

FALL 2007 Volume 10 Number 2

Songwriters magazine

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EXPOSING

THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS



Second Cup's Café Music Series

P2P Downloading: No Cents for Creators

The Do's and Don'ts When Writing for Kids

Published by:

SAC  **Songwriters**
Association of Canada

PLUS Bluebird North, Humber Songwriting Workshop, and RWG Updates

Busy, Busy, Busy!

Wow – where did the summer go? The S.A.C. has been actively promoting the Association at several events over the last few months as well as preparing for the upcoming season: We were at the SCMAS (Saskatchewan Country Music Awards) in Saskatoon, where Lennie Gallant participated in several songwriting panels and showcases; S.A.C. Board President Haydain Neale made his way up to Sault Ste Marie to lead a songwriting workshop co-sponsored by Music and Film in Motion (MFM); Pat Pattison wowed another group of songwriters at a weekend workshop at Metalworks Institute; and in June we had a great bluebird North showcase in Vancouver featuring Heidi McCurdy, Aaron Grant, Ryan McMahon, Hayley Sales, Paula Toledo and of course, Shari Ulrich.

In June, we held our Annual General Meeting in Toronto which featured a great performance from new S.A.C. board member Lynn Miles; Christopher Ward and Rob Wells helped judge a song contest and attended a Gala student songwriters recital in Whitby for SASS (School Alliance of Student Songwriters); and the S.A.C. also co-sponsored Toronto Harbourfront's "Generations – Songwriters in the Round" concert featuring Dean McTaggart, Brent Titcomb, Lindsay Broughton and Liam Titcomb.

The summer ended with our attending the annual MIAC (Music Industry Association of Canada) trade show in Toronto where we had a chance to connect with many industry folks. Thanks to those of you who stopped by the S.A.C. booth to say hello.

We've been busy planning for the coming year's activities and you'll be pleased to hear that Songposium will be coming to Halifax, Ottawa and Winnipeg in November. The day-long workshop will feature sessions such as: Anatomy of a Hit, Radio Programming, Plugging your songs with a Pro, and a Demo evaluation panel. Bluebird North will be in those same cities offering audiences another round of dynamic showcases of Canadian songwriters. The website will be updated as information becomes available. Be sure to buy your tickets early.

The Bluebird North showcases will continue with their usual schedule in Vancouver in the fall under the production guidance of Shari Ulrich. The Toronto showcase will be taking a well-deserved break so that some of the other initiatives and special panel presentations can be taken to the streets. A special thank you to Blair Packham and Shari Ulrich for helping to make the Bluebird North brand what it is today!

If you bump into them, thank them again!

We are excited about a new showcase opportunity involving a partnership with the folks at Second Cup Canada. Thanks to Laura Mingail and Karen Gold (both from Second Cup Marketing), an initiative is in full swing to help promote Canadian songwriters in their coffee houses across the country. With an initial launch in September and October of this year, songwriters from coast to coast will have opportunities to perform their original Canadian songs for a warm, caffeine-loving audience! For more information, see the article by Kerry Doole in this issue.

This past year, members of our advocacy committee have been working hard to ensure that songwriters have a voice in the discussion of the monetization of digital music. We plan on sponsoring several seminar / panels to discuss the monetization of peer-to-peer filesharing and digital distribution of music. The events will be announced soon and promise to be dynamic open forums, bringing some of Canada's foremost songwriters and industry experts together to discuss the issues and the proposed solutions. These events will take place in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, and we hope to have them available to hear online for those unable to attend. Check the songwriters.ca website for details on locations and times for these and other events.

Be sure to check the website for information on the Toronto Date with a Demo nights. This popular event will now be held on the first Wednesday evening of each month at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Check the website for current times and panelists.

I want to take a moment to thank Leah Erbe for her hard work and dedication over the last year and a half in her role as Member Services Rep. Leah has decided to focus her energies on her music career and although she will be missed at the Soho office, we wish her all the success in her new endeavours. We'll miss you Leah!

At the same time, I'd like to welcome Ania Ziemirska to the position of Member Services Representative, who has jumped in with enthusiasm. Welcome Ania! ☺

Don Quarles
Executive Director



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ED – Special Note: At the press time, we learned that S.A.C. Board President Haydain Neale, singer/songwriter, jacksoul frontman, CSHF Board member, was recovering in hospital after a motor vehicle accident on August 3rd, 2007. Our positive energy and thoughts are with Haydain and his entire family. Haydain, we wish you a speedy recovery!

Songwriters

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Association des auteurs compositeurs Canadiens

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SongWorks is a program that brings songwriters together to create project-specific songs. Teams of writers are brought together for an intensive three days of songwriting and recording with the objective being to have songs created for specific artist projects. Last spring, nine songwriters were brought to the Mysthaven Retreat north of Toronto to do exactly that. The group was led by songwriter Eddie Schwartz and comprised of Jenna Andrews, Pete Lesperance, Dean McTaggart, Fergus Hambleton, Brent Bodrug, Lindsay Broughton, Greg Kavanagh and Jamil Aljabri. The songwriters co-wrote and recorded a total of nine songs in three days for upcoming projects.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF S.A.C.
Participants at the Toronto Songworks (from left to right): Eddie Schwartz, Jenna Andrews, Pete Lesperance, Dean McTaggart, Fergus Hambleton, Brent Bodrug, Lindsay Broughton, Greg Kavanagh and Jamil Aljabri.

Leblanc leaves Billboard Magazine

Larry Leblanc, the long time Canadian bureau chief for Billboard magazine, is stepping down from his post effective immediately. Leblanc has been associated with the US-based music trade publication since 1991. Prior to his work with Billboard, he was co-founder of and writer for The Record for 10 years, and the Canadian editor for U.S. trade magazine Record World. His byline has appeared in publications such as Rolling Stone, Guitar Player and Macleans.

A veteran writer, Leblanc has been a supporter of Canadian songwriters and artists and has had the opportunity to interview some of Canada's greatest music creators, such as Celine Dion, Avril Lavigne, Barenaked Ladies, Broken Social Scene, Luc Plamondon, Alanis Morissette and more. Leblanc will continue to run Brycemore Music with his wife, publicist Anya Wilson, handling artist management and publishing for artists such as Dave Gunning, Joel Kroeker, Alana Levandoski and the Brothers Chaffey.

"It's time to move on," Leblanc said from his home in Toronto. "I'm proud of my coverage of Canada for the publication. I certainly feel I've helped bring Canadian music to global markets". Toronto-based journalist Robert Thompson, who writes a golf blog commenting on golf issues, will replace Leblanc.



PHOTO: STEPHEN UHRANEY

SAC President Stable After Suffering Serious Injury

Jacksoul singer and songwriter Haydain Neale, who also serves as President of the Songwriters Association Of Canada, is recuperating in hospital after being critically injured in a traffic accident.

On Friday, August 3, Neale was riding his scooter home from a songwriting session in Scarborough when he was struck by an automobile. The extent of his injuries are unknown, although spokesman Daniel Mekinda says Neale's condition is stable.

For the time being, the family is not releasing any further details and requesting privacy regarding this matter.

