

# music



Glee castmembers perform a mash-up of Katrina and the Waves' "Walking on Sunshine" and Beyoncé's "Halo."

By Sarah Jones

## The Joy of 'Glee'

PRODUCER ADAM ANDERS GIVES HIT SONGS 'JAZZ HANDS'

What do "Imagine," "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "The Thong Song" have in common? Musically, not a lot. But they've all been covered on Fox's smash hit show *Glee*, a smart, funny musical drama that chronicles the lives and loves of a bunch of social misfits who sing and dance together in their high school glee club.

Developed by *Nip/Tuck* creator

Ryan Murphy and starring the hilarious Jane Lynch (*40-Year-Old Virgin*) and a cast of mostly stage actors, *Glee's* formula is simple: Nine students (and their oddball teachers) deal with typical teen issues, and the drama is played out in larger-than-life song-and-dance arrangements of iconic songs from the past four decades. More than 50 hits have been covered, includ-

ing songs from artists ranging from Madonna to Kanye West to the Rolling Stones.

*Glee* attracts more than 8 million viewers each week. But the real success story is the music: iTunes downloads of *Glee* singles have topped 2 million, two soundtrack albums have been released and a concert tour is planned for 2010.

The show introduces classic



Producer/songwriter Adam Anders heads up the *Glee* music team.

hits to new audiences—the cast version of Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin’,” showcased in the pilot, sold 500,000 downloads and generated new sales for the original. *Glee* also has a knack for turning show tunes into pop hits, propelling cast versions of “Defying Gravity” from *Wicked* and “Maybe This Time” from *Cabaret* up the charts.

The show owes much of its success to its superstar music team, led by Adam Anders, whose producing and songwriting credits include Ashley Tisdale, the Backstreet Boys, *High School Musical 3* and *Hannah Montana, The Movie*. Anders is a hit-maker: He recently had 18 simultaneous singles on the iTunes chart, including 16 songs from *Glee*, one by Miley Cyrus and one from a Disney collective. A few years back, he wrote some TV themes for Fox; when *Glee* was being developed, the network suggested creator Murphy meet with Anders. He wasn’t hired right away.

“I think part of it was, he wanted this show to be the anti-*High School Musical*, and he was nervous because I had done *High School Musical*,” Anders says, laughing. “I told him, ‘Look, that’s just one thing that I’ve done so I understand the logistics of

doing a musical, but obviously, the music doesn’t need to sound like that.’ He came back to me, I think it was on a Friday, and said, ‘Can you have [Amy Winehouse’s] “Rehab” to me Monday morning? If you nail it, the show’s yours.’ We spent the weekend on it, and the rest is history.”

Anders and his partner in Sweden, super-producer Peer Astrom (Celine Dion, Madonna), work on an intense timeline, with about seven days from music approval to show taping to producing songs. Their teams work across time zones, around the clock, arranging, tracking and mixing—multitasking to produce up to 11 songs in a single week. “We use the time change to our advantage, so when I go to bed he keeps working, and vice versa—basically, 24 hours a day, six days a week,” says Anders.

The team communicates via Skype and transfers files over the Internet. “At one point, I had three studios in Sweden going, I had three here and one in New York, at the same time,” says Anders, who records vocals at Chalice in Los Angeles. “I’m recording, then checking in every half hour on Skype, with all of the other things going on at the same time. It’s pretty crazy.

“The main thing it comes down to is hav-

ing the right people,” he stresses. “Everybody working on my team is supertalented; everything they bring to the party is top-notch. You really only get one shot when you’re on this compressed a timetable. That’s what I’ve been most proud of: how we’ve been able to pull off so much volume at such a high level. There’s one episode where we’re doing a huge Broadway number with a full orchestra to a Kelly Clarkson cover, to a Rolling Stones song, back to a *Dreamgirls* cover, all in the same week.”

Creating the songs is essentially a two-step process. Once a song is cleared, the team creates a guide demo with a “stunt double”—a singer who sounds like the cast member who will ultimately sing the song. After the arrangement is approved, castmembers are brought in to replace the vocal tracks. Anders records lead vocals separately, and has the group perform together around one mic. Anders uses a variety of mics on the castmembers: “Amber Riley [Mercedes] blows up pretty much everything she gets in front of,” he says. “She’s an amazing singer and she’s probably the most experienced singer in the studio coming in; she’s done background work. She ends up on a [Shure] SM7, which is the only thing that can handle her power. Lea [Michele, aka Rachel] is usually on a 47; for Cory [Montheith, quarterback Finn] we usually use a 251; and then the choir stuff is usually a 251 or 47 middle; and then I use 67s on the sides.”

