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Vol. XXVI No. 5



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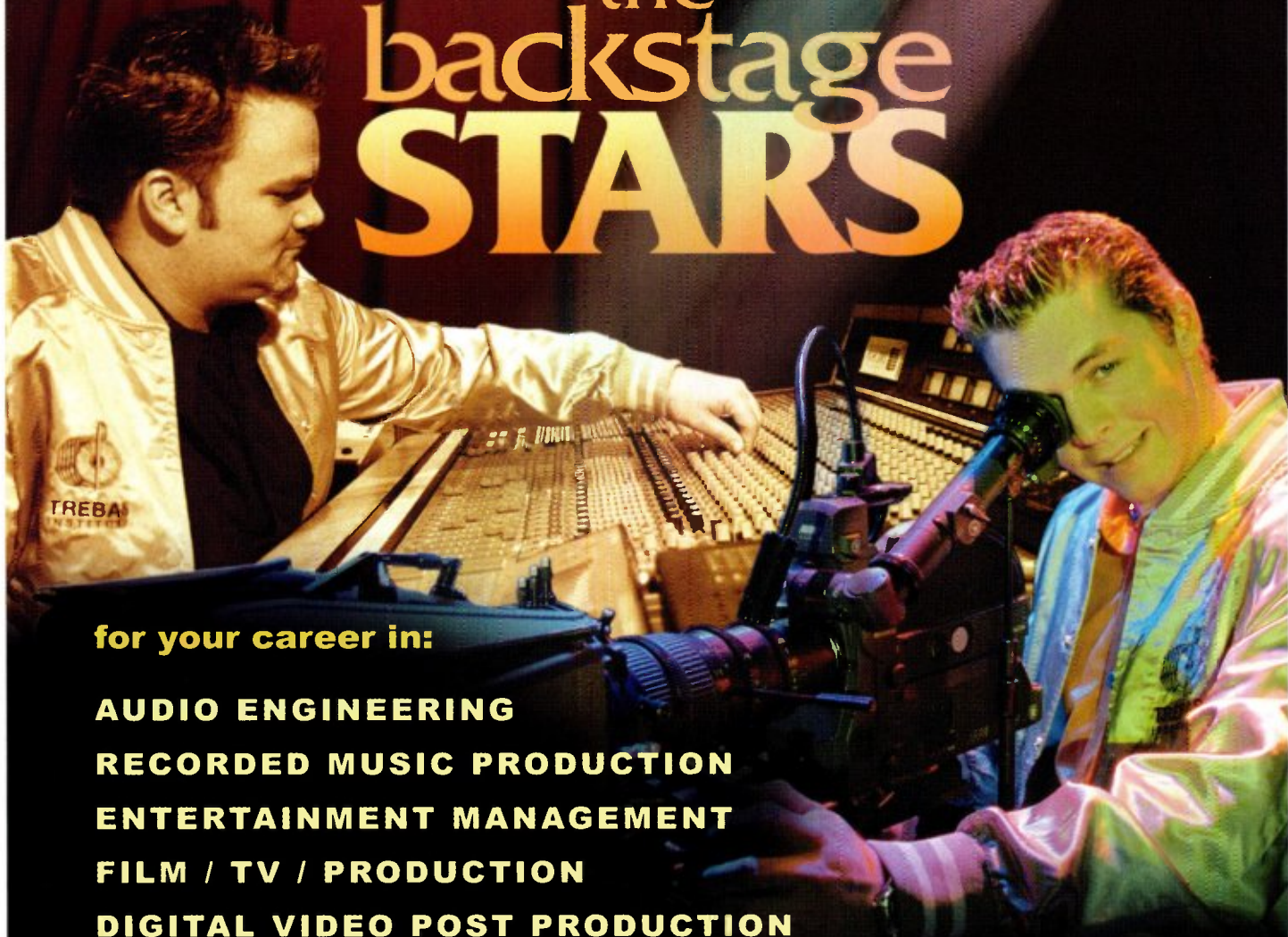




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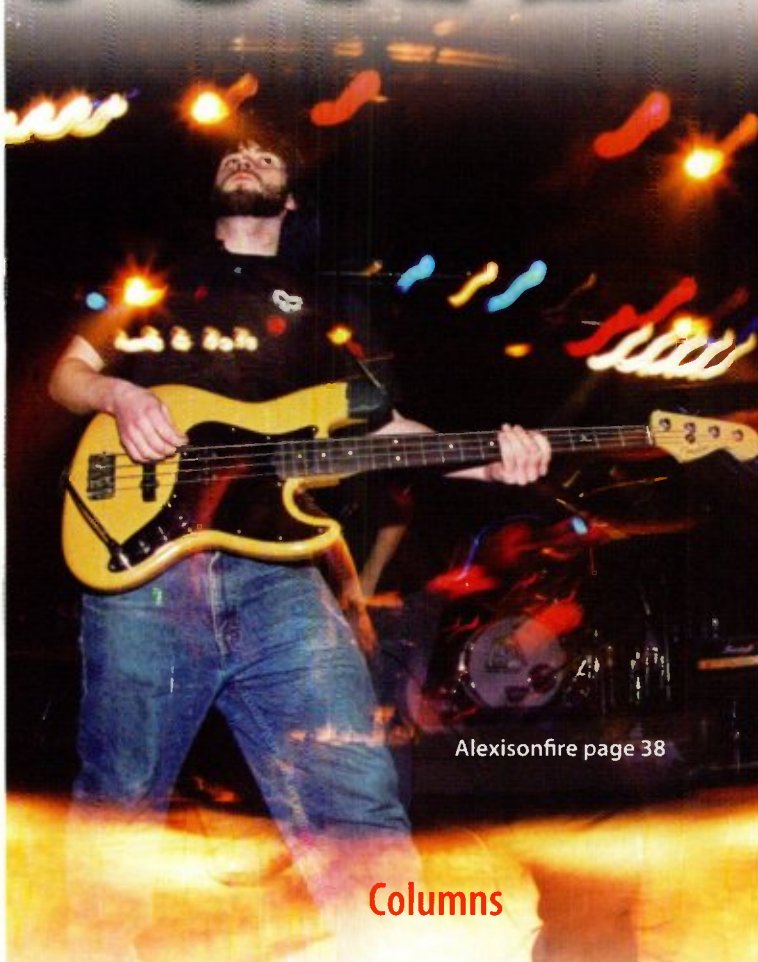
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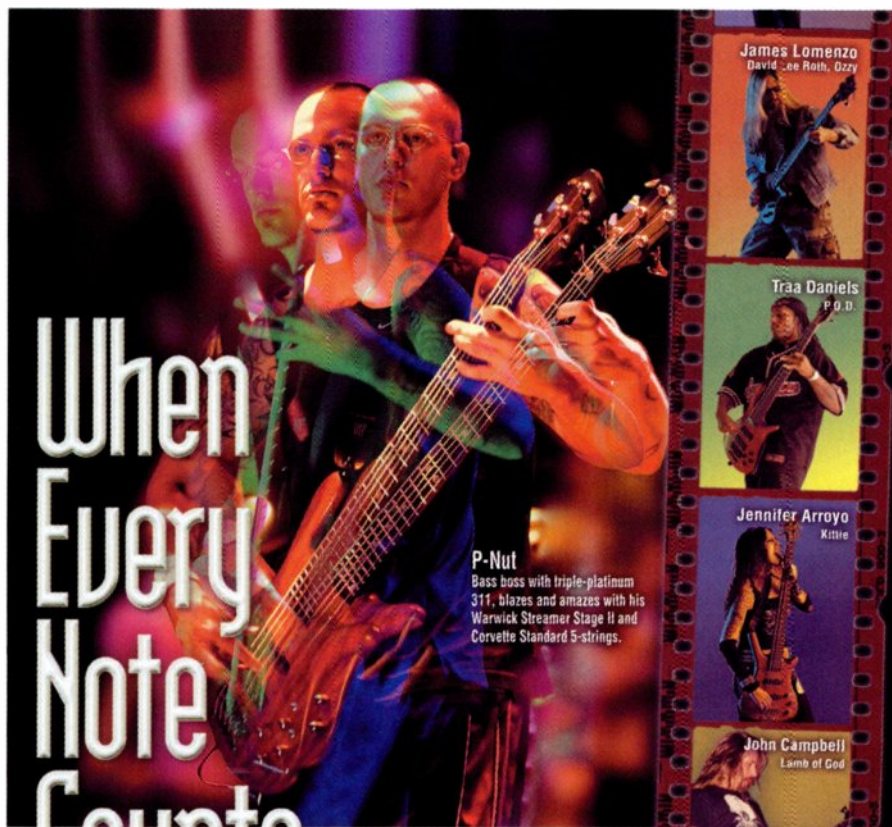


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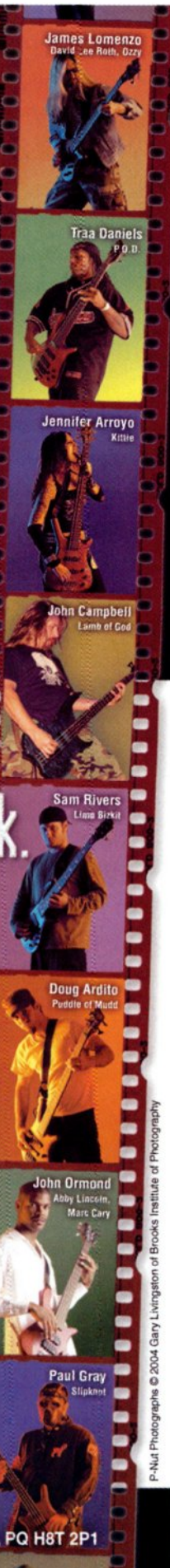
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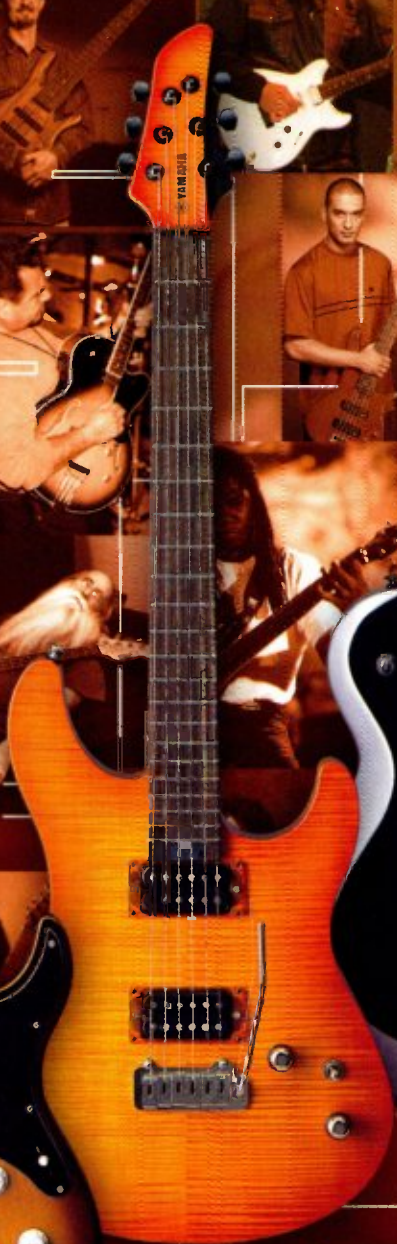
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### Protect Yourself With Disability Insurance



Dear CM,

Regarding "Are You Killing Your Career?" by Chris Taylor-Munro:

It was great to see an article of use to all musicians regardless of genre, age or experience level, and this article also did a good job of addressing a number of health threats that are part of our job. Since the stats the author quotes in his summary indicate that there is more than a 60 per cent chance of a musician experiencing some sort of career-threatening injury, I would like to offer one other point that would have been a good inclusion in this article: musicians need disability insurance coverage!

So, fellow musicians, while disability insurance may seem like a "luxury" when one can least afford it, believe me, it is a relief that you have it if you need it some day (and the stats say there is a greater chance you may than may not). Because we are considered a high-risk occupation, it can be a challenge to find coverage as a musician, but it is worth the search. Members of the American Federation of Musicians are eligible to apply for the group plan offered through their union local. I highly recommend that buyers take the time to get to know what the coverage options are. For example, my union group plan coverage does not cover complications of pregnancy, but offers a 75 per cent rebate on premiums paid following 10 years claims-free status.

I write only as a musician who has experienced disability first hand (of course it would NEVER happen to me!). Fortunately with coverage in place. I encourage musicians to take precautions such as those offered in the article, and also to purchase disability insurance coverage before you need them!

(Please with hold my name to protect my identity)

### State Of The Industry?

Dear CM,

I am amazed and appalled at the views of Kathryn Leslie (tired of hearing about lost talent, uniqueness, culture, intellect) and Robert. Do you seriously enjoy living in a world where "Major" music is so "cookie cutter corporate" and "fast food" factory line? And Chad Kroeger as a McDonalds spokesperson doesn't make you laugh and cry at the times we are in!? You both are missing two very important points I am making.

One... radio does not offer choices and support local talent that is more than deserving and would put economic life back into the local arts community and live venues. Nickelback and Avril have made their millions. Some of us would like to just make a comfortable living being true to our music and not some mass-produced "product". Radio could help local and indie artists find new fans that might not hear or see the band otherwise and give them revenue possibilities. Share the radio time and freedom of speech. In this case ... music. Yes, music and radio is a business but so are local clubs and indie artists/bands. Why should we be treated any different!? Especially indie artists who have a good song and are doing their best to market themselves. The fact that I can hear Danny Michel and the Miniatures on mainstream radio now because they are "signed" is ridiculous. They both deserved recognition long before! And Danny Michel and Kinnie Star being nominated as "Best New Artist" at the Junos ... after each worked numerous hard years beforehand?! Come on!

Two ... music does not have to be complex and "technical" to be good. Although I brought up Rush who is a great technical band, my point being was that they stayed true to their beliefs and have lasted a lot longer (30 years!) than most of these flash in the pans and "been there, sell it again" bands who also waste radio air time. I, and many others, am asking for something of substance and originality.

In regards to "technical" ability ... name me one brand new Canadian musician of a popular band on today's FM radio that has a unique playing style, is inspiring and is beyond the average player with an understanding and mastery of their instrument, like Rik Emmett, Peart/Lee/Lifeson, Tea Party, Ian Chrishon or Daniel Lanois. These players inspired others to be the best they can and to actually play their instruments well. Not just hack through power chords and simple drum beats! Your creativity is definitely limited by your technique whether that be playing or theory! Hit songs do not have to be three or four power chord wonders.

I am not angry or bitter and as for my band's career, we have had good successes, which I am very proud of! Also, I actually liked Nickelback when I first heard them as independents and funny enough, had them at one of our shows in Sudbury. They were nice guys. And congrats to them for all of the success. As for my own music career ... I work full-time in music with my band, teaching (bass/keyboards/guitar), running a recording studio, church organist (yes that's right, rocker by night, pay for my weekend sins on Sunday) clinician and music software tech support/sales for a local music store. I make a comfortable living and am one of the lucky few. So I feel that I am debating these issues with a strong sense of understanding. But, seeing the moulding of artists and radio to suit the needs of corporate bigwigs, radio "consultants" (huh?) and advertisers while brainwashing the public is making me considerably annoyed. The labels and radio need to take some chances for a change! Radio is for the people and musical choice is not a bad thing whether it is indie or major! I abandoned FM radio for AM talk radio long ago ... at least with talk radio you NEVER know what you are going to hear next... It's exciting which today's FM really lacks! Please, I've had enough of the "Supersize Me" radio. Our local music communities want a change and choice in the system!

Ian Graham

P.S. Rest in Peace Matt Osborne ... you were a true musician and friend. May your deserving talent be long noticed and inspiration spread to others. www.mattosborne.com.

### Great Timing

Dear CM,

My name is Jason Pierce I play in a band called "The Weekend" (Teenage USA, EMI). I just wanted to say thank you for your "Percussion" article by Jeff Salem in *Canadian Musician's* issue: Vol. XXVI No.4 (Alanis Morissette cover). I can't read enough about timing issues. As a young professional player (I'm 19), this is always my number one concern. Having the deepest pocket going seems to always take second place to blazing rolls and stuff like that. If everyone wrote articles like yours AND everyone who read them took advice there would be a lot more competition out there!

Thanks again!  
Best regards,

Jason Pierce  
The Weekend  
www.rocktheweekend.com





## Playing Nice ... And Smart

So you want to be a rock star. But what is a rock star and why do you want to become one? If the answer is "because I want to make lots of money, wake up late, have dozens of people cater to me and the rest of the world at large adore me," you're in the wrong line of work. The business of rock and roll is just that; a business that requires a lot of public relations ability and forward planning. Especially in the embryonic stages of your career, making a living in music requires a good work ethic and a lot of personal sacrifice. No one is more aware of this than Mike Watt and Keith Maurik.

First as a member of The Minutemen and then FIREHOSE, Porno For Pyros and The Stooges, Mike Watt is a veritable touring machine. When *CM* went to press, Watt was about to embark upon his fifty-fourth tour since 1980 and, for all of the bands he's formed, he still drives his own tour van. Maurik and his band, the Toronto-based Maximum RNR, played their 150<sup>th</sup> gig on May 1, 2004 after having started in April of 2002 and have toured Canada three times over. Both men know the long, hard road to recognition, but both go out as often as they can because it is their business. "Touring can be hard. Damned hard," muses Watt. "That's one reason I do the tour diaries and stuff. I try to show kids that it ain't no picnic. But it is very doable if you don't have a boatload of attitude and expect to be pampered and shit. It's still a journey. It's not just playing the gig, it's getting there too."

Maurik agrees that attitude will get you nowhere. While he jokes that acting like a "rock star" after you're rich simply makes you colourful, doing so when you're in a small band invariably acts to your detriment. "Don't be an asshole," says Maurik flatly. "Think of fans, promoters, sound people, bartenders, venue staff and anyone you deal with as your employers and co-workers. That will make your experience exponentially easier. As confounding as it may sound, when it comes to being invited back to play another gig, in many cases your offstage manner will be more influential than your onstage performance. Get to know the places you want to play, the bands you want to play with, and the people that make things happen. Support and respect those people and they will support and respect you."

It's important to keep in mind that everything in your career is interconnected. If you don't have shows, you can't afford to record more material and if you don't have more material, you can't get more shows. With that in mind, while part of your act onstage might be to act like a confrontational dickhead, remember that it is an act and to not upset the people that sign your pay cheque. As well, a certain amount of financial planning should come into play when trying to launch both new material and new tours. At that stage of the game, setting and revising long-term goals is important. "At first glance, many things that Maximum RNR have done may not seem advisable for a new band," explains Maurik. "For example, in an era of cheap, digital home recording, we've opted for expensive analog studio recordings. In the age of compact disks we've chosen to release vinyl. In an industry climate that favours full-length albums, we've released a series of two song singles. Finally, in a time of pre-packaged tours, we've headlined our own tours across Canada. The end result of Maximum RNR's first long term plan was to create a solid foundation from which to release a debut full-length album. We wanted the public and media to know who we were and what we were about long before releasing that debut full length. We figured the best way to create name recognition would be to take a page from the music industry of the past and release a series of two-song singles. Every six to eight months we would release a single and then tour the country to back that release up. We're at the point where we've released six songs, toured Canada three times over and received quite a bit of press and campus radio play in a little over two years. In other words, we've milked as much mileage as we possibly could from six songs – and we still haven't released our full-length debut."

In order to avoid frustration it's important to tailor your goals to make sure that they're realistic. Lack of finances, motivation, or time can leave your goals unfulfilled. Everything about your career is time sensitive. After all, if you dump all of your money into the recording process, it could be tough to organize a tour to go promote it and, under that logic, it could be years before you get the chance to record again.

In the end, all of your planning will ensure that your job of making music is more enjoyable. In the long run, isn't that really why you got into music? To have fun? Both Watt and Maurik are very clear on the point that fun isn't just a thing about playing music for a living, it's THE thing. "Focus on enjoying the trip rather than worrying only about the final destination," says Maurik candidly. "If you want to be in music for the long haul, have fun and meet as many people as you can. The relationships you create along the way will prove useful to you in more ways than just playing music."



Mike Watt

## SO YOU WANT TO FIND A JOB

In the endless stream of online communities and groups who attempt to help with the careers of others, arguably one of the most comprehensive online forums for musicians can be found at [www.gigfinder.com](http://www.gigfinder.com). The Musician's Gig Finder International Exchange boasts thousands of free classified ads for musicians ranging from positions open in bands to individual players looking to join groups from Libya to Los Angeles and Mexico to Milan. The site also offers assistance for finding writers, producers, mastering houses, duplication services, engineers, film scorers, booking agents and a whole galaxy of other services to musicians at all stages of their careers. Registration for the bulletin board is free; filling out a brief online form gets you an account and from there you're on your way.

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• Indie Insider • Indie Insider •

## Bandzoogle.com



Who says musicians aren't Web savvy? Former Rubberman members Keif Pun and Chris Vinson recently formed a company that makes it much easier for musicians to get their stuff on the Web. "When Rubberman got signed to [DKD subsidiary] Aquarius Records, they really liked the job I did on our Web site so they asked me to build sites for some of their other artists," explains former Rubberman bassist Chris Vinson. "It got to the point that, in addition to our site, I was handling sites for about 30 other bands as well. I got a lot of requests from artists and managers to update the sites but with 30 bands it was really too much work for me to do. What I did was make a system where managers and artists could take care of their own Web sites in terms of updating shows, music and other stuff like that. Recently I found out that this system could be applied to other groups so I installed a Web site building portion to the system and made it so a band with no computer knowledge could build a Web site and maintain it themselves all in one."

In March 2004, Vinson and Rubberman guitarist Keif Pun launched their program, [www.bandzoogle.com](http://www.bandzoogle.com), to fantastic public response. Thus far, Bandzoogle has begun hosting over 1,200 clients with their list growing every day. Bandzoogle offers artists Web page hosting for their own, self-designed Web pages in a format that requires no prior knowledge of html or other Web-based applications. "Everything is do-it-yourself," says Vinson. "You go through about six steps and the program guides you each step of the way. To get started, all a band needs to do is enter their name, add a photo, choose the type of site they want and what components they want to add to their site like a message board or sound clips and the program builds your site from there."

Bandzoogle offers a 30-day trial period for free and if the client is satisfied there are three packages available (ranging from \$5.95 per month to \$15.95 per month) to continue hosting. Upon signing up, each band gets its own domain name (i.e. [www.yournamehere.com](http://www.yournamehere.com)), technical support via e-mail, hints and tips for bands to keep surfers interested in their site and an online control panel that affords bands the opportunity to make any changes to their site that they may need at any given time. While tech support is offered, both Pun and Vinson maintain that the system is easy enough to use that most bands can do it on their own. "Even during the trial we send out a 30-day coaching newsletter to new bands because a lot of the time they just don't know how to put together a Web site that works properly," says Pun. "We cover all the bases from our experience including stuff like having a mailing list and how to use it effectively."

While Bandzoogle currently services a lot of emerging artists, both Vincent and Pun point out that people in other corners of the music industry could easily use the system. "Bandzoogle is not really limited to just bands," says Pun. "It could cater very easily to managers for example. Agents and record labels too ... like an indie label that has a few bands on its roster but doesn't have the two or three grand to dump into a Web site for each group. As soon as the record label here brings on a new signing, they immediately set up a Web page for the band with them system and then later they design around it. We have all kinds of people like management companies and T-shirt companies using the system. A lot of bands think they can't do it themselves and once they try it they realize they can get really good results without any computer knowledge. That's the biggest stumbling block; most bands think they have to pay to get it done or it's too expensive. The other thing is that, because it's template-based, people think all of the sites look the same but there are a lot of different configurations and you can design one in five minutes, but if you take the time and work through it, you can make a really unique site. We have about 1,200 members. Most of them aren't in Canada. We did some market research and because it's a world market, we have bands on there from Mexico, New Zealand, even a band from Afghanistan has signed up for the trial."

For more information, check out [www.bandzoogle.com](http://www.bandzoogle.com).



# Indie Music On The World Wide Web



Since the demise of MP3.com, independent musicians worldwide have been looking for a server to host their music online and to get it where people will see it and hear it. Companies like Puretracks and the resurrected Napster have attempted to offer such services but, while the US version has pulled a few independent artists into their fold, the Napster servers in Canada and the United Kingdom do not offer any such help to unsigned talent. Because nature abhors a vacuum, MonkFunk.com has come to the rescue.

MonkFunk operates much like MP3.com used to but with several differences that should prove to be artist pleasing. Firstly, while there is a registration fee (ranging from free to \$20 a month depending upon the package you choose), all MonkFunk members receive 10 MB of total storage for songs and pictures, a personal Web site for pictures, music artist history, store items, a blog messenger, a directory listing with MonkFunk and a Web address. Obviously, the more you pay, the more space and options you get. All of the Web sites are upgradeable at any time from the free "Open Mike" package to the larger, monthly-charged "Opening Act" and "Spotlight" packages.

MonkFunk is a musicians' community run by musicians and as such have tailored a couple of their features to artists; particularly the way in which music can be played and purchased on the site. Because some people want their music to be heard but not simply give it away, when users log in and upload their songs they can choose whether the song can be downloadable or if visitors can stream the music but not burn it. Artist Web pages also come with a built-in Paypal shopping cart so artists can sell CDs and other assorted merchandise.

For more information, check out [www.monkfunk.com](http://www.monkfunk.com).



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## Tragically Hip Contest

As of September 15, 2004, you could have the chance to win an Ernie Ball Music Man guitar signed by the Tragically Hip.

The guitar, a limited edition Music Man Canadian Silhouette Special, has been signed by the entire band. This contest is to help celebrate Rob Baker's choice to use the same guitar on the Hip's upcoming tour.

Starting September 15<sup>th</sup>, ballots can be completed at any Music Man dealer or by visiting the Tragically Hip's Web site and becoming a member of the "Hip Club", at [www.thehip.com](http://www.thehip.com). Ballots must be received by December 1, 2004.

