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DEPARTMENTS

- 9 First Take
- 12 Association Update
- 14 Changes
- 20 Canadian Musician Podcast
- 21 Events
- 64 Hot Gear
- 71 Advertisers' Index
- 74 Tech Tools
- 76 Classifieds
- 78 Showcase

COLUMNS

- 27 The Value of the Playback by Stew Crookes
- 28 The Power of Drums by Mark Rogers
- The Power of a Playlist by Jennifer Buchanan
- 31 Teaching Tips for Safe and Exclusive Music Spaces by Stephen Richardson
- 32 A Few More Good Licks by Bill McBirnie
- 60 The Importance of Speaking Like a Star by Lorraine Lawson
- 61 Take Your Pick! by Jean-Philippe Comeau
- 62 How Do You Get a Record Deal by Jeff Nedza
- 63 How to Start Producing Your Own Demos by Rob Wells

FEATURES

BRUCE COCKBURN

IS ON A ROLL

By Matt Bauer

Bruce Cockburn has been riding a late career peak that rivals Bob Dylan. With a distinguished 56-year sojourn marked by politics, spirituality and a nearly unrivalled musical diversity that has seen him embrace folk, jazz, rock and global styles not to mention his highly respected activism and compassionate and socially conscious lyrics, the now 78 year old Cockburn has released his latest album the spiritually-based triumph O Sun O Moon.

MUSIC, MAGIC & LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF WITCH

PROPHET

By Manus Hopkins

With a new record out, a busy festival season ahead, and an appearance in a documentary on witchcraft, Witch Prophet is appearing everywhere these days. It's only right that one such place be in our pages.

JAYDA G FINDS HERSELF THROUGH LOSS

By Matt Bauer

Titled after her late father, Guy, is Jayda G's most personal release to date. Known worldwide for her exuberant DJ sets, the Grand Forks, BC-born and London, UKbased writer, producer, DJ, environmental toxicologist, and broadcaster has crafted a vivid, danceable tapestry in tribute to her father Richard Guy who passed when Jayda was ten.

CANADIAN MUSICIAN'S **2023 KEYBOARD SPECIAL**

By Manus Hopkins

Pianists Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, Martin Mayer, Adrean Farrugia, and Laila Biali share insights on practice, training, and what

makes a piano player great, while offering tips for newer players.



COVER PHOTO: BRUCE COCKBURN

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For more information on products advertised in Canadian Musician, please see page 71 or visit www.canadianmusician.com.

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MAIL AGREEMENT NO.0040069300, RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN

ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION DEPT., 4025 Dorchester Rd., #188, Niagara Falls,

ON L2E 7K8, 905-374-8878, mail@nwcworld.com.

ISSN 0708-9635
INDEXED IN THE CANADIAN PERIODICAL INDE



4025 Dorchester Rd., #188, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 7K8, 905-374-8878, FAX 888-665-1307, mail@nwcworld.com, www.nwcworld.com

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The Perplexities of Black Music in Canada

By Carlos Morgan

am a strong, staunch and passionate advocate for Black music and artists in Canada. Since I was a child, I've been in love with music. I grew up listening to, and falling in love with, gospel, R&B, soul and reggae. My love and passion for these genres of Black music, sparked my journey towards singing in church, starting at age twelve, then performing in R&B, soul, and funk bands, at age sixteen. All the songs I performed and sung, were predominately from Black artists from the United States and Jamaica. It was during this time, I began to ask the questions, "Why am I not hearing domestic Black artists on radio?""Not seeing their records in record stores?". There was a lack of marketing and promoting of their music and none were household names. As a Black man, born and raised in Canada, not seeing and hearing Black artists and musicians that are "homegrown", shaped and informed my opinions about the Canadian music industry and their blatant, anti-Black racist and white supremacist practices and policies that permeate within the Canadian music industry.

Notable Black Musicians in Canada

As my knowledge of the Canadian music industry expanded, so did my interest to learn about Black artists, whether born in Canada or migrated here. I learned about, had the pleasure of meeting, performing with and being mentored by legendary artists, such as Oscar Peterson, Aubrey Mann, Salome Bey, Jackie Richardson, Kim Richardson, Freddie James, Vivienne Williams, Wayne St. John, Jay McGee, Lorraine Scott, Errol Starr, Billy Newton Davis, George St. Kitts and many more. At the same time meeting, collaborating and working with artists of my generation such as Deborah Cox, Simone Denny, Glenn Lewis, Divine Brown, Wade O. Brown, Chris Rouse, Aadin Church, Lorraine Reid, Toya Alexis, Ray Robinson, Haydin Neale, Tanya Mullings, Maestro Fresh Wes and many more.

The immensely, talented pool of Black artists have been in Canada since its inception but have not received the much deserved recognition, acknowledgement and acco-

lades they deserve. Black artists have also made significant contributions to the Canadian music industry, yet so many people don't know of them, unlike white Canadian artists that are household names.

In recent years, I've learned about Black artists including Portia White, Eleanor Collins, Phyllis Marshall, Harry Cromwell, Brent Williams, Big John T-Bone Little and many more unsung heroes that have been a part of laying the foundation for the music industry in Canada.

Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian Music Industry

Whether or not the Canadian music industry, and those that have worked and are currently working in it admits it or not, anti-Black racism and white supremacist attitudes, policies and practices have played a major role in domestic Black artists not being signed to Canadian record labels, and marketed and promoted to the Canadian public. For Black artists to get signed, they would have no other alternative but to seek getting signed in the U.S., whereas white artists get signed to Canadian labels. There have been instances where a white artist, that was recording a genre of Black music, would get signed to a Canadian major record label instead of Black artists, from whence the genre came from.

Some efforts and initiatives have been created to sign Black artists to Canadian record labels, market and promote the artists to the Canadian public, and to the world but those efforts have been nothing short of tokenistic, appeasing and disrespectful.

Along with Canadian record labels not signing Black artists, another ongoing issue has been a lack of commercial radio support. The consistent mandates, to not play the music of domestic Black artists on Canadian mainstream radio, has been blatant in their obvious silence. On the other hand, Black radio stations, created to play domestic and international Black artists, have been in existence since 2001. Unfortunately, these radio stations have not sustained longevity.



CARLOS MORGAN

The Trajectory of Black Music in Canada

The Black music community, in Canada, has evolved and grown in many ways. From the early Black music pioneers that started, and laid the foundation, to those who have and are currently achieving national and international awards, acclaim and accolades. Despite the achievements and progress Black music in Canada have made, there are many issues that the Black music community needs to address and change. Some of the issues include our inability to unify and unwillingness to collaborate, create, build, maintain and sustain our own music infrastructures such as acquiring our own radio stations, record labels, touring opportunities, music education, sharing of music resources and marketing and promoting our original music to the world, to name a few.

My desire is that Canada, and Canadians, will support and acknowledge the contributions Black artists have made to the Canadian music industry, dismantle and destroy the anti-Black racist and white supremacist practices and policies that hinder the growth and development of Black music in Canada.

Carlos Morgan, M.A., is a multi award winning singer, songwriter, producer, recording artist, music educator, speaker, vocal coach, owner of Solroc Music and clothing brand entrepreneur. Morgan can be reached at carlosmorganmusic@hotmail.com.



Trying to Land a Record Deal? Read This.

By Manus Hopkins

e started off our last issue's Indie Insider section by saying that in 44 years of publishing Canadian Musician, there have always been two main things our readers and community members want, and for our advice on. To refresh, those two things are getting more gigs (and better gigs) and landing a record deal. We delved into the former in last month's issue after a successful webinar on the topic, so it was only fitting that in our most recent webinar, which can be found at www.nwcwebinars. com along with other past and future sessions, we explored the latter. We were joined for the webinar by A&R Consultant Fraser Hill and Entertainment Lawyer Burt Gidaro, both of whom shed some light and shared some valuable knowledge on the often-misunderstood subject of record deals.

Fraser Hill, as an A&R consultant, worked his way up to Senior Director of A&R at EMI Music Canada, later moving to Universal Canada once EMI was sold, where he was responsible for signing platinum artists including Serena Ryder, These Kids Wear Crowns, Kreesha Turner, and Shawn Hook. After 21 years at EMI/Universal, he started his own company, frazietrain productions, Inc., an independent music consulting company specializing in Artist and Repertoire Consulting and Artist Development. Here are some main takeaways from Fraser.

These quotes have been edited for length and clarity.

What does an A&R Director do?

Traditionally, artists and repertoire, individual was somebody who was an orchestrator, a composer, musician, and was attached to a label. Back in the '50s, there were numerous labels, a lot of them were independently owned, or there was the big five or six at that time. And those individuals came into the business from the musician side of it, and production, or sort of a combination of both, as you moved into the late 1970s. That's where it started, A&R started to open up into all kinds of people coming into A&R from being a journalist to a radio person to a promoter. And it was a lot wider, so a lot more people got involved. And so, he had less of the traditional musician/composer side, and you had people that had different kinds of skill sets to come in that could spot talent. So that's a long answer to what A&R is, but that gives you the history of where it started and where we are now.

Do bands and artists need to write their own material?

In the early days, they would seek out a good voice like Sinatra and all that in the 1950s. And the artist would seek out that producer and he could find the songs and marry the two together and move on. It wasn't until you got into the late '60s where the bands and the folk movement, Dylan and Lightfoot and everybody started writing their own material. That's where the A&R shifted a little bit from being a traditional composers and producers and musicians, and it became a wider net of people looking for talent.



FRASER HILL

What are you looking for in an artist?

My background is production, so I come out of producing. I pretty well started in the 1978-1979 era, as an assistant, just making coffee and setting up the mics and then worked my way up. So, I come from looking at A&R from a little more of a production side. So, I look at it if something's generating interest, how do I go about making that record? How can I make that connect with an audience? And then even before that, I'm looking at an artist to see if it can work its way through the building, can it come through the front door and get through all the mazes

and the myriad of people that you have to be involved with to put out the record? So those are kind of my collective checklists. So, I look at it from, can I produce a really solid piece of work? Does the artist have more than one song? Do they have 10 songs? Am I looking at a artist's development situation? Am I looking at a situation that fits well and just needs to be tidied up a bit? And then do the budgets attached to those decisions reflect what the material is in the style of music?

How do you find artists, or do they come to you?

Initially, when I was doing it, demos would come in cassette form and you'd spend days going through cassettes, and going through that; the business is quite a bit different [now]. Even five years ago, six years ago, it's so different from what it was in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. But fundamentally, everything is a tip. A lawyer is a tip, your friend's a tip, the promoter, the doorman, the engineer, the assistant, the producer, the composer, someone's girlfriend; you wouldn't believe the number of things that I've come across over the years where people have mentioned one thing or another, and I've gone after it, so that hasn't changed. Word of mouth from unknown sources, people that you trust, that's initially what gets things going on some, but other things are me hunting the Internet, going through all that, having a couple of assistants working through the internet and listening to things. I've dropped in and seen agents, because they're usually the first line of musicians and managers reaching out to get gigs. And that's kind of how I found the Northern Pikes. I hooked up with an agent and was trying to find music to work on as a producer and I went on to co-produce and manage and get those guys signed to Virgin. So that's how kind of how it started, and it hasn't really changed. It's just different how it is today. It's online and Facebook and all the social networks are platforms to find things.

How important is a band's live show?

I want to see them live, I want to see if it walks and talks, and it is what it is. I want to be able to kick the tires, I want to know that I can work with them on a personal level, and on a professional level, making the music, so that's where I come from. Yes, there are things that come in, to me

even now that I'm consulting where the music is really great. And it's produced really well, because everybody has the ability to do that today. But I still want to go out and see if that is actually the singer, because I've got to be able to put my weight behind it, and push it through the whole process of putting out a record and a record company scenario.

Burt Gidaro is a Canadian Entertainment Lawyer with extensive music industry, film, television, OTT, and agency/marketing law experience. He began his entertainment career in the business affairs department of Breakthrough Films & Television, before being recruited by EMI Music Canada as the Head of Business Affairs. He has served in the business affairs department of Universal Music (Canada) and as General Counsel to PolyGram Entertainment's Canadian affiliate. Here are some main takeaways from Gidaro.

These quotes have been edited for length and clarity.

How does an artist find a lawyer, and make sure they are the right lawyer?

The same way you might find an artist, which is you look on the internet and you try and get tips from people that you know in the business, to someone they'll provide you with a name that you can trust. You can call the Law Society too, but typically their take on things is whether or not you've had a disciplinary history or something. I really think it's important. If you have a manager or an agent, you come talk to those folks. And they will often point you in the right direction, because they've worked with lawyers, and they know them.

What would be in a typical recording contract for an artist with a major label?

Typically, with a major label, the first thing they're going to going to want to do is own the master recording. So, the sound recordings that you produce, they would have an obligation to pay you for any sort of revenue that came in from them, but it at the end of the day would be theirs. If you have more leverage there, and it depends on the genre too, you're seeing, if it's very competitive for an artist, like a hip hop artist, often you'll find that it's a licensed deal, and they'll have it for a peri-



BURT GIDARO

od of years, and then the masters can end up reverting to the artists, but it has to be competitive, meaning there has to be a lot of interest in you. That's one way of sweetening the deal for you, is that at the end of the day, you own the sound recording. You'll probably do a deal with that same label if they've been doing a good job, but the economic terms will change in your favor at that point, too. So that's one thing that's in it, that you'll typically find in a major label deal, you'll also find that there's typically more money involved in a major label deal. Your recording budgets are going to be healthier than say, if you signed with an indie artist just because that's to be expected. You're also going to get an in-pocket advance as an artist, and those are going to be healthier than say with most indie labels. With major label deals, typically, there's a royalty involved, somewhere in the neighborhood of 15-22 percent. And again, that all depends on how much leverage you have and how sought after you are. And that's how you end up getting paid. And you would have to recoup any advances. That's another sort of different concept. But it's basically, I don't like to call it this, but advances are just that: they're an advance. You get paid in advance for what would be sales, and then the record company gets to recoup the amount that they've paid you from sales until they're fully paid back. But it's not alone in that; they're not securing it against your car or anything. Nobody's going to repossess your car. So, it's more of an investment type of model.

Keep up with NWC Webinars for more in-depth conversations on a variety of topics with music industry professionals.

Manus Hopkins is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician. He can be reached at mhopkins@nwcworld.com.

ASSOCIATION **UPDATE**

2023 CMAOntario Awards: Winners Announced

The Country Music Association of Ontario (CMAOntario) is proud to announce the winners for the 11th Annual CMAOntario Awards, which took place June 4 at Theatre Aquarius in Hamilton, Ontario. Presented by Slaight Music, the CMAOntario Awards acknowledged the talent and achievements of Ontario's country music industry across 19 categories with presentations and performances.

Robyn Ottolini took home Single of the Year and Female Artist of the Year, while The Reklaws scored Group or Duo of the Year and The Compass Award.

Hosted by Jason McCoy and Shannon Ella, the 11th Annual CM-AOntario Awards Show featured performances by Jade Eagleson, Robyn Ottolini, Nate Haller, Karli June, Graham Scott Fleming, Sacha, Elyse Saunders, Vincent Bishop, Jason Blaine, Genevieve Fisher, Andrew Hyatt, Ryan Langdon, Owen Riegling, Julian Taylor, and The Western Swing Authority.

The CMAOntario Awards also included a special performance by Jason McCoy and Nicole Rayy in honour of 2023 Impact Award recipients The Family Brown, and a tribute performance to Gordon Lightfoot featuring The Good Brothers.

THE 2023 CMAONTARIO AWARD WINNERS ARE:

SINGLE OF THE YEAR – sponsored by Pure Country 93 "Say It" – Robyn Ottolini

ALBUM OF THE YEAR – sponsored by Country 106.7 Party in the Back – Nate Haller

SONGWRITER(S) OF THE YEAR – sponsored by SOCAN Steven Lee Olsen, Brandon Day – Nashville or Nothing (recorded by Steven Lee Olsen)

FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR – sponsored by VEC Entertainment Group Robyn Ottolini

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR – sponsored by IBEW Local 353 Tim Hicks

GROUP OR DUO OF THE YEAR – sponsored by Country 103 The Reklaws

RECORD PRODUCER(S) OF THE YEAR

Karen Kosowski – Karli June

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR (LARGE MARKET) -

sponsored by Fielding Estate Winery KX-947, Hamilton

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR (MEDIUM MARKET) -

sponsored by Lucknow's Music in the Fields Pure Country 105, Peterborough

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR (SMALL MARKET)

100.1 FM The Ranch, Listowel



ROOTS ARTIST OR GROUP OF THE YEAR

Mackenzie Leigh Meyer

RISING STAR – sponsored by Slaight Music Josh Ross

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR – sponsored by Jim Dunlop Productions

"Genes" – Elyse Saunders

MUSIC INDUSTRY PERSON OF THE YEAR – sponsored by Manrkē

Dave Woods

FRANCOPHONE ARTIST OR GROUP OF THE YEAR

Reney Ray

FANS' CHOICE – sponsored by Tourism Hamilton Jade Eagleson

COMPASS AWARD – sponsored by Luminate The Reklaws

HOLLY & STEVE KASSAY GENEROUS SPIRIT AWARD

Kayla Wilging

IMPACT AWARD

Family Brown

The CMAOntario Award Show was preceded by a weekend of activities as part of the CMAOntario Festival & Awards Weekend, June 2-4, 2023. The CMAOntario Festival & Awards Weekend included Songs & Stories: Songwriters in the Round, R2i TuneUp Conference, Bonfire and Tailgate Party. For more information, go to www.cmaontario.ca

Salome Bey, Jully Black, and Bruce Cockburn Get Their Stars on Canada's Walk of Fame

SOCAN members Jully Black, Bruce Cockburn, and the late Salome Bey received their stars on Canada's Walk of Fame, on Friday, May 26, 2023, after being inducted in 2020 and 2021. "I'm so grateful for this opportunity to speak, to express, and to represent every little Black boy and girl who looked out and didn't see someone who looked like them on television, or hear them on the radio, or see them in film and TV, or see them teaching in schools," said Jully Black on learning of her induction.

"Being inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame feels to me like an excuse for a party," joked Bruce Cockburn on learning of his induction. "It feels wonderful. When I first heard the news, I was very excited. I was like, 'What? Me?"

SOCAN members previously honoured by Canada's Walk of Fame include Drake, the late Leonard Cohen, Andy Kim, Col. Chris Hadfield, the late Stompin'Tom Connors, Michael Bublé, Rush, Sarah McLachlan, Blue Rodeo, The Tragically Hip, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, Nickelback, and kd lang.

Recipients Announced at 7th Canadian Live Music Industry Awards: Awards Include Best Teamwork at a Venue, Agent of the Year, Festival of the Year, Industry Impact, and More

Canadian Music Week (CMW) and the Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) are happy to announce the recipients of the 2023 Canadian Live Music Industry Awards (CLMIAs).

The CLMIAs, hosted by two-time JUNO Award winners Digging Roots, took place on June 9th as part of CMW, and showcased performances from Katherine Li, Ashley Sienna, and Charlie Edward.

This year marks the 7th edition of the CLMIAs, a night of celebration and recognition bringing together the Canadians behind live music. In her annual address, President & CEO of the CLMA Erin Benjamin acknowledged the return of live and its profound impact on Canadians and their communities:

"Canada's live music sector has been enthusiastically making up for lost time, finally—and officially—crossing the finish line of the pandemic. The resilience of our nominees, recipients, and the industry at large has set the stage for the brightest of futures, and the CLMA remains hard at work conveying the value our members bring to the quality of life of all Canadians. We're proud of our incredible industry; you continue to inspire so many with your determination and tenacity in the service of artists and fans across the country and around the world. Congratulations to all."

The 2023 CLMIAs honoured more than 22 companies, organizations and individuals including the distinguished career achievements of Riley O'Connor, Chairman, Live Nation Canada, and legendary Canadian artist Bruce Cockburn.

BreakOut West Returns to Kelowna in 2023

Tourism Kelowna, alongside the City of Kelowna, proudly supported the successful bid for BreakOut West 2023, assisting the local Host Committee, consisting of Creative Okanagan and a small group of community volunteers, with their bid development, familiarization tour, and strategic partnership opportunities.

"Kelowna has hosted successful BreakOut West events in 2010 and 2018, and 2023 promises to build on that legacy. The Central Okanagan has a strong, connected music and cultural community, terrific venues, and passionate volunteers ready to host in 2023," says Tourism Kelowna President & CEO, Lisanne Ballantyne. "We are excited to welcome back attendees to our amazing four-season outdoor playground, including new live music and performance spaces. Tourism Kelowna is proud to partner on important events like BreakOut West that increase economic impact while contributing to Kelowna's quality of life. The entire tourism industry is excited for BreakOut West and the Western Canadian Music Awards to return next year!"

The once-a-year event, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, is sure to be one of the highlights of Kelowna's cultural calendar in 2023 as musicians, industry professionals, fans, and del-



egates descend on the city for a 4-day music industry conference, 3-night multi-genre showcase festival at various downtown Kelowna venues, and the Western Canadian Music Awards.

"Kelowna has had massive success in hosting BreakOut West in the past. The event has enabled us to showcase our local artists and unique venues and further establish Kelowna as a community that loves live music," says Karma Lacoff Nieoczym, Creative and Executive Director with Creative Okanagan and Host chair. "MusicBC has strongly supported us in submitting the bid. We look forward to offering our local musicians opportunities to perform at the festival, attend the conference, and submit entries for the Western Canadian Music Awards."

The BreakOut West Showcase Festival featuring over 50 of Western Canada's best emerging and established artists (and a few international acts, too). BreakOut West is run by the Western Canadian Music Alliance and a volunteer committee in the host city. BreakOut West 2023, will happen October 11-15. For more details, visit www.breakoutwest.ca.

The Black Canadian Music Awards is Accepting Submissions

The Black Canadian Music Awards is accepting submissions until July 31, 2023. The Black Canadian Music Awards is made possible through a joint partnership with SiriusXM Canada and SOCAN Foundation. This award is designed to celebrate extraordinary Black music creators that are Canadian.

Submissions to the talent competition can be from all genres of music, such as folk, blues, rock, hip-hop, R&B, etc. Candidates must be Canadian citizens, identify as Black, and the original creators of the musical submission are eligible to apply to the talent competition. In the case a collective use for the Award, all music creators must meet the eligibility criteria.

Up to Five awards valued at up to \$10,000 each will be granted to the finalists. All submissions will be reviewed by a jury composed of Black artists/industry leaders in the Canadian music industry.

The competition is open to music creators who are of Black descent. If the applicant is a collective/band, all members must meet the eligibility criteria.

Candidates must be Canadian and SOCAN members or Canadians who are not members of any performing rights organization. Submissions must be original, composed within two years of the application deadline. Arrangements are not eligible. The applicants must submit musical examples in which they have contributed towards the creation of the work meaningfully, and have a share of ownership in the work. SOCAN and SOCAN Foundation board members and employees and jury members of the Black Canadian Music Awards are not eligible.

For more details and to apply, go to www.socanfoundation.ca/awards.

Jim Beam INDIES Winners Announced

Canadian Music Week announce the winners for the 22nd Anniversary of the Jim Beam INDIES which took place June 8, 2023, at History in Toronto. The Jim Beam INDIES are a celebration of new music, and the artists and teams who inspire the independent spirit, both nationally and internationally.

