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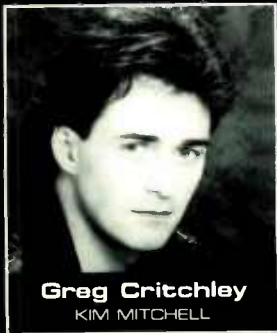
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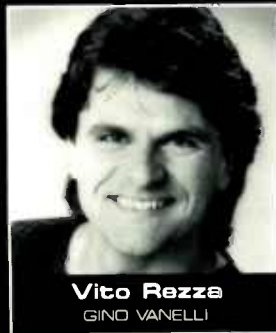
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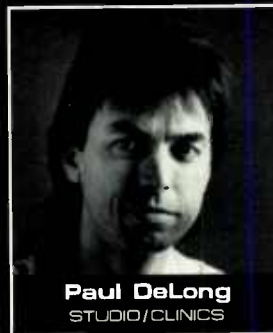
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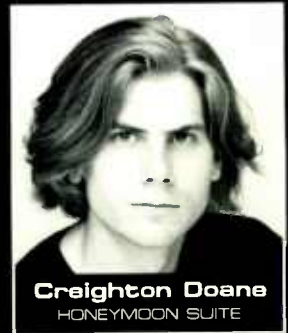
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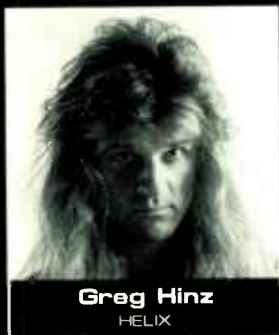
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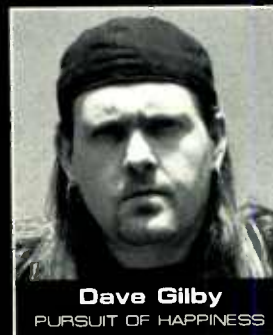
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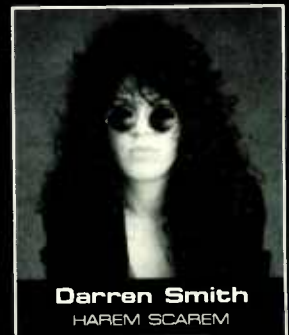
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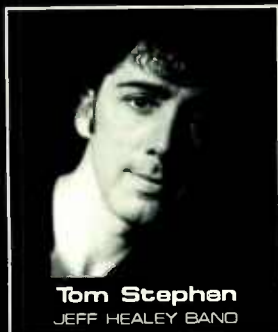
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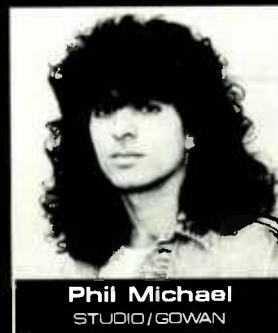
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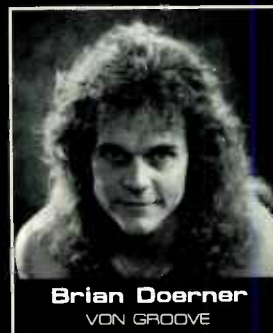
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photographed  
by  
Garth Bowman

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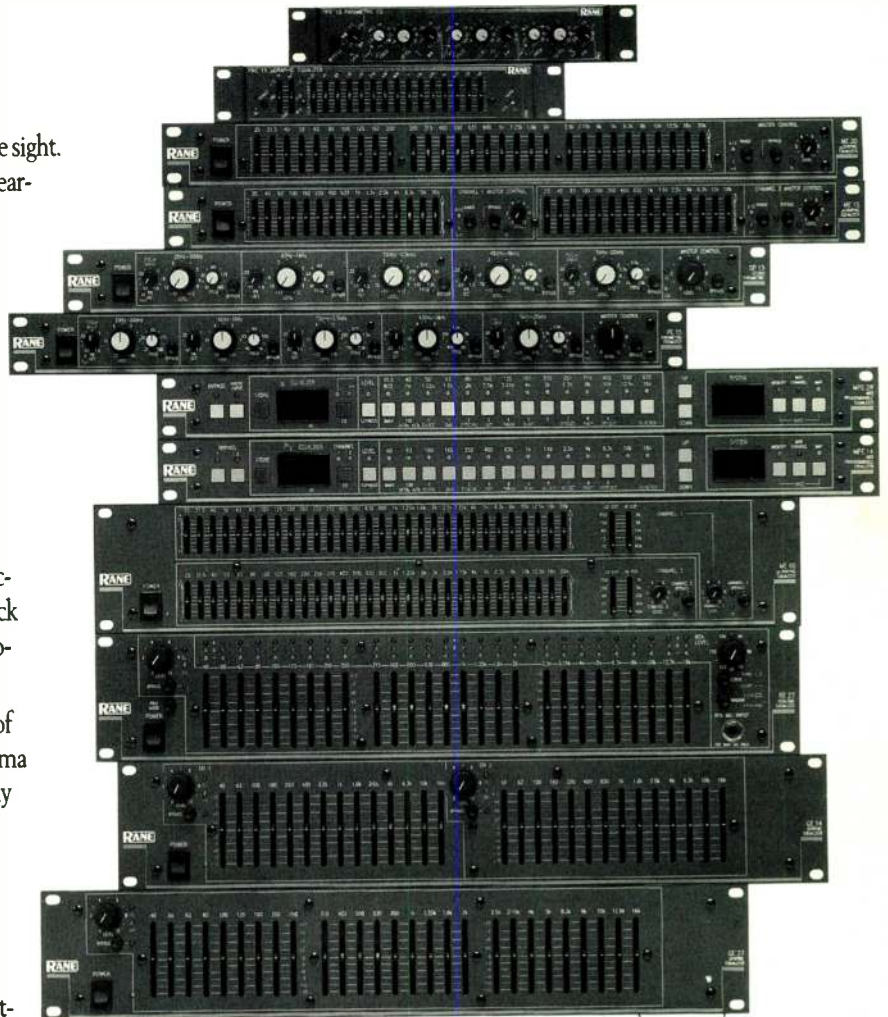
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# FEEDBACK

## INDEPENDENTLY YOURS

The article "Producing & Marketing Your Own Record" (CM April '93) was very informative and timely.

In the past six months, The Lizard has benefited immensely from the number of independent bands who are aggressively taking matters into their own hands and foregoing the usual distribution arrangements with the major labels. The Gravelberys, Universal Honey, Rymes With Orange and Big Faith are but a few more examples of a trend that your article so well addressed.

As one of a number of radio stations releasing homegrown compilations, I found the "Putting Together a Product" segment accurately reflected the dilemma that we found ourselves in when deciding on a CD or cassette format. Ultimately, the former was chosen for not only its sonic superiority but for overall cost-effectiveness. Keep up the good work!

*Jim Scanlon, Music Director  
The Lizard FM 104.7, Kelowna, BC*

## SERIOUS VOCALS

My purpose for writing this letter is to thank Brian Vollmer for writing the article "Serious Vocals — The Bel Canto Technique" in the April '93 issue of *Canadian Musician*.

This is only my first year doing voice, but my teacher tells me that I am at the level of some of her fourth and fifth year students. Your article has really helped me in improving the sound of my voice. I have never thought of "inhaling" while I sing. It really does work! It helps the falsetto, too. I find.

I thank you again, and hope to read more articles by Brian Vollmer in the future.

*Mark Murphy  
St. John's, Nfld*

## A NEW SUBSCRIBER!

I recently sent in my request for subscription after reading your April, 1993 issue. I want to congratulate you for publishing an informative, well-written, classy publication. I especially appreciate the articles written on the business side of music, a topic which gets short shrift in the fanzines. Keep up the good work!

*Bruce Wozny, Ottawa, ON*

## ON THE RIGHT TRACK

I am a songwriter who is just about to start into the music industry. I subscribed to *Canadian Musician* a year ago and had no

choice but to extend my subscription for two more years . . . this magazine is simply the best.

I read the article written by Tim Moshansky (CM April '93) carefully and I have a few questions about how to reach certain contacts. For instance, SOCAN, CMJ (*College Music Journal*) in New York, etc. Also, I would like to know if there is an easy way to get all the addresses of every campus radio station in Canada as mentioned in the article.

*Al Barrett, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, PQ*

\*Ed: The Head Office address for SOCAN is 41 Valleybrook Dr., Don Mills, ON M3B 2S6 (416) 445-8700, FAX (416) 445-7108. You may call their Montreal office at (514) 844-8377. • The address for CMJ is 245 Great Neck Rd., 3rd Floor, Great Neck, NY 11021 (516) 466-6000, FAX (516) 466-7159. • As far as an easy way of getting the addresses for Canadian campus radio stations (as well as just about every other contact you'll need for Canada), pick up a copy of the Music Directory Canada 6th Edition available through The Music Bookstore, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3 (416) 641-2612, FAX (416) 641-1648. Credit Card orders (800) 265-8481.

## SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

First off, I would like to say how great your magazine is and how helpful it has been to not only me, but I'm sure to other musicians across the country.

The reason I am writing is to receive more information on how to apply for a FACTOR award. I feel that I may be eligible for an award and I would like an address or any information you can give me about the organization.

*Mark Holmes, Welland, ON*

\*Ed: FACTOR (Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent On Record) offers numerous types of grants to artists for recording and video production as well as touring. To receive more information and applications, contact: FACTOR, 125 George St., 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON • M5A 2NR • (416) 368-8678 FAX (416) 363-5021.

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# Up FRONT

## MODEM POWER

**T**hese days, it's hard to find a musician who doesn't own or have access to a personal computer. Many of you use it for writing, notation, sequencing or storing samples and sound libraries (as well as the occasional game of *Tetris* or *Crystal Quest*), but on its own, a computer is little more than an island.

The emergence and widespread use of electronic communication has allowed the computer to become the primary source of information for millions of companies and individuals around the world, and connecting your computer to the rest of the on-line world is as simple as purchasing a modem and a telecommunications program.

Without getting into the bits and bauds of telecommunications and choosing modems (there are many good computer books that cover the topic in detail), let's look at what's out there for musicians, how to contact others online and why getting connected makes sense.

### I GOT MY MODEM WORKING

Great! Now your network of contacts has extended by leaps and bounds and is only limited by how much you want to spend on connect time charges (this includes long distance charges for calling bulletin boards/numbers outside your local calling area — be careful, it adds up fast!). Although many bulletin boards let you log in for free, some charge per minute or hour. In some cases, there will be a daily time limit on connect time, others use a credit system where you either purchase credits or are awarded them for uploading files that others can share.

### WHO'S ON-LINE, AND WHAT'S IN THE ETHER

The most obvious way to contact others with your modem is to call them directly. However, this is not always the most convenient way as each of you must have your modem on and be present if you want to exchange data. The solution to this is to join one or more bulletin board services, where you have the luxury of logging on whenever you wish — any files or messages for you are stored within the host computer to be retrieved at your convenience.

There are literally hundreds of boards running in Canada alone. In its simplest form, a BBS offers one or more lines, mail functions, forums (topic-specific areas for posting questions and files), file libraries, and, if there are multiple lines, there is often a chat function where you may converse with

others in real time. Numbers for these services can be found in local computer papers and posted on bulletin boards. Some boards are platform-specific, but more and more boards are popping up that are cross-platform. Some, like MAGIC (Macintosh Awareness Group in Canada) have graphical (point and click) interfaces that make it easy to navigate through the system.

### COMPU SERVE

CompuServe Information Service is one of the largest (and best) on-line information services networks in operation, and offers thousands of program files and data records.



COMPU SERVE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

For a modest monthly fee, you can have access to everything from *American Press* news services online (updated hourly), to weather reports, travel and airline information and software/hardware support.

Most modems and telecommunications software packages come with a CompuServe subscription kit (usually offering a free month of connect time) giving you everything you need to sign up for the service. If you don't have a subscription kit (also available at most computer stores), contact CompuServe's Customer Service to obtain one at PO Box 20212, 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, OH 43220 (614) 457-8650, FAX (614) 457-8149.

Once you have signed up for the service you will receive a User ID# for logging on to the network. CompuServe has local access numbers all over the world (a full directory is available online), so you may log on in Montreal or Japan (using the same ID on any modem-equipped computer) with-

out incurring ridiculous long distance charges — a perfect way for the touring musician to keep in contact (cheaply) with a management office while on the road.

What else is there for the musician on C-Serve? Lots. The MIDI Vendor Forums have files from major manufacturers like Lexicon, JLCopper, Eventide, Opcode and lots more offering demo versions of programs, sound samples and files, price lists, new product information and support. There's Rocknet, a music news feature with information about concerts, new releases and the latest rock gossip, a whole library of reference materials and periodicals at your disposal and of course, there's thousands of other musicians all over the globe using the service you can contact.

### UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNET

No matter what type of bulletin board system you use, sending electronic mail will probably be the primary way you keep in contact with others. On small boards where the person you're contacting is also a member of that board, this will probably just be a matter of typing the recipient's name in the "To:" field.

Many of the larger services (including CompuServe, America Online, MAGIC and others) offer "gateways" that allow you to send mail to people on other networks, and this gets a little more confusing. One of the more widespread is Internet, an e-mail system that connects governmental institutions, military branches, educational institutions and commercial companies. It takes a bit more time for Internet mail to reach its destination (anywhere from half an hour to two days), but it's still faster than snail mail!

To give you an idea of how you can utilize the Internet, both writer Richard Chycki and I are members of CompuServe and MAGIC (among others), and we use these boards to stay in touch no matter where we are. When we're both in Toronto, we can easily send mail on either board by just typing in each other's name or user ID#; but if one of us is travelling, we can still keep in touch via Internet and save a costly long distance call (to do this, you will need to know the person's Internet address).

What follows is a hypothetical situation: If Rich was somewhere that didn't have a local access number for C-Serve (say, the North Pole) and wanted to e-mail my C-Serve mailbox from the computer at the North Pole University (where the only recording studio there is), it would go something like this:

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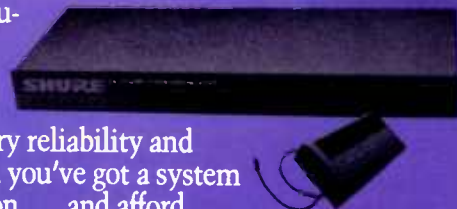
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To: 76570.1056@compuserve.com  
(my Internet address for CompuServe)

From: RChycki@northpole.edu  
(a purely fictitious address for effect)

I don't know how much longer I can stand this cold . . . all the faders on my SSL desk are frozen solid! As soon as I finish the beds for this new album by the Skitzoid Polar Bears I will be back in town with the story.

Rich

Now, as a second example, let's say Rich was logged on to CompuServe in Los Angeles and needed to send a Macintosh file to my MAGIC mailbox via Internet:

To: Shauna\_Kennedy@magic-bbs.corp.apple.com (my Internet address for MAGIC)

From: 71712.337@compuserve.com (Rich's Internet address for CompuServe)  
Okay, so I lied! I'm thawing out here on the beach in L.A. but I have uploaded the text for the story in MacBinary format (as well as a very cool sound file of penguins I sampled up north). Enjoy!

Rich

In both of the above cases, each of us have only made a local call to send or receive that information, incurring a very slight surcharge on CompuServe for using the Internet.

As you can see, using on-line services is a convenient, efficient and cost-effective way to move data, and opens up new possibilities for the musician, allowing you to test out products before you purchase, get information and expand your contacts. With so much of the world turning to digital information, don't get left behind — get connected!

## SAFETY NET

- Make sure your computer has a good virus protection program. Although most reputable boards scan all new uploads, you always run the risk of getting infected.
- Downloaded software is TRY AT YOUR OWN RISK — although there are many good shareware freeware programs out there, a lot of it is written in weird code.
- Never upload commercial programs — it's illegal and unfair.
- Send in your shareware fees.
- Disable call waiting if you're using the same line for your modem that you use for your phone — getting disconnected while downloading a 1.6 Meg file at 2400 baud is a drag.

. . . LIST'N UP! is a free music sampling and information hotline that lets you, the buying public, hear before buying from your home, office — anywhere there's a touch-tone phone. Just dial (416) 96-MUSIC (416) 966-8742, and you're introduced to a menu of nine music categories (all major genres except classical). Select a category that offers a menu of artists, punch in the desired entertainer and you get a brief intro to the CD followed by five one-minute samples of songs in digital quality. You can skip forward or backwards through songs and raise or lower the volume as desired. The artist roster is rotated regularly, so there is always new music.

. . . The Pearl Players Challenge held at this year's Music West attracted players from all over the U.S. and Canada. The Open Competition was won by Gary Grace of Welland, ON (now living in Vancouver) who won a one-year Pearl Endorsement package and will be performing clinics on behalf of Pearl Canada geared towards the street level musician.

. . . Other Canadian musicians in the winners circle include saxophonist Scott Sanft of Surrey, BC who walked away with "Outstanding Tenor Saxophonist, Solo Division" in the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival held at the University of Idaho School of Music. Scott won a top-of-the-line professional model LA-800 Tenor Sax from L.A. Sax Company and will be featured in an upcoming L.A. Sax publication.

. . . from June 23 to August 13, 1993, major radio stations will participate in one of Canada's first national songwriting competitions sponsored by Standard Radio in conjunction with Sound Source, *Canadian Musician* magazine and the Songwriters Association of Canada.

Participating stations include 103.5 QM-FM Vancouver, K-97 Edmonton, Classic Rock CJAY & The New Mix 1060 Calgary, MIX 92 Regina, Q-94 FM Winnipeg, MIX 99.9 Toronto, MAJIC 100 Ottawa, MIX 96 Montreal and VOFM The Best On The Rock in St. John's.

The ten participating stations will solicit demos of unpublished songs from their respective listening audiences. Nine winners will receive a Tascam Porta 07 Mini-Studio plus a weekend seminar in Toronto with Canada's most successful songwriters in conjunction with the Songwriters Association of Canada. Submissions will be evaluated on lyrical content, musical arrangement and commercial potential.

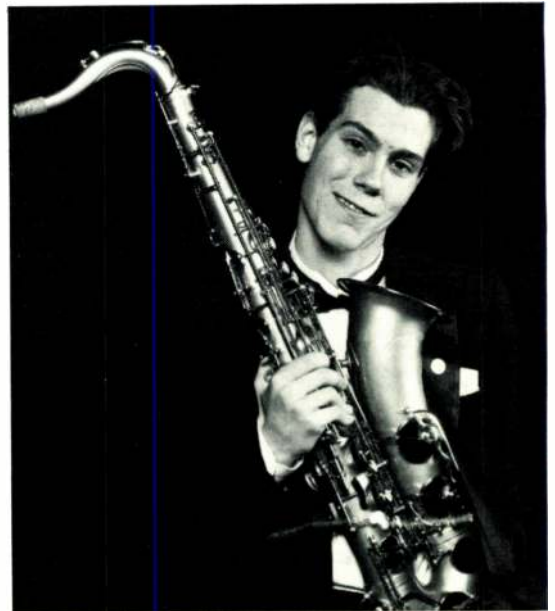
Each of the nine finalists will compete nationally for a grand prize of \$10,000 cash and their own recording session featuring Canada's top studio musicians to be produced by Eddie Schwartz for a final release on MCA Records. The winner will be announced October 5, 1993 on Sound Source's nationally-syndicated radio show, *Countdown Canada*.

For more information, contact Gary Slaight at Standard Radio (416) 960-9911, Lesley Soldat at Sound Source (416) 922-1290 or Mike McLaughlin at the Songwriters Association of Canada (416) 924-7664.

. . . The Rock Radio Network's *Canada's New Rock* is looking for material from bands for airing on their weekly radio program which is broadcast on stations across Canada. Submissions may be forwarded on cassette, DAT (preferred) or CD and anything from basement tapes to studio recordings will be considered. Please include bio and contact information with your package and address to: Q107 c/o *Canada's New Rock*, Attn. Al Joynes, 5255 Yonge St., #1400, Toronto, ON M2N 6P4.

Stations airing *Canada's New Rock* are: CFOX-FM Vancouver (Mon., 11 p.m.); C1FM-FM Kamloops (Mon., 10 p.m.) CJMG-FM Penticton (Sat., 10p.m.) C1ZZ-FM Red Deer (Tues., 11 p.m.) CFPL-FM London (Sun., 11p.m.) CJQQ-FM Timmins (Sat., 10 p.m.) C1LQ-FM Toronto (Tues., 11p.m.) CFRQ-FM Halifax (Tues., 11 p.m.) CJMO-FM Moncton (Sat., 11p.m.)

. . . Red Deer College will be hosting a Leonard Cohen Conference October 22-24, 1993. Individuals interested in attending or participating should contact Shirley Jorgensen, Conference Coordinator at Red Deer College, PO Box 5005, Red Deer, AB T4N 5H5 (403) 342-3320, FAX (403) 340-8940.



Surrey BC's Scott Sanft, a winner in the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival.

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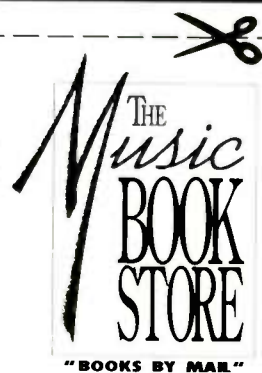
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To receive further information, contact: X-IT Music Productions, 15 Ossington Ave., Toronto, ON M6J 2Y8 (416) 533-1861, FAX (416) 588-4157

... Vintage guitar nuts won't want to miss **Canada's Vintage Guitar Show**, happening August 21-22, 1993 at the Pickering Recreation Centre in Pickering, ON. International dealers and collectors will be featuring stringed instruments of all types for purchase or trade. Admission to the event is \$6.00, and if you present any stringed instrument at the door for sale or trade, you'll receive \$1.00 off the admission price. For more information on the event, contact Tundra Music at (416) 420-9582.

**CM**

# EVENT SCHEDULE

## NMS '93

New York, NY  
July 20-24, 1993  
(416) 588-8962

## Canada's Vintage Guitar Show

Pickering, ON  
August 21-22, 1993  
(416) 420-9582

## CountryFEST

Calgary, AB  
August 23-29, 1993  
(403) 233-8809

## Alberta Country Music Awards

Calgary, AB  
August 29, 1993  
(403) 233-8809

## Country Music Week

Hamilton, ON  
September 16-19, 1993  
(416) 739-5014

## Canadian Country Music Awards

Hamilton, ON  
September 19, 1993  
(416) 739-5014

## CMJ 1993 Music Marathon

New York, NY  
November 3-6, 1993  
(516) 466-6000

## The Record Industry Conference

Toronto, ON  
March 17-20, 1994  
(416) 533-9417

## MusiCan '94 & CMX '94

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March 17-20, 1994  
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## SHERPA DRUM PADS

By Paul Lau

**S**herpa is not just another company with an electronic product. It's a company that is dedicated in developing a cost-effective, high quality electronic percussion pad system.

Sherpa is a Canadian company that individually handcrafts all Sherpa pads. The workmanship speaks for itself and the design is very innovative. Starting with the hi-hat pad, it has four ¼" plugs in the back — two are for open and closed action and accommodate some older MIDI interfaces

drummer to use a stand he is comfortable with and not having to deal with a switching device under his foot. I found that the cabling was very neatly organized since all the switches were enclosed in the same pad.

