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# MIX

MUSIC PRODUCTION • LIVE SOU

## THE ALL-L.A. ISSUE!

- *AES Returns*
- *Iconic Session Players*
- *Hollywood Bowl*

## THE MIX INTERVIEW:

*Jackson Browne*

# SOUND AND STYLE

## DOUG ROGERS AND THE EVOLUTION OF EASTWEST

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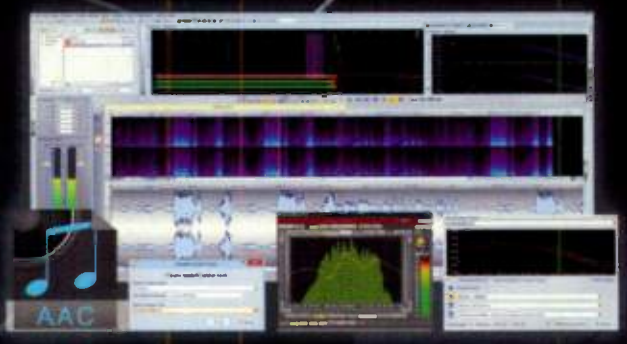


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# 10.14 Contents

Volume 38, Number 10

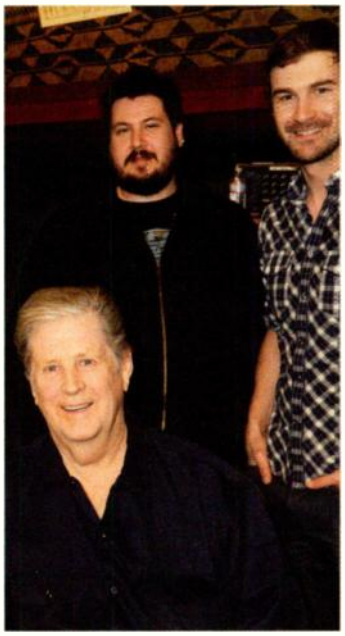

Photo: Adam Latham

## FEATURES





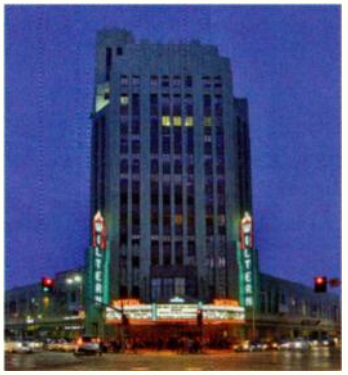
## L.A. NEWS





## VENUE PROFILES





## DEPARTMENTS



## TECH



**On the Cover:** EastWest Studios (and EastWest Sounds) owner Doug Rogers at the refurbished SSL 4064G/E in the reconditioned Studio 5. **Photo:** Brendan Dekora.

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# Current



COMPILED BY THE MIX EDITORS

## From the Editor

# EVERY PAGE AN L.A. STORY

It's been 12 years since the AES hosted its annual U.S. convention in Los Angeles, so we decided a few months back to put together an All-L.A. Issue to celebrate the return. Our apologies to New York, Miami, Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, Nashville and all the other big cities and small towns where great music is made and stellar audio is produced. But this month it's all about the City of Angels, La-La Land, Tinseltown, the Entertainment Capital of the World.

We've done similar issues occasionally over the years, and they're a lot of fun to put together. We editors get together and start hashing out ideas, looking for a proper blend of tribute/historical material and today's energy. Often, we find, the same talents that formed the history are still vital today. Case in point: Jackson Browne, the subject of this month's *Mix* Interview with Blair Jackson. A pivotal songwriting/producing force in the 1970s who is just as vital today, putting out a dynamite new record just this month, recorded in his own Groove Masters Studio out in Santa Monica.

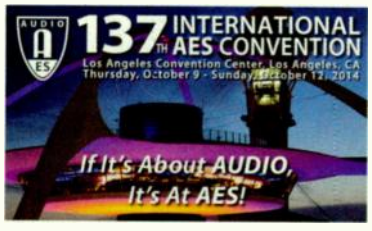
Then there's The Roxy, The Whisky, The Wiltern and McCabe's, along with the granddaddy of all L.A. venues, The Hollywood Bowl. All remain strong and are moving forward, embracing both new technologies and new styles of music.

On the cover, we feature Doug Rogers, who purchased the property at 6000 Sunset Boulevard in 2006 and renamed it EastWest Studios, creating synergies with his software sounds company. This isn't just any property. It's the famous Western Recorders space built by The Father of Modern Recording, Bill Putnam, in 1961, then owned by Allen Sides and becoming part of Ocean Way, before being renamed Cello, and finally EastWest. The equipment has changed over the years, though it retains an emphasis on vintage gear. The interior style has changed, too. The walls, the rooms themselves, have not been touched.

Finally, one of my favorite pieces inside pays tribute to the session players from the 1970s, the Golden Age of L.A. Recording, a different time to be sure, one that followed on the heels of The Wrecking Crew and brought a new, fresh, rock 'n' roll energy to town. Lest anyone think this is a nostalgic piece, read on. Those who talked to us for the article remain just as active today. It's just different.

So, AES, and all you attendees from out of town, welcome back to Los Angeles 2014. It's a pretty special place.

Tom Kenny
Editor




## Welcome to AES L.A. 2014

The AES Convention is back in Los Angeles for the first time in 12 years, and thousands of audio professionals will descend on the downtown convention center from October 9-12. It promises to be one of the most vibrant shows in years, based on early exhibitor signups and advanced registration. And the AES has greatly expanded its technical programs and workshops, reflecting the reality that professional audio is about a lot more than music. All information is available at www.aes.org/events. Here is a sampling of what attendees can expect.

### NEW! "Raw Tracks" Series

When legendary engineers and producers talk about how they worked on a classic song, it always draws a crowd at audio gatherings. This year the AES debuts its new "Raw Tracks" series as part of the Recording and Production Track, where top-name producers and engineers will discuss and deconstruct influential, classic recordings from some of music's most highly regarded artists. Attendees can learn first-hand about details of the sessions—the gear that was used, recording techniques and other insightful production information.

Sessions in the new series include: Fleetwood Mac—A Master Class presented by Ken Caillat about the recording of a classic song from the hit album, Rumours; David Bowie—A track-by-track Master Class featuring a classic David Bowie recording, presented by Ken Scott; Pet Sounds—A Master Class by three-time Grammy-winner Mark Linett about two songs—"Wouldn't It Be Nice" and "God Only Knows"—from the Beach Boys' seminal album Pet Sounds; Red Hot Chili Peppers—A Master Class featuring Andrew Scheps that explores the classic song "Pink As a Floyd."

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# the speakers

## Keynote: Neil Portnow

On Friday, October 10, the 137th AES Convention exhibition will host a special keynote address by Neil Portnow, President/CEO of The Recording Academy, which includes The Academy's Producers & Engineers Wing (composed of more than 5,500 producers, engineers, remixers, manufacturers, technologists, and other related music recording industry professionals. Taking place from 12–1 p.m. in Special Events Room #403, Portnow's presentation will discuss how The Academy and its P&E Wing—via education and dialog—address the challenges and opportunities currently facing recording professionals, as well as targeted advocacy initiatives The Academy is developing to address some of these concerns.

Portnow has served as President of The Recording Academy since December 2002, and was named President/CEO in September 2007. In keeping with The Academy's position as an advocate for its constituents, Portnow develops and manages strategic advocacy positions at the national, state and local levels—both governmental and within music and its related industries.

## Heyser Lecture: Marty O'Donnell

Acclaimed game audio director and composer Marty O'Donnell (Halo series, others) will deliver the Richard C. Heyser Memorial Lecture on Friday, October 10, at 7 p.m. O'Donnell's lecture, titled "The Ear Doesn't Blink: Creating Culture With Adaptive Audio," will draw on his unique perspective from years working in film and commercial music, including developing the audio for Halo, the biggest-selling game soundtrack of all time, as well as the long-awaited title, Destiny, in which he involved the likes of Sir Paul McCartney to create the soundtrack for this much-anticipated game, slated to hit shelves on September 9 of this year.

O'Donnell notes: "Advances in audio production technology have sparked amazing creative responses from audio artists, musicians and composers. Music and audio can enhance the experience of a consumer in ways that were almost unimaginable 30 years ago. It's been an incredible personal creative journey."

## Project Studio Expo

The popular Project Studio Expo, presented in association with Sound On Sound, will feature presentations by leading industry engineers, producers, authors, journalists and educators, including Alex Case, Mike Senior, Stephen Webber, Larry Crane, Craig Anderton, Mick Guzauski, John Storyk, Paul White, Hugh Robjohns, and others. Presenters will lead attendees through basics such as recording vocals, preparing multitracks for mixing and best practices for proper monitoring, as well as more detailed discussions on how to optimize value when it comes to choosing and purchasing equipment, how to design a great project studio, and how to get the most out of a digital audio workstation.

The Project Studio Expo will take place Friday, October 10, and Saturday, October 11, throughout show hours. Sponsors include Audionamix, Avid, Focusrite Novation, Sennheiser, and Universal Audio.

## P&E Wing—Update from L.A

Our friends at The Recording Academy® Producers & Engineers Wing® continue to shine light on the professionals who labor behind the scenes to create music. Besides the ongoing education and activism, the P&E Wing has a full itinerary scheduled for the 137th AES Convention, including the GRAMMY SoundTables® Special Event on Saturday, October 11, titled, "Songs That Move the Needle."

The year kicked off with the P&E Wing's 7th Annual GRAMMY Week® Celebration at The Village, which showcased a High Resolution Audio theme by honoring Neil Young, who spoke eloquently about the importance of the work that producers and engineers contribute to create recordings that reproduce the full emotional impact their creators intended.

The P&E Wing's "Quality Sound Matters" initiative, in partnership with the Consumer Electronics Association, updated its website, which now includes a rich library of content offering information on how to enhance the enjoyment of music by seeking out higher-quality digital file formats and using listening and storage products.

In partnership with the CEA, Digital Entertainment Group, Sony Music International, Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group, the Wing staged a High Resolution Audio press event on June 20 at New York's Jungle City Studios during CE Week, at which music creators played both new and legacy recordings that demonstrated the full fidelity reproduction possible with High Resolution formats. This year the Wing has also supported numerous incarnations of the popular presentation by GRAMMY®-winning engineer/producer Andrew Scheps called "Lost In Translation."

The Wing also continues its efforts to educate about the need for visible technical and performance credits, hosting panels throughout the year on the topic of "Why Recording Metadata Matters." Meanwhile, The Recording Academy's ongoing "Give Fans the Credit" initiative continues to investigate a replacement for liner notes on digitally released music that includes songwriting, production and performance credits.

November 2013 saw a new partnership with the Latin Recording Academy for the first Producers & Engineers Wing Latin GRAMMY Week Celebration. This year, as part of the festivities at the upcoming 15th Annual Latin GRAMMY® Awards, the P&E Wing and the Latin Recording Academy will host "¡En la Mezcla! [In the Mix]" on November 18, 2014, at Studio at The Palms in Las Vegas.

Community and networking remain primary to the P&E Wing agenda, with the production of over 40 events throughout the year, both nationally and in partnership with The Recording Academy's 12 regional chapters. Ranging from networking mixers in Los Angeles to the Art of the Craft series in New York, business panels like "Lost In Transaction" in Nashville and gear shootouts in Florida, to listening sessions in San Francisco, Memphis and New Orleans, the Pacific Northwest Studio Summit in Seattle and interviews and panels nationwide on topics from studio design to vocal techniques, the Wing continues to address the needs of both its members and the recording industry overall.

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## Live Sound Expo

With roughly 25-percent of AES attendees coming from the live sound industry, the Live Sound Expo is targeted at specific engineering and education curriculum across the range of event, touring, house of worship and corporate production. With a presence and panels on the show floor, the Expo is free to registered attendees on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Those who have purchased an All Access pass can take advantage of four full days through the Technical Workshops programs. Sponsored by *Pro Sound News*, *Pro Audio Review*, *Sound & Video Contractor* and *Mix*, the Live Sound Expo includes educational presentations on topics such as Networks and IT; RF Systems; Loudspeaker Setup and Configuration; Mixing Primer; Art of the Soundcheck; Installed Sound; The Small Venue Monitor Mix; and many others.

## AES and SMPTE Partner

The AES this year introduces the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers as an Association Partner. SMPTE is the worldwide leader in the advancement of the art, science and craft of developing and maintaining image, sound and metadata ecosystems. Speakers from SMPTE's professional membership will be presenting as part of the Broadcast and Streaming Media and the Sound for Picture tracks. The sessions, presented by leading figures in their field, are titled: Cinema Standards Review and the Road to Implementing Changes; and SMPTE: Audio Issues for Live Television—Overcoming the Challenges of Live Television Broadcast in Today's Wild, Wild World.

## *Valerie Tyler, 137th AES Co-Chair*

**How did you first became involved with the AES as an organization?**
When I was studying audio at San Francisco State University, I joined the AES student section and became one of the section officers. Shortly after that I had the opportunity to attend my first AES convention in San Francisco, and I fell in love with the people I met there and the knowledge that was available.

**At that time, you were working as an audio editor, recording engineer and live sound engineer?**
No, that came later. When I first joined the AES I was still in school, and was spending as much time as possible playing music and learning about audio engineering. AES events helped me to expand my knowledge of audio and provided the amazing networking opportunities the AES is known for.

**How do you view the role of the co-chair?**
Co-chairs function as partners; ideally they have complementary skill sets and professional networks. Having two people on the task helps to ensure that at least one chair is always available to manage convention business.

**It seems that we have Live, Broadcast, Networking, Sound for Picture...audio that goes beyond music production. Can you comment on the AES approach to all things audio?**
The art and science of audio production continue to evolve to embrace new technologies and business models. AES members possess a wealth of knowledge and provide a bridge from our audio past to our audio present and beyond. Regardless of the specific technology used, the AES will continue to provide a strong foundation for all of its members.

**You work in many facets of digital media, in addition to audio: Web design, graphic design and video. Does this give you a broader perspective on audio? It seems that many who work in audio these days also work in visual media.**
Absolutely! It's all about communication and production values—concepts used in one area translate to all the other areas. File management, aesthetics, balance, dynamic range—it all applies. More and more we're moving toward an immersive experience, and audio plays a key part in that experience.

**I understand you have co-chaired a few of the West Coast conventions now. What is your history of co-chairing?**
This is my sixth time serving as convention co-chair. I've served on ten convention committees, nine times as a co-chair. My experience co-chairing Workshops, Special Events and Tutorials & Master Classes helped to give me a breadth of understanding that I've drawn from as convention co-chair. Each of my co-chairs has helped me to expand the range and depth of my audio knowledge and professional network.

**What's the general mood about the L.A. show this year, from within the AES? The first time in L.A. in 12 years.**
Elated. There's a great deal of excitement to have the show return to the region! Los Angeles features one of the largest audio communities in the world, with active recording, live sound, motion picture, post-production, broadcast and gaming communities. We're very excited to be back in L.A. and reconnecting with this diverse group of audio professionals!

**Is there anything else you would like to say about the AES and its direction moving forward, whether at the college level or the industry level?**
The AES is always working to expand its membership and to serve existing and emerging areas of the audio world. Student members are a vital and valuable part of our community, and we are committed to engaging, informing and inspiring these upcoming engineers. On an industry level, we continue to provide a venue where audio professionals of all backgrounds can benefit from a comprehensive resource on all things audio as well as stay current with new developments, both in the technical program and on the show floor.

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**Quality Components**
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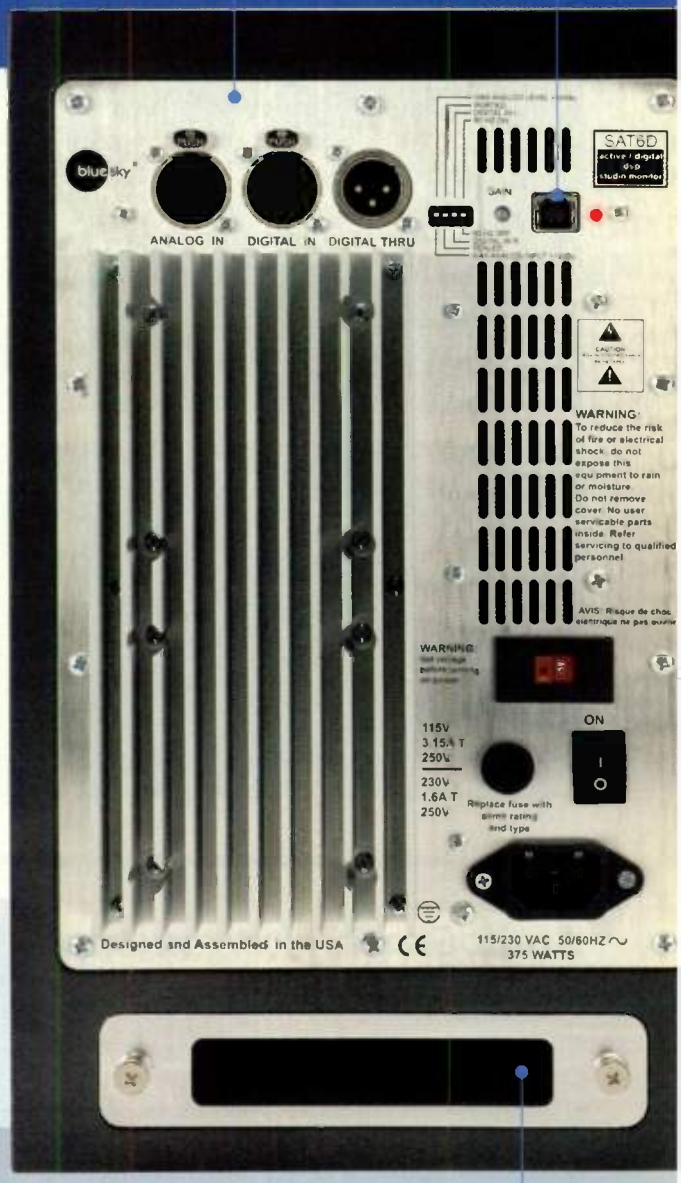
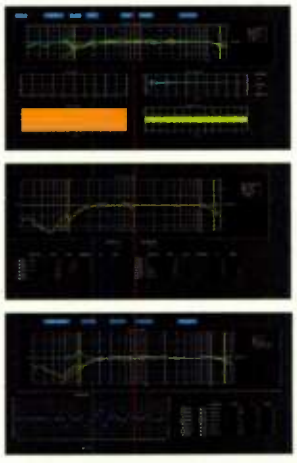
**USB Data Port**
Both the SAT 6D and Sub 12D have a USB data port allowing Blue Sky's proprietary Speaker Manager software to control EQ, time delay, gain, pink noise and system updates.




## Blue Sky's New Star System One

The Star System One is the suite simply the finest monitoring system Blue Sky has ever offered. Start with the building blocks: Superb components and exceptional construction quality? Check. Advanced crossovers and powerful ultra-clean amplification? Check. Seamless modularity from stereo 2.0 to 7.1 centrally-managed systems? Check. And, to provide precision monitoring in the real (and imperfect) world, we embedded intelligent tools to precisely measure and optimize system performance in a wide range of acoustical environments. Of course, we didn't stop there.



### A monitor system that adapts to your environment

The accuracy of an ordinary monitor system will be dramatically degraded when used in an un-treated (or minimally-treated) acoustical environment. These days, that includes a lot of rooms and spaces where pros work. Blue Sky's Speaker Room Optimization (SRO) system provides tools to measure and optimize the system's performance in your working environment, whether it's acoustically neutral or not. Each SAT 6D and Sub 12D has powerful built-in processing with full 1/3 octave graphic EQ plus 8 bands of parametric EQ and filters. And these tools are remarkably easy to use, thanks to Blue Sky's bundled Speaker Manager computer software.*

**Sub 12 D**
Features built-in digital 2.1 bass management with variable crossover frequencies and high and low pass filters.

**Modular. Expandable**
Can your monitor system keep up with you and your future needs? Use a pair of SAT 6Ds for a 2.0 (stereo) system without sub or add a Sub 12D for 2.1. Add the Audio Management Controller (AMC) and additional SAT 6Ds for 5.1 and 7.1 systems. The AMC provides system level, solo and mute, bass management for 5.1 and 7.1 configurations, plus an extraordinary range of additional control features.

**The Guts to Be Great**
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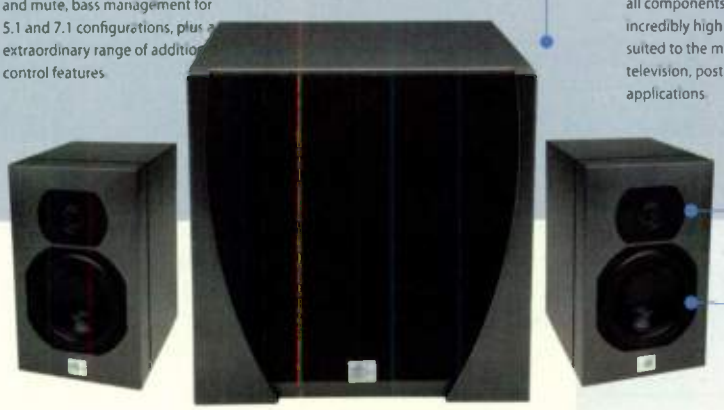
**Rear Port with Removeable Plate**
All Star System One configurations are built using SAT 6Ds, which are full-range/satellite systems, and our subwoofer, the Sub 12D. The Sat 6D can be configured as a full-range system (when a sub is not utilized) through selectable DSP low-pass filters and a rear port with a removable plate.



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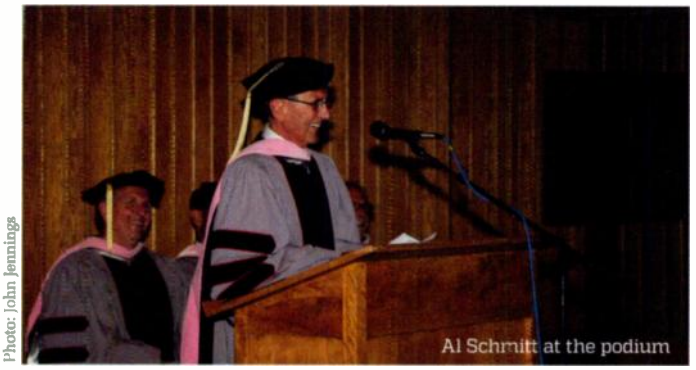

Photo: John Jennings

Al Schmitt at the podium

Photo: John Jennings

Al Schmitt and producer Don Was

# Al Schmitt Receives Berklee Honorary Doctorate, Star on Walk of Fame

Grammy Award-winning producer/engineer Al Schmitt received an honorary doctor of music degree from Berklee College of Music President Roger H. Brown on September 10 at the Capitol Records building in Los Angeles. Schmitt has won 20 Grammy Awards (for work with artists such as Quincy Jones, Steely Dan, Natalie Cole, Paul McCartney, Luis Miguel and Henry Mancini) and a Grammy Trustees Lifetime Achievement, and has worked on 160 gold- and platinum-selling albums. Schmitt has also worked with Elvis Presley, Barbra Streisand, Madonna, Neil Young and Willie Nelson, among hundreds of others.

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce also recently announced that Schmitt will receive a star on the Walk of Fame in front of the Capitol Records Tower in L.A. The Chamber is honoring Schmitt in its Recording category, along with Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald, Kool & The Gang, Pitbull and Pharrell Williams.

Schmitt will receive the star in 2015.

Schmitt has also been inducted into the TEC Awards Hall of Fame, and served on the Recording Academy's National Board of Trustees. He was nominated for a 2014 Emmy Award for his work on CBS's The Beatles: The Night That Changed America.

## *AudioGraph International Turns 20*

On October 9, 2014, AudioGraph International and CEO José "Chilitos" Valenzuela are celebrating 20 years in the pro audio industry. In conjunction with the L.A. AES convention, the event will officially announce the first annual Chilitos Scholarship, which is designed to help talented students with financial hardships launch their careers in music.

The occasion will also serve to present Chilitos' new book, *The Complete Guide to Connecting your Audio, Video, and MIDI Equipment*, published by Hal Leonard.

AGI provides its students with hands-on practice to take their training to the next level, and Chilitos has helped place students in jobs throughout the industry. AGI has implemented its web platform, AudioGraph Online, to reach more students, especially in Latin America, who are hungry for knowledge of the latest audio technologies.

In other news, AGI reached an agreement with the prestigious Mexican university Tecnológico de Monterrey, and its 32 campuses, to act as the U.S. abroad program for the university's Audio Music Production and Communication departments.


The AudioGraph International Team (from left) Engineer Cristian F. Perez, Producer Roy Sugihara, AGI Marketing Director Marina Valenzuela, Sound Designer Michael J. Teborek, AGI Founder Chilitos Valenzuela and behind the camera Garrett LaBrie.

As Chilitos said, "It was always my dream to create a place where musicians, engineers, producers, you name it, could come together under one roof where they could feel comfortable learning and having fun, which is not always the case in many places in this industry."

## Sphere Studios Relocates to L.A.


Francesco Cameli

After 13 years in London, Sphere Studios recently made the journey across the pond, closing up shop in the UK with plans to reopen in Los Angeles in 2015. The studio is currently under construction, with NonZero Architecture heading the design.

Why the move to L.A.? Studio founder Francesco Cameli says it was time for a change. "I wanted to work on music that was more in the genres that I enjoy listening to, and I wanted to be surrounded by some of the greatest studios on the planet and some of the greatest engineers in the business," Cameli says. "The English market is oversaturated with plastic pop, and organic recording has taken a real pounding, not to mention active rock music."


