

LIVE RECORDING TODAY

Some of us will remember the excitement of buying classic live albums by bands we'd recently seen on tour. Back in the golden era of *Yessongs* and *The Song Remains The Same*, the only way a band could make a quality live album was to hire a fully-packed, home-from-home recording mobile at considerable cost.

It's all so different today. While mobiles continue to be the premium live option for many leading record producers, the availability of today's more compact solutions has provided artists with a more direct and simple method of capturing

shows for instant commercial release — an important revenue stream at a time when income from regular recordings is harder to come by than ever.

At the end of November, Simple Minds became one of the latest bands to have official live on-tour recordings on tastefully branded USB Flash drives marketed to fans via the www.concert-online.com website and at venue merchandising stalls.

The range of enabling technologies is growing all the time and this month's Market Focus concentrates on a selection of currently available products...



JOECO BLACKBOX RECORDER

Established in 2007 by Joe Bull, the former owner and MD of SADIe, Cambridge-based JoeCo released its innovative Blackbox Recorder last year — a 19", 1U rack-mounted unit that captures live multitrack audio (24 tracks at up to 24-bit/96kHz) without the need to have a laptop or digital audio workstation (DAW) at the performance.

One of the most affordable, compact and convenient solutions in its class, the Blackbox Recorder attaches to the insert points of any live mixing console and records in broadcast

quality WAV format on to a regular USB2, FAT32 formatted drive. A 500GB drive will store around 20 hours of 24-track material at 24-bit/96kHz.

Ideally operated by the FOH engineer, the Blackbox Recorder's outputs are fed back to the console's insert returns, enabling any console to have a virtual soundcheck facility. Eight insert returns are also brought out to TRS jacks on the rear of the unit, allowing additional outboard processors to be plugged into insert points.

Ready to record just 10 seconds after power-up, its simple user interface and screen

display enable the engineer to focus on the live mix, without additional distractions, safe in the knowledge that secure audio capture and uninterrupted signal flow are always maintained.

For live recordings requiring more than 24 channels, up to four Blackbox Recorder units can be linked together. Slave units take their commands from the master, ensuring that all recordings are synchronous, sample accurate and start on the same sample.

After recording a performance, the hard drive can be plugged directly into any Mac/PC-based DAW for editing and mixing, without the need for file conversion or copying.

The winner of a 2009 PLASA Award for Innovation and recently used on tour by guitarist Richard Thompson, the Blackbox Recorder is distributed in the UK by Sound Technology Ltd, and by FullScaleAV in the United States.

www.soundtech.co.uk • www.fullscaleav.com
www.CapturingPerformance.com



Below: Recording via Allen & Heath's iLive system; Gloria Estefan engineer Cheryl Preston has a great out front solution with the KT 9696 hard drive recorder.



KLARK TEKNIK DN 9696

In 2007, when Klark Teknik showed a pre-production unit of the DN 9696, the industry's first high resolution hard disk recorder for live performance environment, it was received like manna from heaven by sound engineers and artists alike.

For many pros it was the first time they had access to an instant, convenient, high resolution method of recording rehearsals and concerts which could then be used for either archive purposes, virtual soundchecks, TV playback, DVD soundtracks or even commercial releases.

Occupying a 5U rack space, the DN9696 offers 96 tracks of 96kHz audio (BWA format) at 24-bit and nine hours internal recording time. It uniquely features mirrored drive capability, allowing simultaneous internal and external HD recording for real time back-up and redundancy, removing the need for time-consuming copying at the end of a concert.

It is packaged as a simple-to-use, stand-alone single box solution. Other features include both front panel and GUI operation, dual redundant

AES50 connections, and full integration with Midas digital systems.

At the heart of the DN9696 is a customised version of the SADiE MTR software and DSP core, with added features specifically for the live environment, including a front panel solo/PFL headphone output for monitoring and simple transport controls for play/stop/record functions.

Many shows on Latin pop legend Gloria Estefan's farewell tour were recorded on the DN 9696 last year by engineer Cheryl Preston. She said of the experience: "I love it; I had it up and running straight out of the box and its ease of use is unbelievable. Having a multitrack of the show as it's supposed to sound is wonderful because we can pull it up, tune the PA, and even if we only have an hour, we're up and running."

