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IN THE HOT SEAT WITH LARRY LEBLANC



Industry Profile: Jake Schneider

— By Larry LeBlanc (CelebrityAccess MediaWire)

This week In the Hot Seat with Larry LeBlanc: Jake Schneider, partner, agent, and dir. of agency development, Madison House.

If an earthquake develops near Colorado, pin it on the eruptive activities of Jake Schneider.

This 31-year-old executive firebrand at Boulder, Colorado-based Madison House provides continual ground motion throughout all sectors of the live music sector in his pitching of his eclectic artist roster that includes: Bassnectar, Beats Antique, Lotus, Paper Diamond, Keys N Krates, Hieroglyphics and others.

For nearly two decades, multi-purpose Madison House has had a convincing reputation for providing its clients with critical and innovative booking strategies, as well as solid



management.

Mike Luba and Nadia Prescher launched Madison House in 1996 in Athens, Georgia, then home base to an emerging, high-powered independent music scene. In time, the company outgrew the local scene, and would relocate to Boulder in 1998, home of one of its long-standing clients, the String Cheese Incident.

Over the years, the company aggressively branched out, including—among things-- forming an independent record label, SCI Fidelity Records; a travel agency, Madison House Travel; and a concert division, Madison House Presents, recently acquired by AEG Live.

Schneider landed at Madison House in 2005 after being a successful talent buyer in the Iowa City, Iowa market.

You have been at Madison House for 9 years. When you arrived, there were only three agents.

There are 9 full time agents now. The roster has diversified tremendously from a predominantly jam and jazz band agency to a staple for electronica, Americana, indie rock, and hip-hop. All across the board.

Madison House has largely flown under the radar since it started, and certainly in the last decade.

A hundred percent.

What led to the agency to growing so much since you have been there?

When I was brought on, the idea was to diversify the roster. There were three agents, two of them being partners. The other one being an employee. At that point, their roster was very jam band, jazz, and roots heavy. Jesse Aratow (partner/agent/manager), and Nadia Prescher (partner/agent/manager) were doing the majority of the booking at that point. Mike (Luba), Kevin Morris and Jeremy Stein were more focused on the management or running the other various facets of Madison House that we had at the time--be it the ticketing company, the merch company, and stuff like that that we have either since spun off or joined teams with.

There's still the label.

SCI Fidelity Records is still rocking it here in our office releasing the String Cheese Incident records as well as records by other bands ranging from Umphrey's McGee to Lotus.

And there's Madison House Travel.

They are great friends, and I use them all of the time.



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CELEBRITYACCESS

Administration & Sales
Ph: (303) 350-1700
Fax: (303) 339-6877

Data Management &
Technical Support
Encore/General Editorial
Ph: (860) 536-5700
Fax: (860) 536-5713

Mailing Address
Post Office Box 817
Stonington, Connecticut
06378-0817

Madison House's growth may be connected to the fact that many of the bigger agencies weren't interested in some of these music genres. As well, there was a change in the buyers coming up. Newer relationships for you to connect, and to work with.

Yeah, I couldn't put it better than that. I feel like that is the case. For awhile, when I started cutting my teeth in the whole (live music) thing, it was either working with this person or working with this legendary promoter. I just found that the younger people at the various promotional companies and promoters were the people that I would latch on to. The Bryan Bensons of the world that currently works (as booking and production associate) for AC Entertainment booking who, at one time, booked the Orange Peel. Now he's doing festivals like Forecastle and Mountain Oasis and helping with Bonnaroo.

I was on the ground level developing some of this jam electronic stuff as well as some of the more grassroots-oriented electronic stuff, and the indie hip-hop stuff. Like yeah. Yeah, I agree. I think that it was a little bit under the radar. We would go to, maybe, a Pollstar conference, and hear somebody talk about a 360 deal or talk about a certain genre of music that was popping off or they would be, maybe, discussing reinventing the wheel. And there would be a little bit of a collective eye roll, I think, with Madison House (agents attending). My gawd...

I imagine that was also the response from a lot of the younger guys in management or at the other agencies.

