



*By John McGlasson - GJD*

With the undertaking of any big project, regardless of discipline, there are going to be speed bumps, even roadblocks. I've had several in the last couple months. At this point, our former distributor owes me a fairly sizeable sum of money for sales that took place months, in some cases, years ago. I spent everything I had and then some to promote these artists, and with the well-documented decline of the overall music business, I'm finding myself at it's mercy, and am having a hard time getting by, much less paying the studio thousands of dollars. Add in my personal legal issues and incurring fees, and you'd think I wouldn't be able to continue; not the case. We all pull together, we persevere.

Thankfully, our producer, Tony, has been involved with the label almost from day one, he knows what we're up against, and he knows the seeds I've planted all over the place are growing, even though we're not seeing the fruit today. With the exception of Backyard Tire Fire's most recent, yet-to-be-released album, Tony produced every title the band has released. BTF is on a major upward rise, their new album was produced by famed producer Steve Berlin, and will be released this summer by Hyena Records as was their previous release. I own or have rights to all titles up to the point they went to Hyena, so it stands to reason that the money is coming. Tony has known BTF longer than I have, and we share the belief in our hearts that a big payoff is coming, and soon. So Tony is willing to let me continue with my own production, and running a tab with him until the payoff comes. Without friends like Tony, there's no question I'd be done for.

My drummer Eric recently had a new baby, which is all-consuming, yet he still is able to make time for his first love, music, and has shown that his dedication is beyond reproach. This isn't like making a typical album where the songs have simple, easy-to-memorize structures, this stuff is hard! We're making an album that we hope will transcend time and will be appreciated by future generations the way people like us still marvel over Gentle Giant, King Crimson, Rush, Jean-Luc Ponty, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Return to Forever, and the other greats from the heyday of prog/fusion.

The fact is, those bands consisted of brilliant, highly-schooled musicians who were able to transcribe the music for all members, but none of us read music. We do it the hard way; I show the guys the parts, describe the feel and texture I'm looking for, and we rehearse them until it becomes something bigger than what I originally had in mind, because they're brilliant at what they do, no less so than the schooled musicians we admire. It's the only way we know how to do it, and there's a real advantage to doing it this way, in that we're actually creating the songs together as we go, we're all writing them, based on the original spark that exists only in my head. I've had to learn to get what I'm feeling across to them clearly, without being a dictator or a jerk, and being very open to their ideas. We operate very smoothly, because we share the same love and desire to create something that out-lives us, for ourselves, our families, and for our kids to be proud of long after we're gone. A musician without a body of recorded work is lost to history when he or she dies, there has to be a recorded history of your music to remember you by, and we want this album to live forever.

The song we're working on now is actually two songs in one, with a very dramatic, almost orchestral feel to it, which evolves into a very fast-moving, groovy, Zeppelin-esque ending over eight minutes long, called "Flowering". After several rehearsals, we have the basics of the song down, and we'll resume recording in May, after I get some unpleasantness behind me. But the most important thing is not to quit when things get rough. I have an amazing family, a dedicated band, and a producer who's also a great friend, and no matter how long it takes, this album is going to be completed, because we all share the same need for it to. Thanks for reading!