For more information, visit [www.ernieball.com](http://www.ernieball.com), [www.thehip.com](http://www.thehip.com), or [www.canadianmusician.com](http://www.canadianmusician.com).



## Limblifter Rise Again

While information was scarce at press time, Limblifter recently released its third album and first since 2000's *Bellaclava*. The new record, *I/O*, will be released with a new lineup consisting of the long-suffering Ryan Dahle, David Paterson (ex of The Spitfires and Dahle's own Alarm Bell), Megan Bradfield (ex Salteens), and Brent Follett (also ex of The Salteens). Dahle, who was previously quoted as saying that he couldn't in good conscience continue to work under the name Limblifter without his brother Kurt, seems to have little trouble with the notion now and at press time had already booked and played dates in British Columbia and Ontario.

For more information, check out [www.limblifter.com](http://www.limblifter.com).



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# changes

## Canadian Vintage Guitar Show Still Growing

Tundra Music recently hosted its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Vintage Guitar Show at Thornhill Community Centre in Thornhill, ON. Boasting 38 exhibitors this year, the show was “a great success,” and “further proof that we are dealing with a growing market,” says Tundra Music owner Ed MacDonald.

The internationally advertised show featured instruments of all vintages this year and MacDonald happily notes that the show was well attended and a success for both exhibitors and attendees alike. “We’ve been getting a lot of high-end buyers over the last couple of years which is really encouraging. Vintage guitar values increase exponentially over time and people are really beginning to look closer at them as both instruments and collectables,” enthuses MacDonald. “Many of the dealers in vintage instruments actually have waiting lists for certain kinds of guitars because the demand is so great. Next year, we’re hoping to take the show on the road to Alberta. There’s a great market in Canada, The States, and especially in Europe, for vintage instruments right now and we’re really hoping to capitalize on that.”

For more information, contact: Tundra Music, 2857 Kingston Rd., Toronto, ON M1M 1N3 (416) 222-8222, [vintage@tundramusic.com](mailto:vintage@tundramusic.com), [www.tundramusic.com](http://www.tundramusic.com).



Ed MacDonald, owner of Tundra Music, the organizer of the show each year.



D'Addario Canada: Arnold Davidson, Bradley Davidson, Larry Davidson and Carolyn Bacher.



Audionova's Jim Krueger poses with some Switch guitars.



Diffusion Audio: Andy Cherna, Fred Bouchard.

## Singing A Starbucks Tune

The Descendents would be thrilled. Perhaps taking a cue from the most caffeinated band in North America, the fastest growing coffee chain in the world, Starbucks, has announced plans to open up a chain of Hear Music coffee house/music stores across North America. While the coffee giant has been in the business of selling compilation CDs for about five years (featuring tracks from the likes of The Great Lake Swimmers, Sarah Harmer and Paul Westerberg), it has now decided to begin installing listening and burning stations in their stores.

Beginning in Santa Monica, CA and then continuing through Seattle and Austin, TX, Starbucks is planning on outfitting about an eighth of its locations with Hear Music listening and burning stations worldwide by the end of 2005. For \$6.99 American (for the first 5 songs and then \$1 for each additional track) Starbucks will sell customer-created CDs complete with liner notes and artwork. “We are the most frequented retailer in the world,” says Chairman and chief global strategist at Starbucks Howard Schultz. “With hundreds of thousands of songs digitally filed and stored, these Hear Music coffeehouses combine with our existing locations can become the largest music store in any city that we have a Starbucks in. And because of the traffic, the frequency, and the trust that our customers have in the experience and the brand, we believe strongly that we can transform the music industry.”

Schultz wants Starbucks customers to make their own CDs, but he’s also hoping to infiltrate both iPods and laptops as well. He hopes that record labels will develop proprietary material just for the Starbucks network and that the coffee chain itself may help break new artists and develop original material.

For more information, visit [www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com).







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## Crash Kelly Sign Worldwide Record Deal

Toronto-based band Crash Kelly, who has been generating interest in their latest album, *Penny Pills*, from Toronto to London, New York to Los Angeles with their live shows, has recently signed a worldwide record deal with Liquor and Poker Music, in Los Angeles, CA.

Band members include Sean Kelly on lead vocals and guitar, Allister Thompson on rhythm guitar and vocals, Jeff Pearce on bass and vocals, and Eric Herrmann on drums and vocals. The group has signed a multi-album recording contract that Kelly feels "Is a perfect fit for Crash Kelly. I consider Liquor and Poker Music to be the torchbearers for true rock and roll. We're the first Canadian band signed to label which features artists Hanoi Rocks and the Hellacopters, two of my biggest influences. You know we're going to give 'er!"

The first release will be a re-issue of *Penny Pills*. For more information, visit [www.crashkelly.ca](http://www.crashkelly.ca).



Crash Kelly's Sean Kelly

## CMRRA to Protect The Rights Of Songwriters

The Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency (CMRRA), which has taken a strong stand in support of the entry of online music services into Canada, recently announced that it is now setting its sights on protecting the rights of songwriters. In conjunction with the Quebec-based Société du droit de reproduction des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs au Canada (SODRAC), CMRRA has filed a joint tariff application with the Copyright Board of Canada to set a fair royalty rate for songwriters and music publishers for online music sales. "To speed the arrival of these services, we took the unprecedented step of issuing online licenses before establishing the royalty rate," says David Basskin, president of CMRRA. "It is in everybody's best interest to get the licensed commercial services in this country struggle to make a living from their work, so getting fair rates for songwriters in the online domain is absolutely critical. That's what the tariff application is all about."

CMRRA has entered into an Online Licensing Agreement (OLA) with two Canada-based online companies, Puretracks and Archambault, and Napster and MusicNet in the States. Under these agreements, CMRRA has cleared tens of thousands of songs for use by the online services. The agreements, which cover the period from October 2003 to December 2004, call for negotiation on the royalty rate or, failing that, arbitration. To date, a rate has yet to be negotiated, and the issue recently went into arbitration. "While we remain open to continued negotiations with the online companies, we must ensure that a fair rate is set for writers and publishers within a reasonable amount of time," says Basskin.

For more information, please visit [www.cmr.ca](http://www.cmr.ca).

## AFM Supports Induce Act

The American Federation of Musicians of the US and Canada has expressed strong support for the Induce Act introduced by senators Orrin Hatch and Patrick Leahy to counter Internet music piracy.

The Induce Act is a bill that proposes to attack technology companies that make devices that could "induce" or encourage buyers to make illegal copies of songs, movies or computer programs. The bill is being supported by the music industry and Hollywood movie companies, while technology companies feel the bill could stifle innovation by potentially outlawing some devices like Apple's iPod.

AFM President Thomas F. Lee states, "The membership of the AFM includes thousands of recording musicians, both royalty artists and studio musicians, who have suffered as the music industry contracts in the face of unlawful downloading. Services that induce young people to share music files unlawfully should be responsible for their acts and not be allowed to hide behind the individual consumer they seek to attract. The Induce Act is necessary to help ensure that ordinary musicians can survive financially and continue to make great music."

The AFM of the US and Canada is the largest organization in the world dedicated to representing the interests of professional musicians. For more information, visit: [www.afm.org](http://www.afm.org).

## Diana Krall Goes Platinum

Diana Krall, famed vocalist and pianist, has achieved sextuple platinum sales of her live DVD, *Live In Paris*, which was released on EMI Music Canada.

Some other recent Canadian certifications that the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) awarded include Avril Lavigne's *Under My Skin* (2x platinum), Great Big Sea's *Play* (3x platinum) and *Something Beautiful* (gold), and Michael Bubl 's *Come Fly With Me* (gold).

CRIA is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of Canadian companies that create, manufacture and market sound recordings. Visit CRIA online at [www.cria.ca](http://www.cria.ca).





# Classic Albums Live Tackles Sgt. Pepper

After staging brilliant live recreations of some of rock's best albums at venues across both Canada and the US in the last year, Classic Albums Live producer Craig Martin has decided the project will take on its most ambitious album to date. In monumental undertaking, Classic Albums Live will present a live recreation of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* at the historic Carlu Theatre in Toronto on Friday, October 15, 2004.

From beginning to end, *Sgt Pepper* will be recreated live on stage note-for-note by some of Toronto's finest musicians. Seventeen musicians including a four-piece horn section, a four-piece string section, a harpist and a sitar player will take the stage to capture each miniscule detail of the recording. As well, additional Beatles songs will be performed live after completion of the album. Closed in the 1970s but newly renovated and reopened in 2003, this Classic Albums Live presentation will be the first publicly ticketed event at The Carlu. "I've had an idea like this in my head for quite a while now; putting on an event like this in a beautiful Toronto venue," says Martin, "This is the perfect album as well. It's going to be a very special night. I want everyone in Toronto to be exhausted when we finish playing and to have it in such a place as The Carlu - I just can't wait."

Classic Albums Live has been one of Toronto's most talked about attractions for over a year and has garnered rave reviews from fans and critics alike. Its huge popularity has even expanded the show into such US markets as Orlando, El Paso and Cape Cod.

For more information, visit [www.classicalbumslive.com](http://www.classicalbumslive.com).

# EVENTS

## Canadian Country Music Week

Edmonton, AB  
September 10-13, 2004  
(905) 850-1144, FAX (905) 850-1330  
[country@ccma.org](mailto:country@ccma.org), [www.ccma.org](http://www.ccma.org)

## NEMO Music Showcase and Conference

Boston, MA  
September 30 - October 2, 2004  
(617) 572-5300  
[info@nemoboston.com](mailto:info@nemoboston.com),  
[www.nemoboston.com](http://www.nemoboston.com)

## Western Canadian Music Awards

Calgary, AB  
September 30- October 3, 2004  
(306) 780-9830, FAX (306) 780-9831  
[info@wcmw.ca](mailto:info@wcmw.ca), [www.wcmw.ca](http://www.wcmw.ca)

## Ontario Council of Folk Festivals Conference

Guelph, ON  
October 14 - 17, 2004  
(866) 292-6233  
[info@ocff.ca](mailto:info@ocff.ca), [www.ocff.ca](http://www.ocff.ca)

## The College Music Society Annual Meeting

San Francisco, CA  
November 4-7, 2004  
(406) 721-9616, FAX (406) 721-9419  
[cms@music.org](mailto:cms@music.org), [www.music.org](http://www.music.org)

## Percussive Arts Society International Convention

Nashville, TN  
November 10-13, 2004  
(580) 353-1455, FAX (580) 353-1456  
[percarts@pas.org](mailto:percarts@pas.org), [www.pasic.org](http://www.pasic.org)

## Montreal Drum Fest 2004

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

## CINARS 2004

Montreal, PQ  
November 16-20, 2004  
(514) 842-5866, FAX (514) 843-3168  
[arts@cinars.org](mailto:arts@cinars.org), [www.cinars.org](http://www.cinars.org)

## 2004 Midwest Clinic 58th Annual Conference

Chicago, Illinois  
December 14-18, 2004  
(847) 424-4163, FAX (847) 424-5185  
[info@midwestclinic.org](mailto:info@midwestclinic.org),  
[www.midwestclinic.org](http://www.midwestclinic.org)

## International Association for Jazz Education Conference

Long Beach, CA  
January 5-8, 2005  
(785) 776-8744, FAX (785) 776-6190  
[info@iaje.org](mailto:info@iaje.org), [www.iaje.org](http://www.iaje.org)

## Midem: 39th Annual Music Market

Cannes, France  
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+33 (0) 1 4190 4445,  
FAX +33 (0) 1 4190 4450  
[marie.beauchaud@reedmidem.com](mailto:marie.beauchaud@reedmidem.com),  
[www.midem.com](http://www.midem.com)

## East Coast Music Awards

Sydney, Cape Breton  
February 17-20, 2005  
(902) 892-9040, FAX (902) 892-9041  
[ecma@ecma.ca](mailto:ecma@ecma.ca), [www.ecma.ca](http://www.ecma.ca)

## 17th Annual International Folk Alliance Conference

Montreal, PQ  
February 24-27, 2005  
(301) 588-8185, FAX (301) 588-8186  
[fa@folk.org](mailto:fa@folk.org), [www.folk.org](http://www.folk.org)

## Canadian Music Week 2005

Toronto, ON  
March 2-5, 2005  
858-4747, FAX (905) 858-4848  
[info@cmw.net](mailto:info@cmw.net), [www.cmw.net](http://www.cmw.net)

## South by Southwest (SXSW) 2005

Austin, TX  
March 11-15, 2005  
(512) 467-7979, FAX (512) 451-0754  
[sxsw@sxsw.com](mailto:sxsw@sxsw.com), [www.sxsw.com](http://www.sxsw.com)

## Music Teachers National Association Conference

Seattle, WA  
April 2-6, 2005  
(513) 421-1420, FAX (513) 421-2503  
[mtnanet@mtna.org](mailto:mtnanet@mtna.org), [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)

## Jeunesse Musicales Montreal International Competition 2005

Montreal, PQ  
May 5 - 20, 2005  
(514) 845-7744, FAX (514) 845-8241  
[info@jeunessemusicales.com](mailto:info@jeunessemusicales.com),  
[www.jeunessemusicales.com](http://www.jeunessemusicales.com)



## Mark Bass T800 Amp & STD 106 HQ Cabinet

by Rich Priske

"Keep that, get rid of that." "Rich, we love this cab, it's so light!" These were the first reactions the Mark Bass head and cab setup received after I arrived at Toronto's Mod Club Theatre and plugged in for the first time. And, I must say, after A/Bing with my current rig, I agree wholeheartedly.



First of all, I must extend a warm thank you to both Erikson Music, the exclusive distributors for Mark Bass in Canada, and *Canadian Musician*, for providing me with this unique opportunity to properly road test this gear on the latest Matthew Good tour, as opposed to merely plugging in and wanking for a couple of hours in a rehearsal space.

Mark Bass is a relative newcomer on the scene, a high-end design that stands up next to companies such as Aguilar, Ashdown, Trace Elliot, Eden, etc. Hailing from Italy, company founder Marco de Virgiliis has set out to "produce a high-quality bass amp that would meet the needs of professional bass players everywhere." Using only top-quality components such as low profile toroidal transformers and neodymium speakers, Mark Bass is truly a top-notch piece of equipment.

### Features

First of all, let's look at the T800 amplifier. Unfortunately, this model has since been replaced by the T902, which is not currently available in Canada, pending CSA approval. However, I do believe that the T800 is still widely available.

On the front panel, from left to right, you will find an input jack, a clip light and a gain control. The input jack, according to the manual, will automatically adjust its sensitivity and impedance according to whether you use active or passive electronics. I can't comment on this as I only had my passive Fender Precision and Jazz available to me. Sounds cool though, right?

Following the input stage, there is a 2-band semi-parametric EQ (100-800 Hz) (700-6 K) as well as an overall high and low sweep, providing an overall 16dB of cut or boost.

Finally, you will find a line out level control, (line out is pre- or post-EQ) a master level control, a power on indicator light, a headphone jack for jamming at home, and last but not least, a power button that lets you "switch on the head by comfortably staying in front of it."

On the back panel, you will find one Speakon connector as well as two traditional ¼-inch speaker connections. Next you will see the aforementioned pre- or post-line out selector switch and a ground lift switch. There is a cannon connector line out (level is controlled on the front panel, remember?), a dedicated tuner out, and an effects loop. The effects loop comes from the factory wired in parallel, but is easily modifiable to serial, if so desired.

The amp weighs about 10 kg, takes up two rack spaces and is capable of delivering 1,100 W @ 4 ohms, 650 W @ 8 ohms.

The STD 106 HQ speaker cabinet is remarkable right out of the box. It weighs almost nothing! Weighing in at a mere 38 kg, this is a great bonus for those of us who have been married to the Ampeg 8 x 10 for any length of time. The cabinet is constructed of high-grade multiply poplar and is glued, screwed and sealed internally with special compounds. It is then covered with felt. There are handles on the back. According to the manual/brochure, as well as the Web site, the cabinet comes equipped with metal corners; however, the cabinet I received had plastic corners. And yes, there are wheels.

Inside, you will find 6 B&C Neodymium Custom Woofers and one HF Compression Driver with Custom Horn. Frequency response is rated at 35 Hz to 18 K. The crossover is set at 2.5 K. The tweeter is attenuable via a rotary dial located on the side of the panel. On the back, there are two ¼-inch speaker connectors and one Speakon connector. At 6 ohms, this baby can handle 1,200 watts RMS! Two tuned ports allow the bottom end to really flow.



### Sound Quality

OK, now for the fun stuff. Right out of the box, this rig sounds amazing! When dials are set flat, the tone is clean and punchy, and *very* musical. I found that very little EQ fiddling was necessary to get a good sound, and that I ended up using the EQ more as a corrective tool. I found that I could get a whole range of tones from a deep dark dub type sound, all the way to a snappy crisp fusion-y type effect. And yes, it can sound like an SVT.

Playing on different stages each night really allowed me to put this amp through its paces. Every club/hall has its own idiosyncrasies; some rooms are dull, others boom-y, bright etc. the T800 allowed me to dial in (or out) just the right frequencies in order to get the bass up front and clear, without overwhelming the mix. The amp performed brilliantly night after night. And, due to its all-digital design, it never got warm. I can't forget to mention that this baby is loud!

The cabinet is a great design; perfectly suited for those who need a big sound in a small package. I would recommend a road case, however, for any serious touring, as the wheels did not fare too well. Apparently, one of the wheels decided it would rather stay in Saskatoon than continue on our journey.

### Overall Rating

I would have to say, after years of loyal Ampeg love, as well as trying every other amp on the market, that this is the first rig that can win me over to the other side. It looks great, is durable and sounds awesome. Its hefty price tag will probably put it out of reach of the novice player, but for those who have arrived; it is a welcome pot of gold.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$2,599 for the STD106HQ and \$2,499 for the T902 (since the T800 amp is no longer available).

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

Rich "Rock" Priske is best-known as bassist for Matthew Good.



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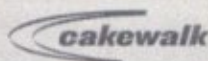


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# Spector Legend 5-string Bass Guitar

by Jeff Pearce



Stuart Spector has been building basses for a good long while, and any company that specializes in just one type of instrument would have to be pretty good at it. They have made a name by crafting beautiful, American-made instruments, which are priced accordingly, usually in the \$3,000 to \$6,000 dollar range. But like other companies, Spector also has several lines of less-expensive basses, namely the Europe, Professional and the Performance Series instruments. These models are priced between \$500 and \$2,000 and share many design features with their more expensive cousins.

The Legend is the newest addition to Spector's Professional Series bass guitars. These Korean-made instruments come in 4-, 5- and 6-string models and feature a 3-piece rock Maple bolt-on neck design. Spector sent me a 5-string for this review. Out of the box the bass was well setup and impressive to look at. The body has a beautifully figured, quilted top under the heavily lacquered surface. The gold hardware is both ornate and rugged, and its eye-catching design makes it look more like a boutique instrument than a mass-produced product. It also features a Spector locking bridge, which is both sophisticated and simple in its design. The bridge is locked and unlocked with an Allen key, and while locked the saddles retain their exact position during string changes.

The body is contoured, which Spector describes as "carved". This is to say that the body has a slightly convex shape, as if the wood has been gently flexed out, mimicking an arch-top guitar. This is a design by Ned Steinberger, which dates back to 1977 and some of the earliest Spector basses. This design is both striking and ergonomically sensible. When playing in a seated position, my wrist tends to rest on the body above the strings. With this design the body slopes back with the wrist, making it comfortable for hours of playing. This contouring also gives the impression that the strings are raised slightly away from the body and from the controls, which seems to open up the playable area. The neck is also very comfortable. The smooth lower cutaway offers easy access to all 24 frets. The 3-ply maple neck is slightly narrower than other 5-string necks, making it very easy to play. In fact the whole bass feels somewhat more compact than similar instruments, a little more slender and streamlined than other modern basses. Despite this, it's a remarkably heavy instrument. I was a little concerned that this might make it a little top heavy when worn, but it is actually really well balanced, and again, very comfortable.

The electronics consist of two passive EMG/HZ pick-ups, in the neck and bridge positions, and an EMG 3-band Active EQ system. The EMG-HZ is an American made hi-impedance pickup, with a punchy tone and a hum cancelling design. I always like to first play a bass with its controls all turned fully up, and because of the EMG's and the relatively small size of the Legend's body, this setting produces a lovely and distinctive mid-range growl – a very focused tone that sat nicely in the mix of the tracks I was working on. By adjusting the separate volume knobs for the bridge and neck pickups, and playing with the active controls, I could produce a wide variety of very pleasant and distinct tones. I wouldn't characterize the Legend as a "super" versatile bass in the tone department, but it always sounds good.

It is versatile in its applications, however. The Legend is perfectly suited to both studio and live situations. When recording while seated, the instrument fits the contours of your body, and is easy to play for hours. Its tonal options would suit many styles of music. And as a live instrument it is comfortable and well balanced. It also has a great, solid feel that I appreciate when playing live. I don't want to play something that feels delicate and judging by the rugged design, I am sure this bass could get through the most unpleasant road conditions. Of course is pretty enough that you would want to keep it safe.

The manufacturer's suggested retail prices for the Spector Legend Series basses are \$949 for the 4-string (34" scale), \$1,049 for 5-string (35" scale) and \$1,149 for the 6-string (35" scale).

For more product information, contact: SF Marketing, 6161 Cypihot, St. Laurent, PQ H4S 1R3 (514) 856-1919, FAX (514) 856-1920, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

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

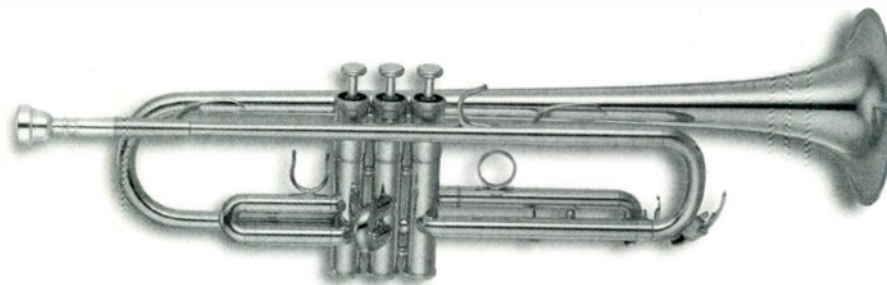
## Distributor's Comments

We are very pleased with Jeff's reaction to the new Spector Legend Series Bass. His review is well-informed and points out several of the elements that bass players all over the world have come to embrace as "Spector-esque." There is but one issue that bears mentioning: On one hand, the reviewer claims that the Legend is not a "super versatile bass in the tone department," then in the very next sentence he proclaims it "versatile in its applications." This may be somewhat confusing to the reader. The reviewer appears quite pleased with the distinctive mid-range growl, yet also appreciates the "wide variety of pleasant and distinct tones," suggesting a rather versatile instrument after all!

Jeff Sazant  
Vice-President, Musical Instrument Group  
SF Marketing



# Yamaha 8310Z Trumpet



by Chase Sanborn

Yamaha has just released the new 8310Z trumpet (the updated version of the 6310Z) and it is a killer! Working closely with head trumpet designer Shunichi Niwata, Bob Malone has created an instrument that retains all the desirable qualities of its predecessor, yet markedly improved the sound and the feel. In the past few weeks I've played the horn with a jazz quartet, a brass quintet, an R&B band, jingle sessions, section parts in a big band, and the lead book on a show in a 2,000-seat theatre. In each situation, I've been blown away by the ease with which the 8310Z plays and the sound that comes out of it. It's actually quite startling – you just tap it and it goes. Do I sound excited? You bet I do! The 8310Z is the most versatile trumpet I've ever played, and demonstrates what can happen when you partner an incredible player like Bobby Shew, a brilliant innovator like Bob Malone, and the engineering and manufacturing capabilities of Yamaha. Here's how it came about:

First, a word about Bob Malone. For many years, Bob was an independent designer and modifier of horns and leadpipes. In particular, he became famous around the world for modifications to Bach and Yamaha trumpets. The Yamahas with the Malone Conversion became known as Yamalones, and there was a lengthy waiting list to get one. Yamaha utilized Bob as an independent consultant, and he was influential in the development of two of Yamaha's most popular models, the 6335MV (designed in consultation with Mike Vax) and the 6310Z (designed in consultation with Bobby Shew and Yamaha designer, Kenzo Kawasaki).

In April of 2001, Yamaha approached Bob and made him an offer he couldn't refuse; they built a state-of-the-art custom shop in Grand Rapids, MI, and hired Bob as head of product development for North America. As a full-time member of the Yamaha team, Bob works with some of the finest players in the world, helping to expand the boundaries of brass instrument design. The influence of his expertise can be seen in the new 8310Z and a soon-to-be-released C trumpet, the result of a two-year collaboration with John Hagstrom of the Chicago Symphony. (This new C trumpet is like

nothing you've ever played – orchestral players take note!)

The 6310Z was designed for Bobby Shew, one of the world's greatest lead and jazz trumpet players. Bobby wanted a horn that was easy to play, with a sound that cut through when playing lead with a big band, yet was mellow enough to play in a jazz quartet. The result was a lightweight trumpet with a stepped bore that starts small (.445") and expands. The 6310Z was a very efficient horn that attracted a lot of fans, though some players found it hard to adjust to the resistance, feeling that the horn 'backed up on them'.

Bob approached Bobby with some ideas for a redesign of the 6310Z. Initially skeptical, Bobby is now thrilled with the results: "I never thought the 6310Z could be improved, but you did it! The bigger and warmer sound is thrilling to hear, and it plays so much easier that I find it hard to believe. It's like having a new career in front of me!" (Visit the Yamaha Web site to see and hear Bobby Shew talking about his new horn: [www.yamaha.com](http://www.yamaha.com))

Probably the most notable change is the bell. The 8310Z utilizes a new bell-making process developed by Shunichi Niwata and other Japanese engineers, then refined to final specifications in conjunction with Bob Malone and John Hagstrom during the 'Chicago C' project. The seam has been moved to the side, the wall thickness tapers towards the flare, and the small bell bead is rounded on one side and flat on the other. The improvement in sound is dramatic – the tone is rich and full with a solid core, it projects like a laser beam and is easier to hear in the section. You really have to hear it to appreciate the difference.

