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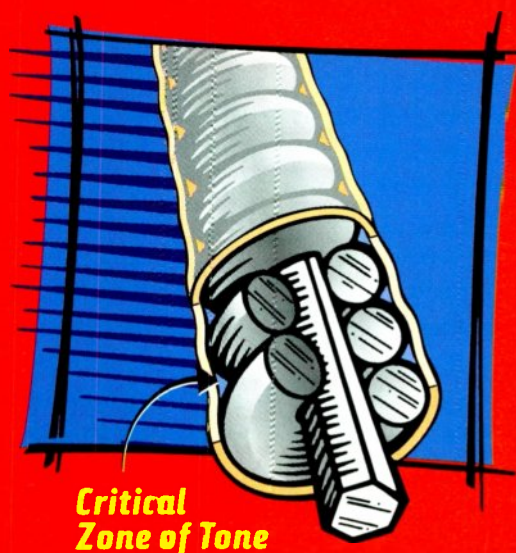


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features columns departments



34 • The Tragically Hip

by Rod Christie

Canada's favourite group delivered *In Violet Light* late spring, marking the first time the band opted to *not* work solely in their own studio by making the trek to the Bahamas to work with producer Hugh Padgham.

38 • Holly McNarland

by Ryan McLaughlin

This Vancouver-based songstress returns after a five-year hiatus with her new album, *Home Is Where My Feet Are*.

42 • Focus on Keyboards

by Kevin Young

Delve into the world of keyboards in this all-encompassing journey through the world where there is a difference between black and white. That's right, there are no grey areas in this feature.

49 • The Alchemy of Music & Audio Software

by Alec Watson

Walk through what's available software-wise for musicians so computers can be used to their greatest potential, whether it be creating, notating, recording, mixing or mastering.

Departments

- 9 • Feedback
- 12 • DIY
- 16 • Changes
- 19 • Music Online
- 20 • Road Test
- 65 • Hot Gear
- 69 • Product Information
- 76 • Marketplace
- 77 • Classifieds
- 78 • Showcase

Columns

- 25 • Guitar – Rick Washbrook
- 26 • Keyboards – Amin Bhatia
- 27 • Bass – Orin Isaacs
- 28 • Percussion – Mitch Borge
- 29 • Woodwinds – BMI McBirnie
- 30 • Brass – Chase Sanborn
- 31 • Digital Music – Paul Lau
- 32 • Vocals – Sarah Slean
- 58 • Writing – Tom Wilson
- 59 • Recording – Karen Kane
- 60 • Live Sound – Jim Yakaowski
- 62 • Business – Chris Taylor

Cover photo by Bernard Clark.

Contents

Blue Shock

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Misguided Songwriter?

Dear *CM*,

I could not help but respond to the letter from Erin Gignac titled "Songwriting Sessions a Waste". Erin appears to write out of a deep frustration with the music industry, but it is not fair to lash out at James Linderman (or anyone else) for attempting to shed a little more light on aspects of what can be a deeply frustrating industry.

Like any industry built on the sweat of creative dreamers, the music industry has its sharks – people who rely on the combination of ignorance and ambition to separate the hopeful from their cash. Some music industry professionals also practice a kind of Applied Darwinism: they will take your money if you really, really insist on spending it, expecting that the unfit and untalented will eventually run out of money, patience or both. However, if you show a degree of humility and a desire to improve your craft, experience shows me there are lots of people out there in the music business who will be willing to spend some of their precious time helping you.

From observation and experience, I can say that the sheep most frequently fleeced in this business are those individuals who insist that the guidelines and traditions – I won't say rules – of quality songwriting don't apply to them. Those traditions are all about respecting the needs, the likes and dislikes, of people who listen to your music.

Most song writing and music industry seminars are aimed precisely at helping people to improve their craft (a songwriting seminar might have acquainted Erin with an AABA song structure, for example), to understand a complicated business a little more clearly, and to equip writers with the creative disciplines that will enable them to do justice to a great musical or lyrical idea, when it comes along. Organizations like the Songwriters Association of Canada (SAC), the Canadian Country Music Association (CCMA), or the Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) all provide seminars or workshops for this purpose, and all of them work for the benefit of songwriters, and to prevent further exploitation.

Erin makes a good point about "staying true" to your creative muse, but goes seriously astray by drawing a line between "real songwriters" and "commercial songwriters", as though you can't try to write great songs while respecting your

audience at the same time. It's about communication, about trying and never stopping, about learning how to win a permanent place in people's hearts with a few words and a melody.

Oh, and if you're hoping for mainstream radio play, try to do all that in just about three minutes. Not much of a goal, eh?

Sincerely,
Bruce Madole
Co-ordinator,
NSAI Toronto Regional Workshop

"inspiration" they vomited up that morning? Without technique, one person's journal entries are as good as the next person's. As someone who has run many a songwriting workshop, I can tell you that when a fledgling writer denigrates "the whole verse chorus thing," he/she is usually looking for excuses. Without craft, songwriting bears an uncanny resemblance to that other thing you do behind closed doors when nobody's listening.

Don Breithaupt,
Green Dolphin Music
Bolton, ON



Dear *CM*,

Erin Gignac's letter on songwriting workshops (May/June 2002) reflects several of music's most enduring myths: 1) that technical knowledge is the enemy of art; 2) that creativity can't be taught; and 3) that true artistic integrity is only possible in a vacuum.

The truth is that if groundbreaking songwriters share one quality, it's their fascination with the technical minutiae of their craft. The informed rewrite is the most important tool of the true artist. Does Gignac think people like Joni Mitchell and Peter Gabriel are just releasing whatever

Dear *CM*,

Please allow me to respond to a letter posted in your May/June issue regarding songwriting sessions. I agree completely that songwriting should start from the heart. Anyone's opinion on "what makes a song great" is purely subjective, and following so-called songwriting rules isn't for everyone. However, songwriting is a craft which must be cultivated, and just because a song flows from inspiration does not mean that it's a GOOD song. The muse only gets the process going ... it's up to the songwriter to finish the process through careful rewriting and polishing that will give a song focus and make it something that someone (besides yourself) will want to listen to. "There are a lot of great songs that have never been on the radio" – and there are a lot of songs that no one wants to listen to because the writer did not finish the job. Sure, some seminars are heavily geared to writing "commercial" songs, and it's unfortunate that these are the ones this songwriter attended. But please don't paint all educational opportunities with the

same brush. Some workshops (such as ours) simply help songwriters to define what they're trying to say, gently suggest ideas that they may not have thought of, and introduce them to their peers in the community. The beauty of songwriting is that it's a constant learning process – you can always improve!

Lorena Kelly
Saskatchewan Recording Industry
Association

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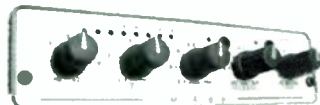




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More Cash For Your Craft

The Lowdown on the Sound Recording Special Payments Fund

If you've ever been called into a session to perform on an album that went on to sell many thousands or millions of copies, and all you have to show for it is your initial scale wage, this article is for you. Alternately, if you ever plan to work as a session musician and you'd like to make more than a few hundred dollars a pop, read on.

Though it has been in existence, by one name or another, for nearly 40 years, many musicians have never heard of the Sound Recording Special Payments Fund (formerly the Phonograph Record Manufacturers' Special Payments Fund). Started in 1964 by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), the fund is designed to compensate musicians – over and above their initial scale wage – that have contributed to the production of recordings.

The fund's Executive Director, Enex Steele explains how the money for the fund is attained: "We have a compliance audit function, where we go in and audit the record companies every couple of years and just basically keep them honest. Also, they make payments to the organization based on sales of CDs, cassettes and vinyl every six months. We take that money and invest it in short-term investment vehicles and then we disperse the money to the participants annually. So you have the money coming in from basically three places: (1) Compliance Audits, (2) Voluntary Payments and (3) Interest Earned."

The money is gathered and then divided among participants in the fund. Because money is only gathered from recordings in which a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the AMF in the US and Canada and various record producers is signed, the more participants the more money for everyone.

The fund currently has about 3,600 active Canadian participants, and between 1997 and 2001 about \$4 million US was distributed to them. "The other thing that is an added benefit is if your work is used in another vehicle it qualifies you for additional compensation. Let's say for example they take the recording that you performed on and they use it in a motion picture or in a commercial or what have you, you are entitled to an additional payment just simply because you did it right," told Steele.

By "right" Steele means the musician made sure that the gig was an AFM covered job – considered "covered work" – and that the musician is a member of the AFM and up-to-date with their union dues. "The money is invested, in part, in the Canadian Pension Fund as well,



Enex Steele

So in addition to getting a supplemental payment once a year for five years, a portion of the money is also put into the Canadian Pension Fund, so that when you retire you get even more compensation." A musician can retire? Who knew?

The fund has an annual monetary distribution every August 1st and surprisingly last year an incredible \$250,000 US was put into an Unclaimed Account for Canadian musicians. The majority of this money is the result of the fund managers being unable to locate participants because their addresses has changed and they haven't updated it.

The often nomadic lifestyle of many musicians has proved a constant battle for the fund, which is continually trying to keep their databases updated to make sure the money gets to those it is intended for. One of the innovative ways that is currently in development to help in this matter is the fund's Web site. Participants will be able to view their tax statements, tax documents and participant statements, while also being provided the opportunity to update their information allowing them to re-route their payments to wherever they want them to go. The fund is also looking into putting a direct deposit module online, which will virtually assure that the artists will get their money wherever they are.

Those of you that are just hearing about this excellent opportunity for the first time may be wondering why, if they've been around for so long, are you only discovering it now. Steele explained, "It's basically starting with me. My challenge has been, since I took over [in 2000], to find as many musicians as possible and give them the money that they are entitled to. I want to raise the awareness of the organization, I want to raise the visibility and again, I want to make certain that people understand that we do have relevance. It's a fantastic benefit, an absolutely fantastic benefit for a participating musician, and that's why I want to do it." Addressing the musicians that are still sitting on the sidelines and don't want to bother finding out more, Steele commented, "You're only hurting yourself. The benefits far outweigh not doing it. Where else can you get paid five times for working once?"

To gain more knowledge on the Sound Recording Special Payments Fund, call (866) 711-FUND (3863) and watch for the Web site to be launched later this summer.



Should You Start Your Own Publishing Company?

by Peter Spellman

Besides the obvious profit potential, which is attractive to anyone seeking a good business to start, there are several situations that make setting up a publishing company a natural move:

- Songwriters may want greater control over their own copyrights, as well as earn more money from their use.
- New songwriters may want to short-circuit frustrations of trying to get publishers to accept their work.
- Writers who work with a co-writer who does well as his own publisher and you can negotiate a portion of the rights for your own company. (NOTE: If your co-writer is a staff writer with a major company, you may find this very difficult unless you also have great contacts and are aggressive about pitching your songs).
- Record producers and recording artists may want to own some of the copyrights that they record.
- Artists' managers, music business attorneys, or accountants may want to handle clients' songs.
- Record labels should want to publish songs they release that aren't already signed to publishers.
- People who have a great casting sense that lets them present the right song to the right artist at the right time.

The Nuts & Bolts Of Setting Up Your Own Publishing Company

1 You are eligible for a SOCAN publisher membership if you conduct business from an office within Canada and have been assigned either (a) a minimum of five copyrighted musical works written or co-written by a SOCAN member, or by a Canadian who is a member of another performing rights society; or (b) the copyright in at least one song that has been

commercially recorded and was written or co-written by a SOCAN member or by a Canadian who is a member of another performing rights society. You are eligible to have BMI, ASCAP or SESAC process your application as a publisher if: a record is being released containing a performance of the song; a motion picture is being released that includes the song; a television program will be or has been broadcast using the song; or a radio program has been broadcast that played the song.

2 Come up with a name for your company (with three alternates) and clear the name with SOCAN, BMI, ASCAP or SESAC. You may use your own name but you should try to come up with something catchy that will make people want to open envelopes with your demos inside. Unless you intend to publish the songs of other writers who may belong to other performing rights organizations, you need only set up a company with the organization you're affiliated with as a writer.

Note: There is a one-time \$50 Cdn. membership fee to be a publisher member of SOCAN. There is a \$50 US annual fee for being a publisher-member of ASCAP. There is a one-time \$100 US application fee to be a BMI publisher, and no annual fee. There is no fee for SESAC publishers.

3 Once the name(s) have been cleared, go to your local city or town hall and obtain the forms to register a fictitious name certificate, also known as a D/B/A (doing business as...). Then go to your bank and open an account under your new business name. If you have any questions about the required business forms contact your local Canada Business Service Centre (www.cbse.org).

4 Copyright all the songs you wish to have in your company on a PA (Performing Arts) form assigned to your company. If you have already obtained copyright registrations on your unpublished songs, you will now register them again as published works.

5 For songs being released on records, or for songs that will be or have been performed in a motion picture, television program or radio program (regardless of whether the song is included on any record), fill out both the writer's and publisher's clearance forms from the performing rights organization involved (SOCAN, BMI, ASCAP or SESAC). These forms notify the organization that a specific song is being released on a specific album so that, when it's performed on the radio, TV or elsewhere, the organization will know who to pay, what percentage to pay the writer and the publisher, and where to send the cheques. Directions are included on the forms and in the publisher's manuals provided by the organizations. Keep a copy of everything you send out for your files.

6 Organize yourself to be able to keep track of your "song shopping." Check out the software from Working Solutionz (www.songtracker.com/songtrkr.html). SongTracker and SongTracker Pro 3.0 are an award-winning set of integrated templates that turn FileMaker Pro 3.0 into a full-featured publishing/song shopping system for professional songwriters and active music publishers.

7 Finally, learn as much as you can about the operations of music publishing. Tim Whitsett's *Music Publishing: The Real Road to Music Business Success* is the first book you should master. Other good resources to help you understand music publishing are *Music, Money & Success* by Jeffrey & Todd Brabec (Schirmer Books) and *The Musician's Business & Legal Guide*, ed. by Mark Halloran (Jerome Nedlands Press), especially pages 121-198.

Peter Spellman is Director of Career Development at Berklee College of Music, Boston and author of The Musician's Internet and The Self-Promoting Musician (both from Berklee Press). You can find him at www.mbsolutions.com.

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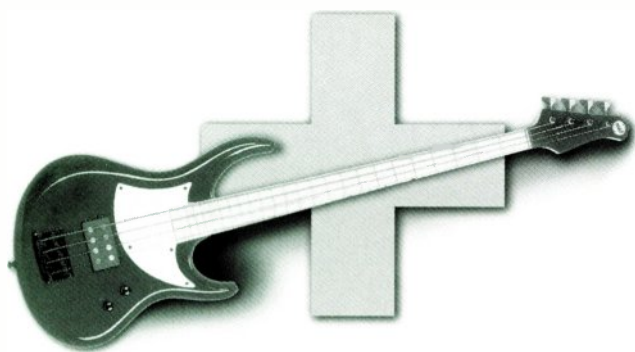
If you are a Canadian country artist and you are planning a tour this year, the Canadian Country Music Association (CCMA) wants to help keep you on the road.

The CCMA has been helping musicians' domestic touring activities since 1997, when the Canadian Tour Support Program was instated. The program helps artists stay on the road longer to promote their albums to radio stations, retail stores and, of course, their fans.

For information on the Canadian Tour Support Program or to receive an application form, contact: Canadian Country Music Association, 5 Director Ct., #102, Woodbridge, ON L4L 4S5 (905) 850-1144, FAX (905) 850-1330, country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org.



Care Corner



Play 'Em Again Man – How To Boil Bass Strings

Ah, the beauty of a fresh string, is there any greater sound? The brightness resonating with every pluck and slap, the glimmer of tonal perfection and a smooth sheen that just screams new! Well open the drawer and pull out those old spare sets, it's time for the renewal. Whether you're gigging it every night to pay the bills or just jammin' in your basement, the following tip is a great way to extend the playability of your strings while keeping cash safely in your pocket.

Boiling strings (which works for guitars as well, but to a lesser extent) has long been met with mixed emotions. However, when done properly, a nice sterilization will keep you playing long passed their expiration date.

The Physics: The first thing to wrap your noodle around is why strings lack lustre over time. When played, the strings collect dirt and oil from your hands which prevents them from vibrating properly and in turn gives you that not-so-fresh sound. When the temperature of a metal is raised, it, like most things, expands. This expansion allows for the dirt to fall free from the coils and also breaks up the collected oil. Additionally, when quickly rinsed in cold water, the strings tighten allowing for a return to some of their original tension.

Directions: To perform the procedure you'll need one pot, some water, a heat source and a little bit of time. Simply remove the strings from your instrument, wrap them up and drop them in a pot full of boiling water. Let the strings poach for about 15 to 20 minutes, remove and rinse with cold water. Make sure the strings are dried right away, as to avoid any type of corrosion. Wait about an hour, string up and rock out!

Limited Warranty: Sorry, as much as it sounds like a miracle cure-all, boiling your strings will only extend their life about a month, and then it will be time to keep those local retailers in business and pick up a new set.

Canada Council For The Arts Deadline Dates

The Canada Council for the Arts is a national agency that provides grants and services to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations in dance, media arts, music, theatre, writing and publishing, interdisciplinary work and performance art and the visual arts. Some of the music programs and their deadlines are as follows:

Grants to Professional Musicians (Individuals)

- Nov. 1, 2002 and March 1, 2003
 - Classical Music of All World Cultures
 - Non-Classical Music (Popular Traditions) of All World Cultures

Aboriginal Peoples Music Program – March 1, 2003

Career Development Program – Oct. 1, 2002

Travel Grants to Professional Musicians

- Any time (at least six weeks before departure date)

Residences and Commissioning of Canadian Compositions

- Sept. 15, 2002 and Jan. 15, 2003

Grants for Specialized Music Sound Recording

- April 1, 2003

New Music Program

- Multi-Year, Annual, Project Funding
 - March 15, 2003
- Targeted Initiatives
 - March 15, 2003
- Shared Initiatives and Audience Development Grants
- Solo Production Projects
- Creation/Production Projects
- Music in Alternative Spaces

Professional Orchestra Program – Jan. 15, 2003

Opera/Music Theatre Program – Dec. 15, 2002

Music Touring Program

- Music Touring Grants
 - Dec. 15, 2002
- International Performance Assistance in Music (Pilot Project)
 - Dec. 15, 2002

Music Festivals Programming Project Grants and Music Festival Travel Grants

- Sept. 15, 2002 and Feb. 15, 2003

The Canada Council for the Arts awards a number of prizes and fellowships that recognize excellence in various disciplines. A separate calendar lists Canada Council prizes and fellowships with their deadline dates. Contact the Endowments and prizes Section if you would like a copy. For more information, visit the Council's Web site at www.canadacouncil.com.



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SOCAN Collects

For the past half-decade digital pay audio services have broadcasted music through digital channels on satellite and cable systems, without paying any royalties. A recent announcement from the Copyright Board is about to change all that.

For everyone that doesn't know what digital pay audio services are, they are the channels on both satellite and cable systems (usually in the high numbers) that broadcast commercial-free, digital-quality music to television sets across the nation.

The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) will begin collecting license fees for these performances, retroactively from 1997 to the present. SOCAN estimates that they will collect more than \$1 million for the current year under the new tariff.

You can check out the complete Copyright Board decision in PDF format at www.cb-cda.gc.ca/decisions/m15032002-b.pdf

Pen a Prize Winner

Dust off your pens, de-case your acoustic and pull out those 'Only you can think of something that imaginative' lyrics – the International Songwriting Competition (ISC) is now accepting entries.

The ISC is providing amateur and professional songwriters the opportunity to win more than \$50,000 in cash and prizes with its new annual songwriting competition. Categories that songs can be entered in include: pop, rock, country, folk, R&B, hip-hop/rap, world music and lyrics only. Entrants may submit multiple songs in as many categories as they wish and submissions can be made via mail or online electronic (MP3) means.

The event will be judged by many of the most influential members of the music industry. Monte Lipman (President of Universal Records), Arif Mardin (VP/GM of Manhattan Records), Andy Summers (performer and ex-Police member), Kim Stephens (VP A&R of Atlantic Records), Eddie Kramer (producer of The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix), David Bendeth (Sr. VP A&R of RCA Records) and more will make up the contest's panel of judges.

The cost for a single-song entry is \$30 US, with additional entries costing \$20 US per entry. For more information on this contest or to enter, click on www.songwritingcompetition.com.

Who the Hell is Dakona?

They've played the Viper Room in LA and Brownies in NYC, they've attracted enough attention to have most major US labels bid on them, Madonna's Maverick Records signed them, and they've had Pete Dinklage open for them. Still the question remains: Dakona who?

Consisting of Ryan McAllister (vocals/guitars), Brook Winstanley (guitars), John Biondolillo (drums/percussion) and Shane Dueck (bass/vocals); the West Coast band has been putting out albums in one form or another since 1997, but it was their first full-length debut, 2000's *Ordinary Heroes*, that started to turn heads. "The idea was to create something half decent that we could then shop around," said Winstanley. "We wanted to find someone who was in the industry, because we were slowly learning that it was a lot about who you knew. That was when we hooked up with EGM (Eric Godtland Management)."

Around the same time as teaming up with EGM, *Ordinary People* attained No. 1 Independent Selling Release in Vancouver-area HMV stores. McAllister explained that "doing well" in an independent market is a world away from big commercial success, and though the sales were good for an indie band, he joked, "We were lucky to hit four digits a year in sales, which is like Certified Cotton or something."

The band's big break came when EGM set up some high profile showcases for them in Los Angeles and New York. "The one night that really started it all was the first night that we played the Viper Room. They had all the labels there and there were CEOs and head A&R guys waiting outside to get in because the Viper Room only holds 200 people and we had 270 on our guest list," said Winstanley. It didn't help matters that

a then little-known Pete Dinklage was opening for them and a star-studded audience was in attendance. "Jason Biggs was there, Cameron Diaz was there, and Warren G, it was just this huge event. Honestly, we were playing on stage and most of the people in the audience were checking each other out. It was just all about the hype ... the ball just started rolling – because Maverick is checking us out, Interscope comes and because Interscope is looking, Island Def Jam wants to see."

Fourteen showcases for record labels and a handful of transcontinental flights later, the band had offers from almost a dozen labels. After some business banter, Dakona decided that Maverick Records (home to Alanis Morissette and the Deftones) was the best place for them.

After settling on Maverick, the band began shopping for a producer, and though their US label was looking at big American producers, it was a Canuck, Arnold Lanni, that Dakona felt most comfortable with. Moving across the country, the band set up shop at Lanni's Arnyard Studios in Toronto, ON, and began the daunting task of creating a major label record, which is due out in February 2003.

With international recognition around the corner, McAllister gives this advice for musicians looking to break into the industry: "Forget about going straight to the labels by yourself. It works one out of a thousand times. Try baby steps; get that good demo and then take that and get a good manager and then take that good manager who hopefully has connections at the labels and just go that way. Don't try to hit the home run right off the bat, and just play as much as you can."



Ryan McAllister and Brook Winstanley take a break while doing some final mixing at Arnyard Studios.



Sonic ... Coming To A Theatre Near You

Toronto-based Sonic, who is currently promoting their CD *Sister Boombox*, has signed a deal with Famous Players to be advertised on up to 800 movie screens across Canada as well, the band has been shipped to various theatres nation-wide to spread their tunes and bring recognition to the growing trend of inter-cinema bars.

The deal came up when Nina (vocals) and Tony (guitars) walked into the Famous Players Colossus theatre in Woodbridge and spotted a poster indicating that the theatre's bar, The Pod, was going to be having live bands performing.

"We inquired that we wanted to speak to the manager and we asked them if we could play. We said we were from the area and so he asked for a tape and then hired us to play a show. It went over really well, the place was packed and everybody was having a good time, so we left off that they would call us back," said Nina.

The theatre's management called the band back because of the success of their first show and Sonic was invited to play the Summer Tent Event. After the show the band sat down with the theatre's management, who had gained interest in Sonic because their shows were so well attended. "They realized that we're really big on promotion. I mean every time we would play Colossus, we would put up flyers, set up posters, send out e-mails to all our friends."

Famous Players main goal was to gain exposure for its bar, The Pod, which many people didn't know existed. The combination was working really well; Famous Players was totally behind them and started advertising them on the big screen right across the country.

Management was so pleased that they wanted to move Sonic to other theatres in the country. "They sent us over to the Paramount in Montréal and we did the same type of thing where we played in the bar/café that



Tony Cutrone (left), Nina, Slavio Monopoli and Mark Gabriel.

they have there. Basically wherever they have a bar, we know that we are first pick to play," says Nina.