Hosted by Shreya Khanna, on air correspondent for Entertainment Tonight ET Canada and host of Live Nation Fans, the Jim Beam INDIES included performances by Jim Beam Talent Search winners FKB, AR Paisley, Aysanabee, Brett Kissel, Maestro Fresh Wes, and a special guest concert by 2023 Video of the Year winner Charlotte Cardin.

The 2023 Jim Beam INDIES Winners are:

Album of the Year - presented by SiriusXM

July Talk – "Remember Never Before"

Artist of the Year - presented by SiriusXMAlexisonfire

Country Artist/Group or Duo of the YearBrett Kissel

Electronic/Dance Artist/Group or Duo of the Year

REZZ

Francophone Artist/Group or Duo of the Year

Sophia Bel

Group or Duo of the Year

Tegan and Sara

Hip Hop/Rap Artist of the Year AR Paisley

Independent Label of the Year 604 Records

Indigenous Artist/Group or Duo of the Year – presented by SiriusXM Aysanabee

Pop Artist/Group or Duo of the Year Grae

Producer of the Year

Ikky

Publisher of the Year – Presented by CRMMA

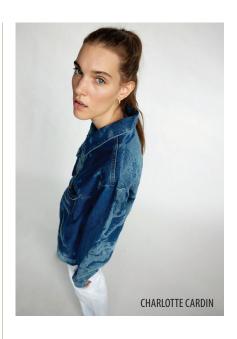
Arts & Crafts Music

R&B Artist/Group or Duo of the Year Dylan Sinclair

Rock Artist/Group or Duo of the Year Simple Plan

Roots/Folk Artist of the Year

The Dead South



Song of the Year - Presented by SOCAN

"We Could Get High" – Songwriter - Billy Raffoul – Performed by Billy Rafoul

Video of the Year

Charlotte Cardin & Lubalin – "Phoenix (Reprise)"

"INDIES Hall Of Fame" Award

Alexander Mair

Honey Jam Concert Set for August in Toronto

This year's Honey Jam concert will take place August 17 at Toronto's TD Hall at 8 p.m. A host of female and gender-diverse singers aged 14-25 auditioned in May for a spot. Those who made the cut also receive mentorship opportunities, attendance to music industry workshops, and more.

Honey Jam is a non-profit multicultural artist development programme run by PhemPhat Entertainment Group. Since 1995 we have worked with young emerging Canadian female artists of all cultures and representing all genres of music to provide mentoring, educational, vocal coaching, performance and networking opportunities. The annual programme culminates with a stellar showcase of live music. We organize impactful experiences



for the artists such as songwriting camps, industry knowledge workshops, mentor cafe's, tickets to major artist concerts, opportunities to attend the music industry conferences and events, to be considered for paid public live and online performances and artist talk sessions to learn from major artists such as Jessie Reyez, Melanie Fiona, Serena Ryder, Marsha Ambrosius, Estelle, LeToya Luckett, Elle Varner, Erykah Badu, Janelle Monae, Alison Hinds, Shontelle and more.

For more information, visit www.honeyjam.com.

Cosmos MusicFEST & EXPO Returned in June

CosmoFEST 2023 was a massive success. The day-long event took place on June 3 at Cosmo Music's Richmond Hill, ON store, and saw a trade show, a stage with a packed performance program, and over a thousand attendees.

"I am impressed with efforts from our partnering brands and suppliers; we are grateful," comments Chris Bailey, Cosmo Music's Vice President, Marketing. "Cosmo Music would not be able to put on CosmoFEST without that support. We are pleased with the day's results and are encouraged that this idea to bring music makers together is important to support music in Canada."

During the store's opening hours during the event, shoppers were able to snag 15 percent off items storewide, while looking around the trade show floor that hosted exhibitors such as Fender. PRS Guitars, Sabian, and many more. The stage was graced by the likes of 54-40, Lighthouse, the Cosmo Soul Express band, and others, and the festival saw special appearances from Paul Reed Smith, Lari Basilio, and David Grissom in the Cosmopolitan Music Hall. Those in attendance were also able to enjoy food from a host of vendors as well as a beer garden while watching the live music.

"Thank you for making CosmoFEST a massive success!" reads a statement on the company's website. "Wow! Another CosmoFEST in the books and we can't thank everyone enough! From the main stage headliners to the food trucks, to the EXPO Tent... After three long years it was incredible to see everyone come together to celebrate live music and gear. We can't wait to see you at the next one!"

For more information, visit www.cosmomusic.ca.





Manifesto Festival Announces Full Week of Events to Celebrate 50 Years of Hip Hop

The Manifesto festival of music, arts and culture delivers a historic week-long lineup of events August 7-13 that celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop through an African diasporic lens, anchored by a blockbuster live concert experience powered by The Block on Friday August 11th at RBC Echo Beach in Toronto. With a full lineup of performers across two stages, headliners for Manifesto Presents: The Block Party are rap star Aminé and Canadian rap icon Saukrates (pictured).

Aminé (pictured), a Los Angeles-based musician of Ethiopian and Eritrean descent, is known for his blockbuster multi-platinum hit single "Caroline", noteworthy collaborations with Offset (Migos), Kehlani, and Young Thug, all the way to his recent critically acclaimed May 2023 collaborative album Kaytraminé with Grammy-winner Kaytranada that features a who's of multi-generational urban music legends including Pharrell Williams, Big Sean, Snoop Dogg, and Freddie Gibbs.

Toronto-based triple threat (rapper / producer / singer) performer Saukrates has a deep catalogue of timeless rap singles dating back to the mid-90s that most diehard rap fans and serious music critics acknowledge as being some of the best music to come out of Canada. His influence spreads to many of the Canadian music megastars of yesterday and today, including Drake - who he worked with early in his career. Equally impressive are his production credits on albums by various hip hop icons including Nas and Redman.

Hosted by The Relentless Diaries podcast crew (Zoie, Tresor, Chris), the Manifesto concert stage will also feature a potent blend of live performances from notable Toronto music talents of today and tomorrow including Kuruza, Eben, No Tourists, SadBoi, Liza, and Eleanor. CBC Music's Angeline Tetteh-Wayoe will host the Block Stage, showcasing Canada's brightest contemporary rappers including Keysha Freshh, Phoenix Pagliacci, Temia, Vince the Messenger, and Clairmont the Second.

In addition to the CBC Music stage in Toronto, The Block, CBC Music's home for music of Black origin - hosted weekdays by Angeline Tetteh-Wayoe - is celebrating 50 years of hip hop by airing 50 stories over 50 days - focused on an artist, event or significant moment in hip hop history. Starting last week, these 50 stories air nationwide each night on The Block on CBC Music until August 11. To close out this special evening of live music, on August 11th Manifesto's official after-party starts at 10pm, featuring four local DJs and takes place at Nomad, an ultra-modern social club pushing the boundaries of music & entertainment.

The full week of Manifesto festival programming begins its unique rollout on August 7 with part one of the Music Summit taking place on the Empress boat, in partnership with CIMA and Music Ontario, to capture the pre-existing Caribana energies in the air on this particular weekend. This year's programming slate includes two highly informative panel discussions; one tied to the influence of Caribbean culture on Hip Hop, with the other providing indie artists with the right tools to succeed in today's music marketplace. Day two of the



summit on August 8th will offer up topical hands-on hip hop culture workshops.

The mission of Manifesto has always been to provide accessible high-quality arts programming and a platform for emerging artists to showcase their skills, and this year is no different. The festival celebration continues at Yonge and Dundas Square on August 12th with a free admission Block Party – in partnership with the Black Talent Initiative and Speedy Transport – where a full day of programming tied to hip hop culture's five main "elements" will include live music performances, DJ's spinning tracks to reflect the five decades of hip hop's musical output, a breakdancing battle and curated dance performances, live graffiti, a hip hop photo exhibit, and numerous vendors on site tied to the culture. Come celebrate Manifesto's Hip Hop 50th Anniversary edition featuring a classic lineup that seamlessly blends African diaspora superstars with some of Canada's finest homegrown world class talents!

For more information visit www.mnfsto.ca.

MuchMusic Experience To Tour Canada In 13 Cities For One Night-Only Events

Following the worldwide debut at SXSW 2023, the documentary feature, 299 Queen Street West, is coming to Canadian venues. After each screening will be an Intimate & Interactive with MuchMusic VJ's and the Director, Sean Menard (pictured).

With unprecedented access to the MuchMusic archives, the two-hour feature tells the origin story and meteoric rise of the seminal music and pop culture brand, highlighting its beginnings as a scrappy Canadian television upstart.

299 Queen Street West is narrated by some of the original trailblazing VJ's, who at the time had no prior

TV hosting experience, received no direction, no scripts, and broadcasted live across the country. The film showcases how MuchMusic's rise in popularity intersected with rap music entering the mainstream, the birth of grunge and alternative rock, and pop stars caused teenage hysteria at the iconic street-level studio. VJ's and iconic personalities featured include Steve Anthony, Rick Campanelli, Monika Deol, Denise Donlon, Erica Ehm, Namugenyi Kiwanuka, Sook-Yin Lee, George Stroumboulopoulos, Bill Welychka, and Michael Williams.

For more information and tickets, visit www.299queenstreetwest.com.



Kardinal Official Honoured with Social Justice Award at Canadian Music Week

Kardinal Offishall received the Social Justice Award at the Canadian Music Week (CMW) Music Summit on June 10, 2023, at the Westin Harbour Castle. Canadian media personality Master T hosted a keynote interview with Kardinal Offishall, followed by the presentation of this second annual award. The CMW Conference, Canada's largest and longest-running industry conference, took place June 8-10, 2023.

After years of earning global respect as one of Canada's most energetic and innovative emcees, Kardinal Offishall has been a staple in the global music scene. He has collaborated on hit records such as "Beautiful" with Akon, "Just Dance" with Lady Gaga, "Numba 1" with Rihanna, and made history with his monster classic "Dangerous" which scorched to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 charts, making him the first rapper from Canada to do so in history.



Kardinal has added TV star to his repertoire, serving as a judge on Canada's Got Talent alongside Howie Mandel, Lilly Singh and Trish Stratus. He has also continued to be a cultural and musical ambassador for a new wave of Canadian superstars and has had the pleasure of working with everyone from the likes of Drake, K'naan, Daniel Caesar, Boi 1da, and Glenn Lewis to even finding himself as one of the few to land music on the end credits on one of Dave Chappelle's comedy specials on Netflix (Equanimity). As an artist, Kardinal has participated early on in the careers of Rihanna, Alex Da Kid, T-Pain, Vybz Kartel, Estelle, and Sean Paul, to name a few. Diversifying his portfolio, by adding executive to the already proven titles of Rapper, Producer and Philanthropist was done without hesitation.

Kardinal is continuing to lead and inspire by releasing his own creative projects, as well as the work of the artists he signs and mentors. He has quite literally ran, with the torch during the Olympics, performed for Nelson Mandela, was federally appointed one of Canada's ambassadors during the country's "150th anniversary of its confederation" and proudly serves as Global A&R at Def Jam Records. Forever pouring into the minds and hearts of current and future legends, Kardinal is the definition of excellence, "coming from the cold".



Music Industry Veteran and Chilliwack Singer-Songwriter Bill Henderson to be Inducted to the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame

Award-winning producer, lead singer, guitarist, and songwriter of one of Canada's top recording supergroups in the '70s and '80s, Chilliwack, Bill Henderson is one of the Canadian music industry's most respected leaders, on stage and off. From the early days of The Collectors, Vancouver's firsthigh profile rock band, to the evolution of Chilliwack, becoming a solo artist and coveted songwriter and record producer, Henderson's career spanning more than 50 years is about to reach another milestone.

On Monday, June 26, the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame (CSHF) will present Bill Henderson with his induction at the SOCAN Annual General Meeting in his hometown of Vancouver, BC. He will be recognized for his distinguished catalogue of hit songs across multiple genres from psychedelic rock, adult contemporary to pop rock, and for stage, television and film. With Chilliwack, he penned some of the band's most successful songs with 14 albums under their belts, including Lonesome Mary, Fly at Night, I Believe, My Girl (Gone, Gone, Gone) and Watcha Gonna Do.

In 1966 Henderson joined as lead guitarist for The Collectors, previously known as The Classics, an established Vancouver band which played regularly on local TV's "Let's Go" and at local clubs including the strip club Torch Cabaret. The Collectors'

first charting single was 1967's psychedelic, philosophical Looking at a Baby (written by Henderson with Howie Vickers). They were among the early Canadian acts to find success in the U.S., and even spent time in California, where Henderson would later draw inspiration to pen the 1976 hit song "California Girl" about his experiences working with California record companies.

By 1969-1970, The Collectors evolved into a new band name, Chilliwack, adding early members Ross Turney, Glenn Miller, and Claire Lawrence. Henderson became their principal songwriter, and garnered the group's first Billboard charting single, Lonesome Mary, in 1972. In 1978 Henderson was nominated for his first JUNO Award along with Turney for producer on Chilliwack's *Dreams, Dreams, Dreams* album, their first platinum album, among many to come.

During the formative years, members came and went, with notable additions being guitarist Howard Froese, bassist Ab Bryant, and multi-instrumentalist Brian "Too Loud" MacLeod – who would become Henderson's frequent songwriting collaborator. The duo wrote the Top 10 hit "My Girl (Gone, Gone, Gone)" and "Whatcha Gonna Do (When I'm Gone)" that yielded the Henderson-MacLeod duo the 1983 JUNO Award for Producer of the Year.

Chilliwack eventually called it quits after their last single (1983's "Don't Stop") with 14 albums under their belts. Henderson would later embrace his acoustic side with fellow British Columbians Shari Ulrich and Roy Forbes to form the folk trio, UHF. Along the way he also became



BILL HENDERSON

a coveted producer, working with The Nylons' platinum JUNO-nominated "Happy Together" album, Long John Baldry, The Irish Rovers, The Good Brothers, and the band Toronto.

He has also been commissioned to compose songs and scores for theatre, television (as music director for *Sesame Street Canada*), and in film, winning a Genie Award for Best Original Song, "When I Sing," for the 1989 Canadian movie *Bye Bye Blues*.

Outside of the music studio and stage, Henderson served as director for the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) from 1986 to 1992; and President of both the Songwriters Association of Canada and SOCAN. Henderson is a member of the Order of Canada as well as an inductee to the British Columbia Entertainment Hall of Fame, and with Chilliwack, to the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. He has amassed an impressive 10 SOCAN Awards, culminating in the Special Achievement Award.

In 1997 Henderson began leading a renewed Chilliwack and continues to tour.

Gibson Garage Hosted its Two-Year Anniversary Celebration

Gibson hosted its Garage Fest from June 7-10 at the Gibson Garage in Nashville, TN. Falling on the two-year anniversary of the opening of the Gibson Garage—Nashville's must-see destination for music lovers—Gibson Garage Fest included with live performances and events with music superstars and emerging acts during CMA Week. The event was open to the public and featured intimate live music performances and events each day. Fans were able to attend live shows, autograph signings, participate in guitar-playing lessons with renowned experts, and interact with Gibson, as well as its philanthropic arm Gibson Gives.

Gibsun

The weekend kicked off on June 7 with Dave Mustaine of Megadeth coming by the Gibson

Garage for a special in-store autograph signing event. The following days featured live performances all day and night, with music from the Gibson Garage team Jenna Weidner, Dylan Jenkins, Shane Hunt, Scott Wasnak, John Wohlford, Matt Boyer, Dani Rose (Honey County), Vincent Mason, and Dawson Anderson (Temecula Road). The vent culminated with a Gibson Garage afterparty with performances from Devon Thompson, Emily Wolfe, and a VIP supergroup.

D'Addario Foundation Awards \$221,000 in **Monetary and Product Grants for Music Education**

The D'Addario Foundation is thrilled to announce the award of \$221,000 in monetary and product grants to 96 music education programs, spanning across 26 U.S. states and four countries. 92% of those 96 awardees are receiving renewed support from the Foundation. In total, an estimated 140,000 children will receive high-quality instruction and instruments as a result of these grants.

Among the 8 percent of new award recipients is Miami Music Project, an El Sistema-inspired program operating in six South-Florida communities to serve families and students with great potential and great need. over the past six years, 100 percent of high school seniors in Miami Music Project have graduated and pursued higher education, a statistic that is common in many of the programs the Foundation supports.

When selecting grantee partners, the D'Addario Foundation often places focus on the frequency with which participants in the program receive instruction. The emphasis on instruction frequency is founded on data from a number of studies which expressly link socioemotional and neurological benefits to active participation in music. The more frequently a child participates, the more benefits they reap.

In the programs which have received grants this cycle, students are participating for 6.5 hours per week on-average. In 25% of these programs, students participate



even more frequently, between 10-15 hours per week. In addition to robust instrument instruction, grantee organizations support their students through mentoring, homework help, meals, and college readiness—all at little to no cost to students and their families.

"On behalf of everyone at INTEMPO, thank you for awarding our organization a 2023 grant," says Robbin Juris, the organization's Grants Manager. "We are so appreciative of the ongoing generosity the D'Addario Foundation has shown. It is always a pleasure to work with you, and we are very grateful for the Foundation's financial and in-kind support. We look forward to working in common purpose with the D'Addario Foundation this year, and we are certain our students will benefit from this partnership."

The D'Addario Foundation conducts two grant cycles per year. During each,

non-profit organizations may apply for support, after first submitting an initial letter of inquiry. Prospective non-profits must clearly illustrate critical elements for success including intensity and need, leadership strength, sustainability, and community commitment.

The D'Addario Foundation finds, funds, and partners with the best grassroots, community-based organizations that are greatly improving outcomes of marginalized and impoverished children through immersive music education. D'Addario believes in the power of music to boost self-confidence. unlock creativity, and improve academic and social outcomes. By making music education accessible, we positively affect social change and fosters better citizens of the world.

For more information, visit daddariofoundation.org.

Registration Open for the 20th Annual IAMA (International **Acoustic Music Awards**)

Registration is now open for the 20th Annual IAMA (International Acoustic Music Awards). IAMA is the preeminent award for musicians and promotes excellence in acoustic music performance and artistry. Acoustic artists in various genres can gain exciting radio and web exposure through this competition. Participating sponsors include Acoustic Cafe and Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Music artists stand a chance to win awards in eight different categories: Best Male Artist, Best Female Artist, Best Group/Duo Folk, Americana/Roots/AAA, Instrumental, Open (any musi-



cal style or genre), Bluegrass/Country, etc. There will also be an Overall Grand Prize winner awarded to the top winner worth over US\$11,000, which includes radio promotion to over 250 radio stations in US and Canada.

Ireland-based folk-acoustic artist Ryan Sheridan (pictured) won top honors in the 19th Annual IAMA (International Acoustic Music Awards). He also won the Best Male Artist Award as well.

Other notable winners include Pat Byrne (also from Ireland) won a Runner-Up award in the Best Male Artist category with his song "Feels Like Living". In 2012, Byrne was crowned the winner of the first series of The Voice of Ireland, which led to the release of his debut album, "All or Nothing." In January 2019, Byrne emigrated to Austin, Texas. Deidre McCalla won Best Folk Award with her song "Shoulder to The Wheel". The Early Mays won the Best Group/Duo Award with their song "The Ballad of Johnny Fall".

The deadline to enter is November 9. For more information, go to: https://www.inacoustic.com/.

AS HEARD ON THE...





Guitar Workshop Plus Founder BRIAN MURRAY

For the full conversation, listen to the May 31, 2023 episode.

CM: Take me back to the beginning of Guitar Workshop Plus and tell me how all of this has grown into what it is today.

Murray: I was a pro guitar player my whole life and part of my profession was I'd be hired to teach at some workshops. I was hired to teach at some of these things in the US. And I always thought to myself, 'Man, these things could be done a little bit

better.'The musician in me was like, 'If I was attending this, I'd like to see this happen or that happen.' 20 years ago, I started my own program. And we started here in Toronto, we did one week, that first year, and it was sold out. And then we did two weeks next year. And they were both sold out. And then we did two weeks in Toronto and one week in Vancouver the next year, and they were all sold out. And it just sort of went from there. Over the years we've been ranked number one by *Guitar Player* magazine and *Guitar World* magazine, *Acoustic Guitar* magazine, and there's a really nice publication here in Canada, that's ranked us high too called *Canadian Musician* magazine.

It started primarily as guitar and then we spread out to do bass, drums, keyboards, vocals, songwriting, but I just thought it would be a great thing if people could go and like immerse themselves in a workshop where you're bettering your skills, no matter what level you're at; you could be beginner, intermediate, or advanced. You get evaluated and get placed accordingly. We have all the nuts and bolts; you're learning theory, you're learning technique, you're learning improvisational concepts, etc. But you're also getting real life opportunity to play. Because we have rhythm section classes, and we have ensembles. And there's nightly concerts ranging from the faculty to the guest artists, to the students. So, it's kind of like you're just living, eating and breathing music for a week. And you can't help but improve and walk away with a lot of material to work on. And then a whole lot of inspiration at that.

Singer-Songwriter

SKYE WALLACE

For the full conversation, listen to the June 21, 2023 episode.

CM: How are you dealing with rising touring costs between now and pre-pandemic? Is there anything you've had to do differently?

Wallace: I feel like everybody I've talked to, it's definitely causing some reassessment for sure. Just because it does, at a certain point, have to be sustainable. And I think especially when you're trying to run your own thing, and take the risks and things like that, investment is important. You could look at it as a small business and everything. And if you were an entrepreneur, you wouldn't think twice about putting in X amount of money, in the hopes that it would come around, and I think it's not seen in that way for artists. As far as being able to sustain a career, my ideal situation would be for a lifetime. So, you kind of have to start adjusting. Yeah, things are more expensive than they were, and just looking at even flights and things like that, the costs do go up. So, I think I've definitely seen that the tour in the fall was extremely expensive, which is great. And I see that as an investment and got some grants to help kind of bolster the cost and things like that. But yeah, it's a weird time. And I think the benefit that artists have is that we're forced to be so adaptable. And I think that's a really important skill in this in this world and in this life. It can be stressful and taxing. But I think that adaptability is something that you can rely on. So, I'm not as scared or nervous at this point. This industry has always been fluctuating



and changing since I started. And probably long, long, long before that, but just from my own experience, it's always changing, things are always weird. So you might as well just vibe.



