



Kelsi, Cassidy and Kristyn

For SHEDAISSY, success came at the best of times and the worst of times. Their debut disc arrived last year just when the industry was of a mind to get behind a new female pop-country trio. The good news: *The Whole SheBang* sold over a million copies. The not-so-good news: After a decade of dues-paying, SHEDAISSY had to endure



HOW KRISTYN OSBORN MAKES HER SONGWRITING GARDEN GROW

endless comparisons to another new female pop-country trio.

But those SHEDAISSY/Dixie Chicks comparisons are downright silly. The immaculately crafted pop of sisters Kristyn, Kelsi, and Cassidy Osborn bears little resemblance to the Chicks' bluegrass-flavored stylings. And while SHEDAISSY records in Nashville, they aren't even from the South—the Osborn sisters were born and raised in Magna, Utah, near Salt Lake City.

Melding pop and country is hardly a new idea, but few acts do so as smoothly as SHEDAISSY. It's no surprise to learn that the sisters grew up listening to the Beatles, the Beach Boys, and classic show tunes. Their best material manages, in similar fashion, to play by the pop rulebook without being formulaic. Almost every track on *The Whole SheBang* packs its little surprises: an unexpected melodic spiral, a quirky vocal harmony, a sudden flash of sly, sarcastic wit.

Part of SHEDAISSY's magic is that strange sibling-singers chemistry, the hard-to-define quality that makes acts like the Beach Boys and the Everly Brothers truly sound bound by blood. But perhaps even more central to the group's success is the songwriting skill of elder sister Kristyn, who, with a large cast of collaborators, penned every tune on *The Whole SheBang*. We recently asked Osborn about her songwriting techniques.

You play both piano and guitar?

Both Cassidy and I play guitar, and all three of us play piano. But I do most of my writing on a Yamaha acoustic guitar.

Why is that?

I sometimes have trouble finding a groove at the piano, so I usually use guitar for groove-oriented songs. When I compose on the piano, it's usually ballad-driven. Plus, it tends to be more convenient to haul a guitar to appointments than a keyboard!

Your main acoustic guitar is a Yamaha CPX-15E. What do you like about it?

Besides its aesthetic beauty, it sounds incredible. I'm very impressed with the electronics as well. The tone is as great unplugged as plugged in. It's the guitar I write on, and I'm so accustomed to the feel and sound that it's my first choice for the stage, too.

