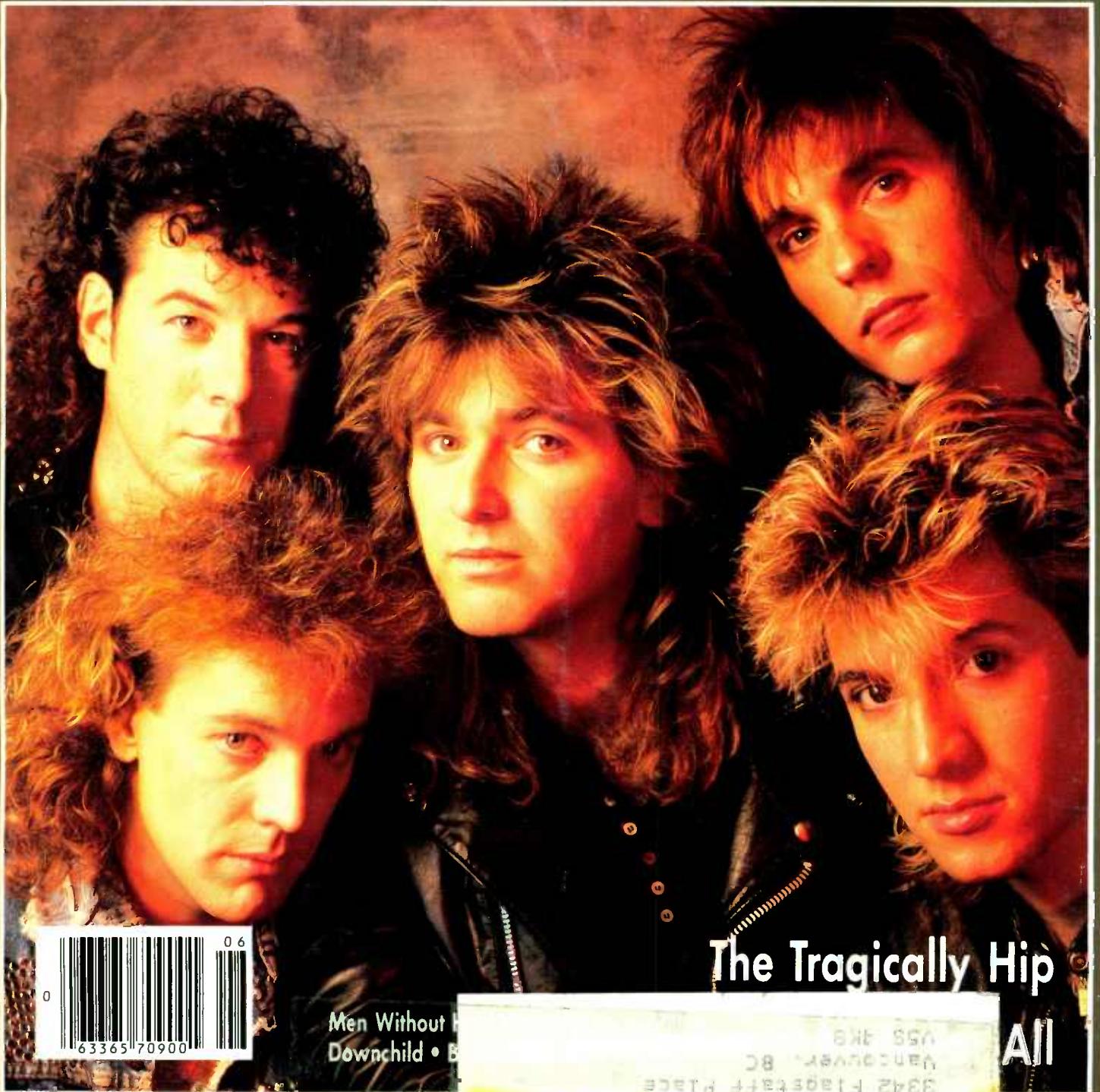


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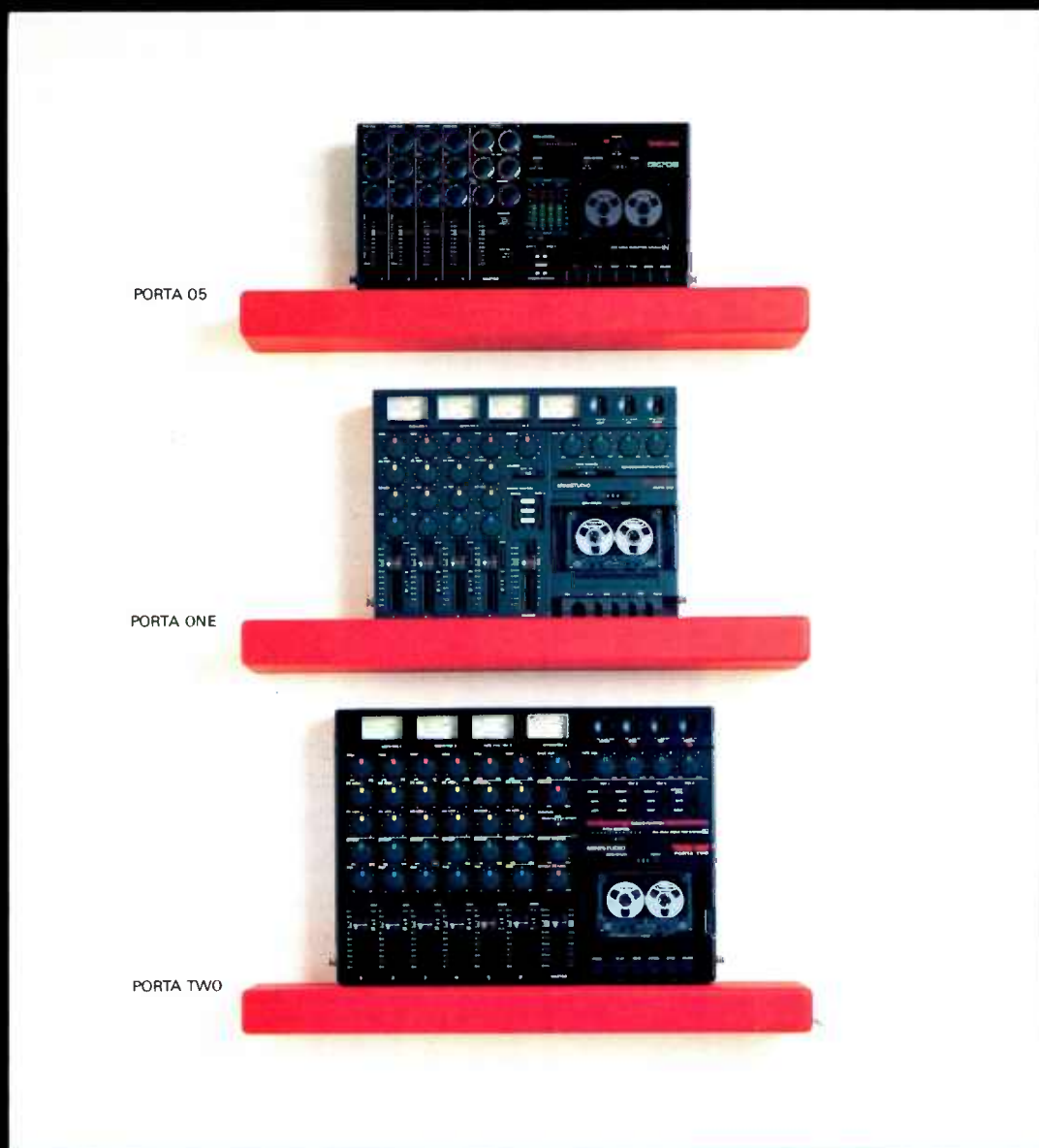
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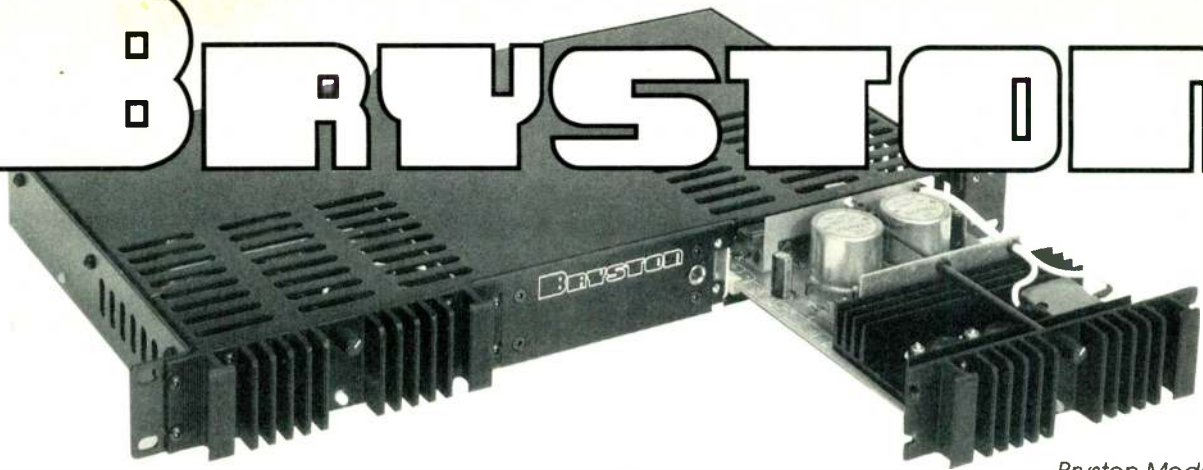
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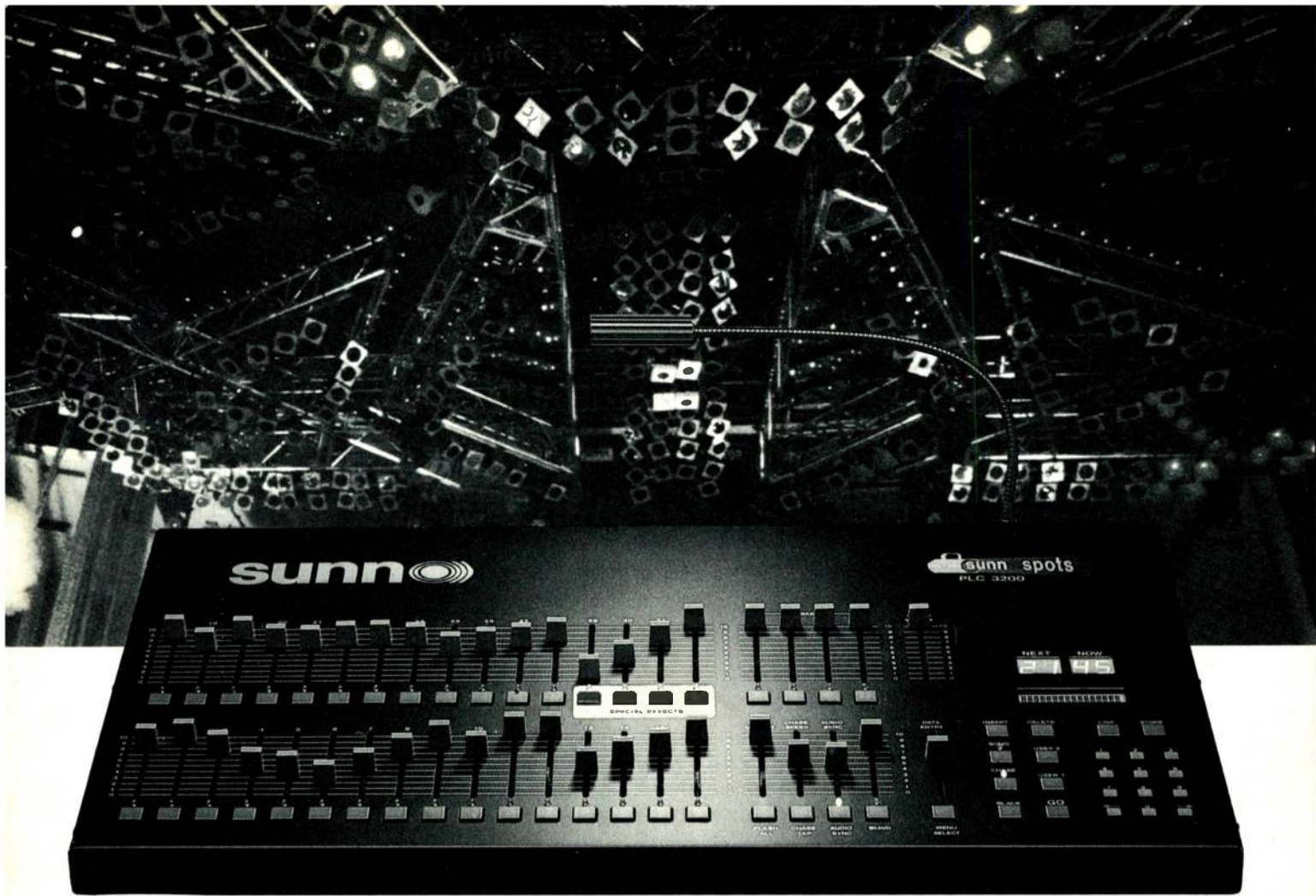
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CONTENTS

CANADIAN MUSICIAN JUNE 1988

VOLUME X, NUMBER 3



Michael McDonald (left) and Johnnie Dee

PHOTO: ROB PREUSS

COVER STORY FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Honeymoon Suite By Perry Stern The Ted Templeman Experience	32
The Tragically Hip By Maureen Littlejohn The (Not So) Tragic Story	40
Making Records The Indie Way By Howard Druckman Four Bands Reveal Their Strategies	47
MIDI For All By Ashley Collie A Look At The Key Areas Affected By MIDI Technology	50
Inside CM Inside A FACTOR Jury	7
Feedback Inelegant language, but I agree: Foster's humility; no chance for capitalism; union prez slams the Genies; and more.	8
Recording Michael Breen at work at home; Tascam eight track cassette recorder; and more.	11
Imaging Shooting a Luba TV special; video pools give exposure.	16
Business Downchild's comeback; applying for Videofact money; the Rheostatics; and more.	20
MIDI Listen Software reviewed; new Performer; Apple MIDI interface	26
Live Sound Recording live for TV; Samson wireless systems; Mosfet power amp.	28
Songwriting Making your plot move.	60
Guitar Brian Greenway means serious business; Charvel, REX50 and Strat plus reviews	62
Keyboards Preparing Men Without Hats for the road: From Gowan to The Jitters.	66
Bass New Yamaha basses.	69
Percussion New Sabian highhats; RX7 rhythm programmer from Yamaha.	70
Vocal Singing is a misunderstood skill.	72
Marketplace Selling or buying?	74

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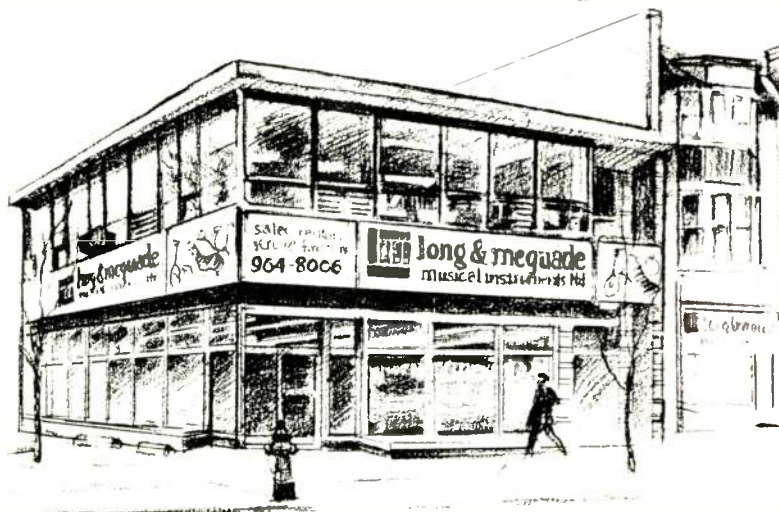
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Sitting In At A FACTOR Jury

Once every few months, as editor of *Canadian Musician*, I am called upon to participate in a FACTOR jury session. FACTOR embodies several federal government funded loan and grant programs designed to initiate recordings of Canadian demos, albums and videos. FACTOR has helped finance early recordings and videos by many of Canada's top recording acts, including The Box, Kim Mitchell and Jane Siberry. For those musicians who have applied for funding in the past, or anticipate doing so in the future, I thought you might like a peek behind the scenes at a recent jury I participated in.

FACTOR juries are essentially very intense group A&R sessions where you listen to between 15 and 20 demos in a two, to two and a half, hour period. Assembled at a boardroom table in a listening room is a panel of so-called experts from the Canadian record business who listen to the tapes and score each on a variety of criteria, including song quality, performance and sales and airplay potential.

After hearing two songs (for the demo application) or three songs (for album applications) the panel discuss what they have heard and determine whether they will support funding a project or not. Album applications must be approved by two separate juries before they are forwarded to the FACTOR Board of Directors for the final OK. Demo awards are granted on the spot.

Jury participants are obliged to keep their findings confidential and not discuss applicants' success or failure outside of the jury room.

Along with myself, this particular jury included the manager of one of Toronto's top recording studios, the manager of one of Canada's most successful international artists, the owner of a studio specializing in soundtracks and smaller album and demo projects, and the arranger/keyboardist with a major Canadian rock performer. This was the first jury I had sat on with a working musician.

The sessions usually begin with the coordinator outlining procedures for the panel and explaining any recent changes in the way FACTOR funds projects. This session began with a discourse by the manager on why FACTOR is flawed because it doesn't allocate funding to promote records to radio. He also suggested a much greater emphasis

be placed on financing demos rather than albums.

Someone else rightly complained about the placement of speakers in the room and the poor quality of the stereo. It was a bitchy start.

These tirades out of the way, we were set to start. For each submission, the jury listens to the first song cold, that is without knowing who the artist is and without any of the accompanying materials to peruse. A song is rarely played to the end. Each song is usually cut off by jury consensus after at least one verse and a chorus. Unfortunately, since most applications are shockingly poor, even the most earnest jury members quickly become cynical during a jury session.

As a general rule, for the juries I have sat on, one record project and one demo are agreed upon for funding per session. I have personally supported fewer, but the jury verdicts need not be unanimous.


At this last session, despite my solitary voice of dissent, the jury voted to finance an album project by a west coast band whose first album flopped a couple of years ago and were subsequently dropped by their label. While their tape was the best produced of the day, their style and songs were strictly third-rate Foreigner and offered little musically original.

I was also unable to sway the jury members to finance a demo for a unique east coast black singer. He had this one terrific song about working in a fish plant set to a revved-up, rocking, Calypso beat. His voice and phrasing were like Esther Phillips doing '60s gospel. He was great, tons of character. The jury blew it.

Despite the imperfections, I will continue to support FACTOR and participate in these juries. It does provide funding to get projects off the ground that might otherwise be stalled. As well, it keeps me in touch with what's happening at the grass roots level. And there's always the hope that we'll discover an exciting new talent in one of these juries and I'll be able to play a small part in bringing this artist to the record buying public.

For more information about FACTOR, call (416) 368-8678.

Ted Burley
Editor




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Fan For Two Years

I have been purchasing your magazine faithfully for the past two years. I thoroughly enjoy every issue and will continue to do so.

I have always had a keen interest in the Canadian music industry and the superb talent we have to offer. I am currently enrolled as a student at Trebas Institute of Recording Arts in Toronto. The school is everything I hoped for. I am working towards the goal of audio engineer/producer and I'm on the right track with Trebas. And I must add my thanks for being introduced to the institute through your magazine.

I have also learned valuable information about all aspects of this wonderful industry I've committed my life to in your informative articles. I look forward to reading each new issue and my subscription will ensure that I will receive every copy! Keep up the great work!

Cathy M. Doyle
Scarborough, ON

Capitalism Has No Historical Chance

In the January issue of *Canadian Musician* there appeared an editorial by Ted Burley titled "The Musician In the Business World", which shared the pages of your publication with a full page advertisement taken out by my company. This editorial appeared at first glance to be an essay of a capitalist apologist nature, but was nevertheless self-defeating in the perspective it offered. It brought home the words of Mikhail Gorbachev (CPSU General Secretary) when he stated "Capitalism has no historical chance. Nor is it accidental that social development as described by bourgeois ideologists finds itself at an impasse, freezing as it were."

For example, the first sentence of the editorial that "capitalism has been taking a bad rap from the vast majority of musicians and the music press" is followed by "Specifically, businessmen running record companies, booking bands, etc. (and their obsession with generating profit)..." The key appears in Burley's statement "and their obsession with generating profit", which obviously hits the nail on the head. As is the psychological nature of obsession, little good can accrue. The result invariably leads to errors in judgement, which in the past has occurred in the industry on a regular basis.

Then he goes on to quote U.S. *Success* magazine writer Morgan Reynolds in his salute to the 'competitive' businessman, "They refuse to be interviewed in the press, or

worse, they volunteer apologies for the shortcomings of capitalism."

This hardly describes a competitive group bravely fielding all criticism which is being leveled at it, so much as it would appear to describe a frightened, insecure, and disorganized elite in full retreat...

"Under capitalism," writes Reynolds, "the natural competitiveness that self-interest encourages (is) not destruction, but excellence." Let us take a hard look at what sort of society 'the capitalist model' has engendered in the United States, a society which for all intensive purposes is closer to being an open textbook on the verities of destruction rather than excellence.

If you're a real capitalist why not set up a company and land a lucrative military contract with the pentagon? This is where all the big time players such as Rockwell, General Dynamics, and a host of companies in Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, San Jose, etc. (silicon valley) find themselves these days. Stop peddling music to teenagers and get into the real action, paving the way to Armageddon.

Tim J. Lawrence
President,
Delta Music Research

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Campaign
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Member of the Arusha International
Resource Centre (Calgary)

Druckman Was Drunk!

I think it was fairly clear that Druckman was drunk. Blowing - bubbles - in - your own - vomit - drunk. Intoxicated. So it's understandable that he didn't make the distinction between Fringe Product (a record licensing label operated by Record Peddler's Ben Hoffman) and the distribution firm Record Peddler, currently offering *13 Engines Before Our Time* record for sale.

I'm paid to do this.
Sober up Howard, you're giving journalism a bad name.