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RBC Ottawa Bluesfest 2023

Ottawa, ON July 6-16, 2023 613-247-1188, FAX 613-247-2220 www.ottawabluesfest.ca

Guitar Workshop Plus: Toronto Session

Toronto, ON July 9-14, 2023 905-567-8000 info@guitarworkshopplus.com, www.guitarworkshopplus.com

Sommo Festival

Cavendish, PEI July 14-15, 2023 info@whitecapentertainment.com www.sommofest.com

Guitar Workshop Plus: Nashville Session

Nashvillve, TN July 9-14, 2023 905-567-8000, FAX 905-785-2831 info@guitarworkshopplus.com, www.guitarworkshopplus.com

Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC July 14-16, 2023 info@thefestival.bc.ca, thefestival.bc.ca

Folk on the Rocks Yellowknife, NWT July 14-16, 2023 867-920-7806

www.folkontherocks.com

Guitar Workshop Plus: Seattle Session

Seattle, WA July 16-21, 2023 905-567-8000, FAX 905-785-2831 info@guitarworkshopplus.com, www.guitarworkshopplus.com

Calgary Folk Music Festival

Calgary, AB July 27-30, 2023 (403) 233-0904, hello@calgaryfolkfest.com www.calgaryfolkfest.com



Music City Drum Show Nashville, TN July 29-30, 2023 www.musiccitydrumshow.com

AUGUST

Osheaga Music & Arts Festival

Montreal, QC August 4-6, 2023 www.osheaga.com

Boots and Hearts Music Festival

Oro-Medonte, ON August 10-13, 2023 info@republiclive.com www.bootsandhearts.com

Mannheim Guitar Summit

Mannheim, Germany September 22-24, 2023 misic@guitarsummit.de, www.guitarsummit.de

Calgary Guitar Show

Calgary, AB October 1, 2023 306-559-5042 canadianguitarshows@amplifycorp.com, www.canadianguitarshows.ca

BreakOut West 2023

Kelowna, BC October 11-15, 2023 204-943-8485 info@breakoutwest.ca, www.breakoutwest.ca





Jackson Audio New Wave

By Jean-Philippe Comeau

rends come and go, and the gear world isn't immune to that. In the last few years, chorus seems to have made a comeback and companies are successfully making recreations of classic chorus units and brand-new ones alike. Jackson Audio's latest offering, the New Wave, was designed in collaboration with guitarist extraordinaire Mark Lettieri and it takes a modern approach to deliver classic and contemporary chorus and vibrato sounds.

Let's begin with an overview of the specifications. The unit's top-mounted jacks allow you to use it in mono, stereo (using TRS cables), or mono in/stereo out. Two 1/8" TRS jacks are used for MIDI in/out and double as an expression pedal connection to control the speed of the effect. The DC plug completes the back panel with its 18V/300mA power requirement (the adapter isn't included). The face of the pedal sports six knobs and two footswitches to control everything. The mix knob goes from dry to vibrato and it's notched in the center so you can zero in on the chorus sound. The tone knob is also notched in the neutral position and has a wide sweep from dark to bright. The depth potentiometer, which goes from very shallow to very deep, also doubles as a push-button to toggle between the seven modes of the pedal. The phase/ratio control either adjusts the phase of LFO2 compared to LFO1 (from 0 to 180 degrees) or a multiplier that increases the speed of LFO2 relative to LFO1, depending on the preset. The speed knob goes from 0.1Hz to a blistering 10Hz. "Delay" controls the clock frequency of the BBD chips and can make the pedal go from dark and compressed to bright and open. The five wave shapes are selected by pressing the phase/ratio knob. Sine, triangle, and square are pretty common but well executed, and the other two are rhythmically modified sine waves that are very fun to use. Finally, the bypass switch also doubles as a "bloom" to fade the effect on and off for a smoother transition and the tap switch doubles as a "ramp" to gradually alternate between two preset speeds. Pressing both switches simultaneously toggles between the seven available

presets. I highly suggest reading the manual before diving in; it's succinct, but detailed and informative.

I tested the New Wave mostly on a clean sound as it is my favorite way to use a chorus, but I ran every preset through overdrive and distortion as well, with both situations yielding equally satisfying results. I started with every knob at 12 o'clock and tweaked from there, but every preset already sounded very balanced that way. "70's" is the only mono chorus in the pedal and although basic, it's rich and thick sounding. "80's" is similar, but in stereo, giving it a great lushness. "RCK" (rack mode) sounds brighter than the previous two and adds a three-dimensional feel to the tone. I loved it with the mix set to VIB and a slow speed to get a leslie-esque tone with a nice throatiness. "VIB" (vibrato) gave me everything from a soft and subtle pitch variation to a flat-out ring-modulator. It can also be used as a nice chorus with the mix set to CHR. "ROT" (rotary speaker) is my favorite type of modulation, so I was excited for this one and I was not disappointed. This preset sounds rich and throaty, and you can adjust the speed ratio between LFO1 and LFO2 for a more realistic feel. Slow settings were particularly pleasing, and the ramp feature proved invaluable to easily transition between fast and slow speeds. "HRM" (harmonic mode) is not a subtle preset and can easily sound seasick, but with the phase/ratio all the way counterclockwise and a shallow depth, it was somewhere between a chorus and harmonic tremolo, which surprised and pleased me at the same time. Lastly, "UC" (user control) gives you full control over every parameter so you can go from tastefully subtle to blatantly weird and anything in between. All the controls on this pedal are highly interactive and complementary, so you can tailor each preset to your liking and save them as such. The mix and tone cannot be saved though, which is a shame because some presets benefit greatly from the wide range of adjustments of these controls.

My experience with the Jackson Audio New Wave was very positive and I enjoyed playing through it. The pedal is well built, every preset sounds musical, and it offers plenty



of adjustments so every player can find their sweet spot and save the settings for later. Furthermore, the MIDI capability increases its versatility and would make it easier to integrate in a complex setup with a switcher. The 18V power requirement is annoying though, especially given the fact that the adapter isn't included, and the flimsy feel of the depth and phase/ratio knobs doesn't inspire long-term sturdiness, although they worked flawlessly during my testing. Overall, I still think this is a great pedal and that anyone looking for a full-featured and versatile chorus/vibrato pedal should give the New Wave a try!

Jean-Philippe Comeau is a Montreal-based guitar player/multi-instrumentalist and teacher with a bachelor's degree in music performance who's been active in the province for more than 15 years as a sideman and playing in various bands. He co-produced singer-songwriter and long-time collaborator Karolane Millette's debut album "La Tête Haute" on which he also played all the guitars. He can be reached at jeanphilippecomeau@hotmail.com.

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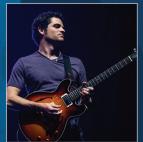
John Jorgenson



Grea Koch



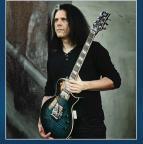
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Novation Launchkey 88

By Manus Hopkins



ith our annual keyboards and piano-focused feature landing in this issue, it only made sense that one of our road tests should be a keyed instrument as well. I was intrigued immediately when I was asked if I'd be interested in reviewing the Launchkey 88 from Novation, before I even really knew what it was. I'm mainly a guitarist these days, but like a lot of musicians, I started out playing classical piano as a kid, so a chance to try out a new electric keyboard piqued my curiosity—especially knowing it had 88 keys in addition to all the cool sounds to explore.

Now, while I was initially expecting a more traditional electric keyboard, based on the whole 88 keys thing, I was surprised and excited to learn this is a MIDI controller for music creation. The keys being only semi-weighted, I realized I wouldn't be playing any Chopin on it, but I'm always happy to play around with cool sounds to build songs out of. I found the keys, while light, still feel pretty good, and for what you'd want to do on this, they work. I'm no tech expert, so the setup took a bit of time and figuring out and watching a video or three, but once I was good to go with it, I was immediately having a great time pressing every button and turning every dial I could, seeing what they all would do. I also should mention, just having to plug the keyboard into my computer, with no external power, and even being USB-compatible

and not needing an interface was pretty neat. The included software is a bonus too, and you'll want to take advantage of it.

Having an 88-key version of the Ableton controller on which this keyboard is based feels great, to come right out and say it. It feels much more musician-like than just using a computer, and having the tools you need laid out in front of you in the familiar piano format is just a nice thing you don't get creating with a smaller controller or an on-screen midi instrument. Making sounds was one thing, but I was thrilled to see just how much you can do with this beyond that—you'll barely need to touch your computer's mousepad at all. Arming tracks, playing, stopping, recording, levels, etc. can all be done on the controller. It really makes the recording process a lot more intuitive and musical-feeling, and less like computer work, of which we all do enough anyway. There is a small screen on the keyboard, but it isn't really necessary, and I still found myself looking at my computer screen as I played and experimented.

Speaking of necessary, this controller has an awful lot of features. I don't want to go on saying more of them are redundant, but I will say, you won't need everything this keyboard has for every project you make, in the best way possible. I still think I could play with this for hours and hours longer, discovering new features I hadn't even tapped into yet, and I fully intend to. If only I had a year to play with it before writing this review.

As much as I enjoy recording, I've never loved having to drag around little virtual dials with my mouse, so not having to do that really relieved some of the frustrating parts of recording and made it so it just felt like I could have fun and be creative. Using MIDI instruments isn't typically something I'd do a whole lot of (being a guitarist) but seeing how much fun this was just made me want to think of projects I could do that would involve the Launchkey heavily, or dare I say entirely. It really opened up a whole new dimension of music I couldn't wait to get into and start working on, which is not something just any keyboard could do for me.

Now, when I'm using an electric keyboard, as I've mentioned, I love finding new sounds and putting them together, either to record something I've written, or just to come up with something on the spot that may or may not be cool. With ample ways to affect the sound, and the ease of recording and adding layers and playing along with what you've recorded, the Launchkey, for everything it is able to do, makes my favourite part of the process such a breeze and so much more fun, musical, creative, and organically flowing, so I would recommend it to any music creators based solely on that.

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Shure GLX-D+ Dual Band Digital Wireless System

By Manus Hopkins



arketed as a major enhancement from the previous generation with claims that it more than doubles available bandwidth, the Shure GLX-D+ Dual Band Digital Wireless System, with its new Dual Band Wireless Technology sounds promising. I haven't gone wireless in a while, personally, especially for guitar; I've found wireless options in my price range have sacrificed too much tone and sound to ultimately be worth it, but I've always been keen and curious to try out newer and higherend technologies with these sorts of things.

I was excited to see that this system essentially promises to eliminate most of the qualms I'd had about other wireless systems I'd previously used and tried, and after watching a few videos while waiting for my unit to arrive, I couldn't wait to set it up and give it a try. My first impression was just how many bits and pieces there were, but once set up, it's clear that this system is not needlessly complicated, and is still pretty intuitive and automatic despite being a more complex design.

With a reported 12 hours of runtime from a single charge, I actually didn't end up fully draining the battery during my trials with this system, so that'd probably a good sign: granted, I didn't play it 12 hours straight and didn't want to return it dead, but at any rate, it can surely get any singer, player, or speaker through a gig, and that's what we'd want it for, right?

The system is offered with three different receiver types. The GLXD4+ tabletop receiver, which has two fixed antennas; the footswitch GLXD6 guitar pedal receiver which fits on most standard pedalboards; and the GLXD4R+ half-rack receiver, supporting the highest number of accessories for installed sound applications. The version I tested myself was the guitar pedal receiver, which is great for me, as I'm primarily a guitar player. I'd love to test out the other two in the future, though for the half-rack receiver, that would require more than some solo practice to use it to its potential. With an operating distance of 100 ft. indoors, it'd surely be fun to find a space we can fully test that.

One thing I really liked about this system is a bit of a simple thing, but it's that the bodypack transmitter isn't uncomfortable or cumbersome. Presuming that most users would want this for onstage use, that's an important thing, nevertheless. Being able to move onstage, and in stage clothing and accessories, is crucial with a wireless system, and something poking your hip and weighing down your pants just isn't going to be fun. This little guy easily clips onto the belt, or guitar strap, and probably some other articles people might have on, and isn't more irksome than a belt itself or any other typically accessory. Without limiting sound or stage movement, this is already a great system to be using in performances and adding the operating distance and length of battery charge just further sells it.

Also, having a tuner included is nice and handy. Though the guitar pedal receiver isn't huge or oddly shaped, it still might have to take the place of another pedal, so having a tuner on it means it can easily squeeze into the tuner pedal's spot and not throw off the layout of the

board. That's definitely a nice touch, because rearranging or upgrading a pedalboard can be a bit of a chore. It seems ease of use and practicality was just as much in mind for the Shure team. who designed this system as sound quality, and I'm definitely not one to complain about that.

As the least expensive of the three options, I can say the instrument system version of the GLX-D+ would be worth it for anyone who needs it—that's to say, if you're playing venues where the stages are big enough and you move around enough to necessitate a wireless system, this is absolutely one to take a look into. It's clearly geared towards professionals and even at the level of venues I play at now, it wouldn't be something I need, but it was a lot of fun to play with and will be something I'll revisit in the event I do need something like it eventually. Because this is Canadian Musician magazine, I can extrapolate that a lot of people reading this are, in fact, guitar players, and a lot are probably professional musicians, so to you I will say that if you're in the market for wireless systems on stage, or even if you need to go wireless for other reasons, take a look into the Shure GLX-D+ Dual Band Digital Wireless System. It's pretty much everything you'd need in a wireless system, it's convenient and easy to use, it sounds great, and with three different receiver types, it offers something for anyone who could be interested in something like it.

Manus Hopkins is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician. He can be reached at mhopkins@nwcworld.com.

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The Value of the Playback (or, Playing Darts Blindfolded)

By Stew Crookes

ven though musicians have been performing on recordings for well over a century, there's nothing intuitive about the process. It takes time and practice to learn how to apply our musical skills in the studio. On our first session, most of us were likely surprised to see how much time went into setting up, and soon figured out that scheduling several days in a row is more efficient. We guickly notice that eating healthy food keeps everyone's energy up, and junk food brings it down. Experience teaches us to bring spare drum heads, guitar strings, cables, etc. because they tend to break as soon as the music store closes.

So let's assume you've learned all those lessons and take look at a decision that casually gets made on so many recording sessions—or rather, a decision that casually doesn't get made; not listening back to takes.

How many times have you finished playing a not-so-great take and someone in the band immediately says: "let's go again, right away!" or how often is a really good take followed by: "let's do one more to be safe!" which then turns into five more? The decision to spend your valuable studio time collecting as many takes as possible seems sensible at first - you can listen to your heart's content for free at home later without the studio clock ticking, right? Well I liken this approach to "playing darts blindfolded" since it's like trying to hit the bullseye by throwing dart after dart without seeing where your efforts are landing and what changes would get you closer to the target. So why might this not be the best way to use your studio day?

First off, it can be exhausting, frustrating and counter-productive to run a song 10-15 times or more in a row and not feel like you're nailing it. Every member of the band might be in agreement that a take was not the one, but if you don't identify

why it wasn't, you can't do anything to address the problems other than trying to play 'better' next time which is too vague of a goal to be a useful plan.

Additionally, the same drive for excellence that brought you all the way from first picking up an instrument to being on this recording session can cloud your judgment. A nearly perfect take might only have a few easily fixable mistakes but when we've just delivered a performance that wasn't flawless, our first instinct is often to mentally discard the whole pass and try again, even if it is only two quick punch-ins away from perfection.

And in the end, how you felt about the take while playing it and how it sounds are actually two different things— you might have a great (or fixable) pass recorded but not even know it because you immediately moved on. Once you've unintentionally piled up a dozen takes you are not realistically going to take an hour of your limited studio time to give them all a focused listen. You might eventually listen to the one or two that you sort of remember as being good and then do another couple that are finally at least somewhat informed by how it all sounds and at this point it can feel perfectly logical to take them home to listen with fresh ears. "Well there's got to be a decent take in there somewhere!" "Probably." "Maybe?" "If not we can figure it out later and edit them together." "Okay,

Was the plan to leave the studio with a hard drive full of hours of takes you can hopefully salvage? Wouldn't you rather confidently check each song off the list, knowing you have a great working take to overdub on with a few solid backups? All of the hours that will then go into sorting through and editing together the aimless takes will only use up your remaining perspective for the song, diverting your focus which should be dedicated to the overdubs

By listening back, discussing, and making notes after every couple takes you can identify exactly what isn't working and focus on solving those problems. Putting aside any one musician's feelings about their performance, there are all manner of things that could be at the heart of the issue. The tempo or key could be wrong, maybe the guitar part is just slightly beyond the guitarist's ability today and should be simplified at least for the bed track, maybe the bassist needs to hear more kick drum in their headphones to lock in better, etc. Listening holistically to the track to locate the trouble spots and then focusing on addressing them is how you figure those things out and get to the best take you can deliver.

It is a much better use of your time in the studio to work the takes, rather than just recording as much as you possibly can. Doing endless, aimless passes squanders everyone's energy and reduces confidence while also creating hours of work for yourself later when it's time to sort it all out. It can take a lot of recording experience to learn that choosing to stop and listen back to takes in the studio is very valuable and is not wasted time at all. On your next session, take some time to listen and critically take stock of your takes and notice how much faster and easier you'll get 'the one' down on tape!

Stew Crookes is a Canadian producer / mixer/engineer/musician currently living and working in Paris. He's worked with such diverse artists as Hawk-



sley Workman, The Weather Station, Jason Collett, Birds of Bellwoods and Jadea Kelly and many others. Learn more at stewcrookes.com or @stew_crookes on Instagram.

COLUMNS

The Power of Drums

By Mark Rogers

rums are a physical instrument, specifically speaking, acoustic drums are played by the arms, hands, legs, and feet with sticks and metal pedals that pound skins and brass. In the hands of a beginner, a drum set can be a deafening noise similar to a bull in a china shop. To a seasoned master, drums and cymbals can become a percolating groove with dynamics ranging from a whisper to a roar.

From the above description you could assume that the power of drumming is strictly a physical act of control, co-ordination and balance. Although this statement is true, is there more to the power of drumming?

Since the beginning of recorded history, drums have been the center of social and cultural activities. Not only creating music for entertainment, the drum has also been used in healing, spiritual and sacred ceremonies, as well as warfare to create noise and drive fear into the enemy.

Healing

Music therapists and therapy programs increasingly use drums and rhythm to promote healing and self-expression. Drumming can be very therapeutic, helping us connect with our inner selves and being a fun way to relax and rejuvenate our minds, body, and soul. Recent research indicates that drumming accelerates physical healing, boosts the immune system, and produces feelings of well-being.

Spiritual

One of the joys of drumming is the fact that it is a huge stress relief. We live in a culture of stress so way too often we have stress hormones through our

bodies. Drumming shifts the brain from releasing stress chemicals to releasing endorphins and other healing chemicals. Drumming also creates a powerful state of presence, which takes you out of processing the past or worrying about the future and brings you into a state of freedom within the present moment, where everything and anything is possible!

Meditation

Drumming induces a meditative state in a way that happens without effort. In more subtle forms of meditation, it can be difficult to focus the busy mind. When you drum, it's hard not to focus on the rhythm, as the vibration is powerful and all encompassing.

Immune System

Research shows that drumming produces an elevated mood state, enhances immunity, and brings your bio rhythms into sync. From heart to your brain, major organs and systems fall into a pattern where rhythms align. This helps your system to function optimally, which means you are functioning properly. With the release of feel-good chemicals, increased energy, and physical and energetic balance, drumming leads to simply feeling really good.

Rhythm of the Room

On a personal level I have experienced the power of drumming and how it benefits my own healing, spiritual, and meditative states. On a professional level for over forty years, I can also add another powerful trait that drummers transcend that is often overlooked – playing to the rhythm of the room. In show business, reading the room is a huge skill entertainers understand that unites a crowd of people into a

likeminded community. When a drummer gets in tune to this energy and reads the "rhythm of the room", they can adjust their playing to turn up the temperature of their surroundings, cool it down, or turn it off... This is a unique kind of power that dynamically played drums have, and with enough experience and being open to it, can gradually be understood.

In conclusion my fellow drummers, realise the power your instrument holds internally for your mind, body, and spirit. Externally, we can bring that power into a room where people come together to dance, worship, listen, or call to battle. Understanding these energies, and paying attention to them, can only make us better musicians, drummers, and performers.



Mark Rogers is the drummer with LMT Connection and Newworldson, produces and engineers at Impression Recording Studio, and teaches at Rogers Drum School. He endorses Yamaha Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Pro Mark sticks and Evans drumheads. You can reach him at MarkRogersMusic.com or ImpressionRecording@gmail.com.

The Power of a Playlist:

Amplify the Art and Science of Music and Give your Mental Health a Tune Up!

By Jennifer Buchanan

an music actually improve our health and well-being? The short answer is "YOU BET," and there is so much evidence — scientific, clinical and personal — that proves it. But how can we maximize what we already know? How can we use music on purpose, and how can music effectively and efficiently change the way we think, behave, and believe, at the very time we crave that change the most?

In theory, putting together a playlist is incredibly simple — but that does not make it easy.

The way in which we order our music is not as important as why we do so. Curating our collections is more than just an exercise — it's also a form of exploration and self-expression. It is an opportunity to reflect upon, and connect to, our internal values and feelings. The echoes of us to connect more deeply to something within us — and to share with our family, friends, or, even further, the wider community, if we choose to do so.

Playlists give us an opportunity to be private if we want to be, share if we desire to, and connect with others when we need to feel a sense of belonging. From the legendary DJs to the electronic wizards to the countless music artists out there, there are many of us who are rooting the playlist on.

The creation of a purposeful playlist is so much more than compiling the most popular suggestions from your music streaming service, in fact there's actual science to it. When you find the right music to use at the right you can elevate your mood and connect to moments of your life you may have forgotten about.

Think back to the last song they played at your school dance, that mixed tape, or the playlist your sweetheart made for you. The songs that you go to every summer and that you may now share with your kids. Behind every song is an untold story, and when you pull those powerful songs together, it can be transformational....and connect you to something bigger than yourself.

The creation of a purposeful playlist is so

much more than compiling the most popular suggestions from your music streaming service, in fact there's actual science to it. When you find the right music to use at the right you can elevate your mood and connect to moments of your life you may have forgotten about.

Since music is now largely "on-demand," it makes the creation of purposeful playlists simple, accessible, and if done right, beneficial for health, happiness and success. As a certified music therapist for almost 30 years here are some of the other results I have witnessed:

- Increased productivity and motivation
- Heightened sense of focus and improved memory
- · Decreased stress and anxiety
- Feeling safer and more connected
- More happiness

For some, generating playlists can seem quite daunting, especially when people see the endeavor as one that takes time and money. However, I suggest that although it does take both those things – time and some money – the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Six Key Steps to Put Together your Purposeful Playlist: for Work, Home, and Life:

- 1. Unpack what you really need what is your desired outcome. If you are going through a particularly difficult transition or feeling depressed I recommend working with a psychologist, counsellor, music therapist to help you identify your key goal. Identifying the most significant goal/objective/need for you is the ultimate first step in the "purposeful' part of the playlist.
- 2. Title your playlist the feeling you hope to achieve and the behavior you hope to change.
- 3. Only put songs in that playlist that evoke the feelings you aim for and remove all songs that don't strike the right chord (ack. pardon music pun).
- 4. Listen at specific time (s) of the day not all day. 20 minutes of intentional

- music listening, at the right time, can help. Assess when you need it most. When you need a boost—waking up, driving to work, driving home, in the evening. You may need different playlists for different times of the day.
- 5. Use good quality speakers. The quality of sound contributes to your feelings of health and well-being.
- 6. Stay open to new music. There are some great streaming services, or your old vinyl collection that you haven't visited for a while or asking intergenerational friends what music they are listening to lately, that can help you explore new music.
- * When making a playlist for others, never make assumptions. If you are working with someone who is not able to communicate for themselves (ie. due to stroke or dementia) connect with your local music therapist for help to ensure the best possible, and safest music choices, are made.*

If I can leave you with just one thought, one key concept, it is this:

Music has the capacity to help you with whatever you are going through. It can truly be your sure friend. Every playlist you develop will bring you into a deep-seeded creative process that will ease your mind and guide you to see your world through a different lens. If you reflect on the past, stay open in the moment, and are willing to embrace the new, your memories, moods, and motivations will continue to grow and change — bringing you a life that is fuller, and more fulfilling, than the life you otherwise would have had

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COLUMNS

Teaching Tips For Safe and Inclusive Music Spaces

By Stephen Richardson

n school, the only "F" I ever received was in Grade 5 Music class.

