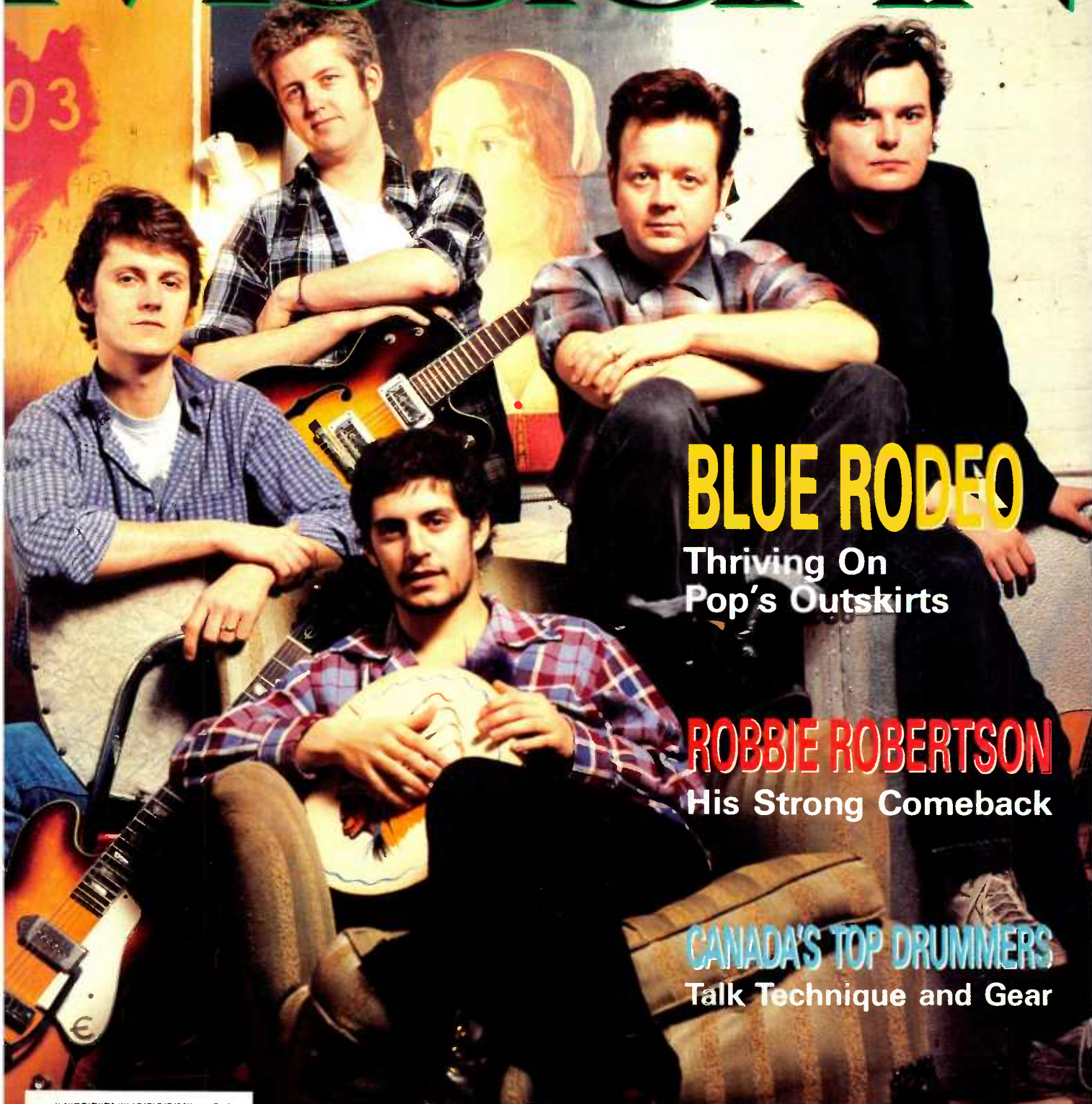


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VOLUME X, NUMBER 2



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## Deciding Which Stories Get Into *Canadian Musician*

One of the questions I am asked most frequently as editor of *Canadian Musician* is "How do you decide which articles to put in each issue of the magazine." Well, it's certainly not a science, but there are specific principles we follow when deciding to go, or not to go, with a story in the magazine.

The overriding principle of *Canadian Musician* is quite simple: each article (and the magazine as a package) must serve to inspire, inform and entertain musicians. This principle plays as much of a role in the focus of each article as it does in determining who or what to write about.

This was the mindset from which we changed the format and design of *Canadian Musician* one year ago this issue. We were attempting to bring our principle fully into practice by developing a formal mix of feature stories and departments that would address all the primary areas of concern to musicians.

Now, this is the foundation on which I build each issue of *Canadian Musician*.

Being a good editor has as much, or more, to do with eliminating what won't get into the magazine as deciding what will. In order to make fully informed decisions, I must continually be engaged in the process of assembling a pool of story ideas. From this pool, I must determine the ideal mix of articles for each issue.

This process of compiling story ideas is the critical part of the job. It is with you day and night because stories can and do come from anywhere.

My morning mail is filled with letters, press releases, records and tapes (25 to 50 per day) requesting coverage on a new product, band or event. The phone rings all day long with publicists, managers, musicians and others wanting to sell me on their concept for a story.

I receive lots of leads for stories from my colleagues in the office. Whether it's the publisher and salespeople dealing with our advertising clients, or the circulation person speaking with dealers and subscribers, or the art director doing an outside job for someone in the industry, I am fed valuable information by the people around me.

I spend a considerable amount of time on the phone chasing down these leads and

keeping up to date with upcoming record projects, tours and product developments. Our freelance writers are also an important source for specific story ideas and information they gather in their travels. I attend a great deal of trade shows, press conferences, night club appearances and concerts to keep informed and involved. There's also an abundance of required reading; magazines, newspapers and newsletters, with both trade and consumer focus.

As it comes time to assign each issue I've already mentally discarded probably 90% of the story ideas available based on the criteria discussed earlier. Of the 10% that have survived, I need to whittle it down even further into what we hope will be a timely mix of interesting stories.

Deciding on the four main feature stories each issue is the critical first step. We've determined that the artist on the cover must be a major Canadian artist currently riding high on the success of an album, single and video. And, ideally the artist will be in the midst of a major Canadian tour when the magazine hits the newstands. We're looking for maximum cover recognition and reaction on the newstands. The second artist featured must also be an artist doing well, but they tend to be at an earlier stage in their careers. The two other major features in each issue are the product feature (Sound On Sound, Focus On Guitar, Focus On Recording, etc.) and the business feature (Rock Fashion, How To Conquer Overseas Markets, Rock Critics, etc.)

For the articles in the regular departments — from Recording, Imaging and MIDI to Keyboards, Guitar and Vocals — we try to put together a wide mix of styles, products and trends. But these are also determined with an eye on timeliness and recognition at some level, whether alternative or mainstream.

So, the key is not so much how we decide but rather how much quality information and ideas we have to choose from.

A key source for information and feedback has always been our readers. I would like to encourage you to write or phone me with any comments and suggestions for *Canadian Musician*.

Ted Burley  
Editor



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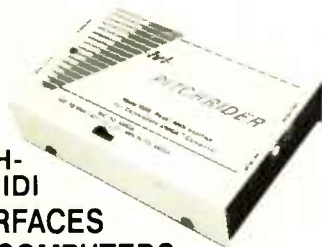
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## FEEDBACK

### Please, No More Shit

I received my first copy of *Canadian Musician* and to say the least I was very disappointed.

It is nothing like it was advertised. I thought I was going to learn something more about music but it has nothing to do with music whatsoever.

It is nothing but a bunch of crap, rock shit. I play four instruments myself but I don't go for this rock shit. It has nothing to do with music whatsoever.

So cancel my subscription as of now. I do not want anymore of this shit coming into my house.

John Meorniuk  
Lethbridge, AB

### Music Schools Different From Recording Schools

This letter is in response to the Canada's Top Music Schools article in the last issue of *Canadian Musician*.

We appreciate the fact that our school (Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology) was included in your article but feel that the structure of the article was somewhat confusing.

Entitled Top Music Schools, one would assume the article to be about schools offering music programs and not schools offering recording programs, yet the article was headed by a recording school, closed by a recording school and in the middle yet another recording school states, "...there is no confusing it with a music school...!"

For the purpose of avoiding any confusion your readers might have about our school we would like to make the following clear. O.I.A.R.T. is registered with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities as a recording school and offers a one year Diploma course. The school is located in London, Ontario and operates its own 24 and 8 track studios.

*Canadian Musician* is a most valuable source of information for those interested in pursuing careers in the music industry but we would like to stress that music schools are different from recording schools and cannot be directly compared. To suggest that some schools are "top" and others not is also dangerous as there will always be accidental omissions. O.I.A.R.T. is in London and so is the highly respected Faculty of Music at the University of Western Ontario. UWO was omitted.

Paul Steenhuis  
Managing Director  
O.I.A.R.T.

### Quality Not Quantity Should Have Been Music School Focus

As principal of The Ontario College of Percussion, supporter of your publication and former editorial contributor, I feel it is necessary to express my concerns in response to your recent focus article on Canada's Top Music Schools.

In the article you clearly define Canada's "Top Music Schools". The preface seems to indicate that the definition of "Top" refers to the availability of electronic facilities and music industry related subjects. Although we agree that these are valuable assets offered, there should be an equal emphasis on the quality of musician generated. The number of actual students that enroll in such comprehensive programs would be very minute in comparison to the number of readers who might be prospective music students looking for more specialized, but equally high quality instruction.

We are strongly offended by the distinct division in your article between "Top Canadian Music Schools" and "Other Canadian Music Schools" in your recent issue. While it is true that The Ontario College of Percussion is more specialized in its concentrated areas of study, the quality of education is second to none. In fact, many of the students of your designated "Top" schools attend The Ontario College of Percussion for specialized training and development of the skills that are not adequately provided in their normal curriculum. Some instructors at these schools are not only past students of The Ontario College of Percussion, but attempt to simulate our teaching program by utilizing the methods in my published series on percussion.

To the best of my knowledge, there was no effort on behalf of your publication to review the facilities or programs at The College before blatantly labelling us as second rate. Research within the music education industry itself would have revealed the high level of respect The Ontario College of Percussion receives, not only with music teachers and retailers, but prominent performing artists, past and present day students.

We are confident that The Ontario College of Percussion is not only "One of the Top Canadian Music Schools", but the "Top" school of its kind in the country.

Paul Robson  
Principal  
The Ontario College  
of Percussion



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**FEEDBACK**

**Lots of Great  
Canadian Talent**

**T**his letter is in reference to the ever so eloquent man that "aired" his opinion of *Canadian Musician* in the Dec. '87 issue.

It's one thing to critique a magazine: "I think your magazine is a pitiful and desperate disgrace to this country." But to say "As is 98% of the music industry here" is something else.

Mister, your little minded opinions of the Canadian music industry are boorish and loathesome. There is an abundance of incredible talent in this country, and as a result of people like yourself, Canadian musicians do not get the support they deserve. Perhaps if you educated yourself by reading useful and relevant articles about the music industry your narrow vision of Canadian talent will expand beyond the limits of Platinum Blonde.

M. Lentin  
Thornhill, ON

**Article on Computers  
May Have Misled Readers**

**I**n reference to the article by Chris Chahley entitled *Choosing Your Music Computer* in the Dec. '87 issue of *Canadian Musician*, I'd like to take this opportunity to correct some misinformation that could very well mislead your readers when they decide to buy a computer for music application.

First off, the article implies that computers based on the 68000 microprocessor are in some way superior to the 8088/80286/80386 microprocessors used in the IBM PCs and compatibles.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

In fact, the 80386 (which is in the latest generation of PCs to hit the streets), is a 32 bit processor that equals and surpasses any of the 68000 generation processors in speed, power and memory handling capacity. PC compatibles based on this processor are quality as powerful (and in some cases even more powerful) as the Mac II, at about half the cost.

The article also leads one to believe that the only viable computers for music are the Mac, Atari and Amiga. To further complicate matters, the IBM PC is grouped in the same class as the outdated Commodore 64 and Apple II! These were "first generation," 8-bit processor machines whose memory capacity was limited to 64K, while even the least expensive PC is a 16 bit machine with 640K standard memory. Where is the comparison?

Your readers should consider these facts

when choosing a music computer:

1. Recent surveys have shown that the IBM PC is owned by nearly 30% of all computer musicians. Do they know something that Mr. Chahley isn't aware of?

2. The 8088-based PC compatibles are as expensive as the Atari and substantially less expensive (about half the cost) than the Mac Plus.

The list goes on.

Needless to say, the PC vs Mac vs Atari vs Amiga issue could easily fill up several pages of discussion. But in all, your readers should be aware that the PC is a much better investment than any of the three computers cited in the article. Not only does it have a full range of music software support, it is also offered generically by hundreds of competing companies. This guarantees that it will be a low cost "commodity" computer for years to come. On the other hand, the Apple and Atari lines have zero competition, which is part of the reason why Mac is so incredibly overpriced.

The major quote from the article was quite true: "Value for the dollar should be the primary issue." In fact, the PC compatibles offer a far better value for the dollar than any of the three computers selected by Mr. Chahley as the best choice for the aspiring computer musician.

Carmin J. Bonanno  
President, Voyetra Technologies  
Mamaroneck, NY

**Publish Monthly Please**

**M**ay I take this opportunity to say that I really enjoyed this year's publications. I would love to see *Canadian Musician* being published monthly as opposed to bi-monthly. May I also say that I find the Gowan articles appearing lately in your magazine to be very informative and intense. I can't wait until Gowan will one day appear on the front cover of *Canadian Musician*.

Greg Berneshawi  
Montreal, PQ

**Informative and Fun**

**I** have just finished reading your magazine and I am extremely impressed. The articles were both informative and fun to read. Even topics that I'm not particularly interested in, were well worth reading. *Canadian Musician* is definitely on my subscription list from here on!

Jeff Scott  
Manager, Act 1  
Mississauga, ON



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## Back To The Fifties With Cowboy Junkies



PHOTO: NOEL ARCHAMBAULT

by Peter Moore

Cowboy Junkies

It was Christmas two years ago that I bought myself a CD player. I ran to A & A's downtown and bought every disc I could find except one, a 1956 German mono recording of Billy Holiday. After listening to Dire Straits too many times I placed the Billy Holiday in the tray and pressed play. I was born in 1956, and there is no way a mono recording with minimal mics could spend so true, so full it must have been doctored. Not the case, simply a good transfer from the original tapes. This begged the question, what happened to the art of recording for the last 30 years?

Did they mix back in the '50s using only one mic? No, they balanced the band around the microphone, relying on the musicians for subtle dynamics, level changes, and attack. The room provided the natural reverb, the producer decided on placement relative to the room and the mic. What this created was a phase coherent recording. In other words all the sound waves arrived at the mic at the same time, creating a full sound with a clear image. A visual analogy would be moving your rabbit ears on a portable TV until the ghost, or out of phase signals, disappear, leaving you with a clear image.

This method of recording has, of course, its limitations and places a great demand on the performers.

After hearing the Cowboy Junkies live, I knew there was an opportunity to attempt a '50s recording in the spirit of the Billy Holiday CD I approached the band and discussed my desire to experiment with this Calrec coincident recording and they agreed. We used their practice place spending an enormous amount of time on placement, amp levels room treatment and who's beer was whos. Finally we achieved a great balance except for the vocals. This was the toughest nut to crack. Margo, the lead singer had a melancholy low key style that was near impossible to pick up naturally with electric bass, guitar and drums playing. The answer was to treat the vocal like any other instrument, have her sing into a vocal mic, through a P.A. amp and place the speaker where she would normally stand.

When the second album was proposed The Cowboys had changed direction somewhat, which required rethinking of the recording. Their desire was to explore the use of many support instruments such as accordion, mandolin, pedal steel guitar, jazz guitar, dobro, country harp, violin, blues harp and back-up

vocals. Ya right guys! Any way, the preproduction tapes indicated a lighter sound, not quite as noir. Since the room is the function of this style of recording, it wasn't an easy task to find one that could support such a diversity in instruments. I have used Trinity Church for classical recordings, and started to realize multi-instruments, amazing reverb, and great acoustics are probably good reasons to choose that space.

This was a gamble because we had only one day to set up, record and tear down, 12 songs with five guest musicians who had never all played together. Not to mention that the Cowboy's had never played in such a huge open space before, but what's life without surprises? The Church is all wood and plaster built in the 1840s, about 176 feet long, 75 wide and 45 feet high. The natural decay is simply beautiful (2.25 sec. approx.). A small vestibule at the back became the studio control room where I set up the K.E.F.P60 monitors, Sony PCM 2500 R-DAT machine, Calrec Sound field MKIV control unit, four Rabbits feet complete with rabbit, and Sonnex Panels.

The Calrec Ambisonic microphone was placed in the centre of the rear third of the church on top of a thick room area carpet.

The pattern dialed upon the control unit was Blumlien, (two finger of eight at 90 degrees in a coincident fashion). This allowed a 360 degree placement of instrument amps and/or instruments. Since drums provide a visual anchor for stereo image, they were placed center front of the microphone. The bass was placed on the exact opposite side giving a solid foundation for the rest of the instruments. The vocal speaker was placed on top of the bass amp so that it would be central and prominent.

We spent seven hours getting just basic sounds. The big problem was the bass amp's back wave was exciting the resonance of the room too much, forcing us to lower the bass volume too much. Basically we folded 1/4 of the carpet up and over the amp covering the rear opening, therefore reducing the room excitement. It worked! The other major problem was radio interference. It almost forced us to abort the session twice it was so severe.

We sorted out the technical problems somewhat and proceeded with smaller arrangements progressing to the larger ones. The treatment of acoustic instruments was to have them physically close to the microphone moving forward and back on rehearsed cues. The amps of the other instruments were back further on small tables with castors allowing easy movement to set the balance. On the average, it took about two trial runs to set the balance, then about four to five takes per song before getting an acceptable take.

(Peter Moore is a Toronto producer).



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## Making Strange Advances



PHOTO: PAT HARBON

Strange Advance

by Maureen Littlejohn

**K**eyboardist/programmer Drew Arnott and vocalist/guitarist Darryl Kromm are Strange Advance, and as a duo they're mighty fine songwriters. But as a duo, they're also heavily new album *The Distance Between*, on Current Records, and for live performances. "Although I love the Pet Shop Boys," laughs Arnott, "two guys mouthing lyrics on stage doesn't do much for me." When we tour I'd like to go out as a five/six piece." He adds, "We don't have the big bucks for a huge line-up of horns and back up players, so we'll be looking for singing musicians. If they own their own instruments that'll be a big plus. We'll also be looking for people that can double on a few instruments."

The amount of pre-taped pieces used during a live performance is the other end of the dependence quandry they've been thinking about. "We don't want to go out with it all on tape," explains Kromm, "but if people don't hear what they expect to hear they get upset. We'll just have to augment the show with some tape, like every other artist in the world does, including Michael Jackson."

Strange Advance used to be heavily dependent on Emulators and sequencing for recording, especially on their first album *Worlds Away*. Ironically things have turned right around on *The Distance Between* which credits 19 additional musicians, including guitar god Allan Holdsworth (J.K., Soft Machine), Randy Bachman, Steve Webster, Greg Critchley and there's even a pedal steel guitarist, Kenny Greer on one track. "Only 20

percent was programmed," estimates Arnott. "We've got more live things going on than ever before." Why the switch around? "With our history of programming, I'm able to say it doesn't have the same spark," admits Arnott. But he adds "the live performances weren't always exactly right either, so what we did was to fly some performances into the computer and then reprogram them so, for instance, an ending could be used as a beginning. We maintained the live sound with this quasi program/live performance compromise."

While live drums only appear on three tracks, live bass appears on all but two of the album's tracks and live guitar is featured on six tracks. Particularly memorable are the two tracks Holdsworth appears on. "Who Lives Next Door" and the majestic-sounding "Alien Time." How did he get involved? "Our record company contacted his manager when they noticed he was going to be in town," says Arnott. "We sent him some copies of our albums and he liked them and was into doing it. So he came in, set up, drank a lot of English beer and played all night." Arnott laughs. "We got about 20 tracks of Allan Holdsworth, now we can put out our own solo Allan Holdsworth album."

Another main feature of recording this album was the use of the Akai MG-1214 12-track tape deck which could be locked up to Phase One's 24 track console (see Recording story in December '87. *Canadian Musician*). Arnott, who owns a 1214, finds the machine a

"miracle." Randy Bachman's guitar work on the "Love is Strange" track was done on a 1214 while he was at mutual friend Billy Chapman's house in Vancouver. "That track was a last minute addition to the album. Billy had Randy come over to his house, just before Christmas and he played some guitar into the 1214. It was very casual. Allan Holdsworth has one too, he said if we ever want him to play on something again to send him the tape (the size of a beta video tape) and he'd lay down as many tracks as we've got and send it back to us." Arnott even had his dad contribute a sax solo, for "This Island Earth," on the 1214.

