



Long & McQuade  
**MAGAZINE**  
long-mcquade.com



# Gift Issue 2014

- **ARKELLS**  
High Noon Watermark
- **FIGHTING THE BUTTERFLIES**  
How to Combat Performance Anxiety
- **ACOUSTIC GUITAR SOUND**  
A Beginner's Guide

where the music begins.



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#### ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

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# This Season...

## Think Outside the (Gift) Box

Between the generosity of the season and New Year's resolutions, now's the perfect time to try something new!

Why not gift music lessons to someone who's never learned to play but has always wanted to?

We've got lesson centres across the country, with professional instructors who teach music to all ages of students, at all stages of learning, and in all styles of music.

Visit [long-mcquade.com/lessons](http://long-mcquade.com/lessons) for all of the details and contact information.

Or consider surprising the guitarist on your list with something completely different – like a keyboard or a trombone! Check out the following pages for portable keyboards from \$130, or super-fun P-Bones for under \$180.

If you're nervous about committing to an uncharted instrument, you can always wrap up a rental for a month – an electronic drum kit for as little as \$35, a trumpet starting at \$19, a banjo from \$28 and many more selections to challenge the musician in your life – or yourself.

Visit [long-mcquade.com/rentals](http://long-mcquade.com/rentals) for all of the options.

## Believe in the Power of Music

Long & McQuade is hosting its 8th annual Music Therapy Fundraising Drive in November and December. Donate a couple of bucks at the till and receive a \$5 rental coupon that you can spend in 2015 – or that you can stuff in a stocking on December 24th!

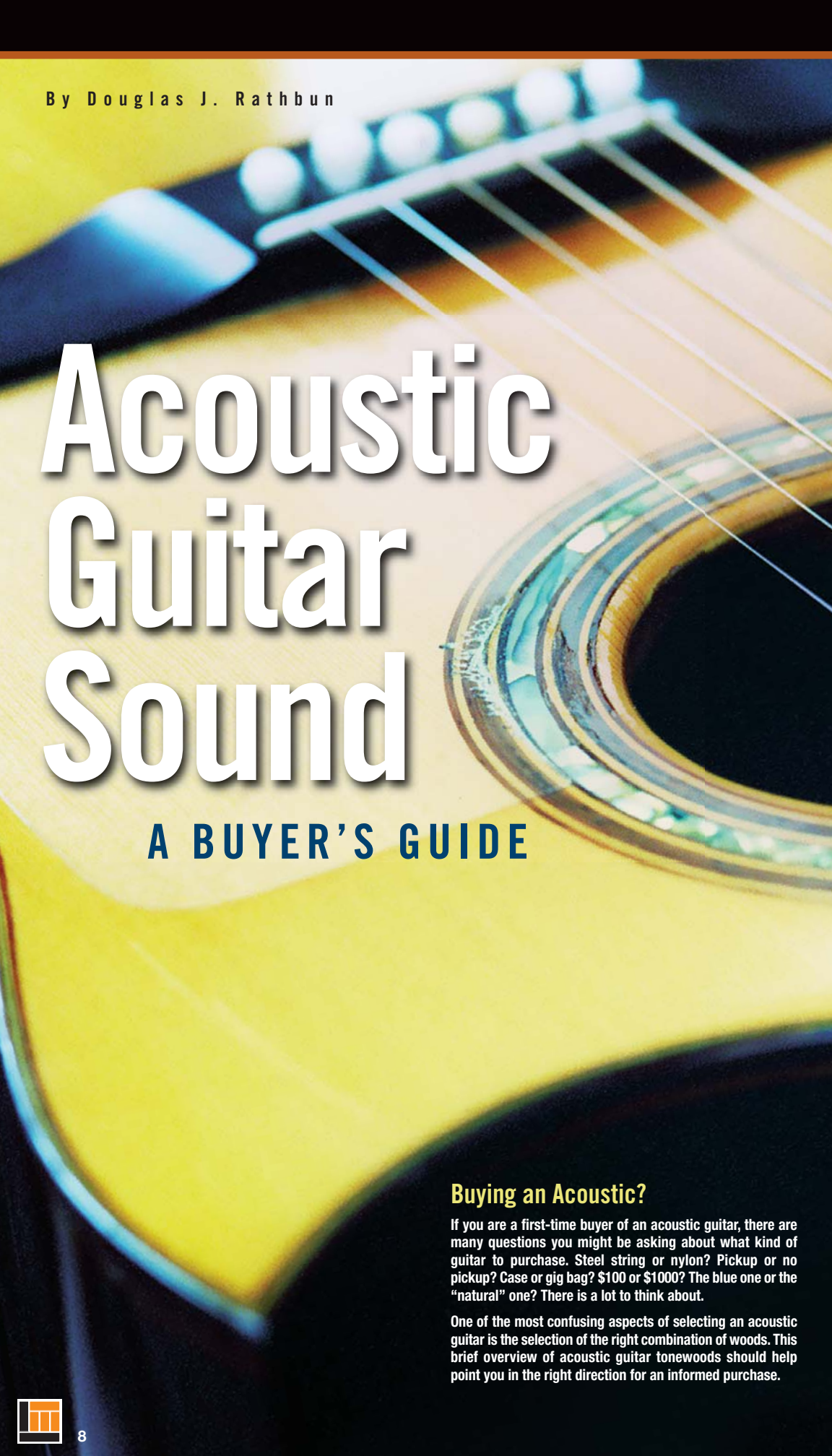
Visit [long-mcquade.com/community](http://long-mcquade.com/community) for a list of hospitals and programs that we support via our music therapy fundraising drive.