Yeah, totally. We felt that we had been doing it (what was being discussed). I think that we are a boutique, and an independent booking agency that has paved the way. That has built a lot of great new concepts. Even our technology. We built this online mega database. Now other agencies are using newer forms of it.

Madison House still somewhat remains under the entertainment radar.

We are just under the radar. We have always wanted it to be that way. Recognition, God it's fun but, at the end of the day, does it make our clients more money? I'm not sure.

An agency that is comparable to Madison House is The Windish Agency.

Very much so. Tom Windish has always said, "I'm going to do this my way. I don't want to do this anybody else's way." That's our mentality very much as well.

I think of Tom Windish as a renegade in the agency world.

A hundred percent. I think that with what he's doing right now with his roster. I think too that they are embracing the (new) technology, and their roster, in general, is indicative of that.

One reason for Madison House's growth may have to do with the incredible shift in music over the past decade. EDM, for example, was present a decade, but there few outlets or platforms for the genre like there is today.

Right. There were no radio outlets for it really in the (United) States at least. Obviously, in Europe there was. But there wasn't a mainstream presence or an acceptable outlet to find this kind of stuff in the U.S.

So the idea of bringing me in (at Madison House) was sort of to expand the agency outside of the roster, and the acts that they were already working. By bringing in someone who wasn't necessarily steeped in the jam band world. With me being a very big hip hop fan, and being someone delving into electronic music, my goal was to come in, make a name for myself, and pick up some acts that made sense.

But I always want to be a cheerleader for Madison House's boutique and independent roster, and trying to bring in other people that would make sense. So as the (agency) roster grew, and as my roster, in particular, grew, it became easier I guess to lure other agents over to Madison House to be part of a very likeable team of people.

I was made partner a year and a half ago, and a large part of my focus has been to constantly bring in young 22-year-old agents like I was when I came here. Not bring them, necessarily, as purely admin in any kind of corporate agency role structure, but as an agent. Put their feet to the fire, and see what they can do. Hopefully, they have a roster with them that they can bring. But the idea is to just keep on growing it (the agency). We have brought in some kids that have grown tremendously in the year or two or three or four years that they have been here. Taking their rosters and tripling or quadrupling them in size, and bringing in a very nice Americana, and indie rock contingent.

Meanwhile, so many of the old school agents and managers continue to consider EDM (electronic dance music) to be a fad. This is despite the fact that the genre has been around for nearly 25 years.

Exactly. I'm very much an advocate of the law of abundance. As cheesy as that sounds. Since this thing (EDM) has come full circle now, I guess what you deem as legendary and older school promoters will call me to get the lay of the land, and to understand the landscape of the electronica world, particularly. Before I did my deal with Madison House I had a few offers to go to different agencies and be the head of their EDM departments. I just don't want to lock myself into something like that.

You don't want to park what you do in one genre.

Yeah, exactly. But with that being said, I'm more than willing to talk to these promoters, and to educate them. I think it only helps (the overall live music business). Again, it's the law of abundance. There's enough to go around for everyone. At times, though, it's funny hearing some of these older guys appropriating some of the language that you are using, or what you have just said is being used in another conversation on a panel somewhere. I'm not saying that always happens, but it's very interesting (when it does). We have helped a lot of these guys—told or directed them—on how to take this music into a whole new touring world. In the sense that we are going into larger venues now, and it's definitely difficult. How do you do it?

What attracted you to make the move from Iowa City to Boulder?

I have always loved the outdoors. I'm a big fisherman; be it open face reel or being a fly fisherman. Also growing up in Minnesota, I skied a ton since I was four-years-old. I was at the ski club every weekend.

So you were looking at a lifestyle choice?

Yeah, that was one of the things. I interviewed with a bunch of different agencies, and I was offered admin ticket count, ask-for-a-job things. I sat down with the Madison House crew. I wore a sports coat into the office. They laughed at me. There were six dogs running around the office. It was just a perfect fit. They were going to make me an agent right away. They had a band that was kind of teed up for me--which was Lotus, who are very successful right now. I was going to work on that band with Jesse Aratow. They basically said, "Come in. We are going to give you this chance. You've got six months. We are going to put your feet to the fire. If you want to take this, hopefully, you will make it happen for yourself." Luckily, I was able to do so. I signed bands before I actually made the move.

