

# CANADIAN MUSICIAN

MM 70900

AUGUST 1987  
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Adams  
Into The Fire**

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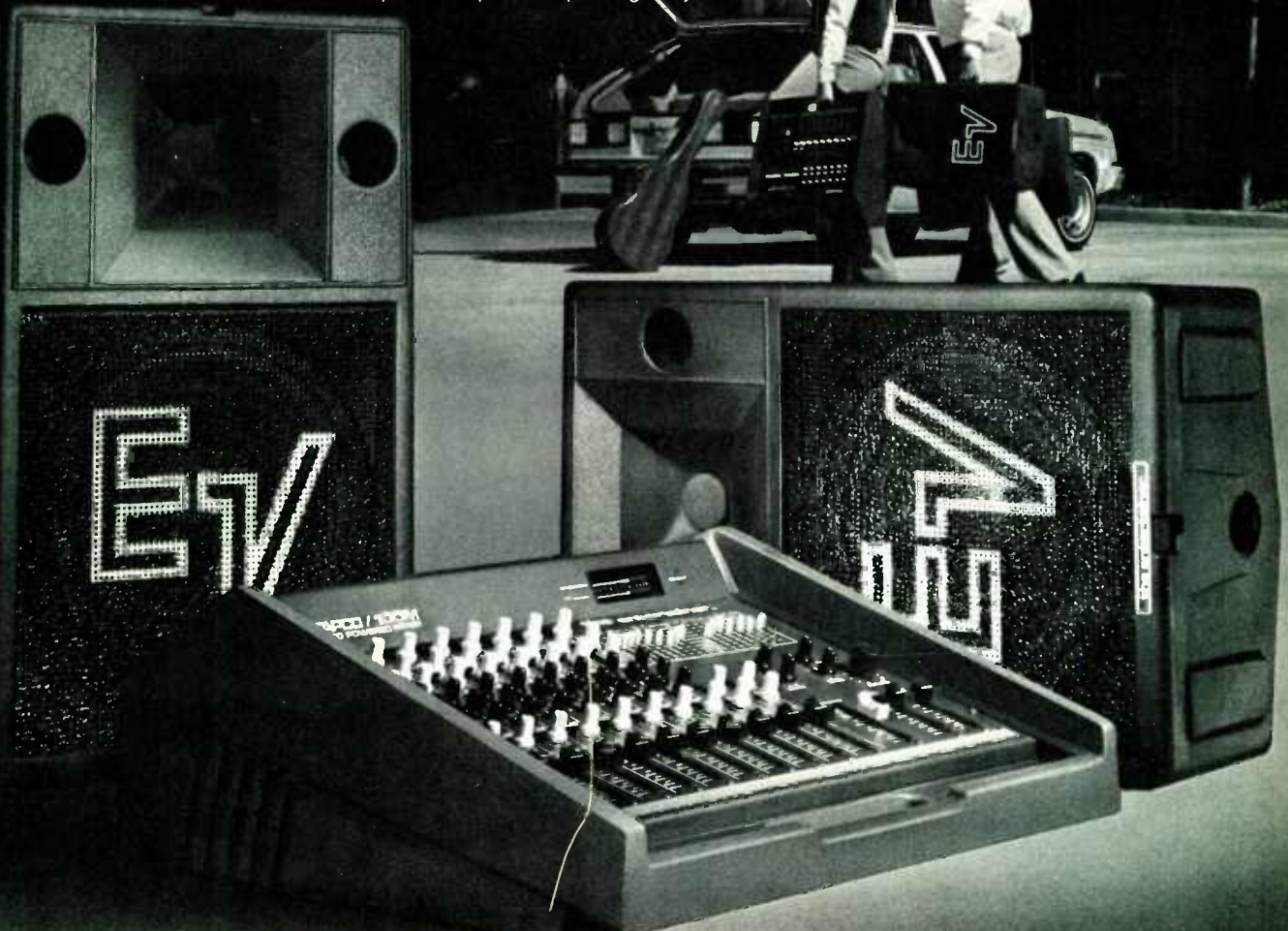
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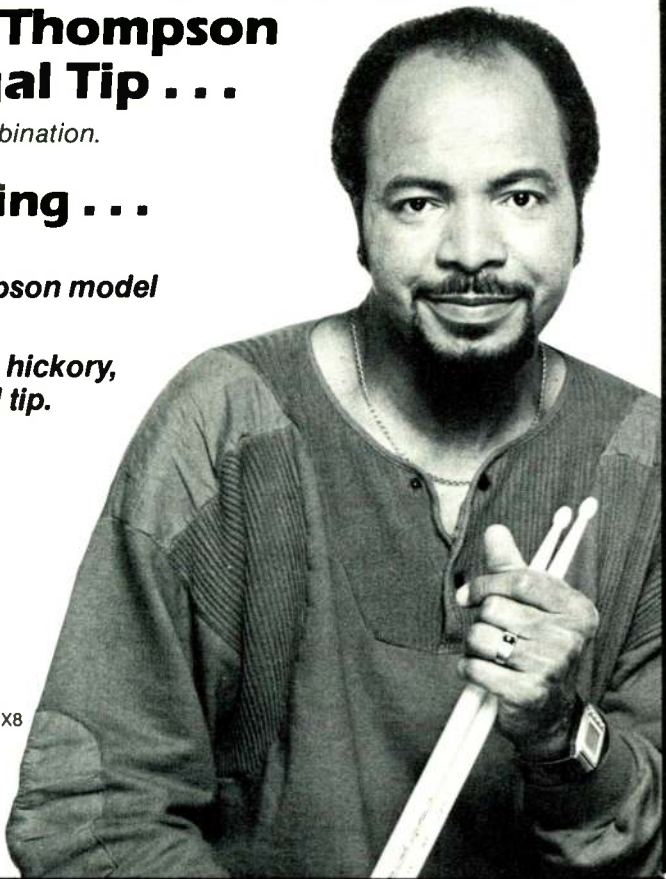
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# INSIDE CM

## The Awakening of Bryan Adams

Staffers at the Bruce Allen Talent office were clearly uptight and cranky. The two most critical albums in the history of Canada's top artist management company were about to hit the streets within weeks of each other. Rock and Hyde's first album since the demise of the Payolas was to be their answer to the David Foster produced record that turned out to be a fiasco. And Bryan Adams' much anticipated follow-up to *Reckless*, the most popular album in the history of Canadian music would finally see the light of day.

Routine (we thought) requests for interviews and photo shoots with Bryan (for a cover story) and Rock and Hyde (for a major feature) were met with, "Well, we've got good news and bad news." Rock and Hyde were available, yes, but Bryan wasn't facing the media until the album was released. We argued that the Bryan cover story in *Canadian Musician* would hit the newsstands a full month after the album was released, but our deadlines required interviewing him beforehand. We weren't making any headway.

We had assumed *Canadian Musician* would be a shoe-in for preferential treatment with Bryan and Bruce Allen. We made our case by pointing out our two previous Bryan cover stories were well received by the readers, the artist and management. In fact, in a daring move, we had recently featured Bruce Allen on the cover, billing him as the ultimate artist manager - not to mention providing him with dozens of copies of the issue which he distributed to friends and foe worldwide. The writer we chose to do the story, Tom Harrison - regarded as the most sensitive and insightful music writer in Canada - had interviewed Bryan on many occasions and had developed a friendly rapport with him. But no. No special favours.

Incredulous, we called up the National Publicity Director at Bryan's label, A&M Records, pleading our case and asking him to apply additional pressure at Bruce Allen Talent.

Tom Harrison himself was pressed into service as a lobbyist. Tom cajoled Bruce at a talent contest they were both judging. Bruce supported the idea in principle but wouldn't commit to the timing. Neither would Bryan when he showed up at a club where Tom's band Bruno Gerussi's Medallion were performing.

And so it went for weeks, turning into months. Finally, the interview was secured, but there would definitely not be a photo session - only for the cover story *Rolling Stone* planned for Bryan.

The reason behind relating the specific details of this arduous episode is that it is

symptomatic of the high level of anxiety and anticipation which Bryan has been struggling with as an artist for two years now.

Bryan's motivation and reasoning were understandable. He wanted *Into The Fire* to speak for itself - and to speak for him. He didn't even show up at a lavish press launch for the album attended by hundreds of the media, many flown into Toronto at A&M's expense.

*Into The Fire* speaks volumes of the full awakening of Bryan as citizen Bryan Adams. His anxiety and apprehension were understandable.

Let's consider some facts. It all started in 1985 with "Tears Are Not Enough", which he was asked to write with his partner Jim Vallance by producer David Foster. For the first time in his life he was to write a topical lyric which was required by the nature of the project to move emotionally, and motivate to action, the entire country. The song also had to inspire some great performances from all the Canadian superstars assembled for the project - many of whom he was in awe of. The song would also have to compete to a certain extent with the other famine relief songs, by the British and American superstars. And Bryan would perform the song that summer to millions during Live Aid.

All this was a very tall order for a young rocker whose social observations in song up until that point had amounted to little more than, "Everywhere I go, kids wanna rock."

If this period was Bryan's artistic rebirth, it was certainly the Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope Tour which served as his adolescence. Through this experience he got to rub shoulders and minds with some of pop music's most spiritual and insightful social commentators - from Lou Reed to Sting to U2. And there was the Prince's Trust charity drive with Tina Turner, Dire Straits, Paul McCartney et al.

Those heady days of sharing a public commitment to the rest of the human race with artists he so admired was the point of no return for Bryan.

He had now experienced firsthand the raw social power of rock music and determined the role he wanted to play.

Enter *Into The Fire*, with songs about welfare lines, dispossessed Indians, soldiers returning from war and just plain surviving.

*Into The Fire* is a spirited album and a courageous effort by an artist putting himself on the line with a powerful statement of personal growth and discovery.

Tom Harrison's excellent interview with Bryan can be found on page 44.

Ted Burley,  
Editor

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# FEEDBACK

## Sexist Ad Was Stupid And Irrelevant

I just subscribed to your magazine and have found it generally to be interesting and informative. However, I stopped dead in my tracks on page 49 of the June '87 issue.

This ad for StudioLab is stupid, offensive, non-creative and totally irrelevant to the product. I have written StudioLab to let them know how I feel about it.

It's too bad you have to include useless, sexist advertising in your magazine. Remember, there are female musicians out there with plenty of dollars to spread around in equipping their bands and for sure they are gonna walk right past StudioLab products.

Helen Rowe  
Winnipeg, MB

## Ad Was In Good Taste But We'll Withdraw It

This letter is regarding an advertisement that we recently ran in your magazine promoting our line of professional loudspeakers.

When advertising, the intent is of course to draw attention to ones products and to try to separate them from other similar products. In the June 1987 edition of *Canadian Musician* we chose, to use a 'glamour shot' of a professional female model wearing a judge's gown which was left open in the front with the heading 'The Verdict Is Clear - Studiolab Performs.'

The layout was professionally created using one of Toronto's finest photographers and advertising agencies and did receive a lot of attention. Unfortunately, not all of the feedback was positive. Several of your female readers wrote to us and said that they were personally offended and that they felt the ad was in poor taste and should be withdrawn.

To these ladies and to others that may have been offended I apologise. It was never our intent to offend, even though we realize of course that we may be taking a risk in running the ad given the furor that surrounds any display of the female anatomy in advertising today.

In view of this, we have decided to change our format to a less controversial one, recognizing that we may have exercised an error in judgement when approving the 'Verdict Is Clear' concept for a small percentage of your readers. These readers are of course also potential customers for our speakers and while we feel that the ad was in good taste, we will withdraw it from the future issues of your very fine magazine.

Bob Vince  
President  
Studio-Lab Audio

## Classical Training Resulted In Turbo-Charged Picking Technique

I found Brian Gauci's column on 'classical guitar for the rock player very interesting and quite informative. I too consider myself primarily a rock player (leaning more towards melodic hard rock) who's narrowing in on a style of his own.

My need to explore with the various techniques associated with the classical/flamenco guitar came about six or seven months ago when I left the rock band I was in for 2 1/2 years. My belief was there had to be more to the guitar than the humdrum of power fifth chords and the run-of-the-mill speed leads. Plus the band was seemingly going nowhere fast. Mind you, I have nothing against the typical box position leads, but at the time I guess I just wanted to venture and progress. Personally, I wanted to broaden my vocabulary as a guitarist, be adequately versatile on the acoustic as well as the electric and to generally grow as a musician.

At first it was tough (still is) to learn the T,I,M,As of fingerstyle picking (an area which I had only touched the surface of in the past) and to establish a good marriage between the left hand and right. Though with lots of patience, perserverance, persistence and TOI (time on instrument), I found it all payed off in the long run. To my surprise I can now play fingerstyle solo pieces such as "Midsummer's Day-dream" by Rik Emmet of Triumph and "Mood For A Day" by Steve Howe of GTR, recorded when he was with Yes. These were pieces I never dreamed of attempting much less playing them to par with the originals.

For turnarounds, I'll torture myself by playing excerpts of violin lines by J.S. Bach on a steel-string acoustic with a pick. This I've found has helped me become more melodic, precise and have a better understanding of the fret board. It's also turbo charged my right hand picking technique.

Marlon R. Wallace  
Dollard Des Ormeaux P.Q.

## I'm Not Impressed

I am not impressed with your new format, "fun" is not the key word here. Your magazine used to have some degree of order to it with sections such as Tips from the Pros and a section on new product information. Let's see you get back to more technical interviews with less dead air. You might try an improvement on your cover story too.



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# FEEDBACK

Other than your April edition, I have always regarded your magazine as the best and it has always been thoroughly read cover to cover. This opinion is also that of several of my colleagues as well.

Brandon Noga  
Surrey B.C.

and definitely deserve credit for their hard work and dedication. When you hear "Bridges over Borders" it's so easy to forget the rough times. The Spoons definitely come out on top and so will everyone who gives them a second chance with their new album.

Jackie Sherry  
Port Hope, ON

## "Career Moves" Draws Praise

Having read your article "Career Moves in the Music Industry" (Canadian Musician April '87) I was prompted to write and express my compliments on the revealing content contained in it. I draw particular attention to comments from Kevan Mackenzie: "The danger of school is that it's an insulated environment and can encourage a certain arrogance in students. They (schools) should be teaching survival, not turning out thousands of kids who dream of being artists." In addition remarks from Phil Poppa: "Getting along with others is just as important as how well you do the job." These are certainly realistic comments.

I would like to draw your attention to an oversight. Two schools in Canada which certainly represent a good deal of graduate placements in the Canadian music industry received no mention, these being ourselves (I.C.A. Institute of Communication Arts) and Fanshawe College in London Ontario. Neither schools were contacted for opinions and no mention was made of the I.C.A. Commercial Music Program. Recognizing *Canadian Musician's* efforts to be a national magazine I would encourage greater research and scope in specific articles of this nature.

Niels Hartvig-Nielsen  
President

I.C.A.-INSTITUTE OF  
COMMUNICATION ARTS

## Hooray For CM And The Spoons

I have just finished reading February's edition of your magazine for the third time. What a terrific piece of work. In times when other so called Canadian magazines are copping out to American and other foreign musicians, it's good to see that you don't have to go beyond our borders. It's good to know that someone's giving our hard working musicians the support they need and definitely deserve.

I especially enjoyed the article on Steve Kendry and the Spoons. This band has worked hard to overcome some rough times

Editor's note: Apologies go out to Steve Kendry for misidentifying him as Derek Kendry. Blush! Blush!

## Musicians Show Early Signs of Hearing Loss

The Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Clinic is a private organization which, in addition to assessing hearing, has the instrumentation and expertise to measure and analyze sound. Recently, the clinic has been involved in studying the relationship between exposure to high-intensity amplified sound and potential permanent damage to hearing.

The detrimental effect of high noise levels in industrial facilities has long been realized, while similar interests with regard to live bands in entertainment establishments have become apparent only relatively recently. Government agencies have established regulations to control hazardous noise levels in the workplace, however, no visible movement has been apparent to extend these regulations into the entertainment sector. It would seem logical to assume, none-the-less, that the government could apply existing controls to clubs insofar as a club is the workplace for its paid employees.

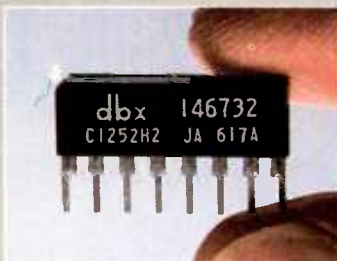
We personally would like to see voluntary guidelines established by non-governmental sources, which would give clubs and musicians a framework within which to operate with respect to sound levels. This approach would allow both club management and musicians to have significant input into guideline formulation.

Through our discussions with local musicians, club managers, sound and light technicians, a common element of concern has prevailed. It was suggested to us by these members of the music industry that we inform this population of the potential risks involved in being exposed to loud music. Collectively, we have decided that the best route to informing this group would be through *Canadian Musician* since it is the magazine that is most often read by members of the music industry.

Gordon Whitehead MSc.  
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## Vannelli Focuses On Production With Latest LP

by Perry Stern

Last year, following his strong comeback on *Black Cars*, *Canadian Musician* spoke to Gino Vannelli about his plans for the follow-up LP. Upon the release of *Big Dreamers Never Sleep*, we tracked the Montreal-born singer down to his Los Angeles studio to talk about what happens to the best laid plans.

In our earlier conversation Vannelli intimated that the new project would: A) have a third party producer, besides Vannelli and his brother Joe, to mediate the recording; B) be recorded at his own studio, then under construction; C) have a reliance on acoustical instrumentation as opposed to synthesized; and D) would emphasize live drumming instead of electronic programming. Well, a year down the road it looks as though Vannelli is batting .500 on predictions. Jeanne Dixon should do so well.

After looking around to find a producer who could mesh well with the strong fraternal bond between the singer and his brothers (this time around a third sibling, Ross, gets credit), they eventually scrapped the idea of a "de facto" producer. Vannelli says that, "The people that I respect will either want to take over and be a producer," (which is apparently more than they wanted), "or the ones that just sort of bounce off people weren't worth having around."

Instead, Vannelli backed away from his usual role as a multi-instrumentalist and oversaw most of the recording, until the vocal tracks were laid, from a more detached perspective.

Building the Blue Moon Studio to record this album was plainly a gargantuan effort that has paid off in spades. Though the space is available for outside rentals, the Vannellis have tied up its use for a full year now, recording *Big Dreamers* as well as several Gino-produced recordings. The main reason for building the studio ("Black Cars" was recorded in Joe's basement -- her brother-in-law says they drove Joe's wife "crazy") was because they didn't want to conform to the financial strictures of renting studio time.

When you record in someone else's studio, Vannelli explains, "you're constantly dealing with excuses." Because of budget and scheduling constraints it's almost impossible to do all the fine tuning and over-dubbing that becomes evident at the end of a recording session. By building their own studio Vannelli was able to come out with a finished product that was actually "finished."

In the past the Vannelli brothers played most of the instruments themselves with



Gino taking on the lion's share. This time Gino confined his musician chores to vocals, with Joe on keyboards, Mike Miller on guitars, Jimmy Haslip on five string bass, David Garibaldi on drums, drum programming and percussion (more on this later) and Marc Russo on sax. Vannelli says that having a group of musicians in the studio for the duration of the recording, as opposed to having guests pop in and out when necessary, gives *Big Dreamers* a more cohesive, ensemble sound.

While Garibaldi, formerly with Tower of Power, is given drum credits, in fact there are no live drums on this album at all. Though Vannelli had earlier predicted that he would

use even more live drums on this record than on "Black Cars" (which he estimated as having 80% live drumming), ultimately the sound he wanted was best left up to the machines using creative programming instead of human playing.

Some might say that the end result on *Big Dreamers* is perhaps "too" well recorded, perhaps bordering on sterility with its immaculately separated tracks and clean production. To Vannelli that's just another old song. "When I produced *Powerful People* in '74," he reminds us, "the basic criticism I had from everyone was that it was too synthesized, too clean, too hi-fi for rock 'n' roll. But to this day *Powerful People* is still selling and to this day A&M is still marketing it as a CD.

"I think of (producing) in almost symphonic terms. With a symphony it's very easy to accuse a hundred people of over-production. It's just the way symphonies are. They're meant to create sonics and euphony to the ear. It's meant to be clean. With rock 'n' roll or pop music it's obvious that it's never going to be like that, but I think my brother and I have been advocates of that type of music since the early days."

"In those early days, Vannelli was particularly well received as an exciting performer. Because of record company battles and unforeseen difficulties, Vannelli hasn't been on the road since 1979. Though he says he's, "itching to get back," there are still no plans for touring with *Big Dreamers* yet. "We won't go on the road until the album proves itself. There are too many other creative things to do... I don't feel that I've reached the point yet where I can permit myself to take seven or eight months out of my life and not create, just execute.

"In the seventies we were pretty much on the cutting edge [of live production] with our sound and with the instrumentation we had. I feel that's a responsibility we have. If we go on the road again I'd like to have something that's truly different and really progressive -- technically and visually. So, as the saying goes, the time is not right, yet."

In the meantime Vannelli plans to take some time off. He had just finished producing five self-penned tracks for gospel recording artist David Meese at Blue Moon and was ready to get out of the studio for the first time in a year. Perhaps by the end of the summer the man who won five consecutive Top Male Vocalist Junos in the seventies will be on the road showing us what he's made of in the eighties.



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# RECORDING

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embellishments were added after the fact -- sax solos by Lenny Mizzoni, guitar solos by Tony Moretta and Derry Grehan (Honey-moon Suite) and final mixing at England's Farmyard Studios -- but for the most part this baby was born through the dedication of two musicians who decided they would do it their way or not at all.

"It's remarkable, because if you saw my basement you wouldn't believe it," laughs Lanni. Recorded on a one inch MS 16 track TASCAM with a 24 channel by 8 channel Soundtracs mixer console, Lanni admits, "Everything was done on B grade equipment. We didn't have a lot of processing or EQs."

However, their recording process was painstaking. "We tried to record things as flat and clean as possible," says Hassel. "Everything was muted so there'd be no dirt on the track." Hassel notes one of the hardest parts of the exercise was to leave space open for upcoming parts. "We had to orchestrate it and plan ahead -- be aware of what wasn't there to make sure nothing would intrude on anything else."

Honing down the album's 12 tracks from 40 rough sketches was another arduous task. "Arn is a prolific writer. I do the editing," explains Hassel. "I play bass and Arn did the vocals, keyboards, drum programming and most of the guitars." Concentrating on achieving a cohesive sound, Hassel points out, "There's no power chords on the album. The drums are powerful and we honed in on the acoustic guitars." Lanni adds, "We tried to get strength from the arrangement."

Their gear included JX8P Roland and DX7 keyboards, a Linn drum machine, and over 15 guitars, including a Vantage, Fender Stratocaster, a Hagstrom 12 string, a Telecaster and an old Fender Jazz bass.

"The hardest thing about this album was there was no objective opinion," admits Lanni. "I'd sing a song, then have to put on a

# Straight Talk

## STRAIGHT TALK NEWSLETTER

*Straight Talk* has experienced the usual growing pains and heeded the well-directed feedback necessary to be of value to its readers.

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- 2) The subscription rate has been lowered from \$49 to \$25 a year.

Lowering the subscription rate took a lot of deliberation so as not to devalue *Straight Talk* in any way. But the truth of the matter is, \$49 was prohibitive to the very people it was designed for: the performing artists in the various stages of developing and maintaining their careers.

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World Radio History

# RECORDING



Frozen Ghost

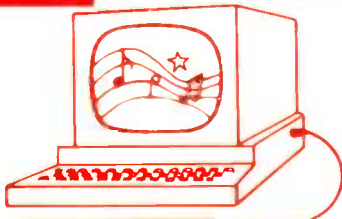
different hat and act as producer. It was a painful process, but gratifying. We produced an album that was never compromised on." Lanni also credits engineer Joe Primeau at Phase One Studios for technical support during the rough mix.

Both Lanni and Hassel went through the mill with their former band Sheriff, where they felt they had little artistic control. "When we were selling this tape, we put it in a brown paper envelope and didn't go on the premise of having hits in the past," says Lanni. Signed to a multi year contract with WEA, Lanni adds, "We don't want to rape the company and we don't want them to rape us. Our deal is a product label agreement. WEA trusts me enough to deliver a really good master every year," he explains.

To celebrate their success, Lanni and Hassel gave their studio a major upgrade. "We bought a CM400 Soundtracs, three Yamaha Rev 7s, external EQs and a MCI 24 track JH114 recorder," says Lanni.

But will Frozen Ghost remain a studio band? "Oh no," says Hassel. "We've got a live band in place and when the second or third single is released, we'll go out and start playing. We like the excitement of live performing."

Maureen Littlejohn



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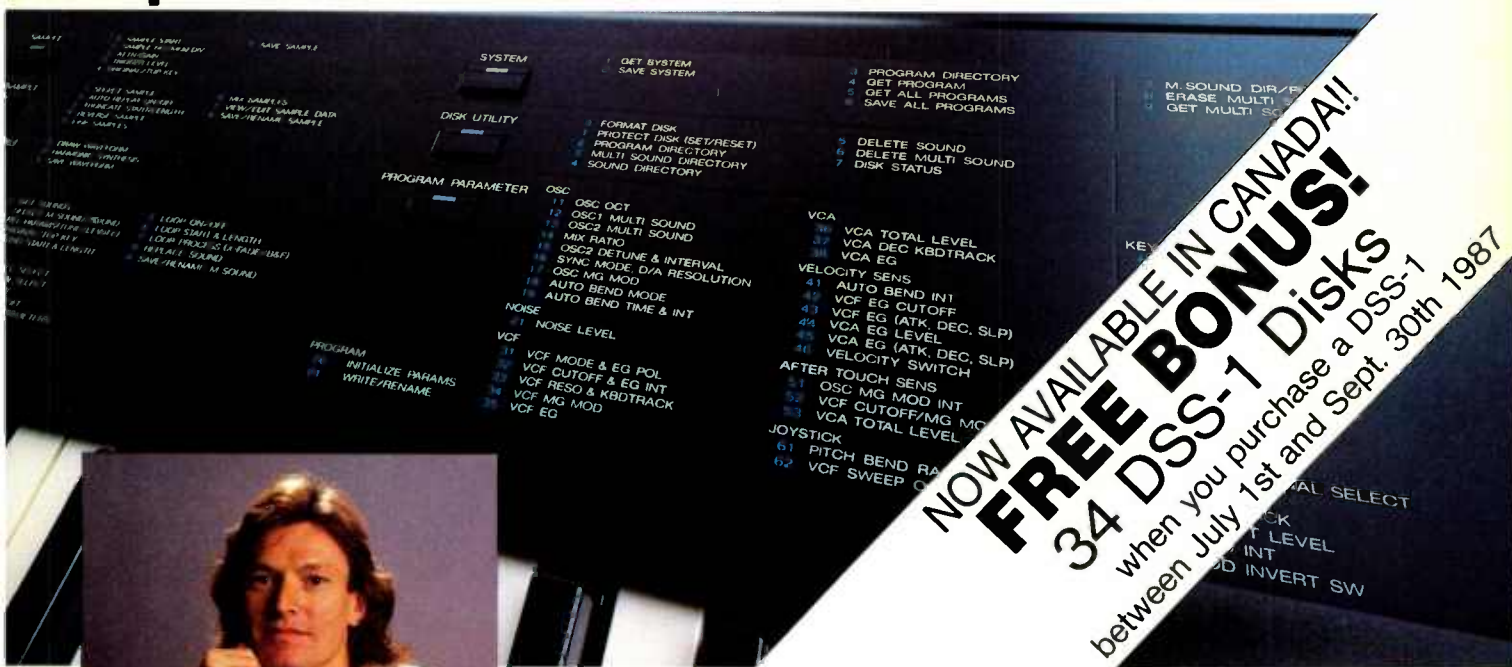


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# RECORDING

## Product Report:

# Barcus-Berry 802 Audio-Processor

by Benjamin Russell

The realm of signal processing is crowded with product vying for our attention and you might be forgiven for thinking it's all been done, but wait, here's something genuinely different. The Barcus-Berry 802 Audio Processor doesn't just rehash old ideas and repackaging them. It has a unique approach for its conception and great sound is the result.

