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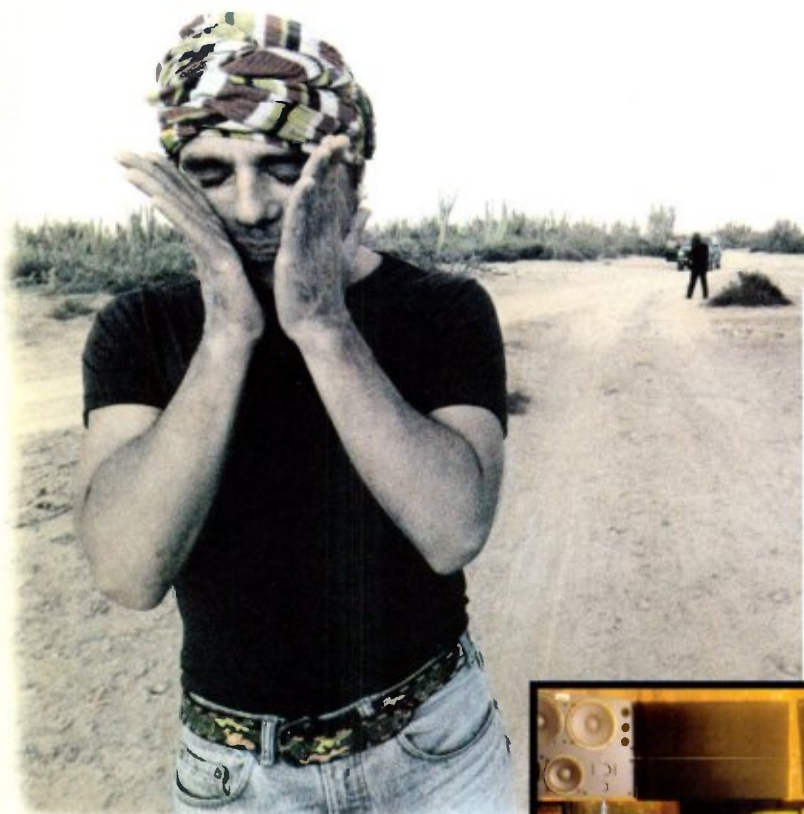
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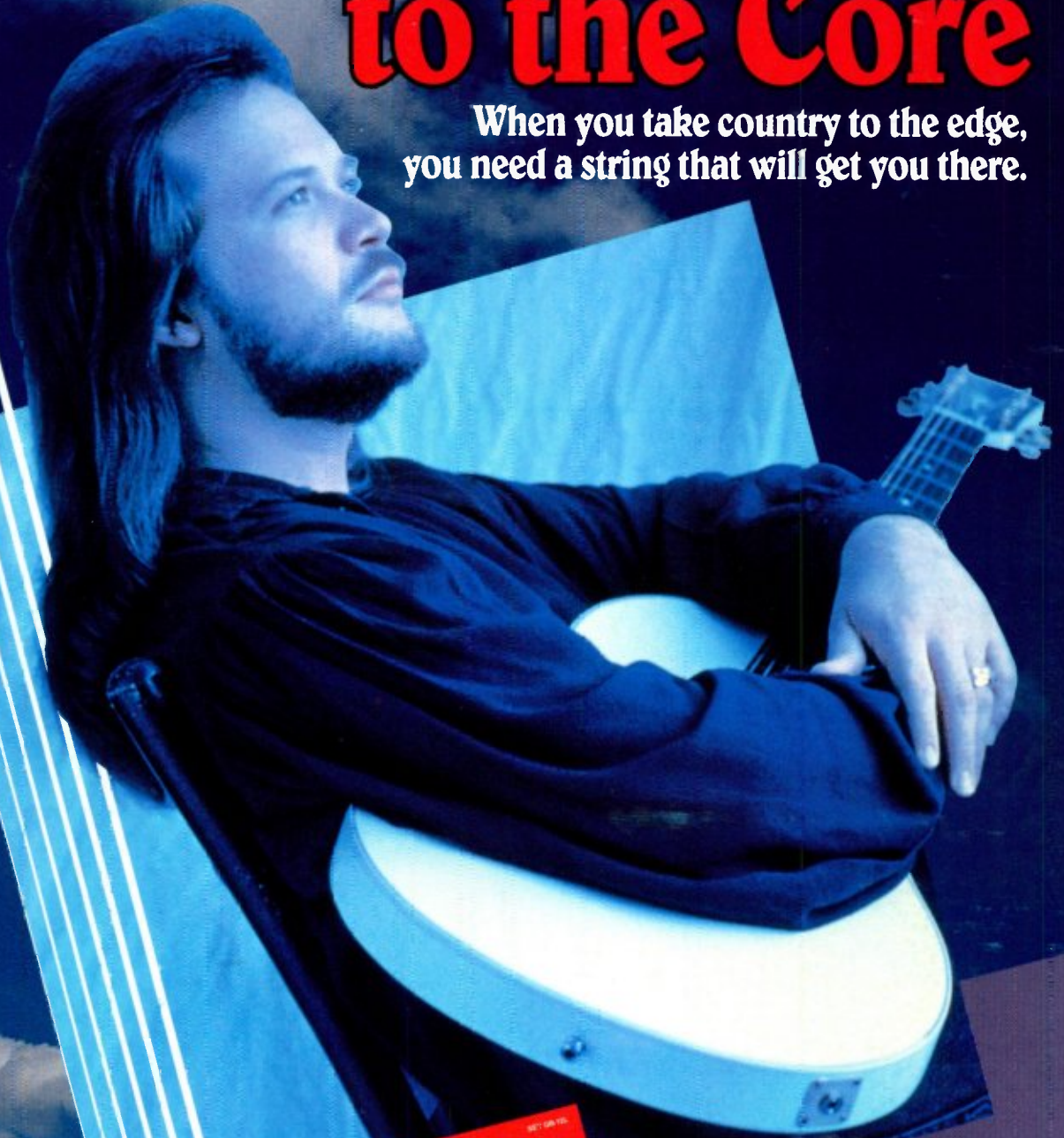
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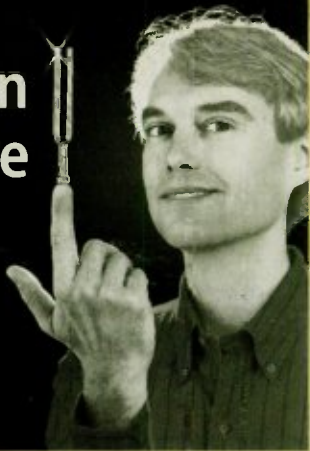
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# "They LAUGHED when I said they could have Perfect Pitch

...until I showed them the secret!"



## The TRUE STORY by David L. Burge

I ALL STARTED in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry.

I would slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda didn't practice anywhere near that amount. But somehow she always seemed to have an edge which made her the star performer of our school! It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I would wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, sensed my growing competition. One day she bragged on and on about Linda, adding more fuel to my fire. "You could never be as good as Linda," she taunted me. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked. Sheryl gloated over a few of Linda's uncanny musical abilities: how she could name any tone or chord—just by ear; how she could sing any pitch she wanted—from mere memory; and how she could even play songs after only listening to them on the radio!

My heart sank. Her fantastic EAR is the key to her success I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But later I doubted Sheryl's story. How could anyone possibly know F# or Bb just by listening? An ear like that would give someone a mastery of the entire musical language!

It bothered me. Did Linda really have Perfect Pitch? I finally got up the nerve and point-blank asked Linda if the rumors were true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly. But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied cheerfully.

### I couldn't wait to call her bluff...

My plan was ingeniously simple: I picked a moment when Linda least suspected it. Then I boldly challenged her to name tones for me—by ear.

I made sure she had not been playing any music. I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made certain other classmates could not help her. I set everything up so I could expose Linda's Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

Nervously I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene.

With silent apprehension I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#!)

I had barely touched the key. "F#," she said.

I was astonished.

I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. Instantly she announced the correct pitch.

Frantically, I played more and more tones, here and there on the keyboard, but each time she would somehow know the pitch—without effort. She was SO amazing—she could identify tones as easily as colors!

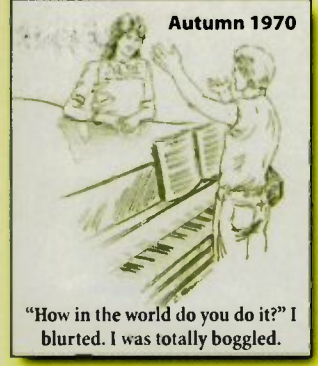
"Sing an Eb," I demanded, determined to mess her up.

With barely a pause she sang the proper pitch. I had her sing tone after tone. But as I checked her on the keyboard, I found that she sang each note perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And to my dismay, that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet from that moment on I knew Perfect Pitch is real.



"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled.

### I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why doesn't everyone know musical tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me that most musicians can't tell C from C#, or A major from F major—like artists who brush painting after painting without ever knowing green from turquoise. It all seemed so odd and contradictory. I found myself even more mystified than before.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my three brothers and two sisters into playing tones for me, then guess each pitch by ear. My many attempts were dismal failures.

So I tried playing the tones over and over in order to memorize them. I tried to feel the "highness" or "lowness" of each pitch. I tried day after day to learn and absorb those elusive tones. But nothing worked. I simply could not recognize the pitches by ear.

After weeks in vain, I finally gave up. Linda's gift was indeed extraordinary. But for me, it was out of reach.

### Then it happened...

It was like a miracle. A twist of fate. Like finding the lost Holy Grail.

Once I had stopped straining my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not visual colors, but colors of pitch, colors of sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever "let go"—and listened—to discover these subtle differences within the musical tones.

Soon I too could recognize the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while Bb has a different pitch color sound—sort of like "listening" to red and blue!

The realization hit me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and name tones, chords and keys all by ear—by tuning in to these subtle "pitch colors" within the tones.

It was almost childish—I felt sure that anyone could unlock their own Perfect Pitch by learning this simple secret of "color hearing."

Excitedly I told my best friend Ann (a flutist) that she could have Perfect Pitch too. She laughed at me.

"You have to be born with Perfect Pitch," she asserted.

"You just don't understand how easy Perfect Pitch is," I explained.

I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. From this discovery, it wasn't long before Ann had also acquired Perfect Pitch! We became instant school celebrities. Classmates loved to test our abilities, leaving everyone awed and amazed by the power of our virtuoso ears.

Way back then I did not know the impact I would have when years later I explained my discovery to college music professors. I was surprised that many of them laughed at me at first. You may have guessed it—they told me, "One must be born with Perfect Pitch." Yet once I revealed the simple secret to Perfect Pitch—and they heard for themselves—you'd be surprised at how fast they would change their tune!

As I continued my own music studies, my Perfect Pitch ear allowed me to progress far faster than I ever thought possible. I even skipped over two required college courses. Perfect Pitch made everything much easier—performing, composing, arranging, sight-reading, transposing, improvising—and it enhanced my enjoyment of music as well! I learned that music is definitely a HEARING art.

### And as for Linda?

Oh yes—time eventually found me at the end of my senior year of high school, with my final chance to outdo Linda. Our local university sponsored a music festival each spring. I went all out for it. Guess what? I scored an A+ in the most advanced performance category. Linda only got an A.

Sweet victory! music to my ears—mine at last!

THESE DAYS, thousands of musicians and two university studies have already proven my Perfect Pitch method. Now I'd like to show YOU how to experience your own Perfect Pitch!

I hope you won't laugh as you picture yourself with various Perfect Pitch skills—like naming tones and chords by ear with laser-like accuracy! I think you will be surprised at just how simple Perfect Pitch really is—and how very valuable.

I'll show you! Just call or write TODAY for your FREE Perfect Pitch Lesson #1!

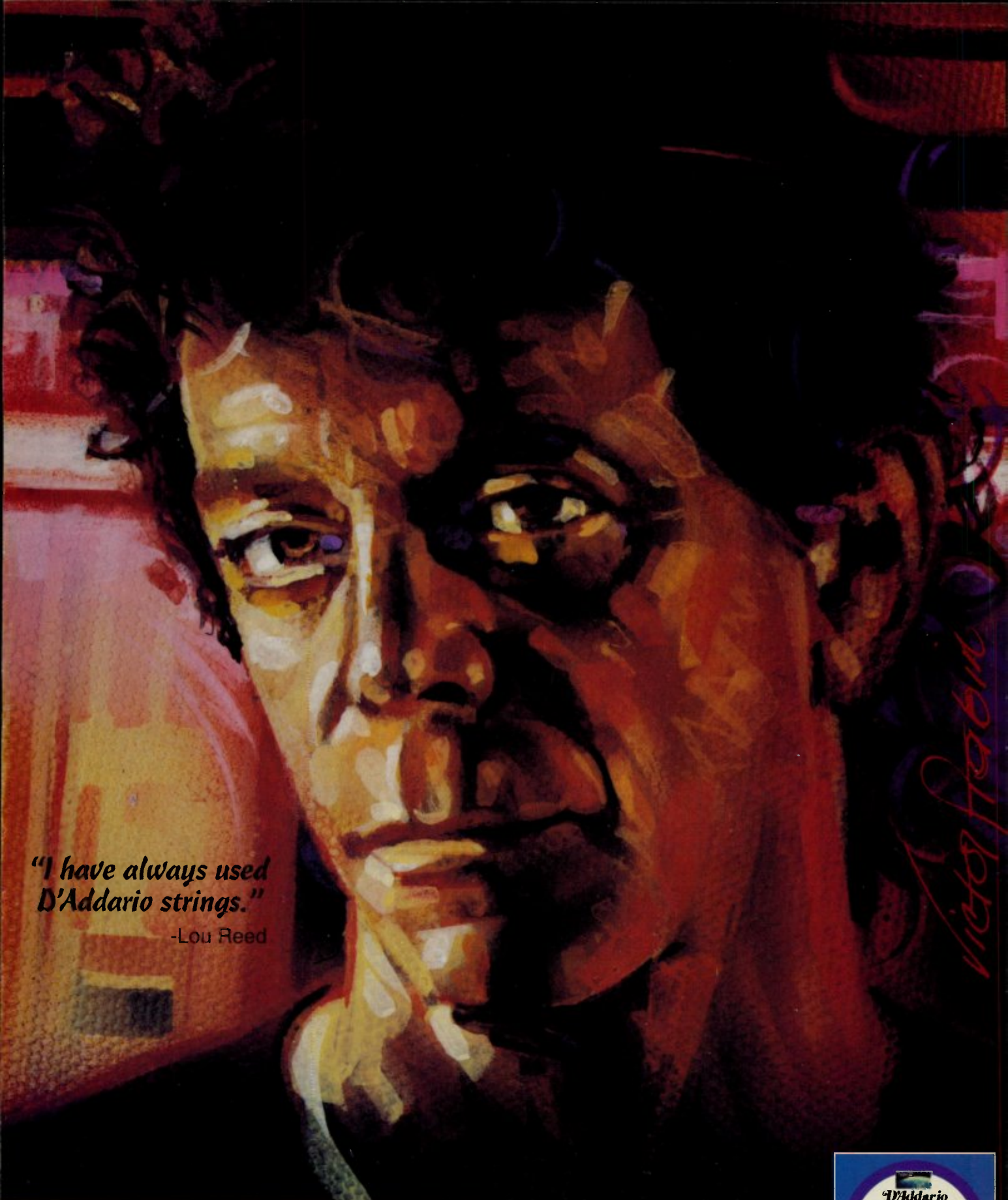
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# TOWN

OCTOBER 1994 \* VOLUME XVI NUMBER 5

# CANADIAN MUSICIAN



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## CREATIVE RECORDING

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peter murray and peter hamilton

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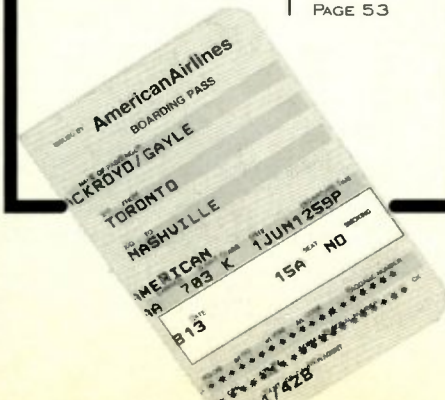
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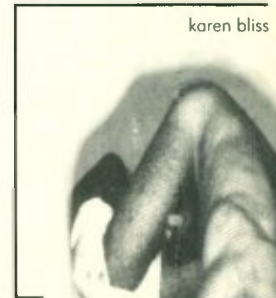
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# BEGGING FOR BRIAN'S VOX TIPS



I understand that Brian Vollmer of Helix has written a couple of columns in your magazine. If this is true, how can I obtain these past issues?

Keep up the good work!

ALAN PACKHAM, SMITHVILLE, ON

• Ed: Brian did indeed write two vocal columns in past issues of Canadian Musician. You'll find them in our Oct. '87 and April '93 issues.

Back issues of Canadian Musician can be obtained by contacting our subscription office at 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3 (905) 641-3471, FAX (905) 641-1648. A complete listing of our back issue catalogue is also available.

# IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOG

As I was driving home in a typical Vancouver rush hour, I scanned the 'Sentimental Moog' article (Keyboards, June '94 CM) which stirred up emotions inside that I thought I had lost forever... you see, I was actually breast-fed by a MiniMoog!

Back in the early days of synthesis (circa 1973), ARP and Moog reigned the shelves of only the bravest music stores. Being the type that was not all that interested in scholastic activities, I was given the opportunity to write an essay on whatever I liked and decided to expand on an area of interest to me — synthesis.

I went down to Montreal's Craig Street — land of pawnshops and dusty music stores — and in the back room at Steve's, there sat a glorious MiniMoog! I asked if anyone could help me in this task of deciphering the functions of VCOs, VCFs and VCAs, but the technology was so new, no one had a grasp. I was given a set of headphones and the task of going where no 15 year-old had gone before.

Needless to say, my findings and lengthy recordings of resonating filters and self-indulging vibratos were met with the lowest mark ever recorded at my school; but for me, it was a time that changed my life. A few short years later I was managing the synth department at that very same store; later put on electronic music clinics at schools and universities; in 1981 was playing and selling the first commercial sequencing and sound-shaping software on the Apple II (pre-MIDI, of course); and later became the product director for the ARP/Rhodes Chroma in Canada, which still stands alone as one of the most interesting and challenging synths ever made. Later, I became involved with the Akai product line and was on the Akai product development team for products such as the S1000.

The culmination of my synth career was at the San Francisco AES (Audio Engineering Society Convention) in 1992 — having a discussion at the Jensen Transformer booth with the man himself, Bob Moog. I got a big smile when I told him about my early breast-feeding! Long live the Moog!

PS: For all of you analog nut-cases, change is what makes music interesting. For some 'real feel', try using a pulse wave and have the waveform change by assigning an envelope to it. This, along with a tasty bit of well-placed vibrato, makes for a great-sounding solo patch!

PETER JANIS, DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING, CABLETEK ELECTRONICS, PORT COQUITLAN, BC

• Ed: Peter may be reached through Cabletek Electronics at (604) 942-1001, FAX (604) 942-1010.

I just have one question for Peter — do you always read Canadian Musician while driving? (Kids, don't try this at home — we certainly don't condone this type of activity!!!)

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# DIGGING FOR DINOSAURS (SYNTHS, THAT IS!)

Greetings from Eastern Ontario. I'm sure you're aware of the trendiness of vintage synthesizers among keyboard players at the moment. No doubt there's a healthy demand out there for this old stuff.

Early- to mid-'80s synth pop has always been my biggest musical influence, so the instruments used at that time have always intrigued me. Among other, more 'current' things in my set-up, I own a Roland Juno-60 synth and TR-808 drum machine, both of which I've had MIDI'd. They complement the sounds of my newer instruments beautifully. Right now I'm on the lookout for a Roland JX-8P synth. I'm also toying with the idea of having a MiniMoog and/or a Sequential Prophet-5. Maybe even an old Linn LM-1 drum machine — just for old time's sake.

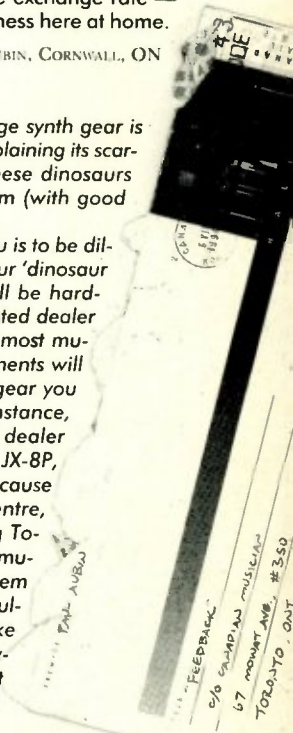
Trouble is, it seems as if there's no network of retailers here in Canada who support the vintage synth trade. Of my older gear, only the MIDI retrofit for my Juno is Canadian (now THERE's a play on words!). All of the other stuff I got from the States. What with all the pains of cross-border shopping — not the least of which is the exchange rate — I'd much rather do business here at home.

PAUL AUBIN, CORNWALL, ON

• Ed: It's true that vintage synth gear is incredibly popular — explaining its scarcity. Those who own these dinosaurs tend to hang on to them (with good reason!).

My best advice to you is to be diligent (and patient) in your 'dinosaur hunt'. Although you will be hard-pressed to find a dedicated dealer of vintage synthesizers, most music store service departments will be able to service any gear you do come across (for instance, any authorized Roland dealer will be able to service a JX-8P, should you find one). Because you live in a smaller centre, you may find contacting Toronto or Montreal-area music stores helpful. Fax them a wanted ad for their bulletin boards and make regular calls to their keyboard departments. Most of these gems get traded or sold through word-of-mouth. Taking out a wanted ad in the **Buy and Sell** or **Canadian Musician** might also be helpful. Finally, try scouring pawnshops — you might be surprised at what shows up in Auntie Em's attic! Be prepared to wait — I waited over a year for a particular pink paisley Telecaster to surface in the Toronto area, but if you're really bent on something...

One more thing Paul, you just might be interested in contacting the gentleman who sent in the **Feedback** letter you see to the left...





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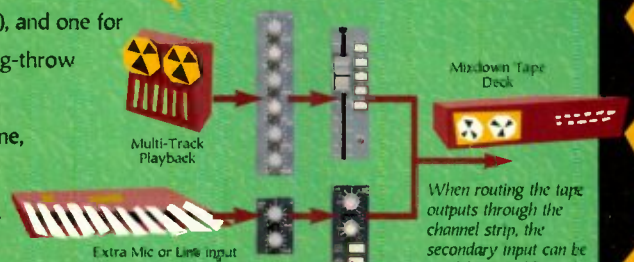
Unlike other 'budget mixers' Topaz is a dedicated multitrack console with the tools to make recording smooth and hassle free.

The dual input design means you have two independent inputs on each input channel strip. One for tape tracks or line sources, (with rotary fader), and one for mic or line sources, (on long-throw fader). These can be easily swapped around at any time, particularly for the mix-down, without re-patching.

Add independent EQ sections for both inputs, 6 auxiliary sends accessible between both inputs, 8 groups with separate outputs as well as a send facility to the output of every channel, a comprehensive Master Module, the choice of 24 or 32 inputs with up to 72 inputs at mix-down, the ability to handle up to a 32-track tape recorder without re-patching and you have a console that is set to do more than just become the class leader.

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### DOUBLE INPUTS DURING MIXDOWN



When routing the tape outputs through the channel strip, the secondary input can be used for an additional mic/line source. - Giving an incredible 64 inputs with EQ in mixdown on the Topaz 32.

# TOPAZ

PROJECT STUDIO CONSOLE



This issue's listening room guest commentator is Rheostatics' guitarist/vocalist Martin Tielli. I purposefully chose two recordings by artists I was sure he'd never heard of, and one new recording from a group he knew very well.



### Charlie Hunter Trio

Charlie Hunter Trio

Mammoth Records/Prawn Song

The *Charlie Hunter Trio* is one of the first recordings released under the Prawn Song label. As instrumental albums go, this one has enough flavour and inventiveness to keep both jazz aficionados and rock and rollers hitting the repeat button on their CD player.

The Charlie Hunter Trio is Charlie Hunter (ex-Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy) on guitars, Jay Lane (Sausage) on drums and Berklee grad Dave Ellis on saxophone offering up their own semi-twisted blend of swinging, funky 'punk jazz'. "It's not 'athletic' or 'heroic' jazz," notes Tielli, "it's got a lot of detail."

"What I'm liking most is the bass playing — the guy's all over the place! Who is this guy? It's like bass is featured, but they don't even mention a bass player," asks a puzzled Tielli as he scans the liner notes. "I keep hearing the bass cross over with the guitar — I think it might be hallucinatory on my part." Nope — it's Charlie Hunter, playing a custom-built seven-string guitar which allows him to play guitar and bass lines simultaneously through two separate amplifiers. In fact, musicians might be tempted to grab this album for the sake of Hunter's chops alone. "He's fast," admires Tielli, "and swings. There was a beautiful feathering guitar technique on '20, 30, 40, 50, 60, Dead' — which is a good title — he's just wisping those strings really fast."

One thing that must be noted is the quality and richness of this recording, which was done entirely on a vintage 8-track (with no overdubbing) at a cost of just over \$100. Tielli actually thought the recording was digital, and launched into a tirade about "sentimentalists who think digital recording is cold". I was almost sorry to disappoint him . . .

"Dance of the Jazz Fascists" (apparently a stab at the Wynton Marsalis school of thought) is definitely one of the high points of this album. Tielli describes it as a "beautiful 'croonerly' melody," with "beautiful tone — soft, silky-sounding trumpet (from guest artist Scott Jensen), the guitar is very silky too — the effect is somewhat like looking through a greased lens." Other standout tracks include an interesting interpretation of Charlie Mingus' "Fables Of Faubus" and the lead-off track, "Fred's Life", featuring great solos by all members of the Trio. "The Telephone's a 'ringin'" brought bemused smiles from both of us as we marvelled at how great moaning through a saxophone can sound, and Miles Perkins lends some scary acoustic bass to "Rhythm Comes in 12 Tones".

"Great overall musicianship," Tielli comments, "and not concerned with that repulsive perfectionism. Very swinging."

### Maybe You Should Drive

Barenaked Ladies

Sire/Reprise

"Sly," is how Tielli sums up the Barenaked Ladies' second release, *Maybe You Should Drive*. Produced by Ben Mink, this 12-song release manages to retain the humour of *Gordon*, but sees the Ladies progressing musically. "I like this, I like it better than their last record — very sly arrangements," offers Tielli, who is friends with the Ladies (this was his first taste of their new material). "It's nice to hear a bit of electricity from them."

Production-wise, the album's feeling is very different from that of the Michael Phillip Wojewoda-produced *Gordon*. "It's been 'Minked'," exclaims Tielli, "it's very textural, and it forms a nice picture overall."

"The musicianship's excellent, as usual, and the Creeggan brothers are better than ever — but I wish I could hear them sing



more; Jim is a beautiful singer, and so's Andy." Tielli also thought the Ladies' writing had come a long way. "I like the lyrical content on this album a lot, more mature sounding — the tongue is a little bit sharper."

The album's first track, "Jane" shows vocalist Steven Page at his best. "I love his vocal phrasing when he says 'Jane' on that song — that's Steven!" Tielli notes. "It's very elegant." Standouts on the album are "You Will Be Waiting" ("a really beautiful song"), "The Wrong Man Was Convicted" (featuring guest musicians Mink on electric guitar, Kirsten Nash on alto sax and Carolyn Ricketts on flute) and the funky "Great Provider" — and the Ladies' witticism really shines on "A" ("Hey you, I like that little homage to BT0 at the beginning," notes a grinning Tielli).

"Seeing these guys and all that happened over those two years was so exciting, and I got to observe the dynamics of fame; *The Dynamics Of Fame* being the title of my first — yet to be written — book," laughs Tielli. "I took notes watching them. They opened for us one year in a little club in Ottawa and the next year, we opened for them at a football stadium in Ottawa!