"It's amazing exposure, Famous Players is a great company to be connected with. Everyone's really open-minded and they'll accept any idea and be willing to debate it, try it. They've never been connected with bands before, so for them it was just a whole new thing. Entertainment creates exposure for them and now everyone knows there's a bar at the Colossus – plain and simple. No one knew before we played there. It's pretty cool, especially that the screen advertising is across Canada. So I mean that's amazing, amazing exposure."

If you want to check out Sonic, they will be playing at the Famous Players Colossus in Woodbridge, ON, on July 20 and August 10, 2002. *Sister Boombox* can be purchased on the band's Web site at www.listentosonic.com or at www.hmv.com as well as select HMV stores.

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Events

Huntsville Festival of the Arts

Huntsville, ON, July 4-21, 2002
(800) 663-2787, FAX (705) 789-8988,
info@huntsvillefestival.on.ca,
www.huntsvillefestival.com

Atlantic Jazz Festival 2002

Halifax, NS, July 5-13, 2002
(800) 567-5277, FAX (902) 425-7946,
info@jazzeast.com,
www.jazzeast.com

Beaches International Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON, July 18-21, 2002
(416) 698-2152, FAX (416) 698-2064,
beaches@beachesjazz.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

25th Annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC, July 19-21, 2002
(800) 883-3655, FAX (604) 602-9790,
info@thefestival.bc.ca,
www.thefestival.bc.ca

Home County Folk Festival

London, ON, July 19-21, 2002
(519) 432-4310, FAX (519) 432-6299,
www.homecounty.ca

Hillside Festival 2002

Guelph, ON, July 26-28, 2002
(519) 763-6396, FAX (519) 763-9514,
hillside@hillside.on.ca,
www.hillside.on.ca

Palmer Rapids Twin Music Festival

Palmer Rapids, ON, July 26-28, 2002
(613) 587-4683,
alschutt@nrtco.net

Atlantis Music Conference 2002

Atlanta, GA, July 31 to August 3, 2002
(770) 499-8600,
www.atlantismusic.com

Markham Jazz Festival

Markham, ON, August 15-18, 2002
(905) 471-JAZZ (5299),
bebop@sympatico.ca,
www.jazzfest.markham.on.ca

Summerfolk Music & Craft Festival

Owen Sound, ON, August 16-18, 2002
(519) 371-2995, FAX (519) 371-2973,
gbfs@bmts.com,
www.summerfolk.org

Eaglewood Folk Festival

Pefferlaw, ON, August 23-25, 2002
(705) 437-1634, FAX (705) 437-3693,
eaglewd@ils.net,
www.eaglewoodfolk.com

Hamilton Music Scene 2002

Hamilton, ON, September 6-7, 2002
(905) 546-3104, FAX (905) 521-0924,
www.hecfi.on.ca

County Music Week 2002

Calgary, AB, September 6-9, 2002
(905) 850-1144, FAX (905) 850-1330,
country@ccma.org,
www.ccma.org

Billboard Dance Music Summit

New York, NY,
September 30 to October 2, 2002
(646) 654-4660,
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboard.com

Prairie Music Week

Winnipeg, MB, September 26-29, 2002
(204) 943-8485,
thom@prairiemusicweek.com,
www.prairiemusicweek.com

The Ontario Council of Folk Festivals Conference 2002

Ottawa, ON, October 18-20, 2002
(866) 292-6233, FAX (705) 674-5227,
ocff@icomm.ca,
www.icomm.ca/ocff

Montréal Drum Fest 2002

Montréal, PQ, November 8-10, 2002
(450) 928-1726,
angelillo@videotron.ca

PASIC 2002

Columbus, OH, November 13-16, 2002
(580) 353-1455, FAX (580) 353-1456,
percarts@pas.org,
www.pas.org

CINARS 2002

Montréal, PQ, November 19-23, 2002
(514) 842-5866, FAX (514) 843-3168,
arts@cinars.org,
www.cinars.org

International Association of Jazz Educators Conference

Toronto, ON, January 8-11, 2003
(785) 776-8744, FAX (785) 776-6190,
info@iaje.org,
www.iaje.org

15th Annual International Folk Alliance Conference

Nashville, TN, February 6-9, 2003
(301) 588-8185, FAX (301) 588-8186,
fa@folk.org,
www.folk.org

East Coast Music Awards

Halifax, NS, February 13-16, 2003
(506) 672-2002, FAX (506) 696-9061,
ecma@ecma.ca,
www.ecma.ca

Canadian Music Week 2003

Toronto, ON, February 27 to March 1, 2003
(905) 858-4747, FAX (905) 858-4848,
info@cmw.net,
www.cmw.net

South by Southwest (SXSW) 2003

Austin, TX, March 7-16, 2003
(512) 467-7979, FAX (512) 451-0754,
sxsw@sxsw.com,
www.sxsw.com

Cape Breton Drum Festival

Cape Breton, NS, April 26-27, 2003
(902) 727-2337,
bruce@cbdumfest.com,
www.cbdumfest.com

Violin 2003

Montréal, PQ, May 27 to June 6, 2003
(514) 845-7744, FAX (514) 845-8241,
info@jeunessesmusicales.com,
www.jeunessesmusicales.com



Downloading Illegal Music



Downloading music off the Internet is one of the most popular and controversial issues on the Internet today and probably will be for a long time. As technology improves, music is being downloaded and distributed over the Internet more quickly and efficiently than ever before. Most music downloaders do not realize the impact, effects and consequences of downloading illegal music from the Internet.

So what's legal and what's not legal? Well, most MP3 files found on the Web are legal, as they are posted by bands who want to get noticed, or by established artists promoting their material. What is *not* legal is unauthorized copies of music. This usually includes MP3s created from CDs that are posted online by people who have not obtained permission from the artist or record company to do so. Most music files downloaded and traded on Napster-type sites are illegal.

The main reason why people download music illegally is because it is available, fast and free. Some music downloaders believe that downloading illegal music off of Napster-type sites is not wrong and not stealing. A whole generation of music fans

has been trained to think music should be free, and this creates the problem.

Downloading MP3s and other illegal music formats affects the music industry drastically. Millions of dollars are lost as a result of illegal music downloading and copying. The amount of albums shipped to retail outlets decrease and artists and record companies lose revenue.

Quick Facts

- It is estimated by the RIAA that 3.6 billion songs are illegally downloaded each month. The RIAA estimates that \$4.5 billion (US) has been lost by the industry due to pirating. An estimated 60 million users were sharing 40 million songs illegally.

- The popularity of Napster led to a tidal wave of similar services. Some services have reached licensing agreements with record companies or restricted access so these music files can only be stored for personal use.

- A few solutions have been suggested to stop the downloading of illegal music, such as: shutting

down sites, applying royalty charges to MP3 players and also royalty charges on blank CD-Rs, CD-RWs, MiniDiscs and cassette tapes.

- Remember, from a CD you have purchased, you can create a copy of a CD or create MP3 files for your own *personal* use but you cannot give this copy to another person. If you give this copy away or sell it, you are in violation of copyright laws.

To learn more about protecting intellectual property rights of artists, the industry and more, visit the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) Web site at www.riaa.com.

Please consider the information above before you download illegal music off the Internet. Keep in mind that if you pirate music, you're basically stealing from artists' pockets, and you directly affect their ability to produce more of the music you like. Studio time isn't cheap...

Kelly Embleton is Computer Services Coordinator for Norris-Whitney Communications.



Resources

... **Vitaminic** helps you discover new music groups who have chosen to put their music out on the Internet in MP3 format. The Vitaminic directory is compiled in order of musical genre and it gives you some information about the band or artist together with some links so that you can listen to their music. If you're a musician, BackStage is the area reserved for those who produce music and wish to transmit it and sell it online. Visit Vitaminic at www.vitaminic.com.

... If your favourite search engine doesn't always yield the results you want, download **Copernic** at www.copernic.com. Copernic searches 20 searches and is available in a free version and two paid versions.

... **Pollstar** provides music business professionals with worldwide concert tour schedules, ticket sales results, music industry contact directories, trade news and unique specialized data services. In addition to publishing the concert industry's leading weekly trade publication, Pollstar also maintains the world's largest database of international concert tour information. Drop by this site at www.pollstar.com.

... The **Music Discovery Network (MDN)** is an organization dedicated to the advancement and success of independent music. Membership includes: music enthusiasts, artists, labels, media, stores, educators, promoters, venue operators, vendors and any other group or organization that would take an interest in supporting independent music. The site features sections such as what's new, music, resources, Web radio, venues and festivals and much more. Check out the MDN at www.musicdiscoveries.com.

... **Groove.ca** announced a new feature added to their site called the Public Mix section. DJs worldwide can now upload their own mixed set via FTP for all to listen to. This will give a lot of people the exposure they are looking for. Mix sets can be uploaded in the .RA (Real Audio) or .MP3 (Mpeg Layer 3) format only. Check out this new feature at www.groove.ca.

... Check out **Music Business Solutions** at www.mbsolutions.com/resource/ for thousands of music-related resources. The emphasis in the Musician's Resource Directory is on resources that

are most helpful to musicians who are trying to establish careers for themselves in areas such as: performing and recording artists, composers and songwriters, educators and music therapists and more.

... Visit the **Canadian Musician Web** site and check out the new Online News section. You will be able to find all the latest news about the industry, products, artists and more. You can also view the news archives and search the stories. Check this out at www.canadianmusician.com/news/pub/index.shtml.

... **Music Books Plus** has greatly expanded their catalogue and now features online over 5,000 books, videos and CD-ROMs on music, recording, audio, songwriting, MIDI, multimedia and the Internet. You can join the electronic newsletter or request a printed catalogue online at www.musicbooksplus.com.

Music Online is a regular department of CM, featuring news and highlights of music online including the Internet, the major online services and music related BBSs. If you have questions, comments, news, or suggestions, please e-mail them to kembleton@nor.com, FAX (905) 641-1648 or mail them to our St. Catharines office.

Serato Pitch 'n Time 2



Serato Pitch 'n Time 2 is a state-of-the-art time stretching and pitch shifting plug-in for Pro Tools endorsed by heavy hitters such as mastering legend Bob Ludwig. An AudioSuite-only plug-in (i.e. no real-time processing as an insert), Pitch 'n Time 2 is compatible with Pro Tools 4.0 and higher (including the new HD system) as well as Pro Tools Free.

With a street price of around \$900 Cdn., Pitch 'n Time is not what I would call a cheap AudioSuite plug-in. So, I am very interested to see how it performs against "free" applications that ship with Pro Tools (TC/E plug-in) and Logic Audio (Time and Pitch Machine).

Upon opening the manual, I was happily surprised at how clear and to the point it is. Serato provides plenty of get-you-up-and-running examples that make learning the software a breeze. The user interface is pretty intuitive and straightforward, so even without the manual you could probably figure things out.

The interface consists of three panels, labeled Tempo, Length and Pitch.

The Tempo Panel

Tempo adjustments are made completely independent of pitch, unlike Varispeed on a tape machine. In the Tempo panel you can choose between fixed, variable and "morph" modes of time stretching.

In Fixed mode, you can change the tempo of an entire selection by entering the desired BPM, percentage change or ratio. This is the mode you will probably end up using the most. Variable mode allows for variable tempo changes, such as ramping up the BPM of a 2-track mix a hair going into choruses. You enter tempo changes with a graphic interface similar to automation graphics in Pro Tools or Logic 5.

In Morph mode, you can make tempo adjustments to discrete parts of a selection. This allows you to alter the length of a single note, for example (a handy tool for fixing an otherwise perfect bass performance). With the graphic interface you just place markers on the waveform indicating the section you want to lengthen (or shorten) and insert a guide marker indicating where you would like the section to end after processing. This is an application of time stretching that hadn't occurred to me.

The Length Panel

In the length panel you are given the current length of a selection along with its start and end points. You can then enter the desired length or end point. This is handy if you need the audio to fit into a prescribed window of time, such as a 30-second radio spot.

The Pitch Panel

The pitch panel allows you to pitch shift audio up to 12 semi-tones without affecting the tempo. The pitch panel consists of a fixed mode for pitching an entire selection and a variable mode for pitch shifting sections of a selection. There is also a Varispeed mode that mimics the analog Varispeed of tape machines in which pitch and tempo are directly linked. You can create some interesting and/or drastic special effects with this feature.

Tests

1. Bumping up the mix.

First I start with a basic 3 BPM jump to the tempo of an 86 BPM song. In the real world, this is probably more than you would usually want to speed up a finished mix, but it isn't ridiculous either. Comparing the results to the unprocessed audio, I can't hear any artifacts or distortion in the Pitch 'n Time file. It sounds identical, only faster. Both Pro Tools TC/E and Logic Factory files sound reasonable, but on closer inspection, they have become a little thinner with traces of distortion setting in. I also notice degradation on cymbals and reverb trails.

To magnify the differences with a stress test, I then try a ridiculous bump up from the original 86 BPM to 120 BPM. Ouch. The Pitch 'n Time track actually sounds pretty good, all things considered. There is a bit of distortion but I am actually surprised how clean and full it sounds. The TC/E and Factory versions are unlistenable ... quite astoundingly distorted.

I then try the same experiments on less complex audio such as a solo vocal track and an acoustic guitar. The story is the same. The bigger the change the more Pitch 'n Time shines over the competition.

2. Loops.

Altering the tempo of drum loops is one of the most common uses for time compression software. However, I stopped using the Logic Time and Pitch Machine to change the tempo of loops a while ago because of the degradation in sound quality of the processed loops. Instead I have been using Soft Samplecell in Pro Tools and the EXS24 in Logic to pitch loops to the right tempo. However, the combination of Pitch 'n Time and the Digidesign Time Trimmer tool have changed all that. With no discernable degradation in sound quality, loops of almost any tempo can be instantly dropped into a song. All you need to do is assign Pitch 'n Time as the default time compression and expansion application in Pro Tools and "time trim" the loop to snap to the length of a bar. It's really simple and like I said, with Pitch 'n Time, the loops sound amazing.

3. Changing Pitch

I pitch up a solo vocal track from the key of C to E and it sounds ... well ... higher, sort of chipmunky. I try shifting a finished mix up a whole tone and the sound quality is identical to the unprocessed file. Honestly, I never really use file-based pitch shifting in production, but I am very impressed with the transparency of the Pitch 'n Time processing. I have a lot of fun with the Varispeed function, adding tape slow-down effects to the bridge of a song. Varispeed is an interesting creative tool.

Conclusions

Serato Pitch 'n Time 2 performs extremely well with almost no discernable distortion, artifacts or loss of fullness. Of course the more drastic the change, the more you are inclined to notice some small degradation. However, in comparison to the Pro Tools TC/E plug-in and the Logic Time Machine, PNT is a very, very beautiful thing. I only wish you could use it directly within native platforms such as Nuendo and Logic Audio (importing files into Pro Tools Free for processing is a pain for Native users). If you are Pro Tools user, Pitch 'n Time 2 integrates seamlessly into and delivers a lot in a very tidy little package. I seriously recommend this software. For more product information, contact: Serato Audio Research, Private Bag 34903, Birkenhead, Auckland, 1330 New Zealand. +64 (9) 480-2396. FAX +64 (9) 480-2397. www.serato.com.

Mark Makoway is a Juno-nominated producer, owner of Rumblecone Music and guitarist for Moist.

Manufacturer's Comments:

Although there is no VST version of Pitch 'n Time, because it is an AudioSuite plug-in it is still possible to use it directly within Logic if you are using Logic to drive Pro Tools hardware. There is a free 30-day demo on our Web site, www.serato.com. — AJ Bertenshaw, Serato Audio Research

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M300

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Burns Brian May Signature Guitar

In May 2002, Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" was named the most popular song of all time by the Guinness Book of World Records. At its release it had no precedent – unique for its symphonic arrangement and the fact that the 'string section' was played by a guitar! I became a fan of Queen and started playing after seeing them. Naturally, I tried to find out everything about Brian May and his guitar. I thought, foolishly, that I might get the sound I heard if I could use the same guitar. Unfortunately, Brian was not only original in the parts he played, the guitar he played was one of a kind.

Called "The Red Special", Brian and his father had built it and it came to be mythologized to ridiculous extremes – "I heard he used a knitting needle and motorcycle springs in the whammy bar!"

A couple of attempts were made to copy Brian's guitar, but they were either too expensive or not very good. With Brian's cooperation, Burns has made the definitive version of his guitar, the Brian May Signature Model.

First, some technical details: the guitar has a chambered, mahogany body, bound on both edges and a polished ebony fingerboard on a glued-in mahogany neck with a bi-directional truss rod. Grover auto locking tuners, a 610 mm scale, 24 medium frets and a zero fret finish the neck details. The pickups are Burns Tri-Sonics, wired in series, then routed through one master volume and one master tone. An on/off switch and an in phase/out of phase switch control each pickup, giving 21 possible combinations. Ruling out some duplication you end up with 16 tones, more than you've likely ever had before.

One concession made in manufacturing was the tremolo system; duplicating Brian's would have made the guitar prohibitively expensive and one of his objectives was that the guitar be affordable. The trem used on the BMS is a fulcrum, similar to a Strat. The bar on the other hand, is a different story. Although the trem isn't the same as the one Brian and his dad built, he insisted the same feel as his guitar. Remember this guitar was prototyped 22 times before getting the approval of its namesake (picky, picky!). The trem arm just didn't feel right to Brian. So while the engineers spent a day with their slide rulers, Brian's guitar tech, Pete Malandrone, bent the bar in a vise till it felt right. Sometimes science misses the point.

This brings us to the point that I got my hands on the guitar, which is always my favourite part! Taking the guitar out of its case, it's obvious that this is a very well made guitar. The finish is smooth and apart from one tiny bump on the heel of the neck, it's flawless. The fretwork is beautiful with

no roughness on the tangs and a nice profile on the medium sized frets. The neck is quite wide and the fingerboard has a compound radius that stays comfortable all the way up. On the guitar I received the nut measured 46 mm, the 12 fret 52.5 mm and the 24th came in at 56.5 mm. The polished ebony fingerboard is glassy smooth and feels great under your hand. The guitar is acoustically loud and sustains well on its own. Now for a little bit of trouble: The BMS ships with the string gauge that Brian uses, very light (0.009s). The product info that accompanies the guitar mentions the fact that this gauge set isn't to everyone's taste. Add to this the short scale length and non-locking, *floating* (bend up or down) trem, and that might explain why, for the first few hours of playing the guitar, I had particular difficulty keeping it in tune. This passed, and all was forgiven once I got to dig into the guitar's multiple personalities.

This will appeal mainly to Queen fans, (remember, without some fancy foot toys by Pete Cornish and half a dozen AC-30s you won't get *those* sounds). That being said, this is a 'top notch' guitar, capable of such a wide palette of tones it would be a shame to limit it to mimicking the sound of Queen. It excels in the single coil realm, able to get several convincing Strat and Tele tones. It even does a decent Gretsch! When you start to get the pickups out of phase with one another then things get *really* interesting. I think you'd be one happy session player with one of these at your disposal! When a producer asks for something 'different' you can give them more 'differents' than they'll know what to do with. This is also a great guitar for those who don't want to (or can't afford to) drag several guitars around for tonal versatility. This thing can do a good version of *so many* things it'd be a great main guitar for a gigging player. Next tune is funky R&B? No problem, the BMS can do that. Next up something heavy? The BMS has a monstrously thick tone with all of the pickups on and in phase.

In short this is a great version of the guitar made famous by one man making one band's music, but it would be just as happy to be anyone's Swiss Army guitar making whatever tones asked of it, in any situation you might find yourself in.

The manufacturer's suggest retail price is \$2,195 Cdn.

For more product information, contact: Audio Distributors International (ADI), 1275 Newton, #6, Boucherville, PQ J4B 5H2 (450) 449-8177, FAX (450) 449-8180, info@adi-online.net, www.adi-online.net.



Mike Turner is a Toronto-based musician, best known for his previous role as Our Lady Peace's guitarist.

Distributor's Comments:

The Brian May Signature Guitar is available in red and tobacco sunburst. Left-handed models are also available and at no extra charge.

— Richard Lashier, ADI

Evolution MK-249C

Well, there are a number of inexpensive keyboard controllers on the market, such as the Midiman Line (which includes the new Oxygen8), the Roland PC70 and PC300 etc. What makes the Evolution MK-249C different? Well, first, it's very well built. It feels good – sturdy. The component parts of the keyboard don't feel like a toy!

This controller allows you to have hands-on, real-time control over sound effects, software plug-ins and virtual instruments plus the advantage of USB. It has 49 full-size touch sensitive keys that really don't feel that bad at all for an inexpensive controller, at the Canad an Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price of \$335.

There are 12 assignable rotary controllers that all feel pretty tight to me. There's an assignable slider and modulation wheel making 14 assignable controllers in all. Now that in itself should have you thinking about your software interface and all the cool tweaking you can do!

There are also controller snapshots to transmit controller data to other devices. The keyboard is USB compatible and comes with a JSB cable plus PC and Mac drivers. The latest drivers can always be found on Evolution's Web site, www.evolution-uk.com. The keyboard has an instant data input system with 10 non-volatile memory banks with no battery requirement (so when you turn the keyboard off it doesn't blow out all the work you did programming the memory banks!). The Evolution also provides USB to MIDI interface and Standard MIDI Out connections. The keyboard also features a pitchbend wheel and a separate modulation wheel. That's the same with the volume slider. There is also a transpose function, octave shift, program, bank change and a 3-digit LED display.

Some of the software packaged with the controller includes

Sound Studio, the popular and powerful MIDI and audio sequencer with integrated digital audio recording and playback facilities. You can record and arrange music then record digital audio, such as vocal riffs, drum loops, and ambient background sounds over top. It also includes Music Teacher, which makes learning to play the keyboard easy and fun. It comes complete with a range of lessons to get you going. The teacher will show you the way giving you the option of learning notes, rhythm or both and showing your mistakes. Like any teacher the Evolution Music Teacher will give grades. You can even choose which teacher you want – from Mr. Easy through to Mr. Guru! MusicPlanet, designed for computer users, young and old, who would love to play and create music but have never known where to begin, is also included. MusicPlanet gives you a great start with hundreds of professionally recorded samples which can be played and mixed together to create an array of musical compositions, from a chart-topping pop hit to a classical piano masterpiece to a pre-school nursery rhyme. The composition can be recorded and saved away at the touch of a button, which means all those great ideas will never be lost. Dream Station demo, a virtual synth workstation. Music Match is a program that records and plays MP3s. B4 is a virtual instrument that emulates the classic B3 organ. A demo version of CubaseVST32 is in the package as well – an amazing sequencer.

Overall the Evolution Keyboard controller was very easy to install and place within my system, and easy to use as well. If you are looking for a very functional controller that gives you a lot of bang for your buck, check it out. I would also recommend that you keep a look out for some of the new

products coming down the pipeline from Evolution – especially products featuring affordable control surfaces with lots of dials and the 61-note keyboard version as well as the two-octave version!

For more information, contact: Thinkware, 109 Woodbine Downs Blvd., #12, Etobicoke, ON M9W 6Y1 (416) 798-4293, FAX (416) 798-1755, twarcnd@thinkwarecnd.com, www.thinkwarecnd.com.

Paul Lau is a Creative Music Digital Audio/MIDI Consultant. He is owner of SNC Christian Productions and SoundLab3. He is also a Software/Keyboard Consultant for Steve's Music and PC-Mega Computers, both in Toronto, ON. Paul is also a member of the band Scatter17. You can reach him by e-mail at docaudio@canada.com.

Distributor's Comments:

Evolution is one of the leading names in computer music. They produce the world's largest range of USB controller keyboards. Evolution's USB range includes two 49-note models, two 61-note models and a compact 25-note model. Total beginners can have a complete music studio on their computer; the equivalent home keyboard could cost four times the amount.

*Colin Meager,
Marketing Manager,
Evolution*

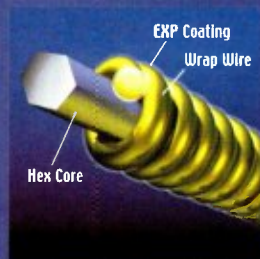


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walking bass lines

Getting a grip on how the bass line functions in songs will help you with your writing, arranging and choices for chord ideas down the road. But for now let's adventure into the approach of giving the illusion of two guitars playing at the same time by learning to play walking bass lines with chords.

