

Industry Profile: REASON TO RHYME ESTABLISHES ITSELF AS SOURCE FOR THEMATIC MUSIC

By Brian F. Johnson

When people think of certain TV shows, like Cheers or All In The Family, the musical introductions are as much a part of that fabric that made them staples of our culture as the characters or the locations of the programs.

Those theme songs are a multi-billion dollar part of the music industry — a cut-throat, quick-turnaround element that few performing musicians know anything about, or, more importantly, how to tap into it.

For years the only musicians who did tap into it were the ones who lived in Hollywood and specialized in that arena. But now, with the proliferation of the internet and FTP technologies, musicians don't have to be within the Hollywood circle anymore.

Local musician Bryan Wagstaff — who has played keyboards with Ash Ganley, Skye Downing and numerous others — along with a few business partners and some key contacts in the L.A. scene, has launched Reason to Rhyme Music, a Colorado-based music publishing company which seeks to write their own material for the small and big screen, while also helping local musicians get their songs in front of the music directors who choose tracks for TV and film.

Marquee: What was the first album you ever purchased?

Wagstaff: Journey's *Greatest Hits*.

Marquee: What was your first concert?

Wagstaff: I knew you were going to ask that. (laughing) Shaun Cassidy at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Portland, Maine.

Editor's note: As embarrassing as those answers might be for Wagstaff, truth be told they are the exact opposite of this writer's firsts. I owned Shaun Cassidy's self-titled album in 1977 and my first concert was Journey in 1987.

Marquee: How did Reason to Rhyme Music get its start?

Wagstaff: Well, in college at USC in L.A. I formed a band called Jonas with Reid Miller, that

later featured Darren Pujale, who plays in Particle now. Jonas was an all-original band and Reason to Rhyme Music was the publishing arm of myself and Reid, my current business partner ... So it's gone from Jonas, the live band, to Reason to Rhyme Music going as the full songwriting arm of things.

Marquee: So this isn't a brand new project?

Wagstaff: No. With our contacts in L.A., including Jeff Jones, who is a monster composer there, we've already placed, last year, two songs in independent films and signed a publishing deal for two of our songs with a music library that is shopping it in L.A. Jeff also took our old Jonas EP and gave it to one of his music directors and got one song "Beat the World" placed on Sunday and Monday Night Football for the NFL.

Marquee: That's huge!

Wagstaff: That's when we got our first taste of slipper money, as they call it in the industry. It's where you put your slippers on and go to the mailbox and there's a check from BMI. From that day on I was determined. I wanted more of those royalty dollars.


Marquee: So you're already engrained in this?

Wagstaff: Oh yeah. When Jonas hung it up in 2001, I came to Boulder and realized we could do this from here. Our friend Jeremy Pollack owns an entertainment company for film and he's been our lyricist for quite a long time — he's our Bernie Taupin — and we've been working with him to develop thematic songs for some pilots that he's working on.

Marquee: So you're writing songs for specific projects as opposed to getting songs you've already written placed?

Wagstaff: We're doing both. Our forte lies in thematic music rather than the entire score. We specialize in creating unique theme songs, be it 25, 30 seconds with proper exposition that fulfills the need of the required moment. The other part

See Profile Page 38



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