## Give the Gift of Choice

Not sure what that special someone on your list will like? You can always buy a Long & McQuade gift card – which can be purchased in any amount, and redeemed for a product or service at any store or lesson centre across the country! (And be sure to wrap it in an exclusive brushed metal gift tin – \$1 from the purchase of each tin is donated to our Music Therapy drive!)

Visit [long-mcquade.com](http://long-mcquade.com) for locations, details on extended holiday hours, and for online shopping.



A close-up, artistic photograph of an acoustic guitar. The focus is on the sound hole, which is surrounded by a decorative, multi-layered ring. The guitar's body is a warm, golden-brown color, and the bridge is visible in the upper left. The strings are taut and extend across the frame. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of depth and texture.

By Douglas J. Rathbun

# Acoustic Guitar Sound

## A BUYER'S GUIDE

### Buying an Acoustic?

If you are a first-time buyer of an acoustic guitar, there are many questions you might be asking about what kind of guitar to purchase. Steel string or nylon? Pickup or no pickup? Case or gig bag? \$100 or \$1000? The blue one or the "natural" one? There is a lot to think about.

One of the most confusing aspects of selecting an acoustic guitar is the selection of the right combination of woods. This brief overview of acoustic guitar tonewoods should help point you in the right direction for an informed purchase.



# Own Your Tone

## WHAT IS “TONEWOOD”?

Quite simply, tonewood is the wood in the guitar that contributes to its overall tone. For an acoustic guitar that means the body, consisting of the top or soundboard, and the back and sides which are usually the same kind of wood.

The guitar's top is the piece that vibrates with the string vibration. It moves to produce a bellows effect, projecting sound waves from the top itself and through the sound hole, reflecting the sound of the guitar's interior. The top increases the surface area of the strings' vibrations, amplifying it and adding overtones, thereby colouring the sound.

Acoustic guitar tops are usually made with woods that are relatively flexible. Spruce and cedar are the most common, although harder woods like mahogany and koa are also used.

Acoustic guitar backs and sides are usually constructed from harder, stiffer woods like mahogany, rosewood, maple, koa or walnut.

## You're the Top!

### TYPICAL TOP TONEWOODS

#### Spruce

Spruce is an abundant, relatively inexpensive and flexible wood that is used in 80% to 90% of the acoustic guitars made today. Its combination of strength and elasticity makes it perfectly suited for guitar tops. Spruce gives the guitar a strong mid-range presence, has clarity of tone when played softly and maintains that clarity when driven hard, making it suitable for a wide range of playing styles from flat picking to finger-style.

Sitka is the most common variety of spruce used in guitar tops. Adirondack is highly sought after for its ability to sustain high volumes without losing character. Englemann is remarkable for its creamy smooth white complexion and richer midrange tones, although it is currently very scarce.

#### Cedar

Cedar is softer than spruce and, therefore, well suited to softer playing styles. Its tone is warmer than spruce and does not handle high volume playing as well. Cedar is a popular top for nylon string classical guitars due to their lower volume and generally sweeter, rounder tones. Smaller bodied steel string guitars designed for lighter touch and finger-style playing can also sport cedar tops. Cedar can be identified by its rich, warm, reddish colour.

#### Hardwoods (Mahogany, Koa)

Although generally reserved for backs and sides, guitar makers have incorporated harder woods like mahogany and koa into the tops of their acoustics. Harder woods are less flexible and, therefore, do not have the volume of spruce and cedar. However, with playing, guitar tops “open up” and get louder with greater range of overtones. Although guitars topped with Hawaiian koa or African mahogany can look stunning to the eye, you must exercise patience with these guitars, allowing them up to a year to come into their own sonically.

