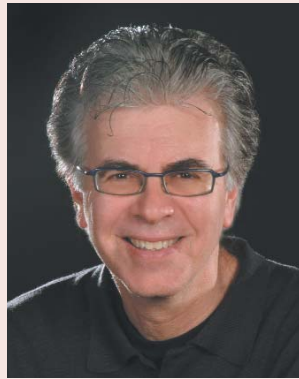


Sharps of a Different Kind

He was barely out of Junior High when, on a dare, Alan Shiner, Class of 7T6, entered a talent show with his band and won. Who knew that would be the beginning of a career that has seen him write songs for pop icons such as Mariah Carey, play back-up on three of Boz Scaggs biggest hits, and turn out more advertising jingles that he can remember, starting with that never-to-be-forgotten one for what was then a small player in the pizza industry – 967 1111 Call Pizza Pizza. And that’s just for starters. Oh, and let’s not forget that running tandem with that career has also been what is equally important to Alan, his dental practice.



After his graduation he juggled three different associateships, working evenings and weekends, doing emergency work through the Academy of Dentistry which he continued after starting his own practice a year later. Originally at Yonge and Davenport, he eventually moved to Avenue Road and

St. Clair. It’s astounding that Alan managed to marry two such demanding careers, and whole-heartedly enjoy and be successful in both, until he was finally forced to give up his active dental practice. “If it wasn’t for a neck and back injury that became exacerbated by

two car accidents six months apart I would still be practising as a dentist,” explains Alan. “I still keep in touch by reading articles and research papers.

I think most people who knew me from dental school just assumed that I gave up dentistry because I loved music more. That’s absolutely not true. I practised for many years and would still be practising today had it not been for my injuries.” And he still hasn’t closed the door on the possibility of one day being able to actively practise again.

He became adept at juggling exam schedules and back-up sessions while at the Faculty. Maybe too adept. He feels that he was seen as somewhat of an oddity in those days. When most people would be in the study hall, he would be out playing a gig. Alan admits that back in those days he was pretty shy. “People might have misunderstood me, mistaking that shyness and my involvement with music for a lack of enthusiasm. It has taken me many years to come out of my shell, maybe using the keyboard as a crutch. Now I’ve come full circle, able to be an MC in front of a room full of people, but I couldn’t have done that back in my student days,” explains Alan. “I actually played at my own graduation formal,

and I think that was the first time that many people realized what I did.”

And the beat goes on when it comes to his music career.

He has several companies set up including one called Toy House Media Creations that does everything from commercials, to voice-over for television and radio. He’s currently working on the creation and production of new advertising jingles for several companies. To date he’s played at over 4,000 events – corporate and private parties and galas. He’s been a music director / conductor for everyone from George Burns to Rich Little; Harry

Alan has played at over 4,000 events and been a music director/conductor for everyone from George Burns to Rich Little; Harry Belafonte to the Smothers Brothers and the Pointer Sisters.

Belafonte to the Smothers Brothers and the Pointer Sisters. He wrote a song for NASA, called *Voyage of a Lifetime*, to relaunch their space program after the tragic accident. When

the space program stalled, he re-wrote it as a charitable song for Canadian athletes, to help raise funds to get them to the Olympics. Now the unofficial Olympic anthem, it was used at the opening in Athens and may become the official song for the Olympics in Vancouver.

A particular highlight for him last November was the premiere of a live theatrical show *You Don’t Have to be Jewish*, for which he was the music director, sound designer and composer of new music. The show is now headed for Broadway.

If you’ve attended the Gala, you’ve seen Alan with his group, *Nova Sounds Band*, putting everyone into a party mood. He’ll be there again this year. Take the time to say hello to this complex person who has achieved so much in so many different fields.

Visit Alan at www.novasounds.net.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW?

If you know of any Alumni that have a story they should be sharing, or if you yourself are involved in an endeavour, organization, or event that you think would make interesting reading for other Alumni, please send it to:

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