I couldn't tune a guitar. In truth, I had no idea what the Music teacher meant by the "beating" of the two strings and how this would slow down when the strings became magically "in tune" with each other. One after the other we filed into a dusty practice room, and she stared into us... waiting.

My friend Jason MacAulay has perfect pitch. He charged classmates a quarter to tune their guitars. Brrrronng, brrrung, brrrrang, brring, binng, bing... and five to ten seconds later the guitar would be tuned. He'd always leave two or three strings just slightly flat with instructions to his "clients" to tighten each string a small amount when testing. Then just like that, A+'s were had by all... well, all except me. Mine he left very untuned and with glee he would cackle endlessly as I entered the practice room and my musical slaughter.

I just couldn't hear it. Stone ears some would say but I just wasn't understanding and back then patience for an "untalented music student" wasn't a common virtue among certain music teachers. Despite everything, to this day, my buddy's tuning side hustle still makes me laugh every time I think about it. Reflecting on the whole experience made me musically stronger and a much better music teacher than I might have become had he taken my twenty-five cents. After that test, a sense of empathy arose in me and ultimately, resilience.

My teaching philosophy is that students are unique individuals and must be *patiently* guided in ways that address this core fact.

Sounds straightforward, simple, obvious, and almost trite... but in a 45-minute period, class after class, day after day, and year after year, it is paramount to respect the unique attributes and experiences that they each of them bring to the classroom.

To meet their true musical potential I need to be evolving with them and cognizant of how they are changing throughout our time together. I don't want "talented" kids charging "untalented" kids a Toonie to pass my tests and create the illusion that "everyone is really getting it." That type of ego doesn't serve anyone but the teacher.

In my first years as a music and band teacher, I followed what was considered best practices: i.e., curriculum outcomes based on "superior" classical music with a pedagogy aimed at developing student technique on a Band instrument. Woven into this Western structure was a need to inform students of what constitutes "Good Music" versus "primitive" or popular music. As years went by I began to see that this paradigm had real strengths but was not reaching or "seeing" all students. It glossed over allowing for the exploration of the contemporary music they were interested in. It didn't truly encourage them to develop their own musical thoughts and opinions in an organic and meaningful manner. Their different cultures and social viewpoints were not fully represented. Unfortunately, many of the different cognitive abilities and types of neurodiversity present in the modern-day classroom were also overlooked by this standard and long-standing approach.

The birth of our second son Gaius and his diagnosis a few months later of Trisomy 21 changed us at a fundamental level. Over the years, both my wife (Program Support Teacher) and I have worked with many Special needs pupils. However, for myself, this was a unique opportunity to explore exactly how deeply music could reach a neuro-diverse individual. I made it a goal to make music a locus in his life. The knowledge we would gain together would feedback into the Music classroom, benefiting all my future students. I needed to unlock the puzzle of how to best guide him in music and also allow him to guide

me. I am listening more now and I do my best to stay present... He loves music and singing and just knowing that he will be my music student for many years to come has completely changed my classroom practices and my other student connections for the better.

My classes are now more methodically paced, with more considerations in place for all aspects of a student's abilities and needs. Brain-based research along with trauma and behavior-informed practice has also become an important aspect of my program. We study more cultural music than ever before and we take our time in doing so. Our classes have fun with the process. We use music to more deeply explore ourselves. This has led to being more forgiving and non-critical of each other. Constructive criticism is important when learning to play an instrument or sing, but it must not be heavy-handed or cruel.

There are many excellent standard texts on the pedagogy for teaching Band and Music in public schools. Working in combination with those weighty tomes I've developed more inclusive, considerate, and student-centered lessons. Here is a small sample of the activities and strategies I use when teaching band, music, choir, piano, and guitar in today's diverse music classrooms.

MUSICAL TIPS, OBSERVATIONS, AND UNSOLICITED TEACHING ADVICE FROM AN AGING BANDMAN:

Rhythm Baseball—Elementary music students love this one. Regular baseball rules but I set up djembes as the bases and the home plate. The pitcher throws a "clap" rhythm to the batter who must correctly repeat the rhythm to round the bases—once for a first base hit and four times for a homerun. When Covid-19 regulations prohibited brass, woodwinds, and choir this activity helped keep my

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classes in the rhythmic game. This can be developed in similar ways to create Rhythm Hockey, Rhythm Basketball, etc.

Musical Archery—For this team activity I use Dollar Store suction cup arrows and a target with velcro flashcards displaying melodies or rhythms. One student targets and shoots a card and then together the team sings or claps it correctly to shoot again. A fun reinforcement game for both choir and elementary students.

Hot Potato Piano—I am very fortunate to have an electronic keyboard lab consisting of thirty instruments. Besides learning our basic piano voicings and scales my students also enjoy learning the basic melodies of popular video games. Once the melody is memorized they "Hot Potato" it from piano to piano. Each student plays a note or phrase of the song and it travels around the room. If the melody gets around the room without mistakes we speed it up. This exercise requires focus as well as sight-reading and metronome skills

Video game scoring—This activity was extremely popular during COVID-19 regulations and the subsequent periods of online learning. It gave many timid students a relevant avenue to create music. Using apps like "Draw Your Game" students worked in pairs to create and score each other's games. In-depth class discussions ensued surrounding the emotions the scores elicited.

Journaling using YouTube's Music Library—Every week in my songwriting class I use YouTube to expose students to new music from different time periods, cultures, and genres; music they would be unlikely to search out on their own. In upper grades, we may also watch a Rick Beato or Adam Neely music theory analysis. Afterward, students journal about their impressions. By Grade 12 each student will have developed a large journal of their discoveries and more importantly, a better understanding of the music of their own cultural background.

Turn it off–Turn you up!—This is an internalization exercise I use during my daily commute. In Choir we start the mp3 of a song and turn the volume completely down after fifteen seconds or so but the Band/Choir continues singing. We then raise the volume to see how closely we stayed in time with the track. Over the term, tracks are turned down for longer periods. Nothing is quite as satisfying as turning a track up after a few minutes and not having rushed or dragged in any way.

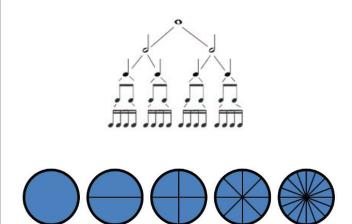
Scales/Arpeggios/Interval singing for neuro-diverse students (in combination with SLP word/sound lists)—One daily activity I use when working with students with speech challenges is to ask their SLP for their list of sight words/sounds and then run these through chords/scales and Kodaly method interval exercises. Every day while looking at his mouth in a mirror, my youngest son uses exercises (like the example listed here) to run challenging words and speech sounds up through triads or seventh chords and then elongate them down through the chord's scale. I am starting to develop these exercises into a book as it has been guite successful in improving his confidence, speech, cadence, and pitch. As

strengths build, different rhythms are added to the exercises. (Tip: Comparing the rhythmic pyramid to a pizza is a very useful device for students to conceptualize how rhythmic subdivisions work).

(Each syllable is hummed, sung (or "speech sung" up) on a note up the chord and then down the scale. This example uses the name of our black cat Obsidian. You can also go down the chord/ up the scale, extend chords, etc.

Ex. Chord—Ohh-bee-Ohh-bee Scale—Oooh-bee-eee-Oooh-Oooh-Oooh-Oooh)





I hope that, for teachers, this will delineate a path to being as creative and open as possible when developing their own inspiring, safe, and inclusive music spaces.

I believe that there is a genre of music and an accessible instrument out there for everyone to delve into... music for students of every age, physicality, mental ability, disposition, personality, gender identity, history, socio-economic and cultural background... as they are all entitled to a rich, empowering, and fulfilling musical life.

Stephen Richardson is a 2x JUNO nominee (2021 & 2023 MusiCounts *Music Teacher of the Year award).* Richardson is originally from Nova Scotia and a quitar graduate of the prestigious Jazz program at STFX. He now works in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories as a K-12 Elementary & High School Band/Music/Guitar Teacher. He returns home to Nova Scotia each summer to gig, write, film, and record. He can be reached at stephen.richardson@ycs.nt.ca.



COLUMNS

A Few More Good Licks

By Bill McBirnie

here has been a request for further information regarding licks. So here are a few more!

This second lick is interesting from a functional standpoint. So, I have set it out twice, in two different key areas. **Melodically**, the notes are exactly the same. However, **harmonically**, this lick functions very differently in each of the two key areas.

The first presentation is in the key of Bb major, where it outlines the harmony of a II-V (or a straight V) function.

Lick #2 - in the key of Bb Major
(Functioning as II-V)



The second presentation of the very same lick, with exactly the same notes, is in the key of **C minor**, where it pivots around the C minor chord and serves a I (or tonic) function.

Lick #2 - in the key of C Minor
(Functioning as I)



Now, test your understanding of this lick—aurally—by playing it and resolving it in the two different ways. You will then hear how it functions very differently, in each case.

First, play the lick and resolve it to a Bb major triad (as in the first presentation). Then, play it again and resolve it to a C minor triad (as in the second presentation). You will hear, immediately, that the same lick sounds very different, simply by resolving it in the two different key areas (Bb major in the first case, and C minor in the second). Why? Because the same melodic fragment is serving two very different harmonic functions.

I cannot overemphasize the importance—and the utility—of a lick such as this!

This lick also has a nice shape and contour. In the Bb major presentation, it functions as a II-V—with slight variations in the melody—and it concludes by landing on the leading note. In the C minor presentation, it functions as a I with some slight variations on the tonic triad—and it concludes by landing on the natural 6th (or 13th). Practice it in one key. Then template it, and work it through all the other keys.

This is a simple—but versatile—lick with lots of possibilities. So, learn to generalize from the sound and feel of it, in every key—and learn to recognize, aurally, how it can resolve—either way!

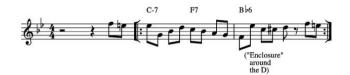
Finally, here are three additional licks, each of which contains

an "enclosure" (consisting of two or more neighbour notes, from above and below) that are used to approach a target note.

Lick #3



Lick #4



Lick #5



The neighbour notes used in enclosures can be either diatonic or chromatic. In either case, their use is a very pleasing melodic device that is well worth cultivating.

Bill McBirnie is a jazz and Latin flute specialist who was personally solicited by Sir James Galway to serve as his resident Jazz Flute Specialist. He is the author of The Technique and Theory of Improvisation: A practical guide for flutists, doublers and other instrumentalists. His most recent album, The Silent Wish(with Bernie Senensky), was nominated for a 2020 Juno award as "Best Instrumental Album of the



Year". All of Bill's Extreme Flute albums are available at BandCamp and iTunes. You can also find out more about Bill at his website: www.extremeflute.com.



BRUCE COCKBURN — IS ON A ROLL —

By Matt Bauer Photography by Daniel Keebler



ruce Cockburn has been riding a late career peak that rivals Bob Dylan. With a distinguished 56-year sojourn marked by politics, spirituality and a nearly unrivalled musical diversity that has seen him embrace folk, jazz, rock, and global styles not to mention his highly respected activism and compassionate and socially conscious lyrics, the now 78-year-old Cockburn remains an iconoclastic national treasure, having received 13 JUNO awards, an induction into the

Canadian Music Songwriters Hall of Fame, a Governor General's Performing Arts Award, an Officer of the Order of Canada and most recently a star on Canada's Walk of Fame.

Time takes its toll, he sings on the opening cut "On A Roll," from his latest and 38th album, O Sun O Moon, But in my soul/ I'm on a roll. With Shawn Colvin guesting on vocals, the infectious shuffle is an acknowledgement that while mortality is inescapable and we're living in an era of disarray, Cockburn's voice and worldview remain as timely as ever setting the tone for one of his

finest efforts in a musical trajectory that has already seen many triumphs.

"I'm not optimistic about the future of the world," confesses Cockburn to *Canadian Musician* via phone from his home in San Francisco. "I mean, I'm hopeful about it. ["On a Roll"] is really an expression of my own situation and my own reaction to what's around me. With a song like that you always want the listener to feel the same energy. You want people to think 'that could be me.' When anybody listens to a song, we always think that it's us we're talking about; that's

being sung about. I mean, unless it's so autobiographical that you can't do that. One of the things that songs do is they invite a kind of empathy. And so the listener thinks, 'yeah, I feel this way. I could feel this way or I'd like to feel that way.' And in that sense, you could see that song as optimistic and hopeful. For me, it really just says how I feel."

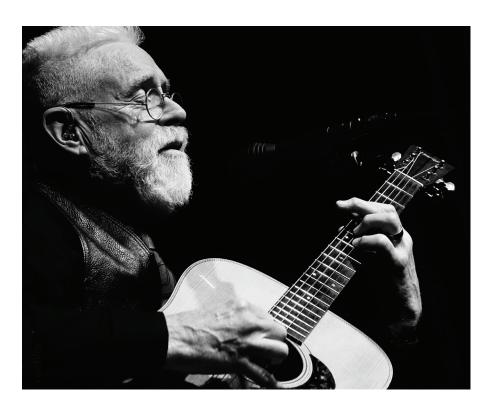
Recorded in Nashville with his long-time producer Colin Linden, O Sun O Moon, brings Cockburn's spirituality (which has always been one of his lyrical motifs) to the fore. "[It's] partly the perspective of age and partly what I've always done," he explains. "But it is more of an obvious part of things on this album than on previous ones."

The stirring "Orders," "O Sun by Day O Moon by Night," with its prayerful chorus that Cockburn says came to him in a dream and the hymnal "Us All" reflect Cockburn's progressive Christian faith in a time of upheaval, rendered with the expected exquisite musicianship and his signature passionate vocals.

"The social situation that prevails including the pandemic and all the polarization that happened, especially in the States in the last five years, "On A Roll," "Orders," and "Us All" are certainly products of that atmosphere," he explains. "You know, they're not really directed at the pandemic. Whether we're just seeing the social scene that's unfolding that includes the way we've all been kind of pushed around by it and have been polarized even further than what was happening before the pandemic hit. Between that we had Trump and all of that, which we still have, of course. Then along comes the pandemic and I remember I've said this to audiences a couple of times, but if you want to look for a conspiracy, because it's such a popular thing to do these days take a look at the satanic conspiracy that put Donald Trump and the pandemic together in the same decade. That's the conspiracy that I worry about. But we're up against whatever we're up against. Those songs reflect my feelings about that.

"The other big factor that runs through the album is I suppose, my age," he continues. "I'm seeing things from a perspective that's slightly different. It includes a lot of the same stuff, but the older you get, the more your perspective kind of shifts. And that colours a lot of the album."

Written in 2021 while vacationing in Maui with Dr. Jeff Garner (the lead pastor of San Francisco's Lighthouse Church, which Bruce attends) "Colin Went Down to the Water" is an achingly poignant requiem for a drowned friend with a gorgeous harmony courtesy of Allison Russell. Along with Russell and Colvin. O Sun O Moon also





features guest appearances by Sarah Jarosz, Jenny Scheinman, Janice Powers, Buddy Miller, Ann and Regina McCrary and on the pertinent "To Keep the World We Know" which calls out global warming and greed, Susan Aglukark.

"Susan actually contacted me and wondered if we could write a song together," explains Cockburn. "I haven't done very much of that over years and it was an interesting idea and I'd met Susan before, I like her. Colin and I, mostly and [my manager] Bernie Finkelstein to an extent, all talked about who we might want to have appear on the album. Allison Russell's name came up right away. I had met her before. We were on a radio show together when she was in Birds of Chicago. Once we started thinking about getting her on the album, I listened to her stuff and I thought it was fantastic. I was really pleased that she was able and



willing to do it. Sarah Jarosz, I had my eye on her for a while. I've listened to her a bit and really like her playing and singing and turned out she's a great person, too. So, all of that went very smoothly. My friend Jenny Scheinman happened to be in Nashville at the right time and able to come over and put some stuff on record. Buddy Miller—Colin Linden's good friends with Buddy and I've met him many times. I'm glad for every single person who participated in the [album] and honoured at their presence. But the people that kind of really surprised me and in a wonderful way and not because I didn't expect them to be good and they were, but because of what they came up with were Jim Hoke and Jeff Taylor. Jim played marimba and put a lot of effort into the horn arrangements—pulling out one horn after another. Jeff plays the accordion and came up with the most beautiful things. I mean the accordion is hardly simple but he just came up with the most simple or not things."

O Sun O Moon is Colin Linden's 11th production credit on a Bruce Cockburn album. Aside from his own impressive career as a solo artist and co-founder of Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, the Toronto-born multi JUNO award-winning

guitarist, songwriter and record producer has worked with a plethora of artists including Bob Dylan, Gregg Allman, Emmylou Harris, The Band, and Lucinda Williams, among many others.

Having met Cockburn at the age of 12, and eventually joining his band in 1991, Linden calls him a mentor. "He was very encouraging and kind to me when I was coming up," says Linden. "I always loved his music and as he [went] in different directions, I was always fascinated and I was always a fan. In 1991 he had just made a record *Nothing but a Burning Light*. He called me to ask me to help him put together a band for [for the] tour. And it was the phone call that changed my life, it's one of the greatest phone calls I've ever got in my life."

"There's a lot of enjoyment, a lot of laughter and our musical tastes overlap," says Cockburn of his working relationship with Linden. "We like some stuff that the other one isn't quite as keen on but when our tastes meet it's a huge area full of all kinds of great stuff. So we've got a lot of language in common musically. We get it. The communication is very good and I really have relied on him to get sounds in terms of how we're going to approach the songs that decode a collaborative effort. The songs are pretty developed by the time I'm willing to play them for

anyone. So he's working with something that's pretty solidly established in terms of what the voice and guitar are doing. And then it's a question of 'What kind of sounds are we going forward with? What kind of emotional feel?' We talk about all these things before we start and as we go along. And then as people are in contributing their parts other people will have ideas saved.' Let's try this. Let's try that.' It just flows along pretty well."

In contrast to recent albums like 2017's Bone on Bone, Linden says that the recording process for O Sun O Moon differed in that Cockburn favoured less of a "band on the floor" approach. "Bruce wanted to start with the songs and he wanted [percussionist and drummer] Gary [Craig] to be involved in cutting stuff with him and we could add things from there on. So we kind of took it from that point of view. Gary played a percussion part and then we overdubbed the rhythm section. We did everything sort of incrementally. So we got a different take on the arrangements and I kind of felt that the people who would make the greatest contributions to the record were people who were virtuosic and arrangement-based."

The result is another superb chapter in an ever evolving journey in the life of



an artist who has refused to sit still, and in turn, has helped to re-define the singer-songwriter tradition.

"I've always been kind of restless in musical terms," he confesses. "So whenever I hear something that I like, I want to incorporate it into my songs, too. There have been influences from all sorts of different directions as a result of that tendency. I haven't really changed how I write, but I have changed the flavour of it by bringing in reggae, rock and jazz elements. In the beginning, I was listening to ethnic music from all over the world laments from Azerbaijan and Tibetan monks chanting and African music—I spent years absorbing that stuff and it comes out from time to time in different ways. But, I also listened to a lot of The Greenbriar Boys and The Country Gentlemen and a lot of blues. Before that point, I was soaking up that stuff and the Beatles and The Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan. At this point, I haven't heard as many new things because I've heard a lot of stuff already [laughs]. The last time I remember really wanting to do something like resembling what I was hearing was when I was listening to Amon Tobin and other electronica composers. And I'm thinking, 'the grooves are great' and so much

[resembles] what I do—the chill end of it. Not the dance stuff, but the stuff that was intended to be listened to had so much in common with what I was doing with the guitar anyway, which is basically a drone and a rhythm and some short term events happening overtop of the drone and the rhythm. And that's kind of what my guitar playing is made of. So I got guite infatuated with that for a while. But lately when I'm in the car in San Francisco, I almost always have the jazz stations on the radio. I've loved jazz since I was in high school and still do . That influence has never been too far away [but] limited by my abilities to reproduce it [laughs]. I'm not a jazz player, but I really appreciate the music and I love it when I can incorporate elements of it on some of the songwriting on this album but the jazz I love is so much more adventurous than where I'm able to go with my song writing."

Bruce Cockburn's social activism is no secret, having visited countries such as Mali, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Mozambique and Nicaragua and working with organizations such as the USC (Unitarian Service Committee), OXFAM, Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International, which of course is reflected in his oeuvre. Prompted for the singer-songwriter's role

in these times of turmoil he says that it's deeply personal for him.

"It's hard to stand back and sort of see what my role is in social terms," he confesses. "When you get absorbed in a piece of music, time stops. And that's true when you're playing as well as when you're listening to it. If you're really listening, [not] background music to a dinner conversation, or if it's in a supermarket, but if you're actually absorbed in the music, it has that effect. So it doesn't matter what kind of music it is really, to get to produce that effect. And I think people need to be able to step away from our concern with the passage of time. I think that artists in general, too, I mean, and songwriters, for sure, react to what's around us. In doing so, we're then motivated to create something in response to what we find around us, what touches us and then we throw that out into the world and other people may be touched by what we do. And then they see something, some kinship, some empathy and some relief in knowing that they're not the only people who feel the way they do."

Matt Bauer is the Editor of Canadian Musician. He can be reached at mbauer@nwcworld.com.



MUSIC, MAGIC & LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF WITCH PROPHET

With a new record out, a busy festival season ahead, and an appearance in a documentary on witchcraft, Witch Prophet is appearing everywhere these days.

It's only right that one such place be in our pages.

By Manus Hopkins

Photography by Francesca Noera



come right out and say it, Witch Prophet's presence in this magazine is overdue. Since releasing her first album in 2018, the gueer, East African, singer-songwriter, who is also the Co-CEO of Heart Lake Records, has shared the stage with and opened for acts like Lido Pimienta, Sudan Archives, Shabazz Palaces, The Hallucination (fka A Tribe Called Red), SAMMUS, Sean Leon, JPEGMAFIA, Snotty Nose Rez Kids and THEESatisfaction. This summer is a busy season for Witch Prophet, a.k.a. Ayo Leilani with a new record, Gateway Experience, having dropped in May, a schedule packed with tour stops and festival experiences, and even a documentary on witchcraft in which the singer features prominently, Witch Prophet's name is everywhere these days.

"Gateway Experience is an album that I wrote, and its theme is about the connection between the brain seizures, otherworldly abilities like psychic abilities out of body experiences, lucid dreaming, and its connection to God and Other, Leilani explains. "All the songs are based on my experiences living with focal aware seizures. Temporal lobe seizures, the type of seizures I have, are not ones where I am unconscious, or where I'm shaking, or where I fall down, but where I have intense déjà vu or déjà rêvé. I always feel like I'm time traveling, like I've lived life. The moment that I'm having a seizure, it feels like I've lived it many times before. I have incredibly lucid dreams. I do have out of body experiences ringing in my ear, things like that. So, all the songs are based on my experiences dealing with temporal lobe epilepsy and focal aware seizures, but also on the magnificence of the mystery of the human brain and the magic that we all can tap into."

Mixing candid sharing of human experiences with exploration of something deeper is a hallmark of Witch Prophet's craft. She acknowledges that to some, matters of health can be private and not something the world should know, but Leilani herself is only able to create art based on something she herself is experiencing.

"I can't just write music about everyday life, like party music," she says. "Writing music is meditation; it's a medicinal thing for me. So, I can't separate what's actually happening to me from my music, because it's my way of healing."

