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# Sweetwater MUSIC INDUSTRY NEWS AND PRODUCT INFORMATION SWEETNOTES<sup>®</sup>

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY DIRECT™

LATE FALL 2001 ISSUE

## MACKIE MDR24/96 DIGITAL RECORDER



Just leave it to those wild and crazy folks at Mackie to surprise us with an incredible new product — particularly without any advanced fanfare (though at the very last second we managed to get a product announcement into the last issue of Sweet Notes). Unless you've been off-planet for the last year or so, you know that **Mackie Designs** started shipping their amazing HDR24/96 Hard Disk Recorder not all that long ago. As expected, the unit has been a hot ticket item and has been greeted with a whole bunch of positive articles and reviews in all the industry publications. However, the \$4999 list price was just a bit too steep for some people (me included, though I'd often find my trembling hands reaching for my credit cards). So what do those nice people at Mackie go and do but introduce the affordable new **MDR24/96 Hard Disk Multitrack Recorder** at the shocking list price of just \$3499. It's the perfect answer for those of us who couldn't quite swing an HDR24/96. And the best news of all is the new unit's mind numbing introductory price — so low that we can't even print it here (your Sweetwater Sales Engineer will be happy to pin a big smile on your face with that information with a single call).



It's hard to believe sometimes, but a lot of us now (me included) have what has rapidly become outdated digital recorders in our studios. The MDR24/96 offers us the opportunity to buy a 24-track recorder that's capable of producing stunningly detailed 24-bit/96kHz recordings at a price that's actually way lower than our original 8-track digital machines. How absolutely, over-the-top cool is that? Ready to go right out of the box with 24 channels of analog I/O, the MDR24/96's familiar tape recorder style controls and simple operation will have users up and recording in no time. Low-cost removable recording and backup drives make saving and storing projects a breeze. Non-linear recording is nondestructive and uses drive space more efficiently than linear or "tape mode" recorders.

Basic cut, copy, and paste editing is done using the MDR24/96's front panel controls — again, right out of the box! With 999 Undos, creativity comes without any risk whatsoever (can't say that about tape-based recorders). And not to worry: The MDR24/96 is equally powerful for pro users. Combined with the HDR24/96 Recorder/Editor and Remote 48 controller, the MDR24/96 is the perfect 24-track slave at a ridiculously low cost. Multi-room studios can install MDR24/96's in the 'B' and 'C' rooms and edit those projects on an HDR24/96 in the 'A' room.

— Continued on Page 2

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE: ROLAND FANTOM KEYBOARD

Inspiration is what the new 76-note **Fantom** from **Roland** is all about — from its fresh, exciting XV-5080 sounds and effects to its arpeggiator and Rhythm Generator functions. Add to this a host of realtime controllers and a super intuitive sequencer and it's easy to see why the company considers the Fantom to be in a class all its own. Judge for yourself! — **SEE PAGE 2**



## HOUSTON VST CONTROLLER

With 100mm motorized faders, rotary controls that provide instant visual feedback and excellent integration of many Cubase and Nuendo functions plus full parameter control of VST plug-ins and instruments, the **Steinberg Houston VST Studio Controller** is one of those "must have" products for serious musicians. — **SEE PAGE 3**



## GROOVE TUBES VIPRE

Vipre (which stands for Variable Impedance Preampfier) is a single channel, all tube design mic pre with impressive specs and even more impressive performance. It's a 30-pound audio monster! — **SEE PAGE 4**

**PLUS: STEINBERG HALION, BLUE MICROPHONES, EVENTIDE ECLIPSE, HNB FAT MAN and much more!**

# Roland Fantom: The keyboard workstation redefined

Ever since its introduction, the Roland XV-5080 has been heralded as Roland's most powerful synthesizer ever — and that's saying a lot for a company with a track record for creating best sellers. With up to four stereo multiplex tones per Patch, you couldn't find more spacious, natural-sounding presets in any other instrument . . . until now. Introducing the **Roland Fantom** (\$2295 list): All the XV-5080 wave memory, four stereo tone architecture and powerful matrix Control to create the most musically expressive sounds possible — from gorgeous sampled grand pianos and lush strings to fat basses and warm pads, Fantom gives you all of the sounds you need to inspire you to create great music!

Okay, it's easy to edit and easy to play, but once you get the right sound, Fantom boasts a host of interactive tools to keep those creative juices flowing, either in Patch or Performance mode. You can start by selecting an Arpeggiator style from guitar strumming to bass lines and chord comping, using the knobs and D-Beam to vary patterns as you play! Then add some drums via Fantom's unique Rhythm Generator, which lets you trigger pre-recorded drum patterns on a specially mapped one-octave key range. These inspiring patterns — all of which were recorded by real live session musicians using V-Drums and GR-Series Guitar Synths — are so darn musical, you might instantly be inspired to turn them into a song. And just imagine

what happens when you combine the Arpeggiator and Rhythm Generator with your own unique playing style!

Now unlike some other workstations, the Fantom's pro-quality (and the key word here is "pro") sequencer is designed to be active regardless of what keyboard mode is selected. So whether you're playing a Patch or Performance,

your ideas can keep flowing and will be captured without having to stop the music. The Fantom's high resolution sequencer also includes powerful Realtime Phrase Sequencing (RPS) for triggering complete musical passages and MIDI data on the fly!

As with any instrument this deep, it would be impossible to describe every feature or rave enough about the sound quality. So for more information and special low pricing, call your Sales Engineer. You can also log onto our Web site at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)" and order 24 hours a day, seven days a week. What could be easier?



Of course, Roland and BOSS are known for their incredible onboard effects, from sparkling clear reverbs to over-the-top distortion and the best guitar amp modeling. The Fantom serves up all the best of these — and more — starting with rich 24-bit reverb for adding silky-smooth ambience to any instrument, along with a separate chorus processor that can be used to thicken up anything from a Rhodes to string ensembles. And with 90 multi-effects onboard (including COSM amp modeling), a triple-based Shuffle Delay, Lo-Fi processing, Groove effects, Slicer, 3D effects and plenty more, you can sculpt your sounds any way you choose!

Even better, Fantom is almost infinitely expandable: With room for over 200MB of sounds, you can expand Fantom's already massive wave memory from one of the largest sound libraries available — currently there are over 20 compatible expansion boards with more under development! And unlike a sampler, all of these sounds can be accessed instantly. Fantom can be expanded with up to two SRX-Series 64MB Wave Expansion Boards, plus an additional SR-JV80-Series board, giving you the perfect balance between high quality and genre specific sounds.



Naturally, with so many quality sounds and effects onboard, the Fantom deserves nothing less than the finest, cutting edge 24-bit D/A converters. So even if your destination is analog, you can rest assured that the Fantom's full dynamic range will shine through your mix. And for those who prefer to work in an all-digital environment, the Fantom comes fully equipped with a stereo S/PDIF digital output, making it easy to integrate this awesome workstation with digital gear of all types: mixers, computers, samplers and more!

Of course, if any workstation keyboard is to truly become the centerpiece of your studio or stage rig, it needs to be comfortable to play and easy to edit. And here, the Fantom delivers on both fronts, beginning with its 76-note synth-weighted keyboard which gives players just the right amount of resistance, along with channel aftertouch to take full advantage of the modulation capabilities within the patches. Realtime controllers include Roland's classic pitchbend / modulation lever (a favorite among many players) plus four fully assignable knobs and the light-sensing D-Beam controller. What's more, thanks to the Fantom's large angled LCD, it's a breeze to navigate all the features offered by this powerful workstation.

**Fantom is almost infinitely expandable, with room for over 200MB of sounds, you can expand the instrument's already massive internal memory by choosing from one of the largest sound libraries available.**

## Mackie MDR24/96 Hard Disk Recorder

— Continued from front page

The MDR24/96 offers us true "plug and play" recording with a 20 gigabyte internal drive for up to 100 minutes of continuous recording, plus an accessory bay for removable recording and backup media. Also onboard is a convenient 3.5 inch drive bay for importing tempo maps and effortless software upgrades. But despite its low cost, the MDR24/96 doesn't skimp on the features, shaving off things you really need like a full meter bridge, 24 channels of analog I/O, a 100-BaseT Ethernet communications port built-in plus the ability to sync to SMPTE, MIDI, and Word Clock, as well as Video Black Burst. Non-destructive cut, copy and paste editing is a breeze. There are plenty of options

already available for this awesome recorder including full digital I/O (via standard d8b cards) that can handle ADAT / T-DIF, ADAT Optical and AES-EBU, the M90 20 gigabyte recording drive and Project 2.2 gigabyte removable media. The MDR24/96 is also fully compatible with Mackie's Remote 24 and Remote 48 controllers. It doesn't have all the editing bells and whistles of its bigger brother, the HDR24/96, but then again you're not paying for features you don't need. But it does work seamlessly with an HDR24/96 to allow 48 tracks of recording.

I've only been able to sneak in and do some basic work with our floor model, but from those brief sessions I can sum it up well by saying that this is a spectacular sounding multitrack with professional capabilities at a price that even we budget-conscious shoppers can afford. Not only that, but it's remarkably easy to use, as well, so you won't have a long, painful learning curve to deal with — always a huge plus. More great news: We're getting plenty of these units in stock, so you won't be sitting on your hands wondering when your MDR24/96 will be shipping — but at this low price, demand will be incredible and the price will go up!

So don't just sit there. Grab that phone and dial up your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for complete information and a super low price on a product that could legitimately be considered the best buy of 2001! You can also log onto "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)" 24/7 for info or to order an MDR24/96 of your own.



# SWEETWATER PRODUCT PROFILE

## Steinberg Houston VST Studio Controller sets a new standard



Here's an undisputable fact: To record great sounding music, you only need a computer (Mac or PC) and all the appropriate software. The computer can handle everything from the initial tracking (or multitracking), dynamics and effects processing (via plug-ins) and mastering. At this point you can burn a CD (or even a DVD

these days) and have your project ready to play on any system without ever having left the comfort of the (hopefully ergonomically-designed) chair in front of your computer.

Still, as great as the visual appeal and versatility of the newest software might be, many of us simply prefer a tactile approach — we want buttons, knobs and faders that we can put our hands on. A keyboard and mouse is simply not a satisfactory alternative for us.

Many manufacturers have designed and built hardware controllers that can work with their software, and these products — while not exactly inexpensive — have sold surprisingly well, proving that we humans want to use our sense of touch as much as our hearing when creating our music. The latest manufacturer to introduce a hardware controller for their software is **Steinberg**. Specially designed to complement their popular **Cubase VST** and **Nuendo** recording software, the new **Houston VST Studio Controller** (\$1499 list) offers users motorized faders and an LCD window with separate displays over each mixer channel, along with transport controls (record, play, stop, etc.), a jog / scrub wheel and even a numeric keypad for entering values, choosing setups and marker positions.

To this writer, the Houston (as in "Houston, we have a problem" I assume) looks like it was chopped off a larger console with its gracefully rounded lower right side and severely square lower left, but that gives it a distinctive look, as well as a surprisingly comfortable feel (as long as you're right-handed; lefties may not find it quite as comfy).

**Houston offers users motorized faders, a large LCD window with displays for each channel, along with transport controls, a jog/scrub wheel and even a numeric keypad**

More importantly, the unit is quite large, so you don't have to worry about having controls that are too close together. In fact, there's a nice spacious feel to it. What's more, the Houston VST Studio Controller is quite sturdy, so you won't have to worry about some fragile knob or button breaking off at the worst possible moment. Part of that sturdiness comes from the use of nine superior Panasonic 100mm motorized faders. Steinberg has clearly designed the Houston to be exceptionally user friendly (an overused term for sure, but one that truly applies here).

