

# SCREEN

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## A record mix

McDonald's charity CD completed in 48 hours

BY ELLEN FORLANI

**O**rchestra leader Rich Daniels and composer Christopher Lay produced a CD whose proceeds will benefit 208 Ronald McDonald Houses worldwide

On the six-song CD, created for the McDonald's Ronald McDonald House Charities, were four songs by Nashville singer/songwriter Victoria Shaw, one by Daniels and another featuring the Soul Children of Chicago gospel group.

Shaw composed and donated a song "When a Child Smiles," expressly for the charity CD.

Daniels' 32-piece City Lights Orchestra—including a full string section—backed the songs. Singers Bonnie Herman, Bob Bowker, Jeff Morrow, Kraig McCreary and Bob Lizik were also featured.

Lay, who plays trombone with the Orchestra and writes music for corporate events, orchestrated and arranged all the songs. They were recorded and mixed in 48 hours at CRC, engineered by Chris Sabold.

"This disc proves, if anything, that Chicago has world-class musicians," said Daniels, a board member of the musicians union for the past nine years.

(The Chicago Federation of Musicians, incidentally, celebrated its 100th anniversary in October.)

"We had a 30-musician orchestra and eight singers to record," said



COMPOSER CHRISTOPHER LAY, A TROMBONE PLAYER WITH CITY LIGHTS ORCHESTRA, NASHVILLE'S VICTORIA SHAW, AND ORCHESTRA FOUNDER AND LEADER RICH DANIELS AFTER A KILLER CRC RECORDING SESSION.

Daniels. "And CRC is the only place in the city with a room big enough to handle our size. We put a lot of midnight oil in that session."

Two of Shaw's songs on the CD were number one hits she wrote for Garth Brooks ("The River") and John Michael Montgomery ("I Love The Way You Love Me"). In the past, she has written songs for country artists Faith Hill and Reba McEntire.

Daniels and the City Lights Orchestra have been a part of the Ronald McDonald Charities Awards of Excellence galas for the last eight years and have backed such artists as Garth Brooks and Burt Bacharach at the event.

Some 2,000 guests attended the recent Ronald McDonald House Chanties Awards of Excellence Gala Oct. 6 where the CD had been placed at their plates.

Daniels, 41, began his music career at age 14 in 1974 as a sax player of a swing-orient Chicago band eventually known as Big Band Machine. Two years later, he was the band's front man.

In 1991, after taking the streamlined, newly-formed Woody Herman Orchestra on the road, Daniels formed the City Lights Orchestra, 32 to 40 musicians and vocalists that complement its traditional big band set-up with full strings, additional woodwinds and percussion.

Daniels said McDonald's is talking about using Shaw's "When a Child Smiles" track on a future commercial.

His goal, he said, is to go back into the studio and make a full-length disc for McDonald's to market, with all the proceeds going to charity.

*The City Lights Orchestra is located at 211 E. Ohio; phone, 312/644-0600.*