

HOLLERADO | LEELA GILDAY | MISHA BOWER | LEANNE HOFFMAN



# CANADIAN MUSICIAN



## BIG WRECK

Take the Gloves Off

**Music's Mental  
Health Crisis**

We Need to  
Start Talking...

**The Ins & Outs of  
Music Management**

**Capture Killer  
Vocal Tracks!**

**Our 2019 Home  
Recording Special**

Vol. XLI No. 5

PM0040069300



Printed in Canada

\$3.50

**40**  
Est. 1979

**PLUS: How Can ACTRA RACS, Artisti & MROC Help You Get Paid?**



into a small Mackie console, I was wondering why it didn't sound like the pros. Then, when I started recording with Tom Cochrane years later at his home studio, I finally got it. Tom is an avid gear collector and had me plug his Neumann U67 into a Neve 1073 preamp then into a Urei 1176 compressor. That was it!

Now I use BAE Audio mic pres – some of the best pres out there in the Neve/API style. Choose a mic that suits the singer. If you're on a budget, try a Shure SM7B. It's around \$500 and it's a lot of singers' preferred mic, from Bonnie Raitt to Steven Tyler. Then, a compressor will take down peaks if you feel the singer needs it. I'm currently using BAE's 10DC, which is a fairly transparent compressor, but if I'm doing a rock track or want a more compressed sound, I'll go to an 1176 or LA-2A.

The right gear really does matter. It'll make your job much easier and inspire you and the singer for an optimal performance.

**CM:** You've worked with an array of singers from various genres. While I'm sure it differs from case to case, how do you typically forge a good creative relationship with a singer in the studio to get the best possible performance?

**BB:** Be responsible for the energy that you bring into the space. Energy in the room is everything. It's not about you; it's about the singer, who has to emotionally connect to the lyric in order to sing an inspired take.

Try to gauge what the singer might want – tea, lots of light, less light, light-hearted jokes, no talking at all... It's their space while they are recording. Try to make it as comfortable for them as you can. Upbeat positivity goes a long way.



**At the Console:**

**Sam Guaiana**  
(Silverstein, Story Untold)

**Go-To Vocal Setup:**

The "for-sure" things are a vintage U87 and a Neve 1073. Super original, I know, but it really is an amazing combo and it's almost impossible to make it sound bad. The EQ

points on a 1073 do so much with so little. The only thing that changes is either a distressor or a blue stripe 1176 after. This is usually vocalist-dependent – the softer stuff gets the distressor, the louder vocals get the 1176. Also, if a vocalist is a bit nasally, I'll probably opt for the distressor because the 1176 is very aggressive in the same range as the vocalist.

**CM:** When it comes to the heavier genres you work on, whether you're mixing the project or getting things primed for an outside mix engineer, how do you make sure your vocal is going to be fully present and cut through the mix?

**SG:** Compression! Aggressive vocal compression for aggressive vocals is the key. And using compressors with character – usually a blue stripe 1176 plug-in and a bit of Soundtoys' Decapitator really makes a vocal hit hard in heavy music. You want the vocals to occupy this dense space and you can't have it fighting with other stuff. Sometimes people think the solution to that is more reverb, but I find it's actually less. More short delay and slap over a lush reverb is my go-to in those situations.

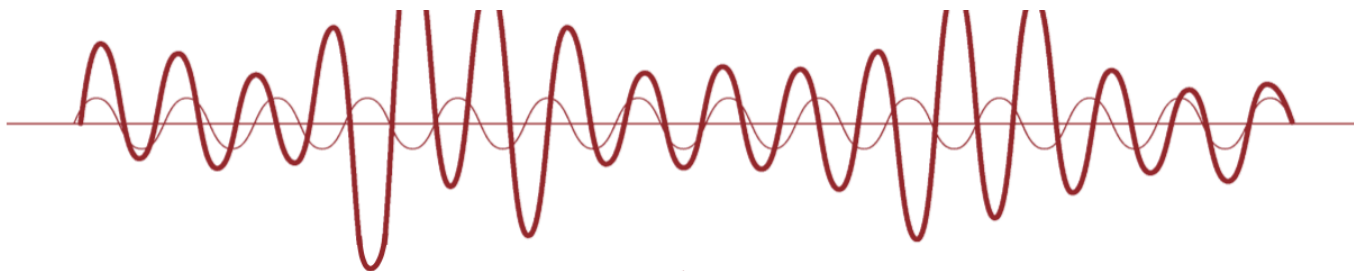


**At the Console:**

**Hill Kourkoutis**  
(Madison Violet, The Cliks)

**Go-To Vocal Setup:**

I use a UAD Apollo as my main interface so my vocal chain makes use of UAD's incredible Unison pres. I usually opt for the Neve 1073 as it is one of my favourites, followed by applying some gentle compression with the Teletronix LA-2A or Tube-Tech CL 1B. I also use the UAD Capitol Chambers plug-in in the vocalist's monitor mix for the sake of the performance but the actual signal being recorded is captured from the preamp and compressor. My go-to mics are usually a Neumann TLM-49 or my Shure SM7. I tend to go with this combo as it provides me with a warm and lush vocal but, of course, I do modify it from time to time if I feel it does not complement the vocalist's timbre.



Once the performance is nailed, I will apply additional vocal treatments to achieve a more stylized sound but I always like to work from something warm and dry to begin with so that I have more versatility on the back end.

**CM:** During the producer's panel at CMW this year, you were talking about the trial-and-error that went into miking and then getting an optimal performance from Luke Stapleton, the beatboxer in a cappella outfit Eh440, for their *Boss Level* record. Can you take us into that process and how you ultimately ended up with your final product?

**HK:** Eh440 is not your traditional a cappella group; they are a contemporary pop group that has some mega tunes, so I wanted to explore a mega sound with a vast sonic spectrum to match that despite the fact that the record was made entirely with human voices.

We began with the "beds" – in this case, Luke – so I threw up a fancy condenser mic and after many takes, it just wasn't working. The performance felt flat and didn't quite sound right, so I went into the room with Luke and asked him to beatbox in the air. I immediately noticed

that a lot of his performance and energy came from the movement of his body. I also directed my ear to his mouth and neck and realized a lot of the "sub" sounds were coming from his neck, whereas the primary attack or articulation of the beatboxing was coming from his mouth.

Getting Luke to stand still in front of a single condenser mic did not capture any of these integral elements so I ran to Long & McQuade to grab a lav mic and to Shoppers Drug Mart to grab a sponge and a razor. When I got back, Luke shaved off a patch of his beard on his neck and we taped the lav to the spot where the sub sounds were coming from. Then I grabbed my Sennheiser e865, a super dynamic cardioid handheld mic, and duct taped a sponge to it so that Luke could hold the mic and move around for his performance without hearing his hands rubbing against the mic. Finally, I threw up some room mics for some dimension so it didn't sound too direct. We pressed record again and the results were incredible. Luke recorded all of his main grooves with this set-up and then to give us more control in the mix, I got him to overdub individual snare, kick, and hi-hat sounds that I layered in with the main grooves in order to control individual levels and effects and make everything sound bigger.


**CASTING**

**WE'RE  
SEEKING  
AWESOME  
TALENT**

MUSICIANS  
ALL INSTRUMENTS

[CIRQUEDUSOLEIL.COM/CASTING](http://CIRQUEDUSOLEIL.COM/CASTING)

**TAKE  
YOUR  
PLACE**

  
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL