

Mac Edwards

Resident: Poquoson, Virginia

Musician: Been playing at guitar for about 40 years never got any better you'd think I'd learn. I have been playing in the same band (Joey and the Jammers) for the last 14 years

Studio: No name as yet. How about My Sanity Clause

Background

I guess it was watching the Fab four on Ed Sullivan that clinched it for me. It gave me an itch that never seemed to go away. I started playing guitar in the fourth grade and never was able to let it go. I played in all sorts of hack high school bands that never really amounted to anything. I got out of trying to get a band going and just goofed around for about 10 years thinking I'd just be a closet musician. Then along came an opportunity and I played bass in a band (Pachanga) for about 7 years and it was a real roller coaster ride. After that I thought it was totally out of my system and the chance to play with Joey and the Jammers came along and I went for it. Been with them for over 14 years and a long strange trip it's been

What made you chose the two songs you recorded for this comp?

Let's see the Badfinger tune was one I used to goof around with in my Pachanga days and I always liked it. I thought Badfinger was treated pretty poorly by the music industry. But even thru it all they still had quite a few memorable tunes and Baby Blue was a favorite. I met my wife to be when our band was playing out and Baby Blue was one she liked as well.

As far as Dig A Pony I always thought it showed about what the Beatles would have been like live at the time it was written. It was typical Lennon gibberish but if you listen to it carefully you begin to understand

what an interesting and inventive guitarist George Harrison was.

Can you describe the instrumentation used on your recordings?

Baby Blue I used a Washburn D-10 for the acoustic portion. I used the internal mic on my Zoom MRS-8 to record it. The electric guitar was an Epiphone Les Paul Jr direct in using the MRS-8 guitar patch VBLUE. The bass was an Aria pro direct in using a Finger Bass patch. Drums were taken from a midi version of the tune and I used a soft synth to convert the sound.

On Dig A Pony I used the same Les Paul JR and 2 different patches forget which ones exactly. One for John's sound one for George was VBLUE. The bass on this interestingly was from a midi version that I converted using a soft synth and did the drums that way as well.

How about the recording network used?

I use a Zoom MRS-8 to do all the tracks most everything direct in and occasionally the internal mic. I then put the Tracks in Cakewalk Guitar Tracks Pro for all the mix down and processing. I also used Traction for all the midi work.

How do you go about recording the songs?

I did this different than any other recording I have tried. I started with a midi version of the tune this set the tempo and timing. I then started adding instruments and removing midi building the tune a step at a time.

Any unique recording techniques used?

I have never used midi conversion before and it was pretty cool. What you do is you take the midi file and replace the General midi notes with actual instruments. I used NS_Kit for the drums and a Fingered Bass for the bass notes. I was amazed at how well it came out. I also used Vocal Tweaker (a VST Plugin) for the first time. This allowed me to correct problem notes in the vocals and I have to say it definitely works as advertised. I also used SIR which uses impulses to emulate different reverbs. I am still learning it but I liked it a lot.

How do you approach the mix?

I pull everything up until the peaks hit about -6. I set the mains so they peak at about -6. No panning to start I just listen then I start getting my placement with pan. I don't like anything panned too wide so I try to get it like a stage positioning. Then I try to balance things and make notes on hot spots. From there it is a tedious process of automating the mix so everything balanced and adding reverb, compression and effects.

How were the songs mastered?

Ahh! Mastering is still a mystery. I play the track after it is mixed to stereo and try to set the EQ first. I am still getting used to my monitors so I play with this until it sounds decent to me. I then will add multiband compression and here I try to compare the sound I get with commercial CD's. Finally I use a mastering limiter at the end of the chain set at -3. Then I listen to the final track in my car and any where else and try to make final tweaks which occasionally lead to remixing as well.

Any tips for the home recordist?

Use your ears, don't do final mixes with headphones, mix a low volume and change the volume occasionally to see if you lose any part of the mix. Take your mix and put

it in between to similar songs that were professionally done and see if your mix holds it own. Finally invest some time with some of the recording groups like Saxon Sound you will gain from a wealth of knowledge.