

Official Journal of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild

AFM/CFM Local 293

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LIBRETTO

November 2023

Volume 122 No. 03

2023 Season's Greetings



"We Can Help"

From the International Musician



Unions Working Together: The AFM as a Partner in Canada's Creative Industries Coalition

by Arden R. Ryshpan, Canadian Actors' Equity Association Executive Director

No one could have expected the extraordinary events of March 2020, when most of

Canada found itself under mandatory lockdown orders due to the COVID pandemic. Within days, every single live performance activity in the country was shut down, tossing thousands of artists out of work. And no one could possibly have anticipated how long the shutdown of live performance would last.

Within a couple of days of the first lockdown order (various provinces had more than one extended period of lockdown between March 2020 and March 2021), the unions representing artists working in live performance in Canada got in touch with each other to set up a meeting. The four unions who met that week included AFM; Canadian Actors' Equity Association (representing performers, directors, stage managers, choreographers, fight directors, and intimacy directors working in theatre, dance, and opera); IATSE Canada (behind-the-scenes workers necessary to the entertainment industry, including stage technicians, scenic carpenters, props masters,

makeup artists, riggers, costume designers); and Associated Designers of Canada (designers of lights, scenery, costumes, sound, and video designs in live performance).

In total, our Canadian memberships represent over 55,000 arts workers. Although we all knew each other from various industry events and meetings, this was the first time that all four live performance organizations decided to work together on an issue of shared concern. The crisis was the impetus for creating the Creative Industries Coalition.

As all four unions worked with the same lobbyist, we were able to quickly mobilize our efforts to ensure that our respective members (most of them independent contractors) could access government support targeted at individuals who were not otherwise eligible for payments under an unemployment program. During the pandemic, the Coalition met on multiple occasions with numerous key senior officials in a variety of government departments including Heritage, Labour, Finance, and Economic and Social Development.

We met several times with the Minister of Heritage as well as with the head of Canada's largest arts funding body. All told, our fantastic lobbyist must have arranged close to 50 meetings. As a result, the various government departments have come to recognize the Coalition as the reliable voice of arts workers in live performance—a testament to the united and clear voice we presented to them.

Our Coalition was instrumental in channeling \$50 million into a fund dedicated to helping artists working in live performance recover from the pandemic, with a maximum payment of \$2,500 per person. Another \$10 million was made available for recovery programs run by artist associations, including training and educational programs.

The Coalition was able to provide our government officials with stories of the struggles our respective members were facing, as well as hard data on the reduction in contracts and earnings for the live performance artists in Canada. Post-pandemic, Equity and the AFM have collaborated on the issue of the potential significant increase in the cost of

visas for Canadians to cross the US border—costs that would make international tours for small and medium-sized groups, as well as individuals, financially prohibitive.

Live performance has not recovered to prepandemic levels and our Coalition continues to work to ensure that our government is well informed of the needs of our respective memberships and that our sector receives the support it needs to recover to prepandemic levels as soon as possible.

Speaking personally, I can say that the work that we have done together has been some of the most important work of my career. The opportunity to work closely with my colleagues in the other unions has been immensely rewarding and has created a cross-jurisdictional camaraderie that has been valuable both professionally and personally. We have learned much from each other in the process and were able to provide essential moral support during the worst moments of the pandemic when the future of our workplaces seemed in jeopardy. I look forward to many more productive years of working with my partners in the Coalition.



2024-2026 Slate of HMG Officers

At the October 26 HMG General Member Meeting, a full slate of officers was nominated to sit on the HMG Executive Board for the next two years::

- ⇒ Larry Feudo, President
- ⇒ Reg Denis, 1st Vice President
- ⇒ Paul Panchezak, 2nd Vice President
- ⇒ Ron Palangio, Marshall
- ⇒ John Morris, Sergeant-At-Arms
- ⇒ Lorelee McGuirl, Director
- ⇒ Bruce Tournay, Director

Continuing in the role of Secretary-Treasurer is Ryan McKenna, and as Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus, Brent Malseed.

Members will recognize many of these names, as most Board members have served with distinction for several years. A special welcome to Bruce (I'll wear the wig) Tournay.



Bruce has been impressing Canadian and international audiences with his effortless piano performance and powerful voice since 1998. Bruce has been featured on City TV and showcased on radio, winning listeners locally and abroad in venues from pubs to soft seat theatres.

Some of Bruce's recent career highlights include performing at the 100th Grey Cup with Dave Rave, performing pre-show entertainment for a Tony Bennett concert, backing Tommy Ambrose, recording with Guido Basso and playing for the Just For Laughs Gala for 6 sold out shows at Toronto's Massey Hall behind Wayne Brady, Brad Garrett and Russell Peters.

Bruce has also enjoyed entertaining guests of Carnival Cruise Lines where he delighted audiences both in the piano bar and on the main stage.

The Libretto

***Official Newsletter of the
Hamilton Musicians' Guild
Publisher Michael Bittle
office@HamiltonMusicians.org
Have news of interest to share?
Let us know!***

THE HAMILTON MUSICIANS' GUILD LOCAL 293, AFM/CFM SINCE 1903

Executive Board

2024-2026



Reg Denis
1st Vice Pres



Larry Feudo
President



Paul Panchezak
2nd Vice Pres



John Morris
Sergeant-At-Arms



Ryan McKenna
Secretary-Treasurer



Ron Palangio
Marshall



Loralee McGuirl
Director



Brent Malseed
Sec/Treas Emeritus



Bruce Tournay
Director



Michael Bittle
Office Admin



Hamilton Musicians' Guild

November 2023 President's Report



Larry Feudo
HMG President

There's been much talk lately about the shrinking live music scene in Hamilton and the attendant lack of playing opportunities for musicians. At our last general membership meeting we had a wide -ranging discussion and some interesting viewpoints were shared with all in attendance.

Some external factors that we as musicians have no control over include the rampant gentrification of Hamilton, an economic downturn and the aging demographics of audiences. These have all contributed to the poor music scene in our hometown. All these factors result in employers bargaining down wages for our musicians—often with no push back from the musicians themselves.

With gentrification and higher real estate values, not to mention operating costs, several venues have either scaled back their live music or thrown in the towel altogether. We can all think of the many venues that have gone that route in the recent past. As well, several area festivals have had to scale back or drop out completely leaving big gaps in the musical landscape.

Listening rooms featuring original music have also taken a hit lately leaving fewer opportunities for those only doing their own compositions.

The economic downturn and the aging demographics all have contributed to smaller turnouts for shows.

At this point we're probably wondering if there's anything we can do to get around this scenario.

While there's not much we can do about the economy or the aging demographics there are some things we can do to cope with this changing landscape. First of all, we as musicians have to be better negotiators. As Joni Mitchell once said musicians have to nurture their inner shark. Don't settle for the first offer- be firm knowing your worth. If more musicians refuse to play for low wages the talent pool would shrink down to poorer musicianship which would impact the owner's bottom line.

Looking for ways to improve your presentation and advancing your skills is always beneficial. Look to those that are successful and emulate what they're doing. Look into the work of choreographer Tom Jackson who's a genius at elevating stage craft for some inspiration.

Consider diversifying your income streams—try teaching if you haven't explored that avenue. Work in several different group formats with varying sizes and genres. Limiting yourself to just one thing will succeed in limiting your potential earnings. Be open to consider different types of events. Corporate events, weddings, seniors homes and putting on your own events are all avenues that are worth picking up on.



The AFM has just relaunched their online booking agency so consider registering for that by sending your promo to Wages Argott, head of freelance services at afmentertainment.org/login. This will cover both Canada and the U.S. (see the ad below). As well, sign up yourself and your band on our website as we launch our own local version of this database.

The Hamilton Musicians' Guild is looking to expand the MPTF programs with educational shows and the seniors' homes MusicianFest. February is Black History Month, March is Women's Month and April is Jazzfest, all of which are open to members in good standing.

For more details, please contact me at the office.

I hope that some of these suggestions will be of help to you all. Enjoy the festive season

Yours in solidarity,

Larry Feudo



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Visit AFMEntertainment.org for more information



Marie Phillips

Marie Phillips, BA (Hons), RRC, CFDS, PFP, FCSI, MFA-P, has been in the financial services industry since 1992. She is a well respected member and past chair of IPC's National Advisory Board and has the advantage of years of experience as a regulatory compliance officer.