Several elements of the new 8310Z are borrowed from the Xeno series, including leadpipe manufacturing process, braces, water keys and valve caps. While retaining the stepped-bore and the efficient, responsive characteristics of the 6310Z, the 8310Z feels more open and easier to blow. The notes slot easily and the high register just sings, yet there is a surprising amount of latitude and the horn doesn't fight you. It feels great, right from the outset.

I know quite a few players who have been eagerly waiting to try the 8310Z, but this one is not leaving my hands! The 8310Z plays like a dream, it sounds amazing, and it is a harbinger of things to come. Yay!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the Yamaha 8310Z Trumpet is \$2,795 in Lacquer, or \$3,185 in Silver Plate.

For more product information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Toronto, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732, [www.yamaha.ca](http://www.yamaha.ca).

*Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto, and is the author of Brass Tactics and Jazz Tactics. (This article is excerpted from the new Revised Edition of Brass Tactics.) Chase is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T. He can be heard in good company on his latest CD Cut To The Chase. For information on Chase's books, CDs, trumpet mouthpieces and other products, please visit [www.chasesanborn.com](http://www.chasesanborn.com).*

## Manufacturer's Comments

The new YTR8310Z is an exciting new product for Yamaha Canada Music, as it heralds some of the exciting new manufacturing techniques and product development results that will begin to be revealed in the entire Yamaha trumpet lineup. We've been inundated with calls and e-mails from some of Canada's top professional jazz and commercial players seeking the first opportunity to try this new horn. What is also interesting is that many top classical soloists in North America and some European orchestras are using this model as their primary instrument. Visit your local Yamaha dealer to try one out today!

Steve Butterworth  
Manager, Band & Orchestral Instruments Department  
Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.



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# Attitudes for the Professional Guitarist

Regardless if you are just considering taking your garage band into the bar scene, or you've been a guitarist for years, becoming professional is more or less about knowledge and focusing on the right goals. Since there is a lot of competition around, here are some essential elements that will help you on the road to being a pro:

**1. Variety is the spice of life.** I once taught a guitar student who only wanted to play punk rock. Needless to say, once he learned his one power chord, which he insisted on using up and down the fretboard, it got more than a little tedious to teach him. We all have a favourite guitar style we swear (or once swore) we'd never deviate from, but sooner or later we realize there are many great styles to learn. Not only does variety make us better players, it keeps us from growing stagnant and getting into ruts. We will naturally be better at certain styles than others, but diversifying is a good ingredient for a long career. Although I'm not a huge fan of country music, I have learned to appreciate some of the guitarists who have impeccable chops in this field. I've even had the opportunity of recording some country licks in my studio for various clients.

**2. If you snooze you lose.** There's nothing more stressful than a leader wondering if the guitarist he/she hired is going to show up for a gig or be on time – (which also means leaving enough time to set up). You may not realize that being late for a gig not only affects the other members in

the band, but also lowers your chances of being hired again as well as affects your reputation. The other thing to consider is if someone calls you for a gig leaving a message on your answering machine you should answer right away. A lot of times I have a list of musicians that I hire. I usually leave a message to a few people and whoever calls me back first has the gig. I've had several times when musicians would call back three or four days later but by that time I would have already booked someone. Even if you're not available to do a gig it's only courteous to call back. That brings up another point, which is the need to own a cell phone. Cell phones allow people to get a hold of you any time or any place. It also lets you call the leader of the band if you're going to be late. The yearly cost can usually be covered by a few dates – which you may have lost if you didn't have a cell.

**3. When in Rome, be like (or dress like) the Romans.** Sooner or later you'll be called upon to do some kind of gig that's not in a bar, be it a house party or a corporate event. These are the kind of gigs where you'll need to know what you should be wearing in order to be appropriate for the occasion. You need to have a few pairs of black dress pants and a shirt and jacket for more formal events. (for women a few formal dresses or dress pants and nice blouses). Normally you get paid twice as much or more for these kinds of gigs which you can use to pay off your clothing expense. I hired a guitarist once to do a corporate gig who didn't have a suit, even though I had mentioned he needed one. Unfortunately, this gig was at a very prestigious golf club and his attire wasn't appropriate – which of course reflected on me. So just remember that if you're not playing at a bar, always ask what the dress code is.

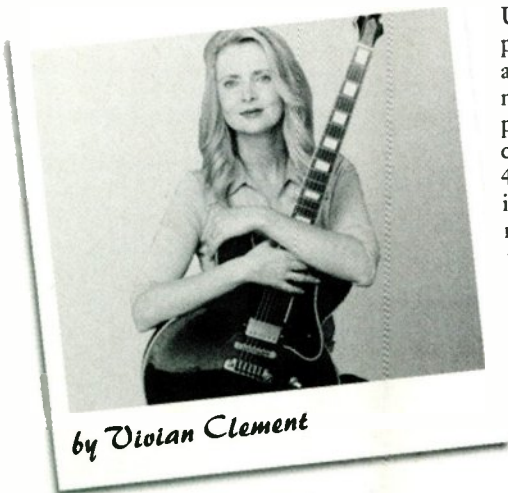
**4. Ouch! My Ears.** If you're playing guitar in a band, realize that you're not the only musician who wants to be heard. Vocalists particularly need to hear themselves or they will have pitch problems as well as vocal stress from having to scream above your screeching guitar. If you're turning up because you're having a hard time hearing yourself above the drums (or other instruments) buy yourself an amp stand so

you can point the amp more towards your ears. Or better yet have an understanding in the band that everyone should turn down and be sure to have a volume booster so you can be heard above the band for your leads.

**5. Gear Up.** Having good gear is true sign of a professional guitarist. There's nothing worse than hearing a guitar player who can't keep their guitar in tune because he/she owns a cheap axe. You may start off with a beginner guitar, but as soon as you start playing for cash you should immediately invest in some good gear. A tuner is a must. Tuners allow you to tune silently in between songs without interrupting everyone. Be sure to always carry lots of extra strings – not just one set – but 3 or 4 of each string. About 10 years ago I hired an acoustic guitarist to play behind my leads. He broke a string and had forgot to bring extras. He had to send for his "mom" to come down and drop off his strings. I wasn't very impressed and guess how many times I hired him again? It's also a good idea to have a little repair kit with you in case of emergencies – consisting of pliers, extra picks, strings, tape (to tape down cables that can be walked on and ultimately pulled from their electrical outputs) and a screwdriver. Also analog stomp boxes or digital effects are the norm for any pro guitarist to own. If you can't afford to have good equipment at this time, start with owning one really good guitar and amp. Music stores today are very helpful in setting up affordable monthly financing, which makes the goal of owning good equipment much easier.

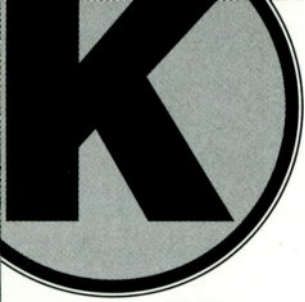
As you can see, with the right information and the right mind-set, being a professional guitarist is a reachable goal. Go out and see some great guitar players in your area and be sure to introduce yourself and ask questions on how they got to where they are. And remember to always play with excellence in mind.

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

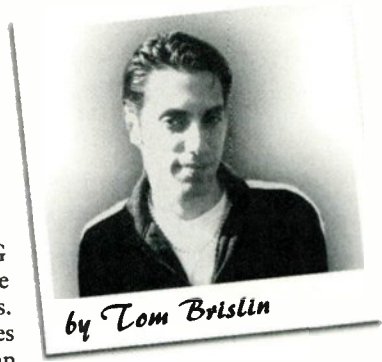


by Vivian Clement





# Chord Toner And Warm-Ups



keyboards

Here is a chord progression based on a work by Carl Czerny. It is shown in the key of G Major (starting on the IV chord, C Major) and is composed mainly of triads. Notice how the use of inversions creates a nice chord melody while only using a few different chords. Make sure all of the notes in both hands are struck simultaneously, and try to make the outer notes (top note of each right-hand chord and bottom note of each left-hand chord) a little louder than the inner notes.

C C#o7

D7 G

G C#o7 D7 G

etc.

## Warm-Up

This exercise deals with repeating notes and slurs. Make sure that both hands are playing the correct fingerings for the repeating notes. Lift from the forearms and land into the first note of a slur. Think of that energy as moving toward the next note and lift off the keyboard after the last note of the slur. This lifting will set you up for the next slur. Exaggerate this action for now. When playing pieces, you probably won't put this much energy into a slur with just two notes. For now, however, it's a good chops builder. Continue the 4-bar sequence up through one octave. Play in all keys.

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



# Deconstructing Watt

## History Lesson Part 1 – Sound And Style.

Chances are, if you're an alternative music fan and don't know who Mike Watt is you haven't been listening for very long. Since 1979 Watt has left an indelible mark on the post-punk landscape, beginning with SST's most critically adored band The Minutemen. Since The Minutemen's untimely demise in 1985, Watt has kept an iron man's recording and touring pace not just with his own projects Dos, The Secondmen and Banyan, but also with The Stooges and Porno For Pyros among others. When his first solo album, *Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?* appeared in 1995 it was described as a "publicist's wet dream" and featured performances by members of Nirvana, Sonic Youth, The Pixies, The Beastie Boys and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Shortly before the release of his third solo album, *The Secondman's Middle Stand*, Watt spoke with *Canadian Musician* to discuss any and all aspects of his relationship with the bass.

**Canadian Musician:** Who inspired you as a player?

**Mike Watt:** You mean other bass players? Because the person that really inspired me to play was [Minutemen guitarist/vocalist] D. Boon and D. Boon's mother. She made me play bass. After I moved to the projects in Pedro and met D. Boon his mother wanted us in the house. There were no guns yet – it was the early

'70s – but it was still kind of rough and she wanted us in the house after school so playing music was kind of an econo-childcare. Other bassists, well, when I was young it was really hard because I couldn't hear them on the records I owned so well. We didn't have older brothers or anything. Not much in the way of sensibilities for figuring out what the bass even really was. And arena rock – it was so far away right? I didn't even know it had bigger strings. I saw in the pictures that it only had four tuners, but we thought they were guitars with thinner necks. On records the guys I could hear were John Entwistle and Jack Bruce so they had a big bearing on my playing and R&B guys like James Jamerson, Larry Graham and the Kool in Kool and The Gang because I could hear the bass lines; I couldn't hear Stu Cook on the Creedence things or Bill Curry in T-Rex. In the music of a lot of bands I just couldn't hear it. I'd mix Geezer Butler up with the guitar lines on Sabbath records. I just didn't know – I was an idiot.

**CM:** So how would you describe your style now?

**MW:** Well, the sound of a middle-aged punk rocker I guess. People have asked me what kind of bass player I am and I say 'D. Boon's bass player'. I try to let a lot of things interest me and get inspired by them so that it's not all just rote stuff, going through exercises and ending up like an *I Love Lucy* rerun thing and I'm playing the same thing over and over. I let songs influence my bass playing in a way. Like "Oh, is this one about a boat? Well, let's get a boat kind of thing going here." Or "Beltsanded Man"? Well let's make it sound like a belt sander then." I even used effects on this new record, which was a first for me. I used fuzz tones and envelope filters and phase shifters – even that DigiWhammy thing that takes you up two octaves. I figured "Well in this part there's a lot of pain so I'll hook this up and go 'Wheeee!'" I'm trying to be more expressive so I can convey things rather than just technique because I'm very influenced by writers. It seems like especially after [James] Joyce, when you write everything gets used as a device to drive home the

emotions and the feelings that you're trying to get across. So I'm trying to bring that more to bass.

**CM:** How do you approach bass then? Is it a compositional tool for you or a rhythmic instrument or does it change depending on the project?

**MW:** Well, the idea of an ensemble works best for me when it's like an interesting conversation so I'm trying to get more interplay. It's trippy too; the politics of the bass. When you're the leader of the band and you're playing bass you're not thinking you're a lead guitar player and having guys just back you up. You're backing them up, so for you to look good you have to make them look good. So especially with this new record I write a lot of interdependent parts. Even back with the Minutemen I always thought of songwriting as putting on a play and I'm casting the costumes and the lighting and all that so that's what I'm doing with the songs and I kind of do it writing their parts. I wrote all of the drum and organ parts even though I can't play those instruments. I did them with my mouth for the guys, or I slapped them out on my legs, or worked them out on the bass. The major reason is that I'm no multi-instrumentalist. I can only really play a little bit of guitar. Bass is my first and pretty much only instrument. The other reason for doing that is because sometimes you want to write a supporting part or a backup part. How do you write that first? It's like writing on cymbals or kick drum. "Don't you guys hear it?" [laughing] It's pretty hard to write the backup part first, so you need to think up the other parts and then go back and write it with the other parts in mind. Sometimes the problem with writing on the bass is that you get this big, predominant bass part. Obviously you want a little variety and not have every song have a huge, upfront bassline.

**Next Issue:** Watt talks about his weapons of choice in his on-going battles with the low end and how to pick the instrument that's right for you.

*Mike Watt was interviewed by Canadian Musician's Research Assistant, Bill Adams.*



with Mike Watt



## My Breakfast with Efrain

About six years ago I was sitting down in Salisbury House (a Manitoba only fine dining experience) with my buddy and fellow drummer Steve Broadhurst. Our conversation was about the pros and cons of seeking endorsements. Steve had been doing a fair amount of playing and touring and was seeking some advice. In the middle of the conversation he pulled out a drum book by Efrain Toro. Just quickly leafing through the pages it seemed to be yet another book with another twist on polyrhythms. Like the bonehead I can be at times, I quickly put it down and continued on with our conversation.

A short time later, Steve called and said that Efrain was going to be in town doing a clinic at a local school. Because it was at a school, for a school, it was not advertised. Steve is a great networker and always seems to have his ear to the ground on these kind of things. So, off we go.

I stood at the back of the classroom as I was a little worried that I was going to have to watch someone solo for 45 minutes and not have an escape route. How's that for having an open mind? Within 15 seconds of Efrain's introduction I knew I was in for a life lesson. I watched, I listened, I learned. Efrain didn't play much but talked at length about drumming concepts and concepts of time. (So many drummers and so little time. I've always liked that one). It wasn't long before I found myself sitting at the front of the class perhaps a metre from where Efrain was perched. All too soon, it was over and I had decided that this was a man I needed to know so I promptly arranged to meet him at his hotel the next morning for breakfast. Lucky me, he was doing something at the university the next day so he was available.

We met for breakfast at 8 a.m. My education started promptly at 8:02 a.m. Our first topic of conversation was about Richard Feynman, a neighbour of Efrain's in Los Angeles. Mr. Feynman was one of the world's most renowned physicists. He was a

great admirer of music, drums in particular, and would often be found jamming with his bongos. Richard and Efrain would have all-nighters talking about sound, music, space and time.

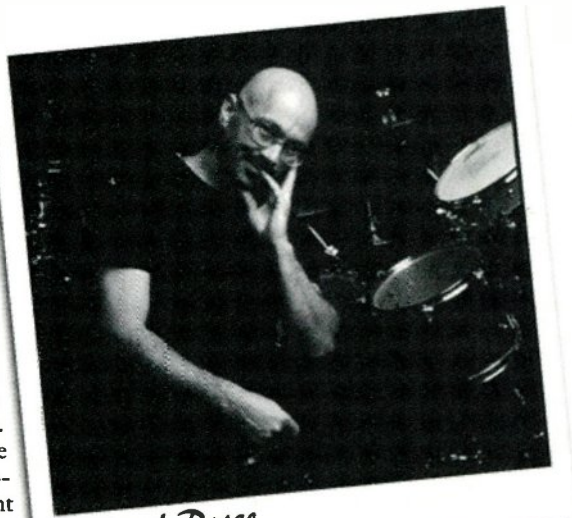
Efrain and I were in our third hour and eighth cup of coffee when we started talking about waves and rhythm. Caffeine was competing with the blood flow at this point and the focus in the conversation couldn't have been stronger. Have you ever tried to define rhythm? By 1 p.m. and completely oblivious to the restaurant staff's vibe of "can you guys take this somewhere else?" my whole concept of rhythm had been turned upside down. Suddenly I had an understanding of Cage, Stockhausen and Braxton. I could go on about these concepts but they are not the point of this article.

Efrain needed to be at the University for 2 p.m. so we had to wrap up and continue later. We met at 6 p.m. for dinner.

Our dinner conversation started out with perceptions of education and what could be offered to take it all up a notch. We moved on to Joseph Campbell (Myth) and then on to Guy Murchie (Music of the Spheres). We spoke briefly about the scene in Los Angeles and why he was going to be leaving LA for Spain. (Efrain now resides in South Africa) By midnight, it was time to call it a day. I drove him back to his hotel and bid him a good night and thanked him for his time.

To this day Efrain and I keep in touch via e-mail and sometimes just good old-fashioned snail mail. My breakfast with him changed the way I listen to music and my understanding of what it is I do.

My point is this. As drummers/musicians we often seek instruction to help us be better, technically at our craft. Every so often we are able to study with someone who has achieved a level of greatness and our



by Mitch Dorge

focus is one of an esoteric nature. Left hand technique, polyrhythmic configurations, speed and independence, etc.

I urge you to seek to understand how your teacher sees and understands things not only as a musician but as a person living life. Try to make a date for breakfast or lunch and try to understand how they see things. Pick up the tab! After my day with Efrain, I went out and purchased three books about Richard Feynman. I picked up two from Joseph Campbell. I took my Stockhausen, Cage, Shoenberg and Braxton discs for a "new" spin. I sat down and listened to my drums and cymbals in a whole new way.

I spend a fair amount of time counting my blessings. My breakfast with Efrain Toro is one of those blessings. Had it not been for Steve, it wouldn't have happened so there is another blessing counted.

*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](http://www.mitchdorge.com) for more information about his solo recording, As Trees Walking, as well as his video, Mitch Dorge, Downsampling Perception.*





# Self-Consciousness, Crossing Over & Extended Techniques

WOODWINDS

Classical flutists are often self-conscious about crossing over into non-classical idioms and especially about crossing over into jazz where the demands (both technically and musically) are appreciable. Nonetheless, sometimes this self-consciousness can be taken a step too far. For example, one worried renegade from the classical tradition recently indicated to me, "When playing with jazzers, I've been told by some that my sound was too 'pure' for real jazz, and yet, others have said that they appreciate a flutist who can produce a 'real' tone. It's almost as if my tone determined whether or not I could improvise well."

I know that I will eventually find myself treading on thin ice here so I will say, up front, that matters of tone and sound involve both opinion and taste – neither of which can be dictated.

Having said that, my initial response to her was she should never let anyone suggest to her that a good flute sound will compromise her ability to be an effective "non-classical" performer. Indeed, in my opinion, anyone who would even imply such a thing to an aspiring jazz flutist is either shallow in their reasoning ... or they simply have some kind of an axe to grind. Either way, this sort of comment is neither useful nor helpful.

As for myself, I find over the years that I tend more and more to play the instrument as it was designed to be played. So I am no longer interested in extended techniques or novelty devices; eg. singing while playing, multi-phonics, circular breathing, key-slapping, whistle tones ... or otherwise "hooting and hollering" as opposed to just ... playing the instrument. And I have reached this point with some measure of inevitability because I have rarely heard other flute players employ these extended techniques or novelty devices in jazz in ways that are genuinely gratifying to me, or at least to my ear. Occasionally, I may be impressed with the results – on a technical level. But, inevitably, I find that the results are not pleasing or meaningful to me – on a musical level. For example, consider the first extended technique I enumerated above (i.e., singing while playing) which is perhaps the most common extended technique amongst jazz flutists. Well ... acoustically, both the flute sound and the voice sound are compromised by this technique because both end up being starved of what they need – which is AIR. As a consequence, both sounds end up being corrupted. Why? Well, you certainly can't achieve a good flute sound ... because it is so adulterated with voice and the tension in the throat. And you certainly won't achieve a good vocal sound either ... because it is so muffled and enclosed by the embouchure. So what you end up with is a hybrid ... a mishmash ... of something that is neither here nor there.

Now remember, this is only my opinion. But, I have arrived at it after a good deal of time and playing-listening experiences. I will also declare right now that, any flutist who really wants to hum along while playing ... go right ahead ... and take whatever gig calls for it ... because I will offer no argument ... and no contest on the matter.

And now, at the risk of contradicting myself, I will draw to your attention a remarkable album that was released in the early '60s called *Flute Fever* (Columbia). It was Jeremy Steig's first album (as well as Denny Zeitland's first appearance on record). Jeremy hums his way through almost the entirety of this album, augmented by various bleats and howls, and with a voice that is ... shall I say ... about as far away from Johnny Hartman's in quality as one can get! Nonetheless, Jeremy's flute work on this album is truly amazing! His approach includes a hell-bent-for-leather conviction as well as true inspiration. He plays with genuine – though highly unorthodox – skill and mastery.

So, as you can see, it is not my intention to malign alternative approaches to the instrument (as opposed to the strictly extended techniques and novelty devices I mentioned earlier). Indeed, alternative physical approaches to the instrument are essential in achieving convincing results in non-classical settings. However, by the same token, the crossover artist must consider how useful the pursuit of extended techniques and novelty devices (which are really just alternative techniques ... in the extreme) are in achieving your overall musical goals, and accordingly, how much time you are prepared to commit to them relative to the other things that you really must cultivate-including simply getting a good sound on your instrument ... pure or otherwise.

And now we are back to where we started on the matter of self-consciousness and crossing over ... And so the issues become student-specific...



by Bill McBirnie

*Bill McBirnie is a jazz and Latin flute specialist located in Toronto. He has been chosen Flutist of the Year, Jazz Report Awards and, more recently, was a winner in the National Flute Association's triennial Jazz Flute Master Class Competition. He has produced two Extreme Flute projects as well as a recent CD with The Mark Eisenman Trio entitled, "Nature Boy". All three of these CDs are available at [www.indiepool.com/extremeflute](http://www.indiepool.com/extremeflute). If you would like to contact Bill directly, you may reach him at [billmcb@idirect.com](mailto:billmcb@idirect.com).*



# B

# brass



## To Sub Or Not To Sub?

**Y**ou are booked to play on a Saturday night, and get called by another leader for a better gig. Should you sub out of the previously booked job? What is the ethical thing to do?

Eventually every player faces this dilemma, as a sideman who wants to get out of a gig, or as a leader who loses a contracted player. While ethics might suggest that the answer is simply to honour the original commitment, that may not always be the best choice, and certainly does not reflect the reality of the business. Murphy's Law guarantees that gigs will happen simultaneously. A seasoned pro always tries to play the best gig, the tricky part is to keep everybody happy in the process. Subbing is a regular part of the professional world, and if handled correctly, is not only ethical, but also essential if one hopes to climb the ladder of success. When weighing your decision, consider the following:

Is there a way to do both gigs? Maybe you can send a sub to cover the first set of the later gig. I'm not a big fan of this routine, but sometimes the leader is happier if the regular player can be there for part of the night. In any case, be generous to the sub, consider giving her all the money for the gig. It's a drag to play the first set then get up and leave, but it helps to know you are making the same money as everyone else while you sit at the bar and listen to the second set!

If there is no way to do both gigs, you will have to decide whether to try and sub out. Turning down a gig because you are already booked shows integrity, and leaves no feathers ruffled. It is the 'safe' route. On the other hand, turning down a good gig may be a tactical error – it could be an important career stepping stone. Ask yourself the following question: How much better is the 'better' gig? If it is just a matter of a few dollars on a Saturday night, stay with the original booking, it's not worth potentially upsetting an employer. Always recommend other players to cover the job you can't do, as that courtesy is appreciated by the leader and your peers. Keep your contact information handy.

If the second gig is much better, in terms of money or prestige, or may lead to future opportunities, explain your situation to the second leader and ask for a day to confirm – don't create a bind by double-booking yourself. Call your subs, and see who is available; try to put somebody on hold before you call the first leader. Then make the call and ask if it is possible to send a sub. Most leaders understand the realities of the business. If you suggest another player who can cover the gig, they will usually be amenable, and will appreciate the groundwork you've done to ease the transition. If the leader okays the sub, you are laughing – you've got yourself a better gig, kept both leaders happy and provided employment for a fellow player; it's win-win all around. (Be aware that if you sub out too often, you may find that your sub has become the regular player. This is a natural part of the freelance world, gigs flow from player to player. Subbing is usually the way to 'break in' to the business.)

If it's a busy night and there are no subs available that can cover the gig to the leader's satisfaction, he may not want to let you off the hook. In this case, honour the original commitment; personal ambition does not entitle you to leave a band in the lurch, and burning bridges is never desirable. Try as we might, we can't do EVERY gig, and a reputation for reliability is of paramount importance.

Here is a final piece of advice: When faced with a dilemma, always go to the affected parties, explain your situation, and ask them for help finding a solution. Most of the time, things will work out.

*Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto, and is the author of Brass Tactics and Jazz Tactics. Chase is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T. He can be heard in good company on his latest CD Cut To The Chase. For information on Chase's books, CDs, trumpet mouthpieces and other products, please visit [www.chasesanborn.com](http://www.chasesanborn.com).*



# Everything You Always Wanted

# to Know About Word Clocks

# And

# Sausages, But Were

# Too Afraid To Ask



digital music



by Alec Watson

It occurred to me that many of you have that funny little plug on the back of your audio hardware marked “WORD CLOCK” and really aren’t sure what it does or how to use it.

Unfortunately, we are going to have to make this column a “two-parter,” but if you stay tuned to the same Bat Channel and same Bat Time, you *will* end up oh-so-wise in the way of word clocks.

### What Does A Word Clock Do?

Easy answer: Word Clocks synchronize your digital audio gear. The “how” and “why” is a bit trickier. So I am going to attempt to come up with a fairly simple explanation that you can use at parties to sound really smart.

