

Long & McQuade
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GIFT ISSUE



WHERE THE MUSIC BEGINS.

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This year as the holiday season approaches, I've been thinking a lot about tradition and family. I'm one of six kids so my house was always a busy place to be. One of my favourite memories is the carolling parties that my mom used to host. She'd play piano as we all sang along, with everyone allocated a specific part for "The Twelve Days of Christmas". It was loud, and chaotic, and despite some groaning, always fun. This is just one of the family traditions I've missed in the past few years.

Everyone in Canada has probably experienced some North American holiday traditions - Christmas carols in the mall, The Grinch on television, a tree full of decorations, and visits with Santa Claus. And of course, there are the parties on New Year's Eve, where the familiar strains of "Auld Lange Syne" are known to everyone who is celebrating.

Music plays an important role in celebrations, not just in December, but throughout the year: Singing around the campfire with guitar accompaniment in the summer; the only Irish song you know being played in the pub on St. Patrick's Day; "Pomp and Circumstance" being performed at a school or university convocation; "Ave Maria" as the bride walks down the aisle, and 'your song' being played as you dance with your loved one. Even the overly enthusiastic singing of "Happy Birthday" or "The Wheels on the Bus" marks important times and places spent with loved ones. Music is the supporting player to so many traditions, and forms a crucial part of the memories that we all have.

No matter what your musical traditions are this - or any - season, your family at Long & McQuade is here to help: From that special instrument, to lessons for the new musician. Equipment rentals for your holiday event, or stocking stuffers for all ages. A gift card for the hard-to-buy-for musician on your list, or a New Year's resolution for yourself to learn something new - we've got something for everyone.

Whether you visit our online store or shop at one of our many locations across Canada, you'll find the same great selection and service. This year, perhaps more than ever, I'm looking forward to celebrating and spending time together - to resuming old traditions, and starting new ones.

Wishing you and yours a happy and music-filled holiday season,

Steve Long





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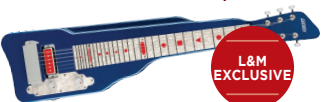
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ROB NASH

MISSION OF MERCY



By Nick Krewen



Don't let his appearance fool you: Winnipeg's Robb Nash may look and act the part of rock star musician, but his true profession?

Lifesaver.

For the past dozen years, Nash has been a mental health advocate and empath who uses his original rock songs – as well as motivational speaking – as a form of outreach to thousands of students across Canada, rescuing them from their darkest, most self-destructive thoughts. You know... the kind of deliberations that can lead to suicide. Robb Nash knows. He's been there.

"When I was 17, I was in a big car accident," recalls the man born Robb Reimer. "I woke up from a coma, found out that my heart had stopped and that they had to rebuild my skull with metal. I also had several surgeries on my shoulder. And I went from being a 6'5" guy who was playing a lot of sports to being a 6'5" guy getting bathed by his mom."

To say he's been through the emotional wringer is an understatement. There have been feelings of survivor guilt, shame and embarrassment surrounding the "why me" question, with those sentiments compounded by the cliché-riddled opinions of strangers who feel qualified or justified to offer their two cents on the matter.

"They told me that it was fate... or they used the religious angle: that God punished me because I was a bad kid," Nash remembers. "The most common one was, 'Everything happens for a reason.' And I had to figure out the reason why I was hit by a semi-truck, and it brought me to a darker place."

Two years later, somebody offered an explanation that was oddly comforting.

"For two years, I was suicidal... until somebody came up to me and said, 'Hey, I think I know the reason you were hit by a semi-truck. You were going too fast on an icy road and sh*t happens.'"

"That sounds simple, but it made me realize, okay, I'm not a puppet. Not everybody gets a second chance... maybe I should do something with it."

And do something he did – Nash dove into music, relying on empathy as his super power.

"I thought, 'How many other people are like me, having dark, suicidal thoughts?' None of my friends knew. None of my family knew. I wanted to tell my story – and a good way to do that was through music. So, I started Live On Arrival."

Nash scored a record deal, some radio airplay and opened for Buckcherry and Finger Eleven. European and US tours were dangling carrots.