The cymbal (ride or crash) pads can mount directly onto all cymbal stands with no extra clamping required — a convenient and well thought-out feature. Both the hi-hat, crash and cymbal pads have a slight curve in their design which is quite usable for the natural percussionist or drummer.

This year, Sherpa has developed the patented SP63DTCP, which is an extra pad (bell) above the main pad on the cymbal pad. This practical design is quite intuitive to the needs of real drummers, and one reason why the Sherpa innovations are becoming more and more accepted among musicians.

Except for the new reverse beater bass pad, the snare, tom and bass pads all have the same 11" wide playing surface. There are single and dual triggers for these pads and as well, they come with a (patent pending) universal mounting system which is adjustable to fit any tom stand. The reverse beater bass pad (one of the new Sherpa products for this year) will fit any pedal rig and is great for compact mobility and usability. One interesting feature I noticed was the suspended playing surface of the reverse beater bass pad, which increases the dynamics of the "feel" for playing and is quite usable with a double pedal. The double pedal feature seems to be of great interest to serious drummers.

Sherpa prides itself with its "soft touch/high bounce" playing surface, which purportedly helps reduce the chances of developing the painful tennis elbow that comes

from playing on hard surfaces. The actual stick bounce increases controllability, giving smoother control over the sticks for more accuracy in complex playing passages. The round-edged pads are encased in a sleek, high-impact plastic giving them maximum strength and durability, yet they are very lightweight and compact.

The optional Sherpa rack stand system is made of polished chromed steel tubing held together by lightweight heavy-duty aluminum castings (these racks are also individually handmade). Sherpa has looked into developing a built-in MIDI interface but presently still relies on MIDI interfacing through other drum trigger-related hardware such as that from companies like Alesis, Kat, Yamaha and Roland.

Using the Sherpa Pads in my studio for the first time, I found that they responded very well. The tracking on the sequencer was more than accurate and the re-triggering of a hi-hat pad at extreme rates was not a problem. The actual size of the pads, especially the crash, takes a little getting used to due to the fact that they are small, but it really wasn't much of an issue. Sherpa is now in the developing phase of a eight-inch bongo percussion pad specifically for a MIDI percussion set-up. Overall, the Canadian-made Sherpa electronic percussion system is a cost-effective, high quality system that would be a nice addition to any MIDI set-up as well as being useful in live applications. These pads are well worth enquiring about the next time you're in the drum department of your local music store.

For more information, contact: Sherpa Enterprises Inc., 935 The Queensway, #556, Toronto, ON M8Z 5Y9 (416) 251-3625.

*Paul Lau is a freelance MIDI consultant and musician based in Toronto, ON.*

### Manufacturer's Response

*I'd like to thank Paul Lau and Canadian Musician for doing a great job reviewing the Sherpa pads, especially upon the new releases of the hi-hat, cymbal, bell and reverse beater bass pads. The new bongo-percussion pad will be released soon and it is an innovation we at Sherpa are quite excited about. I was impressed with the in-depth look into the details of each individual pad.*

*I am confident that this article will excite and entice drummers to explore the MIDI percussion world and try Sherpa products.*

**Sherpa Persad, President  
Sherpa Enterprises Inc.**

which do not have a footswitch for open/closed control; the third connects to a footswitch controller and the other to a direct trigger to accommodate newer interfaces. This particular pad also has a sensitivity boost switch to give a bit more performance reaction. The hi-hat pad will mount on any hi-hat stand, therefore allowing the



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## Moog Taurus Pedals

Foot-controlled analog bass synthesizer with huge, killer bass sounds. Used by progressive guitar and bass players with three feet.



## ARP 2600

Monophonic, miles of wire, built-in speakers and reverb. Remember the modular keyboard around Edgar Winter's neck? This was it.

## Wurlitzer Electric Piano

Unique bass sounds—the portable electric piano that dominated Supertramp. Also used in "Money" and "I Am the Walrus."

## Rhodes Chroma

Thick, mellow, beautiful analog sounds. Eight-voice polyphonic synth that borrowed ARP electronic technology and Rhodes-type mechanics.



## Mellotron

World's first analog sample playback machine—it put the moody in Moody Blues. Its 35 internal tape players (one for each key) created a haunting sound. The people most haunted were roadies—constantly realigning the tape heads.



## Yamaha DX7

Digital synthesizer with FM synth technology developed at Stanford. Brilliant sounds. With all the money you saved, you could have afforded to go back to school to learn how to program it. Any song between '83 and '86 used one.



## Farfisa Organ

Organ sounds that drove go-go dancers wild. Less expensive than a B-3. Elvis Costello and Blondie put its sounds to great use.



## Prophet 5

The ever-popular programmable polyphonic synthesizer with wonderful, rich analog sounds. Its real wooden frame was perfect for getting scratched every time you took it on the road.



## ARP String Ensemble

A keyboard that simulated strings. It did one thing, in its own way, and did it very well.

## Yamaha CP-70

The standard in electric grand pianos used by many including Gabriel and Genesis. Problem was, it didn't weigh much less than a real one.

## Moog Modular

This grandfather of electronic music put synthesis and "Switched-on Bach" on the map. Because of it, 1/4" phone plug manufacturing became a growth industry.

## Minimoog

The first affordable monophonic synthesizer. Great bass sounds.



## Fender Rhodes Mark I

Mellow, metallic—a xylophone with keys. You can blame Jazz Fusion on this instrument. The electric piano of the '60s and '70s.

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MIDIpatch™ modulation system, Vintage Keys lets you recreate the analog mood and feel. And just try to find a classic analog keyboard that offers you 32-voice polyphony, 16 channel multi-timbral capability and 6 assignable polyphonic outputs.

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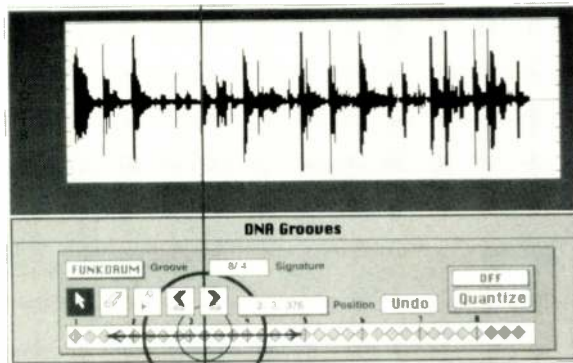
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# DNA BEAT BLOCKS GROOVE CONSTRUCTION KIT



By Paul Lau

**W**C Music Research, the Toronto-based music software company which developed the DNA Groove Template has continued to impress the music industry with the release of the DNA Beat Blocks Groove Construction Kit.

To remind you of what DNA Groove Templates are, they are templates that are created from real performances played by real musicians. The timing of each pulse is extracted and is provided in the form of a quantized template that is two bars long. These groove templates allow you to capture a "humanized" feel and place it in your sequences. The Beat Blocks form the foundation from which over 10,000 groove variations are derived.

When one thinks of drum loops playing along with your sequencer, there are two elements that prevail: the first one being the notes on your sequencer that are locked into the computer's internal clock; and the second one being the drum loop that is locked into the groove of an external clock — the groove and feel of a human playing. The problem of aligning the two together, other than at the beginning of bars, is that there is a tendency for the parts to "go out". Therefore, DNA Beat Blocks was developed — an offspring of the DNA Groove Templates.

DNA Beat Blocks is a new Canadian product that was developed to harmonize and weave together the rhythms of these two elements and assist in the composition and recording of your songs. The DNA breaks down the audio data into its rhythmic fingerprints which is then also transferred into groove templates for use in your sequencer. Once again, Steinberg's Cubase is the first sequencer software program to incorporate a feature which allows the use of these templates. As you groove quantize your MIDI data this allows you to transfer the feel of the audio into the MIDI domain. There are 31 variations of the feel. This translates into

the versatility and capability of being able to use a variety of optional drum tracks and locking into the pocket without having the problems of aligning to the internal computer clock.

The DNA Beat Blocks Construction Kit is an innovative concept in the creation of drum tracks and the beat blocks are a series of musically-related drum loops. The CD is divided into tracks and within these tracks there are drum loops that work together, with each loop consisting of two bars. This is how it works — the main loop represents the standard drum groove that you would like to use. The hi-hat block is a variation of the main block where the hi-hat pattern changes. The snare and kick blocks are variations on the main block, and here we find that there are rhythmic variations on the snare and kick respectively. The fill blocks usually have some kind of roll in the second bar. Construction of a "seamless" drum track is quite easy and intuitive — you sequence these audio loops in a required order to fit the musical application. Once the drum track is constructed in the sequencer, you then can load the feel/groove template that matches the drum loops. The feel may also be transferred to other sequenced rhythmic parts.

The DNA Beat Blocks groove construction kit comes in compact disc format. There are more than 350 different drum loops on each CD, featuring artists like "Funky Drummer" Clyde Stubblefield of James Brown fame and Armando Borg (each with their own DNA Beat Blocks CD). Canadian recording artist Wilson Laurencin, a session drummer/percussionist and producer (Percy Sledge, Vanity, The Platters) has over 500 loops and matching DNA groove templates on his DNA Beat Blocks CD.

I found the sample CD to have an endless supply of useful tracks — it's hard to decide what to use! There are spoken tips throughout the CD giving insight from the artists as

to what the grooves are about and their applications. The DNA Beat Blocks are all stereo digital recordings and there is a very easy and helpful manual that itemizes all the drum loops and includes the tempos to two digits. WC Music has wisely provided floppy disk versions of the DNA Groove Templates for all computer formats — Macintosh, PC/compatible and Atari (these match each drum loop on the sample CD and include the MIDI file of the groove).

I find that WC Music has taken a large bite out of the rigidity of MIDI music with their unique products. If used creatively, the possibilities in retrieving the dynamics of the human feel in MIDI music are limitless. I thoroughly enjoyed the sample CD and groove templates and suggest that if you're serious about sequencing, this is something you've got to check out!

For more information, contact: WC Music Research, PO Box 1275, Stn. K, Toronto, ON M4P 3E5 (416) 444-6644, FAX (416) 496-2884.

## Manufacturer's Response

*We would like to thank Paul for bringing our innovative product to the attention of Canadian Musician readers. We believe that musicians will find our product a precise musical link between the "real" audio world and the MIDI sequencer world. Thanks Paul for a fine review and a job well done!*

**Ernest Cholakis  
President/Developer  
WC Music Research**

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## Digidesign SoundTools II

by Richard Chycki

**D**igital technology has a firm grip on the music industry. Its pristine sonic quality and supreme editing capabilities are showcased well by Digidesign's Sound Tools II hard disk recording system.

Essentially a two-track recorder (four channels with third-party software), the Sound Tools II package consists of a Macintosh computer NuBus card and a single rack space Pro Tools audio interface unit. This is the same unit that comes with their flagship Pro Tools hard disk system. A sizeable, fast hard drive is also required as a single mono track of digital audio eats up about five Megs of hard drive space per minute. That will be discussed later.

Sound Tools II can be installed into any Macintosh II, Centris 650 or Quadra series computer by simply sliding into an open NuBus slot. As with any Macintosh, installation of the Sound Designer II software is a simple click on the Installer icon. For this review, I installed the system into my Quadra 700. A 50-pin connector and cabling system interfaces the Pro Tools unit to the card. The Pro Tools unit has corresponding +4dB balanced XLR analog inputs and outputs, also digital I/O for both AES/EBU and S/PDIF formats. The audio interface features 16 bit A/D converters, 64x oversampling and 18 bit DACs. A simple front panel LED metering system is not useful for critical level adjustment but at least lets you know that the track is sending/receiving audio. The Pro Tools unit can also interface to external word clock.

I should mention that when I first started researching this system, I spoke with several digital audio buffs here in Toronto and nobody was certain of the Sound Tools II recording capabilities with respect to number of channels. I heard that two of the channels were disabled and Sound Tools II was strictly a stereo package; that it could output four channels but could only record two at a time; and that it could record four at a time but only two of the outputs were activated. Hmm . . .

When used with a digital audio/sequencing package that contains the latest digital audio engine (I use Opcode Studio Vision version 1.43), Sound Tools II is a discrete simultaneous four channels in, four channels out recording package. However, the Sound Designer II editing package included with Sound Tools II edits only a pair of channels at a time. If greater editing power is required than what can be found in the sequencer package, you can import audio files into Sound Designer II a pair at a time, manipulate them as needed, and then import them back into the sequencer.

Since this is a Digidesign review, I won't

go off on a tangent explaining digital audio sequencer packages. I will mention that with Studio Vision it is possible to record up to 16 tracks of digital audio per sequence and up to 26 sequences per song. You can only monitor these tracks in lots of four. You can create a mixdown sound file of all these tracks for monitoring reference. Coupling Sound Tools II to a multitrack allows you to up/download tracks in lots of four over several passes. A somewhat costly SMPTE interface unit is recommended when slaving Sound Tools II to a tape unit for the best sound reproduction as Sound Tools II has to adjust its playback sampling rate to allow for tape anomalies. However, I experienced no difficulties at all reversing the process using the Sound Tools II/Macintosh system as my SMPTE master and syncing the deck to it. Who knew?

Sound Designer II is powerful editing software. An overview of the program material appears at the top of the screen. This overview is the platform from which you can zoom into portions of the material, down to single samples if you wish. A more detailed waveform drawing appears beneath the overview. A variety of icons allow you to select playback, zoom, waveform drawing, play lists and a scrub wheel function. Note that the scrub algorithm works very well. The Sound Tools II system is compatible with the J.L. Cooper CS-1 Control Station for a more tape-like feel to the operation of the system. Markers can be placed at any number of areas of the program material for reference. By defining "regions", you can edit these regions together as a non-destructive play list. This feature cannot be over-emphasized. Besides the obvious remove-a-verse-here type of editing, you can work around ticks and pops, vocal and instrument anomalies, etc. (by referring to a "better" region of the track and substituting it) without committing these changes to the sound file because changes like that take time — a fair bit of time. Although I had this program running on a Quadra 700, which is no slouch in the world of Mac, doing a simple cut and paste including waveform redraw of four minutes of audio took about a minute to accomplish. It doesn't sound like a long time, but if you have to do 50 or more modifications, which isn't all that uncommon to a single vocal track, you have a bit of waiting time while the software runs its course. Any edits from the play list can be assembled seamlessly by selecting the appropriate crossfade times and styles, from a quick five millisecond butt joint to a long, smooth overlapping X-type for gentle segues.

Aside from standard cut and paste capabilities, Sound Tools II allows non-destructive editing via an easy-to-use play list system. A variety of real time graphic and parametric EQ options are available, as are

several types of dynamics modifiers (ie. noise gating, expansion and compression). EQ and compression quality is very good, without the phase distortion normally encountered in the world of analog EQ. Playback volume is adjustable for any selectable portion. Pitch shifting can be applied to the digital audio. This feature is laid out particularly well. A tunable pitch reference window pops up and plays an oscillator tone at the correct pitch. Selecting preview loops the portion of audio and allows you to pitch it relative to the oscillator. Cool, cool, COOL! Sound quality, especially for the relatively minimum pitch shift required to fix a vocalist that "came in a little under" for a particular note, is excellent. That is, the singer sounded like he/she sang it dead-on in the first place. Pitch shifting must be destructively written to file (it is undoable once done).

Like the other modifications, any changes written to a sizable file take a chunk of time. All modifiers can be previewed before committing them to the file. Also note that any of these modifiers may be applied to an entire track or any portion selected, all the way down to a single sample. Stereo time compression and expansion can also be performed. Careful with this algorithm. Although fairly radical time compression can be done to speech, I could not get a glitch-free modification on dense music material with even a slight time change.

Digidesign has taken a plug-in approach to the incorporation of additional modifiers. A plug-in module, Digidesign Intelligent Noise Reduction (DINR), allows a user to selectively remove many forms of noise from the program source with little or no artifacts. I first saw this at the NAMM show in Los Angeles when a hissy cassette piano performance was transferred into Sound Tools II and the analog noise was transparently removed from the source. As well, DINR has a sophisticated hum cancelling algorithm to search and destroy this common noise gremlin. This is accomplished by a variety of harmonic filters. Notch filters can be used to attack any other form of pitched noise. It should be noted that DINR is more ideally suited to relatively consistent background noise like hum and hiss rather than transient noises like pops and ticks. These are likely better left to manual removal. Using DINR is simple. By selecting a portion of silence, or rather part of your program material where the noise is fully exposed, DINR analyzes some of the noise and uses these results to "learn" the noise. This graph-like result can be fine-tuned by dragging the graph line into the appropriate position. DINR works quickly; however, for minimal artifacts you will find that some time will be spent fine-tuning. The result is well worth the additional work. I've yet to see anything in the analog world that approaches this method of noise removal.

With such a digital storage-intensive operating system, an excellent hard drive is essential. Dynatek makes a full line of digital storage systems for both musical and business applications. They furnished us

with a 1.2 gigabyte hard drive with a DAT tape backup system from their TRACK series for this review. The TRACK series is an extremely rugged, rackmountable storage system specifically designed to handle the rigours of road use. Applying any sort of physical shock to a hard drive is a definite no-no. Dynatek's proprietary shock mounting system isolates the drive from any sort of vibrational shock, like truck transport, and from impact shock like dropping the unit. Dynatek's Compass software made for easy formatting of the disk. The included Retrospect software provided equally simple backup to the DAT system. Backup is especially important for any computer system, but if you're doing sessions where you have to recall a number of clients' works, it's a necessity. Dynatek makes it a quick, painless venture.

It would take a book to explain all the editing abilities and applications of the Sound Tools II system. Suffice to say that the user is limited by his/her imagination.

### Manufacturer's Response

*Thank you for reviewing Sound Tools II. In the next year, Sound Tools II users will be seeing a number of third-party software options to take advantage of the digital signal processing and recording features of the Sound Tools II system. This not only includes products from the digital audio sequencer developers (Opcode, Mark of the Unicorn, Steinberg and Emagic), but also Digidesign and third-party DSP plug-ins, like our DINR package. With the addition of these products, Sound Tools II will be a very cost-effective and modular two-to-four track audio production tool.*

**Toby Richards  
Product Manager  
Digidesign**

Sound quality is on par with CD. Digidesign is already well known for their intuitive, innovative approach to digital audio and carries that concept through in Sound Tools II. My only complaint was the amount of time taken to destructively modify files. Although the quality is exemplary of, for example, pitch correcting a vocal in the digital domain with Sound Tools II, the amount of time taken using the ol' pitch-shifter-and-punching method on tape is considerably more expedient. As technology advances, we can see the day where tape-based systems are the exception, not the rule. Digidesign has led the way in this field for some time, providing us with a clear view of the way music technology will go.

For more information, contact: Digidesign, 1360 Willow Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 688-0600, FAX (415) 327-0777.

*Richard Chycki is a freelance engineer/producer/guitarist based in Toronto, ON.*

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# Three Hands



People in the media certainly seem to think that what I do is something of a novelty, playing the acoustic guitar exclusively. For me the acoustic always seemed like THE guitar to play — what other instrument is as portable and wondrous sounding? Sure, electrics used to hold a certain powerful fascination for me, as they do for most people with testosterone, but years spent playing in really loud, smoky bars performing someone else's tunes convinced me that I needed to vent my creative frustrations in some more unencumbered way. Hence my fixation with the blessed acoustic.

I don't think I'm being too reactionary when I say that, despite the occasional resurfacing of the acoustic sound on the airwaves (Indigo Girls, intermittent Neil Young songs and other, more Extreme examples), the electric guitar has become the "normal" guitar to play. Most of my teenage guitar students come to me with the idea that they'll learn the basics on an acoustic to save parental eardrums and then "graduate" to an electric guitar. Similarly, what I do is often relegated to "folk music" status (a dead category since about 1962) simply because I'm not playing Steve Vai licks through a mountain of Marshalls cranked to 11. People who ignore the categorizations and actually listen to my music hear shades of R&B, Hendrix, world music, Merle Travis, Leo Kottke and maybe even Don Ross in my sound. Yup, the acoustic is cool.

My first two Duke Street CDs, *Bearing Straight* and *Don Ross* were solo guitar records. The instrument was recorded in such a way as to recreate the acoustic sound of my George Lowden six-string as purely and simply as possible. Engineer Ron Searles used a stereo pair of Neumann U-87s placed strategically in front of the axe with just reverb to sweeten things up. We took the same approach to the solo guitar tunes on my new release, *Three Hands*, but I was planning to do some band work this time and even sing a lot. A bit of reinforcement was called for (I don't object to electricity if I

need it!). Here entered the trusty outboard gear.

For the band tunes (Al Cross on drums, David Woodhead on bass and Matthew Fleming on percussion), we used the aforementioned Neumanns as well as my Ring Music bridge-plate mounted piezo transducer running through my outboard gear. I tend to avoid rack-mounted effects so that I'm not too weighed down on the road. From the guitar I run the signal through a T.C. Electronic dual parametric EQ (to eliminate problem frequencies), a T.C. pre-amp (to boost the tiny voltage of a piezo to line level), a T.C. stereo chorus/pitch mod/flanger and an Alesis Microverb (also stereo). Each of the T.C. boxes is about the size of a pack of cigarettes, and the reverb is a half-rack.

Recently I made some modifications to my set-up to get more of a fat, juicy acoustic sound live through a PA. John at Ring Music in Toronto installed a Sunrise magnetic pickup in the soundhole and then wired the piezo and the magnetic up to a stereo end-pin jack. I wanted the magnetic so that I could boost the bass sound coming out of the guitar (the piezo on its own is great, but the combination of the two is even better). I split the signals at the end of a specially manufactured Rodam stereo patch chord and run the magnetic through most of my effects. This way the piezo, which is more acoustic sounding, doesn't get too mucked around with. I end up with a stereo pair of processed signals from the Sunrise and a mono piezo sound running up the middle. Sounds yummy.

All my effects, power bar, stereo and mono patch chords and other junk fit into a tiny suitcase. Hey, Robert Fripp says the musician of the future has to be portable. Welcome to the future.

The band tunes on *Three Hands* work amazingly well. The acoustic sounds monstrous and seems perfectly at home with a pretty darned loud rhythm section. Needless to say, I'm still mighty perturbed when I go into record stores and see my albums racked next to Pete Seeger compilations (nothing against Pete, I've met him once and I think he's groovy).

I've also just finished a guitar tablature book (*The Answer Book*) of some of the solo instrumental tunes on my three discs. Included here is a section from "Big Buck", originally a solo

**“. . . what I do is often relegated to “folk music” status (a dead category since about 1962) simply because I’m not playing Steve Vai licks through a mountain of Marshalls cranked to 11.”**

tune, but recorded as a duet with violinist Oliver Schroer on *Three Hands*. Most of my original pieces are in strange tunings with unusual names, but this one is in Drop D tuning (Standard tuning with a D on the 6th string) and might prove a bit more user-friendly.

As you can see, the piece doesn't employ any of the usual "Travis picking" alternating bass shtick (oom-cha boom-cha) that characterizes a lot of more traditionally-based fingerstyle playing. Rather, a strong melody line in the treble strings is supported by a very independent bass line. The result illustrates more of the "pianistic" nature of the guitar, in that the various voices intertwine without forming tried-and-true patterns. I've written the piece out with standard notation on top and tablature on the bottom. All the information you could possibly need to play the tune can be found using a combination of the two systems.

I always find that there's more and more to learn about the incredible things an acoustic guitar can do. Once you've discovered natural and artificial harmonics, two-handed tapping, guitar percussion and neck bending (not to mention working on your compositional chops) who needs whammy bars, trans-trems and zillions of foot pedals? Well, someone once asked Segovia what someone really needs to be a great guitarist. His reply? "Strong fingernails."