With regular audio cables you just plug the “audio out” from one piece of gear to the “audio in” on another. When attaching digital pieces of gear you

need to connect the “digital audio out” to the “digital audio in” AND connect the “Word Clock Out” to the “Word Clock In” ... Why?

Let’s start small, with a single sample. A 44.1 kHz 16-bit sample. To your piece of audio hardware it would look a little like this:

0101100101100101

That is a 16-digit binary number (go ahead count them, it’s fun!). It is also known as a “WORD”. These “WORDS” come out of the digital audio output on your piece of digital audio gear. In fact, they “STREAM” out of the digital output a LOT like sausages at a sausage factory. Of course, not everyone has worked at a sausage factory (I haven’t either); but I am told that sausages come out in a long stream and have to be cut to length. Now if you want consistency in length (and who doesn’t?) you are going to have to know how fast the sausages are coming out and cut them accurately with a timer (actually you would cut them with some kind of knife, but you *would* have to time the knife). This is pretty much what happens with a word clock. The digital audio stream comes out of your “digital audio out” looking something like this:

0101100101100101010110010110010101011001011001010101100101100101

The word clock cuts this stream back into 16-bit words like this:

0101100101100101 0101100101100101 0101100101100101 0101100101100101

It’s easy to get lackadaisical with binary and not realize the importance of the timing so here is a real world example that may or may not include sausages!

You are out catting around at the local singles bar and you happen to be given eight phone numbers. In fact, you are SO hot, you had these numbers written on your hand AND the people writing on your hand didn’t even question why there were so many other numbers there. Anyway, you get home and realize that these numbers look a little like:

5557456423526378712365555763789223746753746278912283746537289685

If you don’t split up these numbers accurately you will be calling the wrong numbers (of course, if you were at a bar and had eight numbers written on your hand, you ARE calling the wrong numbers! But that is a different article). This is how important word clocks are. If those numbers don’t get split up accurately, your digital audio IS GOING TO BE FULL OF WRONG NUMBERS! Surprisingly, when the word clocks are chopping up your audio incorrectly, the audio sounds a lot like a bad MP3.

Next article we’ll discuss choosing which piece of gear to make the master clock and why you might want to consider an external clock ... I feel so bad, how will you sleep until then?

*Alec Watson is a Producer/Engineer that works out of his destination studio on Vancouver Island. His discussions on word clocks always make him a bit a parties everywhere. Find him online at goldcreekstudios@shaw.ca.*





# A Vocation Of Vocals

## Part II

VOCALS

If the name Colm Wilkinson eludes recognition, one mention of *The Phantom of the Opera* will bring his voice to mind. *CM* continues its interview with the renowned vocalist from last issue...

**Canadian Musician: Do you prefer performing in musical theatre or in concert?**

**Colm Wilkinson:** There are a lot of pros and cons. Musical theatre is doing the same music night after night, which can get boring, but at the same time you don't have to travel. You're collected from your door, you're brought to the theatre, and then you're brought home. You know how to pace yourself doing that show because you're doing it night after night. Concerts can vary from venue to venue depending on where you are. There are a lot of changes involved. The plus for concerts is the variety of music. You're not singing the same stuff every night. You do sing around the same sort of routine but you can change it when you want to. You have total control. Musicals take over your life. You're doing eight shows a week most of the time, when you first start. You have one day off, and that's usually spent recovering from the seven gigs that you've done the previous week. That goes on week after week. For four and a half years I did *Phantom*, 1,700 performances. This way I can take back my life and sort of have a bit of control over it.

**CM: So how did you keep it fresh for four and a half years of performing in *Phantom*?**

**CW:** Physically, you get tired. The first six months are great. After that, you begin to feel the effect of doing the same thing. Most of the energy goes into trying to keep it

fresh. I use what actors would call emotional recall. It's a technique where you actually recall events that are closely related to what you are doing on stage, then you experience that emotion and use it. It can be very effective in terms of keeping something fresh. You know what the thing is about keeping stuff fresh? If you like the music. I was very fortunate to be involved with what I consider to be some of the best musicals ever written. *Les Miserables* especially. When you've got good material, no matter what it is, that will keep it fresh for you, because the material is good and solid and you enjoy singing it. It takes a long time to get tired of singing really good material.

**CM: You're known for the emotion that you put into your performances. Where does that passion come from?**

**CW:** In concert and in the musicals, I try to visualize the character. You have to enter into the character and be the character, and you have to be as passionate and real as that character. I read the lyrics, and if there's some sort of story in the lyrics I will try to flesh that out by thinking about it and reliving the story in the lyrics. The whole thing about passion is understanding what the author is writing about. It's about telling the honest story the way it is.

**CM: How does your approach to a song differ from one of your compositions to that of someone else?**

**CW:** You actually have an emotional attachment to those lyrics. I try to find a reason for singing the song. For instance, I used to listen to the song "Suzanne" with my wife when we were first married.

**CM: What classical vocal technique do you consistently apply to musical theatre, and the wide variety of genres represented on your album *Some of My Best Friends are Songs*?**

**CW:** I have had vocal training, but very little. I went to vocal coaches to see how I would sustain, to find out how I would sustain my voice, especially in long runs. You go to a vocal coach and you say, I'm going to have to do this, is there any techniques you can tell or show me that would help me sustain what I am doing. I found out, to be quite honest, what I was doing is what they were telling me, because you learn by default. I believe that in the end that it's not really vocal technique. There are some singers out there who don't have great vocal sounds, but they tell the story. Tom Waits, for instance, would not be classed as a great vocal sound, but Tom Waits can really tell a story. I love

anybody who can tell the story because that's what singing was originally about. I believe art is about revealing and healing.

**CM: So to what technique do you tend to default?**

**CW:** I've developed a good support system, and that kicks in automatically and naturally for me. I've always had that, I suppose. The thing about any sort of technique is that you hear about them, you practice them, and then you forget about them and do it naturally. Once you start focusing on technique while you're singing, I think it starts to sound unnatural. If you practice support and breathing properly, you do it naturally after a while. That's when the real benefits start happening.

**CM: What is your favourite genre to sing?**

**CW:** I like to sing all kinds of music. If it appeals to me emotionally and I like the song, I like expressing myself with sound. I don't like boxes. People put you in boxes. I've never varied from what I've done. I've always sung different kinds of music and always want to.

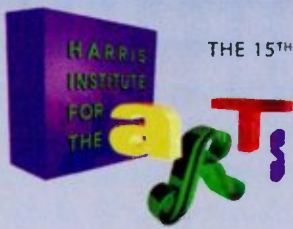
**CM: How do you approach composition?**

**CW:** I've been writing songs for 30 years. In Ireland I'm more known as a writer than here. First of all, I get the time. I carry a little notebook around. I have bundles of paper stacked all over the house with little notes on them. I get an idea for a title, and I jot it down. A title usually sets off different ideas. If I think the title is very provocative, sometimes that leads to a song. Other times situations will lead to a song. The last song on the album that I wrote is "I Cannot Stay", and basically, I've seen and I have been seeing a lot of guys my age who have split from their families. And I've seen relationships where two people have gone down different paths, so far along that path that they can't get back. And that's why this song is called "I Cannot Stay", because a lot of people, though they want to stay, cannot stay because the situation has deteriorated so badly. So I get an idea or a situation that moves me emotionally and I write about it. I've written jingles and under the clock, but for writing a song, the ideal situation is to have either a great title that can move you to write the rest of the lyrics, or a situation that can move you emotionally. Usually it's the lyrics that come first for me, and then the music.

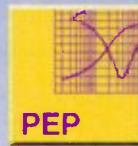
Next issue, *CM* will continue its interview with Colm Wilkinson...



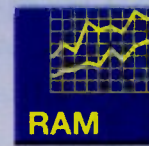




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by Kevin Young



**"It's** amazing in this business how sometimes things just work out to be the best possible combination of things," says Hip Bassist, Gord Sinclair. Although he's talking about the process of making *In Between Evolution*, The Hip's latest record and the events that led up to it. It's also a statement that could sum up his feeling about the band in general.

After almost 20 years together and 11 albums, the Tragically Hip remains enviably vital in performance and on record. There's no mystery to the appeal of The Hip's live show. Whether it's the sonic interplay between guitarists Paul Langlois and Rob Baker, Gord Downie's "just on loan from the asylum" delivery or the band's ever deepening grab bag of songs you know like the back of your hand, there's just something exciting about these five guys on stage that keeps people coming back. There's more to it than that though; their music tends to creep up on you, both lyrically and instrumentally. They've never beat listeners over the head with the obvious and Downie's lyrics are rarely instantly transparent. So, although it might take more time for a Hip track to sink in than the average summer mega hit, they tend to kick around in the corners of your mind, find a good soft spot, dig in deep, and settle in for the long haul.

The new record, recorded in Seattle at Studio X (formerly Bad Animals) with producer Adam Kasper (Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters, Queens of the Stone Age), is no different in that respect. But where their last effort, *In Violet Light*, was more of a pure studio record, this one is a conscious effort to capture The Hip's live energy. Driven by songs that are often as aggressive as they are to the point, the result is raw at times, but that was the idea. In one interview Hip drummer, Johnny Fay, likens the new album's live, spare vibe to an earlier Hip record, 1991's *Road Apples*.

After finishing up tour commitments in December 2003 and then spending roughly four weeks away from each other, The Hip were ready to start writing. Although the band, Sinclair says, was more organized than in the past, there was still a clean slate before them that needed to be filled. "You look around the room at each other thinking, 'How the fuck did we start it the last time? What happened?' Then all of a sudden it starts and six, eight months later you're mastering a record with Bob Ludwig again. It's great. It's exciting."

As Sinclair points out, though, it's easy to say you want to capture the live essence of the band live in studio, but another thing entirely to achieve it. As a starting point the band would get together for a day or two and hammer their ideas into shape, different members grabbing onto different elements of the songs, running with them and letting the songs evolve naturally. "Usually all five of us kind of gravitate towards the same sort of thing," he says. "Slowly, but surely, what began to evolve was a real hard-edged collection of songs. I'm really fortunate to be in a situation where there're four other resources of musical material. It never gets boring." And boredom, he believes, can kill the writing process. "If you try and force something to come and say I'm going to work from 9 to 5 and finish this song by hook or by crook you sometimes end

up taking it to a place where it may not want to go. We've always gone out of our way to record everything we're doing with each other, because sometimes you come back and you've lost the essence of what you were doing. You realize, 'Well I've been working too hard at this. I've made my part too slick.' I think we've removed the ego from the equation enough that none of us feel too precious about what we're doing."

Disagreements are resolved by "leaving no stone unturned" in the writing/arranging process; allowing each member free reign in terms of their contribution individually and finding the best solutions in consensus. "It's very direct the way we deal with each other. Do I get a 100 per cent of my way all the time within the band? No, but creatively it's really satisfying. I know if I bounce an idea off them and no one responds that maybe it wasn't the best idea I've ever had." Flexibility and compromise is key.

With a collection of 15 to 20 songs in as near a state of completion as they could get them, but still without a producer locked in, the band headed west to Whistler, BC to finish arranging the songs free from the distractions of home. While there, local tragedy struck when Rutherford Creek flooded, sweeping away a car carrying several locals returning home after work. "It's a small community. It hit everybody really, really hard and beyond condolences, we wanted to do something for these young guys and their families. So we set up a couple gigs at the Boot Pub." First and foremost, the shows allowed The Hip to give something back to a community they have longstanding ties to, but it also gave them a chance to flesh out the new material on stage with the crowd packed in around them and people hanging over their heads. It was an event that, Sinclair says, inspired them to take the writing process to a new level just about the time that Adam Kasper was to meet with them.

"He was a fan of ours from the stage, not from on record. He kept coming back to what he felt was a gap between what the band is in a live setting and what the band is in a recorded work." By the time recording started, Sinclair says; "We had the stuff cold; it was just a matter of capturing that intangible performance aspect. But," he continues, "It's the most difficult thing going to try to capture the essence of a band on tape." He credits Adam with applying his meticulous sense of detail to creating an environment that enabled them to do just that. "It was all very chilled. Very much like going up on stage. There's no pressure, like, 'Oh, the tape machine is rolling. I better tense up my ass and overplay.'"

Like any normal gig day, the band would spend some time doing a live sound check, trying out different combinations of amps and guitars and jamming on the songs they were going to record. "We'd work on one, maybe two tracks a day, in a big room where we were able to set up two, sometimes three different kits. So we'd do it, very laid back, have a little lunch, kick back and spend the rest of the day playing. The end result was that half the record is single versions; that's what the band is all about, this simultaneous performance of five guys."



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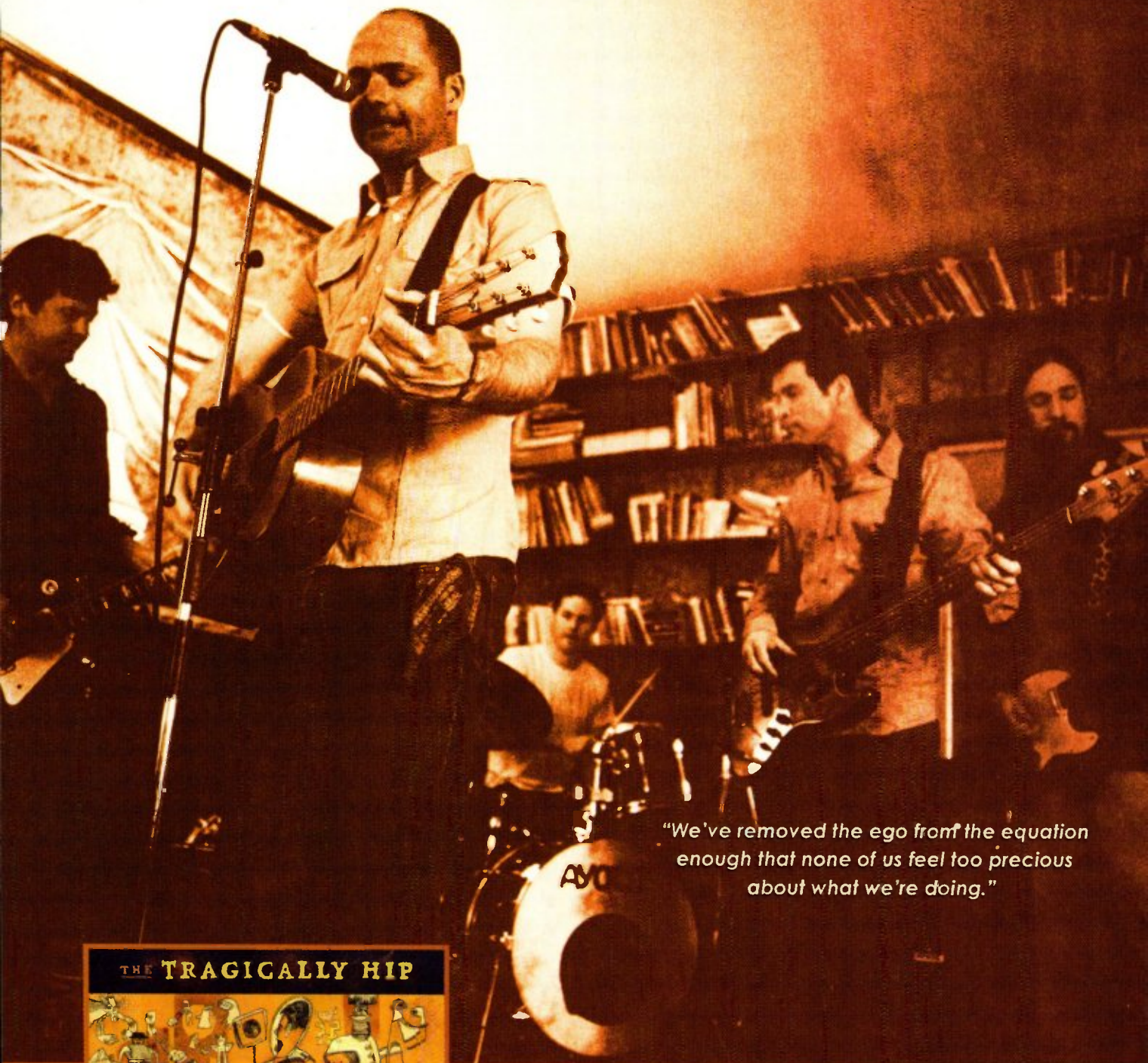


Hip

live.



*"We've always gone out of our way to record everything, because sometimes you come back and you've lost the essence of what you are doing."*



*"We've removed the ego from the equation enough that none of us feel too precious about what we're doing."*

**THE TRAGICALLY HIP**

**IN BETWEEN EVOLUTION**

For More Info On... The Tragically Hip check out [www.thehip.com](http://www.thehip.com)



For Sinclair it's a return to earlier days, the way the band did their first recordings: "As simple as that sounds it was kind of a complex approach; you're out on the road, you're playing, you get a recording contract, you finally get a chance to go in the studio, minimal budget, minimal amount of time — you gotta know your shit going in — you set up, play and lo and behold, three weeks later, you've got a record." On some records, particularly those recorded in the band's own studio, The Bathouse, Sinclair says they had a tendency to micromanage the songs, to really pick them apart in the digital realm. It's part of the luxury of having your own studio, he says, but adds that your chances of getting a truly live sound go out the window pretty quickly.

"We wanted to create this environment: We're on someone else's nickel, the meter's running and this is costing us. So we fired up the 2" machine and stayed away from the Pro Tools rigs, which to me was perfect. It's kind of like this process of rediscovering what the essence of the band is. I've been at every show we've ever played, but I've never had the chance to stand out front to see what the impact is — we're very proud of our recorded output, but what people have always focused on is what the five guys in the group do on stage. Adam jumped at the chance to work with the group based upon his experiences live, not anything that we'd done on record. Clearly he thought there was something he could rediscover that we'd lost sight of, or that other producers hadn't been able to find, and I think he achieved it."

Although some of the tracks required a certain amount of fixes, overdubs and buffing up in the digital realm, the band and Adam did their best to keep the album as purely live as possible. "It's all about creating a musical arrangement where the parts just blend very naturally, like we do on stage." Sharing space in the mix, glory in the arrangements and taking meticulous notes that any overdubs match the original live track.

As much as the recording process helped bring out the grunt instrumentally it also suited Gord Downie's latest batch of lyrics and his trademark growl. "I know Gord's trying to capture place and mood, and specific events, in a roundabout way. It's all about creating a sense of atmosphere. I know 'Mean Street' was written when he was on the road for *Battle Of The Nudes* (Gord Downie's second solo record), about a run in that he had with a person on the street. I think that song, lyrically, came together for Gord after we'd been working on the record. Being in Seattle, having to watch CNN constantly definitely informed that particular track."

Sinclair describes the songs as short, beefy and meant to be delivered aggressively — a product of forces that were affecting the band long before the actual recording took place: "One Night In Copenhagen", for example, talks about a time that had a great deal to do with how the new record would evolve: "Copenhagen" was inspired when we were touring at the end of the *In Violet Light* sessions. Professionally it was a difficult time for us; we'd just left our long-term manager of 15 years; we'd come through a very difficult tour and yet, amidst it all, the group was playing better than we ever had. The stage, and the five of us, became a real refuge. It was our last month of touring in Europe that inspired that song. You're a million miles away from home. There's no sunlight. Everything is falling apart around you and yet, there's this life raft and the life raft happens to be the five guys in this band on stage."

In the end the experiences brought the band closer together, more inspired than ever and with a renewed belief in

your mindset and how you're approaching what you're doing." It's a sentiment that shows up in a number of places, but nowhere as starkly as on "Are We Family", where Downie's lyrics ask; "Are we family . . . when taking care of each other one bullet to another." It's hardly all doom and gloom, mind you. There are lighter moments and the opaque quality of The Hip's lyrics have always allowed listeners to put their own spin on the song's meanings.

Sinclair is quick to express his satisfaction with where the band is now and a deep pride in what they've accomplished. "I've had the same job for almost 20 years with the same guys as my co-workers and I still love going to work everyday. We're at the stage of our career that if we didn't enjoy the writing process and the performance process we wouldn't be doing it." Although, he says, The Hip have never achieved the variety of universal acceptance globally that they have in Canada, that they've been together for as long as they have and can continue to do what they do so well together is the very definition of success. "The road to American stardom is littered with groups like ours. I've honestly always believed that if we had achieved proportional success in the United States compared to what we did in Canada earlier in our career I doubt the band would still be together."

Although we often define our national identity in terms of some vague differences between the Americans and ourselves, we know there's more to it than that. The relationship between Canada and the US is impossible for Canadian artists to ignore and has always informed Canadian music and fascinated musicians. Years ago, Sinclair wrote a paper for a fourth-year Canadian History course on the Gordon Lightfoot song, "A Black Day In July". More recently, he and The Hip were asked to cover the song for *Beautiful: A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot*. "I always loved the piece of music. The images he evokes from literally across the river; you're watching Detroit burn — I always loved the concept that here, literally a stone's throw away, while we have tones of social problems that are uniquely Canadian, that we don't have this one, clearly nagging, monstrous problem that the United States have." When the chance came to record the song, the band jumped at it.

Differences or not, for most Canadian artists American success is the holy grail of music — America is, after all, where they keep all the fancy real estate and such. But it's all a matter of perspective. "For us, it's always been a very, very strange career," he says. "In the US and Europe it's a market by market trip for the band; one night we're an arena band, the next a bar band, the next a theatre act." With the support of the band's Canadian label as well as fans in Canada, the US and Europe they've managed to stay pretty much in the black over their careers. "We were never making anyone in the business enough money that they wanted to fuck around with what we were doing, you know? We never had someone coming in and saying, 'Okay, you've sold 200,000 copies of *Fully Completely* — let's try to make that 2 million.' We've just sort of flown — it's kind of like a little drug runner from the Bahamas — safely under the radar, dropped our product off and flown right back to the safety of grand old Canada."

Sinclair points out that there are, no doubt, some people who might view their success as failure, but he says; "Other groups look to us as being successful because of the length of our career and the fact that we can still gig. I'll never be living in Bel Air with Britney Spears as my next-door neighbour, but I'm quite content living where I'm living. You can see the cost of American success by the number of artists who never have

the trends, with their output and experience, you'd think that once the album was done and in the can the hard part of the creative process would be done. "Ridiculously enough, naming the record, trying to find one phrase that encompasses all the ideas that are there, has always been really difficult for us. Again we found ourselves with the record completed, the artwork underway and no title for the thing." He laughs. In this case the cover art supplied by artist, Cameron Tomsett, took the pressure off the band. The visual connection between Cameron's art and their music is something The Hip has already expanded, by using some of his animations in the video for "Vaccination Scar" as well as on their Web site. They also hope to incorporate it into visual for their tour when they hit the road in the fall. "We knew that we wanted to work with Cameron and when he presented us with the piece we fell head over heels in love with it. And as soon as I heard the title of the piece, to me, it was perfect for the album." Perfect, because it applies to the individuals in the band, the band itself as well as being a reflection of what the world around them is up to and being a return to early day and a more aggressive recording. Maybe it's a stretch, but the title could also sum up Sinclair's feelings about the state of the industry. . . .

Although he admits it's not such a great time in the music business — he mentions that a number of the band's friends have lost their jobs at record companies and a number of bands have lost their deals — he's refreshingly upbeat about both the present and future of the music industry. "What will never change is that there are musicians out there who will find a way to record their output, a way to get up onto the stage. Music fans will seek them out. If it means something to you, then you support it and go to see them play. It doesn't matter if you're formerly on a major label and now you're on an indie. It doesn't matter if you're selling your records at the front of the stage with your T-shirts. There's too much press about the demise of the music business. There are more groups playing now and there's better music available in a million different formats."

At the time of this interview The Hip are hours away from a show at Toronto's Mod Club to celebrate *In Between Evolution's* release. Over the summer they'll be playing a variety of festivals and one offs and starting to tour Canada and worldwide in earnest in September. I know I should probably let Sinclair go to sound check for tonight's show, but before I do I wonder aloud if they've ever thought of bringing Roadside Attraction back. . . .

"We actually considered at one point this summer. It just didn't come off. You know I've always been a fan of the all-day rock festival. It's a great way to see good old bands and hot young bands all together — sort of a one-stop-shopping kind of thing. When we first started Roadside it was all about getting into unusual places like Seabird Island, that Speedway in Ottawa, Stittsville. You bring your tent and you get a bag of weed and a box of beer and you camp out. You get ready for a fun day out in the sun. I think the desire for people to make it a little more convenient; with ample parking, flush toilets, 'here's your concession stand,' and all, has taken a lot of the charm away from the outdoor festival. It's a little difficult to sell that when you know it's happening in two weeks at the same venue with another festival type combination — you know, ultimately, what people really want from their musicians is the sense that this is special, that I'm part of something here. That's what we've always tried to do with every gig." ■

what they do. "You set that as a backdrop to everything we're going through in a global sense, particularly our exposure to the United States and what we're seeing every day on the news and the kind of the world in which we live. There's an urgency to the way the world is right now. I think that coloured a lot of what Gord was writing thematically. It can't help but infiltrate

the chance to achieve, what I think, is their creative potential, because of the demands placed on them by the star making machine. For me the opportunity to explore who I am as a writer, who my bandmates are as writers, that's really what it's all comes down to."

For a band that has weathered, and at times defied



Freelance writer Kevin Young is a Toronto-based musician best-known for his work with David Usher and Moist.



“I can’t sing.” was exactly the response guitarist Wade MacNeil was hoping for when he asked George Pettit to join his band, Alexisonfire, back in 2001. “Yeah, I know. I just want you to come in and scream and yell.” And so he did, thus becoming the expressive exorcistic foil to Dallas Green’s melodic singing.

Watching the St. Catharines, ON “screamo” band – translation: an emo band, or emotional band with a screamer – onstage, one is mesmerized. The energy is palpable; the fans hardcore, learning every word, screams and all, singing along, united in solidarity as the band denounces the use of cocaine in “White Devil” from the latest album, *Watch Out!*, reminisces about a sketchy go-cart outing in “Hey, It’s Your Funeral Mama”, or that creepy disinfectant smell of a hospital waiting room in “Accidents”.

