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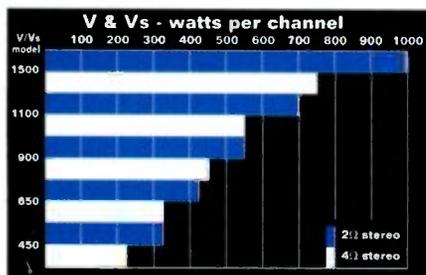


Volume XXIII • Number 4 \$2.95

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World Radio History

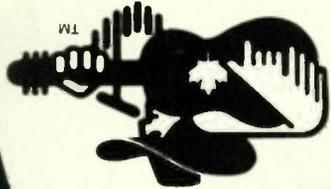
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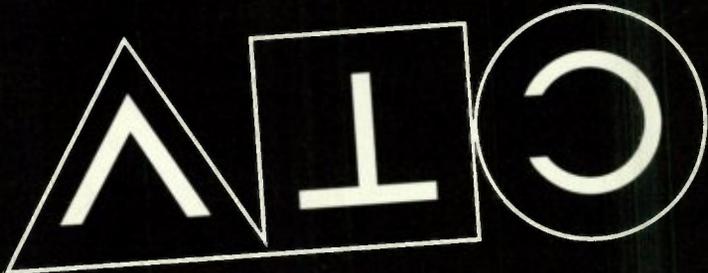
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*Bryan Adams photographed by Andrew Catlin*

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## What A Feeling

A Vital History of Canadian Music

by Martin Melhuish

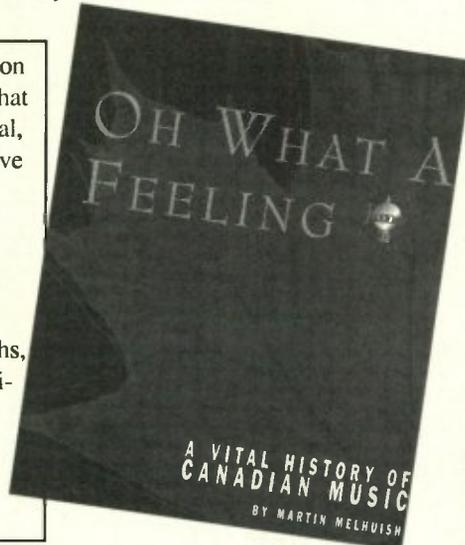
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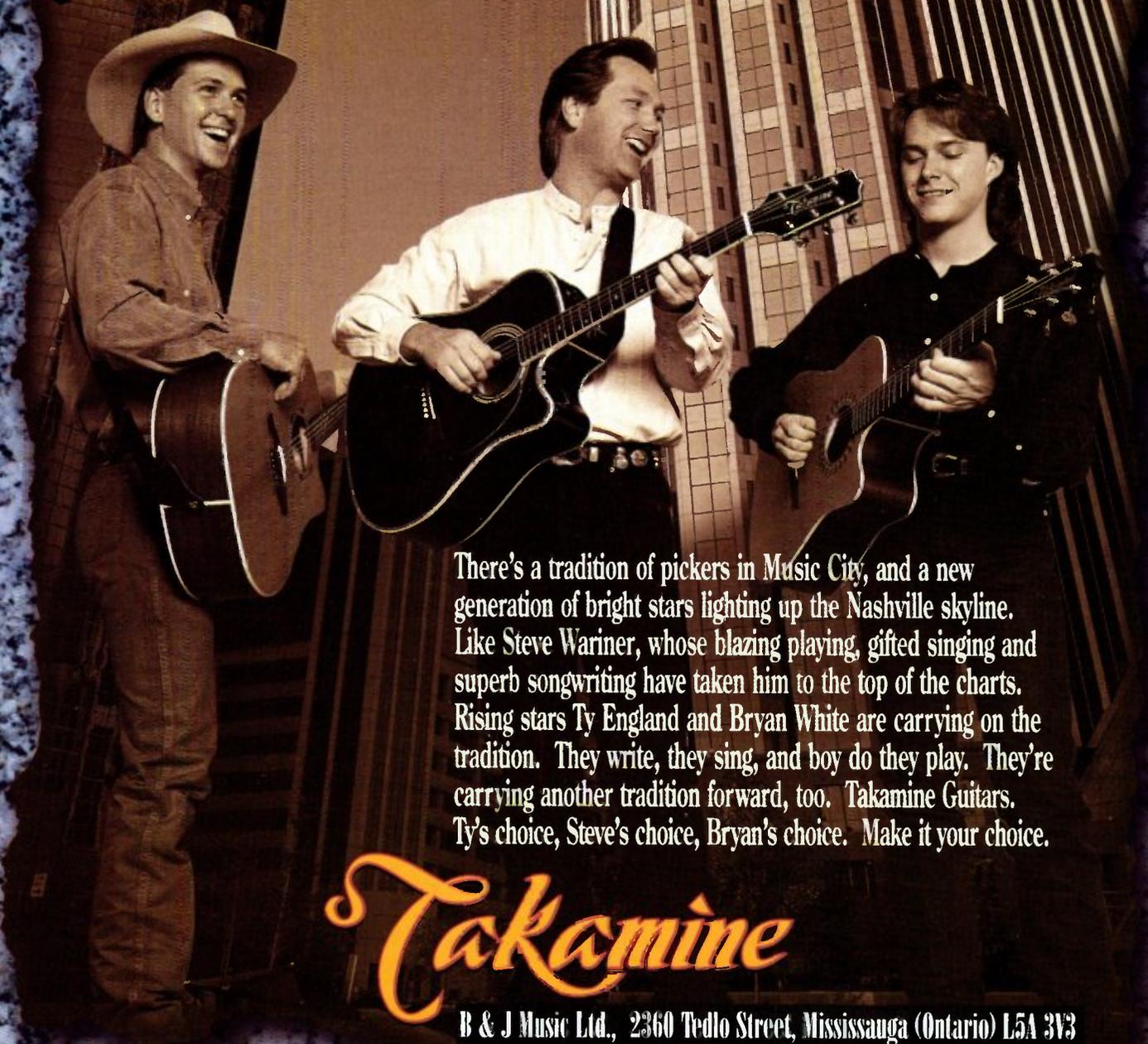
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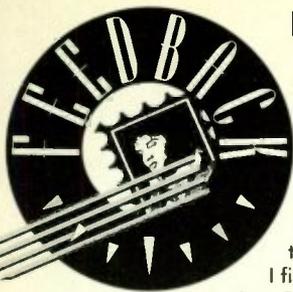
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A photograph of three guitarists performing in front of a city skyline. On the left, a man in a cowboy hat and brown shirt plays an acoustic guitar. In the center, a man in a white shirt and dark tie plays an acoustic guitar. On the right, a woman in a black shirt plays an acoustic guitar. The background shows tall buildings under a blue sky.

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## From The Editor

This year, I had the distinct honour and pleasure of serving on The Jazz Report Awards Committee, which votes to recognize excellence in Canadian Jazz music and education. Over 60 jazz writers, educators, broadcasters, musicians and record company personnel served on this year's committee, and in early May our votes were tabulated to award 40 Canadian jazz and blues artists for their outstanding contributions to the genre.

I first attended the awards in 1995 at the invitation of *The Jazz Report's* publisher and noted pianist/composer Bill King, who is a frequent contributor to *Canadian Musician*. I saw attendance at the 1996 Awards significantly up from last year, a sure indication that its appeal is healthily growing. It was also an honour to witness the great Oscar Peterson receiving The 1996 Jazz Report Award for Jazz Musician of the Year. Many award recipients that night expressed their overwhelming joy at being recognized in the presence of such an important figure in our country's musical history. I'd like to take this opportunity to commend Bill and everyone at *The Jazz Report* for their fine work in promoting jazz in Canada; and fittingly, I'd like to hand him the editorial post for this issue.

Shauna Kennedy

Editor

## THE GLORY YEARS OF JAZZ

by Bill King

The seventies will forever be known as the 'glory years' of the jazz-rock-funk fusion era. With Weather Report, Return To Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra, The Brecker Brothers and Herbie Hancock and the Headhunters fronting the most exciting ensembles in jazz, every new recording became a collector's dream.

Who can forget Hancock's *Manchild* the Brecker Brothers' *Some Skunk Funk*, Weather Report's *Heavy Weather* (which bore the classic "Birdland"), Mahavishnu's *Inner Mounting Flame*, and *Hymn To The Seventh Galaxy* from Return To Forever? These were bands with enormous musical appeal. The compositions were often complex and technically challenging.

It wasn't the music we tired of, but the endless battles between bloated egos that sapped our patience. It was the era of the supergroups, personalities and attitude. Certain high profile jazz musicians reached celebrity status, many raking in the riches unheard of in an idiom mostly identified with suffering and poverty.

Players like Hancock moved between film, television, modern and contemporary jazz with an uncanny ability to produce, profit and endure, through often demanding schedules. From the early hits like "Watermelon Man", the brilliant film scoring of "Blow Up", television's "Sanford and Son", the groundbreaking years with Miles Davis, his own "Speak Like A Child", "Maiden Voyage" and numerous soulful jazz excursions, Hancock set trends and continually redefined the idiom.

Then there were the casualties; none as heart-wrenching as the demise of bassist/composer/arranger Jaco Pastorius.

Here was a guy who appeared like a warm breeze from the south; an angel with a message to deliver. He spoke through the electric fretless in a language of his own creation. In a matter of months, players all over the planet were assimilating the dialect.

Pastorius proved to be an astonishing arranger and composer, but a hard man to communicate with. His unstable life preferences made it difficult to attract long-term support from any record label in comparison to the years Hancock served at Columbia records. In the end, he fell victim to his own tragic excesses, leaving us only to speculate as to what he would have accomplished with a clear head and reams of manuscript paper.

We've lost the spirit of these innovative ensembles. The era of saccharine pop has pretty much defaced the house that Miles built. It may have been a facade, but I sure marvelled at the architecture. The same can't be said for Kenny G and the numerous clones who confuse arpeggios with improvisation, showmanship for artistry.

Bill King Publisher, *The Jazz Report*

Editor's Note: You can now E-Mail the *Jazz Report* at [jazzmag@pathcom.com](mailto:jazzmag@pathcom.com)



photo by Paul J. Hoeffler

## ERRATA!

### Goof-Up #1

In the April '96 *CM's Showcase* department, the lineup for the band **The Paperboys** should have read as follows: Tom Landa (lead vox, guitars, mandolin, bouzouki); Cam Salay (bass, banjo, back-up vox); Shona LaMotte (fiddle, back-up vox); Shannon Saunders (accordion, fiddle, back-up vox), Paul Lawton (drums, percussion, back-up vocals).

Shona and Shannon are the new members of the band, and were shown in the photo — however, the press bio submitted with their package had not been updated to reflect these personnel changes.

### Goof-Up #2

In the June '96 issue's *Showcase* department, the photographs for the bands **Insulin** and **Made** somehow got switched during production. Our apologies to both bands for the error.

### Please Don't Let Us Goof Up Again!!!

As a reminder to acts submitting material for *Showcase*, it's really important that your package be complete to be considered (by this we mean including your tape or CD, glossy black & white photo, current and up-to-date band biography, as well as any clippings you'd like to include), and that every individual element of your package be labelled with your act's name and contact number. Things very often get separated during the production process, and mix-ups are less likely to occur if everything is clearly labelled. Just imagine receiving ten demo submissions one day from acts that all contain four guys. Put the photos (all, coincidentally, carrying no band name on them) in a box and stir well. Now try to match the photos with the tapes and bios. Good Luck. We go through this often here.

We've also found that from time to time, many of you send us packages that contain a ton of material inside a cheap, flimsy envelope. In many cases, your package has broken open during its destination here. We love getting rubber snakes, chattering teeth, slinkys and mom's fruitcake along with your recordings, but make sure they're properly and securely packaged before you give them to the gentle people at Canada Post.

The moral? **PACK IT RIGHT AND LABEL EVERYTHING!**

### Write To Us!

Address your letters to **FEEDBACK**, c/o *Canadian Musician*, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3.  
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# BREAKS

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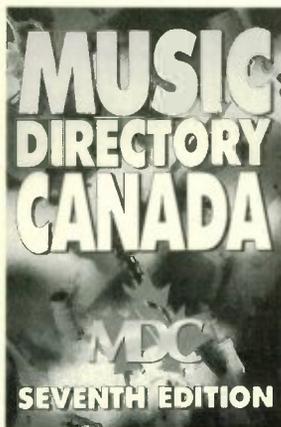
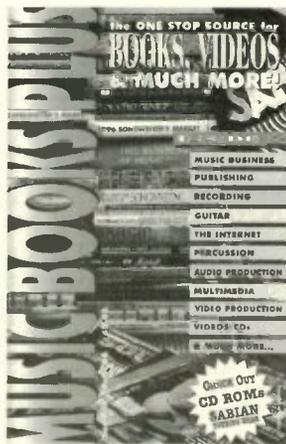
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Showcase applications are now available through the CMW office, and must be submitted along with your act's tape or CD, photo and bio, and a \$20.00 non-refundable processing fee (money order payable to Canadian Music Week). All elements must accompany your application to be considered, and CMW will listen to a maximum of three track selections, so list titles accordingly.

For more information, contact: Canadian Music Week International, PO Box 91015, 666 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2Z0 (416) 695-9236, FAX (416) 695-9239. Visit the CMW web site at <http://cmw.com/cmw>.

... The new **Summer/Fall 1996 Music Books Plus Catalogue** is here! A one-stop source for books and videos covering all aspects of music and audio, the catalogue offers comprehensive information on titles that span areas of interest including: the music business, composition and publishing, guitar, electronic music, recording, multimedia and a variety of interest reading. Instructional videos, fake books and more are profiled in this 80 -page catalogue, available by contacting Music Books Plus, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3 (800) 265-8481, FAX (905) 641-1648.



...**Music Directory Canada, 7th Edition** is scheduled for release at the end of August. This is the *most* comprehensive directory of Canadian Music Industry on the market. Listing includes company, contact, address, phone/fax, e-mail and covers areas such as: record companies, radio stations, agents, managers, recording studios, clubs, associations, music education, artist contacts... and much, much more. This edition is available in book and CD-ROM format. (See ad this issue). To order contact: Music Directory Canada, 23 Hannover Dr., #7, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A3 (800) 265-8481, FAX (905) 641-1648, e-mail: [order@nor.com](mailto:order@nor.com)

## FACTOR UPDATE

FACTOR has announced the following 1996/97 program deadlines:

### Professional Publishers

& Songwriters:

July 31, Oct. 31

### New Talent Demo Award:

Sept. 30, Dec. 20

### Independent Artists Recording Loan:

July 31, Nov. 29

### FACTOR Loan Program:

Aug. 30, Dec. 20

### Video Grant Program:

Aug. 30, Oct. 31, Dec. 20, Jan. 31 ('97)

### Direct Board Approval:

July 31, Aug. 30, Sept. 30, Oct. 31,

Nov. 29, Dec. 20, Jan. 31 ('97)

### Showcase Program:

Aug. 30, Oct. 31, Dec. 20, Jan 31 ('97)

### Tour Program:

Aug. 30, Oct. 31, Dec. 20, Jan. 31 ('97)

### Radio Syndication:

July 31, Aug. 30, Sept. 30,

Oct. 31, Nov. 29,

Dec. 20, Jan. 31 ('97)

### International Marketing Program:

July 31, Nov. 29

### Business Development Program:

Sept. 30, Nov. 29

Application forms for these programs are available through the FACTOR office.

For more information, contact: FACTOR, 125 George St., 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5A 2N4 (416) 368-8678.

The next application deadline for the Ontario Arts Council's **Recording Program for Classical Music** is October 15, 1996.

Applicants must be professional musicians, who are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, resident in Ontario for at least one year. Eligible projects include all aspects of a recording up to the master tape stage. Projects must take place in Ontario and have a producer who may be one of the musicians involved in the project. Each application will be assessed by a jury of peers that will make its decisions based on the information and materials provided in the submission.

To find out more about eligibility and assessment criteria for the Recording Program for Classical Music, or to obtain an application form, contact the Ontario Arts Council's Music Office at (416) 969-7419 or (800) 387-0058 toll-free in Ontario.

For the most up-to-date information on the OAC, including grants, services, deadlines and awards, visit the OAC Web site at <http://www.ffa.ualgary.ca/oac/index.html>

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**Beaches Jazz Festival**  
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**Independent Label Festival**  
Chicago, IL  
July 26-27, 1996  
(312) 341-9112

**Salmon Valley Music Festival**  
Salmon Valley, BC  
August 1-4, 1996  
(604) 971-2220

**International Percussion Workshop**  
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August 4-11, 1996  
(514) 843-8401

**Edmonton Folk Music Festival**  
Edmonton, BC  
August 8-11, 1996  
(403) 429-1899

**9th Annual Guitar Madness**  
Elgin, IL  
September 21-22, 1996  
(708) 931-0707

**Ontario Contact '96**  
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**Canadian Music Week '97**  
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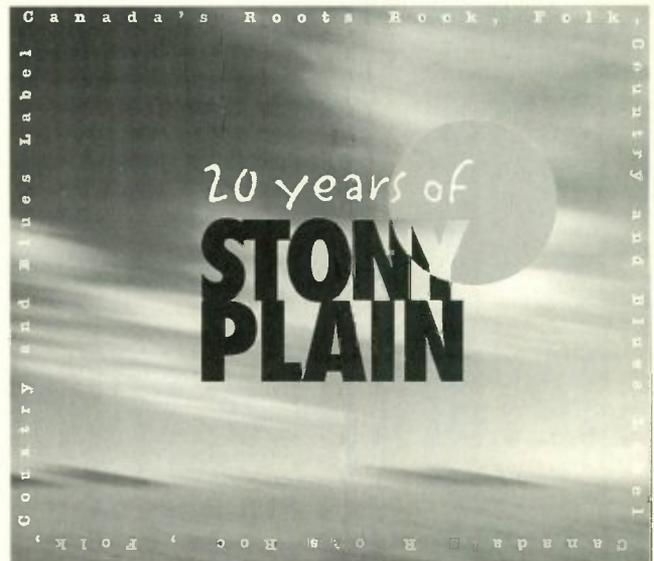
Various Artists - *Stony Plain Records*

Stony Plain Records recently released this special two-disc set to commemorate the label's 20th Anniversary — and I think it's one of the finest collections of roots music to be released in Canada to date.

Forty tracks from past and present Stony Plain artists provide a variety of folk, blues, roots rock and country that will satisfy the most discerning listener. Fans of acoustic music will obviously be in heaven; this album will make you want to pull up a chair, zip open a beer and kick your boots off — perfect for lazy days on the porch.

There's not the space to mention all the artists 'retrospected' within, but Disc One contains quite a few gems — Steve Earle's "Mystery Train Part II" (from his critically-acclaimed album, *Train a Comin'*) leads off the disc; 'vintage' tracks by Great Speckled Bird and Jesse Winchester ("Brand New Tennessee Waltz" — and kudos to Stony Plain for releasing all of this fine songwriter's '70s recordings); the Austin Lounge Lizards' "The Car Hank Died In"; the Grievous Angels' "Crossing The Causeway" featuring Michelle Rumball on vocals; Sylvia Tyson's "You Were On My Mind" (the first song she ever wrote — this 1989 recording features Albert Lee on guitar); and Spirit of the West favourite "Political" are just a few. There's also a couple of previously unreleased tracks — Amos Garrett and Maria Muldaur's "Small Town Talk"; and Rita Chiarelli's "Heartbreak of the Week", with vocals by Prairie Oyster featuring Russell deCarle.

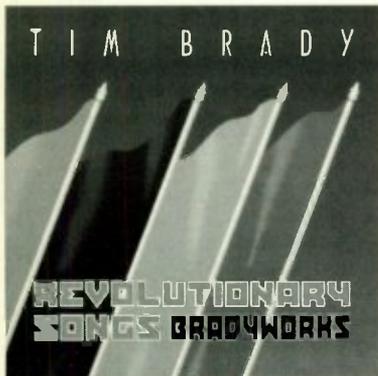
Disc Two takes you on a blues-inspired journey, with tracks like Maria Muldaur's saucy "Don't You Feel My Leg (Don't You Get Me High)"; King Biscuit Boy and Crowbar's "Badly Bent"; Paul James' "Gotta Gimme Some of It" (with John Hammond on harmonica); and slide guitarist Ellen McIlwaine's frenzied "I Want Whacha Got" (that gal can *play!*). Some nice surprises as well on this second disc, with a taste of upcoming releases from Lowell Fulson (a 1981 session with members of The Powder Blues



Band); Professor Longhair (a 1979 session that may be his last studio recording before his death in 1980) and Long John Baldry.

Bottom line is that this is a *really fine* collection of music, and Stony Plain has put a lot of thought into the presentation of this anniversary set. The liner notes, penned by Richard Flohil, are of particular merit, and somebody should give that man an award for them (and also for being such a long-time supporter and cheerleader of roots music in Canada)!

Congratulations to Stony Plain on their 20th Anniversary and on a job well done.



## Revolutionary Songs

Tim Brady and Bradyworks  
*Justin Time Records*

Composer/guitarist Tim Brady is one of this country's finest, most innovative musical minds, and his latest release, *Revolutionary Songs*, is a most inspired and ambitious recording composed for amplified chamber ensemble. Accompanying him on this album is Bradyworks, featuring André Leroux on tenor and soprano sax; Marie-Josée Simard on vibraphone, marimba

and percussion; cellist Gordon Cleland; soprano vocalist Nathalie Paulin; and Louise-Andrée Baril on piano. "Revolutionary Songs" was initially inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the texts for the work were derived from writings on the Russian, Angolan, French and Nicaraguan revolutionary experiences. The work is divided into three parts, each comprising two songs and are sung in French, English and Spanish. Guest vocalist Enriquillo Martí contributes Spanish voice to the piece.

The album also contains several other compositional works, including an interesting piece composed for cello and piano entitled "Three or Four days After the Death of Kurt Cobain", which takes the opening driving guitar riff of Nirvana's song, "Smells Like Teen Spirit", and explores its compositional possibilities, slowing the riff down to a hauntingly sombre dirge.

Tim Brady melds elements of electroacoustic, jazz, rock, classical and new music to create a distinctly original musical language — this is where true alternatives collide.

## CBC's After Hours Blue Note Collection, Vol. II

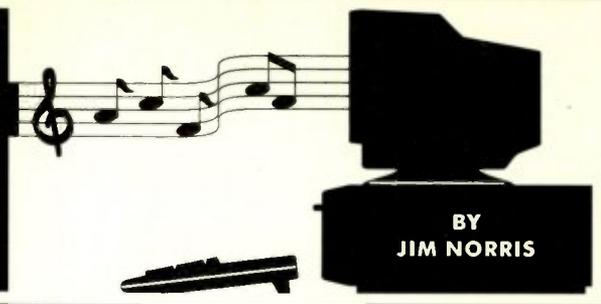
Various Artists  
*Blue Note/EMI Music Canada*



Jazz fans across the country are more than familiar with the voice of Ross Porter, who gently guides them through CBC Stereo's weeknight jazz slot, After Hours.

*After Hours* is a stellar selection of the old and new, selected by Porter, that encompasses some great moments — from Adderly's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" (penned by Joe Zawinul) and Ellington's "Warm Valley" to current favourites like "The Gift" by the extremely gifted Renee Rosnes. Other artists included on the CD include saxophonist Joe Lovano, pianist Jacky Terrasson, Canadian vocalist Holly Cole and two tracks by the incredible Cassandra Wilson, who gives a wonderful twist to Neil Young's "Harvest Moon" (the other track is a previously unreleased rendition of the Mancini and Mercer classic "Moon River").

# music On-Line



Welcome to Music On-Line, a new regular department of CM, featuring news and highlights of music on-line including the Internet, the major on-line services and music related BBSs. If you have questions, comments, news, or suggestions, please e-mail them to [jim.norris@nor.com](mailto:jim.norris@nor.com), FAX (905) 641-1648 or mail them to our St. Catharines office. This feature also appears on the Canadian Musician web site at <http://nor.com/cm>.

## Listening to Music on The Internet

Becoming more common daily are Internet sites with audio files for listening to the music of up and coming and established artists. Files that you can download to your computer are available in WAV, MIDI or MPEG formats and can be played with the relevant player and a sound card. The necessary software is available as freeware or shareware and often comes with your soundcard. Try <http://www.shareware.com> if you need the programs.

You can also find many sites featuring real-time audio files which are played as they are downloaded to your computer. The quality is still far from perfect, but it improves with each software release and the faster your Internet connection, the better the quality. Two of the most popular programs are RealAudio (<http://www.realaudio.com>) and Stream Works (<http://www.xingtech.com>). Both sites feature their software for download and pointers to sites using their products. Check out 1-800 Music Now (<http://1800musicnow.mci.com>) where you can sample your favourite artists using RealAudio before purchasing CDs on-line.

Popping up around the world are Internet Radio stations using this technology to provide live broadcasts of news, weather, sports and music. Once you have RealAudio configured, check out CKUA-FM in Calgary at <http://www.cadvision.com/ckua>. Their Internet signal is broadcast simultaneously to their FM station. For a list of other stations, search for 'Internet Radio' at Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>).