Who did you sign?

A hip hop group from Madison, Wisconsin called the Crest, and there was the Pocket Dwellers from Toronto. One of the early bands that I signed that has had a longstanding effect on me is Pnuma Trio. It was jam electronic band comprised of a bunch of 18 and 19 year olds. Really young kids. Saw them at Jazz Aspen SnowMass three and four months into my job here. One of the guys from the band, Paper Diamond, was actually a really successful DJ, that I work with now. He's been a great friend, and an awesome client of mine forever. It (his career) just grew organically, and we been loyal to each other for 9 years now.

You recently started working with the Minneapolis-based producer Vaski.

Yeah, for sure. A really cool electronic act. It just made sense. He's got managers Row Weber and Marcello Pagin who manage Lindsay Lowend, Seven Lions, and Paper Diamond. I am a fan too. He's a Minnesota boy. He's a Minneapolis-based guy. He's going to be re-locating to Los Angeles very soon. But we are superpsyched to be working with him. He's got a really cool aesthetic. Not only him personally, but with his music and everything around him.

So much these days (an artist's) online presence contributes to their aesthetic. If their Facebook looks like shit; and if their website is garbage, what can we do with them? People want a portal. I think more than anything else that they want a portal to commune (to share with other).

[The Minneapolis-based producer who calls himself Vaski has made a name for himself on the strength of his bass-heavy productions. Drawing from screamo, metalcore, and hip-hop influences, he has released numerous releases on Excision's Rottun Recordings imprint. Vaski recently found a new recording home on 12th Planet's SMOG Records.]

If an act isn't together with the basics of social media, they won't be together once the train leaves the station either.

It's a microcosm of their career. I totally, totally agree. The first thing that I tell people is, "Don't send me your Sonicbids' EPK. Send me a nice Facebook page that looks good." Or, (I'm interested) If they have some albums or music that came out, and looked good, and there's a solid campaign behind it. I think too about the Lotus community. You can tell so much about an act by how many people are just sitting on their message boards or their Facebook pages and just talking to them. If the act is talking back, that creates an even larger dialogue.

Many acts don't have a handle on social media other than in providing basic information.

There's different kinds (of social media) too. For example Bassnectar is not a fan of banging people over the head with random Twitter thoughts. He's interested in activating his community on Facebook on a positive change level. There are different mediums that certain artists are more prevalent in than in others.

How do the Madison House agents handle bookings?

Typically, there's RAs (responsible agents) or co-RAs, two people who split responsibility of an act. Normally, the person who works with an act books the entire North American continent for them. In many cases, I book Europe, Japan, and Australia for some of my clients. We are trying to do more of that. I have a lot more European trips lined up because we just secured some of our acts on festivals like Tomorrowland (in Boom, Belgium) which is big on the electronic music landscape in Europe. So I'm going to be doing more of that. But if we do split stuff up, it's typically East/West. Jesse Aratow and I work on a few clients together, including Lotus and Beats Antique. Jesse does the West, I do the East, Typically, it's the Mississippi (where there's the split of responsibility). God gave us the Mississippi for a reason. It's for routing tours, East/West, basically.

One of your goals is to have a greater presence in Europe for Madison House. How is that strategy developing?

We have just picked up some acts that have an amazing presence in Europe. Some of the acts have taken a little longer to develop there. Europeans know their electronic music. So when they see someone from the U.S., it's hard for them to wrap their heads around, "This act a pioneer." If so in what way? They are starting to believe (in some of the U.S.-based acts). Then I have acts that are straight up European acts.

The goal for the company, and myself personally, is to keep on growing our company over there. I think we are doing a great job right now. We have a lot of awesome connections. The guys at ID&T have been an amazing help with the Tommorlands of the world. I've got a couple of German managers that I am working with now that are doing stuff all over Germany, Belgium and in different countries.