Anders coaxes pop performances from



The boys of *Glee* sing a medley of Bon Jovi’s “It’s My Life” and Usher’s “Confessions Pt. II.”

singers who were initially out of their comfort zone in a recording studio. “Cory had never sung in the studio in his life before ‘Don’t Stop Believin,’” he says. “The first time we recorded, he didn’t know how to breathe and sing at the same time; he almost passed out. To see where he is now is like night and day; he’s come so far.” Lea Michele was accustomed to performing show tunes onstage. “The challenge with her was not can she sing, it was getting her confident that she can sing these different styles,” Anders says. “Onstage, there’s a different way you project and you use more vibrato; pop singing requires a lot of straight singing.” Anders says it’s rewarding watching the singers rise to the occasion. “They’re like, ‘I can’t do this.’ Then they get in there and tough it out, and it turns out amazing.”

*Glee* is all about vocals—big, huge vocals. Anders likens them to the way the show characters might sound in their own minds. “These kids, they’re like, ‘We sound amazing, we’re huge,’ and that’s what you want—big, grandiose sound.” Lots of vocals means lots of passes recorded in a big, live room. And lots of reverb. “I want the vocals to be inspiring,” he says. “People want to enjoy listening to it.”

Songs are prepared for broadcast and download simultaneously, but the mix aesthetic is the same. “There’s no syncing to any picture, so it’s pretty much the way I would make any record,” Anders says. “We program in Logic, we do vocals in Pro Tools, we mix in Pro Tools, I do all the cut-downs in Pro Tools.” Two versions of each song are created: a full-length version for iTunes and an edited version for TV. For the show, Anders FTPs mix stems, broken out into separate backgrounds and leads, with and without effects.

Anders admits that producing a glee choir version of a great pop song “could be the cheesiest thing you’ve ever heard if you’re not careful. So the fine line for me and Peer when we arrange these things is, how do we keep this cool, current, something that could actually work on radio, but then put the ‘jazz hands’ on it?”

“I’d be lying if I said I knew it was going to work,” Anders continues. “I did feel like when you heard ‘Don’t Stop Believin’, you definitely get goose bumps, and we were like, ‘Okay, we did something right here.’ It’s one of the greatest songs ever written, and we said, ‘Let’s just not screw this up.’ And a lot of it starts with that: Let’s stay true to the song, respect the song and add our *Gleeness* to it.” III

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# Bonamassa's 'Black

## INVENTING THE NEW GREEK BLUES

By Barbara Schultz

Joe Bonamassa has built his career on the foundation laid by white blues/rock guitar legends like Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Clapton. He fell in love with this music very early in life—grabbed his first guitar at age 4, and was landing gigs near his home in upstate New York by age 12. Often associated with other guitar prodigies such as Johnny Lang and Eric Johnson, Bonamassa has developed a style that incorporates numerous blues idioms—a bit of Elmore James, a touch of B.B. King, etc.—but owes more to rock interpreters like Jimmy Page and Jimi Hendrix.

So Bonamassa is very well matched with his longtime engineer/producer Kevin Shirley, who has wrangled seminal performances from guitar bands like Aerosmith, Black Crowes, Silverchair, Iron Maiden and Journey. Shirley, who says his clients have affec-

tionately described him as “a nice guy, but one of the most bull-headed producers you could hope to meet,” knows how to capture wild guitars; he also knows he’ll get more compelling performances from artists if he keeps stirring things up.

“This is our sixth project together,” Shirley says. “When we started recording together way back when, one of the tenets of our working relationship was that we were going to push the boundaries. I recognize where Joe’s roots are, but we were going to take the blues to different places. So over the years, we’ve gone swampy, we’ve gone eclectic; in our conversations, we’ve recognized that there are different blues genres: Memphis versus Chicago, Delta blues, Appalachian music, New Orleans, and it’s all related—even back to Celtic music. We’ve always wanted

to explore blues around the world and see how all that fitted in.”

So Shirley saw a great opportunity when a friend, studio owner/engineer Kostas Kalimeris, mentioned that he was building Black Rock, a brand-new studio/villa in spectacular Santorini, Greece. Crystal-blue sea, historic architecture, a wealth of cultural/musical possibilities and a brand-new SSL 9080 J-based studio designed by Roger D’Arcy of Recording Architecture. It probably wasn’t too tough for Shirley to convince Bonamassa to bring his band to Greece to record a new album.

One of Shirley’s trademarks is that he insists on a lot of pre-production so that in-studio performances can happen quickly and be captured in the moment. Shirley helped prepare for Bonamassa’s sessions at Black Rock by auditioning YouTube videos that Kalimeris sent; he was able to choose a handful of Greek musicians and line them up before bringing Bonamassa and his bandmembers to Santorini.