*Toronto-based Don Ross, in addition to his three recordings, has written music for radio, television and theatrical scores. In 1988, Don (a status Micmac Indian) became the first Canadian to win the prestigious U.S. National Guitar Championship in Winfield, Kansas, and has performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.*

# Big Buck

3 2 0 2 4 2 0 4 0 2 4 2 0 0 4 0 2 0 0

5 5 9 7 5 5 0 7 6 5 0 10 12 11 9 7 4

7 7 7 7 9 7 7 8 9 7 8 10 9 0 0 12 14 X 0

10 12 10 9 7 5 7 0 4 2 4 2 3 2 0 3 2 3 2 0 2 4 0

0 2 6 5 0 2 5 2 3 2 0 3 2 4 2 0 5 7

7 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 2

Guitar tuning: DADGBE



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# Working WITH Sound T e c h s



I recently had an unfortunate experience with a sound tech at an industrial gig. The show was a '50s and '60s tribute, and we had never worked with this particular soundman before. My keyboard rig sounded fine through my own amp (which I just use as a monitor), but I had the feeling that the keyboards were quiet and thin in the house mix. There's usually very little a performer can do to change or improve the house sound other than provide a clean, consistent signal to the board, so that's what I try to do. When I'm on stage, a sound tech will mix me to his or her own taste anyway, so I try not to interfere.

Sometime during our second show, there was suddenly an obnoxiously loud, distorted sound through the mains; I realized it was the

to be aware of these problems and do our best to make life easier for the sound tech. I spoke with Dan McLean Jr., an extremely talented soundman and musician who has been involved with live production for artists ranging from Spinal Tap to Marie Osmond, and we worked out some ideas . . .

## CONSISTENT, HIGH LEVELS

Presets on most keyboards vary a lot in the amount of signal they put out. Adjust the sounds you use so that a patch change doesn't also mean a huge volume change. Try playing all your patches, as you play them live, through a small mixer and check out the VU meters. Engineers just hate it when you suddenly put their needles in the red after a bunch of quiet sounds.

Also, be aware that live rock performance has traditionally lacked extreme dynamic changes. I believe this is a sad, unmusical failing; however, if you are playing with all kinds of sensitive crescendi and decrescendi, from pianissimo to fortissimo — but your guitarist remains on eleven, most of your playing will just be obscured. Even your loud points might get lost, as engineers (out of fear that you'll suddenly spike them with a loud

sound) will sometimes just turn your overall volume down. The ideal is that the whole band plays with sensitivity and plays dynamics together for a tech that is open-minded and responsive. In the absence of that ideal, just play loud.

## CLEAN SIGNAL

Most popular keyboards have built-in effects. Many presets are just lathered in reverb so that they will sound warm and gorgeous in the store — and leave the store in great numbers. Make sure to edit your preset effects to reasonable levels. An engineer can't do anything with a piano that sounds like it's in the Taj Mahal — he certainly can't blend it with drums in a bar-room.

If your signal is going through any other boxes on its path to the board such as volume pedals, sub-mixers, EQs or effects, make sure all pots are clean and well-connected, all cables are functioning cleanly and gain is optimized at every point in the path (ie. no redlining meters, no pots on 1 or 2).

Engineers can't clean up unwanted distortion. A VCA-type volume pedal is preferable to a potentiometer-based pedal, as it doesn't directly affect the signal path (it doesn't pick up RF, lose signal when it gets dirty or cut out altogether), although expression pedals that affect volume through MIDI controller #7 can be a problem, as patches must really be tailored to react responsively and consistently.

## CHOICE OF SOUNDS

Every sound engineer has a mental image of what drums, basses, guitars and vocals should sound like. Since most engineers rarely work with real pianos, organs, strings, horns and other acoustic instruments, they have a hard time with keyboards that emulate these sounds or produce new sounds no one has ever heard. I once played a synthesized penny-whistle solo, which the soundman thought was feedback. If you want to be heard, you have to stay away from the kind of subtle shadings and layerings you might use in the studio (or with a sound engineer who has an intimate knowledge of your band's repertoire) and play more obvious, accessible sounds.

You should also be aware that two different sounds at the same volume may have a different apparent volume; an analog brass pad will cut through a mix much more than a piano or mellow organ patch. Bring the level of 'cutting' patches down so they sound as loud as softer patches. Use patches that are reasonably consistent in level throughout their range; sounds that are boomy or irritatingly piercing may not be obvious on a small keyboard amp or home system, but send sound techs' fingers rushing to the 'mute' button when heard through a PA. When playing your sound check, make sure to cycle through your most-used patches so the engineer can get an understanding of your sound intentions.

I hope these suggestions are helpful and I will continue to discuss keyboards in live rock performance in future columns. Just remember, if you screw up, stare at the drummer.

*Len Feldman is a Toronto-based keyboardist who can often be found logging on to computer bulletin board systems in the middle of the night.*

*... I asked him why he didn't realize something was wrong at the start of the night, the soundman said, "Oh you know, sixties stuff, I thought you wanted that cheesy sound."*

keyboards, and frantically pulled down sliders and pots till the levels were reasonable again. After the show, we discovered that an extension to the XLR cable coming from my DI box had a loose connection. As a result, the board was getting very little signal from me, so the tech had turned the gain on my channel way up. This, of course, resulted in a dirty, quiet, and extremely thin sound. When a chance vibration made the connection more solid, there was much too much signal for the settings the tech had made, and loud ugliness was the result.

When I asked him why he didn't realize something was wrong at the start of the night, the soundman said, "Oh you know, sixties stuff. I thought you wanted that cheesy sound."

This nightmare illustrates two big problems that sound technicians have with keyboardists: keyboards are hard to mix, and many techs have no idea what the keyboards should sound like.

Those of us who deal with different systems and technicians from night to night have



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# RUDIMENTS FOR SLAP BASS AN INTRODUCTION



analyzed in gory detail in my book) are vitally useful for several reasons. First, they provide an invaluable tool for developing slap technique because they force you to analyze what is possible, what is impossible and why. Secondly, they comprise every rhythmic combination possible, so practising them prepares you for any slap situation possible — quite literally, because any slap part ever played is made up of rudiments. Thirdly, they develop a greater understanding of rhythm and make it infinitely easier to pick out and identify what other slappers are playing. Lastly, they are useful for those pioneers out there who want to do something new.

Rudiment theory is pretty much breaking things down into their smallest elements in order to better understand the whole, and that is really the task of science. But what you do with that knowledge, hopefully, is not science. It's art.

*Peter Murray is a bass teacher, session musician and producer based in Toronto. He plays with Toronto-based act surrender doroughy and is busy completing his instructional book.*



**T**his issue, I would like to introduce the concept of rudiments for the development of slap technique. It is the subject of a book I am writing entitled *Slap Science: Rudiments for Slap Bass*, which I expect to have released by the end of 1993.

Slap is often referred to as "drumming on the bass" and is usually used as a predominantly rhythmic technique. It therefore stands to reason that we can apply drum concepts to the bass in order to enlarge the rhythmic scope of slap playing. Rudiments are exhaustive sets of combinations of left and right strokes, and drummers practice them to develop stick control, technique and chops. In the same way, the elements of the slap technique can be broken down and arranged into single-beat combinations to be practised and applied.

We first need to analyze the components of slap. First is the slap itself, executed by the thumb. Second is the muted slap, which involves the muting of a regular slap, usually by the left-hand. Third and fourth are the pop and the muted pop, played by either the index or the middle finger of the right hand. Last is the almighty rest, essential for all rhythm. The much-discussed "thump", which involves a muted twack of the left hand fingers on the E-string, is an essential component of most flashy slap tricks and something that I include as a variation of the muted slap (more on that later).

These five components of basic slap technique can be arranged into rudiments, or single-beat combinations. Since quarter notes and eighth notes rarely present any difficulty to players who have any experience at all with slap, it's only really necessary to work on sixteenth note rudiments (four to a beat), eighth note triplet rudiments (three to a beat) and sixteenth note triplet rudiments which are usually combined with an eighth note preceding or following the triplet. Artificial groupings such as 5 and 7 are also possible, but very difficult and, ultimately, not very useful.

Once all of these combinations are found (and this is no small task — I've researched over 800 resulting rudiments), we can go about discovering the multitude of possibilities that arise from hammer-on and pull-off

variations. These include all possible sequences and repetitions of hammer-ons and pull-offs and the "thump", which is essentially a muted hammer-on, both played and muted at the same time by the left-hand fingers. The variations that result number over 1400, which means that there are over 2200 separate single-beat combinations to practice!

The rudiments (which will all appear,

**Here are the 36 sixteenth note rudiments** that combine slaps, mute pops and rests. The slapped note here is low G, but of course, you can and should move these patterns all over the neck. Muted pops can be played on any string, but are notated here on the G-string. The note values and hammer-on/pull-off variations for these rudiments aren't written in, but they're easy to figure out. For rudiments that include slaps followed by one or two rests, simply experiment extending the note-value of the slap, eliminating rests. Also try replacing "double slaps" with hammer-ons and pull-offs, for example, G to A or A to G. Practice these rudiments (in repetitions of 4, followed by a bar of rest) with a metronome or drum machine and watch your tempos. Speed is never as important as rhythmic consistency and tone quality. Once you're somewhat familiar with the rudiments, try composing grooves and bass lines using one or two of them as a base. You'll probably find yourself playing parts that you wouldn't have otherwise thought of.

# Get that Gig



In this column, I would like to discuss the various ways to approach an audition. The first thing you should consider, of course, is whether or not the band in question is the right band for you. You should also be realistic about your own qualities and decide if you are suitable for them.

There are many types of bands and gigs, so I've simplified them into the following categories:

## The Money Making Gig

This is generally a Top 40 act or a wedding, tribute, weekend or jam band that is assembled to make spare money on weekends or part-time.

## Original Band (Unsigned)

This scenario will usually require a lot of dedication, rehearsal, patience and commitment while the group strives together towards their common goals.

## Recording Act (Signed)

This is a more established, professional gig which will usually require your contacting them through their management. It is to your advantage to have assembled your own promotional kit when trying out for such a position.

However you found out about an opening in a band that you'd like to audition for (eg. newspaper ads, bulletin boards in music stores, word of mouth, agents), there are a few things you should get together to make a good impression.

Whatever your previous experience has been, you should include as much of the following as possible:

- ☛ A good quality, clear photo of yourself (8x10 glossy preferable)
- ☛ A recording of your playing (basement tapes, live tapes, demo tapes or anything

you have that best represents you)

- ☛ A comprehensive bio (this should include all of your qualifications and experience. References such as ex-band members, agents and managers are helpful).

## Contact

This is probably the most important part of an audition because you have to make a good first impression on each other. This is basically a screening process where you both judge your compatibility.

You should appear confident and should basically have about the same musical experience, attitude, taste and influences. Don't make any false claims. You'll save yourself some embarrassment because it will come out sooner or later. If everything seems to go well, you'll probably be invited to audition (which is quite an accomplishment in itself).

## Material

In most cases, the act will specify some songs for you to learn (usually three). Listen to what they want from you as a player. If they tell you that they want you to improvise, then go ahead. If they ask you to play exactly the same as the original recording, then play it as close as you possibly can. Don't feel like you have to put everything you can do into one song or "overplay" the song (if you are auditioning for a Rolling Stones tribute band, play like Charlie Watts — not Neil Peart).

## Equipment

Find out what you need to bring to the audition. You might need your whole kit, just parts of it or they may have a kit set up for many drummers to audition with in the same day.

If you have to bring your own kit, you have two extra opportunities to impress them. The first is with your equipment. It has to be

right for the job (don't bring a heavy metal double bass kit with 20 cymbals to an audition for a polka band).

The second opportunity is that you'll be spending more time with them as you set up. You can get to know each other better while you set up as efficiently as possible.

## Follow their lead . . .

## The Audition

This is your big chance. Try to appear confident without being arrogant. Be punctual and be as prepared as possible with their material before you get there. Don't make excuses for poor performance and don't overstay your welcome.

Try not to be discouraged if there are a lot of drummers auditioning. Just try to relax and play your best. Follow their lead. If they like what you're doing and want to spend some more time jamming, that's great. If they end the audition, thank them and pack up. Now is not the time to impress them with a drum solo. They might have another audition coming up or they may need some time to think about other prospects.

Above all, don't be discouraged if you don't get the gig. Nobody gets every gig that they audition for. If you think you made some sort of blunder, learn from your mistake and don't repeat it. Keep trying until you find the right band.

*Toronto-based Jeff Salem is currently on tour with FIST throughout North America supporting their latest release, Reign of Terror. You can catch Jeff at one of his Pearl drum clinics or CDM instructional clinics promoting his own Complete Drum Method series being held across Canada.*

# BREATHING

## PART II



In my last column, I outlined the different kinds of breaths and how to take them without upsetting the embouchure formation. When I left off, you had just finished taking a proper diaphragmatic breath and were ready to start your playing phrase. This is where many players have developed a bad habit.

To picture what happens, let's return to our voice comparison. Take a normal breath before speaking a sentence and, just before speaking, hold your breath briefly so that the first word is delayed by about a half-second. What happens? During that delay, your diaphragm and throat tighten up and your first word has an unnatural, forced quality about it. In our natural speech patterns, which we take for granted, the words follow the inhalation with no delay. The breath is a natural and connected part of the sound that follows. Your attack must follow your inhalation with no delay. Some players use this delay to place their tongue against the top teeth, 'bottling up the air' in the hopes of a clean attack. What generally occurs, however, is an unnatural explosion of sound, accompanied by a tension of the body prior to the attack. This is the opposite of the relaxed, flowing style we want in our playing.

At the moment of attack, immediately following the inhalation, three physical actions must occur. ❶ The diaphragm must snap up from its relaxed inhalation position. You may think of the air column inside you as a pipe organ. The lower notes require a longer column with a lower diaphragm position, and the higher notes require a shorter column with a higher diaphragm position. Regardless of the register being played, the diaphragm will continue to rise until the end of the phrase, as it supports the decreasing column of air within you. ❷ Your embouchure must form with the necessary tension to produce the vibrations with your lips. Your mouth corners should be pointing down and pushing slightly forward to meet the backwards pressure from the mouthpiece, never pulled back in a smile. When you pull back your mouth corners, you stretch your lips, making them thinner and more vulnerable to the pressure from the mouthpiece. Here again, learning to take a breath without disturbing the basic embouchure formation will assist you in achieving the split second reformation to begin playing. The more you must contort your embouchure to get it ready to play, the greater the chance that a note

will not be centred, or will be missed altogether. ❸ Your tongue must jump up and the tip must contact the back of your teeth or the roof of your mouth and snap back to give a clean attack, articulating one of six syllables: DAA, DOO, DEE or TAA, TOO, TEE, depending on the hardness of attack desired and on the register to be played (see my previous article on 'The Tongue'). The key to a successful attack lies in the coordination of these three actions. If any one occurs before the others, your attack will not be as clean or accurate. At the end of this column, I will give an exercise to develop the coordination required here.

I consider the support from the diaphragm to be absolutely crucial to the high range, as well as your basic sound. When working on high-range with students, one of my favourite phrases is to get the notes to 'flip into the slot'. When your note is 'in the slot', all that is needed to maintain it is a steady column of air. Increasing or decreasing the velocity of the air will make the note louder or softer. Putting the note in the slot requires a combination of the proper embouchure formation and the proper diaphragm support. To make students aware of the help that the diaphragm can give, I have them play a G on top of the staff and then try to slur to the high C, using only a definite diaphragm lift, no embouchure manipulation whatsoever. Usually we can get the C to jump out of the horn (assuming the embouchure development has proceeded to a reasonable level). When we repeat the exercise, allowing the embouchure and tongue level to help execute the interval, as well as the diaphragm lift, the result is usually a big, centred, almost effortless high C. This illustrates how much the diaphragm can help in slurring intervals and in producing the higher notes. It also shows how little embouchure manipulation is necessary to produce tones a fourth or fifth apart. If you observe a well-developed player playing two-octave arpeggios up and down, you will see a minimum of embouchure movement. This is necessary for flexibility and the ability to play with control in all registers. You will find the angle of your horn moving up or down as you travel through the various registers. This is your pivot and will be the topic of another discussion. Simply put, your pivot transfers weight from one lip to another to allow them to continue vibrating in all registers.

One further topic remains in this overview of breathing techniques and that is the

concept of timed breathing. When speaking in sentences, they are of varying lengths, from only a few words to quite long phrases. Yet, at the conclusion of each sentence, we are neither gasping for air nor exhaling huge amounts of excess air. This is timed-breathing and again, it is what we strive for when playing. Many students are under the mistaken impression that the route to secure, confident playing is to take a huge breath for every entrance. Your goal is to finish every playing phrase at the same state, air-wise, as when you started it. That is, not fully exhausted of air, but also without excess stale air that must be expelled before your next inhalation. Practice phrases of varying lengths, experimenting with breaths of different sizes, until you become aware of the benefits of timed breathing and strive to integrate this into everything you play.

To work on integrating the concepts of proper breathing, coupled with controlled attacks, I recommend playing two-octave arpeggios from top to bottom. Every note is to be played singly, removing the mouthpiece between each one. The order to remember for mouthpiece placement is: PLACE-INHALE-PLAY. If you do not get a clean attack, remove the mouthpiece and try that note again. If the note speaks clearly, hold it for eight beats. The hard part is that this exercise is to be played pianissimo. This can be difficult, especially above the staff, but do not give in to the temptation to increase the volume to make the note speak — that goes against what we are trying to accomplish. If anything, reduce the volume on subsequent attempts, even if all you get is air. Concentrate on the coordination of the diaphragm, embouchure and tongue to achieve the best possible attack. You may be surprised at how difficult it is to get repeated clean attacks at this volume level. This exercise will work wonders to improve not only the accuracy of your attacks, but your overall chop response as well. Incidentally, this is the best routine I know for trying to inject a little life into chops that have been beat up the night before.

Strive to achieve control over your breathing techniques and you will have gone a long way towards brass-playing excellence.

*Chase Sanborn is a freelance trumpet player and teacher in Toronto. He has toured with Ray Charles and is currently active as a jazz and/or lead trumpet player.*

# FREE YOUR MIND

# YOUR FINGERS WILL FOLLOW



I'm humming a pitch right now. Assuming you could hear me, you'd have a couple of options to discover what the note is. Trial and error ("Oops, it's not a B-flat . . . nope, it's not E . . . ah ha! It's F#") involves a reference schedule based on your initial incorrect choice. This gets you tangled up in names of notes, wrong hand shapes and fumbling in the dark for the pitch until you stumble upon it. In short, not efficient or reliable.

So let's start again with a new pitch. This time, let's not get caught up in thinking of what buttons to push. Instead, I'd like you to detach your pragmatic, critical, thinking self from this process and allow the intuitive self to take over. Listen carefully to the note and sing it, allowing yourself to develop an 'aural concept' of the sound. Singing the pitch will allow you to physically manifest the sound, making it tangible and no longer a disembodied intangible thing in the air. Now, keeping your judgemental, nosy, meddling self out of the picture, allow the intuitive self to play the note.

This is the first step in a process that eventually will allow you to quickly learn melodies and play in any key comfortably, because you no longer are thinking about names of notes or fingers, but instead, your only concern is sound. Ever get stumped on a horn line at rehearsal? Is there a riff that you'd like to play but you can't seem to lift it off of the record? Is there a tune that you (repeatedly) can't remember? Chances are, your aural concept of the melody is flawed. The test is if you can accurately sing it. This

is not only a matter of pitches (interval relationships) but rhythm, also; you may need to approach each separately, starting with the rhythm. Often, solving the rhythm puzzle will permit the melodic line to flow immediately.

The purpose of this process is to allow your ear to do the work of assigning hand shapes to create the desired pitches. You have probably already discovered and internalized the role your ear plays in automatically adjusting air flow and embouchure. Initially, you had to experience what your tongue was supposed to do when articulating a note or consciously breathe properly to achieve a consistent sound, never mind a specific volume. Now the ear passively guides the breathing mechanism and embouchure to achieve the desired articulation, tone and volume.

The next step in a player's development is to discover music as sound, not notes or fingerings. Forget everything anyone ever told you about F# being three fingers on your left hand and one finger on your right hand. For starters, it's

not even F# — it's concert E or A, depending on whether you're playing an E-flat or B-flat horn. Instead, it's just a sound.

With my newer students who can play most of the notes on their saxophones, I have a discovery exercise that never fails to inspire anyone who tries it.

Initially, I ask the student to play a C major scale, doubling the length of the tonic notes at either end of the scale as to automatically imply a sense of time and therefore, of phrase. The sound (aural concept) of a major scale is usually an easy/familiar

melody for them to relate to.

After playing the scale, I then get them to sing the scale to experience the physical manifestation of the sound in their voices. Now I introduce a new tonic note which, much to the students' initial horror, is F#. Now we sing F# major paying close attention to singing the scale properly. And now, with some encouragement and a pep talk similar to the single note discovery exercise mentioned earlier, the student allows their ear to lead the fingers to the correct notes by listening to what comes next. The doubled note value of the tonic on either end of the scale introduces momentum, which gives the student a sense of phrase and meter. Much to the students' surprise, the scale practically plays itself; the fingers falling into place without intellectual guidance, but rather, with aural guidance based on a strong aural concept of the sound of a major scale.

We immediately follow this exercise with simple melodies which are played in an "easy" key, sung, sung in a transposed key by shifting the tonic and then once again, the transposed melody is almost flawlessly played by the astonished student.

The toughest part of developing this aural skill is allowing the ears to lead the fingers and to detach your critical mind from the process. I sometimes ask the student to have the critical self take two steps back so as not to interfere with the aural process.

Further info on the "process" described can be found in books such as *The Inner Game of Tennis* by W. Timothy Gallwey and *Wild Mind* by Natalie Goldberg.

*Gene Hardy is the alto tenor bari bass saxophonist and violinist for the Bourbon Tabernacle Choir and teaches privately in Toronto. Gene has also contributed performances to albums by the Barenaked Ladies, Rheostatics, Big Sugar, Corky & the Juice Pigs and Gregory Hoskins and the Stick People. Gene will be conducting free clinics at Long & McQuade stores across Canada this July and August.*

# Studio Singing

## Grab bag of tips



vowel. Any word that ends on a consonant or diphthong (double vowel) can cause pitch or diction problems.

As simple as it may sound, getting to the consonant or second vowel of the diphthong TOO SOON can cause you to go out of pitch or can cause the word to be unclear. So, when you are singing “I.love” — spend ¾ of the time on the “lah” part of love and just bite off the end of the word with a “v” at the last moment. The same with diphthongs — when singing the word “I” for example, sing “Ah” for as long as you can, then just add the “ee” part of the word as a flourish. You will be amazed at how your intonation improves. This can be particularly helpful when you are trying to reach for a high note. If you find you are over- or under-shooting the pitch, ask yourself how you are breaking down the vowel. If you are shutting down too soon for the consonant or the second half of the diphthong, you will run into problems. Some singers like to sing on consonants or exaggerate diphthongs for stylistic reasons — if you like the sound of it, that’s your choice. But, if you can’t figure out why you’re not making a note or why anyone without a lyric sheet doesn’t know what you are saying, check out your vowel lengths!