I'm not big on reading manuals (like most musicians, I want to start making music, not spend a week reading instructions) and the good news is that most of us can take the unit out of the box, hook it up to our PCs (no Mac support available as yet, but Steinberg says it's on the way and should be available soon) and be up and running in very short order. You can simply select either MIDI or USB control to enable two way communication with your computer. Just plug it into your setup and insert the supplied Cubase VST CD-ROM which contains the relevant update for Cubase 5.0. A second CD-ROM contains the newest PC version of Nuendo, which makes the software Houston-aware. You can use the USB drivers with Windows 98SE, ME, 2000 or XP. If you're not the brave "just go for it" type, just check the manual — it's incredibly easy!

We simply don't have room here (what a surprise!) to go through all the

functions Houston makes available to you. Suffice it to say that if you are running either of the Steinberg software packages for recording, you'll be thrilled with the performance and ease of use the Houston Studio Controller offers. The integration of many Cubase VST functions is excellent (I didn't try Nuendo, but I'm certain it's just as terrific) and you get complete parameter control of all plug-ins, as well as all the latest batch of VST instruments. Naturally, as Steinberg releases updates to either Cubase, Nuendo or the Houston OS, they can be downloaded to or from your computer.

If I was personally running either of Steinberg's excellent recording software packages, I would without a doubt want to add a Houston VST Studio Controller. The tactile response is quite satisfying, and you can still point and click with your mouse right on the computer screen to do those "faster on the PC" moves like entering file names and such.

All-in-all, the Houston Studio Controller is a winner, but I have only scratched the surface here (ahem, not actually scratching anything — the Houston I tried out in our demo room is without a blemish). I'll leave it to your Sweetwater Sales Engineer to supply you with any additional information you might need to help decide if Houston is right for you. What's more, they'll give you a special low price on the unit that will make it even more attractive (if that's possible). So call now or simply log onto "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)" 24 hours a day, seven days a week to order a Houston of your own! — *M. Blake*

## Steinberg HALion Software Sampler

Okay, software samplers are not anything new. In fact, there are several excellent programs available now. Still, these packages existed as stand alone applications or sequencer specific plug-ins . . . until now that is. **HALion** from **Steinberg** (\$399 list) is a software sampler implemented in the form of a VST plug-in, meaning it will seamlessly integrate with Steinberg's sequencers or other software that can access the VST format.

HALion comes on a cross platform CD-ROM containing both Windows and Mac versions. Also supplied are four "content" CDs and three CDs of demo material from other companies. Wow!

One thing that sets HALion apart from most other sample playback units is that it doesn't load

all the sample data into RAM before being able to play back a particular sound. HALion works by "streaming" sample data directly off your hard drive whenever it's required. To speed up access, HALion actually loads in a small bit of each active sample, thus giving the software a "head start" to prevent any delay between a MIDI note on and the beginning of sample playback.

Once you're up and running, you'll find no shortage of creative controls — HALion is so slouch in the programming department, so you have all the filters, envelopes, modulation sources, etc., just as you would on a dedicated hardware sampler. In fact, HALion will give any sampler a run for its money, particularly given the low cost of this incredible package. So call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for additional information and your special low Sweetwater pricing on the HALion VST plug-in sampler. You can also order online 24/7 simply by going to "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".



# Vipre: The world's first all-tube, variable impedance preamp

Among purists, nothing compares to the rich warmth and tonality of a classic tube mic, coupled with a well-matched preamp. Which is — or rather, was — exactly the problem. Because matching each mic required searching out exactly the right preamp to capture the best possible sound. Or settling for the most compatible mismatch, and trying to fix it in the mix.

Until now, that is . . .

Meet the **Groove Tubes Vipre** (\$2999 list). It's the world's first — *and only!* — all-tube, variable impedance preamp. Literally, this is as state-of-the-art as tube technology can possibly get. Not using a tube mic? No problem, because Vipre is also the only preamp designed

to enhance the characteristics of virtually any mic, whether you're recording with the latest high end tube mic or a classic ribbon mic. Or adding a little depth to even the most colorless FET. And it's all accomplished with the mere twist of a knob or two. All tubes — no IC chips, no tricks — no kidding!

These days, hardly anyone uses an all-tube design, even though it's commonly accepted that utilizing nothing but tubes from input to output delivers unmatched results. Using a fully differential Class A design, the Vipre is able to maintain its high performance and simple circuit design, while significantly increasing dynamic range and signal-to-noise ratio. The result is dramatically reduced distortion and incredible performance, revealing exceptional detail and as a bonus, it's also for all intents and purposes totally free of unwanted sonic imprints. There are variable input controls to complement any mic you may own.

The Groove Tubes Vipre is designed to provide a dramatic degree of tone control, allowing you actually "sculpt" the sound you want at the input stage, without having to rely on electronic trickery in later stages of production (the old "we'll fix it in the mix"). Four distinct impedance settings bring out the best in any mic: tube, FET, ribbon or dynamic. As a result, classic mics virtually bloom before your eyes (well, your ears, actually), while FETs acquire a degree of richness never before possible. Or you can use the balanced-bridge input to bypass the variable impedance feature and achieve a completely different sonic character.

Meanwhile, Vipre's five variable rise-time settings allow you to adjust its fast signal path to capture just the sound quality you're looking for: Fast to preserve the

full percussive and forward qualities of the source or slow to help tame overly aggressive sound qualities. And virtually anything and everything in between.

The Vipre's gain controls offer fully discrete step attenuation, allowing for repeatable results and a fully balanced signal path throughout the unit. Even more impressive is Vipre's amazing 75dB of available gain, the highest of any preamp with a virtually unmatched level of tonal control.

Of course, such a high degree of control demands an equally exceptional means of measurement. Which is where its unique, switchable VU meter comes in, with five fully independent types of VU response, permitting a huge measurement range far beyond conventional meters.

Topping it all off is a high-power, high-performance electrical system designed to virtually eliminate clipping. And a simplified power supply incorporating a massive energy reserve to ensure enough power for high-level stages, and provide an unshakable foundation to the low-frequency end of the audio spectrum. The bottom line (at least according to the Groove Tubes folks, and who am I to argue the point?): Anything else is now officially obsolete!

This is a great-sounding preamp, offering an unheard-of degree of tonal control — over 50 different tonal variations, in fact — designed to give you the best possible results from your entire mic collection, and all without having to resort to tweaking EQ or using other signal-degrading devices. And Vipre is designed to ensure that you get great analog sound throughout the foreseeable future, no matter what digital formats may become standard in the years to come.

My opinion? At \$2999 list (your Sweetwater price will, of course, be lower), Vipre is worth every penny. Why? Because every mic in my collection — even the less expensive ones — delivered impressive new sonic performance that I never dreamed were within their capabilities. My best mics now sound like those astronomically-priced mics that I could only dream about before. You won't believe what this unit is capable of delivering in the sound quality department unless you get one for yourself. And oh yes, it just happens to look fantastic, too!

So call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer and order one of these amazing units for yourself. As with everything Sweetwater sells, it comes with a no hassles return policy (ask your Sales Engineer for details) so you can hear it with your own ears — risk free! But trust me on this one, you'll be a believer too once you record the very first tracks with your new Vipre! You can also order online 24 hours a day simply by logging into "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — *Bill Hoover*



Vipre is designed to provide a dramatic degree in tone control, allowing you to sculpt the sound at the input stage without having to resort to electronic trickery at later stages of production

## FireWire fast and dependable: M Project from Glyph Technologies

If you read last issue's Tech Notes column, you know how psyched our Jim Miller was over the new **Mark of the Unicorn 828 FireWire Interface**. Not surprising, since the whole audio world has sat up and taken notice — so much so that we can just barely keep up with the demand. And now, **Glyph Technologies** has unveiled **M Project** (\$899 list), a new specially designed, high-performance FireWire hard drive solution for MOTU hard disk recording systems. In a joint effort from both companies, M Project has been designed for — and extensively tested with — all MOTU systems interfaces and it currently stands as the very first *and only* FireWire hard drive solution officially approved by MOTU.

"We're delighted to be working with MOTU as their approved FireWire hard disk storage solution," said Alex Lieb, Glyph's Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "With the inclusion of the 828 FireWire interface into MOTU's family of products, they have once again proven they are an industry leader in digital audio recording, and Glyph is proud to be their partner," he added.

As the success of the 828 FireWire audio interface shows, FireWire audio is the future of computer-based audio recording, and Jim Cooper, MOTU's Director of

Marketing, told us that Glyph's M Project is the perfect storage solution for MOTU systems for many reasons. "For the 2408 and the rest of our PCI card-based line, M Project adds portable, high-performance storage without taking up a valuable PCI slot. For 828 systems, it offers users the same portable, high-performance audio storage, while at the same time allowing them to daisy chain

their 828 and M project drive directly off the same FireWire bus. And we couldn't be more thrilled with Glyph as a technology partner. Their reputation, products, service and support are unrivaled."

M Project is a 1U x 13-inch deep rack-mountable AC-powered hard drive enclosure equipped with a 40GB hard drive running at 7200 RPM and it's now available *only* from Sweetwater. So please call your Sales Engineer immediately to find out why the M Project is the perfect storage solution for your MOTU system. You'll also get a low Sweetwater price that will surprise you. You can also order direct via the Internet by logging onto our Web site any time, day or night at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". And for more on MOTU's Digital Performer software, check out "Tech Notes" on Page 15 of this issue.





This issue, I'd like to depart for a bit from my usual direction, which is all the new ways Sweetwater has for you to make the most of your love of music and the latest music technology. It's actually a topic that I got into discussing a little while back with our own Jim Miller (Tech Notes) who suggested that it would make an interesting story.

Some of you may be aware that a few years ago, I released an album entitled "Playing Through the Changes." While I was very happy with the final CD, I realized that today's technology would allow me to actually achieve even better sound quality, plus have the flexibility to work in big studios and my home studio as needed.

I decided that this new album would be the best of everything: Some of my favorite songs, mixed with great arrangements and phenomenal players along with using the very latest and greatest technology. As many of you know, I play saxophone and I wanted my project to have a "Big Band" sound, yet still be contemporary sounding. Currently, my list of 20 songs includes a wide variety of styles from Jazz and Standards, to Big



Band and features some of the timeless classics such as "Over The Rainbow", "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy", "New York, New York", "Everyday I Have the Blues" and "Fly Me to the Moon."

Once I had my set list, I realized that while I wanted to faithfully capture the essence of the music, I also wanted to bring a freshness to it and a more modern feel through the use of brand new arrangements and new sounds. I wanted people to feel like they were hearing this music from a brand new perspective or maybe even for the first time. To that end I started doing some of the arrangements myself, but I also wanted others to lend their creativity to the project, so I had Tom Cherry (Saxophone great Boots Randolph's arranger), Nashville's Chris McDonald and Jerroll Lehman (from the Sweetwater recording facility) take on a number of pieces each.

I soon realized that this was a huge undertaking, but one that at every step of the way brought new ideas and even a few surprises to the songs. I knew at that point I was hooked! So we started the recording pro-



cess here at the Sweetwater Studios with top session players laying down the basic tracks: guitar, bass, drums and keyboards. Since I knew I would be going down to Nashville to add horn parts, I made the decision to record everything onto 20-bit ADAT M20s, since so many professional studios support the format.

