INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

OASYS: The Ultimate All-in-One Music Studio

Total musical fulfillment. Isn't that what we're all after? And though technology has brought us powerful tools, we became musicians to make music first and foremost. That's exactly where the phenomenal Korg **OASYS** comes in. It places an all-in-one music studio at your fingertips. Imagine being able to remain at your keyboard while you compose a song, work out and record the ideal vocal track, add a killer guitar solo to the chorus, mix and edit audio and MIDI with the flexibility only computer DAWs used to offer, and even master and burn a CD. With OASYS you don't need a computer, outboard effects, a recorder… it handles all the details for you. No other workstation offers such total integration of the creative and recording processes!

From OASYS's huge 10.4″ TouchView display you have fingertip control of three distinct and powerful synth engines, amazing multi-effects processors, a new generation of KARMA technology, and classic Korg Wave Sequencing and Vector Synthesis control. Plus, OASYS packs a full-blown 16-track hard disk audio recorder that's completely integrated with its MIDI sequencer! From concept to finished product, it's all in OASYS.

Ibanez Arrives at Sweetwater

Here at Sweetwater, we often say our customers really run the company. For example, when you asked for guitars, we responded by building one of the largest inventories of electric and acoustic guitars and basses in the country. Lately, we've been getting a lot of requests for Ibanez guitars, and we listened: We're proud to announce that Ibanez has joined the Sweetwater family in a big way!

It may seem as if Ibanez got its start in the 1970s by building incredibly accurate copies of the hottest guitar models. While it's true that at one point the company did carve out a fairly significant market-share by producing replicas of famous instruments (and there are some who believe that these re-creations were better than the originals), Ibanez was actually founded as Hoshino Gakki Ten in 1909!

from the editor

Full Circle

I feel a bit like the title character in the old sitcom *Welcome Back Kotter*! (Yeah, I admit I'm old enough to remember that show.) After seven years seeking fame and fortune elsewhere (but not quite finding either, especially the fortune part), I find myself back at Sweetwater.

I was first employed at Sweetwater in 1992 as a Sales Engineer; I was the sixth member of the sales team, although a few guys had come and gone before me. While I was too late to work from Chuck's house, I did arrive in time to work out of the original tiny building here at 5335 Bass Road. During my time with the company, I worked my way up to Senior Sales Engineer, launched the Sweetwater University Sales Engineer training program, and eventually moved into the Marketing Department, where I wrote the majority of the first big *ProGear* Directory, worked on *SweetNotes*, contributed to the website, launched *InSync* — which Sweetwater still publishes to this day — and pretty much did everything else marketing-related — there were only a couple of us in the Marketing Department at the time. I left Sweetwater in 1998 to become the Senior Technical Editor at *Keyboard* magazine and later served as Editor-in-Chief at *EQ* magazine.

So why am I before you now typing these words? Because nothing is constant except change, and the path of life took twists and turns that brought me to this place. And I'm thrilled to be here!

Mitch Gallagher
Editorial Director
mitch_gallagher@sweetwater.com

Coming back to Sweetwater has been a homecoming of sorts; I have many friends here. But beyond that, Sweetwater is simply an amazing place to work. The company operates on an incredibly high level in all departments — Sales, Shipping, Service/Support, Marketing, Purchasing, Accounting, Reception — all for one reason: to provide you with the best possible gear purchasing experience. Being around people who are so dedicated and talented is nothing short of inspiring and exhilarating for me. There's just no place like Sweetwater, and I'm honored to once again be a part of this organization.

In my capacity as Editorial Director, you'll be seeing a lot of me (I hope you think that's a good thing) in *SweetNotes*, the *ProGear* Directories, online — anywhere Sweetwater is, you'll find me or my words. We have lots of cool ideas lined up for *SweetNotes* and our other publications, all designed to give you the information you need about the equipment we all love. We're going to have some fun, and we're all going to learn a lot.

Enjoy this issue of *SweetNotes*. Feel free to drop me a line if you have comments or suggestions!

Hot Off The Press!

Watch the mail for your copy of **ProGear Spring 2005**, our new 330-plus page directory packed with the latest pro audio and recording gear plus guitars, keyboards and thousands more audio essentials!

This new directory is even more interactive than before, with hundreds of references to our website, where you'll find audio and video demos, additional images, and application information. We've expanded the "Specs" sections so you can check vital statistics and compare different models. Plus, there are even more personal gear recommendations from our award-winning Sales Engineers.

Most copies of *ProGear* should arrive in the next few weeks. If you don't receive yours, log on to **www.sweetwater.com/progeardirectory**. We'll get one on its way to you right away. If you just can't wait you can even download the directory in PDF format. Then check out the gear, visit our website, start your wish list, and call us!

Palmtop Recording Catches Fire

Need a FireWire interface that fits in the palm of your hand, yet can handle all the input and output needs of your project studio? The PreSonus **FIREBOX** supports 6-channel simultaneous recording, which means you can hook up your vocal mic, an electric guitar or bass, a stereo keyboard, and a drum machine, and capture everything live. That's the highest input count of anything this compact! Plus, the FIREBOX has eight audio outs (six analog and two digital), so you can send signal to your monitors, create several cue mixes, and even run a stereo master track at the same time.

The two front-panel mic/line inputs have PreSonus preamps and phantom power, so they can accept any type of mic: ribbon, dynamic, or condenser. A bonus is the control panel software that lets you boost any channel's input gain by 12dB, making it easy to adjust for whatever gear you might use. With 24-bit/96kHz A/D converters the FIREBOX is already set up for high-definition recording. Two line inputs plus stereo S/PDIF I/O fill out the back panel.

PreSonus has included software to make this a complete recording system. The bundled Cubase LE has 48-track audio capacity plus MIDI recording, VST effects, and support for VSTi instruments. Whether you're going mobile with your laptop or sitting down in your studio, the FIREBOX wraps up your audio in one affordable package! Pay a visit to www.sweetwater.com/firebox to learn more.

>> **PreSonus FIREBOX • Sweetwater price $399.97•**
www.sweetwater.com/firebox

Optional Sidecar

digidesign

VENUE Rocks the Live Sound World

It seems that the last bastion of analog console holdouts exists in the field of live sound reinforcement. Not because you can't teach an old sound-dog new tricks, but due to the immediacy of live performance. A FOH engineer doesn't have time to scroll through multiple menus on an LCD display. Changes have to be quick and intuitive. The other main issue is that with digital consoles, it's an all or nothing situation. There are no work-around solutions like there are with an analog desk. If the host computer goes down, everything goes down. But that hasn't stopped the industry from making the switch to manufacturing digital consoles for live performance — the most recent and exciting entry into the realm of live sound reinforcement comes from Digidesign and their revolutionary **VENUE** system.

When it comes to live sound, the question is: does it make sense for Digidesign to enter this arena (so to speak)? The answer? Oh yeah! It doesn't take much thought to realize that ancillary to pretty much every FOH console on the pro circuit is a Pro Tools | HD rig to capture the performances for that *Live At…* CD. So why not have consoles that can tie everything together seamlessly? That's exactly what Digidesign's VENUE does.

About Digidesign VENUE
Applying the same user-focused thinking that made Pro Tools the undisputed leader in digital recording, VENUE was designed with input from a wide variety of seasoned live sound professionals to meet the specialized and stringent requirements of modern sound reinforcement. The result is a purpose-built, dedicated modular system that delivers studio-grade sound quality, maximum reliability, and unprecedented flexibility at an affordable price.

Eliminating the need for extensive FOH and monitor effects racks, VENUE's D-Show console supports myriad professional DSP effects plug-ins, allowing virtually unlimited possibilities for creative sound processing and original mixes. Internal 48-bit processing provides ultra-high resolution for the onboard EQ and Dynamics sections, and offers uncompromised headroom on mix busses. The live sound engineer can easily take advantage of the very same effects algorithms used in professional Pro Tools recording studios, bringing the sound of the studio to the concert hall. This significantly expands the operator's sonic palette while simultaneously eliminating reliance on outboard gear and the potential for hum, buzz, and noise that such gear often introduces.

True to Digidesign's history of innovation, VENUE is the only live sound mixing environment to feature an optional direct link to industry-standard Pro Tools systems — without requiring separate converters or digital I/O peripherals. This enables operators to seamlessly integrate a Pro Tools workstation with the D-Show console to record a show or augment a live performance with Pro Tools playback. VENUE also supports offline configuration, maximizing productivity by enabling operators to prep a system on a laptop prior to a show, and then simply upload the data to D-Show's embedded computer upon arrival.

Maximum Reliability
Concerned about a digital system going down during a live performance? Don't be. VENUE features multiple redundant subsystems to ensure that audio continues to pass, even in the unlikely event of a system restart. Moreover, the operator retains complete control over channel faders and mutes during the unlikely event of a failure of the host computer — an industry first!

What's Included
Every VENUE live sound system includes over $6300 of the most coveted Digidesign and development partner TDM effects processing plug-ins. To help kick things off, the following plug-ins are included with every VENUE live sound system as part of the VENUEpack plug-in promotion.

- Focusrite d2 EQ and d3 compressor
- Pultec EQ bundle (MEQ-5, EQP-1, and EQH-2 EQ)
- Digidesign Impact and Smack! compressors and Reverb One and ReVibe reverbs
- Bomb Factory BF2-A, BF-3A, Slightly Rude Compressor, and Purple Audio MC77 compressors, and moogerfooger bundle (Ring Modulator, Lowpass Filter, Analog Delay, and 12-Stage Phaser)

Plus, if you purchase an additional D-Show mix engine DSP card, you'll also receive VENUEpack Pro free (a $3265 value):

- Focusrite Forte Suite channel strip
- Line 6 Amp Farm and Echo Farm
- Eventide H949 Harmonizer
- Bomb Factory JOEMEEK bundle (SC2 Photo Optical Compressor and VC5 Meequalizer) Fairchild bundle (Fairchild 660 and 670), and Voce Bundle (Voce Spin and Chorus/Vibrato)

Does VENUE Deliver?
Prior to its release, VENUE was tested mercilessly in "combat" on a variety of tours — we're talking top national acts with sound run by the most demanding FOH engineers in the biz. As expected, VENUE came through with flying colors in roadworthiness, sound quality, and ease of use. Twenty-year FOH veterans who were accustomed to analog desks were able to learn their way around the D-Show console in less than two hours and run their shows flawlessly. But it wasn't just the power and flexibility of VENUE they found amazing — the sound quality absolutely blew them away — as it will you.

For more information on the revolutionary new VENUE, contact your Sweetwater Sales Engineer at 800-222-4700.

>> **Digidesign VENUE**
Sweetwater price: CALL

Conduct Your Own Orchestra

MOTU's new **Symphonic Instrument** plug-in proves that the days of paying big bucks for orchestral sounds are over. This plug-in gives you easy access to an enormous 8GB library of quality orchestra sounds for composing, sequencing, and rendering realistic orchestral performances. Plus, Symphonic Instrument includes a stunning convolution reverb to provide realistic settings for your orchestral passages.

The heart of any sample collection is the sounds, and Symphonic Instrument is guaranteed to please. It's loaded with solo instruments and woodwind (including saxes), brass, and string sections, plus orchestras and choirs. There's orchestral percussion and mallets, Steinway and Yamaha grand pianos, Baroque and cathedral pipe organs, harps, classical guitar, and many historic instruments including lute, recorder, crumhorn, and more. Symphonic Instrument is driven by the same 32-bit UVI engine that powers the MOTU MachFive universal sampler.

The plug-in is 16-part multitimbral per instance, and each part is editable with an envelope, an LFO, two filters, filter envelope, tone controls, pitch controls, and velocity response. This programming flexibility means that you can duplicate a variety of playing styles.

A first for symphonic instrument plug-ins is the built-in convolution reverb that allows you to place your ensemble in authentic acoustic spaces, from sound stages to renowned concert halls to majestic cathedrals. You can adjust the sampled spaces to your taste with control of pre-delay, reverb time, high-pass and low-pass damping, and wet/direct balance.

If you want to do more advanced layering and programming, load the samples directly into MachFive to create complex layers, splits, and stacks. You can take advantage of MachFive's Expert Mode to help you design your own dynamic instruments and ensembles.

The Symphonic Instrument can be used with any compatible Mac® or PC host application (VST, Audio Units, DXi, MAS, and RTAS). With stunning sound, a huge library of sounds, flexibility, and unbeatable price, you can't go wrong!

>> **Symphonic Instrument • Sweetwater price $279.97**
www.sweetwater.com/symphinst

A Virus Your Computer Will Love

Software synths are great, but you have to give up the feel of hardware controls and carefully monitor your CPU use to run them. Likewise, you might love the character of hardware synths but find they have limited user interfaces and storage capability. Now Access has blended the two with their new **VIRUS Total Integration** synthesizers. The new TI synths link to your computer with VIRUSControl companion software, which ports the hardware into your host sequencer for use as a VST/AU instrument, simultaneously offering 2-way audio and MIDI connectivity, control surface functionality, editor and librarian functions, and more.

New synth features include greatly increased 80-voice polyphony, two new oscillator types, a per-patch programmable arpeggiator, delay/reverb effects, and more. The new VIRUS hardware has 24-bit/192kHz balanced analog inputs, S/PDIF I/O, and MIDI in and out ports and could become the main audio and MIDI center for your entire rig. You can choose the model with 61 semi-weighted keys with velocity and aftertouch sensitivity, wood sides, and a bright, illuminated logo on the back. Or go for the **VIRUS TI Desktop**, with a flip-back I/O panel and 4U rackmounting kit. The **VIRUS TI Polar** is a beautiful all-white 37-key version. Jump online to www.sweetwater.com/virusti to learn more!

>> **Access Virus TI Polar • Sweetwater price $2560.97**
>> **Access Virus TI Desktop • Sweetwater price $1895.97**

His book impressed us so much, we hired him!

We think that Mitch Gallagher's **Pro Tools Clinic**: **Demystifying LE for Macintosh and Windows** is the best Pro Tools LE book available, period. We also know that Mitch is one of the foremost experts on pro audio and music technology — as well as one of the best writers on the topic out there. In fact, when we recently had the chance to hire him as Editorial Director to head up our publications, we jumped at it.
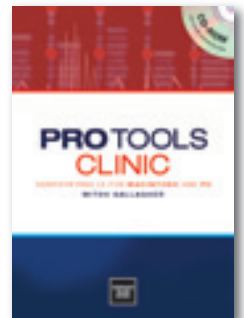
But now we face a dilemma. Since Mitch works here, you might think we're simply flattering him by featuring his book in this newsletter. But nothing could be farther from the truth. We'll repeat: This is simply the best Pro Tools book out there.

With no prior knowledge whatsoever, you'll learn the ins and outs of music production in Pro Tools LE. Mitch generously gives you the benefit of his 25 years in the music business as a studio musician, recording engineer, and music technology expert. You'll appreciate his clear and straightforward writing (honed during his years as editor/writer for *Keyboard* and *EQ* magazines) and the 700-plus screenshots, tutorials, and real-world audio examples he provides. These aren't just "listen to this" examples, these are real tracks that you'll be working on along with Mitch, learning Pro Tools in easy step-by-step fashion.

With Mitch Gallagher as your mentor, all you have to do is sit down at your DAW with *Pro Tools Clinic* and begin — by the time you finish, you'll know how to record, edit, and mix music professionally in Pro Tools LE.

>> **PTClinic • Sweetwater price $24.95**
www.sweetwater.com/ptclinic

KORG

OASYS **KORG**

Visit our exclusive website at www.sweetwater.com/oasys. You'll find audio and video demos, images, and loads of other info. While you're there, check out our exclusive OASYS Forum, where the engineers who actually designed OASYS often answer questions!

— OASYS continued from Page 1

The High Definition PCM synth is like having a built-in turbo-charged Triton. It delivers waveforms with amazing sonic clarity and presence. The piano sound alone rivals anything you'd hear from a multi-gigabyte soft sampler. Fueling this engine is a staggering 627MB wave library loaded with ultra-realistic acoustic instruments and electronic sounds.

OASYS also features Korg's powerful Open Sampling System. You can sample and resample in any mode, sample through effects, and much more, with powerful editing tools to manipulate your samples as you wish. An easy Auto-Setup function makes all the right sampling settings for you with the press of a finger. Stock sampling memory is over 200MB and can be increased to 512MB without requiring any additional RAM (by choosing to not load the EXs-1 Expansion ROM data).

The state-of-the-art AL-1 virtual analog synth engine serves up searing leads, thick pads, ripping bass lines and shimmering atmospheres. This engine truly recreates all the power and glory of great analog synths! It's totally tweakable with multiple envelope generators, LFOs, multi-mode filters and more, all controlled from the TouchView screen.

Whether you want gospel sweetness or rock and roll grit, you'll hear it with the CX-3 modeled tonewheel organ. It cranks out the most accurate sounding classic organ sounds ever heard, with dual drawbar sets plus control over leakage, key click, percussion, chorus/vibrato, and rotary speaker settings. OASYS leaps beyond classic organs by allowing additional harmonics and percussion tunings for never-before-heard timbres.

The "OA" in OASYS stands for Open Architecture. It means this workstation won't become obsolete. The rock-solid Linux foundation allows Korg to develop new synth engines that you can implement via a software upgrade. You'll be able to rely on OASYS as your complete music studio for years to come.

OASYS effects deliver six times the processing power of the Triton! Korg included popular items such as ToneWorks mic, amp, and speaker models, the amazing O-Verb from the OASYS-PCI card, and the silky-smooth Ensemble from the Polysix.