This technique encourages one to become more aware of all the parts and how they work together. These studies over the next three issues will lead you to develop your ear, coordination, and your desire to improve the voice leading movement of your chord changes. Bass movement knowledge will be very helpful in your overall playing.

This area of study is very rewarding. Many of the great jazz guitarist masters like Lenny Breau and Joe Pass did this very well. Let's get started.

A stepwise motion is a smooth scale approach using a whole or a half-step movement. A skipwise motion is interval leaps using a distance of a third or more between the chords.

Ex. 1

Stepwise and stepwise motion. Bars 1 through 4 show stepwise motion. Bar 5 through 7 show skipwise motion.

I stress that the only real way to understand good bass line movement is to know the triads of chords and, when you see the series of chord changes that appear in a song sheet or fake book, you will see the chord name but think in your mind the notes that make up that chord. A simple example, for a C chord the notes are C-E-G; these are the 1st, 3rd and 5th degrees of the scale. Then, for a C7 chord, the notes are C-E-G-Bb;

(Bb is the minor 7th degree.) The A minor chord notes would be A-C-E and the Amin⁷ notes would be A-C-E-G. (G is the minor 7th degree.) It is very important to know your three-note triads and understand the function of the 3rd degree note and how it can make the chord a major sound or a minor sound. Also understand that the 7th degree can be a minor 7th or major 7th degree. If this is confusing, brush up on your music theory.

Now that we have discussed the triads, here are some examples of stepwise motion:

Ex. 2.a, Ex. 2.b, Ex. 2.c

In the next issue, we will discuss ascending or descending chromatic motion in a bass line with comping chords on top.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2a



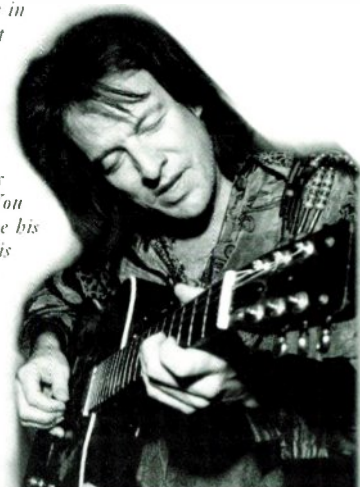
Ex. 2b



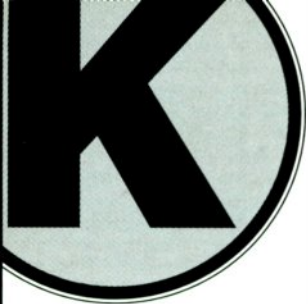
Ex. 2c



Rick Washbrook is a jazz guitarist, performer and teacher in Toronto, ON, whose latest CD is a Lenny Breau tribute album - A Gypsy's Bed. Washbrook is also the author of seven Guitar Instruction videos entitled The Intuitive Lenny Breau For The Advanced Guitarist. You can hear Washbrook and see his instruction video content on his Web site at www.washbrook.com.



by Rick Washbrook



buying synthesizer

In response to phone calls and e-mails I've had from other musicians in the community I've put together a short guide to help you when you buy your next synthesizer.

I must begin with the bad news that it's going to take you weeks, not hours, to get up and running. Yes it is amazing technology and yes it claims to make you a star overnight. But if you've bought that new synthesizer on the belief that you'll be making music with an instant orchestra within a few hours, then sit down and have a good cry now. As wonderful as this technology is, there are very few brochures or salespeople that have the guts to tell you that it's going to take some time to get it right!

Think about how many years it takes to master an acoustic instrument. A synthesizer studio is a group of instruments, each one with a whole new set of freedoms and restrictions. The freedom is that any instrument is capable of hundreds of unique and exciting sounds. The restriction is that the technical and sonic structure of each synthesizer has nothing in common with another one. You'll have to learn each synthesizer in your studio, one at a time before you can take it into battle on your next project. If this were a live player that you'd never heard of, would you trust him or her with a solo at your

next recording date without even an audition? Same thing.

And yes you should read the manual, no matter how badly it's written. It's your only clue to what the manufacturers were thinking when they built the thing. When you open the box, take the manual out first and read through it somewhere else, ideally over a weekend. Then when you come back, you'll have a peripheral idea of its workings as well as a general idea of where to find something in the manual.

In getting to know your new instrument you have to start with its existing sounds. A major fallacy is the instrument's display that tells you what sound you are playing. Unlike looking at a real player who holds an oboe in his hands, the synth patch display that says "oboe" is no guarantee that you're going to hear a convincing simulation. Synth technology is a combination of waveforms or digital data programmed by technicians and while some are amazing, some are downright awful. One might dial up "English horn" or even "bagpipe" and come up with an oboe sound that actually sounds more convincing.

So, ignore the display and use your ear. Go through your new synthesizer patch by patch and make note of the sounds that truly inspire you. Play with each sound for a long time (have your MIDI sequencer running to capture that musical idea too) and try the sound in different registers and different dynamics. Also decide where it would be placed in an ensemble situation. Is it a distant sound, akin to muted strings? Or a small but pointed solo sound that would perform the same function of a

flute double for violins? Any ensemble skills you have, whether orchestrating or playing in a band are valuable here. Thinking in terms of layers now will help you blend these instruments later.

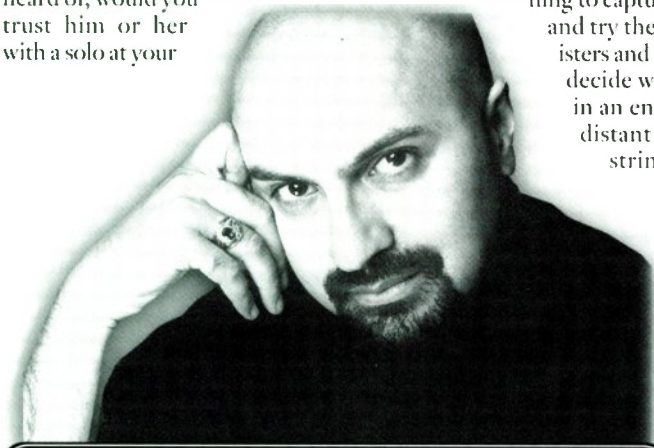
Now rename your sound. Give it a practical name that relates to its timbre, eg. "metallic piano" or "breathy flute". Patch names like "DemonGod" or "Angela's Pad" serve no useful purpose and you should rename these patches to something more useful. If your synthesizer has ROM presets only (non-rewritable memory) then you won't be able to rewrite the patches. In this case use a notepad or a database to log your favourite sounds and their memory location.

This auditioning exercise is crucial because it allows you to get to know the personality of the instrument, and help you instinctively write for it. This also allows you to give the instrument your own unique trademark since you've chosen the sounds that appeal to you. Just as in acoustic writing, it's not the sound, but how you blend that sound with others, that will make or break a good arrangement. In time you'll start editing patch parameters and actually change and create new sounds.

After the above exercise you can then consider taking your new synth into battle with the rest of your toys and tricks on your next gig. Don't do it before. How many times have we had a friend call us over to "Check this out," only to be greeted with malfunctions and "That's funny, it never did that before ... Oh I know ... nope that's not it ... just give me a minute..."

Time is precious. Use it and your new gear well.

Composer Amin Bhatia has maintained a love/hate relationship with synthesizers for 20 years. He no longer has hair. Recent scores include the IMAX film "Goldfever" and TV series Power Play and John Woo's Once A Thief.



by Amin Bhatia

stand out

B

bass

I have to share with you something I've noticed that is sad, but true. Musically, the general public expects very little from us bass players. I know some of you are rejoicing but most of you hate this fact as much as I do. That is why I've always used it to my advantage.

When I was growing up I could never figure out, that whenever a round of solos were taking place, why did everyone but the drummer stop playing or get really quiet whenever I had to solo? I always thought that if I'm keeping the energy up to back their solos, they should keep the energy up to back mine. After time, I realized that if the musicians I'm playing with aren't in my regular band where I can tell them what I want when I solo, then I have to live with it. Think about it ... When a keyboardist solos, he is able to comp the chords in his left hand while blistering a 100-mile-an-hour lead line on his right hand. The guitar player hits a switch and his instrument goes into a distortion that makes anything he does sound great. The drummer, as long as he can keep a beat, has the first instrument ever created to his advantage. When we step up, everyone else shuts off so the audience can hear every little thing you do ... and if you haven't got much to say, unfortunately you say it loud and clear.

I feel that if the band is going to shut off when I solo, great, because they would probably just get in my way anyway. Here are a couple of things you must learn to make sure when it's your turn to solo you *Stand Out*.

1. Learn to solo like a lead instrument. Why? Because no one expects it. This is not easy to do and it will take you years before you get a handle on it, but when you do, trust me, it's a great feeling to actually make your bass sing the blues over a blues line.

2. Learn to comp. Why? Because no one expects it. What I mean by comp is learn to play the chords that dictate those great solo lines. That's what the keyboard player just did for his solo – try to out do him. And

finally, the most dangerous trick in the book...

3. Stop the band and unleash your thumb. Why? Because no one expects it including the musicians on stage.

I actually got to the point where I didn't want the band to play at all. I would stop the band and just have the audience clap on the 2s and 4s of the beat. Think about it ... if I'm going to take a solo where I know I'm gonna eventually work my way up from a funky thump groove into a blistering display of 16th note triplets that would make Victor Wooten proud, why would I have a drummer step all over me? This works great if you can pull it off because you actually get the audience involved. They become a part of your solo.

Start slow and funky and do not play the same bass line to the song – alter it or come up with something fresh. Believe it or not, less is more at this point. Pull your thumb out of the holster and slowly start into a slight flurry of notes. Make sure that after you've done your run or lick that you get back to being slow and funky to make sure they, the band, knows that you know what you're doing. Double up the speed and intensity to the point where you only have about four bars left for overdrive. Go for the kill, cue the drummer for the last four bars that you've saved for your ego filled 16th note triplet, hammer-ons, double thumping and whatever you can throw in the solo. The big finish comes when you hit the fourth bar of overdrive, the audience is going wild, your hand is about to fall off, you then cue the rest of the band to hit the chorus of the song, and once again you come off looking like the man.

Please don't try this at home. Remember, in front of an audience is the only way to truly *Stand Out*. Until next time, mad love to all my bottom dwellers.

Orin Isaacs is the Bassist/Musical Director of Open Mike with Mike Bullard which can be seen nightly on the Comedy Network and CTV. Check out his album entitled Where I'm From in stores and online.



Roy Timm

by Orin Isaacs

P

percussion

being human

When was the last time you sat down and just listened to your drums? Each drum and cymbal in your setup has a unique sound and that sound is altered by your unique way extracting its uniqueness. That's a lot of unique.

The sample world has, in the past, tried to emulate the personal sound of instruments but never really got there. Not because they used the wrong microphones or the wrong instruments or even the wrong people to play the instruments they sampled. It didn't work out primarily because they didn't have you.

Or to put it another way, they could have had you come in and play the instrument they wanted to sample because they wanted to capture your unique way of sound extraction. All they would have recorded was the way you played that day. You're human. You're affected by your surroundings and by the uniqueness of the instrument you play and the people you're playing with.

I've noticed, at least for myself, that the tone of my drums and cymbals in combination with the room I'm in will really have an effect on the type of groove and tempo I'll play. For example, next time you're sitting at a piano (a real one) just play a note. Any note. Take a minute to feel the sound of the room you're in and how the piano resonates. Some brilliant tech people have gone to great lengths to sample pianos and to their credit, they've done a fine job but nothing compares to how you would play that same piano from moment to moment. The same goes for drums and cymbals.

Sample CDs and electronic drums have come leaps and bounds but the attitude these days is more in trying to give the drummer sounds he/she can apply their "unique" personality more than try and replace their acoustic instrument. Which brings me back to being human.

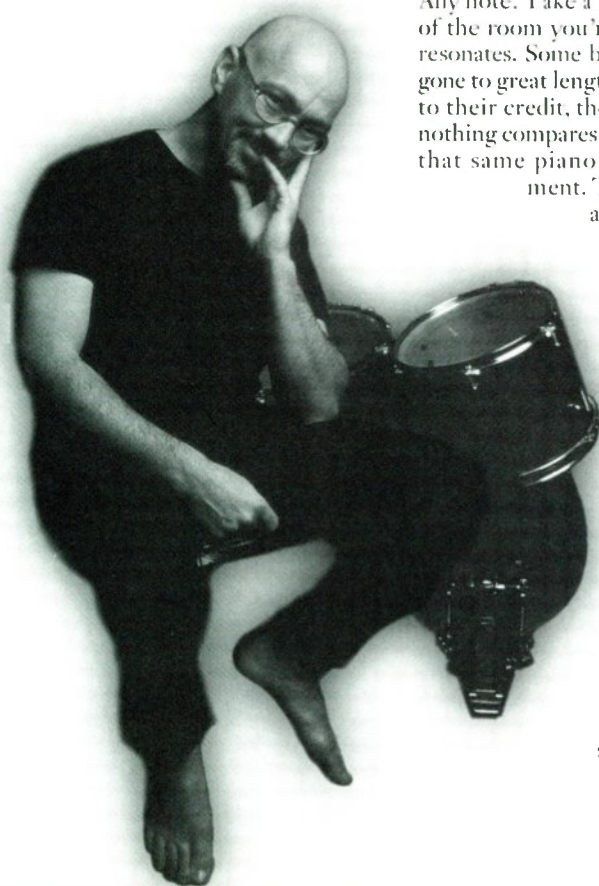
Take a moment to revel in being who you are. Listen to your instrument and take note in

how you are affected by its tone or lack of it. Play a groove for a while, say 10 minutes. Once you're done pick up a metronome and clock the tempo you were playing at. If you're the type of drummer who has a lot of drop in your toms, tune them up so they stay wide open, ring forever. Find a groove and lock in for 10 minutes. Clock it. Chances are the tempo will be quite different OR you will have found a groove which works with your natural body clock but fits the new tones from the kit. Also notice how your approach to the kit changes in how aggressive, or not, you become. Believe it or not, being aware of how these kinds of things affect you and in turn how you affect them is a great way of finding out who you are, musically, and that's the thing that can't be sampled but only recorded and even then, what will be recorded is whatever you are that day. A couple of excellent recordings in this regard are *Four and More*, (Miles Davis) with Tony Williams and *80/81*, (Pat Metheny) with Jack DeJohnette.

It may sound as though I'm a purist, but I'm not. I use technology all the time. As a matter of fact, *As Trees Walking*, my first solo record is 70 per cent tech and 30 per cent "real", but throughout the record, who and what I am is very clear. I think it's worth the time to discover who we are.



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



by Mitch Dorge

functioning physically

Contexts

Introduction

This article is dedicated primarily to those who play flute in non-classical contexts. However, it is likely to be of relevance to most wind players. So, whenever you see the word, "instrument", feel free to substitute your own horn because what I have to say about the flute may well apply to your own instrument!

This article serves primarily (though not exclusively) the interests of (1) doublers and (2) flutists in the classical tradition who wish to produce more convincing results when playing in non-classical situations. It examines the issue from a physical perspective – so I will not be discussing idiomatic details (i.e., time, rhythmic and melodic approaches) in relation to any particular bag or groove. Nevertheless, because the approach I'm taking is essentially physical, what I have to say is relevant in any non-classical playing situation – whether it's jazz, rock, pop, Cuban, Brazilian, flamenco, funk, etc.

Acoustics

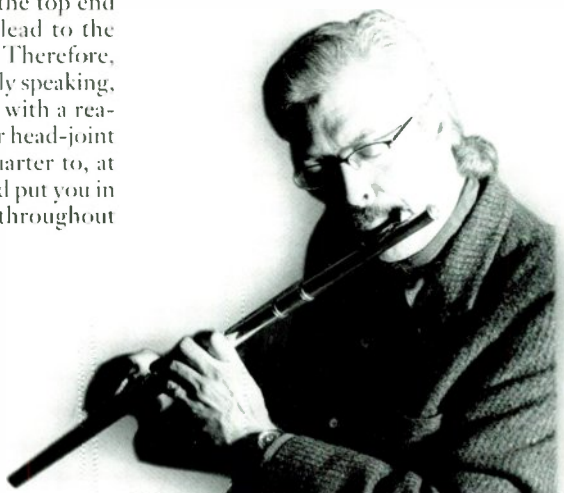
The flute is an inherently soft instrument ... that's just the way it is. Also, in non-classical performance situations, because of the presence of bass and drums, the playing contexts are often very loud. Unfortunately, that's just the way it is. So you not only have to learn to reconcile yourself to these acoustical facts but also (and more importantly) you have to learn to cope with them.

These acoustical realities are not entirely beyond challenging – at least in part. To illustrate, there is little doubt that the top end of the instrument is naturally much louder and more penetrating than the bottom end. So why not simply make use of this acoustical fact? I often hear flute players

trying to minimize, if not remove, what they perceive to be a shrill edge from the top end of the instrument (I suppose in an effort to achieve what they presume to be a much "nicer" tone). Well, from the standpoint of the general volume level, this is hardly necessary because, more often than not, the playing context is very loud anyway. My approach to the top end of the instrument has always been very simple – I just "blast away!" – because this always works! And by taking this approach, I am not struggling with what is a very natural acoustical tendency of the instrument. I guarantee you that, if you do the same, eventually, you will get a good result provided that you keep your pitch under control – and in order to do that, you must blow down and/or pull your head-joint out.

On the other hand, the bottom end of the instrument poses precisely the opposite problem. It is soft and does not penetrate well. Therefore, my approach to the bottom end is, in the interest of balancing the overall intensity of the instrument, to make the bottom end as loud as I can! Admittedly, this is not as easy as dealing with the top end – but it can be done – broadly speaking, by blowing down. However, blowing down (in conjunction with pulling out your head-joint in order to rectify the pitch at the top end of the instrument) will likely lead to the pitch being flat at the bottom. Therefore, you must compromise. Generally speaking, if you have a good instrument, with a reasonably good scale, pulling your head-joint out about the thickness of a quarter to, at most, a quarter of an inch should put you in tune with the rest of the band throughout most of the range.

Bill McBirnie has been voted Flutist of the Year by the Jazz Report. His flute work is featured on the album, Desvio, catalogued under the project name, EXTREME FLUTE. It is available at major retailers and through the distributor, Indie Pool.



by Bill McBirnie

B

brass

the cheeseburger

Popeye's Chord

A hamburger has three components: bun, meat, and bun. Similarly, a triad has three notes: 1, 3 and 5. The most important part of the hamburger is the meat; it is the component that identifies it as a hamburger. The 3rd is the 'meat' of the chord. It contains the essence of the chord sound and is the most important note in the chord. Compared to the meat, the bun is rather boring. Compared to the 3rd, the root and 5th are kind of boring. When you eat a hamburger, you would ideally get a bite of meat in every bite. When you improvise, you will incorporate the 3rd of most chords.

This Analogy Is Getting Cheesy

Now add the cheese to the sandwich. Voila! A cheeseburger. It is still a hamburger, but the cheese adds an additional element which enhances the flavour of the ordinary hamburger. The 7th is the 'cheese' of the seventh chord. It adds zest. Just as you might have Swiss or cheddar cheese on your burger, you might have a major 7 or a b7 on your chord.

If I hand you a hamburger patty with cheese (but no bun) you can still identify it as a cheeseburger. If you know the 3rd and 7th, you can generally identify the chord. They are the most important notes of the chord, and the 3rd is the more important of the two.

Expand The Menu

We could change the hamburger to ham. Now it is a ham and cheese sandwich. This might be a minor seventh chord. Change the ham to tomato and you've got a diminished chord. And so on. Choose your own sandwich analogy. Vegetarians might prefer to think of the 3rd as a Portobello mushroom.

Would You Like Fries With That?

What did the trombone player say on his last gig? Ummm, never mind. Back to our lunch... Now you come to the condiments (extensions). The natural extensions (9, 11, 13) might equate to butter, mayonnaise etc. These are items which enhance the flavour of the sandwich, but don't necessarily have

particularly strong tastes themselves. The altered extensions (b9, #9, #11, b13) might be more along the lines of hot peppers or fried onions. These are foods that have strong flavours, and taste better when added to the sandwich than they do alone. Onions on a bun is not a popular sandwich. The root and b9 sound better when the 3rd and 7th are included. I have no guidelines as to which condiment equates to which extension, that's up to you. I leave it your way.

Cheeseburger Basics

Meat:	3 rd
Cheese:	7 th
Buns:	root / 5 th
Condiments:	extensions / altered extensions

So how do you use all this gastronomic information? If you come across a G7 (b9 b5) chord and haven't quite mastered (or even heard of) a diminished/whole-tone scale, remember this: It's a cheeseburger ... play a B (the 3rd), and see where that takes you.

Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto. He is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T and is a Yamaha performing artist/clinician. Jazz Tactics is the third book by Chase Sanborn. A wide range of products and information can be found on his Web site, www.chasesanborn.com.



by Chase Sanborn

audio workstation

The All-In-One Wonder

In this instalment of the digital column, I will try to simplify/explain and uncover the complex world of digital audio workstations. Recently, I was on *ROBTV – The Bottom Line* with Michael Vaughan, where I was able to show some new technology as it pertained to musical gear. It was quite enjoyable while generating a lot of interest, especially with some of the technology that was shown.

Some of the toys I brought along were the Roland D2, MC-505 and Korg Triton. Within minutes I had the host playing along and groovin' on these "DAWs". There are many types and sizes of a DAW, and to me, what defines a DAW isn't how many features it has, but what it can do. For example, I used to have a PPCWave and it was a one-of-a-kind keyboard but at the time of its creation it also had a 1,000-note sequencer built on board with a sync connection for my drum-ulator. I could do eight-part note sequencing and have it sync to a drum machine – very cool at the time. It also had the capability to be connected to external modular voice units and a sampler called a wavetern with monitor. Expandability and connectivity are essential to DAWs. Most of you readers are probably familiar with the Akai 2000MPC sequencer/sampler, a widely used DAW for creating the groove tunes/loops by almost everyone. Recently I got to see the new Akai4000 and it comes with a 60 GB hard drive (that's just crazy) and a monitor hook-up. It contains a fully featured Z-series sampler with 24-bit/96 kHz sampling capabilities, using Akai's custom JS-LSI chip. The interface has two slider controls, two knobs and various extra switches all custom assignable. The pads are now switchable between six banks instead of the four with previous MPCs. It also has 64 voices with 272 MB as standard RAM (upgradeable to 512 using standard DIMMS) and also a built-in CD-R. There are also two USB ports allowing CPU connection and keyboard or floppy drive and MIDI etc. Do you even need anything else?

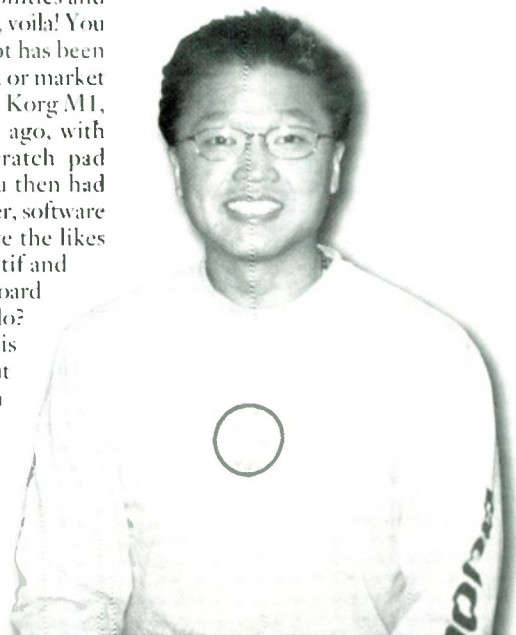
(Now that's a workstation!) Integration of a DAW into a recording studio situation is crucial and most all DAWs make the connection via computer connector, USB or MIDI very easily.

What I am trying to explain is that even a simple drum machine has evolved from drum sounds with a pattern sequencer to a sampling control unit with or without incorporated sounds. Here is a flip side of DAWs: Roland/BOSS and Zoom have come out with digital recorders that have included percussion and bass sounds, and on the Zoom recorder, there are pads that are playable like that of a drum machine! Is that a DAW? Now on the flip side of that recently I reviewed a Roland VS-2480 digital recorder that has everything in it except for stock sounds – is that a DAW? Do I have you confused yet? I'm confused!