"I wish my band would take the time to get into a groove like they do."

### Riddles Are Abound Tonight

Sausage

Interscope/Prawn Song

"Nauseously funky" was Tielli's first comment on the debut album by original Primus members Les Claypool (bass), Jay Lane (drums) and Todd Huth (guitar) — collectively known as Sausage. From the moment Huth's completely bent guitar riff on the opening track, "Prelude To Fear" came oozing out of the speakers, I knew I had a convert on my hands.

"I could get to like this album a lot. The feel is like the Talking Heads, but without the masturbation of insecurities — not that I mind at all the masturbation of insecurities and neuroseses.

"Love the guitarist, the contrasts in tones — like clean Les Paul with both pick-ups on," remarks Tielli. "It must be so much fun to play in this band.

"All the tones of the instruments sound totally real. Like the first album (both, coincidentally or not, were recorded at The Corn studio in Berkeley, CA), it's not concerned with being perfect and that's a great trend, because there's so much out there that's too slick — and spirit is so much more important than the technical aspects of what's going on."

There's no denying that certain magic that seems to happen with trios is evident on this album — no jostling for space here, but a nice balance of all elements and some interesting musical interpretations. "They're taking time out to travel . . . nice, long journeys," muses Tielli.

This album really flows from beginning to end — a strangely warped, but very listenable recording. Notable tracks include the above-mentioned "Prelude To Fear" and "Recreating" — with again, some very fine guitar work by Todd Huth. "The transistor distortion on the guitar is really awesome," notes Tielli, "none of this tube shit — I like the sound of capacitors rattling." It goes without saying that Claypool's bass playing inspires throughout the album — and it seems that he's going to be a force to be reckoned with on the production field as well if these latest Prawn Song releases are any indication. "His low string is just flapping on a lot of this and you hear wood — there's nothing wrong with traditionalists, but these guys are *not*," enthuses Tielli, impressed with the artistic reach of this recording. Style-wise, it's an almost indescribable soundscape, but the final track's title carries a warning that sufficiently summed up its effect on us — "Caution Should be Used While Driving a Motor Vehicle or Operating Machinery". "There's no boundaries to where you can steal from or what you can use," remarked Tielli on the inventiveness of *Riddles Are Abound Tonight*. "Technology is technology, whether it's a clay drum or a Sun computer."

Perhaps the highest praise Tielli exalts on this debut Sausage release was his comment, "This album makes you want to check to see if your fly's done up!"



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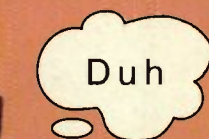
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Canada's **Crash Test Dummies** have recently signed an artist endorsement agreement with **Dean Markley Strings**.

The group has enjoyed enormous success on the charts both in Canada and the U.S. with their album **God Shuffled His Feet** and the single "Mmm Mmm Mmm", and has been touring the U.S. with **Elvis Costello** on the **Brutal Youth Tour**.

According to Rich Friedrich, Dean Markley's director of artist relations, the **Crash Test Dummies'** strings of choice are the **Dean Markley Blue Steel Electric Regulars** and **Blue Steel Bass Strings**.

# BREAKS

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

...Cabletek Electronics Ltd. of Port Coquitlam will be conducting clinics in cities across Canada on acoustical and electromagnetic noise prevention in both recording studios and for live sound.

The **We Hate Noise** clinics will look at such areas as selecting the best cable to do the job, how to save money, grounding schemes, balanced lines, isolation transformers and patch bays. The seminars will also cover signals, the problems that can cause data errors and will also take a quick look at the state of fiber-optic systems.

For more information, contact Cabletek at (604) 942-1001 or one of the dealers listed below to reserve a place.

- Steve's Music - Ottawa ..... Sept. 6 7:00 pm
- DB Recording - Montreal ..... Sept. 7 1:00 pm
- Richard's Audio - Ottawa ..... Sept. 7 7:00 pm
- Boite GL - Montreal ..... Sept. 8 7:00 pm
- Mus. Richard Gendreau - Quebec ..... Sept. 12 7:00 pm
- Steve's Music - Montreal ..... Sept. 13 7:00 pm
- Italmelodie - Montreal ..... Sept. 14 7:00 pm
- Sonorisation Spectrum - Montreal ..... Sept. 15 7:00 pm
- Tom Lee Music - Vancouver ..... Sept. 20 7:00 pm
- Advance Electronics - Winnipeg ..... Sept. 26 1:00 pm
- Long & McQuade - Winnipeg ..... Sept. 26 7:00 pm
- B. Sharp Music - Regina ..... Sept. 27 7:00 pm
- H.E.L. Music - Saskatoon ..... Sept. 28 7:00 pm
- Ward Connection - Vancouver ..... Oct. 11 7:00 pm
- Long & McQuade - Toronto ..... Oct. 17 7:00 pm
- Steve's Music - Toronto ..... Oct. 18 7:00 pm
- Audio Operations - Mississauga ..... Oct. 19 7:00 pm

- JSGS - Toronto ..... Oct. 20 7:00 pm
- Teletech - London ..... Oct. 24 7:00 pm
- Central Music - Welland ..... Oct. 25 7:00 pm
- Lakeshore Music - Burlington ..... Oct. 26 7:00 pm
- Saved By Technology - Toronto ..... Oct. 27 7:00 pm

...Norris-Whitney Communications Inc. has launched **The Music & Audio Connection**, the International On-Line Forum for Musicians and Music and Audio Professionals. The forum is being featured on Delphi, North America's fastest-growing computer on-line service. Entry to the Forum is free after joining Delphi, on which a one-month free trial is available. Delphi can be accessed with a local phone call worldwide. Music & Audio Connection members can take advantage of the following features: file libraries, industry news, discussion groups, electronic mail to millions of computer users worldwide, live conferences, use-friendly Internet access, direct connection to hundreds of BBSs, shopping services and travel

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

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For further information, contact: Norris-Whitney Communications Inc., 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3 (905) 641-3471, FAX (905) 641-1648, Internet: norcomm@delphi.com.

...MusicQuest 94, sponsored by Yamaha Canada Music, recently held their national final judging in Toronto. The winning act, chosen by a panel of industry experts, is *Robert and The Rainmakers* of Montreal. The group will be travelling to Japan in October to compete in the MusicQuest World finals *Canadian Musician* will feature a followup story on

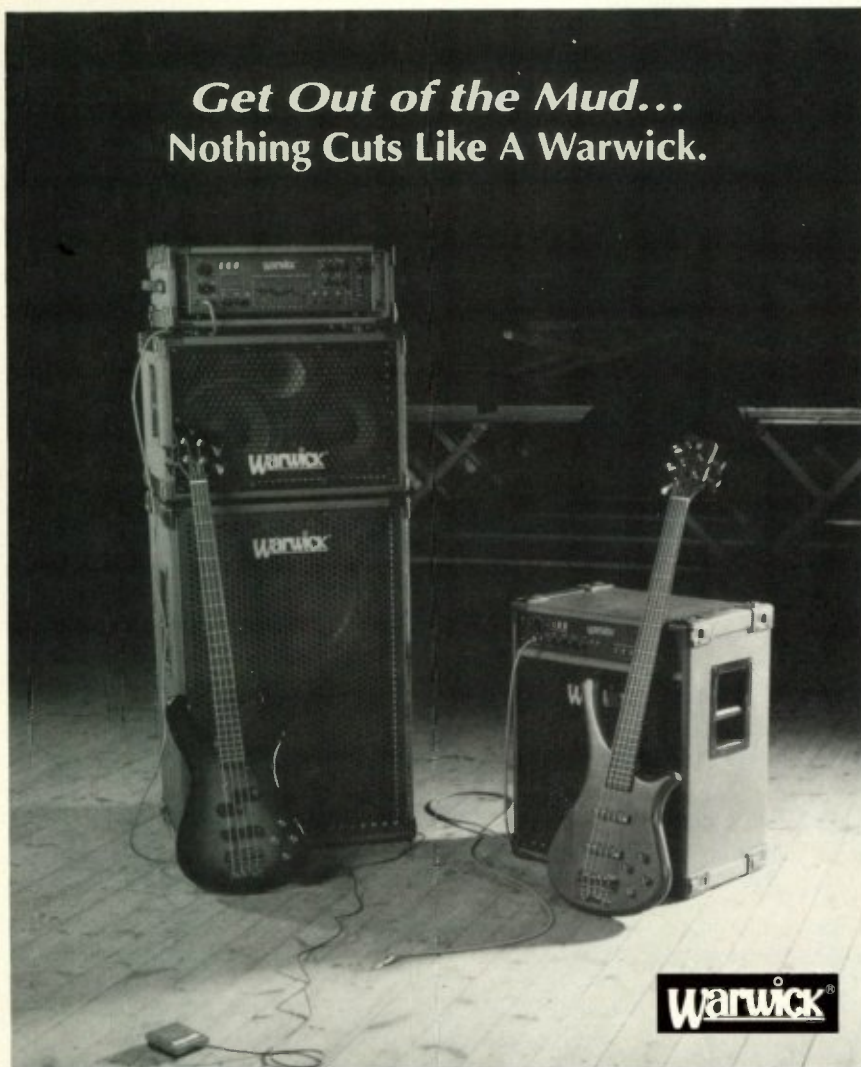
their trip in the December issue.

For further information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music, 135 Milner Ave., Scarborough, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732.

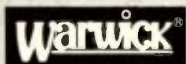
...CINARS 1994, the International exchange for performers will be held November 29-December 2, 1994 in Montreal, PQ.

CINARS will present two-hour shows, consisting of excerpts in dance, multimedia and interdisciplines, music, theatre and variety.

For information, contact: CINARS, 3575 St. Laurent, #820, Montreal, PQ H2X 2T7 (514) 842-5866, FAX (514) 843-3168.



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...Professional Sound magazine will present **Advanced Studio Recording**, an intensive one-day seminar for engineers, producers and musicians at The Metalworks Recording Studio in Mississauga, ON. The same seminar will run Saturday, November 19 and Sunday, November 20, and attendees may choose which seminar date they prefer to attend.

This high-end seminar will focus on many aspects of studio recording including recording equipment and studio acoustics, session procedures, recording and miking techniques, overdubs, digital and hard-disk recording, the MIDI studio, on-location recording and audio for video. Engineers from both Canada and the U.S. will be on-hand to share advice on the latest developments and techniques being used in recording studios today.

Registration fee for the seminar is \$95.00 and those interested are advised to register well in advance as attendance for the event is limited. To register by credit card, call toll-free in Canada and the U.S. 1-800-265-8481; or you may mail your cheque or money order to: Norris-Whitney Communications Inc., 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3. Be sure to indicate which seminar day you prefer to attend.

...Canadian Music Week '95 invites all Canadian musicians to submit your demo package and bio by November 30, 1994 to be considered for a showcase in the annual **Canadian Music Week Festival**, running March 20 - 26, 1995 in Toronto, ON.

To submit an act for consideration, please complete a Festival Application Form and send with a photo, press kit and a minimum of three songs on cassette/CD/video along with a \$20.00 application fee per submission (certified cheque or money order) payable to: Canadian Music Festival Inc., PO Box

# BREAKS

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...SOCAN Advanced Songwriter Workshops will be held in five Canadian cities this fall. The workshops are designed to accommodate advanced level songwriters who display a solid grasp of their craft. Only 12 songs will be admitted per workshop. Events are scheduled for Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal (a French-language workshop), Edmonton and Halifax.

The workshop fee is \$150 and the events will take place over the course of a weekend. See our **Events** calendar for dates and information numbers for each city.

...H.E.A.R. (Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to prevent hearing loss among musicians and their audiences by promoting awareness of hearing issues and educating the public about the nature of sound. Many musicians (including Pete Townshend, a known sufferer of tinnitus) support or are active within the organization. For more information or to find out how you can become involved in their work, call H.E.A.R.'s 24-hour hotline at (415) 773-9590, or write to: H.E.A.R., PO Box 460847, San Francisco, CA 94146.

...The Alesis Whole Lotta Palooza Tour '94 comes to Toronto, ON on September 22, 1994 (Metro Toronto Convention Centre) and Montreal, PQ on September 23, 1994 (Hotel Lord Barry). The clinics will feature the newest Alesis products including the QuadraSynth Master Keyboard, S4 Sound Module and QuadraVerb 2, as well as an advance preview of the soon-to-be-released Midiverb 4. For more information, contact Alesis at (310) 558-4530, FAX (310) 836-9192, e-mail: ALECORP@Alesis1.usa.com.

...The Pacific Music Industry Association has established the **PMIA/Fraser MacPherson Music Scholarship Fund** to honour the memory of Vancouver-based jazz musician Fraser MacPherson, who passed away in September, 1993 as a result of cancer. The funds will be pre-

sented as \$2000 bursaries to young instrumentalists.

The first deadline for scholarship applications is November 1, 1994. For details and an application form, contact the PMIA at (604) 873-1914.

...Upcoming deadlines for **FACTOR's Independent Artists' Recording Loan Program** are: Rock, Country, Easy Listening, Dance/Rap: September 30, 1994 & December 19, 1994. Children's, Classical, Folk/Blues, Jazz, Reggae, Worldbeat: October 31, 1994. For more information, contact **FACTOR** at (416) 368-8678.

...Showcase submissions for **Undercur-**

**rents '95**, taking place in Cleveland, OH May 18-20, 1995, are now being considered. Acts interested in showcasing at the festival should send a three-song cassette, short bio, 8x10 black and white photo and a \$10 (U.S. funds) processing fee. Also include information on the style of music you play, your latest release, the number of musicians in your act and which performing rights society, if any, you belong to.

Deadline for submissions is February 1, 1995. For more information, contact: Undercurrents, PO Box 94040, Cleveland, OH 44101 (216) 241-1902.

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**TESTED ON  
PAGE 23**

REAL WORLD  
**ROAD TEST**  
TESTING  
PRODUCT

**BOSS DR-5  
DR. RHYTHM  
SECTION**

BY DOUG BLAZE

In the beginning there was the drum machine; and Ikutaro saw it was good. From its humble beginnings in the early '60s, the Rhythm Ace and its creator, Mr. Ikutaro Kakehashi, started what few realized would become a revolution. The promise was simple: offer a musician a way to create the sonic illusion of more than one musician. Who knew then that Mr. Kakehashi would help lead us, through his company Roland, into the MIDI age?

The evolution has brought us hundreds of drum machines, keyboards and sound modules from various manufacturers. The BOSS division of Roland has offered the Dr. Rhythm drum machine series since 1979 and in the latest incarnation of the series, the DR-5 Dr. Rhythm Section has dramatically expanded on this concept. The revolution continues!



**TESTED ON  
PAGE 26**

**WHAT IS IT?**

As the name Dr. Rhythm Section implies, it's much more than a drum machine. The DR-5 is a self-contained four-piece band with a rehearsal and recording studio at your disposal! It's a sequencer, drum machine, multi-timbral sound source, tuner, monophonic guitar synth, electronic



**TESTED ON  
THIS PAGE**

chord book, guitar amp simulator, metronome and pattern-based instrumental style player all in one little package.

At first glance, the DR-5 looks like a slightly oversized calculator with 61 buttons, an alpha numeric dial and various outputs and inputs including MIDI In and Out on the back. It will run for three to six hours with carbon and alkaline batteries respectively. It would be wise to opt for the AC adapter. It's small enough to make it easily portable and includes a stereo mini jack headphone output 'a la Walkman'.

As you stare at it for a few seconds, you realize that it's laid out to emulate the first five frets of a six-string guitar. There's a large multi-purpose LCD with another five frets worth of guitar and an octave of piano keyboard starting at C. When the chord function is on, the LCD shows the fingerings of both the guitar and keyboard chords. The frets can be shifted to move chords up and down the software neck through two of the function buttons. This effectively can be used as an electronic chord book. There's also a guitar tuner function button that lets you use the LCD to access the built-in guitar tuner. The LCD also displays tempo, song, pattern and editing information.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

As a pattern-based 4-track sequencer, the DR-5 is laid out very much like a drum machine. The sounds are organized around drum kits. The 'Kit'

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## ROAD TEST

is comprised of the drum sounds on the drum track and three additional polyphonic instrumental sounds on tracks 1 to 3. If the 45 preset kits don't satisfy your needs, 16 user kits can be created. You can create your own MIDI note assignment for the drums on any of these kits if you like. There are 200 preset and 200 user-created patterns that take advantage of these 'Kits'. A 'Song' is made up of 'Patterns' linked together and each pattern can be up to four bars long. Several time signatures are available for each pattern and you can record and edit in either real or step time, using either a MIDI keyboard or an electric guitar.

Polyphonic entry on all the tracks is also possible via 36 little rubber pads on the top. They represent five frets of a guitar and the open strings. The musical alignment can also be changed to represent a 6-string bass or a vertical chromatic arrangement. To get to higher frets, there is a fret shift function that lets you access up to 24 frets. There's also an octave shift for tracks 1 to 3, letting the pitch of the pads be brought up or down an octave. Taping in a drum part is easy enough and the recorded input can automatically be quantized up to its maximum resolution of 48 clocks per quarter note. If you're not happy with the feel, the DR-5 has a time shift function that lets you shift any specified note in step edit mode by + or - 7 degrees. The pads have a nice feel to them and the unit seems solid enough to take a good pounding and keep on sounding! The pads are not velocity-sensitive, but by holding down various accent buttons, you can realize four different velocity levels per note or chord.

One very innovative idea is the inclusion of a pitch to voltage converter in the DR-5. This makes it possible to record monophonic melodies into new user patterns using an electric guitar as the input device. I found this most useful for inputting bass lines. The patterns can't memorize pitch bend information, although it will recognize it in real time through the guitar input or an external MIDI source. A guitarist can play monophonic synth lines live, using the guitar input to trigger the internal sounds of the DR-5. It also sends the information, including pitch bend and velocity, to the MIDI Out so you can record into an external MIDI sequencer or trigger a monophonic sound in another MIDI module!

The tracking is adequate, but it's not quite as good as any of the new dedicated guitar synths — however, it's important to consider the price and application difference. Part of the reason the tracking isn't as good as a dedicated guitar synth is because it's monophonic. You have to execute your single lines very cleanly, avoiding sounding more than one note at a time. The tracking of the wound strings is not as responsive as the other strings, especially as you move down in pitch towards the open position. I've found this is a problem in varying de-

grees with any pitch to voltage system for guitar. What I often did to compensate for this was to play in the line one or two octaves above, and then bring it down again with the transpose feature. The octave shift for the tracks is useful as well. Although this system is not perfect, I did appreciate being able to use my own guitar to input the music.

Recording entire chords in step or real time can be achieved using a MIDI keyboard or by pressing two buttons specifying the chord type and its root. Several variations of the chord voicings are available, as well as user-created voicings. It's also possible to create original chords through editing the preset chords and storing them in the user memory area. I liked the fact that the chords are displayed on the LCD for both keyboard and guitar. This makes it a great little chord tutor and ear training device. The type of preset chords available cover a wide enough harmonic spectrum to make them practical in a variety of musical genres. Just about any chord type is possible.

For one of my first tests, I decided to take the DR-5 along on a three-hour car trip. I brought the manual, which is in readable English this time, but wanted to see if I could figure it out without it. When I arrived at my destination I had a new song programmed. Imagine how many I could have programmed if I weren't driving! (just kidding). There was still more to learn about the DR-5, but it was laid out simply enough to get at it quickly. The headphone output was loud enough to work in a moving vehicle as well.

My next test was to see if I could use the MIDI Out to record a monophonic bass line into my MIDI sequencer. It worked! As I said before though, I had to be conscious of my technique to make it a viable input device. I honestly didn't expect it to work as well as it did.

There is supposedly room for 20 songs in the internal memory. It's capable of memorizing up to 5000 MIDI events, which doesn't seem like much, but because it typically uses repeated patterns and doesn't memorize pitch bend and aftertouch, it's enough to work with. It really depends on how complex your patterns and songs are. Although in live use this is not enough memory to fill up four forty-minute sets, it can certainly supplement any live performance by a single or duo act. Storing the contents of the internal memory is easily done by initiating a MIDI sysex dump, and you can also send any patterns or songs in real time to an external MIDI sequencer.

External start and stop control is available either through MIDI or through the foot controller inputs on the back of the unit. The DR-5 can either be the master or slave in a MIDI sync situation. Through the use of a stereo input jack, two individual foot pedals can be used to send various sorts of information. Virtually any of the top panel controls can be duplicated in the separate foot controllers. For example, there's a repeat key function that lets you repeat a user-specified number of patterns and then con-



tinue the song. Assigning this to a foot pedal would let you add an extra verse or chorus to a live performance of a song. Another function that adds flexibility during playback is called 'Specified Pattern Change'. This lets you switch during live play to a variation pattern, or a fill-in pattern to either the variation or original pattern. I like the fact that it can be used live and still offer some interaction with the performer. Songs can also be chained together with their playback pre-programmed.

## HOW ARE THE PRESET PATTERNS?

There are 200 preset and 200 user-definable rhythm section patterns available. I found the quality of the preset patterns excellent. The musical content is a little cliché, but very convincing as a rhythm section. The styles that have been covered within these preset patterns are quite extensive. I found all the preset patterns musically credible and quite usable — even in a professional application. The preset patterns also show off the different kit configurations. Preset patterns can be copied into new blank user patterns and edited for your personal application. The patterns, in essence, give you a good starting point or can be used all by themselves. The combination of quality sounds and sequence patterns adds up!

## HOW DOES IT SOUND?

BOSS has managed to pack a lot of punch into this tiny package. The DR-5 has 256 16-bit sampled sounds with 19 voices of polyphony on board. I found the quality of the sounds quite good and musically usable. As the name 'Rhythm Section' implies, the sounds cater to that application. There are 33 kick drums, 41 snares, 27 toms, 18 cymbals, 39 percussion instruments, 11 FX sounds and a partridge in a pear tree! Some

of the appropriate drum sounds were sampled with reverb. The samples can cover styles varying from Rap to Rock to Latin to Jazz. There are also 82 different instruments including keyboards, strings, wind and synth sounds, with an emphasis on guitars and bass. The guitar sounds are really good. There are quality samples of acoustics and electrics and a very usable heavy guitar sound. There are virtually no useless sounds on the unit, and enough different samples to satisfy several different musical tastes. Although it's not a GS or General MIDI device, it's very comfortable as a self-contained laptop MIDI system.

The inclusion of a guitar amp simulator makes it possible to plug a guitar directly into the unit and mix the sound of the tracks and guitar in the headphone output. It also sends the mix to the main stereo outs, so it would be possible to plug in your effects pedals into the DR-5 and go directly to a mixing console for live or recording purposes. This would help warm up the sound of directly injected guitar.

## CONCLUSION

This unit is smokin'! At a suggested list price of \$695.00 (and competitive retailers will sell for less), the DR-5 is a bargain. I would have liked to have seen pitch bend memory in the patterns, but realize it would have cost considerably more if this had been implemented. It's not intended as a high-end sequencing tool and sound module, but if you're building your MIDI rig from scratch or looking for an inexpensive but potent demo tool, I don't know of anything else that can do so much for so little!

For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music, 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V6V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552.

*FREELANCE WRITER DOUG BLAZE IS A SINGER/SONGWRITER/GUITARIST/CLINICIAN WHO OWNS HIS OWN PROJECT STUDIO AND IS JUST STARTING UP HIS OWN RECORD LABEL.*

CM

# SOLDANO HOT ROD 50 PLUS

BY PETER HORVATH

Michael Soldano is the kind of guy that has an innate desire to build the best possible quality guitar amplifiers — regardless of cost. His designs are of a high quality and his amps and modifications are sought out by many of the industry's top performers as well as manufacturers. His designs are not limited only to the amplifiers and preamps that he builds in the U.S.A. or designs for other companies, but also aftermarket upgrades that are available — for instance, his snap-in high gain module for any tube amp. Also, his utilization of MIDI and mechanics as seen in one of his guitar preamps is truly unique to the Soldano school of electronics design.

The Soldano company, until recently, resided in what is left of beautiful downtown L.A. Michael is from Seattle, where his amplifier company first got going, and where it is once again established in 'post quake' fashion. Actually, the reason that Michael got into the amplifier business was that he had bought a 'top-of-the-line' amp that, to him, sounded utterly horrible for the money — so he built his own amp. Not only was he happy with the results, but it seems that many other guitar players in Seattle wanted that Soldano sound as well. A number of people promised to buy his amps once he had them built so that he could keep costs down by purchasing parts

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in quantity. He built these amps and called his clients to pick them up. Needless to say, some of his customers reneged on the deal and he was stuck with a few of his

first amps. Boy, they must be kicking themselves now! Shortly after this incident, he made the move to the brighter lights of eL Eh? and set up shop to compete with the thousand other guitar shops in the city. The going was quite rough, it seems, until Steve Lukather bought one of his amps. Soon after that, demand started to grow among the world's best guitar players for these incredibly souped-up apocalyptic-sounding amps.

Before long, Eddie Van Halen, Mark Knopfler, Eric Clapton, The ArcAngels and Lou Reed, among others, were using his amps in the studio and on stage. As the Soldano reputation started to grow, so did his product list. He began manufacturing guitar preamps as well as amplifiers and now has several models available of each. One of his preamps is even MIDI-controlled — and in a most entertaining way; the MIDI is used to control motorized pots on the front panel of the preamp. Kick in a MIDI program change and watch the knobs move to a previous setup. It seems that few companies are designing mojoboodah-megasizzler git-tar amps and other products, but Soldano is one of the few manufacturers doing this

and he is at the top of the heap.

What I have here with me is the Soldano Hot Rod 50 Plus guitar amplifier, encased in a very good looking purple Tolex. This megasizzler also comes with a quarter-stack speaker box that houses two 12" speakers that gives all the thump and squeal of a regular half-stack 4x12 box — and, it fits easily into just about any car on the market (unless, of course, it's a two-seat speedster) and will handily fit onto any stage.

The speaker box is fairly directional, just like any 4x12 box, and is inherent in the design of the closed back cabinet; yet it sounds good around the side of the box and will definitely blow you away standing right in front of it — especially if you've got the volume turned up. This cabinet looks to be a little deeper than the standard 4x12 box, which may help to add to the thick sustained sound of the cabinet. The quarter-stack cabinet came loaded with Soldano's own speaker design which sounded quite good; in fact, I thought it was a pair of Celestions until I opened up the back to take a peek inside. Celestion speakers are the optional speaker for this cabinet, but if the Soldano speakers sound this good, then what's the point of options?

The tone coming out of this speaker box is full-range, with a bottom end thump that reminds me of the last *Earthquake* movie and a high end that cuts through any fog of sound, yet remains present and has plenty of character. But the best part is the one that

your neighbours will hate — this amp is LOUD. For best results and a quick eviction, stick in your earplugs and turn it up! I plugged in and started to get a feel for the amp when I suddenly felt a presence about me. Lo and behold, I turned around to see my neighbour's head sticking through the wall, his jaw a-flappin', but no sound. I stopped playing to see what the fuss was all about, and he tells me that he can hear it *two blocks* away! Yep, plenty o' juice in this one. (My neighbour was quite happy when I pulled out the amp stand that the distributor shipped with the package. This stand puts your guitar amp on a 45 degree angle that places the sound right in your face, so that you can keep the volume down to a minor roar. The stand is made by the Take-A-Stand people and is an all-steel construction and even holds a 4x12 cabinet solidly. Soundmen are going to love this one; it's strong and it folds up, too!)