Arriving while Kalimeris and his staff were still putting the finishing touches on the studio, Shirley and the bandmembers enjoyed the residential facility’s hospitality and daily dips in the Aegean Sea, while Bonamassa sequestered himself to write new material. Then Shirley arranged some front-porch-style sessions with just Bonamassa and the Greek musicians he’d selected.

“The first thing we did was have a session with these two Greek guys, Thanasis Vasilopoulos on clarino and Manolis Karadinis on bouzouki,” Shirley says. “Neither of them spoke English, and it was an interesting way of getting the music going. We actually recorded one track sitting outside on the patio outside the studio. At night it’s so quiet there, the recording was beautiful. These were different elements that we introduced into Joe’s sound.”

Kalimeris, the studio owner, also found those sessions particularly memorable: “That night was so peaceful, it made the recording really unique,” he recalls. “The vibe from everybody was fun and experimental.”

The introduction of folk instruments is especially effective in Bonamassa’s cover of Leonard Cohen’s inspiring “Bird on a Wire”—a song that’s been recorded by singular artists such as Johnny Cash and Joe Cocker, but Bonamassa makes it his own.

Shirley, who records all of his projects live, also took Bonamassa out of his guitar comfort

zone on this album: "Normally, Joe plays a Les Paul guitar, but on this album I wanted to try to challenge him, so I asked him to put away his beloved Les Paul and we recorded with him playing a Telecaster and an amplifier and nothing between them. Then I just I dangled a [Shure SM] 57 over the speaker, just trying to get an edgier live feeling. After five or six days of that, we went back to Joe's comfort zone; we put up the huge stacks and miked them up properly with

a 57 and the Beyer 201 and a Royer R121 and a Neumann 67 back into the room to give it a little bit of ambience."

Shirley's mixing process, done this time on the SSL console and listening through KRK VXT6s, also seems to be part and parcel of recording live: "We don't mix separately," he says. "I always mix as I go, and my rough mixes are what make the album. I feel that when it's coming off the console, you're right there, into the music, and you're aware of the minutiae when you're that close to it. When you wait until four weeks later, it's, 'Why did we put that guitar part in again? I know I had a good idea at the time.' The rough mixes really capture the way we heard the song."



Rehearsing outside at Black Rock, L-R: Joe Bonamassa (guitar), Manolis Karadinis (bouzouki), Rick Melick (keyboards), Thanasis Vasilopoulos (clarino)


Bonomassa and friends were so happy with what they heard at Black Rock that they named their album after the studio. *Black Rock*, the album, comes out March 9, 2010, on Bonamassa's own J&R Adventures label, and he and Shirley plan to return to Greece to record a follow-up next year.



Bonomassa playing a Resonator Dulcimer

"I love the studio; it's absolutely the most creative studio I've ever been in," Shirley says. "There's all this traditional Greek architecture with concrete, concave ceilings. Once you're inside these things, you get this amazing resonance and explosion of sound, which is a little uncontrollable, but it's fantastic. And staying in the place and being able to go in at 7 a.m. or coming back after dinner and cutting a track at 11 or 12 at night—it's a wonderful environment to be able to do that." III

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# CLASSIC TRACKS



Cherie Currie, Joan Jett, Sandy West, Lita Ford and Jackie Fox

*Can't stay at home, can't stay at school  
Old folks say, ya poor little fool  
Down the street I'm the girl next door  
I'm the fox you've been waiting for  
Hello Daddy, hello Mom  
I'm your ch ch ch ch ch ch cherry bomb*

Fowley had been in the music biz for almost 30 years when he met founding Runaways members Jett and Sandy West. He made his first studio recording in 1949, when he was 10, and from that point on, he was never not working in studios, or writing, publishing or producing bands. "I've sold 102 million records in a 50-plus-year career," Fowley points out. "I've produced everybody, worked with almost everyone. The Beach Boys did songs I published. I've recorded with Andrew Loog Oldham, who was producer of the Rolling Stones. Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones of Led Zepelin played behind me on a song that I did. It's a huge list."

Fowley's credit list also includes The Byrds, Warren Zevon, KISS, the Hollywood Argyles, Frank Zappa's Mother's of Invention, Cat Stevens, Alice Cooper, Jonathan Richman, BTO, The Germs and Nirvana, to name a handful of the acts that have capitalized on Fowley's songs, productions and his keen, intangible sense of what music the public wants. And he says he knew he had something great from the moment he met Joan Jett, whom he has called the "musical child of Keith Richards and John Lennon."

