



**“Indie
acts
are the
future.”**

— *IndieProMix* Partner **Rob Chiarelli**

“Connecting Pro mixers & Indie artists” is the slogan of IndieProMix, a collection of six top-tier mixers and producers. Offering high end, professional mixing at reasonable rates to budget-conscious independent musicians, IndieProMix gives indies direct access to the same guys that the majors hire. Some of their credits include Bruce Springsteen, Paul McCartney, Christina Aguilera, Kelly Clarkson, Fishbone, Ice Cube, Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Matisyahu, New Radicals, Will Smith and Imogen Heap.

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indie**PRO****mix**

connecting pro mixers & indie artists



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IndieProMix Partner David Kahne at the SSL 9000

The IndieProMix team consists of Rob Chiarelli, Matt Forger, Michael James, David Kahne, Nick Page and Tony Shepperd. Even with over 150 Gold and Platinum albums to their collective credit, the mixers at IndieProMix define indie-friendly. If they really like an up-and-coming artist, they will be as flexible and accommodating as possible. And while they continue to have their long-term, major-label clients, they dedicate the time in between those projects to helping the independent musician. Once scheduled and confirmed, indie projects are given the same professional-

ism and attention as any other client, and they won't get bumped--not even by a major-label project.

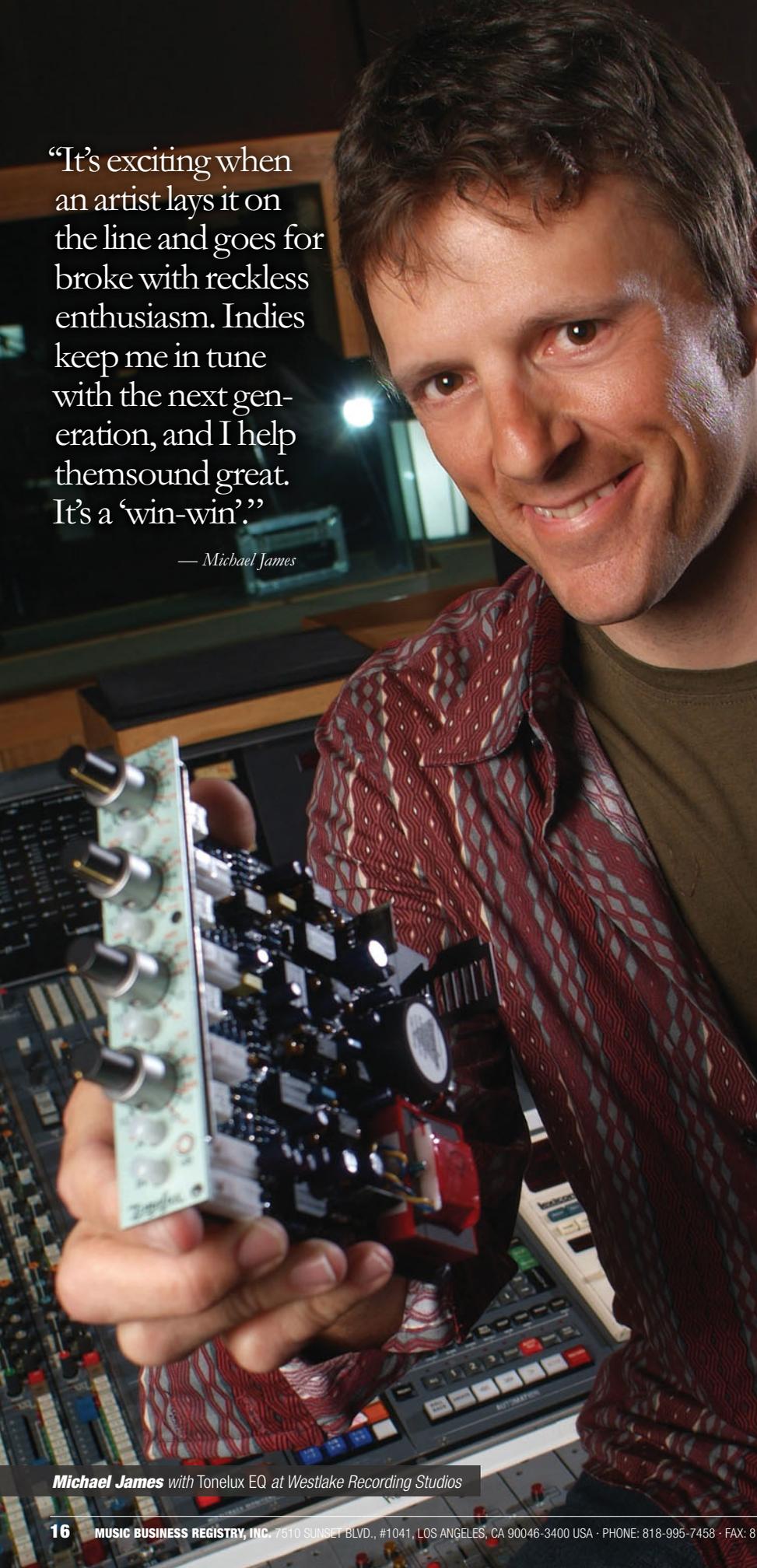
Artists who typically hire IndieProMix are those who have tried to get that elusive "radio-ready" or major-label-release sound, but haven't been able to get it from their own mixes. These artists own Pro Tools, Logic or Nuendo, and they labor for days over a mix, wondering why it doesn't pop like the songs on the charts. Eventually they realize the value of having a specialist mix their music; the song gets the mix it deserves, and the artist can move on and write the next