But there was a more intriguing offer in the wings: would Nash accept a nine-month trek to visit schools and promote mental health issues to students vulnerable to depression, anxiety, addiction, self-harm and bullying?

"I walked away from it all," he says, referring to the promising career. "It was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I didn't have a dollar to my name and had to refinance my home. And those nine months have turned into 12 years."

Nash knew he made the correct choice when he and his band were called to assist with a crisis at an Ontario school. A female student had committed suicide... but there was another threat.

"It turned out that the girl's suicide note revealed that she had a pact: if she killed herself, one of her friends would, too," Nash recalls. "They didn't know which friend it was."

Nash entered the 1000-student auditorium with trepidation, faced with a dilemma.

"Until that day, I had never spoken about the fact that I was suicidal," Nash admits. "I thought, 'What would my family and teachers think of me if I revealed this weakness?'"

Nash decided to bare his soul, telling the crowd, "I know there is someone out there thinking about taking their life. I was there, too."

He said not only did the confession feel like a 1000lb weight had been lifted from his shoulders, but a girl handed him her suicide note following the concert.

"That blew my mind."

Since that day, Nash says he has personally received 917 notes, "not to mention all the kids that would get home, rip them up, burn them and send us a picture from their phone or post a video on YouTube or Instagram."

As a reminder, Nash sports the tattooed names, on his arm, of dozens of individuals he's helped, only too aware that the crisis is far from over: Kids Help Phone reports that 1 in 5 teenagers seriously considers suicide annually.

Nash, who was awarded the Order of Manitoba for his efforts, is certainly doing his part: his Robb Nash Project is officially designated as a charity and visits over 100 schools (either individually or in groups), reserves, prisons and youth detention centres yearly. In some cases, he therapeutically writes and records songs with troubled students with equipment donated by Long & McQuade, gifting them a glimpse into their own potential.

Lately, he's developed an online curriculum that includes a "where are they now" documentary of students who chose life over death, and four modules featuring music videos for Nash original songs.

Currently available free to schools in eight provinces – and developed in association with psychologists, counsellors, social workers and teachers – the curriculum also includes a 10-minute rendition of Nash's story. After watching the modules, students are encouraged to journal their own struggles and breakthroughs.

At the conclusion of each module, those who feel they're in need of immediate help can text "NASH" to 686868 to connect with the 24-7 crisis hotline partner Kids Help Phone.

Nash, whose new album **This Is War** is filled with empowering songs, is grateful and humbled for the difference he's made in some students' lives, but admits it's only half the battle and, to a certain extent, beyond his control.

"We plant the seed and we give them hope, but the kids have to water that seed."

www.robbynash.com



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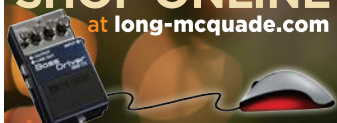
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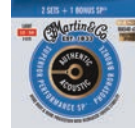
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The Bloor store's PA and Recording department received a huge renovation in the summer of 2020. Although the space was working well before, we always want to discover new ways to present products and improve the experience for our customers.

The team that worked on the renovation are the same people that design and build all the beautiful new Long & McQuade locations. We were blown away by how efficient and professional they were, resulting in an extremely modern, bright, and fresh-looking department.

Over two years later, we still have regular customers who marvel at how much better the space looks and functions. The redesigned space encourages our customers to directly engage with the products in a more meaningful way, with purpose-built displays that allow us to highlight the products. It's amazing that even though the store is the same dimensions, the design makes the space feel a lot bigger, brighter and more open!





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By Piers Henwood

CREATIVE CLOSURE

WHERE THE MUSIC BEGINS.





Life is full of open loops: circular internal dialogues and unfinished tasks that rattle in our heads. This is especially true for the creative individual – the musician, songwriter, or producer who must bring order to the amorphous creative process. While an open drum loop in your DAW might inspire creativity, too many open loops in your creative life lead to gridlock and endless unfinished projects.

That's why creative closure is essential.

We know that broken human relationships benefit from closure, and the concept of closure is also useful to illuminate the psychology of the creative process.

