

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Guitarist Thaddeus Hogarth navigates new technology

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Guitar teacher and indie R&B artist Thaddeus Hogarth's album "Live at Bose" is nominated for R&B album of the year in the 2006 Independent Music Awards.

The story behind "Live at Bose," an indie CD, is an instruction manual on how a musician can navigate unexplored waters.

The original music by Boston-based guitarist Thaddeus Hogarth is nominated for Album of the Year in the R&B category of the 2006 Independent Music Awards. Winners of the awards, co-sponsored by Border's Books & Music, are promoted to more than seven million music fans and industry professionals.

Hogarth heard the good news via a text message on his cell phone as he talked about his upcoming CD release concert on Friday, Oct. 28, at Ryles Jazz Club in Cambridge.

"I feel very blessed as an independent musician," he

said. "I'm not running behind the industry's idea of what I should be playing at all. I love what I'm doing, making music and making my own music."

A guitar teacher at Berklee College of Music and a self-styled "relentless resourceful hustler" of his music and for his band, Hogarth has lived in Boston for the past 21 years. "Boston feels like home," said Hogarth, who was born in England to West Indian parents.

Hogarth plays guitar, chromatic harmonica and sings lead vocals. He performs along with Joey Scrima on drums, David Buda on bass guitar and David Sparr on keyboards. They were one of 24 groups nation wide chosen by Bose this year to help launch the Framingham-based company's personalized amplification system.

The new way of amplifying music for live performances consists of six-foot poles fixed to a base with a cylindrical radiating speaker that has a reach of about 180 degrees. "Each musician has amplification," explains Hogarth, "and there's a woofer for the bass. An audience can immediately identify the drummer, for instance. It's an honest sound as if there weren't amplification."

Bose awarded these systems to test their product to a variety of gospel, country and jazz groups. The company also has a room in its plant that is set up for performances. Hogarth has played there to invited audiences a couple of times. "The response was always good," he says.

Back in Boston, Hogarth put together enough tracks from those dates at Bose to comprise a CD. Then he went back to Bose with the idea that if they'd manufacture the CD, he would distribute it at the gigs he plays. Bose had never intended to get into making CDs but was intrigued by the marketing possibilities. One thing led to another and Hogarth got the CDs, the master of which he owns.

Now the CD, "Live At Bose," is vying for the coveted IMA Album of the Year award. The IMAs deliver real career opportunities for indie artists, labels and releases by putting IMA winners and finalists in front of millions of music fans and industry decision makers around the world. The winners are featured in "The Musician's Atlas," read by music press, talent buyers, label executives, promoters and so forth. Artists' tracks are made available for purchase as digital downloads on IMA online jukeboxes. The jukeboxes also include clickable links to artist websites. More than six million Borders Books & Music customers will be directed to the IMA jukeboxes via targeted promotions throughout the year.

Judges for the 2006 competition include artists Norah Jones, Melissa Etheridge, Joe Perry, Bill Wyman, George Clinton and Terence Blanchard as well as industry representatives such as Abby White from Performing Songwriter magazine, Alexandra Patsavas of The Chop Shop and Melinda Newman of Billboard magazine. Finalists will be announced in early December.

In the meantime, Hogarth continues working under the mantra, "never say no to a gig." He has three previous CDs that are sold at stores. He's a sideman in a couple of other groups. He plays weddings. Several of his songs have been featured in episodes of MTV's "Undressed," and "The Osbournes."

"I've played harmonica on someone's Christmas album; I opened for Tower of Power twice with the band you hear on the Bose Live CD; I'll go out on an off night and sing a Sinatra song; I just ask where is the job, I love music that much," he said.

Hogarth and his band celebrate the release of "Live at Bose" with three sets at Ryles, 212 Hampshire St. in Cambridge: 9, 10:30 and midnight. For more information you can go online to www.rylesjazz.com or call 617-876-9330.

While Hogarth has settled into Boston, he says he feels like an "island boy at heart." Raised on his mother's native St. Kitts after his parents' divorce, he says it bothers him when someone walks by and doesn't say hi.

However, he adds, "I came to Boston because of Berklee and I am still in Boston because of Berklee where I am a part of a community that's musically vibrant. I am home here in a spiritual sense. Still, I wish people would say hello more."