In Nashville, at George Cumbee's Classic Audio studios, I was able to get the absolute best, "A-list" brass section (four trumpets and four trombones) to lay down my horn parts. Now I'm around a lot of terrific musicians, but these guys blew me away with their performance—these are the guys that play on so many "hit" records. My music was now really cooking!

At this point, I returned to Fort Wayne, and to really polish and sweeten the songs, we added a real string section (violins, violas, cellos and basses) to some of the material, giving it a lush, glossy texture that only real strings can provide.

I took the ADAT tapes to my home studio and transferred everything into my Pro Tools TDM system via the Digidesign ADAT bridge. And there I'm slowly adding all the sax parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bari, and even Bass sax, as well as Flute). Most of the songs have about five or six sax lines along with vocals, additional percussion and other solo instruments. When all the tracks are complete—in some cases from 30 to 50 tracks!—the plan is to then mix everything at home in Pro Tools using my ProControl Mixing Surface. I can't wait to use the automation and all of the plug-ins. The rough mixes are already sounding better than my "final" mixes of a couple of years ago.

I am working on the material every chance I get. Originally, I'd hoped to have the album finished by the end of the year, but with all the tracks left to add, it just might be into next year before everything is complete. Happily, the quality of all the other performers is truly awe inspiring, making it a real treat to add my sax parts.

If you are interested in hearing a rough example from my album, an MP3 file can be downloaded at "[http://PTband.com/chucksurackalbum/Chuck\\_Surack2001/Misty.mp3](http://PTband.com/chucksurackalbum/Chuck_Surack2001/Misty.mp3)". I think once you give it a listen you'll have a better appreciation for how much time and energy went into each song.

I hope you enjoyed me telling you how I use ProTools, ADATs and such. If you look at my personal website, "PTband.com", you'll see that I also play out live almost every weekend. When gigging I depend on my Titanium Apple Macintosh Powerbook computer running the incredible Digital Performer 3.0. I have a huge 20 megabyte MIDI file that drives two K2500 racks and it allows me to go instantly to any one of over 350 songs. It is absolutely an amazing system.

I trust you've enjoyed this brief change of pace. Please feel free to write me at "[Chuck\\_Surack@sweetwater.com](mailto:Chuck_Surack@sweetwater.com)". I'll look forward to seeing you here next issue.



**Q:** I own a **Roland VS-1680** which, as we all know, records at 24-bits, although the A/D converters are only 20-bit. I just now purchased a **MOTU 828** interface and wondered if I could use the 828's 24-bit converters as inputs to the VS-1680 (via the unit's digital ins) to give me a better original signal. Is this possible and are there any negative aspects to this?

**A:** Yes, this will work. You'll probably need to use AudioDesk or another application (Digital Performer 3.0, for instance) to route your audio from the analog inputs to the S/PDIF (RCA coaxial or optical) outputs. I'm sure it would sound fine. The only issue would be the introduction of latency. You could combat this by either lowering buffer sizes or, if you're only using one or two analog sources, you can use the "monitor input" feature of the 828 for the "no-latency" option.

**Q:** What USB hubs can I use with my **Midiman USB MIDI** interface (Midisport)?

**A:** Midiman has tested and approved only the Belkin "Bus Station" Powered USB hub for Mac and PC. Midiman has experienced problems with other hubs, especially non-powered units. This can also be applied to MOTU USB interfaces. Powered hubs, especially those from Belkin are recommended.

**Q:** **Absynth** immediately quits when launched on a Mac. What's the problem?

**A:** There are reports of some extensions causing conflicts with Absynth. Try disabling the following extensions (if they are installed): Adobe Type Manager 4.6.2 (under MacOS 9.1), Action Files, USB Floppy Enabler and Fax STF extensions. Hopefully that should clear up the problem.

**Q:** Sometimes I get sense key / code errors when recording to a CDR with **Jam**. What do these mean?

**A:** These types of errors can be caused by a handful of things. You can usually prevent them by doing the following: First, be sure to start your Mac while holding the shift key down to turn off all extensions. Jam doesn't require any extensions to operate and therefore works best when all extensions are disabled at startup. Extension conflicts are the single most common problem when trying to write CDs. Next, be sure that you have the most current version of firmware for your CD recorder model. Firmware is the hard coded instruction imbedded within the CD recorder drive. Firmware is typically stored on flash memory chips so that they can be reprogrammed with a software utility. Check with your hardware vendor or contact the recorder manufacturer via phone or Web site to download the newest firmware code for your recorder.

Other SCSI peripherals could cause problems, as well. Be sure to try recording when nothing else is attached to the SCSI bus to ensure that no other peripheral is interfering with the recording process. Lastly, check the cables and termination. Improper cabling or termination will disturb the SCSI communication between Jam and the recorder and could cause an error. Also check to make sure your CDR is supported by the latest version of Jam, by visiting "[www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)".

# Sophisticated new GK-Ready effects pedals from BOSS

If you own a guitar that's equipped with a Roland GK-2A pickup or one of the exceptional guitars from manufacturers like Brian Moore or Godin with a GK-ready connector, you're going to love the two new Twin Pedal Series effects pedals from BOSS: The WP-20G Wave Processor and the OC-20G Poly Octave.

With their GK Pickup inputs, these new effects pedals process each guitar string individually, yielding amazing synth-type effects (WP-20G) and polyphonic octave capabilities (OC-20G) far beyond any effects pedals in history.

First up there's the **WP-20G Wave Processor** (\$299 list), which lets guitarist select from six different synth-type waves and effects — Saw Lead, Square, Ring Mod, Slow Gear, Sitar and Acoustic

can produce octaves for various combinations of strings — like the 5th and 6th strings — while leaving the other four strings unprocessed for cool simulated guitar/bass combos. Six guitar simulations are also provided, including three acoustic guitar simulations and three electric guitar simulations that will have audience members scratching their heads. Finally, onboard distortion can be activated to produce a thick "new-school" metal sound with the bass sounding an octave below the fundamental.

The battery-driven WP-20G and OC-20G also offer send and return jacks for connection to conventional pedal effects or placement within the effects loops of guitar amplifiers and studio gear. A convenient AC adapter is available for those of you who are eco-friendly and hate the thought of throwing away a lot of batteries (though both boxes can run quite a while off battery power, unlike many vintage effects).

Personally, I had a blast playing both these pedals. The specifics above don't do them justice — these are effects boxes you just have to hear to appreciate. And given their low list price (naturally your Sweetwater price will be lower), you can actually afford to own both of them. Running the WP-20G into the OC-20G is a mind-expanding experience, I kid you not. Words alone cannot possibly give you even the slightest indication of all the sonic possibilities.

So pick up the phone and call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer and order up either or both of these hot new BOSS pedals. They will definitely have you scrambling to lay down some tracks almost immediately! If you just want to order any time, 24/7, simply log onto "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — S. Haley



With their GK pickup inputs, these new effects pedals can process each guitar string individually

— using simple knob-based controls. Once selected, the sound's tonality can be tweaked using a Color knob, and blended in with the unprocessed guitar sound using the Level knob. This pedal also offers 11 different chorus and delay effects, which can be used to produce fatter synth and effect sounds, and turned on and off independently thanks to the WP-20G's dual-pedal design. The wide range of analog synth-type tones, instant tracking response and built-in effects should find the WP-20G a home with guitarists ranging from heavy rockers to jazz players and anyone who wants to push the boundaries of their instrument.

Next there's the **OC-20G Poly Octave** (\$299 list), the world's first polyphonic octave pedal, capable of producing string-assignable octave effects, unique non-native guitar simulations, and even onboard distortion for getting ultra-heavy tones. Thanks to the GK Pickup input, the OC-20G

# Top-rated Sweetwater Sample Libraries still drawing rave reviews

With all the other terrific new products we feature in *Sweet Notes*, we recently realized that we were short changing our own line of excellent products, the **Sweetwater Sample Libraries**.

Created in conjunction with some of the very best sound design companies — like Stratus Sounds and RSI — and fully programmed in the Sweetwater Soundware Development Facility, these exceptional libraries for such best selling instruments as the Kurzweil K2000, K2500, K2600 and E-MU samplers have drawn much critical praise from the top industry publications like *Keyboard* and *Electronic Musician*. In fact, our **Ultimate Guitars** collection was the very first (and still one of the only) sample collections to be awarded a perfect score by *Keyboard* magazine, and our **Total Stereo Session Drums** impressed the editors so much that they granted it their new "Key Buy" award.

In the *EM* review of **Ultimate Guitars**, Jeff Obee wrote: "Frequent *EM* contributor Jim Miller played and sampled all the guitars on this CD-ROM and he did a fabulous job. The samples are scrupulously clean and meticulous all the way from the bottom of the keyboard to the top; there are at least six samples per octave and no sample has to cover more than a whole step.

"The acoustic guitars in particular are excellent; they're full and rich and wonderfully realistic. The electrics had the immediacy and punch of a miked cabinet and the distortion was thick and screamin'. I got a lot of guitar 'feeling' from the samples: the texture of the string being plucked, the grittiness of the (distortion), and the resonance of the sound board were all there . . . The programming on this disc is absolutely top-notch and for good reason; it was done by Daniel Fisher, the Kurzweil VAST expert responsible for the now-famous 'Dark Side of the Moon' patch for the K2000." Jeff went on to rave for over two and a half pages, but the final verdict was a perfect score in sound quality, programming and documentation.

In presenting the Key Buy award to Sweetwater for our **Stereo Drums** CD, *Keyboard's* Greg Rule, wrote: "Considering the hundreds of sample libraries on the market, you might wonder why a company would bother making another collection of drum and percussion samples . . . Then I loaded these kits into my K2500 and cowabonga! These samples are gorgeous, lush and exquisitely recorded. Of the 29 kits in this collection, almost all put a smile on my face."

What's next? We'll save that for a future issue. In the meantime, if you own a Kurzweil or any sampler that reads Kurzweil format, you absolutely have to be nuts not to own at least a few of these killer sample collections, so call your Sales Engineer for pricing or log onto "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)" to order!



NEED IT TOMORROW? We can ship FedEx for next day delivery! (800) 222-4700



# BLUE Microphones: More than just a recording tool

The first time I laid eyes on a **BLUE** (which stands for Baltic Latvian Universal Electronics) microphone, I thought to myself, what a strange looking beast this is. And is there really such a thing as Baltic Latvian Universal Electronics? I suppose it really doesn't matter, since these mics are so impressive in performance that you won't even think twice about their unusual appearance or where that goofy name came from (somewhere in Latvia, I would guess, which is one of the Baltic states located outside Russia — see, I remember my high school geography).

According to the BLUE folks — who are not actually blue at all, it turns out — their mics are an investment in value, quality, and expression. You will display them for their artistic beauty, covet and protect them for their investment value, and treasure them for conveying the heart and soul of any musical recording.

The company says they are not interested in cost-effective mass production, which could jeopardize the design quality of their tube and solid state mics and related products. They design and manufacture all their own capsules, as well as precision parts, from the smallest screw to the large body shells used for their Bottle microphones. What makes BLUE microphones so unique and so valuable? Again, according to the company, it's the mylar film of their BLUE hand-built capsules which are sputtered with a special, "unique-to-BLUE" formula of the purest 24-carat gold and aluminum. This special film is tensioned to their own hand-built brass backplates, again designed and manufactured in their own Riga factory. This formula allows their mics to achieve the fastest transient response without the sacrifice of low-end frequencies.