Wee Scratch McNab
Fringe Product Promotion Guru

Inelegant Language, But Makes Good Point

In your April issue you published a letter from John Meorniuk. While I cannot support his inelegant language I certainly endorse his general description of your

magazine. During the years in which I have been a subscriber, your focus has changed to become a magazine entirely devoted to rock music, which of course is not interesting to everyone. Perhaps you should change your name to *Canadian Rock Musician*.

I do not intend to bother cancelling my subscription but I certainly will not renew it.

William J. Henmerick,
Toronto

Foster's Well-Deserved Humility

I enjoyed *King Of The Middle Of The Road* (the keyboards feature on David Foster). I think Foster says it best when he states, "Just because I surround myself with an orchestra, doesn't mean I have to be compared to the greats." The man has a point there and I applaud his well-deserved humility.

If David Foster has any gifts (in music), the most obvious would be his ability to surround himself with able players. I've always liked his hair style.

Mendelson Joe
Toronto

Protesting Use Of Recorded Music

The Toronto Musicians' Association strongly protests the decision by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, and the Canadian Broadcasting Association (who are co-producers) to replace "live" music with synthesizer and recorded music, and the orchestra with an organ, on the *1988 Genie Awards Show*.

This national awards show is one of the major presentations of the year, attracting a large TV and in-person audience. To insult Canadian musicians by having them represented by only a single musician playing an organ and surrounded by pre-taped synthesizer music, is unbelievable. As it happens the single musician happens to be very talented and has produced some fine music.

However, when one compares the music on a U.S. produced awards show, I cannot recall their ever having utilized the services of only one musician, any more than they would have only one singer, comic, dancer, etc. Why do we always have to look and sound so cheap?

Bobby Herriot
President
Toronto Musicians' Association

You're Looking A Little Thinner

I've been buying CM off the newsstand for a few years now and last year I bought a one year subscription. About three issues later I received a renewal notice. This struck me as a bit of an infringement upon one of my basic rights...the right to leave everything to the last minute. It also made me consider the reason why I should or should not resubscribe. Your first renewal notice came the same month as the issue in which you reworked your format, gave it a face-lift, so to speak. I noticed the new look was a little thinner than the old. That's not really that important to me as I prefer content to style unless the style is content. I don't want to cause another futile fuss over which is more important, style or content, the singer or the song; it's just that when I look at your magazine, I look at the cover, the editorial, the ads, the letters, the pictures, the articles and the classifieds. It's my job, I'm a musician. And it looks a little thinner. But I am going to renew, because there's enough stuff inside to make it worth the cash and every two months I can have it mailed to my backwater address and find out what Skinny Puppy is doing now.

Which brings me to some general comments on Canadian musicians, from Saturday night at the Diamond Club to Chamber music in the lobby of the Petroleum Club, from Bruce Cockburn in Belgium to the Beer Barrel Polka at the Bradshaw wedding. Musically this country is a rather large gamut as anyone who does not focus too much attention on their navel can realize. We live in a time when the global village concept is becoming a day to day reality, mainly based upon quantum leaps in the communications industry within the past hundred years or so. I can get a technologies degree from a University in the Western States, taught on videotape by professors from Harvard or M.I.T. and beamed via satellite into my living room in Backwater Manitoba. I can sample Howard Pawley's voice and turn it into a bagpipe (without too much editing, too...you should hear it). The Inuit of Chesterfield Inlet can watch the Gulf War heat up via CBC North or they can watch the latest Corey Hart video on Sam Taylor's show. Music is globally accessible. But the funny thing is that in this high tech, leading edge, instant access industry, most of the business end of the music biz in this country is done within walking distance of the Hotel St. Leonard in downtown Toronto.

John Mosby
Backwater, MB

Business's Creative Spirit

As a musician/capitalist, I was very impressed with Ted Burley's article "The Musician in the Business World."

Not only the music industry, but the world around us is suffering from irrational ideas.

It is articles like these that give us fuel and knowledge. This helps us survive, create and prosper.

Musicians have been in the dark too long. Its nice to see an editor take this seriously.

Yes, musicians are taking negative views of the very thing that can help them: capitalism.

My reply, will be a quote from Ayn Rand: "For if there is more tragic a fool than the businessman who doesn't know that he's an exponent of man's highest creative spirit - it is the artist who thinks that the businessman is his enemy." (*Atlas Shrugged* 1957).

Rob Taylor
Waterloo, ON

Appalled At Canadian A&R Departments

Being an artist (singer/songwriter/musician) who has just concluded a mail-out to all the major record labels in this country, I would like to offer some comments on the recording industry in Canada, specifically the A & R departments, and the men who run them.

I am appalled at the manner of responses that are made by some record companies to artists who submit material. In such an under-nourished national music industry as ours, a handful of men (no women) wield the power to make or break you (encourage or discourage) and I'm not sure if all of them have the care and dedication necessary for the job.

The form letters that were sent, I ignored. A form letter is meaningless. (Actually, it probably means no one listened to your tape.) One label sent two replies in the space of a month. Both began with the same sentence, (though they were not form letters) "Thank you for your submission..." The first letter (with tape returned) advised: "Listen to the radio and determine what is hot and what is not and remember that it is easier to make what you can sell than to sell what you can make."

In the first place, the man's a poet, but who would want to know it? In the second place, what awful advice; imitate someone else! Since, as we all know, anyone who is unique just doesn't make it. I mean look at Chrissie Hynde, Cyndi Lauper, and Suzanne Vega. I'm

sure that's their collective credo.

I heard lately of an A & R man in this country who complained that all the demo tapes he had received lately sounded like U2. He wouldn't sign any of them, why should he? There already is a U2.

The second letter from that same label said, "I do find your demo represents a competent effort and I will retain it for future submissions".

Both letters were signed by the same guy, but I have a hard time believing that the same person wrote them. If he did, I'm not sure that he listened to the tape either. And if he didn't listen to it, I'd prefer that he didn't tell me he did - or tell me anything, for that matter. I think this fellow either needs a good vacation or a new job.

One A & R man expressed surprise that artists who submit tapes to him expect a reply. It seems that he expects the artists to somehow chase him down for a response to their work. How are we supposed to know that? When an artist submits a tape to a record company, it is a given that he is expecting a reply, and hopefully a favourable one. Perhaps we are to conclude that no reply means no interest. But in this case, it might mean that the company (or the A & R man) simply has its own policy. A form letter might mean no interest. It's very confusing.

On the other hand, Brian Allen of Attic Records took the time to call and be critical in a very articulate and positive way. I appreciated it. I also received intelligent and encouraging replies from Bob Roper at WEA (who mentioned a song he liked by name - this makes me believe that he listened) and from William Tenn at Island (who said I was too mainstream for that label but wished me the best of luck saying he felt sure there was a deal out there for me somewhere).

John David Redmond at A & M (Irving-Almo Music, publishing) has also been helpful and encouraging, realizing the value of personal contact with an artist and well-thought out advice.

To those who support and encourage the struggling artists of this land, I say thanks and I wish there were more of you. To the others who may be letting their greed get in the way, may you all turn into car salesmen.

Boy, do I feel better now (?)

Liz Tanzey
Toronto, ON

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Michael Breen's One Man Show



Michael Breen

by Maureen Littlejohn

Michael Breen, 30, could easily be described as a one-man band. The slim, wiry native of Nicolet, Quebec sings lead vocals, background vocals, plays guitar, piano, synthesizer and does his own drum programming on his debut album, released in 1987 by Alert Records. While Breen is responsible for the lion's share of the playing on the record, he did get a hand from Sylvain Larose on bass, Philippe Bernard for added drums and percussion, Claude Chaput on synthesizer, Gilles Beaudoir on mandolin and guitars, Daniel Barbe on organ and synthesizer, Sylvain Clavet on drums for two tracks and Luc Boivin on percussion for three tracks. Produced by Pierre Bazinet (Luba), the album was recorded at Montreal's D.M.S. Studio and digitally mixed at Le Studio in Morin Heights by Jean-Claude Beaudoin and Paul Northfield.

The album has a punchy dynamism -- the songs are filled with alternately soaring/bitting vocals metered to tight, tough drums and interspersed with stinging guitar riffs -- and Breen is proud to point out that three of the tracks, including the single "Rain", were written while he was in the studio. "I prefer to write in the studio because it's easier to keep the song's magic," he explains. "When you

get really maniac on a song for a demo, it's tough to redo later in the studio since you've already given all the magic."

"Rain" was the last song he did on the four month project. "I was skinny, lost 10 pounds during the recording, and was really tired," recalls Breen. "Pierre gave me the encouragement to go through with writing the song." Borrowing an Emulator and Macintosh computer from Bazinet, Breen was able to complete the song at home. "I programmed the sequencers, did the piano and keyboard parts and planned out the whole thing. Then I took an MC500 and transferred everything via the Mac and rearranged the velocity and other things that needed fixing," he explains.

Breen did all his back-up vocals for the album at home in Montreal on his 8-track TASCAM 58 recorder and M50 TASCAM board. "Together they sound very good," he says. "And the frequency is always the same, there's no lower bottom end." In his home studio he also has a MC500 sequencer, Rev 7 and SRE2000 reverbs, a 3000 delay unit, a Mesa Boogie amplifier, Drumulator, A DX7 and a D50, a Casio sampler and an old "raunchy" Korg C3 organ. For guitar he uses a Rockman, as well as a Roland Dimension D chorus. "The Dimension D is an old machine but I like it," says Breen. "It opens up the

sound and puts in a third dimension, but you can't use it too much. Just a little is very tasty."

Building the home studio has been a gradual process for Breen. After playing throughout Quebec in a French Top 40 cover band for three years during the disco era, he found he wanted to play his own songs. "I decided I'd put together my own studio and find musicians to play with me if I needed them."

Starting with a TEAC 3440 4-track machine and an Allan & Heath 12 input board, he was able to slowly update his equipment and eventually saved enough money to buy the TASCAM 58. It was a demo done in this home studio, on the TASCAM 8-track, that landed him his deal with Alert Records, as well as winning him second place (and a prize of JVL speakers and a Yamaha Rev 7 reverb unit) in *Rock Express*' 1986 National Talent Search. As his studio grew he was also able to finance his own projects by renting it out. "I needed the money. It was tough at the beginning with no record and no touring," he explains, adding, "Since I'm playing now, most of the equipment is on the road with me."

A prolific, spontaneous songwriter, Breen makes sure he doesn't miss any song ideas by carrying a small Sony tape recorder with him at all times. "Rain" started with the Drummulator SP12 in the D.M.S. studio. I found a good beat and then just started playing three chords and a chorus, but I had no bridge. We stopped for the weekend and I decided to go skiing with my girlfriend." He laughs, "I brought the little recorder and on the way to the ski slope, I found the bridge."

Breen, who only tackled learning to speak and sing in English a little over three years ago doesn't write his own lyrics. Instead he hands over a completed melody to musician friends like Sass Jordan, who wrote the words to "Rain", or Stephen Trotter or Geoff Hughes, who also contributed to his debut album.

Although he has the ability to be a one-man show, Breen believes forming a solid, consistent musical team is the best approach to touring and future recording. His band lineup consists of Yves Frulla on keyboards, Mark Urquart on guitar, Richard Lanthier on bass and Peter Carlton on drums. "When I give a musician a part I want them to give it some of their own soul," he explains, smiling. "You have to be very careful to give other musicians good positive energy."

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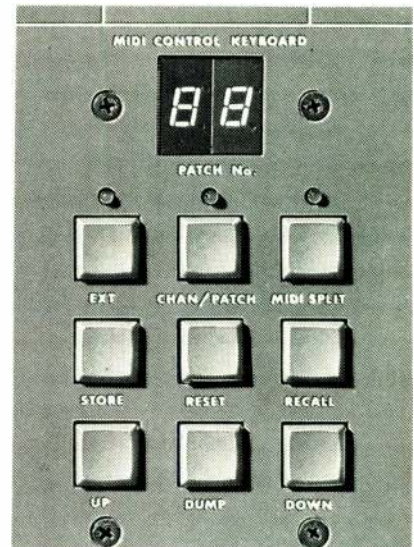
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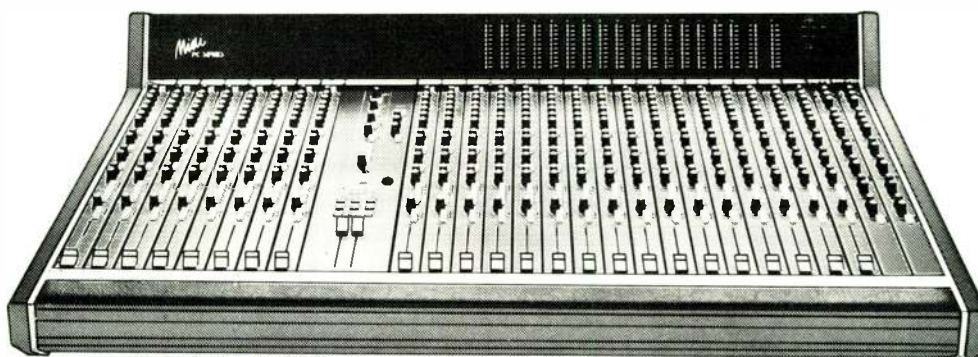
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RECORDING

DigiTech Introduces The DSP 64

DigiTech has introduced the Dual Digital Reverberation and Effects Signal Processor, the DSP 64.

The DSP 64 offers two independent digital effects processors in a single rack-mountable chassis. Each digital processor has stereo inputs and outputs and an effect defeat, so that the DSP 64 may be operated as two independent reverb-effect units, or as a single stereo unit with the ability to do different reverb effects for the right and left channels. Each of the digital reverb effect signal channels offer the user 30 different reverberation effects ranging from large room environments with long decay times to small room environments, and reverse reverb effects to gated reverberation effects. The unit utilizes 16-bit A-D-A linear PCM encoding and two of DigiTech's new DSP256 custom VLSIs, designed for wide dynamic range and smooth sounding effects.

The user may, in each of the two channels, select one of two banks, each with fifteen effects, at the touch of a button. Mix, output, and input controls on each channel allow the DSP 64 to be used in a wide range of signal

level applications. Each channel offers inputs and outputs on the rear of the unit in stereo, also an effect defeat switch jack is provided for each channel on the rear of the unit for remote defeating of the effect in performance applications. The unit is housed in a rack-

mountable steel chassis, with a screened aluminum front panel. Information on the top of the unit gives the user program content.

For more information, contact: Heint Electronics, 41 Industrial Pkwy. S., Aurora ON L4G 3Y5.

New JBL/UREI Limiter/Compressor

Gould Marketing has introduced the JBL/UREI 7110 Limiter/Compressor to their line of signal processing equipment.

The 7110 features soft-knee compression curves adjustable from 1.5:1 through infinity:1.

The 7110's automatic preset button serves a twofold purpose by engaging a program-dependant variable attack and release circuit and fixing the compression ratio and peak/average blend controls to critically accepted settings. Multiple channel limiting is accommodated through the available simple link function while an active balanced input al-

lows enough threshold range to provide full limiting action with input signals down to -20dBm. The 7110's unbalanced output is capable of +22dBm into 600 Ohms.

High resolution LED displays provide for easy reading of gain reduction levels or input/output. The output display's zero reference is adjustable from -10dBm to +8dBm. The unbalanced output is capable of +22dBm into 600 Ohms and an optional output transformer accessory is available.

For more information, contact: Gould Marketing Inc., 6445 Cote de Liesse, Montreal, PQ H4T 1E5 (514) 342-4441.

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RECORDING

Tascam Unveils First 8-Track Multitrack Cassette Recorder

Tascam, a full-line manufacturer of professional audio equipment, has introduced the first 8-track multitrack cassette recorder using standard audio cassettes.

The innovative rack-mount Tascam 238 Syncaset supplies twice the amount of tracks previously available in a standard cassette multitrack recorder.

Features on the Tascam 238 include 3-3/4 ips tape speed, full-function remote control, auto punch in/out, auto rehearse, dbx II noise reduction, and MIDI (FSK) compatibility. Additionally, the ergonomically designed 238 Syncaset is SMPTE-friendly, giving it the ability to lock up with other decks and synchronize with video.

The 238 Synset also features a serial connector for external computer control and open architecture for future software devel-



opment. The soon-to-be released Tascam MIDiiZER synchronizer will be an important part of the 238 system, allowing easy integration with MIDI instruments and SMPTE ma-

chine synchronization.

For more information, contact: TEAC Canada, 3610 Nashua Dr., Units 1 & 2, Mississauga, ON L4V 1L2 (416) 671-3367.

Vivian Campbell
joins
the **Kramer Team**

Vivian Campbell, guitar virtuoso currently on tour with "WHITESNAKE", has officially become part of the **KRAMER** products development team and joins the ranks of other renowned guitarists like Eddy Van Halen, Paul Dean, Elliot Easton and Richie Sambora.

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Shooting Luba For TV Special



PHOTO: RAJ RAMA/LGI

By Benjamin Russell

Luba in concert at Metropolis

The black hole. It's a rock 'n' roll phenomenon. You're watching live concert footage on TV and what do you see? The background is black, the audience is hidden in inky darkness. The band appears to be nowhere in particular - in limbo between worlds. Very dramatic surely, but hey - haven't we seen it all before, at least once too often? Thus spake Don Allan, director of the new Luba special to be shown on CBC.

"Originally somebody wanted us to shoot it at the Spectrum. I just didn't feel it was right for Luba. Her music is very much from the heart. I wanted to really feel that it was a warmer concert and not a typical rock 'n' roll thing. I decided to go after something that had some character to it in terms of its architecture. We searched it out and found Metropolis (just off "The Main" in Montreal). It was incredible that we found it because I had designed it in my head and thought we would never get it but hoped to get something close. What we really wanted to do was to sort of surround Luba with people, be they on balconies or around her, because we wanted her warmth reflected in the atmosphere of the concert. I think we were successful in that."

We asked producer, Bruce Glawson of Cambium Productions, how the show came about. "CBC has been very supportive of this kind of music special where it goes beyond the concerts. We also do a behind-the-scenes look at their career, on the road, and in the recording studio doing interviews. We had the idea for a series of shows, Jane Siberry

being the first one we did (*One More Colour*). For us it was a matter of approaching artists that we were interested in. Jane and Luba were sort of at the top of our list so we went specifically after them and fortunately, they said yes. The financing is basically Telefilm Canada, Ontario Film Development Corporation and the CBC. It will be sold world-wide."

There were eight cameramen on the shoot. Don Allan: "It's a couple more than people would normally use. Instead of playing it safe having one guy on a close up, one on a medium shot, one on a wide shot and just sort of cutting between them; having them hold their shots until they're told to do something else, I encourage the cameramen to be creative. Give me a shot. Once they take it, give me a different variation. Because cameramen are not used to that, you have to sort of coach them, but at the same time, they'll give you stuff that you couldn't ask them for sometimes, and those magic moments happen. It becomes a much more creative process. But by going for the gusto, you can sometimes screw things up too, like when the guitarist starts you're not getting that exact shot, so you need those extra couple of cameramen to cover your ass."

Did he coach the band too? "Not much. I mean, we're supposed to be documenting their performance, not staging it. We kind of worked together on it. You want them to be totally natural but at the same time you need to define certain parameters so everybody is going to know what's going to happen. You have to remember that they are actually per-

forming live as opposed to lip syncing. That's gotta be the priority for them. It's just telling them to make their moves a bit bigger and to be aware of the camera men. Move in and out from the mic so as to give us the transition element within shots.

"It's a good-looking band and they're all very talented in their own rights. Luba is incredibly dynamic. She really is a Jekyll and Hyde; she goes from this shy little woman to a big voiced, energetic performer."

Formerly the Theatre Francis, it's easy to visualize Sarah Bernhardt in performance, as she was in 1895. Today, all the gaudy trappings of an earlier epoch make great fodder for directors and lighting personnel. Don explains the techniques they used: "We used lighting to subtly pick up bits of the architecture and at the same time tried not to overlight it. It might have seemed to the live audience to have been brighter than a normal concert, but compared to typical television concerts, it was underlit and I'm really happy with the way it looks. There's two extremes: there's the rock 'n' roll guys who have their scenes in their head and just light from this to that and do things for the eye when you're standing there. Then there's the television guys who say, no, you need all the lights on all the time and just change the colours in the background. I'm from the new school in that I'm used to technology that can handle the more subtle things, and so lighting was to put a spotlight on Luba, expose correctly for her, and let the background create moods."

Video Pooling Your Talent

by Maureen Littlejohn

Most indie bands and many signed bands only dream of playing to audiences of 300,000 people a week, let alone crowds that big in a year. Video pools make that dream become reality by giving bands a chance to perform via the small (and sometimes big) screen in all of Canada's major clubs.

Currently there are four pools operating in the country--RPI Videopool, Musician Video Services, Rock Canada Network and Network Video--who duplicate and distribute specially programmed tapes to the hospitality industry. The pools usually program tapes with videos obtained from major record companies but are also gradually branching out into using independent releases. Copyright is monitored by the Video Music Licensing Agency Inc. (VLA), an agency set up by the majors and smaller distributors. The pools pay access and clip fees to the VLA who in turn forward the money to their members (in some cases access fees go directly to the record company). These fees are usually

used to "offset the cost of making the video," notes Patrick Fox, VLA Director of Investigative Services.

Don't pay copyright

The largest pool, Network Video, services 145 clubs with approximately 300,000 viewers (each club receives 26 one-hour tapes per year) nationally, and in addition they cater to approximately 200 occasional user clients. Network Video offers three tape formats to their club clients; album oriented rock (AOR), the more popular Top 40/dance format, and ambient ("video wallpaper"). So far some of the videos they've programmed have been by Pursuit of Happiness, Grapes of Wrath, and an independent soul/dance band called Tantara. "We can't pay the independent bands copyright," says Troke. "But we can offer them national exposure." This is especially encouraging for dance oriented bands, who often have a tough time gaining airplay since so few radio stations have dance formats. Of course, they have to sink some

dollars into making a video as well as a recording, but that doesn't necessarily mean spending a fortune. "Tantara's video," notes Network production and programming consultant, David McNally, "looked good but was shot for under \$2,500."

Indies Welcome

Most video pools are very open to receiving independently produced videos, "but the quality must be good," notes Terry Debono, President of Rock Canada Network. "We need one inch masters, and the video has to be as close to the audio form of the recording as possible. DJs are very strict about what they play." Debono also notes the importance of timing, "Two to three weeks after being released is the maximum time we can wait to receive videos." Because of the constant demand for fresh material and VLA rules, tapes usually stay with the clubs for a limit of three months and then they are returned to the pool where they are destroyed.

