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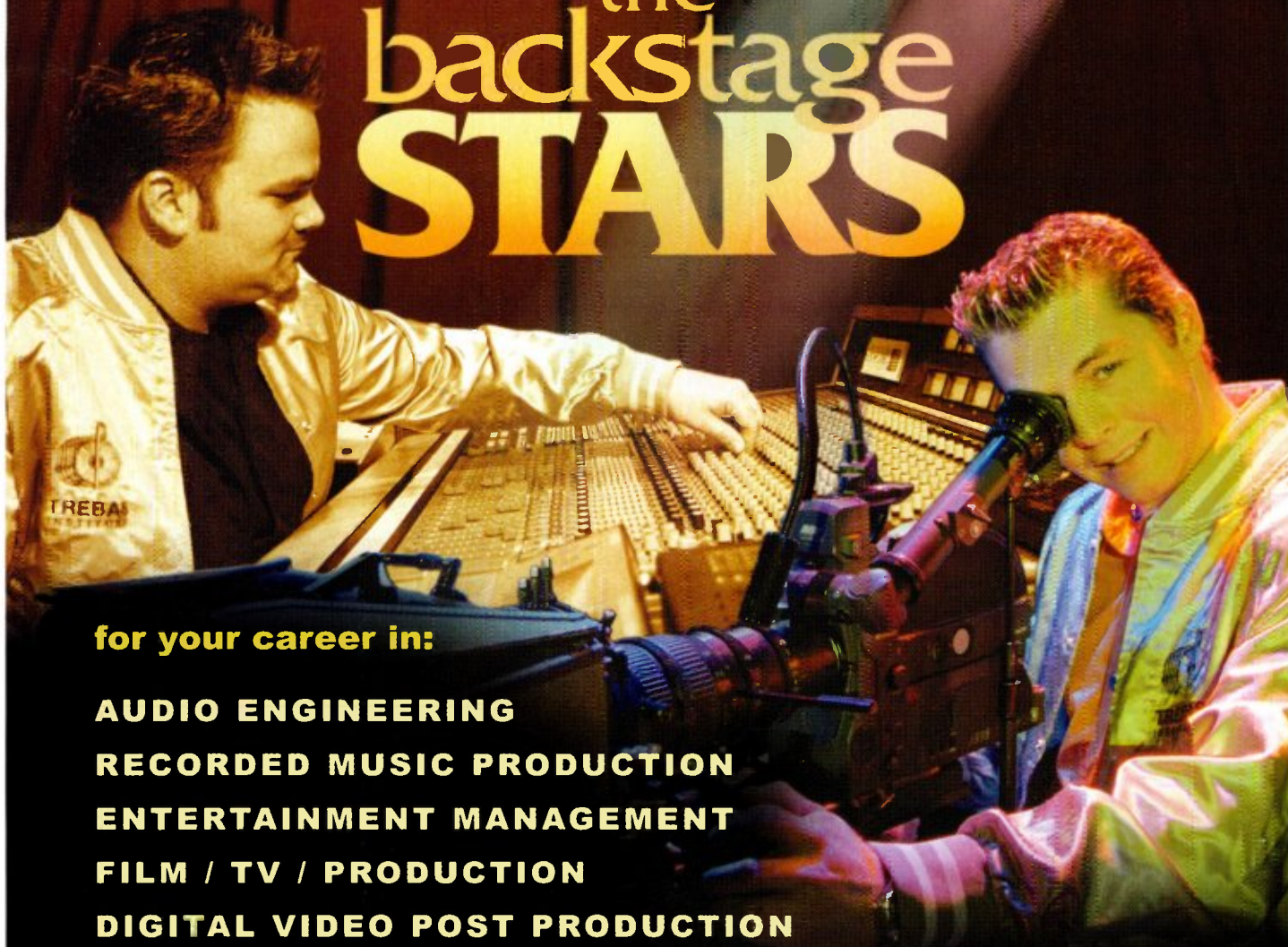
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PROJET ORANGE



MEGAPHOBE





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Help The Independents

Hello again CM.

To Ian Graham:

I am sorry but I don't believe that I ever said that I "enjoyed living in a world where 'major' music is so 'cookie cutter corporate' and 'fast food' factory line." In actual fact, I do enjoy, even sometimes look forward to hearing (as you would call them) such cookie cutter artists like Nickelback on the radio however it is in the same fashion that I look forward to listening to a CD I picked up of a no-name artist (for a lack of a better word) in order to support them at a local venue etc.

I don't think that I missed any point that you were trying to make. I think I just disagreed with your argument.

To begin with, if you have such a strong sense of understanding, how can you see any correlation between sharing radio time and freedom of speech? Radio time for the most part isn't free or public. Independent bands could have all of the airplay that they wish if they could come up with the funds. But frankly, it was your accusation of the public promotion of the specific radio schedule that I disagreed with. I do wonder how many people who have 'made their millions' would pass it aside for the good of other musicians or heck, even the betterment of society (and I'm not talking 1/18th of their to-date income).

Secondly, I don't think that music HAS TO BE complex and technical. To me, music is passion, love, hate, happiness, sadness and all of the things and nothings in between. It doesn't necessarily matter who made the music but if it evokes a connection within the artist and/or the audience then doesn't it serve its purpose? I realize that artists who can understand and master an instrument deserve credit and recognition but it doesn't mean that the "cookie cutter corporate" song is any less deserving. Speaking of simple drum beats, what if it is accompanied with thought-provoking lyrics or an amazing guitar solo?

I say I am tired of hearing about the lack of support for independents when that energy could be spent trying to do something about it. Like writing and petitioning some of those corporate 'bigwigs' or starting an advertising company (not-for-profit perhaps?) for the independents. What about having a studio discount nation wide for new, upcoming artists or, oh, I can hear a jingle now; AM 95X1 the Indie Haven! An example of some individuals who might be doing this is at www.zunior.com.

Lastly, I must say, if anyone gets brainwashed with today's advertising they deserve it!

As an aside, what is so bad about artists starting off in the US (aside from it not being their home country)? The population and spending certainly support it. What really happens when a band first hits it big in Canada anyways? They have to tour down there and overseas...

Thanks,
Kathryn Leslie

**Ed. You make some great points Kathryn. There are many things musicians could try to do instead of complaining about their current situation. It's refreshing to hear some positive thinking. Thanks for your comments.*



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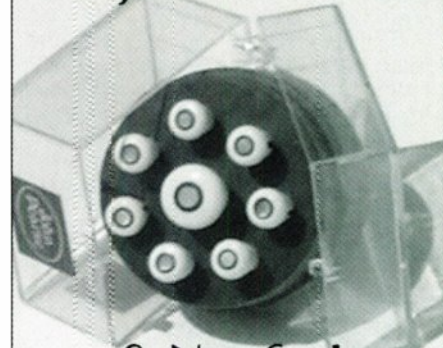
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Press Kits – What You Should Know

by Dana Blacklock

Putting together a press kit for a band is straightforward for the most part. However, it's quite shocking to see some of the things that tend to get left out. Some bands forget to include contact info, photos – even CDs for crying out loud!

A press kit should represent a band as much as possible. Not enough people are creative with their press kits, but it's important to be as creative with a press kit as with any other promotional tools such as posters, flyers and even Web sites. Here is a list of essential things you want to make sure you at least consider, if not use all of them, when organizing a press kit for your band:

Biography

A band's biography is very significant, so make it interesting. A few lines stating where you're from and how long you've been together as a band is a great start, but you may want to consider going slightly more in-depth...

You should highlight what exactly makes your band what it is and include a few sentences explaining how your band got its start. Also, let it be known who plays what and who sings, who creates the melodies and who writes the lyrics, etc.

After the introduction, provide a description of your band's sound. Some bands today might be against "labelling" themselves, but people still want an idea of what to expect before giving your band a listen. Stating that your sound is "diverse" and "unlike anything heard before" doesn't describe your sound at all. Elaborate. If your band delivers a thrash-y metal sound or a dirty grunge rock sound, make it clear by using adjectives and examples, etc. If it helps, ask a few friends or fans to describe your music for you.

The second paragraph should include background information. Has your band recorded any albums? Has your band opened for any well-known acts? Also, highlight future plans and goals such as touring, recording, etc.

Revise your biography and most importantly, spellcheck your work. There's no quicker way to look unprofessional than to have a poor grasp of your own language. If no one in your band has a knack for writing you may want to ask a friend or hire someone to write the biography instead.

You also need to include contact information – this information should *never* be left out. Provide a phone number, a cell number if necessary, e-mail address, Web site, etc. Imagine someone wants to contact you to book a gig, or simply to ask you a few questions for a potential article: no contact info equals no gig, no article, and really no chance at all of having a shot.

Photographs

Don't skimp on photography! Sure you may have a computer at home that can print out photos, but keep in mind that these images can't be rescanned and used for publication in many high-end publications. In other words, you just wasted your time and money. Include a *real* photograph with your press kit – the kind that you would get when you take in a roll of film to get developed. Most one-hour photo places like drug stores and supermarkets now have the option for you to bring in

digital storage devices like a compact flash card, memory stick, or others, to get a professional photographic print.

Depending on where you're sending your press kits, you may not need a professional print. If you're only interested in sending your press kit to online press, then you won't need a professional print. *Make sure* you find out what quality of image is required. Each outlet may have different requirements, so you want to make sure that you have decent enough quality digital images that will suit anyone's needs. Remember, you can always shrink the size of a digital photo, or lower its resolution, but you *cannot* make it better than what you start out with. Sure, the pictures from your mom's digital camera may look great on your computer screen, but what would they look like in print? If you only shoot an image at 72 DPI, then that's what you're stuck with. Better to shoot it at 300 DPI so you have the higher resolution if you need it. As mentioned above, you can easily save a 300 DPI image at 72 DPI, but it doesn't work the other way. You don't want your photos looking pixellated. (You know, like old school video game graphics – all boxy looking!)

You may want to include a CD-ROM in your press kit containing high-resolution images instead of a professional print. Again, it depends on what the requirements are for where you plan to send your press kit. Many people don't want to waste time scanning professional prints. If you provide a CD with high-resolution images, you've made someone's job much easier. Do some leg work: find out what several media outlets require and figure out what you want to include in your press kit. Remember, it's better to have a photo be too good in terms of quality than to be not good enough quality.

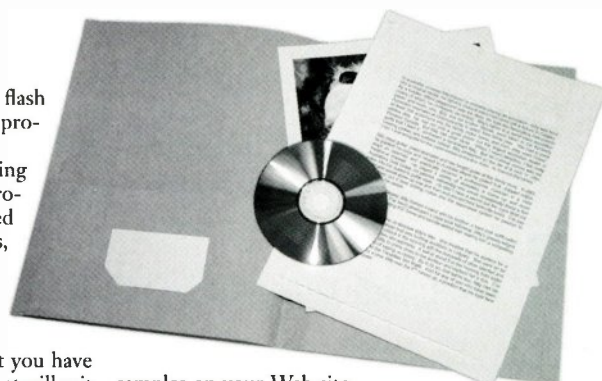
A professional photographer is an option but isn't always necessary. Depending on what sort of image you want, a good quality digital camera and a creative friend can usually do the trick. If you want your band situated in a city street-like setting or a dark abandoned area, etc., it shouldn't be too hard to find a photo-worthy location somewhere around town.

If you don't have a large budget, see what schools are in your area. If there's a college or university nearby that offers a journalism or photography course, chances are you may be able to find a student who is simply looking for some experience as their main form of payment. That's "main form" of payment. You should still offer some money for their work, although it certainly doesn't have to be professional rates. Don't forget to give them credit for the photos in your press kit!

You could always save up for a professional photographer, but only buy what you need. Don't blow the bank hiring the highest priced photographer you find. You might be surprised at what deals you could find out there...

Music Sample

When creating a press kit for your band, your CD is a vital component. Even if you have audio



samples on your Web site you want to provide people receiving your press kit the convenience of having your music at their fingertips. Not everyone has time to visit your Web site and download audio files.

Make sure that you include your song titles somewhere on your CD's packaging. If you only print your song titles on the actual CD, how is the listener supposed to know what they're listening to when the CD is in use?

Lastly, make sure your CD is clean and scratch free. If it looks or sounds like it has been sitting on the floor of your car for a few months you may want to make another copy. If the CD starts skipping, you know it will end up in the garbage.

Press Clippings

If your band has been reviewed or featured before, it doesn't hurt to include some press clippings in your press kit. A good idea is to grab a quote from each review (don't forget to include the byline) and assemble them onto one page. If it's done this way, the quotes are more likely to be read and there is a good impression left by reading a chain of compliments that aren't cluttered by other text.

Folders And Additional Material

Last but definitely not least, your packaging. This is like presenting yourself at a job interview – you want to seem as professional and together as possible in front of a potential employer and you should want the same with your press package for potential reviewers. Using a paperclip to hold your material together isn't going to raise any eyebrows...

Swing by your local office supply depot, grab a presentable folder and place your materials within. Some folders even have a separate pocket for a CD.

If your band has promotional stickers you can dress up your folder by placing one on the front. Make sure the sticker is straight! You don't want your kit looking like an eight-year-old put it together. Additional materials to include in a press kit (if you have them) are buttons, stickers, postcards, pens, etc. Most people won't display these unless they're fans but you never know where those pens may be dropped and you never know where those stickers may be placed. The chance of your band's name being heard increases with such material. Even if your sticker ends up in a bathroom stall it's better than having it sit in a package at home, right?

Dana Blacklock is Editorial Assistant for Canadian Musician.

Who's On Your Mailing List?

By Tim Sweeney

Who's on your mailing list? That's a very valid question to ask any artist or musician who is serious about their music. Every artist wants to get more people on their mailing list. Ironically, most artists wouldn't be able to tell you anything about the individual people on their mailing list except that most of them have come to at least one show. By not knowing who is on your mailing list you are losing thousands of dollars a year in product sales. Let me give you two examples.

First, an artist many of you know from the Music Strategies Seminars, and an artist I have been working with for the last year, is Tomas Michaud (www.TomasMichaud.com). Tomas was familiar with a fan of his that bought all of his CDs for herself and for her friends and co-workers. This fan is in the management section of Small Business Accounts at Bank Of America. Through conversations with her about his music and how his CDs can be a valuable gift to their customers instead of some cheap promotional item at Christmas. Bank of America just ordered 30,000 CDs of his to give away.

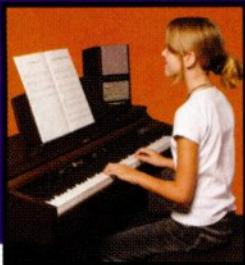
Second, another artist many of you know from the Music Strategies Seminars and an artist I have been working with for the last few years, is Melissa Worthington. Recently, Melissa decided to release her own audio book which focuses on the different obstacles in life that a lot of people who are her fans deal with. She has found that by communicating her thoughts about how her fans can get through some of the problems in her life, she is selling six times more of her audio books to her fans that are already familiar with her music. By knowing the people on her mailing list she has developed a new product that they want and it communicates to them the messages in her songs.

Your fans want to be connected to you because of the messages in your songs, not the music. Sure they like your music but they are bonding to you because of the lyrics, your insights and the common experiences you both share. By getting to know the people on your mailing list and making notes of the conversations you have with them at your shows and when you are out promoting, you are creating a relationship with them where they want to come to your shows and buy your CDs to support you.

If you aren't selling thousands of CDs a year at your live shows and through your Web site and mailing list, it's a sign that you haven't spent the time you need to get to know the people on your mailing list! Once you do, you will see more sales and the true impact your music has on people.

Tim Sweeney is a musician and writer who can be found online at www.TSAMusic.com.

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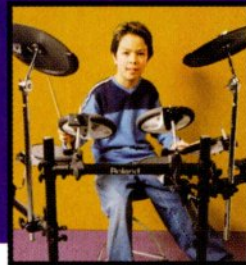
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Shania Twain Presents The First Of The CARAS' Band Aid Grants

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Shania Twain was honoured to present on behalf of CARAS, stating, "Music education is vital to our development."

CARAS, the producers of the Juno Awards, created the Band Aid program in 1997 to support music education. The \$10,000 grants were received in the form of musical instruments to schools with great musical potential in need of funding.

Over 125 applications were received from schools in need across Canada this year. Thanks to MasterCard's generous support and commitment to the importance of music education for Canadian youth, CARAS increased the number of Band Aid grants awarded this year. Kevin Stanton, President of MasterCard Canada said "MasterCard is pleased to continue working with CARAS again this year to bring priceless moments and positive difference to hundreds more school children nationwide."

CARAS' Music Education Committee selected the schools based on the greatest need in a list of criteria that included: dedication of school staff; community support and fundraising abilities; inventory and condition of instruments; economic need; number of students; and overall impact the grant would make within the school and the community.

Including the 2004/2005 grants, CARAS will have donated nearly a million dollars to music programs. For details on the CARAS' Music Education program visit www.carasonline.ca.



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The Salads Go Wild

The Salads have recently released their first full length DVD *Band Gone Wild* on December 21, 2004.

The DVD featuring a full-length concert, four videos, studio footage, and a ton of private footage shot by the band over the last 15 years (!), is full of crazy antics, mischief, shenanigans, and all the unexpected high jinks expected from the band. A sneak preview of the live concert was aired on Viewers Choice in the days leading up to the release of the DVD.

The founding members Chuck Dailey (bass), Grant Taylor (drums), and lead songwriter Dave Ziemba (guitar) are not strangers to the indie music scene. Since their pre-teen years they have been obsessed with Van Halen and Metallica. When Mista D (Darren Dumas) joined the band in 1999, the band added high-energy rock n' roll to ska, metal, reggae, and a dash of punk.

The Salads have found their success by taking their music outside the conventional box. Much of their success can be link to the GM Ring In & Win Commercial campaign that aired during the Olympics and World Cup Hockey featuring an unreleased track by the Salads. The track featuring the catchy lyrics "Today Is Your Lucky Day" is available exclusively on the *Band Gone Wild* DVD.

In addition, their hit song "Get Loose" was featured in the 2004 Canadian movie *Euro Trip* and in some of the Labatt Blue TV commercials.

The Salads have gained a notable reputation over the past two years winning awards including Favourite Rock Group (Canadian Music Week), Breakthrough Artist (Canadian Radio Music Awards) and the 2003 CASBY Award for the Best Independent Record.

For more information on The Salads check out www.thesalads.com



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All bands and artists who submitted packages on time are eligible to win the 102.1 Edge New Rock Search Showcase 2005 and the Galaxie Rising Star Award. In addition, the artists selected for the showcase will all be eligible and judged by the attending audiences for the NXNE/Universal Music Canada Fan Choice Award at the end of the festival.

Over the years, fans have been witness to breakout performances from artists such as Sam Roberts, k-os, DKT/MC5, Sarah Harmer, Ambulance Ltd., Gord Downie and many more.

The NXNE Industry Conference also offers music business education through their panels, roundtables, workshops, seminars, and exciting and sometimes controversial speakers.

For more details visit, www.nxne.com



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Guitar Workshop Plus Adds West Coast Session

Due to popular demand, Guitar Workshop Plus ... Bass, Drums and Keyboard has added an additional session in Vancouver, BC. Guitar Workshop Plus is designed for everyone from teenagers, adult hobbyists and professional musicians. It is a unique, healthy, non-competitive environment for intense musical growth for musicians ages 12 to adults from all backgrounds.

All courses are offered at the Beginner and Advanced level, with styles including blues, jazz, rock, acoustic and classical. Students learn from the daily hands-on classes, late afternoon clinics (songwriting, improvisation, vocal, etc.), ensemble performances, and evening concerts.

Both sessions one and two will remain in Toronto at Appleby College in Oakville, just west of Toronto, with the third session at the University of BC.

The program's administration has been organizing and directing music workshops across North America for 10 years. The additional location and session illustrates the popular demand of the program, which sold out last year.

In addition to the already astounding faculty, artists such as Robben Ford, Rik Emmett, Randy Bachman, Andy Summers (The Police), Mike Stern, Lorne Lofsky, Yngwie Malmsteen, Larry Coryell, John Knowles, and John Abercrombie have worked and continue to work with the administration.

Sessions one and two in Toronto will run July 17-22, 2005 and July 24-29, 2005 respectively. Session three in Vancouver will run August 15-20, 2005. Resident and non-resident tuitions are available and registration has already begun for 2005.

For more information on the Guitar Workshop Plus ... Bass, Drums and Keyboard programs, visit www.guitarworkshop-plus.com


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Sonar 4 Producer Edition

by Alec Watson

It doesn't seem all that long ago that Cakewalk made a good little program called Pro Audio. Their versions of Pro Audio 7, 8 and 9 gave owners of PC computers a good platform to record on – at a good price. It *certainly* wasn't going to make Mac snobs owners change platforms, but it was good value for money. A couple of years ago, the folks over at Cakewalk decided to change the program name to Sonar. With this change came some innovations, such as being able to use "Acid-ized" loops right inside the digital audio program (easily) which, at the time, made Sonar a bit of an innovation leader. The audio engine was also completely rewritten.

Shortly after the introduction of Sonar however, not to be outdone, new innovations such as surround sound and higher sample rates started to show up on other audio programs; this kind of left Sonar a little behind; placing Sonar once again as a "good product" at a good price. That has just changed.

I have spent a good few hours with Sonar 4 and can report back, with certainty, that the latest incarnation of Cakewalk's flagship recording program is a serious professional recording tool. Let me qualify this review by mentioning that the new manual is over 700 pages long! In other words, this program has a lot of depth that I can't possibly cover in any significant detail. I will however expound on what I found to be highlights that have shown up in this new version.

Sonar 4 Producer Edition has added 36 different varieties of surround sound mixing (I didn't know that there was more than about 6). Not only can you place your tracks (and automate them with a joystick) in a 3-dimensional surround space, they have added fully compliant surround plug-ins: the Lexicon Pantheon reverb is now a *surround* reverb (and a good one at that) as well as a Sonitus multi-channel surround compressor and a "Surround Bridge" that enables you to utilize stereo plug-ins in the surround field.

The audio engine has seen some positive changes on this new edition too. No longer limited to "measly" 24-bit/96 kHz recording, Sonar 4 can record sample rates up to 500 kHz.