Leilani further highlights the benefits of her willingness to share her experiences, saying the human brain is an interesting topic for her, and others might share that sentiment. Leilani even reveals that she wasn't versed in focal aware seizures and didn't realize that was what was happening to her for most of her life, and believes many other are still in that boat.

"Having the ability to talk about it and to share my experiences is my way of also helping other people that might not realize that's what's happening for them," she says. "And also to connect with people who know that's happening to them, but feel like there's a stigma when it comes to epilepsy and seizures, and chronic illness."

While Leilani believes her focal aware seizures still have connections to the magical, she was intent on finding a medical explanation as well, since 2013 when she discovered what she was experiencing was out of the ordinary. It took years of seeing doctors and being referred to specialists



before she had a definitive term for what she was dealing with.

"It's just been a constant, uphill battle of advocating for myself within the medical industry and getting people to listen to me," she says. "It was really hard because I didn't have the right vocabulary to describe and to explain what was happening. And I didn't know what was happening."

The idea that listeners can find their own meaning in Leilani's lyrical recounting of her own experiences has both positives and negatives, as the artist explains.

"I'm glad that people can listen to [Gate-way Experience] and connect however they need to connect to it, because people hear things and hear messages in different ways," she says. "But I also want the understanding that this album is about focal aware seizures; it is about the brain, because I want to be able to dispel the stigma around epilepsy and the fear around chronic illness. So, it's a double-edged sword where I do want you to be able to connect with it in any way, but I also want you to be able to



understand where I'm coming from and hear from a different point of view as well or hear from my point of view."

In doing her research before getting down to work on *Gateway Experience*, Leilani was surprised to find epilepsy is nowhere near as rare as she had thought. She even found several celebrities who deal with the condition, including one of the best-known rappers out there, Lil Wayne.

"He has an amazing career and has been able to live a really full life, and people don't know what he goes through, so it's interesting," Leilani says of Lil Wayne. "Because if I had known that, I think it would have been a lot easier for me in the beginning, when it's really scary, when somebody tells you that you have this chronic illness, or you're trying to figure out what's happening."

Being open about her focal aware seizures has helped Leilani not just as an artist, but also in her daily life. Since her condition affects her daily life, it's something she feels people around her should know about, even though she occasionally gets advice to

keep it to herself.

"If I don't say anything, it'll just seem like I'm a flake, or a jerk, if I'm trying to do something with somebody, and then I have a seizure, and I'm not able to go out and I'm not able to be my full self," she says. "I don't want that; I want people to understand what's happening, and to be able to give me grace and also to recognize that everybody goes through things. I don't have to tell people everything that's going on, but this is something that I think is okay to share, because it does more help than harm."

Leilani's closest collaborator is her wife, SUN SUN, who produces all of Witch Prophet's music. The two share a farm property outside of Toronto where they work.

"We talk a lot about the different instruments that I want to use, the style of beats that I want, and the different tempos that I want to have in the songs," Leilani says. "[SUN SUN] is very intuitive when working with me. We've been working together for almost 15 years, so she knows what I like, and she knows how to tap into what I'm trying to express."

Together, Witch Prophet and SUN SUN come up with sounds and styles that suit the lyrical content Leilani writes. On *Gateway Experience*, the duo brought in trumpeter Tara Kannangara to help shape the sensations the album puts forth.

"In the song 'Dizzy,' for example, when I'm talking about a spinning sensation that happens right as I'm about to have a seizure, Tara sort of fills out that that feeling by using her trumpet as a way to visualize what I'm saying," Leilani says.

Because she suffers from memory loss, Leilani prefers to write lyrics that repeat and keep her verses from being too wordy.

"I need to be able to remember it and feel like I'm not missing the whole verse when I'm singing the song," she explains. "So that's another way that I deal with the symptoms of seizures, by also providing music that people can sort of zone out to and dance to or clean their house to or whatever."

Crafting a setlist that balances newer and more familiar music is another part of the process Leilani and SUN SUN do together. Because her current sets are usually about an hour long, Leilani likes to have them follow her career in a sort of chronological order. She likes to explain the meanings behind some of the songs onstage, and also will often throw in some unreleased tunes that have yet to be recorded but are fun to perform.

As far as Witch Prophet and SUN SUN's practice routine goes, Leilani says it typically consists more of song snippets and loops than full songs or set runs, and the sessions usually start with a spliff before anything else. Living outside of the city has done wonders for Leilani's creative process as well, as she finds it easier to get in tune with nature and focus on her writing and practice without the distractions of the busy city.

"There's windows and bright light throughout the whole house, and we're surrounded by forest and trees," Leilani says. "So, I'll sit on the porch, I'll smoke, hang out, play music, and just look at nature. And that's usually how we vibe into writing new things. I also travel a lot to Jamaica. And when I'm there I get a lot of inspiration; songs just come to me, and lyrics always just come to me. And then when we get back into the city and back into Toronto or back on the farm, I'll usually expand on what I wrote or what came to me in Jamaica on beats from SUN SUN."

With Leilani being the face of the operations and SUN SUN serving as a kind of quiet partner, Leilani is happy to take any opportunity to shine a light on her wife's

contributions to the music, even saying she gets ecstatic when people recognize SUN SUN while the two walk around at festivals or other events. The two have a special musical chemistry and worked together in pre-Witch Prophet projects, so Leilani knew when Witch Prophet was conceived that SUN SUN would be an integral part of it.

"I think it's great," says Leilani of the dynamic between herself and SUN SUN. "We really balance each other out. We've been working together for a really long time; Witch Prophet is not the first project. I was in her band first. They were called Abstract Random. They were a political dub hop, weird group where they would dress up and make really funky beats and weird songs. And so, I joined her band first and then we had another band called Above Top Secret, and then we started doing Witch Prophet. We've worked together for a long time, so it's really easy."

In fact, it was through Toronto's music and arts scene the two met in the first place.

"I had started a collective called 88 Days of Fortune in Toronto, and it was a collective of different visual artists, musicians, and multimedia artists," Leilani recounts. "And when we met, [SUN SUN] was running a store in downtown Toronto that had a stage in the backyard, that she just happened to build. And we met and I asked if we could throw a party in the back of the store. And she agreed but said only if her band could perform . We have been inseparable since then, and that was in 2009."

As Leilani explains, Witch Prophet started off as the name of a song and then was likely going to be used as an album title before she decided it would serve best as a stage name.

"When it was the name of the song, it was me doing loops on a guitar pedal looper, which SUN SUN had taught me how to use," Leilani says. "So, the whole idea of Witch Prophet with the ethereal and loop pedals and haunting, all started with SUN SUN helping me learn how to use her guitar loop pedal, so it just made sense to work together."

The two truly are inseparable; SUN SUN is even close by as we chat with Leilani over the phone, and the singer shouts out to her wife to confirm the make of the aforementioned loop pedal—a DigitTech Digidelay delay/looper pedal (though Leilani now uses a TC Helicon Voicelive Touch).

After talking about music, touring, seizures, magic, and more, our conversation takes a turn to the subject of *Coven*, the recently released Canadian witchcraft-focused documentary in which Leilani is featured. As for how Leilani got involved in the project, the

answer is quite simple.

"Rama Rau, the director, just randomly hit me up on email, I think, and said that she was doing a film about witches," she says. "She was looking for a witch of colour or Black witch and she googled it and I popped up."

Leilani's first reaction was to assume the email was a fake, as her inbox is always filled with spam. After googling Rau and finding out she was legit, Leilani thought, why not? And signed on for the project. Rau told Leilani about the other featured witches and the parts of the world they'd been to film, such as England and Scotland, and asked where she wanted to travel. Though Leilani has connections in Jamaica, she didn't feel safe with the idea of openly being a queer witch in the country and felt the same about her home country of Ethiopia. Rau suggested the Black Witch University in New Orleans, and Leilani was immediately excited by the idea. She admits it was upsetting to see how much of her footage was left on the cutting room floor for time constraint purposes, but looks back on the experience fondly.

"I love talking about magic and witches. Any opportunity, I'll do it," she says. "Every time I do it, I get a lot of weird emails, hate mail, hate comments. Like a lot. Always, always, it always happens. But I don't think I care anymore. I don't care anymore. You can write me really intense things, but I think that's where it kind of stops; it doesn't go further than that. So why would I stop my life just because somebody's behind a computer? And because somebody's scared of something that's other—I'm not going to stop my life for that."

Letting the nasty comments she receives when she speaks about witchcraft and medical matters go was something Leilani feels she only really started doing this year.

"I just had enough," she says. "There's nothing I can do. I've blocked people but there's really nothing I can do. And also, I go and look at the people who are writing these things, I'll go and look at their page, I'll go and look at their social media, and a lot of them seem really sad and lonely. It still bothers me, but not to the point where I'm scared to be me. It still hurts my feelings. It still makes me ask why they are so angry. But not enough that I'm not going to live my truth."

Despite any negativity, Leilani ultimately feels her candidness in interviews and other settings creates a deeper connection between herself and her fans.

"Listening to music is a solo thing, and having a conversation is connecting to the person who you're talking to and learning a little bit more and paying a little bit more attention because you're not daydreaming,"

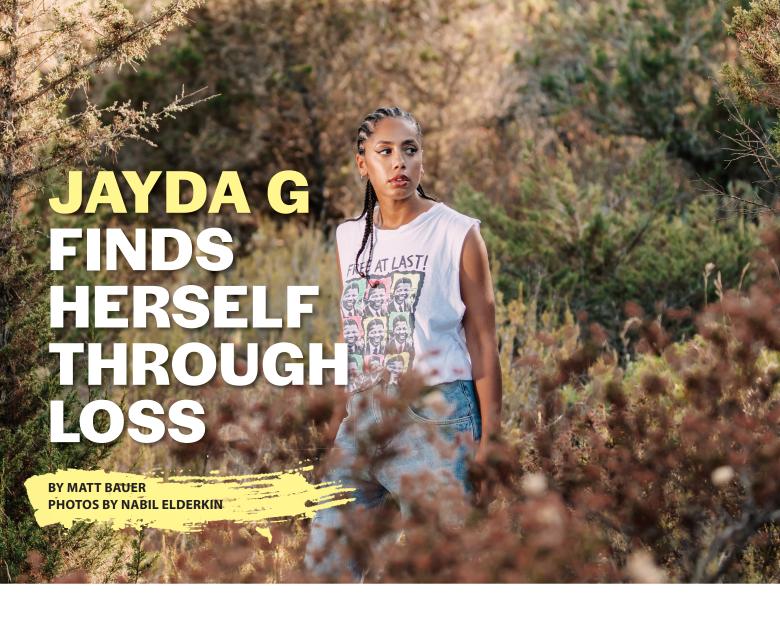


she explains. "Music allows you to daydream and allows you to go in and out of consciousness, whereas when you're having conversations, hopefully the people you're having conversations with are present in the moment and are able to absorb what you're saying a little bit more."

Other than her upcoming performances and finding more opportunities to share her new music with the world, Leilani is looking forward to seeing if she'll make the cut for this year's Polaris Prize Short List. She wasn't able to attend the long list announcement because her son's college graduation was the same night and had to delay her celebrating to let him have his day, but it was exciting nevertheless to hear that she was included in the list. With *Gateway Experience* out, Leilani is able to put a confident foot forward as she walks into a summer season packed with shows all across the country.

"I'm really excited to perform the full album because I haven't had a chance to do that yet," she says.

Manus Hopkins is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician. He can be reached at mhopkins@nwcworld.com.



itled after her late father, *Guy*, is Jayda G's most personal release to date. Known worldwide for her exuberant DJ sets, the Grand Forks, BC-born and London, UK-based writer, producer, DJ, environmental toxicologist, and broadcaster has crafted a vivid, danceable tapestry in tribute to her father Richard Guy who passed when Jayda was ten. Knowing he was dying, he recorded 11 hours of videotape narrating his life, which forms the genesis and provides the narrative thread to one of the most remarkable dance music albums in recent years.

Growing up surrounded by sound and an abundance of nature, Jayda's infatuation with music was sparked early on. "I've been obsessed with sounds and music since I was little," she tells *Canadian Musician* over Zoom from her home in England. "I've always been a big lover of music and always obsessed with finding music and then [it] just never let up. It was something I always did from my beginning with lessons in

piano and violin at the age of five."

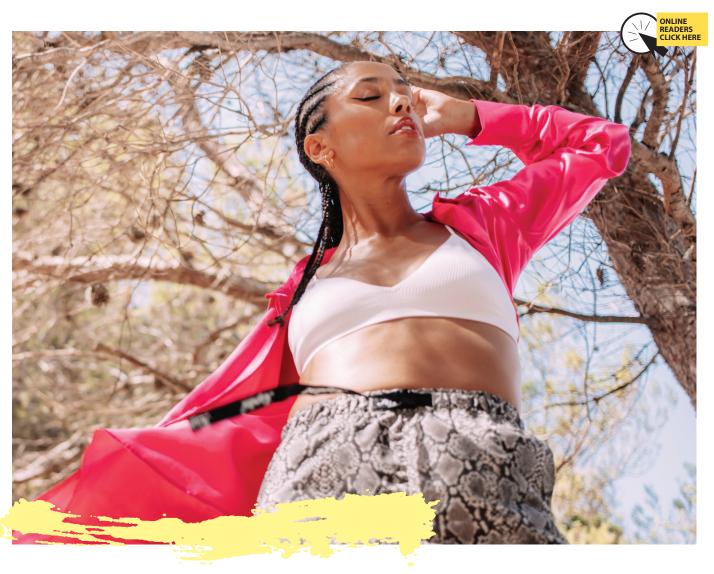
With her father's copious collection of soul, R&B, funk, and blues came an appreciation for a good groove (which she continues to indulge on her Spotify track IDs playlist). From her mom came a love of jazz, from her sister an important appreciation for disco, and from her brother, who was working in the Canadian music industry at the time, promo CDs through the mail that exposed her to defining artists such as D'Angelo and TLC.

Jayda G started producing music in 2014, cheekily admitting to it as procrastination while pursuing a degree in biology. Stints in Los Angeles and Vancouver followed. A move to Berlin would prove an important catalyst for Jayda, spurring her to eventually write and release her first solo projects: 2016's "Jaydaisms", 2018's standout "Diva Bitch" single, featuring long-time vocal collaborator and childhood friend Alexa Dash, and "Sacred Spaces," released the same year on her own JMG Recordings imprint. Her debut album Significant

Changes was released on Ninja Tune in 2019 and met with critical acclaim from the likes of Mixmag (who made Jayda their 'Cover Star'), Pitchfork, Dazed, Resident Advisor, NME and more.

The release of her 2021 mid-pandemic single, "Both Of Us," created with producer Fred again.. would prove to be a pivotal moment for Jayda. Paying tribute to the dancefloors of the past and drawing on her love of classic, uplifting house, the track quickly took on a life of its own among fans, drawing an outpouring of critical praise that saw it named as one of the "Songs of the Year" by Pitchfork, NPR, Billboard, The Guardian, NME, NYLON, Clash and many, many more, and earning her a notable Grammy nomination at the 2021 awards.

It was another high point in what has been a burgeoning musical career that has also seen her release a trove of high-profile remixes for the likes of Taylor Swift and Dua Lipa; tour the world's biggest festival and stages including Glastonbury and



Coachella; release a compilation for the venerable *DJ Kicks* series and highly praised collaboration with Aluna; and appear as a guest judge on BBC's *Glow Up*.

While she admits that she had the idea of using her father's tapes as the basis for an album for many years, it wasn't until the pandemic that she was able to tackle it." I knew I wanted to approach it differently than I had done before. And I just needed the time and the space to really sort out what that looked like. And it wasn't really until the pandemic that I was able to do that.

"I wanted to see what it would look like using these tapes as a foundation for music," she continues. "A lot of house music in general uses a lot of samples. And I was like, 'What would it sound like if I use my dad's tapes of him talking?' and how cool that would be for myself, personally. As it grew, it just became into something so much more than just sampling. It really formed the basis and inspiration for all the lyrics essentially."

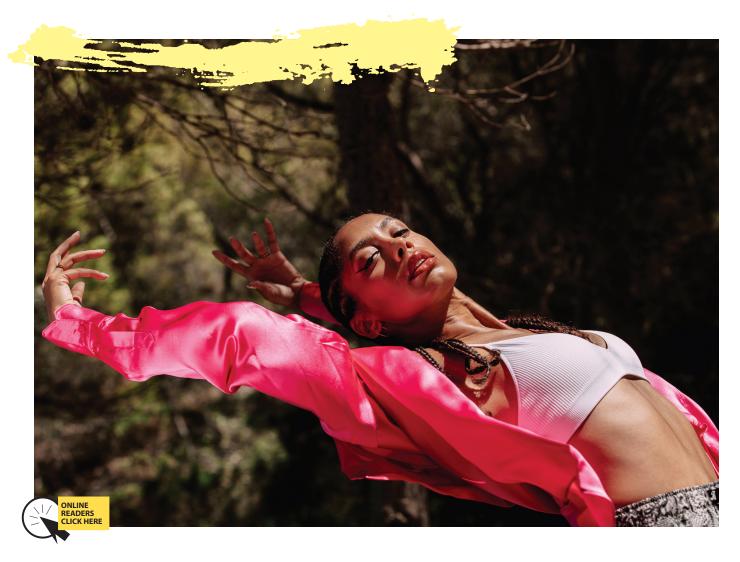
Rooted in Jayda's love of classic house,

disco, R&B, soul and funk and interspersed with snippets of her father's voice, *Guy*, is an inspiring tribute to a young African American man recounting his odyssey in an often antagonistic and harsh world: growing up in a rough Kansas neighborhood and his various interactions with neighborhood bullies, the police and local authorities; his enlistment in the Vietnam War by the age of 18; his side-hustle as a Washington DC nighttime radio DJ, who'd inadvertently got caught up in the 1968 race riots; and finally his new life in Canada where he married Jayda's mother and sought to better himself, his family and his community.

"My father, he was a very brave and persistent amazing person who really just sought out a different life for himself than what was shown to him, from where he grew up," recalls Jayda of her father who would be 80 this year. "He wanted something different from what he saw around him, which I think is a real rarity. [There aren't] a lot of people who want something different than what they see. It's hard to imagine even what you would want differently when you haven't

seen it. You have to remember my father; he was born in the 1940s. And a black man growing up in the States during the 1950s—you can imagine that it was very, very tough for him. He actually says in his tapes that he would have been growing up in what would now be called the ghetto. But for him, it was a community and I think that's something that was also super important to my father was community and helping people. To this day when I'm in Grand Forks, there are people who remember my father and they're like, 'Oh, are you Guy's kid?' so he's still [greatly and fondly] remembered even to this day. He was just a really charismatic person."

While dance music is still seen by too many as a frivolous genre (and admittedly examining grief is uncommon in dance and house music), *Guy* is steeped in the foundations of the BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities who birthed the music, continuing its joyous lineage. "It's actually a genre that's super powerful that gave people a space to be themselves in a world where they couldn't be themselves. And that's really always the ethos for me around dance music and house music.



That's why I love it. That's why I dance to it. It is, you know, a sense that it's for the people and for Black people. I love the genre. And I want people to remember that. So why not make a dance album that has meaning and life and energy in a different kind of way?"

One of the most invigorating tracks on Guy is the paean to Jayda's grandmother and the overall resiliency of Black women, "When She Dance." "Throughout my father's tapes, he shared [that] he was so close to his mother, my grandma, who sadly I never got to meet," she says. "She sounded like such an amazing person. It's crazy when I think of it. It was the 1950s. She was a single mom and she was working several jobs to keep it all together. She owned her own house, which I think is amazing. I really wanted to celebrate the independence and the strength of a Black woman during a time when things were really freaking tough and things still are tough, but I can imagine during the 1950s it was also maybe a little bit tougher. She obviously had this astounding strength. But she loved to dance; she loved to have a good time. She really [embodied] the 'work hard play hard' ethos. And that's what "When She Dance" is about.

You can be strong and really independent and still have a lot of fun—all of the [many aspects] of being a Black woman."

Co-produced with Jack Peñate, Jayda says that the recording of *Guy* took over two years. "I'm a big Ableton user while Jack uses Logic," explains Jayda of the sessions. "So it was this weird pairing between the two. There's certain things that Ableton does that Logic doesn't do and things that Logic does that Ableton doesn't do so like, a mishmash between the two really. We were experimenting with different plugins. A lot of Native Plugins; a lot of Arturia Plugins. I also like to use Splice a little bit for certain sounds that are harder to find."

She proudly calls the sonic results "Jayda G 2.0." "It's been a big push, a big change, in terms of this album," she confesses. "I really pushed myself musically, and sonically, I really wanted this album to go to another level in terms of sound but still rooted in dance."

Guy also showcases another milestone in Jayda's career since it features her vocals on every track. "I definitely feel better than when I [first started] but I don't know whether I feel fully confident, "she confesses. "I think it's a journey to say the least. I'm defi-

nitely nowhere near I see myself in terms of my vocal abilities, but you have to start somewhere. And I'm definitely the kind of person, I just go for it. If I sit around and wait for things to be perfect, then they'll never happen. That's kind of been my ethos. I definitely would say I'm more comfortable than I was, but not fully there."

Reflecting on what she's learned from her father and the grieving process so candidly explored on Guy, Jayda is sanguine. "Life can be a choice, you know, things happen, shit happens in life, things can be really hard, but you have a choice of how you want to move on from those hardships. And that's something I think I really saw within my dad's life, is that he had so many ups and downs, but he chose to grow from it. And he chose to become a better person from all of it. It's such a big ethos within my family. The second thing is around grief. Grief doesn't have to be this big, scary thing that we don't talk about. Grief is something that doesn't leave you—it's always there. And it's more that you just learn to live with it. But the cool thing about grief is that you have it because you love someone, so it's really all rooted in love."

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Concurrent with her music career is Jayda G's environmental work and activism which has seen her completing her masters in Resource and Environmental Management, specializing in Environmental Toxicology and launching her own science-based interview series JMG Talks which is a platform for young environmental scientists to open up about their research and bring greater understanding of their work to the public.

"Whenever you're an artist or someone with a public platform, there's things that you care about—there's things that we all care about that really strike a chord with us," she says. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if all artists really took on whatever it is that really spoke to them and advocated for it, and for me, it's the environment. When you're an artist or a public facing person, there are so many people looking at you, even if it's just like a few thousand people who are paying attention. And I think it's worth actually saying something. And for me, the art of environment and nature, in general is my big love. Music and nature are the two things that just make me super happy. My heart lights up, and so it just made sense to

talk about the things that I love."

Apart from *Guy*, Jayda G's other project of 2023 is the feature length documentary *Blue Carbon*. Hosted by Jayda the film took her to the frontlines of the climate crisis to meet with communities already affected by the emerging disaster. Created by the BAFTA and Emmy-winning director Nicolas Brown (*The Serengeti Rules*) and executive producer Fernando Meirelles (City Of God, The Two Popes) it also features Brazilian artist Seu Jorge and original music from Wu-Tang's RZA.