## Thinking Outside the Box

### SELECTING TONEWOODS FOR BACK AND SIDES

Where a guitar's top will provide overall volume and articulation, the back and sides provide an acoustic's character. The pairing of top and back and side materials, in addition to body size and shape, are the main ingredients in the guitar's overall tone.

#### Mahogany

Mahogany is the most common back and side tonewood used by guitar makers. The pairing of spruce tops with mahogany backs and sides is as common as PB & J. Mahogany provides a tone that serves

a wide range of styles, having a thick mid-range response with plenty of character.

#### Rosewood

Where mahogany is punchy and mid-rangy, rosewood is almost the inverse. Rosewood has enhanced upper and lower registers, giving a round, warm, resonant bass and sparkingly clear highs. Brazilian rosewood is almost the stuff of legend. Being a restricted and protected rainforest material, it is no longer available.

#### Koa

Hawaiian Koa is a stunning hardwood with magnificent figuring. Koa tends to emphasize the mid-range and sounds fairly bright as a tonewood. Patience and playing is needed to allow this wood to open up and come into its own.

#### Maple

The big leaf maple is an extremely attractive and popular wood for the backs and sides of acoustics. Sonically it is very bright and chimey, hence its popularity on bigger bodied acoustics where the larger sound box can compensate with louder bass response. Figured maple is highly sought after with its deep three dimensional effects like Flame and Quilt which are genetic variations in the maple tree not unlike the difference between straight, wavy and curly hair in people.

## Some Examples of Tonewood Pairings

### Cedar Top

#### Simon & Patrick SP33744

Cedar Cutaway GT, with wild cherry back and sides. (317724) \***699**

#### Seagull Artist Mosaic S33515

With mahogany back and sides. (382651) \***949**

### Spruce Top, Mahogany Back & Sides

#### Larrivee L-02 (Spruce/Sapele)

(60101) \***1099**

#### Gibson J45

(7633) \***2199**

### Spruce Top, Rosewood Back & Sides

#### Simon & Patrick SP25213 Showcase

(195497) \***1029**

#### Taylor 814ce

(57995) \***3739**

### Spruce Top, Maple Back & Sides

#### Simon & Patrick SP36387 Natural Elements Amber Trails

(360279) \***549**

#### Gibson Dove

(7653) \***3299**

### All Mahogany

#### Taylor GS Mini (Mahogany/Sapele)

(355871) \***549**

#### Simon & Patrick SP38084 Woodland Pro

(397110) \***669**

### Spruce Top, Koa Back & Sides

#### Martin Performing Artist Grand Performance

(360148) \***835**

#### Taylor 214ce-K DLX

(407511) \***1374**

## Bone Up on Your Tone Before You Phone!

Before you call to order that guitar, or before you visit your local Long & McQuade acoustic room and are besieged by hundreds of models of acoustic guitars, do some homework. Think about what you want from your new acoustic. What kind of playing style do you like? Do you like hard strumming or flat-picking, or are you more interested in the subtle nuance of finger-style?

Think about matching up some tonewoods to complement your playing style and musical preferences. It will make the selection of the perfect guitar an easier and more pleasurable experience. Remember that many of the models of acoustic guitar Long & McQuade carries are available for rent at extremely reasonable rates. Try a few before you buy!

Formerly a professor and Chair of the Department of Theatre, Speech and Music Performance at Calgary's Mount Royal University, Doug has been singing and playing guitar for over 40 years (recording for 10) and now works at the Calgary South Long & McQuade.





# Arkells' High Noon Watermark

By Nick Krewen





There must be something in the Hamilton water.

What else can explain the continuous flow of tuneful Steel City talent lapping against the eardrums of musical aficionados around the world?

Crowbar and King Biscuit Boy; Teenage Head and Forgotten Rebels; the Grammy-winning producer, singer and songwriter Daniel Lanois; the one-man industry known as Tom Wilson (either in his Blackie & The Rodeo Kings collective or Lee Harvey Osmond guise) and Tomi Swick; Monster Truck, The Reason, Caribou and Jessy Lanza: these are a few of the Hammer heavyweights who have made – or are making – waves, and you'd be wise not to exclude double Juno Award winners the Arkells, named after a street in the city's Westdale district, from the list.

*High Noon* is the third and most realized album from the Max Kerman-Mike DeAngelis-Nick Dika-Tim Oxford-Anthony Carone collective that first met at McMaster University. It's a rousing collection of rock 'n' roll with a soulful bent that will further the Arkells' reputation as foremost entertainers.

