KARA-MOON.COM presents The K-M Review

You want to know about music?

You want to know about home recording?

You want to learn from the experience of others?

You've come to the right place!

Welcome to the new KM-zine, a free internet publication for artists and home recording enthusiasts.

This publication represents another stage in the Kara-moon journey, offering free content and services to the internet music community.
We hope you will enjoy this first edition, entirely written by KM members. We invite other readers and musicians to join us and write articles for this free monthly publication. The future of this publication is completely in the hands of our contributors.

A word of thanks also to "Off the wall designs" who created the complete layout of the magazine.

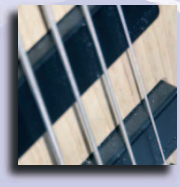
KARA-MOON.COM presents The K-M Review

No.1 June, 2008

Welcome to the first issue of, what we intend to be, our monthly publication.

In this first issue we are going to give you a set of articles, written by our members, which we hope will give you a greater insight into the world of home music recording.

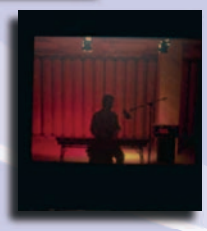
1. Music theory. Part 1.



2. Talking bass. Part 1.

3. NI Kore review.

4. Software of the month.



5. Artist of the month.

6. Repo Audio - take back what's yours.

7. Hardware of the month.

The reviews and opinions within this publication are solely the opinions of the individual authors.

1. Music theory. Part 1. Written by Kara

back to contents

Reading Guitar and Bass Tab
Tablature (tab for short) is a system of notation that graphically represents strings and frets of the fretboard or neck. Each note is indicated by placing a number which indicates the fret to play, on the appropriate string.

The Basics of Reading Guitar Tab
To start out, tabs are written in lines, each line representing a string on the instrument. The thickest string being the bottom most line and the thinnest string being the topmost
So, it is actually designed in a way that, when you put a tab in front of you flat on the table, you see the strings in the same order as you look down to your instrument when you are holding it.

```
G|--------------------
D|--------------------
A|--------------------
E|--------------------
```

Numbers are then placed on these lines to represent finger positions on the fret board. If you read the diagram below you would play this on a bass by putting your finger just behind the 2nd fret on the 5th string (or the second thickest string). As musical notes this would read as follows B B B C# B A, each with a rest between them. The 'zero' represents playing an open string. So in this case you would play the A open with no finger position on the fretboard.

```
G|--------------------
D|--------------------
A|2-2-2-4-2-0------
E|--------------------
```

As you can see, you read a tab from the left to right as you would read a time line.
To introduce time divisions you can introduce horizontal bars to show the measures.

```
G|----|----|----|
D|-67-|-45-|----|
A|3--4|5--2|3---|
E|----|----|----|
```

In this tab we have 3 4/4 measures (|----|) and for every tick of the measure it shows which note to play. In measure 1 we play 4 notes one after the other, pressing 3 fret on the A string, 6th on the D string, 7th on the D string and finally 4th on the A string.

As you can see, tabs have one short coming, it doesn't show the length of the note... In bass this is not a very big problem, because you usually follow the groove of the drums, so it's easy to figure out.
The same system is used for guitar tabs, only difference is that you represent the 6 strings

next page

```
e|--------------------
B|--------------------
G|--------------------
D|--------------------
A|--------------------
E|--------------------
```

To tab a chord the notes would be placed in a vertical line upon the horizontal ones. This diagram represents a C Chord. You would strum the bottom 5 strings of the guitar in one motion if you were to read this tab properly

```
e|0-------------------
B|1-------------------
G|0-------------------
D|2-------------------
A|3-------------------
E|--------------------
```

Since there is no number on the E-string, you wouldn't play that string.
And this one you would strum the ‘C Chord’ 2 times in a 4/4 time sig, once one the first beat and once on the third beat.

```
e|0-0-|-----------------
B|1-1-|-----------------
G|0-0-|-----------------
D|2-2-|-----------------
A|3-3-|-----------------
E|----|-----------------
```

To make this tutorial complete, below you'll find an overview of symbols used in tabs.

