

WHAT'S ON

Text: Brad Watts

Sydney's **GAS** has just welcomed the all-singing, all-dancing, Buzz Pringle on board. Buzz is known around the traps as being the managing director and senior audio engineer at **Stellar Sound** for the last two decades. GAS has also just installed the uber-amazing two-bay Fairlight Dream II Constellation, which apparently looks like a spaceship on steroids according to Blair (let's hope it doesn't break out in acne and get all aggressive). Blair Joscelyne has taken out the 2009 Melbourne Advertising & Design Club award for Best Original Music for his composition for the Origin Energy *Happy Papercrafts* TV commercial. His collection of toy pianos and keyboards (now numbering over 50) has also been photographed for a coffee-table book on alternate music creation with the photos to also appear as part of an exhibition in Sydney during 2010.

The Australian Songwriters Association has just crowned **Tony King** the 'Australian Songwriter of the Year'. King also won an unprecedented three awards, taking out 'Best Song' in the Open and Folk/Acoustic categories, as well as the 'Best Lyrics' award. Tony has an extensive list of credits including teaming up for songwriting and lead guitarist duties with Andrew Strong of Commitments fame. He was also a script writer for the radio comedy series *How Green Was My Cactus*, now in its 23rd year of political satire. Check out his *Wine into Water* project – creating water-wells in Ethiopia from music.

Sameer SenGupta of **Bombay Brothel** notoriety, has finally put his long overdue album to bed. Working alongside Ken Cloud, the album is entitled *Proximo*, and will be infiltrating the dance fraternity under the moniker of Pocket 808. Due out in February, the album features a host of Australian singers, including Nathan Hudson from Faker, Aya Larkin

from Skunkhour, Ali Omar (R.I.P.), Jamie Lloyd, Royce Doherty, Gina Mitchell of Basslines, and one as yet unnamed mystery singer.

Over at **Trackdown Scoring Stage** house engineer Daniel Brown has been busy working with producer Max Lambert on the music for Sydney's New Years Eve Celebrations.

While in Sydney on tour with the Black Eyed Peas, Will.I.Am popped into the studio again for a few sessions, culminating in Trackdown's studio manager, Elaine Beckett, producing the filming of the BEP's Sydney concert. Trackdown's Technical Director/Lead Engineer, Simon Leadley, spent time with composer Felicity Fox completing the 5.1 mix for her score for the short film, *Wall Boy*, and engineer Tim Ryan is working as music editor on the feature film *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, starring Katie Holmes.

While we're on the subject of Trackdown, Brent Heber of Digidesign infamy in collaboration with the Trackdown crew are in the process of fitting out a 5.1 mix suite, dubbed 'Sumsound at Trackdown' – set to open on February 1st. The cinema premix facility will feature a pile of high-falutin' Digidesign equipment and a somewhat enormous 150-inch cinema screen. Watch this space for further details.

Down the hill at the **Brain Studios**, Sound Casino and Chicks Who Love Guns have just wrapped up an EP recording with Clayton Segelov in Studio A. Canberra mathcorers, Inside The Exterior, have begun pre-production for their debut release. Atmospheric doom bands, Mona's Lament, and The Veil, have been tracking new material in the Brain. Wollongong rockers, Tetanus Rig, have also recorded an EP with Clayton.

Got any news about the happenings in your studio or venue? Email Brad BW: brad@alchemedia.com.au

Bobby 'Dodgehuana' Scott has again returned from Turkey where he's been completing a site inspection for the 2010 Anzac Day proceedings. He's also been recording music by Bree van Reyk and Nick Wales for *Happy as Larry* – Sean Parker's dance production for the Sydney Festival. Bob is also writing music for Alex Harrison's *Dark, not too Dark*, and doing music and sound for a large surround-sound PA at CarriageWorks Theatre (Australia) during February. Added to the Dodgehuana schedule are workshops and sound experiments for Damien Ricketson's piece *Fractured Again* for the Sydney Festival, and an album mix for Jungle Hammer.

Dave Sparks's **Pirate Studios**, tucked away at the edge of Bournda National Park near Tathra in NSW has enjoyed another busy few months involving recording the Moruya Jazz festival for ABC South East NSW, mixing live tracks for the Lime Spiders, mixing the Happy Hate Me Nots, as well as tracking albums and mastering for The Cliffs, Rebecca Moore, TNT, 3 Wheeled Ute, and country artist Cameron Cusak. Dave's also tracking and heading up production of albums for Daniel Champagne and Matt Sothern for a Pirate Records release.