"We wanted to make a record that was going to be fun to play live," notes Kerman, the singing, guitar playing, and principle songwriting Arkell. "Whether we like it or not, we've set our own bar pretty high for energetic rock 'n' roll songs. That's our bread and butter in a live setting, what our fans connect with.

"So we wanted to make sure we had songs that would stand up to our others like 'On Paper', 'Oh, The Boss Is Coming!' or 'Book Club' – write some big old rock songs."

But as spirited, escapist and uplifting as *High Noon* is intended to be, the album, mainly produced by Tony Hoffer (Beck, The Kooks, Foster The People) with a few tracks handled by Eric Ratz (Monster Truck, Billy Talent), also includes more topical fare with songs like the critical "Fake Money", the funky "Hey Kids", the soulfully-orchestrated "Systematic" and the vibrant "What Are You Holding On To" – influenced, says Kerner, by a legendary, politically-charged British punk band.

"A friend of mine who I show demos to began sending me Clash songs with the lyrics attached," Kerner recalls. "I've always liked The Clash, but I really started to dig in to it. They're such an amazing band and so adventurous on a production level, unafraid to take weird chances.

"Lyrically, they're able to talk about a lot of things with nuance and complexity in a way we don't see from many rock 'n' roll bands. I like a lot of punk songs, but for some reason, the Clash seems a little smarter than all the others.

"I think that really informed the way we wanted to make the record: get adventurous, have some fun, but also really try to say something."

The creative Arkells journey always begins with Kerner.

"Typically, it starts very bare bones: chord, melody and a few lyrics. I'll bring that to the guys," he explains. "It's also a process, because they have to be excited about the nine lyrics I've written down so far and the chords and melody, and from there everybody gets their hands on it. It's really collaborative.

"Even for lyrics, I really rely on the guys to make them better, whether it involves editing or contributing a different idea for a line.

"Musically, everybody gets in each other's faces and suggests parts. Mike might suggest something on the drums; or our drummer Tim may suggest a different guitar tone. Everyone knows that the goal is to make great music and write a great song, so no one is particularly precious about who does what."

And although the keyboards on the album are relegated to Anthony Carone, who replaced law school attendee Dan Griffin in time for *High Noon*, Kerner says he's often inspired by his own set of 88s.

"I have a piano at home and I write a lot on it," Kerner admits. "I've set up a voice memo on my phone, and that usually does the trick. I also have a journal that I jot verbal ideas in throughout the course of the day."

One thing Kerner and the Arkells refuse to do is spend endless amounts of time in the studio experimenting with fragments of ideas. They prefer to be as concise as possible, with any experimentation often done either at rehearsal with jams, with drummer Oxford capturing them so they can be assessed the next day, or occasionally recorded at guitarist DeAngelis' home studio.

It's a formula they've followed since their independent 2007 EP *Deadlines* (reissued the subsequent year when they signed with Toronto's Dine Alone Records), 2008's *Jackson Square* and 2011's *Michigan Left*, and that methodology didn't cease for *High Noon*.

"We just knew we needed to get 12 to 15 really strong songs to take into the studio, and just getting there was the goal," says Kerner. "Because it's easy to hear about bands who say, 'Oh, we wrote 90 songs for this record.' And I think, 'How is that possible?' They can't all be good songs. We don't want to push out 50 ideas and go through the scraps and piece them together. We really want to focus and make the songs as strong and as special as possible."