Incidentally, having heard that the audio engine is more efficient, I was very surprised that one of my mixes that used around 45 per cent of Pentium 4 processor power in Sonar 3 was running up at around 90 per cent in Sonar 4! It turns out that the addition of POW-r Dithering (which can be turned on and off) uses up a fair amount of processor power. There are three different POW-r algorithms; the default algorithm is the most CPU intensive. Of course, when I turned off the dithering, as expected, my CPU usage went way down ... So how 'bout this POW-r dithering? Well, I have received many e-mails in the past when I have suggested that recording in 24-bit, especially on a track that is going to be squashed

with compression to within an inch of its life, may not be all its cracked up to be. Especially when you have to add noise to dither it down to 16 bits for CD. However, I have some very well respected friends down at Masterfonics in Nashville that swear by Pow-r dithering ... and if it is good enough for Masterfonics...

New Features

The new features list is abundant, here are some of my favourites:

Track folders – anyone that ever worked on Sonar, that was used to Pro Tools was always looking for better organization of tracks. Sonar 4's new track folders answer this complaint admirably.

Audio editing has had some work done to it too. Users of Nuendo have always had a legitimate claim that audio editing in that program was more powerful than in Sonar. That too has been corrected. In fact, if you are used to key commands from Pro Tools, Nuendo, Logic etc. you will find that they have made templates for Sonar 4 to make your life easy.

Another past complaint I have had with Sonar was its time stretching capability. It has always been able to do it, it just didn't sound good. I have always exported files to other programs in order to get the best audio quality out of time stretching. Apparently I won't be doing that again, Sonar has added Prosoniq MPEX3 time scaling. The time stretching and pitch shifting capabilities are now *very* good.

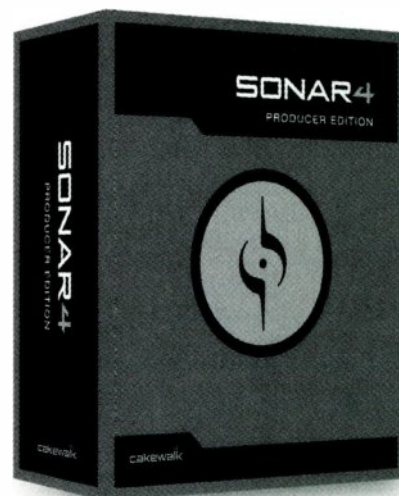
For the full list of changes in Sonar 4 check out Cakewalk's Web site at www.cakewalk.com.

Conclusion: Sonar 4 is a major upgrade. This program has a LOT of depth. Cakewalk has created some excellent new innovations, borrowed good techniques from other programs and added some strong audio improvements. Yes, you are still going to have complaints from Mac owners when you want to exchange tracks between platforms; it can be done, but it is still not a *cakewalk*. Other than that shortcoming, there are now NO excuses for not being able to make outstanding recordings on this very professional recording software ... to the folks at Cakewalk – very well done!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$959.

For more production information, contact: Thinkware Canada, 109 Woodbine Downs Blvd., #12, Etobicoke, ON M9W 6Y1 (416) 798-4293, FAX (416) 798-1755, information@thinkware.com, www.thinkware.com.

Alec Watson is a producer/engineer in Nanaimo, BC. He can be reached at Alec@Vinsynch.com.



Manufacturer's Response

Regarding Alec's comments about getting complaints from Mac owners, Sonar does support OMF import/export, as well as Broadcast WAV files, which makes this a fairly painless process. In addition, Sonar 4 allows you to quickly export each track to a separate file, and each file is padded with silence if the track does not start at time 0 – this makes it a breeze to import and automatically align tracks in any other program.

Morten Saether
Product Manager, Cakewalk



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World Radio History

Sonor Giant Step Middle Pedal

by Chris Taylor-Munro

Sonor currently offers 11 pedals; 6 from its regular series of hardware (P233, P433, DP492S, DP492SL (left version), P693 and DP692) that come standard with each line of its drumkits respectively and 5 from its standalone flagship line, the Giant Step Series. They include the Twin Effect (heel and toe action footboards), Single, Double (both left and right), Triple (combination of double and twin effect) and the subject of this test, the Middle Pedal. Each of the Giant Step models is different in its playing application, but equal in Sonor's high quality of execution. You should be able to find a pedal for your needs with such a large selection.

With Thomas Lang's recent cross-country clinic tour he aptly demonstrated the complex rhythms you can play and stressed the creative aspect of having your feet as technically proficient as your hands. The Giant Step pedals are smooth, quiet and very precise due to their excellent machining, assembly and design characteristics. Standard features for the line include Sonor's "Docking Station" that clamps on to your bassdrum and stays there. It uses an Allen key (provided) to fasten to the hoop, which is a bit cumbersome, but thankfully you only have to attach once and you're done with it. It stayed solid with no wiggle wobble action over time. The pedals themselves attach to the docking station via the "Smart Connect" system, a ball and socket connection that uses a lever to secure the pedal in place. The system works well and is of even greater value should you have to make a pedal switch mid set for the dreaded unforeseen emergency. The beater cams can be independently adjusted without changing the footboard angle. The spring mounts use speed needle bearings contributing to the input response and quiet operation ... no squeaks or rattles here. The bottom fitting for the spring is on a pendulum that rocks back and fourth on roller bearings providing less friction and negating any loss of energy. Accommodating different shoe sizes is a feature very useful to today's wide range of players. The toe stop has a travel range of almost two inches and the heel plate and footboard on the Twin Effect pedal can be positioned to fit your foot just so. Each of the footboards is mounted on speed roller bearings for effortless motion. The base plate is heavy enough and provides good grip on most surfaces, as it is both rubberized and has Velcro patches for carpet. Sonor gives you the option of silent chain driven or silent strap driven standard with the clips and straps tucked away in the heavy-duty nylon-carrying bags. The Middle Pedal comes with two bags.

My first impression of the Middle Pedal was a



good one as it was easily put together within five minutes of pulling it out of the cases. I was, however, skeptical of why Sonor developed the pedal in the first place, but that changed once I placed it on the floor and began experimenting with it. The action is the best I've ever felt. The left and right are seamless and perfectly symmetrical. The connecting arm from each of the pedals is about half the length of a typical double pedal and that makes all the difference. Less energy exerted and less energy lost in reaction time from pedalboard to the beater striking the head. The standard beaters are reversible (felt or rubber), somewhat light, but pack a good punch and should hold up well. You can accessorize the pedal with your choice of felt, wood, rubber or acrylic beaters to customize your sound and feel. Having the pedal boards out to each side allows your snare drum to sit dead centre, lined up with your bass drum. Drummers need not worry if you're a "lefty" or a "righty" as this pedal does not care. Thomas Lang mentioned drummers seem particularly thrilled from a visual standpoint as you can see both feet in action from the audience. One "quip" I have is you must be aware of your snare stand, specifically the basket height adjustment. I had to raise it half an inch to accommodate the beaters directly beneath my snare. This may only pose a problem for players who sit lower to begin with. With three sections to the pedal picking it up and moving it around is awkward as you only have two hands. Best to detach the components and that way your not putting any undue stress on the pedal's arms and joints. The last comment I'll make concerns price. The Middle Pedal is not cheap, but with such a finely tuned piece of

gear it may be the last pedal you ever buy.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the Sonor Giant Step is \$1,995, although the street price may be considerably less according to Coast Music.

For more product information, contact: Coast Music, 21000 Trans-Canada Hwy., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457-0055, info@coastmusic.com, www.jamindustries.com.

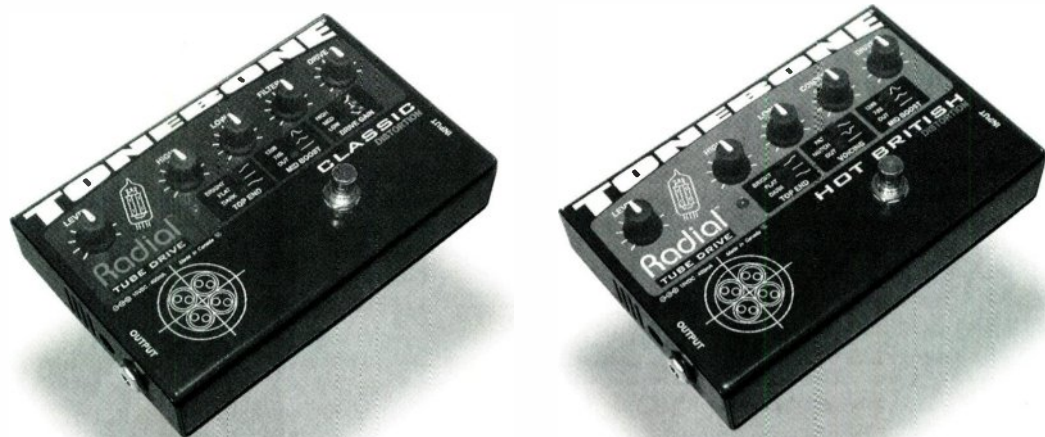
Musician Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based freelance writer who drummed for Hydrofoil and David Usher/Moist.

Distributor's Comments

We'd like to thank Chris for his thorough review of the Giant Step Middle Pedal. As he points out, the Giant Step Series Pedals offer a very diverse range of applications and possibilities. Many players have found them to be "ready for action" right out of the box using the factory settings. Thanks to the docking station and smart-connect system, they have received a lot of praise from drummers on the road for their speedy set ups and dependability. In addition to the pedal tested, the complete range of Sonor pedals from 200 series to Giant Step is available in Canada.

Scott Atkins
Product Manager & Canadian Artist Relations,
Sonor Canada

Radial Tonebone Classic & Hot British



by Mike Turner

Radial Engineering are a Canadian company dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in tone. Seems like such a simple statement right? Well, when you get the chance to play around with the Tonebone line of pedals you start to get the picture in terms of the lengths they are willing to go to. The specific pedals in question here are the "Hot British" and "Classic" Tonebones, and rest assured, they are among the best distortion pedals you are likely to find. Both pedals have phenomenal build quality and feature true bypass as well as a single 12AX7 tube to give the unmistakable tube signature that make these such good units. Because of the tubes these pedals do not use a battery and only run using the included 15 Volt wall wart. I tested them using a 1980 Les Paul Studio Standard with PAFs and a Tom Anderson Guitarworks hollow T Classic with the standard Tele pickup configuration going into either a '95 Mesa Boogie Trem-o-verb 2 x 12 combo or a Matchless DC 30 2 x 12 combo.

The "Classic" is the more reserved of the two but don't let that fool you into thinking that it lacks aggression. I'd guess that this was designed to emulate the vintage tube combo sound of a tweed Champ or Bassman. There are five pots; Level, High, Low Filter and Drive and three multi-position switches, Top End, Mid Boost and Drive Gain. The Level and Drive pots are just what you expect, kind of a preamp power amp relationship where the drive is the amount of dirt and level is the volume of the overall output. One note at this point, these things are HOT! There's a ton of gain so don't try anything too radical right off the bat. The High and Low controls are again self evident as to their function, in tech talk they are post distortion active tone controls that boost or cut 14.5dB from 12 o'clock position. High is active at 4.3 kHz and Low operates at 100 Hz. This leaves the Filter pot which sounds like a low pass filter. This lets you compensate for anything overly bright be it amp or guitar. Next up are the three multi-position switches: Top End, Mid Boost and Drive Gain. The Drive Gain control gives you the choice of three ranges of gain that the Gain pot attenuates, from a gentle grind all the way up to gobs of gain and sustain for as long as

you want! Top End tailors the highs in a very musical and intuitive way, just like you'd expect by the position labels, Bright (+6.5dB @ 10 kHz) offers a nice addition of "air" in the upper harmonics. Flat (flat ... duh!) does nothing ... what were you expecting? Dark (-6dB @ 1.8 kHz) is exactly that ... dark and a more dramatic change than the bright position. The Mid Boost switch is pretty aggressive, but in a really usable way. The greater the boost amount, the higher in the midrange the boost occurs. The 7dB setting is actually +6dB @ 390 Hz (interesting choice of name...) and the 12dB setting is +12dB @ 620 Hz the Out setting bypasses the circuit (once again ... duh) I found that it really thickened up the single coils and made the PAFs just sing, great for a nice "vocal" kind of solo sound. One very telling thing that I heard with the Classic is that with careful adjustment it was able to retain the character and volume of the original tone. All of the original definition was kept and you could tailor just the type of distortion that you added, almost like a layer on top of your tone instead of the more typical A-B total replacement a distortion pedal usually performs. This has always marked the real attention to detail from a pedal maker.

In use the Classic is a great unit and with a street price of just \$229 US you will not be let down, I promise. The Hot British's manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$229 US as well.

The Hot British is the more 'slamming' of these two pedals and if I were to guess again, I'd have to go with the "big stack" as the inspiration for this pedal. Think modded Marshall or even Soldano and you're in the ball park here. The five pots are the same in name and function except that Contour replaces the Filter control and that the Gain control is a lot hotter, almost as though there is only the highest level of gain structure available on the Classic. The Top End and Mid Boost switches are the same but the other switch gives the Hot British its own character. The Voicing switch has a bypass position (guess what it does...), a Scooped position and a Fat position. The Scooped is a mid-cut passive filter and the Fat is a mid-boost passive filter. This is where the Contour pot comes into play by dialing in the centre fre-

quency that the filters boost or cut. The Hot British is definitely capable of more of the contemporary guitar tones, detune or bring your 7-string and get way down low! The level of "thump" is just earth shaking. Once again the definition is very impressive especially considering the level of gain we're talking about. Even if you choose to voice chords fairly wide, the Hot British won't turn them into mud. Both PAFs and single coil pickups loved the Hot British. In addition, I also feel confident saying that these will like any amp you feel like plugging them into!

Both pedals are great additions to your arsenal of distortion tones and, in all honesty, I wouldn't hesitate in recommending them.

For more product information, contact: Radial Engineering, 1638 Kebet Way, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 5W9 (604) 942-1001, FAX (604) 942-1010, info@radialeng.com, www.radialeng.com.

Mike Turner is a Toronto-based producer based at The Pocket Studios, www.thepocketstudios.com, who is also known as previously being Our Lady Peace's guitarist.

Manufacturer's Comments

Thanks for the great review! You are right: the Classic is designed to emulate the tone from great American amplifiers while the Hot British tends towards the overdriven English stack. I would like to point out that when you turn the volume down on the guitar, you will find that the tone cleans up like a real amp. This is critical to retaining the instrument's character and allows the players personal style to shine through. Finally, we work very hard at ensuring the pedals are quiet. Street price is around \$299 in Canada.

Peter Janis
President - C-Tec, Radial, Tonebone,
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Back To The Basics



guitar

In Michael Jordan's book *I Can't Accept Not Trying*, he states "Everything I did, everything I achieved, can be traced back to the way I approached the fundamentals and how I applied them to my abilities." He also writes: "The minute you get away from fundamentals the bottom can fall out."

[Jordan, Michael. *I Can't Accept Not Trying*. Michael Jordan on the Pursuit of Excellence. Copyright 1994 by Rare Air, Ltd. Text copyright 1994 by Michael Jordan. Harper Collins Publishers. NY]

This brings me back to a situation where several years ago, I was asked to play in a show band in the States. One of the band members was hailed as being the greatest bass player of his hometown. Needless to say I was really looking forward to playing with this guy, who not only ended up having great chops and some really good technique, but also could also really lock-in with the drummer. What puzzled me was that he seemed to make tons of mistakes and didn't always play what was appropriate for the song. One day while I was contemplating this situation, one of the other band members commented that the bass player's problem was that he didn't have a good grasp on the basics. This comment really stuck to me and I realized that that really was the problem.

As guitarists, we are always faced with an overwhelming feeling of needing to learn more new stuff; mastering the latest lick; bettering our technique; or finding our own signature sound. We feel a tremendous pressure to know it all and play it all, and do it in the shortest amount of time possible. Unfortunately this obsession can lead us to the all-familiar "jack of all trades, master of none"

syndrome. The old adage of "The quickest shortcut is usually the longest road" definitely applies to becoming a better guitarist. Over the years, my experience has led me to believe that our musical challenges, as a rule, are not a result of a lack of talent but a lack of understanding and working on the fundamentals.

At some point it's essential to zero in on our weak spots in order to discover the reason they exist. For example, we could take a look at technique. For most novice guitar players, once they have caught the soloing bug, they try to play all types of licks as quickly as possible in an attempt to demonstrate their dexterity on the neck. If they're not careful this can lead to a habit of sloppy technique. The truth of the matter is that in order to speed up you must slow down. If you want to be a speed demon you will need to learn how to play extremely slow and clean and then gradually (by using a metronome) incrementally increase your speed. One should never play above their ability to keep a musical passage clean. If technique is sloppy, it's simply because not enough time has been spent playing at a much slower pace. Having said that, speed is not a substitute for good taste and should basically be used within the right context.

Inadequate ear training is also an area that can create problems in our playing. Most guitarists limit their ear training to transposing songs off of CDs or learning to differentiate the different characteristics of chords like major, minor, dominants etc. Although this is a very important part of ear training, another aspect that should not be overlooked is learning to hear intervals. If you think of this for a moment you will realize that it is true, since all music is derived from intervals. Soling is actually playing horizontally (or across) from one interval to the next, while playing chords is playing intervals vertically or in a cluster. One of the best ways to improve your ears is to play a note on the guitar and then sing the intervals up the octave. This amazingly simple exercise not only allows you to internalize the intervals, but because you are using your own voice, lets you feel the vibrations that each interval creates. Soon you will be able to distinguish intervals in solos and chords with much more ease.

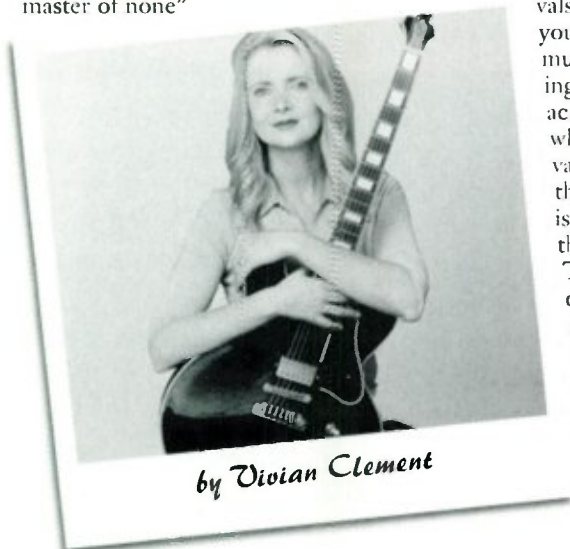
We should also examine the topic of improvisation. For most of us we learn how to solo

by memorizing scales. But how well do we really know these scales? A lot of times we just skimp over the surface and don't spend the necessary time to internalize scales and learn everything there is to know about them. For instance, it's a good practice to be able to sing scales that we are learning. Additionally, naming each note that belongs to the scale and its relationship to the tonic (or root note) is essential. Learning to write out the scales on manuscript is also beneficial as well as playing a scale on only one string (which allows you to see how the scale is laid out successively). Even though this does take time, it's much more effective to master one scale and know it inside out, than a lot of scales and only know them superficially.

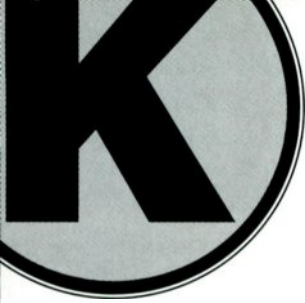
Consider the area of rhythmic proficiency. Working with a metronome (or a drum machine) is beyond a doubt the only way to learn how to keep constant time. If you think you don't suffer from time problems, try recording yourself for a few minutes playing a chord progression (without a metronome) and see how easy it is for your time to speed up or slow down. We could learn a lot from drummers who tediously work with a metronome, since they understand the importance of being able to play in time. (As a side note, it's easy to know if a drummer hasn't spent time with a metronome since his time will always waver.) A great exercise is taking a single note and playing it against a metronome, first using a whole note, then a half note, then a quarter note, then a triplet etc ... making sure your time aligns with the sound of the metronome. If you have a sequencer you can lay down a simple bass line with a drum beat and play chord progressions. These exercises allow you to focus on your time, which will translate into playing better with other musicians.

These are just a few examples of areas where studying the basics would be helpful as guitarists. The bottom line is that it's crucial to always review the basics and keep them in the forefront of learning. If you are struggling in an area, try breaking it down to its simplest form and buildup from there, seeing if this solves the problem. Ultimately, you will notice that strengthening the basics will cause your level of playing to rise to new heights.

Vivian Clement is a jazz/blues guitarist performing in the Toronto area and recording in her studio "Exodus Studios" in Mississauga, ON. Her Web site is www.vivianclement.com or www.exodusstudio.ca.



by Vivian Clement



Paring Down Your Performance

Keyboards

With the ever-increasing amount of possibilities available to us as keyboard players it's possible to get lost in the weeds occasionally when writing parts, recording or trying to recreate our work on stage. While there's nothing wrong with incredibly deep sounds and thick orchestrations, just because you can layer 25 different textures and FX to create a sound doesn't necessarily mean you should. Few tracks require a massive keyboard orchestra and if you throw everything you have at a track you risk beating the vibe of the song to death. When the options become overwhelming discipline yourself and focus on the basics: the melody, the central rhythm, the hook, what specific sounds fit the intent of the song – the things that will glue the keyboard track to the rest of the performances.

Recording

Serve the needs of the composition and the requirements of the producer/composer. Balance your natural desire as a player to stamp the piece with your style with a certain degree of diplomacy and tact. Whether you're recording, writing or trying to re-create a complex part, if you make it your goal to simplify your performance, to ultimately use fewer tracks and sounds, chances are you'll find it far easier to pull out the hooks.

Don't get married to a sound or line before you have a grip on what the song/producer/artist needs

Concentrate on the performance. Many people prefer not to lay FX to tape and would rather be able to explore options in the mix. That said sometimes getting the best performance recorded requires all the elements of the sound to survive to the mix; whenever possible record both MIDI and audio for reference. Your performance may very well get chopped up into pieces and reshuffled, your sounds changed, but if you have a solid audio reference at least you and the people you're working with will know where you started. Make it a strong, signature performance with a killer sound from the outset and that's less likely to happen, ultimately saving you and the producer/artist time and effort later.

