



Producer David Ivory (L) walks musicians through a transition in the song. Also pictured are bassist Kjell Benner (second from left), singer-songwriter Rick Denzien (upper right), and drummer Anton Fig (seated, lower left).

Letterman drummer Anton Fig records here with local artist Rick Denzien

For 21 years, "Late Show" host David Letterman has presented night after night of Emmy Award-winning comedy, punctuated by drum rolls and rim shots from drummer Anton Fig, a member of the show's Orchestra since 1986. Fig has also

performed and recorded with Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, Madonna, Kiss and Paul Simon, among others — including, most recently, Ambler recording artist Rick Denzien and Gwynedd Valley producer David Ivory. Denzien founded the Ambler-

based independent recording label Slot-1, and has three recording projects to his credit. He received a Billboard Songwriting Award with his second release, "Laser Writing on the Moon," and with

Continued on page 7

Ivory keys in on Denzien and Fig

Continued from page 3

his third CD release, "Exit 21" (1999), he was involved with the Grammy process and also mentioned as a "songwriting hero" under the subtitle "Reading the Grammy Tea Leaves" in the book "Songwriting for Dummies" by Joel Hirschhorn.

"Exit 21" received national airplay, Denzien went on tour, and also produced the local Songwriters Original Showcase, featuring up-and-coming regional artists.

"I felt that to grow as an artist, I needed to work with someone who could take me up a notch," said Denzien, "so I called David Ivory." A local producer, Grammy-nominated engineer and songwriter, Ivory is known for developing artists' music to a successful commercial level.

Ivory's work includes an impressive list of clients and artists, including Patty LaBelle, the O'Jays, Clive Davis of Jay Records for the Philadelphia band Silvertide, and the Grammy Award-winning Philadelphia hip-hop band The Roots (Best Rap Album 1999), for which Ivory recorded and developed the sound and received his Grammy nomination. His own songs have been recorded by national label artists and have been heard on film and television.

"I work with artists who have the talent, ability and willingness to grow and who have dedication to work hard to be successful," said Ivory. He equates his role in the studio with that of a professional sports coach. "My



Producer David Ivory (L), at Dylanava Studio, walks drummer Anton Fig through a transition in the song.

role is to bring out the talent that is already inside of artists by showing them what to do."

Denzien began working with Ivory in 2003 at Dylanava Studio, which hosts artists from around the world. Located on three acres in Gwynedd Valley, the studio is devoid of "the distractions of a major metropolis."

Denzien contacted Fig when the session drummer, working on his recording project with Ivory, was slated to leave the area to go on tour. "I always admired Anton Fig, so I sent him an e-mail with a sound link of a song David and I were working on, not really expecting to

hear back," said Denzien. According to Fig, "I listened to the music and thought it sounded good, and that I would be able to contribute to it." So the session at

Ivory's studio was worked in around Fig's busy touring, recording and television schedule.

With the grace and ease of true professionals, the musicians completed the session within several hours. Along with Denzien and Fig was local bass player Kjell Benner, a session player who has worked with artists such as Sister Sledge and Quiet Riot. He is also a member of the Philadelphia-based band the Love Puppies.

"I try to give the producer and artist what they want in the shortest amount of time, and let the music dictate what I play," said Fig. "The best part of the recording process is when I can nail a good part really quickly; often the first few takes are the best, even if you don't know a song well," he said. "The process is the same whether working with Nile Rodgers, Mick Jagger or Rick Denzien."

For more information on Rick Denzien and links to Anton Fig and David Ivory, visit www.exit21.net.

BACKSTAGE
PASS

An occasional feature
about local people in
arts & entertainment.