* h - hammer on
* p - pull off
* b - bend string up
* r - release bend
* / - slide up
* \ - slide down
* v - vibrato (sometimes written as ~)
* t - right hand tap
* s - legato slide
* S - shift slide
* - natural harmonic
* [n] - artificial harmonic
* n(n) - tapped harmonic
* tr - trill
* T - tap
* TP - trem. picking
* PM - palm muting
* \n/ - tremolo bar dip; n = amount to dip
* \n - tremolo bar down
* n/ - tremolo bar up
* /n\ - tremolo bar inverted dip
* = - hold bend; also acts as connecting device for hammers/pulls
* <> - volume swell (louder/softer)
* x - on rhythm slash represents muted slash
* o - on rhythm slash represents single note slash

Example :
A Hammer On
A hammer on is executed by picking a note and then hammering done with the fretting hand on the second note. The second note isn't actually picked but kind of echoes the first one. Here is an example of how hammer-ons are written in tab:

```
G|--------|---------------
D|--------|---------------
A|--5h7---|---------------
E|5h7-----|---------------
```

In this example you would play the following in a 8/8 measure : 5th fret on the thickest E-string on the first 1/8 followed directly by a hammer on on the 7th fret of the E-string, then one the third 1/8 of the measure 5th fret on the A string followed by a hammer on on the 7th fret of the A string.

As you can see, once you understand the principle it is pretty basic, but a lot of guitar players and bass players prefer it above reading 'normal notation'

2. Talking bass. Part 1. Written by Kara

back to contents

Talking bass - Part 1

1. Who is that bass player and what is his role?

To keep it easy, let's start with the following statement :

The bass player gives support to the rhythmic groove that the drummer puts in place. Although this is a very general statement, it describes the role of a bass player well, and as such he has to keep this in mind.

2. Step 1 - The rhythmic approach

No matter what happens, the bass player can express his playing skill and add his harmonic content to a song, the most important aspect of his playing will be to keep the rhythm. This means that he has to be self assured and know his instrument so well that he can play without thinking.

How does he get to that level ? A simple answer, practice is the word.

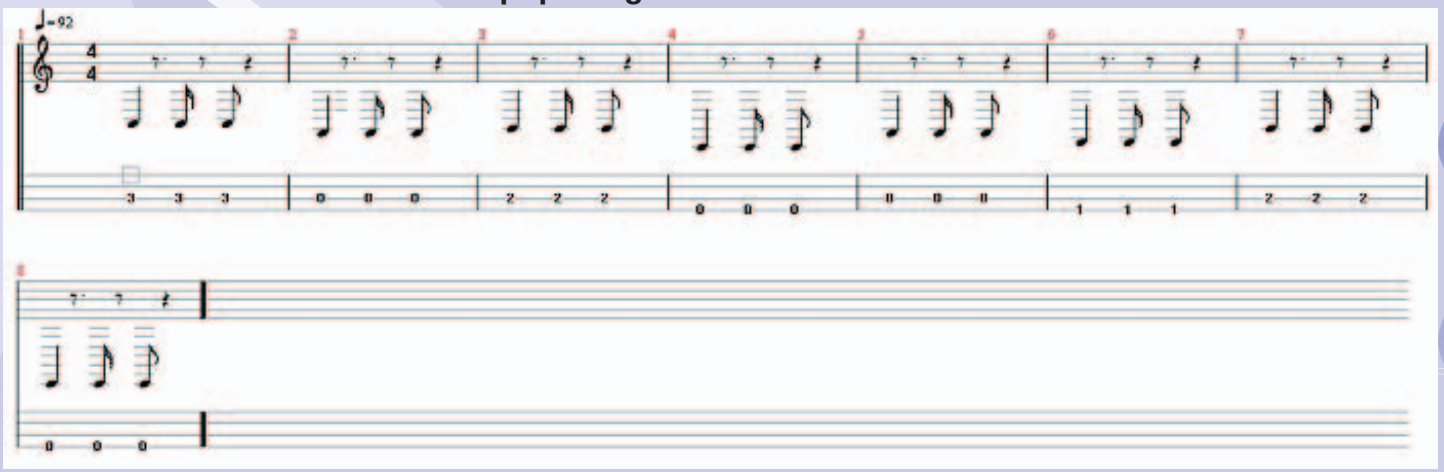
Let's see how good you are at bass playing.

In the first exercise we will limit ourselves to a basic groove. The bass player will listen to the kick drum, and follow this groove, playing the root of each chord in the right groove.

This is the basic technique of bass playing. It's also the reason that a lot of people think that a bass guitar is an easy instrument to play. Well, after all, it isn't that easy, because a number of skills are required.

The bass player needs to :
- Read a chord chart because he'll need to follow the chord that the guitar or keyboard is playing.
- Know the neck of his instrument perfectly. During the song he won't have the time to think where the next note to be played is without losing the groove.
- Listen to the drummer to stay in the groove.
- Have a perfect rhythmic feeling.