Of course, there are lots of other factors that can improve or hamper your singing. Things like smoking or drinking coffee, tea, sugar drinks or alcohol can dry out your throat. Try herb tea or water in the booth instead. Too much dairy in your diet can cause phlegm-frogs in your throat — great if you want to sound like Rod Stewart, though. Being physically rested before a lot of challenging singing is vital for strong diaphragm action, although again, metal and grungers might like that world-weary sound. And girls — I’m not being sexist — but there are certain days of the month when you probably don’t want to do any important vocals if you can help it. Most women hear a difference in their voices on those “sensitive” days. So go fly a plane, but just stay out of the studio!

Last but not least, be kind to yourself when the red light goes on. It’s easy to get stressed when take after take sounds imperfect to you. Just like in playing tennis, don’t dwell in the shots you miss, just move on to the next. You just have to trust yourself to let it come out. A great deal of a good performance is confidence. Believe that it’s gonna come out right, get out of your own way and let the music take over!

*Vocalist songwriter Amy Sky’s songs have been recorded by such artists as Diana Ross, Anne Murray, Sieve Wariner, Reba McEntire and Belinda Carlisle. Amy is also a featured vocalist with Exchange, and continues to pursue a solo career.*

**O**ver the past 15 years I have sung in many venues and done numerous live and recorded sessions. They all present different challenges to getting the best artistic and technical performance.

There are, however, certain techniques common to all situations. Live singing, by its nature, forgives a multitude of technical sins in favour of a dynamic delivery. Committing to tape, however, is another story. What works live doesn’t always translate in the studio. In this article, I am going to walk through some trouble-shooting procedures for studio situations.

### HEAR YOURSELF

Headphones, instrument balances, reverb, delay and EQ monitoring, engineers and mixing consoles are the variables here. If you are not getting the vibe, either to sing inspiredly or to sing in tune, experiment with the following:

#### HEADPHONES

Choose a pair that sound bright and clear to you. Don’t choose a pair that hype the bottom end, because that will distort your overall pitch picture. What differentiates singing in tune aloud in a room and singing with a band blasting in your ear are all the conflicting harmonic frequencies. The bass frequencies, by the nature of their harmonic structure, are confusing to the ear. So, while lots of bottom end might make you swing better, it could be the culprit if you are singing out of tune. You may even want to invest in a pro-quality pair of headphones to take with you from studio to studio for consistency.

#### NON-SYNTHESIZED INSTRUMENTS

Take your overall pitch centre from an instrument that doesn’t go out of tune — like a synth or piano. As mentioned above, the number one trouble-maker is the bass — even if the fundamental note is in tune, the upper harmonics are not and they will mess with your ear. Make sure the bass is tucked into the track in your headphone mix. The same goes for guitars, horns, strings or any other real, pitch-fallible instrument.

If you’re still having problems after the bass is turned down, check any other live

track for its intonation and turn down the offenders. Also, individual drums might hamper you depending on your vocal range. I find the snare drum to be right in my vocal frequency, so I turn it down or thin out the EQ. That also goes for mixing. Often, the heart of a voice’s EQ range is sucked up by an improperly equalized snare drum — suddenly your passionate performance sounds boring — it could be nothing more than the pesky snare EQ.

#### REVERB, DELAY & EQ

Any good engineer will experiment with you to send you reverb, delay and EQ levels that sound good to your ears. Every one is different in this regard — some people like to sing dry, whereas others like to feel like they are in the Taj Mahal.

If you don’t already know what sound you prefer, some experimentation in a non-pressured, off the clock session with a friendly engineer would be really helpful preparation. Nothing is more frustrating for an engineer than to have a singer say “umm . . . I sound so, I don’t know, far away — no, now it’s just too spooky . . .” You will be considered far more professional if you’re able to specify your needs. Keep in mind that the simpler the effects you are monitoring, the less likely you are to have difficulty hearing.

#### ENGINEERS & CONSOLES

I only mention these variables by way of further explanation if all of the above are not helping you. Unless you are a superstar with unlimited budget, you probably have the least control over your engineer and console in any given situation. Just be aware that both can affect your performance, so if you find an engineer who you enjoy working with, use them when you can! The same goes for the console — note what kind of console you are working with at different studios, so if problems specific to that console arise, you can be forewarned when next you meet.

#### VOWELS

Moving away from the equipment aspect, I am going to outline a singing procedure that will help both your intonation and articulation. Very simply, it’s called singing on the



# Mind Over Music



**S**moke curled through the hallway, soaking softly into the charcoal grey Sonex. The howling of a panic stop wailed from the tires of a brightly coloured automobile. A small child ran across the street, over and over again. I looked for sounds and marvelled. How could he possibly do it so easily?

"Ah . . . a bass. Gimme a bass." Dale sat back in his chair in the lounge outside the door to the pre-production room, a bear of a man with a mottled grey beard and the thick fingers and forearms of a consummately powerful player. I obediently dug through bands of patches, choosing my Oberheim for the basic sound engine due to the thick, warm sound it produced. We were working on a 60-second spot for TV, a change from the literally dozens of commercials that the studio was in the midst of producing for a new marketing scheme. We needed as many

***"I didn't spend an hour looking for the perfect sound. I just wrote and kept going . . ."***

different spots as we could possibly find and Dale and the other writer at the studio were turning out work as fast as they could.

"No, no, no. O.K., that'll do." Dale laid down his fuming cigar and strode into my room.

"Run it," he said, and the child on the video screen ran in and out of danger once more.

"O.K., record," he said and immediately laid down a finished take of a killer bass track that ran end to end through the spot, full of energy and drive while perfectly fitting the intricate nuances of timing required for writing to picture. This guy, I thought, is a freak.

Writing. The making of something that never existed. The creation of worlds of complexity and beauty that boggle the minds

even after centuries of study. How can it be so easy for some and so unattainable for the rest? How could Dale walk into a room and create, on demand, what most spend eons waiting for the muse to provide? I had spent years on the study of writing, working away with my Fostex X-15 4-track recorder and my Roland microcomposer. I had tried a lot of ideas out, but it seemed that I could get only the barest start on any of them before I realized that once again they were not working for me.

"Something that sounds kind of like a flute," came the words from the lounge, drifting into the room along with the last remnants of the cigar. It was considerate of him not to smoke in my room, I thought, but seeing him relaxing out there only needing to walk into the studio to lay down tracks, somehow underlined my frustration with my own inability to create like him, even though I practically lived in the studio. We worked on together until the spot was finished and ready to be transferred to the 24-track in "A", where the live tracks would be overlaid. I had to ask him.

"Dale, how do you do it?" I said, as he gathered his belongings to leave. "How can you possibly create so easily? I've tried every way I can think of to do it and it's just not happening. I've analyzed style, form, I've studied harmony, arranging, I've read books . . . everything."

"It's easy, Doug," he replied. "It's just that you've got it all wrong. You don't need any of that stuff — you just do it."

"Huh? What do you mean? Can you explain that? I don't understand." I replied. This was not the reply I had expected!

"No," he said. "That's all crap. You've just got it all wrong, Doug. You just DO IT, that's all," and with that remark, he pulled on his gloves and walked out of the studio into a cold, clear night. I looked out the door after him as he left, his burly figure striding confidently on into the dark. I went and sat in the lounge and thought, what could he

mean by that?

Time passed. I drank coffee and ran through my mind all of the ways that I had approached writing. Suddenly, it came to me. I really was doing it all wrong. I realized, and sitting here thinking about it was a prime example of how NOT to do things. I had just spent an hour trying to figure out what he really meant when it was totally obvious. Totally obvious. He simply meant exactly what he had said! You just DO IT! I walked into the studio and sat down to DO IT. It was amazing.

We need commercials. I thought, perfect 30-second writing exercises. I laid down a groove on my "Total Music" sequencing package and began. This time, however, I didn't stop. I didn't redo my groove a million times. I didn't spend an hour looking for the perfect sound. I just wrote and I kept going until I knew that I had to go home or I'd never make it in the next day.

The next day I simply carried on. Easy. You don't stop — you don't figure out every theory as to why something works or not, you just do it again until it does. By afternoon it was finished and I was amazed. I played it for the studio people and they liked it! The spot went into production in "A" immediately and was a finished product by the end of the day. Naturally enough. I began another one right away and the same thing happened! I had four or five finished spots complete within two weeks and suddenly I was one of the writers, not just a pre-production MIDI tech. It amazed me and those around me as well. It was as if I had turned on a switch somewhere within me.

Years later, it still works. It still amazes me. It was so simple. You start, you keep going until you are finished, you stop and it's done. No more, no less. Thank you, Dale, wherever you are. You were right — I had it all wrong.

*Doug Blackley is a soundscore composer and sound designer whose work has received numerous theatrical awards and nominations. He is based in Edmonton, AB.*

**CM**

# WHAT MIDI SYS EX MEANS TO YOU



**T**his is a MIDI column that is not just for keyboard players. If you are a guitar player, bass player, live or studio engineer using ANY piece of MIDI-equipped programmable pre-amps, effects processors, drum machines or modules, this data back-up stuff is important to you, too.

There are two basic laws that apply to all electronic, software-driven RAM memory equipped apparatus:

**LAW #1:** *Nothing lasts forever.*

**LAW #2:** *Shit happens at the least convenient time, when you least expect it and are not prepared to deal with it.*

In my experience, there is only one way to save your hours of work (as well as hours of swearing and a case or two of Tylenol). That secret is simply this: Make backups of everything; Make backups often; Remember where you put your backup copies; Make backups of your backups.

If you're thinking that RAM cards are your only saviour, re-read **LAW #1**. RAM cards use the same Ni-Cad or Lithium battery back-up to keep the memory alive that keeps your internal memory intact in your module or effects processor. All RAM memories disappear when that little fella goes dead. That is usually at about five years of regular use (or just before you really need it). Re-read **LAW #2**. The most obvious limitation with RAM cards is the cost. Who can really afford about \$100 a copy for a back-up?

Most effects units, guitar and bass processors and pre-amps (such as the ART SGX-2000, Alesis Quadverb and Marshall JMP-1) don't even have a card slot available. Your only means of saving yourself a lot of grief is the SYS/EX Data Dump.

SYS/EX Data (or System Exclusive Information) is basically all of the internal working parameters and value settings used to build one or all of the sounds or patches in your gear. It is also all of the pattern and song memory from any MIDI drum machine or the sequence and song data from any "workstation" type keyboard without an on-board disk drive. M1 and SQ-1 owners rejoice.

Now I'm about to make an assumption:

You have some piece of gear you've just now realized you should back-up. If you're a keyboard player, I'm going to assume you also own or have access to a sequencer. If you're not a keyboard player, you must know someone with one you can use. If worse comes to worst, go rent one for a day or two. It will be worth it in the long run.

The actual process of doing a data dump is really quite simple if you follow these simple steps:

- 1 Attach the MIDI Out from your unit to your sequencer.
- 2 Make sure the SYS/EX data filter is disabled on your unit and the sequencer.
- 3 Choose a track on your sequencer in real time record mode. Set the tempo at 120 bpm.
- 4 Find your (gasp!) owner's manual and read the part about MIDI bulk dumps, data dumps or MIDI dumps. Remember, every manufacturer has a different syntax for the same basic commands. Be patient. It will be there.
- 5 Start your sequencer recording in real time.
- 6 Execute the data transfer as per your manual.
- 7 When the data screen in your unit shows COMPLETE, then and only then can you stop the recorder.
- 8 Save your new SYS/EX SONG with a title like "D-50 Internals", and you now have a data backup.

To reload your machine, it is only a matter of attaching the MIDI Out of the sequencer to the MIDI In of your gear. Load the SYS/EX song and hit Play. Remember, when you reload your unit you WRITE OVER THE DATA CURRENTLY IN ITS MEMORY! PERMANENTLY!! Make sure you save the current internal data first!

A special message to all Roland MC-50 and MC-50mkII users: Anytime you do a data dump to the MC-50, it will lock up and give you a "Buffer Memory Full" message. This is a result of the far-too-small buffer memory in all Roland products these days. Here is an easy fix:

- 1 Turn off all of the MIDI thru functions (see owner's manual)

- 2 Turn off the active sensing mode (manual again)
- 3 Slow the recording tempo down to 50 bpm

This will solve those buffer-related lock-ups.

If you are a computer user, there is a great little program for Mac, Atari and IBM called SuperLibrarian from Pixel Publishing. This is an inexpensive universal librarian that works with almost everything. Go to your favourite music store, check it out and buy it. This program is worth its weight in gold. For the price of about one regular RAM card, SuperLibrarian allows you to save files and manipulate banks of sounds to build new files. It's great. End of sales pitch.

I really can't overstate the importance of keeping up-to-date back-ups of all RAM memory from all of your gear. This simple back-up procedure can be done on pretty much any MIDI sequencer. If you use a lot of effects units or processors, purchasing a used PR-100 or any older model disk drive-equipped sequencer may save you hours of grief. Remember, losing your data is not an IF, but rather, a WHEN.

Anytime a unit goes in for service, it will usually come back blank, or at best, re-initialized to the original factory settings.

If you suddenly get serious about data recovery, there are a number of specialized data disk units specifically designed for the MIDI user. The Alesis DataDisc or Yamaha MDF-1 may be a worthwhile investment.

The true potential of system exclusive functions goes way beyond the simple back-up functions I've discussed so far. In my next column, we'll go deeper into using SYS/EX functions to control real time sound and effects control, as well as some great ways to store patch data along with the song data on your sequences. While we're at it, we will also go into Control Change and other easy ways to make your songs sound more polished, more dynamic and hopefully, a little easier to manage.

*Tim Marshall is a MIDI product specialist and consultant based in Toronto, ON.*

# Jon Anderson says "Yes" to Audio-Technica 40-Series microphones.

Jon Anderson is one of the most innovative of today's leading musicians. Co-creator of the seminal rock group Yes, his music has proven both popular and on the leading edge of musical thought. His current project is *Power of Silence*, an album for Geffen Records recorded primarily at his fully-equipped personal studio.

For this project Jon and his engineer Ron Wasserman used both the AT4033 and AT4051 cardioid microphones. Both were quite impressed by their ease of use. Ron Wasserman noted that Jon required almost no EQ to get exactly the sound he wanted, and that setup was much faster than with other studio microphones. In fact he said it almost seemed that the AT4033 would "automatically adjust" to whatever the situation required without "boominess" or need for compression.

This capability fit right in with Jon Anderson's desire to work very quickly, and to avoid talent "burnout" during

repeated tests and takes. Jon has used many vocal mikes in his career, but he found the AT4033 remarkably clean despite high sound pressure levels and noted that "I could really get on it!" Ron also remarked on the amazing "clarity" and "unbelievably clean high end" of the AT4033 compared to his previous favorite microphones.

The microphones were used for many tracks including percussion, reeds, harp, acoustic guitar, and even a Bosendorfer grand piano. It was the consistently accurate response of the A-T 40-Series microphones to every challenge that made them so useful to both Jon Anderson and Ron Wasserman.

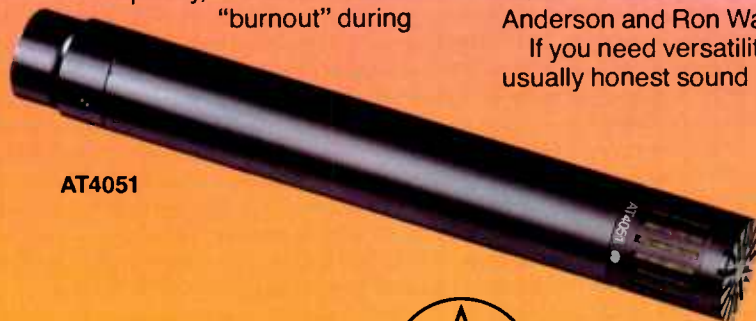
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World Radio History

by Tim Moshansky

# ON *The* Road

I'm standing on the roadside in an industrial section of a Vancouver suburb holding onto 'Zoo', a 120 lb. bull mastiff as his owner, 54-40 drummer Matt Johnson is being photographed along with the rest of the band. At any moment, Zoo could easily bolt off in any direction, dragging me helplessly behind or wrenching my fingers clear off where I am holding the leash. Luckily, Matt tells him to "sit" and he behaves himself.

Photographer Garth Bowman is clicking away as the boys lean against Brad Merritt's 1963 Ford Futura. Semi-trailers and dump trucks hurtle past at 70 km, creating a natural wind-tunnel effect and scattering dust everywhere. The setting is a fitting one for 54-40, a band that has stuck it out through years of touring the roadways of the continent, playing to thousands of audiences in hundreds of cities.

The band played its first gig in 1981 as a trio when punk rock still largely dominated the "alternative" scene. "The point was just to get out and do it; it didn't really matter how. It was almost desperate — there was an urgency about it," explains Merritt over lunch in a nearby greasy spoon. "We just took what we had and rented the rest, and that's how we got started."

After a couple of member changes and additions, the band released *Set The Fire* independently in 1984, which got a lot of attention on college radio in the U.S. The band set up some gigs in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, and slowly built up a following and reputation south of the border. "We'd been down to California three times before we even went to Alberta because of the mountains," says Osborne. "Who wants to drive through the mountains?"

"We never got off the Western side of the U.S. or Canada until we signed with Warner in 1986," explains Merritt. At that point, the band received tour support from the record company which allowed them to tour the whole continent and eventually foray into Europe.

Twelve years, five albums and lots of roadwork later, 54-40 have established themselves as a headline act with an impressive live show, playing to ever-increasing crowds in places as diverse as Miami, London and Moscow. CM caught up with the band on

a warm Vancouver day while they were preparing demos for their new album to talk about their excursions out onto . . .

## the road

As with most bands that are starting out on the road without tour support from a record label, 54-40's early ventures out onto the highway were anything but luxurious. "We'd pack ten guys in a van and go down the coast to play some gigs," recalls Neil Osborne. "We'd have a per diem of three dollars a day, we'd sleep on people's floors — it didn't matter. You spend a lot of your life on the road not playing music. Shows are only two hours out of twenty-four"

"A lot of truck stops," adds Comparelli. "Hashbrowns, greasy eggs, weird coffee."

There have been some memorable gigs, too. Osborne recalls one show in Long Beach, California that was probably one of their worst. "We were at our rope's end with our record company — they cut off our tour support. The road was just a waste of time and I just wasn't into it. I put my guitar down and I was ready to just walk off the stage. There was like, eleven people — and half of them we knew."

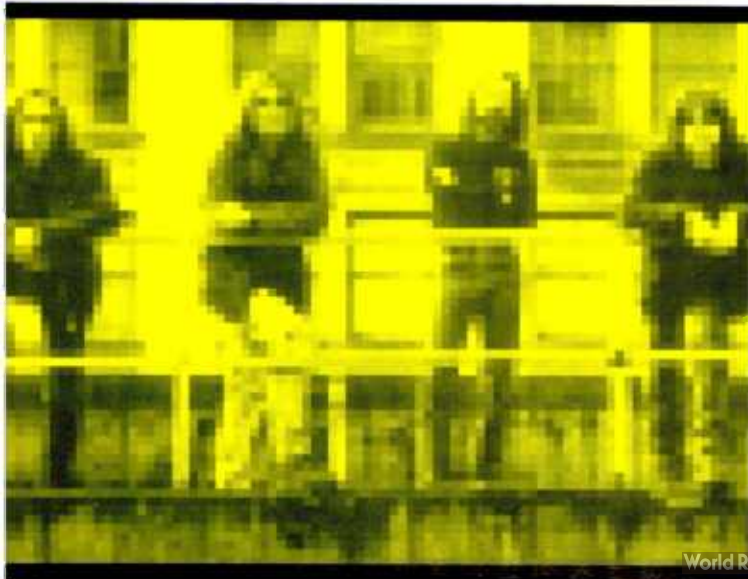
Of course, they've had a lot of good shows as well. "Our first show at the Ritz in New York was really good," remembers Merritt, "also Ontario Place Forum the first time, for 35,000 people. Now that was a buzz."

"Some of the best gigs are the little clubs where they're packed, maybe 100 or 200 people," says Osborne. "Essentially, your best gig is your last gig. The reason is obvious."

"Rick's American Cafe. Remember that show?" asks Phil of his band mates. "There were two people there — a guy that worked there bartending and washing dishes and a guy watching the baseball game. The stage was about as big as this table."

"I was watching the baseball game too," laughs Merritt.

"Yep, those were the days," Osborne reflects, "And nowadays, the road is a lot of promotion, meeting and playing for record company reps and in-store performances." These are things the band doesn't particularly enjoy, but accept as part of the job. Does



the business side take the fun out of it for them? "No, it's never been more fun as far as I'm concerned," offers Merritt. "More of a lot of things actually. There's more freedom, more options — more money."

"The nature of the whole thing (performing) is kind of chaotic," offers Comparelli, "but half the fun is just getting out there and whatever happens, happens. It's like, 'it's rock and roll, here we go.'" There never seems to be a dull moment when you're on stage, according to Osborne. "You think you've seen it all. I've had people come up on stage and threaten me; someone tried to run off with my guitar once in Calgary."

Osborne has been known to smash his guitar more than once onstage, in keeping with his dark, broody persona. "It's not like Nirvana," he says, who deliberately destroy their gear as part of their act. "But I'll deliberately just chuck it, like, 'that's all folks.' I've got these two heavy-duty 1980-81 Telecasters. I'm on my

fourth neck on one of them (see sidebar on Road Gear).

"I mean, really it's a hunk of wood with some wires on it. I look at it like it's a heavy Black and Decker power tool. You hammer away, you do your job, you chuck it down when you get the job done

and off you go." (A look at Neil's Tele later confirms his claim — the strap is held on with gaff tape, there's one volume knob, the pickup's selector switch doesn't work and there are nicks and scratches everywhere. But upon playing it, it sounds great and feels like a worked-in, comfortable instrument.) Of course, he owns several of the "don't-even-look-at-that-one" guitar varieties that he uses strictly for recording and occasionally, writing.

Now that the band has achieved a considerable amount of success at home and across the globe, touring is a little easier to endure. "Now we like to fly," admits guitarist and trumpeter Comparelli. "I guess we're kind of spoiled now. There's no way I'm going to drive to Winnipeg or Edmonton in a van with nine other people and two band's worth of gear anymore! (laughs)" Now that all of the band members are married (some with kids), certain considerations

have to be taken care of like not touring during Christmas time, but overall, they tour as much or more than anyone else.

Later, I'm back at the band's spacious but cluttered rehearsal space listening to their home-made demos for their follow-up to *Dear Dear*. I talked with the band about preparing for and performing live, and found out what kind of gear they're using on the road. After lunch and a fairly interesting (and dangerous) photo session, the band are in a fairly gracious and relaxed mood as we talk about touring and performing.

## preparing for a performance

"I like to at least walk through the audience area once," offers Osborne. "I find sometimes when you come in the back door and you don't even notice the stage you really find it hard to figure out what the hell is going on. I like to go and check out the backup band amongst the crowd, noticed or unnoticed, and get a look at the stage and just get a feel for who's out there, to see what the vibe is. That's all that's required. Get some kind of angle on it.

"I've learned, or at least I think I've learned, how not to wreck my voice. Just don't sing very hard at first. Let your vocals warm up. If you're going to scream you've got to open your throat, not like this (makes sound of crow cawing)." Do they structure their set in a certain order to accommodate the vocals? "No, not anymore. All of our sets are structured around Phil's timing (big laughs). Other than that, we like to start off with a bang and end with a bang."