In the meantime, S.A.C. Vice President Eddie Schwartz -- who has assumed the role of Acting President until Neale has sufficiently recovered to resume his duties -- issued the following statement:

"All of us at the S.A.C. cherish Haydain as a dear friend, a supportive colleague, a great talent, and an inspired leader, and we are more deeply distressed by this terrible accident than words can express. We are with him, his wife Michaela, and his entire family in the hope and belief he is on the road to full recovery."

Well-wishers can e-mail Haydain messages of support, encouragement and healing to getwellhaydain@gmail.com.

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The Coffee house - a songwriter's second home

By KERRY DOOLE

Given that coffee is the chosen creative fuel of a very high proportion of songwriters, it makes perfect sense that a coffeehouse setting would be a very attractive performance venue for them.

That is just one of the premises behind a new partnership between Second Cup Ltd. and the Songwriters Association of Canada (S.A.C.). This fall, they are joining forces in Second Cup's Café Music series. Some of Canada's most acclaimed singer/songwriters will perform in 14 Second Cup locations in eight Canadian cities (Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax).

"I am really excited about this partnership," says S.A.C. Executive Director Don Quarles. "When we started talking to Second Cup, we realized we both shared the same passion of wanting to promote Canadian songwriters. It is going to help raise the profile of Canadian songwriters in the public's eye, and that's really important. There's a lot of great Canadian music out there, so this is a wonderful opportunity for singer/songwriters to have an audience to hear their work."

Karen Gold, Second Cup's Vice President of Marketing, is a genuinely enthusiastic booster of Canadian musical talent. "It's a tough gig being in the Canadian music industry, especially now. Our program offers a great opportunity to showcase and profile these fine artists."

The initiative dovetails nicely with Second Cup's own business model. It is the only major specialty café chain that is Canadian-owned, and Gold notes that "as a franchise organization, we're a locally-owned business, with owner/operators from the community. We want to profile local performers in conjunction with our local business people. We are Canadian, so let's play Canadian music."

Second Cup inaugurated this series last fall,

with Ron Sexsmith as the feature artist, playing eight concerts in four cities. It was greeted with real public excitement and extensive media coverage, and the new series ups the ante considerably.

Singer/songwriters confirmed for appearances include an impressively diverse group of artists such as Jimmy Rankin, Suzie McNeil, Melissa McClelland,

Matthew Good, and Jill Barber. At each performance, the artist's CDs will be available for purchase (and for signing), while their music will be played in the café that day.

Second Cup will also provide opportunities for up and coming songwriters to showcase their material. "We have 360 cafés, so we offer a lot of outlets for artists to play," says Gold. "After the kickoff with these name artists we're hoping to promote a surge of more local yet lesser known talent, so they can pick up a mic on a Friday night. We'll have a program that can be booked through the local franchise partner, so an artist can approach them. We've also pre-screened a lot of local artists and put them on our website. Anyone wanting to book one of these artists can go onto the site and check out their calendar."

Don Quarles reports "S.A.C. members are ecstatic about this initiative. I've already had a few songwriters saying they are lined up to play at some locations. They love the fact there's another possible venue for them to share their original songs."

Back in the '60s and early '70s, the coffeehouse environment was of crucial importance in developing the careers of Canadian singer/songwriters on their way to international success. Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, Gordon Lightfoot, Bruce Cockburn, Murray McLauchlan, Tom Cochrane, and many more all honed their performance and songwriting skills through gigs at such coffeehouse venues as Toronto's Riverboat, Ottawa's Café Le Hibou, and Montreal's Yellow Door.

The Riverboat in particular has earned mythical status in Canadian music history. Situated in a basement in a house in the Yorkville district, it was opened by Bernie Fiedler (later one of Canada's premier music managers) in 1964, and hosted live

music until closing in 1978. According to legend, such folk classics as Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" (from the famous *Clouds* album) and Phil Ochs' "Changes" were written in the club's upstairs backroom.

Veteran Toronto music publicist and promoter Jane Harbury worked at



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NETWORK MANAGEMENT
Melissa McLelland



PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAUL MIERS CONCERTS
Colin James



PHOTO: MARGARET MALANDRUCCOLO
Jimmy Rankin

PHOTO: ROSE COUSINS



Jill Barber

The Riverboat from 1969 to 1974 and recalls it as a perfect environment for singer/songwriters. "People would come for the artists. Generally speaking, there was no need for anyone to have to say "sshhh" since they had paid to come in and there was no alcohol to loosen tongues."

This intimate and attentive environment is one that Second Cup is taking great pains to recreate, as Gold explains. "With many of our café renovations, we're

proving a creatively stimulating one for songwriters, as the synergy between caffeine and composition is a well-established one. The fellow in the corner quietly sipping his latte and scribbling a few notes may just be working on a new composition. "I know that Ron Sexsmith does a lot of writing in cafes," notes Karen Gold. "He meets a lot of other artists there too, to help them with their writing."

This new program is



PHOTO: BRIAN HELM PHOTOGRAPHY

Wil

stressing a home-style environment, with fireplaces and comfortable chairs. We want our customers to feel comfortable in our café home while listening to great music. We want them to have an experience beyond something really superficial. The coffeehouse environment in the '60s and '70s was a great place to discuss culture, politics, and philosophy. Here, we do have a philosophical approach, and we have chosen artists we really do feel have integrity. We want music that has meaning and that makes you feel good."

The coffeehouse environment is already

PHOTO: ANDREW MACNAUGHTON



Michael Kaeshammer

an exciting and important new initiative for Canadian songwriters. States Quarles "I hope this is the beginning of a long-standing relationship. I see it as an obvious fit, as we both share the same passion for supporting Canadian talent."

For more information on this initiative, check out the songwriters.ca or secondcup.com websites. ☺

Kerry Doole is a freelance music journalist with a passion for both coffee and singer/songwriters. He can be reached at kerrydoole@yahoo.ca

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We acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada Music Fund 

Young Songwriters Show Their Stuff at Year-End Gala Recital

Whitby, ON - May 30th marked the date of the 4th annual *School Alliance of Student Songwriters* (SASS) Gala recital. SASS is a program led by teacher/songwriter Artemis Chartier and producer/guitarist/songwriter Dale Russell and is designed to bring songwriting into Canadian schools. The event took place at Donald A. Wilson S.S. in Whitby and saw over 15 student performances and several special guest appearances by the likes of songwriters Christopher Ward, Rob Wells, and Rap artist Duane Gibson "DO", for an audience of over 250 eager parents, teachers and SASS supporters. Many of the performers were finalists in an environmental song contest sponsored by many supporters including: MIAC, Microsoft, Korg, Hagstrom, Sennheiser, Washburn, Levy's Leathers, Swiss Chalet and many private donors. First place went to 13-year-old Jehvon Grant for his song "Listen".

SASS offers programs in Ontario and B.C. schools and has taught the craft of songwriting free of charge to an estimated 4000 students over the last four years. SASS, whose mission is "Giving Youth A Voice", encourages students to support each other and to make a positive difference with their music, but, above all, strives to listen to what young people really have to say. For more information about SASS and its initiatives, go to their website at www.sasscanada.net ☺



PHOTO: COURTESY OF S.A.C.

Sarah Nadeau's song "Ready to Give" won her second place in the SASS song contest and an Epiphone guitar and amp, which was donated by S.A.C.'s Christopher Ward (L) and Rob Wells.



