes the unit all the time will take care of it, or replace a faulty factory installed i.c."

More and more of the bands Westbury works with take their own effects racks on the road to duplicate live what they do in the studio, and even sample sounds from their albums to bring on the road.

"They will sample the drums and trigger the samplers with contacts or microphones, but the mikes aren't reproducing the live drums, just triggering the sampled sounds," he said, but the system is not perfect.

"You may hit one drum and the trigger for the next drum picks it up because it is right beside it, and the wrong drum is triggered. They're still working that out."

Alfred Larter: Music Stop, Halifax

Alfred Larter is the live sound specialist at Music Stop in Halifax and brought up an important factor concerning the direction live sound is taking.

"The gap is getting smaller between the audiophile sound standards that people have at home and live sound."

Bands on the east coast, as elsewhere in Canada are going on the road with more and more elaborate systems in tow. Just as the big recording acts have travelled with virtual recording studios on wheels, making their rounds of the arenas and stadiums, the club acts now more than ever are getting into the picture.

Larter sees the groups passing through the doors of Music Stop slowly building what amounts to very impressive set-ups, taking full advantage of the new technology and plummeting pricetags.

With MIDI making inroads in processing equipment used by live sound engineers, are bands on the east coast getting on this slow moving band wagon and MIDI'ing their sound systems? We asked Alfred.

"On the whole they're not," he replied. "I do know a soundman who has three Yamaha SPX90s and a MIDI controller. He has a very effective set-up that's really eased his workload a lot."

With all the jobs that some soundmen are responsible for including front of house sound, monitor mixes, lighting and visual effects (fog machines, flash-pots etc.) it's surprising that more of them don't take advantage of the benefits a MIDI controlled rack has to offer. Bands expect dozens of different sound changes in the course of a night, be it in original material or worse yet, in duplicating production characteristics of twenty different records. A MIDI set-up can simplify life for a soundman and free up time for other tasks. □



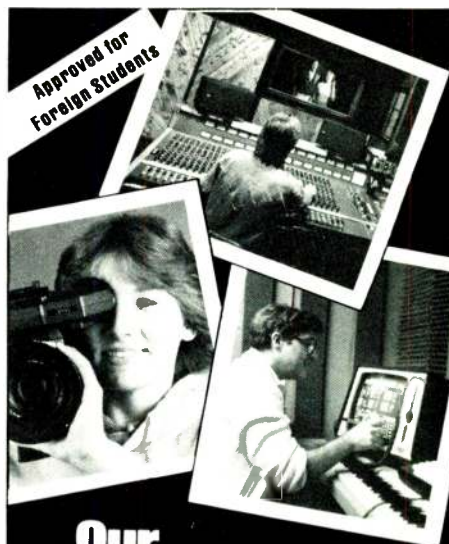
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GUITAR

LIVE AND STUDIO SETUPS FOR HONEYMOON SUITE

By Derry Grehan

For the purpose of this article, I've decided to focus mainly on the various equipment setups I have used in both studio and live situations.

There is really not a whole lot to talk about concerning the first *Honeymoon Suite* album, as it was a time when we had only the bare essentials and took them directly from the local rock bar, down the street to the studio. My setup, of course, was very basic, consisting of nothing more than a few pedals (chorus, distortion, delay) stuck crudely on a piece of wood and running through this old Marshall 50 watt head and a couple of 100 watt bot toms. It wasn't much but it sounded good at that time and did the job.

In the studio I used the same thing: a modified Marshall top that was kicking around Phase One at the time; and did without the space-age pedalboard for a few weeks. Since the album was done rather quickly and on a low budget, we more or less got a half decent guitar sound, and just went for that the whole way through. The only guitars I had then were a '72 Red Strat and a '68 Gibson SG Special, but neither sounded that good in the studio. Instead, I did almost the whole record with a beautiful old '65 Gibson SG, owned by Paul Gross of Phase One, with the exception of some clean parts on which I used the Strat (ie. "Wave Babies"). I should also mention at this time that I was messing around with some cheap wireless units when playing live and went through nothing but aggravation. Don't get me wrong, I love being wireless, but take my advice and stay on a cord until you can afford a dependable unit.