Okay, let's go back a step, I feel that drum machines were the beginnings of the first DAW, but then when you have the incorporation of serious note sequencing, digital audio recording, sampling capabilities and stock sounds that can be triggered, voila! You have the present day DAW! A lot has been attributed to the keyboard world or market where you find products like the Korg M1, which came out about 10 years ago, with great sounds and a neat-o scratch pad sequencer – what a teaser! (You then had to go out and purchase a computer, software and an interface). Now you have the likes of Korg's Triton, Yamaha's Motif and Roland's Phantom that are all keyboard workstations. What won't they do? Now don't be confused by all this positive hype I am spouting about DAWs, they have their place in the arsenal of recording and performance tools. It's great to use a DAW "alone" whether it is a simple drum machine or a full blown all-in-one, but it is the importance of integration with other musical colours on your palette that makes for

interesting music. DAWs are the all-in-one wonders and have given both novice and professional musicians a tool that can really enhance and assist in the creation of music! Guess what's comin' around the corner?

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by Paul Lau



your voice

muscle

What kind of warm-up exercises do you do?

I never prepare to write, I always just write or don't write, but before performing live I do some silly things with my lips and to warm up my throat I make all the strange noises. I also stretch because if I play for an hour and a half, and I'm really playing hard with a band, it's really painful after, so I stretch all my fingers and my arms. We have to put all our hands together and say 'Whoa Band!' – it's key!

Silly things with your lips and strange noises? I'm almost afraid to ask.

I do a little bit of scales and I do sliding scales, [insert your own chromatic scale here], and [insert chromatic scale mingled with your light helicopter-esque sound] scales like that with your lips and scales with your tongue hanging out, that's really good because it keeps your larynx low. [Try it. It works.]

[...through laughter] Where did you learn how to sing?

I learned to sing by singing often – that's all. I sing in the shower all the time, and I sang with my favourite records and stuff. It's just like your voice is a muscle, there are muscles in there and they just get stronger over time. You can sort of hone it, and perfect the little movements that you have to make so it doesn't hurt you or you have more stamina. I think it just takes time and singing a lot.

Did you ever take singing lessons?

[A very coy] Nope.

Do you have a particular writing process for your vocal lines, or songs in general? Do you start with lyrics or a piano line?

Sometimes it's one, sometimes it's the other. I don't really pay attention to how I write. Everybody's dying to know how people write songs and I don't even know, I let it happen – if I look at it too hard I'll solve my own mystery. It's a mish-mash. Usually I'm walking at 2 a.m. and something will

come into my head from the ether. There's a thing about harmony, like having a sense of the chord, but not hearing it that I totally find useful and I've used it throughout my musical training and career. You can mentally picture or mentally hear chords. So, I'll be walking and I'll have this little tune in my head and then I go, 'Oh, okay pay attention to those chords you're hearing,' so I listen to them in my head and I remember that's one, that's four, that's five or minus three goes here. Then I get home and I twiddle it out on the piano and I'm like 'ooh, that's pretty good.' It's this weird sort of abstract mental thing if you can picture a chord, and I find that completely helpful.

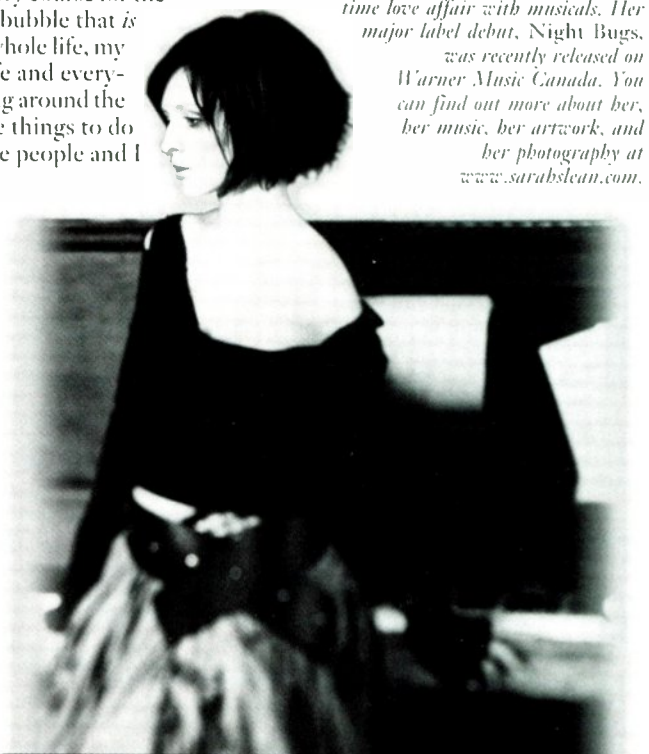
It was printed somewhere that you went back to university, not for music, but for writing. Did you want to sharpen your story-telling abilities?

I actually took a short story course for the reason to get out of the bubble that is the music industry. My whole life, my friends and my social life and everything was sort of revolving around the same clubs and the same things to do every night and the same people and I was losing my mind. So I said, 'I need to know there's another reality!' So I enrolled in this course, because I've always liked school too – I'm a big nerd loser. The more books the better. I just took it to sort of see other faces and see different lifestyles going on; people walking around campus in jogging pants and binders, it was like, 'Wow! Cool! People living differently.' It was good – it's like mental spring cleaning. You have to rub clean your eyes all the time.

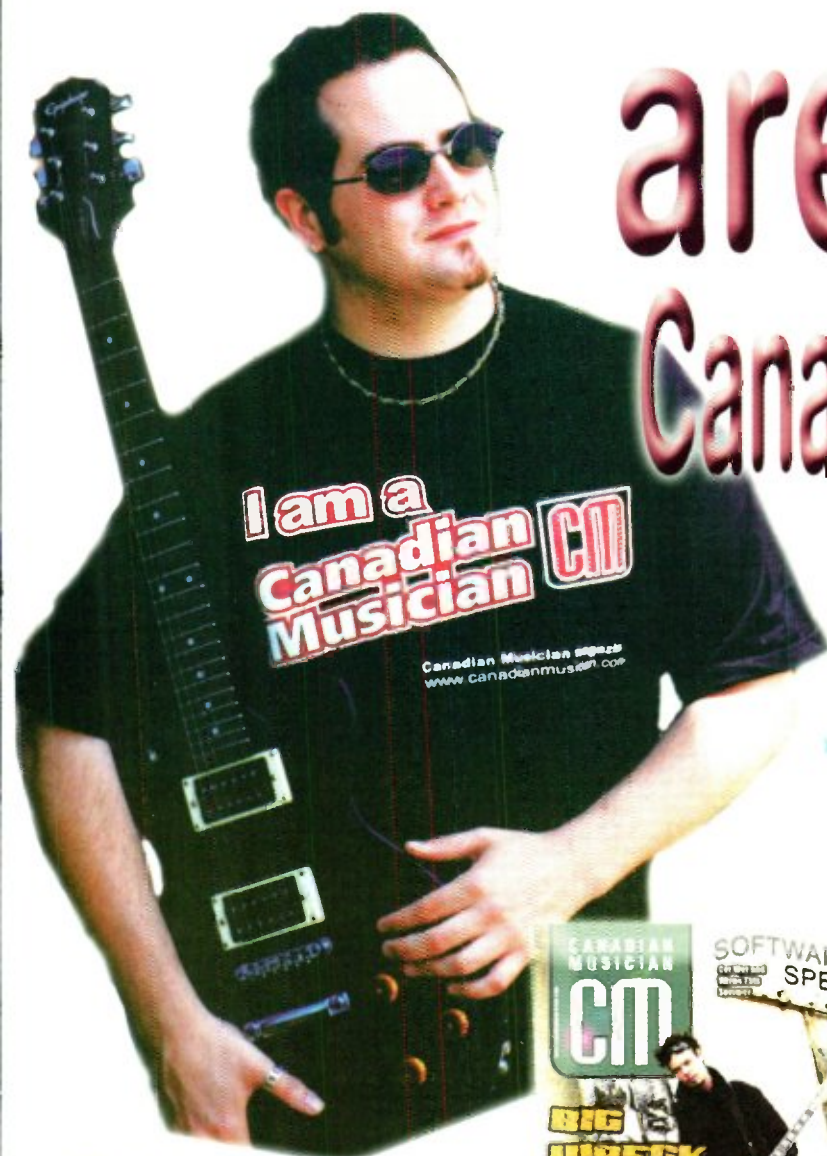
Artistically, you work in various other mediums, painting, drawing, photography, what attracted you to these forms of expression?

I'm always watching. I feel like that's my job – to watch – that's what I do for a living. I get to express that in so many different ways. There are so many things you can do in one day, or with your life, I just want to try them all and normally I want them to have something to do with sound or colour, I don't know why, that's just my particular idiosyncrasy. I've always loved visual arts. I had a really influential teacher in high school who really pushed me and challenged me, so maybe that's why.

Whether her music is popping up on the hit show Dawson's Creek, or appearing in the blockbuster movie, Joyride, Sarah Slean is Canada's newest piano pixie skilled at crafting richly textured songs that reflect her long-time love affair with musicals. Her major label debut, Night Bugs, was recently released on Warner Music Canada. You can find out more about her, her music, her artwork, and her photography at www.sarahslean.com.



with Sarah Slean



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Photos by Bernard Clark



Tragically HIP

by Rod Christie

Wayne Gretzky, Cirque du Soleil, SCTV and The Tragically Hip: Which one doesn't belong? If you asked any of the guys in The Hip about their recent induction into the Canadian Walk of Fame, the answer would be *themselves*. A legion of dedicated Hip fans would no doubt disagree, and The Hip's newest album, *In Violet Light*, sits atop a body of work that rivals any great Canadian artist. Call them "The Group of Five".

"Does that mean it's over?" asks Hip drummer Johnny Fay, half-joking. The general sentiment expressed amongst Fay and band-mates Gord Sinclair (bass), Robby Baker (guitar) and Paul Langlois (guitar) is one of stunned disbelief. The band calls in one-by-one from Kingston, minus singer Gordon Downie (who faxed in a few comments on each of the new tracks), to talk about the recording of the new album, which hit stores June 11.

In Violet Light is an affirmation of the group's egalitarian spirit, the strength of Downie's lyrics bolstered by twined guitars and dynamic grooves – a hallmark of the band. The record was created in three stages: The first two consisted of recording and mixing at Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas with Hugh Padgham (The Police, Phil Collins) producing and Terry Manning (Led Zeppelin, Lenny Kravitz) engineering. The final two songs ("Silver Jet" and album opener "Are You Ready") were recorded at the band's own Bathhouse Studios in Bath, Ontario with long-time associate Mark Vreeken. The finished product is a result of both meticulous hard work and happy circumstance.

The catalyst for the album was Hugh Padgham and his sudden availability near the end of writing for the record. "Hugh's got an incredible CV," says Sinclair. "We had toyed with the idea of producing ourselves again, but it became clear early in

the writing process that we needed to have some objectivity. It was Johnny that was a huge Padgham fan, but stuff like XTC and The Police were influential to all of us."

"I had to go to summer school because of Hugh," laughs Fay. "When *Synchronicity* came out I ditched my exams so that I could be the first person in Kingston to own it. He's got such a great ear, and it just blew my mind working with him. Plus, he gave me the Stuart Copeland sound on one track."

Recording in the Bahamas provided a new perspective for the band, not only in handing the creative decisions over to an outside influence, but also through the isolation afforded them on the island itself. Let's not forget that a few weeks of beach, sea and sun never hurt anyone.

"It's still a little mind boggling that we got to work with these guys," offers Sinclair. "From our perspective, it made the job easier. If you are working with Hugh or Terry, you just defer. I was actually looking forward to handing it over. It was luxurious to be in a position to bring what you've got, play your hardest and wait to be told. Terry's engineered *Led Zeppelin III*, I'm not going to tell him where to put a microphone!"

The recording at Compass Point was divided into two parts, five weeks before Christmas 2001 for recording, and another five in the New Year for final overdubs and mixing. "At first, it was intense 10-hour days," says Baker of the experience. "After that, the final weeks were a very different pace. I would get up at my leisure, have breakfast by the pool, take a walk and then slip in to see [what the others were doing]. We all popped in and out every hour or two, but just like production, you hire the best people that you can and let them do their thing." The album was mixed

by Padgham and Manning, literally hours after the last overdub was completed.

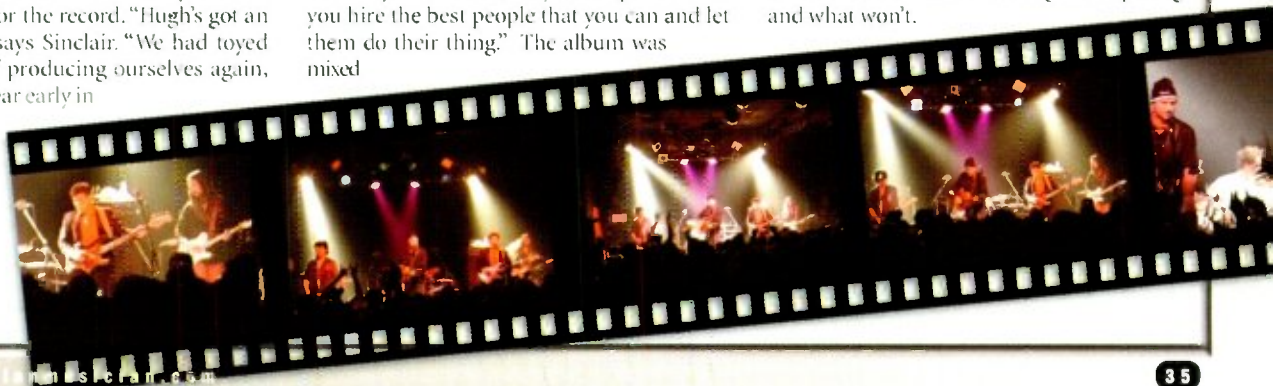
"We had done the last three records in our own studio, and they were all a great experience," says Langlois. "This time we felt that it had been a while since we isolated ourselves from anybody that didn't have anything to do with the record. It felt like the right thing to do, and everyone was positive down there."

Bed tracks were done live off the floor, an arrangement designed to augment the band's natural strengths, and the preferred approach of Padgham. "He likes bands to be in one room, and he's very finicky about how it sounds," says Fay. "He was telling me not to hit the cymbals too hard, or to tape them up. His big thing is balance, provided the arrangement and the performance is there."

"Every song is basically the four of us playing in one room, with as much isolation as possible, and Gord would be sitting in the control room," says Baker. "We would usually keep that working vocal, but obviously try to get a better one. We'd try different pitches, lines or slightly different approaches, and it ended up with each song having upwards of seven takes, and Gord would sort through them and go for the most complete take."

Writing for the album took place in June 2001, and the sessions followed closely with the established Hip ethic: Each member brings several contributions to the table, and the band literally sits in a circle and presents their ideas until everyone has had their say. After 18 years of writing, recording and performing, these jam sessions take on a more stripped down, subliminal feel, as each member is aware of what will make a great Hip song and what won't.

The Hip performs at a recent show at Lee's Palace in Toronto, Ontario.



THE Tragically HIP



"You just throw the idea out there and see how the guys respond to it," explains Sinclair. "Some ideas take off instantly, some are laboured and some never really get anywhere. The big factor is Gord's initial response and what he layers on lyrically and melodically. As a songwriter, I don't spend an awful lot of time trying to finish an idea on my own, because I know when a song is 'Hip Appropriate', one that someone can feed off of and take in a better direction than I could on my own."

Referring to the opener "Are You Ready", Downie writes; "This literally came to me in a dream ... I woke up in the middle of the night in the Bahamas singing that exact melody. There was no tune for it until about a month or so later when Paul started playing what you hear today. I've always read about that 'waking up in the middle of the night and scrambling for a pen' bit happening to people but, until then, it had never happened to me."

"We pay tons of attention to the lyrics Gord has written," states Sinclair, who in the early days contributed to the lyrical development. "Gord has written all of the lyrics since *Fully Completely*, and he is a disciplined and meticulous writer. He works really hard, constantly refining and trying to make the lyrics perfect for him. He's really prolific and always bounces ideas off of us, so there is no shortage of options."

"Some songs require me to figure out what I am going to do before we go into the studio," says Baker. "The way we were recording this time was a very song-oriented process. Hugh doesn't like to hear guitar solos per se. Unless you are Clapton, he doesn't want to hear you winding out for several choruses. Basically, all the parts had to serve the song, so it was a matter of stripping back. It's largely a matter of the type of song we are writing now, it's become a less is more approach. I still get plenty of opportunities to wind it out now, but it seems like I'm only indulging myself."

For a band that has been tight since day one, with no membership changes, The Hip dynamic is understandably solid. Each musician is

still finding new ways to use their instrument, and still managing to be impressed with the others contributions. "Any of us can teach a course in group dynamics," says Langlois. "I don't think anyone stops learning how to do that better. The goals or aspirations we set for ourselves have all morphed a bit, but fortunately the intentions have all remained the same, that is, to be a great band."

"We've scaled things back now, because we all have families," says Sinclair. "We're being more humane with the way we approach things. The music is still huge. It's part of being in the band that keeps it fresh every night. The short answer is that it's a lot of fun to get up and play with these guys. Because of the nature of the songwriting, or again because we've been together so long, we're not really pinned down to playing a specific song in a specific way, nor are we even tied to playing the same set from night to night. As a songwriter, I like to think that you get better and better over the years."

"You have to push it, you can't keep running over the same old ground," adds Baker. "I always know when I walk off stage whether or not I played to the edge of my ability. I always try to push, to surprise myself onstage. I'm constantly surprised by what the other guys are doing. Plus, there is the rush of getting up onstage and playing for people, and all these songs are new, so you never really know what is going to fly."

On top of working with a pair of world-class studio professionals, The Hip also got the run of the house with Manning's extensive guitar collection. To hear them talk about it is like listening to a bit of rock history. Baker got to try Bob Marley's Martin acoustic, which he says was so warped it was unplayable past the third fret.

"Terry takes great care of these instruments," he says, "so it can't have gone downhill that rapidly. I don't know how Marley did it. Robert Johnson's guitar was there - I held it, which was a treat. The strings were about an inch off the neck, and it was a dobro, with a round neck. It was quite a slice to see it and know the history."

On the record, he used some of his own guitars, a Tele, a Strat and a PRS, but also took full advantage of Manning's guitar library. "He's got a couple of '56 Teles, one belonged to Eric Clapton and one to Jimmy Page, and we relied on them pretty heavily. When they were plugged in they had this growl to them that you don't get with today's instruments. I'm not a vintage snob, I'm a utilitarian when it comes to guitars, they're just tools, but there was something special about those guitars. I used a guitar of Duane Eddy's on a couple of tracks."

"When we were recording beds, I chugged along on rhythm with an acoustic, because we never really know how the vocal will appear in the end," he continues. "I used a Gibson J160, the John Lennon model. It was a great guitar that had an annoying buzz. When we reconvened after Christmas, I had received a couple of guitars from Garrison, a company



out of Newfoundland. I took the guitar down and it was amazing, I redid all the acoustic parts." In addition to these guitars, Baker used his own Mesa Boogie and Tremoverb amps, as well as one he called a Bernie, a small amp made in Hamilton out of an old film projector. For many of the acoustic beds, Baker plugged his guitar into an amp, set just before the feedback point, what he describes as the old Keith Richards sound.

Langlois set up for recording is even more utilitarian than that of his fellow guitar slinger. "I used the same gear that I take out on the road," he says. "These are the guitars I feel most comfortable with. Before we went down, I pretty much knew which ones were going to go on each song, what sound I was looking for. I used three Les Pauls. One is a '79 black Custom, and there two '79 Deluxes, one sunburst and one tobacco. I also have a Les Paul Jr., which is a distinctive, heavy sounding guitar, and one I was getting better sounds from."

Drummer Fay used his Ayotte kit for much of the record, the same kit he tours with. "I have a kit that Ray Ayotte made me about 10 years ago," he explains. "It has a 14" bass drum. That's the one I used on 'Ahead By A Century' and 'Poets', and you wouldn't think that such a small kit would cut it, but anyone who has been in the studio knows that you get the biggest sounds from the smallest drums. I also used some of Terry Manning's drums, and I was honoured to use the great Mickey Curry's ride cymbal, one of the greatest drummers of all time and a definite influence on me. (Mickey Curry plays with Bryan Adams and Hall and Oates)."





Sticking closely to the tried and true, Sinclair returned to his principle bass used on the last few records. "It's a '57 Fender P that I bought off of Kyle Rock 12 years ago. It's a stock '57 that he had an early '60s jazz pickup dropped into near the bridge. It's a beautiful sounding guitar, maple neck, and I've tried a bunch of things but I always come back to that one. I also used a mid-'60s Gibson EBO on a few tracks, a great guitar with a nice wooly sound. Terry also had a '62 Hofner bass right out of the box, which I used on "Beautiful Thing". I'm a gear junky, I've

got a closet full of stuff, and it's just a lot of fun picking up a beautiful vintage instrument and letting it go."

"I firmly believe that in the '50s, the craftsmanship and nature of the business meant that the guitars were made to better standards," he continues. "I have a bunch of '50s guitars, and they're all beautiful. Having said that, when we got back up here to finish recording, I pulled out my old Specter, the one I played on "Up To Here", and used it on the tracks we did at the Bathhouse."

If recording down in the Bahamas was such a great opportunity for the band, why then did they finish recording the album with Mark Vreeken at the Bathhouse? As Baker observes, the nonstop creative process was the culprit: "I feel like the record was made as we were still going. We wrote beyond the completion of the record."


"We all talked after mixing was finished in January and decided that we were two songs shy of a record," says Fay. "We went into Bath and had enough time to rehearse a couple of tunes. Gord had this idea down in the Bahamas ("Are You Ready") and we spent a little more time on it up here. It was nice because we sent the songs down to Terry Manning, and he's been a part of the family since he worked at Ardent in Memphis, where we recorded *Up To Here*. He mixed the final songs for us."

Baker laments the fact that they are often unable to include all the songs they have recorded on one record. While the band is not really interested in releasing singles or one of the odds and sods collections that are popular these days, they have come up with a creative

way to allow fans to get this "unheard" music. With each copy of the album comes a Hip Club card, which allows fans to go to the band's Web site and download two extra songs.

Call them Canada's most humble rock stars. When asked their feelings on the Canadian Walk of Fame, each member almost audibly blushes down the phone line. They are thrilled to be included in the company of people or groups that they say have defined their own lives as Canadians, as well as the fact that fellow musicians Rush were the ones that campaigned to get them there in the first place.

"I think it's a great honour, and my parents and wife and kids are thrilled," says Sinclair.

"I would like to tip my hat to the guys in Rush. While they're not a direct musical influence, the way that they approach making music on an independent, true to yourselves level has paved the way directly and indirectly for every band in this country. They made it okay to play your own stuff and approach it with a commitment to your own passion and creativity. They've really allowed us to be who we are. But on the other hand, my kids are stoked to meet Wayne Gretzky, so for that alone, I've got to thank them." 

Rod Christie is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



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A Place To Call Home

Close your eyes, think back half a decade or so and bring to mind the chill that drove through your body as a barely-known Vancouverite belted out verse about being numb, asking the question that defined the '90s: "Where do you fit in?"

It's been five years since Holly McNarland released *Stuff* and showed the world that grrls can rock too! In the time since, pop divas have flooded the industry and all but destroyed everything Holly and her contemporaries built for women in rock. Well, the 'rocktress' is back and ready to reclaim her throne.

Explaining why she waited until now to return to the scene, Holly said, "We just kept going back in and recording more. Looking back now [the industry] was so saturated with shit music at the time. Nothing was real; it was all prefabricated music so I'm kind of glad I didn't get released during the 'Spice' thing and the Backstreet and Britney Spears thing. That's all kind of going away, thankfully. There's always something that's going to saturate the market, but at least right now it's music – it's a bunch of guy bands but at least they're playing their instruments. So I'm hoping now is a better time to be released."

Her new album, *Home Is Where My Feet Are*, hit the stands June 11th and is being supported by not one, but two singles. The heavier of the two, "Do You Get High?", is being touted to rock stations across the country, while "Beautiful Blue" is getting its play on the adult contemporary frequency, along with a video on MuchMoreMusic. Wait, adult contemporary stations? What happened to the "rock chick?"

"I'm a mom now. Not that all the songs are mom-ville, but I'm a mom and I've settled down quite a bit. You get older and you grow and your writing grows. If you're doing it yourself you're going to grow. I fought the whole 'you have to be a rocker, you're perceived as a rock chick.' I don't want to say I'm not a 'rock chick,'" she exclaimed in her best mock UK-rocker impersonation. "But I am who I am and that's how I write and I can't get around it, so when somebody says, 'Write a rock song!' my initial instinct is 'Fuck you! I'm not going to write a rock song, I'll do what I want.'" So it's just really honest. I didn't sit down to write a hit – whatever comes out, comes out."