## translating their recorded sound to the stage

"This last record hasn't been that hard because the stuff was so live oriented — there wasn't a lot of overdubbing, so I didn't

### Road Gear

While 54-40 has sometimes delved into the technology available to musicians, they have recently applied a stripped down approach to equipment they use while performing. All of the band use wireless systems and have Korg tuners built into their racks that can be seen from anywhere on stage.

### Brad Merritt

Fender Jazz bass  
Fender Jazz Special or Fender Precision bass  
Peavey Deca 528 amp  
Peavey Alpha Tube bass pre-amp  
Peavey 1820 bass enclosure  
Korg DT1 Tuner  
Samson SR22 wireless unit  
Boss FS-50 pedal

"The Fender Jazz is the first bass guitar that I bought brand new," Brad explains, "I always wanted a Jazz because Jerry Useless (of the legendary Vancouver punk group The Subhumans) played one. It's got a narrower neck than the Precision. The Precision neck is kind of like a two by four." Brad is also very happy with his Alpha Tube pre-amp that has been discontinued, and apparently, snatched up by bass players.



get myself into too much trouble," says Phil Comparelli. "Previous albums have been a real pain in the ass, you know, you've got six guitar parts going at once and it's like . . . (shrugs). There's just no need for it. I mean, it was fun; back then that was the way things were done. It's still done a lot, but it's changing back to the live thing, which is great, I can appreciate that. A tune will end up being its own later anyway. Live, it will

best you can do is just play. Hopefully something happens onstage that gives it that . . . cosmic lift. But it's tough sometimes." Merritt agrees with him and also stresses the obligation factor. "People pay a lot for concert tickets, and they want a lot. And they deserve a lot. But when you've played the song, literally, a thousand times . . ." ". . . they don't get much better." kicks in Osborne.

Some of the new songs require a different approach when

playing them live. On "She La," for example, Comparelli has to take time out to tune his G and B strings to A (EADAAE). "It's like he's got a little 12-string right in his guitar," says Osborne, "That's a secret. Or was a secret." Since Comparelli doesn't have a spare guitar tuned this way for the stage, the band has to tune their set so he can tune at the beginning and then re-tune at the end of that song. This gives Osborne a chance to crack a couple of one-liners to a captive audience. "The song also has a 20-second intro before he comes in, so he's got about half a

evolve into a different thing altogether."

54-40's live sound mixer Glen Reely (who has mixed hundreds of shows for the band over the last six years in North America as well as Britain, Switzerland and Moscow) says the band is working towards "a more powerful live show with a heavier type sound," rather than a recorded, studio sound. "I don't really fool around too much with what they're giving me. They provide the sounds they want and I don't really have to do a lot. Turn it up (laughs)." Reely also engineers the band's demos with a Soundcraft Spirit 24-channel board onto DAT. The demos are then taken down to L.A. to be recorded with producer Don Smith. They already have 27 songs written to choose from when they get down there.

The band often writes new songs while on the road, playing and recording new ideas at their sound checks and testing them during their performances. "We like to play the songs live to get a feel for them and get a feel for the arrangements," says drummer Johnson, "If they feel fairly comfortable live, we know we're pretty close." He also acknowledges that playing the same tunes over and over again can sometimes be hard, trying to keep up the energy and intensity after playing a song thousands of times. "Sometimes the

## Neil! Osborne

2 Fender Telecaster electric guitars  
Vox AC30 amp and/or Fender Super Twin Reverb amp  
Korg DT1 Tuner  
Samson SR22 wireless unit  
Boss FS-50 pedal (controlling an SE-50 processor)

## Matt Johnson

Yamaha 4-piece drum kit  
14" Sabian hi-hat  
17" Sabian crash  
18" Sabian crash  
20" Sabian ride  
Camco and Pearl hardware  
Promark 5B Hickory nylon-tip sticks

"Playing in the studio and playing live are totally, totally different," says Johnson, "After doing a lot of shows on the road, I really look forward to going back to the studio. After the beds are done and that's over with, it's like, 'let's get back on the road.'" Johnson sometimes prepares for a live gig with a practice pad in the dressing room, does some stretches, and maybe has a couple of drinks to relax. "But not too relaxed," he laughs.

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minute," he jokes.

On "Music Man", the guitar part on the album has been double-tracked with real trumpet, also played by Comparelli, which makes for a real punchy sound. Onstage, they opt to just use guitar without triggers or samples. "Basically, the philosophy is au naturel," says Merritt. "If you can't do it, it doesn't get done."

Employing lots of effects and overdubs is becoming a thing of the past. 54-40, after going through the techno '80s have come back full circle to the straight ahead guitar/drum rock they started with. Occasionally the band hires Osborne's brother, David,

to play keyboards and harmonica, but if he's not there they won't attempt to hide the fact with anything fake. It's a more honest approach to the music, giving listeners a truer representation of what the band is going to sound like when they go to see them live. They'll hear what they expect to hear.

After a couple of cups of Starbucks coffee, playing Neil's guitar and listening to some more new songs, it's time to leave the boys alone to finish working. We've gone over the time originally allotted to the interview, but no one notices. It's been fun.

In the future, 54-40 has plans to do a tour

of Europe, maybe even Australia and Japan, and certainly lots of shows here on home turf in support of upcoming al-

## Phil Comparelli

Martin Brown P.C. custom-built electric guitar

2 Schecter custom Stratocaster electric guitars

Peavey EVH 5150 head

2 Peavey 5150 Straight Speaker enclosures or Marshall 4X12 cabs

Jim Dunlop Crybaby Wah-Wah pedal

Korg DT1 Tuner

Samson SR22 wireless unit

Boss FS-50 pedal (controlling an SE-50 processor)

Phil had been using an ADA footpedal which could bring him an array of sounds at the kick of a button, but because of the spirit of the new album, now prefers just plugging into his amp and turning it up. A lot of this has to do with producer Don Smith's urging when they were recording *Dear Dear* down in California to use a Soldano amp. Phil maintains that the 5150 has kind of a "Soldano" sound, similar to a "hot-rodded Marshall." 54-40 using a 5150? Concert-goers will recognize Phil's custom-made green guitar (made by luthier Martin Brown) which he uses almost exclusively on the road nowadays. In the past he has used various Schecter axes and takes them along for back-ups. Having experimented with every footpedal and device know to man, Comparelli now prefers just to plug in and go for broke. "If you can't do it on your own without the stuff," he says, "then why bother?"

bums. There will be many more gigs to play before their last one, maybe in the year 2023. I leave thinking that I'll probably see them at some sun-baked, beer-drenched concert, blasting out "Baby Ran" for the zillionth time, but still lovin' it. Somewhere down the road.

*Tim Moshansky is a Vancouver-based musician and freelance writer.*

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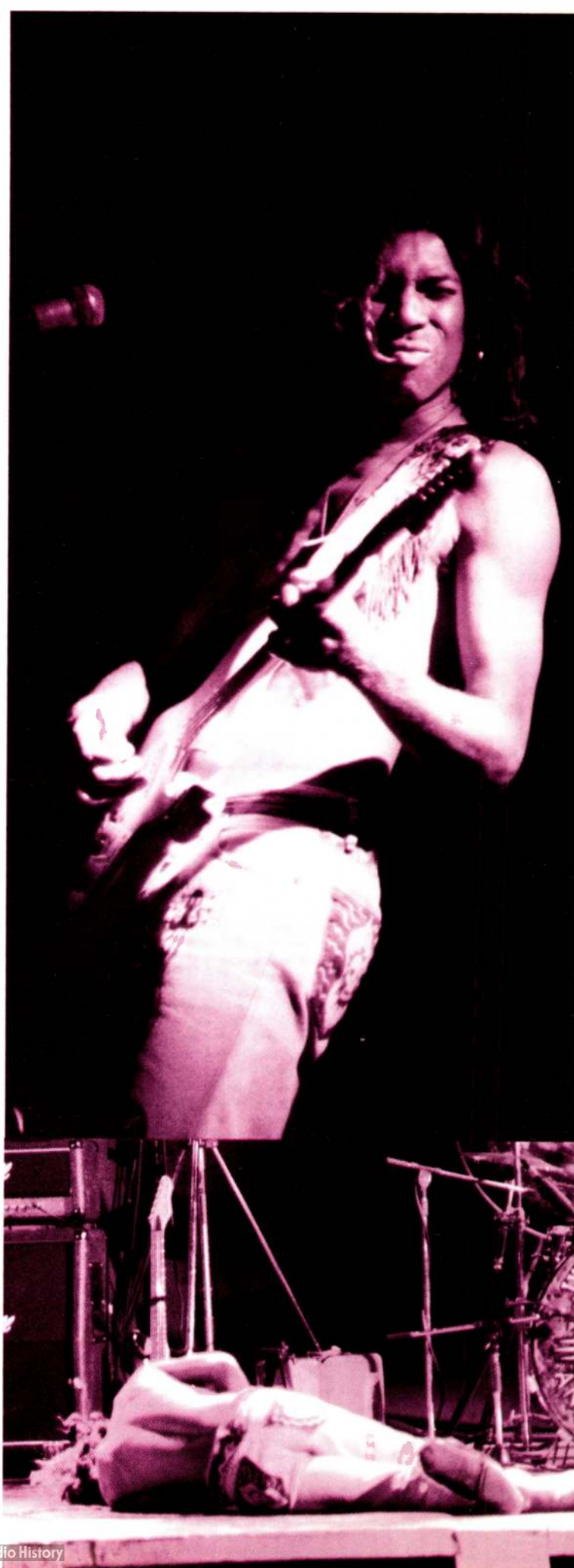
## Wild 'T' & the Spirit

# Playing to Live

# Living to Play

**I** first met Tony (Wild 'T') Springer some five years ago at a jam session in a small pub in Toronto. The smoky room was crammed full of players who watched transfixed as 'T' blazed through a Hendrix song to open the set. A couple of tunes later, the flood gates opened and the stage became a cavalcade of musical styles and abilities as musicians of many stripes joined in the jamming. Like a chameleon, Springer went from frontman to second fiddle and by the end of the night almost everyone there had been up to play with him – even me.

I a n M e n z i e s



Today, Wild 'T' is one of Canada's hottest guitar slingers. The native Trinidadian has just returned from a series of stateside talkshow appearances—including Letterman's *Late Night* and *Arsenio Hall*—playing with the legendary David Bowie, and now his band The Spirit is putting the finishing touches on the follow-up release to 1991's *Love Crazy*. Through it all, Springer has continued to make jamming a priority. "I like it a lot because it kind of normalizes me," says the easy-going axeman. "I can experiment more, people don't expect the same things from you. A lot of the time, I even play bass. But most of all, it's just real fun—I mean, we get all kinds of people out. There's really good musicians that nobody's heard about; and playing behind them gives me lots of ideas."

Veteran drummer Danny Bilan, who has been playing with Wild 'T' for over six years, still marvels at the guitarist's versatility. "The great thing about the jams with Tony is he'll get anybody up, it's like a real jam. A 50-year-old guy will come in and say 'I want to play a celtic tune' and we'll hack our way through it."

Rounded out by South African expatriate Nazeem Lakay on bass, Springer's band is a "thundering, muscular mix of blues, soul and guitar-driven rock and roll". The ever-changing live show has a level of intensity that never wanes, even amidst the onslaught of the guitarist's untamed lead breaks. "It's all a feeling, nothing is really worked out," says the dreadlocked fret-burner. "You have to keep challenging yourself. Last night I might have played something for a certain solo that sounded really good and the next night you might want to do it that way again, but I try to stay away

this one has a double pickup on the bridge. There's a switch for single coil or double coil settings and you can have more pickup settings than a regular Strat—like you can have the one up at the neck on with the one at the bridge—it's really nice for getting a 'grunge' sound." As far as strings go, Wild 'T' keeps it simple. "I don't care what kind of strings I use, as long as they're new. I usually just say give me some .010 to .046 (gauge), the cheapest set you've got."

Even at Wild 'T' and The Spirit's level of success, the reality of touring in the '90s is an economy of scale. "We all travel together in one van," says Bilan. "There's the gear in the back and the four of us (including soundman Wayne Berge) in the front, so we have to be compact. I move all my own stuff, I set it up and I tear it down so I have to travel light." Bilan uses a very classic 4-piece kit to power along the seasoned trio. My kick drum's an old Slingerland marching band drum that I had customized so that I could use it as a regular bass drum. The rest of the kit, the snare, rack tom and floor tom are Ludwigs I've had for years. I'm a real traditionalist, my hardware's all the stuff I've had ever since I started playing. It's not heavy duty—it's just your average stuff, the same as all the older guys like John Bonham used." It goes without saying that Bilan is meticulous about the care of his rig. The vintage silver finish kit is in perfect shape and is topped with all Sabian cymbals and a Paiste gong. "Being just a trio, you have to create lots of sounds and textures. Sometimes I even use timpanis, but for this kind of touring we just don't have the room."

Springer's relationship with David Bowie began in December of 1991. The British crooner

he finishes the story. "I went out and started to jam along with the song they wanted me to play on, just to work out some ideas, you know, like get the beat and stuff. After about 15 minutes I said 'okay let's do some takes now', and they said 'no, just come in here and listen for a second. We've got what we want man, that's it'. I couldn't believe it, they'd been recording me the whole time, from the minute I started!" Although they did do some fine-tuning afterwards, Wild 'T' essentially cut the tracks for "I Know It's Going to Happen Some Day" unrehearsed and on the fly.

"I really dug working in the studio with those guys," he says of the experience. "I've worked with lots of other people, but sometimes there's so much perfection that by the time you get to putting it down, the feeling is gone." To his surprise, working with the big boys was different. "They know how to get the best out of you by not confusing you with attitude and stuff. It's really cool."

That sense of feeling is something the band has instilled in their upcoming release, tentatively titled *Givin' Blood*. More raw and direct, the new album promises to be a departure from '91's *Love Crazy*. "I think it's because we've played live more and we know what works," says a thoughtful Springer. "With the first album, we did it quick and then we were gone on the road and Arnold (Lanni) had to decide what to do with it. This time, we're all there every day putting in input and deciding. This is what we really sound like, it's much more of a group effort." Bilan agrees: "Arnold and I hear things the same way, this is my 20th year playing professionally, and it's the first time I've re-

## IN A JAM?

More than a source of ideas, Springer's penchant for hosting jam sessions was also how he found his new bassist. "I used to go down to his jams all the time," says Nazeem Lakay. "It was the only jam around where they played my kind of music and I could get up to do it." Lakay plays a Yamaha five-string bass into a Peavey Mega Bass head. The head is bi-amped into three Peavey cabinets and it's split at 60 Hz. "I like the Yamaha's sound, it's nice and full. For a three-piece band, you need that." © A master at holding down the bottom line, Nazeem still has one trick up his sleeve, a BOSS WH10 wah wah pedal. "I got it from Tony, he used to use it. It's got a switch (to change frequencies) for guitar or bass. I use it sometimes when I do solos, it's a very nice pedal." Like the rest of the band, making good use of a simple set-up lets Lakay concentrate on the music.

from that as much as I can. I try to rise to the occasion and challenge myself."

Playing through a Marshall 1900 head and a Peavey 4x12 Black Widow cabinet, Wild 'T' uses a fairly standard array of pedal effects including an Ibanez Tube Screamer; a digital delay, octaver and chorus from BOSS; a Cry Baby Wah Wah; and an old compressor pedal even he can't remember the brand name of. "It's good to have colours and things you can put in the sound, but I try not to get caught up in the technology. Even if I'm using my digital delay pedal, the sound has more to do with what I'm playing than what the effect is doing." Driving the whole rig is Springer's latest acquisition. "I just thought a new guitar while I was in New York (performing with Bowie), it's a Strat Ultra. Instead of having the usual three pickups,

was performing in Montreal with his band Tin Machine when he saw the video for 'Midnight Blues' and 'I flipped completely out'. Since then, Wild 'T' and Bowie have remained in contact, and last fall he was asked to come in and record some tracks for 'The Thin White Dukes' new album, *Black Tie White Noise*. "We played in Calgary the night before I flew to New York," says Springer. "At the end of the gig, I crammed my guitar into some wires in the roof of the stage and let it hang there feeding back to end the show." The minor damage to his tuning pegs went unnoticed until his arrival at Hit Factory Studios. "When I got there, they had me go out and set up. I was saying my guitar's a mess and so on, but David and Nile (Rogers) said 'don't worry about it, just go in and play'. They were totally cool about it." Springer's eyes light up as

recorded something that when I walk in the control room and listen to playback, it sounds just like it did when I was sitting on my stool. That's a really great feeling."

After the last two years, it's hard to imagine what more could be in store for this reluctant guitar hero, but Wild 'T' himself hasn't lost sight of where he came from. "We just want to get out there and do what we do. We turn people on because we turn on ourselves." More than just a pyrotechnical pick-handler, Wild 'T' is an entertainer that lives to play and plays to live. He's destined to go wherever The Spirit moves him.

Ian Menzies is a Toronto-based freelance writer and musician.



**I**t's no secret that Canada's independent music scene is alive and well. More bands than ever before are flourishing on their own and breaking down the age-old barriers of corporate rock. But it wasn't always this way.

Moxy Frivous are one of a handful of groups who have been instrumental in blowing the homegrown music scene wide open. Before signing a world-wide deal with Warner Music, the vocal based quartet sold an astounding 45,000 copies of their independent six song cassette debut. Completed in just 40 hours with engineer Doug McClement, the bare bones recording rivals the Cowboy Junkies' famous *Trinity Sessions* for its simplicity and success.

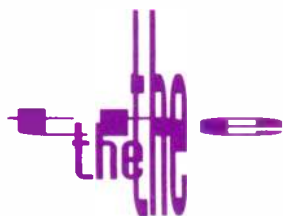
Now, using the expanded palate that their new deal affords them, the band has just finished self-producing a new release. Slated to arrive in stores by early July, the sophomore effort is a crucial one in the group's young career. "One of the things the band wanted to do with this album was to change any preconceived notions that might exist," says singer percussionist Jean Ghomeshi. "If anybody thinks we're just an a cappella group, this album is a tremendous departure. Only one song of the 15 is pure a cappella and some of the others have distorted electric guitars and full drum kits. Those people who have seen us live know we use a lot of instrumentation, but if they only know us from "Green Eggs and Ham" or "King of Spain", they're going to be surprised. Not just because there isn't as much of the fiercely satirical stuff on this album — which was a conscious decision — but also that there's a lot of unique instrumentation."

To help them achieve their expanded sound, the Moxys once again enlisted the trusty ears of Doug McClement. "When they first got the record deal and it was time to make the album we had some meetings and they described to me the approach they wanted to take," McClement explains. "They wanted a little darker sound and we thought of going all digital, but Frivous is very organic. There's a very warm-sounding human element to these guys and I felt that using a state-of-the-art analog chain would be more in tune with what the band was trying to do." Ideas about sound and feel are always hard to put into words, so the band used existing recordings to help get their point across. "They started talking about some of the sounds they wanted in terms of the last Suzanne Vega record and the last few Tom Waits albums," says McClement. "It's like you've got this sort of churning acoustical bed track and it's almost hard to tell what some of the instruments are, but you can tell they're not electric."



Mandate in hand, McClement went searching for the unique sonic environment that could deliver the sound they were looking for. "I started thinking, 'okay, we need a studio within a day's drive of Toronto where we can go and live and where they have real neat acoustics and really good analog gear.' That creates a very short list." So short in fact, that he started to have trouble satisfying the criteria. "We'd noticed that several of the albums we wanted to emulate had been recorded at a place called Dreamland Studios in Bearsville, NY, like Suzanne Vega, 10,000 Maniacs and the Bobby McFerrin/Yo Yo Ma collaboration. Then one day we were talking to Blair Packham of the Jitters and he personally recommended Dreamland. He had done some work there with Colin Linden and said there was a lot of interesting acoustic rooms and a lot of great old tube gear and we should check it out because it was just what we were looking for." After receiving a gear list and a video of the location the decision was made and the boys packed up their gig bags and headed off for a three week recording intensive.

Situated in an old church, Dreamland is a singularly unique recording facility. With room choices ranging from the 33 foot high vaulted ceiling of the main room to the full Sonex padding of the smallest isolation booth, this former house of worship offers a motherlode of ambience to the true believer. But the vintage gear demands a certain reverence as well. "One of the main reasons we went there is because they have this 1978, 48-channel API console," McClement gushes. "API is like the American-made equivalent of a Neve. It's got old discrete electronics and there's no microchips in the audio path. It's all big transistors and big wires — very low tech and very high quality." The



**MOXY**

**FRIVOUS**

PHOTO BY GRAHAM KENNEDY



chapel's aura had a positive effect on the band as well. "It was an incredible recording environment," says Ghomeshi. "We were tucked away in the Catskill Mountains but it was still only an hour out of New York City. There was a great energy and I think it worked really well for us." Fellow Früvous David Matheson agrees, "the whole thing was very organic, we didn't feel like we were in a hit factory."

With the studio fully blocked out, the band settled into their intense regimen. "We worked our asses off, we spent 14 to 16 hours a day every day," says Ghomeshi. "In hindsight, it's questionable as to whether or not that was a smart tactic because we definitely burnt out a bit. By the end of the second week, there were a couple of days where we were working at half speed, you know, like the Leafs in game six." To keep the sound as fresh as possible, the band, rounded out by Murray Foster and Michael Ford operated with a rotating producer's chair — each of them taking equal time on the other side of the glass. "It was kind of weird taking a band in the studio to do their first album and not having a producer," admits McClement. "I'm really meticulous about tuning and it's very seldom I run into a band that's more picky about tuning and timing than I am, but these guys were. They had a very clear idea of what they were after and they used my experience to help them get it." Matheson agrees, "At the point of recording the stuff, there's not a lot of decisions left to be made. Doug's job is to make sure that it goes to the tape in a way that gives us the optimum amount to play with later when we go to the mix."

To take advantage of the ambient possibilities of Dreamland, a wide variety of microphones and placement patterns were

used. "They had a number of these 1940s Neumann U47 tube mics which we used for most of the vocals," explains McClement. "We experimented a lot, but in order to keep the overall vocal sound consistent, we found the spot that sounded best for the main mic and nailed the stand to the floor for the whole three weeks. Then, we went directly into the API mic preamp and hard-wired it straight into the 2" Studer A-820 tape deck with built-in Dolby SR." With a consistent reference in place, they turned their attention to the ambient mics. "There were a pair of Crown PZMs built into the ceiling of the church and then we put a pair of U47s in the balcony of the church. For some of the tunes, there's one vocal track and two ambient tracks for each of the four parts, so we'd have 12 tracks just for vocals." Some other mics McClement used were the East German-made Micro-

tech Gefell UM-70S condensers for guitar amps and a pair of Shoeps MC-61s for acoustic guitars — the latter are used extensively in classical recordings.

For one track, McClement used something called 'The Green Hornet'. "For the song 'Video Bargainville', they were looking for an intercom sound for the talk-over, so I asked at the studio if they had this mic. It's a dispatch mic that's always been popular with harmonica players because its bullet shape is easy to hold while playing harp and when you run it through a tube amp, it has its own inherent distorted sound. I had Jean go into the Sonex-covered room and then I cut it really hot so it would sound distorted." When matched with the sparsely timed delivery of Ghomeshi's performance, the result is perfect for the song's skewed, satirical lyrics.