The Hot Rod 50 Plus will easily handle any gigging situation short of Make Believe Gardens. It seems that the demand for arena-sized amps is waning; Marshall stacks are fewer and farther between in the showcases of the retail music biz — in fact, many stores now stock only one or two 4x12 boxes since the demand for them has diminished and fewer guitar players (or roadies) are willing to break their backs lugging around a prehistoric monolith. The newer amp designs provide plenty of crunch and volume in a package that is much easier to carry on your favourite transit system;



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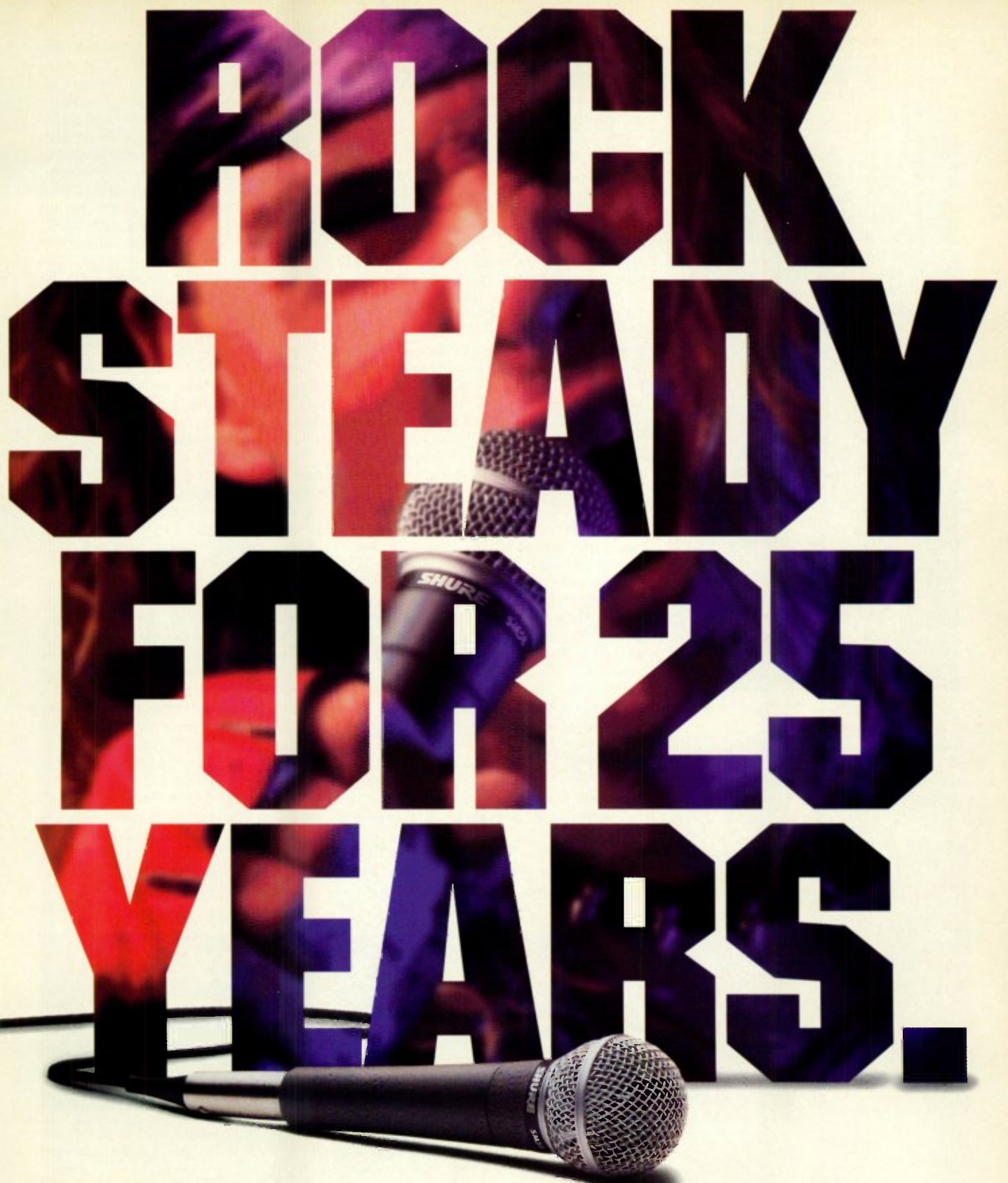
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hence, the Soldano design. Although the Hot Rod 50 Plus is somewhat larger than the average single speaker combo amp, it is considerably smaller and lighter than a half stack and it has a carrying handle on top, making it easy to lug around.

Let's cut away to the brains of the operation here, the Hot Rod 50 Plus amp itself. The amp is housed in a Marshall-style box and is covered in the same purple Tolex as the cabinet. Instead of the solid front and back, Soldano has decided to replace that with an aluminum mesh that lets a hurricane through for great ventilation since all tube amps tend to run fairly hot. This also helps to increase the life expectancy of many of the components in the amp by keeping running temperatures down and it does that quite nicely — and looks pretty cool, too. The amp's chassis is painted white and has the names and numbers of all the controls silkscreened onto it. Taking a closer look at the construction of the amp, we find that this amp is designed with road-ruggedness in mind. The circuit board is made of fibreglass and is mounted solidly onto the chassis. The components used are of good quality — for example, the circuit board-mounted porcelain tube sockets that dissipate heat much better than their bakelite counterparts and the high-quality capacitors that are used will last a lot longer than their 'buy-in-bulk-cheap' counterparts. Upgrading component quality is probably the best way to upgrade your amplifier's sound and it is really quite drastic the difference a few well-placed components make in the quality of your sound; so it's nice to see that this amp is loaded with top-quality parts.

Included on this amp is a tube-buffered effects loop (!!!!!) and remote channel switching. Between the regular high gain channel and the super high gain channel is a switching circuit that switches quietly between the two channels without thumps or other unusual noises. Each channel has its own input gain control and master volumes to help you set up quickly without

affecting the other channel, and the tone controls are shared by both channels. I might make mention here of another feature the Soldano amplifiers are infamous for — they go to 11 (making them perfect for Spinal Tap-esque applications). My own personal taste found it difficult to find a setting that was perfect for both channels, winding up with a sound that tended to be just a little too bright in the cleaner channel while the dirtier channel sounded great... not a big loss, and a quick mod here and there ought to fix that and any other minor annoyances — of which there seemed to be very few. Tone controls include bass, middle, treble and a presence control for a fairly wide choice of tone colours. Transformers in this amp are large enough to handle any current that the amp could ask for and, of course, the fuse holder is around on the back of the amp. The front panel is rounded out with the power and standby switches and a very pretty blue pilot light.

This amp is definitely not for the faint of heart or wallet, but if you want to get scorching lead tones that leave you wanting only for an audience, then this is the amp for you. I was a little disappointed that the amp was not 100% perfect for me, but as I said, these things can be very easily taken care of. Overall, I would be hard pressed to find an amp that sounds as good as the Soldano Hot Rod 50 Plus straight out of the box. After doing numerous recordings with it, I was happy with the variety of sounds achieved from different tone and microphone setups. Although no single amp is a panacea for tone, this one fits the bill for many of today's hottest sounds and in a much more compact rig than was available just a few years ago. Guaranteed to blow your neighbours away!

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PETER HORVATH OWNS LIBERTY STREET RECORDING STUDIOS IN TORONTO, ON.

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## MARANTZ PMD740 PERSONAL RECORDING STUDIO

BY PETER HORVATH

The four-track format of recording has been with us for some time now — the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album was done on four-track way back in the mid '60s when go-go boots were all the rage — but needless to say, the concept of an *affordable* home unit was non-existent. So, about 15 years ago, Teac introduced to the marketplace an 'affordable' four-track recorder, the 144. What it gave you was the ability to record and mix four discrete tracks of audio on the readily available compact cassette format. What it *didn't* give you was fidelity. Your recording chops

had to be in top shape and you could only get mediocre sound quality, but things soon improved with the introduction of newer and better models.

As technology progressed, the four-tracker became a realistic way to record your own album — just like the Beatles did. Four-track releases are still a viable way to get your music out to the music-hungry masses, and recording yourself at home is a great way to learn about production (plus, manufacturing and releasing them is a great way to learn about how the music business runs). One producer that I work with brings

# ROAD TEST

me his pre-production work done on a four-track machine and the sound quality is very good; and I still use my X-15 as my musical notepad — so as you can see, there are plenty

of roles for the four-track format, regardless of what the state of recording is at any given time.

Marantz is a company that has a reputation for manufacturing high-quality home stereo components, a reputation that was earned through the '60s and '70s and is still well respected today.

Their equipment was noted for a clarity of sound, lots of power and longevity. Bearing all of this in mind, I had the chance to work with the Marantz version of the four-track recorder, the PMD740 (whatever happened to naming things after animals or places rather than license plates?). This unit comes as a complete four-track studio including a six-channel mixer, aux loops, cue system and even has sync capabilities. I thought to myself that this was a pretty complete unit except for effects. The first company that includes a decent multi-effects chip linked directly in their four-track unit is likely to make a serious bundle o' dough and sell a lot of units — so why not include one? The technology sure is small enough to fit, and with this many features on a top-of-the-line four-track, it's the only thing missing (thanks for letting me get that personal gripe out of the way).

The first thing you notice when you take the PMD740 out of the box are the four large-sized VU meters that sit at the top of the unit. The unit is basically a large square that has that modern 'sculpted by a wind tunnel' look to it, which is pleasant to look at, and all the controls are placed on the PMD740 to fit ergonomically and not be confusing to the eye. This machine is pretty straightforward to deal with and has a few features included that make it more than just any ol' four-track machine. Included, among others, are Dolby HX Pro, two speeds, insert points, sync capabilities, balanced mic inputs and a host of other goodies that I'll get to soon. Out of the box, this unit is ready to go — plug it in, drop in a tape and play. Setup time for the tracks is minimal and it is very easy to use.

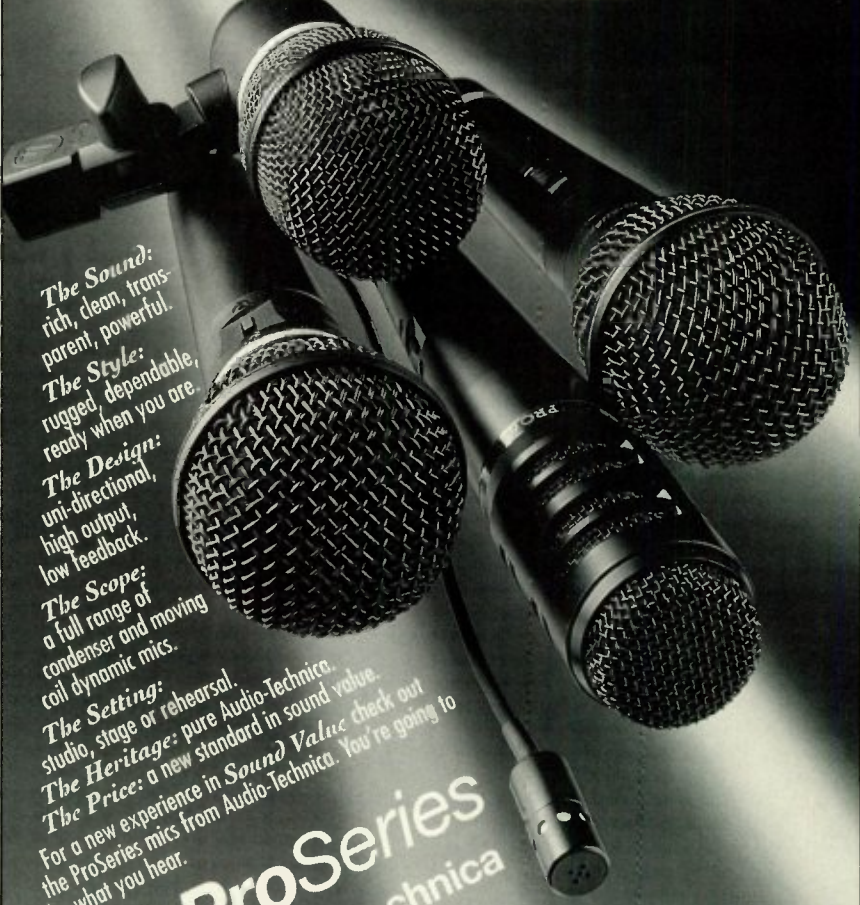
The mixer that is provided in the PMD740 is of a six-channel style, where the first four channels are full-featured and the last two are pared down versions of the first four; plus, of course, the master section. The first four channels' controls include, from the top of the strip, a trim control for the balanced mic input or the line in, depending on which input is selected; followed by a three-way EQ that has the high end shelved with a gain adjust. The mid EQ and the low EQ are of a quasi-parametric style that allows for frequency sweep and gain adjust. Below that is the F/X send level that routes the signal through a loop that goes out mono and returns in either stereo or mono, so it is configured to handle just about any effect box on the market today. Around back, on the rear panel of the unit for these first four channels, is an XLR connector for the balanced mic input, a 1/4" jack for the

line level input and a 1/4" TRS connector for an insert point. This is a feature that has a lot of merit for me because it allows for much variety in signal processing. Rather than having two dedicated F/X loops which will allow only two effects, this configuration allows the individual channel's signal to be routed to any signal processor (compressor, noise gate, etc.) or effect unit for much more versatility than most other 4-track units. Below the F/X send is the pan control for the individual channel. The additional two channels are configured in a simple style that has only one input, which is the 1/4" line level input. At the top of the channel is the input trim followed by the EQ section, which on these two channels is a shelving EQ that has only high and low level controls. The EQ is followed by the F/X send

knob and below that is the pan control. The unit has a total of seven faders, one for each channel and one stereo master fader. The master section has not one, but two headphone feeds — where one is intended for the musician out on the floor and the other feed is for the operator. This feed is switchable for monitoring either the line out, the cue feed or the F/X feed without affecting the other headphone feed. There is also an F/X master send control as well as a master return level for the loop. You must remember about the return master or it could lead to some confusion hunting down wayward signals.

There are some really cool features on this machine that I would like to spend some time familiarizing you with. First is the noise reduction, which is DBX and the best feature of this

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is that it is switchable in or out. This becomes particularly important when laying down a sync tone (be it FSK, SMPTE or whatever else you might utilize) since the DBX is a compression and expansion type of system, which winds up distorting the sync tone to the point where it may become unreliable — so switching it off is necessary. On the back panel of the unit is an input and an output for the sync tone which sends the tone to track 4 on the machine, sending it through the least possible amount of electronics to keep signal degradation to a minimum. To complete the sync system, Marantz decided to install an additional stereo input that gets routed directly to the stereo buss, again minimizing routing to other areas of the mixer to keep the signal as clean as possible.

The PMD740 is a two-speed unit as well. It runs at 1-7/8 ips as the standard speed and at 3-3/4 ips as the high speed. You will notice a difference in sonic quality between the two speeds — at the slow speed, the frequency response is 40 Hz-12.5 kHz and in the high speed, the frequency response is 40 Hz-16 kHz. The higher speed also runs a little bit cleaner due to the nature of tape: the higher the speed, the lower the tape hiss. Signal-to-noise ratio is claimed to be 85dB with the noise reduction on and has a distortion figure that is less than 1.5%. There is a four-digit electronic tape counter that is switchable to view one of five modes: memory location #1; memory location #2; punch point #1; punch point #2; or the current tape location. The system can also be programmed to rehearse through punches and automatically drop into record and out of record at predetermined locations on the tape. There is also a pitch control which allows for a variation up and down of 10% and has a detent in the slider at the center position.

Overall, I found the Marantz PMD740 to be quite an effective little machine. It was easy to operate without constantly having to look in the manual to figure out how to stop the machine. I found the unit sounded pretty good, with a good variation available through the EQ. When I did have to refer to the manual, I found it to be an easy read; informative, clear and concise, with plenty of diagrams to ensure that you get yourself properly set up. The manual also runs the beginner through some basic audio concepts and vocabulary in a completely separate chapter, so that the experienced can sidestep this without losing any operating information. There are several manufacturers who should take note that a clearly written, descriptive manual allows their customers to utilize their products to the fullest without having to go blindly through the unit with a huge loss of time trying to figure it out. The unit is as easy to look at as it is to deal with, so overall, I would give this unit a 9 out of 10. The PMD740 is Marantz' 'flagship' into the audio recording market and if things work out well, we should expect to see a few more well thought out products from them.

For more information, contact: TC Electronics Canada Ltd., 540 Firing Ave., Baie d'Urfe, PQ H9X 3T2 (514) 457-4044, FAX (514) 457-5524.

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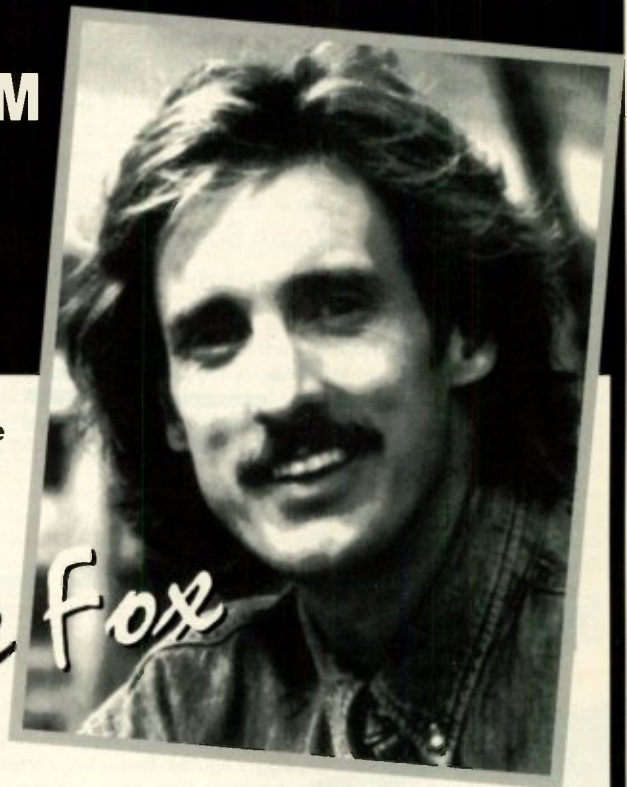
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CCMA



BY JEFF MYERS

# COSMIC BASS

**G**reetings to all of you music-crazed, sub-sonic, finger-popping, bottom-happy, toe-tapping readers out there! This being my first article for *Canadian Musician*, I am more than happy to contribute to the cause of musical awareness and honestly say, "I never met a bass player I didn't like and who I couldn't learn from". There is always something to learn in music — and in life, for that matter. Therein lies the attraction. Life is music and vice versa.

Now, I think we have sat under the cosmic tree long enough and it's time to eat some of the more tangible fruit. Let's talk about bass. Not to be confused with the aquatic variation bearing the same name, but the one that is phonetically the same as "base". This calls to mind the metaphor of laying down a solid bass groove feeling very much like that of sliding safe to home-base. That's the first thing I try to get into, 'cause if that ain't happenin', nothing else I do is gonna help. So, I gotta get into that groove!

Let's touch on technique. It does help. In my experience, great technique doesn't always make great music, but anyone with a lick of sense is past that already and is not afraid to dive into the benefits gleaned from technique. To me, technique is measured by how familiar you are with your instrument. It doesn't matter whether you play with your thumb, fingers, pick, toes or nose. As long as you can express yourself readily with a degree of consistency, you're in. Everyone has their own unique technique, which they learned either from someone else or from messing around on their own; so don't be afraid to take some lessons from players that you respect, thereby adding to your own personal style. With the right attitude, you can only profit from the experience. For me, one of the most attractive aspects of music-making is that it's a never-ending source of learning. I'll never stop being impressed by the amount of great players out there and I try to always keep my ears open. Listening is a quiet activity that is sometimes difficult to achieve.

I'd like to mention the role of technology as it pertains to the modern bass player. I believe it to be a useful tool; however, great instruments and equipment don't necessarily make great players. How well you use what you have is the real test. Learning a bit about how your instrument works mechanically as well as a general understanding of the physics of sound can only bring you closer to becoming the type of player you want to become. It's this constant inquiry into what you love doing that helps you become that "better player". If you ever stop asking yourself, "How can I be a better player?", then it's time to give it up and try something new. I can't think of a time when I didn't dream of having this or that new piece of gear, in hopes of finding that sound I hear in my mind's ear. For me, every time I acquire a new instrument it provides new inspiration for practice. I admit I'm a bit of an equipment junkie, but I have yet to find one axe that does it all for me — so the search continues. I've also learned that equipment is only part of making a good sound. The biggest part is what's in your heart and your head and how that's transferred through your body and right out your fingers onto the instrument. Good equipment can only enhance what you already have inside yourself.

I realized this several years ago while touring with the international Broadway production of *Dreamgirls*. We were in Memphis, Tennessee and after our show a few of us went to a club to check out the local scene. Upon

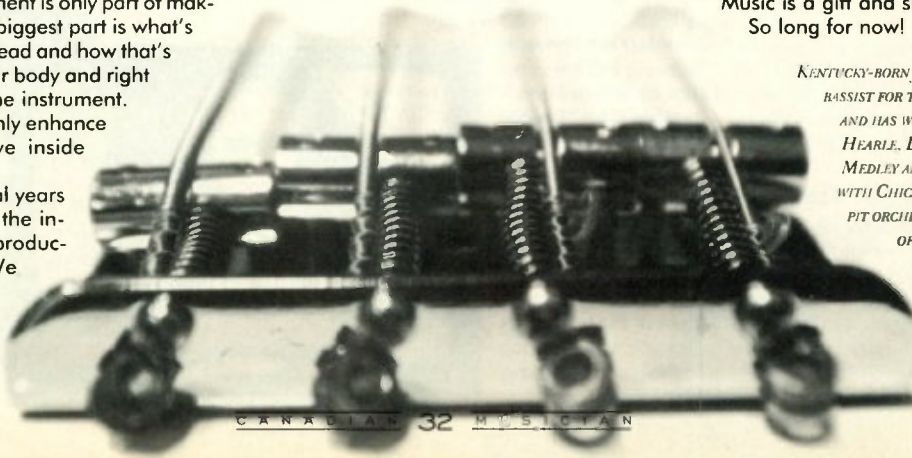
arrival, we were lucky enough to hear one of my all-time favourite bassists, Donald "Duck" Dunn, laying down one of the deepest grooves I had ever heard anyone play. Upon closer inspection, I noticed that his equipment was certainly nothing special — a Peavey four-string bass playing through an old padded Kustom amp. His sound was nothing short of amazing — punchy, fat low-end that you could ride on from here to China. I felt as if I had been baptized in the waters of the muddy Mississippi and I realized, right then and there, that it was much more than equipment that influenced the soul of the sound. I guess the point I'm trying to make here is that, while new gear can be fun, exciting and provide an excellent palate of sound, it's the body, mind and spirit of the player that really makes the sound and the music come alive. Playing an instrument is like being an athlete. You must train the body, mind and spirit if you want to play the game without getting hurt.

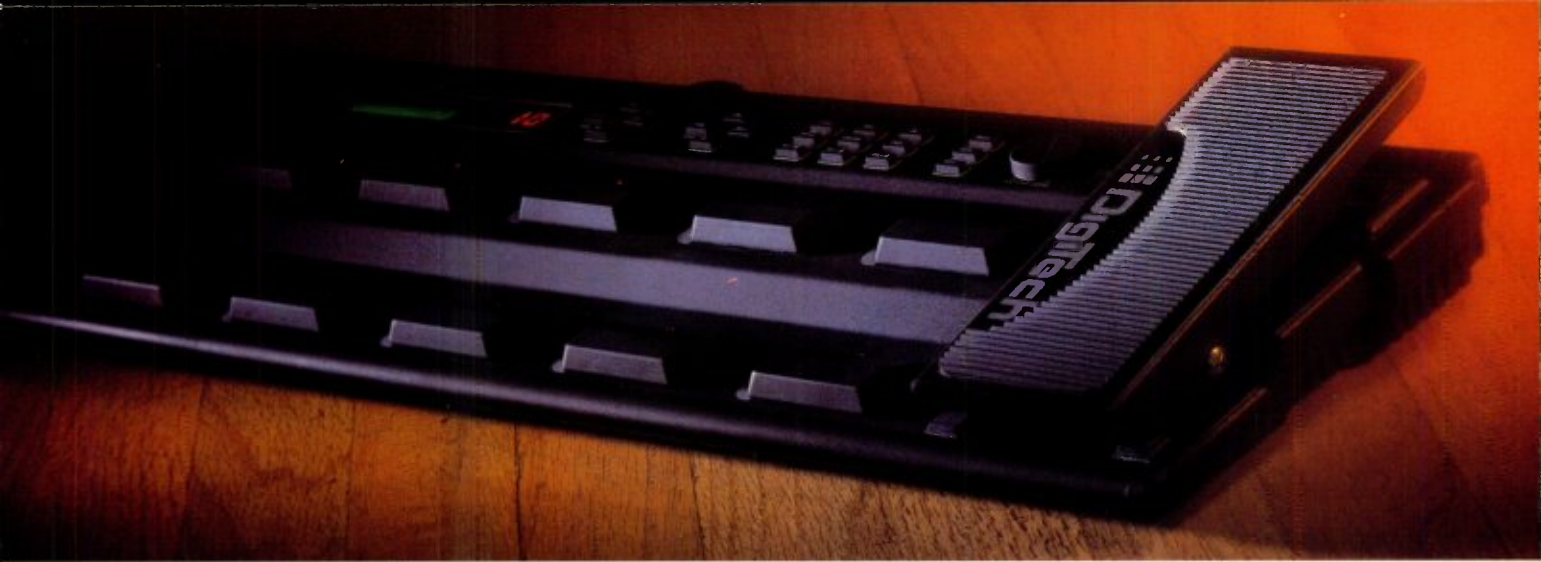
Another way to become a better player is by trying to play with cats that are on a higher level than you. This is not always easy. Sometimes they don't want to spend their time being nurse-maids, but I've found that most of the really great players are more than willing to help out by sharing some of their experiences and by trying to put you at ease. It may be very intimidating to think you're going to play with this guy or that guy, but that's the time to suck it in, breathe, let go of any preconceived notions and concentrate on making music. So, get out there and seek out the finest players in your town or wherever you might be. Talk to them, jam with them and more than likely, you'll find that we are all in this together and that a true love of music and life is more than enough common ground to get things moving in the right direction.

One last story before I sign off. A few years ago, I was touring in Texas and decided to pay a visit to that town's most famous blues bar, 'Antoinette'. It was jam-nite and it seemed that every gunslinger in town had shown up for the show-down. Obviously, I'm talking about guitarists here and believe me, there was definitely no shortage of talent in this smoky Texas corral. After about an hour of soulful guitar testifying, displayed by a variety of very talented players, a young kid came in the club to deliver a pizza to some customer. Next thing I know, this kid is onstage, guitar in hand, blowing everyone away. The crowd was going nuts and he was a hero for that night. He finished playing and went back to his job at the pizzeria. So remember — anytime you feel like you know it all and that you're the best... you're wrong! You never know when the pizza boy might come and kick your ass!

Stay lean, mean and humble but have confidence in your own ability. Keep practising and learning — not because you have to but because you want to. Keep tuning your body, mind and spirit and you'll reach your goals. Remember, it's not the destination but the journey that counts. Most of all, have fun. Music is a gift and should be enjoyed. So long for now!

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BY JAY DEACHMAN

# IMPROVISATIONAL DRUM FLAMBÉ

As we all know, the drum set is a unique instrument. Particularly in contemporary music situations, the drum set stands out as being primarily an improvisational instrument. While other musicians generally stick to pre-arranged parts (save some solos), the drummer is often improvising set-ups, fills, even full parts! (Don't scoff, Mr. Guitar Player — remember when your amp blew in front of 500 stern club-goers? Who loves ya, baby!)

The dictionary defines improvisation as: "To compose or perform without preparation." If we take this literally, this means that one of the primary tools we use every time we sit down at the kit *can't be practised*. However, for my own benefit, I began messing around with some improvisational exercises I came up with that I've found to be helpful in further developing these skills. (Either that or they are just a heck of a lot of fun!)