NARLAND

by Ryan McLaughlin

Though Holly construed that family life has matured her, the new album is still very much soul-saturated. "My writing is really honest and it's wide open. I'm not very personal and I'm not very private. I think that's one way of getting the deep down stuff out without talking about it. I don't need a therapist I have a guitar!" she joked.

Aside from the slightly toned-down attitude on the album, another new direction Holly took with *Home Is Where My Feet Are* was working with a fresh batch of producers. Both her first disc *Sour Pie* and her major-label debut, *Stuff* were produced by Dale Penner (Nickelback, Universal Honey). "He was the first guy and only guy I'd ever worked with, so we knew each other pretty well." She explained that she intentionally set out to go with different producers this time. "I'm not really into doing the same thing over and over again – you try to get new input."

The first part of the album, which was recorded in Malibu, California, was produced with Hamilton, Ontario's Mark Howard (The Tragically Hip, Emmylou Harris, The Neville Brothers) and bore the tracks: "When You Come Down", "Brush Into My Tears", "I Cry", "The Ride", "More" and "Sister", a song which was co-produced with Warne Livesey. Warne, who is best known for his work with the Matthew Good Band, also produced both of the first two singles, as well as "Voices", "Watching Over You" and "Losing My Face". Rounding out the production team was another Steel City resident, Malcolm Burn (Blue Rodeo, Shawn Colvin, Better Than Ezra) who pulled duty on "Dallas" a distrustful tune ("What'd you do in Dallas?/Can you still smell her skin?/My head's turning upside-down/All I see is bright red") audibly reminiscent of "Water" from *Stuff*.

The Malibu sessions were something that Holly spoke very fondly of, but their beginnings were anything but stable. "We had actually rented a castle. I think the cheque was there and everything. It was this cheesy Malibu castle that we had seen pictures of and it was amazing. Mark Howard had already gone and took measurements and figured out if everyone could stay there, it was going to be amazing! But three days before I was supposed to leave, the woman that owned the castle – the bitch that owned the castle – decided to go and check out my Web site and saw a picture that my friend drew of me walking my dog and he's taking a shit. It's just a fucking cartoon and she pulled the plug. She didn't want 'my kind' in her castle. We were set to go and everything was finished: I can't believe they didn't sue her."

After getting over that initial hurdle, the Malibu beach house was discovered, but again the fates had their own agenda: "Mark Howard was already there with the gear. The day I was supposed to leave I got to the airport, and I had to go by myself at that point because everything was so screwed up, so I was travelling with my guitar, my bags and my child was strapped to my front in one of those little baby harnesses. Then they turned me back at the border and sent me home and we had to do all kinds of legal shit to get me down there. It looked like I was *never* going to do this album; it was crazy. But we ended up making it through and three years later the album is going to come out."

After laying down the majority of the album in the Golden State, Holly returned to Canada's left coast and hooked up with Warne. "We recorded at Mushroom Studios and the Warehouse in Vancouver. They're both pretty awesome studios. Warne is really good, and the easiest guy to work with. He's so fun and just a really mellow and laid-back kind of guy. And he's got a daughter a little bit younger than me so he knows the age," pausing, she added with a chuckle, "I don't want to make him sound old!"

Warne also took on mixing duties for the album, working out of the Warehouse Studios; "Three producers, one mixer – I had to get some continuity in there."

Continuity in mixing perhaps, but looking through the CD's liner notes, it is easy to tell that Holly enjoys utilizing the talents of a plethora of musicians. While in Malibu she tapped a couple of the guys she had previously toured with, Tony (Tone) Valcic for drums and Les Cooper for guitar work and when the sessions moved back to Canada, she brought in a familiar face that also calls Vancouver home, Dave Genn, best known as a (now former) member of the Matthew Good Band. "I've been friends with him for years, so he was pretty comfortable to work with. I wrote with him on the album too. It was good, I'd call him at like midnight and be like, 'Come over! Come over! We need to do the bridge.' So he was good to bounce everything off of."

Outlining other talent that peppered the new recording, she said, "Darryl Johnson, who's from Emmylou Harris' band, played basically everything on 'Sister' with the exception of some guitars we added about six months ago to beef it up a bit. He played the bass, the drums, sang backup, he can just do everything, he's really amazing, and he's got a beautiful, beautiful voice. That will be on the enhanced CD as well, him doing backups. It's pretty crazy to watch because he's a big huge man and he's got this angelic voice."



Continuing, Holly explained that vocalist Josh Ramsay performed backup vox on 'Beautiful Blue'. "He's in a band called Marianas Trench. He's got a really beautiful voice. He's kind of just starting out (he's like 21), but I'm thinking he's going to do well."

For those that paid attention to the performers on *Stuff*, you'll notice a return of Joey Santiago from the Pixies, who stopped by for a couple days while Holly was recording in Malibu. "He played on 'Brush into My Tears'. If you listen to it you'll go, 'Oh, there's Joey, that's signature Joey.' It was cool because I don't think he has ever really recorded on anybody's stuff since the Pixies."

With all the recording behind her, and the album on its way to music stores, it was time for the self-assured siren to hit the stage and perform in front of fans for the first time in 3½ years at the 2002 edition of New Music West – no big deal, just like old times, nothing to worry about. "I was shitting my pants! I thought I was going to die! The night before I couldn't sleep. My stomach was in knots. But as soon as I got on stage I was fine. I was still nervous, but no more nervous than 3½ years ago. The last time I played I was seven months pregnant and before that was the '98 Lilith Fair."

For her return, Holly hit the stage at none other than Vancouver's infamous Penthouse strip club. "There were poles on the stage and we tried to get rid of them but it was like, 'Nope, the poles stay. We'll give you Jägermeister, but no, the poles have to stay on the stage.' It was a lot of fun though; there was a line up around the block ... so it was a nice homecoming – a nice welcome back."

"It was a bit weird because I'm not playing as much guitar. We're going back into rehearsals tomorrow and I'm going to start playing more guitar. Sometimes I just don't know what to do with myself if I'm not playing, because I played a lot on the last tour, so it's kind of weird without a guitar."

Letting it be known what might change from what you hear on the album to what you hear when she hits the road this summer, Holly said, "It's a lot harder! It's a lot rockier live. We've sped up and chunked up a lot of songs. Once you play that many slow-ish songs it just kind of gets boring. It's good to listen to on an album but live it's like a lullaby. So we're slowly turning everything into rock, and we're not done yet; we have five more songs to rehearse."

Her stage line-up includes Dave Genn on keys and guitar, Sean Ashby on guitar and lap steel, Nik Pesut handling drumming and backup vocals, and Joel Myers on bass guitar as well as singing backup. "It's starting to sound really good. I've never had that many backups before, and it's a lot of work. It's a big full sound now, I'm pretty excited and rehearsals are a lot of fun."

Concluding the interview, we asked Holly if she thought that her return to the scene might bring with it some of the vigour that the female music scene has been missing, she said, "Somebody was telling me, I think it was my old A&R guy, that all the weasel people [a.k.a. record company executives] get reports on what's doing well and he said that women in music went up like 20 per cent in the last little while. There are not a lot of females right now, it's pretty depressing. I think the whole women in rock thing being beaten over everybody's head made it sort of disappear and it's frustrating. But I'm hoping there's going to be a frenzy again." ☐

Me too.

Ryan McLaughlin is Assistant Editor for Canadian Musician.

Holly and Her Band

HOLLY MCNARLAND

Guitar:

Gibson J-200 acoustic guitar
Fishman Platinum acoustic guitar DI

DAVE GENN

Guitars:

'95 Gibson Les Paul Standard
'94 Gibson Les Paul Studio
'67 Gibson 335
He shares Holly's '97 Gibson J-200

Strings:

All his guitars are strung with DR strings gauge 10-52.

Amplifier:

Mesa Boogie Mark-IV head and 4 x 12 cab

Pedalboard:

MXR Dynacomp compressor
Ibanez Tube Screamer
Boss Vibrato
Dunlop Tremelo
Digitech Whammy
Line 6 Delay Modeller

Bio: Dave, who is the musical director for Holly's touring band, has appeared on albums by Art Bergmann, Emm Gryner, Len, Lowest of the Low, Ron Hawkins and the Rusty Nails, DSK, MGB, Grapes of Wrath and Pure, among others. His playing is featured on 7 of the 12 tracks on Holly's *Home is Where My Feet Are*.

SEAN ASHBY

Guitars:

Gibson Les Paul Standard
Gibson Flying V
Gibson J 45
Gretsch Nashville
National lap steel

Amp:

Fender Deluxe
Marshall 4 x 12 cabinet

Pedals:

Voodoo Lab switching system/pedal power
BOSS/Ibanez/Electro Harmonix

Strings:

DR Strings

Bio: Sean is the singer/songwriter/producer/engineer/guitarist for Jack Tripper. Sean has played guitar for many recording artists including: Sarah McLachlan, Delerium, Ginger, Mae Moore, Wild Strawberries and Lava Hay as well as many other great artists.

Note to Holly Fans: If you come to see Holly McNarland sing you must respond between songs by yelling "Come on then!" Don't ask why, it doesn't make sense ... just do it.

JOEL MYERS

Basses:

Fender Jazz Basses

Amp/Speakers:

Ampeg and Gallien Kruger amplifiers
Ampeg speakers

Strings:

DR Strings

Bio: Joel currently lives in Vancouver, BC, where he plays in local band Cinderpop. He's also a session artist for Nettwerk recording artist Jennifer McLaren.

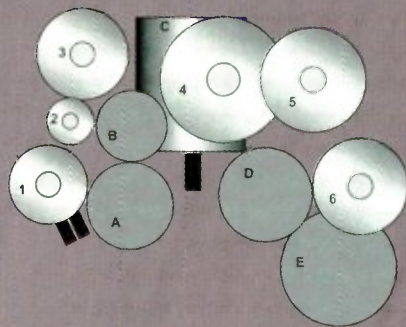
NIK PESUT

Drums:

Ayotte Cherry wood finish
A. 13 x 4" Snare/14 x 5.5" Wood hoop
Kepler Snare
B. 10 x 8" Rack Tom
C. 20 x 18" Bass Drum
D. 14 x 14" Floor Tom
E. 16 x 16" Floor Tom

Cymbals:

SABIAN
1. HH 13" Groove Hats
2. AA 6" Splash
3. HH 17" Medium Thin Crash
4. HH 21" Vintage Ride/20" Leopard Ride
5. HH 18" Thin Crash
6. HH 16" Thin Chinese



Hardware:

Yamaha

Bio: Nik, formerly of the group Templar, currently does session and touring work with local Vancouver bands such as The Dirtmints. Dave Genn produced The Dirtmints' new album, which will be released on Sonic Union in a few months. He's been playing drums since the age of three, and he's "never wanted to do anything else for a living."



IN THE RIGHT PLACE, A GUITAR IS AN INSPIRATION

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So You're Dusting Off The Ivories, Are You?

KEYBOARD

by Kevin Young



There was a time in the early to mid-'90s when being a keyboard player in a rock band was only slightly less isolating than being the only guy on the block with the black plague. Given that we now seem to be enjoying a bit of a renaissance, as well as the increased availability of sophisticated home recording options, the role of keyboards has expanded again and an increasing number of artists are picking up the instrument in an effort to flesh out their sound. Correspondingly, keyboard manufacturers have answered the demand with powerful hardware and software, intuitive sequencers, phrase generators and machines that recreate the sounds, feel and look of vintage keys.

There's lots to choose from, but before rushing out to buy gear for a first time setup, or augment your existing rig, it's important to take a long, hard look at what's available to make the right choices for your gig. There are no right or wrong choices necessarily, but with all the technology available, building a rig, one that's versatile enough to adequately answer the demands of various live and studio gigs without breaking the bank completely can be somewhat challenging, particularly if you're just starting out.

Learning...

If you are picking up the instrument for the first time there's no better way to start to learn to play, as well as get a grip on the technology, than just messing around with whatever keyboard instruments you have access to. A number of players I've met over the years have taken music lessons of some kind, but just as many are largely self-taught and, depending on what level you actually want and need to play at, learning via the hunt and peck method is as viable as any other. Perhaps all you want is to

Emm Gryner

Provide us with a gear list please – what's in your rig?

Yamaha P80
Kurzweil Stage Piano 76
Proteus 2000
Line 6 Delay Pedal

Do you have a favourite instrument? One that you've wanted to own, have owned, or favour above others for writing, recording or live performance? Why this specific piece?

Really all I want right now is a baby grand piano. I'd even settle for one of the digital ones. All my songs start on piano and I actually used a Yamaha digital grand at one of my shows in Toronto two years ago and secretly loved it.

What prompted you to decide to play keys as opposed to, or in addition to, other instruments?

My parents forced me at gunpoint to learn classical piano.

Did you take piano/keyboard lessons when you first started playing the instrument? For how long? How many different teachers?

I had one main teacher, who taught me piano from age 5 to 13. I was her last student – she died after me!

How do you think keyboard technology will change over the next few years and what advances would you personally like to see?

I expect keyboard technology to become even more portable, and to sound more realistic with every year that goes by. As a travelling musician, who often tours on her own, I'd like to see more portable pianos ... things that can fold up and fold out into a baby grand. I for one am a little tired of the synth-on-the-Y-stand look as being the only alternative for the touring pianist.

Any specific advice you would offer, or instruments you would recommend to other players in terms of "must have" gear?

Spend the money to get the good stuff!

Singer/songwriter/keyboardist Emm Gryner is an independent musician, who, in her spare time, performs with David Bowie. Find Emm online at www.emmgryner.com.



Welcome to *Canadian Musician's* Focus On...

R R O S



learn a bit of keys as a second instrument for performance and writing purposes, to get familiar enough with the technology to contribute the odd line or texture to arrangement.

If you are interested in lessons, it's important to research the options available and decide whether you'd prefer to take an occasional lesson here and there – perhaps from a variety of different people – or to commit to a period of time with a specific teacher. Either way, find a teacher or method that suits your goals. You can learn the fundamentals equally well in a number of different ways, but once you begin to advance you may want to be very specific with a prospective teacher or institution in terms of what direction you'd like to take.

A good grounding in technique and theory is extremely useful, but the terminology and priorities vary greatly between styles and genres of music. Question teachers about their interests and prior experience – in terms of teaching – as well as writing and performing. As important as the mechanics of playing are, much can also be learned from simply talking to your instructor about their experiences as a musician.

Choosing Gear and Building Your Rig...

Whether you've played for years, or you're thinking of picking up some gear and learning, all the bells, whistles and power in the world won't help you if the gear you settle on doesn't fulfill your needs. Power, in terms of versatility and sound quality and choosing gear with an interface that suits your needs are important considerations, but price and how well the unit travels are also an issue.

If you're starting from scratch and looking for gear to gig with, avoid the temptation to

sell the farm to put a down payment on something hideously expensive and overly complex. It's preferable to find something that does what you need it to well and is reasonably flexible. A fairly large variety of quality sounds, fairly sophisticated layering and split functions that will allow enough on-board control to do what you need for live and studio work at the moment and will continue to be relevant as a reliable controller when you expand your setup by adding rack-mounted modules, specific use keyboards and additional controllers. Having said that, a reasonably good controller combined with a variety of sound modules is almost as compact and allows you more flexibility. Whatever controller you do choose, it's wise to have, at the *very* least, a few on board sounds – just in case your module takes a vacation midway through a performance. Generally I prefer a controller without weighted keys simply for the sake of making organ and synth parts more fluid.

That's not to say you shouldn't get as much power on your side as possible. The trend seems to be for companies to provide more and more power and versatility in increasingly compact units. These are great for ease in terms of setup and transport; workstations and sound modules with rock solid sounds, sequencing and sampling capabilities, and intuitive phrase generators that are fantastic writing tools and make incredibly complex recorded arrangements fairly easy to recreate live. As always, a Korg Triton or a module from the Roland JV series are good bets. Check out the Korg Karma, Yamaha Motif and Roland RS 5 and RS 9.

My main considerations have usually been durability and relevance. If your priority is live performance then sheer size and weight as well as the range of the keyboard are very important. For players who play mostly piano and don't need much in the way of monster sounds a good digital piano with

weighted keys may be ideal. If your main concern is a good sounding piano in a reasonably compact package, it's primarily a question of realistic action, sound quality and response versus price. Still, there are a variety of acoustic sounds you may want to access and for versatility's sake it's a good bet to pick up something that allows you to access a variety of diverse patches and has at least some editing capability.

Warning – some however, are brutally heavy and awkward – perhaps perfect for home or studio use, but depending on how you're traveling they can make small vehicles and stages a nightmare to share with them. Any time you buy a keyboard that is physically quite large it's a good idea to imagine just what it will feel like after you case it up for the road. In some cases you might be better off to suffer through synth action in favour of portability and versatility. That said, there's no reason not to tour with plenty of gear and use a mix of vintage and modern components if doing so enhances the show and enables you to deal with any potential breakdowns more effectively and quickly while performing. Consider what you're minimum requirements are and how much you can spend then shop accordingly.

If you can, spend as much time with the gear you're interested in before you buy it. Rent it for a while, or at the very least take some time to tech out the gear yourself – regardless of how sophisticated a unit is it has specific limitations – know exactly what limits are unacceptable to you and ask pointed questions of the salesperson and manufacturer to make sure the machine does what you want it to. You don't want to be in a situation where you've bought something roughly the same price as a used car only to find out that it doesn't nearly fulfill your needs in six months or a year. This is where a specific use keyboard might very well be relevant – a con-

troller that allows extensive control and recreates vintage sounds.

Overall there's a renewed interest in vintage gear and sounds, but increasingly less patience for bulk and instability and many new products address this admirably. Whether you're after cool vintage electro acoustic sounds like Wurlitizers and Rhodes, need the power of a B3 in a compact package or a digital model of classic analog synthesis, it's all about sound quality and what interface you prefer. Both machines that address themselves solely to the problem of recreating one type of vintage gear and those that are more general have a wealth of diverse and excellent sounds to choose from. The question is how you prefer to access those sounds and the degree of real-time control you want over them versus overall flexibility. The application you intend to put the unit to is also an important factor in choosing between true vintage gear, digital recreations, sound modules, workstations and the many software options available.

Over the past 10 years or so a number of MIDI compatible Hammond simulators have been created. The Roland's VK series and Korg's updated CX 3 are my personal favourites. Clearly great care was exercised in the design process of both machines to faithfully recreate the traditional interface and sound of a B3, as well as approximate some of the original's quirks. Another good bet is the Nord Electro. It recreates both vintage electric piano and organ sounds. Although the organ interface is physically different from the original B3 it sounds great and includes an above average number of onboard FX.

For digital mockups or vintage electric pianos and synths control interface is also important. For dedicated electric pianos check out the Nord Electro and Applied Acoustic's newly released Lounge Lizard software. For synths: The Venom Product Line, the Nord Lead series, the new Roland SH-32 and Applied Acoustics Tassman software. These however, are only a few of the options available. The key to finding the right gear is putting the time in, both in stores and online – depending on your needs you may very well be able to download all you need for a fraction of the price of a hardware module. Of course there's something nice about dedicated hardware with a familiar panel to play with. Shop around.

No matter what type of device you choose there are other physical details that are worth taking into account, the main panel controller layout, for instance, both in terms of how it fits into your rig as well as how much sense it makes on its own. Take a good look

Kevin Young

Provide us with a gear list please – what's in your rig?

Rack

Akai S 5000 Sampler
BOSS SE 70 FX Processor
Roland JV2080

Controllers

Roland A 33
Lexicon MRC
Roland D-70 (Backup)
Yamaha A 80 (Backup)

Additional Keys

Nord Lead Keyboard
Roland VK 7

Vintage

Wurlitzer Electric Piano
Yamaha SK 50 D

Do you have a favourite instrument? One that you've wanted to own, have owned, or favour above others for writing, recording or live performance? Why this specific piece?

I've always wanted to own a B3, but have never had the space for one at home, or the desire to suffer the beating the rest of my band would give me if I insisted on taking one on the road. The VK 7 is by far the best keyboard purchase I've ever made. Although I don't really consider myself to be an accomplished Hammond player, a big, swirly, dirty organ is the sound I often fall back on when nothing else seems to work and I need to add texture and colour in already sonically dense tracks.

What prompted you to decide to play keys as opposed to, or in addition to, other instruments?

Originally I wanted to play guitar – desperately, but the lessons I had lined up fell through when my family moved. I was already taking piano lessons and just stayed with it. Still though, most of my instrumental influences are guitar players and that's affected the type of parts I write greatly.

Did you take piano/keyboard lessons when you first started playing the instrument? For how long? How many different teachers?

I took classical piano lessons on and off for years with a variety of teachers and eventually ended up in a university music program at Queen's, but ran screaming to a jazz program at a college in Vancouver to find something a little more applicable to what I actually wanted to do.

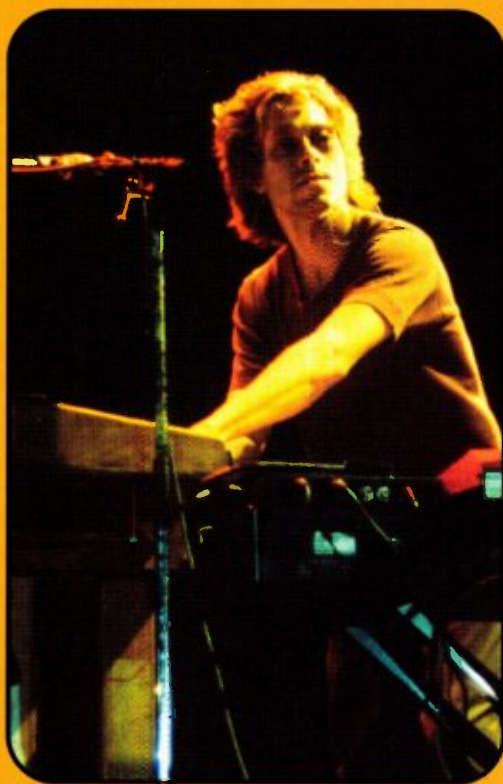
How do you think keyboard technology will change over the next few years and what advances would you personally like to see?

It's hard to say what will happen over the next few years. The trend for hardware now seems to lean towards more versatile real-time control and more overall capability in an increasingly compact machine. What I'd like to see in the future is a laptop specifically built to withstand the hazards of the road; a hardware platform that was stable enough to tour with so I could take some of the amazing software that's out there now, get it out of the studio and on stage.

Any specific advice you would offer, or instruments you would recommend to other players in terms of "must have" gear?

As I mention in the main portion of this article, I recommend taking a fair amount of time with any potential purchase before you buy it. Rent it for rehearsals and a show if possible. It's the best way to see if a machine is the right choice for you.

Kevin Young is a Montréal-based musician, best known for his work with Moist and David Usher.

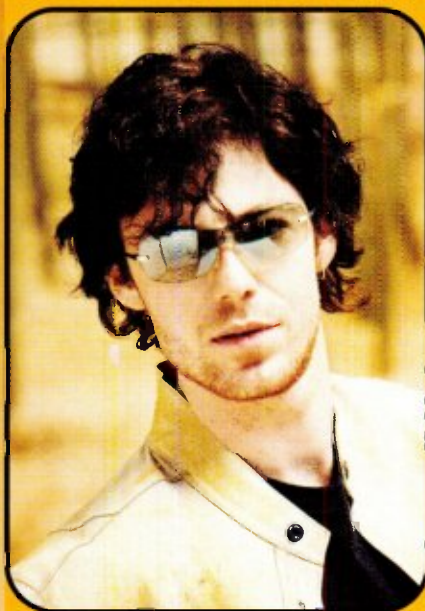


at how expandable a unit is. Pay particular attention to power connections: Many keys come with universal power cables that are easy to replace in a pinch or some variety of power supply that can be backed up with a multi-purpose adapter. Some however will only use the AC adapter provided by the manufacturer. That's something to consider, because when it gets broken – and it will at some point – you'll need a spare, a spare that will be neither inexpensive nor easy to find. For live performance, the simpler and more durable, the better.