Alexisonfire truly is a band for the youth. That’s who it’s intended for, teens and 20-somethings sick of radio fodder, sick of auto-tuned pop stars, sick of music that says nothing of value. *to them*. Alexis – MacNeil, Pettit, Green, drummer Jesse Ingelevics and bassist Chris Steele – in many ways, while a lofty assessment, is what Nirvana or Beck was to the Gen-X-ers as hair metal waned. It speaks to its generation, loudly and with conviction and without compromise.

Just to put it in perspective:

With a ton of radio support and push from their respective labels, according to figures issued by Nielsen SoundScan Canada, by late July *The Trews* had sold 14,000 copies of its Bumstead/Sony debut album in about a year, and the 604-signing Thornley had scanned 21,000 copies of its summer 2004 release. Alexisonfire’s *Watch Out!* debuted at No. 6 on the Top 200 Soundscan chart, selling over 6,500 copies in the first week. Just over a month later, the Distort/EMI album had sold more than 17,000 copies. That’s with barely any radio play, except for specialty shows on Toronto’s Edge 102, which added the single “Accidents” to late-night rotation only.

“There’s still a lot of shit that people like,” says Green. “There’s still a lot of radio rock out there, so I don’t know if the radio stations are going to be forced to play (us) because people are still listening to Evanescence and Nickelback. And we don’t really care. We haven’t got any love from radio yet and it’s not going to affect us. We’re doing okay.”

More than okay. The band’s 2002 self-titled debut scanned almost 29,000 units – more than most domestic signings. About the only mainstream media support Alexis has received is from MuchMusic. The station played all three videos and has since added the new “Accidents”, all directed by Mark Ricciardelli.

“We had a lot of goofballs telling us what they thought we should do, but generally they are so far off the mark, it blows my mind,” says MacNeil. “A really good example is every single video we’ve made. First video (‘Pulmonary Archery’), everybody was like, ‘I don’t know what this is? It takes so long to establish the band.’ And we were like, ‘No. You’re wrong. It’s great.’

“And the second video (‘Counterparts And Number Them’), they’re like, ‘This is ridiculous.’ I don’t know what you’re thinking.” And even the same with the third (‘Waterwings (And Other Pool Side Fashion Faux Pas)’), people were like, ‘You should do alternate edits, where we take the whole first part out. MuchMusic’s not even going to want to touch it.

“It’s that whole group of people who are about as old as our parents who work for us, who just have a hard time wrapping their heads around the things that we do sometimes.”

Maybe like naming your band after a lactating contortionist stripper. Green couldn’t resist pausing on a Discovery Channel program when he saw a segment on a talented gal named Alexis Fire (Find her online at [www.alexisonfire.com](http://www.alexisonfire.com)). “When you’re flipping around on the TV and you see somebody bending themselves in half, you kind of have to watch for a couple of minutes – at least I do,” admits Green, who tucked the name away for the future.

As each of their respective bands fell apart, they linked up. MacNeil and Steele had always played together, at the time in punk rock band Plan 9. Green sang and played guitar in the melodic rock trio Helicon Blue. Ingelevics played drums in punk rock act The

Banned. And Pettit played bass in a Swedish-style metal outfit called Condemning Salem.

When Green’s bandmates bailed on a Toronto show, he phoned MacNeil who was putting on Plan 9’s last show in Hamilton on Halloween three years ago. He suggested they jam together.

“I sang for my old band and Dallas sang for his, and I’ve always wanted to have a band that had a frontman who was aggressive and in your face, and that’s why I wanted to have George spitting on the mic,” says MacNeil.

“We all played in loud bands, but not screamo,” adds Green, not even sure if the genre had been coined at that point, even if the style did exist. “Our practice was a couple of days before my birthday in September. I met George for the first time officially on my birthday, September 29, at the Grape & Wine Festival in St. Catharines. So that’s when I say the band started because everybody else knew each other.”

Ingelevics, MacNeil and Steele were all 17; Pettit, 19; and Green, the eldest at 21.

The first song Alexisonfire wrote was called “The Philosophical Significance Of Shooting My Sister In The Face – An Essay By James Secord”. It seems the band has always had brilliant titles. The song, based on an essay by one of Pettit’s friends, “sucked,” according to Green, but the second and third songs were keepers, “Counterparts And Number Them”, and “Little Girls Pointing And Laughing”. Both would end up on the band’s debut album.

Within a month of being a band, Alexisonfire went into Burning Sound in Niagara Falls with friend Adam Hendershot and recorded a three-song demo (consisting of the aforementioned three songs) for a couple of hundred bucks in two days on an 8-track. They wrapped each burned CD in Ingelevics’ old math notes and sold them for \$3 a pop at shows.

They didn’t shop the demo, but did give it to their friends, Joel Carriere of St. Catharines-based Bedlam Society, an online magazine, street team and promotion company, and former St. Catharines native Greg Below of Toronto’s Distort, a production and concert promotion company (Incubus, System Of A Down, Slipknot).

Below had met Green a few years prior from Carriere when he was working as an engineer at Toronto’s McClear Digital and promoting shows. Carriere was working with Green’s Helicon Blue and Below offered to record its second EP. So when Alexisonfire started, both Carriere and Below were interested in helping out.

By then, Below was the studio manager at EMI Music Publishing’s in-house studio and had also formed a hard music record label, also called Distort, with then partner Mitch Joel. The first signing was New York’s The Step Kings, which he produced, and he landed national distribution through EMI Music Canada. Below was playing the Alexisonfire demo when EMI Music Publishing Canada President Mike McCarty heard it.

“When I met Mike, he didn’t tell me who he was,” says Green. “He came to see us in St. Catharines and me and him and Greg went out for a drink after. I told him pretty much everything he (the industry) did was shit, not knowing who he was.

“I think that’s shit, all that stuff,” he tells McCarty, actually naming bands. “At the end of the night, he slips me his business card and I was like, ‘Holy crap,’ and then I went back to the guys and said, ‘I think I might have just ruined our career.’”

Far from it. EMI Music Publishing signed the band, about a week after the Distort deal was finalized in June 2002. Carriere officially came on board as Alexis’ manager.

“The whole plan was to get an EMI deal and then for Greg to put out our record because obviously no one else in Canada would look at a bunch of kids yelling and screaming,” says Green. “We write songs the way we write songs. I told (Mike) that I always wanted to grow organically. I wanted to spend time touring in a band. He really appreciates that and he doesn’t try to force anything on us.”

Sporadically, from June through to October, Alexisonfire would trek into Toronto when studio was available to record what would eventually become its 2002 self-titled album with Below as co-producer. The bed tracks were recorded at Iguana and Umbrella, and then the rest at EMI’s studio. On MacNeil’s first day of grade 13, he went to school, then drove immediately to the studio and stayed there





everyone  
who  
knows  
screamo  
knows...

# Alexisonfire

Photos by Omer R. Cordell

by Karen Bliss

CANADIAN MUSICIAN • 39



until 3 a.m. "It was just ridiculous, going up there at really stupid times," MacNeil says.

In retrospect, Green and MacNeil don't sound too pleased with their performances on the first album. Green says it "has no feel" and MacNeil says, "It was a very strange way to go about it."

Green refers to the band as "studio virgins," at the time. "We had not been a band for that long. We didn't really know what we were doing. We enjoy the songs on the record, but if we could go back and re-record it, but any band's gonna say that. On the first record, when we didn't know each other very well, the dual vocal thing was first coming about and we didn't really know what we were doing. We just both sang whatever we felt like singing. I mumble through my teeth and you can't really understand what I'm saying."

Pettit has his own view. "A lot of those songs were almost one take," he says. "Go in there and belt them out, and then it was over, and we wrote a lot of the lyrics in the studio and a lot on the spot. I like the lyrics on the first album but it was so random."

With some 200 shows under Alexisonfire's belt in Canada and the US, the old songs eventually took shape and the band was able to give more thought to the follow-up album. After playing shows in New Jersey and Philadelphia on the first and second of January, 2004, the band buckled down, practicing eight hours a day for the rest of the month, writing the album.

"Definitely, our songwriting has improved," says MacNeil, who writes much of the music with Green. "On the first album, it's more or less a lot of parts. It's a lot of great parts, but as a whole, things aren't repeated very often. This time, we wanted to make more of a focus out of it – have stuff that you could sing along to, and the parts that we really dig, we repeated. We wanted to follow a complete thought throughout the whole song and get across what we're trying to say."

"This was good," says Pettit of writing *Watch Out!*. "I felt better about it lyrically. I like the lyrics on the first album, but this one felt like we had it all planned out and there were really chorus-y sing-along parts."

Pettit laughs about "Hey, It's Your Funeral Mama", about a go-cart track which scared the hell out of him as a teen because it was so poorly maintained a wheel once flew off and he skidded off the road, but talks passionately about the two "message" songs on the album.

"White Devil", denounces cocaine use, which he says has become "fashionable" with some of the kids in St. Catharines, among other places on his travels. "It's

so lame. It's something you shouldn't mess around with, especially when you consider all the horror stories," Pettit says. "We're not a straight-edge band. Everybody drinks and has a good time, but we know where to draw the line."

The other is "Get Fought", the first song the band wrote for *Watch Out!*, and it's really just a word to the "message board mentality," than a typical message song. "I was sick of kids with insecurities, kids persecuting kids because they didn't dress a certain way or didn't have the right dance moves and that's not what we are about. It was about us getting sick of going to shows and seeing kids there who didn't really care about music."

Next was finding the right co-producer. Green and Pettit had sung on "Rekindled", "Wake Up My Love", and "Seven Steps Remix" on their friends Jude The Obscure's album, *The Coldest Winter*, and had enjoyed producer Julius "Juice" Butty's mellow approach. "I want the CD to sell itself, not a name," says MacNeil of why Alexis didn't seek out a heavyweight.

The band was sold on Juice after he mixed two songs – "Sharks And Danger" and "Get Fought" – from pre-production session with Below that were released as a two-song sampler CD.

"We wanted to do it with Juice because we all felt it was going to be amazing," says

**singing  
is one thing,  
but how does a  
producer get the right  
screams from a guy  
without damaging his voice  
take after take and  
with the words still  
audible to the  
devout  
fan?**

MacNeil. "He's recorded a lot of our friends (Sleeper Set Sail, Rise Over Run, Jude The Obscure). We are just absolutely blown away every time he records something, just subtle things like the way he mixes stuff and strange little things that he comes up with."

Juice says he'd like the Alexisonfire album to be a stepping-stone to other big projects and hopes record labels, both in and outside the country, will now consider him. Based in Smithville, ON, his digital studio, Silo Recording, is an addition to his house, which he has been working out of for four years. He uses a Yamaha O2R console and

Nuendo.

So in late January, after a month of writing and pre-production, Alexisonfire came into Silo. At the foundation was the rhythm section, because as Juice believes, if you don't have a good rhythm section, everything else is going to fall apart.

"When I went to the rehearsal, Jesse definitely stuck out to me," says Juice. "I loved some of the stuff he was doing this time around. He's definitely come a long, long way, getting really tight, really solid, and having some really tasty drum fills and some nice work on the new songs.

"Steele is an amazing bass player. The two of them played really solid together. I like to track the drums and the bass together so there are two separate rooms that I set the equipment up in. Jesse played in the larger room with the drums and had the headphones on, and then Steele had his rig in another room, in the isolation booth and he played in the control room where everybody else was. That way he could keep the communication open. It worked really well."

What's evident for anyone who has listened to both albums back to back is the clear definition between Green's melodic passages and Pettit's screams.

For Green, who didn't want to mumble on this album, he happily reports he is "very clear," and enunciates. "He worked really hard with me on my vocals," says Green of Juice.

"I said to him, 'I don't want to use pitch correction at all.' I pride myself on not using pitch correction because if I'm not going to be able to sing it live, then I'm not going to record it because I think that's a bunch of shit. There's too much fake music out there right now. I'm not an entertainer. I'm a musician. If I was an entertainer, then I wouldn't even sing those songs.

"Even if I sang something perfectly on key and he couldn't understand what I was saying, he'd tell me to do it again because it's good to be clear."

Juice is humble about his role. "Dallas worked on a lot of this stuff in terms of pre-production, and he got his sound down touring and focusing on what he wanted to do. We just pushed it further. We talked a bit about it before they came in. I was aware that the songs were different than the songs on the first CD, that he was going to be doing a lot more singing."

Singing is one thing, but how does a producer get the right screams from a guy without damaging his voice take after take and with the words still audible to the devout fan?

"With George, we tried out a bunch of different microphones," says Juice. "We tried an Audio-Technica 4033 which is a large diaphragm, more expensive condenser



microphone. And then we went to a hand-held Sennheiser 421 that seemed to suit more the sound that we were going for. He holds it in his hands, so I think it's a comfort thing plus he can cup the microphone and get a different kind of sound. That's the way I like to approach the screaming stuff.

"We ended up going with a handheld and I set up a PA in the room, and cranked the PA to 10, until it started to feedback, and he sang all his tracks, with headphones on and with his vocals coming in though the PA as well with the handheld mic. That really gave it some real cool balls, a nice heavy sound. Again it didn't sound muffled. You can hear a lot of what he's doing."

Pettit has lost his voice on tour before and saw a throat specialist, which he calls a "very unpleasant" experience. "The doctor put this long tube thing into my nose and it went all the way back to the back of my throat and then he made me do vocal scales, with this thing. I'm gagging and coughing all over the place and he's like, 'Okay, try your vocal scales now, George,' and I'm like (spitters) 'DoooOoOo. ReEEeee, Miiiiiiiiiii...' I couldn't even get it out."

In the studio, he has his own prescription. "I've got a jug full of hot water in the room with me and I've got a humidifier going, and I've got honey near me, so I'm lubricated while I'm doing it," says Pettit. "I definitely have to have a humidifier going in the room. If I'm ever hoarse, I walk over and dip my face into the steam for a second and take that in. Keeps my vocal chords warm."

He says there is method to his madness. "Sometimes, it's difficult to perform. You get in there, and usually the first three takes are going to be scrapped because your voice has to warm up to the whole idea of screaming. You get in there and the first one sounds a bit raspier usually or not as full, and then you get a couple more takes in there, and get warmed up, and you get a much more balls-y kind of scream."

Cutting all his vocals over five days, Pettit laughs when he recounts how Juice would ask him to re-scream something because his pronunciation wasn't right. "I know that sounds ridiculous."

He thinks he probably could sing, if he tried, but what's the point. It's a language reserved for the Alexis fan, one who listens, who understands, and appreciates what it's like to get yer ya-ya's out without real ammunition. ■

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



## equipment list

### dallas green

1952 Fender Telecaster Reissue  
Marshall 30th Anniversary Head  
Morris Custom Electronics (custom Cabinet)  
BOSS RV3 Digital Delay-Rev Pedal

### wade macneil

Les Paul Classic  
Marshall JCM 2000  
Morris Custom Electronics (Custom Cabinet)  
Line 6 Delay Modular

### chris steele

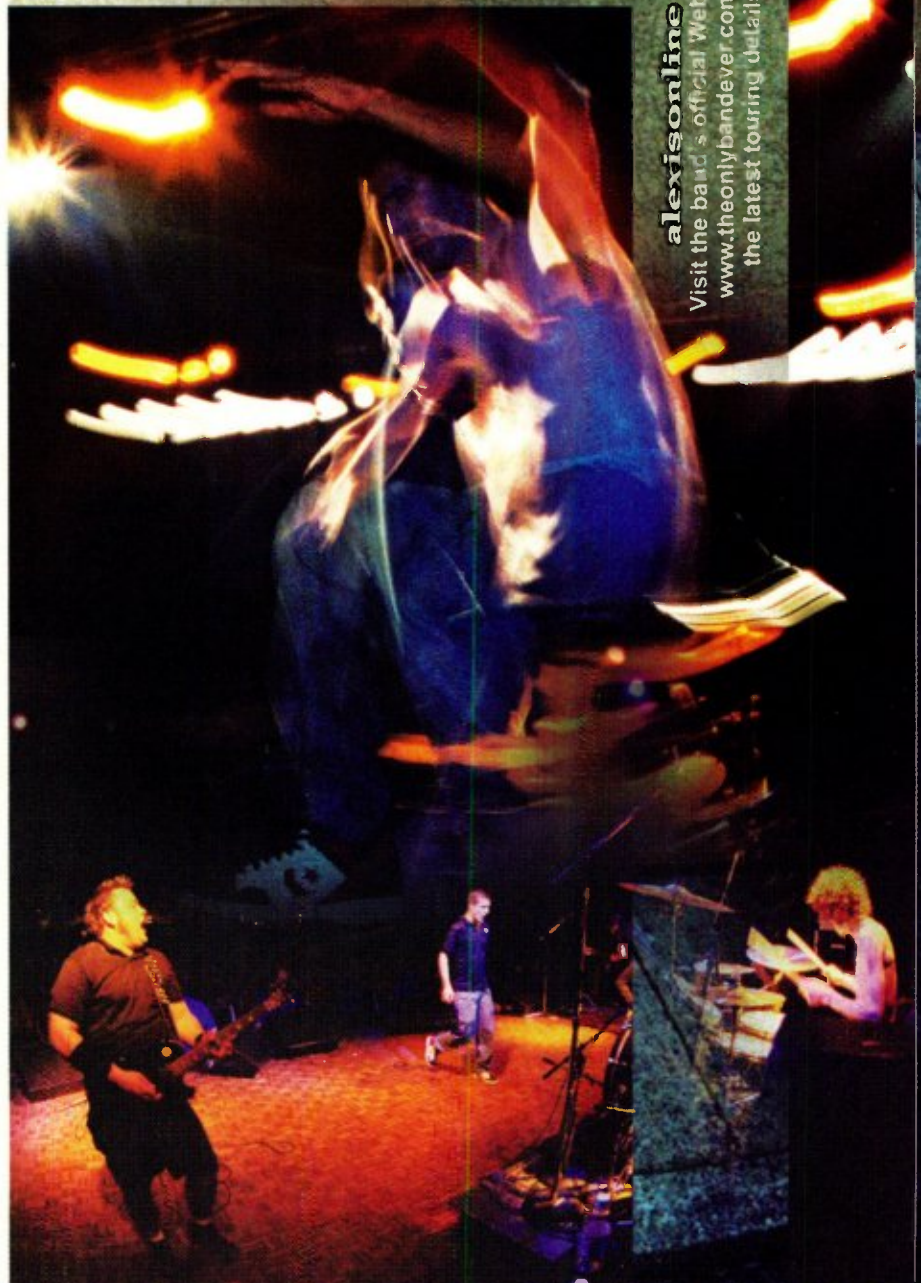
American Fender Jazz Bass  
Ampeg SVT IV Bass Head  
Ampeg 8x10 Cabinet  
Sansamp Bass Driver

### jesse ingelewics

U-Drum Custom Drums  
SABIAN Cymbals  
Pro-Mark Drum Sticks

### sponsorships

Alexisonfire has recently become endorseees of the following products:  
Schecter Guitars  
SIT Strings  
Pro-Mark Drum Sticks  
U-Drum Custom Drums



**alexisonfire**

Visit the band's official Web site:  
[www.theonlybandever.com](http://www.theonlybandever.com) for  
the latest touring details.



# SO YOU WANT TO BUILD

Break out the tools and make your dream come true.



## BY ALEC WATSON



# LD A HOME STUDIO... 6" STUD →

**My** first and best advice to you is: "Don't do it! Let some other bum in the band spend all his hard-earned cash on gear that will go obsolete while he worries about how he is going to make the payments." Of course, if you're like me, you just may be the other bum...

It's hard to imagine why we work so hard to spend all our money on recording gear, so that we can make very little money and then have to work harder to buy more. Some of us are just wired like that. So, if after my best advice you still want to go ahead on building things and buying gear, you might as well have some guidance based on many years of experience, so that you can cut some of the *right* corners.

Decision #1: What is your budget and what is your goal? Are you a songwriter that can get away with one microphone, a computer and a set of speakers? Or do you want the whole gang over to record live in the basement? I'll try and set out some realistic budgets that you can *go over* (as in: *go over budget!*).

Decision #2: Is this an odd weekend thing to do with the fellas, or do you want to pursue some higher level of audio excellence? If you're an audio purist, you probably need to be looking at the one thing that gets overlooked in almost every home project studio: acoustics!

## ACOUSTICS ON A BUDGET 101

The biggest acoustic consideration with home studios is not standing waves (those notes in the bass frequencies that stick out and make the room shake), or room ambience (reverb). It is bleed. No, not the kind of bleeding that happens when you stick your finger in the chop saw (though I did recently learn *why* they call it a *chop saw*). I am talking about the bleed of sound waves coming in AND going out of your home recording studio.

In considering your new venture that will allow you to be your own boss, make no money, and worry about how you are going to make the house payments, here is your first VERY IMPORTANT STEP! Have a sit down in the area where you want to record – and *listen*. What can you hear?

The following is a true story about a fairly experienced producer/engineer (yes, this *is* one of those stories where you start out with "I have this friend...") who built a fairly nice destination recording studio looking out over the water on an island in the Pacific. This *friend* was always so busy looking out at the wonderful view that he never really stopped and listened; at least not until the tracking room was just getting its final coat of paint. It was then in a moment of sheer horror that he realized he had just heard a car drive past. The cars weren't *loud*, but they were audible. How did this happen? It's not like he didn't live there. He had never noticed traffic noise in the past. He had failed to critically listen. It is one thing to believe that you live in a quiet neighbourhood. It is quite another to live in a quiet enough area to record an acoustic guitar. To make good recordings, your recording room is going to have to be *very quiet*.

Anyway, my friend ended up spending a whole bunch of money and time trying to fix the traffic noise problems that should have been identified right at the beginning.

Bleed, of course, is a two way street (do you like how I linked traffic noise and the potential for irate band hating neighbours into a simple generic phrase?). If you can hear things from the outside, your neighbours will certainly hear things being played on the inside. The truly horrifying news here is: (this may be a surprise to you) it is *almost* impossible to truly sound proof a room; however, there are steps you can take to significantly reduce bleed from inside and out.

If you are anything like most Canadian musicians, you are working on a tight budget. If you have lots of money, there are all sorts of expensive professional solutions available to you for soundproofing. For those of you, like me, who are looking for bang for your buck I recommend – cue fanfare – THE ROOM WITHIN A ROOM approach. Not only does a room within a room significantly help with sound proofing, you can change room dimensions while you are building it, helping to control reflections and decrease standing waves.

For my sound proofing problems, I mean my friend's sound proofing problems, we used double walls. A standard exterior wall consists of a layer of siding and sheathing over a framework of 2 x 4s. Found inside the 2 x 4 layer is pink fibreglass insulation covered by your interior wall surface: a single layer of ½-inch dry wall. Now if you have ever picked up a sheet of drywall – you know that it is fairly heavy. Weight, when it comes to sound proofing, is our friend. In fact, simply adding another ½-inch sheet of drywall to the existing drywall can be a cost effective aide in isolating some frequencies. The biggest problem, no matter how dense a wall is, is that a single wall transfers sound through itself. Because a single wall is "solid", any sound hitting the outside (or inside) surface, makes the wall vibrate in sympathy. This vibration is transferred to the 2 x 4s on the inside and finally to the wall on the other side. It's like one of those magic rows of "ball bearings on strings" gadgets in science lab. The energy from one ball bearing striking from one side is transferred through all the ball bearings to the other side. By simply building another wall on the inside (that is in no way attached to the outside wall), and then filling the resulting cavity between the two walls with rock wool insulation, sound transfer is GREATLY reduced.

There are other advantages to building a room within a room too. When your house was built, hopefully the builder went to some effort to make sure the walls were square and parallel. Parallel, square walls probably make a house stronger (I am an audio engineer not a housing engineer), but man do they make it sound bad. Parallel surfaces, as you probably know, create standing waves. Standing waves are nice if you are singing in the shower, not so nice for recording; unless you are desperately trying to create the vocal sound on the latest Viagra ad.

One way to *beat* these standing waves is to go to great lengths and calculations to create tuned bass traps to eat those frequencies. It is *much* easier however, to make crooked walls! And any idiot can do that – even me. In fact, based on my experience, I guarantee that you will enjoy making crooked walls on purpose! There is a certain non-conformist satisfaction in doing a job wrong. In order to kill standing waves, a wall only has to be a couple of inches out of square. In a fairly big room, a couple of inches is hard to detect by the eye, but your ear will *sure* notice a difference.

## THE POOR MAN'S LEDE CONTROL ROOM

Now I don't want to go over-stating things here and leave you disappointed, but the following construction technique will, for the home studio on a budget, delight and amaze an audiophile with the improvement in imaging and frequency response.

Just slightly after dinosaurs walked the earth, the Live End, Dead End, control room was created to help solve imaging problems in the recording control room. Sound, dependant upon frequency, resonates out of a speaker cabinet far more omni-directionally than speaker manufacturers would have you believe. In simple terms, this means that sound waves, especially low notes, come flying out of your speaker cabinet in all directions (this is bad). This creates all sorts of havoc in a listening environment; especially if you are trying to get your buddies to call your newly renovated basement a "control room."

To battle this phenomenon, the Live End, Dead End control room was developed. The concept is very simple. You make the wall behind the speakers very dead (absorptive) so it doesn't reflect the audio coming out of the back of the speaker and you make the back wall of the control room fairly



TO MAKE GOOD  
RECORDINGS,  
YOUR RECORDING  
ROOM IS  
GOING TO  
HAVE TO BE  
VERY QUIET.



live and reflective (reflective as in sound bouncing around – not mirrors) so that it doesn't sound like you are listening to audio in the sonic equivalent of a marshmallow.

For my, I mean my friend's front control room wall (the wall behind the speakers), we started by doubling the drywall thickness. Rather than screwing the new drywall on, it was glued with construction glue (the glue acts as a "spring" barrier between the drywall layers further reducing sound transfer). This wall was then covered with a layer of rock wool. The rock wool is far denser and more absorptive than fiberglass and much cheaper than acoustic foam, yet has very similar properties.