Debono admits Rock Network receives most of their videos from major record companies, but often they have to look for material "outside. Pools are not subject to CRTC regulations, but Debono maintains his company presents a fair split of Canadian and foreign artists."

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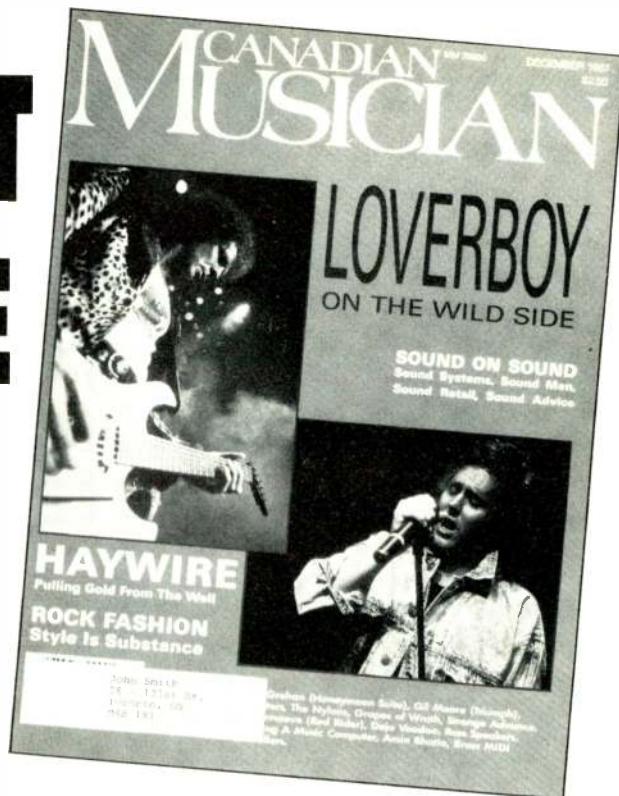


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Downchild's Still In Business



Tony Flaim (left), Donnie Walsh

by Tim O'Connor

Despite all the hyperbole about how lives have been changed by a Springsteen anthem or a Dylan epic, music is just another form of entertainment when you get right down to it. Some important things have been said in songs like "Won't Get Fooled Again" or "Revolution," but most modern music generally comes down to boy wants girl, usually in fishnet stockings.

So when things that really do matter -- like death -- thrust themselves upon a songwriter, writing a tune seems incredibly insignificant.

Thus, in 1982 after Downchild pianist Jane Vasey died of leukemia, leader Donny Walsh found that he just couldn't put pen to paper anymore. The combination of Vasey's death and Walsh's writing block became too much; the Toronto band that had become one of North America's premier blues acts since 1970 ground to a halt. Singer Tony Flaim went solo and Walsh, who had lived with Vasey, ran fishing charters on Lake Ontario.

The band eventually drifted back together and played sporadically, but the spark was gone. In a recent interview, Walsh said "I knew I couldn't write, but I wasn't really sure why. But you watch this happen to somebody and all your priorities change. Values and things become really different."

Flaim notices Walsh is starting to fumble for words and jumps in: "It's hard to get people together and do something positive when something like that happens. How do you go around and say 'Guys, I got this tune and I think it's great.' Like who fucking cares?"

But the band started to regain its old spark

when slide guitarist Mike McKenna joined about three years ago. McKenna, whom Walsh compares to Elmore James as a stylist, played with the nifty McKenna Mendelson Mainline in early '70s.

Flaim rejoined a year later and "the last piece in the puzzle" was the addition of Gene Taylor last fall. The Texas native is one of North America's top blues pianists, having played with T-Bone Walker and the Blasters. His desire to join Downchild said a lot about Walsh's stature in the blues community.

Taylor rounded out an outfit that included veteran Downchild bassist Dennis Pinhorn, tenor saxophonist Pat Carey and trumpet player Bob Heslin. Drummer Marty Vickers joined shortly before Christmas.

"As the band started becoming a band again," Flaim said, "and when it started being fun for Donny, I noticed the songs started to come to him again. As soon as he got happy, you couldn't stop him."

Having secured a record deal with Stony Plain, Downchild went into Toronto's Round Sound studios with Walsh and engineer Danny Sustar handling the production. The result is the appropriately titled *It's Been So Long*, a sweet slice of blues that's big on soul-stirring melody and shuffling rhythm. The horns give it big-band sparkle and McKenna's guitar adds muscle, while Walsh contributes his rough-and-ready harmonica.

Walsh contends the record is the best Downchild album yet, mainly because "it's a band album. One of my main goals was to let the guys in the band have more input because I was producing it."

As the producer, Walsh said he was also far more confident that he'd get the record and the performances he wanted. "We used to have producers from outside the band who would feel obligations to the band *and* to the record company. Tony would be in the studio singing awful and the producer would make him stay at it until he got it right. Well, you don't get it right that way. You go home and come back tomorrow...and then in one take the next day, 'Boom!'"

Flaim said Walsh's production style made working on the LP a lot of fun, and it allowed the group's sides to co-exist. "With this band, you've got a muscle element with Donny, Gene and myself and then you got the tenor sax guy who's got a music degree and a bass player who's got all kinds of chops. So we got this slick side and the muscle side. But as far as soul is concerned, none of these guys can be beat."

That Walsh let the players have plenty of say in the studio might surprise some folks, considering Walsh's reputation as a no-nonsense leader. Nearly 70 musicians have trooped through the group, most of them dismissed because of unreliability, including Walsh's brother Richard. Flaim said, "You always have to have a guy who says 'Get in the van. We're going now.' But there's never been anybody in this band who couldn't get their opinion across."

"The way this band is set up," Walsh said, "is that when it comes down to 'Are we are going to do it this way or that way,' I make the decision. And we get it done."

PHOTO: TOM ROBE

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How To Get Money From VideoFACT

by Julie Thorburn, VideoFACT Program Director

So you want to be a rock star! Prepare for a long hard battle. No matter how difficult you think it's going to be to get recognition for your music and to "make" it in this business - it's ten times harder! Just think, if it was easy, everyone would have platinum records on their livingroom walls.

Fortunately there is some help along the way. Certain institutions have realized that the pursuit of musical excellence is a noble one and they are prepared to offer some assistance. The important kind of help: money!!!

VideoFACT is one such program. Our money comes from the MuchMusic/MusiquePlus Network as part of their promise of performance. MuchMusic/MusiquePlus recognizes that a steady supply of quality Canadian videos is important for their station's programming. Three and a half years ago when they received approval to go on the air they committed 2.4% of their gross revenue towards developing Canadian talent. They decided to put this money to work for them...helping to produce music videos that they could broadcast.

Over the past years VideoFACT has offered awards totalling over \$600,000 and has been involved in the production of 120 music videos. This makes VideoFACT the single largest body involved with video production in Canada.

VideoFACT finances music videos in both english and french, in all musical categories and in all regions of the country. Our strongest involvement is with rock/pop music since that's where the demand is.

VideoFACT acts basically as a financing body. We can provide an award of up to \$10,000 or half of the production costs for a music video. Our contribution is an award which does not have to be repaid.

Who's Eligible?

Anyone is eligible to apply for financing as long as their project meets basic CRTC Canadian content criteria. Also, the rights to the master sound recording and master video must be owned by a Canadian or a Canadian company.

The proposal has to be for a new production. Since the objective of VideoFACT is to stimulate the production of Canadian music videos (not to replace funds already allocated towards production) completed music videos will not be considered for financing.

Record labels will often apply to VideoFACT on behalf of artists on their roster but an artist does not have to be

affiliated with a record label to be eligible. VideoFACT has recognized, over the years, that the life blood of the industry lies in the new and developing artists who have yet to reach the mainstream. VideoFACT consistently offers its awards to "unknowns" and many of these "unknowns" have gone on to successful careers, both nationally and internationally. For example, VideoFACT was involved in the first music videos for The Box, Jane Siberry, K.D. Lang, Kim Mitchell, The Jitters and Haywire. More recently there's been Andy Cash, Blue Rodeo, Jeff Healey, Jeffrey Hatcher.

Evaluation

VideoFACT basically acts as a financing body. The applicant is expected to make all the creative and production decisions. The Board will either approve or reject involvement in a production based on the video proposal. The Board meets four times a year.

*“ The better
the application
the better
the chances. ”*

It's the Board of Directors of VideoFACT who decide how the fund is going to be allocated. The Board is made up of Bernie Finkelstein from True North Records who is the Chairman, Doug Bennett from Doug and the Slugs, Paul-Emile Beauln from Radiomutual, Pierre Marchand from MusiquePlus, John Martin and Moses Znaimer from MuchMusic and Deborah Samuel, a video director.

Each application is evaluated in terms of the song and the visual concept.

No one makes a direct presentation to the Board of Directors so your ideas have to translate well onto paper. Obviously how you communicate your ideas can often be as important as what you are saying.

The Application Form

Every applicant must start with the four page VideoFACT application form. These forms are available from the VideoFACT office in

Toronto, MusiquePlus in Montreal and MuchWest in Vancouver.

The application form provides us with some basic information on your production. It should be filled out as completely and accurately as possible. The more complete and well thought out your application, the better the chance you have for success.

The Song

This is the single most important element in the proposal. A weak song will never make a good video. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that their tape is of satisfactory quality before submission. Remember that the competition is stiff. Putting your rough demo up against artists with finished masters puts your application at a disadvantage. Get your song together and then think about its video potential.

Video Concept Information

For our purposes the video concept information should break down into three sections - video synopsis, video treatment and script/storyboard. The video synopsis should be a comprehensive capsulated version of the video concept. Just a few sentences explaining what ideas you are going to communicate with your video and your song.

Information about the technical approach to the production should be detailed in the video treatment.

The script should be no longer than five pages. The best approach is to divide an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper down the middle. Put the audio cues (lyrics of the song) down the left hand side of the page and the corresponding visuals down the right hand side.

If you are using an interesting locale it helps to provide photographs.

Biography

Always include a recent photo of the performer and an up-to-date bio. This helps to put your request in a human perspective.

Include 3/4" or VHS copies of previously produced music videos if available.

Deadlines

VideoFACT operates on a deadline system. There are four deadlines a year and applications must arrive in the VideoFACT office by 5:00 E.D.T. on the day of the deadline. Late applications will not be processed or reviewed. Board decisions will be available three weeks after the deadline. The next deadline for submitting applications is Monday, May 2, 1988, the next being early July. For more information, contact VideoFACT at (416) 596-8696.

More Music Careers Than Being a Performer

by Paul Steenhuis

The question "How can I get a job in the music business?" is one of the most common that we have to deal with at our school. Generally we find that the motivation behind such a question comes from a true interest and appreciation of music. The problem facing most people is deciding what kind of education would be the most appropriate in preparation for their chosen career.

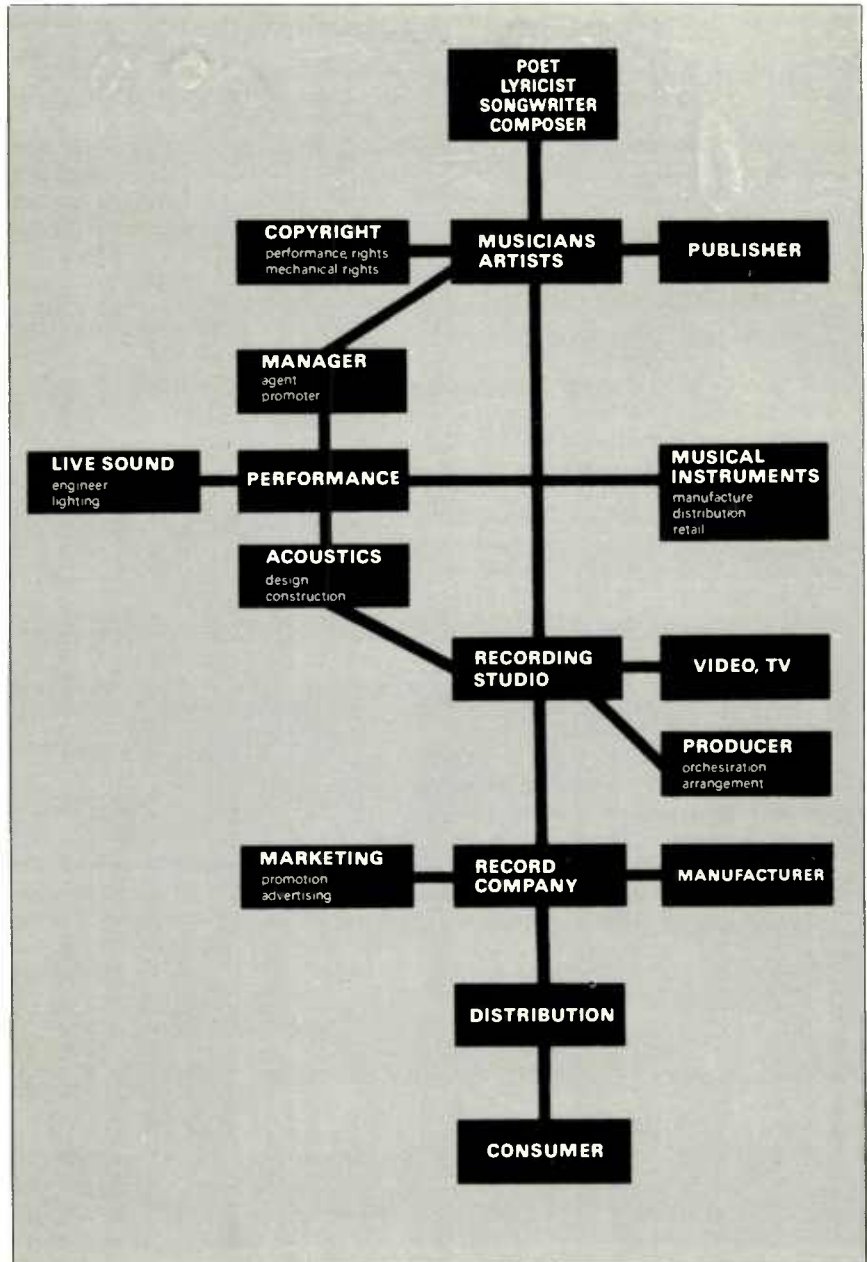
The performance aspects of the business enjoy high public visibility and strongly attract those people wanting to expose their talents. But there are many aspects of the biz that are less visible and could attract those people who love music but are not interested in performing or are not musicians. Finding out about these areas of the biz is more difficult.

For anybody wishing to become involved in the music industry, it is important to have a broad knowledge of all areas in order to understand their inter-relationships. Each area has its own complement of specialists.

The industry is constantly being subjected to the introduction of new techniques and processes and the rate at which new hardware shows up almost precludes anyone from keeping up with current technology. The result is that for the newcomer there is always more to learn. One cannot delete the basics from education but one must add the innovations. This increases the demand on the student and makes preparation for entry level to the job market more difficult each year. However, as far as the industry is concerned, as conditions become more advanced the demand for trained individuals increases. The closer the applicant is to current entry level, the less time the employer need spend on training.

Now perhaps we can go back and look at the opening question, "How can I get a job in the music business?" The days of walking in off the street, which is how I got my start, are over. It is important to identify an area of real interest and carefully select an education that best caters to entry level. The majority of employers are more inclined to treat applicants seriously and with consideration if they have spent time and money in preparation for their career.

Because facets of the industry are so highly specialised, it is important to realise that on-the-job training constitutes a vital part of experience and you must always be willing to learn and start at the bottom. No studio manager is going to risk an unproven engineer on



a \$60,000.00 a year client.

The best preparation in the world will not get you a job if you are not actively pursuing a gig. Be positive, pleasantly aggressive. Luck, being in the right place at the right time and who you know play a great part in securing a position in the industry. But if you don't know what you're doing or why you're doing it, you won't last long.

For in depth information about the industry talking to the people who are part of it.

(Paul Steenhuis is the Managing Director of the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology in London, Ontario. He has been active in the music industry as an engineer and producer for 22 years and active in education for 13 years).

Rheostatics: A Perverse Approach To Success

by Howard Druckman

Almost everything the Rheostatics do flies in the face of conventional music-biz wisdom. They write and perform a hybrid of folk, funk, metal, and pop, going for each song instead of maintaining a single style. Their gigs are gleefully sloppy rather than stolidly professional. They tour this behemoth of country with no financial backing, and actually manage to turn a profit. They are all four singer/writers, a sure for-

mula for creative implosion. And they write about the Canadian condition, never a particularly popular subject.

The Rheostatics are fast becoming Canada's most popular alternative/indie band, despite an unintentionally perverse approach. They've gained a reputation on college radio, played three two-week jaunts a piece in both Vancouver and Winnipeg in the past year, and recently did a live national radio broadcast of all-new material on CBC's *Brave New Waves*, out of Montreal.

And of course, there's their debut album, *Greatest Hits* (ho, ho), which extends Canadian traditions from Lightfoot folk to Neil Young grunge-rock to Max Webster suburban teen pop. The Rheostatics may only refer to Canada incidentally, but it's always there.

"We didn't want to make a rough-sounding, 'alternative' album," says guitarist Dave Bidini. "We wanted to make an accessible record. There are pop songs on it. If your grandma can listen to 'Higher and Higher' or 'Crescent Moon' and she won't turn off the stereo or burn the pancakes — that's excellent."

In fact, Toronto's CFNY-FM ultimately allowed three album cuts into their regular rotation over a two-month period. But The Rheostatics' current foundation is touring.

Their first western jaunt, last summer, was no picnic. They drove the Bidini family's Delta 88, hitched up a trailer for gear, slept on friends' floors, and sold T-shirts to acquire ready cash. They also played to 700 people opening for The Dead Milkmen and to 1200 opening for The Hoodoo Gurus. Though the tour was supposed to support the album, delays kept it from coming out until they were already back home in Toronto.

"The tour was in support of the T-shirt," smiles singer/bassist Tim Vesley. "But we got a lot more money on the road than we do in Toronto. Partly because we're something fresh from out of town, and partly because they take into account that we drove 800 kilometers to get there."

Though the Delta 88 broke down irreperably outside of Revelstoke, B.C., and the band had to rent a car for half the tour, they made back almost all of the \$3500 they'd sunk into the venture.

Now they're earning enough on the road to avoid using it, travelling to Vancouver and Winnipeg by plane, instruments and all. But their shows can still be pretty chaotic.

After eight years together, they're tight enough to get away with such horseplay. "We go completely loopy playing live," says Bidini, "and our music reflects that."



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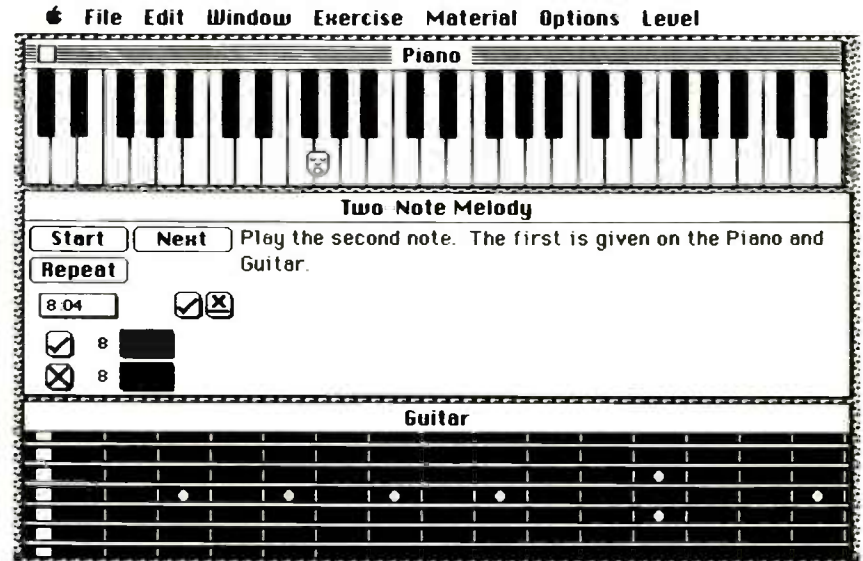
Ear Training Software For The Mac

by Benjamin Russell

While the Macintosh is the choice for musicians with its intuitive interface and a wealth of the best music software available for any computer, it has suffered from a dearth of educational packages. One of the first programs to address this situation was an ear training package called Listen. Recently, version 2.1 arrived on our doorstep from Resonate (the publisher). We're pleased to see it supports MIDI.

For music teachers, ear training can be a real drudge. Picture sitting at a piano playing intervals, short silly melodies, and chord inversions for hours at a time and you begin to get the idea. It's no fun for teacher or student but it's the repetitious, mind-numbing sort of thing that computers excel at. Enter Listen. Users select exercises and levels of difficulty, the Mac generates examples and plays them back over the internal speaker, headphones, or ideally, an external sound system.

Booting the program presents us with three windows: two are graphic representations of a piano keyboard and a guitar fret-board respectively. The other called "Progress and Explanation" serves to keep us informed. The first thing you'll do is load a "sound", i.e. one of 25 synthesized timbres included in the package, which utilize the Mac's sound chip. Choosing a sound with simple harmonic content, such as a flute, makes doing the exercises a little easier. More complex timbres contain harmonics which could be confused with fundamental pitches; what the user can handle will obviously depend on his (or her) level.



Screen of Listen 2.1 ear training software for the Mac.

Notes are played by clicking on the keyboard or guitar strings but it's far more satisfactory to connect a MIDI keyboard. This requires an interface. (We know of several retailing in the neighborhood of \$100-150.) MIDI control is found in the Options menu and any of the 16 MIDI channels may be chosen. Patch through is also available so you could turn off the Mac's volume and use your synth or sampler for more realistic sounds, should you so desire. Once you've made your selections, simply click on the "Use MIDI" button and you're in business. A thoughtful inclusion is the ability to assign keys on the MIDI keyboard to control program's operation. These may then be used instead of the on screen buttons to start exercises and so on.

What are the exercises? They range from basic recognition of simple intervals to some very hard stuff. Picking out 13th chords played on "Tubular Voice" might have been a piece of cake for Beethoven; the average guy will have to work his way up to it. But hey, that's why you'll buy this program isn't it! Typically, the Mac plays the notes; you recognize and play them back. Alternatively, you could choose one of the multiple choice exercises such as "Interval Naming". The computer plays the interval and you press one of several buttons to choose whether it's a minor 3rd, major 7th, etc.