## RESOURCES

... **Speck Electronics** has set up a web site to promote their line of rack-mount mixers and multi-channel equalizers. Included are product information including specifications, an Audio Trivia page, and information on Speck users. Visit at <http://www.speck.com/>

... **Spirit by Soundcraft** has launched a web site at <http://www.spirit-by-soundcraft.co.uk>. The site features product illustrations, specifications and on-line brochure ordering as well as information on Spirit users, application guides, company profile and opportunities to win Spirit merchandise.

... **Quantegy Inc.**, Manufacturers of **Ampex** and **Quantegy** professional audio, video and instrumentation media products, has launched a web site at <http://www.quantegy.com>. The site features a tour of Quantegy history, company achievements, manufacturing sciences, product specs and applications and a section on corporate developments.

... **Multimedia and Entertainment Law Online News** is located at: <http://www.degrees.com/melon>. Featured are articles on entertainment law, event listings, news and links to other web sites.

... **Pro-Mark's** Internet presence is located at <http://www.promark-stix.com>. Their site features information on their product line, endorsers, press releases, an on-line questionnaire and an assortment of cool links.

... **MuchMusic** has created it's new **MuchWest** website hosted by veteran journalist Terry David Mulligan. Included are upcoming programming highlights, contests, concert listings and links to related sites. You can also listen to Terry David's radio program Mulligan's Stew on CKUA-FM using RealAudio. Check it out at <http://www.axionet.com/muchwest>.

... **Norris-Whitney Communications** operates **The Music & Audio Connection**, the international on-line resource for music-enthusiasts, musicians, music and audio professionals. Included are artist listings, free classified ads, products for sale, company showcases, music and audio resources, career information, music humour, discussion forums and file libraries. Drop by at <http://maac.com/music>.

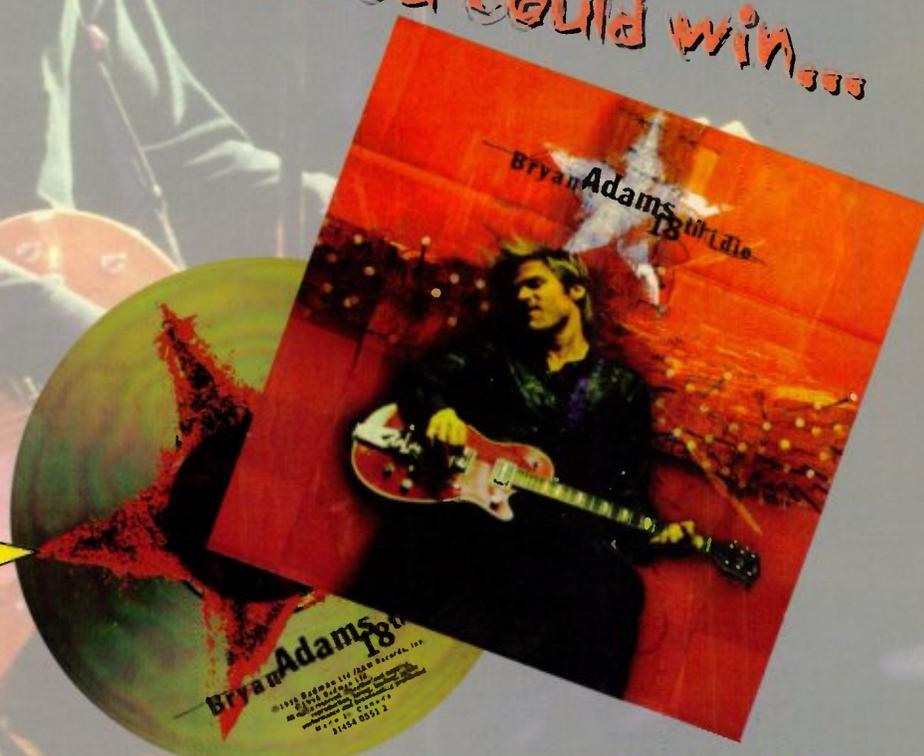


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# BSS FCS-916 Parametric Equaliser Pre-Amplifier



BY JOHN ALBANI

You know, every time the guys at Contact Distribution send new BSS gear for me to try, I get this unnerving feeling in my stomach — don't get me wrong, I mean this in the best way. You see, I know I'm going to have to keep it, because I know it's going to be amazing. And they've done it again. Enter the new BSS FCS-916 Parametric Equaliser Pre-Amplifier. As the product profile I have reads, it's anything but another parametric EQ, and was designed by BSS's Technical Director Stan Gould, who was responsible for the early mid-'80s Midas PR series input strips.

## BORING (BUT IMPRESSIVE) FACTS

The FCS-916 has four fully parametric bands of EQ from 20Hz-20kHz. Each band maximizes frequency coverage by the use of frequency scaling switches, which divide the range by a factor of 10. The high and low bands offer a choice of either bell or shelving. All bands have in/out switching and the FCS-916 has a master in/out switch which is great for quick A/B comparisons. Metering consists of a five-segment LED indicator switchable from input to output. Each band also offers a notch mode with a fixed narrow bandwidth of 0.04 octaves and a depth adjustable from -20dB to -30dB, allowing easy removal of feedback in live situations or when, in recording applications, precise frequency removal is a necessity. Also there are high and low pass sweepable filters as well as an incredibly clean mic/line input section (-127dBu), which is switchable from the front panel for rack mounting (thank you), providing 0 to 50dB of gain with phantom and both XLR and TRS jacks. The output stage has a single XLR and an additional +/-15dB gain control.

## NOW TO THE FUN PART! (HANDS ON!)

First off, at a price around \$1695.00 Canadian, there isn't another similar unit so full-featured and retaining such sonic excellence as this parametric pre-amp.

According to David Haydon from BSS UK, "The whole product premise was to fill the enormous price gap between the cheaper mass-marketed stuff (knobs for dollar ratio) and the more esoterically priced (but generally excellent) high-end units from Focusrite, GML and the tubular guys."

Well congratulations guys, you did exactly that.

This is one of the cleanest-sounding pre-amps I've heard. It made even my old SM-57 sound incredible. On a male or female voice, the EQ was very musical, opening up the sound nicely in the range you boost rather than sounding like you just cranked in some EQ at a certain point. I was also able to point the top frequency at 20kHz shelving and bring out a great airiness in the vocals without them getting spitty or needing lots of de-essing, which I was only able to do once before with a Mas-senburg parametric.

On bass guitar and electric guitar, the hi and low pass filters worked wonders at getting rid of unwanted frequencies without altering the remaining sound. Also, to punch up older recorded tracks, the scaling switches made it possible to overlap frequency bands unlike anything I've used before, so I was never out of a wanted range.

In one instance, I recorded a live choir; and in my ambient mics at the far end of the room, you could hear a vent fan whining in the background. I inserted the FCS-916 on the offending room mic and used the notch filter to successfully remove the fan without getting any shifting in my stereo imaging. I was extremely happy with this unit on acoustic guitar as well as on overall mixes. The FCS-916 is certainly clean enough and sounds killer going straight to a DAT machine.

Consider also for the price of the competition's single units, you could have two FCS-916s of equal quality. For live sound, try replacing your main EQs with a pair of 916s and you'll be blown away with the results.

As with all BSS gear, it has that same ruggedness about it as well as that same green front plate thing. I wish they could have made the 916 look a little cooler (not that it matters any, I guess; but from a marketing standpoint, look at the Avalon or Focusrite RED series pre-amps, etc. They could sound like crap and you would still head straight for them). Another plus left out in my opinion is the lack of an insert point. If there had been one, I would have loved to insert my BSS 901 (can you just imagine!).

## BOTTOM LINE

The FCS-916 definitely rates first in the best bang for the buck category. It's incredibly clean, quiet and sounds great. Whether for post, pro or project recording, live sound or broadcast applications, I'm confident the 916, at just under \$1695.00, is going to be showing up on a lot of equipment lists soon (in pairs). If you have internet access, go to the BSS site at <http://www.bssaudio.co.uk/bss/index.html> to find out more on the FCS-916.

I'm keeping the FCS-916, and by the time you've read this, I'll be far away (just kidding). However, I *am* keeping this unit. REALLY I AM! You can't have it back! Get away! It's MINE I TELL YOU!!!

For more information, contact: Contact Distribution Ltd., 38 Thornmount Dr., #1, Scarborough, ON M1B 5P2 (416) 287-1144, FAX (416) 287-1204.

*JOHN ALBANI OWNS AND OPERATES LANDSHARK MUSIC SERVICES, A 32-TRACK DIGITAL FACILITY, AND IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS STINT AS LEAD GUITARIST, CO-WRITER, PRODUCER AND ARRANGER FOR CANADIAN RECORDING ARTIST LEE AARON. HE'S CURRENTLY MISSING IN ACTION, ALONG WITH A BSS FCS-916 UNIT. AND I THOUGHT HE WAS JOKING...*

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BY PAUL RIVERA

I have received some interesting questions recently via E-Mail on the Internet from *Canadian Musician* readers, and this month I would like to give a rather lengthy answer to one of them. From out in the Maritimes, Sean Flannery in Saint John, New Brunswick asks a very important, yet quite basic question:

"Why can't I use shielded cable as a speaker cord? When I use speaker cable for my guitar, I get a lot of hum. If I use shielded cable for my speaker, won't it reduce noise? My local dealer tells me many different reasons, but can you please clarify? Also, what kinds of plugs and cable should I use?"

First off, it is absolutely imperative that you never use shielded cable for the connection between your amplifier and your speakers. Conversely, as you have found out, speaker wire is not shielded and cannot be used as low level signal wire. Shielding protects the signal from sources of noise like AC mains cables, lighting fixtures, etc.

Shielded cable has, internally, very small wires. These conductors, because of their small diameter and consequent small cross section, have too much internal resistance for use with high power. When connecting between a Power Amp and a speaker, the current or power that needs to be transferred is considerable. When the resistance of the wire is factored in as a series resistance, with the voltage emanating from the amplifier and the speaker load, this resistance will reduce the power transmitted to the speaker. For example, by using Ohms Law, we can calculate the effect of this loss incurred by the cable. The formula used would be  $P = E^2/R$ .

[P (Power in Watts) =  $E^2$  (output Voltage of

Let's use the formula again and we see that  $800/10 = 80$  Watts, a loss of 20 Watts or 20%. It also means that the cable is now dissipating 20% of the load, and this power loss will be dissipated in heat within the cable. The larger the conductors (or larger cross-section of conductor), the less resistance. In North America, speaker wire is generally measured in Wire Gauge Sizes. The smaller the number, the larger the wire. The longer the length of speaker wire, the larger you will need the wire to be in order to remain consistent and minimize the effects of the internal cable resistance.

As a rule of thumb, a typical one Meter long speaker cable should be at least 16 Gauge for no more than 100 Watts. If a high power bass head, say 400 Watts, is connected into a 4 or 2 Ohm load, please use a minimum of 14 Gauge, preferably 12 Gauge. A two Meter length should be reduced in Gauge size by at least a number of 2 — say instead of 16 Gauge for one Meter, use 14 Gauge for two Meters, etc.

# THE CABLE GUY

the Amplifier squared) /R (R is the total load resistance or Impedance)].

Supposing we have an 8 Ohm load in a normal 100 Watt tube amplifier (28.28 Volts AC), the formula would be  $P (100) = E^2 (28.28^2 \text{ or } 800) /R (8)$ .

If we assume a three meter shielded cable has 2 Ohms of resistance (could be less, could be way more with that cheap Asian-made cable), and it is in Series or additive with the 8 Ohms of the speaker, then our total load to the amplifier is now 10 Ohms (8+2).

A long length of five Meters with a high power head into a low load of, say 2 Ohms, would require at least a 10 Gauge (very large), and then you will not be able to find a phone plug to handle this diameter wire.

Not to be redundant, but if we look at an amplifier that puts out 400 Watts at 2 Ohms, it will have an output of 28.28 Volts. If we add even just 1 Ohm resistance in series with the 2 Ohm load, the result is  $800/3 = 266$  Watts, or 33% of the power lost. Power or heat dissipated in the cable is 133 Watts. Ouch!

It is easy to see why one does not use shielded cable for power conduction. Try to use cable that has a Neoprene jacket, which will be impervious to chemicals and weather and will also survive the rigors of the road.

This illustration can also infer that a shielded cable in series with a guitar as a signal source, feeding that same typical tube amplifier with an Input Impedance of 1 Meg Ohm (One Million Ohms) is of no consequence because of the high impedance (2 Ohms in series with 1 Meg Ohm equals an almost immeasurable loss). Of much greater consequence to the guitar signal is the capacitance of the shielded cable. This factor affects the high end response of your guitar. The more capacitance, the less highs. Capacitance in cable is caused by many things, such as the chemical composition of the insulating material, method of wrapping layers of wire, etc. This capacitance is measured by the foot or meter, and as a rule of thumb for guitar cables, try to find cable where it is less than 20 Picofarad (20 Pfd.) per foot. These specifications are given in the catalogues of most major wire manufacturers. Also use Shielded Cable that has a tight braided shield. This will minimize interference from lighting dimmers (common in clubs) and AC mains cables lying about on the floor.

As a side note to cable manufacturers and plug makes, I always recommend Canare brand (Japanese made) shielded cable (extremely low noise and terrific braided shielding) and Belden (North American made) brand cable for speaker wire as well as shielded cable. For plugs, Neutrik of Switzerland, as well as Switchcraft are the only brands to use. Do not bother with off-shore or Asian makes of plugs, as their metallurgy as well as plating is second rate.

Investing money into quality cables is never a waste. Well, that's all for this issue. Keep those questions coming! [rivera@rivera.com](mailto:rivera@rivera.com).



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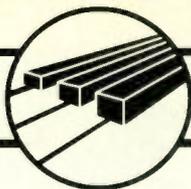
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# The Keyboardist's Library

We have had requests from many of our readers for suggestions for additions to their library — so here are a few!

## **Popular Piano Chord Dictionary**

*by Palmer-Hughes*

The notation, fingering and keyboard diagrams for all of the important chords used in modern popular music. 48 pages. Alfred Publishing.

## **How to Improvise With Piano**

An in-depth look at improvising at the piano. Topics include Keyboard Harmony, Variation and Motif Improvisation. Hal Leonard Publishing.

## **Exploring Basic Blues for Keyboard**

*By Bill Boyd*

This book introduces a blues scale system that produces idiomatic sounds characteristic of early blues, Dixieland, boogie, swing and rock. Instruction begins with one-measure phrases followed by a step-by-step approach to 12-measure improvisation. Hal Leonard Publishing

## **An Introduction to Jazz Chord Voicing for Keyboard**

*By Bill Boyd*

This book is designed for the pianist/keyboardist with moderate technical skills and reading ability who wants to play jazz styles and learn to improvise from reading chord symbols. Unique features of this book include chords and progressions written out in all keys, a simple fingering system which applies to all keys, and coverage of improvising and solo playing.

Hal Leonard Publishing.

## **Blues, Jazz & Riffs for Keyboards**

*By William T. Eveleth*

This book presents a practical approach to improvising through a system of patterns in traditional blues style. Because so much of today's popular music has its roots in blues, the material included here is a vital component of jazz, rock, R&B, gospel, soul and even pop. The author has compiled actual licks, riffs, turnaround phrases, embellishments and basic patterns that define good piano blues and can be used as a basis for players to explore and create their own style. Hal Leonard Publishing.

## **The Chord Approach to Pop Piano Playing**

*By Albert DiVito*

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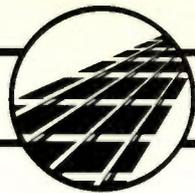
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*All of these titles are available at music and bookstores across Canada or through Music Books Plus (800-265-8481).*



# BASS

## CANADIAN MUSICIAN BASSISTS' POLL

Who is Canada's best at holding down that bottom-end groove? We'd like to find out, so we're asking you to choose your favourites in the categories below. Eligible nominations are Canadian bassists, or international bassists that are performing/recording as part of a Canadian group.

We've offered a few suggestions in each category, but please nominate your favourite if it's not there. Only one vote per reader please. The results from our poll will be featured in our December issue with bios and pictures of the winners. All names will also be entered in a draw for \$200.00 worth of books or videos from Music Books Plus!

### Best Upright Bassist

- Joel Quarrington (TSO)
- Neil Swainson (Free Trade)
- Dave Young (jazz sessionist, soloist)
- Rene Worst (Skywalk)
- Don Thompson (jazz sessionist, soloist)
- George Koller (Holly Cole, Koller & Michels)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Best Electric Bassist - Freelance

- Alain Caron (Uzeb, Le Band)
- Pat Kilbride (The Code, Five After Four, sessions)
- Steve Lucas (Loreena McKennitt, sessionist)
- Brian Amati (Sarah McLachlan, sessions)
- Peter Cardinali (The Dexters, The Boomers, sessions)
- Ken "Spider" Sinnaeve (Tom Cochrane, Kim Mitchell, sessions)
- David Piltch (k.d. lang, Holly Cole, sessions)
- Chris Tarry (Jann Arden, sessions)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Best Bassist - Group

- Bruce Gordon (I Mother Earth)
- Russell deCarle (Prairie Oyster)
- Geddy Lee (Rush)
- Bazil Donovan (Blue Rodeo)
- Jim Creegan (Barenaked Ladies)
- Tim Vesely (Rheostatics)
- Chin Injeti (Bass Is Base)
- Brad Merritt (54-40)
- Stuart Chatwood (Tea Party)
- Gord Sinclair (The Tragically Hip)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send one choice from each category to *Canadian Musician* by mail at

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You can also vote on the *Canadian Musician* site at <http://nor.com/cm>. You must include your name, address and phone number for your vote to count.

...poll



BY JEFFREY MACPHERSON

# DRUMSET

## ARCHITECTURE

**I**n architecture, one of the primary challenges an architect must face is to ensure that his or her building merges with, complements and enhances its surrounding structures. The same can be said for the musician, who is given the task of creating a 'part' for a given song. They must be able to blend with the other musicians, complement what they are already playing and contribute solid, creative, musical ideas to the existing structure. Thus, hopefully improving the overall musical statement the artist is trying to make.

As drummers, we have several musical devices at our disposal which may help us meet these challenges. These include influencing style, dynamics, feel, tempo and emotion. The influence we have will often lead other musicians to deem us as the backbone or foundation of the group, thereby investing us with a lot of power and influence in establishing the direction the music is going to take.

My intention in writing this article is to provide you with some ideas for creating drum parts in original pop music (by pop music I mean pop, rock, country, folk, blues, etc.). Remember that with power comes responsibility — and we need to use the power we have wisely.

Before an architect even begins to build, they must first choose their materials. The same is true for the drummer. We have, at our disposal, a vast array of materials to create with including sticks, brushes, hot rods, blasticks, mallets, even our hands and any combinations thereof. Also available to us are the types of drums we choose to use (meaning shell construction, size and depth), how they are tuned (high, medium, low) and which types of drumheads will provide us with the sound we require. Don't forget about the abundance of choices you have in cymbals, not to mention percussion, drum machine programs and/or loops. It's important to become familiar with all of these options and the affect they can have on the music.

To help you in choosing the materials you need to create your own musical statement, it is wise to determine the song's musical style. For example, does the song have a blues feel or is it straight-ahead pop? Is it aggressive rock or a ballad with jazz overtones? In determining the style of a particular song, it is important to do your homework. By doing your homework I mean listening to lots of records. Listen to what the drummer is playing and try to surmise what exactly he's playing and why he's playing it. Listen to what the other musicians are playing and how they and the drummer interact with each other. Listen to the sound of the drums and the way they were recorded. It is extremely important that you construct a strong musical foundation for yourself. One which you can build from to begin expressing your own creative ideas. In doing your homework you will begin to accumulate a wealth of ideas for almost any pop song that comes your way.

When I am required to provide a drum track for a new song, these are some elements I try to listen for the first few times I hear the song: overall style or feel, melody, dynamics, tempo, important shots or rhythmic figures, pos-

sible areas for drum fills, what the other musicians are playing (especially the bass player), the overall emotion of the song, and the lyrics.

Lyrics, unfortunately, often get overlooked by some musicians who tend to deal with the music only. To me, lyrics are an extremely important aspect to any song. Fortunately for lyricists, SOCAN feels the same way I do. Lyrics are a key insight into the emotional content of a song and, therefore, will help you in determining your emotional approach on the drums.

For instance, certain words or phrases may inspire explosive, unrestrained fills, or inspire fills which are sweet, tasteful and musical. So whenever possible, try to obtain a lyric sheet from the songwriter. A lyric sheet will also provide you with a valuable visual representation of a song. Most songwriters will be duly impressed that you show such an interest in their craft.

I consider there to be two basic approaches to constructing a drum part for a given song:

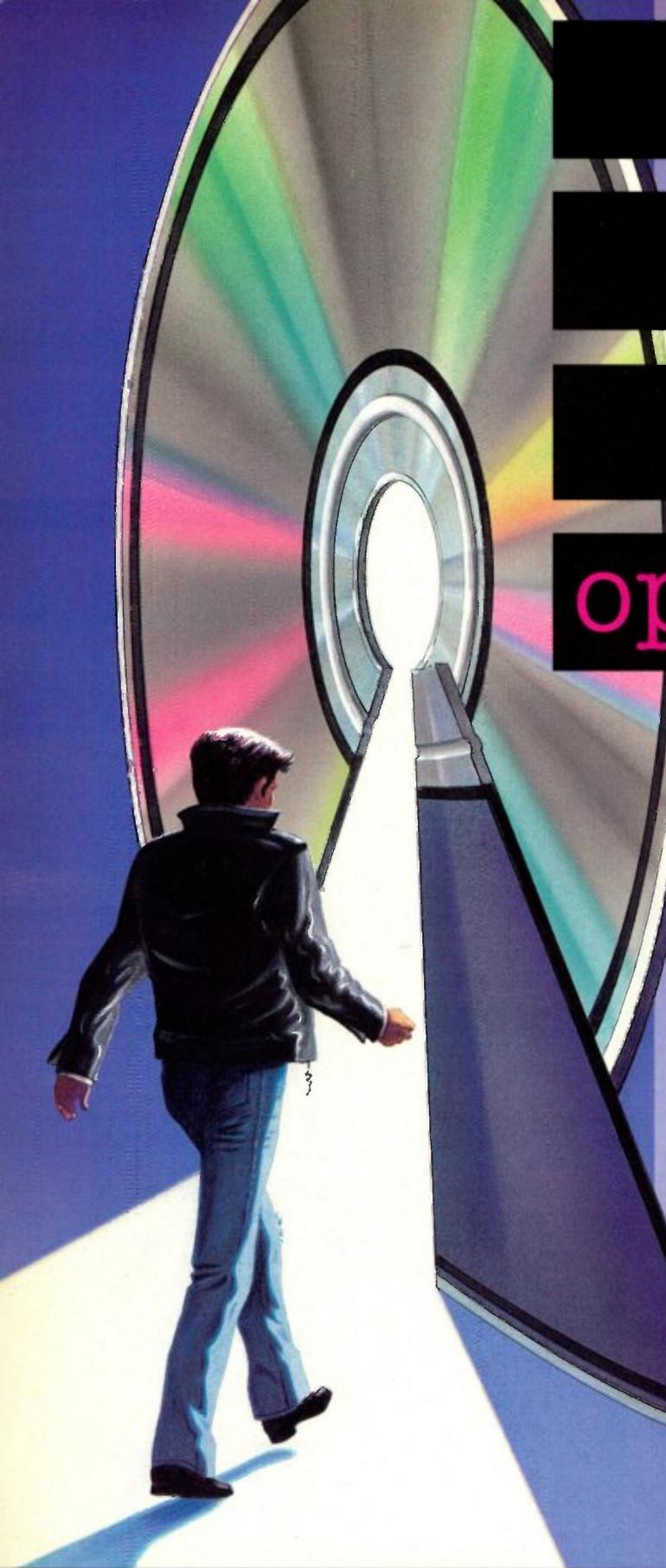
1. start simple and build.
2. start busy and eliminate.

There are inherent advantages to both approaches. For example, the first approach works very well when time is of the essence. If you need to create a drum part quickly, trust your first instinct and start simply. Then add fills and nuances to the groove where appropriate. Use good judgment and good taste by serving the music first. As Mies van der Rohe said, "less is more". One of the advantages of the second approach (time permitting, of course) is that you are able to explore all the creative ideas you can conjure up in your mind. Very often, this will lead you in directions you didn't think were possible before and, consequently, you may come up with ideas which are very inspiring not only for yourself, but for the other members of the band as well. By practicing and strengthening your creative flow, you will become more proficient at finding good musical ideas much more quickly. But remember that sometimes, not all of your ideas will be appropriate for the given song. Always be objective, open to ideas from others, and eliminate any ideas which do not work.

Like the architect, our challenge as drummers is to create a finished product which is structurally sound, serves a useful purpose, and is inspiring to others as well as ourselves. I hope the ideas I have presented in this article help you to meet these challenges as a creative drummer.

*JEFFREY MACPHERSON HAS TOURED AND RECORDED WITH CHARLIE MAJOR, SUSAN AGLUKARK AND FALL DOWN GO BOOM, IN ADDITION TO LIVE AND/OR STUDIO WORK WITH ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS MELANIE DOANE, THE DENNY CHRISTIANSON BIG BAND, UNIVERSAL HONEY AND THE IMMIGRANTS.*





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BY BILL MCBIRNIE

# ARE YOU CUBAN? PART II

## RICHARD EQUES

I had the good fortune to study with master charanga/cha cha flutist, Richard Eques (one of the founders of the renowned Orquesta Aragon), while attending 'Afrocubanismo!' in Banff a couple of summers ago.

Richard plays what the Cubans themselves might call 'popular' music. Despite his quite legendary 'popularity', Richard plays with not only great charm and simplicity, but great substance and merit as well. For these reasons, his work warrants close examination by any instrumentalist. Accordingly, I am presenting a transcription of one of Richard's classic flute solos which I drafted while I was in Banff under his tutelage. It is a model of simple but thoughtful motivic development.

Although the blowing is based on a simple two-bar vamp, Richard's solo has some very hip — as well some very corny — elements that are blended into both the melodic and rhythmic dimensions. The finished result will draw the attention of a child at the same time that it will hold the interest of an adult (now, that is the sign of truly extraordinary musicianship at work!). For that reason, this is a solo that I have practised and revisited many times — and I have learned a lot from it.

For flute players who want to achieve an authentic charanga effect, the solo is required to be played one octave above where it is written (no, I am not kidding!).

Charanga music generally consists of vocals, percussion and strings with a single flutist. Stylistically, it has an ostensible lightness and airiness about it. However, from the flute player's standpoint, the lightness and airiness is only apparent because, in actual performance, the flutist is required to play very high and very loud at all times, using a thick, strong and harsh attack. Unless it is clear that a particular note is to be sustained, all values are punctuated in a staccato manner.

Please observe that all of the essential characteristics of this style are exhibited in the very fine flute work of Nestor Torres, who puts in several appearances on both volumes of Cachao's *Master Sessions* (mentioned in Part 1). Nestor's contributions are especially

noteworthy in the several danzons on which Nestor is featured to very good and authentic advantage.

Now, what follows is a transcription of Richard Eques' flute solo to the mambo classic, "Tres Lindas Cubanos".

(Please note that the solo is split into two segments which are described as "First Mambo" and "Second Mambo". Although the term "mambo", refers to a basic Cuban rhythm, it is also used to describe a segment of a tune's structure; i.e., the 'blowing' section. In addition, please note that the recommended tempo for this particular solo is about 88-90 to the half note.)

### First Mambo

Second Mambo

Musical score for 'Second Mambo' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of eight staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. The notation includes stems, beams, and various note heads.



*BILL MCBIRNIE HAS PERFORMED WITH HERBIE MANN, ART BLAKEY, DIZZY GILLESPIE AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED JAZZ MUSICIANS. HIS MUSICAL CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE HEARD ON RECORDINGS BY MEMO ACEVEDO, THE JUNIOR MANCE QUINTET AND DA.*

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BY JIM BURGESS



# NEW TOOLS FOR THE DIGITAL MUSICIAN

This issue, we will be taking a look at some of the latest Pro Tools TDM Plug-In's, as well as an interesting new software program called Vocalign which should also be of interest to the Pro Tools user.

What is a TDM Plug-In (in case you were wondering)? Plug-In's are software 'modules' that use the power of the Digidesign TDM bus and DSP Farm(s) to add new features to a Pro Tools III/TDM system. Plug-In's are powered by the Digidesign DSP Farm, a powerful DSP effects/mixing engine card. Now Digidesign and its development partners can create exciting new software-based EQ, dynamics and effects devices that operate entirely within TDM's 256-channel/24-bit virtual mixing and processing environment. More and more manufacturers are offering software-based processing modules. Here's some of the latest plug-ins to hit the market:

## Focusrite d2 High Quality, Multi-Band Equalizer

The Focusrite d2 Multiband Equalizer is a Pro Tools TDM plug-in based on the highly acclaimed Red Range 2 Dual EQ designed by Rupert Neve. Configurations include three different mono or stereo modules. As a six-band module, the d2 includes high pass and low pass filters, high and low shelving, and high-mid and low-mid peaking filters with variable bandwidth. The four-band module provides high and low shelving, and high-mid and low-mid peaking-type filters. The single band module can consist of any one of the filter types. Three configurations allow flexibility with DSP to be used as required.

## TC Electronics TC/Reverb & TC/Chorus

TC Electronics have introduced the TC/Reverb and TC/Chorus as Pro Tools/TDM plug-ins. With an entirely new way of editing effects parameters, recording engineers, software engineers and graphic artists have redefined how parameters are viewed. Intuitive blocks of information represent what traditionally was numbers upon numbers. TC/Reverb parameters include input/output, mix level, room shape and dimensions, stereo width, high cut filter, three selectable frequencies with independent durations, and pre delay. TC/Chorus parameters include input/output, mix level, speed, depth, LFO phase, high cut filter, feedback with selectable frequency, and delay — each having a bypass and LEDs.

These additions to Pro Tools/TDM will no doubt set new standards as far as multi-effects user interfaces are concerned.

## Intelligent Devices AD-1 Pro Audio Analyzer

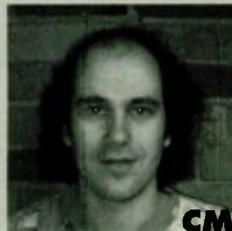
Previously formed to provide extreme intelligent DSP solutions for scientific applications, the AD-1 Pro Audio Analyzer is the first product for the private sector. An ultimate tool for real-time monitoring, this TDM plug-in (and stand-alone application) assures a perfect digital master with stereo peak and average metering, realtime spectral analysis and clip indicators. In this new and brave digital world, metering is once again of critical importance. Gone are the days when hitting tape hard meant a better, warmer sound. In the digital domain, hitting the tape harder is more like putting your ear to the exhaust pipe of a Harley Davidson when Bubba kick-starts it. To achieve digital zero without any overs is beyond the human ear. Point is, it's a necessary tool and a job well done by Intelligent Devices.

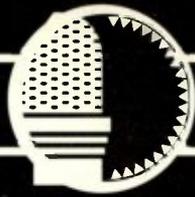
## Synchro Arts Vocalign

Vocalign is a new and unique audio alignment software available for the Apple Macintosh that can save hours and hours in monotonous editing tasks. With either mono or stereo tracks, common applications which benefit from Vocalign's process includes dialog replacement, lip-syncing, matching and tightening of backing vocals and double-tracked vocals.

Vocalign is also desirable for any applications which involve modifying the timing of a musical track to match another. Through macro commands, there is a seamless connection to Digidesign's Pro Tools 3.0 (or higher), making Vocalign a must for any existing Pro Tools users. Vocalign is not the first Apple-based software able to perform these types of tasks, however the user interface and speediness is unmatched.

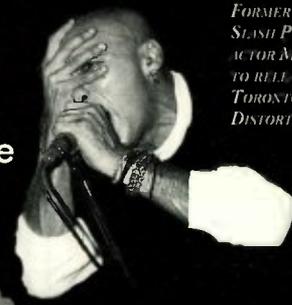
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# TAKING YOUR VOICE ON THE ROAD:

Preparations for any performance can be an enormous undertaking for those involved in the production of a live musical event. Everyone from the sound and lighting engineers, to stage and technical hands, to concert venue employees, road managers, security personnel and the musicians themselves must always be aware of the dynamics that go into producing a safe and successful show. No more prevalent are these productions than at this time of the year; for with the advent of another summer and its accompanying warm weather, this becomes the high season for outdoor shows, concert tours and music festivals. Now, ask anyone who has worked in this environment and they'll tell you that the pace is usually hectic and the demands are often grueling.



FORMER VOCALIST WITH THE BAND SLASH PUPPET, SINGER/SONGWRITER/ACTOR MIF IS CURRENTLY PREPARING TO RELEASE HIS DEBUT CD WITH THE TORONTO-BASED ACT TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION.

## TIPS FOR TOURING

The three 'R's' as I call them — regularity, regimen and repetition — become familiar trademarks to the professionals on tour who endeavour to produce these shows to their highest capabilities. Vocalists, especially, must always be cognizant of the many distractions and possible hazards that may arise while on the road. The scenarios are endless; therefore, you must always strive to maintain a personal schedule regimented to ones mental and physical needs while preparing responsibly for any performance. This may sound corny to some, but when you perform just as many shows as you have travel days on any given tour, and if you care about precision, you become very aware of the endless demands and responsibilities.

Health should always be the first consideration of any serious singer when embarking on a tour. David Lee Roth of the 'classic' Van Halen often mused that, "my body is my temple and I treat it as such", while he was dominating the seventies rock scene. If you have ever had the pleasure of watching Roth perform, as I did on several occasions, not to mention other active and worthy road warriors such as Steven Tyler, Rod Stewart, Roger Daltrey and the legendary Mick Jagger, it must have been obvious to you — as it was to me — that these performers were extremely fit, or perhaps on some occasions, fit to be tied. Physical conditioning is a must when you exert yourself like these guys do. The energy consumed by these showmen is awesome considering the regularity and constancy with which they perform, especially at their age. Kid yourself not, this requires a great deal of exercise, rest and good nutrition to accomplish.

Since vocalists seem to be most susceptible to illness while on tour, succumbing easily to colds and sore throats, it becomes a certain necessity to conduct and regulate ones activities responsibly. Long outdoor concert schedules can be extremely hazardous to a singer as climactic conditions may not always be ideal, particularly in the early and late summer seasons. Thus, it becomes even more significant to elevate our conditioning and raise our awareness to a suitable level for optimum health and performance. Warming up before every show becomes routine due to the rigorous nature of touring. I myself make it a point to run vocal scales one hour before any performance, often locking myself away whenever I can to work out the bugs. This helps to loosen up your voice and prevent any unnecessary aggravation or damage to your vocal chords.

Many crooners fail to realize that their larynx, which is the muscular structure at the upper part of the trachea that houses the vocal chords, behaves no differently than any other muscle system in one's body. While preparing for any sporting event, professional athletes are always seen warming up by stretching and exercising before their ensuing detail, a physical requirement that helps

to prevent cramps and injury during any athletic event. Loosening up before the game makes for good common sense to an athlete and so it should to a professional vocalist prior to any engagement. When you take into consideration the delicate nature of your larynx and the fragility of your vocal chords, it is not hard to imagine the difficulty that one can run into when failing to prepare properly for performance.

Over exertion and lack of proper rest are the main ingredients of such potential ailments as hoarseness, laryngitis (which is the inflammation of the larynx membranes) and nodes (that occur when there is scarring caused to the tissue surrounding the vocal chords). All are very common and serious conditions that should never be taken lightly — particularly the latter, which has been known to end many a singing career. (Generally speaking, a physician — usually a nose, ear and throat specialist — should be consulted immediately when nodes begin to appear.) However, these hazardous conditions can be easily prevented by plenty of quality sleep, a healthy diet, proper physical conditioning and discipline. Furthermore, if stricken by any of these conditions while on tour, there are many techniques one can resort to to help ease the discomfort and help remedy the ailments.

Some of my own personal remedy techniques include plenty of hot showers prior to show time to help open up the pores and nasal passages, especially when nursing a bad cold. Gargling with salted water or warm tea with lemon and honey always helps to ease some of the discomfort caused by inflammation (a pharmaceutical product called Chloraseptic is popular amongst many singers and works the same way as an antiseptic to help cleanse and ease the discomforts associated with throat inflammation). I never go on tour without bringing a few particular products like Meloids (throat pastilles that help to soothe and cool throat membranes); non-drowsiness congestion tablets (Sudafed or Sinutab); and a good supply of throat lozenges, especially during the colder months. One should always try to stay away from alcohol and cigarettes as a rule while on tour, as these vices can be very damaging to one's throat — not to mention one's overall health. A simple towel on stage helps to keep the sweat off and can be worn around your head or neck after the show to keep your temperature constant until you get back to your dressing room or hotel.

Most of all, one must have the discipline to maintain a suitable balance between responsible behaviour and habitual necessity in order to survive adequately on the road. Never underestimate the unpredictability of your travels while touring and always remember that your body will only work as well as you treat it. It is your temple after all!



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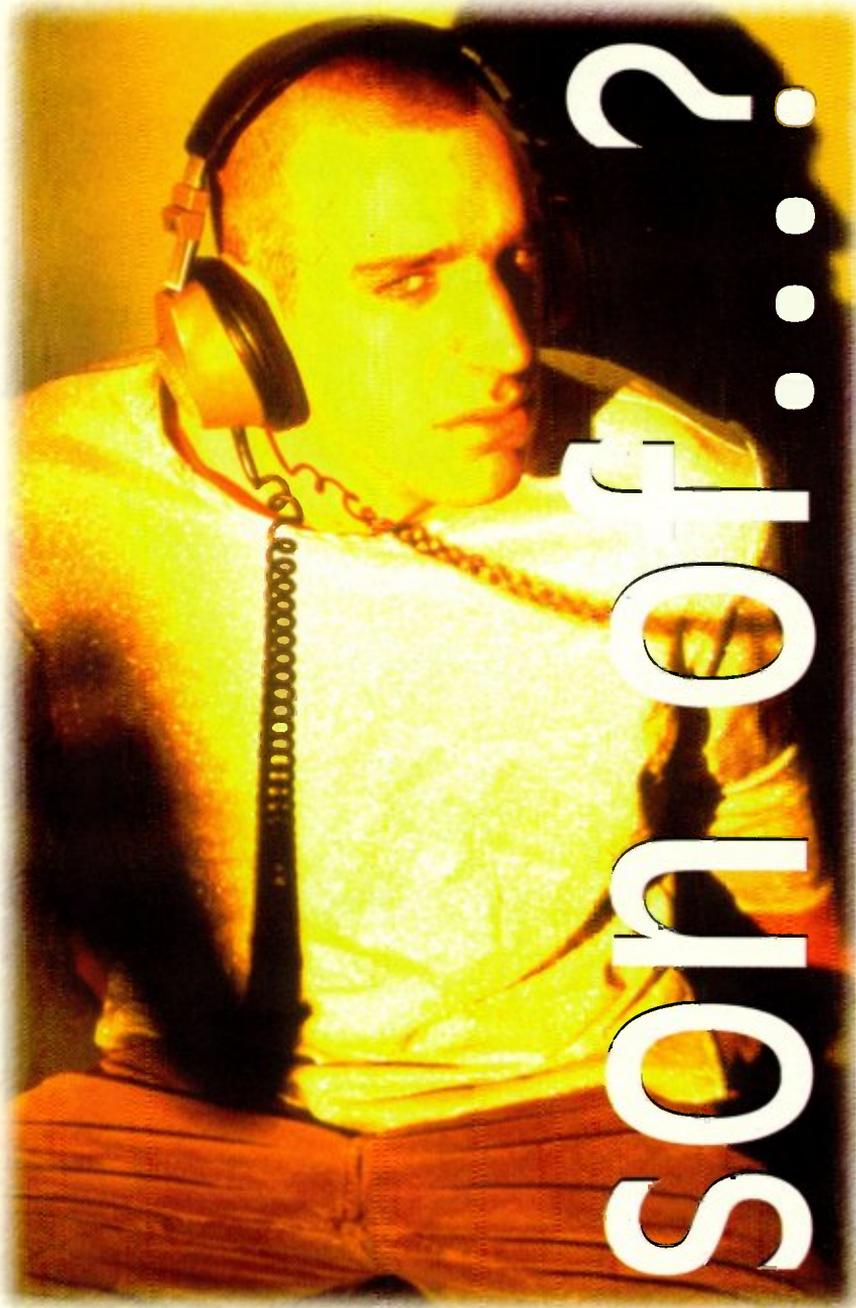
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World Radio History

## Jason "Son" Beck on The Incredible Influence of Being.



**Son** has performed *Purple Rain* in its entirety live, claimed Michael Jackson's *Thriller* title for the nineties, and worn its influences on his sleeve.

Is nothing sacred?

Perpetrator Jason Beck, the "son" behind Toronto's Son, reserves the word original for "the greats". He just doesn't believe any young musician has forged a consistent musical personality yet. Given the Elvis Costello/Prince lineage of Son's funky new wave pop, that might be true of this 23-year old singer/keyboardist too, were it not for the fact that any similarities to persons living, in the tabloids, or who have undergone a symbolic renaming is purely *not* coincidence.

Son is merely a vehicle for Beck, bassist Dave Szigeti, drummer Anthony Michelli and guitarist Simon Craig to honour the pop greats in as pure and respectful a manner as possible. "Son should not be anything but pop songs that are derived from that Elvis Costello source,

Prince studio aesthetic and all that lo-fi stuff from the early nineties that I like mixed in with Beatles songwriting," Beck explains. "I wouldn't want to put my weird music out under the name Son. I'll put it under 'The Weird Music Band' and I'll sign a deal with an independent label who will understand that kind of music."

Coming from an intense jazz background — as a teenager, he used to hunt down the most complex compositions and try to transcribe them by ear — Beck is a guy who has a total sound and vision for whatever he does.

Like a science experiment, he might not be certain of the outcome, but he knows the desired result; and he'll work both meticulously and recklessly to get there. In other words, his musical universe is greater than the sum of Prince and Elvis Costello.

His creative juices flow in many directions. He helped fund his debut album, *Thriller* — remastered and released on Warner Music Canada

— by writing the theme for a short-lived FOX sitcom, *Pig Sty*, in 1994, and more recently sold a Hole rip-off, "Smell" to the TV show *Second Noah*. "They wanted to use 'Violet' originally, but they couldn't get the rights," says Beck.

A versatile songwriter, his other main project includes an anything-goes rock band The Shit, which he describes, rather journalistically, as "a weird female-fronted indie rock band mixed with super-chug ballsy cock-rock and four singers" — including himself on drums, hip hop producer Dominic Sable on keyboards, bassist Rebecca Gould and guitarist Merrill Nisker. They perform just as regularly in Toronto as Son.

"It's like when John Zorn puts out records, the group is synonymous with a certain musical concept," says Beck. And so it will be with his projects.

There was a deluge of lessons in the Beck household in all kinds of athletics and music. Born in Montreal, Jason started piano at age eight, but quit two years later, fed up with practising. His parents wanted to provide Jason, sister Jennifer and older brother Jean-Christophe with all the advantages they lacked in their childhood. When sister Jennifer was told she displayed talent in squash, all the kids were enrolled in squash. "My brother and I pretty much stank," recalls Jason. A year later, the music teacher mentioned that Jason and Chris were musically inclined, and so dear Jennifer had to take music lessons as well. "I'm not sure if they had clued in to the fact that different children can be talented in different ways," Jason muses.

is so limited to just lounge jazz. It has very little versatility. And maybe one day a virtuoso will come along and prove me wrong, but to my mind, it's very difficult to get your body involved with it. The vibraphone phase didn't last very long obviously," he laughs. "I quickly clued in to the fact that it was limited, so I started practising piano really graciously and sort of dabbled in pop songs — but nothing serious.

"The kind of pop songs I liked, again, were very muso, like Sting. Friends of mine would say, 'Do you like REM?', and I'd say, 'fuck, that sucks'. I didn't understand about songwriting or putting things in a sublime and simple way. So that discovery came to me in college as a result. It's one thing to spend your adolescence seeking out this kind of difficult, 'ear-training' kind of music; it's another thing to spend four years of your life studying it. That kind of saturation finally clued me in to the fact that there had to be something else. It had taken me so far in one direction that I had to go the opposite way to find the reaction. And I started to listen to Prince and Elvis Costello and all the things that are so evident on *Thriller* specifically."

Although he wanted to pursue music, he appeased his parents by commencing an English degree at Montreal's McGill University. "My folks were into giving me all the opportunities growing up; but as soon as it became a bit more than a hobby, they sort of got worried and actually threatened to not support us at all if we switched to music," Beck says. The next year, his piano skills earned him admittance into the jazz program, a kind of noble, parent-pleasing music education. In the

## Son has performed Purple Rain in its entirety live. claimed Michael Jackson's *Thriller* title for the nineties. and worn its influences on his sleeve. Is nothing sacred?

As Chris continued piano — he is now an accomplished television and film composer in Los Angeles who worked for a while with TV theme king Mike Post (*Law & Order, Murder One*) — Jason quit and started playing drums at age ten. "I was really hyperactive and hitting things seemed to be the best antidote. I played that until I was 16. I didn't even touch another instrument," says Beck, who spent age 11 to 14 in Calgary where he picked up his first four-track tape machine, then the next four years at a Toronto private school.

Even though he's not keen on talking about those years, it couldn't have been that stuffy. He formed a "snobby jazz fusion rock" band called Decoy with schoolmate Simon Craig, which won a High School Battle Of The Bands at the Concert Hall. One of the competitors was an alternative rock band, Entangled, which featured Hayden, Noah Mintz, currently of hHead and Josh Malinsky of Peleto. "They hated us. They thought we were faggy art school jazz snobs," claims Beck.

At 18, he moved back to Montreal for eight months to finish high school and spent the remaining four months of the year in Calgary writing children's music for the government of Alberta. "My brother and I used to write Broadway-style musicals, and one of them was seen by someone who happened to be on holiday and knew of this very liberal program which hired starving artists to do environmental education for kids in the middle of Red Neck, Alberta — it was an odd situation."

Most of his adolescence, he says, had been spent in search of music that exercised his brain, not his soul. "I was awakened to jazz and got really into vicious ear-training. I would try to find the most complicated music I could and transcribe it. It was really nerdy. I had not yet experienced music that could move you in a profound, soulful way yet. Eventually, I decided that I should be able to have traditional tone in my instrument as well, as opposed to just rhythm and the abstract tones of a drum set. I decided to switch over, but I didn't want to have to learn the piano. So I switched to vibraphone.

"Vibraphone is the nerdiest instrument ever invented because its tone

evenings, he would perform at the school's jazz pub on an acoustic piano with an electric bass player and a drummer. "I'd just started to sing my own pop songs, but it was still sort of couched in a jazz aesthetic — only because it was a jazz pub and I was in jazz school and the musicians I was using were jazz musicians," he says.

"I was doing a few of my own pop songs, but there were still solos and stuff like that. It was an attempt to try it out, because my confidence in my singing was just so low that I had to couch it with things I was comfortable with — so either jazz, soloing, that kind of thing. If you don't have a God-given soulful, beautiful voice, then you have to work harder in other ways — phrasing, delivery, stage presence — all those kinds of things have to compensate. It took me a long time to not be self-conscious in public."

Once graduated, degree in hand, the 22-year old high-tailed it to Toronto with the intention of starting a band. He already had the musicians in mind, which included Dave Szigeti, a bass player he met at McGill who had played with Beck's half-jazz/half-pop trio and had his own avant-garde band The Intergalactic Temple of Dave Szigeti. "He was such a ballsy individual, especially within the confines of school," Beck comments. His other choice was his old high school friend and Decoy bandmate Simon Craig. Dominic Sable, now keyboardist in The Shit, joined briefly on drums before being replaced by Anthony Michelli, Szigeti's roommate at the time. "It was a pretty instant vibe," recalls Beck.

In his last year of college, Beck had bought himself a Sansui six-track and had begun laying down songs and sound experiments. "That was my partner in crime for everything on *Thriller*," says Beck. There were some 15 to 20 tunes demoed before this particular foursome got together, but much of it wasn't suitable for Son, says Beck. "About twenty percent of it worked and that would be the mode I would start writing in. If I'd had three different musicians to work with I'd have used different sections of the tunes and Son would be a folk band."



Beck would play all the instruments and demo the song and bring it in to the guys on a crappy ghetto-blast. He amassed a backlog of about 40 songs when *Thriller* was started. "A lot of them were shit and a lot of them were purposefully modelled after a lot of funk that we'd been listening to; and we had just started getting into the more slightly experimental vibe," he says.

The majority of his effort was on recording, simply because it was so hard to find live gigs at the beginning. "It took me three months to get a Wednesday at (the now defunct) Clinton's," he remembers. Before moving to Toronto, he had co-written a theme on spec for the *Pig Sty* pilot with his brother Chris, now stationed in Los Angeles and working at Mike Post Productions. After some revisions, it was accepted and Beck put the \$3000 U.S. towards the \$5000 recording cost of what would eventually become Son's debut album, *Thriller*.

In January and March of 1995, they began by laying down the drums at B-Group Music, a makeshift studio in Burlington, Ontario — actually Brent Bodrug's Fostex 8-track analog tape machine put in his mom's dance studio when a friend needed to record. "Anthony recorded alone, very simply — six mics and two room mics. He played through a click track as I gave cues from a keyboard there in the room," explains Beck.

"When you listen to the record, it's an amazing performance by Anthony considering he played to click track and not with other human beings. And then we transferred those eight tracks onto an ADAT and then transferred those eight tracks on to a dummy track of a second ADAT, so I basically had seven more tracks to play with on the second ADAT — and all the bass and guitar and keyboards were done on those seven

tracks. All those tracks were done in my mom's basement [dubbed Hooker Room], engineered and produced by myself in March and April of '95.