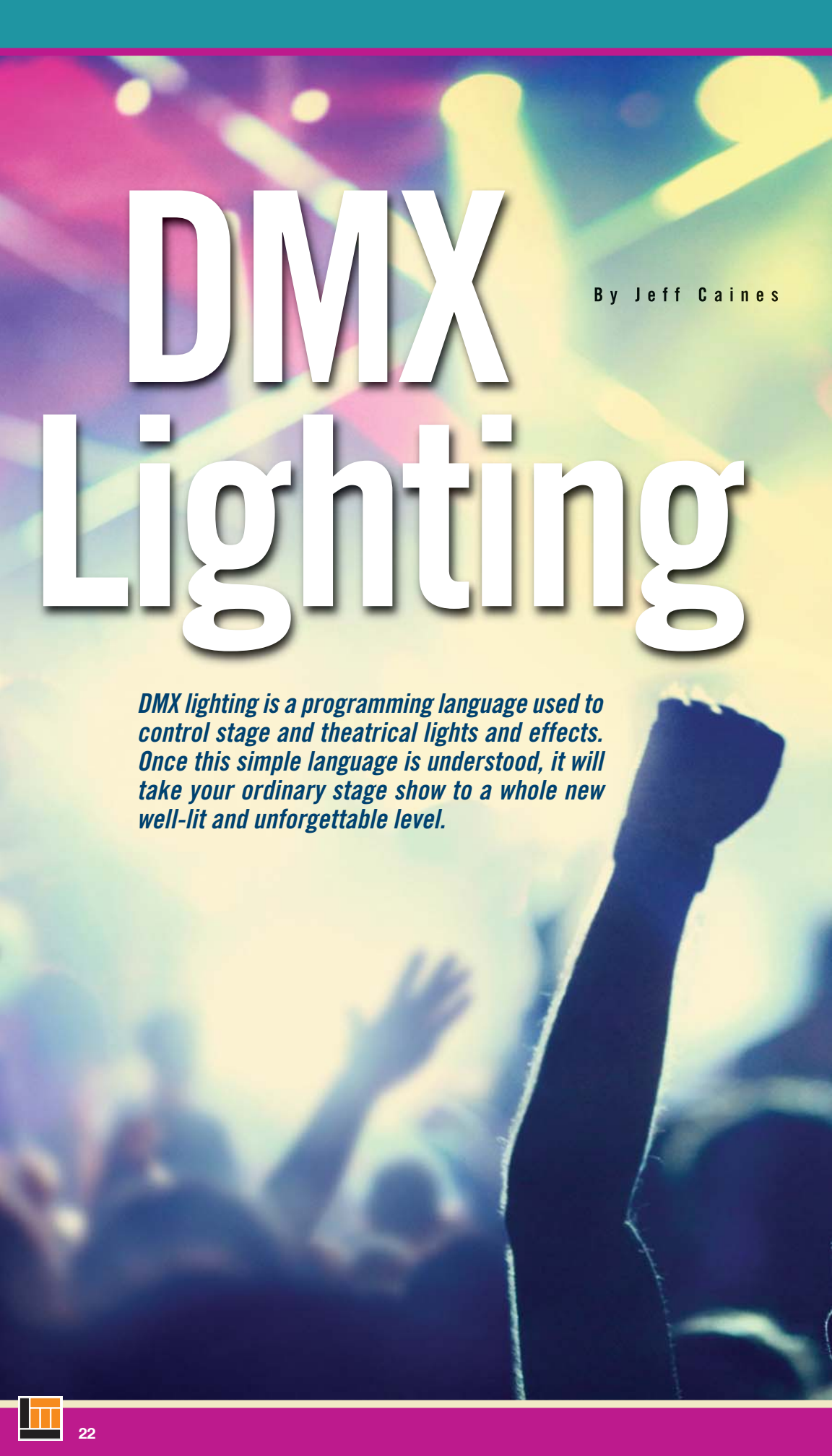
Kerner says Tony Hoffer, producer of 11 High Noon songs, was ideal for the project "because he could speak in many different musical languages" due to his wide-ranging client repertoire. Multiple Juno winner Ratz simply "encouraged us just to be the Arkells, be a rock 'n' roll band unafraid to let loose, think about these songs and the way we play them live."

Of course, an endless string of performances is next for the Arkells, as they further endear themselves to European, Canadian and American crowds on lengthy tours that will doubtlessly raise their profile even higher, continuing Hamilton's world domination mandate.

But it still doesn't explain what's in that Hamilton water.

"I can't tell you," Kerner replies. "But it's something good."





# DMX Lighting

By Jeff Caines

*DMX lighting is a programming language used to control stage and theatrical lights and effects. Once this simple language is understood, it will take your ordinary stage show to a whole new well-lit and unforgettable level.*



## A Brief History

DMX512 as it is known, is a Digital Multiplex containing 512 pieces of information. It was first introduced in the 1980s to control stage lighting dimmer packs, to give lighting designers more control over the amount of light on stage. Since then, DMX has gone through several protocol changes and has turned into an industry standard for all lights and effects in production today. DMX is not only used on stage but can be found on everything from the timers in Christmas lights to the titles scrolling on the screens in Times Square.

## Speaking DMX

Before we get to connecting and programming, we need to know the terminology used to decipher our system. Starting from the top, each individual light or fog machine is called a FIXTURE. When we connect multiple fixtures, we refer to this as a UNIVERSE. With every fixture, each controllable option is counted as a CHANNEL. For example, a light that can flash on and off and has colours in red and green and blue would be a four-channel light. Channel 1 is the flash on and off, Channel 2 is Red, Channel 3 is Green, and Channel 4 is Blue. Each universe can contain 512 channels. Hence DMX512.

## Connecting DMX

Each fixture (that is DMX compliant) uses either a 3- or 5-pin XLR connection. The economy priced fixtures will use a 3-pin connection, whereas the higher end will introduce 5-pin connections. Both connections look like a basic microphone cable but do work in a higher impedance. Cables that are branded as DMX cables cost more money, but offer a much more solid uninterrupted signal.

