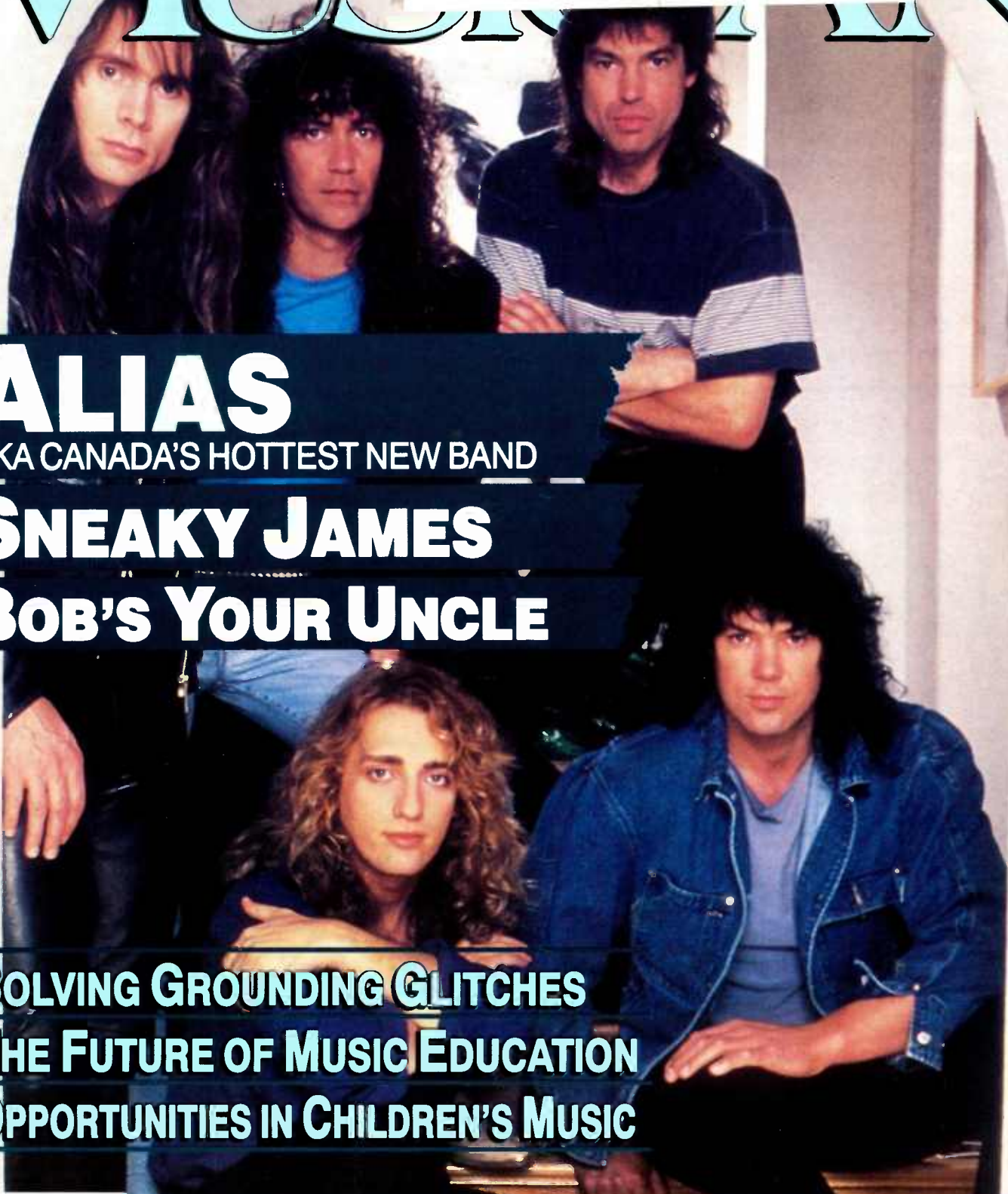


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C·O·N·T·E·N·T·S

CANADIAN MUSICIAN ■ FEBRUARY 1991 • VOLUME XIII NUMBER 1

COVER STORY	ALIAS: STARTING FROM SCRATCH <i>by Don Breithaupt</i> A brand new band with an illustrious past and a dazzling future. _____	32
FEATURES	BOB'S YOUR UNCLE: EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY <i>by Christopher Gudgeon</i> The road to a recording contract was long and winding for this Vancouver alternative quintet. _____	36
	SNEAKY JAMES: MONTREAL'S BEST-KEPT SECRET <i>by David Henman</i> A demo tape, dropped off at our offices, lead us to ask the musical question: "Who is Sneaky James, and why don't they have a record deal?" _____	38
	UNDERSTANDING AND SOLVING GROUNDING PROBLEMS <i>by Richard Chycki</i> Got gremlins in your ground loop? Tempted to use a "cheater"? Before you do, read this comprehensive look at grounding. _____	40
	OPPORTUNITIES IN CHILDREN'S MUSIC <i>by Elizabeth Finley</i> How to succeed in children's music including a list of useful contacts. _____	44
	THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION <i>by Shelagh O' Donnell</i> Tomorrow's music students will be using advanced technological tools to learn everything from "Smoke On The Water" to Beethoven's Fifth. _____	48
DEPARTMENTS	Feedback The human condition; women behind the kit; double or nothing; and more. _____	10
	First Takes Music '91; East Coast Music Awards; Make Music Expo; and more. _____	12
	Product Reports SWR Baby Blue; Boss SE-50; Alesis 1622; Mesa-Boogie Mark IV; Rane GE-30; Digitech GSP-21. _____	14
	Product News ADA Vintage Splitstack; BBE guitar preamp; Ensonic workstation; TASCAM Portastudios; and more. _____	68
	Classified _____	73
	Marketplace _____	74
COLUMNS	Guitar Daniel Estulin _____	20
	Keyboards Drew Winters _____	25
	Bass Dave Freeman (The Critics) _____	26
	Percussion Michael Root (Paul Janz) _____	28
	Brass Dave Dunlop _____	29
	Woodwinds Alex Dean _____	30
	MIDI Robert Bailey (Paul Janz) _____	60
	Live Sound John K. Young _____	63
	Recording Kevin Doyle _____	64
	Vocals Holly Cole (The Holly Cole Trio) _____	65
	Business Brian Daley (Cinram) _____	66
	Video Ian Menzies _____	67

38



Michael Dwyer and James Mahaffey (left and centre) of Sneaky James, with David Henman.

32



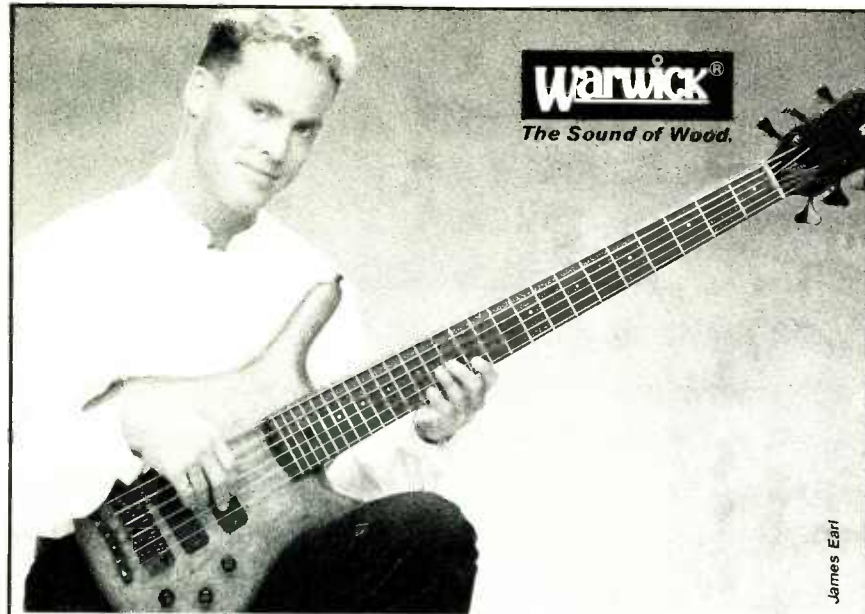
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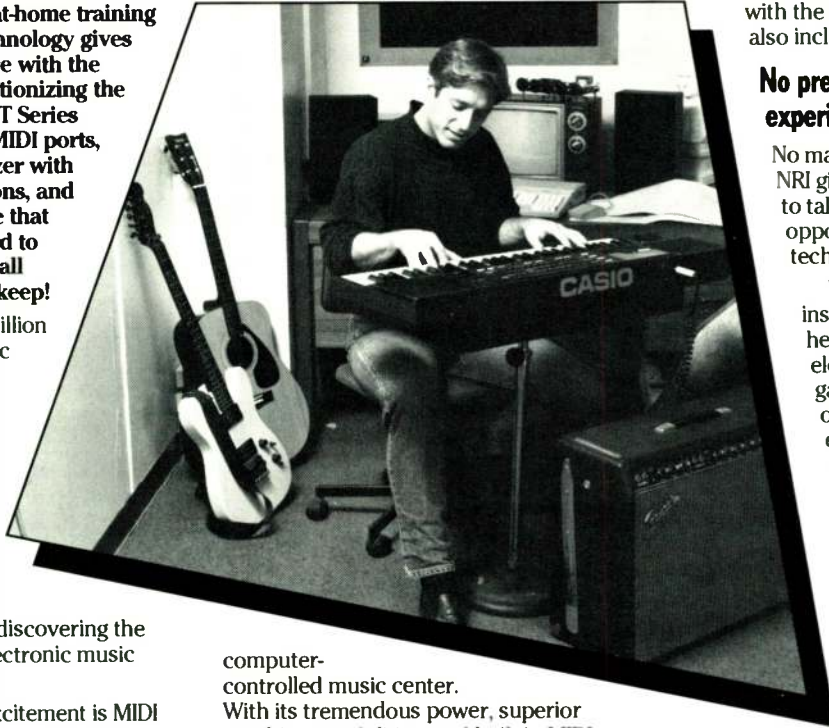
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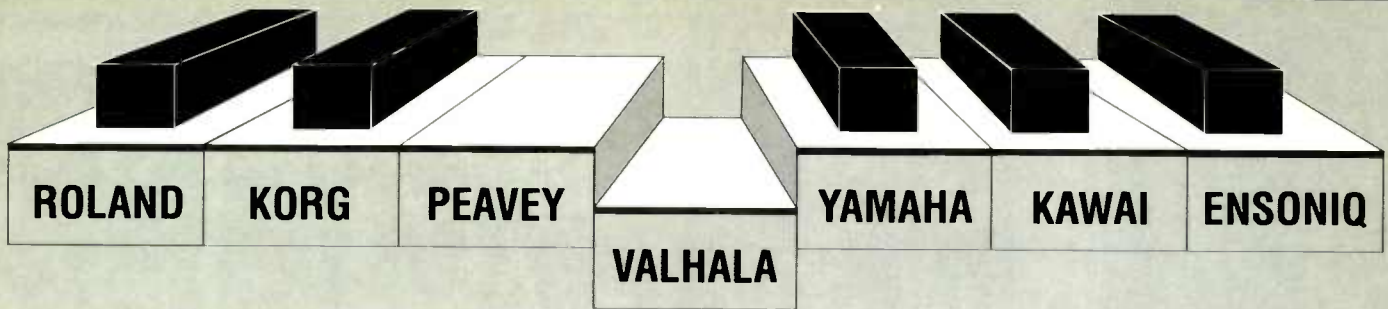
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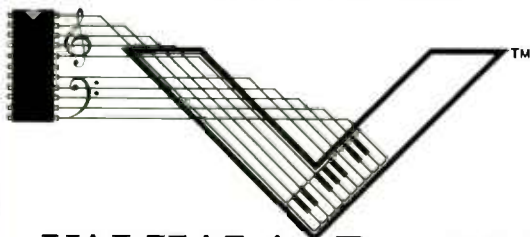
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The Human Element

Although all of our conversations to date have been nothing but agreeable, I feel compelled to take a different stance to the one you took in the December '90 issue of *CM*. Of course, I'm sure you knew you'd get letters!

I'd like to point out that technology does not force non-tech music into obsolescence. On the contrary, there are probably more recordings available of more styles of music today than at any other time. Record sales prove there is room for all. Also, there are those proponents of guitar, for example, that contend that amplifying it removes the "natural" tone of the instrument

and also removes the challenge to use one's fingers as the sole source of dynamics and tonal expression. Time marches on.

Regardless of the application for a new technology, it still takes skill and practice to use it in a way that makes people attracted to listen over and over. Although the ratio of all-tech to non-tech songs in the Top Ten may fluctuate, I don't think it would be inaccurate to assume that there are very few (if any) records that do not see a computer as even a small component

of their construction.

When the computer is used as a recording and playback device, it is only marginally different from an analog multi-track recorder, which was criticized as a "real music destroyer" upon its introduction, yet we have come to accept it as commonplace. It is still an art and a skill to use either, and someone must play or assemble the parts.

Technology, like fire, can be both an enemy and a friend, and the skillful operator creates a piece of work that draws attention to the song and artist, without the average listeners concerning themselves about its



Brian Allen.

origin. In my opinion, it isn't machines, but humans, that make a recording sound inhuman.

There is room for all creators, from all origins, and their acceptance also depends on the responses of (guess who?) humans.

Brian Allen

Vice President, A&R
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Equality and the Drummer

I read with appreciation and interest your recent article "Technology and the drummer: Marriage or Divorce" by Christopher Gudgeon (*CM* December '90). The eleven "heartbeats" mentioned, which "give the music life", certainly have and will continue to earn "respect for the man behind the kit." But what about the woman behind the kit?

No offense! The context of the article was very clear, and the content very precise and informative. Mr. Gudgeon is a good writer. Had he inserted "and woman" in the phrase "the man behind the kit," that would have

been enough.

The eleven men spotlighted by Canada's premiere music magazine have certainly earned their accolades. My observations cannot detract at all from their achievements. These guys are extraordinary. But women play the drums. And some of them are exceptional.

Richard Walker

Audio To Go
Toronto, ON

East Coast Music Awards

Could you tell me the dates of next year's Maritime Music Awards, as well as the location? I have not attended, as yet. Also, do you know of any openings for permanent jingle writers or staff songwriters in Toronto?

John Farrell Botten
Sackville, NB

See "First Takes," elsewhere in this issue for an update on the East Coast Music Awards/Conference. Our Music Directory Canada, available through *CM Books* (416) 485-1049, lists jingle production companies, as well as publishing and record companies. — Ed.

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Boss SE-50 Stereo Effects Processor

by Richard Chycki

Boss has entered the digital multi-effects race with their new SE-50. A half-rack size unit (with one of those annoying external AC adaptors), the SE-50 offers an impressive cross section of quality and features.

This unit is a stereo in, stereo out device, i.e. it processes signals in *true* stereo for several of its algorithms. Normally found in processors many times its price, *à la* Eventide H3000, stereo processing allows for spectacular reverb, pitch shifting and delay effects that maintain all of the stereo image present at the input of the processor.

A healthy 28 different algorithms are available: Reverbs (halls, rooms, plates, ambience, gates, stereo), delays (stereo, multis, tapped),

modulation (chorus, stereo flanger and phaser), pitch shifters (stereo, multi), vocoder, enhancer, rotating speaker simulator, 2-channel mixer (with EQ and noise gate on each strip and chorus, stereo tap delay, 'verb) and several 'verb/'verb, echo/'verb, chorus/'verb combinations. Again, that true stereo input allows for great routing possibilities for those echo-on-the-left-reverb-on-the-right programs. To utilize the available processing power to maximum advantage, the SE-50 operates at two different sampling rates, 48kHz and 32kHz, depending upon the complexity of the algorithm in use. The resultant operating bandwidth is 20kHz and 15kHz respectively.

The sound quality of the SE-50 is excellent,

with single effects algorithms shining the most. Real-time MIDI control is possible for a number of the 128 patches, as well as MIDI bulk dump and load capabilities. Sadly, the distortion tone in the guitar multi-algorithm was a substantial disappointment when used direct with the line driver function as recommended.

The Boss SE-50 offers innovative features for its price range, most notably the stereo input system. Sound quality is very good. Overall, a big bang for the buck.

For more information, contact: Roland Canada, 13880 Mayfield Pl., V6V 2E4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552.

Richard Chycki is a Toronto-based guitarist/songwriter.

Mesa/Boogie Mark IV Combo Amplifier

by Richard Chycki

Mesa/Boogie has long upheld a reputation for its innovative Rolls-Royce approach to guitar amplifiers. The Mark IV is an all-tube tri-modal amplifier that is the culmination of six years of research and development based on the extremely successful Mark III amp introduced in 1984. First impression is that this amp is loaded, really loaded, with features; the front and rear panels are stuffed to the hilt. Boogie claims that the Mark IV is "the last amplifier you will ever need to buy." That is just *asking* for the *Canadian Musician* acid test, so...

This unit packs a sophisticated tri-model preamp section with much more control over each mode than its predecessor. The Rhythm 1 (clean) and Rhythm 2 (crunch) modes share only the bass and mid controls; gain and treble controls remain isolated. Boogie's reasoning is that the treble control, being the predominant tone modifier — combined with the voicing of the Crunch mode — limits the effectiveness of the lower controls in that mode anyway. Bright and fat pull switches complement Rhythm 1 and 2 respectively.

The Lead mode that put Boogie on the map is a separate entity in the Mark IV. Extreme tonal versatility is available, thanks to the complement of fat, bright, and harmonics/midgain (rear panel) switches combined with the bass/mid/treble controls. Note that unworldly amounts of gain are possible in this mode. But more on that later.

Two effects loops are available, one that is programmable and switchable for one or two of the three modes and one that is continuously active. These feed into the traditional Boogie 5-band graphic EQ. Like the loop, the EQ is also programmable, with automatic activation possible for the Rhythm 2 mode and footswitchable in conjunction with the Lead mode.