great song.

How does it work?

Before they even hear your music, IndieProMix want to hear from you. On their website, indiepromix.com, is a simple form where you send them your contact info and a little about your project. This leads to an initial phone call where you get a feel for each other and find out if it makes sense to take the next step.

"What kind of vibe do you want from your mixes, bold and in-your-face or subtle and dynamic? Green Day or Peter Gabriel?" says mixer Michael James. "You, the artist need to let us know what kind of emotion or sound you want the mix to convey." From that conversation, if they feel like they might be



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— Michael James

the right guys for the job, *then* they will ask for a sample of some music.

“We don’t want artists blindly sending us MP3’s before we have a conversation because choosing a mixer is a very important artistic choice,” continued James. “It’s also important for the artist and the mixer to have a good communication flow to ensure that the right mixer is doing the right job for the right artist. If it doesn’t feel like a good fit, it’s best to take a pass. We need to know that we can knock it

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out of the park--most indie artists can’t afford a second shot.”

Prices are determined on project by project basis. Many IndieProMix jobs have come in at under \$1000 for a song, and others have doubled or tripled that figure, depending on number of tracks, special requirements, number of alternate mixes, etc.

“Most artists want a main mix, an instrumental stem and an a cappella stem. Other clients request a TV mix [mix minus lead vocal so the artist can sing live over the recorded track on TV]. Other variables could be a request for multiple CYA (cover your ass) mixes, like horns in, horns muted; guitars up, guitars down, etc. Songs with more than a hundred tracks are going to cost significantly more than songs that have only 24 tracks.”

Once a job is confirmed, the mix is scheduled for a specific date. Response time is key. When the mix is in the ballpark, clients receive a first-draft mp3 via email. They pick up the phone and comment on it. Any requests or changes are addressed right away, and, after a few quick revisions, the mix is completed within a few hours, on the same day it was started.

I asked some of the mix specialists at IndieProMix about working with independent musicians and up and coming artists.

Michael James with Tonelux EQ at Westlake Recording Studios



IndieProMix Partner Tony Sheppard

Michael James: “I enjoy working with vibrant artists who control their own destinies, who create music because nobody else is playing the stuff that they want to hear. It’s exciting when an artist lays it on the line and goes for broke with reckless enthusiasm. Indies keep me in tune with the next generation, and I help them sound great. It’s a win-win.”

David Kahne: “When I finish an album and have two days before I start something else, I can knock out some mixes. I’m on off-time, and it’s kind of like having some wine between

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cheese tastings. And, I can work on some new music, made by someone who doesn’t care about the majors and might be more concerned with just making something unique. When I work on an Indie album, I’m done when the artist is happy, not the layers of people above and around them. It’s more fun, and it has a solid close.”

Rob Chiarelli: “I have always loved the Indie world and I get a lot of satisfaction working with energetic, creative & talented people who live for the music. It’s all about the music. The next great band is unsigned, undiscovered and unafraid to take chances. Just like us. Indie acts are the future of the music business. Everyone knows that.”

IndieProMix gives the artist direct access to same skills, equipment and guys that mix the hits in an indie friendly environment. Says James, “We call ourselves IndieProMix because we offer professional-level services to the indie artist. Our customers don’t hesitate to refer us to other artists, calling us the best deal out there. We see ourselves as Indie-thinking Pros for Pro-thinking Indies.”

— Ed Johnson was a writer, reviewer and regular columnist for *The Inside Connection music magazine* for 10 years. He is currently Manager of Artist Relations and music industry consultant for A&R Unlimited in New York (<http://www.amr-unlimited.com>)