

## THE NINTH ANNUAL BATTLE OF THE BAR BANDS

By D. Michael Bain

For nine consecutive years the CBA (BC) Benevolent Society has run an increasingly popular and competitive fundraising event at the Commodore Ballroom: The Battle of the Bar Bands. The Battle is truly a must-see / must-hear / must-experience event that brings together dozens of lawyers displaying incredible music and showmanship skills for over 900 enthusiastic audience members and supporters. The 2009 event was held on June 11, 2010, and raised in excess of \$100,000 for the Society—a record! This first decade of extraordinary legal rock and roll talent combined with Herculean fundraising efforts will culminate at a sure to be sold-out event on June 10, 2011, at the Commodore Ballroom.

In 2010 no fewer than seven bands competed for the coveted ZSA Cup for Best Band. These were The Disclaimers, Howard Mickelson Band, No Reply, The Noted Uppers, Standard of Hair, Suspended Sentence and Twisted Solicitor. In the weeks leading up to the event the bands solicited donations, sold tickets, chose their songs, rehearsed their musical and stage craft, and good-naturedly trash-talked one another. In the case of at least one of the event's co-chairs, Derek Brindle, Q.C., and Roger Holland, we assume that a search for spandex also took place (unless, of course, Mr. Holland has an extensive collection of the stuff from which to choose at home—a horrifying prospect more probable than possible).

Mr. Brindle, sans spandex, was 2010's master of ceremonies, a position he inherited on short notice when the usual host, CBC's Rick Cluff, was unable to attend. Leaving his Rickenbacker at home this year, Mr. Brindle introduced the judging panel, comprising the Honourable Judge Gary Cohen of the Provincial Court (and also a founding director of the CBA (BC) Benevolent Society), lawyer Mike Girard and Francois Marchand, the *Vancouver Sun's* music, arts and entertainment columnist. Their task was not an easy one, as set after set of polished performances leapt on and off the stage. By the end of the evening, the crowd had been whipped into a near-ecstatic frenzy. When all of the dust had settled, the victors were:

1. The Disclaimers
2. The Noted Uppers
3. Standard of Hair (spandex notwithstanding).

The Disclaimers are an eight-piece powerhouse of five lawyers: Pat Haberl (Owen Bird Law Corporation) on vocals and guitar, Andre Beaulieu (ICBC) on bass, Lindsay Goldberg (McMillan LLP) on trumpet, Pat Madaisky (Madisky & Company) on keyboards, Mike Varabioff (Axiom Law Corporation) on guitar, and three non-lawyers: Gord Rogers (drums), Dave Ronald (saxophone) and Mike Taylor (trombone). With that kind of horn power, you know that R&B is going to be a big factor, and it was in The Disclaimers' set (which purports to be "provided on an 'as is' basis, without express warranty of any kind"). The Disclaimers put on a blistering non-stop musical set with a heavy emphasis on their horn section. The sheer enthusiasm of the band surged from the stage and cascaded over the crowd as some sort of "happy tsunami". All that was left in its wake was a floor full of dancing, singing ecstatic audience members.



FIRST-PLACE WINNERS: The Disclaimers (l to r): Gord Rogers, Dave Ronald, Pat Madaisky, Mike Taylor, Lindsay Goldberg, Pat Haberl, Mike Varabioff, Andre Beaulieu.

This enthusiasm was not limited to the sheer musical precision and polish of The Disclaimers, for they also raised over \$30,000 for the society, with special acknowledgement going to Pat Haberl and Michael Taylor (Nicola Wealth Group) for this incredible achievement. The Noted Uppers also raised over \$25,000, a large portion of which was the result of the committed efforts of David Hay. It should be noted that the ZSA Awards for the top corporate donation was shared this year by West Coast Title Search and The Investment Administration Solutions Inc. McCarthy Tétraut, more than ably represented by that firm's always fabulous Twisted Solicitor, received honours for

the top law firm donation to the event in a presentation made by Stephanie Hacksel of ZSA Legal Recruitment and society President Basil Hobbs.

The Noted Uppers were the evening's second-place winner. David Hay (Richards Buell Sutton) dramatically fronts this popular band with support from Dan Burnett (Owen Bird Law Corporation) on saxophone and cowbell, Meldon Ellis (Ellis Business Lawyers) on bass, and a Phil Spector-sized "wall of sound" on guitars: Judge David St. Pierre, Terry La Liberté, Q.C. (La Liberté Cronin & Company), Jonathan Monk (Department of Justice) and Mark Killas (Pryke Lambert Leathley Russell LLP). This group of seven is further supported by Michael Hurst (keyboards), Melanie Dekker (vocals) and Chiko Misomali (drums). Together they put on a compelling set of R&B and rock and roll favourites, with Mr. Hay working the crowd in what has become known in the industry as "The Hay Way". The floor is now open to the reader to insert "The Hay Way" into any and all song lyrics involving the word "highway".



Photo by Patricia Jordan

SECOND-PLACE WINNERS: The Noted Uppers (shown, l to r): *David Hay, Meldon Ellis, David St. Pierre, Jonathan Monk, Dan Burnett.*

The Uppers have a curious history of starting out as The Bickertons, becoming The Novel Positions, and then performing as The Noted Uppers. In a move somewhat reminiscent of The Irish Rovers becoming simply The Rovers (before reverting once again The Irish Rovers), The Noted Uppers now wish to be known as The Uppers. As far as we could tell, The Uppers have not only incredible musical chops, but also their own hair.

The same cannot be said about Standard of Hair, who only have incredible musical chops but quite obviously someone else's hair. Having raided bassist Roger Holland's spandex collection and a local wig and makeup vendor, the band became that curious anomaly from the mid-80s—a hair band. Looking for all the world like a combination of rejected Louis XIV courtesans and Spinal Tap, Standard of Hair took to the stage in the form of the aforementioned Mr. Holland (Singleton Urquhart) on bass, John Logan (Jenkins, Marzban, Logan LLP) on drums, Alexander Fane (Bull, Housser & Tupper LLP) on keyboards and guitar, Trevor Wiebe (World Wide Wiebe) on guitar, Ian Jones (Singleton Urquhart) also on guitar, and Michael Mjanes (Davis LLP) on vocals. No ringers in this band! In an unobstructed assault on the senses, Standard of Hair blasted their way through a set list including covers of Kiss, Bon Jovi and Twisted Sister tunes. What a way to end the evening!



Photo by Patricia Jordan

THIRD-PLACE WINNERS: Standard Of Hair (a.k.a. Substandard of Spandex) (l to r): John Logan, Alex Fane, Michael Mjanes, Ian Jones, Trevor Wiebe, Roger Holland.

Once again the event benefited greatly from the support that Stephanie Hacksel and her team at ZSA Legal Recruitment provided in the form of advertising, fundraising and organizational support. The Canadian Bar Association is also a keen supporter of the event, and thanks are extended on behalf of the society to them.

The same team will be sponsoring BOBBX, and for the first time in the event's ten-year history all of the bands that have ever won first place in the

past will be pitted against one another, including The Disclaimers, Still Living At Home, Mr. Fancy Education and The Noted Uppers thereby guaranteeing an incredible evening of enthusiasm, exuberance and the explosive force of rock and roll. Tickets for 2011 are available through the Canadian Bar Association at 604-687-3404. The event is sure to sell out—buy early so as not to be disappointed.

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