This is particularly true of Samplers. When it comes to reproducing very complex arrangements of unique sounds, specific loops and/or patterns, generally a sampler makes a lot of sense. But be sure to investigate the machine thoroughly with an eye to how user-friendly it is. If it's a hardware sampler find out whether or not it is truly compatible with your computer platform, how stable and (for newer models) complete the operating system is and, perhaps most importantly, how durable a machine it is. Many a unit that's perfect for studio use may not react well to the bumps and power surges that come with touring. Bottom line ... buy something that you know works, a unit with an operating system that's been tweaked out enough that it actually does what the company says it will. Samplers are powerful tools, but can require more patience and finesse than other gear when you first use them.

On tour you need something that's going to take a certain amount of punishment. No matter how much you gig, a little or a lot, accidents happen. Minimize the size of your rig, but, if possible, take care to be as completely backed up on stage as possible by building a system that will either duplicate the functions of your main gear or at least allow you to get through the show if something decides to stop working. The least I'd be willing to bring would be two identical keyboards, or, if you're running a variety of modules from a controller, a controller and backup keyboard with on board sounds, a sound module and whatever effects might be necessary. The idea with this setup is redundancy – no matter what breaks down or gets lost in transit you should be covered. Whatever you choose as your main sound generator, if you intend to do a fair bit of travelling, particularly overseas, it's a wise idea to choose something that's easy to rent just about anywhere. This does require a bit of research. Just because it's popular in North America, doesn't mean you'll find it in other countries or that tech support and the means to repair it will be readily available. This is where redundancy and the smallest rig you can live with is key. The pace of touring doesn't often allow time for lengthy repairs.

This will get you by. Of course there is something extremely seductive about having a large rig. After years of touring with a very simple setup I began to add more keyboards; an organ simulator, a dedicated synthesizer – the main keyboard rig also contained two samplers; one to generate loops that was triggered from drum world and one to cover more complex string and synth arrangements. Also



Michael Levine

Remy Shand

Provide us with a gear list please – what's in your keyboard rig?

Hohner Clavinet
B3 with Leslies 122 & 145
Fender Rhodes models 73 and 88
Wurlitzer electric piano
Roland SH-1000 synthesizer
Roland string synthesizer
Realistic MG1 (as heard on "Take A Message")
Upright piano

Do you have a favourite keyboard instrument? One that you've wanted to own, have owned, or favour above others for writing, recording or live performance? Why this specific piece?
I use a Fender Rhodes model 88 for recording and a model 73 for live performances.

What prompted you to decide to play keys as opposed to, or in addition to, other instruments?

I took on the keyboards to expand my knowledge of chord extensions so I could be a better-improvising bass player. I eventually got deeper and deeper into practicing keyboards and exploring different vintage keyboards. My first keyboard was a Casio Tone Bank.

Did you take piano/keyboard lessons when you first started playing the instrument? For how long? How many different teachers?

No, I'm self-taught.

How do you think keyboard technology will change over the next few years and what advances would you personally like to see?

I don't know – I use old gear. I'm really not into keyboard technology. Maybe someone could make a lighter Rhodes?

Any specific advice you would offer, or instruments you would recommend to other players in terms of "must have" gear?

Good patch cords and an MXR Phase 90 pedal.

Remy Shand is a multi-instrumentalist, originally from Winnipeg, MB. Find him online at www.remyshand.ca.

included in the rack was a back-up sound module in case the sampler required rebooting midway through a show. With all this technology it becomes necessary to consider carefully what controller you'll use to run the lot of it. My suggestion would be to find some small controller to tie all your machines together, handle patch changes and FX so no matter what keyboard controller you may be using you have the luxury of a familiar controller to make patch and FX changes that's completely separate. There are a variety of devices that can do this and are small enough to chuck in your carry-on baggage, guaranteeing the safety of your show settings. I currently use a Lexicon MRC, but have an eye to incorporating Midiman's Oxygen8 which duplicates much of the Lexicon's functionality, but has

the benefit of a small keyboard interface as well, making it useful not only as part of the live rig, but for recording on a laptop between shows and warming up.

The main problems with a rig of this size is transport, and the fact that it becomes a bit of a Rubik's Cube to set up and fit on some stages. The ability to change gears midway through a jam on stage, allowing yourself the freedom that's inherent in playing specialty boards with real-time controls is fantastic, but the more complex your setup is, the nastier it is to tech out when problems arise. Unless you have a dedicated keyboard tech, it's you and your gear vs. Murphy. It's best to keep it simple and neat.

Tech Support and Care and Feeding...

Whatever you decide on make sure it's going to work well in your existing rig – for the road this is mostly just an issue of physical dimensions and layout. For example, does that tasty new synth module with the fat sounds require a new rack case?

Beyond that, make sure your gear simply works well. Ideally what you've purchased will do what the manual says it will. This is not always the case – on rare occasions you may find that some of the capabilities that were a good selling point in the first place are somewhat more limited than you thought; either because the information you were provided with was inaccurate or incomplete, or, more likely, because you've indulged yourself in a fit of wishful thinking. Check that there are resources available to you to troubleshoot, master complex functions, negotiate the operating system and upgrade.

Three Important Questions...

Will the company in question continue to support their hardware with operating system upgrades, expansion cards and/or additional proprietary software that adds to the unit's functionality and versatility?

No, but really, will they? In other words – have they done so in the past?

Is their tech support and/or repair department qualified and accessible; real technical support; a live body that actually knows the gear and is reachable by phone or e-mail? There's nothing more frustrating than dealing with someone whose knowledge of his or her own product is sketchier than yours.

Conversely, tech support folks are routinely asked catastrophically foolish questions that could be easily answered by a manual. Be specific. If part of the problem is that the manual is unclear or heavily laden with company specific keybores, make that clear at the outset.

It's often said that the devil is in the details: True enough. The more complex your system is, the more potential for problems, but also the more likely you'll be able to deal with miscellaneous screw ups without stopping the show. Obviously, if your main gig doesn't involve travelling, roadworthiness is not as much of an issue. Stability is still key however, and in the studio you can't afford to lose time simply trying to keep your gear running. A nifty piece of sampler or synth software may seem less of a hassle than heavy equipment but it's not unless you know the program you intend to use inside and out tweak – out any problems ahead of time.

Dave Genn

Provide us with a gear list please – what's in your rig?

My master MIDI controller for live and studio use is a Roland A-90. It boasts good weighted piano action, diverse MIDI implementation, and a great set of sounds that I can use in a live setting. In the studio I may use any of the following instruments that I've collected over the years: Korg CX-3, Vox Jaguar and Acetone Top-5 organs; Yamaha CS-60, Korg DSS-1 and Roland Super Jupiter synthesizers; a Wurlitzer model 200 electric piano, a Rhodes MK-80 digital piano, or the monophonic monolith, my Moog Taurus 1 pedals.

Do you have a favourite instrument? One that you've wanted to own, have owned, or favour above others for writing, recording or live performance? Why this specific piece?

I assume that picking a favourite keyboard is like trying to choose which one of your children to save, but since I have yet to be blessed with little ones I'll go out on a limb and admit that, at the risk of sounding old-fashioned, it has to be the Hammond B3 played through a Leslie cabinet. Although nearly impossible to transport, difficult to service, expensive to purchase and, let's face it, stupid to own, there isn't a more powerful or conversely subtle sound available from any keyboard in history. I am always learning new ways of utilizing the distinct properties of the Hammond/Leslie combination, and yet somehow I can't imagine that I've even scratched the surface.

What prompted you to decide to play keys as opposed to, or in addition to, other instruments?

All musicians should take the time to learn at least a little bit of piano. Even an informal and elementary knowledge of the keyboard will allow any musician to approach their own instrument from a fresh perspective and make it easier to learn a new one.

Did you take piano/keyboard lessons when you first started playing the instrument? For how long? How many different teachers?

Like so many other musicians, I had no choice as to what instrument I would learn first. God bless my "Driving Mom" who enrolled me in piano lessons when I was six, and when I showed an interest, encouraged me by spending much of her time shuttling me to and from the local music school for lessons in jazz, popular and classical piano. I gained my RCT Grade 10 when I was 13, and as a result spent much of my twenties teaching, which is an excellent way of getting paid to maintain one's technique and sight-reading skills.

How do you think keyboard technology will change over the next few years and what advances would you personally like to see?

When can I be retrofitted with a "MIDI out" port so I can just "think" my parts? That way I can spend less time practicing scales and more time doing what I really love: lifting heavy things.

Any specific advice you would offer, or instruments you would recommend to other players in terms of "must have" gear?

Stay in school. Learn a trade. Go to college. Respect your parents. Don't do drugs. Hug someone at least once a day. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to pursue a career in the music business. As far as "must have" gear goes, I've always found that I'm really screwed when I've forgotten the power cable.

Dave Genn, famed Canadian keyboardist/guitarist extraordinaire, is currently on tour with Holly McNarland and has recently produced upcoming releases by Pepper Sands, The Dirtmills and Honeysuckle Serentina.



Low Blotz/Steve Harris

That said there are also a number of problems that come along with seemingly tried and true devices. I remember sitting in the studio with four broken Wurlitzer electric pianos trying to mimic the sound of the original unit we'd used – a unit that was now in several different pieces around the room. Although there were a number of vintage keys units available at the time, we were still chasing the warmth and character of the original scratch track and sometimes using the real thing has a favourable impact on your playing. Certainly there's a certain satisfaction involved in playing and recording a variety of beautiful old keyboards. In fact some players suggest there's no substitute, but in a situation where vintage gear is unavailable or a liability for some reason, other options may be preferable. When time pressure is an issue ultimately complex functionality and versatility in a compact setup is best. Sometimes it's worth keeping the fiddly gear at home and taking the time in pre-production for a tour or recording to sample or otherwise recreate specific sounds using a platform that's unlikely to increase the margin for error on stage or in the studio.

No matter what you do your rig will have its own quirks. Knowing them in advance will save trouble later. If you know your gear reacts badly to travel in specific ways be prepared. No less important than knowing and caring for your primary gear are having the cables, tools and spare parts necessary for keeping your entire rig in good health close at hand.

With this in mind, it doesn't hurt to include a drawer in your rack for backups and cables – especially MIDI cables. They're notoriously fragile; buy the best quality you can find. If your setup involves multiple devices in a MIDI chain, finding the culprit in a pinch can be time consuming; not something you want to deal with onstage if it's avoidable. Keep spare pedals, adapters, your memory cards and other backups, a multi-driver, a reasonable quantity of Scotch Whisky and whatever else you might need in there as well.

If you do have a tech troubleshooting your gear for you, they'll need be able to have access to such components at side stage, but if you don't, you should have easy onstage access, just in case. The same thing goes for all your backups for settings and samples. Be certain to keep a third copy of any disks, samples or audio files back home, preferably with someone who can be reached and trusted to send them out to meet you, in a format you can load up, on tour should the need arise. Cut down the margin for error even more by testing any essential backup gear and cables regularly and always after flying.

Regardless of whether you're headed out on tour, or to the studio, always bring what you need to play, tech and backup your gear. It may be a little more hassle to move, or cost a bit more to transport, but it's worth it. If you're headed overseas backup is more important than ever. That drawer I just mentioned; the one that's full of extra cables and assorted adapters? Remove your backups, memory cards and any parts you might need, put them

into a solid briefcase and take it with you. When flying, carry-on this suitcase if possible.

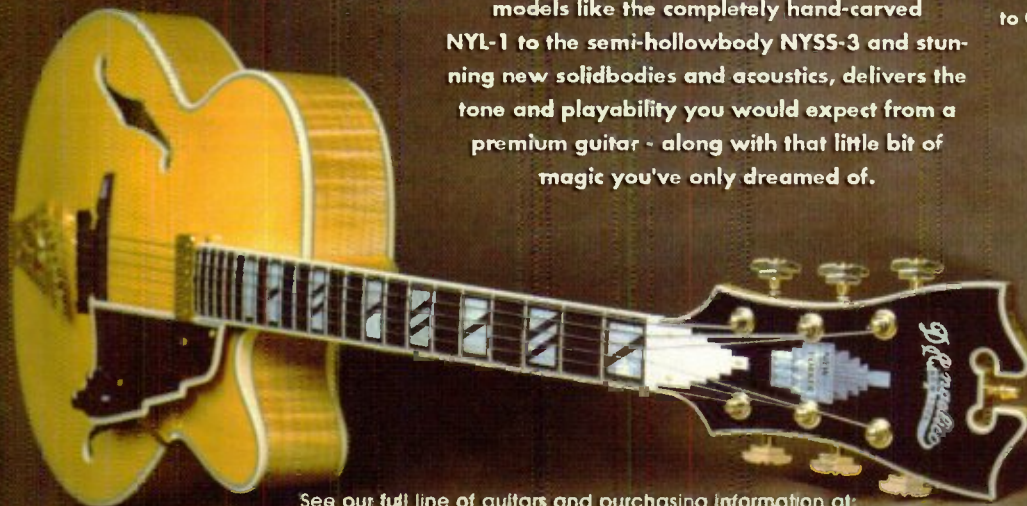
Though you can't be expected to effect major repairs mid-show and most gear is far more complex than you personally may be able to deal with. Certain issues can be taken care of with a few simple tools and reliable system and audio file backups. Eventually keyboards will get torn up by touring and it doesn't hurt to get friendly with a good tech at your local music store and to watch them conduct any necessary repairs. Certain keyboards, especially vintage gear, have problems that reoccur with age or use. If it breaks there once the chances are good it will again. Possessing both the knowledge and the parts to make the repairs will cut down on stress.

Finally, always deal with any problems immediately, no matter how small they seem. They can swiftly become larger if not looked after. A good example: One day a crew member informed me that one of my devices had what sounded like a loose screw somewhere around the power supply – I responded with an unconcerned "Yes, I know. I'll fix it when I get home." Our next conversation was less relaxed, owing to the fact that the keyboard in question was now on fire; a situation that took a hasty rental and six hundred dollars to remedy. CM

Kevin Young is a Montreal-based musician, who is keyboardist for both Moist and David Usher

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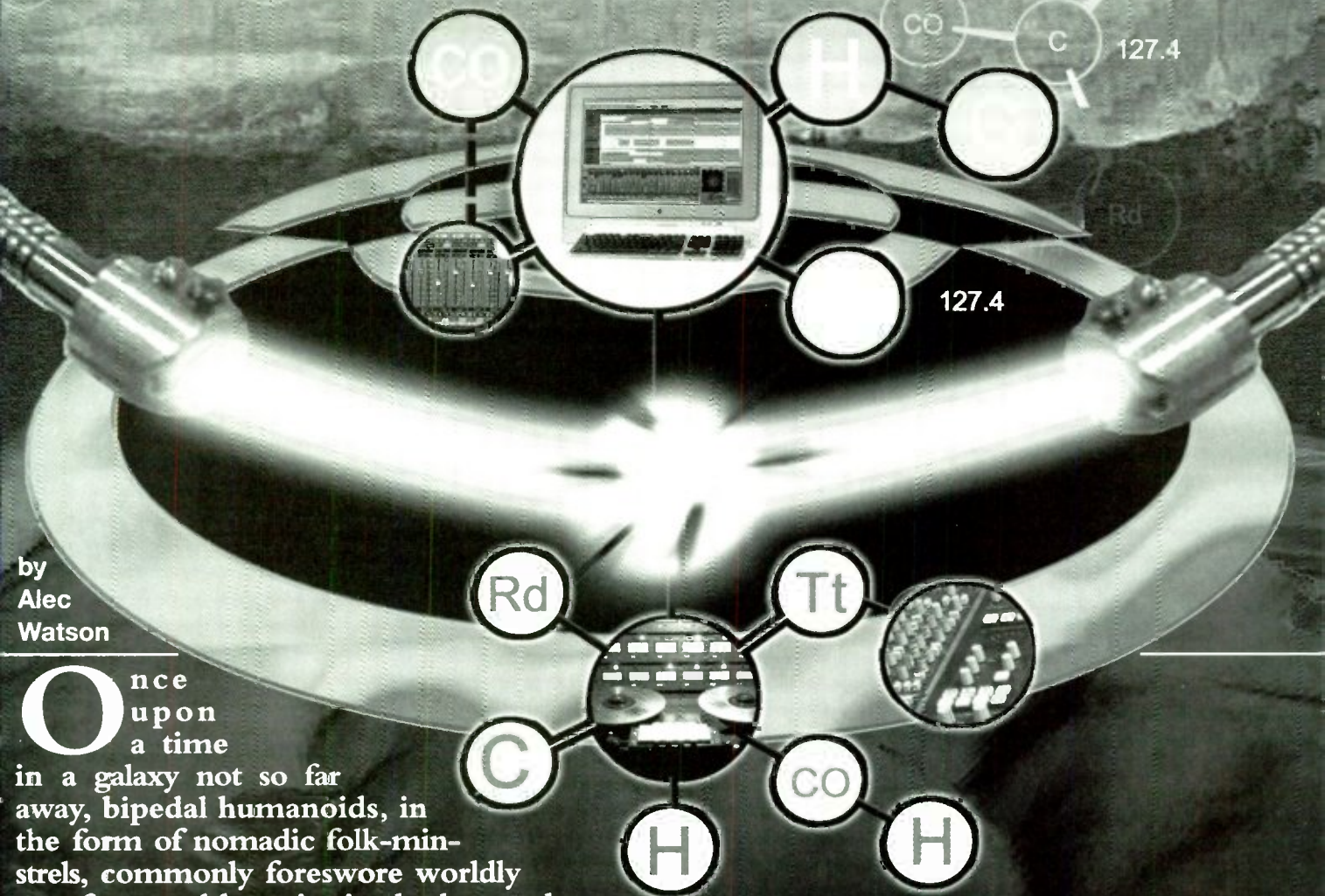
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THE ALCHEMY OF MUSIC AND AUDIO SOFTWARE



by
Alec
Watson

Once upon a time in a galaxy not so far away, bipedal humanoids, in the form of nomadic folk-minstrels, commonly foreswore worldly comforts and luxuries in the hopes that their aural masterpieces would bring rewards, acclaim and immortality. These works would miraculously be transduced from tiny potential voltages to a state of flux moving at light speed. This chrysalis occurred however, only after all their personal wealth had been surrendered in order to demonstrate their martyrdom to the cause and their purity of purpose.

The minstrels, led by little more than faith in the auguries of their divine interpreters, sometimes called producers, would work days, weeks, years, in dimly lit hovels, often called studios, all for the opportunity to present their offerings. These musical offerings were intended to appease deities, known as record company executives, who controlled the destiny of the hapless minstrels, imperiously and arbitrarily from afar. After much sweat, many tears, and much beseeching of the muse – coupled with the ingestion of ancient and powerful medicaments squeezed from beans, dried leaves, fermented fruits and grains – the fatalistic minstrels would present their offerings at the altar of the gods through a strange and capricious medium called an audio cassette tape. This fickle messenger would, even when the prescribed sacrifices had been made and solemn rituals observed, often intercede cruelly with a destructive interpretation of its own, sadly rendering the lovingly conceived music into something unrecognizable even to its creators.

Thankfully, the dark ages ended in the last year or maybe the year before. Much has changed and much hasn't. But this I know: music is more fun and creative now, for the technically inclined! The computer, as a medium which had the potential to make recording more accessible and



“Who was the smarty-pants who turned audio signals into visual building blocks? And whoever dreamed that Lego would train future recording engineers?”

more cost effective for the project studio, has become so successful that I would argue that it is now the most prevalent musical instrument (for better or worse) on the radio today. Software has become a medium in which musicians can create, notate, record, mix and master.

At the heart of the virtual studio is the multitrack audio program. This little gem has names like: Pro Tools, Cubase, Performer, Logic, Sonar ... and takes the place of the automated \$250,000 recording console with flying faders, and the \$50,000, 2" 24-track recorder, not to mention that nonsensical and expensive anomaly which wired the two together know as the “patch bay”. You can now get all this and much, much more for less than \$1,000!

There are a lot of holdouts that are reluctant to move to computer production, fearing an unknown virtual world which will get in the way of their creativity. However, the interfaces for these digital audio software suites can easily fit many different production styles.

For the mullet crowd, thinning on top and expanding in the middle, sporting a threadbare Tull t-shirt, who quaintly insist on recording in linear fashion: I, too, still like to track in a “normal” recording studio, in “normal” fashion.



When shooting for that analog sound, it's nice to track to 2" tape. Once recorded, there is an abundance of hardware options to transfer the audio tracks to hard drive at which point you can take them home with you.

Once at home, the computer is a great place to really take time with lead and background vocals. Once you get the hang of 'flying-in' the parts, the computer is a powerful tool for editing minor time inconsistencies. Every digital audio program in existence performs almost magical feats of cutting and splicing tracks, feats that were formerly reserved for the "audio surgeon" with a razor blade and nerves of steel. As an incidental bonus, for keyboard players, you can also install a fashion makeover program to experiment with a new hairdo while making changes to your recorded tracks.

With the new generation of software and a reasonably fast PC, it is also possible to track straight to the computer ... with confidence. Though I have been somewhat reluctant to track directly to computer, especially with a large multitrack session for fear of glitches or monitoring inflexibility, I can now confidently cue the Baptist Preacher Voice: "...Brothers and Sisters, you are now hearing the recitations of the converted!"

In a recent tracking session in Nashville for newcomer Rick Henry, we tracked direct to PC on a software package called Nuendo, through a souped-up "old" Yamaha O2R digital mixing console. The O2R converted the signal to digital, and ran the headphone mixes. The digital signal was transferred as a multi-track signal through a MOTU 2408, and Nuendo did a flawless job of recording and punching 20 tracks at a time. With this system we were very quickly able to make a major arrangement change to an entire song and all its recorded tracks, after the song had been completed, but while the session musicians were still on hand. This ability, heretofore a farfetched pipedream, was made possible by cutting the place where a 'bridge' could be later inserted. The band then played the bridge section, the software did the non-destructive punch, and the engineer fine-

tuned the punch-in after it had been performed. (Initially, he had the computer punch-in early and punch-out late). After this take was complete, he resized the punch-in for each track (based upon where the player had hit the first note), and the resulting edit was perfect. This technical feat could not be performed in any other medium. The session was fantastic and the moderately speedy PC (priced likely around \$1,000 with similar priced software) was solid and outstanding. I am still not ready to replace a Neve and a finely tuned Studer tape deck for all situations, but I

can say that tracking to the home PC, or in this case a studio PC, was a dream.

The engineer who becomes truly creative and facile is like another musician at the session, and the instrument played is the computer. Who was the smarty-pants who turned audio signals into visual building blocks? And whoever dreamed that Lego would train future recording engineers?

Yeah, I am talking about looping. I first became aware of the technology through Sonic Foundry's Acid back in the dark ages in the last millennium. I

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remember thinking, "That's fun, but you can't make real music with that?"

Until recently, a dedicated looping program was required to build grooves, using loops which then had to be exported piecemeal to a digital audio program where overdubs could be added. It was creative in a new way, but pretty clumsy. This changed for me shortly after opening a shiny new Pandora's box from the fine folks at Cakewalk. Sonar 2, as a digital audio program, performs solidly, and one wouldn't expect anything less. But Sonar 2 has added the ability to work with "acidized" loops. What does this mean? It means that from an interface common to almost all audio platforms, you can record in the usual linear fashion, add MIDI and loops seamlessly, and all data will be accepted as if it were from the same format.

If your current audio program doesn't have this ability, it soon will, and if you are in the market for software, buy a program that works with loops as well. The ability, in real-time, to add something like a swinging sax loop over a straight multitrack drum recording adds flexibility and creativity previously unattainable. This all-in-one approach to recording audio is like being a kid and having Mom tell you it's fine to eat ice cream with your steak and mashed potatoes. You might learn that it isn't worth doing, but it was fun finding out.

And Now For Something Completely Different: Plug-Ins

It wasn't all that long ago that a digital effects unit of questionable quality would cost \$2,500. Worse yet, you could spend significantly more for a good sounding compressor to patch into merely one instrument on one channel of your very expensive mixing console. I am here to gleefully tell you that those days are over. Oh, it gets better!

When you buy a software plug-in, you don't just get one. No way. We are presently living in the future. You may re-use it on as many audio

"Engineering note: Much like owning a fast car; just because you can drive faster than everyone else doesn't mean you should."

tracks as your little processor can handle. You can literally buy one good physical-modelling compressor and turn it into 40! (Engineering note: Much like owning a fast car; just because you can drive faster than everyone else doesn't mean you should.)