Have you found audience reaction toward electronic music in places like Japan similar to North America?

Very much so. That surprised me five years ago during my first trip to Japan when I went over there with Pnuma Trio, and again when I went to Fuji Rock this summer with Lotus which is very much an electronic band with improvisational jam qualities to them. Typically, the Japanese population at shows—I'm not trying to stereotype—but normally they are pretty reserved as far as to their reaction to certain types of music. However, I found as soon as

Lotus hit the stage, there were kids crowd surfing. And they do the exact same thing here. Despite how people look, they are still dressed in the same Patagonia rain jackets, and rocking up with a fist in the air to the same band. Whether it's a band at Red Rocks (Red Rocks Amphitheatre near Morrison, Colorado) or the Fields of Heaven at Fuji Rocks.

AEG Live recently acquired Madison House Presents. How does that affect the Madison House agency business?

It doesn't really at all. Our peers range from people in every company--from AEG's competitors at places like Live Nation, SFX and ID&T. We are in the business of selling our talent to promoters. Therefore it's an open playing field. It (the acquisition) is a very fun, and interesting thing because we are in an office with a bunch of crazy people coming up with some really cool events, and we are able to come up with some unique ideas of how to tour our artists. If Madison House Presents/AEG Live can come up with a creative touring package for an artist then we will definitely bring it to our artist. But a lot of our artists are anti-national touring offers. For instance, Bassnectar (the stage name of Lorin Ashton) has turned down multiple 30 date tours all with the same promoter. It's just not going to happen. It's not what we are built on.

[This month AEG Live announced the acquisition of Madison House Presents, the festival, touring, and special events production company. Under the deal, Madison House Presents' principal partners Don Sullivan, Mike Luba and Jeremy Stein joined AEG along with Alicia Karlin and Michael Sampliner. Madison House Presents operates from offices in Boulder, New York, and Chicago.]

But it's a great flow of information due to their being in the office here, and it's really fun having Mike Luba back in the fold. Don Sullivan I viewed as a mentor while I was in college doing shows at the University of Iowa. He was bringing JAM Productions shows into Iowa City. I did a ton of work with him. It's fun having those guys in the fold right now.

What's the arrangement with Madison House Presents working from your Boulder office?

You know what? I'm not privy to the total financials at that end of things, being that I'm not a Madison House Presents employee, and I'm not a partner in that company. However, Madison House Presents works from this Madison House office for the time being for sure; especially since Jeremy Stein is a partner in Madison House. Him, Michael Sampliner and Alicia Karlin all work out of here. Mike Luba is in New York, and Don Sullivan is holding it down in Chicago as well.

Obviously, there's synergy between the agency and Madison House/AEG? These are folks you have worked with for years, and partnered with on the Rothbury Festival, and Fourmile Canyon Revival.

Very much so. They are always going to be our friends, and kind of our creative counterpart. I, for a time, helped, purchase talent for both Rothbury and Electric Forest. There will be times that they will bounce ideas off me for various events. As well, having those kinds of creatives around is helpful. For instance, right now Beats Antique, one of our really unique clients that blends world music with an electronic vibe and who has a world-renowned belly dancer (Zoe Jakes), we're working on a circus-eque tour that Madison House Presents and AEG Live might assist with curating. Help on the creative level in trying to figure out how to execute something like that.

How do you handle a new client's expectations of wanting to be on the festival circuit or doing bigger tours immediately on signing?

At the end of the day, Jake Schneider or Madison House will have the clout (to get such bookings). We may work with one of these (promoter) companies, but do we want to call out the favor right now to get you on this when you are not going to play it next year when you a real (fan) base?

Better to have a buzz than to be overlooked at a festival

I totally agree. I think that one of the people that I'd like to give one of the largest shout outs to are our friends over at C3 Presents. They promote tons of festivals, and they manage five of our clients. They do Adam Deitch, Break Science, Beats Antique, Lance Herbstrong, and Bassnectar.

So sitting with them gives you a degree of confidence for sure.