The versatility of the power amp section clearly indicates its importance in the tone of the amp. Class A or Simul-class operation is possible for outputs ranging from 30 to 75 watts RMS. Class A runs only the two outer power tubes, biased so that they operate throughout the entire waveform for a rich harmonic output when clipped. EL 34s can be used in these sockets rather than 6L6s for that British crunch. As well, these tubes can run in triode or pentode configurations for a soft or hard clip. Simul-class engages the inner pair of 6L6s that combine their output with the others via a special proprietary output transformer.

"Tweed Power" mode reduces the operating voltage of the entire amplifier to give its overdrive characteristics a more "brown" quality (isn't that the word Eddie uses to describe his sound?). It supposedly reduces the output marginally but greatly increases tube life. The power reduction also facilitates the use of a quartet of 6V6s for that "Deluxe" tone.

Three separate presence circuits, one for each mode, round out the power amp sec-

tion. Voicing pull switches for additional bite are available for the Rhythm 2 Lead modes.

For channel switching, an unusually rugged footswitch is included. It accesses all three preamp modes as well as EQ and effects loop switching. Jacks on the rear of the amp can interface it to a variety of MIDI controllers to automate its functions as required.

With such an impressive list of features, one would expect this amp to deliver any sound imaginable. It does. With very little effort, I had clean sounds so 'Fender' that the tolex was turning into tweed right in front of me. The Crunch mode is especially...commanding, reminiscent of a hyper Lee Jackson modified Marshall. Lead mode is gain city. Maxxed, it's uncontrollable, although the manual warns that such use will cause noise and control problems. But hey, I had to try it. Set correctly, the Mark IV really sings with blistering sustain. The 12" Electro-voice challenges most stack rigs. And lo and behold, a recording output that sounds killer when run directly into a console.

It's great to see such a well-designed, self-contained tube amp in this day of 300-FX-at-a-time-digital-whosamawhatsits. The old adage of "quality, not quantity" really shines through the Mark IV with every note played. Ten out of ten all the way!!

For more information, contact: Mesa/Boogie Ltd., 1317 Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954 (707) 778-6565, FAX (707) 765-1503.

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SWR Baby Blue Combo Bass Amp

by Dave Freeman

SWR's Baby Blue combo is a hybrid amp with a tube preamp and a solid state power amp. The unit is small (14.5" x 24.5" x 12.5") and weighs 42 lbs. It delivers 120 watts RMS @ 8 ohms and 150 watts RMS @ 4 ohms. The cabinet contains two Bagend 8" drivers, one Bagend 5" cone tweeter, and a passive crossover.

The front panel has separate passive/active inputs, input gain control with clip indicator, semi-parametric EQ, aural enhancer with pull EQ defeat, effects blend with pull bypass, master gain with clip indicator and an on/off switch.

The rear panel has a speaker output, extension speaker output, effects loop, line out, tuner out, balanced XLR output with level control and ground lift switch, and a switch for line/direct out.

I used my Ken Smith 5-string bass to test this amp. I set the EQ to defeat (flat), the input gain

and master gain set just below clipping, bass volume on full, and showed no mercy. The amp exhibited a very natural smooth sound. It accurately reproduced the sound of my bass. The bottom was solid, fairly full, mids were even, and the highs were sweet, not harsh. There was no evidence of break-up until the amp was driven into clipping. It handled the low B exceptionally well, considering it has only two 8" speakers for bottom end.

The Baby Blue is a great combo amp. It is ideal as a practise, studio or small gig amp. Although it probably would fall short in volume for larger gigs, there is an output for an extension cabinet. The amp has all the features a player could want. It's obvious SWR is attentive to the advice and requirements of bassists.

For more information, contact: SWR, 12823 Foothill Blvd., #F, Newburgh, NY 12550.

Dave Freeman is a bassist/songwriter for The Critics, based in Toronto.

Alesis 1622 Audio Console

by James David Smith

The Alesis 1622 audio console utilizes manufacturing technologies not regularly employed in high quality audio products, to pack a lot of power into a small, lightweight, inexpensive package. It has enough channels and extra features for a sophisticated mix, and it's affordable. People who previously couldn't even begin to consider a mixer with this kind of performance should get very excited.

This console really does sound good. After peeking inside I expected crosstalk problems. I was wrong. My ears believe all the printed specifications. As the manual says, the 1622 has the "superb, sweet sound normally associated with consoles costing many times more."

Headroom above zero VU seemed more limited to me than on other more costly consoles, but with a signal to noise ratio this good, it won't hurt to leave yourself some headroom below zero. Incidentally, the master output level is switchable between -10 and +14 dB for compatibility with just about anything.

My primary design complaint about this console is that there are no clip lights (and limited headroom).

What did I see when I looked inside? Alesis has eliminated the traditional fader, pot and switch and the high costs that accompany them. The knobs and switch caps are an integral part of the control surface, while the fader carbons and switch pads are an integral part of the main circuit board's surface. This console is truly monolithic: It's a functioning mixer only when it's fully assembled.

The 1622 is a beautifully executed compromise between technical ideals and cost-effectiveness. I believe that most of the complaints I have about functionality can be traced back to a dollar saved somewhere. Let's not

forget that every dollar saved is reflected in the unit's affordability.

If you're careful, nobody will listen to your tapes and exclaim, "it sounds like you don't have clip lights."

The controls feel "wobbly," but don't let that scare you — it's probably the only immediately recognizable side-effect of monolithic design, and it doesn't compromise performance.

But I want clip lights. For live sound it's crucial.

There's no way to display level off the sub-master outputs at all (not even a solo switch). Listen carefully, to make sure you're not recording subtle distortion, especially if you've boosted EQ since the last take.

The headphone jack is at the bottom of the back panel, about a third of the way across, surrounded by all kinds of other connections you'll want to leave connected most of the time. It's awkward.

Conclusion

This great sounding piece of equipment is an excellent choice for light use in clean environments. It will probably deliver years of trouble-free service in hobbyist studio, producing superb quality recordings. Keep it covered when you're not using it.

I have my doubts about live sound or road use, but only time will tell how well this technology can stand up. I have no doubt that the low price and sonic performance will put more than a few of these consoles into all kinds of applications.

For more information, contact: Alesis Corporation, 3630 Holdrege Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016.

Jim Smith operates Prezsmith Engineering in Toronto.



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EV/N/DYM Series II Microphones

by Steve Hutt

The buzz word in new microphone technology is "neodymium." Electro-Voice may have been the first to utilize this rare earth magnet in microphones when they introduced a line of microphones they refer to as "N/DYM." The benefits of using this magnet over conventional ceramic type magnets are that its magnetic strength can be greater for a given size. This translates into increased sensitivity and, given proper design geometry, the opportunity to realize benefits in frequency response, transient response and reduced distortion over conventional magnets designs.

The N/DYM series microphones feature an excellent shock-mount system for reducing handling noise and vibration, as well as a plastic handle grip and integral wind screen. They have a comfortable,

balanced feel in the hand.

N/D 757A and N/D 857

In a nutshell, we were highly impressed by the 857 and highly distressed by the 757A. We had the 757A on the vocalist in The Spitfire Band (a 19-piece dance orchestra) with the band miked only for solos. The problem we ran into was a lingering ringing in the 125 to 200 Hertz range that was particularly obnoxious when the vocalist was speaking.

In an attempt to reduce the problem, first the low end cut switch on the mic was inserted, but to no avail. Then a parametric EQ was used to cut approximately 2/3rd of an octave centred at 160 Hertz. This partially solved the problem, but not nearly as well as switching to the 857...

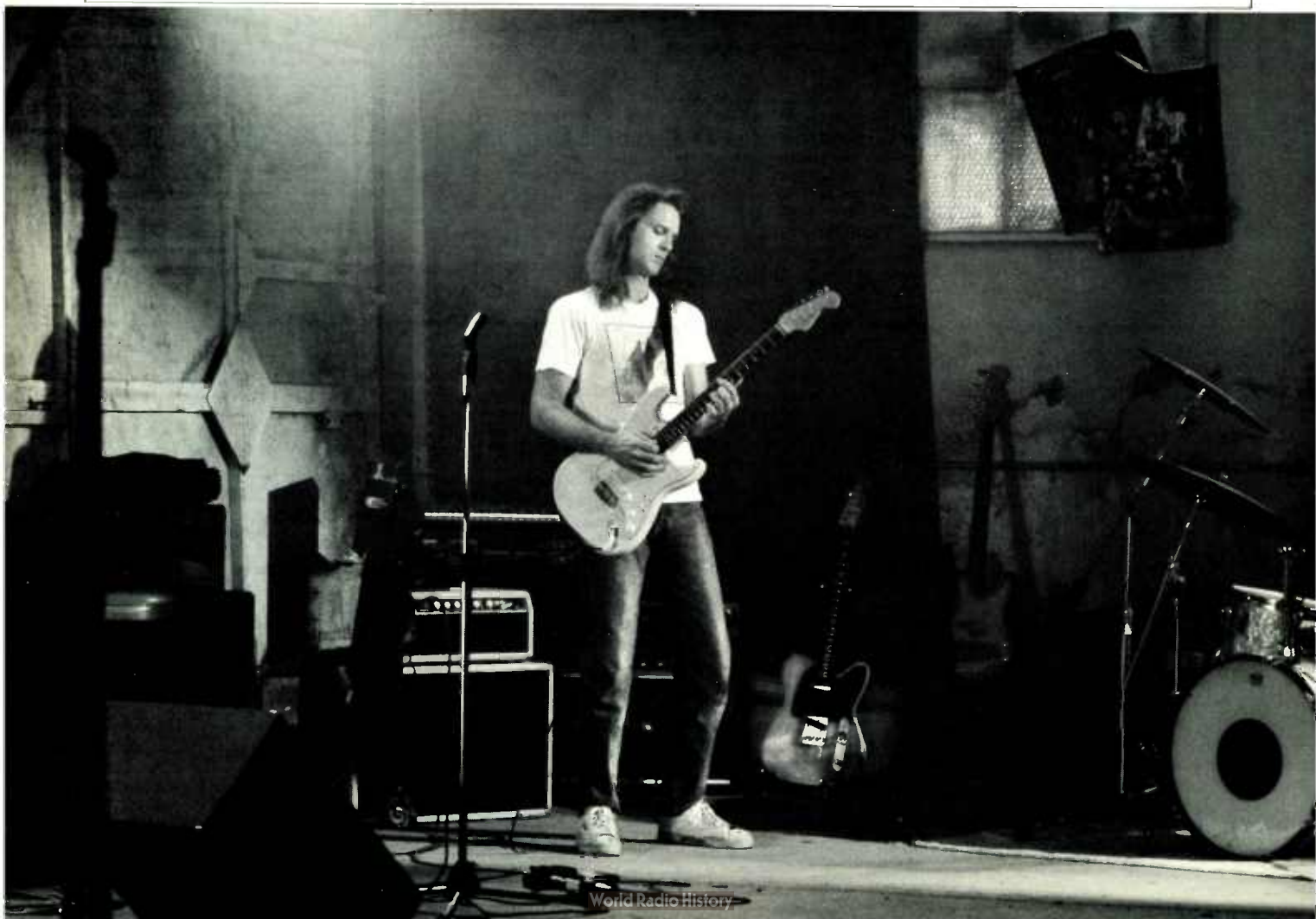
Interestingly, all equalizer settings

could now be set to flat and the muddiness was gone. Intelligibility was excellent. The voice sounded full and natural. The proximity effect of the 857 was very well balanced for the vocalist's technique, and feedback rejection allowed for excellent monitor gain. The N/D 857 is a very fine microphone.

The use of a neodymium iron boron magnet is in itself not the single feature that makes a good mic. There's a lot more to it — witness the differences of the N/D 757A versus the N/D 857.

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

Steve Hutt is the president of Equity Sound Investments, which manufactures loudspeakers.



Digitech GSP-21 Guitar Signal Processor

by Richard Chycki

Digitech's GSP-21 packs a 21-effect wallop, with up to 10 effects available simultaneously. These effects are a conglomerate of digital and digitally controlled analog effects. Also included is a multipurpose footswitch with fluorescent display, making this package a "complete" guitar system.

Compressor, "tube" distortions, EQ, noise gate, enhancer, chorus, flange, delays, and reverbs — they are all available here for connection to a guitar amplifier or mixer via the programmable speaker simulator. These effects are combined into a variety of 64 presets that are readily modified and stored to any of 64 user patches.

The unit also supports the use of external effects via its line level effects loop (mono send/stereo return). The loop is programmable in that it can be switched in and out of its predetermined position in the effects chain. The GSP-21 has substantial MIDI capabilities as well, acknowledging dynamic MIDI commands as well as trans-

mitting its own information, making it an ideal "rack master" if needed.

Having a footswitch included is a welcome accessory. Although the alphanumeric display in the footcontroller is a good concept, its small size and limited viewing angle may be difficult to read under adverse conditions (on stage?). The dozen footswitches are stacked in two rows of six that require a carefully placed foot to avoid striking two switches at once. A pair of boots could prove to be a problem in that regard, not to mention what they could do to those frail multipin connectors; XLRs would have complemented the durability of the footcontroller's metal casing.

The sonic capabilities of the GSP-21 are truly immense, almost too immense. Sure, the individual effects are very palatable, including the distortion circuitry, thankfully, but it is very, very easy to go overboard with a unit with so much potential. The factory presets are so drenched in effects that the manufacturer itself demonstrates how easy

it is to get carried away.

It is clear that for optimum performance, the owner should use the internal distortion circuitry. That area has always been brutally subjective; if one happens to not prefer its sound, one could be a little stuck. This is a common problem in many of these all-in-one guitar processors that manufacturers should address. The better the interfaceability of a piece of gear into a rig, the more people it will appeal to.

That said, the GSP-21 is indeed a versatile, formidable sounding multi-effects device. The Classic Twin and Ultimate Reverb functions are truly astounding. If a potential buyer is willing to learn and assess all of its capabilities and control them in a realistic fashion, it could prove to be an indispensable addition to an axeman's rig.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music Reg'd., 378 Isabey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1W1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069.

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Flamenco Guitar

Flamenco music is a folk art of Spain, the child of a polygamous marriage between Iberian, Moorish and Gypsy cultures, whose interaction have both unified and fragmented that country during its history. Because of this tumultuous ancestry, flamenco has been a problematic offspring — difficult to categorize, but vigorous and adaptable nonetheless.

The heart of flamenco traditionally has resided in Andalusia, a picturesque region of southern Spain encompassing the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Guadalquivir River Valley. Unquestionably, the major element which has gone into the making of flamenco is the gypsy culture. Yet flamenco music is not, as is often mistakenly assumed, the actual creation of the gypsies. A point of utmost importance is that flamenco is not ethnic music, but a phenomenon of geography and culture. It is a curious fact that the gypsies did not, in any country, create most of the things popularly ascribed to them. The gypsies never were and never will be the originators, in most cases, but are rather the interpreters and perpetuators.

Flamenco, as a distinct type of music, emerged in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, Andalusia has had a strong musical tradition from ancient times and it would be naive to dissociate flamenco from that heritage. Through the centuries, Andalusia has come to absorb peoples of very different cultures and backgrounds, and has integrated elements of their music into the indigenous prevailing music.

In Andalusia, it seems that the gypsies found something in the music that they did not find elsewhere in their migration through North Africa, the Orient, Spain and the rest of Europe, and which undoubtedly stirred the very fibres of their oriental ancestry. They, in turn, contributed not with culture of their own, but an ability to interpret, the gift of innate musicianship and an inclination to dramatize art and vital life style that echoes the traditional Andalusian way of life.

Flamenco guitar's history differs from that of the classical guitar in that the latter's past is well documented in a multitude of writings that go back many centuries. In contrast, flamenco is an art orally handed down from one generation to the next — no written records exist to enlighten us as to its origins. The evident lack of recorded history may also be attributed to the fact that most of the serious

flamenco of the seventeenth and eighteenth century was practised by the gypsies, and most gypsies of the epoch past could neither read nor write.

And now to technique: The traditional flamenco guitar is similar to classical guitar, but has cypress back and sides, not rosewood. It also has a lower action, which gives a much crisper tone, and is fitted with a golpeador (tapping plate). Tuning pegs are fitted instead of machine heads. The left-hand technique in flamenco is identical to that used in playing classical guitar, the main consideration being that the thumb is kept in line with the second and third fingers — classical players should find no real problem as far as the left hand is concerned. It is in the right-hand technique that the majority of people need guidance. For, unlike with the classical guitar, there is no standard right-hand technique — the desired sound can be achieved by quite a variety of right-hand techniques. However, a correct way has evolved over the years. At this point I must stress that it is impossible to play flamenco on a steel-strung or folk guitar.

There are four basic techniques to learn. They are, in order of importance: rasqueados (rolls), thumb strokes, picardos (runs) and tremolos. Please do not misunderstand: in order to develop a powerful right-hand, one must spend many uninterrupted years dedicating oneself to flamenco. But I think that the above mentioned methods should be well learned before going on to the more complex techniques.

Finger Designation

Thumb = p
Index = i
Middle = m
Ring = a
Small = q

Rasqueados: The correct way to play a single rasqueado is to begin with the little finger, following in rapid succession with ring, middle and

index fingers, all in the direction of the first string. The single rasqueado often ends with a golpe (tap) in which the ring finger (a) taps the golpeador as the last (index) finger crosses the strings.

The continuous rasqueado is performed in various ways, but here is one example. First, play a single rasqueado, but start the rasqueado again just before the last note of the preceding rasqueado has finished. Repeat this action until a continuous roll is achieved.

Thumb strokes: Thumb strokes are some of the most powerful in flamenco, and only many hours of diligent, everyday practice will enable you to master this difficult stroke. Thumb strokes are often accompanied by a golpe (with the ring finger). When doing this bring the hand around from the classical position until the knuckles face more toward the finger-board. The thumb should always be held straight and the stroke a downward, bringing the thumb to rest on the next string.

Picardos: Picardo is the term for what the classical player would call a poyando, and is usually played with two fingers (i-m or i-a). The most important feature here is to ensure that the fingers work alternately, no matter how difficult the sequence of notes may be.