Listen does a great job of graphically reinforcing the learning process. Let's say you're doing triads. While the Mac plays 3 notes the cursor changes to an ear. Then it becomes a pointing finger and you point at

the notes in succession from lowest to highest. When you click on the notes, the cursor changes to a happy or sad face depending on your accuracy. In the "Progress" window, "?" icons representing the notes will change to checkmarks or crosses depending on whether you chose correctly. If you got it wrong, the computer plays it again and you have another whack at it. Either way, it marks up the score for the current exercise in a bar graph with totals telling your score.

In practice (pun intended), Listen is a lot of fun for everyone whether a beginner or seasoned professional. One reason people are scared of music is that they don't want to make mistakes in front of people, whether it be an audience or even their teacher. The Mac doesn't care if you're talented or not. Just think of it as a game. Do you get discouraged when you get blown up in PT109? No, you jump right back in and try to better your score. It's a challenge and can easily become an addiction. Listen has exactly the same effect so beware!

Documentation is excellent. The 86 page manual is clearly laid out and includes a glossary of musical and computer terms to make sure everyone knows the vocabulary. It's what you might call very educational...

List price in Canada is \$125. Listen is copy protected but may be installed on a hard disk using the key disc method. For more information contact Resonate: PO Box 996, Menlo Park, CA 94026, USA, or in Canada, MusicWare: 1166 Eglinton Ave. West, Toronto, M6C 2E3.

MIDI

Apple Introduces The Apple MIDI Interface

Apple Canada Inc. has introduced the Apple MIDI Interface, its first product specifically designed for the music market, offering musicians, music educators and hobbyists a low-cost, high-quality Apple-labeled product.

The Apple MIDI Interface for the Apple IIGS and Macintosh family of personal computers has one MIDI In-plug and one MIDI Out-plug, making it suitable for a broad range of musical applications.

"The Apple MIDI Interface demonstrates our interest in and commitment to the music market," said John Boyle, Product Marketing Manager, Apple Canada. "MIDI and computer technology have sparked a revolution in the music industry, changing the way music is created. This technology provides musicians with much greater creative control over their music than has ever been available before. It is not something that will turn a beginner into an advanced player, but it will allow musicians, at no matter what level, to get the most out of their music."

The Apple MIDI Interface measures three

inches long by two inches wide and one and one ¼ inches deep. It connects to one of the computer's two serial ports via Apple's standard circular eight connector. MIDI instruments are connected to the interface via two five-pin standard MIDI cables.

For more information, contact: Apple Canada, 7495 Birchmount Rd., Markham, ON L3R 5G2 (416) 477-5800.

New Versions Of Performer and Composer Software Debut

Winter NAMM and MacWorld Expo served as the stage for the introduction of Mark of the Unicorn's newest Professional Composer and Performer software programs for the Apple Macintosh line of computers and the Apple MIDI interface.

The new Version 2.2 of the Professional Composer score notation software includes several music printing advances. To Compos-

er's support of Adobe's Sonata laser-font, Version 2.2 adds enharmonic transposition, slanted beams, text utilities and greater control over the placement of articulations, dynamics, ornaments and page formatting.

Version 2.3 of the Performer sequencer software improves many of the program's advanced features and adds Mac II compatibility. Programmable tempo changes, independent track looping and multiple meters all run 60% to 80% faster than previous versions, while Performer continues to support 32 MIDI channels and synchronization to SMPTE.

According to John Mavraides of MOTU, "The response from our beta-testers has been very enthusiastic. Many of them have told me that the new releases have reaffirmed Mark of the Unicorn's high-end reputation in the professional music software community."

The version 2.2 and 2.3 updates to Professional Composer and Performer respectively will be mailed to all registered users free of charge. Users who have purchased earlier versions of either package can send in their registration card to receive the free update.

For more information, contact: Musicware Distributors, 1573 Eglinton Ave. W., #3, Toronto ON M6E 2G9 (416) 785-3311.

MIDI music software

Look what they're saying about Master Tracks Pro, available now for the Macintosh and Atari ST:

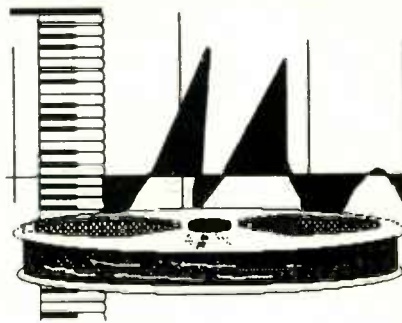
"Master Tracks Pro... a program clearly designed to be the do-it-all Mac sequencer. This sequencer is one of the most impressive we've seen for any computer." *Ted Greenwald, Keyboard, July 1987*

"Master Tracks Pro offers a comprehensive range of powerful global editing commands. Even in a world dominated by sequencers, this one stands out from the rest. If you're just getting in to using the Macintosh (or Atari ST) as a musical tool and you're looking to choose a sequencer, Master Tracks Pro definitely qualifies amongst the very best of what's currently available." *Jim Burgess, Music Technology, July 1987*

"Master Tracks Pro is doing a great job for me, and has solved my needs for a reliable sequencer that offers more features. The more I use this program, the more I like it. Once you've played with graphic modulation editing, it's hard to go back to any other method." *Craig Anderton, Electronic Musician, August 1987*



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Passport produces high quality music software for professionals, amateurs and music educators. Our complete line of products includes MIDI sequencers, music printing software, synth editing software and MIDI interfaces.

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Capturing Luba Live for CBC Special

by Benjamin Russell

Live sound is a tricky business. In the studio, instruments and vocals may be isolated, most often recorded separately. To capture a live performance, technical concessions must be made, chances must be taken, and there's always an element of danger. After all, we're talking about live rock 'n' roll music here!

Normally, there are two distinct facets of live sound: the house mix for the audience, and the monitor mix for the band. Often these bear little resemblance and members of the band may each have their own monitor mix emphasizing different aspects of the music.

Add a third element, namely recording the live performance, and the complexity deepens. To understand the triumphs and tribulations of such a situation, we checked out Luba at Montreal's Metropolis Club, a show which was recently recorded for posterity and a CBC television special. Later we spoke to the band's musical director, drummer Peter Marunczak.

Peter: "My role is just making sure that everything sounds OK in the final mixdown and that's basically it. I didn't actually concern myself much with the 24-track recording. We had already done something with Marcel Gouin, the engineer, at the Spectrum so he kind of knew what to expect.

"On the main system, we had 40 inputs which we had to bring down to 24. Everything goes to tape dry and we add in reverb and stuff like that later. You're kind of limited to what you can do, and we had to take that into consideration, so we mixed the keyboards down to stereo; the toms and Simmons all go on a stereo mix. When you come to the mixdown, you really don't have the liberty or the amount of inputs that you'd like to have to separate everything properly, but you try to overcome it. With 'When a Man Loves a Woman,' we had that problem, but through the modern wonders of gating and stuff like that we were able to eliminate a lot of the leakage in the mics. 'When a Man Loves a Woman' sounded pretty cool, so it should be OK."

Were there any problems or conflicts between what the monitors, house, and 24-track mixes were doing? "Yeah, there was a lot of that stuff going on. All the mics on stage pick up what's coming out of the monitors so there are a lot of leakage problems."

Was there anything different in the sound the audience heard as a result of it being



Luba

taped for TV? "Metropolis is a great club, but the only way to get really good sound is if you fly the system. The flying points they have were being used for lights. That was a major concern because we had to move the P.A. 20 feet away from the stage toward the audience, so the P.A. was almost in the middle of the room. That wasn't very good. I heard from other people that it sounded really good 40 feet out in the middle of the room, but when you went out on top it kind of got weak. In a way it was a concession to TV, but in another way it wasn't because we really didn't have time to go in there before the show and put in a flying system.

"As far as the show was concerned, you could put us in a bathroom and we'd perform the same way. I liked the club a lot; it's a good-looking place, it's got a lot of mystique to it, but then there are other little drawbacks. On stage, for instance, I think the ceiling goes up 60 feet or something, so that's kind of weird where again, the only way you'd

be able to get a good monitoring sound on stage would be to fly the monitors on both sides. That would help, but it costs a lot of money to rig a system like that."

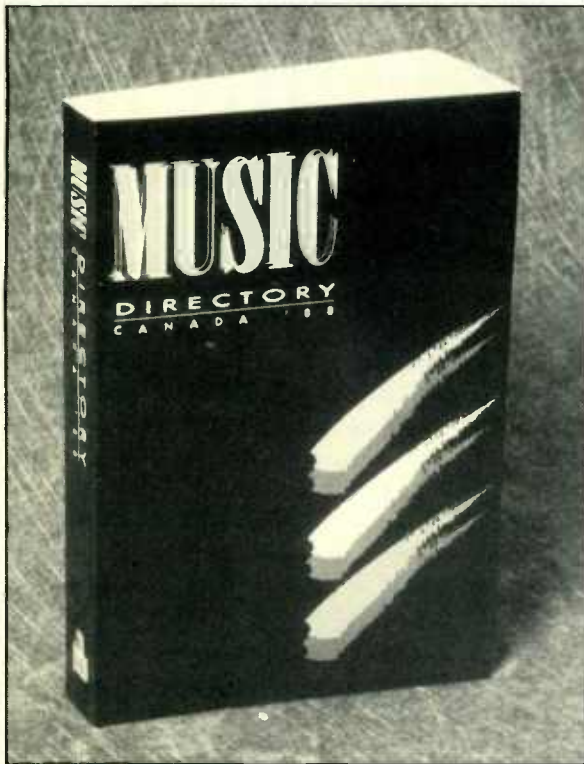
Monitors proved to be a major hurdle for the band as they found it hard to hear themselves and there was enough feedback in some songs to make it necessary to reshoot them at the end of the evening. We asked Peter for details. "It's not the company's fault, it's not the person behind the board, it's the venue, that stage, because the ceiling was so high. With the monitors pointing up into that 60 foot tunnel, there was a problem. It was just sucking up the sound.

"Unfortunately the person we had at the show wasn't familiar with the music, was French, and there was a little bit of a communication problem. Not that I'm blaming him because he was French, but I can't communicate that kind of technical stuff in French — it's hard enough for me in English!"

PHOTO: TAFFI ROSEN

MUSIC DIRECTORY

C A N A D A ' 8 8



The all new Music Directory Canada for 1988 has arrived! Finally, after months of research, revisions and updates, the most comprehensive guide to the Canadian music industry is here.

With an expanded content and even more specifics in each listing, the '88 directory is the best source of information on Canadian music you'll find anywhere.

There are 50 categories in all; from radio stations and record companies to booking agents and night clubs. The new directory is bigger and more comprehensive, with five new sections added: financial services, music consulting, music merchandising, background music, and selected discographies.

If you're in the music business, or just want access to it, the Music Directory Canada '88 is an essential tool you cannot be without.

The '88 directory is available for only \$24.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling. To order, complete the section below and send it to us with your payment, or charge it to your VISA, Mastercard or American Express. To order by phone, give us a call at (416) 485-1049 and charge it.

Music Directory Canada '88 is available at Classics, W.H. Smith and other book, music and record stores across Canada.



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The PPX Series of MOSFET Power Amplifiers was designed for professional applications.

The introduction of two new models, first the PPX1200 and now the PPX1600, extends the current range (PPX300, PPX450 and PPX900) to give the user greater flexibility in choosing the right output power for each application. The clean power outputs of both PPX1200 and PPX1600 were designed for today's demanding low frequency applications.

With the introduction of these two models comes two product enhancements which have also been incorporated across the PPX Series.

The use of an active-sensing circuit with an enhanced DC protection facility activates the crowbar device immediately violation of output DC level occurs.

Improved DC offset at output reduces the maximum DC offset to only 6uV on all machines.

For more information, contact: Gould Marketing, 6445 Cote de Liesse, Montreal, PQ H4T 1E5 (514) 342-4441, FAX (514) 342-5597



New Samson Stage 2 Series Wireless System

Samson breaks new ground in the wireless marketplace with the introduction of the Stage 2 Series wireless system. Priced for entry level users (system to start at \$429 suggested list). Stage 2 is unique in that it offers high-quality dbx noise reduction, a first in its class.

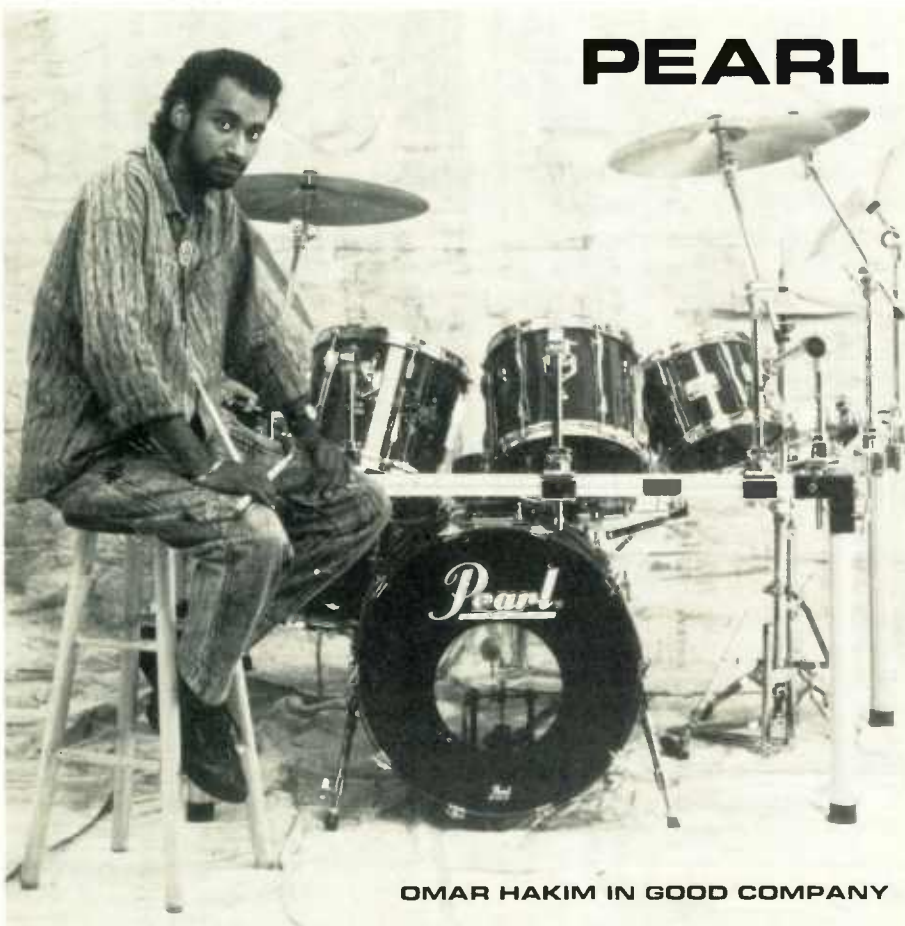
Wireless is limited by strict FCC guidelines which regulate narrow bandwidths, curbing potential quality. Samson's innovations with dbx provide wider frequency range, increased dynamics, and low noise. These systems are free of the "pumping" and "breathing" characteristics of typical wire-

less.

Stage 2 is a full line including systems for instruments, handheld microphones, and lavaliers. Among the name brand microphone options are the new Sony ECM144 lavalier and the AKG C410 headset mics. In all there are four lavs and six handhelds.

It is expected the introduction of Stage 2 will substantially widen wireless markets by making it affordable to everyone.

For more information, contact: Omnimedia, 9653 Cote de Liesse, Dorval, PQ H9P 1A3 (514) 636-9971.



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HONEYMOON

B Y P E R Y S T E R N

When Johnnie Dee regained consciousness, lying behind the car that only moments before he had stood in front of, the first thing he thought of was his face. "I know it sounds crazy, man," he confesses, "but when I woke up and saw all those people standing around me the first thing I did was reach up and ask: 'My face? How's my face?'" Of course, once he caught a glimpse of the contorted mess that used to be his left leg, all thoughts of facial disfigurement floated mercifully away.

December wasn't a particularly good month for Johnnie. The accident in L.A. (on the 13th as it happens) was bad enough to set an already protracted Honeymoon Suite recording schedule back several weeks, but while spending Christmas in a Toronto hospital bed, his parents' Niagara Falls home burnt down. Ho Ho Ho.

Ultimately the release of *Racing After Midnight*, Honeymoon Suite's third album, was only delayed by about a month, but its recording had already taken twice as long (and

cost at least twice as much) as either of their previous efforts.

The new LP is considered a revamping of the already familiar (and popular -- both previous albums sold double platinum) HS sound. Where in the past the band relied heavily on pop hooks underscored by an almost too subtle threat of metal meltdown, now the band, under the tutelage of producer extraordinaire Ted Templeman (Van Halen, David Lee Roth) has put its guitars upfront and left all Suiteness behind.

Drummer Dave Betts attributes the album's "rawer sound" to an attempt at capturing the maturing sound of HS after more than a year of touring. You can't play night after night with bands like Heart, ZZ Top and Journey without picking up a thing or two.

The choice of Templeman, says Betts, was a simple one. First, the band had worked with the producer while recording the title song for the *Lethal Weapon* soundtrack. Secondly, the band's previous producer, Bruce Fairbairn, who'd gone on to worldwide fame for his work on Bon Jovi's monster hit *Slip-*

pery When Wet, was tied up in the studio with Aerosmith. Lastly, but not least, was Templeman's position at Warner Brothers, HS's U.S. label.

"He's a vice president [for A&R] at Warner Bros.," Betts explains, "and that gets a little more excitement from the Warner Bros. people down in Los Angeles. We thought that would help us in the long run -- getting more support from the field staff and everyone involved with the company." Keeping the U.S. label excited has been a priority for HS ever since Prendergast commandeered an office in Warner's Burbank headquarters two years ago.

Betts says, "It's a little difficult for a Canadian act to get quite as much recognition from the Burbank office as Van Halen, or Madonna or ZZ Top. These are all guys on their roster, and then they've got Honeymoon Suite -- the Canadian guys. 'Oh yeah,'" he adds, imitating the indifferent voice of a jaded American publicist, "'They're nice guys. We like 'em.'" HS knew that nice guys finish last.

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Templeman as producer was his fee. "Ted," according to Betts, "doesn't charge as a producer." As in-house producer exclusively working for Warners' acts, Templeman didn't figure into a budget that would have been astronomical considering the cost of studio time in L.A.

A chicken-or-egg question arises, though, over who decided that *Racing After Midnight* would veer off into a harder direction than HS had travelled in the past. Did they just fall in behind the lead of their producer, or did they pick a producer who could deliver them a new sound?

Receiving co-production credit on the album is former Van Halen/Bruce Springsteen/Robert Cray engineer Jeff Hendrickson, who'd worked previously with Templeman and had been nominated for a Grammy for David Lee Roth's *Crazy From The Heat*. Hendrickson, speaking from L.A., explained how everyone seemed to come to the same conclusion about the band at the same time: "Seeing how they played in the studio [during the *Lethal Weapon* sessions] and then listening to how they sounded on their albums, it was like two different bands. They had that soft side to them. I went up to Toronto, to that place called Wonderland, and I saw a completely different thing than I had heard on record. "What Hendrickson observed was guitarist Derry Grehan's domi-

nance on stage. "I think everyone wanted to get more of that across," Henderickson says. "Derry's guitar was a real focal point when we saw them live." It was a conclusion that everyone had silently come to on their own. Since the departure of original keyboardist Ray Coburn in October '86, HS's sound had taken a decidedly harder edge. Coburn's replacement by keyboard whiz, ex-Spoon Rob Preuss, only served to further push Grehan to the forefront as the newest member and he concentrated on integrating himself into the act. Preuss' forte has supplemented the sound of the band, rather than overwhelm it.

"From the start," according to Grehan, "we wanted to do a rock 'n' roll record where the songs revolved around the guitar riffs." To that end Honeymoon Suite has set its sights on matching the success of the bands they've toured with, rather than cruising alongside their nearest Canadian "competition," the pop-oriented Glass Tiger.

Certainly, however, for those uninitiated in HS's past or those who wax nostalgic for their former, softer sound, it would appear that the band fell under the spell of a producer intent on making a personal statement at the expense of the group's established sound. With a slight mix of both consternation and resignation in his voice, Betts agrees that the production on this album is dramatically different enough from their past work to warrant questions. Questions about whether the band was bullied into the heavier sound by a domineering producer, chosen more for his position with the label than his affinity to

the group's sound: "Yeah, it's [Ted's] record, but when you're working with someone like that who's successful, you can fight and you can say, 'We like this or we don't like that,' or whatever, but you've got to give this guy the benefit of the doubt. It's still a Honeymoon Suite album regardless who does it and because of that we're happy about the way it came out. But you're right. It's Ted's record, but I don't think he's changed the band too drastically."

The main quality that Templeman brought to the album, according to the participants, wasn't a propensity for heavier sounds but a devotion to the quality of the songs themselves. "The difference between Ted and a Canadian producer," says Betts, "is that the Canadian guys are more concerned with how good the drum sound is. Ted's more concerned about the song." And this comes from a drummer.

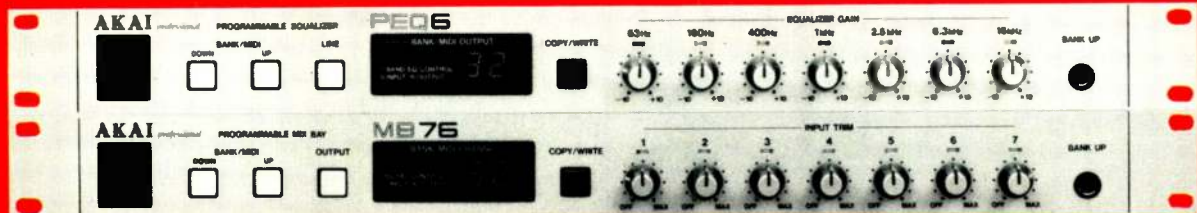
As principal songwriter, Grehan found Templeman to be the "pickiest" producer he'd worked with, particularly about lyrics and songs. "But I'm glad he was like that," the guitarist adds, "because he kicked our asses. He taught me about concentrating on what you're saying in the songs."