## Improvisational Drum Flambé

(serves one)

### Ingredients:

- 1 drummer/percussionist
- 1 drum set (brand/set-up not crucial)
- 1 open mind
- 1 imagination
- 1 private practise area
- 1 hour or more of dedicated time

First, ensure practise area is empty of distractions (such as band members). Utilize dimmed lighting, candles, incense, etc. to create atmosphere. Sit down at your kit and sit quietly for a short while, focusing yourself on the drums (meaning, forget about that argument with your significant other or whatever else is plaguing your mind). Then, proceed to try these exercises:

### Thunder Storm

In this exercise, you are attempting to replicate your idea of a thunder storm from beginning to end. For example, I would start with complete silence (calm before the storm) and quietly begin to assimilate drops of rain falling on the street. As the "rain" intensifies, in the distance, rumbling thunder is heard, the sky clouds over, the wind rises, lightning begins to dart the sky, etc. Just let yourself go and see what happens!

(Bake for 20 minutes)

### Song

Use your immense creative talents to write a song. Using the drum kit, write intros, verses, choruses and solos. The point of this is not to do an awesome drum solo, but to really have a song with identifiable sections and hooks. (Ya, Mr. Clark, I give it a nine for dancing...)

(Boil for 20 minutes)

### Romance

As goofy as this may sound, you are trying to represent a romance or romantic moment. For example, you may approach this as if you were the sole soundtrack for a movie; You being with the meeting scene (love across a crowded room?), then the first dinner and the first kiss, etc. The main reason that this exercise seems to work is because there aren't too many emotions we possess as strong as these.

(Fry for 20 minutes)

I hope that I made this concept clear, as there are endless different exercises like this that you could invent for your own fun. Just remember, there are absolutely no rules whatsoever. Utilize your instrument any way you want to get the effect you need. Have an open mind and an active imagination and get lost in your improvisation!

Until next time, I wish you all you wish for yourselves.

VANCOUVER-BASED JAY DEACHMAN PLAYS WITH JOE BROOKS AS WELL AS THE GROUP SUNDG. HE IS ACTIVE AS A STUDIO AND JINGLE SESSION PLAYER AND TEACHES PERCUSSION AT TOM LEE MUSIC IN VANCOUVER, BC.

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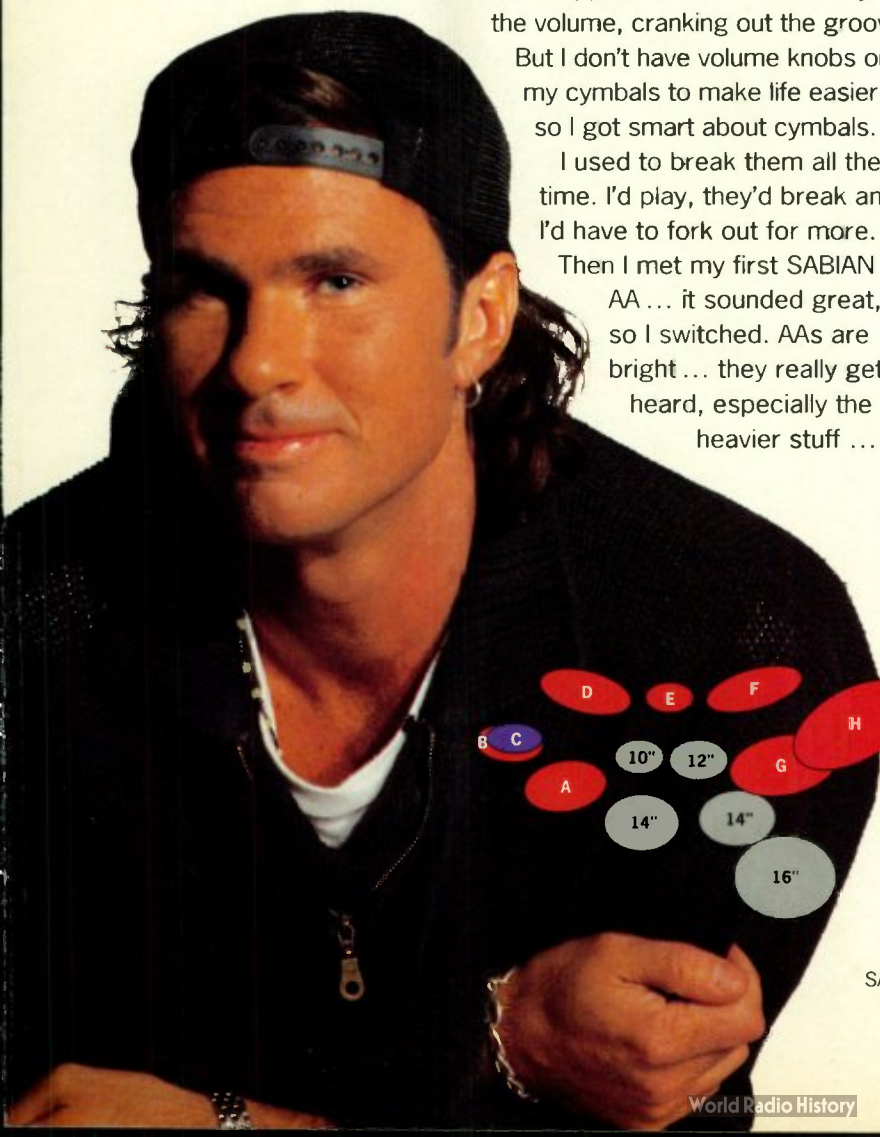
But I don’t have volume knobs on my cymbals to make life easier, so I got smart about cymbals.

I used to break them all the time. I’d play, they’d break and I’d have to fork out for more.

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# CREATIVE RECORDING

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Today, musical recordings are being created in bedrooms, project studios and state-of-the-art facilities — and also on desktop computers, live-off-the-floor, via telephone lines and in buses, churches and open spaces. The “recording studio” is no longer a fixed, tangible entity. Technology has given us freedom — our minds and souls are our studios and we are limited only by our imagination and desire.

It's an exciting time — a “golden age” of recording where the future embraces the past: where state-of-the-art technology seamlessly melds with the vintage gear of yesteryear. Where the vacuum tube and the microchip hold equal allure, and analog and digital become allies in the search for the recordist's utopia.

## DANIEL LANOIS: RECORDING IN THE LAND OF THE NEW DREAMERS

by Peter Murray

*“...a five minute drive and you're*

*into the kind of terrain that you*

*can see in these photographs.*

*It's a very special place, I call*

*it 'The Land Of The*

*New Dreamers'...”*

**D**aniel Lanois' Hamilton sanctuary is hidden from the road by a dense wall of trees, shrubs and flowering vines. Inside, the style is minimalist and seems to allow for the imagination to provide decor. Candles are lit throughout the house, creating more mood at 1 p.m. than light, and incense is burning. A makeshift ADAT studio is assembled in what appears to

be a dining room, amidst vintage amps, tube mics and scarcely legible lyrics strewn about the floor. There's definitely an atmosphere of calm here which suits Lanois' serene disposition, though it is, in fact, his production; he's on a holiday of sorts, taking time off from the recording of his third solo album in Mexico.

The man who produced some of the most

*...Continued on page 39*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MALCOLM BURN

# LANOIS' TIPS FOR MAKING GREAT RECORDINGS

## The Lanois Production Style

"I can only build on what I believe, and what the people in the room at that time believe, to be exciting; and I would only ever choose to carry on with something as long as there was a feeling about it that propelled me to the next level. So I'm very much a believer in *sonic persuasion*, if you like. If you have an amazing guitar tone, you'll come up with an amazing guitar part that will promote an amazing vocal idea that will promote an amazing response from the drummer. It's like a snowball effect; and until you have an exciting beginning of sorts, I don't think you could possibly carry on."

## Creating 'Timeless' Recordings

"A 'timeless' recording *feels right*. And a recording that feels right is usually made up of some kind of truth — for example, a true documentation of how people were playing in the room at that time, uninterrupted by external opinion. If something has a natural feeling, then that's also a real good ingredient for timelessness.

"The *irony* of timelessness is that sometimes, the most dated things are timeless. You listen to... I don't know... a P-Funk record from the early '70s — and there's a crass wah-wah pedal that is dated specific to the day — and everybody thinks it's wonderful and timeless! I think it's because there was so much commitment that went into it, it was so much the 'sound of the moment' and done with such naivete that it *is* timeless. Naivete is not something that you can be aware of when you're trying to work, it's something that you're aware of maybe a year down the road; but it's also a pretty important ingredient to recordings you want to keep listening to."

## Recording Acoustic Guitar

"I've stopped using microphones on acoustic guitars. I haven't done that in a good ten years. I use a pickup on an acoustic guitar and run it through a small amp, or I'll run it through some kind of guitar pre-amp and patch that directly to tape. I've recorded acoustic guitars for about twenty years of my life, and I got fed up with them; fed up with them booming and vocals spilling into the microphones... there's like, twenty problems you *always* have when you try and record acoustic guitars. So at this stage of my life, I've stopped miking them!"

## The Mixing Process

"I think good mixing has to do with enthusiasm. All the best mixes that I've been associated with have had to do with somebody getting in there in a moment when they really believed; and they sort of got a balance rough and ready and moved in there and hit on a sound, and other people in the room were encouraging — and you end up with a great mix. That mix could be done by myself, if I'm enthusiastic, or I might let an associate of mine do the same. I'm not very territorial about the console. If *anybody* feels like going over to do a mix, I *welcome it!* Sometimes, I'll invite the singer that's never done a mix before to sit at the console, and say, 'come up with a balance — what do you want to hear?', and then just have some fun

with it — and you'd be surprised at what people come up with. A balance and some kind of an approach is really the foundation of a great mix, I think, and just about anyone could come up with that as long as they've got an assistant around them who knows what they're doing."

## Getting A Great Sound

"If something is great and I hear from the next room, I have a simple rule: hands off for fifteen minutes — let's have some fun and listen. What that gives you is kind of like a 'frozen moment'. Whatever you like about it, you do an extensive documentation; and the documentation involves everything — the EQs, the patches, what effects you're using, compression... You write down all the details of that mix, *especially* the ingredients that excite you the most, and if you happen to have a computer, then you stick the actual mix itself and the levels into the computer. It becomes a certain standard, a point of reference, and you name the mix. Now, even in a week's time or maybe a month's time, you can put that song up and say, 'I want to get back to that most exciting position again'. And at that point, you pull out your figures book and you reset everything back as it was and you get pretty close to it."

## The Graveyard

We have a term that we use, it's called 'The Graveyard'. And whatever we've got on the master tape that we think we want to get rid of — sometimes, you do this kind of thing and two months later you think, 'Oh God, that vocal take was amazing, why did we erase it?' — well, rather than erasing we dump it to the graveyard, and it's always kind of sitting there in a library, if you like."

## Using Technology

"I guess it doesn't apply so much now, but through the '80s, anything that had to do with automation or computerization was referred to as 'Hal' (laughs)! If someone did a great mix, my first comment was always, 'Did Hal get that?...'"

## Pre-Production

"Pre-production time is the 'unofficial time'. It's the time when things are looser, defenses are down — it's a time to experiment and consider a lot of possibilities for where a recording could go. In those situations, I found that quite a lot of great seeds were sown, and they were often seeds that made their way to the final record. So I don't personally separate the two, I always record with the view of 'using it if you get it'."

## Demos

"I'll tell you a little story — I was of the opinion this friend of mine's demo had more feeling than the final master of the record that they were just about to put out — just on one song; and I called him and said, 'you've really gotta give me a shot at resurrecting this demo and see if I can get it to the level where you'll want to use it on your record'."

"He said, 'well, I don't really know the history of how it was done'. So I called up several engineers who were involved, and it was started on an 8-track half-inch, then that half-inch was put on a 16-track half-inch which gave them another eight tracks, and they just kind of barrelled right into that tape and created a 16-track out of an 8-track that had some strange dbx noise reduction — and I dumped that to an SR system. I had to take the dbx out to get the sounds to not have a pumping effect, and ultimately, this thing sounded fantastic! The vocals were beautifully clear, the guitars were full of life and in my opinion, it sounded a lot better than the final master, that was done in a proper recording setting. So the moral of the story is sometimes, this sort of unorthodox, reckless recording in backrooms and basements will bring about results that you won't get in a formal setting, 'cause maybe you've got cheap microphones or the compressor's kind of nasty... but that equipment will give you a certain kind of result."



PHOTOGRAPH BY MACCOLL BURN

# DIGITAL MULTITRACK SYSTEMS

by Peter Hamilton

So you're tired of aligning that old analog machine with less-than-nimble fingers as a result of too many razor blade editing sessions. Maybe you can't afford reels of 2" tape at \$250 bucks a pop for 16-1/2 minutes of recording time. Perhaps it's the thought of having non-destructive editing and unlimited bouncing with absolutely no degradation of the original recorded tracks that's exciting you. Or maybe, it's because you actually believe that analog recording is somehow old technology — and not as good as digital.

In any case, you need a digital fix and you need it now. Here it is kids. **Current Digital Systems Overview 10101.** All of the following products are suitable for project-based recording and are within the same, comparable price range.

## TAPE-BASED RECORDERS

The **Alesis ADAT** is a rackmountable eight track recorder utilizing a rotary helical scan head system similar to that found in your VCR. This S-VHS tape-based system will allow up to forty minutes of program recording per 120 minute video cassette. The basic sampling rate of the ADAT is 48 kHz (although varispeed will allow this to be shifted from 40.4 kHz to 50.8 kHz as required). Several units (to a maximum of 16) can be synced together and controlled by way of Alesis' BRC (Big Remote Control). The features of this external device include multi-point autolocation, track bouncing, MIDI synchronization, SMPTE read, write and generate commands and seamless multiple ADAT relay recording (as one tape ends another begins to record). Each unit comes complete with an LRC (Little Remote Control) and a glass fibre cable to connect its fibre optic in/out ports to other external devices (i.e., to make safety copies or to access the features contained within Alesis' new QuadraSynth). While recent rumblings in the outfield have questioned the reliability and longevity of its tape transport system (as yet to be proven) and the inconvenience of having to use one of its eight tracks for time code, the Alesis ADAT will remain a popular choice as a result of its ease of use, capabilities and established third party support.

The **Tascam DA-88** is an eight track, 4U rackmountable tape-based digital multi-track unit using Hi-8 videotape cartridges and capable of recording up to 108 minutes of program on a 120 minute cartridge. Sampling rates employed on this unit are 44.1 kHz and 48 kHz, although this can be modified via the +/- 6% varispeed control. A built-in tape shuttle wheel allows you to scroll either way by 1/4 times normal speed or up to 8 times normal speed. Using a single cable, several DA-88s (up to 16 machines/128 tracks) can be synced together without requiring the use of any audio tracks or an additional external synchronizer. The optional RC-848 is a remote multi-machine autolocator with record and select buttons for up to six DA-88s (48 tracks). The remote unit also contains an external shuttle wheel, 99-point autolocator, an output to synchronize with video systems and ports to allow for the control of synchronized Tascam analog decks. The simpler, and less expensive, palm-sized RC-808

offers basic transport controls and is designed for use with a single DA-88 (although additional units slaved to the master will chase locations as required). The optional SY-88 SMPTE synchronization card allows for, among other things, locking to external time code sources and MIDI machine control. Only one SY-88 sync card is required to provide SMPTE functions for all locked up units. While the DA-88 has not been on the market long enough to compare any third party support, it is fully expected that as the number of units in use continues to grow, so shall such support.

A relative newcomer to the market is the eight track, S-VHS tape-based **Fostex RD-8**. Because it uses the same tape transport system as the Alesis ADAT, the two machines are compatible and tapes are interchangeable. A built-in SMPTE package (reads/generates/chases and locks) makes this unit very attractive. Additionally, the RD-8 offers a 100-point autolocator, MIDI machine control and can take system diagnostic information displayed on its LCD screen and store that information (sampling rates, clock rates, SMPTE info, etc.) at the head of any ADAT tape. Like the ADAT, the RD-8 uses fibre optic inputs and outputs to allow for the cloning of tapes between any combination of ADATs or RD-8s. The Model 8312 remote is included with the purchase of the RD-8 and allows access to basic transport controls. MIDI Machine Control is also available as well as MIDI ports at the rear of the unit to allow for syncing the recorder directly to a sequencer.

## DISK-BASED RECORDERS

The **Akai DR4d** is a stand-alone unit that stores recorded digital information on an internal or external hard drive (or optical drive). The DR4d allows for four tracks of recording with the ability of syncing four machines together to obtain a total of 16 tracks. Because information is stored on a hard disk, one can jump to any point in the recording almost instantaneously. This also allows for copy/cut/paste and insert editing abilities not available on the above tape-based systems. Unlike computer-based recording systems however, intricate manipulation/editing features are not possible on the DR4d.

**DigiDesign's Session 8** is a Windows-based rackmountable direct-to-disk eight track recording package for IBM/compatible comput-

ers. Operating at 44.1 or 48 kHz, the system is graphics-oriented and offers onscreen EQ, mixing board, effects etc. The system comes with a DSP/SCSI card, an input/output card and associated software. All you have to supply is a 386 or better computer, sound card of high quality and a large capacity external SCSI hard disk (the system uses approximately 5Mb for each track minute; therefore, an eight track song of four minutes would require at least 160 Mb of disk space). The primary 'Mix Window' is designed to most accurately represent a familiar recording environment. Eight faders (one for each track), eight input/effect return faders and eight cue mix faders for constructing headphone mixes are available. Mute, solo and pan controls are also represented here. The Session 8 also offers a reasonably good EQ section with a choice of four different curves. At the rear of the rackmount unit there are four insert points for routing signal to compressors, etc., a stereo monitor output, mix and cue outputs and two headphone outputs. While basic editing features exist, the Session 8 is primarily a music recording package and should not be compared to more intricate and powerful editing/post programs such as Sound Tools.

Also popular and powerful are the sequencing/digital audio programs such as Emagic's Notator Logic and Steinberg's Cubase Audio. The latest versions of both DigiDesign's Session 8 and Emagic's Logic include a software-based BRC for the Alesis ADAT. This allows you to interface the two systems for track transfers and editing all within the digital domain (once in the digital domain, you try to stay there. Going through the converters a number of times has been known to degrade the original recorded signal).

Before making any purchase you should first identify your immediate and, if possible, future needs. The above brief product/system description is by no means a complete or short list of the numerous available options. If you're serious about moving into the digital domain, you'll have to investigate and evaluate these systems to meet those requirements specific to you. However, with the number of options currently available, you should be able to be up and running quickly with the flexibility to upgrade or expand at a later date.

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# CREATIVE RECORDING

...Continued from page 36

important and successful albums of the '80s (including works by U2, Peter Gabriel, Robbie Robertson and Bob Dylan) is seated on a pillow against a living room wall, hand-rolling cigarettes and expressing unusually strong (but suitable) interest in my borrowed tape recorder. He brings in an unused metal heater to use as a mic stand, politely suggests I use Dolby, reminds me that the EQ is not printed and leaves the room once again to get me a set of headphones so that I can do a quick test of the machine. Wait a minute — will this interview have the Lanois sound?... that rich, deep, warm and rootsy ambience that pervades all of his work? I start musing about the possibilities but the fantasy is brief: we launch into a discussion about recording production, the creative process, technology and gear.

Lanois had worked primarily out of New Orleans for several years, producing many albums for others and two for himself. Seeking a new perspective for the follow-up to *For The Beauty of Winona*, he decided to head further south. He loaded up an 18-wheeler with all his gear, including an Amek 6000 series console, a Studer A80 2" 24-track machine and a Postex 24-track tape machine, haggled his way through customs and moved into a house built into the side of a mountain. "I've always been fascinated with Mexico on a number of levels. I think there's a certain kind of mysticism in the air there that I like. It's a corner of the world that is very idealistic; and I think that wherever you have dreamers, I think you have a lot of creative power. A change of scenery is good for the soul and good for creativity," Lanois relates. "I rented a house looking out onto the ocean, a very nice feeling place. We just set the gear up in the house. The facility was half inside and half outside — it turned out to be terrific acoustically, because of the many different surfaces and no standing waves. You know, palapa (roof), rock, tile, open air, trees..."

The record is only partially completed, but he's come back to Hamilton for a few weeks to gain some perspective before re-entering the recording process. "I kind of use the 'guerilla hit-and-run' technique. I go in, roll up the sleeves, work real hard for two weeks or a month, then retreat — and try to gain some objectivity and listen. Then I'll go back in for another flash, come back out and listen. That's certainly how U2's *Achtung Baby* was done, and for that matter, *The Joshua Tree* as well. I wouldn't go into a studio constantly for a year or anything like that, I think that would be a sure death."

Lanois is working with a trio this time,

along with Brian Blade on drums and Darryl Johnson on bass. "I love the power and the fast communication of a trio and I'm hoping to get some of that vitality on this record." And how's it going so far? "I feel pretty good about it; I think I've broken some ground sonically and I think I've poetically gone up a few pegs."

For the album, Lanois is using the Amek 6000 series console ("It's brand new, it's got 40 channels, the modules are real skinny and the EQs are kicking — they're fantastic!") and a Studer A80 analog 24-track 2" machine. Outboard gear of choice for this album includes the Eventide 3500 Harmonizer ("that's the box we're currently spending our time with and it's pretty great").

Monitoring is being approached slightly differently for this album. Lanois explains: "We used quite a conventional front speaker system, a bi-amp combination E-V and a Clair Brothers subwoofer system. And in the back of the room, two more stacks — but more industrial stacks, PA stacks by a Dutch company called Axis. The PA stack would act as a tool for jucing people, 'cause there's nothing like volume to get bass players excited when they're doing overdubs and so on! So the control room, depending on the moment, could be turned into almost like a nightclub vibe — *pounding* bass and *sizzling* tweeters! It sounds like a simple idea, but it was a great one for getting the adrenalin going. I still use a technique of combining a wedge monitoring system with an earphone monitoring system. For certain work, I like the power of a proper stage monitoring system for doing certain overdubs or even cutting tracks not wearing phones."

When the conversation turns to the question of analog vs. digital, Lanois declares his commitment to the generation of good source sounds. "The 'warmth' that you may hear in my work comes from just about everything else *other* than the tape recorder. I think that whatever warmth gets picked up by, let's say, an analog tape machine, would be a tiny percentage compared to what you decide to *do* to get to the tape — ranging from the idea that you have, the instrument that you use, the microphone that you use, the amplifier you use, the compressor, the equalizer, the room that you're in — I think all of those things are the important ingredients rather than the tape recorder. I've gotten real warm recordings out of digital recorders. I have a little ADAT here; I've been messing with some vocals and I got a beautiful warm vocal sound — but I'm using an old tube U47 through an API pre-amp and a 550A API equalizer. *Those* are the warm ingredients,

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communication of a  
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of that vitality on  
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# CREATIVE RECORDING

and the tape recorder is a documentation device that I think is relatively 'obedient' to what it's being asked to do."

Though Lanois has a strong love for Neumann tube mics (he owns half a dozen U47s), vintage tube amplifiers and a wide variety of analog gear, he by no means shuns digital technology. "The truth of it is, you use what you think sounds good. It doesn't really have anything to do with how old it is, how recent it is." Daniel used his ADAT while on the road in Mexico. "Some of those road recordings done on that tape recorder were then bounced to 24-track and built onto." He has several DAT machines, but expresses concern about their reliability: "They're really valuable in the sense that you can kind of keep them going and you don't have to feel bad about wasting tape; and it's real good if you can get a great rough mix and it's on DAT — then you can always use it as a master. But the strange thing about DAT machines is they only have about a three-year life, no matter how little or how much you spend. It's kind of the 'state of the art' with these things. I guess they're kind of fickle because they're a rotating head system, so they break down pretty quick, they deteriorate. It was a great idea that was put on a very bad format. I think the hard disk system is going to be far superior." Lanois relates that he's "heard through the grapevine" about the new 24-track RADAR hard disk recorder, developed by Vancouver-based Creation Technologies. "I'd be interested in trying one out. It sounds fantastic, actually. Anything small in a tape recorder really interests me, because tape recorders have been giant forever; and it's a bit of a deterrent if you want to move a tape recorder down the street and it happens to weigh twelve-hundred pounds! (laughs)."

Lanois sees technology as an ally, but warns against letting it distract too much from the creative process: "What I usually do is, I collect a few things around me that I'm genuinely excited about, and that's what I'll use for a while. You can't use it all. If you try and learn it all and be a master of all, you'll just turn into a kind of a 'textbook' and you're not going to get any work done! Technically, I will use what I am most excited about at that time, and that keeps evolving. At any given time, if you manage to work with what you're most excited about, then that will be the stamp of that work. And two years later, in my experience, I will actually have *lost* the ability to be good working with that box, because I'll be onto something else; and that's sort of the interesting part of technology and its evolution — I think it has a lot to do with people and enthusiasm."

Lanois has the distinction of being an engi-

neer, producer and musician, but his passion for music pervades everything he does. "I really evolved into production through music, rather than through technology. I've never had 'production influences' in the sense that I've never really studied recordings on that level. I've *responded* to recordings for how they sounded, but I've never gone as far as trying to work out exactly what *technique* was used to get to that result. And I think that's sort of a nice way to be influenced; if you hear something and you think, 'oh, that sounds *fantastic*. I just love the feeling of this!', it's almost better to put it away and just live with the memory of it. Then, when you get around to doing something yourself, you might think that you're mimicking, but your own feelings and your own efforts will stand a chance of being heard and have more identity."

...I really evolved into production through music, rather than through technology ...

That identity is something Lanois feels is making its way into more and more of the music that's being recorded today, particularly in Canada. "In Canada, the people here are such appreciators of so many things, and that comes from an intelligence. We want to know what the great films are, what the great records are, what the great books are, why things are happening politically in other parts of the world; but ultimately, that means that there's a certain kind of analysis that comes into play. And the danger of analysis is mimicry. If you analyze something to the degree that you really understand it, it may be the very thing that you'll do if you get a chance to do it, rather than just come up with something of your own. I think that's changing in Canada. I see more confidence and individuality in this neck of the woods than I saw ten or fifteen years ago."

"I think that there's a generation of people who are trying to find their place in the world and out of necessity, they're coming up with what they're coming up with. It's not a time for complacency. It's kind of like either you do it, or you get out! There's a certain urgency in the air, which is probably a good thing... economic pressure — I can't imagine that the government can keep paying for all those records and keep paying for people to live without working. I can't imagine that that can keep on going forever, and I think that even though that hasn't happened yet, I think that feeling's in the air — that danger may exist — and it makes its way into art."

CM

FREELANCE WRITER/SESSION PLAYER/PRODUCER PETER MURRAY IS THE AUTHOR OF ESSENTIAL BASS TECHNIQUE AND IS BASSIST AND CO-WRITER FOR THE TORONTO-BASED ACT SURRENDER DOROTHY.

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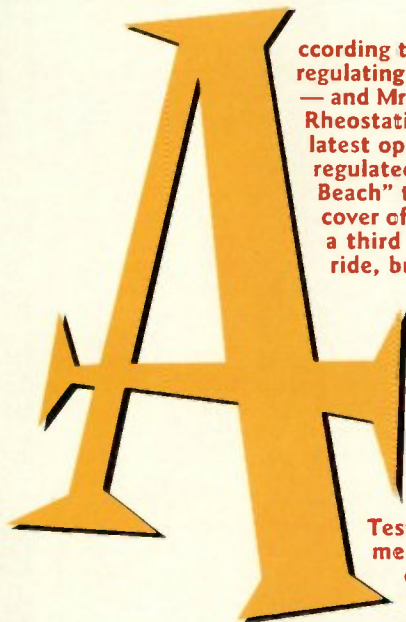
# THE RHEOSTATICS



BY IAN MENZIES  
PHOTOS: GRAHAM KENNEDY

**"You're such a happening fish, flopping on a digital beach."**

• FROM THE SONG  
"DIGITAL BEACH"  
WRITTEN BY MARTIN TIELLI.