Do you think that it is easy? Let's try this with a simple exercise.
Here is the chord chart of a nice pop song.



As you can see, the bass player will only play the root of each chord.
There is another difficulty here also, the length of the notes. This is something a lot of beginning bass players do wrong. They start the note on the right beat, but don't respect the length of the note. That makes the playing dull and breaks the groove.
So, in our exercise, take attention of muting that string for the eight and sixteenth notes !

You can download the .mp3 file for this exercise in the forum, in the KM-zine section.
http://www.kara-moon.com/forum/index.php?board=47.0

next page

If you think that was easy, then you are ready to go up to the next step.

3. Step 2 - The Harmonic Approach.

Once you feel confident with your instrument and you can follow any groove without thinking, (and you really 'feel' the rhythm), it is time to think how you, as a bass player, can add harmonic content to a song.

Now what do we need to add harmonic content ?
- Obviously all skills from step 1, keep practicing those are really important.
- You'll need to learn how chords are structured, because you will use the notes of the chords to build your groove.

Now, how are chords structured, do we need a lot of theory to understand this? This is a difficult question because there are 2 types of bass players:
- Those who know a lot of theory and can apply it to their instrument.
- Those who don't know theory but know the neck of their instrument, (yes, again that neck...), and the patterns to play over a chord.

Which is the best method? I honestly can't answer this question, I know excellent musicians in both categories.

To make this series of articles pleasant to read, I've decided to avoid theory as much as possible and concentrate on the playing.

One last piece of advice before we start talking about patterns. Don't forget another basic rule for bass players: "LESS is MORE". When you start to play real riffs, don't overdo it. Let the other players in your band express themselves too.

4. Basic patterns

To build riffs you'll need to know a couple of patterns for the most common form of chords. You'll use those patterns to arpeggiate the notes of the chord in a rhythmic way, that gives support to your drummer. This is where you and your drummer will layout the groove of the song.

It is important that you memorize those patterns visually. Once you know how to play a basic G chord, it's just a matter of changing the position on the neck to play the same pattern to play a C chord. And you know already now where that G and C note is on the neck, don't you?

In this first issue of 'Talking Bass' we will limit ourselves to the most common chord structures. Will this limit you in your playing ?
Not at all !

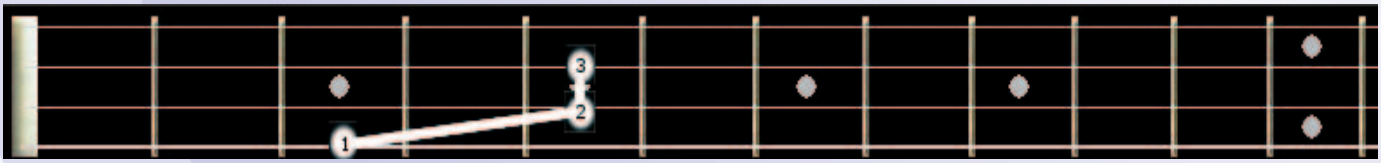
If you are not a specialized jazz player you will be able to play your groove on 90% of the existing pop, rock and folk songs. This pattern of root, fifth, and octave of a chord is your best friend.

back to contents

4.1 A standard chord.

Puzzled over what to play over a standard chord? As just mentioned, root, fifth, and octave is a good choice. Now how does this translate into a pattern on the neck?

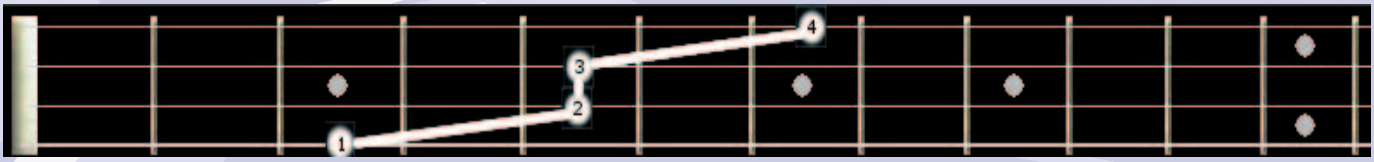
Here we go :



With this simple pattern, you could already play a lot of songs, just by playing some notes of the pattern in the right place on the neck.
Be aware that you don't always have to play all notes of the patterns, you could simply build a groove with the root and the fifth, or like in a lot of techno songs, the root and the octave.

But why not learn things the right way from the start and learn the full pattern?