Because Moxy Früvous use a smaller drum kit than most pop bands, a lot of experimentation went into getting unique percussive sounds on tape. "There was a lot of percussion instruments that weren't instruments at all in the traditional sense," says McClement. "We used everything from rolled up pieces of tin to hitting a metal stool with a ballpeen hammer." A predominant track on the song "Laika" was actually played on a studio room divider. "I was playing the track on congas with balistics," explains Ghomeshi, "but it just wasn't working, so I started using different kinds of brushes just hitting everything in the room while Dave and Mike and Murray were in the booth listening. Finally, I had these steel-handled plastic brushes by Regal Tip that I was playing on the side of this divider and the way the steel part of the brush hit the wood just before the plastic part did created all kinds of polyrhythmic overtones that sounded

# VOUUS SESSIONS

incredible." After experimenting with mic placement and moving it around the room to get the right ambient slap-back, they cut the track and used it as the primary rhythm bed for the whole song.

As the project nears completion, the band is looking forward to an extensive touring schedule, not to mention video shoots, interviews and all the other trappings of success. But the knowledge gained in the studio will be felt for some time. "Needless to say, we know our way around a studio a lot better," says Ghomeshi. "But I think we've learned even more about the way Frivvous works. For example, we work best if we don't dwell too long on one song, so when next we have a 12-hour day, we'll work on six tunes instead of one. That's something we didn't know before the middle of this project and it's something that will help us outside the studio as well."

By remaining masters of their own fate, Moxy Frivvous continues down the road that got them where they are today. Embracing risk and taking chances with an independent attitude, an idiomatic style and a savvy wit.

IAN MENZIES IS A TORONTO-BASED MUSICIAN AND FREELANCE WRITER.

## GOING IT ALONE

Producers have always been a big part of rock and roll. Names like Quincy Jones and Daniel Lanois are synonymous with Michael Jackson and U2, and they've played a big role in both the sound and the success of those artists. So why would a young band like Moxy Frivvous decide to go without? "We thought about it," says Matheson, "but we weren't sure we wanted to bring another cook into a kitchen full of four other strong-minded cooks. The possibility of bringing a producer in and putting his or her mark on the stuff was daunting. We decided that given the fact that we can't find one who knows us and who we know, then the unknown is not worth the risk."

Ghomeshi adds "The feeling was, if we can't get our heroes, if we can't get Elvis Costello, why parachute somebody in — whether they're a great producer or not. We were lucky our record company let us do this because before we started, there were probably five people in the world who thought we could produce ourselves, us and Jack (Jack Ross is the band's manager). Even the owner of the studio said he'd never seen anything like it. He was really excited by the fact that not only were the artists producing themselves, but that all four of us were doing it democratically." Like almost every risk the band has taken, this gamble looks like it's paying off. "I'm really happy," says Ghomeshi, "the songs are sounding just the way we want them to."

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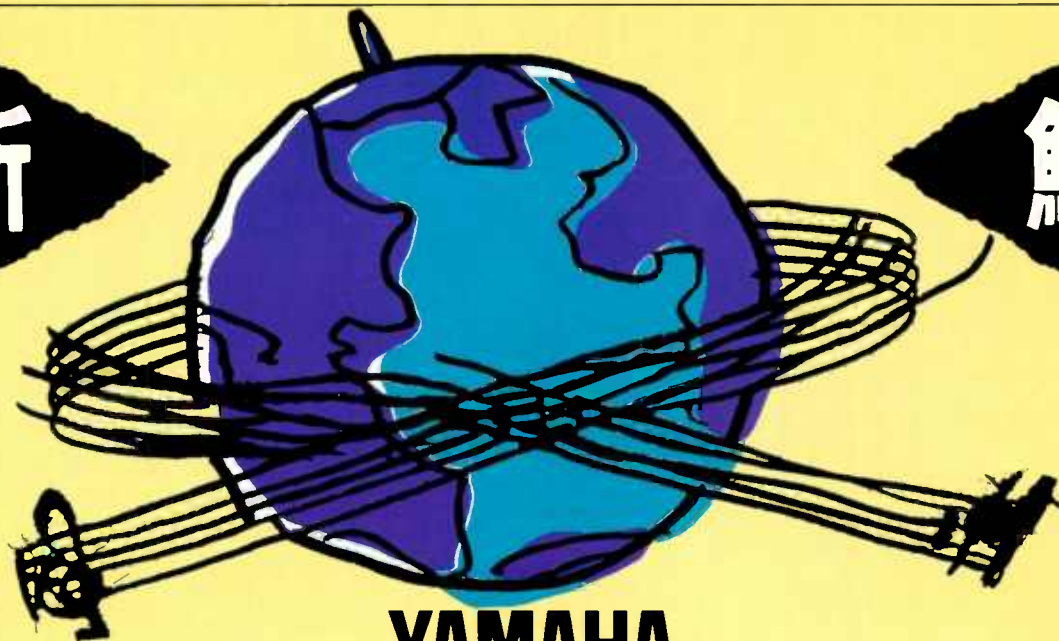


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# LIVE SOUND TOURING

products on the rise and the financial outlay on the decline, bands today are in the unique position of having professional sound in a compact, easy-to-manage system that they do not have to actually purchase. The trend today is rental and to some extent, leasing.

Determining your specific needs is the most important step in putting together a system. The type of music you are going to be playing, the type of rooms you'll be playing it in, portability /transport limitations and the extent of your own technical know-how are only a few of the points to consider. Fortunately, most companies specializing in PA gear rental and sales are more than willing to help you define the most suitable system for your needs (for more information on building and owning your dream rig, see Al Craig's live sound columns in the April and June '93 issues of CM — as well as this current issue).

While your budget will ultimately dictate the extent of your system, there are some basics that need to be met among the three major components of the system.

## THE MIXER

- In addition to your external room EQs, you should have a flexible EQ. Most consoles incorporate a combination of fixed and/or sweepable EQs. Consider the number of EQs available for each individual channel. The more the better.
- The mixer should have at least some sub-group capabilities (as many as possible), especially if you are using more than twelve inputs.
- You should have balanced microphone inputs to limit or eliminate noise, hum and RFI (radio frequency interference).
- Balanced outputs are also a good idea.
- Stereo boards are nice, although chances are you'll be running in mono to limit the extra costs of additional power amplifiers.
- Consider the number of monitor sends required versus the number available. Having at least two monitor sends will allow you to tailor a specific mix for the vocalist or the drummer.
  - Keep in mind the number of effects sends. You'll want at least two per channel.

- Also consider the board's metering capabilities.
- Individual channel inserts are a must.

## AMPLIFIERS

Overworking the amplifiers will result in clipping, which in turn produces square waves rather than smooth sine wave outputs. This forces the speakers to respond to both positive and negative voltages within an unrealistic period of time and may result in serious speaker damage. Select an amp that is 50% higher power at the same impedance of the speaker it is powering (for example, 200 watt speaker = 300 watt amplifier). It is very important to keep in mind that many makes of amplifiers are under-rated and, as a result, this formula may not be applicable. Investigation of the amplifier's actual specifications is always a good idea. This process will result in cleaner, safer power with additional headroom.

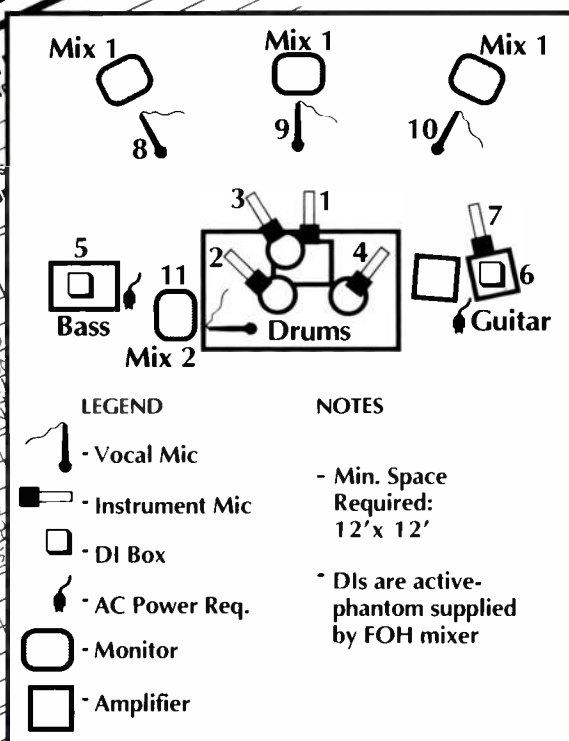
## SPEAKERS

- Most touring companies today are using self-contained multi-way enclosures coupled with supplemental cabinets to handle the lowest frequencies, and it is this trend that is trickling down to the smaller scale level. Manufacturers like Peavey, Yorkville and the higher end Meyer offer 'total concept' type systems which require far less space

## MICROPHONE CHART

Client	Artist	Venue	Date	Recording	Recording	Hous	Mon
Black Stage Box		SHIVERS	06/03/93				
Input	Instrument	Type	Phantom				
1	KICK	DI	NO				
2	SNARE	DI	NO				
3	BACK TOM	DI	NO				
4	FLOOR TOM	DI	NO				
5	BASS GUITAR	DI	NO				
6	GUITAR	DI	NO				
7	GUITAR	DI	NO				
8	LEAD VOCAL	DI	NO				
9	JAMES VOCAL	DI	NO				
10	BRO VOCAL	DI	NO				
11	SPARE	DI	NO				
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							

## SAMPLE STAGE PLOT



BAND:
ENGINEER:
DATE:
VENUE:
VENUE CONTACT:
LOAD IN:
LOAD OUT:

# LIVE SOUND & TOURING

Ensure that everything can be safely loaded into the van and that once loaded, there is enough room for whatever bodies will be riding with the load. Keep it legal. It will pay off in the long run. When you are able to get everything in, number all boxes, containers and gear so that they can be

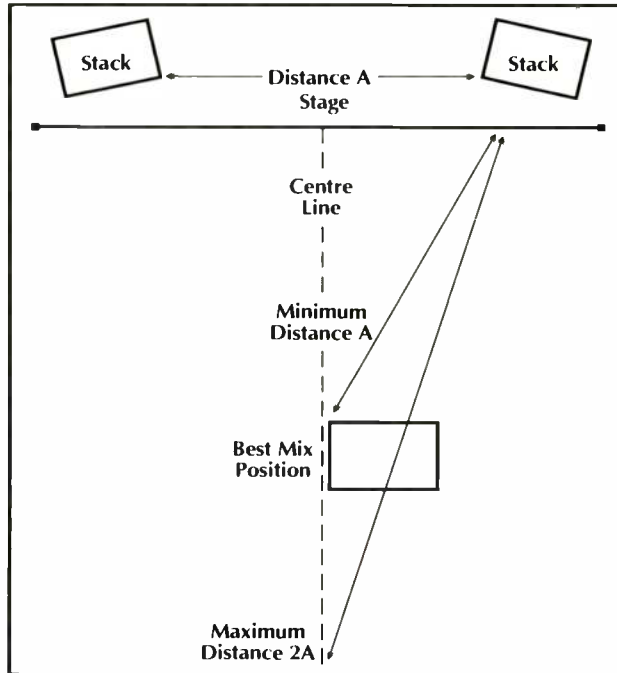
loaded in the same way every time. This will save you time and help you to avoid leaving anything behind.

loaded in the same way every time. This will save you time and help you to avoid leaving anything behind.

## INPUT LISTS/ STAGE PLOTS

Once you can confidently set up the system and gear quickly and with a minimum amount of fuss, you'll want to ensure that the same can be done on the road. Input lists and stage plots go a long way to achieving this, particularly if stage change-overs and line-up changes are happening. The band will almost

- The system you choose to go with should be capable of filling the room. If the band is overpowering the PA, they are either too loud or the PA is too small for their requirements. Don't be afraid to ask the band to turn down. You are working as a team — the result of which will be a tighter, cohesive show for the benefit of a paying audience. After compiling your system, practice putting it all together either at an in-town gig or, if you have to, somebody's garage. Find the weak parts of the setup and remedy them before heading out on the road. I've done a complete set-up in my backyard including all of the band's gear for lack of a better place to debug. Finding specialized connectors or adapters in the Canadian wilderness could easily become a lifelong quest.



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Bruce Cockburn is a member of Ottawa Local 180.

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always have a preferred set-up/layout. It is important to try to keep this consistent from gig to gig in order to ensure the best possible performance. For example, as a bassist I *must* be on stage left, otherwise I feel dislocated from the drummer. Whether this is physical or psychological I don't know, but I feel far more comfortable and, as a result, perform better.

When making up the stage plot, determine the minimum space required to position the band as they prefer to be. Make sure this information is included on your layout. When phoning ahead to your next gig, you can find out about space limitations and plan alternative positioning before you arrive. Input lists should be made up and used consistently on each gig.

Keep a master with all the information filled in and leave the rest blank until they are required in the event that equipment problems arise and re-patching must be done. Make one hundred copies of each and don't be afraid of faxing copies to the booking agent or house engineer at the club. It can often save confusion and time upon load-in/set-up and help you hunt down and eliminate line problems as they occur.

Every engineer has a preferred method of laying out the inputs on their board. I always tend to start with the bass drum as one and the snare on two, followed by toms and overheads if they are required. Keeping all of the drum inputs together makes them easier to find on the fly and gives a much better visual representation of their mix. After the drum mix is achieved, I prefer to assign them to a sub-mix of their own, two sub-mixes if I'm working in stereo. I also like to keep the bass guitar next to the drums for easier control in getting the signals to work together as a cohesive unit. Background vocals can be sub-grouped together as well so that a single fader can be used to increase their level in the mix without offsetting their balance with each other or the lead. If you find that you have a particular line problem and are forced to make a change at the last minute or during the show, be sure to indicate those changes on the mic chart. During the show it's easy to forget seemingly small changes and waste valuable time trying to remember what you or someone else did.

## FINE-TUNING YOUR SETUP

- Get the monitor mix happening first. Chances are that the changes you make will be as a direct result of the house system interacting with the monitor mix.

Most of the fine-tuning will be

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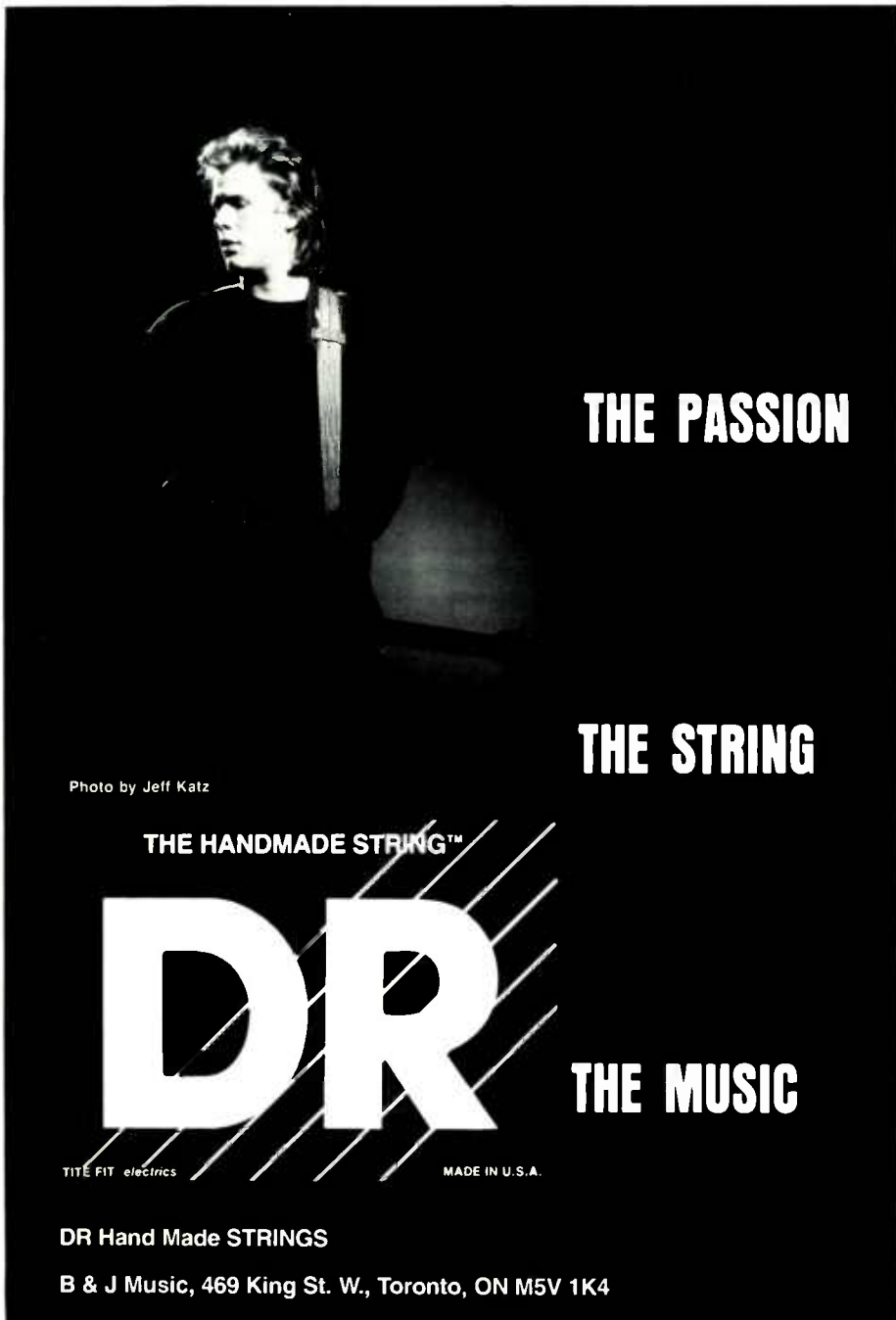
# LIVE SOUND TOURING

required in the house mix once the club fills up and the show starts. Typically you have only a one song maximum to get it together.

- The mix position is important. Quite often, the club owner is very definite about where you can set up the FOH console. Most often it's either back stage or some other area of poor

reference. Under balconies or overhangs can be exceedingly difficult as they usually act as bass traps. Ideally, you'll want to hear what the audience is hearing. This can best be achieved by placing the mix position where you can hear what the greatest number of people in the audience will be hearing. For

smaller venues, the best way to do this is to measure the distance between the two stacks (*distance A*), and ensure that the console is not located any closer than this distance from the nearest stack or any further than twice this distance back (*distance 2A*). In addition, set the console slightly off of the centre line to the stage to avoid any phase problems. If the physical restrictions of the club will not permit this, or if the club manager has little veins in his forehead in danger of exploding, consult with the house engineer or sound tech if they are available. They can be an invaluable source of



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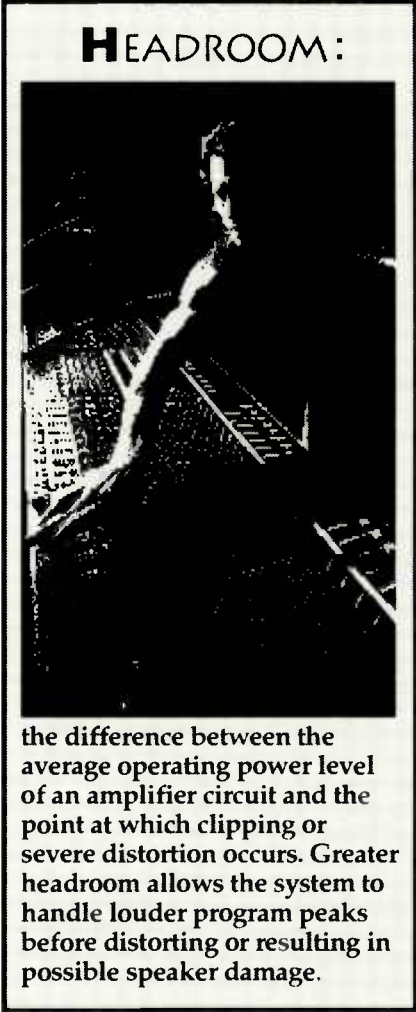
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## HEADROOM:



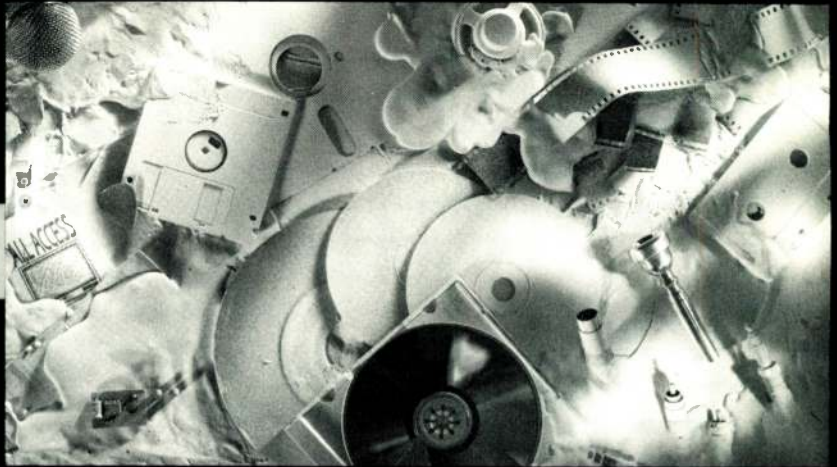
the difference between the average operating power level of an amplifier circuit and the point at which clipping or severe distortion occurs. Greater headroom allows the system to handle louder program peaks before distorting or resulting in possible speaker damage.

information on peculiarities of the room and how best to compensate for them with the EQ or alternate speaker placements. Make friends with them on your arrival. The cost of a beer or two can often make or break the professionalism of your show.

## FURTHER SOUND ADVICE

- Stage monitors are the primary cause of feedback. Keep their levels as low as possible and use at least a 1/3 octave EQ to notch out the

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offending frequencies.

- Keep mic cables away from AC or lighting cables. If they have to cross one another, make sure they do so at 90 degree angles to limit hum in the lines and, if possible, lift them up. Use twisted pair mic cables with a braided shield.
- Mic close to the sources to achieve more gain in the system before feedback. You may have to roll off some of the low frequencies at the board to compensate for the proximity effect of the microphones.
- Don't use more mics than you have to. You'll have less feedback problems and less to worry about during the show.
- During down time or when time permits before the show, check your cables and repair them as necessary. If you don't have time, clearly mark them and make a notation in your *logbook*. You *are* keeping a log, right?
- Ensure ground pins are intact on all AC cables. Lifting the ground in this manner is not only illegal, it's dangerous.
- Have lots of adapters, connectors and line lifts. Start your collection today.
- Cable runs should be safely taped down or covered with carpet. Lawsuits are expensive.
- Have on-hand a large supply of gaffer tape, sharpies, white label tape, markers, pens, pencils, screw drivers, allen keys, wire cutters, pliers, a soldering iron, solder, fuses, cable testers, extension cords, power bars, extra mics, cables and DI boxes, flashlight, batteries, a desk lamp, coffee table, scatter rug, kitchen . . . get the picture?
- Unattended rolls of tape are to be adopted, particularly if there is no name written on the inside (unless, of course, they are mine).
- Label everything — tape, boxes, cases, cables, drummers — the works.
- It is vitally important that you have a record of every piece of gear and their corresponding serial numbers. Make a master list to stay back home and carry a few copies with you on the road. This will help if something goes missing or if you are crossing borders. Do the same for any rental or leasing agreements you have made in regards to the equipment. Keep this information safely in your *logbook*. You really should consider getting one.
- Take extra precautions when touring in winter. Snow and cold are harder on equipment and people than sum-

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mer months. Cables, faders, pots et al become brittle when frozen. Allow them time to thaw. Condensation is the enemy. When storing cabinets, do not put the speaker up. You never know when the roof of that orange van will start leaking. In addition, mics are continuously bombarded with warm, moist breath. Allow them to sufficiently dry out before using them, particularly if they are condenser mics. If possible, always keep your mics packed together and with you where it's warm.