According to Webster's Dictionary, a rheostat is a device for regulating current flow within set parameters. If this is true — and Mr. Webster is known for his reliability — then the Rheostatics are anything but, well, rheostatic. The band's latest opus, *Introducing Happiness*, is a tidal wave of unregulated currents. From the delicate trickle of "Digital Beach" to the surging overload of "One More Colour" (a cover of the Jane Siberry tune), the album fluctuates like a third world generator in a thunderstorm. It's a wild ride, but it's also strangely familiar. After all, it's the kind of electricity the feisty foursome has been generating for almost a decade — pure, powerful and plainly Canadian.

Longtime luminaries of this country's indie scene, the Rheostatics got their first major label deal last year, when Seymour Stein signed them to Sire Records in the States. A huge fan of Canuck music since he discovered k.d. lang, Stein has been on a 'North of 49' signing spree which has netted his label The Waltons, Acid Test, Barenaked Ladies and Meryn Cadell. This summer, over several days and lots of coffee, I got a chance to ask the guys about their new record and how it evolved.

It all started deep in the middle of last year's depressingly brutal winter, when the four diehard Leafs fans and Etobicoke homeboys broke with tradition and left the tundra for the towering palm trees and pristine beaches of the Bahamas. More than a southern sojourn, it was a journey of discovery that would take them places they'd never been. "It was Mike's idea to go south," says singer/guitarist Martin Tielli, referring to longtime friend and producer Michael Phillip Wojewoda (Barenaked Ladies and countless others). "We wanted to go somewhere out of town because we could get money this time. We were thinking of going to Le Studio in Quebec, but going to the Bahamas wasn't much more money... well, okay — it was more money because of the flights, but in terms of time, it was the same rate. Plus, it was going to be a most excellent adventure." Wojewoda had his own reasons for going to the island's Compass Point Studios. "I've been wanting to record there for years," he admits. "An awful lot of records that changed my life were recorded there — *More Songs About Buildings and Food* (Talking Heads) and all the great Compass Point All Star Grace Jones albums from the '80s — stuff like that." The idyllic studio is also the birthplace of a hard rock classic. "I can't imagine how AC/DC recorded *Back In Black* there," says Tielli. "It's such a beautiful place; you'd have to drink a lot of Jack Daniels, maybe, to get into a heavy metal mood."

Before leaving town, the band got a chance to do some pre-production. "Whenever we can, we go into inexpensive studios," says Martin. "We went into The Gas Station (a funky downscale studio in Toronto's warehouse district where the Bourbon Tabernacle Choir are just finishing a recording with — you guessed it — Wojewoda producing) and we spent some time in a friend's studio, so we probably did about thirty percent of the songs before leaving. We lived with them and played them live some, but quite a few of them were totally new." One example is the song "Digital Beach". "I wrote it just a week before we went down to the Bahamas. It's an elaboration on one song we were doing, but it turned



out to be completely different in terms of tone and feeling. It's just a small little piece on classical guitar." Wojewoda doesn't dismiss it so lightly. "That's a tune of Martin's that's incredibly sparse. The recording is some of the 'closest to untouched' Compass Point vibe you'll get. It was very much Martin live doing his thing." But was the trip to the Bahamas Martin's inspiration for writing the song? "I was actually thinking about a beach I saw in Italy. All the umbrellas were laid out side by side and it looked like a microchip."

The island's many charms notwithstanding, *Introducing Happiness* is distinguished by more than its exotic location. "It was a very intense recording to make," says Wojewoda. "Much more so than the last two (*Melville* in 1991 and *Whale Music* in 1993). It was just the nature of the material, the mandates everyone had, the kind of music that was being made and the dynamic amongst everyone. It was very ambitious; the guys were really stretching." One song in particular was almost unlimited in its potential scope. "Dave's (Bidini) song 'Earth' had more in common with film Foley effects and ambient tracks for cinema than with music," Wojewoda continues. "There's just a lot of mood stuff that came from flying in sounds. I mean, the tune is essentially the history of the world in four and a half minutes, so we tried to cram a lot in." Like most of the record, the mini-epic wasn't fully realized at first. "The song 'Earth' was all over the place," says Bidini. "All we had were thoughts about maybe the way stuff should sound, how stuff should morph, how certain instruments would shadow the lyric... and how it would be an evolution through time. We really tried to create a whole new vocabulary — like, we slowed down the sound of a racoon crying on a sampler and it sounded like the birth of an egg... the dawn of man."

As the session's current flow began to heat up, the task fell on Wojewoda to be the band's true rheostat. "I think a lot of what was happening — and they were great sessions to do — was Mike doing some massive, judicious editing," offers drummer/vocalist Dave Clark. "For instance, in the title track — where there's a breakdown in the verse and it's all just vocal parts — well, there were more vocal parts to that and more instruments in the whole song. We just laid it on thick and then he kind of trimmed off a bit of the mustard to make the sandwich tasty." Michael also played the part of soundboard. "It was nice to translate with Mike," says Bidini. "Just trying all kinds of different things, throwing different ideas at a few songs. When we did 'Jesus Was A Teenager', we had no idea what the arrangement of the song was going to be or how we were going to try it. That day we got really lucky — the Scottish drums, the tympani, the vibrato guitar and Tim's piano (Tim Vesely is the band's bassist/vocalist/multi-instrumentalist) — it worked. We didn't even have to tinker with it. The track on the record is the third take live off the floor."

But not everything came so easily. When you generate as much electricity as the Rheostatics do, some sparks are bound to fly. "We're a hard band to work with in the studio," admits Tielli. "It's because we are a democracy. Everybody has different ideas — a lot of different ideas, conflicting ideas — and we don't think we're great, so we're always doubting ourselves and we need someone to help us with decisions instead of just floundering. I mean, I'll never stop unless Mike tells me to. A lot of his function is to be there to tell me, 'Okay, that's good; you're not going to get any better, stop.'" It's not a job Wojewoda takes lightly. "The process requires a lot of pretty severe decisions," he admits. "When there's an explosion of ideas happening, there should be no self-censoring — just let it spill forward and then there's this big pile in front of you and you go, 'well, I obviously can't use all of it'. I mean, there's an awful lot of stuff on the 2" tape that didn't make it in the mix."

Not all the tracking for the record was done offshore. The overdubs were done at Hamilton's legendary Grant Avenue Studios and the mixing at Toronto's Reaction Studios. "I generally mix on an SSL," Wojewoda explains, "and that's what Reaction has. It was also nice to finish up tracking in Hamilton. It still had that out-of-town 'woodshed' feel and it served as a decompression chamber from the Bahamas back to winter in Canada."

There is no denying that *Introducing Happiness* is a very challenging listen. In the words of the producer himself, "It's hyper-dense stuff" — but that wasn't always



**"(They) put forth a dense and radiant muffin of (their) own design."**

• FROM THE SONG  
"THE MUFFIN MAN"  
WRITTEN BY FRANK ZAPPA.

**"First came the wheel and the ball of fire. The cigarette and the radial tire."**

• FROM THE SONG "EARTH"  
WRITTEN BY DAVE BIDINI.



# DAVE RAVES



The Rheostatics have always had the respect of their peers. As one of the pioneering indie groups of the '80s, they helped make integrity and creativity the trademarks of Canada's nascent musical renaissance. Founding member and freelance music journalist (he has written for the Toronto Star, amongst others) Dave Bidini has a unique perspective on how the scene has changed.

"A couple of years ago, I think I would have said that the industry wasn't really doing their job; but now, I think they are doing their job. Before, you could be making a huge noise on your local scene and you couldn't get an A&R guy or a radio guy out to save your life. It was impossible. The whole industry thought they were better than what was going on right here.

"We've been playing since 1981, so whether that makes us old farts or whatever, we've seen a lot of bands come and go and a lot of scenes ebb and flow. In the mid '80s, there was this major label recording artist tier of the industry, like Honeymoon Suite and Platinum Blonde. It wasn't reflective of the Canadian scene at all. We had our own little community — everyone was nice to each other, playing gigs with each other and helping each other out on the road. Now, finally,

it seems like that upper tier of crass commercial bands has been displaced."

What makes the new major label recording artists different? "Someone in Calgary was saying to me, 'You guys are so different — The Tragically Hip, the Barenaked Ladies — they're so mainstream'. Well, whatever kind of music they make, I don't have an opinion on that because I know them as people. But the things they represent and the things they're trying to do are truly noble and special. Look at who they take on tour — Eric's Trip, Pigfarm, Change of Heart and us — the types of bands that would have never caught a break from a big band in the past.

"Now, all these great young bands have the ear of these people. CFNY (Toronto's alternative radio station) has a lot to do with it, Elliot Lefko (MCA Concerts Canada) has a lot to do with it. These are all people who came up through the scene just as we did — and a lot of bands have stuck around and helped foster the scene. Back in 1987 when we went on a Canadian tour, there were only a handful of bands crossing the country. Now, everybody's crossing the country and it's awesome. It's the best time ever for Canadian music and if we deserve any credit at all, it's simply because we stuck around long enough."

Here's hoping they stick around a little longer.

the bands intention. "It's like we thought in reverse almost," says the soft-spoken Vesely, "because we thought we were making the opposite of that. We thought we were making a really straight-ahead, simple record." For his part, Tielli thinks he knows what happened. "For *Whale Music*, we wanted to make a pop record and we tried our damndest and as far as I'm concerned, it is a pop record. People tell us it's weird, but I don't think it's weird at all — it's just very densely packed with pop. I guess maybe the way radio and record people think, pop can't be too full of hooks."

As musicians and fans, we can all rejoice in the fact that the Rheostatics have never let the dictates of the music industry distort their musical vision. From the gut-wrenching impact of "Record Body Count" (*Melville*) to the wistful aura of "California Dreamline" (*Whale Music*), they have always been true to themselves — even as they searched for their musical identity. "As we recorded this record," says Tielli, "in a way, we might have been discovering that we do have a style, and we were exploring that. After a while, I think you have to start to become self-conscious — in a good way — and realize that you've got a sound and start enjoying it." Has the band really found happiness? "I guess maybe in reaction to things getting serious — being signed and stuff — we've been sort of taking a lighter attitude towards the music. We enjoy ourselves doing it a bit more; maybe just out of fear that it might become a job — though it shows no signs of becoming that, thank God." Amen indeed.

Ian Menzies is a writer, producer and performer based in Toronto.

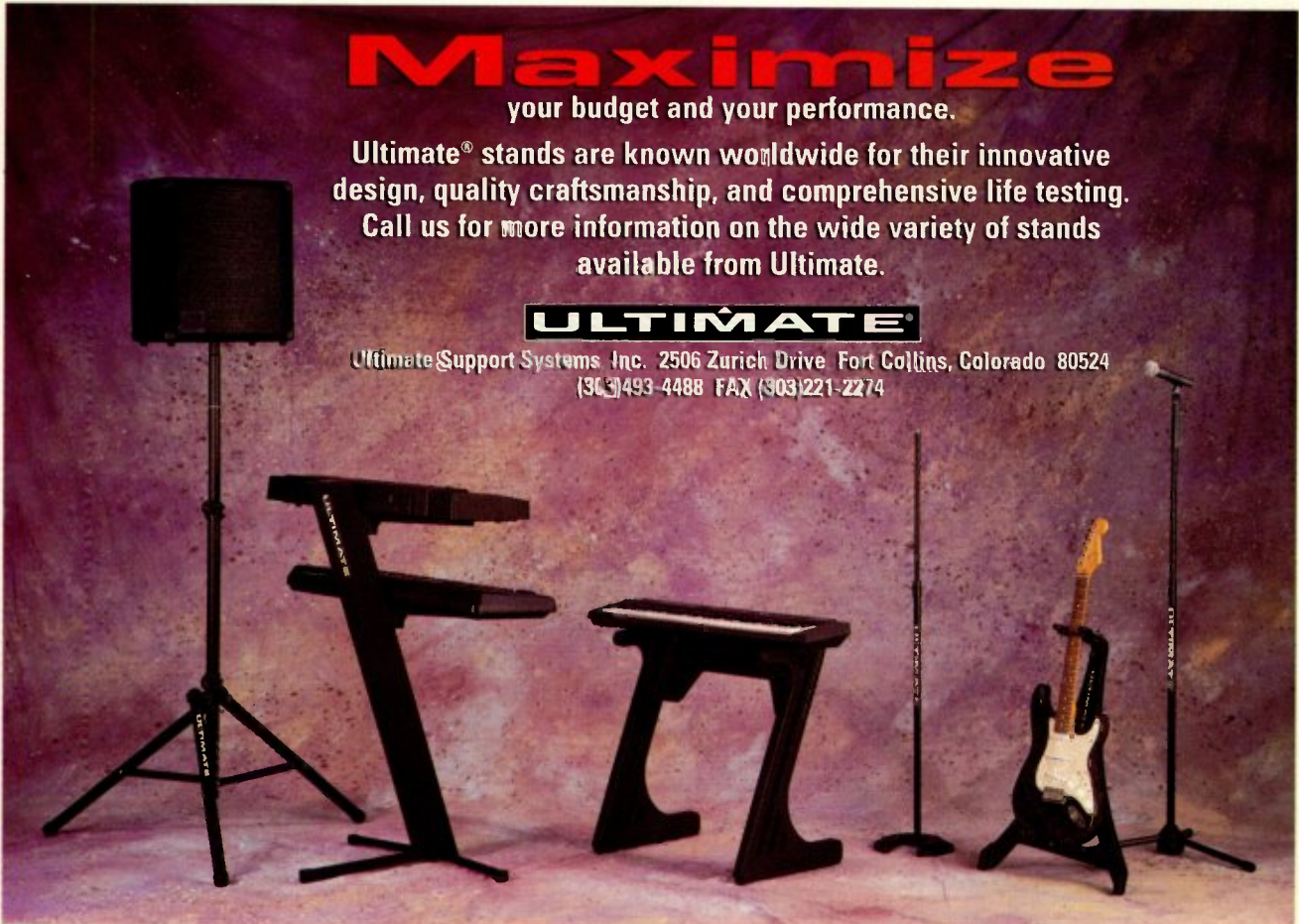
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# Suturing Sounds, Sa

by Karen Bliss

Using drum machines, samplers and sequencers, industrial bands manipulate anything and everything from rhythm, voice and discord to a plethora of found and stock sounds. The trademark of industrial music is not unlike the Exorcist growling incomprehensibly to ear-splitting power tools. But the industrial cogs are now turning in multiple directions, separating the genre into industrial grindcore, industrial dance and industrial dabblers. The following three bands use the technology to varying degrees to inject power and invention into what they do.

## Malhavoc

Led and conceptualized by industrial extremist James Cavalluzzo, Toronto's Malhavoc push the envelope of metal music. On their fourth and latest album, *Get Down*, which revolves around the fictional story of troubled musician MC JC, the quartet churns out a masticated onslaught of metal, white noise, chunky hip hop rhythms and processed vocals. The results are alarming, demented, intriguing and, dare we say it, dance-oriented.

Cavalluzzo formed Malhavoc in 1984 before he was even aware of the term *industrial*, let alone its founder, England's Throbbing Gristle (which started Industrial Records in 1978). The vocalist was just experimenting, using tape decks to record sounds off the television and from the environment. "One thing I did was tape a rain storm and I put it behind the music," Cavalluzzo recalls of his pre-sampler days, adding that the results often sounded "awkward".

His sole intention, more like a mission, was to explore musically, to go where no artist had gone before. "I bought my first drum machine seven years ago," Cavalluzzo recounts, "for the simple reason that we didn't have a jam room and I could rehearse at any volume level. I didn't need to play a drum kit. Then, with the advent of MIDI, the next thing I bought was a keyboard because I could write songs and add elements to the metal music at the time that you couldn't do with a guitar. So, ever since then, I've expanded on the MIDI equipment."

Cavalluzzo was also introduced to sampling about that time. "I had a Mirage, which is one of the original cheap samplers, but many people still use it today. Janet Jackson's *Rhythm Nation* was all done on a Mirage. I still buy old MIDI equipment because it has certain flavours that a lot of the new equipment doesn't have," he continues, outlining some of his gear. "I have a Super Jupiter, an old analog Roland keyboard that's rack-mounted. It's one of the big, fat analog synths that bands like Nitzer Ebb and the original Depeche Mode used. And then there's the standard modern keyboard which everybody has, which is the M1. Then, we have the Advanced Mirage, which is the updated EPS16 sampler. Basically, every time they updated the Mirage, I got the newer version."

The luxury of having all this equipment at home allows Cavalluzzo to bring whole songs to the band. On previous Malhavoc albums, he would write everything before he got to the studio, but with the recording of *Get Down*, many parts were worked out during "rehearsals" with producer David Ogilvie (Skinny Puppy, Nine Inch Nails, Doughboys). For the first time, drummer/co-founder John Carss, guitarist David Kiner and bassist Steve Jelliman share writing credits with Cavalluzzo on many of the songs.

Malhavoc: Shaun Scallen



"Basically, I wrote the songs on computer, brought them to the band and then we'd jam it out and they'd help make changes," says Cavalluzzo. "Maybe the pre-chorus was too long or boring, or John would add drum parts and make the fills sound better — the same with the guitars. Sometimes, they'd help write the lyrics because the lyrics were all written in the studio. We had five days in the studio, so while I was singing the lyrics for one song, they'd be writing the lyrics for the next song."

Cavalluzzo says that Ogilvie was a kindred spirit who always wanted to explore and experiment. The one-time member of Skinny Puppy utilized neat little tricks of the trade which had a huge impact on the feel and sound of *Get Down*.

On "Journey's End", while Cavalluzzo was "too busy playing hockey", the band and Ogilvie created a wastelandic, eternal reverb ending by jamming out the song for 20 minutes in the studio. The closing cut, "Discipline (Mad Flatus Mix)", was given a face-lift in five minutes by putting a 3/4 dubbed delay on the drums, instead of 4/4. "It's the Adrian Sherwood school of dubbed delay," says Cavalluzzo. "It really created a whole new song."

As always, Malhavoc tested out "hundreds" of vocal effects, including different kinds of wahs and fuzz boxes first tried for the guitars, such as the new Roland distortion pedals. One vocal effect that Ogilvie dredged up, Cavalluzzo had actually used back in 1985 on the song "Beginning and the End" using a 909 drum machine and the original 1970s version Ibanez tube screamer. "To me, it's the best vocal sound you can get with a stomp box," says Cavalluzzo. "It's funny, these two things are still popular."

There was another minor switch. All of Malhavoc's previous albums are in the key of E-flat, but *Get Down* is mostly in D-flat. It all started with the opening number, aptly titled "Tune". While at a late-night showing of *Carrie*, he noticed the big ominous D-minor note during the classic pig's blood prom scene. "I sampled about three seconds [from John Carpenter's soundtrack] and looped it. I made sure it was in A440, and what we did was tune the guitars down to a D-flat, which is the note on the loop. So, basically, I'm tuning to the movie."

Cavalluzzo says he doesn't normally sample from movies because it's such old hat, but this choice is particularly befitting because *Carrie* is seeking revenge, just like *Get Down*'s main character, MC JC. "He's a character," says Cavalluzzo, "who wants retribution from those who put him on the stage."

## Econoline Crush

Econoline Crush's catchy hardcore clank is both pulverizing and tuneful. The vocals are commanding and largely untreated, which makes it easier on the ears than the usual luciferous variety.

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# amples and Sequences



Though they admit to being "studio maniacs", the focus is on melody over mechanics.

"If we are, in fact, an industrial band," allows lead vocalist/lyricist Trevor Hurst, "then I hope we're taking industrial music to some new territory. We're trying to get away from the sterile industrial feel and put a little more human element in the music."

Coming from an alternative music background, Hurst had always wanted to explore the industrial genre, but "had never known anybody who could afford the gear". That was until the start of '92, when he answered an ad in a Seattle paper placed by Tom Ferris (formerly of Moev) and together, in a tiny apartment in Vancouver, BC, the irresistible grooves of Econoline Crush took shape.

"It was Tom's computer and sampler," Hurst imparts, "and we brought in some boards, some guitars, the SansAmp and an SE50. Our first demo was recorded on a 16-track Alesis. We were using a Creator program and I think we had an ASR10 sampler and a Roland JV80. When we put the guitars down, we just ran the guitars through a SansAmp. The whole thing was done in the bedroom."

When Econoline Crush took its snap, crackle rock to the stage, various members came and went from the project, including Ferris. The incarnation that stuck to this day is drummer Gregg Leask, guitarist Robbie Morfitt, guitarist Hack and bassist Daniel Douglas Yaremko. Since the bedroom era, the band has upgraded its gear to include the Performer program for Macintosh, a fully loaded Kurzweil K2000, a Yamaha TG 770 and various Roland sound modules.

According to Hurst, Econoline's major label debut, *Purge*, an introductory EP, isn't a fair representation of the band's sound or capabilities. It was recorded in less than a week at Greenhouse Studios simply to give the band something to tour behind once it had signed to EMI Music Canada.

"We went in to record live off-the-floor, so the programming isn't brilliant," he readily admits. "There's some interesting sampling in "Psyche" (a Killing Joke cover) that we pulled off *Fire Walk With Me*, a David Lynch movie. It has voices and laughing and other strange things, but it's not really where we're at right now."

Right now, Econoline is in pre-production on a full album that will be recorded later this summer by David Castell (Course of Empire, Varga's "Greed" remix). Chris Bryant is the new keyboardist/programmer. "With an industrial band, pre-production doesn't mean sitting in a circle with your instruments and banging out a song," Hurst points out. "We have two big rooms for working on this record. In one of the rooms, we sit around with guitars, working on riffs and certain things and the other room is the studio room where the song basically gets built. We tend to spend a lot of time on each song in the studio."

"There's going to be a lot more textures," Hurst continues, outlining his visions for the upcoming project, "and we're going to be experimenting with processing on guitars and vocals. We're really experimenting with sounds, sound design and samples. For example, for one new song, we sampled about 20 different ice skating

sounds — skates turning, somebody stopping on ice, somebody just skating — and we took it and detuned it and used it as a percussion instrument."

Econoline has a huge stack of DATs with odd sounds and ambience tracks which the whole band is responsible for collecting. They try and avoid using stock sounds and anything they do use is highly mutated or modified. "It's good to have a whole library of that stuff because you can throw it into a K2000 and use the internal effects and just screw it up," Hurst says.

As absorbed as Econoline Crush may get in the splendid and outrageous possibilities at their disposal in the studio, the focus for this new album, Hurst insists, is on the "emotional state" of the song. "Sometimes, you get carried away being aggressive or having the programming be 'state-of-the-art' and you lose yourself in it and miss the point of the song," Hurst explains. "So we're really concentrating on dynamics and songwriting this time around and hopefully, it will make a huge difference and a much better record."

## Varga

Varga has metamorphosed from a speed metal band into inventive metallurgists. In making their debut album, *Prototype* (Zoo/BMG), Varga cranks out an alloy of hard rock and industrial bents with forceful vocals and crushing raps. "We're not trying to be an industrial band," says drummer Dan Fila. "We're just a metal band who draws on all its influences."

When Varga formed in 1984, its Slayer-type assault was the optimum release for four youths living in the smog-and-cog filled factory town of Hamilton, Ontario. Fila, guitarist Adam Alex, singer/bassist Joe Varga and guitarist Sean Williamson would get their ya-yas out after school by playing at breakneck speed. But when the '90s hit, Varga grew bored and restless with the wanking game and stopped the thrashing for thrashing's sake.

A deal with Maze America had collapsed along with the label and this proved to be a blessing in disguise. It forced Varga to reassess its direction. Speed metal, says Fila, was "too restrictive." This newfound realization injected a freshness and enthusiasm into the decade-old unit. "We just started experimenting," says Fila, who played in a symphony in Hamilton for two years and is currently finishing off a Bachelor of Arts in music at McMaster University.

BMG Music Canada's VP of A&R, David Bendeth, was impressed with Varga's new songs and kept requesting more and more material until, some 25 songs later, he signed the band. At the time, there was no trace of industrial music in Varga's metal. The band was just delivering to Bendeth the "basic raw elements" recorded on a four-track.

"We never had the money to buy a drum machine or have samplers before," says Fila, who shares writing credits with the other three members, "but as we developed, if I wanted a drum machine, I could borrow money to get one. When we finally had the finan-

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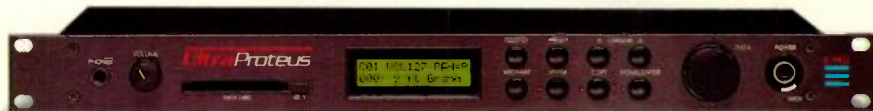
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"We started experimenting with loops in pre-production and we were getting these really nice clean sounds off a drum machine — nice hi-hats and nice timbales," Fila continues, "and then we started throwing in these weird sounds from a disk we got from New York City that had Harleys and machines on it."

Fila admits the members of Varga aren't authorities on the history of industrial music, as many musicians experimenting with the genre seem to be, but then again, *Prototype* isn't an album steeped in computer technology. Only half the album used loops.



Varga: BMG Music Canada

According to Bendeth, who produced the album, "In pre-production, it was recorded live through a PA system in the studio. Nothing was used until we started recording all the music and then we ran everything to a click track. Then, we went with programmers Mike Stanutz and Biron and we used a number of Roland S-550 samplers. It was all sampling and everything used was Mac-based."

"We made up all our own loops," says Bendeth. "They were all made out of industrial sounds of machinery from factories. Some of them were sampled off sound disks, where we actually put together rhythmic loops out of, say, a drill and a metal hammer. Some of them were made for the record — if we didn't have the ones we needed, we actually went out and sampled something with a microphone."

Fila is certain Varga won't return to the restrictive neck-brace of one-dimensional speed metal. New songs have been pouring forth and his mind is already racing to the studio. "The next record is going to be very different," he vows. "We're going to continue the sampling — although some songs won't have it — but we want to continue to expand our horizons. I really want to bring in more of a classical feel to my drum parts. I want to play some timpani and, hopefully, some xylophone too and totally fuck everybody up!"

Karen Bliss is a freelance music writer based in Toronto, ON.

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# THE TRAVELLING MUSICIANS' GUIDE TO NASHVILLE



BY SHAUNA KENNEDY

*Falling in love with a Champagne sparkle jazz kit at Nashville's NAMM Summer Session*

Nevermind that I was almost in Chattanooga before I realized we were driving in the wrong direction from the airport en route to the hotel. I was distracted. You see, I flipped on the radio expecting to hear Reba or Garth or Dwight — instead, I got Alex, Geddy and Neil!

Although most people think of Florida as Canada's southernmost point (due to the number of snowbirds winterizing there), there's another southern locale that's seeing a lot of Canadian activity of the musical variety.

Nashville has always been a hotbed for American music, but these days (once you get yourself headed in the right direction), you're likely to pull up beside an Ontario licence plate as you stop for a



light along Broadway, just like I did. By the way, it was songwriter Tim Thorney and recording artist Alanis who were in that vehicle, and who welcomed me to Music City USA. You know, it *almost* seemed completely normal...

Nashville, the home of Music City USA, draws thousands of songwriters every year, each hoping to have their tunes published and made famous by some well-known country artist. Every day, hundreds of songsmiths pound the pavement on Music Row, dropping off demo tapes and lyric sheets; session musicians lay down the groove for the 'next big hit' in the city's abundant recording studios; and in the evening, up-and-comings artists showcase for the industry in

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clubs and cafes throughout the city hoping to have their talent discovered.

For Canadian songwriters and musicians, Nashville holds a lot of opportunity. Where L.A. was once the preferred destination of those seriously trying to make it in the industry, Nashville has been gaining ground at an alarming rate. Whether you're seeking a publishing deal, looking to do demos, jingle or session work or are hoping to be discovered, you might want to test the waters of Music City USA. And don't let anybody tell you that Nashville's JUST for country music, either. There's a healthy blues scene and even some alternative music happening in the Bible Belt. Nashville has been seeing a real increase in new music businesses.

There's a real exodus of L.A.-based record and publishing companies deciding to pull up stops, leave their offices (many of which now sport cracked walls) and move to safer, less congested surroundings right now; and Nashville seems to be the prime relocation point. You'll find a number of businesses already established there with Canadian connections too, like Savannah Music and Balmur Music.