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It's Time to Monetize P2P

By NICK KREWEN

With computer-manufacturer Apple recently announcing the sale of its three-billionth download through iTunes, the notion that the monetization of digital music is a future concern no longer holds water.

The truth is, monetization is an immediate issue. While recent inroads have been made for compensating Canadian songwriters for ringtones and online music services (6 percent of the purchase price with a \$.06 minimum per ringtone through 2005, while 2005-2007 online



Bill Henderson

music services pay copyright owners 8.8 percent of the consumer price of the download, while online subscription services offering limited downloads pay 5.9 percent of their monthly subscription revenue and those services solely dedicated to offering on-demand music streaming pay 4.6 percent of that revenue), the matter of monetizing peer-to-peer (P2P) Internet music services still remains unaddressed.

As long as the issue remains unaddressed, it's hurting songwriters where it counts the most – their bank accounts.

"Songwriters and artists earn their living - they put food on the table and a roof over their heads – based on monetization of their rights and their music," states Eddie Schwartz, Vice President of the Songwriters Association Of Canada (S.A.C.). "We're in this terrible situation where, by some estimates, 97% of the music that's being downloaded on the Internet is being shared on P2P networks. Artists and songwriters are being paid zero for that massive activity.

"Between the U.S. and Canada, literally billions of songs are being shared every year. So while music is arguably more popular and more listened to than ever, songwriters are having a harder time earning a living.

"It's ironic that while there's such an

incredible use of music, the people who create music are really struggling to survive. And we feel very strongly that there's a disconnect there that has to be addressed."

The S.A.C. is looking to rectify that situation with a proposal that the organization suggests is a logical move in ensuring compensation for not only Canadian music creators, but artists, publishers and record labels: the formation of a music collective.

"We're trying to monetize P2P," states S.A.C. President Haydain Neale.

"We're living in a new reality. One day I'm singing into a microphone and the next I'm singing into a laptop. The world has changed."

And in that changing world, says S.A.C. Vice President Bill Henderson, it's time to find a solution.

"This situation with peer-to-peer file-sharing has been going on for over 10 years, and not a lot of progress has been made," notes Henderson.

"Music fans have made it very clear that digital downloading is the way they want to access our music, and in many surveys, fans have stated that they'd be happy to pay the artists and

writers for their work.

"So all we're saying is, 'Let's set up a system where that can happen.'"

Henderson says the S.A.C.-proposed arrangement would involve establishing a collective that functions similarly to the performing rights organization SOCAN (The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers Of Canada).

"It's not that complicated an idea: a

tracking the use of music on the Internet and wireless devices such as cell phones and personal digital assistants.

"There are companies that track this stuff now," says Henderson. In exchange for the fee, the collective would grant a blanket license, similar to measures SOCAN applies to the collection of radio performance royalties.

"When radio came along, it was impossible for them to clear the rights to each song with each publisher, not to mention record company," says Henderson.

"It was also impossible for each rights holder to go to all the radio stations and make sure that whatever of their songs they played they got paid for.

"So what came about was the collective, which is the obvious way to handle it. The collective grants a blanket license -- so you take any song you want and you can play it, download it, communicate it or stream it.

"You can do this as many times as you want, whenever you want, for a set compulsory license fee -- it's very, very simple."

Although the figure is not set in stone, the S.A.C. is currently advocating a collective subscription fee of \$5 per month per Internet access point.

How did they reach that number?

"We got an idea of how many people in Canada access broadband Internet and an idea of the number of songs being traded and shared on a monthly and annual basis," explains Eddie Schwartz. "Most people have bundled services; they get Internet, TV, phone and sometimes even cell phone from the same carrier. So given the fact that people's bills are \$150-\$160 a month – certainly over \$100 for many people – the \$5 figure seemed a very reasonable addition to what



Eddie Schwartz

As long as the issue remains unaddressed, it's hurting songwriters where it counts the most – their bank accounts.

modest monthly fee – kind of like a subscription fee – that everyone that has a computer and access to the Internet or a wireless device would pay," Henderson explains. "That fee would go to an organization – a collective – that would represent the writers, artists, record companies and publishers."

Henderson says that the proposed collective would be responsible for

people were paying already.

"When you take the pool of money that the \$5 fee creates and divide it by the number of songs that are downloaded by file-sharing, we felt the number we came up with was going to compensate the industry – and particularly creators – fairly.

"So if it's fair to the consumer at \$.16

cont'd next page

a day to be able to access 79 million tracks, that kind of expenditure puts enough money back into the industry to compensate all the people who have been making music. It seems like a reasonable number."

However, both Henderson and Schwartz caution that the \$5 figure could change once the S.A.C. consults with an economist.

"That's the suggestion now: maybe there are other factors we're not considering," Schwartz admits. "That's why we want to talk to an economist and make sure that what seems reasonable can be justified in a more rigid and scientific approach, and really make sure that \$5 is the right number.

"So we're not locked in, but it's a target that we're playing around with."

This proposal is only the beginning: the next steps are to get the rest of the music industry on board and lobby for government legislation to approve the collective.

"We hope that we will be able to get the support of the entire music industry in Canada," says Henderson. "We already have the support of all the creators' groups in Canada and the major creators' groups in the United States and in the United Kingdom. There are a lot of people who feel this should happen.

"We're talking to publishers and we have many individual and very influential publishers who are very much on our side. They want to see this happen, too."

"We have talked to the independent record companies in Canada and things are moving along there accordingly," Henderson reports.

"We're bringing people in all the time and we're continuing to fine-tune our proposal. There's a lot of work to be done."

There is one other important group that S.A.C. president Haydain Neale wants to consult: the customer.

"We have to educate the consumer," Neale notes. "The fan has been left out of the loop and doesn't understand how things work. They've never understood publishing, and many probably think Rihanna writes her own songs. But what if she actually has a team of guys behind her that writes those songs?"

"I think if we just talk turkey like that, it'll make a lot of sense to them and bring them on board."

In the meantime, Eddie Schwartz invites S.A.C. members to show their support by sending e-mails to advocacy@songwriters.ca as well as by donation, noting that the Songwriters Association



of Canada is a charitable organization and will issue tax receipts for any contributions involving its advocacy.

"The more support we can get, the better," says Schwartz. "If you could put your name as a songwriter, artist- or even as a consumer- on a document that supports this initiative, we'd be very grateful.

"Then that would make it all the more powerful, the more people we can get to sign off on this idea.


"After all, we're not asking anyone to change their behaviour. This model we're presenting just monetizes existing behaviour.

"The people who make the music should get paid." ☺


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KIDDING AROUND

Writing Children's Music Is Actually.... Serious Business

By NICK KREWEN

They have names like "Slimy The Slug," "Veggie Dip Doo Wah" and "Underpants In Hawaii," cover topics that are far removed from the hit parade, and appeal to a milk-and-cookie crowd that enjoys its daily afternoon nap.

Yet no matter how much fun or silly or serious or entertaining a kids' song can be, writing children's music is serious business.

In fact, those who specialize in music for the pre-kindergarten-to-grade-school-set, view it as something of a science.

"Children are very sophisticated listeners," notes Jack Grunsky, the Toronto-based veteran children's entertainer and 2007 Juno Award Children's Album of the Year recipient for *My Beautiful World*.

"Children are very direct and honest in responding to music. It is quite a challenge to write songs that mean something to children and can move them or inspire them."