When human relationships sit in an extended state of uncertainty, all parties suffer. Whether it's a romantic relationship or a working relationship, it's difficult to move forward in an environment that remains full of unanswered questions. Similarly, when creative projects remain ambiguous, the creative individual or team suffers, and the creative spirit is dampened.

Psychologists Arie Kruglanski and Donna Webster originally coined the phrase "need for closure" in 1994. According to Kruglanski, "The need for cognitive closure refers to individuals' desire for a firm answer to a question, and an aversion toward ambiguity."

Applying this term to the creative process is pertinent because creative projects often represent an ambiguous internal relationship with oneself. In creating something from nothing, the artist must embark on a process that challenges his or her self-identity.

Therefore, when we habitually don't finish creative projects, we live in an ambiguous relationship with an essential part of our selfhood. We may even subconsciously take on commitments in other areas of life to avoid facing the difficulty of tackling our creative work.

Because the creative process is inherently ambiguous, one of the most important ways to create fulfillment is by consistently seeking creative closure. And how do we do that? It starts and ends by finishing projects!

It sounds obvious enough, but it's never easy in the creative realm. Indeed, finishing one creative project is far more difficult than having five in an open loop. Creative people like to tinker on open loops, and tinkering is indeed an essential part of learning an instrument, coming up with new song ideas, and expanding our production or engineering skills.

But when it comes to putting art and creativity out into the world, we can't tinker endlessly. The open loop can become the lazy default, characterized by a lack of decision-making and perhaps a lack of confidence. So we must embark on a series of steps that move a project from A to B.

The tension is that no creative project ever feels complete to the creator; there is always a looming after-thought, that metaphorical or literal note that might be added or subtracted. Finishing can become an intense psychological commitment, and people with an artistic temperament are prone to rumination.

On the positive side, this characteristic makes possible the probing insight that a great artist might have. On the negative side, too much rumination begets inaction. For the creative individual, there are few things more dispiriting than getting stalled on creative projects.

But, because it's more difficult, it's also more fulfilling to finish one project than to tinker endlessly on five. When we finish a creative project, we exemplify an important set of personal characteristics that transcend the musical or creative realm. We hold ourselves (and our partners) accountable. We learn to divide a larger task into finite steps. We make a challenging commitment and follow through. We gain valuable experience by adding structure to an ambiguous process. Whether the audience for the creative project turns out to be one or one million, we put an expression of ourselves out into the world, and in doing so create personal growth.

And here's the key – creative closure is an equally applicable mindset for the amateur hobbyist as it is for the professional musician. The skills learned from pursuing creative closure apply to all walks of life. Whether we're working in a band or a boardroom, in tech or construction, the habit of finishing what we start is essential – especially when it comes to difficult projects that might be easier to walk away from.

That said, it's important to acknowledge that not all creative projects are destined to be finished. For example, great songwriters often have a stockpile of unfinished song fragments lying around, and some ideas probably shouldn't see the light of day – creative people need to iterate in order to clear the pipes and get to the best ideas.

But this fact doesn't change the basic thesis of creative closure, because the thesis is behavioural. Seeking creative closure is a skill that transcends individual projects. You can still seek creative closure for your most important projects while accepting that there will be ideas and smaller projects left on the cutting room floor.

As an industry professional, I often get asked by young musicians, “What should I do to achieve A, B, or C?” And while the answer will vary based on circumstance, one universal answer is to do what's in your own control. That starts with making decisions and finishing creative projects. The dominance of streaming platforms means there are no longer gatekeepers in the distribution of music, so any finished project has an opportunity to be heard, which is an inspiring evolution.

Although finishing creative projects is in our control, it's easier said than done. So what are some specific techniques to help get unstuck?

