



BEN KAPLAN

By Stacey Thompson

In high school, music was Ben Kaplan's life and love. He had visions of standing on a lit stage in front of thousands, the sound of his guitar ringing through an overdriven amp. Playing in many different bands at the time certainly helped fuel this fire. While he had the unwavering support of his parents, Kaplan was urged to think of a backup plan; little did he know that backup plan would ultimately be his mark on the music industry.

A producer, engineer, mixer, musician, and one of the owners of Fader Mountain Sound (formerly Little Mountain Sound) in Vancouver, BC, Kaplan's current responsibilities are endless but all circle around his passion for music.

"As a producer, I am responsible for the entire project from conception to mastering," says Kaplan of his work. "I often engineer the records I am producing as well. I find it the best way to really know what's going on in every aspect of the recording process."

Working with other producers, including Garth "GGGarth" Richardson, with whom he's worked for over a decade, gives him the chance to hone his craft while also expanding his array of influences – as does the opportunity to work in a studio he calls his own. "Having the studio, I find myself often recording one day, mixing the next, playing guitar the next, and so on and so forth – I like it that way. It keeps it fresh."

Everyone in the business enjoys the feeling of pride that comes with hearing their finished product, though that feeling is compounded for Kaplan when working with an artist he respects. "I love taking someone's vision and putting it all together for them; really getting into the creative process of writing, recording, and mixing to get them to that place," he says. "Especially when the band or producer knows you and trusts you and allows you to be as freely creative as you need to be."

No job is without its challenges, however, and ironically, with the advancements in technology that have enhanced workflow and productivity have come a disproportionate demand on turnaround times.

"Although I love immersing myself in the recording process, working around



the clock for days on end, that can take a toll on you," he says. "And a lot of the time, those hours aren't always spent being creative." He adds that with shrinking studio budgets there is a lot more involved in the editing process and post-production to the point where one can get lost in it from time to time.

Being lost in one's work is not always a bad thing, though – especially when the work involves producing a fresh and exciting band like Vancouver's Mother Mother. He had the opportunity to work with the five-piece on its most recent release, 2012's *The Sticks*, describing it as a "unique and truly pleasurable experience."

"Making *The Sticks* was probably the smoothest, most natural recording I've ever done in every aspect, from pre-production to mixing and mastering," he says. "The band was tight and well-rehearsed and the songs were clever and polished."

Kaplan describes the band's approach to its craft as disciplined and dedicated, and adds that vocalist, guitarist, songwriter, and co-producer Ryan Guldemon's writing talents and preparation only enhanced their collaboration. "Because the band was so prepared, it allowed us to really explore sonic possibilities in depth," he says.

For the better part of 2012, the Village Recorder in Los Angeles was his home base while recording Scottish rock band Biffy

Clyro's highly-anticipated double album, *Opposites*, which garnered the band its first number one album in the U.K. within a week of its release. Additionally, Kaplan has been mixing the band's live sets, a number of TV and radio appearances, and several B-sides. Adds Kaplan: "Their songwriting is amazing."

One thing that is wonderfully clear is that family means the world to Kaplan. In July 2012, he married his wife, Emily, on the beach in Santa Monica, CA. Immediate family and friends gathered at the front of the city's iconic pier. "It was amazing," he says emphatically. His little one, Sebastian, is now just over a year-and-a-half and is, as Kaplan describes, "pretty much the coolest dude we know." Rounding out the family is Lulu, their much-loved cat.

Though Kaplan has called Vancouver home for the last 13 years, his work has taken him around the world. "Like anybody, I love going on vacation, but I also like being able to go somewhere and work and live there, too," he says. "It gives you a totally different take on the city or region to work, eat, sleep and really live there and experience it."

So far, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago have become temporary second homes – and he likes it that way. Although Vancouver and Fader Mountain Sound are his base, he'll go wherever the music might take him.

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