Richmond, B.C.'s Charlotte Diamond -- who recorded her debut Juno-winning album *10 Carrot Diamond* in 1985, introducing young ones to such favourite ditties as "Four Hugs A Day" and "I Am A Pizza" -- says you won't find a more imaginative, attentive or interactive crowd.

"Children are a most dynamic audience to work with," says Diamond, a former junior high school teacher who tours around the world and records songs in English, French and Spanish.

"So many times, I'm flipping from one language to another, and it's absolutely amazing how flexible children are and how they will come along with me.

"A carefully crafted song that gets the audience engaged really makes them an exceedingly wonderful audience to work with because they will readily sing along when you get them going."

And therein lies the challenge: How do you properly craft a children's song?

Canada in particular has been blessed with its share of innovative and gifted children's recording artist-performers, starting in 1976 with Raffi and his groundbreaking *Singable Songs For The Very Young* and Sharon, Lois & Bram's *One Elephant, Deux Elephants* to Fred Penner's *The Cat Came Back*.

The tradition continues on today with Carmen Campagne and the trio *Songwriters* has engaged to offer pointers on writing for the 2-to-10-year-old demographic.

Charlotte Diamond recently released *Todo el Mundo Come Banana!*, her first Spanish-language kids' album -- and 13th overall -- at www.charlottediamond.com.

Casablanca Records artist and four-time Juno winner Jack Grunsky a 25-year veteran, offers his dozen albums through www.jackgrunsky.com.

John Differ, who performs under the name "Jake," is a relative newbie in children's entertainment. This father of two released *Take A Little Ride With Me* in 2004 and is currently recording his third album, *Ziggy Zaggy Road*, which will be available through www.musicby-jake.com later this summer.

Between the three of them -- all of whom transitioned from folk singers, by the way -- there's over 525 dog years worth of experience.



Charlotte Diamond

So here's the skinnamarink on 10 pointers for writing for a mark that offers both rhyme and reason...

1) Know Your Audience

"You have to be able to relate to and understand children," notes Grunsky, a father of two. "You have to be around them enough to see their world and see it through their eyes. If you can do that, then you're speaking their language and you can't go wrong.

"You have to be totally honest in your approach with them because children can pick up right away if something is real or not."

2) Pick A Topic -- Any Topic

You can be a silly billy and write about wacky, wild and far-out adventures in the land of the Tiki-Tiki, but don't be afraid to keep your material grounded.

Mother-of-two Charlotte Diamond says that contrary to popular belief, kids are receptive to sober social messages.

"You can sometimes do something very serious with a comical twist and then kids will listen to it," Diamond explains. "If there's a message

worked in there, then the message gets carried along by the flow of the song."

Jack Grunsky says the well of potential topics never runs dry.

"The beauty of being a children's performer and songwriter is that there is such an abundance of themes and topics that one can write about for children," allows Grunsky, who captured his first Juno in 1992 for *Waves Of Wonder*, which also earned him a Parents' Choice Gold Award.

"You just have to tap into the world of the child. There's never a shortage of ideas of what to write about, because you have to be perceptive and keep your eyes open and your ears open to and observe children, or think about your own childhood experiences."

3) Be Eclectic

That appreciation for variety also extends to melodies, rhythms, styles and musical arrangements.

"One thing I love about writing for kids I feel like the field is wide open," notes Jake Differ, who wrote the theme song to Olympic gold medalist Silken Laumann's 2006 book *Child's Play*.

"I have eclectic tastes in music, so I get to write a reggae tune, a big band swing tune and a country tune, and put them all in a row, because children are so open to different types of music, it's really liberating to write for kids.

"And if you're messing with them, they know instantly, because they just walk away," he laughs.

4) Use Your Family For Inspiration

"I was talking with my daughter about how penguins looked like they're in tuxedos and that they're on their way somewhere really important," Differ recalls. "So she started laughing about it and I started writing this little jazz tune that ending up being 'Antarctic Soirée.'"

"There are just certain ideas that might flicker something in their imagination or something that really makes them laugh.

"And the fact that it's a jazz ballad, hopefully will help them develop an open attitude towards all types of music."

5) Think "Interactive"

Because interplay is such a crucial component in children's music -- indelibly intertwining the professions of entertainer and songwriter into one duality -- you might want to consider making much or your music singable and danceable.

"I want them to be engaged," says Charlotte



PHOTO: NANCY SAXBERG

Jake Differ

Diamond. "I want them to be totally fascinated by what I'm doing on stage. So therefore I make my stage shows very interesting with lots of different things going on - dancing, movement and sign language."

Diamond says her multilingual approach also appeals to older kids, too.

"I've found that when I started introducing the different languages and the sign language, where a lot of people are only working at the pre-school level, the older kids really seem to like my stuff, too," she notes.

6) Add Unexpected Twists

Here's something to remember: the sounds you inject into your songs don't have to be musical. Use your imagination when you're in the studio.

"Probably my most famous song that I've written is called 'Octopus,'" states Diamond.

"It's about the food chain, from the slippery fish right up to the humongous whale at the end.

"The reason the song works is that we have a huge whale-size burp."

7) Don't "Dumb Down" The Music

"I never sing down to kids," says Diamond, who offers a Hug Bug Club for kids on her website.

"If anything, I get them to leap up to maybe a higher level of thinking of a higher level of involvement."

Diamond also says that kids are also very receptive to profound themes.

"You would think that all the up-tempo things that I've written like 'Four Hugs A Day' would be the all-time favourites -- and they are the ones that kids sing -- but I will get letters and the kids will say, 'I really like the song 'Spider's Web'," notes Diamond.

"It's in a minor key, and it's very mystical and very thoughtful. Even the song, 'May There Always Be Sunshine,' is a very deep thought.

"If the idea is good, children will accept it."

Jack Grunsky says it's important not to stand from a soapbox.

"There are songs that tell a story; songs that have a global message or environmental themes that teach in a subtle way," Grunsky explains. "When I do write songs like that, I try not to sound preachy but create the lyric in such a way that it's engaging and one that a child can relate to quickly and easily.

"There's a song of mine called 'The Mediterranean Sea' that's more of a poem,

almost a folk song. I have a granddaughter that's six years old - that's one song she likes the most. It's an adult song, so it shows that children are very sophisticated listeners."

8) Avoid Pitfalls

"Stay away from using clichés or expressions that you don't really mean," Grunsky advises. "That's a trap - to use language that one may think a child will relate to, but in fact is talking down to children. That big pitfall must really be avoided."

Grunsky also says there's something to be said for keeping emotions honest.

"It should be true to the heart," he states.

Charlotte Diamond says consistency is key.

"Avoid jumping around too much," says Diamond. "Make what you do predictable so that the kids will be able to follow. Having a good chorus is like home base: You can go everywhere in between, but then you have to come back to home base.

"So avoid being too obscure, and avoid vocabulary that's too cutesy. Kids need to learn words. We want them to be good readers. Remember, songs are one of the first places that they encounter words strung together creatively and rhyming."

9) Keep It Brief

Hey, attention spans are at a premium these days -- and we all know that children can get bored quickly and easily.

"There's a magic number, and I think it's about two minutes and thirty seconds," states Charlotte Diamond in terms of song endurance.

"The really long songs -- if it's a story, you can get away with it and if it's an engaging story, then you're fine -- but the really long involved songs tend to lose them."