BLUE builds and tunes each capsule by hand. The finished capsules are measured in an anechoic chamber for optimum performance. Each mic capsule is mounted with a molded, injected rubber stem, to isolate unwanted rumble. There are no integrated circuits. Their solid state and tube microphone amplifiers are based on a Class A, fully discrete circuit, employing a custom microphone transformer built and wound to BLUE specifications. Now I could tell you more, but let's take a look at some of these unique BLUE creations.

**The Dragonfly** (\$1095 list). Complete with an integrated elastic Shockmount, this class A discrete, transformerless mic offers a rotating capsule grill that can be positioned in the most difficult of areas. Countless hours of research and development were spent to test and select the most suitable active and passive components. This no compromise process, can assure the low noise, high dynamic range and unappreciable distortion of the microphone circuitry. The end result gives the Dragonfly completely neutral sonics with low output impedance and no side effects from the cable capacitance and load impedance. The capsule operating principle is a pressure gradient with the pickup pattern being cardioid. A matched set of Dragonfly's can be specially ordered. These uniquely colored mics are built in a limited edition only basis. Capsules are measured in an anechoic chamber to provide the end user with a balanced sound for all critical recordings. The Dragonfly just was voted "Microphone of the Year" in the *Electronic Musician* Editors Choice Awards. Considering how many high quality mics are out there, this is high praise indeed!

**The Blueberry** (\$1295 list) consists of a Class A discrete microphone amplifier perfectly matched to a single pattern, cardioid, hand-built large diaphragm capsule. This is BLUE's entry level pressure gradient mic, designed to fill the needs of the home musician and professional alike. The timbre of the microphone capsule has been tuned to provide users with a silky smooth, bright and airy top end reminiscent of the best vintage microphones, delivering a

recorded signal, such as a vocal, minus unwanted low end resonance that can cause a compressor to breathe or pump. The final results are vocals and instruments that blend effortlessly with the basic recorded program material. All BLUE microphone capsules are capable of handling high SPLs, so users may get as close to the microphone capsule as desired.

The flagship of the BLUE mic series is **The Bottle** (\$3999 list), a tube condenser microphone with eight different interchangeable capsules. As such, The Bottle is not just a mic, but a microphone system. Capsules can be changed to deliver different tonality, patterns and handle any application, all while the mic is still turned on. The amplifier design is based on a single vacuum tube pentode EF86 in a triode mode. This tube is hand-selected by BLUE personnel for low noise performance. The Bottle mic is packaged with one B6 Lollipop large diaphragm cardioid capsule and the 9610 Tube Mic Power supply. BLUE has developed the 9610 with the new "Soft Start" feature to assure the longevity of the vacuum tube, and the stability of the microphone circuitry.

The optional capsule selections include: B7 (Cardioid large diaphragm single backplate for the classic vocal sound); B6 (Cardioid large diaphragm, dual backplate for the modern presence vocal sound); B5 (Pressure omni large diaphragm, the "presence" omni); B4 (Perspex sphere pressure omni small diaphragm, the "big" omni); B3 (Cardioid mid sized diaphragm, the neutral capsule); B2 Figure eight large diaphragm, the vintage capsule; B1 (Cardioid small diaphragm, the "accuracy plus" capsule); and the B0 (Cardioid large capsule with bright, clean sonics). Note that the B4 capsule is available on a special order basis only.

**The Cactus** (\$3295 list). If you're looking for a mic that combines true vintage character with the latest cutting edge production techniques, look no further than The Cactus. With superbly detailed information in the midrange and a soft, silky response in the upper end, the multi-pattern, pressure gradient Cactus fills any need for detailing and mellowing the program material. The amplifier design is based on a single vacuum tube sub-miniature.

**The Kiwi** (\$2299 list). At BLUE the goal is to achieve individual personalities for each of their microphones. Our top of the line Class A Discrete model, The Kiwi, delivers just that. Capsule patterns include Cardioid, Figure 8, Omni and selections in between for a total of nine different choices. This is achieved in a careful, unique manner using the BLUE double backplate capsule. These unique capsules are measured in an anechoic chamber for the optimum performance. Mounting to the Kiwi microphone amplifier is provided by a mold injected rubber stem to help isolate unwanted rumble. Additional protection from low end rumble is provided by the use of an elastic spider type shockmount.

Hey, as anyone around here can tell you, nobody is as nuts about microphones as I am. Like most guitar players who can never have enough guitars, I can't imagine ever owning enough mics. To me, they're like the creative filters photographers use — each one adds a special character or a distinctive feel to the final product. BLUE mics are certainly unique, both in appearance and design. Yup, I want one (or two or . . . ahem, let's not mention this to my wife, okay?)

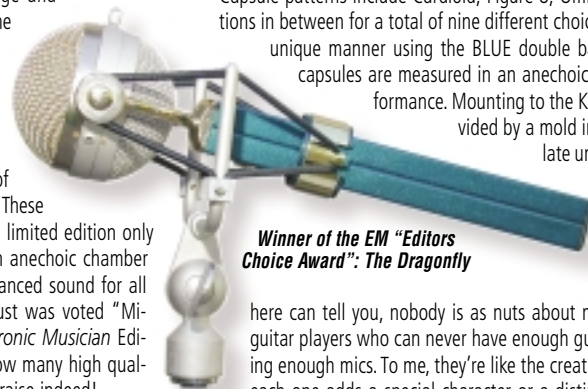
If you would like more information on BLUE mics, call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer right now. They'll be glad to fill in all the details for you, along with giving you the special low Sweetwater price on the BLUE mic that's right for your specific application. What? It's 2:30 AM? No problem: Just order online at [www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. — B. Hoover



The Bottle from BLUE



The Cactus



Winner of the EM "Editors Choice Award": The Dragonfly

You will display BLUE mics for their artistic beauty, covet and protect them for their investment value and treasure them for conveying the heart and soul of any musical recording

# Eventide Eclipse: Entry level price with top end performance



Take this simple quiz: Who was the very first manufacturer to offer digital effects processors? Well, if you read the headline, we sort of gave that one away, don't you think? Yes, it's **Eventide**, a company whose products are found in every state-of-the-art studio around the world. Their **H3000 Ultra Harmonizer Series** (first introduced in 1988) and the newer **DSP4000 Series** are still considered industry standard tools in professional studios around the world. Truth is, Eventide products have *never* been considered "budget-priced" equipment — they leave the inexpensive toys to other manufacturers and have always concentrated on producing the very best sounding, no compromise effects processors. As such, they deserve their lofty reputation.

Still, though the company builds astronomically-priced boxes that are out of reach for many of us, recent technological breakthroughs have allowed the company to build a processor that lives up to their amazingly high standards, yet is actually priced low enough that serious project studio owners can actually afford to put premium quality Eventide effects in their facilities. Introducing the amazing **Eventide Eclipse**, the company's newest and *most affordable* multi-effects processor — just \$2250 list (your Sweetwater pricing will naturally be even lower).

Okay, you're thinking, what corners did they cut? The answer is surprisingly...none! Incredibly, the Eclipse offers ten times the processing power of the H3000 Series at a fraction of the cost

Okay, you're thinking, what corners did they cut? The answer is surprisingly . . . none! Incredibly, the Eclipse offers users ten times the processing power of the original H3000 Series at a fraction of the price. What's more, everything is packaged nicely in a single space rackmount module with an elegant user interface, a large LCD display, some soft buttons, a numeric keypad and a smattering of function keys. There are 217 preset programs built right in, with a PC Flash card slot for further expansion or to save your own setups.

Still, you want to know that bottom line: How does the Eclipse sound? Almost impossibly, it sounds to our ears just like the high priced Eventide boxes with lush, ultra-clear reverbs, a full complement of the expected multi-effects (delay, chorus, flange, etc.) and naturally, the company's trademark pitch change algorithms.

At this point, you might be tempted to simply stop reading and order one for your studio — and who could blame you? This is certainly a processor that screams "professional!" from the moment you turn it on. But there's more features that we'd like to quickly fill you in on, beginning with the back of the unit which has every type of connection you could ever think of or possibly need. The two analog outs are via combination 1/4" / XLR sockets (running balanced +4dBu on the XLRs and -10dBV unbalanced on the 1/4" jacks). There's actually enough gain in the Eclipse circuitry to allow you to plug in an electric guitar directly, making it the world's most sophisticated (and best sounding) "stompbox."

Digital I/O is via XLRs for AES-EBU signals, phono plugs for S/PDIF signals and finally Toslink optical for either IEC568 stereo signals or ADAT lightpipe multitrack data. A pair of BNCs provide word clock ins and outs, while a nine-pin D-Sub connector enables an RS232 serial link to be established with a PC to transfer data. There are two 1/4" sockets for connection to foot switches or pedals for control of a number of parameters and finally, the ubiquitous MIDI in, out and through ports.

The Eclipse front panel is remarkably uncluttered for a device that's got so much processing power. On the left are a pair of LEDs, switchable to indicate input or output levels (from -40 to zero). Next to that are another column of LEDs that indicate sampling rates from 44.1 to 96kHz (yes, Eclipse is 24-bit/96kHz ready). The fluorescent display is large enough to comfortably display all appropriate data in a highly legible fashion over two lines. To the right of that are the main operational controls, a rotary encoder, bypass and setup switches, the numeric keypad, a "tap" tempo button and the card slot. As we said, very clean.

Well we're out of room. But if you need more information or your low Sweetwater pricing on the amazing Eventide Eclipse, call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer right now, or order 24/7 online at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".



For those of you who may not have been with us last issue, "Still Hot!" is a special column devoted to items that aren't particularly new, but have proven to be among the best sellers in our entire inventory. It also includes products that may never (for one reason or another), have gotten a write-up in *Sweet Notes*.

One product that has been red hot ever since its initial introduction is the **Digi 001** from **Digidesign** (\$995 list). Imagine recording your music with the comfort of knowing that virtually any aspect of it can be changed or rearranged after you've recorded it (even any effects), and then be easily



transferred to a studio for professional mixing and/or mastering. With Digi 001, you get a truly professional

studio-in-a-box — with no external hardware needed (not even a mixer)! You'll also be using the same **Pro Tools** software interface that countless pro studios rely on every day. This is the perfect place to begin building your dream studio with 18 simultaneous inputs and outputs, including analog, S/PDIF, ADAT optical, and MIDI. Simply plug Digi 001 into an approved Mac or Windows computer, install our software and you're ready to go.

Other products that we can barely keep in stock include the amazingly affordable **Neumann TLM 103** microphones (\$995 list) including the special limited edition, all-black **Monolith**, which looks totally awesome and sounds even better! If you've ever dreamed of owning a Neumann mic, here's one you can easily afford.

Finally, we just have to mention the full line of **Ovation Guitars**. As you probably know, Ovation was the first company to build an electro-acoustic guitar that actually *sounded* acoustic. They have models in all price ranges, so you can own the guitar that started an entire audio revolution!

## STOP THE PRESSES!

Literally seconds before this issue was plated and put on the presses, we got word that we're now officially one of the only *factory authorized ALESIS* service centers in the entire country!

That's right! Get factory authorized service on your Alesis gear now from our SweetCare™ Service Center, and you'll get your gear back faster and sounding better than ever! We have a complete stock of genuine Alesis parts, as well as the experience, test equipment and expertise to make your Alesis gear perform as good as the day you broke the seal on the box. So don't put it off another minute. Call us now at (800) 222-4700 and ask for the SweetCare™ Service Center. We'll make sure you get back to enjoying your Alesis gear before you know it.