Connections on the backs of fixtures will have an in and a thru. We connect all fixtures in a daisy-chain fashion. In each universe, there is one MASTER, and every fixture connected is referred to as a SLAVE. The master is either a hardware controller with faders, such as an Elation DMX Operator Pro, or more commonly now, a software program such as American DJ MYDMX2.0. In either situation, there is only one output from either the hardware or software (with a USB interface) that will run into the input of Fixture 1. The output of Fixture 1 will then lead into the input of Fixture 2. The output of Fixture 2 will then lead into the input of Fixture 3. This will continue all the way down the line to the rest of the fixtures in your universe. That's it.

## Programming Made Simple

Now that all fixtures have been physically connected, we need to address each fixture in the universe. Each fixture's factory default is Channel 1. What this means currently is that from our master, if we move up the fader for Channel 1, the first parameter of every fixture, whatever it may be, will be modified. Generally not a show we want to present.

Before we move on, there are two things we need to understand about how the DMX control signal is distributed. This is the trickiest part of understanding DMX. We program our fixtures separately so that, just like our house address, they differ - so that our postal mail does not all end up at one house. Using our example from before, we have a light with 4 channels: on/off, red, green and blue. That is, channels 1,2,3,4. So for the next fixture that we have that we want separate control of, what is the address? If you said channel 5, you have just cracked the code of DMX. The message is sent as a cluster so all information is sent down the chain to each fixture. Because each fixture has its own address, like our house does, the fixture only looks for its address. If the channel being controlled is in range of a particular fixture's address, the fixture will receive that message and follow the command. Using the example of a 4-channel light, if channel 3 is being adjusted, the fixture will receive the message. If the control signal is, say, channel 6, then Fixture 1 is not affected and ignores the message.

*Working out of the Langley Long & McQuade, Jeff works as a High-Tech Specialist in PA, Recording and Rentals. When he isn't at the store, he is on-site training customers and designing new audio and light systems for venues. Jeff can also be found on stage, either playing or running sound and lights.*

The second part of the control signal is on the fixture side. Each fixture will have a set amount of required DMX channels. Read the manual that you get with your light to see how many channels it will "take up". Some lights offer multiple set-up options to allow for more or less control depending on what is desired. Most fixtures will also require you to turn off that auto or sound active mode to allow for DMX control. Having full control of all lights can give us the power to create SCENES. Hardware and software will allow us to program everything as we need and then we can store it to a single scene. Most controllers allow for a large amount of scenes, where all we need to do is hit scene 1 for all green, scene 2 for all red, scene 3 for all blue, etc.

## Want to Get Started?

Here are some suggested pieces of gear to get you up and running:

### MASTER CONTROLLER HARDWARE:

#### American DJ DMX Operator

(sku 60361)

Control 192 total DMX channels and program up to 240 scenes.

Buy: \$199 | Rent: \$13/week



### MASTER CONTROLLER SOFTWARE:

#### American DJ MyDMX II

(sku 373666)

A powerful and easy to use DMX lighting control app for PC and Mac – even use it with your smartphone!

Buy: \$299



### LIGHTING:

#### Microh LEDPAR64KDII

(sku 306579)

Designed for medium to large stage use, this unit provides bright, saturated colours on stage.

Buy: \$141<sup>99</sup> | Rent: \$15/week



#### Orion Cyclops ORFX3

(sku 370967)

Easy plug and play operation; works as a standalone or ganged with multiple units.

Buy: \$180 | Rent: \$13/week

#### Microh MONSOON FX

(sku 405845)

6 different effects in one unit!

Buy: \$269 | Rent: \$19/week

### DMX CABLE EXAMPLE:

#### AC3PDMX25 (sku 281094)

Buy: \$14<sup>50</sup>



I would recommend playing around and experimenting on your own. The nice thing about DMX lights is that if you are having problems, unplug the XLR cable and most lights should jump back to sound active mode.

You have worked hard on what you are presenting on stage, so have a solid light show to make it even better! Have fun...



By Elyse Dalglish

# Fighting the Butterflies

HOW TO COMBAT  
PERFORMANCE ANXIETY



Jitters, Stage Fright, Butterflies in the Stomach... There are many names for this feeling of panic before an important performance, but you are not alone.

Performance anxiety affects almost everyone at some point. But learning how to cope with the shaky hands, nausea and dry throat will not only help you as a musician, but in life as well.

