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to spend three years in the machine. Spend most of your time on the big touring busses. Get up early for interviews where you must be careful to give the same answer to the questions that will be asked you over and over again so no magazine editor gets miffed. Then the radio interviews. Then the public appearance with signing. The shows will require constant repetition of a core of songs. Set lists and lighting cue points are best, so you should make key moves and stand in certain places on stage nightly. All the money spent on tours, ads and all other promotions is money the record company gets paid back before you get any money." **Iggy Pop's** line about being buried deep in mass production was about the sameness of his groupies, but it works just as well for the selling of rock and roll by corporations. There's a good reason **Jim Morrison** and **Kurt Cobain** quickly grew to hate it.

Note that nowhere did Danny say I couldn't say what I want to say, outrage whomever I want, dress as horribly as I like. That's what always made Danny such a great record exec; he understands rock and roll, and he's an ACLU guy. Danny isn't in the music business anymore. That's right; the guy who was practically a teenager when he was a head honcho at Swansong, Led Zeppelin's own label, a guy who was President of legendary record labels like Atlantic and Mercury, doesn't work in the music business anymore. What does that tell you about the music business?

So before you pack up your gear and friends and add yourself to the unimaginable glut of bands that have turned L.A. and N.Y.C. into disreputable swamps of mediocrity like MP3.com in its final days, consider carefully what you are struggling so hard to achieve. Ponder if there may not be better ways of achieving what you really want.

7. Recording: digital or analog?

I'm an analog nut, but analog stuff is tricky, breaks down easy, and then you have to transfer to digital. But no matter what anybody says, they still can't make digital sound as good as 2" 24 track. I had it explained to me once by **Hank Waring**, the guy who mastered all of **Bob Marley's** records. Hank mastered everything from **Steppenwolf's** "Born to be Wild" to classic punk band **The Germs**, to my band Lucid Nation's first CD, *The Stillness of Over*.

Hank believed the world is more violent because of digital music. He explained how an analog recording of music is an unbroken flow like music itself. But digital music is chopped into identical equal sized pieces, and even if you can't hear the clickety clack of the railroad track, your brain gets annoyed by it. He thinks rap music was perfect for digital but it was terrible for rock because rock just doesn't sound right without its real underlying flow. Having said all that, it requires a certain kind of nutcase to take on the hassle of analog recording. I do think all musicians

should try it at least once, but I don't think it's a great place to start out.

If you are recording just for your own reference, use a simple cassette recorder. For bands, consider a good stereo cassette component. Some of the better old ones like Tascams can be bought dirt cheap on Ebay, and they sound great with just two decent mics, one plugged into each in channel.

Also, don't underestimate how great one really good stereo mic can sound in the center of the room where your band is playing. You don't have to mic up every little thing to get a good sound.

Best of all, cassettes are lo-fi analog. The step up to quarter inch or half inch reel to reel, while producing impressive gains in sound quality, will also cost you an arm and a leg if you can even find a steady supply of tape. Soon your room will become a frightening mass of unsteady towers of tape boxes. Don't even ask about splicing with a razor blade.

For my own set up at home, I have a 24-track analog mixing board from the UK for a warm sound, going into a digital hard drive. It's not great, but it's good enough. Our track "Fubar" was recorded that way. You can hear that it sounds fairly good with some mixing help from **Mike Barile** and some mastering by **Jack Endino**.

But for convenience you just can't beat digital. Once you have the required hardware and software, you can record hundreds of hours for free, or for the price of CDs or zip drives or however you back up. You can take your whole studio with you anywhere you can take your laptop. Plus the ease of manipulation of sound is like a dream come true, compared to the unforgiving black and white photography of laying down an analog track.

Apples are still a little better than PCs for music making, but there a lot of great programs for PCs. Start out at Sweetwater.com or Musiciansfriend.com.

8. Your music for download?

It's a pretty simple equation. CDs are practically prehistoric. Vinyl is nice for the fetishist. I think it still sounds best of all. Lucid Nation has almost one hundred songs for sale on iTunes and Rhapsody and other pay-for-play services. But the only people who can buy our music there are people with credit cards or with very generous and trusting parents. Since lots of kids under eighteen like our music, what choice am I giving them? Come back in four years?

How much good does your music do in a silent horde in your closet? Even if only one person a week downloads one of your songs for free, that's fifty people who cared enough to keep one. If you are really good, and creative, who knows: You may get thousands of downloads a day. At that point you have all kinds of options, and people will appear to advise you how to make the most of them. Don't trust anyone. They may even mean well. But trust only yourself. Before you put your name on any dotted line, be sure you know exactly and in detail what you are getting into.

As for copyright, I've always had a cavalier attitude, and for years I never got copyrights on my songs because I thought copyrighting was stupid if you didn't have the money to fight back. Famous bands stole ideas from me, but so what if I had copyrighted them? You think I could afford to sue Geffen Records?

Now that we're big enough to be attracting interest from soundtrack supervisors, everything got copy written not because I think it will stop people from stealing my ideas, but because I want the right to say 'no' to use I disagree with. Although how much good will that do me? **Ronald Reagan** used "Born in the U.S.A." for his presidential campaign even after Bruce Springsteen revealed he was against Reagan and never gave him permission to use the song.

Some of my smartest musician friends these days are planning to make their livings doing what they consider more valuable work for our threatened species. They give their music away for free and wouldn't have it any other way. They say this will purify an art form impossibly infested with parasites. Even though I still try to imagine ways to actually reach a lot of people and make money at this while preserving my principles, I can't argue with the wisdom.

9. Touring the Internet.

There's plenty of info online about regular old touring. It can be so amazing. For me it's like sped up time. You see beautiful things. A mist covered Oregon meadow at dawn, while Jim Morrison on the radio sings about not being forgiven for wasting it. A mountain lion lopes across a highway in Montana. You meet fans. Make new friends. Have scary adventures like peeing at night outside a deserted gas station in the middle of nowhere in Utah while a tin sign bangs loose overhead in the dust wind.

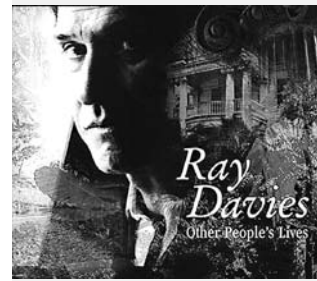
But before you risk life, limb and bank account to play in front of twenty kids, ten of whom are hostile, in another dump with a piss soaked bathroom, consider that for less money your band could purchase itself a practically professional Sony DV Cam and an Apple laptop with Final Cut Pro HD to edit whatever you shoot.

You can use your Apple to record your band if you add some software and interfacing. You can make your own films, music videos, and DVDs. You can web cam a rehearsal. With Ableton Live 5, you can even use your Apple as your live instrument. It's a brave new world for musicians, and with the expansion of broadband and even faster services on the way, the Internet is definitely the future of promotion.

So consider the possibilities. For people stuck in the old ways of doing things, the music business is now even more a killing floor than it was before. But for wild idea-spouting pioneers who fiercely defend their independence, this is the opening of a frontier vaster than any musicians have faced. The day is ours to seize. Let's learn from the past, not re-enact it.

cd review

Ray Davies *Other People's Lives* (V2)



So, if *You Really Got Me* was Genesis and the Gospel was *Something Else* thru *Arthur* (add *Face to Face* or *Lola* as the fourth book, depending on your taste), then I guess former **Kinks** front man Ray Davies' first solo collection, *Other People's Lives*, would be Revelations. I don't know, maybe it's the Book of Mormon. Point is: you don't want to push a metaphor too far, or a Kinks front man, for that matter. Speaking of, it must have been pretty apocalyptic for poor Ray when he was shot in the leg chasing down a mugger two years back (let's see **50 Cent** take a bullet when he's in his late fifties). But you can't keep a good man down, and if there's one thing we know about Davies, he's a scrapper. Apparently, seeing his life flash, as they say, gave Davies the determination to finish up this collection of songs (in the works for five years), and drop it on a fickle American music market. Well, have you heard the *Good News*?

What we get in *Other People's Lives* is a collection of well worked tunes from a mature pop/rock composer—mind you, the kind that uses a word like "shite" on the opening track (think a more believably cool **Elvis Costello**). So Ray's mature - big deal, we all should be at his age. It doesn't mean he's not doing damn fine work here. True, it's not the aggressive, passionate work of The Kinks in their formative years, but that's okay. There is a passion here. *Other People's Lives* is a love letter to true believers who stuck around long enough to read it. "Next Door Neighbor" alone is worth the price of admission, a beautiful, nostalgic foray

into music hall.

Most importantly, the album is caulked full of Davies' brand of subtle English wit and sly observation ("Is There Life After Breakfast?" Ray says yes, but don't forget your meds). Freed from the impossible expectations of a full-fledged Kinks reunion, Davies, the man, delivers a substantial collection worth checking out. And kids, don't forget to read your Gospel. Amen.

— Ken Powers

David Peterson and 1946

In the Mountaintops to Roam
(Echotunes)



The first surprise on this rolling, driving, energetic contemporary bluegrass album from a Homburg-wearing Nashville musician is that the opening tune, a hot and swinging fiddle-and-strings rave up called "I'll Still Write Your Name in the Sand," was written by **Buddy Starcher**. He's the guy who had the novelty hit way back when called "History Repeats Itself," comparing **J.F.K.'s** assassination with **Lincoln's**. So score one for Peterson, for making us aware that Starcher's legacy is deeper than that of a one-hit-wonder.

This bluegrass album consistently delivers exciting versions of older songs like **Hank Snow's** "The Golden Rocket" and the **Delmore Brothers'** "Some of These Days (You're Gonna Be Sad)," plus evocative original compositions by Peterson, like the wrenching ballad that gives the album its name. This is bluegrass reaching out for a younger and newer audience, and it scores big with its sense of relevancy and history, as well as with its exquisite playing and singing.

— Steven Rosen

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