Know when to shine. Different genres require different approaches. The subtle approach requires a more discerning ear – small sounds, simple melodies and harmonies lend themselves well both to dense

and sparse arrangements. Again, resist the temptation to chuck everything at a recording. Someone has to sift through it later and if they can't immediately define what struck them about your performance, maybe they'll just pull up their favourite plug-in and track something themselves.

Performance

The most automatic way to recreate a complex arrangement on stage is to use the original sounds and samples. When you're starting from scratch, regardless of the platform you're using, you'll likely find yourself doing a little legwork. If you can identify sounds as standard acoustic, electro-acoustic or synth sounds then perhaps not so much initially. Whether it's a string arrangement and a concert grand, an unholy mess of unusual samples, or a combination of all of the above you have to make some choices when you take it from the studio and drag it out on stage...

For complex textures – i.e. the 25 sounds layered together with 25 separate FX layered with the sample of someone banging a kitchen sink against another kitchen sink.

Use the tactics of your adversary against them. Start out with a mess of sounds layered across the keys, against a loop of the track or song and pare down, mixing and matching until you find something similar.

When you get into rehearsal, keep all those options handy, but try to pare down still more. Just as some sounds don't work in a track on record, some textures just don't translate well to the full band/live stage arena. Again, serve the needs of the song and the gig.

For complex arrangements a more methodical approach may be necessary.

A series of parts may sound more complex than they actually are. Identify what you can feasibly play first, be they samples or not layer the sonic elements of the main performance across zones of the keyboard that make sense.

Lose the dead weight: there's no sense knocking yourself out trying to play the clarinet trill that isn't really in the mix with one pinky. Anything you can't handle with two hands that's absolutely necessary – complex synth bits, deep orchestral arrangements – break them down so that you trigger them as individually as possible. Making your performance more flexible is a lifesaver

when things go awry on stage.

Improvise: Get as close as possible to the sounds, but take time to play around with versions of the song and don't be afraid to play fast and loose with sounds and arrangements to create a unique live version. It's a great way to breathe new life into a song.

As much as you might like to include all the bells and whistles and orchestral bits you put on record in the live show, sometimes it's not feasible or necessary. Bottom line, if it's a hook, if it enhances your performance in a meaningful way ... run samples, play to track, do what's necessary to get it on stage. That said, if you can play it live then why wouldn't you? There's no shame in running loops or additional parts under the band, but I still think it's shabby when the whole band stops playing to let some stock sound playing some hookless progression take over for the middle eight. If you've sold a million records and everybody in the audience expects it and there is absolutely no other way to deal with it, fine. If no one but your bandmates and family know your songs then find a way to *actually* play that section. Change the arrangement or find another person on stage with a free hand. If you can't then just kill it if nobody will notice. Save it for the arena tour.

Regardless of how you recreate the studio parts live, do so in a way that is designed to impress the crowd ... so they leave and go tell their friends what a killer live act you're in.

Kevin Young is a Toronto-based keyboardist best known for his work with David Usher and Moist.



by Kevin Young

Deconstructing Watt – Warming Up



with Mike Watt

CM continues its series of columns with legendary bassist Mike Watt...

Canadian Musician: Do you play more for groove or melody?

Mike Watt: Well, it's kind of like inhaling and exhaling; you have to do both at different times. There's a time to go out and times to go back. More and more I'm trying to get the bass to function more like a lyric. "This song's about a train, so you're singing about trains, so let's get it to sound like a train." That's what I was trying to do with "Big Train" [from 1995's *Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?*]. I was even trying to make the whistles. Obviously we don't have the same harmonic thing that the other instruments do with chords, so you have to find other ways. There's always a way to do it and that's what I've been investigating more and more as time goes on. Kids ask me now about how to write bass parts nowadays and I say that you can't always listen to the groove. Obviously the groove's important but also when you're going to go in a different direction you can give listeners cues that something's coming up. Like an on-ramp or off-ramp; a descending or ascending riff or something that presages a change. My test has always been that if the bass line suddenly wasn't there,

hopefully the song falls apart [laughing]. That's when you know you wrote a good bass line.

CM: Before you go onstage is there anything you do to warm up your hands?

MW: I play before I go on stage. I do some Stooges riffs, some – not overboard with the scales because real songs aren't just scales. There's not syncopation like you would use in a song, so I like to play little parts to Stooges songs because there's that groove aspect to bass that shouldn't be lost. That's the real thing that makes us nurturing. That's the thing that makes us the warm blanket around the band: we've got the groove. It's the same with a good drummer – he's got the groove and it makes everybody feel safe. There isn't any groove in a scale. That's what I do to warm up because falling into a groove is something that's difficult to do cold. Some guys can do it, others can't. Flea is between 45 minutes and an hour warming up. He's really gotten on himself to do that, he told me. He won't even be talking to other cats; he'll dedicate himself to that. I tend to talk to people because I'm nervous. I talk to my guys and it's normally right before and because normally I'm taking a nap in the boat [Watt's nickname for his van]. My guys usually come and get me right before we go on because I do all the driving. Actually the vibrations of the steering wheel help with the hurt in my hands. It's a sort of massage thing.

CM: What do you listen to when you're playing live?

MW: The drummer. The way I set up the Secondmen is such that I'm right on him. I bring everybody right to the front of the stage. I've got the kick drum almost against my leg so I'm hearing that beat and I'm not pointed straight at the crowd I'm pointed kind of like if I was on the bow of a boat and I can look the organ player right in the eye. One of the things I learned playing with Porno For Pyros is that eye contact is really a neat thing to get going. It's sort of like an invisible conductor. You can communicate that way. Being in Porno For Pyros was a great experience for me. You can't learn everything always being the boss. Sometimes it's good to be a deck hand; taking direction from someone else. Funny thing about Perry Farrell: when he's trying to teach you a song he won't tell you the chords, he'll tell you the story behind the song – like "Good God's Urge". Pete's dad got cancer and Pete asked God to take his life in place of his father's. So they started playing it and I really started following the vocal more than anything. I followed the melody. It was right in the moment. It was a trippy thing to do but in that band it was more like being part of an orchestra you know; I was helping facilitate a whole sound. It's not all about me. I mean there's something neat about the bass helping you out there anyway, but it was different in that context. Given bass is not an instrument that's totally upfront, falling back isn't too difficult but it was outside of the norm for me. That's how you learn though; you take yourself out of that comfortable environment and try things another way.

Next issue, Watt explains how to stay original as a bassist...

Etudes? Why Etudes At All?



I'm often asked by classically oriented flute players about how to approach learning jazz. Not surprisingly, they tend to feel that some sort of written etudes is the way to go. One asked me about some specific Yusef Lateef etudes with a question on how to play the 16th notes. "Should they be played straight or with a jazzy feel?" Well, I will begin by responding very narrowly...

In a jazz context, with any 8th note line, you must always aim for a relaxed altered triplet feel with some stress on the 2nd and 4th beats of the bar (and which beats correspond to the sox cymbal of the drum kit). Classical players – in fact, most players – have to make a troublesome adjustment in *not* relying on the strong beats of the bar (1 and 3) as points of rhythmic reference and work through a "phase shift" focusing on the less stable – but more important – beats of the bar (2 and 4) ... and learn to work the metronome accordingly. This can prove frustrating at first – but there really is no alternative.

Now, I don't believe in practicing 16th note etudes, or anything at even a semblance of high speed, when learning jazz. (I don't even like the look of things that are documented in 16th notes.) Most musical things can be set out clearly and plainly in 8th notes and worked at moderate tempos to achieve the desired results. Also, it is important to recognize that, initially, precision is far more important than speed. With precision, and time, speed will come. In fact, sometimes I have to get classical players to recognize that, even for jazz, they have to practice scales with absolute precision at very moderate tempos if they are ever to stand a chance of performing well in jazz situations. (Note: Technical standards don't necessarily diminish just because it's NOT classical music.)

You must also practice scales on a modal basis (i.e., starting on each chord tone as well as each non-chord tone) and adorn them slightly with a bebop passing note in order to even up the scale (i.e., so the chord tones will line up with the down beats). And, once again, precision is the key here – not speed. Oh, and while you're at it, *listen* to the sound of each of the modes! Don't run them up and down mindlessly. Think about them ... about how they sound ... about how they feel ... and about how they tie into the implied harmonies/tonalities.

How About Another Approach?

Rather than practice page after page of etudes that you can never hope to use in a solo anyway, it's more sensible, as well as being more beneficial to take very small 2-, 3-, perhaps 4-bar phrases (typically II-V-I patterns) that catch your ear from solos that you are listening to closely and also transcribing. (Note: Transcription is an important part of the learning process!) However, if your ear is not strong enough to lift things yet, then track down the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* and work some of his phrases/cadences (at manageable tempos, of course!) very carefully, through ALL of the keys. Then gradually accelerate them, again through ALL of the keys with absolute precision, always practicing with the metronome on beats 2 and 4. I guarantee you that, if you choose just three or four pithy Bird phrases and work them through ALL of the keys in the manner I have suggested, you will be amazed at how far down the jazz road just this single exercise will take you! However, you must listen carefully to how Bird plays those phrases and mimic him as closely as you can. All of this requires time and patience. But it is extremely formative! Why, I admit that even now, this is the *only* form of "technical" exercise that I ever do anymore. I no longer practice scales, at all...

What About An Even Better Alternative?

In terms of starting jazz on an instrument like the flute (and this goes for doublers as well), an even better alternative is to simply look at the instrument in a completely different way. Pretend it isn't a flute at all. Start to see it as something else entirely. Let your backbone slip. And get a Ray Charles record! Start playing along with it and match every inflection he makes with his voice on the flute! Now you're really talking!



by Bill McBirnie

This is unquestionably the best advice I can give. Ray Charles is a far more relevant starting point than any "etude"! Besides, approaching jazz in this way is not only fun. It is absolutely *the* most formative introductory exercise in terms of developing a good mind-set – especially for an instrument that is perceived to be (and let's face it, is) as wimpy as the flute. I have surprised a lot of students with demonstrations at lessons and helped to get them "out of their shell" with just one cut (any cut) from a Ray Charles record.

In summary, any serious jazz flute student should get away from the notion that learning "etudes" is a meaningful way to approach jazz. It isn't. Indeed, etudes will only...take you away from the music...

Of course, if you insist on learning "etudes", then work on ones that *are* relevant. For example, pick a few bebop heads and practice then relentlessly until you have them completely under control. A lot of the essential melodic and rhythmic elements that you need to learn are right there before your eyes for you to hear. At the same time as you work these bebop heads through, you are also learning some good tunes!

Bill McBirnie is a jazz and Latin flute specialist located in Toronto. He has been chosen Flut-ist of the Year, Jazz Report Awards and, more recently, was a winner in the National Flute Association's triennial Jazz Flute Master Class Competition. He has produced two Extreme Flute projects as well as a recent CD with The Mark Eisenman Trio entitled, Nature Boy. All three of these CDs are available at www.indiepool.com/extremeflute. If you would like to contact Bill directly, you may reach him at billmcb@idirect.com.

The 4 T's Part II

Memorize Tunes

It is important to memorize tunes for two reasons. One, every jazz player needs to have a repertoire of tunes that she can play without resorting to a fake book. This shared repertoire allows a group of jazz players to get on the stand, call a tune, and start to play. This amazes people who do not understand jazz, that we can 'spontaneously' play music. It is because we have a common understanding of the framework of a tune, and how to create within that framework.

Two, the primary goal of a jazz improviser is to compose new melodies. To learn what makes a good melody, study songs that have stood the test of time (standards). When you learn a tune, learn the correct melody, preferably from several sources. Always try to have both a recording and a lead sheet for a tune that you are learning, comparing the way the melody was originally written with at least one player's interpretation of it. It is best to learn tunes from vocalists, since their use of words promotes good phrasing. Besides, a melody is quicker to learn with words than without, and it will be easier to recall the melody if you can think of the words. You will always play a tune better if you know the words.



Develop Key Fluency (Transpose)

A jazz player must be comfortable in all keys, since any chord might occur at any time. For most players there are roughly seven or eight 'easy' key signatures, and four or five 'hard' keys. They are not really harder, just less familiar. To improve your key fluency, take a short phrase, lick or pattern through 12 keys every day. This may seem onerous at first, but you will get better at it quickly. Think of the melody as chord tones, this translates quickly into all keys. When you learn a tune, play the melody up and down a half step from the original key. This ensures that you really know the tune, and forces you to deal with some of the less-familiar key signatures.

Study Theory And Harmony

This is where aspiring jazz players often start out – learning about scales and chords. Frequently, it is where they give up, as the whole process seems just too complicated and academic. While it is crucial that a jazz musician understands music theory, it should be taught in a practical context, always associating a sound with the theory. Being told that the notes of a Cm9 chord are C-E^b-G-B^b-D is just rote memorization. Playing those notes on the horn while the piano plays the chord provides immediate gratification and an understanding of the sound, rather than the theory that explains the sound. For starters, concentrate on the following three scales and chords. They will get you through most standard tunes, and will help you play through the ubiquitous II-V-I progression.

- Major scale/Major Seven Chords
- Mixolydian scale/Dominant Seven chords (lower the 7th note in both scale and chord)
- Dorian scale/Minor Seven chords (lower the 7th and 3rd notes in both scale and chord)

There is your strategy for learning to improvise. Follow the 4-T's, listen to music every day, and take every opportunity to improvise.

Chase Sanborn is a trumpet player, teacher and author based in Canada. He is a familiar face in the recording studios and jazz clubs of Toronto, and is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T. His books, Jazz Tactics and Brass Tactics explore the world of jazz improvisation and brass playing, offering real-world advice with a casual, humorous dialog. Coming soon: the Jazz Tactics DVD, featuring the Chase Sanborn Quartet. For more information, visit www.chasesanborn.com.

Drum And Bass Mixing



digital music

I am likely to earn myself some grief here, but I gotta say that my preferred approach to mixing drums and bass, the foundation of a groovy track, is not exactly old school. Of course, I have an admiration for a really well played, unedited, acoustic track (in the old days these were sometimes played by bands – use a dictionary here if needed). As an engineer and listener however, not only do I have an appreciation for an impossibly well-played track, but there is something I love about the pureness of tone and placement that can only be achieved through artificial means. So in a complete dismissal of all audio purists, here is a great technique to tighten up that big bad bottom!

I like to shoot for “aural fantasy,” which strangely makes me think of the covers of those pseudo-soft-porn men’s periodicals popping up in the grocery store these days. We all know that the scantily clad women gracing the covers of these magazines have been airbrushed, but how many of us can actually see the airbrushing? If you can, do you look at the airbrushing, or do you look at the bronze beauty? This whole concept is somewhat analogous to the effect that

moving time can achieve with the rhythm section of a recording. The technique of nudging notes left or right I like lovingly refer to as “turd-polishing.”

Like building a house, you need to start with a solid foundation – the kick drum and bass. Working with just these two tracks, zoom in tight so that you can easily see the waveforms. I like to cut each bass note and place it just behind the transient of the kick (a well-played track means much less cutting and moving of course). This allows the transient and upper harmonics of the kick’s attack to come punching through your speakers before the bass note starts to ring.

If the bass guitar precedes a kick, the punch in the track is lost.

In the mix, you might not hear that the bass is ahead of the kick, but this beat will noticeably lack the punch of a bass note sitting behind the kick transient. Conversely, if the bass note is too late, the attack becomes too long to be punchy or becomes a separate note. A little experimentation here is good, as this can sometimes be a nice effect, giving the track a relaxed quality.

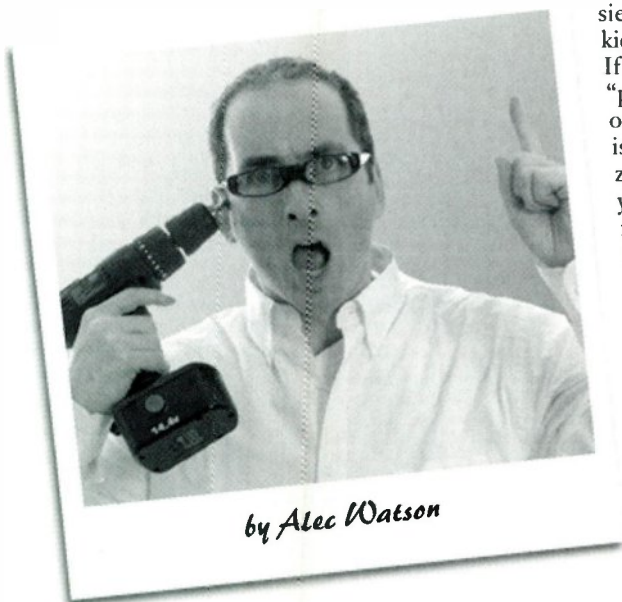
The real magic happens when the two instruments blend to become a single punchy low-end transient that transforms from a kick into a thick fat bass note. If you are a real stickler for “perfection” and have LOTS of time on your hands, there is something to be said for zooming in really tight on your kick and bass waveforms and making sure the transients of both instruments are “in phase.” I

strongly recommend finding a niece or nephew that you can trust and bribe with ice cream to do this tedious task ... if they mess up even on note: “No ice cream for you!”

In attempting to phase align the two tracks, you are not likely to get all the peaks and valleys to line up because the bass wavelengths are going to vary with frequency. The important ones to line up are the early ones where the amplitude is highest. The science here lies in the fact that these waveforms represent the voltage output from your digital to analog converters. If you prefer a more “physical model,” these waves symbolize the direction your speakers are going to be pushed (the flat line in the centre being the zero crossing where the speaker sits at rest). On a vast number of systems these frequencies are going to be played by a mono subwoofer. As the subwoofer can only go one direction at one time, if the bass and kick waves are in phase (pushing in the same direction) the mix is going to be much punchier than that of a mix with a bass and kick that are out of phase. Unfortunately, this magical fix is not going to save bad tone and sloppy playing.

In closing, I would like to point out to the percussive purists (drummers) that I didn’t even mention lining the kick drum up with the click track before going on to align the bass. Only an engineer that believes the covers of *Maxim* and *Stuff* are works of art would do such a thing! Hmm...

Alec is a producer/engineer in Nanaimo, BC. He can be reached at Alec@Vinsynch.com.



by Alec Watson

V

Be It, Feel It, Love It, Live It

vocals

In this article, I would like to talk about the true dedication that is required to become a singer. What dedication you may ask? How is my life going to change?

The truth is that most people either don't understand what it takes to be a professional singer or aren't willing to offer the level of commitment necessary. Too many people think that all they have to do is open their mouth and sing and that will automatically make them a professional singer. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would like to identify four areas in which you have to be committed in order to become a truly professional singer: physical conditioning, vocal training, emotional openness and ensuring that you are doing everything for the right reasons.

As I have mentioned in other articles, being a professional singer is very similar to being a professional athlete and it demands a certain amount of physical fitness. Do you have to have huge muscles and not an ounce of body fat? No, but you should aim to keep as lean a physique as possible and should have strong abdominal muscles in order to be able to give physical support to the sound you are producing. More importantly, you need to maintain a fairly strict diet. Love milk? Well, as a singer you really need to avoid dairy products – as they clog you up with mucous which is definitely the opposite of what you want to achieve. In fact, any of the minerals and vitamins that you have been getting from dairy products can be found in other foods. I know it's hard – some of you probably love cheese or ice cream – but you will have to give it up for the sake of your goal. Keep your body clean, free of mucous and your voice will reflect exactly that.

Another serious commitment that you must make if you wish to become a professional singer is a commitment to learn how to properly use your voice. The obvious reason is that you will be a better singer and will learn how to play "your instrument" in the same manner as any other musician playing their instruments. The other obvi-

ous reason is to learn how to safely use your voice in order to prevent yourself from ever damaging it due to incorrect technique. As I've mentioned in most other fields, training is a prerequisite. If you are a professional or aspiring basketball player, figure skater, ballerina or sprinter you have a coach who assists you in being the best you can be. The same should be true for singers as well. If you are truly committed to becoming a professional singer, professional coaching is a necessity and not a luxury. After all, if you want to become a professional engineer, you will have to go to university for several years. By the time you receive your degree, you will have probably spent at least \$30,000-50,000. But you are also hoping that once you find a job, you will make back your investment within your first year of working and for the rest of your life you will be gaining a pure profit from your education. Why should it be any different for a *professional singer*? The word *professional* implies trained, educated, and certified. Is this worth your investment? Definitely!

There is another important commitment that many aspiring singers are often very apprehensive about: exposing their inner selves to the outside world. I always tell my students that to be a complete performer, one of most important pieces of the puzzle, if not the most important, is having the ability and willingness to share who you are as a person with the audience. All the greatest singers make an emotional connection with their audience through their singing. When I take on a new student I start out by teaching them the technical aspects of singing. Once they have mastered vocal technique and no longer have to consciously worry about staying in key, etc., I work with them on developing the emotional component of their singing. When this happens I actually feel like I am working as both a vocal coach and psychologist. This can be very difficult because a large portion of the population subverts their natural charisma and personality and it can be very hard to "free a person's spirit." Furthermore, you do not only need to share yourself with the audience, but



by Diana Yampolsky

also have something worth sharing. Singers need to lead inspired lives. Pull yourself away from the computer at least long enough that you might fall in love or get your heart broken or develop a close friendship.

The final commitment that you need to make should be relatively easy for you: putting singing above everything else because you love it. Be obsessed with it, strive to get better, and perform every performance like you are performing in front of thousands of adoring fans. Furthermore, sing for the right reasons and not because of a desire for money or fame. Only one in a million becomes a Celine Dion or George Michael, regardless of talent. For this reason, you need to be doing it purely because you love it. Of course, it's a wonderful thing if you do sell millions of records and I am in no way trying to convince you to not strive for commercial success. But if you truly love singing and are committed to being the best singer you can be, it will be reflected in your performance and will actually enhance your chances of selling millions of your CDs.

Diana Yampolsky is a vocal instructor based in Toronto at the Royans School for the Musical Performing Arts, located online at www.vocalscience.com. Her second book, Vocal Science II – Flight from the Virtual Music to Reality, will be available soon.