The Big Prize was a different story. There was a little more money, a little more time and we were certainly working with some of the best people in the business on that record. Bruce Fairbairn is an excellent producer and knows how to make a band sound the best they possibly can on record. I was very pleased with the overall guitar sound and owe a lot of that to Bob Rock. Almost all the amps I used were his. He knew his studio

(Little Mountain Sound) inside/out and how to make it sound good. We used mostly combinations of Hi-Watt heads and cabinets as well as my Marshalls. Almost all the time, we ran in stereo through an old Roland tape echo and sometimes had as many as three separate amp setups for one track.

For guitar, I did most of the album with an old Kramer SDS-1 guitar. It was more or less the predecessor to the Baretta, being a strat-style, one pick-up job with a Floyd Rose and maple neck. Other than some small acoustic parts, the only other guitar I used was my obnoxious pink Hamer Steve Stevens. Despite its appearance, it had the greatest out of phase strat-like tone that I used in parts of "Feel It Again."

During the year following the release of *The Big Prize*, my live set-up pretty well stayed the same with the addition of a NADY 700 wireless which worked great. I had begun to accumulate various guitars as I went along, which included the Hamer, a Carvin doubleneck, and several Lados, but the white Kramer was still my workhorse.

Unfortunately, half-way through the year we had our truck stolen in New Jersey while on tour with Heart. I lost all my amps plus eight guitars and can only say "Thank God for insurance." However, no money will ever replace your favourite axe.

I guess this brings us to the present, which finds me at home, for the moment, in Toronto getting ready to go back to L.A. in a few short weeks to finish recording album number three. We were all quite excited to learn that Ted Templeman would produce this record for us. I have to admit I was a little nervous playing guitar in front of him the first time, considering who this guy has worked with in the past.

Ted has a pretty simple approach to recording. He's into a group feel and once the band is set up in the studio where they can call all hear and see each other, the headphones are turned up loud and the tape machine rolls.

My studio setup this time is more basic



PHOTO: DIMO SAFARI

Derry Grehan

than before. There are two amps running in stereo by way of a Roland SDE 2500 with around 7-9 ml sec. between them. The cabinets are individually miked and are panned hard left and right to create a doubling effect. One head is a very old modified Marshall 50 watt, used on some Van Halen sessions, and a Seymour Duncan Convertible, which is used on the delayed signal. Up to this point, we've got the best tone from my Kramer Pacer with the occasional Baretta being used on some other tracks.

Probably the smartest, and certainly the most expensive investment I've made to date in my gear is the Bradshaw System.* It was well worth it as I was fed up with going on stage in front of thousands not knowing if my velcro & wood pedalboard would cut it for 45 minutes. The Bradshaw Box, as it's sometimes called, is quite simple. The smaller board, which I have, has three rows of five switches which trigger five presets, on/off switching for up to seven effects and two advance setting switches for the rack mountable units. There is a Korg Volume pedal thrown in for good measure. All effects can be used separately or in any combination with each other.

The rack holds an SPX90, Roland SDE 2500, Boss DDL, Ibanez Chorus and Tube Screamer pedals, Hush II C, Furman Power Bar and NADY 701 wireless. The whole system runs in stereo through two old Marshall 50 W heads and four cabinets.

For guitars these days I have an assortment of Kramers (which includes a few Baretas, a Pacer and a Ferrington) as well as a Steinberger, a Hamer Chapparel and a bunch of Lados, one of which has become my favourite of late. Affectionately known as "Ketchup & Mustard," this guitar was completely custom made from scratch by Joe and John at Lado.

*Based in L.A., Bob Bradshaw operates Custom Audio Electronics, 11125 Weddington St., N. Hollywood, CA 91601.

KEYBOARDS

TECHNOLOGY FOR HUMAN BEINGS



By Amin Bhatia

Amin Bhatia

In my life, I have had the good fortune to have worked with some damn ingenious legends in the biz, including David Foster and Toto's Steve Porcaro. The results of my work with them (as well as their kind pushing tapes through various doors), has resulted in my debut album on Capitol's new label Cinema Records.

The album is called *The Interstellar Suite*, and it's a science fiction fantasy that stems from my love for film music. It features synthesizers, sound effects, dialogue and symphonic orchestrations on a scope of pure high fidelity. (You know the ad for that tape manufacturer where a guy sitting in a chair is blown backward by the sound? This album does that).

