

PLUS! THE OFF-COURT MUSICAL LIFE OF TORONTO RAPTORS COACH NICK NURSE



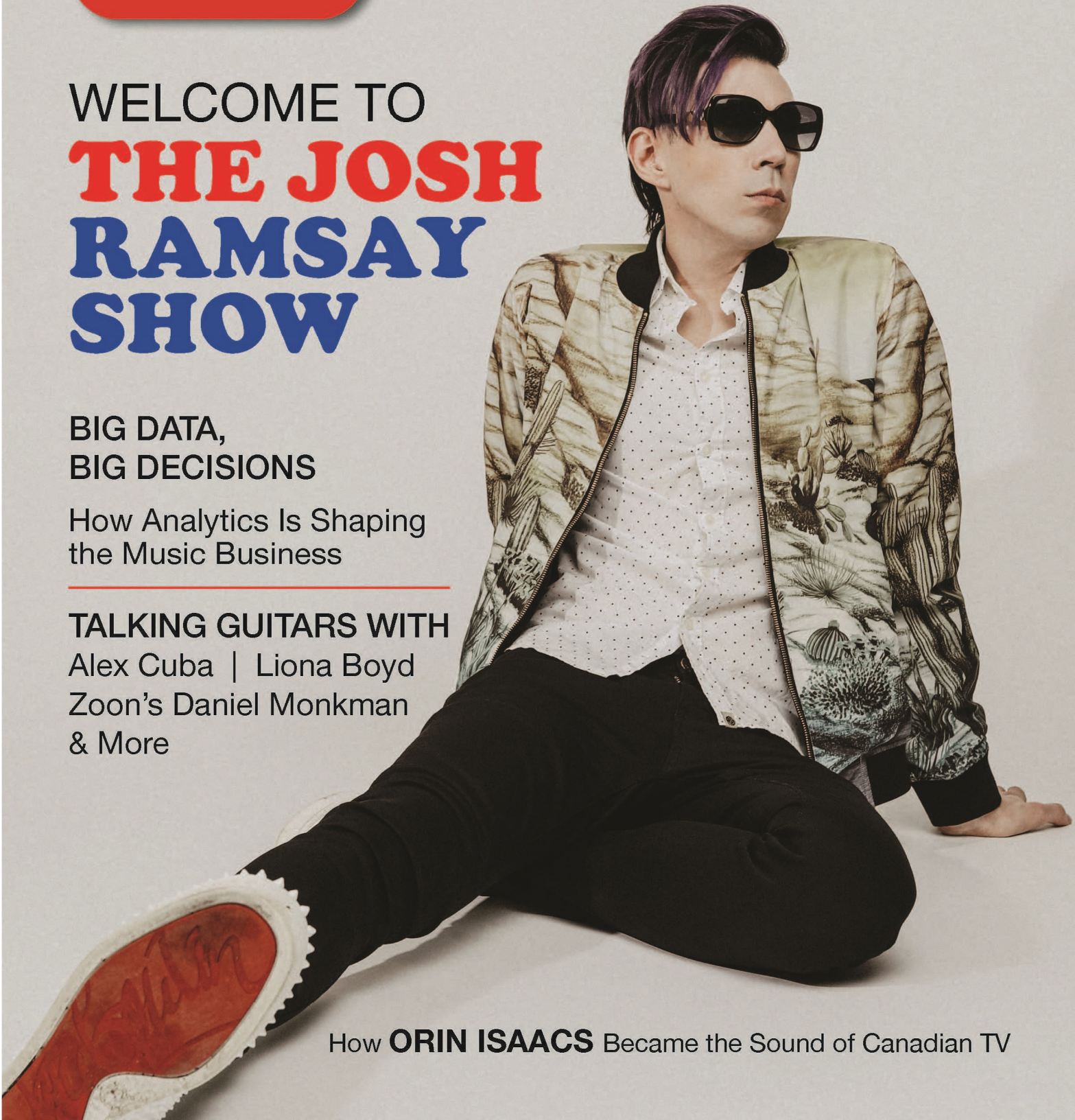
CANADIAN MUSICIAN

WELCOME TO **THE JOSH RAMSAY SHOW**

**BIG DATA,
BIG DECISIONS**

How Analytics Is Shaping
the Music Business

TALKING GUITARS WITH
Alex Cuba | Liona Boyd
Zoon's Daniel Monkman
& More



How **ORIN ISAACS** Became the Sound of Canadian TV



PHOTO: DEAN MARRANTZ

CANADA'S FIRST LADY OF GUITAR LIONA BOYD

Known as "Canada's First Lady of Guitar," Liona Boyd is a five-time Juno Award winner, has five honorary doctorates, and has received the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario. In 2019 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Guitar Museum in New York. Boyd's career spans over 45 years and nearly 30 albums, many of which are Gold and Platinum certified.

CM: Walk me through your typical live setup these days, and does it change for live vs. studio work?

Liona Boyd: I haven't performed live since before the pandemic. Our setup is pretty simple. My duo partner, Andrew Dolson, and I each have our guitar and a vocal mic. Some pieces in the program have accompanying tracks that are triggered by Andrew from a MacBook Air on the stage running Logic, which sends stems to the PA. My main concert guitar has a custom pickup system by Trinity Audio installed by [Toronto guitar shop] The 12th Fret that connects to an external two-channel preamp. The system consists of a pickup in the bridge and a microphone in the sound hole. The preamp allows each signal to go separately to the PA, or they can be blended to a single channel on the preamp. Andrew is playing one of my older classical guitars, which has had a microphone pickup installed.

The studio setup is completely different, of course. For years, my long-time producer, Peter Bond, has recorded me with a combination of a Neumann M149 and an AKG C12 with a pair of room mics, usually [AKG] 414s. The microphones are running into a Manley VoxBox and Avalon 737 [tube channel strip].

CM: Do you have any specific favourite guitars?

Boyd: I have played German Vasquez Rubio 'Solista' model guitars since the mid '90s. Personally, I tend to prefer the tonal colour of cedar tops over spruce, but I have used both over the years. I started my professional career playing Jose Ramirez and then later in the '80s Yamaha custom-built guitars for me. I still have the 1982 Grand Concert



PHOTO: WAL_172619 FROM PIXABAY

model that I used on my *Live in Tokyo* album, which I would sell to the right collector.