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World Radio History

The EVOLUTION OF How Ron Sexsmith



by Karen Bliss

Photos by Roy Timm

of a SONGWRITER: Learned To Write Songs ... and really doesn't care if he ever has another hit-



With *Retriever*, Ron Sexsmith's latest album, the Toronto musician, whose songs have been covered by everyone from Rod Stewart to k.d. lang, declares in his bio: "With a few of the tracks, I think I've finally figured out how to write a chorus!"

It's an unusual statement for a guy, who is viewed primarily as a singer-songwriter, and who writes on a daily basis, without fail, for fear of losing the skill. He is, we're certain, being too hard on himself. However, as well-respected and beloved as he is, Sexsmith finally has his first top 5 radio hit at AC with "Whatever It Takes", and the follow-up, "Not About To Lose", has entered the top 30.

"I have written choruses in the past, but I don't think it was my forte," Sexsmith explains, in the front room of his Toronto house, sitting at the Doherty piano his drummer, Don Kerr, gave him, now adorned with such precious items as a Christmas card from his childhood hero-turned-fan Elton John, and a 2002 Genie Award for best original song for "Love Is Free" from the film *The Art Of Woo*.

He starts singing the chorus to Sheryl Crow's "Every Day Is A Winding Road" to illustrate that he's never written anything potential consumers can happily belt even if they don't know the verses. "I never wrote that way. Like 'Strawberry Blonde' (on 1997's *Other Songs*) doesn't have a chorus, just a line at the end of the verse that I repeat."

That changed when Sexsmith was on tour with Coldplay behind his last album, 2002's *Cobblestone Runway*, for which frontman Chris Martin appeared on the track "Gold In Them Hills". Every night, Sexsmith would watch the British band perform songs with "big grandiose choruses" and it began rubbing off.

"I started writing 'Not About To Lose' and that's all I had – this 'not about to lose,' line, Sexsmith recounts, singing the melody.

"Chris heard me writing it when I was in my dressing room and he poked his head in the door and said, 'What's that? Play it for me.' And he said, 'Wow that sounds like a hit.' People had always said really nice things about my songs, but no one had ever said that before. That excited me."

Sexsmith had choruses "here and there," on his previous albums. "I just hadn't had as many of them in one place before," he quips.

He's a "compulsive" songwriter, trying every

day to work on something that he's started. What's extraordinary is not only the great catalogue of songs in his head by other composers (he once sang a dozen Bob Dylan songs by heart at a tribute concert in Ireland), but that, for his own compositions, he "writes in his head," usually when he's walking around or on an airplane or in a hotel room.

"I don't have a tape recorder or a dictaphone, so whenever I do have a bunch of songs finished, I have to call my drummer, Don, and ask him if I can go to his studio to demo them. I'm superstitious that if I walk around with a dictaphone, it would make it self-conscious. It's like when the TV camera is on and they say, 'Act natural.' It's that kind thing.

"I scribble down stuff. And one time I sang a melody into my answering machine, but once I've sung it a few times, it tends to stay there. I find songwriting so mysterious. It's almost like, if I've got a melody, I can store it in my brain somewhere.

"Like 'Imaginary Friends' on my new album, the melody I wrote when I was 16 – and that's a rare example – but I had it stored somewhere. Years later, I'm in Germany or somewhere, and I had this lyric I was working on, 'Imaginary Friends', and I don't know what triggered it, but I finally had a home for this old melody.



he "Imaginary Friends" melody must've been one of the first Sexsmith ever wrote. Like most musicians, he started out by playing covers. Born in St. Catharines, ON, he says he was "kind of forced" into playing guitar when he was 14 or 15. "I just wanted to be the guy with the microphone. I was like Roger Daltry," Sexsmith says, recalling his grade 9 band with his friends at St. Catharines Collegiate.

The first gig they played was at his former public school, before any of them knew how to play their instruments. "We'd always heard that you don't have to have any talent to play rock music, but we really didn't have any," Sexsmith laughs. "We were literally strumming the guitar out of tune without even touching the fret board, and singing, chanting over top.

"We played this show and it must have sounded just awful. And these two kids, who were a lot younger than me, came up, and said, 'You don't know how to play the guitar.' And I was like, 'They're onto me.' It kind of shamed me into taking lessons."

He'd watch guitarists on television and notice they were playing chords. "The teacher I had wanted me to start with 'Mary Had A Little Lamb' and all that other stuff that I didn't have any patience for," Sexsmith recalls. "Whenever he would show me a chord, it would be some useless chord, like some jazz chord which, at that time, I didn't relate to it. So I bought myself a Beatles book of easy chords and I started to finally figure it out."

He claims he was the quintessential teenager with the cliché bad skin and hair hanging in his face. His favourite singers were Daltry and Deep Purple's Ian Gillan. Sexsmith used to rock it out too. "I've got the tapes," he says to prove it.

"My bass player sang and I sang, and I was really into lead guitar. I'm not too bad at it actually, but for some reason I've never been good at writing songs that would require lead guitar."

After learning his first couple of chords, Sexsmith spent most of his free time in his bedroom, trying to write songs – songs like "Witch For A Day" and "Prehistoric Lady" – which he recalls fondly with adjectives such as "Spinal Tap," "stupid," and "awful."

"We liked Frank Zappa when we were teenagers and teenagers are always kind of pretentious and smart alecks," he says by way of explanation.

A photo gracing his upstairs wall speaks volumes – his hair is shaggy; he's wearing a cut-off plaid shirt and shorts, and "arena rock posing" with a Gibson Les Paul he received from his parents for Christmas back then. He had a Silvertone before that (he now plays a Taylor acoustic 612 and Fender Telecaster).

The band first went by the name Paper Moon, then Hex and finally The Scribes. Sexsmith even considered taking his middle name, Eldon, for the stage. "I thought it sounded more like Elvis Presley," he laughs.

Sexsmith graduated from high school at 17 with no clue what he was going to do with his life. The Scribes was still together and contemplated moving to Toronto. "It was hard to make any kind of decision and I had no money," he says.

Around the same time, his older brother, Don, who played in a cover band at The Lion's Tavern in St. Catharines, said he could get him a solo gig there if he learned some popular songs by Creedence Clearwater Revival, Neil Young and the like. He lent Ron some vinyl to study, and a few weeks later, Sexsmith had a regular gig – four sets a night for \$35.

"I wasn't even old enough to be in a bar, and had to get permission from the Ontario government to go there," Sexsmith recalls. "When I wasn't onstage, I had to go sit in a room by myself and just wait, and then they'd say, 'Okay, it's time to come back on.'"

Sexsmith says he had so much enthusiasm that after a few months he was packing the joint. The first article about him was in the *St. Catharines Standard* in 1982 and it was called *The One Man Jukebox*. After a while, the bar management relaxed and he didn't have to go in the room between sets. "They'd bring me drinks and if the cops came, I'd go in the room," he says.

"I'd never really been popular before and all of a sudden people were coming in and I was getting invited to parties and all sorts of things. It was really a fun time. I was really just screaming my head off every weekend and losing my voice all the time too. I really didn't know what I was doing. I was just playing. I was like a performing monkey.

"At the same time, I was playing with my band. So I would gig on the weekends until 1 a.m., and then I would meet my band at this warehouse and rehearse until about 4 a.m., so I ultimately lost my voice. I did take some lessons to figure out what I was doing wrong. I still have trouble with it now," he adds.

"But around the time, it just seemed like the band became less interesting for me because I had my own little thing going, so I walked away from it."

Sexsmith continued to play covers in bars, while practicing the art of songwriting. He wanted to demo some of them, but didn't have any money, so he and his drummer went tree planting in Chappleau in northern Ontario. "They hired us both as one person because they thought we'd both be very useless. We didn't look like outdoorsy types," he laughs.

At 20, little did he know his life was about to change forever. "I met this French girl (Jocelyne), who was also working there, and the next thing you know we had a baby on the way," he says.

At the end of tree-planting season, Sexsmith returned home to figure out his options. There was a local girl he was in love with, so at Christmas time he went to see Jocelyne in Quebec to tell her. Driving down a beautiful road,

surrounded by snow, he couldn't get up the nerve, then they saw a falling star. They pulled the car over and turned on the radio. Gospel great Mahalia Jackson was singing "Silent Night".

"I took it as a sign that this is what I should be doing, that I should be a dad. As a result — and I know it sounds cosmic and freaky — but I feel like I was rewarded because I never wrote songs before, and all of a sudden here I am, trying to be a good person, trying to do the right thing, and I felt some connection," Sexsmith recounts.

"As a kid, I'd never been religious, but I always had this God, I don't know what you'd call it, this ongoing dialogue, [laughs] and I always felt that there was something out there. So I think that's why some of those earlier songs — 'Palace of Lights' and 'Mirror Mirror' — had this spiritual tone."

When Christopher was born, the three of them moved to Cap-de-la-Madeleine, near Trois Rivières, PQ. Sexsmith barely spoke French, she barely English. They lived on a desolate country road in a converted barn that had no heat. Every morning Sexsmith would get up to chop wood for the fire. They cooked on a wood-burning stove.

They also had a piano.

"There were so many changes in my life and so much stress or whatever it was, I started writing my first songs," says Sexsmith, then 21. "It was really inspiring. I'd always read interviews about songwriters, and I never really related to what they were saying, and all of a sudden I felt like a songwriter because I had all these songs come — and it's been like that ever since.

"It was a really happy time," he muses. "There's a song on my new album called 'Dandelion Wine' and it's from that period."

One of the first songs Sexsmith wrote was "Speaking With The Angel",

which he didn't like at the time, but years later would be the song that got him signed. "I wrote it about trying to be a good father because my son was only a few weeks old at the time," says Sexsmith.

"When I try to remember the songs I wrote back then, they were all kind of spiritual.



But when I started writing these songs, I just started thinking, 'This is what I'm gonna do. I've got to get to the big city. I have to try.'"

Sexsmith and his new family relocated to St. Catharines. He tried to get his old club gigs back, but found it difficult to find work. Instead, he got a job in the backroom of *The St. Catharines Standard*, the very newspaper that wrote the initial piece on him. He played occasionally, but didn't want to do covers anymore.

He then read an article about another singer-songwriter from the Niagara Region, Kurt Swinghammer, who was griping about how there were no places for original musicians to perform in St. Catharines. "Everything he said was true," remembers Sexsmith.

"I went to see him play and he was putting out all these cassettes and I was like, 'How does he do that?' I wrote him a letter and asked him if he'd produce me. So he came down and I played him all the songs I'd written in Quebec – except for 'Speaking With The Angel' because I didn't think it was any good – and he liked the new songs," says Sexsmith, who had laid them down on a tape recorder for Swinghammer.

"So we recorded a record called *There's A Way* that he produced. He played everything on it and all I did was sing. But after we mixed it and put it on cassette, the master tapes mysteriously disappeared. To this day, I don't know what happened to them, which is kind of good because it does sound really dated. It sounded very '80s (it was 1986).

"I'd done demos before that, but this was my first proper record. I remember he sent it around to a few people in Toronto and I was getting all these A&R letters. Everything was telling me to move to Toronto."

In late October 1987, he did just that. The only person he really knew was Swinghammer. A month later, he met Bobby Wiseman, then-keyboardist for Blue Rodeo, who offered to produce his next demo in the basement studio of The Music Gallery. "He had a deal where it was like \$5 an hour or something amazing," says Sexsmith. "All I had to do was come up with the money to buy the tape and he would produce it."

But Wiseman was so busy touring and producing other artists that they didn't end up finishing the album until late 1990. In the meantime, Sexsmith says, "I had met other great songwriters who influenced me like Kyp Harness and Bob Schneider and I became a part of that scene. I thought I was part of something. Moving to Toronto was the best thing I ever did."

When the album, *Grand Opera Lane*, was done, Wiseman shopped it around. Sexsmith relays how "everybody was flipping out," over it. "We thought that we were gonna get a deal, but I wasn't packing them in. So label people would come to see me and there'd be nobody there," says Sexsmith, who played with a band called The Uncool.

"So there would be a little buzz and then it would go cold again. This happened a few times, and finally we got some interest down in the States and then the doors started opening."

The first door was Interscope Music Publishing. "That was all because of that tape, *Grand Opera Lane*, and '... Angel' mostly," he says.

"(A publishing deal) was like winning second prize. I thought that I would write and other people would do my songs, which wasn't the case. I started right away making demos. It was the first time I ever had any money too. At the time, it seemed like it was a lot of money. They put \$20,000 (US) in my account and I was going, 'Alright.'"

Now a father of a daughter, Evelyne, too, Sexsmith kept his day job as a foot courier in Toronto, afraid the deal might fall apart. Good thing too. Sexsmith wrote many of the songs on his 1995 self-titled album while he was making deliveries (he later wrote "Dragonfly On Bay Street" about it).

Sexsmith landed a record deal after Interscope Music Publishing's Ronny Vance stirred the pot, following an on-the-spot offer from then Polydor president Davitt Sigerson in New York after he played just two songs in his office. Vance gave then Interscope Records' president Jimmy Iovine a ring.

And two days later, Sexsmith was on a plane to L.A. to play in his office.

"So then I had to make a choice and I went with Interscope," says Sexsmith, who then quit his courier job a week before recording.

Sexsmith opted out of his deal. He plowed headlong into writing the next album, while he sought a new label and dealt with the dissolution of his 15-year relationship with Jocelyne. 2001's *Blue Boy* found a home in Canada with Linus/Warner. He recorded *Cobblestone Runway* in the UK with producer Martin Terefe, who did the current album, as well. He also signed a new publishing deal with Sony/ATV, new label deal with Warner Music for Canada – and found new love, guitarist Colleen Hixenburgh of By Divine Right, which many of the songs on *Retriever* are about.

And so Sexsmith's career has continued with a solid, ever-growing fan base. While he's enjoying the chart positions of his current singles, he doesn't care if he ever has another hit.

"I'm pretty proud of what I've been able to do," he says. "I feel that around the world I've kind of eked out a little place. I have my supporters. 'My Secret Heart' has been covered by Rod Stewart, Nick Lowe, Curtis Stigers, Leslie Feist, and others. k.d. lang just recorded 'Fallen'. Mary Black did 'Speaking With The Angel'. I have a whole box upstairs of known people and unknown people doing my songs.

"But for me, Stephen Foster, that's what it's all about right there," he says, lifting a beautiful illustrated songbook, *A Treasury Of Stephen Foster*,

"When I try to remember the songs I wrote back then, they were all kind of spiritual. But when I started writing these songs, I just started thinking, 'This is what I'm gonna do. I've got to get to the big city. I have to try.'"

Mitchell Froom (Crowded House, Elvis Costello, Suzanne Vega) was hired to produce and went through the hundred or so songs Sexsmith had accumulated over the years. "He was always more attracted to the ballads or the more melodic songs," says Sexsmith.

When the album was done, he says, "I didn't know if I liked it because it didn't sound like everybody else's records and they had my voice so up-front. It made me a bit self-conscious, and the music was really sparse and dark. I trusted Mitchell, but then one day my publisher visited us in the studio and I could tell right away that he didn't like what he was hearing, and so, sure enough, when we finally finished the record, everyone hated it.

"They wanted to scrap the whole thing and they wanted me to do it over with Daniel (Lanois) and that's why there's a Lanois track ('There's A Rhythm') on there. It was really stressful because I thought I'd maybe blown my first big shot."

When the album came out, the press was good – but sales weren't. "They were talking about dropping me," Sexsmith reveals. Then in December of '95, five months after the release date, Elvis Costello sent praises Sexsmith's way. More accolades followed from Elton John, Paul McCartney and John Hiatt. The buzz allowed Sexsmith and Froom to make a second, and third, album together, 1997's *Other Songs* and 1999's *Whereabouts*, respectively. None ever sold more than 100,000 worldwide.

After taking a cut in the recording budget, Steve Earle produced the next album, *Blue Boy*, but

from the '40s off his piano. "Here's a guy who wrote songs in the 1800s, but never recorded them," enthuses Sexsmith of the American legend.

He starts singing the opening of "Camptown Races" and stops before he gets to the doo-da.

He then name-checks "Oh! Susanna", "Beautiful Dreamer", "My Old Kentucky Home", "Hard Times Come Again No More" and sings a bit of "Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair".

"He wrote all of these great songs. He was one of the first songwriters and never recorded a single one of them. He wrote them down. He died penniless and he was an alcoholic, but there's something romantic about the fact that these songs live on," says Sexsmith, who contributed "Comrades Fill No Glass For Me" to a 2004 Stephen Foster tribute album, *Beautiful Dreamer*.

"As a songwriter, that's all you can really hope for that a handful of your songs someone will be singing them somewhere. Records and all that stuff for me is just a vehicle. He didn't have that vehicle. It's just a nice way to put them down, so I try not to get too precious about it. The whole industry could collapse. It doesn't really matter to me." ●

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Brothers Jean-Christophe and Jean-Sebastien Boies may be basking in the radio success of the first single, "Tell All Your Friends" from their newest release, Megaphobe (BMG), but they are not strangers to the experience.

How many Francophone artists can English-speaking Canada name besides Celine? Not many? That's too bad. So add Projet Orange (sounds similar to "protégé," en français tout le monde!) to the list of successful artists from "la belle province" to make the jump to the rest of the country and no doubt, beyond.

Brothers Jean-Christophe (vocals, guitar) and Jean-Sebastien Boies (guitar) may be basking in the radio success of the first single, "Tell All Your Friends" from their newest release, *Megaphobe* (BMG), but they are not strangers to the experience.

PO's self-titled debut released in March of 2001 garnered four singles at Francophone radio and a MuchMusic Video award for best French video. So how come you're just hearing about them now? Because somebody at the record label realized French ... English ... who cares? If the songs are great ... let everyone hear them. Truth is you can't keep a good band down.

JC and JS sit down with me at BMG's Toronto office for a brief pitstop between playing a well-received show in Hamilton, ON the night before and continuing on their way to Peterborough, ON for tonight's show. The rest of the band, Guillaume Doiron (guitar), Stephane Gaudreault (drums) and Louis Lalancette (bass) happily engage in a lively game of foosball in the room next door.

"What the hell are we doing?" exclaims JC in reference to beginning recording the follow-up release to the first CD. "We had recorded some songs once, twice and even three times as demo versions, but the songs were getting older. So to finally have a finished album ... we believe in *it* for the first time."

Any band with a successful debut feels pressure to follow up with a strong second release, but to decide to write and record in a language other than your mother tongue is balls-y to say the least!

"Our fans in Quebec are not the same fans that listen to Eric Lapointe and La Chicane. Our fans listen to British bands like Radiohead and The Muse. The reaction has been 'Cool guys ... we like your vision,'" says JS. JC elaborates, "Our fan base is more about the music and not the language."

The title track on *Megaphobe* kicks this album into gear from the get-go, originally written in French, later translated to English with the help of singer/producer/songstress, Simon Wilcox who would contribute in a major way to ensuring JC's lyrics conveyed what he was expressing in both languages throughout the entire recording process.

I ask JC how he decides in which language he writes his lyrics. "The language we use first is the music. For me it's impossible to express exactly the same thing in English as I do in French because of the subtle differences and parameters of the two languages. I try to express the global idea. When we record demos I just mumble the melody in whatever sounds good for the song and then sit down afterward and concentrate on the words themselves. Lyrics are the last step of writing a song for Projet Orange."

JS continues, "We were wondering if JC was going to be able to write the lyrics in English because he had recorded only a few lines in English, but not entire songs so we used our secret weapon: Simon Wilcox." Wilcox, who speaks French impeccably, has co-written songs (in English) with Three Days Grace and Ryan Malcolm to name a few. The brothers Boies genuinely show a lotta' love for her collaboration and don't try to hide it.

Along with the pressure to follow up on their debut success and the events surrounding September 11th life would present the brothers with another unforeseeable challenge: illness. Jean-Sebastien was diagnosed with a rare blood disease that forced the recording of the new album to be put on the back burner for six months while he underwent treatment sessions three times per week. With Jean-Christophe at his side JS beat the odds and made a full recovery.

As expected, the brothers' outlook on life changed and they set up a studio in a rented home on Iles D'Orleans, an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, east of their hometown of Quebec, to get away from it all and concentrate on their music. "The fact that we were raised in more of a reclusive lifestyle ... my parents have and love their chalet ... that's where we feel the best. We prefer the country," JC says with respect to all city folk. JS recounts the recording process

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by Chris Taylor-Munro



projet orange

Gear List

Louis

Ampeg SVT Classic
Cabinet Ampeg 8 x 10"
Roland PK-5 MIDI bass pedal

Steph

Fibes Drum set 26", 12", 16",
14", 6 1/2", SABIAN cymbals

Guillaume

Mesa Boogie Rectoverb 50 W
Vox AC 30
Fender Telecaster
James Trussard Rusty
caster guitar
Full Tone effects
Voodoo Lab effects
Line 6 DL 4

JS

Vox AC-30
Fender Telecaster
Fender Stratocaster
Vox Valve-tone
BOSS GT-5
Roland Super JV-1080

JC

Line 6 amplifier
Fender Stratocaster
Godin guitar
Gibson
Les Paul Studio

of their first album, "Picture two guys from a small village in a recording studio in a big city like Montreal, for weeks and months on end, minus 30 outside, missing our family and friends. We were bored!"

Chorus to "Cities"

*I never wanna comeback
To the city, never comeback
Why does everyone look so sad
In the city?*

Good things come from not so great places or moments in peoples' lives. Track eight, "Cities" is an upbeat song with great vocal hooks, but clearly illustrates the melancholy funk the brothers were in during that time. JC shares the story of how "Cities" came to fruition. "All the songs were written over six months on Iles D'Orleans except "Cities". It was written in Montreal in the studio three days before Christmas. We were really looking forward to getting home. I woke up at 2 p.m. on the studio couch and didn't recognize what I was hearing so I asked, 'What the fuck's going on?' JS replies, 'We're trying to record a new song!' And so that's what we did."