In the deep south, **Sing Sing** is buzzing and busy – not only with bookings but also with a recently inaugurated maintenance and repair regime. Rejuvenation procedures have been carried out on all three LA4s and all four GML EQs, while the Focusrite ISA 110 from the Neve Room has had its 100,000km service. Topping off the revamp is a modification to the CBS compressor to include attack, release and threshold controls. It's also acquired a few more new toys to play with, including an original pair of UREI LA3 compressors, a 1950s Gates compressor, a Roland RE501 Space Echo and



PONY MUSIC RECORDING

Pony Music's new studio, located on an industrial estate in Hallam (an outer south-eastern suburb of Melbourne), has officially opened after much toil and hard yakka. With an impressive gear list, substantial live and control rooms and a great overall vibe, the new facility is going great guns and has already hosted several sessions for the likes of Carly Van, Stevie Paige, Anarchsphere, Eye Of The Enemy, NeObliviscaris and '90s band, DefRyme. Probably the most luxurious aspect of the new setup is the luxury of height, thanks to the raw dimensions of the tilt slab factory walls – the

main recording room enjoys a ceiling of 5.5 metres.

Pony's impressive equipment stable is constantly growing (along with the costs!), with recent additions including a pair of vintage Neumann U47s, Neve mic pres and an Al Smart C2 compressor. The recording chain at Pony revolves around a ProTools HD2 system with C24 control surface fed by Lynx, Apogee and UA 2192 converters through 22 outboard mic pres including API, Neve, Telefunken, UA, AEA, Amek, Byer66 and Great River.

The room also includes a list of classic and modern amplifiers, drums and instruments, including a Hammond/Leslie combination.

Pony's new full service music complex also offers the added luxury of a retail store (for all your plectrum, strings and stick requirements), state-of-the-art rehearsal studios, production hire (PA, lighting and backline), tuition and repairs all onsite. It's a one-stop-shop if you're rehearsing or recording.

For a full rundown on what Pony Music offers visit: www.ponymusic.com.au



MATTHEW GRAY MASTERING

Matthew Gray's mastering studio in Brisbane has been around for a while now – eight years in fact. In that time Matt has developed quite a reputation for his skills. The old rumpus room that became a mastering studio is these days full of all manner of high-end esoteric analogue and digital gear. From his beloved Lavry Gold converters and modified Ampex ATR 102 half-inch tape machines to the various analogue and digital stereo EQs from Sontec, API, Weiss and Buzz Audio, Matt's collection is extensive yet focussed. He doesn't have a thousand EQ options or 20 compressors at his disposal, but the ones he has are impressive

and versatile.

Matt's facility boasts a hybrid of analogue processors, along with digital outboard from Weiss (the DS-1 Mk3) and Crane Song (the HEDD) as well as plug-in processors designed specifically for mastering. Most of the audio sweetening is done using analogue processing, including API 2500 and Thermionic Culture Phoenix compressors and the three aforementioned analogue EQs: the Sontec MES-432C EQ – considered by some to be the Holy Grail of analogue mastering EQs – the Buzz Audio REQ 2.2, and the API 5500.

When asked how he got his hands on such a rare piece as the Sontec, Matt's response seemed logical

enough: "I blanket emailed every studio I knew of that had one to see if anyone would part with theirs. Most studios told me to sod off – 'prise it from our cold dead hands' – but eventually a Japanese studio responded... this particular unit used to belong to Sandy Pearlman of Blue Oyster Cult fame. It still has his name on it."

Matt's mastering studio also provides an online mastering service, which includes a free mix evaluation. Clients can upload their music and Matt identifies potential problems and offers suggestions.

To find out more, go to: www.matthewgraymastering.com and follow the yellow brick road.

a Thermionic Culture Phoenix stereo compressor.

At **Deluxe Mastering** in Brunswick, Tony 'Jack the Bear' Mantz's recent projects include 'The Dead River Deep's, Tin Man, Canadian producer Jimmy Valance Jnr (son of songwriter Jim Valance), Kingswood, Triple J Unearthed winners Howl, remixes for Dizzee Rascal (UK), and demos for Airbourne's upcoming album. Adam Dempsey mastered his third album for Broderick Smith (the latest produced by Matt Walker and featuring Garth Hudson of The Band), as well as CD and vinyl releases for The Fearless Vampire Killers, The Demon Parade, Crystal Thomas, Plastic Palace Alice, Jona Byron, 'The Vaudeville Smash (formerly Pornland), the debut for a capella trio, Aluka (produced by Myles Mumford), and a live compilation from Going Down Swinging. Byron Scullin completed albums for Midnight Juggernauts, Matthew McBeath and Eleanor Garran, tracks for Digital Primate and T-Rek, mixing and mastering an album for blues busker George Kamikawa, and completing sound design for dance company Chunky Move and score/sound design for a work by video artist Daniel Crooks.