I've always been fascinated by how different woods affect the classical guitar's tone. And of course, even identical models sound and feel different from each other. I always test several before choosing one to purchase.

CM: Given the length of your career, do you find you are still learning new techniques these days, and if so, how do you approach this?

Boyd: I'm always interested to see how classical guitar continues to evolve, especially with younger players who are constantly experimenting with new techniques, including percussion effects that can be very interesting.

CM: Do you have a usual practice regimen, and if so, what does it look like?

Boyd: Mostly it's practicing the new pieces I have written in order to get them as good as possible before we record them. I like to have things under my fingers so that I don't have to think about technique when I'm recording.

CM: With any extra downtime you may have had during the pandemic, what did you find yourself working on?

Boyd: I was writing and recording extensively over the last three or four years! I have two separate album projects. The first album is a Latin dance-influenced recording called *L.O.V.E.* Since this fall I have released three singles and videos, the first one, "Popcorn Remix," filmed in Toronto and Palm Beach, was released in August, followed by the title track "L.O.V.E." in October, which featured my friend, Toronto singer Amanda Martinez. We have had a great response to both. The *L.O.V.E.* album songs are really about maintaining a sense of joy during this trying time. The latest single and video is called "Ayudame Papa," which is Spanish for "help me father." It's dedicated to my late father, John H. Boyd. All these videos can be viewed on YouTube on my Vevo channel. Several more are awaiting release dates.

The second project will come out later this year and is a mostly instrumental album called *Once Upon A Time* that I have been working on with my brilliant producer, Peter Bond. All the pieces on the album are based on beautiful romantic melodies. Some pieces are quite epic, while others are more intimate. After collaborating together for over 14 years, Peter and I both feel that this is our greatest album of the modern Liona Boyd era. I'm so excited to share it with the world! Those who have heard it, including some well-known musicians and composers, such as Vangelis, whom Peter and I hold in high esteem, have been full of praise for the unique pieces and we find that tremendously gratifying.