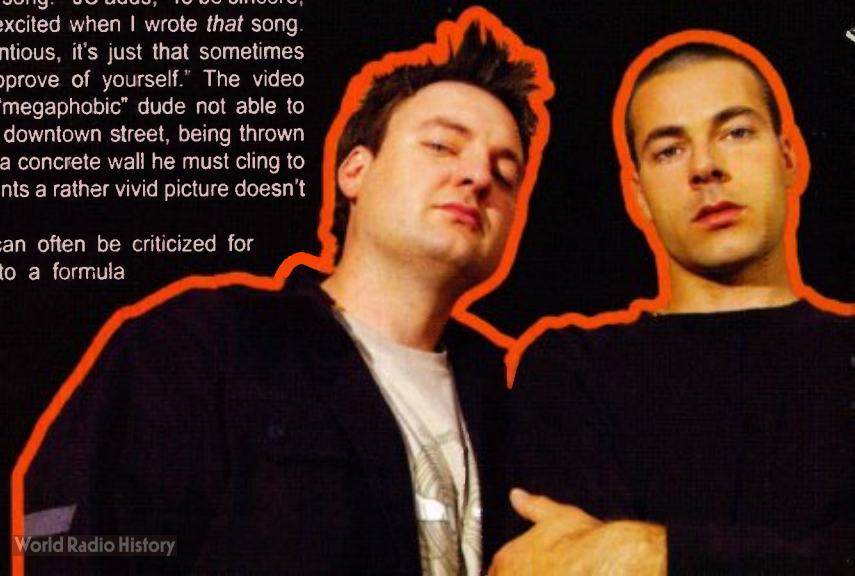
"Tell All Your Friends" immediately gets your foot tapping, your head bobbing and your hips shuckin' and-a jivin' with a compressed-to-hell, '80s drum machine rhythm followed by JC's voice floating above a haunting, almost reverent, arpeggiated guitar riff. The three elements combine to create what is one of the more compelling intros to fall on these ears in recent times. The way the bass line drops into place to reinforce the groove is very tasteful, indeed. Great harmonies and the driving eighth notes of the chorus never let up until you hit repeat. JS begins, "JC wrote that song by himself on Iles D'Orleans and called me at home in said 'Come, I want you to hear a new song.' So when I returned to the island he played it for me and I thought 'Oh my God, this is a great song.'" JC adds, "To be sincere, I was really excited when I wrote *that* song. It's not pretentious, it's just that sometimes you really approve of yourself." The video depicts one "megaphobic" dude not able to cross a busy downtown street, being thrown back against a concrete wall he must cling to for safety. Paints a rather vivid picture doesn't it?

Bands can often be criticized for not sticking to a formula

throughout an album, but I for one am glad to hear such a diverse mix of music and great compilation of songs. JS agrees, "We were so lucky to have BMG leave us alone in the bush for six months to create and record our music." Projet Orange manages to keep cohesiveness to their music while surprising the listener with a refreshing dose of versatility. Without sounding cliché, *Megaphobe* has something for everyone.

Projet Orange has been touring steadily in support of the new album across Canada with headline shows of their own and some fantastic opening slots for international artists such as The Music. Having a bilingual collection of songs enables Projet Orange to tailor their set depending on the crowd and obviously what city or town they're playing in on any given night. "We have English-speaking fans that come to our shows here in Ontario who have the first album asking for our French songs. They're even trying to speak broken French to us ... it's great! When we play in a town in Quebec we definitely play more of our French songs," says JC.

Once the songs had been written, and for the most part the basic ideas recorded, the next stage was getting some high profile names onboard and head back to the city (Montreal and Toronto) for additional recording and mixing. Enter Juno Award-winning producer, Gavin Brown (Billy Talent, Three Days Grace, Thornley). Gavin produced two tracks, "Hell To Pay" and "Tell All Your Friends" (also plays drums on these tracks ... his uncle, Dave Brown, a fabulous drummer himself, touts Gavin's fantastic drumming all the time). Gavin also mixed 10 other tracks with Eric Ratz at Vespa Studio in Toronto. "Cities" was mixed by Brian Malouf (Foo Fighters, Pearl Jam, Everclear) with the vocals produced by Simon Wilcox and Eric Filto. Filto also gets credit for co-production with Projet Orange, keys and programming for various tracks.



The brothers being multi-instrumentalists (JC plays guitar, drums, keys and programming. JS plays guitar, keys, piano), I ask how they decide to bring in additional musicians for the recording process. JC responds, "For some of the songs I played the drum tracks on we tried to bring in other drummers, but it didn't have the same feel or it was hard for them to create the exact ghost notes and patterns I originally played." JS continues, "Most of the time we listen back to the recorded tracks the day after and decide what needs to be changed and if we should get someone else to play the part." "But if it's 'the shit' we leave it!" JC says laughing. Back to JS, "When we're in the studio 24/7 sometimes friends will drop by and jam with us, give us ideas and then we say 'Hey that's really cool' so we record it."

Living and working in a studio far from your neighbours allows you to get adventurous with your recording techniques. "We recorded drums outside at 3 a.m. because there's nobody around," recalls JC.

house I had never recorded anything myself. Every song was a lesson on how to properly record ... how to make a guitar sound good, etc. I learned by trying new things. "A.R.S.E." was towards the end of the recording process and one day I had nothing to do. I can't seem to get away from Pro Tools. I'm hypnotized by it. So I wanted to try a sequence song. I grabbed some bass drums from other tracks and probably spent 16 hours building it."

"Ballade" links Projet Orange most to their Brit band influences song-wise. The song highlights JC's strong vocals and JS' piano playing backed with appropriately sparse verses in contrast to the lush choruses. The song hints at groups like Travis, Coldplay and Montreal's own Rufus Wainwright vocally. One of the gems on the album for sure.

By this point most albums tend to fade off into filler tracks (you know who you are), but the songs just keep coming. "Just Before" is one of those tunes that creep into your brain long after you finished listening to the CD. Again, it's upbeat, has a blatant vocal hook



for Moist before this author did. The unit has been the same since the inception of the band. JC only picked up guitar and started playing drums "a couple" of years ago (you can't help but be a bit jealous when people tell you things like that) and as a drummer I am impressed with the tracks he cut.

"Yeah! Yeah!" is a bratty pop song that would be ideal set to some London (UK) back-street gang chase if that helps set up the vibe any? (Moving on) The chorus explodes with guitar and JC's falsetto. For a singer with such a clean voice he sure can growl it up for the meaner bits. Things get a little angry all round on this one. Ten dollars says this is the

"We were so lucky to have BMG leave us alone in the bush for six months to create and record our music."

Track 3, "Them" is an eerie tune with its mesmerizing guitar lines layered over a drum pattern that starts out simple enough then brilliantly throws you for a nice loop time-wise. The layering continues with the vocal harmonies further accentuating the dark mood of this eclectic pop song.

"Impair" lets on to the fact that if you didn't know Projet Orange is a French-speaking band (the guys are much too humble about their English by the way ... it's great!) you definitely know by this point. It is the first track on the album JC sings in French. Even if you can't understand the lyrics, the melody is a breeze to sing along with and leads to one of the more raucous guitar moments on the album.

Perhaps the song that stands apart from the rest of the album the most is track five, "A.R.S.E." This piece is quite solemn combining Gregorian-like choirs, free jazz keys and contrabass, ripped apart drum samples and loops reminding me of something Bjork would be proud of. Thankfully JC takes it as a compliment, "Oh! I'm a big fan of Bjork." The chorus lyrics are "I'm happily down," and the line seems to wail with despair, making them memorable and uplifting despite the words themselves. JC explains the creation of this piece. "Three years ago when we rented the

with an unexpected half-time pre-chorus that just drips and oozes with great production value. I am constantly being coaxed to chair dance to these pop songs yet when you listen to the lyrics you can't help but feel the sadness. Happy ... sad... happy ... it's all good!

"Les Geants" (The Giants) is the first single for Francophone radio and should get the live audience chanting along with the chorus. I asked JC if he feels any pressure to be writing songs in English vs. French now that the rest of Canada has been introduced to Projet Orange. "When I write it's always a spontaneous idea ... whatever's in my brain. I just pick up my guitar and start playing."

"If You Leave" is another great moment for guitars on the album. If I haven't mentioned it yet the tones and effects are constantly changing throughout, but always tasty. Guillaume Doiron (roll the "RRRR," Guitar) has been with the brothers Boies for the lifespan of Projet Orange. "He's the best!" Says JS nodding his head confidently. Louis Lalancette (Bass) was in fact an originating member of PO with Jean-Sebastien. Lancette and JS played together in a previous group and asked Jean-Christophe to join them. Stephane Gaudreault (Drums) has been backing some of Canada's best artists for years such as Jean Leloup and even played

headbanger moment at the show.

"J'aime" is the final cut on the album (don't worry there's a bonus track). This song is one of my favourites after listening to the album, oh, probably nine times now. You can't be sure if the song has both French and English lyrics when you're listening for the first time without going online and checking the lyrics (www.projetorange.com). A great last impression that showcases the brothers' best talents: super vocals, harmonies and hooks galore, fat guitars, ethereal textures and most apparent, great songwriting. "I feel like every song deserves to be on the album." says JS proudly.

In conclusion Projet Orange wish to make a public announcement: don't put regular ethanol into a diesel rental van, especially on your birthday in Cornwall, ON. The band recently learned this lesson the hard way. Please check your local listings for a PO show near you and BUY a CD. You'll be glad you did.



Musician Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based freelance writer who drummed for Hydrofoil and David Usher/Moist.

my eyes at more as a publicist than indie bands who call me and want to send me their demo and they don't even know what I do."

Equally self-destructive is bringing huge attitude into a small club. Recalls Pace, "I was doing publicity for a band recently who played at Club 279 at the Hard Rock Cafe in Toronto. This band delayed opening the doors by 45 minutes because they did a two-hour sound check which was totally and entirely unwarranted, considering they're a virtually unknown indie band! They irked staff in the club with their larger-than-life attitudes and that certainly doesn't bode well for their reputation."

Good point. In this business, relationships – good ones – matter. Not just with other artists, fans and industry folks, with everyone. It doesn't matter what stage of your career you're at. The story about you being a jerk will get told more loudly and more often than the one about how you're generally nice to dogs and children. As Nettwerk CEO, Terry McBride, said in an earlier *CM* article, "An artist never has the latitude to freak out."

making, having very distinct opinions about the industry and top 40 charts without having listened to the radio or watching videos in years, getting caught up in the hype and believing that their art is of higher value than the people they work with – including family and supporters."

Not convinced? Take it from someone with a successful career that spans several decades and genres, Randy Bachman; "I've seen many artists treat people meanly with no regards for their feelings. Everyone deserves to be treated and spoken to with respect, as you would like to be spoken to by one of the people you admire. You meet the same people on the way up as you do on the way down. They are important to you and the ladder of fame does go both ways sooner or later."

That, of all the things to remember, is probably most important. Honestly, the best piece of advice I've ever been given personally was a number of years ago from one of the Rheostatics crew. I don't know his name or his job description, but the comment just stuck; "Keep your family and friends close – when the spotlight goes off for good they're the people who'll be most important to you."

And the spotlight will go off ... Derrick Ross, VP of National Promotion EMI Music Canada recalls an artist whose attitude played a key role in shortening their career. The mistake? "Piss off the people who are helping you." The artist in question, he says, had a "great start, then shit all over radio and media people because the artist felt they had made it. Well, programmers and media people couldn't wait to piss all over the next record and they did. The funny thing is the record was good ... but it didn't matter."

You simply can't afford to burn bridges. El Mocambo Talent Booker, NXNE Director and Festival Music Programmer Yvonne Matsell has booked a whole mess of Toronto clubs over

the years: "Don't think that you can graduate your band from your parents' basement directly to the Horseshoe or The El Mocambo." Regardless of where your gig is ... "PROMOTE," she says. "Posters stuck up around the venue at soundcheck, day of show, does *not* constitute promoting. The venue relies on bands to stay in business and the way a club stays in business

"The worst mistake that artists make: listening to other people's advice. The worst mistake I've made: not listening to other people's advice ... and there's the rub. Good luck."

- Michael Timmins
(Cowboy Junkies)

LEARN SUNICIDE

Cripple Your Chances

by Kevin Young

Obviously you have to be firm. You have to believe that you're really good at what you do. But when people start paying a lot of attention to you it's not uncommon to start thinking maybe you're not just good; maybe you're better than most.

"It's a buyer's market and a thousand bands are behind you waiting to get in," says RJ Guha, Director, Artist Management of Matrix Entertainment Group/Kindling Records. "If your attitude sucks, the bartenders and the wait staff and the house technicians will all tell the booker not to bring you back. And, unless the place made so much money from you playing that show, you're not getting re-booked."

Producer Byron Wong cautions against making turning prospective supporters off by making mistakes that have their roots in a shabby attitude. "The worst mistakes an artist can make ... allowing the trappings of rock and roll to take precedence over the art they're

"I'm too embarrassed to name my most classic mistakes but they usually boil down to a business decision that I was making and wanted to be thought of as 'a good guy.' If I had been detached in many of my business dealings I would have come out of it much better off."

- Randy Bachman

is by doing bar sales. Those sales pay the rent, the PA, the sound guy, the bar staff, insurance and the alcohol itself. The club relies on bands to bring in a thirsty audience."

The basic equation ... "No sales = Bar closure = Less places for a band to play, and that means YOU."

Making enemies will come back to haunt you. The smart way to work in the music industry is always to be looking forward and surrounding yourself with people who can help you play the long game. Toronto Entertainment Lawyer, Chris Taylor, states, "Be open to suggestions. You are dealing with people who take great pride in being able to do their job well. I've seen too many artists proceed to tell A&R people how to produce, market and promote their music with very little room left for record company involvement. Realize that you are not the only expert in this regard but rather an important contributor to the process. You can lose record company interest at this stage even if the music you have produced has passed the test. Listen; you might learn something."



Randy Bachman



Randy Berswick



Nick Btagona



Albert Chambers



Kim Cooke

Michael McCarty, President of EMI Music Publishing Canada has this to add, "Music is mostly a collaborative art, yet most artists don't recognize that. You would not expect Steven Spielberg to write, act, direct, photograph, set design, light and edit his movies all by himself. Why do so many musicians think they can create music in a vacuum? There are few true groups where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

One of the big mistakes artists make, says Terry McBride, "Is trying to do radio promotions and pick their own singles." Whether you agree or disagree with Terry, the point is that you have to work to your strengths and allow other people to work to theirs. Terry is looking for what he always has, he says, "a song that impacts me emotionally." He suggests that you "think solely about the songs, nothing else."

Basically, when you hire people to do certain jobs – allow them to do them. Maybe your way is the right way, but you should at least have the courtesy and wisdom to listen to your team – your relationship will suffer if you cut people out.

Which leads to another hint ... make sure the people you're working with are the real deal. If they represent you, then make sure they do so in a way that you can live with. Choose carefully, says Chris Taylor. "The quality of team member options will increase in proportion to your self-made success. Bad team members can greatly impair your ability to secure record company interest."

Many artists make errors in this area, especially when it comes to management. One way to turn people off says Kim Cooke, "Hooking up with a manager who people dislike to the point that they effectively bury the act."

Or, says Randy Berswick, "Thinking that the guy who owns the van can be the manager." Also, he adds, expecting others to do everything for you is as counter-productive as trying to do everything yourself. "The thing that musicians forget is that they are entrepreneurs, that they need to be sure something happens, they need to look after it. People who are successful make it happen."

Having said that, it is possible to be self-managed and get somewhere ... it can be helpful to be represented by someone young, brash and hungry; someone who would kill to get you noticed. But, when an opportunity to get some serious power behind you comes along, you and your young, green manager need to suck it up and do what's best for the project. Unfortunately, that usually means parting ways professionally.

Balancing personal loyalties, while making sound decisions is all part of the gig and the rare balance that makes a successful artist ... says Kim Cooke, "You have to be courteous, prompt and professional at the same time you are being electric, rebellious and cool as hell. The industry wants to work with people who have their shit together and

artists who can be tomorrow's next big act. Try to be both."

A&R, management, promoters, agents – regardless of who you want to get interested – they aren't looking for people who might be better next time. The first impression you make is key.

Summed up by Montreal producer/songwriter Albert Chambers, "The song is EVERYTHING. Your first objective is to concentrate on selling your songwriting ability." There are, however, some basic nuts and bolts to remember ... "Your press kit," Chambers continues, "is like your business plan to a loan officer at a bank. Do not take it any less seriously. A short bio about the band and how each member contributes to the sound is all you need. No need to mention past bands you've been in unless they're well known acts."

Then there's contact info, track listing and presentation ... "I have received many great CDs and don't know who to contact," says Randy Bachman.

One of Jake Gold's (The Management Trust/Canadian Idol) pet peeves, "They send me their CDs and they put their song titles on the disk. I put the disk in the player and I don't know what songs I'm listening to."

That said, Chambers continues, bottom line, make sure that your package has current and reliable contact info in more than one place; current and reliable meaning a number and e-mail that isn't going to change anytime soon – on the CD, on the sleeve etc.

Help your music sell itself, says Derrick Ross, "Be confident in what you are selling ... when they send me that music and/or invite me to their show and start the conversation off with, 'It's pretty rough and not the way we want it,' that makes me think, 'Then why would you think I would like it?'" Far better he says to introduce yourself as a young band/artist starting out, telegraph your excitement about your music ask him to give it a listen and make some recommendations. And ... "Get my interest. One of the demo tapes I heard the quickest was taped to a 6-foot Gumby blow-up. I just received another package last week that came in a metal box which had all kinds of stuff relating to the bands name ... EVIDENCE."

Tailor your package to the person it's going to ... in light of new technology, says RJ Guha, "Today most folks are used to getting solicited with finished records. That being said, fidelity will only get you so far. If the songs aren't there, it doesn't matter how good it sounds. Make sure each song is bulletproof and you're targeting the right labels and A&R people for the sound of your act."

Too Tall, of Montreal's CHOM 97.7 has opened an enormous amount of promo packages. His weekly show, *Made In Canada*, has aired for the past 17 years. Still, he says, "it's just not that hard to get me to listen to something. In a year I get 300 or so new Canadian releases and 100 of those become half-hour features. How do I select what to play and what to leave out? Quite often I'll try to feature a band that has a show coming up or a launch party or just some damn good reason that I can't ignore. Of course my program offers only featured play. Trying to get regular rotation at a radio



"Most mistakes stem from over-inflated egos and general lack of humility. Don't believe your own bullshit, even if you've tasted a little success and the chat rooms are buzzing about your genius."

- Dave Genn



"There is a side of me that believes that A&R people have trouble listening to what is probably a great song badly recorded. Labels have less imagination than back when they were used to hearing crappy sounding demos but had to concentrate on listen for hit songs ... not hit productions."

- Albert Chambers



"It is very frustrating to watch artists waste their time, energy, and youth chasing a dream that could be within their grasp if only they would set their ego aside in order to be part of something bigger than themselves."

- Michael McCarty



The most important part of a showcase is the sound. A good soundman is the unsung member of every band. His efforts can make or break a band. The most important thing in a mix is the vocal and whenever it's not the vocal it's the instrument taking the solo. Everything else is secondary.

- Randy Bachman





Alan Cross

station is a different story, best told by music and program directors."

"Blind mailings of indie CDs to the 'program director' or 'music director' don't work," says Alan Cross. A lack of understanding about the ferocity of competition for space on playlists is counter-productive. "They spend all this time writing and recording this music only to completely blow it when it comes to marketing their stuff."

Long-time record producer and engineer, Nick Blagona's advice ... "Create a great first impression by presenting great songs and a great EPK (Electronic Press Kit). My personal pet peeve," he says, "demos that have not had thought put into the content." That is ... "All songs, not the best songs, are sent."

"These days," says Derrick Ross, "musicians and bands have to be more developed before they are presented to the industry. Musicians have to basically become their own labels first and then begin the search for another to help out with marketing and promotion."

"The Web site," adds Michael McCarty, "has replaced the bio, photo, and in many respects the entire demo package. It used to be that if you heard about a new act via the grapevine you had to track them down somehow, ask for a demo, and wait for it to arrive. Now they are just a Google and a download away." But, he cautions, the tools are only as good as the talent behind them.

Still, the focus is the song says Jake Gold, "Some bands spend a fortune making album-ready demos. Some bands spend hardly any money. Really, all anyone is interested in is how good the songs are." The idea is to deliver representations "that people can understand, can actually hear the song in its right state..."

Bear in mind that album ready demos don't mean layers and layers of crap ... just because you can lay down 115 tracks in your home studio doesn't mean you should. The point is to serve the song. Ken Friesen and Mark Vreeken weigh in on the demo process...

Ken Friesen of Signal Path Audio Services: "The worst mistake people make is spending all their time working on the instrumental tracks. Then, at the end, the vocalist has to jam their track down in haste. It's almost an afterthought. Serious mistake - what you're trying to sell is the vocal and the person who is singing. It's what you want to spend the most time on, not the least."

Mark Vreeken (Producer/Sound Engineer for the Tragically Hip and others): "I've received some demos that had 20 or more songs each and cover a wide range of styles. Pick four or five songs that best represent your strongest material. Leave people wanting more. It's important not to smother the songs with layers of overdubs and ear candy that can never be recreated live. Give the songs room to breathe and let the production support the essence of the songs."

Ultimately, your music is going to speak for you, and Jake Gold puts

it about as bluntly as it can be put, "If I hear something decent on the demo, I'm going to go see the band. That's what I want - I need something that's going to make me want to go see the band."

And that brings us to the truest of tests, where there's nowhere to hide - the showcase...

You've made an impression with your music, but now you have to pull it off live...

Says Steve Blair, Director of A&R for Warner Music Canada; "You only get so many chances with the industry. Each band has a label's interest for a portion of time and at some point they're going to get over them - if they haven't seen them, a year down the road they might see them again. We try to keep an open mind, but at some point in time you get your three strikes and you're out."

You want to be ready and being ready means plenty of practice, a good venue with a crowd to motivate the industry folks standing at the back of the room to be at both the beginning and end of your show. "Keep it short," says Alan Cross, "Industry people in the audience have been through a million showcases. Give them your best stuff in a tight set that's no more than 30 minutes. You can go longer, but you risk boring them."

And don't pull the trigger before you are ready, warns Michael McCarty. "Inviting attention from the industry before you are ready ... you just dig a hole that is difficult to climb out of."