1. Write down all of your open loops to get them out of your head and onto the page. This concept originates from the Getting Things Done (GTD) framework by productivity guru David Allen, and has been shown to reduce stress and help identify important areas of focus, creating the basis for future action. There is helpful literature to read by Google-ing GTD and productivity.
2. Write down a list of justifications for finishing the project(s) you identify as priorities. Here you want to focus on outcomes you care about that are in your control. The point isn't to think about a possible market-driven outcome such as being a rock star, but about personal values and learnings that you'll gain from the process of finishing. These will likely include items listed above such as making good on our word, improving skillsets, getting out of our comfort zone, confronting fear, and building self-confidence.
3. Find a creative accountability partner, or if you're already part of a group of creatives (eg. a band), create common language around this subject. The creative process is lonely and sometimes requires fortification. Setting up regular co-working sessions with someone who is pursuing similar goals is helpful for sticking to commitments. If you're prone to not following through on your word to yourself, sharing commitments with an accountability partner can help add another level of motivation.
4. If you're in a group environment where projects don't finish due to internal debate and disagreement, familiarize yourself with my framework for Creative Diplomacy: <https://piershenwood.com/creative-diplomacy/>

A musician or producer's creative process is inherently full of confusion and ambiguity, and that's why so many creative projects are left unfinished. We often don't take ourselves and our commitments seriously enough. We think that it's not life or death, that it doesn't really matter if we finish. But it does matter. Turning our internal dialogue from open loops and endless rumination into tangible outcomes is essential to our growth, just as keeping one's word to oneself is integral to our self-confidence and self-image.

There is a gift in finishing creative projects: A gift to the self in terms of following through on one's word, and a gift to others in sharing creative output with the world.

Leaving a creative idea unfinished is its own form of a painful and ambiguous ending, like a confusing break up or the mysterious end of a working relationship. In starting a creative project, we are asking ourselves a question, and the only way to answer that question is to finish. So perhaps the greatest requirement of the creative process – whether you're an amateur hobbyist or a global rock star – is simply to finish.

That's creative closure.

Recently given the Music Managers Forum (MMF) “Honour Roll” award, recognizing outstanding career achievement in artist management, Piers Henwood is a GRAMMY- and JUNO-nominated manager and musician. Since forming Amelia Artists in 2002, Piers has co-managed the careers of past and present clients including Bedouin Soundclash, Tegan and Sara, Luca Fogale, The Librarian, Buck 65, The Funk Hunters, as well as his own bands Astrocolor and Jets Overhead.

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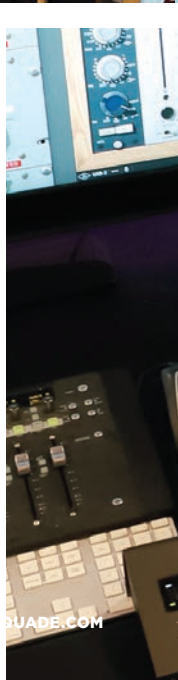
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REMOTE RECORDING FOR INTIMATE SETTINGS

By Tim Condon



HOW KAREN KOSOWSKI
AND BRIAN MONCARZ
PRODUCED THROUGH
THE PANDEMIC



Karen Kosowski and Brian Moncarz are two of the latest Canadian producers to find success on the global stage. Kosowski has had quite the year – she produced the majority of the tracks on the debut album **Remember Her Name** by American country music artist Mickey Guyton. As well as **Remember Her Name** being nominated for three Grammy Awards, Kosowski arranged and performed the US national anthem with Guyton for the 2022 Super Bowl.

Having worked with Our Lady Peace, The Trews, Moneen, Circa Survive, Yukon Blonde and more, Moncarz is recently coming off recording vocals and co-mixing Alice Cooper's **Detroit Stories** with Bob Ezrin, as well as doing more co-writing and production work, specifically with One Bad Son and Bleeker.

Work for both Kosowski and Moncarz was a constant through the pandemic, thanks to innovative thinking, and access to unique tools. Moncarz has worked remotely (but closely) with the band Ninety Foot Stone. At his suggestion, guitarist Austin Cole purchased a Universal Audio Apollo Twin X, to utilize tracking through the Universal Audio Unison plugins, in particular the Marshall, Friedman, and Diezel guitar amp plugins. Guitar tracking with these plug-ins was done remotely, with Moncarz overseeing the daily recordings. Drum and bass parts were recorded by Jason Pierce and Duncan Coutts of Our Lady Peace at their respective homes, and Taylor Perkins of Bleeker recorded vocals from his home studio.