Cinema Records is the new progressive label founded by radio guru Lee Abrams. The man invented the Album Oriented Rock format as we know it and he's now working at bringing back that progressive '70s sound. Consequently Cinema is mainly an instrumental rock label intended for lovers of Yes, Emerson Lake and Palmer and the Moody Blues. No we are NOT New Age! This is not music to wash your BMW by. It is music intended to be dynamic; to motivate rather than tranquilize. It works on all levels from high tech rock to orchestral synthesis and includes Patrick Moraz, Pete Bardens, Michael Hoenig and myself...so far.

Interstellar Suite, works on various levels of the orchestral synthesis variety. On a musical level it serves as a film score without the

film.

On a technical level it's an audiophile demo that'll really test your speakers and scare your neighbours! We worked hard to preserve the transients of the laser cannons and the thunder of the timpani rolls.

On another level I set out to prove something to the industry: There were absolutely no samplers used on this album. No Synclaviers, no Emulators, nothin'! We all know hundreds of acoustic instrument players that have had their sounds copped and stored on some floppy; rather than aggravate that issue I decided to create my synth orchestra from scratch. The result? A Roland Microcomposer with half of a TX 816 rack, a couple of Super JXs, an OB Expander and a souped up Minimoog! That's not a lot in today's technopop world, but with multitrack tape and a few months of sweat it results in about 120 different instruments at the same time...and it's thick!

People have asked me how many session players I brought in to sweeten up the synth tracks. When I reply "none" they proceed directly to the next obvious question: "What samplers d'ya use?" My biggest joy is the shocked look on their face when I again say "none".

You see, it is my belief that the thick gutsy wall of sound we all strive for does not come from MIDing up a room full of keyboards. It comes from working each element humanly and separately, then combining it later, track by track, layer by layer; the way the Beatles

used to do it, the way Disney used to do it, the way Lucasfilm does it now. Our musical history comes from giant concert halls with a hundred people playing together, humanly random, emotionally synchronized; something you just can't match with one digitized marcatto string sample on auto-correct! It takes time and several takes of each track, blended together to achieve a thick orchestral effect. If you're going to use your sampler use it as a starting point only. You have to multitrack! Several takes! Much time! It's worth it.

The success I've had with this technique is demonstrated in name-dropping examples like winning the Roland international synthesizer competition two years in a row; programming sounds for David Foster on his solo album (the sounds were later used in Michael Jackson's *Thriller*). Working with Steve Porcaro on synth programs and orchestral intros to Toto's last album, *Fahrenheit*. And finally, getting a call from Cinema records to actually do an album for money!

I'm quite proud to say that the joy in projects like these did not come from acquiring the latest piece of techno-gear. Nor did it come from the latest snare drum sampled off the CD of the week. It came from knowing one's existing equipment till it's second nature. Then, locking in and sweating till it sounds right.

(Amin Bhatia is an Edmonton based musician/programmer who has worked with David Foster and Toto.)

FROM STREETHEART TO RED RIDER

By Ken Sinnaeve

My first recording band was Streetheart which I was with from the start to a rather unglorious finish. I made seven records with the band. Several tunes, in particular, "Action" and "Under My Thumb" are considered FM classics.

Over the years I've played through a few different bass amps. My first was an old tweed-style Fender Bassman. It had four inputs and the whole band including the singer used to play through it. Then I had a Sunn amp which sounded great but wasn't very loud.

When I first came to Toronto with Streetheart I had an Acoustic 370 with one 18" speaker. All kinds of problems plagued me with this beast, including too much bottom end spilling around on stage, into the drum mikes, etc., and not being able to get any definition.

Some guys sounded great with this amp but my style of playing (which was pretty busy at the time) didn't match up with it very well. Then I got a Mono-Block and a B.C. Rich Eagle bass from Prakash John. This in combination with a couple of front loaded cabinets and watching Prakash play cleaned up my sound a lot.

The Mono-Block had been "souped-up" by Pete Traynor and certainly sounded a lot better than standard models. Unfortunately, after blowing it up in Fort Rampage, Saskatchewan it was never the same.

I kept those same cabinets, which were custom built from one and a half inch thick wood until the end of Streetheart. At that point I was using the Rich through an Alembic tube pre-amp into a Peavey CS-800 amp driving four 15" JBLs. Unfortunately, I lost all this stuff when the band broke up.