Steve Hornbeak

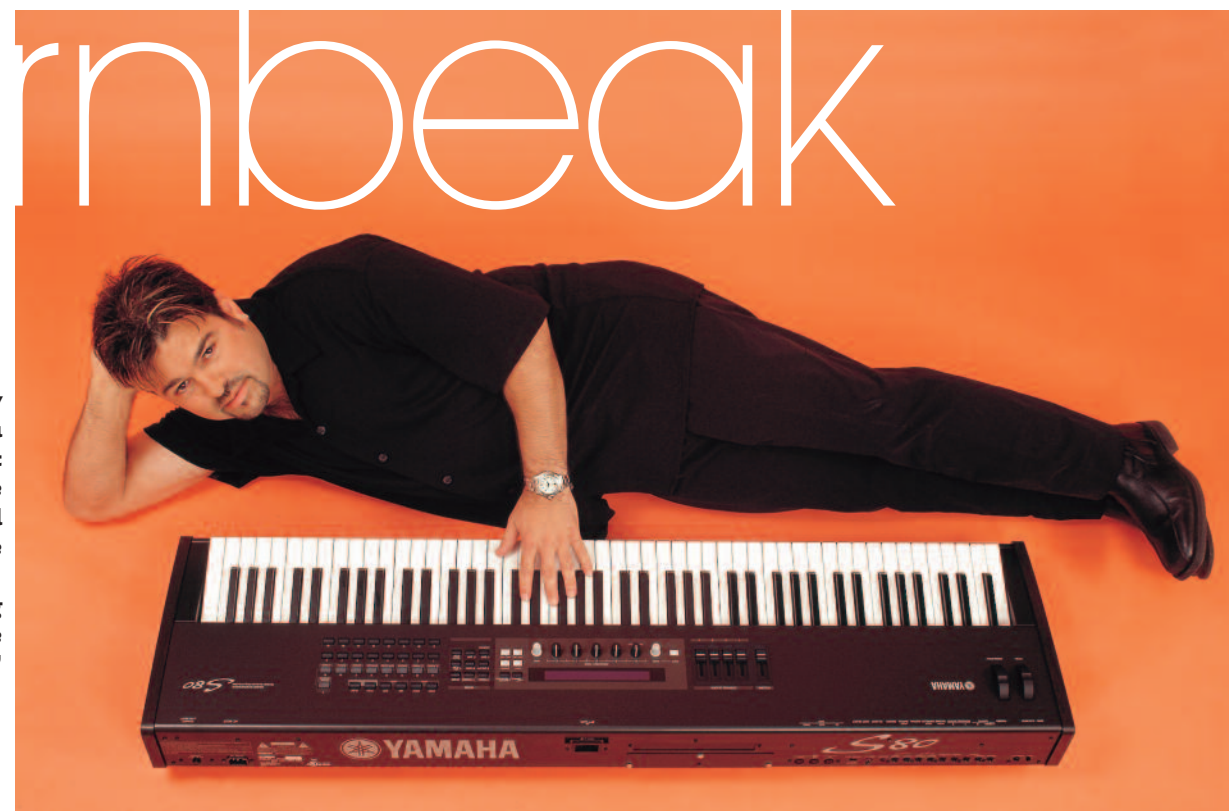
CELEBRATING A CHANGE OF FAITH

Faith Hill continues to evolve from country singer to pop diva and Steve Hornbeak couldn't be happier. "Country is where I got my foot in the door," says Hill's longtime keyboardist/vocalist, "but I've always been more of a pop musi-

going on that I have my hands full, and one of the girl background singers plays the extra parts on a Yamaha EX5 Synthesizer." Particularly exciting to Hornbeak is the way Hill is reinventing some older material to suit her changing sound. "For example," he says, "she decided to replace the original acoustic piano sound on 'Take Another Piece of My Heart'

Leslie," he recalls. "In fact, everyone said the low end sounded bigger." All piano sounds come from a Yamaha P200 Electronic Piano. "That's not just my choice," insists Hornbeak. "Faith absolutely loves the Yamaha sounds. They cut through in live performance and they're awesome to record with. There's nothing else in the same league." And when the crew rolls a

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cian. Now that Faith is crossing over with things like the Divas tour, the gig has turned into something I enjoy even more."

To hear the Nashville-based road and studio veteran tell it, it's like playing two gigs at once: "On Faith's older material like 'Hey Baby Let's Go to Vegas,' it's strictly boom-chick acoustic piano. But on the newer, poppier songs, there's so much keyboard stuff

with a heavy overdrive organ. I found the perfect sound on my EX5: a preset called 'Hard Rock.' Faith loved that grinding, distorted

organ, so we used it again on 'Love Child' on the Divas 2000 tour."

Hornbeak used to rely on an organ and a rotating speaker cabinet for his organ sounds,

but after growing frustrated with repeated breakdowns, he switched to straight EX5. "Nobody even noticed I'd stopped using the

7-foot grand piano for the acoustic portion of the show, few listeners ever realize that it's really a second P200 inside a piano shell.

For this year's tour, Hornbeak says he plans to add a Yamaha S80 Synthesizer: "Beside being a great controller, it has all these great arpeggio features. It seems to be a perfect fit for the next step up Faith is trying to make in her music."



ON **GOD AND THE FBI**

Janis Ian has been through many musical incarnations since her 1967 song "Society's Child" made her a star at age 15. She's been a soft-rock balladeer, a disco diva, a polished Nashville tunesmith and a prolific jingle writer. But even those who've come to expect the expected from Ian may be startled by her latest album, the raw, hard-hitting *God and the FBI*. "My working title for this record was *Bite Me!*" states Ian. "I wanted it to be edgier and more dissonant than anything I'd done before." With that goal in mind, Ian made a 180-degree turn from her previous disc, *Hunger*, which had been recorded live to analog with minimal overdubs. This time, she and her collaborators constructed their own digital home studio so they could have the luxury of experimenting as much as they liked. "Working



that way changed everything," says Ian. "Collaborating with the same people in the same space every day made it feel like we were in a band, as opposed to being in a big studio with musicians who have done 30 other sessions that week and where everyone is cognizant that the clock is running."