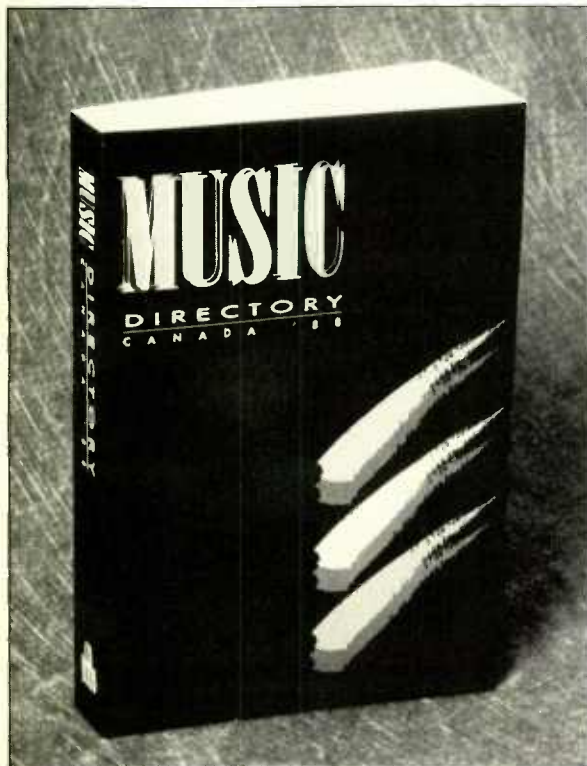
"With our second album, 2W0, we demoed all the songs, went to England to work with Michael Kamen (string arrangements on "We Run") and used very expensive studios and musicians that cost \$2,000 a day to record. At the end I had to say it didn't have that something that made the demo special. When I work with the 1214 it's there, it's good quality and we can use it."

The 1214 also seems to fit in with the way Arnott and Kromm like to write songs, allowing them the freedom to add in musical elements at will. "I like to focus on the foundation of a song. Even though I'm a lead guitarist, it isn't my first impulse to play it. I tend to leave space in my compositions." Adds Arnott, "We focus on melody and top end, neither of us play bass, so we don't worry too much about it until later."



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## Getting Your Video On MuchMusic



Anne Howard

by Maureen Littlejohn

What makes a good music video? And what will ensure airplay? If anyone knows, it's Anne Howard, producer at MuchMusic. Howard, who views over 2,000 new videos a year, is a member of the station's programming committee, which meets every Tuesday to view new videos and decide which ones to add and which ones to drop. "We base our decisions on a number of factors," she explains, "like chart action, radio station play, U.S. charts, aesthetics of the video and just whether we like them or not."

Deluged by videos from the major record companies and major mainstream artists, Howard admits that in the grand scheme of things, the percentage of Canadian videos they receive is "miniscule." However, she believes that should not discourage any Canadian musician, signed, or independent to submit their tape. "We look at everything that comes in," says Howard, "people shouldn't be intimidated to bring a video in, there's no formal policy they have to follow." But in order to get airplay there are some very basic ground rules. "Technical quality is important," says Howard, "the video must be on 3/4", 1" or Beta Cam tape. The higher quality tape is preferred and has a better chance of higher rotation. If it's poor quality the video might get a one time only airing." Huge budgets aren't necessary, she says, but she also notes that a video shot for less than \$5,000 probably won't be up to scratch.

Many Canadian videos are subsidised by VideoFact, a grant and loan organization formerly operated under the auspices of the fed-

eral government and now largely funded by MuchMusic. How has this affected MuchMusic's video acceptance policy? "Just because someone gets VideoFact money to make their video, doesn't mean they're guaranteed airplay," says Howard.

It's not so much the money spent, as having somebody knowledgeable in the medium putting the money in the right place to ensure good production, notes Howard. "A band or artist should get a professional's opinion (someone who's worked in the field a few years and can give constructive feedback) before they go ahead with a video idea," she suggests. "A video doesn't have to be shot by a professional," she adds, "as long as the person has the right sensibility. If a band is on a low budget, they could go to a local film school and see if a student there might be up to par to shoot it." Howard cites Scott Merritt's "Transitor" video, shot by Al Maciulus, a fourth year Ryerson student at the time, as an example. "Al found an artist he wanted to shoot and did a beautiful job, we played it a lot." She also cites the videos done by Eight Seconds and Pursuit of Happiness as good examples of independently produced tapes.

Where many videos fall down, (aside from the technical incompetence) is in concept. "Live club footage doesn't usually come off," says Howard, "the images can be boring unless the editor is astute." Complicated plot lines can also be disastrous. "Often bands will try to copy something they've seen, like a love story," she explains. "Unless the director is used to shooting drama it will turn out

flat and uninteresting." On the other hand, she acknowledges the fact that "the idea behind a video doesn't have to be great, it can be borrowed. Often ideas can be made better. We don't expect state-of-the-art production from a really young band, but we do expect something thoughtful, where a group effort is evident."

When she can, Howard likes to give artists some kind of feedback, "if they phone and ask for my opinion, I'll try to take the time to talk to them." But she adds, "I'm honest and I know I've broken a few hearts." Other recommendations Howard makes to increase the likelihood of a video's success are hiring a producer to look after all the details before, during and after a video shoot — "is there enough tape? Is there enough power, are city permits needed for location shooting?" — and paying bills. Howard puts a lot of emphasis on the latter, "A kid who took advantage of his relationship with cable company and used facilities he wasn't supposed to be using, as well as not paying crew members he promised to pay, got himself in real trouble. I had to promise the cable company not to play his video until the problem was sorted out." She also notes that a bio and information about the band included with the video are helpful, and that the tape should be labeled with the band's name and address, so it can be returned. What are Howard's favorite videos? "Kate Bush's 'Cloud Busting' is my all time favorite," she says, "Jane Siberry's 'The Walking' has really started to grow on me, and I like INXS' 'Need You Tonight'," just because Michael Hutchence is so sexy."



## SHUFFLE DEMONS: Very Big Ideas Very Tight Budget



by Joel Goldberg

The Shuffle Demons

It seems like years ago that the phone rang and I talked to Richard Underhill, the leader of the Shuffle Demons about co-producing and directing their second video "Out of My House Roach". Actually, that seemingly innocent phone conversation was in early September and it touched off four months of laughing, crying, frantic planning, sleepless nights, and in the end, relief and a huge sense of accomplishment!

I jumped at the chance of working on the video because I was and still am, a big fan of the Shuffle Demons. When you direct a video it helps to like what the band is doing.

The storyboard for the roach video was conceived in one evening by myself, Richard, band member Dave Parker and Peter MacDonald. We were lucky enough to obtain the services of Berniece Lum, a very talented graphic artist who patiently brought our excited ramblings to life on paper. The final copy that Berniece gave me proved to be a big reason for the clip's success. An organized, concise storyboard saves time and money both in the shooting and the off line editing of the video.

In creating an independent video, it is also very important to work closely with the band and keep them as creatively involved as possible. Picking the crew for an indy video can also be a problem. On one hand, you want to get well qualified, professional, enthusiastic people. On the other hand, how are you going to pay them? It comes as no surprise that most indy crews become involved with videos as a labour of love. Many times the crews are made up of friends or fans of the band who work for nothing. It was no different for the

Demons video. The anchor of our unit were the many people who volunteered their time building sets, picking up props, and generally helping out. Without these people and their dedicated, hard work, the video could not have been made.

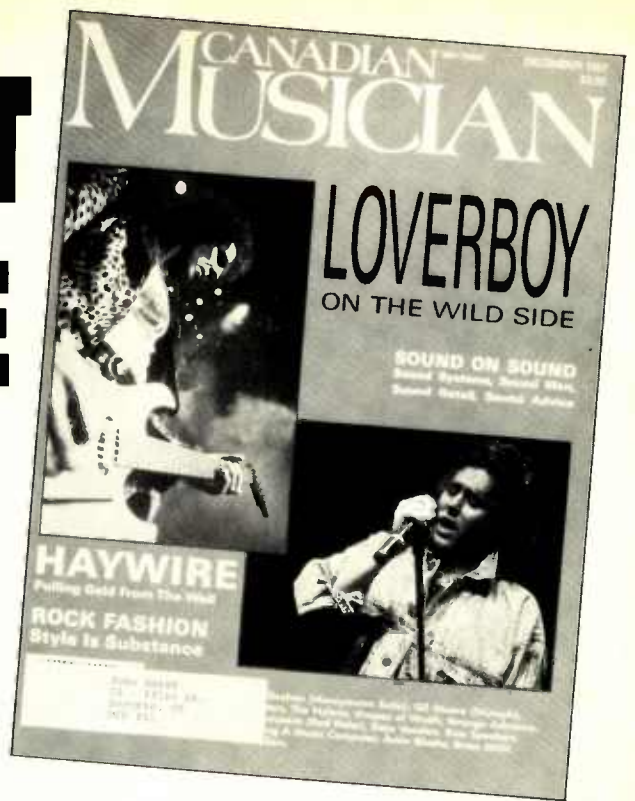
The task of creating the overall look of the video went to Kurt Swinghammer, the same artist who did the artwork for the Demons "Streetniks" album cover. Our cinematographer was Paul Sarossy, whose name I noticed on the tall new buildings "Breaking Down Her Walls" video. I contacted Paul through his father Ivan who is a commercial director at CITY TV. The crew was rounded out with lighting director Sandy Carroll who I knew from CITY, Peter MacDonald who doubled as our audio operator and production assistant, and Sharon Kavanaugh, also from CITY who did an outstanding job as our production co-ordinator, handling the overall organization of the project. Sharon spent hours on the phone and on location pulling the whole production together. The last member of the main crew was Ron Stefaniuk, a theatrical special effects man and magician who created an amazing mechanical roach as well as our pyrotechnics and special effects. (Doing live special effects is a lot less expensive than creating electronic special effects. And it does a better job of capturing the moment in post production. Ron Created all of the effects while in different hotels on the road, plus a lot of last minute work on the weekend of the shoot. Remember, all of the crew, including the volunteers were working on the video in their spare time. Everybody had day jobs. Welcome to the world of independent video making!

A small budget causes a lot of problems. I don't have enough space to talk about all the problems we encountered, but the big problems were quite interesting. The first one was losing Rob Fresco, our original choice for cinematographer to other commitments. We also had a very hard time finding a location, and when we finally did we went there only to find a film crew had set up fake walls and props, changing the entire structure of the space! Finding flats and the finding place to paint them was another problem and in the end Kurt had to squeeze into a tiny cubby hole to create the "bigger than life" atmosphere we were looking for. The shooting schedule was also a problem with delays in our original shooting scheme and trying to work around everybody's day jobs.

Despite all this we shot the entire video in one weekend, setting up on Friday and shooting Saturday from 6 am to 10pm (the Demons had a gig that night) and on Sunday, a marathon shoot from 6 am to 6 am Monday morning (most of the crew had to go home, shower and get to their day jobs after the Sunday shoot). I did my off line editing on 3/4" and the post production was done with David Kines, who I consider a television wizard. David is unflappable and quick (time is money, especially in independent video production). He directs the CHUM FM 30 and post production for the New Music for CITY TV and has done post for videos by the Jitters, Messenjah and Frozen Ghost among others.

*(Joel Goldberg is a video director and producer of CITY-TV's Toronto Rocks and MushMusic).*

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## COREY HART: Putting 1987 Behind Him



Corey Hart

By Tim O'Connor

All of us have a few bad days or weeks we'd like to forget, but Corey Hart would like to forget most of 1987.

After ascending to international stardom faster than any Canadian pop star before him, Hart came crashing down to earth in '87. In 1984, the struggling singer's debut LP, *First Offence*, went Top 10 worldwide and his brooding stare became a video network staple. His second album, *Boy in the Box*, was a monster - selling more than one million copies in Canada alone.

Then came *Fields of Fire* in late 1986. Critics harped that it was overburdened with ballads and that his delivery was ludicrously overwrought. Commercially, it was a relative failure at sales of 300,000 in Canada.

The '87 tour was a disaster. After the key single, "I Can't Help Falling in Love," flopped, Hart and his management unwisely pressed ahead with his headlining tour of smaller U.S. centres. Most of the dates were undersold and Hart was feeling chronically tired. He had been feeling lethargic during the preceding tour of Japan.

As the tour went on, Hart got worse. He was unable to sleep or keep food down. Even so, his management added more dates to the tour and prepared plans for a comprehensive summer tour of Canada that would include smaller cities like Kitimat, B.C., and Sydney, P.E.I.

But after his first Canadian show in June in Sudbury, Ont., he collapsed. He got through a lacklustre show in Sault Ste. Marie, but he collapsed again after a concert in Thunder Bay.

He was flown home to Montreal where a doctor found that Hart was 12 pounds underweight and suffering from exhaustion. He was told to rest for three months. Even

though Hart and the promoters across Canada would lose thousands of dollars, the Canadian tour was cancelled. Hart retired to his girlfriend's country home where he slept, read and relaxed.

"It's a bit of a blur," the 25-year-old said of his collapse. "I was pretty screwed up. I had literally not taken a break since 1982 ... Since then I did three major tours. It was an accumulation of all that work catching up with me."

Considering Hart's intense demeanor, it didn't seem unlikely that he had worked himself into the ground. Nonetheless, suspicions and questions arose in the minds of many industry insiders. Some believed Corey had actually suffered a nervous collapse. Others questioned whether the collapse happened at all, postulating that it was just a calculated attempt to distract attention from a bombing album.

"To call it a ruse is totally wrong," said Keith Brown, label manager for Aquarius Records in Montreal, Hart's label. "Even Corey would acknowledge that this tour and the album had not been well received; that this might have set wheels in motion for the state he found himself in Northern Ontario."

Hart denies he worried himself sick because the album was stalling and attendance was down at his shows. "It had nothing to do with that," he said flatly. "I mean the year with *Fields of Fire* wasn't the easiest of years for me ... but I've never looked at this as a three-inning ballgame."

But Brown said the album's poor showing "preyed on Corey's mind. I'm sure it had a lot to do with the fact he eventually had a physical collapse."

Like many people, however, Brown wonders why Hart's management and road crew

allowed Hart to crash. "That part mystifies me. One thing that is glaring is that Corey's management kept adding dates (to the tour) two weeks before he collapsed. Definitely, there was a communication breakdown there. Those people on the road should have been more concerned with the possibility he was sick."

Given the circumstances, it didn't come as much of a surprise when Bob Romalgia resigned as Hart's manager in September just before a Montreal concert that was taped for a CBC special on Hart. (It was broadcast in December.) Romalgia was unavailable for comment for this article. Brown said Hart would get a new manager after he finished the new album which he began recording in late November in Montserrat in the West Indies.

Hart said that while he rested during the summer, he found what he was looking for. "After a while I was getting restless, so I started writing. And I think I wrote the best songs of my life that summer. I think they are leagues ahead of what I've done before. In September, I looked over this body of work and I thought I better go put this stuff down because it's fresh and happening now."

The new record will mark Hart's first attempt at producing - Phil Chapman has done the job in the past - and he'll be assisted by co-producer Andy Richards. While Hart was reluctant to discuss the direction the record might take, he allowed that "I'm going a lot more acoustic than in the past, which is a small hint. A couple of tracks I'm planning to record right off the floor and record with the vocal live."

Hart didn't know when the record might be released, but he promised that it would be worth remembering.



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# Rang Tangoing In Nashville

by Maureen Littlejohn

**B**ye bye day jobs, hello full time playing and recording career. That's the song Rang Tango founder/singer Lori Yates, 27, bassist Brad Fordham, 25, guitarist Lee Warren, 33, drummer Ed Goddine, 33, and back up vocalist Annette Paiement, 22, are singing these days. Singing to a two album deal with CBS Nashville early this year, Yates admits the deal came as quite a surprise for the one 1/2-year-old Toronto-based country/rockabilly band. "We hadn't even sent out demos yet," she exclaims. "We'd recorded a single called 'Sweetheart Avenue,'" explains Fordham. "And we were going to send it out (we didn't know to who yet) but it never got released. The jackets were just being printed up when CBS asked us to hold it." He laughs, "we didn't even meet anybody from CBS Canada until Lori came back from Nashville."

Scheduled to start their Nashville recording in March with Steve Buckingham (Tammy Wynette, Sweethearts of the Rodeo) producing, how did the ultimate country dream come true for a bunch of city kids from Canada? "There was a convention last summer in the Laurentian mountains for CBS. They were talking about up-and-coming bands," says Yates "and our name kept coming up." The pieces actually came together when Ab Hoch (a New York manager and sound company owner living in Montreal), who was attending the convention with Lennie Petze, an American CBS executive (he had a hand in launching Cyndi Lauper), heard a Rang Tango tape and decided to come to Toronto and meet the band. Maybe the whole thing was in the stars since Hoch got the band's tape from his friend Syl Coutu, who worked at Steve's Music in Toronto with bass player Fordham. "It all happened pretty fast," says Yates, "Ab sent the tape down to Lenny in New York and in the meantime we signed a management agreement with Ab and



Lori Yates

Syl. That gave him the power to negotiate on our behalf instead of just going on good faith." Petze came up for a Rang Tango gig at the BamBoo. "We were really scared," admits Yates, "we'd never met anybody from a record company before." The next thing you know Yates is sitting in Petze's New York office discussing business when a call comes through from Larry Hamby, vice president A&R CBS Nashville, wanting to come up to Toronto and hear the band. And so he did, at Clinton's on a Wednesday night. "With a half empty house, mostly just our moms and dads cheering us on," laughs Fordham. But Hamby liked what he heard,--a high energy, no-frills band that's able to get a traditional sound with a minimum of modern technology--sent flowers to Yates and invited her down to Nashville. "I talked to him after the gig and he wanted to be convinced that our hearts were in the right place as far as country music goes. He didn't want to hear that in two years I wanted to do rock," remembers Yates. "I told him I liked singers like Brenda Lee and Tanya Tucker and he warmed right up to me. I guess he was afraid we might be "Fashion Country," just discovering Patsy Cline,

but I told him we weren't."

What are Rang Tango? According to the Hamby, "the real thing." But according to Yates "We're not a country band in the traditional sense, from what I know about and hear coming out of Nashville though, you could call us a young country band. All I know is I respect and love the music."

Another reason for their ready acceptance by CBS Nashville had to do with their straight ahead sound. "Lee and I both play Fenders," says Fordham, who learned his country chops while playing with Johnny Lovesin at a notorious Toronto country after-hours club called the Matador.

Rang Tango's deal was cinched when Yates held her own during a demo recording session, produced by Bob Johnson (Bob Dylan) at Cowboy Jack Clement's studio in Nashville earlier this year, "I did three songs, straight off the floor with a bunch of session players backing me up," grins Yates, admitting she was nervous. In addition CBS asked her to go to Austin to check out the music scene. Notes Yates, "I hung out, went to some of the clubs and just had fun." She pauses, But you know? I think Toronto's got just as good a scene."



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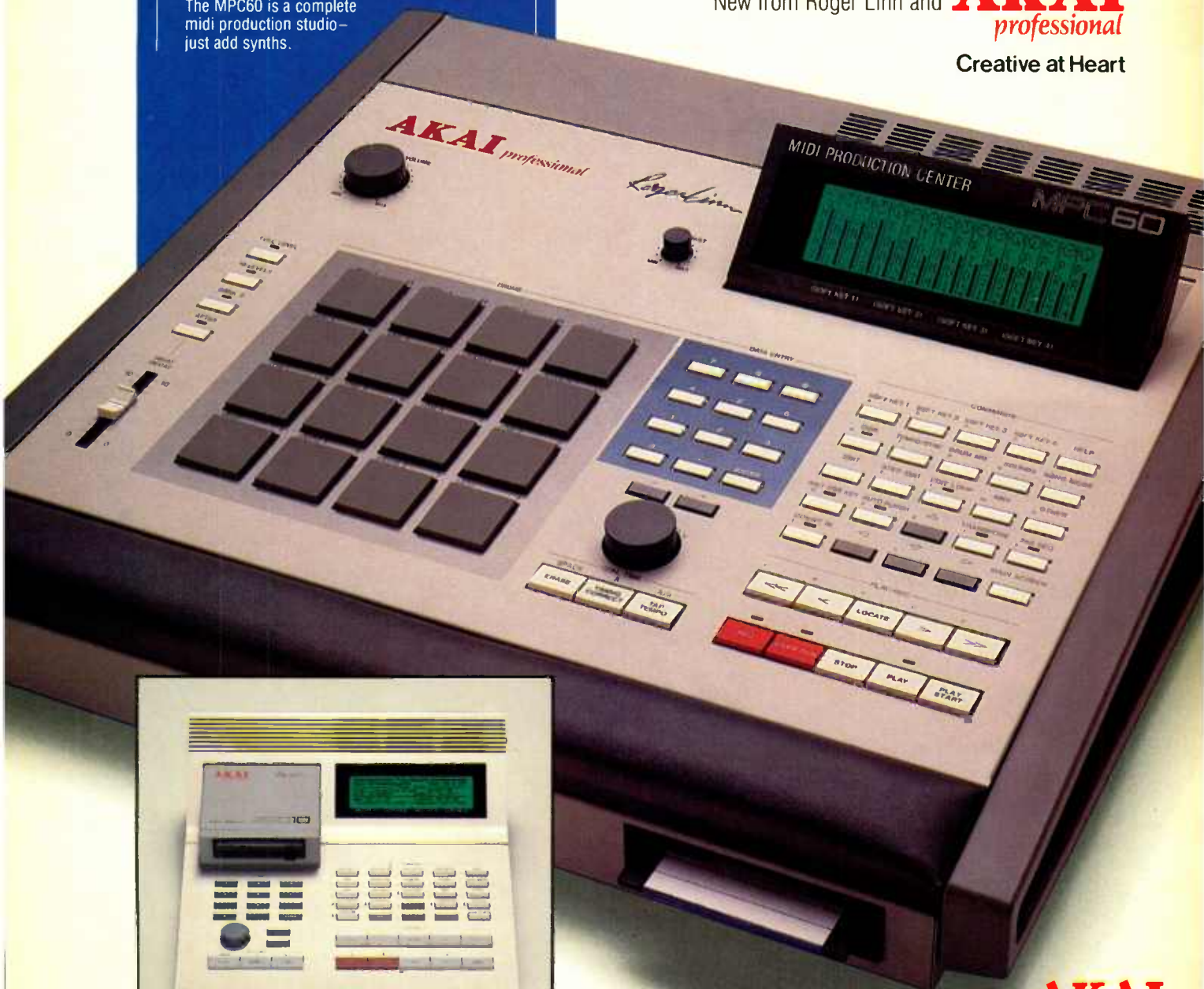
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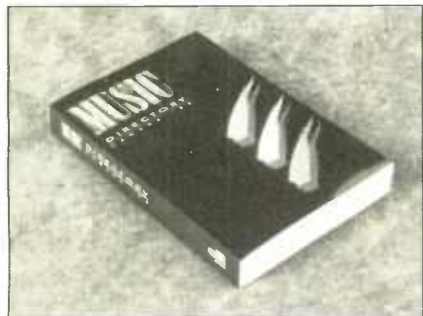
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# BUSINESS

## Music Directory Canada '88 Now Available



**C**M Books has announced the release of *Music Directory Canada '88*. The Music Directory is considered a bible by those working in the Canadian music industry. This year's directory has 50 categories including: Acoustic Consultants, Associations, Consumer & Trade Shows, Music Education, Musical Instrument & Sound Equipment Suppliers, Recording Studio Equipment Suppliers, Sound & Lighting Companies and Video Production Companies. Five new categories are: Choral

Groups, Financial Services, Music Consultants, Music Merchandising and Radio Program Distributors.

