

recording bands



## THE CHRONICLES OF BISHOP ALLEN

### A Band for All Seasons

**B**ishop Allen decided to take on the daunting task of writing, recording, and releasing 12, yes, that's 12, EPs during the year of 2006. Why? They thought it would be a positive challenge to their collective psyche. The collection of discs is aptly titled by each month and each feature 4 new songs produced in their rehearsal space in Williamsburg. With their collection of Shure, Audio-Technica and Neumann microphones, dbx and Focusrite mic preamps, and Pro Tools HD system, the band has learned much about its own sound and the pros and cons of recording in your own space.

#### Did you have any prior setup at home?

Christian: Our first album, "Charm School," was recorded at home, in a bedroom. We used the Yamaha AW4416 digital audio workstation. Before that, Justin had a 4-track that we used to use. We had that and a single mic and that's what we used for an entire album.

Justin: We also went up to our friend, Colly [Anderson]'s house and he had an Mbox and we recorded some drums and vocals on it.

C: He actually introduced us to Pro Tools which is what we ended up mixing with. We had to dump everything from the Yamaha into Pro Tools.

#### You bought your current setup all at once?

J: When we decided to make these EPs we realized we wouldn't be able to rely on studio time because of the volume of recording we were planning on doing. We needed just to be able to record drums for instance.

#### Did you know anything going into it?

J: We learned it all by trial and error. We'd messed around in college recording on a tape 4-track and we'd definitely had some experience with that "bedroom recording" but this was a fairly different thing.

C: We never got any advice from anyone who knew what they were doing. Not until we met Coll.

#### So when you first started, were you afraid to try stuff or were you into experimenting?

J: We experiment to make songs that actually sound good to us.

#### How much time do you spend "getting sounds"?

Christian: Too little. Our drums are the weakest point. We do spend some time getting guitar sounds. A lot of that is with pedals and working with the amp.

#### If money weren't an issue, what would you change about your current setup?

J: I would love to move to a better space, where the room sounded better or there were more rooms that we could use to get different sounds or get isolation. We don't have a board and all that gear to help add character. What we have here is the bare bones.

C: It got us through a year of recording! But we need to do other things otherwise we're going to have the same sounds on our records.

#### What led you to wanting to have someone come in a mix the EPs?

J: Mixing is hard.

#### Do you think it's important to spend money on the space that you're in, the equipment that you have, or keeping your instruments in check?

J: I'd say your instruments. You can play a musical instrument but if you don't have a functioning instrument, your recording equipment does you no good. Number one – have instruments. Number two – be able to play songs on them. Number three – record those songs. We are a breed of musician that must exist now because of home recording and can't separate being a musician from recording. I can't imagine that if we weren't able to record, what we'd be doing. It's a different thought process.  
[www.bishopallen.com](http://www.bishopallen.com)  
[www.hillaryjohnson.com](http://www.hillaryjohnson.com)