"Teenaged girls with guitars," he states. "We knew it from the day it started. And we were in a hurry. It only took 17 weeks for the band to form, rehearse, play, learn songs and get a deal with Mercury Records, with no demo."

A major-label deal with no demo? "Kim Fowley is a genius and knows how to do things," Fowley says.

But let's get back to the forming part. Fowley hooked Jett up with West. Next to join was bassist Micki Steele, who didn't stay with the band but later became known as Michael Steele, bassist in The Bangles. Cherie Currie—then only 16—joined next as the group's lead vocalist, followed by future metal guitar icon Lita Ford. The last piece of the puzzle was the bassist who appears on The Runaways album, Jackie Fox. Fowley then brought the group he calls the "fabulous five" into Artie Ripp's Fidel-

## The Runaways

### "CHERRY BOMB"

By Barbara Schultz

"Here's your headline," says musical genius Kim Fowley, who occasionally refers to himself in the third person. "Kim Fowley and the Runaways recorded "Cherry Bomb" in a store room on purpose. We didn't have an equipment list. We barely had equipment. But we had a plan.' Then everybody reads it, and this will be the best article you've written in 10 years." Fowley, who helped form The Runaways and produced their first album, has really thrown down the gauntlet here, especially considering that "Cherry

Bomb" could be considered a dubious choice for a "Classic Track." It's kind of a garage band song, and the band's eponymous debut album, which includes "Cherry Bomb," barely cracked the *Billboard* 200. But "Classic Tracks" aren't just about hits, and "Cherry Bomb," written by Fowley and a then-unknown rocker named Joan Jett in 1976, marked the debut of America's first all-girl rock band. Go back and listen, and those punk guitars and racy vocals sound just as tough as they did back then:

ity Recording in Studio City, Calif., to make their first album; the lead track was “Cherry Bomb,” a song that is rumored to have been written in five minutes, on the spot for Currie’s audition: “There was rock ‘n’ roll magic there,” Fowley says. “It was no problem.”

Fowley says he chose to record at Fidelity because of the studio’s atmosphere, but he doesn’t mean that in a good way. “We were in the B room, which was a remade storeroom,” he says. “It was awful. But it wasn’t scary. It was the kind of studio you wanted a garage product out of. A lot of young bands go into studios with chandeliers and red-velvet rugs and a receptionist who looks better than they do, and they’re terrified. But if you walk into a room where they store stuff, you’re not going to be intimidated. You’re going to swagger about: ‘What a horrible place. Oh, well, we’ve played a lot of horrible places. This is nothing new.’”

“Studio B was like I had rooms and I converted them into a studio when need be, as opposed to Studio A, which was a studio all the time,” clarifies Ripp, who founded Fidelity in 1971. “Studio B was a control room and a reasonable-sized office—kind of a large conference room. The other side of the back wall was the front office so you could easily blow away anything that was going on in the front office. But there was an intimacy in the room and there was a sound that was tight and alive, despite its lack of, shall we say, visual amenities.”

Behind a 16-channel Quantam console for The Runaways’ first sessions was the studio’s chief engineer, Andy Morris, whom we were unable to locate for this article. Fowley recalls that Morris was “a genius engineer. He understood every accident that makes a hit record. It’s the accidents and the things you leave out that make a record.”



What else does Fowley remember about working in Fidelity? “Chaos, madness, fighting, drama. Seizing the moment. Changing the world. Boredom,” he says. “And no guests. No visitors. No parents, no record company, nothing. We were at war. We didn’t have time to entertain in the foxhole. No drugs or alcohol either. Fast food. You always play obnoxious rock ‘n’ roll when you eat bad fast food.”

When asked if he recalls what equipment was used on these sessions, Fowley says, “How should I know? I don’t engineer anything; I can’t even drive a car. I sit there and dream and do conceptual supervision, and all the guys who are technical interpret it. I’ve never bothered to learn anything other than if it sounds good or bad.

“Anyway, it was all awful. It was sub-par. It was old. It was like Ingmar Bergman says: ‘I always use bad equipment so my actors perform better.’ Here’s the trick: Hey morons, don’t worry about the equipment, worry about the song and the players and the singers and make sure that some person in the public will want to own the recording when it’s finished.”

Stand back, Fowley’s just getting warmed up: “Nirvana didn’t show up with a list of equipment, and say, ‘We demand this equipment.’ They said, ‘Let’s go make a record like we’ve always wanted to; now we can. Here we are, let’s rock.’ I don’t care about the egg-head aspect of your readership. Eggheads, I am a moron, and I sold 102 million records not knowing anything about equipment, but I knew the song, I knew the tone of the voice and what tone and tempo and timbre was, and I understood there had to be some tuning, and I understood somebody had to buy it, and I always left holes in the arrangement so people could smoke dope, get drunk, fall in love, have fights, have sex, go for a ride, or if they’re lonely, keep from killing themselves.

“Kim Fowley and The Runaways recorded ‘Cherry Bomb’ in a storeroom on purpose. We didn’t have an equipment list. We barely had equipment. But we had a plan.”  
—Kim Fowley

You’re making records for the listener, not for yourselves, so get off of that, ‘Oh, we must have an Aphex Aural Exciter,’ or the modern equivalent of that demand. Go get your own studio. Get your mom to buy you a Fostex and a manual, and you can start your own Failure Sound Studios upstairs in your baby brother’s nursery.”



Producer/artist Kim Fowley (left) with Fidelity Recording Studios owner Artie Ripp circa '76

Clearly, no one’s going to get anything more from Fowley on the subject of equipment, but at *Mix*, we have our ways.

Joey Latimer, an engineer, composer, musician and label owner who currently lives and works in Idyllwild, Calif., apprenticed at Fidelity Recording in the late ‘70s, and though he wasn’t present for The Runaways sessions, he remembers what equipment would have been used in Studio B. He says they would have recorded to a 3M M79 16-track machine with Dolby B NR. The speakers were 12-inch three-way JBLs. Ironically, Fowley does admit to using an Aural Exciter on this project, and Latimer says there was also a BX10 spring reverb in that room that engineers would patch into the EMT 150 plates in Studio A. Also on hand were LA-2A and 1176 limiters, Pultec EQs, Roger Meyer noise gates and outboard API EQs. Fidelity also offered a host of Neumann and AKG tube mics, as well as models such as the Shure SM57, Electro-Voice RE20 or 666, and Sennheiser 421 and 441s.

So it doesn’t sound like Fidelity’s gear was actually

*Continued on page 86*

*"Cherry Bomb," continued from page 47*

sub-par—it would have been quite a nicely equipped 16-track studio in its time. Whatever the reason, the studio was the perfect environment for The Runaways to unleash their five-girl rock rebellion.

"Kim Fowley was a visionary," says Ripp, whose 40-plus-year résumé includes producing hits from the Shangri La's to the Lovin' Spoonful to Billy Joel and so many others. "He was creative, demanding, energetic and he understood he was dealing with something new. He wasn't making a Xerox. He encouraged the freedom and creativity and energy that he knew the girls had; they were young, they were impressionable, and they were teenaged girls connected with their experience of being girls playing in a guy's world."

Ripp sold Fidelity Recording in 2002 to Tom Weir, who renamed it Studio City Sound. The studio has remained busy and recently hosted Exene Cervenka of X, recording a cover of "Cherry Bomb."

In addition to continuing to produce, re-

cord, perform and write music, Fowley has a weekly program that's part of Little Steven's "Underground Garage" on Sirius/XM satellite radio. He's also been consulting with the producers and actors who are working on a movie about The Runaways, set for release in June 2010. The film stars Michael Shannon as Fowley, Kristen Stewart as Jett and Dakota Fanning as Currie.

The real Cherie Currie left The Runaways after the band completed three albums (*The Runaways*, *Queens of Noise* and *Live in Japan*). She made more recordings, including an album with her twin sister, Marie Currie, and she has acted in films and TV shows. The band recorded two more albums after her departure, with Jett singing lead. Sandy West remained with the band till the bitter end; after they broke up in 1979, she continued to record and perform, and worked as a drum teacher. She was diagnosed with cancer 2005 and died the following year.

Bassist Jackie Fox left the band in 1977 and became a Harvard-educated attorney. Lita Ford went solo after The Runaways

split, recording several successful hard-rock albums, including last year's *Wicked Wonderland*. Jett, of course, became the best-known graduate of The Runaways. She founded Blackheart Records with producer Kenny Laguna when she couldn't get a U.S. label deal for the debut album by Joan Jett & The Blackhearts. Her hits include "Bad Reputation," "I Love Rock 'n' Roll," "I Hate Myself for Loving You" and others. She continues to tour and record, and is one of the executive producers of the forthcoming Runaways biopic in which, rumor has it, the actresses portraying the bandmembers actually perform "Cherry Bomb" and other Runaways songs.

"A lot of the older stuff comes back, gets re-used or re-recorded," Fowley says, "and I'm grateful for that, but I'm always interested in tomorrow. Each day I have a new song, and each new song is better than any song I've ever written." ■

*Many thanks to Joey Latimer for providing technical information and contacts related to this article.*