# Gibson's "retro styled" Super Goldtone Tube Amplifiers

Not long ago, a number of guitar "experts" agreed that the so-called retro movement would soon be dead as a door nail. And while it may be true that the latest cutting edge modeling technology puts us ever closer to recreating the sound of the very finest tube amps, there's still a huge contingent of guitar players who feel that nothing with the word "digital" in it will ever replace the warm, buttery sound of a real set of toasty vacuum tubes in a well designed amplifier. Personally, I'm torn between the flexibility of modeling and the "100% real" sound of a tube amp. Of course, I might be tempted to swing onto the tube side if I found room on one of my credit cards for something like Gibson's Super Goldtone Series.



One look at either the GA-30RV or the GA-60RV and you know that **Gibson** (builders of classic guitars

like the Les Paul) was definitely looking to appeal to the traditionalists and "retro lovers" out here in the real world. Both amps are absolutely convincing in their classic 1950s or early 60s appearance, as well as their performance. In fact, just as I was writing this article, Buddy Guy and several other top blues acts came to town and up there on stage — so distinctive that you couldn't help but notice

them — were several Gibson Goldtone amps. The fact that these acts can pretty much have their pick (no pun intended) of amps, yet they chose the Goldtone Series, speaks volumes.

Powered by four EL84 tubes in the Class A amplifier section, the (conservatively-rated) 30-watt **Super Goldtone GA-30RV** (\$2395 list) features a 100% vacuum tube signal path, along with a real 6-spring Accutronics reverb tank. To achieve its uniquely well balanced sound, the amplifier is mated to a pair of vintage Celestion speakers: one 10-inch and one 12-inch, giving you the best of both worlds. Naturally, in an amp that's this advanced, you get two independent channels, each with their own tone-shaping capabilities (passive treble, mid and bass), boost and reverb controls.

The only big concession to the modern world is the fact that the GA-30RV includes a standard series/parallel effects loop — a smart move on the part of the Gibson engineers, since even though amps built in the "golden age" of guitar amps didn't have this feature, they most probably would have if outboard effects (chorus, flange, delay, etc.) had been around at the time. Again, this is a personal thing, but I hate having more than one or two pedals on the floor when I'm playing. For one thing, all those stomp boxes hooked together tend to suck out the tone, not to mention the fact that they eat batteries like crazy (and who wants to power six or more effects boxes with those wall-wart power supplies?).

Moving up a step, there's the 60-watt **Super Goldtone GA-60RV** (\$2495 list) for those occasions where you need a bit more power to fill bigger clubs or small halls (or maybe you just love driving the neighbors absolutely nuts). The GA-60RV's Class A/B power amp is driven by two of the big EL34 vacuum tubes. Like the GA-30RV, the signal path is an all tube design coupled to a 6-spring reverb tank and driving a pair of specially voiced Celestion 12-inch speakers. You also get the same dual independent channels with sepa-

rate tone, boost and reverb controls, along with the series/parallel effects loop. What's more, the GA-60RV includes a special external biasing facility which allows you to "fine tune" the amp to the tubes — a real plus that no vintage amps ever have (but sure could have used).

For my needs (studio recording and the occasional live gig), the GA-30RV is perfect. If I ever went back to playing out live (which I'd love to do), I'd definitely opt for the extra power and punch that the GA-60RV delivers. Which of these exceptional amps is right for you? Hey, just call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer and he or she will be more than happy to help you pick the perfect Goldtone amp, not to mention give you your special low Sweetwater pricing. — *M. Rief*

## Gibson J-45 Rosewood

Let me just say up front that I have always been a huge fan of Gibson acoustic guitars (and their electrics, too, but that's another story for another issue). Though I'm almost as old as the hills now, I can still easily remember seeing The Beatles in their original television performances back in the 1960s (in glorious black and white, no less). I distinctly recall that when they played acoustic guitars, they were always Gibsons (although Paul played an Epiphone, which at the time was made in the same factory as Gibson acoustics).

Indeed, as recent documentation has shown, George Harrison and John Lennon each owned a "round shouldered" Gibson J-160E jumbo flat-top and these guitars were rather freely swapped around in the studio for their many classic recordings which prominently featured acoustic guitars, such as "Norwegian Wood" and "It's Only Love." While the J-160E (the E stood for "electric" because of a single coil pickup set between the soundhole and fingerboard) was discontinued in 1977, it's slightly less ornate sibling, the **Gibson J-45** (\$2049 list) has been in production since the 1940s and continues to be one of the company's best sellers. Despite minor cosmetic differences, the J-45 delivers all the distinctive sonic characteristics of the J-160E.

Where is all of this leading? Well, I just got word that Sweetwater has taken

delivery of some J-45s with solid rosewood back and sides and a gorgeous antique natural finish over a solid spruce top. Both the fingerboard and bridge are made of ebony (which is denser than rosewood) and the wood used in the neck is mahogany. The fretboard inlays are simple but elegant mother-of-pearl, while the tuners are classic gold "kidneys." Like most of Gibson's guitars, the J-45 features a 24 3/4-inch scale and there's a transducer pickup onboard for those occasions when you need to amplify the instrument.

While there are many other guitars in Gibson's line of acoustics (including such absolute beauties as the Super Jumbo 200), the J-45 has several things going for it: It delivers that unmistakably clean acoustic guitar sound that The Beatles made famous at a price that's a bit more down-to-earth than some of the company's high end historical reissues.

I recently traded in my old acoustic guitar for a top-of-the-line hollowbody electric, so I'm in the market for a new acoustic. Given my preference for the distinctive sound of a Gibson acoustic, I just might find some space on one of my credit cards for a J-45 of my very own (unless you beat me to it, of course). For more information and special low Sweetwater pricing on a J-45, you can call your Sales Engineer or you can order 24/7 at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — *J. Miller*



One look at the Gibson Goldtone amps and you'll know that they were designed to appeal to the traditionalists and "retro-lovers" out here in the real world

# The Radius Series Fat Man and Fat Man 2 tube processors from HHB

For many years, hardcore audiophiles have insisted that tube-based equipment sounded better than anything else and were willing to pay outrageous prices to get that sound. The rest of us were

too busy being mesmerized by the rainbow of colors reflecting off our new CDs to pay attention. But then, slowly but surely, the vast majority of the music world started to get the message: Our ears are pleased by the

warmth of analog and the richness that comes with the use of that "ancient" technology, vacuum tubes.

If you're one of the thousands of home project studio owners who want that sound on your own recordings, but thought you couldn't afford it — think again. From **HHB** comes the Radius 3 Fat Man and Radius 5 Fat Man 2, both priced at an incredible \$469 retail (naturally, your Sweetwater price is even lower).

**Despite their low cost and factory presets, experienced users will love having a manual mode available, allowing full creative control of all compression parameters**

The **Radius 3 Fat Man** delivers top-quality HHB stereo tube compression at an amazingly affordable price. It makes adding real tube warmth to recording and live sound applications easy by offering 15 preset compression programs, all created in conjunction with leading audio engineers including Pink Floyd's Andy Jackson. The presets include optimum compression settings for vocals, keyboards, bass, acoustic and electric guitars, snare, kick and whole drum kits and pop, rock and dance mixes, making the Fat Man a very user-friendly tube compressor.



For users who wish to create their own compression settings, a manual mode provides fully adjustable control over threshold, ratio, knee, attack and release settings. Input / output gains and gain make-up controls remain adjustable in both preset and manual modes to allow gain balancing for different systems. A bypass switch is provided to compare compressed and direct signals and a vintage-style VU meter can be switched to meter output level or the amount of gain reduction. Fat Man is a 3U half-rack width unit which can either be free-standing or rackmounted with the optional 19-inch FatRack (\$79 list).

Perfect as an instrument preamp, vocal processor or a "warm" front-end for any computer-based digital recording system, the **HHB Radius 5 Fat Man 2** is a single-channel unit that combines a tube preamp and compressor. It simply could not be easier to use, with 15 presets optimized for a wide variety of sources, including five vocal settings, keyboards, acoustic and electric guitars, basses and drums.

Despite its amazingly low cost, more experienced users will be happy with having a manual mode available, allowing full control of all compression parameters just as they are in the Fat Man. The high-quality tube preamp stage accepts mic, line and instrument signals and provides phantom power along with a 90Hz low-cut filter. A balanced line output is provided on a 1/4-inch jack connector, and switchable metering of either output level or gain reduction is displayed via a single retro-style backlit VU meter.

The Fat Man 2 uses a classic dual stage 12AX7A triode tube, powered from a high-quality internal power supply. One stage of the tube is located in the preamp section, while the other is in the compressor stage. Like the original Fat Man, the Fat Man 2 is a 3U half-rack width unit which can be free-standing or rackmounted with the optional 19-inch FatRack.

Here at Sweetwater, we sell a ton of both these excellent units, yet for some strange reason, we've never had occasion to feature them here in Sweet Notes. Hmm, very odd . . . Given their superb sound quality and super affordability they almost sell themselves. So call your Sales Engineer for additional information or to order a Fat Man of your very own at a super low Sweetwater price. You can also order online 24/7 at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — *M. Rief*

# Powered Plug-Ins: True-to-analog reproductions from Universal Audio

Lots of you remember the very first audio plug-ins. They were fairly small programs that performed some interesting — and in some cases, rather weird — audio processing tasks. Today, those of us using our computers to do our audio production need as much power as we can get since we want as many tracks as our Macs and PCs will deliver. But using a whole slew of plug-ins can put a lot of strain on even the fastest of today's machines. So you can either cut back on the plug-ins, record and playback fewer tracks or do the sensible thing: Add **Powered Plug-Ins**, the first offering in the **Universal Audio Digital** product line.



Powered Plug-Ins are a family of DSP-intensive plug-ins powered by a revolutionary PCI DSP card which brings ultra-high computational processing to host-based systems — outperforming even the DSP hardware engines of today's popular high-end DAWs. The **UAD-1** card, bundled with Powered Plug-Ins, utilizes a single proprietary high-speed DSP processor. The end result is a quantum leap in performance giving native workstation users the experience of using plenty of professional quality plug-ins, totally unencumbered by the limitations of the host processor.

To illustrate the horsepower of Powered Plug-ins, a VST user could easily configure a 32 track session utilizing 32 EQs, 16 compressors and three RealVerb Pro applications — all running simultaneously. This configuration would leave additional capacity on the DSP card for even more processing! Available for \$995 (list price), the Powered Plug-Ins Pro bundle features **Kind of Loud Technologies'** highest quality stereo reverb, **RealVerb Pro**; and also includes the UAD-1 card,

**1176LN** and **LA-2A** Compressor emulations (both of which have won kudos from discriminating pros and the industry press), **EQ-1** equalizer module, **CX-1** compressor module, **MD-1** modulated delay and **RS-1 Room Simulator** module.

Based in Santa Cruz, California, Universal Audio is well known for its vintage analog reproductions. With the recent acquisition of Kind of Loud Technologies, the company is focused on merging the best of analog and digital technology. The company is devoted to this endeavor, following its motto, "Analog Ears, Digital Minds." It was crucial to absolutely nail that trademark Universal Audio analog sound — and they did just that.