Tremolo: The tremolo is a soothing, flowing sound consisting of a two-part technique that is more common in solo playing than in any other form. The listener has the illusion of hearing two separate instruments being played simultaneously since the tremolo consists of distinct melodic patterns in the bass and treble voices. As opposed to the classical tremolo (quadruplets p-a-m-i), flamenco tremolo is grouped in quintuplets (p-i-a-m-i).

Let's take a closer look at two of the techniques we have discussed: the tremolo and the rasqueado.

TREMOLLO: The thumb (p) should be practised a poyando (rest-stroke) and the rest of the fingers played tirando (free-stroke). The exercise that follows should be practised very slowly and deliberately. Be sure that you are articulating separate sounding notes in even rhythm before attempting to play it at a reasonable speed. (Fig.1)

RASQUEADO: The technique whose sound is automatically identified with flamenco is the rasqueado. The essence of a good rasqueado is strength and control. To develop this, proceed with the following exercise. Make a tight fist with the right

THE TREMOLLO EXERCISE

FIG 1

The figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves show a sequence of quintuplets of notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes in the quintuplets are G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. The fingerings are indicated as i, a, m, i, a. The second staff starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes in the quintuplets are G2, F2, E2, D2, and C2. The fingerings are indicated as p, i, a, m, i. Both staves end with a 'simile' marking. The exercise is labeled 'FIG 1' at the bottom.

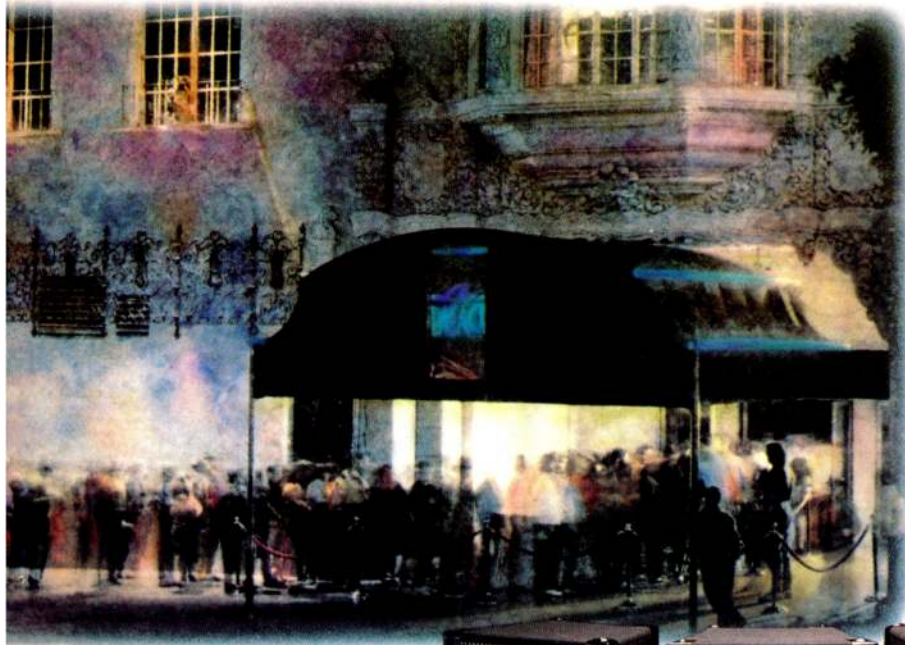
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Buying A Bass Amp

An amp, be it a combo amp, amp head or a component system, is required to reproduce the sound of your bass and nothing else. Therefore, you want to buy a system that will do this with the most accuracy. Whether you're buying a bass amp for the first time, or replacing an existing one, the rules for buying remain the same.

The most important rule in a bass amp system audition is: *Use your own bass.* The strings on your bass should be fresh, one or two weeks old. Do not use new strings, one or two days old, as they will briefly enhance the high end response of your bass. Your bass should have its normal sound for listening tests.

Next is a very important rule that should never be ignored: *Adjust all tone and equalization controls on the pre-amp, to the flat (no boost or cut) position.* This allows your bass signal to pass through the preamp stage to the power stage without any alteration in sound. The test is the amp's ability to reproduce the sound of your bass, not the operation of the tone controls. Tone controls are used to obtain a different sound or sounds than your normal sound, as a desired effect. An amp requiring tone control alteration, boosting or cutting to give the truest sound of your bass is not a wise investment. It's robbing you of the option of having flexibility with your sound. Not all preamps have a true flat equalization position. Therefore, an adjustment must be made by ear reference. This is where knowing the sound of your bass is of benefit.

A separate preamp and/or power amp audition can be done using a store stock model of your speaker. There are no electronic components in a speaker that can be substituted during manufacturing, unlike preamps and power amps. Therefore, the sound of your speaker will be consistent with the same model at a music store.

A preamp audition can be done using a power amp at a music store. Be sure to use the same model as your own, or one of good quality. As mentioned, set the tone and equalization controls to the flat position. Once you've determined the accuracy and the sound of the preamp, explore the tone controls. Check for options that you may require. Does the preamp have one or two inputs, a balanced direct output, an effects loop, or a headphone output? The great debate with preamps is whether to buy tube or transistor. The answer is to use your ears and go with the sound you prefer.

Power amps are the easiest items to audition. However it should be taken seriously, as a power amp does not need to be updated. Therefore, you can assume it will be a permanent addition. Read the specification sheets and look for a power amp that has the following:

1. The ability to power your speakers — check impedance requirements
2. A large and clean power output — 3% or less THD (Total Harmonic Distortion) Note: 1% or less THD is optimum and generally industry standard.



Dave Freeman is a bassist and songwriter for the Critics, in Toronto.

3. The least amount of weight and size.

Then audition the power amp(s). Most power amps reproduce a bass signal with no problem. However, there are some that don't respond well to the transients of a bass. When this happens, the power amp clips the output and delivers a distorted output, or an output less than potential. The solution is to lower the input signal to a level where clipping does not occur, resulting in a lower output level. This is not an acceptable situation, especially if you can't get the specified output from the amp. It's advisable to pass on a power amp of this nature. One great benefit of recent power amp technology is the end of the "boat anchor" era. Several manufacturers have combined excellent performance specifications with minimum size and weight. I recommend that products of this nature be investigated. There is no

reason whatsoever to drag a fifty-pound power amp around for your bass rig. Also, there is a strange phenomenon which occurs when it's time to load in or out the bass rig — the band disappears. Your back will appreciate every pound you don't lift. Don't be afraid to make a serious investment. Remember, you'll have the amp for awhile. Also, you can never have too much power — as you can always turn down — or too little weight. Why have the reverse?

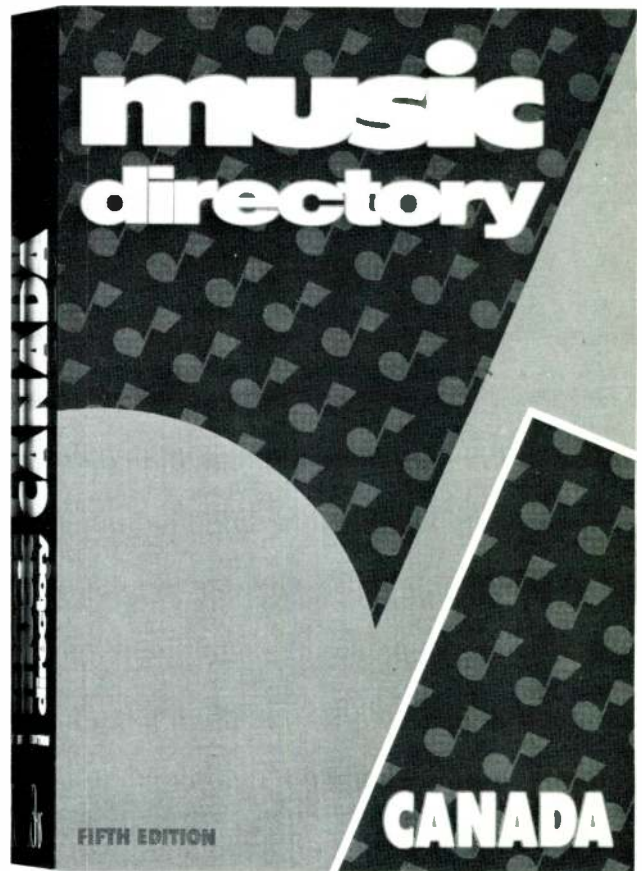
The rule to audition a speaker cabinet is: *Take your amp or preamp and amp,* even if the store has the same model. No two amps sound alike, especially tube amps. If possible, connect two different speakers at one time. It's hard to remember the sound of one speaker while connecting another. Pan back and forth between the two cabinets. First, listen to specifics. The low end should be clear and tight, not muffled or boomy. The midrange should be defined, but not honky. The high end should be bright, clear, but not shrill or overbearing. Cabinets with a tweeter should have a level control for the high end. Next, listen to the sound of each cabinet on the whole. Does what you're hearing sound like your bass? Is the sound enhanced, or deficient? Once you have found a speaker you like, leave it connected, and use it as a reference for further listening tests. Then the process becomes a matter of elimination. This is known as A/B comparison testing. I recommend the purchase of a speaker system that is small and modular. This will allow you to use whatever number of cabinets is required for each gig. It will also make it easy to transport the system.

Combo amps contain the three elements discussed: a preamp, a power amp and a speaker, all combined in a self-contained unit. Hence, the name. You have to use a variation of the rules used for separate components. Instead of A/B comparisons between separate components, it is done between combo amps. Apply the rules for the preamp and the speaker, but don't be too concerned with the power amp specifications.

The overall rule for purchasing equipment is KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid. Remember, your bass is your sound and the sound source. Bells, whistles and neon lights do not make an amp sound or function any better. They're marketing ploys used often to help sell a product.

Until next time, practice and persevere!

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GROOVE

CLICKING WITH THE GROOVE

PART THREE

Though the use of click has become more prevalent in recent years in both live and studio settings, many drummers have found it difficult to make friends with this little 'metronome.' Drummers may well argue that the click has its disadvantages, but when the producer makes the call as to whether or not you'll be playing with one, the discussion is moot. Reasons for using the click are usually obvious and legitimate (e.g. sequences will be added after the drum track). So our question here is: When using a click, how can I, the drummer, function with maximum comfort and musicality without feeling I am a slave to a machine, drowning in a sea of sterility? Or, on a more basic level: How can I overcome my fear of the click if I have only experienced the abysmal failure of not being able to get four bars into a tune when using one?

Part of the solution to both questions (besides practising to a metronome) involves two things — one, understanding your natural timekeeping ability, and two, positioning with the click.

Concerning the first, here's an interesting anecdote. Some years ago I made a discovery which has since become key to me when playing with machines. I would often, upon getting home after a gig, sit on my bed and play little drum solos on my thighs with a pair of sticks, sometimes to the point of light bruising. One night I nearly fell off the bed as I finished my nightly 'skin bash' when I realized that, for months, I had been playing in near perfect time, at sixty beats per minute, to...my alarm clock! For nights after I would forget this until I stopped playing, when I would again hear the clock as it kept the same time I had been keeping myself. I had not been *listening* to the clock, but I had been *hearing* it.

I think we can infer from this that the subconscious can be aware of things that we may not be *making* ourselves aware of. I'm sure you've seen very young children dancing in good time to music. I really doubt that they are thinking much about it at all, let alone *worrying* about it. Of course we've all seen grown men and women on dance floors everywhere, proving you can have a good time without

having any time at all. But they're probably not endeavouring to become drummers, either. So, if you *are* a drummer, you *must* have a degree of God-given timekeeping ability. For this good reason you don't necessarily have to *force* yourself to keep good time, even with a click.

The drummer should know that, by relaxing into the feel of the music, being aware of the click but not being consumed by it, and having confidence in his natural (and practised) musical ability, he can eventually learn to sync with the click almost effortlessly.

Now let's consider the second thing, which we'll call *positioning*. This is a



Michael Root plays drums with Paul Janz.

PHOTO: VICTOR DEZSO

conscious approach to the click which works in tandem with the unconscious aspect I've touched on. By mentally situating yourself behind the time, you can avoid this problem: The drummer who gets himself all on the 'edge of his seat' trying to stay 'on top' of the click will, when he screws up, probably find himself *ahead* of the click. Beside being the most disorienting place to be in relation to the click (versus behind it), by the time you slo-o-ow down to recapture the groove (criminal drumming), it probably won't be there anymore. So, to make a somewhat esoteric analogy, try to ride the click the way a motorcyclist will sometimes get in tow behind a tractor trailer and be drawn along in the slipstream. I don't mean 'flaming' along behind the click. I mean that, by laying back in the time, you will be able to keep the click ahead of you and aurally *in view* (versus behind you, *out of view*), and avoid getting into that ugly zone where the only thing on your mind is, 'Help!' Your drum part will sit with

sequences with a more relaxed, human feel, and time compensations involving bringing the time forward will not sound nearly as annoying as falling back. The click may be the only thing a drummer should ever follow. You just can't lead a click because machines are bad listeners.

No amount of insight is of much value without practical implementation. Only by practising with a metronome and/or drum machine will these points become clear. As you pit your playing against unforgiving machines you will discover the nature of your tendencies to fluctuate the time.

Understanding and practising concepts like these has improved my time immensely. I often find myself in live situations with a click almost forgetting it's there. I use a small monitor under my hi-hat which gives me a click only, programmed to follow the song dynamic and sit just under the mix of my main monitor. Even when I don't give it my full attention, I know it still registers in my ear. It's quite a confidence boost to sort of 'wake up' to the click halfway through a song and find out you haven't blown it yet.

In the end, the real benefit of working with clicks is that your time will be better, period. Paradoxically, the real test is how consistent you are without one. I remember how proud I was when I told a famous drummer, who had just watched me perform, that I had used a click for the whole set, and he replied, "Aw, man, now I don't know if you speed up or slow down." Interesting.

In closing, remember that the click is like a dog that will only bite you if you're afraid of it. Relax. You are not a slave to technology. It is a tool, a helper, your slave. You are not a drummer under a (excuse me) 'click-tatorship.' Groove is still job number one and machines exist to assist you in accomplishing that.

I hope these ideas will help you to get more freed up in your work with clicks. And, I hope you find yourself so deep in the groove that your favourite drum machine will short-circuit with embarrassment.

This is my concluding article on 'groove.' So, until next time, God bless and stick with it.

by Dave Dunlop

THE FUTURE OF BRASS

Writing a brass column for *Canadian Musician* is something I've always wanted to do. Unfortunately, every topic has been covered. Well, almost — one area that hasn't been addressed is the future of brass playing. I'm no Kreskin, but after eighteen years of playing professionally, I've made a few observations.

The steady decline of trombone and trumpet players enrolling in college and university music programs suggests that many high school brass players aren't willing to take a chance on a full-time music career. It's a tough decision, but if you have talent, it shouldn't be that difficult; and it definitely beats selling shoes.

The war between real and synthetic horns continues. But real instruments are gradually returning to favour in jingles, movie soundtracks and, most importantly, recorded music. The reason is simple — it takes forever to duplicate what a live horn section can do. More to the point, however, all of the nuances of a horn section (shakes, falls, bends, sforzandi, etc.)

sound ridiculous on sample keyboards.

While we're on the subject of synthesizer technology, a common sound on pop recordings is a mix of horns and synth (although quite often the horns are mixed to an almost inaudible level below the keyboards). It's important to know how to play with synthesizers for this situation: i.e., match the vibrato, attack and cut-offs, and the two sounds usually work.

The economy of late isn't helping the live music scene. Business is down for most dance bands, and many clubs are cutting back large bands. Wedding bands still use horns, however, and the resurgence of r'n'b has created work in some clubs. Here in Toronto, Latin music is providing work for many horn players and, of course, many classical orchestras still use trombones and trumpets. A further possibility is the theatre.

But the days of weekly (and daily) television shows with live bands, travelling bands and hotels using large house bands seem to be over. These days everything is

trimmed down to a bare minimum. In spite of this, horns are still an integral part of all kinds of music, and will be around, at least in live and recorded music, a lot longer than Emulators and Fairlights. You can quote me on that!

We can draw some conclusions from these trends and changes in the overall picture. Learning classic r'n'b horn lines, like those heard on records by James Brown and Aretha Franklin, is a good place to start. And don't forget Chicago; Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Earth, Wind & Fire. (Or, if your future is in the classical arena, practice those orchestral excerpts.)

As well, it would be wise to learn standards, practice with synthesizers and listen to other brass players. Be musically flexible.

There will always be room for quality brass players. You can, however, expect to pay your dues. *That will never change.*

Dave Dunlop is a freelance trumpet player based in Toronto.

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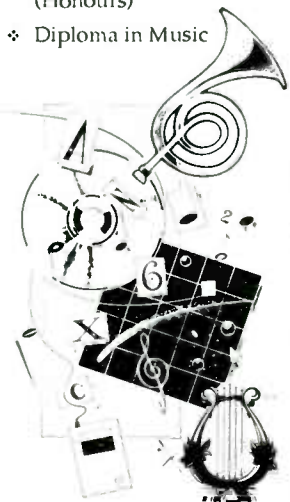
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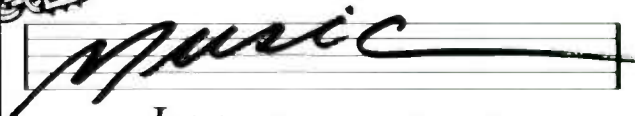
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WOODWINDS

Developing Time Feel

by Alex Dean

When I first started playing saxophone I was always told to get a good sound, because it was the first thing anyone would hear. These days I would still say a good sound was extremely important, but I might add that in jazz, a good *time* feel is almost or even more important. After all, John Coltrane's sound was considered too bright and loud. Even Charlie Parker's sound wasn't acceptable to some people. However, no one doubted that he could swing. Sound, then, like jazz, can be a very subjective thing; but if a player's time feel is bad, it's hard to tell what's going on.

I do a few exercises with my students to help them develop a good time feel, which I would like to discuss here.