There's a great management team there which can provide festivals for their clients. On top of that, they are very frank with me. They are great to talk to, and shoot ideas back-and-forth with. Huston Powell, Allie Ehlinger or Amy Corbin will just be like, "Hey, we are not going to do (book) an act. We don't want to repeat something. Even three years in a row, we're not going to do something." Or they will tell a client, "Hey, if this happens this year, it's not going to happen in three years, and that's when you might need it." So it's about explaining expectations and letting your clients know that you are talking to these promoters for the long haul, and the long picture, and here are what the plans need to be.

Do you often have managers in shopping agencies trying to pit you against other agencies?

it's one of the things that I hate the most. Every once in awhile, I will go through it. I tell those managers that our work speaks for itself. Our festival presence speaks for itself. The sustainability of our clients speaks for itself. I'm not interested in outdoing (other agencies). I can tell them exactly what we do better than the rest of the other quantity DJ agencies out there if they want me to sell them on that.

Every once in awhile, I will. I typically find that if a manager is bluffing a little bit saying that he's got a couple of other agencies on the line, and I'm the first call. I can't tell you how many times that first call ends with, "Okay, we don't have to do another call." Were there other calls? I'm not sure. But I definitely frown upon it (competitive shopping) and I normally tell people that I'm not interested in getting into some kind of agency bidding war for a client.

If they know our company, if they have done the research, managers or artists come to us because they are interested. They had better be interested in our company. If not, I'm not going to sell myself. I'm not going to tell

them, like some of these corporate agencies do, that “We’re going to make you millions. You are going to be a star over night.” No. “We are going to grow and build this properly. Figure out how you can have a sustainable career to provide for your family or for yourself for years to come.”

So if band comes in with a festival want list, it’s “Have a good life, fellas?”

Totally. You can come to us and say, “Here’s our ideal wish list.” Well, cool. We ask all of our clients for a great wish list. “Give me a list of realistic peers that you think that you can go out with, and then give me a list of who would totally blow my mind if we went out with them. We’ll try to make that happen, and it’s going to be fun to track that throughout our careers and relationships together.” The festivals the same thing. Maybe, we aren’t getting Lollapalooza this year but two to three years from now when we proven that we can do some hard tickets in Chicago, we will have Huston (Powell) look our way. We just want to know that right off the bat that we are dealing with a realistic person. Or, if you are so in love with the music than you might be willing to deal with some of the bullshit. It very rarely happens, but every once in awhile it does happen. I’ve got a couple of clients on my roster like that.

It’s preferable that acts and managers consult with you in making that realistic wish list.

Exactly. And honestly, and typically my way is that I under promise, and I over deliver. “Guys, I don’t think that I can get this for you this year.” Then, “Well, I got this for you this year.” It’s not meant to be some kind of cheesy tactic. I just don’t want to raise peoples’ expectations. But I know typically that we can often deliver more than we can say that we offer.

The career strategy of emerging acts releasing a record, getting radio exposure, and then building their touring base has largely disappeared.

Yep. It has indeed for sure. I always go back to the Bassnectar thing. We have grown this for 6 or 7 years now. It’s been a completely grassroots thing. Obviously, there have been singles on the Beatport or the iTunes charts, but there wasn’t a bunch of accessible press and radio for him when we were taking him from 200 cap rooms to selling him for two nights at Red Rocks on a weekend, and to mini arenas. it was a grassroots-oriented thing. We were touring these types of artists without real product. It was about the live show. You didn’t have to have a record.

That’s what I started out on. Full on, I think that hip hop was a little bit more record-oriented. I think that those kids buy a lot of albums. But with the jam electronic stuff, and jam bands in general with that grassroots mentality there were records, but those records weren’t what was helping to propel some new stratosphere of stardom or whatever.

Street mixtapes were vital to rap.