One room of the house contained a hard disk-based Pro Tools digital recording system; a second workstation was a simple Yamaha MD8 8-Track Digital Recorder. "We ended up tracking a lot of guitars on the MD8 and flying them into Pro Tools later," recalls songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Phillip Clark, one of Ian's key collaborators. Ian and Clark initially feared that the data compression of the MD8's mini disc format might compromise the guitar tones, but they were entirely satisfied by the results. "I love analog, so I'm a bear about that stuff," insists Ian. "But we were amazed when we flew in the mini disc tracks. They sounded great."

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"So far, we haven't used the MD8 as a writing tool," says Clark. "But now we hope to start writing from the ground up on the multitrack using loops and things." Ian agrees: "For the next CD, we'd like to have more of the songs start from scratch with an idea that we develop in the studio. Co-writing on that sort of scale becomes almost like a team sport. You have an outline of your plays, and everyone uses their individual strengths in pursuit of the common goal. I don't know how it will work out, but it's something we want to try."

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SheDAISY at the Millennium Concert

You also have a couple of AES1500 and AES1500B electrics.

Yes. I really feel Yamaha hit the mark with the AES1500 series. It exceeds my expectations on all levels. If I could have my absolute dream guitar, there's only one thing I'd want to add: make it a chameleon guitar that changes color to match my wardrobe. [Laughs.] That's every girl's dream, trust me.



Kassidy with the Yamaha CPX-15E

instrument seems to be pretty simple and user-friendly, though I admit that there are a lot of features I haven't had time to explore yet. The feel is what really sold me.

You worked with Dann Huff on The Whole SheBANG. Besides being a great producer, he's one of the world's most respected studio guitarists. Did you pick up any tricks watching him work?

Honestly, I am usually in such awe when Dann plays that I lose all focus! But one thing I have taken away from long hours in the studio with him is the importance of a producer being able to communicate with the players in "musician speak." Dann understands the studio guys, and he really has a knack for bringing out the best in them.

Are you the sort of writer who hears tunes in your head first, or do you tend to find them under your fingers on the instrument?

For me, songwriting has absolutely no formula. It's unpredictable, and that's what's so compelling about it. I love the sheer nonsensical methodology that I have adopted. It keeps the process fresh and creative, though it probably drives my co-writers crazy! But in the end, the most important aspect of songwriting is not how you go about it, but how honestly you relay a message to the listener. It can be simple, it can be complicated, but it's got to be honest.

Can an instrument inspire a song?

The songs start in the soul, the mind, the heart, and are then translated by the instrument. We speak through instruments. We tell stories through melody. We emote through lyrics. All these things are created by and through a songwriter and, if we are lucky, a little divine inspiration.

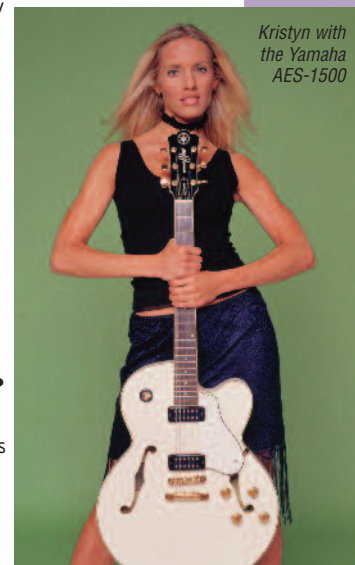
CPX

The Compass Series of handcrafted Yamaha acoustic guitars started as a guitar designer's dream in 1996 and saw their first NAMM show in 1998. The dream is to create instruments of unsurpassed aesthetic beauty, while offering the professional guitarist a perfect acoustic and acoustic/electric combination for the studio or stage. Each Compass guitar

draws its design inspiration from a point on the Compass. The CPX15 was the first and represented the beginnings of the voyage with a nautical theme and position markers replicating the numbers of the frets in actual flag signals. The second in the series was the Western-inspired CPX15W, followed by a Caribbean motif CPX15S, a far Eastern-inspired CPX15E, and finally this year's highly coveted model, the Limited Production CPX15N. The CPX15N enjoys a beautiful white transparent burst over bleached sycamore,

with whale's tails adorning the fingerboard.

Yamaha Handcrafted Compass guitars range in retail price from \$1,599 to \$2,799. However, several more affordably priced Compass Series have recently been added including the CPX5 at \$699 MSRP.



Kristyn with the Yamaha AES-1500



Kelsi with the Yamaha DJX11