The directory also has a new section, among the special reference listings which include Schedule of Events and Suggested Reading. The new section is a Selected Discography of Canadian Artists.

There are 56 groups of listings in all.

In total there are over 3,000 detailed listings of individuals, organizations and institutions. Each category is listed alphabetically and by region, and comes complete with addresses and phone numbers. There are over 600 book pages, which is 150 more than the previous directory.

Over a year in the making, *Music Directory Canada '88* was compiled by Editor Maureen Littlejohn. The project was overseen by *Canadian Musician's* editor, Ted Burley, who acted as Executive Editor for this project. The result is a directory which ties all the various elements of the whole Canadian music scene into one complete and easy to use industry guide.

*Music Directory Canada '88* sells for \$24.95 and is available at book stores, musical instrument stores and record stores. You can order the directory by phoning CM Books at (416) 485-1049.

## Appointment Notice



**Maria Ralley**

**J**im Norris, president of Norris Publications (publisher of *Canadian Musician*), is proud to announce the appointment of Maria Ralley as Advertising Sales Representative for *Canadian Musician* and our other publications. Maria has been with us for more than two years as circulation coordinator. She brings to her new job an enthusiasm and dedication to customer service, and a well developed knowledge of the magazine and our readers.

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## Electro-Voice Introduces Series Of Consoles

Electro-Voice has introduced a series of BK-32 stereo mixing consoles at the Winter NAMM show in Anaheim, CA. The series expands on the introduction of the BK-1632, 16 channel stereo mixing console, offering various channel configurations: 24 channel, 16 channel, 12 channel and a rack mountable eight channel.

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According to Walsh, the BK-32 series provides features that sound engineers look for in mixing consoles including: subgroup capability, individual channel effects loop, multiple sends, phantom power and pre-fade listen.

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PRODUCT NEWS



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## Images In Vogue Record The Spell

by Joe Vizvary



Images In Vogue

Like our previous records, *The Spell* was recorded over an extended period of time, though not necessarily by choice. The search for the right producer, combined with the problems of coordinating producers' schedules, studio availability, band gigs, and members' health problems (chronic laryngitis) meant that we would only be in the studio three or four days a week, two of three weeks at a time. As a result, each time we finished a group of songs, we would have a couple of weeks to evaluate what we had done. When we would re-enter the studio our reactions to the results of the previous session would directly affect how we recorded the next songs. Even Song selection was affected. Usually most of the songs for an album are selected during preproduction, then recorded as a group. The songs on *The Spell* were often selected to contrast earlier selections, or to fill a stylistic gap. As well, because we used a number of production teams, the group of people selecting songs for each session would be different, so two songs were actually recorded twice, with different producers using radically different approaches.

### First Sessions

The first sessions for *The Spell* took place at Phase One Studios in Toronto in December 1986 and January 1987, with me as producer. These sessions were originally intended as demo sessions but the early results were good enough that we got the go ahead to try for finished tracks. Of these, "What If?" ended up on the album.

Since these were the first songs we were recording as a five piece band with only one keyboard player, as producer I wanted to approach these songs in a simpler, more direct manner than we would have with earlier band line-ups. On "What If?" I restricted my keyboard parts to an acoustic piano, supported by a simple cello melody, played on an Ensoniq Mirage, and an ethereal pad which fades in and out randomly, played on a Roland Alpha Juno 2. I wanted the song to have a simple, almost folk or countryish feel, along the lines of Roxy Music's "A Song For Europe" and Lou Reed's "The Kids", so the piano rarely plays more than one-note melodies, adding triads only during the choruses.

We returned to Phase One in February to record two more songs, with John Switzer gradually becoming involved in producing. Since the songs recorded earlier had been part of our live set for about six months, we decided to try recording two of our newest songs, written late January, and not yet tried out live. On "Everytime" I wanted to continue simplifying my approach to playing. The most basic part I came up with for the song was descending intervals played as constant eighth notes, becoming an even simpler melody during the chorus. This was done using a cheap electronic piano sound from the Alpha Juno 2. The part was played into my Roland MC 500 and quantized. The part was synced to tape, and as the sequencer played the part, I played the controls of my Lexicon PCM 41 DDL, fading echoes in and out, to create an effect of expansion and contraction, of breath-

ing. I also added some buzzy string pitchbends to further add to the feeling of expanding. This was meant to work with the vocals, which I wanted to sound as though Dale, our singer, was looking into a room as he sang the lines, then retreating between lines.

### Saved By Technology

With John Switzer designated producer, we entered Saved by Technology's MIDI studio in March. Our usual method of recording to this point was to add parts to a basic drum machine and sequencer scratch track, prepared during preproduction. In fact, this is basically how we had recorded since the band started. John felt it was logical for a band like ours (whatever that means) to try recording using SBT's Macintosh computer system and MIDI capabilities, then add whatever parts might be needed later at Phase One.

"Like A Fool" was written from an instrumental piece I had shown Dale. I later thought it would be interesting to use the instrumental as an introduction to "Like A Fool", but the piece took on a character of its own, mutating into "One Hand Cleanses...The Other" (The Other appears on the B-side of the "So Careful" 12" single). MIDied together in endless combinations were an Emulator II, Ensoniq ESQ, Akai S-900, Sequential Circuits Prophet VS and to reinforce some of the parts on "Everytime" because some felt the original Alpha Juno 2 parts sounded "cheap" (as it was meant to, in retrospect. Now it sounds like a DX7, which is just as appalling

*Continued*

# MIDI

## Images In Vogue

to some). While I agree with having as many sound sources available as possible while recording, I found it a bit easy to fall into a situation of "keyboards by committee". Rather than one person's taste in sound deciding, the sound that ends up being used is usually a compromise between two of three people. While the sounds and parts used on "Like a Fool" were distinctive on their own, the combined results seem to sound a bit homogenized. A keyboardist's identity comes from what he is willing to do or not do, and what devices he will or will not use. The "state of the industry" seems to dictate, however, that keyboard parts should be the result of a "mass mind".

### Phase One and McClear

"Like a Fool" and "One Hand Cleanses" were taken to Phase One to be completed. This is where "One Hand Cleanses" started mutating as I added some hellish noises from my Prophet 5 and some processed taped voices from the film "The Hunger".

In April, we started recording at McClear Place Studios in Toronto, with Jon Goldsmith and Kerry Crawford producing. Since we started recording in December, the sound of the songs had gotten progressively denser,

and the recording methods more rigid. After using the computer, we wanted to try the opposite, so the next four songs were recorded live, with all five of us playing live to a click track. Later parts would be added or eliminated, but the basic live feel remained.

### Crawford and Goldsmith

Crawford and Goldsmith's approach was one of even more simplicity, probably as a result of their reaction to the songs which we had recorded at SBT and Phase One. "So Careful", our current single, has only a layered string pad from the Alpha Juno 2 MIDled to a Yamaha GS-1, and a simple sequence from our Sequential Circuits Pro-1 providing a rhythmic pulse. In fact, I don't even play during much of the song. Only at the end of the song are any other keyboard sounds introduced. "Piece of Your Heart" uses this same approach, with no keyboard parts and only one guitar part during the choruses.

On "Alone" I had intended to use acoustic piano, but the part tended to dominate the choruses, so I switched the part to the Alpha Juno 2, using an unobtrusive electric piano sound. A subtle voice sound from Rob Yales Fairlight was used to imply bass notes during sections of the song where the bass guitar plays out of its usual register.

Since these songs were considered the

most "commercial", when we went back to McClear in June to record the final two songs for the album. Our reaction was to choose songs that could not possibly be chosen as singles. We recorded "I Saw the Man" and "Daddy" with a lot of room for experimentation, though both ended up being fairly straight-ahead anyway.

"I Saw the Man" was originally intended as an angular, abrasive dance song, with jarring guitar and noise accents. Instead of real drums, we programmed a simple bass drum program into the MC 500. Then we sampled various sounds into the Fairlight, including our guitarist, Tim Welch, and metallic sounds from a Einstuerzende Neubauten CD. These were altered to create a pseudo kit, and with our drummer, Derrick Gyles, playing the snare drum part from an Octa-pad and me playing the rest of the noises on the Fairlight keyboard instead of drum fills and cymbals.

While the first half of "Daddy" uses a conventional approach, with the Alpha Juno 2 and Roland D50 providing the keyboard pads, the second half of the song changes radically. We switch from real drums to a totally synthesized kit, to make the second half sound more mechanical and relentless.

*(Joe Vizary is a member of The Spell and/or Images In Vogue).*

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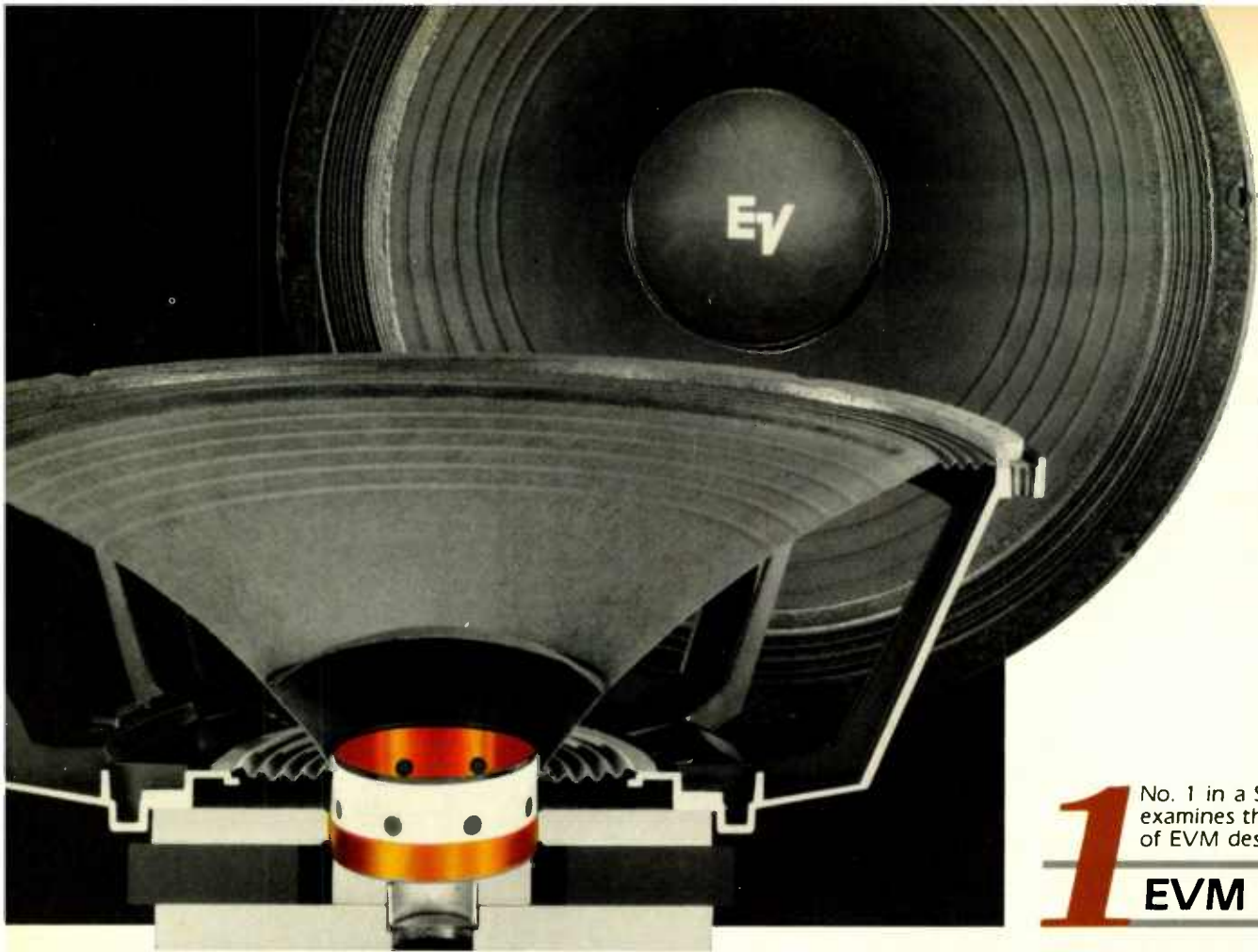
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# BLUE RIVER

## THRIVING ON

B Y P E R R Y S T E R N



PHOTO: HIDEO SATOH



# RODEO

## N POP'S OUTSKIRTS

**I**n a bitter cold Scarborough night late in December, some 500-odd (very odd) students are whooping it up in what looks to be a huge concrete bunker. At the back of the room, standing next to the sound board, Stan Kulin and Dave Tollington, President and National (and International) Product Manager respectively of WEA Canada, watch as one of their brightest new lights performs to a captivated audience in a room with all the acoustical charm of a granite shoe box.

As the band, Blue Rodeo, finishes one tune and the crowd surges onto the dance floor for the next, Tollington slowly tilts his head towards the roof, some five, grey, concrete stories above and remarks to no-one in particular, "Now I know where to come when they drop the Big One."

Not every gig that Blue Rodeo plays is in some ignominious hall that swallows up their music and spits out a sound that could only be replicated on an unrefurbished 1953 Seabreeze mono record player. But every gig has the same result. Song by song, set by set, more and more people put down their beers, pick up their partners and mosey on up to the dance floor to spin a little before the band says goodnight. As bar bands go, you'd have to travel far and wide to find one more crowd pleasing and personable than this one. And now, they've got a gold record to boot.

While Blue Rodeo has certainly made an impact on the music scene in Canada in the past year, the repercussions of their success probably won't be fully appreciated until next year, sometime after their second album is released. Quietly, without commotion or confusion, Blue Rodeo has re-written the book on how a band can reach a national audience, maintain a full touring schedule (over 170 dates last year), and still keep their day jobs.

"We've never been country country guys," Blue Rodeo's Greg Keelor says of himself and his long-time partner Jim Cuddy. We're country like The Byrds were country... or The

Lovin' Spoonful and Buffalo Springfield. We weren't raised on Merle Haggard or any of those cats. Which is to say, for the umpteenth time, Blue Rodeo is a *Pop* band, with country inflections to be sure, but a pop band all the same.

Four months after releasing their debut album, *Outskirts*, Blue Rodeo looked like someone might pull the plug on their eclectic bronco. To say the album had stiffed would be kind. "When it first came out," Keelor explains, "no one would play it. It was: Too varied, or, 'We don't play country.' At first we were scared. We thought we had the largest delete ever of all time." But they weren't ready to give up the ghost yet.

The Blue Rodeo success story is one of patience and persistence. It's one with a lot of rules being broken, with a few white lies being told, and with aspirations met and surpassed. Here's a band that, unlike most of their contemporaries, don't worry about contriving a physical image, could care less about current technological advances, hasn't put itself in hock to a record company for recording or video expenses, hasn't prostituted itself for the sake of a foreign release, and still only works on weekends. The band members are experienced (except perhaps for keyboardist Bobby Wiseman who'd never been in a group before), articulate, well-versed in the history of contemporary music but not enslaved by an obsession with it, have probably had more downs than ups in their professional pasts, and, according to Cuddy, they "don't care" where they'll be this time next year. That they don't appear to be foaming at the mouth to reach the top of the charts is remarkably refreshing in this All-Or-Nothing day and age. Perhaps because of all this, it might do us all a bit of good to see how they got where they are today.

The basis for Blue Rodeo's success lies in the enduring partnership between Cuddy and Keelor. Friends since high school (they are both in their early thirties now), in many ways, as with most couples, they are oppo-

sites: Cuddy is almost Mr. Rogers-like in his warmth and approachability. Keelor is more cynical in attitude and his "warmth" generally bubbles over into boisterous exuberance. Cuddy is always clean-shaven, well-appointed and attentive. Keelor is, well frankly, a slob -- usually wearing dirty (or seemingly dirty) clothes, has a five o'clock shadow all day, and won't suffer fools gladly. Together, however, they are two peas in a pod. As their manager, John Caton, explains: "There's the optimist and the pessimist and they're joined at the hip because they've known each other for so long. When I deal with Blue Rodeo I deal with Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor as one and I deal with the others separately."

The differences in their personalities manifest themselves in their different styles of songwriting. According to Caton, "Jim is more the sentimentalist and idealist. He takes something and tries to find the good in it. Greg is more melancholy. He has more to say on social issues." The unusual fact that the band has two singer/songwriters and two frontmen gives the band a broader range thematically as well as musically.

Back in 1977, during Toronto's last great club scene, Cuddy and Keelor formed their first band. Briefly called The Tears, they soon changed the name to The Hi-Fi's. The group was, "Pop with a capital P," according to Keelor, and in it they learned the fundamentals of guitar playing, songwriting, and something called "band dynamics." "We were so Poppy we were more like 'puppy,'" Keelor jokes now. "We'd write hooks, not songs."

Even still, they released a single ("I Don't Know Why"/"Look What You've Done") that got some local airplay, and were on the verge of signing their first record deal when the bottom fell out. "We were negotiating with Ready Records," Keelor recalls, "when, a week away from signing, The Edge closed, the Horseshoe closed and good ol' doomsday Peter Goddard wrote yet another article announcing the end of rock 'n' roll.

"Ready Records were having some finan-

# BLUE RODEO

cial problems and with things looking so gloomy they said: We'll sign you, but we're not going to put out a record until next year. Basically they were saying forget it. Absolutely no one else in Toronto was taking any chances with new bands at the time, so The Hi-Fis packed it in with Keelor flying off to London and Cuddy joining his girlfriend who'd found work in New York.

The breaking up of The Hi-Fis was the first step towards building the philosophy that guides Blue Rodeo. Like many young musicians they tried to live the fantasy-life of what they imagined a rock star's life would

be. "Jim and I liked to be in bands in that adolescent Beatles way," Keelor says now. "In *Help* they were all great friends and lived in the same house." But in New York and in London they observed completely different rock lifestyles. Instead of the small "scenes" emerging around clubs or fashions they'd found in Toronto, they discovered whole "subcultures" of people, thriving communities of night-lifers, musicians, artists, actors, and the like, who didn't aspire to rock 'n' roll, they lived it.

Eventually Keelor joined Cuddy in New York where they were introduced to the underground "junk" pop scene of The Birthday Party, Panther Burns, and Alex Chilton. They started playing ska and reggae, Keelor recalls, as well as, "a trashy rock 'n' roll that

we'd never heard before." Unchained from their devotion to the sixties pop of The Beatles, The Stones and Dylan, the two friends formed a new band, called Fly to France, that tried to incorporate all the new influences.

But Fly to France wouldn't take off. "Whenever a band falls apart," observes Keelor, "there's the excitement of starting something new with everything you've learned. When Fly to France fell apart we went out and bought acoustic guitars, which we hadn't played in a long time. That's where the roots of Blue Rodeo came from."

In New York the pair completely overhauled their attitude about playing. Back in Toronto the general consensus was that a gig should be treated as an "event" and that a band should only play sparingly for fear of burning out its audience. But in London, Keelor discovered the pub rock scene where people like Dave Edmunds, Nick Lowe and Graham Parker were playing clubs every night, often drawing the same people over and over again.

In New York they fell under the spell of country singer Ned Sublette. Terms like "cowpunk" and "New Country" hadn't been invented yet, and Sublette to this day is still relatively undiscovered, but Keelor refers regularly to Sublette as a "big influence. His songwriting was so honest and upfront and he had the courage to experiment with instrumentation. One night he'd have a tuba instead of a bass. The songs were so strong that anything he added to them just made them more interesting. The songs we'd written may have been great pop, but if you sat down and played them on an acoustic they wouldn't sound so hot. Now, if I played you one of our songs right here, it would sound fine.

"We started concentrating on duets because we didn't want to have to rely on a band for a good sound. We did a demo tape on acoustic guitars just before we left New York. It was a real Don and Phil [Everly] thing, and that's what we slapped Blue Rodeo on." Ironically, after having given up on the Big Apple and back in Toronto again, they started hearing from New York record companies interested in the Blue Rodeo demos. "They'd say couldn't you come down here and play for us," recalls Keelor acerbically, "and I'd say: I was there for three years, why didn't you call me then?"

Keelor and Cuddy were joined in the Blue Rodeo line up by bassist Bazil Donovan and drummer Cleave Anderson, both of whom had played with The Sharks. The game plan was simple. Get the songs down and then play as often as possible to refine their live sound. "Live" was what Blue Rodeo would be all about. This was in '85. By '86 they'd picked up two more integral players: keyboardist Wiseman who brought in a jazz element through his experience as an improvisational performance artist, and manager John Caton, formerly with The Arrows, who'd grown fed up with rock 'n' roll and had gone back to a lucrative real estate career.