But what really makes OASYS a "studio" rather than just a "workstation" is its seamlessly integrated 16-track hard disk recorder. You can record audio tracks in perfect sync with your MIDI sequences. It sports a full mixing control surface with automation plus full editing capabilities. OASYS even has studio-grade phantom-powered mic preamps. It's all tied to Korg's MIDI sequencer. Plus, there's a built-in CD-R/RW drive so you can move from conception to finished CD without ever having to go outside the box.

>> **OASYS 76-Key • Sweetwater price $7999.00**
>> **OASYS 88-Key • Sweetwater price $8499.00**
www.sweetwater.com/oasys

The huge 10.4˝ TouchView color display can be adjusted to any viewing angle. Every screen includes easy tab navigation to quickly move from function to function.

Eventide Anthology

For 33 years trendsetters have relied on Eventide effects to create signature sounds. The H3000 and Orville have ruled for years, while older models have attained vintage status. Recently, Eventide re-created those awesome effects as Pro Tools TDM plug-ins, meticulously duplicating the high-powered hardware. Now **Anthology** brings together Eventide's entire line of plug-ins in one power-packed package.

First up are the H3000 Band Delays and H3000 Factory. Band Delays offers eight voices of tempo-based parametric filtered delays, each with pan, delay, and level controls. Factory offers the ability to patch together any combination of eighteen effects blocks creating complex multi-effects.

Five Clockworks Legacy plug-ins are included. H910 is the original Harmonizer pitch-changer with delay — great for micro pitch shifting. H949 is the Harmonizer pitch-changer featuring flanging, delay, and a randomizer. Omnipressor is a double-knee compressor/expander with attitude. Instant Phaser is the software version of the first swept filter bank. Instant Flanger is a dedicated flanger featuring input level, LFO, or manual sweep for modulation sources.

Two plug-ins are derived from Eventide's top-of-the-line Orville. Eventide Reverb is a multieffect plug-in featuring nine rooms with pre- or post-compression, parametric pre- and post-EQ, and twin delays. Octavox features eight voices of diatonic Harmonizer pitch shifting with individual delay, level, and pan, and the unique Notation Grid.

Eventide's Anthology represents a combined retail value of $2875, but at Sweetwater you'll pay only a fraction of that price. Owners of two or more Eventide plug-ins are able to upgrade for $599 through June 30, 2005. Call your Sales Engineer at 800-222-4700 for details.

>> **Eventide Anthology • Sweetwater price $995.97**
www.sweetwater.com/anthology

Black Box

We're not exactly sure why M-Audio chose to call this new creative tool for guitarists the **Black Box**. As far as we know, it can't survive a plane crash, and judging from the picture, it actually looks more grey than black. But that doesn't stop it from being one of the coolest things we've seen for guitarists in a long time.

Co-developed by M-Audio and Roger Linn Design, the Black Box combines amp modeling, powerful beat-synced effects, and a drum machine with an audio interface for computer-based recording. Based on AdrenaLinn II technology, the Black Box can be used as a stand-alone amp-modeling and effects unit featuring spot-on models of 12 of the greatest guitar amps of all time.

The Black Box incorporates tons of inspiring unique effects that automatically beat-sync to your drum patterns. A built-in microphone preamp is included for recording and processing vocals and acoustic instruments. One simple USB connection sends the output to your favorite computer-based recording software — and syncs the Black Box's drums and effects to your tracks.

The effects can also be synchronized to an external MIDI clock so they're always in sync with your grooves and sequences. In addition to standards such as tremolo, delay, chorus, auto-wah, and talk box, the Black Box has a variety of unique effects such as filter sequencing and arpeggios that let you create sounds you've never heard before. There's also an independent beat-synced delay with controls for note division, number of repeats, and volume. You can process your guitar, microphone, or drum patterns through the DSP effects for some truly out-there original sounds.

The Black Box ships with 99 great presets that are combinations of amp models, beat-synced effects, and drum grooves for you to jam with. You get 160MB of free drum loops in WAV format, taken from M-Audio's ProSessions Sound and Loop Libraries with tons of grooves spanning most popular styles.

If that weren't enough, Black Box comes with Ableton Live Lite 4 GTR, which brings you much of the audio and MIDI functionality of the multi-award winning Ableton Live 4. With four audio tracks, two MIDI tracks, incredible looping, VST and Audio Unit support, software instruments, effects, and much more, Live Lite 4 GTR turns Black Box and your computer into a complete composition and recording solution.

The Black Box gives you killer tone, groundbreaking effects, huge beats, and easy recording all in a single, easy-to-use package. Check out www.sweetwater.com/blackbox for more information.

>> **M-Audio Black Box • Sweetwater price $279.97**
www.sweetwater.com/blackbox

— IBANEZ Continued from Page 1

By 1964, Hoshino was building and exporting guitars with brand names that included Ibanez, Jamboree, and Goldentone (no, that wasn't one of the James Bond movies). By 1974, the Ibanez line had exploded with both set-neck and bolt-neck instruments, many of which were patterned after the most popular American guitars. It's these guitars that started popping up at guitar shows, often carrying price tags that almost matched "the real thing." The reason was simple: They were great guitars!

But within a few years, Ibanez guitars started appearing with their own innovative features and, in 1977, the Artist Autograph line was unveiled with the introduction of the Bob Weir (Grateful Dead) Professional, a limited edition guitar called the Paul Stanley (Kiss) Iceman, and the most prestigious of all, the George Benson GB-10. By 1981, Lee Ritenour and Joe Pass signature guitars appeared and, in 1985, both Steve Lukather (Toto) and Alan Holdsworth endorsed the sleek Ibanez Roadstar.

The JEM Series appeared in 1988, designed in conjunction with guitar virtuoso Steve Vai. The JEM77 had deeply offset cutaways, vine inlays, a locking vibrato system, a super-versatile pickup configuration, and its most distinctive feature, the "monkey grip" body handle. Another shot of credibility came in 1990 with the debut of the Joe Satriani JS Series.

Today the diversity of instruments available from Ibanez is nothing short of astounding, with styles ranging from wickedly outrageous to super sophisticated. Players endorsing current models run the gamut from artists such as Johnnie 5 (Marilyn Manson) and Pat Metheny to bands such as Korn.

Now that you know a bit about Ibanez's history, it's time to check out our current inventory of Ibanez guitars on our website. You can also call your friendly, knowledgeable Sweetwater Sales Engineer who will be glad to tell you everything you need to know about the entire line of prestigious Ibanez instruments. Those of you who asked for — demanded — Ibanez guitars are no doubt already on the phone or online, making your selection at a great Sweetwater price!
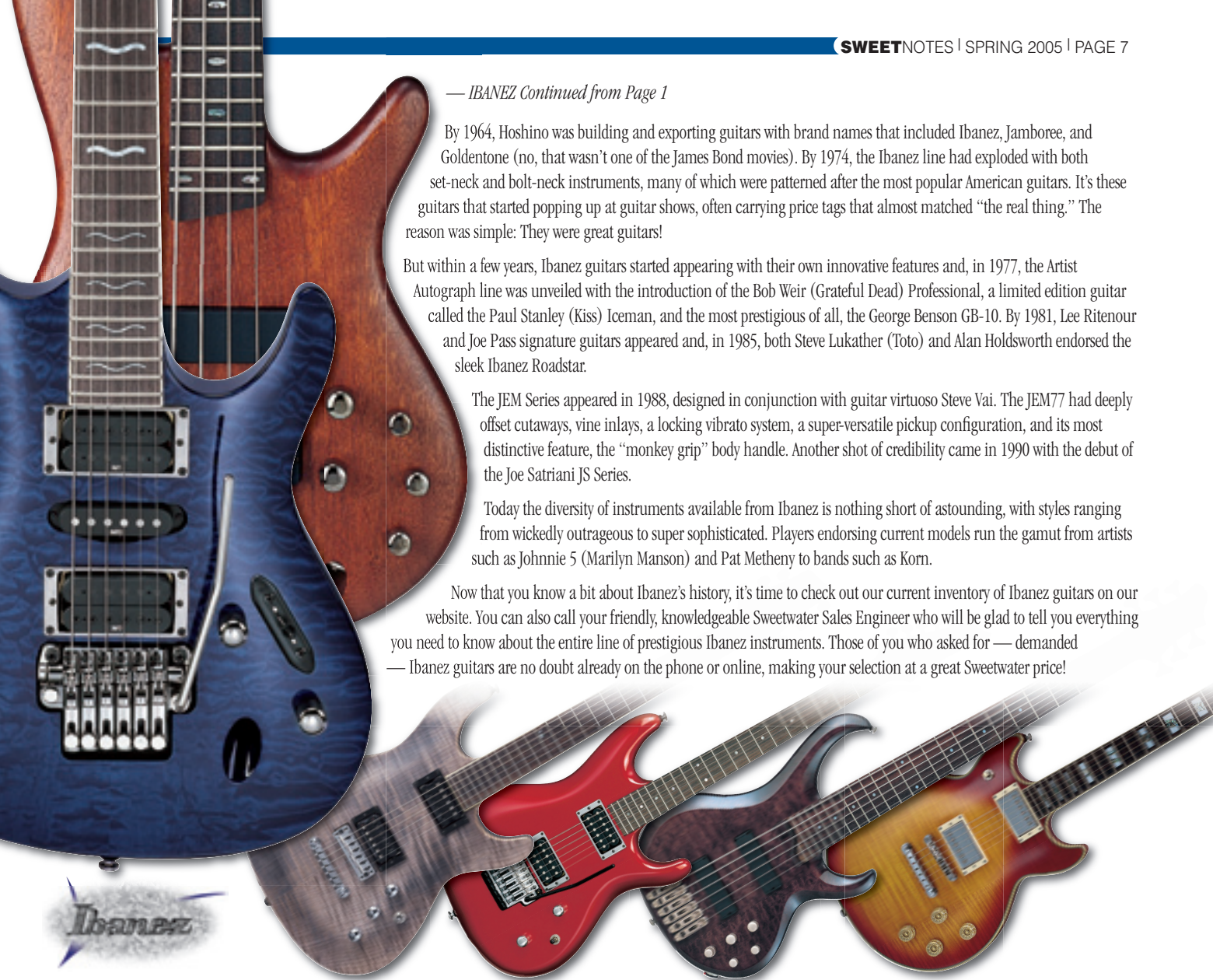
Nobody Does FREE Shipping Like We Do!