First, the most important thing you can do to develop your own time feel is to *listen*: Listen to records, listen to live jazz, listen to each individual instrument and listen to how they play together and react to each other. Don't just buy play-along records, learn the tunes and then expect to play with a live band, because you'll still sound like you're playing with a record. The nicest way I can describe this is by saying it will sound like a one-way conversation.

Now to the concept of time feel. I think of time in jazz not in 4/4, but actually on a 12/8 grid.

(FIG. 1)



1/8 notes would feel like this:

(FIG. 2)



I've heard these described as gap triplets, skip triplets or jazz 1/8ths.

In 4/4, then, even though the 1/8ths are written straight, they are played as triplets:

(FIG. 3)



played:

(FIG. 4)



Now, how to apply this. Take a major scale, and play the scale tonguing all the notes. Tongue the chord tones twice.

(FIG. 5)



After you're comfortable with this, try taking out the middle triplet.

(FIG. 6)



Once this is comfortable, try applying this concept to the two bop scales:

1. the major or b6 bop scale

(FIG. 7)



2. the dominant or b7 bop scale

(FIG. 8)



When the two bop scales are feeling comfortable, try putting the pulse or click of the metronome on beats 2 and 4 where the pulse is in jazz anyway. A quick way to find this is to call the first click you hear beat 4. For example,

4 1 2 3 4 rather than 1 2 3 4
x x x x x x

At this point I'd like to introduce the concept of chromatic approach tones. I create a 11m7 V7 17 sentence using diatonic four-note chords. I have my students approach each note by a semi-tone below the tone. Once again I do this with a triplet feel, keeping the pulse (or click) of the metronome on beats 2 and 4.

(FIG. 9)



The reason I don't start the four-note chord until beat 3 of the third bar or I maj7 chord is so the student can hear the resolution of the dominant 7th.

As with all these exercises this should be practised in all twelve keys to develop facility on the horn. It is also possible to move the chromatic tone so that it is not just an upbeat but also a downbeat. However, generally the accent in bebop is on the chord tone, whether it is a downbeat or an upbeat. When the tempo speeds up, the 1/8th generally straightens out, but the accents are still on the chord tones.

I should also point out that the concept of chromatic approach tones can also be applied to all the available partials (9th, 11th, etc.) on all chords.

I would sum up by reiterating that the most important tools you have for learning are your ears, and to use them all you have to do is listen.

Toronto-based saxophonist Alex Dean has played and recorded with Gil Evans, Jim Galloway, Aaron Davis, Phil Nimmons, Jay McShann and Rob McConnell's Boss Brass. Both Feet, his second recording with his quintet, is available on Unity.



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STARTING FROM SCRATCH



BY DON BREITHAUPT



When the power ballad “When I’m With You” rocketed to the top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 in early 1989, six years after the demise of Sheriff, the Canadian band that spawned it, explanations were hard to come by. The bare facts were simple enough — deejays in Las Vegas and Phoenix who had resurrected the song encountered phenomenal listener approval, and the resulting momentum proved unstoppable. What was harder to comprehend was that at the height of the video boom, an act with no hot clip, no image and no six-figure promotional budget had hit the musical jackpot with good old-fashioned grassroots audience support. It was a testament to the durability of a good song. Though “When I’m With You” had done respectable business in Canada in its original 1983 release, it had never cracked the U.S. charts until its unexpected second honeymoon.

In spring 1989, former Sheriff members Arnold Lanni and Wolf Hassell were several years into a new career as Frozen Ghost. Sheriff’s singer, Freddy Curci, and lead guitarist, Steve DeMarchi, were less visible. But not for long. The two had built a sixteen-track studio in Toronto and were in the midst of painstakingly demoing their original material when Sheriff suddenly became a household name. The lesson of “When I’m With You” — that traditional pop criteria like emotion-packed vocals and solid production still mattered — was not lost on Curci and DeMarchi. They continued the detailed work of creating world-class rock in a humble setting.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNA MARIA DI SANTO



With the help of engineer David Runstedler, they committed guitars, vocals and cymbals to tape, running drums (performed in real time via pads into a sequencer) and keyboards from a sync track as they went. "We would leave things off to conserve tracks whenever we could," says DeMarchi. "One time we wiped a bass track to make room for a back-up vocal, then redid the bass when the vocals were bounced." Guitar amps were placed in the wine cellar. A lead vocal was recorded in DeMarchi's mother's bedroom. Throughout, a fix-it-in-the-mix philosophy was avoided. "We were planning to mix it ourselves," says DeMarchi. "What was on tape had to sound good."

Then the phone calls started. The interested parties, mostly managers and agents whose interest had been piqued by the single-digit success of "When I'm With You," wanted to know the duo's plans.

A trip to Los Angeles provided the setting for the birth of Alias, one of 1990's biggest success stories. "We ran into Mike (Derosier, the band's drummer), who had been playing with Richard Marx," says DeMarchi. Derosier, a founding member of Heart, was looking to get back into a regular band situation, and brought ex-Heart cohorts Roger Fisher (guitar) and Steve Fossen (bass) into what would soon become Alias.

The name is ostensibly a nod to the quintet's illustrious past. But its implication of anonymity gives a clue to the band's priorities: These guys want the emphasis on the music. The album cover gives listeners nothing to latch onto in terms of visual identity. The implicit command is *listen*.

We caught up with Alias' Canadian contingent on a recent U.S. junket opening for REO Speedwagon. DeMarchi and Curci's comments had the ring of hard-won truth.

"When Sheriff broke up, everyone wound up with nothing — maybe an amp or a monitor here or there, but basically nothing," says DeMarchi. But there is a certain liberation in starting from scratch, and the Curci/DeMarchi comeback seems strikingly methodical and deliberate, particularly in a business whose basic unit of measurement is the overnight sensation. When it came time to negotiate with labels, the duo knew what to watch out for. "Getting signed is only the beginning. We wanted commitment from a record company, not just, 'We'll throw it against the wall and if it sticks, great.' Otherwise, it's not worth doing."

If that sounds light years away from a starry-eyed kid for whom signing any contract with a major-label logo on it is paradise, you're getting the picture.

Alias' wealth of experience also came in handy in the Hollywood studio jungle. Having recorded at most of Toronto's major studios, and realizing the difference between here and there is mostly one of attitude (not hardware), DeMarchi and Curci went into Capitol Studios L.A. knowing their methods were already sound. They had, after all, landed a record deal with their basement tapes. For five of the album's eleven tracks, they bounced their sixteen-track masters up to twenty-four and took it from there. "These guys couldn't believe the guitar sounds we had," says DeMarchi. "We had used an old (Shure) SM-58 on the Marshalls in Toronto. But we had taken our time adding the guitars to the beds. In L.A. it's: 'Does it sound good? Then record it!'"

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, then, care and craft *can* substitute for technology. "We took a big chance making a record on our little sixteen-track," says DeMarchi. "If nothing else, it's proof you can do it in any format. The quality is the same."

Continued

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ALIAS

For producer Rick Neigher, whose credits include Vixen and Tonio K, the hard work began when it was time to start recording the new songs in L.A. The task at hand was to partially emulate the sound of the Toronto demos (particularly the drum sounds) in order to maintain the album's sonic identity. For the studio staff, that was a tall order. "For example, we knew from experience that the right mic for Freddy's voice was the AKG 414," says DeMarchi. "But they didn't believe it. They kept renting all these tube mics worth a couple of grand each. Finally, we ended up using the 414."

But the sparkling results of the L.A. sessions belie any north/south differences in methodology. Neigher's knack for stripping the songs to their essentials proved to be a good balance for the pristine order of the Toronto sessions. "It's important to get a new set of ears involved, so you're not just pleasing yourself," says DeMarchi.

For Curci's part, Alias is only the latest instalment in an encouraging musical career. Having had only eight vocal lessons in his life, he took the success of Sheriff as "a reassurance that I was doing things correctly. I learned to sing by singing a lot." Maintaining the stratospheric vocal power that is his signature — Curci has been compared to Steve Perry — is difficult amid a hectic performance schedule, interviews and endless hours on tour buses. Curci's secret is simple: "I try to get some sleep and stay healthy."

While the road had its downside, Curci says it has been "fertile for writing. I don't think this is a band that will experience the second-album jitters. Everybody writes, and our philosophy is that the best songs make the record." To facilitate writing while on tour, Curci and DeMarchi share a TASCAM eight-track machine with a twelve-channel mixer, a Korg M-1 synthesizer and a multi-effects unit.

Alias' Apparatus

Both Freddy Curci and Steve DeMarchi use a Marshall JCM 800 50-watt head with a 4x12 cabinet, an Ibanez guitar with a Floyd Rose, and a Samson wireless. Roger Fisher uses Fisher guitars and Fisher 4x12 speaker cabinets with Marshall heads. All three guitarists use Ovation 12-string acoustics.

Bassist Steve Fossen uses a 5-string Fender bass, a Peavey mega amp head with 4x10 and 2x15 enclosures and a Samson wireless. Drummer Mike Derosier plays Ludwig drums.

"It's good for basics, for dragging into your hotel room," says Curci. "I always keep a Sony micro-cassette on my person for ideas. Then, if it warrants it, we'll do it on the eight-track."

As writing partners, Curci and DeMarchi defy the simpler models of yesteryear. "It's never the same twice," says Curci. "If I get an idea while I'm driving," says DeMarchi, "I'll pull over, call home and sing it into my answering machine. We don't have standard method. Some songs start with a drum

groove, some start with a guitar lick. 'More Than Words Can Say' came from the lyrical idea. 'Heroes' started with a melody."

Even more complicated than writing with a partner is sharing lead guitar chores with another person. Both DeMarchi and Roger Fisher are used to taking centre stage. "We were both nervous about that," says DeMarchi. But the extra muscle the two guitarists add to the Alias sound more than compensates for logistical problems like who plays which part. It also allows for what DeMarchi describes as a "little guitar battle" in the show.

To maintain a "live" energy while in the studio, Alias cut many tracks live off the floor, some in record time. "For 'The Power,' 'Haunted Heart' and 'More Than Words Can Say,' we spent maybe twenty minutes rehearsing, then laid them down," says DeMarchi. That kind of confidence comes only after years in the business, and while Alias isn't avoiding its past (the band does "When I'm With You" and Heart's "Barracuda" in concert), its world-beating debut album serves notice that this band-from-the-ashes has a very bright future indeed. ■

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BOB'S YOUR UNCLE



A GUIDE TO GETTING *Signed*

by Christopher Gudgeon

In the beginning, there was a U.S. independent record deal with Dr. Dream. Dr. Dream led to Intrepid and, with distribution through Capitol, to the Canadian release of Bob's Your Uncle's *Tale of 2 Legs* in October of '90.



ound confusing? Well, it's all part of the rocky ride Bob's Your Uncle took on the way to their first record deal. Once called "Canada's sexiest unsigned band," The Bobs worked diligently for over two years to piece together "the deal."

Things were looking good for the Vancouver-based band in the summer of 1989. They were featured in the Canadian Showcase at New York's New Music Seminar. Playing with Spirit Of The West, Chalk Circle and The Holly Cole Trio, The Bobs were in great company. Frank Weipert, the band's manager, says that their expectations ran high at the seminar.

"We turned in a really favourable performance, as did Spirit Of The West. The general buzz in the room was that ourselves and Spirit would be the ones getting the nod for a record deal. We had every major A&R person from the U.S. sitting in the audience. Everybody made the assumption that it was a done deal. At the time we were offered a couple of independent deals. But we had to back-burner those."

Unfortunately, the major deal never materialized. Lead singer and guitarist Sook-Yin Lee says that the big labels seemed interested, but always with reservations.

"They always had a 'but': they loved us, 'but.' It was frustrating, but understandable. We are a very original, challenging band. A record company sees that, likes it, but worries that we will be a hard sell."

So, what had looked promising during the summer of 1989 looked bleak by the winter. The band had a great reputation for off-the-wall live shows, and a completed, self-produced album (circa \$15,000). But no deal. According to Weipert, the band was in a jam.

"We couldn't secure a deal with the majors, and the independents had their noses out of joint because we turned them down once. So I went back to the independents with my tail between my legs, and I went to Dr. Dream, who happened to have a band drop out of their release cycle. They said, 'Well, you've got the finished album, we love the band, we've got some space to go and release the album — maybe we can reach some sort of agreement and do the distribution for you in the States.'"

Finally, in June of this year, *A Tale of 2 Legs* was released in the U.S. by Dr. Dream. Now they were in an even stranger situation: a Canadian band, on an American label, with no distribution in Canada. Bob's Your Uncle originally tried to go the independent distribution route in their homeland:

"We were sitting in a situation where our U.S. label would import the album into Canada," says Weipert. "The album would go for a fairly hefty price, maybe \$10 on cassette, and maybe \$17 on CD. It's just an example of what I see as the biggest problem in Canadian music today — that is, the

lack of good independent distribution for product in Canada. Radio can't play something that isn't in the stores, that isn't available.

But wait. The story has a happy ending, and as fate would have it, it all came together at *this* year's New Music Seminar. Dr. Dream ran into some people from Canada's Intrepid Records, who boast the likes of National Velvet. Intrepid, who have a pressing and distribution arrangement with Capitol, picked up the Canadian rights to *A Tale Of 2 Legs*. On October 1 of this year, the album was finally released at home.

Was it worth all the work? Well, even before the album was released in Canada, Bob's Your Uncle was the number one played band on college radio stations across the country. Sook-Yin Lee believes that the hard work the band put into the project will make things easier next time around.

"We've been playing together and working towards a record deal since 1985; I mean, right now we're on our fifth cross-country tour, so we're not kidding ourselves about anything happening overnight. It takes a lot of work to convince a record company that you're serious about the music. This

album is in fact over a year-and-a-half old. I listen to it now and I'm very proud of it, but I think that we were a very independent band when we recorded it. We've grown a lot since then. I can hardly wait to get into the studio again."

Weipert, as well, is optimistic about Bob's Your Uncle. He believes that labels like "alternative" and "independent," which the band has been stuck with — labels which perhaps scared off some of the major record companies last time around — will

A Well-Equipped Bob's Your Uncle

Space is at a premium for The Bobs, who have to load all their equipment into a converted school bus named Bob.

Bernie Radelfinger

Larivee and Ibanez basses, Galien Kruger bass head, 15" single EV cabinet. Effects: Amdele flanger, Pearl delay, Boss chorus, Morley volume pedal. Black Imm Dunlop pick.

John Rule

Canwood drum kit: 10"x 10", 12"x 12" toms; 16"x 16" floor tom; 14"x 20" bass; Pearl snare: Ambassador heads on top, Diplomats on the bottom. Cymbals: 20" Sabian Dry Ride, 18" and 16" Sabian crashes, 10" Sabian splash, 14" Zildjian New Beat hi-hats. Collarlock system, with Tama and Pearl hardware. Vic Firth 5A sticks.

Peter Lizotte

Peter uses two amps: a Fender Princeton, for clean sounds, and an old Gibson BR-A, with a Shure SD-245 high impedance mic, for his

"dirty" sound. Effects: Pearl flanger, Ibanez DDL, DOD A-B box, Boss DI. Harps include a selection of Hohner Special Chromonica 270s. He also plays a Paul Dean Odyssey electric guitar.

James Junger

Aria Pro II electric guitar. Stella 4-string tenor acoustic. Yamaha 100 head with two 12" speakers. Effects: Ibanez digital delay, Amdele compressor and chorus, Boss volume pedal, Rat distortion. "Toupee by Dansworth."

Sook-Yin Lee

Fender Squire electric guitar. Roland Chorus. Roland Cube Amp. Other assorted stuff includes: 1" circumference 4.5 foot long PCV tube; baby blue, 12-key toy piano; transistor radio; detachable, multi-coloured trumpet whistle; sliding whistle; honking cock kazoo; train whistle; warbler.

grow less important as the band matures.

"It's not a matter of the band shifting for the market, or the market shifting to accommodate the band. It's important to realize that for the large system, be it the media, be it the record companies, be it whatever, their reaction time to trends is slow. They've never been leaders; they only react to what's going on. Whatever they consider to be the Next Big Thing has already been two or three years in the making. I don't know if Bob's your Uncle will ever change for the market. They will mature as a band. It will take us maybe another year, but we'll make it."

In the meantime, the band continues to stay hard at it. They're completing their fifth cross-Canada tour in Bob, a converted school bus, and are looking to piece together their next record deal. *A Tale Of 2 Legs* won't be the last story we hear from Bob's Your Uncle.

SNEAKY



BY DAVID HENMAN

When I lived there in the late seventies/early eighties, I often heard N.D.G. (Notre-Dame De Grâce in Montreal) referred to as the "musician's ghetto." I suppose, to look at us sitting in the noonday sun on a park bench along Sherbrooke Street West, clutching a quart bottle of Molson's beer and/or an acoustic guitar, it's not too hard to understand from whence that ignoble epithet arose. Recently I went back, on a mission which found me sitting in the Kent Pizzeria on a sunny Saturday morning (less than a block from the aforementioned park bench), over too many early morning cigarettes and cups of coffee, conducting an investigation into a band/project called Sneaky James. This investigation was born during the late summer of last year, when lead vocalist James Mahaffey dropped off a fourteen-song demo that he was shopping to A&R departments in Toronto.

PHOTO: PATRICIA GREER

World Radio History

JAMES

Because our "Showcase" department attracts hundreds of tapes from unsigned artists, it's much like having our own little A&R department. And while it is not within the mandate of *Canadian Musician* to go out on a limb for — or to discover — new artists, this tape was too exciting, too much fun and far too powerfully performed and recorded to just file somewhere.

"The eight songs on side A," explains lead vocalist, piano and harmonica player Mahaffey, "were done on twenty-four tracks, a full-blown production on a relatively limited budget. We thought, if we're going to do it, we might as well do it as big as we can." "Otherwise," interjects guitarist and backing vocalist Wayne Dwyer, "we'd just have to redo it anyway." These eight tracks were recorded at Montreal Sound and produced by SCI Productions (Bill Szawlowski and April Wine guitarist Gary Moffet).