"Blue carbon really is a term that talks about these ecosystems that are coastal ecosystems, they include mangrove forests, saltwater marshes, marshes, and seagrass meadows," she explains. "They are really good at pulling carbon out of the atmosphere and putting it into the ground. And that's the star of the film. We're going out and we're talking about these ecosystems, which are really good at, essentially, combating climate change. If we put more money and resources and energy into saving these ecosystems and also growing them, then we could really have, possibly a fighting chance

in terms of climate change. It grows into so much more than just the environment, climate change is also a social justice issue. It's not just about the environment, it's about the systems that are at play, and the discrepancies between different kinds of people and where they live, especially how the people who are causing climate change are not the same people who are being affected by it. That is really what the heart of this film is about. And that's why I'm just so excited because it really ties into everything. When it comes to climate change, it's not a separate issue. It is the issue."

While Jayda G proudly acknowledges her growth as an artist, she intends to stay rooted in dance music. "I've grown in so many ways but I'll always still keep a foot in where I came from," she says after a long day of interviews. "I think I'll always play dance music—old 1990s house music [and] disco. I play the things that make me happy."

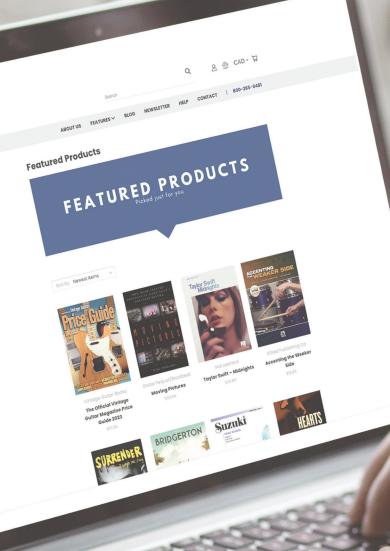
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CANADIAN MUSICIAN'S 2023

KEYBOARDS SPECIAL

BY MANUS HOPKINS



In our last few issues, we've had panels of drummers, bassists, and guitarists share their gear preferences, delve into their practice routines, and offer tips for aspiring players on their instruments. Now, it's time to show the piano players of the country some love. We rounded up blues legend Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne, 'Canada's Prince of Piano' Martin Mayer, sought-after jazz piano instructor Adrean Farrugia, and Juno Award-winner Laila Biali to show that Canadians know their keys.

These interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

CM: Tell me about how you got into playing piano and why you fell in love with the instrument.



WAYNE: I took my lessons; we had a piano as I was coming up, and of course, I took lessons from my choir

director. That was kind of my start. But you know, having the instrument around the house and sitting there banging on it... my mother and I used to do sort of a four-hand type of thing, kind of a boogie. That got me interested in the piano. And then of course, a lot of records I heard had nice piano stuff, and I wanted to be like that. Ray Charles, Fats Domino, people like that, piano players. So that was my first interest. And like I said, I was part of the youth choir. And I started playing piano for them. And that's when I started really falling in love with a piano. I tried a few other instruments but that seemed to work obviously, because I had access to one. That was my first love and still is-we fell in love and we're still in love.



MAYER: I think it was grade four or five, elementary school, I was in choir class. And I remember

multiple times during those classes, just being really enamored with the accompanist and how she played and the sound that she was able to coax out of the piano, and the choir room. So, I remember going to her after one of the classes and then saying, 'Hey, you know, I'd love to learn the song that we've been singing, but I want to learn it on piano, so can I get the sheet music from you for it?' And that was my first introduction into the world of copyright. She told me she couldn't give it to me because it's copyrighted sheet music. And so that was kind of a bummer. But then later that week, she comes up to me with this manila folder. And she said, 'You didn't get this from me.' So, I open it up, and the music was in there. And I remember going home and saying to my parents that I really, really wanted to learn how to play piano and they said, 'Okay, well, let's give it a try and see what happens.' And I jumped in; I think it was maybe two or three months later, we sort of

spent some time looking for a piano teacher and some recommendations. And it was just off to the races from there. I was so gung-ho with it. And [my teacher] saw that I had such potential that she basically put me through four grades of Royal Conservatory in my first year. So that was my first foray into the piano.



FARRUGIA: My dad's a musician. He's a drummer. And my grandpa on my mom's side was a fiddler.

I have a couple of uncles who play guitar. So, there was definitely a lot of music around me when I was a kid. It's kind of a funny story, I guess. I used to go to church when I was a kid, and they would have these sort of hangs in the church basement after mass where all the little old ladies would make cookies and coffee, and people would just hang out and talk and stuff. They had a piano down there, and I remember, the priest sat down and played the left-hand part of 'Heart and Soul,' you know, that famous [plays left-hand part]. The old lady sat down



















KENNY WAYNE

MARTIN MAYER

ADREAN FARRUGIA

LAILA BIALI

and went [plays right-hand part]. And I just remember being really fascinated; I really remember it grabbing my attention. I was about 12. I went over, and I was watching them really intently, just fascinated with the instrument. And I think there was something cool about the piano because I could see everything. It's not like the illusive saxophone or even a guitar where you just see the fingers moving aroundthere was something that really made sense about the piano. They stopped playing and then I just kind of sat down and started plinking around and then I started playing the left-hand part and playing the right-hand part together. And I remember the priest was like, 'Oh, Adrean, you play piano?' And he's like, 'How long have you been playing?' And I was like, 'Oh, this is my first time,' and I remember then all of a sudden, everyone made a big deal about it, that I could play that. So, I guess when you're a little kid, you're trying to find your identity. And I guess for me, I found something that felt like, maybe I'm good at this, because all these grownups are making a big deal about something. So, I got kind of excited.

And I think the piano was just the instrument that happened to be there, so I think I fell in love with the instrument just because it was something that maybe clicked with my brain the way my own brain works. I'm very visually oriented, and the piano keyboard is very, very visual.



BIALI: There's a little story there that my mom tells me because I don't have a recollection of this. My mom

tells me that when I was three-and-ahalf, I climbed up onto the bench in front of the family piano and started to play the melody to "Sesame Street" by ear. And so, she was trying to decide at the time, do we put Laila in gymnastics, or do we put her in piano lessons? Because this was in the early 1980s, and parents were not necessarily putting their kids in everything under the sun; you had to choose one extracurricular activity. And so, she was torn, because I was also a very bouncy child. But then that happened, and so piano it was.

In terms of falling in love with it

myself, I have a big memory of my mom playing church hymns-my mom raised four daughters. My dad was the breadwinner; it was a traditional family. And so, [my mom] was a real busybody, but every now and then she would go over to the piano and just play these simple, beautiful church hymns. And there was such a feeling of peace that would just descend on the house. And it felt I could sense as a child, the pleasure that she derived from the instrument, and I think that cast a little bit of a spell for me.

CM: What is your most prized or most coveted instrument?



WAYNE: I like the Steinways; I mean, I've never owned one, but I have performed on one. Bösen-

dorfer is another one that I've played. It seems to be the Yamaha C7 is a very popular one I enjoy. However, some of the old honky-tonk blues pianos, and it depends on what type the setting is that really helps us see, like a saloon

upright they call it, is a really nice one that's all broken in and the keys all work, but the feel of it, it's just wear and tear. It just captures the essence of the room and the era. So, I like that.

There's not really a brand that I use, but I do like Yamaha. I do like Steinways and Bösendorfer, I have played some other pianos that were actually nice where I don't remember the names of them. So sometimes, you know, the piano has been played. And [if] it's really broken in it's really a treat to play. Some of the brand-new ones are a little bit stiff, so it has to be broken in. So, I like the pianos with a nice, soft touch. Because I've been playing mostly digital piano, just at the clubs and then just moving it around; moving a piano around is a mess. A lighter touch is something I prefer, but I do like the standard grand pianos. When I was coming up, we had a smaller one, but my mom had it redone. And so that's kind of why I got my start.



MAYER: I would say right now, my most prized instrument is my Roland AX-1 bright red keytar, that

is personally signed and dedicated to me by John Tesh, who's the guy that actually got me into this style of music. I had seen his PBS show, back in the 1990s, and I have not heard music like that before. I was classically trained, and I was listening to stuff by you know, John Williams, Elton John, David Foster, and those types of artists. But I'd never heard that sort of marriage of modern piano with the traditional orchestra, so that keytar is hung up in my studio and it's really cool that the guy who inspired me 30 years ago was not only kind enough

to sign it for me, but now I can actually call a friend.



FARRUGIA: I mean, I love my own instrument. I have a Bechstein Concert 8. It's actually an upright piano,

but it's probably the best upright piano you can buy. And I love it because I've had the time to develop a relationship with it. So, that's always been one of the challenges as a piano player versus again, say a horn player or a bassist, is they get to take their instrument out with them. Whereas we have to typically go and play what's there. So, I do have my favorite brands. I'm a huge fan of German Bechstein pianos. The likelihood of finding one of those on a gig is incredibly rare, though, I bet, especially in North America. I do tend to like a nicely tuned Steinway that's nicely regulated. And also, I'm a big fan of Japanese Kawai Pianos. You see a lot of Yamahas and they're great instruments, but I find they don't quite have as much personality as some of the other brands, and you can kind of play on a Yamaha and it immediately gives you that nice sound, but once you start exploring there sometimes isn't a tonne of depth, whereas I definitely prize a piano that the more you play it, the more you can discover different sounds that can be coaxed out of it. The Italian Faziolis are nice, too. So that might be a coveted instrument only because I think it's the world's most expensive piano.



BIALI: Wow, that's a great question. Oh, my gosh, and it's so interesting you should ask that, because I

have been taken to several pianos of note around the world. So, you know, I remember when Noble Street Studios here in Toronto got their first Fazioli, it was like a big deal. 'You're going to get to play this fabled Italian piano, like the Lamborghini of pianos.' And I liked it for sure. And then in Berlin, I was brought into the Bechstein showroom, kind of their global headquarters and got to try some of them out. But it's interesting, I actually am a Yamaha artist. And while in many ways, nothing beats a good Steinway, in my opinion, or Bösendorfer, I do really love a good Yamaha. And I've encountered quite a few.

I'm not answering your question [laughs]. Do I have a dream piano? No, I can't say that I do, necessarily. But if I did, it would be one that is very even from a tactile place, because you can find instruments depending on how they've been maintained over the years that feel a little bit sticky, or that are kind of a heavier action. So, I like something that's right in the middle. Nice and even and the sound has to sing; it has to have a very beautiful sound. Some people like a bright sound, especially jazz musicians. I do not—I like something that, sure, has some high end, but isn't overly broad. But then it's got to have that richness from the bottom end. Ping in the high end and richness from the bottom end.

CM: To you, what makes a great piano player?



WAYNE: One that plays piano with passion. When they have passion, there's a way that your fingers touch.



I talked to some of the old guys that play, and they say, 'play it passionately.' And not pound on it; some people pound on it to get their frustrations out on the piano, or instruments in general, actually banging on the piano, like a little kid would bang on a piano. But playing passionately, playing as if you're massaging person, that's sort of another way that I sort of use the phrase 'passionately,' that makes a great piano player. And it says things to you when you're passionate to it. I mean, it's kind of hard to explain, but it sort of works with you. And instead of struggling, trying to get it to do something for you, it will do amazing things if you have patience and passion.



MAYER: I would say emotion. Two things: emotion and playing the music. Don't play the notes, don't play

what's on the page, take what's on the page as the base, like what a great recipe is. Any chef will tell you a great recipe is a base. I mean, you just take your knowledge, and you take your expression, and you expand on that to make it yours. So, I would say my biggest thing is, the more you evoke emotion, the more you play the music as opposed to playing the notes, that is the biggest thing.



FARRUGIA: Well, I think what makes a great piano player is largely the same as just what makes a great

musician. You know, it's somebody who can play from a space where you can hear that they're connected to something, connected to the music. There's a sort of a fusing that happens when a performer is connected to the music, I mean, athletes call it being in the zone. So, you know, a great musician is a person who's playing from that connected space. I think when we're young, we get excited about the things we're learning; we learn a lot of cool chords, we work on playing fast, and then when we perform we, in the beginning, we're trying to kind of show off what we can do, which is, in many ways, I think, a natural part of the maturing process, but it's very ego-driven, and it doesn't have a lot of depth. And then I think, when you hear truly great artists, there's some depth in their playing that has to do with the fact that they're really connected to the music.

Piano player-specific, somebody who knows how to play the instrument. There's a lot of factors that go into playing piano. There's learning the coordination between the hands. So, there's just the technique. But then I think the rarer thing that a lot of the truly great pianists possess is the ability to make the piano sing. I mean, it seems counterintuitive to make an instrument that's percussive hammers hitting a string sing, but it's this attention and this ability to really create a wide variety of tones. So, I have heard, for instance, in my humble opinion, piano players who have a tonne of technique and a real command of the coordination between the hands, but you can tell that they haven't spent a lot of time really like sitting there studying how to coax the 50 different tones, you can get out of one note. And to me, that adds a real level of

depth. And when you hear a truly great pianist, they can get a lot of colors out of the piano. That's something I really value for sure.



BIALL: Oh my gosh, that's such a great question. Well, it's interesting. It's interesting because of course,

there are fabulous technicians out there, people who just irrefutably play the instrument in their sleep and can achieve extraordinary things from a technical place. But to me, it's almost like... there's a verse in the Bible that talks about how if you have certain things, but without love, it's like a clanging cymbal—well for me, it's like, if you're going to play piano, you can play it incredibly well and at a super high level. But if there isn't that heart, that feeling that depth of expression, and the sense that the piano is an extension of the person playing it on almost a heart and soul level, if that isn't there, then I'm left dry; I'm left cold. But I think some level of technique is always great. But some of the most connected and impactful players aren't even necessarily trained pianists, they just have a voice, and the instrument immediately cuts to the heart.

CM: Tell me about your training.



WAYNE: I went straight into gigging, because I took lessons, I started at eight years old in San Francisco, and

then we moved to Los Angeles when I was 11 or 12. And that was going to continue, but I think my folks couldn't afford to keep the lessons going. And

then the person that I was referred to wasn't quite in the Central Los Angeles area. So, I stopped that. So, I will say that the gigging came in, and listening to a lot of the little groups that I played with musicians on the block, they had records, and no one had sheet music. So, it was basically listening to it and playing it for the piano. The saxophone players, for some reason, they seemed to have music [laughs]. But anyway, the piano players, we couldn't find the sheet music for the piano parts to it. So that's why I acquired playing by ear. Along with that, a lot of the choir didn't have the music either, especially the youth choir, who didn't want to do the traditional hymns of the book, they wanted to take the hymns and kind of update them to do their own way. So that required listening, and just picking up on stuff by ear. And that's what I do now, although I've had chord charts and stuff like that, but not really official charts.



MAYER: So, with Royal Conservatory of Music, in my first year, I did those four levels. I got up to Royal Con-

servatory grade nine and did grade three history and harmony. And at that point, I realized that even though I was classically trained, I was never going to be a classical musician. It was just not in my DNA. This was in Edmonton at the time, though I'm based in Vancouver now. I studied music in Edmonton even though I was born in Prague, then I went to MacEwan University and studied jazz piano in a program that was founded by Tommy Banks, who is and was one of the premier Canadian pianists.

It was while I was there, that it sort

of looked up and said, 'I have to do something to get people's attention in this industry.' So that's when I took out a \$35,000, loan and decided to produce a debut concert. And that's where the rest of the career trajectory came from. I was in university studying all this stuff. And amidst all of that. taking this big risk, but I mean, going into piano was a risk by itself. I had no idea whether I was going to be good, I had no idea whether I was going to like it. God knows there were times where I was like, 'I don't want to practice, I want to be outside.' It's those teenage years you look back on and go, 'I don't consider myself classical pianist even though I am classically trained.' And so, the benefit of that is that when I want to play pieces that are more challenging, I have the technique and the technique training in order to undertake that.



FARRUGIA: I think I started in the way that a lot of people do. There was a local lady who taught piano,

and she was recommended by a friend's mom who was also studying, so I started learning with her and it was the Royal Conservatory program, which, in these parts, a lot of young pianists take. So, I got a classical foundation, which I was really grateful for, and then, after a certain time with my original teacher, I moved on to a teacher for more advanced students. I went through with the Royal Conservatory thing. I lived in Hamilton at the time, so the closest music program to home that was reputable was Mohawk College. So, I went there as a classical major. And then within the first month, I started seeing all the jazz players and



kind of thought what they were doing was a lot cooler. I would always be practicing classical music alone in a little piano cubicle, but they'd be jamming together and stuff and hanging out and laughing and cheering each other on, so I wanted to switch over to jazz. Halfway through the first semester, I asked them if I could switch to jazz and they said, 'Well, you don't really have any jazz experience.' And they said to go and learn how to play over a twelve-bar blues and then come back and talk to us. So, I went and feverishly practiced twelve-bar blues for a couple of weeks. And then I came back, and I auditioned. And they let me in, so I did the applied diploma program at Mohawk, then I went on to U of T after for undergrad, and then ultimately did a masters degree in composition at York University. Those years were amazing for meeting people, building a social network that became a professional network, and learning from amazing teachers. But I do think that the best learning I've had has been through these private lessons with, like, a visiting artist coming to Toronto

to perform. I'd go there, to their gig, and then I'd yank at their sleeve and say, 'Can I get a lesson with you while you're here?' That was huge. And then also, I used to visit this legendary drum teacher. His name is Jim Blackley. Many of the greatest drummers in Canada have studied with him. And he used to have jam sessions every Friday at his house, and I would go every week and get to play with this master in his 70s, who would completely obliterate us on the drums. It felt like that kind of learning where if you want to learn to swim, somebody just throws you in the water. I wouldn't do that to a kid. I think it could traumatize them. So, that's the crux of my education. And then of course, I think the cornerstone of good education is teaching somebody how to teach themselves. So, a lot of years of listening and transcribing music off albums, Herbie Hancock, and Keith Jarrett and Bill Evans, transcribing what they're playing, and really trying to understand it and internalize it, thinking about it like trying to learn a language. That's my training in a nutshell.



BIALI: I was raised through the conservatory method, Royal Conservatory of Music. And I started at

three-and-a-half. And when I was four. I officially started lessons and kind of made my way up the ranks through grade 10, and actually wanted to be a concert pianist. And I had a very devoted classical piano teacher in West Vancouver. So, then I was actually in a car accident when I was 15. And I did get injured enough that I was no longer able to pursue classical music at the level that I had dreamed of. And that was when I happened to switch high schools and ended up at high school in North Vancouver that had a really great jazz band. And my teacher introduced me to some incredible jazz pianists-Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, and Renee Rosnes, who's Canadian, now living in New York City. And she'd actually gone to the same high school and studied with him a couple decades before me. And that started to pull me towards jazz, but at that time, I was playing mostly with my left hand, which felt really

awkward. You see, it's like 50 percent of your facility if you're only using one hand. So, it was a tough time to be transitioning and using it and learning a new language and a new genre. But it was definitely a formative part of my training. And then I went to Humber College, and because I was still dealing with my arm injury, I went as a singer and as a composer, but continued to explore my voice as a piano player.

CM: Do you have a typical practice routine these days?



WAYNE: No, actually, I don't. I get more into songwriting. So, I like the songs. I mean, I would say probably

twice, three, or four times a week, I probably would just play the piano without thinking about writing a song. But mostly when I sit at the piano, and when I start doing that, a song kind of comes up. So, in writing a song myself, I'm just doodling on the piano, just running scales or just keeping my fingers limber. A song comes up. And so, I don't concentrate and then get a piece of paper and start writing. And I do allow the parts in a band for it, like the bass, and then put a rhythm to it, and chord changes and lyrics. I spend a lot more time writing a song that I do practicing just piano.



MAYER: The strange thing is that it's been four years since my last tour. And that is the longest time I've been

in between projects. When I think about practicing and warm up, obviously, I run scales and those types of things to make sure that everything is moving, and, you're not going full headon into something without warming up, because that's just a killer on the hands.

If you don't listen to the body, it can be very detrimental. So, my warmup, I would say, would consist of the usual scales and scale progressions and all that sort of stuff, and then going into songs that I'm either currently playing and seeing if there's something I can do in terms of adjusting my interpretations or finding some different expressions here and there or going back into something that I might not have played in years, or finding a new piece of music that is challenging. One thing that is also fun to do sometimes, is just to go back to some of those very early days of classical pieces in Royal Conservatory because with that, you almost have to stick to what is there and you can still interpret it. But even something as simple as [Beethoven's] "Moonlight Sonata" is such a beautiful piece, but you have to have a certain depth, a certain patience; you can't rush through it, you have to actually sit and play with intention. I think that type of warm up and practice to me, is more beneficial than just sitting and doing scales for four hours.

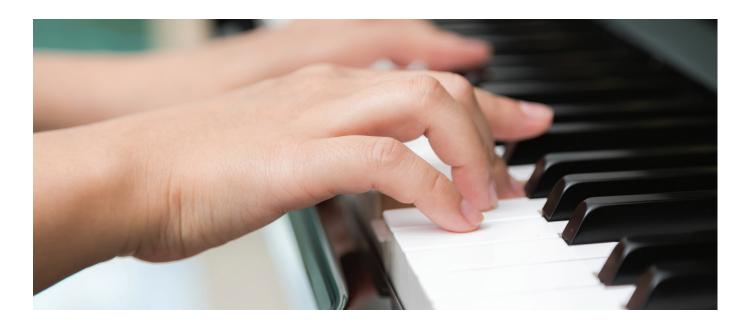


FARRUGIA: I've got kind of an evolving warmup that's been evolving over the years. I guess my attitude is

practicing can be trying to strengthen something or keep something where it needs to be, but it's also about developing new skills. So obviously, there's certain things I practiced 10 years ago that I don't really feel are a useful use of my time to practice now, certain

scales and things like that. I have sort of a warmup that involves using all the fingers across a rhythmic grid exercise. So, you're sort of practicing moving your fingers, but you're also practicing with time against the metronome. Sometimes I'll get into playing some Johann Sebastian Bach; I just find it's one of the best ways to get the brain and the fingers working. And then largely practicing for me involves some repertoire that I'm working on. Often, it's a jazz standard that's just a single page. But it's really about exploring it, really sitting inside of it, trying to explore it harmonically, improvising over it, maybe exploring some cool arranging ideas, like if I were playing this on a gig, I might want to do it this way, you know. And then some time spent trying to get into the zone of composition. So, I'm always trying to write. That often involves just a bit of free improv, until I stumble on something that sounds kind of cool. And then I'll isolate it and start to play around with it. That's a real practical approach to composition. And then I'm always trying to do listening and transcribing, so I'm always trying to look for recordings that there's something intriguing about.

I like the old saying 'humans are like plants; you're either growing or you're dying, but there's nothing in between.' Instead of just trying to maintain, looking at paths for growth. My playing, my practicing is a lot less organized than it was when I was younger. I used to do this, then do this, then do that, but a lot of the time now I might just sit down and play. And sometimes I'll be playing and then I'll stumble on something, I'll be like, 'Oh, why did I stumble on that? Oh, that feels uncomfortable,' and then I'll isolate it, and then I'll come up with some



little exercise to work on. So, it's a real practical approach.



BIALI: It's what happens onstage! So, I always say that I'm largely on the wrong keyboard most of

the time: my computer keyboard. Now that I kind of run my own business as it were, and lead a band, and I book my own tours. I have an agency but I'm essentially the tour manager and I'm always applying for grants and trying to drum up funding and I'm in front of my computer far more than I am the piano. So, I have to really take advantage of times when we're on the road. Working things out during soundcheck and then I also try to about once a year get out to the Banff Centre, which to me, is like my happy creative place. And that's when I'll finally get some focused time at the instrument. Usually, I'll write or arrange music for a new project. But you know, that's the real beautiful focus time of reconnection with the piano. I used to have exercises that I would do daily

back in my 20s, but now as a mom and radio host and businesswoman and with all these things going on, it takes a lot of discipline and focus to get to get to the instrument and to clear everything else out of the way so I can get to the instrument, which is probably what I should be doing first. Go to the instrument first!

CM: What tips would you give to aspiring players starting out on the piano?



WAYNE: I think there's basically, for me, two types of piano players: there's one that wants to write a

song, which is a different approach, and then there's one that just wants to be an instrumentalist, another different approach. So, if you want to be an instrumentalist, then obviously you should know the scales, but you should also know, which I learned years ago, is that when you perform a song, a lot of piano players want to

think about a solo. You think about melodies, so you're not just playing scales. You think about melody and being able to hum your solos. So, I would suggest as an instrumentalist, I think you'd probably want to do some reading and that way you can learn from others' techniques. If you're a songwriter, you want to pick up things from your feet yourself. You don't have to be technical to be a songwriter. If you're an instrumentalist, you probably need to be a little bit more of a technician. And that depends on what genre of music you're in. If you're going to be involved in pop music, you probably don't, jazz you definitely do, blues you don't. So, you follow the genre of music and then you sort of go that direction, you listen to other piano players playing that type of music and see and learn some techniques and tricks from them. So, when we all started, we heard different people play. I think listening to other records, and if you're a reader, find some techniques from other piano players, and if you just want to go by feel then I think listening to records and listening to people that you would like to play like, those are my tips.



MAYER: I can just see parents would hate me for this... I say that jokingly, of course, but the passion

and the interest have to come from the player. No questions asked. If you have a parent saying, 'Well, yeah, I think you'd be really cool with this,' that's one thing. If you have a parent that tried piano when they were younger, and it didn't work for them, and that's the reason that they want you to do it, it's not going to work. I've seen so many people that have gone into trying play piano, trying to learn piano, and you can just see it, you can just feel it. And the problem with that is that feeling of 'I really don't want to be doing this,' then translates and goes into the music. And that's hard. Because when I say feel the music, express the music, it has to come from the place of passion. Play the music, don't play the notes.

So obviously, the first thing is, make sure it's something that you want to do 100 percent, and take your time and do it properly. I always recommend Royal Conservatory of Music. Yes, there are videos online that can show you. But for the love of God, or whomever you might believe in, do not fall prey to those courses where they say, 'You think you need years to learn how to play piano? I can teach you piano in 10 hours.' That just doesn't work. That's like suggesting a brain surgeon can be trained in 10 hours. So, passion for it is key, and for it to be your

own passion. Encouragement is one thing, but doing it for somebody else won't work during Royal Conservatory, and that's the training and doing it in the sort of old school approach. When you think of driving cars, you learn how to drive on a stick shift, because if you learn how to drive on a stick shift, you can drive an automatic, and if you're classically trained, you can either continue being a classical pianist or you can then have the foundation to go and play pop and jazz and whatnot. It's more challenging to say, 'I'm going to learn pop and jazz,' and then all of a sudden go, 'Well I want to learn classical music.' That's a bit backwards step that doesn't always work. That's not to say that it couldn't for somebody, but it doesn't always.

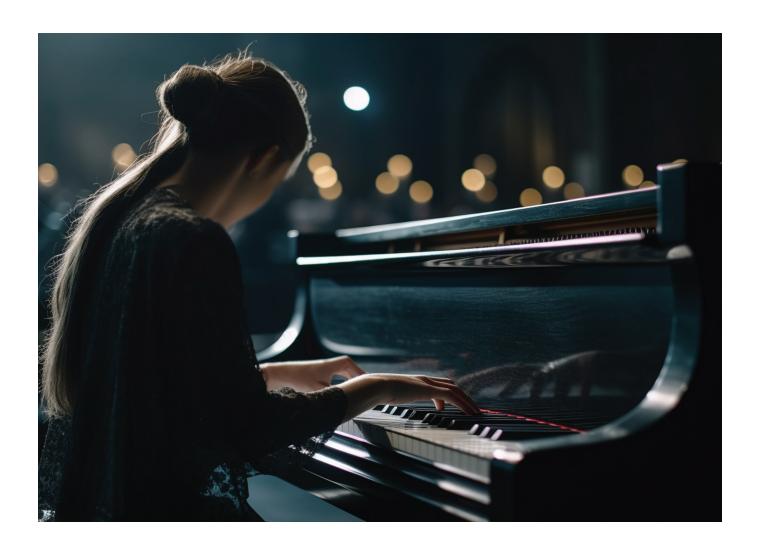


FARRUGIA: I think there's some cliché things. I could say that they're clichés because they're timeless

truths. If you want to be good at something, you have to work at it. Patience is a powerful mental state, because patience allows us to work on things in such a way where we're looking at what we're doing in the now instead of focused on the outcome. I'm a huge believer that your mindset is by far the most important part of any process; it's not just doing the work, it's also how you're how you're dealing with it. For example, student A is practicing, and they're excited, because they're really envisioning this future for themselves where they're going to be a successful musician, and they're going to have all these amazing adventures and experiences. And they're focused on

that desire, and that belief, and that makes it a joyous process. Student B is practicing, and they're like, 'I really suck. I don't want to suck. I have to practice so I don't suck. If I don't practice, I'm going to be terrible, and people are going to laugh at me and think I'm a loser.' That's motivating practice through fear of an undesired outcome. So really spending time thinking about how to relate to this thing, do I believe it can be fulfilling for me, do I believe I can do well at it, do I look at someone that I see as successful and go, 'Why not me, I could be that'-so, start out on the instrument and do all the things that you need to do. Because it's pretty standard stuff, learning chords, learning scales, learning repertoire. But also, really focus on your mindset. Look at how you're relating to the process. Anybody who ever became great at something became great, because they believed they could. And that's one of the hardest things in the world to do is just actually believe you can be great. And so, start working on that from the beginning too, so that you don't get to the point where you've done all the work, you've got so much together and you're going 'I don't get it. Why am I still not fulfilled by this?' Well, it's because now you have to go and address your mindset, you know. So, I think that's a really huge part of the process, too. It's something I work on a lot with my own students just getting there, getting their head in a place where their thoughts are driving the process in a positive way, rather than slowing them down or even stopping them.

that. And their practicing is driven by





BIALI: Transcribe—check out the music that you love. If there's a piano in there, in the mix, great.

See if you can pick out with the piano is playing, no matter what the genre. Obviously with classical, you're not going to transcribe; there's written music out there that you can purchase and learn, depending on your level of training. But I have found that one of the greatest ways to grow as a as a pianist to listen to what some of my favorite players are doing. And it can take a lot of time. But it's a beautiful way to

discover new techniques and new voicings and new ways of expressing oneself with the piano.

I watch my son who's 13, and he plays piano. And it's fascinating to watch his evolution. And one of the things he does a lot is go on You-Tube. And he loves gaming. And so, we'll find YouTube channel videos, and some of them are slowed down hit songs or songs from the games that he loves that he's playing, and he loves the music. And somebody will just sort of break it all down. And so, he will learn it that way. And so, I guess what's so beautiful about this

day and age is that there's no one right path. There are so many different ways to grow and achieve your goals as a player. So don't get caught up in what you might think is the right way. There are many, many ways to get there. And at the end of the day, I think you have to find what most connects with you and keeps your joy and satisfaction alive in terms of your connection to the instrument.

Manus Hopkins is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician. He can be reached at mhopkins@nwcworld.com.

COLUMNS

The Importance of Speaking Like a Star

By Lorraine Lawson

n today's fast-paced world, the ability to communicate effectively has become more vital than ever.

It has always been challenging for artists, songwriters, and producers to stand out. There has and continues to be, an over-supply of talented individuals and not enough demand by the audience to sustain all the amazing music that gets created. This is why the question of "how does someone breakthrough the noise" should be at the top of every emerging artist's mind.

As a vocal and performance coach to hundreds of developing, emerging and established artists including Roy Woods, Neon Dreams, Devon Cole, Blake McGrath, my message has shifted dramatically over the years from one being, all about the quality of the music as the reason for someone's success, to the dramatic realization, it is not going be the music alone that gets the audience's attention or the reason for launching a successful career.

There is substantial evidence throughout the decades, that an artist's success actually stems from someone's complete understanding of who they are and their ability to effectively share who you are with the world.

Today with new advancements in Al's abilities to write great lyrics in under 10 seconds inspired by some of the best songwriters in the world, or its ability to create beats inspired by the best producers in the world and even imitating the voices of the best singers on the planet, my message is clearly more important than ever.

At the beginning of an artist's career, what makes an audience remember them, is not simply their vocal performance, or the visual stage design, or their physical performance, although all those things are important. Think about some of your favourite shows or festivals you have been too. There are always a few artists performing you have never heard of before. What inspires you to remember them is often the story they tell between songs.

Once an artist is famous the music can do the talking but for emerging artists, the way they can engage the audience from the first moment is crucial.

When an artist learns to tell interesting stories on stage and off, the audience

wants to know more about them. The artist has to get good at asking the audience for what they want from them whether it's to put their hands in the air, or sing along with them or to go check out their socials. Emerging artists have to get really good at asking the audience to stream their song, buy their merchandise and make sure the audience becomes raving fans so they come out to their next show.

I appreciate my role is so much more than being a great vocal and performance coach. The biggest difference I make is not just helping my clients sing and perform better. I help artists figure out how to fully express who they are at every stage of their career.

Award winning artists understand that being a great speaker is essential for longevity in this business. Successful artists possess strengths beyond the music which often leads to effective leadership and entrepreneurial skills. Artists like Taylor Swift and Jay-Z are examples of artists whose skills extend far past creating incredible music. They are able to deliver impactful speeches that inspire and motivate everyone around them.

To get to this level, artists often leverage their speaking abilities to advocate for causes they believe in, rallying their team and influencing their fans to take action. They continue to refine their ability to communicate their vision, cultivate collaboration among fellow musicians, and shape the direction of the music industry by becoming a person who is not only interesting but deeply interested in influencing their audience and the industry at large.

At the beginning of someone's career it is crucial to become a great speaker. Developing and emerging artists who are able to refine their speaking skills can express what they want more clearly to their collaborators ensuring they are dictating the direction of their career and not waiting for others to do it for them

I have designed many of my programs including ADI (Artist Development Intensive) and my Mentorship programs to assist artists in their personal and professional development especially their communication skills. Even my private sessions with artists start with my

asking a lot of key questions designed to get the artists to declare who they are, what they want, and why they want it.

A great example of this is Canadian rising star JESSIA. She has an authentic, genuine and infectious way she speaks to not only the audience but to her team, collaborators and record label. She is just comfortable speaking to the audience that know her well as the audience that doesn't know her. This is particularly important when she was chosen to open for One Republic.

There is nothing better than when an artist can project a positive self-image, genuine excitement, and love for what they are doing, who they are doing it with, and who they are doing it for.

So many Artists like Alicia Keys and Lizzo leverage every opportunity to speak to an audience with an opportunity to advocate for social justice and other important causes to them. They inspire action, motivate people to join their movement and effect positive change in society. These artists exemplify the immense influence and impact that can be achieved through effective speaking, extending their reach far beyond the boundaries of the music industry.

I encourage everyone reading this to consider harnessing the power of effective communication, remembering it's not what you do that makes you stand out, it's who you are!



Lorraine Lawson is CEO of Lawson Vocal Studios, a Vocal, Performance and Career Coach/Vocal Coach for Schitt's Creek/The Launch/Grammy & Juno Winning Artists. She can be reached at info@lawsonvocalstudios.com.

Take Your Pick!

What a Difference a Pick Makes

By Jean-Philippe Comeau

n the first instalment of *Take Your Pick* (July/August 2022), I gave a brief overview of the history of the guitar plectrum, and I took you through my pick collecting journey. This time, I'll go over the anatomy of a plectrum and how variants in its conception affect what you can get out of this underestimated tool.

Graze Anatomy

The Shape

The most easily identifiable difference between various picks (apart from their colour) is their shape. While the overall shape of a plectrum doesn't really affect its tone, it certainly changes how it feels in your hands, and that alone can have a big impact on how comfortable it is and whether you like it or not. If you haven't done it in a while (or ever), I encourage you to play a different shape of pick from what you're used to for a few days to see how it feels and how it changes your playing. There are plenty to choose from between the standard and the small teardrops, the big and small triangles, the regular and XL jazz, and even the shark fins for the most adventurous of you!

The Tip

The next major point of differentiation is the tip of the pick. There are two main types, sharp and round, with countless variations. It's one of the parts that make the biggest tonal difference. Just try this: take a regular teardrop pick, play with the pointier, "normal" end, and then turn it around to play with the "shoulder". You should hear quite a noticeable difference, the rounder end sounding darker. Furthermore, the attack and release on the strings aren't the same at all between a round and a sharp tip, the former being smooth and soft, while the latter is more precise and articulate.

The Bevel

The bevel is essentially the side of the pick. Some of the most common plectra are stamped from a sheet of material, which gives them very straight bevels that can result in a raspier attack with more character. Some are injection molded and have rounder edges, resulting in a smoother attack and a better flow on the strings, and others are hand-made or hand-finished with what is called a speed bevel. That refers to the process of shaping the tip of the plectrum to mimic the wear of many hours of playing, thus giving the player a smooth release off the strings. From my experience, it also seems to brighten the tone a little bit.

Material and Thickness

The first thing players might think to change if they want a different tone out of their plectrum is the material it's made of. The most commonly used materials might be nylon, celluloid, Delrin and ultem. Nylon gives a relatively smooth and warm tone and is the most flexible, celluloid and Delrin are both a little bit brighter and stiffer but are a good middle-ground, while ultem is the stiffest and sounds bright and crisp. There are also materials we mostly see on the boutique pick market (but not exclusively) like acrylic, wood, tagua, casein, bone, horn, metal, and stone, to name a few. They all have wildly different characters, and while they're mostly pretty thick, they're a lot of fun to explore.

Speaking of thickness, it goes hand in hand with materials to determine a pick's tone and feel. A thin, flexible plectrum will produce a more delicate sound with little to no low-end and will most likely be heard clicking away across the strings. It'll give you somewhat less control over what it does as well, because of the springiness it has. The thicker and stiffer a plectrum gets, the fatter it's going to sound. At a certain point, you'll even start to hear a "tic" or a chirp when it hits the strings, that can be exacerbated depending on the material. A thick pick will also give you complete control over it because it won't have any flex in the attack.

The Bottom Line

As you can see, there are a lot of subtleties in a plectrum and an endless combination

of factors to influence the resulting product. It's very hard to compare the effects of changing a single one of the elements listed above though, because several of them might change at once between different picks. Everything in here should then be taken with a grain of salt as there are no right or wrong answers, only a world of nuances to explore. So, why not venture on a discovery journey and test out as many variations of these things as you can find? It might give you a better grasp of what they do and how they can change your playing and your tone. Worst case scenario, you'll go back to using what you did before, but with a greater understanding of why you do, and you'll have a variety of tools at your disposal if you want to spice things up from time to time. Now grab your guitar and take your pick!



Jean-Philippe Comeau is a Montreal-based guitar player/multi-instrumentalist and teacher with a bachelor's degree in music performance who's been active for more than 15 years on the local scene playing in various bands. He co-produced singer-song-writer and long-time collaborator Karolane Millette's debut album "La Tête Haute" on which he also played all the guitars, and he recently started working at Oakfloor Records as a session player and producer. He can be reached at jeanphilippecomeau@hotmail.com.

COLUMNS

How Do You Get a Record Deal?

By Jeff Nedza

ow do you get a record deal? If you're reading this, the question has likely crossed your mind at some point and maybe even caused you a certain degree of nervous anxiety. As a musician years ago, I probably obsessed over this question more than once, and by "probably," I do mean "absolutely, all the time" (if we're being honest). While today many artists endeavour to operate independently of a label's assistance or influence, several still desire and pursue the dream of partnering with a record label. Both have their peaks and pitfalls, but given my obvious bias as a label executive, this column is pointed toward those chasing the dream of putting pen to paper on a record deal.

So how does wanting a record deal turn into getting a record deal? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer here. With so many variables and different benchmarks for success spread across multiple genres, a one size fits all solution does not exist. That said, you will see characteristics and commonalities in artists across many genres that have resulted in record deals being conceived. Sure, there are also exceptions, unique situations no one ever saw coming or anticipated, but those are still few and far between.

The primary reasons most new artists get record deals today typically comes down to the following occurring, often all at once, the perfect storm. Most importantly, undeniable musical talent coupled with exceptional song writing. A rapidly or consistently growing audience. An insatiable appetite for the artist's content on social media. Increasing streaming numbers. An incredible live show. Consistency and determination. Often, it's all the above mixed with a dash of perfect timing. While a simple "how to" checklist is unlikely to be anything but simple and just as unlikely to quarantee results, these characteristics illuminate what record companies are often looking for and what sets certain artists apart from others.

Now before you start fantasizing about landing that often-elusive record deal, take a moment to self-assess where you are with your career as an artist currently. Consider some of the characteristics above and how they may or may not apply to you. Consider what you bring to the table, you as an artist, your music, your audience, and your business. Establish a realistic and solid understanding of where you are in your career trajectory. What you've accomplished thus far as an artist and how you benchmark against your peers or your competition more accurately is a worthy exercise. By doing so, you establish the value you bring to a record label and what you may need to work on to create the value the label will inevitably seek in prospective artists. You are not alone in this guest. If a label is looking at you, you are also one of several, and you are not all being presented with a deal. One will stand out, and one, if any, will get that deal. Ask yourself, do I stand out? What can I do to separate and place myself ahead of the pack?

With that said, there is often a significant difference between wanting a record deal and needing one. If you're an artist who dreams of signing a contract with a record label, chase that dream! Of course, you want a record deal, dream achieved! But I encourage artists with this goal to establish a business case that clearly illustrates that you need one first. Keep sight of the fact this is a business. If you want to be taken seriously and treated seriously, you should only be entertaining offers or shopping for deals if you want and, more importantly, need a record deal.

If you are on a positive trajectory, and your music is transitioning from hobby to tangible business; congratulations! While you still have time, become the CEO of your own business, and know it inside and out. Understand your market and your brand. Identify your areas of opportunity and growth. Track your stats. Set goals and hold yourself accountable. Your music is now a business; treat it as such. Look at options to build your team. The right artist

manager, agent or lawyer can all help foster relationships with record labels when the time is right. Regardless of who you may add to your team, remember that NOBODY will be a better representative for you as an artist, your music, and your business than you. Remember always to keep a sharp eye on your business if you are lucky enough to sign a record deal. A day may come when your contract term expires, and this process starts again. In such a case, you don't want to be clueless about how your business runs; always maintain some degree and oversight.

Remember, music is subjective. While you may not be everyone's cup of tea, it doesn't mean you aren't the perfect dose of whatever you do for someone else. Be patient. Do not let setbacks hold you back. Staying positive and believing in yourself and your music is a must to keep you going.

Keep going!



Jeff Nedza is Vice President of Marketing for Cadence Music Group based in Toronto. With Cadence Music he established and heads up Known Accomplice Records and manages the Juno nominated band Bleeker. He is a current faculty member at The Songwriting Academy based in the London, England and previously served as Senior Manager, Marketing at Universal Music Canada. He can be reached at jeff.nedza@cadencemusicgroup.com.

How to Start Producing Your Own Demos

By Rob Wells

hen I first suggest to a songwriter that they should learn how to produce their own music demos, they look at me like I have ten heads. To them, it's the equivalent of asking them to run the Boston Marathon or climb Mount Everest.

Let's be honest... learning how to produce music can seem a lot like climbing a steep mountain. From far away, it looks impossible. Insurmountable; left to the experts. This is definitely the way I felt about production back in the day. It held me back as just being a songwriter, having to rely on others to produce my music. After some time of being disappointed by the productions I was receiving for my songs (and looking at my dwindling bank account), I thought, if others can produce music, why can't I? Was fear the only thing that was holding me back from learning how to produce? After some meditation and deep breathing, I bravely turned towards the production mountain and started my ascent.

As I got closer to the mountain, I began to realize that it wasn't steep at all. It was gentle rolling foothills. Each initial foothill that I climbed was quite easy. In production terms, this is equivalent to turning on your computer and opening up your music production suite (or DAW, such as Garageband, Reaper, Logic, Studio One, Cubase, FL Studio, Ableton, ProTools etc.) and having a little poke around. Opening up windows and folders and plugins and just messing around without creating any music. This is what I call step one.

(You should have some basic gear in your studio, such as a computer/laptop, an audio interface (that plugs into the computer via USB), a microphone (including mic stand, pop screen and mic cable that plugs into the audio interface), a keyboard

controller, headphones or speakers.)

Step two, or foothill two, is opening up your DAW and learning how to load a virtual instrument, such as a piano, drum kit, or guitar. If you have a keyboard controller plugged into your computer via USB, you can control your virtual instrument by pressing the keys on your controller. If you don't have a keyboard controller, you can always use your computer keyboard to trigger the notes on the virtual instrument.

Step three, or foothill three, is learning how to create an audio track as well as your virtual instrument track, and learning how to record something from your microphone or guitar (both can be plugged into your audio interface).

Before you know it, you're three foothills higher than the ground level where you were before you started on this journey. Each small step you take is another step up the production mountain!

The further you climb, the more you're going to realize that the stock sounds that come with your DAW are probably not the best sounds in the world. Having a great set of virtual instruments that sound real and authentic is quite important when making your demos sound great (and expensive!).

For pianos, I'm a lover of the company called "Imperfect Samples". They have fantastic virtual pianos that run on Kontakt. My favourites are definitely the "Steinway Walnut Grand" and the "White Baby Grand". They're relatively inexpensive as well

For guitars, I love Native Instruments' "Strummed Acoustic" line, as well as Native Instruments' electric guitar selections. Easy to use and they sound fantastic.

For drums, I use Splice for what is called "One Shots." Splice is great for downloading individual samples from fantastic drummers worldwide, as well as electronic drums and samples from DJs and producers worldwide. Splice is available for

subscription with a small monthly fee.

For strings, I use Miroslav Philharmonik 2, Abbey Road One, and many others. I tend to layer string parts together from multiple sources to get great textures.

I could go on and on, but if you start using these virtual instruments, your demos will be sounding incredible in no time at all. If your song gets selected to go on a record, and the label or artist wants to use parts from your demo, you can always replace the virtual parts with the real thing once you're given a budget.

Finally, when producing your demos, you don't have to wear every hat—I would always pay for someone to sing your demo if you're not a fantastic vocalist yourself. Make sure that the demo singer you get doesn't "oversing" the demo, and scare away any potential artists that you might pitch your songs to. The vocal has to be just enough to sell the song and make the artist think "I love that vocal, but I know I can do it better!"

My final words are... have fun climbing the mountain. If it isn't fun, choose another angle. Oh and by the way... the mountain never ends. You can keep climbing (aka learning) until they're lowering you into the ground.



Rob Wells is a multi-platinum award winning music producer and songwriter. He can be reached at robwmusic@amail.com.



GEAR







Epiphone Emily Wolfe "White Wolfe" Sheraton

Epiphone has announced the release of the Epiphone Emily Wolfe "White Wolfe" Sheraton. Created by guitarist, singer-songwriter, and producer Emily Wolfe and the luthiers at Epiphone in Nashville, TN, the "White Wolfe" Sheraton marks Wolfe's second Epiphone signature guitar.