Often, says Dave Genn (Producer/Songwriter, formerly of the Matthew Good Band, currently touring and recording with 54-40) rushing to the place where the industry is clustered can be detrimental to an act's success. "Bands from Vancouver and Halifax have the opportunity to develop free of the prying eyes and ears of Toronto-based A&R reps. Subsequently, when it is their time to showcase they've already written and refined countless songs and performed numerous times. Bands from outside Leaf Land may take just as long or longer to peak but the Canadian record companies give them a fair shake because it takes a while for word to spread from Drum Heller to the Horseshoe."

True, and since industry showcases tend to be more than a bit strange, in that there's a crowd of industry standing at the back of the room trying to figure out whether you are worth the time and effort and money they can provide you with. Your best bet is to make the show as much like any other you would play. To keep your comfort level up and put on the best show possible you need a crowd, your crowd - the best band looks that much better if they can pack the venue. And, the bottom line is that it's easier to play to that crowd and forget the folks at the back wall with their arms crossed.

Steve Jordan, Director of A&R for True North Records: "Don't give a shit about their presence at your gig - play for the fans, rock the crowd." The worst thing you can do is "treating any live show like it's a chore. Play like it matters. If you're bored playing your own music, think how I must feel."



"Make every effort when you get a show to bring out an audience. And NEVER use a show just as a rehearsal. The club promoter will know what you are up to and will probably never book your band again."

- Yvonne Matsell



"A band goes to showcase for someone - they've never played at a place unless their friends were in the house and all of a sudden they don't know how to play in front of an empty room."

- Jake Gold



"Write a hundred songs and then start throwing away all but the very best ones after that. Once you've really developed and refined your writing skills then you can spend the cash on a pro-sounding demo, but the truth: is that the really good ears in the industry can hear a great song in a cheap recording, just as you can tell a great song from a simple acoustic performance."

- Dave Genn



"Some people are extremely strong personalities that are so obvious they can't be diluted. Other artists need time to find their voice. Sometimes it takes time to distil what the essence is of what you're trying to project. Diversity can be the commercial kiss of death. A record label or a manager will likely want a clearly defined musical style, message and persona that they can sell. So make those decisions before you start."

- Ken Friesen



Ken Friesen



Dave Genn



Jake Gold



Steve Jordan



Michael McCarty

Albert Chambers: "They can usually tell if they like what they see within the first two songs. Hit them hard going in and leave them with a bang. The best way to hit them hard..."

Chris Taylor: "Play two of your best songs within the first three songs. If you can hook people on the first few songs they won't leave for the whole set. If you bore them in the first couple of songs there is a good possibility that they will leave or lose interest."

Above all, be prepared, cautions Kim Cooke: "The kiss of death is showcasing before you are ready to absolutely kill."

Remember, like the demo, the nuts and bolts have to be in place: Aside from making sure your band is tight, rehearse your showcase set; figure out which songs will run together and where you'll take a break to say a few words. Cut the fat, if something doesn't work, kill it. You want to show that you not only have great songs, but you and the band are entertaining and confident.

If you're a solo artist hiring a band then make sure the musicians are not only competent, but look the part and feel right to play with. Really great bands have a chemistry that's obvious. Some of that is raw potential and natural enthusiasm, but there is no substitute for experience. The more you play, the better you become. Consider that when you're choosing musicians.

Being ready to kill also means scouting the ground ahead of time, says Mark Vreeken. "Keep the show as simple as possible technically. Nothing is more distracting than musicians struggling with equipment problems when they only have a short set to begin with. If the type of music demands a lot of playback tracks or complicated equipment setups, be as self-contained as you can by carrying extra mics, DIs, cables and backups of your tracks. It's a good idea to show up early and meet the people you'll be working with so there are no surprises during changeover. Also, keep stage volumes reasonable - it's hard to get your tunes across if the vocal can't be heard."

After great songs the thing Producer, Nick Blagona, looks for is "commitment from all band members and that they are working as a team. The best advice I can offer is to believe in yourself. Hold fast to that, vigilantly. Besides that, I recommend loyalty be both to each other and to those who have supported the



Karen Pace



Derick Ross



Kim Stockwood



Chris Taylor



"Never apologize or make excuses to the audience. Be yourself and force them to like you."

- Mark Vreeken



"What the industry is looking for is an artist that is ready, willing and able to tour; you can't download a T-shirt or a concert experience yet."

- Chris Taylor



"There has to be that sort of instant sort of attraction to the band. That thing that makes you go 'Wow, this is something special.' When the band has it or doesn't have it you know it right away. It doesn't take 10 to 15 songs."

- Jake Gold



"Try to find out exactly who you are as an artist before someone tells you what you are, and when they do, if you don't agree, run. Try to make records that you think are in right now."

By the time you try to copy something else, it's already time for something new. Do what you feel, not what you think might sell.

Maybe you'll be lucky and you'll get both."

- Kim Stockwood (Sh:aye)



artist(s)." No matter how sketchy things get, showing grace and professionalism on and off stage is impressive - it helps to telegraph that the music is most important for you.

RJ Guha is drawn to career artists, "People who will always find a way to make music. Because of this self-determination they have a grasp of the business: artist management, booking, promotion and publicity. They have an understanding of exactly what it is I do everyday on their behalf. Of course having 'star' quality also helps."

And there it is ... the X-factor, the fairy dust - the element that many folks believe you either have or you don't ... for Michael McCarty, "The biggest problem by far is that almost no one is 'the whole package'. As noted music industry gadfly Bob Lefsetz says, "People are drawn to authentic greatness ... it's not [just] about looks; it's not [just] about singles. It's an amalgamation of identity, music and message. A holy trinity."

Granted, to an extent, the elements of that trinity can be developed, but you have to convince people the raw potential is there.

The best way to do so: don't limit your options. Some people will tell you to listen to your label, or your management, exclusively. Others will say 'only listen to yourself and don't let anyone trample your artistic expression.' The key is to walk the line between those extremes - make music you love that's authentic. Surround yourself with people who truly believe in what you do as well as your potential. Listen to other artist's music. Realize that songwriting is a craft; just because you don't like a certain song or genre doesn't mean you can't learn something valuable from it. When people talk, really listen.

The intangible element that makes everyone drop their jaws when you perform is rare. You may or may not have it, but you should have a really firm idea of what it means, how it sounds, looks and plays in the wild ... to that end get out there and look for it.

That way, whether you make it or not you at least accomplish something. As Yvonne Matsell says, "Help build a musical community. Go out and see other bands. If you as a musician don't go out to support live music, then why should an average person be bothered to?"



Kevin Young is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



Michael Timmins



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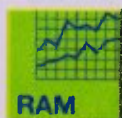
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MUSIC Education

Becoming A Better Musician by Vivian Clement

The National Association for Music Education (MENC) is an organization whose main mission is for the advancement of music education by encouraging the study and making of music. One of their endeavours is to compile facts/quotes and documented research demonstrating the importance of music in our present culture. According to MENC the benefits of music education are as follows:

- Success in society**
- Success in school**
- Success in developing intelligence**
- Success in life**

"Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence, traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. An association of music and math has, in fact, long been noted. Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification while giving pleasure to others". [M.D., Leading Heart Surgeon, Baylor College of Music .Source: MENC & Emdash; The National Association for Music Education "Benefits of Music Education" Brochure, Spring 2002]

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Music Education

Traditional vs. Contemporary Music Education – The Beginner

The first step in any musician's journey is to make a decision in regards to what instrument they are attracted to playing, as well as which instrument suits their temperament. Due to the strong influence of the media, aspiring musicians are often fascinated by popular instruments such as guitar, drums, piano, bass and vocals. Many parents feel that their children should play the piano since that is what they learned as a child or because parents feel that the piano is a more well-rounded instrument. This may be the case, but as many can testify, this is not always the wisest choice. If a beginner really has his or her heart set on a particular instrument, being forced to study some other instrument can create frustration and boredom leading to loss of interest. At the same time, some students embrace the piano with great enthusiasm. The point is that it is preferable to start with an instrument that creates excitement, which in turn will provide more of a chance for continued studies. Although this does not guarantee that a student will persist with his or her chosen instrument, there does seem to be a greater chance of continued interest and advancement if they are pursuing music out of sincere enjoyment.

This also goes hand-in-hand with the type of instruction a student embraces. There are many forms that music education can take. Many musicians have been taught in the traditional way such as private or group lessons, self-taught, or a combination of both. Elementary schools, for example, teach in a class setting and tend to focus primarily on instruments pertaining to an orchestra such as clarinet, saxophone and percussion etc. Music stores and music schools on the other hand focus more on private lessons for guitar, bass, drums and sometimes wind instruments. Deciding on the type of education necessary will be determined by the instrument itself, as well as the aspirations of the student and/or parent. Traditional (or classical) study such as the Royal Conservatory and the like are very

good at producing excellent results. They are world renown and their curriculum is essentially consistent regardless of location. Students who study under the Royal Conservatory can later become teachers if they so choose. Traditional teachers can be located through word of mouth, local newspapers (usually before school starts in September) or classically dedicated music schools.

The other option for music education is a more contemporary approach. Teachers teach from their homes or at music stores and tend to

focus more on pop/rock and blues. In addition, some communities have small schools set up specifically for local music students combining traditional and contemporary methods. Community centres and colleges sometimes offer evening class lessons throughout the week – which are generally intended for adults who desire to play music and who feel more comfortable in a group setting. Community schools and centres can be found in the yellow pages/and or the Internet. Music camps and summer workshops are another alternative to

ON THE NET

GENERAL MUSIC EDUCATION SITES

WWW.CAMMAC.CA

This is the site for the Canadian Amateur Musicians Association. This non-profit organization provides opportunities for musicians to share knowledge and make music together.

WWW.CUMS-SMUC.CA

The Canadian University Music Society, where you can find links to publications, Internet resources, agencies as well as information on the Society.

WWW.EDUCATIONINDEX.COM

This site is a music resource to search for information and different links to 50 categories – lots of interesting sites for students and teachers alike.

WWW.MUSICSTUDY.COM

Here you can find ear training and music theory software, which are great tools to help develop your ear as well as understanding theory.

WWW.UPSPIRAL.COM

If you are into self-instruction you will find this site to be a good resource. It has lessons for singing, piano, theory, drums, wind instruments and much more.

WWW.DATADRAGON.COM

Learn how to read music online. You can also ask any question in regards to music. And for you history buffs, there is an index for Music History in addition to information about different musical genres.

WWW.CLASSICAL.NET

If you are more into classical music rather than contemporary music you will find what you are looking for. Excellent site for CD/DVD/book reviews with 6,000 files and 4,000 links for classical music. Has a link to a buyer's guide which recommends CDs for your classical collection.

WWW.SHEETMUSIC1.COM

Buy sheet music online of classical, jazz, Broadway, contemporary Christian and many more categories. The site also has links for jazz ensembles and a large selection of fake books.

WWW.MUSICARRANGERS.COM

This site offers live, online classes for music students and professionals.

HTTP://UNDERSTANDINGMUSIC.COM

An interactive music school on the Web that offers classes right from your home.

ON THE NET

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL SITES

WWW.MUSICBOOKPLUS.COM

Offers over 6,000 titles which you can order on line: books, videos, CDs, DVDs and software from over 60 categories including: guitar, bass, ear training, fake books, classical, etc. Other points of interest are books on music business, film production, electronics, recording and lyric writing.

WWW.HOMESPUNTAPES.COM

The site features a wide assortment of information and products, some with a uniquely Canadian perspective.

look into. These programs allow all levels of musicians in their curriculum and are the duration of a week or more. As a rule, summer camps are aimed at children while workshops include both children and adults. Once again, courses are offered in both traditional and contemporary methods. Camps and workshops usually provide opportunities for ensemble playing and performing in front of family and peers.

Regardless of what form of instruction is decided upon, having the right teacher plays an important role in musical development. Some teachers are more disciplinary while others have a more relaxed approach. Given that, different people learn through different methods – a proper student to teacher match is essential. Oftentimes a student can become discouraged if they are not able to comprehend the teacher's instructions and may feel inhibited when it comes to asking questions. A good teacher is able to communicate at all levels and demonstrates patience with students who take more time absorbing lessons.

The More Advanced Musician

For the intermediate or advanced musician there are other factors to consider when determining which road to take for furthering your skills. The first question you will need to answer is: are you wanting a career in music or simply desiring to study for self-improvement. If you want to become a professional musician, you may consider post-secondary education. While saturating yourself in this kind of environment for this length of time (three to four years) is a superb way of learning, you must decide if this

commitment suits your circumstances. Colleges and universities offer a wide range of instruments plus a well-rounded curriculum. Some of the courses you can expect to take are: theory, performance, ensemble, note reading, music history, ear training etc. While colleges offer a hands-on practical approach, universities are more academically structured requiring students to study courses other than music. On a side note ... all institutions of higher education are great at developing skill, but cannot guarantee success in the music field. Every year more and more students graduate, flooding an already saturated market. Any serious musician must therefore, also be savvy to the music business and understand what it takes to become employable. Some schools offer music business courses, while others do not. The important thing to realize is being talented on your instrument is only a part of your success. Business chops and your ability to network play a vital role as well.

In many larger cities, clinics are often offered to local musicians by various clinicians. Generally, clinics will be held in a music store, or at a school and are usually a few hours long. For the most part, the clinic will feature the artist performing songs and then explaining by demonstration what their technique is all about. Since clinics are frequently endorsed by retail music companies, the musicians perform on instruments endorsed by these companies. Sometimes the clinic is held for the sole purpose of demonstrating product but other times it is aimed at teaching instrument techniques and can be quite informative. Clinics are a good place to ask questions and they present a great networking opportunity.

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Music Education

Self-Instruction And The Internet

There has always been a group of musicians who have never studied with private teachers but acquired their skill by being self-taught. Typically, they have a good ear for music, enjoy playing contemporary songs and getting together with friends to jam. They may learn tunes through tablature (tab) which they download from the Internet or borrow a few licks from other musicians. If you prefer going the self-taught route, there are many sources from which you can choose for your learning. Music book distributors, make available a wide variety of self-instruction books. Several of these books have an enclosed CD where the author performs the exercises demonstrated in the book. Most music stores have book displays on various topics from hit songs to specific instrumental techniques. These are all available at

ON THE NET

DRUM SITES

WWW.MXTAB.NET

Archives for drum tablature. Choose its sister link: Musicforum.com to ask questions in regards to drums or, for more advanced drummers look into the advanced discussions. You can also locate lessons and articles.

WWW.DRUMS-AND-DRUM-SETS.COM

Get tips for playing drums, or techniques for improving your playing. Included is an article for absolute beginners and guidelines for proper drum stick playing. You'll come across links for purchasing drums online, in addition to books and DVDs for the drum enthusiast.

WWW.ALL-GOOD-TABS.COM

This site has a section for most downloaded drum tabs and an alphabetical index for what you are looking for. Also included are links for lyrics for those interested.

WWW.DRUMBUM.COM

Featuring over 400 free drum lessons and drum tabs. Included topics for styles are: rock, funk, afro-Cuban etc. . . Lessons on technique such as paradiddles, double bass, fills and tons more.

WWW.DRUMSDATABASE.COM

This site is an online database of drum lessons that also features drum tabs.

WWW.DRUMSET.COM

Drummers can vote on various topics on this site that also offers articles, a chat area, a message forum and links to other drum resources.

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THE REGINALD BEDFORD COMPETITION for Excellence in Piano Playing takes place near the end of May each year. These awards are open to all students who are currently enrolled, or are about to be enrolled, in a music program at McMaster University. For application forms, contact the School of the Arts.

APPLICATION

Auditions to enter the music program at McMaster can be arranged by appointment on the specified audition dates in March, April, and May, or by special arrangement.

For an audition appointment and further information, please contact,

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or telephone 905-525-9140, ext. 27671.**

a reasonable cost. You can also buy DVDs of your favourite artists and learn to play by watching them explain how they approach their instrument. This is an excellent way to learn since you are able to hear the lesson as well as see it performed. In addition, play-along CDs in all styles of music can be purchased, that have prerecorded music allowing you to improvise. They come with a booklet explaining what scales can be played with the songs.

With the emergence of the Internet, we are inundated with information from all sources. Although it can seem overwhelming at times, the Internet has become a remarkable tool for locating almost anything anyone can think about. There are downloads for music software, DVDs, books, CDs etc. You can even learn theory and download private lessons and have a teacher transcribe a specific song for you. Sites for tablature abound and are an easy way to learn your favourite song. A side note to tab sites: not all tab transcriptions are accurate (since anyone can post them on a site) therefore you do have to hunt for the right ones. If you have interests in recording, or the music business you will find many interesting sites for your perusal.

ON THE NET

BASS SITES

WWW.ACOUSTICBASS.COM

This is a serious site strictly committed to acoustic upright bass. You can post questions, classifieds, announcements, and other related double bass info.

WWW.BASSTABARCHIVE.COM

Looking for tab for the bass? Check this one out. Claims to be the largest collection of bass tab on the net.

WWW.GUITARGALLERYMUSIC.COM

Good collection of video, DVDs, sheet music and instruction for jazz and rock bass.

WWW.THEGUITARSITE.COM

This site contains various links for guitar and bass, including interesting link for bass history, explaining its beginning and evolution.

WWW.CYBERFRETBASE.COM

This site offers free online bass lessons for musicians through audio, video and tab.

WWW.ACTIVEBASS.COM

An online bass community for, you guessed it, bass players.



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WWW.LEARNPIANOONLINE.COM

Teach yourself to play piano with step-by-step instructions. Free lessons and e-mail support if you have any questions.

WWW.HEARANDPLAY.COM

By signing up with Jermaine Griggs, the site's founder, you can receive 60 free piano lessons. Start playing right away and get over 200 chords by ear. Visitors to the site can study major and minor chords and create chord progressions.

WWW.PIANOTABS.NET

This is an excellent site to learn how to play pop/rock piano using tab or piano scores. Lessons are free but sheet music can be purchased online. Contains links for how to read and write tab, a bulletin board and a chat room.

WWW.MUSICANDYOU.COM

For beginners, intermediate and advanced players, this site offers piano lessons including jazz, arranging and playing your favourite songs.

WWW.MYPIANOLESSONS.COM

This site has a wide range of studies for piano from rock to classical, but nothing comes for free...



Brian Murray

How long should a student stay with a teacher?

Christine Glen: As long as he/she feels comfortable, motivated and is getting the correct tuition for his/her needs.

Brian Murray: A student should continue to study with a teacher as long as he/she is learning and progressing. Some students will make it an ongoing thing once they've found a qualified teacher that they really like and will study for years with

Artists Speak

The following musicians were interviewed in regards to their view on music education: Christine Glen is a private vocal instructor at Humber College and performs pop/R&B/jazz with her band in Toronto and

surrounding areas. For 10 years she was a session singer in England doing jingles, movies, albums, backing vocals and demos. Brian Murray is a Toronto area guitarist who is an honours graduate of the Humber College jazz program and Director of the Guitar Workshop Plus program.

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GUITAR SITES

WWW.CYBERFRET.COM

Take lessons online with a range of teachers. There are various topics including: chords, theory, ear training, technique, and improvising. This site also has helpful articles on the music business and balancing your practice schedule as well as other areas of interest for guitarists.

WWW.GUITARNOTES.COM

This site has a huge guitar directory with over 5,000 guitar links, lots of classifieds and auctions, 150,000 plus tabs and MP3s. It also has links for effects, recording, parts and accessories, news and media. Discussions about the guitar and guitar instructions are also available here.

WWW.GUITARTABS.COM

There are lots of tabs to choose from on this site, including some of your favourite top artists.

WWW.CHORDFIND.COM

Good visual site for learning chords in all 12 keys. Shows a fretboard, which displays chords as you request them. You will find common chords as well as some more advanced chords.

WWW.GET-IT-ALL.NET

Want to add some new riffs to your playing? Check it out. Good source for guitar riffs. Has over 500 lead guitar licks written in tablature and also notation. Most guitar styles are here such as: rock, metal, blues, country etc.

WWW.CHOPSFACORY.COM

If you like or want to learn more about jazz this is a good place to start. There are links to jazz chords, scales, technique, comping, improvising, theory and sight-reading. In addition, it has links to essential CDs and books.

WWW.CLASSIC-GUITAR.COM

Offering some instructional material, this site is aimed at aspiring classical guitarists.

WWW.RIFFINTERACTIVE.COM

Live interactive lessons for guitar players.

WWW.GUITARSITE.COM

An online resource for guitarists that is updated daily. You can also sign up for their weekly newsletter, the Guitar News Weekly.

WWW.GUITAR.COM

A site dedicated to guitar players ... including links to interviews, books for sale, discussions, education etc.

WWW.TABALORIUM.COM/FAST

Looking for guitar tabs? This site offers plenty of choices for any guitarist.

WWW.OLGA.NET

The OnLine Guitar Archive – another guitar tab site dedicated to sharing tab between guitarists.

WWW.GUITARNOISE.COM

This site offers online guitar lessons and a discussion forum for guitarists.

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that teacher. Other students will study for a period of a year or so, take some time to practice and absorb all of the information and technique exercises that they have learned, then start taking lessons again.

What benefits does private instructions offer?

CG: The benefits of private instruction are two-fold. The teacher has the chance to really cater to the students' specific needs and the student gets the time to develop at their own pace. **BM:** Private instruction affords the student the luxury of being able to focus on particular aspects of their playing. A good teacher will be able to focus in on the student's weaknesses and give exercises, repertoire, etc. to help develop those areas. For example, if a student has good technique but is sometimes uncomfortable improvising, the teacher can zero in on that and give scales, arpeggios, choose chord progressions, tunes, etc. that will improve the student's ability to improvise.

How does a musician know when they've learned all they can from a particular teacher?

CG: When all specific goals have been met.

BM: Generally speaking, the teacher has to have the ability to give the student the knowledge and skill development necessary to take their playing to the next level. The teacher should also be able to inspire, support, and encourage the student to continue to practice properly. If the student feels as though the teacher does not possess those qualities and can't teach them the "tricks of the trade," it's time to move on.

Did you study privately or have any other forms of musical instruction?