Due to the difficulty of raising the money, the recording project took about a year and a half. "We received two grants from the Quebec government," Mahaffey reveals. "We had applied to FACTOR and to MusicAction — which is the same as FACTOR but strictly for the French scene — but to no avail."

One of the most remarkable things about Sneaky James' demo is that it sounds like a very high quality live recording. Interestingly, this was not an accident: "Gary and Bill (SCI) talk about 'sound pressure' going onto the tape — they record hot, so that some of the excitement and the loudness actually translate onto tape," explains Dwyer.

At Studio Victor, where the bed tracks were laid down before going to Montreal Sound, a natural drum-miking technique was used. "The ambient and reverb type of sounds on the kit are room sounds," says Mahaffey. "The drum room at Studio Victor is like a small gymnasium. It's all oak, and round, with parabolic reflectors built into the walls."

Studio Victor uses an Otari 24-track recorder. At Montreal Sound it was an MCI 24-track and a Harrison 32-buss console. Dwyer elaborates: "We used a couple of old Urei leveling amplifiers, as well as Gatex gates, Lexicon reverbs, and so on. We had a ton of vocal mics to choose from, but used a Shure SM58 about half the time, as well as an AKG 414. We kept the headphones pretty loud."

"I did each vocal track about three times straight through," recalls Mahaffey, "and then Gary and Bill did 'compilation' tracks, where you take the best parts of each performance and distill them down to one complete 'take.'"

Side B was done in Dwyer's basement on an eight-track Otari. For my money it sounds as good, and easily as exciting, as the 24-track stuff.

This is where Jim Ayoub (Mahogany Rush) was brought in to play drums. Mahaffey played drums on the 24-track demo — he started out playing drums and, later, keyboards. Jeff Phillips, of Gould Marketing in Montreal, loaned us the Otari," confesses Dwyer, "as well as a Seck 12-channel board, an AKG ADR-68k reverb...about fifty thousand dollars worth of recording gear!"

The Mahaffey/Dwyer songwriting team combines, predominantly, Dwyer's music and Mahaffey's lyrics, which are usually added after the music is finished. "I'm pretty much a failure when it comes to relationships," Mahaffey confides, "so I've got enough lyrical inspiration to last the rest of my life!"

At this point, the band consists of whoever shows up, and lately that has included Jim Ayoub, who spent many years behind the kit with Mahogany Rush. "We're the only two that were dumb enough to stick at it all this time," jokes Mahaffey. "We're the writing core. Wayne and I take care of everything — writing the tunes, doing all the business. It's a lot more efficient that way. The industry being what it is these days, you have to be very efficient. Don't beat around the bush, get to the point which, in the end, is the music."

"I plan to get a MIDIverb III, because it's programmable."

James Mahaffey uses an AKG wireless microphone. In some shows, he'll play a Hohner harmonica and a Roland U20 for its piano and Hammond B3 organ sounds. "It has an amazing grand piano sound. I go direct into the PA console and hear it back through the monitors."

may-car, good time feel that rock 'n' roll (and many other kinds of music) were always meant to have. Though they don't sound at all like The Black Crowes or The London Quireboys, Sneaky James has its heart in pretty much that same place: the roar of a Hammond B3, the scream of a slide guitar, the thunder of a loud drum kit and, naturally, great rock 'n' roll songs and singing.

"We've been doing this for years," Mahaffey points out, "and it concerns me that we might be perceived as bandwagon jumpers, or trend followers, which is not at all the case."

What is it like surviving as an original band in Montreal? Probably the same as anywhere else. Whether you live in Armpit, Saskatchewan or Sleeping Bag, Manitoba (or anywhere else in the world), one thing holds true: Cover bands make money, original bands — up to a point — don't.

"We've developed a bit of a following," concedes Mahaffey. Is a major record deal — and national exposure — just down the road? Inevitably, if there's any justice. But, as most of us know (or will eventually find out), that can be a long and bumpy road. Sneaky James makes great rock 'n' roll, and the rest of the country deserves to hear it.

Sneaky James' Private Stock

Like Alex Lifeson of Rush, Wayne Dwyer uses Odyssey guitars. "They were made in Vancouver, and the company has since gone under. So far I've found two of them, and bought both. They've got a certain feel that I've never found anywhere else. I've also got a '62 SG Special. I've been offered a lot of money for it, but I refuse to part with it. One of my Odysseys has DiMarzio Super Distortion pickups, but I've been thinking of changing them. I don't use a whammy-bar — I'm kind of a purist, I guess. I use an ADA MP-1 preamp, which I love. Unfortunately, the solid state circuit is not as clean as it could be. I use an Alesis MIDIverb II, and a

MIDI pedal. I also have a BBE Stinger. I'm not sure what it does — it's kind of an enhancer — but you can sure tell when it's off. My amp is a Bryston 3B power amp, 175 watts per side, with a Marshall 4X12 bottom. I run stereo, so on the other side I have a Marshall 100 watt head and a 4X10 bottom.

B XORCISING THE GREMLIN GROUND LOOP

The Big Letdown

So you finally did it! In a wild frenzy of retail sharkfest and cheque writing, you've managed to exhaust your bank account and come home with some quality gear. Anxiously anticipating instant tonal gratification, you patch it all together and throw the master power switch. BBBBRRRRRRZZZZZ!!!! Hey, what's with all that noise?!!! Frantically double checking the spec sheets, you're sure you bought good quiet gear; so what happened to the awesome sound your freshly poverty-stricken ears were so badly yearning? Alas, my friend, you are another victim of the heinous ground loop.

Understanding the concept and causes of these gremlins will help to formulate effective measures to eradicate them. The term "ground" is somewhat ambiguous when applied to audio equipment; a processor can have several "grounds" within a single unit — the shield ground (case) and the signal ground (audio). These grounds end up being tied together at a single point within the unit, hopefully with some kind of option to allow them to be isolated from one another. Each piece of gear in our rig has its own internal matrix. Problems usually arise from the methods by which all of the equipment, and therefore the individual ground matrices, are interconnected.

The Prognosis

All ground points have a resistance between them, albeit small, due to the fact that a perfect conductor does not exist. Current flowing through these ground points creates a voltage, not the absolute zero-volt level we would like to see at a ground point. Creating a loop by connecting these grounds together via two or more paths allows current to flow between grounds of different potentials. This is done via the shield(s) of the audio cable(s) and the third pin of the power cable. And the more gear that is interconnected, the more complex the ground loop becomes and the noisier the rig can get.

The resultant interactive hum and noise is a combination of power supply ripple and external interference caught by the shield bleeding into the audio path via our

Continued...

Damn Yankees Rocks with DigiTech



Photo by Robin Visotsky

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EXORCISING THE GREMLIN LOOP

friendly ground loop. This is exacerbated by the incompatibilities of various manufacturers' differing grounding schemes and the use of unbalanced audio lines. Here, the shield ground is also the signal ground, the ground loop noise automatically becoming part of the audio signal.

So we now know exactly what a ground loop is, its causes and its symptoms. Troubleshooting a substantial setup will bring to light that exorcising these gremlins can be somewhat of an arduous process. A systematic process of standardizing our rigs' ground system seems to be the most effective method to kill any ground loops.

Proper interconnection of our equipment using correct cable configurations will help to quell ground loop induced noise. The accompanying cable wiring diagram (Fig.3) illustrates examples of cable assemblies designed for minimal noise. Note that two conductor shielded wire is used in all instances; it is imperative that the signal ground and case (shield) ground are separated wherever possible. Sadly, the handful of common unbalanced 1/4" to 1/4" cables purchased from the local music store generally are not conducive to a quiet rack. The shield of each cable should be connected only at the receiving end to the sleeve of a 1/4" TRS plug or the case terminal (the often neglected one attached to the set screw) of an XLR connector. Only a single shield ground point is required, as the chassis are already connected together via the third pin of the power cable. Making a chassis-to-chassis connection through the audio jacks is redundant and will bring to life a ground loop.

While we are on the subject of that third pin on power cables that many people like to render useless, it may be a good idea at this time to reiterate its purpose of existence — safety! That is, protection against possible electrocution (read: death). Should a failure occur inside a piece of equipment and a hazardous voltage is transmitted to the case, where ultimately it could be transmitted to the user, the current would be conducted to ground via that third pin and a fuse would be blown. **THE GROUND PIN SHOULD NEVER BE DEFEATED AT ANY TIME!!!** A piece of shielded

wire will be your sole element of protection, and it cannot safely conduct the almost 2000 watts of power available at a common power outlet away from a user. So please, take a little extra time to de-bug your rig safely.

To further optimize our rig, it is a good idea to separate the signal and case (shield) grounds inside individual pieces of equipment. This may not be possible in some pieces of

gear but very easy in others; the situation should be evaluated on an individual basis. Equipment with a "ground lift" switch is ready to go. Just flick the switch as required. Installing a ground lift switch is usually an easy task. The signal ground and case ground are commonly connected together at a single point within a piece of gear, at the power supply or at the sleeve of a 1/4" audio connector. Ideally our ultimate goal is to have the signal ground system and case grounds meet at a single point within the entire rig. We can accomplish this through the use of the lift switch and proper wiring techniques.

The standard wiring scheme for XLR connectors is: pin 2 is hot, pin 3 is cold, pin 1 is signal ground, and the case terminal is shield ground; for 1/4" connectors: TRS are optimum, wired tip hot, ring cold, and sleeve

case ground for balanced installations and tip hot, ring signal ground, and sleeve case ground for unbalanced setups.

Rack-mounted equipment where the grounds are difficult to separate, especially in tube amps and digital sound processors, can have grounding problems alleviated by insulating the whole case from the rest of the rack with nonconductive mounting hardware and fish paper (a type of insulating material) between the rails and chassis.

This selection of equipment for interconnection compatibility will dictate what, if any, modifications may be necessary for the quietest operation, so take the time to choose carefully. Time spent on conscientious wiring will exorcise the gremlin ground loops and give the reward of a noise-free, consistent rig. No voodoo or garlic necklaces required.

Exercise Caution

All of the modifications and additions done to the equipment in this article have been successfully performed previously and will not damage or impede the operation of the gear in any way when done correctly. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you have any work done by a qualified technician, should you not possess the required technical know-how yourself. Opening and modifying equipment will void said equipment's warranty, and seeing that we are not responsible for any damages you may incur, **BE CAREFUL!!**

Richard Chycki is a freelance guitarist and songwriter with uncontrollable electronic urges.

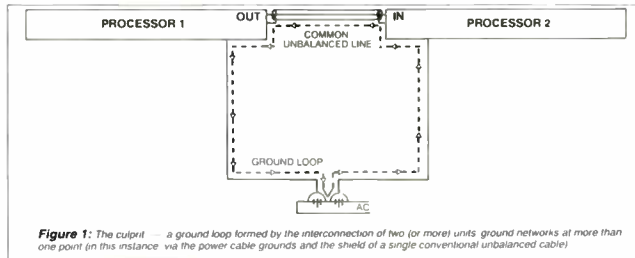


Figure 1: The culprit — a ground loop formed by the interconnection of two (or more) units' ground networks at more than one point (in this instance, via the power cable grounds and the shield of a single conventional unbalanced cable)

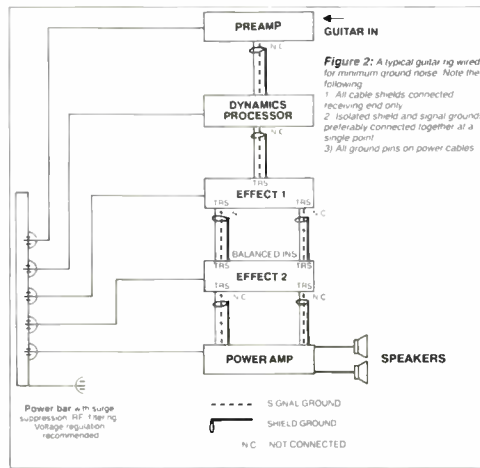


Figure 2: A typical guitar rig wired for minimum ground noise. Note the following:
1. All cable shields connected receiving end only.
2. Isolated shield and signal grounds preferably connected together at a single point.
3. All ground pins on power cables.

Power bar with surge suppression filter recommended.
--- SIGNAL GROUND
— SHIELD GROUND
N.C. NOT CONNECTED

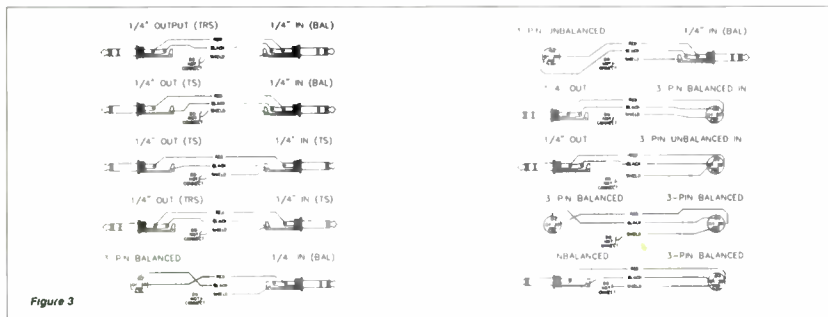


Figure 3

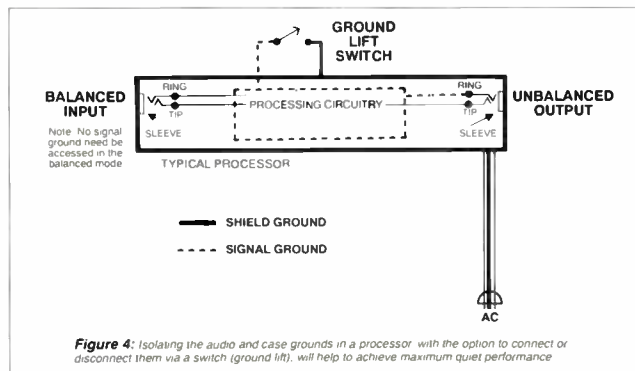
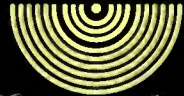


Figure 4: Isolating the audio and case grounds in a processor, with the option to connect or disconnect them via a switch (ground lift), will help to achieve maximum quiet performance.

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AA MEDIUM CRASH

HH Classic RIDE

OPPORTUNITIES IN CHILDREN'S MUSIC

by Elizabeth Finley

In the fast-paced world of making music, a relatively new and unexplored territory is opening itself up to Canadian artists and musicians right across the country, and with encouraging results. The unfamiliar terrain is that of children's music.

No longer content to be a mere afterthought within the North American music industry, children's music is opening doors not only for Canadian performers, who are finding seemingly unchallenged success south of the border, but for musicians and producers who are able to get on the ground floor of a rapidly expanding segment of the music industry.

Currently, Canada is recognized as the world leader in children's music, providing such entertainers as Heather Bishop (Oak Street Music), Raffi Cavoukian (A&M), Fred Penner (Oak Street) and Toronto's own Sharon, Lois and Bram (Elephant Records). Raffi has recorded eight albums since 1976, selling more than four million copies in the United States alone.

Canada also has its share of record companies that produce children's artists, including Oak Street in Winnipeg and Elephant Records in Toronto. The Children's Group, a Toronto-based record company, is one of the largest children's record labels in Canada, with eight artists to its credit. Currently, The Children's Group is increasing the distribution of quality children's music through arrangements with major U.S. and Canadian labels — yet another sign that children's music is not only a consideration for the indies, but a growing concern for the conventional record companies as well.

North American spending on children is increasing (a reported twenty-five percent in 1989) in the face of the recent baby boom. Industry statistics indicate that children's

music products now account for twenty to twenty-five percent of sales in traditional book stores. The music is not only being bought by parents, but by public schools and other learning institutions.

But as the area of children's music grows in size and scope, it retains many of the characteristics associated with the music business. Ken Whiteley, a Toronto-based, independent record producer who has produced thirty-five children's records to date, feels that while performing for children is unique, the route into that aspect of the industry is parallel with any other.

"As a producer, I would bring the same criteria (to choosing a studio musician) that I would bring to any recording," Whiteley says, adding that performing alongside a children's artist (in the studio or on the road) is "the same as any other kind of gig you might get — it requires sensitivity and musical ability the same as any other gig does."

There are particular considerations, however, for those wanting to perform directly for children, as a children's artist. "It's very different than playing in clubs," Whiteley says of performing for a young audience. "[Children] are ready to listen. They *want* to listen. It's a different thing getting a bar to rock than performing in a [children's] concert."

Prior to choosing a career as a children's artist, Whiteley suggests that performers, first and foremost, explore the elements of a young audience. "Find out if you enjoy having them for an audience," he advises. "Just get out there and [perform], provided you have a certain skill as a musician."

Whiteley, a children's artist in his own right, produced seven albums for Raffi over an eleven-year span. He believes that in order to become a children's artist, one must start with the basics: Listen to other artists, think about the kind of music you liked as a

child, learn some children's songs and then try them out. He suggests that artists contact local nursery, kindergarten and public schools to arrange performances.

Whiteley also names humour and audience participation as being key factors for pleasing children and keeping them interested. In his own act, The Junior Jug Band (Children's Group), Whiteley and his brother, Chris, change instruments throughout the set: "That's how we keep the interest up."

Once artists have some experience behind them and have decided to pursue a career in children's music, they can approach such programs as the Ontario Arts Council's Creative Artists In The Schools. The program enables artists to take their music into a learning environment and, according to Whiteley, has helped numerous artists develop skills applicable to concert performances: "A lot of artists have really got their feet wet through the program."

The differences between working in children's music and other forms are, according to Whiteley, fairly practical. They include the ways in which a performer addresses his or her audience and the kinds of hours worked. Many of the other aspects are standard within the music industry.

Bob Roper, general manager of Elephant Records and band manager for Sharon, Lois and Bram, says that while working within a children's market has its limitations, there remains plenty of room for aspiring artists and musicians within the field. He explains, "It is a limited market, but there's still a lot of room. You don't have to play The Diamond (in Toronto) every Friday night in order to be successful." The limitations lie in the type of material that is appropriate, and saleable, for children.