Marie was named the 2023 Female Trailblazer of the Year (Wealth Professionals) - this award recognizes the outstanding female trailblazer advisor in the wealth management and financial planning industry whose astounding personal and professional achievements have earned them a place among the industry's best." She was a 2022 recipient of the Globe and Mail's Canada's Top Wealth Advisor: Best in Province has received the IPC Cares Award for Community Service, Value of Advice awards, Top Ten Wealth Builder of the Year Award, Best Client Experience Awards, George R. Robinson Award, and has been published / profiled in a wide variety of articles including BNN, the Investment Executive and the Wealth Professional.

MUSIC

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"She opened their eyes to some enlightening concepts that were unfamiliar to them."

Marie actively volunteers her time advocating for financial literacy and philanthropy in the arts sector and is also an amateur musician.

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WINNER

The Harvest ETFs Award for Female Trailblazer of the Year



Marie Phillips
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NEXT STEPS PLANNING



Local 293 StreetBeat.....



Paul Panchezak

Growing up, I often heard that familiar old maxim, “the Lord helps those who help themselves”. Like many familiar old maxims, the lesson rings true. Local 293 acknowledged that fact Saturday November 4 when a benefit was held for the Bob Pedler Memorial Fund which has, as its root, the concept of musicians helping musicians.

The fund makes payments to Local 293 members who, due to accident or medical issues, are unable to work for a prolonged period of time. Over the course of over five hours at Stonewalls in downtown Hamilton, eight musical acts gave freely of their time to raise money for the benefit of their friends and colleagues who have, or may yet, hit on hard times.

From the acoustic sounds of **Don Oakie and Lily Sazz**, who offered a nice set of originals and familiar favourites, to **Big John and the Night Trippers** who, five hours later, closed off the day with a vintage soul set, the program showcased the wide variety of talent and music that Local 293 has to offer.

As well as the two acts mentioned above, **Jimmy Howard** led his quartet through a set of wide-ranging jazz including a particularly inspired take on Sonny Rollins “Oleo”. **Troy Harmer and the Persuaders** blazed through a torrid set of classic rock including a rendition of Sugarloaf’s “Green Eyed Lady” that made us forget that the original recording was dominated by Hammond organ not guitar. **Paul Coombs and his Blues Band** served up exciting electric blues in the style of the old masters (Muddy, Elmore, Hooker, Wolf etc.) while my musical family **Trickbag** offered their own take on blues in the T.H.&B. rocking blues style.

For something completely different, **Queship** followed with progressive rock that called to mind Canadian icons Rush. It was nice to see former 293 president John Staley and his band **Back Trax** including guitarist Russ McAllister. When I was just starting out Russ, was already a renowned local stringbender. Coincidentally, he just turned 80 and shows no sign of slowing down which proves that musicians don’t retire. They don’t fade away either. Instead, they crank it up and let ‘er rip.

As already mentioned, Local 293 Executive Board member Big John and his band of Night Trippers brought the proceedings to a rousing conclusion with a set that recalled the glory days of soul music.

The program also included a number of draws with prizes provided with the help of event sponsors including **Long and McQuade, Picks and Sticks, The Acoustic Room and Marie Philips of Next Steps Financial**.

A prize of particular note was an Epiphone Dove acoustic guitar worth over \$700 donated by Long and McQuade which was won by Paul Coombs, one of the afternoon’s performers. Great to see it won by someone who will put it to good use.

As in previous Bob Pedler fundraisers, the afternoon also gave the opportunity for the local to present it’s annual George R. Robinson Award named in honour of the Guild’s founder. The award is given out to organizations or individual’s who have shown outstanding support for live music in our area. 2023 acknowledged two recipients **Charles Cozens and the Friends of Richard Newell Committee** who for twenty years have staged an annual charity benefit concert in honour of their late friend Richard Newell a.k.a. King Biscuit Boy (see the separate article on the Robinson Awards).

Although this year’s get together was well attended, I was hoping that we might have seen a few more of the rank-and-file members of the local. After all, your support may someday be to your own



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benefit in the unfortunate circumstance of a medical problem or accident. As they say, “you don’t know what you got till it’s gone”. Hopefully, next year’s show may be an even more resounding success with the participation of some of our members who didn’t make it out this year.

Rest assured those who did attend enjoyed some great music and a chance to hang with musical comrades and old friends.

BOB PEDLER MEMORIAL FUND

On Saturday November 4, Stonewalls Restaurant on York Blvd was “a rockin and a rollin” with the sounds of—not one, not two—but eight bands of the finest professional musicians ever to grace a Hamilton stage, all donating their time and talents to benefit the Bob Pedler Memorial Fund.

The Bob Pedler Memorial Fund is named for the late Bob Pedler, a popular musician and music store owner in Hamilton and a former member of the executive board of the Hamilton Musicians’ Guild. Bob was also the father of well-known Hamilton-based drummer Jack Pedler (Teenage Head).

The Bob Pedler Memorial Fund is dedicated to provide financial aid to HMG members who become unable to perform due to injury or ongoing health issues.

This fund is not intended to replace health insurance or provide general loans but does supply modest amounts of assistance to qualified applicants on an emergency basis.

All Fund inquiries, applications, and awards are treated with the strictest confidence.

If you are a member of Local 293, or if you know of a member, suffering from a medical issue that prevents them from playing professionally, please call the HMG office and speak to Larry Feudo, HMG President, 905-525-4040.

The Bob Pedler Memorial Fund was set up to help members like you. Please use it.

2023 George R. Robinson Awards

This year marks the 120th anniversary of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild. Founded by George R. Robinson in April 1903, the Guild has a long history of advocating for the rights of musicians. At the annual Bob Pedler Memorial Fundraiser, we have traditionally honoured individuals who have provided outstanding support for live music in our community, with the George R. Robinson Award. Recent recipients have included Judy Marsales and Marie Phillips.



This year, the efforts of the **Friends of Richard Newell Committee** were recognized. For twenty years, they have put on a tribute show for Richard Newell (AKA King Biscuit Boy). Employing hundreds of local musicians and donating funds raised to Mohawk College Music Student Scholarships and the Bob Pedler Memorial Fund, they continue to host this wonderful event.

They have raised over \$30,000 for the Mohawk Scholarships in addition to over \$7,000 for the Bob Pedler Fund. As a grass roots organization comprised of Richard's friends, they have truly selflessly supported live music out of love and respect for Hamilton's rich musical history.

The "Friends" include Paul Cronkwright, Sonny Del Rio, Rob Platzko, Neil Nickafor, Paul Panchezak, Ian Wallace and Larry Feudo.

Also, special thanks are given to Sonny Del Rio and Rob Platzko for donating some \$3,000 to the Pedler Fund from last year's "Sonny Del Rio Hometown Christmas" show.

This year's other recipient of the Robinson Award is **Charles Cozens**. Charles is an award winning internationally renowned arranger, composer, orchestrator, conductor, music director and producer.

During a career spanning over 5 decades, Charles has garnered too many awards to list here. His orchestral work has been met with critical acclaim and he's guest conducted from coast to coast in Canada as well as abroad. His credits include television and film soundtracks, theatrical productions and over 100 CDs.

He has worked with Henry Mancini, Eartha Kitt and Cab Calloway, to name just a few notables.



In 2016 he founded the Burlington New Millennium Orchestra, employing over 25 musicians and covered under a collective agreement with the Hamilton Musicians' Guild. The task of creating and maintaining a thriving orchestra today is a daunting task and a real accomplishment.

We are proud to say that the HMG has played a small role helping him along the way. For all this and much more, we congratulate Charles and wish him continued success.



Ryan McKenna
Secretary-Treasurer

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

It was great to see so many of you at the recent General Member Meeting and at the Bob Pedler Memorial Fundraiser. I am excited for what the New Year can bring as we all head into new business opportunities and a season of growth for our Local. For details on what's been happening, take a look at the Admin's report.

Have a great holiday season, *Ryan*



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AFM Entertainment is now accepting registration from AFM members who are solo artists or leaders of self-contained bands and ensembles, in every genre of music.