Diamond extends that rule of thumb to live performance.

"Sometimes with songs that I've recorded that were longer, I will truncate it when I do it in performance. I'll pick the most accessible verses and maybe just leave one out.

"When you're listening to something that's recorded, you can often absorb more. But in

performance, it's always good to aim for that two-and-a-half minutes, maybe a little bit more."

Jake Differ also tries to keep it under the three-minute mark.

"I'm a lyric-oriented guy, and if I end up writing a six-minute song, I have to start editing lyrics within a shorter timeframe because I don't want kids to get bored," says Differ, a father of two.

"I'll also try to insert three or four songs on a record that are maybe a minute or 90 seconds, just to shake things up a bit."

10) Test It Live

So is your song any good? There's only one way to find out: play it in front of family and friends.

"Whatever I write or how I perform is a communiqué with children on their level," says Jack Grunsky. "I can sense from my performance where I've got their attention just by their reactions. And I can tell if my performance is weak or if it's strong, or if the song is getting to them. If it's not, it goes back to the drawing board and I rework it."

Don't worry about butterflies, advises Charlotte Diamond

"Don't be afraid - just get out there and do it," says Diamond. "Ask friends over and sing to their kids if you're not that much of a performer and more of a writer, and see what they do and how they react."

Aside from these 10 tips, there are plenty of other things to consider when writing children's songs: from Jake's additional predilection for natural instruments over MIDI and Jack Grunsky's advice to tickle the funny bone to Charlotte Diamond's insistence for keeping the keys within a reasonable range.

It's clear these three writers wouldn't trade their profession for anything.

"You're helping people to define what music will be in their life when they're very, very young and play a positive role in it," declares Jake Differ

"It's the most rewarding thing I've ever done musically." ☺

Serving Your Multilingual Audience

Juno-winner Charlotte Diamond is one of the rare children's entertainers who appeals to English, French and Spanish-speaking kids around the world.

But writing in different languages can be a challenge.

"When you're going into Spanish or French, there's a lot more words to deal with to cover what you say in English," Diamond explains.

"So I work with a great translating assistant in Spanish who is from Costa Rica and then a wonderful Ottawa gal who helps me with my French. I translate it so far and they give me a more fine-tuned translation. Then I sing the song and start dropping what I need to, in order to make it work."

What if the foreign language syntax doesn't fit the framework of the original song?

"You just abort," she laughs. "You abort and then you look for the concept. And also, things

are said differently in different languages. For example, I have a song translated that's written by another artist called 'Lucky Streak.'

"There was no way that would come out really easily, so I had to call it 'Que Buena Suerte,' which means, 'What Good Luck.'

"You have to be ready to be flexible."

Diamond says she engages her audience in performance through dancing, movement and "echo" and is amazed at children's versatility and adaptability.

"I'll do 'I'm A Pizza' in English, then do it in French -- 'Je Suis Un Pizza' and in Spanish -- 'Soy Una Pizza' -- and the kids echo back and forth with the words.

"It doesn't matter what language or where I am -- whether it's the States, Europe or Canada.

"Because it's an echo song, children pick up the language."

Harbourfront – “Generations – Songwriters in the Round”

June 30th, 2007 - Toronto - Harbourfront was the location for a fantastic line-up of songwriting talent that included Dean McTaggart, Liam and Brent Titcomb, and Lindsay Broughton. The Canada Day “Generations” event, sponsored by the S.A.C. along with the Harbourfront Centre, provided the opportunity for each artist to talk about songwriting and play some of their most popular hit songs as well as their latest tunes in front of a packed audience.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF S.A.C.



As Dean McTaggart (far right) plays one of his original songs, Lindsay Broughton, Brent Titcomb and Liam Titcomb (L to R) give him musical support at Toronto Harbourfront’s “Generations – Songwriters in the Round” on June 30th.

PHOTO: NADIA MOLLINARI



Sunshine State’s Aleza and James Bryan

Sweet Summer Music Sizzles at Honey Jam

Toronto – A stellar lineup of performers hit the stage at the Mod Club this August for another Honey Jam. This all-female showcase is produced by PhemPhat Productions and was hosted by MuchMusic’s Matte Babel and Degra’s Andrea Lewis. It featured independent artists Sunshine State, Cali, Denosh and Jenna, all of whom are on Honey Jam’s 2007 CD. Past Honey Jam alumni have included Nelly Furtado, Jully Black, Graph Nobel, Melanie Durrant, Toya Alexis, current Canadian Idol sensation Martha Joy, and many more.

Sponsored by Sony/BMG, Flow 93.5FM, MuchVibe, Yamaha Canada, UMAC, Peace Magazine, and NOW Magazine, Honey Jam proceeds go to YWCA Toronto’s women’s and girls’ programs. The Honey Jams 2007 CD is in store now and available on maplemusic.com. For more information about upcoming Honey Jams, check out honeyjam.com, myspace.com/honeyjam, and myspace.com/honeyjamsCD.

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Humber Summer Songwriting Workshop 2007; Good Ideas Grow Into Traditions

By LEAH ERBE

This year's Humber Summer Songwriting Workshop proved that the intensive week of songwriting workshops, guest speakers, and onstage practice opportunities has a lot to offer both to accomplished songwriters and those with less experience under their belts.

The week started with an introductory demo evaluation session, during which the students got to know the different tastes and personalities of all the faculty members. That night, the faculty performed their original songs for the students and guests in a truly unforgettable concert.

During the mornings, students heard from a host of speakers that represented a variety of perspectives on the craft and business of songwriting. Some panelists represented parts of the music business that are difficult to access— guests included album art designer Michael Wrycraft; hit songwriter and one of MuchMusic's first VJs, Christopher Ward; and the drummer, singer, and "punk rock lawyer" David Quinton-Steinberg. Morning panels also

to eight. Students had the opportunity to work with several different faculty members of their choice over the course of the week. The eight faculty members, including co-directors Rik Emmett and Blair Packham, were the backbone of the workshop— many were returning members from previous years, which goes to show that this workshop is as much fun for the faculty as it is for the students.

Rik's experience with Triumph and with his own solo work means he has a sharp ear for the structure and message of a song, be it a straight-ahead rocker or a power ballad. Blair's amazing guitar playing and musical knowledge never

Several new faculty members joined us this year. Danny Michel has garnered both critical and popular acclaim as a singer/songwriter, guitarist, and producer. He approached the workshop with energy, patience, and an open mind, willing to learn from his students as much as they



PHOTO: PIERRE MILLETTE

Shari Ulrich and
Julia Graff

learned from him. Jules Shear is known as a "songwriter's songwriter". Jules' songs have been recorded by Cyndi Lauper, the Bangles, and the Band, and he didn't hesitate to get into the meat and potatoes of the craft with his classes. Shari Ulrich is a Juno-winning songwriter and performer,

both solo and with acts including Pied Pumkin and UHF. She was able to draw from many different places to connect with each student over their work. Shari and her daughter Julia were constantly smiling and friendly faces in the workshops and the dorms.

Throughout the day and night, two faculty assistants, Allister Bradley and Bill McKetrick, were available to help students record demos of their material. Both former students and seasoned songwriters, Allister and Bill lent their extensive technical knowledge and current recording setups to the students of the workshop. This new feature also enabled students to write songs in the morning, record them that night, and bring the CD in the next day to play for others.