Unable to work in his studio due to lockdowns, the mix was finalized in Moncarz's basement. Brian used a significant dose of Universal Audio plugins. The Neve 1073 EQ, Pultec EQP-1A, 1176s, LA-2As, Studer A800, and AKG BX 20 did the heavy lifting for mixing duties. Mix bus featured a few choice pieces of analog hardware, in conjunction with the UAD Manley Massive Passive plugin, ATR-102 Tape Plugin, and Sonnox Oxford Inflator plugin.

"Sonically the Apollo, along with UAD plugins, sounds absolutely stunning," he says. "The analog modelling (with the plugins) is incredible and it has allowed me to scale down my use of analog hardware immensely."

Likewise, Kosowski navigated the pandemic by remotely recording locked down Canadian musicians from her residence in Nashville. Using remote software, Kosowski was able to be very hands on in the recording sessions.

"Artists invested in their own Universal Audio Apollo interfaces and that enabled us to work remotely over Zoom, with me controlling their recording software, while they sang their vocals," she explains. "It was like they were in a vocal booth several thousand miles away, and I was still able to both produce and engineer the session. I was still confident in the quality of the recording chain and signal path, and they loved the way their vocals sounded in their ears... which is so important. The (UAD) 1176 Rev A compressor plugin is on almost every vocal I record, and their Oxford Limiter and Shadow Hills compressor plugins are part of my mix bus treatment. Their AMS RMX16 reverb is also a go-to!"

As producers, Kosowski and Moncarz are aware of the importance of making musicians feel comfortable during recording sessions, in order to yield the best results. Moncarz does this by keeping the session mood light and fun as gear is being set up. Musical influences and gear are discussed, allowing an opportunity for the musicians and producer to quickly bond. Time is taken to create and dial in great sounds, giving the musician confidence in what they are hearing when they start recording. Great sounds lead to inspired performances.

Kosowski uses ambience to create the right vibe for musicians: burning candles, dimming the lights, and creating an environment that is comfortable and relaxing. Likewise, the mood is kept light, and humour is used to help diffuse nerves around the recording.

"The best performances often come from letting the musician start out by playing or singing whatever comes naturally to them, and guiding only when necessary," Kosowski asserts, "although, I've also found interesting results from getting vocalists to try something they're not used to doing, like standing on one foot while singing. It redirects the attention."

What advice would Kosowski and Moncarz offer for upcoming musicians?

"Try to always stay inspired," says Moncarz. "Do little things every day to keep you excited about music. Read a music autobiography, listen to a music-themed podcast, watch live footage of your favourite bands on YouTube, etc. After more than twenty years in the industry, if I need a dose of inspiration I'll put on an old album that informed my musical upbringing. If I listen to Stevie Ray Vaughan's **In Step**, The Black Crowes' **Southern Harmony** and **Musical Companion** or Soundgarden's **Superunknown**, they will always remind me of why I got into music in the first place and inspire me to work extra hard in the studio. Inspiration is key to what we do as music creators, and maintaining inspiration is always a great challenge!"

Kosowski adds, "Work hard to perfect your craft and find your own original voice!"





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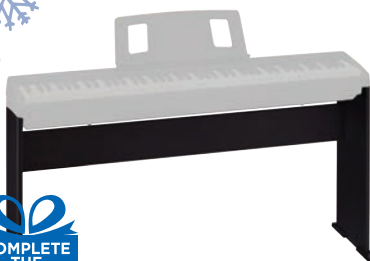


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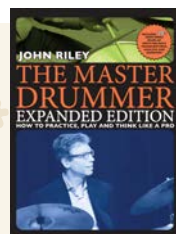
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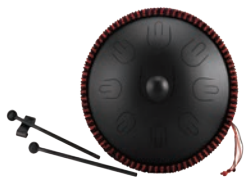
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INCLUSIVE INSTRUMENTS



By Kevin Young





The first words on the Inclusive Instruments website are 'Join the jam session,' which sums up the approach driving the creation of the instruments they design and build.

