

SESSION SPOTLIGHT THE SADIES' *NEW SEASONS*

By Jeff Forlenza

Led by brothers Dallas and Travis Good, The Sadies are an eclectic band based in Toronto. The Sadies could be categorized as roots-rock or alt-country, but there are also elements of surf guitar, bluegrass and ballsy rock 'n' roll in their distinctive sound. The Sadies' latest release, *New Seasons* on Yep Roc Records, showcases the band's many influences and excellent musicianship.

Gary Louris produced the album and provided backing vocals on a number of songs. In the '80s, Louris and Mark Olson helped establish The Jayhawks as torchbearers of the alt-country flame ignited by The Byrds and Gram Parsons.

PHOTO: BETH HAMMIL



Engineer Ken Friesen

It's fitting that Louris worked with a band at the forefront of the next wave of alt-country.

Engineer Ken Friesen tracked and mixed parts of the album. Friesen has a background in live sound, studio design and broadcast mixing, as well as recording and mixing album projects. His credits include engineering albums

for the likes of the Tragically Hip and Blue Rodeo. A fellow Canadian, Friesen worked with The Sadies on their live concert CD.

When it came time to record their next studio album, The Sadies chose to record part of the album with Friesen at Toronto's Woodshed Studios. (Other parts of the album were recorded, mixed and overdubbed by engineer Paco Loco at his studio in Spain.) Friesen was comfortable working at Woodshed because he designed and installed the studio. "The Woodshed worked well," he explains. "It is mostly one good-sized room with no separate control room. There is an iso booth, a couple of amp closets and some good baffles, all of which we used

PHOTOS: CHRIS SHREANAN-DYCK



Woodshed's Neve 8014 console and outboard gear



The Sadies are (from left) Travis Good, Mike Belitsky, Sean Dean and Dallas Good.

to record the album."

Recording tracks at Woodshed, Friesen (for the most part) stayed in the analog domain. "Pro Tools HD was used to overdub some additional parts onto songs that were mixed in Spain," Friesen says. "Some songs were transferred to Pro Tools to take advantage of the mix automation, but there was little, or no use, of Pro Tools' editing, plug-ins or pitch correction."

Friesen used Telefunken U47 and U67, AKG C24, RCA 44 and Coles 4038 microphones on the project. He recorded to 2-inch tape on a 24-track Otari MTR 90 Mark II recorder, and then printed mixes to quarter-inch tape on a Studer 820. Mixing the album was a team effort for The Sadies, with producer Louris, engineers Friesen and Loco, and mastering engineer Peter J. Moore all contributing to the mix. Friesen used Woodshed's Neve 8014 console with 1073 modules to mix some of the songs.

"They are living proof that rock is not dead," Friesen says of The Sadies. "The caliber of the musicianship is very high, so it made analog recording not only possible, but an absolute pleasure. Gary Louris' production was great and really helped the guys by drawing out their best singing of their best songs. It was fun to do it old school with no computer for the most part. It really makes it all more about guts and instinct, and less about thinking and perfection." ■



The main room at Woodshed Studio in Toronto