CG: Both. I studied privately, and also sang in choirs and played in youth orchestras and bands. I tried to sing/play as much as I could.

BM: I was self-taught from age 11 through my late teens, before I studied privately with some very advanced players. At that point, I was already an established rock, blues, acoustic, and classical player but was into some very advanced jazz studies and needed to get to that next level. That's when I went to study at a post-secondary music program where I graduated with honours.


If someone is considering becoming a professional musician, how important is post-secondary musical education?

CG: Depends on what he/she does or is involved with, e.g.: When one aspires to become a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, for instance, then continued education is highly recommended. However, a post-secondary education is not a guarantee to a successful professional career, for example not every rock/pop/jazz/folk artist went to music school.

BM: I always tell people that becoming a professional musician is no different than any other profession. Whether you want to be a lawyer, doctor, computer programmer, or a musician, you have to get the best education possible. Go to law school if you want to make a good living in law ... go to music school if you hope to survive in the music industry. It is invaluable. ●




Vivian Clement is a jazz/blues guitarist performing in the Toronto area and recording in her studio "Exodus Studios" in Mississauga, ON. Her Web site is www.vivianclement.com or www.exodusstudio.ca.



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The Road to Success is Paved with Dead Raccoons

Your band no doubt aspires to become mega-selling international recording artists – with your own line of designer clothes and a reality TV show – in as short a time as possible. Six months tops. And while it has happened, for most, the road to success usually involves an un-heated Econoline, on a highway littered with road kill, some place between Edmonton and Calgary at 5 a.m. in February.

Hardly glamorous, but that's the gig. And while touring, most bands have to wear many hats. You're the Booking Agent, the PR Rep, the Road Manager, the Accountant and the Roadies. But you can make the trip easier and more enjoyable by keeping in mind these few suggestions.

Type up Engagement Sheets for each week and for all concerned – this will include the name and location of each venue, a map, set up times, performance times and any special considerations (band must play Happy Birthday for Manager). It will keep you all, literally, on the same page.

Keep a record of the venues and the bookers with whom you deal – it's always better to be able to call the guy and say, "Hi Sam, it's Bob from The Good Ol' Blues Brothers Boys. We played there last February 14th and were wondering..."

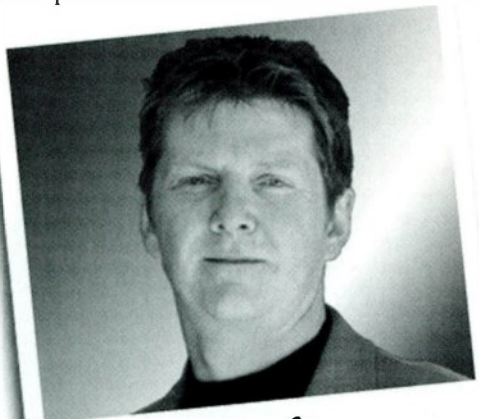
Have a "live" demo available – While a studio demo is okay, unless Phil Spector is going to be mixing the gig (and that's pretty unlikely at this current date) the booker will appreciate hearing what you *really* sound like.

Try securing an opening spot with other bands – it's often a lot less work for you and will help you build a following in places where you don't already have one. Use these gigs as showcases and invite other bookers. Be courteous and helpful to the headliners.

Get a signed contract – not always possible but a good idea. Specify in the contract your fee, who supplies what equipment, who's doing sound, whether food or drink is included, accommodation, start and finish times, when you get paid, etc.

If you're working for the door – specify the amount of the door charge, how many other acts are sharing the monies, how is it split, who provides the door person, number of comps on the guest list for each act.

Promote the hell out of 'er – make up and distribute your own flyers, ask the club to run an ad, poster the streets, send a press release to the local newspapers and radio stations asking for a mention or a listing in their "what's on" section. Include a short, well-written bio and a photo.



by *Tim Elmy*

"Hey, that's my cord" – make a list and mark all your equipment including leads, spares, cases, etc., and then check off everything before and after the gig.

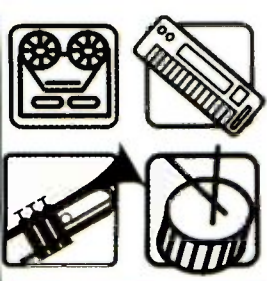
If you're crossing borders – make sure everyone has proper ID, visas, a copy of the Performance Contract and the hotel address. And for God's sake leave (leaf?) your friends from the plant kingdom at home; even Paul McCartney got tossed in jail once.

Hit and Split – a personal preference, but at the end of the night, while you still have some energy, quickly pack up your stuff and load out. Then you can kick back and have a beer.

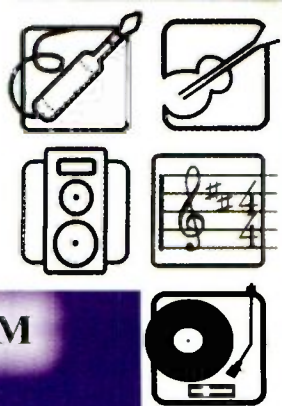
Find things to do in the places you play – look at it is way, you've got a job that lets you travel and see other parts of the country and/or the world. Take advantage of that. Go sightseeing, visit a museum, meet local people. Don't just sit around the Have A Nap Motel boozing. It'll sap your health, ruin your playing, fray relationships and drain your bank account.

Stick together – remember you're a band; it's all for one and one for all. Be supportive of each other, respect each other's opinions and need for privacy. The road can be a lot of fun, but it can also be lonely and stressful at times. Never leave your buddy in a lurch and watch each other's backs.

Tim Elmy is a Toronto-based writer and drummer for The Bingham Street Band with a checkered past and large bank overdraft. You can reach him at timelmy@rogers.com.



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The views and opinions expressed in this article are not meant to substitute for legal advice which should be sought in each particular instance.

Introduction

At a recent concert I heard on fan remark, "\$20 for a T-shirt? Little did he realize that the typical concert T-shirt should actually be priced higher to earn a decent profit for the artist. Most consumers (and some recording artists and their management) rarely take time to figure out where all the money goes. The following article is a review of all the cost considerations that should be taken into account when a band is selling their T-shirts: at any price.

Time

Many musicians do not consider the time spent overseeing the design; production; and sale of their T-shirts as costs but it is. This time could be spent doing other things (writing songs, doing interviews, playing shows, etc.) and, as we lawyers like to say, "time is money." It is hard to calculate this exactly but it should be a consideration when pricing T-shirts.

Art Design

Artists who design artwork or logos for T-shirts charge a fee. I have had clients who have paid anywhere from \$0-10,000 for artwork designs that they later use for T-shirts. As a side note: often record companies own the artwork relating to the band; in particular, the artwork relating to the album cover and other supporting material. Record companies may require artists to reimburse them for the use



by Chris Taylor

of this artwork. Try to address this ownership issue in your recording agreement so you have access to your album artwork.

Film and Screen Exposure Costs

A first time run of merchandise is subject to a one-time film and screen exposure cost. Screen exposures cost approximately \$28/per ink colour and films range from \$20-30/per ink colour depending on the size and complexity of the design. If you amortize your costs over more T-shirts your per profit per shirt increases. Musicians should avoid "dumping" designs too frequently if possible in order maximize profit. Start up costs can be considerable on short runs.

Print Costs

Each T-shirt needs to feed through the printing process. Prices will vary depending on the complexity of the print job but it is safe to say that most T-shirt print jobs cost \$1.20 to \$3 per shirt. Obviously, the more T-shirts you make from the initial run the lower your per unit costs will be.

T-shirt Costs

The T-shirts themselves cost money obviously. The price of a typical touring shirt (Gildan, AAA, Fruit of the Loom) ranges between \$4-6. The popular choice of American Apparel runs from \$8-\$10 for men's shirts and \$8-\$12 for women's. Prices per unit decrease with quantity.

Shipping

This is where bands get themselves into serious trouble. Ideally, you order your T-shirts and can pick them up from your supplier thereby avoiding any shipping charges. Typically what happens is that artists are late with their set up arrangements and merchandise is delivered late due to unreasonable timelines; or, groups that are out on the road touring lose track of their stock and end up ordering product in a rushed panic - both of these scenarios require overnight shipping. A box of T-shirts costs about \$100 to ship overnight from Toronto to Winnipeg for example.

Sales/Tracking

Medium-sized touring groups will bring someone on the road to manage their merchandise for them. If done properly, this is a worthwhile expense because accurate tracking and reporting will keep you well stocked (so you don't miss sales) and will avoid ghastly shipping

charges. This person might cost you anywhere from \$50 to \$150 per day plus 1-5 per cent sales commission depending on the experience level and complexity of the work.

Venue Costs

Major venues and many clubs charge the bands a fee on their merchandise sales. This can range from 5-25 per cent. This is a huge chunk of your T-shirt price right there.

Accounting/Management/Legal/Overhead

Bands have third parties they employ to help manage their business affairs. All of these individuals, whether they are working on a percentage or hourly basis, are paid by the bands to provide services related to the sale of that T-shirt. In addition bands have costs to run their business (i.e. van rentals, gear purchases, etc.).

The Math

If a band is charging \$20 per T-shirt for 1,000 shirts they would generate \$20,000 in revenue. If you look at some typical costs for a mid-sized band this is how the costs could break down. TOTAL INCOME: \$20,000.

Costs

Art/Design	\$1,000
Film/Screens	\$225
Print Costs (\$1.50 per)	\$1,500
T-shirt costs (\$6.00)	\$6,000
Shipping	\$500
Salesperson (1 week)	\$650
Venue costs (20% after taxes)	\$3,400
Overhead (mgr. etc. - 25%)	\$5,000
Sales Taxes (avg. 15%)	\$3,000
TOTAL COSTS:	\$21,275

General/Conclusion

Keep in mind that the example outlined above assumes the following: i) shipping charges are kept to a minimum; ii) you haven't given any T-shirts away to local road crew/bar staff; and, iii) you sold ALL your shirts (usually you are always left with stock that may not sell).

At the end of the day a musician is not taking home very much money when they work through the math: especially if they are only charging \$20 per T-shirt. In fact, at \$20 per shirt most bands are probably losing money. Talk about taking the shirt off your back!

Chris Taylor is a lawyer with the law firm of Sanderson Taylor and works with Avril Lavigne, Nelly Furtado, Billy Talent, Sum 41, Three Days Grace and Sam Roberts among others. www.sandersonataylor.com.

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The Early Years

canadian musician



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Planet Waves Tuner Up Bracket



Planet Waves recently released the Tuner Up Bracket. Holding the guitarist's tuner in place with a sturdy elastic loop, the Tuner Up bracket hangs from an acoustic guitar's sound hole.

A piezo transducer that is built into the Tuner Up senses vibrations from the guitar's top and fires that signal straight into the guitar's tuner via a 1/8" to 1/4" cable, resulting in a reliable note each time. Planet Waves feels that the Tuner Up is a "must-have accessory" for acoustic guitar players who tune up with their tuner's microphone.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 West Wilmot, #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (905) 889-0116, FAX (905) 889-8998, orders@daddariocanada.com, www.daddario.com.

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Roland Fantom-Xa Music Production Synthesizer



Roland recently unveiled the Fantom-Xa Music Production Synthesizer – a professional keyboard that has some of the most important features found on the well-known Fantom-X6.

The Fantom-Xa features 128 Voice Polyphony, 64 MB onboard Wave ROM (SRX-expandable), three MFX Processors plus separate Reverb, Chorus and Mastering Effects, USB connectivity for MIDI and file transfer, Skip Back Sampling and more. Performance-oriented features include a 61-note touch sensitive Roland keyboard, real-time Control Knobs and a D Beam.

Roland Canada Music's Product Manager Paul McCabe comments, "Fantom-X has become the instrument of choice for keyboard-based composers in Canada. With the incredibly affordable new Fantom-Xa, Roland engineers have created the Music Production Synthesizer for everyone."

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

Vox ToneLab SE



Vox recently introduced the latest addition of the Valvetronix series – the ToneLab SE amplifier and effect pedalboard.

The ToneLab SE includes Vox's Valve Reactor circuit that uses a 12AX7 dual triode as a power amp tube. There are 50 stomp boxes and effects included and up to seven effects can be used at the same time. Effects include compression, overdrive, chorus, tremolo, rotary speaker, acoustic simulation, tape echo and auto-wah – noise reduction is included. Additionally, any grouping of amp, cabinet and effect settings can be saved as one of 96 programs. Two channels, A and B, of amp/cabinet settings can be saved in each program, enabling the player to switch between backing and lead parts. Various styles are also provided within 32 preset programs.

The ToneLab SE offers 16 amp models ranging from modern boutique standards to vintage cabinet shapes, as well as 11 cabinet models that replicate the acoustic character of several cabinet shapes and speaker types.

An Amp/Line selector lets players connect to power amps, guitar amps, mixers, etc. For private practicing, a headphone output is included as well as MIDI in/out and a built-in Korg digital tuner.

The exterior of the ToneLab SE features metal construction and control knobs for easy operation. Parameter values, original values and program names are presented on an LCD screen, which is backlit for better visibility.

For more information, contact: Korg Canada, 21000 Trans-Canada Hwy., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457-0055, support@korgcanada.com, www.korgcanada.com.

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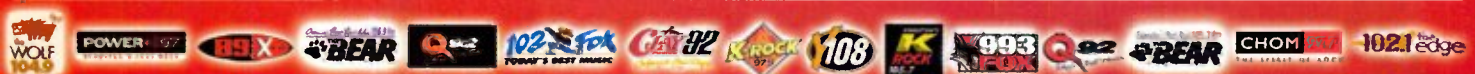
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The NATIONAL PLAYDOWN FINALS will be held Saturday, March 5, 2005 in Toronto.

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Meinl Byzance Cymbals

Meinl recently introduced the dry finish in the Byzance Series. Cymbals that have a dry finish have a matte surface. The Byzance Series cymbals are available in a 14" dry hi-hat and a 20" dry ride model. The finish is attained by sandblasting the cymbal's surface resulting in a dry sound with a short sustain, yet Meinl feels it offers a great stick definition.

According to Meinl, both dry finish Byzance cymbals work well for jazz, fusion, pop and Latin music.

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



Dean Vendetta Guitar



Dean Guitars recently introduced the Vendetta line of electric guitars with four different models to choose from.

All four models have a string-through-body design, dual humbuckers, a Dean V Ferrule pattern, 25.5 scale and solid Mahogany body with a Rosewood fingerboard and Maple neck. The Vendetta 1.0 and 2.0 models are both bolt-on necks with black hardware; the 2.0 model has a solid flame Maple top. The Vendetta 3.0 and 4.0 models feature neck-through construction with razor wire inlay running from the bottom to the top of the fret board. The 3.0 and 4.0 both have nickel hardware and the 4.0 model has a quilted Maple top and a 'Tiger Eye' finish.

For more information, contact: Intellimix Corp., 525 Morgan, Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 3T6 (888) MIX-4-YOU, (514) 457-9663, FAX (514) 457-0575, salesinfo@intellimix.com, www.intellimix.com.

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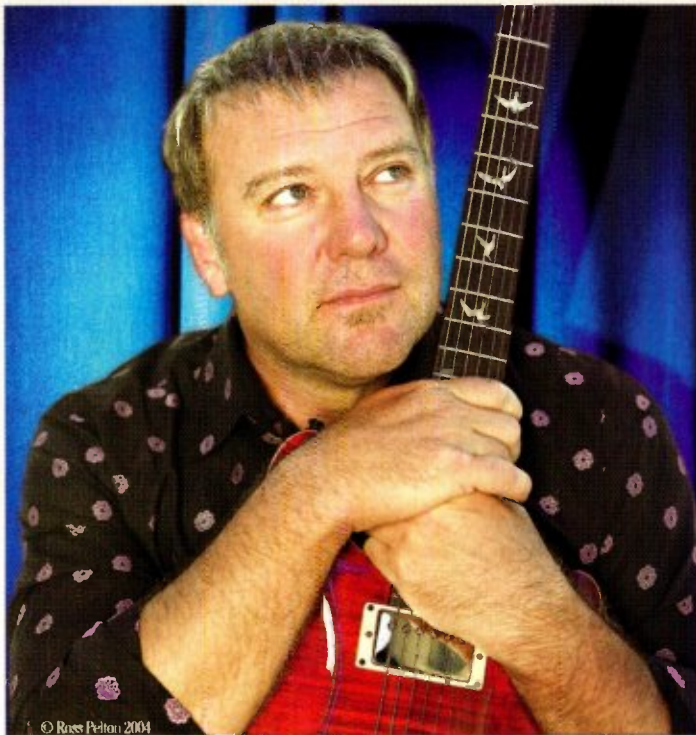
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Dean Markley Strings, Inc. - manufacturer and distributor of world famous Dean Markley electric, Acoustic, Bass, Classical, banjo, and Mandolin, 12-string, Pedal Steel and Bajo Sexto Strings. Dean Markley also has a complete line of guitar accessories which include Acoustic pickups, featuring the award winning ProMag all-wood-housing soundhole pickups. Dean Markley's new high end line of West Coast Series acoustic guitar amplification pickup systems is setting the acoustic field on fire. Be sure to check out the new "Buy Song Direct" section on the www.DeanMarkley.com website. Now you can get Dean Markley T-shirts, Jackets, Turbo-Tune string winders and Drum Key Winders. There are many other accessories which you can get directly from the company. Check it out.

Dean Markley is among a very small group of string companies that make their own strings. We have a manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan that makes Dean Markley strings, as well as strings for a number of other companies.

Dean Markley started off as a very small string company that focused on quality and original design concepts which produce superior products. Dean Markley has grown into one of the industry's major string manufacturers without compromising those ideas and standards. In a "me too" industry, Dean Markley made his own rules, creating innovative products such as the Blue Steel string line, ProMag acoustic pickups, SR2000 bass strings, and the Enviro Electric and Formula RZR Acoustic string lines. Basically every product that the Dean Markley company makes is the very best in its field.

- Step 1
Starting at either the treble or bass side, loosen and remove the first string to be replaced. This note of how the bridge pin is positioned on the bridge saddle slot. Insert the string in its proper hole in the bridge. Keep the ball end portion of the double winding facing away from the sound hole.
- Step 2
The string should be positioned into the front edge of the bridge pin hole and the corresponding notch in the bridge pin. Push the ball end of the string down into the hole approximately 1 - 2 inches. Position the string.
- Step 3
The string is held in place at the bridge by a small notch in the front edge of the bridge pin. Push the bridge pin all the way into the bridge. Then pull up on the string to make sure that the ball end of the string is pulled tightly up against the middle of the top of the guitar. (Guitar guitars may have small dents in the front of the bridge pin holes, but there are no longer necessary with these new style bridge pins.) After inserting the string and pin, a firm push with your thumb on the pin in all that is needed to keep it in place.
- Step 4
Note: Most bridge saddles are not glued to the bridge saddle slot. The tension of the strings will hold the saddle in place and the strings in their proper alignment. The tension of the strings will hold the saddle in place.
- Step 5
Be sure to attach each string to its correct tuning peg (as shown in photo). The string is passed through the string hole located near the top of the tuning peg. Leave enough slack in the string so there will be 1 or 2 wraps around the tuning peg which is used to pitch. The string is passed through the string hole.
- Step 6
After going through the string hole, the end of the string is wound one-half way in the reverse direction around the tuning peg (clockwise for the three bass strings, counter-clockwise for the three treble strings). This will enable you to form a lock on the string to avoid slippage. (See to next step.) The end of the string is wound back, one-half way around the string peg.
- Step 7
(Note: The position of the guitar is reversed to show how the string is locked onto the shaft.) After pinning under the larger part of the string, the short portion is bent back over the long part. As you tune up the string, you will notice that this step forms a lock that will prevent string slippage.
- Step 8
After the string is brought up to pitch (standard A-440 tuning), the extra length of string may be clipped off usually about 1/4" above the last bend. (Note that a string should pass around the shaft at least two to three full turns. Each winding should be under the previous one, or closer to the base of the peg. This holds the string on your fret and holds much better. The string is wound two to three times around the tuning peg. You might occasionally encounter an older guitar with a thin bridge or a string with a longer double winding adjacent to the ball end. Its contact with the bridge saddle by this winding is not recommended, so have down an old habit's trick or remedy. An extra ball from an old string is placed over the string and drawn against the first ball. This will effectively lock the string onto the bridge, removing the hairy area of the string from direct saddle contact.

Alex Lifeson needs no introduction. As the guitarist for progressive rock pioneers Rush, Alex knows a thing or two about guitars (and guitar strings). "I have been a user of Dean Markley strings for over 20 years and hope to continue for another 20 years. They are simply, the best!"

A MODERN DAY WARRIOR: Young Alex in the early days



No question, strings are an essential part of the sound of a guitar. With the exception of a new few, the majority of players will agree that their guitars sound noticeably better with new strings. Though it's no secret, the fact is frequently overlooked and taken for granted. Changing strings is probably the cheapest and simplest way to improve your tone. So if you're not entirely happy with the sound of your guitar you may want to consider trying another type of string before replacing pickups, or blaming the amp or your new bass player, since different strings may give your guitar an entirely new sound and feel. Remember, the string is really where the sound of your guitar begins. It's the vibration of the string that initiates every thing.

A string is constructed of a core, the center around which the windings are wrapped, and the windings, the wrap of wire around the center core. The core is usually either round or hexagonal in shape, while the windings come in three shapes: round-wound, half-round (which are also known as polished or ground-round wound), and flat-wound. Round-wound is the most common of all string types and produces the brightest and clearest sound. A half-round string is constructed from a round-wound string that has had the outer round wrap ground or burr-honed down to create a more even and flatter surface. The smoother surface allows the hand to glide more freely with less squeaking as it moves across the strings, and are generally not quite as bright as round-wounds. Flat-wound strings have a completely smooth outer wrap to provide the sleek and most fluid surface for effortless sliding without squeaks. Flat-wounds produce a flat and dark sound and are most frequently used by traditional jazz players.

