

grapevine

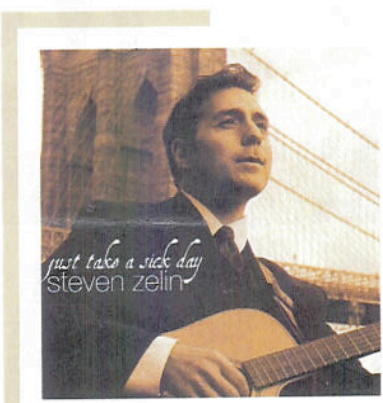
Songs in the Key of Sarbox

IF AUDITS, merger negotiations, or FASB rulings don't put a song in your heart, maybe Steven Zelin can. Calling himself "The Singing CPA," the 31-year-old internal auditor at French investment bank Société Générale in New York is putting a new twist on accounting with his toe-tapping tunes about taxes, taking sick days, and finding free furniture on New York City streets.

Not surprisingly, Zelin's most attentive audience is a room full of finance professionals. "Accountants get a real kick out of my music," says Zelin, whose repertoire includes such songs as "Dear IRS" (about tax returns) and "Stealing from the Company."

Zelin picked up the guitar at age 16 and hasn't stopped playing since. Accounting also came quite easy to the Alfred University graduate, who started out as an auditor at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Blending the two was inevitable, he says. "I was writing love songs and songs about living in New York City when my accounting experience just kind of crept in," he explains.

In fact, Zelin, who has performed at a variety of CPA events, sees many similarities between his two passions. "A song has one central theme that the rhythm, tone, and lyrics all support," he says. "An audit report is about one company, and the issues, opinions, and wording all support that one subject."



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Zelin's "Dear IRS" was so popular after he recorded it in 2005 that it was played on at least nine radio stations and inspired the release of his first CD, *Just Take a Sick Day*. He says CFOs should keep an eye out for his next CD, *The Singing CPA*, due later this year. It's chock-full of tax and accounting songs for those who want to "lighten up a little," as Zelin says. Or need to.

—LAURA DEMARS

Daniel Neuhauer/Chain Ring Creative Services (top)