Here we go :



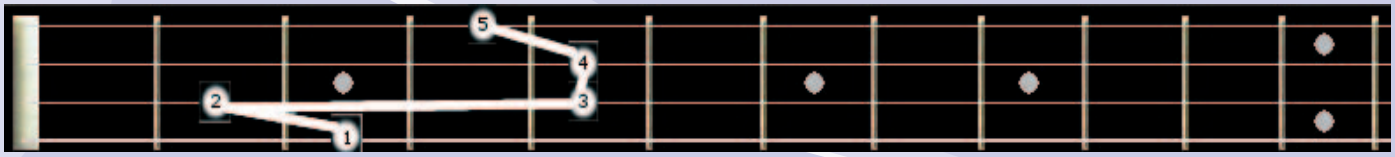
As you can see, the same basic notes but extended with the third and the fifth one octave above the root.

Be careful to use that third on standard chords; it doesn't always sound good and could clash with other instruments, but once you know how that third sounds, you'll know when to use it and when to avoid it.

4.2 A standard minor chord.

This is an easy one since we know that the different between a normal chord and a minor chord is the fact that the third is lowered a semitone. Having that in mind you could, starting from figure 2, create the pattern yourself.

But to be sure, here it is



As you can see, you could play the same root, fifth, and octave as for a standard chord. So what is the different from a bass player's point of view then?

On a standard chord, in most situations you will avoid the third (that is in pop songs, in jazz and walking bass lines you won't but that's for later).

On minor chords, very often you want to emphasize the slightly sad tone of a minor chord and there the third is your best friend.

That's it for the first issue of this series of 'Talking Bass'. I hope you enjoyed reading it.

Next issue we will see some extended forms of chords and we'll focus on our first groove.

Until then, keep practicing

3. NI Kore review. Written by Marc JX8P

back to contents

I've been using Kore 2 more and more lately so I thought it'd be nice to do a little review of it. I'm quite enthusiastic about this software which is very intuitive and easy to play and amazingly complex and flexible if you dive into the sound creation and editing facilities.

A short introduction

To start with, a short introduction as to what Kore 2 does: basically, the Kore platform is a combination of a software host for MIDI, VST and VSTi plugins and a hardware controller. Though the software can be used without the controller, it does make 'playing' the software a lot easier if you have it connected.

The software is amazingly flexible. You can host loads of VSTi's, set them up so they play at the same time or for different zones on your master keyboard. You can send them through separate VST effects if you want and route the audio to different audio outs (if you have them). You can tweak the incoming midi data using midi transformers, you can add a midi file player (which can be triggered by an incoming midi note if you want), there's and arpeggiator and a step sequencer...

Any automatable parameter in a VSTi or VST - or even most of the internal structure of such a setup such as channel volumes or pan - can be assigned to one of the eight knobs on the control hardware, or to one of the eight buttons that it has. The control hardware also has a display which can display those parameter names and, of course, several pages of such assignments can be set up (called controller pages).

You can of course store such a setup - complete with all kinds of tags and metadata which makes finding back such presets easy in the future.

Kore 2 contains loads of presets for all of the NI instruments, most of them with 8 different 'morph states' that you can morph between. But the nicest thing is that NI have fitted Kore 2 with the synth engines (and the Kontakt 2 engine too) of most of their software products which means that even if you don't own those you can play Kore 2 presets that use these engines. You can't open the synths and samplers in that case, but you will be able to use Kore 2 to tweak the parameters that the sound programmers have set up. Kore 2 contains loads of presets, all neatly tagged and fitted with metadata and controller pages. They are also releasing Kore 2 soundpacks, which are packs of additional presets with a very nice price.

If this has gotten you interested: NI are about to release a free version of the Kore 2 software with a select number of presets, so you can always check that one out!

Installation

Getting started with Kore is really a very simple affair - no more difficult than installing your usual software synth or host. You install the software (there's a standalone and a plugin version for use in your sequencer, both are largely similar in function) and the presets it contains, you install the driver for the controller and you connect the controller to the USB port of your computer. Authentication is via the NI license control center which asks for the serial code you got with the software, then connects to NI and authorizes the software on your computer. You can authorize the software on two different machines simultaneously. Should you later dump one of these machines, you can remove it from your account at NI and thus free the authorization for a new computer. It's all very quick and easy and one of the best schemes I know. After this, Kore 2 will scan your VSTi/VST folders for plugins (you'll be able to add other folders and rescan them later) to build up a plugin database. After that, the fun begins.

next page

Finding a sound

The database of presets is one of the most important assets of Kore 2. Aside from its name, every preset is fitted with several tags, such as: 'Synth Pad', 'Layered', 'Warm', 'New Age' for a particular synth pad sound, or 'Guitar', 'Distorted', 'Metallic', 'Rock' for a particular lead guitar sound. Loads of tags can be assigned to any one preset, along with a personal score for that preset so you'll be able to quickly find your favourites again. The database can also score information such as who made the preset, notes on the preset and what plugins were used in it which all helps tremendously when you are looking for a certain sound quality or you need to find a preset back that you used before.