Certainly the most glaring evidence of Templeman's desire to finely craft the lyrical content of a song along with the overall sound of the piece is on "Long Way Back." The lyrics are by Doobie Brother Michael McDonald who also contributes background vocals. He was called in after repeated efforts by Grehan and Dee to come up with something other



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than what the guitarist characterizes as "dumb boy/girl lyrics."

The song is about a rape victim trying to strive for "normalcy" from the point of view of someone with a deep and sincere social consciousness. Not to say that Johnnie Dee is uncaring to the plight of the abused, but it is a little jarring hearing him sing a line that must have come out much easier for McDonald: "I could have been a billionaire out in the private sector/ Still I chose to protect the rights of the innocent ones." Dee concedes that, "It was hard for me to pick up what he was talking about at first."

Betts offers, "They tried and tried and tried and tried and finally Ted said: Let me send it to Michael. When you've got so many people down there telling you how great something is, what are you going to do? We're not big enough yet to say: Fuck you. So in the end we've got a Doobie Brothers song with Johnnie singing."

But it's not the lyrical content of the album that will ultimately illustrate the new direction for HS, it's the guitar. To emphasize a more basic sound the producers decided to adhere to the fundamentals of rock recording instead of experimenting with new machinery. Co-producer Henerickson sees it as an effort not to sound "too slick." "Technology," he explains, "has really stayed the same for the last five years, in my opinion. Something

might be quieter, or sound a little different, but it's really still the same.... Most things out now have either tons of gated reverb or tons of sampled drums. There's such a variety of tricks you can put on something but we wanted to sound like the band, not something they couldn't reproduce live. So we didn't go for the real, real glitter. With the few additions of reverbs and delays and maybe a chorus or harmonizer here and there, we didn't go for the big glitz."

As the central figure on *Racing After Midnight*, Grehan explains his studio set-up: "All of our equipment was stolen a year or so ago, so during the course of the album I was buying up all new stuff. The main thing I picked up was a new rack along with a pedal board called the Bradshaw Box [made in L.A. by Bob Bradshaw]. It's well thought out, really clean and quiet. It cost a lot of money, but for the longest time I've been throwing things together myself, just using a piece of wood and sticking some pedals on it. I'd get in front of a lot of people in some shows and it would just cut out -- you know, the guitar player's nightmare. I just got so sick of that that I decided to go out and invest in a good system that's going to last me.

"I ended up spending between \$5,000 - \$10,000 for the rack, pedal board and new amps. I went back to Marshall and when I get out on the road I'll be using three Marshall stacks, but not all the cabinets. It's important for a musician to have the sound. The most important thing for me is for my gear to work good and sound good, and it helps if it looks good, too.

"For guitars I'm using Kramers, mostly. I have a thing going with them. And I'm also using Lados, too, which are made in Toronto. For the record I used mostly two Kramer guitars: one for all the rhythm tracks and another for all the lead tracks.

"For the rhythm I used a Pacer. It's a three pick-up guitar with a rosewood fretboard. I found it had a really full, thick sound which I kind of vary from track to track. I find when I get to the studio and I get comfortable with one guitar I like to use it the whole way through rather than switching. Everytime you pick up another guitar you've got to spend another two hours trying to EQ it and get it just right. They all sound so different even if they're identical makes.

"For the leads I got a Baretta, took it apart, modified it a bit, and put it back together. It's got a really good sound on it for lead. For recording the rhythm tracks I used an old Marshall 50-watt top that was just a bit juiced up and a couple of vintage Marshall bottoms. For the leads we used all new stuff."

After the guitar, the most prevalent sound on *Racing After Midnight* is Johnnie Dee's voice. It's a richer, fuller, more confident instrument than has appeared on any of Dee's previous work. The singer attributes its improvement to Templeman's studio strategy: "Ever since we worked with him [on "Lethal Weapon"] he'd be praising my vocals like crazy. I know that sounds egotistical for me to be saying that, and I'm not an ego guy, but when your producer listens to what you're singing

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and likes what you do (even if he doesn't and he just says it), then he gives you the confidence to explore things fuller.

"There were a lot of times in the past when I'd get behind the mic and be nervous, and you can't have that on a record. Guys like Billy Idol can do all that stuff with their voices because they're free to do whatever, and it comes across that way."

Ultimately the public will decide how successful Honeymoon Suite's change in direction will be. With the current popularity of heavy metal acts on the charts (Bon Jovi, Whitesnake) it would seem a logical progression for a band that flirted with metal in the past. But Hendrickson points out: "You can't use what's out there as a barometer because it might change tomorrow."

For Johnnie Dee, who'll be carrying a 10-inch pin in his left leg for the next year or so, this is a pivotal record for HS, but not a make-or-break one. Not so for drummer Betts: "Third albums are always the most difficult. They're the 'break' record. You do the first album and it's: That's cute, that's fine. You do the second one and it's: Well, maybe they do have some potential, but it didn't do as well as we thought. It's the third one. Think of any Canadian band on their third album, from Platinum Blonde to the Parachute Club. It's the big thing."

For Grehan though, *Racing After Midnight* is another learning experience along the road for Honeymoon Suite. He sees the last few years as a growth period for the band, highlighted by their emerging confidence as a live act. The change in the band seems a perfectly natural one for him: "I guess we were just influenced by all these bands we've toured with; ZZ Top, and Heart and Journey.

"After playing arenas night after night, seeing the kids and just living the whole experience, I think you get a feel for the kind of rock 'n' roll that really excites them. Night after night we'd do our opening set and I'd go out and watch those other bands, and I think I spent a lot of time watching the audience, too, and what got these kids off. I suppose we were influenced by that."

As for lessons learned, it's unlikely that Honeymoon Suite will go into a studio again with as little finished material as they did this time. While working with a producer like Templeman undoubtedly means much will be changed during the course of recording, studio time is too precious of a commodity to be spent on experimenting with and fine tuning a song. Even with a bigger budget and strong label support, Grehan says next time things will be different. "In retrospect," he concludes, "It's a lot better that we took our time with it because we went in with a lot of unfinished songs that were almost there -- just like we'd done with other albums." For the next album, though, there'll be fewer loose ends going in, and fewer questions about who's really in charge by the time it gets out. □

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he Tragically Hip

T H E (N O T

BY MAUREEN LITTLEJOHN

With a name like The Tragically Hip you'd expect they'd be shrouded in black, full of smart alecky sarcasm and spewing forth biting social commentary. Surprise, surprise. Sure, they're smart and cocky, but at the same time they're polite and thoughtful. In some ways they're consummate boys-next-door; the kind you'd have no trouble bringing home to mom and dad. Their appearance is decidedly en campus — school jackets, rumpled shirts, longish hair and blue jeans — and their music is raw, gritty, honest rock and roll. On second thought, your brothers and sisters would probably be more keen on them than mom

and dad.

Holed up in Regina's Sandman Inn, The Hip are happy to talk. It's 7:30 p.m., a couple of hours 'til first set, and they have a little time on their hands before heading over to the venue.

Local heroes in their hometown of Kingston, Ontario, the roosty/bluesy/rockin' fivesome — Gord Downie on vocals, Gord Sinclair on bass, Paul Langlois on guitar, Rob Baker on guitar and Johnny Fay on drums — admit the first leg of their debut tour of western Canada has been a little challenging. "We've been getting a good reaction from the crowds," says Gord Downie, with his signa-

ture rasp. "But the problem with going across the country for the first time is dealing with agents in other markets who don't know what the band is all about and put us into the wrong club." Their brand of rocky, sweat-soaked, butt-kicking blues definitely needs the right showcase environment; preferably a place that stinks of beer, where you can feel the grit of a hundred bleary nights crunching under your boots. "We just got fired from a fancy new disco called The Diamond Club in Winnipeg," explains Downie indignantly. "They figured with our video and record we were worth getting, but after one set they decided they didn't like us. That blew us out for



PHOTO: DIMO SAFARI

SO) TRAGIC STORY

three days, in addition to three days we booked at another club in town owned by the same people. That didn't feel too good, after travelling 1,800 miles to get there." Luckily some other gigs came through, one at the university in town, which Downie notes, "we were better suited for, and it ended up being great. They asked us to come back on our way home."

The Tragically Hip are what their manager, Jake Gold (also manager for New Regime) calls "a real band. When I first saw them I got this feeling they really liked each other." He hit the nail on the head. All five band-members grew up together, and as high school

buddies their musical tastes evolved concurrently. Three of them went on to study at Queen's University, Downie took Political Science, Baker took Fine Arts and Sinclair majored in History, and they formed the band in 1985 while still in school. "At first it was just a fun thing to do on weekends," says Downie. "Then, much to the detriment of our studies it started seeping into Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and we were playing to sell out crowds all the time around Kingston." Downie laughs, "My studies gave me the fodder for in between song patter." Although they're from a university town, and have a loyal number of fans from their alma

mater, guitarist Baker notes, "We're not a college band as such. "They tend to like more avant-garde bands. We go over just as well in biker bars."

After Sinclair and Baker graduated (Downie didn't complete his degree) it was time to seriously get into musical career mode. "I didn't want to run the risk of getting a job in a consultancy firm like so many of my peers were doing," jokes Downie. Their career took an upward swing when they were discovered by Gold's partner Allan Gregg (also the president of political polling powerhouse Decima Research) in the summer of 1986. Gregg had been sent their 8-track base-

BOBBY ROCK

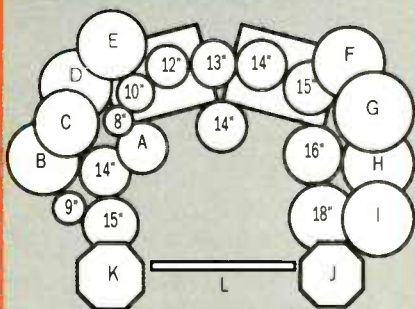
(Vinnie Vincent Invasion)



Photo: Mark Weiss

Best known for his thunderous drumming, Bobby Rock is a multi-faceted individual whose strict self-discipline, talent and sheer persistence have led to early success with the hard rocking Vinnie Vincent Invasion. With the new 'All Systems Go' destined to emulate the success of their self-titled debut album, it looks like this is the year for Bobby to make his mark.

Bobby stresses ... "My desire to master my instrument led me to study all styles ... Jazz, Funk, Latin and Classical ... but I am a rock drummer! I use body-building to develop the strength and stamina to play harder and faster. Rock drumming is about attitude. It's about 'letting the animal out'. It's about power, energy and conviction. Whether on the road or in the studio I'm continually making my statement."



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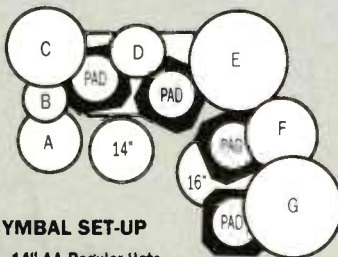
(INXS)



Photo: Ross Halfin

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'WILD' MICK BROWN

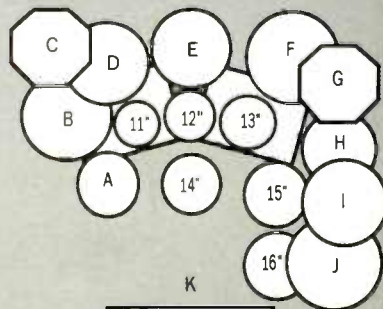
(Dokken)



Photo: Pat Rodgers

With the platinum successes of their albums 'Tooth and Nail', 'Under Lock and Key' and their latest hit 'Back For The Attack', drummer 'Wild' Mick Brown and his bandmates in Dokken, have firmly established themselves as one of rock's most enduring and successful acts.

Heavily influenced by the likes of Keith Moon and John Bonham, Mick has been the big beat for Dokken over the past seven years and freely admits to being a wild, hard-hitting player. Flamboyantly driving the band from within his 'cage of rage', Mick tells us ... "Sabian cymbals are the most durable I've ever played, cutting through those screaming guitars and delivering the clean, punchy sounds I need for both studio and stage."



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The Tragically Hip

ment demo tape by a personal friend, who had received it from his brother-in-law, the band's road manager. "I heard the tape in Allan's car on the way to a ball game," recounts Gold. "He and his friend John Parikhhal (president of Joint Communications, a broadcast consulting firm) were really enthusiastic about it. I wanted to see them play live, so I set up a gig for them opening for a Rolling Stones clone band at Larry's Hideaway in Toronto. The crowd loved them, and so did I. I was attracted to the singer's voice, as soon as I heard him I knew there was something special there." After the show, over beers in the smoky Pilot Tavern, Gold, Gregg and the band hammered out a management deal.

"Allan's stake in us is predominately personal," says Downie. "He genuinely likes rock and roll music. We were lucky to hit it off with him." Gregg and Gold are 50-50 partners, Gregg provides financial backing and high powered contacts, while Gold looks after the day to day operations. Although Gregg has his hands full running Decima, he talks daily with Gold and all decisions are made as a team. "We got involved together two years ago," explains Gold. "It's a good relationship. Allan is the business whiz and I have the street connections."

Strategically setting out a grass roots game plan to establish a band loyalty outside of Kingston, Gold got the band playing six nights a week in smaller Southern Ontario urban centres. Under his direction they also recorded an EP, made a video and got a distribution deal with BMG.

Although they've come a long way since Gold first saw them, The Tragically Hip still view themselves as "young guys coming out of the basement." Downie notes that while their songwriting has matured, they have also remained loyal to their roots. "Our premise was to play cover tunes we wished other bar bands would play, songs that we collectively liked." Adds guitarist Baker, "We started out doing songs by the Clash and the Pistols, and then began drifting back to the Rolling Stones and their roots; early soul, blues, funk and even country and western."

"We got into a '60s British blues genre," remembers Downie. "It wasn't so much a concerted effort, it just happened." He waxes philosophical: "There seems to be a great stigma attached to being a cover band, but I think it eventually helps your writing. To convince yourself you can write original material at age 18 that the rest of the world is going to want to listen to is naive. The writing will be juvenile, except in exceptional cases."

They still do cover tunes, but as they've matured, they've become more prolific in their songwriting. "We've slowly integrated our songs. It's evolved from five original songs per 15 song set to about four covers per 17 song set. We like playing covers, Suzy Q is a mainstay." Roadhouse Blues by the Doors also used to be a mainstay, but it was cut because it "begged too much of a comparison to

the original," says Downie. "We get compared to the Doors a lot, I personally don't see it, we have no keyboards, but if someone's drinking in a bar and likes the band and thinks we're like the Doors, that's a compliment." He also admits their raw stage presence may have just a dash of Jim Morrison-esque raunch about it.

There's no denying The Hip shoot from the stage. Sparks fly during their driving, gut-felt live performances. Their approach is simple. "We don't use any special effects, keyboards or even foot pedals," says Baker. "I guess you could say we're a standard rock and roll band, we like the straight ahead approach; plug it in, turn it up and go." Baker gets his ringing, restless guitar sounds from two Fender Stratocasters which he uses with a

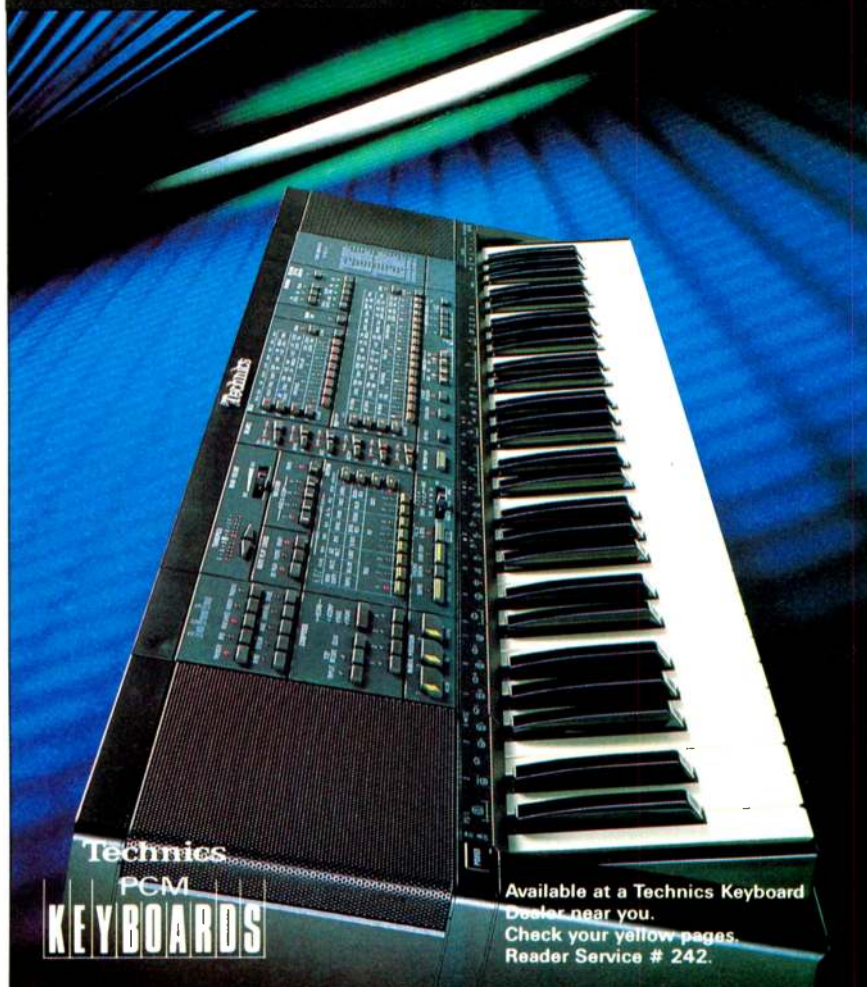
Messa Boogie amp. "I just jack straight into it and play." Langlois plays a Telecaster which he plugs into a Randall amp, Sinclair plays a Fender Precision bass, with a Galien Kruger 400RV amp and Fay's kit consists of Gretsch drums with Paiste cymbals. Baker laughs, "Our stage gear couldn't be more minimal. One time in Kingston we were called at 9:30 p.m. to cover for a band who didn't show up. We were on stage by 10 p.m."

Their direct approach didn't change when they went into the studio to record their EP last year. "We used the same gear we use live and in rehearsal," says bassist Sinclair, the band's main writer. "The only different thing I did was take the signal from the guitar and amp directly through the board and use the best tone."

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The Tragically Hip

Five of the EP's seven tracks were recorded at Sounds Interchange ("in the middle of the night to get cut rates," says Sinclair) and two at Phase One. "The last two, 'Hiway Girl' and 'Werewolf, we did at Phase One live to two-track. We just stuck up the mics like we do for a live gig, and recorded, exactly like the Beatles used to" says Sinclair. "We're not the kind of band that gets wrapped up in studio effects. If we can't play it live, we won't record it. There's no trickery, no tapes and" he adds smiling, "if it's out of tune, it's out of tune."

The EP was produced by Ken Greer, guitarist for Red Rider (and right wing on Gold's hockey team). Sinclair admits, "Red Rider is the archetype of what we're trying to do. They're straight ahead, great musicians." Greer was brought on board first as an arranger, and Sinclair recalls, "he was there to stimulate our own appraisal of our work. On a personal level he didn't ask for much, he's very mild mannered, but we took everything he suggested to heart. I guess we regarded him as a mentor."

Of the EP's seven songs, Sinclair wrote and contributed to the writing of four. "Everybody in the band has a handle on writing," he says modestly. "We just used a little more of my stuff this time." Sinclair writes on a Norman acoustic guitar, and just recently bought a dictaphone tape recorder to capture his ide-

as as he goes along. "For 'Small Town Bringdown' I came up with the lyrical ideas first. Then I sat down on the couch and the verse came quickly. I arranged the melody from there, then the chorus and bridge. And I whipped off the lyrics as I went," he shrugs. "It wasn't super complex." Working as a unit, rather than individuals, Sinclair explains, "I don't read or write music, and the band doesn't chart out parts for each other. Normally in rehearsal if anyone has ideas they show it to the other guys. We all have input. The way we work you'll never know how it's going to sound until the band has a chance to play it together. Our styles are pretty similar, though, we've all known each other for such a long time."

Originally the tracks recorded at Sounds Interchange, including singles "Small Town Bringdown" and "Last American Exit", were going to be label shopping demos. When the response was so positive they decided to go the full nine yards and press it to vinyl. "We sent the tape out to people in radio and record companies and all sorts of calls started coming in, especially from the U.S.," explains Baker. When New York mixing giant Don Wershba, who was also in on the project (he heard the rough mixes, went to see them play and offered his services), started shopping the tape around for himself they knew they were on to something. "We decided we better jump on it and get it out as soon as possible," says Baker.

Pressed on the Rock Records label, started by Gold as a vehicle for the band, the record

was released in Kingston in December of 1987, a full month before BMG distributed it to the rest of the country. "We wanted to say thank-you to Kingston," says Gold. To test their market nationally, they sent the EP along with a 12" version of "Small Town Bringdown" to 12 AOR stations across the country, as well as college and university radio. "Every AOR station added it," says Gold proudly. "Then we sent it out to every FM radio station we thought would play it." No AM stations were approached? "This isn't a singles band, we want to generate band loyalty, not song loyalty," says Gold firmly.

This year Gold wants to build a national awareness of the band at a street level. They're scheduled for more western dates, another single and video is due out, "Last American Exit", and they hope to record a full album in July. Where will the financing for all this come from? "The band members support themselves by playing all the time. Allan and I stand behind them, we'll co-sign for certain things but we don't pay them a salary." And the upcoming record? "We'll put the money up for the costs of recording and making a video," says Gold, "and then work on the recoupable principle, like most major labels do."

The plan this summer is to record at one of the studios in Bearsville, New York, and take a little more time to put out a full fledged album. "We won't spend a lot of time, though," says Downie. "Two months wouldn't be advantageous for us, what we do is simple to translate." □



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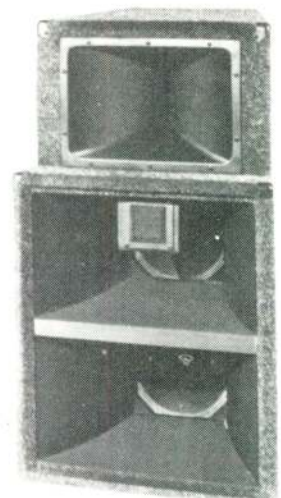
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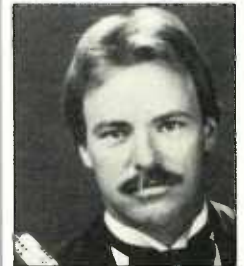
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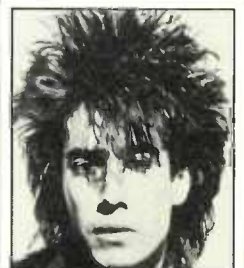
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Making Records



THE INDEPENDENT WAY

B Y H O W A R D D R U C K M A N

These days, nothing defines an independent band so much as their actual independence from the traditional recording industry. Perhaps the most prevalent fallout from the punk explosion of 1977 has been a wide-spread faith in do-it-yourself-ism. Hundreds of alternative bands across the country are managing to hustle up enough money to squeeze out a slab of vinyl and give themselves a chance in the marketplace.