At Sweetwater we know from years of experience that new gear isn't a value unless you receive it on time and in great condition. Our free shipping policy is just one more way the Sweetwater Difference makes your purchase even more of a value. Here's why free shipping from Sweetwater is better than other retailers:

No minimum purchase — ever. We never require a minimum purchase to qualify for free shipping.

Nearly every product qualifies. The only exceptions are special orders, oversized, and overweight items. And even those items receive the best shipping deals anywhere!

Speedy FedEx delivery.* We rely on Federal Express as our principal carrier because of their great record of on-time delivery and experience in handling sensitive electronic gear. FedEx Ground from Sweetwater takes only 1-5 days as opposed to the 2-9 days of other carriers. So, not only is our shipping free, but it's also faster!*

Latest same-day shipping cutoff. We can ship orders later in the day than any other retailer. That's important when your gig or session can't wait for that essential piece of gear!

Online order tracking. Once your order ships, our SweetTrack system gives you the safest, most secure way of checking status as well as protection from unauthorized rerouting.

A minimum of fine print. Free shipping is available in the continental United States. It's not valid on items purchased with a purchase order. It does not apply to APO/FPO and international addresses. Finally, if you should return an item, your refund will not include the original shipping costs.

So add it up: Great Deals. No Minimum Purchase. Free Shipping. Why shop anywhere else?

* Smaller items may ship via United States Postal Service. In some areas we may use UPS or another carrier.

New Audio Power for the Fantom-X

The **Fantom-X series** already has so much going for it, we don't know where to begin. Fantastic sounds, velocity-sensitive trigger pads, Skip Back Sampling, D Beam infrared controller… it's quite a list. Now Roland has packed even

The Fantom-X makes putting your music together a seamless process.

more power into the Fantom-X with a new operating system featuring Audio Track Expansion. The new OS adds eight stereo linear audio tracks, so you can record and mix entirely within your Fantom. The Fantom-X makes putting your music together a seamless process. Imagine having a rock-solid "DAW/synth" that's a complete fusion of audio and MIDI!

Unlike sequence-driven samples that use MIDI events as triggers, the new audio tracks can be played back from any point in the song. It's easy to synchronize audio perfectly to your MIDI tracks using the new real-time time-stretch capabilities. You can also output a Skip Back sample to an audio track, which means you can turn an inspired riff into a song in no time at all. And it's all easy to navigate with the color-coded LCD display.

The new Fantom OS also includes Editor software, with a Sample Editor plus a Multisample Waveform Editor, for when you want to do serious sample-based patch creation. And if you've been hanging on to your Roland S-700 series samples, there's even a file converter for Mac® and PC so you can load them into your Fantom-X.

The piano players here at Sweetwater have been raving about the Fantom-X8's 88-key Progressive Hammer Action keyboard. It's a perfect complement to the fantastic acoustic piano patch, which uses individual stereo multi-samples for each key and every velocity stage. In fact, there are over 700 samples used in this single patch!

All new **Fantom-X6**, **-X7**, and **-X8** models and the **Fantom-XR rack** unit we're shipping include the new operating system. If you already own a Fantom-X, call your Sales Engineer for information on upgrading.

Fantom-XR rack

>> **Roland FantomX6** • **Sweetwater price $1995.97 • www.sweetwater.com/fantomx6**
>> **Roland FantomX7** • **Sweetwater price $2395.97 • www.sweetwater.com/fantomx7**
>> **Roland FantomX8** • **Sweetwater price $2795.97 • www.sweetwater.com/fantomx8**
>> **Roland FantomXR** • **Sweetwater price $1395.97 • www.sweetwater.com/fantomxr**

No Secrets Between Friends

SONY

Some recording engineers jealously guard their mixing and processing secrets. But we're going to let you in on a not-so-well-kept secret in our arsenal: the new plug-in bundles from Sony. They're available for Pro Tools TDM and LE systems, as well as TC PowerCore. The bundles comprise different combinations of four Sony plug-ins:

Transient Modulator will cure muddy and indistinct mixes, giving your tracks attack and presence that weren't there before. Or, you can smooth out overly harsh attacks.

Inflator magically adds loudness to your program material. You'll produce louder mixes than you ever thought possible, without overloads or audible pumping. Inflator can even restore musicality to clipped signals!

Dynamics provides the dynamics control of a million-dollar mixer. It's drawn from Sony's OXF-R3 console and offers independent compressor, limiter, expander, and gate sections. A built-in "Warmth" feature adds harmonics.

EQ is also drawn from the mega-buck OXF-R3. It's a transparent 5-band parametric with low and high shelving. Four selectable EQ types include emulations of vintage models that give you plenty of creative options.

Here's how the bundles break down: Oxford Trio "A" includes the EQ, Dynamics, and Inflator. The "B" Trio features EQ, Dynamics, and Transient Modulator. And the "C" bundle has the EQ, Inflator, and Transient Modulator. Pick the package that suits your needs and save a ton of cash!
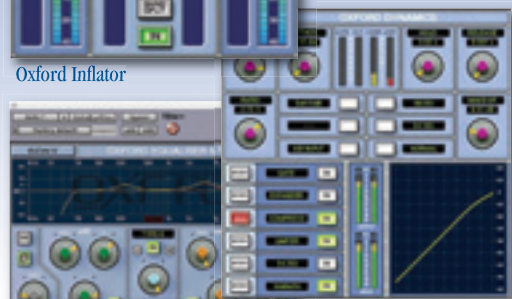
Transient Modulator

Oxford Inflator

Oxford Dynamics

Oxford EQ

>> **Go to www.sweetwater.com/sonyoxford for more information.**

It's the Little Things That Matter

By Mitch Gallagher

It's the little things that make a studio run smoothly. Whether you're working on your own projects in a spare bedroom, recording bands in a converted garage, or operating a commercial facility, there are tons of tricks for enhancing the vibe of your room, making musicians comfortable, and making your life easier. All it takes is a bit of planning, some thought, and a small effort. Here are a few session-smoothing ideas I rely on when tracking:

- Be ready when the talent arrives. Set up mics, mic stands, and music stands positioned roughly where the musicians will be located. Have your computer and DAW software booted and waiting for the first downbeat.

- Check batteries often and keep some spares of each type around.

- Have a rough template for the piece of music you'll be working on set up and ready to go on your DAW. Have tracks created and assigned for those parts you know you'll be recording. Then create a few extras for unexpected surprises.

- Minor "comforts" will make a huge difference in the performances musicians deliver. Set up a small table or tray near where each person will be located. Stock it with a bottle of chilled water (or beverage of your choice), a notepad and pencil, a guitar/bass tuner, spare guitar cable, headphones; whatever the musician — even if that musician is you and you're recording yourself — might want or need.

- Plan for more cables than you think you'll need and have the extras easily at hand. It's a certainty that you'll need to replace a bad cable, plug in an unexpected piece of gear, or run an extra mic on something.

- Do a test run on any signal paths you've got set up before you hit the record button. This means not only making sure signal is getting to your mic preamp, but that you can actually record and play back that signal.

- Want to kill a session? Set things up so the bass player trips and falls, breaking the neck of his bass, and taking out two cymbals and four of your precious tube mics in the process. To avoid this, keep the floor as clean as possible — route cables carefully — and keep clutter to a minimum.