After that I got an older Spector bass from Scott Smith and since I wasn't doing much live stuff, I just went straight into the board and rented a bass rig for each session.

A lot of engineers I've worked with live and in the studio seem to like the sound of this bass direct, but then again they probably say that to all bass players.

When I have used an amp in the studio I usually go for a "tube" type of sound to balance with the clean direct sound. On the early Streetheart stuff I used an SVT. Later on, I used a Galien-Krueger. You can get a slightly overdriven tube sound on it. On the Tom Cochrane album, I went through an H & H with MOS-FET circuitry. It's a ballsy little amp.

Since Red Rider is the first band I've played live with in years (other than the odd bar gig), I've had to start looking for a bass system that will sound great on a big stage and stand up to the rigors of the road. I think I may have found it.

The cabinets are designed and built by Odessa Acoustics which is a subsidiary of Bruit Bleu Sonorisation, a Quebec based sound company. It's basically a bi-amped system. The SW-15 bottoms have two JBL 2225s in them and I used two of these. On top are two MM1-12 cabs with a JBL E120 speaker and a tweeter in each. The boxes are very heavy duty and are finished in industrial strength black epoxy (no wimp leatherette here). You just can't get store-bought stuff made this well. The bottoms are driven by an Ashly FET-500 power-amp and the tops are powered by an Ashly FET-200.

I like MOS-FET amps because unlike most transistor amps they clip smoothly with no spikes or glitches.

I used an Ashly BP-41 pre-amp which has a lot of nice features. It has a presence boost with a pre-set curve that adds warmth as well as highs, a standard three place (bass, mid, treble) E.Q. section and a single band of parametric E.Q. A built-in two way crossover simplifies bi-amplification and there's a built-in headphone amp too.

The direct out is quiet and it has a pre-post switch that allows you to send your signal to the board before or after your E.Q. section.

All in all, a very punchy, warm sounding system that looks great and is extremely roadworthy. Thanks to Gerr Electro Acoustics and Bruit Bleu for specs and co-operation.

Playing live with Red Rider is a lot of fun but it can be tricky. There's a lot of sound on stage, what with three guitars, a wall of keyboards, drums, drum machine, vocals and not to mention me thrashing away underneath. (Sometimes it sounds like Elvis is in the building.) Consequently we're constantly reminding ourselves to be aware of the dynamics in the music which thankfully (on record at least) there are a lot of. It's almost like you have to exaggerate the dynamics live if you want them to be heard. Especially in an arena. I know my own approach to playing changes from the studio to the hockey hall. I tend to play more staccato and with a pick so that the notes don't overlap. I also mute the strings with the heel of my palm, although I do this in the studio too.

On stage I use my E.Q. primarily to cut



Ken Sinnaeve

unwanted frequencies rather than boost. In arenas you want to get rid of as much boominess on stage as possible because it seems to come from everywhere anyway, so I try to find the real resonant peaks and cut them.

Most of the time I have the bass through my monitor fairly loud. That way I can turn my system down a bit and get a nice spread between my wedge and my amp. This also helps overall volume on stage because if the other guys are getting blown away by your amp the natural thing to do is turn up themselves or fire you.

I think any bass player will tell you that playing with a good drummer certainly makes a bass player sound better and I've been lucky to play with some of the best including: Matt Frenette on the first two Streetheart albums, Anton Fig on the Partland Bros., Graham Broad, Jorn Anderson and Randall Coryell with Red Rider.

Interestingly, when I was called over to Wales to do the Red Rider record, they had already cut the bed tracks with another bass player, Paul Martinez. Consequently, I put down my bass parts to Graham Broad's drum tracks after he was done. He's a great drummer and I hope to meet him someday.

The Spector was used on all the tunes I played on except for "Boy Inside the Man" on which I used a Steinberger. On "Lasting Song" I played all the choruses and bridge using the Spector and then went back and did all the verses with a Fender fretless. The tag at the end of "River of Stone" is also fretless. On several songs including "Boy" and "River" I tuned the E string down to a D.

(Ken Sinnaeve plays bass with Red Rider).