As far as recording goes, more and more artists in all styles of music are choosing Nashville as a location to lay down their albums. A wealth of experienced producers and more recording studios per square mile to choose from than anywhere else in North America makes it the perfect place for anything from demos to full-scale albums to jingle work — and the price is right.

One of the things that draws so many to Nashville, outside of the proximity of the musical community, is the quality of living. With an unemployment rate of only 2% and favourable weather conditions year-round (you won't find much snow in Music City), it's an increasingly popular spot — particularly with the winter-weary.

Housing is cheap, abundant and downright gorgeous. In fact, you may even find yourself with a few Canuck neighbours. Savannah Music's Brian Ferriman is probably the best-known Canadian music industry person who has chosen to put down roots and set up shop in Nashville — and his best-known artist, Michelle Wright and her band all live in Nashville as well (both Michelle and bandmate Lee Warren recently moved into new homes). Balmur's Max Hutchinson moved there a couple of years ago to take a position in Balmur's Nashville office, Alan Kates (Charlie Major's manager) recently opened a Nashville office and Keith James (of Toronto's 'New Country' radio station, CISS-FM) will be a new resident in the near future. Outside of the country field, Canadian-born jazz saxophonist Warren Hill made a recent move to Nashville after deciding the climate in Los Angeles was just too... well, bumpy. Other non-Canadian musical giants outside the country vein that have recently made Nashville their home include demon drummer Chester Thompson.

If that's enough to pique your interest in a visit to Music City USA — be it for business or pleasure — we've compiled some tips to help you plan your trip and get you off to a great start.

### PLAN AHEAD

Particularly if you're going to Nashville to (hopefully) drum up some business, it pays to do some legwork at home beforehand. If you're a songwriter or artist who's visiting

Nashville with the purpose of seeing publishers, record company A&R people or artist managers, send



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letters and make appointments before you leave. These people are barraged by songwriters every day, and you'll have a tough time getting your foot in the door at all if you haven't made contact first. Contacting the local performing rights organizations, songwriters associations and local A.F. of M. and notifying them of your visit can be helpful. Collect as much information from these organizations as you can.

Make sure you have enough demo tapes, business cards, lyric sheets and bio packages to present at your appointments, and always bring a few extras — you never know who you'll bump into at the local diner!

If you're auditioning for studio or session work at the numerous studios and jingle-houses in Nashville, make sure your instrument (and that includes your voice) is in top condition and that you've done any necessary legwork before your audition (received any charts or scripts

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Nashville, TN 37203 (615) 244-2840

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OF MUSICIANS (AFM)**  
Nashville Chapter, Local 257,  
11 Music Circle N.,  
Nashville, TN 37203 (615) 244-9514

**AMERICAN SOCIETY  
OF COMPOSERS AND  
PUBLISHERS (ASCAP)**  
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Nashville, TN 37203 (615) 742-5000

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Nashville, TN 37203 (615) 320-0055

## WHEN YOU GET THERE

Once you've arrived in Nashville, you'll want to pick up the local newspapers and industry magazines to have the most up-to-date information on the local entertainment scene. *The Tennessean* has a very informative Sunday Showcase section that contains entertainment listings for the week as well as industry news and editorial; *The Nashville Banner's* Thursday 'Weekender' supplement lists all of the writers nights and showcases for the week; and the *Nashville Scene* is an 'alternative-style' weekly with the week's entertainment listings.

Other publications you won't want to be without are *Billboard*, *Cash Box* and *Music City News*, containing all of the latest-breaking industry news from Music City

USA including new signings and concert schedules.

If you're calling on people during your stay, keep your hotel's number handy to leave with them if necessary and inform the front desk at your hotel to take detailed messages for you while you're out. Many hotels offer a voice-message box that you can access from any telephone. You might want to check on what services your hotel offers before your trip commences — you'll want access to a fax machine and photocopier, and many larger hotels will even offer word processing services. Waiting for call-backs is no reason to stay cooped up in your room all day!



## ESSENTIAL NUMBERS

**NASHVILLE SONGWRITERS  
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(NSAI)**

15 Music Square W.,  
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(615) 256-3354, FAX (613) 256-0034

The NSAI holds weekly workshops as well as two larger seminars (in March and July) offering demo critiques and industry guest speakers.

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## MUSIC-RELATED EVENTS

There's many music-related events happening in Nashville year-round, and you might want to plan your visit to coincide with one of them. Everything from songwriting seminars to industry and radio conferences to summer festivals can be found in Music City — but remember, plan well ahead of the event you'd like to attend to ensure hotel accomodation is available.

March offers **The Country Radio Seminar** (first weekend in March) and **The Nashville Songwriters Association International Seminar** (usually the third weekend in March) — the NSAI seminar is a particularly good one for meeting the industry bigwigs; June sees the **International Country Music Fan Fair** — one of the best events for country music lovers who'd like to rub shoulders with their

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favourite artists — and the **Summer Lights** festival, a four-day street fest featuring music of all styles, dance, theatre and arts; the NSAI **Summer Seminar** is an all-day songwriter's event that occurs every July; and an event that has been held in Nashville for the past two years is the **National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Summer Session**, which has taken place during the last week of July (although this event is geared to music store dealers, many musicians with product endorsements or affiliations have been known to attend). October sees much schmoozing with **CMA (Country Music Association)**

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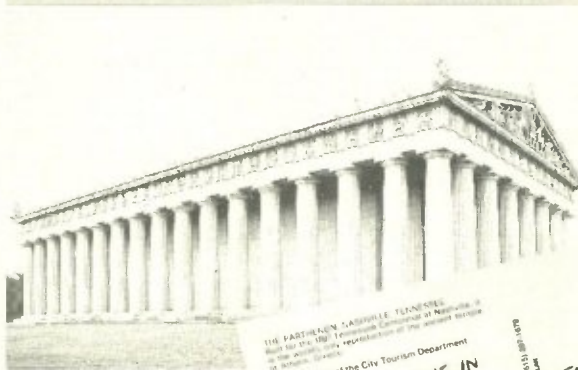
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## GETTING ONSTAGE IN NASHVILLE

The bottom line is — it's hard! With so many songwriters converging on the city, many of the open stages and showcase clubs are booked well in advance. Open stage nights are often run on a sign-up basis — therefore, getting there early (and sometimes that means in the afternoon) is essential if you want to play in front of a crowd.

Toronto-based singer/songwriter Gayle Ackroyd has visited Nashville annually since 1990 and has participated in many writer showcase nights during her visits. She mentions that calling the clubs in

THE PARTHENON, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



Printed courtesy of the City Tourism Department

HAVING A GREAT TIME IN NASHVILLE - LOTS OF CANADIANS HERE, IN FACT, IRAN INTO TIM THORNEY & ALANIS AT A STOPLIGHT HERE RIGHT AFTER I ARRIVED! GOING ON A TOUR OF MUSIC ROW LATER WITH MAX FROM 'BARBARA'S' IN PRINTERS ALLEY TO SIT IN ON A "NAMM JAM" - SEE YA SOON!

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Photographed by Gayle Ackroyd

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advance or approaching the hosts and letting them know that you are an out-of-towner is often helpful in securing a spot.

The Bluebird Cafe, known for its Sunday "writers night" is just one of the many places in Nashville where you'll see aspiring singer/songwriters hoping to turn a few ears, but there are many more clubs and cafes in the city that hold weekly showcase nights or are available for industry showcase bookings. The NSAI can help you find out which clubs host such events, but here's a few to get you started:

#### ACE OF CLUBS

114 2nd Ave. S.,  
Nashville, TN 37201 (615) 254-2237

This is a large-capacity club that is popular as an 'industry showcase' venue — but you must be able to draw a large crowd if you want to book your band here.

#### THE BLUEBIRD CAFE

4104 Hillsboro Rd.,  
Nashville, TN 37215  
(615) 383-1461

The Bluebird hosts weekly open mic nights and writer showcases throughout the week. Strictly original music. Every Sunday, the Bluebird hosts 'Writer's Night', which is by invitation only — auditions for the evenings are held four times a year and obtaining a spot is difficult and competitive.

#### DOUGLAS CORNER

2106 8th Ave. S.,  
Nashville, TN 37204 (615) 298-1688

A popular songwriter's hangout, they book new artists and hold a weekly open mic.

#### ESSENTIAL MUSICIAN'S SERVICES

Nashville has just about everything a musician could possibly need in the way of services — there are an abundance of music stores and instrument repair shops, photographers, music copyists and promoters as well as financial consultants, lawyers and booking agents. Here are some of the more difficult-to-find services you may require:

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#### TIME OUT FOR FUN

There's an awful lot to see and do in Nashville — you might want to catch some of the more famed attractions such as Opryland USA, Music Row, Printer's

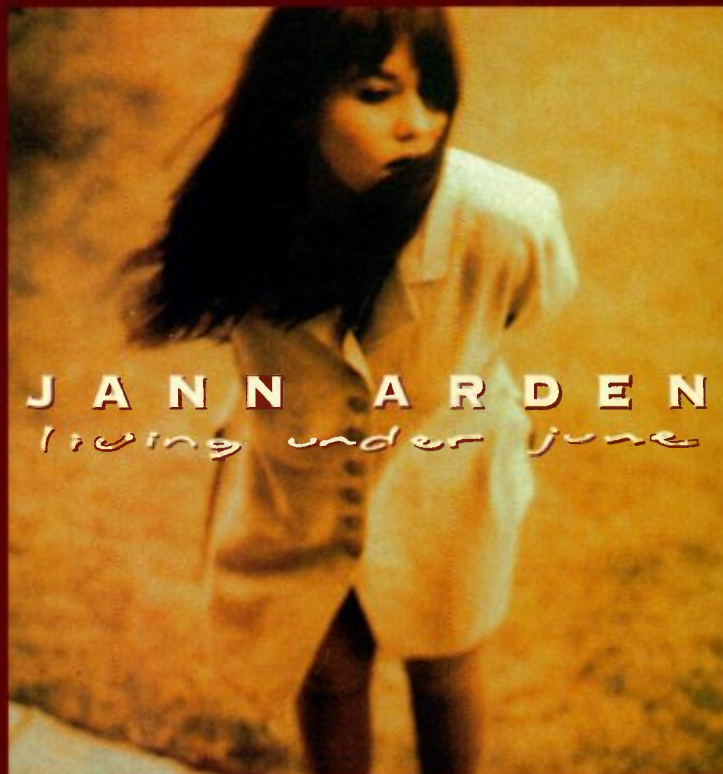
Alley, downtown Nashville's Ryman Auditorium and the Parthenon (yep, it looks just like the original and incredible at night, when it's all lit up); but there's other gems in the city that are less obvious and worth seeking out. Here's my top picks (most of which you won't find in the tourist guides):

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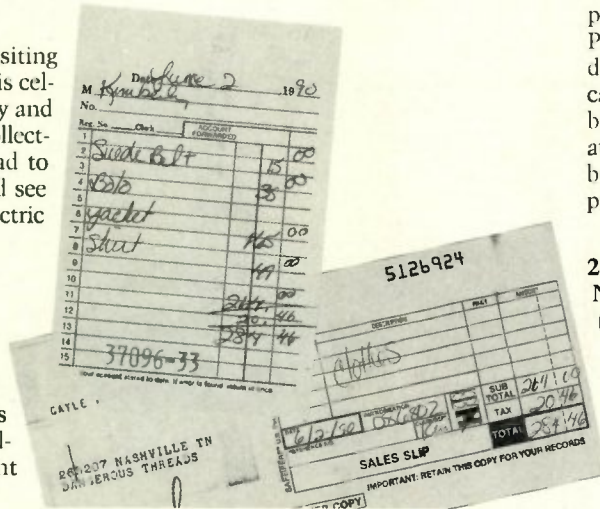
a must-see for any guitarist visiting Nashville. This year, Gibson is celebrating its 100th Anniversary and has issued a special series of collectible guitar models. Call ahead to book a tour of the facility and see how the legendary Les Paul electric guitar gets manufactured.

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Week, it seems the whole town's decked out in 'dangerous threads'. There's a second location at 105 2nd. Ave. N., but the 'mothership' store on Elliston Place is the one to visit. Shopaholics beware!

### BONGO JAVA

2007 Belmont Blvd.,  
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(615) 385-5282

One of the things that Nashville is *not* reckoned for is its coffee. In a word, it sucks. You may search high and low for a decent 'cuppa', but the only place you'll find it is here at Bongo Java, a cool cafe with a big porch outside — the bohemian atmosphere is a nice change from the 'country glam' you see just about everywhere else. For this coffee-livin' Canuck, it was the highlight (and lifesaver) of my visit.

### LONGHORN STEAKS

110 Lyle Ave.,  
Nashville, TN 37203  
(615) 329-9195

Obviously not for the vegetarian musician — in fact, don't even invite them 'cause they'll faint when you order the 22 oz. Longhorn steak. Need I say more?

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

This is just a taste of what's available to the musician travelling to Nashville. For an extensive listing of music industry-related businesses as well as practical tips for songwriters and musicians wishing to move to or visit Nashville, one of the best books to pick up is *The Song-*

*writer's And Musician's Guide To Nashville* by Sherry Bond. It lists everything from arrangers and producers to recording studios, business services, booking agents and all facets of the music, entertainment, recording and publishing industries. Other helpful guides include *The Official Country Music Directory* and the travel book *Music City*

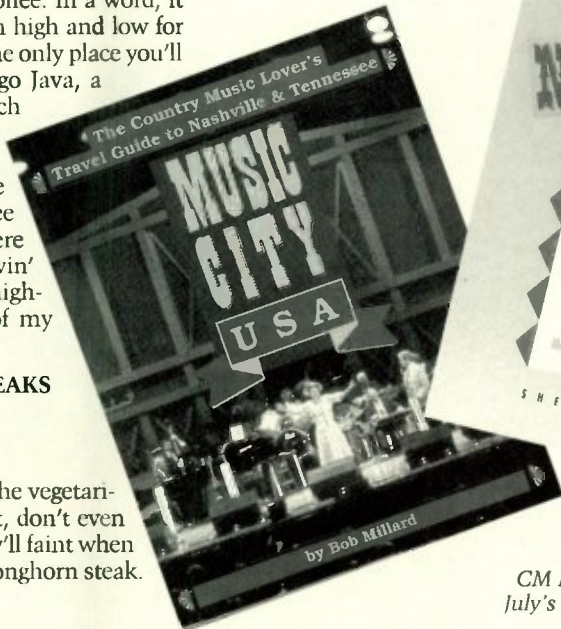
*USA* by Bob Millard. All of these titles can be ordered through Music Books Plus, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3. Toll-free order line 1-800-265-8481 (Canada or USA), FAX (905) 641-1648.

To make the most of your trip, use your contacts to acquire as much information as you can beforehand, plan your time carefully and leave room for extra business meetings that may take shape after you arrive. There's a whole town of music industry professionals

waiting to be called on, so what are you waiting for?

CM Managing editor Shauna Kennedy survived July's NAMM Summer Session in Nashville, TN.

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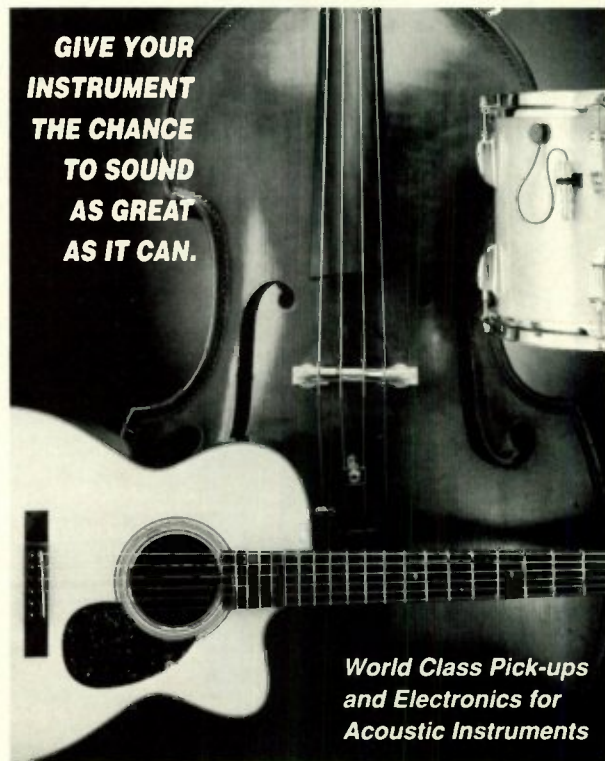
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## THE MOUTHPIECE ~ PART TWO

In my last column, I outlined some of the considerations in choosing a new mouthpiece. By way of example, I am writing here my personal "mouthpiece history" to give you an idea of the process that I have gone through in learning about the role of the mouthpiece in brass playing.

I started on a 7C and played it for 15 years. On the advice of a teacher with whom I was studying trumpet mechanics, I switched to a Schilke 13A4A, which is much smaller

and produced more piercing high notes (the 14A4A, slightly larger, is still used by many I played that for another five or six years and then got the itch to experiment with improving my sound, while maintaining the high chops. After briefly assessing many pieces trying to find a combination, I settled on the Marcinkiewicz Vizzuti model, which is unusual in that

it is very wide but quite shallow. This allowed me to keep my high range but the sound became a bit bigger and flexibility improved a bit.

After playing this one for a couple of years, I experimented within the Marc. line, moving slightly bigger a couple of times to his own model and then to his 3C, which is quite a bit shallower than a Bach 3C (see what I mean about lack of consistency in manufacturers' standards?). By this time, my work load was ranging from lead trumpet on shows, through jazz gigs and a bit of classical. I found that I could not get that full range of sound on one mouthpiece, so I started playing a Marc. 3 as well as the 3C. This has a larger cup and provided me with a darker sound, more suited to jazz and classical, while I still played the 3C for lead. This combination worked well for me for years and I could switch between them because the rims were identical.

Sometime later, I tried a Stork 2C. I loved the feel of the rim and the sound quality, but found it didn't do everything I needed to do, so I put it on the shelf for a year. It stayed on my mind, however, and eventually I decided to go for it and make the switch (I waited for a slow time work-wise to do this). Feel and sound were great with this piece, but not my

range, so I stayed on the Marc. 3C for lead. This was not a desirable situation, as now I was playing on two different rims, which was stressful on my chops. I searched through different Stork models, trying to replace the Marc. 3C with something with a rim more similar to my Stork 2C. I had no luck and started to feel a bit desperate, as I knew my playing was not at its best, being stuck between those two mouthpieces.

I arranged a trip to Vermont to talk to John and Phyllis Stork about my problem. Phyllis measured my Marc. 3C and made a mouthpiece with their 2C rim, but with the Marc. cup and throat. From the first notes I played, I knew we had found it: the rim felt just like my 2C, but the high notes were all back in place. It was a great feeling (if somewhat incongruous), standing in their front yard, gazing at the rolling Vermont hills and playing for the cows next door, sensing that I was finally set for mouthpieces.

Believe it or not, I still feel that way today. I do 80 to 90 percent of my playing on the Stork 2C, switching to the custom model for high lead work. I believe that with this combination, I have ended my mouthpiece quest that started ten years ago. The 2C is almost as big as you can get, so my sound is now a function of my playing, with no more improvement likely from the mouthpiece, and any range difficulties are likewise playing-oriented, not mouthpiece-oriented. So now it's just practice, practice, practice.

It is interesting to note that I played my first mouthpiece for 15 years and the next for five before experimenting on my own. On each of the subsequent pieces, I spent at least a year before trying anything else. In each case, I was following a master plan: try to slowly move larger for better sound without losing high-register performance.

As you consider a mouthpiece change, be aware that it is a major commitment and only time will tell if it is the right move. Only experience will tell which way to move. A proper decision can help your playing and an improper one can cause you untold grief.

I would like to thank John and Phyllis Stork for making such good mouthpieces and for making my musical life a little more pleasant. For further information on the function of the various aspects of mouthpiece designs, I highly recommend their book, *Understanding the Mouthpiece*, available from Stork Mouthpieces, Rt. 2, Box 1818, Maple Hill Rd., Plainfield, VT 06667.

*CHASE SANBORN IS A FREELANCE TRUMPET PLAYER AND TEACHER IN TORONTO. HE HAS TOURED WITH RAY CHARLES AND IS CURRENTLY ACTIVE AS A JAZZ AND/OR LEAD TRUMPET PLAYER.*

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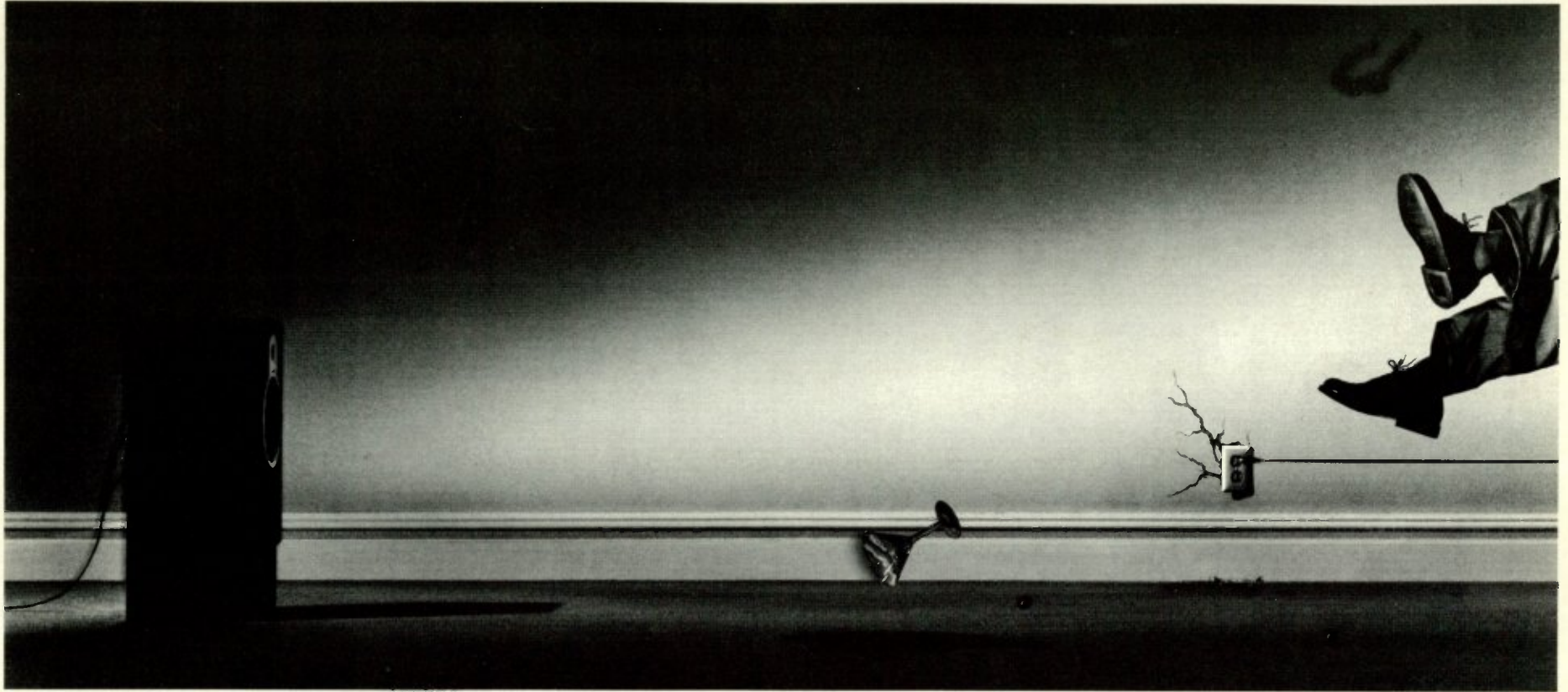
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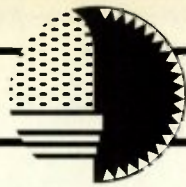


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BY MARC LAFRANCE

# THIS BUSINESS OF ROCK & ROLL SINGING

Incredible as it may sound, I've sung on over 100 albums and performed over 1,000 sessions (jingles, audio visuals, TV and movie soundtracks) as well as appeared live in concert venues of all kinds. When I was asked to pass on some advice about singing rock & roll, I was thrilled. I thought I would focus on several aspects of rock & roll singing: the studio, physical fitness, live venues and some of the business considerations.

First, let's start with the studio. I've been fortunate enough to work with producers such as Bob Rock, Bruce Fairbairn, Paul Dean, Jim Vallance, David Foster and Bryan Adams, to name a few.

One must learn how to take direction. Every producer has their own style — so stay alert! When singing background vocals in a group, never try to overpower the other singers. Work on the blend. I remember one instance where a singer, hoping to impress the producer, kept standing out in the mix. Well, needless to say, I never did see that singer again on another session. Wait for the producer to direct you. If he or she says move back from the mic, do it. Also, make sure you listen and work with the other singers. I find having one headphone on one ear so you can hear the track and the other off the ear really helps with pitch and syncing up with the other singers.

Keeping relaxed is most important. A tense singer is a tense vocal chord. A little humour never hurts. It can help break the ice, but don't let it get out of hand. Even as a background singer, it is possible to contribute a good idea if you have one. However, scope out the situation; in some instances, it may not be appropriate. Usually a gut feeling will tell you how you should proceed.

Physical conditioning is definitely strongly recommended. Most of the artists that I've worked for are on some type of exercise program. I belong to a gym and love to mountain bike (preferably up hills — it's great for the cardio). Don't forget that your voice is your instrument and you carry it around with you everywhere, so treat it with respect. I'd recommend a fitness club that is affiliated with other clubs (IPFA) around the world because you may be spending an awful lot of time on the road. If you have a band, working out together can create a real camaraderie.

Drinking plenty of water is great for the vocal chords. Doing vocal warm-ups in the car on the way to the studio or your gig is something I practise faithfully. Of course, there are always exceptions. While I was recording my recent debut album, *Out of Nowhere*, my producer Paul Dean and I found that, in order to get the raunchier vocal sound we wanted, I should ride my mountain bike to the studio first thing in the day and avoid warming up. We got the results we were looking for.

Live singing is a totally different animal. Some of the same techniques exist such as doing your vocal warm-ups and the physical fitness parts. Performing live is much more physical, though. You never know what is going to happen and that's what makes it really exciting. Having your monitor EQed properly and making sure the volume level is just right so you can hear yourself is quite important. If you take three singers and give them all equal balance in their monitors, each one will swear the other two singers are louder. I think this may be caused by some kind of pressure on your ears when you sing. I found that I could solve this problem for myself by raising the

level of my voice in the monitor mix with the other vocalists balanced evenly at a quieter level.

Performing for your audience is number one, so whatever the situation, put out for them. Get your pitch from a top end instrument (keyboard or guitar) because relying for pitch from low end instruments may cause you to sing flat. Once again, relax and make sure you're having fun.

If you are going to be a professional singer, you have to have some business smarts. Show up to your gigs and sessions early. This will

give you time to get in the studio or dressing room and do vocal warm-ups or, in some cases, become familiar with the music you'll be recording. Keep good financial records even if you think you're not making much money. Don't forget that if you set up a good system now, the only thing that will change when you're making the big cash will be the decimal points. There are plenty of great computer programs out there, such as Accpac Bedford/Simply Accounting or Quicken to help you keep it together. Don't be afraid to discuss money before doing a job. I'd suggest joining the A.F. of M. (American Federation of Musicians). That's right — singers can be members. Being a member has many advantages such as contributing to a pension and cheap musical equipment insurance (should you own some musical equipment). They can also tell you what scale you should be charging. When it's time to tour in the U.S., the A.F. of M. membership will be necessary for immigration purposes.

When you do a lot of album work, if all your sessions are filed with the A.F. of M., you will receive a royalty payment (Phonograph Records Special Payments Fund) for the next five years above and beyond your initial payment. As you can imagine, that means more money in your pocket. For more information about associations, contact the local in your area.