- Transport Canada provides road conditions for different areas. Find out the number for your area and keep it in your *logbook*. You should have one by now!
- A phone call in advance of the show is always a good idea.
- After you have completed setting up for the show, play your favourite CD or tape through the system and take half an hour to walk around the venue listening to it. This will help you to identify problem areas and EQ corrections.
- Communicate. The band and the sound person have to work together as a team for the greater benefit of the show. If stage/monitor volumes are too high, don't be afraid of insisting that they be brought down.
- If you don't know, ask. Most techs are more than willing to impart the secrets of the trade and, in fact, many can't understand why the younger ones don't approach them for information more often. Remember though, timing is everything. If they are obviously working on getting the sound together or chasing down a problem on a gig, don't distract them. There will be time during or after the show.
- Read. There are several excellent sources of information available on the subjects of equipment and audio in general. I highly recommend the *Sound Reinforcement Handbook* written by Gary Davis and Ralph Jones for Yamaha. Pick up a copy and take it with you as a road bible. It will be invaluable to you in learning your craft and understanding how problems occur and can be solved.
- Get busy out there. These are the times of your lives!

*Peter Hamilton is a freelance engineer/musician based in Toronto, ON*



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# VIDEO BOOKS

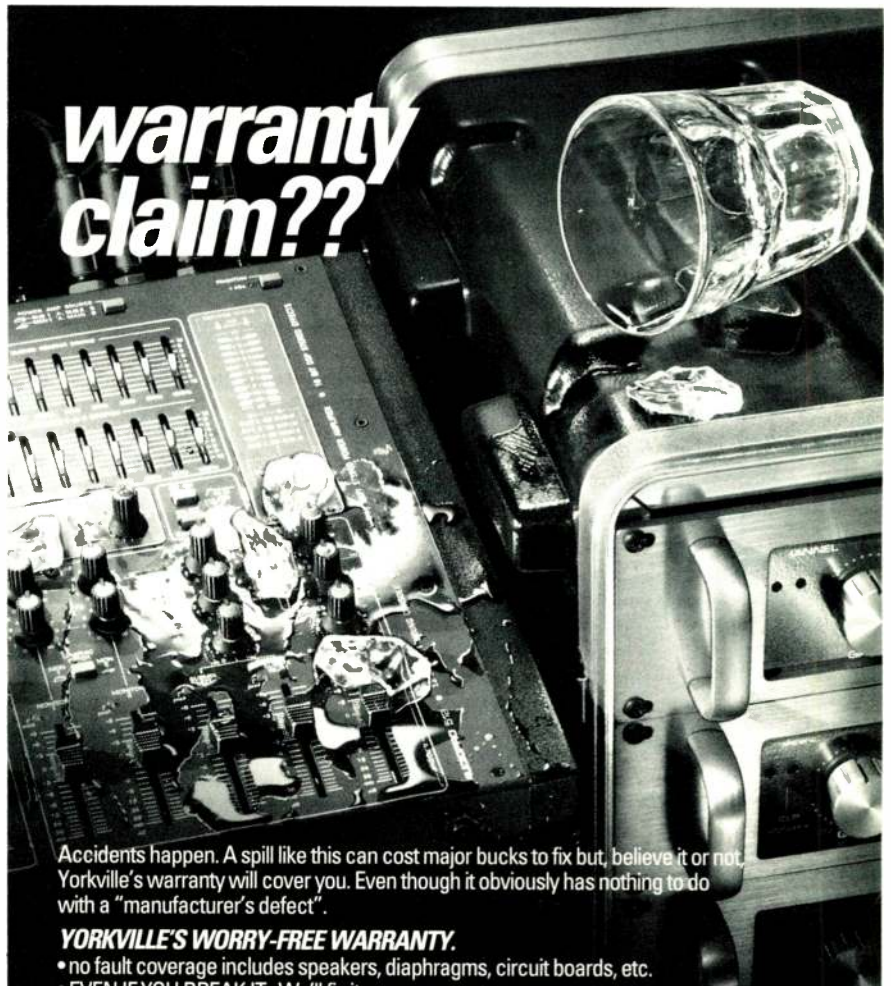


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The CPA 10S is capable of 2kW power handling with minimal distortion and exhibits no significant lobing when arrayed due to its identical horizontal and vertical [-3dB at 15 kHz (@ 45°)] off-axis performance.

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For more information, contact: Tannoy/T.G.I. North America Inc., 300 Gage Ave., #1, Kitchener, ON N2M 2C8 (519) 745-1158, FAX (519) 745-2364.

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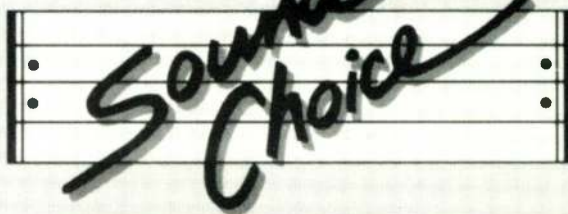


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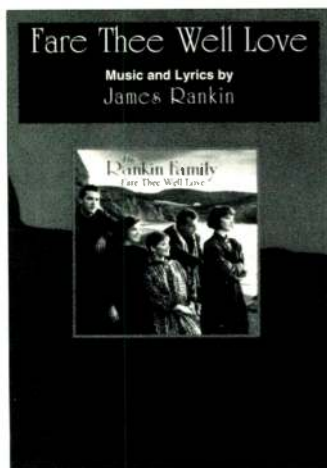
The model also features rear panel switches to select between stereo or mono operation, normal or bridged mode,

as well as two choices of input sensitivity. Rear panel input connections may be made via 1/4" balanced phone jacks or barrier strips with ground lift provision. Level attenuators for each channel are provided on the front panel along with a stereo headphone jack. Status LEDs on each channel include signal present, clip alert and "protect-mode" indication.



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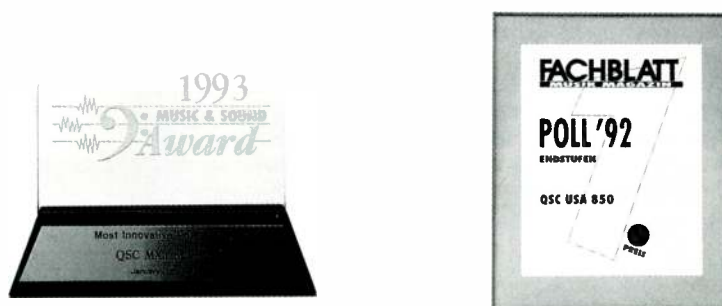
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# G E A R

## LIVE SOUND SOURING

### NADY 950GS UHF WIRELESS SYSTEM

Nady Systems has introduced the Nady 950GS UHF Wireless System.

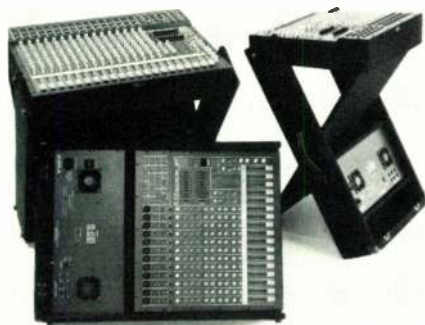
The Nady 950GS UHF wireless receiver is a rack mount, True Diversity unit with 40 frequency synthesized channels, arranged in four user-selectable groups of ten channels each. The receiver is available with Nady's new, all-metal, Surface Mount Technology (SMT) handheld, lavalier or instrument transmitters.

The 950GS utilizes Nady's proprietary UHF RF link, plus Nady's patented companding noise reduction for refined audio quality. The 950GS has a 120dB dynamic range.

For enhanced reliability in even the largest venues, the 950GS also features Nady's exclusive hiss mute circuitry which, according to the manufacturer, maintains audio quality as the user moves to the outside limit of the system's operating range.

Other features include switchable balanced level out (line/mic), 115/220V AC power, 20-25 V DC power option, bass boost, monitor volume control and front or rear mounted high efficiency antennas. The 950GS operates in the 800 MHz range.

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



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Fender Electronics has introduced the new PX Series powered mixers. The PX Series combines a studio-quality stereo mixing console with a professional built-in digital reverb, a dual nine-band

graphic equalizer and two high-powered professional power amplifiers. A lower cost eight-channel unit

with a spring reverb, the PX-2208, is also available.

The PX-2208 and PX-2208D include a two-channel 150 watt into four ohm power amplifier. The PX-2212D and PX-2216D include a two-channel 250 watts-per-channel into four ohm power amplifier. Fender's proprietary Deltacomp clip protection circuitry is

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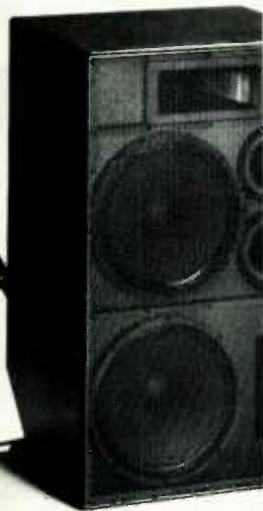


# LIVE SOUND & TOURING GEAR

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EAW has released the new FR Series high definition nearfield systems.

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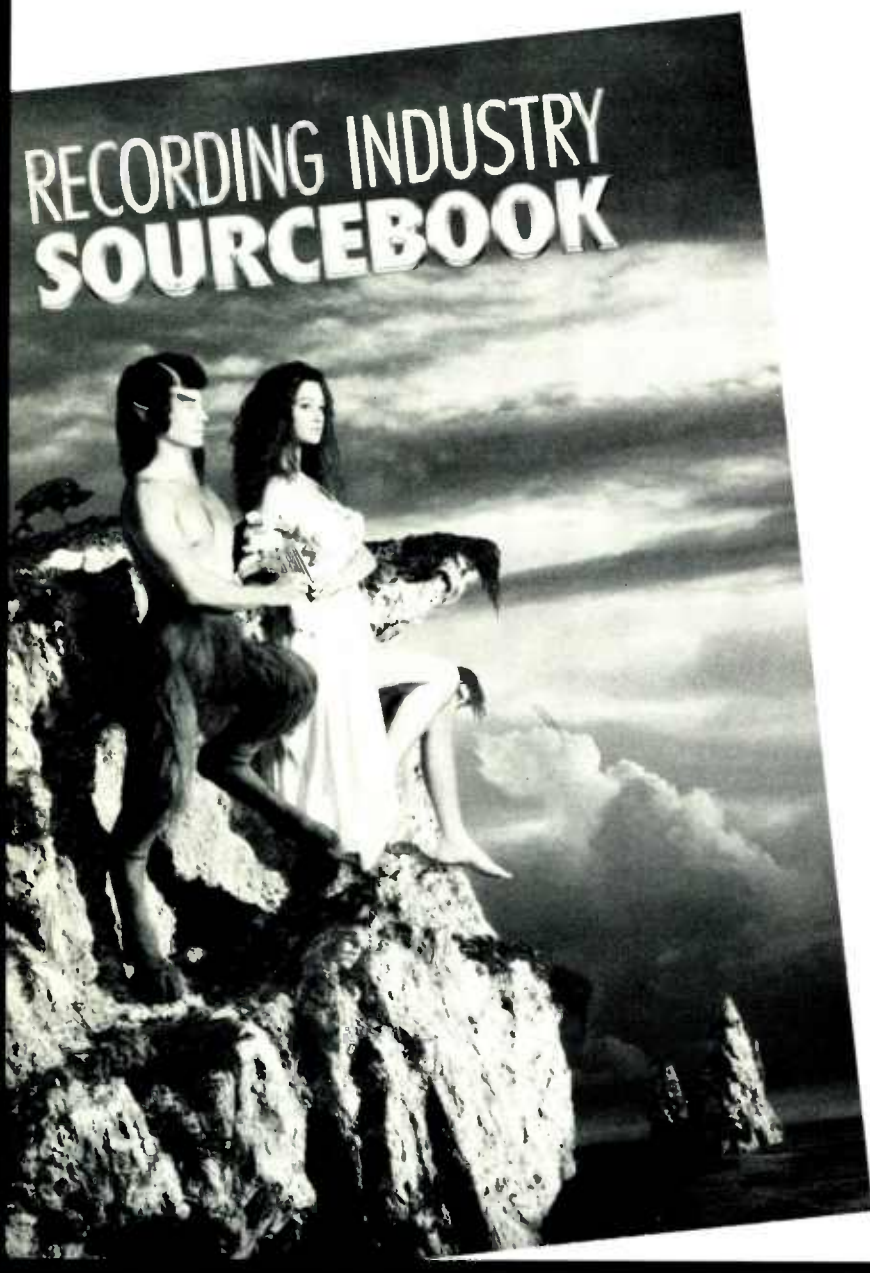
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# TOYS & MORE TOYS

In this article I'll try to advise on some of the do's and don'ts as we piece together our front-of-house rack. In a previous article we determined that our budget for our effects rack would be \$10,000 keeping approximately \$1,000 for casing and cabling. Let's shop!

## EQUALIZATION

Considering our main EQ is the first in the chain once the signal path leaves the soundboard, it's important that the quality of this particular unit is in keeping with the quality of our console without killing our budget. Some engineers prefer a parametric equalizer. Although this type of equalization gives you more flexibility and control over frequencies, it requires a little more time and understanding than a standard 1/3 octave graphic equalizer. Ironically, even some of the more experienced live sound techs have never used a parametric EQ or even care to. To ensure that our system is user-friendly, we'll stick with the graphic-style EQ. Most respectable manufacturers offer a reasonable stereo EQ around the \$1,000 mark. When buying any equipment, make sure the manufacturer offers a solid warranty as well as a history of providing reliable products. There are still many Klark Technic DN360 stereo equalizers out there that have continued to provide years of uninterrupted service and are still an industry-accepted product. Ashly have introduced the GOX 3102 selling in the \$1,500 range that I have had a great level of success with.

## COMPRESSION

A piece of equipment every FOH rack should contain is a main compressor. One can expect to pay around \$700 for a decent stereo compressor, although one can look upwards into the \$2,000 region for some fairly sophisticated units. Ashly, dbx, Rane and Symetrix to mention a few, all offer a respectable stereo compressor, each offering a varied amount of features. As well as a stereo compressor for our mains, an additional stereo compressor for channel insertion would be advised. This comes in handy when dealing with heavy transients caused by bass guitars. The other channel can be

used to control and smooth out a singer with bad dynamics or mic control. I'd personally recommend a dbx 166 stereo compressor based on its affordability and reliability as well as its ability to be used as a noise gate.

## NOISE GATES

Noise gates are a voltage-sensitive unit that allows or disallows the flow of signal information from one point to another. They are most commonly used to eliminate rumbling and low end feedback caused by drums or other percussive instruments by means of inserting into a particular channel on the console. This is not to limit their usefulness because gates equipped with a key function (a feature used to open another gate or trigger other pieces of equipment simultaneously) can be very useful in accomplishing a tight bass drum/bass guitar bottom end.

Some features to look for when purchasing a noise gate are the key function, a floor control feature, attack and release controls and a hold control. Higher-end manufacturers offer more intricate features, but not without cost. For the purposes of this sound system a decent 4-channel quad noise gate with the above functions will suffice. My personal choice is the new Ashly SG-35E quad noise gate, retailing around \$850. If you decide to go the route of a higher-end noise gate, Drawmer offers the DS 201 stereo noise gate that retails around \$1,000. For the purpose of this system, we'll stick with the Ashly to stay within our budget.

We've succeeded in burning up approximately \$4,000 so far, now let's buy some effects!

## EFFECTS PROCESSING

Digital delays, as we've come to know them, are very quickly becoming a thing of the past. Multi-effects processing has become the way of the present and the future. One unit capable of replacing upwards of six is hard to argue with, although I still think four separate multi-effects units are the way to go. This gives you all the flexibility you could ever need to accomplish a nicely effected program. The one downfall of all this multi processing is the time required to set all the different parameters. Another important factor is that of MIDI. Most units manufactured these days are MIDI-compatible. Pushing one or two buttons sure beats the

hell out of seven or eight. When considering the digital delay or echo programs of a particular unit, ensure that the unit is capable of providing at least 1-5 seconds of delay time.

Reverberation is another thing that has come a long way over the years. In the earlier years of mixing live sound, I was overwhelmed to have a 16-channel Bi-amp mixing console with a built-in spring reverb. Progressing into the 20th Century, I purchased my first digital reverb unit (a Yamaha SPX90). This particular unit was and probably still is the most commonly found effects unit in racks around the world.

Yamaha continues to provide the industry with excellent, reasonably priced multi-effects processing units. Lexicon, Digitech, Alesis and ART also manufacture cost-effective multi-effects units. I still tend to favour the ease in operating the old faithfuls (Roland, Korg and Ibanez) who have provided me with years of reliable digital delays. You could purchase four respectable units with the remaining \$4,000 and still have some extra for an inexpensive CD/Cassette deck.

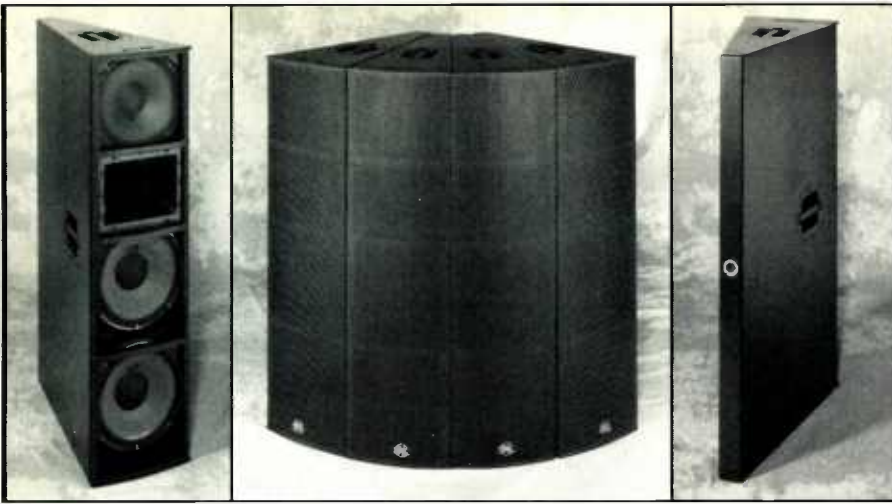
## THE RACK

When purchasing a custom rack, be sure to deal with a company that specializes in making custom road cases. Pay the extra money. Remember you're protecting a big investment. When figuring out the size of your case, leave extra rack spaces to accommodate an illuminating power conditioning module as well as a locking drawer and room for additional purchases. Make sure all patch plates are constructed of heavy steel and utilize only the best cabling and connectors. Wherever possible use balanced connectors. Be sure your case is adequately ventilated to avoid the overheating of components. Most equipment failure is a direct result of expansion and contraction of printed circuit boards causing cold solder joints.

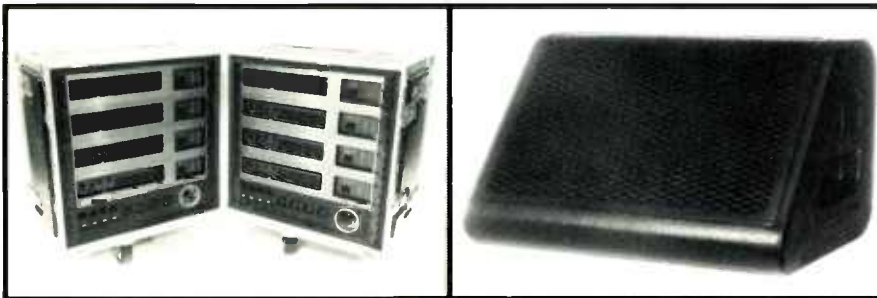
Well, I think we've done a pretty good job of building our effects rack and stayed within our budget. Be sure to pick up the next issue of CM when we go shopping for our power and enclosures.

*Al Craig is owner/operator of A.C. Sound and Lighting and the Ontario Institute of Live Sound Engineering and recording located in London, ON.*

**CM**



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# Can You Make This SOUND... better?



A great deal has been written about how engineers can achieve a better product. Since this is, after all, a musicians' magazine, I thought it might be applicable to address how you, the musician, can help. If you expect your instrument to sound killer in the studio, your most effective approach would be to make it sound killer at home. Don't go into the studio expecting a miracle. If it sounds like hell when you play it, the engineer will duly present you with a remarkably accurate replica of exactly that.

I recall one session where the bass player dragged in an old Ampeg bass head and an 8x10 cabinet. After miking it and setting up a DI feed, I went into the control room to set up the board and some compressors while the bass player fired up his rig and began making noise.

As I brought up the fader for the bass mic, my first thought was that someone had parked a truck in the iso booth and left the engine running. I trotted over to the bass amp to discover that the cooling fan in the amp head was suffering from some ailment that made it sound like a lawnmower running on gravel. Trying not to laugh too hard, I repositioned the mic to one of the two lowest cones of the cabinet to get as far away from the amp head as possible. The bass player was looking at me with a puzzled expression on his face, as in, "Is anything wrong?". No, nothing serious. Nothing that can't be fixed by getting a new bass rig.

Realistically, though, if my mic repositioning didn't do the trick, then I would simply have gotten a longer 1/4" cable and tossed the amp head into another room. The incinerator, perhaps.

I returned to the control room to find out how my bass sound was doing. The cooling fan was certainly much more manageable, and I was thinking that if we got enough volume out of the cabinet, it should cover it up quite nicely.

That's when I heard it. From the bowels of Hell itself, a bass sound emerged hardly to be recognized as such. Containing nothing above 200 Hz, the sound was a holographic mudslide accompanied by an extremely convincing rendition of a rhinoceros with gas. I bowed my head in a silent prayer, asking that not all the cones in the cabinet were blown. I checked, and suffice it to say

that the bass sound on the recording is DI only.

The moral of the story is: Make sure your gear is in good working order before setting foot in the studio. Not only will your sound suffer, but making such discoveries during a recording session is a costly waste of studio time, especially if repairs have to be made on necessary equipment.

I had one guitarist who didn't get to play a single note before the power supply for his effects pedals self-destructed. While dismantling it and uttering death threats and other pertinent information regarding its parentage, he revealed the fact that he'd been meaning to have it looked at for months. So we wasted an hour and a half hunting down enough 9V batteries and adapters to run his pedals before we could proceed.

Strings are another issue. Guitar strings tend to be relatively cheap, and also have a habit (usually) of breaking before they get tonally disgusting. As a result, most guitarists come into the studio with strings that sound good but won't stay in tune because of their newness. Bass strings are another thing altogether. Just because your strings have survived three years and twelve boilings doesn't necessarily mean they still sound good. I know they're expensive, but buy a new set before the session! Besides, they'll last you another three years playing live.

Drums are a lot of fun, too. Drummers have a tendency to forget about the least expensive part of the kit — those little plastic sleeves and felt bits that go onto the cymbal rests. Since the cymbals are being close-miked, all those insignificant rattlings of a metal cymbal on a metal stand are meticulously captured in glorious hi-fi. Not only is this poor treatment of the cymbals — it causes them to crack from the centre out — but the sound is terribly annoying. In fact, it's right up there with the squeaking kick drum pedals, rattling hardware, and creaking drum stools. Most studios will have some type of lubricant on hand to fix squeaks, but as for the missing bolt on the cymbal stand, good luck. The solution? Enter the engineer's best friend: We swathe your kit in gaffer tape while the rest of the band restrains you.

