



Sweetwater® SweetNotes®

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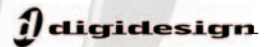
Making music happen for over 27 years!

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The Digidesign 003 Family



We're not bashful about the fact that we love Pro Tools. We've literally installed tens of thousands of Pro Tools systems across the country, from modest LE systems to full-blown HD Accel/ICON systems. So you can imagine the buzz that was running through Sweetwater on the day Digidesign made a special trip from California to give us a look at the new **003**. At the hands-on demo, we got a chance to check out all the new features of these very cool new units.

The 003 is equipped with features that put the "pro" in project studio, and that narrow the gap between Pro Tools LE and Pro Tools!HD interfaces. Among these features are a word clock input that allows you to easily sync Pro Tools LE with external digital gear. The desktop-based 003 model is also equipped with a jog/shuttle wheel for zipping

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Ampeg Arrives!

Sweetwater is proud to announce that Ampeg has joined our family! The Ampeg name has been synonymous with quality products since the late 1940s, when the Ampeg Bassamp Company first took shape. The company's commitment to quality has never wavered, and today their products continue to be highly sought-after, especially by bass players. Take a look at any live music stage setup and more often than not, you'll find an Ampeg bass rig in the backline.

Sweetwater now stocks numerous Ampeg products, from the compact **BA-115T** 100-watt bass combo amp to the powerful, classic tube-driven tones of the reissued **SVT-VR**. Updated models, such as the rackmountable 600-watt **SVT-4PRO** and MOSFET **SVT-450H** head, give you options galore for achieving low-end nirvana.

Coupled with the company's distinctive cabinets (yes, we have the monster 8 x 10" **SVT-810E** here waiting for you, as well as several other cabinet options), these dependable tone machines are built to provide years of road-friendly service.



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from the editor



Mitch Gallagher

Editorial Director

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Native Comes Of Age

If I had any question whether a native audio system could handle a professional mixing session, all doubt was dispelled at the recent NAMM show. MOTU invited me and several other Sweetwater folks who were at the show into a private room within their booth. A large flat-panel TV hung on the wall, in front of a table and a comfortable couch. A surround speaker system was set up around the room. After dispensing with the obligatory handshakes, greetings, and small talk, one of the MOTU reps said, "You've got to check this out. . . ." and loaded a Digital Performer project onto the flatscreen. He hit play, and we watched and listened as the music played. Yawn. . . we've all seen it a zillion times before.

Then he opened up the DP mixer and showed us how all the visible channels were maxed out with eight plug-ins each. Yeah, yeah, fine. He began scrolling through additional mixer channels. . . and scrolling. . . and scrolling. In total, the project was playing 125 audio tracks, each loaded with eight active plug-ins. The project was using 1,000 audio plug-ins simultaneously, including EQs, reverbs, filters, and more! The computer was a 3GHz quad-Intel Mac Pro tower with 3GB of RAM and two internal SATA drives. In fact, the Mac Pro was accomplishing this feat using only 60% of its available CPU power, so screen redraws, meter response, and usability were completely smooth. Dang!

It was an amazing display of sheer power. No question there was enough horsepower on tap for a "normal" mixdown with a more reasonable number of tracks and plug-ins!

hands on: Korg MR Series

By Mitch Gallagher

Most people who have listened to DSD (Direct Stream Digital) on SACD say that it sounds real, detailed, very "analog." The problem is that until recently, there hasn't been an affordable way to capture or play DSD recordings in most recording studios. Korg is out to change all that with the new **MR-1** and **MR-1000** professional mobile recorders.

The MR-1 and MR-1000 are portable stereo digital recorders; each can record at regular digital resolutions up to 192kHz/24-bit. But they can also record using 1-bit DSD resolutions: 2.8MHz (that's *MBGA*-Hertz) for the MR-1, and 2.8 and 5.6MHz (twice as fast as SACD) for the MR-1000.

I had a chance to put both models to work in my studio and on location.

MR-1

The MR-1 is the handheld model; it's about the size of an iPod, and comes in a nice fitted case. It includes a clip-on stereo mic and a power supply/battery charger (the battery is built-in). I/O is on 1/8" mini jacks: two balanced/unbalanced ins (mic or line), stereo out, and headphones.

Even though the MR-1 has a 20GB hard drive, you'd never know it — it's almost totally silent. The drive provides around 31 hours of stereo recording at 44.1kHz/16-bit or over seven hours at 2.8MHz DSD. Battery life is 2-2.5 hours, depending on the audio resolution you're using.

The MR-1 is simple to operate and sounds marvelous! The stereo mic that comes with it works very well with the internal preamps, or you can use external preamps and other mics. At 2.8MHz DSD, you'll be amazed at the sound quality. Despite its "iPod" appearance, I wouldn't hesitate to use it to capture an important concert or for mixdown.

MR-1000

The MR-1000 is also a portable unit, sized like a small hard drive. It comes in a sturdy carrying bag with shoulder strap, and includes a power supply or can run up to four hours on AA batteries. The battery compartment is right on top — very convenient. Its audio I/O includes two 1/4"/XLR combi inputs, two XLR and RCA outputs, and stereo 1/4" headphones.

The built-in mic preamps feature phantom power and a switchable input limiter for overload protection. There's a 40GB hard drive built-in; like the

MR-1, the drive is almost silent — I recorded with it right next to the mics, and there was no bleed. It can hold around 60 hours of 44.1/16-bit stereo audio, or over seven hours at super-quality 5.6MHz DSD resolution.

In a word, the audio quality is spectacular. Smooth, uncolored, detailed, realistic — *real* is the adjective that kept coming to mind. The preamps are clean, and stand up well next to external units. For critical location recording, the MR-1000 is tough to beat. And for mixdown/mastering, this could be the digital unit we've all been waiting for, whether you're mixing in the box or using external analog summing/mixer!

Audiogate

The Audiogate Mac and Windows software included with both models plays all file formats, and can export all formats/resolutions. It offers very basic audio editing. File transfers to computer are fast using USB 2.0. It's cool to be able to record in DSD format, then export to WAV files using your computer. You never lose the super-high resolution DSD original, so you have an instant archive. By the way, Korg says that MP3 record/play capability will be added later this year.

Buy One

The MR-1 and MR-1000 are ideal for mixdown, for archiving, and for stereo location recording. You'll be surprised how much you'll use one of these around the studio or on location. And you'll be very pleasantly surprised at how great they sound! Most highly recommended.



MR-1000



MR-1

>>> **Korg MR-1000 • Sweetwater price \$1199.97 • www.sweetwater.com/mr1000**
>>> **Korg MR-1 • Sweetwater price \$699.97 • www.sweetwater.com/mr1**

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SWEETWATER EXCLUSIVE! hands on: Fender VG Strat

By Mitch Gallagher

I've always been the kind of guitar player who wants tons of sounds. If I have my Strat, I wish I had my Les Paul. If I have my Tele, I want the Strat. And I could always use an acoustic guitar, even if I'm mainly playing electric. I want all the tones at once, right from one guitar.

Sound familiar? Then check out the new **VG Stratocaster** from Fender! The VG Strat starts out as a real American Series Stratocaster guitar. It has three single-coil pickups with 5-way switching, a maple neck with a maple or rosewood fingerboard (I had the rosewood model), a synchronized tremolo bridge, a 3-ply parchment pickguard, and chrome hardware. You've got all the great "traditional" Strat sounds, in a very playable guitar. But take a closer look: There's a fourth pickup back by the bridge. And here are two knobs on the pickguard, labeled "T" and "M," along with a blue LED. What's up?

The extra controls and pickup are for the built-in Roland VG technology, which delivers modeled guitar tones in addition to the Strat's regular sounds. Nothing extra is needed — just plug the VG Strat into your amp with a regular guitar cable! (You can even use it wireless, if you want.)

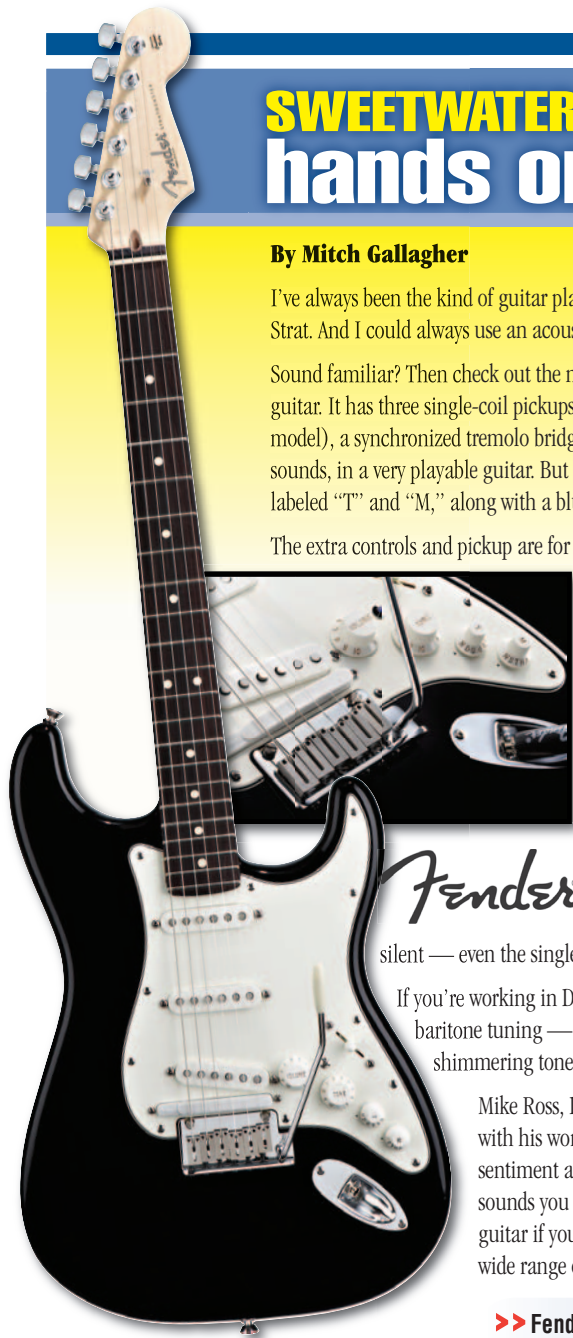
The "M" and "T" knobs access the modeled guitars and tunings. Under the "M" knob you'll find standard (non-modeled) Strat sounds, a modeled Strat, a modeled Tele, modeled humbuckers, and a modeled acoustic guitar. The Strat's 5-position pickup switch chooses among the pickups on the modeled guitars, or, in the case of the acoustic, five different variations. The "T" knob calls up six tunings: standard, drop D, G, D modal, baritone (standard tuning down a 4th), and 12-string.

I compared the VG Strat side-by-side with my Strat, as well as my Tele and Les Paul Standard. The virtual Tele has all the chicken-pickin' cluck you could want. Humbucker mode delivers rich, full, broad punch, with round highs, and tight bottom end. It sounded great with a crunchy amp, and settled into smooth singing with a bit more gain. As a bonus, the virtual guitars are all completely silent — even the single-coil models are totally hum-free.

If you're working in D or G tunings, you'll love being able to retune with a simple twist of the knob. Be sure to check out the baritone tuning — we're talking a *huge* tone, especially with the humbucker model. The 12-string tuning creates a rich, shimmering tone on strummed chords and on picked arpeggios, just like the real thing.

Mike Ross, Director of Marketing at Sweetwater, uttered the phrase "Versatility Supreme!" after using the VG Strat with his worship group on a recent Sunday morning. Other guitar players here at Sweetwater expressed the same sentiment after playing the VG Strat through various amps in our demo room. I have to agree — the range of sounds you can cover is truly impressive. The VG Stratocaster supplies 37 tones, and does them all well. It's the ideal guitar if you're covering a lot of styles or tones during the course of a gig, or if you want to have instant access to a wide range of guitar sounds in the studio. Call your Sales Engineer now for complete details!

>> Fender VG Stratocaster • Sweetwater price \$1699.99 • www.sweetwater.com/stratvgrblk



Fender®

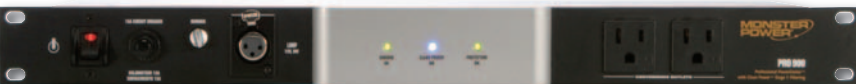
Monstrous Power Protection

MONSTER
POWER

Power conditioning and protection devices have thankless jobs. But without clean power, none of your gadgets will fulfill their potential, and if — heaven forbid — a power problem rears its ugly head, you're left with some very expensive display pieces.

The folks at Monster (yes, the quality cable guys) have developed an effective and affordable power conditioner that also provides high-capacity spike and surge protection. The Monster **Pro 900 PowerCenter** uses filtering to provide clean AC power. Using exclusive Dual Mode Plus protection circuitry, the PowerCenter also automatically disconnects all equipment in the event of a big surge, and will let you know (via lights and an audible alarm) that it has done its job. It features eight color-coded outlets and matching power cord labels for quick and accurate setup.

For a more compact solution, the **Pro 200 PowerCenter** gives you two AC connections and plugs directly into wall outlets. You can easily pack the Pro 200 in your gig bag, and, like its big brother, it provides clean AC power and Dual Mode Plus surge protection, with disconnect circuitry and an audible alarm.



>> Monster Power PRO 900 PowerCenter • Sweetwater price \$99.95 • sweetwater.com/pro900
>> Monster Power PRO 200 PowerCenter • Sweetwater price \$39.95 • sweetwater.com/pro200

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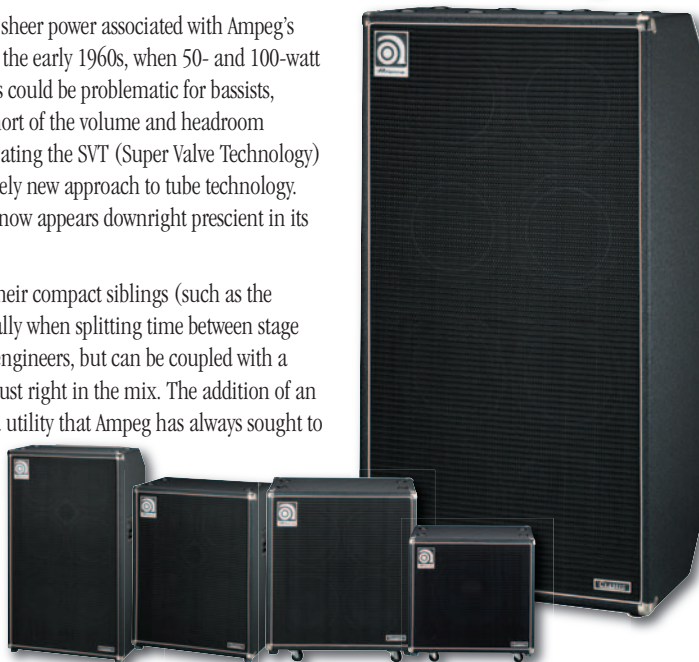


The much sought-after sheer power associated with Ampeg's SVT amps dates back to the early 1960s, when 50- and 100-watt amplifiers were considered to be sufficient for any venue by most manufacturers. This could be problematic for bassists, because the pre-solid state tube technology in use at the time often maxed out well short of the volume and headroom required to maintain a clean low-end signal. Ampeg took the ball and ran with it, creating the SVT (Super Valve Technology) stage amp, which not only boasted a mighty 300 watts of power, but was also an entirely new approach to tube technology. Considering the radical changes that were soon to hit the musical landscape, Ampeg now appears downright prescient in its pursuit of more wattage at the time.

The extraordinary tone-shaping capabilities and features of both the SVT amps and their compact siblings (such as the 220-watt, 1 x 15" **BA-115HP** combo) give players some truly useful options, especially when splitting time between stage and studio. For instance, the BA-115HP's balanced line out will not only please FOH engineers, but can be coupled with a mic on the amp's speaker in the recording room to capture the kind of tone that sits just right in the mix. The addition of an onboard tuner and headphone out on the BA-115HP represents the kind of real-world utility that Ampeg has always sought to build into its products.

We're thrilled to be able to share Ampeg's wealth of experience and dedication to excellence with you by stocking an extensive line of this great company's products. To our friends at Ampeg: Welcome aboard, we're glad to have you here!

Check out our entire selection of Ampeg amplifiers and cabinets at www.sweetwater.com/ampeg.



MOTU Hardware is Now Vista-friendly

The world of computer audio is constantly moving and changing. New operating systems are constantly appearing, users are inundated with updates and upgrades, and software manufacturers are racing to see who can produce, improve, or just plain change the most. This often leaves both makers and consumers of interface hardware in a constant state of flux, trying to keep their important physical link to the digital domain current and working effectively. When Microsoft announced the impending arrival of their new Windows Vista operating system, you could practically hear the keyboards tapping and hotlines buzzing.

Thankfully for PC users, MOTU came prepared for the long-awaited arrival of the new operating system and recently posted downloadable Vista-compatible drivers so you can run your MOTU audio and MIDI hardware with the newest Windows OS.

MOTU has a reputation for well-designed, flexible hardware and software that's friendly to several platforms, allowing you to get the most out of your system. The company, which was established in 1980, has been at the forefront of digital audio since the beginning.

According to MOTU, all current hardware products are supported under Vista, including FireWire and USB 2.0 interfaces such as the 828mkII and UltraLite, PCI core systems (such as the HD192 and 2408mk3), and USB MIDI interfaces. Vista drivers are available in both 32- and 64-bit versions, and are also compatible with Windows XP, so you can take advantage of the capabilities of these drivers with either system.



For more information about downloading the Vista-compatible MOTU drivers, got to www.motu.com.

Ibanez JS100



Let's face it... music can be a dream- and hero-driven business, and nowhere is this more prevalent than in the world of guitar. Everyone who's ever strapped on a guitar has envisioned themselves standing in front of a sea of screaming fans. Every once in a while, a guitar hero emerges who becomes a hero to an entire generation of guitarists — and Joe Satriani is that guitarist.

Satriani's career spans two decades and his list of students includes such guitar heavyweights as Steve Vai (a fellow Ibanez Signature artist), Metallica's Kirk Hammett, Primus' Larry LaLonde, and jazz guitarist Charlie Hunter. His unique style — an amalgamation of prog rock and metal with a healthy dose of mojo thrown in for good measure — demanded unique instruments and led to Joe's involvement with Ibanez, creating a line of custom signature guitars.

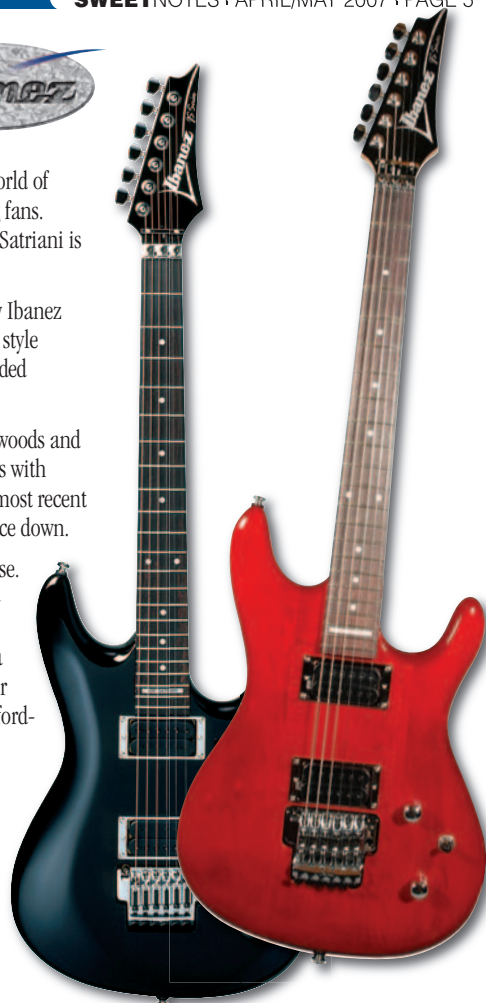
Known for his discriminating taste when it comes to tone, Satriani's guitars reflect this in the selection of the tonewoods and electronics. His previous signature models — the JS1000 and JS1200 — were equipped to Joe's exact specifications with multi-radius Prestige necks, modified volume pots to maintain highs at any volume, and signature pickups. The most recent JS model delivers a ton of tone in a very playable package, but has a slightly streamlined feature set to keep the price down.

The **JS100** sports a lightweight basswood body like its pricier brethren, for a beefy tone with great low-end response. The neck of the JS100 is slim and fast, perfect for shredding or rhythm playing, with a rosewood fingerboard. Electronically, the JS100 is equipped with IBZ AH1 and AH2 humbuckers. The AH1 is the quintessential rhythm pickup for big round tones. At the bridge sits the AH2 humbucker, which interacts very nicely with the basswood body for a full sound great for solos and producing harmonics. Rounding out the feature set is an Edge III tremolo system for dive-bombing. Everything you need to "surf with the alien" is here, but the price of the JS100 is decidedly more affordable than its big brothers'.

There have been very few guitarists that have created the stir that Joe Satriani has. With more than two decades of instrumental rock behind him and a style all his own, it's easy to see why Joe needed an axe that was equally as unique. With the JS100, that unique instrument is now available to help you create your own distinctive style!

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TASCAM.

Next-generation Workstation!

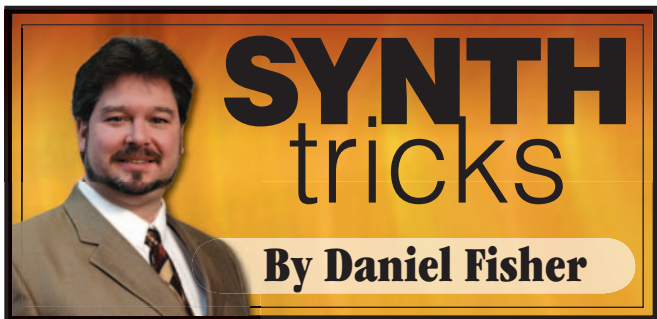
In the late 1970s, TASCAM brought recording home with their revolutionary PortaStudio line of 4-track cassette-based workstations. Now, nearly three decades later, home recording is going strong, though cassette decks aren't as prevalent as they once were. Multitracking in home and project studios on a digital system is standard practice, and with the **2488mkII**, TASCAM continues to serve the personal studio arena with a portable digital studio-in-a-box that's a follow-up to the successful 2488.

With the ability to record eight simultaneous tracks (24 total) at 24-bit/44.1kHz, the 2488mkII is a great solution for anyone that needs to do full band recordings in a variety of locations. The eight inputs comprise four phantom power-capable XLR/TRS combo jacks with four more 1/4" mic/line jacks. Mixing is handled with 19 physical faders, and the 2488mkII is loaded with slew of effects to EQ, compress, add reverb, or even master your projects, plus there's a dedicated stereo compressor for adding compression on the mix bus. There's even an assignable guitar multi-effects processor for adding overdrive, chorus, flanging, and other effects to your DI'd guitar signals.

The 2488mkII boasts an 80GB hard drive, twice as large as its predecessor. There's a handy jog wheel for scanning through the track's timeline. TASCAM also had live recording in mind with the 2488mkII, and included a feature that allows you to record a multi-song set into a single file and separate the songs into individual files for a CD with the push of a button. The 2488mkII hooks up to a computer via USB for drag-and-drop importing of files, or to back up files from the mkII to your PC or Mac. The CD burner has been bolstered, with write speeds of up to 16x, four times faster than the original 2488. Rounding out the new features is an even easier-to-read LCD panel.

The 2488mkII is priced to compete with DAW systems, yet is feature-laden enough to be a great all-in-one solution for recording. There are ample tracks for recording a band, and the small footprint and light weight make it very easy to move from place to place. TASCAM proves that while software is great, >>TASCAM 2488mkII • Sweetwater price \$899.97 • www.sweetwater.com/2488mk2 a great piece of hardware can work wonders!

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Technology has made some amazing advances recently for live keyboard players, but a lot of us haven't had the time or information needed to take advantage of these modern miracles. But that's okay... I'm here to spread the word!

Probably the most exciting change is the progress made with virtual instrument plug-ins and the computers that are now more than ready to play them in a live situation. Some examples of these plug-ins include: Native Instruments' **B4 II** (organ simulator), **Akoustik Piano**, **Elektrik Piano**, **Pro-53** (Prophet 5 simulator), **Battery 3** (drums), and **Massive** (a fat-sounding synthesizer). And then there's Synthogy **Ivory** grand piano and **Italian Grand**, **Garritan Jazz & Big Band** and **GEM** (General MIDI), plus virtual instruments by Big Fish Audio, Yellow Tools, and more.

These instruments are another level beyond hardware ROM-based synthesizers as they can stream their monstrously huge files directly from the hard drive for the ultimate in instrumental reality.

I've personally been using an Apple **MacBook** as my live rig, along with a MIDI controller keyboard and it's nothing short of astounding just how good this setup sounds. (And I carry it all to the gig under one arm!) Although this works very well, I now have a Muse Receptor to do the same thing, which allows me to keep my Mac at home for its other duties. But Mac, PC, or Receptor, they all work great for your live setup.

The next piece of the live puzzle is the MIDI controller. This has been an incredible year so far for MIDI controllers. There are lightweight units from M-Audio, Edirol, Korg, and Novation, as well as larger 88-note weighted controllers from CME and others. All of them have lots of knobs, sliders, buttons, and pads that let you express yourself in real time. And don't forget about the MIDI drum controllers, wind controllers, and more from AKAI, M-Audio, Korg, and Yamaha. There's something for everyone!

Finally, I've got to tell you about the new wireless MIDI units from M-Audio. I've been wanting wireless MIDI for over 12 years now but it's always been too expensive. Now, M-Audio offers the 25-key **MidAir** for only \$199.97! The possibilities are huge.

Imagine this: You're onstage with a battery-powered controller (no power cables). The controller is controlling your virtual instruments via MIDI (no audio cables), and your MIDI is wireless (no MIDI cables). This means that your controller can be placed anywhere on stage with no connections whatsoever. Is that cool or what?



Get into Gear!

LINE 6 Guitar amp modeling isn't a new phenomena. It seems that guitarists are always trying to add more tones to their sonic arsenal. But most of us don't have room to store dozens of amps. The good news is that guitar amp modelers offer a plethora of tonal options and often take up very little real estate, especially software emulators that only take up hard drive space. Though the amp-modeling field is a crowded one, one manufacturer has consistently been ahead of the curve: Line 6.

Line 6's **Gearbox** is an outstanding collection of emulated classic and modern guitar and bass amplifier models with algorithms borrowed from the company's very successful Pod XT. The amp models all include selectable microphone models that can be fed into six virtual classic mic preamps. Line 6 also included a load of great effects processors with reproductions of sought-after vintage

effects, plus some modern classics as well. There are even filters from Moog and ARP synths that can be used to push your guitar or bass into new creative territories.

Your guitar can tap into Gearbox's modeling power via the included DI interface, which plugs into an available USB port, and also serves as copy protection for Gearbox. The interface provides a clean user interface with latency-free monitoring direct into your DAW. The DI sports a single hi-Z input that's been optimized for guitar and has an input pad to reduce the output for guitars with high-output pickups. The back panel boasts a headphone out, a pair of balanced outs that can be used for monitoring, plus a DI out that allows the Gearbox interface to function as a standard DI.

There are two different versions of Gearbox available — Gold and Silver — with Gold being the most feature-rich. Silver is loaded with 18 guitar amp models, five bass amp models, and 30 effects processors. Gold is overflowing with tonal options, incorporating 78 guitar amps, 28 bass amps, and 80 modeled effects. Both Silver and Gold have the same six mic preamp models. Silver is aimed at guitarists who need some additional tonal options in their recordings; Gold, on the other hand, is a much more comprehensive collection that's perfect for tweakheads. No matter which collection you get, there's one thing that's certain — they simply sound fantastic!

»» **Line 6 GearBox Gold Bundle • Sweetwater price \$499.99 • www.sweetwater.com/GearBoxGold**
 »» **Line 6 GearBox Silver Bundle • Sweetwater price \$299.99 • www.sweetwater.com/GearBoxSilv**

GUITAR 101: Necks

Gibson Memphis ES-335

Paul Reed Smith Santana II

By Jim Miller

Back in the old days, we didn't worry too much about guitar necks. See, there were basically only two kinds of strings: The ones that hurt your fingers and the ones that hurt your fingers even more. You have to remember that we didn't have light gauge strings or "slinky" sets back then. So while today's players can learn with a set of .008s or .009s, our first E string was a mammoth .012 and our G was a wound .024! When you were coming to terms with shredded fingers, the neck profile really meant very little.

Thankfully, all that has changed. Most manufacturers now divulge the radius (curve) of the fingerboard, the width of the neck at the nut and even the neck profile. Actually, it wouldn't be too much of a stretch to say that a particular neck profile is part of the lore and legend of famous guitars. As an example, early Gibson Les Pauls through 1958 had big, chunky necks, but in 1959, the company shaved off a bit of girth, resulting in what many consider to be the perfect Les Paul neck — not too fat, not too skinny. However, by 1960, a clear trend emerged and in response to player demand, Gibson unveiled the so-called "slim taper" neck, which carried over into the SG line, as well as the ES-335. There's no denying that the slim taper neck is one of the fastest ever produced by any company.

Today, you can choose the Les Paul of your dreams, as the company has historically accurate reproductions of all three necks in the '58, '59, and '60 Les Paul reissues. But Gibson certainly isn't the only

company with a wide array of neck profiles. Arguably, Fender has almost as many neck profiles as it has guitar models. Over its 50-year history, Fender has had so many neck carves that it's amazing they can keep track of them all. There are "U"-shaped, "C"-shaped, soft "V"-shaped and everything in between, with fingerboard radiuses from 7.25 inches all the way out to 12 inches.

Another guitar builder, Paul Reed Smith, proudly offers three standard profiles: wide-fat, wide-thin, and regular (which, as you might guess, is somewhere between the two extremes). For those who really love fat necks, there's the special order Santana II, with a carve that's even fatter than the wide-fat.

I could go on and on, but the truth is, most guitar players won't really know which specific neck shape is best for them until they've played for a while. As you might guess, many people find it's easier to learn on a guitar with a thinner neck. Thankfully, like all other aspects of guitar building, quality is at an all-time high. Even so-called "budget models" play extremely well and have great necks. If you have questions, most of Sweetwater's Sales Engineers either play guitar themselves or have spent extra time in the Sweetwater University courses that cover guitars, so answers are only a phone call away.

I'll be back next time to cover the other aspect of the guitar neck: The fingerboard. See you next issue!



Customer Studio: Jeremy Cucco



Let's pay a visit to Sublyme Records, Jeremy Cucco's recording and mastering studio. Sublyme has been operating in Fredericksburg, Virginia for 10 years, though a large portion of what's mixed and mastered there is initially captured miles away, according to Cucco, a longtime Sweetwater customer. "The majority of the recording I do is on-location orchestra, choir, and acoustic recording," he says. The studio's website points out that "you can't record an orchestra in a studio. Well, you can, but it would have to be a huge studio. Besides, why would we want to, when so many concert halls and churches sound so good?" When he does record inside Sublyme, he takes advantage of the floating construction of the studio's cozy recording room. "I have a 12' x 13' room that's dedicated to recording instruments, plus a 4' x 6' iso booth" for in-house tracking. But the bulk of Sublyme's in-house efforts are focused on mastering.

When he's not capturing symphonies outside the studio, Jeremy works in Sublyme's custom-built underground mastering suite. He relies on top-shelf outboard gear, including a Manley Vari-Mu compressor/limiter and a Crane Song Ibis mastering EQ. "Almost every mastering track I do passes through those two boxes," he notes. Other studio gear highlights include Grace Designs 101 and 201 preamps, Benchmark, Lynx, Aphex, and Mackie converters, and an extensive mic locker, including a couple of go-to microphones. "Two of my favorite mics are the Rode K2 and the Soundelux U195," he says, pointing out one way he's benefited from the advice of his Sweetwater Sales Engineer Craig Wilson. "It

was Craig who recommended the K2 to me," Cucco remembers. He also sings the praises of his Soundelux condenser: "It's rich and full and quite transparent."

Cucco is appreciative of the relationship he and his Sales Engineer have built, and feels it comes in handy when it's time to order. "Craig knows exactly what I have, so he can make recommendations that are right for me. I'm incredibly busy, and I don't have time to deal with going over a lot of information. Craig knows how to work with me," he says, adding, "I never feel pushed into anything when I'm working with Sweetwater."

Likewise, Wilson enjoys working with the studio owner. "He's definitely very knowledgeable about what it takes to make good recordings," he says.

Cucco plans to expand his location recording operation even further nationally, as well as extending into the international market. And he'll be staying with Sweetwater all the way. "I'll be spending another \$100,000 with Sweetwater over the next 10 years, no problem," he says.

Our thanks and best of luck to Jeremy Cucco! You can find more information about Sublyme Records at www.sublymerecords.com.

Want to see your studio in SweetNotes? Email photos to Mitch Gallagher now! (mitch_gallagher@sweetwater.com)

The Sweetwater Difference — Experience it for yourself! Call, fax, or email us today!



Sweetwater was one of the first retailers to have a presence on the fledgling Internet — way back in 1994. We're all heavily into technology here (I doubt you're surprised to hear that!), and I'm happy to say our crystal balls were working well back then and we realized how big this whole web thing could become, and we wanted to get in on it from the ground floor.

Today, Sweetwater.com is an astoundingly massive resource. We've got somewhere over 65,000 pages live on the site! This includes thousands of product pages, of course, but there are tens of thousands of pages dedicated to providing support, tips and techniques, technical resources, and other knowledge. In fact, last year *Electronic Musician* magazine named us one of the best web resources for musicians — something we're very proud of.

Here's something else we're very proud of: Sweetwater's *inSync* just passed its

10-year anniversary! If you haven't visited *inSync* or don't subscribe to it, it's our daily Internet newsletter. Every business day for the past ten years, we've posted industry news, new product information, news of new product arrivals, and two tremendous resources: our Word for the Day and Tech Tip of the Day. At this point we have well over 2,000 music and technology-related terms in our Word for the Day glossary, with a new one added each day. It's literally become a technical dictionary for the industry. The Tech Tip of the Day contains everything from answers to questions we receive to helpful tips and tidbits for getting more out of your gear, to problem fixes, to news on technical issues.

Ten years ago, there was nothing like *inSync* available in our industry; there might have been one or two other newsletters in other industries, but it was pretty revolutionary at the time. (Now that I think about it, I guess we were blogging long before the term was even invented...) With the daily flood of information, *inSync* is even more vital today; our team combs the web and talks to manufacturers every day to bring together all the relevant information they can find, then distills it down into bite-sized chunks that you can quickly scan through and digest. In addition, we compile each week's daily *inSync* issues and send them out to subscribers each Friday night, and we also have an RSS feed of the daily issues you can subscribe to.

inSync is totally free, and there are no ads or sales pitches in it, so we really don't get anything for it. But I like the fact that we're giving back to the industry and helping people stay up to date. I read it every day to stay on top of what's happening. I hope you'll check it out at www.sweetwater.com/insync.

Happy birthday, *inSync*, here's to another decade!

Roland MV-8800

As recording, mixing, and editing capabilities have gotten more powerful and flexible in this Digital Age, it's a little puzzling that more manufacturers haven't started "thinking outside the box," imagining new creative and innovative ways to create, access, and manipulate sounds beyond the standard faders and knobs of the mixer paradigm. With the popularity of modern sampling, hip-hop, and DJ performances comes a real need to be able to work with sounds on the fly, combining the power of a DAW system with an accessible, portable means to control it. Roland addressed this issue a while back with the groundbreaking MV-8000, which became an instant standard among DJs and producers. They've raised the bar again with the new, feature-laden **MV-8800**, which packs even more functionality into an easy-to-use, expandable package.

The MV-8800 is a full sampler and synth, as well as a multitrack recorder. This unit is stuffed with features, including parameters that can be assigned to the automated control surfaces, a built-in 24-channel stereo mixer, extensive signal-processing functions (parametric EQ, enhancer, expander, multiband compressor, and mastering limiter), a hard drive that's already loaded with a 128-instrument sound library, real-time BPM tempo-matching and pitch-matching, and a host of effects that let you make and manipulate great-sounding tracks right out of the box.

The first thing you notice about this compact unit is its control layout. Sure, there are faders (eight of them), but they're not the prominent fixtures you'd find on a mixer-style unit. The MV-8800's most dominant feature is a group of 16 control pads, making it resemble a drum machine. Their placement, as well as that of the transport controls (start, stop, record, etc.) is thoughtfully laid out, giving you an uncluttered control surface that lends itself to real-time operation. In addition to the control pads, the unit sports easily accessible buttons and knobs for loading banks, editing, and entering values and numerical information. There's even a cursor function that lets you navigate the MV-8800's full-color LCD screen, for occasions when using the included mouse just isn't feasible. An optional VGA monitor can be added for even better viewing of the comprehensive graphics.

One of the highlights of the MV-8800 is its ability to integrate drum machine-style pattern recording with the conventional "tape-style" tracking that makes DAWs so easy to use. Whole phrases can be recorded, chopped, sampled, manipulated, and assigned to any of the 16 pads for instant access. Onboard sounds, such as the legendary TR-808 and TR-909 drum machines, as well as pianos, strings, guitars, horns, and synth basses, are available for similar treatment. There's even onboard capability to take your tracks all the way to the mastering stage! The MV-8800 truly does it all inside the box, while giving you the freedom to take its amazing functionality outside yours.

►► Roland MV-8800 • Sweetwater price \$2295.97 • www.sweetwater.com/mv8800

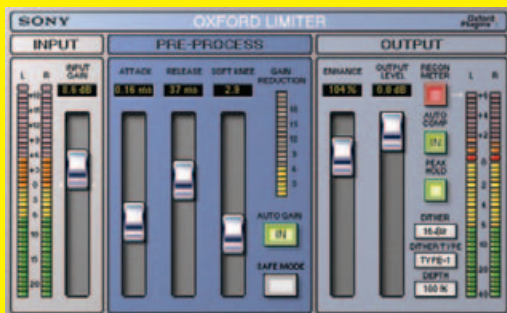
Moving? Moved? Want more than one copy? Call, fax, or email us your new address and don't miss an issue of *SweetNotes*!

LATE-BREAKING SONY OXFORD NEWS!

SONY

Sony Oxford has announced the release of Audio Units versions of their premier plug-ins! This means that users of native software such as Digital Performer, Logic Pro, Live, Peak, and Final Cut Pro can now access some of the finest processors on the planet!

Call your Sales Engineer for more information!



Crown Jewel



It's a poorly kept secret that many of the great recorded guitar tones were captured using low-wattage tube amps. Much of Jimmy Page's legendary Led Zeppelin album work was done through small tube amps. Small tube amps are enjoying a comeback with guitarists and engineers alike for their ability to create huge tone at low volume, compact size and light weight, and minimal cost. They're not just for practice in the bedroom anymore!

Peavey has been a leading manufacturer of guitars, amps (of all sizes), and PA gear for over 40 years with a reputation for producing equipment that sounds great, is built tank-tough, and doesn't cost a fortune. They've crafted custom amplifiers for Eddie Van Halen and Joe Satriani, as well as lines of amplifiers that hearken back to the glory days of rock n' roll while putting their own unique spin on classic tones. One of their more recent creations, the **ValveKing Royal 8**, is a low-wattage tube amp designed for low-volume practice or recording and is chock full of tone, despite its small size.

The 5-watt ValveKing Royal 8 uses true Class A circuitry to provide the tone and feel of the amplifiers that were used in creating the most legendary rock n' roll riffs of all time. The tube complement includes a 12AX7 in the preamp with no negative feedback in the power amp, while an EL84 is situated at the power stage. You're given complete control with tone, master volume, and gain knobs, plus there are high- and low-gain inputs. Tube distortion tones can be achieved in two ways: crank the volume and reduce the gain for smooth, dynamic distortion from the power amp, or crank the gain and reduce the volume for singing preamp overdrive. Push both the gain and the volume and you'll produce saturated lead tones that'll sustain for days. All of this tube sweetness is broadcast through a single 8" speaker.

The ValveKing Royal 8 is a bargain, priced just under \$200. The variety of distortion tones that can be created and the ability to conjure these sounds at low volumes makes the ValveKing Royal 8 very appealing to guitarists who want authentic tube tones, but want to avoid straining their backs or upsetting the neighbors.

Call your Sales Engineer now to learn more!

>> **Peavy ValveKing Royal 8 • Sweetwater price \$199.99**
• www.sweetwater.com/ValveKRoyal



Expert CENTER



While Madonna might live in the material world, we're surely living in the information world. With high-speed Internet an everyday reality, there are vast amounts of knowledge that are never more than a mouse-click away. Of course, one such resource is Sweetwater's own SweetCare tech support website (www.sweetwater.com/sweetcare) where you'll find a wealth of information about most of the products we carry. We've compiled links to the most commonly asked tech support questions, plus there's a brand-new massive Pro Tools Resource Center to answer all your Digidesign-related questions.

But Sweetwater isn't your only source for tech support. Our friends and partners are also a great source of information, and many of them have their own tutorials that can guide you through your technical questions.

A few examples:

http://www.tascam.com/Products/DM-3200/dm3200_tn_routing.pdf has routing info for the DM-3200 and DM-4800 digital consoles.

<http://www.digidesign.com/index.cfm?langid=100&navid=62&itmid=23396&ref=PTAV-F> is a great tutorial for Digidesign's Strike virtual drummer.

<http://www.digidesign.com/index.cfm?langid=100&navid=62&itmid=23396&ref=PTAV-F> is a Live 5 Digidesign Edition tutorial.

www.learnigastudio.com covers all your Giga needs.

http://www.sweetwater.com/feature/register_waves/ and <http://www.sweetwater.com/feature/ptresources/register.php> are Sweetwater tutorials about how to register Waves plug-ins and Digidesign products respectively.

Of course, we'll always be there to help you with any and all of your tech support needs, but since we can't physically be on the phone 24 hours a day, we wanted to show some of our favorite web resources so your creativity never grinds to a halt due to a technical problem.

— continued from page 1

for zipping through a session's timeline. Rounding out the physical new features of the 003 family is the addition of a second headphone output that can be set to mirror outputs 3-4, allowing you to have two independent headphone mixes.

Under the hood, the 003 sports completely redesigned microphone preamps. These new preamps implement discrete, bi-polar, low-noise transistors paired with a super-clean signal path for some of the most musical-sounding inputs to appear on an LE interface. The preamps aren't the only improvement, as the 003 also sports cleaner A/D conversion than previous models. Standalone MIDI Mode, one of the coolest ideas to crop up in a long time, allows you to use the 003 outside the realm of Pro Tools to control MIDI parameters in other software. The 003 Rack has the same hardware and design, but without the control surface features.

The hardware isn't the only thing that's been retooled with the release of the 003. The Ignition Pack, a software package that adds a ton of bang-for-the-buck to every Pro Tools system, has been revamped to offer even more value. Included in the Ignition Pack 2, as it is now called, are virtual drums, light versions of Ableton Live and Reason, virtual synths, Melodyne essential, and a mountain of other software tools and added-value perks. If you opt for the 003 or 003 Rack Factory Bundle, they ship with Ignition Pack 2 Pro, which adds useful monitoring tools from Trillium Labs, a sampler, and a quartet of sound libraries. These special bundles put all the tools you need to create music at your fingertips for a fraction of the cost of buying everything individually. And don't forget that a full version of industry-standard Pro Tools LE software comes with every 003 family interface!

Digidesign is offering numerous special deals that allow owners of legacy Pro Tools LE systems to upgrade to the latest generation of LE system at a reduced cost. It's an excellent time to step up to an 003, especially considering the electronic and sonic improvements to the signal path.

The 003 represents the latest evolutionary step in Pro Tools LE interfaces, and with the newest enhancements to the Ignition Packs, this is a great time to either upgrade from your existing system or take the leap into the industry-leading production software. Either way, the 003 sounds great, boasts upgraded features, and puts the power of the Pro Tools in your hands for a very reasonable price.



- >> Digidesign 003 Factory • Sweetwater price \$2195.97 • www.sweetwater.com/digi003fact
- >> Digidesign 003 Rack • Sweetwater price \$1199.97 • www.sweetwater.com/digi003r



12-pack of Tone

If you've ever held a guitar, you're undoubtedly familiar with Marshall amplifiers. Whether it was Jimi's psychedelic-tinged blues in the '60s, Johnny Ramone's chainsaw riffs in the '70s, the scooped mids of '80s metal, the grunge tones of the '90s, or on to today's modern rock, these tone monsters have been backing more guitarists than any other amp in history. It would seem with over 40 years of making amps, Marshall wouldn't see much need to improve. But that didn't stop them from creating an amp that's so modern and so versatile that it's absolutely mind-blowing, even by Marshall standards.

The new **JVM Series** are all-tube 4-channel amps, and within each of the four channels are three modes, making for a total of 12 distinct sounds (how's that for versatility!). With clean tones that are stellar and high-gain settings just a switch away, there's literally no tone the JVM can't conjure. Classic rockers will love the Crunch channel, with tones reminiscent of Plexis, or push it a bit harder for JCM800-style gain. For massive amounts of gain, there are OD1 and OD2, which can cover any sonic territory with a heavy leaning toward shredding. No matter what kind of tone you're looking for, it's a safe bet that the JVM can produce it.

While the JVM is certainly a tonal powerhouse, the overall design is innovative in its own right. The tube complement is a quartet of ECC83 tubes — or 12AX7s, as we call them on this side of the pond — with another ECC83 and four EL34s at the power stage. The front panel is clean and well laid out. The real magic lies in the 6-button programmable footswitch. Settings can be assigned to the six switches, and amp status can be monitored from the LEDs on the footswitch, meaning that you always know where you are, even without looking at the amp. Plus, with MIDI in and thru — which can be integrated into a MIDI-switching setup — the JVM can store up to 128 amps setups. Marshall also included an amazing studio-quality digital reverb that's one of the best-sounding guitar amp reverbs available. The circuit was designed in such a way that if you switch to a different channel, the reverb continues to decay naturally. The back panel reveals an XLR direct out that's active even when the amp is in standby mode so you can harness the Marshall sound for recording — even at 3 AM.

Based on the sheer amount of tones available, the super-flexible switching setup, the great reverb, and the quality that comes along with owning a Marshall, the JVM amps — which are available as either a 100-watt head or a 100-watt 2 x 12" combo — truly give us a glimpse of what the future of guitar amplification looks like. Marshall practically invented modern guitar tone as we know it, and it looks like they have a good idea about where it's going in the future.

- >> Marshall JVM410H • Sweetwater price \$1749.97 • www.sweetwater.com/jvm410h
- >> Marshall 1960A • Sweetwater price \$699.97 • www.sweetwater.com/1960a
- >> Marshall 1960B • Sweetwater price \$699.97 • www.sweetwater.com/1960b



Sweetwater's Exclusive: Minimoog Voyagers

Mahogany Cabinet



*Jade Series
shown*

Think “analog synthesizer” and the Moog name instantly comes to mind. Prior to his recent passing, the legendary Bob Moog resurrected his company and managed to conjure up some new products in the process. One resulting highlight is the Minimoog Voyager, which combines the company's signature analog sounds and shaping capabilities with modern functionality. It truly brings the legacy of Moog into the 21st century, while leaving the distinctive vibe intact.

As cool as the Voyager's adjustable tilted control panel and wood housing looks, however, Sweetwater managed to go one better and procure mahogany-clad beauties with some striking and exclusive options!

In addition to their distinctive mahogany cabinets, each of Sweetwater's exclusive **Minimoog Voyager Selects** have exotic backlight colors for their control panels. You can choose between solar orange, lunar white, jade green, fire red, and electric blue options for a distinctive-looking, one-of-a-kind instrument. Imagine firing up your Minimoog, turning down the lights, and seeing the controls and mod- and pitch-wheels bathed in a truly breathtaking color!

Of course, looks are only skin- (or in this case, panel-) deep, and this Sweetwater-exclusive limited selection of Voyagers would only be attractive paperweights if they didn't perform. Mr. Moog was a stickler for quality, performance, and great sound, and these synths do not disappoint! While staying true to the analog sound-shaping architecture of the venerable Model D Minimoog, the Voyagers add a new layer of features that make it easy to use in the studio or onstage. This version includes new editor/librarian software, and seven banks of 128 presets pre-loaded with patches created by luminaries from the keyboard world. In addition, a MIDI enhancement function allows you to actually reduce the MIDI output for ease of use with older equipment.

These are just a few of the incredible features you'll find on these exclusive instruments, be sure to visit www.sweetwater.com to find out more. We're happy to give you the opportunity to get

>> Moog Voyager Select • Sweetwater price \$3195.97
• www.sweetwater.com/voyagersjm

your hands on a piece of history by offering these extremely limited-edition Minimoog Voyagers!

IK Offers a Sweet Crossgrade Deal!

Sweetwater and IK Multimedia have teamed up to give owners of IK products a great opportunity to add to or upgrade their existing IK software! If you are the registered owner of any one IK product, this “Crossgrade for All” promotion lets you add any other IK product at the discounted crossgrade price!



Since 1996, IK Multimedia has been developing and manufacturing music software optimized for high performance on personal computers. The international company is highly regarded for great-sounding, user-friendly software, such as the Amplitube guitar amp-modeling plug-in, T-RackS mastering plug-in/standalone, SampleTank sample workstation plug-in, the incredible Ampeg SVX bass amp-modeling plug-in, and a whole lot more.

If you currently have an LE version of an IK product (and are registered as the owner), this crossgrade deal allows you to upgrade to the full version for a great price! You can also add new sound modules, signal processors, effects, or virtual instruments to your IK arsenal for an unbeatable deal.

One more cool feature of this offer: according to IK, it doesn't matter how long ago you purchased your products — the deal is still good. Call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer today for more information on this amazing promotion!



Super Headphone/ Mic Offer!

AKG is one of the most trusted names in pro audio. Their mics are legendary, and their headphones are staples in studios worldwide. Now, for a limited time, you can get one of the most famous mics in the world — the **C414B-XLS** — paired with industry-standard **K271** headphones at an amazing price.

Even if you already have a C414 in your mic cabinet (and if you don't this would be the optimal time to get one), everyone knows that the only thing better than one great mic is having a pair of great mics. A pair of C414s make excellent drum overheads, excel as room mics, and are overachievers in just about any stereo miking situation.

And how better to monitor your stereo miking than with a set of stellar headphones? The K271s are great at blocking external noise while accurately reproducing sources, giving you an excellent picture of what's going down during recording or mixing.

With the C414B-XLS listing for \$1123 and the K271 listing at \$294, getting both for under a grand is a steal! This is a great time to bolster both your monitoring capabilities and add a really nice mic to your collection, or complete your stereo pair. Call your Sales Engineer today to get all the details on this amazing limited-time offer!

>> AKG C414/K271 Bundle • Sweetwater price \$999.97 •
www.sweetwater.com/c414k271bum

Hot Off The Press!

The Spring 2007 edition of our *ProGear Gear Encyclopedia* has hit the streets! The new 428-page directory, packed with the latest pro audio and recording gear plus guitars, keyboards, and thousands more audio essentials, is now shipping. Download yours today at www.sweetwater.com/publications.



hands on: Faderport

By Mitch Gallagher



I love creating music on computers; the control, the flexibility, in short, the power. But I also date back (barely) to analog tape and mixing consoles, so I sometimes miss that “performance” aspect that went along with mixing a song without automation, and the instant access that hardware controls under your hands offer. I have a large control surface in my studio that I love, but if you’ve been following my “Studio Notebook” articles in these pages, then you know that I’ve been doing a lot of work lately on a compact portable rig — where space is always an issue. Now, thanks to PreSonus, even though I’m challenged for space and weight, I can still have a control surface for hands-on control!

The PreSonus **FaderPort** is a single-fader channel strip for controlling a software DAW. (Currently Pro Tools, Digital Performer, Logic, Cubase/Nuendo, and SONAR are supported; others are on the way.) For channel control, you’re given a motorized 100-mm long-throw fader, a dedicated pan knob, mute, solo and record knobs, and automation controls for selecting Read, Write, and Touch modes, as well as a button for turning off the moving hardware fader.

Additional controls open windows in your DAW, plus there’s an undo button, marker and loop controls, punch-in/-out, and the standard transport controls (rewind, fast-forward, stop, play, record). A footswitch jack performs hands-free punch-in and punch-out, while channel select buttons allow you to move through your DAW’s channels/tracks by channel or in banks.

In Use

I plugged the FaderPort into my trusty MacBook and fired up Pro Tools LE and Logic (not at the same time, of course). There wasn’t even any need to install drivers — just plug it in. The FaderPort worked very well for me. It’s just right for making on-the-fly adjustments to a mix and for riding a fader during mixdown. Initially there were some limitations because the FaderPort was forced to operate in HUI-emulation mode. But there is a dedicated Logic driver on the way, and a dedicated Digital Performer driver was just released at this writing. SONAR and Cubase/Nuendo also offer dedicated drivers. These dedicated drivers provide much tighter integration between the software and the FaderPort, and offer 1,024 steps of fader resolution — that’s fine control!

At Sweetwater’s price (under \$200), the FaderPort is a no-brainer. It makes such a difference being able to put your hands on your mixes. And it operates totally plug-in-and-play transparently. I love hardware that just works — I literally have not had to crack the manual once during my time with the FaderPort. It does the job and it doesn’t get in the way — literally or figuratively — all of which adds up to one very nice product.

>> PreSonus FaderPort • Sweetwater price \$199.97 • www.sweetwater.com/faderport



Waldorf Edition Plug-in Collection

Waldorf is back! The company is celebrating its rebirth with the **Waldorf Edition**, a suite of plug-ins that will have sound designers, producers, and musicians drooling. Included in this stellar collection are the PPG Wave 2.V virtual wavetable synth, the Attack percussion synthesizer, and the D-Pole filter plug-in.

PPG’s Wave 2 was the first digital wavetable synth to feature analog filters. Now the unique sound-shaping features of the Wave 2 are available again with Waldorf’s plug-in, which takes the original synth to a new level of flexibility.

The Attack synth puts the best analog synth percussion sounds of the ‘80s and ‘90s into your DAW. Attack is loaded with 36 kits with 24 percussion sounds per kit. This plug-in also gives you control over oscillators, filters, frequency and ring modulation, and effects.

You’ll get truly fascinating sounds out of the D-POLE filter, which uses six modules (filter, amplifier, LFO, envelope follower, delay, and oscillator) to manipulate, contort, and tweak sounds into entirely new creations. Filters can be synched for trippy beats, or you can alter your voice, instrument, or samples for subtle or outlandish effects.

The Waldorf Edition Suite is Mac- and Windows-compatible, and works with any VST 2.0-compatible host.

>> Waldorf Edition • Sweetwater price \$79.99
• www.sweetwater.com/WaldorfEd



Compact Thunder



Monitoring is one of the most critical links in a signal chain. If your monitors aren’t faithfully reproducing all the frequencies, there’s no way to ensure your mix is going to translate from system to system. For large studios where space is no problem, making sure that the bass and sub-bass frequencies are well represented isn’t usually a problem. But with project studios, space can be a challenge. Fortunately, the Event **S100** active subwoofer is compact enough to fit into any studio, and priced to be affordable for any budget.

The S100 is loaded with an 8” polypropylene-cone damper-equipped low-frequency driver driven by 100-watts of power. The frequency response extends down to 35Hz, and the cabinet sports a floor-coupled design to provide the most volume possible. Plus, there’s a footswitch that instantly mutes the output. The S100 is the perfect companion to the Event ALP-5 Active Linear Phase nearfield — though it will work with any active monitoring setup, and really shines when paired with compact nearfield monitors.

Subwoofers have become necessary in today’s studio world, especially since more and more home stereo systems are sub-equipped setups. If you want to be certain how your mixes are going to translate into other systems, you need a subwoofer, and the low cost and high performance of the S100 makes it a front-runner in low-frequency assistance for monitoring.



>> Event S100 • Sweetwater price \$299.97 •
www.sweetwater.com/s100sub

Video and Music On the Go

By Dan Hoeye

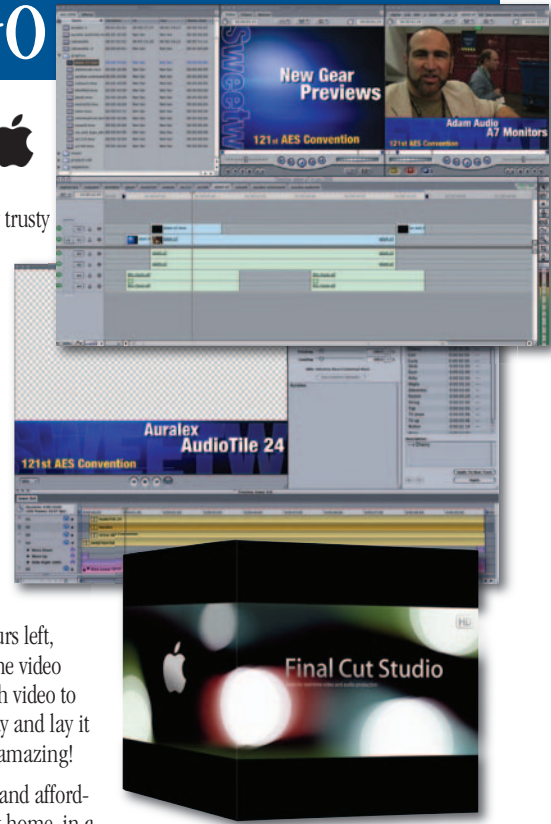
Each year I look forward to the exciting industry trade shows such as NAMM and AES. The sights and sounds of new gear remind me how fun and fulfilling it is to make music and to record projects. Whether flying to New York, San Francisco, or Los Angeles, for the past few years my travel partner has been my trusty Mac laptop. This little white wonder has proven its worth over and over — never quite so much as it did this past fall while traveling to the AES show in San Francisco.

I was in the process of finishing a big project when we left for AES, leaving me no time to prepare for a number of videos we planned to do while at the show. However, armed with my laptop, a pair of Sennheiser HD-280 Pro headphones, and video and audio software, I took off into the blue yonder confident I'd somehow finish the video and music preproduction before touching ground in northern California.

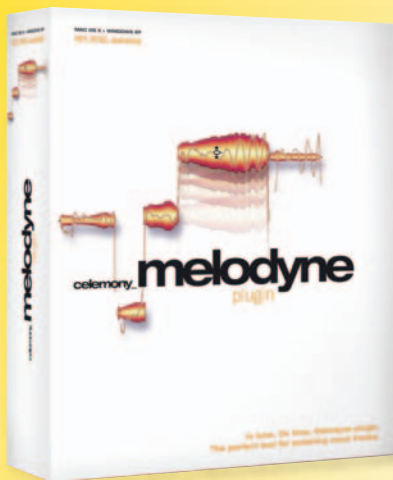
My production software is Apple's **Final Cut Pro Studio**, which combines Final Cut Pro, Motion, LiveType, SoundTrack Pro, and DVD Studio Pro. This suite delivers everything you need to create professional multimedia projects. We planned to shoot previews of new products at the show, as well as "video chats" with industry personalities such as Craig Anderton, Roger Nichols, EveAnna Manley, and others. I needed to create video intros and exits, lower third titles, and create music beds, and I only had this one travel day to finish them.

Once the captain allowed the use of "approved electronic devices," I launched Motion and came up with intros and exits for the videos. Then, I moved on to creating lower third titles using LiveType. Next, with just a few hours left, I opened SoundTrack Pro and created ten different music beds using the included Apple Loops. (I made all of the video intros and exits in Motion the same length so I could drop the music beds in any of the videos — allowing each video to "feel" unique.) Finally, I made video templates so all I'd have to do at the show was edit material from each day and lay it into its respective template. The entire process took me about four hours, and I did it entirely with a laptop — amazing!

Once upon a time, I made my living writing music and editing video in a high-end "pro" studio. With flexible and affordable tools like those discussed here, my music and video studio is wherever I happen to be at the moment — at home, in a hotel, or in the air.



>> **Apple Final Cut Pro Studio** • Sweetwater price \$1299.00 • www.sweetwater.com/finalcutstu



Melodyne Plugs In

When Celemony debuted Melodyne at the 2001 Winter NAMM show, everyone knew that the world of audio was about to change. The ability to seamlessly manipulate the pitch and timing of a track saved countless sessions where the vocal slid out of pitch or the tempo was less than steady. Needless to say, engineers found Melodyne to be a very valuable tool, and clients liked it because it saved them studio time and money since re-tracking wasn't needed.

The original standalone version of Melodyne is powerful, but needs the Melodyne Bridge software to function with a DAW. The Melodyne user interface was very intuitive, and no one could argue that the end result using Melodyne was anything less than amazing, but the competition's ability to run inside right the user's DAW was definitely an advantage.

Now, with the release of **Melodyne Plug-in**, the software can now run directly inside your DAW! The current list of Mac and PC host DAWs that support the Melodyne plug-in includes Pro Tools|HD, LE, and M-Powered versions 7 and above, Digital Performer 5 (Core Audio only), Ableton Live 5.2 and 6.0.1, SONAR 6, Nuendo 3, and Cubase 3 and 4. It's important to note that some users of DAWs not mentioned above have had success running the Melodyne plug-in, so if you don't see your preferred DAW, you should download the demo version and check it out on your system to see if it works.

The beauty of Melodyne is that it works like an audio plug-in that functions like a MIDI sequencer. With the same ease that MIDI notes are moved in a piano-roll edit view in a sequencer, users can move the notes of a track. Wish the singer had hit an E there instead of a B? With Melodyne, there's a scale ruler running up the left side of the screen that allows you to see exactly what pitch you're moving the note to. It really is that easy.

But enough about the technical side of Melodyne, as it's far more than a corrective tool. Melodyne excels as an inventive way to spice up a vocal track. From changing the actual notes being sung to adding vibrato or drift, completely re-sculpting the vocal track (or any single-voice sound source) is never more than a mouse-click away. You can also change the duration of a note, and the surrounding notes automatically adjust themselves accordingly. Very cool stuff!

In a perfect world, pitch- and timing-correction wouldn't be needed, since everything would be consistently in-tune and on-time. But anybody that's spent any time in the studio knows that it rarely happens that way. Thankfully, when things do slide into the realm of less than perfect, we've got powerful tools like Melodyne to patch things up or creatively work with tracks.

>> **Celemony Melodyne Plug-in** • Sweetwater price \$249.97 • www.sweetwater.com/melodyneplug

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Remember those original *Star Trek* episodes — the ones with Kirk and Spock? Every so often, when the writers were stuck, they'd send the crew of the Enterprise to some planet where everyone dressed and acted like they were from ancient Greece or the wild, wild west. The sets were probably easily accessible and it never hurt the ratings, as Trekkies loyally followed wherever the Enterprise ventured.

While I didn't make it to Anaheim for Winter NAMM (my leash only reaches as far as the refrigerator), I've been told that many attendees felt a bit like those *Star Trek* characters. Instead of walking into the 2007 NAMM Show, in a lot of ways, it looked and felt like a 1980s or '90s event. Not only was Kurzweil back (now owned by Hyundai) but so was Moog, Waldorf, and the biggest surprise of all, the Rhodes electric piano!

Of course, it wasn't just keyboards that gave this year's Winter NAMM an "old school" look. Almost every guitar manufacturer was prominently displaying reissues. Gibson had their Historic Les Pauls on display including both a 1956 (with P-90 pickups) and '57 Goldtop (with humbuckers) along with those drool-worthy sunburst '58,

'59, and '60 Standard recreations, plus the '57 Custom "Black Beauty" with either two or three humbuckers. Biggest surprise? The Kiefer Sutherland KS-336, part of the company's "Inspired By" series. Word is, when he's not chasing terrorists on the hit show *24*, Kiefer is deep into new music and old guitars.

Not to be outdone, Fender had almost every model imaginable, including their Time Machine, Closet Classic, NOS (new old stock), and Relics on display. There are '56, '57, '60, '62, '65, and '66 Strats in all the most popular colors plus Vintage '52 and '62 Telecasters, as well as '50s and '60s Tele Classics (including a '60s version with a Bigsby), '69 and '72 Tele Thinlines, and '72 Tele Deluxe and Custom reissues. That's just the tip of the iceberg as far as Fender is concerned, but I'm personally impressed that the company has also reissued lesser known, but brilliant models such as the Jaguar, Jazzmaster, and '65 Mustang, which session players all bought because it had a distinctive sound all its own, thanks to a unique pickup selector system.

PRS unveiled a number of interesting variations on existing models. In particular, there are now nitrocellulose satin finish versions of the Singlecut Standard, the Singlecut Soapbar, the Singlecut Trem, and the "hybrid" Singlecut Trem Modern Eagle, which melds the best features from both models to stunning effect.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the amazing comeback that Gretsch guitars have made. I still get three or four emails a week from the Tech Notes Online (www.sweetwater.com/feature/technotes) feature I did on Gretsch back in 2005! The company has released a number of new models for 2007, but probably the biggest news is that the appropriate models are once again part of the Chet Atkins Collection. While George Harrison is arguably the highest profile player ever to strap on a Gretsch, there probably wouldn't even be a line of Gretsch guitars if it weren't for Chet Atkins. Not only did he play and endorse the instruments, he also had input in the designs. I'm wrapping up a new Gretsch feature that will run soon in my Tech Notes Online column; keep an eye out for it at the URL above.

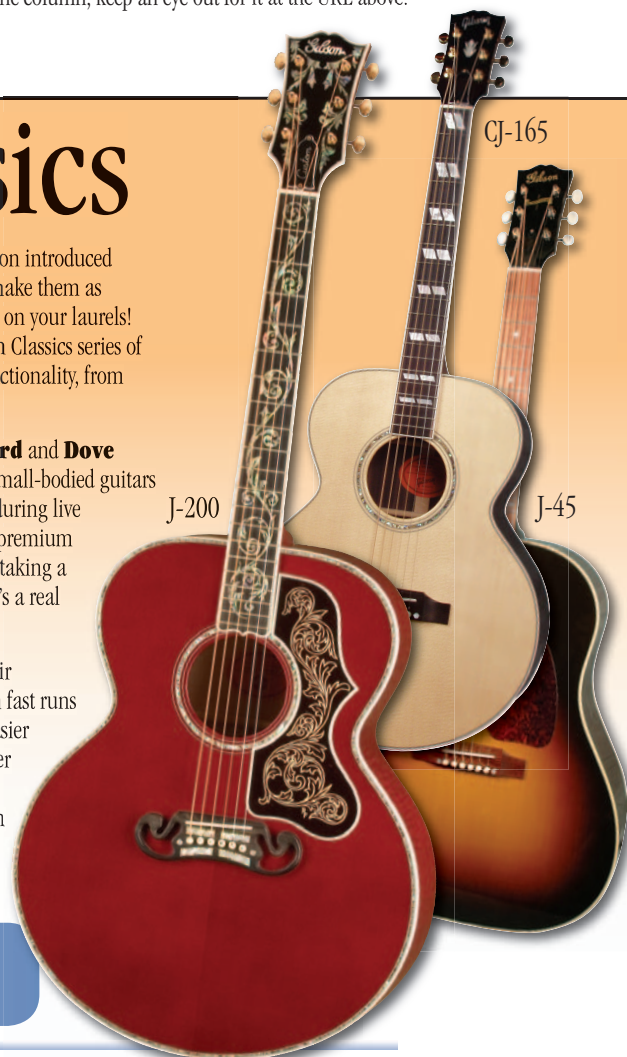
New Modern Classics

Gibson has been making top-quality acoustic guitars since its inception in 1894, when Orville Gibson introduced his first instruments. The company continues to constantly update and improve their products to make them as playable and dependable as possible — after all, you don't stay in business for 113 years by resting on your laurels! The venerable guitar maker recently announced some great new improvements to its entire Modern Classics series of acoustic guitars, making them even easier and more comfortable to play while adding modern functionality, from string height to electronics.

The Modern Classics lineup includes over 20 popular Gibson models, including the **Hummingbird** and **Dove** dreadnoughts, **J-45** and **J-50** round-shoulder acoustics, **J-150**, **J-200**, and J-185 jumbos, and small-bodied guitars such as the **Blues King** and **CJ-165**, to name a few. If your favorite artist straps on an acoustic during live performances, there's a good chance it's a Gibson, and all the Modern Classic models now include premium onboard pickups and electronics from Fishman and L.R. Baggs. There's nothing like the feeling of taking a great-playing, comfortable "old friend" onstage and getting an accurate amplified tone out of it; it's a real performance enhancer!

In addition to giving these guitars some live muscle, Gibson made significant improvements to their playability. The edges of the fingerboards have been radiused, or rolled, making it easier to perform fast runs up and down the neck, as well as giving you more overall comfort. The Modern Classics are now easier to play than ever, thanks to lower string height. This adjustment not only allows for faster and easier fretting everywhere on the neck, it also means the guitar will play in tune higher up the neck. The additions of a bone nut and Grover tuners provide greater tuning stability and even better tone than before. All these improvements add up to a rewarding playing experience from a truly classic series of instruments.

- >> Gibson J-200 • Sweetwater price \$7999.99 • www.sweetwater.com/j200vinechld
- >> Gibson CJ-165 • Sweetwater price \$2199.99 • www.sweetwater.com/lsg6rangh
- >> Gibson J-45 • Sweetwater price \$1999.99 • www.sweetwater.com/rs45vsnh1



studio notebook: Software Selection

By Mitch Gallagher

Choosing the software that you'll be using in your studio can be a challenge — I probably get asked the "what should I buy" question more than any other. The good news is that, by and large, all the successful software that's on the market today works well. If you're careful it's tough to go too far wrong.

Here are things I look at when I'm choosing software; it's a process of elimination:

1. Assess the Need — Before anything else, I sit down and think about why I want to add the new software. What am I hoping to accomplish? In some cases, the answer is as simple as "to get some cool new sounds" — and that's fine. At least I know what the goal is.

2. Compatibility — The new software has to work with everything I have. I know you're supposed to choose software, *then* choose hardware to run it — and that's good advice. But the reality is, I already have computers and peripherals. The software has to work with those items, and be compatible with other software I use.

3. User Interface — This may seem trivial, but after years of staring at computer screens, I want the software to *look* good. I also want it to be easy to use and logically laid out. How far can you get without having to crack the manual?



4. Capability — What does the software do? What does it offer that other packages don't? I don't look for one piece of software to do everything. Rather, I consider what each does well, and try to use them for those purposes. In some cases, multiple packages will do the things I need; at that point I reconsider items #3 and #5 to help make a decision.

5. Documentation/Support — Does the company have a good web presence? Can you easily find and download free updates and fixes? Is there a user forum for discussing the program and getting questions answered? Are tech support and FAQs easily accessible?

While I do check web forums and blogs for user experiences with the software, I recommend taking those posts with a grain of salt. People seem much more likely to complain than to post positive things; plus you don't know how "qualified" anonymous posters are to "pass judgment" — read opinions, but weigh the source carefully.

Finally, I'll sit down and make a pros/cons list for each of the candidates I haven't eliminated. This will usually bring me to the correct piece of software. Note that price hasn't come up. While price is important, it's more important to me to get the right item.

hands on: IK Multimedia Ampeg SVX

By Mitch Gallagher

Think that only guitar players get to have fun with software amp and effects modelers? Think again! IK Multimedia has joined with Ampeg to create the **Ampeg SVX** dedicated bass amp modeling software, complete with numerous heads and cabs, plus stompbox effects. The software runs standalone on Mac (including Intel Mac) or Windows, and supports VST, RTAS, and Audio Units plug-in formats. I tested it running standalone and as a plug-in in Pro Tools, Logic Pro, and Ableton Live on my Apple MacBook.

The amps and cabinets are from the long and storied list of Ampeg's best bass gear — we're talking the BA-15R, BA-500, SVT-4Pro, and the SVT Classic amplifiers, and the BA-500, BA-15R, BXT-410H, PB-212H, SVT-410H, and the monstrous 8x10" SVT-810E. You can mix and match cabinets and amps at will. Niceties abound; click on the cabinet graphic, and the grille cloth pops off revealing the speaker(s). Most of the cabs have an adjustable high-frequency driver — you flip the cabinet around to adjust this on the back panel. Cool touch.

Six modeled microphones are provided for capturing the tone — you'll probably be able to guess the exact mics based on their names: Dynamic 20, Dynamic 57, Dynamic 421, Vintage Dynamic 20, Condenser 87, and Condenser 414. Place the mic on or off axis, and move it near to or far from the cabinet. Choose to have the mic pick up some stereo room ambience, if you want. You can blend the direct bass sound with the processed sound, and adjust the phase between the two.

The difference that changing among the various amps,



cabinets, and mics makes isn't subtle — there's a tremendous assortment of tones available before you ever touch the front panel of the amp model. You could spend hours (or days) just trying all the combinations.

If you want to take your bass further, start plugging in virtual stompboxes. You can run your signal through up to six pedals at once. The options include Overdrive, Octaver, Analog Chorus (also does vibrato), Analog Delay (can sync to tempo), Bass Wah (also does auto-wah), Compressor, Envelope Filter, and Volume Pedal. The pedals all sound authentic and can be automated.

There's also a built-in tuner.

The standalone version adds a nice extra: "SpeedTrainer," which lets you load up an audio file and play along with it. You can slow down or speed up or change the tuning to match your bass. Plus you can set up a loop to repeat a tough lick, and there's a built-in metronome. Impressive!

Ampeg SVX is very easy to operate. The best compliment I can give it is to say that it sounds real. I had a song where I was using a sampled bass to play an exposed part; the sound was, honestly, weak. I ran it through Ampeg SVX and suddenly it came to life and sounded like a real bass. I had this same experience over and over. And, when you run a real bass through Ampeg SVX, the results are even better.

If you're a bass player, you need this. If you're a recording engineer or composer, you need this. Heck, everyone needs Ampeg SVX!

➤➤ IK Multimedia Ampeg SVX • Sweetwater price \$319.97 • www.sweetwater.com/ampegsvx

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Meet **Brad** Every

Name: Brad Every
Position at Sweetwater: Senior Sales Engineer
Start Date: 10/14/02
Hired as: Sales Engineer
Education: Electrical engineering degree from Purdue University.

Where are you from originally? Texas, Kansas, South

Dakota, Michigan, but most recently Indianapolis and Lafayette, Indiana.

What was your occupation before coming to Sweetwater? I designed and installed high-end home theaters and home automation. I also designed commercial sound systems and did acoustical consulting work.

Why did you first apply for a job at Sweetwater? I saw the ad online and thought it matched my personality and career goals perfectly.

Foreign languages: Very little Spanish.

Technical strengths: Anything analog or digital. I'm the person everyone comes to for difficult, "tweaky" questions.

Favorite music-related website(s): www.sweetwater.com

Instruments you play: Guitar, but I mainly play the faders on a mixing console now.

Gear you own: Apple Powerbook, Digidesign Pro Tools LE system, Apogee converters, Glyph storage, various preamps, Fender Tele, Gibson ES-335, Hot-rodged custom guitar amp stack.

Family info: Wonderful girlfriend Nicole, German Shepherd puppy named Sascha.

Other stuff we should know about you: I'm into motorcycles, metal-working, and furniture-making, to name a few of my hobbies.

Personal motto: "Get off your butt and make it happen!"

Favorite magazine: *Car & Driver*

Real-life hero: Enzo Ferrari

Guilty pleasure of choice: Jumping on my Harley and riding nowhere in particular.

How would your boss describe you? Detail-orientated, organized, someone who's not afraid of taking the lead. Someone you can depend on to get things done.

How would your best friend describe you? A person who's always there for his friends and would do anything for them.

What did you dream about doing for a living when you were growing up? Being an engineer or architect

Describe the most dramatic situation in which you provided the "Sweetwater Difference" for a customer: I'm currently working with one of my clients converting an old church into a live music venue. Not only am I designing the sound system, but also helping to design the room itself down to where the doors should go!

What in your life best prepared you for the work you do here at Sweetwater? Moving around so much as a kid really exposed me to many different types of people. Now I can relate to, and effectively communicate with, anyone.

What do you enjoy most about being part of the Sweetwater Team? Being able to help my clients realize their dreams.

What is the most important thing you've learned at Sweetwater? Hard work really does pay off.