

Northern Michigan Resident Nominated “Outstanding Music Producer of The Year”

Mackinaw City, MI, April 27, 2011 - Mackinaw City resident, music producer and filmmaker Frank Rogala has been nationally recognized by the *OutMusic Awards* as *Outstanding Producer of the Year* for his latest album, *TwinkleU*. The televised (*Logo TV*) award ceremony will take place on May 23rd at *Live Nation’s Irving Plaza* in New York City.

“It was amazing,” said Rogala, “The album had only been out a couple weeks when the nomination came though. We had been working on it for nearly seven years. You never really know how something is going to be received, especially when you have been at it for so long.”

TwinkleU is the debut pop album by countertenor vocalist Cris Law. Law normally specializes in the Baroque, Renaissance and Medieval periods. Rogala not only produced, but also co-wrote the surprisingly glossy confection of an album (available on *Itunes*). Rogala is a native of northern Michigan, who spends half of the year here and half in Southern California.

The album was recorded and mixed in the same garage studio where Rogala and his band *NC-17* recorded and filmed much of their 2001 film, *Won’t Anybody Listen*. This full length motion picture garnered rave reviews in the *Hollywood Reporter*, *Variety* and *The New York Times*, and was picked up for theatrical distribution by *Seventh Art Releasing* for TV broadcast rights were acquired by the *Sundance Channel*. TV broadcast rights were acquired by the *Sundance Channel*. Rogala originally burst on the scene with his band *EXUDE* and their parody version of “*Girls Just Want To Have Fun*” in the mid 1980’s.

“There are great dynasties of pop music based on soaring high male vocalists, but you don’t hear counter tenor male singers much in pop music today,” explained producer and co-writer Rogala. “When I heard Cris’s voice, it was so unfamiliar sounding, so ethereal and at the same time, strong yet vulnerable. The tone floats somewhere between genders. I was intrigued,” explained Rogala.

“I looked to pop records with similar upper register male vocals like *the Bee Gees, Michael Jackson, The Bronski Beat* and used those references as a launching pad,” explained Rogala. *TwinkleU* covers *The Bee Gees’ You Should Be Dancing* and makes a medley of the *Bronski Beat’s Why/Small Town Boy*.

The rub came when the duo tried to take that operatic voice (trained to project and fill a room with amplification) and fit its sturdy tone into a pop record. “The joke is that I ruined his training,” said Rogala. “I had to work with Cris to help him find a voice that let him sing and emote in an entirely unfamiliar way than what had been instilled into his being. When I checked out pop albums by other opera singers, I didn’t find even one that didn’t seem like a missed opportunity; if not a failure or worse – a cop out. Either the singer was imposing an operatic voice over a pop track or in a recent case, a female opera singer performed her entire album in an entirely different vocal range than the one that had made her famous (this allowed her to sing pop in a conventional way by avoiding her trained operatic register, but resulted in a so-so vocal performance). I just haven’t heard it done in a way that *worked*.

I wasn’t about to create an entire album of cover (songs by other artist) songs. Between the two of us, I felt we could create an original sound and ‘voice’ for Cris. I was looking for something that felt like a step forward,” explained Rogala, who wrote nearly all of the lyrics on *TwinkleU*.

“I know that 7 years to produce an album seems ridiculous, but we were working on it constantly. I was determined that the album would not be finished until it was right,” explained Rogala, “I am so weary of mediocre music - there is enough garbage in the world already, I didn’t need to contribute more.

Many of Law’s live vocal performances occur in southern California houses of worship. Rogala credits witnessing Law’s church performances, along with the experience of losing his parents, with the creation of two songs on *TwinkleU* that lean toward the spiritual. Rogala explains, “Listening to Cris I was exposed to music that was fresh to my ears, but in reality is hundreds of years old. There

is a use of language in old hymns that is very personal, symbolic and powerful.” The duo intends *Rise Up*, the final song on the album, to become a “new” hymn for the modern age.

Rogala is working on a detailed account of the personal struggles he experienced during the 7 years it took to finish the album. He plans to upload the saga in stages at the *TwinkleU* web site <http://TwinkleUmusic.com> Several more music videos are on the way including both a “pop” and “club” mix of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*.

TwinkleU’s current music video is *Magic* (see <http://vimeo.com/twinkleu>)

You can hear to *TwinkleU* songs at *Itunes*, *Amazon*, *Rhapsody*, *CDBaby* and most anywhere online music is available.



PHOTOs to accompany this press release and a TEXT VERSION of this press release are available at:
TwinkleUmusic.com/press.htm