"We want to get across that music is a way to get people together," says co-founder Ryan McCaul. "It's not separate for people with disabilities.

"With adaptive instruments, everyone can be creative, regardless of technical or social barriers," Ryan continues, adding that their products help foster musical groups that are more accommodating for people with disabilities "and allow them to contribute in an authentic way."

Inclusive Instruments is about making the opportunity for composition and performance more accessible to those with physical or developmental challenges. As their site states: 'Our mission is to create a truly inclusive community through music, and to create meaningful social connections for anyone living with a disability.'

The goal is to meet both individual and collective needs. "We have some instruments that work for a lot of different people, but we also make custom designs," says Ryan. "For example, one person liked the guitar, and the best way for them to interact with a button or sensor was through head motion. So we made them an instrument that would play and change guitar sounds that way."

During the pandemic, they offered "inclusive online music sessions." Of late, they've focused more on fostering the use of their technology in family, community, and school settings. "Our hope is that people can connect with local community groups and teachers, especially as things open up," says Ryan, "and use their instruments with groups who are making music."

That was a driving force for McCaul before the Whitby, Ontario-based company launched, something he elaborated on during a recent conversation.

Kevin: How did this start?

Ryan: I worked at Participation House London (PHL), supporting individuals with disabilities in their homes and community in early 2017. I was placed there during the fourth year of my music undergrad studies as part of Western University's Music in the Community course and ended up being hired as a Development Support Worker. My boss (PHL Senior Coordinator, Stacey Sutton) was and is a huge support. She came to me and said, "So many people we support love music, and I want you to try to do something (for them)."

Kevin: How did you go from there to creating instruments?

Ryan: Soon after that, I went to Northwestern University in Chicago for my Master's and developed the idea as a resident of The Garage at Northwestern (the university incubator), through classes at the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

When I moved back to the Toronto area in June of 2020, I reached out to PHL, told them what we'd been doing in the States, and that I'd like to do a project at PHL. So, my friend Ian Gregor (Inclusive Instruments engineer/co-founder) and I made custom instruments for people (at PHL). We were open to doing iPad instruments if people wanted. But we wanted to meet with individuals living with disabilities whose family and community members knew had an interest in music and just got to know them. We asked about their musical tastes. We asked if they played with community groups or family members, and what (instrument) they wanted to play. From those discussions, we designed custom instruments for them.

Those instruments ranged widely, from an adaptive clarinet and vocoder to designs for adaptive acoustic and electric guitars and the 'air' guitar available on their site. They also hosted online inclusive music sessions.

"The idea was for them to form a band, or make a song to share with their family or community at a listening party," says Ryan. "In the fall of 2020, we incorporated, launched the website, and now we're selling the designs that have been most popular, but we're still doing custom work."

In doing so, they bring a wide range of expertise and experience to the table. In addition to Ryan's technical programming chops, he's an experienced teacher with a Master's Degree in Music Education, and a Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from Northwestern. He's a certified Ontario College of Teachers graduate with a focus on Instrumental and Vocal Music. During his time in the States, he also served as lead teacher and president of AMPED, a music mentorship program for incarcerated youth in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center.

Ian studied Space Engineering at the Lassonde School of Engineering at York University, worked with the Canadian Space Agency and York University on CubeSat projects, and taught robotics.

Rounding out their team are Anthony Nufrio and Justin Cruz.

Anthony leads the company's music sessions and is an Ontario College of Teachers certified teacher and musician. Additionally, he teaches English with the Toronto District School Board and has extensive experience teaching students with special needs.

Justin has a passion for building custom computers and computer systems, and brings a wealth of experience from his studies in Computer Systems Technology and as a Senior Technical Specialist at Canadian Tire, where he's participated in a range of major company-wide technical projects.



Kevin: With all very specialized skills – how did you find each other?