What we're talking about here is something that's bound to be compared with other sonic enhancement products, particularly the Aural Exciter by Aphex. The purpose of these products is to make us, the listeners, perceive improved high frequency response and clarity in the overall sound of whatever we're listening to, whether the source is tape, or a microphone, etc. Where previous units have played psycho-acoustic tricks on our ears by actually distorting the input signal in ways which fool our ears, the Barcus-Berry unit attempts to time correct the various component frequencies in the signal to better approximate live sound. They claim to realign the various harmonics, inherent in sound, which are jumbled in normal electric circuits and which typically produce muddy sound and decreased clarity. Rather than adding or subtracting anything from the signal, the 802's purpose is to restore it.

Enough of the mumbo jumbo - how does it sound, you say?

What can I use it for? The 802 is designed to be placed anywhere in the audio chain, on the direct out/in of your mixing board, between the mixer and the amp, between the tape machines, etc. The difference it makes

has to be heard to be properly appreciated. Let's just say that the unit succeeds in what it sets out to do. Spatial relationships between various instruments and their stereo positioning in a mix are greatly enhanced, really making the sound come alive. It is great for use on vocals, making them sound more distinct without the need for excessive EQ. The same applies to just about anything, drums, guitars, synths, pianos etc. It's fabulous for making cassette dubs sound pretty much like the original.

The unit is very easy to use and has only to be set once and then more or less left alone. It's stereo, each side having a knob to adjust the 'process level', as well as recessed mini screws for line gain adjustment (to balance between apparent differences in volume between processed and non-processed signals) and low frequency gain adjustment (since there's increased high frequency perceived, it's there to allow for a corresponding balance in the low range - 10 to 200 Hz). LEDs allow you to easily monitor and set the appropriate level. The rear panel has balanced XLR and phone jacks, and line signals can be from -10 to +4dBm. A clip LED lights when excessive levels are present at the input (+24dBm or more).

We can sum up by saying the 802 is a welcome addition to any studio set-up - it's a professional unit and capable of delivering great sound. You won't know till you've tried it just how much better your music will sound, so check it out. While you're at it, have a look at another Barcus-Berry product, the 402 'Maxie', more or less the same thing except it has phone and RCA jacks, operates at -10 dBm, costs less and is aimed more at the semi-pro market and live applications.



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World Radio History



# IMAGING

## The Politics And Art Of Rock Photo Journalism

By Ted Davis

Pat Harbron remembers the time he photographed The Cult. Pat, having suggested that one of the world's most aggressive-sounding bands wear black, was being rebuffed.

"We don't want that Southern Death Cult image anymore," said lead singer, Ian Astbury. "We're not like that anymore."

"Alright."

A week later, the band showed up at Pat's Adelaide St. studio for the shoot with an idea.

"Yeah, we thought we'd wear black," said Astbury. "It suits us."

"Great idea," said Pat, who then proceeded to manoeuvre the cocky British rockers into unthreatening poses of casual group camaraderie. The pictures chosen for printing were approved on both artistic and promotional grounds by the record company, The Cult and the wily Mr. Harbron, who makes it his business to help establish and confirm the images of the people he photographs - and to do it successfully. Says Pat, "Deciding on the best overall look for the photographs is a democratic process but I have the strongest lobby."

Except, that is, when the record companies assert their opinions. But this, as experience has proven, does not preclude opposition to corporate initiatives. In fact, a nose for business and an ability to make people see things his way are two talents which Pat considers vital to his professional success.

The other is, of course, some skill with a camera. Pat never even really looked at a 35mm. camera until in the midst of rock and roll playing/managing/journalism career. When he was 23, he bought his first camera body and lens and landed a job as an assistant to a fashion photographer friend. This "apprenticeship" accelerated Pat's assimilation of photographic information and helped him sidestep the mistakes that would have slowed him down. By 1978, he knew, with his business knowledge and contacts and his fast-growing camera skills, that an opportunity for photographic self-employment existed.

Pat says his insistence on administering his art as a business is no small part of his career climb. He has been the recipient of some criticism for being *too* businesslike but says that is a result of bucking a popular image of photography as a hobby rather than a job. "You wouldn't expect me to shoot pictures for free on an Arctic oil rig," says Pat. "How is shooting a Bruce Springsteen con-



cert any less of a job? I still have to produce a product that will satisfy the client."

However, Pat's business acumen has not superseded his will to uphold artistic beliefs in the face of client directives. He says that record companies can be over-instructive in arranging promotional or album cover photo sessions, especially in the case of young bands in which "seed" money has been invested.

"Once, a record rep came in with some primitive sketches of how the company wanted me to shoot a band of theirs in the studio," said Pat. "I was seething, but I politely took their advice, and the photos as requested, and then went to work on my own ideas. That was the last anyone saw of those sketches."

At heart though, it is his ability to photographically confirm or even generate an image that has garnered for Pat a celoid clientele that includes Bruce Cockburn, K.D. Lang, The Cult, Level 42 and Dexter Gordon, to name a few.

He says that musicians usually have a good idea of who they are, or at least who they're supposed to be, and consequently come both mentally and physically prepared to be photographed. Pat sites Level 42 as a band that understands its cultured rhythm and blues image and that demonstrates it through both a confident attitude and a taste in clothing that he described as "King's Road leather." Likewise, The Nylons, who, long before even setting foot in Pat's studio for their *Happy Together* album cover, were developing a clothes and hairstyle image in concert with their record company.

Image preparation was not so keenly honed in the case of bands like Helix, who showed up for a shoot in sweat-stained concert clothing or Honeymoon Suite, whose basic blue jean rock and roll image bloomed into basic black after consultation with Pat.



At least as important to image confirmation as physical appearance is photographic setting and the more subtle implications that this has on efforts to capture images on film.

As usual, Pat knocks about setting concepts with his clients but tries to retain his "lobby." In the case of one guitarist he'd prefer not to name, he lost to more forceful, economically dictated demands and produced photographs satisfactory to neither himself nor the artist. But generally, his sense for proposing settings that best match perceived images and his skills in swinging things to his way of thinking have served him well. Said Pat, "I didn't even tell Level 42 I was taking them to a staircase setting because I knew they would say they were sick of staircases... they loved the pictures."

So did jazz great Dexter Gordon, who was photographed in the wake of extensive media attention resulting from his lead role in the movie *Around Midnight*. Gordon, who Pat described as "not really interested in the whole promotion process," was willing to be directed by Pat. Pat took advantage of the opportunity to conceptualize a new image for the jazzman.

"Everybody always pictures Dexter in a dark, smoky bar playing jazz. So I took him outside. It was a bright day with some clouds and the pictures of him against a blue sky in New York turned out to be very striking and different."

# IMAGING

## Lighting Up Gowan's Great Dirty World Tour

By Benjamin Russell

**W**e heard about an innovative light show for Gowan's "Great Dirty World Tour" so we headed to Kingston to check it out, and spoke to lighting director/tour manager Howard Ungerlieder about it.

"Almost all of the lights are on the ground which is very different. I've got six lights in the air, two spots on stage and basically a circus of effects. Everyone's used to seeing lights coming down from a truss and you know, it starts there and it stops on the stage but this way it starts on the stage and just goes infinitely into the air and it gives you new dimension. There's a lot of special effects on this tour. I'm using two mirrors on stage, 280 lights, and we're bouncing lights into the mirrors and getting some really nice effects through smoke in the air which is unusual."

Does he think this sort of system is likely to catch on? "Put it this way. In 1974 when I brought in the aircraft lights, I don't think anyone had used them before. I did the Rush

tour, we went to England and there was a lot of front page coverage on the patterns, the fingers of light coming down with the aircraft landing lights. Over the years I think that every single band has used them (not that I'm saying I invented the light). Maybe you'll start seeing bands using this now. Who knows? I'm really keen on making it unique. This tour gives me a lot of chance to experiment that I wouldn't be able to do on other tours. It's still new for Larry - that buzz is there. It's a smaller amount of equipment to work with but sometimes less is more. When you don't have much you have to come up with other ideas and you go, "Wow! This is amazing."

Smoke is of the essence and there was a lot of it in evidence. Jean Mereweather, the man Westbury Sound and Lights sent out to physically put the show together, told us the building is filled with smoke before the show and kept heavily smoked up throughout. "When you've got an effects show like this, smoke is real important and it has to be everywhere,

tons of it. If there's no smoke, no dirt in the air, you won't see any of the beams. We've got two smoke machines. One is high powered, called a Smoke Processor, from a company out of England which strangely has a French name, Le Maitre. The other one is a Martin Fogger which is quieter and runs automatically with a timer. It might shoot out smoke say, for five seconds every two minutes."

We ask about power and the types of lights being used. Jean fills us in. "We're using about 270 thousand watts of total power for the lights. For dimmers I'm using two racks of Lighting Methods, each about 72 thousand watts, then we have a custom rack made by Dilor Industries out of Vancouver. It's 96 thousand watts, designed by us. Then I have a smaller Dilor rack, 24 thousand watts for all the little special effects."

"We have a big scrim or screen behind the stage and everything flashing on the screen is a leko fixture. We have 16 of them with gobos. A gobo is something you put in front of a source of light and it makes a pattern. Then we have the aircrafts, low voltage lights which run always together in series of four. It's used only as an effect and they're all on the back truss pointing upwards making a fan of different colors. We have 48 of them."

"There are a lot of floor fixtures - Thomas par 64s - 72 in the back and 96 on the side

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racks. They're chrome so they look really good - classy - and they're aluminum so they're real light weight. The bulbs on the back truss are all narrow and on the sides they're very narrow."

"Then there's the psyche lights, the irises that light up the scrim. I have five instruments and each one has three separate circuits, one red, one green, one blue which flood the entire screen so that when I open the traveller, the screen will show as red. Normally people have a black backdrop and we'll leave the traveller closed like that for awhile and then as it's opened you will see red spreading out from the middle of the back of the stage until the whole thing is red. It's very effective."

"Our RDS projectors come from one of the biggest special effect companies in the world, out of Los Angeles, called Great American Patterns. They make the gobos and so on. We use the 2000 watt projectors which you really need for a big arena. On the floor in behind Larry's riser we have a spiral machine. All it is is a thing that slides into the front of the projector and it's motorized so that when there's a lot of smoke, you see turning patterns of light. We project slides, specially painted by an artist from Toronto, onto the screen. We also are using a scene machine with an endless loop of film for clouds moving from left to right."

"Then there's the mole fays. In the industry we call it a blinder and we use it to blind the audience. If you put it on you can light up an entire arena completely white. If Larry



decides he wants to make the audience sing along, we'll put the lights on the people and when the lights are on them, they feel more like singing. We've got two of those on either side of Larry's riser pointing into the crowd."

It sounds like quite a hefty array of equipment and with all the talk of MIDI these days we were expecting to see it under the control of a computer but Howard tells us he's not convinced. "What it does is take it out of your hands. If you're a really good lighting designer, you're with the music and everything is flowing, it's sort of like playing an instrument, a piano or something. MIDI's fine sometimes if it's something you don't have enough hands for, but like anything, if you take away the human element, it can become very static, cut and dried."

While not MIDI, the lighting console is anything but low tech. Custom designed for Howard by See Factor in New York, Westbury arranged to rent it for the Gowan tour. Howard: "It's an Avolite 3 scene board, 96 channels with a 16x16 chase panel. There's 48 submasters for your combinations and 12 channels of independents for special effects. It's got a speed control (active on the chase lights, for instance) and you match the music to the speed of LEDs on the board and when it comes time for the effect, you just let it go." We'll let Gowan put it in perspective. "This the most unique set-up and the first time I've had the chance to present something this different to the people. We've put a great deal of thought behind it and Howard's great at designing this sort of thing. I've encouraged that spirit of experimentation and we're really going for it."

By the way, if you're interested for your next tour, expect to pay \$5-7,000 per week for a similar set-up.

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## Joint Communications

# Positioning Artists In The Marketplace With Research

By Rosie Levine

**L**ifestyle research. Demographics. Target audience. Even the most unaware consumer feels twinges of recognition at the mention of terms like baby boomer radio. Who are the people who make sense of the buyers' wants and needs, using market research? Joint Communications appears to have its finger on the pulse.

In the late '70s, Dave Charles, a 23 year radio veteran and John Parikhhal, a futurist and academic, were hired to oversee the creation of a new rock station - Q107 in Toronto. Inspired by the success of the Burkhardt-Abrams team in Atlanta, they tapped into an undeveloped hinterland - consulting the media using state of the art research techniques. Ten years later, their company Joint Communications' client list includes CBS Radio, Metromedia, NBC, MTV, *Rolling Stone* Magazine, as well as 30 radio stations across Canada. They must be interpreting something right.

Charles and Parikhhal like to think of themselves as media strategists, gambling that their assessment of what the public wants to hear right now, or six months from now, is the ticket the media heavyweights want to buy. Joint Communications has gradually added another group to its roster, record companies seeking advice on how their artists are perceived by potential record buyers who are listening to the radio - a lot.

"Commercialism is my favourite word," exults Dave Charles, responding to a query on why an up and coming musician has to adapt to a radio station's format. "Any musician who says he doesn't care about the mass acceptance that comes with radio airplay is deluding himself." The operative word here is 'mass', and that precludes those acts with legions of fans who are not going to hear their favourites on radio. "We call those turntable records. They're played in clubs or on home turntables, but never heard on the radio," says Charles.

Fees for the company's expertise, which include a written report, are set according to the number of tracks an artist wants evaluated. The costs are as follows: 1 track - \$285.00, 2 tracks - \$525.00, 4 tracks - \$975.00 and 6-8 tracks - \$1275.00. For a 'positioning evaluation', an in depth marketing study, add another \$1275.00. If the record company opts for the full package, the expenditure is \$3000.00. "It's worthwhile when you consider that a record company is likely to spend \$250,000.00 on a new release anyway," says Charles.

If it sounds like winners coming to winners for validation, you may be right. For an unsigned artist, the best move might be to consult Joint Communications before you spend Aunt Betty's money on your demo. At least then you'll know what the consultants predict listeners likes and dislikes will be six months from now. Then, maybe you can go out and create that hit record for radio.

Aspiring musicians take heart. John Parikhhal has some solid suggestions for unsigned artists. He proffers, "No matter what, the most important ingredient is to write from the heart. It's also important to



John Parikhhal



Dave Charles

keep a very tight focus on the image you want to project. I don't care if you beg, borrow, or steal, but get good management. I can't tell you why that's so hard to accomplish in Canada, but your bass player cannot be your manager. It's extremely important to develop a good relationship with the people in radio. Ask for their advice—don't get caught up in telling them what they should be doing with your record. When you do finally sign a deal with a record company, negotiate muscle for money. By that I mean put aside the fact that you've been struggling for nickels and dimes

and the record company money seems substantial. Look at the long term wherein you can exercise control over the marketing and promotion of your record. Lastly, prepare to work very, very hard to be a 10 year overnight sensation."

At the moment Joint Communications is not into turntable records. We're talking Bryan Adams, Corey Hart, Red Ryder, Luba, Glass Tiger, and Rush here. "The record company comes to us, although occasionally it's the manager or artist themselves. They want to know how the artist is perceived by the consumer in relation to the other acts that they're hearing on radio and how to successfully position him or her in that marketplace. Our client wants to know - in advance of a new record release - what cuts are strongest and test best with the audience. Basically they come to us to evaluate their product in terms of commercial viability. Because we are considered to be the objective eyes and ears for radio stations in Canada, we can give them the informed layman's point of view."

Just what is this state of the art research that might determine whether the 'product' is ready, or whether it's back to the drawing board? John Parikhhal, who earned his masters degree under media guru Marshall ("the medium is the message") McLuhan, explains the process. "We have built a huge data pool of musically active listeners. By that I don't mean people who are surprised to hear that Whitney Houston has a new single out. In that sense, it's self-selecting."

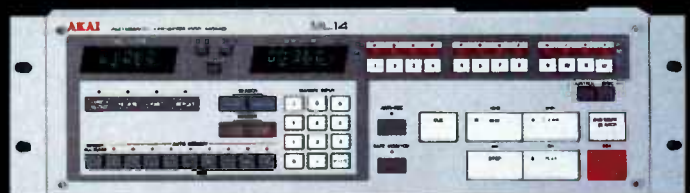
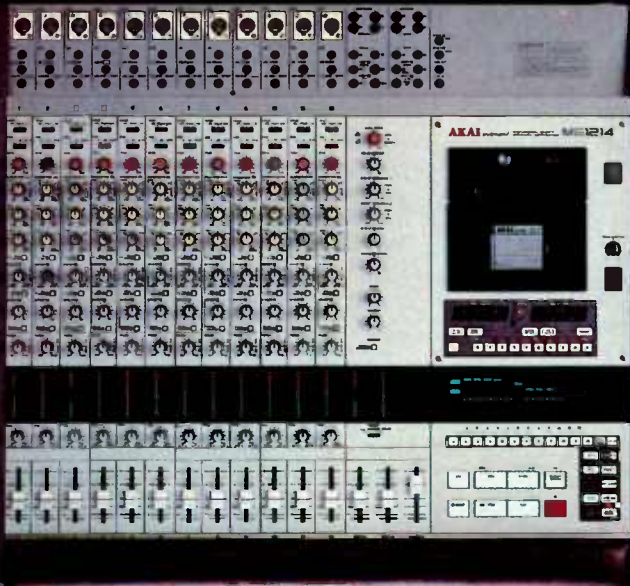
Where do they find these people? "We do mall intercepts, place ads in newspapers, and do random telephone selection to build up the data pool. We may not use some of these groups until months later depending on the control group we're going after."

When Joint Communications is asked to test market demos, they do a number of panel testings in auditoriums drawing on their pool of musically active listeners. Client tracks might be mixed in with songs that a radio listener would normally hear during a given hour's segment. The participants are asked for very specific input on what they've heard. Parikhhal obviously respects the feedback he gets and says "it's amazing how adept the kids are at making suggestions." The listeners' input is then passed on, via Joint Communications, to the record company. "We'll tally which songs test better than others and would be best bets for the first single. Re-sequencing or re-mixing might be recommended. We cover such aspects as drum sounds, guitar licks, hooks, and lyrical weakspots."





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# BUSINESS

## Ultimate Alternative Compilation

**Various Artists**

**For No Apparent Reason**

**X Records**

**Produced by Rob Marcuzzi and**

**Gary Verrinder**

**Wellesley Sound Studios**

These days it's become axiomatic of the indie scene that just about anybody can put out a record themselves. So it should come as no surprise that two suburban everymen from Toronto have released a definitive compilation of that city's alternative/underground community, *For No Apparent Reason*.

Rob Marcuzzi is a 23-year-old engineering graduate from the University of Toronto; Gary Verrinder is a 20-year-old who works at Sears and has some experience in record distribution. Together they formed a label, called it X Records (a shortened form of their preferred beverage, Molson Export Ale), and started recording local talent.

"Originally, we formed the company to put out a single by Adam Faux, who plays guitar in the band Pigfarm," says Rob. "But once we cut it, we thought we could try and get more stuff out of Toronto because there's a lot of activity right now. We figured the best way would be to go for a compilation."

Rob had already lent the Change of Heart band \$600 to help finance their debut EP, *50 Ft. Up*, and through that group had grown familiar enough with the city's alternative crowd to approach a dozen-odd participants with the prospect of a compilation. "We got them all drunk and asked them to do it," laughs Gary.

Not quite. "We asked each band for a quarter-inch tape of whatever song they wanted," says Rob, "But some of them were so slow or delayed that they were handing us their tapes while we were already mixing the tracks we had, on our last day in the studio."

*For No Apparent Reason* is nonetheless a widespread, representative sampling of the T.O. scene, from the hardcore of Groovy Religion to the punk-a-funk of the Garbagemen to the crystalline guitars of the Plasterscene Replicas to the quirky organ-and-wailing of Fifth Column to the garage/trash of the Dundrells.

The record also provides vinyl debuts for Pigfarm (fundamental rock 'n' roll), the Subterraneans (pure pop), the Lawn (thoughtful, dynamic guitar rock), 13 Engines (aggressive guitar pop), the Saddle Tramps (country-ish jangle), Nomind (hardcore), and the Rheostatics (Stompin' Tom Connors meets metal and funk).

The first pressing of the compilation cost \$3000 for 1000 copies, most of which came from Gary's job at Sears and Rob's work for his father's construction company. The two plan to recoup their investment over a three-

night record release party/benefit at Toronto's Rivoli club. Any earnings over and above recoupment will be split evenly among the bands and X; the recouped money will be plowed back into more recording.

Upcoming projects include: A Pigfarm album, A Rheostatics album, and Canadian licensing deals for 13 Engines (who've recorded for Detroit's Metroland label), A Neon Rome (who recorded for France's New Rose Records), and Mercyland (a crack hardcore



band on DRG Records from Athens, Georgia).

*For No Apparent Reason* will be distributed by Record Peddler, Zulu Records, and Bonaparte. If it's not available at your local dealer, try X Records, 255 Derrydown Road, Downsview, ON M3J 1S2.

Howard Druckman



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# LIVE SOUND

## Taking Chalk Circle On The Road

By Ike Zimbel

**H**ow do you get six people, their luggage, three quarters of a ton of gear and 500 T-shirts in a van? Stay tuned to find out.

The information in this article is based on a national tour that I did with Chalk Circle in the summer of 1986. My duties were soundman, principal driver and "the Ayatollah Co-Manager". The other five people were; the band, and Chris Pegg, the band's manager (who also doubled as lighting designer).

After deciding that the exiting "car & a van" method of transportation was un-economical for a national tour, we settled on Ford 350 Club Wagon, from Budget. Having put some 20,000 km on this model, I really can't say enough about it. I can try, though...I give this van full marks for power, handling, cargo space and comfort. There is on Catch-22, however, and that is that because these vans are so rugged, I have found, repeatedly, that they haven't been as well maintained as they should. Uneven tire pressure, dirty motor oil, and occasionally, overdue for a tune up are some of the problems that I've encountered when picking up these vans from the rental place.

By way of equipment preparation, we adopted the policy that everything get put into some kind of road case (as opposed to the numerous cardboard boxes) and that "small is better". To this end, we found that the two keyboards fit nicely in the top tray of one of the (2) drum cases. The keyboard amplification system which was all old Traynor junk, was traded in on a new Traynor Block 100-K, which is quite small, and a great amp. As well the old 50 watt Marshall stack was swapped for a small Fender amp.

In spite of these improvements, when the time came to get all this stuff behind the remaining back seat, I had some real doubts as to it happening. But, we were on the way to a gig! So we got down to it, and, by the time we were finished, we had established the basis of a "pack" which would change very little. The only problem with it was that it went right to the roof, with the result that by the time we had gotten back from a two day shakedown trip, two people had been bonked on the head by guitars which had come loose while stopping. This problem was solved with a pair of ratcheting load straps which I borrowed from a sound company (who shall remain nameless because they're not in the



Chalk Circle

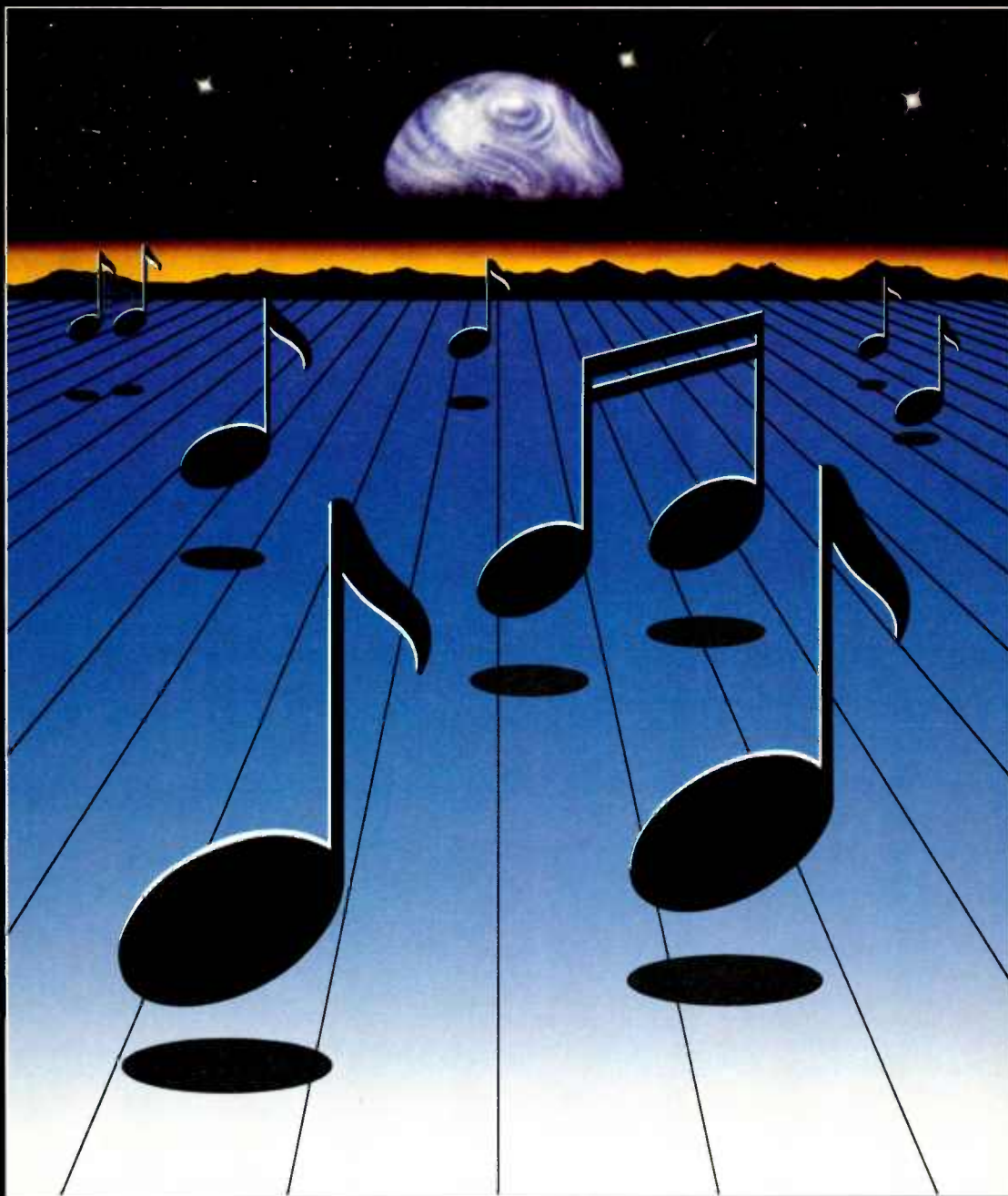
business of lending things-thanks guys!). These were the ultra heavy duty variety, which you can purchase from truck cargo control companies. You can get a lighter version at auto supply stores. Here's how to rig them: With the equipment out of the van, the seat should be visible. These are made of heavy steel and are securely bolted to the floor. The long end of the straps should be fastened to these points, either with a secure knot, or a hook if the straps come so equipped. (The straps we had had hooks that were too large to fit in the seat mount, so I had to take a loop of strap thru the mount and then attach the hook to the loop-this worked fine.) Once this is done, throw the straps over the rear seat and load the equipment. That done, feed the straps over the gear and fasten at the back of the load. I should note that the only point we could find to fasten the straps at the back was the rear bumper. We did this by hooking the straps to the bumper, tightening each strap fairly tight with its ratchet, and then closing the rear doors. If this is done properly, it should be possible to close the doors with a good slam, while making it impossible to remove the hooks from the rear bumper. This whole routine may sound like a hassle, but given the peace of mind that

we all felt-especially while braking and making emergency stops, it was well worth the trouble.

