

DAVE ULLRICH

In my early days, I used to play in a band in Kingston, Ontario. Our first practice spaces were at my house on Division and later on, on Johnson street. I'd lived with four other housemates, so space was always at a premium. The Division attic made a great spot to spread out while the Johnson basement was much tighter. In both cases, we always had to consider who was studying, who was around, and what time of day it was. We got the job done, but just barely.

Then, we were lucky enough to have the chance to get a proper practice space in 1993, which was notably used by The Tragically Hip in their early days. The spot was an old meat locker owned by the main local sound company. They used part of the building to hold speakers and gear, while the lockers were used by bands to rock out at full volume. It was a huge space and it had the main advantage of providing our very first proper vocal P.A. which helped in a big way to actually hear vocals and get more road-ready.

At times, I recall using my brother's K-car to drive out to the space on the edge of town to practice later at night. The place would be freezing in the winter, and it was always quite creepy to be out there alone at night. This spooky scene facilitated one of the best gags ever when Mike and I arrived later at night with nobody around.

We fired up the gear and started working on some songs when all of a sudden, over our loud racket, the whole place suddenly started to shake. It literally felt like a spaceship had just landed on the roof and we were about to be blown to bits. We immediately stopped playing, but the sound just seemed to get much louder.

As we were actually in a meat locker, it kinda seemed safer to just stay put, however, we eventually decided to open the door. As we slowly open the door — just a crack — we see a huge wall of speakers all pushed up, all around the door, facing right at us. We were surrounded.

These huge stadium speakers were all blowing hot, white noise at full volume right at our door. Of course, standing behind the pile, were several seasoned K-town sound dudes all laughing their asses right off, and laughing right at us.

Turns out, this was some type of white noise testing that they would do on their speakers on a regular basis, and they thought we could use a 'welcome to the

neighbourhood'. It was absolutely hilarious and it inspired me to go out on Halloween, later that year, dressed as Kingston's coolest sound man, Doug Cox.