Continued...

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CHILDREN'S MUSIC

One doesn't have to be involved in folk music in order to get streamlined into children's music because "it's not something you can do three hundred times a year." Aspiring performers must take their young audiences into consideration, including such things as its short attention span. Most artists also prefer to play to parents as well as children, providing a family-type atmosphere to their performances.

Good marketing is another factor, if not one of the keys, to success, and such areas as promotion are getting caught up in the changes as well. As the children's market continues to blossom in both the U.S. and Canada, record companies should conceivably be able to spend the kind of money once reserved for big-name entertainers.

However, overhead expenses for the production of children's music run as high, if not higher, than that for other performers, and with smaller returns. "When I go on the road, I have to pay musicians as much as Blue Rodeo would," Roper said. "And my tickets cost \$12, not \$20."

But Canada is the place where children's music got its start, and continues to help fuel the industry through a vast assortment of Children's and Folk Festivals not as plentiful in other parts of the world. Roper concedes that such opportunities have been the nurturing point for Sharon, Lois and Bram, as well as other Canadian children's artists. "There are a number of things available here that just aren't in other countries," Roper offers. "In Canada, especially, there is a pretty good audience, if you do it right. *Per capita*, (Sharon, Lois and Bram) are much bigger here (than in the U.S.)."

While the children's market in the U.S. is just currently starting to take off, as it has in Canada, the enthusiasm indicates a long and prosperous run. "[It's] a growing industry," Roper confirms. "We've found a niche and it's something that parents want. To not put records in the stores is to lose out on a huge market."

Gilles Paquin, president of Oak Street Music and chairman of the advisory committee of the Children's Committee for the Juno Awards, believes contemporary children's music got its start as part of a grassroots movement that began in the late seventies and has since evolved into a solid, expanding market. "There is a legitimate industry that's growing," Paquin adds. "As it's evolved, it's become its own market. We're seeing a lot of interest from all the majors as well. Everybody's looking for the new Raffis and the new Fred Penners."

Oak Street, whose collection of twelve children's artists includes Fred Penner and Bob King, has held onto the conviction that good business begins with good music. "Basically, our goal was to establish it as a legitimate business," Paquin explains. "That includes keeping the level of music high [and] struggling hard to make the retailers understand that the buyers are out there."

For now, however, the bulk of children's music doesn't get airplay, but Paquin feels that will change in the years ahead. Currently, he and those with Oak Street are looking for performers who not only have the necessary talent, but who can adapt well to the changes facing an expanding segment of the music industry. "At Oak Street, we're looking for acts that can not only perform well, [but] who are adaptable to television," Paquin said.

CONTACTS

Artists, musicians and songwriters wanting to become involved in the children's music industry and/or who have performed for young audiences in the past, should contact the following for additional information:

- Ontario Council of Folk Festivals, (416) 651-8361 or (705) 228-1172
- Mariposa Folk Foundation Inc., (416) 769-3655
- Vancouver Folk Festival, (604) 879-2931
- Mariposa In The Schools, (416) 462-9400
- Ontario Arts Council's Arts and Education department, (416) 961-1660
- CBC's Children's T.V. department, (416) 975-6776
- Independent and other labels specializing in children's music, including Oak Street Music Inc., (204) 957-0085 and The Children's Group, (416) 538-7339
- Organizers of various folk and children's festivals held throughout Canada.
- Local nursery, kindergarten and public schools.
- Music academies that provide lessons for children.

But marketing is only one of a number of considerations that one must take into account upon choosing a career in children's music. According to Paquin, making children's music requires not only a understanding of the marketplace, but of those who directly make up that market — children. "It's hard if you're not right for it," Paquin cautions. "There's a high degree of integrity that's needed, and necessary. Once you have a good understanding of what (performing for children) means, then you're ready to begin," he said.

While Paquin feels that the first step for artists who want to get involved in children's music is to start performing for young audiences, in order to forge a personal "style and identity," he suggests that there are numerous other routes into the field.

They include opportunities for songwriters, singers, musicians, producers and so on. The best route, according to Paquin, is to get in contact with those already involved in areas of the business. He suggests contacting record labels, like Oak Street, and submitting examples of individual work, as well as contacting the organizers of Children's and Folk Festivals. "There is a tremendous number of independents out there," Paquin says of the record companies that supply children's music. "In the U.S., the network is even bigger."

When Sharon Hampson of Sharon, Lois and Bram first started out as a singer on the

Toronto coffee-house circuit at seventeen, there wasn't much of a market for children's music in Canada. By the time she hooked up with Lois Lilienstein and Bram Morrison to put together an album of children's music, the trio found themselves working hard to "sell" the idea to industry leaders. "When we started out, we were forever trying to prove ourselves," Hampson recalls. "We had to, in a sense, create the industry."

She's not far from the truth. In fact, the group formed its own record company, Elephant Records, to put out their first album, *One Elephant, Deux Elephants*, in 1978. Fortunately, aiding the group in their endeavour to reach a market of children were a variety of Canadian festivals, a program spun out of the annual Mariposa Folk Festival entitled Mariposa In The Schools, and the CBC's longstanding dedication to children's programming. Their first album was an instant hit.

"It's a Canadian phenomenon," Hampson says of the origins of children's music. "Something happened very differently here than in the United States. The industry thrived in a way that it didn't in the U.S."

The trio has been successful throughout North America. Their popular television series, *Sharon, Lois and Bram's Elephant Show*, is broadcast nationally by the CBC, and by Nickelodeon in the U.S.

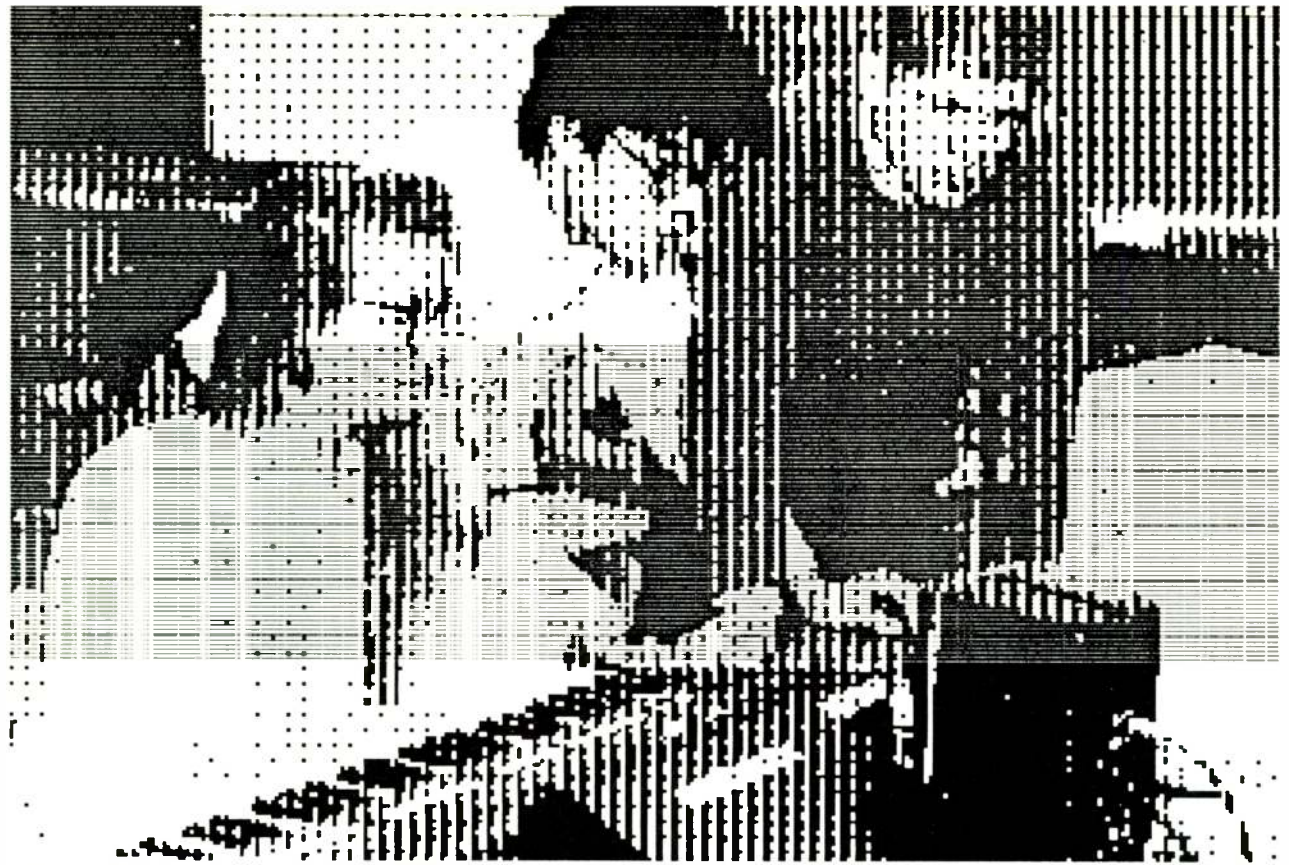
Due to past success stories, children's performers now have more opportunities to grow and mature as artists. According to Hampson, there are numerous more facilities to practice and perform in than there were a decade ago. "It's a growth industry," she adds. "Things that were innovative twelve years ago are quite commonplace now."

And while appealing to a young audience may look easy, it's not. *Sharon, Lois and Bram Sing A to Z*, will testify that working within their industry requires a dedicated and continued exchange with children.

Jack Grunsky, of The Children's Group, echoes Hampson's sentiments. "Children as an audience are wonderful," he reports. "They're very receptive and also very critical. It makes the performer work all the harder."

Grunsky, whose two albums include *Imaginary Window* and *Children Of The Morning*, acknowledges the work of acts like Sharon, Lois and Bram in helping to bring Canadian children's music to both national and international audiences. "They have paved the way and have contributed enormously to the awareness and the need for children's music," he states.

In the end, Gilles Paquin feels that children's music should serve more than just an economic purpose. For his part, he believes both the message and the music must be strong, and that it be shared by both parents and children. Like other forms, children's music should exist to do what music has always been meant to do — unite its listeners. ■



THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

by Shelagh O'Donnell

It's a big night for the grade nine band at Toronto's Nelson Boylan Collegiate. They're playing for Commencement in front of their first live audience, and performance pressure is at a peak. But tonight, they're confident they'll deliver — backed by a sequencer, computer and sound module borrowed from the high school's computer music course.

This may sound like a forecast for the future of music education, but it's happening now. In this fast-paced environment of constantly changing variables, the need for teaching facilities, curriculae, and instructors to remain current is crucial. In its infancy less than a decade ago, computer and MIDI technology is now a fact of life, and more and more educators believe that teaching a music student the computer is teaching them to earn a living in the next century.

I have always felt and still feel that technology is a great equalizer," says Sara Jordan, head of music at Nelson Boylan, a high school breaking new ground on the collegiate level, with courses on computer music and computer-based video production. "Everyone is put on equal footing because it starts everyone back at square one. It allows kids from a school community who may not have had years of private lessons to have an edge over traditionally trained musicians. They have this edge because they learn to think harmonically, they learn good keyboard skills and they are computer-literate through the use of MIDI. Or is it that they become MIDI-literate through the use of the computer?"

A pioneer of computer-based music programs, Trebas Institute of Recording Arts introduced their first digital course in 1979 — four years before the digital CD hit the market.

"The reaction (from students) was 'Why? What's this for?' because they didn't see anything out there," says Trebas president David Leonard. "Students don't necessarily have the vision of the future of the music industry. They come into the program based on a perception, whatever that is, of the industry today or at that time. As digital technology started hitting the market, they began to realize that they didn't really understand everything it could do."

Trebas offers two separate programs: Recording Arts, which encompasses music production and audio engineering technology, and Music Business Administration (MBA). The Recording Arts courses all use computers, with students learning how to build as well as operate equipment.

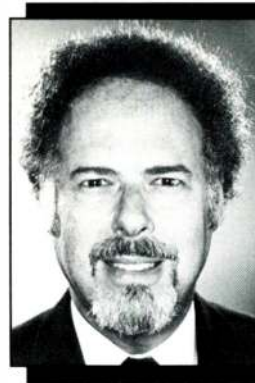
"It's one thing to look superficially at the knobs on the equipment or at a sales brochure, but you're a lot more educated when you understand what it can really do. The opportunities are there to be more creative as a musician and producer if you understand the depth and breadth of what technology can do."

Technological advancements in the music industry are also re-defining music-based career descriptions. Boundaries such as those between recording and production are becoming increasingly fuzzy, as technology allows one person to do the jobs of many.

"A musician and an engineer or producer — until very recently — were separate people, separate functions. Now, engineering types are learning more of the musical elements and getting into production, and we see musicians who are taking control of the equipment because, for a \$10,000 investment, you can get the creative opportunities that used to require a quarter-of-a-million-dollar studio. Musicians start learning about technology, and engineers produce their own sounds." Students are increasingly required to understand the concerns facing those on both sides of the recording studio glass.

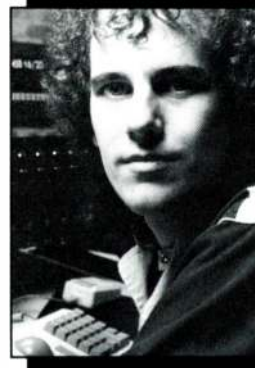
Merging boundaries between audio and video are also affecting what students are learning, to be competitive in the work force.

Though the film and television industry and the music industry traditionally were two separate entities, the influx of the music video has seen audio people involved in video production and television people concentrating more on audio as TV sound becomes more sophisticated to meet the requirements of the public's educated ears. As a result, many sound studios have upgraded to post production and synchronization facilities, and courses such as Trebas' Audio Post Production for Video are becoming more and more popular. "This is an area where studios haven't been able to find people other than training them hands-on. There just haven't been schools doing this."



David P. Leonard (Trebas Institute of Recording Arts)

PHOTO JOHN MCQUEEN AND ASSOCIATES



Jim Burgess (Saved By Technology)

PHOTO DAVID LEE



Sara Jordan (Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute)



John Harris (Harris Institute)

Continued...

THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Generic Training

Because current technology is often 'flavour of the month,' there is a risk that the equipment learned by a student could be outdated before it's even mastered. To compensate for this problem, teaching facilities like the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology (OIART), designed to train students for entry level into the recording engineering studio business, are providing students with generic training — that is, with the ability to apply skills to more than just currently popular equipment.

"For instance, with reverb units we teach them how all reverb units work, whether you're in a cave or using the most modern piece of technical equipment. Our thoughts are that the industry is changing so quickly that if

we just teach them how the hardware works, they won't be very well prepared for new innovations. Rather than learn every new piece of equipment, a solid understanding of the theory should enable them to adapt their knowledge to the new equipment as it comes out," says OIART registrar Geoff Keymer.

"Another problem being identified by music educators in this area (not performance but a recording studio situation)," says Geoff, "is that the industry changes so rapidly that we have to add more and more courses at the end of our program, (like the recent addition of an audio for video program), but the earlier ones can't be deleted because they act as building blocks. In other words, courses aren't increasing in length of duration but in content, so the graduate from this year will have much more information than the graduate from five years ago. It becomes a bit of a problem in that we're expecting more and more from our students, but in the same respect our students are much more sophisticated."

Though professional musicians who have diligently studied an instrument for years may find the concept of being replaced by a sample less than pleasing, most educators feel that the technology will open rather than close doors. Says John Harris, director of Toronto's Harris Institute, musicians are now enabled to do things that couldn't have been dreamt of ten years ago, like being capable of handling vastly more elements of composition and arranging alone. "A lot of people see technology as scary and putting people out of work, but my view is that it enables the creative community to do more than a single person has ever been able to do before. As a creative tool, it's a bonus for songwriters and arrangers who can now do practically everything themselves." At the institute which just celebrated its first birthday, Harris combines creative, technological and business aspects in all their courses. Two programs are offered: Producing/Engineering, which includes composition,

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arranging, the technology of sound recording and business; and Recording Arts Management, focusing on industry management functions. In development stages is a Technical Training Centre, a fully-integrated training facility with MIDI, a 24-track recording studio, audio post-production, live sound and lighting.

The Computer As Instructor

Not only are music students being educated *on* computers, they're being educated *with* computers. "We're seeing a definite increase in the number of teachers interested in integrating MIDI into their curriculae. There's a new willingness and interest level from music educators, and that is helping to get the technology out into more music curriculae," says Saved By Technology's Jim Burgess. The two most popular computers used by music educators, according to

Burgess, are the Apple Macintosh and the Atari ST, both of which offer a variety of educational software packages. For the Macintosh, an ear-training program called *Listen* is available that features interactive exercises, as well as one called *Practica Musica*, which incorporates not only ear training but music theory, music notation and scoring. One of the top programs for the Atari is *Take Note*, featuring both guitar and keyboard mappings for all the different chord types and a series of exercises that students can choose to focus on. Coda is another company that offers music scoring programs such as *Perceive*, focusing on ear-training.

"With ear training programs, students can work at their own pace in an interactive fashion and choose the exercises they want. For example, some have exercises for identifying different intervals or inversions, so the student can choose his particular area of interest or deficiency and concentrate on it, working on their own without having

to have a teacher over their shoulder. This sort of software has been popular for both music students in a traditional school and for individuals at home who are just looking to learn more about music and feel more comfortable working at their own pace," says Burgess.

Software is also available to facilitate the learning of synthesis. Opcode produces a line of sound editors for this purpose, and Atari offers a similar product, a universal editor for most synthesizers from Dr. T. called *X-Or*. Sampling is another area for people to learn, and a variety of sample editors are available for various computers. DigiDesign produces a program called *Sound Designer* that teaches how sounds are put together and how to loop, truncate and set up sampled sounds.