**DRIVING:** The first priority here is establishing who will drive. A few guidelines: In a rented vehicle it's a good idea to only allow drivers who meet the minimum age requirement (for insurance purposes) to drive. This can vary from 22 to 25 years of age. Next, drivers who have their license, but don't drive very often should be ruled out. A heavily loaded van, with passengers on board, is not a good place for an occasional driver to take a refresher course.

After we had met those guidelines, we were left with myself and two other drivers. Of those two, one had been driving the band's old van for years, and the other owned a small, zippy import. The contrast between the way these two drove helped me solidify a theory I had been working on for years. It is of primary importance that a driver have a sense of the mass, weight, and momentum of the vehicle being driven. The idea being that you don't expect 6000 lbs. of van to take sharp curves at 100+kmh, stop on the same dime as a little import, and go down long hills without picking up a dangerous amount of speed. I found that this van, while it handled and behaved excellently, felt more like a fully

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# LIVE SOUND

loaded 5-ton truck than even, say, my brother's S-10 pickup. The key to driving a heavy vehicle is ANTICIPATION.

Now that we have all these great reasons to slow down, a tip: Many people who drive automatics have no concept of downshifting to slow down, they either back off the gas, or hit the brakes. Well, meet second gear! (That's the "2" in PRND2L) When you have to start slowing down for that light, or curve, or have a long hill to descend, just decelerate and shift into 2nd. This will slow you down much more smoothly (and in slippery conditions, more safely) than even touching the brakes. On long downgrades second will help keep your speed under control, and save a lot of wear and tear on the brakes (which will heat up and become much less effective when used to control speed on a long hill).

One of the things I found about Chalk Circle is that they are by far the most democratic band I've ever worked with, there really is no leader, no boss. This is great, however, I found it really hard to introduce the concept that, particularly in the later part of really long drives, the driver (whoever's turn it is) becomes the most important person in the van. The driver's needs, especially in terms of staying alert and awake, take precedence over everyone else's. This means that if the driver wants to drive with his window open (in mid January, of course) while playing his

latest demo or Lawrence Welk's greatest hits and trading road stories with the co-driver, everyone else should indulge him. Your being able to sleep literally takes a back seat to his being able to stay awake. And guess what? When that driver finishes his/her shift at 3:00 a.m., he/she gets to put up with whatever the next driver needs to keep awake.

Back to the co-driver for a moment. I think it's very important that the person in the right-hand seat take the job of driving just as seriously as the driver, again, particularly at night. It is their responsibility to help the driver keep awake, and to keep an eye peeled for road hazards, especially in Bambi, Bessie, or Bullwinkle country. As well the co-driver should take responsibility for navigating, particularly when entering a strange town in search of the venue, or hotel.

One final driving tip: Slow down when driving through National Parks, the RCMP keep a very sharp lookout for speeders. Besides, the scenery is always worth slowing down for, anyway.

Now that were out here enjoying the scenery in our national parks, it's time to nip home for a minute and deal with your luggage. In a nutshell, smaller and less are better. My own touring luggage usually consists of two overnight bags. I fill one with extra clothing, the other carries two changes of clothing, a sweater, shaving kit and other

essentials. If we are just spending the beauty of small luggage is that it fits under seats and in other nooks and crannies that big, square suitcases just won't go.

Security: There isn't a van made which an experienced thief can't break into in under two minutes. Given that you can't keep people out, the next best thing is to make it look like there's no reason to want in. This entails the window black-out of the cargo area I mentioned earlier. As well, it's a good idea to carry something (like a blanket) to throw over the front part of the load so that nothing that says "Fender" or "Yamaha" or "rip me off!" is visible. Never leave the van unlocked, not even for a minute. This is especially important in alleys behind clubs and concert halls.

—When loading or un-loading, one person should always stay with the van.

—Don't leave cameras, walkmans and so on lying on the seats. Last person out of the van should always check for this and for unlocked doors. Have a look around for the keys, too. It always takes good guys way more than two minutes to break in. (It's a good idea to have another set made. I kept one set on me, the other set was "the van keys" for everyone else.) Finally, at night, try to park in a well lighted area, preferably with the back doors against a wall.

*(Ike Zimbel is a soundman who has worked with Chalk Circle and Manteca.)*

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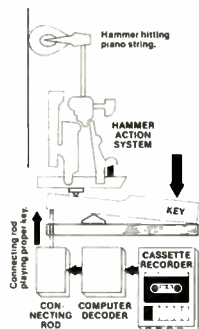
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# MIDI

## Drum Machines vs Samplers

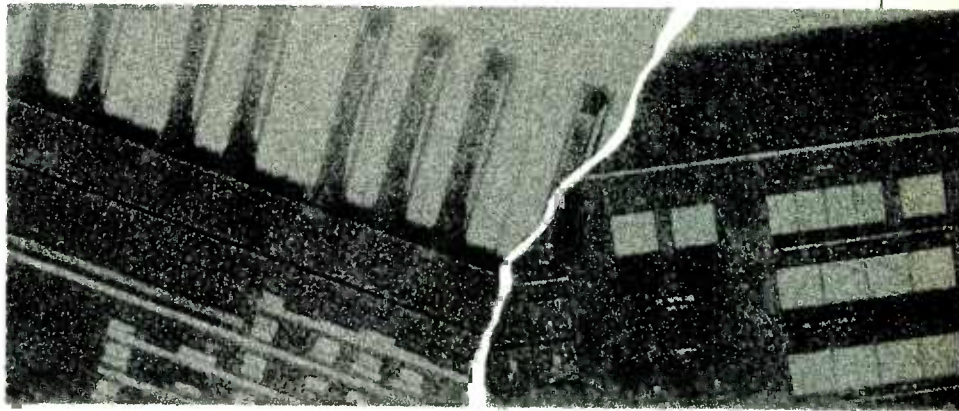
by Benjamin Russell

For those of us who have been relying on drum machines to provide the backbeats we crave, there is no need to discuss the purpose of programming rhythm. Whether for composing, recording or live work, there are enough of us who use them to have made drum machines a fact of life - it's a lucrative market for the manufacturers. However, in this column, I'd like to be a little sacrilegious and say that I feel the days of the drum machine are numbered.

In the early days when beat boxes slugged out preprogrammed rhythm patterns and sounded like card board boxes being hit with limp spaghetti (yes, I had one of those - didn't you?) you had no choice. It was either that or a drummer. In time things changed and with the advent of Roger Linn's first creation, digital drum sounds became a reality though few could afford them. Now however, anyone can cough up the cash for a small Japanese made box which will easily provide sophisticated programming capability and great sound.

Great, you say, so what's this about the demise of the drum machine? Well, in the last few years MIDI has raised its head and made itself a fact of life too and with MIDI sequencers, dedicated or computer based, I don't think you need to use the drum machine's internal programming capability at all because the sequencer can do that work for you.

Let's look at a typical session of composing. The old way of doing things is/was to program patterns on your drum machine, then chain them together to make songs. Meanwhile, you might record some sequences



using synths. To play them back with the drums you have to sync them together.

Anyone who has experienced the joys and agonies of syncing different manufacturers' boxes can tell you stories of timing delays, different pulse per quarter note values and so on. Admittedly, MIDI allows much easier synchronization between various machines but there's still the dreaded MIDI delay to take into consideration.

Here's a simple solution: don't use the drum machine's internal programming. Just use it as a sound source. Through MIDI each drum sound may be accessed as a MIDI key number and you can program dynamics in as well. If you're using a Roland TR505 or Yamaha RX drum box, you can't get more than a couple of different volume levels for each sound. From a sequencer over MIDI, there can be as many as 128 degrees of volume from very soft to full blast. You should never have to touch the drum machine again. Just set it to an appropriate MIDI channel

and leave it. Your controlling keyboard will be your new set of drum pads. (Better yet, get a set of Octapads or a MIDI drum kit to fire your beats into the sequencer and then to your beat box.)

The advantages of this way of operating are clear: your sequences and rhythm patterns will be playing from the same source so they should be tighter (no delays), you have dynamics, and you have the freedom to edit your compositions from one global perspective instead of having to reprogram a bunch of different machines if you decide to add an extra chorus. Furthermore, if you don't have to operate different programming systems it gives you that much more time for creative stuff, and isn't that what we're all after? If you change drum machines, you don't even have to bother to learn the new system, just plug it in and use it as a sound source.

Now we come to the crux of the matter. What is left of a digital drum machine if you  
*continued on page 39*

### New Products From Sequential Include Studio 440

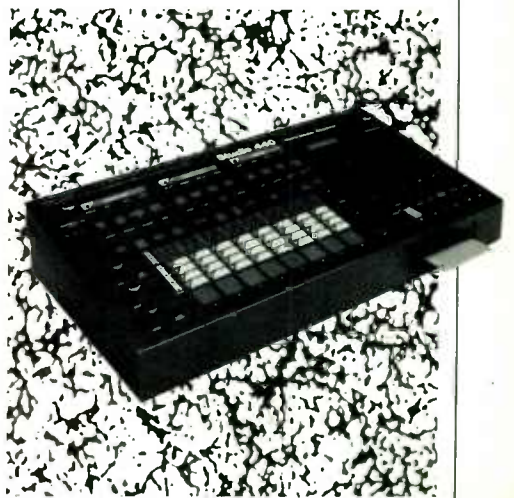
Sequential has released the Studio 440, an all-in-one box which includes a sequencer, drum programming facilities, a sampler, SMPTE read and write capabilities along with a 3½" disk drive and a Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) port for connection to a hard disk drive or perhaps CD-ROMs in the future. With a maximum sampling rate of 41.667 kHz and 12.6 seconds of sampling time, real time sample monitoring, potential for up to 32 samples on board, plus computer assisted looping functions such as cross fade looping, the machine can be used as its own sound source but it can control external synths as well on up to

32 MIDI channels.

Eight velocity sensitive pads may be used to trigger internal or external sounds and the 32 samples are organized into 4 kits and 4 banks. Analog synth circuitry can be applied to the samples as well.

Also new from Sequential are the updated Prophet 2002 Plus (kits are available to upgrade older models) giving 8 audio outputs, cross-fade looping and an expandable memory. Sequential is making their VS synth available in a rack mount version as well.

For more information, contact: Sequential, 3051 North First St., San Jose, CA 95134 (408) 946-5240.



# SONGWRITING

## The Box - From The Guts



By Tim O'Connor

Jean Marc Pisapia, lead singer and principal songwriter for The Box, used to fret over every word of his songs, constantly searching for that perfect word, that ultimate metaphor. While Pisapia's songs on the first two Box albums are certainly airtight - with every word worth its weight - the songs are rather stiff and didactic.

It's a common malady among writers of any kind; there is a tendency to fuss over things too much. Some writers anguish over each line even in a first draft, which prevents things from flowing, or they rewrite so much, there's no life left in the song. A saying about journalists is applicable to all writers: When journalists have longer to write, they usually write worse.

Having exhausted many brain cells and achieved limited success, Pisapia and his mates decided to take a different approach to writing their third album, *Closer Together*. "At one point you're tired of thinking out every move you make and you just look at yourself and say 'Stop being so precious. Just do it with your guts for once instead of doing it with the head,'" Pisapia says.

The result is the band's best album. The LP is noted for its free spirit, warmth and good humor. The melodies are unchained and the band's love affair with pop unfurls freely. It's a success borne out by sales - in only five weeks *Closer Together* had sold more than 38,000 copies and the title track was getting saturation airplay on everything from AOR to CHR.

The sentiments in "Closer Together" are idealistic - maybe even naive - but strip away

all the theorizing about people and you'll find that humans are basic, loving beings. This is what Pisapia has done; he's gotten to the core of things without getting wimpy. It's what makes the album such a treat.

"Most bands have a phobia about doing the stupid love song, but you notice most bands have the urge to do that simple love song," Pisapia notes. "It's an enjoyable thing to do and it's a very enjoyable thing to listen to when you're on the public side. And falling in love is one of the simplest, purest feelings you or I can experience. Translating them into a song is such a natural thing, so we just did that."

Most of the band's new songs concern love in some way, including the ballad "Emilie," "I'm Back," "Without Love" and "Ordinary People", which Pisapia plans as the second single. Although "Ordinary People" has a political flavour, it's not a political statement. It's about the helplessness people feel when they think about the Soviets and the Americans at the arms talks.

"The first feeling you get is always the same: 'Nothing will happen.' You have this empty feeling of total incapacity to do anything. 'Ordinary People' is exactly that. We are ordinary people and we have ordinary fears. This was the simple feeling I had every time I confronted this situation, so I just made a simple song about it."

Writing lyrics is no longer "the pain in the ass" it once was "because I have a lighter approach to them, and I'm getting better with my English," says Pisapia, then laughing.

Pisapia will continue to work on his English because even though The Box is a francophone band, he pledges the group's

recordings will always be in English. Echoing provincial compatriot Veronique Beliveau Pisapia says French doesn't work as well as English in rock - he says French lacks punch - and English is the language of rock around the world.

However, Pisapia was recently asked to write a French song and an English song - "Closer Together," which he was going to write anyway - for a 22-minute video for LEUCAN (Leukemia Canada) to help raise money for leukemia research. But, referring to the French song, Pisapia warns "you'll never see it on plastic."

"It's absolutely essential that with the kind of status we have now, that our identity is kept very clear. It's very hard to market a band that has more than one identity. And we have suffered for too long from this faceless band situation where people didn't know who we were or what we did. Everybody was acquainted with our songs but they didn't know it was The Box. And that affects sales very directly, thank you very much."

The band's image is stronger this time out, and so is Pisapia's use of spoken word vignettes in which he portrays the voices of characters in some songs. He has a resonating speaking voice to begin with, but it rumbles and rasps on *Closer Together*. How does he get that voice?

"When I sing all day recording an album or on tour, my voice goes out to lunch completely and that's the voice I end up with," he says, noting most rockers lose their speaking voices on tour. "I also had one of the most tremendous colds I ever caught during the recording and it worked out really well," he said breaking up. "I was so happy."



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# ARRANGING

## Structuring Songs For Albert Hall



L to R: Mike Jones (engineer), Albert Hall, Ron Burrows

By Ron Burrows

Although I've been writing, arranging, and producing sessions for radio and television commercials, television shows, industrial films, and other forms of musical mania for ten years, it's been a relatively short period of time that I've been involved directly with recording artists as either their writer, arranger, or producer.

About three years, actually.

There are important differences in the way that you prepare for each of the above sessions, but this month I'll concentrate on my method of preparation for sessions with a recording artist.

As a sideman on other artists' phonograph recording sessions, I have the opportunity to see how their writers and arrangers handle things in the studio. And the way that things are handled in the studio is a direct result of the amount of preproduction that went on before the session.

At this moment, I'm in the middle of an album project with an artist named Albert Hall. My function is as arranger and producer, so it's a good example to use to explain some of the goings-on that occur before the arrival at the studio.

My involvement in this project began naturally enough with a phone call from Albert,

who asked if I'd be interested in arranging and producing some songs for him. We got together and chatted mostly about music in general - we had dealt with each other beforehand, but our dealings hadn't included the recording aspect. We shared enough of the same ideas that it seemed that we could work together, and so we agreed to go ahead with planning the logistics of the project.

Albert's voice is rich and full, with some roughness around the edges, and he's totally at home singing ballads or up-tempo tunes. He has an excellent musical sense, and isn't thrown off by what some would consider to be 'adventurous' chord changes.

Our first preproduction meeting consisted entirely of listening to a cassette of original tunes that Albert had recorded at home with guitar and voice. We listened to the entire tape several times, and touched on different aspects of each tune as a thought would strike us. I left with a copy of the cassette, so I could live with it for a while. I played it in the car, at home, and in the office, until I knew the tunes as well as Albert.

At subsequent meetings we directed our attention to each tune on an individual basis. The orchestration of the tunes hadn't been touched on yet, we just spent time deciding

what the shape of each one should be. And Albert was revising lyrics as one turn of phrase struck him as better than another.

While all this was going on, we were discussing what the overall philosophy of the album should be, and how that philosophy could best be expressed from an arranging, and overall sound, point of view.

Once we had determined the shape of the tunes, I took them away, and started work on arranging them.

As each tune neared completion, I would call Albert and explain to him what I was doing with it - what the instrumentation was like in one, what the solo instrument was doing at a particular place in another, that I had a really neat line to set up the chorus - stuff like that.

Once I had finished roughs of the arrangements of the songs, we got together for another round of meetings, and went over each song again. As we did this, we discussed who the different key players could be for each. We both had many of the same players in mind, and this had a bearing on how the arrangement would ultimately end up.

One move that was made was to build the tunes in the studio with some obvious synthesizer parts. In his past recordings, the synth was used mostly for electric piano parts, and some strings. When Albert first recorded, he was straight-ahead country, and gradually moved to being totally uptown country.

So the decision we had made was to move this record even closer to the commercial music border, while still being mindful of what had gone before.

The process up to this point had taken just over two months, and things were in a state of doneness. And I use the term 'state of doneness' because when it comes to recording, there are lots of times that something happens in the studio that prompts you to change some of the parts you've slaved over. You could have spent days and days writing the optimum (in your mind) counterpoint for the guitar in the bridge, and on the first or second run through, the guitar player asks if he could try something there, and it's great! Don't ever be so stiff in the studio that you won't listen to input from the players. After all, you hired them so they could bring their particular brand of expertise to the music.

*(Ron Burrows is President of Burrows Music Ltd., a respected jingle house, and is a freelance producer/arranger.)*



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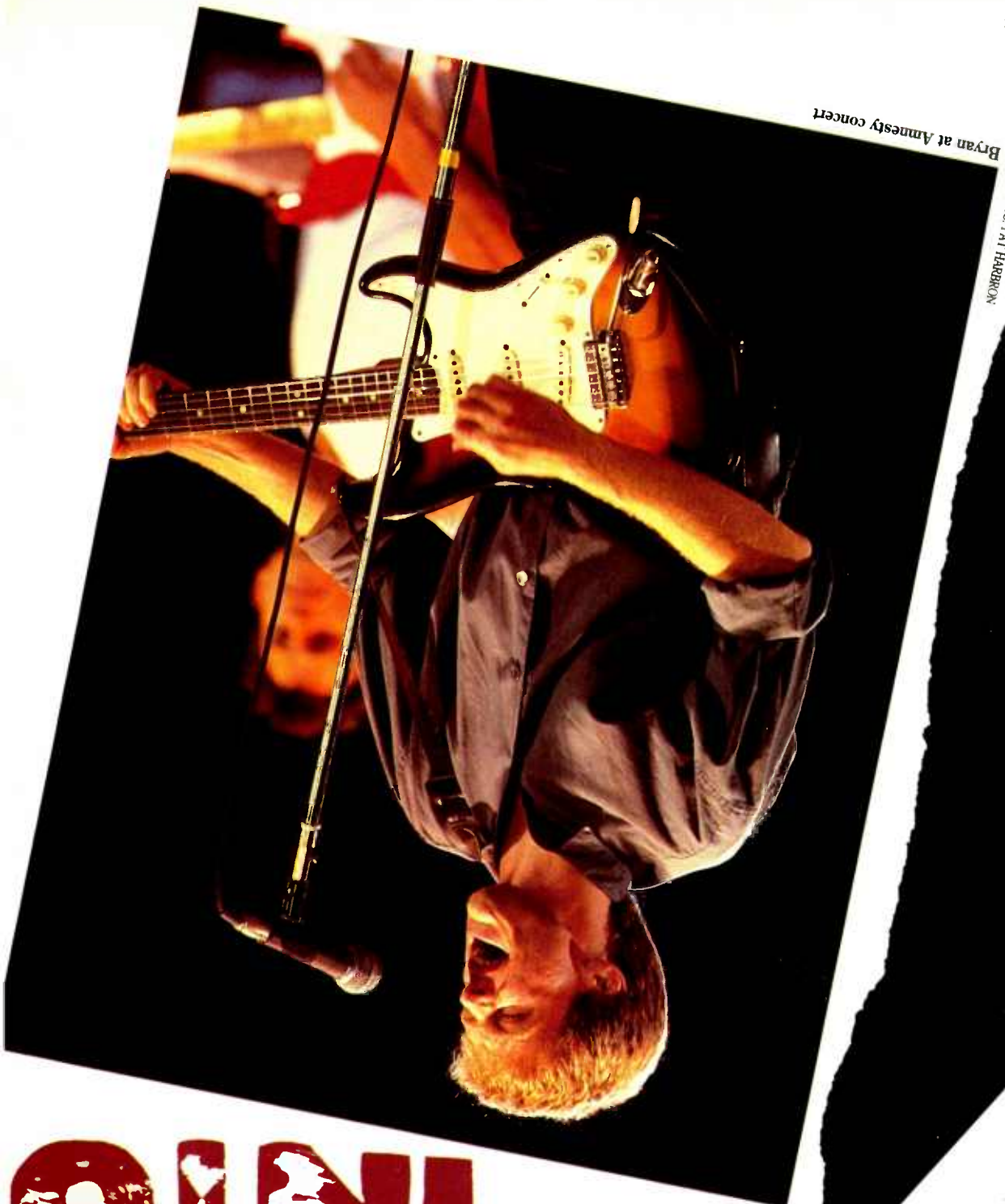
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Bryan at Amnesty concert

PHOTOS: PAT HARRISON



# BRYAN FROM FRYING INTO



# ADAMS: PAN, THE FIRE

BY TOM HARRISON

When Canadian Musician

last left Bryan Adams a year ago, he was munching taco chips and Salsa with Jim Vallance at a favoured ersatz Mexican restaurant in Kitsilano where the pair was taking a break from writing the songs that have become his latest opus, *Into The Fire*.

Loyal and intrepid readers will remember that at that time Bryan and Jim had seen clearly the roads that were open to them as they amassed material for the sequel to the five million-selling, diamond status, landmark recording of *Reckless*. There was the seductive and tantalizing easy route called *Reckless Part Two*, which the duo readily could have knocked together at risk of appearing cynical and patronizing to their fans. There was the High Tech Imperative, which beckoned the both of them with alluring state of the art pop-rock autocracy. Then there was the challenge to dig deeper into themselves as people and make a record that revealed more of their personalities to the public, and which aspired to the next hurdle in the upward mobility of an ambitious songwriting duo. Artistic credibility, to be not only as successful and as popular as their idols and peers but also to enjoy the same cultural relevance.

This last route was a tricky one to navigate, but the most enticing. After all, as the inevitable success and popularity that was Bryan's due arrived at the door one album behind

schedule, he had more or less thumbed his nose at critics, quite accurately stating that the public had made its choice and that was what mattered.

Indeed, until two years ago that was all that had mattered. Jim and Bryan had teamed originally to write and record the kind of pop music they'd always loved. This was their mandate; where was it written that they also be social critics or boho artistes who only appealed to the loaves of bread they disdained in "Kids Want To Rock" anyway?

Yet deep down inside, Bryan Adams and Jim Vallance are rock fans and, in their own way, rock critics too. They have great taste in pop and rock music. Many of the people who are rock critics' models and darlings are their favorites too. The Beatles, their ultimate, weren't only popular, they were catalysts for social change and influences on popular thought. They weren't merely successful.

Only speculating here, but perhaps the fact that an essentially upbeat pop/rock singer such as Bryan can sell five million albums worldwide is not news but that Peter Gabriel can sell a million *Sos* is, is reason enough to



Bryan and Sting during Amnesty concert

want to crash the inner-circle of contemporary artists who are impoverished by commercial standards but who make a difference.

Thus it was that in 1985, Bryan Adams and Jim Vallance, might have been casting around for a way to make a difference, but a way that was also natural to them.

And then along came "Tears Are Not Enough". Bryan remembers it well.

"Yeah, 'Tears Are Not Enough'. Writing the lyrics for that song was a real turning point. It gave us confidence and it was a real challenge to write about an issue as sensitive as that one. The musicians who sang on that record liked the lyrics, too, which made Jim and I feel good. You feel honored when Joni Mitchell says she likes your lyrics."

"Tears Are Not Enough" was the perfect

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## Bryan Adams

vehicle. Politically and socially, it was current and right. African aid was a pressing issue that leant itself to big questions and simple statements; it did not need debate or details, neither of which Bryan and Jim had proven very good at providing to that point. Moreover, it was a fast, resounding answer to the critics of *Reckless* who found the album emotionally hollow and questioned who Bryan really was behind the aggressive pose of songs such as "Kids Wanna Rock" or "Run To You".

Anyone who has heard *Into The Fire* -- how could anyone not have heard something of this multi-tiered album? -- will realize that Bryan has dropped the pose and offered more of himself than he ever dared before. It's a cautious offering but brave nonetheless. It also cleverly but subtly takes up the second option mentioned above: You will hear a more subtle use of keyboards and other studio technology to create atmospheres, flesh out his basic hard rock drive, and to reinforce the dynamics Bryan and Jim have always valued.

If *Into The Fire*, then, was only the dawning of Bryan's socio-politics, it wouldn't be much of an album. It would be unrealistic to expect a 27 year old middle class kid-turned-adult to make the transition from scrappy rock and roller to social essayist in one album. In his own country, Bryan also has many other artists who are much more comfortable with, accomplished at and equipped for writing topically: Bruce Cockburn, Murray MacLauchlan or Paul Hyde to name three.

Yet, Bryan Adams is the only one whose popularity gives him the clout to make a difference. By this standard and in the quality of *Into The Fire's* writing, performances and production eclipses Bryan's previous records. **What was the first song completed for into the fire?**

"Hearts On Fire'. It probably sounds like it could have been on *Reckless*. The second song was 'Rebel'."

**Why cut "Rebel" after Roger Daltrey had already recorded his version, which you've stated you like?**

"We had 15 songs cut (as demos) when Roger did his version. Since then we added a third verse. I suppose it's a little sacrilegious to have done that after Roger's version, especially since he's one of my heroes. But my version is quite a bit different from his."