Now, say I want a nice synth lead. All I have to do is to open the sound browser and click on the 'synth lead' tags in the tag lists to the left. To the right I have my results window and there I'll see the names of all the presets that conform to my selection. I can try one of these by just double clicking it. If there are still too many, I can add another search tag to the left - say 'Classic Mono Lead', and even other tags to further refine my search. Once again, the results window will directly change to reflect what tags I select and I'm just a double click away from playing the sounds in question.

Having selected a sound, it's loaded into the 'Sound matrix' which sounds very impressive (and which is) but which can basically be seen as a kind of mixer with several channels, each of which can contain one or more plugins (more of this later when I'll be talking about sound creation). The presets all have several controller pages which have been set up by the sound designers for the specific sound that you've just loaded. A synth preset, for example, is very likely therefore to give you access to the filter settings, probably some basic ADSR settings and other switches and tweakable parameters that are useful. Most sounds also have eight different morph states which you can either select directly or which you can morph between by using your mouse or - even better - your controller. Having the controller pages and the morph states really means that you're able to quickly tweak an existing sound and play it very expressively. What also helps here is that the eight endless controllers have a very high resolution. Another cool thing here: not only does the controller show you what knob and what button controls what in the display, each button also has a built in status led showing the status of the switch it controls and each knob is touch sensitive: if you just touch it it will show its current value in the display of the controller.

I'm in control!

Ah yes, the controller. Kore 2 can basically be completely controlled via the controller. Sound selection, sound tweaking and all. The controller looks and feels very classy, silvery metal and shiny black are the main elements here. All lights are red as is the display. The left hand side is the tweaking section; here are the eight buttons and eight knobs that control your sounds and they feel very sturdy. The middle section contains the display, four arrow buttons (for controlling the menus) and a stop, run and record button (intended for the Kore 2 sequencers and such) and to the right is a big alpha dial for making precise adjustments in values with a ring of six special buttons around it (for jumping to the menu or to the controller pages of a sound). While the arrow buttons and the six buttons around the alpha dial feel a bit more flimsy to me, they work well and in the Kore 2 version they are improved so I heard (I still use the Kore 1 controller as I got Kore 1 and then upgraded to Kore 2 in software only).

Using the controller is really a pleasure; the tweak knobs and buttons work well and give you quick access without needing to open a plugin or its menu pages if it has those. Since it can also allow you to simultaneously control several plugins within a preset, this really makes it an interesting performance tool too. Tweak the volume levels of a backing synth line controlled by the Kore arpeggiator, raise the filter frequency of an arpeggiated synth while simultaneously starting another arpeggiated synth line followed by a quick selection of another patch to play from your keyboard so you can play along to it? All in a days work (and exactly the kind of stuff I'm programming into it at the moment).

Next: some basic sound editing; layering and setting up splits.

4. Software of the month.

back to contents

MMA - Musical Midi Accompaniment, Part 1

By Bob van der Poel

In this short series of articles I hope to show you why I wrote MMA, how to do some basic song writing with it, how to create your own style files and some cute tips and tricks.

Just what is this program?

MMA is really just a very fancy metronome which understands chords and rhythms. A fancy metronome? really? Okay, it might be best if we go back to the beginning ... not of time, but about five years ago when I started to write MMA.

I play the saxophone (as well as a number of other instruments). But, saxophone was the newest and was demanding a lot of my practice time. Mastering the mechanics of the horn was one thing; doing that in time to music was another. I'd been spoiled over the years playing
electronic organs and keyboards with their auto-accompaniments. Nothing like that on sax. So, at first, I played the chords on a keyboard, recorded them and then practiced with the result. I also purchased some "Music Minus One" CDs. All this helped, but it seemed to me that a computer program should do this for me.

I'd seen a demo of the "Band In A Box" software on a PC. Cool, but I run Linux. I did a bit of investigating and really didn't like the BiaB solution: proprietary file formats, the on-going expense, and a sense of a lock in to a vendor. Plus, I'd have to run it on a PC or Mac. Not cool in my mind.

Being rather silly at times, I decided to write a simple program which would generate some beats and play some chords to my MIDI keyboard. After a bit of struggling and reading I figured out how to generate a MIDI file using the Python language.