VSS3: Enlisting in the PowerCore

For all who are loyal to the core — PowerCore, that is — and enjoy its remarkable sound quality and stability, we have some seriously good news: TC Electronic has just released the VSS3 Stereo Source Reverb for PowerCore. The algorithms for this reverb have been directly ported from their coveted and *muy*-expensive Reverb 6000.

TC understands that a room is a very complicated reverb processor. With that in mind TC spent a year researching and fine-tuning the **VSS3** to react differently to identical signals rather than apply the same response each time. So instead of having a single mathematical model of a room's response, you have a reverb that works closer to the way reality functions — never the same way twice. That's why the sound of the Reverb 6000 has become an industry standard on hit records and feature films.

With the VSS3 locked and loaded in your PowerCore, you not only get extensive modulation capabilities, you also get a collection of reverb presets that are regularly used at the highest levels of music and post production.

Don't have a PowerCore? We think it's worth it to get one just to run VSS3! To learn more, point your browser to www.sweetwater.com/vss3, then contact your Sweetwater Sales Engineer.

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>> **TC Electronic VSS3 • Sweetwater price $499.97**
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Inside Sweetwater®
music technology direct ™

Chuck Surack

simply can't wait one minute longer, download the brand new, hot-off-the-presses *Spring 2005 ProGear Gear Encyclopedia* from www.sweetwater.com/progeardirectory.

Speaking of arrivals, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Mitch Gallagher and Mike Ross to Sweetwater. Long-timers may remember Mitch from his first tour of duty here during the '90s; others will recognize him as editor and writer at *Keyboard* and *EQ* magazines — over the past seven years he's published almost 1,000 articles on recording and music technology. He's just released his second book — an outstanding guide to Pro Tools LE (see page 4) — and he's recognized as a leading expert in our industry. With Mitch as our Editorial Director, you're going to see exciting things coming from *SweetNotes, ProGear*, and all of Sweetwater's publications and web pages.

Up in the Sweetwater Marketing Department, the staff is heaving a collective sigh of relief. Why? Because the latest *ProGear* directory has been completed. In fact, by the time you read this, many of you will have received your *ProGear*. I can't begin to tell you how much work went into writing, editing, designing, and proofing the current 330-page edition.

We go to all that trouble because we know you want all the info you can get on what's new and cool in music technology. So we combed the recent NAMM show for the latest and greatest new products, and collected information on all of the outstanding products we carry here at Sweetwater — a *huge* task.

You know from reading "Inside Sweetwater" that I'm as much — if not more — of a gearhead as anyone on the planet. And even though I'm involved in putting *ProGear* together, I still find myself anxiously awaiting the arrival of each edition from the printer. There's just no other resource like it in our industry.

Watch for your copy in the mail, with any orders you receive from Sweetwater or, if you

Mike Ross joins us as Director of Marketing. Before coming to Sweetwater, Mike was the Account Director for SWG&M Advertising. He's been in advertising and marketing for 18 years, working on everything from yachts to technology. He's a veteran guitar player and studio rat — and he's been a Sweetwater customer for ten years — so he should fit in perfectly around here.

Mitch and Mike are great examples of my philosophy: Hire the best and the brightest people, then turn them loose to use their talents to make the company an even better resource for our customers. It's the same approach we take when hiring Sales Engineers. We're always looking for the best in the business; people with education, technical knowledge, drive to succeed, and lots of real-world experience. And it helps if you're fun to be around, too!

As our team grows, we have just one goal in mind: to make Sweetwater your #1 source for music technology. To achieve that goal, we're searching for the best people, coming up with innovative ideas, and working harder than any other retailer to give you the shopping experience you deserve.

Hearing Is Believing

We've all had one of those "you had to be there" experiences. You know… something was screamingly funny — or simply incredible — and there's just no way to describe what happened well enough so anyone else can experience the impact. The story falls flat in the telling. That's exactly the problem we have telling you about Dynaudio's **BM 5A** monitors.

Before we tell you the "you had to be there" bit, a little background: Dynaudio believes that if you're not making the drivers yourself, then you're not making speakers — you're in the packaging business. To that end, Dynaudio isn't satisfied with conventional technologies. Instead, they use ultra-light aluminum wire and aluminum voice coils, which make it possible to reduce the mass of the voice coil and increase its diameter and length at the same time, providing a dramatic improvement in the dynamic range. Due to the tremendous weight advantage of aluminum over copper, more coil windings are possible, enabling greater linear movement and high reliability without compression. Techno stuff aside, what does this mean to you? That's where the story begins:

There we were, sitting in Sweetwater's BDL (Blue Diamond Lounge), where Sales Engineers and a few lucky company gearheads like us go each week to see and hear what's new from manufacturers. When the product specialist played his reference CD through the BM 5As, the first thing that jumped out at us was how big they sounded. We thought he was playing the CD through the Dynaudio AIR 25 midfield monitors (with two 10˝ woofers each) they had set up. Imagine our surprise when it turned out that it was the BM 5As we were hearing: 2-way active monitors with a 6.9" woofer and a 1.1" soft-dome tweeter.

As we were leaving the demo, someone said, "I didn't know there was a pad in that song! I've heard it a million times and I never knew they used a pad in the intro." That's how clear and immediate the improvement in the BM 5A's sound reproduction is over other speakers. Keep in mind that we were sitting in a huge room full of people, way back from the monitors and off to the side — nowhere near the sweet spot — and yet we heard amazingly coherent and detailed sound. The most incredible thing is that speakers this accurate can easily become harsh and difficult to listen to for long periods of time. Not so with the BM 5As. They have a clear, natural sound that you could listen to all day. And we haven't even gotten to the best bit yet: BM 5As are under $1,000 per pair, and they sounded so good… well, you just had to be there.

dynaudioacoustics

>> **Dynaudio BM 5A** • **Sweetwater price $999.97**
www.sweetwater.com/bm5a

'Tis the Season for Playing Live

Even though there's snow on the ground outside Sweetwater Central, we can tell that spring is here. How? By all the groups calling in to update and upgrade their sound systems for summer shows and tours. If you've pulled your live rig out and found it just doesn't have the "oomph" you need, we can help!

We can't talk live sound without mentioning **Digidesign's VENUE** with its D-Show console. Wow! Definitely aimed at major tour audio, this high-end wonder is a studio-grade board that runs DSP effects plug-ins and can drive a Pro Tools system in addition to creating stellar live mixes. Don't miss the full story on page 2 of this issue.

You can upgrade your mixer to a premium-quality console for less than you'd expect. **Mackie's new Onyx 80 Series mixers** are built around the fantastic Onyx preamps. The Onyx 2480 8-bus console features 24 channels of Onyx preamps, 4-band Perkins EQ on every channel for a great combination of "British" sound and flexibility, and top-notch electronics throughout for high-end performance without the high-end price. There are also 32-, 40-, and 48-channel versions, all built like tanks!

Mackie's Onyx 80 mixers offer premium sound quality.

Mackie also has new firepower for your speaker system. With 1,300 watts and a custom-tuned cabinet from Eastern Acoustic Works, the 3-way **SA1532z** generates thundering sound from dual 15" low-frequency drivers. Mids and highs are present and sparkling, thanks to the Mackie-exclusive Wave Front design that creates a focused, single wavefront with excellent phase and power response. These cabinets rock!

Loudspeaker management can tame a boomy room, clean up your mix, and protect your gear. TC Electronic's **XO24** digital speaker management controller is a compact and powerful DSP-based unit that's so easy to use that you'll be up and running in an instant. With 2-, 3-, and 4-way electronic crossovers, 4-band parametric input and output EQ, limiting, and independent output delays, the XO24 can solve virtually every speaker management problem. Plus, it's all easily controlled via the "one click" front-panel architecture.

TC Electronic's XO24 improves the sound of your system.

It's time to go wireless — why wait? Audio-Technica's new 2000 Series gives you pro-quality wireless performance at a price that any band can afford. The **ATW2120** handheld mic will give your lead singer freedom to roam while its true diversity receiver stays locked in with outstanding interference and intermodulation resistance. The 2000 Series offers 10 selectable frequencies and automatic scanning for quick setup. The ATW2110 gives you the receiver and a compact belt pack, ready to handle your choice of mics or instrument inputs.

The Mackie SA1532z delivers room-filling output from a compact footprint.

The Audio-Technica 2000 Series is an affordable wireless solution.

It seems that the drummer always gets shortchanged when you're running out of mics. But **Samson's 8Kit** solves that with mics to cover an entire standard kit, including two C01 condensers for overheads. The snare and tom mics have built-in rim-mount clips, which really cut down on mic stand clutter. A Mini Pencil condenser works great on hi-hat or ride. And the whole system stores in a rugged road case built to survive life on the road.