Once again, *Canadian Musician* readers may recall that Bryan and Jim stated a year ago that as songwriters they found it easier to write for a specific situation (such as "Tears Are Not Enough") or the image of another artist (Daltrey) than for Bryan himself. The achilles heel of *Reckless* is that the image they created for Bryan through "attitude" songs such as "Ain't Gonna Cry" wasn't very believable, and consequently gave itself away as being contrived. Whatever vulnerability Bryan may have exposed in a song such as "Victim Of Love", "Into The Fire" or "Another Day" it rings more true. For this album, Jim and Bryan seemed less concerned

with image or attitude than with character and feeling. It's one reason why "Rebel" seems out of place, a throwback that has been re-tailored, but "Victim Of Love" is the real heart of the album despite the big issue songs, "Remembrance Day" or "Native Son". **"Victim Of Love" is the best love-gone-wrong ballad you've written. It seems to have come from someplace in the past that was real to you. Your wail later in the song really puts it over.**

"I thought I'd improvise a bit there. The wail was an expression of the anguish and desperation in the song. It's ironic I should write a song that is so unhappy when these days I feel so happy.

"That's the best vocal I've ever recorded". **It sounds like your past work with Tina**

**Turner rubbed off in your singing.**

"Yeah, Tina has taught me a lot about singing. She told me that she'd always thought I sounded like a black singer. It's funny how that works because I was influenced so much by singers like Rod Stewart and especially Stevie Marriot. People thought they were black singers, too, but they picked up their influences from black singers and I picked those influences up through them."

"Tears Are Not Enough", and the positive reinforcement Bryan received for it, was the stimulus that awakened a social conscience in him that he'd always kept to himself. He and his band performed "Tears Are Not Enough" at Live-Aid. In the spring of '86 he wrote a letter to the Province newspaper protesting the presence of U.S. warships in Vancouver's



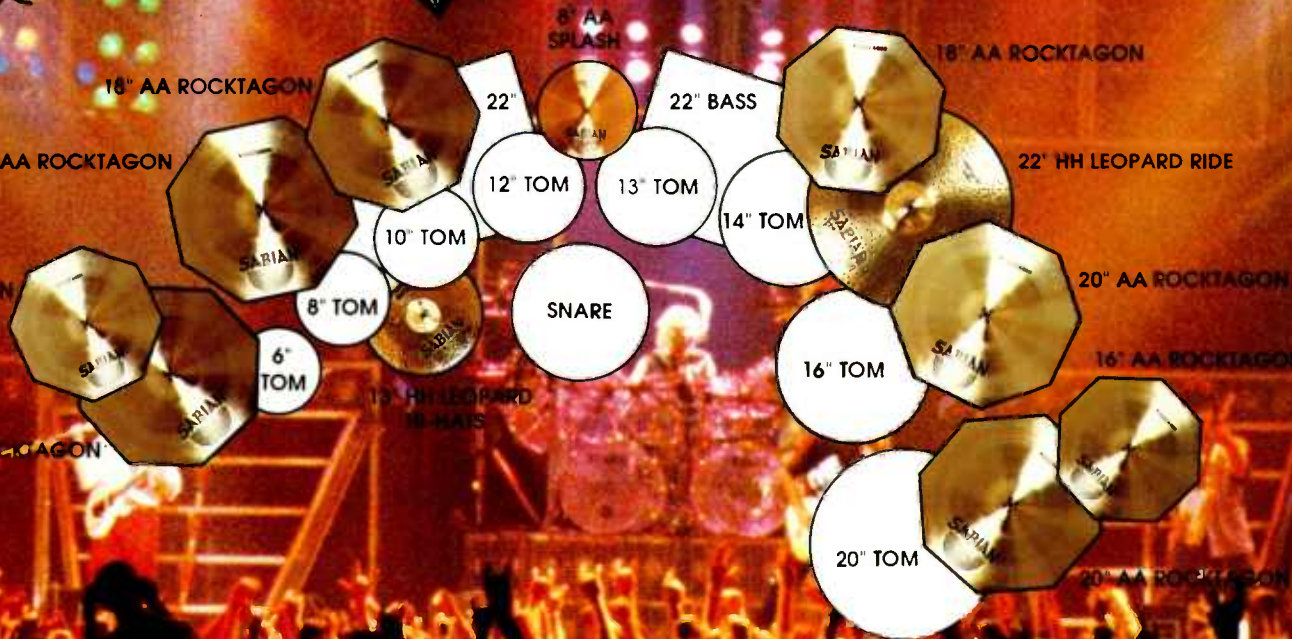
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## Bryan Adams

English Bay, an act that was applauded as the coming out of Citizen Adams or the self-exposure of another naive rock star. In England he performed at Wembley Arena for the Prince's Trust. In America he hooked up with the Amnesty International Conspiracy Of Hope tour. Some people have suggested he looked out of place, spunky rocker bouncing around Sting and Peter Gabriel. The other way to look at it was that he was earning his right to be there, and getting a first class education in motivational politics at the same time.

**Was the charity work you did last year positive re-inforcement to go ahead and write the more topical songs on *Into The Fire*?**

"If nothing else. Until this album, I'd never wanted to write anything that could be called outspoken. I've been a member of Greenpeace for years, but I'm not vocal about it. I never felt the need.

But if you've done well by something, you've got to give something back. Doing this has been my way of putting something back. I spent the whole of last year doing charity work -- the whole year. I feel good about it. You can't really change something with a concert or a record but you can make people aware of it. It was good for a Canadian to be on the Amnesty tour. Amnesty membership in Canada doubled last year.

"For me, the only way to get involved in Amnesty was to get all the way involved. I thought it was a good cause and it was the

best way for me to find out about it."

**Eventually you have to turn your attention back to your career. It becomes hard to turn down anyone with a cause that seeks your help.**

There's a point where you can do too much. Where your effectiveness diminishes because you've been over-exploited.

**And then there is the point where you have to wrestle with the issue of the role of politics in music.**

It's better to remember that we're pop musicians, not politicians, and that that line should never be crossed. I think of *Into The Fire* as nothing more than a pop record."

But a pop record unlike Bryan's previous four pop records. Previously such observations as "Another Day's" "They say the best in life is free but if you don't pay then you don't eat," would have seemed alien. As a song about trying to survive on welfare its straightforward, unvarnished sentiment is in context with "Native Son", which deals with the displacement of the West Coast Indian, or "Remembrance Day", which creates a tale from the World War One to make a simple, if obvious statement. Elsewhere, Bryan and Jim may be accused of trying too hard and offering too few details or risks to support songs such as "The Strong Survive" or "Rebel", but "Remembrance Day" or "Another Day" work because Bryan plays them straight.

**Did you have any family members who fought in World War One?**

There were a couple of personal attachments. "Remembrance Day" is a tribute to our fore-

fathers. It's a romantic song as well. I wanted to pay tribute to the people who died fighting for the freedom we enjoy today. I think it's a better story than it is a composition...but it's a decent song."

**What inspired "Native Son"?**

I've had that title for a few years, but I didn't know what to do with it. Jim and I had to do some research on that one. A lot of it was inspired by the speeches of Chief Joseph who was a Northwest Coast Indian. It's like opening up a history book. The story is set in the 1800s, which was a turbulent era for the West Coast Indian.

**When I saw the lines "Once there was a time my little one, before the wagons, before the soldiers' guns when this land was ours as far as the eagle flies," I thought you'd resorted to Hollywood clichés.**

No way. You have to understand that we took those lines directly from the speeches of Chief Joseph. There's nothing Hollywood in a line like "as far as the eagle flies." That's real. They talked like that.

**Now that you've tried writing social and topical songs, do you find it easier to write pop songs?**

No, it's extremely difficult. If it was easy, everybody would be doing it. It's as hard or harder to write a simple pop song as it is to write something topical. One thing though, the fact that the songs are more personal means that I can sing them with more passion, because they are more real to me.

One of the great pleasures of *Into The Fire*

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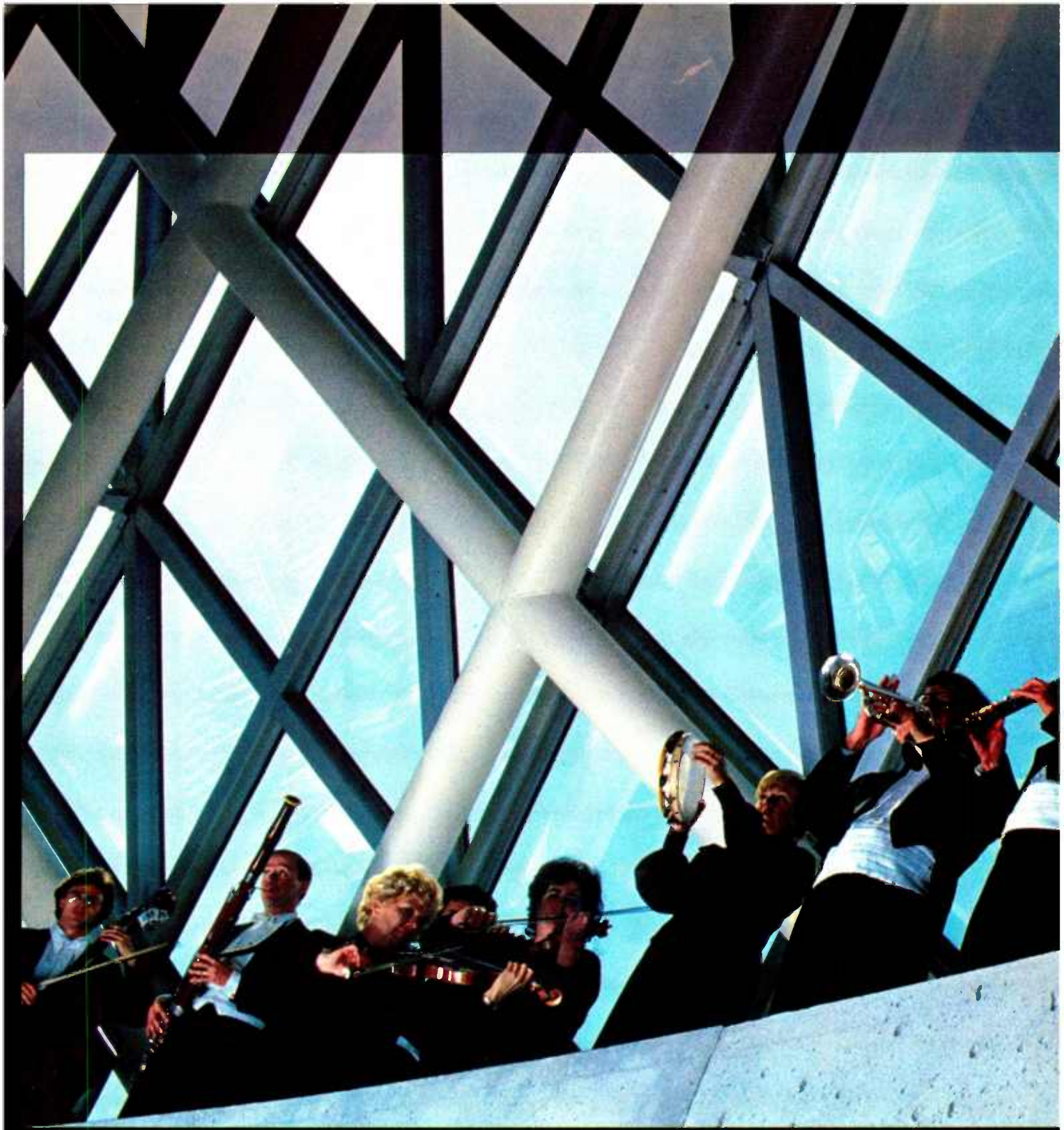


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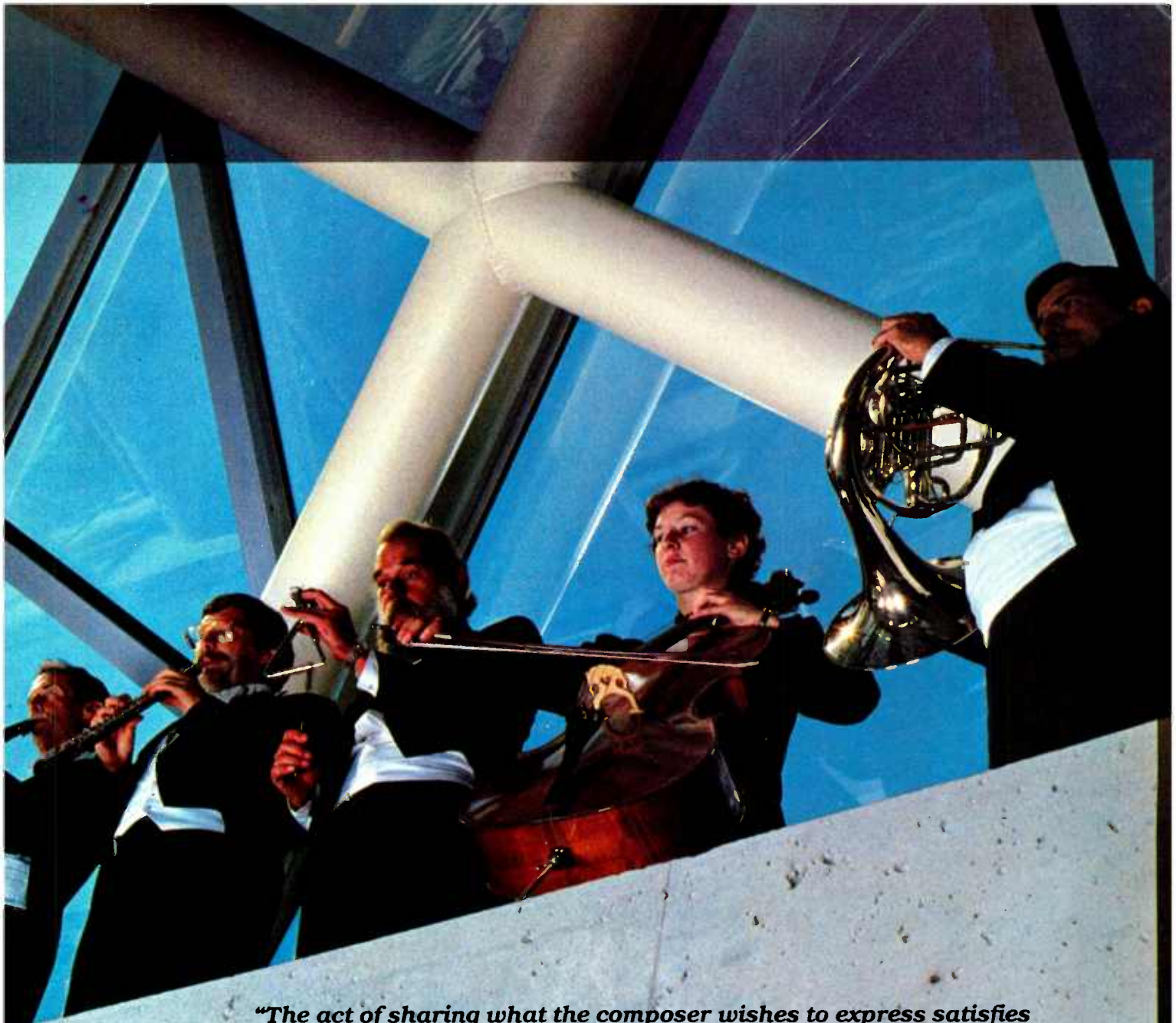
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"Just beyond the fringe but worth the drive."

## Bryan Adams

is the number of musical cross-references Jim and Bryan drop all over the album. The "Strong Survive" comes dangerously close to being an updated "Resurrection Shuffle" (the only song for which Ashton, Gardner and Dyke will be remembered). The title track's rich textures and undulating bass line evokes the entire middle-period of The Beatles. It's obvious that Jim and Bryan took their time in developing most of these songs as a seamless whole, and left room for their musicians, to make their contributions in a more personal way. Keith Scott, for instance, is allowed more slack than usual and steps out as a guitarist with real blues feeling -- although it is Bryan playing most of the lead on "Heat Of The Night", despite what the album liner says.

**I suppose buying an SSL board and recording most of the record at home on your own time contributed to the fluid quality of this album.**

"I've got a good studio now. I can make my own records at home and I don't have to go to New York or even Little Mountain Sound across town. We even did some of the tracks for the song on Carly Simon's new album *It Should Have Been Me* right here.

"We recorded the album during the autumn, which was great, because you remember how nice the weather was back then.

**Yep. But How did (co-producer) Bob Clearmountain feel about leaving his native environment to work in your house?**

"Bob likes the comforts of a big studio, but I wanted to take him out of that environment. I think, looking back, he enjoyed it more than he thought he would."

**Whose idea was it, then, to mix the album in England?**

"Bob's. I don't know why he wanted to mix there. I mean, it's January and Big Ben froze. And there I am. What am I doing there?"

"There's nothing anywhere that says you have to record a guitar a certain way or anything. It's all up to the imagination. The sounds on this album are really good. The guitar sounds really big. They were recorded in my living room, which was practically empty because at the time I had no furniture.

The organ was recorded in the bathroom, tambourines in the shower.

I think recording at home is the way of the future. More and more people are recording at home because the technology makes it affordable. You don't need an SSL board. We just basically used a couple of AC30s for amplification, Pultec EQs for the guitars (Pultecs are these great old tube EQs) and Stratocaster guitars. We set everything up in the house and played."

**You seem to have left more room for the band on this album.**

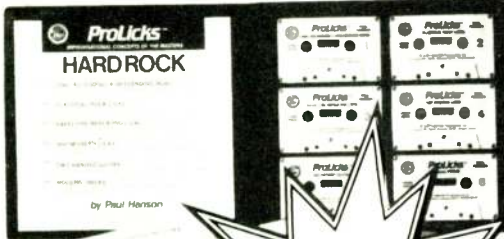
"The songs lend themselves to more input from the band. "Into The Fire", man, just explodes. That's the heaviest track I've ever recorded. And "Native Son" is the most sensitive and dynamic. We've become a really good band."



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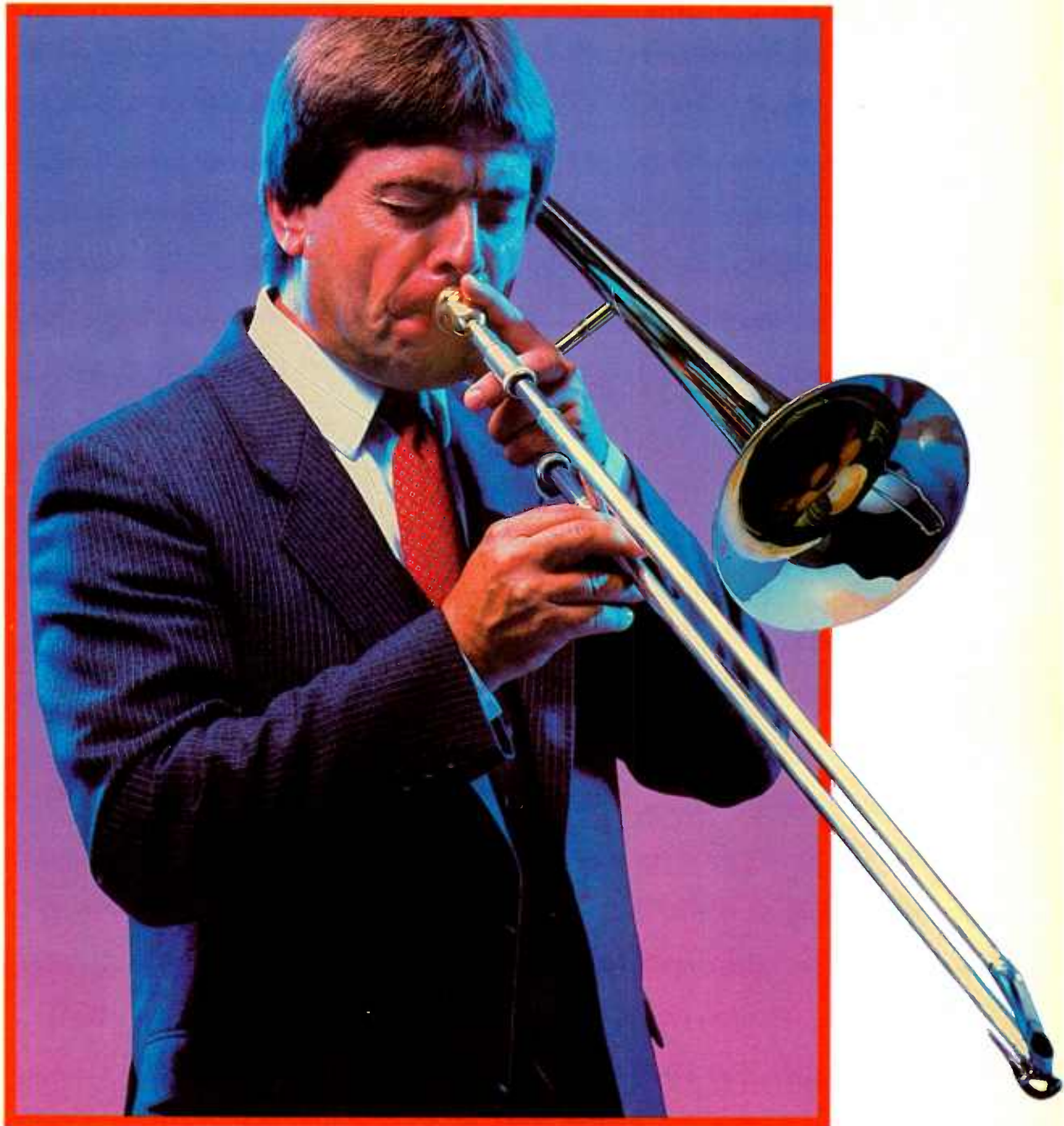
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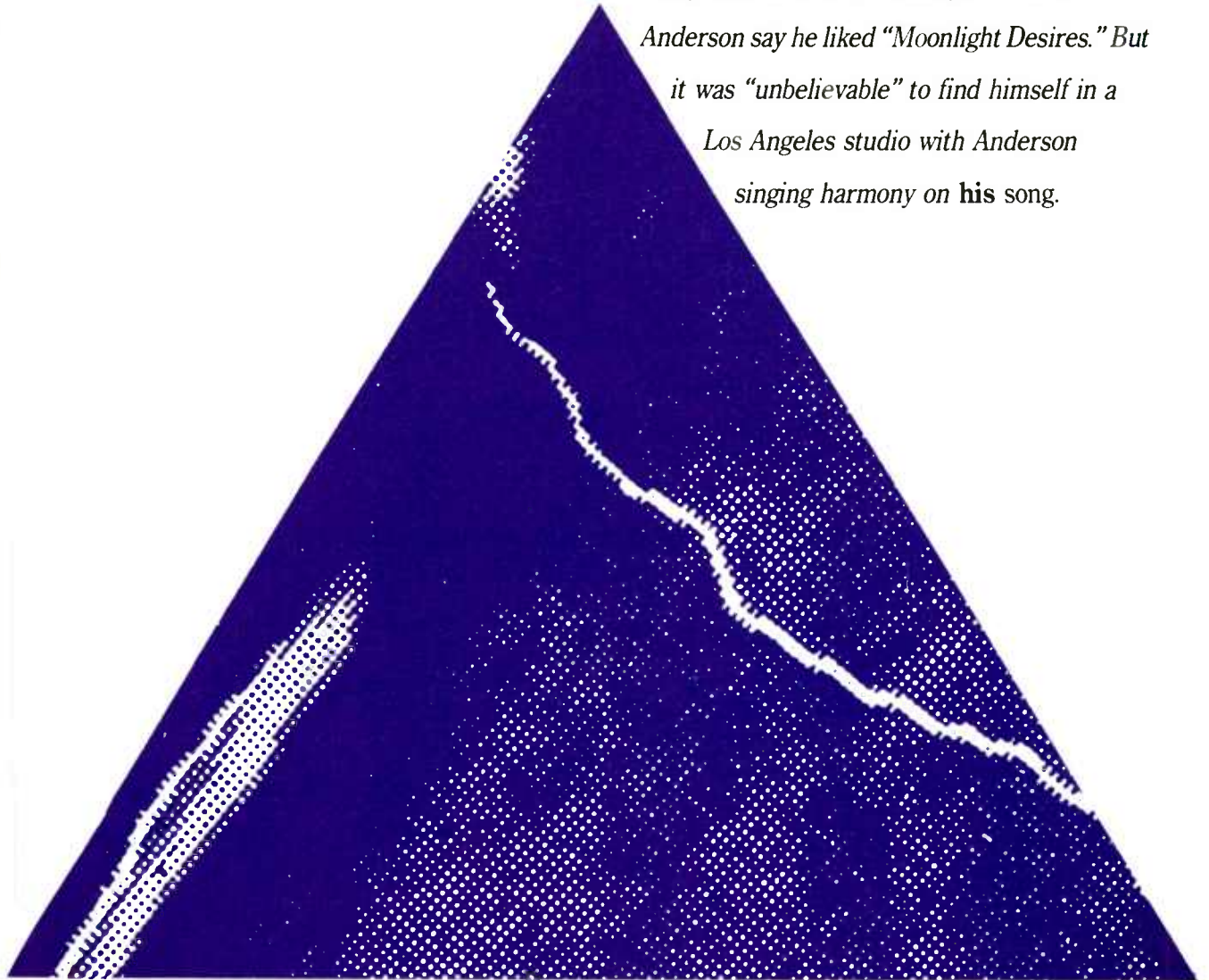
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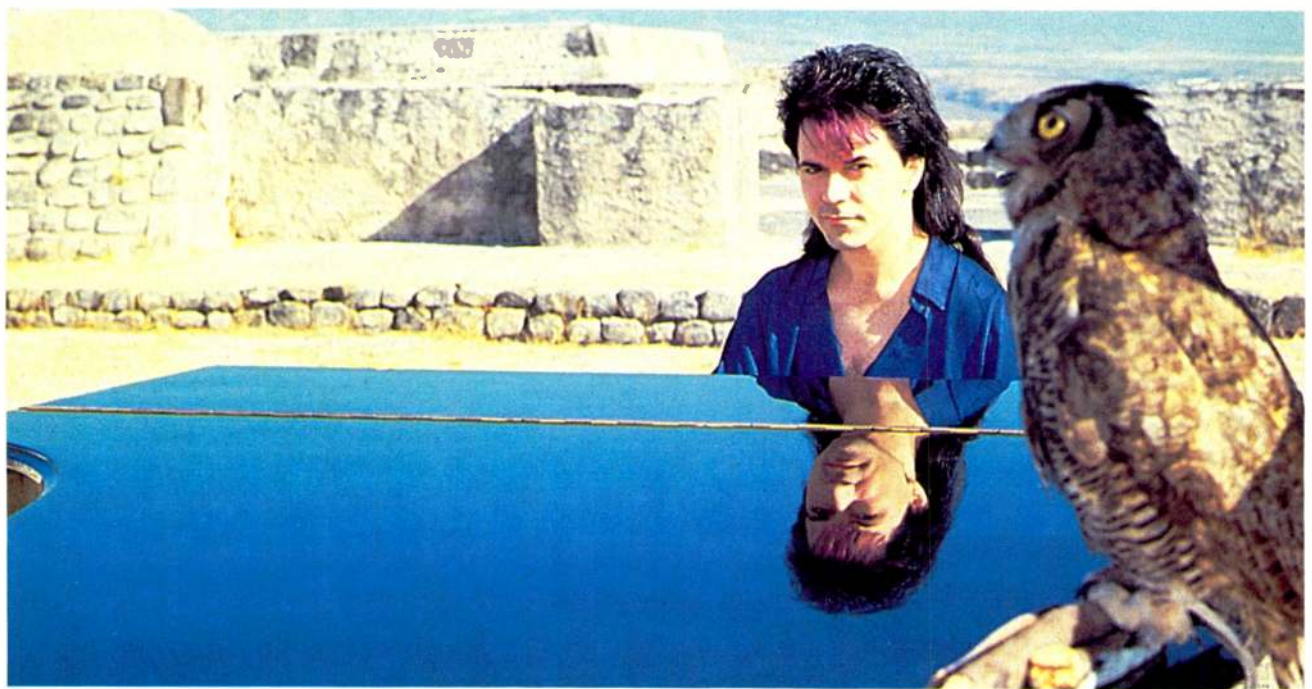
**F**or Larry Gowan, it was a thrill just to hear Jon Anderson say he liked "Moonlight Desires." But it was "unbelievable" to find himself in a Los Angeles studio with Anderson singing harmony on **his** song.