PHOTO: ADAM KRAWESKY

HSSW Students and Faculty

gets in his way of demanding honesty and clarity, in his own lyrics and in his students' as well.

Damhnait Doyle is known both for her solo work and for her work with the group Shaye, and supplied friendly advice along with an unending well of support and irresistible cheer. Justin Gray has worked with many high-profile artists as a songwriter and producer, and always had a candid opinion on a song's place in the current world of recording, producing and publishing. Haydain Neale, President of the S.A.C. and frontman of R&B band jacksoul, brought a laid-back good humour to his straight-up opinions, and was just as likely to get into brainstorming for a new lyric as he was to stay late answering questions about S.A.C. Advocacy initiatives.



PHOTO: PIERRE MILLETTE

Leah Erbe and Haydain Neale

featured some of Canada's big names and hidden gems as Murray MacLauchlan and Dean McTaggart shared their stories and played the songs that got them to where they are today. Some lower-profile songwriters, like Ember Swift and Mia Sheard, played songs and gave their thoughts on making a living as a songwriter.

In the afternoon, faculty members led in-depth workshops in small groups of six

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THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS

Vancouver Band Reaches A New Milestone With Fourth Album

By Nick Krewen

There's a transitional moment in a songwriter's career – and by extension, in a musician and recording artist's as well – where the tide changes and a new level of artistic maturity is attained.

Sometimes it's a slight adjustment in technique and experience, a slow and silent osmosis that creeps up on you and infiltrates your work. And when it comes to your own objectivity, others recognize what may be personally perceived as minimal progress as a substantial leap forward instead.

Challengers, the fourth album by Vancouver-born collective The New Pornographers, definitely possesses the aura of a defining moment in a band's history.

Abandoning the feverish intensity of its two earliest albums, 2000's *Mass Romantic* and 2003's *Electric Version*, the New Pornographers has incorporated some of the more significant sonic experiments they engineered on 2005's *Twin Cinema* and transferred them to *Challengers*.

Moodier, more spacious, and containing several shimmering moments where melody and lyric meet arrangement in perfect harmony, *Challengers'* twelve tunes – nine written by singer, guitarist and founder Carl Newman and three contributed by Dan "Destroyer" Bejar – are intoxicating and imaginative, a blueprint for future creations.

Main songwriter Newman also envisions *Challengers* as a springboard; but then again, he's felt that each New Pornographers album has been a step above the one before.

make music.

"I never felt like I was a person who came out of the gate really great. I feel it's been something I've learned how to do through the years.

"I look forward to the next record and I think our next record will be the best record."

Newman, 29, is willing to concede that *Challengers* is perhaps the truest representation of his band's sonic intentions thus far.

"On this one, we definitely weren't afraid to make it mellower," Newman admits.

"We never meant to be a really upbeat band. It just turns out that those were the records that we made. I never wanted to be the band that was known for that certain peppy beat.

I think that we definitely wanted to explore more of the quieter music that I've loved in my life and I'd like to make.

"It's a little more difficult making quiet music. You've got fewer crutches."

Certainly, it doesn't hurt to have a support team like the one Newman has assembled. Sprung from the ashes of numerous respected "alternative" indie bands – Zumpano, the Evaporators, Destroyer, cub, Limblifter, and, initially, Superconductor – back in 1997, the New Pornographers boasts an enviable chemistry that could only be derived from the participation of singer and guitarist Newman, singer and guitarist Bejar, resonant vocalist Neko Case, keyboard player Blaine Thurier, bassist (and producer and engineer) John Collins, drummer Kurt Dahle, Electric Version recruit Todd Fancey on guitar

out of my last band, Zumpano, a little frustrated with the internal band politics about how we arrived at decisions. So when The New Pornographers started, of course none of us had any real ambitions. None of us thought we were going to get as far as we got. We didn't even think we were going to get close to this far.

"But I remember thinking about The New Pornographers and thinking I was going to make this record and it was going to be ... made the way I wanted to be made, where I didn't compromise and I didn't go, 'Oh, I let this slide by because the guitar player and the drummer wanted it.'

"I thought, 'If this record fails, it will be my fault. And if it succeeds, I will take responsibility for it, too.'

"I know I'm not the best singer or the best player by any means, but I'm the leader - jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none guy."

In fact, Newman suggests that the two of the reasons *Challengers* sounds so different and so much more textured than previous New Pornographers efforts are tempo and clarity.

"Slowing things down a lot and putting space into our music to the point where all of a sudden you can hear things," he explains. "I think our earlier records had a lot of textures, but it was so dense it was hard to tell what the textures were – you had to really listen hard and listen intently to the wall of sound."

Challengers – the group's first album on Last Gang Records, following three releases on Mint (all U.S. New Pornographers releases are on Matador) – certainly offers plenty of diversity: "My Rights Versus Yours" starts things off serenely with flute, acoustic guitar and vocal before picking up the pace and building to a powerful crescendo; "Challengers" lovingly wraps itself around Neko Case's ringing, expressive alto, which is shadowed by what Carl Newman calls "the Glen Campbell guitar" and lacy mandolin passages; "Myriad Harbour" happily mixes a semi-spoken Kathryn Calder lead vocal with a Dan Bejar singing lead, an unusual call-and-response rhythm leading to a boisterous climax; "Go Places" offers a mesmerizing

"...It's a tricky game, but that's kind of the fun part of making music."

"I really like it," says the newlywed Newman, reached at his Brooklyn apartment nine days after his happy nuptials.

"I know I have no objectivity, but I've always been under the delusion that each record is better than the last. I always feel like making music is such a process of growing and learning how to

and Immaculate Machines singer and pianist Kathryn Calder, an addition for *Twin Cinema*.

"Everybody pitches in creatively, but I ultimately have a lot of the final decisions," states Newman. "Not many things get past me in the mix that I dislike.

"When this band started, I had come

Rise To The *Challengers*

12/8 rhythm over a sweet Case-warbled melody; and "Mutiny, I Promise You" delivers a straight-up rockin' romp with humming chorus and an uplifting conclusion.

Of course, Newman's initial influences – Brian Wilson, Burt Bacharach and Jimmy Webb – also echo throughout *Challengers*. But in "My Rights Versus Yours" and "The Old Showstoppers," a new one is introduced: Electric Light Orchestra principal Jeff Lynne.

"Everybody loves Jeff Lynne," says Newman. "I don't think he gets enough credit in rock history somehow. But he's amazing. Obviously what he did owed a great debt to The Beatles, but ELO kind of carried the torch for The Beatles in a lot of ways. It was amazing music.

"He invented a production style that some people might really hate, but I love that (Traveling) Wilburys sound with the really loud kick in the snare and the loud, driving acoustic guitar. It's such a simple recipe but Jeff Lynne has really, really nailed it."

Still, with such touchstones as Wilson, Bacharach and Webb as Newman's formative songwriting heroes, there's a certain quality to the New Pornographers sound that seems both modern and a throwback – or maybe a salute – to the classic sound of the '60s, an era uninhibited by pre-programmed and restrictive, advertiser-targeted radio playlists.

"All those writers have become unconscious influences on me," says Newman. "I never sit down and think, 'I want to do something that sounds like this.' Maybe at one point I did - but I think everything those writers have done is kind of a part of me now and I couldn't get rid of it if I tried.