Blue Rodeo quickly became a mainstay of the Toronto night life. They roamed freely up



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and down the clubs on Queen Street, picking up more and more college and out-of-town gigs, working as often as possible in the London pub ethic that Keelor had so admired. Having worked out their songs originally on acoustics, the band definitely had a country feel, something they combatted with Wiseman's unpredictable flourishes on his 28 year old Acetone organ and beaten up Clavinet.

Three "movements" were being promoted at the time: the cowpunk of bands like Wall of Voodoo and Rank & File, the roots-rock of R.E.M. and Let's Active, and the neo-psychodelia of The Cult and Love & Rockets. Somehow or other Blue Rodeo, regardless of the connotations of its name, managed to touch on all three, gaining nearly universal critical acclaim. "It's a funny thing," reflects Cuddy, "that when you drop an image you create a new image. In our defence, if you saw our show you'd see that we haven't just jumped on a bandwagon. Our keyboard player, Bobby, adds a jazz element that's not really heard on those other things."

Caton, who had sworn off managing because of the psychotic nature of the business, was seduced by the easy stage presence of the band as well as the compelling listenability of their original songs. They played almost all the songs that appear on *Outskirts* during the first set that Caton heard two years ago, and when he heard "Try," he was hooked.

Now is the part of the story where strategies, politics, and economic realities bust up the dream world of just a bunch of guys who, as Keelor explains, "just wanted to play music. The dream was: We didn't want to be in show business anymore, we wanted to be musicians."

By '86 there was a lot of talk about Blue Rodeo being courted by all the major labels. In fact, only WEA had actually opened the door for contract negotiations. Bob Roper, WEA's head of A&R, says he was sitting in his office one day when National Publicity Manager Joanne Kaeding popped her head in the door and said, "I've just seen a band that you're going to hate. But I love 'em and we've got to sign them." On first viewing Kaeding's prediction proved all too true. "They were just horrible the first time I saw them at the Holiday (in Toronto), Roper recalls. "But Caton convinced me to give them another chance a few weeks later and they were terrific."

Over the next few months Roper saw the band several times, culminating in an evening when the band, "played their hearts out." to an audience of twelve. "They were great, and they played for themselves. I loved it." They immediately started negotiating a budget for an album, but got hung up on the price tag.

Initially, Caton and the band figured on a figure of about \$150,000 that would be needed for a producer, studio time and a video or two. Roper felt the figure was too high. As time went by, through Cuddy's connection (through his day job), with a video company, they managed to make a \$25,000 video for "Outskirts" for about \$3,000. Then FACTOR

came through with approximately half the production budget for the album. Some fourteen months after first being introduced to the band, Roper could now sign a deal with them for the much-reduced budget. The band was given four weeks to deliver a master.

Caton was a long-time friend of producer Terry Brown, and Brown, who is constantly being offered free time in studios so that he can check them out, had done some demo work with Blue Rodeo in the past. He was the natural choice as their producer, but as with any producer/performer partnership, the band was a bit leery about who would take the helm. Though famous now because of his long association with Rush and for his recent success with Cutting Crew, the boys in Blue Rodeo knew something else about him that

they wanted to draw on. Brown, they'd discovered, had learned his chops as an engineer and producer back in sixties London, manning the boards for acts like The Troggs, The Animals, Donovan and Jimi Hendrix. They wanted him to forget what he'd learned since those heady days of pop and help bring to their album the kind of immediacy and innovation that had long since disappeared from contemporary production techniques.

"Choosing a producer," says Jim Cuddy, "is a bit like doing acid. You decide to do it. You choose what type. You drop it. But then... you're fucked. It takes over. I'm not saying that Terry Brown took over, but a producer's talent is to sit in a control room and put all the pieces together. The band's talent is to go in and do their piece as best as they can

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# BLUE RODEO

saying: Just a second.... just a second! But you can't second guess your producer all the way along. Terry Brown has a sense of precision and a vast knowledge of recording techniques, but we kept saying: Go back. Don't give us this Rush stuff and the Cutting Crew. Go back to Empire Studios and your days with the Troggs."

The ultimate goal of the album, one that probably wasn't entirely achieved, was to capture the band's infectious and idiosyncratic live sound. To do that they would have had to do much of their recording as an ensemble straight off the floor, something the deadline and budget didn't allow for. The performance that usually got sacrificed was Wiseman's keyboarding. In October's *Canadian Musician* Wiseman described his unique playing style: using drumsticks he often beats up on his clavinet, sometimes playing it percussively as though it were a xylophone, sometimes using the sticks horizontally against the keys, sometimes playing up and down the keyboard's legs. On stage his antics have been described as "half the show," but on the album he's been relegated to a more traditional keyboardist's role.

The end result of *Outskirts* was an album that displayed the band's wide range of influences and styles, highlighting the topnotch songwriting talents of Keelor and Cuddy. What was missing was the indisputable proof

of the band's brilliance as a live act. This meant that, though the record was generally well-received critically, it was immediately pointed out that to really appreciate Blue Rodeo, you had to see them perform.

When Caton negotiated with WEA, he demanded from them a six month commitment from the label as opposed to the usual twelve week period that a band is given to prove its stuff. In turn he promised WEA that the band would support the album by playing cross country. "That was a smokescreen," Caton now confesses. "I led the record company to believe that we would go on tour, I just didn't say how."

The reality of the situation was that Cuddy and Anderson, both of whom are married with children, had day jobs they couldn't afford to sacrifice. As a necessity they developed the "Hit and Run Tour". Caton and the band discovered that instead of packing the proverbial van and staying out on the road for months on end, that they could fly out of Toronto on Thursday night, play three gigs in Vancouver or Calgary or Halifax and be back home in time for work on Monday. What it means is they only break even by gigging. They pay for their flights with whatever the promoter's paying, and accommodations are provided free. While in town they'll spend the days doing interviews, in stores, and generally getting to know the retailers and radio programmers that can help them out.

Cuddy is quick to point out that they've probably seen more of the country because of their novel approach than most bands do in

the conventional way. Having played over 170 dates in 1987, they managed to play Vancouver and Halifax three times, Edmonton and Calgary twice, Montreal four times and Ottawa ten. "By keeping our day jobs and working around those limitations," Cuddy contends, "we maintain very good stability in the band. That, from my experience, has always been the problem with bands that I've been in. It's rarely been musical problems that break up a band, although there always are some. It's always that someone's gone broke or has personal problems or someone has to take a job out of town."

Though the single and video for "Outskirts" had been released, as Keelor earlier pointed out, the group was being roundly ignored by radio all across the country. Even the stations that played a cut or two had chosen alternative tracks, particularly "Heart Like Mine" and "Floating." Eventually they started picking up steam on college charts and by June, three months after the album's release, they prepared for the release of their second single, "Try."

This is where WEA's full commitment to Blue Rodeo was proven. "Try" had the unfortunate timing of being released during the first few days of last summer's mail strike. Every radio station in the country was sent the single, but after a few weeks Caton realized that there was no way of knowing who had or hadn't received the song. Because the band wouldn't be blanketing the country with personal appearances, the role of radio was crucial even though Caton's stated motto

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## BLUE RODEO

was that the band had to work, "From the street up, and not from radio down." With a great deal of trepidation he approached WEA and asked that "Try" be completely reserved after the mail strike was resolved. To his great surprise they answered back with an unreserved "yes."

By July the video for "Try" was completed and it managed to so impress MuchMusic's programming chief John Martin, that it immediately went into high rotation. The rest, as they say, is history.

But that wasn't the end of promoting the album. Not by a long shot. Though their original commitment to six months promotion would have run out in September, WEA stepped up its efforts on Blue Rodeo's behalf. A marketing scheme called "Blue Bucks" was developed wherein retailers would receive "bucks" for displays, front racking, and playing the album in the store. Those who'd earned the most "bucks" would receive a prize package including gold records and t-shirts as well as dinner with the band. The key here was that Caton didn't leave it up to WEA to do all the work themselves. WEA's JoAnn Kaeding is quick to point out that Caton's team (including Grant Rorabeck and Tony Neilsen) have been, "really good themselves. John and Tony have been, since the beginning, going into stores and getting the people out. Giving them t-shirts, tickets to the shows. The big guys always get invitations."

In February *Outskirts* was released in the States on Atlantic records. Still bucking conventional wisdom, Blue Rodeo will be approaching the U.S. market in much the same way they've done here. Because of the slow response to the album at home, the Americans were in no great rush to sign them to a distribution deal, but having warmed up to the success of "Try" they're willing to let the band have its way. They still plan to release "Outskirts" as their first single, holding back "Try" for 12 - 14 weeks until they've garnered some recognition.

So many bands have been heralded as "the next big thing" that the phrase has become meaningless. Blue Rodeo doesn't want to be a "Big" thing, though they certainly wouldn't spit at the opportunity. They seem to want something more enduring than chart success, critical acclaim, and fat paychecks. It has nothing to do with the business savvy they seem to have so much of, or the show business ability to rev up a crowd. It's something about being *musicians*. Jim Cuddy gets wistful when he thinks about his role as a songwriter. "A big part of pop music," he explains, "is the pleasure of phenomena. The phenomenon is that a song can come out and all of a sudden it becomes electric because everyone is hearing it at the same time. From Sackville New Brunswick to Kelowna, B.C. they'll have that song in common. It's exhilarating to think that can happen... and all of a sudden it's happening to one of *your* songs." □

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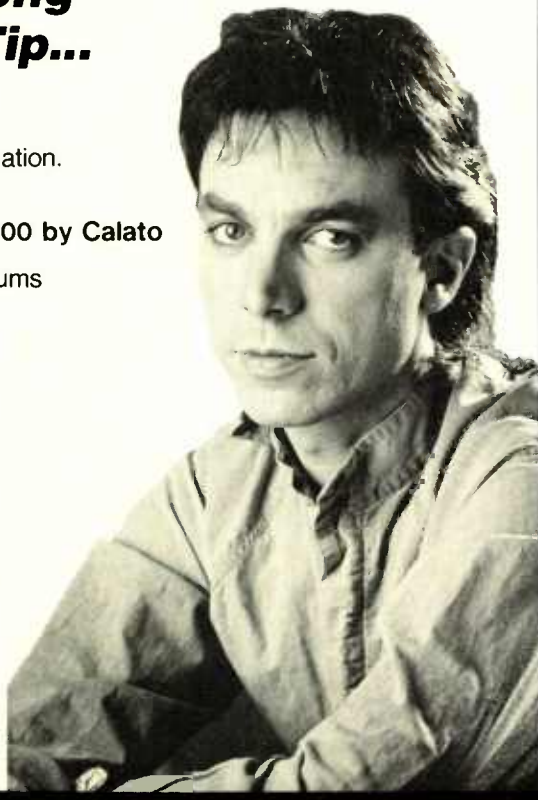
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# Robbie Robertson IS BACK



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**M**ake no mistake about it: Robbie Robertson is *back*, and hotter than he's ever been in 30 years of music-making. His solo debut comeback album, *Robbie Robertson*, has earned critical raves, flattering portraits, and Top-Ten-List status from *Rolling Stone* on down to your local daily newspaper. On a promo tour of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, Robertson is doing as many as 20 interviews a day and shaking hands with record retailers and radio jocks. Everybody wants a piece of him these days, and he seems willing to allow them all the opportunity.

As guitarist and songwriter for The Band, Robertson was one of rock's greatest creative

spirits from 1968's *Music From Big Pink* through 1978's all-star farewell to The Band, *The Last Waltz*. It's been 10 years since he's written and recorded a full album of songs. Robertson's new work approaches the talent and vision of his earlier work. He remains one of the great songwriters and guitarists of his generation.

"When the first song came," says Robertson, "I thought 'This is the kind of thing I've been searching for all my life.' A few days later another song started to come. It was a very gratifying feeling."

As he began to write again, Robertson found himself gravitating towards his half-Indian heritage. (His mother is an Iroquois, his father was Jewish.) Young Robbie was first

inspired to play by spending summers with his musically-inclined cousins on the Six Nations Reservation in Ontario.

"This Indian thing wasn't even crossing my mind when I wrote the songs," he says. "But I just found it was seeping out. Then I could really feel it drifting to the surface, and I felt good about it."

So the images on the album are largely Indian: a broken arrow, a half-breed riding again, an Indian at war. And the sound is heavy on tom-toms in "Fallen Angel" and "Sweet Fire of Love."

"I wanted the album to start off, on 'Fallen Angel,' with these huge Indian drums," says Robertson. "To play the heartbeat of this album. We got it so we had just the right delay





on it, so we could play to the decay of the beat. It is actually drums being hit, but it doesn't just go 'Boom, boom, boom,' it goes (he whispers) 'Buh-doom-poom,' and it fades, and it's much more haunting.

"Sweet Fire" and "Testimony," collaborations with U2 (the latter performed to a backing horn track by jazz arranger Gil Evans) came about under great pressure. Robertson immediately flew off to Dublin after he'd completed work with Evans on the soundtrack for *The Color Of Money*. He arrived in the midst of a storm of hurricane-like proportions. He got to U2 drummer Adam Clayton's studio with no songs at all. "Sweet Fire" was scribbled on some scraps of paper and based on a guitar-and-tom-tom track

Robertson had on a cassette.

It was edited down from a 22-minute jam, with Bono and other U2 member Edge.

"Instead of doing takes," he says, "we'd play it through and keep trying different structures. We just kept playing and said 'These are the parts that feel the best.'"

But Robertson doesn't mind pressure. Similarly, Hamiltonian producer Daniel Lanois (who brought former clients U2 and Peter Gabriel to the project and assembled the band) worked hard to get the best out of the players.

"He would encourage musicians," says Robertson. "He'd push and push until they did a bit more than they even thought they were capable of."

"Daniel is the kind of guy you meet and say 'Let's start a band!' He gets right in the trenches with you, and he's not afraid to get his hands dirty. He was the first producer I talked with. I liked the idea of us two Canadians - whether we were in Dublin, Los Angeles, wherever - just out there kickin' ass."

"Daniel made it so I could try *any* goddam thing, even something ridiculous, just in case I might discover something there. He was good at seeing where to pursue or not pursue things."

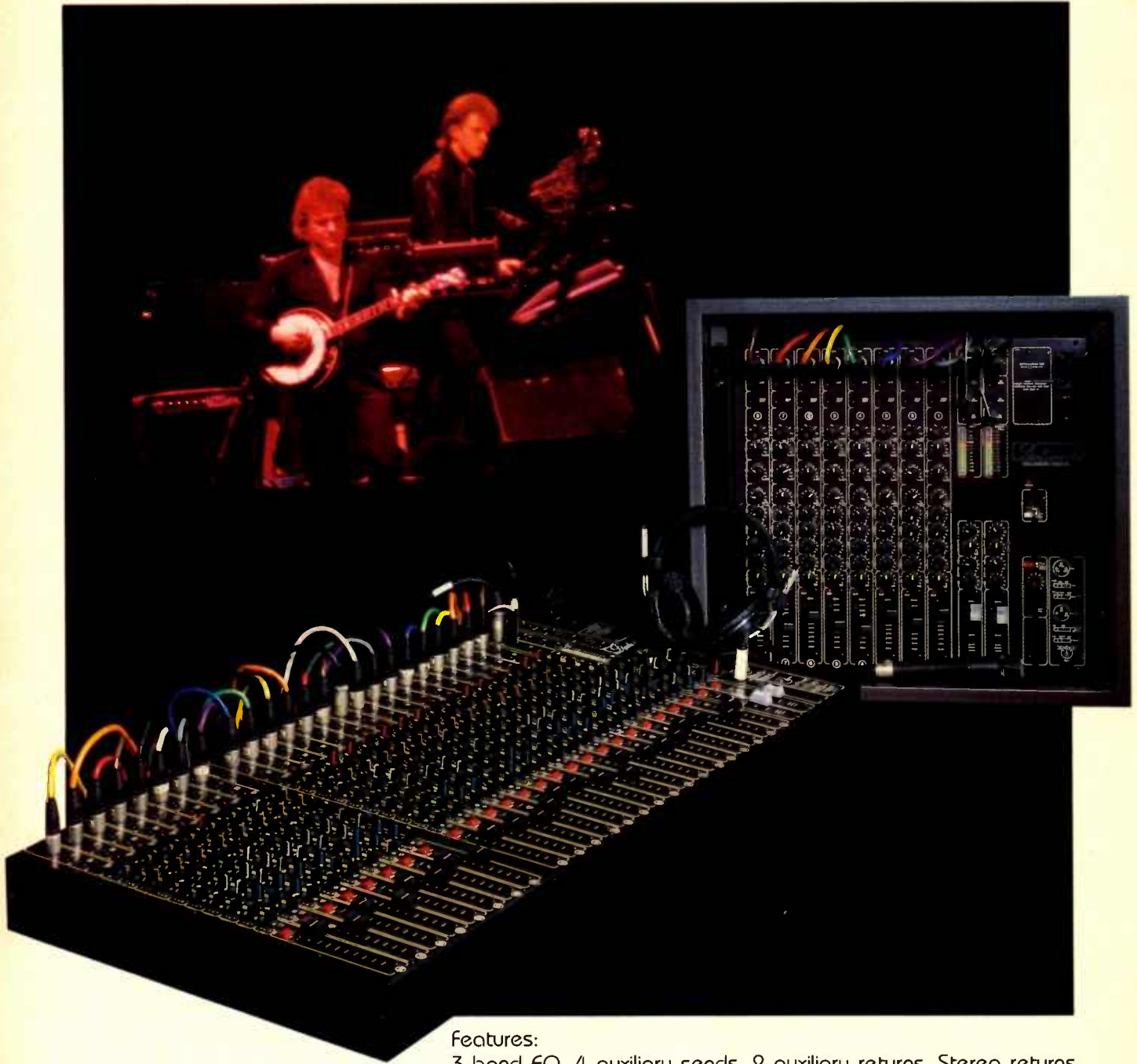
The basic band ended up being Manu Kathe (Peter Gabriel), on drums, bassist Tony Levin (Gabriel, King Crimson), and Hamiltonian session pro Bill Dillon (see sidebar) on ambient guitar. Lanois would add

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# Robbie Robertson

percussion while Gabriel, U2, The BoDeans, Maria McKee (Lone Justice), and former Band-mates Rick Danko and Garth Hudson all contributed to the album.

"We were just kind of getting what we could as people went by," says Robertson. "We had some folks just for a few days. If it sounds like a band, it's because these are extraordinary, well-seasoned musicians."

Robertson and Lanois would get complete, finished options on tape as people passed through, deciding what to use and how in the mixing stage.

It's an expensive way to work. *Rolling Stone* estimated that the album cost \$1 million (including Robertson's six-figure advance to sign with Geffen Records). Lanois calls it at \$400,000. It was recorded at six studios. Songs were written and re-written. Katche and Dillon were flown in to work. Robertson flew to Bath to work with Gabriel and to Dublin to work with U2. During recording, he left to do *The Color Of Money* soundtrack and Lanois left to do *The Joshua Tree*. Robertson's manager had to pay to finish the record after the guitarist had exhausted a six-figure budget.

He claims that the time and expenses are exaggerated. His defence is simple: "If it's right for the music, then you should just do it." After 11 years, he wanted to do it just right.

One thing he'd almost never done before is sing lead vocals. Many have compared the phrasing to that of his former Band-mates, but Robertson says that came from the old process of bouncing songs he'd written off of them.



His own voice ranges from a gritty growl ("American Roulette") to falsetto backing vocals ("Broken Arrow") to an incredibly husky whisper (the verses of "Somewhere Down The Crazy River").

"That's just how I sing," Robertson chuck-

les. "We used this old U-47 microphone from the '50s or '60s. Nothing unique about 'em, except that no two sound alike. You get a good one, put it up, just sing with all your heart and see what you get."

Robertson sang falsetto backing vocals on "Broken Arrow" when Elizabeth Fraser (Cocteau Twins) and Mary Margaret O'Hara (Go Deo Chorus) were unavailable.

"It was a nice feeling after all this time, to still have a few surprises left," says Robertson.

Some of the most surprised people are longtime Band fans. Not because he didn't make another Band record; more because the new one seems to have discarded some of the old values.

To these folks, the Band were rootsy, subtle, anti-trendy; the new one is slick and trendy.

"Slick is the wrong word," says Robertson. "Ninety per cent of the time it's just two guitars, bass and drums."

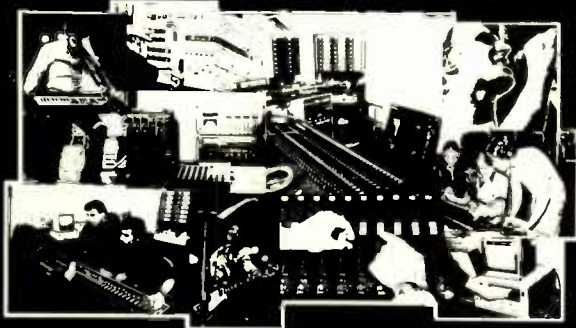
"It's 1988, and I'd feel stupid pretending it's 1969. I like lots of what's happened in the meantime."

"I don't give a shit about whether U2 is popular or not. It's the music. Their drummer is amazing, and Edge has more character than any guitar player around."

"As for the 'obvious' rock 'n' roll, I chose not to forget strapping on a guitar and saying 'let's kick the shit outta this one!' It's my roots."

"I've run into some hardcore Band fans who said they were shocked when they first

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# Robbie Robertson

heard it. Well, I like that.

"I was trying to complement the songs by using musicians who'd give you something extraordinary, and who could follow the visions I was talking about. To make you feel the songs.

"Trendiness is the kind of stuff in 10 years doesn't mean anything. To the best of my ability, I feel like I've got something here that time won't hurt."