The Emily Wolfe "White Wolfe" Sheraton is equipped with an Indian laurel fretboard with 22 medium jumbo frets and mother-of-pearl block inlay on the front, Emily's wolf logo and a white gloss Emily Wolfe signature on the rear and is outfitted with Grover Rotomatic tuning machines and a Graph Tech nut. An Epiphone LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge and Stop Bar tailpiece hold down the other end of the strings and contribute to the sustain of the instrument. The electronics include full-sized Epiphone Alnico Classic PRO humbucker pickups paired with CTS potentiometers for smooth control over individual pickup volume and overall tone. It's finished in Aged Bone White paired with lightly aged gold hardware. An EpiLite case is included.

For more information, contact Yorkville Sound: 905-837-8777, FAX 905-839-5776, canada@yorkville.com, www.yorkville.com.

Roswell Pro Audio Roswell Aztec

Roswell Pro Audio has added a new flagship to their roster: the Roswell Aztec, a multipattern tube mic built without compromise. The mic's single-triode topology, edge-terminated K251 capsule, and custom-wound European T14 transformer deliver the airy, intimate top end and muscular bass of the finest vintage tube microphones.

Rather than merely "clone" a vintage design, Roswell has reimagined it with new features and upgrades. The mic incorporates a high-pass filter switch to reduce proximity for close mic placements, while a second switch enables an attenuation pad to increase headroom for high-SPL sources. A control on the power supply provides nine discrete polar patterns. The mic's power supply is fully regulated and excessively filtered. It includes numerous component upgrades unique to the Aztec: NOS tantalum resistors, a Swiss-made pattern control, and Roswell's own electrolytic filter capacitors, which were specially designed for audio. Even the fuse and fuse holder are upgraded to gold-plated German-made parts.

For more information, contact Roswell Pro Audio: 978-540-0547, info@roswellproaudio.com, www.roswellproaudio.com.

Gemstone Amps LLC and Port Noise Marketing Sapphire Combo

Gemstone Amps LLC and Port Noise Marketing have introduced the Sapphire, a 25 watt, 6v6 powered cathode biased 1-12 combo at the Dallas International Guitar Show. Featuring two distinct channels voiced US and UK along with a Master Volume and Three-Way Gain switch in a custom cabinet, the Sapphire covers ground from jazz to rock with plenty of volume for stage use yet quiet enough for the studio.

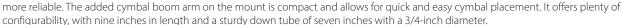
Gemstone Amps LLC is a Bismarck, ND based company specializing in player-grade amplifiers. The company was founded in 2021 by James Jiskra, a 45-year veteran of the music business both on and off the stage with deep roots in retail and publishing.

For more information, visit www.gemstoneamps.com.

ddrum SE Flyer 4-piece Shell Pack

ddrum has unveiled the updated SE Flyer 4-piece Shell Pack, featuring several upgrades that enhance this vintage 'Bop' configuration. From new lugs gaskets and spurs to a reimagined tom mount with cymbal boom arm, the SE Flyer has received much more than just a facelift complete with a new Vintage Sparkle finish. These improvements stay true to the kit's compact utility, while delivering the style and sonic quality players expect

Several enhancements to the SE Flyer benefit not only the functionality and tone of the kit, but also the vintage aesthetic. Reimagining key components from the bottom up, ddrum has upgraded the bass drum spurs to gull wing style, allowing for quick set-up and tear-down while bringing a classic look to the kit. Isolation mounts on the toms have been removed to further improve the kit's look and sound. The double tom holder has also been redesigned to be more versatile and significantly



For more information, contact Armadillo Enterprises, Inc: 813-600-3920, FAX 813-600-3933, sales@armadilloent.com, www.armadilloent.com.



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GEAR



D'Addario Pad Lock Straps

D'Addario is bringing the old "rubber washer" trick into the 21st century with Pad Lock Straps; a line of straps that offers hassle-free security. Inserting a rubber washer over a guitar strap and onto the end pin of a guitar is an old trick to getting some extra strap security. The Pad Lock Strap improves this technique by making the rubber washer part of the strap end itself. No need to find rubber washers, replace end pins, or add any extra parts. It's as easy as putting on the strap and pulling the rubber tab over the end pin.

Woven Pad Lock Straps offer designs for players of all styles. D'Addario has four new Pad Lock prints to choose from, including Phoenix Dream, Parallel Flowers, Monterey Black, and Lightning Black. From iconic themes to unique patterns and artwork, these durable straps provide distinct style along with hassle-free security.

For more information, contact D'Addario Canada: 905-947-9595, 800-268-6855, FAX 905-947-4336, info@daddariocanada.com. www.daddariocanada.com.

PRS Guitars PRS SE Silver Sky Updates

Paul Reed Smith (PRS) Guitars and John Mayer have announced two updates to the popular PRS SE Silver Sky model: a maple fretboard version and the first color refresh on the rosewood-equipped model since its introduction in January 2022. Welcome the PRS SE Silver Sky Maple. The specifications of the SE Silver Sky Maple are all the same as its rosewood-appointed predecessor, except for the fretboard wood and colors. The PRS SE Silver Sky comes in a unique color palette: Nylon Blue, Overland Gray, and Summit Purple.

The original PRS SE Silver Sky is also getting an update. Originally released in four colors (Dragon Fruit, Ever Green, Moon White, and Stone Blue), the SE Silver Sky is saying goodbye to Dragon Fruit and Ever Green and adding Storm Gray and Piano Black. Shared specifications for the two models include: poplar body, maple neck, 22 frets, 25.5-inch scale length, 8.5-inch fretboard radius, 635 JM "S" pickups with one volume, two tone, and 5-way blade pickup switch, synthetic bone nut, PRS small bird inlays, and PRS Classic 10-46 strings.

For more information, contact Paul Reed Smith Guitars: 418-558-8011, clangevin@prsguitars.com, www.prsguitars.com.

Latin Percussion Rhythm Rods

Latin Percussion (LP) has launched its new range of synthetic and natural Rhythm Rods. The new rods, hybrids of regular sticks and brushes, offer drummers and percussionists greater versatility and a wider sonic range when playing. The new synthetic rods are made by binding many thin, high-grade polymer shafts together. All feature a comfortable, non-slip rubber grip, an adjustable sleeve, and O-Rings so users can fine-tune their sonic palette by controlling the spread of the rods.

The LP9911 Lightweight Rhythm Rods (7/8-inch diameter) and LP9912 Heavyweight Rhythm Rods (1-1/8-inch diameter) feature an exclusive reinforced core to give them superior balance, stability, and playability. The LP9913 -Synthetic Lightweight Adjustable Core Rhythm Rods (7/8-inch diameter) and the LP9914 Synthetic Heavyweight Adjustable Core Rhythm Rods (1-1/8-inch diameter) have a solid core with a retractable tip. This provides stability while allowing the user to set the perfect amount of articulation. The LP9917 Natural Rhythm Rods (1-1/4-inch diameter) are 13 inches long and are made from thin strips of organic material bound together. This natural material delivers enhanced dynamic control and rebound for drummers allowing users to customize their tone.



For more information, contact B&J Music: 800-268-8147, FAX 800-777-3265, www.bjmusiconline.com.



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GEAR



Magnatone Croc Collection

Magnatone has unveiled its Croc Collection amps. The company is offering its highly acclaimed Master Collection amplifiers specially covered with a proprietary, 100% cotton textile fabric made exclusively for Magnatone in the USA with an amazing new look. Using a multi-step manufacturing process, the textile begins with a silver base coat and is then embossed with a Croc impression using black dye to create the pattern. Next, a custom-colored pigment is painstakingly hand applied to each cabinet, allowing the silver base color to blend with the pigment to create a one-of-a-kind finish.

To complete the process, nitrocellulose lacquer is applied to seal each cabinet resulting in a patina that will look better as it ages. Only a limited number of these amps will be available. Magnatone has secured a specific quantity of this Croc material and will offer this product only while supplies last. The Croc Collection is available in Silver/Gold, Silver/Blue, Silver/Red, and Silver/Purple.

For more information, visit www.magnatoneusa.com.

Pirastro KorfkerRest LUNA for Violin

Pirastro has introduced the new KorfkerRest LUNA for violin, which focuses on ease of use while honouring Pirastro's commitment to comfort and tonal freedom. Its design and materials allow the violin to express an astonishing freedom of dynamic range, accuracy in response and trueness of timbre. Thanks to a snap-in system, personal adjustments are only one click away.

The rounded shape of the Pirastro KorfkerRest LUNA's cross section naturally fits the body's curves and eliminates the need for any tilt adjustment. Two soft pads, the same as on the Pirastro KorfkerRest Model 2, focus body contact in two areas, shoulder and chest, avoiding the collar bone.

For more information, contact Geo. Heinl & Co. Ltd.: 416-363-0093, FAX 416-363-0053, ghcl@idirect.com, www.georgeheinl.com.

Godin Guitars Montreal Premiere Pro Models

Godin Guitars has introduced the Montreal Premiere Pro models - primed and ready for a wide variety of music styles, including country, pop, surf, jazz, blues, classic rock, and heavy rock. The Montreal Premiere's feature a uniquely sculpted centre block and boast pickups usually only found in custom shop guitars.

Among the secret ingredients for the Aztek Red is a pair of made-in-the-USA Seymour Duncan P-Rails with Triple Shot Mounting Rings for endless tonal options. Each unique hybrid humbucker can be split to give you a super fat, authentic vintage P90 tone, or can be split to the Rail coil for a classic Strat-like tone. Both P-Rails are controlled by a three-way switch, volume and tone knobs, and two mini-switches. The Arctik Blue version is equipped with a pair of made-in-the-USA Seymour Duncan pickups. At the neck, the Seymour Duncan Antiquity provides a rich, articulate, sweet treble attack with a warm, full sounding low-end, serving up the elusive tone of a vintage P.A.F. un-potted humbucker. At the bridge, the ever-popular Seymour Duncan JB delivers high gain for full low-end crunch and crisp, powerful vocal-like highs, sought after by guitarists of all genres for decades. Both are controlled by a 3-way switch and volume and tone knobs. Made in Canada, the Montreal Première Pro is complemented by a Tuneo-matic style bridge with a brass tailpiece for optimal sustain and precise tuning.

For more information, contact Godin Guitars: 514-457-7977, FAX 514-457-5774, info@godinguitars.com, www.godinguitars.com.



For more information, contact Coast Music: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, info@coastmusic.com, www.coastmusiconline.com.









Shure and Gator Mic Stand and Case Collection

Shure has announced it is partnering with Gator to introduce a collection of high-quality products designed to complement and fit Shure's microphones and audio equipment. The partnership will include new Shure-branded products developed in collaboration with Gator—a broadcast boom arm, desktop microphone stands, headphone cases, stand accessories, and microphone accessory bags. All products are designed to work alongside Shure's product portfolio of microphones and wireless equipment.

The Shure and Gator collection includes the SH-Broadcast Boom Arm, Shure Mic Stands (Stage and Creator Series), Shure Mic Accessory Cases, Shure Mic Bags, Shure Mic Cases, and Shure Leather Holder for Guitar Packs.

For more information, contact Erikson Audio: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, info@eriksonaudio.com, www.eriksonaudio.com.

Electro-Harmonix Hell Melter

Distortion Pedal

ElectroHarmonix (EHX) has released the Hell Melter distortion pedal. The Hell Melter features expanded controls and tonal capabilities, allowing the already in-your-face sound of the pedal to broaden by switching to more open clipping options and boosting the internal voltage for increased headroom, less compression, and more attack.

The EHX Hell Melter's expanded control set includes Gain and Level controls, and a powerful active EQ featuring with parametric mids for improved versatility. The Dry level control allows for blending input signal for improved low-end when used with a bass or even blending in other distorted tones. Boost Footswitch engages an input gain boost and volume boost which is internally adjustable. The Normal/Burn switch toggles between the classic chainsaw sound and the more open clipping option.

For more information, contact Electro-Harmonix: 718-937-8300, FAX 718-937-9222, info@ehx.com, www.ehx.com.

Fender John 5 Ghost Telecaster

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has announced the launch of the John 5 Ghost Telecaster and signature accessories collection, the latest signature Telecaster guitar from John 5. When it came time to design his new signature model, 5 sought to create an instrument completely unique that could accommodate any playing style. The result is the Ghost.

The John 5 Ghost Telecaster features a top-bound alder body and one-piece maple neck finished entirely in an Arctic White gloss and accented by red appointments and a mirrored pickguard/control plate. DiMarzio D Activator humbuckers deliver harmonically rich modern crunch, harnessed by a performance-oriented control set with a three-way toggle mounted to the upper bout for swift pickup switching and pickguard-mounted master volume and arcade-style "kill switch" for rapid-fire stutter effects. Deluxe locking tuners and six-saddle tele bridge with block steel saddles ensure rock-solid tuning stability and spot-on intonation. The John 5 Ghost Telecaster is entombed in a custom white tolex hardshell case with crushed red interior featuring John 5 Ghost embroidery.

For more information, contact Fender Musical Instruments Corp.: 480-596-9690, www.fender.com.





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GEAR





Orange Box Bluetooth Speaker

Orange Amplification has introduced the new Orange Box Bluetooth speakers to its growing consumer range.

Orange Bluetooth Boxes are the only Bluetooth speakers on the market that use both Class D and A/B Analogue amplifiers, giving them controlled, tight, punchy bass and smooth, natural mids and highs. Also included is a unique audio safety feature which continually monitors the volume signal with a flashing warning light when the unit is being driven too hard, indicating overload distortion and possible damage to the speakers.

The smaller, more compact Orange Box is lightweight, super-portable with a handy carry strap and a rechargeable battery offering up to 15 hours of playback time. The slightly larger Box-L is the mains-powered version, featuring a larger subwoofer to bring nuanced audio to any room. Both feature the same rugged construction, technology and Orange livery as the guitar amplifiers. The wooden tolex-covered boxes come in a choice of orange or black.

For more information, contact Launch Music: 833-215-3207, info@launchmusic.ca, www.launchmusic.ca.

Royer Labs 25th Anniversary Limited-Edition R-121 Distressed Rose

Royer Labs is celebrating its 25th anniversary with the release of the R-121 25th Anniversary model, which celebrates the R-121's legacy with a unique, limited edition "Distressed Rose" finish that gives a variety of looks, from a dark bourbon color in lower studio lighting and onstage to a rich rose color in brighter light. Royer refused to modify the classic R-121's design and function, but this stunning finish is the company's way of letting everyone in on the 25th Anniversary party. There will be 500 R-121 Distressed Roses made.

The R-121 is typically used on electric guitars around the world and is also one of the finest brass mics available, along with drum rooms, kick drums, piano, snare drum, acoustic guitar, violin, all percussion, harp, cello... the list goes on and on. When you want to record an instrument as naturally as possible, you reach for an R-121.

For more information, contact YSL Pro: 416-867-9000, FAX 416-867-1080, yslpro@yorkville.com, www.yslpro.com.

Spector Updated USA NS Basses

Spector has announced the release of its updated USA NS series of basses crafted in the new Spector USA Custom Shop facility outside of Woodstock, New York. These basses remain faithful to the intent of the original instruments while combining the most popular design elements of their nearly 50-year history, an expanding menu of player-focused options, and the increased consistency of modern manufacturing techniques.

The models boast body contours, Spector's proprietary bridge, and the custom appointments like matching head-stocks, all drawn from Spector's famed Brooklyn, Kramer, and modern Woodstock eras. They are also available with newer options or upgrades, including modern or vintage pickup spacing, improved fingerboard tapers, standard and thin neck profiles, and premium electronics and preamps.

For more information, contact Korg USA: 866-444-9201, sales@korgusa.com, www.korgusa.com.

GAMMA Guitar Effects Pedal Line

Following closely on the heels of the launch of the GAMMA G25 and G50 combo guitar amplifiers, Acoustic Control Corporation has announced the launch of the GAMMA Guitar Effects Pedal line, with six pedals featuring crafted blends of carefully selected components and expertly engineered circuitry for reverb, echo, chorus, and dynamic distortions. The range includes the ATLAS Boosted Overdrive Guitar Effects Pedal, BACCHUS Dynamic Driver Guitar Effects Pedal, CUMULUS 3-Way Reverb Guitar Effects Pedal, EROS Clean Chorus Guitar Effects Pedal, HADES Metal Distortion Guitar Effects Pedal, and NARCISSUS Warm Delay Guitar Effects Pedal.

All models feature intuitive operation, a metal flake paint finish, heavy-duty full-sized metal chassis with metal knobs, and operation from either a 9-volt battery or 9-volt DC power supply. Each can be used as a sole pedal unit or as a pedal board component. Additionally, all pedals feature mono audio input and output, with buffered bypass for consistent tone in any setup.

For more information, visit www.AcousticControlCorp.com.















TECH___ TOOLS



BANDIE was created by the members of the Canadian all-female country band Nice Horse. As a band pushing hard to make it to the next level, they survive by dividing tasks and working around the clock to make it happen. The biggest time-sucks for the band were advancing their shows and managing their touring and day-to-day activities. Not only was this time consuming, but often answers to their questions about upcoming gigs would come from a bunch of different places to a bunch of different people. Trying to compile all the information efficiently (and avoid asking the same question to promoters three different times in ten different ways) was an ongoing challenge.

BANDIE started as a very comprehensive spreadsheet, with a multitude of plug-ins and formulas, to keep Nice Horse, their hired guns, and their entire team on the same page. When their ambitions for BANDIE outgrew the spreadsheet, they partnered up with the teams at Trading Fours Software and Duck Labs (including some musicians-turned-developers!) in order to transform their creation into a mobile app and web platform that they could share with artists, bands, and tour managers who are also people with too much stuff to do and not enough hours in the day to do it. **Bandie.app**



Facebook parent company Meta has developed an AI text-to-music generator called MusicGen. The language model, described by Meta's Fundamental AI Research (FAIR) team as "a simple and controllable model for music generation", can take text prompts like, for example, 'up-beat acoustic folk' or "Pop dance track with catchy melodies" and turn them into new 12-second music clips.

The model, released as open source, can also use melodic prompts to generate new music. Meta says that it used 20,000 hours of licensed music to train MusicGen, including 10,000 "high-quality" licensed music tracks, and as reported by Tech-Crunch, 390,000 instrument-only tracks from ShutterStock and Pond5. huggingface.co/spaces/facebook/MusicGen



D'Addario has announced the launch of Drumhead Finder, a cutting-edge analytical tool designed to help players find their perfect drumhead. In partnership with Cartful Solutions, D'Addario created a simple, yet powerful recommendation engine which sifts through hundreds of possibilities to align with each player's needs. Using advanced technology, powered by decades of D'Addario expertise, Drumhead Finder can match players to the right EVANS drumhead with incredible accuracy.

The user experience is fun, easy, and takes only a few minutes to complete. Players answer a series of questions about their drum, preferences, and style, which allows the tool to narrow down the list of ideal drumheads. Once completed, users instantly receive their "Best Match," as well as ancillary options. Players can also have results sent by email for future reference.

www.daddario.com



Elk has launched a native app version of Elk LIVE for the Mac OS desktop. Elk LIVE connects musicians online for live, real-time jamming over the Internet with ultra-low latency, and requiring nothing more than a standard audio interface and an Internet connection. With Elk LIVE, musicians can come together in its online virtual studio for real-time remote jamming, rehearsing, and collaborating ideas for songwriting, in perfect sync and with high fidelity, studio-quality audio as if they were in the same room.

With a clean, elegant yet simple user interface, Elk LIVE is designed for musicians of every skill level and every genre to connect with their fellow bandmates quickly and easily so they can immerse themselves in their music. Elk LIVE is available on Mac OS, and musicians can connect their instruments to their Mac OS device using any I/O audio interface for an ultra-low-latency experience. **Elk.live**

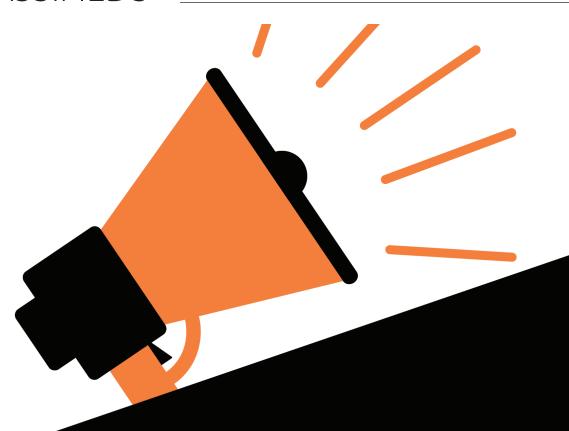


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MISTY BLUE

WHAT:

Indie Folk Rock

WHERE:

Toronto, ON

VISIT:

www.mistyblueband.com

The story of Misty Blue's creation began two years ago with a decision to step outside the comfort zone and into the danger zone. At that time, Misty Blue consisted of only two members, performing as a two-piece acoustic act. However, in 2022, a rhythm section was introduced, giving birth to a new musical dynamic. Hailing from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Misty Blue represents a remarkable outcome of four individuals who crossed paths on the online platform, Kijiji.

Fast forward today, and the band has undergone a remarkable transformation, fueled by their newfound passion for electric performances in the indie folk-rock space. Misty Blue has witnessed tremendous growth, and if the last eight months have shown anything, the ceiling is higher than ever.





Indigenous Super Stars' Canada 2022, Best Emerging Artist, Robin Cisek is a Metis artist from Edmonton who creates melodic alternative electro-pop. Robin Cisek emerged into her music career after years of struggle with health problems.

Her most recent singles have garnered a lot of success on radio. "Hey Disaster" (August 2022) charted on the Mediabase Activator radio at number 93 and "Zeus" (June 2022) charted at #2 on the Indigenous Music Countdown making this Cisek's 5th time charting on the IMC.

Since the release of her debut album, *Delicate Minds* (2021), a concept album intended to speak about mental health, Cisek's career has been on an upward momentum. "Memories", a song from the album, garnered 24,000 views on Youtube and received Awards from a number of film festivals. In 2022, Robin Cisek and her song "Memories" was chosen as one of CBC and Toyota Searchlight's (2022) top 100. Cisek's most notable performances include opening for LA's Starcrawler, Calgary Pride, Canadian Music Week 2023, and Long Day's night festival, where she opened for Polaris Music Prize nominee Begonia.

ROBIN CISEK

WHAT: Alt-Pop

WHERE:

Sherwood Park, AB

VISIT:

www.robincisekmusic.com

ALTERED BY MOM

WHAT:

Alt/Indie Rock

WHERE:

Toronto, ON

VISIT:

www.alteredbymom

Altered by Mom is an alt-rock/indie duo from Toronto that combine a knack for infectious melodies and classic songwriting with a quirky sense of humour and a tongue-in-cheek post-grunge aesthetic. They sound like Alanis Morissette, Oliva Rodrigo, and Sloan chowing down on a party sub in the security line at YYZ.

The band's new release, AHEM, is a metaphorical throat clearing, a demand for attention, and a command of the floor. While 52 SONGS was a 52-course meal, the four tracks on AHEM are a power snack, like a banana with a Red Bull chaser, an amuse-bouche for the ears. Lead singles "Dive In," "Everygirl," and now "Waiting on a Sign That's Already There" are compelling fun and introspective songs about self-belief, pursuing love, and embracing the weird and wonderful in life.





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