"And whenever we're laying down a ton of vocals, it's hard not to be in debt to Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys, because they just nailed the vocalizing like nobody before them.

"Where else can you go after 'God

Only Knows'? It's just one of the most beautiful vocal performances with an arrangement that's both so beautiful and so strange, it's hard not to tip your hat to it and go, 'I acknowledge your superiority, but yes, I will continue to make music.'"

As for the '60s connection?

"Recently I was thinking about and listening to a lot of music from the late '60s – basically from the psychedelic era – and I started thinking about how that was the last era where people were just pushing music as far as they could

"The fact that he could write music like that and make it so palatable for the masses, I think, is incredibly impressive. It's very challenging.

"I'm a big fan of the arrangements. It's a tricky game, but that's kind of the fun part of making music. You write the songs and then you try to figure out how to present them."

When it comes to New Pornographers' arrangements, Newman acknowledges they're workshopped in the studio with a strong helping of spontaneity.

"There's not really a lot of pre-meditation,"



PHOTO: MARINA CHAVEZ

push it," Newman states.

"Jimmy Webb was doing that. If you listen to the record that 'MacArthur Park' is on, *A Tramp Shining*, or the next one, *The Yard Went On Forever* - those are crazy records.

"It's like this weird psychedelic easy-listening music. There aren't that many people on Earth that I think could really get into it - it was just so out on its own. And initially, I thought it was kind of bad, but then I started listening to it more and thought it was really cool, you know?

"Or someone like Bacharach - I loved how people dismissed him as an easy-listening artist, but you take those songs apart and try to play them and it's pretty crazy music.

Newman explains. "Sometimes I have a few ideas for a song, like a vague mood for a song, but usually we just go in there and start recording, and try and figure out what works and what doesn't work.

"Sometimes you throw a lot of stuff on a song, and then you'll listen to it, and think it's not right. Then you'll pull everything away until it's just a piano and a vocal, and you'll go, 'That sounds right to me.'

"But you have to throw the kitchen sink at it sometimes to realize that you don't need very much on a song."

It's clear that Newman enjoys talking about music, although one gets the sense he'd rather be making it. However, he frankly admits he's surprised he's even in a position to make records; it certainly

cont'd on page 18

wasn't a career aspiration, at least in the beginning.

"In my teens, I was just a crazy music fan," he says. "I didn't pick up a guitar or learn my first chord until I was eighteen. I always thought of music as this magical thing that I couldn't do, and I kind of fell into it.

"I really want to make a record where stuff unfolds like a dream unfolds"

"So I started jamming with friends. We started this kind of joke band called Superconductor that soon stopped being a joke; we inadvertently became a real band.

"Nobody else wanted to sing, so I said, 'Sure, I'll sing.'

"Nobody else was really writing songs, per se, so I thought, 'I'll take a crack at writing songs.' I just went from there. The minute I played my first gig, I really, really liked it. It really stuck with me and I just never left it.

"It's always been something that I can't stop myself from doing.

"Like now we've finished this record, it's not like I've stopped and done something else. I'm always writing songs. I began writing the next record before we even finished overdubbing or mixing *Challengers*. It's just something that's an ongoing process."

Newman describes writing melodies as a type of malady.

"It's an illness in a way," he explains. "It's an illness because I have a hard time finishing the songs. I always have about thirty half-finished songs going on. I wish I was one of those people who could go, 'I wrote this complete song in the last two days. Now let me play it for you.' I always have a ton of things unfinished.

"So when people ask me if I have a lot of songs written for the next record, my answer is, 'I either have zero written or I have fifty.'"

Yet having so many incomplete ideas suits Newman when it comes to recording the album: it allows him to experiment with lyrics and shuffle words back and forth.

"I'm kind of lazy with the words," he admits. "For me, the words are ever-changing. I rarely sit down and write a song and go, 'These words are perfect.

This is everything I wanted to say for this song.'

"I'll usually go, 'Okay, these are just training words. I'll just use these for the time being.' Sometimes they stick, but a lot of times I'll rewrite them.

"I also realize that, at least for us, being in the studio is part of the song-

writing process. So I could spend a lot of time finishing the lyrics before we go into the studio, but I know the song would evolve and then I would probably dump whatever melodies and lyrics I had and change it around, because songs change in the studio.

"So it makes life a little easier, because it means I can go into the studio with songs that aren't completely finished, but have some faith in our instincts that the creative process will just show us where to go with them."

He also admits that although his lyrics

plants his ideas and inspirational moments on his trusty PDA.

"It's actually a Blackberry Pearl," he reveals. "That's my demo machine - I just sing and play into it when I have any ideas.

"I'm really not much of a tech guy. I don't have a lot of room in my apartment for one thing, but I find the technical part of demoing sometimes really frustrating. When all you want to do with an idea is get it down immediately, you don't want to be sitting there going, 'Why am I not getting output on this microphone?'"

"I've always tried to keep it simple. I had a digital 8-track that I bought in 1999, but it's a little outdated. These days I'll sing into my Blackberry and send this little voice-note to myself on my computer.

"I've got about 50 voice-notes on my iTunes folder, which are song ideas or vocal ideas. I also have many notebooks going where I scrawl lyrics and chords. I'm still kind of a Luddite that way."

Luddite or not, Newman says *Challengers* still falls short of his ultimate dream album.

"When I think of the record that I really want to make, I don't think I've made it yet," says Newman. "But I really want to make a record where stuff unfolds like a dream unfolds ... a dream goes off in these weird tangents where all of a sudden you're in one place, but then that place turns into another place. It all seems natural, but it's very surreal and strange.

"I think that's what I always want to put into an album and I think some of my favourite records have that quality to them. It's a tough thing to shoot for."

Newman's advice for songwriters looking to hone their own vision: perseverance and consistency.

"Just hack away and do it and try to do something interesting," he advises. "And keep going. Who is it that said that 90 percent of success is just showing up? I kind of feel that way.

"When I think of all the times I've played music, I feel like I've never really changed my plan. I've just kept playing music because I want to play music. Even when I had a day job, I still continued to play music and eventually that strategy worked.

"If you want to write songs, just write songs. Keep writing them until you get better." ☺



PHOTO: MARINA CHAVEZ

seem metaphorical, they're often literal.

"On this record, there are some songs that, although they still come off as metaphorical, to me were very literal stories about my life at a certain point -- like "Go Places," "Challengers," and "Unguided."

"Sometimes I try to be more literal than lyrical, but they don't sound right to me. I think it comes from wanting to write songs that have kind of this dream logic to them, where they have some truth to me, but they might sound like nonsense to other people; but I guess that's poetry for the most part."

When he's not in front of the board or in a microphone booth, Newman

Regional Writers' Group Updates

A look at what's happening at some S.A.C. RWGs

Kippens, NL - This Newfoundland RWG concluded its inaugural year in June and will start up again in September. The group began the year at the Silver Dollar Lounge in Kippens and concluded at the Dreamcatcher Lounge in Stephenville. The group currently has 5 members and plans to expand in the fall.

Volunteer coordinator Smokin' Joe Wiseman released his first CD, *A Field By The Sea*, in March of this year; the CD features 10 of Wiseman's original songs. Wiseman also attended the Humber Summer Songwriting Workshop in Toronto in



PHOTO: COURTESY OF S.A.C.