Permanence is Robertson's songwriting trademark. A story gets told, personal and detailed enough to be Robertson's, but with enough distance and narrative craftsmanship

to get at more eternal truths.

Band gems like "Up On Cripple Creek" and "The Weight" live on today in bars, clubs and on radio. They're modern standards in a way, perhaps because Robertson writes in the voices of various characters without succumbing to caricature or autobiography.

Robertson's chief obsession remains an American mythology that's deeply felt, if halfinvented. The new album pulls it a little more distinctly into the 20th Century, and approaches it from his newly rediscovered Indian sensibility.

Robertson sometimes composes on the guitar, sometimes on the piano.

"I take whatever comes," he says. "Sometimes it's the chords, sometimes the title. Sometimes it's the first line, or the melody, or

the guitar riff, or the drumbeat. Anything that you feel is worth pursuing."

Robertson has written some songs in one fell swoop, though. "There's always a little refining to do," he says. "Come back with a better line here, or a different chord there. I wrote "The Weight" in one shot. I think 'American Roulette,' 'Broken Arrow,' and 'Sonny Got Caught In The Moonlight' each came in one clean sweep.

"I upgraded some things in the recording. I dropped a verse out of 'Broken Arrow' and simplified some chord changes to easier inversions, but that was it."

And permanence? "You just have to say 'Time will tell on this.' But you can at least put your soul into it, and do it with the dignity that might allow it to mean something over a long period of time."

Robertson was first exposed to music when he heard big-band favourites on the radio at five years old. As a lad he mistakenly enrolled for Hawaiian guitar lessons. But he stuck with them.

"It was really disillusioning," he chuckles. "But the guy wasn't a bad teacher - Billy Blue, King of the Hawaiian Guitar!"

Inspired by his Indian cousins and the birth of rock 'n' roll radio, Robertson acquired a Stella acoustic guitar, then a Harmony electric and amp. By 15, he was a fanatic, playing parties in bands like Robbie and the Robots, or The Consuls. His mum was concerned about school, but generally supportive.

Though he took Hawaiian guitar lessons, young Robbie spent hours trying to imitate a slide guitar sound by playing with a vibrato. At least until he caught on.

"It's a long way from Canada to Clarksdale, Mississippi," Robertson explains. "All I did was hear the sounds - it was hard enough even to get the records. I tried everything to duplicate that sound, and found that by fingering with a wide vibrato, I could come close. But it was really a chore, and to find out years later that they were using a slide bar was terrible," he laughs.

Robertson learned to simultaneously fingerpick and use a flatpick from the players on the *Louisiana Hayride* radio program: Merle Travis, James Burton. As a guitar player with Ronnie Hawkins' Hawks in the early '60s, he developed his trademark harmonic picking sound.

"All the time with the Hawks, and later with Bob Dylan, I was playing screaming guitar. I didn't stop until we became The Band. Then I thought it was time for a change. At the time it had become very common to hear screaming guitar. There was Clapton, Hendrix, everybody else and their brother. Whenever anything got too obvious, I always thought I'd like to go the other way."

Under Hawkins, Robertson learned discipline, the guitar and how to drink, smoke, and party all night. When Robertson, Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel and Levon Helm - The Hawks - were called on by Dylan to support his "I've gone electric" 1965 world tour, he learned pride in the face of booing (from disgruntled folk fans) and songwriting skills (from the best of the era). □



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# Hamilton's Bill Dillon's Guitar Wizardy

**B**y now, of course, you already know that U2 and Peter Gabriel helped out on the Robertson album. You probably know that the BoDeans and Maria McKee pitched in. But one of the real surprises is the vital, consistent contribution of Toronto-born, Hamilton-raised guitarist Bill Dillon. It was Dillon, who on all but two songs, supplied the ambient sonic colouring for Robbie's "broad imagination."

"Bill was just *amazing*," says Robertson, "for experimental sounds and getting the ambiances you describe to him. He'd play these *sounds*, and instead of doing it on Synclavier or Fairlights, he just does it with an ordinary guitar, a funky little amplifier, and some pedals. I don't know anybody else, anywhere, that can do that; who can play these *sounds*."

"He was like a little guitar orchestra behind me, and it would free me up to do the rhythms and play the solos. When I did that, I didn't feel like the bottom was dropping out."

"I had plenty of room to play with," says Dillon. "It was a case of 'That guy's handling that end, and this guy's got this side covered, so I'm free over in my area.' It came down to

what song was creating what mood in my corner of the ballpark. I didn't have to feel the automatic lead-or-rhythm bit."

One of the key elements in Dillon's small chain of effects boxes was a simple volume pedal, which he got used to while gigging with a country band six nights a week for survival. (Dillon has also played with Marc Laforme, David Bradstreet, Ian Thomas, and - like Robbie - with Ronnie Hawkins' Hawks.)

"In the studio you have all this outboard gear - delays, effects - but they give you a lot of percussion when you hit the strings, which tends to drive all the stuff like crazy: 'Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat!'"

"I usually use the volume pedal to kill excess noise when I'm not playing. But I found that by hitting the strings with the pedal off, then bringing it up, you send the signal slowly into this outboard gear and make it do different things. That was a discovery I made right on the spot."

"So the whole album was 'What happens if we do this, with that machine, on this song?' Or we'd say 'Wouldn't it be neat to do this sound on a guitar?' and there it was! For me, these were sounds that I'd dreamt about all

my life."

Like the sighing, swaying moans throughout "Fallen Angel"; the siren wail behind the solo in "American Roulette"; and the quiet insect chirp at the opening of "Somewhere Down The Crazy River."

When Robertson told the stories that led to "Crazy River," he mentioned the summertime sound of chirping cicadas down south. "So we got a machine up with a similar sound," says Dillon, "and by barely touching the strings and using the volume pedal while Robbie was talking, we got the exact sound he'd talked about."

Dillon was involved in the initial song-treatment process as well. Daniel Lanois knew the fellow Hamiltonian from his session work at Lanois' Grant Avenue Studios. When Lanois imported him to Robertson's Los Angeles "workshop," the trio hunkered down and thrashed away at the new songs.

"Danny'd pick up a tambourine or maracas; Robbie'd play guitar or just sing while I'd play one of his Martin acoustics. We'd get a vibe going, and get clues to the songs or workable parts that way. From there it just grew into what we have now."

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# THE GUESS WHO

B A L L A D O F T H E L A S T 2 5 Y E A R S

## PART TWO

From Mondo-psychedelia and The Hit Machine to Players Upheavals and the Juno Debacle

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

**I**n an era of experimentation and an unprecedented self-consciousness, "These Eyes" was simply a throw-back to romantic '50s-styled rock and roll balladry with a distinctive, anachronistic piano figure and a lush, almost saccharine string arrangement by Ben McPeck. It was a major hit in Canada, but more importantly, it brought the Guess Who back from the dead as far as the United States was concerned.

The subsequent album was called *Wheatfield Soul* as a subtle tongue-in-cheek joke made up for "These Eyes" conservatism with heavy and hokey broadsides of experimentation and self-consciousness. Even then, in 1968, it is possible to see the dichotomy not only within the character of the Guess Who's members - most obviously that of Cummings - but in its recording history.

"Pink Wine" and "Friends of Mine" are two of many songs with lyrics by Burton which make coded or specific references to friends, relations and personal experiences. In the former, you can find a one line tip of the

headband to Neil Young; in the overwhelmingly ambitious and equally embarrassing, 10 minute long "Friends of Mine" is a glimpse of Cummings' obsessiveness.

In his search for his own musical identity, Burton often assumed that of someone else, such as Eric Burdon. When he wrote "Friends of Mine" Cummings was tremendously impressed by The Doors, particularly the menacing atmosphere and drama of "The End" and "When the Music's Over."

Bachman recalls walking into Cummings' apartment one day to find that he'd virtually transformed it into a Jim Morrison shrine. Burton, Kale and Peterson also were dabbling in drugs and that, too, had an effect on the Guess Who's dual approach to record making.

On one side, the team of Bachman and Cummings were intent on writing hit singles, but on the other, when it came time to make the albums, the group tended toward self-indulgence. In the late '60s the one had the unfortunate consequence of working against

the other. As the hit records kept on coming - "Laughing," "American Woman," "No Sugar Tonight" - the Guess Who became recognized as a "singles" band and wrong-headedly condemned by the hip as commercial. Consequently, the Guess Who went to extremes to be accepted as an "album" band.

"Nobody listened to the albums," Peterson complains. "They couldn't get past 'These Eyes,' the hits. There was a lot of labelling going on. I think our best album is *Share The Land*; it's the album that worked as a whole, but *Rockin'* was our most experimental LP. We recorded that LP live and mixed it without sleeping. We finished it in three days. When the staff at RCA Studios in Chicago left on Friday we were working on the bed tracks. When they came in Monday we handed them the album."

*Rockin'*, which was released in 1972, included a section called "Heaven Only Moved Once Yesterday," which begins with Burton putting a coin in a jukebox and getting Phil Phillips singing "Sea of Love." Only it's not





Randy Bachman (left) and Burton Cummings at Junos Press Conference.

the Phillips original. It's the Guess Who. The band had decided to learn the song, record it as authentically as possible, press it at RCA's in-house pressing plant, stick it on the jukebox, and record the sound of the jukebox as it played "Sea of Love." Burton still has the "Sea of Love" disc at his home.

If the albums were a problem, the Bachman and Cummings hit machine never failed. *Wheatfield Soul* was succeeded by *Canned Wheat* and it, in turn, was followed by *American Woman*. The band's biggest success to that point, the album's key track was Burton's rejection of the Statue of Liberty as an appropriate American symbol of freedom. With a relentless riff and snooty vocal, "American Woman" was guaranteed to be a song you'd either love or hate with a passion. That passion made the Guess Who a headliner throughout the U.S. and there seemed to be no looking back.

"We got this feeling that 'American Woman' was going to number one," says Randy Bachman. "As it was climbing the charts we were in the middle of a long, 90 date tour. Every night I'd be coming off stage and throwing up. I'd been throwing up every night for a week. I was throwing up blood and having convulsions and writhing on the floor in terrible pain. Unbelievable pain. But we were on tour and I couldn't check into a hospital. Finally the pain just got so bad I knew I would have to leave the tour."

Randy's illness was diagnosed as gall stones. He went home to Winnipeg to recuperate and was replaced temporarily with a fill-in guitar player. A few weeks later, he had

to go to New York to be seen by a specialist and to look after some band business. Meanwhile, the others in the band called his Winnipeg home to see how their guitarist was getting along. When they discovered Randy was in New York, they instantly concluded he was working out a solo deal behind their backs, and filled with drug-induced craziness, sacked him.

"The band was getting into mondo-psychedelia," states Randy, who didn't drink or take drugs and whose wife had converted him to the Mormon faith. "It was drug du jour. So I was growing apart from the band and while I was in the hospital the band was having a great time without me."

Randy Bachman finished his tenure with the Guess Who during three nights of the last week of the Fillmore Ballroom in San Francisco in 1970, headlining all three nights. In Winnipeg once more, he teamed with Chad Allan in Brave Belt and then became even more successful than he'd been in the Guess Who, as leader of Bachman Turner Overdrive.

Back at the Guess Who camp, Burton, Kale, and Peterson had rebounded quickly enlisting Kurt Winter and Greg Leskiw from another Winnipeg group, the Gettysburg Address. The band scrapped the tapes it had been working on with Randy, recorded its most successful album, *Share The Land*, and continued on its high octane fast track.

"We were the fucking Canadian music industry for how many years?" Cummings wonders out loud. "How many bands stay together for 16 albums? It's amazing to me

when I think of some of the groups who opened for us at that time: Boz Scaggs, the Mahavishnu orchestra, Steely Dan - Steely Dan! - Aerosmith, ZZ Top, Bob Seger, Alice Cooper...."

Yet without Randy Bachman, the group had lost a piece of its core. After *Share The Land*, the hits clocked in with less regularity, the albums became more erratic and, significantly, the personnel changes became more frequent.

"My favourite album of all is *Rockin'*," Burton declares. "It was the most 'band-y.' To me, that's miles above the others for its feel. It sounds live."

Unfortunately, Leskiw was Winnipeg bound shortly after its release. He was replaced by Donnie McDougall, who'd been missing in Winnipeg since leaving the much-loved Vancouver band, Mother Tucker's Yellow Duck. Kale left for Winnipeg after the next album, *Live At The Paramount*, and Bill Wallace came in on the shuttle. This line-up stabilized for three albums but was getting lost in the haze of alcohol and cocaine. "I'll never forget *Road Food*," Burton says unhappily. "Garry and Billy and I had to finish that album on our own. I don't think Kurt could deal with the worldliness that comes with being an international star."

The shuttle service broke down on its way back from dispatching McDougall and Winter to Winnipeg. This time, the Guess Who went to Toronto for its next member, Domenic Troiano. Troiano was a ringer, a hot guitarist who was in demand as a session player and had been a leader in his own right with The

## THE GUESS WHO

Mandela and Bush. He has since said that the two years he spent with the Guess Who were like sleepwalking but there is no doubt that with him in the ranks the Guess Who suddenly had its most technically accomplished lineup. While the others were keen to exploit the group's instrumental potential, Burton wasn't so sure he liked the direction the band was taking.

"I think Burton was intimidated by Domenic, who was a tremendous musician," muses Peterson. "I think he thought Domenic, Bill Wallace and I were going to take the band away from him. I don't see how we could have done that."

The end came in 1975 when Burton, who seemed at last to be bored with the whole thing and was looking elsewhere to movies and solo work, dissolved the Guess Who. Appropriately, the final album, *Power In The Music*, included one of the best tracks this configuration ever made, "When The Band Was Singing Shakin' All Over."

"I saw the end coming in 1974," Burton claims. "You know what did it for me? I wrote 'I'm Scared' and took it to the guys and they shat on it. I thought it was the best thing that I had written."

"Really?" Garry responds with surprise and sadness. "Now why couldn't we have worked that out?"

Burton Cummings woke up on Monday

morning of the Juno Awards with second thoughts. He would make peace with Kale, if Kale was straight and reasonable enough to listen. He wouldn't make his vitriolic speech. Like Garry Peterson, he would step up to the podium to say thanks to the fans and to give the survivors and victims of the last 25 years - the late Bruce Decker, the recovering Kurt Winter, Chad Allan, Leskiw, McDougall, troiano, Wallace, the unsung manager Don Hunter.

"This means too much to me to have a cloud left hanging over it," Cummings says as he sits in the lobby of the Harbour Castle hotel, opposite Garry Peterson. If these two have their differences, they keep them buried and the more they talk the more obvious it is that their relationship is built not merely on music but on understanding and friendship. Peterson, who prefers Bon Sai gardening to drinking, cooking to drugs, sports to just about everything else, has tolerated Burton at his worst, is seeing him now at his best.

"I tell you one thing, man" Burton states. "I sure feel better without alcohol. It's unbelievable. It's a different planet. The stamina! I've had more stamina onstage than I've had in the last 15 years."

After breaking up the Guess Who, Burton enjoyed immediate success with his solo career, beginning with the single "Stand Tall" and ironically "I'm Scared." But after three best-selling albums in Canada, Burton had not made the impact for which he hoped in the States and he began to lose direction. The boozing and cocaine didn't help, nor did the

musical climate of the new wave '70s which regarded him and his Guess Who legacy with unjust embarrassment. Burton nonetheless hosted the Juno Awards four years in a row, although in the final year, his lifestyle had overwhelmed him and, punchy and slow, he allowed co-host Allen Thicke to walk away with the show.

Burton's memories of the late '70s and early '80s are mixed. He married, he got to make his dreamed of film debut (*Melanie*). He hosted a rock and roll tribute. His recording career had stalled, however, and his erratic and volatile behaviour is blamed for the brevity of the 1983 Guess Who reunion. He was burning both friends and bridges in his weaving path.

"I checked into the Raleigh Hill Centre for 29 days in November 1985," Burton says. "I had hammered myself into submission in 1984 and stayed in my mansion in L.A. The turning point was when I put 40 miles on my car that I couldn't account for. That scared me. I could have killed someone."

"Today I carry incredible guilt with me. I said and did things I never would have. I lost friends. I thought, after three years of trying to keep myself clean, that the guilt would dissipate, but it hasn't."

"That sounds like Kale," Peterson says, sympathetically. "He has never stopped feeling guilty about his father, who died while Jim was on tour. He never saw Jim's success."

"Another thing," Burton continues. "When you have relative degrees of success you inevitably have a period of descent. It doesn't

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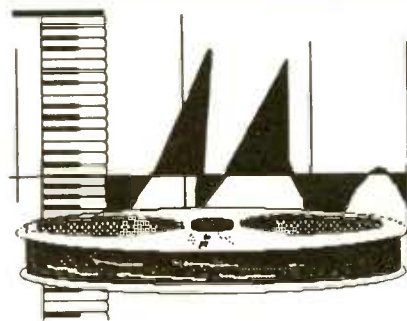
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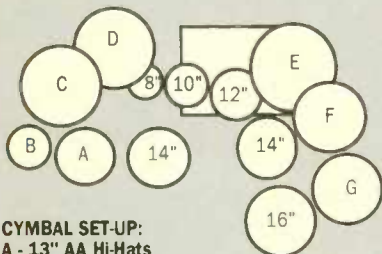


Photo: Pat Rodgers

Mr. Mister's albums 'Welcome to the Real World' and 'Go On' have not only introduced the music world to a great new band, they have also highlighted the tasteful, inventive programming and playing of L.A. drummer, Pat Mastelotto.

Raised on such disparate influences as The Dave Clark Five and Jimi Hendrix, Pat's powerful technique and great pop sensibility have added a degree of real excitement and credibility to the concept of drummers combining both acoustic and electronic percussion in their performance.

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# DONNY BALDWIN

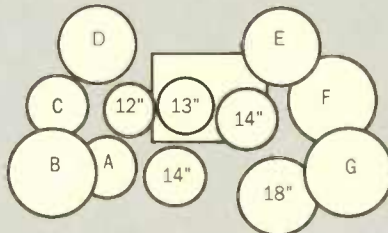
(Starship)



Photo: Pat Johnson

Donny spent several successful years on tour and recording with the likes of Elvin Bishop (that's him on the soulful classic, 'Fooled Around And Fell In Love'), Pablo Cruise ('A Place In The Sun') and former Dooble Brother, Tom Johnson, before taking up his present spot as drummer and backing vocalist in the ever-popular Starship.

Since joining, Donny's solid R'n'B leanings and no-nonsense rock grooves have integrated with the band's ever-evolving sound, adding, up to some of the best contemporary music of the decade. Songs like 'We Built This City', 'Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now', and the pulsating punch of 'It's Not Over' have not only re-established the band Stateside, but have topped the charts around the world.



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# RICHIE HAYWARD

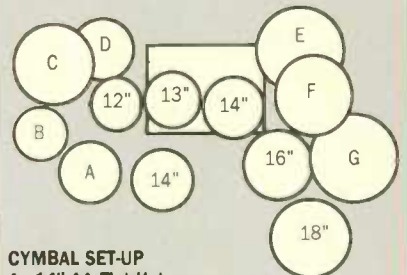
(Little Feat, Warren Zevon)



Photo: Pat Rodgers

The percolating funk and blistering rock grooves of Richie Hayward have delighted musicians for years. As a member of Little Feat, one of L.A.'s finest bands, his drumming propelled such great records as 'Feats Don't Fail Me Now', 'Time Loves A Hero' and 'The Last Record Album' into the hearts of listeners the world over.

Along the way he added his indelible style to Robert Palmer's debut LP, 'Sneakin' Sally Through the Alley', and later, 'Steppin' Out', with the eclectic Joan Armatrading. Recording and touring Robert Plant's album, 'Shakin' and Stirred' not only put Richie back into the spot-light with an excellent band, but led to more sessions and, most recently, the drummer's seat on Warren Zevon's 'Sentimental Hygiene' tour.



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## THE GUESS WHO

matter whether you're Rod Stewart or The Beatles, inevitably you're not going to be as successful as you were. That's the toughest lesson in the world to learn."

As it turned out, Burton Cummings never got to air his second thoughts. That night at the Junos, as he and Randy Bachman, Garry Peterson and Jim Kale walked to the podium to accept their induction to the Hall of Fame, CBC TV cut to a commercial and cut the band down. The Guess Who, the band from whose experiences the rest of the Canadian industry learned, the first rock and roll band to enter the hall of fame, and a band whose career the rest of the world is beginning to re-evaluate, fell victim once again to Juno jinx and the members' own inflammable personalities.

Backstage, Burton summed up his feelings about the insult with a succinct, "it stinks," while Jim Kale stewed to Burton's left and swore, to Bachman and Cummings' ire, that the Guess Who were still alive. The anger the two sides had felt toward each other was now directed outward at the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences who had screwed up again. CARAS's president Peter Steinmetz apologized immediately and called the incident a technical gaffe. Nobody who knew about the Kale and Cummings storm warnings believed him.

"I think the producers feared that it would turn into Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage at the Junos," Randy suspects.

Whatever, the angry phone calls and letters flooded the CBC, which quickly promised to produce a face-saving retrospective of the Guess Who and immediately taped interviews with its members. Randy is hopeful that the special may produce a book and a movie-as CBC Special Products. At his new farm outside Victoria, Burton is already writing an autobiography, of sorts, which was stimulated by his written introduction to Jim Einarson's book, *Shakin' All Over*. At RCA, Jim Campbell is busily trying to clear the way for a massive two record/CD retrospective that will put the band's recorded output into historical perspective and critical context. In White Rock, Garry Peterson is hoping that RCA will go even further and release the band's entire catalogue.

An informal poll of the three Guess Who members who participated in these interviews, Peterson, Bachman and Cummings came up with a short list of what they feel are the essential Guess Who recordings.