It's a challenge just to be able to take the chance. Band members on the indie level invariably work full-time jobs. They pay for rehearsal space and gear as well as food and rent, and can only practice and write songs in their limited spare time. Door guarantees at gigs range from zero to insignificant, and club owners are reluctant to relinquish even a Tuesday night.

Even if an indie band can scrape together enough cash to record, the only affordable studio time is often between 2 and 7 a.m.

But at least alternative support systems are established enough to give them a fighting chance. Sixty-odd campus radio stations across Canada offer indie music access to the airwaves. A handful of distribution companies specialize in independent product - Toronto's Fringe, Vancouver's Zulu, and others. And dozens of small record companies - AMOK, X and Fringe in Toronto, Zulu, Nettwerk and Mo-Da-Mu in Vancouver, Og, Psyche-Industry and Pipeline in Montreal - will put out fewer than 5,000 copies of a record, based solely on musical quality.

Increasingly, do-it-yourself bands and labels are signing distribution deals with the major record companies. Current Records have sold gold (50,000) for the Parachute Club and M+M via their deals with RCA, and just released Alta Moda's debut through CBS. Duke Street made Jane Siberry a gold-seller. Island has signed Andrew Cash (formerly of l'Etranger) and WEA is distributing Blue Rodeo and 54-40.

For most indie bands to survive, it becomes a matter of guerilla tactics in money-gathering, recording, booking and management, in order to survive and ultimately flourish on vinyl.

Making Records

DEJA VOODOO

"It's funny," says Gerard Van Herk, the guitar playing half of Montreal sludgeabilly band Deja Voodoo, and co-manager of their own Og Records label. "We decided to quit our day jobs to become big-time rock stars, and months later, we're broke."

But that's temporary, because Og is one of the cagiest labels in Canada. This year Van Herk and drummer Tony Dewald released their own *Swamp of Love* LP, put out the Gruesomes' *Tyrants of Teen Trash* debut LP, played 13 dates in 17 days across 7,500 miles of Western Canada, and spent the summer touring Europe for the first time.

Though only Greek and Finnish gigs materialized, the band released a mini-LP in Finland.

But they still got to release three more records this year before going bust: Their own *Worst of Deja Voodoo* (which clears the Og catalogue of old cassettes and singles), *Volume 3* of their *It Came From Canada* compilation series (an important outlet for weird do-it-yourself bands), and a new Gruesomes LP, *Gruesomania*. That was their last \$4,000, for now.

But the band is business oriented enough to have kept themselves, and Og, going for more than five years. Constant touring is the foundation, allowing them to build up contacts at friendly radio stations and record retailers *in person*.

They're currently in the midst of a 35-day show, 22-city tour of Canada, travelling by Grey Coach, sleeping at friends' houses, and carrying only guitar and drums. That ought to raise some capital. This December their annual Deja Voodoo bar-B-Q show in Montreal (and a new one in Toronto) should also have added to the coffers. And Og's mail-order catalogue, already offering all of Og records as well as T-shirts, buttons, and a newsletter, now includes dozens of Canadian indie titles that they handle as a distributor.

In 1988 they expect to release or reissue no less than four albums and EPs. Also planned is another jaunt to Europe, including a live "greatest hits" recording on national Greek radio - to be released as an album there - and another disc in Finland.

"We're trying to treat the world the same as we did Canada," says Van Herk. "Just bust our asses until people sit up and take notice."

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Getting noticed on national television was essential for The Pursuit of Happiness. If their video for "I'm An Adult Now" hadn't rocketed the band to national stardom, they might never have released the single.

They did the video on a lark, says androgynous TPOH frontperson Moe Berg. "We picked up 'I'm An Adult Now' and cut that, plus a few other songs for a demo, in a 16-track basement studio. The demo was just to set up gigs in Queen Street clubs."

Typically, the video was made with the free co-operation of friends of the band. "We gave it to MuchMusic," says Berg, "thinking it might get played a few times on *City Limits*. At the time, we were struggling to get a Wednesday night gig anywhere in town."

While TPOH toured out west, Much Music jumped on "Adult" for heavy rotation and soon record buyers were demanding the single. TPOH pressed 1,000 copies for a few thousand bucks, but radio followed video's lead, and a second pressing of 500 sold out in one weekend. The band found a manager in Jeff Rogers, who successfully pitched the single to WEA for distribution, with a 120-day option to sign the band. WEA pressed and promoted the song, but let the option lapse.

"What you want management for," says Berg, "is to avoid mistakes. You need somebody who understands the business because you don't want to get yourself in trouble. We've gotten a lot of lucky breaks, and fortunately we've been able to cash in on them."

Indeed. THOP have won two 1987 CASBYs, and been nominated for a Juno and Toronto Music Award the same year. Their intelligent, hard-rockin' guitar pop has piqued the interest from such high-level, major-distributed companies as Virgin, Elektra and Chrysalis.

"It would be very easy to run into the first deal that came along," says Berg. "But people were responding to the hype. And it was hype."

"When you sign a record deal, it's going to last for a long time. There's no point getting involved in something that's going to break up the band or ruin your career down the line."

"We put it out ourselves to begin with. If we're not going to get a better deal from a situation than by doing it ourselves, why bother?"

One deal that's allowed the band to quit their day jobs is a contract with SBK Publish-

ing, who've given the band an advance on future royalties. TPOH have just released a 4-song college radio promo EP of "Adult" in the U.S. to test the waters and generate a buzz. And producer Jim Dickinson (Alex Chilton, The Replacements) is reportedly very interested in working with the band.

THE LAWN

"Even Charlie Mingus was a postman," says Gord Cummings, the affably goofy singer/guitarist/songwriter for the Lawn, one of the two best unsigned bands in Toronto. By day, Cummings works at a second-hand record store; guitarist/singer Pat Gregory works at a bookstore, his brother, bassist Richard Gregory, is a groundskeeper, and drummer Mike Duggan is studying engineering.

By night, the Lawn play dynamic, loud, guitar-based rock 'n' roll. The band is currently mixing a debut album, recorded sporadically over a seven-month stretch at Wellesley Sound.

"But that way the songs get to develop their own life," says Cummings. "They're more like individual projects than one big 40-minute sound."

Typically, the band would gig around town for their small but rabid cult following, spend the door money on recording, then do it all over again. But they did start with a \$5,000 bank loan.

"A parent co-signed the loan," says Cummings, "and payments come from money the band makes. Once in a while we have to dig into our pockets to cover it, which is a real drag. If we're not gigging or drawing poorly, it can get pretty scary."

"At one point we went four weeks without hitting the studio, and we were *dying* to go back in. But a couple of pals popped us \$500 here and there. Meanwhile, we're paying bank instalments and rehearsal space rent."

Still the band were friendly enough with Wellesley to get a good hourly rate and work



Deja Voodoo

in prime-time chunks of five hours at a stretch. And Cummings has learned how to go after financing.

"We've got some CAPAC grant money coming," he says. "Bands should get off their asses and find out about CAPAC, PROCAN, and FACTOR. There's money available, but people aren't going to come knocking on your door to tell you about it. You have to look for it."

The self-titled album should be out in early 1988 on Driveway Records. Cummings expects to use the LP as a calling card for U.S. indies. Promo copies will be sent to key media worldwide, and Canadian distribution will fall to the most interested parties.

The band expects to tour before the spring. "We decided that we weren't going to contrive to look good to the majors in Canada," says Cummings. "I don't think any of them are thrilled about us. Maybe in a few years we'll have a better reason - or opportunity - to be communicating with those guys."

THE PLASTERSCENE REPLICAS

The Plasterscene Replicas are the other one of the two best unsigned bands in Toronto. The Replicas play haunting, crystalline guitar pop 'n' roll with glowing harmonies, and a gloriously sweeping romanticism.

Though the band has repeatedly changed drummers, the singing/songwriting core of guitarists Charlie Salmon and Steve Stewart, and bassist Brendan Cavin, has remained intact for the better part of five years.

In 1984, the 'Reps recorded a four-song debut EP on local artist Clive Robertson's Voicesspondence label. Unbelievably, they got to do it for free: Robertson's studio is a grant-financed outlet for culturally important bands, and he liked the band enough to squeeze their sessions into his crowded schedule.



The Pursuit of Happiness

Cut in sporadic bursts in the fall of '84, the record came out in early '85. The band blanketed southern Ontario themselves, and had Record Peddler (the Fringe people) distribute across Canada.

"We concentrated on just getting it into stores and getting it sold," says Stewart. "Mainly to increase attendance at gigs and get our name out there. We thought there was no way any record company would be interested."

In the summer of '85, Salmon quit the band because of various pressures; there were three songwriters vying for exposure; living (as well as playing) together had taken its toll; a new-found manager quit the music biz for one month after taking the Replicas on; and band members were frustrated at their own threadbare existence. But after 18

months of other projects, the Replicas fell together again while rehearsing for a one-off benefit gig.

"This time we tried to define some objectives," says Stewart: "Doing demos, familiarizing ourselves with the studio, going after a record more. Trying to get somebody else to pay for recording instead of ourselves. Finding ourselves on a label within a few years."

The band has been cutting demos constantly. In February '87 they cut five songs for a nominal fee at Friendly Pirate's 8-track studio. In May, they spent \$1,300 to record upgraded and edited versions of two songs, "We Can Walk," and "Trains" at the 16-track Umbrella Studios. The newer versions are shorter, snappier and ready for radio.

"The purpose," says Stewart, "was to do a demo so that A&R people would hear it and go, 'yes, this has potential.' To have somebody say 'I'll pay for you to record.'"

But the band parted ways with manager Matthew Buck (who handled Vital Sines, and took on the reunited Replicas) because he was intent on a major-label signing. The band wanted more control over the music and are looking for a deal with a major-distributed indie.

To that end, they've just spent an \$1,800 FACTOR grant cutting two new songs, "Town Crier" and "Pull Out" which sacrifice none of their genius to an increasingly radio-friendly sound. These two, and the last two, have been sent out to Canadian and U.S. indies. The band is fielding offers from several, while Salmon and Stewart work odd jobs (construction work in summer) or collect welfare, and Cavin works in a restaurant bakeshop.

"We can do a record ourselves and sell 5,000 copies in Canada, but it means nothing," says Stewart. "We'll do that if we're not picked up. But we're after a world-wide deal, or at least in the U.S. as well as Canada.

"It's a matter of the odds," he says. "And I think the chances are pretty good for us." □



The Plasterscene Replicas

MIDI II FOR ALL

B Y A S H L E Y C O L L I E

There are very few working musicians in Canada yet to be touched by MIDI. Whether you're a one-man show playing the hotel lounge circuit or a recording artist working on new songs in your home studio, MIDI has likely saved you time and improved the quality of the music you make. While it would be easy to fill several books on

MIDI's impact on making music, we've decided to focus on a few key areas for our special focus on MIDI, MIDI For All. We've taken a look at MIDI's impact on keyboards, in the recording studio, the software musicians are using, in performance and the next frontier, MIDI and the guitarist.

MIDI The Catalyst For Keyboardists

In many ways, the pre-MIDI days of a short while ago seem almost prehistoric to keyboardists. Retailers will confirm that MIDI's impact was first felt in the keyboard world, and the following players describe what life was like without this "enormous catalyst" as retailer Jeff Sazant of Steve's Music puts it.

Jim MacDonald, keyboardist and consultant to Toronto's Computer Music Centre, a MIDI-based retailer, recalls working with two Mini Moogs in 1980-81 when digital instruments were just coming onto the market, and says, "I was pulling my hair out just keeping the synths in tune, let alone worrying about things like filters. Then, when it came



Ensoniq SQ80

to the studio, you were doing analog recording and layering track upon track to create bigger sounds. The doubling feature on the Oberheim or Jupiter helped, but it took so much time. Now, I'm able to stack sounds and save tracks using my MIDI gear, and I'm able to concentrate more on my performance."

Lou Pomanti, who does work on half-a-dozen TV shows and recorded some synth parts on the last Platinum Blonde album, says, "I was just getting busy in the studio in 1984, and I'd just bought my first real polyphonic synth, the Jupiter 8. This was in the pre-DX7 days and I used to cart the Jupiter around to studios. My role was that of a synthesist and I was often asked to program sound on the spot. I didn't have a rack of synths MIDled up to fall back on.

Today I rarely have to program anymore. I take in about five synths (DX7, TX7, Super Jupiter, Akai S900 and D50) and through them I have enough sound libraries built up that I'm usually in the ballpark when I'm asked for a particular sound.

MIDI has made synths even more crucial. However, with synths essentially being computers, a computer interface of some sort was bound to develop."

Rob Yale, who has been responsible for Fairlight programming on various albums and toured with the likes of Jane Siberry and DalBello, confirms the enormous impact of MIDI, "In the past, if you wanted to drive another synth, you have to produce gates and control voltages, and it was a complicated process that took time. I first came across MIDI spec in synths like the DX7 and JX3P about three to four years ago, and all of a sudden, at my fingertips, I was able to interface different synths and layer sounds.

"MIDI has made the entire methods of composing music accessible to the general public and average musician. What's really happening, though, is computer music. With computer control, we're now able to use the

computer as a soft sequencer, and use other software programs."

At the retail level, MIDI's impact on keyboards has been dramatic from the actual products to the way the staff has to deal with an increasingly knowledgeable customer.

Steve's Jeff Sazant explains: "The immediate impact was the exandability of keyboard setups and far less obsolescence of product. Customers began to buy hardware in blocks, instead of buying one huge and very expensive system. Another impact was that the keys started disappearing as synths became available in rack mount form. Then people started asking, "if keyboards can talk to each other, why can't they talk to computers?" The result of that is a huge growing software based market. While synth technology, like sampling, has increased exponentially, MIDI has made it interactive and more attractive.

"However, it's still not nickels and dimes to get into a MIDI keyboard, because we're talking one to several thousand dollars. My experience is that customers will buy a basic standard keyboard - one that's hot - and then use it to trigger other sound generating devices."

Sazant admits that MIDI has put an additional responsibility on retailers and their staff in terms of understanding the technologies and also knowing the merits of each product: "The question is that if you want to have solid knowledge, how far do you take it? Should, you as a retailer, get involved in music software, when it can be time-consuming and labor intensive in terms of sales? How much do you want to master it? On the other hand, the customer wants to deal with someone with as good or better knowledge."

As a keyboardist, Pomanti feels MIDI is having far more impact on "music with a purpose" than on records: "MIDI instruments are being used to lower the costs of production on such things as jingles, TV and film.

About 75 percent of these productions are done with machines, and more and more production studios now have their own racks of MIDI gear."

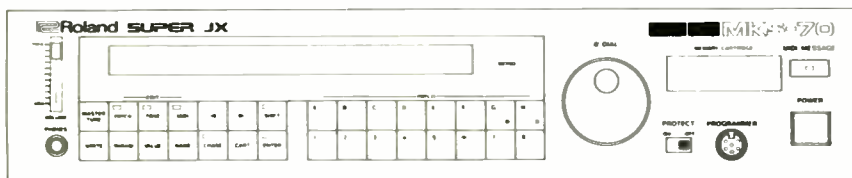
MIDI In The Studio

When it comes to what you can produce with MIDI in the studio, the limitations are your gear and your imagination.

When it comes to gear, think about this scenario: You and your co-composer are sitting in studios thousands of miles apart: you in Toronto, he in Vancouver. Now, how would you like to shrink your musical world and drop those geographic boundaries? What would you think if you could somehow transmit a sequencer file to your partner in Vancouver? Mind-boggling? Not really because software that will allow such a transmission is already being beta-tested. The software is called MIDI phone and it effectively transmits MIDI data via a modem over the telephone line, and it does it in real time to boot! Let your imagination run wild: instead of flying in a top session player from out of town, you can have him send his performance to you via phone. MIDI Phone is expected to be available by the fall and it'll cost less than \$300.

That's what's coming out shortly, but what's MIDI up to in present studio situations?

Jim Burgess used to work as a freelance synthesist and programmer just a few years ago, and he'd take his PPG waveform synth around with him to recording studios. In 1983/84, most work was played manually onto tape but the industry was at the dawn of the introduction of MIDI sequencers. Burgess who now runs his own Saved By Technology music retail outlet, explains, "Then a crucial change happened: you were able to sync MIDI sequences to tape. Today, MIDI has given us much more flexibility in the studio. We're recording both the acoustic drum



Roland's Super JX front panel



Yamaha's DXII

MIDI II

sounds and the MIDI data output of a drummer to which we're not only making alterations, but we can also use the performance to trigger different sounds later."

For awhile, SBT set up a complete MIDI recording studio in conjunction with its retail operations; in fact, the last band recording project done there was the pre-pro work for *The Spell*. Burgess says, "More and more recording studios are revolving around MIDI, and there's been the emergence of the MIDI production studio, which essentially is a composition environment, and not meant to accommodate a band in the conventional way. For several reasons, we decided to discontinue doing such recordings, but we still use our studio for several projects, including: we do in-house evaluation of MIDI products in a studio environment; we prepare sound libraries for synths and samplers; we handle some production projects such as film scoring and sound effects, as well as developing sound libraries and electronic music pieces for manufacturers' special events; and, we're also working on our own music composition which will result in an electronic, instrumental recording.

"With the Canadian dollar still in a good position vis a vis the American dollar, and with the good studios we have here in Toronto along with the very high level of competence, people are in a lucrative position to set up a dedicated 24-track MIDI overdub studio. Already, there are studios set up to primarily handle production work for advertising projects. There are teams of writers using Macs to compose, and they're crashing out a lot of production. I'd say 85 percent of this production is done electronically using MIDI."

MIDI has opened up huge opportunities for the musician doing work at home. Domenic Troiano recalls the time when he first started getting involved in scoring for TV. His basic set-up included his guitar and a Linn Drum which didn't have a sequencer. He now plans to have a Mac and a sequencing program up and running to do his work: "I like to screw around at home by myself, so it's great writing something and 'taping' it without it really

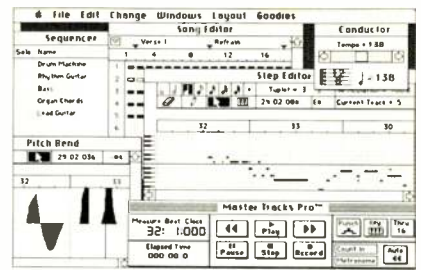
being on tape. MIDI saves time for me and frees me up to experiment more with sounds. Before MIDI, once you did your part, that was it. Now, three months later, you can take your performance sequence, change your mind, and change your sound. Using MIDI gear is like hiring a mechanical slave to do your work: it's another working tool but you've still got to play the notes and create the part."

Howard Aye, former bassist with Rough Trade and a contributor to the upcoming Brian Eno/Daniel Lanois project, has been working with Domenic Troiano in the production of the new recordings by singer David Gibson and guitarist Johnny R. Aye, who questions where music technology is taking us, describing it as a double-edged sword, says, "Technology allows just about anyone to put out a terrific demo, using a four-track and a MIDI sequencer at home. With the David and Johnny R. projects, I'm working out the arrangements, bringing them into the studio and adding real time percussion, singing, and guitar.

As wonderful and as quick as it is, I personally don't like music programming: you can get too bogged down with precision, so I like to bring in live players. But, I recently worked out the percussion sequences myself for one of the projects, and then I brought in a heavy Latin guy, who listened to my arrangement, and then asked me why I needed him!

"That's the point because, for me, using a percussionist adds that human feel; on the other hand, I loved it when drum machines came out because I didn't have to put up with a drummer's bad attitude, if I didn't want. Technology does kill work in some cases. As a bassist, I've lost out to sequenced bass, but I've evolved and now I'm using the technology to save money and time. As a producer, you can become a victim of technology, having access to all those MIDI keyboards and sounds, and, as I said, you can go too far. I like to take a hybrid approach in the studio."

Bob Federer, who runs Round Sound Studio, also likes to work at home initially, bring his performance to the studio, then access a whole bank of synths and modules: his home set-up includes Performer software running off his Mac and accessing a Roland MT32 MIDI module.



Master Tracks Pro, Version 2.0

For him MIDI has absolutely impacted how he works in the studio: "For those who don't have access to a multitrack, they can sort of simulate a multitrack environment by having several synths all locked up via MIDI. Now, you can have a MIDI sequencer, some of which are capable of playing 32 different instruments at one time with each playing a different sound, triggering a bank of sound generators; that sounds like a multitrack situation to me. But, an advantage of having everything in the digital domain, is that you can cut and splice or change something, like the key, at the last moment. You can't do that on a multitrack because you're basically locked in; once you've played your piano part, it's frozen.

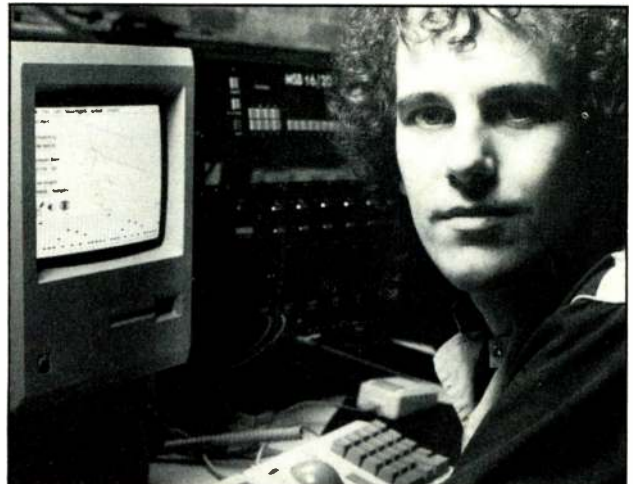
"Whereas on a sequencer, it's like working on a word processor. You can make everything double-spaced, change the font to italics and print it again. The comparison of going from long-hand to using word processing, is the type of jump that musicians have experienced through the use of computers and MIDI.