"It was sort of learning on the spot," says Beck. "Really, the ADAT is so simple to use. It's basically like using a four-track. Once you learn how to patch everything in, it's basically just hit and miss. There was a lot of great experimentation going on, just because my mom's basement is a limited place, so we were moving mics into bathrooms or trying to bounce the sound off a mirror or, when she's away during the day, trying to record the guitar amps from the other side of the house. Just stuff like that, which is really fun."

Beck's brother had always offered to mix the album, but the two came from different musical poles. That he discovered when they demoed together. "Chris had a very controlling, slick aesthetic and I was very defensive, into experimenting," Beck explains. "It's a matter of taste. He doesn't relate to making something sound intentionally bad or lo-fi. He doesn't agree with wanting to mic something underwater or anything fucked up or trippy. I just didn't think it would be right, but that's just family shit. In the end, we had a big heart to heart talk and I explained it's important to do it my way; please don't try to out your musical aesthetic on it, please just serve mine."

In May, Beck had run out of money, so he returned to Alberta to do the children's music gig again so he could afford the three-week mixing period in L.A. in July. He says the process was incredible. So incredible, in fact, that this lo-fi guy gave his hi-fi brother a co-production credit on the album.

*continued on page 38*

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continued from page 36

"Who knows if he really deserved it or not," questions Beck. "It's a blurry area, what a producer does. It's everything from moral support to knowing how to use a compressor but, in this case, he arranged the mixing to be such an incredibly luxurious process and one where we were not watching the clock, I felt that alone made the album sound a lot better in some abstract way. The fact that we had the freedom to sit there in a luxurious air-conditioned studio every day with a full fridge and a secretary and people to get us coffee, it was unbelievable," he laughs. "The one thing I don't like about recording, at times when I've done it, is watching a

clock and settling for something because your ears are tired. And I didn't have to settle on anything."

Once mastered back in Toronto with Peter Moore at the e room — chosen because he was the "kind of guy you could hang out and smoke cigarettes with" — Beck released *Thriller* in September of '95. He didn't mail it to the major labels. In some cosmic way, he felt when the time was right, they would find out about it.

It was the robots on the cover which prompted Warner Music Canada A&R rep Steve Jordan to purchase the compact disc from Sam The Record Man. But it was the funky new wave soul

inside which convinced him to make the Toronto act his first signing. "The record absolutely blew me away," recounts Jordan. "It was so good that I had to double check the package to see if it was in fact indie and from Toronto." Within two weeks of seeing Son perform, the label offered Son's creator a deal, not the entire band. "Our contract definitely allows for the creative freedoms which he needs," says Jordan.

"The contract is great," Beck agrees. "I told them I want to be able to pursue other things and as long I don't use the image and name and aesthetic associated with Son, that's cool."

The album was remastered by George Graves at The Lacquer Channel and released nationwide in mid-March, spearheaded by the funky first single, "Pick Up The Phone" which has recently been followed-up with the equally funky "Joke". Beck, who has just returned from his first cross-Canada tour, is finding that the rest of the band is contributing more and more to the song development and creation of new ones.

"I don't think I was even comfortable saying there was a sound of the band until the record came out," says Beck, who is making available his *Filler* cassettes — 52 songs demoed on four-track, via mail order.

"We became conscious of the fact that people may be expecting us to duplicate it. After the CD release, we would go into rehearsal and it would be weird. We'd be playing the songs and there'd be this spectre hanging over us of the recorded song, 'the official version'. So whenever you make a change from that official version, you have to be really conscious of it and think it out more. Beforehand, we were really just fucking around a lot and now the fucking around is a lot more focused and a lot more serious.

"We had a very interesting discussion this morning," he continues. "We started to think that the standard way of putting out an album and putting a single out and touring that single, and then coming back and then doing another single, and touring that again, and then taking a few months off and then putting out another record and then doing it all again, really doesn't agree with us very well.

"We started to brainstorm different ways of trying to relate the recording process with touring and what it really means. I think the rule book is used far too often with young bands such as ourselves. We're going to make it a priority, both in the recording arena and in the touring arena, to try to offset some to the traditional ways that things are run. And when the second record does come out, we might try some unorthodox approaches to promoting it. Not that I think we can change anything," he admits. "If anything, we might just end up making ourselves a lower priority for Warner, and if that's what happens in the process, so be it."

*Karen Bliss is a Toronto-based freelance writer.*



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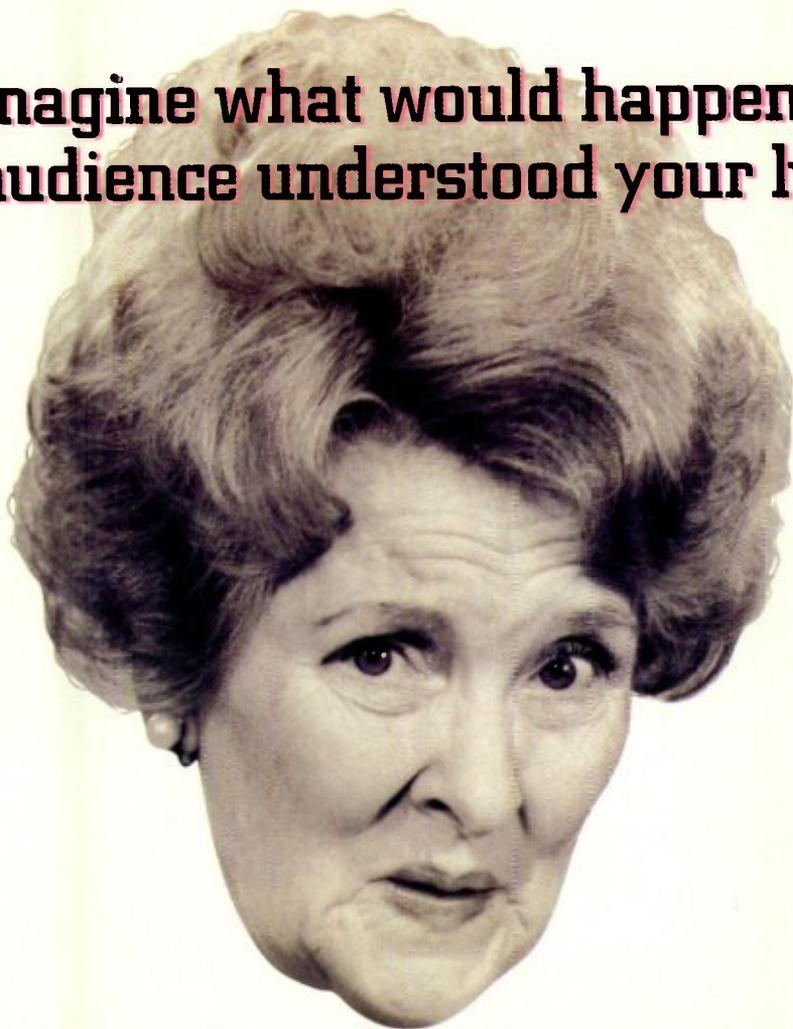


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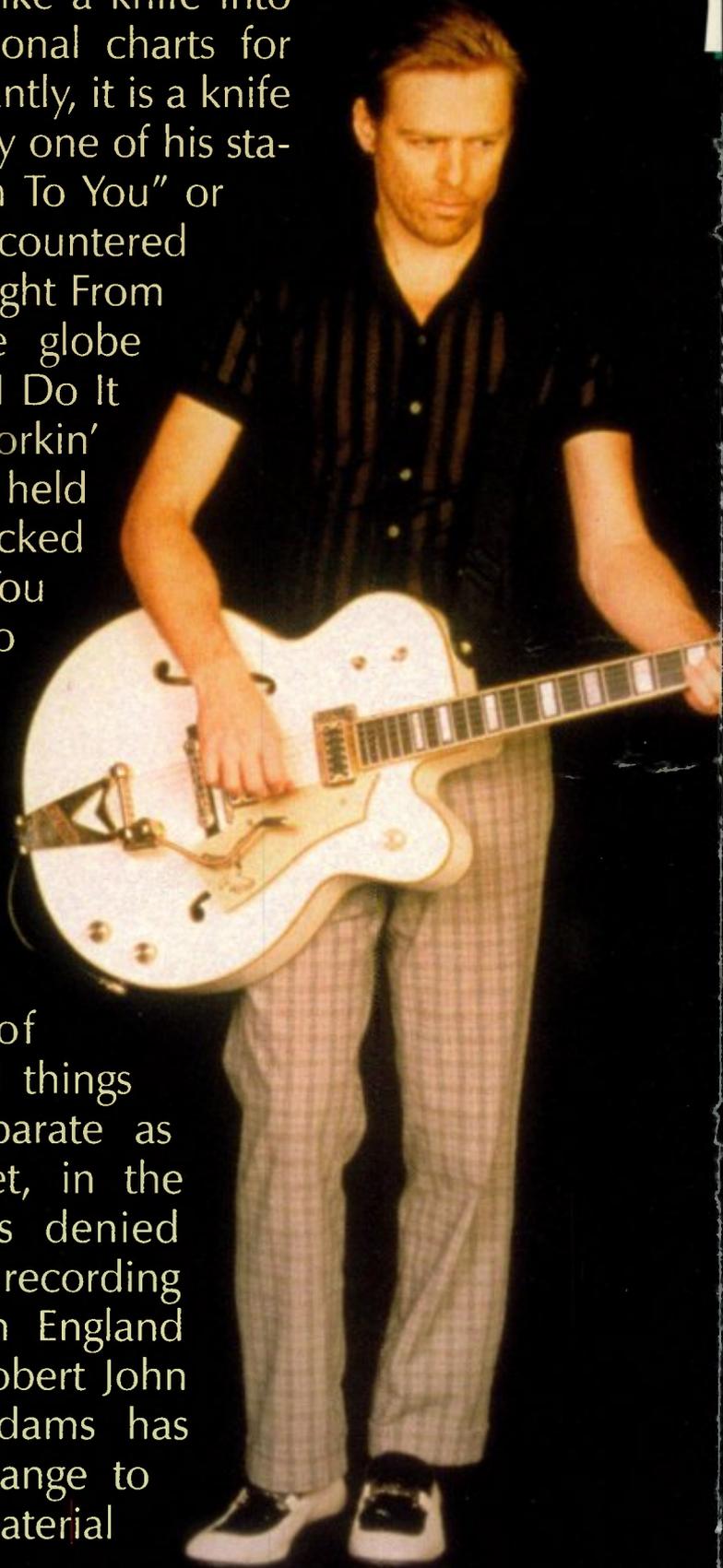
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**B**ryan Adams' music has cut like a knife into the Canadian and International charts for nearly two decades. Significantly, it is a knife that cuts both ways. For every one of his stadium rocking anthems like "Run To You" or "Kids Wanna Rock", he has countered with swooning ballads like "Straight From The Heart", "Heaven" or the globe smashing hit "(Everything I Do) I Do It For You". The white T-shirted workin' man rock screamer with his fist held high was also the gaucho bedecked troubadour crooning "Have You Ever Really Loved A Woman?" to millions of worldwide television viewers on this years Academy Awards. He is the Greenpeace supporting, down to Earth vegan who also writes the love themes for over-the-top Hollywood films. He is the International Ambassador of Canadian Rock, symbolic of all things Canadian in countries as disparate as England and Vietnam; and yet, in the unkindest cut of all, he was denied CanCon status for the crime of recording *Waking Up The Neighbours* in England with UK maverick producer Robert John "Mutt" Lange. Undaunted, Adams has once again teamed up with Lange to record his first album of new material in five years.



# Bryan Adams

*18 til i die* is an appropriate moniker for an album by a late "thirtysomething" with a Peter Pan knack of staying in tune with his adolescent longings. The knife still cuts both ways, only now with a vengeance. On this, his seventh studio release, he may appear worldly enough to ask "Have You Ever Really Loved A Woman", but he's not above writing a song called "(I Wanna Be) Your Underwear". And when he really was 18, back in 1976 when he replaced Nick Gilder in Sweeney Todd (of "Roxy Roller" fame), he probably never imagined being so upwardly mobile as to afford a collection of vintage recording equipment for his own mobile studio — let alone take it to such exotic locales as Jamaica and Provence (in the south of France) as he did this time around.

"I decided to build myself a portable studio," Adams explains, "with no real intention of where it was gonna go. The idea really was to have a portable studio in case I wanted to go somewhere. I had a premonition that that was how I was gonna work."

Adams was once again on the money with his instincts, for it was soon after his premonition that he received a long distance phone call from one Mutt Lange.

"He phoned me from Jamaica," relates Adams, "and said, 'listen man, why don't you come down here next week and let's work on some songs?'. And I said, 'yeah, okay'. So I went down there, thinking in the back of my mind, 'I wonder if he'd be into making an album with a mobile unit?' We hadn't even discussed doing another album yet."

Lange, no fool in the business of making hit records, immediately warmed to the idea of a mobile recording. Adams describes the set up.

"It would be a pretty loose atmosphere, so that if we felt like plugging something in we'd just plug it in and away we go."

Adams had one more key condi-

tion about the recording process: "I said, 'let's not make demos; let's just record these songs like we were gonna make masters'. I don't really make demos anymore, I make masters completely. I used to record demos, then re-record the whole thing with the band. Now, whatever I record, no matter how crappy it is, that's gonna be it. I'll work on it until it becomes a master."

Apparently, Lange had worked that way before.

"It turned out," continues Adams, "that he'd made a lot of AC/DC records in the most shittiest of studios anyway. It wasn't that unusual for him to make records in a less technical environment. So we shipped the gear down there, I rented a house on a cliff and we spent three months in '94 and five months in '95 living in this house, recording. It was like three weeks a month, and then we'd take a week off and then regroup."

Adams' Vancouver-based studio, The Warehouse, is both mobile and permanent. The building, obviously, is fixed to one locale, but virtually everything in it can be moved out to wherever the music is. Adams is most proud of this feature.

"I bought this place a long time ago," he says of the original Warehouse studio that he built in 1989, "when I thought that I was gonna work here all the time. I was in a different mind set. I'd been collecting equipment since 1985. I have a big collection of valve and tube stuff, compressors, limiters and microphones. A lot of the technology starts in the late '40s and goes up to the present day. This is gonna be the mother of all studios."

All of his gear from the old Warehouse is moving into the new Warehouse, in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

"It's in a good location," beams the proud studio owner in a tone resembling a sales pitch. "It also has the most diverse selection of equipment of any studio in this country and perhaps in America, too. We

have two studios. One has a big old Neve desk that used to belong to AIR Studios; it went to Atlantic, then Atlantic sold it to me. It's been modified. We also have the new J Series SSL console, which has eighty inputs."

After years of working in studios where the artist is often intimidated by the room or the technology, Adams is adamant that the right vibe be the central issue at his studio, or wherever that studio travels.

"It's gonna be the most artist-friendly studio by far. In terms of comfort, it's gonna be easy and functional — one of those places that you can get in, sit down and work. And relax."

Relaxed atmosphere. Did someone say Jamaica? Ya mon! But while there was plenty of laid back atmosphere during the Jamaican sessions, there were a few troublesome moments.

"The worst case thing was like, we'd wake up and get started, and then suddenly 'wooong!' — brownout. Everything goes down, and we're like, 'so can anyone here tell us when it's gonna come back?'"

(Affects Jamaican accent)

'No, Mon'

'Think it'll be today?'

'I dunno, mon'

'Think it'll be tomorrow?'

'Maybe...'

But in the land that invented the phrase "soon come", one learns pretty quickly, when the going gets tough, the tough go swimming.

"We'd all go swimming and start talking about lyrics. The atmosphere became, 'well, that's what it is.' It wasn't like, 'let's all get pissed off, it was like, 'hey, we got some down time, let's go swimming!'"

*Waking Up The Neighbours*, Adams' only other album of the '90s, was more of a late '80s album in terms of character. The mega-overdubbed walls of harmonies, a trademark of Mutt Lange's production prevalent on his records with Def Leppard, Loverboy and AC/DC, and heavily-processed drum sounds



Gets  
Upwardly  
Mobile  
Down  
South



by Paul Myers



# Bryan Adams

(or machines) threaten to sound somewhat dated when juxtaposed with the post-Nirvana directness of contemporary rock artists like Soundgarden or Green Day. Adams was indeed mindful of the change in the pop landscape in his time away from recording. But what was in his mind was to go back to an artist he knew very well — himself.

"I think Mutt and I understood that we had to make a record that was more in keeping with things I'd done before, more stripped down and real sounding. *Waking Up The Neighbours* was more like something that he would have done. When I first worked with Mutt, that's how it was. We couldn't go for drum machines, it wouldn't fly. You have to understand there are things about what he does with synths and drum machines that are really brilliant and it ends up being used; but you can also make that sound real."

Reality is in abundance on *18 'til I die*. Many of the lead vocals have an earthy, if not downright raunchy, edge that was only hinted at in Adams' previous recorded output. Partly as a result of sculpting the tracks one piece at a time and partly as a reaction to the aforementioned overproduction of *Neighbours*, the overall effect is that many of the vocals sound like first takes.

"I gotta be honest with you, some songs are one take," confirms Adams. "I Think About You" is one take. Acoustic guitar and voice one take — I think I dropped in a couple of places, I changed the lyrics — but the rest of the songs on the album were worked on. I would probably sing a song six times and then Mutt would take the best pieces out of those takes."

Adams notes that there is a difference between stage and studio spontaneity. "If you've played a

song live over and over, night after night, eventually you'll find the 'slot' where you'll naturally want to go melody-wise and feel-wise. But if you've just written the song, if it's brand new, in most cases there's an infinite amount of possibilities of where you can go with it. So the idea of singing it, and this is something I've done mostly with Mutt, is just to go in and sing it. Just go in there and see what comes out. And if there's places where the lyric doesn't work or the melody doesn't work, we'd go back and work on that."

Repetition can often detract from getting a 'live' and 'off-the-floor' take, but Adams figures it's worth it.



"Personally speaking, I think I get better the more I sing; so if I sing it six or eight times, I know that my voice is getting warmed up. Even before I go on stage, I don't really warm up that much — they say you should, but I don't."

Even the backing vocals on the new album benefit from 'less-is-more' revisionism. Gone are those Def Leppardian stacks of voices on choruses that seem to shout out: "Mutt Lange Was Here!"

"That's where I stepped in," concurs Adams. "I said, 'let's make this sound real; in fact, let's make it real, not just sound real.' It wasn't even a question. On my previous albums, there wasn't a lot of backing vocals — and Mutt loves backing vocals and harmonies. At one point, he said to me, 'You just don't like harmony, do you?' I said it's not that I don't like harmony, it's just that I've never had that before. I've never really had a lot of harmonies. So we did do some singing, Mutt and I, reinforcing the choruses together — we called ourselves the Pointless Brothers — but we never had those oversize backing vocal parts."

So why hire Mutt Lange and not expect him to be *Mutt Lange*? Did Adams expect to teach an old Mutt some new tricks? Not on your life.

"With Mutt, I don't ask him [what he's doing], I just let him get on with it. It's not the kind of thing where I come back to the studio and go, 'what the hell is that?' Anytime I'd come back to the studio after they'd been working when I wasn't there, I'd go, 'Holy smokes, that sounds great!' So you know, that's what's wonderful about working with a producer like that, one who really understands what you want, who gets it, basically. So that was never a problem."

That kind of mutual respect between Adams and Lange also prevails in the area of co-writing. Not since his early hits, co-written with Jim Vallance, has Adams worked so closely with one other writer. And since the songs were recorded as they were being written, it's no surprise that Lange has a hand in much of the writing.

"Everything was written on the spot," confides Adams. "I'm not really that prolific. I really have to sit down and isolate myself to come up with



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songs. If I sit down with a guitar right now and work for a couple of hours, I'll come up with something. But if I don't, I won't come up with anything. I'll just become a couch potato and turn on the TV."

Bouncing off Lange certainly helped him keep focused on the job at hand.

"I'm basically an ideas guy. I think that I can take an idea so far, or someone else has got an idea and I can improve it or add my touch. I can sit there and work with somebody as long as it takes. I'll sit down with Mutt and we start working on an idea, and any time that the song would go to the next level, it would be when the two of us sat together. There was never a time when I'd go into another room or go for a walk or something. We would just work on it all the time."

Lange, as famous for his lyrical sexual innuendos as for his long and wordy titles, such as Heart's "All I Wanna Do Is Make Love To You" and Shania Twain's "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under", has left his mark on Adams. Since writing "(Everything I Do) I Do It For You" with Lange and Michael Kamen, the pair have gone on to write wordathon titles such as "Have You Ever Really Loved A Woman", "The Only Thing That Looks Good On Me Is You" and the sexually provocative "(I Wanna Be) Your Underwear".

Adams says that Lange, in turn, has expressed admiration for Adams' bridges or "middle eights".

"Mutt used to call me Mr. Middle Eight," Adams confesses. "The middle eight sort of reinforces the idea of what you've already been saying. That's what the middle eight should do, maybe in some cases it might take it to a different place.

Generally to me, a middle eight is just confirming what the rest of the song has already been talking about."

But in these back-to-basics '90s, and after scanning the current climate on radio singles, a rethink was in order. This led to a rather ironic twist for "Mr. Middle Eight".

"On this album, just before we went to mixing, we did something quite unusual. We actually edited out three middle eights from three different songs. I listened to a lot of songs that are out there recently, and I noticed that a lot of people don't really have middle eights. So I thought, we can put them in and I suppose it is a stylistic thing for me, but on the other hand, it isn't really what's going on, so let's make it a little bit more compact. So boom-boom-boom (Bryan snaps fingers). Three songs, three middle eights gone. Some of the songs were quite succinct already, and the ideas had already been taken to the next level. In "(I Wanna Be) Your Underwear", the middle eight lyric went: 'There's no place that I'd rather be / Than sniffing around your lingerie.' It didn't need to be there. We'd already said that in every way possible. There's this sniff sound on the track, and where that sniff is, that's where the middle eight used to be. In 'I Think About You', the middle eight went: 'I could be driving on a street somewhere / Lose my direction and not even care / In the dead of night, in the daytime too / It feels so right when I think about you'. I'd already said that in the whole song already. Nice idea... but I'd already said it."

Another way for an artist to make a statement is with fashion. That's not something you'd ordinarily associate with the image of Bryan Adams.

So it may come as a surprise that Adams' new video for "The Only Thing That Looks Good On Me Is You" features the "Artist Formerly Seen Only In A White T-Shirt" wearing some pretty haute couture gear. Adams hints that the video was more a parody, sort of like Robert Altman's film *Ready To Wear*.

"The video is a piss take on fashion; that's really why there's so many fashion things in there. The song's, like, talking about different designers [Versace and Armani are among the names dropped], and the fact that no matter what I put on, forget it... In the last few videos I've done — I haven't really thought about this but, if I think about it now — I wore a white suit and green shirt in the last video and a blue shirt and a pair of black pants in the one before. Maybe because it was for *Don Juan De Marco*. Maybe Hollywood has changed my perception of wardrobe."

Can it really be that the time has come for Bryan Adams to shop in the Men's section? What do you think?

"I really haven't consciously decided to throw the white T-shirt away, yet. It's still looming large in my wardrobe. It's simple, it's classic."

Simple and Classic. That's probably the best way to sum up *18 til i die*. It's classic rock: big hooks, honkin' guitars and a whole mess of drums. But, like shopping at the Gap, it's basic, simple and ready to wear.

And once again, it cuts both ways.

*Paul Myers is a Toronto-based songwriter, musician and freelance writer.*

*For gear listing, see sidebar on page 44*

**Dave Weckl**  
 Snare: Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare  
 Bass: Emperor Coated/Ebony  
 Toms: Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Clear

**Sheila E.**  
 Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare  
 Ping Pong/Ambassador Smooth White  
 Pin Stripe/Ambassador Clear

**Simon Phillips**  
 CS Coated w/Black Dot/Ambassador Snare  
 Pinstripe/Ebony  
 Emperor Clear/Ambassador Clear

## The Warehouse Studio: A Gear-Lover's Dream!

The available equipment at Bryan Adams' Warehouse Studio is extensive enough to whet the appetite of any engineer. The collection of tube gear, in particular, is most impressive. Check out what the two rooms have to offer: (turning green yet?)

