

INDIE SEEN

By [Carrie Humphries](#)

There is hardly a better way to network with other musicians and professionals in the industry than attending a songwriting competition. Weeks of performances meshed with guest judging and open jams have brought out the best of independent musicians. After the wrap-up of the recent 2009 Guelph competition, Robbie Hancock, veteran event coordinator and founder of RJ Entertainment, takes the reins to create the second major competition in the local scene, the 1st Annual Songwriter's Competition at Mulligan's Sports Bar in Cambridge. I've been asked to be a guest judge in May – oh, the pressure!..

The 1st Annual Cambridge Songwriting Competition

The javelins are being sharpened, the armour polished. Robbie Hancock has opened the doors at Mulligan's to the 1st Annual Cambridge Songwriting Competition. Beginning May 8 and running for 12 consecutive weeks, contestants will be given the opportunity to go head to head with each other for a slick \$1500 grand prize and a slew of other incentives by performing one to three songs before a rotating panel of five industry professional judges. As a musician in control of his own career, Robbie's promotions company RJ Entertainment (Silver winner of the Reader's Choice Award by Echo last year), stands by the motto of musicians working for musicians. Robbie explains that he has "spent many years learning how to marry art and commerce together, and now that I am a working full-time musician, I want to pass on this information to those that have the drive, determination and perseverance to succeed in the music industry. A competition like this is a great platform to kickstart any songwriter's career." And kickstart it should! With judges ranging from Gabe Lee (a Cambridge native blues rock writer) to Dave Mansell (booking manager for hot spot Maxwell's Music House in Waterloo), the minimal \$20 entry fee seems like pennies for the experience the competition guarantees. Signing up is a breeze – head down to Robbie's live music nights at Mulligan's each Wednesday to get put on the roster and added to the ranks. Just don't forget to bring your sword. For more information on the competition, search the 1st Annual Songwriting Competition on Facebook or visit Robbie's webpage at www.rjentertainment.ca.

Allister Bradley

Allister Bradley's conviction as an artist is astounding. After leaving a highly successful corporate position to take on the

daunting task of full-time musician, Allister immediately knew his decision was, in fact, the best course of action for his life. Never fearing the cliché of the “starving artist”, Allister has crossed the line between writing and performing his own music to assisting on projects for other indie artists including producing and engineering. With two studio albums to his credit, Allister’s latest release, “Too”, showcased his talent as being influenced by genres from jazz-inspired pop to ‘70s rock n’ roll. He took a seat among the ranks of the 1st Annual Cambridge Songwriting competition even before Robbie Hancock posted the details. He “expects to hear the competitors’ BEST songs. I hope to see great songwriting rewarded with advancement to the subsequent levels of competition.” Allister is no stranger to the competition of songwriting – his top finishes include Unisong International Song Contest, Great Lakes Songwriting Contest, and SongWars, plus a nomination for Best Original Composition at this year’s Canadian Smooth Jazz Awards. Allister explains that the allure of Robbie’s contest as a way of getting out and performing in the local scene. “Sure, winning would be great,” Allister says, “but ultimately this satisfies my goal of playing more near home, and meeting up with other musicians with whom I can collaborate and perform.” Before his sting at the first round in the competition, get a sneak preview of Allister by checking out www.myspace.com/allisterbradley or www.allisterbradley.com.

INDIE SEEN would like to send our deepest sympathies to Miss Angel for the loss of her husband and partner Mel Brown this past week. The Delta Blues man from Jackson, Mississippi was a great inspiration to the music community and we are thankful he adopted Kitchener as his home. From his routine gigs at the Boathouse Sunday afternoons, to legendary shows with B.B. King, Mel will be missed and not forgotten. INDIE SEEN recognizes that Mel was selected as a guest judge for the 1st Annual Cambridge Songwriting Competition. In light of this sad news, Robbie Hancock has created a Tribute to Mel Brown Concert. Search Facebook or www.rjentertainment.ca for further details. Rest in peace, Mel Brown, October 7, 1939 – March 20, 2009.

If you're interested in being featured in INDIE SEEN, forward your online press bio to calendar@echoweekly.com with the subject line “Indie Seen”. Those who cannot follow this simple rule shall be asked to leave the premises without hesitation.