# GOWAN'S

## MOONLIGHT DESIRES COME TRUE



By Tim O'Connor

And during the session, Anderson remarked how similar their voices were. "We sing in the same range, almost the same timbre. We don't sound alike, but our voices blend well."

Gowan had an easy explanation. "I put it down to I've been singing with him for years - with my records at home," he says, laughing.

It wasn't that long ago that Gowan was at Maple Leaf Gardens, watching in awe as Anderson and Yes pulled off musical feats of skill. As a teenager, Gowan played cello, clarinet, classical piano and some power chords on an electric guitar. The combination of intricate classical progressions and rock dynamics made Gowan a big fan of the progressive rockers of the '70s such as the



Yesmen and Genesis. He dreamt about becoming as good a musician as Anderson or bassist Tony Levin.

But in the 1980s, these are the musicians who are playing on Gowan's own albums. "I've had a chance to work with my past heroes," Gowan says.

These players have provided the skill and experience that has helped make Gowan's last two albums - 1985 *Strange Animal* and the new *Great Dirty World* - world-class records. They enhanced Gowan's incredibly melodic songs; tunes tinged with progressive elements but concise enough and with enough modern hooks for the '80s.

*Strange Animal* vaulted Gowan into the top

ranks of Canadian stars. It spawned three hit singles, drew rave reviews and sold just under 300,000. Manager Ray Danniels is confident *Great Dirty World* will surpass *Strange Animal*, noting the new LP sold more than 50,000 copies within three weeks of its release in March.

His spunky personality and athletic live shows have certainly helped, but much of the credit for Gowan's success can be attributed to the high-powered Danniels, who also manages Rush, Spoons and Images in Vogue. After it signed him in 1982, CBS Records suggested he get Danniels as his manager even though Danniels is president of Anthem Entertainment Group, which includes SRO management and Anthem Records. Gowan signed with Danniels during production of this first

# GOWAN

album and consequently, Danniels didn't have much input into the record. The LP was cluttered, forced and it flopped miserably.

Things were done quite differently with *Strange Animal*. To take advantage of Gowan's mischievous good looks, he was hooked up with video producer Rob Quartly who worked on the innovative and animated video for "A Criminal Mind." Danniels and CBS also put on a lavish record launch during which Gowan's spirited performance won him many friends in the industry and created some boosters in the media. David Farrell, publisher of *The Record*, said it was one of the most successful launches he's ever seen.

But before all that, Danniels got some of Gowan's demos into the hands of producer David Tickle, who's also worked with Peter Gabriel, Split Enz and Red Ryder. Tickle was so impressed, he played the tapes for Levin and drummer Jerry Marotta. Tickle then phoned him from England: "My jaw dropped." Guitarist David Rhodes then climbed on the Gowan bandwagon and they recorded *Strange Animal* at Ringo Starr's studio in Tittenhurst Park, England.

Levin was the only player to return for *Great Dirty World*. Keyboardist Peter Robinson, who's played with Phil Collins and Brand X, helped flesh out Gowan's keyboard melodies with interesting sounds and new technology that Gowan says he doesn't have time to work on. Other players included

guitarist Gene Black, who co-wrote Rod Stewart's "Love Touch" Holly Knight, drummer Nigel Olsson (Elton John) and drummer Bob Brill (Berlin). Gowan's brother Terry, a member of the touring band, played Stick.

Danniels says that using the all-star talent isn't part of a strategy to lend more credibility to Gowan, or to have an impressive credits list on the album. "All these people have done it for the love of the music or their affection for the guy because we certainly don't have the budget to go out and hire these guys," Danniels says. "Larry's records are done on a realistic, typical record budget. They're on a fixed budget and these guys come in for, I think, union scale and that's it.... They sound like superstar records without a superstar budget. That's the intention."

Despite the polished sound and all-star lineups, Gowan remains unknown in the United States. Danniels says part of the problem is that Gowan doesn't rank high enough on CBS's list of priorities. "CBS has an enormous problem with non-American acts," Danniels asserts. "And I have an artist that's unique. He doesn't sound like your typical American record. That doesn't make it easy."

The lack of U.S. interest may lie in the predominantly English sound of Gowan's records. Instead of rocking out Byrds remakes or living in America, Gowan is from that British art rock school that has tried to expand the boundaries of pop. It's not egghead rock, but Gowan's themes are cerebral, probing the human psyche, our frailities and our fears.

It's not easily packaged for American consumption.

Asked if he made the new record in La-la land to gain an American edge, Gowan says: "I think that may have happened but it wasn't the motivation." He noted the main reason is that Tickle, Robinson and Black all live in L.A. and it was a lot cheaper for him to nip down there than to haul everybody to Richard Starkey's.

But, he did entertain the notion of heading back there. "I thought I could use the same cast as the last album and do it in England, but once you fall into a formula it gets dangerous. This (*Great Dirty World*) is a completely new thing - new songs, new haircut," he said, laughing and pulling at his purple-dyed bangs.

He says he doesn't concern himself with the marketing angles when it comes to recording locations or writing. "All that comes into it is: Is it a good piece of music?" he says. "I'm going to have to play 'Criminal Mind' for as long as my career runs and I'm not sick of it yet. And I probably won't be sick in years to come because it's not something I pandered, thinking maybe a specific audience might be able to relate to this song."

*Great Dirty World* isn't a radical departure from *Strange Animal*. Gowan has refined his melodies and tightened his arrangements, but he's added some kick-ass guitar. Both "Awake the Giant" and "60 Second Nightmare" display a harder edge than Gowan has shown before. "It was a bit of a reaction to

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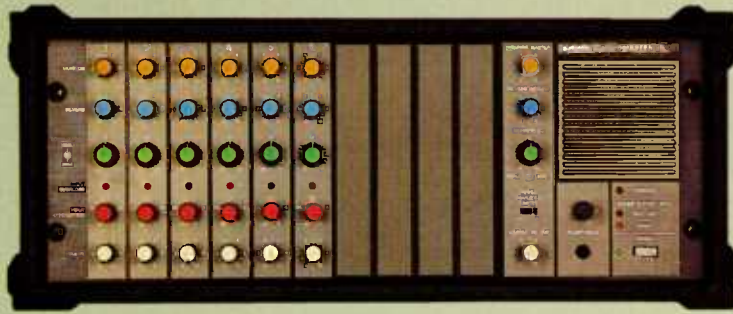
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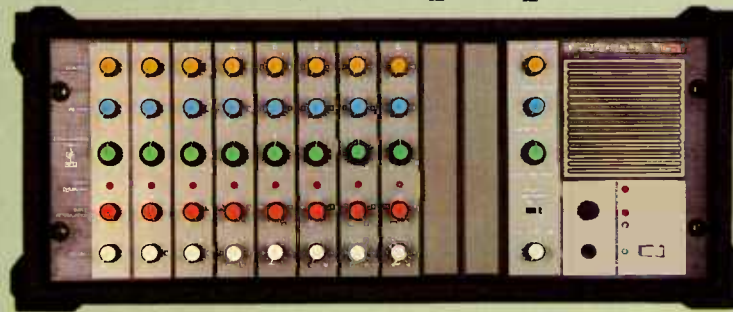
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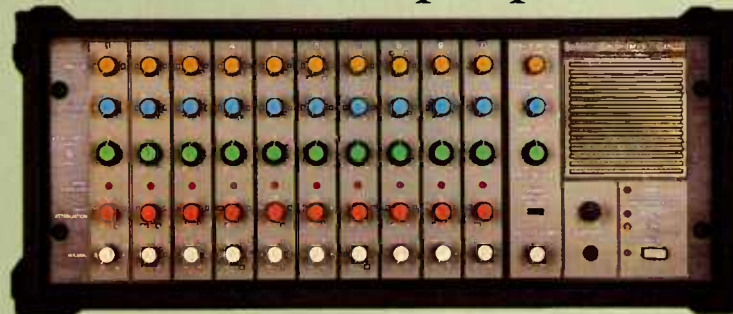
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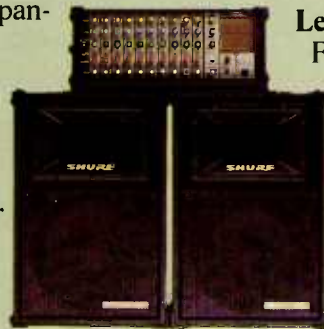
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## GOWAN

*Strange Animal*, which I thought was a powerful record in some ways, but after playing live I wanted to do something even a bit more powerful and a little grittier. Being near the end of the show, I wanted more muscular songs for the end of the show."

Along with Terry Gowan on Stick and bass, the other members of the band that toured across Canada this spring included drummer Phil Michael, keyboardist Peter Nunn and former Coney Hatch guitarist Steve Shelski. From Victoria to St. John's, the 24-date tour drew huge crowds of fans willing to part with up to \$20.00 to see a homegrown lad.

Terry says the members of the touring band pick up their parts from the records by ear, and with some coaching from Larry, they try to develop the same character in their playing as the big name players. "It's fun really," Terry enthuses in the same munchkin voice of his brother's. "Those players are just so great. It feels real good that Larry has enough confidence in you to play one of their parts."

Terry says he eventually adds his own variations on the parts and his brother encourages that. But he said it's no blow to his or the other players' egos that Larry goes outside his musical family for musicians to play on his albums. "There's no problem in that."

But if you're good enough to play live, aren't you good enough to play on the

albums? "No. Not at this point because there's so much you can learn from Tony Levin. I watched him do the bass parts on the record and I learned so much. The guy has so much more experience. My ambition is to some day be as good as Tony."

(Daniels says the touring band is "improving beyond belief," and he expects to see more of the band on the next record.)

Terry says Levin is a classic example of what sets a world-class musician apart from an average player. Many players can noodle all over the fretboard, but he says Levin "doesn't play with his hands. He plays with his heart and mind. His hands are just the tools."

In the studio, Larry says he sometimes hesitates to tell somebody like Levin what to do, "but you'd be surprised at how much gall I can get up in the studio.... It's different when you're working on your own songs and you want them done a certain way.

"They end up doing it the way they want to anyway, so you don't have to say to Tony Levin 'I wish you'd play it this way,' because he's playing it a way that I'd never have thought of and he's putting his personality in there."

Tickle's main contribution to the sessions is "organizing" the players and making the music sound good, Gowan says. Tickle isn't a catalyst, but an editor and an opinionated one at that, he says. "It's really good to have someone as opinionated as you are even though that leads to some friction, but I think

the best music comes out of an atmosphere where one person isn't getting it one way."

Gowan says Tickle tries to keep the spirit of his home demos, but they usually need pruning. Gowan says his main problem is writing long songs. "On some songs, it's really difficult. Then again, limitations are actually liberating because when you're limited to eight bars, you have to show how good you are in those eight bars. All the chaff is cut away and then you really find out if you've got something to say."

Despite the almost unlimited amount of studio technology available to him, Gowan says the only noteworthy addition to this record was Synclavier. "But it's not readily apparent," he said. "Nothing gets older than a new sound. Ugh. Everybody does it to death."

Similarly, he says Tickle didn't increase the amount of treatment on his voice in the studio. He uses digital delay for almost every vocal. Except for some reverb, he went natural for "Dedication" and "Living in the Golden Age".

Singers such as Peter Gabriel and Anderson used a minimum of studio gadgetry in their art rock days, a time when bands were trying to expand the boundaries of pop music. It's something Gowan is trying to do now. "In writing a rock song, what I think about is 'Is this a good place for rock to go.' I ask myself 'Is this expanding rock or is it formulated?'"

"There are definite parameters. You can't break the whole wall down but you can sign your name in it." □

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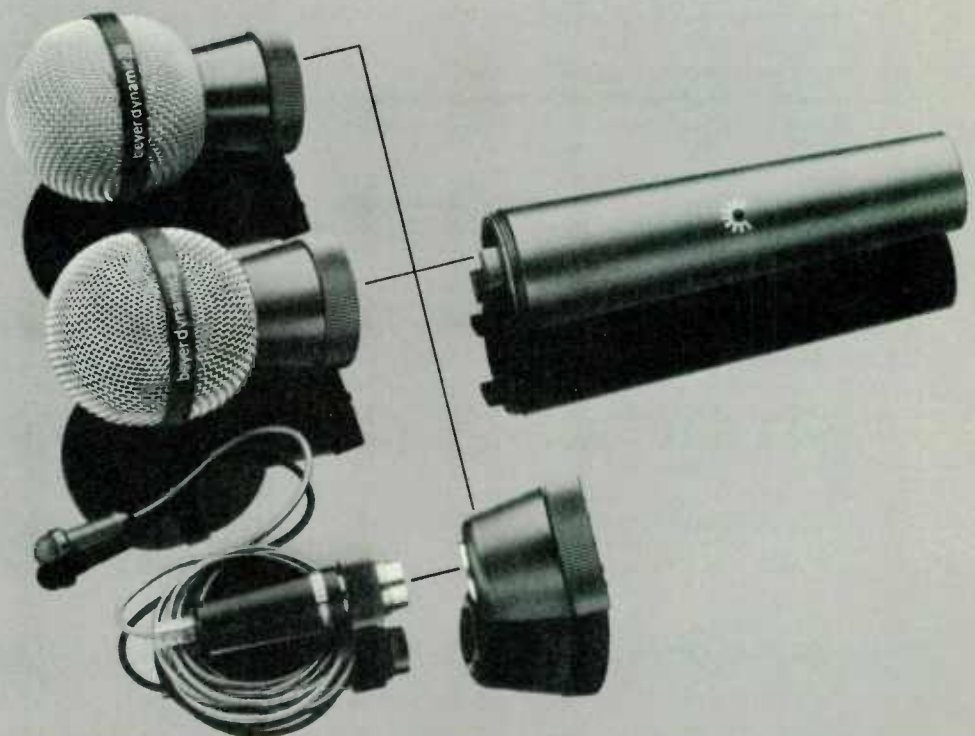
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# Exploiting The Overseas Markets

by Perry Stern

Traditionally the siren call that most Canadian musicians heed is the ringing and slamming of American cash registers. In mythology, as in life, most of those lured by the siren find themselves floundering along the unpredictably dangerous shoreline that makes the U.S. music market seem, at the same time, both inviting and lethal.

Breaking into the American market is generally considered the penultimate achievement of musicians around the world. It's so big, so diverse, so lucrative, so risky. Unfortunately for Canadians the lure of the U.S. is strongest here, not necessarily because of its proximity, but because the economic reality of trying to sustain and enlarge a career relying solely on the domestic market is limited at best. Certainly the prospect is appealing to most musicians keenly aware of the golden ring that seems so available to some, to stay on the seesaw of the Canadian scene when the American merry-go-round looms so large.

That's the strength of the siren. Her song drowns out the beckoning calls of more distant, less dangerous shores. Although Canadians don't seem frightened by the huge distance between the shores of our own country, we're intimidated by the expanse of water that separates us from the rest of the world. From those other two marketplaces for our talent: Europe and the Far East.

Though daunted by the difficulties in penetrating the language barriers, legal labyrinths, and cultural differences between the various pieces of the foreign (read: non-American) jigsaw puzzle, there are a number of Canadians who have not only succeeded in Europe and the Far East, but have flourished there.

Besides the huge followings of Rush and Bryan Adams, other, smaller lights have

brightened on distant shores. Lee Aaron's new lease on life was provided by Germany. The Parachute Club's reputation, dealt a crippling blow by their failure to crack the American market, is now being sustained by European enthusiasm. Images In Vogue were floating in a pre-signing limbo with only an Australian licencing deal supporting them before they were picked up by Anthem.

Besides financial and logistical problems, timing is a crucial factor in heading overseas. With classic North American conceit, people unable to accept critical and commercial rejection here see the European market as a haven, and the last resort, for the lunatic fringe of contemporary music. Considering the rarity of European (as opposed to British) acts entering the North American charts it is folly to assume that if your sound is similar to one of their acts that has made it here (the list is short with the treacly ABBA at the top and including Germany's Kraftwerk and Holland's A-ha) then you're likely to make it over there. As super-manager Bruce Allen concedes: "I don't see how we can sit here and understand what's happening in Munich and Paris."

While there are pitfalls to avoid and obstacles to hurdle when approaching the overseas market, there is also a well of other peoples' experiences to draw on for information and encouragement. Keep in mind, though, that everyone is a neophyte when entering a new market for the first time. No amount of

success in Canada or the U.S. will adequately prepare one for the inscrutability of the Japanese music business or the Machiavellian machinations of European booking agents. The thing to do, apparently, is hold your nose, dive into the water, and then tread water like hell to figure things out for yourself. But there are people who can wave to you from the shore. Gary Smith, bassist/keyboardist for Images In Vogue:

"It's probably best to start off with someone who approached the overseas market with the least experience, the fewest pre-concieved notions, and still came away with a profitable deal. Last year Smith, who takes responsibility for most of the band's business concerns, along with Images' since-dismissed manager, went to MIDEM in the hope of signing some licensing deals. MIDEM, which Smith characterizes as 'a zoo,' is the main trade show for music in Europe.

"The rights to our back catalogue of material (two EPs and an album, but for one song that had been released in France) reverted back to us when we left WEA," Smith explains as the backdrop to his trip. He put together a strong promotional package, including two cassettes of released and demo material, all their videos, and a poster, to pitch to various record companies. The first day was spent "sussing out" the show, wandering from booth to booth getting the lay of the land, making appointments to meet with people the next day.





"I was amazed," he recalls, "that most of the people didn't show up for their appointments the next day. Unfortunately it seems that most of the people, particularly the higher ups and the bigger labels go to MIDEM for the parties. Go to the bars at night and you'll see. They spend their days recovering from the night before. But, if you know the right people you can do more business at night at the bars than during the day at the show."

Knowing, or even merely recognizing the "right people" is only half the problem. Though many of them are unavailable during the day, Smith says they, "usually act offended if you give them your stuff," during a seemingly casual conversation at one of the nighttime bars. "You've got to be assertive," he advises, "and you have to know all the legalities of your situation. If they express an interest in you they often turn you over to one of their lawyers."

Once a label expresses a willingness to sign your band they immediately want to know who your manager is (if he's not there to begin with you've got a problem - a manager with a good reputation abroad is a huge asset), and what complications are involved with your publishing rights. In Images' case, they wanted to know if an override percentage existed in which they'd have to pay a token percentage of any deal to the band's former label.

On the strength of Images' package, ten

deals were secured at MIDEM but only two were seriously pursued and one was finally signed. The reason eight deals disintegrated was because Smith shrewdly did a financial check, through Dun and Bradstreet, on the stability and reputations of the companies involved. "Some of the deals were bad," he says, "but some of the companies were bad, too." Of the two good offers, one was finally refused (after the band signed with Ray Danniels) because of a clause that might have allowed the label to release licensed material whenever they pleased, regardless of new material released elsewhere. The signed deal, for releases in Australia and New Zealand, has already resulted in over 12,000 record sales and a profit for the band, "from record one." That's the joy of licensing: the cost of creating the product is being dealt with elsewhere (domestically), so if anyone else in the world takes a shine to you it's gravy.

(It should be noted that though Smith feels the approximately \$3,000 spent on the MIDEM trip was, "money well spent," it is unlikely that he'll return there personally with the band's upcoming release. "MIDEM is no longer relevant for me because we now have proper management.")

Wisely, Smith says there are no plans for an Images tour of Europe until their new album is released over there. Considering distances, overseas shipping costs of gear, the high expense of travel costs, including

hotels and gas (four to five times the Canadian price), touring is a very risky proposition. The rule of thumb is: only go in support of product, and with the support of your foreign label(s) and publishers.

Halls are generally smaller in Europe than in North America and an act that can make a good living playing to 4,000 people a night here will barely scrape by packing 2,000 seat halls over there - the cost of mounting a large show is essentially the same, but the return is substantially less. On the other hand, if you have a record to sell you can cover the shortfall of your tour expenses through increased record sales generated by your band's presence.

*Terry McBride, Nettwerk Productions:*

There are, of course, exceptional circumstances when a band is compelled to tour under less than optimum conditions. Last year Nettwerk's Skinny Puppy made a costly 28 date tour of Europe without a new record to support. Being well outside the confines of commercial music, Puppy felt it was necessary to take the risk of touring in order to develop interest in the band, particularly at a time when bands of the same ilk (the U.S.'s Ministry, England's Cabaret Voltaire, Belgium's Front 242) were making some headway in the indie charts.

This appears to be a risk that many new bands, unable to gain local interest, think is worth taking because their sound has a somewhat "European flavour." After mounting an



## Overseas Markets

expensive tour, they'll often find that flavour leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

Skinny Puppy went to Europe just prior to Capitol Record's taking on of the entire Nettwerk roster. Because of this the band was unable to negotiate any new deals abroad, and it also lost some of the enthusiasm of its one European label, Belgium's big independent, Play It Again, Sam. (Since then eight European countries have gotten online for the next Puppy release and a Nettwerk Europe office has been established.) In retrospect McBride says it's "almost impossible to say," if the tour was worth the \$30,000 to \$40,000 it cost.

Unfortunately the band got caught by one

of the traps of touring abroad. Because most tours are worked out through phone calls and telexes to European booking agents, it is necessary to put your trust (and wallet) in someone else's hands. While there are plenty of reputable agents and promoters, needless to say there are plenty more who aren't. Nettwerk's man ended up booking less shows for less money than he had originally promised. The tour budget, made in accordance with the theoretical income could never be covered by even the most optimistic gate receipts and, as previously stated, there was no new product to cover the shortfall. The tour was also poorly routed so that the band was constantly criss-crossing countries in a haphazard and exhausting way.

In the future Nettwerk won't have the

same problems. Recently McBride's partner, Mark Jowett, visited sixteen Capital offices in Europe paving the way for the new crop of Nettwerk releases. Even though company reps from North America pitch domestic releases abroad, McBride says, "You can't leave it up to them because you're only one of fifty releases that month so you only get 1/50th of the attention you want."

McBride also points out that your publishing deals, usually completely independent from any licensing arrangements whether you're with a multinational or an indie, can be a huge help while touring. Because the way a publisher makes money off you is by people buying and playing your records, and because your tour should generate more of both, it is in their best interest to help you along in any way possible. Often the publisher can turn you on to reputable agents, promoters and record companies, and often they will provide advances (recoupable, of course) to help you get overseas.

*Bruce Allen, manager, president of Bruce Allen Talent:*

Allen, whose reputation needs no explanation here, first learned the intricacies of overseas markets when he represented Bachman Turner Overdrive in the '70s. On the basis of that experience, he speaks with uncharacteristic modesty about how he deals with the foreign music scene.

"Though I managed BTO with some success in Europe, it was years later that I realized that you can't treat it like the American market," he says. Allen's key advice is to find trustworthy people at the record companies and publishing firms over there. "Most North American managers try to run Europe, but I don't see how we can sit here and understand what's happening in Munich or Paris. I've had to take a backseat," he says, but adds that the only time he overrode the advice of his European advisors was when they thought that Bryan Adams touring with Tina Turner a few years ago would be a mistake. They, needless to say, were wrong, but usually, Allen confides, they're not.

Allen prefers to sign a separate agency deal with a European agent so that he has, "someone right there, on my side, dealing with European promoters." It's the same in Japan where Allen has relied on the same agent, Mr. Udo (*Udo-san* to Allen), since 1974. "In Japan," he explains, "there is no such word as 'no'. I need someone to guide me through the marketplace."

When touring in Europe, Allen says the main thing is to recoup your touring shortfalls through record sales in the territory you're in. "Don't cross collateralize your royalties," he warns, "get them [assuming you're signed to a multi-national record company] to apportion the cost of the shortfall according to the size of the territory. For example Portugal should pay less than Germany for advances."

The decision to tour abroad shouldn't be made cavalierly. Allen says that one should only attempt it if the record companies have indicated that they're one hundred percent behind you, and even then you should think



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about it somemore. Breaking even in the end seems to be the main goal, it is unlikely that you'll turn a profit on the basis of ticket sales alone.

In Japan things are a little different. Unlike Europe, Allen describes Japanese concert fees as "decent" and he says that the label will generally cover all your external expenses (accomodations, travel). You just have to cover the cost of getting there, and then pay your salaries and per diems. Again, touring overseas isn't for making money, it's for promoting record sales.

**Bernie Finklestein, True North Records:**

Once you've signed your various deals it's likely you have some understanding of the various territories. Though Terry McBride says, "Europe seems a lot bigger than it really is," it is a mistake to think that a group of countries jammed together share the same tastes in music and performance. Bruce Cockburn has been touring Europe regularly since 1979 and he still is regarded differently in different countries. According to Finklestein, his manager, Cockburn is seen, "In the U.S. as an eccentric rocker; in Canada as a singer/songwriter; in Germany as an angry, socially concious, cutting edge rocker; in Italy as a primarily acoustical artist; and in the U.K. as a christian performer, like The Alarm or U2." This is why it's important to treat each territory individually.

Each country also has its own idiosyncracies. During one Italian tour Finklestein was dismayed to hear that two

days before a show, which was booked into a 2,000 seat hall, advance sales were only around three to four hundred tickets. On the basis of another hundred tickets being bought the day before the show the promoter moved the concert to a 6,000 seat venue. On the night of the show Cockburn, who prides himself on starting on time was advised that, "the people wouldn't respect him," if he wasn't at least an hour-and-a-half late. When he finally arrived, at 10:30 for his 9 o'clock show, he found an over-packed audience of 6,700.