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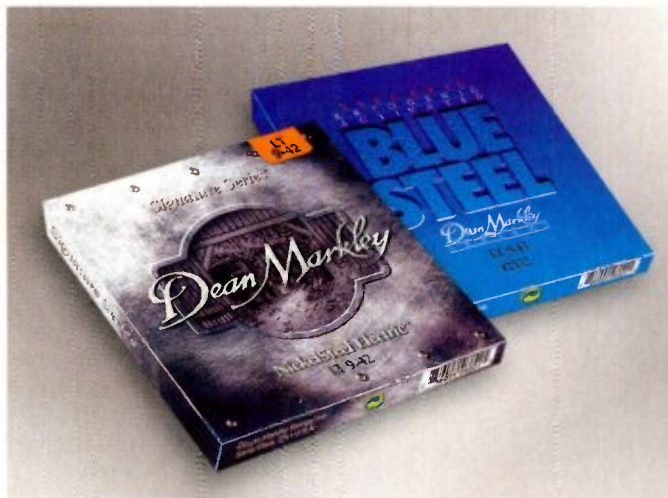
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The first thing that most people assume when their guitar won't stay in tune is that the humors are slipping, or somehow not doing their job. A logical enough assumption, but 99.9% of the time it is a string. Given that all the maintenance factors we have discussed are accounted for, making the instrument capable of getting in tune in the first place, the next common reason guitarists go out of tune is old tired... strings. "Fix 'em up new strings or a new... you say. You had did you stretch them?" "Oh excuse," you protest. Let's see that guitar. Well look at this. One yank on the low E and the pitch drops a step and a half. If your average guitar repairman had a nickel for every time that tuner is back place, he would be working from a mansion in Malibu, not the back of the local one-shop.

In all, this may seem like a lot to deal with, but if you keep your strings new and stretched you will probably avoid it. And just in case-keep that electronic tuner handy and full of fresh batteries.



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- Strings.....A#
- Turbo-Tune.....Bb
- Swag.....Caug
- Pickup.....D#
- Picks.....Eb
- Alchemy.....F#



Yamaha BBT 500 Bass Amplifier

Yamaha recently unveiled the BBT 500H bass amplifier. The BBT 500H is the world's first all-digital bass amp according to Yamaha. It features 11 modern and vintage amplifier sounds, good tone shaping capability to suit any style of music and built-in dynamics.

The amplifier only weighs 8.5 lbs., making transportation easy, and it distributes 500 watts of power into 2 ohms (250 watts into 4 ohms). The front panel offers easy access to the controls, including five-band, frequency-variable tone controls, fully parametric EQ, single-band, compressor and programmable effects blend controls. In addition, the BBT 500H features a built-in effects loop, MIDI in/out, a speaker simulator and five user memory locations.

Connections include 1/4" line and balanced XLR outputs, two 1/4" speaker outputs, tuner outputs and a headphone jack.

Yamaha also offers three speaker systems intended to compliment the BBT 500H – the BBT 110S (1 x 10" and 1" tweeter); the BBH 210S (2 x 10" and 1" tweeter); the BBT 410S (4 x 10" and 1" tweeter).

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



Sennheiser HSP2 And HSP4 Headsets

Sennheiser recently unveiled the HSP2 (omni) and the HSP4 (cardioid) headsets.

The HSP2 and the HSP4 headsets, according to Sennheiser, are ideal for different applications including onstage performances and use on loud convention floors. Both headsets feature integrated windscreens for unobtrusive visuals. The lightweight, yet rugged design is engineered for optimum performance including an ergonomic, 1.1 mm diameter and an adjustable boom arm mountable on either side. Comfortable to wear, the headsets are constructed of beta titanium materials. Both of the headsets are compatible with the MZA900 in-line preamp with dual-colour LEDs that report the status of the cable and phantom power.

The HSP2 headset is outfitted with the MKE Platinum omni-directional capsule for optimized treble and bass response and it handles sound pressure levels of up to 142dB. The hermetically sealed capsule and umbrella-like diaphragm protect the microphone against moisture.

The cardioid HSP4 headset, featuring a flexible gooseneck for optimal positioning, uses a cardioid version of the MKE Platinum capsule. This optimized capsule is designed to deliver good isolation in acoustically demanding live performance environments where background noise and feedback is an issue. The HSP4 handles both live performance environments and noisy conventions areas "with ease," according to Sennheiser.

For more information, contact: Sennheiser (Canada) Inc., 221 Labrosse Ave., Pointe-Claire, PQ H9R 1A3 (514) 426-3013, FAX (514) 426-3953, info@sennheiser.ca, www.sennheiser.ca.

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Fender Dyna-Touch III Series



Fender recently added some major upgrades to its Dyna-Touch III Series. The Dyna-Touch III series includes six amplifiers: the Bullet 150, Champion 300, Princeton 650, Deluxe 900, Stage 1000 and Stage 1600. These amplifiers feature upgrades such as nickel-plated steel hardware, model-specific hand-crafted Fender DSP effects and a fresh cosmetic treatment with new black and silver grille cloth and metal badge with the model's name on it. However, according to Fender, the reason for the upgrade on the Dyna-Touch III series isn't only cosmetic; it is also to bring forth a more upscale DSP technology to the average guitar amp.

The Princeton 650, Deluxe 900 and Stage 1000, Stage 1600 models are highlighted by the addition of seven new timbre filters including Metal Drop Scoop, Mid Squawk and Acoustic Scoop. These EQ curves allow guitarists to customize the amps' tone to numerous specific applications. Additionally, the Normal channel and the Drive channels are switched back and forth. These amplifiers also include a digital chromatic tuner and premium Celestion speakers.

For more information, contact: Fender Musical Instruments Corp., 8860 E. Chaparral Rd., #100, Scottsdale, AZ 85250 (480) 596-9690, www.fender.com.

Meisel 8860 Double Bass

Meisel Stringed Instruments recently introduced the 8860 Double Bass.

The Meisel 8860 Double Bass possesses a solid Spruce top that is carved, not pressed. According to Meisel, the 8860 produces the rich, resonant sound that experienced bass players demand – from jazz to classical.

The 8860 Double Bass features flamed, laminated Maple sides and back, an all-Maple neck, Ebony tailpiece and fingerboard, as well as German-made Rubner machine heads.

For more information, contact: Meisel Stringed Instruments, 32 Commerce St., PO Box 90, Springfield, NJ 07081 (800) 634-7356, FAX (800) 362-5020, info@meiselmusic.com, www.meiselmusic.com.



Ultimate Teach Yourself Classic Rock Guitar

Warner Bros. recently released the *Ultimate Teach Yourself Classic Rock Guitar*, a new book and CD set based on famous hits from bands such as the Kinks, the Beach Boys, Creedence Clearwater Revival and more.

The book features well-known songs like "Long Train Runnin'", "Green River" and "Fun, Fun, Fun". Each song offers the material required for an educational yet entertaining lesson in basic rock guitar. Some of the topics covered in this book/CD package include Comps and Progressions, Boogie Progressions, Rock Rhythms, Arpeggio Style, Rock Scale and Rock Soloing. With the play-along CD, guitarists are able to play along with their favourite classic hits.

For more information, contact: Warner Bros. Publications, 15800 N.W. 48th Ave., Miami, FL 33014 (800) 338-9399, FAX (305) 621-4869, penny.campbell@warnerchappell.com, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

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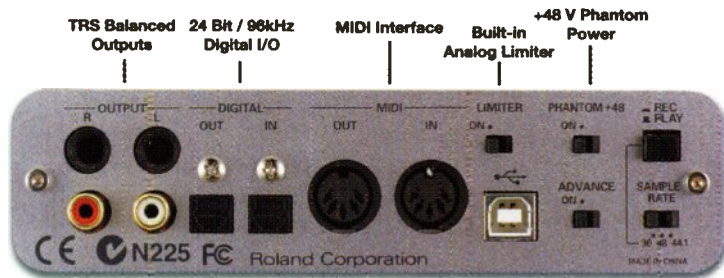
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Seymour Duncan Pickup Matched Sets

Seymour Duncan recently their most well liked pickup models in pre-matched sets. The release of the matched sets include the Vintage Blues Set, Hot Rodded Humbucker Set, Distortion Mayhem Set, California '50s Set and the Everything Axe Set.

The Vintage Blues Set, ideal for blues, jazz and classic rock, is based on the vintage P.A.F. humbuckers of the late '50s. It is made up of a pair of calibrated SH-1 '59 Model pickups for the neck and bridge positions.

The Hot Rodded Humbucker Set is ideal for a wide range of styles from aggressive blues-rock to metal. It matches a SH-2n Jazz Model for the neck position and an SH-4 JB Model for the bridge position.

The Distortion Mayhem Set, designed for the heaviest metal, punk and hardcore guitar tones, features a duo of SH-6 Duncan Distortion humbuckers for the neck and bridge positions.

The California '50s Set of pickups, a matched and calibrated set of SSL-1 Vintage Staggered pickups for Stratocaster guitars, features authentic '50s reproduction Alnico 5 vintage single coils and are ideal for surf, Country, blues and classic rock.

Last but not least, The Everything Axe Set joins an SBBJ-1b JB Jr. for the bridge position with an SDBR-1n Duckbucker and SL59-1n Little '59 for the middle and neck positions. According to Seymour, this particular set will coax everything from vintage to heavy tones from a Stratocaster. It plays well with all musical styles and each of the pickups is hum-cancelling.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 21000 Trans-Canada Hwy., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457- 4681, info@eriksonmusic.com, www.eriksonmusic.com.

Peavey Acoustic Stage Pack

Peavey Electronics recently introduced the Acoustic Stage Pack – a beginner's guitar package providing an acoustic guitar as well as accessories such as a durable, protective gig bag, a Peavey guitar strap, strings, picks and a digital tuner. The package also comes complete with the Peavey/Rock House Method Total Musician Series DVD, provided to push aspiring guitarists to the next level.

The 25 1/2" scale Spruce top acoustic guitar features a Mahogany back, neck and sides with a Rosewood fretboard with 20 frets. As well as traditional X-bracing, the guitar has sealed die-cast tuners and compensated bridge saddles.

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

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Hohner Resonator Guitar



Hohner recently introduced the Resonator Guitar, an ideal crossover for guitarists who want to add a soulful, bluesy touch to their music.

The Resonator Guitar models both feature wooden bodies with traditional resonator hardware. The HR-100, with a "Vintage Sunburst" colour, is a traditional round neck resonator guitar featuring a select Spruce top with Mahogany back and sides; Mahogany neck with Rosewood fingerboard and dot inlay; bound neck and body; sealed chrome die-cast tuners and chrome hardware and a traditional spider resonator with Maple saddle. The HR-200CE is an A/E roundneck resonator guitar with cutaway and is much like the HR-100 with its Mahogany back and sides, Mahogany neck with Rosewood fingerboard and dot inlay and bound neck and body. The HR-200CE also features sealed chrome machine heads and chrome hardware; biscuit resonator with Maple saddle; custom MB-4 low noise pickup in neck position with volume and tone controls mounted on the body. The HR-200CE is available in "Matte Black."

For more information, contact: Charlie Argall Music, 3266 Yonge St., #1709, Toronto, ON M4N 3P6 (877) 488-1645, (416) 488-1645, FAX (416) 488-3643, charlieargallmusic@bellnet.ca, www.charlieargallmusic.com.

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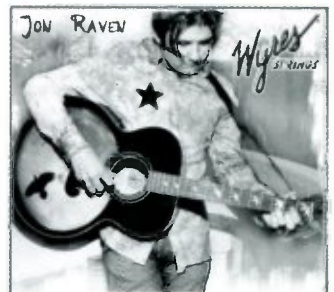
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Brian Byrne

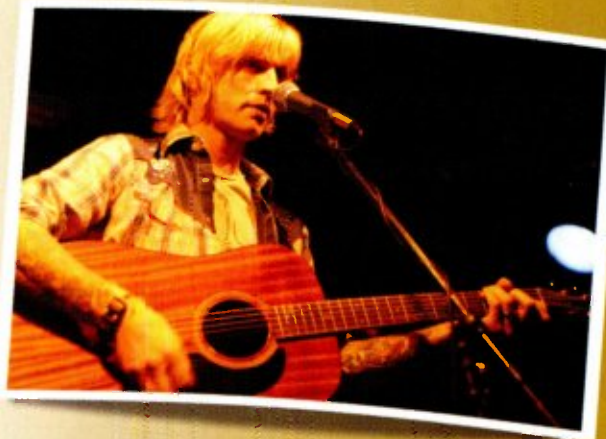
Who: Brian Byrne

Where: Toronto, ON

What: country cool

Contact: The Management Trust, 411 Queen St. W., 3rd Fl., Toronto, ON M5V 2A5 (416) 979-7070, FAX (416) 979-0505

Tuesdays, Thursdays And If It Rains marks Brian Byrne's first solo venture and it's a surprising departure from his last gig – fronting hard rock band I Mother Earth. He's gone *cool* country and that has little to do with his sleeve tattoos or lack of cowboy hat. It's the instrumentation – mandolin, dobro, lapsteel, Hammond B3 and drums played, mostly brushes – and the fact that his lyrical stories are touching, funny, and charming, filled with foibles. In I Mother Earth, Byrne never wrote his own lyrics so the fact he does this so well is remarkable. His are filled with love, whether it be for his wife ("Jen's Song", "Sweet Love" – two of the best cuts), his grandparents ("Century Old"), or his local pub ("Tuesdays, Thursdays And If It Rains"). Byrne wrote all the tracks, co-producing with engineer Peter Hamilton at his Wreck Chord Factory in Toronto. Byrne plays acoustic guitar, and enlists a band that includes David Usher playmates Kevin Young (keyboards) and Gerry Finn (electric guitar, banjo). Damhnait Doyle sings backup on five tracks. The album is due in 2005.



Dan Politano

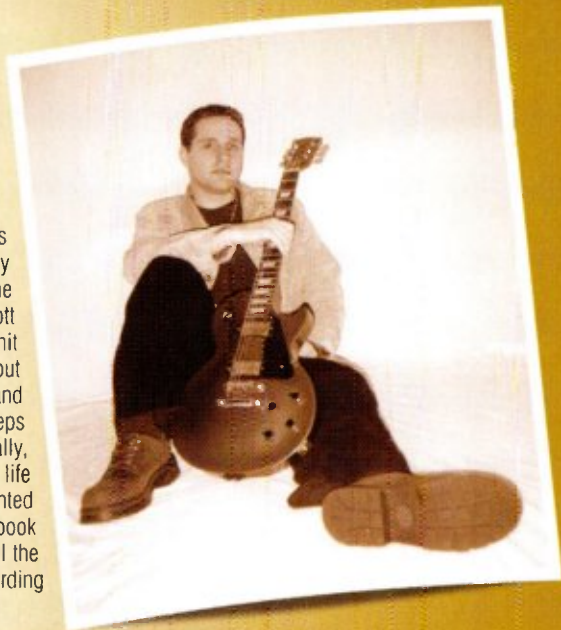
Who: Dan Politano

Where: Victoria, BC

What: light rock

Contact: 994 Snowdrop Ave., Victoria, BC V8Z 2N4 (250) 881-2838, info@danpolitano.com, www.danpolitano.com.

The 24-year-old self-taught guitarist readily admits in his bio that he's influenced by fellow Canadian Bryan Adams and one can hear it in his raspy voice. He thanks Adams, as well as Goo Goo Dolls and The Beatles in the liner notes of his debut album, *Back Where I Started*. Self-produced at Scott Henderson's Collwood, BC basement studio, charmingly called Sea Of Shit Studios, the singer-songwriter rounded up his twin brother, Mike, on drums, but handles all the guitars and bass himself. Essentially mild rockers, "Smile" and "Ready To Go", are fairly straight-ahead, while the next, "Innocence Arose", steps it up a little and if reproduced could have some fierce pop/rock power. Lyrically, he covers everything from a long-distance love affair ("New Zealand") to the life of an HIV-infected street kid ("Givin' It All"). Politano, whose father, Bryan, fronted Roxlyde and now That '70s Band, received his first guitar and Beatles songbook from his grandparents, which lead to him writing his first song at age 10. All the songs on *Back Where I Started* could benefit from a producer and better recording to pump them up.



Kellylee Evans

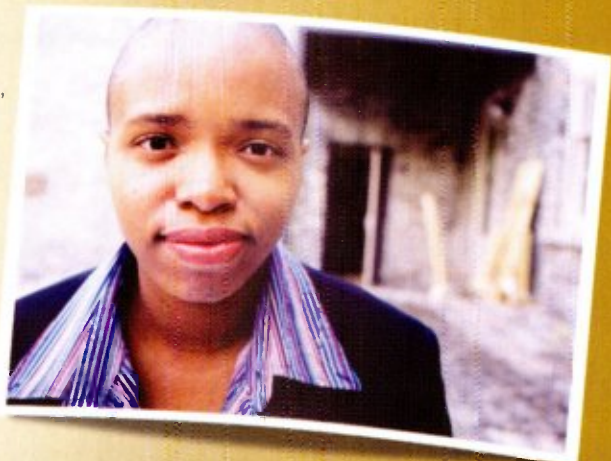
Who: Kellylee Evans

Where: Ottawa, ON

What: global-influenced jazz

Contact: KAE MEDIA, PO Box 75, Ottawa, ON K0A 1B0 (613) 253-2017, FAX (613) 253-6398, kellyleeevans@yahoo.com

Since recording this CD, *Fight Or Flight?*, Kellylee Evans won second place at the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition. The contest, open to singers under the age of 30, received 167 applications globally. The Toronto-born, Ottawa-based vocalist performed three standards at the semi-finals before a panel of judges at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. She achieved the highest position for a Canadian vocalist in the competition's 17-year history. On her CD, however, Evans wrote all 10 original songs from the rhythmic opener "I Don't Want You To Love Me" and whimsical "Who Knows?" to the island-vibed "Let's Call A Truce Tonight". All 12 songs, including covers of "Round' Midnight" and "Climb Ev'ry Mountain", were produced in New York by bassist Lonnie Plaxico (Chet Baker, Dexter Gordon, Wynton Marsalis). Laid down in just two days, her backing band included pianist George Colligan (Cassandra Wilson, Ravi Coltrane), guitarist Marvin Sewell (Cassandra Wilson, George Benson), drummer Steve Hass (Art Garfunkel, Billy Joel), and percussionist Kahlil Kwame Bell (Erykah Badu, Roberta Flack).



Toronto-based music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian news correspondent for *Rollingstone.com*, and operates a Canadian music industry news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/JamColumnBliss/home.html>. She also edits *Gasoline*, and contributes to *Elle Canada*, *Audience*, *Tribute*, *Words & Music* and others.

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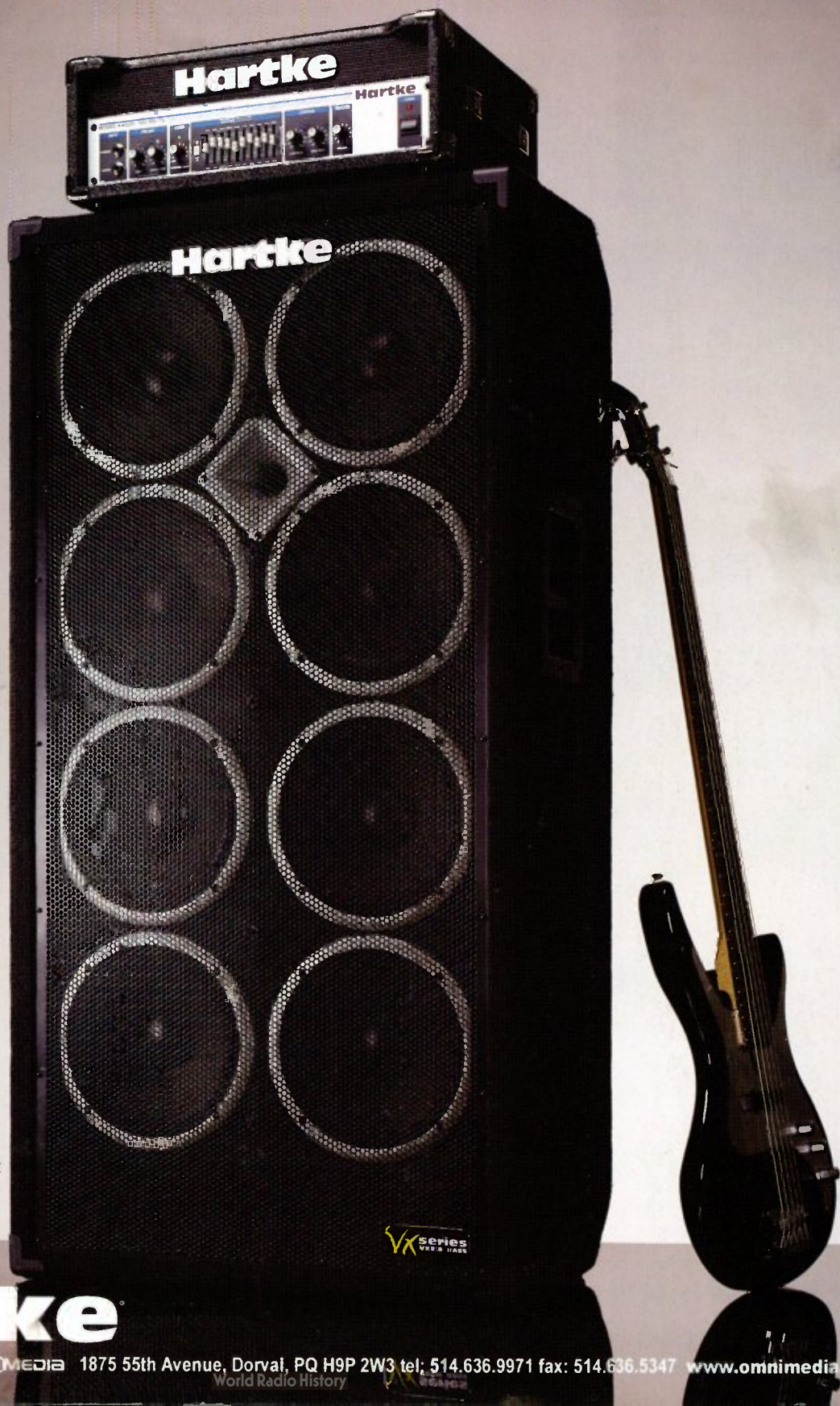
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