There are a lot of websites out there right now where mixtapes are still prevalent. You go to XLR8R, Remix and URB and people are dropping mixtapes all of the time. There’s a lot of crossover from the EDM world, and the hip hop world. I was predominantly focused on the independent hip hop. I grew up in Minneapolis so I grew up listening to Atmosphere, and Rhymesayers (the Rhymesayers Entertainment label) which has this line of very independent—what I would deem positive—hip hop. We work with some commercial hip hop now. I would say that some of the more commercial hip hop is definitely word of mouth via mixtapes but there are some singles or tracks involved. Right now, hip hop, in general, is definitely single-oriented with some of this glam hop stuff that is coming out.

Fifteen years ago, if a cutting edge act couldn’t get radio--which they usually couldn’t unless it was college radio—they pitched their music to Pitchfork Media for a review. There weren’t many influential platforms for exposure after that. Today, there are so many outlets and platforms to jump onto.

Yeah, for sure. And back then a lot of it was the live show, and word-of-mouth stuff. Whereas a lot of my co-workers may have went on a Phish tour, I was the guy who went on a Jurassic 5 tour. I did 7 or 8 dates with Jurassic 5. I would go out there, and I would find out about a new MC called Mac Lethal because he opened up the Lawrence, Kansas show. I would buy three of his cheap mixtapes, and a T-shirt. That was how I found out about stuff. So it was very much a live show-oriented type of thing and figuring out who is supporting who and who was who in the independent hip hop world because you know that “Concrete Schoolyard” (originally featured on Jurassic 5 EP on Rumble Records in 1997) wasn’t getting tons of radio airplay for Jurassic 5 back then.

Before coming to Madison House, you worked at S.C.O.P.E. Productions and Pig-Donkey Presents, both in Iowa City.

S.C.O.P.E. Productions was very much the program council at the University of Iowa. I was there (in Iowa City) for five years. I ran it for three or four years.

What were you studying at the University of Iowa?

I was an English and history major.

Going to be a teacher?

Yep, that was probably the fall-back job. No doubt.

Betcha you also worked at the university’s radio station.

I found out about S.C.O.P.E. Productions from this student activities board at the same time I did find out about the radio station there. I had my own 2-3 A.M. or 2-4 A.M. shift where I played a bunch of indie hip hop tracks that I liked.

At S.C.O.P.E. Productions, we had a unique scenario where we were almost forced to turn a profit, and most of our shows were ticketed. We had a couple of non-ticketed shows a year. I had the very fortunate scenario of that if you wanted to book a show in Iowa City, and if the capacity was above 350 people, you basically had to book through the university. So I was in the position of being able to offer an arena, a theatre, and a club for all those shows. We would do 40 to 50 shows a year. It was nuts.

It was kind of like (having) Monopoly money, but at the same time the books had to kind of balance at the same time. So I was able to make what I deemed as fair offers. I remember that one week we did G Love, 311 and Moe. All on the same week on paid tickets. At the same time, we had Jeff Fortier who was then at Clear Channel; Brian Moore from Clear Channel; the guys from JAM Productions; and Jacki (Becker) from Up To Eleven Productions (in Lawrence, Kansas) all those people were bringing us shows as well too. We were very, very busy. It was to the point where I totally neglected academia.

Did you graduate?

Nope. I still have a couple of classes left. I will never finish them.

Was an Iowa City gig often a weekday bridge date?

Yeah, but we also had some great weekend shows as well. We were doing enough, and there were enough fans in that market that it wasn't all horrible nights of the week. It's a great routing market. If you are going out of Chicago, and you're trying to get to Minneapolis, it's a perfect place to stop.

As well, as you were building up relationships with bookers and other promoters, you were in a good position to get weekend dates as well.

For sure. We were working stuff all across the board whether it was John Mayer or Brooks & Dunn post 9/11 with the soldiers onstage and the red, white and blue confetti at our Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

A taste of the big time for you.

Yeah, it was a fun place to be at that point but when you are loading out from an arena at 4 AM—and I was DJing four or five nights a week—so I would work around that schedule—it was hard to make those 8 A.M. classes.

What was Pig-Donkey Presents?

Pig-Donkey Presents was my own company where I presented hip hop show around the city at 300 cap venues or less, like the Iowa City Yacht Club, and Gabe's Oasis, and venues like that. It was a lot of the Midwestern hip hop scene. Some of the younger Rhymesayers' acts. There was a group from Chicago called the Molemen I worked with a bunch, and the Typical Cats from Chicago.