"You can speak of a sequencer as a sort of MIDI-based tape recorder," says Burgess, "and what most people are interested in is being able to record and then play it back and build up a composition. There are a lot of



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THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

different sequencers on the market ranging from about \$100, but the best ones offer the ability to instantly transcribe what someone plays directly into music notation. "This is not only a very useful thing when you're composing music, it also has a very high educational value. A program from C-Lab called *Notator* has been extremely popular because it's one of the few on the market that can instantly create a score from what somebody plays. If someone wants to learn the relationship between what they play on a keyboard versus notes on a staff or vice versa, this is one of the best ways."

Nova Scotia's Canadian Conservatory of Music is starting to implement technological training with a new intermediate teaching tool called the Kawai GBI Session Trainer. It operates on the concept of "music minus one" — offering

programs from which any instruments can be removed, letting the student play solos on top of the remaining tracks. "It teaches them how to play in time, helps them play scales over progressions and helps them practice soloing or rhythm training," says Bruce Chapman, director of the Conservatory. "I think it will help them to be better players, because no matter how many lessons you take or how long you play along on a record, if you're a bass player playing along to a record that has the bass part on it, you never really get down to it until you're playing in a group — and this is the closest you'll come."

The advent of music instruction on video and audio cassette has drastically changed the way many musicians are educated. Now, they have the ability to learn from people, which they otherwise wouldn't have. Music students are becoming educated by the best people in their respective field in the privacy of their own homes, digesting the information at their own pace.

Rumark Video caters to this market, offering close to two hundred videos, ranging from beginning level to professional instruction on all major instruments and styles. Mark Helman of Rumark explains another advantage to this type of learning: "Students may become bored with one teacher, not because the teacher isn't good, but just because they may become disenchanted with the same thing all the time and stop taking lessons. Video offers them something different for the moment, so when they go back to their teacher, they have something new to discuss. It really opens up a lot of doors."

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Memories of weekly childhood piano lessons and forced practising at the hands of well-intentioned parents still haunt many musicians. The frustration often associated with learning a new instrument can ultimately overshadow its pleasures. However, the concept of music education as a chore is fast becoming antiquated, as innovative educators are putting the fun back into learning, through curriculae developed to meet both the needs and desires of modern students.

"It's really time to put enjoyment into music education," says *CM* publisher Jim Norris. "When you think back to high school, who would you rather hang out with, the music teacher or the gym teacher? Chances are it was the gym teacher. The fun associated with sports should also be associated with learning music."

Paulette Brault, national director of the international, innovative Pianosonics program, is an educator helping to make this happen. "We've all learned the old way, and a lot of

children as well as teachers are getting tired of traditional teaching methods. The times are changing quickly, as far as computers and so forth, and education has to change with them," she says. "The Pianosonics program, now in its first year, was developed over the last decade by a collaborative of music teachers combining their wants and needs for a new program suited to current times, but still meeting Royal Conservatory requirements. The result is a combination of 'fun' teaching methods like flash cards, rhythm drills, creative work, listening games and ensemble experience teaching students to read music, transpose, improvise and sight read all within the first year. Students aren't restricted to the middle range of the keyboard, as with traditional training, allowing them to play more satisfying music from an early stage," says Brault. Another large break from traditional training is that students don't read standard notation in the beginning, based on the idea that playing facilities

shouldn't be limited by note reading level.

"The importance of developing the much needed reading skills is not ignored; therefore, the rules and concepts of music are mastered one step at a time, giving the student the background to move into traditional note-reading more progressively. "By the time they arrive at traditional music, both the sight-reading skills and playing skills are fundamentally sound," says Brault.

"What's different about our program is that it's a peer group situation that provides extra incentive to practice, making it enjoyable for all. Teachers were getting tired of losing their students at about the grade 4 or 5 level. The number of students who couldn't learn with the traditional approach, which is largely the 'show and tell' method of teaching, and had long been considered 'untalented,' turned out to be a sizeable majority. "Music is a language that's meant to be enjoyable. A lot of people are what psychologists called 'motor minded'

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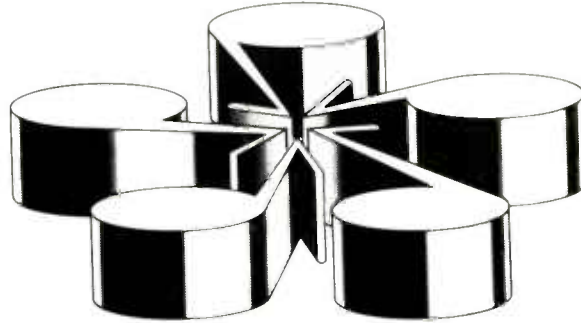
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THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

— they learn readily through muscular experience — so we're actually teaching kinesthetics at the same time, which is highly effective but seldom used in the teaching profession. In order to truly learn anything, one first needs to experience it; so what we're doing is actually lending our hands to our students to help them memorize the correct feeling. Music is a means of communication and self-expression, and that's how it should have been taught in the first place.

"Kids and adults are learning the same things they did twenty years ago, it's just a different approach. We're doing it quicker because of the steps that are combined — the theory and the practical, together — and they're getting a quicker understanding of what they're doing so that the music background is

becoming stronger in the first two years, rather than 'push, push, shove, learn how to read, get into the conservatory, and then if you ever do get around grade eight level you'll understand how it all works'. Nobody wants to learn that way anymore."

Moving With The Times

Changes in the way music is taught go hand in hand with changes in styles of music being taught. Gone are the days when a young Zeppelin fan would come away from his umpteenth guitar lesson with a long face and another verse of *Four Strong Winds* under his belt. Hardly satisfying, and certainly not reflective of the unbridled passion oozing from the instruments of his rock heroes. The surge of jazz programs in music schools during the early seventies laid the groundwork for the acceptance of non-classical music training as a legitimate form. Since then, music schools focusing on

commercial and pop music, like the Professional Musicians College, open for five years in Regina and two years in Winnipeg, have grown to meet the very legitimate needs of today's professional musician, catering to the practicality of music training in the nineties. "What we try to do is prepare people to go out and play gigs wherever they have to, so we go through a lot of different media, like rock, country and jazz. In order to be a musician who plays all the time, you have to be able to play a variety of styles. When you go to a university or a more traditional style of teaching, you're pretty well into a classical style only," says principal Greg Dunstan.

In the same vein of commercial music, Selkirk College in Nelson, B.C. has been offering a Professional Music Program for the past two years. Demand for the program, which includes use of an eleven-station MIDI lab and 24-track recording studio, "has been phenomenal, even without the use of advertising," says chairman Darcy Hepner.

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Traditionally-based educational companies like Yamaha are also moving with the times, teaching not only traditional piano courses but also group courses, like the one designed for the "Yamaha Electone" electric organ. Alan Pulsifer, national course supervisor, says programs like this are of increasing interest to children and teens as well as adults. "Obviously, a lot of people's conception of the organ is your typical Hammond church-style organ; but today it has really grown into a three-keyboard, multi-synthesizer, using a lot of sampled sounds that sound like the real instrument. "We deal with arranging concepts and orchestration, because the instrument has that capability. It can sound like anything from a full orchestra to a jazz trio to a pipe organ," says Pulsifer. "I think the general public is becoming much more aware of what's going on out there, technology-wise. You still have that old school of people who stick to the traditional acoustic instruments, like piano, but I've seen a marked increase in the number of people who are considering all the options of modern technology. People are becoming more educated and therefore they're demanding more as well." Yamaha also has a pop ensemble course in the pilot stages, using current synthesizers and drum machines in a group format.

Basic Skills Unchanged

Though technology is changing teaching styles and content, the basic fundamentals of music are still as important as ever. Without them, the musician runs the risk of becoming merely a 'button pusher'. "Music itself still involves the same things as it always did. The teaching of music requires skills that remain the same, whether the application is

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HYPER HACKING:

PART THREE

CREATING YOUR OWN PROTEUS LIBRARIAN

As Carl Sagan would say, "In order to bake an apple pie, we must first...invent the universe!" Well, I can't give tips on your own personal universe creation, but I can provide the third and final instalment on how to create a patch librarian in HyperCard for the Emu Proteus! All of the introductory poop has been covered in the first two instalments, so you may want to dust those off and review a bit to bring your bad self back up to speed. For the vast majority of you out there who have been keeping a vigil by your mailbox, sleeping in a moldy pup tent surrounded by enough empty beer cans to make your trendy environmentally-conscious neighbours file a petition to have you forcibly removed beyond the city limits, here are the final three button scripts. First up is the 'Load' button. Type this into the 'Load' button's script exactly as you see it.

on mouseUp

```
global DataType,InByte,theLength,
thePatch,thePatch2
global thePatch3,thePatch4,thePatch5
put "" into cd fld Status
put "" into InByte
put "" into thepatch
put "" into thepatch2
put "" into thepatch3
put "" into thepatch4
put "" into thepatch5
get hmUtility("flushInput",1)
put fileName("TEXT") into filename
if filename is not empty then
  go to this card
  put "Opening file" & filename into
  cd fld Status
  open file filename
  read from file filename until return
  if it is "Proteus" &return then
    read from file filename until return
  end if
  if it is "User Preset" &return then
    put "User Preset" into DataType
  end if
  if it is "Factory Preset" &return then
    put "Factory Presets" into
    DataType
```

```
end if
if it is "Master Settings" &return then
  put "Master Settings" into
  DataType
end if
if it is "Tuning Table" &return then
  put "Tuning Table" into DataType
end if
set cursor to busy
put "Unpacking Data..." into cd
fld Status
read from file filename until return
put it into thePatch
read from file filename until return
put it into thePatch2
read from file filename until return
put it into thePatch3
read from file filename until return
put it into thePatch4
read from file filename until return
put it into thePatch5
else
  answer "Not a Proteus File" with "OK"
```

```
exit mouseup
end if
close file filename
put thepatch into outbyte
put thepatch2 after outbyte
put thepatch3 after outbyte
put thepatch4 after outbyte
put thepatch5 after outbyte
if last word of outbyte <> "F7" then
  beep
  answer "Not a complete Sys-Ex
  file!" with "OK"
  exit mouseup
else
  repeat while last char of filename
  <> ":"
    put last char of filename before
    temp
    delete last char of filename
  end repeat
  put numtochar of 34 & temp &
  numtochar of 34 & "has been
  loaded!" into cd fld Status
end if
put DataType into cd fld "DataType"
end mouseUp
```



Robert Bailey teaches Digital Sound at Capilano College, works as a software engineer at MotionWorks (a Vancouver Macintosh developer), and has been the keyboard player for Paul Janz for the last four years.

PHOTO: PATRICIA GREER

The 'Load' button reads a suitable data file from your disk and loads it into handy containers in HyperCard. It then verifies that the last byte of information loaded was an "F7" (the decimal equivalent of this number is 247), which signifies the end of a System Exclusive message. The most accurate way to error-check a bulk dump message is to count the number of bytes. However, every synth has a different number of bytes in its patch dump message, so if this stack were to be modified (easily done!) to include other synths, a more generic approach to error-checking such as the one we use would be called for.

The 'Save' button script performs the inverse operation of the 'Load' button. It packs the data that has been comfortably residing in the various HyperCard containers and writes it to disk as a data file bearing the name of your choice. This is a great example of how HyperCard enables a very involved bit of programming to be done using only a few lines of code.

Continued...

```

global InByte,theLength,thePatch,the
Patch2,thePatch3
global DataType,thePatch4,thePatch5
put newFileName("Save Dump As:",
"Proteus") into filename
if filename is not empty then
go to this card -- refresh
if InByte = " " then exit mouseup
open file filename
write "Proteus" & return to file
filename
write DataType & return to file
filename
set cursor to busy
put "Writing new data file..." into
cd fld Status
write thePatch & return to file
filename
write thePatch2 & return to file
filename
write thePatch3 & return to file
filename
write thePatch4 & return to file
filename
write thePatch5 & return to file
filename
close file filename
put "Done!" into cd fld Status
end if
end mouseUp

```

Last, but certainly not least, is the 'Send' button. It packs the necessary data in much the same fashion as the 'Save' button, but writes the data to the MIDI interface (check your MIDI Manager!) instead of the disk. Due to the conversion routines I have included here (I like to work in Hex, don't ask me why...), it can take a few seconds for your Mac to finish chugging before the actual data is sent, so don't freak out if you try the stack out for the first time and the send button doesn't appear to work!

```

on mouseUp
global thepatch,thepatch2,thepatch3,
thepatch4,thepatch5
set the cursor to busy
put "Packing Data..." into cd fld Status
put thepatch into outbyte
put thepatch2 after outbyte
put thepatch3 after outbyte
put thepatch4 after outbyte
put thepatch5 after outbyte
put "Converting From Hex..." into
cd fld Status
put hmConvert(outByte) into temp2
put "Sending Bulk Data..." into
cd fld Status
hm WriteMIDI temp2
put "Done!..." into cd fld status
end mouseUp

```

That should do it! This stack was written with the beta version of HyperMIDI 2.0, for which I would like to thank Nigel Redmon

(of EarLevel Engineering, 21213-B Hawthorne Blvd., #5305, Torrance, CA 90509-2881 [213] 316-2939), who is the creator of HyperMIDI 2.0 and has given us reg'lar folks a great quick 'n' dirty path to writing our own custom software. I would also like to hear from YOU! If there are any other projects like this one that you would like to see created, or if you have any other comments, please write. If you want a free copy

of this stack, send a Self Addressed Stamped Floppy Disk Mailer with a formatted 800k Mac disk in it and, yea verily, thou shalt receive:

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LIVE SOUND

The Perils of **LOW BUDGET SHOWS**

by John K. Young

Technicians often differ in their outlook on the way in which sound should be reproduced. As a soundman, I have found myself at many different venues, whether behind the house console, monitor console or just a paying customer, and I have dealt with several varied scenarios.

When mixing a live show, you must take into account the structure of the entire room that you are working; chances are it is not a controllable environment for sound. Therefore, you will be confronted with many different acoustical problems, for example, low end drag, long reverb decay times, etc. These types of problems are not easily rectified. You may be able to make the corrections by working with your house EQs, boosting and cutting frequencies to help you locate the problem spots.

It is futile to place a PA system suitable for two hundred people in a room that can be occupied by six hundred. Now you're confronted with a dilemma — how to distribute your sound. You have three choices: drive your system beyond its capability, set a normal working level for that particular system, or leave.

If you decide to go with the first choice, you take the risk of damaging the speaker system, which in turn becomes costly to band members when the system is returned to the rental company. The other possibility is having six hundred dissatisfied, unhappy, paying customers and having to deal with the repercussions. If you opt for the second choice, you will find that the desire to go with number three will gradually dissipate as the evening progresses. You will now mix your show with quality in mind and not quantity (there may be some flack directed



John K. Young is a professional sound engineer with Kostar Sound in Montreal.

towards you as to the overall output level — technically it is an inefficient PA).

There are several approaches you may take towards alleviating your troubles. You may want to discuss with the promoter and/or band members any possibility of finding the funds in order to rent the

necessary equipment to properly execute this show. If this is not feasible, another step to take to achieve greater room coverage would be to spread your monitor speakers on the stage and direct them towards your audience. You may come across phasing problems, but your audience won't notice the difference. Another possibility, if you are using a four-box system, is to place two boxes on the stage and two boxes further out facing outwards to the audience. This would be similar to using a "satellite system" for large venues — you will now have to deal with "time delay." You can time-align this system, but you must have "time alignment units" which, on the average show, are not readily available. But let's be honest — most audiences will not notice the delay factor.

The last option is to mix for an audience equivalent to your system capabilities. To accomplish good sound you must place both the soundman and his/her console at a decent location in the crowd so that the sound being heard is equal to both parties — the sound technician and the paying customer. As we know, the best vantage point for the best sound should be at the mixing console.

I have just touched the tip of the iceberg regarding low budget shows. A good thing to keep in mind whenever you are put in these or similar circumstances is, think quick, think thorough, and always wear a smile!

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RECORDING

Back to Basics: Recording Seventh Son

by Kevin Doyle

In early 1990 the band Seventh Son approached me with the intention of recording an album as live as possible, with minimum over-dubbing, and that the only sound processing should be 'pre-1970,' such as reverb, delays, guitar wah-wah's, etc.

The band was very adamant about not using any modern-day type of auxiliary gear like choruses, phasers, harmonizers, etc. Their reasoning for this was that they felt the songs should stand up on their songwriting merits alone and that a lot of production and processing would only undermine the direction the band wanted to pursue. As an engineer, I felt that this would be simple but also challenging, because it's too easy these days to take an average quality sound and make it sound better, or completely different, through a lot of processing.

It was decided that, for a different drum sound, we would switch the actual drums (mostly snare drums) but retain the same mic positions. For assorted guitar sounds, we would use different guitars with different amplifiers. The guitar player, Michael Zweig, is an engineer's dream come true when it comes to getting good guitar sounds efficiently. He uses heavy gauge guitar strings in conjunction with high action, which produces a really good sound for guitar amps to work with. By using older Fender guitar amps and an older, low-wattage Marshall, it was much easier to access good distorted guitar sounds at reasonable spl levels. It can often be very difficult to get good distorted guitar sounds, especially in live rooms, from high wattage amps with low gauge strings, because you have to turn them up so loud (try standing behind a 747 during a take-off — you'll know what I mean).

Once Michael and I would agree on a guitar/amp combination, I would record the sound before we tracked with three

different types of mics — Shure SM57, Sennheiser 421 and Sanken 41. Michael, Tim Thorney (the producer) and I would find the type of mic combo and placement we liked and then start recording. (I tried other types of condensers, e.g. AKG-414/U-87, but found that they coloured the sound too much because you had to use a mic pad. With the Sanken there is no mic pad and it will not break up at high spl level, so if I wanted more bottom end in the guitar sound I would usually use this mic rather than dynamic ones.)

For keyboards there was a piano, Wur-

litzer and (mostly) a B-3 organ with two Leslie cabinets. The idea of two cabinets was to get stereo separation and a bigger sound. The Wur-

litzer was run through an amplifier to get more edge, and the piano was often recorded in mono with a lot of compression.