### Mixing Room Equipment List

#### Console:

Solid State Logic 9080 J Series Console (80-input)

#### Tape Machines:

Studer A800 III 24-track

Sony PCM 3348 Digital Multitrack (48-track)

Tascam DA-88 Digital 8-track w/ T/C

#### Mixdown Machines:

(2x) Sony 7030 T/C DAT Recorder  
w/ Apogee 20-bit converters (AD1000/DAM000)

Studer A820 - 1/2" 2-track analog

Sony DASH 3402 2-track digital w/ T/C

(2x) Sony TCK 679ES cassette deck (pro balanced)

Sony 111-ES CD player (pro balanced)

#### Synchronizers:

Lynx Modules V-500 Software w/ Serial Video Card

Leitch House Video Black Sync Generator

#### Amps/ Speakers:

Studer A68 power amps

Hofler 9505 power amp

Yamaha 2250 power amps

BGW 250B power amp

KRK 9000 speakers

Genelec 1031A powered speakers

Yamaha NS-10M speakers

Auratone C-5 Cube speaker (with mono box)

#### Reverbs & Delays:

AMS RMX 16 Reverb

AMS DMX 1580S (2 x 6.5 sec) with chorus

MXR Stereo Flangers (SSL automated)

EMT 250 Digital Reverb

Eventide H3000 SE/B Ultra Harmonizer

+ Stereo Sampler (45 sec)

Eventide H949 Harmonizer

Lexicon 480L Digital Reverb V4.0 + Classic Cart

Lexicon PCM-70 Effects Reverb

KORG SDD 3000 DDL

(2x) Roland SDE 3000 DDL

Roland Vocoder

Sony R-7 Reverb (20-bit)

Ursa Major Space Station SST 282

Yamaha SPX 1000

Yamaha SPX 990 (20-bit)

(2x) Yamaha SPX 90 II

Yamaha REV-5 Digital Effects

Yamaha REV-7 Digital Effects

#### Compressor/Limiters:

(2x) BSS 901 Dynamic EQ

(5x) dbx 902 De-Esser modules w/ power supply

(2x) dbx 903 Comp/Lim 160X

Drawmer DS 201 Noise Gate

(2x) Neve 2254 Compressor/Limiter

SSL Stereo Compressor

(2x) Teletronix LA-2A

(2x) Teletronix LA-3A

UREI 1176LN

#### Equalizers:

(2x) API 550b EQ

dbx 120 DT Sub Harmonic Generator

GML 8200 Stereo EQ

Neve 1081 4-band EQ/Mic Preamp (8 in rack)

(6x) Pultec EQP-1A3 Tube Program EQ

Pultec MEQ-5 Tube Mid Range EQ

Sansamp PSA-1 GTR Pre-amp

UREI 565 Little Dipper

#### Special Gear:

(2) Little Labs Sample Switcher

Russian Dragon Timer Box

TCB Systems SSL to MIDI Converter

### Recording/Tracking Room Equipment List

#### Console:

Neve A6630 "Custom Air Studio" 58-Input Console  
(no automation)

(6x) Custom Cue Mixing Stations (16 inputs)  
w/ Yamaha 2075 Power Amps

#### Tape Machines:

Studer A800 III 24-track

Sony PCM 3348 Digital Multitrack (48-track)

#### Mixdown Machines:

Panasonic 3900 DAT Machine

Sony DASH 3402 2-track Digital w/ T/C

Studer A810 1/4" 2-track Analog

Sony TC-K679ES Pro Cassette Deck

Sony 111-ES Pro CD Player

#### Synchronizers:

Leitch House Video Blk Sync Generator

Lynx Modules V-500 Software w/ Serial Video Card

#### Amps/Speakers:

Studer A68 Power Amp

Yamaha 2250 Power Amp

KRK 9000 Speakers

Yamaha NS-10M Speakers

Auratone C-5 Cube Speakers (mono box)

#### Compressor/Limiters:

(2x) BSS 901 Dynamic EQ

(2x) dbx 902 De-Esser Modules w/ Power Supply

(4x) Drawmer DS201 Noise Gate

Fairchild 666 Mono Tube Compressor

GML 8900 Stereo Compressor

(8x) Neve 3226-Limiter/Compressor

SSL Stereo Compressor

(2x) Teletronix LA-2A Tube Compressor

(2x) Teletronix LA-3A Compressor

UREI 1176 LN Compressor

#### Equalizers:

dbx 120 DT Sub Harmonic Generator

GML 8200 Stereo EQ

(8x) Pultec EQP-1A3 Tube Program EQ

(2x) Pultec MEQ-5 Tube Mid Range EQ

UREI 565 Little Dipper Notch EQ

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AMS RMX 16 Reverb

dbx Stereo Flangers

Eventide H3000 SE/B Ultra Harmonizer

+ Stereo Sampler (45 sec)

Lexicon 480L Digital Reverb

(2x) Roland SDE-3000 DDL

Sony R-7 Stereo Digital Reverb (20-bit)

Yamaha REV-5 Digital Reverb

Yamaha SPX 990 Stereo Digital Effects (20-bit)

Yamaha SPX 1000 Digital Effects

#### Special Gear:

Little Labs Sample Switcher

Russian Dragon Timer Box

#### Microphones:

AKG C-12 Tube • AKG C-12A Tube

AKG C-24 Stereo Tube

(2x) AKG C-28A Tube • (2x) AKG C-414 ULS

(5x) AKG C-460 • AKG D-20

(2x) AKG D-112 • (2x) Electro-Voice RE-20

Electro-Voice RE-38

(2x) Neumann KW-54a Tube • (7x) Neumann U-87ai

Neumann SM-23c Stereo Tube • Neumann U-47 Tube

Neumann M-49 Tube • Neumann U-67 Tube

(11x) Sennheiser MD-421

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(6x) Shure SM-57 Beta

(2x) Sony C-48

(2x) Telefunken Elam 251 Tube

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# BRIAN HUGHES

Guitarist Brian Hughes plays with an intense passion that's obvious in his well-known work with Celtic songstress Loreena McKennitt; but nowhere does it shine so brightly as on his latest solo offering, *Straight To You*. On this, Brian's third solo release (a follow up to 1993's *Under One Sky* and his 1991 debut *Between Dusk and Dreaming*), the Toronto-based artist blends jazz, pop and World music influences into an extremely accessible release that is his most satisfying work to date. His fluid playing style has matured through ten years of intense touring and performing with McKennitt and his own solo group, evolving to the point where he is now enjoying accolades from influential publications like America's *JAZZIZ* magazine, which not only selected the album track "Casa Magica" as one of ten winners in their recent 'Guitars On Fire' competition, but featured the tune as the lead-off track on the CD sampler that accompanied their April issue. For Brian, it was an honour to have been chosen by noted guitarists Lee Ritenour and Jim Hall (whom he cites as a definite influence), judges for the contest, and another indication that this Canadian fretmaster is just beginning to hit his stride.

Initially self-taught, Brian, like many other budding guitarists at that time, gravitated towards the rock and blues guitar sounds of the day, absorbing the influence of Hendrix, Derek and the Dominoes and Jeff Beck, among others. "When I first

started playing, I was listening mainly to rock albums — Clapton and Duane Allman — and just figuring out the licks off the records by playing them over and over; and I guess I got fairly adept at that, the sort of blues-rock type of thing," he states.

"Then, I heard Wes Montgomery and Grant Green on the radio one day." It was a turning point in the young guitarist's musical direction.

"That type of jazz, their styles, are very blues influenced; and I could really relate to what they were doing," says Hughes, who immediately sought out recordings like Green's classic *Live At The Lighthouse*, "but when I got the records and tried to figure it out, it was a little more complicated than I had thought.

"At that point," relates Hughes, who was then living in Edmonton, "I began taking some jazz lessons with a local guitar player and then I went to Grant MacEwan College and studied with Bob Carins, who was a student of Jim Hall. After that, I went to the Banff School of Fine Arts for one of their summer courses and studied with Ed Bickert, and then went to GIT (at Los Angeles-based Musician's Institute) with Pat Martino and Robben Ford, who were teaching there at the time." The presence of so many great players on the teaching faculty (Joe DiOrio was also a faculty member at GIT during his year there), provided unending inspiration for Brian.

Today, Brian plays with conviction, weaving effortlessly through his fluidly

arranged compositions, and though he still endures comparisons to contemporaries like Pat Metheny, he's definitely found his own voice. His own voice is also getting stronger thanks to the guitarist/composer/producer's foray into the business end of the music industry, with the formation of his own label, Sylvan House Music. It's an exciting venture for Hughes, who has learned much from seeing first-hand the business savvy that's garnered Loreena McKennitt such success.

"This is my first independent album, so to speak," enthuses Brian. "I just decided to strike out on my own, and Justin Time (who released Brian's previous solo recordings) was nice enough to let me out of my deal." Brian's Sylvan House label is distributed here through Warner Music, and he's currently working on various deals for distribution overseas.

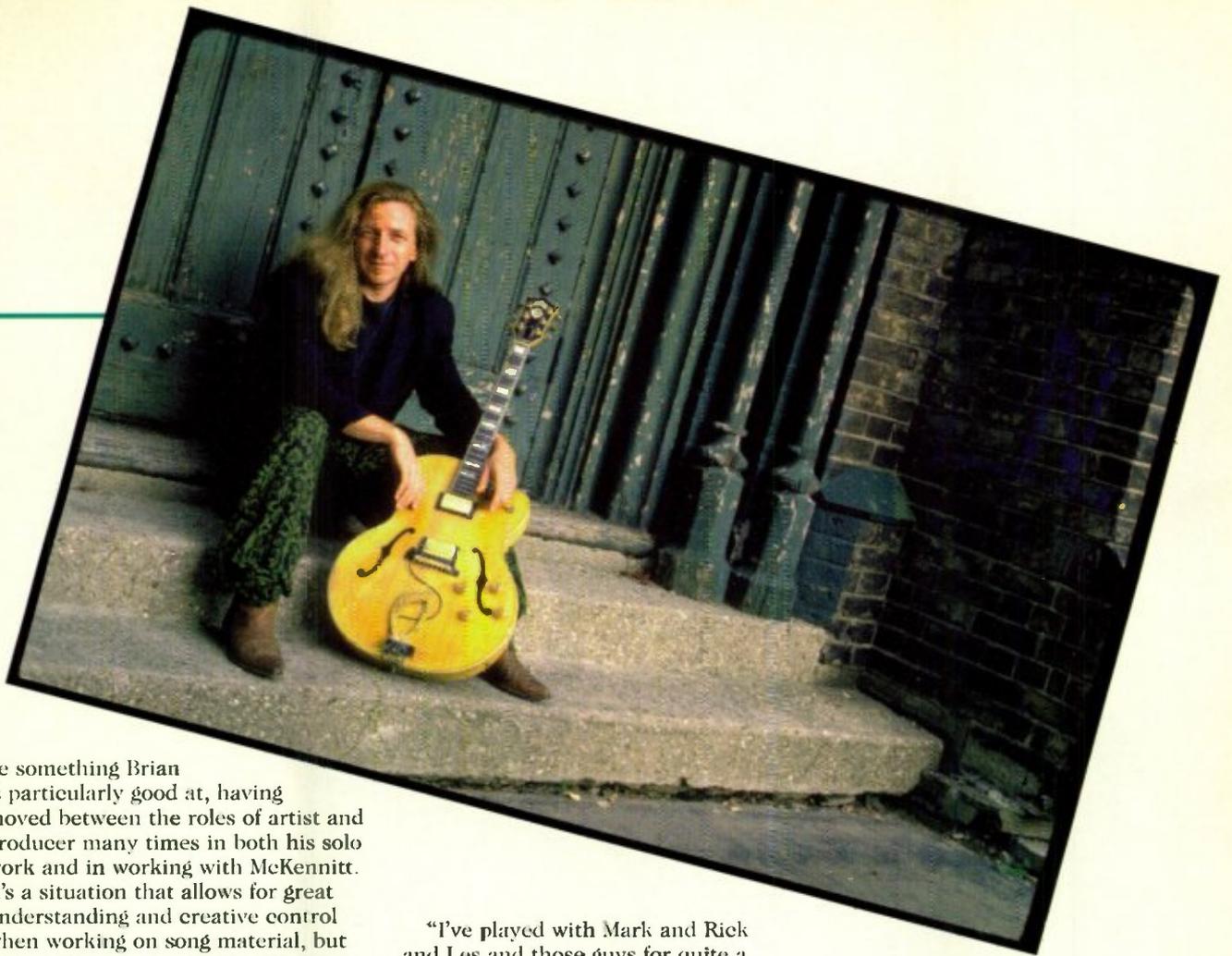
"For me, having my own label is a vehicle to maintain creative control over my product and to select what other markets around the world I want to put it into and be able to choose what label — as opposed to having a blanket deal with some company which may not be necessarily getting it into the right market in other countries," he states.

"It's more work, but I find it's more rewarding in the end result, instead of being 'lost in the shuffle', which often happens to many jazz artists, particularly those on a major label."

Wearing a number of hats seems to

## MUSICAL FRUIT

b y S h a u n a K e n n e d y



be something Brian is particularly good at, having moved between the roles of artist and producer many times in both his solo work and in working with McKennitt. It's a situation that allows for great understanding and creative control when working on song material, but it's not always an easy transition to make, he states.

"With Loreena, it's easier to be removed from it. I always feel like the artist, they always tend to perceive more what's 'wrong' with it, as opposed to what's good about it — and I know for myself, when I produce my own albums, I'm kind of in both camps being the artist *and* the producer.

"I think to a point, part of a good production is making sure everything is in the right perspective and everything is well played — and I can be quite a stickler for details — but sometimes on your own project, if you're producing it yourself, you have a tendency to get too absorbed or too involved, or pick at too many details and try to smooth out too many wrinkles, which sometimes makes it less interesting — it homogenizes it too much."

Working with top-notch musicians certainly helps, and on *Straight To You*, Hughes is joined by percussionist Rick Lazar, drummer Mark Kelso, pianist/keyboardist Les Portelli and bassist Peter Bleakney, as well as guest musicians Hugh Marsh (whose violin accompanies Hughes on "Andalusian Nights"), and organist Gord Sheard.

"I've played with Mark and Rick and Les and those guys for quite a few years now, so I'm writing the songs with them in mind," he says. "I do fairly specific demos on the computer (Brian uses an Atari with Notator software) and play that for them, give them the charts and they then elaborate on that, give it their particular style."

Their longtime musical friendships lend a certain synchronicity to the album that perhaps would have been difficult with other session players of that calibre.

"With my stuff, the songs and the arrangements are pretty set, so it's really what goes on within those sections that is formatted for solos or whatever — that's where the guys can 'do their own thing', so to speak. But within the written body of the tune," Brian says of the musicians' collective ability to serve the tune and be familiar with each other's playing styles, "it's just them getting into the *feel*, the *spirit* of the tune and making it work and making sure all the parts lock together nicely and the dynamics are good." The result is a wonderfully balanced and sensitive performance by all instrumentalists, something that is often lacking on many jazz-oriented recordings.

You'd think that finding time to write and record would be difficult for Brian, especially given the often hectic pace he endures as sideman and producer for McKennitt, who tours extensively. But Brian seems to move between his own projects and McKennitt's with amazing ease.

"As great as Loreena's music is," relates Brian, "you always miss the music you're writing and performing — and that's my true calling. It's great to be out there touring and playing to all those great audiences, but you also long to be doing your own thing, too. It's one of those 'musical dichotomys'.

"She (Loreena) likes to take a long period of time off between projects and touring, which is great because then that allows me a period of time to do my thing. Usually when I know there's a large chunk of time booked with Loreena, immediately following that I'll be booking a lot of time with my group. It becomes a constant work cycle, in a sense, of jumping off the road from one tour to either doing a bunch of dates with my band or writing for one of my recordings — or recording."

*continued on page 49*

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# BRIAN HUGHES

## "Andalusian Night"

©Brian Hughes SOCAN/BMI 1995  
from the Brian Hughes album  
**Straight To You**

"I wrote the melody for this song on the Oud ( a 10-string fretless middle eastern lute). The tuning of my Oud is DADGCF (although I have encountered other variations). The low D and high F are single strings, and the middle four bouts are unison pairs.

Originally, the whole melody was played over a 'D' drone, and because of the instrument's tuning, it lay quite naturally on the fingerboard.

When it came time to record, I decided to re-harmonize the song to give it more of a Spanish flavour and to play it on the nylon string guitar. I also transposed it up a whole tone to the key of A minor.

On the recording, I trade 8's, 4's and 2's with violinist Hugh Marsh during the solo section. Solos can be based out of the A harmonic minor scale.

continued from page 47

Although he rarely composes any of his own material while out on the road with McKennitt, after a few days rest at home he finds himself fresh and back in his writing studio. He mentions that his best musical ideas usually come in the first few minutes of sitting down with his instrument, so his tape recorder is always on.

"I have four guitars that are MIDI'd, and generally I do most of my writing on guitar and I'll do all the programming into the computer via the guitar — I'll be playing in all the drum parts and bass and keyboards," says Brian on how he approaches the writing process. "There's a couple of tunes I've written on the piano; sometimes just getting away from the guitar can be interesting because you can come up with different things. I don't really know how to play the piano that well, so I tend to come up with simpler things. Also, if you're very familiar with your own instrument, you end up sometimes just running back into your own

Andalusian Night © Brian Hughes  
SOCAN 1995

The musical score is written for guitar in 4/4 time with a tempo of 92. It consists of six staves. Staves A, B, and C are the main melodic lines. Staff A starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Staff B is a second staff in the same system. Staff C is a third staff in the same system. The score includes various chords such as Am7(add9), Dmi7, E7, and F. There are also triplets and unison pairs indicated. Below the main score is a section titled 'Solo Changes' which shows a sequence of chords: Am7, Dmi7, E7, Am7, F, E7, Dmi7(add9), E7, Dmi7(add9), E7, F, E7, and Am7. The solo changes section is written on five staves.

familiar habits — you know, chord changes or keys that you like to play."

One element of the music that Brian paid particular attention to on this album was song tempo.

"The day before I went into the studio," he explains, "I went through all the songs and really focused on the tempos because I found that with the songs on my second album, *Under One Sky*, after recording them all I'd gone, 'Alright, that's great, keep that'; and then three days later, I went, 'Gee that's fast, it's too fast' — but by then, at that point, we'd already kind of committed to it. I didn't want that to happen on this album. A lot of time, I think you can use tempo to sort of compensate for excitement, and that's something I think you can hear a lot when you go to see bands live. If you're familiar with their record, a lot of times you'll hear a band live and they're just *ripping* through the tune. I think you tend to get the feeling, especially when you're in front of a lot of people,

that you want to make it more exciting, and if you're not playing to a click, the drummer will often just get excited and count in 'onetwothreefour!'

"So I did pay a lot of attention to that on this album, just to make sure the tempos were really in the right spot for the tune, that they 'sat' nicely. On this album, there's tunes like 'Soul Fruit', which is sort of funkier, and 'Straight To You', which is kind of Latin, and you want them to sort of sit in that nice pocket and not be too edgy, but at the same time not be too slow and draggy — it's funny how just one or two beats a minute can make such a big difference."

The origin of the exotic title "Soul Fruit", an album track that is a sort of 'tip of the hat' to one of Hughes' major musical mentors, Wes Montgomery, might be of interest to any artist who is trying to find their own voice.

"That title comes from a book my wife Pamela bought me called *The Artists Way*," notes Brian. The best-

# BRIAN HUGHES

selling book by Julia Cameron is a 'must-read' for any artist that struggles with their creative muse, and presents a series of exercises and affirmations, arranged much like a twelve-step program, that allows you to tap into and understand your own internal creative process.

"There's all these little quotes in the margins, and there was one quote from someone that describe the artistic process as being the 'fruit of your soul' — whether it's a painting or music or whatever — and I liked that," Brian relates. "I keep a little book where I write little lines or

images that strike me. A lot of titles and images for songs I tend to get from reading. 'Soul Fruit', I thought, was a great image and, for awhile, it was actually a contender for the album title."

Brian's latest labour of love certainly is musical fruit for the senses, and if all goes as planned, he'll soon be reaping the fruits of his labours on the business side, as well. At the time of this writing, Brian was just working out the final details of a distribution deal with the Japanese label Apollon, which will see *Straight To You* released in Japan by September. What's more, he's just returned from a New York recording session with well-known arranger David Matthews

that saw him contribute a guest solo for a forthcoming Apollon release — a session that also featured the guest talents of Larry Carlton, Lee Ritenour, Hiram Bullock, Mike Stern, Larry Coryell and Al DiMeola. If it's true that success can be measured by the company one keeps, Brian's future is sure shaping up to be one exciting musical excursion.

*Shauna Kennedy is managing editor of Canadian Musician.*

## BRIAN HUGHES ON GEAR

"For performing and recording with my group, my '73 Gibson ES-175 handles the bulk of the duties. I usually record a few songs per CD on nylon string guitar. In the studio, I use a Takamine EN 60C, but live, I have lately been using a Godin Multiac. I also use a '73 Fender Stratocaster for some of the rockier tunes. All of the above guitars except the Takamine are MIDFed.

"With Loreena McKennitt I don't use the ES-175 but I add a steel string Godin Multiac (also MIDFed), an Oud (middle eastern 10-string fretless lute), Russian Balaliaka and Greek Bouzouki.

"Because of the diverse nature of the instruments and the addition of synthesizer to many of the sounds, I have come up with a bit of an unorthodox setup for amplifying all of this.

"I have a custom-built rack and pedalboard. The rack houses a Mackie 1202 mixer, Korg tuner, Fishman Pro EQ, Korg A3 signal processor and a Roland U-220 synth module.

"The pedalboard has a Roland GR-09 guitar synth (which I use as a MIDI controller), a Korg FC-6 foot controller, a SansAmp Classic, two volume pedals (one for guitar and one for synth), an A/B box and a few momentary switches.

"With the A/B switch, I can choose to send the guitar signal directly to the A3 (which I prefer for the electric guitars), or to have the A3 fed by a send from the Mackie (which I prefer to do for the acoustic instruments).

"I basically pre-mix the guitars and synth in the Mackie and send this all to the amp. Lately, I have been using a Peavey Stereo Chorus amp. I bypass the pre-amp section and run the Mackie's outputs directly into the unit's power amps. When I am performing with Loreena McKennitt, I run the Mackie directly into a Meyer stereo monitoring system and forgo the amp entirely."

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by John Albani

## with Signal Processing

**W**hen it comes to signal processing, you probably won't find any two people who reach for the same gear. All the recording studios have different racks of gear and you never know **what** you'll find under the foot of a musician!

Most confusing is that you can always find about fifteen different products on any given type of signal processing — all claiming to be both “newest” and “new & improved” versions of last year's models. In fact, the marketing departments for these companies have done a great job of making us feel that we couldn't possibly get anything done without a hell of an arsenal of processors.

In recording studios, a standard set of signal processors are found to be common to all. They will have a few good quality compressors, equalizers and reverb units. Usually you will find more compressors and equalizers than reverb units, which reflects the current trend of keeping a more raw, less processed, production. For my own studio, I opted for tube compressors and equalizers and better mics instead of a lot of rackmount noise-makers (and from the tapes I usually get, I'd advise most to consider the same).

It's pretty hard to not get excited about a new processor when the advertisements hit you as often as they do. However, my favourite engineer (Lenny DeRose from Sony Music) taught me a very valuable lesson in my early days in the studio. At that time, I always wanted to reach for the Eventide 910

## Compressors and Limiters

Harmonizer (like Randy Rhoads) to thicken my guitars or put tons of reverb on a vocal to make it sound good — or what I *thought* was good. Lenny began showing me how different mics and their positions could drastically alter the sound. For example, a single SM 57 on my Marshall cabinet sounded a little thin to me. Rather than process it, Lenny put a Sennheiser 421 on the cabinet as well which, by balancing the faders to my liking, thickened up the guitar tremendously and it sounded more like my natural playing. The same goes for bass, drums, brass and everything else for that matter. Before you start grabbing for those knobs, you'd best stick your head in front of the sound you're trying to record, put a few different mics in front of it and go back into the control room and find which mic sounds the closest to what you just heard acoustically. From there, you will get the most natural sound for the instrument and if you do apply any processing, it won't be for the wrong reasons.

The same goes for those stomp-box pedals. If you don't have a great-sounding guitar and amp to start with, you'll only make a bigger mess by getting more pedals. I'd rather spend my money on a good guitar and amp and one good distortion pedal than buy a lesser quality guitar or amp to afford five or six pedals. I get a lot of guitarists into the studio who are surprised at what the microphone hears compared to what they hear when they're standing in front of their amp on stage or in the rehearsal room. There was never a truer saying than "crap in, crap out". I remember one time a guitarist in my band thought his amp sounded great on stage through a Boss Overdrive and a Boss equalizer pedal with a happy face curve, then into a stereo chorus pedal and finally, into two Marshall stacks. However, he was wondering what was wrong with the soundman because at the sound board, his amp was all muffled and woofy. The soundman said, "Why don't you stick your head in front of the cabinet and hear what the mic is hearing?" So, he did. After hitting a few chords, he slowly turned around and said, scratching his head, "Oh yeah!". The next day, he showed up with about eight different distortion boxes, and after sticking his head in front of the cabinet and selecting one after the other, he settled on a Pro Rat pedal and ditched the equalizer. He was then happy with both his stage sound and the sound in the PA (and so was the soundman and the rest of the band).

Let's talk a bit about what some of these processors do and when they are used.