Basically, I had my company where on off nights or weekend nights I would throw together some sort of 4 to 5 act hip hop bill while I was still at school. I was doing that on the side. So I was DJing. I was throwing these parties under Pig-Donkey Presents. I was doing the S.C.O.P.E. Productions thing. I also created—which I'm proud of—the University of Iowa Hip Hop Week, which was a very scholarly-oriented event. We brought in everyone from Chuck D to various graffiti artists all talking on the culture of hip hop. There were courses on hip hop and its roots. It culminated in a big hip hop show. We had performances from artists like Rahzel and Slick Rick. That was my focus in those days.

Your parents must have been flipping out about you not concentrating on your academic studies.

They were freaking out. They actually cut me off. They full on cut me off. It was only a couple of years ago that they said to me, "Hey, we apologize for not believing in what you were trying to do. We just thought that you were smoking a lot of weed, and listening to hip hop."

Which was probably true.

It was very true, for sure. At the same time, I was working a before and after school program to make ends meet. Waking up at 6 A.M. in time to serve kids breakfast. I'm the oldest of six in the family so I had a lot of jobs. So DJing until 2 or 3 A.M. and then waking up at 6 A.M. to send kids off to school was an interesting two years of my life for sure.

Where are you from originally?

I'm from Apple Valley, a suburb of Minneapolis. But Minneapolis is what I call home.

Were you in bands or DJing in high school?

No. I was a little bit of a hip hop fan, but I was a big punk rock and ska kid. The early years of the Warped tour, I identified with that crowd a lot. I'd go out and see Voodoo Glow Skulls, and Bad Religion. I would go to First Ave, the famous 1,500 cap room, and see all kinds of shows. Prince has played there so many times. My parents were huge Prince fans, obviously, being from Minneapolis. I was seeing shows like that downtown. On Tuesday, Wednesday nights I would go to whatever shows I could. I was definitely the kid in the workman's jacket with the fake name wearing the punk rock stuff.

We get the music bug early don't we?

For sure. Thirteen or fourteen-years-old.

And it doesn't change.

Not at all.

The guys you hang and kibitz with in the business today are all music fans.

I'm telling you, I think that's the case. An example, as I told you, is that I went on a Jurassic 5 tour when everyone else was going on a Phish tour. I saw Jurassic 5 at Fuji Rock in the misty mountains of Japan this summer. I was a fan, man. So I had to run to get there, and that was it. That was all that mattered. I didn't care about anything else. We represent Chali 2na now, and that for me is a full circle kind of thing from Jurassic 5. But yeah, once a fan always a fan. Going out Tuesday nights (back then as a teenager) is going out Tuesday nights now.

You have Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder (OCD), an anxiety disorder. A hindrance in your work?

It's probably an hindrance for my employees because I have an absolute need for perfection at all times. In my life it has been tough for relationships. Thank God, I have a wife who puts up with it. But, personally and on a work tip, I think that it has only helped create what I deem a pretty flawless system here, from the admin accounting department to the contracting admin world. It's great. We worked with another company to develop a system to handle contracts, guest lists, and tour books, and things like that. That was me three or four years in a row not sleeping because it wasn't good enough.

I have (the neurological disorder) Tourette Syndrome too. If I yell "fuck" at a promoter, I can blame it on my Tourettes.

Larry LeBlanc is widely recognized as one of the leading music industry journalists in the world. Before joining CelebrityAccess in 2008 as senior editor, he was the Canadian bureau chief of Billboard from 1991-2007 and Canadian editor of Record World from 1970-89. He was also a co-founder of the late Canadian music trade, The Record.

He has been quoted on music industry issues in hundreds of publications including Time, Forbes, and the London Times. He is co-author of the book "Music From Far And Wide."

Larry is the recipient of the 2013 Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award, recognizing individuals who have made an impact on the Canadian music industry. He is a board member of the Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia, Ontario.

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