**Al Mair, Attic Records:**

Returning to Japan for a moment, Al Mair, who's worked deals for The Nylons, Lee Aaron and Haywire (among others) in the Far East, explains some oriental idiosyncracies: "At a Japanese record company they have all these product managers, each representing a different aspect of the label. One for heavy metal, one for new age, one for soft dance music, one for pop, etc... Now you might take your act to the wrong guy (how are you to know which product manager is the one for you?), and even if the *right* guy is sitting at the next desk, he won't pass you on. You've got to rely on someone. I rely on my publisher, to guide your product to the right person. Then it might take up to six months to hear from them. They do things pretty slowly.

"In Japan 70% of the music is in Japanese so a foreign language hit doesn't guarantee excitement there. In Europe the language of

Pop is English so having a hit here first at least gets your foot in the door."

Mair also points out the local benefits of successfully scoring in an overseas market: "American record companies don't notice you unless you have a gold, or better still, a platinum record in Canada. They still believe that Canadian content rules guarantee the success of a domestic act. They don't pay much attention to the Japanese market either, but if you make it in England or Europe, they'll notice."

For an upstart band it is still relatively simple to book the odd American tour and then come home to lick your wounds. While you might be able to dip your toes into the U.S. pool every now and again, it's necessary to dive headfirst into the deep end if you're going overseas.

Unfortunately this means that if you haven't generated at least a modicum of success and interest on the domestic scene, it's unlikely that you'll do differently abroad. It's one thing to look for a new audience if you've saturated yourself on the homefront, but it's another to risk your career on an ill-concieved notion that a more "sophisticated" foreign market will accept something that you can't even sell in your own language.

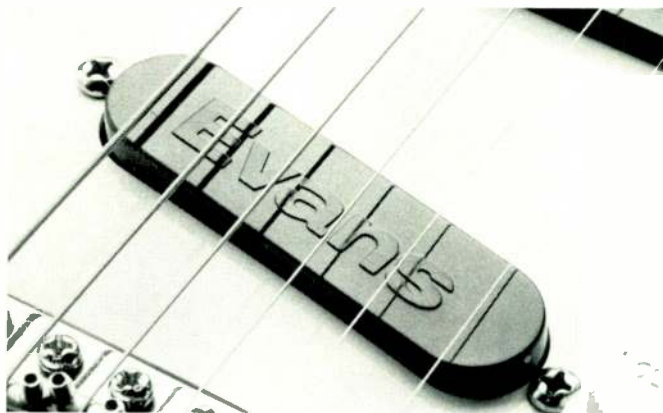
If you do score over there, you're pretty well set for the duration of your career. Citing the still flourishing careers in Europe of geriatric rockers from the fifties and sixties, Bruce Allen points out that the people there, "will stay with you forever. European fans are a lot less fickle than fans over here." □



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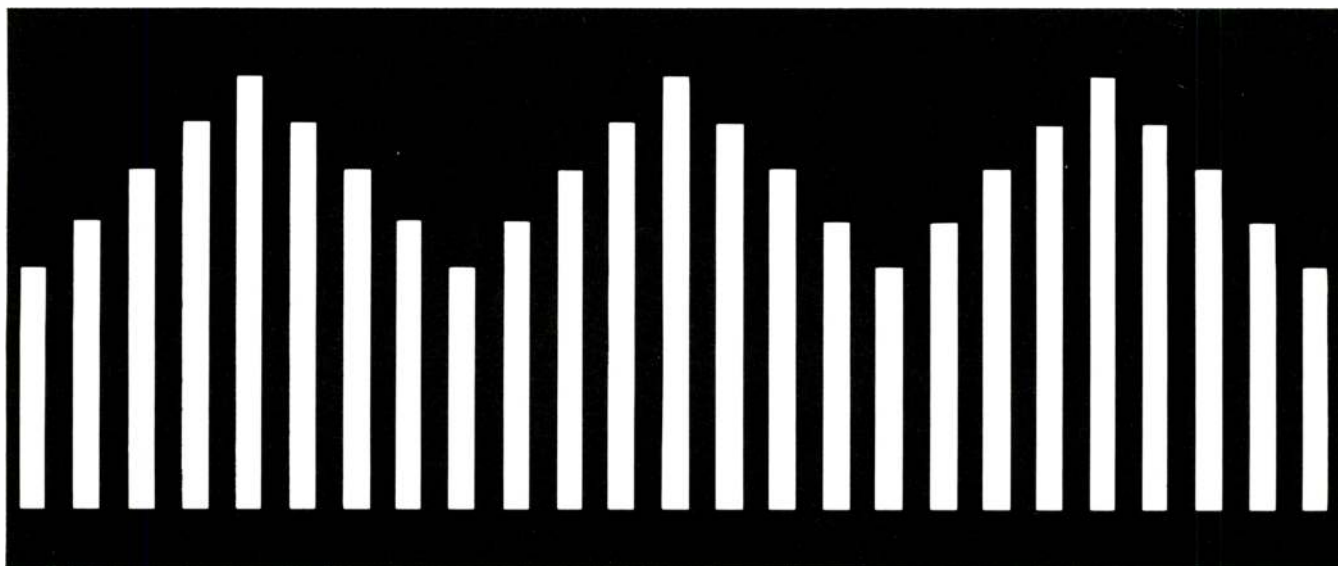
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# FOCUS ON RECORDING

By Benjamin Russell



## What Goes Into A Studio?

It can seem like a black art, practiced in dimly lit settings - windowless rooms - silent as the tomb until the ritual begins. The participants enter, flickering LEDs hypnotically start to blink and surge in time to music while nimble fingered wizards bend over vast arrays of buttons, switches and displays controlling the proceedings.

Sound familiar? It should if you've ever done some recording. From the most humble home set-up to the largest professional facility, the scene is repeated daily, around the clock. We're going to delve into the magic and try to make some sense out of it all. Abracadabra! . . .

First, let's have a look at what a studio actually is, what goes into it, the essential ingredients. Number one on the list is some

sort of a machine to record performances whether analog or digital. Second, you need to have some kind of a mixer if you intend to blend numerous tracks, instruments, voices, etc. You'll need a microphone. You'll need monitor speakers and/or headphones to be able to hear what's going on, and some sort of amplification system to boost signals to an audible level. Let's not forget the musicians, and someone to operate our studio. These are the essentials, but that's barely scratching the surface.

Most recordists would tell you they couldn't survive without some of the spices, signal processing. In order to capture wildly dynamic performances, compressors are used to keep level under control. Equalizers (glorified tone controls) are usually built into

mixing desks but there are whole schools of thought as to which external EQ to use: parametric, graphic, tube or solid state, etc. Almost everybody would agree that you need a reverb unit (at least one) to bring your mixes alive. There are several types: spring, plate, actual rooms with a speaker and microphone for real reverberation, but the most popular today is digital, partly because of cost (they're available quite cheaply) and partly because you can have a lot of choice as to apparent room size, shape and acoustic properties. Next on the list would be delay lines. Again, there are digital and analog versions and many people still use a tape machine, recording on one head and playing back on the other to give a delay. Useful for making echoes, chorusing and flanging

effects, delay units are found in most studios. Further effects units range from noise gates to exciters to the full range of guitar distortion pedals and so on, not to mention a myriad of items such as direct boxes to match signal levels and impedances. Something else which is super obvious but is easy to overlook is cables. The wiring between mics/instruments, consoles, recorders, effects, etc. is of crucial importance in getting clean sound. It's easy to take for granted and some people say it's not that important, but others will tell you their sound improved immeasurably once they installed good quality cabling in their set-ups.

More and more, modern studios are growing to include computer interfaces, samplers, synchronizers, sequencers, etc. For the average rock'n'roller, these things are less important, but if you're involved in film/video post production, or most forms of pop music, some level of electronics has certainly entered or will enter your recording life. A tremendous boon to songwriters and composers, a combi-

nation of analog tape machine, MIDI sequencer, synth/sampler and drum machine, makes for an unequaled tool for creativity. If Beethoven and the boys were alive today, we know what they'd have in their basement!

Let's talk digital for a minute. When it comes to recorders right now, your choices are limited. Unless you have a lot of money, you can forget about multi-track. While relatively inexpensive stereo digital recorders are available, usually in the form of VHS or Beta video machines with a suitable interface, multi-tracks are very pricey items. Over the immediate horizon, the DAT format holds some promise for recordists, but it will probably still be a few years before we see home digital multi-tracks become a reality. Meanwhile, makers of analog machines keep making them better and better to meet the digital challenge. At the top end, there's a lot of controversy over what sounds better and only you can be the final judge.

As far as mixers are concerned, nearly all

have analog circuitry to which manufacturers are increasingly adding microprocessors for control of muting, signal routing, etc. On the horizon we can see totally digital concepts looming, but they won't be here for a while. Even more than digital recorders, digital mixers could change the way the process works so that recording as we know it today would become an anachronism. Picture a computer with a digital interface - no knobs, faders, or switches. EQ, levels, pan, signal routing all depicted on the computer screen. This would be totally automated, of course, for pin point accuracy in mixdowns that you could leave and come back to a month later with everything exactly as you left it, your settings saved on a disk. No pipe dream, systems like this are being developed right now. Combined with digital recording, the boundaries between recording, signal processing, sampling and synthesis become blurred to the point where you can't tell where one leaves off and the other begins. Let's just hope they remember to make it friendly enough to operate that we musicians can use the stuff to make music!

## How To Choose A Studio

**O**K, so you've got your tune written and you want to get it down on tape. Where do you go? Good question, but the answer's not that easy. There are some other questions which must be answered first. What do you plan to do with the song(s) once they're recorded? Do you want a finished master, ready to press into vinyl (or compact disc), or do you merely want a professional presentation for a music publisher to hear your music? How many tracks will you need? What's your budget?

The range of studios available is as extensive as the needs which they seek to fulfill. At the upper end you have mega-track facilities armed to the teeth with outboard gear, automated consoles and custom designed and tuned rooms. A number of these studios offer secluded locations where you can work uninterrupted by the distractions of the city including hotel-like accommodations with maid service and private chefs to cater to

your needs. At the lower end, assuming you don't have such facilities of your own, maybe a friend has a small 4-track cassette mixer/recorder and a couple of mics and effects. Between the extremes there are home and commercial 8 and 16-track studios with more or less in the way of consoles, outboard gear and MIDI capability.

Obviously, if you're planning to record a whole orchestra simultaneously you'll have to choose a studio with a large recording room. On the other hand, if your project is largely electronic, a place with a large control room, lots of MIDI gear, and a small vocal booth might serve your purposes better. If your idea is to have a simple demo to show your band mates how the song should go, perhaps you should invest in a small set-up you can continue to use rather than having the money go out the window on one session in someone else's studio.

If your project is visually oriented, make

sure the studio you choose has SMPTE interlock and video monitoring facilities. It helps to work in a place that's familiar with the concepts. This applies in the case of all sync applications - if you try to work with an engineer in a studio where they don't understand such things, it can slow you down a great deal having to explain how to lay a tone on tape and so on. (You would expect, of course, every professional studio to know about such things, but a surprising number don't.)

Be sure to visit studios you're considering and don't be afraid to ask questions as to what gear they have, the qualifications of the engineers, and so on. Make them play you some of the stuff they've done lately. Most importantly, make sure you're going to feel comfortable with the engineer as he can make or break the final product and if he's not interested or too technically oriented, it can really throw you off.

## Up Close With The Majors

by Rob Poretti



### LITTLE MOUNTAIN

**L**ittle Mountain Studios in Vancouver, little known to most people, have been around for over 15 years. Solely owned by Bob Brooks for the last four years and as a partnership for 15, Little Mountain is best known for major record projects especially in the rock category.

The past four years have been immensely successful both in terms of the quantity of business as well as the quality projects of the "world class" magnitude. "It has been incredibly and wonderfully busy," says studio manager Alison Glass. "Jingles and film scoring during the day and record projects in the evening. It's been amazing."

Alison maintains that the meat and pota-

toes is still commercial music. The past year saw a definite increase in film work, with highlights such as feature films "Platoon" and "Salvator" and TV soundtracks "I'll Take Manhattan" and "The Alamo." With a long list of TV and radio commercials as well, it's easy to see how Little Mountain Sound is as busy as it is. If that weren't enough, it seems that these people rock around the clock! Recent projects include albums by Loverboy,

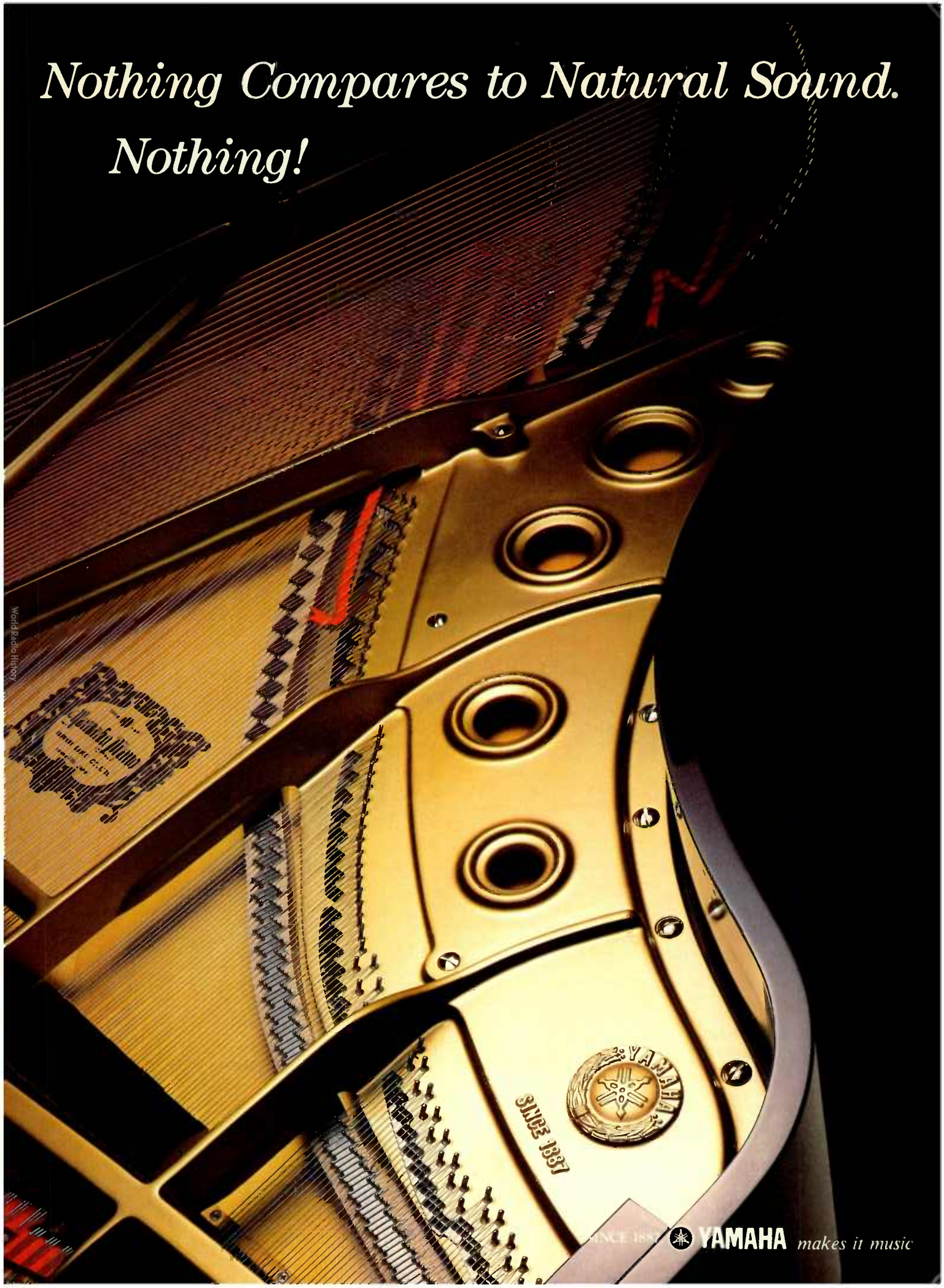
Bon Jovi and Aerosmith. Bruce Fairbairn literally moved in for the last six months as he produced all three acts with engineering from Bob Rock (freelance), and Mike Fraser. Seems like all three groups were quite happy; Bon Jovi has already booked studio time for their next album, with the likelihood of Aerosmith doing the same.

State-of-the-art equipment and talented personnel are doing wonders at this quickly expanding business. "We have three studio operations. Studio A has an SSL 4048 with two 24 track Studers. Studio B is 24 track Neve and Studio C is 8 track Neve. We also have 4 Sony DASH (Digital Audio Stationary Heads) tapes recorders." Digital mixdown seems to be the norm at Little Mountain



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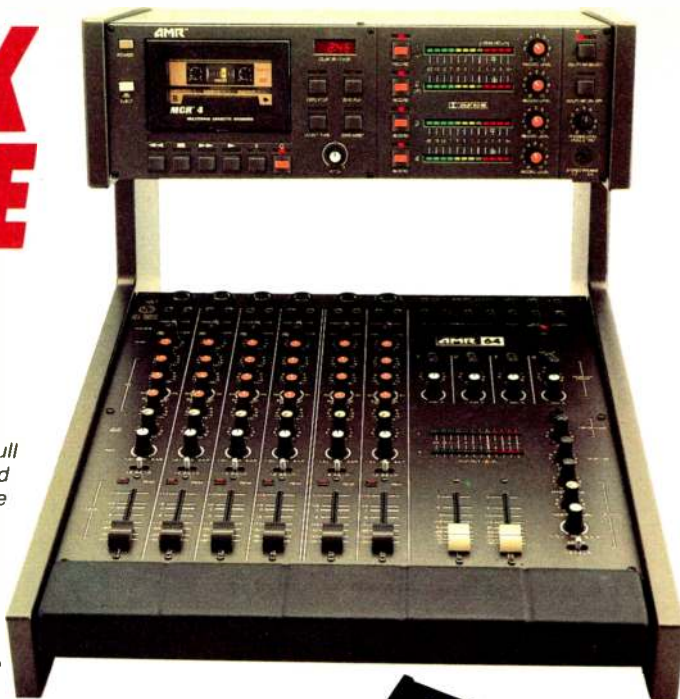


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offering both the DASH format as well as Sony's PCM 1630 3/4" video format. Digital multitrack is also just around the corner. "We aren't digital multitrack yet. We're waiting for Studer's digital machine." That sounds like a commitment to quality.

And of course staying on top means being current with all the latest technology. Engineer Roger Monk, in conjunction with Little Mountain, have just purchased an AMS audiofile hard disc recording and editing system. They are just now using the system for both audio post production and record projects.

#### MANTA SOUND

Manta Sound, in Toronto opened its doors in November of 1971 and from day one has been one of Canada's leading recording studios. It started as a one room facility with a smaller overdub studio and by 1979 had three world class studios within its confines. Today, Manta is a five studio complex, all state-of-the-art and all very, very busy. Nineteen-eighty-six was a significant year in that Manta became involved in digital multitrack recording in a big way. With the purchase of two Mitsubishi 32 track recorders (and a third being constantly rented), it became obvious that digital multitrack had hit downtown Toronto. This year nearly every major record and TV project was realized on a Mitsubishi digital leap, "The number one reason was sonic quality. The biggest problem was getting away from analog tape." The Mitsubishi system was the system of choice with the major benefit the extra 8 tracks over the Sony multitrack. "In a jingle session it's impractical because of time constraints to lock up two 24 track tape machines, so having those extra eight tracks is a real benefit for jingles." The clients are happy with the digital changeover and of course the engineers are all smiles.

Work done at Manta covers all commercial work and audio post production. Business seems to be equally divided between music scoring for film, television, advertising and the record industry. The client list is impressive and includes the CBC, CTV, and most of the large advertising /production agencies in Toronto.

Music recording and record production



The Box

play a very important role at Manta. Andrew Hermant (President, owner and one time head engineer of Manta) recognized this and launched his label Duke Street Records. Manta is the home of this well-know independent label and boasts artists such as Jane Siberry and Hugh Marsh. (Hugh Marsh just finished his second album with Duke Street with guest appearances by Lisa Dal Bello and Robert Palmer.) Other recent record projects included Chalk Circle, FM, Jane Siberry's new album and a live 32 track digital remote for Manteca.

Manta Sound is currently paving the way for digital recording in Canada, especially with the latest installation of an AMS Audiofile in Studio 5. This unit features hard disc based digital recording, (versus recording on magnetic tape), with instant access to large amounts of sound data via a very sophisticated computer editing system. There are only a handful of Audiofiles in the world and they represent the very latest in high tech computer/audio products.

#### MCLEAR PLACE

McClear Place is probably the oldest surviving recording studio in Canada. RCA bought the original building back in the '50s from CHUM radio, and was used as a recording and mastering facility for the record company, until it was sold in 1979. Hence McClear Place was born. An original staff of

four has grown into a 20 person operation boasting four 24 track studios, each with its own 3/4" video/audio synchronization system.

The state-of-the-art studios are complemented with complete mastering/production rooms, including disc lacquering, tape mastering, and compact disc mastering. Canada's first digital editing suite resides here, and along with that fame, the first CD mastering room. The list of clients include virtually every major record label in Canada. Credits for film, TV and jingles seems endless, and the artist roster impressive. These people are obviously busy!

Since the addition of two studios in 1986 (including one outfitted with an SSL 6000E), McClear has never been the same. During the same period, two of Canada's premier recording engineers moved in: Hayward Parrott, who received a Juno for best engineer in 1986; and Mike Jones, who amongst other things, has worked on the last couple of Parachute Club albums as both engineer and co-producer. State-of-the-art talent is definitely part of the success story.

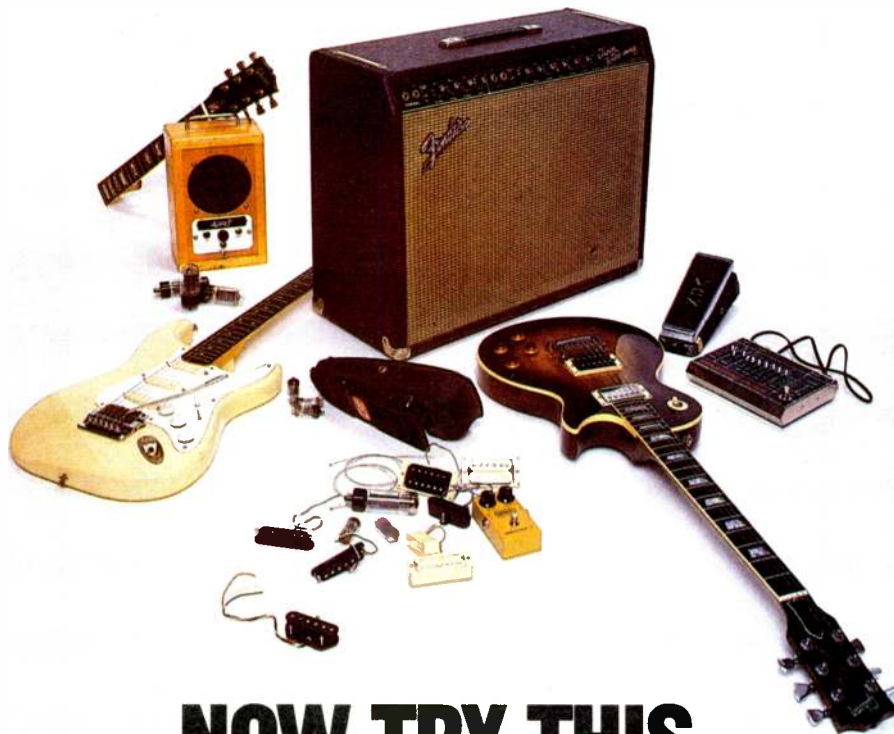
Busy is an understatement. It's not uncommon to see nine jingles booked in one day. Then the record projects start in the evening! Yet with all the commercial music that's done here the focus is still on the music. "We're a music studio. We do a little bit of everything here," states owner Bob Richards. "Film scores, records, ads, TV weeklies, and music varieties...we've definitely seen an increase in record projects." Recent record project clients include Rush, Blue Rodeo, Images in Vogue, Nylons, Parachute Club, The Box and Frank Mills.

Generally speaking, there has been an increase in every field, especially audio post for video. The SSL automated stereo video system certainly helps in this department. Present projects include the TV series *Adderley*, and a 48 week special for the CBC, *Glenn Gould*. However, Bob still puts the emphasis on the music. "We fully support the record music industry. No one else in Canada has record lacquering, tape mastering and CD mastering facilities all under one roof." Not even close. And along with three world class studios, a project has the potential to go from microphone to cassette, record or CD all in the same building.



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# Tchukon In Morin Heights

How do you follow up a performance that dazzles 4 million television viewers, wins you \$100,000 U.S., and puts you firmly on the spot? *Star Search* has been the beginning and end of the careers of many of its winners and Montreal pop/funk band Tchukon had to walk carefully through the minefield which accompanies success when they took top prize in the famous competition. 'Here and Now', their new album on the Aquarius label, distributed by Capitol in Canada, shows they've succeeded where others have failed - nurturing their original vision to fruition while making their first album. We went to Morin Heights to check their progress while they were in session at Le Studio.

We found the band hard at work, crackling with an aura of creative tension, maintained in a kind of concentrated calm, almost as if everyone was in a trance. For band members Kat Dyson (singer/guitarist), Slim Williams (singer/keyboardist), Harold Fisher (bass), Eric Roberts (drums), Ingrid Stitt (sax), and engineer David Bottrill, a heightened state of music was the order of the day. We noticed the lack of a producer - who was in charge, we asked? The band, we were told. Huh? That's not how it's supposed to be when a group is making their first album... is it?

Kat: "We recorded 'Fatal Attraction' (the lead-off single) will Bill Meyers producing, engineered by Bob Brown. That was right after we won *Star Search*. Then they went back to L.A. but Bob returned to co-produce 'Live Inside Your Heart', 'Break Down The Walls', 'Let's Talk', and 'Loosen Up'. Bill's a hot producer and Bob's worked with Gladys Knight and the S.O.S. Band, Jim Jam and Terry Lewis, Janet Jackson, and a lot of L.A. bands. We convinced the record company to let us produce the rest of the album ourselves, engineered by David Bottrill who works with Peter Gabriel in Bath, England. We met him once, the vibe was right, so we invited him to come work on the sessions.

"A lot of people find it kind of amazing that we could go in and produce and co-produce - it's five people and they thought it would be an impossibility but we've proven that it's not. We each have our line of expertise and when you meld it together it makes a whole lot of sense. Something that I might miss from a drum perspective, the drummer's gonna pick up. Something that the bass player may overlook as a vocal nuance, I'm gonna pick up, you know what I mean? There was a lot of giving and taking and sensitivity about the music going on. I think everybody tried to remove themselves from their instrument and you try to listen to it like a listener and like a self-critic. 'Ok, the part I'm playing - can I live with that, do I wanna hear that, am I proud of that?'"

Is it in perspective with the group? Is it really complementing what's there or should



Members of Tchukon at Morin Heights with synclavier expert, Michel Lesperance (far right)

I edit it? Did I overplay, should I pull parts out of it?' Everybody kind of did that honestly and it worked out that way even when somebody else said well, 'Hey, that's too much there.' If you have conflict with the vocals, rather than getting all huffy and puffy about it it was like, 'Yeah, you're right.' It wasn't a whole lot of difficulty."