Ties to the company's Silicon Valley neighbors created a unique opportunity to develop software for a super DSP chip never before applied to professional audio applications. It's a scary-powerful processor that's probably overkill. The Floating Point Processor provides a distortion free, high resolution signal path and the single unpartitioned DSP chip provides optimal performance and flexibility thanks to four megabytes of 1200 megs per second on-board memory. Lots of ultra-fast memory means smoother reverbs and delay lines, and a dedicated bus mastered multi-channel DMA controller transfers data between the UAD-1 and the host without impacting the UAD-1 DSP or the host processor speed or performance.

Intrigued? We should think so. Naturally, you'll be wanting to talk to your Sweetwater Sales Engineer about all the additional features available with the UA Powered Plug-ins — of which there are many. You'll also get a special low Sweetwater price that will make owning this or any other UA product a no-brainer. You can also order any time, day or night simply by logging onto our Web site at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".



# Line 6 Vetta amp offers "point to point interactive modeling"

Nobody has been building amps with the latest modeling technology as long as the folks at **Line 6**. In fact, a good case could be made that they started the entire modeling amp revolution with the release of their original AxSys212. With the amazing success of each of the products that followed — including the best selling stompbox modelers — you had to wonder how they'd top these already impressive achievements. The answer is with the brand new **Line 6 Vetta** (\$2399.99 list).

Several years of research have resulted in the development of Line 6's latest generation of modeling, a process they call "Point to Point Interactive Modeling." This new technique allows for each unique Vetta model to be built with every bit as much care and attention to detail as the crème de la crème of hand wired amps, capturing more nuance than previously possible. Every carefully analyzed and modeled tonal element contains all the dynamic interactive details crucial to tone and feel. Even unique sonic contributions,



Line 6 Vetta

further and found that playing independent amp models at the same time with the ability to assign different completely routable stompboxes to each amp! On top of that, speaker cabinets are also totally independent. The crowning touch allows Vetta to magically manipulate your sound in such a way that the previously unimagined dream of studio double tracking could finally be realized on stage. Talk about mind blowing!

Each channel is essentially a complete rig, with your choice of amp models (any two at once), stompboxes (any three at once) and studio quality post-amp processing like reverb, compression, pitch shift and EQ — yes, all at once. Then there's the new Double Tracker that absolutely must be heard to be believed. And it just wouldn't be right if Line 6 didn't include a convenient line level output.

The optional (but to my way of thinking, mandatory) FBX pedal board is like having a whole crew of roadies ready to wheel out an entirely new collection of gear and hook it all up — and all in time for your very next note. With a backlit display that shows exactly where you are, and rugged steel stomp switches and twin expression pedals to give you complete control of where you're going, there's nothing like the Vetta available from any manufacturer.

Look, I grew up playing guitar. If an amp doesn't sound fantastic, I'm just not interested. So no matter how many bells and whistles a particular amp may have, it just doesn't matter if I play a note and I don't "hear the magic." If I play a note high up on the fingerboard and it doesn't sing out with all the heart and passion I put into it, you can just throw that amp into the pile called "tried, but didn't succeed."

Vetta amp models include such classics as the Fender 1961 Tweed Champ and 1953 Tweed Deluxe, the Fender 1964 Deluxe Reverb and '58 Bassman, both a 1961 Vox AC-15 and 1967 AC-30 with Top Boost, a ton of 1960s and 70s Marshall amps, Mesa Boogies, Budda Twinmaster and lots more we haven't got room to list. You also get a plethora of speaker configurations, from single 8-inch up to big



Marshall stacks and everything else in between. To top it all off, there are killer models of some of the very best modern and vintage effects (like the Arbiter Fuzz Face, Boss CE1 Chorus and Tycobrahe Octavia, to name but a few).

As you'd expect with an amp this well thought out and designed, it can be upgraded as new features become available via Flash RAM (talk about thoughtful). But the whole package wouldn't matter if it didn't have "the sound." And while die-hard purists may feel that no digital modeling will ever exactly capture the sound of a high end (and astronomically priced) tube amp, the Vetta comes closer than anything any company has come up with to this point in my humble opinion. Our ears may notice a tiny bit of difference under controlled studio conditions, but your audience won't — they'll be too busy lifting their jaws back up off the ground after hearing this amp.

So what more do you need to know? It's by Line 6, the people who pretty much invented the concept of the modeling amplifier. Got questions? Just ask your Sweetwater Sales Engineer. You'll also get a special low Sweetwater price from them on a Vetta of your own. Order today and you could be rocking the house by tomorrow with the Line 6 Vetta. You can also check in at our Web site for more information or to order a Vetta online 24 hours a day, seven days a week at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — *Michael Rief*

## The studio quality Line 6 Echo Pro

The Line 6 folks — ever known for their innovations — realized that delay effects were a critical part of both classic and modern tone shaping. When they released the **DL4 Delay Stompbox Modeler**, I was one of the first in line to get my hands on one and I can't imagine ever letting it out of my sight. Still, integrating a stompbox into my studio was problematic. Sure the Line 6 designers offered up a plug-in called the Echo Farm, but I wanted a high quality rackmount unit that served up all the sonic tricks of the DL4 with balanced ins and outs.

Introducing the **Echo Pro** from **Line 6** (\$699.99 list), a more sophisticated version of the DL4 that's perfect for integrating into your studio "bag of tricks." With Echo Pro, you get extensive MIDI features, analog bypass, expression pedal control and 99 Program memories for tone junkies who want total control and limitless options. The high-visibility displays let you know what's going on at all times and innovative tempo controls translate delay times and modulation rates from milliseconds or Hertz to BPM and back — simply tap a tempo or lock to MIDI Clock and dial in the perfect note rhythm to match any groove at any tempo.

Echo Pro features the latest 24-bit processing and A/D/A conversion based on such "must have" classics as the Maestro EP-1 Tube Echoplex, Maestro EP-3 Echoplex and my personal favorite, the Roland RE-101 Space Echo. You also get Line 6's exclusive Sweep Echo (a filter-swept delay) plus models of the Boss DM-2 Analog Delay, Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memoryman, Dynamic Delay (t.c. electronic 2290).



What's more there are ping-pong delay, Magnetic Platter Echo, a modern digital delay (with or without modulation), a tremendously cool stereo delay (different delay times on left and right signals), low res delay (down to 6-bits), auto volume echo (similar to using a volume pedal inline) and my all-time favorite, the Reverse ("xirdneH imil ekil tsu").

Want more? You got it with a kick-butt 60-second Loop Sampler. If you can't come up with dozens of ideas for songs based on just going through the presets, well maybe you should think of doing something less creative than music (like playing checkers). Naturally on an exceptional processor like this, you get both XLR (balanced) and 1/4 inch inputs and outputs with level controls, MIDI in and software selectable MIDI out/thru and a universal power supply. And unlike certain other delays we could name, the Echo Pro is a true stereo processor: What goes into either the left or right input gets processed independently (no mixing of the signals at any stage).

You probably already wanted a DL4 — or maybe you already own one — but the Echo Pro is truly the next step up the audio quality ladder. In the best of all possible worlds, I would certainly opt to own both! So call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for further information along with your special low Sweetwater pricing. Or just log onto "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)" to order any time day or night! — *J.M.*

Each unique Vetta sound is crafted with as much care and attention to detail as the best hand wired amps!

# Antares Vocal Producer lets you "sweeten to taste"

The heart of every great song is a great vocal sound. The new Antares Vocal Producer (\$599 list) combines the company's world-renowned Auto-Tune Pitch Correction and TEC-Award-winning Microphone Modeler technologies with state-of-the-art vocal processing modules to give you everything you need to create stunning vocal tracks in any musical style.

Live or in the studio, the AVP lets you instantly select from a large library of sounds, from gorgeously mellow to seriously twisted. Antares included factory presets for a wide variety of applications as well as an interface that makes it easy to create your own signature sounds. They've even included a selection of presets for instrumental and percussion tracks — now that's darn thoughtful.

The AVP features include the company's signature Auto-Tune realtime pitch correction which lets you correct the pitch of vocals (or even

want since virtually every major function is a button press away.

All too often the latest technological

tools are priced out of the reach of people like you or I, but the AVP proves that there are actually companies out there that want to get this kind of processing power into our hands without us having to take on a second job or get another mortgage on your house. Personally, my hat is off to the folks at Antares.

So call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for any additional information you may need or to order an AVP of your very own. You can also order 24/7 by logging on to [www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com). What could possibly be easier?

solo instruments), in real time, without distortion or any other weird digital artifacts, while preserving all of the expressive nuance of the original performance. Next up is the Antares Microphone Modeling, which lets you give your vocal tracks the characteristics of a variety of high-end studio mics as well as allowing you to adjust the proximity effect associated with mic distance. I've personally used this technology as a plug-in with enormously gratifying results — this is ear candy of the very finest quality. On top of all that, there's Antares's newest Analog Tube Modeling included to give your vocals (or anything else) the warmth of a classic tube preamp.

Now all of that would be impressive enough, but when you're hot, you're hot and the day the Antares engineers designed the AVP must have been a scorcher. How about a Variable Knee Compressor? Yes, a state-of-the-art dynamics processor with threshold, ratio, attack and decay controls as well as a continuously variable knee characteristic is built right in. What's more, there's also an integral Downward Expanding Gate with threshold and ratio controls that works independently of the compressor to eliminate noise and breath sounds.

**If you don't feel like programming, the AVP comes right out of the box with an extensive collection of high quality factory presets for a wide variety of vocal styles**

Okay, you're thinking that's all pretty overwhelming, but we're not through yet. There's a Variable Frequency De-Esser which tames vocal sibilance with threshold, ratio, attack and decay controls as well as a variable highpass frequency to match any vocal performance. And while they were at it, they included a flexible Parametric EQ so you can fine-tune your vocal sound with two independent bands of equalization that let you select from 6dB or 12 dB high or low cut, high or low shelving with variable slope, bandpass, notch and fully parametric peaking. The list goes on with Automatic Mono or Stereo Double Tracking — you can automatically mix a doubled track vocal into the AVP's main output or route it to a separate output for post-processing and mixing.

Naturally, with a product this deep you'd expect it to be fully programmable — and it is! Once you've created the perfect vocal sound for any particular track, every parameter can be saved as a preset for instant recall. What's more, if you don't feel like programming, the AVP comes right out of the box with an extensive collection of high quality factory presets for a wide variety of vocal styles. They've even included a selection of presets for instrumental and percussion tracks.

How about MIDI Automation? Every variable module parameter can be controlled via MIDI Automation? Every variable module parameter can be controlled via MIDI continuous controllers for realtime automation. Okay, this box is really totally over-the-top, but you don't need a degree in astrophysics to operate it. It's almost bonehead simple to use (though you can dig deep into all its features if you really want to). No scrolling through endless menus to find the parameter you

## Power Mac G4/867MHz

Seems like every time I think I have finally gotten the last computer I'll probably ever need, along comes the "latest and greatest" with features and performance that I end up feeling I can't live without. Now it's not that my 400MHz Power Mac G4 is a sloth — it's not — but when you figure that the new **Power Mac G4/867MHz** can process Photoshop files more than twice as fast as my 400MHz machine (and thus saving me valuable time) I figure it's worth the investment. On top of that, these new, faster Macs can record and playback more digital tracks from applications like Digital Performer 3.0 and many others.