To register you or your band, go to

<https://afmentertainment.org/login>

and log in with your

existing AFM.org
username and
password



Michael Bittle

HMG Office Administrator

Administrator’s Report

Season’s Greetings! I’ve been working as the admin guy in the HMG office for about 8 months now, supporting Ryan McKenna and Larry Feudo. My main duties have been to keep the website updated on a regular basis, to maintain our social media presence, process membership renewals (and to send out those pesky emails reminding you of your renewal status), keeping the accounting and the filing systems up to date, helping out with MPTF applications, troubleshooting on computer issues, and general office duties. Anyway, I just want to highlight a few items that have happened over the past few months.:

- * HMG Website – I took over management of the HMG website in May. Before that, we were getting about 4200 visitors a month. Since taking over the website, I update it at least once a week, sometimes once or twice a day, and we are now up to over 7200 visitors a month.

- * Social Media – similarly, by posting and cross-posting material regularly on Facebook, our followers have increased from 800 to over 1200. I set up an Instagram account which now has over 340 followers, and I’ve been posting on our Twitter account and increased that from 19 to 580 followers.

- * Mailing Lists – I’ve set up and regularly manage email mailing lists to keep our members informed about upcoming events of interest, and to remind them about deadlines for dues payments. I’ve also set up a mailing list to distribute our newsletter, The Libretto, to AFM contacts in Canada and the US. One result of this is that the August issue of The Libretto has been downloaded over 6,000 times.
- * The Libretto - speaking of The Libretto, with the guidance of Larry Feudo and Brent Malseed, I published the past two issues, and I like to think they have been favourably received. Next year, I am changing it from 3x a year to one each quarter, and would like to go to a monthly schedule if more members were willing to send me material on a regular basis, like Paul Panchezak does with his “Local 293 Streetbeat”.
- * Looking ahead, I would like to begin putting a spotlight on new members, to promote them through the website, The Libretto and our social media channels.

If you have any questions about your membership status in the AFM, feel free to call me at 905-525-4040 or email me at office@HamiltonMusicians.org.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP STATS

	<u>Nov 23, 2023</u>	<u>Nov 23, 2022</u>
Current Members	548	560
New Members (Year to Date)	41	63
Reinstated Members (Year to Date)	19	40
Suspended Members (Current Quarter)	13	13
Expelled Members (Year to Date)	64	-
Resigned in Good Standing (Year to Date)	26	51
Deceased Members (Year to Date)	3	4

‘The Last Waltz’ Returns to Theatres for 45th Anniversary, Revisiting One of the Most Famous Concerts in Rock and Roll History

By the time Martin Scorsese’s music documentary “The Last Waltz” premiered in 1978, the legendary Americana music progenitors the Band, whom the film explores, had gone from “Cahoots” to kaput for two years.

The 1976 farewell concert at the center of the film was already a piece of rock and roll history by the time the film debuted. Seeing it recently at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles in celebration of its 45th anniversary, it’s clear how much history and American music culture was also saying “Good Night” with Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Levon Helm and the Band’s unofficial leader Robbie Robertson (who called the group “the Brotherhood.”)

To help sort out the importance of “Waltz’s” place in rock history were music historian Harvey Kubernik, who shared his recollections of attending the concert at the Winterland Theater in San Francisco; music rights firm CEO / founder Olivier Chastan, who had bonded professionally and personally with Robertson in the last years of his life; and Rhino Records president Mark Pinkus, who helpfully described current efforts to marshal social media marketing to help bring awareness of music from over a half-century ago to the 21st century audience. Veteran music journalist Pamela Chelin moderated the discussion.



Rather than seeming like an artifact, “Last Waltz,” which Chastan announced will return to theaters in an upcoming 800-screen release Nov. 5, plays like a lively, vibrant, spontaneous combustion of feisty yet elegant American musicology. And the music, which is simply astounding, gets a fresh release, per Pinkus, with lots of tunes not in the movie.

The tribal nature of the show is aided by the common love of roots music as performed by the Band and their esteemed guests, which included Bob Dylan, who they famously backed on tour and on one album for Geffen Records; gumbo music great Dr. John; soul gospel stirrers the Staples; Celtic soul poet/belter Van Morrison; English guitar wizard Eric Clapton; and Chicago blues giant Muddy Waters.

If you include Hibbing, Minn., native Dylan, you also note there’s a strong north-of-the-47th-parallel vibe that brings together the four Canadian-born members of the Band — Robertson, Danko, Hudson and Manuel — along with superstar Canadian guests Neil

Young and Joni Mitchell and also Southern rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins, who spent decades on the Canadian music scene and was the guy who first put the Band together as his backup musicians, then known as the Hawks.

The joyfulness of sharing the stage with fellow artists who changed pop culture forever in the previous 15 years overwhelmed any hints of nostalgia or solemnity. Everyone was too busy proving their songs were the main attraction, a point driven home by Mitchell's invigorating take on "Coyote" and Young's punchy, impassioned version of the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young classic "Helpless."

Kubernik helped convey the sense of wonder from that night decades ago, when attendees' expectations for the evening were limited simply to a concert where the Band might be hanging it all up. "You could walk up and buy tickets on the day of the show," Kubernik recalls, still marveling at how low-key and unexpected it was to become part of one of the greatest nights in rock and roll history.



When Dylan and the Band rip into a propulsive take on blues standard "Baby Let Me Follow You Down," those with long memories will note that folk-rock really began 12 years earlier when the Animals lifted the song from Dylan's debut album and released their amped-up version in early 1964.

After lifting "House of the Rising Sun" from the same album, also in 1964, and selling millions of copies, it must have been startling to Dylan, who wasted no time in "Bringing It All Back Home" as his 1965 folk-rock history-making record proclaimed.

In 12 years, from 1964 to 1976, the Beatles arrived and left; Woodstock buoyed a generation's hopes and Altamont crushed them; Elvis, who inspired the rock revolution, became passe, then hip again, then on his way to an early death; Dylan revolutionized songwriting then crashed his motorcycle and disappeared from live appearance, then re-emerged, backed up by the Band.

Somehow, all of that feels organically processed and captured here, with a nonstop roll of performances that speak to the magic that happened when the blues and country got mixed up, amplifying and transforming into messages of rebellion, passion, joy and eternal existential quests.

Seamlessly breezing from several of the Band's magnificent greatest hits, such as "Up on Cripple Creek," "The Shape I'm In," "It Makes No Difference," "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" and "Ophelia," to backing Waters on "Mannish Boy," Dr. John on "Such a Night," Morrison on a raucous, showstopping "Caravan" and Dylan on closer "I

Shall Be Released,” “Waltz” is no musty museum piece. It’s a blast of musical perfection that hits like one of those Canadian blizzards the folkies of the era might have sung about.

Scorsese’s adoration of Robbie is noticeable throughout the film. Robertson is the author of the songs and he’s also the handsome guitarslinger that the camera loves. For Scorsese to shoot past his greatest visual asset and the genius behind that songbook would have been foolish. His presence never seemed out of place, inappropriate or excessive — quite the opposite.



The whole Band get their moments via performances and interviews. Manuel and Danko, who both died tragically young and tragically addicted, are heartbreakingly vulnerable and unforgettable — both as artists and earnest souls.

Helm’s singing and playing remains one of the great wonders of the rock music world. His attack on the vocals and skins drives the Band to some of their greatest moments, and Marty gets that on film for generations to marvel at.

Hudson, the sole surviving Band member, is a keyboard wizard filmed as a supernatural force. It’s not the “Robbie and Friends” show. It’s a group portrait for the ages.

Nothing about “The Last Waltz” seems cringey or dated. Still, one might marvel, if you’ve read the accounts of the night, how so much cocaine could be consumed without anyone worrying about dying from fentanyl. Those were the days.



As for the here and now, while so many of the greats on display in “Last Waltz” are gone, Neil, Mavis Staples, Bob, Joni, Van, Eric are all still performing live. May they stay “Forever Young” and may you see them live.

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CCMA Awards

Congratulations to HMG member Josh Ross

Echoing the primary themes of country in his pop-rock-infused way, Josh Ross's take on love, work, and play is often documented through his whirlwind experiences. From moving to Nashville the night of a tornado, leaving only a month later when a global pandemic arrived, to developing an ever-evolving career amidst the drawbacks of injuries, lockdowns, and conflicting relationships, Josh Ross is a country artist bound by the act of forging past and overcoming restraints.

"There is something to be said about when your heart is really in the right place to sing something... As an artist, I want the listener and me to go back to a song and remember our exact experiences around it, to encourage connection in all forms," Josh said. The need for that musical connection began

growing up in Burlington, Ontario's suburbia. Overhearing his parents sing along to Guns N Roses and Bruce Springsteen in their kitchen while he ran around the house pretending to play guitar. Learning in those early years what music was, he found himself writing words in his notebook that, at the time, he didn't realize were poems and lyrics. Onwards through school, he focused on sports like motocross and football, eventually encountering the injuries that came with each game.

Following several football-related injuries at Ontario's Western University, the isolation that came from the injuries allowed Josh some time to develop his relationship with music. Taking nearly empty shuttle buses to get to school due to the cast on his leg, learning how to play guitar in his dorm, and on a few noise-complaint occasions bringing two speakers and a subwoofer into the bathroom to belt songs, Josh eventually made the shift of not just listening to music but making his own.

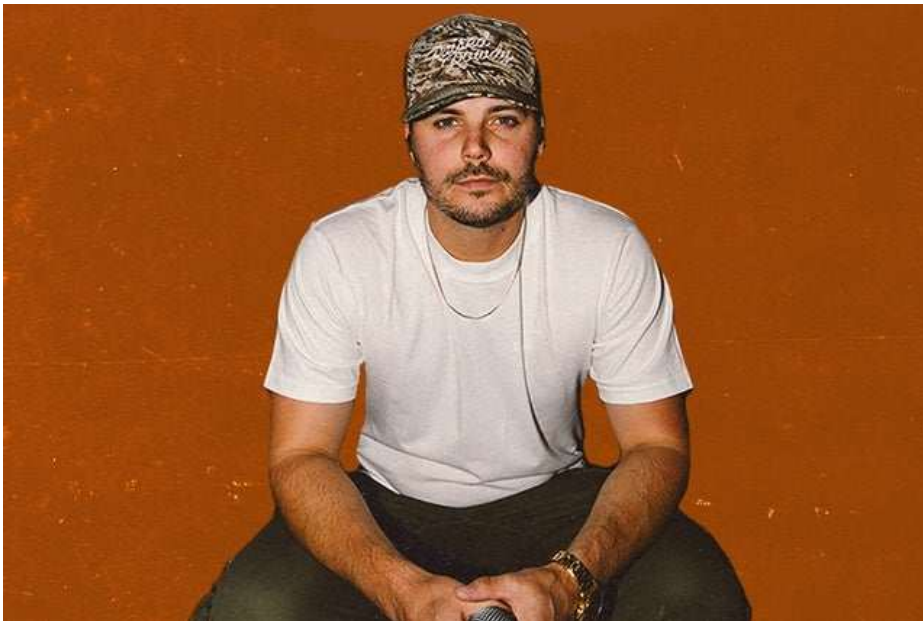
"I had a lot of catching up to do," Josh said on his first few years immersing himself in the music industry. From practicing in his dorm to playing his first live show at the Boots & Hearts Emerging Artist Showcase in front of 5,000 people, Josh stated that "I used to throw up before the football games because of the anxiety, which is probably why I threw up before that show." While the pressure to succeed in his sports days poured over into his music career, the drive to achieve inspired him to connect with various songwriters and musicians, eventually leading him to Nashville. In conflict with choosing a stable job post-university or setting his sights on the music industry, Josh Ross's passions, and talent, pushed him to the path of Nashville, where he further began developing his sound and artistry. From 2019 onwards, Josh Ross dove head-first into his music career as an artist with sonic elements in his music, nodding to raw country, soft rock, and hints of 80s pop-rock.



In early 2022, Josh pushed even further in his career with his major-label signing to Universal Music Canada, the country's leading music company, and The Core Entertainment, the management company specializing in discovering and championing new talent in music. He joined the team as the second artist signed to UMC's joint venture with The Core, a partnership designed to offer Canadian artists a collaborative and integrated approach to releasing music worldwide.

From his 2019 independent debut to now, the Nashville-based singer-songwriter quickly and impressively built a name for himself with a handful of songs that have now generated more than 179 million global streams. Often writing from personal experiences, Josh Ross has delivered versatile lyrics throughout his collection of songs. His major-label debut and now Platinum-certified track "On A Different Night" hit over 28.2 million streams, and his Platinum-certified cathartic ballad on romantic losses "First Taste of Gone" has continued to amass over 21.3 million streams since its release in early 2022 and peaked on the Top 5 Canadian Country Radio Charts. Ross captured attention across the US with placement on Spotify's top country playlists like New Boots, Next From Nashville, Breakout Country and more.

Along with his home country of Canada with the #1 country spot on Spotify Canada's Viral 50 Chart and more, Apple Music's Canada's Country playlist as the cover artist and was selected as Apple Music Canada's UP NEXT artist September 2022. Ross was also selected as the new face of Country Heat on Amazon Music which included billboards in Toronto and Nashville. Along the way, Ross also landed a spot as one of the SiriusXM Top of the Country Top 3 finalists and was nominated for Rising Star at the Canadian Country Music Awards (CCMA) in 2022. Ross is the top nominated artist at the 2023 CCMA's including 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year', and 'Single of the Year'. His recent singles, "Ain't Doin' Jack" is up to 5.6 million streams since it's release in July and the radio hit "Trouble" hit #1 at Canadian Country Radio with over 70 million global streams and is certified Platinum.



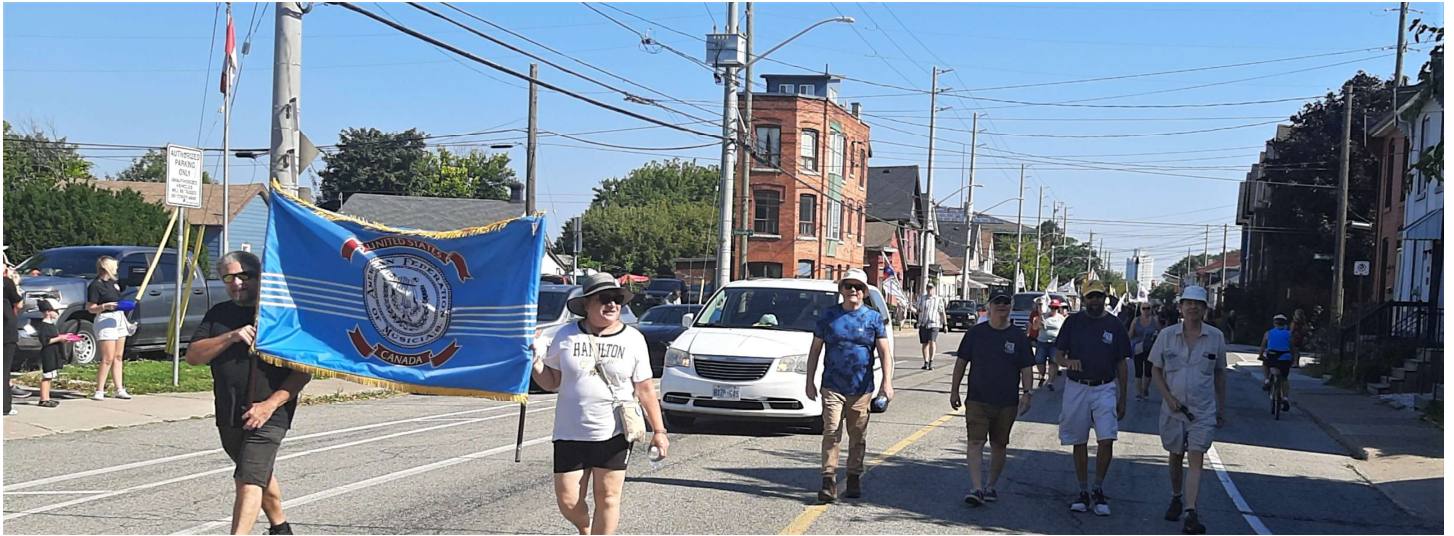
Recently, Ross won 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year' at the 2023 Canadian Country Music Awards, where Ross also performed "Trouble" live on stage for fans in Hamilton and on TV broadcast presented by TD live on CTV / Bell Media.

Ross continues to carve out his place in Country music across the nation with chart-topping music releases and electrifying performances. Performances include opening for Parker McCollum, Bailey Zimmerman, Lee Brice, Tenille Arts, Chase Rice and his

recent North American tour opening for Nickelback and Brantley Gilbert's extensive Get Rollin' Tour throughout Summer/Fall 2023. Full list of dates available on his website.

With management services from The Core and a recorded music agreement with Universal, watch for much more to come from Josh Ross as he anchors himself as one of 2023's most promising Country artists.

HMG Marching in Hamilton Labour Day Parade



Members of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild proudly carried the AFM banner through the streets of Hamilton on September 4 during the annual Labour Day Parade organized by the Hamilton and District Labour Council. Among the marchers were Larry Feudo (HMG President), Reg Denis (HMG 1st Vice President), Paul Panchezak (HMG 2nd Vice-President) and Ron Palangio (HMG Marshall).

Though it was unseasonably hot, the Hamilton parade went off without any major hitches. We marched to blasting music, greeting onlookers, proudly waving our Local 293 banners and flags while wearing our AFM t-shirts. Our thanks to those members who braved the heat.

Following the parade, we headed to our spot in Bayfront Park to set up our tent and banners in proud support of Local 293, ready for an afternoon of relaxation and al fresco dining.

We mingled with other Locals while enjoying the BBQ food and cool drinks, with great entertainment provided by HMG members Troy Harmer and the Persuaders.

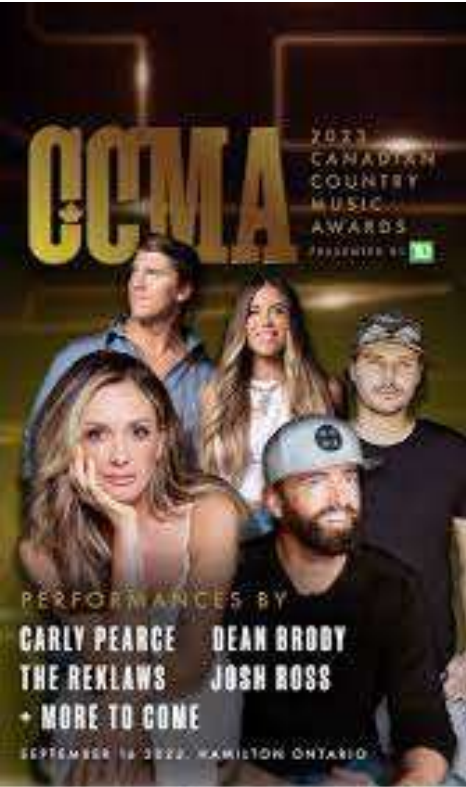
All in all it was a wonderful success and we look forward to the next one.



CCMA Awards

Congratulations to HMG members The Reklaws

The Reklaws are a one-of-a-kind duo made up of brother and sister Jenna and Stuart Walker, proud to bring the party to every stage they stand on. The Reklaws found breakout success with their debut single “Long Live the Night,” the most-streamed domestic song of all Canadian country artists and theme song for the CFL Thursday Night Football national broadcast in 2018/2019.



2021 was a record-breaking year for the duo when their viral TikTok hit “What the Truck” earned PLATINUM-certification, making it the fastest-ever Canadian country song to go PLATINUM in the streaming era.

The pair kicked off 2023 by securing three coveted JUNO nominations for TikTok JUNO Fan’s Choice, Group or Duo of the Year and Country Album of the Year.

They recently hosted the 2023 CCMA Awards on CTV, winning Top Selling Canadian Album for their 2022 release Good Ol’ Days, after taking home wins in 2022 for the second consecutive year for Top Selling Canadian Single (“What the Truck” feat. SACHA) and Group or Duo of the Year.



The Reklaws hold 8 JUNO nominations, 8 CCMA Awards, 3 #1s at Canadian Radio, 2 DOUBLE PLATINUM, 8 PLATINUM and 13 GOLD singles and a GOLD-certified debut album (Freshman Year).

In addition, the pair have 300M+ Global Streams, 6 of the top 20 streamed singles by a Canadian country artist since 2019 (more than any other artist) and the most domestically streamed debut album in Canadian country history. Listen to their new single “Honky Tonkin’ About” with Drake Milligan out everywhere now.

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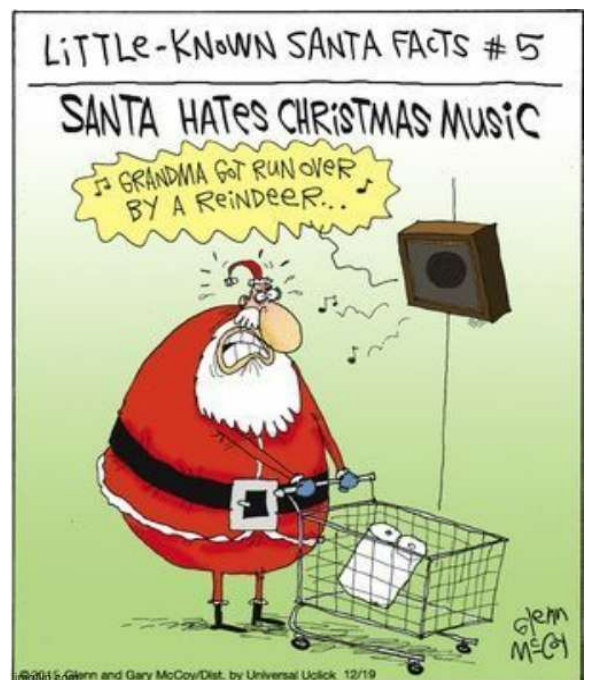
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November, 2023

LIBRETTO (Official Journal of AFM/CFM Local

Reg Denis Celebrates 50 years with the HMG



Reg Denis (formerly of Linx, The Only 1's, Royal Order, Tangerine Forest, Pork—both versions, and Crackers) receives his 50-year HMG membership pin and certificate from Larry Feudo, president of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild.

Reg joined the HMG in 1971 and enjoyed a brilliant career as a professional musician alongside his longtime collaborator (and love of his life) Patti Warden.

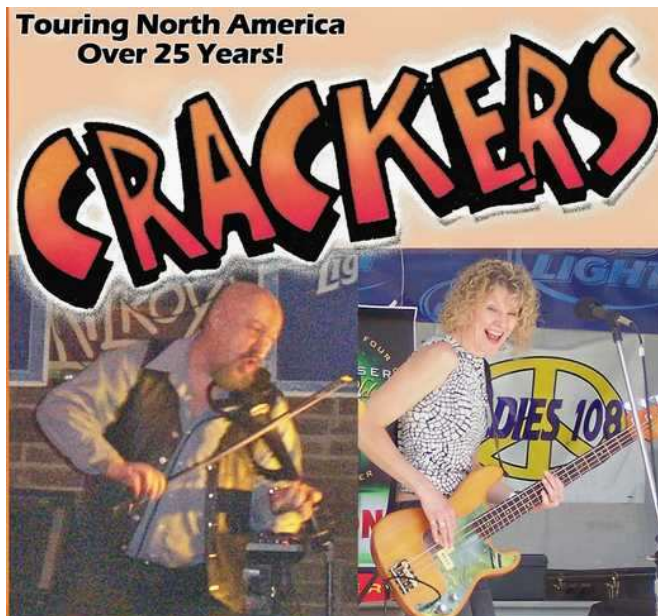
Reg "The Dome" Denis is still making music and serves on the Executive Board of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild as 1st Vice President.

When Linx had run its course in the mid 1970s, founding members and Hamilton natives guitarist Reg Denis and bassist

Patricia Warden decided to put together a new act – one that was as memorable on stage for its presence as it was good musically, and one that was a little less serious than their previous groups.

They recruited vocalist Monte Hawes and drummer George Holyoke, and naming themselves Crackers, they became one of Canada's first truly independent groups, playing the local area. They then expanded throughout the rest of Ontario and then into Quebec, developing a style that showed influences ranging from Frank Zappa and Jimi Hendrix to Charlie Daniels, as well as blues and jazz. As they progressed, they began throwing in some comedic elements into their live shows, and were noticed by manager Craig Nicholson of Pizzazz Productions. They became regular favourites at Toronto's El Mocambo and in Montreal at the Maples Inn, complete with comedy, shocking visuals, and X-rated antics.

Recorded at Master Studios with Daniel Lanois in his mother's basement in Ancaster, and produced by Steve Smith (aka Red Green), they released their first single, "Crackers In Concert." It got decent airplay around the Toronto market, but it was the lukewarm lewdity of the b-side, "Gracie," that took off, becoming a huge hit on campus stations and selling enough copies to finance a full album. Recorded at Lanois' new Grant Avenue Studio in Hamilton their debut album, CHOICE CUTS was released in 1978 on Pizzazz Records. Denis and Hawes handled the bulk of the songwriting, and tracks like "Crazy Man," "Heaven Was Never This Dead," and the instrumental "Four Wheel Drive" showcased their musical dexterity, with Denis also



getting nods for his fiddle work.