Francesco Cameli's setup at his temporary space in the former Devonshire Studios.

Though Sphere L.A. is still under construction, Cameli has been busy working out of the former Devonshire Studios in North Hollywood. "It's a great space that I'm sharing with mix engineer Craig Bauer, owner of Hinge Studios, formerly in Chicago," Cameli says. "I am building a mix suite for him at Sphere next to my tracking space, so we thought we'd move into Devonshire together."

Cameli says the transition to L.A. has been great. "I pretty much got off a plane and locked myself into a studio with Don Gilmore [producer/engineer, Linkin Park, Good Charlotte] working," Cameli says. "The first project I worked on was Korn, and I've been steadily working since. I recorded the new Flyleaf album, which is out soon, and did some work with Krewella as well. I've also started to develop a local band called Cartographer."

The move has been two years in the making, which gave Cameli time to prepare for the transition to happen as smoothly as possible. Sphere L.A. will be a bit bigger than its London location, and Cameli has brought over the entire backline, vintage mic and outboard collection that he had there, including Pultecs, Fairchilds, UREIs and U 47s, 67s, and Elam 251s.

Though Sphere's location has changed, Cameli's studio philosophy remains the same as it has been from the beginning. "I want to create a space with state-of-the-art equipment but in an environment where the gear melts away and leaves a comfortable vibe that allows clients to express themselves freely and perform to the best of their abilities," Cameli says. "L.A. is full of talent that converges here from the entire planet, so to me and my clients, [the city] offers the inspiration and the resources necessary to make great records. In that respect, Los Angeles is truly unique."—*Lori Kennedy*

## Eric Clapton Records 'The Breeze' JJ Cale Tribute at Ocean Way

Eric Clapton & Friends recently gathered in Ocean Way's historic Studio A to record *The Breeze: An Appreciation of JJ Cale*. The album, released on July 29, entered the *Billboard* charts at Number Two.

To honor Cale's legacy, a year after his passing, Clapton recorded performances with Mark Knopfler, John Mayer, Willie Nelson, Tom Petty, Derek Trucks, Don White, bassist Nathan East, drummer Jim Keltner and Cale's widow Christine Lakeland. Also included were many of Cale's fellow Oklahoma musicians. The album features 16 JJ Cale songs and is named for the 1972 single "Call Me the Breeze."

"When Eric heard of JJ's passing and the funeral they were planning down in his Escondido hometown," Keltner recalls, "he flew from London to L.A., got a car and drove all the way down the coast. That afternoon a very small gathering watched them put JJ down in the ground right under a magnolia tree. Eric put his own album on hold in order to do this tribute to JJ. And then he brought a group of Okies from Tulsa out to record, and put them up at the Four Seasons Hotel. It was wonderful and just a real classy thing to do."—*David Goggin*


Photo: David Goggin; Mr. Bonzai

Pictured in Ocean Way's historic Studio A are (foreground L-R) Nathan East, Christine Lakeland and Eric Clapton.

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# L.A.'s Unsung Studio Heroes

BY BARBARA SCHULTZ

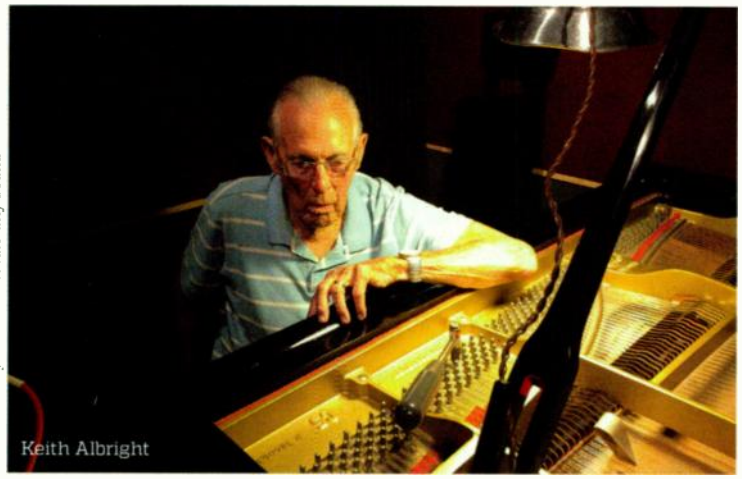
Photo: Courtesy Tom Weir/Studio City Sound

Keith Albright

Remember when engineers weren't even credited on albums? Labels haven't always acknowledged the essential role players on both sides of the glass. But at *Mix*, it's what we do: focus on individuals and technologies behind the scenes. With this in mind, for our L.A. issue we talked to a few of the people even further behind the music, whose names definitely don't end up in the liner notes (inasmuch as there are still liner notes).

## The Piano Tuner

At age 90, studio legend Keith Albright has been keeping L.A.'s pianos in tune for more than 60 years. Though he no longer rides his bicycle to gigs as he used to, he's as in-demand as ever.

Albright learned his craft in 1948 and then worked at Baldwin Pianos Company for the next 22 years. "In '74 I began tuning in as many as 60 recording studios, where I learned to tune under pressure, often with multiple downbeats in little time," he says. "I developed the solve-the-puzzle techniques to find the state of the piano—how to bring it to the best sound in temperament with all the interval beat comparisons, pure unisons, special touches for the type of music.

"Tuning has been a sport for me, a challenge of strategy, skill, speed and flexibility," Albright continues. "I love making the piano sound as beautiful as it can. I enjoy knowing the people in the studios—the sound engineers, and of course the studio managers and owners who have been so wonderful to me through the years and still are!"

Albright's client roster includes Capitol Studios, Westlake, EastWest, Entourage Studios, NRG, Studio City Sound and many more. "With Baldwin I tuned the concerts—Hollywood Bowl, et cetera," he says. "I brought the bike to the stage of the Academy Awards. I've worked for artists from Liberace to the Beatles, the Doors, Michael Jackson, *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno. A lot of people came and went. It's still a joy tuning for Stevie Wonder. I'm going to tune to 100, God willing!"

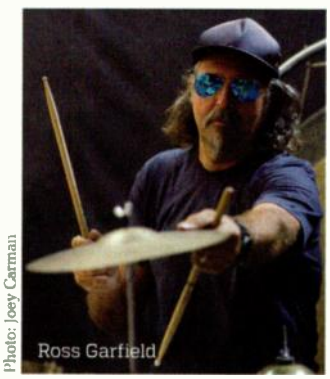
Photo: Joey Carman

Ross Garfield

## The Drum Doctor

Ross Garfield, known by his company name, The Drum Doctor, is the go-to repair and tuning expert for many of the city's top studios and players. A drummer since the age of seven, Garfield found his niche like a lot of engineers do: He moved to L.A. seeking a music career, but became indispensible as a technician instead.

"I started as a drum repair guy in a music shop," Garfield says. "Every time I'd do a repair, I would also tune the drums. One day, a drummer picked up a repair and went to his session, and I got a call: 'The drum sounded great when I brought it in, but I knocked it out of tune and I can't get it back to where it was. Can you come down and tune it for me?'"

The rest is history. Garfield has been tuning drums at Henson Studios since it was A&M; at press time he was on call to keep Coldplay's album sessions on track. Other studio clients include Ocean Way, Conway, Sunset Sound and Bruno Mars' personal facility. He's also proud to have worked with greats such as Jim Keltner for more than 30 years.

"I don't think anywhere has as much action as the L.A. scene," Garfield says. "We have probably the best, or some of the best, studios in the world, and we have amazing support services for people. And if I have a slow day I get out to the beach. That's my idea of fun."

## The Problem Solver

Studio managers have long told *Mix* that the assistants who rise to the top must be long on people skills and initiative. Anyone who wants to succeed in the music business has to want it enough to fill whatever role is needed, and still keep a sense of humor.

Design FX Audio's Chris Pitzel fits this description to a T. When Pitzel joined DFX as a delivery driver eight years ago, the rental/service/remote recording company had a large staff, including a full-time maintenance tech, and they were busy early till late. But like many businesses, the company has had to scale down, finding ways to stay lean but keep fielding equipment to music studios such as Record Plant, Lurssen Mastering and The Village, and picture studios like Warner Bros., Paramount and Fox.

"When things slowed down, we didn't have an in-house tech anymore, so I tried to do what I could," says Pitzel, who worked at Enterprise as an assistant before moving over to DFX. He quickly went from driving and cabling gear to doing most of the maintenance tech work on DFX's vast inventory. "I just kept, little by little, figuring things out," Pitzel says. "I've never had any formal training, so some stuff does get out of my league, and when it does, we'll send it out. But now I fix gear, I take orders, I deliver orders. It's a small operation, so everybody does everything."

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Ringo Starr onstage at the Clive Davis Theater at the Grammy Museum.

# The Grammy Museum

## Spend an Evening with a Legend

By Barbara Schultz // Photos courtesy of the Grammy Museum

"An Evening With..." at the Grammy Museum is one of the best bargains (typically priced at $25), and one of the most coveted tickets in Los Angeles. Museum members get first crack at seats in the 200-capacity theater to observe interviews and performances of artists from Fall Out Boy to Black Sabbath to Lang Lang. These special concerts are key parts of the museum's outreach programming, in its mission to educate the public about the history and impact of popular music.

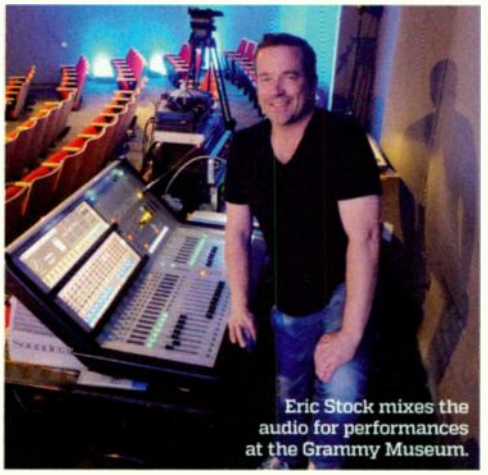
The museum began hosting performances and special events in its Clive Davis Theater nearly six years ago; the theater and P.A. were originally designed to accommodate intimate evenings with artists—talky, stripped down affairs that got to the heart of a performer's playing or songwriting craft. But Eric Stock, who's been mixing these shows since the theater opened, has seen the scope expand to include full-blown rock 'n' roll shows as well as acousti-fied sets by Foreigner, Imagine Dragons and other bands.

"The system was an acoustic setup originally," Stock says. "But we had Muse play here a couple years ago [at a private event for local radio station KROQ's listeners], and they brought a full semi of equipment into this little theater. We had to get a transformer the size of a Volkswagen Bug to step up the power.

"They also required some additional subs, so we borrowed a couple from JBL," Stock continues. "It opened my eyes to what we needed in here, so I ordered some to have permanently."

Today, the all-JBL P.A. system comprises four VRX932LAP line array boxes, plus eight VP-7212MDP powered loudspeakers, and VRX918SP and VTX-S28 subwoofers. Stock mixes on a 32-input Soundcraft VI1 board. The mic package includes more than a dozen AKG models. Stock, who also runs monitors, lighting, and audio and video recording gear from front-of-house, says Harman has been very generous to the museum.

"It's a lot of moving parts, so I'm not running any outboard gear during shows," says Stock, who was a performing musician and club sound mixer before joining the museum. "I record everything multitrack to Cubase and then I mix with my Waves SSL plug-ins and their Signature Series Eddie Kramer plug-ins. Within a day or two after every show, I'll mix the audio, edit the video together, and then we house it in our permanent archives here in the museum. People can call up any show that we've had here and watch it."


Eric Stock mixes the audio for performances at the Grammy Museum.

Stock also contributes audio to many of the special exhibits at the Museum, such as the current "Sounds of Laurel Canyon," featuring the music of singer/songwriters Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa, Jim Morrison and others; and the recent "Ringo: Peace and Love" exhibit, which chronicles the life and music of the legendary Beatles drummer, and offers drum lessons from the man himself.

"That was a huge one for me," says Stock. "I'm a drummer, too, and I got to go to his house and film him giving drum lessons. DW and Roland teamed up and made an electronic drum kit that looks like a full-blown acoustic kit, with little pads and a touchscreen computer, where you can select one of three lessons. Then Ringo appears and talks about his background and drumming, and does a simple groove, so you get to jam along with Ringo."

Whatever the project, Stock's biggest responsibility is to ensure that listeners enjoy their experience and take away some new insight, whether "remixing" a George Harrison song on individual headphones to learn how different beats change the feel of a song, witnessing a special performance a music legend like Johnny Mathis, or discovering a legend in the making like Gary Clark, Jr.

"There's no formula to this, because so many different acts come through here," says Stock. "One day it's Lady Gaga with a full band, and the next it's John Mellencamp by himself. My friends will say, 'Let's go see this show at the Hollywood Bowl,' but I'll say, 'No thanks. I'll just wait a few months and they'll show up at my work.'" ■

# THE BEST DOG & PONY SHOW IN TOWN

Dog & Pony Studios out of Las Vegas, NV recently upgraded their sound system to feature Yamaha's NUAGE Advanced Production System. As the premier recording studio in the entertainment capital of the world, Dog & Pony's resume features everything from MGM Resorts MLife TV to the recently released Elliot Smith documentary, "Heaven Adores You." With all that goes on in this studio, it's obvious that what happens here definitely doesn't stay here. We sat down with studio Owner/Producer John McClain to get his thoughts on the new system.

*"My favorite thing about Nuendo is how you can find multiple ways to solve the same problem. The competition hands you their DAW and says "Work within these predefined parameters." In contrast, Steinberg hands you Nuendo and says, "Work how you want and define the parameters for yourself."*

*"With Nuage, Yamaha has taken the next logical step to this approach and built a stellar control surface that adds to the ergonomics of Nuendo. Now everything is at your fingertips and you spend less time with a mouse and keyboard. I'm spending time mixing like I would on an analog console but with all the modern conveniences of a top flight DAW and control surface that interact seamlessly. Audio is more fun than ever!"*

— John McClain

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Brian Wilson (seated) in Ocean Way Studio A with senior staff engineer Wesley Seidman (left) and studio manager Robin Goodchild

# Brian Wilson and Friends at Ocean Way Studios

By Barbara Schultz // Photo: David Goggin/Mr. Bonzai

Between Brian Wilson and Ocean Way Studios, Hollywood, you've got a whole lot of history, and a lot of musical possibilities.

Wilson began his latest project—an upcoming album of solo performances and duets with famous guests—in the three-studio complex a year-and-a-half ago. Now, fans are waiting with baited breath to hear the tracks, which at press time were being mixed by Bob Clearmountain.

"When Brian finished that last Beach Boys record [*That's Why God Made the Radio*, 2012], he soon after began work on this one," says Ocean Way's senior staff engineer, Wesley Seidman, who recorded the new tracks. "Brian never stops writing. He'll come in with a vocal idea, a piano demo that he made on his Dictaphone at home or he will just sit at the piano in the live room, and quickly those ideas become a song."

Seidman captured the performances to Pro Tools in all three of the studios at Ocean Way (A, B and D), but the engineer says Wilson prefers to do live band tracking and orchestral sections in Studio B, a room that has also hosted sessions for award-winning albums by Green Day, Radiohead, and Eric Clapton with B.B. King: "It's just the sound and feel of the room itself, and the [custom 56-Input 8068/8088] Neve doesn't hurt," Seidman says. "He did almost all of the work on his solo records in there. But he also likes Studio A, where we cut a few tracks and is my favorite room for strings. We also cut a lot of the background vocals and guest vocals for the new album in D."

Though the final track list wasn't available at press time, Seidman reveals that guests who cut with Wilson for this upcoming album include musician/producer/label exec Don Was on bass; guitarist Dean Parks; drummers Jim Keltner and Kenny Aronoff; and in-demand vocalists such as Zooey Deschanel, country star Kacey Musgraves, Nate Ruess of Fun., and popular singer/songwriter Lana Del Rey.

Wilson's vocals were recorded in all three rooms with a Neumann U 47. In Studio A, his voice went through the modified Focusrite console to a Teletronix LA-2A. "In D, we would go through the remote Neve pre's into an [Universal Audio] 1176, and then toward the last third of the record, I purchased a modified API mic pre, which has amazing bandwidth, and sent the 47 through that, into an 1176. And this is all flat—Brian EQs himself by moving around the mic, which he does naturally. We also used a plethora of [UAD] reverb and delay plug-ins. This enabled us to automate the delay and reverb times for each section of the songs where desired. Brian and I both like the FX to be just right.

"It's always a pleasure to record such a talented and professional artist like Brian," Seidman continues. "He also is actually a very funny person. He's one of the few people able to make me laugh out loud on a regular basis."

One of the advantages of working in a studio with Ocean Way's history and reputation is the opportunity to audition new equipment, alongside the vintage. On Wilson's sessions, Seidman tried out a batch of brand-new Sanken microphones.

"Jim Pace brought us these super-high-fidelity mics—the Co-100Ks," says Seidman whose nine years and counting at Ocean Way were preceded by stints with Nathaniel Kunkel and Conway Studios. "We tried them on drum overheads, orchestra and horn rooms—they were really amazing. We also used them on a mandolin and acoustic lap steel. Another mic they gave us was the CU-55, which is my new favorite acoustic guitar and banjo mic. It really captures the instrument as it is. It complements the dynamics, so there was no need for a compressor. It's one of my future purchases for sure.

"Ocean Way is one of only a handful of studios left where you get the opportunity to try the latest things in a controlled environment," Seidman says. "I also think that musicians actually play differently when they're there. I've worked with a lot of these same players in other places and they're always amazing, but it's almost like they get into a different zone when recording in these rooms. There is something very unique about the way the rooms sound and feel at Ocean Way, to the point where I've had friends call me up and ask, 'Was this done at Ocean Way?' They can tell. They're getting some kind of overall picture of the rooms themselves and the way people play when they record in them." ■


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# On the Cover

By Tom Kenny

## EASTWEST STUDIOS, HOLLYWOOD

Photo: Brendan Dekora

The core team at EastWest Studios, from left: Candace Stewart, Lawrence Malchose, Rhys Moody, and Blake Rogers.

When Doug Rogers purchased one of the world's most storied recording facilities back in 2006, right in the heart of Hollywood, there was no doubt rampant speculation around L.A. about what it all meant. High-end and mid-level commercial facilities had been hit hard over the previous decade, many of them shuttering in the face of lower budgets and lower-cost competition. The strong had weathered the storm and adapted their business models. And now here comes a guy who had made his millions in software—not just software, but sophisticated, high-quality sampling and virtual instrument software, one of the very advances that allowed composers and engineers and producers to get high-quality sounds without stepping in a studio.

The studio is the famed Western Recorders at 6000 Sunset Boulevard, originally built in 1961 by Bill Putnam, then sold to Allen Sides in 1989 and becoming part of Ocean Way, before being renamed Cello when Rick Adams purchased it in 1999, and finally reopening in 2009 as EastWest Studios. The software company, of course, is EastWest Sounds, the world's leading purveyor of sampled sounds and virtual instruments. Nearly eight years later, both entities are thriving. As a studio, projects associated with EastWest have garnered 26 Grammy nominations over the past two years alone. As a software company, by the time you read this, the final installment of the flagship product, the Hollywood Orchestra Collection, will have been released.

"It's simply not possible to do what we did with the income from a recording studio," Rogers says. "Those funds have to come from a larger company, and fortunately the software company required state-of-the-art everything in order to produce superior products, so we could justify the investment on that basis. The Hollywood Orchestra Collection was the catalyst for wanting to purchase the studio, without which we would

# In 1973, at Watkins Glen, live sound went just a bit digital.



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Photo: Brendan Dekora

The legendary Studio 1, designed by Bill Putnam and left intact since 1961.

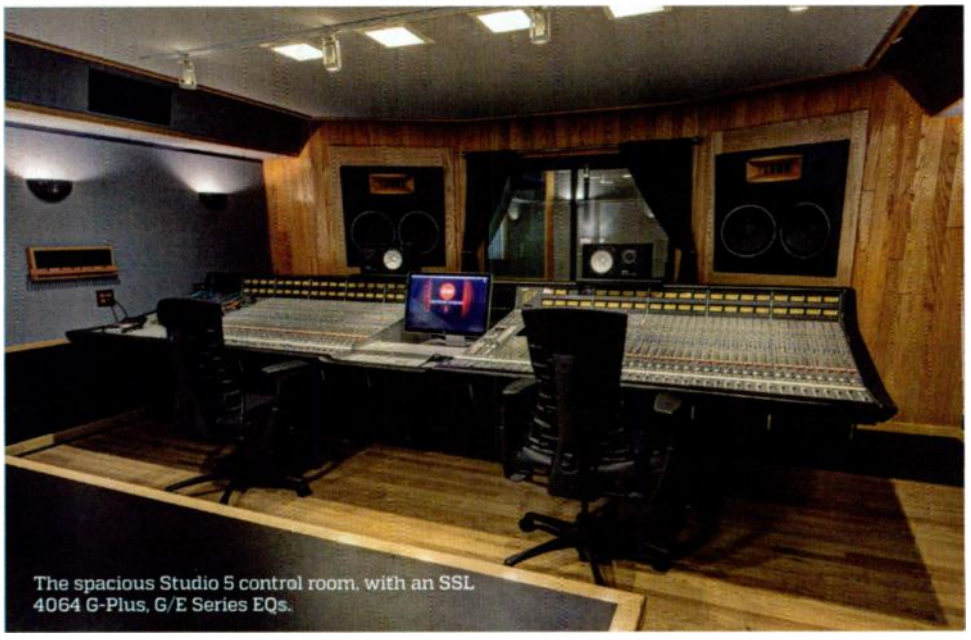


Photo: Brendan Dekora

The spacious Studio 5 control room, with an SSL 4064 G-Plus, G/E Series EQs.

never have been able to spend five years on the project. The software we have produced since purchasing the studios is vastly superior than our prior releases, and it's partly because of the great sounding rooms, the unlimited time we have available, and the unique vintage gear we use, so it's a good synergy."

The story of the makeover at EastWest has been told before, including in these pages. The short version: Rogers enlisted international designer Phillipe Starck to re-do all of the common areas, leaving the walls and studios completely untouched. "It already had the best-sounding rooms I had ever worked in," says Rogers, who owned studios in his native New Zealand before he started creating samples and moved to the States. "We never planned to change the actual recording spaces."

Studio 1, with its 80-channel Neve 8078, is the big room that has hosted Sinatra and countless Hollywood scoring sessions. Studio 2, with a custom RCA Neve 8028, became the Rock room of sorts and saw lots of Rick Rubin projects through the '90s. Studio 3, home to a rare Trident A Range, was host to classic Mamas & the Papas songs and, of course, Pet Sounds. Studio 5, built during the Ocean Way days primarily as a mix room, was scheduled for re-equipping from the beginning. It took awhile to find the right console, but the room was finished earlier this year, and now it's on this month's cover of *Mix*.

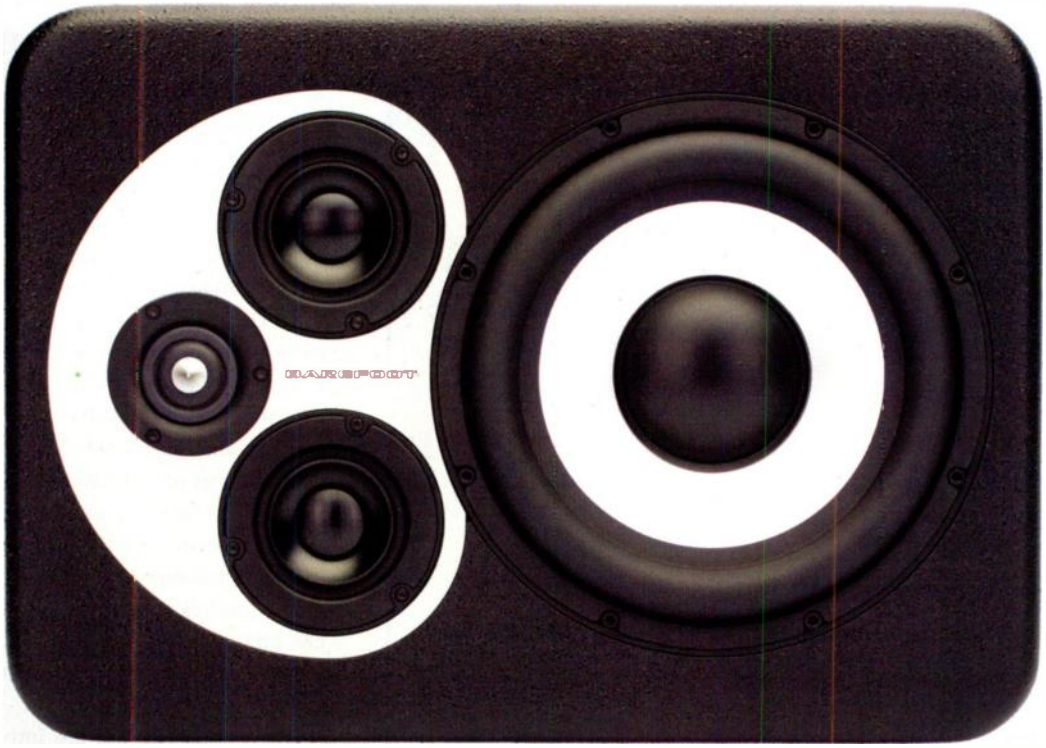
Soon after EastWest officially re-opened for business in 2009, Rogers hired Candace Stewart, a magnetic personality and long-time L.A. studio manager (she had previously managed Cello in the same space) to run the place. "When I returned in January 2010, I was already thinking about ways to be as competitive as possible," Stewart says. "As a booker, versatility has always been key for me, having what people want. If people want to track on a Neve then leave to mix on an SSL, I was determined to get an SSL and keep them in the building. Back in the OceanWay days, Scott Litt, the producer, had a Neve in the room. When it was Cello we had an SSL J Series. It only seemed fitting that since we have two Neves and a Trident A Range, we add an SSL to round things out. Doug had the exact same thing in mind."

The search for the right console actually took a couple of years, with Rogers and Stewart polling top producers and engineers in town to get their opinions. In April 2013, they hired Lawrence Malchose as chief engineer, and the first question they asked him was if he could have an SSL room in Studio 5 ready in 2014. He said, "Sure." They still didn't have the console model; the polling continued.

Malchose is one of those talented, jack-of-all-trades, largely self-taught and mentored engineer types. He's a musician and recording engineer who moved into tech. He worked for years at Music Grinder, both assisting and doing tech, and integrated three rooms including an SSL and a Neve 8108 from Conway. He helped wire up Studio 2 at Sunset Sound for a time, then served as assistant tech. He then moved on to be Senior Technician at Cello, then as Head Tech at Big 3 in St. Petersburg, Fla., and stints at Conway and The Village. When called by Rogers and Stewart, he was working for SSL. He came back to EastWest and started in on re-switching the Trident, waiting on the SSL for Studio 5.

"It was pretty much unanimous that we wanted an SSL 4000 G+ with both E and G EQs," Malchose says. "But finding the perfect board was

# BAREFOOT




# MICROMAIN45

no easy task! We were looking for a 'pedigreed' console, one with a long list of fantastic records associated with it. It turns out it was right in our back yard and belonged to none other than Rich Costey, who had been a resident in Studio 5 back when it had a 9000J in there. The console frame had been modified to accommodate a DAW monitor and keyboard in the center section, which is perfect for the modern workflow. To accommodate that, 16 channels had been pushed to a sidecar. We ended up having to split the desk into five pieces to get it in the room, so I ended up rebuilding the frame and the wiring to make it in to a proper 64-channel desk."

The console was purchased on December 5, 2013, and Malchose and team started in earnest the following month. Although the space was already mostly built out, the rear wall had to be demolished and rebuilt, air conditioning and power added, flooring, walls, ceiling, custom outboard racks, interface panels and a great deal of time experimenting with materials and design on the back wall to get the most out of the space sonically.

"It was very important to us to make sure the bottom could pump for our R&B clients and the range and imaging was stellar for our golden-ears clients," Malchose explains. "Fortunately, I had the help of Gonzalo 'Gonzo' Lopez to turn drawings into reality. It turns out he built the room for Ocean Way 20-some odd years ago, so he knew where all the skeletons were buried. We left the front wall alone, so we went to George Augsperger to custom design a speaker system to fit the room. They're slightly taller and thinner, with these JBL 18-inch subs. They sound fantastic in that space, and clients love the low end."

"One of the things that's so great about EastWest is that we appeal to all styles of music and are not typecast or working with any one single genre," Stewart says. "We work with big name artists like the Chili Peppers, Metallica, Justin Timberlake and Arianna Grande, as well as lots of indie artists like LP, Brother and Bones, Attica Riots, 5 Knives and Grizfolk. We also see a lot of hip hop artists/producers, Latin artists, film and TV dates in Studio 1—*Mad Men*, *Glee*, *American Horror Story*, *Eat Pray Love*, *Iron Man 2*. While we rely on outside bookings for the most part, we are all extremely proud to be associated with EastWest Sounds and the awesome libraries they create."

Impeccably maintained vintage gear, cutting-edge 64-bit virtual instruments, and some of the finest recording rooms in the world has proved a winning formula for EastWest, and the synergies are working out precisely as Rogers intended when he took the plunge and put up a reported $10 million for the studio makeover.

"To me, the sound is all that matters," Rogers says. "That's all that leaves our studios, whether it be for records or software. I always say to those mourning the loss of the former recording studio business, 'You can't swim against the tide of progress.'" Rogers says. "Computers changed everything, even the recording process. Studios are now full of computers and software, and of course a lot can be done at home with inexpensive recording equipment. We cater to that market with our software.

"But two things that are important in my view that distinguish facilities like EastWest Studios from home studios are (a) the home studio typically does not have great-sounding recording rooms, and acoustic instruments only sound good in a great-sounding environment, and (b) people tend to work alone at home, resulting in a lack of objectivity that often impacts the end result. Making music is a people business, and you need to surround yourself with pros who can tell you when something is great or it sucks. That's what we provide." ■

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# Classic Tracks:
## Los Angeles Edition

By Blair Jackson & Barbara Schultz

## "OHIO"
### Crosby, Still, Nash & Young (single, Atlantic, 1970)

It's a rare song that makes you want to start a revolution, and one of the most heart-breaking, powerful and intensely inspiring of the lot is Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's response to the Kent State killings: "Ohio."

In an era before the Internet or 24-hour news, "Ohio" was about as swift a reaction to current events as artists could make. After seeing photos of the tragedy (which took place May 4, 1970) in *Life* magazine, Neil Young wrote the lyrics and brought them to his bandmates, who were then in tour rehearsals.

"They were rehearsing during the day, and in the evening, I was working in Record Plant A with Stephen Stills on his solo album," recalls engineer Bill Halverson. "One day, management called, saying, 'It's going to be different tonight. They have a song they really need to record.' This was the 21st of May."



Halverson, who enjoyed working with the equipment he'd used as a staff engineer and then an independent at Wally Heider Studios, had rented a 3M M79 24-track machine from Heider, as well as several Shure 456 vocal mics and 547s for guitar amps. The band's road crew loaded in amps and instruments, and helped Halverson set up. Drummer Johny Barbata's kit and Calvin Samuels' bass were placed in a carpeted part of the main room, and all of the singers/guitarists and amplifiers were in a more live part of the room.

"The four of them were within a couple of feet of each other, and there was a lot of intensity," says Halverson. "There was probably a lot of leakage on the multitrack, but as long as everyone's playing the right notes, leakage can be your friend."

"Ohio" was recorded live, including those moving harmonies, David Crosby's chilling vocal ad-libs ("How many more?") and all of the guitar parts. The recording was complete in three or four takes.

Halverson and the band mixed the song that night on Record Plant's Quad-8 console, listening on the studio's custom Tom Hidley mains as well as a pair of Auratones. "I went back and listened before this interview," Halverson says. "That song still gives me goosebumps."

Realism, as well as brilliance, being the order of the day, the band proceeded to make a live B side, "Find the Cost of Freedom." Read a bonus Classic Track at mixonline.com.

## "LITTLE RED BOOK"
### Love (from the album *Love*, Elektra Records, 1966)

Led by magnetic frontman Arthur Lee, Love was one the first L.A. rock bands to cause a stir nationally in the wake of The Byrds' stunning success in 1965. The quintet—singer Lee, guitarists Johnny Echols and Bryan MacLean, bassist Ken Forssi and drummer Alban "Snoopy" Pfisterer—had only been playing local clubs for a few months when they were snapped up by Jac Holzman's Elektra Records and brought to Sunset Sound at the end of January 1966 to record their eponymous first album with Holzman, Elektra producer Mark Abramson, and the label's wunderkind engineer Bruce Botnick.

Though Lee was the principal songwriter, the album also contained a few cover tunes, including "Hey Joe" (pre-Hendrix) and the driving Burt Bacharach-Hal David song "Little Red Book," which had already been recorded by Manfred Mann for the 1965 film *What's New Pussycat?* The Mann version had none of the proto-punkish insistency—nor the "cool" factor—of Love's arrangement, which was the group's first charting single, reaching Number 52, setting the stage for their even bigger single from the summer of '66, "7 and 7 Is" (a precursor to their second LP, Da Capo). The *Love* album made it to Number 57.

Botnick recorded the track live at Sunset Sound's Studio One through the room's warm-sounding Alan Emig 14-input custom tube console, to an Ampex 300 3-track that had been converted to a 4-track, running at 15 ips. Monitoring was through Altec 604e loudspeakers. "In those days, I always used three mics on drums—one under the snare, one overhead and one kick," he says. For a vocal mic he often favored a Neumann U 47. He also used the studio's famous live chamber—containing two RCA 44s—for reverb. The original single version would have been mono; the album was available in both mono and stereo.

The engineer says he can't recall if Lee cut the vocals at the same time the band recorded the backing track, but suspects he probably did. The entire al-

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bum was tracked and mixed in just four days, with the best complete takes being used—typical in that era.

"I loved Arthur," says Botnick, who cut Love's first three albums. "He was really special. He was a really good poet. I had the good fortune to be with two in that period—him and Jim Morrison; guys who really were word men. In fact, Arthur told Jac Holzman about The Doors, and the Doors signed [with Elektra] because they had Arthur and Paul Butterfield."


## "LOW RIDER"

### WAR (from the album *Why Can't We Be Friends?*, (United Artists Records, 1975)

In the great tradition established from the beginning of rock 'n' roll, WAR's "Low Rider" is a song about a car—one of the coolest, most groove-y, sultry car songs ever, in fact. And the groove at the core of it developed from the way WAR worked in the studio with their longtime engineer, Chris Huston.

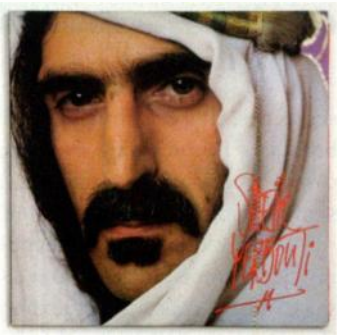
"We were always recording," says Huston, who began working with WAR and their producer Jerry Goldstein in the late '60s. "We'd record sometimes 10 hours a night, going through four, five or six reels of 24-track tape, regularly. They'd jam for hours, and every night there could be three or four cassettes full of rough mixes—not songs, but jams—and each one would get a catalog number, and everyone would get a copy, including me.

"Later, sometimes years later, someone would get an idea for a song, and we'd find the appropriate 24-track tape and the section they wanted. We'd find a section that could be turned into an intro, and if there was a bit we could make into the bridge or chorus, we'd use it. That's how 'Low Rider' was written, mostly by Charles Miller, who sang on the actual record, but everyone would contribute."

"Low Rider" was made in Studio B of Sound City, as Fleetwood Mac had booked Studio A. "It was a small room but we were used to it," Huston recalls. "Everybody sang, so we'd have up to 36 microphones active in the room throughout a session."

In addition to the jam-based groove, and Miller's growling vocal, it's the instrumentation on "Low Rider" that's so memorable: the beat of Papa Dee's cowbell (which was overdubbed and edited for the intro), the funky percussion, the thick, doubled duet of harmonica and sax.

"The conga player also had tablas, bongos, gongs, cymbals and needed several vocal mics available," Huston says. "Lonnie Jordan would also have several vocal mics because he'd have a regular piano, a Hammond



organ, Moog synthesizers, electric piano and Clavinet, and I'd never know where he was going to be."

In Sound City, Huston usually recorded to Ampex 24-track machines. "I only ever used one model of limiter, and that was the UREI 1176," he says. "The only things I used them on were vocals and bass. I never used limiting or compression on anything else."

Huston favored AKG instrument mics at that time, and Neumann U 87s for vocals. Everything usually went directly through the pre's in the studio's Neve board.

"Of all the groups I've worked with, WAR had such a natural creativity," says Huston. "Even when they were just young guys from the Long Beach/Signal Hill area and had no idea what the studio was about, they were just incredible."

## "DANCIN' FOOL"

### Frank Zappa (from the album *Sheik Yerbouti*, Zappa Records, 1979)

The disco era that brought us *Saturday Night Fever*, spoons on chains, and satin everything spawned an unintentional subgenre: "disco sucks" music. Rockers laughed and cheered for Steve Dahl's parody of Rod Stewart's "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" ("Do You Think I'm Disco?" 1979), and for that brilliant iconoclast Frank Zappa's first bonafide hit, the Number 45 song "Dancin' Fool."

"Fool" debuted in the artist's live set in 1975 and was first captured as a concert recording, but the song didn't appear on record until he reworked it in The Village Recorder with the help of his then engineer, Joe Chiccarelli.

"The live basic tracks were recorded by Pete Henderson, who produced *Breakfast in America* for Supertramp—I think with the Record Plant Remote truck," Chiccarelli recalls. "Frank felt at the time that his band played great live, so he loved the feel of the drum tracks, but 80 to 90 percent of the work, including the mix, was done at The Village, mostly in Studio A."

Numerous meticulous overdubs and retakes were recorded—many of them grouped—all to one 24-track Ampex 1200 tape machine. "Guitar solos were definitely redone, percussion, vocals—Frank always sounded great to me on the Neumann M 49, and everything went through the preamps in the Harrison 3232 console. Frank was a big fan of these old EMT PDM 156 limiters, and we used those a lot on guitar, drums and audience tracks. We also used Inovonics 201 limiters on vocals and bass."

Elements added at The Village include the rock guitar intro; vocal


screeches, choruses and laughter; and percussion by Ed Mann and keyboardists Tommy Mars and Peter Wolf. A lot of the humor in the track comes from those overdubs—Zappa's broad chorused vocals, spacey synths, and cartoony xylophone runs.

"Tommy did a lot of vocoder background vocals; I think there might be some vocoder mixed in the choruses, as well," Chiccarelli says. "There was a ton of experimentation with synths: Tommy had the Oberheim OB-X, Prophet 5, some Moog stuff. Also, Frank was the first person I knew to bring racks of outboard gear into the studio for his guitar rig. There were Harmonizers and MXR Flangers. He'd have a stereo amp set up for a clean guitar sound and a couple for a dirty guitar sound. What I really learned from Frank is how much he liked to push the limits in the studio. His willingness to take chances, be irreverent and fearless, certainly made a lasting impression on me."

## "HELP ME"

### Joni Mitchell (from the album *Court and Spark*, Asylum, 1974)

In every generation, young music and poetry lovers will "discover" the wonder of Joni Mitchell; her magnificent voice, artistic courage, and brilliant songwriting are as inspiring now as ever. And everyone who knows her work has a favorite album, but *Court and Spark* is exceptional among her greatest records in at least one respect: It has Mitchell's one Top 10 pop hit, "Help Me."

This moving song about the inner conflict between love and "freedom" also marks one of the first appearances of the jazz-pop group Tom Scott's L.A. Express on Mitchell's recordings. Comprising the original lineup of sax player Scott, bassist Max Bennett, drummer/percussionist John Guerin, guitarist Larry Carlton and keyboardist Joe Sample, the L.A. Express brought a feel that helped Mitchell realize the jazz-folk style she envisioned for her sixth album.

Working at A&M Studios in 1973, the artist and her co-producer/engineer the late Henry Lewy were assisted by a young staff engineer named Ellis Sorkin. "She always knew what she wanted to do, and how to do it. Her perfectionism amazed me," Sorkin says.

"What's memorable about those sessions, and about 'Help Me' in particular, is Joni was one of the innovators as far as layering vocals. Henry was constantly editing for her—all with a razor blade of course."

The tape machines in A&M at that time were Scully 2-tracks, and *Court and Spark* was recorded in A&M's A, B and C rooms, with most of Mitchell's vocals being cut in C to a Shure SM7 via the API console and a UREI 1176 LN Blueface compressor/limiter.

"We also did a lot of piano overdubs in C," Sorkin recalls. "We had a 1900s Steinway in there that she loved to use. But most everything else was recorded live—we always had a full rhythm section going, with all the amps in the main room, and Joni would sing a scratch vocal in a booth.

"Joni was also an early adopter of taking more time to record and mix," Sorkin continues. "We took maybe two or three times as long as most people to mix a song, which means at that time we spent six to eight hours to get a song where she had it in her head. You would hear the song emerge in layers—she had so much talent, she could get exactly where she wanted it. Henry and I were just the button pushers for her, to a degree. She painted those mixes stroke by stroke."

## "EAT IT"

### Weird Al Yankovic (from the album *"Weird Al" Yankovic in 3D*, 1984, Rock 'n Roll/Scotti Bros. Records)

It was clear from his very first single—"My Bologna," a parody of The Knack's "My Sharona"—that Weird Al Yankovic could deliver the goods. He's built an incredibly lucrative career cleverly sending up pop songs


of every style—who can forget "Another One Rides the Bus," "Addicted to Spuds," "Girls Just Want to Have Lunch," "I Want a New Duck," "I Love Rocky Road," "The Saga Begins" (a *Star Wars* parody set to "American Pie"), or this epic Michael Jackson lampoon, "Eat It" (not to be confused with his later MJ masterpiece, "Fat").

"Eat It'" was cut during sessions for Yankovic's second album, *"Weird Al" Yankovic in 3D*, recorded at what was then the Scotti Bros.' Santa Monica Sound Recorders studio in the fall of 1983, released in the winter of 1984. Producing, as he had on the first Yankovic album, was none other than rock guitarist Rick Derringer, who also played guitar on the album. The parodist's regular band—guitarist Jim West, bassist Steve Jay and drummer Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz—also appeared on the album, as did others.

Engineering was Tony Papa, who says, "Usually we tracked it live, with the guitar in a room away from the drums and bass. We always tried to get a great drum and bass take as our foundation. At that point we'd start layering on top of that. Then, Al would come in and we'd do a whole series of vocal sessions. But he was always there from the beginning to the end."

The studio boasted a Neve 8108 in the control room, and Papa says Yankovic's vocal chain consisted of "a [Sony] C-12 tube mic—I think we used that on every record—and a little bit of reverb. We had a Pultec EQ, which gave him a little more bottom than he would have had normally, and the limiter would have been an 1176.

Asked about whether they tried to replicate the sound of the songs they parodied, Papa says, "Sure. Everybody would get a copy of whatever we were doing as a tribute or parody, or whatever you want to call it, and they'd listen to their part and come in very prepared. I would listen to the song really closely, as well, for reverb and little audio things, and then our mentality was, "Let's see if we can beat this!" Not copy it, beat it. Sometimes you did, sometimes you didn't," he laughs.

The song made it to Number 12 on the singles chart and won a Grammy in 1985.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# "LATE FOR THE SKY"

## Jackson Browne (from the album *Late for the Sky*, Asylum Records, 1974)

Has there ever been a more astute and moving evocation of the distance and weirdness that sometimes dooms a relationship than "Late for the Sky," title song of the masterful album of the same name by the subject of this month's *Mix* Interview (see page 60).

"For [that album]," Browne told Bud Scoppa in 2010, "I had the songs pretty much written. It was the first time I'd sat down and written songs with the information of how I was going to record them. I went to Asylum and got $10,000 to rehearse the band for a month before we went in the studio... I just wanted the record to be like a band, and there were only the five people playing on the record. We rehearsed everything in a room in the house I grew up in, which my grandfather had built. [It] had stained glass windows, a pipe organ and a choir loft, high ceilings... It might have been one reason the songs sound kind of church-y... With 'Late for the Sky,' I had this one phrase—'late for the sky'—and I wrote that whole song in order to say that one phrase at the end of it.


The Top 20 album, which also contains the classics "Fountain of Sorrow," "Before the Deluge" and "For a Dancer," was recorded in mid-1974, primarily at Elektra Sound Recorders in L.A., with Al Schmitt engineering and co-producing with Browne. That track is spare in its instrumentation—just Browne's piano, David Lindley's guitar, Jai Winding's organ, Doug Haywood on bass and Larry Zack on drums. It was cut to 3M 16-track in Studio A at Elektra, which had a 24-in, 16-out De Medio console (Studio B, where some work was also done, had a Sound Techniques board), JBL monitors and a Yamaha grand piano.

"Jackson played and sang live with the band for almost everything," Schmitt remembers, "and it went very smoothly. That whole album was done in 30 days—30 days straight without a day off. We mixed it at Hollywood Sound on the De Medio console there.

"One of the things I remember most is that every night when we'd finish, Jackson and I would get in the car and drive up to Mulholland [Drive] overlooking the Valley, and we'd sit and discuss what we'd do the next day. It was very cool. That album is one of the highlights of my career. It's a very important album for me making it, as I know it was for a lot of people who listened to it."

*Continued on p. 79*

# THE ROXY THEATRE

## Legendary Live Music Venue Undergoes Audio Upgrade

By Matt Gallagher

Photo: Joel Flint

The Roxy Theatre's FOH engineer Donovan Haney (left) and production manager Dann Saxton

The Roxy Theatre immediately established itself as a cultural touchstone on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood—already home to other historically important and vibrant clubs such as the Whisky A Go-Go—when it opened as a music venue on September 20, 1973, with Neil Young as the headliner. The Roxy's original partnership comprised music business veterans Elmer Valentine, Lou Adler, David Geffen, Elliot Roberts and Peter Asher, who launched the club by presenting such artists as Linda Ronstadt, Frank Zappa and Genesis during its first year. In the years and decades since, The Roxy has hosted the likes of Bruce Springsteen, X, David Bowie, Warren Zevon, Van Morrison, Billy Joel, Nirvana, Motley Crüe, Guns N' Roses, Joan Jett, Sex Pistols, Jay-Z, Foo Fighters, and Arcade Fire. The venue remains in the Adler family today, owned by Lou Adler and his son, Nic Adler.

"I think that it's great that the club is family owned," says Donovan Haney, The Roxy Theatre's head FOH engineer, who has worked there for three years. "The Sunset Strip is one of the last places where second-generation club owners—third generation in the case of The Whisky—are still passionate about the clubs and business that their family started."

"Working closely with the Adler family—Lou, Nic and Cisco—on numerous projects has opened my eyes to how impressive longevity really is in the music venue business," says Dann Saxton, The Roxy Theatre's production manager. "To have done everything in-house for 40 years is incredible. The Roxy isn't just a bar and a stage; it's a trendsetter and a safe place for artists to introduce their vision to the music industry. There's an integrity and 'vibe' that the Adler family has kept alive here, and as a manager of the club I've adopted that vibe, and our staff helps convey that to the artists and patrons."

Saxton says that The Roxy presents all types of music. "We're known for rock 'n' roll for sure, but we have music of all kinds: folk, R&B, pop acts, comedians, hip-hop, punk shows, hardcore shows, etc.," he says. "We used to have many local shows [but] recently we've refocused our booking and most shows are national acts and we throw on local openers.

"There's a magic about this place that you can feel walking through the hall backstage," adds Saxton, who joined the staff in February 2008. "It's in a building that was built in the 1920s. Here's a story: Van Halen rehearsed at The Roxy for two months in 2011. They loaded in every other day in the mornings, and they would go through songs for a few hours onstage. David Lee Roth and I became close, and one day he told me that when Bob Marley was playing The Roxy in 1976, Van Halen was outside handing out flyers to their show! Then one day I was talking to Rivers Cuomo—Weezer was playing The Roxy in 2012—and I told him that story. Rivers went on to tell me that when Van Halen was playing in the late '80s, Weezer had just moved to L.A. and was outside handing out flyers for their shows. It just shows you how the music scene in L.A. continues to feed itself—the cycle of the Sunset Strip. I wonder who was handing out flyers at that Weezer show!"

Haney cites The Roxy's longstanding reputation for its great sound as an equally important part of its status as an iconic Hollywood club. "I was a touring engineer for 10 years prior to settling down at The Roxy, and when I toured, The Roxy was one of my favorite rooms to mix in," says Haney. "It was small, you could get the P.A. loud and it sounded good. Mixing in the Roxy is an honor. I felt that way the first time I walked in the room and I feel that way every time I step behind the console. Since the room is so small it can bring little challenges to the table depending on the dynamics of the band, so the job is far from stale."

However, in 2013, The Roxy's staff realized that it was time to finally address some long-needed upgrades to the club's audio and lighting infrastructure. Management committed to closing the venue in January and February 2014 to install a new LED/digital lighting

*Continued on p. 44*

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# THE WHISKY A-GO-GO

## 50 Years of Rock and More, and Still Counting

The Whisky A Go-Go opened its doors on the emerging Sunset Strip in 1964 just as the '60s and counterculture rebellion were taking flight and in the ensuing years hosted many of the era's most groundbreaking artists, including The Doors, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Led Zeppelin. In November 2006 the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum honored the Whisky A Go-Go as an historic rock 'n' roll landmark.

Photo courtesy of Luis Cardenas

The Whisky-A-Go-Go's front-of-house engineer Leonard Contreras (at left, holding iPad) and production manager Luis Cardenas.

Today the Whisky A Go-Go remains one of the top music venues in Los Angeles. In late September, it hosted numerous bands for the 2014 Sunset Strip Music Festival, including Jane's Addiction, Empire of the Sun, Kaiser Chiefs, Mayer Hawthorne and L.A. Guns. On September 26, the Whisky hosted Slash featuring Myles Kennedy and The Conspirators as Slash and his band toured the Sunset Strip, also visiting The Roxy Theatre and The Troubadour. Rumor has it that Motley Crüe will conclude its Final Tour by playing their last-ever show at The Whisky.

"After 50 years we are still going strong," says The Whisky's production manager, Luis Cardenas. "We showcase all types of music but mostly we are a rock venue and we cater to all national and local bands. The only change that's happened during my time here is going from all analog to digital, which was a much needed change." Cardenas says today's L.A. music scene is "tough from a musicians point of view. There is a lot of competition and a ton of places [presenting] live bands. The scene is alive and well; on any given weekend you can find all sorts of musical styles. Don't forget that Downtown L.A. is not that far from Hollywood and also has a lot of live venues."

The venue currently has Behringer X32 consoles at FOH and monitors. "A fellow sound engineer by the name of Jerry Lopez bought the console and loaned it to me to use at the club," says FOH engineer Leonard Contreras, who has worked at The Whisky as well as on the road for 18 years. "I was blown away about how easy and versatile the X32 is. We now have full support from the company thanks to Joe Sanborn from the Music Group." The Whisky's P.A. system comprises Electro-Voice Xi Series full-range loudspeakers with MTL-4 subs, powered by EV TG5 and TG7 amplifiers. "In choosing a P.A. back in 2009, we [consulted] Dave Brown from Quantum Sales & Technology," Contreras says. "We came in and shot the room for the frequency response to find the best match for the room." The mic package includes Shure, AKG, Audix, and Sennheiser. — *Matt Gallagher*

# THE WILTERN THEATRE

## Landmark Art Deco Building Houses Premier Live Nation Venue

The iconic Wiltern Theatre has stood at the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Western Avenue in Los Angeles' Koreatown district since 1931, when it opened as a vaudeville and movie theater with a large pipe organ, and also housing a 12-story office building. The Wiltern suffered neglect in the 1960s and 1970s and was targeted for demolition in 1979, when the Los Angeles Conservancy worked to save the building as an important part of Los Angeles' heritage, and convinced local land developers to purchase and restore the property. It reopened in May 1985.

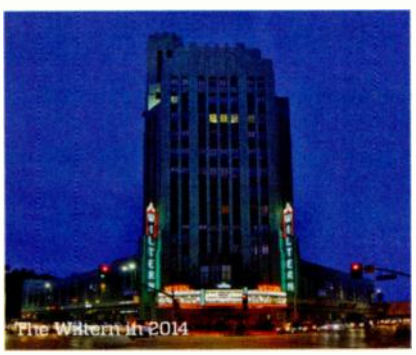

Photo: Paul Jonason

The Wiltern in 2014

"Live Nation took over [The Wiltern] with its precursor company SFX in 2000, so they spearheaded the renovation and have been running the building ever since," says Reid Bartlett of Live Nation, who is the Wiltern Theatre's production manager and has worked there since 1990. "In 2002 the building underwent a renovation that took all of the seats off of the main floor downstairs and replaced them with a series of leveled tiers that we can bring seats into for those events that require seats. Probably about 85 percent of our shows are performed with a standing audience, and that's where our capacity of 2,300 comes from. There are 1,300 on the main floor—standing, general admission usually—and we have 1,000 upstairs in the fixed seats up in the balcony.

"We provide a place for all different types of music," Bartlett says. "This particular week [in September] we've done Limp Bizkit, Old Crow Medicine Show, SAMHAIN, Rise Against, and two days of a Tyler Perry musical play. For us it's pretty busy when we physically go from a seated show or one configuration one day to a totally different standing configuration."

Rich Lidge and Tig Moore are the two lead audio engineers at The Wiltern. The venue's main P.A. system is a JBL VerTec line array with Version 5 processing (16x VT4889 flown 8 per side and 8x CSR82L dual 18-inch subwoofers powered by 16x Crown Audio I-Tech 12000HD amplifiers). Front-of-house provides Yamaha PM4000-48 and 32-channel Midas Venice analog consoles, and for effects, BSS, dbx, TC Electronic and Yamaha outboard units. A monitor system is available for rent from Bartlett's sound company, Flag Systems, and includes a Yamaha PM4000M analog console and Flag Systems' proprietary wedges, sidefills and drum fills. "For the most part we have kept the analog boards to make it easier for a guest engineer to step up and just go," Bartlett says. "And probably about 25 percent of the groups that are touring now are carrying their own consoles."—*Matt Gallagher*

*Continued from p. 40*

system, and bring in Rat Sound Systems and company president Dave Rat to evaluate, repair and renew the venue's audio system and components.

"Once I took the house gig [in 2011] I realized that the amp room needed a lot of work and processing was less than desirable, but unfortunately the budget wasn't there to replace everything," Haney recalls. "Toward the end of 2013 we got word that the P.A. would be a major part of renovations but there would be a budget. I started talking with Dave and Paul [Freudenberg, Rat Sound general manager] in January, giving them the specs of everything we had in the room so we could work within a budget and get the most out of it. There was a lot to go through as well; you can imagine the club had accumulated a lot of gear over the years and transitioning to a digital environment from an analog one also left us with a large surplus of gear. Rat really worked closely with us to recycle gear back into the club where we could and sell the remainder of the gear so we could put that money back into the club. Dave and Paul definitely seemed to go out of their way to see what we wanted in the club and brought everything up for discussion, which was incredibly cool."

Dave Rat says his company's approach involved analyzing and revitalizing The Roxy's legacy P.A. gear. "We found that some of the gear was mismatched from repairs over the years," he says. "The mains system was in pretty good physical condition, but electrically and acoustically it needed a good bit of work. There was a mish-mash of various amplifiers. The wiring had quite a few issues."

Rat Sound Systems took care of the mains system by fully testing all of its components, replacing the ones that were blown or the wrong type, and repairing problematic wiring issues. "Meanwhile, we sent a truck from Rat and picked up all the amplifiers, monitor wedges, 18-inch speakers and outboard gear," Dave Rat says. "Back at Rat we tested and sorted the gear into piles of working, need to fix and stuff to sell.

"Probably the biggest project was the monitor system," Rat continues. "We decided to do a rebuild of the Clair 12AM wedges. Once all of the original loudspeakers and wiring was repaired or replaced and tested, we pounded out the grilles, put on some fresh paint and moved on to amplifiers. We cleaned, tested and repaired all the existing amps, and by using all the amps from both the main and monitor system we were able to set up four matched high-power bi-amp mixes, four medium power bi-amp mixes, a few subwoofer mixes and a high power mix for the pair of EAW MicroWedge MW15 monitors we added, as well as power for the dual 18-inch Rat Drum Sub." Rat also added five fully processed Powersoft M50 amps to power the main system and a Powersoft K10 amp to power the four dual 18-inch cabinets under the stage.

Rat also specified two Avid Venue Profile consoles for monitors and front-of-house. Saxton says, "It was time to bring in digital boards that were user friendly for our visiting engineers. With national acts, almost every headliner will have their own FOH engineer. We decided not to bring in a board that required us to give the engineers a tutorial at load-in. Venue Profiles are very common and most engineers have used them before—and the room sounds great."

"Personally I feel that the Avid Profile is a no brainer for the venue," Haney adds. "Even if someone prefers another console they usually are still proficient in the Avid Venue environment. If they aren't familiar it's nothing a 10-minute crash course can't handle."

"Finally, there were a few areas that had some sound coverage issues," Rat says. "One area on each side of stage under the P.A. hangs as well as an area in the center just in front of the stage, to which we added some EAW full-range speakers to cover." ■

# MCCABE'S GUITAR SHOP

## An Intimate Space for Quieter Acoustic

Sound engineer Wayne Griffith mixes a concert inside McCabe's mixing booth.

Photo: Kenneth Scott

McCabe's Guitar Shop on Pico Blvd. in Santa Monica, located two blocks west of the Santa Monica Freeway's Centinela Avenue off-ramp, is first and foremost a musical instrument store that opened in 1958 and specializes in acoustic and folk music instruments, offering sales, rentals, repairs, private lessons and classes. Since 1969, McCabe's has presented weekend concerts in a back room with an 8-foot-deep stage, a mixing station built into one wall, folding chairs, and walls that are adorned with stringed instruments.

The shop showcases the practitioners of folk and acoustic music, as well as performers who are interested in putting on a special acoustic or stripped-down show (think *MTV Unplugged*), from local and up-and-coming acts to internationally known artists. A few of the more well known artists who have graced McCabe's stage include Beck, Memphis Slim, Tom Waits, Vince Gill, Jackson Browne and Emmylou Harris.

"It's a listening room," explains audio engineer Wayne Griffith, who has worked at McCabe's on a part-time basis for 42 years; his fellow audio engineer, Alan Kanter, has worked there part-time for 44 years. "We always thought of it like the show that would happen in your living room at a party, or something like that. That's the feel we've always gone for. No alcohol is served. Because of that there isn't the revenue [from drink sales] so the concerts have always run where it's hopeful that they break even, but they've always kind of been written off as publicity for the guitar shop."

McCabe's P.A. system is powered by a QSC PLX1804 power amplifier and comprises two JBL SR4738 three-way speakers with 18-inch woofers, with two JBL SR4722 speakers flown above the stage for monitoring, plus one JBL SRX712M floor monitor. The console is a hybrid Midas VeniceF32, and outboard processing includes six channels of dbx 166 limiting and a BSS FCS 966 graphic equalizer. Microphones include Shure Beta 57s, Beta 58s, SM57s, and two Neumann KMS 105 condensers for vocals, and the Studio Projects C4 small diaphragm condensers for acoustic guitars.

Griffith reflects that even though today L.A. offers a greater number of venues for experiencing musical styles long found at McCabe's, "I would still like to think that it's different at McCabe's. When Los Lobos played McCabe's they played a completely acoustic Norteño show—and that was one of the best shows I've ever seen there. It's fun when you can get the performers to do something different, because the people at McCabe's are used to seeing something different, something acoustic."—*Matt Gallagher* ■

# THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL

## A Unique Blend of Natural Acoustics and Amplified Sound

By Matt Hurwitz

Photo Courtesy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

The Hollywood Bowl, that iconic Los Angeles venue so named for the landscape it occupies, not the shell covering its stage, hosted its first classical music concerts in 1922. At the time of its opening, the venue's natural acoustics were considered perfect as is. The trademark shell, with concentric staggered rings of reflective material, first appeared in 1928 to help boost the natural sound. Amplification arrived eight years later, with a system driven by 500-watt amplifiers from Bell Laboratories, according to The Los Angeles Times.

A variety of systems have been in place over the years, determined and defined largely by an ever-growing variety of music genres. Famed promoter Bob Eubanks noted that the contract rider for his first presentation of The Beatles at the Bowl in 1964 required only "an adequate sound system." Their arrival, along with the many rock acts that followed, immediately rendered whatever was considered adequate at the time no longer so.

While the physical Bowl was renovated in 2003, including replacement of its shell structure with one 30 percent larger, the sound system was given a full makeover a decade later, just prior to the 2013 season, in what its hosts consider the ultimate supplement to what nature originally provided.

On an afternoon's visit, while the Los Angeles Philharmonic rehearses, principal sound designer Fred Vogler, who has been mixing at the Bowl for 12 years, briefly mutes the audio system from his front-of-house position two-fifths of the way up from the stage. "When we turn off the P.A., you get a sense that there's an ensemble playing, but you don't get a sense of the delicacies and all of the intricate melodies and harmonies that are important to the experience," he says. "Our objective is to make the orchestral experience as acoustic and natural-sounding as possible. And by doing so, we

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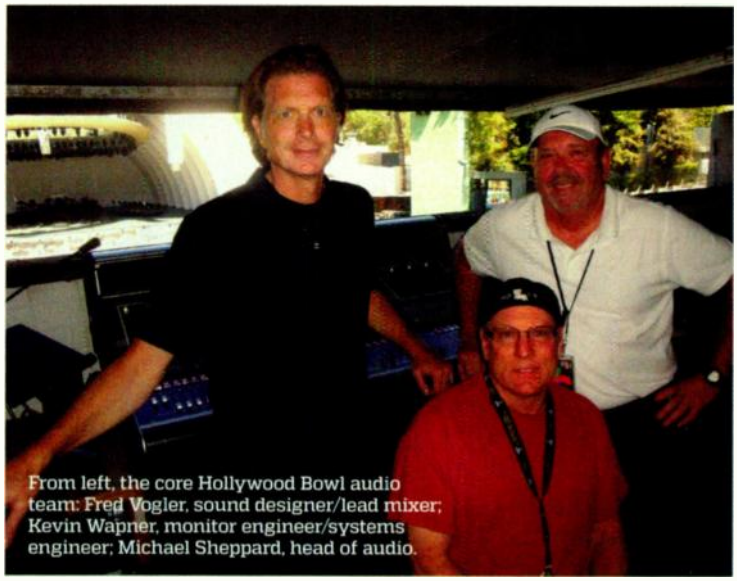

From left, the core Hollywood Bowl audio team: Fred Vogler, sound designer/lead mixer; Kevin Wapner, monitor engineer/systems engineer; Michael Sheppard, head of audio.

Photo: Matt Hurwitz

can make the sound bigger, broader and fuller."

The venue still, of course, hosts classical, pops and rock shows—even combinations thereof, such as a recent show featuring Elvis Costello and the L.A. Phil. But it is the classical audience for whom even the slightest detail must be reproduced accurately. "They're a discerning audience," Vogler notes. "They are accustomed to a certain sound quality at the concert hall and on recordings. They expect the violins to sound like violins, and the woodwinds to have a certain presence and color to them. If the timbre or positioning isn't right, these people notice."

The 2004 sound system upgrade, designed in part by the Bowl's monitor engineer and systems engineer, Kevin Wapner, was complete, replacing everything from the mixing console and loudspeakers to infrastructure and wiring. Wiring runs from both the stage to the amp room, as well as to the mixing position, were replaced or upgraded, and cable lengths were shortened to reduce impedance. "Reducing the lengths made a huge difference," Vogler says. "Plus, it's an outdoor venue, and some of the lines were 10 or 20 years old. Because of the environmental factors, they are not as reliable after more than 5 or 10 years."

At FOH, the team replaced its Yamaha PM1D digital mixer with a DiGiCo SD7, connected throughout the venue via a Group One Ltd. Opticore LX4 Optical Digital Multicore Network System. "We wanted something that was quick and that had high resolution, with up to 96k in and out," Vogler says. "We can readily arrange the elements with the assignable control surface and cater the surface to whatever the show's needs are, whether it's pops or rock."

A recent performance by Marcus Miller contained elements of pop, along with a jazz element toward the front of the stage and orchestral in the rear. "With plenty of soloists coming and going, it was nice to be able to move stuff around, as needed, without hunting and moving around the console too much," Vogler says. "That type of board is invaluable for this kind of setup."

The venue's loudspeaker array comprises L-Acoustics components, the company working alongside the Bowl team to create a cohesive system. The main left-right arrays feature 16 K1 enclosures per side, with four K1-SB extensions and four KARA units below those.

"One of the big advantages of the K1 system is that they're so prevalent as a touring rig," notes Michael Sheppard, the Bowl's head of audio. "Large tours come in here and see them and go, 'Oh. you've got a K1. I can just send mine on to the next venue.' They don't have to unload theirs; plus, they're familiar with the K1 and know how it performs. So they already have a good handle on how their mix is going to be that night."

The center fills are made up of eight KARAs, which also feature in one of two front-fill options the Bowl utilizes. "We'll have those for our louder shows, ones that require a little more amplification across the front," Vogler explains. "And then for a quiet show, such as an orchestral concert, we'll use L-Acoustics 5XTs. They have a low profile, but they give enough fidelity for the people sitting closest to the stage, and still allow them to see over them."

The subwoofers, on either side, are sets of eight L-Acoustics SB28s, with four ARCS WIDE, which bring the powerful response. "When we do a real thumpin' show," Vogler says, "you definitely feel your body and the fabric on your body moving around."

For those seating sections far wide of the stage that don't provide direct line of sight to the main array, a set of 12XTs hang above to offer enhancement. In addition, eight small JBL speakers allow Vogler to provide reverb or other effects as needed, for surrounds. "They just give it a sense of size or space around the edge, and are really only heard in the box section of seating," he says.

There are no delay speakers spaced further in the seating," Sheppard says. "From side to side, there is very, very little difference in the quality and volume of the sound. And then, from front to back, over 450 feet, I doubt you hear anything more than about 5- or 6dB difference. It's pretty remarkable, the physics of how this line array works. We're very stereophonic here in our mixing—we don't mix mono. We want it to have a breadth and a depth. There's some pushback—we have some mixers that come through that believe more that everybody should hear equal. But we've found that this gives orchestral sound a real life and dimensionality."

The Bowl's shell does provide some reflection, though not through the full frequency range. While both the conical-shaped ribs and the canopy above the orchestra do tend to focus sound outwards, frequencies below about 500 Hz tend to drop off, Vogler says, taking that into consideration when choosing and positioning mics.

The team draws from a large collection of studio condenser-type microphones for just about everything, including Sennheiser, Schoeps and Neumann. Mics used for a particular orchestral section on one day might not be the best fit on another, depending on the configuration of the stage. Typical orchestral miking can involve as few as 30 to 40 microphones. A pair of Sennheiser MKH 800 Twins hanging overhead act as the mains, providing a significant amount of the sound. "They have a front and back capsule, with dual outputs. So I can change the polar pattern by adjusting the level of one or the other output, depending on what's needed," Vogler explains. Over the center of the orchestra are three Schoeps MK21s, suspended just 10 feet above the players.

Onstage, the principal strings are miked with MK4s, Colette mics in cardioid, while the celli and bass use Sennheiser MKH40s. The brass instruments are picked up by Neumann U89s, and the woodwinds by TLM 170s, both set in a wide cardioid pattern.

Rock acts typically bring their own mic collection, also using about 30 or 40 mics/inputs, as well as their own preferred console, which is typically set up in a guest mix position. The guest console's output is then fed to the Bowl's FOH SD7, which sends it out flat to the amplifiers and speaker system. "They'll give us a left-right and a sub send," says

Photo: Adam Latham

A panoramic view, showcasing the Bowl's unique natural-acoustic backdrop.

Sheppard. "They may also give me a send for the front fill or the center cluster. That gives some flexibility to what kind of sound they put out. But they paint the sound the way they want to hear it, so that it's the artist's sound, not our sound."

Says Sheppard, "In a week's time, we often do a rock 'n' roll show on Monday, and then on Tuesday we'll do a classical show. And then on Wednesday, it's a jazz show, and then Thursday another classical show, and Friday/Saturday a pop show, and a World Music Festival on Sunday. It's not unusual for us to be out of here at midnight and then be back at 8 a.m. to begin setting up for the next concert.

"When we were consulting with everyone over this P.A. and our consoles, that was something that we had to take into account, being able to shorten or eliminate any turnaround time, as far as repositioning or retuning the P.A.," Sheppard adds. "It has the versatility to allow us to do a rock show one night and a classical music show the next, with very little in the way of adjustment, and still be able to achieve the same degree of fidelity throughout the venue."

Audiences have clearly responded. "I've seen more standing ovations, more people sitting forward in their chairs and engaged in the show," Vogler notes. "The dynamics are really extended with this higher resolution system. When it's quiet, the audience is incredibly quiet and really paying attention. They're watching the performers in a way that I don't think I'd seen in prior seasons. People will come up to me after a show and tell me, 'I'm hearing things that I never heard before.' It's been a 10-year effort to make this P.A. what it is. It's now tuned to the point where we can really provide everybody in the house a good seat." ■

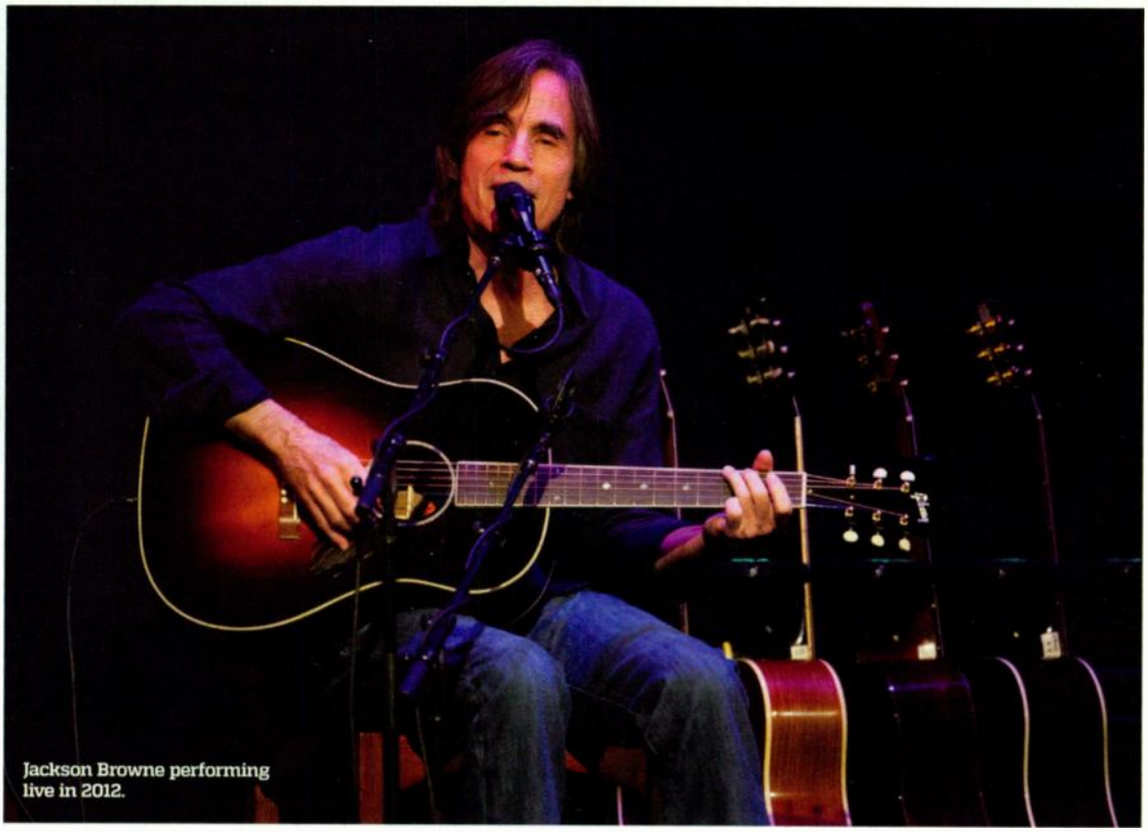

Photo: Steve Jennings

Jackson Browne performing live in 2012.

I knew he was a good 12-string player. He played 12-string on my song "The Naked Ride Home" [from the 2002 album of the same name], and working with him was such an eye-opening experience. He was able to go so deep into the groove of the song and find these parts that made the whole song sort of pulse and vibrate in an essential way. Normally when you overdub you're adding something, and you hope that it's not something superfluous. But with him, he goes right to the center of the thing; he grabs it by the spine. So I showed him "The Birds of St. Marks" and asked him if he wanted to cut it like a Byrds song with the 12-string, and the idea intrigued him. So that was the beginning of his working on this album. Then I started thinking of other songs he might fit on, and Val [McCallum] is a huge fan of Greg's, and vice-versa, so the more we got to do, the more we wanted to do, and they wound up playing together on eight songs and are each on one of the songs alone.

**So, is the way that a lot of these tracks came together a matter of whoever was around when you decided you would go in and cut a given song? I count six different bass players, six different drummers, but then I looked back at the credits for your older albums and it became clear you've always worked this way, with a couple of exceptions.**

I did decide after the last record [2008's *Time the Conqueror*, cut with his band at that time] that I would go about each song separately and call whoever seemed right for that song. So it wasn't "whoever was around," although there was a little of that. I think I used [bassist] Kevin McCormick less and Bob Glaub more because Kevin was out for most of the last couple of years with CSN.

**Bob Glaub's been a dependable presence for you over the years.**

Yeah, he has. You know, Bob's not credited as playing bass on "The Pretender," though he played on that song. Somehow, the credits were wrong on the original release, and then, when it was re-released again on [*The Very Best of Jackson Browne*] they got it wrong again! I know he played that part, and it's so like his playing. But somehow, when we were doing credits, Lee Sklar got credited. [*Laughs*] Anyway, Bob has played on some of my favorite records, and he and I have been good friends all this time. And Bob and Kevin are really good friends, too.

So it's about: Who do you call for this specific thing? Like, I got [drummer] Don Heffington to play on a couple of songs. He was the drummer with Lone Justice and has played with so many great people. He's a *great* drummer. I actually got to play with him at an Adam Sandler Christmas party once. There were three drummers there who rotated in and out of percussion and drums, and they did this heroic 40-song set, just playing one song after another and I got to play with him there. And I knew him from the Largo [club], too. He plays with Sara and Sean Watkins a lot. He also has an amazing record out now called *Gloryland*.

My whole album was influenced by these sit-ins and get-togethers at people's houses and at various friends' gigs, like Val McCallum's.

**Isn't he also part of some loose band called Jackshit, or something?**

He is. I sit in with Jackshit sometimes. It's in that spirit where you're just having fun playing songs, and I wanted to have that feeling for this record—where I'd call people and we'd have fun recording, and there was less emphasis on cutting the definitive version. I mean, you always try to make the best recording of a song you can...

"If I Could Be Anywhere" I cut with Jim Keltner on drums and Tal Wilkenfeld playing bass and [Heartbreakers keyboardist] Benmont Tench. It's a song I had tried cutting before, but it didn't have the urgency I thought it needed. So I thought, "I'm going to cut this more like The Beatles—*bomp, bomp, bomp, bomp*—and I asked Benmont to play 4s on the piano, but even then it wasn't quite right. That song didn't come easy. But Keltner, who never really plays anything the same way twice in a row, wound up coming up with that feeling of urgency the song needed to deliver by simply playing 4s straight through the song, and then, spontaneously, he and Benmont played this incredible ending, which I never could figure out how to cut down, so we left it all in.

**You're a jam band!**

[*Laughs*] Not exactly. But I like the fact that the three songs that actually try to have something to say [socially/politically]—in the case of "If I

Photo: Adam Latham

A panoramic view, showcasing the Bowl's unique natural-acoustic backdrop.

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# WHEN SESSIONS REIGNED SUPREME

## THE PLAYERS, STUDIOS FROM L.A.'S GOLDEN AGE

BY ROBYN FLANS

David Foster producing/conducting a session, late 1970s.

The Record Plant in Los Angeles was the place to be on Sunday nights in 1973, when owner Gary Kellgren convinced drummer Jim Keltner to host a weekly jam session called the Jim Keltner Fan Club Hour—despite Keltner's distaste for "jamming," and for the moniker.

"I said, 'The only thing I know and love is going in and learning a song and playing a song,'" Keltner recalls. "And Gary said, 'Well, let's just do that and call it whatever we want to call it.'"

So many huge artists played and recordings were made, though they never saw the light of day, except for one monumental evening Keltner recalls that was bootlegged for many years and finally released by Mick Jagger on the *Very Best of Mick Jagger* in 2007.

"One night John [Lennon] and May [Pang] were out for dinner with Richard Perry on a Sunday night," Keltner recalls. "I didn't think about inviting John because I didn't think he would want to come down and do that, but Richard told him there were these jam sessions and John said, 'What? He's my buddy, let's go down there.'"

That night Lennon showed up and produced "Too Many Cooks," which Danny Kortchmar had brought in to the session. Jagger was on vocals, Harry Nilsson on backing vocals, and among the musicians were Kortchmar, Keltner, Jesse Ed Davis, Al Kooper and Jack Bruce. According to Keltner, Ringo was just hanging out that night.

Modest as Keltner is, artists came because of his reputation, even that early on, as the Los Angeles music scene was bursting at the seams in such recording studios as the Record Plant, Village Recorders, A&M, Conway, Dawnbreaker, Westlake, United Western, Sound City, Evergreen, Ocean Way, Capitol, Sound Factory, Sunset Sound, Paramount, Larrabee and many, many others. He was one of those musicians who remained at the core as a new wave of faces began to appear on the session scene.

David Foster says Keltner was responsible for adding him to a roster

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John Robinson, back in the day.

of musicians that included the likes of Bob Glaub, Danny Kortchmar, Russ Kunkel, Waddy Wachtel, Dean Parks, Leland Sklar, Greg Phillinganes, the Porcaro brothers—Jeff, Steve and Mike—Steve Lukather, David Paich and John Robinson. These guys were taking over studios and honoring the work of their predecessors, namely The Wrecking Crew of Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, Joe Osborne, Carol Kaye, Tommy Tedesco and Glen Campbell, a force that didn't get much credit until much later for the magnificent work they did.

Foster describes the session scene back then as a "club."

"We all kept a book, we all had that phone service, Your Girl, and we would wait for those calls," he remembers. "My book for those three or four years that I was a session player was just filled with ink every day. I would do Don Piestrup's jingles at 8:00 in the morning with glorious musicians like Hal Blaine—I was at the tail end of that—and we worked 10 to 1, then 2 to 5 on sessions like the Fifth Dimension. And then at night we would do all-nighters with the rock 'n' rollers like Rod Stewart and George Harrison. They were 16- and 18-hour days. And the next day you'd do it all over again. You never knew who you were going to be hooked up with on those sessions. You'd get there and be surprised and thrilled that David Paich would be the other keyboard player or Michael Omartian or Jay Graydon or Ray Parker or Larry Carlton was playing guitar, and you were always anxious to see who the drummer was because that was obviously the foundation."

The work was plentiful and the budgets bountiful. Record companies were spending money, and time, nurturing artists.

Those were the glory days of the late 1970s, or as Foster called it, "the heyday"; the Los Angeles recording scene was alive with creativity and innovation. But the innovation led to invention, which ultimately led to the technology that would dramatically change the playing field for musicians, studios and all those involved in the industry. Those first-call session players are still working, most of them a lot, but it will never be the same again. They know that.

## A DIFFERENT TIME

Guitarist Dean Parks says back then there was an abundance of artists signed and a lot of gambles taken. He says record companies were making money so they were willing to take chances.

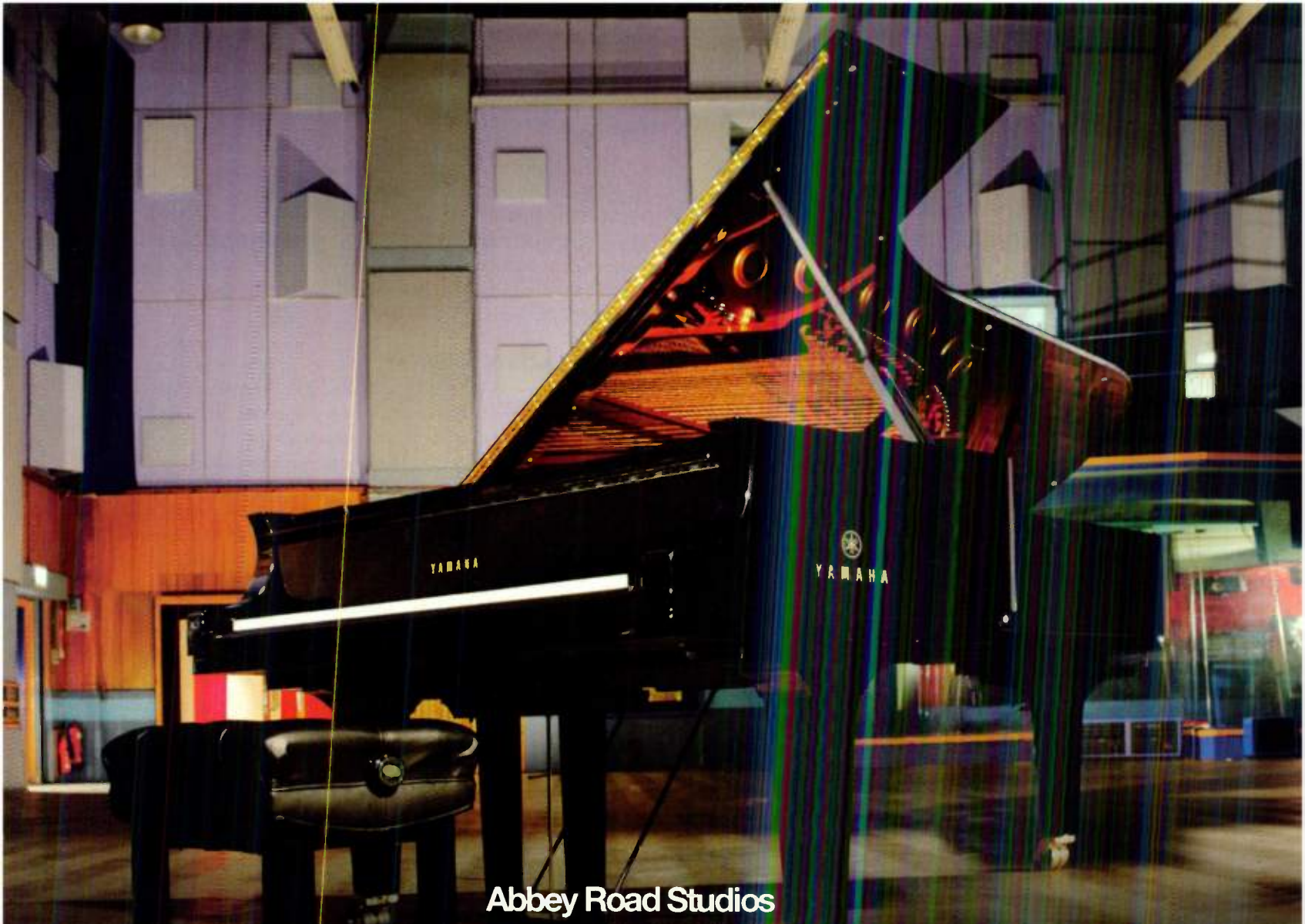
He recalls working with Joan Baez on Diamonds and Rust at A&M after she had cut several albums that had not yielded any hits.

"They were big sessions at A&M Studios with a room full of musicians and it felt great," Parks says. "You could tell it was going to do something. There was a glow around it while we were doing it."

In the late '70s, after Parks took a short detour to produce albums for such artists as Dolly Parton and Tom Snow, he missed the playing scene so much that "I put out my shingle again."

"Say you're on a week of tracking sessions, you're going to do the definitive performance of 10 songs no one has ever heard with some of the greatest players in the world through the best sound system you can imagine," Parks says. "That's fun."

Session bassist Bob Glaub remembers the fun in recording Nicolette Larson's debut album, *Nicolette*, at Amigo Studios in the late '70s with a rhythm section that included drummer Rick Shlosser and Bill Payne on keys with Ted Templeman at the helm. They cut "Lotta Love," which brought the former background singer to public attention.

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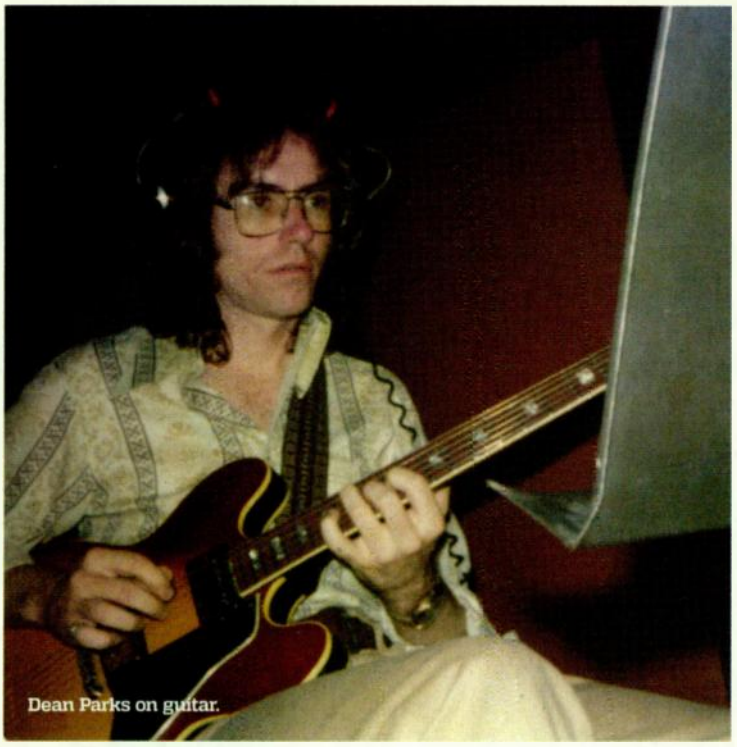
Dean Parks on guitar.

And down the hall, Glaub recalls, Rickie Lee Jones was cutting with Jeff Porcaro. Glaub says those were the days you'd run into your pals all the time at the studio. "There were so many musicians and we'd see each other all the time."

They'd run from one studio to the next, booked on doubles and triples in three-hour blocks, based on union rules, and cartage was becoming a boom business.

Parks describes a typical scenario of the times:

"The 9 a.m. session ended at 1 sharp in the Valley, and I arrived at Western 3 in Hollywood at 1:49. The cartage guys had my gear set up already [a Princeton Reverb amp, a fuzz pedal, wah pedal, and a trunk with a dozen guitars].

"I cleared away the cigarette butt someone left on the music stand, saw that the stack of music called for 12-string acoustic and electric, which I got from the trunk in the hall, and brought one to the piano to tune a string, then went to my seat to tune the rest.

"The headphones were a single [one ear], so I asked the engineer for a double set, although I knew his phone mix would be mono. I heard the multitrack's alignment tone...don't put on the phones yet!

"2 p.m., time to begin. The leader was getting pushy; they'd need to get tracks on four songs before 5, or we'd have to go into an hour's overtime [an extra 50-percent pay per hour]. We hoped that wouldn't happen, so we would have more time for dinner before the 7 p.m. double-session at Sunset Sound.

"Soon, in the first take, the drummer stopped. There was something not right about the feel, and there would be no repairing a drum track, so he counted it again, looking to the engineer: Should he wait for rewind, or keep it rolling? They do the take, and go in to hear playback, discuss the tempo, etc. As expected, my electric guitar sound was completely different from my morning session. What could have changed? Different mic? Mic pre? EQ? Console? Multitrack? Compression? Engineer? Control room monitors? I was on a riser here, and this morning I was on the floor? Mic placement? Whatever, adjust accordingly and move ahead."

Lukather says the doubles, triples and that period were "some of the best times of my life."

"We were all studying music back then," he remembers. "It was music, music, music all day long. You would go to school and practice, take harmony, theory, study privately, take orchestration; we lived, breathed, ate and went to bed with it. We were obsessed. There's nothing we had to wish for anymore."

## THE NEW KIDS IN TOWN

Jeff Porcaro told me in 1982: "[David] Paich, [David] Hungate, myself and a few other guys like David Foster and Jay Winding, all started getting into the studio at the same time. I'm talking about '72, '73 and '74... We were real radical. I mean, I know myself, we hated contractors. I just remember a time observing studio sessions when nobody said anything. You didn't speak your mind: It was, 'Yes sir,' and, 'No, sir,' and you just did your stuff. We weren't brought up to be studio musicians. We were guys who played in power trios, rock 'n' rollers who happened to read and play Barbra Streisand dates, too. People didn't know how to take 19-year-old cats speaking musical sense..."

It was no coincidence that drummer John Robinson, a relative newcomer to the scene at the time, and a member of Rufus, was asked to test the waters on Michael Jackson's *Off the Wall* album by cutting two "B" sides, "Girlfriend" and "It's the Falling in Love" at Allen Zentz Recording Studios. He says the record had been cut previously by other musicians, but now there was a new influx of players.

"After we cut those two, I heard them milling around in there and then they pushed the talk button and said, 'What're you doing Monday?' I said, 'Nothing.' They said, 'You wanna come record the rest of the album?' I said, 'Yes!'"

Robinson says the first group of tracks were cut at Allen Zentz because Bruce Swedien liked the Harrison console. The second batch, which included "Rock With You," was cut at Westlake B.

Lukather says there was a period of time that it seemed to him that money was being burned. "Drum sounds would take a day," he remembers.

"Three hours on a kick drum," Glaub recalls. "It was crazy. We'd be making phone calls. This was back 30 years before cell phones, before even answering machines. We all had answering services, and some of the studios had a direct line like a house phone at a hotel."

"They would hire us to sit around in the hallway," Lukather says. "We were going, 'Why don't you hire the drummer for the day and hire us to come the next day?' That was just included in the budget."

## TECHNOLOGY EMERGING

For many varied and often unrelated but interconnected reasons, the vibrant, exciting scene took a turn in the early 1980s. Lukather attributes the changes to two main factors.

The first was a prophecy made by Jeff Porcaro, sitting in product designer Roger Linn's apartment, circa 1978. Lukather, Jeff and Steve Porcaro, and David Paich had been invited over to check out his new gadget.

"There were alligator cables coming out of his Roland rhythm box," Lukather recalls, "and when this f-ing little diabolical homemade box started going, 'boom smack, boom-boom smack,' with a kick, hi-hat and snare and it sounded pretty real, the look on Jeff's face... Well, he looked around the room and he said, 'We have to destroy this now, it's going to

# WHY
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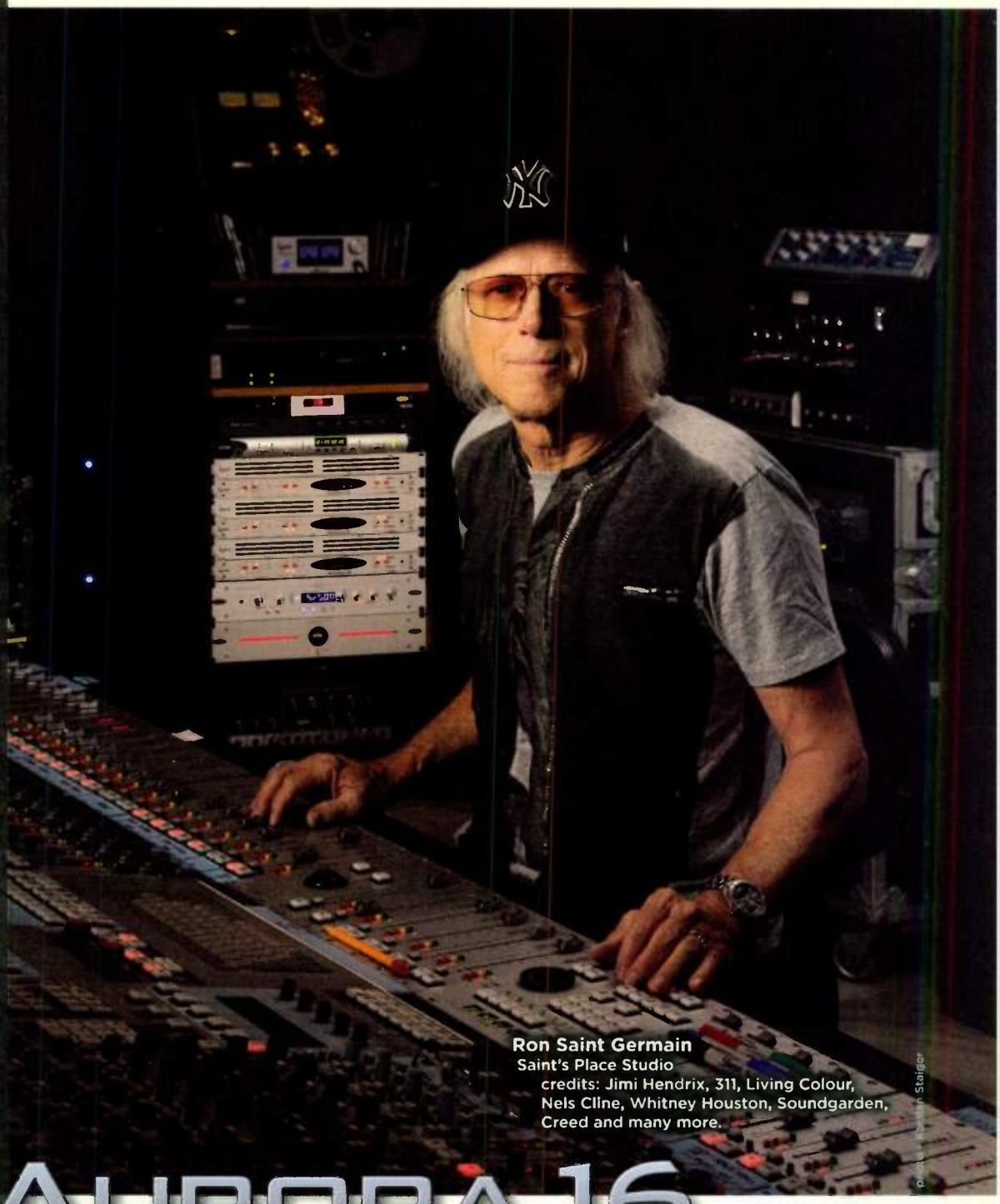

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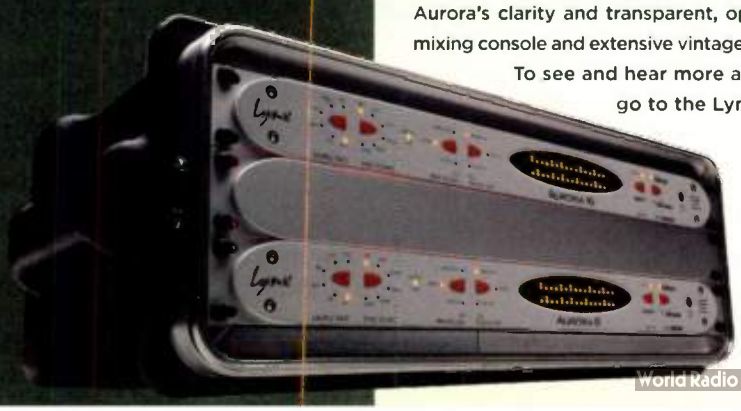

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ruin everything.'

"All of a sudden we started the era of, 'We don't need humans to make music anymore; we have machines to do the job.' And when they figured out how to hook up a clock to a synthesizer to the drum machine, then the bass players were out of work."

Case in point: Foster says he loves playing synth bass, which he learned from Gary Wright when he worked on the *Dream Weaver* album in 1978.

"He was an amazing synth bass player," Foster says. "Then when I was producing *Chicago XXVI* in 1981, on the very first session, Peter Cetera, who is a great bass player, was playing and I was young and cocky and something went down and he was uncomfortable with what I said, and he took me aside and said, 'Hey you know I've heard your synth bass playing and I don't really want to play bass on these records. Why don't you play.' And I played synth bass on the next three Chicago records, and that kind of contributed to their '80s sound."

"For me things changed when the [Yamaha] DX7, the first digital keyboard [1983], and the LinnDrum came out," Glaub says. "They changed everything for a lot of brass players, bass players, some drummers. Work did change for a while. I'll credit my good friend Jim Keltner for this. A lot of guys couldn't hang in for the long haul. He's probably an anomaly."

Keltner was one of the first to embrace technology.

"When the home studio thing came along and the keyboard guys could do everything, if you were a drummer who had a good feel and a good sound, you probably wouldn't be replaced by Roger Linn," Keltner says. "The record may have been made with a Linn machine, but you would be called to replace the machine. And that's something that hasn't changed, except it's no longer a Linn machine. But it really wiped out bass players because there are tremendous bass samples, and if you are a keyboard player, you can play a great bass. But, then again, as a musician, hopefully you have something unique about your playing that can't be replaced by a machine."

"I had slow years," Glaub remembers. "You have to be willing to wait it out and be in for the long haul. I had a couple of slow years right then in '83 and '84 when I had just bought a house and we had just had a second child. But then things changed again and I started working a ton. The

## *THE PLAYERS*

Of the dozens and dozens of amazing L.A. session players over the years, the following contributed to our story.

Canadian-born **David Foster** has done everything in the music business from having a hit song with a pop group called Skylark to making music as a session player in the '70s, first hired by contractor Frank DeCaro. "I was living in an apartment in Coldwater Canyon and had laid out in the sun and gotten second degree burns," Foster remembers. "I showed up at my first session—a Helen Reddy date—on crutches. At the end of the date, I overheard DeCaro saying, 'We should get the crippled guy to play piano again.'"

Ultimately Foster went on to become one of music's top record producers, winning 16 Grammys and recording the likes of Earth, Wind & Fire, Andrea Bocelli, Celine Dion, Mariah Carey, Chicago, Madonna, Jennifer Lopez, Barbra Streisand and Beyonce.

**Jim Keltner**, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been a leading session drummer since the early '70s, getting his big start with Delaney & Bonnie and then Joe Cocker. He has the auspicious distinction of having worked often with John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, as well an eclectic mix of artists such as Bob Dylan, Van Dyke Parks, Leon Russell, Eric Clapton, Dolly Parton, Warren Zevon, Barbra Streisand, Bonnie Raitt, Randy Newman, Neil Young, Harry Nilsson and Bill Wyman. He was also a member of two super groups, the Traveling Wilburys and Little Village.

Originally from California, major recording and touring bassist **Bob Glaub** got his session start on a Jesse Ed Davis record and from there he went on to work with such artists as Dave Mason, Rod Stewart, Warren Zevon, Gladys Knight, Nicolette Larson, Cher, Stevie Nicks and Jackson Browne, whose band he joined in 1978 for more than a decade. He is currently back with Browne on his new record and tour.

Texas-born **Dean Parks** moved to Los Angeles to work with Sonny & Cher in 1970, and his career took off with such artists as Steely Dan, Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Neil Diamond, Billy Joel, Barbra Streisand, B.B. King, the Crusaders and an eclectic list. He has also composed and produced.

Drummer **John "J.R." Robinson** arrived in Los Angeles in 1978 from Iowa with Rufus after they discovered him in a bar band in his home state. Not long after, he was nabbed to work on Michael Jackson's Off the Wall and then his phone began to ring... artists such as George Duke, Quincy Jones, Herb Alpert, Herbie Hancock, the Pointer Sisters, Lionel Richie, Glenn Frey, Frank Sinatra and Barbra Streisand, with whom he's worked since 1993.

Born in the San Fernando Valley, guitarist **Steve Lukather** says he owes everything to his second family, the Porcaros. From a rehearsal band with Willie Ornelas, Jai Winding and Steve Porcaro, Winding got him on a Terence Boylan record. From there, drummer Jeff Porcaro brought him into one of his earliest sessions with Boz Scaggs, "which really upped the stock," Lukather says. Then dates with Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Chicago, Donna Summer, an endless list, going on to become a prolific composer and then a member of Toto with his buddies.

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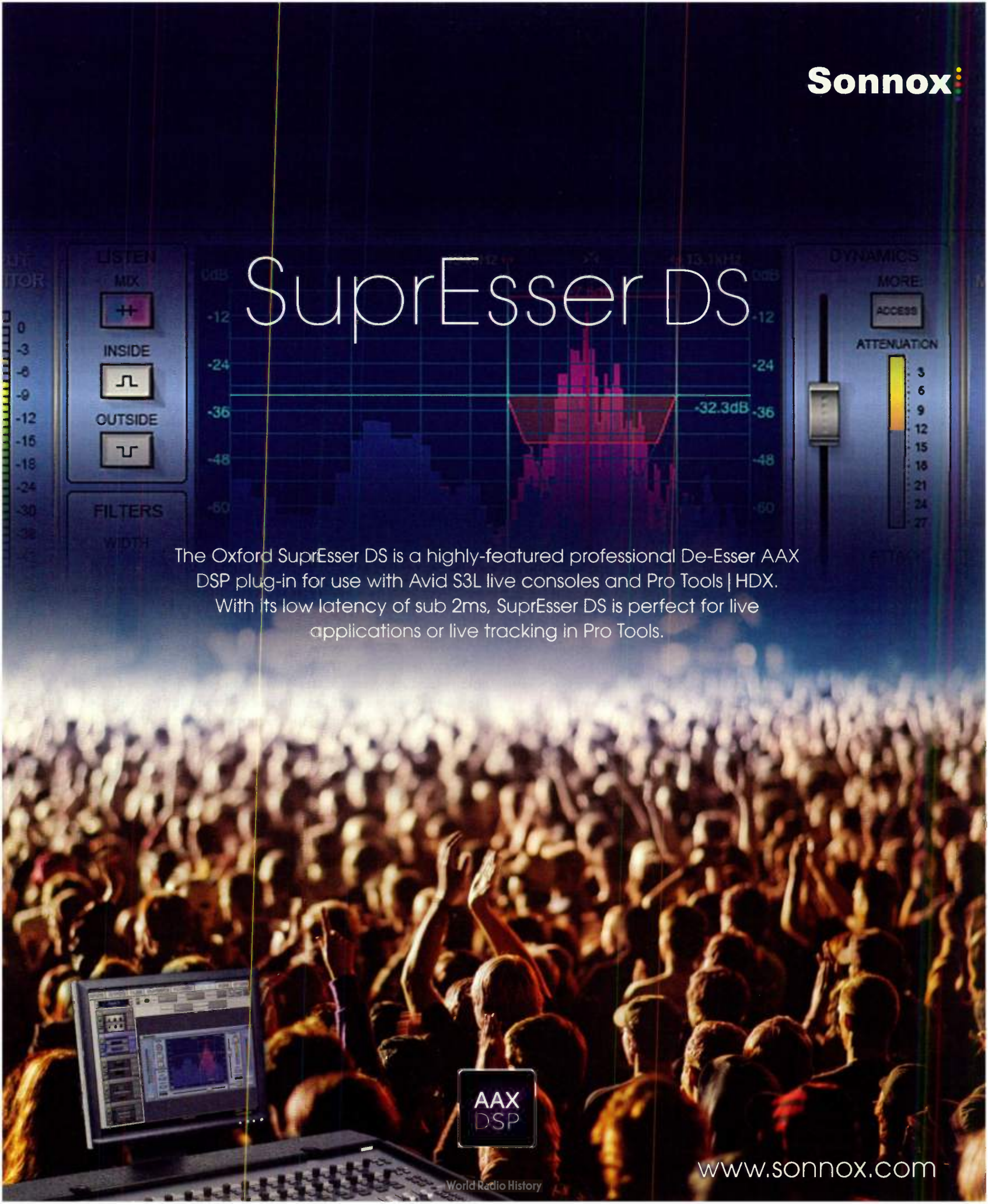


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David Foster, right, with Neil Diamond.

budgets are different, and if you want to work with some of the younger indie artists, you have to be willing to negotiate fees that make sense."

Parks, who still remembers how great it was when the first Korg tuner hit the marketplace in the mid-'70s, says the advent of the drum machine changed recording, and it was better for some drummers than others. "Some drummers had not made friends with the click, and unless you could do that, you couldn't replace fake drums on a track, and as a drummer you had to learn how to do that because things started to be based on a click track."

Foster, who gave up a six-figure income in 1978 as a studio player to make $5,000 as a producer in his first year, remembers witnessing some key historical musical moments. "The first time I saw a Minimoog, I just about freaked; the first time I saw a string ARP [synthesizer], I freaked. The first time I saw a MIDI controller, I couldn't believe it. It was on my Olivia Newton-John record [*Two of a Kind*, 1983]. Steve Kipner had written a song ["Catch 22 (2 Steps Forward, 2 Steps Back)"] and brought in this machine and pressed a button and this damn track played. I couldn't believe it. Everything was tight, the piano part was tight, the bass part was tight, the drums were tight. It was phenomenal."

Foster also remembers the birth of automation at the Complex, circa 1981. "When I was working with Earth, Wind & Fire, George Massenburg brought me into his workshop and he said, 'Move this fader.' It was one fader, and he said, 'Go up to here and go up to this mark and then come back to this mark and then go back to zero,' and I did it and he said, 'Now watch,' and he pressed a bunch of electronic shit and the fader did the exact same moves that I had just done. Those were huge moments."

MTV was the other change that hurt the industry, in Lukather's estimation. He doesn't mince words, but because he is a still a session musician and a member of Toto, he has a unique perspective, which he is able to share with his equally unique sense of humor.

"We were told it was a promotional thing, no one was ever going to make money, but they found a loophole, turned it into a commercial channel, turned it into a money-soaking bunch of losers that ruined music and turned musicians into actors," he says. "In the '60s, if there was a good-looking guy in the band, that was a plus, but it wasn't a deal breaker because you had to be great to make records. Now all of a sudden you had to be pretty, too. Pretty became more important than good. We were forced to make videos with our own money, against our own will, with people dressing us up like idiots and we had to recoup that money with the promise that MTV was going to play it, and then they wouldn't because there was payola involved..."

Glaub says even though the days are no longer full of doubles and he is now doing his own cartage, he still loves making music.

"The work was so abundant and I probably took it for granted for a while," Glaub admits. "It was just such a buzz. We were working all the time. We were trying to spend time with families and get sleep and not be too hung-over the next day. It was an amazing period of about 10 years."

Keltner, arguably one of the only session players that has spanned from the Wrecking Crew days into this current generation of studio musicians, says one session a day was really only all he has ever cared to do, anyway.

"When the Internet started shaking the record companies up and everything and sessions went way down and all that, it changed as far as the volume goes, but nothing really changed in my life," Keltner says. "I still was doing records and I'm still doing them today and that's all, Lord willing, I'll be doing until I drop." ■

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Jeffrey Young, Jackson Browne, Bob Glaub, Mauricio Lewak, Greg Leisz, Val McCallum

Photo: Nels Israelson

de la crème of L.A. players: guitarist David Lindley (his main foil for many years), the versatile backing group known as The Section (guitarist Danny Kortchmar, bassist Lee Sklar, drummer Russ Kunkel and keyboardist Craig Doerge), drummers Larry Zack and Mauricio Lewak, bassist Bob Glaub, guitarists Waddy Wachtel, Scott Thurston and Mark Goldenberg, bassist Kevin McCormick and dozens more. As I joked during our interview, "It takes a village to make a Jackson Browne record."

In keeping with that ethos, *Standing in the Breach* features half a dozen different bassists and drummers and several different keyboardists, but the core sound comes from three players—Browne, guitarist Val McCallum and master-of-all-guitars Greg Leisz. (Those two are part of Browne's current touring band, which also includes bassist Glaub, drummer Lewak and keyboardist Jeff Young). The album's 10 tracks cover a range of musical styles, yet never depart too far from Jackson Browne territory.

In its modern incarnation, "The Birds of St. Marks" sounds like a long-lost Byrds track. "Leaving Winslow" is a shuffling, countrified train song. "If I Could Be Anywhere" starts with a Beatles-ish bounce and ends with a dreamy instrumental ride-out. "Walls and Doors" was written by the popular Cuban musician Carlos Varela, and features some of his band. Browne and Rob Wasserman wrote the music for "You Know the Night" to unpublished lyrics by Woody Guthrie. And "Yeah Yeah" is a classic Jackson Browne relationship song with an irresistible hook. The arrangements are tasteful throughout and the sonics impeccable; the music breathes and feels alive. If you haven't checked Jackson Browne out for a while, this album is a good opportunity to get reacquainted with him.

In late August, I spoke with Jackson by phone from Connecticut, where he was playing a solo gig. We talked about the making of *Standing in the Breach*, more generally about how he likes to record, and also a few other topics.

**You've been coming out with studio albums only spradically in recent years. When does it become "album time" for you?**

Well, it's a blurry line because I have a studio and I sometimes cut songs way before I have enough songs for an album. So I'm sort of always recording. I think I once read about Paul Simon that he would cut songs as soon as he wrote them and then he'd write another one and cut that, and I sort of envied that. I never liked the approach where you cut all the tracks and then you sing all the tracks and then allot this amount of time for overdubbing. I guess that's a cost-effective way of making a record, but that makes it too much like an assembly line. So what I do is have a gradual accumulation of songs I'm working on.

And some of the songs on this album were cut quite a long time ago. For example, "If I Could Be Anywhere" must have been recorded more than a year-and-a-half ago.

**Were they all recorded at your studio?**

All except for one song, the last one on the album, "Here." That was also cut awhile back. It was recorded at Berkeley Street Studio in Santa Monica because mine was rented out! I had written it for the movie *Shrink*. I wrote it on the road and came back to town and had to cut it quickly, because they needed it right away. But it was never quite the record I thought it could be.

This album reminds me a little of that Richard Linklater movie, *Boyhood*, which was shot over a period of years, because some of these songs were written a long time ago. Like the "The Birds of St. Marks" is a song I wrote when I was 18, but I never got to do it like I thought it should be done in the beginning. I remember writing the song and thinking, "This would sound good as a Byrds song." But it never seemed finished, and after a while I sort of forgot about it. I didn't even remember it when I was pitching songs to The Byrds sometime after my first album. Years later, I rediscovered the song during an interview for the long-form video *Going Home*.

**The piano version you recorded on 'Live Acoustic Vol. 1' [2005] is so different than the one on the new album, though it certainly feels like a Jackson Browne song in the classic sense.**

There was a way in which the chords went that made sense on the piano, but on just the guitar [back when I wrote it], while it made sense, it didn't sound full enough, and it would have taken the 12-string and the bass and the drums to get it how I heard it.

**Greg Leisz, who's one of my favorite guitarists, sounds great on the 12-string on that.**

He's the reason I thought of doing "The Birds of St. Marks"—because

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# Jackson Browne

## *L.A.'S FAVORITE SON TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW ALBUM, STANDING IN THE BREACH, AND HOW HE WORKS IN THE STUDIO*

BY BLAIR JACKSON

Jackson Browne wrote "The Birds of St. Marks," the song that kicks off his superb new album, *Standing in the Breach*, when he was just 18, living in New York and penning wise-beyond-his-years songs that would be recorded by such diverse artists as Tom Rush, The Byrds and Nico—years before his self-titled Asylum Records debut made him a rising star in 1972, when "Doctor My Eyes" became a surprise Top 10 hit. That album was the first of five straight indisputably great records Browne cut in the 1970s, establishing him as one of the most poetic, perceptive and emotionally attuned singer-songwriters of the modern era. [The other four are *For Everyman* (1973), *Late for the Sky* (1974), *The Pretender* (1976) and *Running on Empty* (1977)]. He also found time to produce his friend Warren Zevon's fantastic first two albums, *Warren Zevon* (1976) and *Excitable Boy* (1978). Browne's growing popularity through the first half of the '80s, when he landed a handful of singles in the Top 40, showed that he had a definite mainstream knack, too.

Not all of his fans embraced his move into the overt political commentary and social consciousness expressed on late-'80s albums such as *Lives in the Balance* and *World in Motion*, though that development was hardly a surprise—for many years he'd given his time to dozens of good causes, big and small. Indeed, there are few artists who have played more benefit concerts than Jackson Browne. With the exception of his extraordinary, deeply personal 1993 record, *I'm Alive*, his albums have continued to mix songs that reflect the tumult of the world we live in with engaging meditations on matters of the heart and soul—classic Jackson Browne terrain.

*World in Motion* was the first of Browne's albums to be recorded at his own Groove Masters studio in Santa Monica; *Lawyers in Love* and *Lives in the Balance* were recorded at Jackson's previously owned studio, called Downtown, in Los Angeles. His earlier records were cut at a variety of top L.A. studios, such as Sunset Sound, Elektra, Hollywood Sound, Sound Factory, Record One and The Complex.

Through the years, he's worked with scads of fantastic engineers and mixers, including Richard Orshoff, Al Schmitt, John Haeny, Greg Ladanyi, James Geddes, David Tickle, Ed Cherney, Bob Clearmountain and, on all his albums since *I'm Alive*, Paul Dieter, who both engineered and co-produced *Standing in the Breach* at Groove Masters. The list of musicians and singers who have contributed to Browne's albums must easily number more than 100, including A-list pals ranging from various Eagles and Little Feat members, to Linda Ronstadt, Bonnie Raitt, David Crosby, Graham Nash and Joni Mitchell; and an amazing assortment from the crème


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Jeffrey Young, Jackson Browne, Bob Glaub, Mauricio Lewak, Greg Leisz, Val McCallum

Photo: Nels Israelson

de la crème of L.A. players: guitarist David Lindley (his main foil for many years), the versatile backing group known as The Section (guitarist Danny Kortchmar, bassist Lee Sklar, drummer Russ Kunkel and keyboardist Craig Doerge), drummers Larry Zack and Mauricio Lewak, bassist Bob Glaub, guitarists Waddy Wachtel, Scott Thurston and Mark Goldenberg, bassist Kevin McCormick and dozens more. As I joked during our interview, "It takes a village to make a Jackson Browne record."

In keeping with that ethos, *Standing in the Breach* features half a dozen different bassists and drummers and several different keyboardists, but the core sound comes from three players—Browne, guitarist Val McCallum and master-of-all-guitars Greg Leisz. (Those two are part of Browne's current touring band, which also includes bassist Glaub, drummer Lewak and keyboardist Jeff Young). The album's 10 tracks cover a range of musical styles, yet never depart too far from Jackson Browne territory.

In its modern incarnation, "The Birds of St. Marks" sounds like a long-lost Byrds track. "Leaving Winslow" is a shuffling, countrified train song. "If I Could Be Anywhere" starts with a Beatles-ish bounce and ends with a dreamy instrumental ride-out. "Walls and Doors" was written by the popular Cuban musician Carlos Varela, and features some of his band. Browne and Rob Wasserman wrote the music for "You Know the Night" to unpublished lyrics by Woody Guthrie. And "Yeah Yeah" is a classic Jackson Browne relationship song with an irresistible hook. The arrangements are tasteful throughout and the sonics impeccable; the music breathes and feels alive. If you haven't checked Jackson Browne out for a while, this album is a good opportunity to get reacquainted with him.

In late August, I spoke with Jackson by phone from Connecticut, where he was playing a solo gig. We talked about the making of *Standing in the Breach*, more generally about how he likes to record, and also a few other topics.

**You've been coming out with studio albums only spradically in recent years. When does it become "album time" for you?**

Well, it's a blurry line because I have a studio and I sometimes cut songs way before I have enough songs for an album. So I'm sort of always recording. I think I once read about Paul Simon that he would cut songs as soon as he wrote them and then he'd write another one and cut that, and I sort of envied that. I never liked the approach where you cut all the tracks and then you sing all the tracks and then allot this amount of time for overdubbing. I guess that's a cost-effective way of making a record, but that makes it too much like an assembly line. So what I do is have a gradual accumulation of songs I'm working on.

And some of the songs on this album were cut quite a long time ago. For example, "If I Could Be Anywhere" must have been recorded more than a year-and-a-half ago.

**Were they all recorded at your studio?**

All except for one song, the last one on the album, "Here." That was also cut awhile back. It was recorded at Berkeley Street Studio in Santa Monica because mine was rented out! I had written it for the movie *Shrink*. I wrote it on the road and came back to town and had to cut it quickly, because they needed it right away. But it was never quite the record I thought it could be.

This album reminds me a little of that Richard Linklater movie, *Boyhood*, which was shot over a period of years, because some of these songs were written a long time ago. Like the "The Birds of St. Marks" is a song I wrote when I was 18, but I never got to do it like I thought it should be done in the beginning. I remember writing the song and thinking, "This would sound good as a Byrds song." But it never seemed finished, and after a while I sort of forgot about it. I didn't even remember it when I was pitching songs to The Byrds sometime after my first album. Years later, I rediscovered the song during an interview for the long-form video *Going Home*.

**The piano version you recorded on 'Live Acoustic Vol. 1' [2005] is so different than the one on the new album, though it certainly feels like a Jackson Browne song in the classic sense.**

There was a way in which the chords went that made sense on the piano, but on just the guitar [back when I wrote it], while it made sense, it didn't sound full enough, and it would have taken the 12-string and the bass and the drums to get it how I heard it.

**Greg Leisz, who's one of my favorite guitarists, sounds great on the 12-string on that.**

He's the reason I thought of doing "The Birds of St. Marks"—because

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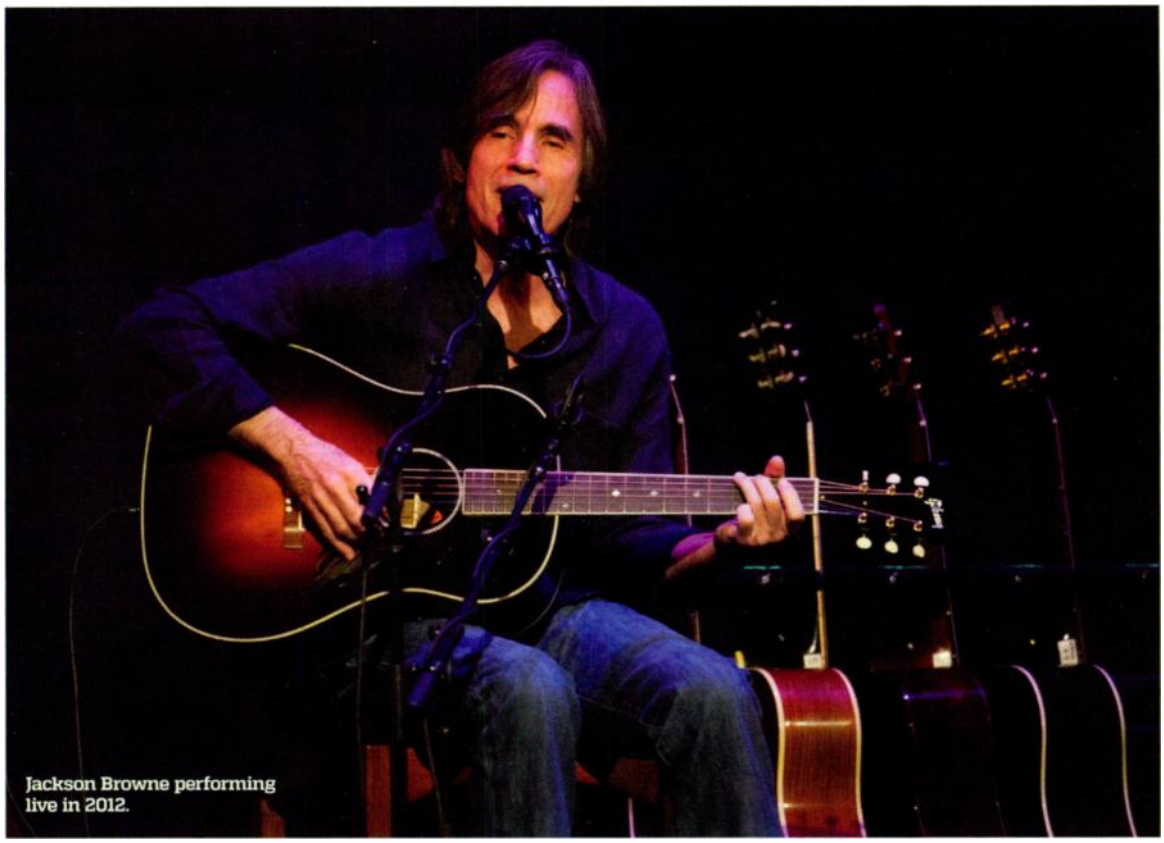

Photo: Steve Jennings

Jackson Browne performing live in 2012.

I knew he was a good 12-string player. He played 12-string on my song "The Naked Ride Home" [from the 2002 album of the same name], and working with him was such an eye-opening experience. He was able to go so deep into the groove of the song and find these parts that made the whole song sort of pulse and vibrate in an essential way. Normally when you overdub you're adding something, and you hope that it's not something superfluous. But with him, he goes right to the center of the thing; he grabs it by the spine. So I showed him "The Birds of St. Marks" and asked him if he wanted to cut it like a Byrds song with the 12-string, and the idea intrigued him. So that was the beginning of his working on this album. Then I started thinking of other songs he might fit on, and Val [McCallum] is a huge fan of Greg's, and vice-versa, so the more we got to do, the more we wanted to do, and they wound up playing together on eight songs and are each on one of the songs alone.

**So, is the way that a lot of these tracks came together a matter of whoever was around when you decided you would go in and cut a given song? I count six different bass players, six different drummers, but then I looked back at the credits for your older albums and it became clear you've always worked this way, with a couple of exceptions.**

I did decide after the last record [2008's *Time the Conqueror*, cut with his band at that time] that I would go about each song separately and call whoever seemed right for that song. So it wasn't "whoever was around," although there was a little of that. I think I used [bassist] Kevin McCormick less and Bob Glaub more because Kevin was out for most of the last couple of years with CSN.

**Bob Glaub's been a dependable presence for you over the years.**

Yeah, he has. You know, Bob's not credited as playing bass on "The Pretender," though he played on that song. Somehow, the credits were wrong on the original release, and then, when it was re-released again on [*The Very Best of Jackson Browne*] they got it wrong again! I know he played that part, and it's so like his playing. But somehow, when we were doing credits, Lee Sklar got credited. [*Laughs*] Anyway, Bob has played on some of my favorite records, and he and I have been good friends all this time. And Bob and Kevin are really good friends, too.

So it's about: Who do you call for this specific thing? Like, I got [drummer] Don Heffington to play on a couple of songs. He was the drummer with Lone Justice and has played with so many great people. He's a *great* drummer. I actually got to play with him at an Adam Sandler Christmas party once. There were three drummers there who rotated in and out of percussion and drums, and they did this heroic 40-song set, just playing one song after another and I got to play with him there. And I knew him from the Largo [club], too. He plays with Sara and Sean Watkins a lot. He also has an amazing record out now called *Gloryland*.

My whole album was influenced by these sit-ins and get-togethers at people's houses and at various friends' gigs, like Val McCallum's.

**Isn't he also part of some loose band called Jackshit, or something?**

He is. I sit in with Jackshit sometimes. It's in that spirit where you're just having fun playing songs, and I wanted to have that feeling for this record—where I'd call people and we'd have fun recording, and there was less emphasis on cutting the definitive version. I mean, you always try to make the best recording of a song you can...

"If I Could Be Anywhere" I cut with Jim Keltner on drums and Tal Wilkenfeld playing bass and [Heartbreakers keyboardist] Benmont Tench. It's a song I had tried cutting before, but it didn't have the urgency I thought it needed. So I thought, "I'm going to cut this more like The Beatles—*bomp, bomp, bomp, bomp*—and I asked Benmont to play 4s on the piano, but even then it wasn't quite right. That song didn't come easy. But Keltner, who never really plays anything the same way twice in a row, wound up coming up with that feeling of urgency the song needed to deliver by simply playing 4s straight through the song, and then, spontaneously, he and Benmont played this incredible ending, which I never could figure out how to cut down, so we left it all in.

**You're a jam band!**

[*Laughs*] Not exactly. But I like the fact that the three songs that actually try to have something to say [socially/politically]—in the case of "If I

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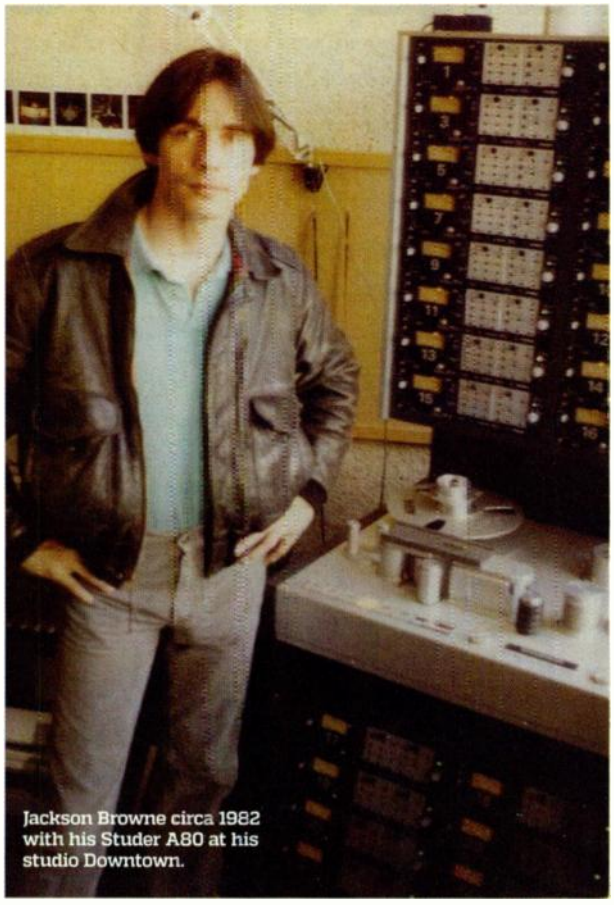
Could Be Anywhere," about the state of the ocean and about Empire; there's a lot to chew on—have long ride-outs. "The Long Way Around" is another one. It goes on for a while and you're left listening and hopefully thinking a little bit. It gives you a little time before the next song starts.

**I really like the amount of space your engineer, Paul Dieter, leaves in the music. There's plenty of room for those vibe-y, atmospheric guitars that Val McCallum seems to specialize in, and also enough air around your lead vocal.**

Paul is great. He's is also my front-of-house mixer and really winds up listening to *everything* I do, so he's used to reaching for the vocal and trying to make the vocal heard. That's something he brought to this album. He's also really good at balancing things quickly, and he knows there's this version, and the next version, and there will be the next version after that. [*Laughs.*]



Jackson Browne circa 1982 with his Studer A80 at his studio Downtown.

**How do you know when you're done?**

You run out of money. [Laughs] You need to release something. For me, it's like a two-cylinder engine, where you tour for a while, and you go home and record for a while, and then you tour some more. But because we've made records of the tours, too, it gets pretty blurry. I guess there comes a certain point where you begin counting up the songs and you think, "Oh, we're close to having enough songs for an album."

I think the album is plenty long enough, and you could make the argument that a couple of these songs could've had less-long ride-outs; you could have some shorter songs. But all these songs are long, in and of themselves—there are a lot of lyrics. So you have to make it so people can hear them. I have made records with songs that have too many words and they go by so quickly you can't really hear them. Like the original version of "In the Shape of a Heart" [on *Lives in the Balance*] is not the best recording of the song, because there's too much going on to really hear the lyrics. When I would just play that song for people by itself they would say, "When did you write that? Is that a new song?" [*Laughs*] And that's with them having heard the old one! The words just hadn't registered with them. So I realized I needed to make records that made you want to listen, and where you can really hear everything.

**You had a period where you used some different mixers—David Tickle, one with Ed Cherney, another with Bob Clearmountain. I'm wondering what having that added viewpoint does for you, because you obviously have a pretty firm idea of what you're after.**

I did that for a long time and it was because I couldn't really see sitting there for a year with any of those guys taking up their time. [*Laughs*] But I wanted to work with them. What it provides is a break in the making

of the record, where someone else comes in and turns it into something slightly different. I would look at Cherney [who mixed *I'm Alive*] and say, "Really? This is what it sounds like?" And he would say, "Yes, this is what it sounds like. That's it." The thing is, you hear it all kinds of different ways before its finished—especially when you're overdubbing, you tend to listen to things out of proportion.

That didn't used to happen with Greg Ladanyi. I used to make whole records with Greg Ladanyi [Zevon's *Excitable Boy*, *Running on Empty*, *Hold Out*, *Lawyers in Love*] and that was a way of working I have missed in recent years—the same guy who recorded it, would mix it. So I feel this new record is a little more like that. It was a really conscious attempt to see whether Paul and I would hear it the way we'd been hearing it throughout the process and pull it together and deal with balancing it—can you get the best of everything you've heard as you've been working?

Sometimes it works to give it to somebody else and have them put it together at the end, too, but there's kind of no going back. It's very difficult to say, "Well, there was this *other* thing I heard before and I want to go back and listen to this other thing." Although Bob [Clearmountain] was really good about that. My co-producer Kevin McCormick and I might say to Bob, "Actually, we were thinking something more like *this*" and I'd get him to change one or two things, and he'd say, "Oh, you mean like *this*?" and in four motions—*whap*!—there it would be. And was usually about balances. That was very fulfilling.

And Cherney has got his own magical thing that happens. One time, I found him out on the corner outside the studio and I said, "What are you doing out here, Ed?" And he said, "Um, I'm just out here waiting for Jesus to get through with the snare drum..." [*Laughs*.]

**What made you decide to have your own studio, like Groove Masters, in the first place?**

Well, at one point I had a studio in downtown L.A. [known as Downtown], on the fifth floor of a building on Broadway. I think the idea came from an article I'd read where the Heartbreakers talked about how they made their first album by buying machines and recording in a storefront. I read that and I thought, "Oh my god, you can do that? I'm doin' that!" [*Laughs*] So I bought this gear and with a lot of help embarked on what has become a long quest. Before that I had looked into buying Dave Hassinger's studio on Selma, the Sound Factory. My business people kept saying, "You'd be saving a lot of money and making a great move if you had your own studio to work in." I was making all these albums back-to-back. So there was that thought in the air. After Downtown, I put the studio in my house—that was called Outpost—and made a couple of records there, but being in my house made it hard for other people to use it. Then, when I got rid of that house, I moved to Santa Monica and built Groove Masters.

**Does the way you work require that an engineer be on-call, or do you know enough to get your thoughts down on your own?**

I don't know anything; I know *nothing*. [*Laughs*] I can't do even the simplest things. I have to have an engineer. I've got two second engineers—which as you know is the most demanding work in the studio—both of whom are very capable first engineers and able to record and do whatever I need to do. [Assistants on *Standing in the Breach* were Bil Lane and Rich Tosi.] They can help me with whatever needs to be done, knowing that chances are we're going to re-cut it at some point. So, it's sort of like making sketches in a way.

**Has Pro Tools made that process easier, in the sense that you can just record and record and record and then edit easily?**

Pro Tools has been indispensible. Because I always did a lot of editing—cutting things together or flying things around. We got into Nuendo before Pro Tools, which Paul actually found a little more edit-friendly, and it also had 96kHz/24-bit earlier than Pro Tools did. Pro Tools has become the standard of the industry, and if you have a studio you pretty much need to have it. But, I track on 2-inch tape and then move it to Pro Tools.

**I know you made your early records at places like Sunset Sound and Sound Factory—classic rooms. Did you have the same approach to**

**building songs and recording you use today? How did you learn about working in the studio?**

I used to follow other producers to a studio, or work with the engineers they had worked with, because I knew I didn't know anything. Like, I followed Peter Asher around for a while. There was also a guy named Michael James Jackson, a producer, who would suggest players. He would tell me, "You want a great bass player? Call Wilton Felder." And that sort of thing was very helpful to me. So you try different people.


**You worked with Al Schmitt early on, and John Haeny was a great engineer, too.**

John Haeny was maybe my first real mentor in the studio. He really taught me a lot. He recorded *For Everyman*; he did all the tracks and all of the overdubs. He also recorded and mixed Warren Zevon's first album, *Warren Zevon*. John was a great recordist and the go-to guy for a lot of people back then. He was also great at balancing things and had a sort of in-born sense of composition. But when it came time to mix *For Everyman*, we couldn't really agree on some things, so after finishing it with him, I decided to go in and finish it again, and I did some of the things I wanted to do that he didn't want to do. I called Al Schmitt to mix the album that Haeny had recorded, and then Al did the entire next album, *Late for the Sky*. That one was done in a pretty quick time frame.

**Did "The Section" band come about organically through them playing on so many different projects together?**

Yes. Russ Kunkel and Lee Sklar were James Taylor's rhythm section, and I was using them on my first album. Lee had met Craig Doerge playing on a Mimi Fariña and Tom Jans session and told me about him, so I hired him. Along with Danny Kortchmar they became "The Section," cutting their own albums. But they were actually The Section on many albums that were cut in those days.

For a while I would call them for sessions, but I couldn't afford to take them on the road until after *The Pretender* did really well and I started to play arenas and sheds. And I paid them every way you could pay 'em! [*Laughs*] I paid them as an opening act—they opened the show, which gave them the chance to get all dialed in and totally comfortable onstage. I also paid them as sidemen—as my band—and I also paid them as producers, just to make sure they would actually come out on tour. They were so good in the studio. Songs like "The Fuse" [on *The Pretender*], or any number of things, had come together because of the way they played as a band. They were like a younger version of the Wrecking Crew. Things got done, they got decided on. They played like they'd been playing together for a lifetime. And now they have.

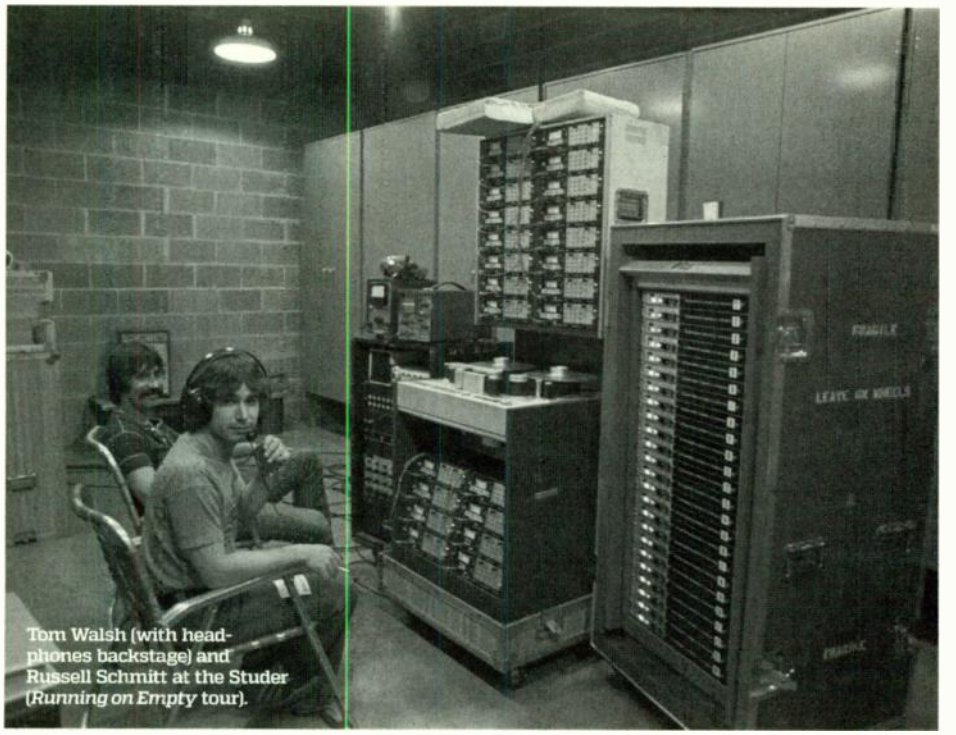


Photo: Joel Bernstein

Tom Walsh (with headphones backstage) and Russell Schmitt at the Studer (*Running on Empty* tour).

**'Running on Empty' was a milestone in the way live albums were made. You've got songs recorded in hotel rooms and tour buses and rehearsals and onstage. Was it always conceived that way, or was that a notion that came after the fact when you heard what you had?**

No, that was the idea from the start. You'll laugh, because it was pretty hare-brained, but Nakamichi had come out with this really great cassette recorder, and for someone like me it sounded as good as anything! [*Laughs*] So I said, "Why don't we record *everything*? With one of these you can record every single thing that happens and put out everything." It was big—like half the size of phone book—but obviously really portable. I told Peter Asher what I wanted to do and he said, "Well, *that's* a noble idea." [*Laughs*] "And you're going to put out everything the way it is? You're not going to overdub? You're not going to fix anything?" He looked at me and said, "Okay, but at least do it on a 2-track [reel-to-reel]." Then, I was talking to the guys at Showco, the touring sound company, and they said, "If you're going to take a 2-track, we have a Studer 24-track—why don't you take that? Don't listen to it; just record everything." Of course, then we were able to fix and fix.

So we put that [24-track] machine in a room and recorded everything that was being done onstage into the machine without listening back. And we didn't listen back to most of it until we got back to LA. Actually, we did hire the Record Plant truck to do the hotel recording in Maryland and New Jersey, and Illinois, so at two of these gigs we had that to work with. [At all the shows without the truck] there would be a guy in a back room with the Studer, but no console, and he could only listen to one track at a time—so he'd plug the headphones into track 18 and make sure it wasn't distorting, and then he'd listen to another one. And Ladanyi would call up on the headset because he'd noticed that Russ [Kunkel] was playing softer, and he'd say to Tom Walsh, the guy at the Studer, "What kind of levels do you have on the kick? Is it +3?" And Tom would say, "Yeah, it's +3," and Ladanyi wouldn't believe him and he'd run back to the room in the middle of the song and look at the meter and say, "That's not +3!" and he'd crank the input. "*That's* +3!" and he'd run back to the front-of-the-house. [*Laughs.*]

But nobody had ever done a live album like that. Most live albums had been done by recording your show on two different nights, with a truck, so we were innovative in that regard. But the guys in the band—David Lindley especially, but also all the guys in The Section—were such a creative group and all this amazing shit would happen spontaneously that I wanted to capture, and we were able to do that. Now, it's not hard if you want to do that. We've all recorded everything that happens onstage for years now. ■

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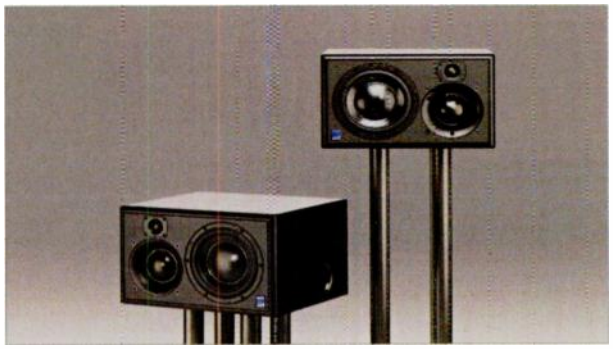

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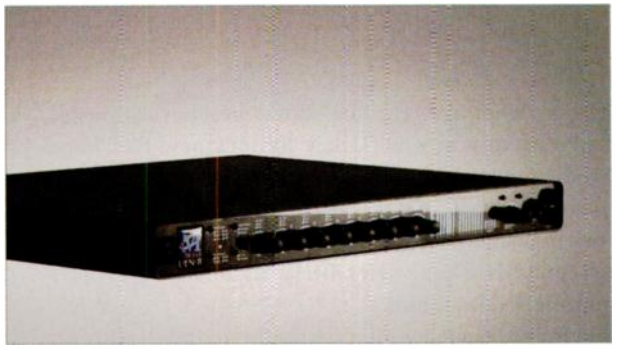

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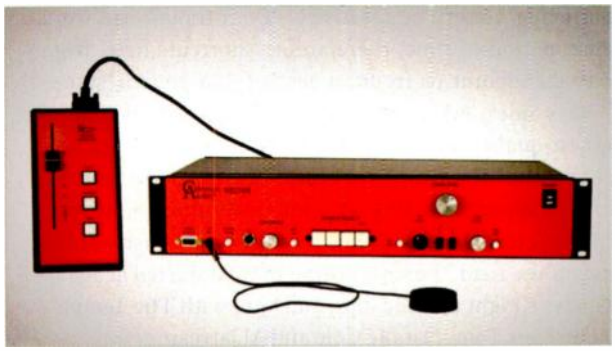

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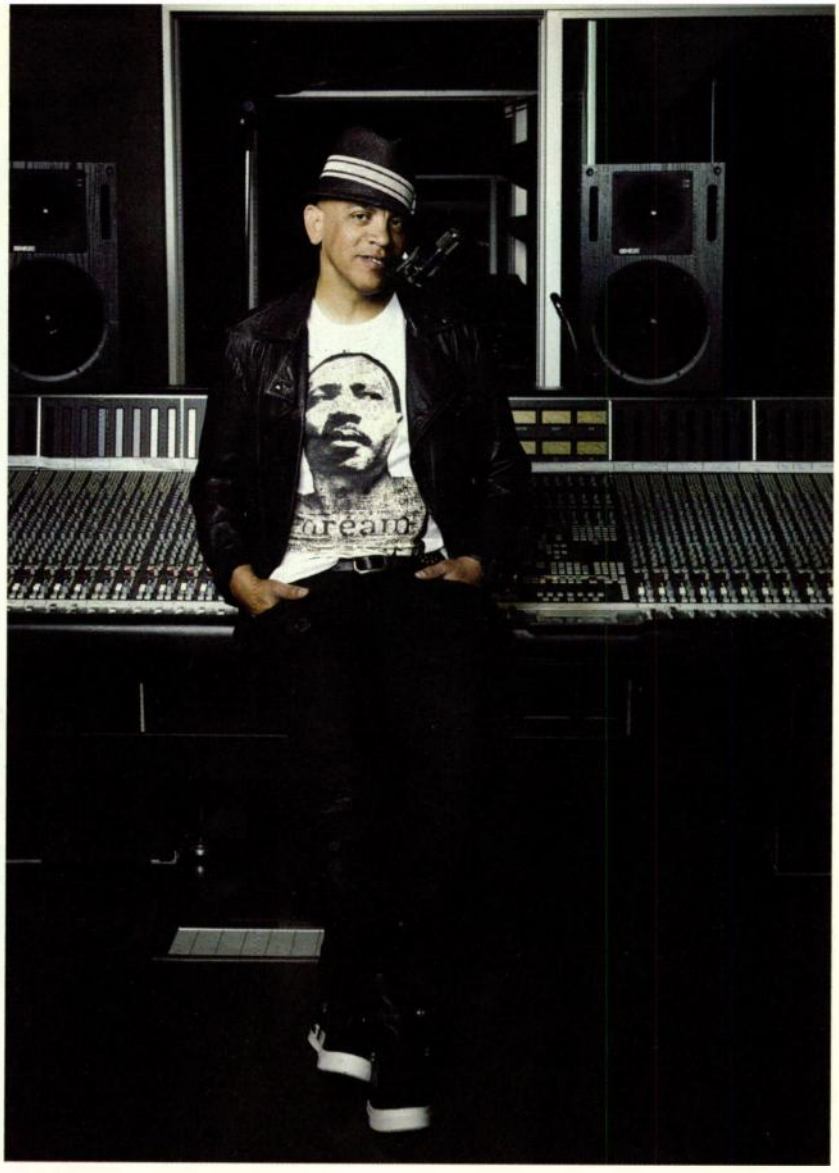

Photo: Brian Bowen Smith

Jazz saxophonist Dave Koz stands beside the console, listening to a mix in Rickey Minor's new Red Lotus Studios on the historic Sunset Gower Studios lot in Hollywood. The pair, along with engineer Allen Sides, cut six songs in one day, two weeks prior, and five more the following Monday, for Koz's new Christmas album. "My head is still spinning," Koz admits.

It's nothing, though, for Minor, who also records weekly singles for each of *American Idol*'s Top 10 contestants. "When Dave came in here, they were so impressed that we were 12 songs in in two weeks," the producer states. "In two weeks, we normally have cut, mixed and mastered 20 songs. So this is Club Med for us!"

Minor has mastered a workflow that allows him and his team to churn out multiple tracks at breakneck speed, without sacrificing quality or creativity. "Even though we work in a short period of time, there are no shortcuts here, from a quality standpoint or from an aesthetic or artistic standpoint," says Sides. Adds Koz, "This might actually be one of the highest-quality recordings I've ever done."

Red Lotus is Minor's second home-base studio since 1998, when he wrapped up a 10-year stint as Whitney Houston's musical director. "At that point, I was 39 and I just wanted to come off the road," he says, noting that he started at age 19 with Gladys Knight and the Pips, and later with The Temptations, The Four Tops, Natalie Cole and Al Jarreau.

While working as musical director for the syndicated *Motown Live*, he decided to set up shop—a studio and office—at Hollywood Center Studios, where the show did its post work. "I just love being on a movie lot," he says. "There's a synergy there." He eventually became musical director for *American Idol*, from 2005 to 2010, before taking over for Kevin Eubanks and leading the Tonight Show Band for Jay Leno thereafter, until its finale this past February, when he returned to *Idol*. "*The Tonight Show* ended on February 6, and I started *Idol* on February 3," he laughs.

Minor had given up his digs at Hollywood Center in 2011 while working on Leno, so he began looking for a new place, originally for an office. "I was two days away from closing a deal at Paramount," he recalls. "I thought, 'I should call Allen Sides and have him take a look at this space, to see if he thinks it's something I could build out into a studio.'"

The deal didn't happen, but Sides, longtime owner of Ocean Way Recording, had just sold his space, along with some associated buildings just behind it, to Sunset Gower. He suggested that Minor take over a spot on the first floor of a three-story building there. "Rickey called me, and I knew Sunset Gower was looking for a tenant. So it was a match made in heaven," Sides recalls.

After going through the concrete building, a former film vault, with Sides, Minor decided to take the bottom floor for his office. "Then I thought, 'Gee, I need a studio more than I need an office!'" the producer laughs. Fortunately for him, Sides had previously considered building a studio in the space, so the two started off on the same page. Sides then designed and built the studio out to fit Minor's needs.

The building, without partitions, is long and narrow, but eventually afforded Minor a 17.5x19-foot main live room, two iso rooms (a 9x8-foot "performance room" and a 9x9-foot guitar room), and a 14-foot-wide by 26-foot-deep control room. Though the rooms make use of ample splays and absorption materials Sides had incorporated over the years at Ocean Way, he and Minor didn't shy away from the effects of the concrete structure.

"I wasn't concerned about the high ceilings and hard surfaces," Minor says. "I wanted a project space where every

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Photo: Ashley Skaggs

Producer/engineer Allen Sides, right, with Minor at Red Lotus Studios.

recording would be a master, not a demo recorded in a space where the acoustics make it unusable. When you listen to the tracks that are done in here, you'd think they were done in a very large room. It's a very neutral sound. It's clear and very neutral, with no resonances. Remember, I'm across the hall from Ocean Way Studio A and B. There are so many other places I can go [if I need alternatives]."

Sides built a raised floor for the facility. "It has a little bit of bounce to it. It's not a totally dead floor," he says. "It has a lot of life to it, actually."

For the iso booths, Minor wanted complete isolation, with double sliding-glass doors, and he wanted flexibility so that he could alter each space by adding baffles or hard surfaces to change the amount of reflection. "The iso's turned out great—the isolation's ridiculous," says Sides. "We're doing acoustic bass, acoustic guitars and percussion. So we needed to have very short decays and controlled ambience in each of them."

The lounge space, a former storage room, is also available for recording, accessible via tielines. "We record Dave's saxophone parts in there, and it really sounds great," Minor says. "It's a pretty live space, but with double blankets surrounding him, we have a little bit of the ambience of the room, but mostly direct sound." And the space is comfortable.

"You don't find many new studios being built in Los Angeles that are not in people's houses," Koz relates. "At its core DNA, it's an amazing Allen Sides-created room. But it's so comfortable, it feels like a house, even though it's actually a commercial space."

The ample control room had two design needs: to fit the console and fit all of Minor's various VIP guests. "Rickey needed a pretty big control room," Sides notes. "He has producers, directors and label people here all the time. And even though it's not a huge space, you can sit anywhere in the room and it sounds great. That's what we really wanted."

He and Minor worked up several configurations to accommodate the room's good-sized mixing console. "We started out thinking about hav-

ing a Pro control. But we just love analog consoles," Sides says. The one that found its home at Red Lotus was one that Dr. Dre had been using at Record One, a 72-input SSL J Series desk. "It's one of my favorites," Sides says. "It was the original Todd-AC scoring console, and it's probably the most expensive SSL ever built. It was a $1.6 million J, with a full film section. We mixed *Avatar* on this console."

Sides is particularly fond of its ability to conveniently group inputs together for easy effects sends. "Every bucket of eight can be selected to its own group of aux sends. So you can do eight 8-channel stems simultaneously. It's a very sophisticated console, and it's the only one like it."

Though the control room has Genelec monitors available, most listening is done on a pair of large Ocean Way HR2 speaker systems. "They work well, even in a deep control room like this," Sides says. "With these speakers, there's no single sweet spot—10 people sitting anywhere will hear everything with great clarity. If you play something that's well recorded, it sounds amazing. And when you play something that's poorly recorded, you'd rather not be in the room. If it's the slightest bit harsh, or there's anything wrong with it, you'll hear it, and you'll fix it."

## FAST-PACED 'IDOL' PLAY

Construction on Red Lotus began in September of last year, with wiring beginning mid-January for a month, and the first recordings for *American Idol* taking place the third week in February, with the selection of the "Top 10" contestants. Each week, the survivors perform a new song live for the audience, after which host Ryan Seacrest suggests the audience purchase a full-length, studio-produced version of that track on iTunes.

The process for creating those recordings on a weekly basis—10 of them to start with, and whittled down over the following weeks—is, to say the least, mind-boggling. It's also a pace in which Minor thrives. "I love it," he says. "It forces you to make decisions. You can't sit around."

On Friday mornings, after the elimination of one performer the previous night, contestants meet with one of three Associate Music Directors and Vocal Coaches to which Minor has assigned them to work. Possible song candidates for the following week's program are discussed, and the teams prepare rough arrangements, from which a final selection is made. A piano vocal recording is then made, along with a sketch chart, which is sent back to Minor by 1 that same afternoon.

By 5 p.m., Minor has reviewed all of the songs, deciding on any changes in the arrangements and any special treatments, such as strings or other instruments, that will be required for each. "We have a conference call, and by then I've figured out, things like, 'the intro needs to change,' 'no modulation in the chorus to make it feel like it's going bigger,' 'add a 2/4 bar here,'" he explains. A team of arrangers, then, works through the night, delivering completed charts and miscellaneous tracks to Minor by 7 the next morning.

Recording begins on the rhythm tracks at 8 a.m. Saturday, with engineering handled by Sides. "He would help me out and give me advice," Minor explains. "Then I would call him with a question, and he'd say,

From L to R: Billy Childs, Rickey Minor, Johnny Mathis, Dave Koz, Allen Sides (behind Dave), Chuck Berghofer, Clayton Cameron and Ryan Steples

Photo: Ashley Stagg

'I'll be right there'—and he lives in Santa Barbara! He started helping me in the beginning, when I was looking for engineers, and it went from there. I haven't done one session yet without him." Lenny Wee, who's worked with Minor since his Hollywood Center studio days, also works as a Pro Tools technician, arranger and conductor.

The players are all musicians with whom Minor has worked for years, supplemented by any special needs (e.g., pedal steel, banjo for country tracks), provided by longtime contractor Ernie Fields, Jr. "Ernie hired me for my first job at 19," Minor recalls. "He's Number 1 on my speed dial."

Recording 10 tracks in one day presents its own set of challenges, not the least of which is assuring that each song has its own character, avoiding any generic "house band" sound, something Minor credits to not only the variety of songs themselves, but to great players. "My guys are so well-diverse. If it's acoustic guitar, nylon string, pedal steel, baritone guitar, drop-D tuning—they can do anything. But the songs themselves, for the most part, have dictated the individuality of the recordings, giving them a color of their own."

Minor will vary the instrumentation, based on the song or genre. "We had a girl this year who sang like Stevie Nicks. So I would use a Fender Precision bass, or a 5-string 1968 Gretsch bass that I have." For another contestant, who did Led Zeppelin's "Dazed and Confused," "we did a lot of effects on the vocals, like backward effects, and made it dirtier. And I played an old 4-string Telecaster bass; it was noisy, and I loved it. And it was a perfect fit, to help it sound authentic."

Sides will keep the effects paths set up for quick playbacks. "Rickey likes to hear it like a finished record the second we track it," the engineer explains. "When they walk in for a playback, I've got all my 'verbs, patch delay, everything's all set up so it's accessible. We're very big on that. Because if it needs an overdub or needs a fill, we need to know what it's gonna sound like as a finished record. The concept of a 'rough mix' doesn't exist, from our standpoint. By the time I've heard it twice, it sounds like the finished record."

The first four contestants begin recording their vocals by noon. The vocals are recorded across town in three rooms set up at the Sunset Marquis Hotel, where the contestants stay, tracked by experienced vocal producers who know how to get the best out of the young performers. "We have three different vocal setups, with good mics and mic pre's," Sides says. "It's all happening simultaneously."

Minor and Sides, meanwhile, prepare 2-track mixes of the songs and upload them, along with a Pro Tools file, to an FTP site for the engineers back at the hotel. Again, no "rough mixes" here. "We want them to sing to something that really sounds good," Sides informs. "We try to get it really close to where it needs to be, so that they can have as much inspiration as they can to motivate their performance."

The completed vocals, comped and ready to mix, are sent back to Minor, and any additional overdubs are added by engineer Steve Genewick, who assists Sides in the final mix, which begins Sunday at 10 a.m. and finishes the following day. The tracks are then mastered for iTunes the following morning, then provided to iTunes by noon that day, and made available for purchase the following night, after the live performance.

"It's intense," says Sides. "You have, like, three 14-hour days in a row. But it's very enjoyable. We have fun."

## RAPID SAX

A similar process was put into play for Dave Koz's Christmas album sessions, though with a slightly more generous schedule: six songs, then five, tracked on two consecutive Mondays, respectively, with overdubs in between (a 12th tune with Johnny Mathis was done during the first week, in Ocean Way). "I don't understand taking six months to record a record, and then mixing for several months," says Minor. "You mix all the heart and soul out of it."

Koz's disc is in the "duets" vein, with superstar vocalists and musicians accompanying the saxophonist on each track—Mathis, Gloria Estefan, India.Arie, Trombone Shorty, Fantasia, Heather Headley and others. Such albums, Minor notes, can be time-consuming to put together. "You've got the arrangement to do, the artists agreeing to do it, then arrangement approval by both artists, and all of the paperwork and red tape."

Minor's same stock troupe of talented musicians were put to work, again, easily slipping between genres, as required, be it jazz, swing, rock or pop. Still, Minor is not averse to replacing a player if there's a better fit, even if it means swapping himself out as bass player on five tracks to bring in veteran standup bassist Chuck Berghofer.

"On India's track, 'I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm,' which is kind of an ode to Ella Fitzgerald's 1958 version, there's Trombone Shorty, and it's just a quartet," he explains. "We made it a little more New Orleans vibe, and I played electric bass. But I knew an upright would sound more authentic. It's about the truth; you have to let the music dictate what's best. And all my guys know that's the case. If I can fire me, I can definitely fire any of them!"

"It's a hotbed of activity here," notes Koz. "It reminds me of what the Brill Building was, way back when. And Rickey's at the center of it all. He knows exactly who to call, and he knows who to call that can come and be there in 30 minutes. We needed Chuck to do this overdub, Rickey calls him, and he says, 'I'll be there in 30 minutes.' And he was here with his bass in 30 minutes, and the overdub was done." ■

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# AES TECHNOLOGY PREVIEW

The 137th AES convention in Los Angeles will bring new products, papers, workshops and more to the City of Angels. While many companies hold their releases tight to the chest until showtime, a handful of them are sharing their new releases with *Mix* readers beforehand.

## Avid VENUE S3L-X System

**Scalable, AVB-Networked Mixer/Recorder**

The S3L-X System promises versatility, reliability and value for stage and studio. The Ethernet AVB-networked modular system streamlines FOH, monitor and broadcast workflows by sharing the same I/O across multiple S3L-X Systems, with full automatic gain compensation. A mobile recording/mixing studio is also possible using just the Venue S3 surface and Pro Tools software on a laptop. Other features include mixing of DAW sessions using S3 as a standalone mixing surface and 4x6 audio interface, 64-bit AAX DSP plug-in support, scalability from 16 to 64 mic preamps, twice the RAM compared to S3L, and recording directly to Pro Tools through Ethernet.

## Yamaha RMio64-D

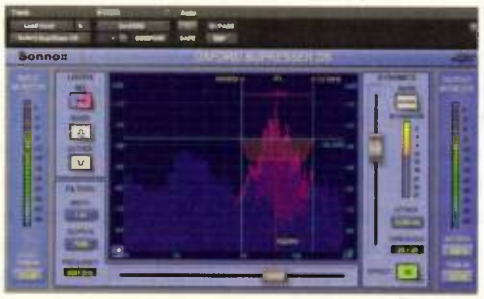
**Dante Enabler**

The RMio64-D provides new capabilities for Yamaha CL and QL Series consoles, as well as NUAGE DAW systems, using Dante networking. The unit enables audio from a CL or QL live sound system to be converted to MADI and fed to an OB vehicle, for example, or a MADI-based console can be easily integrated into a NUAGE system for post-production. The RMio64-D MADI also allows sample-rate conversion sources with differing word clocks to be connected without causing noise or dropouts. It additionally supports MADI redundancy through simultaneous coaxial and optical connections. With the MADI Split (loopback) capability, a signal received at either the coaxial or optical input can be retransmitted to the output. Also at the show, Yamaha's CL and QL Digital Audio consoles will release V3.0 updates available in early 2015.

## Sonnox SuprEsser DS

**Super Sibilance Suppression**

Sonnox will be at the Avid Connectivity Partner Pavilion showing the Oxford SuprEsser DS, a professional De-Esser AAX DSP plug-in designed for use with Pro Tools HDX and Avid S3L live consoles. The SuprEsser DS features low latency of sub 2 ms for live applications or live tracking in Pro Tools. The GUI provides an intuitive FFT display and three listen modes that enable users to see and hear exactly where the problem frequencies are, so they can suppress or remove them. Additional features include Automatic Level Tracking, Linear Phase Filtering and a Wet/Dry blend control for final balancing.




## SADiE Version 6.1

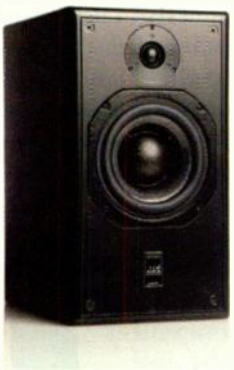
**New Features and Functions**

Prism Sound will bring SADiE Version 6.1 to AES, offering a range of new features including WAV Master, allowing users to create WAV files for an entire album, using PQ marks to define the start and end of the WAV file for each album track through a new high-quality Sample Rate conversion algorithm. The update also incorporates ISRC in BWF into SADiE's new WAV Master option ensuring that the correct files are used for playback and replication. Other features include support for reading and writing a WAV file's LIST-INFO chunk, and for Track Name and Artist metadata (included in Mastering Suite and Sound Suite packs), 32-bit floating-point format for recording or bouncing to WAV or BWF, and the inclusion of SADIE MTR (Multi-Track Recorder) software in the SADIE6 installer, which can run without a license when using an LRX2 or Prism Sound Lyra, Titan and Atlas interfaces.

## PreSonus StudioLive RM16AI and RM32AI

**Recallable, Touch Control Mixers**

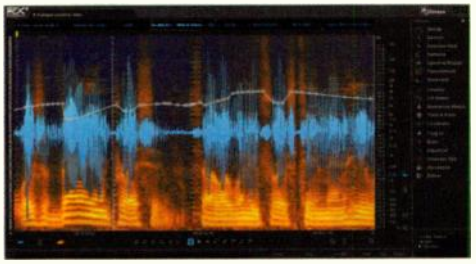
These new mixers from PreSonus are based on the StudioLive AI-series engine and controlled with battle-ready UC Surface software for Mac, Windows and iOS. The UC Surface control software is designed to be ar interface for live or studio mixing, providing quick, intuitive access to essential controls and features. The 3U rackmount RM16AI provides 16 locking XLR inputs with recallable XMAX Class A preamps, eight XLR line outs and three main outs (left, right and mono/center); 32 internal channels and 25 buses; a 52x34 FireWire 800 recording interface; 96kHz operation; and extensive signal processing. The 4U rackmount RM32AI offers 32 inputs with recallable XMAX preamps and 16 line outputs but otherwise has the same features as the 16-input version.



## ATC SC-M20ASL Pro (V2) and SC-M20PSL Pro Monitors

**Redesigned Active and Passive Units**

New from ATC, the ATC SCM20ASL Pro (V2) replaces the previous-generation SCM20ASL Pro, while the passive model is an all-new affair, providing an entry point into ATC studio monitoring at a lower price. Both models feature ATC's drive units, hand built in its UK facility. The new SH-25-76S 1-inch soft dome tweeter is the first to be designed and built by ATC. It uses a dual-suspension design, negating the requirement for Ferrofluid, and avoiding the detrimental effects of this drying out over time. The bass/midrange driver used in both loudspeakers is ATC's proprietary 6-inch Super Linear device, constructed with a 3-inch voice coil and a short-coil, long-gap topology.



## iZotope RX 4

**Audio Repair Tools**

RX 4 from iZotope is designed to be the ultimate companion to a DAW or NLE with new intelligent modules, timesaving features, and deeper levels of integration with hosts. Users can adjust and balance the volume of vocals and instruments with the new nondestructive Clip Gain feature. Background noise from dialog and vocals can be reduced in real time with the Dialogue Denoiser (now a standard feature with both RX 4 and RX 4 Advanced). The editing process has been streamlined with enhanced integration between Pro Tools, Logic and other popular hosts through the RX Connect functionality. The Advanced version of RX 4 includes additional timesaving features, including automatic balancing of the volume of mixes with the Leveler, freeing more time for creative mix decisions.

## Avid/Apogee Duet and Quartet I/Os

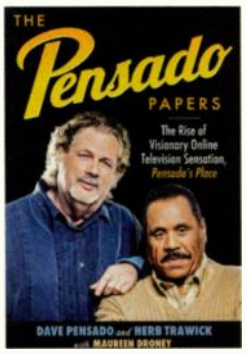
**Rebranded USB Interfaces**

Avid and Apogee have partnered on rebranding the Duet and Quartet audio interfaces, each paired with Avid's Pro Tools 11 software for Mac and Windows. Duet is a 2 x 4 USB audio interface operating at up to 192 kHz, 24-bit resolution. The Quartet is a USB interface offering 12 inputs, 8 outputs, including four combo mic/instrument/line inputs, eight channels of ADAD/SMUX input via Toslink, six ¼-inch balanced line outputs for three speaker sets, or 5.1 monitoring.

## Hal Leonard Publishing

**New and Instructional Titles**

Hal Leonard will show a wide variety of titles including *The Pensado Papers*, sharing the importance of relentless perseverance and tenacity in the pursuit of success and the story of incredible redemption that Dave Pensado has shared with his manager and friend, Herb Trawick. Mark Cross's *Audio Post-Production: For Film and Television* teaches the essential skills to enter the audio post-production industry, including the four basic elements: dialog, music, sound effects and Foley effects. Alan Parsons' and Julian Colbeck's the *Art & Science of Sound Recording* takes the DVD set to the next level, further chronicling legendary engineer, producer and artist Parsons' approaches to sound recording. The book includes technical background information, detailed diagrams, plus a complete set of course notes on each of the 24 topics, from "The Brief History of Recording" to the now-classic "Dealing with Disasters."





## Millennia AD-596D/AD-596R and HV-32P/HV-35P

**Four for the Road**

Millennia Media will show four new products, including two portable preamps and new Dante card options for existing products. The HV-32P and HV-35P portable preamps are designed to be powered via 12 to 15 volts of DC or can run on standard 2000mAh battery packs for hours. The HV-32P uses two 200 Series HV-32 preamps while HV-35P uses one of the critically acclaimed 500 Series HV-35 preamp cards and includes a DI. The Portable Series Preamps are housed in rugged, lightweight (24-oz.) aluminum one-third rack-width chassis designed to sit horizontally or vertically,

preamp back to life in the Retro OP-6 Preamp. The new unit offers a few features not found on the original, including several mic impedances switchable via the front panel using a custom-wound input transformer, 48V phantom power for condenser and active ribbon mics, plus Mic and Instrument inputs. Like the original, the unit sits in a portable case with a removable front cover. It also has a large gain knob and a VU meter, output gain control, and switches for five metering options, polarity invert, and pad.

## Focusrite Rednet Modules

**Four New Dante Interfaces**

Focusrite has announced the release of four new Rednet modules, including the MP8R 8-channel remote-controlled mic pre; D16R AES/EBU interface; HD32R HD Bridge for Pro Tools; and the D64R MADI bridge. Targeted at live sound/recording and broadcast environments, the products feature dual Ethernet ports fitted with locking Ethercon connectors, several operating modes including daisy-chaining and redundancy confirmed by front-panel indicators, and two separate power supplies with fault-detection capability. Power failure is indicated both remotely and on the front panel. The modules feature a rugged, roadworthy exterior with maximum internal build quality, in a compact 1U rackmount form factor.

## JoeCo BlackBox BBR1MP Recorder

**Preamps Plus Capture**

JoeCo's BlackBox BBR1MP Recorder is a 24-channel, stand-alone, live audio acquisition solution delivering all the standard BlackBox functionality, plus 24 high-quality, in-house-developed microphone preamps. It operates at up to 24-bit/96kHz, and features individually switchable mic/line inputs, balanced outputs, video sync, timecode and word clock inputs. User installable Dante and MADI interface cards are also available as options, adding 24 channels of Dante or MADI I/O to the BBR1MP unit. Microphones can either be connected to the unit via tails from the rear D-Sub connectors, or via an optional 2U breakout panel with XLR connectors. System components are available individually or as part of a bundle. Audio is recorded direct to external USB2/ 3 drive in Broadcast WAV format for instant ingest into post-production.


## sE Electronics ProMic LASER

**On-Camera Shotgun Microphone**

ProMic LASER is a shotgun condenser with a precision-tuned capsule for capturing professional-quality audio direct to camera. The mic features a rugged aluminum design and comes with a removable wind shield and custom shock-mount for hot-shoe mounting directly onto a camera. A single AAA battery powers the ProMic LASER, promising a low noise floor and high sensitivity level. Other features include a bass cut switch, which can be used in tandem with the -10dB pad. The ProMic LASER comes with a three-year free replacement warranty and ships with a protective carrying bag and a 3.5mm coiled cable to connect the microphone to your camera.

## Drawmer 1973 Compressor

**3-Band FET Dynamics Processor**

The Drawmer 1973 features three independent compressor sections with two variable-frequency 6dB/octave crossovers. The low, middle and high-frequency sections

feature threshold, gain, attack and release controls, along with gain-reduction metering. Each section can be independently muted or bypassed for confusion-free setup and monitoring. The low section possesses a Big switch for enhanced low-end, whereas the high section possesses an Air switch for enhanced high-end. The three sections are recombined to form the Wet signal, which can be mixed to variable degree with the dry signal for easy parallel compression.

### Bock 407 Microphone

**U47 Modeled Transducer**

Designed with the classic U47 in mind, the Bock 407 promises the girth and reach of a vintage microphone without the maintenance issues or hard-to-find parts. The Bock 407 embodies all the most important characteristics of the original, including its signature proximity effect. The original 47 had proximity effect behavior that was part of its sound and why it defined "big vocals." With up to +12dB of boost at 100 Hz when used at 1-inch distance, the 47 signature defined generations of vocal recordings. The fixed-cardioid microphone includes a shock-mount and power supply.

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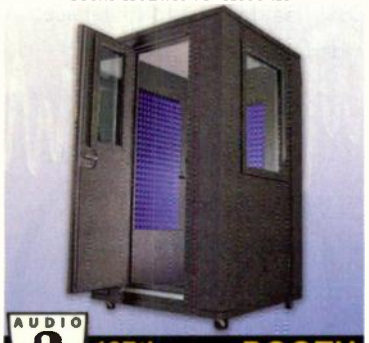

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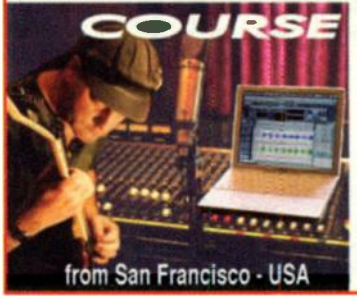

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## Novation Bass Station II
### 25-key analog synthesizer

Bass Station II is an analog mono-synth based on the classic original Novation Bass Station but re-worked for the 21st century. It has two filters, three oscillators, patch save, and a fully analog effects section. Add a step sequencer, arpeggiator, full sized keys and a powerful modulation section and you have the makings of a synth that is built for bass, but capable of so much more.

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# TechTalk

# 18 Years in L.A.

By Kevin Becka

I've lived in Cleveland, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., and now twice in Nashville, but the city I spent the biggest chunk of time in is Los Angeles. I lived there from 1976 to 1994, which in great part set me up for careers in audio recording, publishing and education. I got my love of music from my dad, who would sing around the house and was always playing records. He wasn't the feely-touchy type, and in my kidhead, I believed I could have a better connection with him if I was excellent at something musical.

So I took up guitar at 11, and through high school I played in many bands and, because I could read music, in the pit orchestras for drama department productions at ASU. I studied music theory through the Berklee correspondence course, explored George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept, corresponded and took lessons from Berklee's William Leavitt, Howard Roberts, Joe Pass, and plumbed as many local brains as I could find. Once I got to college, I flew through my theory classes and quickly wrung everything I could out of the desert. L.A. was close, and always somewhere I knew I'd be.

**Film music, composition and songwriting were early interests as I sought my path in music.**

Los Angeles offers more than you'd ever need to "make it" in a career in the audio and visual arts—if you don't give up. I supported my music habit with many day gigs, along with playing guitar, sometimes seven nights a week. I worked in a hotel as a bellhop, as a messenger/dispatcher, as an assistant dress buyer at Mode O' Day (really!), and put on a tool belt to build three recording studios around town. You might think that the day jobs were a drag, but that's where I met some of the coolest people, who whether they knew it or not, were mentoring me.

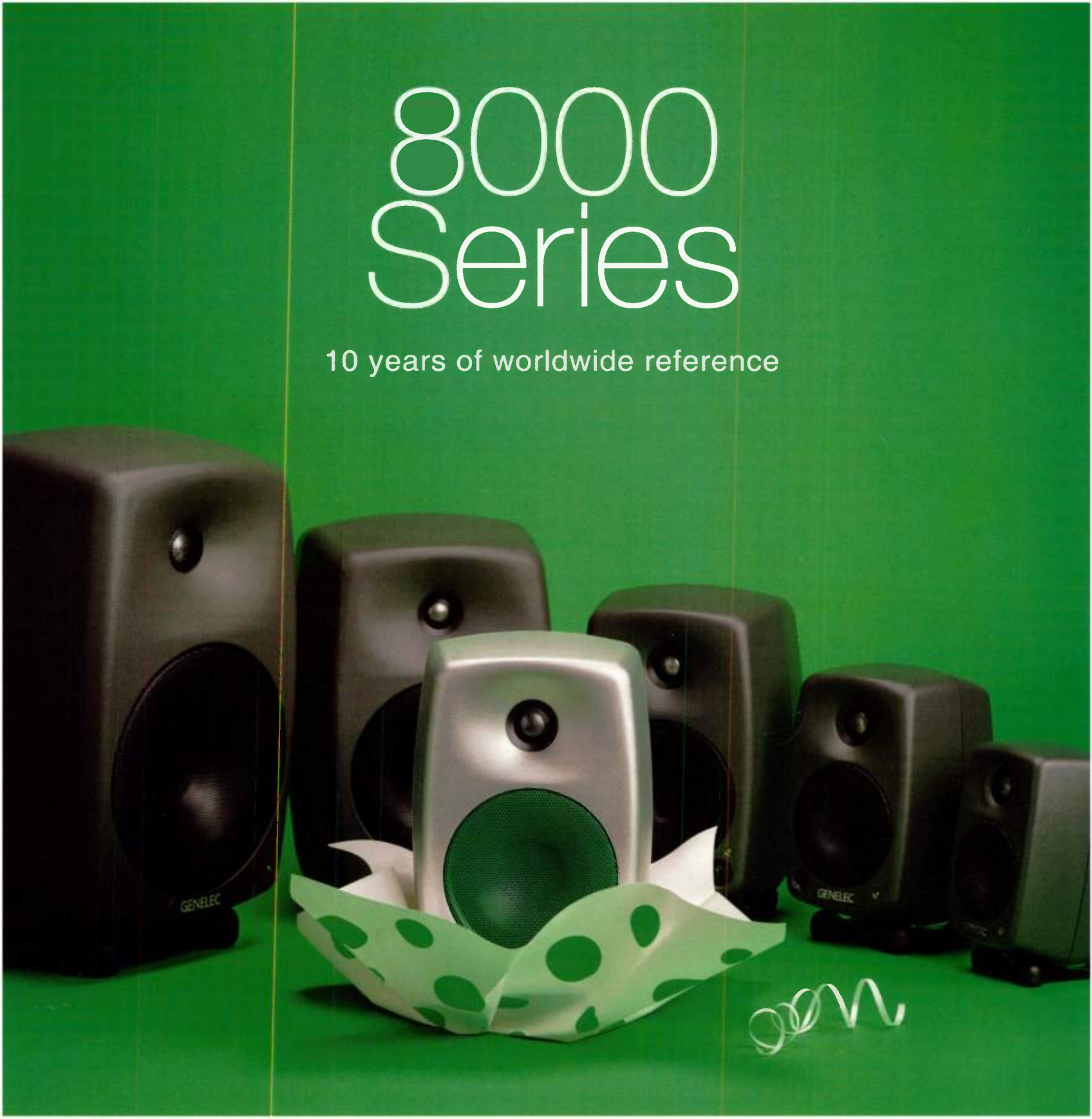
As a messenger, I picked up comedian Don Rickles' standard poodles, Joker and Clown, two male dogs that barely fit in my 1978 Honda Civic. They humped each other all the way to the vet, providing comedic relief at stoplights along Rodeo Drive. I made deliveries to voice-over genius Mel Blanc, musicians Verdine White and Johnny Rivers, met actor Tony Curtis, dropped papers to actor Carroll O'Connor, movie mogul Ted Fields, and film cans at Tom Laughlin's house. I took legal papers to the home of billionaire and media maven Jerry Perenchio, who literally opened the cookie jar on his counter and pulled out a wad of cash that he handed to me as a tip. I delivered to film composer Michael Small, who was in town writing the score for *The Postman Always Rings Twice* in a room overlooking the beach in Santa Monica. After that delivery, I did some research on his work, and as luck had it, was dispatched to Small a second time where I was able to sit at the piano with him and ask him questions about the score of *Parallax View*. All this interaction proved over and over that this is where I needed to stay for as long as it took.

Film music, composition and songwriting were early interests as I sought my path in music. I studied arranging and composition with Albert Harris and Dick Grove, and songwriting with Jack Segal, who held invite-only songwriting workshops. I studied lyric writing with Molly-Ann Leiken and Phyllis Molinary, networking all the while with other writers.

But it was building studios that got me centered and finally on the right track. I was hired by studio and gear designer Eduardo Fayad and built two rooms, including Lighthouse Recorders in the Valley. It's there I got my first staff gig assisting engineer Terry Christian and producer Michael Omartian, who were working on Stephen Bishop's *Bowling in Paris*. That was 1988, and just yesterday I went to a Vandy football game with Michael, Terry and engineer Steve Marcantonio. Relationships that started 26 years ago, plus a new one—I love it.

At the Lighthouse I got to work with the top names in music: Quincy Jones, David Foster, Humberto Gatica, Mick Guzauski, Burt Bacharach, John Fogerty, Natalie Cole, Whitney Houston, George Duke, Erik Zobler, Ray Charles, Kenny G., Steve Lukather, Michael Landau, Jeff Porcaro, Nathan East, J. R. Robinson, Jerry Hey and many more. I was in heaven. One night, I was alone at the studio waiting for David Foster, who was dropping by to do some work. He handed me the keys to his Jag and asked me to get a reel of 2-inch out of the trunk. On three tracks was a direct dupe of Nat King Cole's *Unforgettable* master recording. We sat there and listened to the isolated tracks. David pointed out the leakage of the orchestra on Nat's vocal track, which was all done live to three tracks, as many early records were. Hearing Nat soloed was delicious.

I never wanted to leave L.A.; only the 1994 Northridge earthquake unseated me. I didn't know it then, but it was time to go. I ended up building new careers based on my L.A. experiences, which I continue to use every day in my interaction with readers, students, artists, musicians and everyone else. Randy Newman said it best: I Love L.A. ■

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