The band, formed in 1978, has been together as more or less the same unit since that time (except for Ingrid who joined relatively recently). All the members are excellent players who have been on countless sessions as sidemen/women for other artists, working with various producers. Slim told us, "Basically we formed the group to put people together who were on the same level, the same vibe, who wanted to do original music. I guess to maintain the relationship for this long is kind of a milestone."

We asked if their professional backgrounds helped them in the production side of things. Kat: "Yeah, you kinda know what to do and not to do. All we have to do is listen back. You also need technical people that you really trust, who really know their stuff and we've been lucky, we've had two really good guys."

"We got together all the records that we'd done before with other people, produced by other folks. A lot of them were producers but not producers who knew what they wanted and didn't know. We listened to their stuff that we played on and then played the stuff on our album. You really get a chance to gauge your growth when you do that. You see how you were when you did your first sessions with other people and how you just wanted to get out there and do. You think about the situation of the recording - whether it was a good producer or a mediocre producer - somebody who knew what they

wanted or somebody who really didn't, somebody who gave you free reign to do something, which projects you were really creative on, which ones you were just hired to play a part on. All this as opposed to a project that was just completely and totally given to us. It's growth, you know!"

The band's original approach carried through when they were laying down tracks. Recording an album these days, even when it's a band, as opposed to a solo artist, it's rare to see a whole group in the studio laying down tracks all at once, but that's the way tunes such as "Camille" were done. Usually, technology being what it is, a click track will be layed down and the band goes in in ones and twos to put down their parts. Here, Tchukon were really bucking the system. As we were told, the music comes first, then technology. Not to say sequencers, synths, samplers and timecode were foreign to the *Here And Now* sessions, it's just that the band refused to be bullied by the machines.

Slim: "What music's about is the feeling. It's not the technology. But we've been having a ball lately because we've been using the technology and mixing it in with the Tchukon feel. We've been using a computer in different ways as to bring up the band feel. By playing into the computer on a live feel and not quantizing it, we've been able to get closer to the tune and keep that feel even in a technical way. When we play it back, we experiment with different sounds." With this philosophy in mind, we were better able to understand seeing Harold playing the bass line to 'Principal of Emotion' by hand on a DX100 when anybody else would probably have sequenced it using the Synclavier system in the next room.

Benjamin Russell





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World Radio History



## Home Studio - A Living Entity

by Benjamin Russell

A studio is a growing thing, almost a living entity. Its parts change, its organs and outward appearances vary over time. As I write, my studio has a certain capacity, takes a certain amount of space and so on, but it will almost certainly be different by the time you read this: perhaps I'll have bought a new piece and sold two older ones I no longer need. Ask anyone with a home studio and they'll tell you the same thing.

When I first set up I had a 4-track cassette (Tascam 144) and some sundry guitar pedals. My reverb unit was my guitar amp. Currently I have a Fostex 8-track which I use in conjunction with an Atari ST computer and the Steinberg Research Pro-24 sequencing software. Previously I was forced to use FSK synchronization to connect sequencer with tape machine which meant I always had to start at the beginning of the tune even if all I wanted to do was to fix a small mistake at the end of the track. Now I've bought a Synhance MTS-1 MIDI synchronizer and it's increased my productivity immensely since it can chase lock anywhere in the song.

Obviously, the studio is based around



**Benjamin Russell**

MIDI. I use various synths and samplers to play parts live to the final two-track mixdown. My usual procedure now is to structure the song, lay down a sync track, put own a pad to sing with, do the vocals, and then start figuring out exactly what rhythms, chords and sounds will best suit the song. I like doing it that way because you're not locked into any-

thing and you can change stuff at the last minute. I used to find that I'd figure out parts and become real attached to them then when I put down the vocal, they would often conflict and I'd have to start again.

When you work this way, with a lot of stuff going live to the mix, you need less tape tracks, but your board has to be bigger to accommodate all the effects, instruments, and tape tracks. Lately I've been using a Soundtracs PC16 console with MIDI mutes and I've been ecstatic with the results. You also need to have tons of outboard gear because you won't be able to lay effects on tape, so I've got a rather large complement: Alesis reverbs, Ibanez and Korg delays, as well as a real beauty, the Klark-Teknik DN780 digital reverb/effects processor. For compression, I use dbx. My home stereo acts as my amplifier and I monitor on TOA and Radio Shack speakers. Microphones are Crown, Shure, and Audio-Technica. I mix down to Sony reel-to-reel and Sansui and Marantz cassette machines.

While I had the nerve to press an independent single from my first recordings back in 1981, my home studio is strictly used for pre-production now.

## Kat Dyson's Home Studio

Like many professional musicians, songwriter, singer/guitarist with Montreal band, Tchukon, Kat Dyson has a room in her home dedicated to recording music. A musician's musician, she works with just the essentials to get her ideas down on tape.

"I use Yamaha guitars and amps, a Roland 707 drum machine, the Audio Technica four-track cassette machine, and Audio Technica mics, an SPX90, and a DX100 synthesizer. It's not a very heavy synth, and I'm not really a synthesizer player, but it's good to put down basic ideas, and it's got all the sounds in it that I need. I also use the Yamaha percussion module, the 21L, from time to time. I have the Boss digital delay, one of the small pedal ones. I also have an Ibanez UE300 - it has an analog delay, stereo chorus, and a tube screamer. I use it for guitars, basses, and sometimes I run synthesizers through it to try and get weird textures. I mix down to an Aiwa cassette machine."

"To do a song, I'll usually work on the idea with voice and guitar first and then do the drum programming. Usually I'll do a little preliminary thing just with a hand recorder to get the structure in my mind. Then I build it from the drum track, try to find either a good synth bass sound, play bass myself, or get a friend or somebody to come over. Then I'll put a rough vocal and start to put guitars on and add synthesizer parts."

"I try not to do a lot of bouncing, but I do some Maybe I'll put a maximum of two keyboard parts, guitar part, bass part and drums



and I'll have the keyboard parts bounced together. Usually the bass and drums and guitar I don't like to bounce - it's easier with synthesizer stuff. It just comes out cleaner for me rather than to do that to the bass and squash it all up. Then I'll do a mix onto a cassette then take that mix and put it onto another tape and lay vocals down. Sometimes I'll do a couple of different versions until I get it right. When it's finished, I'll take it to the band or, since I write for other people too, I

take it to them. I try to make it audible enough to be listened to by people who say they only want to hear 24-track demos.

"I'm not into synchronization and all that now, but I know I'm gonna have to be in the future. I'm getting a QX5 just to have something simple to learn. I'm trying to learn more about MIDI and what it can do. Even though I have fun just putting things down the way I have been, I think it will help expedite things a little."

# David Foster



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## Stan Meissner's 24 Track Home Studio

**S**ongwriting/recording artist Stan Meissner has one of the more impressive home studios we've come across. Twenty-four tracks in your basement ain't bad. We asked him to tell us about it.

"I have an MCI 24-track and an MCI 2-track, a Tascam Model 35 board which isn't the greatest but it's been customized and it's 32 channel. I've got JBL, Yamaha, and Auratone monitors, Lexicon PCM60 and Yamaha SPX90 reverb units, a Lexicon Prime Time delay and another Roland delay, miscellaneous Kepexes, graphic EQs, and that kind of stuff. I've got dbx compression. I've got all kinds of microphones: Neumann, AKG 414 (which I use a lot), AKG 452s, Sennheiser 421s, a bunch of '57s, '58s, Shure SM81s - I have lots of mics.

"I have a Ludwig drum kit that's part of the studio. I'm a guitar player mainly, so I have a selection of amplifiers. I've got miscellaneous keyboards, a Jupiter 6, and I've got a Commodore computer with the Syntech software that I'm using. I use a lot of MIDI stuff. I have a DMX that I've had MIDI'd which is incredible. The one thing it doesn't deal with is dynamics, but the MIDI note numbers are assignable, and it sends out MIDI clock. I don't use its internal sounds anymore - I just program with it and it fires drum sounds on my S900 sampler. It also acts as my sync to tape unit (the MIDI version outputs sync while it's cinched to tape)."



"I find I don't use much of my MIDI stuff live to the mix. I generally like to have the stuff on tape because I like to process it and I tend to record lots of things and bounce it together."

"The studio is in 2 rooms in the basement of my house. The control room is pretty small and the recording room is about 3 times the size. There's a window between them. This is the third house I've had a studio in and I kind of just like to work with the house as opposed to rebuilding it. At a point, I imagine I will go a little more commercial and actually get a designed room, but that will be a couple of major, major hit records down the road. Whatever I can get my hands on, money-wise, just tends to go into equipment. I can't play on a renovation!"

"I've literally gone through everything - two-track, four-track, eight-track, 16-track, and 24-track. I didn't jump over any one of those increments. Each step along the way was a necessary one for me. You get a lot out of each step. If you just started from scratch with a 16-track, you wouldn't have the same imagination for it as if you had to struggle with a 4-track to get a lot of overdubs out of it."

## Financing Your Studio

**Y**ou know what you want, you've got your eye on the recorder, board, and peripherals that would suit your purposes. What do you do now? If you're rich you're all set. Otherwise, you have to plan carefully and make arrangements.

These days it's not too hard to finance a simple home set-up (it's even easier if you have a day job!) since the cost of cassette recorder/mixers is really quite affordable. Kat Dyson told us she put her set-up together on her own funds, leasing the recorder from Steve's. However, if you're aiming at something more substantial, it's doubtful if you'll be able to just pull the cash out of your pocket. Putting my home studio together has been like a black hole in my bank account over several years. Partly paid for by record advances and song royalties, it has never been rented out to pay for itself and the bulk of it has been financed by income from other sources (when they pay me for this article, you know where the money will go!).

Stan Meisner has had help from his record company, and he also makes his studio earn its keep. "On my first album with A&M, I worked out an arrangement with them where part of the budget would go to upgrading my 16-track machine to 24-track because I going to be doing a lot of the recording at home. I end up doing about 50% of the work

in the studio myself and the rest is outside regular work around town. That's how I finance it mostly. A big part of the advances I've made, equipment-wise have been from working on a project for a month or two, doing sessions and whatever I don't need to live on goes to new gear. Having a recording studio, savings are something you don't have!"

If you were to look into the books of the big studios, many if not all of them don't own the big consoles and recorders outright. Leasing arrangements, either with the manufacturers or their agents and dealers are the rule of thumb. When you're talking sophisticated gear that costs mega bucks and is likely to be outdated in a very few years, it's intelligent for the studio not to be locked into anything. When tax advantages are taken into consideration, leasing makes sense for studios. If you have ambitions to own your own 24-track and you have yourself registered as a company, check into leasing.

Another possibility for at least partially financing your big move up might be to make some sort of deal with the seller of the gear to be a kind of partner in the studio, taking a share of the profits in exchange for smaller lease payments or whatever.

*Benjamin Russell*

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FOCUS ON RECORDING

# The Future

Something we should all realize is that we're living in the future right now. Not so long ago the kinds of choices and options we have today were unheard of. To get a basic 16-track recorder even 10 years ago, it would have cost you at least \$20-30,000. Today in the neighbourhood of \$6,000, you can pick up a Fostex 16-track. Home cassette 4-tracks are a recent phenomenon. Digital recorders, reverbs, delays and the like were gleams in the eyes of the engineers only a few short years ago. To top it off, the whole thing with MIDI and computers, samplers and so on is very new, as are digital synthesizers. Increasingly, these things are being seen as a normal part of the studio.

We've touched on the idea of digital mixers. When that concept becomes practical reality we're going to see a whole new revolution. Already with digital recorders you can make pinpoint splices and the art of editing music has become incredibly precise - visit a digital editing suite and you'll see what we mean. Once that kind of control comes to consoles, integrated with digital recorders and signal processors, it's going to be whole new ball of wax. It's going to open the door to incredible palettes of sound which the musical artist will be able to manipulate for unprecedented possibilities. Doubtless the structure of popular music will remain the same with verse/chorus/bridge combinations, but as we've seen already with the advent of samplers and digital effects, it's bound to sound different. We'll see what it means, though, when you only have to record and mix one chorus and then have the rest be digitally spliced in, transposed or whatever. Will it ruin the spontaneous feel, disturb the vibe?

Watch for more and more home studios, better equipped thanks to downwardly spiraling prices. It seems pretty clear that MIDI is here to stay with sequencers, samplers and synths. The trend has been to use less tape tracks and run more instruments live into the mix, synchronized with digital effects units (virtual tracks). As more people become familiar with these concepts, it's fair to say the trend will continue.

Despite all these advances in technology, however, we can expect to see rock'n'rollers carrying on the torch of primitivism. After all, some of the best records ever made were done in garages with one microphone in mono. It's not high fidelity sound and wide dynamic range that counts anyway. It's the music, isn't it? Well, isn't it? . . .

One of the most interesting phenomena is that music/recording is becoming something everybody can get involved in since prices are now coming down to consumer levels. Gone are the days when recording was just for the elite, the professionals. Now anybody can get into the game. □

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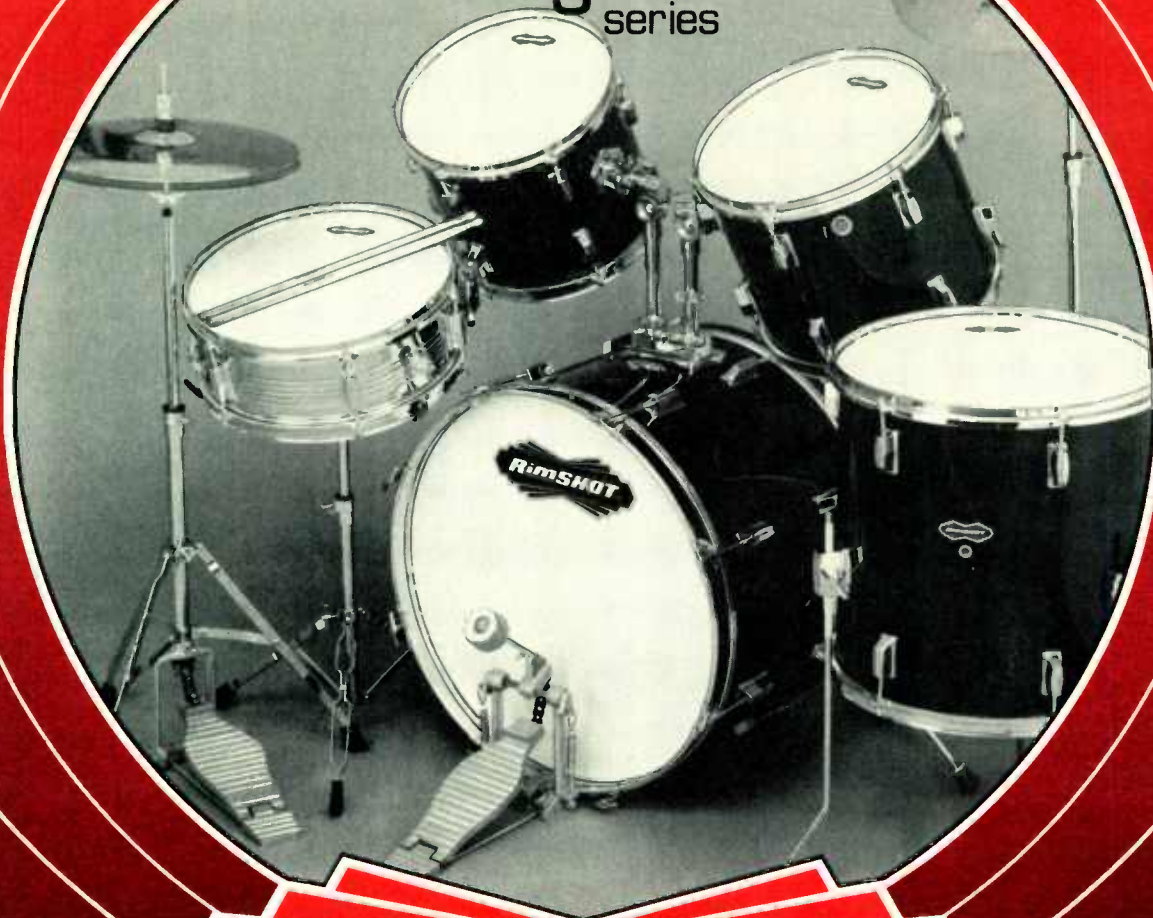
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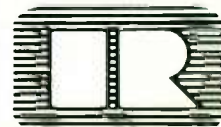
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## Guitar Was Created For Boys Bad At Sports

by Moe Berg

I have to admit I feel a little foolish writing a column about guitar playing, but then, I feel a little foolish doing just about anything. What I mean is that I don't consider myself to be a "guitar god", at least not in the traditional sense.

Guitar solos, to me, have become an obligatory excuse for the guitarist in the band to show off, or a political move on the part of the songwriter (provided that he and the guitarist are not one and the same) to make sure the axe man has his due. Actually, showing off, grandstanding (read: acting like a GOOF) seems to have become an integral part of a live guitarist's persona. (This phenomenon has become exaggerated in recent years, particularly since the rise of the video where it became important for everyone to play to the camera). Pete Townshend used to go crazy on stage, but, he was so much more self-conscious than today's heroes. They practically beat their chests and flex their muscles during their solos. Of course, I definitely feel that guitar playing is a spectator sport and anyone who has seen *The Pursuit of Happiness* knows that I don't exactly sit down and read charts. Furthermore, it could be legitimately said that I look like a goof onstage, but, that's because *I actually am a goof* and not because I'm trying to express my manhood through my instrument. Anyway, having said all of that, I really love the guitar and enjoy playing it. I think that God created the guitar for boys who aren't good at sports. My guitar is my pal - I love to wear it and hold it. I also love to torture it and make it scream. (Shame on all of you who are making the obvious comparison!)

I find myself in the position of being the chief noisemaker in *The Pursuit of Happiness*, which is to say we haven't a keyboard player and I'm the only guitarist. The sound of a power trio is very appealing to me and I prefer using Tam and Tasha (our backup singers) to flesh out our sound. I've always loved that airy feeling when a guitarist switches from rhythm to lead, eliminating the midrange and leaving the guitar to wail against the bottom end of the bass and drums.

My guitar playing is an extension of my writing and since I consider myself a writer first, this influences my playing in a number of ways. First, I try to avoid over-playing because I'm painfully conscious of how that



can ruin a song. Understatement is a quality I admire in a guitarist or in any musician. Secondly, as a writer I have two personalities - a "pop" and a "rock" side, so I have corresponding traits as a guitarist.

If I'm playing off of a melodic chord pattern then that's the kind of solo I'll play. If the musical backdrop is more ambiguous, then I take the kamikaze route and play more of a scream-squeak-squeal solo. It's just two ways of getting the job done.

I'm more adept and more interesting as a rhythm guitarist than as a lead guitarist. I love interesting chords and chord patterns and would rather practice them than scales. So, when I do play a lead, I try to keep the notes of the rhythm pattern in the solo. Nothing is more annoying to me than to hear a minor chord progression in a song, then when the solo comes up to hear the guitarist play a screaming solo in a major key.

I basically play rhythm with everything up full blast and use my pedals to put me over the top for solos. There isn't a solo in every song and sometimes there is no instrumental break in a song, or the break consists of a chord pattern rather than a traditional lead break. I hate to repeat myself, but, the song really is the crucial thing and all musicians should appreciate that.

As far as influences go, I've listened to almost everybody. If there is a particular rec-

ord, however, that really affected my guitar playing it would have to be *Blow by Blow* by Jeff Beck. To be specific, his solo in "Diamond Dust" I consider to contain much of the virtue I aspire to. It's played against a very complex and beautiful chord pattern and never strays from that pattern. In fact the chords suggest the solo which is entirely the point.

For my rock edge I'd have to say that the first Montrose album had a large effect on me. I still think that it is far "heavier" than any of the hard rock or metal albums available today. I once read that Ronnie Montrose said that a true test of a guitar solo is that it could be sung, and I completely agree with that sentiment.

In closing, if I have any advice to young guitarists, it's to try and develop your own distinctive style. The fact that I have my own, is the reason I've been asked to write this article, not because of my technical prowess. It's great to learn to play like Eddie Van Halen, but, there are a thousand players out there doing the same thing (without even mentioning Mr. Van Halen himself) and chances are a lot of them are better than you. And forget about rock posturing, it's boring and makes you look foolish. OK?

(Moe Berg is lead guitarist, vocalist and songwriter for *The Pursuit of Happiness*).



## Product Review:

# The Heritage Stat

By Benjamin Russell

When Gibson made its recent move from Kalamazoo, Michigan, where they had been making instruments since the late 1800s, some of the company's employees decided to stay on. They bought the factory from Gibson and started production on their own line of guitars called The Heritage and we were fortunate to receive one for evaluation. The Heritage Stat, whose name is obviously derived from the famous Fender guitar, is an interesting hybrid.

Let's start by describing the Stat. The body is roughly Stat shaped, the neck 25 1/2" scale with 22 frets, joined to the body at the 17th fret. There is a single truss rod adjustable at the headstock (again reminiscent of Fender design). The body is solid mahogany with a cream bound flat curly maple top. The review instrument had a very handsome grain with an antique cherry sunburst - there is no pickguard to hide the beauty of the wood. The neck is glued in mahogany with a rosewood fingerboard and mother of pearl dot position markers. Here is where the Gibson influence is most clearly seen - the fingerboard curva-



ture and fat frets as well as the overall feel. The headstock is painted black, both front and back, like some old Gibsons.

There are three pick-ups: two high output single coils with rather large pole pieces and a high output humbucker in the bridge position. One volume and one tone control do duty for all three pickups. Switching is accomplished by means of four mini toggle switches, three to turn the pickups on or off, and one to split the coil on the humbucker for the option of single coil operation. The advantage of this arrangement is that you can have more pickup combinations at your fingertips than with a standard three or five way switch and the switches are arranged in such a way to make quick one-handed operation easy.

For hardware, the Stat sports chrome Grover tuning pegs and a Kahler Tremolo bridge system with a locking nut and adjustable tuning pegs at the bridge.

You can tell a lot about a guitar before you even plug it in: the Stat has a lot of sustain and Stevie Ray came to mind. Even after plugging it in, the instrument seemed a natural for this player. (The people at Heritage should get him to endorse it!) Don't read this wrong - the Stat is a very versatile guitar and is capable of clear ringing Strat-like sounds, through the "out-of-phase" range, to the biting, and/or meaty tones you might need. The combination of single coil and switchable humbucker pickups blended with the Gibson-ish neck and spiced with the Kahler really makes a winner.

Unlike high tech gear, each guitar has its own character; they're more like friends than mere tools to get the job done.

# Jeffrey Hatcher's Got The Big Beat

**Jeffrey Hatcher and the Big Beat**  
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If you enjoy well-crafted, meat and potatoes rock 'n' roll with a touch of style and class, buy this EP. It's bound to become a collectors' item when Jeffrey Hatcher and the Big Beat get signed to a major American label. Of all the struggling indie bands in Toronto, the Big Beat may have the greatest potential for acceptable, mainstream success on a very large scale.

The likeliest comparisons are to John Cougar Mellencamp and Bryan Adams, mostly because of Hatcher's raspy, throaty voice. "It sounds like that because I sing a lot," says Jeff. "I really push it 'cause I like it to sound well worked-in."

The likeliest, overworked pigeonhole for the Big Beat sound is "roots-rock," but they simply play workmanlike personable rock 'n' roll. "We're not archivists in the least," says

Jeff. "In London (Ont.) they called us a *cowpunk* band! Whatever they call the guitar-based sound, we've been called for ten years. There's no affectation in the band."

Or in the songs. "99 Years", with its Creedence-styled shuffle and riff, Keith-Richardesque lead guitar, and passionate vocal, seems at first glance to be about beating one's head against the walls of the music industry. (It was written in '83-'84 when the Big Beat became "the only band in the history of the universe" to live in Toronto while gigging exclusively in New York city and their native Winnipeg.)

"Some songs - and this is one of them - I don't think about all that hard when I'm writing lyrics," says Jeff. "It's more of a mood or a dreamy kind of thing - you just rhyme it. Get hold of an idea and drag it through the mud 'til you're finished!"

"In '99 Years' I did notice that the verses seemed to be complaining a bit, so that's why I stuck in the chorus: 'Go tell it to your mama, tell it to the man...' In other words, blah-blah-blah; stop complaining already. I realized I was ragging."

As for the music, "I just bang around the

guitar until I hear something I like."

Elsewhere on the EP, "The Man Who Would Be King" features the gospel-ish harmonies of Jeff's brothers Don (on lead guitar) and Paul (on drums), most noticeable on a hooky *a capella* ending. "That was (co-producer) Tom Rogers' idea," says Jeff, who wrote the soulful, REM-like "Midnight Train" with "a three-part folky harmony in mind - as translated by a loud rock group."

The Big Beat are used to the indie struggle, but with any luck at all it won't be for much longer. At press time, they were working on a video for "Midnight Trains"; they've earned the support of influential American rock writer Dave Marsh; Nick Lowe is interested in producing them; representatives from all three American major labels - RCA, CBS, and WEA - have heard and seen the band, and expressed interest in a possible deal; so have several indie labels; the Big Beat have a back-log of 50-odd songs, and their next album - deal or not - should be out before summer's end.

For information write c/o Robert Lawrence, 427 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario  
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# KEYBOARDS

## Keyboards and MIDI Used Extensively On New Regime Album



By Jim McDonald of New Regime

Recording an album today is a much more technical exercise than it was only five years ago. The reason for this is due to the advancements made in microchip technology and the development of MIDI as a universal interfacing system between keyboards and computers. In this column I will discuss how we used sequencers, MIDI patch bays, and other devices to create overall textures on our new album, *Play To Win*.

The first step in recording the basic keyboard parts was to record a SMPTE code onto tape using a Roland SBX-80 sync box. This enabled us to synchronize the parts that were to be sequenced with the rest of the instrumental tracks that were to be recorded. Usually scratch drum machine (RX-15) tracks were laid down along with the SBX-80 as a

tempo and structural reference. Once the sync tracks were recorded, we were able to commence with recording of the keyboards.

Various methods were used in recording the keyboards. Method one was playing the parts live to tape. Method two was sequencing the parts to tape and method three was to trigger a synth with some sort of audio trigger signal. Before I discuss specifics, I would like to make a brief rundown of the equipment that we used for the different applications mentioned above.

The equipment we used with the help of Bruce Fowler and Luke Koyle of Modular Music included three DX-7s, an Emulator II, an AKAI S-900, a Prophet VS, an Oberheim X-pander, a PPG 2.3, an Ensoniq ESQ-1 and a Roland JX-8I<sup>+</sup> and JP-6. As far as other MIDI

devices we used, they included an SPX-80 and Yamaha RX-15 (as mentioned before), an AKAI ME-30P patch bay, a Roland MC-500 sequencer and a Yamaha MEP-4 MIDI Event Processor.

### Playing Live To Tape

To create our overall textures and images in playing live in the studio, we used different approaches. One approach we used was to subdivide the ten or eleven keyboards into three separate master keyboard sections using the AKAI ME-30P. This allowed Bruce, Luke and I to each play an orchestrated part of, for instance, a brass section using each keyboard for a different texture in order to create a whole texture. Each player had two or more keyboards in his section. When the three of us played in unison to the track, the result was a very realistic sense of feel and



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# KEYBOARDS

sound which enhanced the overall arrangement of the song.