Well, where does all this blazing speed come from? Naturally, part of the power is courtesy of the G4 Processor with Velocity Engine (also known as AltiVec), first introduced in the original line of Power Mac G4s. But the newest machines also feature 256K of on-chip L2 cache (running at the full 867MHz clock speed) as well as an additional 2MB of backside cache all connected to SDRAM and other necessary system hardware goodies over a 133MHz bus. All these numbers may not mean much to you or I, but the end result is serious, top-end performance — and all at a price that's really not much more than I plunked down for my original G4, which may be the most impressive stat of all.

There's a lot more I could tell you about this hot new (okay, let's use the term) supercomputer: 60GB of 7200rpm ATA hard drive storage, 10/100/1000Base-T Ethernet, four 64-bit PCI slots specially tweaked to deliver top performance, two USB and two FireWire ports and to top it all off, Apple's incredible SuperDrive (a feature which could easily fill an article all by itself).

There's more to this baby than I have room to tell you here, so may I suggest that you call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for additional information and special low pricing on the new G4/867MHz or any other Apple product. You can also order online 24/7 at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".





# Novation Supernova II and A-Station: Affordable analog

Remember when we first had access to digital synths? Almost overnight, everyone got rid of their old analog instruments, only to discover that while digital synthesis was more versatile (it did a much better job of imitating real acoustic instruments), it lacked the big, fat, beefy tones we came to expect from our analog machines. We wanted them back, but suddenly they were priced through the roof!



Enter **Novation**, a company that dedicated itself to rekindling the analog flame, but using more stable technologies that have since become available. The **Supernova II** (\$3499 list keyboard / \$2999 list rackmount) is built around the company's proprietary Analog Sound Modeling technology, so you can get those thick, fat sounds you've been missing. But since it's using new technology, you also get an incredible array of control features, 24-voice polyphony (expandable to up to 48-voices), over 1,000 programs and over 500 multiprograms — all of which means you won't run out of inspiration. Still, the massive processing capacity that makes the Supernova II so easy to use, sweeps away the boundaries to your musical expression, so whether you're crafting a specific sound in the studio or looking for an immediate response on stage, the synth works with you to create sounds of superb quality and intensity. And the finishing touch comes from the exquisite semi-weighted keyboard (with Aftertouch), which makes playing the Supernova II a uniquely expressive experience.

The Supernova II is built around Novation's proprietary Analog Sound Modeling technology, so you can get those thick, fat sounds you've been missing

Basically, the Supernova II does what all synthesizers should do: It makes it easy to create incredible, never-heard-before sounds. With its elegantly organized banks of knobs and sliders, you can use them all as the stepping stones to total freedom of expression. Common sense has been designed into the Supernova II: Whatever you want to do to a sound, a twist of a knob or the touch of a button gives you realtime tone shaping capabilities, with the display telling you exactly what is happening. At last, the technology is on your side — not fighting against you with endless unfathomable menus.

There are three oscillators per voice, two ring modulators and a noise generator. Up to six oscillators can be generated with no loss of polyphony when the special double saw waveform is used. What's even cooler is that you have FM capabilities available right along with the analog modeling with eight different FM routings available, with Modulation Matrix (with 130 possible routings) capable of modulating each of the three FM nodes. And naturally, with an instru-

ment this sophisticated, it's eight-part multi-timbral. As for filters, there are 12, 18 and 24 dB per octave resonant filters, configurable in Low Pass, High Pass and Band Pass modes, plus nine special dual type filters. All filters also feature an overdrive control, capable of effects from subtle saturation to dirty overdrive. Filter Bypass mode allows noise to be independently filtered and is ideal for the creation of drum sounds.

The instrument's LFO capabilities and complex envelope structures are way too deep for us to get into here, but suffice to say you have all the control you need to shape exactly the sound you're after. But then you can also sweeten that sound with a sophisticated effects processor which offers up distortion, comb filter, EQ, reverb, chorus / flanger / phaser / ensemble / rotary speaker, delay and panning effects for each program. There are a total of 57 effects available simultaneously — seven effects for each of the 8 parts of a performance or program, plus one global 42-band Vocoder (with Sibilance modes and Spectrum Analyzer no less). Yup, you can have a different reverb on each part, a different delay on each part, a different chorus etc.

Oh, and did we mention the built in arpeggiator with 128 preset polyphonic and 128 preset monophonic patterns. In addition, there are 384 user-programmable arpeggiators: 192 mono and 192 polyphonic. Eight arpeggiators are available simultaneously in Performance mode. All this plus lots of expan-



sion capabilities and you're in sonic heaven!

But the Supernova isn't the only synth Novation has up its collective sleeve. Along with a host of other terrific instruments which we don't have space to cover, there's the brand new **Novation A-Station**, a 1U analog modeling module with a list price of just \$699! (Your Sweetwater price will be lower, of course.) With eight-voice polyphony, stereo inputs for processing external signals, a pattern-based arpeggiator, 25 knobs that also transmit MIDI data, a full-featured multi-effects processor (with all the usual bells and whistles) plus a 12-band vocoder, the A-Station is quite the sound making machine at a price that's almost unbelievable!

Just before press time, we had our first opportunity to actually hear this hot new module, and we were all thinking the same thing: At such a low list price, who wouldn't want that great big, fat analog synth sound in our racks? It's got terrific sounds, real knobs and switches (no menus, hooray!) and an incredibly low price. As Novation itself asks: "What else do you want?"

For more information on either the Supernova II keyboard or rack or the A-Station module, you need to give your Sweetwater Sales Engineer a call right now. Better yet, order up your choice of any of the powerful, versatile Novation synths right now online at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)". — *Bill Hoover*



## HHB CDR830 BurnIT CD Recorder

Just a few years ago, getting a CD burned was costly and time consuming. You'd have to either drive across town or mail your DAT to one of the special order houses, shell out some significant cash and wait for your disc to be ready. Those days are over forever. Today, for about the same price as we used to pay for a quality cassette recorder (or less) we can buy a CD burner and have a finished disc in minutes rather than days or weeks. The latest is the wallet-friendly **HHB CDR830 BurnIT CD Recorder** (\$699 list). Featuring high precision 24-bit A/D and D/A converters, the CDR830 BurnIT delivers recordings of the highest possible quality. The precise design of the CD laser assembly means that every single CD-R and CD-RW disc written by the BurnIT is exceptionally accurate, providing greater compatibility with other CD players and recorders yet it's solidly enough even for pro studio use.

It's a breeze to record from CD, DAT, MD or hard disk using the SCMS-free digital input. A built-in sample rate converter accepts sampling rates from 32kHz to 48kHz. Call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for additional information and your special low pricing on the HHB BurnIT. If you're reading this in the middle of the night, you can order 24/7 on our Web site at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".

TALK TO AN EXPERT! Our Sales Engineers know their stuff and can help you select exactly the right gear!

In the last few issues, I've featured several of our valued manufacturer and factory representative partners. I'll continue to include their perspectives in future issues, but for now I'd like to turn the focus back inside of Sweetwater and on a key person and the department he manages.

Our focus today will be on **Eryk Foss**, our Service Department Manager and the potentially huge impact his department can have on you as a Sweetwater customer. It's important to recognize this important department because it's absolutely unique in the industry in terms of comprehensiveness and quality. As you probably know, only a handful of retailers have service departments and I'm not aware of even a single one that has a full-time dedicated technical support staff. This is what makes Eryk's impact at Sweetwater so significant to us — and to you.

Eryk comes to us from Middleton, Idaho where he was doing something distinctly non-music related. When Eryk first approached us, he was interested in a position as a Sales Engineer. I had to ask him why he'd consider leaving an upper level management position with years invested in a career to move his wife and himself to Fort Wayne, only to start all over in a brand new profession. His response was one that I'm sure a lot of you can relate to: He'd always loved music and wanted to make his profession something he was passionate about. I discovered that his parents were both music educators and that he'd studied music history, theory and performance in college. I also learned that he continued to perform as a guitarist and vocalist and was teaching piano and guitar to a small group of students. He was familiar with both Macs and PCs and had a home studio. Clearly, he was one of us!

Following a very strong interview, I put the wheels in motion to bring Eryk to Sweetwater to join the sales team. However, during this timeframe, I learned that we would soon be in the market for a Service Manager. After wrestling with myself as to whether or not I wanted to lose Eryk's talents in the Sales Department, I decided that he really needed to be considered for the Service Manager position. Here, he would be able to use his background to benefit the whole company and his customer-oriented perspective seemed to be a great fit for a critical position like this. Poor Eryk had to go through another round of interviews on the phone. To his credit, he was hired without even having to make another trip to Fort Wayne!

One of the things we quickly grew to like best about him was his ability to work "outside the lines" and his incredible determination to do whatever it took to get the job done. Our goal isn't just to fix things or answer questions but to do whatever was necessary to make our customers happy. Internally, we define this as the difference between fixing the problem and fixing the customer.



Basically the Service Department can be divided into three interrelated components: Tech Support, Repairs (bench technicians), and Installations (putting memory in keyboards, configuring HD recording systems etc.).

I asked Eryk about his thoughts on customer service and the role his department plays in making Sweetwater unique in our industry. Here's what he had to say: "My department pulls together the best talent in the whole building to get problems solved for customers. This sometimes involves our Tech Support team working closely with the Sales Engineer who sold the

system to ensure that our customers get exactly what they wanted out of their systems. It might even mean utilizing our in-house recording studio to test a product out in a real world situation."

He went on to say, "There is also something unique about having our repair technicians sitting right next to our Tech Support crew. Because we actually fix the gear in-house we're immediately able to give our customers the benefit of what we learn in resolving their specific issues. As a department, we attempt to tackle each problem immediately. There is nothing that sits for even a half hour before being attacked. Additionally, we have a high caliber team that will custom configure and install everything we sell, for both Macs and PCs. For example, we've put together and tested more ProTools and other hard disk systems than anybody else and do it the right way. We don't just load software, but run tests to ensure the whole system works when our customers take it out of the box."

He noted that "if a customer calls Tech Support before 3 P.M., we guarantee a callback before the end of the day. There's also a strong commitment to work with the customer until the issue is solved, even if it involves conference calls to manufacturers to get the job done."

While service and technical support (for life) may not be issues you initially think about when selecting gear, they can be the difference between getting a session done and disappointing a key client. When you work with Sweetwater, you not only get a knowledgeable Sales Engineer on the front end who can help you decide which products best fit your needs but also be confident that we'll do whatever it takes to make sure you're actually able to use the gear effectively after you put it in your studio or on stage. Ultimately, it's not about the gear; it's about making music. With the right equipment configured for your specific needs, you can focus on the really important stuff and turn your creativity loose!

Rock and Roll! — J.R., V.P. of Sales



## 24-Hour SweetCare™ Support and Care

**SweetCare™** is one of the most comprehensive approaches to technical support options in the music industry. Whether on the web or in person, the commitment to helping customers is our passion. 23 years of experience with advanced music technology is at your disposal 24/7 via our online **SweetCare™ Support and Care Center** or in person six days a week with new extended hours on Saturdays. With **SweetCare™**, our customers have access to in-depth articles, live media and the most complete knowledge base of musical and technical information available anywhere. We've also created a new online forum, where you can discuss your ideas, insights and issues with the top minds and artists in pro audio.

If the topic or issue you're confronting isn't addressed online, you can reach one of our Service Techs and easily get the info you need — right over the phone at (800) 222-4700! And we're **factory authorized** to service and repair every item we sell, right down to the component level. What's more, we have one of the fastest turn-around times in the industry!