Next we built a crooked wall (to reduce the standing waves). Once again, drywall was used on the "outside of the wall"; however, for the inside surface of our room-within-a-room, there was no hard surface added. Instead, we filled the 2 x 4 cavity with rock wool and then on the outside stapled material to hold the rock wool in place. The result is a very dead front wall. It doesn't allow much sound in or out and is really quite dead at all but the lowest frequencies.

The cost of such a treatment is as follows:

8 sheets drywall @ \$12	\$96
15 econo studs @ \$3	\$45
4 bags of rock wool @ \$25	\$100
Total:	\$241

The resulting improvement in imaging for your \$1,400 powered monitors – priceless.

To create a true room within a room you are going to be looking at nearly 3-4 times that cost, which is not insignificant. But if you want to record acoustic instruments in a quiet, controlled environment, it is a necessary consideration.

### PUTTING YOUR CLIENTS IN THE PENALTY BOX

There was a time for me, when I lived down in Nashville, Tennessee, when work was really sparse. Though not worthy of my own VH-1 special, I did my best to live well beyond my means for far too long and suddenly found myself, and thousands of dollars in recording gear, down-scaling to an apartment. Most important on my list of requirements was a walk-in closet. Not for all my dreadful leftover '80s clothes, but rather, of course, because I needed an iso-booth. Laugh as you may, I happen to know I am not the only person to record vocals in a closet and hear the resulting tracks on the radio. It is not easy to make records in the bedroom (the "coming out of the closet" jokes wear thin . . . on the first day) but it is possible. Would I recommend a walk-in closet as an iso-booth? No. In a pinch, however, it will work, especially if it is not a square closet.

I am not a fan of iso-booths. I find that acoustic instruments, especially things like acoustic guitars, sound very small when recorded in confined spaces. Sometimes however, when recording at home there is not much choice.

If you are limited by your environment, here are some ideas to get the most out of your iso-booth:

Once again, rock wool covered in material is an excellent choice for deadening. The reflections in a small room come back very fast, so the deader you can make it, the better. As far as a design goes, a square would be your worst shape. If you had a room that was 4 x 4 feet, middle C would be the resonant frequency . . . yeah, that would be a bad iso-booth for vocals. That would make your vocals and guitars sound very muddy. Ideally, in a small room, make very crooked walls and don't forget a crooked absorptive ceiling too!

Unless you like the sound of a small room, mic the instrument close. The closer you are to the source, the less effect you are going to have from your small room. However, keep in mind, that close microphone placement is not likely the ideal placement for the instrument you are recording. I guess you will just have to trust your ears for placement; who'd of thunk?

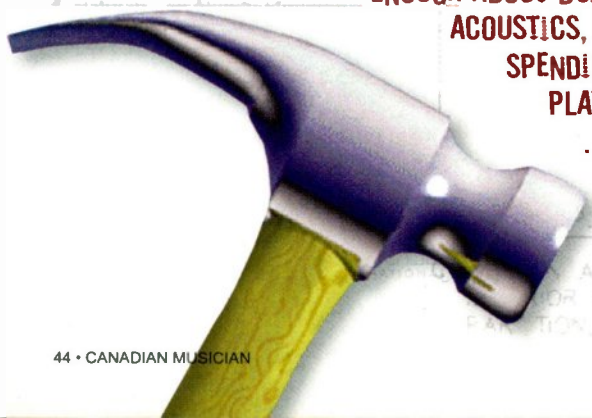
Often, my preference, when faced with a situation of throwing someone into the "penalty box" (iso-booth) would be to choose to record in the control room. After all, it is a control room. You have different live and dead areas, you have been careful not to construct parallel walls and it is a far more spacious and friendly a place to perform. There are of course downsides to this option – the main one being that you can't talk about how much the person in the other room sucks! Beyond that, there are of course sound issues; you and anyone else in the room has to (think Elmer Fudd) be vewy, vewy, qwuiet. Your gear has to be quiet too; no obscenely noisy cooling fans. The rewards however for recording this way can be great. You can achieve a feeling of intimacy with the performer and they also have an audience to perform to.

Iso-booth and control room recording each have their inherent advantages; it is good to be aware as a home producer/engineer, of how to get the best performance out of your client.

### ENOUGH ABOUT BUILDING AND ACOUSTICS, LETS TALK ABOUT SPENDING MONEY AND PLAYING WITH GADGETS

There is currently more recording gear available to the home musician than at any time in history. The hardest decision for a home producer/engineer is trying to decide how to blow your budget . . . wisely utilize your hard-earned cash.

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The diligent editor of this fine magazine asked me to look at a few budgets in building a home studio. The first budget he picked was for the under \$500 crowd.

Under 500? Dollars?! My first thought was that if you only have \$500 as a home recording budget, maybe you should save your money a little longer. After all, when the first 4-track Portastudio came out from Tascam in the early '80s it cost around \$700 – US!

But you know what? I was brought up on a small hobby farm; I first started getting into playing with music when I was about 14. My idea, back then, of mixing a song was playing two store bought cassettes at the same time and recording the “flanging” effect onto a third. I had a “Realistic” 4-channel mixer AND a tiny PZM microphone. This is where I learned to love messing about with other people’s audio. There wasn’t a piece of quality audio gear to be found within a 50-mile radius, but I had a *lot* of fun.

If you have \$500, a computer, and just want to have a lot of fun messing around with audio, consider a USB mic preamp. The little 2-channel mic-pres from Tascam, Edirol, Mackie or M-Audio sound surprisingly good. You can plug in guitars, keyboards, dynamic microphones and even high-end condenser microphones. A little mic-pre like this will grow with your studio. Based on the assumption that “your studio is only as good as its weakest link,” one of these little preamps won’t likely be the weakest piece of audio gear in your recording chain until you get up to a \$10,000 budget. If you have a computer you can get a USB mic-pre, use the bundled software that comes with it for recording, buy yourself a reasonably good pair of headphones, (I like “circum-aural” headphones, no this is not a Sue Johanson sexual aide, these are headphones that completely cover your ears; if you wear headphones for a long time, your ears will get sore from being pushed onto the side of your head) and get a reasonable small dynamic microphone for under \$500!

**\$1,500 ... AND NO ONE BUT YOU DECIDING HOW TO SPEND IT**

If you have a \$1,500 budget, this starts to open your world to some other possibilities. Myself, I have always wanted to be a bit of a renaissance man. I work in the audio arts, but I spend a lot of time in the visual arts too. I also love building things ... no, I'm not writing my dating bio for hotbabeslookingtodatecoolmusicians.com. I am suggesting that because I love to build and always desire reaching some goal that I believe to be barely attainable; my approach might not be for everyone. That said, I am writing this, so I am going to tell you what I'd do with the \$1,500. I like to dabble in photography. Photography is very similar to engineering. When taking a photograph, it is very easy to take a picture that doesn't bring out the best in someone. You could almost go as far as saying it is particularly difficult to take a picture of someone and make them look better than they *really* do. Sure, you can use lighting to enhance someone's best attributes, but the reality is that there is a certain amount of truth in an unretouched photograph. Similarly, when I am playing the role of engineer, I can't magically make someone sound better than they really are, there is less *magic* than most people think there is. The truth is: it is quite easy to make someone sound worse than they really do.

Sticking to this photographic theme, it is very hard to take a great photo of someone with a very cheap lens, you can capture a moment with a snapshot camera, but a high-end portrait is probably going to take a serious lens. The exact same is true with engineering, I can capture *character* with one microphone and a Mini-disc. If my goal is to record something that appeals to critical listener, the Mini-disc is not going to cut it. Sorry, it may seem that I have digressed from the \$1,500 budget ... a little. See, what I would do with \$1,500 is purchase one piece of pretty good gear and *fudge* the rest until I could upgrade. Ebay is a great place to sell off your old fudge.

With \$1,500, you could get yourself a dedicated multitrack recorder; one of the new 8- or 12-track digital workstations from Korg, Tascam, BOSS or Zoom. This would be a valid choice depending on your application. Me, I would buy one good microphone, stick to the USB preamp (remember, they are pretty good) use the computer to record and spend a little bit of money on treating the “control” room, whether that be your bedroom, living room or basement. If you can start to “hear” your tracks, you will be able to start making judgment calls on how to improve them.

**PHILOSOPHY, RETAIL MARKETING AND AUDIO**

Now hopefully I didn't give the brush-off to digital recording workstations. That was not my intention. I was just suggesting that if I had a limited budget, I wouldn't use it ALL on a workstation. While we are on the subject of wise-spending, I am going to indulge another part of my wannabe-renaissance-dude alter ego and discuss the intricacies of retail pricing. Now I don't profess to be an expert on marketing, however, I am well known for being a frugal buyer and make my choices carefully.

In my imminently small and black and white world (with thinking like this I just may be capable of leading a country) it seems to me that manufacturers fall into three categories. There are those that make things cheap. They make their money from selling to the masses. Sometimes these products are winners, sometimes losers, but it doesn't matter as long as they sell (Think: Duff's Stuff). The second category of manufacturer takes pride in what they make. They are selling to the discerning buyer. Building a brand name that equates to quality at an attainable if not affordable price is important to them (Think: Lexus, Infinity, Mercedes). The third category has more to do with prestige, they are the best of the best, their parts are expensive and so is their manufacturing (think: diamonds and caviar ... speaking of which, someone needs to tell those people that diamonds are “see through” rocks, not completely dissimilar to glass, and caviar is smelly dead fish eggs).

So what do you do with this secret to world domination? Look at your budget, and look at the weakest link in your recording chain.

You will find the greatest diversity of quality in the recording chain has to do with transducers ... in other words, the biggest differences, especially when it comes to money, can be found in microphones and speakers.

Of course, good mic preamps, digital to analog converters etc. make a difference to your recording, but I guarantee you that a good microphone plugged into a mediocre mic preamp will sound better than a mediocre mic plugged into a good preamp. The same is true for speakers. Oh yes, the guys at Future Shop would have you believe that this amp over here for \$1,700 sounds WAY better than this one over here for \$250. I have in fact (this is true) been told at a nameless audiophile retailer, that: “This power amp here gives the speaker a fat, almost fruity, bottom end”!?!

(Note to the editor, in the event that I ever review something and describe it as sounding “fruity”, my emergency contact is Dr. Kevoorkian.)

The truth is, that you can plug a surprisingly inexpensive power amp into a good speaker and get a much better sound than plugging a world class power amp into a distinctly misnamed “Realistic” speaker.

**...AND NOW FOR THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE DISPENSED IN MODERN HISTORY!**

Actually I seem to have wiped that piece of advice off my hard drive, but here is a good piece of advice in its place ...

“When working on a limited budget, reserve the greatest part of your resources for the outside(s) and work your way toward the centre.”

**WAY COOL DUDE! BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

Well it could mean:

When you make an independent record, it is better to spend more money on great musicians (the outside), a little less on the studio (the middle) and more on the mixing, mastering and promotions (the outside).

Or

When you build a house make a very solid foundation (the outside) use econo studs for construction (the middle) and appoint the walls with fine finishings and trim (the outside).

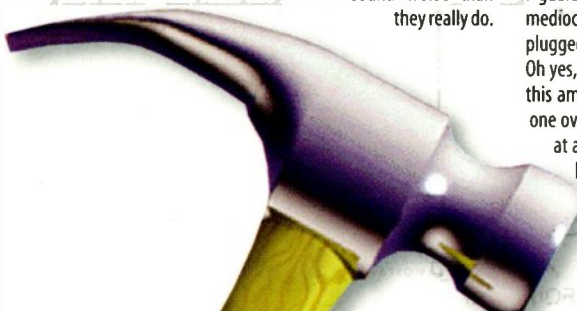
Or

When you record, record with good microphones in a room that has been treated in a way that removes standing waves (the outside) store it on a medium that will render “meat and potatoes” accurate results (the middle) and monitor your choices on good speakers that will give you fairly accurate results from which you can make informed choices (the outside).

I know I am going to get scolded by established producer and engineers for dispensing information that will limit your recordings to mediocrity and calling it advice. However! I'd like to remind my contemporaries that most of the time you have to work on a budget that is far smaller than what the “pros” deem to be the necessary ideal. When faced with this situation you make the best of the resources you have on hand. Here are some realities:

Most modern recording mediums (workstations, computers, yes even the well-maintained multitrack tape deck) sound pretty good. Keep in mind the source that you are trying to capture; this can't be done well with a bad microphone or in a bad sounding room. Start at the source and work your way through the chain. If you are working on fairly important projects, maybe you should book in at a big studio for tracking and then use your home studio for overdubs and finally return to a big studio for mixing. There are all sorts of valid ways to utilize a home studio, it is very rewarding and can be a lot of fun. Just be careful to spend your hard-earned cash on the right things and do your best to give yourself an environment in which you can make *sound* decisions on your music.

Producer/Engineer Alec Watson works out of his destination studio on Vancouver Island. He often seems to have a friend that has some impossible self-created problem.





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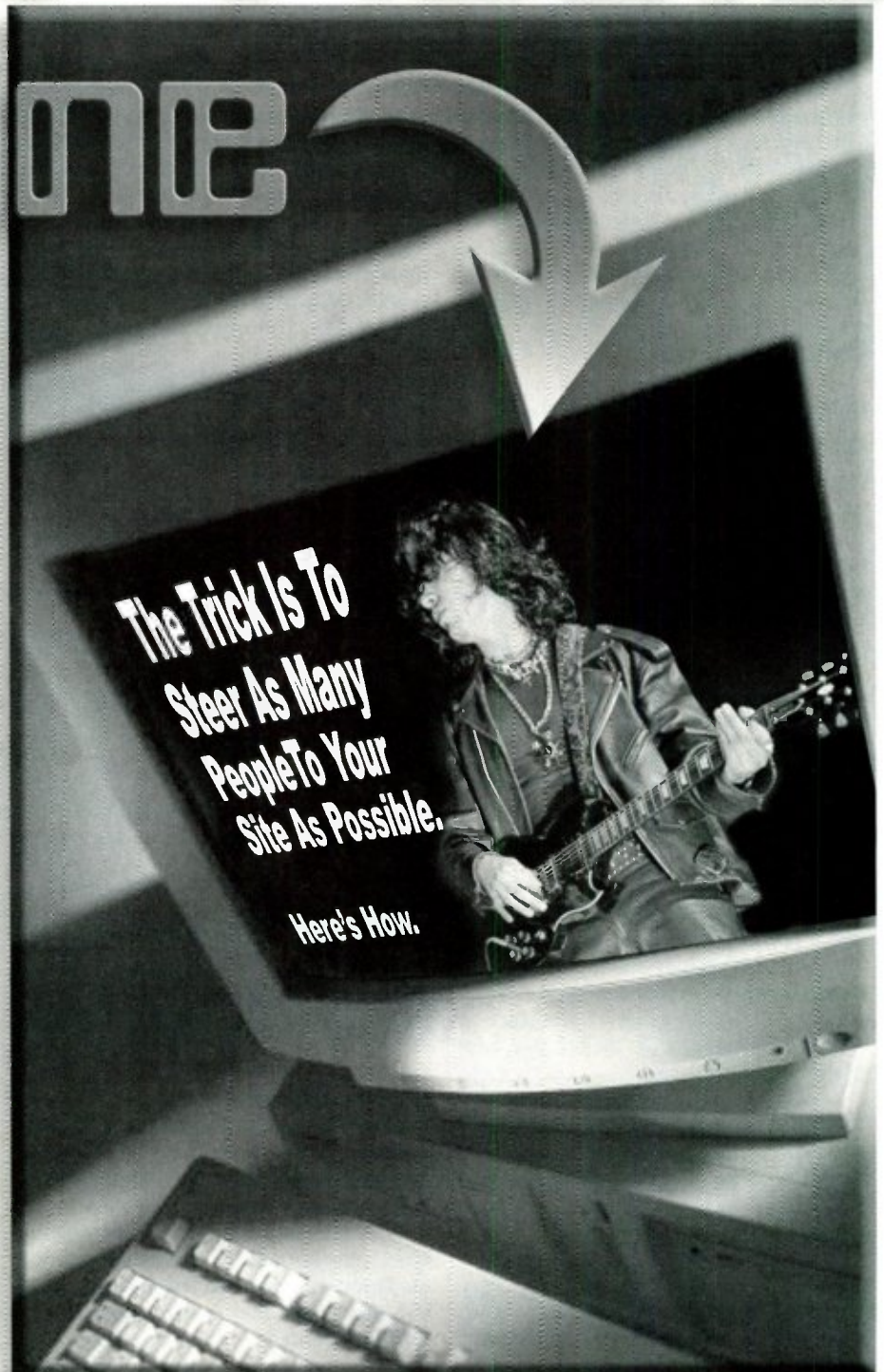
# Marketing Your Music Online

by Bill Adams

**F** For many years, the standard business practice in the music industry was that bands were discovered in clubs by A&R reps and signed to record label deals. They then received eye-popping advances and massive promotion budgets with which to plug their material, and ultimately, get a kick at the "big time." Unfortunately, to paraphrase Bob Dylan, the "big times" are a-changing. Tough times call for tougher deals. The biggest advances are gone and labels are less likely to rubber-stamp the expenses of light-fearing scouts. Record companies no longer spend thousands to get a new song on big radio stations and the stations themselves can no longer afford to turn over their airwaves to acts that are not proven hit-makers.

Does that mean that the good times are over? Obviously not. New bands are signed every year. As a case in point, about two years ago, freelance talent finder Joe Berman typed "New Zealand indie rock bands" into his computer search engine and found a little-known quintet from Whangarei called Steriogram. The band had a song and video posted on its Web site, but no record contract. Excited by what he heard, Berman e-mailed Steriogram frontman Brad Carter asking for more music – and so began the roller coaster. Carter mailed a demo CD, which Berman played for Dan McCarroll, senior creative director for EMI Publishing. In turn, McCarroll played Steriogram's CD for a friend of his who just happened to be the president of Capitol Records.

Two weeks later, Steriogram had a





steady stream of updates for upcoming performances by his myriad of projects, tour diaries, studio diaries and general news bites about "what's up in [his] wack life." Particularly from a fan's point of view, news is a proven attention keeper and also a great way to draw a few more bodies out to shows if you have an updated show calendar. The important part here is to be constantly on the collective mind of your fan base. If you don't continually update your site and let your content get stale, people will get bored and stop coming back.

Another way to hold peoples' interest is to get them involved in the site using polls, forums, contests and newsletters. The Headstones saw a fair amount of success with their online "Choose Our Set List" poll that included submitting a list of song titles as well as the fan's name and hometown. That poll worked well on a couple of levels because not only did the band's Web site traffic increase, the band was known for announcing whose set they were playing when they came to town and more people would attend the shows to see if the band was playing the set they'd suggested. At one point David Bowie held a songwriting contest and put it to his fans to submit lyrics to his site. The winner got a trip to the recording studio with Bowie and his band to record

## Link-A-Lot

As stated, it's a good idea to get links to your site in as many places as possible. On that note, the following is a list of Web pages that are great resources for independent bands and allow indie bands to list themselves and links to their own sites. Several of these resources are free; check them out and see which ones would be best for you. Descriptions are derived from text posted on the sites.

- [www.monkfunk.com](http://www.monkfunk.com) – a sort of indie Napster ... in fact, sponsored by Napster.
- [www.bandradio.com](http://www.bandradio.com) – indie group Web site hosting. (Much like Bandzoogle)
- [www.indie-music.com](http://www.indie-music.com) – lots of resources ... venue directory for setting up tours.
- [www.indieonestop.com](http://www.indieonestop.com) – resources, listings, post your act on the site.
- [www.stompinground.com](http://www.stompinground.com) – An independent music oriented Web site featuring independent/unsigned bands, indie band listings, music resources, record label listings and many other resources. Promote your band, label or company internationally through the most resourceful independent music market place and site on the Web.
- [www.getplayed.com](http://www.getplayed.com) – musicians can submit songs for download and/or sell their CDs upon membership.
- [www.indiebandsites.com](http://www.indiebandsites.com) – e-newsletter with great information.
- [www.relaxonline.com](http://www.relaxonline.com) – submit music for download.
- [www.earshot-online.com](http://www.earshot-online.com) – takes CD submissions for review, hosted by the NCRA.
- [www.pitchforkmedia.com](http://www.pitchforkmedia.com) – If you're talented and not boring, you can make a name for yourself on Pitchfork almost immediately. Presently have more than 500,000 unique visitors per month (of which 70,000+ are daily readers), making them the largest indie-oriented music publication on or off the Web.
- [www.canadianmusician.com](http://www.canadianmusician.com) – CM's site posts links to thousands of bands on its Web site for no charge.
- [www.contactmusic.com](http://www.contactmusic.com) All music makers and shakers who want to make themselves known should log on to contactmusic.com Packed full of contacts such as PR reps, A&R, managers and venues, as well as tips from celebrities on how to get in the biz, this Web site is a platform for aspiring new talent!
- [www.bandzoogle.com](http://www.bandzoogle.com) – Web site design and support for new bands.
- [KickInTheHead.com](http://KickInTheHead.com) – Canadian site that lets you post your band and information for free.

### Web Promotion Information

[Smart-Web-Promotion.com](http://Smart-Web-Promotion.com) – free tips, techniques and tools to promote your online business. Contains comprehensive articles on just about every facet of online marketing and it's all free!

## The Indie Bible, Fifth Edition



The *Indie Bible* contains:

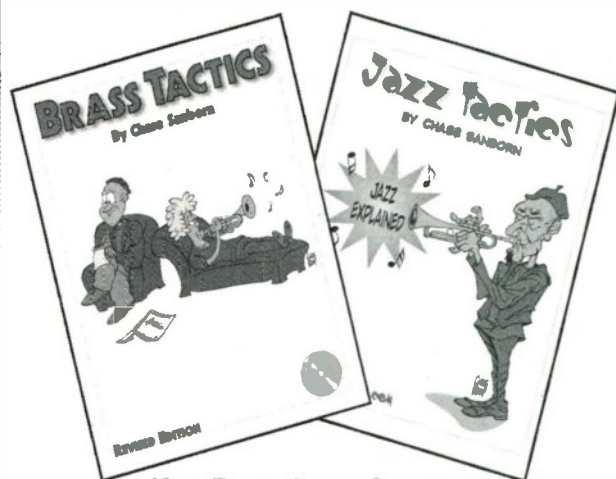
- 4,000 publications from around the world that will **REVIEW** your CD!
- 3,200 radio stations from around the world will **PLAY** your songs!
- 500 vendors and services that will help you to **SELL** your music!
- 500 helpful resources and sites where you can **PROMOTE** your band!
- 200 sites where you can **UPLOAD** your band's MP3 files!
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# Marketing Your Music Online

the song that would, in turn, appear on his *Hours...* album.

Fans love to get involved with the internal workings of their favorite bands

including [www.rainmusic.com](http://www.rainmusic.com) and [www.musicbizacademy.com](http://www.musicbizacademy.com)) that are far more comprehensive than this article could be. Moreover, the technical nuts and bolts of successfully developing a marketing plan for selling your music online are best left to the professionals. However, for those that either don't have the financial resources or simply don't wish to buy a bunch of books, here are a few tips that *Canadian Musician* is happy to provide.

## Project: Merch

First and foremost, if you're selling your wares (T-shirts, CDs, posters, buttons and whatever else you can dream up) on your Web site with no outside assistance, it's important to remember to whom you're trying to sell your stuff. Most teenagers do not have access to credit cards and so limit your market right off the bat. Some grown-ups (or any folks with credit cards) might be hesitant to give out their credit information online even if you employ a service like PayPal and as such probably won't jump at the opportunity to hand that sort of information over to an independent band. For that purpose, opening up your options by offering a printable order form

and accepting certified cheques and money orders as well as providing a mailing address to which young people can send their money is probably a good idea. Hasbrot met with great success using such methods for their special edition, mail-order-only G.I. Joe and Transformers offers in the '80s, so why can't you? Just remember to be honest and factor enough into your online sale price for return postage to your buyers.

On the other hand, there are several online companies willing to help in selling your products if you choose including [MapleMusic.com](http://MapleMusic.com) (see sidebar), Indie Pool, Amazon Advantage, [Garageband.com](http://Garageband.com), and CD Baby. For the most part, all of these companies offer ostensibly the same service with only minor variations: for a small fee per unit, they will warehouse your products and manage the actual business affairs involved in taking orders and then shipping said product. The company receives payment for your products and then forwards your cut of the money to you. The upside to these companies is that most are well established and have good business track records and have a large enough net that many people who wouldn't necessarily have heard your stuff before will have the opportunity. The downside is that you don't see all the money (though more if you were signed to a label) and you're only involved



and affording them the opportunity to do that ensures that people will continue to return to the site if only to see what the outcomes of your promotions are. Once you have them back on the site, you can entice them still further with all of your newest editions, releases, and news. The whole thing is cyclical; and once people have a reason to return to your site, they will.

## My Life As A Skill

Having your Web site updated not only improves concert attendance, it can improve album sales. The notoriously cryptic Pink Floyd saw the generally abysmal sales of their *Division Bell* record improve once the band announced a treasure hunt with the winner being able to successfully decipher the lyrics of the album (apparently, the lyrics could function as a sort of map to a spot where the band had deposited a "treasure"). For those of us that prefer more conventional lyrical fare however, we have to content ourselves with selling our wares online.

There have been volumes produced on the subject of "How To Sell Your Music Online" ("*Sell Your Music*": *How To Profitably Sell Your Own Recordings Online* by Mark W. Curran [NMD Books] is one such publication, and there are dozens of online help pages

An advertisement for a guitar tuner. The main text reads "Meet the Easiest Tuner" in a large, stylized font. Below this, a black guitar tuner device is shown, which is a small rectangular box with a digital display showing "440" and "B" with arrows. The device has buttons labeled "mode", "select", and "power". The brand name "the intellitouch TUNER" is printed on the device. To the right, a portion of a guitar is visible, showing the headstock and tuning pegs. Below the tuner, the text "You Will Ever Use." is written in a large, stylized font.

