



SWEET NOTES

AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING MUSIC RETAILER

SPRING 1997

ORAM PRO AUDIO PRODUCTS



The Oram
BEQ24 Console

Classic European Design and Audio Excellence Now Available in North America

No one has to tell you that mixing console quality has skyrocketed over the last few years, primarily in response to the proliferation of digital recorders. Even the mass market products aimed at the millions of musicians with home studios have amazing specs that come close to what was once considered pro quality. But how good is "good"? Is there really still a great difference between semi-pro and pro equipment?

The answer is, quite simply, yes. As low to mid-priced mixers have gotten better, so too have the high end boards used in major studios around the world. While the average musician can now afford a mixer that will produce a fine recording, the domain of truly great sound still belongs in the realm of the elite few consoles. And yet, even here, absolute sonic transparency and awesome fidelity have become more affordable.

Consider this: You can now purchase a mixing console that can go head-to-head with \$100,000 mixers for less than a third of that price. And the manufacturer that has done it is **Oram Professional Audio** in the form of their **BEQ Series 8 and 24 bus Consoles**. What is not surprising is that the man behind this equipment is

the same person who became world famous as the "Father of British EQ," John Oram. His reputation for sonic excellence and outstanding audio designs have been heard worldwide in such diverse products as the renowned Trident Consoles, Vox amplifiers and even Martin guitar preamplifiers.

Anyone who has ever researched buying a mixer has heard the term "British EQ." This refers to a particularly smooth and musical equalization that many manufacturers have attempted to copy, but none has duplicated. Some have even termed this particular sound "magical."

Unfortunately, John Oram's latest products and designs have been rather hard to come by in North America. Those who wanted the pristine quality and authentic Oram British EQ were forced to import Oram consoles, preamps and equalizers from Europe. But all of this has now changed: When we heard these phenomenal mixers for ourselves and saw the incredible quality of their construction, we immediately knew we had to make these monster boards available to all our customers. To make a long story short, Sweetwater Sound is now the exclusive North American distributor for Oram products, meaning that America's fastest-growing music retailer will be selling one of Europe's best selling — and best sounding — professional audio products.

This partnership could not come at a better time for the many studios here in North America that have been looking to upgrade to the very best hardware available in order to finally achieve that quantum leap into world class sound. In fact, many have said that the new Oram consoles are the only products in their price range that can actually compete favorably with a Neve console for overall audio quality — high praise indeed for any product.

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Oram Sonics' MWS
Microphone Work Station

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NEW ROLAND PRODUCTS

Typically, nobody shows more new products at a NAMM Show than **Roland**, and this year is certainly no exception. We take a first look at the company's most exciting new products like the **VS-880 V-Xpanded**, **JP-8000 synth**, **VK-7 Combo Organ**, **V-Drums TD-10** and much more.

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SONY'S NEW MDM-X4

Imagine recording four tracks of superb quality digital audio on a single 2.5" MiniDisc. That's exactly what you can do with the remarkable **Sony MDM-X4** with integral six-channel mixer and the exclusive Edit Track System.

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NAMM SHOW REPORT

Every January, the music industry gathers in Anaheim, California for the **Winter NAMM Show**. We take you on a whirlwind tour of the 1997 show and give you the inside story on the hottest products from all the major manufacturers.

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MACKIE DIGITAL CONSOLE

It was probably the biggest news at this year's NAMM Show. We take a preliminary look at **Mackie Designs** revolutionary **Digital 8-Bus Console** and its list of innovative features.

— SEE PAGE 4

Want the hottest technology without the hefty price tag? See **Tech Notes** for information on our exclusive new Sweetwater Certified Pre-Owned Equipment Plan **PLUS**: Greg Hanks BA-660 Mic Preamp, Beyerdynamic Cordless Headphones, Akai MPC2000 Production Center **AND MORE!**

NEW ROLAND PRODUCTS: 1997

Longtime NAMM attendees know one thing: Roland typically releases more cool new products per square foot than just about any other exhibitor at the show, and this year was certainly no exception. Here are just a few of the highlights:

VS-880 V-XPANDED:

Already one of the industry's major success stories of the last year, the new VS-880's Version 2 software and a one gigabyte hard drive have really enhanced this already amazing unit. Now add an **Auto Mixing Function** that records and plays back mixing data for your song in real time, including full fader movements and all panning positions, full MIDI control over "scene change," and an insert for the master output so you can process the final output with an effect like compression.

The Recorder Section now allows simultaneous playback of six tracks in MASTER MODE and offers a digital output with full copy protection. Additionally, there are over 20 powerful new and convenient

Triangle Mod and Feedback OSC. The unit produces 8-voice polyphony and has a 49-key (four octave) velocity sensitive keyboard.



The JP-8000: offering plenty of knobs, sliders and other realtime controllers

The new **JV-2080 64-Voice Synth Module** (\$2095) is essentially a JV-1080 with four more expansion slots for a total of about 2,900 total patches or 128 megs of 16-bit linear format waveforms when fully expanded. For instance, Roland's new **Bass and Drums Expansion Board** (\$475) which features samples from five of the world's most respected session musicians, like Marcus Miller and John Patitucci. If you don't own one of the company's expandable synths, you can still get these sounds in the **M-BD1 Expansion Module** (\$695).

You say you need classic B-3 sounds? Presenting the **VK-7 Combo Organ** (\$2495 list) which emulates vintage organ tones via Roland's new Virtual Tone Wheel technology and features sophisticated rotary speaker simulation thanks to the company's COSM technology. There are even nine harmonic drawbars for realtime tonal manipulations, percussion stops, amp simulator plus a full set of onboard orchestral voices.

Another COSM-based product emerged in the

form of what the company calls "the future of percussion." Roland unveiled their **V-Drums TD-10** module (\$1895) which features over 600 drum and percussion sounds, plus 50 melodic instruments. Via COSM, you can actually model the drum head type, shell materials and size, plus select which mics are used to "record" the sound, their position and type of room ambience. These modeled drums can even be controlled (just like real drums) with brushes. A complete drum pad kit (PD-120/100 V-pads) to match the TD-10 will also be available — watch these pages.

Also getting a lot of attention was the newest addition to the Roland Guitar Synth family, the **GR-30** (\$895) which features the world's fastest gui-



Fastest triggering in town: the GR-30 Guitar Synth

tar triggering response, a staggering 384 onboard sounds, a new arpeggiator, polyphonic Harmonist and much more.

Among the other products Roland showed was their next generation digital piano, the **RD-600** (\$2495) with 64-note polyphony, outstanding realism, improved hammer action and more.

For complete information and your pricing on these and other incredible new Roland products, call your Sweetwater sales engineer today



Need 2,900 patches? Just get yourself a JV-2080 and all eight Expansion Boards

features in the editing/sync sections to enhance control of your VS-880.

But here's the mind-blowing part: Roland has now incorporated their revolutionary COSM technology right into this recorder. What does that mean? Well, you might, for example, record tracks using Roland's new **DR-10** (\$95) or **DR-20** (\$150) dynamic mics, then use the **Mic Simulator** function to make those tracks sound like they were recorded using an expensive large diaphragm studio mic (we can't mention names, but you can probably guess which one we mean). There are a number of mic emulations available (you can even control the perceived "distance" between the mic and sound source) plus other incredible algorithms like 19-band Vocoder, Hum Canceler, Lo-Fi Sound Processor, Space Chorus and many, many more. In all, there are 100 additional preset effect patches.

If all this sounds incredible, wait until you hear the price: just \$2695 list! Existing VS-880 owners can even upgrade their software for only \$125. Wow!

Since we're sure to run out of space if we spend too much time on any one product, let's move on to the new **JP-8000** (\$2295 list). This synth is a throwback to the company's glorious analog synths, combining lots of knobs and realtime controllers with vintage synth sounds provided via Analog Modeling Technology. A newly developed DSP oscillator offers seven unique algorithms: sawtooth, triangle and square waves, plus new waveforms like Super Saw,

SONY'S MINIDISC-BASED MDM-X4

Let's be honest: multitracking onto cassettes was useful in its time, but its stone-age technology compared to what's available today. Take for example the MiniDisc: It's a highly reliable digital recording medium that's perfect for people who want the kind of quality associated with digital recording, but don't want to invest in a huge, elaborate (and costly) studio setup. The original masterminds behind the MiniDisc format is none other than **Sony**, so you know their engi-

neers really understand how to get maximum performance from this convenient recording medium. These guys burned a lot of midnight oil and came up with the amazing new **MDM-X4 MD Multi-Track Recorder** (\$1250 list), a whole new standard in personal studios.

The MDM-X4 offers up to 37 minutes of superb quality 4-track digital audio on an MD data disc (74 minutes of 2-track) that simply outperforms any cassette system to date. It also includes the exclusive Track Edit system (for editing between two tracks) and a host of other incredible features that will revolutionize your concept of personal recording.

The MDM-X4 comes equipped with

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1997 WINTER NAMM REPORT

By Mitch Gallagher

Every January, when temperatures up here in Fort Wayne dip below zero, it can mean only one thing for Sweetwater's intrepid trade show team: Winter NAMM in Anaheim! Like clockwork, we trudge across the frozen tundra, board an airplane and emerge in sunny California hours later, ready to be inundated and overwhelmed with an amazing assortment of brand new "must have" products — sort of a music technology (and warm weather) fan's dream come true. No, don't thank us, it's all part of the job.

Now, nothing I can tell you can compare to actually experiencing the onslaught of a full-on NAMM Show, but I'll do my best to bring you up to date. Take a deep breath, grab your most comfortable walking shoes and ear plugs, then join me for a walk through some of the hottest products from this year's show.

First of all, everyone's been asking, so I'll get it out of the way right now: Yes, Mackie Designs was indeed showing their new digital mixer. The only word that comes to mind is "WOW!" Check out the story on page 4 for additional details.

The hot products this year fell into several categories: Computer audio cards, guitar amps (many digital), and anything that could possibly be construed as doing any sort of "modeling" were all present in abundance. Still, "digital" continues to be the Technology Buzzword of the Decade in the music industry.

Finally, for those keeping track, the trendy NAMM catch word this time out was "phat." Go ahead, impress your friends by using it daily (whether situationally appropriate or not . . .).

Disclaimer (hey, it's the '90s, so we have to have one of these): This is in no way a complete list of anything, just a sampling of what was on display at NAMM. All product names, specs, prices, colors, sizes, weight, relative "phat-ness," delivery dates, expiration dates, mileage, volume levels, compression ratios and anything else I can possibly think of are subject to change without notice. All prices are list, meaning when you call us for your actual price, it's going to be less, okay?

AKAI. The company's latest generation of the MPC series is the **MPC2000** (\$1495), which takes a modular approach to create an integrated sequencer/sampler/drum machine. A variety of options and upgrades can turn the MPC2000 into a true production center. Akai says it's "half the calories, all the phat."

ALESIS. These people seem intent on shrinking studios down to the size of matchboxes! New models in the diminutive Nano series include the **Nano Piano** (\$399), **Nano Synth** (\$499) and **Nano Bass** (\$299). Each offers a ton of music power in a tiny box. Also on display were the **Studio 12r** (\$449) and **Studio 32** (\$1299) mixers, the **Wedge** (\$499) desktop master reverb (very cool!) and the **QSR** synth module (\$899).

ART. The Applied Research and Technology folks had their full line of studio, guitar and bass processors on display, including the innovative new **Phat-Boy** bass preamp/processor (\$299). Also drawing attention was ART's expanding line of professional grade studio processors, including the **Pro MPA** (\$599) and **Dual MP** (\$329) tube preamps, **Pro VLA** (\$599) and **Dual Leveler** (\$329) leveling amps, **Pro Gate** (\$1099), and a whole bunch of EQs, compressors, you name it — the company

has entered the pro audio world in a big way. They also unveiled their **Model 820** (\$899) and **825** (\$1299) classic guitar amps. The 820 is a head-only design, while the 825 is a dual 12" closed-back combo. These amps were designed by Dan Pearce around ART's popular Eighty/Eighty processor, offer built-in effects, MIDI control and top-notch construction.

CROWN. One of the most amazing new items at the show was also one of the most unassuming: The **Crown K2 Balanced Current Amplifier** (\$1795). What's so special about this amp? How about a full 2,500 watts into two ohms, while only drawing four amps of current? Because of this tiny current draw, the amp needs no fan and has unmatched thermal efficiency (which provides TONS of hidden benefits). With pro specs and sound quality plus many neat features, this is a major advance in amplifier design, so check it out soon — the other amp manufacturers sure will.

DIGITECH. The Digitech booth was rocking with a bunch of exciting new products like the **Studio Quad v2** (\$549.95) effects processor, the new **XP Series Wah/Whammy** (\$199.95) and

Modulator (\$199.95) guitar pedals and the **Vocalist Performer** (\$419.95) harmonizer were all getting their fair share of looks. But most of the attention went to the awesome new **GSP-2112** (\$1099.95) guitar processor and the company's entry into the world of guitar amps,

the **Johnson Millennium**. The 2112 is a significant step up from the company's best-selling GSP-2101, while the Millennium is a stereo 150 watt, 2x12 combo amp featuring 12AX7 tubes, S-DISC processing and full programmability.

EMAGIC. The folks at Emagic win the award for sturdiest literature: Their lit was bound in spiral notebook style with stainless steel front and back covers (No, I won't be making painful jokes about using their software to record heavy metal music). In addition to their top-notch line of software products, Emagic entered the hardware world with their **Unitor 8** MIDI interface (\$799), which has 8 MIDI ins/outs, plus SMPTE and VITC for true video lock. Up to eight can be stacked for 1024 independent MIDI channels! Let's see now, that means I can have only sixty-four 16-channel multi-timbral keyboards playing at once . . . I hope that's enough!

The company also launched **Audiowerk 8** (\$799), a PCI recording card with two analog ins, 8 outs, S/PDIF and full compatibility with Mac and Windows 95. The unit will ship with VMR (Virtual Multitrack Recorder) software. Naturally, it's also compatible with Logic Audio. Emagic promised compatibility with other software manufacturers soon, as well as an optional digital out extension and an ADAT/S/PDIF optical link.

E-MU. It's called **Planet Phatt** "The Swing Sys-



The Wedge desktop master reverb from Alesis



The new Planet Phatt module from E-mu: taking you on an Acid Jazz trip



The Johnson Millennium from Digitech

MACKIE'S DIGITAL 8•BUS: A PREVIEW

Don't start clearing space in your studio for it just yet, but the word is that **Mackie's Digital 8•Bus** should be available very soon. Exactly what that means is anybody's guess, but the excitement this console is generating in the industry is nearly overwhelming, meaning that when the units actually ship, there's guaranteed to be a long list of people who already shelled out some hard-earned cash to be one of the first to get one.

Obviously Greg Mackie's team has done it again and this new board is everything we expected it to be, and then some. Here's just a partial list of its features: 48 true channels for tracking, overdub and mixdown; jitter-free, touch-updatable motorized faders; 12 aux sends per channel; 32-bit internal processing with full 24-bit output; dynamic and snapshot recall of all parameters; multiple, simultaneous digital effects, dynamics processing and equalization; an SVGA monitor output plus mouse and keyboard inputs; a built-in hard drive plus floppy drive (let's pause here to catch our collective breaths, shall we?).

Here's more: A powerful CPU with 8 megs of on-



The Mackie Digital 8•Bus: Its features rival those of a \$200,000 mixing console.

board memory; a built-in multifunction meter bridge; record-ready button on every channel; dedicated transport controls plus jog/shuttle; instantly upgradable DSP effects. Whew! Even if this were the full feature list, you'd be thinking this is one phenomenal machine.

But here's where it gets even cooler (if that's pos-

sible): the Digital 8•Bus comes with a built-in 33.6 kB modem and direct internal dial-up software that lets your Digital 8•Bus phone Mackie Central for DSP upgrades, system enhancements, diagnostics and even e-mail — and all in your choice of languages!

Small wonder that this console got so much attention at the Winter NAMM Show in Anaheim. Over two full years in development, the 48x8x2 Digital 8•Bus has the features and sound quality you'd expect for serious production work (including full surround capability). In terms of automation versatility, this console can go head-to-head with other mixers in the \$200,000 price range, yet it will carry a suggested retail price of less than \$8,000 (now aren't you glad you were sitting down?).

We won't kid you: We don't have a firm delivery date on this beast yet, but you can bet that whatever units might show up at the Sweetwater loading dock are going to be going right back out, probably the same day. So we beg you, plead with you, don't wait another minute — get the latest up-to-the-minute info from your Sweetwater sales engineer immediately!

1997 WINTER NAMM REPORT

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with two 20-bit multitrack recorders, **DARla** and **Layla**. **DARla** is a Windows 95 PCI card (soon available for the Mac) offering two analog ins/eight analog outs. Omnibus technology for aux, monitor and bus routing, plus sample rates up to 50 kHz. **Layla** combines a Windows 95 PCI card (also soon for Mac) with an external audio interface that provides eight balanced ins and 10 balanced outs, S/PDIF, Word Clock, MIDI and more for under \$1000. Both systems feature Plug and Play compliant designs allowing for easy setup and compatibility with most existing audio software.

Finally, Event was showing the new **Rode NT-1** microphone, a single pattern, large diaphragm mic designed to provide the clarity and dynamic range that today's recording systems require. It has the looks, performance and fidelity to make it a valuable addition to every mic collection.

FOCUSRITE. New in the Focusrite Green Series are the **Green 4 Dual Compressor/Limiter** (\$1495) and the **Green 5 Channel Strip** (\$1595). If you haven't had a chance to check out the amazing quality and value offered by the entire Green series, you owe it to yourself to do so soon, these pieces make outstanding additions to virtually any level studio.

FOSTEX. The folks from Fostex were showing new, improved versions of several products, including the **D-80v2** and the **DMT-8v1** (\$1295). Larger hard drives, optional SCSI expansion and a variety of new software features greatly enhance these already successful recorders.

LINE 6. The company released the **Floor Board** (\$299), a companion foot control unit for their very hip AxSys 212 digital guitar system. Stomp box style FX control, wah and volume pedals and more. Every AxSys owner needs one!

MACKIE. The big news, of course, is the new digital 8

bus console, but Mackie was also showing off their wonderful HR-824 powered studio monitors (\$749 each) to rave reviews. Definitely worth checking these out! For more on the Digital 8•Bus, see elsewhere on this page.

MARK OF THE UNICORN. MOTU was showing Version 2.0 of their superb **Freestyle** trackless sequencer (\$199). New features include notation enhancements, Sense Tempo, new beat adjustment features, SMPTE sync capabilities and tons more. It's available for both Mac and Windows and is 100% PowerPC Native! Then there's **Digital**

MIDI controller (\$199.95) with 49 keys plus full MIDI control capabilities, making it just about perfect for any size MIDI studio or keyboard rig.

ROLAND. See page two for a complete report.

SONIC FOUNDRY. New plug-ins for Sound Forge 4.0 were the buzz at the Sonic Foundry booth. The **Acoustics Modeler** (\$249) models the acoustics of real environments and recording devices. Depending upon the acoustic signature applied, this plug-in can simulate responses varying from large concert halls to the vintage sound of an old tube mic! **CD Architect** (\$395) writes Redbook audio direct to recordable CD. It has extensive support for PQ editing, as well as flexible playlist control.

TASCAM. The people at TASCAM had their awesome new digital mixing console on display, and it looks to be a red hot setup for those who want to seriously upgrade the quality and versatility of their studio. Priced under \$10,000, it

offers pretty much everything you could possibly want or need in a mixer, like full automation and that great TASCAM sound quality. More next issue on this one!

VOCE. The **V5** Tone Wheel Organ module is the latest in Voce's series of B-3 simulators. It combines Digital Tonewheel Technology with MIDI drawbars for a compact, integrated package. Combine it with Voce's **Spin II** rotary speaker simulator (\$399) and you've got a combination that's tough to beat. Hint: Spin sounds great on guitars, too.

WAVES. The company had lots of cool new plug-in software to show like the **PAZ Psychoacoustic Analyzer** (\$550) and **Renaissance Compressor** (\$550). I'd tell you more but we're out of room. Watch these pages for more on Waves products in upcoming issues (also see page 11 — ed.).

There you have it, just a few of the new items on display at NAMM. Give your Sweetwater sales engineer a call for availability and your special pricing on all this great gear!



The unusual-looking (but terrific sounding) Green 4 Dual Compressor/Limiter from Focusrite

Performer for the Mac which is also moving to version 2.0 with PowerPC Native code, PureDSP, sample rate conversion plus all the features recently introduced in the latest Performer 5.5 upgrade. List price remains at \$899.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC PRODUCTS. New from MAP is the **MultiDesk Pro** (price based upon configuration), an excellent solution for your studio organization and ergonomic requirements. A modular, flexible design allows you to set up exactly the configuration you need, without hassles. The new **Pro Series** line of studio racks, CPU mounts, overbridges and even cup holders (gotta have one...) add the finishing touches to your studio's organizational needs.

MIDIMAN. Along with an impressive assortment of MIDI and sync interfaces, small mixers and other useful items, MIDIMAN introduced **Digipatch**, a 12x6 coax and optical patch bay/router (\$699). The optical lines support either S/PDIF or ADAT formats. Also new is the **Keystation Pro**

IF IT'S BROKEN AND YOU NEED IT FIXED... Our Service Department is Factory Authorized! (219) 432-8176

TIME FOR A REALITY CHECK?

By Chuck and Brenda Surack
Owners, Sweetwater Sound

If you regularly thumb through the pages of *Keyboard*, *Electronic Musician*, *Recording*, etc., you know that hardly a month goes by that you don't see glossy, full page, four-color advertisements for a variety of new products — both hardware and software — that claim to be faster, cooler, more innovative and less expensive than the competition. In the majority of cases, their claims are true. The question is: Is it a real product yet, or is it just another case of industry vaporware?

While most companies do their best to release products in a timely manner, there are several reasons why ads start appearing for gear that simply doesn't exist yet. One reason is because the deadlines for submitting ads for all the various magazines are many months in advance of the day you actually get your copy. For instance, an ad placed today (in March) might not actually run until the June issue. To make sure there's a ready market for their new equipment, companies have to sometimes guess months in advance what the real release date might be to give their marketing departments time to build effective ad campaigns.

But suppose that sometime during those two or three months, one of their suppliers (for example, a subcontractor that builds power supplies) experiences problems on their own assembly line. Now the manufacturer has thousands of units ready to ship, but without power supplies. Such delays are understandable and completely out of the control of the manufacturer.

But there are other equipment manufacturers who begin to advertise well in advance of the actual release date simply to keep musicians from buying a competitor's product that's already available. As we all know, the music industry is tiny compared to other "mega-industries" (like automobile, appliance or furniture manufacturing), and any advantage they can gain to keep a specific share of their potential market can often mean the difference between a company's success or failure.

Unfortunately, like a stone thrown into a still pond, the ripples move outwards: Customers call and ask for this new product, so dealers order tons of it. Then, when the product doesn't ship when it's supposed to, customers get angry and often take out their frustrations on the retailer who has significant money tied up in a product that actually doesn't exist yet.

It's frustrating for all of us. Despite our best efforts, there have been a few times when we have published information about new products right here in *Sweet Notes*, only to have the manufacturer tell us (after we print 150,000 copies) that they just won't be able to ship on time. In most cases, it's hard for us to be upset with the manufacturer — they're doing the best they can to be successful in what is an incredibly competitive industry.

Here at Sweetwater, we have begun an innovative pro-

gram that actually monitors the status of new equipment. Thanks to our size and enormous sales volume, manufacturers are only too happy to work with us in preventing the kind of disappointments many of you have experienced in the past when you've ordered certain products, then had to sit and wait, and wait . . .

What this means is that in the majority of cases, when you call us about a new item you see featured in your favorite industry publication, we'll have the inside track

on whether this is indeed a viable product rather than just something a manufacturer *hopes* will be available in the near future.

In fact, as you read these words, we have just added another special page to our Web Site that will keep you totally up on the latest industry news and product releases. It's called "In Sync," and it's updated every single day. The URL is: "<http://www.sweetwater.com/insync/>".

We've already pulled major stories from recent issues of this newsletter when we discovered that shipping dates on heavily-promoted products just could not

be met. We'll do it again.

Hopefully, what should be apparent is that there are really no "bad guys" here. Everyone is doing the best they can to be successful and make products that musicians will find useful. It's simply the competitive nature of this business that makes every manufacturer dependent on "industry buzz."

So the next time you see an ad for an item you think you can't live without, give us a call. We'll have the inside story on what's real and what's not. We'll also have alternatives ready in case you need the capabilities some new item will offer. In many cases, there are already products that perform the same functions at comparable prices, but you might not know about them. If you feel you can't settle for anything less than that super-duper, whizz-bang new item, we'll make sure you get one of the very first units off the assembly line!

Though we're running out of room, we did want to tell you once again how excited we are about being chosen as the exclusive North American distributor for **Oram Products** (which, unless you read your publications back-to-front, you've already seen on page one).

Like many of you, we had heard about the Oram pro audio line for many years, and once we got to actually see for ourselves how versatile these products are (not to mention hear how absolutely phenomenal they sound), well, we just knew that we would do whatever it took to make the line available to our customers.

Fortunately, the Oram people agreed that Sweetwater was exceptionally well-placed to reach its prospective customers, and the hopes of a long-term partnership became a reality. So check out our lead story and remember, we're always keeping an eye out for products we know will be perfect for our customers. You can count on it!

Until next issue, so long.



Q: I am trying to transfer a file between my DAT and my DAW. The problems is that after I transfer the file, I have all kinds of pops and clicks in the audio. Any Ideas on what's causing this?

A: You must sync the digital clock in the DAT and DAW together when you are transferring the data. You should set the sync mode in your DAW to "Digital" so that it syncs to the digital clock (44.1 kHz or 48 kHz) from the DAT. Once the transfer of you audio is complete you can set the clock in your DAW back to "internal." That should resolve your pop and click problems. Also make sure that when you open your file in the DAW that you select the same clock rate as the clock rate the DAT was recorded at. If your clocks are set at different rates, the audio will play back either too fast or too slow.

Q: I have a Kurzweil K2000 and I seem to remember that when I bought it, Sweetwater installed a fan kit. Are there filters on these fans and do they need to be cleaned?

A: The K2000 does have a fan filter that needs to be cleaned on a regular basis. You should make cleaning the fan filters in all your gear a part of the regular maintenance schedule for your studio. Here are some other products that may have filters that need to be cleaned: Power amps, mixing board power supplies, hard drives, computers, and some samplers and effects processors. How often should you clean them you ask? Well, that would depend on the location and environment where your gear is being used. The dustier your environment, the more often you should clean it. Try starting out by cleaning the filters every month and increase or decrease the frequency as necessary.

Q: I have a computer sequencer and a digital 8-track. I want to set up my system so that I can use the MMC controls in my sequencer, but I don't understand how I can get everything to sync up.

A: The digital multitrack (i.e. ADAT/DA88, etc.) will be the clock master and will need to output time code information to your computer sequencer via either MTC or SMPTE. You will set your sequencer to *receive* and *slave* to the incoming time code, either MTC or SMPTE. The multitrack should also be set up to *receive* MMC command from your computer sequencer. When you press play on your sequencer, that will send a command to your recorder which will "press" the play button. The multitrack will then start playing and outputting timecode to your sequencer and it, in turn, will start to play.

Q: I just got a new tube mic preamp and I am not sure how to integrate it into my board. It does not make sense to also run the signal through my board's mic preamps. How can I get the signal into my board and not use the board's mic pres?

A: The best solution is to plug your new preamp directly into the inputs of your multitrack, then use

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ORDERS PROCESSED SAME DAY! In most cases, orders ship the same day we receive them! (219) 432-8176

THE VERSATILE BA-660 BY GREG HANKS DESIGN

There are times when nothing less than the best will do. As a recording engineer or producer with a "make-or-break" project on your hands, you can't afford to make compromises. Yet that's exactly what you do when you trust your finished product to equipment that just doesn't cut it in the highly competitive world of first class recording.

Careful selection and placement of the correct microphone is essential, and passing that signal through the fin-

even a classic Neve console bus limiter. How many other products can make that claim? Zero!

Backed by a three-year warranty and hand crafted right here in the USA by people who really care about quality, the BA-660 is an incredible investment. It will pay dividends over many years in your studio by providing the absolute best audio imaginable on project after project.

No, this isn't a mass-market product — at \$3875 it represents a significant investment for any studio or individual. But unlike other products that come with high price tags, yet become expendable when the next hot product comes along, the BA-660 will provide a timeless, rock-solid foundation for your studio thanks to its superior design and absolutely flawless performance.

Of course the BA-660 has some truly impressive specs, like a maximum dynamic range of >154 dB and a frequency response from 11 Hz all the way up to 35 kHz. It features a 100 dB metering range, full phantom power, inserts, all Class A circuitry with absolutely no negative feedback in the audio path, and of course, the ins and outs are fully balanced.

You may never need the kind of performance this unit will deliver, but if you ever do, isn't it great to know that there's a product you can absolutely stake your reputation on? The BA-660 is exclusively available only from Sweetwater Sound, so if you would like more information and your special pricing on this dream machine, call your sales engineer immediately.



Greg Hanks Design's BA-660: It's one-of-a-kind, and it's only available from Sweetwater Sound

est microphone preamplifier virtually guarantees that there will not be any compromising in your finished product.

To that end, the **Greg Hanks Design BA-660** was designed right from the start to be the absolute best mic preamplifier available anywhere, at any price. Ultra low noise, wide dynamic range, and the pure, warm, fat sound of tubes, plus true class A electronics put the BA-660 squarely in a class all its own.

But this is more than just a mic preamp; the BA-660 is also a world-class compressor/limiter. Using sophisticated tube design and cutting edge technology, this remarkable product has presets that exactly emulate the sound and response of much sought-after vintage equipment like the Fairchild 660, Urei LA-2, SSL Quad Limiter, RCA BA-6, or



ALESIS POINT SEVEN: NEW SPEAKERS, NEW APPLICATIONS

In 1994, **Alesis** created a new standard in mix reference monitors with the TEC Award-winning **Monitor One**. Now, with its introduction of the new **Point Seven Shielded Reference Monitor** (\$299 list), the company addresses a whole new class of studios: The home and multimedia studio.

With their solid bass, crisp, detailed highs and pinpoint precision imaging, the **Point Seven** allows you to hear every detail in your recording, for perfect reproduction of even the most critical mix.

Unlike common home or multimedia speakers, the **Point Sevens** are acoustically balanced to give accurate, flat reproduction of the sound being reproduced instead of the narrow, often artificially hyped response of most consumer level speakers.

Of course, the **Point Sevens** are magnetically shielded for use with any size computer or video monitor, making it right at home in MIDI studios, video editing suites and multimedia authoring facilities. The highly-acclaimed **Super-Port** technology has been retained from the **Monitor Ones**, but the ports are mounted on the front to make speaker positioning less critical. In addition, a custom-designed 2 kHz crossover provides accurate phasing and a wide sweet spot for mixing.

It's a well-known fact that most small shielded monitors just can't deliver the kind of power that music professionals require. The **Point Seven** was designed from the ground up as a studio reference monitor for serious pro-level use, meaning it can easily handle 50 watts of continuous power and 100 watt transients. This kind of power handling is crucial for mixing rock music and a pair of **Point Sevens** can fill a room with sound if necessary. Plus, its 4 ohm impedance allows most amps to deliver up to double the power that they can to 8 ohm speakers.

Each **Point Seven** monitor features a 5.25" low frequency driver and 1" silk dome tweeter and weighs in at only 11 pounds. Gold-plated 5-way binding posts are standard.

If you need small, shielded monitors that can play loud when you need it, as well as provide pinpoint imaging, call your Sweetwater sales engineer for your special price on the **Alesis Point Sevens!**



RANE'S MOJO SERIES: IT'S AN ATTITUDE



The word **Mojo** means magic. After all, your hard work and creativity is more than just plain music, isn't it? It's magic, plus a whole lot of hard work and plenty of attitude. And if you've got the attitude, your signal processing should too. Guess that's why the people at **Rane Corporation** decided to call their new processor line the **Mojo Series**.

Go ahead, rack up a **Mojo Series MC 22 Compressor/Limiter** (\$299 list) or the **MQ 302 Stereo 1/3 Octave EQ** (\$399 list) and see what we mean — you'll be making your own **mojo** with absolute confidence, knowing that each product is American made and utilizes the very latest in innovative component and circuit design. Each processor in the **Mojo Series**, including the **MX 22** and **MX 23 Stereo Two and Three Way Crossovers** (\$299 and \$399 respectively) and the **MH 4 Quad Channel Headphone Amp** (\$299 list) is fully tested and actually listened to by a real human being who really cares before being shipped out. This virtually guarantees your satisfaction, which is important to a company like Rane. After all, the company built its excellent reputation by producing quality products that musicians can depend on (and they've been doing it for over 15 years now, so they must be doing something right!).

Before you buy just any signal processor, we urge you to test drive the **Mojo Series** for yourself. Your Sweetwater sales engineer can provide you with all relevant information, super low pricing, and just a bit of that special Sweetwater-style **mojo**.



NEED MORE INFORMATION? ACCESS OUR WEB SITE: "WWW.SWEETWATER.COM"

BEYERDYNAMIC IRS 790

Cordless Infra-Red Stereo Headphones

Just a few short months ago, cordless headphones would have been considered little more than a novelty item. Sure, the idea that you could move around your studio without tripping over a headphone cable and accidentally destroying some valuable piece of equipment sounded pretty good, but in the past, cordless essentially meant "lo-fi" — not something you wanted to have around your studio.

Well all that has finally changed, because after years of research and countless prototypes, the engineers at European industry giant **Beyerdynamic** have finally

designed a true cordless headphone that not only works, but delivers the kind of sound quality you'd expect from a Beyerdynamic product — we're talking full range frequency response of 20 to 23,000 Hz here!

Thanks to the **IRS 790**, you can now be totally free to move about your studio while hearing incredibly accurate

reproduction via the surprisingly comfortable, soft ear cushioned "cans." Instead of a connecting cable however, audio is projected out from the powerful transmitter via invisible infra-red light. Essentially, it's the same way your remote communicates with your TV, only a lot more sophisticated. You can even purchase additional headphones so each member of your band can own a set. For multiroom applications, there's also a slave transmitter available.

List for the entire system is just \$269, plus additional headphones retail at \$169 each. Considering how revolutionary this system is, it's a small price to pay for such total freedom. Imagine not having to be hooked up to your console with a restrictive cable ever again. Folks, this looks like the wave of the future and it's available now. Honestly, from personal experience we can tell you that once you try a set of these out for yourself, you'll never go back to old-fashioned "wired" headphones again. Call immediately for additional information plus your special Sweetwater pricing!



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SOUNDTRACS MIXERS: SUPER QUALITY NOW SUPER AFFORDABLE

Options: It's what makes the music business so interesting. There are products for every need and in virtually every price range. But it wasn't always like that. For years, serious musicians had to spend huge amounts of cash to buy a quality mixing console. Or else they had to settle for a noisy board that carried a modest price tag.

Honestly, it's hard for us not to feel spoiled when we can now buy a high quality mixer with specs that even the pros would have died for not so long ago. Take for example the **Soundtracs Topaz** line of mixing consoles. You can get the configuration that makes the most sense for your needs, from 12 to 32 channels, four or eight bus, at prices that won't break anyone's budget.

Even with the least expensive Topaz mixer, you get a 12 channel/4 bus design with dual aux sends, three band EQ on every channel (lesser boards make do with two), phantom power and super low noise inputs, all at a list price of just \$449. No, that's not a typo.



The Topaz Project 8: more features than we have room to list at a truly surprising price

Or maybe you're ready to move up to a full-featured 8-bus recording console. Then maybe the **Topaz Project 8** is the perfect solution for your studio. Packed with features and looking like a million bucks, the Project 8 provides flawless audio performance, incredibly versatile semi-parametric EQ on every channel plus secondary high and low shelving filters, six switchable aux sends, a dual input/output module (unbeatable during mixdowns), smooth "ultra-glide" pots for precise control, true in-line mixing capabilities, long throw faders, a choice of 24 or 32 inputs with up to 72 inputs at mixdown (giving you the ability to handle up to a 32 track recorder without repatching) and optional sophisticated automation. List prices start at \$3999.

Of course, with Sweetwater's super low pricing, you won't be paying near that, but you'll still be getting the killer mixer you've always wanted. So come on, call your sales engineer today and get the inside story on the full line of super quality Soundtracs mixers!

NEED IT RIGHT AWAY? We can ship any product to you overnight! Call for details: **(219) 432-8176**

AKAI'S MPC2000 MIDI PRODUCTION CENTER

Okay, I'll admit it: For years I've personally lusted after one of Akai's MPC Series Production Centers. I had the opportunity to try out an MPC60 at a NAMM

with a MIDI sequencer that set the standard for both immediacy and ease-of-use. What that meant was that you could sample in your favorite drum sounds, play them from the great-feeling onboard drum pads, then use the sequencer to control all your synths and samplers. It was very cool then, but this new machine has taken this design philosophy to a new level.

The MPC2000 ships standard with a 16-bit sampling engine with 32 note polyphony, two megs of onboard RAM (upgradable to 32 megs via standard SIMMs), dynamic digital filters with resonance, graphic cut and paste sample editing, a 64 track sequencer with 100,000 note capacity, linear or pattern (drum machine style) recording, enhanced sequence editing, and the MPC's unique note variation slider for note-by-note control of level, tuning, attack, decay or filter. Of course, there's a large, 248x60 LCD with graphic user interface, a 25-pin SCSI port, 16 great-feeling velocity and pressure sensitive drum machine pads, floppy drive and fully ergonomic data/digit wheels for entering data.

If that's still not enough, how about 1/4" balanced recording ins, RCA-pin digital ins and outs, 1/4" stereo outs, headphone out, and full MIDI in/out/thru ports? And if you want even more, you can add eight individual outs, S/PDIF digital in and out, a multi-effects processor, 8 meg Flash ROM board, and a SMPTE board, all of which are optional.

What none of this tells you is exactly how easy the MPC is to work with. Controls are right where you'd expect them to be and the large LCD graphic interface takes you through every function with ease.

Hey kids, I've already ordered one for myself and I suggest you do the same. Call your sales engineer for all the facts and your special price on the MPC2000.

— Jim Miller



Akai's sophisticated MPC2000, a true pro quality MIDI production center

Show a number of years ago, and have been trying to figure out a way to get my hands on one ever since. See, the problem was, these things were not only super sophisticated, but expensive as well. Certainly way out of my league. At least until now . . .

Thanks to numerous breakthroughs in both technology and production techniques, the engineers at Akai have finally been able to bring the MPC Series within reach of all serious musicians with the release of the brand new MPC2000. With a new lower list price of just \$1495, it looks like I can finally have my dream machine. What's so special you ask? Let's take a look "under the hood."

The MPC Series was the first serious piece of equipment to merge CD-quality 16-bit sampling technology

SEARCHING FOR A REAL CAREER IN PRO AUDIO SALES?

Tired of showing up, day after day at a dead-end sales job where your knowledge of the music business and people skills are undervalued and unappreciated? Are you ready for a new challenge?

Consider trading that unsatisfying day job for a real career in pro audio with Sweetwater Sound. We're always looking for talented, highly motivated individuals who have both the knowledge and drive to "take the ball and run." We provide a thoroughly professional work environment plus all the tools essential to your personal success. You'll be working side-by-side with the best people in the industry, and if you're willing to put forth the effort, you'll be rewarded by earning a salary that is finally commensurate with your personal abilities and ambition.

We also offer you the opportunity to live in a wonderful community with excellent quality-of-life; a place where you can feel safe walking down the streets at night, but where you also have access to all the benefits of "big city" living.

Warning: This is not an easy job! If you can't handle a fast-paced workplace while staying on top of the latest technical advances, then please do not apply. But if you are genuinely ready to begin a great new career, we want to hear from you. Please submit a resume and salary history. All inquiries will be completely confidential.

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SONY'S MDM-X4 MULTI-TRACK RECORDER

— Continued from page two

an integral six-channel mixer with great sound quality (after all, you are recording to digital) and lots of functionality like 10 inputs/4 bus, 2 aux sends and a 3-band equalizer. The unit also incorporates highly sophisticated MIDI features that ensure a flexible system configuration, such as MMC/MTC synchronization and compatibility with all major sequencing software.

Sit down in front of an MDM-X4 and one of the first features you'll notice is the Mix-Write function. This state-of-the-art editing feature lets you handle track-summing and doubling as if you were mixing and recording sounds using multiple 4-track recorders. For example: Let's say you recorded music onto all four tracks. With Mix-Write, you can mix the four different tracks and stereo pinging them to tracks one and two (go ahead, try that with

any cassette multitrack). This then frees up two more tracks (3 and 4) for additional recording. Other super-sophisticated editing functions allow you to further edit your high quality digital sound creations by track, 4-track section and even song. With the MDM-X4, the creative possibilities are almost limitless.

It takes Sony eight full pages to describe every MDM-X4 feature (lots of it in little-bitty type), so you know in our limited space we'll never be able to fully describe all its useful functions (like Auto Punch In/Out, Undo/Redo, Rehearsal Mode and 11-Point Locate Function, just to name a few). Fortunately your Sweetwater sales engineer can tell you a lot more about this great-sounding, easy to use digital recorder (they may even own one themselves). So call today for information and your special low pricing on the incredible Sony MDM-X4.



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ORAM PRO AUDIO PRODUCTS

— Continued from Page One

All Oram products essentially take a "brute force" approach to mixer design, from the individual channel strips and great-feeling full length faders, right down to the extra heavy duty power supplies. These products are built to perform day in and day out, year after year, yet still deliver the outstanding sonic performance required in even the most demanding situations.

Sitting at the top of the Oram family tree is the **BEQ Series 24** with list prices starting at \$39,900 — a hefty investment to be sure, but still far better value than many mixers sporting even bigger price tags, but delivering bigger quality that just doesn't come close to that of the BEQ Series 24.

This console features the superb, warm, vintage sound of Oram Sonics super low noise circuitry, enhanced by the low noise characteristics and reliability of true Surface Mount Technology (SMT). There are 10 aux sends per channel with 10 FX returns, each with dual band EQ plus Oram's unique Triple Aux which allows connection to 30 FX with full level control (can your mixer do that?).


Of course, you get smooth 100mm main faders (which can be factory or retro fitted for any automation system) and 60mm monitor faders with dual channel EQ. There are 112 Inputs to the mix bus with a 32 input console plus a noise gate on every channel. Each Series 24 is fully modular with 3mm aluminum panels held in place by tough Nyloc fasteners.

The prestigious British trade magazine *Sound On Sound* praised the BEQ Series 24 in its August 1996 issue, stating "...above all (it) offers a quality of signal path comparable to the best. You might expect to find this much functionality on a desk at this price, but not with this much attention to detail and pride in its audio specs and performance." We couldn't possibly agree more.

Next in the Oram line is the **BEQ Series 8** with a list price starting at \$15,395. It, too, features the superb Oram Sonics super low noise circuitry, Surface Mount Technology, 7 aux sends per channel with 5 FX returns, 100mm main faders and 60mm monitor faders, 72 inputs to mix bus with a 24 input configuration, two separate stereo mix outs with master faders and an external, "silent running" power supply, all standard.

A quote from *EQ* magazine (March 1996) probably sums up the Series 8 the best: "The Father of British EQ has just made the Mother of


all Consoles." Guess they were impressed, eh? So much so, in fact, that the magazine awarded this console not one, but two blue ribbons for quality at a recent AES Show. The Series 8 also was a TEC Award nominee in 1996.

From experience we know that you can find other mixers that have more "bells and whistles," but almost none can compete with the unsurpassed Oram sound quality. Plus, 

The BEQ Series 8 features Oram's world renowned British EQ which has been described as "magical."

with a BEQ console, you get a REAL mixing desk, not some table-top mixer that your clients will look at as something "less than professional."

But Oram Professional Audio Products include more than mixing consoles. Also available is the **Oram Sonics MWS** (\$2195 list) which stands for Microphone Work Station. Essentially, this is a stand-alone version of the ultra high quality mic preamps found in Oram's consoles, plus the company's exceptional EQ with high and low pass filters, bass and treble shelving and sweepable mids. If you want the sound of Oram's low noise (essentially NO noise) mic preamps without investing in a whole new board, this unit will make perfect sense. Talk to your sales engineer — they've heard this masterpiece and they're now true believers. You will be too, once you add one to your studio.

The stand-alone **Oram Sonics HD-EQ2** (\$4070 list — see photo below) applies John Oram's years of experience to the problem of designing an outboard EQ that combines outstanding flexibility with the highly desirable British EQ sound. It has a total of 8 bands of EQ per channel with both sweep and shelf circuitry, separate filter and EQ bypass, plus switch selectable plus/minus 6/18 dB control. 

Look, this equipment certainly isn't for everyone, but here at Sweetwater, we knew as soon as we saw and heard them that they would be absolutely perfect for certain customers. When you simply can't compromise on audio quality, or if you only want the best for your studio at prices that you can actually afford, Oram products are the way to go. So call us for more detailed information and your special pricing on all these great Oram products.

SOUNDWARE SCENE

By Daniel Fisher, Chief Soundware Engineer

Regular readers of *Sweet Notes* know that our **Soundware Scene** column is the place to go for the latest on all our soundware development projects. But today I'd like to address those who may have heard a lot about Kurzweil keyboards, but want to know exactly why we feel they're the most extraordinary synthesizers and samplers yet made and why Sweetwater Sound is the most logical place to buy them.

If you watch way too much TV (guilty!), you've probably noticed that there's an army of professional musicians out there who all have the word KURZWEIL on their keyboard rigs. Do they all know something that you don't? Well, if you don't own a K2000/K2vx/K2500 or PC-88 then, "Yes, they do!"

Kurzweil's current flagship line, the **K2500 Series**, is a remarkable achievement in both synth and sampler design. There are four keyboard versions: the **K2500** which has 76 semi-weighted keys, the **K2500S** which adds the Sampling Option, the **K2500X** with 88 weighted keys, and **K2500XS** which has 88 notes plus the Sampling Option.

There's a tremendous choice of physical controllers on these instruments like 8 fully assignable sliders, 8 zone switches, 2 assignable switches, 2 assignable wheels, a long and short assignable ribbon controller, a breath controller input, 2 foot switch controllers, 2 continuous foot controllers, plus key pressure and velocity sensitivity.

Add to this a fantastic stereo sampler that can have up to



The Kurzweil K2500: So powerful it's inspiring a whole new generation to take up programming

128 megs of RAM onboard (sold separately), combined with a powerful sample editor and you have the makings of a true world class sampling setup. But that's just the beginning. Now take your samples and run them through the single most powerful digital synthesizer engine on the planet, appropriately named V.A.S.T. (an acronym for Variable Architecture Synthesis Technology), which can warp your samples in so many ways that they haven't all been discovered yet! There's also 8 megs of professional quality ROM samples and waveforms onboard with the option to add 8 more megs of **Orchestral ROM**, 8 more megs of **Contemporary ROM**, and a stunning 4 meg **Stereo Grand Piano**. Now you're beginning to see the unlimited creative potential of this fantastic machine.

But there's even more to come. The K2500 Series keeps getting upgraded operating systems that add exciting new features simply by loading in a floppy. (See The Future of V.A.S.T. section on page 10 for more info.) And new hardware options like the **KDFX** full-bandwidth Multi-Effects Processor and **DMTi** Digital Multitrack Interface are going to blast this

— Continued on page 10

WE STOCK THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS FROM ALL MAJOR MANUFACTURERS!

If you don't see it here, CALL US!

SOUNDWARE SCENE

— continued from page 9
machine into the next century.

And I know, without bias, that Sweetwater Sound is by far the most VAST-savvy retailer in the business. With a machine as deep as the K2000/K2500, your enjoyment and success with this instrument is directly related to the quality of tech support, service, and the extensive knowledge of your salesperson. You're going to want to know what's coming, what it will do, and when it will really be available. You want to buy your Kurzweil from a company that sells and maintains *thousands* of Kurzweil products and options every year.

This is probably the most serious musical instrument decision you will ever make. Don't settle for lame support from a store that has one dusty K2000 (Version 1.0) and where no one is quite sure how it works. Sweetwater has made a commitment to be the single most knowledgeable source for Kurzweil information. We go the extra mile to support your Kurzweil purchase with extra goodies like our **Power Pack** floppy disks and our Top 20 Kurzweil Questions list that'll get you up and running while other stores are still scrambling through the owner's manual trying to figure it out.

We've also got the best stockpile of new, demo, and used K2000s, K2500s and PC-88s to help you get a machine that fits your budget.

The Future of V.A.S.T.

One of the most exciting aspects of owning a Kurzweil product is knowing that there's always something new just around the corner for your keyboard. And you know that the Sweetwater Team is going to be hip to the new stuff before it even ships.

Here's the current state of the operating systems: The K2000 and K2vx keyboards and racks are currently running on engine version 3.18. There has been an announcement from Kurzweil that a version 3.5x is coming soon which will add 8 Drum Channels (!) with P-RAM, a new sustain pedal feature (Sus2) which will not recapture ringing notes, and the ability to import Type 1 Standard MIDI Files. Disk features will include the ability to verify files when saving or backing up and v3.5x will support hard drives up to 2 gigabytes!

The current K2500 operating system is v2.31 (which you can download from our Web Site). Forthcoming operating systems will include the KB3 Mode which features an incredibly realistic B3 Organ simulation including real-time drawbars with the K2500's sliders and mod wheel. Other future operating systems will have cool features like LIVE Mode, which will allow you to bring audio into your K2500 for real-time V.A.S.T. processing.

For Kurzweil owners with the Sweetwater connection, the future is indeed VAST!

ART GOES PRO IN A BIG WAY

A few years ago, **Applied Research and Technology**, better known as **ART**, was widely recognized for their guitar and bass effects units. You know, the ones with the bright post-psychedelic graphics on the front? Priced aggressively and offering plenty of bang for the buck, these processors were quite successful.

But the company had bigger plans, as evidenced by the products they have been releasing over the last year or so, like the much-acclaimed **Pro MPA** Two Channel Tube Mic Preamp (\$599 list) and its smaller relative, the single channel **Tube MP** (\$149 list). ART was moving into the big leagues with products aimed squarely at the pro audio market.

Not that the company has forgotten its guitar-based roots; it still offers an enormous variety of effects processors such as the **Quadra/FX** Dual DSP/Four Channel Multi Effects unit (\$299 list) and the **DST Eighty/Eighty Express** Powered Processor (\$799 list), both of which offer tremendous processing power and excellent sound quality at affordable prices. There's even a dedicated stomp box called the **XTREME+** for guitar players who want their effects on the floor.

What's more, ART has recently moved into the guitar combo amp department with products like the **Model 830 Classic Openback** (\$999 list) and the **Model 820 Classic Head** (\$899 list).

But what has really brought the company to the attention

of pros is their exceptional tube-based analog leveling/compression processors. In fact, our own Jim Miller (Tech Notes) recently completed a review of the **Pro VLA Two Channel Vactrol/Tube Leveling Amplifier** (\$599 list) for *Electronic Musician* magazine in which he pretty much raves about the unit's transparent sound quality and overall warmth and clarity (and around here, we know Jim's no big fan of compressors in general, so we know he was impressed). This



The **PRO VLA**: designed to excel in areas where transparent, expressive dynamics control is desired.

unit is indeed a significant achievement, both in terms of its sound quality and price. But ART also offers the **Dual Leveler** Two channel leveling amplifier at just \$329 list, and the single channel **Leveler** at only \$159 list. All three are designed around the same basic VCA-less Vactrol circuitry and real 12AX7 tubes. And each features both 1/4" TRS and XLR balanced ins and outs, so you know the company was thinking of the pro market when they designed these units.

We're certain that you'll want to give these processors a serious listen, as well as the new **Model 351 31-Band** and **341 Dual 15-Band Equalizers**. Give us a call to find out more about these and all of the other great ART products and, of course, for your special low Sweetwater pricing.

CROWN K2: NO FAN, NO NOISE, 2500 WATTS

Of all the products being shown at NAMM this year, the **Crown K2** probably gets the award for most amazing, though unassuming, development in audio. Capable of producing an astounding 2,500 watts of ear-busting power, the K2 still manages to run without a fan and zero noise thanks to its unmatched thermal efficiency and other engineering marvels. The K2 features full thermal level control protection which subtly reduces gain as volume and output approach critical levels, as well as Automatic Turn-On Diagnostics, all in a sealed chassis.

You're going to be hearing a lot about this amplifier, particularly given its list price of just \$1795. Before you invest in any amplification, we urge you to call your Sweetwater sales engineer for special pricing on the Crown K2.

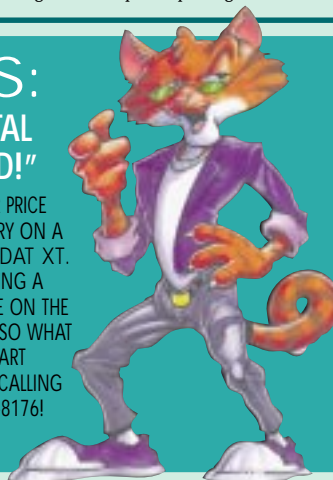


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Q & A

— Continued from page 5

your mixer to monitor the output. A second option would be to plug the preamp into one of the mixer's line inputs, thus bypassing the internal mic preamps. A third (and probably least desirable in many cases) would be to patch the pre directly into one of the board's insert points. You will then still be able to use the mixer's onboard EQ and aux sends to further alter the signal if desired.

Got a question? Well, we've got answers! Simply mail your question to Sweetwater Sound at 5335 Bass Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46808 or send e-mail directly to "tech_support@sweetwater.com."

YOU CAN'T BEAT OUR BEST VALUE GUARANTEE! Call us today for the complete details at (219) 432-8176

By Jim Miller

Let's face it: Not everybody has the bucks to go out and buy all the equipment they really want for their studio. I know I don't. For some reason people still seem to think manufacturers throw gear at me just because I happen to write about their products. Hardly. Just like you, I have to pay for my equipment.

Of course, with finance plans in place like the Sweetwater Technology Card and the new Line of Credit Accounts, getting the right multitrack, mics and mixer for your personal studio is easier than ever before. But let's say that instead of buying a brand new digital multitrack, you'd rather be able to get a recorder AND a quality mixer for about the same price. Hey, wouldn't we all?

Well, I'm pleased to be the one to tell you about a brand new Sweetwater exclusive, one that will make a lot of sense to many of you out there. They call it **Sweetwater Certified Pre-Owned Equipment**. Let me explain exactly what this means.

First, everyone should know by now that Sweetwater takes in tons of used equipment. There are those musicians out there who have the desire and finances to always have the latest gear in their studios, so they trade their used equipment in on new equipment. In most cases, these "trade-ins" are only a few years old and in excellent condition. So what the Sweetwater Service Department does is take these recorders, mixers, keyboards, etc. apart, piece-by-piece, and meticulously service them thoroughly from the ground up to bring them up as close as humanly possible to the specs of a brand new unit. If a particular item can't be brought up to spec, it's usually put into a separate inventory to be stripped as needed for parts.

The net result of this process is that Sweetwater now has a sufficient inventory of many items to begin offering these to its customers at amazingly low prices. Begin to see the picture? Essentially, you can buy a piece of equipment that will perform exactly as if it were new, but at a substantial savings, leaving you free to use those extra bucks to invest in a mic, mixer, multi-effects unit, etc.

Sure, just about every retailer sells used gear, and when you buy it, you're pretty much on your own. If it stops working two weeks later, your salesman looks at you as if he never saw you before in his life, right?

Well the key here are those two magic words: "Sweetwater Certified."

What this means is that our Service Department has carefully checked the item over to be as certain as possible that it will not fail a few weeks, months or probably even years from the day you buy it. It also means that — are you ready for this? — Sweetwater treats these certified items just like new gear, meaning our industry first "no hype/no hassles" guarantee applies to whatever you might be buying. So if the unit stops working, doesn't produce the results you're after, or if you're just not completely happy with it, we'll exchange it, give you credit towards another item, or even refund your money. You can't beat that deal.

I don't know of any other retailer that offers anything close to that kind of warranty on pre-owned equipment. To be fair, the most reputable dealers will,

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in most cases, give you 24 hours to try an item out. After that, well, good luck folks . . .

If it weren't for the fact that Sweetwater's Service Department is the very best in the business, the company would probably never have started such an ambitious program. They have complete confidence that if the people in Service say a piece of equipment is back up to spec, they can offer it to you without any reservations, period.

Personally, I think this is a great program, and one you will be hearing a lot more about in the coming months (and one that other dealers are sure to begin copying soon). It allows you to get the gear you need without spending a small fortune, then gives you the same peace-of-mind you get when purchasing new equipment — and as we all know, even brand new units occasionally fail for many reasons, otherwise there would be no such thing as a warranty.

What kind of equipment will be Sweetwater Certified? Just about anything that's capable of being brought up to like-new condition: ADATs, DA-88s,

ing on big time. And computer-based recording is definitely getting some serious attention, both from a hardware standpoint and in some advanced software, mostly in the form of various plug-ins that can be used just like outboard gear to produce outstanding results.

Recently, I personally began writing several articles for *Electronic Musician* on the subject of using plug-ins, and let me tell you from firsthand experience that it can be rather humbling at first. Just sorting out all the various platforms (TDM, SDII, native, VST and others) is enough to make your head spin.

I've now been working with plug-ins from **Waves** and **AnTares Systems** (formerly Jupiter Systems, the company that brought you Infinity looping software), both in **Digidesign's Sound Designer II** with an Audiomedia II card, and Version 1.5 of **Peak** from **Berkely Integrated Audio Software** running on a PCI-based **Audiomedia III** system.

My first word of advice: If you are even considering using your computer to do digital multitracking or mastering (or whatever), you really need to call

your Sweetwater sales engineer to get the most accurate information before you begin your foray into computer-based recording. Getting the wrong system for your needs will cause you to pull out your hair, gnash your teeth and generally be in a very bad mood for the next eight months or so. But once you have a well-designed system in place, you'll be surprised at how versatile it can be, and you'll be cruising along making fantastic-sounding recordings in short order. With the addition of plug-ins, you'll be amazed at the results.

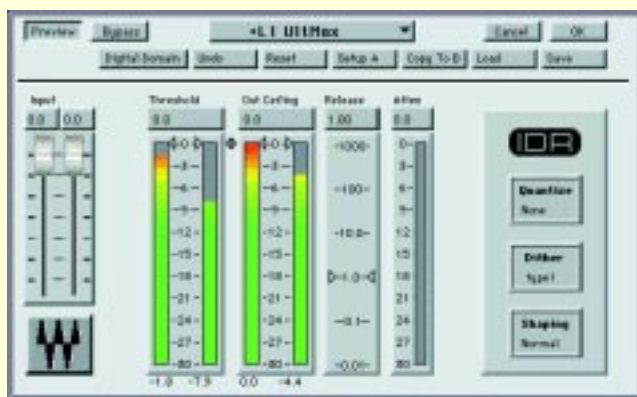
For example, Waves' **L1 Ultramaximizer** software will allow you to make CD-ready audio files thanks to its advanced

peak limiter, level maximizer and the company's IDR (Increased Digital Resolution) noise-shaping and re-dithering process. Their **Q10** ten-band equalizer, **Renaissance Compressor** (with authentic vintage sound) and **S1 Stereo Imager** are all tools I personally have used to remaster some old tapes that exist only in cassette format. The result is a finished product that almost sounds like it was recorded yesterday, rather than 12 years ago.

Both the **Multiband Dynamics Tool (MDT)** and **Jupiter Voice Processor (JVP)** from AnTares Systems are also great plug-ins that do a wide variety of processing, ranging from De-Essing and Compression to Parametric EQ and Delay. Listen to Sweetwater's new **Session Drums CD-ROM**; many of the drum samples were processed using these plug-ins.

Fact is, you'll be seeing a lot more plug-ins in the future in all sorts of applications from **Adobe Photoshop** and **Premiere** to **Netscape Navigator** and everything in between. This is very powerful technology that's bound to change the way we work on our personal computers well into the next century.

Well, I'm out of here for now. See you next issue.



Waves' Ultramaximizer Plug-in allows you to control the dynamics of your mixes

K2000s and other synths, Mackie boards and more!

Now if you're interested (and if I've done my job you should be), I would suggest you call your Sweetwater sales engineer immediately and find out exactly what Sweetwater Certified items are currently in stock. You can even check our Web Site. But remember that these items will go fast (in fact, I've already purchased one myself).

And one last item before I move on: This new program also means that your trade-in is even more valuable when you're looking to move up to the hottest new gear. It's a great program where everybody wins, and how often in life can we say that?

I just read the NAMM report that's included on page 3 of this issue. I don't think there's ever been a more exciting time to be involved with music than right now, (but of course you could say that about every NAMM Show). However, if you read this article carefully, you'll spot some rather interesting trends.

For one, outboard processors are big right now: compressors, limiters, expanders, tube preamps, etc. You'll also notice that powered monitors are catch-

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