Working at being an accomplished rock & roll singer takes a lot of hard work and dedication. In the end, it's all up to you. When you love what you do, there's no better job in the world. Rock on.

VANCOUVER-BASED SINGER/SONGWRITER/MUSICIAN MARC LAFRANCE HAS CONTRIBUTED VOCALS TO ALBUMS BY MOTLEY CRUE, SCORPIONS, BON JOVI, QUIREBOYS, POISON AND COUNTLESS OTHERS

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BY TODD BOOTH

# ROCK 'N' ROW

Rock artist Kim Mitchell meets the late, great Arnold Schoenberg...

An excerpt from the bridge of "Lemon Wedge" off of Kim Mitchell's latest album, *Itch*.

Sure... It's only rock 'n' roll, but this passage of music follows the strict discipline of serial composition, or "writing on the row". All 12 tones are set in a fixed order and no tone can be used again until the other 11 have sounded.

It was over ten years ago now that Kim first called me to work on *Akimbo Alogo*. He needed someone to

chart the guys' parts, help out with the arrangements, even play on the album. At that time, I had come off the road, completed extensive studies in harmony and orchestration and had begun scoring film and TV tracks. Still, here was an opportunity to work my craft in a very popular, contemporary idiom.

For all of Kim's albums that were to follow over the next decade, I would submit idea after idea based in the theory I had studied and worked... and for the most part, Kim was very open to my input. From the embellished passing sixths on plagal cadences in "Easy to Tame" to the time shifts and modal experimentation of "In Your Arms", to the linear counter-point bridge of "the Great Embrace", I had a chance to work my craft and hear it become part of the audio-memories of a rock 'n' roll sub-culture. Along with a reasonable visibility, some gold and platinum albums to hang on the wall and a little money, too, the relationship served me well.

One of the many things I came to understand over the years is that there is always more and less appropriate musical ideas for each and every musical form and style. Rock was no exception. As adventurous as I was allowed to be, there were still some musical techniques that were deemed "not appropriate" for use with the popular song. But I would always push... and Kim, much to his credit, would always hear me out. One such "sonic bad boy" first introduced to the Modern Music listeners by Arnold Schoenberg and his contemporaries around the turn of the last century is known as *atonality*. Arnold's means to understanding this uncharted sonic landscape would eventually lead him to "serial technique" or "writing on the row". Atonality was guaranteed to alienate many in the art music scene, let alone the popular scene over the next century or so. That is, perhaps, until now...

## The New Eclecticism

It was just a few months before my work on the album *Itch* began. I was the keyboard player and music director for a couple of shows in Thailand, on tour with members of the *hard-rock* band Zen Maniac. We were backing Thai singer Manee, whose work is in a contemporary *techno-pop/dance* style; with special guest Gary Burton and his brand of *modern jazz*; and a *new-age* Thai artist, Tewan, whose band worked a mix of traditional Eastern and contemporary Western instruments. I couldn't help noticing what seemed to be a new eclecticism in music appreciation.

After listening to *alternative-rock*'s King's X on a Walkman in the Bangkok airport the next day, we flew on to Chaing Mai. Traditional Thai music was being played in the lobby of the hotel as we arrived. I remember thinking that afternoon, "Why not? It has truly become an eclectic world. So, as the barriers to the individual styles of music we think of as *rock*, *rap*, *jazz*, etc. fall around us, why not the barriers between *all* musics? Why not allow even film-scoring techniques

like *free-atonalism* to become accessible within everything else?"

## Rock 'n' Row

The basic theory of the row is that the 12 tones of the chromatic scale are set into a recurring order from which *all the melodic and harmonic elements of the music* are then drawn. Schoenberg knew that the elements of unity and variety would have to be present in his music whether or not it had a discernible key. And, as is the case in all art-forms, a critical balance between these elements would be the principal challenge of the music.

In most popular songs we hear day-to-day, the rhythm is a relatively constant *unity*. The harmonies, once established, are retained for much of the piece. Even the melody, with its development throughout the piece, is generally based on a few short linear statements or motifs.

When we need *variety*, it is achieved by the move from verse to chorus, the addition of counter-melodies in second verses, new melodies and harmonies in bridges, the changing lyrics in the developing story line, etc.

In serial-atonality, the music hopes to retain its *unity* through the repetition of the row. This collection of intervals and their resulting sonic quality are usually decided upon by the composer in advance of the composition. It's sort of like the tailor choosing the material before making the coat. I chose a row that had some slight sense of key, while still employing all 12 tones:

THE ROW: A series of 12 different tones from which all of the melodic and harmonic elements are drawn.

Further, by starting on triplets before any other tempo references have been made, I could add to the feeling of odd bars and time changes. Schoenberg had felt that, since the row, in theory at least, represented the *unity* in the music, rhythm was then free to work in the *variety* element (I've known many a bored drummer who wishes this were true in popular music). This re-assignment of duties within the fabric of atonal music is why most people find its rhythms to be very sporadic and disjointed.

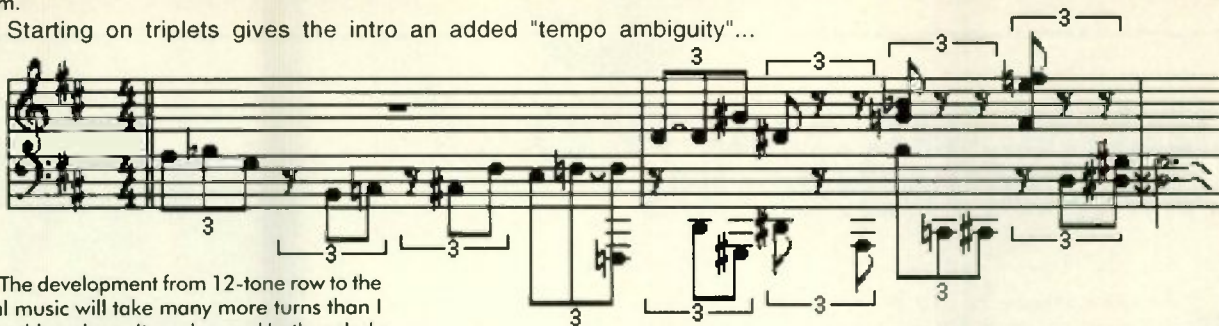
The old rules are not tossed out in the approach to any new forms of music, as some may think. Rather, they may just be turned on their heads from our traditional perspective. New forms in art just re-invent the old rules.

Think about some of the arbitrary rules that order our lives now, rules that we sometimes think are immutable. It is likely that if "red means go" and "green means stop", there would still be as much order



to a city's traffic flow as there is now. If, on the other hand, there was only one intersection where the colours were reversed, it would most certainly be chaotic. Similarly, once the rules that guide a work of art are established by that piece, it is under its own obligations to follow them.

Starting on triplets gives the intro an added "tempo ambiguity"...



The development from 12-tone row to the final music will take many more turns than I can address here. It can be used both melodically and harmonically (for an illustration of how the row can be used for harmony, compare the numbers below the notes of the second illustration with the numbers below the notes of the first illustration). It can also be transposed to begin on any of the other 11 tones, played backwards and/or upside down, or even fragmented and used in counter-point with itself. The row's quality of unity will vary throughout all of these transformations. Like any other musical technique, serial composition is really just another starting place for the creative process.

I always push toward creative answers in my work and Kim's albums have been no exception. In turn, my ideas have not always made it to the final product. But artists, managers, producers and record companies alike are all in the business of staying in business, and so they have legitimate concerns about selling their product. From Kim's projects alone, I have, among other things, a "canonic

guitar solo" and a "sectional-use of linear counter-point" bridge that are still up for grabs. There are even some hip brass charts that date back to 1984 and the *Akimbo Alogo* album.

### Next ... ?

I have always heard that the turn of each century ushers in new frontiers in the arts, sometimes moving the "esoteric" to the "commonplace". For example, in music:

1800 • the peak of the Classics and the birth of the Early Romantic era

1900 • the peak of the Romantics and the birth of the Impressionistic era and Modern harmony experiments like Poly-tonal and Atonal techniques

2000 • the peak of ? and the birth of ?

If this is indeed true, then I have high hopes that a new eclecticism will continue to be accepted and used in every aspect of art; that, like the promise of the recent world

music movement, the next century will be alive with music of all ideologies.

I like to think that as the world is growing up, it is becoming not just tolerant of its diverse cultures and concepts, but is actively seeking them out. Artists and record companies alike seem more willing than ever to risk, more willing to push out the old boundaries of the "commercially acceptable".

No... I don't think that the era of 12-tone rock has, or ever will arrive. I eagerly await the next step forward. I don't know what Kim has an *itch* for lately, but I am *itchin'* for the future of music. Just so that you understand what I mean, someday you might hear me *riding by yelling*, "Look Ma, no key!"

*IN ADDITION TO WORKING WITH KIM MITCHELL, KEYBOARDIST/STICK PLAYER/ARRANGER TODD BOOTH HAS DONE BOTH LIVE AND STUDIO WORK WITH ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS THE HAWK, LIONA BOYD AND DAN HILL.*

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BY LARRY LEFEBOUR

# MULTIMEDIA AND THE MODERN MUSICIAN

When MIDI emerged in the early '80s, it was viewed by many as another evil technology that was understood by few and that had the potential to reduce the art form we all know and love into cold, impersonal streams of data. More than a decade later, people recognize the strengths of MIDI as a tool to enhance creativity and allow the musician greater control over his or her craft. People have tended to view multimedia in a similar fashion, as some mystic art shrouded in a mind-boggling technology. However, as the popular media continue to expound the virtues of multimedia, many people are becoming more curious about what this new craft is all about.

Well, so much for the sermonizing. What is multimedia and what does it mean to you, the modern musician of the '90s? Well, let's deal with the first part of that question. Multimedia can be seen as a process or art that integrates text, graphics, video and sound into a cohesive presentation. That presentation can be used for any purpose, ranging from education and information retrieval to entertainment. When your grade six teacher showed you that the chromosomal activity of cells increases during mitosis (huh?) on an overhead projector, he/she used a multimedia presentation. Uncle Omar's slide show of the family trip to the Pink Flamingo Petting Zoo & BBQ Hut was also a multimedia presentation. See? This is stuff that you are already familiar with.

As you can see, multimedia can be used for educational purposes, but its uses are more far reaching than that. Certain multimedia CD-ROMs allow you to access an encyclopedia's worth of information in an instant, such as telephone numbers for the entire country or legal precedents. Others can place you in simulated environments for training purposes. There are many games out there that provide realistic action with video images. Some CD-ROMs, such as Peter Gabriel's and David Bowie's allow you to become the producer/engineer and re-mix songs and edit videos. The creative element is very important in multimedia presentations and this is where musicians can benefit, being the creative geniuses that we are. More on this later. First, there are some technical details that I'd like to get out of the way.

I've thrown about the term 'CD-ROM' several times. CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory) is one of the possible delivery systems for a multimedia presentation. Presentations can exist in many formats, such as video, floppy disk, kiosks, etc. CD-ROM has become, for lack of a better description, the current standard for the computer industry due to its huge storage capacity and its relatively low cost. However, the CD-ROM comes in different formats that are each used for different computer systems (please bear with me; I'll make this as painless as possible). Mode 1 CD-ROMs play either visual or audio data, but not simultaneously. Most multimedia CD-ROMs are Mode 2, which solves the simultaneous audio/visual data problem. XA (eXtended Architecture) CD-ROMs allow for simultaneous audio and video. The Mac community uses 'HFS'-compatible CD-ROMs, whereas IBM and UNIX systems use 'ISO 9660'-compatible CD-ROMs. CD-i is Philips' own interactive CD-ROM format. Some products are 'hybrids', capable of being used by different systems (i.e., Mac and IBM). There! Enough of that! Suffice to say that there are many different formats that aren't all compatible with each other. Trust me; this is important information to keep in mind as you will see later.

Okay. You have this flat, round, plastic thing in your hands. Well, how did it come into being? That's a good question. Just like a typical album

project, a CD-ROM requires careful and detailed planning. After thinking of the concept and the goal of the project, it's a good idea to separate the concept into smaller "modules" so you can flesh out the details and not be overwhelmed by the entire project. Try to use storyboards for a visual reference. This way, the creative flow of the project can be developed. Be prepared to make many changes and modifications in your first few drafts; remember, you're creating something that should be visually and aurally engrossing for the user. When assembling your source material (audio, video, graphics, text, etc.), make sure that it is of the best possible quality. This is important because you will often have to manipulate the data so that it can be used on a computer system different from the one you are using to create the project (\* technical news flash — you will probably be using a 386 or 68030 machine or better. Thank you for listening \*). Programming or authoring is the step where you assemble all of your elements into a logical and creative structure. Don't let the term 'programming' scare you; there are several programs available that allow you to graphically arrange your elements using 'icons' (small representative pictures) instead of a programming language. However, previous knowledge of a programming language certainly helps when you need to have absolute control over any of your elements. After extensive testing, you will finally be ready to write your presentation onto a CD-ROM. How long does a project like this take? Depending upon the scope of your project, your planning and the availability of your source material, a presentation can take anywhere from several weeks to several months to create. Now, the big question: how much does this cost? Well, let me put it this way. A car is a car, but would you prefer to experience the rush and exhilaration of driving down the open road in a 50 hp Lawn-Boy GT or a Porsche? It really depends upon the depth you wish to achieve in your presentation.

All of this talk about money brings up another area of concern; that is, the business of selling your product. You will have to answer many questions, such as: Who is this product for (Mac, IBM, both)? How will it be marketed? Who is my competition? Is my product unique? How much will it sell for? How much will it cost to produce? All of these and other marketing questions are very important to ask in order to determine the feasibility of your project (yeah, I know, reality sucks).

Now that you have a rough idea as to what multimedia is and what some of the basic steps to producing your own product are, let's get back to our first question. What does it mean to you, the musician? Well, first, multimedia offers you another avenue for your musical talents, whether it be writing and arranging soundtracks or producing and arranging audio material for presentations. More importantly, multimedia is slowly coming into its own as an art-form, much as video made its own transition. The creative aspect of multimedia and the fact that several of the elements (namely audio and video) are familiar make multimedia an ideal development area for musicians and creative people. This industry is still in its infancy and the technological boundaries are being constantly pushed further, allowing people to create beautiful and stunning presentations. Multimedia is a natural extension of music, video and other visual and performance arts. There are no "rules", so to speak, as to what is and isn't possible. You are only limited by your imagination.

(Screen fades to black; lush orchestral music fills the air as the 3-D credits dart madly across the screen...)

*ASSISTANT LARRY LEFEBOUR HOLDS A MUSIC DEGREE AND IS A GRADUATE OF THE HARRIS INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS. HE HEADS UP INTERACTIVITY INC., A CD-ROM PRODUCTION FACILITY BASED IN TORONTO, ON.*

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BY BENJAMIN RUSSELL

## D-D-DIGITAL G-G-GENERATION

**T**he past ten years have seen an explosion in digital technology. All of us, aware of it or not, have been touched by what is basically a computer revolution. Even the most staunch holdout has no second thoughts about using their TV's remote control. But the insidious digital force is hiding even there, in chips inside the unit. What about your car? Chances are its fuel injection is controlled by a micro-chip. By now, most musicians have either embraced the revolution wholeheartedly, or at least made an uneasy alliance.

Even Rick has jumped into the game. I hadn't spoken to him in a couple of years and gave him a call the other day. He has a serious studio in his basement. Last time I was there, he had a drum kit set up, mic'd and ready to roll. He scorned drum machines and was highly sceptical of my "virtual" MIDI tracks.

When I phoned, he was in session. The control room was full of players working on a tune. Make a note: they were NOT in the studio with their guitars, bass, drums, etc. They were "playing" a whole new set of instruments. You guessed it — Rick had gone digital! He told me he now runs a IBM clone with sequencing software, uses a drum machine to enter parts (still doesn't quantize, though) and no longer keeps a drum kit set up in the studio. He even brought up digital recording and asked what I thought about it.

Digital audio is coming of age. What was, only a short time ago, the exclusive preserve of the very rich and/or famous is now filtering down to the masses. The technology is still not "cheap", but a growing number of products are tantalizingly within the reach of those determined to give them a try.

It's an exciting time. Should you jump in and invest in a digital recording system? Maybe. Price/feature ratios keep improving. If you wait, you're bound to find something that does more for less money. But how long do you wait? The ultimate product at the ultimate price will always be in the future. Meanwhile, you could miss serious music/money-making possibilities.

If you decide to launch into the digital audio universe, what exactly do you need? That's not an easy question to answer. There are plenty of options, not all of them totally compatible.

Should you go for a tape-based system? Major league pro tape manufacturers have all had tape-based recorders for years, but these are cash intensive. Alesis made a breakthrough with ADAT. Their machine provides eight tracks of digital audio with the option of gang-

ing multiple machines together for lots more tracks. Other manufacturers have come on board with ADAT, notably Fostex, with their RD8.

Tascam has a machine that runs with the same general concept (digital audio on linear tape) but theirs is not compatible and uses a different kind of tape.

The other significant approach is hard disk-based, most commonly requiring the use of a fairly beefy computer and (yep!) a hard disk on which to record your tracks. Most high-end (and relatively high priced) hard disk-based systems are stand-alone, proprietary packages which may or may not include an obvious computer. In the low-to-mid price range, there is a growing number of choices for hard disk recording on desk-top computers.

Requirements include computer, software and in many cases, additional hardware (interfaces, sound cards, etc.). Macintosh and IBM systems are currently dominant, but Atari's Falcon computer has the potential to take some significant market share if they can work out distribution problems.

One force in the computer marketplace benefiting musicians is the proliferation of audio-visual (AV) products. "Multimedia". There's that buzzword again. What it

means is that as more average computer people make movies, presentations, etc. with their computers, more developers strive to meet their needs. No longer a niche market (the music business is a mere wart on the hind leg of the computer industry!), digital audio becomes a mass market item. Big-time competition leads to proliferation of choices and lower prices.

We're already seeing this happen. For example, for the past several years, Digidesign has been more or less alone in providing digital audio cards for the Macintosh. Now they face challenges, not only from other card manufacturers, but from Apple itself, which currently offers computer models with built-in CD-quality digital audio recording capability.

In my next column, we'll look more closely at the Macintosh, explore some of the hardware/software options and see if this stuff really works — and more importantly, if it's any fun!

In the meantime, if you have any questions you'd like answered or any comments about this general area, drop me a line at the magazine.

Until next time...

*BENJAMIN RUSSELL IS A SINGER/SONGWRITER/  
PRODUCER BASED IN MONTREAL, PQ.*



BY STEVE PARTON

## KING MIDAS FOR A DAY



**R**ob Colby is the sound engineer for Phil Collins and for Genesis. Not long ago, I was his sound assistant for Phil Collins' rehearsal at Studio Economik in Montreal. After the session, I followed Rob to Phil's show at the Skydome in Toronto to find out what was involved in working a "room" that size. They have 160,000 watts of power to play with; that's about 135K more than I usually have to deal with. I spoke with Rob about some of the techniques he employs when doing large-scale shows. I thought I would relay some of his points here for those looking for a somewhat bigger gig.

One of the first things that came to mind was to find out how to EQ an empty room which would soon be filled with 40,000 high-frequency absorbing bodies. Rob's main EQ is left quite similar to the way it was the previous night and

so, during sound-check, there is in fact an abundance of high end and harshness. In allowing for this, Rob compresses the high end in order to keep with the consistency of his sound system, rather than try to find the perfect sound without an audience there.

"I listen to the P.A. with only what I need to have on at that time; I don't turn the whole system on so it's reflecting sounds all over the room and getting in the way of the sound-check. I listen to maybe the inside three columns which I'm going to listen to for the majority of the show anyway."

by about 90 milliseconds. The actual amount of delay is fine-tuned each night by measuring it rather than calculating it. Sending a click-track through the mains, he gradually brings up the delay in the horns until the signal arrives at the same time as that coming from the full range speakers. This allows the people in the nose-bleed sections to hear everything evenly.

### NOT EXACTLY ANECHOIC

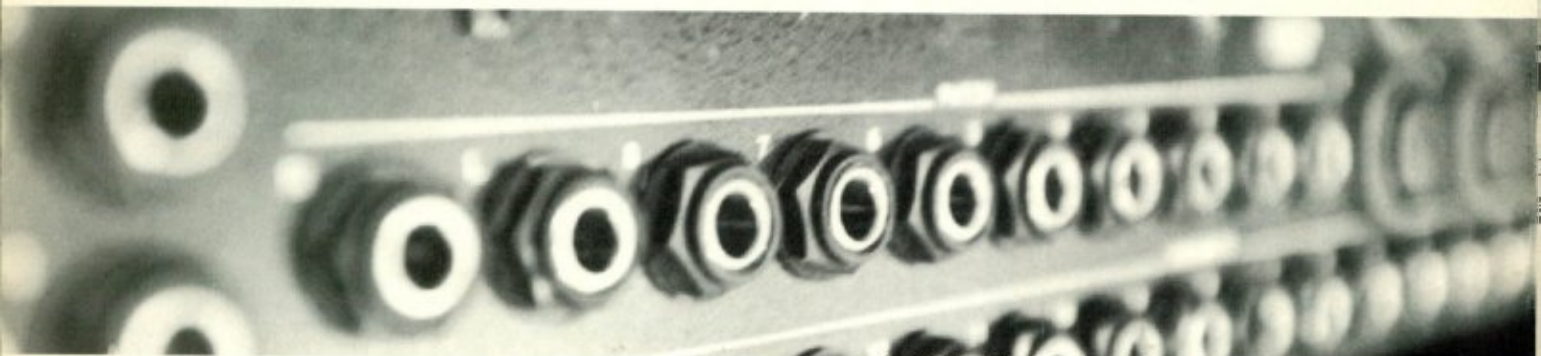
Speaking of delays, I asked Rob how he deals with excess reflections in stadiums which could interfere with his intended digital delay settings. He says that he does not worry too much about that, given the amount of power he has.

"I try to saturate the room with enough level so that I don't hear the reflections coming back," he says. "That is a risky thing to do if you don't have enough control over the system; you can get into big feedback problems."

If the room is so busy that the natural reflections are being smeared with the assigned delay for the vocal, one is better to just eliminate those intended effects.

### THE MIDAS TOUCH

Rob has two Midas consoles; one for the three drum sets and one for everything else (four vox, four horns, guitar, bass, keys and piano). The boards are semi-automated; flying faders are positioned at the beginning of each song (as predetermined by automation snapshots set during production rehearsals) and Rob carries the mix



### SO HOW'S THE SOUND UP THERE, ANYWAY?

When the house fills up and the rest of the P.A. is turned on, Rob doesn't even hear those other columns because they are wrapped around the sides of the stage. So how does he know if it sounds good in all the different sections? It's not like he can take a stroll around the room in the middle of the show. Rob does that during production rehearsals, getting familiar with how the amplifiers need to be trimmed as you get farther away.

"The system I've been touring with for the past few years, the Prism System, is extremely accurate and gives a very good representation, no matter where you're standing in the room. And also, during the show, one of the sound techs wanders around and comes back and gives us a good vital report as to what's going on."

Although Rob has to contend with the interpretation of someone else's ears, he does find it helpful while being stuck in his chair behind the console. Looking up from my chair behind the console, I saw 12 horns pointed at the upper balconies, time-delayed, apparently

through to the end of the song. He prefers to have just the beginning of the songs preset. "I don't intend to take time setting that up when the last song is finishing. I'm mixing all the way to the end of that last song and then boom, I'm right into the next song and I'm able to then concentrate on turning off the effects that I don't need and turning on the ones that I do need." Rob has but 16 effects sends to decide from.

As far as decisions go, how much of a say does Rob have in how he mixes, which types of effects he uses, etc?

"It's all up to me prior to the tour. The production manager has no say in what I'm using and I've never had an artist say to me, 'I don't want you to use this limiter; I'd rather have you use this one.'"

I wonder if he misses the good ol' days (my present days), dealing with beer-breath bar owners leaning over his console twisting knobs at random in an attempt to turn down a screaming guitar amp which is not even in the mix? Maybe not.

STEVE PARTON IS A MONTREAL-BASED SOUND ENGINEER AND GUITAR TECH WHO TAKES ON ALL GIGS THROWN AT HIM.

CM



BY TED SOUTHAM

## THE FOUR COLOUR PRINTING PROCESS

Most offset printing is done these days using what is commonly termed four colour process printing. Four colour process involves using a mix of four standard colours to fool the eye into thinking that it is seeing a wide range of shades and colours. All printers, film makers, artists and designers use the exact same four colours so that these standards are common worldwide.

The four colours are yellow, cyan (a bright blue), magenta (a bright purplish red) and black. These four colours are printed using tiny dots of each colour that overlap with each other and white space to produce any shade that a designer can imagine. For example: yellow and magenta printed in equal amounts with no white space form a traditional red. The same yellow and magenta with about 70 percent white space will produce pink. Complete coverage of cyan and yellow will print kelly green. In actuality, there is no green on the paper but in an effect similar to seeing the stagecoach wheels go backwards in an old movie, your eye "sees" not the small dots individually but the combined effect. The black component is used to produce shadows and highlights and is not normally part of the colour mix.

Most CD and cassette inserts are printed this way. This means a tremendous cost savings in ink setups on the large presses that all the Canadian suppliers use for music industry jobs. It also means that many other jobs can be printed on the same sheets, thus spreading setup costs over more than one customer.

In order to effectively use process colour, your designer must understand their use. To reproduce a colour photograph, a computerized (and expensive) separation process must be used. For shadings and solid colours, the designer can specify the required percentage of each process colour to the film maker so that the film and printing plates are going to give the required result. In all cases, the process requires that four pieces of film be produced.

Some designers who are not familiar with how a job will be printed will try to save their clients money by specifying a two colour job and picking the two colours to be used from a book called the *Pantone Matching System* (PMS). These are a group of about 2,000 standard colours that have common ink formulas and can be specified worldwide. In this case, no attempt is made to fool the eye but the exact colour required is printed on the paper. The idea is that film costs will be halved and print costs decreased because a two colour press can be used. While this is a good idea in principle and would work effectively for a poster or a flyer or a large print run (over 100,000 impressions), for a specialized item like a CD or cassette insert or booklet, this is a false economy. These type of products must be produced in a sophisticated printing plant because of the folding and die cutting elements of the job. These plants can print special colours in addition to four colour process but the start up costs for the relatively small runs used on most music jobs far outweigh the savings from producing only two pieces of film.

When planning your print requirements, you and your designer must think ahead, not only to find the appearance required, but how that result will be obtained. To get what you want in the appearance of the final product, your decisions now are as important as your choice of engineer or studio.

TED SOUTHAM IS SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF SHOREWOOD PACKAGING'S MUSIC PRODUCTS DIVISION. HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CARAS, FUNCTIONING AS CHAIR OF THE PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE. HE WAS FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL MARKETS AT CBS RECORDS AND IN PACKAGE GOODS PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AT NESTLE. **CM**



BRADLEY SOUTHAM

# HOT GEAR

## RESUME ON A DISK FOR MUSICIANS

Resume On A Disk For Musicians is a new computer resume service designed just for musicians. It features a complete multimedia presentation of their resume with graphics, sound, animation and a full-colour picture of the musician.

Pictures of musicians are placed on computer disk along with samples of their lyrics, resume, leadsheets and even demonstrations of their MIDIfile songs which can be played back through a soundcard, MIDI keyboard, module or PC speaker.

The disks can be used by writers who want to collaborate with other musicians and as an electronic promo package to send out to booking agents and record companies. It is also perfect for uploading to online services like CompuServe, Delphi and America Online for other musicians and music industry professionals to download.