**Peterson:** " 'Hang On To Your Love,' and 'No Time' are my favorite tracks but any Guess Who set has to have 'American Woman,' 'These Eyes,' 'Undun' and 'Laughing!'"

**Bachman:** "You'd have to include 'Shakin' All Over,' of course, but I also like 'No Time' and 'Undun' feel so great to play, even when we do it today."

**Cummings:** " 'Shakin' All Over,' 'These Eyes,' 'American Woman,' 'Undun,' 'No Sugar Tonight' and 'No Time.' 'No Time' gave us credibility as a rock band." □

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**“H**i man — this is Edward. I used to write to you when I was Eddie, remember? I was watching TV one day and I saw Valerie whatshername call Eddie Van Halen, Edward, and I thought that was pretty hip, so now I’m Edward too. Anyway, you told me last year about all the new electronic drum stuff and so I checked some of it out. Really awesome, man. But, I’m still kinda confused, ‘cause every time I see something else comes out that is better and costs about half as much as the other thing. So then I start thinking about buying the new thing and while I’m thinking about that, something else comes out that’s better and cheaper than the new thing. My question is, does this ever stop, ‘cause I still don’t have any stuff and I’m getting tired of thinking!!”

Well, the bad news Eddie, er Edward, is that this isn’t likely to stop. Companies are constantly introducing newer, superior products and because of industry competition and technology’s ability to develop more economical ways of doing things, prices should continue to improve. If you really are interested in getting some techno stuff, then find something that you can use and buy it. You’ve got to get your feet wet somewhere along the line and there is no time like the present. And, if you’re really worried that all of this thinking may be detrimental to your health, keep an eye out for a fantastic new product that could be the solution to your problem.

Brand new out of Schmell Industries of California, comes a machine that will make your percussion purchasing decisions for you. The Schmellulator II, if given your personal pertinent facts, such as age, musical style, hair height, budget restrictions, playing ability etc.; will not only tell you what to buy, but also exactly what you can do with your existing gear. The one major drawback with this little beauty, is that while you’re thinking about buying it, a newer model will probably come out that is better and cheaper. But, hey, nothing’s perfect.

• • •

Apparently, many of you have been able to make your own decisions just fine over the past year and the result has been several new trends. The most dramatic of which has been the shift from acoustic vs. electronic to acoustic with electronic. Most drummers are brought up on and are still most at home with, the feel of an acoustic kit. However, drummers are also understandably drawn to the sounds of today, which, realistically can only be achieved through electronics. So, being the clever fellows that we are, we’ve managed to take the best of both worlds and combine them. One way, is to add some pads

around the kit which are fed either directly into an external sound source such as a Simmons brain, or into MIDI controller such as an Octapad and then into an external sound source such as a synthesizer or sampler. The pad set-up allows you to keep the electronics isolated from the acoustics and this, depending upon your playing style and type of music can be beneficial. It’s when you want to combine the elements that life gets a little more difficult. If, for instance, you want to combine your acoustic snare sound with your new Phil Collins snare sample, you have to hit the drum and the pad simultaneously which requires the use of either two hands or a hand and a foot. Since we are dealing with a fairly limited appendage supply to begin with, that can further restrict our groove options. While the difficulty of this particular manoeuvre depends largely on factors such as tempo, snare pattern, proximity of pad etc., combined kick patterns and combined tom fills, of almost any kind are awkward and tedious at the best of times, using the pad method. An alternate method, which is much more sound combining oriented is triggering.

Now, this method will somewhat limit or at least complicate your ability to isolate acoustic from electronic sounds, but whether that represents a drawback again, depends on your individual needs. By means of contact mics or transducers, which are attached directly to the head, rim or shell of the appropriate drum, electronic sounds are detonated simply by striking that drum. The mics or transducers are plugged into an interface such as the Simmons MTM, which through sensitivity and threshold adjustments, can allow the electronic sounds to detonate every time the drum is struck or just at selected times.

While the various makes and models of electronic drum brains are still very popular as sound sources for pads and triggering alike, samplers such as the AKAI S-900 have also begun to gain popularity. This is certainly not the time to open a forum on the ethics of sampling, and speaking as both victim and victee, I am not sure where I stand. But I did find it funny to witness the outrage of a certain samplist over the so-called theft by one of his colleagues, of the Manu Katche kick sample that he had himself just taken from a Sting CD. Sign of the times I guess.

Another common acoustic kit accessory these days is the drum machine, such as the Roland 707. Granted the drum machine is still replacing players to some extent, but this once dreaded adversary is more commonly being used by drummers as a multi-purpose tool. Offstage, of course, it is still used for writing and practicing and on stage it can be used as a sound source for triggering or as an

additional player to handle time, kit and/or percussion chores. In an odd way, machines have helped the recent revival of traditional hand percussion instruments as well. Cowbell, shaker, clave, handclaps etc., have been used to such an extent by producers and arrangers during the “machine years” of recording that it has sparked an interest in hot percussion sounds and hot live players, who, incidentally have also been adding electronics such as Octapads and samplers to their own arsenal of sounds.

Sales of electronics generally are flourishing these days as players head for this middle ground of combination kits that we’ve described or for the upper reaches of techdom — the world of computers! Macintosh and Atari are becoming more and more prevalent in music circles these days, particularly in studios and big ticket concerts. Software packages such as Performer offer very sophisticated sequencing capabilities for those of you looking for greater programming challenges. There is even a new package called Upbeat which is designed specifically for programming drum and percussion parts. Of course, you need a computer to use Upbeat, but if you already have a Mac and an interest in drum programming, then add this one quickly to your software collection. It is the closest thing yet in computers, to drum machine-type programming, with the superior features that a computer offers, including on screen viewing of your patterns.

While electronic percussion sales in general have flourished, sales of the complete electronic kit in particular, have not. As I mentioned before, the majority of drummers do feel more comfortable with the feel of an acoustic kit, but there are other factors that have contributed to the revival of traditional kit playing as well. Listeners of records, radio and television have been bombarded over the last few years by the predictably perfect time and sound of machines, and our collective ears are craving a change. The sound of an imperfect human being, trashing away at a good old-fashioned set of tubs, while having never really gone out of style, sounds even better these days in the overall cyclical scheme of things. Another factor, I feel, has been the emergence on television of the late night, talk show drummer. Guys like Steve Jordan, Anton Fig, Vinnie Colaiuta and Andy Newmark have reminded us all, just how good a small acoustic set of drums can sound when driven by fire and talent.

Usually for this annual round-up, I do reviews and comparisons of the latest in percussion products, but this year we thought it might be interesting to take a look at the equipment of a cross-section of Canada’s top drummers.



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World Radio History



# canada's TOP drummers

## Barry Keane • Gordon Lightfoot

by Barry Keane

My onstage setup for Gordon Lightfoot concerts consists of a fairly basic acoustic kit plus some percussion toys. One thing that is conspicuous by its absence from the setup is any type of electronics. Now it's not that I'm a purist, because I've certainly used my share of hydro related gear for studio work over the years. In fact, I've used Linndrum, Simmons and Emulator II in the studio with Gordon. But, the all acoustic approach seems to be the natural way to handle the delicate balances and dynamics that must happen within the

band itself on stage. My playing style and sound are geared to blend in with and not take away from the focal part of the concert which obviously is Gordon's vocals and acoustic guitar work. As a result, the kit has developed a few out-of-the-ordinary features. On a couple of songs, I take the snare strainer off and play fingers across the rim of the snare. I found that by taping a towel across the top third of the drum, it cuts down greatly on unwanted ring and resonance and produces a sort of muted conga sound. I started leaving the towel on for the tunes with brushes, and eventually for everything. Because of the acoustic instruments, there are a number of open mics on stage and the towel both helps contain and add warmth to the snare sound. Another little oddity is the kick beater. It's an old World Beater, which has a flat, square wood surface on one side. The reverse side is the same but has a thin foam rubber covering which is wrapped with leather. I found each side to be useful for certain songs and because the beater swivels, I can go back and forth throughout the night.

I have used this kit almost exclusively over the years for Gordon Lightfoot concerts but I did use it also for Stan Rogers' *Turnaround*

album, for the Ian and Sylvia Reunion concert and currently (as the picture shows) at Eastern Sound for the taping of a few new tracks for *Gord's Gold Vol. II*.

### Barry's Kit

DRUMS: Premier (except where indicated)

Size	Heads-Top	Bottom
<b>KICK:</b> 16x20"	Remo-Coated Ambassador	Open
<b>SNARE:</b> 6x14" (Ludwig)	Remo-Coated Ambassador	Remo-Clear Ambassador
<b>TOMS:</b> Concert 6x8"/7x10"	Ludwig-Weather Ludwig-Masters	Open
<b>Rack</b> 9x12"	Remo-Coated Ambassadors	Remo-Coated Ambassadors
9x14" Floor	"	"
16x16"	Remo-Coated Ambassadors	Remo-Coated Ambassadors

**CYMBALS:** Zildjian

Size	Type
14"	Regular Hats
18"	Medium Thin Crash
16"	Paper Thin Crash

**KICK PEDAL:** Rogers Swiv-o-Matic

**HARDWARE:** Ludwig (except Premier Hi-Hat Stand)

**PERCUSSION:** Bell Tree, Mark Tree, 2 Triangles, Fog Bell, Shaker, Wood Block, Sleigh Bells

**ELECTRONICS:** None

**STICKS:** Powertip-Barry Keane Model, Regal Brushes, Vic Firth Soft Mallets



Barry Keane



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\*Actual N/D357 user comments are kept on file at the Electro-Voice Corporate headquarters in Buchanan, Michigan.

World Radio History



# canada's TOP drummers

## Paul DeLong • Kim Mitchell

by Paul DeLong

This was the set-up I used on the last Kim Mitchell tour and incidentally the first time I

had used any electronics live. I played one of the EP-1 pedals with my left foot to trigger a tambourine in one tune and handclaps in another. The first half of the tour, I was using both pedals to trigger the RX5 floor toms while I soloed over top but when I realized that this got a little too dense through the PA I switched to having the left foot trigger a cowbell while I soloed on the timbales on the Octapad as well as the rest of the kit. Considering what other drummers are doing with triggering these days, this may seem like a rather timid step into the world of electronics, but it was effective for the tunes we used it in (and it did make people wonder how I was playing a cowbell and flailing around on

the drums at the same time!). We'll probably get into it more on the next tour, although a lot of Kim's music, particularly the rockier stuff still just requires good old fashioned acoustic drums!

In the studio, I use Canwoods or one of the other sets of Gretsch drums I have. Depending on what I'm doing, I usually use 10", 12" and 14" toms tuned a bit lower for a wetter sound. Live, I keep the toms a lot tighter to stop the low frequency rumbling that happens in hockey arenas.

For recording, I use lighter cymbals; generally a 20" leopard ride; 14 and 16" hand-hammered crashes and the new Sound-Control crashes sound great too.



Paul DeLong

### Paul's Kit

**DRUMS:** Canwood

**KICK:**

Size	Heads-Top	Bottom
16x22"	Remo-Pinstripe	Black-Ambassador (10" hole on front)

**SNARE:**

6 1/2x14"	Remo-Coated Reverse Dot	Remo-Ambassador
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**TOMS:**

Rack	Remo-Clear Emperors	Remo-Clear
8x10"		Ambassadors
8x12"	"	"
9x13"	"	"
12x14"	"	"

\*\*All toms mounted with Rims system

Floor  
16x16"

**CYMBALS:** Sabian

Size	Type
14"	Rock Hats
14"	Regular Hats
22"	Leopard Ride
17&18"	Rock Crashes
15&16"	A.A. Chinese
18"	H.H. Chinese
10"	Rock Splash

**HARDWARE:** Gretsch & Tama

**KICK PEDAL:** Gretsch

**ELECTRONICS:** Roland Octapad, 2-DW EP1 Trigger Pedals, Yamaha RX5 Drum Machine

**STICKS:** Regal Wood Tip, Quantum 1000 Unlacquered by Calato

## Pete Marunzak • Luba

by Pete Marunzak

Having played the drums and various percussive instruments for the past fifteen years, I feel that I have achieved a solid understanding of the application of acoustic and electronic drumming techniques. As a result, I am now a firm believer in the synthesis of these specific techniques, as well as their long term implications. The use of various drum machines to enhance and create unique rhythmic patterns may be accompanied by or applied to live acoustic drumming. This serves to broaden a drummer's creative scope, as

# canada's TOP drummers

well as giving him or her more artistic freedom.

I have presently become intrigued with the application of acoustic drum triggering through various MIDI devices. What makes this interesting is the ability to control various drum sounds that may, under certain circumstances, be frustrating to achieve because of the acoustic environment within which the drum kit is set up. Greater sound regulation and the elimination of microphone leakage and unfavourable frequency characteristics, are some of the technical advantages one may achieve with this method.

Drum triggering of sampled sounds, be it snares, bass drums or clashing metal objects, opens up an entire arsenal of creative sounds to the modern drummer which can inspire an imaginative approach to drumming in today's music. It is in the application of this method that I have been able to become extremely comfortable in combining and fusing various electronic sounds with conventional acoustic-type drum sounds.

The idea of being able to alter drum sounds of snares, bass drums etc. through drum triggering of sampled sounds by striking an acoustic drum kit, nurtures technical skill as well as emotional feel.

Another interesting implementation is the ability to combine miked acoustic drums with various sampled sounds. For example, you may strike a miked snare drum that has been tuned fairly high and combine that sound with a triggered sampled snare or opened hi-hat sound that has been tuned to a lower pitch with some type of effect on it.

This type of approach to drumming has enabled me to create some exciting sounds during live performances.



Pete Marunzak

## Pete's Kit

**DRUMS:** Yamaha Touring Series  
**Size** Heads-Top Bottom  
**KICK:** 16x22" Remo Ambassador Remo Ambassador  
**SNARE:** 8x14" Remo Ambassador Remo Ambassador  
 (Pearl Free Floating)  
**TOMS:**  
 Rack  
 10x10" Remo Ambassador Remo Ambassador  
 10x12" " " "  
 11x13" " " "  
 12x14" " " "  
 Floor  
 16x16" Remo Ambassador Remo Ambassador  
**CYMBALS:** Paiste Colour Sound  
**Size** Type  
 14" Rude Hats  
 22" Medium Ride  
 18" China Type 2002  
 18" Mellow China Type  
 18" Medium Crash  
 16" Medium Crash  
 2-10" Splashes  
**HARDWARE:** Yamaha Jacques Capelle hi-hat stand  
**KICK PEDAL:** DW5000  
**ELECTRONICS:** Simmons SDS-V with four Simmons pads.  
 Phil Trac Translator2 MIDI Controller and  
 Phil Trac Acoustic Drum Triggers. Roland  
 808, 707, 909 drum machines. EmulatorII+

**STICKS:** Regal 5B

## Don Schmid • The Northern Pikes

by Don Schmid

I first started playing drums when I was 14 and learned on my own by playing to records. My drumming style is really quite simple. I rely on my kick, snare and hat almost all the time. I believe in "less is more" in that I use tom and cymbal fills to a minimum which enhances our musical style.

I have recently obtained endorsements from Yamaha and Sabian which has enabled me to choose the correct style and sizes of drums and cymbals that I require. After a little trial and error, I have returned to a basic four piece kit in the Yamaha Power Recording Series. I went with a smaller kick to obtain a real tight and audible sound as a good deal of our music is fast!

The thick snare and toms help project and give a full round sound. My hardware is all Yamaha, from the 900 Series which is very strong and durable. I spent a good deal of time picking my cymbals as I wanted the warmth and cutting edge ability which is sometimes hard to find.

My drum heads are all Remo, Pin Stripe on top of toms and kicks. Black Dot Pin Stripe on the snare and clear diplomats underneath. My sticks of late have been Regal 2B nylon. I like the nylon for the extra cymbal brilliance. Electronic drums? At one point, I had considered them, however, I feel our music and my playing style works best with acoustic drums. Who knows for sure. Sometime we might want to introduce different drum sounds on our records. I could see using samples and such, but I feel that will be a gradual process and we all feel good about that as new sounds and ideas are always exciting.



Don Schmid



## Don's Kit

<b>DRUMS:</b> Yamaha Power Recording Series		
<b>Size</b>	<b>Heads-Top</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
<b>KICK:</b> 16x20"	Remo-Pinstripe	Remo-Clear Diplomat
<b>SNARE:</b> 7x14"	Remo-Pinstripe	"
<b>TOMS:</b> Rack 10x12" Floor 14x16"	Remo Pinstripe " "	" " "
<b>CYMBALS:</b> Sabian		
<b>Size</b>	<b>Type</b>	
14"	HH Sizzle Hats	
21"	HH Medium Ride	
16"	HH Medium Crash	
16"	AA Medium Crash	
15"	HH Medium Crash	
<b>HARDWARE:</b> Yamaha 900 Series		
<b>KICK PEDAL:</b> Yamaha		
<b>ELECTRONICS:</b> None		
<b>STICKS:</b> Regal 2B Nylon		

## Dave Betts • Honey-moon Suite

by Dave Betts

The selection of equipment is clearly a matter of personal preference. Experience teaches a drummer what performs to his own standards. As a member of a demanding band, when a drummer selects a brand it's because he is satisfied with the sound, projection, roadability and (of all things) the appearance of the kit.

• Unlike a guitar player I once met, who equated his instruments as tools of the trade and a means to a good time, most drummers care very much about their gear and how it looks. This is showbiz man. We've got to look cool as well as feel happy about the image we project through the smoke, lights and lasers.

With a great new HS album about to be released, I have upgraded my Premier kit for the extended touring that will follow. Currently, I am using the double shell Resonator series in Red Inferno finish. I mean bright red... that will flash to the back row seats in any venue.

## Dave's Kit

<b>DRUMS:</b> Premier Resonators		
<b>Size</b>	<b>Heads-Top</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
<b>KICK:</b> 2-16x24"	Premier D.S.	Premier-Polo Cutout
<b>SNARE:</b> 8x14" (Project One)	Premier-Everplay H.D. Pipe Band	Premier S.D.
<b>TOMS:</b> Rack 10" 12" 13" 14" Floor 16" 18"	Premier D.S. " " " " " " "	Premier C.L. " " " " " " "
<b>CYMBALS:</b> Sabian		
<b>Size</b>	<b>Type</b>	
14"	H.H. Rock Hats	
22"	H.H. Chinese	
20"	H.H. Chinese	
21"	H.H. Rock Crash	
18"	H.H. Medium Thin Crash	
17"	H.H. Medium Thin Crash	
2-16"	H.H. Medium Thin Crash	
<b>HARDWARE:</b> Premier Prolock		
<b>KICK PEDAL:</b> 2-Premier 252		
<b>ELECTRONICS:</b> None		
<b>STICKS:</b> Premier H N3SL		

All my cymbals are Sabian hammered. They cut with a response and sound second to none.

I would like to thank Mick and Jayne McLoughlin and Roger Horrobin of Premier, along with Bob Zildjian, Roy and Sue Edmunds and Dave McAllister at Sabian for their encouragement and support.

## Gil Moore • Triumph

by Gil Moore

Playing in the studio and playing live are as different as night and day. In both cases, playing in the groove with some degree of metronomic precision is essential, however, the way in which this task is accomplished is very different. In the studio, I am completely relaxed when I play. I don't hit the drums nearly as hard because I believe that at certain volume levels the instrument distorts and does not produce its natural resonance (I have found this to be true despite the recommendations of many producers and engineers).

In a live situation, I have so much adrenalin running that maintaining control is always a problem. In addition, singing lead vocals and playing drums as a very bad mix indeed. I suspect this is why Phil Collins opted to perform each task independently. My key for live performance is to harness the adrenalin and energy I feel and try to use it as reserve horsepower, instead of letting it take over and play me.

The studio is the exact opposite. Because there is no audience to generate adrenalin, it has to come from inside... just enough to give you that edge (and counteract a tendency for lethargic playing in a studio environment), but not enough to take away from smooth articulation and good metre.

Another major difference for me is attitude. Live, I play very aggressively and this produces fills and accents that would not be appropriate in a studio situation. When making a record I am doing just that - playing for an end result. For this reason, the composition of my live and studio tracks is considerably different even though the style may be consistent.

I change my equipment considerably as well. I use Aquarian Classic clear heads in the studio whereas I use Aquarian Studio X with power dots live. Live, I use a Tama Set that was custom made with acrylic shells, whereas in the studio I use a conventional Tama Art Star set-up. I change my cymbals from conventional Sabian AA in the studio to a combination of octagon and leopard Sabians live. I use a slightly heavier version of my Aquarian X10 combo graphite sticks live. What do all these changes mean? Well, I'd have to generalize and say that live, I prefer a louder, dampened sound and in the studio I prefer a more natural acoustic sound. This is the reverse of what many drummers prefer, but my

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# canada's TOP drummers

rationale is as follows: in the studio I want to capture the natural sound of the instrument. Drums that are designed, built, and tuned properly, sound great in an ideal acoustic environment. Put them in a hockey arena and they can sound like a bunch of junk. With modern technology, the processing equipment available to compensate for bad acoustics in arenas enables us to take something that is less than perfect (when miked and pumped through a big system) and create a better, unnatural sound. A slightly more dampened signal from the source helps us to do this. The mics from my live drum kit are split at our mixing board and trigger signals are sent to a Simmons SDS7. The net result of all these is that the sound man has essentially two sets of signals at his board. One set is what is coming off the stage mics and the other set is what the triggers are sending to the board via the Simmons unit. What is heard by the audience in a concert is combination of these two sounds, mixed together. All of this would be a complete waste of time in a recording studio, but I think it produces great arena drums. I hope this will provide some insight into these distinct but closely related areas.