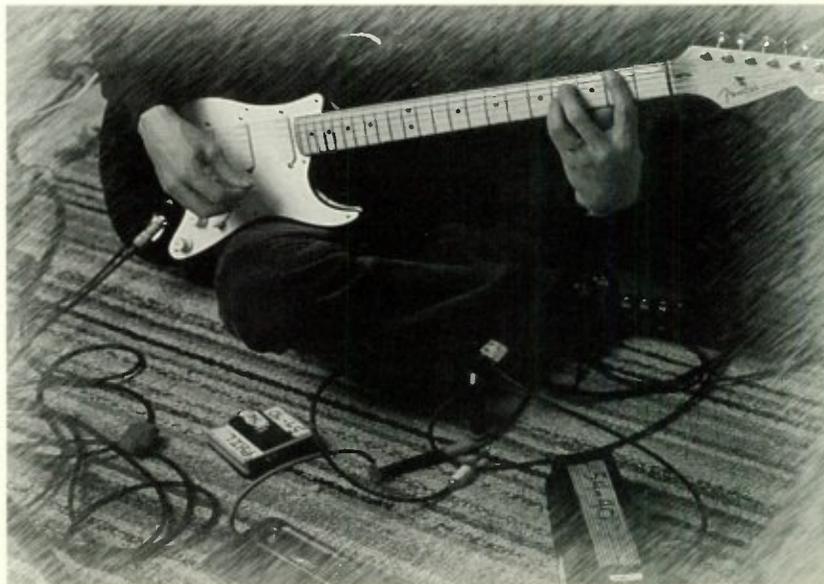
The one processor that everyone should have (and is probably most important) is a good compressor. Compressors and limiters reduce the dynamic range of your sound so you can get proper levels to tape for recording, and so that sounds don't jump out of a PA system. Limiters are an extreme compressor. They are designed to set a ceiling for the level of sound and stop it from going past that point. For example, a vocalist can be singing a very quiet passage one minute and then be really belting it out the next, which, uncompressed, can have him or her jumping in and out of the music track and sounding quite unintelligible. Applying compression can basically turn up the quiet sections and bring the level down in the louder sections. Properly adjusted, you will get a good even-sounding vocal to sit perfectly in your mix. I say properly because compression can be your best friend or your worst enemy. If used incorrectly, you can get what is known as 'pumping' and 'breathing' — most noticeably in sustaining instruments or when compressing the entire mix.

As a starting suggestion for vocals, try setting the attack fast and the release medium to slow. Set the ratio to 3 or 4:1 (meaning for every 3 or 4dB of gain at the input, you will only get 1dB of gain at the output). Set the threshold control so you rarely see the meter move on soft sections and listen for the sound of the loud sections — it should not be sucked back too noticeably. If you feel you are losing too much dynamics in the performance, try one of three things: First, try reducing the threshold so you don't get as much gain reduction. Secondly, you can reduce the ratio so your dynamics aren't as squashed by the compressor. Thirdly, you may try a small amount of compression in the recording stage and the same amount again on playback. This way, the compressor won't be working so much at one time, which seems to be the better way to go — especially with some of the low end compressors available.

In the case of drums, the dynamic range can be incredible. Again, compressors and limiters can be a great help. With a fast attack and fairly quick release, you can get a fuller sound containing more shell instead of one sharp stick hit. Mild compression on overheads or room mics can control harshness and give the drums a more even sound.

On bass guitar, you may want to start with a 4:1 ratio, a short but not immediate attack and release and, depending on the dynamics of the player, raise the ratio from there. You will find your settings will change along with the style of music and quality of player.

Compression for guitars can be quite different as well depending on the tempo of the song, the choice between clean, distorted or acoustic, and the player's ability. My favourite mid-priced compressor is the TL Audio C-1 stereo tube compressor. It's the only one of its kind I've ever been able to use on distorted guitar with amazing results. You'll see it work on the meters but you won't hear it work — which is the sign of a great compressor! For most acoustic instruments such as acoustic guitar and bass, woodwinds, brass and strings, you may want to start with a reasonably fast attack and medium release, but you'll have to experiment a bit considering the difference in quality and sound between compressors today. Different acoustic instruments have different transient responses, and with too fast a release time you can bring up the noise in between notes and chords substantially. A good, inexpensive compressor for all of these instruments is the dbx 160X or XT. The 'over easy' setting is a real trademark sound of this unit. Distorted electric guitars bring to mind an addition to the chain; most of today's compressors have what is known as a 'side chain input'. One of the applications for this is to insert an equalizer into the side chain, which will detect the frequency you



# SHAPING YOUR SOUND

boost at the input of the compressor rather than the whole signal. For example, if you set the record level input of a distorted guitar playing an open chord to 0 VU, you'll notice when you dampen the chord and play eighth notes, your meters go off the scale. Consequently, if you set the record level for the dampened chords, your open chords are recorded too low. In order to control these dynamics, most compressors suck the sound way too far back. There are two solutions to this problem, both involving frequency selective compression: With an equalizer inserted into the compressor's side chain, boost around 80 to 120 Hz and pull out all the others so the input to the compressor only contains mostly the bottom frequencies where the guitar amp resonates. Some compressors have a "side chain listen" button, enabling you to solo the guitar through the equalizer so you can actually hear what frequencies you're adjusting. This is very useful and should be a consideration when looking for a good compressor. What to do next is to set the compressor's threshold for about 4 to 8dB of gain reduction with a fast attack and release for the dampened chords. Your open chords should not register on the compressor's meters, indicating you are below the set threshold. This way, the compressor only reacts to the lower frequencies.

The second way (and my choice) to overcome this problem is with an incredible equalizer compressor by BSS called the DPR-901 Dynamic Equalizer. This is a 4-band parametric EQ with a compressor on each band. You find the troublesome frequency with the equalizer section by setting a narrow bandwidth, boosting the level and sweeping the frequencies of the lower end until the most lively frequency jumps out at you. The compressor for that particular band will turn down the volume of that frequency only when it exceeds the compressor's threshold. The difference here is none of the other frequencies of the instrument will ever touch the compressor. It's like having a very fast engineer or sound man turn down the lower EQ pot just when the low end of the instrument gets too boomy.

This same scenario works for getting rid of overly loud "esses" and "ts" in vocals and is known as "de-essing". You just do the opposite; with EQs as a side chain, you boost high frequencies and cut lower ones and with the DPR-901, you have the high band compressor just turn down the level of the high frequencies. When looking for a compressor, watch for some compressors which also have a built-in de-esser feature such as Aphex's model 661 "Expressor" and BSS's DPR-402 compressor de-esser.

## Noise Gates

Another important and very useful signal processor, the noise gate, works by setting a threshold whereby when sound drops below this threshold, the signal is shut off. You can find a variety of controls on different noise gates. The most common are a threshold and a release control. The better

gates have threshold, hold, release and ratio controls. The hold function is a delay for the shutting off of the signal once it falls below the threshold. The release function is a fading out, over an adjustable time, of the signal (instead of abruptly shutting it off). The ratio function sets how much the signal is shut down.

Here's an example of all functions in use: If you have a snare drum with a nice shell ring in it that contains a little too much hat, you start with the hold set to off and release set to immediate. Turn the threshold all the way up so no signal gets through, and then back it down until only the stick hits pop through. At this point, depending on the tempo of the song and amount of overtone you want left in the snare, turn the hold control until you hear the majority of the snare overtone. Right now, you hear the effect Phil Collins used on so many of his songs such as "Mama". The sound is still abruptly cut off. Now, turn the release control and you'll notice the sound is starting to fade out rather than be cut off. At this time, you may want to play with the hold and release functions until you get the combination you are looking for. The last function is the ratio, which allows you to fade the signal out to a certain point, leaving a chosen amount of the signal present between hits. This works also for getting rid of noise in between guitars and other instruments. Some compressors have a noise gate with only a threshold and release control, which can be a saviour because as the compressor brings the loud sections down, it also brings up the quiet parts and any noise that is present.

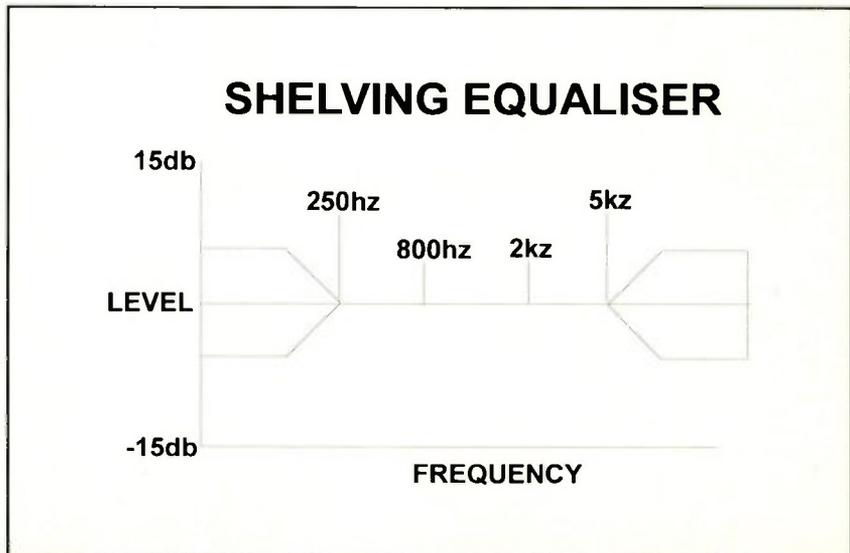
## Equalizers

Equalizers are usually used on the consoles; however, outboard EQs are becoming more prominent these days since the quality has gone up in moderately-priced units. You have a choice between graphic and parametric equalizers. The most common graphic EQs come in 10-, 15- or 31-band versions. The difference, other than the obvious number of bands, is that with more bands you can zero in on a particular frequency and not affect others above or below it. The parametric comes in a few versions also. You can get quasi-parametric or fully parametric and can have three to five ranges of selectable equalization. Fully

parametric means each band has a sweepable frequency range, a boost or cut control and a bell or width control, which allows you to choose how much on either side of the chosen frequency you will affect. Quasi-parametric is what most project studio consoles have, which is a sweepable parametric, but without the bell or width option. Some parametric EQs offer a "shelving" feature which allows you to boost or cut frequencies from a selectable point. Usually, this feature exists in the highest and lowest bands of the equalizer. My two favourite EQs under \$2000 are the new BSS FCS-916 (previously reviewed in *Professional Sound*), and TL Audio's tube EQ-1, both of which are great mic pre-amps as well as great-sounding EQs.

## Multi-Effects: Verbs, Flangers, Aural Exciters & More!

Multi-effects processors have become extremely common over the past few years and the quality has improved immensely with new 20-bit and 32-bit technology. Most of these contain reverbs, gates, compressors, EQs, delays, choruses and flangers. Some offer, in addition, pitch changers, phase shifters, amp simulators, distortion effects and aural exciters (don't you just love the sound of the last one?). Some also give you the option of selecting the order of the effects. Every effects manufacturer has at least one of these multi-processors but the most common of these are the Alesis Quadraverb 2, DigiTech's various models, Boss' SE-50 and 70, and Ensoniq's DP-4. The biggest problem with these used to be that all processing functions were done by one digital chip, making the quality less than that of individual units. Now, with the quality of the chips getting better, so is their ability to provide better-sounding reverbs, delays, pitch shifters, etc. Ensoniq's DP-4, however, uses a chip for each processor, giving even greater routing capabilities and sound. The fact still remains that single units like Yamaha's new PRO-R3, TC Electronic's Wizard 2000 and Lexicon's new PCM-80 and PCM-90 are benefiting from the advancement in technology also, and will sound better than the multi-effect processors. TC's Wizard 2000 and Lexicon's PCM-80 offer some degree of multi-processing, but being over the \$2500 range, you would expect these high-end units to sound great — and they do!



Getting back to aural exciters, let me say this about that! For the most part, I hate these things. I guess because I hear them abused so often, I would rather not hear them at all. The only useable choices seem to be between dbx, BBE and the ever-so-popular Aphex. With the boxes by dbx and Aphex, you have to be very careful not to clip these or you can give a vocalist an unintentional lisp. Now just to be fair, if you use these after a compressor and de-esser, you can control the dynamics and end up with pretty good results. If you don't use at least a compressor before the exciter, then by the time you aren't clipping "esses", you won't have enough drive for the rest of the sound and the unit will get noisy. The advantage of the dbx and Aphex boxes over the BBE models is you can select a range of high frequency content to process. BBE's units have a fixed frequency range and I find the crossover point where they begin processing to be too low most of the time, and their time alignment feature punches a small hole in the midrange area of the source. All of these used in moderation are pretty good at opening up the upper frequency content for making cassette copies or adding some upper definition to a snare or guitar, etc. However, I still prefer a good EQ. I don't mean to beat up on Aphex at all, since all their other processors are great. The nicest exciter I've used is still Aphex's broadcast version. It has more adjustment features and is less subject to distortion. The last one I saw in a store was selling for about \$700.

Reverb processors are always found in the studio and in live sound applications. They are getting better all the time at recreating rooms, halls, chambers and plates. The differences between them all is considerable. The better ones seem to offer more parameters for sound adjustment. Again, these boxes can really make a mess of things if you aren't careful. The wrong choice of reverb isn't as bad as too much reverb. Good quality low end reverbs from Alesis, Boss, DigiTech and others are good enough quality now to be showing up in some pro studios. You don't have to spend a great deal of money to get a good quality reverb unit, but some of the mid to high end processors have excelled in quality far beyond our dreams, and offer incredible sound and options.

The best bang for the buck, in my opinion, is Yamaha's Pro R-3 reverb. At around \$1800, this machine offers 32-bit digital processing and 20-bit AD and D/A converters, and a signal to noise ratio of 110dB. I've always known Yamaha to make reverbs that sound great, particularly on drums and percussion, and this new box has become my favourite for just that. If you were thinking of getting a reverb processor costing around \$1200, I strongly advise you look for those "no interest months" at your local music store and step up to one of these. It's not that much more expensive, but the difference will blow you away. Other good-sounding products are the Alesis Quadverb and Microverb series, the Yamaha 900 series and Lexicon's Alex and LXP 1, 5 and 15 reverbs. At the higher end, you have TC Electronic's M5000 and M2000 Wizard, Lexicon's PCM-80 and 90, 300, 224X and the big gun 480L (the "L" stands for lots of \$\$\$) and AMS Systems' reverb processor.

Musicians seem to have lessened the size of their large racks and have dusted off their Big

Muffs and old MXR pedals (I personally love my old Colortron and Vox wah-wahs).

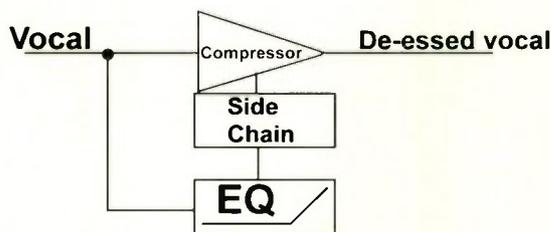
Everyone has at least one favourite stomp box in their set-up — there is such an enormous selection of stomp boxes available that I couldn't get through all of them in this article, so let's just see what people are using and what's cool.

Dan Achen from Junkhouse is currently using Vox AC-30 amps (my favourite), Jen wah-wahs and a Roland GP-8 guitar rackmount processor. He likes the sound of the compression the GP-8 gives to his sound. For smaller clubs, Dan uses Vox AC-10 amps and likes pre-amping these with an old Electro-Harmonix Memory-Man for that extra drive. He also has, in his collection, a Dunlop Roto-Vibe which is basically 'plug in and play'; no knobs to waste time with. One of the older pieces of gear Dan uses is a Mu-Tron down

lution controls allowing you to apply chorusing or flanging to the delays.

Phase shifters do exactly what the name implies. Again, a modulation control is applied to the phase relationship between two identical signals. The effect has a slight 'wah wah' sound to it. As far as the order of these pedals goes, I find there aren't any rules — and experimenting can lead you to innovative-sounding combinations. There's one order, for guitar, that a number of people use: guitar into a compressor, then into a distortion, followed by a chorus, flanger or delay. The reason for the distortion's position is that when you have a delay-type effect before it, you get an effect like two people are playing through one amp, which gets muddy — and the phasing can rob you of sustaining long notes. Distortion first gives you one guitar sound which is delayed

### Diagram of a de-esser



octave pedal (I loved their Bi-Phase). He says the older pedals might be a bit noisy, but they don't make anything that replaced the sound of them. Lately, Dan has been using effects from a new L.A.-based company called Fultone — in particular, the Ultimate Octave, which is a combination of an octave up box and fuzz box in one.

Jason Filiatrault, bass player for Punjabi By Nature, loves the sound of the Trace Elliot SMX-12 bass pre-amp. It contains a crossover with a great compressor for both the top and bottom sections and has an effects loop for just the high end, which he uses for chorusing while leaving the bottom end unprocessed. Jason also works at a music store (Long and McQuade), and says the current top sellers are the Boss DD5 delay and the Boss Blues Breaker overdrive pedal. For bass, the Trace Elliot compressor pedal, which is a stomp-box version of the one in his pre-amp, is a great choice. I think you can get some cool distortion from the Ibanez Tube Screamer and the Pro Rat pedal. SansAmp makes a great pedal pre-amp which sounds monstrous into a Fender Twin Reverb or Vox AC-30.

Flangers and choruses work by widening and shortening a delay time in order to create modulation effects. This is done with an adjustable LFO (low frequency oscillator) assigned to the delay time and a width control to set the distance between the shortest and longest delay times. Flanging, which has more of that 'jet fly by' sound, uses a short delay time usually between 1 and 3 milliseconds, where chorusing uses a delay time between 8 and 20 milliseconds. Some delay effects, both rack and pedal, have a set of modu-

lation controls allowing you to apply chorusing or flanging to the delays.

Keyboard players have a large choice of keyboards and modules which contain some great processors internally. John James says the beauty of this set-up is that with everything self-contained, you spend less time fooling around and get more work done. These internal processors are also controllable via MIDI information, so you can easily automate them from your sequencer or computer.

In the pro audio area, Eric Kofler of Tele-Tech says one of the most notable improvements in signal processing is the introduction of digital inputs and outputs. These are In's and Out's which enable you to print your effects digitally, usually through a coaxial RCA connector in the industry standard S/PDIF and IEC formats or an ADAT fiber optical interface. This process eliminates the analog transfer and associated quality loss. Eric also states that in the mid-price range, the dbx 1066 and TL Audio compressors are selling well, and he expects TL's new Indigo line of processors to be a success also.

The one thing to remember with signal processing is it's always changing, and even though there are some typical set-ups, you should never stop experimenting with these boxes because the possibilities for coming up with new, interesting and innovative sounds are endless.

*John Albani owns and operates LandShark Music Services, a 32-track digital facility, and is best-known for his stint as lead guitarist, co-writer, producer and arranger for Canadian recording artist Lee Aaron.*

# SHAPING YOUR SOUND with Signal Processing

## Your Personal Effects

by Paul Myers

Is there one stomp box in your rig that you just can't keep your foot off of? Do you find yourself routinely 'dialing in' a pet sound from your rack system? We asked a few of Canada's best gigging musicians and producers about their favourite signal processors, and told them to step on it.

### Colin Cripps (guitarist, Crash Vegas)

"The **Acetone Fuzzmaster** is the coolest fuzz I've ever had. It was made in the late '60s and it looks like a little brick of cheese. I used one on the last Crash Vegas album, *Aurora*, on the tune called 'Old Enough' for all that bizzaro slide stuff."

### Colin Linden (songwriter/guitarist/producer)



"I love any effect that has character. These days, my favourite effect is a little orange box that plugs directly into my guitar called an **Orange Squeezer**. It was originally made in the late '60s or early '70s by Dan Armstrong, but was recently reissued (not in too large a quantity) by a company in New Jersey called WD. It's a compressor with a very unique sound. You set the gain and the reduction by opening the box up with a screwdriver and twiddling 'til it's right — then all you do is turn it on or off. It sounds fabulous. I use it for a lot of my recent recordings — probably most recently for the solo on 'Stealin' Away' on **Blackie & The Rodeo Kings**."

### Michael Phillip Wojewoda (producer, Barenaked Ladies, Ashley MacIsaac, Spirit of The West)

"My favourite piece of signal processing is also the first one I ever bought, the **dbx 263X a/k/a the De-Esser**. I've used this same piece of hardware on just about every singer I've ever recorded. The reason I like it is because you can dial in lots of treble, high end to a voice, to give it air, and then at the end of the chain you insert the De-Esser, which is a compressor that only responds to very

high frequencies. Like, when there's an 's', it makes the meters flail, it compresses the entire signal, but only on the 's' sounds. It's my most used, least ephemeral unit."

### James Gray (keyboardist, Blue Rodeo)

"I don't use a lot of stuff, but the effect I'm most fond of is the **Roland Space Echo**. It's an analog echo, it's got a tape loop inside. I like to play with the delay speed in real time performance. It sounds like you're detuning the piano while you're playing through it. Then I run all that through my **PCM 41**."

### Chris Wardman (producer, Rusty, Slowburn, Meryn Cadell)

"My favourite piece of outboard gear would have to be one of the Eventide trio of the **Eventide 910 Harmonizer**, the **Eventide Instant Phaser**, and the **Eventide Instant Flanger**. I have a theory that you should only use gear that Led Zeppelin or the Beatles would have recorded through. (Jimmy Page used to get the prototypes from the Eventide factory). If I had to pick one, it would be the **Eventide Instant Flanger**. It adds depth and space and fattens things up. Since I despise digital reverb flanging, phasing and harmonizing are excellent options. An example of it being abused is the vocal on Rusty's 'Misogyny'."

"One of the best features of the **Eventide Instant Flanger** is that it cost me \$60 at Songbird (in Toronto). It was probably worth at least \$2000 when it came out, maybe even \$6000!"

### Steven Drake (guitarist, Odds; Producer/Engineer, 54•40, The Tragically Hip)

"What we (in Odds) call it the '**black echo box**'. It's a nameless old plastic analog echo pedal with the knobs ripped off and the battery compartment door missing (the battery leads are actually ripped off). We used it on almost all of *Good Weird Feeling* as a vocal and guitar effect. One good example is the huge guitar on 'Leave it There'. It sounds so bad that the noise creates whole new sounds. The echo doesn't come back as a replication of the original signal. It creates some gibbled approximation. I used it on the 54•40 record (as producer) and would have used it on the Hip record, but couldn't find it for awhile."

### Martin Tielli (guitarist/vocalist, Rheostatics)

"I like my **Ibanez DM 1000 Digital Delay**. It's got a tone control on the regeneration so it doesn't sound so crispy clean, you can warm up the sound a little."

### Blair Packham (producer/guitarist with Arlene Bishop)

"As guitar player with Arlene, I use several floor-based effects pedals. The main one, and the one I love best, is the **Boss Tremolo** pedal, which simulates the vibrato circuit of an old Fender amp. It's not a perfect simulation (and there are other vibrato pedals that are quieter; it's a bit hissy), but the Boss is very versatile. For instance, you can connect the outputs to two different amps and have the signal sweep between them for a really deep pan/tremolo effect. I use it on 'Small Girlish Hands' from Arlene Bishop's new EP, *Pinky*."

### Phil Comparelli (guitarist, 54•40)

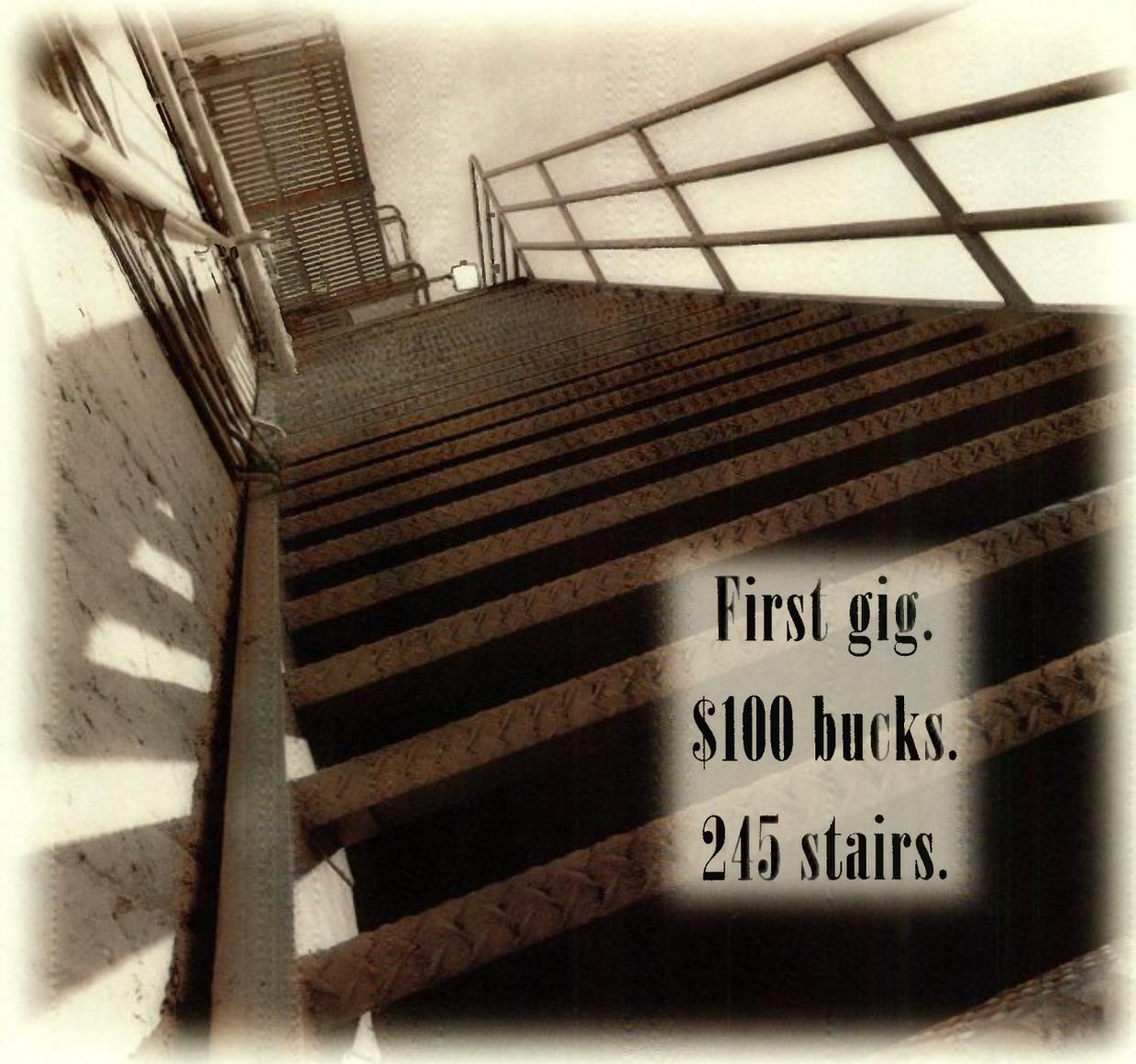


"My only pedal (right now) is a **Sovtek Big Muff** (the classic, remade Russian style), which I use in the chorus of 'Crossing A Canyon' from our new album, when the guitar army comes out to kill you. I use the Big Muff live. It's the biggest pedal I could find, with the biggest switches, etc. I can hit it with my eyes closed from six feet away, so I do."