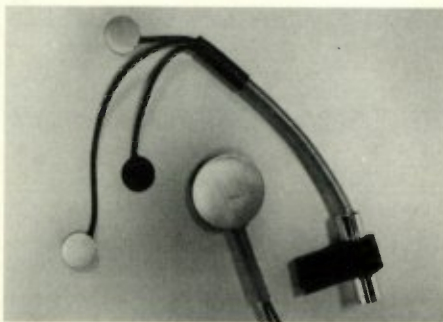
The program works on all IBM-compatible computers with a VGA monitor and 640K of memory.

For more information, contact: New Sound Music, PO Box 37363, Oak Park, MI (810) 424-8619, FAX (810) 424-7405.

## SOUNDSPOTS PIEZO CRYSTAL PICKUPS

Seymour Duncan Acoustic has introduced their SoundSpots line of piezo crystal pickups. The handcrafted SoundSpots pickup line is currently nine models strong.

Each SoundSpot is hand ground to extremely fine tolerances. This process, along with the selection of materials, renders a pickup with a very thin surface that also maintains its strength and flexibility. The result is a SoundSpot transducer that is ultra-sensitive to an instrument's surface vibrations and, there-



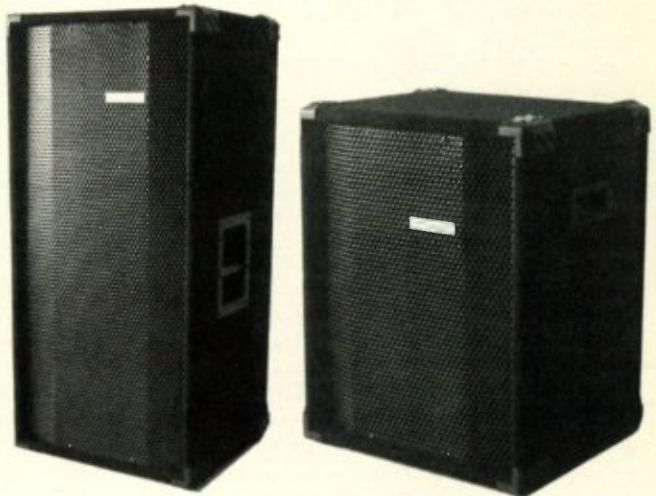
## • Products Featured In This Issue of Hot Gear •

RESUME ON A DISK FOR MUSICIANS • COMPACT "L" SERIES LOUDSPEAKERS • SOUNDSPOTS PIEZO CRYSTAL PICKUPS • ROLAND AC-100 ACOUSTIC CHORUS AMP • DBX 166A COMPRESSOR/LIMITER/EXPANDER GATE • ALESIS AI-2 SYNCHRONIZATION INTERFACE • BOSS RV-70 DIGITAL REVERB • YAMAHA MT120S MULTITRACK RECORDER • ALESIS QUADRAVERB 2 • ELECTRO-VOICE SX100 • PRO-REC ANALOGUE COLLECTION • AKG-C12VR TUBE MICROPHONE • ROCK 'N' ROLLER SUPERCART • FASTEDDIE • GODIN MULTIACT GUITAR

## COMPACT "L" SERIES LOUDSPEAKERS

Compact has introduced a new series of acoustic loudspeakers. The "L" Series will satisfy the needs of musicians and sound engineers seeking a quality product on a limited budget, offering excellent reproduction quality and power capacity, heavy duty construction and an affordable price.

Two models are available. The L-115 incorporates a 15" woofer (C15W-8, the same one used in the "C" Series) as well as a high frequency ceramic horn driver; and the L-215 model is equipped with two ceramic horn drivers and two 15"



woofers. Each of these loudspeakers have the same characteristics — compact format, excellent craftsmanship, choice components, an ultra-efficient protection system and Compact's exclusive "high performance" crossover.

The "L" Series comes standard with a resistant carpet finish and a metal protective grille. These are also available in version "N" (natural finish), which allows the installer to paint them according to the taste of his/her customer.

For more information, contact: S.F. Marketing Inc., 6161 Cypihot, St. Laurent, PQ H4S 1R3 (514) 856-1919, FAX (514) 856-1920.

fore, is extremely natural and warm-sounding. The SoundSpots line marks Seymour Duncan's entry into the acoustic non-stringed and ethnic instrument market. In addition to violins, there are a host of SoundSpots for non-stringed instruments such as bongos, congas, cymbals, hand drums, harmonicas, glass harps and steel drums; as well as SoundSpots designed for a variety of ethnic instruments including berimbau, bouzoukis, hammered dulcimers, kalimbas, ouds, sitars and much more.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 620 McCaffrey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1N1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069.



## AKG C12VR TUBE MICROPHONE

The new C12VR tube microphone is designed to continue and expand upon the tradition of the C12, a collectible tube mic manufactured by AKG between 1954 and 1963. The vintage C12 sound is recreated with a modern-day version of the original capsule and the same tried and true tube electronics used in the '50s and '60s.

The C12VR keeps the original 6072 vacuum tube at the heart of its circuitry, maintaining the C12's characteristic warmth, clarity and presence. Improve-



ments minimize inherent hum and electrical noise susceptibility. User control has also been enhanced: selectable preattenuation is provided in 10 or 20dB increments; the one-inch twin-diaphragm system permits the selection of nine different polar patterns (omni, cardioid, figure-8 and six intermediate response steps) which may be adjusted silently and remotely from the N-tube power unit; and nominal sensitivity of the C12VR may be increased with p.c. switches by 10dB. Frequency range is 30 Hz-20 kHz +/-2.5dB.

Other features of the new C12VR include a large core section output transformer design that keeps low-frequency distortion to a minimum with a two-position roll off/bass cut circuitry that can be remotely controlled; special shock mounting elements; a 30-foot connecting cable (with large 12-pin Tuchel end connector); and a foam windscreen.

For more information, contact: AKG Canada, 9629 Clement St., Lasalle, PQ H8R 4B4 (514) 595-3966, FAX (800) 790-2000.

## ROCK 'N' ROLLER SUPERCART

Rock 'N' Roller Supercarts combine the portability of a luggage cart with the big load capacity of an industrial four-wheel dolly. Three new models have been introduced to the line.

Perfect for transporting drum gear or other cumbersome equipment, all models instantly convert into five configurations: variable-length hi-stacker, variable-length furniture dolly, variable-length platform truck, two-wheel handtruck or storage transport.

The largest model, RR10, carries up to 500 pounds, weighs only 33 pounds and folds up to fit into the trunk of a compact car. All models feature rugged steel construction, durable powder-coat finish, stairclimbers and caster brakes.

For more information, contact: Music Industries Corp., 99 Tulip Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001 (516) 352-4110, FAX (516) 352-0754.

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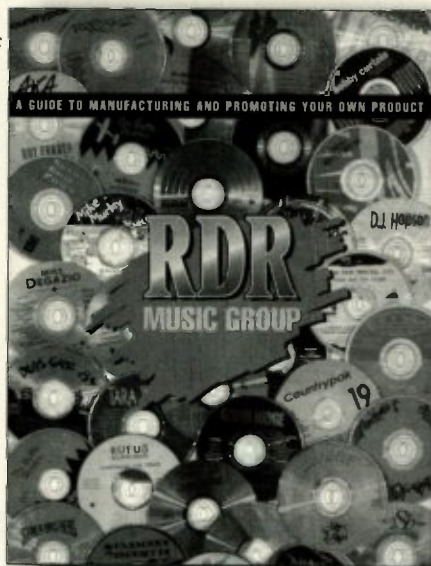
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## ROLAND AC-100 ACOUSTIC CHORUS AMP

The Roland AC-100 Acoustic Chorus Amp is designed specifically for acoustic guitar players.

The AC-100 is a tri-amped, three speaker system consisting of one 12" speaker and two 5" speakers. The 100 watt amplifier is apportioned accordingly at 50W x 25W x 25W. The 12" speaker accommodates a dry full-range signal while the smaller speaker pair are effected by the built-in stereo digital chorus and reverb. This affords flexibility, since the 5" speakers employ a fully controllable stereo chorus and reverb, while the dry 12" speaker maintains the natural integrity of your instrument.

There are two independent channels, one featuring an XLR mic level input. Unlike many amplifiers, both input channels can be independently affected. Controlling the input signal is easy with the three-band EQ and there is even an onboard notch-filter which eliminates feedback and howling. The back panel houses an effects loop and footswitch jack for the onboard effects. There are two line level XLR outputs in addition to a pair of standard 1/4" outputs.

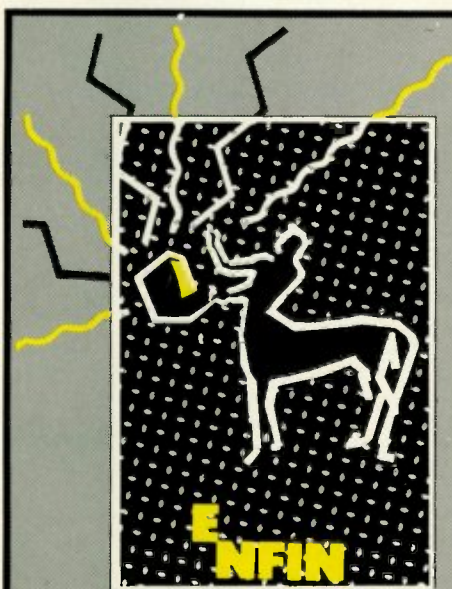
For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music, 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V6V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552.

## DBX 166A COM- PRESSOR/LIMITER/ EXPANDER GATE

The new dbx 166A Compressor/Limiter/Expander Gate is a two-channel, stereo linkable unit. It features a choice of Over-Easy or hard knee compression, two sets of program-dependent attack and release time constants, a switchable LF shelf in the detector circuit and PeakStop limiting. Balanced XLR and unbalanced 1/4" inputs and outputs, IEC AC connector and bold new front panel graphics add up to a new, improved standard.

The 166 has been discontinued as of May, 1994, and replaced by the U.S. manufactured 166A. All the new features and only a small price increase over the older 166 makes the new 166A great value, and one that is highly competitive with other two-channel units on the market.

For more information, contact: AKG Canada, 9629 Clement St., Lasalle, PQ H8R 4B4 (514) 595-3966, FAX (800) 790-2000.



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# ALESIS AI-2 SYNCHRONIZATION INTERFACE

Alesis has introduced the AI-2 Multipurpose Audio/Video Synchronization Interface. The AI-2, a single-rackspace time code synchronizer for the Alesis ADAT Digital Multitrack Recorder, was developed jointly with TimeLine Vista, an industry leader in synchronization products. The ADAT is an eight-track, eight-channel multitrack digital audio recorder that records on S-VHS tape with full linear 16-bit, 48 kHz sampling fidelity.

The AI-2 effectively interfaces the ADAT system with the entire world of professional audio and video. In addition to acting as a stand-alone chase synchronizer for the ADAT, it also translates commands from video editors (commonly in the Sony 9-pin protocol) to the ADAT sync protocol, allowing video editors to control ADATs directly from an edit decision list. It connects to the first ADAT in a chain, and up to 16 ADATs can be controlled as a system for a total of 128 tracks of audio. The AI-2 allows the ADAT to be controlled from the



TimeLine Lynx, Lynx 2 and Micro Lynx synchronizers.

The AI-2 features SMPTE time code input and output jacks, with video and world clock inputs. It can read time code at high speed, eliminating the need to count tach pulses. It can generate, jam sync and regenerate all formats of

SMPTE/EBU time code. On the MIDI side, the unit will send MIDI Time Code (MTC) and translate MIDI Machine Control (MMC) messages to the ADAT.

For more information, contact: Alesis, 3630 Holdrege Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016 (310) 558-4530, FAX (310) 836-9120, e-mail: ALECORP@Alesis1.usa.com.

## BOSS RV-70 DIGITAL REVERB

The BOSS RV-70 Digital Stereo Reverb represents the latest development in a superb dedicated digital reverb unit, at an affordable price.

The RV-70 is perfect for project studios of any size. With its large assortment of reverb presets, the RV-70 will free up your multi-effects for other chores. The RV-70 is also great for individual instrument rigs like guitar, keyboards or drums and equally at home with rehearsal PA systems or live sound reinforcement.

With 199 preset programs, many taken directly from the Roland SRV-330 Dimensional Space Reverb, the applications are virtually endless. The RV-70 utilizes 16-bit digital processing at 44.1 kHz to produce the highest quality, high-density effects. Many of the parameters are directly accessible and easily edited right on the front-panel controls. The RV-70 is completely MIDI compatible and many of the parameters which are not accessible from the front panel can be edited using MIDI system exclusive messages. The input level switch makes it compatible with live performance or professional recording.

For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music, 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V6V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552.

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# YAMAHA MT120S MULTITRACK RECORDER

Yamaha has introduced a new version of the popular MT120 4-channel multitrack recorder, the MT120S. Versatile and easy-to-use, like its predecessor, the MT120S offers outstanding sound quality along with the addition of several important new features.

The MT120S offers input sensitivity controls on all four channels, which enable the MT120S to accept virtually any combination of input sources, from electronic instrument to line-level audio equipment to microphones. Each channel can be assigned directly to its own record-

er track or several channels can be assigned to a single track via the PAN controls provided for each channel. An important upgrade is the addition of stereo SUB IN jacks to allow the signal from external MIDI equipment to be returned to the MT120S without reducing valuable input-channel capacity.

A five-band graphic equalizer is standard on the MT120S, allowing the user to refine his/her sound while recording and again at mixdown. The transport section has a sophisticated microcomputer control system to ensure flawless tape handling

and stability. Light-touch electronic controls provide fast response and a smooth operating feel.

The MT120S features a rehearsal function that provides full monitoring facilities when rehearsing overdubs or punch-ins. Punch-in/punch-out control has also been refined with a three-stage (start, punch-in, punch-out) footswitch control sequence. The optional RCM1 wired remote control unit allows all transport modes to be controlled from any convenient location. The transport also features pitch control and a zero-stop function.

Other important features on the MT120S include flexible monitoring facilities, a mono-send/stereo return effects loop with send controls on each mixer channel, built-in switchable dbx noise reduction for noise-free recordings, a SYNC switch to allow synchronization of MIDI equipment to the MT120S, individual tape out jacks, an internal power supply, independent LED peak meters for all four tracks and an accurate three-digit tape counter. Two sets of stereo outputs are provided to permit simultaneous connection to a mixdown recorder and to a monitoring system.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Scarborough, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732.

## ALESIS QUADRAVERB 2

The Alesis QuadraVerb 2 Dual Channel Octal Processing Master Effects with Digital I/O (Q2) offers stunning sonic quality previously found only in dedicated, single-function studio reverb units.

In a single rack space package, Q2 provides eight simultaneous effect blocks which can be combined, layered or split between two independent input and output channels. Each block can be programmed as a reverb, EQ, delay or pitch shifter, with a total of 44 effect subtypes available. Advanced effect parameter features, such as tap-temp delays and input envelopes are also incorporated into this single rackspace unit. Inputs and outputs on the Q2 are on balanced +4 dBu 1/4" TRS jacks. The Q2 has a large, custom LCD graphic display, which shows all routings as "digital patch cables". It is the first effects processor to offer an ADAT Multi-Channel Optical Digital Interface input and output, which allows the processing of signals to and from ADAT without leaving the digital domain.

For more information, contact: Alesis, 3630 Holdrege Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016 (310) 558-4530, FAX (310) 836-9192, e-mail: ALECORP@Alesis1.usa.com.

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# GODIN MULTIAC GUITAR

The Multiac opens up a new world of musical expression to guitar players of every style. The guitar is a marriage of modern electronics and contemporary guitar crafting.

The lightweight Multiac body is crafted from a block of mahogany. Inside, there are two acoustic chambers. The larger chamber (centred below the bridge) contains the main acoustic resonance and a narrow channel connects it to a smaller chamber (located below the soundhole) from which air escapes. The double chamber body allows maximum acoustic resonance while inhibiting feedback. A true acoustic guitar, the Multiac top is constructed from solid book-matched spruce and will improve with playing.

Although comfortable in the hands of a classical guitarist, the neck of the Multiac has been designed with the steel string player in mind. The scale is slightly longer than most nylon string guitars, providing additional string tension to prevent the guitar

from sounding mushy and allowing the guitar to be played with either fingers or a pick. Neck width and string spacing conform to classical standards, but a specially-designed truss rod system has reduced the profile of the neck. The slight radius in the ebony fingerboard further enhances comfort.

The Multiac's Richard McClish multi-string sensor consists of a flexible gold-plated sensor for each string, resulting in high sensitivity without feedback problems. The preamp/EQ can handle anything from delicate finger picking to aggressive rock strumming.

The Multiac is designed to work with Roland's GR-1 guitar synthesizer, and a 13-pin jack adjacent to the phone jack connects directly into the GR-1. Combining a guitar and MIDI is hassle-free, allowing you to just plug in and play.

For more information, contact: La Si Do Inc., 4240 Sere St., St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1A6 (514) 343-5560, FAX (514) 343-5098.



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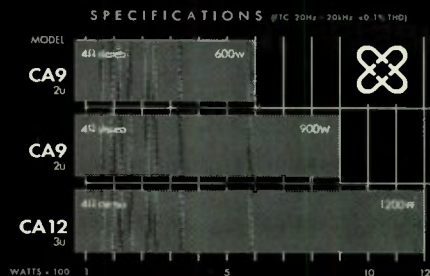
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Solid, tight bass performance below 80 Hz is provided by a 12" EVG-12 woofer. The EVG-12 features beryllium copper lead wires, high-temperature materials and a low-mass edge-wound voice coil driven by a large magnetic structure.

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The horn is driven by the DH2005, a 1" wide-band width compression driver with a titanium diaphragm. This driver uses unique convex-drive Time Path phasing plug for smooth high-frequency performance that extends beyond 25,000 Hz. The driver's voice coil is also coupled to the diaphragm with EV's exclusive Resonant Drive technology, increasing and smoothing high-frequency response and reducing the internal equalization required for flat frequency response.

The DH2005 driver is protected against accidental overdrive by EV's PRO circuit that greatly enhances reliability. If input power to the driver exceeds the nominal rating, the circuit is activated and reduces power delivered to the driver by 6dB. The loudspeaker remains in this mode of operation until input power is reduced to a safe level.

The Sx100's trapezoidal cabinet, perfect for arraying, is constructed of high-impact polypropylene for extreme durability, with integral carrying handles and a stand socket includ-

ed. Rubber feet attached to the cabinet bottom and mating sockets moulded into the top provide convenient, stable stacking.

The Sx100 is also ideal for use with the EV Xp200 system controller and the EV Sb120a (powered) and Sb120 (non-powered) bass module. These elements can be combined to form a completely integrated, dynamic system.

For more information, contact: Mark IV Audio Canada, Inc., 345 Herbert St., Gananoque, ON K7G 2V1 (613) 382-2141, FAX (613) 382-7466.

## PRO-REC ANALOGUE COLLECTION

Third party sound company Pro-Rec has released the Analogue Collection audio sample CD and CD-ROMs for SampleCell, K2000 and S-1000 samplers.

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For more information, contact: Pro-Rec, Inc., 106 W. 13th St., #13, New York, NY 10011 (212) 675-5606, FAX (212) 627-3148.



## FASTEDDIE

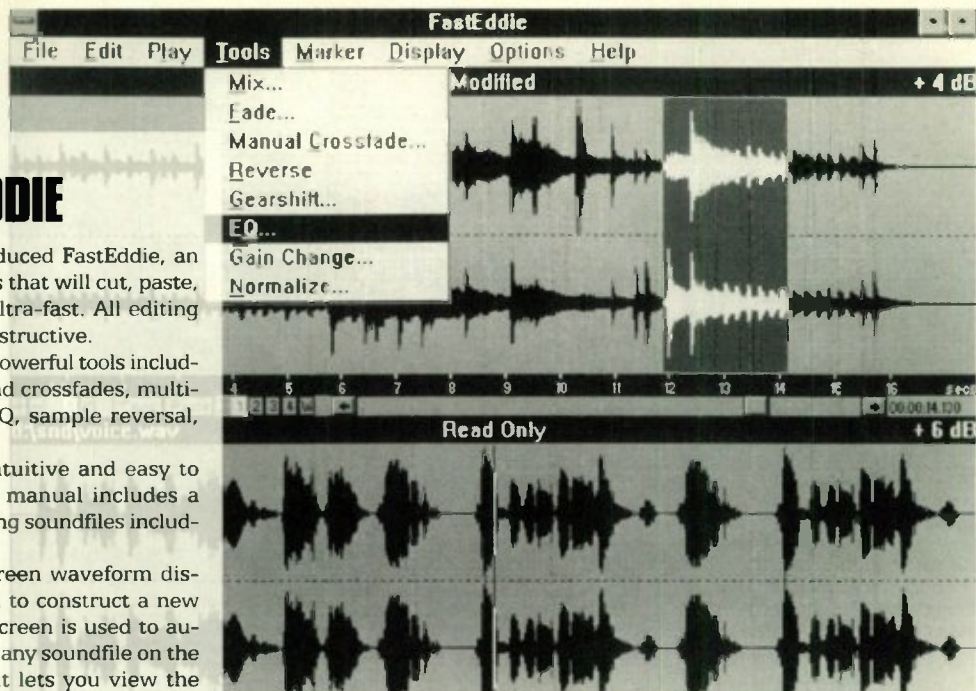
Digital Audio Labs has introduced FastEddie, an editor for Windows soundfiles that will cut, paste, copy and delete operations ultra-fast. All editing operations are totally non-destructive.

FastEddie provides many powerful tools including overlays, custom fades and crossfades, multiple UNDOs, bass & treble EQ, sample reversal, gain change and normalize.

FastEddie is unusually intuitive and easy to learn. The FastEddie users' manual includes a quick-start, plus a tutorial using soundfiles included on the installation disks.

FastEddie uses a split-screen waveform display; the top window is used to construct a new soundfile while the bottom screen is used to audition and select sounds from any soundfile on the hard disk. Zoom-in/zoom-out lets you view the waveform in any level of detail. Markers can be dropped anywhere in the waveform display; markers can even be dropped on-the-fly during recording and playback.

FastEddie includes a Sound Catalogue that lets you make collections of soundfiles that you can play with a simple point-and-click with the mouse. Catalog sounds can also be triggered by MIDI. The



Playlist Editor lets you make a list of soundfiles that play sequentially. The Playlist Editor also lets you cut soundfiles into segments, making it useful for doing song remixes.

FastEddie works with any Windows-compatible soundcard and produces .wav-format soundfiles.

For more information, contact: Digital Audio Labs, Inc., 14505 21st Ave. N., #202, Plymouth, MN 55447 (612) 473-7626, FAX (612) 473-7915.

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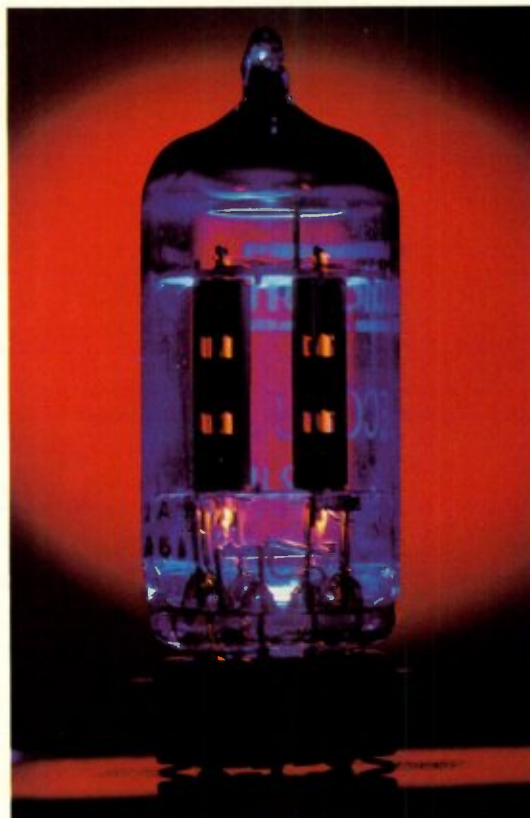
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d e a r g o d

Style: "Gaunch" Rock

Contact: **BAT Management, 1758 Venables St., Vancouver, BC V5L 2H4 (604) 254-0795.**

*Gaunch Rock*: A self-described brand of alternately driving and distorted guitars, solid rhythm lines and understated organ-like keyboards providing the musical foundation for richly passionate vocals. Foremost example of Gaunch: dear god's ten-song independent release, *Real Horrorshow*.

**B**orrowed from Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, the term "real horrorshow" referred to something that was full-on cool; likewise, this album is, too. And like the written document, *Real Horrorshow* delves into the darker aspects of life and relationships — this time with a typically Gen-X perspective.

Vic Wayne (vocals, guitar), Steve Monteith (guitar, vocals), Reece "Bob Wiseman" Terris (keyboards), Matt Holden (bass, vocals) and Glenn Kruger (drums) have crafted a very professional-sounding release. The production quality on *Real Horrorshow* in no way marks the work as amateur, as so often is the case with independent releases. The effects used on the tracks are subtle and minimal, added to enforce the lyrical mood rather than overshadow it. An accomplished musicianship and Wayne's vocal range and power are the primary elements driving each song. "Setting" is a perfect example. Opening as a softly understated ballad, "Setting" builds in power, volume and aggression. The effects treatment on the vocal line creates a dream-like quality in the verses, which is juxtaposed against the harsh clarity of the untreated chorus, adding a feeling of aggression.

Recording technology aside, the strength of dear god's music stems from its lyrical ambiguity. It puts forth an idea, an emotion, a vibe that ultimately reveals more of the state-of-mind of the listener than the lyricist. Dark, moody and introspective glimpses at relationships permeate this album. "Wired" seems to explore the potential of an individual's actions toward another. "Naked", on the other hand, expresses the desire to be better than you are for another. Within these introspections and observations, the relationships remain undefined, as do the settings and situations. Is this the angst of first love? Could it be anger over an unresolved relationship? It is this ambiguity that gives the band its across-the-board appeal with teens, twenty-somethings and thirty-somethings alike.

Look for a lot more from dear god over the coming months. They are the latest in a very short list of bands with serious interest from major labels across the country.



A m y B r u n n

Style: **Acoustic Folk**

Contact: **Sunflower Records, R.R. #1, Sleeman, ON P0W 1M0 (807) 852-1092.**

**I**t is not often that a person would be so moved by a musical event that they would become inspired to emulate those they have just witnessed. Far too often in these situations, the resultant creative endeavour unfortunately becomes a pale imitation or outright mockery of the original. Thankfully, Amy Brunn has proven herself to be a very capable and creative musician in her own right.

Sixteen-year-old Amy Brunn of Rainy River, Ontario recently released her first independent cassette, an eight-song journey of extreme personal reflection and examination. *Savannah* was born of her pilgrimage to the Winnipeg Folk Festival and the variety and calibre of musical talent portrayed. From this event, Brunn discovered that she, too, could create musical moments that touched the masses individually.

Drawing from the early influences of Bob Dylan and Neil Young, and more contemporary artists such as Tori Amos, Sarah McLachlan and Ani DiFranco, Brunn's *Savannah* exudes both a simple serenity and haunting clarity. Relying on the power of her words, her voice and her acoustic guitar, each song on the cassette is crafted with minimal accoutrements. The lyrical imagery and emotional urgency of Brunn's voice saturates each track and the stark document is infinitely more powerful for the lack of trickery and effect — integrity and honesty become the theme.

Brunn's lyrical maturity belies her age. While classmates and friends agonize over what to wear to the next high school dance, Brunn attacks subjects of abuse, broken relationships and those in decline. On *Mother*, she demonstrates the rare talent of internalizing the effects of another's actions on oneself and then empathizing to capture the emotional perspective of the other. *Maybe It's You* and *Lost* are purely introspective; her soulful vocals almost tear through the tape with a great depth of feeling.

*Savannah* is not an "easy listen". It is a heartfelt and sometimes disturbing record of a very sensitive soul. This inherent intimacy and exposure, though, make it that much more appealing as there is a little of the voyeur in each one of us. How else do we begin to examine our own situation without a moving example from another?!





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