"In the studio your performance is stored on a sequencer and it isn't locked in. You can listen to a different combination of sounds via MIDI, and you can step back and listen to them objectively. In a way, you become your own producer/arranger. MIDI is changing everything and you can't ignore it, but there's no secret to it. MIDI is a communication highway, and it still comes down to how you want to manipulate the information."

MIDI technology and its results are only as good as the person using it, and that old computer saw, "garbage in, garbage out," is just as relevant to the music industry.



Howard Aye (r) with Strange Advance



Jim Burgess

Software Is The Key

Back about four or five years ago when the leading manufacturers of synthesizers were finally sitting down to find a way of getting their competing products to talk to each other, little did they know how large of a spin-off industry they were creating. The original MIDI spec was supposedly arrived at to allow musicians to layer several competitive keyboards i.e. trigger more than one tone generator. But, with the evolution of digital synthesis, the whole concept of computer music opened up, and this in turn, brought with it the development of MIDI software programs for keyboards and computers.

Jeff Sazant, manager of Steve's Music in Toronto, which was one of the first music retailers to jump onto the MIDI bandwagon, says, "The manufacturers didn't see all the applications for software, not only in music composing and editing, but also in the area of MIDI post production of video and film." Bob Federer has run the gamut in the industry from playing keyboards live, to working with the Canadian distributor for Synclavier and developing software for this synth. Most of his time is now spent in the studio creating sounds for several TV shows. He still considers himself a musician even though his responsibilities and environment has evolved. The use of software, which he calls the "intelligence" that's driving all the hardware, has not only made his job easier but also expanded the scope of what he produces.

Federer, who's programming his own editor software to further assist his efforts, explains the impact of MIDI software: "Take MIDI sequencers: they're storage devices that function like word processing software does for the writer. On a sequencer, you can take a whole block of notes and transpose everything up or down an octave. Or, you can play something and then decide that you want to take the track and quantize it to the nearest sixteenth note."

One of the most popular MIDI sequencers is Performer by Mark of the Unicorn which allows the user to visually control the software through tape-deck style controls. Federer explains, "It's a lot easier with the

computer to see your performance information on the screen, it's also a lot easier to change the sound."

Even though software is more and more user-friendly, users often end up saying, "Gee, this program is great...but only if it had this." As a result, musicians are getting into programming their own software. For instance, Kevin Bond a keyboard specialist at Steve's music has been developing a "mapper" which creates a guideline for mapping out samples and multipatches.

Federer, himself, has been working on MIDI Station, an editor program that overcomes some of the things that bugged him about an editor program he purchased: "The thing about writing your own software, is that you can make it do what you want, for example, the other editor had no facility to sort the sounds, say in an alphabetical way. Now, I can archive banks of sound. I'm calling my MIDI station, a performer editor, because I want to use it as I'm working to make the fast changes in sound that are needed in the studio environment where time is very important."

"In some cases, although it's changing for the better, the software really isn't written by a musician. Now, the writer could be a fabulous programmer, but he isn't necessarily thinking the way a musician would think. If I were to put out an editor program, I'd write it in such a way that the user, being a non-programmer, could make the kind of changes he'd like without having to learn programming. Fortunately, the price of computer hardware and memory is coming down, so programs can be large enough and have the flexibility to let the user make his own improvements and reconfigurations."

What types of MIDI software programs are available? Well, basic types include sequencer, editor, and librarian programs. Performer is made for the Mac, while Pro 24 is a sequencer made for Atari. Editor and librarian programs usually come in combination and are made for specific keyboards like Opcode's DX/TX7/TX816 editor/librarian: synth features, like reverb, are put into the program. These programs, of course, serve different functions and offer tremendous flexibility: for instance while there are 64 presets on a D50 synth, a librarian program for the D50 will make it possible for you to store 20-30 banks each with 64 sounds.

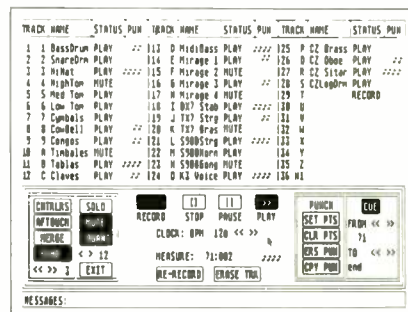
Robert DiGioia, who works for Saved By Technology, which specializes in MIDI software, says there are also programs for samplers like the Akai S900: "for the user who doesn't have the patience to learn about the



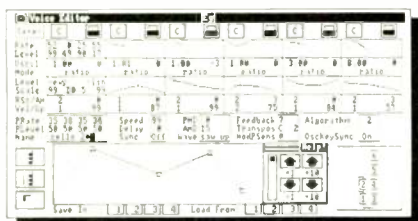
The Mac with Apple MIDI Interface

sampler, DigiDesign has developed a Waveform Editor which comes under its Sound Designer Series. The way that you would usually make a sample would be to try different loops and use your ears to get the right one. Now, you can see the drawings of the waveforms of your samples and change things like the envelope. Another new product by DigiDesign is the Universal Sound Designer, which takes advantage of the fact there's now one standard format for storing samples. This one program will let you communicate with any number of different samplers. Software is where it's at for a lot of MIDI hardware."

The hardware companies, themselves, are committing even more to the music industry. SBT's Jim Burgess reports that Apple has recently set up a team dedicated to the music industry, and the company has endorsed the industry through a number of moves: "Apple introduced a MIDI interface, it exhibited at the Winter NAMM show in California, it has introduced a major advertising program in national music magazines that calls the Mac the ultimate music instrument, Apple is also encouraging its dealer network to sell MIDI solutions. In my opinion, the Mac, by a substantial margin, is the ideal computer for MIDI music applications."



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MIDI A Saviour In Performance

Robert DiGioia worked for eight years as an engineer/producer at Le Studio in Morin Heights. During those years, he worked with some of the top international and Canadian bands. He remembers the problems Rush were encountering as they set off to perform their increasingly textured albums live. But DiGioia, who now works for Toronto music retailer Saved By Technology, admits some "initial reluctance" when MIDI started sweeping across the industry: "First of all, I found I was setting up fewer mics and plugging in more MIDI cables. Then, I was dealing with essentially non-musician people who were producing some impressive stuff. But as roles started changing in the traditional setup, I soon realized that MIDI was something I had to grasp pretty quickly."

DiGioia didn't realize that his role was to change dramatically, too. He had engineered all three of Corey Hart's albums, including *Fields of Fire*, and he says the Montreal sing-

er, who has a penchant for wanting to reproduce his album as best as possible, asked him to help set the system up for the tour. This included putting samples together as well as advising what the best hardware configuration would be.

The album, unlike the previous *Boy In The Box* which had heavily featured the Fairlight, now relied on the Emulator and Yamaha synths but the result was similar: a heavily layered sound and then some. DiGioia's initial involvement went something like this: he'd put in some time at Le Studio, where Hart's band was rehearsing during the day. He'd then come in and rehearse with them during the late afternoon. He'd discuss with Hart and tour keyboardist, Ray Coburn, what sounds would be needed to be played by the Emulator and Prophet keyboards. DiGioia would then drive back up to Le Studio and sample and edit more sounds at night, then bring them in the next day to rehearse.

But the process was becoming more diffi-

cult and the first leg of the tour, in Japan, was looming. A programmer, Scott Humphrey, was hired to put some final touches on the system, and then Hart asked DiGioia to join them on tour in support of keyboardist Coburn. DiGioia accepted and explains how important MIDI was to the process: "Without MIDI, there would have been the need to have two keyboard players on-stage. From a practical and technical point of view, having a MIDI keyboard technician off-stage was the only way to go...the only way of reproducing the album. Just think of Rush today. Geddy basically has only one keyboard on-stage but he's accessing all sorts of MIDI sound generators off-stage through his technician."

"Even, Pink Floyd were able to reproduce their layered sounds by having just a minimum of keyboards on stage. All of this is being done successfully through MIDI."

The keyboard set-up that DiGioia used included: On-stage Coburn had four keyboards stacked on each other, using the Yamaha KX88 MIDI controller to trigger a Yamaha TX816 sound module and a Prophet 2000 which was off-stage in DiGioia's set-up. The other on-stage keyboards were the PPG 2.2 and the Roland JX8P synths, and the Yamaha DX7 which was used only as MIDI controller for the two off-stage Emulators and which went through a switching box in Di Gioia's set-up. While Coburn was triggering one Emulator, DiGioia would be loading up the other Emulator with what other sounds were needed, and changing patches etc.

MIDI For Guitar The Next Frontier

The MIDI products of primary concern to guitarist and include MIDI guitars, pitch to MIDI converters, and MIDI guitar controllers. It seems the jury is still out on how beneficial the impact of MIDI has been on the guitarist, because there are those who claim that its impact has yet to be felt.

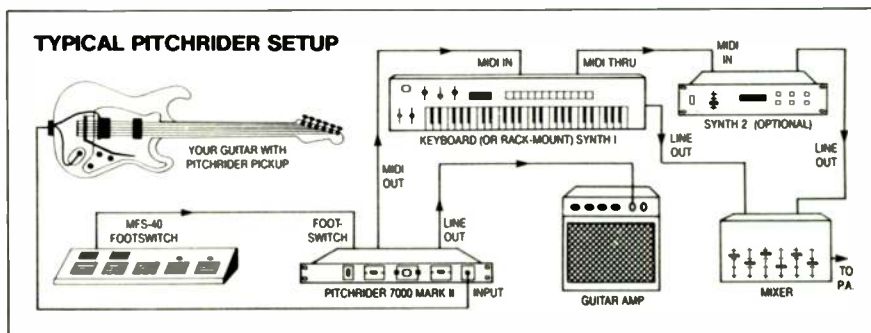
Dave Norris-Elye, IVL sales rep and former sax player with such bands as The Stampeders and Long John Baldry, admits that some of the early guitar and wind MIDI controllers now seem prehistoric: "When these products came out, you might only have ten patches on a stock synthesizer that were fast enough for a horn or guitar. Guitarists really felt a time lag, so there was an obvious need to develop fast tracking patches for the guitar. Fortunately, some manufacturers are about to fill this hole in the market. In fact, the main feature of these new products is that you can blend guitar textures with a synth. The player will now have a better sound source library, and be able to lock it to the feel of his instrument. This is just the frontier."

The guitarist's search for MIDI utopia began at the onset of the MIDI revolution. Ro-

land has been at the forefront of digital technology and its underlying motivation has and continues to be finding out exactly what the working musician wants. Roland's first electronic guitar product was a dedicated guitar controller (GR-500), which was soon followed by several guitar models (GR-100 and GR-300 series) which featured special pick-ups and built-in electronic controls. This series achieved some success but with the industry-wide advent of MIDI, Roland introduced a single, dedicated model, the GR-700 guitar which was a rather unique, high-tech looking instrument featuring a stabilising arm.

Roland Canada's Steve Alexander explains the next step in the design evolution: "The GR-700 expanded Roland's acceptance in this area, but we realized that people really want to enjoy the feel of their own instrument. We decided to really open up the MIDI possibilities, and Roland's engineers spent a long time designing the GM-70 guitar to MIDI interface. A special pick-up can be mounted on most solid body guitars, and then it can be plugged into the GM-70 to access a world of sounds from a sound source like the MT-32 multi-timbral module."

Alexander feels the market has been look-



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Mario Cippolina with the Bose 802™/302 professional sound system he used on the 1987 Huey Lewis and the News tour.

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ing for the right price point and right features, and a device like the GM-70, which has 16-bit processing, is the state of the art product to fit the need.

Last year, another supplier, TMI, initially introduced the Stepp DG-1 guitar synthesizer, a rather elaborate-looking electronic guitar which had its own onboard sounds. This hybrid instrument was certainly at the leading edge, and Rik Emmett and Alex Lifeson were two high profile clients; but at a price about \$9,000, it was a little too rich for most guitarists' tastes.

Tim Craig of TMI, which distributes Fender guitars in Canada, offers his view on MIDI's impact on the way guitar is played: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. It's been frustrating for the manufacturers of guitar MIDI devices and electronic guitars. TMI brought in people like Curt Smith, who has years of experience in guitar technology with both Yamaha and IVL Technologies, and we introduced a product like the Stepp, and we found the market was simply not ready for it.

"The early MIDI devices had definite problems: the microprocessors just weren't fast enough and there were other glitches. Music retailers became hesitant, a lot of people got burned and turned off by the technology, and, as a result, the market just didn't open up."

Craig confirms that there are several high quality MIDI guitar devices now coming onto the market, and says the IVL Pitchrider and the Roland GM-70 products are state-of-the-art. However, he foresees another more basic concern, adding, "Guitarists are the most conservative of players when it comes to change. He doesn't want to sound like airplane or a siren. There he's been perfecting his licks for years on his 56 Tele, and he's being asked to buy another guitar to access MIDI sounds that he probably doesn't really want. He's going to tell a salesman to take a hike."

Domenic Troiano, is one of those "traditional" players when it comes to playing guitar live, but he admits he was initially taken by the first MIDI guitars: "At first, it was neat to have a B-3 sound, and say, "heh, that's me playing guitar. But if you're listening to what I do, what do you really care how I do it? When I want to play guitar, all I want is to plug my Strat into an amp."

As one of the Canadian music scene's leading players, Troiano has had access to the first and best products that suppliers have had to offer; however, there are several factors which have kept him from actively pursuing the use of MIDI guitar devices. His music scoring work for a number of movies and hit television shows, including CBS' *Night Heat*, has changed his basic work environment from the stage to the studio. When he first started doing music scoring, he'd sit at home with his guitar and a Linn Drumm without a sequencing feature, and he'd tape something close to what he wanted. He'd then go to the studio and have his arrange-



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ments played by his engineer/keyboardist, Bob Federer, or by other musicians.

Today, he rarely uses his guitar. He primarily uses a Linn with a built-in sequencer. Soon, he'll be using a Mac and a sequencing software program to help create a performance. He'll then take the performance, which will be on disk, into the studio and access the variety of MIDI modules and synths. He explains, "As long as the end result is what I want, then it really doesn't matter what instrument is being played. When it comes to MIDI and the guitar, I found the devices are much slower than triggering off keyboards. With some of the newer MIDI devices, you probably can make them work for you, but I just don't have the time. And, I feel that as long as you're dealing with strings, you're always going to have a delay problem. Up until now, the MIDI devices just haven't triggered fast enough."

Retailer Grant MacNeil of Toronto's Twelfth Fret store confirms that most of the present MIDI interfaces (IVL, Roland, Photon) now work very well but that the impact of MIDI has been "pretty weak". He adds that it has more to do with the basic nature of the player's personality and it's a matter of what he's willing or not willing to get involved in: "I don't think the basic rock and roller can be turned on by the MIDI concept. Two years ago, the market was bombarded by products by Takamine, Shadow, IVL, Roland and Photon, and there was a lot of initial excitement. But the devices didn't have the bugs worked out, and the manufacturers created false expectations. The dedicated MIDI guitars tended to be junk products that just didn't hold up."

Having said that, MacNeil says that there's more use of MIDI than one would think or even notice. While very few rock bands use MIDI live, he reports that small set-ups like duos and trios have swung over to the interface concept. As for the seasoned pro like Troiano, who's been a Twelfth Fret customer for years, MacNeil admits they just don't have the time.

Where some potential growth is looming is in the area of redesigning patches on standard synths that are geared to guitarists. He praises the initiative of IVL's Norris-Elye who has been working with Oberheim with IVL's help to design the patches for the Matrix 1000 rack mount module.

Perhaps with some more realistic expectations in tow, some manufacturers are re-looking at the MIDI guitar market. One of the newest introductions is the Suzuki XG-1m MIDI guitar controller, which looks somewhat like a guitar; in fact, Suzuki calls it an electronic guitar and it can access a variety of MIDI sounds. Retailer Kevin Barr of Toronto's Computer Music Center says, "At \$349 retail, it's an attractive entry level novelty instrument. It's not applicable to the pro context, but it does allow the amateur to get involved in MIDI from a fretboard." □

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Three Kinds Of Plots In Songs

by Sheila Davis

A plot is the pattern of events in a story. Most lyrics are not stories as such. Yet, the word *plot* is common songwriter parlance. It refers to a lyric's sequential movement whether it be narrative or simply emotional. Lyric plots come in three levels of complexity: attitudinal, situational, and narrative that is, story songs.

The *attitudinal song*, the simplest of the three, is one in which the singer expresses an attitude or emotion about someone or something. For example, "I Can't Smile Without You," "Endless Love," "Always On My Mind." The majority of pop songs are simply attitudinal.

In the *situational song*, the writer has given that attitude or emotion a dramatic framework: the singer is reacting to a particular set of circumstances; for example, in "Somewhere Down the Road," the male lover is saying goodbye to a woman who's going off to do her thing; in "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," an ex-con is traveling on a bus home to his girl. Situational songs are the second most com-

mon plot category.

The *narrative*, or *story song*, has a plot in the true sense of the word; it's a linear tale with a beginning, middle, and end. The story song is either the singer's recollection of a personal event, as in "Taxi" and "Ode to Billy Joe," or a tale about someone the singer knows, like "Harper Valley PTA." and "Richard Cory." Lastly, a story can be told by that impersonal camera eye, such as "Eleanor Rigby" and "She's Leaving Home."

The lyricist's job is to take that attitude, or situation, or story, and develop it to a satisfying conclusion - a payoff.

Every well-written song gives the listener a total experience-from something, through something, to something.

In order for your lyric to make a listener fight back a tear, get up and boogie, or march on the Pentagon, your words must convey one clear, consistent emotion. So first decide the effect you want your song to produce. Knowing your end will lead you to the right means.

Develop - Don't Paraphrase

New writers frequently mistake paraphrasing - saying the same thing in different words - for development. As a case in point, I recall a student who, moved by the accident at Chernobyl, turned his fears for the future into a lyric. The writer reflected that all the inhabitants of the earth shared his concern. He conveyed the idea in the first verse in examples like *from castles to igloos... the bag lady and the duchess...from the White House to the Kremlin*. But every subsequent verse was composed solely of more such examples: *from the tenement to the penthouse... from the private to the general*...Each coupling kept restating the same thought that everyone - regardless of stature or nationality - is equally anxious. The lyric never went anywhere.

(Excerpt taken from the book *Successful Lyric Writing* by Sheila Davis, published by Prentice-Hall (416) 293-3621.)

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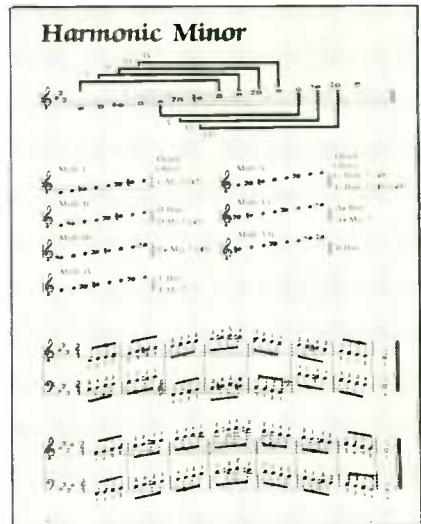
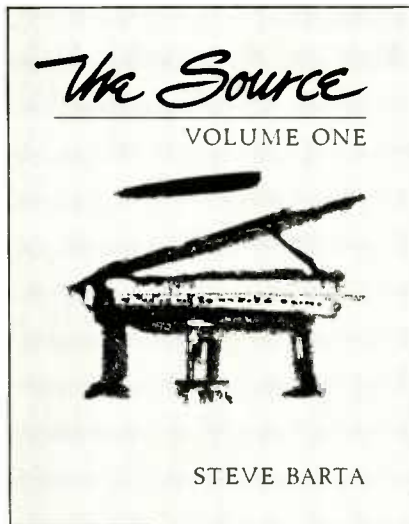
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Brian Greenway Means Serious Business



Brian Greenway

by Maureen Littlejohn

Remember April Wine? If you do, you'll probably remember their sweet pop sound gaining a rocky edge around 1977. That edge occurred as a result of the band's maturation, but it also had a lot to do with the rocking, bluesy guitar playing of Brian Greenway. A native Montrealer, Greenway joined April Wine 11 years ago and stuck with them until the band's demise in 1985.

Striking out on his own, Greenway has recently released his first album, *Serious Business* on Atlantic Records. And serious arena rock business it is. Greenway plans to give Bon Jovi a run for his money. He's managed by Bud Prager, (who also manages Foreigner) and Marty Simon (a Quebec drummer/composer/producer/arranger who at one time played with Chris Spedding's Sharks and who played on April Wine's last album). Greenway's album includes a line-up of world class talent: Andy Newmark on drums (Roxy Music, Sting); Aldo Nova programming; Daniel Barr on keyboards; and guest guitar appearances by Rush's Alex Lifeson and Corey Hart's Mike Hehir. "Marty cast all the musicians on the album like he was casting a movie," says Greenway. "He knew who would work well with each of the parts." He smiles, "All the personalities on the album were a great vote of confidence for me."

Honing his talents as an all round musician on the album--lead vocalist, keyboard player, song writer, and guitarist--Greenway admits, "I realize I'm not going to be a guitar great, I'm not a technical player like Steve Vie or Eddie Van Halen. My main influences come from the blues, and I play from the heart." He

is extremely fond of his '69 Les Paul custom guitar. "It has a nice thick sound to it, I don't have to go through a lot of unnecessary EQ on the board in the studio with it, or live. It has a Tom Anderson pickup in the tail position now, and an old Seymour Duncan in the bridge position. It's basically stock, but it's been around the world with me." He laughs, "I never let it out of my sight." Greenway also has a '78 Gibson which he uses as a spare and a Roadstar with a whammy bar. "I experimented with the Roadstar in the studio, it has a unique almost synthetic string sound for doing lovely melodic lines when I put it through the Rockman."

"I think this album has tapped into Brian's potential," says Simon. "In April Wine he was encouraged to play guitar and not think too much. I came in like a school master and found all this creativity."