### John Critchley (guitarist/vocalist, 13 Engines)

"I have a **Premier Spring Reverb** unit. It's a good spacey, reverb. It looks cool, it's an old brown box, the size of a shoebox. I would think it's from the '60s but I'm not positive. I've used it a lot, notably on the middle part of 'Vermillion' from our album *Conquistador*."

continued on page 59



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# Yamaha Silent Brass got people talking...

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*Doc Severinsen*  
Trumpet Artist

"I think I've finally purchased my last practice mute. The Yamaha Silent Brass system for trombone is the only practice mute I've ever found that allows me to play every note with an acceptable level of resistance. If Silent Brass had been on the market when I began buying mutes, I would have saved myself a lot of money."

*Doug Yeo*  
Trombone Artist

"Many years ago, on a record date, I remember sitting next to my good friend and session trumpeter extraordinaire Alan Rubin. Alan was fantasizing about a device which would allow him to put on headphones and practice as if he were standing in the middle of a large church, even if he was standing in his living room. Well, Alan, the future is here!"

*Randy Brecker*  
Trumpet Artist

"Silent Brass takes the practice mute concept to a whole new level...low notes are open and the high and mid-range notes as well. It's very useful if you have a family or travel a lot and stay in hotels."

*Steve Turre*  
Trombone Artist



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### Steven Page (Barenaked Ladies)

"I go nowhere without my **Ibanez Tube Screamer** (the old-fashioned one in the metal casing; plastic makes me scared — can it hold my bulk?) and my **ProCo Rat** pedal. They are the only pedals I use onstage, and although neither of them appear on *Born On A Pirate Ship*, they both made cameos on *Maybe You Should Drive*. The Tube Screamer lets me rawk without cranking my amp to levels that would get me kicked out of the band, and it has that old-style buzziness that gets me all tingly. Very flexible too, although I tend to keep my settings at 9 for drive, 4 for level and 8 for tone.

"The Rat, on the other hand, is used mostly just for my solo at the end of 'Alternative Girlfriend', with the settings at 6 for distortion, 8 for volume and 8 for filter."

### Mike Turner (guitarist, Our Lady Peace)

"Any kind of cool distortion pedals — notably **Rat**, **Big Muff** or **Electric Mistress**. These sounds can be heard on just about anything OLP has released."

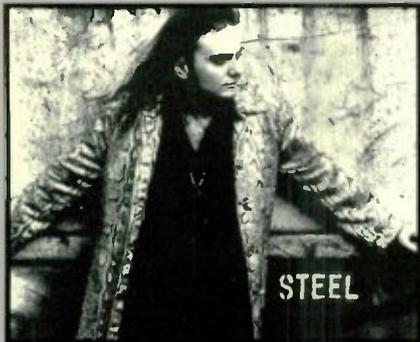
### Craig Northey (Odds)

My quick audio crutch is the cheapo **dbx 163x** compressor. It's nicknamed the 'over easy' compressor due to its simple 'one slider' controls. I use it on all guitars and vocals in my home. I set it a simple 'all the way up' setting. It squishes them into much more beautiful things than they actually are. Breath and pick noise aplenty. I find you need that kind of a tool when you're working quickly and trying to make Portastudio stuff have a better presence."

### Neil Osborne (guitarist/vocalist, 54-40)

"I don't play favourites, but I like the **DOD Fuzzpedal**. It gives me that Bush X sound — so bad it's good. We used it in recording quite a bit on *Trusted By Millions*; check the fuzzy bits of 'Love You All', 'Couldn't Be Sorry' and 'Crossing A Canyon'."

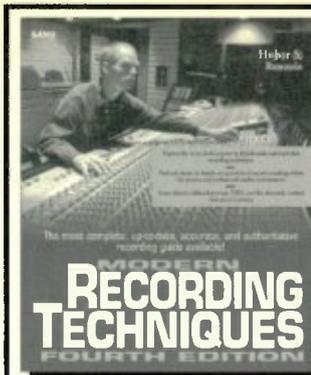
### David Gogo (guitarist)



I like the **Ibanez Tube Screamer**. It's the one thing I can't leave home without. If I could have only one pedal, this is the one. They're so good, I actually use two of them — for that extra fromage."

*Paul Myers is a Toronto-based songwriter, musician and freelance writer.*

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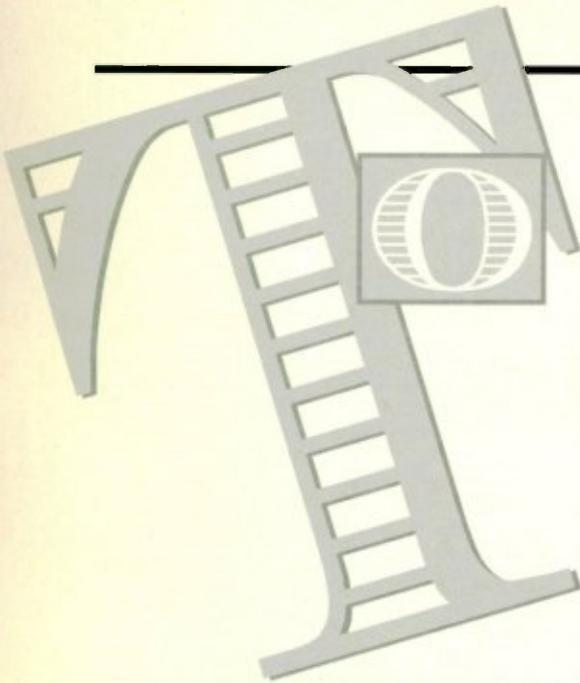


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BY STEVE PARTON



# buy A SOUND SYSTEM



I know how to purchase sound systems, not just because I've used them, but because I have sold many of them out of the PA dept. of Steve's Music (Montreal), and have since been asked questions on all levels of purchasing. This article is a follow-up to a previous topic which dealt with bands who do their own sound (CM, Feb. '96), using PAs for small to medium rooms (if you're looking to power up a stadium, Central Park, etc., this article may not be for you).

Let's simplify things for the first-time buyers. Generally, the mixer chosen should reflect the needs of the band's instrumentation, regardless of the size of the clubs you anticipate playing, whereas the power section (speakers and power amplifiers), should accommodate the room size. (NOTE: the information in this article is not necessarily applicable to large rooms, the likes of which may warrant a separate monitor board, complex cross-over systems, etc.)

Powered mixers are very attractive to those who don't want to concern themselves with too many technical details. The convenience of having a mixer, power amplifier, graphic EQ and reverb all in one is unequivocal to some. Heck, why don't they just make them with built-in microphones and tape decks, too?

Actually, they do; they're called karaoke machines — not my area.

Powered mixers do limit your options, but are very useful if you intend to remain on the small-room circuit as a set-up-and-play type of act. Manufacturers, recognizing this, are putting out great gear (with options galore) that is used by many duos, trios, churches and small conferences. A good powered mixer will allow access to all components for expansion. This way, the power can be used for monitors while the mixer and EQ can be sent out to another power amplifier as the main mix — to give just one example of a versatile powered mixer.

For those going the route of separate components, let's start with the mixer. It seems that a 12-channel mixer isn't a 12-channel mixer anymore. Some inputs are mic inputs (with XLR or 1/4" jacks), and some inputs are stereo line-level for keyboards, FX returns or submixers. So it is that a board with ten faders could be called a twelve channel mixer, because it has eight single-channel mic inputs and two stereo inputs {8 + (2x2) = 12}.

It is such a nice thing to have equalizers on each channel; it's even nicer if there are at least three bands; it's really hip if the mid

band has sweepable frequencies. And if all three (or even four — my God!) have sweepable frequencies, or even bandwidths, well, then your board is probably going to just kick ass! Let's just hope that it SOUNDS good.

Aux's can be PRE-fader or POST-fader; sometimes they are switchable. Switchable

aux's are one of the COOLEST things a mixer can possibly have. Pre-fader aux's are for monitors (i.e., the signal being sent to the musicians' monitors is NOT affected by the movements of the fader or mute button). Post-fader aux's are for effects, and are raised and lowered with the movements of the fader.

## THE POWER TRIP

We know the importance of a good mixer in the audio chain, but there are still many more things to budget for (like, say, amps and speakers). When I mention amps, please don't think of a Marshall half-stack or a Trace Elliot bass rig; I'm talking about POWER amps, which amplify the signals received from the mixer and send them to the main speakers and monitor speakers.

The stereo/mono controversy is something that you have to come to grips with on your own. A stereo amp can power the right and left main signals, or it can power the mains (in mono) on one side with a monitor mix on the other, or it can power a subwoofer on one side with the full range speakers (in mono) on the other side. For the latter two applications, some amplifiers are made with one side more powerful than the other.

An ideal power amp set-up has an amp for the mains, an amp for the subwoofers (with a cross-over in between), and an amp for each monitor mix. Don't forget that each monitor mix basically only needs one side of an amp (one stereo amp for two monitor mixers).

Contrary to popular myth, a healthy system has amplifiers that are MORE powerful than the speakers, as it is more dangerous to underpower a speaker than to overpower it. The name of the game is HEADROOM. If you are clipping, you'll hear it, or you'll see it on the face of the power amps.

Make sure that you are reading the correct speaker ratings. Peak (or program) watt value is applicable to DJ's or PROGRAM music. It's the continuous or RMS value that we need to consider as a match with the amps. Also, watch your impedances, (two 8-ohm speakers in parallel is 4 ohms...); and make sure that you are reading the amplifier's output rating at the proper impedance to match your speakers. An amp with 2000-WATTS pasted on the front probably gives that much power only in bridge mono at TWO-ohms.

If there is not a lot of money left over for instrument mics and direct boxes, guitar amps can be plugged directly into the console (from the pre-amp out), provided the console is side-stage. A drum kit can get by with three mics (kick, snare and overhead), or even two mics (kick and overhead). For vocal mics, don't even THINK of getting anything other than Shure SM 58s (or better). And PLEASE find it in the budget to buy a graphic equalizer, the lack of which makes a great PA sound like trash, and makes your monitors feed back.

I haven't even mentioned compressors, gates, reverbs, delays, flight cases, mic stands, clip-on beer holders, cabling or snakes. What I did do, was arm you a little bit so you are ready to face the salesperson with a bit of knowledge. The next few articles will go into the specs and reasonings behind some of the components listed above. In the meantime, if there are any PA questions, write to me and I'll write about them. Give me some feedback.

STEVE PARTON IS A MONTREAL-BASED SOUND TECH WHO PLAYS IN THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS.

BY KEVIN DOYLE

# LIVE RECORDING IN THE STUDIO



KEVIN DOYLE HAS ENGINEERED RECENT PROJECTS FOR STEPHEN EIKHARD, HAREM SCHEM AND LAWRENCE GOWAN, AND IS CURRENTLY HEAD ENGINEER AT D.A.V.E. (FORMERLY SOUNDS INTERACTIVE).

Recently, I was approached by David Deacon and the Word to co-produce and record an album; with the intention of recording the band 'live-off-the-floor', including solos and vocals. Their wish was to capture a live organic sound, using all-natural instruments and no computer-based sequencing or sampling.

I was somewhat surprised by this request. In the last three years, I have worked on more than thirty albums, but even so, the last album I recorded live-off-the-floor was in the fall of 1992.

I looked forward to the challenge of re-discovering recording methods that would maximize the sound quality without compromising the flexibility to be efficient and practical in the live environment.

For the drums, I used a 421 for the mid-range and a D112E for the low end of the bass drum. After moving the mics around for the optimum position, I used an old Neve EQ to add extra low end and midrange. On the snare, I used two SM 57s: one on top, and the other underneath. After getting the right blend, I added a little top end from a Neve EQ. For the toms, I used KM 100s (-10dB) for their warm low end and clean top end. For the overheads, I used a pair of 414s, with their phase reversed. I found that without the phase reversal, I was experiencing acoustic phasing problems in the low end. I tend to never roll

off the low end on the overheads, because I like the richness they add to the toms and snare. If I have too much snare in the overhead mics, I'll strap a stereo compressor over them with a very fast attack and fast release time.

For the bass, I used a Sanken CU-41 on the amp and an active DI. The Sanken is a great mic for bass and guitar amps. The microphone is almost impossible to overload, and has great low frequency response, which are features hard to find in a condenser microphone.

I used two Neve 1073 modules as mic pre-amps and EQ on the bass. I find the 1073s have a great low end and can be punchy and warm. Before hitting tape, I used a little compression from an LA-2 for the DI and a highly-modified LA-3 for the amp.

David Shaw, the piano player and co-producer, informed me that he would be doing very dynamic solos live off the floor, and also some very quiet playing in some of the verses. With this in mind, I chose to use two B+K 4000 series microphones, and the Drawmer 1960 mic pre-amps, for their great transient response and tube sound. I had my assistant, Stuart Brawley (a piano virtuoso in his own right), place the mic pre-amps right on the floor, and under my instructions from the Control Room, had him set the appropriate levels. After adding about 3dB at 15kHz with

some outboard GML EQs, I went directly to tape from the 1960, bypassing the console completely.

With the guitars, I used a stereo DI and a U-67 (-10dB) and SM 57 on the amp. The U-67 has a really warm low end, and the 57 has a good midrange. Depending on the guitar part, I would vary the mixture of the microphones, rather than using EQ. If I needed to use any compression, I used an LA-3 or Summit.

For the acoustic guitars, I really like the sound of a B+K mic with a Pultec EQ. With acoustic guitars, pianos and many other acoustic instruments, I tend to avoid using any compression at all. I'm still waiting for the optimum compressor for some acoustic instruments that doesn't affect the quality of the sound.

For the lead vocals, I placed the singer on the floor so he was able to have good eye contact with all the members of the band. I prefer good tube mics, with a GML pre-amp on the floor. For compression, I'll switch between a dbx 165a or a UREI with a GML or API equalizer.

I've been extremely satisfied recording like this recently, and am really enjoying live recording again.

CM



BY DEAN FOSTER MCNEILL



# INSURANCE: LESS TROUBLE THAN IT'S WORTH

Flames engulfed the roof of the Kapuskasing Inn and we waited dismally for our equipment to be reduced to cinders. I turned to the other guys in the band and said, "Think there's still time to get the PA insured?"

Most musicians I know, including me, would rather plug in an amp and play than take the time to deal with important business issues. Insurance is one of those issues that just begs procrastination. After all, insurance really means that you are paying, and will continue to pay, in preparation for an event that may never actually take place. For those with a gambling spirit, that seems like a very easy thing to put off for a while (or forever). Take it from someone who learned the hard way: if you haven't been burned yet (in one way or another), you will.

Our fire occurred during a week-long gig in northern Ontario. The PA system was very expensive — and uninsured. Fortunately, the Kapuskasing fire department was able to put the fire out before it reached the basement bar-room, but not before pumping gallons and gallons of water into the building above that room. Again, good fortune was with us. There were only a few puddles on the floor, and our equipment was not washed away in a flood.

Though we walked away unscathed from that experience, I can tell you that we were on the phone to our manager that night to get the gear insured, and it was done the next day. Had our system been destroyed, it would have brought our career with that band to a shuddering halt.

One problem with musical equipment is that thieves know it is generally worth a lot of money. Many years ago, my band practiced in the home of our guitarist. He didn't want many people to know this; in fact, he would get mad at me for bringing friends over to sit in on a jam. I thought he was being ridiculous.

Several bands later, I learned with hindsight that he was the wiser one. Some thieves broke into the warehouse where we practiced, and cleaned out a huge amount of equipment from several rooms. They literally knocked down an entire wall of our room to get in (it was a pretty flimsy wall). Fortunately, we were playing at a club that night, so all they got from us was our practice PA system and a tape deck. Other bands were not so lucky.

Theft and "Acts of God" are not the only potential plug-pullers. A few other nasty human traits can come into play, such as recklessness and malice.

I remember opening for a VBA (Very Big Act) one time in Toronto. Instead of the friendly camaraderie I had naively expected, the band's roadies threw our equipment off the stage after our set, caring very little for an unknown group like ourselves. They damaged parts of our drummer's kit, and refused to accept any responsibility for it. If you have the time and the resources, you could try to get some of your money back for such an incident through small claims court. But let's face reality: it's a heck of a lot easier just to make sure your gear is insured beforehand, and make a claim for accidental damage.

With regards to malice, damage to equipment can be intentional as well as accidental. At the end of a show in Smiths Falls, Ontario, the guitarist and I were heading towards the door to leave. We were stopped

by this drunk, mean-looking guy who said, "You see those guys at the bar over there?" We looked over and saw at least ten more guys (in the same category as our friend here) sitting at the bar looking back at us, with big grins on their faces. "Me and the boys are gonna go down there and trash all your stuff if you don't play a couple more songs."

Now, I suppose I should have been flattered that they liked our music, but I would have preferred an encore request in the form of beer bottles banging on tables, as usual. We were outnumbered, and we averted disaster by playing a few more tunes. Good thing — that would have been a tough one to explain on the insurance claim.

Although luck has been generally on my side, the point of these stories is that anything can happen, especially in the crazy world of the music business. We musicians are probably more likely than other professions to have weird things happen to our work equipment, and least likely to be able to afford the loss (unless, of course, you've hit the big time).

Our gear is susceptible to general wear-and-tear and accidental damage just like any other profession. Amps will blow, speakers will fry, cables will short out... the list goes on and on. I was fronting a band one night and trying to look cool by spinning my microphone around by the mic cable. Suddenly I noticed that the cable felt awfully light. I looked down and discovered that the mic had gone flying over towards the bar and landed on the floor. Microphones are tough, but they aren't meant to take that kind of abuse. Fortunately, it didn't take anybody's eye out on the way.

Despite all the things that could go wrong, insurance is often the last thing on a young musician's mind when he has just bought his first set of gear and is jamming with his first band. Whether you are new to the game or have been around for a while, your equipment was probably paid for through hard work and/or heavy debt. Don't take the risk of ending your career early: get your gear insured and avoid misery. That guitar would be awfully quiet without an amp to play through.

*Editor's Note\* Readers are warned that not all insurance policies provide sufficient coverage for musicians. Basic home contents insurance most often will not provide for equipment lost, stolen or damaged while on the road or at a venue. Those who have home studios, expensive or rare vintage gear should also note that their equipment should be insured for its full replacement or appraisal value. Contact your local musician's union for advice on choosing an insurance provider who specializes in these areas. One reputable firm which provides coverage for A.F. of M. members is Clydesdale Insurance Brokerage Ltd. They can be reached at (519) 966-2600, FAX (519) 966-6177.*

*OTTAWA BASED SINGER, GUITARIST, SONGWRITER AND VOCAL TEACHER DEAN FOSTER MCNEILL HAS FRONTED NUMEROUS BANDS OVER THE PAST 14 YEARS INCLUDING HUNGOVER MARY, WHO PLACED THIRD IN THE 1991 BILLBOARD INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION. HE CURRENTLY PERFORMS A SOLO SHOW IN THE OTTAWA AREA.*

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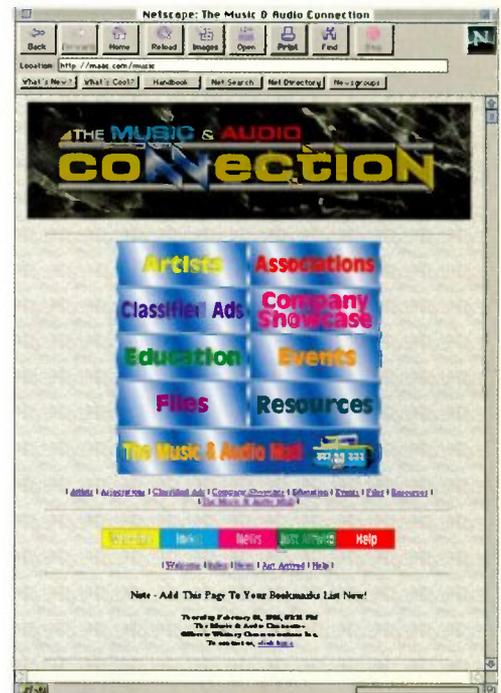
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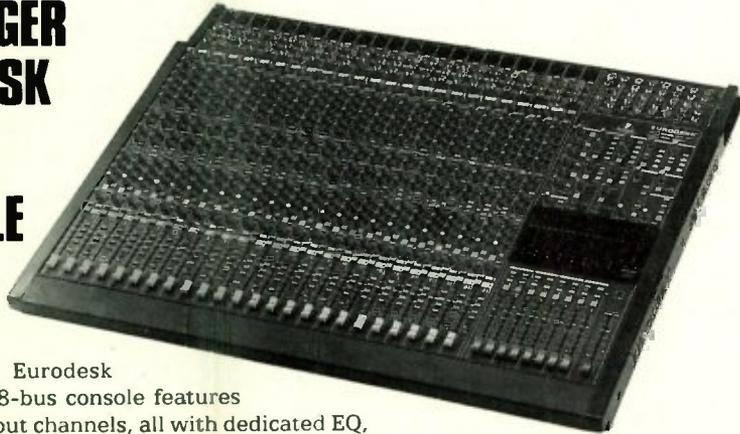


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- **Vector Violins • Studer MicValve Preamp**
- **Boss ME-8B Bass Effects • EAW FL103**
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## BEHRINGER EURODESK 8-BUS CONSOLE



The new Behringer Eurodesk MX 8000 8-bus console features 24 dual input channels, all with dedicated EQ, Mute, Pan and Level. The Eurodesk also offers up to 60 line inputs on mixdown; a comprehensive EQ section with swept mids and a universal expander port that allows it to link seamlessly to other Eurodesks or any 8-bus console. This new mixing console also includes: eight balanced subgroups; channel, subgroup and mix insert points and direct outputs; plus 24 balanced tape inputs and outputs, switchable to +4 dBu/-10 dBv.

The Eurodesk's 4-band constant Q equalizer on the main channels includes swept mids that offer a range of 50 Hz-20 kHz. The console is further equipped with six Aux sends, switchable Pre/Post and A/B channel; six stereo effects returns with extensive routing capability; Solo-In-Place and pre-fader listen; and extensive monitoring and talkback options, including two independent headphone mixes. At least +15 dB of gain is available on all sends and returns.

For greater operational flexibility and future upgrading, Behringer also provides an optional 24-channel meter bridge and a universal Cybermix 32-channel mute/fader automation system. The Eurodesk features a sturdy chassis and rugged construction throughout, with sealed Panasonic pots and specially-constructed, laser-trimmed Panasonic faders that provide a true logarithmic taper.

Many other features take the Eurodesk into new levels of performance for an 8-bus console: 24 secondary channel inputs (each with their own dedicated EQ, level and Mute); excellent noise and transient performance, thanks in part to a massive 19" rack-mounted external 400-watt power supply; and balanced mic (gold-plated Neutrik XLR) line and tape inputs and servo-balanced mic preamps, that let you hear the actual sound of your microphones.

For more information, contact: Samson Technologies Corp., PO Box 9031, 575 Underhill Blvd., Syosset, NY 11791-9031 (516) 364-2244, FAX (516) 364-3888.