Ryan: We're all friends from high school who stayed in touch. For building physical instruments, I needed an engineer, somebody who could 3D print, and Ian was interested, so he helped out with the project we did with people at PHL. Then we ended up turning it into a business. Anthony and I played in bands together. We're both TDSB teachers, and Anthony's been teaching for a long time, so having him help with our sessions was a no-brainer. When we started building more instruments, we needed someone to help with the soldering, construction, and assembly, and Ian reached out to Justin. We lucked out; all of the talents were there in our friend group.

Kevin: So, researching and developing the instruments on the site, how did you approach that?

Ryan: The designs came from the needs of the people we worked with. If someone said they wanted to play guitar, we'd get a sense of what their physical needs were. We had the skills from the projects we'd done; I had a background in programming, making iPad instruments, and wanted to use sensors, buttons, and things like that, with some programming to make it simple to use. With Ian being amazing at 3D printing and building, he and Justin are a great team.

Kevin: I understand that you're working with various partners on this, including Long & McQuade. Can you give us an idea of how those relationships have helped you and the people you're building instruments for?

Ryan: Obviously, PHL has been amazing for us in terms of our collaboration with their community members. Western's music program and the students in the Music in the Community program worked in our sessions. Long & McQuade has been collecting old instruments. For custom instruments, we're using a lot of those. We also have a strategic partnership with Community Living Ontario, who helps spread the word about what we do.

Kevin: I know you're a business – not a charity or not-for-profit, but it seems that the focus is more about facilitating engagement than making a profit. For anyone reading this, is there a way they can get involved and help?

Ryan: We're selling instruments, but we're looking to partner with community organizations. Sometimes the best way to do that is for them to apply for funding so we can be a vendor for them. There's also funding in Ontario for adults living with developmental disabilities. We try to get creative with finding funding for people wherever we can.

Kevin: What about people who'd like to offer up instruments or parts?

Ryan: We are accepting instrument donations, but have limited space because we're working out of our homes. But we can talk with people and see if they have something we're accepting. The biggest thing for us right now is visibility. If someone knows anyone who may be interested, a family member, music teacher, music therapist, or someone working in an organization who may want to collaborate in some way, that's the biggest way to help, by spreading the word.

The most important thing for Ryan and the company's team is finding others with the will, passion, and expertise to find inclusive avenues for playing and creating music.

"Exactly," he says. "We want more people to know we exist. Few people even know that adaptive musical instruments are an option for them. Some may opt out of making music in the first place because they may think it's something that's not accessible for them. We want to connect with school boards and teachers who buy into the vision of including students with disabilities in music classes."

Ryan stresses that, while they've listed some instruments on their site, they still do custom work that – given their collective expertise – can be conceived, designed, and built for people with a wide variety of needs.

"Addressing the variety of needs of our clients is a priority," he explains. "Right now, we're making individual full custom designs until we have a viable alternative. It's possible down the road that we may have modular instrument designs, so people can select which parts they'd like for their instrument in a way that best suits their own needs."

That process, beyond leading to individual solutions for specific players, also helps them to develop broader instrument categories, "like a violin or wind instrument designed so they can be included in a traditional band class, or choir, or whatever. Our thinking is, 'What can we make so people can join a group?' That's our approach."

Currently, Inclusive Instruments products are primarily standalone instruments, but Ryan hopes to include MIDI connectivity soon.

"Instruments that can be used with GarageBand and with your phone to access all the instruments/sounds that are already there. That's next."

For anyone interested in learning more, buying an instrument, or helping spread the word, Ryan concludes, "The best way is to go to www.inclusiveinstruments.org and send us an email. People can buy existing designs, but we do consultations and meet via phone or video call so we can recommend an instrument that's appropriate for somebody, or, if there are other accommodations to be made, we can talk about customized solutions and figure that out."





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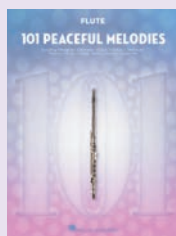
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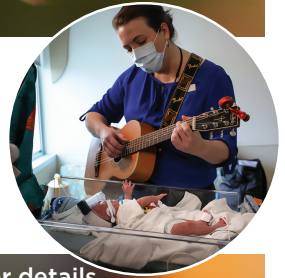


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