PERCUSSION

WORKING WITH MACHINES ON NEW TRIUMPH ALBUM

By Gil Moore

The new Triumph album *Surveillance* was a completely new experience for me as a drummer. We decided from the past experience of other albums that on certain tracks we would work with a click and other tracks we wouldn't. The click tends to give songs a stiff feel at times as opposed to a loose groove that develops when tracks are recorded to a drummer playing in free time. I personally haven't decided which school of thought is right. I think it's a matter of selective use with good taste being the criteria.

I have used click tracks before and I suppose the only reason this time it felt like a trip into outer space is because of the way in which we used synchronizers. I played a lot of rough tracks initially with Mike and Rik that were transposed on to Greg Loate's drum computers/synchronizer equipment. Normally at this stage of the writing process for a Triumph album, the band continues to jam out ideas and rearrange songs continually. This usually consists of going back out on the floor time, and time and time again to try to find the right feel and the right arrangement. This time we tried using the computer. We went back with a time corrected track that was now available to us and rearranged the song electronically. All I could think of while this was going on was, "where was this equipment when I had tennis elbow two albums ago?" This could have saved me a lot of grief and aggravation.

I couldn't help but feel lazy at this point. At the same time, I was amazed by the ability of the machines. The funny thing I found was although I initially feared the computer might lock me into an uncreative mode where I would be unable to give tracks the spark of life, I found the reverse was true. The computer always seemed like a mediocre drummer to me. However, I could play along live to the computer and feel like a side man as opposed to feeling like the anchor of the band

and I think that allowed me to be a little more creative.

The other thing that was great was our editing capabilities later on. When you record in free time, editing is only possible at certain intervals during the music where natural edit points occur. With the use of click tracks and electronic drums etc., editing capabilities become far greater in the early stage of overdubs (ie; prior to too many guitars and/or vocals being laid down). Working with Greg was an experience I won't forget and I definitely plan on using some combination of the same type of equipment on the next Triumph album.

By the way, Greg's main unit was an EMU SP-12. As far as my acoustic drums are concerned, I used a superb set of Tama Artstar drums as follows: 2-22" bass drums, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, and 20" tom toms, 6½" deep metal snare. I use a wide assortment of Sabian cymbals which I change from track to track, although I never change my ride cymbal which is a 22" leopard rod and a 14" set of leopard hats. I find, regardless of the crash cymbal sounds, or specialty cymbal sounds that those two constants work well in every situation. Most of the crash cymbals are larger in diameter than is customary. I like the deep sound of large Sabian AA crash cymbals.

I use Aquarian X-10 graphite drum sticks which I am firmly convinced provide a fatter snare drum sound. The graphite doesn't dent on impact with the rim of the snare drum on the backbeat and cymbals sound crisper as well. I use Aquarian shock grips which actually give me a softer feel than wood even though I am using a more rigid stick.

The drums were recorded with two sets of mics in the "live area" of the Metalworks Studios in Mississauga. Most of you probably know we built these studios to our own specifications, and the rear half of the main floor is very loud. We close-miked the entire kit as



Gil Moore

well as using an assortment of ambient mics. The miking techniques and microphones themselves changed from track to track depending on the set-up and the requirements of the tune. One thing I found especially useful on this album was the use of a circular piece of mylar to dampen the snare drums slightly and fatten it up. I'm generally a "don't put anything on my drums" kind of guy but this is one technique I really like. Aquarian Products (the makers of the drum sticks previously mentioned) are soon going to be manufacturing a line of heads pre-dampened in this manner and I think this will be a boon to drummers in the studio.

I had a great time making this album but I can honestly say I'm glad it's over. It's been a long grind. People have asked me what I focus on or what's the most important thing in the studio when you're making a record or what's the new twist on this record? I got to admit the more records I have made the more I have found there is no magic secret other than trying to focus on the center of the beat and create a smooth groove.

This becomes an exceptional challenge when you're working with machines. The one mistake a lot of drummers make is they allow the machine to correct their time or they try to play in such a way that if they feel themselves going out of synch with the machine, they instantly correct it. This is a mistake. The way to work with machines and still create feel is to be able to have the machine play even if you're not 100 percent on with it all the time. Some of the tracks on our album are absolutely perfect in sync with the machine, and other tracks aren't. I evaluate them listening to playback monitors without listening to the sync track. That way I'm listening for a feel and a groove, not for metronomic perfection. I think that this is the way that drummers can work with machines and still produce good music.