## NEW LP MINI TIMBALES

Latin Percussion has added new Mini Timbales to its growing line of professional percussion instruments. This item is the perfect complement to any drum kit or multi-percussion setup.

LP Mini Timbales are fashioned after the full-size Tito Puente Timbales, featuring chrome plated steel shells, six inches and eight inches in diameter. These drums are designed with authentic Cuban-style tuning — including a heavy duty tilting mount attached to the shell separator for easy set up and breakdown.

LP Mini Timbales offer a tonal balance ranging between bongos and standard-size timbales. They produce unique effects with crackling highs and crisp attacks. This instrument's crossover appeal helps it transcend all musical styles, making it suitable in musical applications ranging from rock to Latin to jazz.

For more information, contact: Efkey Music Group, 2165 46th Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872.

## NEW APHEX MODEL 109 PARAMETRIC EQ



Aphex Systems has introduced the Model 109 Parametric Equalizer, combining studio quality, Aphex-engineered equalization with the company's patented Tubessence true vacuum tube circuitry.

The Model 109 includes a unique mode switch offering either dual (stereo) or mono four-band equalizer configurations in the same unit. This feature offers the user more flexibility for adapting the unit from 'general sweetening' to critical problem solving.

Each channel of the Model 109 offers +/-10dB of gain, two bands of equalization that each offer +/-15dB boost/cut with centre detent (flat), sweepable frequency adjustment variable bandwidth, and switchable peak or shelving filter mode.

The unit can be operated in the EQ bypass mode, yet still pass signal through the Tubessence vacuum tube stage. This feature is handy for digital users who wish to 'warm up' their digital signals. A switchable hardware bypass is also supplied. Inputs and outputs are 1/4" TRS balanced/unbalanced.

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

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For more information, contact: Sabian Ltd., Meductic, NB E0H 1L0 (506) 272-2019, FAX (506) 272-2040.

## VECTOR VIOLINS

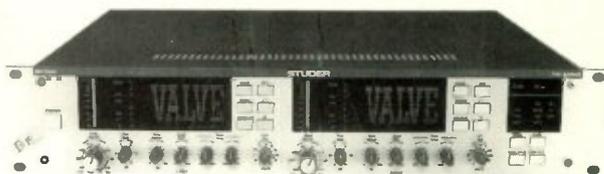


The new line of Vector electro-acoustic violins combine lightweight bodies, ultra-stable tuning systems and the latest in transducer bridge designs.

With three unique body styles, personalized ergonomics and a fifth string option, violin players are now assured a custom instrument tailored to their specific needs. All Vector violins are handcrafted from select Curly Maple and European Spruce and combine streamlined styling and state-of-the-art sound in an affordable price range. Vector violins come complete with a plush-lined, rectangular hardshell case and a two-year warranty.

For more information, contact: Vector Violins, 1111 Russia Rd., Black Rock, Kings Co., NSBOP 1V0 (902) 538-3271.

## STUDER D19 MICVALVE TUBE MIC/LINE PREAMP



Using the latest technology, Studer has been able to create the "warmth" and other unique features of tube sound in the new D19 MicVALVE. The new MicVALVE system is a 2-channel mic/line preamp with what Studer engineers call a "Valve Dignifier" tube stage in addition to full 20-bit A/D conversion. The tube sound circuitry can be switched into the signal path to provide a number of controls for precise signal treatment.

In addition to the tube sound features, the MicVALVE system offers analog line outputs, switchable inserts and an AES/EBU output fed by a high-performance 20-bit A/D converter with selectable DSP noise shaping. Optionally, digital outputs to ADAT™ or TDIF™ are available, including individual channel I/O routing.

The D19 MicVALVE was developed for the stereo mastering and digital classical recording sectors of the industry as well as for general recording studio applications.

For more information, contact: Studer Canada Ltd., 1947 Leslie St., Don Mills, ON M3B 2M3 (416) 510-1347, FAX (416) 510-1294.



## DRAWMER 1962 Digital Vacuum Tube Preamp

Drawmer has introduced the 1962 Digital Vacuum Tube Preamplifier. The 1962 provides an ultra-high quality "front end" for digital recording. Combining Drawmer's vacuum tube technology with two low-noise preamps and two integral, full 24-bit resolution analog to digital converters, the 1962 provides a one-box solution for committing audio directly to the digital domain.

The 1962 incorporates perfectly matched pairs of preamps and D/A converters, while a switchable "zero overshoot" transparent limiter enables the full dynamic range to be utilized without fear of digital overload. Since the 1962's digital hardware is modular, the unit can also be supplied as an analog-only device which is easily able to be upgraded to the full digital processor at a later time.

Although the 1962 employs a minimal signal path philosophy, it also incorporates a number of innovative processing features including variable high and low pass filters, fine tune equalization, dynamic enhancement, variable tube drive, selectable digital resolution (16, 18, 20 and 24 bits), provisions for mixing up to eight channels, and AES/EBU, SPDIF and TDIF outputs are provided.

For more information, contact: Gerraudio Distribution, 2 Thorncliffe Park Dr., #9, Toronto, ON M4H 1H2 (416) 696-2779, FAX (416) 467-5819.



## TASCAM 424 MKII PORTASTUDIO

Tascam's new 424 MKII Portastudio is an integrated cassette multitrack recorder/mixer which builds upon the original 424 by adding significant new upgrades that make the recorder more capable and intuitive to operate.

With balanced XLR mic inputs, 3-band EQ with mid sweep, an upgraded AUX system and automated Punch In/Out, the 424 MKII packs a lot of punch into the entry-level cassette multitrack format.



With the addition of four balanced XLR mic inputs, recording enthusiasts can now use high quality, professional, low impedance microphones to better capture their performances. After the performance is captured, the 424 MKII's new 3-band EQ with sweepable midrange will enable you to contour the sound with far greater flexibility than was previously available.

For more information, contact: TEAC Canada Ltd., Tascam Division, 340 Brunel Rd., Mississauga, ON L4Z 2C2 (905) 890-8008, FAX (905) 890-9888.

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## BOSS ME-8B BASS MULTIPLE EFFECTS

Boss recently introduced a collection of compact effects pedals designed specifically for electric bassists. These bass-optimized pedals have been so well received that Boss has decided to follow-up with a powerful, all-in-one bass multi-effect: the ME-8B Bass Multiple Effects Processor. This floor pedal-style effects unit offers virtually every sound possibility for the variety-conscious bassist.

The ME-8B offers a comprehensive collection of Boss effects, perfectly suited to bass. Simply touch the pedals to access compression, EQ, delay, chorus and pitch-shifting as well as an outstanding collection of newly-developed effects using some of Boss' most impressive proprietary technology. A greatly improved signal-to-noise ratio is accomplished via a brand new high-performance DSP chip. The new chip provides 18-bit AF (Adaptive Focus) Method A/D conversion and 20-bit D/A conversion. Extensive realtime control is easily performed with the dedicated control pedal.

Built-in effects also include reverb, flanger and even bass overdrive. Unique effects include the newly developed 'fretreffex' which turns any fretted bass into a 'fretless' at the touch of a pedal. This is extremely useful for both live and recording applications. For easy control and one-touch recall, there are 50 preset patches and 50 user patches. This versatile unit includes a built-in chromatic tuner, is still extremely user-friendly and thoroughly road-worthy.

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

## EAW FL103

The new FL103 from Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW) is a switchable bi-amp/full-range-passive loudspeaker system designed for applications demanding totally natural reproduction and extremely high output levels (124 dB).

In a trapezoidal enclosure of 18-ply cross-grain laminated Baltic birch, this innovative true 3-way design incorporates a 1" compression driver on a WGP waveguide for 100° conical high frequency

dispersion, a 6.5" cone transducer in a unique vented sub-enclosure for mid-range and a 15" woofer for low frequency. Its extended low frequency response allows the FL103 to function as a stand-alone reinforcement system.



The FL103 is designed for a variety of applications including theatre, houses of worship, dance clubs and multi-media presentations.

For more information, contact: Contact Distribution Ltd., 38 Thornmount Dr., #1, Scarborough, ON M1B 5P2 (416) 287-1144, FAX (416) 287-1204.

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# SPiRiT FOLiO SX

Spirit By Soundcraft, Inc. has launched the flexible, four-bus Folio SX — the first in a new generation of cost-effective, feature-loaded Folio consoles.

The Spirit Folio SX delivers digital-quality sound in both live and recording applications. With a total of 20 inputs and 18 outputs (including Auxes and Direct Outs) offered as standard, the mixer's twelve mono mic/line channels are all equipped with Spirit's UltraMic preamp. This preamp provides a wide 60dB gain range and +22dBu of headroom, ensuring that the input stage can easily accommodate any mic or line-level device.

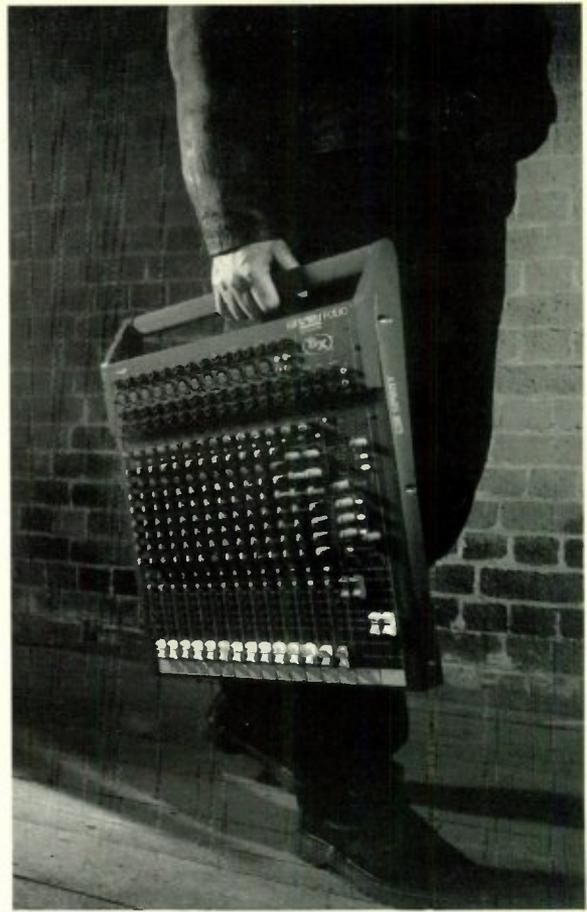
In addition to mix outs, two subgroup busses allow groups of instruments to be sent either to multitrack recorders, additional speakers or be sub-grouped to mix. Four stereo inputs for keyboards and other stereo instruments are also available, as are eight Direct Outs, switchable pre/post fader, making the Folio SX equally adept at studio or live recording.

A three-band EQ with sweepable mids utilizes custom-designed pots to provide even and consistent response around the entire sweep. Steep 18dB per octave High Pass Filters on each channel effectively eliminate low frequency rumble.

Three Aux Sends are offered, two of which may be assigned pre/post fader for use in live performances requiring extra monitors, or in recording applications needing additional effects devices. For accurate control at mixdown, 100mm faders are used throughout. A separate Mono Output with level control and two subgroup Outputs are also available.

The Folio SX is housed in a compact, rugged aluminum frame with integral carrying handle for easy portability. The chassis can optionally be rack-mounted into a 10U space.

For more information, contact: Soundcraft Canada, 9629 Clement, LaSalle, PQ H8R 4B4 (514) 595-396, FAX (800) 790-2000.



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# NEW SHURE BETA MICROPHONE MODELS

With the introduction of two new models, the Shure family of Beta microphones has grown to a point where five distinct product offerings can be used to fulfill the needs of an entire live performance. In addition to its increase in size, the line also stands to benefit from a number of improvements made to two existing models.

The first among the two newcomers, the Beta 52, is a dynamic mic designed to deliver the low-end punch required for kick drums and other bass instruments. Incorporating Shure's Dynamic Locking adjustable mounting assembly which can be locked securely into position, the device additionally features a hardened grille which helps it survive even in the harsh environment of life on the road.

Proving that small microphones can indeed deliver big sound, the Beta 56 is the second new offering in the Beta line. With performance centered around a frequency response ideally suited for drums and instruments, the microphone utilizes a consistent supercardioid pattern to supply a high degree of gain-before-feedback. Like the rest of its siblings within the Beta family, the Beta 56 can be mounted quickly and easily thanks to its locking base and compact, swivel-head design.

Representing the perfect complement for drums, vocals, guitar amps and just about anything else you can think of, the Beta 57A has undergone design changes which bring added warmth and presence to its performance. Featuring a new hardened grille which steadfastly resists drum stick impact and allows the mic to be placed closer to the sound source to enhance low frequency response, the restyled Beta 57A is also equipped with a new shock mount which lowers handling noise to a bare minimum.



Following in the original Beta 58's footsteps, the redesigned Beta 58A is a premium dynamic vocal mic offering a smoother response and extended high frequency performance. Tough and reliable like the original, it too features an improved shock mount which greatly reduces stand and handling noise.

Still occupying the lead position within the Beta line-up, the Beta 87 combines a smooth, tailored response with a supercardioid pattern to provide greater gain-before-feedback. Ideally suited for vocal performances, it combines studio-quality condenser characteristics with rugged roadworthy durability.

For more information, contact: A.C. Simmonds & Sons Ltd., 975 Dillingham Rd., Pickering, ON L1W 3B2 (905) 839-8041, FAX (905) 839-2667.

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## CELESTION UNVEILS HIGHLY-PORTABLE ROAD SERIES



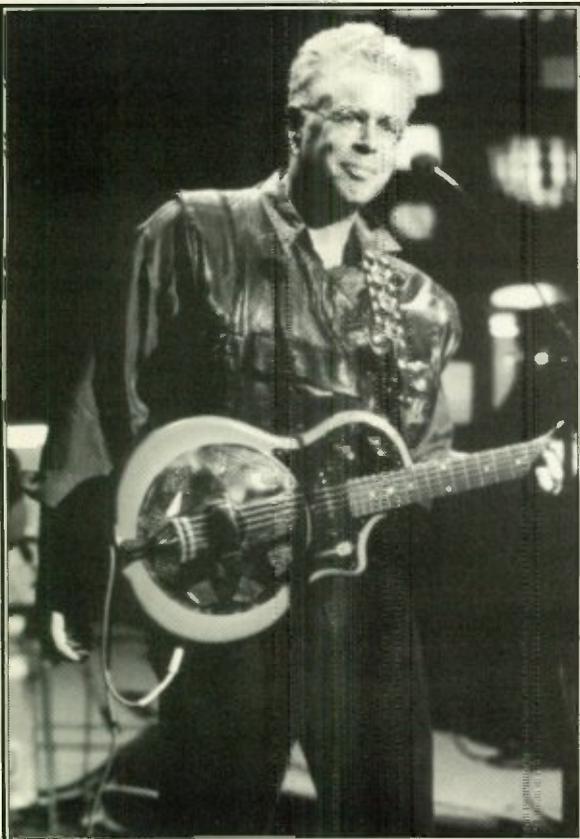
Celestion's Road Series combines the latest technologies in component development and system voicing with a new polymer cabinet molding process to create a durable, high-quality, affordable PA system.

Perfect for club bands, 'weekend warriors' and sound rental companies, a proprietary double-skin Polycore material provides exceptional acoustic stiffness from a very lightweight yet virtually indestructible enclosure. Integral to the molding are large bar handles, interlocking universal stacking points and exponential or constant directivity horns, allowing the system cost to be kept to a minimum without compromising specifications.

Bass drivers utilize Celestion's distinctive Flexirol™ surround, which provides greater excursion and improved longevity. Crisp high-end on the full-range models is delivered via a powerful one-inch exit compression driver combined with the built-in exponential horn. For smaller foreground applications, the R1220 makes use of a specially-designed constant directivity horn-loaded Ring Transmission Transducer. Smooth second and third order passive crossovers with low-loss, high-power components provide clear system integration and feature PolySwitch™ protection circuitry throughout. The Road Series also features Neutrik® Speakon® and 1/4-inch jack parallel connectors.

Models in the Road Series include: the R1220 2-way 12" full-range, the R1520 2-way 15" full-range, the R1522 2-way dual 15" full-range and the R1542 dual 15" bass system.

For more information, contact: Efkey Music Group, 2165 46th Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872.



Bruce Cockburn is a member of Ottawa Local 180.

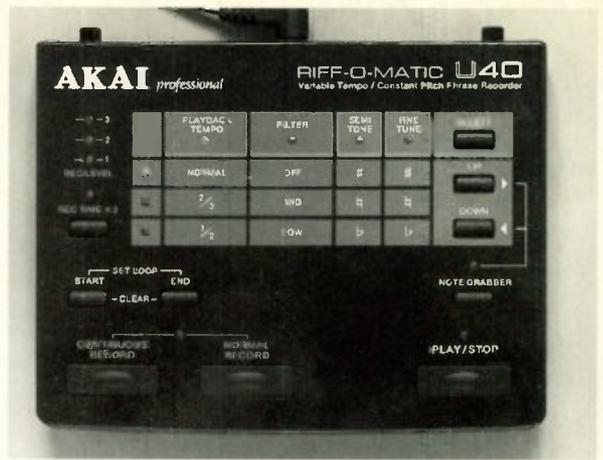
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The Riff-O-Matic provides 13 seconds of recording time, or you can increase your recording time to 26 seconds with a reduced frequency response. Once recorded, you can adjust the playback tempo to slow it down to 1/2 speed. As you learn the part, you can increase the tempo to speed and then back to full speed, all without changing the pitch of the recording. A Continuous Record function keeps the Riff-O-Matic in record mode so when the Stop button is pressed, the last 13 (or 26) seconds are captured.

Other cool Riff-O-Matic features include the Set Loop function, which will continuously loop any part of the recording; and a Filter, that isolates mid-range or low frequencies to help you hear the part you're learning. The Riff-O-Matic can transpose over a +/-6 semitone range to allow you to play in different keys. It even has a Note Grabber function that allows you to loop a single note as well as step through each individual note of the recording. It's great for learning those really fast solos.

The Riff-O-Matic features a line level input for recording from CD, cassette player, etc.. The Line In Level lets you adjust the recording level of the music being recorded. An instrument input lets you connect your guitar (or other instrument) directly to the Riff-O-Matic and a Line Output lets you connect to your amplifier. A Headphone Out is also provided for practising in private.

For more information, contact: International Music Corp., 1316 E. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76102 (817) 336-5114, FAX (817) 870-1271.

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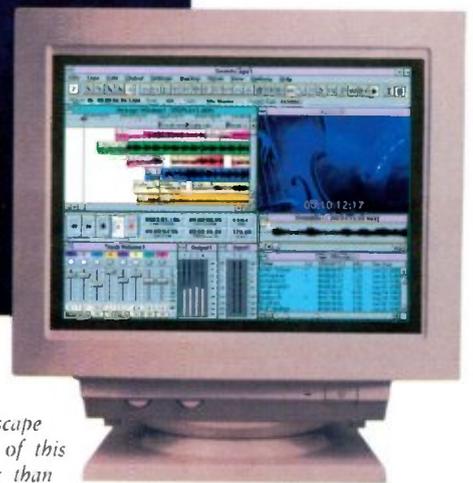
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For more information, contact: Peavey Electronics, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301 (601) 483-5365, FAX (601) 486-1278.



## EPIPHONE ELVIS PRESLEY LIMITED EDITION GUITAR

Epiphone's new Limited Edition Elvis Presley Signature guitar line is designed in close cooperation with the Elvis Presley Estate and Graceland. This new guitar line pays tribute to 'The King of Rock and Roll' while also offering the Elvis Presley enthusiast, guitar player or collector

a combination of professional features, superior sound quality and craftsmanship.

Patterned after Elvis' actual acoustic guitar, a custom Gibson J-200, Epiphone takes their EJ-200 counterpart and adds a specially-designed pearloid pickguard featuring a two-colour original drawing of Elvis' face incorporated into the traditional 'flower and vine' pattern. Also featured is Elvis' lightning bolt 'TCB' (Taking Care of Business) logo, which is inlaid in pearl on the 12th fret. An exact reproduction of the Elvis Presley signature is silkscreened on the headstock in gold, while a large 'ELVIS' appears in a gold serif font with red drop-shadow across the upper face of the guitar.

Other features include the famous J-200 jumbo body shape and size for maximum sound projection. The body materials include maple for the back and sides of the instrument while the top is select spruce for a bright, clear tone. The fingerboard and bridge are solid rosewood while the neck is solid maple. All three combine for superior neck stabil-

ity, playing comfort and sustain. To round out the package, the guitar features the traditional 'crown' fret position inlays, Kluson-style machine heads and trade-



mark 'mustache' bridge design for the true vintage look.

The new Elvis Presley line is available in two models — the Elvis EJ-200 non-cutaway acoustic jumbo and the Elvis EJ-200CE cutaway acoustic/electric featuring Epiphone's professional pre-amp with parametric EQ and low-Z and high-Z outputs.

For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound Ltd., 550 Granite Ct., Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481, FAX (905) 837-8746.

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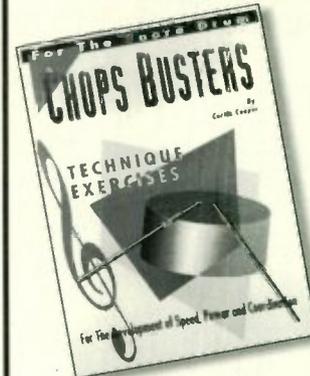
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# SHOWCASE

by Karen Bliss



## COCO LOVE ALCORN

**Style:** sultry jazz pop

**Lineup:** Coco Love Alcorn (vocals); Joel Fountain (drums); Chris Gestrin (keyboards); Danny Parker (bass); Andy Creeggan (percussion)

**Contact:** Dan Cimoroni, Raging Bull Productions, 310 Water St., #400, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B6 (604) 684-5823

Daughter of renowned Canadian jazz musician John Alcorn, Vancouver's Coco Love Alcorn has a gorgeous, sensuous voice whose self-titled CD could most definitely aid a romantic evening. Performing since the age of 16, the dark-featured and mysterious young woman won a scholarship to Berklee before even finishing high school. Now 21, her debut album includes a half a dozen original jazz-pop tunes, much in the vein of Sade meets Anita Baker. The rest are standards given quite unusual renderings, from the jazz-scat vocal of "Dat Dere" rising crisply overtop the elastic groove of the stand-up bass, to the sombre "My Funny Valentine". The album was produced by Grammy nominee and Juno Award-winner Rick Kilburn for Xntrik Productions.

## TRIPHAMMER

**Style:** Hammering melodicism

**Lineup:** Matt Crowley (vocals, bass); Jon Maxwell (vocals, guitar); Mark Chamberlain (guitars); Dan Bristow (drums)

**Contact:** Jon Maxwell, 292 Stewart St., #3, Peterborough, ON K9J 3N1 (705) 749-2059

Three wishes: we want 1) to form a band; 2) to write great songs; 3) and really quickly. Triphammer has done all that, but it sounded too magic lantern-like a story for a band this good to have only formed this year. And as it happens, all the Peterborough lads have put in the legwork with other hardworking indie bands. Co-vocalists Matt Crowley and Jon Maxwell both played in Gifthorse, and Mark Chamberlain and Dan Bristow used to be in Slant. Once converged, the resulting Triphammer has a melodicism and plowing rock vibe similar to The Skydiggers and REM, especially on the lead song "Concussion". Jangly guitar, earnest, almost effortless vocals, later give way to a rockier exit. "How Does It Feel" is of the gentler jangly persuasion, while the last number, "Standstill", is another punchy melodic rocker. The three tracks on this cassette were produced by James Stanley and Joao Carvahlo of Umbrella Sound. Wish it was a full album.



## JANE DOE

**Style:** vicious cyclepunk

**Lineup:** Diane Higgins (vocals); Beasty Green (bass); Cathy Marchese (drums); Lori Allen (guitar)

**Contact:** Girlie Girl Music, c/o Lori Allen, PO Box 36, 688 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4Y 2A6 (416) 926-0478

Jeepers, how can this anonymous gal group Jane Doe hope to stay that way, what with that guitar biting down like a chainsaw on, well, another chainsaw, and that voice yelping nastily along? Crash, yelp, arrrr they do, on a daintily-named little number called "Kiss You". Check out their credentials and you'll realize that two members did time in defunct all-female Toronto metallers Maidenstone. Get to "I Can Be", the best and deepest cut, and the thumping bass churns up a cool groove. Still, Diane Higgins casts some spells like some wicked witch of the indie scene and the guitars wail in the swirling chorus. The third track on this demo cassette, "Scream", uses clanking percussion that also throbs and muscles with raging guitar. The whole deal was produced by Sven Gali's guitarist Dee Cernile at McClear Pathe, and co-produced by the band and Denis Tougas.

Artists appearing in SHOWCASE will be included in the Canadian Musician website at <http://nor.com/cm>

If you are unsigned and would like to be a part of **Showcase**, send us a complete bio, glossy black & white photo and a cassette of your music.

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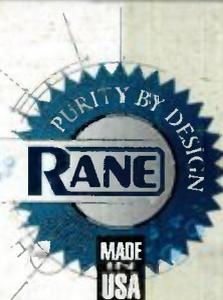
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