PHOTO: PATRICIA GREER

Kevin Doyle was an engineer on Alannah Myles debut album, which is fast approaching Diamond status (one million units sold) in Canada.

For lead vocals I would use either a Shure SM7 or the AKG tube mic in conjunction with a Massenburg preamp and Equalizer. For compression I used a Urei LA-3 that I've had extensively modified (so that it works quite well on vocals, but you wouldn't want to use it on a bass).

With bass guitar I used a mixture of both direct (with a 0-3 ms delay) and amp with a little bit of EQ from a Pultec and compression from a Urei LA-2.

Since more than sixteen tracks were rarely used in the recording stages, and the auxiliary outboard gear was minimal, mixing proved to be very efficient as compared to more complex 32 or 48 track recordings, which require a lot of time.

The only processing I did use was two different types of reverb (one at 1 second and the other at 2.2 seconds) and one delay, usually used in an eighth-note configuration. When the mixing of a track was nearing completion I would buss EQ and compress the mix using a 2:1 ratio with a slow attack time (50ms) and fast release time (100ms).

by Holly Cole

Listening to Other Instruments

The best thing that ever happened to me as a singer was growing up in a family of instrumentalists. Although I had no intention of going into music until I was in my late teens, my parents were developing my ear at a very young age, and I was always surrounded by music. I started piano lessons (against my will) when I was five, and when we listened to the radio it was usually the CBC, which play a lot of classical music (which bored me as a kid). But when I got the chance to sing along to popular music, my dad would suggest that, instead of singing the melody, I pick out one of the harmonies to sing, or maybe even the bass line. This was an excellent approach for a kid because I got to listen to the kind of music I liked in such a way that it made me learn a lot about music generally.

When I was sixteen I took a trip to Boston to visit my brother, who was studying piano at the Berklee College of Music. It was then that I discovered jazz music and decided that



PHOTO: PATRICIA GREER

Holly Cole's first album, Girl Talk, performed by the Holly Cole Trio and produced by Peter Moore (Cowboy Junkies) is available on the Alert Label.

I would become a jazz saxophone player. When I returned home I bought a junior

model alto saxophone and tons of used jazz instrumental albums. I imitated every sax player and listened to tons of other instrumentalists as well.

Then one day someone played a Sarah Vaughan album for me. Until that point I hadn't really heard any of the great jazz singers, and I instantly became obsessed with it. So I bought all the vocal jazz albums I could and, at first, spent a lot of time imitating those singers. But I never stopped listening to those instrumentalists who had initially influenced me before I was a singer.

Being a singer and only listening to singers, or only listening to the vocals within music is like listening to only one style of music. It can only limit your ideas. The main problem I see in singers is a limited understanding of how the music works, one that only stretches as far as their role within it; whereas, if you understand, even generally, the roles that the other instruments play, it will affect the choices you make as a singer.



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TAKING • THE • MYSTERY OUT OF MUSIC MANUFACTURING PART • TWO

CD technology has without a doubt revolutionized our industry faster than anyone could have imagined. It has allowed us to transfer and reproduce up to seventy-five minutes of program from virtually any source and gain the highest fidelity possible. This theory sounds great but, unfortunately, it is not quite precise. In actual fact, a finished product compact disc will only supply an enhanced version of the master used to manufacture it. In other words, if your master tape is not produced exactly the way you want it, the CD you make from it won't sound any better. The process of manufacturing compact discs cannot, for example, alter the top or bottom end of your tape master, but will instead exaggerate them and any other defect present.

Here then are the steps your master tape will go through during manufacturing, and some things you should be doing to ensure a smooth transition from plant to store shelf.

Most manufacturers can accept any format of master tape but must, without exception, change your master to a Sony format 1610 or 1630 U-matic tape with a sampling frequency of 44.1 kHz. This pre-mastering stage can be done at the plant or a select number of qualified mastering facilities. This transfer process also involves preparation of the master for P&Q subcoding. This subcode will eventually enable the CD player to define the program configuration on the finished CD. The next step is to produce a glass master. As with the lacquer cutting process in vinyl manufacturing, the glass master is the first disc impression of the final product. Digital information is transferred directly from your PQd master to a glass disc coated with organic polymer. A series of positive and negative impressions of this glass master is then manufactured until a suitable stamper is obtained for the injection moulding process.

Contrary to popular belief, a compact disc is not pressed as its distant cousin, the vinyl record. It is instead extruded through an injection moulding machine. Its content consists of a polycarbonate resin which is introduced in dry pellet form and then super-heated until pliable. After moulding, the next step is to coat the finished disc with a film of aluminum to protect this surface against damage. A thin layer of lacquer is then applied. After final inspection of the finished

disc, the label is printed directly onto the top surface. This is usually done using a silk screen method.

Depending on the extent of the services provided by the manufacturer you have chosen, you may have to provide them with



PHOTO: PATRICIA GREER

Brian Daley is Marketing and Sales Account Executive for Canadian independent artists at Cinram Ltd. Cinram Ltd. manufactures compact discs, cassette tapes and vinyl LPs and singles for most of Canada's major and independent record labels. Brian is closely associated with radio promoters and independent record labels.

finished label negatives and printed inserts. If your supplier provides a full design and printing service in addition to manufacturing, it pays to have as much of the typesetting done yourself prior to bringing the package to them. This can be sourced easily by asking a local print shop who they might recommend. By doing this, you decrease the possibilities of type errors and have greater control over type style and layout. The CD manufacturer should be able to provide accurate dimensional information for any size booklet and tray card.

I can't stress enough how important the graphic design stage of your project is. The image portrayed by your graphics can have a profound effect on its distribution success. This is not to suggest that elaborate and expensive artwork and design will guarantee sales. An imaginative, fresh approach using eye-catching visuals can usually produce the best results. Some of the most appealing graphics I've seen use no colour at all, but are simply variations of black on white. I suggest you take the time to investigate different graphic styles used by major recording artists prior to beginning your design.

In addition to the standard information you put on the graphics, don't forget the obvious things that will make your product more readily accessible to the customer, distributor or radio station music director. They include a) catalogue number, b) manufacturer reference (name, address, phone number of your record company), c) copyright and publishing information, d) M.A.P.L. Canadian content logo, e) compact disc logo, f) master source indication logo (i.e., A.D.D. or D.D.D.) and g) distribution information, if applicable.

The most common method of packaging a compact disc is in a clear plastic jewel box with black tray and shrinkwrap. CD singles can also be supplied in 5" CD jackets, eliminating the need for jewel boxes. This lightweight alternative may be a consideration when your postage budget for promotional distribution of singles is tight. These methods of packaging have proven more effective at the retail level and do not contribute as much to our country's growing environmental concerns as did their predecessors, the blister pack and long box.

Manufacturing costs can vary depending on the type and style of the inserts you choose. A standard compact disc product is supplied with a two panel (4" high x 8" long, folded once) insert and tray card. Costs per 1,000 discs can range from \$3,300 for black and white graphics to \$3,700 on average for colour. These costs include manufacturing, art, film and print. As previously discussed, costs for participation in a CD compilation usually start just under 1,000. Remember that, whether you put a five-minute program or seventy-two minute program on a disc, in most cases the manufacturing costs are the same.

As discussed in my last article, the move to manufacturing your own compact disc may not be for you now. You may decide that a compilation better fits your budget. Whatever your decision, a cautious, step-by-step approach should be used. You must evaluate carefully the product mix between CD, tape and LP you have chosen. At \$3.70 each, you don't want to be stuck with 999 compact discs in your basement collecting dust.

My next instalment will investigate in more detail the manufacturing process of cassette tapes and cassette singles. I will also explain, in detail, how you can manufacture these 1,000 compact discs for free.

VIDEO

HOW TO MAKE A C H E A P V I D E O T H A T D O E S N ' T L O O K I T

By Ian Menzies

Although most of the videos seen today cost more than the average house to make, there have been a great many very successful ones made on surprisingly low budgets; there's no reason you can't do the same. Here are some suggestions that will help you spend your limited resources in the right places.

Getting Started

First and foremost, make sure you're happy with the quality of the recording of your song. Things will be much easier if you have the finished mix before you do anything else. And you'll also be more inspired as you work on the video if you've got a great sounding track. The other thing to establish right up front is just exactly what your budget is. Whether it's \$5,000 to \$25,000, knowing your spending limit will help ensure that you get everything done before you run out of money (financial assistance is available from several sources, including VideoFact and Factor).

Pre-Production

There are several things that need to be done in preparation for the actual shooting of the video. The first one is probably the easiest — coming up with a concept. Although thematic story lines can be good, I strongly recommend a live performance approach for first-time videos — they are generally more effective and less expensive.

The next thing you have to do is probably the most difficult — finding the right people. There are three key jobs in the video process that are best served by knowledgeable professionals. They are: cinematographer, editor and director. To me, the single most important factor in making a good looking video is who's behind the camera. No matter how many friends you know who will do it for free, a professional cinematographer is worth the money. The other thing that can make or break a project is the editing. This is where both the flow of the video and the timing of the lip-sync are decided — crucial ingredients to an overall professional look.

As far as a director goes, someone with video experience is not essential; but you should have someone who understands your concept and from whom everyone feels comfortable taking directions. At all times you should try and get people who are enthusiastic about your project. Many professionals, if properly approached, will take on a project at well below their normal rates.

The other major decision to be made is location. To keep costs low it is absolutely essential that you shoot all your footage in one location, preferably indoors (you don't want to rely on the weather). For this reason a place with several possible changes of scenery, such as a warehouse with several small rooms and hallways, is a good choice. With a little creativity you should be able to find a spot that you can use free of charge; but remember, you'll need it for a whole day and you'll be making lots of noise.

Finally, call on all your friends to help out with the logistics of putting it all together. You'll need lots of help with transportation, loading, food, etc., so get the whole gang involved.

Hard Costs

There are some things that you are going to have to pay for outright. The cost of the film, (don't shoot on Betacam — it just doesn't cut it) the processing, transferring to video and a decent editing suite for the final edits are all very hard to get a deal on, but shop around for the best price and take the advice of your cinematographer or director as to who does the best work. You may also have to rent some of the equipment you can't borrow, such as special lighting or a dolly track.

Post-Production

The editing process can be very time consuming, but it does not have to be expensive. Finding the rough edit points can be done quite effectively with two high quality VCRs, as long as you have SMPTE code on your video master. This enables you to spend a minimum of time in a professional editing suite making the predetermined final edits.

Of course there are many other things involved in the making of a full-fledged video, but with these basic points, a lot of ingenuity and all the favours you can muster, you should be able to pull together a cohesive, well-run project that will result in a work that sits comfortably between the latest vids from Colin James and Jeff Healey.

Next issue: Finding The Right Producer

Ian Menzies is a freelance producer, songwriter and guitarist based in Toronto. Three of the videos he has co-produced are in rotation at MuchMusic.

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Yamaha Rackmount Version Of SY77

Yamaha has introduced the Yamaha TG77 Digital Tone Generator, utilizing the same RCM (Realtime Convolution and Modulation Synthesis) as the Yamaha SY77.

Although compatible with the SY77, the TG77's 128 ROM voices and 16 ROM Multis are new. In addition, a new naming system allows for quick identification of the type of voice being called up. In addition to the two sets of stereo outputs featured on the SY77, the TG77 has 8 programmable individual polyphonic outputs (for a total of twelve outputs). The Multi Edit menu has been expanded, allowing the user to assign any voice to any output.



Static Voice Allocation (SVA) has been added to the TG77, providing an alternative to Dynamic Voice Allocation. SVA allows exact programmability of polyphony per voice.

As with the SY77, the front panel of the TG77 has a 40 x 8 character, backlit LCD. New screens have been added to the software. The front panel also contains dual concentric volume controls, headphone jack, and effects bypass switch.

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

Drum Gun

Held and worn like a guitar, the Drum Gun is outfitted with three touch-sensitive pads in the body, and a series of sensors implanted in the neck. Through its interface with the Roland OctaPad, many percussion and melodic sound combinations are possible.



For more information, contact: Drum Gun Inc., 76 Clinton St., Doylestown, PA 18966.

New from TASCAM

TASCAM has introduced three new Portastudios, including the **Porta-03**, the **424** and the **488**. The Porta-03 features two mixable mic/line inputs that can be recorded onto any of four tracks. The 424 features three speeds, eight inputs, DBX noise reduction, pitch control and MIDI sync in-out jacks. The 488 features twelve inputs, 3 3/4 ips tape speed, DBX noise reduction and an eight-track cassette recording system.

For more information, contact: TEAC Canada Ltd., 340 Brunel Rd., Mississauga,



ON L4Z 2C2 (416) 890-8008, FAX (416) 890-9888.

Kurzweil MicroSequencer

The Kurzweil MS-1 MicroSequencer is a digital data recorder that works with any MIDI-equipped home keyboard. The MS-1's cassette deck-type controls let the user record, edit and play back up to four different "tracks." Each track can be made up of a number of musical "parts." The user can play in one part at a time, or can listen to one part while recording the next. The MS-1 also has advanced editing capabilities such as track merge, track loop, patch thru, volume adjust, play all songs and track channel assignment.



For more information, contact: Young Chang (Piano) Canada Corp., 130 Royal Crest Ct., Markham ON L3R 0A1 (416) 513-6240, FAX (416) 513-6252.

Slingerland Radio King

The Slingerland Radio King snare drum has been re-introduced. The snare drum was developed decades ago by the original Slingerland designers.

Two models will be available: the **SRK110**, a 5 1/2" x 14", and the **SRK111**, a 6 1/2" x 14". The shell is made of one-piece, steam-bent sugar maple with a hide-glued lap joint; one-piece, hide-glued, lapped reinforcement rings, and a 30-degree beveled bearing edge. Hoops include



original Slingerland-style, straight, flanged, brass counter hoops which are chrome plated, and include an engraved batter hoop.

For more information, contact: B&J Music, 469 King St. W., Toronto, ON M5V 1K4 (416) 596-8361, FAX (416) 596-8822.

California Series Acoustic Guitars by Fender

Fender's **Montara** models are Dreadnought style guitars with the Fender headstock that feature a special convex back design for smoother, richer tone, according to the manufacturer.

Construction for the black, natural and sunburst models includes mahogany back and sides and a spruce top, while the flame maple model features flame maple top, back and side construction, a maple neck, and a rosewood bridge. All models have a rosewood fretboard and die-cast machine heads with pearl buttons.



An onboard electronic circuit offers active graphic equalization with volume, bass, mid and treble slide pots. The circuit is powered by a 9-volt battery, which is accessed via the sound hole.

Fender's **La Brea** black, natural and sunburst guitars feature mostly rosewood con-



struction with a spruce top, while the La Brea flame maple model offers flame maple top, back and side construction, as well as a maple neck and a rosewood bridge. All models have a rosewood fretboard and chrome die-cast machine heads.

An onboard piezoelectric pickup is mounted under the bridge; volume and tone controls are accessible on the body.

For more information, contact: Fender Canada, 45 Mural St., #7, Richmond Hill, ON (416) 881-7555.

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Emax II Enhancement From E-Mu

The Emax II is a 16-bit digital sound system, with 2Mb of internal RAM standard. Additionally, a 4Mb version with stereo sampling will be offered. The new software version 2.10 adds compatibility with new and existing CD-ROM drives and disks over its Small Computer System Interface (SCSI).

Available in rack-mount and keyboard form, Emax II is both a professional 16-bit sampler and a synthesizer, utilizing E-mu's Spectrum In-

terpolation Digital Synthesis.

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sixteen voices or sixteen monophonic voices with true stereo chorusing. Thirty-two custom digital lowpass filters (1 per channel) provide "analog-style" timbre control. Eighteen-bit DACs (Digital to Analog Convertors) are at all eight polyphonic outputs (configured as four stereo pairs).

For more information, contact: E-mu Systems, Inc., 1600 Green Hills Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066 (408) 438-1921.



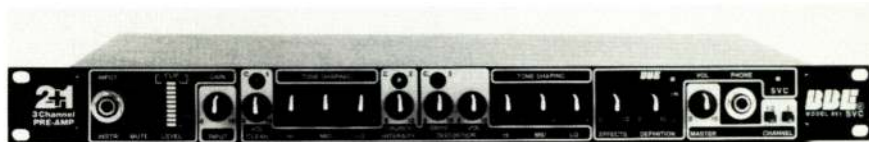
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The **Pocket Sequencer** is a compact sixteen-track MIDI sequencer. **Pocket Sync** is a "smart" FSK-to-MIDI tape sync device, allowing the user to synchronize his or her sequencer to any tape deck.

Pocket Sequencer features the capability to overdub new parts as well as punch in and out at any point in the song. An "Accept" buffer allows experimentation without writing over existing track data unless desired.

There are also four levels of quantization to correct any timing errors on desired tracks. Song data is stored in a RAM card that plugs into a port on the side of the unit.

Pocket Sync has MIDI in and out and audio in and out. All functions take place automatically. When MIDI timing data is present at the MIDI input, Pocket Sync will output FSK at the audio out. When FSK is present at the audio input, the corresponding

MIDI timing data is output from the MIDI out.

These devices require no batteries or external AC adaptor.

For more information, contact: Anatek Microcircuits Inc., 230-212 Brooksbank Ave., N. Vancouver, BC V7J 2C1 (604) 980-6850, FAX (604) 980-2722.

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The Ensonic EPS-16 Plus digital sampling workstation provides 16-bit sampling with 100dB signal-to-noise performance. Internal memory comes standard with 1 megabyte RAM, with optional expansion to 2 megabytes. A new form of optional memory expansion, FLASHBANK, is user-programmable ROM memory, which can be written to multiple times, and retains its memory even when the unit is turned off. Effects provided include reverb, chorusing, flanging, phase shifting, delay, and distortion. The

EPS-16 Plus can resample sounds with their effects.

The EPS-16 Plus has an upgraded 16-track sequencer with complete editing and MIDI automated mixdown capabilities; 96 PPQ clock resolution; up to 160,000 note memory and the ability to audition all editing changes against the original part and to load sounds while the sequencer is playing.

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