Plug-ins are the dark matter of the software cosmos, mysterious and deceiving. Some have pretty interfaces and sound bad; others appear visually conservative and sound wonderful. I could probably write an entire book that described in detail the manifold pitfalls of such things as plug-ins which aren't truly 24-bit and therefore add artifacts as bit-depth and word length become



more complex. But such a book would be obsolete by printing time. (Well actually, my version of the book, unlike some of my contemporaries who work solely on Macs, would be short. To wit, "...Listen carefully, now. Does it sound good? Yes? Well then, plug it in, plug it in." End of book.)

There are dozens of different reverb plug-ins. By their nature

running those two or three reverbs, you will likely bog-down your computer. The screen will update slowly, laboriously switching from the mixer view to the editing screen. To combat this problem, I often print my reverb to a stereo track. The average 7200 RPM, 40 GB drive can play around 100 simultaneous audio tracks. (I sometimes like to use

endo of the 'hard drive' to be superior. Ahem). With a solid rough mix up, I copy the vocal to another track (sometimes called cloning) and add my reverb plug-in to the cloned track. On the "wet/dry" control of the reverb I will slide it to 100 per cent wet, then turn the overall track volume down till my new "reverb" track is sitting at the level I want. At this point I change reverb parameters to find the desired reverb sound. At the precise moment of ambient epiphany (when it sounds good, eh?), I "apply" the effect to the track. This frees the processor to run faster and allows automation to control the amount of reverb on the vocal by simply moving the fader of the reverb track.

EQs and delays, comparatively, use very little processor power. You can likely plug an EQ and/or delay into every track in your mix. (Just remember it's like a fast car...)

Compressors use up slightly more processor power, especially those of the physical-modelling variety. Physical models aren't girls dancing around in workout suits on TSN; they are plug-ins

"Mixing on the computer is a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, you have all the time in the world to get the mix that you want, but on the other hand, you have all the time in the world to get the mix that you want."

they will use up the most processor power. On a reasonably fast system, while mixing 32 tracks of audio and using a handful of EQs, compressors and delays, you can expect to get away with no more than two, or perhaps three different reverbs. But when

this as a pick-up line. Incidentally, Alan Doyle of Great Big Sea recommends to his struggling bachelor friends the line, "Would you rather be hit over the head by a cabbage or a lettuce?" This works surprisingly well, but I have found the innu-

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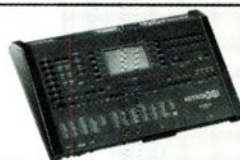
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that use variable algorithms in order to mimic specific colourations or 'non-linearities' found in electronic components (not a good pick-up line). In easier terms, they sound like expensive stuff, eh?

Physical modelling can currently be found in almost every facet of software. Antares Mic Modeler is a handy little plug-in to have on-hand to achieve the signature colourations of mics not actually in your arsenal. This plug-in, when used on a signal recorded with a good quality, neutral sounding condenser mic, can give excellent results.

Not only can you save money on microphones these days, you can also save money on instruments. The new "virtual" instruments that can be "plugged" into your audio program allow you to play samples, synthesizers and physically-modelled acoustic instruments from a MIDI keyboard, plugged into your computer. Programs like Gigasampler allow you to play pianos or strings without many of the limitations that standard synths and keyboards impose. For example, it is possible to generate a note that will

take 40 seconds or more to decay – just like a real piano. Though these samples require more than a gigabyte of storage, they sound fantastic and it is only currently possible to achieve this on a computer-based system.

There are now scads of physical-modelling reverbs. These reverbs actually take the signal and apply reverb signatures normally found in places like churches and arenas. If you're anything like me, I just hate it when I want to get the reverb of GM Place for a particular track, but can't get in because the Canucks are playing.

Another physical-model fave, and friend to assistant engineers everywhere, is the amp simulator. Let's be honest, there is something fiendishly gratifying about sending the dutiful assistant into the dank, skanky torture chamber used for guitar amp isolation, containing beer-stained amps and discarded crisp packets, where cacophonous guitars must be cranked to 11 while each unit is put through its paces. Though the miserable blighter (coffee boy/girl/assistant) has no headphones, you blithely com-

mand his every move through the talkback. He contorts himself into impossible positions trying to get 'that perfect monster guitar sound' as, en masse, the band and producer repair to the lounge for refreshments. But I digress.

Recently I have found it quite efficient, although not as gratifying, to audition virtual amp and mic combinations while listening to the guitar being played (without bleed from the amp room). I can be confident in knowing that the sound I have dialed-up will slot into the sound picture nicely. Oh the joys of living in the future.

Mixing on the computer is a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, you have all the time in the world to get the mix that you want, but on the other hand, you have all the time in the world to get the mix that you want. It does, however, take a little longer to mix when you only have access to one fader at a time. This is in fact one of the biggest limitations of such a method. Of course our buddies, the manufacturers, have been working on this one. And this



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year, if you are a practicing 'gadgetarian', is the year you will add one of the fancy new control surfaces to the home studio. The control surface is an external piece of hardware that allows for multiple panning, supplies fader knobs, and furnishes transport controls to give that real studio feel. But hey, if you are going to spend that kind of money, why not a little more and get a digital mixing console to take some of the processing weight off of your computer? This frees up your processor to work on its specialty tasks, while the digital mixer becomes the tactile control sur-

face. And then, if you are going to spend that amount ... for just a little more...

No, there really isn't an end in sight. Only a decade ago, we looked ahead and anticipated the day we could record, mix and master at home all in the digital domain. Maybe I am not as visionary as I should be, but I really didn't foresee compressing audio files with MP3 software so I could send songs directly to the radio station where they could be instantly added to a play list. (Nor did I foresee the converse and nightmarish scenario of sending a mix-in-progress to a

management company on the other side of the world, allowing them to "take part in the mixing process"). With the new software, we are able to compress music to a dynamic range of 4dB (so loud the meters never move). Meanwhile, there are manufacturers who would have us believe that 16-bit (a dynamic range of around 90dB and about 86dB more than we apparently need for a club mix) is not enough; we must record 24-bit signals so that we may squash it to within an inch of its life! Not so the audio sounds better, but just to be louder than the other guys.

And for the future, the true future? A word of caution: We will be able to ask the computer to do unbelievable things like lift and separate parts and samples from recordings old or new, clean or distorted. Louis Armstrong's trumpet lifted from a Zeller's Christmas Compilation CD, gunshots counted and triangulated in Dealey Plaza. We will be able to exhume things from recordings we didn't even know were there. Beware! Remember this as you swear at the singer, believing that no one will ever hear what you really said, while you hit the red virtual record button on the virtual interface of your virtual recording studio.

In short, it comes as no surprise that software and the home computer have the ability to alter and re-invent music in ways we never thought possible. And, to mockingly paraphrase Charlton Heston, it's not the computers and software that ruin music, it's the people that use them. Continuing to find ways to creatively use the tools in your virtual arsenal will ensure that music production and the music industry remain a satisfying blend of science and art.

For a complete list of music and audio software suppliers, visit www.canadianmusician.com/software for links to the companies' Web sites.

Alec Watson is a Recording Engineer located in Nanaimo, BC, who has spent numerous years working in both Canada and Nashville, TN. He is co-owner of VinSync, a BC-based production company which you can find online at www.vinsync.com.

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about communication we're not talking about self-indulgence'

Part II

This is part two of *CM*'s three-part series delving into all that is Tom Wilson and his unique writing style. Widely recognized as a rebel in the industry, Tom sat down with us and shared his views on where good songs come from. A word of caution to our more sensitive readers, the following article contains language more appropriate for sailors and industry veterans. *Canadian Musician* neither supports nor endorses the use of such language, though we have been known to mutter such things under our breath and in the privacy of our own homes.

Canadian Musician: Could you walk us through how you go about writing a song?

Tom Wilson: I think, being an ex-addict, I find that creative energy – the creative process – is the most addictive non-substance that I think you can get your hands on. I think that everybody has the potential in them to create whether it's painting, or writing a short story, play, poem or music. We've all got it in us. It's just a question of unleashing that. It's kind of like if you're 30 years old and you've never been laid, the potential for you to go out and get a blowjob is there, but if you've never got one, you don't know what you're missing 'cause you're a fucking idiot. It's the same thing with creative energy, if nobody tells you that it's there for you, that you've got this inside you and you can unleash this and you can let it out, and that it's really rewarding then you'll never know that you've got it. You'll never know that it's there for you.

CM: Is there anything in particular that you do, like a certain song you put on to spark those juices, or a painting you look at, anything like that at all?

TW: I don't know ... books have always inspired me more than music as far as writing goes. Good ideas – conversation is really No. 1 on the list as far as getting inspiration. People in a bus terminal, people in a bar, you catch on to some things that they say and you've got great songs there. Also, I

consider myself really fortunate to be living in Hamilton, because I think that being in a big city you're always looking over your shoulder, you're always watching what your buddy is doing, you're always watching. Every corner you turn, there's 10 people doing the same fucking boring thing, you know what I mean? In smaller cities like Hamilton or Winnipeg or St. Catharines (you know Ron Sexsmith is from St. Catharines) it's a great place to start forming your own style. It's like when Junkhouse went to Toronto from Hamilton nobody had ever seen anything as ridiculous as that. It was loud and obnoxious and we didn't give a shit, and everyone in Toronto was being a little ponsy Rheostatic. I'm not slagging anybody, I'm just saying that the actual geographic surroundings that you're in can lend a lot to how you develop your style.

CM: Do you start with pen or pick? Meaning, do you write down the lyrics first or do you kick off the process by strumming it out on the guitar?

TW: It's 50/50 for me. Sometimes singing a little melody and just finding something, trying to fit that square peg in a round hole makes you come up with interesting things. Also simplicity is so important. I've always said this, I could write the song that puts all the fish back in the sea, and I could write the song that fills up the hole in the ozone layer, and nobody would give a shit, but people want to hear "Out Of My Head" for the rest of my life. It's like a two-chord song, there's nothing to it, but simplicity really rules. We're talking about communication. We're not talking about self-indulgence. We can self-indulge ourselves all we want and it doesn't make us any happier, I think really the job that we have is to communicate. And I think that as artists we're happier communicating with people and knowing that we're connecting with people. And we're not dumbing it down, which is the term in this industry, in the movie industry and the entertainment industry. It's just making it simple man ... conversation.

When I sit down to write with people, when I do re-writes with people and they're kind of getting frilly with their words, I say to them, 'If you were sitting in the Royal Hotel or the Balmoral Hotel in Hamilton, and you were talking like that, you would get a beer bottle broken over your head.' If I sat down with you in some bar, how would I talk to you and say 'I'm really fucking bummed out man, my wife left me and I've got no money,' or 'Hey man, I just met this chick and we just fucked and it's fucking great and we get along and I slept over at her house.' How would I explain that? Would I frill it all up like the Moody Blues or Yes or Procol Harum? Or would I make it sound like I'm from Hamilton, like I'm talking about it? So communication is really important, and communicating in the simplest terms as far as I'm concerned.

Tom Wilson, best known for fronting the rock band Junkhouse, has won numerous accolades including three Junos during his iconic career in the Canadian music industry. The first album in his recently launched solo career, Planet Love sees Tom explore new areas of himself both musically and personally. For more information on Tom and his album, click on www.tomwilson.net.



with Tom Wilson

recording options indie for the artist



recording

These days, the independent artist or group has to weigh many different options when it comes to recording – unlike the major label artist who usually gets the opportunity to record and mix in a world class studio because the record company is paying for it. Unless you're an independent artist with lots of money, world-class recording facilities are not in the realm of financial possibility. (For a more detailed description of a world class facility, see my April 1996 *Canadian Musician* article, "If This Were Anywhere Between 1970-1990, We'd All Be A Little Less Confused").

Since I work with many independent artists, I make it my business to seek out recording facilities that are high in quality but do not have a world class price tag. Being a recording engineer/producer for over 25 years, it's easy for me to evaluate a studio's quality by just seeing an equipment list (although I have been known to say that "equipment isn't everything" and it's true). Musicians however, usually do not have this knowledge and need help in determining what the good options are for recording their project. In that April 1996 article, I broke down recording equipment and quality into four distinct categories:

1. World Class
2. Professional
3. Semi-professional
4. Consumer/Home Recording

Since world class recording is too expensive and consumer recording is quite often not competitive, marketable quality, the "Professional" and the "Semi-Professional" categories are the ones in which a lot of marketable recordings are being made. Can you hear the difference in these two cat-

egories of recording? Yes, definitely. How much does it matter in today's recording world where anything goes? I'm not sure. There are some "Lo-Fi" recordings (meaning mediocre audio quality) on the radio that have done very well because the *music* is great. If you have the right person doing the engineering and/or producing, even a semi-professional studio can produce great results. However, having said that, I also think that there is too much inappropriate use of "basement" studios when a more professional format was needed.

The major differences between a professional studio and a semi-professional studio are the recording console, the multitrack tape formats, the microphone/mic pre-amp collection and the quality of outboard gear. If a studio has a Mackie board, three ADAT machines, no condenser microphones and two \$300 effects processors, then this is a semi-professional studio. If a studio has a console made by SSL, Neve, API, Sony/MCI, Amek, Westar or DDA and has both digital and analog recording formats, many condenser mics and effects processors, this is a professional studio.

So the question is, if you are an indie musician or group wanting to record and don't know anything about equipment differences, how can you evaluate a studio? The answer is, you can't, not by yourself. The best way around this is to find someone knowledgeable to help you. Other musicians are the best resource for knowing good people to talk to. If you're not already connected to or know an independent engineer and/or producer, then ask around. Having an independent engineer and/or producer to help with initial decisions will give you the most unbiased outlook on the situation.

Engineers and producers who are employees of studios will do anything they can to promote the studio they work for, even if it's not right for your project. The success of your project is directly related to the thoroughness of your research in this area. Be sure to get as many opinions and references as you can and make sure to not be swayed by just one enthusiastic reference. Meet with people personally but don't get talked into paying for that first meeting. In my opinion, offering an initial free consultation is a common business courtesy.

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



by Karen Kane



touring tricks techniques

Put All Your Ducks In A Row

Old sound engineers never die, they just move to Vegas and run sound for singers our parents listened to. Well, at least that happened to some sound engineers that I know, including myself for a short time. It was a bit of a learning curve moving from mixing mostly rock and pop bands to artists that were without a doubt the only star of the show. Their names are on the marquee, and the fans buying the tickets want to be sure to hear that singer's golden pipes well above any musical distraction.

What I discovered early in my new career direction was that conventional mixing didn't necessarily work, and I would continually chase my tail. First, I'd turn up a keyboard patch, and then I'd turn down the percussion. Soon I'd reach for a guitar mic, and then ... well, you get the picture. The funny thing was, as I would reach up to turn something down, the musicians were already backing off the gas pedal, having spent years mixing themselves on stage. What I learned was, never let the star vocalist get lost in the mix as you play the game of "chase the offending instrument."

The simplest way to make sure I'm not losing the vocalist is to group everything except the star vocal into one VCA group. This way I can mix the show with two fingers. One is on the band and one on the star. If some part of the band gets too loud, I turn the whole band mix down to ensure the vocalist is clear and on top and then sort out the culprit before fading the whole band mix back in.

This all may sound a bit extreme, but you can't really know how tough these gigs can be until you try them. It doesn't often happen that a fan will come out of the audience at the end of the show and mention to you that the keyboards were a touch low. You *know* you will hear, and usually your boss will as well, if his vocals were not the primary element of the mix. Make your life easy

and group everything except the star on one VCA.

The musicians in the band are usually not around more than a couple years at a time, and we sound engineers come and go from those gigs as well, but that star will be in Vegas well into the 21st century, so do your duty and let the fans hear him or her as clear as crystal.

Group Rates

Okay. Let's face it. It's all about money, right? In this day and age of cutting back on costs, we have all been forced to cut corners and rethink how we approach the necessity of certain equipment. We've also been asked to minimize our footprint on the Front of House riser. One way that space can be saved is by cutting back on the amount of compressors you take on the road.

On a recent tour, I put the main instruments and most of the vocals that needed to be compressed into stereo subgroups and then inserted stereo compressors across those groups. One rack space, one stereo compressor, and a whole group of vocals or instruments are processed. End result: a lot of space was saved. With the new consoles on the scene now, loaded with virtual dynamics and onboard software-driven signal processing, the days of racks and racks of gates, compressors, and effects units are soon to be gone. We are also seeing "8-in, 8-out" interface devices, such as BSS Soundweb, that process the signal in a bunch of ways; this further eliminates rack-mounted compressors and EQ units.

I agree with this philosophy of downsizing when it comes to tours that go for a long period of time, where things get set and pretty much left alone. When I do a one-off and have very little time to get set up, however, sitting down with a mouse and new software is a scary thought, and definitely not the fastest way to go. That being said, the onboard stuff is really close (at the

time of this writing) to being just as great sounding, and user-friendly to operate, as the rack-mounted stuff. We are already seeing rack mounted consoles that operate with a mouse and screen, or small mainframes with a few VCAs and channel strips to replace the monoliths we now mix on. The learning curve may be a bit steep, but when the first big tour goes out there with a Front of House riser that is 8' x 8', we are all going to have to follow suit. Because I've seen this coming, I have tried to consolidate my rack space and get used to the "downsizing mindset."

One great way to accomplish this is to gang those compressors up into subgroups. It works well. You may lose a little control over individual vocals or instruments, but on average you will be just as pleased and keep costs and real estate requirements down. Let's get with the new way of thinking and keep ourselves employed. And if you're still not convinced, think of all the P-touch labels that you'll save not having to mark all those compressors at the start of the tour.

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



by Jim Yakabuski



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recording agreements

Part I

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

Introduction

This article is the first of a two-part article reviewing the major terms found in a typical Canadian Major Record Company recording contract. Of course, individual circumstances can vary widely depending on the bargaining power of the artist.

Major Record Company

When we use the term "Major Record Company" ("MRC") we mean one of the following companies in Canada: Warner Bros., Universal, BMG, EMI and Sony. Several other record companies in Canada including Jive, Aquarius, and Nettwerk can, on occasion, make competitive offers against MRCs. Smaller record companies may be more flexible on the length of term and creative control issues whereas MRCs are often stronger in the financial guarantees of artist advances, recording funds, video budgets, tour support, etc. All of these terms are discussed below.

Term

Every recording agreement should explicitly outline how long the contract is for. Typically, the term is tied to a delivery commitment for a particular number of albums. In most instances a Major Recording Company will attempt to tie up the artist for as many albums as possible with the maximum being up to eight albums. The artist (or their representatives) should attempt to reduce this requirement to as few albums as possible (three to six).

The MRC will commit to producing and releasing one album and will retain options to the remaining albums. It is important to remember, although a recording agreement may be for up to eight albums the MRC will not guarantee to fund the production of all eight albums. It is *their* option to decide whether or not they wish to extend the relationship with the artist beyond the first album.

Occasionally an artist may be able to have the MRC commit to a guaranteed two albums but rarely beyond that. The artist tries to get the MRC to commit to as many albums as possible and to reduce the overall option periods as much as possible. The reduction of option periods will hopefully put the artist in a better position to re-negotiate an extension of their current agreement

if they enjoy success on their first four or five albums. As we know, artists rarely reach the end of their option periods with the MRC; however, it doesn't hurt to plan ahead just in case.

Advances

Normally when an artist signs a recording agreement with an MRC the artist will receive an advance of approximately \$20,000 to \$50,000 Cdn. This is money for the artist to use at the artist's sole discretion. Often this money is used to pay living expenses, management commissions, legal fees and artist debts. This money, especially if it is the sole source of income for the artist, must also provide for the artist's basic living needs (i.e. food, rent, etc.) before, during and after the recording of the first album under the MRC agreement. Sometimes MRCs will kick in further monies when the artist is in desperate need – other times they won't and the artist may be forced to entertain a publishing offer or work a second job prior to release of the first album.

The artist will receive further artist advances for subsequent albums under the recording agreement when, and if, the MRC elects to exercise its option(s).

[Note to reader: do not forget to address Goods and Services Tax (GST) issues under this section.]

Recording Budgets/Funds

The agreement will also guarantee a minimum amount for recording each album. An average guaranteed recording budget for a first album would likely range between \$100,000 to \$200,000 depending on the anticipated recording costs for the artist. Many times recording companies will guarantee a minimum recording budget but authorize larger actual recording budgets once the process of recording the actual album begins. Very few albums are recorded for amounts lower than the recording budgets granted in the agreement.

It is important to understand the distinction between recording "Budgets" and recording "Funds" in a recording agreement. "Recording Budgets" are often bare minimums where, if the artist comes in under budget, the surplus does NOT go to the artist; whereas "Recording Funds" pay any recording money surplus, remaining after delivery of the applicable album, to

the Artist. Make sure this is clarified in the agreement.

Recoupment

This issue of recoupment is important to understand. In brief, many of the costs incurred by the record company such as artist advances; recording budgets; tour support and video monies are paid back to the MRC through the artist's royalty (described below). For example, if the record company costs listed above totalled \$450,000 and the artist's royalty was \$1.50 per album, the artist would need to sell 300,000 copies of their album (triple platinum in Canada!) to be in a "recouped" position.

On the bright side of the equation the advances described above are *only* recoupable from artist royalties under the agreement and are "non-returnable" so, if you don't recoup under your agreement you do not have to repay the MRC through your personal funds. In addition, many of the MRCs costs such as marketing, promotion, and other overhead costs are not included in the recoupable amounts.

Next Issue

Next issue we will review Royalties, Territory, Creative Control, Controlled Composition Clauses/Mechanicals, Video Budgets and Tour Support. Join us.

Chris Taylor is a music lawyer with the law firm of Sanderson Taylor and works with Grammy Award Nominees, Nelly Furtado, Gerald Eaton and Brian West among others. Find him online at www.sandersontaylor.com.



by Chris Taylor, B.A., LL.B.



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- ☐ September/October - David Clayton-Thomas, Downchild Blues Band, Nash the Slash, Hearing Loss, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Jazz Clubs
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1989

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Roland MC-09 PhraseLab

The Art of Chords



A new book by Stéphane Gagnon, *The Art of Chords*, takes a new approach on teaching guitar players how to read and understand chords. With knowledge of only six chords, two basic formulas and

some rudiment of music theory, anyone can understand and play more than 9,000 possible guitar chords.

The fully illustrated, step-by-step instruction includes chord theory, organization of the guitar neck, reading a chord's name, individual chord analysis, tips and memory tricks, written exercises, practical exercises and a complete chord dictionary.

The book is supported by the Web site, www.guitar-tracks.com, where readers can find MP3 backing tracks, links and resources. Also, the book is available in both English and French.

For more information, contact: Canadian Print Music Distributors, Inc., 4500 Sheppard Ave. E., #47G, Toronto, ON M1S 3R6 (416) 293-1200, FAX (416) 293-4318, service@musicbooks.com, www.musicbooks.com/cpm.



Roland has recently released the MC-09 PhraseLab, a desktop tool that combines a four-part audio looper with a DSP monosynth capable of creating lead, bass and rhythm sound as well, the unit includes a vintage step sequencer, onboard effects, optional SmartMedia storage and more.

The MC-09's DSP synth section is a modeled analog monosynth, which utilizes the PhraseLab's keypads or MIDI to trigger the sounds. Six real-time control knobs are used to tweak the sounds, while a 32-step sequencer offers Roland's popular TR-REC method for programming drum patterns using a grid.

The unit's four-part audio looper can capture and loop up to four monophonic phrases, each up to six seconds in length. The MC-09 is fully capable of sampling phrases from external sources via line inputs, and since the PhraseLab uses BPM and measures, automatic looping is simple.

The PhraseLab also features onboard effects. Four algorithms provide Filter, Isolator, Phaser and Slicer effects, which can be applied to any of the four audio loops or to live inputs. All is controlled in real-time via the aforementioned knobs; and all data – including synth/effects patches, sequences and audio – can be conveniently stored on optional SmartMedia.

For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music Ltd., 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V8V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552, info@roland.ca, www.roland.ca.

ToneBone Tube Distortion Pedals

Radial Engineering, a division of JP CableTek Electronics Ltd., is pleased to announce its latest in guitar tube distortion pedals. The ToneBone Classic and the ToneBone Hot British distortion pedals

provide the guitarist with a wide range of sounds and effects.

The ToneBone Classic derives its tone from amplifiers used in the '60s and '70s, while the

ToneBone Hot British brings forth the modern aggressive sounds of the '80s, '90s and today. Both pedals feature drive output controls for setting levels, as well as low and high frequency active equalization, filtering, tone shaping and boost switches.

