



Cyndi Lauper

by Daniel Keller

Keeps Shining It On

When Cyndi Lauper burst onto the scene in the early 1980s, the record industry still projected the image of being a happy, supportive, and nurturing environment for developing artists. In the “new wave” of music Cyndi helped to pioneer, the sky seemed the limit.

Nowadays, of course, the industry (and indeed the world) is a very different place. Emerging artists and industry veterans like Cyndi, are shunning major labels in favor of live performance and the Internet. Having recently self-released a critically-acclaimed EP (2002's *Shine*) in advance of a new full length album, there seems to be no stopping this Grammy®-nominated artist from continuing her love of music.

OTWS caught up with Cyndi in the midst of her sold-out tour, with dates evenly split between solo shows and opening for Cher, and got her take on the music, the fans, and life in today's music industry.

ON TOUR WITH SHURE: How's the tour going?

CYNDI LAUPER: The audiences have been amazing. We're having a blast. I have a wonderful band and a wonderful crew. I'm rediscover-

ing some of my older material, and I'm writing new stuff. We've been recording the shows, and we'll probably do a live CD and DVD in the spring.

OTWS: You recorded your last album *Shine* at home, and when your label (Edel) folded, you released a five-track EP on your own. Do you feel that artists generally have more control over their careers now than in the past?

LAUPER: Absolutely. Making and releasing *Shine* was very empowering. We did the whole thing in my garage. With the tools available now, people are able to record their own music and not be at the mercy of the major labels. With the Internet, satellite radio, TV, and other media, the power is now in the musicians' hands.

OTWS: Do you think it's harder now for an artist to get their music heard?

LAUPER: There have always been brick walls, and there have always been ways around those walls. People want to hear new music, and in the end they're finding that music on their own, because they're tired of being spoon-fed what the marketing geniuses think they want to hear.

The big awakening for me came just before we released *Shine*. We were playing a festival near Dallas, and 20,000 people started singing along with 'Madonna Whore.' Edel had pressed a handful of promos of the album, and I guess one found its way to the web. And I realized, even though you couldn't buy the album, the people who wanted to hear it were no longer locked out. The equation has changed. Change is good for any artist. Change will develop you, make you stronger and better at your craft.

OTWS: Artists are learning how to be successful on their own terms, through other channels...

LAUPER: You may be excluded from the media, but not from the art. There's always another way, if you ask, 'What are my options?' If you're creative in your music, you gotta be creative in getting it out there, too. I never listen to someone who says, 'I can't.' What they're really saying is, 'It's too difficult.'

OTWS: One of the many causes you've supported over the years has

been hearing conservation awareness. You were an early adopter of Shure PSM® systems. Have they helped you reduce ear fatigue?

LAUPER: It's definitely a good start. Only half the band is using them on this tour, so the stage level is still pretty loud. But using in-ears has been a big adjustment for me as a singer; hearing every nuance makes everything much more critical—the mix, the compression, the EQ, the mic. Shure's been really helpful with finding us the right mic, and listening to our feedback on the PSM systems.

OTWS: Any advice for artists just starting out?

LAUPER: I think as a musician, it's really important to contribute to the world you live in. Never lose sight of integrity—if you win on someone else's terms, someone else has won, not you. There is always a choice, as long as you're aware of alternatives.

If I can do this, someone else can. I'm thrilled to be a musician in this era, because whatever doors I can kick open will be open for those who follow.



CYNDI LAUPER	THEIRS	ON A BUDGET
Lead Vocal	Beta 57A®	SM57
Kick	Beta 52A® & Beta 91	PG52
Snare	Beta 57A	SM57
Toms	Beta 98	PG56
Overheads	KSM32	KSM109
Monitors	PSM® 600	PSM 200