But controversy ensued though, thanks to the album jacket. Although several options were considered after a lengthy photo shoot, Nicholson decided to use the one with the road crew mooning the camera, which the band thought was a joke. When they complained, they were told it was too late, as it had already gone to print.

They continued playing while expanding their audience base, making some stops along the way out east (where they played alongside the likes of Dutch Mason and , out west, and into the US. They were also featured on several episodes of "Music 'Til Midnight," a local Hamilton TV variety program, and by this time had already been dubbed as 'canada's original lunatic rock show.'



Denis formed Lunatic Records and began work on their follow-up album with Lanois producing. With the exception of "Little Johnny" (recorded in Winnipeg during a b-circuit bar tour), *HARD ON YOU* was again done at Grant Avenue. With other tracks like "Double Trouble," "The Tit Man," and the keyboards-only "Visions," they became cult favourites across the country, including at festivals and the bar circuit. A 1980 concert at Laurentian University also saw them play on stage with Francois Lemieux, where they had to learn the entire set in French – a show that also featured Oscar Peterson's bassist Michel Donato.

The original band was together for nearly 20 years. After Holyoke and Hawes eventually left, Denis and Warden continued touring with various other members now and again, and became cult favourites at festivals and more intimate settings, and played Daytona Beach (the largest motorcycle rally in the world) for eight straight years, while

taking time off every so often to get on with life outside of music.

They returned with *ROCK ATTACK* in 2005. Released on the Lunatic label, it contained material from the first two albums, along with some of their most requested live songs. Those studio recordings of "Bye Bye," "Rock Attack," and "Livin' In America" were produced by Ian Thomas. The same day they finished in the studio on "Livin' In America," James Brown released his single of the same name from the "Rocky III" soundtrack.

In 2003, Denis was elected Secretary Treasurer of the Hamilton Musicians Guild local 293, a role which he took on for three and a half years. This is where he met blues and jazz legend Jackie Washington, and was credited with helping him get back into the music business after a lengthy hiatus. The Guild recognized Denis' efforts and awarded him a special honour in recognition of his loyalty in helping Hamilton area musicians in many ways.

The band released *TONGUE IN CHEEK* in 2008, recorded at Squidcake Studios in Smithville, Ontario. Sold solely at their shows, it was initially intended for the US market, but that changed when "Devil Went To Jamaica" and "Pussy Cat" went viral and became cult classics.





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November, 2023

LIBRETTO (Official Journal of AFM/CFM Local

HMG FUNDS HPO FALL SCHOOL TOUR

Through a successful collaboration between HMG President Larry Feudo and Kim Varian, Executive Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the HPO was able to present their HPO Brass Quintet and HPO Woodwind Quintet to over a dozen local high schools in October and November this year.

By raising \$ 26,000 through the Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF), the HMG was able to finance not only the HPO's Fall high school tour, but also a special Holiday performance of "The Hockey Sweater" to be held December 8 for local school children.

"The Hockey Sweater" is a beloved Canadian story that comes to life in the concert hall with HPO Composer-in-Residence Abigail Richardson Schulte's orchestral work. Based on the children's book by Roch Carrier, the HPO performance will be complete with the sounds of whistles blowing, hockey sticks breaking, crowds cheering and more. For those of us who remember the eternal rivalry between The Maple Leafs and Les Canadiens (and even for those who don't), this work will bring the audience on a nostalgic trip into an iconic winter tale in Quebec.

The MPTF was established in 1948 as a nonprofit independent public service organization whose mission includes contributing to the public knowledge and appreciation of music, as well as making music a part of every child's life experience. Headquartered in New York City, the MPTF evolved from a landmark collective bargaining agreement between the American Federation of Musicians and the major recording companies of the day.

Today the MPTF is a vital organization that brings music to the public and supplements the income of musicians, all at no cost to those receiving this precious gift of music. The Music Performance Trust Fund's mission is to provide admission-free, live, quality music, performed by professional musicians to the public of all backgrounds throughout the United States and Canada. They seek to enrich the lives of the public, young and old, through music and to contribute to the public's knowledge and appreciation of music. They also strive to make music and music education an exciting experience and to expand it to every child's life experience.



November, 2023

LIBRETTO (Official Journal of AFM/CFM Local

Want to put together a musical event, but need financing?

As an HMG member, you can apply for a grant sponsored by the Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF). This fund is shared by all local unions of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM). The fund subsidizes between 50% and 100% of musicians' fees in accordance with minimum standards.

MPTF STORY

The Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF) was established in 1948 as a nonprofit independent public service organization whose mission includes contributing to the public knowledge and appreciation of music, as well as making music a part of every child's life experience. Headquartered in New York City, the tax-exempt MPTF, operating under section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code, evolved from a landmark collective bargaining agreement between the American Federation of Musicians and the major recording companies of the day. Today the MPTF is a vital organization that brings music to the public and supplements the income of musicians, all at no cost to those receiving this precious gift of music.

Funded via a royalty stream from the signatory record labels, led by the three major labels, Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group, and the Warner Music Group, the MPTF today presents thousands of live, admission-free musical programs annually in the United States and Canada. Under the terms of their agreement, the recording companies pay a royalty from the sale of sound recordings to the Fund. These funds are supplemented by co-sponsoring organizations and administered by a Trustee, who is independent of both the recording industry and the AFM.

Music of all styles is brought to a total audience numbering in the millions and covering all age groups and segments of society. Music ranging from pop to classical, jazz to Broadway, is staged at venues including (but not limited to) parks, schools, concert halls, shopping malls, veterans' hospitals, nursing homes and more. The Fund sponsored or co-sponsored over 2,000 free live events in our 2018-19 fiscal year. MPTF performances are never used to raise money, sell merchandise or promote political or religious events.

Working in tandem with union locals in various cities, the MPTF places music in the schools, with priority given to music that enhances education and affords students an opportunity to enjoy live music and interact with professional musicians.

Music industry veteran Dan Beck, Trustee of the Music Performance Trust Fund has taken stewardship over the Fund and its commitment to the cause of free live musical performances, inspiring millions and culturally enriching communities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

GUIDE TO THE GRANT – MPTF:

The purpose of the trust fund is to promote "live music" and to provide music where music is the prime purpose for public attendance. See the list of performance types NOT approved below.

The MPTF has been providing grants to help create free music performances for the public's entertainment and education for over 70 years. Almost all of our events are co-sponsored, as we require the involvement of local participants that include arts councils, symphonic organizations, municipalities, veterans groups, school systems, and healthcare organizations, among others.

Need Financing?

Our funding is meant to ensure that the professional musicians who are performing are reasonably paid on par with local scale while assuring that there is no cost to enjoy the music. The idea is to enhance our communities and enrich lives through music. Our co-sponsored events run the gamut of musical styles, from classical and opera to Dixieland, pop, rock, country, jazz, and R&B. Our events often introduce musical styles that are not easily accessible and many times our events come with an educational element to them.

MPTF events are held in parks, schools, and public halls, as well as in hospitals and at retirement centers. We have a mandate to distribute our funds proportionately across the U.S. and Canada.

Recipients of our grants are required to handle the necessary payroll requirements of hiring professional musicians, including appropriate payments to pension funds and taxes. We will provide the financial and contact information necessary to make this happen.

MPTF-funded events must be free of charge and without any conditions for admittance. They cannot be fund-raising events or raffles regardless of the merit. We do not fund performances for conventions, political campaigns, class reunions, commencement exercises, workshops or seminars, or for private clubs. A list of these restrictions and related ones follow this general guide to our grants.

We require grant applications be submitted at least 60 days prior to the performance. Grant recipients should include the MPTF in event programs, press releases, websites, posted signs, and other public notifications, along with other event sponsors.

We look forward to receiving good quality photos and other materials that can help us inform the public of your good work and the legacy of the events the MPTF eagerly supports. We always welcome ideas and creative opportunities to expand the public and media awareness of these great performances and the work of our partners. We also have printed posters and material to help enhance the public's awareness of our participation.

Once the event happens, we require written certification that the performance was completed, upon which we initiate the payment of our grants.

Successful events are considered in evaluating future grants, based on timeliness of the application, overall cooperation, follow up and media support, and the quality of the events themselves.