MIDI CONTROLLERS FOR BRASS PLAYERS

By Tony Carlucci

In my February 1986 *Canadian Musician* article "High-tech Keyboards, Friend or Foe," I made mention of two new units for the brass/woodwind player. This article will discuss these new updated units, the PITCHRIDER 4000 Mark II and the AKAI EVI wind synthesizer, from the users point of view. Both propel the brass/woodwind players into the MIDI world.

EVI Wind Synthesizer

This is now being made and distributed by AKAI. This MIDI set up does have some similarities in its features (pitch bend, volume dynamics, input sensitivity) to the Pitchrider, and is activated solely by air pressure whereas with the MK II, you use your own horn to activate the synth sounds. So the standard mouthpiece lip buzz approach is not needed here. The EVI also comes with a Synth module, the EWU 2000, that boasts a number of pre-set interal sounds. The thing to remember about the EVI, from a trumpet player's point of view, is that although it was designed with the trumpet player in mind, your approach to it is going to be different than that of your own axe. It will require a serious time commitment on your part to get to the level that you are currently on your trumpet.

Note: the EWI (Sax version) is much easier to learn. It has a truer sense of feel and its set up is very much closer to the real sax.

What makes the EVI a little more difficult to learn is:

1. As you ascend or descend in a run, a key on the end roller must be pressed every 4th interval to continue your line with fluency. This "bridge" per se, will take a lot of practise to master with flawless articulation;
2. Your fingering between c and f now will be the same in the high register as it is in the low register;
3. To change octaves, your thumb, while resting in a slot between two rollers, must make a

smooth but clean jerk into the next slot. (Another problem is resting your fingers on the valves. Touching the valves will inadvertently, trigger the synth, so you must adjust to not putting your fingers on the valves not in use.) Moving from slot to slot (right to ascend, left to descend) combined with the 4th interval key and some alternate fingering, will require a lot more thinking on your part. The EVI is a great MIDI unit but its success will depend on whether the trumpet player of today will be willing to put in a lot of practising time into learning its different approach.

The Pitch Rider 4000 Mark II

The MKII takes an alternate route from the EVI, it allows you to trigger synth sounds from your acoustic horn. This is done by MIDling your horn, via pick up mic from your mouthpiece to the MKII to the synth module. The MKII is the most up-to-date version of this unit and hosts a number of new modifications. It has the same brain and look as the 7000 MKII but has a different memory set up. The MKII now has a built in pre-amp (where as before you needed an external pre amp to boost signal) and comes with the MFS 40 foot pedal. The foot pedal has a 64 pre-set memory built-in and a host of functions.

1. The Chain and Steps pedals allow you to program any number of synth patches up to 64 in any sequence you wish. This simply means you'll never have to touch your synth or MKII when on a gig. All patches and functions are pre-set, and controlled from these foot pedal functions.
2. The Sustain pedal works much like a sustain pedal on a keyboard. Just press it down, play a short note, and the synth note will hold for as long as the pedal is held down. This is great for those long power endings in rock and roll. Holding down the sustain pedal and playing a progression of notes (up to six) will result in you being able to play chords. Each note will sustain as long as the Sustain pedal



Tony Carlucci

is down.

3. The Hold pedal works much like the sustain pedal except you don't have to hold it down with your foot, it will "grab hold" of the note(s) and lock them in. This will allow you to play over the chord, now locked in, either with the synth sound or your acoustic horn sound, or both. By the way, the MKII also can assign each note in the chord to be a different sound. All you need is a multi timbrel synth unit. Another interesting feature the MKII offers is the ability for you to play a run or lick or anything at any speed for that matter and have the MKII split each note into a chord or interval. You can now play a whole solo in parallel 4ths or 5ths or whatever your ear desires.

4. The Bypass pedal when pressed down and released will effectively turn off the MIDI output from the MKII. You can now play with your acoustic sound alone, the MFS 40 foot pedal is an extremely convenient extension to the MKII.

Some of the other key functions the MKII offers help to add the expression of your own instrument to the synth sound.

Pitch Bend allows your synth to smoothly follow any pitch variations of up to 12 semitones that you perform on your instrument, such as portamento note transitions or pitch vibrato.