## What is performance anxiety?

Performance anxiety is the body's natural defence mechanism to stress called the "Fight or Flight response." When the body gets stressed out, it releases a hormone called cortisol. Cortisol works alongside adrenaline to generate reserved energy in the body in order to help it survive immediate threats, or help it prepare for exertion.

Some physical symptoms of this include dry mouth, racing heart rate, shaky voice, sweating, light headedness and nausea. Researchers say that we developed these physiological reactions to a perceived harmful or stressful situation when humans were hunting and gathering for survival. This reaction would allow the person to make the quick decision to fight off or flee from the potential danger.

Even though the Fight or Flight response is no longer relevant to today's lifestyle, the body still has the same biological response to any stress it may encounter. These days, instead of falling rocks to dodge, we have large SUVs cutting us off on the highway, and instead of wild animals threatening our lives, we have the same biological reaction when we are approached by our boss or an authority figure. Our bodies don't know the difference between physical danger and psychological stress. The body attempts to help us out in the only way that it knows... Fight or Flight.

Heightened cortisol levels in the body, over an extended period of time, can have many negative side effects. These elevated levels have been linked to learning and memory problems, mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, impaired immune function, heart disease, increased weight gain, and it also increases the likelihood of depression.

The good news is that there are many effective ways to control and combat this potentially debilitating condition. Overall health always helps with any kind of stress, and finding outlets to burn cortisol and release stress are key to being able to perform at your best.

## Ways to make this adrenaline rush work for you, and not against you:

### EXERCISE

Exercising for 20-30 minutes burns up cortisol in the body and engages the body's natural ability to produce endorphins (the body's natural opiates). This also improves your overall mood and confidence, which is a key factor when performing.

### DIET

Try to avoid foods that stimulate your system or raise blood sugar before a performance. These include fried foods, sugar, carbohydrates, alcohol, caffeine and milk. Foods that help alleviate performance anxiety include whole grains, blueberries,

dark chocolate, nuts and pumpkin seeds. Any protein will also increase your energy and alertness.

### SLEEP

Sleep helps the body reduce stress from the day. The Fight or Flight response is triggered more easily when the body hasn't had enough sleep.

### MEDITATION OR VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES

By visualizing the type of outcome you want from your performance, you are able to take the steps toward achieving that vision. Meditating and taking long, deep breaths before a performance will help clear the mind and relax the muscles. If you were not able to get enough sleep the night before the performance, meditation is a great way to rest the mind, reduce stress and get an energy boost.

### RELEASE

Releasing pent up emotions is an excellent way to reduce anxiety and feel more relaxed. One way to do this is by watching a funny movie or comedy act. Laughing releases the same endorphins as when you are exercising (even if it's a fake laugh!)

Listening to music that triggers positive thoughts is another good way to let go of emotions. This also releases those "feel good" endorphins.

Free writing can be very helpful in letting go of what's bothering you. This is done by just putting a pen to paper and writing anything and everything that comes to mind, without judging it. Sometimes this is also a great way, if you're a songwriter, to get new song ideas or release writer's block. Allow yourself to get out all of the worries and negative emotions that might be causing you stress.

### BREATHE

Breathing techniques are highly effective in controlling stress, shaking and muscle cramping. By breathing in slowly through the nose and exhaling slowly through your mouth (like you are breathing out through a straw) you can calm nerves, slow the heart rate and improve oxygen circulation throughout your entire body.

By being prepared for your performance as much as possible, you will greatly reduce pressure on yourself. Some other helpful tips include:

- Practice your set and know it well
- Stay organized – prepare a to-do/equipment list
- Collect all equipment the night before
- Choose what you will be wearing the night before
- Get there early
- Stay hydrated
- Pause and take a deep breath right before you start playing
- Avoid too much alcohol/coffee

Remember that the audience wants you to succeed.

With the confidence you gain from not having to worry about performance anxiety anymore, you will be able to take your performance to a higher level. You will be able to concentrate on enjoying performing for your audience, and they will enjoy it along with you.

*Elyse received her musical training from Humber College, and she is an active performer in the GTA. Some of her performance experiences include singing for the Mayor of Mississauga, performing the national anthem at Toronto Argos and Blue Jays games, recording with Sum 41 and more. She works at Long & McQuade in Mississauga.*



By Heather Elizabeth Rathbun

# Why Your Violin Probably Isn't Broken

A FIRST TIMER'S  
GUIDE TO  
ORCHESTRAL STRINGS



I'm not going to lie: I used to be terrified to touch orchestral strings. I've since learned that they aren't all that delicate! I'd like to share with you what I have learned about how a violin works, how to maintain it, clean it, and generally know your way around your (or your child's) instrument.