Why Python? No particular reason other than I'd been playing with it at the time. I certainly had doubts as to its suitability and speed, but I've not had any problems with this. The joy of Python is that it permits very fast development of new code. These days I've forgotten most of what I've learned about C and other languages.

I did a lot of hacking before I posted my first Alpha version for the world to pound on! But, the basics were there.

MMA uses two files to produce a MIDI file:

We will cover the second file, the library, in a future article. But, first let's look at your song file. Let's say you have a song called, creatively, "My Song". And let's further agree that this is a Latin Tango played at 120 beats per minute. A few minutes with a text editor might generate the file "mysong.mma" which looks something like:

```
Tempo 120
Groove Tango
1  C
2  F
3  G7
4  C  / Em
5  C
6  /
7  F
8  C
```

next page

To create a MIDI file you just need to let MMA does it's magic. From a shell prompt type:

```
$: mma mysong
```

and the MIDI "mysong.mid" will be created. MMA is kind enough to inform you that the song is 8 bars long and should play for about a half a minute.

Fire up your MIDI player to listen.

Before we leave this example, I do want to have a better look at the song file.

The first line in the file sets the tempo in beats per minute. By default, MMA generates all its songs at 120 bpm, so this command really isn't necessary in this file. Also, not so obvious is the fact that you can change the tempo at any point in the song. If you wanted to have the last 2 bars played faster you could insert a "Tempo 140" between bars 6 and 7.

The second line in the file sets the style of the piece. In this case we've used a basic Tango, but MMA ships with nearly 700 different styles so you're sure to find something suitable. If not, stay tuned because we'll show you how to create your own styles in a upcoming article. Again, we can change styles at any time in the song. So, following from our tempo example, above, we could insert "GrooveTangoEnd" right after our new Tempo to give a fast ending.

Finally we get to the chords. Each line in the file consists of a number and some chord symbols. The number represents the bar number of your song. It is optional, but it makes debugging a lot simpler! Following the number are a series of chords. The style of the piece
determines the maximum number of chords you can have in a bar. In most cases this is four (but in a waltz it'd be three). If you have too many chords in a bar MMA will print out a helpful error message.

MMA assumes that you want the same chord for the duration of the bar. So, the line:

```
1 C
```

will generate a C chord on each beat.

Need to change mid-bar? Not a problem. Use the "/" repeat symbol and another chord symbol. So,

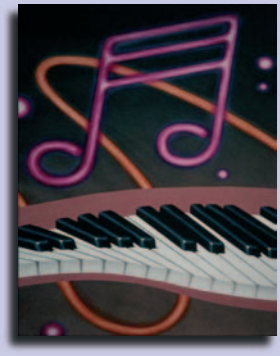
```
1  C  /  Dm  Em
```

will use a C for the first 2 beats, a Dm on the third and a Em on the fourth.

If you use the same chord in successive bars, the repeat symbol comes in handy as well:

```
5  C
6  /
```

puts each beat in bars 5 and 6 to a C chord.



So, grab a copy of MMA and play a bit. It's free ... what a deal.

http://www.mellowood.ca/mma

5. Artist of the month. Bob van der Poel.

back to contents

**For our first artist of the month we have chosen Bob van der Poel.
Not only a great musician but also an active moderator of the KM forum.**

**Bob just released his first CD, called Cedars.
Cedars is inspired by the majesty and beauty of British Columbia's Kootenay region.
The CD can be bought directly on the website of Bob at the following address : http://www.mellowood.ca**

We used the occasion to ask him a couple of questions.

> 1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself as an artist?

I've been playing one thing or another for most of my life. I started out on accordion when I was 12 or 13. Matter of fact, I worked my way through high school teaching accordion ... good money for a kid in those days.

Played a bit of flute in high school as well. Haven't had a flute in my hands for more than a minute since then, but I'm sure I could play one in a few weeks of practice. Funny how the fingers never seem to forget.

I started to play electronic organ in my 20's. Not nearly as geeky an image, if I recall. Had a little teaching business in the late 80's when I lived in Edmonton. But, the teaching gig wasn't all that much fun. A complete pain to have to deal with people who didn't practice, didn't listen, didn't care ... even if they did pay me every week.

I started to play saxophone about 10 years ago. I thought it'd be an easy thing to do ... after all, it's a limited range and you only play one note at a time. Wow, was I mistaken on that. Hardest thing I've ever tried to do. Really. But, I think I'm started to understand the instrument now.

> 2. What are your influences in music ?