### Gil's Kit

**DRUMS:** TAMA (custom acrylic shells)

Size	Heads-Top	Bottom
<b>KICK:</b>		
2-16x22"	Aquarian Studio X	Aquarian Studio X
<b>SNARE:</b>		
6 1/2x14"	Aquarian Studio X	Aquarian Studio X
<b>TOMS:</b>		
Concert	Aquarian Studio X	Aquarian Studio X
6x6"	"	"
6x8"	"	"
Rack	"	"
8x10"	"	"
10x12"	"	"
12x13"	"	"
13x14"	"	"
Floor	"	"
16x16"	"	"
18x20"	"	"

**CYMBALS:** Sabian

Size	Type
13"	AA Leopard Rock Hats
22"	Medium Heavy Leopard Ride
2-20"	AA Medium Rocktagon Crash
2-20"	AA Medium Rocktagon Crash
2-18"	AA Medium Rocktagon Crash
2-16"	AA Thin Medium Rocktagon Crash
1-8"	Splash

**KICK PEDAL:** Tama

**HARDWARE:** Tama

**ELECTRONICS:**

1	Simmons SDS7
1	Simmons MIM Trigger Interface
2	Lexicon Prime Time Delays
12	DBX 160 Compressor/Limiters
1	Eventide Harmonizer
1	AMS Reverb
<b>STICKS:</b>	Aquarian X10 Combo

Barry Keane would like to thank these fine drummers for taking time out of their busy schedules to help put this article together. Also, thanks to Randy Milliken of Long & McQuade Ltd., Toronto and Al Betts.

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## First The Muse Has To Strike You



The Jitters (Blair Packam, centre)

by Blair Packam

I am a fairly methodical person, organized and pretty efficient. Whether you consider this an asset or a fault depends on who you are. My friends probably find it to be a bit of a pain, but the people I work with *should* consider it a benefit. (As lead singer and main songwriter for the Jitters, the Toronto rock 'n' roll group, my best friends are the people I work with: I often wonder how they feel!) It makes sense that my tendency to organize would carry over into my songwriting to a degree--I do have a method of sorts.

Some people just let songs "happen". This can result in great work and hit records. Fine. The only problem I can see with that is that it wouldn't necessarily translate very well into an article on songwriting! If nothing else, when you are methodical, at least you can tell people about your method!

For me, writing songs is the most satisfying thing about being in a rock 'n' roll band; more than performing, recording, or even getting paid! It's an opportunity to express feelings or thoughts that may never see the light of day otherwise. The best part about it, though, isn't finishing the song, or playing it for other people; it's being struck by the original spark of inspiration. Ironically, this is one thing I can't rely on a method for. The "muse" has to strike me. Thankfully, it does, anywhere, anytime. It's a wonderful feeling, like magic, as other songwriters will attest. I

believe that this "magic" is the art of songwriting.

Being a word-oriented person, possible titles suggest themselves to me most often, rather than musical ideas. You may have heard the Jitters' song "Last of the Red Hot Fools" on the radio (or maybe you've seen the video--I'm the big guy). This song started as a title idea. The very thought of a person being a red-hot fool rather than a red-hot lover amused me (yes, I guess I do relate to it personally...). I thought it was kinda funny, and the opposite of the typical "rock-star-stud" sentiment. If I analyse the "magic" of the initial inspiration, I can see how the very rhythm of the title suggested a melody to go with it, as if out of thin air itself.

I say "as if" because this is where my method starts to creep in. The rhythmic flow (or *cadence*) of the spoken words will give me melodic ideas. For instance, if one were to say the phrase "Now I'm just the last of the red hot fools" to another person, certain words would be emphasized, and others wouldn't. "Now" would be hit hard, to indicate a change from the past. "Last" would also be made to stand out. Melodically, these words are assigned higher notes than the ones that follow--this makes them stand out, the same way they would in everyday speech. This is called *prosody*; emphasizing certain words or syllables, in this case both rhythmically and melodically, to achieve a

natural flow. (Two important things to remember: first, this approach comes naturally to me. I only thought about it once I realized I was doing it *anyway*; and second, many, many truly great songs have been written with completely unnatural prosody--I'm just telling you how I do it).

Once the melody of the title is in place. I think about the rest of the chorus, and how to develop the concept lyrically. The idea of having this "red hot fool" musing over just how he blew his chance with some woman was the route that seemed the most natural. Thus, he "played it dumb/shoulda played it smart", etc. Again, the melody is more or less suggested by the rhythm of the words.

If the "magic" of songwriting is art, hard work is the craft. Too often, this is where I run and hide. Luckily, I can turn to Jitters' lead guitarist and co-writer Dan Levy. He is really good at seeing where I'm trying to go with a song, and taking it there. Basically, Danny heard the chorus and sketched-out verse for "Red Hot Fools" and came back to me the next day with three verses and most of the bridge, which we finished together. Danny and I write a lot like this, it's working out really well. Matt Greenberg, Glenn Martin, and Peter Nunn, the other Jitters, are good collaborators, too.

Writing with other people, though I found it difficult at first, has turned out to be a very interesting way of working. I have even begun to write with people outside the band recently. Eddie "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" Schwartz and Michael "Your Daddy Don't Know" Roth are two examples (someday, I wanna be known as Blair "Last of the Red Hot Fools" Packham!). Another is Ben Haines, who helped write "Almost Convinced", a track on our Capitol-EMI debut album. Currently, I'm writing with Tamara Amabile, formerly of the Pursuit of Happiness, now leading, with her sister Tasha, a Toronto band called the Fatales.

Sometimes collaborating with others is a mixed blessing: your original, personal expression can get watered down in an effort to please everyone involved. But, as Eddie Schwartz says, there comes a time when you realize you are writing not just as a form of self-therapy, but for an audience, as a professional. For the most part, I agree. And writing with others means fresh perspectives, fresh methods and approaches, things everyone can use at one time or another.

(Blair "Last Of The Red Hot Fools" Packman is principal songwriter and lead singer for The Jitters).



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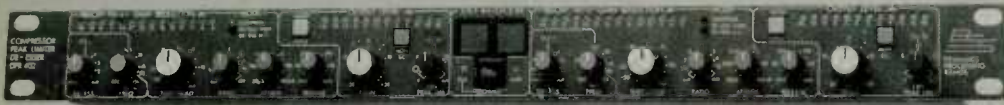


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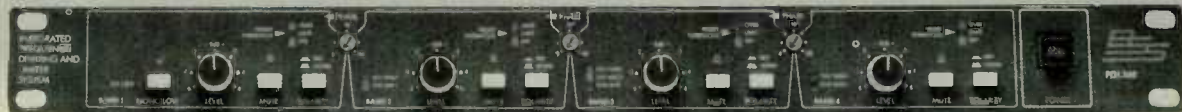


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## Cash Creating A Light To The World

By Maureen Littlejohn

**N**o he didn't listen to Peter, Paul and Mary as a kid. Irish rebel songs? Never. What he was into was *Gold Rush* by Neil Young, *Tumbleweed Connection* by Elton John, and Bob Dylan's *Greatest Hits*. Comparing the socially conscious and soul baring songs these artists wrote for their albums, it's not hard to figure out where songwriter/singer/guitarist Andrew Cash's heart lies. "My early influences all seemed to be outside of the mainstream," explains Cash. "They were a thorn in the side of mainstream and yet operated within it. I'm letting those influences come out in my writing now," says the 25-year-old Toronto native. Founder of the now defunct band L'Etranger, Cash landed himself a solo deal with Island Records in Canada last fall and his first album on the label, produced by John Switzer (Jane Siberry) will be hitting the nation's turntables in the spring.

Cash has been compared to Britain's folkie/socialist confrontationalist Billy Bragg, and to be sure they're both guitar players and wordsmiths worried about the eve of destruction, but Cash is his own man. His tunes are sparse, but not bare-boned like Bragg's, his lyrics are teasingly vague not overtly political, and many of his melodies are sweetly harmonized, not grating or jarring like Bragg's can be. "Rock and roll has the potential to critique the culture around it," says Cash. "I don't think it's all powerful, like Bono says, but the people who play it can be much more of a light to the world than they usually are. For example Bruce Springsteen and U2 have captured the imagination of so many people because their personal commitments have made them stand out in an age of non-commitment. They didn't forget about the rest of the world as they got more successful."

Cash believes the best songwriting comes from subjects that are personally and physically accessible. "My songs with L'Etranger used to be about third world people starving, or the injustices that imperialism heaps on people with lesser economic power. They were a result of my doing a lot of reading about Latin America. But after travelling across Canada over the last two years I've realized there exists the same kind of unjust relationship between major economic centres like Toronto and places like Newfoundland. When I've been in Sudbury or out east I've heard people talk and felt their pride getting chipped away on a day to day basis because they don't have the jobs, the clothes and fancy cars that people in



Andrew Cash

magazines have. Maybe people in Toronto can afford these things, but Toronto isn't Canada. A lot of what this record is about is finding a place for everybody in this culture. My songs try to help people make sense of things and understand they don't have to feel bad if they don't have certain material goods." He admits that lyrics usually come after a song is written, "I'll work on a song for weeks and just sing la la la to it, then I'll add the words later."

To work out melodies, verses and choruses Cash uses his six string Takamine acoustic guitar, but admits he doesn't follow any particular pattern. "Sometimes I take a chorus from one song and put it into another song," he laughs, "that's the benefit of not having a record deal for so long, no one notices." Often I'll have written a chunk of music, like a chorus, then all of a sudden a verse will appear. With one song, "Time and Place", when I brought it to the band (L'Etranger) all I had were the verses. I stood there in front of the

mic, with no chorus, got my guitar and all of a sudden this chorus came out of the blue, I'd never played it before, it just came out and it turned out well."

Cash admits there is a bit of a hangover from his L'Etranger days on his new album, since two of the songs, "Trail of Tears" and "Time and Place" were included on their last independent EP, *Sticks and Stones*, but the sound and delivery have changed. "At first we were going to remix those two songs off the EP, but then I realized they didn't have the degree of warmth I wanted to get across with this record." To achieve the sound he wanted, "warm but with a rock edge," during the recording Cash avoided using any samples, shyed away from "the gated reverb thing" on the live drums and tried to do as much as possible straight from the floor. "I wanted it to sound like human beings were playing, it didn't matter if we went off the click track, as long as the feel was right," notes Cash. Enlisting the talents of former L'Etranger drummer Peter Duffin, 4 on the Floor bassist Peter MacGibbon, Toronto guitarist Graydon Nichols (High Noon, Bop Cats), Celtic traditionalist Jim Ediger on fiddle, accordion, and piano and former vocalist for Direktive 17, Andy Maize for harmonies, Cash was able to come up with the results he wanted. He used a homemade acoustic guitar for its "warm, rich even sound" made by Tony Duggan Smith (Pukka Orchestra) and David Wren on the heart rending suicide song "Midnight Gone", as well as "Smile Me Down" and "Time and Place." A late '60s Gibson Thunderbird was used for its clean overdrive and "good raunch factor" on "It's Not Forever." He also achieved the album's overall warm guitar sound using a Fender Strat and a Tokai ("a copy of a Fender Strat") guitars. "I like Strats because they sound distinct, but they can still rock out," admits Cash. Although he's proud of staying away from MIDI, it did cause a little heart break during the recording sessions. "I use Capos a lot and that makes it hard to keep a guitar in tune," says Cash. "on one song, 'Smile Me Down', we had to do all the guitars over again because they were all out of tune." He smiles. "The initial idea was to do the whole album as a four piece live off the floor, then dub in vocals, harmonies and guitar solos. Of the 11 tracks we were successful on three songs, 'Do Not Adjust Your Set', 'Wind Blows' and 'When Is It Gonna Come'. Maybe by the third LP we'll be able to do the whole thing live with minimal overdubs."

PHOTO: GAVIN HARVEY



## SONGWRITING

# Black Life Focus For Dub Poet

by Howard Druckman

Toronto supports a growing number of dub poets, and now one of the best has released his debut album. Clifton Joseph's *Oral Transmissions* with music by the excellent Live-stock Band, is tough, tight, funky and full of righteous wrath. It reflects on the Toronto black immigrant community that feels exploited in "this forever season of concrete and snow."

Joseph works in two distinct styles. In poem-songs like "Lookin' For A Job" and "Chuck Prophecy," he focuses on specific, typical day-to-day situations. These songs tackle unemployment and the temporary liberation of weekend partying to a rock-hard funk beat and a smokin' reggae sound, respectively.

In more free-poetic, articulate works like "Scenes/Seen" and "Praise/Defence Stance" Joseph widens his shutter to include pimps, dope, sellouts, media and government on one hand, and the whole of proud black womanhood on the other - to a more free-flowing sound.

"Those last two are the *baddest* that I've gotten," says Joseph, whose charming, streetwise flash and jive never overwhelm his superior intellect. His voice is raspy; his native Antiguan accent, musical; his intelligence, engaging.

"Those point to where I want to get to - away from the strict steadiness of the band. In 'Stance' all I listened to was the bass, and I told everybody else to go wherever they wanted to go.

"Working with musicians has also led me to explore the sound of the voice as well: The voice as instrument, the poet alone as orchestra. So you've got the content ongoing, the vocal style, the music, a lot of things happening to engage an audience."

Naturally, Joseph's transition from hot live performance to cold, empty studio wasn't easy.

"The shit was tough man," he admits. "I got really uptight at times, getting told I chanted too high or too low. And you're always checking the time. 'Cause the clock moves and dollars fly away. You have to accommodate the technology and the musicians, and cut out all the little mistakes you can get away with in performance."

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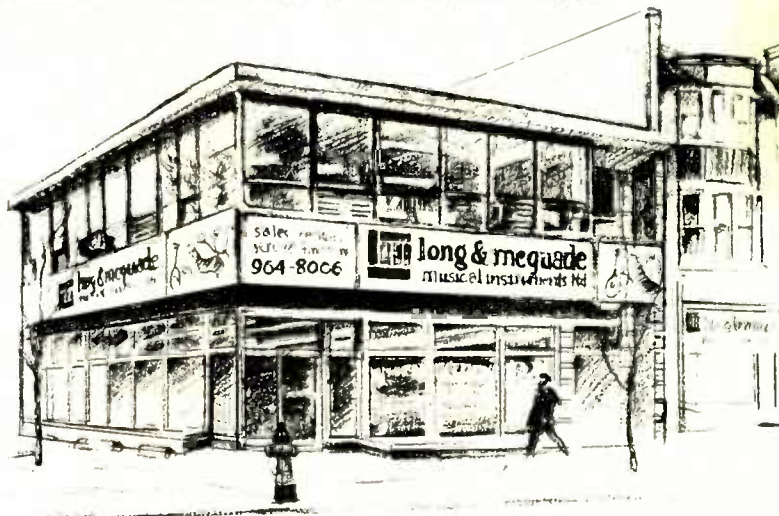
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## David Wilcox Makes Breakfast At The Circus

by Dara Rowland



David Wilcox

David Wilcox figures if he hadn't become a musician, he'd have become a tree surgeon. As it happened though, the first time he heard Elvis as a kid, rock 'n roll guitar won out. "It ate me," he laughs. "That attention and desire, I was just a kid, but I wanted a guitar."

By the time Wilcox was 12 he was a sideman in a garage band and playing local church gigs. After a brief stint as a teacher (he admits he couldn't explain music well), he auditioned for and was hired by Ian and Sylvia for their TV show house band, Great Speckled Bird. Instead of spending years grinding it out on the club circuit, he leapt from non-union to the big leagues. Of course he told Ian he was union before the audition. "Then I borrowed the money from my mom to pay my dues," he says, noting that he was able to repay the debt soon with sizable paycheques.

After Ian and Sylvia though, his luck changed dramatically. "I didn't face the initial starvation," he admits, "but my fortunes plummeted after that." He "scruffled" around as a sideman with a few bands, then toured with Maria Muldaur on the strength of his work for the Tyson's. Following that *Midnight At The Oasis* tour, he received other work -- but it was always playing someone else's music.

"I work on a guitar sound to get something original, but I eventually felt constricted because it was somebody else's band," he explains. Lack of musical variety within a band also bothered him. "I always stress diversity, and I haven't lost the vision of that desire. Then, you could get into a country or pop or rock or blues band, but not one that played all. His latest LP, *Breakfast At The Circus*, reflects his wide range of musical interests.

While he describes his sound as basically pop/rock, he is pleased that people hear the flavours of country, rock 'n roll and blues on individual cuts.

It came time for Wilcox to start up his own band in 1975, but due to innate shyness, he handed the set-up and supervision of that task to Sadia, who remains his producer. By 1978, with several club dates to his credit, the labels still kept their distance. So Sadia sought out an investor to finance a record which they shopped for two years. After a less than enjoyable experience with a small label, Wilcox was eventually signed by Capital/EMI. Today, five albums later, people still think of him as a guitar player, which seems reasonable since that's how they were first introduced to him on television. He prefers, however, to describe himself as a "song player, not a guitar gun."

In discussing his playing technique though, he has definite opinions. A finger player, he uses a thumb pick and bare fingers when playing most tunes. A flat pick is only used for fast songs like his "Hot Hot Papa", or R & B rhythm parts.

On the road he uses two Fender Stratocasters (one with a humbucking and one with a stock pick-up), but in the studio for *Breakfast*, he relied on eight different guitars including an Ibanez Artist model, a Silvertone, and Fenders. With these, and a few different techniques, he was able to create very different sounds. He is particularly enthusiastic about the way the Silvertone reacted when the amp was thrown full, and the dirty/clean sound produced when he plugged straight into the board. On the cut "Push Push Push", he played through a Heavy Metal II "floor toy", then direct into the board. But *Breakfast* represented another first for

the song stylist.

"It was much more free," he explains, "because we didn't record with live performances in mind." Previously, Wilcox recorded with consideration for the material's live transposition. Opting instead for unlimited freedom, though, means he is now trying hard to keep smiling through the process of preparing a stage show. As with all his stage performances he requires a loose arrangement -- a skeletal arrangement cohesive enough to include the songs his fans want yet flexible enough to allow Wilcox to flow with the particular audience he's playing to. He enjoys the variety of venues he regularly plays, and remains convinced that dealing with diversity, whether realized in audience composition or the way a song is different each night due to the flexibility of the musical arrangements, keeps the music alive. And whether the audience is college or working class, he hones his skills to fashion a show tailor made for them. In February, along with David Rose (bass) and Garth Bright (drums), Wilcox will have hit the road again.

Life on the road for Wilcox is nothing new, and like a true trooper, he has developed a few survival skills to make the excursion more enjoyable. He developed this strategy one summer, years ago, when body and soul nearly collapsed.

"We'll only do four shows a week now, anymore is dangerous," he states, recalling those earlier days. "One summer, to keep the band alive, I took all gigs, sometimes we'd play two in one day in two different places. By the end of the summer I was nearly ready for the hospital." He now sets his pace and enjoys touring, as long as the accommodation is good, and takes time to explore the city or town he's visiting.



## Jeffrey Hatcher's No Frills Roots Rock

by Howard Druckman

When Jeffrey Hatcher wrote "99 Years" back in 1984, he and the Big Beat were trying desperately -- and unsuccessfully -- to scrape up a gig in Toronto. The shuffling riff-rocker was in fact a thinly-veiled complaint about beating one's head against the usual music-industry walls. "Poor boy, he never learned no better," sang Hatcher.

### "99 Years"

In what might best be described as a masterstroke of irony, "99 Years" has recently been pouring forth like April showers from college radio across North America, and trickling along as an added single in key-market CHR and AOR stations as well. With the benefit of a re-mix by The Cars' Elliot Easton, the song has been beefed up just enough to appeal to radio-programming ears.

"We wanted to take what we had," says Hatcher, "and without changing it much, just make it a little fuller. Give it a bit more of a stretch to grab your ear more on the radio.

We kept what we added unobtrusive -- tambourine, extra vocal, keyboard parts."

By the time you read this, a second single should be mildly re-mixed and grabbing more ears. The likely choice is "Deliver Me," an achingly lovely ballad that ought to cut across various formats. "We might go with Elliot Easton again," says Hatcher. "But this one should be less work than '99 years.' Maybe just a bit of EQ and panning, no added stuff."

Both songs, as well as "Midnight Trains" and "Man Who Would Be King", appeared on the Big Beat's 1986 Canadian EP. When the band signed an American deal with New York-based Upside Records, all four songs re-appeared on their debut album, *Cross Our Hearts*, (distributed by Fringe in Canada).

### Roots-Rock and Strings

The seven other, freshly-recorded songs on *Cross Our Hearts* provide a fine composite of the Big Beat's eclectic, no-frills roots-rock. "Out of Time" is a pure-pop singalong, "Fro-

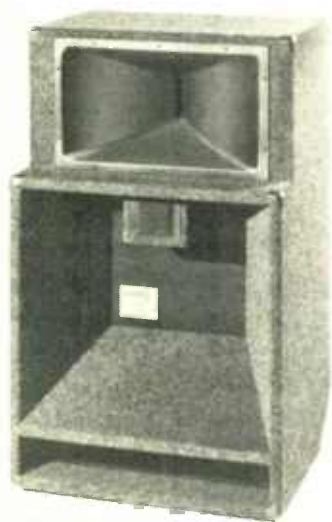
zen in Place" features brother Don Hatcher's south-of-the-border sax, while "In My Hand" offers a poignant string section and three-part harmony for full effect.

Hatcher's songwriting continues to shine. "The King And Me" is an allegorical father/son tale that never gets too obvious or cloying. "Eye of the Needle" provides social comment without preaching, and "In Waiting" leaves its boy-girl situation appealingly unresolved. In a tribute from one fine songwriter to another, Hatcher and the Big Beat do a timely cover of Phil Ochs' "Cross My Heart," for which the album is named.

The next step? "We've got to get out playing now," says Hatcher. "We'll be gigging across Canada, and we ought to get into the States first chance we get.

"And we're just starting to plan the second album. We've already been discussing song selection."

With 50-odd tunes backlogged from the Big Beat's earlier incarnations as The Fuse and The Six, material is no problem.



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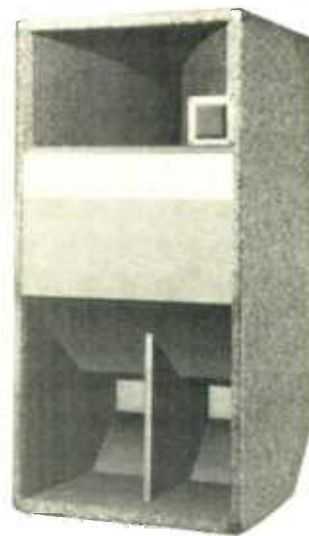
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## King Of The Middle Of The Road

by Maureen Littlejohn



David Foster

David Foster is mad as hell. He's mad that the critics are slagging his latest album, *Symphony Sessions*. "I didn't do it trying to be Bach or Beethoven," says Foster, indignantly. The Victoria born producer / composer / arranger / keyboardist who has won four Grammys and two Junos, smooths his own feathers. "Just because I surrounded myself with an orchestra, doesn't mean I have to be compared to the greats." He explains that with this album he "dug down a little deeper," since he was dissatisfied with the kinds of records he had been making. "I was burned out on pop music, in a rut, so I decided on a total departure with no rules and regulations. The album isn't for everybody's taste, but it shouldn't be compared to the London Symphony Orchestra doing Mozart with John Parker, a monster keyboard player."

In fact this easy listening "Winter Games" (the official Olympic song he was commissioned to write by Coca-Cola) vehicle has many movie sound-track-like qualities and is worth a further listen. For one, most of it was recorded live to a Sony Digital two track over five days with the 83 musician Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre. Quite an accomplishment for a man who spent over a year producing a Chicago album.

The album was engineered by Eric Tomlinson, (he also recorded the soundtracks for *Amadeus*, *Star Wars*, and *The Empire Strikes Back* with the London Symphony Orchestra) who brought with him a small selection of tube mics. A Studer portable board was brought in and they did it "the old fashioned way," laughs Foster. "It

was such a strange dichotomy for me, being the guy that did the Streisand album with all synthesizers." But he's quick to point out, "I don't sequence when I'm using a keyboard. I like to play everything myself." The entire album was recorded live except for the rhythm section, piano and guitar on "Winter Games," and Danny Peck's 20 seconds of vocals (the only vocals on the album) on "Firedance".

Because of the live element Foster found himself doing something he hadn't done for years, practice. "I found I had written things I couldn't play. I had to take some piano lessons, slow these parts right down and practice to get them up to speed." Foster plays a nine foot Yamaha grand piano, a company which he endorses, throughout the LP. "I like the product, but they don't give me lots of stuff," he explains. "I went after them because I think they are the best. I've played Steinways and Dusendorfers all over the world, but Yamaha is the only piano that is consistent."

Starting his writing for *Symphony Sessions* in March of '87, Foster enlisted the help of conductor/arranger Jeremy Lubbock, who also co-produced the album, to put the notes to paper for the orchestra. "I could do it, but not with the same accuracy," says Foster. "I demoed some pieces ahead with a synthesizer to give Jeremy an idea and he copied it as best he could. In other cases I did just a piano demo and left the rest of the orchestrating to him." The charts were then given to the orchestra members a few months ahead of recording time in June '87. "When we arrived in Vancouver we had a two hour rehearsal and one 1/2 hour recording session for each of the 10 songs," explains Foster.

"By some standards that's a lot, but by mine that's nothing." One luxury Foster did have was being able to digitally edit. "Each song was recorded five times and then I took the best of each performance and put it all together. A couple of pieces were used all the way through."

Was it hard for a man used to operating every part of the show to direct all his energy to his own playing during the recording? "No, I was very focused during this project. Nothing I could do would impress this group of 83 musicians, they've played the greatest music ever written and played with great keyboard players." (They also did the soundtrack for *Platoon*). What about ego clashes with engineer Tomlinson? "The only area we disagreed on was the miking of the piano. He wanted to use a couple of 87s which are stock classical mics and give a soft mushy sound. I wasn't happy with them and talked him into using a couple of 414s for a brighter, more modern sound. He was reluctant, but I think it was a perfect compromise between a classical piano sound and a pop Bruce Hornsby clanky sound."

The one track on the album which Foster admits doesn't really fit the moodier, more reflective aspects of most of the pieces is the reved up "Winter Games". "When Coca-Cola asked me to write it I thought immediately of radio exposure, so I pulled something together with the orchestra and a rhythm section. It's an accessible piece and really stands out on the album. By coincidence it happened at the same time as *Symphony Sessions*, and I think everyone at Atlantic Records breathed a sigh of relief, because the rest of the album is a long shot."



# Nailing Down The Bassics

by Kim Brandt

It has been my sorry duty over my several years of teaching, when discussing the subject of technique, to tell students "this is right, this is wrong", but it always seems to boil down to a few fundamental things. It has nothing to do with whether you wear leather pants and a sequined shirt when playing the bass or if you prefer something a little more conservative. (like my personal favorite, silk shirts and spandex pants, with the alligator skin boots, of course!)

The reality of it is that no matter what kind of music you play there are certain basic playing habits that allow you to perform to your fullest. Since a lot of bassists are self taught, they make the big mistake of asking other musicians how to play their axe, namely guitarists. Big mistake! Never ask a guitar player how to play the bass. No matter how competent he is on the guitar he very likely doesn't have a clue how to play the bass properly. This would be akin to a drummer asking a priest about rhythm.

The position of the thumb on the left hand is extremely important. It should act as a gauge to feel where the notes are on the neck in a given position. The only time it should move is when you're changing positions. A good way to determine where your thumb should be placed is to play on the A string; B flat with the first finger then holding that note play B natural with the second, C with the third and C sharp with your fourth finger. You must keep all the fingers down. Now look at your thumb (it should be behind the second finger) and leave it there when playing in that position. The same applies farther up the neck as well. Initially this may feel awkward but believe me it is the best position to utilize your muscles to their optimum.

When you play, try to imagine the left hand as though its holding a tennis ball. If you do this it will allow you to use a minimum amount of strength to obtain maximum efficiency. Never press harder than absolutely necessary to get the note to sound. The tennis ball only approximates the curvature of the fingers. I say approximate because this will vary depending on the size of your hand.

The right thumb should be anchored on either the pick-up or some kind of base attached to the body (of your bass). Always alternate your fingers and don't rest the thumb on the E string. When you go to play the E string not only will you have to pluck the note you'll have to move your thumb as well.

A pick is useful for hard-edge rock and roll. You should practice with it. Hold it firmly but don't squeeze too hard. The motion should be

only in your forearm and wrist. It's a good idea to anchor the right hand with the pinky finger on the pick-guard or the fleshy part of the hand on the bridge.

Another thing to remember is to keep relaxed. The more you tense up the more you constrict the muscles. Check your shoulders and arms periodically to make sure they're not rigid. Conserve energy.

## Tuning

Tuning is truly one of the most vital aspects of music and often sadly ignored by many musicians. With the advent of electronic tuners no one with a fretted instrument should be out of tune. Here are a few hints to help you get in tune and stay there longer. To begin you must "set up" the intonation on your axe. This requires an electronic tuner. If you don't own one start saving. In the meantime borrow one from a friend. All fretted instru-

“**Never ask a guitarist how to play bass.**”

ments have adjustable bridges. Tune an open string to pitch then play the octave on the 12th fret. The two notes should register exactly the same on the tuner. If the tuner says the octave on the 12th fret is flat move the saddle towards the nut or if it registers sharp move the saddle away from the nut. You must do this every time you change strings. You may find that the needle on the tuner moves around a lot on the lower strings. The more expensive the tuner the less likelihood of this happening. Personally, I use a \$79.00 tuner with a wobbly needle but once you get familiar with your own tuner you can tell where the centre is.

Now that your instrument is set up, you can use your ears or the tuner to tune it up. One word of caution regarding the method of tuning using the harmonic on the 7th fret and the harmonic on the 5th fret of the next lower string. You will find if you check it out that the harmonic on the 7th fret is sharp. I

recommend open G then put your finger on the 5th fret of the D string and tune the D string to your G. Use this method for the entire instrument or just use the tuner.

Something that engineers love is a player who plays at a consistent volume level. That way they only need to use a minimum amount of compression. Generally speaking the less compression the better your sound. Something I used to do was plug into my cassette player and play watching the volume meter. I spent many hours learning which notes sounded louder or softer and learned to control the levels. If you spend enough time at this it becomes second nature and you won't consciously even think about it.

## Concept Of Time

An interesting thing about time in relation to music is that you usually have more than you think. Sight reading up-tempo or rhythmically complex passages can be made simpler. Having seen the best readers get really nervous when presented with a difficult chart, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the player who can put him (her)self together and play the part flawlessly by the second or third take. The pressure is probably most intense in a studio situation but pressure to perform well is very real in any working situation.

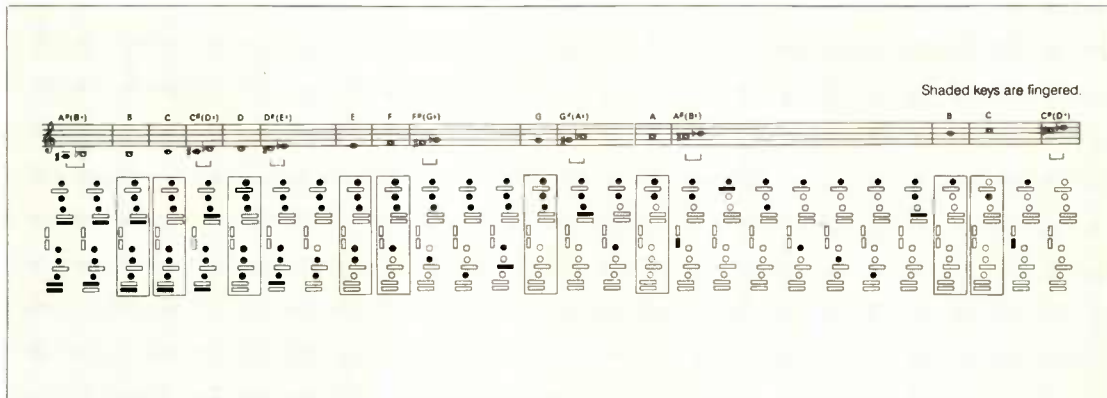
## Concentration

I have discovered over the years that the only time I really get "in the weeds" so to speak is when I'm not paying attention to what I'm supposed to be doing. Sound familiar? It sounds very basic but it's true. Trying to keep your cool when you're working for some scatter-brained leader or singer who counts a tune in at one tempo when they really want something completely different can be very frustrating. The producer who wants you to "feel the vibe" of some song and put a "tasty" fill on the third and fourth beats while looking at his watch and saying "there isn't a lot of time to do this" can, to say the least, unnerve the most experienced pro. Don't let them get to you!

When I say you have more time than you think I mean to say the normal tendency for a player is to rush. That's quite often the fault of adrenalin, but also a breakdown in concentration. That's not to say that there isn't a natural flow to music where the tempo changes with the feel, but that's not the same as rushing the beat.

*(Kim Brandt is a busy session player.)*

## The Yamaha WX7 Revealed



by Mark Hasselbach

All good things come to those who wait, and the autumn of '87 brought the two big contenders in the MIDI Wind Controller field to the marketplace. First came the Akai EWI/EVI 1000 touch sensitive controllers and now the Yamaha WX7, with keys that feel very close to that of a real horn.

The technology has been with us now for a while, but leading manufacturers do not want to damage good reputations with product that will eventually be ignored by the public due to inconsistencies or bugs. Nearly ten years ago the Lyricon made a limited but respected leap into analog wind controlling, and Gentle Electric developed one of the first analog interfaces for actual wind instruments. In 1985 an innovative and now very well respected small company, IVL, made the first reliable and practical MIDI interface for existing wind instruments. All of this piqued the interest of the ever more aware and competitive wind and brass player, and we stand at the threshold of a new age of expression.

The WX7. It looks cool. It's space age. Lightweight body, good key action. Lots of variables. LOTS of variables. In fact, it borders on *not* being user friendly. However, every player will be looking for something different in a controller, and the WX7 certainly has many different adjustable features. Those involved in synthesis/patch edits/programming etc., will know that most of today's technology requires some manual study and lots of hands-on to get the most out of each piece of gear. The WX7 is no different, except in all fairness to this well thought out instrument, it does play when you first hook it up.

Let's start with the feel. The WX7 feels like

an acoustic instrument. It weighs less than a pound, and uses the standard Boehm fingering system. The keys, which trigger small switches underneath, are some sort of high tech plastic that seems durable enough to withstand wear and tear, but only time will tell. The key height is adjustable by tiny shims that can be installed by the user to suit his or her taste. There is a permanent plastic reed installed that does not vibrate, but does indeed translate the characteristics of a player's normal reed bite, vibrato, bend, and air resistance to the electronics which control the sound parameters. All these areas of feel are adjustable and may take some fiddling with to get just right.

There are some interesting and useful harmonic features on the WX7. In the Follow Mode, the player is able to play parallel harmony with any line that is played. The interval is variable and can be chosen and changed while playing, using the right hand thumb Hold Key. In the Normal Mode, when you press the Hold Key while playing a note, the WX7 'remembers' that note. Every time you play a note, the held note will also be heard until the Hold Key is pressed again. The WX7 can transmit this data on two separate MIDI channels for independent control of two sound sources, and another key next to the Hold Key allows the player to change programs from the instrument. Octaves are chosen by left hand thumb buttons, or by two other key configurations, for a total of seven octaves.

The WX7 was designed ideally for use with synthesis programs that accept breath control information, namely Yamaha. However, the WX7 is useable with any make of MIDI

sound source with workable but varying results. Fortunately, the designers have included a way to switch the instrument to aftertouch send when no breath control program is available. The aftertouch messages work virtually the same as breath control send/receive but the operative word is virtually. Once a note has been attacked, it has a limited margin of dynamic range. Therefore a note can be attacked very softly (even faded in from silence) but that note cannot be crescendoed to the maximum volume of the note without re-attacking the note. In other words, it is not possible to make one long continuous note grow from ppp to fff. This can be overcome, or at least disguised, by playing mannerisms that take this into account. By skillfully re-attacking the note, or more simply changing to another note, the natural sound of breath dynamics becomes apparent. Playing passages as you would on any horn will be sufficient to give life to these synthesized sounds. It is only on singular, held notes that a wide dynamic range cannot be achieved.

The WX7 is very expressive, but whether it will be expressive enough to lure many hornplayers into the game remains to be seen. The marketplace is ready for this type of product, and there is stiff competition from Akai and possibly Roland. So far the jury is still out .....one manufacturer offers one set of fabulous features, and another offers a different set of fabulous features, all centred around musical machines that do basically the same thing, only differently.

*(Mark Hasselbach is a busy West Coast based session player.)*



## No Substitute For Experience

by Tamara Amabile

In this business you come across a lot of pearls of wisdom. Everyone thinks they have the fool-proof method to turn you into Aretha Franklin overnight. We've all heard the lines before, "twenty radishes a day keep nodules away" or "a shot of bourbon before every set is the only way to warm-up."

The one thing I've learned that does make sense is the line about experience being the best teacher. There are dos and don'ts a good vocal coach can show you that will save you time and save you from damaging your throat. Still I've always found the most important lessons I've learned have come from trial and error. Yes, it's sad but true, there is no rock 101 course that can teach you everything you need to know in four easy lessons. I believe everyone has to find out for themselves what works best and why. One of the only ways to do that is to live it. Putting yourself in new situations keeps you fresh and interested. It also helps to develop your style and individuality and that's what will set you apart from the millions of other singers out there.

My sister Tasha and I have been working together for seven years now. For the majority of that time we've been fronting our own bands. About two years ago we joined The Pursuit of Happiness. It was the first time we worked with a band full-time as back-up singers. The band is a power trio and our vocals were used as a fourth instrument of sorts. Immediately we developed immense respect for the act of back-up singing. In some ways I think it's harder to do than singing lead. At least harder to do well. Just consider what your job is, you are there to make the lead singer sound good. That means being precise, consistent and, if humanly possible, never singing off key. That translates into hard work.

The band (T.P.O.H.) did steady live work as well as quite a bit of recording. Our studio situations were always different. Our first single was a self-produced effort done in a 16 track one room basement studio. After that we recorded 24 track, live to two track, and eight track from our rehearsal space. In the studio I'm big on feel. I've always maintained that the intensity of the performance is often more important than the technical accuracy. Back-ups tend to need that exactness, so we had to develop a bit of a different approach.

Recently we had the chance to do some back up work on the Jitter's record. Having never been session singers we were thrilled with the opportunity. We knew the tunes



PHOTO: EDEN ROBBINS

Tamara Amabile

from seeing the band live and since we don't read music we just showed up and worked out the parts as we come to them. (If you don't read music being a quick study is an asset, and definitely something you can learn through experience). Everyone was really nice to work with and that made things pretty relaxed, which is great because being comfortable makes for better performances and a lot more fun!

Tasha and I recently left The Pursuit of Happiness to concentrate full-time on our own band The Fatales. I've always loved being in a band. People (in our case five) working together to develop a sound and style is an exciting thing to be part of.

As a singer it's also liberating. Working with the same people and rehearsing enough

to know the material cold gives you the freedom to have fun with it. I'm not talking about beating songs to death. If the band itself is bored by it's material you can bet no one else will be doing cartwheels over it. I just mean knowing the songs well enough that you can be confident, no matter what the situation, and trust yourself as well as the people you play with. That's when you can start to take chances.

Again, since there are no golden rules to live by, dive in, don't be shy. Sing in as many situations as you can, you'll always learn something you can use later. Remember there really is no substitute for experience.

(Tamara Amabile, along with her sister Tasha, front the Toronto group The Fatales.)

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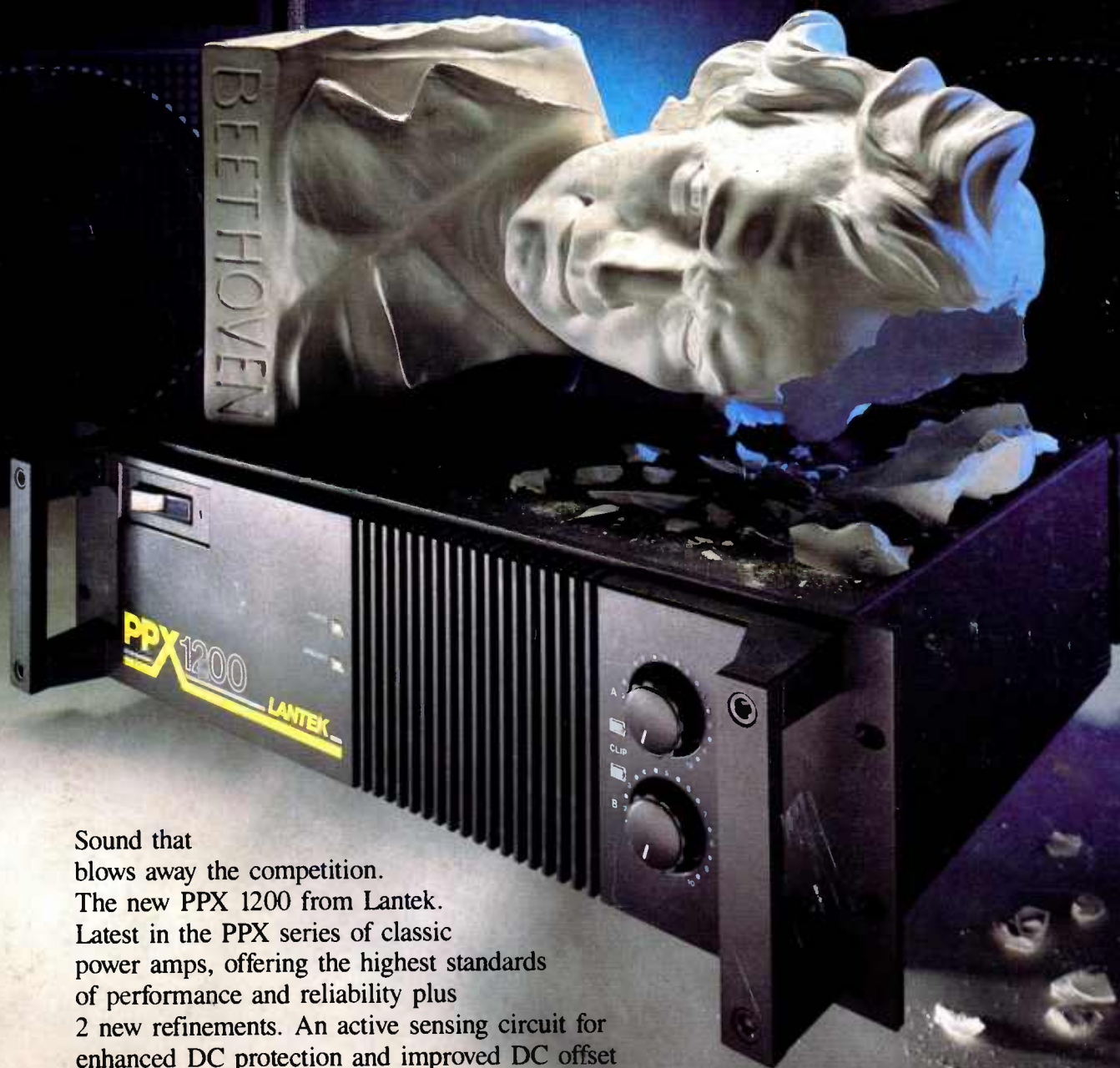
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