Drum heads are another major issue. I don't know how many times I have had to

deal with a snare that had four tuning lugs missing, a dead ringer and half a roll of paper towel taped to it. As soon as I wander over to the drumkit to marvel at the tragedy and administer whatever treatments are necessary, last rites usually being one of them, the drummer invariably says, "Yeah, I know it looks like hell, but it sounds great live!". After slapping a mic on it and returning to the control room, I raise the fader and hear a so-called snare that sounds exactly as I expect, closely resembling a box of Pampers with a Slinky stapled to the bottom of it. Please. Buy new heads. They help.

So does tuning, come to think of it. Drums are not easy to tune or to keep in tune. Tension across each tuning lug does not remain consistent for very long, and, if left uneven for an extended period, causes the head to warp, resulting in a Doppler effect every time the drum is hit. If it has not been left this way for too long, it may be retuned, but, if it is warped, it will require replacement.

Which brings me to another point. For winter recording sessions, when you decide to load the truck the night before to save time in the morning, do the world a favour and arrange with the studio to arrive two hours ahead of time. This will give the gear a chance to thaw out and you a chance to retune the whole mess. Even though the drum head box says it can survive -40°C to +50°C, what they didn't tell you is that the pitch changes two octaves in the process, with little regard for uniformity.

Good sounds make for good recordings. If you want to sound like a Les Paul going through a Marshall JCM 900 and a 4x12 cabinet, I suggest that's what you bring along.

The whole purpose of a recording session is to capture what you sound like, so make sure you sound like what you want before you arrive. An engineer and the equipment can enhance your sound, but can enhance only what you supply.

*Engineer and Trebas instructor Eric Abrahams is owner of Sounds Like Hell Productions, a new company offering recording and related services in a wide variety of Toronto recording studios to accommodate any budget or requirement.*

# ARTISTIC SACRIFICE



**S**ACRIFICES — the most prevalent word when the topic is independent touring. When any independent act hits the road, unless they've acquired an outside investor or sell as many cassettes off the stage as the Barenaked Ladies did, they'd better be ready to make sacrifices. Also, take note of the **#1 TOURING RULE: MAKE SURE YOUR BAND IS PREPARED MUSICALLY.** There's a lot of talented competition out there. Hey, no intended cynicism here, but spreading your musical gospel coast-to-coast in this country will be one of the most challenging undertakings you will ever take on as a performing musician . . .

## SACRIFICE #1: YOUR TIME

Chances are if you're an unsigned artist (no shame here) about to embark on a cross-country tour, you probably don't have the semi-luxury of a booking agent. If this is the case, presto — you're the booking agent! Yup. So about two months before you want to head out, hop on the phone and do it yourself. This can be a frustrating exercise of phone tag, unanswered and/or several repeat calls.

Before making any calls, take note of this **#1 TOURING RULE: USE OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION.** Talk to other musicians, tour managers or agents about which clubs you should be playing and on which nights (you're wasting precious phone time calling 'Top 40' bars if you play punk rock). You could also refer to the *National Chart Gig Guide*, an information source chock-full of clubs, promoters, publications, radio stations, record stores and instrument rental/repair shops in each major centre across the country. You can contact the *National Chart* at PO Box 332, Willowdale Stn. A, North York, ON M2N 5S9. The amount of time spent calling clubs will depend on how many dates you want to play and over how many days. Some bands can go two weeks straight with no days off, others need a break every three gigs or so (this usually depends on how much torture the vocalist's voice can endure — don't push it!). If the talent buyer at the club cares about their bookings, they'll ask you to follow your call with a promotional package. This should

include just about any piece of evidence that shows your band has its shit together (ie. quality demo tape, press photo, bio, press clippings, performance video, college radio chart positions, a nifty tour poster, reference letters from other clubs and of course, a cover letter including your name, phone number and the date and deal you're looking for).

## SACRIFICE #2: YOUR PRIDE

When you've tracked down the club's talent buyer, followed up the begging with a package and secured your date verbally, mail (along with more nifty tour posters) a Live Engagement Contract to the club. The contract is an agreement between you and the buyer stating the date, location, time and length of performance, the fee/terms agreed upon, complete contacts for both parties and any other added provisions. The contract should also state that the club is to supply an adequate PA system along with an experienced sound tech. Most agreements should include a monetary guarantee with hotel accommodations and a hot meal for each performance night. If your band has never played that market before, you'll be lucky to get a \$100 guarantee and a case of beer, but more than likely you'll get the opening slot on a three-band bill and a few beers (it's at this point that you must remind yourself how much you luuuuv to play).

Regardless, get it on paper and try to get the buyer to return a signed copy of the contract to you. Every once in a while you'll come across a club that will not only return a signed copy (unlikely) but will also include the 50% upfront deposit that you requested as well (highly unlikely). In all reality, you may not receive any contracts before you leave, meaning the whole tour is one big risk.

## SACRIFICE #3: BATTERIES

Yup, batteries. You'll probably run 'em dry in your calculator as you repeatedly try to budget your tour expenses into the few measly guarantees that were negotiated (in many cases your negotiations may only result in a percentage of income taken from each admission paid — don't bank on these at all).

Your expenses should include vehicles, fuel/oil, hotels, meals, crew, parking, equipment rentals, ferries and of course, the artist draw (a.k.a. per diem). Per diems should be kept to minimum since most days are spent travelling. Per diems can be reduced even more on show days where a meal is provided. This may sound cheap, but you'll find that every penny counts!

## SACRIFICE #4: MORE OF YOUR TIME

So it's two weeks before your tour starts and you haven't received a contract from anyone yet. Again, hop on the phone, track down the buyer and explain how it is only good business to return contracts, ensuring both parties of your participation on the said date. At this time you should take the opportunity to advance the show and collect all pertinent information necessary to pull off a smooth performance. This includes securing technical requirements, merchandise arrangements, detailed directions to the club and hotel, load-in/sound-check/performance times, meal time, when the doors open and a curfew (if any). Along with this information, make sure to record the phone number of the club, which is often a different number from the buyer's.

## SACRIFICE #5: EVEN MORE OF YOUR TIME

Chances are if you're unsigned (honest, it's okay), you can't afford a publicist. If this be the case, presto — you're the publicist! What does a publicist do? Well, you could say that they drum up as much free advertising for your gig as possible, both in the form of previews in the local dailies, weeklies or school/campus newspapers. You need to coordinate phone or in-person interviews on relevant commercial and campus radio stations and don't forget the community television stations. Ask for the *Bowden's* or *Matthews* media guides at your local reference library for all the nationally current names and phone numbers you'll need. **#1 TOURING RULE: DON'T OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLICITY.** No part of touring is more disheartening than playing to an empty room because no one is aware that you're in

town. It could also ruin your chances of returning to that club.

### SACRIFICE #6: WEAR 'N' TEAR ON YOUR UNCLE'S VAN

If your uncle (or anyone else for that matter) has a van he can spare for a couple of weeks, borrow it! Nothing will put an already slim tour budget in the red quicker than a rented vehicle. Remember to make sure that anyone driving the vehicle is of the insurable age for the existing insurance policy. Another smart move would be to join an auto club. For a very reasonable fee, they provide 24-hour emergency roadside service and towing almost anywhere in North America. Probably the most efficient club in Canada is the CAA. Call 1-800-336-4357 to find out your nearest registration office. They can also provide you with road maps and will even assist you in mapping out the best route to take from one location to the next. #1 TOURING RULE: CHECK YOUR MOTOR OIL EVERY DAY. And this may sound odd, but try to keep your vehicle as clean-looking as possible. The RCMP seem to have an instant attraction to unique looking vans, resulting in many lost travelling hours. If you must rent, try to find a vehicle that will comfortably carry band and gear, while still leaving room for a small mattress. When calling rental agencies, try to work out a deal based on both the length of your rental period and the distance you will be travelling.

### SACRIFICE #7: SLEEP

You've been taking shifts driving since 5 a.m., but you've arrived safely and on time. After you finish your interview at the campus radio station, you head to the club. Your band name is misspelled on the marquee. Hmm. You load in, set up, sound check, try to split a medium pizza five ways, have a beer, get up and play, pull off a pretty good show, tear down, load out, cross your fingers in hopes that you won't have a hassle getting paid and finally drive to the hotel. Great! Park the van and hit the sack.

Well, not exactly. If you're lucky enough, you get a ground level room in the hotel because you've got to unload most everything from the van and pile it in your hotel room. Sound stupid? So will your band when they try to take the stage the next night with no instruments. #1 TOURING RULE: NEVER LEAVE ANY VALUABLES IN AN UNATTENDED VEHICLE.

### SACRIFICE #8: YOUR BED

In many situations accommodations are not provided, meaning you must fend for yourself. This could mean cutting costs at a roadside motel with only two single beds or maybe sleeping on a friend's living room floor (remember, you luuuuv to play). Take time to sleep though, for both your safety and the quality of your performance depend on it.

### SACRIFICE #9: YOUR SANITY

So you've got two days off before your next show and to save money, you hang out in Swift Current. Bring a healthy supply of books and board games.

When a month has gone by, you've toured half of Canada's cities on your way out, the other half on your way back and you've only racked up \$1,500 on your mom's credit card. Excellent! You kept it under the \$2,000 mark. Seriously, there isn't a band yet to tour this huge country at this level and make a profit. But despair not! It only gets easier with each time out (slowly, mind you). Remember: with every action there's an equal and opposite reaction, and with every sacrifice comes a morsel of opportunity. At the end of each night, shake hands with the talent buyer and send thank you letters to all the journalists, DJs and VJs. Don't destroy your hotel room, 'cause you'll be back there one day. And the next time you pick up the phone to start booking another tour, notice how you're spending less time talking and more time playing. 'Cause you luuuuv to play.

*Don Christensen heads NOISE Management, the exclusive management and booking company for Bob Wiseman and Change of Heart.*

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# P R O D U C T N E W S

## Yamaha PSR 5700 Electronic Keyboard

Yamaha has announced the introduction of the most powerful electronic keyboard in the PSR product line: the Yamaha PSR 5700. The PSR 5700 offers numerous professional features, such as 16-bit sound, interactive accompaniment and a built-in 3.5" floppy disk drive — all in a compact keyboard designed for the home hobbyist.

The PSR 5700 features 38-note polyphony, a total of 100 AWM (Advanced Wave Memory) voices, 100 custom voices and 126 general MIDI voices. Each voice has up to nine effects. The unit also possesses 84 percussion sounds and eight drum pads.

The PSR 5700 boasts an 8-track sequencer with full editing capabilities. It provides 36 different musical styles, each with individual intros, fills, endings and 12 variations. The sequencer's memory can hold up to six songs and additional songs can be saved to disk. A built-in signal processor enhances the keyboard's sounds with sustain, reverb, chorus, duet/trio and transpose effects.

The keyboard features 61 touch-sensitive keys, a modulation wheel and a pitch bend wheel. In addition, the unit provides an auxiliary stereo audio input for an external drum machine or tone generator to be played through the speakers.

The 3.5" floppy disk provides storage and recall of tonal and performance data. It also can play back performances found on the "Yamaha Disk Orchestra Collection".

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



## Chameleon DSP Preamp

New from Rocktron, the 24 bit Chameleon DSP guitar preamp offers continuously variable preamp tones and a number of effects.

The Chameleon will produce the tone of your favourite stack or vintage combo, classic fuzz tones and all stations in between. Use up to three FX simultaneously, including reverb, chorus, delay, flange, wah-wah auto pan, phase, pitch shift, tremolo and speaker simulator. Incorporating HUSH noise reduction, the Chameleon may be used with Rocktron's MIDI Mate foot controller.

For more information, contact: Solo Professional Products, 2870 Technology Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48309 (313) 853-3055, FAX (313) 853-5937.

## The Miracle Piano Teaching System

The Miracle Piano Teaching System is designed to work with a variety of systems including Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Genesis System, IBM PC & compatible computers, Commodore Amiga computers and Macintosh computers.

Written by professional music educators, this program makes learning the basics a pleasure. It is the ideal system for beginners or even for those who just need to brush up on basic piano skills. By taking full advantage of computer technology, The Miracle makes learning keyboard fundamentals fast and easy. Using Artificial Intelligence Technology, it monitors each lesson and builds a series of personalized exercises based on individual needs, and by borrowing the fun of video games, it makes kids want to learn.

The professional keyboard features full-sized, pressure-sensitive keys. Over 100 other instruments are available at a single keystroke and a built-in stereo sound system allows you to make an entire orchestra come to life whenever you play. The Miracle keyboard is compatible with the entire world of modern synthesizers through built-in MIDI connections.

For more information, contact: DHD Enterprises, 9275 Hwy. 48, Markham, ON L6E 1A2 (416) 472-1289, FAX (416) 472-3136.



## Hot Guitarist Video Magazine

The *Hot Guitarist* Video Magazine is an innovative concept that brings the hottest guitarists from today's leading bands right into your own living room.

Featuring a mix of in-depth interviews, exclusive live performances, advice about gear and one-on-one lessons, the video series is perfect for today's MTV generation, who have become accustomed to receiving information in a more visual fashion. The 85 minute videos feature artists such as Steve Morse, Neal Schon, Jennifer Batten, Paul Gilbert and Al DiMeola giving interviews and instructional lessons.

For more information, contact: National Music Methods Ltd., 80 Esna Park Dr., #10, Markham, ON L3R 2R6 (416) 470-6120, FAX (416) 470-6126.

P R O D U C T  
N I W S

## Vic Firth Emil Richards Collection

Vic Firth has introduced the Emil Richards Collection of percussion mallets and effects.

Emil Richards, percussionist and premier L.A. studio musician, has had a major impact on modern percussion. Throughout his career, Emil has toured the world collecting and studying ethnic percussion instruments, and the depth of his percussion knowledge has given him a unique artistic perspective. Emil has now collaborated with Vic Firth and the result is a new line of sticks and accessories.

The Emil Signature Series consists of five novel instruments which produce distinct and versatile percussive effects:

**Back Beat Clappers** — great for fast rhythms played on the knee like castanets or for back beats and rhythms behind a band or a singer.

**Timp-Maraca Sticks** — a cross between a timpani mallet and a maraca. Played on tom-toms, congas and bongos; great for African or Latin music.

**Rattle Mallets** — a cross between a keyboard mallet and a maraca. Played on vibes, marimba or tom-toms; also terrific for African and Latin work.

**Slap Mallets** — made from reversed sheepskin, this leather-headed keyboard mallet lets you really dig into the bars. Produces a unique slap sound effect, accomplished by pressing the mallet into the bar when striking.

**Drum Stick Chime** — a playable wind chime capable of producing gentle cascades of sound to full staccato attacks. Great for the patio as well!

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



## Super High-Gloss Piano Polish

Cory Keyboard Products has introduced their latest custom product for piano care, Super High-Gloss Piano Polish. Specially designed for today's polyester and lacquer high-gloss finishes, Super High-Gloss removes and resists fingerprints, is anti-static and non-streaking.

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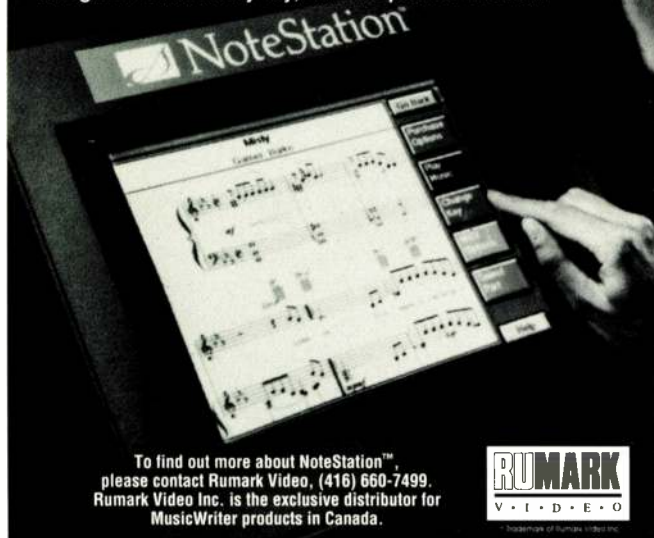
For more information, contact: Cory Keyboard Products, 21704 Devonshire St., #274, Chatsworth, CA 91311 (818) 708-9532, FAX (818) 708-1430.

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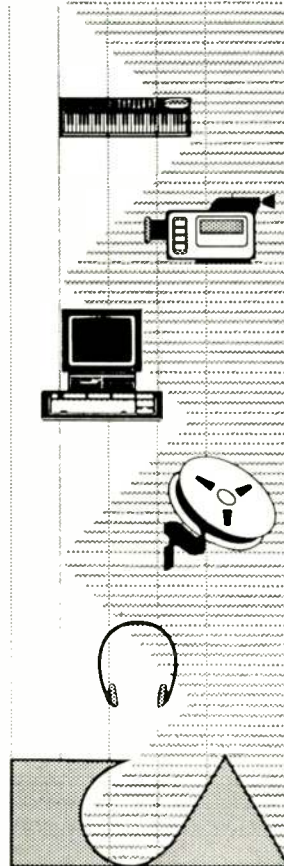
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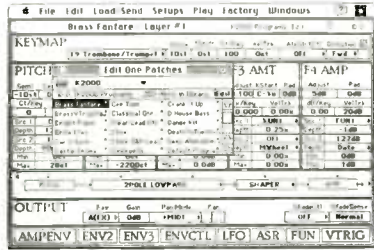
## Opcode Edit One Editor/Librarian

Opcode Systems has introduced Edit One, a low-cost music software package for Macintosh computers. Edit One is an editor/librarian for storing, editing and arranging synthesizer sounds and other MIDI device information.

Edit One is a special version of Opcode's popular Galaxy Plus Editors designed for the user who only needs an editor/librarian for a single, specific synthesizer or device. The package is compatible with all the same devices as Galaxy Plus Editors. When the user "configures" Edit One for the single device of their choice from the many available possibilities, the disk set is then "locked into compatibility" for that device.

Edit One is OMS (Opcode MIDI System) compatible but can be used with the "Minimal Studio Setup" if the user isn't using any other OMS compatible applications. Using a custom setup, OMS allows the user to describe an entire music studio's MIDI connections, devices, channels, controllers and more.

For more information, contact: Saved By Technology, 10 Breadalbane St., Toronto, ON M4Y 1C3 (416) 928-5984, FAX (416) 928-0262.



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New models include the CM20D acoustic guitar bag with full 1" padding throughout, cordura outer shell and plush lining. Features include leather string guard, string & accessory pockets, luggage hook and double lockable zipper pulls.

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## Sabian NewsBeat Catalog '93

Sabian has announced the release of its *NewsBeat* Catalog '93. With a front cover picturing rocker Blas Elias in action, this free 24-page publication offers drummers and percussionists of all styles a comprehensive guide to the latest in Sabian cymbals, percussion instruments and their applications.

Designed to be more than just a catalog, *NewsBeat* is an information and ideas magazine with key features including: the Sabian Checklist — a seven step guide to selecting cymbals; a complete listing of Sabian cymbals, gongs and sounds; Sound Charts showing the shapes and sounds of cymbals; and pitch response charts. The catalog also features spotlights on the set-ups and cymbals of leading players from all styles of music including David Abbruzzese (Pearl Jam), Russ McKinnon (Tower of Power), Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers), Rod Morgenstein (Dixie Dregs) and Liberty DeVitto (Billy Joel) among others.

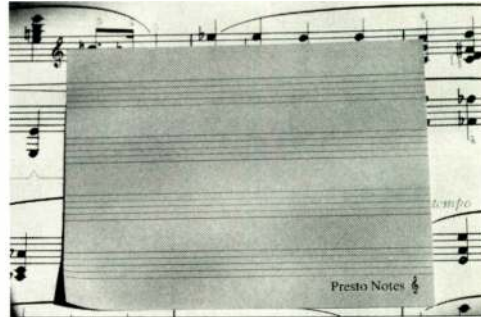
Creative cymbal application ideas for incorporating new and different sounds into a setup are presented and the catalog is rounded out with a software clothing and percussion accessories order card, as well as a consumer response card.

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# Showcase

by Penny Campbell

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## INCONNU

STYLE: Traditional

CONTACT: Inconnu, 38 Green Crescent, Whitehorse Yukon Y1A 4R9 (403) 668-6054

OK, so you want to know what the Canadian sound is? Listen to this cassette by Whitehorse band Inconnu, with its mixture of traditional folk, country, jazz and pop, and you may have a better idea of what might truly be considered a Canadian-sounding band. Not only is the music a well-crafted fusion of the many influences abounding in our country, but the band even sings in both official languages on some tracks. Vocals are provided by co-founders Lucie Desaulniers and Leonard Osland, who split leads. What is great about the sound of this band are the beautiful harmonies and the unique arrangements. Osland plays drums and other more traditional forms of percussion., band arranger Andrea McColeman plays piano and accordion, Nick DeGraff plays acoustic guitar and the bottom end is supplied by Jay Burr on . . . tuba. The five original tunes on this cassette cover the spectrum of the musical palette, and are highlighted by the strong vocals of Osland and Desaulniers. Of particular note is the haunting ballad "Icebound", which is strong both lyrically and vocally. And if anyone thinks you must record in a big studio in a major metropolitan center, just listen to the production values on this cassette, recorded at Old Crow Studio in Whitehorse. Original is definitely the key word for Inconnu.



## SUICIDE TRIBE

STYLE: Alternative

CONTACT: Simon K. (514) 849-7715

This band's bio package says virtually nothing other than the names of the players, and the press quotes supplied seem slightly more than dubious. But this is a band who can let the music speak for itself. Punk/funk/grunge/thrash and good fun, this three-song demo from Montreal's Suicide Tribe shows a lot of promise. Vocalist/guitarist Simon K. and bassist Frank Lawson have a solid groove happening, somewhere between the Chili Peppers and Metallica. The additions of guitarist Taylor Horne and drummer Peter Jackson have rounded out the lineup and provided the necessary amount of "noise and rhythm". Lead track "Daddy" is a killer and I love the Chili Pepper-sounding final short take "Snake In My Pants". Lawson is solid on bass, balancing the right amount of groove and melody to give the tunes that funky edge. The recording mixes some sampled sounds with the real stuff, but I look forward to seeing this band live. See you in the mosh pit!



## THE CRAWLIN' KINGSNAKES

STYLE: Rock

CONTACT: The Crawl' Kingsnakes  
55 New St., Hamilton, ON L8P 4J7.

Hmm . . . named after a John Lee Hooker tune. I like that. Opening track has distorted guitars and bluesy vocals. Good start. By the time I got through the second song, I realized I really liked the sound of this CD by Hamilton's roots/rockers The Crawl' Kingsnakes. *Loaded 'n' Rollin'* is jam-packed and jammin', recorded at Helm Studios in Kitchener, sounding pretty much live-off-the-floor. Lead vocalist/guitarist/songwriter Paul Wootton has assembled a crack lineup of players: guitarist Steve Foster, bassist Greg Plant, and drummer Mike Stewart work together to create a rich landscape for Wootton's soulful vocals. The tunes go from bluesy rockers to rockabilly to simply guitar/blues harp acoustics. The band definitely acknowledges the role of traditional blues and roots music in the creation of modern day rock and country. To quote Paul Wootton, "Rootless music doesn't stay around too long. It disappears." That being the case, The Crawl' Kingsnakes should be around for quite a while.







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