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by John Eargle

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## MapleMusic.com

Before you skip this sidebar because you're not signed to MapleMusic Recordings, rest assured that this could still be a good opportunity because you don't need to be. While the same company may own them, MapleMusic.com and MapleMusic Recordings are mutually exclusive entities with very different focuses. "MapleMusic.com started first," explains Rebecca Lind at MapleMusic.com of the confusion. "MapleMusic Recordings is only about two years old. There are almost 400 bands up on MapleMusic.com and we represent truly independent acts like The Cheap Suits or Mug Shot. Some of the acts have distribution nationally but the reason MapleMusic.com was created was to supply independent musicians with an affordable e-commerce machine. We are primarily an artist service; not like Amazon or HMV.ca. It's not as though we're buying products from artists and then marking them up. A lot of it is consignment and the artists are really involved in the design of their Web site and their bio and controlling their merchandise and their pricing. MapleMusic Recordings has little to do with that. They have investors that MapleMusic.com does not. It's always been treated as a separate business because of that."

MapleMusic.com is currently taking open submissions from bands for the purposes of selling their merchandise through the company, which means if you've got some stuff to sell, you are a potential client. For a per unit fee (to be discussed upon signing of a contract), MapleMusic.com will work with a new band to design a merch page that's hosted on the company's site and then handle incoming orders for them. It is, however, up to the bands to promote and maximize their earnings. "The bands that recognize it for the tool it is are usually the ones that do the best," says Lind. "They realize that the more merch they put up the bigger their cheques get every month. It is what they make of it - getting word out, using their mailing lists and so on to promote it themselves. If they don't make it known, it obviously won't help them; but by the same token we're not going to call someone up and tell them they're off [the site]. We'd like to sell 50 CDs a year from each of our artists, which pretty much covers our overhead, but if they sell 39 we're not going to raise a fuss. The spirit of supporting Canadian independent music comes before the numbers."

For more information, visit: [www.maplemusic.com](http://www.maplemusic.com).

in the process in the abstract; if your stuff is selling, you don't necessarily know where, and as such it's more difficult to readjust the focus of your marketing efforts accordingly. One company that just announced some big news recently may be of particular interest to musicians however. CD Baby and Vision Music USA have decided to pool their efforts and collective resources to form a strategic alliance aimed at helping the independent music community.

CD Baby is (according to their bio) the top online retailer for independent CDs. They currently have 67,123 artists selling CDs on their site. To date, they've sold 1,074,899 CDs and paid out \$8,547,404.48 to artists.

Vision Music USA is an independent musicians resource. It provides artist development, booking, publicity, merchandise, graphic and Web site design, CD duplication and mastering services all from their offices in Austin, TX and Boston, MA.

As a result of the alliance, an added bonus is that Vision Music USA is offering CD Baby artists a 15 per cent discount on all vision services.

As with all of the information in this article, it's up to you to decide which advice and services will work best for you and to be creative in your application of them. This is not the gospel as handed down from on high, these are just ideas that may be helpful to you.

## Notes From The Other Side Of The Fence

It's always nice to know "where the enemy sleeps," or in this case, how they operate. Journalists are strange creatures that don't like to divulge their interior business workings



# BACK ISSUES

## The Early Years



### 1979

- March/April - Burton Cummings, Murray McLachlan, Shopping for a Synthesizer, Recording Studio Design, Notables' Stereos
- September/October - Domenic Troiano, Prism, Irish Rovers, Moe Koffman, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Keyboard Combinations

### 1980

- January/February - Trooper, Segarini, Ronnie Prophet, Andrew Davis, Managers, Vintage Organs
- March/April - Triumph, Jerry Doucetts, Gnette Reno, Tom Mawhinny, Show Playing for Guitar - Part I, Record Piracy
- July/August - Dan Hill, FM, Henry Cuesta, Powder Blues, Radio Airplay, Show Playing for Guitar - Part III
- September/October - David Clayton Thomas, Downchild Blues Band, Nash the Slash, Hearing Loss, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Jazz Clubs
- November/December - April Wine, Dianne Heatherington, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Bobby Edwards, Troubleshooting Your Gear, Part I, Bass Players' Choice

### 1982

- May/June - Chilliwack, Shari Ulrich, Daniel Lavoie, Performing Rights - Part I, Songwriters' Market Guide
- September/October - Diane Tell, Doug Bennett, David Wilcox, Linda Marizer, Anvil
- November/December - Loverboy, Andrew Hermant, Wayne Rostad, V.E.J.I., Canadian Recording Studio Guide

### 1983

- March/April - Rough Trade, Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass, Dick Damron, Terry Crawford, Sami Moon, Do It Yourself Percussion - Part I
- May/June - Liora Boyd, The Spoonies, Raffi, Do It Yourself Percussion-Part II
- September/October - Bruce Cockburn, Ian Thomas, Lydia Taylor, Image - Part I
- November/December - Osirac Peterson, The Lincolns, Wildroot Orchestra, Jarvis Benoit Quartet, Image - Part II

### 1984

- July/August - Triumph, Aldo Nova, Uzeb, Chilliwack, Grokking Electronics

### 1985

- May/June - Corey Hart, Murray McLachlan, L'Etranger, The Electronic Drum Jungle, The Canadian Musician Lighting Guide Part I
- September/October - M + M, CM Lighting Guide Part III, Electronic Percussion Accessories, Spotlight on Vancouver Vancouver from the Air, Bruce Allen, Idle Eyes, Network Records, Headpins, DOA

### 1986

- January/February - Joni Mitchell, Loverboy, Creating That Buzz, The New Music, Focus on Pro Keyboards
- July/August - Luba, 54-40, Musicians' Money, Cover Bands, Computer Music Revolution

### 1987

- July/August - Bryan Adams, Gowan, How to Work Overseas Markets, Focus on Recording

### 1988

- September/October - Red Rider, Ari Bergman, Jeff Healey, The State of the Guitar
- November/December - Disaster Proofing Your Band Part I, On the Road, Anne Murray, k.d. lang, Live Sound

### 1989

- March/April - 10th Anniversary Edition, The Artists, The Business, Selected Artist Index, The Equipment
- November/December - David Wilcox, 54-40, Kevin MacMichael, How to Avoid Getting Ripped Off, Putting a Sound System Together

### 1990

- January/February - Jane Siberry, Daniel Lanois, The Scramblers, A&R Directors: What are they looking for?, Life After Music Education
- March/April - Rush, George Fox, Oliver Jones, Booking Agents: What Makes Them Tick?, Keyboards in the Nineties
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# Marketing Your Music Online

because, honestly, it's not unlike any other business. While you may have put up a press section on your Web site with a few choice critical words, a bio, hi-res photos and a couple of audio samples, if you're unknown to the press entity, it's not a given that it'll come looking for you. It's good to be proactive with the press, but there are a few things that you shouldn't do because it's just in bad taste. Like someone wise once said (I think it was Ray Charles), "Do unto others as you would have them do

unto you."

Everyone, for example, hates getting e-mails that take a long time to load. As stated earlier, if you want the best reaction, the best course of action is to make an impact quickly. With that in mind, do not send a bio, photos or songs via e-mail to the press. Writers are people too; as such, if it takes an eternity to load, we'll never know how good it is because we've already skipped it out of frustration. A better course of action may be to draft a press release

that is short, makes its point, includes the all-important contact information (name, e-mail, phone number and perhaps a mailing address) for follow-up and most definitely a link to your Web site. As well, it's important that it's stated clearly who you are, whom you represent and if you're inviting the press to an event (like a show or barbeque), where it is and in which city so we can make our plans accordingly. Just like the public speaking you had to do in third grade, be clear and be concise.

Finally, be professional. Make sure that you've read an e-mail or press release over before you send it. Spelling and grammatical errors don't look professional (writers are anal retentive about that sort of thing) and, unless a writer also happens to be a friend of yours, it is still a business correspondence so you should conduct

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*Bill Adams is Research Assistant for Canadian Musician.*





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# Writing For A Music Publisher

**M**usic Publishing is a very exciting business. In this column, I will go over some of the most common topics discussed and some of the most asked questions. I'm now in my sixth year writing for Sony Tree Music in Nashville and it's still pretty much like the Brill Building Days in New York City. Nashville's Music Row still has writers that are full of ideas and turning out the songs on a regular basis.

Being singed to a Music Publisher is a job, and a very demanding job at that. A basic songwriting deal means that you are hired to write so many songs in a year, and you are given a draw, against your future royalties of whatever songs get cut. You will be assigned a song plugger, who will work closely with you on deciding what songs should be demoed and he or she will decide what songs they should pitch to the artist that are cutting.

A song plugger will also suggest whom you should be co-writing with, because every songwriter has a different forte, and when a plugger knows that, he can set up little teams of songwriters.

All right now, let's say you just finished writing a song in one of the writers rooms in Music Row, and you would like to bounce it off your plugger. He either comes down to the writing session and listens to the song, or you can put it on a work tape for him. Let's say he comes down to the session. He would listen to us perform the song with just our acoustic guitars and us singing it, he may

suggest to change tempo, work on the lyric a bit in certain parts. He might just say he doesn't think he could get the song cut, due to many of that type song hanging around in the library, or it's too country, or it's not country enough. There could be so many reasons. But when a plugger expresses his thoughts, you should rely and trust his judgement call because he is the one who is out there everyday playing songs for artist's and producers, and he's got his ears on the pulse of what's going around town.

Basically, what it gets down to, if the song doesn't knock people out in the early stages, don't spend the money on a demo that will never be pitched. Usually I will go in and demo four songs with a full band of session players and decide before hand what type of songs there going to be, obviously after they have been approved to demo. First I get a bandleader to run the session and he usually hires the session players on my behalf of Sony Tree and I. I would then get together with the bandleader and go over the style and vibe that I want in each song, and also the most important part, the vocalist. If I want the session to lean more toward a pop country vibe such as Lonestar & Collin Raye, I would call in vocalists that have the more pop country voices and have them sing the demos. It would be contradictory if I brought in a really hardcore country voice to get a modern pop country vibe on the track.

When your session is finally complete, you will turn them into your publisher with all the paperwork correctly filled out, date of creation, Studio recorded at, date turned in, publishing info, and lyrics. The creative department at your publisher will then listen to your songs along with the other batch of songs that were also turned in. They will go over all the songs and decide which ones they think, they could get cut or even put on hold, which means the artist is still deciding if they will cut it or not.

Let me back up a bit here, there's basically three things that can happen when one of your songs gets listened to from the artist or producer. Number one is they could just simply say PASS, which means the song they just heard doesn't suit the project, or it's too slow, or they already have a song like it on the project. Chances of it being a bad song are

slim, because usually all songs in a major company that are pitched are very strong songs. If the song is passed on, it's not what they are looking for.

Number Two, is, they could put it on hold, which is nerve wracking because every time you hear that one of your songs is on hold, you think that could be the ticket. Remember they put many songs on hold, and slowly start narrowing in on the ones they want to keep. A song on hold could be six months before they tell yes or no! What you have to do is keep writing great songs, and stay focused on your job, which is songwriting, and getting the best performance out of your session.

Number three is the big prize. A producer or artist might hear your song for the first time and totally flip out and say it's a cut, just like that. That happens all the time. You don't know, it's almost like whatever is in the artist's mind and what you wrote is the exact same thing, than you hit the jackpot.

Many people have always asked me, do you sell your songs, do you get paid when you write a song, there's all kinds of questions, but I'll try to keep it simple and to the point. Basically you have a quota of songs to write, while you are under contract with your publisher, they give you a monthly salary (or whatever you have negotiated). They will usually pay for all the recording costs, and this is all goes on a tab that gets bigger every time you turn in songs and cash your salary cheque. You then hope that one of your songs lands on Garth's or Shania's CD and then your publisher would recoup everything that has been spent on you and advanced to you and then you would start to see royalties. My next column will deal with the producing and arranging songs so they give the next impact possible!

*Rick Rose is now in his sixth year with Sony Tree Music Publishing in Nashville and has just over 200 songs in his catalogue that he's written with writers such as Desmond Child, Anton Fig, Monty Powell, Tom Douglas, Dave Gibson, Naisoe Sheridan, and many others. He also has cuts with artists such as Bill Medley, Atomic, Doc Walker, Robyn Scott, In Theory, Lennex, Perfect Affair, and his own CD Songs From the Studio B Sessions on Bandana Records, and he's managed by legendary manager Dee Anthony.*

*For CD purchase info, check out [www.rickrosemusic.com](http://www.rickrosemusic.com).*



by Rick Rose



# Recording Vocalists

This article is part three in a three part series. In part one (March/April 2004 *Canadian Musician*) we addressed microphone setup and placement. Part two (July/August 2004 *Canadian Musician*) addressed processing the sound. For part three, lets find the singer and get started.

## The Singer

Different singers will be best prepared at different times of day. While one may be raring to go at 9 a.m., another may not really open up until the late afternoon. A tired singer sings a tired vocal. Schedule the vocal session for the singer's best time.

Better singers will want to warm up. No one can be expected to jump in on any creative endeavour without warming up first. Give her the needed time and privacy. Once she is ready, doublecheck that her cue mix is just right. Encourage her to memorize the lyrics. Something is lost when the singer is reading lyrics from a page. Better that she focus on the feel and interpretation of the vocal, not hunting around for the next line.

## The Mood

Commonly, only essential people are allowed in the control room during vocals. Even the best of singers can find concentrating on vocal parts difficult with a room full of people staring at them.

Dim the lights and light the candles, burn the incense, take all your clothes off, create a mood to help the singer feel comfortable, relaxed and confident. The more at ease the situation is, the better the outcome of the tracks. A strong vocal track makes the singer and you look good.

## In Record/Red Lights

Wear headphones during vocals. As the engineer, when you wear headphones and monitor the cue mix, you hear exactly what the singer is hearing, allowing you to fine-tune the cue mix as the vocal progresses. Of course, lower the control room monitor levels to avoid influence. A good cue mix is paramount.

Get into it. Get the singer into it. It's much easier to record an inspired singer. Keep the vibe up, be positive, and be generous. Tell her what you want, not what you don't want.

Don't stop the singer unless you must. Wait for the end of the piece. Stopping and starting can be distracting. Let her run through the song to totally get into the flow

of it. Be as specific as possible as to what you want her to do. All singers need guidance from the control room. Simply having her redo a track with no indication of what is needed helps no one. Granted this is not usually the engineer's job, but the producer's.

Commonly, the more you engineer, the more you will learn about production.

When overdubbing, tell the singer to sing along as soon as she hears the music. This ensures she will have the same groove as the original, rather than starting cold on the downbeat of the intended punch in. Once she knows where she is in the song, switch the track to input, so she hears herself singing. Punch in at the appropriate time. Invite her to listen back in the control room and play the results and discuss them. Singers know how they should sound. If you can take her view of what she wants and bring it up a notch or two beyond her expectations, she will sing better.

## Pitch

Louder volume levels can mask slight pitch problems. Turning down the studio monitors will help you hear pitch and tuning issues. Similarly, when a singer is having a hard time hitting notes, turn the cue mix level down. If the singer must have loud headphones, pull the lower frequencies. Loud lows can mess with a singer's pitch.

Suggest she remove one side of the headphones to hear herself in one ear, and the cue mix in the other. Maybe record a simple piano or acoustic guitar track playing the vocal melody – no chords, just single notes of the melody of the vocal track. (Of course, not to be used in the final mix.) Add this track in to the cue mix, and maybe remove any other instruments that may be throwing off her pitch.

Try the old out-of-phase speaker setup. In the studio, place two speakers at eye level in a triangle with the microphone, aimed at the singer. Switch the L/R wires on the back of one speaker, then send a mono cue mix through them. The music reaches the singer, but the two signals are cancelled at the microphone.

Consider bringing the singer into the control room. Leave the studio monitors on and do a vocal in the control room with the music blasting directly at her. This might be the best way to get a solid vocal. Set the microphone monitor signal just short of feedback with a non omni-directional pattern. Or she may want to wear headphones in the control room. If so, you

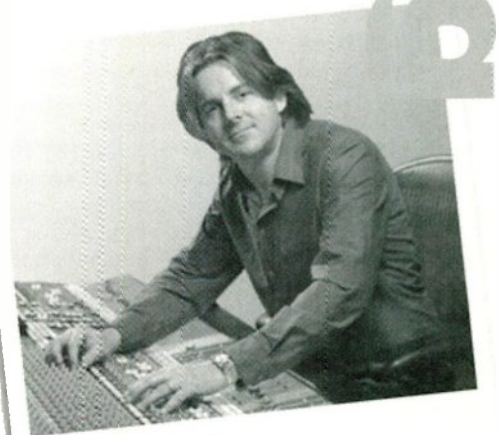
would wear headphones as well.

## Patience

Singers, like everyone else in the world (including you) will have bad days. Sometimes they sound absolutely magnificent and sometimes they sound like a train wreck. If you lose patience with a player, it may not be long until she loses patience with you. The door swings both ways. Not everyone is a virtuoso.

On those rare occasions when the emotions just aren't flowing, maybe tell the singer to picture one person in his mind. Forget the studio and the microphones, just picture that person, maybe an old love, or a movie star, or even a certain recording engineer and sing to that person.

When a great lead vocal is completed early in the project, the rest of the instruments will build around it. The players need to hear that vocal track so they can weave in and out of the way. A great vocal track inspires the rest of the players to do their best. Ultimately, the best vocals come from well-written songs.



by Tim Crich

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

Recording



# 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

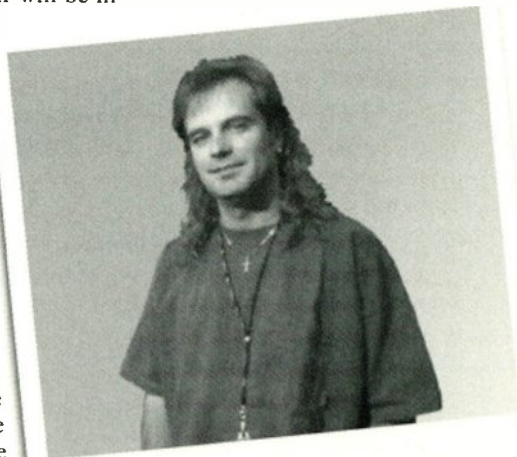
those gigs as well, but that star will be in Vegas well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so do your duty and let the fans hear him or her as clear as crystal.

## 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



by Jim Yakabuski

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."

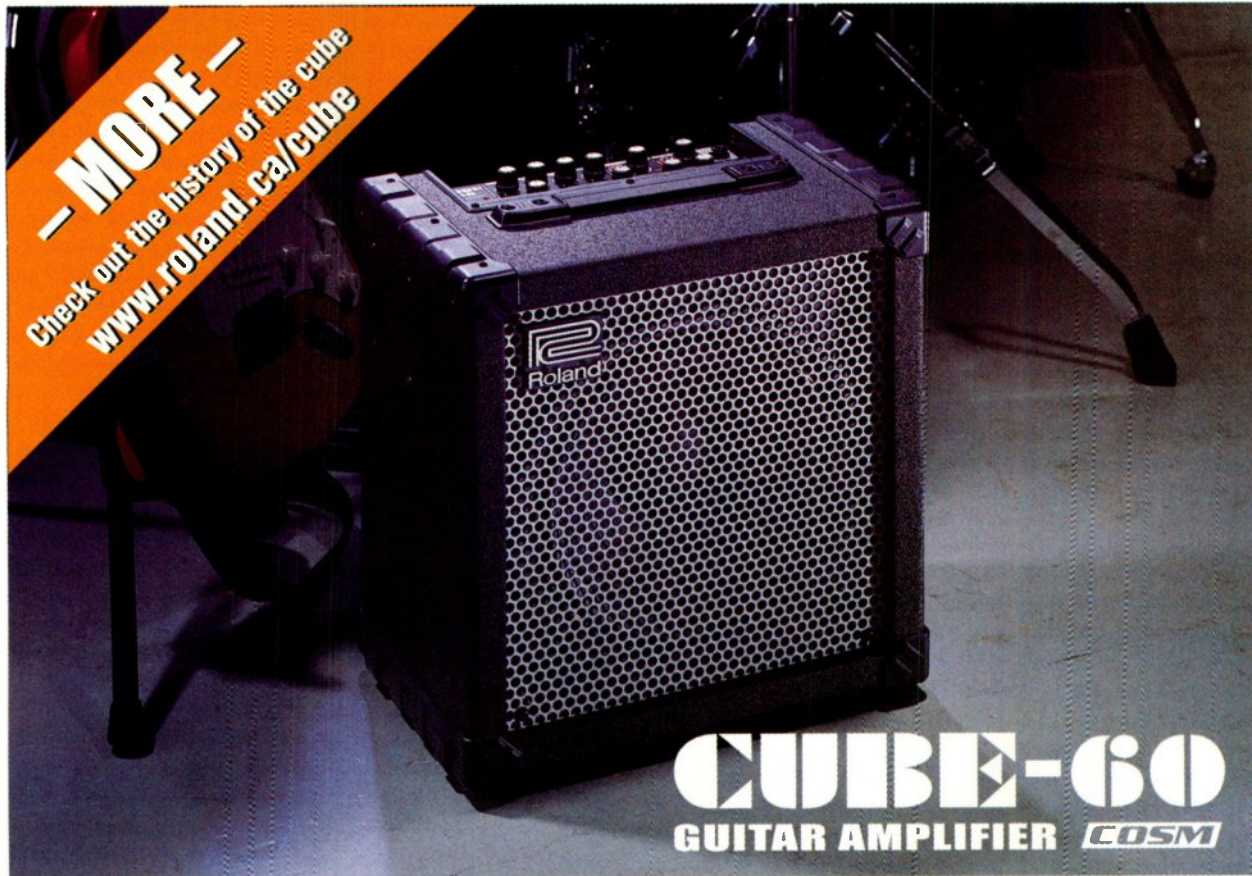
One great way to accomplish this is to gang those compressors up into subgroups. It works well. You may lose a little control over individual vocals or instruments, but on average you will be just as pleased and keep costs and real estate requirements down. Let's get with the new way of thinking and 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](http://www.mixbooks.com) and [www.musicbooksplus.com](http://www.musicbooksplus.com).*



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# Accountants & Business Managers

*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

Accountants and/or business managers play a crucial role in any successful recording artist's career. This article reviews some of their duties and some typical fee arrangements used when retaining these individuals.

## Role

Most business managers are accountants and/or trained in accounting practices. They provide overall tax planning (i.e. setting aside amounts); coordinate/oversee a bookkeeper who works at more cost effective rates; tracks payments owing; reviews royalty statements; and pays bills on an artist's behalf. Some of these duties are discussed in more detail below.

## Death and Taxes

It is true. One of the most important roles is with respect to tax compliance and tax withholding issues. As self-employed individuals, recording artists are responsible for paying their own income tax. There are dozens of stories of recording artists who fail to set aside proper amounts for tax purposes or fail to file taxes all together (i.e. Willie Nelson, James Brown, Chuck Berry, etc.). Don't stick your head in the sand – the taxman is not going away.

Any artist who tours and/or earns money in territories outside of Canada understands that there are various tax complications depending on which country you are earning income in and/or from. It is important to have a representative who is well versed in the nuances of the various tax schemes around the world – or at least have a network of contacts that help them stickhandle through various territories. Some of the rules that apply are specific to the music business so you should have someone who is a specialist in this field.

Your business manager will also assist with any audits or investigations related to tax authorities. They have an in-depth understanding of your financial affairs and are equipped to communicate your position clearly in a language that auditors can understand.

## Tour Budgets

Business managers assist with preparing tour budgets. If the tour requires tour support, this budget would be presented to the record label and the business manager (along with the artist's manager or road manager) works with the record label on cutting the fat and

ensuring monies are spent wisely. Once the tour is finished the business manager would typically help assemble all the back up information (i.e. receipts for expenses incoming reports) and provide a final accounting for touring so that you can be reimbursed for expenditures.

While on the road, the business manager may be in daily contact with road manager: who are collecting your money with respect to live performances as well as merchandising income. The business manager may play an active role in helping you develop systems, checklists to monitor your supply of merchandise and avoid costly overnight shipping costs.

## Royalty/Income Statements

Business managers who are experts in the music field can review royalty statements and keep a close eye on third party record companies; music publishers; or, any other third party that owe you money. Similarly they can monitor your payment obligations to third parties (i.e. to record producers, mixers, etc.) to ensure that you are making timely and accurate payments to people you owe money to.

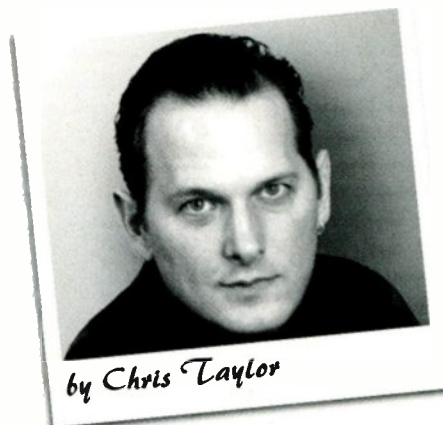
Business managers don't typically perform in-depth/official audits of third party royalty statements. Often, this work is left to experts in the field with the business manager and artist manager working in tandem to ensure proper royalties are paid.

## Remuneration/Engagement

Generally, business managers bill on an hourly or percentage of income basis. Hourly rates can range between \$125 and \$500 in my experience. US business managers more typically bill 5% of gross professional income. Often business managers will employ or recommend bookkeepers to perform some of the more rudimentary accounting duties for a lower fee (\$25-\$50). Normally fees are paid on a monthly basis and any disbursements and/or filing fees are charged in addition to the fees paid (similar to attorneys). Musicians should be very careful about the percentage-based arrangement and how it is defined and compare that with potential hourly rates. Thankfully, most of these agreements do not bind musicians for any longer than 12 months – and sometimes 30 days maximum. You should make sure your attorney reviews the engagement letter on your behalf before signing.