Smokin' Joe

July and was honoured to perform at Hugh's Room in Toronto at the week's finale. For more info, contact Smokin' Joe Wiseman at cards@warp.nfld.net

Halifax, NS - Since the inception of the Halifax Writers' Group in April 2006, the group has been growing in numbers and creativity by leaps and bounds. On average, 15-20 members gather at 7:00 PM on the second Monday of each month at the Lion's Head Tavern, on the corner of Robie & Yonge Street in Halifax. The group has been working from John Capek's book

PHOTO: GORDON BUTLER



L-R Lisa Birt, Alan P. MacLeod, Joanne Butler

"How To Write a Hit Song Without Really Trying", and enjoyed co-writing exercises modeled after the July Black workshop attended by hosts Lisa Birt & Joanna Butler during the February ECMAs. S.A.C. Director Lennie Gallant stopped by in May and treated the group to some great advice and a few acoustic numbers. Paul Lamb (from the award-winning duo Crush) is scheduled to appear in September. For more information, contact Lisa Birt at lisa_genge@hotmail.com or Alan P. MacLeod at abadalan@gmail.com.

Montreal, QC - The Montreal Writers' Group was launched in December 2006, and is the first RWG in Quebec sponsored by the S.A.C. The group is still evolving and attracting new members, meeting once a month with enthusiasm. In May, special guest Mary Catherine Harris from Third Side Music gave an information session on publishing and copyrights, and answered many of the members' questions. The group will reconvene for regular monthly meetings in August, and has another special guest planned for the fall. For more information, contact Micheline Emond at micheliem@videotron.ca

Etobicoke, ON - "Do you think that by working just a few hours a week, you can become a hit songwriter? Daily exercise keeps an athlete fit and we, as songwriters, need to be active. We need to keep our love of music and songwriting part of our daily activity," says Liana DiMarco, host of one of S.A.C.'s longest-running RWGs in the Greater Toronto Area. The Etobicoke Writers' Group meets the first Saturday of each month at Michelle's Restaurant, 1828 Weston Rd., Etobicoke, and there a gathering of songwriters interested in sharing their love of songwriting and improving their craft meet to share stories, learn from exercises, and perform their songs. Lorenzo P., an active participant in the group, notes,



PHOTO: LiAna

Lynn Harrison

"I know that being in the group and hearing others describe their writing processes has helped me become more conscious of something that I've done without thinking in the past... it's making me see this as a craft instead of a hobby." This past spring, Lynn Harrison spoke to the group about her songwriting process, and this fall Eve Goldberg will share her skills. For more information contact Liana DiMarco at GuitarBabe@hotmail.com ☺

If you have stories from the Regional Writers' Group meetings you attend, please send them to sac@songwriters.ca. If you'd like to host a Regional Writers' Group in your area, please contact Don Quarles at don@songwriters.ca.

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Welcome *New Members!*

The S.A.C. welcomes the following new members who have joined since May, 2007

AB Jason Brazeau	BC Matthew Phoenix	ON Linda Doyle	ON Donna Pahuta
AB Troy Kokol	BC Adri-Anne Ralph	ON Mark Evenchick	ON Lee Palmer
AB Neil Macdonald	BC Preston Anthony Sawyer	ON Keith Ford	ON Stephen Pessah
AB Quentin McNamara	BC Morgan Schram	ON Steven Gazo	ON Keisha Prince
AB Brandi Morin	BC Gerald Soroka	ON David Green	ON Mario Pronovost
AB Stephanie Mortenson	BC Arthur "Chad" Thorp	ON Lynn Harrison	ON Maurizio Rossetto
AB Cyndy Pickersgill	BC Marlee Walchuk	ON Waqaas Hashmi	ON Kathleen Salvador
AB Melinda Tarcon	BC Mike Webb	ON Orville Heyn	ON Amanda Scott
AB Terrence R Taylor	BC Glenn Wootton	ON Valentine Hohn	ON Holly Sedgwick
AB Peter Zrymiak-Kissane	BC James Wright	ON Lawrie Ingles	ON Joanna Shaw
BC Monalisa Amirsetia	BC Gord H Yelich	ON James Jones	ON Paula Shear
BC Justin Chan	MB Brent Degryse	ON Kaitlin Kozelj	ON Shemira Sheriff
BC Nathan Clack	MB Kathy Kennedy	ON Deena Kruzic	ON Tammy Joy Short
BC Jesse Day	MB Jason Malloy	ON Alex Kruzic	ON Sandy Trebell
BC Cynthia Hamar	MB Richard Mckay	ON Arie Levit	ON Linda Wright
BC Cliff Howard	MB Dominique Reynolds	ON Barry Little	ON Jeff Young
BC Sarah Jaysmith	MB Robert Zirk	ON Nelly Michelle Lopez	ON Tyler-Rose Zidenberg
BC Mel Johnston	NB Bob Barclay	ON Mackenzie MacBride Ellis	ON Ania Ziemirska
BC Mandeep Khaira	NS Paul McNeill	ON Frank MacLeod	QC Andre Allore
BC Peter Lalonde	ON Pete Aasen	ON Nicola Maneto	QC Prita Chhabra
BC Graham MacPherson	ON Ciara Adams	ON Anthony Marcello	QC Glen Ethier
BC Diane Masters	ON Zainab Alhiwairis	ON Stephanie Martin	QC Audrey Gourdji
BC Don McDermid	ON Diane Bessette	ON Carolyn McCormack	QC John Hewer
BC Megan McNeil	ON Glenn Brown	ON Tim McCurry	QC Mazen Kereknawi
BC Eamonn Morris	ON Denis Chadbourn	ON Ricky McLean	QC Michael Petritsis
BC Norman Morrison	ON Wayne Chisholm	ON Raymond Melana	QC Betty Piette
BC Darhl Paley	ON Danielle Cook	ON Danielle Morrison	SK Darren Forbes
BC John Palmer	ON Roger Davies	ON Elora Mulligan	SK Suzanne Paschall
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Humber Summer Songwriting Workshop

cont'd from page 15

In the evenings, students tried out new or reworked material or simply enjoyed a uniquely appreciative audience at open mic nights. Faculty members often dropped by, mostly to watch and support, and sometimes to treat students to a performance. Jules Shear brought his entire class to one open mic, to perform the song they had written as a class that afternoon. On another night, performers were accompanied by Rik Emmett and Danny Michel on guitar! The performance opportunities also included a showcase of students at Hugh's Room in Toronto, where students played with a stellar backup band comprising Rik Emmett on guitar, Allister Bradley on keys, Derek Downham on drums, and Maury LaFoy on bass.

As always, the workshop became a close-knit community. This year, many returning students had made huge strides in their writing and performing. The workshop offers a week of total immersion in music, and an opportunity to focus on songwriting in a totally supportive and open environment. It also brings together unlikely collaborators, and many students keep in touch, sharing news or songs, or even playing shows together. The high standard of quality, incredible work ethic and warm, inviting atmosphere made the workshop an unforgettable week for everyone involved. For more information on how you can attend next year's workshop, check out Humber College's website at <http://creativeandperformingarts.humber.ca/> 

Leah Erbe recently released an EP produced by Haydain Neale, whom she first met at the Humber Songwriting Workshop in 2005.



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