

## WHY A WHITE BREAD SUMMER, WHEN THERE'S JAM TO BE HAD

>>> BY STEVE PRENTICE



>>> PHOTO CAPTION:



“ They just want to play some serious music and have fun doing it. ”

LEFT SIDE:  
TOPHER STOTT  
CREATIVE PRODUCER  
RIGHT SIDE:  
ROBERT SIBONY  
PRODUCER  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
LEAGUE OF ROCK



Rod Stewart. The Yardbirds. Max Webster. These are holy names to basement musicians. We, the people who picked up a guitar at

12, or 16, or 20 only to put it down again in exchange for a briefcase and a monthly parking pass see such legends as grazing in much greener pastures than our own, impossibly far removed from the Monday-to-Friday rat race.

Well, no more.

Enter Terry Moshenberg, founder of the League of Rock ([www.leagueofrock.com](http://www.leagueofrock.com)). Not a school, not a band, but a unique, multi-

week jam setup or more correctly a JAB setup. JAB stands for “join a band,” which is what you do when you sign up for his once-a-week-for-10-weeks excursion.

Not only do you get to work with other musicians and rehearse actual songs, the League also keeps things vibrant by moving your newly-formed band into a recording studio to cut a three-song CD, and then on-stage, to rock out like the big boys.

Late on a warm spring Friday afternoon I toured the facilities with Terry. Situated in the basement of an old building bordering Toronto’s Garment District, the studios are warm and inviting — lots of wood, books, soft light and a ceramic cat for a door-stop. The

League’s members have ample space to setup, rehearse, record, and then review their work, on top-notch gear, from the drum set to the recording desk.

Later, over shwarma at the local Tunisian greasy spoon, Terry talks about how proud he is of his members. For the most part, they’re people who work in other professions, from Toronto’s corporate canyons. “They love to play,” he says, “they’re great because they’ve got nothing to prove. They’re not seeking to become rock stars. They just want to play some serious music and have fun doing it.” And indeed, the group I got to watch were great. There were no egos, no fits of pique, just four guys who had carefully practiced over the pre-



ceding few weeks, and were now just laying down the vocal tracks for a stunningly accurate rendition of a Tragically Hip song.

Like many great ideas, the *League of Rock's* JAB session series has spawned other fascinating projects for Terry and his L.O.R. people. Take team-building, for example. Companies who have had enough of sending their staff to swing from ropes or undergo blind-folded-fall-back-and-we'll-catch-you games, can instead hook up their best players with real rock stars. That's what Unilever is doing this year, when players from Lighthouse drop in, and Alan Frew from Glass Tiger will be filling up a visitors' parking space at Research In Motion in the Fall. (Gosh, does this mean future concert

goers will get to wave their BlackBerrys instead of Bic lighters when the slow song comes on?)

But Terry's not finished yet. The biggest thing, he says, is that working musicians, the industry big shots have been really impressed by the *League of Rock*. There are plans afoot, he says, for certain special members to actually take a field trip to a certain rock star's castle in France – yes, castle – to taste wine with himself and other members from rock royalty. Now, fellow guitarists, can one get any closer to God than that?

*The League of Rock* is not Terry's first fascinating venture. Others include pioneering international debit card technologies through his company, *Moshen Media*. He is also known as

Mr. Erica Ehm. His wife was Canada's first music VJ and is now the founder of [www.yummymummyclub.ca](http://www.yummymummyclub.ca).

*The League of Rock* is a unique place for downtown Toronto grownups to play. Although other jam studios exist, Terry's careful matching up of prospective members, and the unique combination of casual warmth and serious devotion to quality fun seems unique. With time, Terry adds, there may be further chapters opened up in other Canadian and U.S. cities. But for now Toronto non-professional musicians need to start being extra nice to their significant others in order to get permission to stay out late and play for the next 10 weeks. 2