## Where To Find Them

There are a handful of very skilled business/manager accountants in Canada. You can find them in the annual Canadian *Contact Directory* (1-800-215-4814 under "Service Providers"). I routinely work with US-based



by Chris Taylor

business managers for clients who are active in the United States. I generally recommend Canadian business managers for my clients that live in Canada because Canadian tax law; estate law; insurance law (as discussed in this article) play a large role in their lives. Many of these Canadian business managers have US and international relationships that they can draw upon when expert advice is needed for particular ex-Canada circumstances. I also recommend, if the expertise is available, that my client choose business management that resides in their home city – frequent face-to-face contact is important in a relationship that is so critical. Ask your musician friends who they use; check with your manager and lawyer; and, meet with a few before making a decision.

## General/Conclusion

We have outlined a number of the duties of the typical business manager in this article but there are others. Your business manager can be involved in reviewing your insurance status along with insurance advisors to ensure you have adequate coverage. They may also review contracts along with your attorney to make comments and/or suggestions from their perspective. A business manager will not provide investment advice but will recommend expert third parties to help you make your choices. Finally, they often participate in discussions involving your estate planning – you're not going to live forever right?

It is often not essential for a beginner artist to retain a business manager to perform the role outlined in this article but once a career picks up momentum, and cash flow permits, it is essential to consider hiring someone to look after the matters discussed above.

*Chris Taylor is a lawyer with the law firm of Sanders Taylor and works with Avril Lavigne, Nelly Furtado, Billy Talent, Sum 41, Three Days Grace and Sam Roberts among others.*  
[www.sandersontaylor.com](http://www.sandersontaylor.com)





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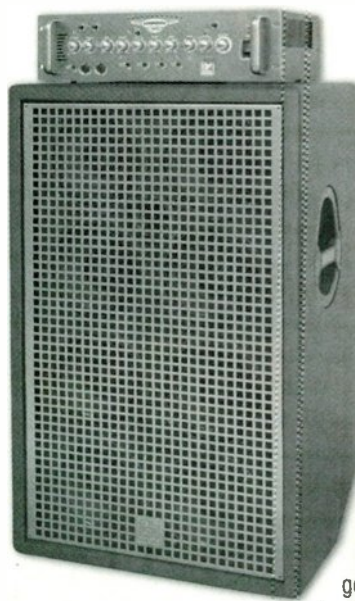
## Edward Van Halen Art Series



Charvel recently released the Edward Van Halen Art Series guitars based on Van Halen's own original and iconic designs. The EVH Art Series guitars feature three instruments, each with its own striped colour scheme. The schemes, originally designed by Edward Van Halen for his own personal guitars, include white with black stripes, black with yellow stripes and red with black and white stripes. Additionally, the Charvel Custom Shop has introduced a limited run of guitars that are replicas of Van Halen's classic red guitar with black and white stripes. Working closely with Van Halen, the Charvel Custom Shop will create 100 pieces, all replicating the original down to every nitty gritty detail – specifications, nicks, scratches and even wear marks will be found on these replicas.

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

## Yorkville XS800H Bass Amplifier



Yorkville Sound recently introduced the latest addition to their XS Series line of bass amplifiers – the XS800H.

The 800 watt XS800H features a versatile input circuitry that enables users to select between an all tube input signal path, or bypass the tube completely and use a FET driven solid-state input circuit. True tube overdrive can be added to any 'clean' signal path that is chosen by using a new balance control that lets users set the ideal blend of overdriven to clean signal. This guarantees that users can add as much grunge or as little tube warmth as desired while keeping the definition and clarity of the clean tone. Standard on the XS800H are new, tone-shaping controls such as 'Scoop' and 'Resonance', along with a compressor with user definable threshold and user defeatable output limiter. Additionally, a 5-band EQ, with semi-parametric mid, guarantees the XS800H user can get any tone they need. Other features include a

front panel wet/dry control for the effects return, highly visible VU metering, footswitchable effects return with front panel effects blend control and a pre/post selectable XLR balanced DI output with ground lift.

For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound, 550 Granite Ct., Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481, FAX (905) 839-5776, [info@yorkville.com](mailto:info@yorkville.com), [www.yorkville.com](http://www.yorkville.com).

## Furman SB-1000



Furman Sound recently released the new rack-mountable SB-1000 Uninterruptible Power Supply designed with the needs of performing and recording musicians and studios whom are hungry for power.

With the SB-1000, musicians and studio pros no longer need to worry about damaging sensitive digital gear or loosing hours of studio work because of a power outage. The rugged 19" 1U Furman Sound SB-1000 UPS can save and close critical applications and power down a CPU and monitor, as well as additional peripherals like hard drives, CD/DVD burners, printers, etc. The SB-1000UPS can also safely keep critical rack and pedal components, along with keyboards running, until the user can power them down safely, preventing the brownout and surges that can damage sensitive equipment. Featuring 1000 V A/600-watts capacity from its step up/step down multitap Toroid transformer, a current overload alarm is triggered at 10 Amps total capacity. Another alarm triggers when in battery back-up mode. The unit offers three-minute back up with a 5-amp RMS load, and 32 minutes of back up with a typical computer and monitor load. The SB-1000UPS fanless cooling runs quietly for operation in critical listening recording studio environments.

For more information, contact: SF Marketing, 6161 Cypriote St., St. Laurent, PQ H4S 1R3 (514) 856-1919, FAX (514) 856-1920, [info@sfm.ca](mailto:info@sfm.ca), [www.sfm.ca](http://www.sfm.ca).

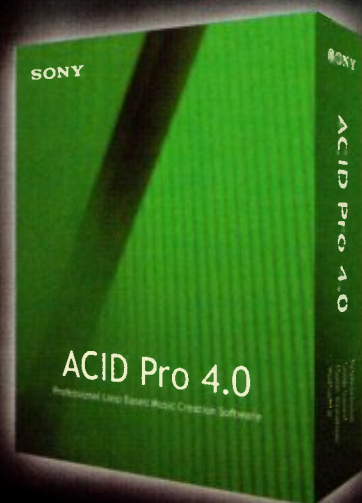
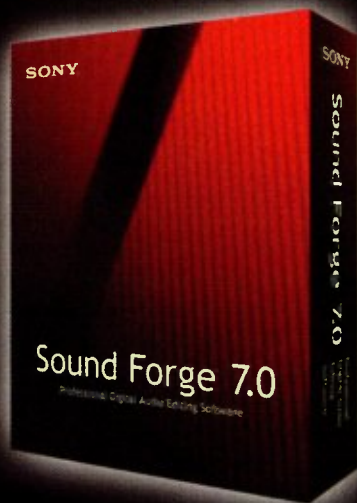
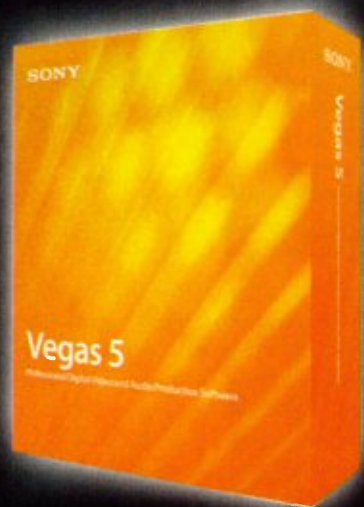


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## Uncompromising Innovation





# Peavey Jack Daniel's Series



Peavey Electronics Corp. recently introduced the Jack Daniel's electric guitar.

The Jack Daniel's electric guitar, a single-cutaway, is constructed using warm, resonant Mahogany for the body and neck with a solid, 5A quilt Maple arch top. The Jack Daniel's electric guitar also features ebony fretboards for a smooth feel; two patented, dual-wound, hum-cancelling Peavey pickups offering high output and matchless tone; chrome Schaller tuners, and optional ACM Analog Acoustic Modeling. This model also carries Peavey's Dual-Compression Bridge system – a string-through design, which creates a metal-to-metal connection for singing sustain and stronger string presence.

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

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# Yamaha LC2 Music Lab System

Yamaha Music Ltd. recently unveiled the LC2 Multi Purpose Music Lab, taking teaching in music education to the next level – the computer age.

The LC2 is a multi-purpose system that is presented as a modular and expandable design, which makes it perfect for a range of electronic instruments and classroom conditions. The LC2 features a rack mounted Hub, Student Boxes, Hardware Remote Control and optional Music Management software. Cabling and headphones are included with the basic eight-channel system with the capability of being expanded via eight-channel expansion cards to accommodate as many as 48 students. The LC2 Hub can be controlled by the Hardware Remote Controller or computer-based software through a USB connection. The Student Boxes comprise of stereo instruments, a microphone and computer audio inputs, as well as output and level controls. Each box is linked to the Hub through CAT5 cables, reducing installation time. The Hardware Remote Controller is small enough to sit on top of a teacher's keyboard or be carried with one hand while storing up to eight different class configurations for simple recall at the touch of a button. The Music Lab Management software reflects all of the controls of the remote and also includes complete class management tools and multimedia music software. Teachers can also name students and classes, track attendance and test scores, run a variety of Yamaha music software and even have the physical layout of their classes graphically represented by simply adding a Windows-based computer to the system.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Toronto, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732, [www.yamaha.ca](http://www.yamaha.ca).



# Pro-Mark Neil Peart Drumsticks



Pro-Mark Corp., after getting together with Rush drummer Neil Peart, recently introduced the Neil Peart drumsticks in celebration of Rush's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Pro-Mark has created a design that is now being imprinted on Peart's Autograph Series Oak 747, the stick that he has drummed with throughout his career with RUSH. Additionally, Peart has been provided with 30 pairs of "extra-special" sticks – one pair for each of the band's 30 years. Peart will drum with these sticks, and return them to Pro-Mark in the future, which will result in a "silent auction" on the Pro-Mark Web site offering fans a chance to bid on the used sticks. The top 30 bidders will receive a folder containing an 8 x 10 colour photo of Peart behind his drums, a Certificate of Authenticity with Peart's original signature, as well as a pair of sticks in a black velvet bag embroidered with the band's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo. The highest bidder will receive additional surprises in their package.

For more information, contact: EfKay Music Group, 2165 46<sup>th</sup> Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872, [howard@efkaymusic.com](mailto:howard@efkaymusic.com), [www.efkaymusic.com](http://www.efkaymusic.com).

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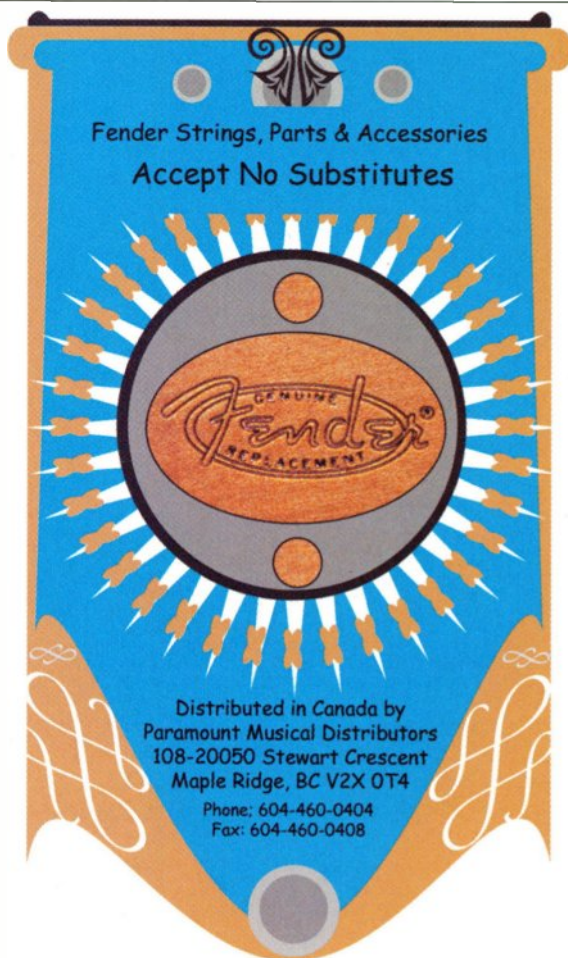
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# Marshall Handwired Series



Marshall recently introduced a line of handwired amplifiers and matching speaker cabinets. Aside from the limited edition Offset JTM45 Halfstack that was available in 1999 with only 300 models produced worldwide, the Handwired Series is the first time Marshall has offered a handwired product in recent years. These new amps are much like the originals, sharing the simplicity of operation and rich, natural valve tone. All of the original components and materials were used or reproduced in order to make the Handwired Series, and the original methods of construction used in the late '60s were revisited as well. All of the transformers (output and power) have been carefully re-created by Dagnall Electronics. The 1974X combo is an 18-watt amplifier representing one from 1966-1968. The all-valve combo features two channels and a valve-driven Tremolo circuit, while each channel offers two inputs plus volume and tone controls. User-friendly features on the rear panel consist of two speaker output jacks and an impedance selector.

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

## The Band Leader Software



Band Leader Systems, Inc. recently released The Band Leader – a program that allows musicians, managers, service companies, etc. to take care of business in an easy and fun manner.

The Band Leader includes a gig manager and colour coded gig calendar and tracks bookings for multiple ensembles, track players, staff, contacts, venues, fans, etc. It will also send out generic or personalized e-mail, auto update to your Web site's gig schedule and create calendars for your Web site. Other features include an expense tracker, earnings and expense reports, a contract generator, a song database and set list maker, promo materials tracking, a complete user's manual and much more. The Band Leader will run on Windows XP, 2000, Me, 98, 95 and NT.

For more information, visit: [www.thebandleader.com](http://www.thebandleader.com).







## Casio LK-90TV And LK-45



Casio recently unveiled their most advanced "Lighted Key" learning keyboards, including the first keyboard that can be connected to a TV. The LK-90TV and LK-45 are designed to make playing the keyboard easy for anyone. They both feature Casio's three-step learning system that allows you to learn as you play. For the purpose of on-screen lessons and karaoke, the LK-90TV can be hooked up directly to a TV console, offering beginners a visual contact while playing. A video cable is included in the package. Once hooked up to a TV set, when using Casio's three-step learning system, the LK-90TV's icons are right on the screen. Any feedback that is received through the interactive scoring after you play a song is done with animation. When it comes to karaoke, using the LK-90TV is simple. The lyrics to the selected song are displayed on the screen while each word to be sung lights up. Additionally, for creative expression, the LK-90TV provides a 24-note polyphonic along with 264 tones.

The LK-45 is a keyboard that can be played by just about anyone. The LK-45 also provides Casio's three-step learning system. With 61-keys and 100 built-in tunes, the LK-45 possesses two different auto-accompaniment modes: Casio Chord and Fingered Chord. The Casio Chord enables play of fully formed chords with one finger, while the Fingered Chord enables full chord play in the accompaniment range of the keyboard. Other features include 100 PCM tones and 100 rhythm patterns, a voice fingering guide, MIDI, a MIDI in/out jack, an assignable pedal jack (Sustain, Soft, Sostenuto, Rhythm Start/Stop), and transpose and tuning controls.

For more information, contact: Efkay Music Group, 2165 46<sup>th</sup> Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872, howard@efkaymusic.com, www.efkaymusic.com.

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# Hohner Resonator Guitar



Hohner recently introduced the Resonator Guitar, an ideal crossover for guitarists who want to add a soulful, bluesy touch to their music.

The Resonator Guitar models both feature wooden bodies with traditional resonator hardware. The HR-100, with a "Vintage Sunburst" colour, is a traditional round neck resonator guitar featuring a select Spruce top with Mahogany back and sides; Mahogany neck with Rosewood fingerboard and dot inlay; bound neck and body; sealed chrome die-cast tuners and chrome hardware and a traditional spider resonator with Maple saddle. The HR-200CE is an A/E roundneck resonator guitar with cutaway, and is much like the HR-100 with its Mahogany back and sides, Mahogany neck with Rosewood fingerboard and dot inlay and bound neck and body. The HR-200CE also features sealed chrome machine heads and chrome hardware; biscuit resonator with Maple saddle; custom MB-4 low noise pickup in neck position with volume and tone controls mounted on the body. The HR-200CE is available in "Matte Black".

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

# SABIAN B8 Complete Set



SABIAN recently introduced the B8 Complete Set of cymbals, comprising of a 10" Splash, 14" Hi-Hats, 16" and 18" Thin Crashes, an 18" Chinese and a 20" Ride. The B8 set is based on a setup configuration used by a large number of today's leading drummers.

SABIAN B8 cymbals are fabricated from pure, uni-rolled B8 bronze, an alloy consisting of 92% copper and 8% tin. Each cymbal is carefully crafted before being hand finished, and is later aged and tested in the SABIAN vault.

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

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# Conn-Selmer Paris St. Louis Anniversary Clarinet



Conn-Selmer recently introduced the St. Louis Anniversary clarinet in memory of Selmer Paris winning the gold medal at the St. Louis World's Fair 100 years ago.

Available in B and A, this clarinet is intended for professionals, along with advancing students and hobbyists. Technical features of the St. Louis model include grenadilla wood, aged over three years before turning and oil treatment, multiple barrels for personal tuning adjustments, .571" bore (.573" for A), left-hand E /A lever, silver plated keys, metal tenon sockets and an adjustable thumb rest. To give a special tribute to St. Louis, a gold-plated St. Louis logo plate is placed upon the upper joint. In addition, special silver and gold plated joint rings add an exquisite finish to the clarinet.

For more information, contact: London Music Sales, 17 Hammond Cres., London, ON N5X 1A5 (519) 439-3817, FAX (519) 439-0037, lms@ody.ca.

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## Ridley Bent

**Who:** Ridley Bent

**Where:** Vancouver, BC

**What:** the good, the bad and the ugly

**Contact:** MapleMusic, 30 St. Clair Ave. W., #103, Toronto, ON M4V 3A1 (416) 961-4332.

You can't *not* listen to this guy. He's an extraordinary storyteller, a vivid, character-driven wordsmith, who also plays guitar. Produced by ex Bass Is Base's Chin Injeti at Vancouver's Hipposonic, the album, *Blam!*, is a mix of country, folk, hip-hop and rock, played by an assortment of helping hands. But the music is really just garnish to Ridley Bent's voice and words. A cappella, he'd still be that good. Told in a cool ravaged country and western talk-twang, his fiction covers all the juicy topics — drugs, guns, murder, love and the wrong side of the law. On "David Harley's Son", a funky acoustic folk-rap, he tells of pa, a good man but bad pop (who is also a cop). You gotta hear it to believe it; it's a mini movie script. His cool cowboy style makes you believe he's gonna mosey on up to your front door, gun drawn. The funky finger-snapping story of "The Devil & Coltrane Henry" rocks, while "Rattlesnake Moonshine" is a loving ballad about his dead ma and insane pa. Fiction, people, fiction. That's what Ridley Bent creates, outlaw odes.



Ridley Bent

## Elliott Brood

**Who:** Elliott Brood

**Where:** Toronto, ON

**What:** goldrush riff

**Contact:** 380 A Bloor Street W., Apt.2, Toronto, ON M5S 1X2 [www.elliottbrood.ca](http://www.elliottbrood.ca).

The band handmade the package for its debut EP, *Tin Type*, a mini CD in a mini black cardboard book affixed with two old black and white photographs, and wrapped in a brown paper bag. Mark Sasso (banjo, guitar, words) and Casey Laforet (guitar, companion/keys, words) want to maintain mystique of what they're doing, this tribute to a bygone era, where banjo was king, hence a main promo shot of people surely long deceased. The pair both attended the same high school in Windsor, ON and separately relocated to Toronto, forming Elliott Brood in 2001. After meeting Steve Pitkin, he offered to co-produce the retro folkies with a penchant for bluegrass. The EP was recorded over two days in November, 2002, in the Orange Room. "Only At Home" is a riff-heavy banjo 'n' guitar scorcher and "Cadillac Dust" (for which a video has been made and can viewed on the band's Web site) a melancholy melodic stomp. Both stand out in this six-song collection. Pitkin has since joined the band, as the suitcase player. Seriously. Who needs a real drum kit?



Elliott Brood

## Hundred Mile House

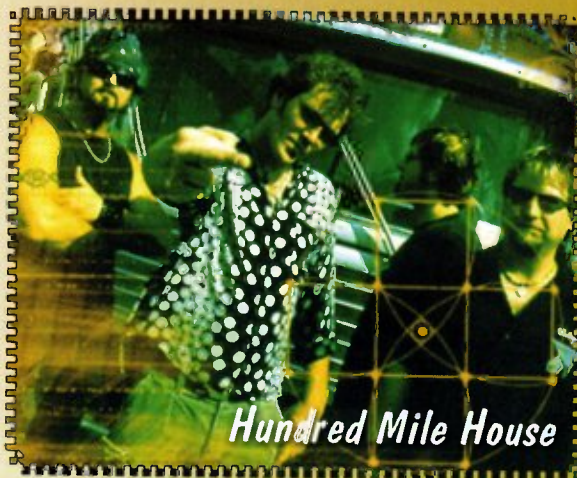
**Who:** Hundred Mile House

**Where:** Kitchener-Waterloo, ON

**What:** soul to the devil

**Contact:** Christine A. Liebig of Higher Ground Entertainment, [Zanamcara@sympatico.ca](mailto:Zanamcara@sympatico.ca), (519) 589-5923, [www.hundredmilehouse.com](http://www.hundredmilehouse.com)

With three of the five songs co-produced by The Tea Party's Jeff Martin at Metalworks, the other two by Peter Boshart and Hundred Mile House bassist/vocalist Larsen Liebig at Sonicadisturbia, this self-titled EP is heavy, menacing and dark. Frontman Pete Thompson has the perfect threatening rock voice for such music, and Liebig, drummer Anthony Nuic and guitarist Ritch Meiszinger are a tight unit. It's surprising the Kitchener-Waterloo, ON band has been together for almost a decade, and that these five songs are the first to get national distribution (through MapleNationWide). It probably helps that the band is endorsed by Martin. In addition to producing, he also plays lead guitar on the first single, "Face to Face", piano on "Genevieve" and joins Liebig on backing vocals for "River's Edge". HMH has also opened for The Tea Party on many occasions. While Thompson has a predilection for the word "soul" in the lyrics of all five songs, musically the EP ranges from the pummeling lead track, "Face To Face" to the groovier "Rivers Edge" and creepier industrial-grind of "Genevieve". A full album is reportedly due in the New Year.



Hundred Mile House



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

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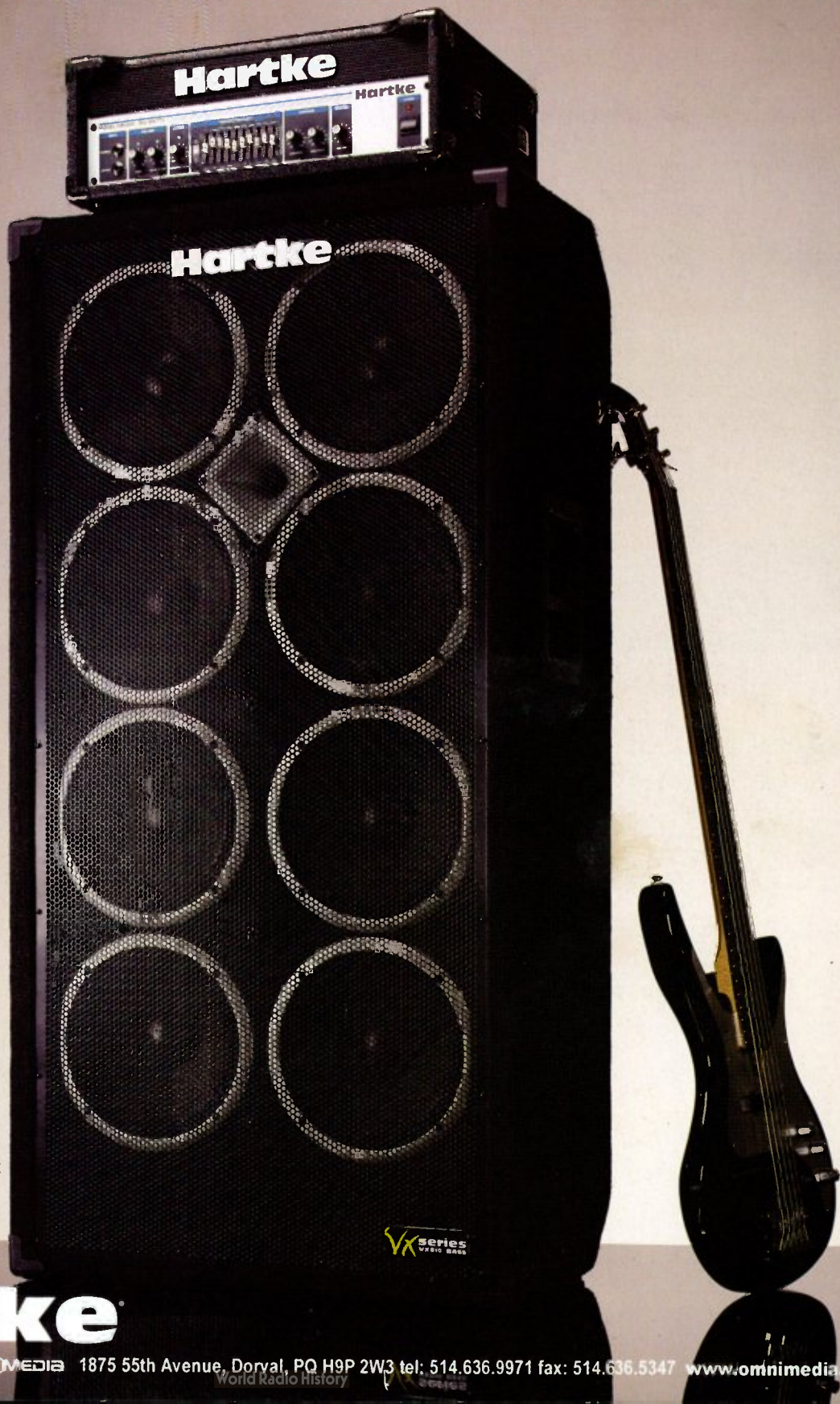
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