Recommendations for Projects for MPTF performances of the following types will NOT be approved:

- * When admission is charged or there is a condition for admittance.
- * When donations, before, during and after performances are solicited.
- * For composers' forums or performances to promote composers' new works.
- * For a fund-raising activity regardless of the merit.
- * For workshops, individual instructions or clinical type performances.
- * For testimonials, proms, mixers, class reunions, commencement or graduation exercises, appreciation or award functions.
- * For conventions, seminars, lectures of any organization.

Need Financing?

- * For a selective group – closed membership.
- * For raffles.
- * Where there is a requirement to purchase food or alcoholic beverages.
- * Where an AFM Local Union or Member of such Union acts as co-sponsor.
- * For sectarian or ecumenical religious services.
- * For church-connected feasts or holy days.
- * Where the performance is recorded for commercial use.
- * For live TV or radio broadcasts without the Trustees' prior approval 10 days in advance of performance.
- * A political rally, parade, meeting, convention, social function or celebration for any political group, any business group or any labour union.
- * Where the expenditure for a performance is deemed excessive by the Trustee.
- * Where the size of the musical group or the type of music is deemed inappropriate for the audience to be serviced.

Contact Local 293: The easiest way to apply for a grant is to seek the assistance of the American Federation of Musicians Local in your geographic area. They are often experienced in our application process and can also be helpful in planning and organizing the musical aspect of your event.



For more information

about the MPTF

please visit

the HMG website at

www.HamiltonMusicians.org

“My school holiday concert has been cancelled. Frosty the Snowman has the same name as a drug dealer, Rudolph is a victim of bullying, Jingle Bells denies global warming and White Christmas is racist.”

November, 2023

LIBRETTO (Official Journal of AFM/CFM Local

A Guide to Flying with Musical Instruments in Canada

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A Conversation With ... Guitarist Bill Dillon

(cont'd from the August Libretto)

(Bill King) B.K: How did it work in the studio between you to. Did he ask you to try this or that?

(Bill Dillon) B.D: I found out the best thing for me was to know the lyrics. Up until then, for me, it was not to be a musician and just play the songs. It was the sound of the vocal cords and how they sang those songs and how they delivered them. What I was bringing to Robbie's table was my love of song. John Sebastian, John & Paul, Bob Dylan, Justin Hayward from the Moody Blues and, of course, The Band.

I was sitting there on a chair with an acoustic guitar, Daniel Lanois standing there, and Robbie looking at me given instructions. I'm just banging away on this acoustic. It was kind of like I'd know the song after one listen. We'd just talk about it – what do you think, why don't we do like this? Robbie didn't know my background, my love for The Band and how I idolized those guys.

Garth Hudson, still today, is one of my biggest inspirations. I couldn't say I was into the guitar players in The Band so much. They just happened to be great at what they did. The songs were the vehicle, and the guitar playing was either great for the songs or not.

I loved Justin and Zal Yanofsky in the Lovin' Spoonful. All of the bits he did, "Wow." If you change one iota of these songs, it would not be the same. One iota of a Band album. With Robbie, it was the lyrics that had to be so emotional to me to come up with a response.

B.K: We had been talking back and forth on the Salon Magazine article that just came out. So much is said about Robbie's relationship with fellow "Band" mates. It's near impossible getting a read on a person under so much scrutiny. During a recent Salon Magazine interview with Robbie about the film *Band of Brothers* with writer Gary M. Kramer, this question came up, followed by Robertson's persuasive response.

From the interview conducted by Gary M.Kraner: You visit Levon Helm on his deathbed. I understand from the film that there was conflict over songwriting credits and money. Do you care to comment further about waiting until it was too late to reconnect with Helm?

"Here's something that I've not said before. To this day, on The Band's songs, I share the publishing and songwriting credit with Levon. The other guys said they wanted to sell their part of the publishing. When we started, everyone was supposed to write songs. [When they didn't], I thought they were lazy. But some people can write songs, and some can't. Levon didn't write songs. I gave him credit on some songs because he was around. Garth was a great musician, but he couldn't write. Ringo Starr doesn't write songs. Charlie Watts doesn't write songs, and they don't share publishing credit with the other guys in their groups. After 16 years together, Levon never once mentioned songwriting. When it came up, I was generous about it. I did stuff I didn't have to do, and I did it to be a good friend. It was 10 or 15 years after that when Levon was struggling financially, and he's blamed someone else for what happened with him. This was another case of that."

B.D: You know I was going to ask you if I could share that on my Facebook page too. That answers everything.



B.D: Isn't that it? When I read that, I said there you go. That's exactly what it is. I've done a lot of stuff with Robbie from the movie soundtracks, Native American records, two Robbie solo records, all of the TV shows, specials in Europe and Rome and Spain. It's amazing. I lived with him when we were doing stuff. That's a lot of camaraderie. People who are listening or reading this interview, I'm going to underline something with a thousand underlines. Nobody knows more than me, speaking for myself, how he really is as a human being, a musician, a writer, and as a friend – how much he loved with all of his heart those guys. I can not stress that enough. Nobody knows that because they don't live with Robbie. Nobody knows that because they don't work with Robbie. They haven't recorded with him, hung out with him, in restaurants, control rooms, or hanging out with other people. More importantly, making those songs.

When he was asking other musicians to play something, he'd be referencing a sort of drum style or bass part – he'd just want somebody to be on the song like Levon, but he couldn't say that. With Vinnie Colaiuta, he'd say, "Can you make it more like shifty" – his favourite word. He had great admiration and love for those guys. He knows them better than anyone.

B.K: For some reason, some want to take sides in this who are way out of the loop. I always consider the music first. How about Bill, the young man?

B.D: I started life as an emotionally autistic kid. I didn't know that. I was left to my own devices in a very dysfunctional home. Ages one to five, I was nowhere where I should be. I was decades behind everybody else emotionally. When 1965 came along, not only was I ten years younger than Robbie and the other musicians doing anything here – I was ten years younger than the Beatles. By the time I got a hold of my first guitar, it was something I could latch on to for some sort of emotional understanding. I was socially dysfunctional, emotionally confused, yet not looking for an escape. It was synchronicity – here are the 60s', here's the music, here's the guitar and here's the Beatles – "wow." Nothing turned me on like that.

At that time, Bill, there was this explosion of consciousness expansion and self-help books. There was Timothy Leary, Maharishi (Mahesh Yogi) Ouspensky (P.D. Ouspensky) and Allan Watts. This close friend of mine at the time turned me on to this. I hadn't had a guitar yet. After reading hundreds and hundreds of books, I'm looking for a way that would sit right with me, and one was an autobiography of Yogi. I'm twelve or thirteen at the time, and by the time I'm thirteen and fourteen, I'm heavily into this stuff and learning how to play the guitar sort of – Moody Blues.

George Harrison – *All Things Music Pass* album comes out. The Band album. Without The Band in my life, I don't think I'd be here talking to you. The Band was a lot deeper than they let on. It's layers of an onion. That's why those records are so vital. The same with *All Things Must Pass*. The Moody Blues - a cliché as they are in a lot of ways, at the time, was life-saving. It was three or four artists, three or four bands that carried me through. It was the gluing together Yogananda with this music, (Paramahansa Yogananda self-realization fellowship) sometimes on acid.

My connection with Robbie, Joni Mitchell, George Harrison, Richie Havens, this person and that person, all started then. It was decades later, I realized they were the only people I lived by. It was about emotional development from the day I was born. Here's this tunnel, and if I can make it through this tunnel – you'd meditate, you'd listen to this song you'd listen to this album all night – a hit of this, and it would take me places and me trying to get out of who I was. The baggage I had to get through was unbelievable.



Decades later, all this synchronicity, all these events moved synchronically through all my life. I couldn't believe the things that were happening. I was just going through them. Seeing Lenny Breau in person, meeting Chet Atkins, meeting B.B. King, meeting Danny Weis. We were just talking about Danny and reading his interview, and I was in a state of mind thinking about him at the Rockpile.

I didn't know George Harrison was into Yogananda. I thought he was into Maharishi, and that was over and done with. Before we did this big music festival in San Remo, Robbie asked me to come and do this other thing. He then says George Harrison is coming. I didn't know they were friends before that. Excuse me! It was my connection through all of the music that got me to The Band, which got me to Robbie and Dan Lanois, who I grew up with. This is what brought me to George Harrison's feet. The connectedness of what I believe has been my whole path in life has been through meditation and self-realization. Even in the last five years, I've changed a lot. I see more now than I ever thought I'd dream of seeing.