Working on the album for almost three years, Greenway wrote most of the songs on a Korg DW6000 keyboard. "I had keyboard lessons when I was young," he notes. "Enough to do punch ins and write with, but not enough to play live." He found during his writing and demoing process that he was listening to a lot of classical music. "I love pipe organ and as I was writing my songs I found I was emulating classical types of inversions." Sketching out the songs in painstaking detail ("We really made two albums, the demo and the finished master.") Greenway used his Fostex 8-track with outboard gear including a Yamaha SPX 90, a small BBX compressor limiter system, a guitar system using a set up of dual Rockman sustainer units and a SPX90 processing unit. "I'd usually mess around

with the computer to get a loose arrangement and the core of the song," he explains. "I'd put down the drums, then the keyboards, go back and put in the guitar parts with a classical style of grandeur, and then put a rock guitar through it with large inversions and a texture of MIDI instruments." He laughs, "I was breaking all the rules, panning and bouncing and adding tons of reverb and echo to each track. I didn't have a clue what I was doing, but it worked." Admitting that he "exhausted all his ideas in pre-production," Greenway and Simon (who arranged all the songs and produced the album with Paul Northfield) were completely rehearsed and prepared by the time they entered the studio. Bed tracks were recorded at Le Studio, Jean Roussel's (English session musician--The Police, Cat Stevens) home studio in Montreal was used and Alex Lifeson's guitar solo on the first single "Danger Zone" was done at Sounds Interchange.

Greenway has no fear that his recorded arena rock will die during his live shows. "I put together a live band last October and most of the players are used to an arena situation. Jerry Mercer from April Wine will be on drums, John McGale from Offenbach is on guitar, Paul Harwood of Mahogany Rush is on bass and Jean St. Jaques from UZEB is on keyboards."

Simon, who orchestrated the entire project has no qualms either. "I think it's the right time and place for an artist who can compose grand arena style rock music. My friend and partner Bud Prager in New York knows instinctively who has great talent and he can point people in the right direction."

GUITAR

PRODUCT REVIEW:

Charvel Jackson Model 4

by Moe Berg

The first thing you notice about the Charvel Jackson is that this is a beautiful guitar. I mean this is the kind of guitar that looks great in a rock video (you know ... the part where the guy points the neck of his axe skyward and puts his smiling face against the body while he's showing you what a killer riff he's playing). It comes in five great finishes (mine was a real nice blue) and the neck has a genuine mother-of-pearl inlay.

But, of course, more important is how well it plays. The Charvel has a comfortable feel to it. Also, the neck (maple with a rosewood fretboard) is really fast. One of the most impressive features of the guitar is how well it plays past the twelfth fret. I always find that the high E string on most guitars tends to choke when you bend it past the twelfth fret. No such problem here, due to the fact that the fretboard has a varied taper, which is to say it is tapered differently at the head of the neck than it is closer to the body.

Let's identify the parts of the Charvel Jack-

son Model 4. The three knobs are volume, tone, and mid boost. It has three on/off toggle switches for the three pickups. The tail piece is a Floyd Rose with a Jackson locking tremolo. The locking nut is great because you don't need a special wrench to unlock it when you break a string. A flat-head screw driver (or in the heat of battle - a dime) will get you in. Unfortunately, off setting this slightly is the fact that you need an Allen key to change the strings on the tailpiece.

The pickups are Jackson's own design and are made for use with active circuitry. There are two dual coil bi-level (or stacked) humbucking pickups and one accentuated high frequency humbucking in the bridge position. The two bi-levels have an Alnico (short for aluminum, nickel, and cobalt) magnet and the treble pickup has a ceramic magnet. Can't say I understand any of this, but, to me it means the guitar is loud as hell, yet still very smooth.

(Moe Berg is lead guitarist, singer/songwriter with *The Pursuit of Happiness*).



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GUITAR

PRODUCT REVIEW:

Fender's New Strat Plus

by David Henman

In recent years, the Fender Stratocaster has come to be recognized as the ultimate electric solid body guitar, particularly evident in the vast number of attempts by just about every manufacturer (including Fender) to copy, recreate, modify and upgrade Leo Fender's original design. Surf gui-

tar legend Dick Dale was quoted in *Guitar Player* as saying what many Strat enthusiasts believe, "There's nothing you can do to improve it." Ironically, Fender itself may have finally succeeded where all others failed. Presenting, for your evaluation, the Strat Plus.

This may indeed be the ultimate Strat! The

brochure describes it as "a complete rethinking of the classic Stratocaster." As revered as this instrument is, it is commonly recognized, even by the manufacturer, that their beloved has two rather major imperfections: The single coil pick-ups are prone to noise and hum ("sometimes as loud as the signal itself," the company confesses) and it is very difficult to keep this guitar in tune when using the Tremolo arm, although it is one of the best ever patented. (The fact that this guitar is so highly regarded in spite of these flaws is further tribute to its timeless character.)

First, let's look at the pickup or, in this case, the new Fender-Lace Sensor, a device so revolutionary that the manufacturer claims that it is not a pickup at all, but an Acoustic Emission Sensor: a passive, noise-free, single coil system with no magnetic string damping. Although other units will follow, the Strat Plus is equipped with the Golden Strat model that recreates the classic Strat sound with slightly increased output.

Now let's see what Fender has done to solve the tuning problem. Is this the beginning of the end for the "locking tremolo", a design that creates more problems than it solves? A good locking system (Floyd Rose, Kahler, etc.) often costs as much as the guitar on which it is mounted, and it is a complicated monstrosity that makes even the changing of one string an ambitious undertaking, except for those who rely on their guitar technicians to take care of such matters. Until now, that is the trade-off us whammy bar enthusiasts have had to make in order to enjoy virtually unlimited dive-bombing without the risk of an entire performance being sabotaged by tuning problems.

There are three key ingredients in the Strat Plus solution to the tuning problem. The bridge assembly is the same one that was employed successfully on the recent American Standard Stratocaster, which differs significantly from the original design in that the bridge pivots against two screws instead of six. (In recent years it was discovered that loosening the middle four screws helped the string stay in tune on the original design.) Then we come to the new Fender/Wilkinson roller nut, through which the strings glide on a needle-bearing roller, eliminating the risk of "hang-ups" at the nut. Finally, we have the incredible Sperzel Trim-Lock Tuning machines.

Thanks to Peter Bruni at Steve's Music for additional information.

(David Henman is a Toronto-based guitarist, singer/songwriter.)



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GUITAR

PRODUCT REVIEW:

Yamaha REX 50

by Moe Berg

When I first heard about the REX 50, I must admit I was very excited. A digital effects processor at an extremely modest price seemed too good to be true. Well, it might be.

Before we get into that we should talk a bit about what we have here. The REX 50 offers reverb, delay, chorus, flanging, pitch change, panning and distortion. The distortion can be used in conjunction with the other effects (though only one at a time). It has thirty non-programmable presets and has room for sixty of your own programs, which are programmed by editing one of the first thirty existing presets. It's incredibly easy to use — only eight buttons on the whole thing with an LCD displaying the effect name and an LED displaying the corresponding number. There is an input level control and a stereo mix button which offers a choice between having a mix between your signal and the effect or just the effect. It's also MIDI, but, I didn't explore that application, because as I once overheard Molly Johnson say, "I never even liked MIDI as a dress length." There is room at the rear for a bypass pedal or one to switch from effect to effect in a memory recall loop.

As a tool for home recording, the REX is quite useful. However, if you are a guitarist planning on using this in a live situation, there are some problems I encountered that you may want to be aware of. I found the gate to be a bit pesky. Idly fingering your frets will cause chattering. Also, if you like to let your chords ring out, you will be discouraged by the way they suddenly disappear when you get below the threshold. I took the trigger level down to zero on any effect I used. The echo and reverb effects, especially when used in conjunction with distortion, have an annoying tendency to ghost, which means that it regenerates or feeds back after the effect is finished. These are minor glitches which can be coped with. What is not as easy to deal with is that the bypass doesn't work very well. If you're on a distortion setting and you bypass, there is still some residual effect on your supposedly clean guitar sound.

Having said all of that, I found the actual sounds of the REX 50 excellent. The distortion when used in combination with the chorus or flange really had a nice cutting effect. The echo and reverb programs were great in a home recording situation.

Although this is a fairly versatile unit with some good sounds, I suggest you spend some time trying it out to find out if you can deal with it before you buy the REX 50.

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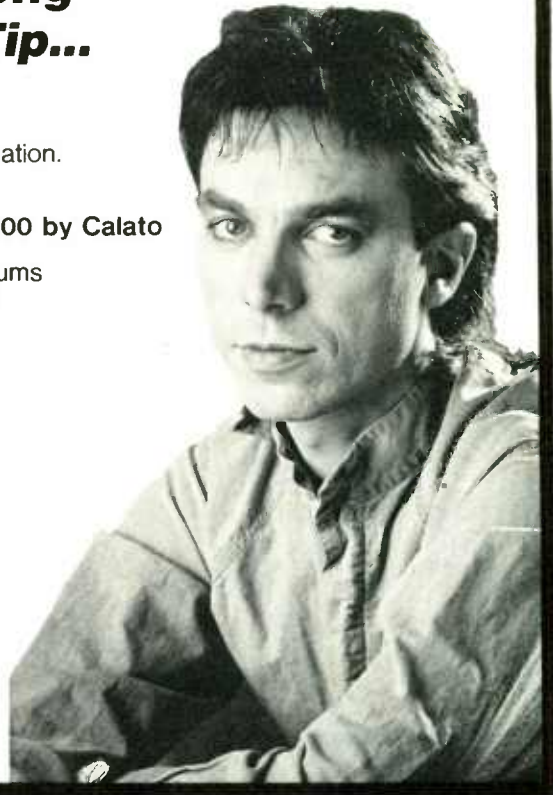
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Men Without Hats Prepare Their Keyboards To Tour



PHOTO: BENJAMIN RUSSELL

by Benjamin Russell

Bruce Murphy (left), Lenny Pinkas

It's the spontaneous nature of a live concert which ignites audiences and keeps them coming back. But rock 'n' roll is a game of illusions. An unbelievable amount of preparation goes into a major tour and when the music involves a lot of keyboards, the prep work increases astronomically — ask Lenny Pinkas, keyboard maestro for Men Without Hats. By the time you read this, the world tour in support of the platinum album, *Pop Goes the World*, will be underway. We spoke with Lenny and keyboard henchman, Bruce Murphy in Montreal while the band was in the latter stages of rehearsal.

Lenny: "I started doing keyboards for the album last spring in England and we finished in August. Then there was a little bit of a break but it really wasn't one after all. We were supposed to rehearse for this tour in England, but that didn't work out. We didn't find out until we had packed up all the equipment and were ready to ship it over. Just before I was supposed to get on the plane, Ivan

and Stephan (the band's leaders) called and told us to unpack. We found rehearsal space here, put ads in the papers all over, and started auditioning musicians for the band. At that time there were only three of us, Ivan, Stephan and me."

What was the first step in readying the keyboard part of the show? "I went up to Morin Heights with the masters and sampled almost everything for all the different sounds that we had used on the record. Then we just chopped up all the disks and samples and started getting them into presets and sounds. The initial programming that went on was geared toward the auditions. Everything had to be sequenced and as we tried out different people, say a drummer, we'd take drums out of the sequencer and leave everything else. For bass, it was the same process, and so on. In the show itself there's not that much sequencing."

How critical was technical knowledge as a criterion for being hired to play keyboards in

Men Without Hats? "We had to have somebody who could walk in and not need to be told what a sampler or synthesizer does, or how to program it to get a certain sound."

Bruce Murphy heard of the gig from a friend, jumped in his jeep, and braved a wicked snowstorm driving to Montreal from Toronto to audition. Once he'd showed his chops, auditions for the job were closed and he removed his hat for the duration. He tells us, "The show is incredibly technology intensive. The only thing I could think of that probably might be scarier is Michael Jackson's live show. We've been programming 16 hours a day for two weeks now. Most of the sounds were already created but a lot of them have had to go through Sound Designer on the Mac to bring up the levels. I come in in the morning, boot up Sound Designer on the computer and it's on all day. To give you an idea, there's a song called "Walk On the Water" that we do where the backup vocals are sampled and we found that the last note was flat. So we chopped up the sample into two pieces, retuned the end and spliced it back together again perfectly tuned."

Bruce was amazed by Lenny's technical prowess and abilities as a player when he heard him blowing Ian Anderson's flute in "On Tuesday." Anderson played on the album and it was up to Lenny to recreate the parts. Lenny: "That was actually a big job to put together because, in the studio, when I did the sampling, I didn't have much time. I just took 17 second clips and then had to wade through it after, copying the sound 25 times, chopping it up and looping it till it sounded just right. I ended up with a whole keyboard full of samples with velocity switching so when I play softly it might be a smooth note and if I play harder it'll growl."

Something Bruce had to adjust to was not knowing who was playing what. He tells us, "Technically, out of the seven piece band, there are six keyboard players. The drummer actually plays some of the string parts. There are these big punches which he plays on his drum pads. You're never sure who's doing anything."

KEYBOARDS

“What’s It Like Playing Keyboards With The Jitters As Compared to Gowan?”

by Peter Nunn

This is one of the questions I’m most frequently asked by fellow musicians. In both cases, I joined the bands after their albums were already recorded, and thus, my first task was to familiarize myself with the material.

The most obvious difference between The Jitters and Gowan is of course, the music. Gowan’s classical and progressive rock style tends to make his music quite orchestrated, requiring the utilization of many different sounds in each song. The Jitters’ music on the other hand is more of a cross between pop, rock ‘n’ roll and rhythm and blues and therefore only calls for a few basic sounds such as piano, organ and horn pads. Due to the fact that Gowan’s music demands the use of so many varied sounds, more keyboards are required, as well as much more programming than that needed by The Jitters.



Peter Nunn

Perhaps the major difference between the two gigs is the approach. In the case of Gowan, the challenge for me was to duplicate

the keyboard parts on the albums as accurately as possible. Therefore, all of the parts I played were direct “lifts” from the records. After spending time with my equipment, I was able to duplicate the records almost exactly, including exact parts, sounds, arrangements, etc. Gowan’s music was a challenge technically since almost all of my parts had to be played as originally written. I simply learned the parts and played them using sampled and synth sounds from the LPs.

The Jitters on the other hand, were not quite as concerned with me playing exactly what is on their album. Once I had learned their material, they allowed me to be somewhat spontaneous. I was able to slightly vary my approach to the songs from one performance to the next, as long as the improvising was in line with the basic keyboard parts al-

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KEYBOARDS

Keyboards With The Jitters

ready established. There are, of course, certain parts from The Jitters album that I do play note for note such as the organ stabs at the beginning of "Last Of The Red Hot Fools" or the introduction to "Closer Every Day." However, most of the parts I play are either ones that I have written myself, or those which we've worked out as a band since the album was recorded.

"Strange Animal"

Performing live with Gowan and The Jitters clearly makes the difference between the two obvious, particularly from the standpoint of instruments. On the last Gowan tour, I played an Emulator II, an Oberheim Matrix 12, a Yamaha DX7, and Ensoniq ESQ1 and Akai S900s. The Emulator provided strings, horns, some choir-like sounds and that popular 'Fairlight-style' sound that Larry (Gowan) uses on the solo in "A Criminal Mind." The Matrix 12 I used mainly for its organ, string and synth sounds. Percussive sounds came primarily from the DX7. The ESQ1 was used mostly as a controller and sequencer. All of the keyboards, including Larry's MIDled

CP70 and Phil Michael's (drummer) Octapad were patched through a JL Cooper MSD MIDI Patchbay. One S900 was dedicated solely to piano, one was reserved for drums and the third handled sound effects such as the wolf howl in "Strange Animal," as well as some background vocals (John Anderson in "Moonlight Desires" and Gowan's own voice in "Cosmetics").

Playing live rock and roll with The Jitters requires a piano, an organ and until we get a horn section, horns. I'm currently using a Korg DSM1 sampler, a Yamaha DX7 and a Korg CX3 organ. The DSM1 is rack-mounted and for the time being, I'm using my DX7 as the controlling keyboard. I don't use the DX7 sounds normally, but I do have it programmed as a "back-up" instrument in case either the sampler or the organ (please not both...) ever malfunction. The DSM1 has 1K memory and presently provides me with two piano sounds. One is a factory piano sound and the other is a custom sample of the grand piano used on the album. The DSM1 also contains the horns and strings that I have recently sampled. All of this is stored on one disk, with memory to spare. Thus, I don't have to deal with loading disks during a show. Two things that I look forward to, are better samples which I'm continually acquiring and pur-

chasing and the Ensoniq EPS sampler as soon as it becomes available. The EPS will hopefully be in the stores by the time you read this, and check out its ability to "load while you play."

Fewer Patch Changes

The basic difference between playing with The Jitters as compared to Gowan, can be summed up quite simply. While actually playing with The Jitters, I have fewer patch changes. That is, I'll almost always be playing some combination of organ, piano and horns, whereas in Gowan, I programmed my set-up song by song, so that by pushing one button on the ESQ1, six different MIDI instruments changed patches. This was accomplished by using the sequencer section, even for songs that were played without sequencing. Each unit was given its own MIDI channel, and was then assigned to one of the eight tracks.

Gowan and The Jitters are just two of the bands that I have worked with. Playing with any act will have its own unique set of requirements and mandates. It is up to each keyboardist to interpret and fulfill those requirements in his/her own way, making the best use of the equipment at his/her disposal.

(Peter Nunn is keyboardist with The Jitters.)

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SINGING A Misunderstood Skill

by Rosemary Burns

Singing is the most misunderstood skill in the world. Skill you say? Yes, I say skill, and that is where most of the problem lies. Most people do not think of singing as a skill. We talk about the skills of this and that athlete and particularly this year with the Olympics being held here in Canada. We all know that Brian Orser has a great natural ability to skate. His skate dancing is magnificent to watch as he makes it look so easy but, we all know that his skill in the figures puts him in top place in the judging. Yes, without his skills he and any other athlete would not earn a medal for their performance.

Now you ask, how can I compare this to singing. You can have the most beautiful voice in the world and not be able to sing. It's like owning a Steinway grand piano and only having the skill to play chopsticks. This is where the problem begins.

Everyone is born with a voice, we can all make noise. Some people have the ability to make more beautiful noise than others so the world in general believes that they can naturally sing. They have a natural ability. The world completely forgets that the natural athlete spends years of practice developing the natural talent. They have the best coaches they can find. Teachers, sport psychologists. You name it and they will have it. Skill along with the natural talent makes the performer. The body must be treated well and looked after. It is the singer's instrument. We all know how well a musician cares for his instrument.

If singers could bring themselves to think like athletes, more young singers would achieve their goals.

Over the years I have had many artists who are well known in their field come to me and ask for lessons. They feel that by taking a few lessons they will be as good a singer as are they are a player of their primary instrument. After a few months of training they usually end up being disappointed and saying that they didn't know that learning to sing correctly took so much work. "Why, it's harder to sing well than play my own instrument." I then ask how many years they have been learning the skills of their instrument. Naturally, the answer is always a long time.

*“Skill is
primary
and
natural
talent
secondary.”*

There are many ways of learning skills. Recently I saw a young girl on a television talent show, she was twelve years old and black. She sang up a storm like you couldn't believe. Where did she learn her skill? Probably in her mother arms in church as most Gospel singers. It was always around her and she just assimilated the skill. Obviously as she grew older she was coached on how to sell this natural talent. We see this a lot in child stars. Michael Jackson is a perfect example. Very few people have this advantage.

Then there is the athlete who may have a natural ability for some particular sport he starts at a very early age and keeps practicing and training until his skill becomes better than his natural ability. The whole world ac-

cepts this fact. We can compare this type of performer to the young singer who starts on the road at a very early age and keeps working and working at his art until years later, like Bruce Springsteen with thousands of performances behind him, he is recognized for his talent. We all know the story of the overnight sensation and how he must pay his dues.

But there is also another way to "make it" and that is by being taught how to care for the voice and the skill to use it well. I feel that it is important for a singer to realize that the instrument can be taught and that singing is not just a natural talent. I truly believe that skill is primary and natural talent secondary.

Like the athlete who is learning a new jump, a new turn or skill, the singer must always be aware of how to learn new material. So often good talent is lost because the singer has abused the voice during rehearsals. When one is young the body is able to take a great deal of abuse, but as we grow older we must be more careful. So often I hear of singers rehearsing for five or six hours with the band as they all learn their parts. This may be OK for the guitarist and keyboard player because as they play more, they warm up and the better they play their instrument. But, we who are singers must remember that we are the instrument and the player. If we break a string, it cannot be replaced. Things are different for the singer. We are using the body and energy. Singing correctly takes a great deal of concentration and energy. Try to think like an athlete. He doesn't run the marathon 20 times in a row. When the concentration has gone, the practice is no longer valid and can actually harm the voice. When the singer is practicing with the band it is wise to put down a vocal track for the band to practice with and then come in after the band knows the material. By doing the vocals over and over, the vocalist puts himself in jeopardy.

As one grows older, if they have learned to use the voice correctly, the instrument gets better. Look at some of the top vocalists of today. Most of them are in their fortys and beyond. A person loses their voice only when they lose their physical energy, just like any athlete.

It Starts With Believing You Can Sing

by Molly Johnson



Molly Johnson

I like to work in a lot of different areas of music. I like to try different things. I'm a back-up singer with Breeding Ground. It teaches me harmonies. It takes the pressure off from being the focal point and lets you focus more on parts and more musical things. My work with Aaron Davis and David Pilch on my jazz "thang" has given me great new chops. We do Gershwin, Cole Porter, Duke Ellington standards. It seems to have improved my range and I'm able to read through charts and understand melodic form. I then bring that back to my rock band. I think if you try different things and get out and work in different areas it just makes the whole thing cooler.

I've been out there for a long time and that's enabled me to check out other opportunities, I'm very fortunate that way. But the way to do that means usually going up and asking someone if you can be in their band. That's the simplest and easiest way to do it. People don't usually ask you, and I think it's important to leave yourself open and have

an attitude about wanting to work and to try different things. That way you'll attract those kinds of people who'll give you that opportunity. I think the real bottom line is that if you want to be in a band you should join a band, if you want to be a singer you should get out there and start singing. It just gets better with time and practice.

It comes back to attitude; the kind of feelings you have about yourself. We're not talking about negative, egotistical type qualities, we're talking about a strong sense of self. I think if you hear a note and if you feel confident about it you can usually sing it and the more times you sing it the easier it becomes.

Did I mention the fact that you can either sing or you can't and half of being able to sing is just believing that you can do it. The other half is actually getting up there and doing it. Doing it is always the key.

(Molly Johnson is lead singer with Toronto's Alta Moda.)

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