The other more common method was to just use one master keyboard MIDIed to as many other keyboards as necessary to create the overall effect. This is obviously a much simpler approach but just as effective.

The Yamaha MEP-4 was, in one instance, used to limit keyboard splits so that a certain sound would only register in a specific octave range on the master keyboard controller. This is only one of the multitude of applications for the MEP-4.

In using method one, the AKAI patch bay was the integral device for assigning the masters and dividing the MIDI channel number assignments.

## Sequencing To Tape

When sequencing to tape, the necessary tools included the SBX-80, the MC-500 and the AKAI ME 30P. The SBX-80 was the master clock controller that drove the MC-500 which in turn drove the various keyboards using the ME-30P to route the MIDI clock and note on/off messages to their keyboards. The most effective way in recording sequenced parts to tape was to utilize the song position pointer feature in the MC-500 triggered by the SBX. After finding the desired texture or sound to be used, the SBX-80 was programmed to trigger the MC-500 at a specific frame/bit location in the song so that the part was 'punched in', not unlike manual punching. Once the part was printed to tape, fine tuning of the "feel" of the initial attack of the part was accomplished by finding on the tape where the initial attack of the keyboard part was in comparison to the drum track. If it was not the way that was desired, an offset differential was reprogrammed into the SBX-80 to compensate. In effect this either put back or moved forward the keyboard track in relation to the rest of the tracks. The effect that felt the best was eventually retained and printed to tape.

The advantage of using sequences in the studio is that you can let a sequence run in playback and listen to a part. In this way, you can determine if the part actually fits into the song and if the right combination of sounds are being used to complement the track.

## Triggering A Keyboard From An Audio or MIDI Trigger

This particular method was used in a few instances for either adding an effect or for inserting specific parts into a track at a later date. One example was to utilize the Yamaha RX-15's note triggering feature to trigger a keyboard that was MIDIed to it. Specific drum pads on the RX-15 were assigned a corresponding note number which in turn sent that information to the keyboard. The SBX-80 ran the drum machine. In this example the RX-15 was being used as a simple sequencer.

As for us using an external audio trigger,

one particular instance was to play a part on a keyboard and route that signal to a hi-hat part on a drum machine, then to utilize a gate effect to create a texture while fine tuning the synthesizer envelope to find the right release time of the effect.

Considering the number of keyboards that were implemented you may ask yourself, "What about the rest of the band?" Well, considering that New Regime is a high energy rock band you could flip the coin and say "Why all the keyboards?" The reasoning for using the number of keyboards that we did (along with the other MIDI devices), was to

obtain the overall textures to complement and embellish the arrangements and to add "hooks" to the songs using unique sounds, the same way a painter uses a brush to create his moods and textures.

The most important things for a keyboard player to consider when playing in a contemporary band is to remember two things: orchestration and "hook" line melodies. As our producer Steve Webster says "less is more and more is less" and "use pads when only absolutely necessary."

*(Jim McDonald is keyboardist with New Regime.)*

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# KEYBOARDS

## Product Review: Casio FZ-1

By Rob Paretti

The Casio FZ-1 is the sampler that a lot of us have been waiting for (and believe me the wait was worth it!). From its high tech finish to its high tech specs, it's easy to see that Casio has hit it big with its most recent entry into the pro music market.

### The Front Panel

Cosmetically, the FZ-1 is simplicity itself. Its smooth lines in black metallic finish beautifully contrast the black and white 5 octave velocity/touch sensitive keyboard. It's uncluttered panel has 8 function buttons, 4 cursor buttons, a numeric keypad and 3 sliders one each for volume, sampling level and data entry. Its most noticeable feature is a large 6x5 cm., blacklit, LCD display, used for graphic editing and displaying the FZ-1's unique hierarchical menu system.

The menu system that the FZ-1 employs is a joy to use and is both logical and simple. By using the four cursor controls (left, right, up, down), along with the enter and escape keys, it's easy to fly through the various modes and their accompanying function menus.

### Modify Mode

A couple of definitions are in order here. Because the Casio FZ-1 is a synthesizer as well as a sampler, it calls its raw sound sources voices, rather than samples. Banks are how those voices are assigned to the keyboard and are synonymous to presets. The modify mode is where all your editing is done in order to create voices and banks used in the play mode. This includes sound generation, setting up banks, MIDI parameters, output channel assignments, and so on. All disc functions can be found under this category, though banks and/or voices can also be loaded from the play mode.

There are a number of different ways of generating a sound from the FZ-1, all of which are simple and best of all, a lot of fun. The first is of course sampling. The FZ-1 is a 16 bit linear sampler that uses 36, 18, and 9 khz. sampling rates. At the highest rate you have 14.5 seconds of sampling time and with the optional memory board nearly 30 seconds of full bandwidth sampling! Memory can be divided into 64 sample areas. Casio calls these 64 sample memories, "voices". (For the record, the Casio FZ-1 is an 8 voice polyphonic keyboard).

The sampling power that the FZ-1 has is easily matched by its various wave synthesis functions. There are no less than 4 ways to "synthesize" a sound: Preset Wave (analog or

subtractive synthesis), Sine Synthesis (additive synthesis), cut sample (waveform extraction from existing samples), and Hand Drawing (waveform drawing).

### Performance

Like everything else on this keyboard, setting up banks (presets), is an efficient process. First of all, each voice is assigned to an area, or keygroup zone. Banks are set up by assigning up to 64 areas either across the keyboard horizontally, or vertically as velocity splits. That's right, up to 64 velocity splits! In other words, instead of having a loud sample and a soft sample on one key, you can specify up to 64. Minimum and maximum velocities can be set up for each area, over a range of 1 to 127. Potential performance setups have never been more powerful and creative possibilities more amazing.

The FZ-1's MIDI implementation is obviously complete. (This is our dream sampler, remember?) Each area can be assigned its own receive MIDI channel. The FZ-1's eight voices will respond in a multi-mode fashion, dynamically allocating voices where needed. A different MIDI channel can also be assigned for transmitting and receiving. The FZ-1 also has a complete system exclusive implementation.

(Rob Paretti works at Saved By Technology in Toronto).

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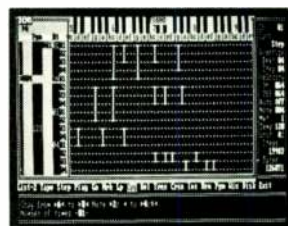
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World Radio History



# PERCUSSION

## Taking Technology On The Road



With the tracks for the latest "Cocktail Forks" album now firmly packed in the can, Triplescale, having checked his service and donned his shades, fires a few ultra-hip obscenities at the cartage guys and then heads for the door and greater conquests.

**Chips Buffalo:** Hey Tommy - nice work man.

**Thomas 'Hitman' Triplescale:**

Alright, big guy. Ciao.

**C.B.:** One question, my man.

**T.T.:** No problem.

**C.B.:** How are you going to do this stuff on stage?

**T.T.:** No problem.

**C.B.:** But on some of these things, you're talkin' mucho gear and some pretty tricky sync stuff.

**T.T.:** No problem.

**C.B.:** Wait a minute, man. You're talkin' multiple drum machines, Emulator, real kit, Simmons, Octapad, interface, gadgets, not to mention all the special effects things that we did.

**T.T.:** No problem.

**C.B.:** How can it be no problem?

**T.T.:** Well, remember the kid with the hair that played tambourine on "GEEK STREET EYES"?

**C.B.:** The one they call "Waffle Face"?

**T.T.:** That's the kid. Well, he's the drummer; he's the one doing the tour and he's the one with the problem. As for me, I'm outta here.

Duplicating studio sounds on the road can be a major headache but maybe "Waffle Face" can take some tips from a couple of guys who have been doing it successfully for years.

Charlie Cooley is currently working in two Toronto based groups - **Manteca** (Latin, funk and salsa) and **Backstreet** (rhythmic rock/R&B).

"Backstreet plays music by bands on the radio, eg: Peter Gabriel, Paul Simon, Level 42. These groups all use real drums, sometimes supplemented by machines and processing. Reproducing the sounds in a live situation can be a challenge. If your band has access to processing equipment (gates, reverb units etc.) then you won't have too much trouble. For those of you who don't, don't worry. Just learn the parts.

In **Backstreet**, we don't use a lot of processing on the PA. I'm responsible for recreating the sounds as best as I can with my own equipment. If you don't own sophisticated equipment, go for the most important



components of the song. I concentrate on the 'feel', tempo, dynamics and specific patterns being played.

If drum patterns have been played by a machine and don't seem practical manually, some editing and simplification may be required. Writing out drum parts can be extremely helpful in learning new material but if you don't have this facility, you may have to 'woodshed' with the record or tape. Direct copying may be helpful, but I would stress using your own ideas and patterns as you progress.

Setting up drum sounds for a **Manteca** concert is a team effort. I'll sit at the kit while Ike and Matt Zimbel work on the mix at the board. (Ike is **Manteca's** sound technician; Matt plays congas and percussion and has produced our two most recent albums, "Strength In Numbers" and "No Heroes") It

can be entertaining to watch the brothers at work. Their ideas can sometimes collide, but they always end up on the same path. These guys know how to get amazing drum sounds.

The drum sounds stay basically the same throughout the show, except for specific reverb and gate settings that may be required. All my drum mics are gated (except the hi-hat and overheads) using the Rebis RA201. The gates stay on throughout the entire show. This prevents leakage from other instruments into the drum mics.

The bass drum mic is an AKG D112. This is a large diaphragm-based mic with good bottom end, snap and definition. The snare mic-a Calrec condenser - has a fast response and is very bright and punchy. The hi-hat mic is an AKG 451 condenser. This baby has great top and sizzle. The toms are miked with Senheisser 421s or 409s, which have a good bark to them. (We like to scare people!)

Processing includes a Yamaha REV 7 at the board. According to Ike, the 'percussion plate' and 'large room' settings are used most frequently. With the processing available to us in **Manteca**, we are usually able to produce as close to the recorded sound as desired, although sometimes different sounds and settings work better in a live situation.

But with or without processing, it's still important to concentrate on the detail and execution of your parts in the songs. Don't rely on impressive drum sounds to carry you."

Charlie Cooley  
Drummer

Manteca & Backstreet

## CONTEST WINNER

*Brenda Lockmuller of North Vancouver, BC is the winner in the Canadian Musician subscription contest held earlier this year. Brenda walked away with the new R-100 drum machine from Kawai. Brenda is a composer who is beginning to assemble a home studio.*

*Garry Kenny of Kawai presents the R-100 to Brenda at Long & McQuade's in Vancouver.*





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**TRUTH:** A lot of monitors "color" their sound. They don't deliver truly flat response. Their technology is full of compromises. Their components are from a variety of sources, and not designed to precisely integrate with each other.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Bad mixes. Re-mixes. Having to "trash" an entire session. Or worst of all, no mixes because clients simply don't come back.

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**CONSEQUENCES:** "Universal" monitors, those not specifically designed for a precise application or environment, invariably compromise technology, with inferior sound the result.

**TRUTH:** JBL's 4400 Series Studio Monitors achieve a new "truth" in sound with

an extended high frequency response that remains effortlessly smooth through the critical 3,000 to 20,000 Hz range. And even extends beyond audibility to 27 kHz, reducing phase shift within the audible band for a more open and natural sound. The 4400 Series' incomparable high end clarity is the result of JBL's use of pure titanium for its unique ribbed-dome tweeter and diamond surround, capable of withstanding forces surpassing a phenomenal 1000 G's.

**CONSEQUENCES:** When pushed hard, most tweeters simply fail. Transient detail blurs, and the material itself deforms and breaks down. Other materials can't take the stress, and crack under pressure.

**TRUTH:** The Frequency Dividing Network in each 4400 Series monitor allows optimum transitions between drivers in both amplitude and phase. The precisely calibrated reference controls let you adjust for personal preferences, room variations, and specific equalization.

**CONSEQUENCES:** When the interaction between drivers is not carefully orchestrated, the results can be edgy, indistinctive, or simply "false" sound.

**TRUTH:** All 4400 Studio Monitors feature JBL's exclusive Symmetrical Field Geometry magnetic structure, which dramatically reduces second harmonic

distortion, and is key in producing the 4400's deep, powerful, clean bass.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Conventional magnetic structures utilize non-symmetrical magnetic fields, which add significantly to distortion due to a nonlinear pull on the voice coil.

**TRUTH:** 4400 Series monitors also feature special low diffraction grill frame designs, which reduce time delay distortion. Extra-large voice coils and ultra-rigid cast frames result in both mechanical and thermal stability under heavy professional use.

**CONSEQUENCES:** For reasons of economics, monitors will often use stamped rather than cast frames, resulting in both mechanical distortion and power compression.

**TRUTH:** The JBL 4400 Studio Monitor Series captures the full dynamic range, extended high frequency, and precise character of your sound as no other monitors in the business. Experience the 4400 Series Studio Monitors at your JBL dealer's today.

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# PERCUSSION

## Product Review: The Casio MIDI Drum System

By Barry Keane

**S**traight forward and practical, best describes Casio's entry into the world of electronic drum sets. The Casio MIDI Drum System consists of a MIDI Drum Translator (DZ-1) and a drum stand or rack (DCS-1). With a suggested list price of \$1,995., this system is easily the most affordable on the market today, and the price is only part of its practicality. The DZ-1 and its accompanying manual are both very user friendly and if you are still among the many drummers who has yet to sample the MIDI waters, this just might be the system you've been waiting for.

The Translator has separate inputs and parameter controls, such as sensitivity and volume, for up to eight pads. There is a 125 step velocity range for each input, which allows for great dynamic control. The editing function is easy to understand and control, while allowing each pad MIDI independence. That is, even without a degree from M.I.T., it is possible for you to program each individual pad to trigger notes from different MIDI sources simultaneously, if you so desire.

True, you are limited to just four pre-sets and true, you are not allowed the MIDI routing madness available in some other interfaces, such as Simmons MTM for example, but when it comes to the practical needs of most drummers, these do not represent serious constraints. There is an optional foot pedal (SP-2) available which functions on one channel of the Translator and is recommended by the manufacturer for use with open and closed hi-hat sounds. My experience with using a pad for hi-hat has, to date, been somewhat less than satisfying, however, if this type of thing interests you, then the foot pedal may be worth checking out.

The pads themselves are round, black and light in weight. The playing surfaces are real drum heads and are all tension tunable by way of four lug nuts. The advantage of the real drum head concept, is that it gives you the feel of acoustic drums and is therefore easier on your joints than other harder, synthetic surfaces. The disadvantage is that the tracking is not as true as a hard surface and will cause your dynamic feel to suffer accordingly. The other consideration is that the heads will tend to wear and will have to be periodically replaced. Though I haven't actu-

ally gone through the process of changing a head on a pad, I am told that it is not as easy as you might expect.

The pads and the Translator all use 1/4" guitar type jacks which I prefer personally to XLRs, from a consistency standpoint, but to each his own.

The drum stand is one of those modern synth type units fitted with multi-adjustable drum pad holders. Here's where the degree from M.I.T. might be helpful. If you've never worked with a stand of this type, it may prove to be a little awkward at first and may take some time for you to adjust. The bass drum is free standing, independent from the drum stand. It is balanced on the kick pedal plate and supported by two long, adjustable spurs which project forward from either side of the pad.

This system is compatible with Casio's drum machine, the RZ-1, but it will work just as efficiently and in some cases moreso, with any MIDI sound source ie: drum machines, synthesizers, samplers, etc.

The Casio MIDI Drum System has a lot of nice features, especially considering the price and for combined simplicity and practicality, it appears hard to beat.



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# BRASS

## From Solo Trumpet To Circus Pit Band Gig



By Tony Carlucci

A little while ago, on a quiet Sunday morning, I got a call from a desperate sounding man insisting that he needed me immediately for an album session. The mix-down was due to start in a few days and the artist wanted a last minute idea put down. Being early Sunday morning (after a late night), I barely could remember where to go or what horns to bring, but off I went. This wasn't the first time I was put in this situation. What ran through my head while I was getting dressed was that it wouldn't be my last. Unexpected early morning studio calls must rank among the highest stress situations for musicians. After driving 20 miles with one hand on the steering wheel and performing a buzz routine on my mouth-piece with the other, I arrived. I've now become very proficient at driving and warming up on my mouth-piece. Doing a buzz routine can improve your pitch and build consistency in your cup sensations. In the words of a man I respect greatly, Mr. Don Johnson: "The mouthpiece never lies." In the studio they were waiting for me to arrive, I felt the pressure, but on second glance, I also noticed I was the only horn player there. In my half asleep state when I got the call that morning, I immediately assumed that it was to be a horn sectional recording. Obviously it wasn't.

They wanted an improvised trumpet solo, with a lot of energy. In the bulk of my work, I rarely get a chance to do a session that requires me to be creative and gives me some freedom. Well, now I was waking up really quickly, and without the aid of coffee. With a combination of nervousness and anticipation, I hoped all my experience over the years in soloing, would carry me through with flying colours. By the end of the session, I was feeling great about what was going on to tape. This feeling was why I'm in this business; the opportunity to express myself, under pressure, and do an excellent job.

In this situation, experience is your biggest asset. All those rough mornings and bad days as well as the good experiences accumulate into the expertise you need to handle any curve that might be thrown at ya. In order for these experiences to do you any good in the future, it is crucial that you approach your musical and professional advancement with a sensitive and caring attitude.

Another situation in which I recently had to rely on my past experience was when I got a call to play for the Garden Bros. circus pit band. I knew before I got there that the music would vary greatly, but I didn't expect some of the things that I had to contend with. The first was how fast each tune and cue came up,

which made it necessary to be really on the ball, in terms of attentiveness. As you probably already figured out, there was no automatic pilot here, not at first anyway. Second was pacing. Mr. Dave Dunlop, the other trumpet player and the pit band leader, like to have two trumpets sharing the lead book for two reasons. This first is that it allows him the freedom to perform his leader duties (tape machine sound board and giving cues).

The second is that the show is two hours long and there is only a minimal amount of break time. This may seem alright for two trumpet players to handle, but there were sometimes three shows a day. As you can see I had to get my pacing together really fast. The wide variation of music styles was the easy part for me. I love all kinds of music, and in my past I've played just about every style that exists in Western music. The whole scenario challenges every element of talent and experience one might have, and helps to build musical character. I find it difficult to understand musicians that insist on playing only one style of music. Where is their sense of adventure?

*(Tony Carlucci is a busy session player, whose work has included a stint with the Spoons)*





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# VOCALS

## Arranging Vocals For Cats Can Fly

By Peter Alexandre

When I was first asked to write an article on the vocal style of Cats Can Fly I thought to myself, "Ya open da mouth an' da sound comes out - what's to write?"

As a bit of background I should point out that our band is blessed with four guys who have the ability to sing lead vocals, and during our years on that gruelling, unavoidable purgatory which we affectionately refer to as 'bars' we used all four voices for leads (I was the one wailing Springsteen). This relieved the monotony and eased the vocal wear and tear of playing three or four shows a night for close to three hundred nights a year.

It was only after A&R men lined up to tell us the public would have trouble focussing on so many vocalists that we cut down to two - David and Eddie. This didn't mean, however, that Mitchell and I had to keep our mouths shut, as Cats Can Fly has always been a vocally oriented band and we use a lot of harmonies.

One might think that it would be easy to arrange background vocals in a band with four strong singers, but in a way this makes it even more difficult because most of the parts we try sound good. But sounding good a cappella and complementing the song are two different things. In pop music the song is the most important item in the 'package', and if harmonies detract from it they should not be used. In most cases, less is more - vocal overkill may help one's ego but it also may hinder airplay. Just how much is too much is

purely a judgement call and there are no set rules except, perhaps, that each song demands its own special treatment. There are three songs from our debut album which I'd like to use as examples: "Cold Hands, Warm Heart," "Flippin' to the 'A' Side" and "Crazy Fever."

Having the backing vocals sing the chorus line with the lead vocal answering or scatting over them is one of our favourite things to do vocally. In "Crazy Fever" the chorus consists of a simple two voice unison with an additional voice an octave below. The parts were tripled, and processed through an A.M.S. harmonizer for thickness and consistency (we're still waiting for the MIDI vocal retrofit). In the bridge the "Can't get enough" was not so much sung as shouted, and again it was tripled and processed. "Crazy Fever" is a fairly busy song instrumentally and any other parts we tried seemed to hinder more than help.

Using two lead singers provides a unique dimension in our vocals. Another one of our favourite vocal tricks is to use the voice not singing the lead on a particular song to spell off the other vocalist on key lines. This variation on a duet helps emphasize those lines.

"Flipping' to the 'A' Side" is a prime example of this. David sings the lead vocal and in the second verse "turn it all around" is repeated four times in succession with David taking the first one, Eddie singing the second, a three part block harmony taking the third and Eddie again singing the fourth and holding his note over into the second chorus. The chorus line is a tripled two voice unison (David and Mitchell), with the two lead vocal-

ists singing over it, and a block harmony providing some extra colour with "Living, lovin'..." (my personal favourite harmony on the album). In the bridge David and Eddie alternately answer the block harmonies which take the first and third lines, with Eddie again holding his last note over into the chorus. Rather than drive the ending choruses into the ground in typical pop fashion, we used a double chorus, switched to the "Living, lovin'" harmony, and then returned to the choruses for the fade.

Adding vocal parts as a song goes on is an effective way of building emotion, and in "Cold Hands, Warm Heart" we do this as well as doing some of the other things we've already touched on. David sings the song along until the first chorus. Here Eddie contributes a single voice echo which breaks off into a three part harmony on the last word ("heart"). In the second verse a single voice harmony parallels the melody on three lines including the line leading into the chorus where a block harmony joins David on the first line.

It is always difficult to put harmonies in a song or part of a song which was written to be very personal (doesn't it sound silly when four men sing, 'I love you, girl, like nobody else does'? The bridge of 'Cold Hands...' was one of these parts. It is bare of backing vocals until a strong four part block joins David on "dark of the night". This is the climax of the song and after a breakdown section where Eddie and I sing a unison octave we break into a fully block harmony chorus with some falsetto Beach Boys style oohs - guaranteed to jerk tears from the driest eyes - and David scatting over top.

You just can't show up at the studio and expect to come up with the parts, it can be very time consuming and frustrating. Different artists work different ways. Some hire vocal arrangers, some have a guy in the band who's responsible for vocal ideas and others rely on the producer. In Cats Can Fly we spend a fair amount of time gathered around a piano or guitar, or preferably we get a tape of the bed tracks with lead vocals and practice with it until we come up with parts that work. We sometimes have to change, delete or add parts in the studio, but we've got a firm starting point. We also spend a lot of time demoing our tunes on four track and some of the vocal parts we come up with at that stage make it to the mastered version.

*(Peter Alexandre is keyboardist and sings background vocals with Cats Can Fly.)*



L to R: Mitchel James, David Ashley, Eddie Zeman, Peter Alexandre



## Flippin' To The "A" Side Conceived From Bass Line

by David Ashley of Cats Can Fly

It was about sixteen years ago that I picked up my first guitar. Actually, wanting to play the drums, I found that attempting to master intricate strumming patterns was sufficient to satisfy my desire to become the next Ringo Starr. I then proceeded to learn every chord in my *440 Chord Book*. I even tried my hand at guitar soloing, but alas, found myself returning to that tried and true familiar phrase "I'm just another 'dime a dozen' guitar player". It was time to try something different. I yearned for an instrument that would satisfy my hunger for playing something rhythmical and also musical. A little voice whispered "How about a bass guitar?" This was something relatively unattempted by all the aspiring Jimmy Pages, Keith Richards and Jimi Hendrixes. At that time there didn't seem to be any real rock bass heroes. I got down to some intense wood shedding with my new-found love, the bass guitar.

When I think of "Flippin' to the A side" I think of a song conceived from a catchy bass line. I remember writing the music on piano (which is definitely not my forte), and noticing that it reminded me a little of "House of the Rising Sun". I was a split-second away from scrapping it, but instead I whipped out my trusty old TEAC 4 track and put down drum machine (a straight ahead dance beat) and a dummy guitar track. This allowed me the freedom to create a sophisticated, yet simple bass part. Then, I re-wrote the guitar track by adding some obscure Fixx chords and the rest resulted in "Flippin' as we know it. I write 90% of my songs and formulate my bass parts using this method.

Very often, I'm asked where my influences and inspiration stem from. I immediately think back to a time when the bass had a definite position of prominence. Drummers would usually play very straight (snare on 2 and 4 or 1,2,3 and 4) which gave the bass complete freedom to syncopate at leisure. I am referring, of course to the Motown sound. My style definitely exhibits an early Motown flavour. Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clarke, Mark King (who I had the pleasure of touring with in Canada), and a local player Prakash John, who 14 years ago, blew me away with his proficiency and dexterity on bass guitar, have all been instrumental in creating the David Ashley bass style.

Well, I guess you'd like to hear a little about my rig. It ain't much, but it does the job.



First, I'm a one guitar man (some people say that makes for a faithful partner) I have a Lado, one pickup solid body bass that I've been loyal to for the past 10 years (the 36th one he made), a 1971 Fender Precision (my spare bass on stage, used as a token gesture on "Lookin' For Love") and a brand new acquisition the Yamaha RX-800 series— looks like this this baby is goin' to steal my heart. I have an ampeg SVT. head and two JBL T-L cabinets. My amplifier is not that important to me on stage because I put my bass through cross-stage and my own vocal monitor... nice and loud! Monitor 'techs' don't like this, but I need to feel the resonance of the bass right in front of me for my thumb-slapping technique. I've also gone wireless in the last year, using a Samson Dual Receiver System, which I recommend for reliability and economy. I leave the bass effects to the discretion of the sound engineer and cross my fingers.

There were tunes on the album where I used bass 'synth': "Heavy Load", "Crazy Fever" and "One Way or the Other". I'd like to refer to "Heavy Load" for a moment. This song was originally four-tracked with an up-tempo, straight ahead rock feel. When we started to arrange it as a band, we found it to be lifeless and bland. Enter Micromoog (a superfat sounding classic from the '70s). We then tried a Latin feel, slowing the tempo

down a bit, with Eddie, playing a straight groove beat and myself playing a plodding rhythmic Moog bass line. (Peter and Mitchell adding the embellishments to complete the groove.) The song became a favourite on the album and a favourite for us to perform. I'm all for playing a little bass synth for variety, but when a bass part is sequenced instead of being played live, I feel emotion is lost on an instrument that is founded on raw emotion. I'd like to play as accurately as a sequencer than use one. I'm also disenchanted with the sampled slap bass sound sequenced to play a hundred miles an hour. Come on all you programmers, give us a chance to catch up to machines! But then again, is that what we want?

As far as technique goes, I feel as comfortable playing slap style as I do with standard finger-plucking techniques. I find, by using thumb-slapping and finger popping you no longer have the comfort of hiding behind your drummer—not that I ever have. You now become a percussion instrument propelled into the forefront. That is precisely why it's advisable to have a good understanding of drumming. I practice my scales regularly, and most important, I never stop listening and watching.

(David Ashley is bass player, vocalist and songwriter with Cats Can Fly.)

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