

Hi everyone, I'm back! In case you didn't catch last month's article, my name is Jim McGorman and I'm part of the Rockstar house band.

Last month I discussed some of the gear I use on the show. So, this time I'd like to answer two of the most frequently asked questions about the show: "How do you guys learn all those songs?" "How does it all work?" Well, let me take you through a typical week on the Rockstar set. Keep in mind, there are many variations (and things are constantly being shifted around), but for the

At the beginning of the season, each "rocker" (meaning contestant) picks one elimination song that will be their song until he or she is in the bottom three. If the rocker hits the bottom, sings and survives, another song is chosen. So, we have to learn two new elimination songs each week for the contestants who make it through, in addition to the songs for the Sunday/Tuesday show. It's partic-

gresses, so "more weeks" equals "fewer rockers." Once we get down to the final few, we'll do the full song. Until then, we're learning the "cut." So, imagine a song that you've heard (and played) your whole life being cut into pieces. It can be a bit of a mind-f%^#^, actually. Paul Mirkovich, our music director and keyboardist, does a phenomenal job of trimming the fat. Not to mention he's a bad-



most part it works this way: First of all, there are technically three shows: the performance show, the elimination show and the reality show. For us—meaning the house band—it's a process of learning, rehearsing and performing. The schedule is kind of crazy, so stay with me and hopefully it'll make sense in the end.

We usually get the song choices for each week on Monday. (I know you're thinking, "The day before!?" Relax.) Actually, Sunday is when we tape the show for airing on Tuesday. Now, we don't know who will be singing each song until Thursday, because we don't know who will be eliminated. Moreover, we don't know what song they'll choose on Thursday, the day that songs are selected. On Monday, and on our own (usually at home in my studio, in my pajamas with a cup of tea – hey, I'm Irish), we learn all the songs for the performance and new elimination songs. This is where it gets a bit confusing.

ularly difficult at the beginning of the season because there are so many contestants. That's thirty songs! Now, a lot of these are songs we all know (when I say know, I mean we've heard them on the radio or have been listening to them for a while. They've been in our consciousness, but we still have to learn the parts. Thankfully, we've already covered some of them in the previous season.

We remember those songs, sort of. First I learn the song (usually I learn the rhythm guitar part and harmonies, but if I think the song has more keyboard parts than Paul can do himself, I'll check that out too), I check out the "cut." By that I'm referring to the cut-down version of the song that we'll play on the show. Given the large number of contestants (especially at the start of the season) and the time constraints, we can only play shortened versions of the songs. They start at about a minute-and-a-half and get longer as the season pro-

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