This is just a tiny sampling of the gear we carry for cranking up your live rig. As always, your Sweetwater Sales Engineer has a mountain of information to help you. Or go online to our special Live Sound website at www.sweetwater.com/live-sound to learn even more.

Your drum kit is covered with the Samson 8Kit.

Capturing the Perfect Moment

There's nothing more exciting than being out in the field capturing a once-in-a-lifetime moment; levels are perfectly set; mics are in exactly the right places; it's great to be alive! Then your laptop's OS flashes an error message, your hard drive groans and dies, or your ever-hungry tape machine begins eating and digesting your irreplaceable tape. You can't ask the band to start their gig over; the congressman to restate his admission of guilt; or the rare heron to fly back and repeat its mating call. Slowly that indescribably sickening feeling settles into the pit of your stomach as you realize the moment is gone forever. It's happened to us a few times, and each time we think: *There has to be a better way*!

The biggest problem with most portable recorders is that they're based around machines with lots of moving parts — spinning hard drives, rotating capstans and rollers, drive motors, eject mechanisms. The list is long, and any item on it can fail at any time — more than likely at the worst possible time. In the past few years, methods for storing data without use of moving parts have jumped to the fore. Solid-state recorders using Compact Flash (CF) cards do away with moving parts, can provide tons of record time, run for hours on batteries, and let you edit in the field. Let's check out a few of the models we're fond of here at Sweetwater.

Even though it's brand new, the Edirol R-1 has already become one of our favorites. It includes tools that make it great for music recording, including a built-in metronome and tuner. Plus, a dedicated effects processor makes it easy to set up EQ, hum and noise suppression, and add reverb to the stereo track, all right inside the box. The R-1 can record at nine different quality levels from 24-bit/44.1kHz WAV files to 64kbps MP3s.

Marantz has been building solid-state recorders for several years. Lately we've been very impressed with their PMD670. With phantom-powered mic inputs on XLR connectors, this is a great choice for sampling in the field or handling audio for broadcast. It can

marantz

PMD670

record up to 5-1/2 hours at 16-bit/48kHz resolution with a 4GB CF card and includes built-in limiting plus high- and low-pass filters. You can insert Edit Decision List (EDL) markers and set up EDL-sorted playback. S/PDIF I/O and a USB port make transferring files to a computer or CD burner easy. If you need a rackmount solution, the PMD570 offers all the 670's functions in a rugged 1U chassis.

For a truly compact recorder the Marantz PMD660 can't be beat. It's a high-powered, high-quality, high-reliability solid-state unit that fits in the palm of your hand! But that doesn't mean it's short on performance, offering two phantom-powered XLR mic ins and in-the-box editing. Need long record time? A single 1GB CF card can hold up to 36 hours of uninterrupted audio (monaural MP3 at 64kbps)! You can also get over an hour of 16-bit/44.1 or 48kHz linear PCM audio on the same 1GB card. Plus, it runs on just four AA batteries.

These machines have so many features, we could fill this entire issue of *SweetNotes* and still have more to say. To learn more, visit www.sweetwater.com or give your Sales Engineer a call. With a solid-state recorder, there's no reason to miss capturing that perfect moment ever again.

>> Marantz PMD670 • Sweetwater price $699.97
www.sweetwater.com/pmd670

Q&A QUESTIONS ANSWERS

HOW MUCH RAM DO I NEED?

We hear this question frequently from customers. It's tough to answer, because different products require different amounts. The easy answer? More than enough.

For example, Digidesign states that a Digi002 requires 384MB minimum, 512MB or higher recommended. But this doesn't take into account extra plug-ins or virtual instruments. Throw something like MachFive, BFD, or Ivory into the system, and you'll want to start with 1GB of RAM and consider adding more. RAM demands always grow when software is updated and new software is added to the system. We recommend 1GB as a starting point for any DAW system.

BIG BEN AND TERMINATION

Users have observed that Apogee's Big Ben Word Clock termination lights don't always illuminate. Big Ben is looking for a 75-ohm load on the slave device. If a 75-ohm load isn't detected, Big Ben's termination light won't be on.

While this indicates the receiving device isn't properly terminated, it's not necessarily a problem. Many devices have Word Clock inputs that aren't terminated; they don't have the 75-ohm load. For example, I've worked with a Big Ben and just about every MOTU audio interface. The Big Ben termination lights never illuminate on ports connected to MOTU interfaces. Yet, the MOTU audio interfaces always lock without problem to the Big Ben.

The Big Ben user guide has some useful information on termination, including how to add termination if necessary.

A NERD EATS HIS WORDS

[*Editor's Note:* One of our techs admitted to the following story during a Technology Anonymous 12-step meeting. The names have been changed to protect the guilty….]

"Last week I received my new iPod Shuffle. When I got the ultra-cool, super-tiny MP3 player, I danced like a kid getting his bomb-pop from the ice cream man. All the guys in tech support ooh'd and aah'd along with me (for a few seconds, then we answered more tech calls).

"That evening I rushed home, kissed my wife, ran upstairs, plugged the iPod into my Mac, and started cramming my favorite music into the tiny wonder.

"Things didn't go so well. It appeared as if tons of songs were on the iPod, but it wouldn't play. It just flashed green and yellow lights with every button push. That night I said some hurtful things to my iPod Shuffle — terrible things.

"If you haven't guessed, it wasn't the iPod's fault. I had skipped two simple steps: reading the manual and following the instructions. *Oh, the shame*.

"I read the manual and learned some simple, yet important things: My OS needed an update, and the latest iPod drivers needed to be installed. Everything worked fine after that."

Pretty embarrassing. So why share this story? To make a point we all often ignore: There's simply no substitute for reading manuals and instructions!
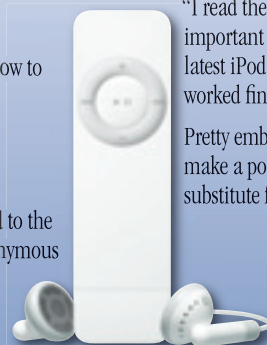
Inside the Sweetwater Difference

Jeff Radke

So…what do Sales Engineers who spend all day, every day, learning about and talking about music technology do when they go home at night? Spend as much time as possible digging in and creating with the music technology gear in their home studios, of course!

Since we have a building full of musicians and engineers, it only makes sense that after working in the "toy store" all day, these folks are anxious to go home and actually play with these technology "toys"! I can't imagine a better blend of vocation and avocation. For example, I get to have an "office" that has a Gibson Jimmy Page Signature Les Paul sitting in the corner that's plugged into a huge Marshall stack (two 1960Bs with a smoking JCM 2000 Series DSL100 head on top). I don't know about you, but that's enough to keep me smilin' all day!

I should note that our entire company is loaded with musicians, with a huge percentage playing out regularly, writing music, and spending time behind the console working on recording projects. Making music and recording aren't the sole domains of the sales staff by any means, it's just that the most heavily addicted gearheads tend to be drawn to this department!

Our sales crew is exposed to the latest and greatest equipment day in and day out. They spend hours a week being trained on new products and technologies. They see products before they're publicly released and sometimes even have the opportunity to assist with product development and design. Being human (and musicians, the most dangerous kind of human) it's natural that we're always rationalizing ways to buy some of the gear for ourselves. Employee discounts and other programs make it dangerously easy to stay in "gear acquisition" mode year-round!

The end result is that nearly every one of us has a pretty nice studio waiting at home. Some of these studios are compact or even portable and some are, for lack of a better word, "excessive." More importantly, these studios get a lot of use. This is one of the big reasons Sweetwater Sales Engineers know what they're talking about! I'm going to keep this column short so we can fit in photos of a few of the home studios of Sweetwater Sales Engineers (I admit, that's my studio at upper-left.) Enjoy!

—Rock and Roll!
Jeff (VP of Sales)

Check out these Sales Engineers' home studios
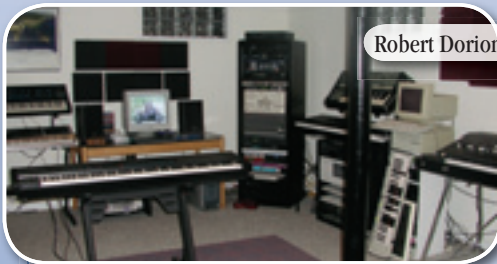
Robert Dorion
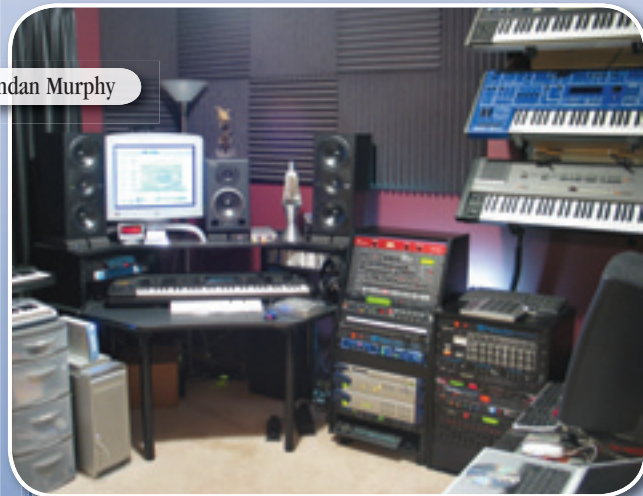Vintage synths galore!