Jazz from the 30's though the 50's. I'm not too big on the big band stuff. But, just love to listen to small group playing. Guys like Stan Getz, Ike Quebec and Gerry Mulligan on sax; Brubeck and Oscar Peterson on piano. I'm not big on electronica or the wild, non-melodic stuff. Oh, and if this is to be truthful I have to admit that I do like the older rock stuff. Bobby Darin, Mommas and Papas, and The Beatles ... and a lot more. My musical tastes are pretty eclectic ... just don't make me listen to any more Country and Western!

> 3. What equipment do you use ?

I have a Keilwerth Tenor sax with a RPC mouthpiece. Took a long time to find the "right" mouthpiece for the horn. Of course I have a lot of "other stuff" around. A few more saxophones, keyboards, an accordion and a huge Kawai organ.

**I have to put in a plug for my favorite new toy: the Zoom H4 recorder.
Amazing bit of technology!**

next page

> 4. Do you play live ?

Yes, but not that often. I was playing in a community band for years, but that got old (too much of the same old crap week after week). I do the occasional solo gig, but not nearly as much as I should. I've been in a few small groups over the years, but they are really hard to keep going ... different folks have different interests and priorities in their lives.

> 5. How do you think does the internet influences the music industry ?

Well, it certainly makes music and music production much more accessible. Not sure if this is a good thing or not. I've heard a lot of terrible stuff passing for music in the last few years. Maybe this is just my age (I'm in my late 50's) showing, but I really don't know.

Certainly for me it's a wonderful tool. I can research players, styles, etc. Get tools and advice. Certainly I would never have completed my CD without the help from the folks I know only via the internet.

> 6. Would you sign a contract with a major label ?

Not a chance. First, I really don't expect them to come knocking at my door. Second, I would like to continue to enjoy my music. In my nightmare I'd get signed and have to travel 200 days a year to promote my stuff playing the same 10 songs night after night. Aggggghhhh!

I feel very fortunate that I've never had to rely on music to pay my bills.

> 7. What is your favourite internet spot

Besides the Kara-Moon forums? I'd have to say that these days it's youtube. I can't believe how many different videos there are on that site. I want to hear how Nina Simone sang Wild is the Wind ... well, there it is. Amazing.

> 8. Anything else you want to say about yourself ?

Naw, I'm sure I've bored your readers enough already.

back to contents

6. Repo Audio - take back what's yours.

Written by Oren Thomas Fisher

Take back control of your sound.

Get OUT of the studio and into your own digital production environment where what you say, goes! Record when YOU want to, mixdown as many times as it takes to get it RIGHT, and tweak that master 'til it sends a shiver down your spine.

Mastering your music at home on a personal computer...

Episode 1. Get to know your gear.

The audio file

- a digital recording is known as an audio file, and for mastering purposes is usually in ".wav" format
- start with a decently mixed audio file. That means no unintended ambient noise or pops, clicks or glitches
- if you're mastering for someone else and it's crap, send it back. You deserve a well crafted mixdown as a place to start.

The computer

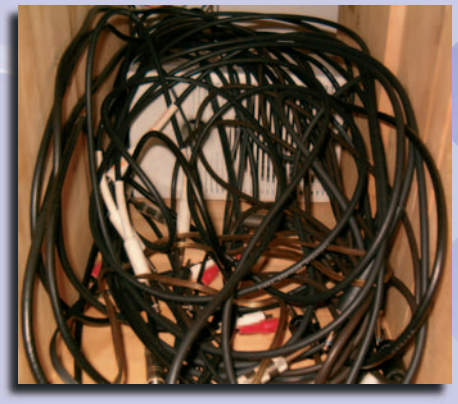
- 32 or 64bit processor, single core will do (I prefer AMD)
-7200rpm hard drive with a 16mb buffer, one will do fine
-1 gigabyte of RAM (if you're unlucky enough to be stuck with Windoze Vista, get 2)
-quiet cooling fans

The operating system

-a Mac is good...if you're rich
-Windoze can offer either 2000Pro or XP, both reasonably solid.
-Linux offers several good ones, some specifically for music production. If you really want to learn the craft and make your own decisions, go Linux. Most folks I know use Ubuntu Studio or 64studio.

The audio card

-Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy - a bit of a toy, but will get you there...not Linux friendly
-MAudio 2496 - the M-Audio gear is all business and my personal preference (surprised?)