Here I am in San Remo, Italy, in the summertime for a whole week and George shows up. We are out in the clubs at night - did our show, and he says, "Go find something for us." They handed me like five million lyres or something. Well, in two minutes, I found something and ran back to the hotel into this unbelievable suite overlooking the Mediterranean. I knock on the door, and there are Robbie and George and Robbie's manager. I sat up with George all night. We watched the sun come up together. He then hugs me goodbye. Robbie's in another room with some people. With my hip against George's and the hash on a pin and catching his eyes at that moment, I had no Beatle in me; you don't blow your cool. You're just one of the guys. I've said many times, the people in Spain could hear my bones rattling. There's no greater Beatle junkie than me.

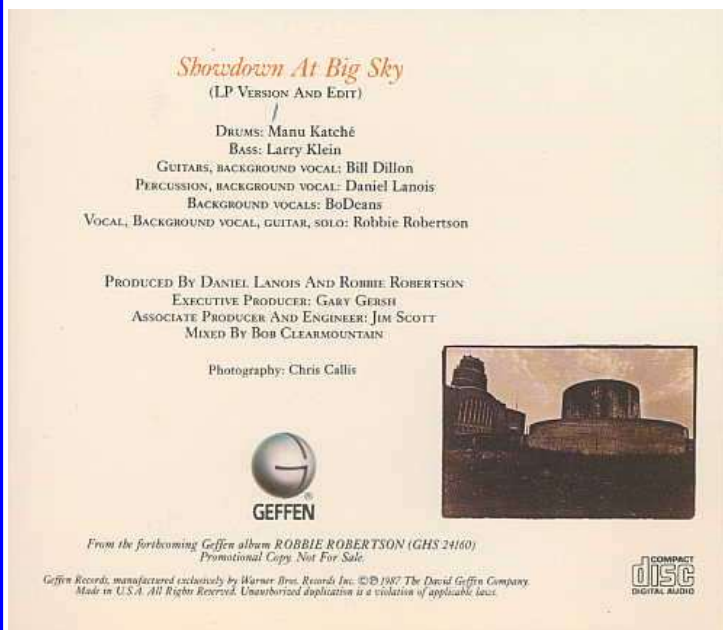
About 3:30 in the morning, Robbie asks, "Bill, where are your guitars?" For one time in my life, I left them in the trunk of the limo. He says, "Phone the front desk and see if you can get the limo driver to bring them up." I phone the desk, and they say Gino is asleep; he's been busy all day. I couldn't do it. Besides, George's wife is a floor below waiting for him.

My first meeting with George. There was this gigantic hotel, with a marble hallway you walked through past marble pillars into a banquet room with glass doors out onto the Mediterranean sea down below the mountain. They had an espresso machine there, and I'm in heaven. I hear George Harrison is showing up that day, and get all dressed up and walk away down and sat on a couch and looked out at the gardens. I wondered when George was showing and hear this kerfuffle the hallway near the side of me, and way down the end of this room. I see this gang of people come in, and my heart started pounding. In the middle, you could see all of this flashing going – it's George. I see his head pop up, and hand go around the mouth and hear, "Robbie, Robbie." I stood up and said, "No, but I'm with him." He leaves the group and prances over to me. "Hey, how you doing?" A big hug and a handshake. The manager runs over and drags him away. Halfway through the sliding doors, George turns around to me and literally says, "You know, you look a lot alike..." but didn't finish it. "Tell Robbie I'll see him somewhere down the base of the river."

B.K: You have a wonderful story about first meeting Joni Mitchell.

B.D: I didn't know Larry Klein from Adam. Here I am in L.A., and here there are all of these big names and famous people I don't know from anything. One day Robbie had this song, Showdown at Big Sky. It was just me there in one of the small rooms at Village Recorder, and we were just getting started. So Robbie gives me a new song, and we are going to start with the lyrics. I went into the small playing area cubicle enough to put an amp and sit there. The day before, this truck shows up and delivers maybe thirty or forty basses. In front of me, all of the basses sit there and a gigantic rack full of equipment. I was waiting for Tony Levin to show and didn't remember him having all of this stuff.

The next day this guy shows up and says hi to Robbie and starts talking with Dan. Dan's looking at all of these basses; he's tuning up all modern stuff. He runs his fingers up and down the strings and says, "I think I'm more into jukebox type stuff for sound."



Dan located this single-pickup Telecaster bass with these industrial cable flat wound strings and a neck you could walk on. The pickup was dangling too. So they take the bass with pick up into Larry Klein, and he says, "OK, sure." He's sitting there playing this bass, and I'm in the cubicle, and within the first half-hour, we start jamming. He'd play something then I'd play something. I had something of me I wanted to throw in. That little thing I wanted to add before we were working on the song was given to me on a cassette by one of the engineers as I was going to the hotel one night. I pop it in the rental car and listen to and thought "wow" that's really

cool. A few days later I phoned Larry at home and said I've got this little cassette and you should have a listen. He says, "OK, come on up; I'll meet you at the café." I slipped him the cassette, and he played it for Joni Mitchell, and they turned that into the song Nothing Can Be Done.

After the second day of working with Klein, we had the bass part. We jammed and got it all down. After he was ready to go, he's sitting outside the studio in the coffee area. I'm sitting there thinking how much I enjoyed the two days. He has to leave, and I have to keep working on the song. He says, "Well, I've been telling Joni I've been having a great time."

After this back in forth for about twenty minutes, I ask him, "By the way, what does your wife do?" He looks at me and says, "Well, it's Joni." I ask, "Do I know Joni?" and he says, "My wife is Joni Mitchell." I lose it and say, "You are married to Joni Mitchell?" I then ask him, "Would you do me a favour. Since I was a little kid, one of my favourite guitar players, let alone songwriters is Joni Mitchell." Somebody had given me the *Blue* album, and I hadn't heard anything like that since Richie Havens. To me, she's an amazing player." As a guitar player, most don't talk about her in that way. And for me to ask him to tell Joni, I'm probably her biggest fan, and she influenced a lot of things for me in ways I didn't know was something special. He said he'd be more than happy to pass along to her and said, "great meeting you."

Two days later the phone rings in my hotel, and it's Larry. "Hey Bill, you know that café you hang out up here in Brentwood, we're just down the street, Joni would like to meet you. Let's meet for lunch." She walks in and says, "Hey Bill, nice to meet you." A waiter comes over to take our order, and she says, "Yes, I'd like some macaroni and weiners, can you put that together for me?" I fell apart inside, knowing I'd lived on that meal. If Lanois paid me for the session, I'd buy and slice up the weiners in the K.D. I ordered an espresso and started talking.

"I've got some songs I'm working on, and Larry was telling me about this and that. Would you like to come up to the house? It's just down the street" She wanted me to listen to songs. I said to them, 'better ask Robbie'. They said, 'OK, let us know'.

So Robbie and Lanois are in the control room at Village Recorder, and I tell them I'd just had lunch with Larry Klein and Joni Mitchell. Of all things, she asked me if I could come to her place tonight after work. Robbie's smiling and Dan's shaking his head, smiling, looking down at the floor. I say, "I

didn't want to answer them without asking you first." Robbie gets up and walks to the end of the console – twisting a cable cord and says, just like this, "That's alright, Bill if you want to play girl's music." Dan cracked up, and I didn't know where this was going.

After work, I jump in the car, drive over to Bellair, pull up and push buttons that open gates to this beautiful Spanish mansion.

The first visit went really great. I kept going day after day, and we made a record. There's this one song for the life of me I could never tell you what it was and I asked her, 'There's this song you did this thing on guitar, the rhythm, the bass part – how did you do that?' "She says, 'Well, that's such and such a tuning'. She has thousands of guitars around, and each one is a different tuning. She invites me downstairs. I walk down this circular staircase – a turret, and through a door, you could see the pool where that famous picture of her floating on her back, which became an album cover. She pulls out the acoustic guitar she used for that song and says, "I kind of did it like this."

She starts playing the song live to me just like the record – I hear – the rhythm, the two fingers parts, the bass notes, the melody and the chord changes, the open strings, the fretted strings. She hands to me, and as I held the guitar, she got frustrated watching me try a bar or two of it and the fact I couldn't play it just like her. Moments like that, I'll cherish the rest of my life.



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Membership activity August—November, 2023

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