



MUSIC, LIKE ART, CAN TAKE YOU TO A DIFFERENT WORLD – ONE OF YOUR OWN DESIGN, WHERE YOU DECIDE WHAT THE MOOD WILL BE AND WITH WHOM YOU’LL SHARE IT. IT TAKES MORE THAN RAW TALENT TO CREATE MUSIC; IT TAKES SKILL, PRACTICE AND TECHNIQUE. ONLY AFTER THESE ARE PERFECTED CAN YOU CONVINCED OTHERS TO JOIN YOUR WORLD. SEBU SIMONIAN AND RYAN MERCHANT HAVE CREATED NUMEROUS WORLDS THROUGH THEIR MUSIC.

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A WORLD OF CREATION

The merger of two creative minds can make wonders. Ryan Merchant and Sebu Simonian have taken their love and talent for music to another level. They are two needles in a haystack who happened to find each other. With talent, hard work and determination, this team of two not only jams to their own beats but also converts masses of people to join them, and be a part of their worlds.

Writing comes naturally to Ryan; perhaps his English degree from USC plays a role. He learned to

play the guitar and other musical instruments on his own and honed his craft through private instruction. His love of music was sparked because of the late Michael Jackson, specifically Thriller. “Michael Jackson put music into my consciousness,” he said. Jackson was also a great influence on Sebu who studied music from a young age and received his bachelor’s degree in music from CSUN. “I fell in love with music because of Michael’s ‘Billy Jean,’” said Sebu. ▶

THE SINGLE “SAFE AND SOUND,” ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR A COLA AD AND REJECTED, NOW CAUSES STRANGERS TO DANCE WITH EACH OTHER AT THE BAND’S LIVE SHOWS.



RYAN'S LOVE OF MUSIC WAS SPARKED BY THE LATE MICHAEL JACKSON, SPECIFICALLY THE *THRILLER* ALBUM. "I AM OBSESSED WITH MUSIC, RYAN ADMITS. IT FREES ME AND BRINGS OUT A SIDE OF ME THAT PEOPLE DON'T NORMALLY SEE," HE SAYS.

Sebu Simonian and Ryan Merchant

Their recordings are done out of Sebu's own studio, Stereotrain Rehearsal and Recording Studios. For over eight years, the studio has been used by musicians including Everlast, t.A.T.u, KillMatriarch, The Dirty Diamond, Viza, Far East Movement, Johnny One Match and Jivan Gasparyan Jr.

Others such as Stevie Wonder, Jimi Hendrix, Jamiroquai, Joni Mitchell, Air, Phoenix, Empire of the Sun, MGMT, Radiohead and Pink Floyd have impacted their music and their creations for Capital Cities – their “intelligent, electro-pop, dance, rock, melodic band,” as described by Sebu.

The duo met in 2008, and now as the musical minds behind Lazyhooks, Ryan and Sebu write jingles – composing the music for advertisements. They have worked with major companies and have a few more campaigns lined up throughout 2011. Among their accomplishments with Lazyhooks are: Shaw - Together is Amazing and Jet Pack, Honda - I Wanna Ride and The Knock, Walmart - Slimfast, Muscle Milk - Warriors, Titleist - This Ball, Glucerna - Balance.

They have also worked with Coke, Pepsi, Nike, Home Depot and University of Phoenix. Both Sebu and Ryan contribute to the songwriting and playing. When needed, they hire extra musicians to accompany them. “We are contacted by the company and most of the time are sent the video concept of the advertisement. To that video, we compose music,” said Sebu.

“We are highly critical of one another, which helps us produce great music.” To be successful in this type of work, you need quick turnaround and a feel for what the mass audiences will be interested in. Aside from composing music, this industry requires the skill of

marketing – knowing the audience and organization.

Some of the discarded material that they composed gave them ideas to write their own music, giving them the catalyst to create Capital Cities. “The name of the band is made to bring together people from different backgrounds and to just have fun through our music,” said Ryan. Indeed, the universal appeal of the band has attracted many followers. Their live shows are unique from other gigs. The mood of the room is lively and buoyant. You tend to forget your problems when you enter a show put on by Capital Cities.

The surroundings include people wearing ridiculously large colorful sunglasses, soap bubbles coming from the stage and lots of jumping and dancing.

“The single ‘Safe and Sound,’ originally written for a cola ad and rejected, now causes strangers to dance with each other at the band’s live shows,” said the band. It is difficult not to get into that mood if the first words you hear are, “I could lift you up, I could show you what you want to see, and take you where you want to be, You could be my luck, Even if the sky is falling down, I know that we’ll be safe and sound.”

Sebu and Ryan are continuously working on new material for both Lazyhooks and Capital Cities. They will soon tour the United States to continue sending vibes of joy, tolerance and togetherness. ■