The software

-for audio mastering I use an open-source program called Audacity. It works with both Windoze and Linux, and with the LADSPA plugins from Steve Harris and the LAME MP3 audio compression codec, you are all the way downtown.
(anyone who tries to tell you that first-rate pro audio mastering is not possible with Audacity is horribly mis-informed)

next page

back to contents

The monitor system

- a good old stereo integrated amp with headphone jack and big full-range speakers is an excellent choice - cheap and plentiful

-the other option is those tiny stereo "satellites" with a subwoofer. Cambridge Soundworks PCWorks is my choice (something about the woofer located at a distance on the floor provides a very accurate sonic image).

-learn how a well mastered audio file sounds on your gear. Assemble a selection of your favourite pro recordings and pay attention to how they sound on your monitor system. When mastering, try to duplicate the effect.

Your ears

-these are your most valuable tools - look after them! Monitor at reasonable levels, and take frequent breaks. Keep the muscles of your neck, jaw and shoulders relaxed - some variation of yoga or other stretching regimen will serve you well. Get healthy, stay well rested, avoid excesses of caffeine, alcohol, and food. Avoid pharmaceuticals and recreational drugs.

Next month: **Episode 2.** Tuning up your audio file.

7. Hardware of the month.

Digitech RP12 - GSP1101

Written by Oren Thomas Fisher

1996 was a good year for recording and performing guitarists alike, with Digitech's RP12 and RP120(complete with vacuum tube) multi-effects processors/pre-amps providing a complete pallette of programmable digital and analog effects, available in rack-mountable or floor pedal-array models. Quiet, rugged, dependable, and versatile, these units were designed and built in North America by guitarists for guitarists.

Then, fashions in guitar processing changed, and.... enter the amp modelling craze.
Want to sound like some old hippy with a vintage Vox AC30? Just plug in, and push a button. Another button for black-face Fender, one for Marshall overkill, several for various speaker cabinet combinations, and even a few pre-sets that promise to ape the complete rig of your favorite guitar star.
And for better or worse, Digitech jumped in with every imaginable amp-pickup-cabinet-stompbox emulation, all stuffed into an array of shiny boxes.
For those who wanted to go with their own thoughts on how an electric guitar sounds best? Out of luck... but only for about 12 years...

2008 promises to be a very good year for those of us who like their effects and pre-amp in one package, with the advent of Digitech's GSP1101.
Back to doing what they do best, their latest machine looks (and sounds) like just the thing for those old-school pickers who still have a few brain cells intact, and for new players who prefer to define their own sound.

My 12 year old RP12 still works like the professional tool it is, but when it's time to replace my trusty tone machine, it's nice to know the crew down there in Salt Lake City has a new rig that will help me sound just like... me.

next page

back to contents

Digitech RP12 Specifications (1996)

General Specs:

Effects At Once:

Up to 9, Total Effects: Over 30

Effects:

Compressor, Heavy Sustain, Overdrive & Grunge Distortions, Intelligent Pitch Shifting, Smooth Pitch, Smooth Whammy, Slap-Back-Stereo Ping-Pong, 2 Tap Delay, 4 Tap Delay, Delay Modulation, Multi-Effect Reverb, Bigverb, Gated & Reverse Reverb, Chorus, Flange, Comb Filter, Noise Gate, Silencer, Cabinet Emulator, Parametric EQs, Stereo Imaging, Digital Mixing, Auto Panner, Tremolo, Pitch Shifter, Phaser, Whammy, Wah, Auto Wah.

Total Programs:

128 Factory, 128 User, Algorithms, 36.

Floor Controller:

Accesses programs and enables/disables individual effects, toggles effect parameters, and includes a built-on expression pedal

Processing Specs:

Processor:

24 bit S-DISC(TM) VLSI

Frequency Response:

20Hz-20kHz, +0, -3dB

Signal to Noise Ratio:

>90dB; ref=max. signal, 22kHz measurement bandwidth

Sampling Rate:

39kHz

THD:

Less than 0.04% at 1kHz

Misc Specs:

MIDI:

In, Out/Thru, Basic Implementation

Size:

2.5" H x 24.25"W x 8.5" D with Expression Pedal forward

Weight:

7.6 lbs (3.47kg)

http://www.digitech.com/products/GSP1101/GSP1101_Demo.php

KARA-MOON.COM presents The K-M Review

No.1 June, 2008

We, at Kara-Moon, hope that you have found this set of articles to be both informative and entertaining.

Kara-Moon is made up of people just like you. Those who have a passion for music and home recording and wish to share that passion with like minded musicians from around the world.

We hope that you enjoy your visits to our Auditorium and only ask you to add your voice to ours in spreading the word around the globe.

Thank you for visiting us.

Designed and compiled for Kara-Moon
by

Off The Wall designs

www.offthewallart.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk