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# [Recording studios have been popping up all over the place in Newfoundland]

Sean Ridgeley

Recording studios have been popping up all over the place in Newfoundland the past few years, a testament to the slowly growing music scene. St. John's Record Time Productions and Vaughn's Recording Suite are some of the most established ones, and The Telegram got a good look inside each.

Record Time was established over a decade ago, and has been home to such diverse clients as Buddy Wasiname and the Other Fellers, Dana Parsons, Bucket Truck and Gary Johnston. Rick Hollett is the producer, working with his long-time teammate and engineer Kevin Pinhorn.

The place is nice and open, with hardwood flooring everywhere - the feel is a cross between an upscale lodge and a cozy house basement. The studio boasts an acoustically designed live room and control room, which Hollett says makes for better sound.

Getting into the business side of things, he says there was a "nagging doubt" about whether or not the studio would succeed when he started it but it was never enough to stop him.

Vaughn Rowsell, of Vaughn's Recording Suite, has been in the business 15 years and appears to share a secret in success with Record Time: "My advice to anyone getting into this is to be prepared to do a variety of different jobs to make a living in St. John's." Both offer a variety of services outside music, everything from jingles for businesses to location sound for film and TV to CD and DVD production.

"Maybe in Toronto you could be an engineer 24/7," Rowsell comments. "But it's not like that here, especially if you have to pay a mortgage and raise a family."

Home studios, to whatever level they're built, are also extremely common now.

Steve Parsons, a Newfoundland native and musician, now studies audio engineering in Vancouver. With experience in both home and pro environments, he feels each has its pros and cons.

"A home studio is a great way to learn the basics, if you're new to it," he says. "Plus, you're not getting charged per hour so you can take all the time you want. But you probably won't have the benefits of rack gear, effects, a studio

console and a treated studio floor that you get with a pro studio."

Rowsell adds that "some stuff doesn't have to be done in a million-dollar studio, and that's a fact."

Of course, it's called pro for a reason, and Hollett explains that professionalism has its value.

"One can take advantage of a lot of expertise; the producer can serve as an audience - they know what you're capable of and will get the best job out of you."

He also encourages artists to do whatever suits them best, sometimes suggesting people cut their budget in half by doing a lot of it at home.

Business and principles aside, everyone seems to share the sentiment that at the end of the day, it's all about the music. Rowsell illustrates this by telling a story of an experience he had a couple of years ago.

"I did this job for this gentleman who played accordion, and he died, like, 20 years ago and had this cassette tape with him playing accordion in his kitchen, recorded with a ghetto blaster and a little

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microphone. His daughter wanted me to put a band around the recording. I hired all the musicians and played on some of it myself. And I just heard a song not long ago on... 'Homebrew' from that CD."

The artist? Gussy O'Reilly.

Towards the end of the interview at Record Time, Jim Duff walks in, a local artist ready to finish up the album he's working on. He sums up the feeling at both studios nicely.

"I finished my supper," he says, laughing and smiling.

"Gave me wife a big kiss, then came down here. What else is there in life, right?"

This definitely ain't office work.