Kenny Bergle
A guitarists retreat

Brad Lyons
Liquid Channels and Pro Tools

Brendan Murphy
Sounds as good as it looks!

Austin Moss
Turntables, scratching and beat boxes

TechNotes
Jim Miller

If I were to tabulate all the emails I get from SweetNotes readers, I'm betting the single most common question would have to be something like, "What can I do to improve the sound of my studio?" Each case is different, but I find that many studio owners forget what I call Miller's Law of the Weakest Link: *"No studio will sound better than the quality of the weakest link in its audio chain."* In many cases, the weakest link turns out to be (taa-dah!)… the mic preamps.

While it's true that today's budget preamps are light years better than those of even a decade ago, that doesn't mean those budget preamps are a match for our best mics. Heck, almost any mic will sound better through a premium mic preamp!

It wasn't until I had the opportunity to review a great preamp that I finally "got" this fact. My high-end microphones suddenly went from sounding really good to sounding fantastic! Once I added that preamp to my rack, I started getting audio that truly was consistently pro quality.

But does "pro quality" mean the preamp has ruler-flat frequency response? Maybe, maybe not — it depends on what you need. In some cases you want the mic preamp to simply make the signal louder without adding sonic coloration. In other cases, you want the preamp to add as much "color" as possible. It depends on the sound you're after.

It also depends on the mic you're using. Different mics interface differently with different preamps. (How many times can you use the word "different" in a single sentence?) In other words, impedance and other factors can affect how a particular mic sounds through a certain preamp.

So I might plug my Earthworks QTC40 mics into a Universal Audio 2-610 (an analog tube preamp and equalizer based on the legendary UA 610 modular console) and find audio bliss. But I might prefer my AKG C 414 through a Manley EQ500, which delivers a more modern tube sound and its own distinctive EQ circuitry. Someone else might prefer the Earthworks mics through the Manley or maybe a Grace Design Model 201, which is a 2-channel preamp with a transformerless design. I could go on listing mic and preamp combinations for weeks and never cover all the bases.

The bottom line is this: Mic preamps have distinct personalities. Tube units will sound different compared to solid-state analog preamps, which sound different from digital designs. In fact, that's the original reason for using outboard preamps: to obtain a variety of preamp colors that provide a richer recording palette.

The best bet is to assemble a selection of preamps that provide different colors; smooth, rich, transparent, warm, fat, aggressive — choose your adjective. It's a cliché by now, but think of preamps the way an artist thinks of brushes; each provides a useful function, and the more variety you have, the more diverse and rich your sonic paintings can be.

So if you're looking to upgrade your studio, I suggest considering the sonic firepower available in today's range of mic preamps. You know the drill by now: Your Sweetwater Sales Engineer is the best person to talk to about which preamp will work best for your needs and applications!

Paul Reed Smith Launches Two New Models

It's hard to believe that PRS guitars have been around for 20 years now. Many of us here at Sweetwater still recall seeing those first incredible Paul Reed Smith Customs way back in 1985 at the NAMM Show. The company has grown to the point where they're one of the largest guitar builders on the planet.

During the last two decades, PRS has introduced some pretty amazing high-end guitars, such as the Dragon series and the latest limited-edition Artist Series instruments with Brazilian rosewood necks. But the biggest surprise actually came two years ago when PRS introduced the shockingly affordable Santana SE!

Now there are two brand-new SE models. The first is the PRS **SE Soapbar II**, which carries on in the tradition of the original SE Soapbar, but with the distinctive PRS double-cutaway shape. Features include a solid mahogany body with a glued-in mahogany neck, two specially designed soapbar pickups, and a PRS-designed combination bridge and tailpiece. The SE Soapbar II is available in four classic colors: Tobacco Sunburst, Black, Antique White, and Vintage Cherry. Lovers of big necks will appreciate this guitar's wide-fat neck, which allows you to really dig into chords and solos. The soapbar pickups offer a classic sound that's brighter than a humbucker but warmer and less noisy than most single coils.

Already a best-seller for us here at Sweetwater, the **SE EG** is now available in a 3-pickup version, the SE EG S/S/H with a humbucker in the bridge position, along with single-coil pickups in the neck and middle positions. This guitar comes standard with the PRS-designed vibrato tailpiece, which lets you stay in tune no matter how much you bend notes or chords. It also features the wide-fat neck and is available in black or white with a black pickguard or in tobacco sunburst with a white pickguard.
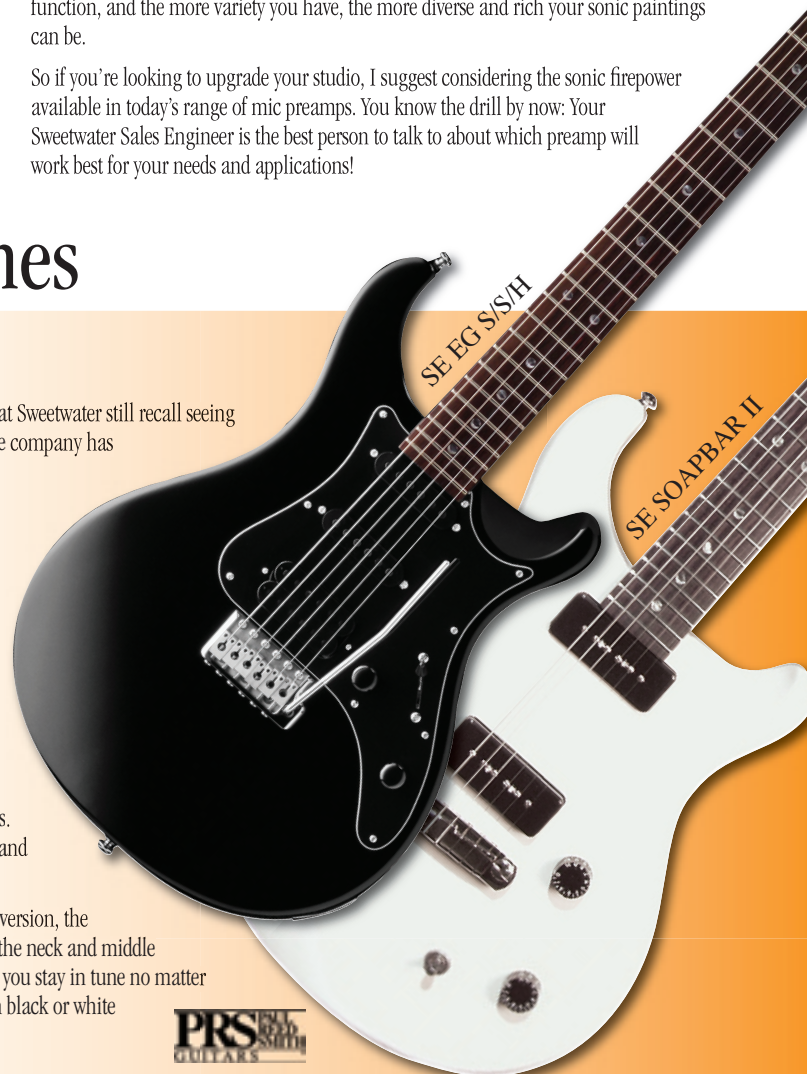
SE EG S/S/H

SE SOAPBAR II

Audio Sommelier:
Choosing the Right Microphone

By Mitch Gallagher

A few years ago my wife and I became interested in wines. We began educating ourselves by reading about the different varietals, attending tastings and seminars at wine shops and restaurants, and trying a lot of wines. (That's the fun part!) At first we were challenged when trying to taste the subtleties in different wines. But over time we developed our senses of taste and smell until we could discern some of the finer points. From then on, it became much easier to determine whether we liked a bottle or not, and to decide what foods might pair best with a particular wine. We're not sommeliers — experts who supervise the wines for fine restaurants — but we're learning.

Much the same process is involved when you're choosing and using microphones. Each model has its own "flavor" and will be appropriate for certain applications, while less ideal for others. This is why engineers like to have a well-stocked mic locker to work with; so there's a variety of mics to try for each application.

For most studios, a good large-diaphragm condenser mic is the Holy Grail. Start with a mic that will sound good for a wide variety of applications. Examples might include the Shure KSM44, AKG C 414B XLS, Samson C01, Audio-Technica AT4050, BLUE Bluebird, Studio Projects B3, Neumann TLM103, or the Rode NT2A.

Once you have that base covered, then start looking to fill things out. Every studio needs a general-purpose dynamic mic for guitar amps, drums, and other instruments. The Shure SM57 is the ubiquitous standard, but Audix, AKG, Sennheiser, and Beyerdynamic all have excellent offerings. A new contender is the BLUE Ball active dynamic mic.

My next stop would be for small-diaphragm condenser mics for acoustic guitar, drum overheads, hi-hat, and other applications. The AKG C 451, Neumann KM184, Shure KSM141, Rode NT5, Earthworks TC20, and Audio-Technica AT4051 are just a few of the many models available.

A ribbon mic will bring a distinctive flavor to your collection; whether used on vocals, guitar amps, brass, or drum kit, ribbons such as the Royer R121, AEA R84, or Beyerdynamic M160 offer a smooth, round, unhyped tone color.

Once your locker is stocked, you can start looking at special purpose mics, such as dedicated vocal mics like the Soundelux e250, kick drum mics like the Shure Beta52, AKG D112, Sennheiser e602, Audio-Technica Pro25, or BLUE KickBall, or a stereo mic like the Rode NT4, Audio-Technica AT822, Studio Projects LSD2, or the Royer SF24.

As you're assembling your mic collection, take the time to try each mic for as many applications as you can — listen carefully and learn to discern each model's tone and response. Soon you'll be instinctively pairing mics with sound sources — you'll know that for a harsh guitar amp you need to use this mic, and for shimmery cymbals, that mic is the one to go to.

Learning about mics is a seemingly never-ending process; there's always a new model or technology on the horizon. The Sweetwater web site — www.sweetwater.com — contains endless information on mics of all types, and your Sales Engineer is an excellent resource for microphone enlightenment. Call now!
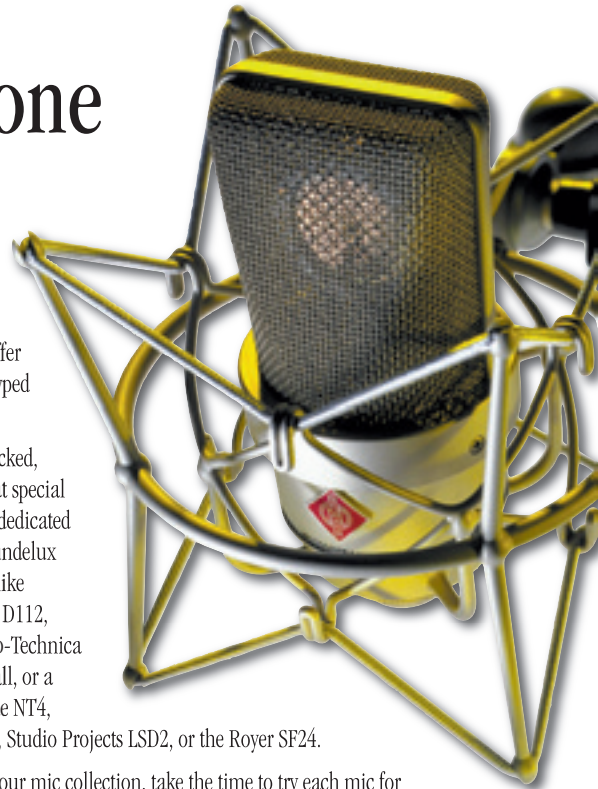
May is Marshall Month

Holy alliteration! May is Marshall Month at Sweetwater, and we're celebrating the power and glory of rock's most famous amps. Point your browser to www.sweetwater.com/marshall to experience our exclusive new Marshall website — you'll be amazed at the amount of information we've put together, along with cool photos and lots of other goodies.

Honoring a Legend
On December 8, 2004, an act of senseless violence took the life of "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott, guitarist for Pantera and Damageplan. A special auction has been set up at sweetwater.com where you can bid on a Marshall AVT20 20-watt, 2-channel, 1x10" amp autographed by Darrell's brother, Vinnie Paul Abbott (drummer for Pantera and Damageplan), and close friend Zakk Wylde (Ozzy Osbourne, Black Label Society). The auction runs through May — simply go online for details on how to bid. Bid generously — not only could you win a great amp, you'll be honoring a true rock 'n' roll legend. All proceeds go to the Dimebag Darrell Memorial Fund.

Plus, Marshall will donate 5% of all Marshall sales at Sweetwater during May to the Memorial Fund. If you've been waiting to buy a new amp, now's a great time — not only will you get a screaming Marshall, you'll also be contributing to a worthy cause.

Marshall

NEW! DealZone

We've often thought that it would be fantastic to have a single place where our customers and friends could stay on top of the amazing deals we offer. Now it's here! The Sweetwater DealZone is the greatest non-stop "sale" ever invented. At **www.sweetwater.com/DealZone** you'll find:

• Hundreds of up-to-the-minute Sweetwater price drops
• Current money-back manufacturer rebates and offers
• Price-slashed demo, used, refurb, and overstock items

In the DealZone you can also sign up to win free gear each month, sign up for our bargain-packed GearNET e-newsletter, and check out the Sweetwater Trading Post, where musicians buy and sell their used gear every day.

So save your hard-earned dollars! Get into the DealZone and choose from thousands of sizzling hot deals — all from the convenience of one place:

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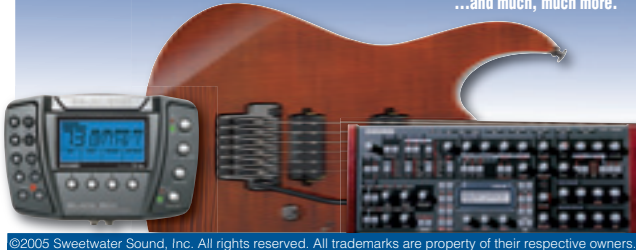**(800) 222-4700 • sweetwater.com**

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...and much, much more.

Meet Dan VanAmerongen

Name: Dan Van Amerongen
Position at SSI: Senior Sales Engineer
Start Date: 1/4/00
Education: B.A. in Media Technologies, Minor in Business from Greenville College; Basic Electronics, International Correspondence School
What was your occupation before coming to Sweetwater? Student, sales, live sound, studio work
Foreign Languages: Small amount of French
Technical Strengths: Digital and analog audio, PC issues, and Pro Tools
Instruments you play: Bass, guitar, voice
Gear You Own: Studio: Sweetwater Creation Station Rack, Digidesign Pro Tools|HD2 Accel System with 192io, Focusrite ISA428, Focusrite TwinTrak Pro, Apogee Rosetta 200, Aphex 204, PreSonus Central Station, PreSonus ACP22, Kurzweil Rumour, Kurzweil KME61, Mackie HR624 monitors, Sennheiser HD280Pro headphones, BLUE BlueBird, BLUE BabyBottle, Audio-Technica AT3035, AKG C1000s, Audix D6, Audix OM5, AKG D112, Glyph Companion hard drive, Monster Power Pro2000, and tons of plug-ins and software
Instruments: Brian Moore i88 synth guitar with Roland VG8, Ovation model 1763 nylon classic, Takamine Santa Fe EAC11C acoustic/electric, Yamaha FG401 acoustic, Peavey Unity Series 4-string bass, Godin 5-string bass, and upright bass
Miscellaneous Live Gear: Mackie 1620 Onyx, Mackie SA1521, vintage Fender Vibrasonic Reverb (silver-face), Univox 4x12 cabinet, Peavey KiloBass Biamp head and 410TFX with horn cabinet, Roland DB500 combo bass amp
Family Info: wife, Genny (since 5/24/97); daughter, Laurel (6/25/02); son, Cole (6/2/04)

Other stuff we should know about you (hobbies, interests, etc.): I collect basketball cards, and enjoy sports — go Spurs! — woodworking, and music. I am always working on never-ending home remodeling projects, playing and singing with the worship team at my church, and training the technical team there.
Personal Motto: I can do anything through Christ who strengthens me.
Favorite Magazine: *Mix*
Real Life Hero: My dad
Guilty pleasure of choice: Working with music every chance I get
How would your boss describe you? Dependable, honest, will do anything to make sure a customer is satisfied
How would your best friend describe you? Focused, too much at times. One-track mind, you know, there's a goal, and we must get there!
What did you dream about doing for a living when you were growing up? Working in a recording studio
What in your life best prepared you for the work you do here at Sweetwater? Working a full-time job, a part-time job, and being a full-time college student all at the same time; this job is very intense! The determination to succeed instilled in me by both my parents has helped me as well.
What do you enjoy most about being part of the Sweetwater Team? Making people happy as they work with the equipment that I recommend and sell to them, and the ability to continue learning as long as I work.
What is the most important thing you've learned at Sweetwater? My success here depends upon the effort I put in, prayer, and how much I care about the customer.
Describe the most dramatic situation in which you provided the "Sweetwater Difference" for a customer or the most unusual/creative solution to a customer problem: On several occasions I have sent my personal gear to a customer to get them through a bind when we were out of stock and the manufacturer was unable to supply one in time.