Volume Dynamics gives you an open door to applying the crescendo and decrescendo and again having the synth following the dynamic changes in volume. The synth you are using must have the ability to respond to MIDI channel after touch messages in order for this function to work properly.

Input Sensitivity will give you more control on your attack and further the natural expression of your horn on to the synth sound.

(Tony Carlucci is a busy live and studio session player).

THE SINGER IN THE RECORDING STUDIO

By Rosemary Burns

Many of *Canadian Musician* readers know that I have had the opportunity to work with my students in the recording studio. It has been a learning experience for me and I have tried many experiments in the studio to see what the results would be. I am always looking for ways to get the best possible result from the singer.

I began to teach a course at Sheridan College several years ago in the art of singing in the recording studio, but now I am working in professional studios in conjunction with several record companies and their artists. So many stage performers are not comfortable in the studio.

Everyone knows to go anywhere in this business you must get a record deal, and to do that you have to have a demo - even if it is only on a four track.

I find that very few producers know how to record the voice and those of you who produce your own band know even less. Much of the music of today is MIDI or synthesized so that the only identifying part of the music becomes the vocals. The lead singer puts his or her mark on the group. I feel that the voice should always be recorded flat. So few people do this. They add reverb, echo, double track and all kinds of things on the first cut. I feel this is wrong. By this method we end up with a Max Headroom-like human robot and lose the personality of the performer. We must leave the voice as natural as possible. If there are flaws and imperfections, leave them there. Sometimes that little mistake will make the music come to life.

I have been in studios where the producer is unhappy with this or that phrase and keeps doing it over and over.

If you don't get it in three tries leave it alone for another day or just leave it. Often I see the

engineer punch in for every phrase. This too is a terrible mistake; we lose the flow of the music. We must think in terms of the vocal instrument. We are the instrument and we must play the instrument. Punching in every line is like asking a pole vaulter to jump without running.

I have found that many times the first run through is the best and many times this is not recorded. Another thing I find is that the artist is many times their own worst enemy by not taking in energy. They expect to work in the studio for hours without taking in any nourishment. As you use the energy you must replace it. Eat something.

Many singers don't have a clue about microphone techniques. If you are going into the studio for the first time you should take time for at least a half an hour to find out what the mic can do for you. Experiment. Find out what happens when you get in close to the mic turn your back, step back and sing full voice sing a line of vowels see what happens when you "pop" the mic. Then listen back. Another important feature is the mic itself. We all know that there are very expensive mics out there but they may not be for you. Try different setups. I tell you it can make the world of difference.

Back in the '50s when I was recording in Vienna for the first time I had the good fortune to sit in on some recording sessions before it was my turn to record. I found it fascinating as anyone does the first time round. At that time, the whole orchestra - seventy musicians - the conductor and soloist would record together. There would be at least twenty mics on the floor in various sections of the orchestra. The soloist would have one mic for themselves. Now at the time the whole orchestra would be playing forte and the soloist would be singing



Rosemary Burns

forte, the soloist would have to turn their back to the mic because the little red needle would go over if they didn't and the whole thing would be ruined. It didn't take very long for the singer to learn when to back away from the mic and if they were singing pianissimo to close in on the mic.

Today not many artists have to turn their back on the mics but there are still some that have so much power that they must. But in almost all cases the artist must learn how to close in on the mic to get the intimate, sexy sounds and to back off to get strong, full sounds. Oh yes I know let the engineer do it at the controls but the true artist learns to do the work and the engineer does very little. There is a very big difference in the final product. Learn to control your recording sound by learning microphone technique.

I have written before about trying to create an atmosphere in the recording studio and have suggested to the artist to get a candle and light the flame as it gives you a focus to work to. Recently, I was in a studio where the artist when I arrived was in a blacked out studio with only the lights in the board side being on.

It was impossible to see him working. I insisted that the light must be on him. I could not work with someone without seeing them. At this time, as things didn't seem to be working out. I suggested that we get the old candle and see if the flame would give the performer some inspiration. I then asked the studio assistant for a candle, forgetting that the word for a spot light is also called a candle. Well lo and behold a spotlight was placed at the front of the singer and he felt as if he was on the stage and I must admit that we got the best performance out of him that he has ever done.

Experiment — make yourself at home — try different things.

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