Both ToneBone pedals are housed in a compact foot-pedal enclosures and feature hybrid tube and transistor circuitry, which combine to provide tube warmth and tonal range. The footswitch also features true bypass operation, allowing the guitar to effortlessly pass through the pedal. The guitar interacts with the same 'feel' as playing with an amplifier. ToneBone pedals come equipped with a 15 V power supply.

For more information, contact: Radial Engineering, Building 100, 1638 Kebet Way, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 5W9 (604) 942-1001, FAX (604) 942-1010, info@cabletek.ca, www.radialeng.com.





Titanium Guitar Strings

Rohrbacher Technologies has unveiled their new corrosion proof Medium Tension Titanium Acoustic Guitar Strings.

The strings are constructed with electrochemically-matched materials to eliminate corrosion, and are designed to outlast conventional light gauge acoustic guitar strings (including coated strings).

Equivalent in cumulative tension to conventional light gauge acoustic strings, the set joins Rohrbacher's growing line of strings, which includes low-tension nickel and low-tension phosphor bronze wound (designed for finger-style play) as well as Dr. Buzz string cleaner/lubricant/protectant.

For more information, contact: Rohrbacher Technologies LLC, 10 Woodland Rd., Bordentown, NJ 08505 (609) 298-3915, FAX (609) 298-3915, rohrbacher@rohrtech.com, www.rohrtech.com.



Fender All-in-One KXR Series Amplifiers

Fender Musical Instruments Corp. has recently released a new amplifier series to its expansive line of musical instruments and professional audio products. The KXR Series offers convenient, all-in-one amplifiers with full frequency reproduction suitable for a variety of acoustic instruments as well as keyboards, drum machines and vocals. Available in two models (KXR 100 and KXR 60), these portable, road-worthy amps allow for a variety of applications.

The KXR 100 offers great sound and lasting value and is ideal for keyboard players. The amp is housed in an 80 W, 15" 4-ohm Fender Special Design speaker, weighing 55 lbs. and measuring 27.5" high, 20.5" wide and 12" deep. Features include one Dual Piezo-Electric high frequency horn, three channels with independent volume, 4-band Master EQ, Master Reverb, FX Loop and a Delta Comp Limiter for speaker protection.

The KXR 60 is medium sized (22" H x 18" W x 12" D) amp, sized right to fit in the back seat of a vehicle and ideal for club or single gigs. The amp is housed in a 12" 8-ohm Fender Special Design speaker, and weighs 51 lbs. Features include one Dual Piezo-Electric high frequency horn, two channels with independent volume, 4-band Master EQ, Master Reverb and FX Loop. This smaller amp also has a Delta Comp Limiter for speaker protection. Both amps come equipped with a headphone jack and RCA jacks for CD players, tape players, etc.

For more information, contact: Fender Musical Instrument Corps., 8860 E. Chaparral Rd., #100, Scottsdale, AZ 85250 (480) 596-9690, FAX (480) 596-1386, www.fender.com.

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Johnson Acoustic/ Electric Basses

Johnson has recently announced the release of two new instruments in their line of acoustic/electric basses.

The JG-622-E acoustic/electric jumbo bass is designed for beginning bassists. Built with a Spruce top and Nato neck for resonance and longevity. Some additional features include a Rosewood fretboard and bridge, nickel/silver frets and a 4-band EQ/pickup.

The JG-672 acoustic/electric bass is constructed with a Canadian Sitka Spruce top and Honduran Mahogany back and sides, and like the JG-622-E, it comes complete with a 4-band EQ and pickup.

For more information, contact: The Music Link Corporation, PO Box 162, Brisbane, CA 94005 (888) 552-5465, FAX (650) 615-8997, www.themusiclink.net.



Genz Benz GBE 400 Bass Amp

Genz Benz Enclosures has recently introduced their new line of Bass Amplification systems, the GBE 400.

The GBE 400 is the smaller brother of the GBE 600 and features a complete solid-state design with the ability to produce 450 W (@ 2 ohms), 330 W (@ 4 ohms) and 200 W (@ 8 ohms). The unit also offers active/passive input with signal mute, tuner out, 3-shape circuits, 5-band active EQ, front panel LED amplifier status display, master volume, limiter, XLR direct out with pre/post/ground lift switches, dual speakon and 1/4" speaker outputs and high-efficiency fan cooling. The GBE 400 comes in a black chassis with a brushed aluminium faceplate and silver metallic knobs.

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

QRS Self-Tuning Piano

QRS Music Technologies, makers of the Pianomation system, has recently introduced the Self-Tuning Piano.

The automated system tunes the piano by passing an electrical current through its strings and in turn warming or cooling the strings, which either lowers or heightens the pitch of the string respectively.

Eliminating the need to tune each of a piano's 250 strings, the Self-Tuning Piano tunes the entire instrument within 20 seconds at the push of a button. Invisible from the outside, the self-tuning system does not affect the tone quality of the piano at all.

The electrical current is applied to the strings via a circuit board fastened to the underside of the pinblock, while a series of magnetic pickups and sustaining coils, encased in a wooden strip beneath the strings, determines each string's frequency.

For more information, contact: QRS Music Technologies, 2011 Seward Ave., Naples, FL 34109 (941) 597-5888. FAX (941) 597-3936, qrs@qrsinc.com, www.qrsmusic.com.

Zeeta Guitar Amp

Maven Peal Instruments has recently released their newest guitar amplifier. Designed to help guitarists protect their hearing, the Zeeta guitar amplifier feature Maven Peal's new Sag Circuit, a patented new power supply design that gives guitars the sound they traditionally had to turn up the volume to get, now at volumes as low as 1/2 W.

With cases of tinnitus (that infernal ringing sound in may a musicians head caused by prolonged exposure to loud sound pressure levels) becoming more and more common, the Zeeta amp cuts down on risk by producing power amp distortion quietly. The Zeeta offers control knobs for sag control and for wattage control. Sag control allows the musician to adjust the amount of voltage sag, or power amp distortion. Wattage control allows guitarists to select the actual number of watts the amp is producing, giving them the ability to distort the power amp at whatever volume is appropriate for the venue they are in - it is not a Master Volume control or other preamp gimmick, but actually controls the power amp.

Available in 15, 30 and 50 W models, the Zeeta is encased in a finger-jointed, handcrafted pine cabinet.

For more information, contact: Maven Peal Instruments, Inc., 1270 Peck Hill Rd., Plainfield, VT 05667 (802) 456-1607. FAX (802) 456-1609. maven@peal.net, www.mavenpeal.com.

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70	COMMUNITY (WHITE RADIO)	3111
8	CREST (WHITE RADIO)	2972
24	D'ADDARIO US	3032
47	D'ANGELICO	3028
75	DEAN MARKLEY	3098
3	ELIXIR (GORE)	3031
74	FENDER (PARAMOUNT)	3113
15	FOSTEX (ERIKSON PRO)	3118
66	HARRIS INSTITUTE	3109
6	IBANEZ (EFKAY)	3100
53	JAZZTACTICS	3034
53	KETRON (FMZ MARKETING)	2858
14	KOCH (AUDIONOVA)	3103
67	KORG CANADA	3110
10,11	LARRIVEE GUITARS	3102
17	LEVY'S LEATHERS	3104
12	ONTARIO STAGING	2374
41	OVATION (B&J MUSIC)	2835
7	RODE (ADI)	3101
55	SANDERSON TAYLOR	3106
56	SAVED BY TECHNOLOGY	3107
57	SHURE BETA (SF MARKETING)	3059
61	SHURE ULX (SF MARKETING)	3116
79	STEINBERG	3114
37	TAYE DRUMS	2979
21	TC ELECTRONIC	3037
2	TREBAS INSTITUTE	2990
72	VOYAGER SOUND	3112
64	YAMAHA	3108
80	ZOOM (OMNIMEDIA)	3115

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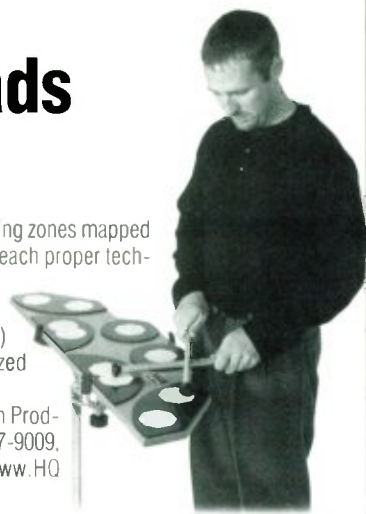
HQ Percussion Products has recently designed four new models of marching tenor drum practice pads for their line of RealFeel practice pads designed with the active tenor drummer in mind.

Tenor Practice Pads offer true-to-size playing surfaces, allowing a drummer to practice on a device that mimics the position of a tenor drum set. The practice pads come in a variety of sizes and some feature mapped out playing zones on drum surfaces in order to teach proper technique through playing areas.

The RF-TP-6LT is for players who use large size drums (10", 12", 13" and 14") with two 6" shot drums, while the RF-TP-5ST is for tenor players who use smaller drum surfaces (8", 10", 12" and 13") with

one 6" shot drum. Both of these models have playing zones mapped out and feature a target for each stick in order to teach proper technique through playing areas. For drummers who want more freedom to move around the drum surfaces, the RF-TP-6LS (for players of larger drums) and the RF-TP-6LS (for players of smaller sized drums) do not have playing zones mapped out.

For more information, contact: HQ Percussion Products, PO Box 430065, St. Louis, MO 63143 (314) 647-9009, FAX (314) 644-0097, GtwyPerc@aol.com, www.HQ Percussion.com.



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DW 9000 Series Limited Bass Drum Pedals



Drum Workshop has recently announced the addition of a limited number of DW 9000 Series bass drum pedals to its roster of drum accessories.

The DW 9000 Series pedals are made with titanium and handcrafted aluminum components, combining a sleek look with increased power, smoothness, speed and sensitivity. The pedal is designed with a variety of features including a free-floating rotor, which is independently mounted through the use of friction-reducing ball bearings. A free-floating spring assembly allows for moving the location of the spring from the end of the hex shaft to the centre of the pedal, maintaining vertical alignment of moving parts and preventing loss of energy. The DW 9000 also includes a Delta-Plus multi-bearing system, which utilizes friction-reducing ball bearings in the rotor, rocker and spring connector. A special feature of the units is the titanium footboard, used to lower the weight of the footboard, while vastly improving the pedal's balance and strength.

Only 500 single and 500 double Limited Edition Titanium DW 9000 Series pedals will be produced. Each pedal will include a sequential serial number and a certificate of authenticity signed by DW President, Don Lombardi and John Good.

For more information, contact: Drum Workshop, 3450 Lunar Ct., Oxnard, CA 93030 (805) 485-6999, FAX (805) 485-1334, www.dwdrums.com.



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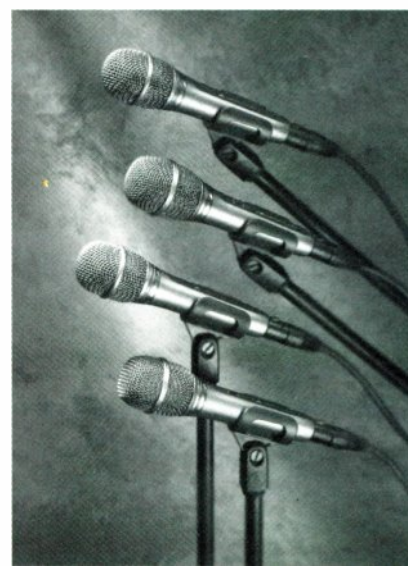
Audio-Technica has recently unveiled the next generation of live performance microphones – the Artist Elite Series. The series features four handheld microphones (two condenser and two dynamic) with each mic bringing sound quality to touring/live performance, club sound, broadcast, corporate facilities and worship venues.

The leader of the series is the AE5400 cardioid condenser microphone, which features a true condenser, large-diaphragm element design that delivers pristine sound for natural sounding vocals. The AE5400 features an aged vapour-deposited gold diaphragm for a flat frequency response with improved dynamic range and can handle high SPLs without sacrificing high-frequency performance.

The AE3300 cardioid condenser microphone offers performance for venues ranging from large areas to intimate club settings. The AE3300 provides detail, clarity and realism and features a well-tempered cardioid polar pattern. Both the AE3300 and the AE5400 feature anti-shock engineering, a switchable 80 Hz high pass filter, a 10dB pad, multi-level windscreen and include Audio-Technica's new AT8470 Quiet-Flex stand clamp.

The series also includes two handheld dynamic microphones, which include the AE6100 hypercardioid dynamic microphone and the AE4100 cardioid dynamic microphone. The AE6100 delivers a clean sound for great for a monitor cut and on-stage presence. It features a polar pattern tailored for heightened on-axis response and maximum feedback rejection. The AE4100 model was designed for more aggressive sound quality and keeps the vocals up-front in the mix while delivering superior gain-before-feedback. Both handheld mics have superior anti-shock engineering for low handling noise and also include the new AT8670 Quiet-Flex stand clamp.

For more information, contact: Audio-Technica US, Inc., 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224 (330) 686-2600, FAX (330) 688-3752, pro@atus.com, www.audiotechnica.com.



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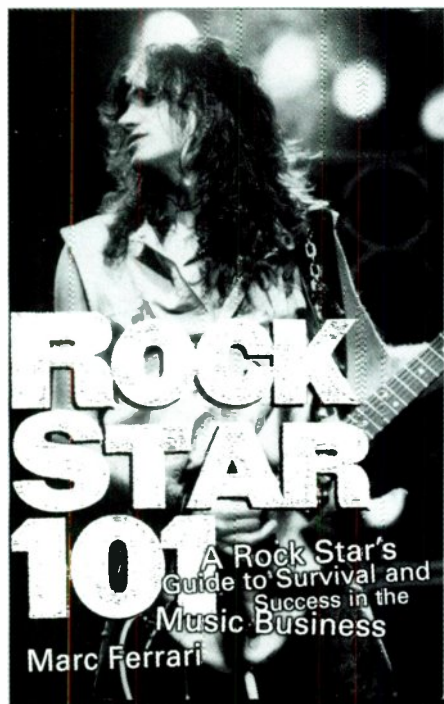
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Rock Star 101

Allworth Press has recently released their latest guide to survival and success in the music business, *Rock Star 101*. The book was penned by industry veteran Marc Ferrari, former guitarist for Keel, and accounts what it is to live the life of a Rock Star.

The book outlines how to make sure their talent is financially rewarded and how to apply their creativity to new sources of income. Readers will also learn about the professionals who help a band grow, when it is time to hire them and how to pick a team that promises optimum efficiency.

Some topics included in the book are: Understanding the business and legal elements of the music industry (negotiations, contracts, publishing, merchandising, endorsements, money management and more), protecting the band from legal and financial conflicts, negotiating a "key man clause" and other crucial contract elements, finding sideline work in music-related fields, set up convincing showcases or auditions with recording labels and developing a long-term perspective for one's musical success.

For more information, contact: Allworth Press, 10 E. 23rd St., #510, New York, NY 10010 (212) 777-8395, FAX (212) 777-8261, www.allworth.com.

B-1 Single-Diaphragm Condenser Mic

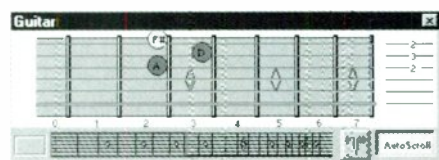
Behringer has recently added a new model to its line of professional microphones. The B-1 is a single-diaphragm condenser microphone especially designed with home studio musicians and recording engineers in mind.

The B-1 reproduces sound with incredible accuracy, realism and sensitivity and boasts exceptional clarity and dynamic range in both vocal and instrumental performances. The mic features a shock-mounted 1", gold-sputtered, single-diaphragm capsule and delivers a wide frequency response from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. This is enhanced by a pronounced presence boost with a level peak at around 12 kHz, making equalization unnecessary in many recording situations.

The mic is ideal for close miking in a variety of live and studio applications. Featuring a cardioid pattern, switchable high-pass filter, -10dB pad and maximum SPL of 148dB, the mic is designed with low-noise transformerless FET circuitry. The B-1 is +48 V phantom powered and is constructed with a satin, nickel-plated brass body. A hard case, suspension mount and windscreens are also included.

For more information, contact: Behringer Canada Ltd., PO Box 24043 Dartmouth, NS B3A 4T4 (902) 860-2677, FAX (902) 860-2078, a.maurik@behringer.de, www.behringer.com.

Guitar Synth v2.1



Lateral Solution has released the latest version of their innovative Guitar Synth software. Version 2.1 of the virtual polyphonic guitar synthesizer allows you to control the synthesizer built into your soundcard, or an external synthesizer, by playing an electric guitar in real-time.

Not requiring any modifications to the instrument, Guitar Synth only needs a standard electric guitar connected to the microphone input of your soundcard (via a patch cord and a 1/4" to 5.25 mm audio adapter).

Some of the features include full electric guitar note range of C0 to C#5, a string bending mode, sampling speeds up to 106 Hz and a Save as MIDI option. The software also allows you to save all your settings as well as change Bias level, Dynamics and Fingerpicking ratio. To run the software you will require a PC running a minimum of Windows 95/98/Me/2000/NT4/XP, 32 MB of RAM, 300 MHz processor, an 800 x 600 screen resolution and 16-bit colour display. A slightly disabled demo version can be downloaded for free at the company's Web site.

For more information, contact: Lateral Solution Ltd., 91 Onley St., Norwich, UK NR2 2EA, sales@lateralsol.com, www.lateralsol.com.





Alesis airSynth

Alesis has recently unveiled the airSynth, a tabletop product that produces dramatic synthesized sounds and sound effects.

A follow-up to the Alesis airFX, the airSynth is the second product to incorporate Alesis Semiconductor's revolutionary new patent-pending Axyz (pronounced ax-is) technology. Infrared Axyz technology allows the user to control up to five sound variables simultaneously by utilizing the invisible 3-D sphere above the unit with moving a hand left to right, forward and backward or up and down over the product to create different sounds.

The simple user interface consists of a single knob, which is used to select, engage, bypass, freeze and release a given sound and a LED indicates the current sound program.

The airSynth features a broad range of sound effects, synthesized noises and sound sets including 50 staccato, percussive, legato continuous pads, drum sounds, and sounds that emulate things in nature. Playing airSynth involves simply pressing the knob to engage the patch and then moving a hand through the invincible infrared sphere to create sounds.

airSynth features a frequency range of 20 Hz to 20 kHz, 24-bit converters and can be integrated with airFX via stereo RCA inputs and outputs without using an external mixer. Accessories include a 9-volt AC external power supply and a threaded socket on the base of the unit to allow the airSynth to be mounted on a microphone stand for ease of use in clubs and studios. The airSynth is ideal for use in live performances, DJ applications, music post-production and on-air broadcast applications.



For more information, contact: Intellimix Corp., 6057 Thimens Blvd., St. Laurent, PQ H4S 1V8 (514) 333-6001, FAX (514) 333-5379, salesinfo@intellimix.com, www.intellimix.com.

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by Jim Kelly

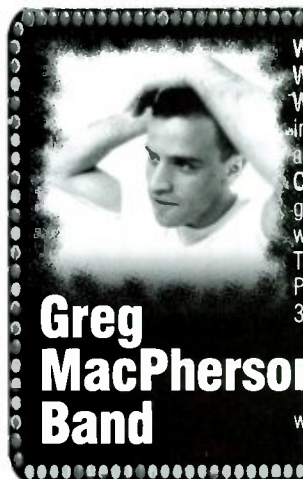
Since the release of her 2000 debut, *2 Little Birds*, Christine Fellows has become a vibrant fixture on the Winnipeg music scene, and has begun to spread her wings across the country. *The Last One Standing* is her deliciously distinctive follow-up. Some call it avant-folk; others label it chamber-pop. I just call it wonderful. Fellows' remarkably oblique approach to song construction and lyric writing creates music that is at once calming and oddly disturbing, but never less than completely captivating. Cello and viola wrap loving arms around Fellows' refreshingly atypical piano style and charming vocals, with warm support from accordion, thumb piano, bowed glockenspiel and tastefully applied percussion. She says she's not an avid music listener, but rather finds her inspiration in other art forms such as dance, and in the people immediately around her. "On this record, I did a lot of dedications for people," says Fellows, "which is very unlike me, but it just seemed appropriate, and it was an interesting way to work." With songs as alluring as these, maybe she should stick with that approach. "Regrets" is a courtly backward glance at paths taken and declined. "Roadkill" is a more sobering exercise in hindsight, surveying a flattened relationship in the rear view. And "Veda's Waltz" is a gentle gift of hope with its delicious refrain. "It's not too late for the battle-scarred/Here's your parade and your tinfoil stars." Decidedly distinctive and uniquely talented, Christine Fellows' star is definitely on the rise.



Christine Fellows

Who: Christine Fellows
Where: Winnipeg, MB
What: Tantalizingly original avant-folk-pop
Contact: Shauna de Cartier, Sixshooter Records, 98038 Queen St. E, Toronto, ON, M4M 1J0
(416) 465-2459, FAX (416) 532-0331, shauna@sixshooterrecords.com, www.christinefellows.com

When your stock-in-trade is gritty, unblinking observations from life's dustier corners and rougher edges, and your songs are populated by everyday folks desperately riding stillborn dreams, and when you serve up gutsy guitar rock with a bit of muscle, perhaps the Bruce Springsteen comparisons are inevitable. But that's okay, because Greg MacPherson wears it well, which is to say that he has the writing chops and the talent to stand on his own. Released this past March, the Winnipegger's second album, *Good Times Coming Back Again*, has reviewers raving. With Steve Bates (Bulletproof Nothing, XOXO) on guitar and Jason Tait (The Weakerthans) on drums, MacPherson creates a lean and sparse sound that's a perfect vehicle for his incisive and intelligent lyrics. Being tagged 'socially conscious guy in Winnipeg' doesn't necessarily bother MacPherson. "But I'm kind of all over the place too," he says. "There are tunes that are stories and tunes that are more snapshots. It can go in lots of different directions." So you get the hard driving rock of "The Day The Water Dried Up From The Tap", the gloomy, haunted soundscape of "Remote Control", the jaunty apathy anthem "Numbers", a faded diorama of lives lived in numb stasis, and the lead-off track, "Good Times", which MacPherson infuses with such a sense of menace that it begs the question: good times for whom? The band hopes to be touring Eastern Canada by late summer. If you're looking for the future of Canadian rock 'n' roll, take a gander at the Greg MacPherson Band.



Greg MacPherson Band

Who: Greg MacPherson Band
Where: Winnipeg, MB
What: Raw, lean rock with intelligence, conscience and soul
Contact: (204) 943-8419, greg_macpherson@hotmail.com, www.gregmacpherson.com
The G7 Welcoming Committee, PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3
(204) 947-2002, FAX (204) 947-3202, www.g7welcomingcommittee.com

Touchtone Gurus is a fast-rising Saskatoon foursome who has a lot to offer. Their second release, *Shoegazing*, is a wonderfully self-assured collection of melodic modern pop/rock with more hooks than a meat factory. Three songs — "Radio Show", "Take My Hand" and "Trickle Down" — made an impact on the college charts, while the singles "Nico-tine" and "Tell Me About Your Day" received some well-deserved mainstream airplay. The band enjoys a wide variety of influences, including The Beatles and Radiohead, with songwriting shared equally among the band members. "We don't really aim for any particular genre of sound," says bassist Steve Bunka. "We'll take the mood of the song and accompany it with whatever music it takes to create the best vibe for that song." The band is currently working on their third album with producer Bryan Potvin of the Northern Pikes. According to Bunka, the new record, which they hope to release in September, will offer a diverse assortment of styles from light pop/rock to more conventional rock and "moody rock", and even some country-influenced tracks. The two-year game plan is to release the album on their own, shop it to radio, get a video out and hit the touring circuit. If the new record continues the fine quality of work found on *Shoegazing*, I wouldn't be the least bit surprised to hear these guys all over the radio in the near future. The Gurus are sure to be a band you'll want to keep in touch with.



Touchtone Gurus

Who: Touchtone Gurus
Where: Saskatoon, SK
What: Irresistibly catchy modern pop-rock
Contact: Yvonne Valnea, Last Tango Productions, (416) 538-1838, lastango@pathcom.com, www.touchtonegurus.com

Jim Kelly is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

If you are unsigned and would like to be a part of **Showcase**, send us a complete bio, glossy black & white photo (no computer print-outs or scans) and a cassette/CD of your music. Send your complete package to **Showcase**, *Canadian Musician*, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3. Showcase also appears on the *Canadian Musician* Web site at www.canadianmusician.com.

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