Take a few minutes to check out the 24 Hour **SweetCare™ Support and Care Center** today at [www.Sweetwater.com/support](http://www.Sweetwater.com/support). Experience our dedicated approach to taking total care of you, our customers.

## Killer pricing on Alesis MasterLink

There are times that procrastination can actually be a good thing (though I know I'll never convince my wife or my boss of that). But this is one of those times! See, I have been lusting after an **Alesis MasterLink**

**ML9600** for a long time now, but there always seemed to be some other item I really needed for my studio to complete a particular project, so I just kept putting off buying one.

So here's the great news: Sweetwater just bought a truckload of these amazing units at an unheard of price, and they're passing the savings on to their

customers. What that means is there has never been a better time than right now to get your hands on a hard disk recorder that can record a 24-bit / 96kHz signal, bend, fold, spindle or mutilate it and then burn it onto a CD! All the tools you need are built right in, so call your Sales Engineer right now or order 24/7 online at "[www.sweetwater.com](http://www.sweetwater.com)".





I'm sure most of you read my column in the last issue of *Sweet Notes* where I raved about MOTU's hot new 828 FireWire Interface. What you don't know is that the article had to get cut down to fit onto one page due to our coverage of the Summer NAMM Show. Meanwhile, I'll pick up this issue where I left off.

I did mention that the MOTU 828 ships with the company's excellent, full-featured, 24-bit AudioDesk software (Macs only, sorry) at no extra charge, but if you're truly serious about your audio (and come on, why bother otherwise?), you'll be running MOTU's new **Digital Performer 3.0** software on your Mac. Now I'm just one guy, but I've been involved with audio since I was 19 years old (which was longer ago than I care to think about) and it is my opinion that no hardware or software product has ever come down the pike that can compare feature for feature with DP3. True, there's a bit of a learning curve (which you'd have to expect), but this is one astounding piece of software that can do anything you could possibly ask of it — and plenty more!

Ready to start producing true 5.1 surround audio? No problem, since DP3 was



Interestingly, as I was writing this column, MOTU issued a press release with some pretty impressive stats. While those of us with "older" Macs — single processor G3s and G4s — can easily record and playback 16 or 24 tracks (or more) via DP3 on our machines with plenty of plug-in processing, the newest Macs, like Apple Computer's 800 MHz dual-processor G4 Power Macintosh (G4 MP/800) can deliver over 100 tracks! MOTU's test runs were on a completely "native" system, with the Mac interfacing with a MOTU 2408mkII where the computer handles all of the real-time mixing and processing. With this configuration, DP3 was

able to play back 128 tracks of 16-bit, 44.1 kHz audio with eight bands of parametric EQ and dynamics processing on every track. This breaks down as follows: 128 audio voices, 1024 bands of EQ and 128 dynamics processors. All processing is calculated with 32-bit floating point precision. If you don't need all that processing, you can easily go above and beyond 128 tracks. Now this is truly mind-boggling!

Before I get off the subject, I cannot possibly discuss DP3 without mentioning the quality of its manuals. These days, most product manuals seem to be left over cold war documents in severe need of decrypting. I won't name names, but I recently cracked open a manual from a major manufacturer and had to put it down within minutes — I thought my head would explode! How can a company spend so much time developing an excellent product, and then turn around and give responsibility for producing the documentation to what had to be either aliens from the Planet Zognor or a group of writers that are having some very nasty acid flashbacks?

Since I've already discussed the MOTU 828 in our last issue and DP3 in this issue, I hope you read Brad Lyons' excellent article on Glyph Technologies products last issue, which explained just why all hard drives are not created equal. Well, in the time since that issue hit your mailboxes, Glyph unveiled the impressive new **M-Project**, designed specifically to be used with the MOTU 828. There's more on the M-Project on Page 4, but what I liked was how well it integrates with the 828. Basically, you hook a FireWire cable into your computer's FireWire port, plug that into the M-Project, then run a second cable to your MOTU 828 and you're ready to record onto either the 40 or 80 gigabyte configurations, which allow you to record, mix and edit up to 420 minutes of 24-track audio at 24-bit. All this plus Glyph's super 24-hour advance replacement warranty. If, like me, you're using the 828 in your studio, Glyph's M-Project makes the perfect complement for safe, reliable storage of your precious audio.

On to a completely different subject. Though I grew up playing guitar and performing material by Hendrix, Cream, The Who and other '60s and early '70s bands, I also did gigs with my father, who just happens to be a terrific keyboard player. I'd normally fill in whenever his guitar player couldn't make it. We played all the standards like "Misty" and my personal favorite, "Tennessee Waltz". While that's light years away from what my rock band was playing, I will forever be in debt to my dad for introducing me to a whole world of music that I might not otherwise have been exposed to, with its supple melody lines, rich harmonies and elegant arrangements. To this day, my dad — now in his 80s — plays some of that material (along with original compositions) on a high end

Yamaha PSR keyboard I bought him and he has a ball. I love to see his smile when he's really lost in the music.

All of this leads me to mentioning that I got the opportunity to hear some tracks off Chuck Surack's new self-produced album of standards and was knocked out by both the sonics and his performance. I'd encourage you to read Chuck's account of tracking the latest album on Page 5. You can also follow the URL there and hear one of the pieces for yourself. Who knows, you might be surprised to find that you like this music as much as I do.

Before I sign off until next issue, I hope you'll forgive me for mentioning that I just recently lost my very best friend, Sam, a 15-year-old labrador/springer mix, after a five-month bout with cancer. It's always a sad experience to lose a loved one, but I have to say that thanks to my music and the support of my family and friends, I was able

to get through this tough time. Sometimes we forget that not everyone has the ability to channel their emotions into their music. To those of you there who have a family member or even a pet who's ill, my heart goes out to you. To those of you who are working through your own health problems I say hang in there. With the help of our music, we can get through even the toughest times. I've said this before and it's worth repeating: It's great to have the latest digital multitrack or synth or whatever. But without the music, it's just a pile of scrap metal and plastic. So let's keep making music.



built from the ground up to handle surround sound — that is, it's not just a feature that the engineering team tacked on at some point and then hoped for the best. If you just want to stick with creating stereo masters, it's nice to know that 5.1 capabilities are there waiting for you when you decide to take the plunge. Personally, my studio is not at the 5.1 stage, though my living room home theater system is, and the sound is nothing short of fantastic.

I'm pretty certain that it will still be a few more years before everyone has the time and money to go surround in their project studios (though pro facilities can't afford to wait around and most have already upgraded). Considering the fact that you'll need additional amplification and monitors and very likely a new mixer, it's understandable that you have other priorities. But the bottom line is that when you *do* go 5.1 — and you will — Digital Performer is ready to go with you without any additional software upgrades.

How about plug-ins? Those nifty little applications that started out as a novelty item and have turned out to be indispensable in our studios. Well, DP3 ships with some of the very best right out of the box. I'm talking about performance that rivals some state of the art hardware out there. You start with basic needs like the versatile eVerb (can any-

one even imagine recordings made without quality reverb these days?) which can go toe-to-toe with my expensive rackmount unit. Next up there are pro quality dynamics plug-ins like the MasterWorks Compressor, Gate and Limiter, plus time-based effects like Echo, Chorus, Phaser and Flanger — all excellent! Naturally there's a full complement of tone-shaping plug-ins like an 8-Band Parametric EQ, Multimode Filter and my personal favorite, the PreAmp 1 which simulates everything from subtle tube warmth to dramatic distortion effects.

There are plenty more, but I don't have space to get into all of them here. What's important to note is that these plug-ins are MOTU Audio System format (MAS) and can be used to process audio in real time during playback. To add to DP3's capabilities, you can also use any TDM-compatible or Adobe Premiere compatible plug-ins (TDM plug-ins require additional Digidesign hardware to run in real time). Premiere plug-ins cannot operate in real time, but that's no big deal. It's just great that DP3 can use them, particularly since I have many third party Premiere plug-ins already installed in my Mac.



**"With a new dual processor Mac and a MOTU 2408 interface, Digital Performer 3.0 was able to play back 128 tracks of 16-bit 44.1kHz audio!"**

## inside THIS ISSUE

- **MACKIE'S AFFORDABLE MDR24/96**
- **ROLAND FANTOM KEYBOARD**
- **STEINBERG HOUSTON and HALION**
  - **GROOVE TUBES VIPRE**
  - **GIBSON GOLDTONE AMPS**
- **LINE 6 GOODIES • BLUE MICS**  
*and much more!*



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# EMPLOYEE PROFILE

**Name:** JEFFREY GREEN

**Position at SSI:** Senior Sales Engineer

**Start Date:** 1/25/93 **Hired as:** Sales intern

**Education:** Bachelor of Music, Music Engineering Technology Program, Ball State University

**What was your occupation before coming to Sweetwater?** I started at Sweetwater right out of college  
**Foreign Languages:** A little Spanish (just enough to get into trouble).

**Technical Strengths:** My biggest strengths are MIDI applications: sequencing, keyboards, controllers, etc.

**Instruments you play:** My primary instrument is the cello, but I also play guitar, bass, keyboards, hand percussion.

**Gear you Own:** I have accumulated a substantial home studio. I have a MOTU 2408-based Mac G3 with a Midi Express XT, an iBook, AKG C4000, a 1972 cream Arp Odyssey, Korg MS2000R, Nordlead, Quasimidi 309, Alesis Studio 32, Roland SP808, DR202, Korg Kaoss Pad, Mackie HR824 monitors, Nord Micro-Modular, Yamaha EX5R, Yamaha WX7, Digitech GSP2101, guitars, basses, cello, a million pieces of software, and my pride and joy, a custom 5-string electric/MIDI cello made by Eric Jensen in Seattle, I use to drive most of this stuff.

**Other stuff we should know about you: (hobbies, interests, etc.):** First and foremost, I enjoy spending time with my wife Jen, my daughter Zoe (who's 5) and my son Griffin (1 year). Besides all things musical, I enjoy reading and studying philosophy, science, modern art and poetry. I've always played basketball, which fits in nicely with our Indiana location.

**Personal Motto:** He who puts up with insult invites injury (I got this in a fortune cookie once and it just seemed to have stuck with me).



**Favorite Magazine:** Grooves, Straight No Chaser, Discover

**Real Life Hero:** My father is the most unselfish and hardest working person I know; he displays true integrity in everything he does.

**Guilty pleasure of choice (ex. watching Gilligan's Island reruns, etc.):** Eating too much chocolate in one sitting.

**How would your boss describe you?** Does a good job of taking care of clients, works hard, is dependable and consistent.

**What did you dream about doing for a living when you were growing up?** No surprise, a rock star

**What in your life best prepared you for the work you do here at Sweetwater?** The Music Engineering degree at Ball State was intensive and multi-faceted, which required the discipline to organize my time and multi-task.

**What do you enjoy most about being part of the Sweetwater Team?** Helping people realize their dreams as well as meeting and developing relationships with people from different background and cultures.

**What is the most important thing you've learned at Sweetwater?** How to communicate effectively with people.

**Describe the most dramatic situation in which you provided the "Sweetwater Difference" for a customer or**

**the most unusual/creative solution to a problem:** Over a very intense two week period I (along with assistance from a number of colleagues) designed, tested, delivered and installed a very large and sophisticated studio half way across the country with a large amount of somewhat unknown routings and switching devices to be able to go between two digital mixers and a mountain of digital recorders and processing devices. We met the customer's deadline with a fully functional studio in what I previously would have considered an impossible timeframe.