Over at **Anon Islet Records** in Melbourne, Tomas Fitzgerald is recording and mixing power pop band, Left Feels Right, epic rock band TST, and helping out Rincon with preproduction for their next record.

Down at **The Mill**, further renovations are slated for the summer break, with AT editor Andy Stewart putting the finishing touches on acoustic treatments between mix sessions with Tash Parker, Wally De Backer, and J Walker. Andy reckons he has a backlog of mixing to do in the coming months due to all the bartering he's done for labouring hours – apparently the bill's getting quite out of hand! 2010 will hopefully be the year work at The Mill ceases to involve hammers and becomes entirely audio based.

Representing South Australia, Mark Killey from **524 Recording** is all but finished recording Frodo's third album. Frodo (Gerry Wolf Krochmal) was so happy with the results on albums one and two, that he commissioned Mark to do his darnedest on the

third album. Somewhere Mark has found the time to record an album for himself under the name MLCUndercat.

At **Revolution Studios**, Genevieve Maynard has been tweaking vocals for Paul Mac's new album, recording a six-piece live jazz album with Eddie Bronson, an album worth of songs for an 18 piece primary school choir, working on a crossover western/classical/Bollywood Indian album with Shelly Misra, mastering for My Sauce Good and Cloud Control remixes, a didgeridoo session with William Barton for an Argentinian project with the producer listening in via Skype, and an album for Julian Curwin's avant-jazz lounge project, The Tango Saloon.

It's been a couple of eventful months for the gang at **The Grove Studios**, with recent clients availing themselves of the Studio One facilities, including Silverchair, New Empire, Katie Noonan, Sunday Waits, Victor Row and Ray McCarthy. In-house engineer Josh Telford, and the rest of The Grove crew were also honoured to have producer Nick Didia (Powderfinger, Pearl Jam, Rage Against The Machine) working at the facility. In Studio Two, the Harrison desk has been completely re-capped and the list of outboard equipment is steadily growing with the recent acquisition of a Pendulum ES-8 stereo compressor and Sennheiser 504 microphones. Andy Sorenson's Translator Mix Suite is set to go with new equipment including a ProTools HD2 system, MacPro, Lynx convertors, Waves Mercury bundle and additional plug-ins, a Neve 8816 summing box, C1 Smart Compressor, API 5500 stereo EQ, Crane Song Hedd 192, and an API 512 preamp.

Rancom Street's Ted Howard has been moonlighting at **301** for the last couple of weeks, but as always he returns to his Rancom St heartland. Ted's been mastering The Sunny Cowgirls' album, following which he'll be tracking with local 'Brit pop' band, The Chronics. Gear-wise, Ted's loving Acoustica's convolution version of the Bricasti M7 (a free download he tells us). Ted has also reignited an old flame with the AWA 'W Amp' limiter. Ted

reckons it pre-dates the AWA G58250 (which Rancom St happens to have a pair of). Apparently it's great for when only slamming and pumping compression will do.

The **SOH Recording Studios** are having fun with a month long series of sessions recording the Sydney Symphony Prokofiev Festival with Vladimir Ashkenazy. Apparently the crew turned the Concert Hall into a dedicated recording room with wonderful results. Then a week with Tim Freedman and his rogues playing with the Sydney Symphony. Recent sessions have included Sienna and Lee Groves, Opera Australia's *Così fan Tutti* live broadcast, as well as mixing a DVD for the Australian Ballet's production of Swan Lake. In terms of new gear, Tony David Cray tells us his most recent epiphany has been the joy of using a 4B pencil over a 2B. Go figure!

After nearly 12 months of interning at **Love Hz Studios**, Brett Moses has finally been nudged out into the big bad world to start work on his own projects. Brett will continue to utilise not only Love Hz but also his **Pleasant Valley Studio** – depending how pleasant he's feeling. First cabs off the rank at Pleasant Valley have been singer/songwriter Glenn Wheatcroft and power-pop project, Reprise, as well as bed tracks for Bryan Estepa's next album. Brett can't get enough of his Universal Audio LA-610, and is still hopelessly devoted to his Yamaha NS10Ms.

This month's special project at **Crystal Mastering** definitely goes to the soundtrack mastering of *Bran Nue Dae*, featuring artists such as Missy Higgins, Jessica Mauboy, Ernie Dingo, Geoffrey Rush and Dan Sultan. Mastered by John Ruberto, the soundtrack to this Australian movie (currently screening nationally) was recorded and produced by Tim Cole & David Bridie. Other cool cats on the Crystal couch include Eddy Current, Young Heretics (produced by Tom Larkin of Shihad), Daysend (produced by Jenk), Mikowai (produced by Magoo), Manic Pistoleros, Sascha Ion, Lost for Words, Corporation Klink, The Readymades, Gea Mala, and Matt Kirsch. ■