## Your Bridge May Fall Down. It Isn't Broken!

There are many parts of a violin that aren't actually attached to the instrument. The bridge (the wooden part on which the strings rest), the pegs (large tuners on the scroll), and the tailpiece (the end part to which the strings are attached) are all held on to the instrument by the pressure of the taut and tuned strings. This means a few things:

1. Tuning your violin involves pushing the peg into the scroll to keep the tuning where you put it. If you turn the peg without pushing it back into the scroll, the tension on the string will immediately unwind the peg, and you will be left with a loose peg and a floppy string. If it still doesn't stay or is hard to move, you can treat it with a peg compound. Remove the peg, and place the drops or compound on the peg where it will meet the scroll on either side of the string hole. If this still does not fix the problem, then it is possible you will need your pegs serviced by a trained luthier.
2. Loose strings, a good knock, or pulling on the bridge can make it fall down. Simply stand it back up, re-tune the strings, and you will be good to play again! Your bridge should be centered between the fingerboard and tailpiece, and in line with the small triangular notches in the f-hole. As you stand the bridge up, make sure that you support it carefully from both sides to ensure that the tip doesn't bend as you slide it into place under the strings.
3. Changing strings one at a time is the preferred method. Taking off all of the strings at once to change the strings is okay, but be aware that your pegs and tailpiece might fall out, and your bridge will come off. Take care not to bump the body of the instrument at this time as you can knock down the sound post inside the instrument (Look inside through the f-hole. See it? It's the wooden post in the middle.) Also, your pegs are fitted to each specific hole; be careful not to mix up which one goes where.

## Cleaning the Strings

Your strings can become pretty grubby with rosin after a while. If you plan to keep the strings you have, you can clean them by taking a paper towel and rubbing alcohol (99% isopropyl recommended), and rubbing the strings down while they are still taut on the instrument. Take care not to get rubbing alcohol on the body of the instrument or the fingerboard as this can destroy the finish of the wood and dry it out.

## Cleaning the Fingerboard

Rosin and finger oils can build up on the fingerboard while you play. The best practice is to wipe down your instrument after every time you play. However, if your fingerboard does develop build-up, you can use a small amount of varnish cleaner on a soft cloth to clean it up. It's usually easy to clean around the strings at the bottom of the fingerboard, but if you are going to change your strings, you might as well do this once you've taken them off.

## Cleaning the Body of the Instrument

Use a violin polish and soft cloth for cleaning the body. A small amount on a soft cloth helps remove rosin build-up and creates a beautiful shine.

## Replacing Strings

While the string is off, that is the best time to treat your peg with peg compound to allow smooth, secure motion of the pegs in the scroll. Once you have done that, place the non-ball end of the string into the hole in the peg. You'll want to turn the peg while starting a neat wrap of the string toward the string's ideal placement on the fingerboard. When you've got a few turns on the peg, take the ball end and slide it into the proper spot on the tailpiece. The "E" string on violins usually has a small plastic tube on it; slide that over the bridge to help prevent it from biting into the bridge, and then turn the peg to tighten the string.

## Tuning the Instrument

First, unscrew fine tuners, so that they are at their loosest setting. Then, using the pegs on the scroll, bring the string as close as you can to your desired note. I start with just the large pegs and a general tuning, since once you get to the last string, the tuning will have changed on your first string. This is due to the fact that the bridge is not attached, and it "floats" around with the changing string tension. Once you've got all of the strings as close as you feel you can, adjust the screws on the tailpiece to "fine tune" the strings. You may have to do this a few times on an entirely new set in order to get the instrument in tune with itself.

... and you're done! Regular maintenance of your instrument can help it look, sound, and feel better for longer, and increase your confidence and understanding of how it works. Remember that if you are ever unsure of how to fix a problem, it is best to ask your teacher or a Long & McQuade staff member what the best course of action is. Have fun and keep practicing!

*Heather Rathbun has always had an interest in every aspect of music, and often picks up new instruments just to learn how they work. She studied flute and alto saxophone, and has tried guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, trombone, french horn, piano and clarinet. She spent three years in the Classical Voice stream at the University of Lethbridge, and is currently working on finishing her degree, with intent to move on to a Master's Degree in Music Therapy. She works at Long & McQuade in Calgary.*



# TOP 10 Reasons for Learning to Play a Musical Instrument

**1** Sharpens memory

**6** Advances mathematical ability

**2** Refines organizational skills

**7** Improves reading and comprehension skills

**3** Teaches discipline

**8** Exposes you to cultural history

**4** Promotes social skills

**9** Fosters self expression

**5** Enhances coordination

**10** Increases self confidence



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