"And for recording the shows, rather than have a truck and a bunch of people turning up, and making sure they understand what's going on, there's one little box, and in three minutes you're ready to go. It connects straight into our Midas XL8 and is practically foolproof."

www.klarkteknik.com

ALLEN & HEATH

Recently launched by Allen & Heath is a series of audio networking and interface cards for the iLive family, offering a range of possibilities including multitrack recording, with A&H's proprietary ACE (Audio Control Ethernet) link, EtherSound, ADAT, Aviom and now MADI interfaces.

French band Air are currently using iLive's MADI interface on their European tour to record shows every night on to a computer. It was also used at the *VoodooFest 2009* in New Orleans to provide broadcast/recording facilities, creating two MADI recording streams to RME/Nuendo and SSL/Pro Tools.

American Music & Sound's Dave Lewty explained: "We had an A&H iDR10 MixRack on stage fitted with a MADI card, linked by ACE to an iLive-144 control surface installed in an OB truck. We ran a BNC cable from the truck to the rack from a MOTU clock and set the console to receive external clock."

"We had two multitracks in the truck for Pro Tools and Nuendo, both of these were synced to the unicorn. We ran two BNC MADI-out cables

BLACKBOX RECORDER

a multi-track for the 21st century

CAPTURING LIVE PERFORMANCE
24 TRACK • 24 BIT • 96kHz



- Capture live multi-track audio without taking a computer to the performance
- Can attach to the insert points of any live console to provide virtual soundchecking as well
- Balanced i/o version also available
- Records onto a regular USB2 drive. Over 20 hours of 24-track material at 24 Bit / 96kHz on a 500GB drive
- Simple user interface lets the live engineer focus on the mix
- Fail safe features for secure audio capture
- USB drive plugs straight into a Digital Audio Workstation for instant editing. No file transfer. No wasted time!

www.CapturingPerformance.com

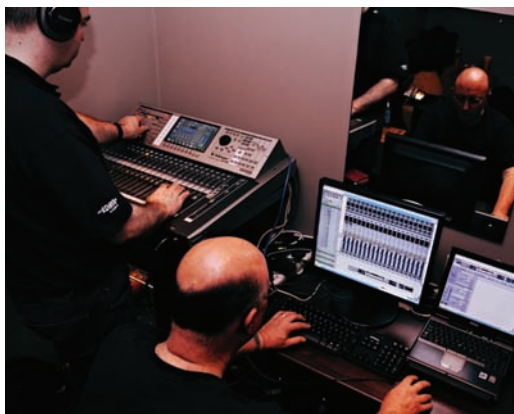
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Below: Martin Thomas and Simon Kenning record The Joy Formidable at London's The Garage using Roland's V-Mixing system. Location Factory's DiGiCo SD8; a Cadac J-Type console in the LMS Mobile's refurbished control room.



from the iDR10 — one to Nuendo and one to Pro Tools — and two BNC cables from Nuendo and Pro Tools to MADI in on the iDR10.”

For high channel count recording, the EtherSound option can be chosen. The MADI, EtherSound and ADAT optical option cards for iLive provide all the flexibility to handle any pro multi-channel recording requirements you would typically encounter.

www.allen-heath.com

ROLAND V-MIXING SYSTEM

An RSS M-400 48-channel digital console, complete with Digital Snake and Cakewalk Sonar and REAC software, has been used to record a live album for indie rockers The Joy Formidable.

Backstage at north London's famous Garage venue, Roland Systems Group technical wizards Martin Thomas and Simon Kenning had good reason to appreciate the super-compact footprint of the digital M-400 V-Mixer console, which enabled them to fit an entire live recording set-up as well as two engineers and a three-piece band into a 10'x 8' dressing room.

The RSS technology maintained a low profile in the club. The use of a single S-4000 Digital Snake stage box meant that the live recording team caused less than minimal

disruption to the venue and the band's FOH engineer, yet was able to capture a live performance in 48kHz 24-bit broadcast-quality audio.

Using the Digital Snake 'stand-alone', the system could have delivered an even more impressive 40 channels of 96kHz 24-bit audio.

Martin Thomas said of the Cakewalk Sonar recording package: "It's a very good capture medium, even if you ultimately want to use Pro Tools for post-production, although Sonar and the VS700 would be our chosen option. In

hardware terms, we brought in an M-400 console, plus Digital Snake, rack-mount PC, a laptop and an Edirol R-44 recorder, which added up to a superbly portable, highly cost-effective mobile recording rig.

"The CAT5 REAC ASIO interface actually allowed us three mixes: a clean pre-fade mix direct from stage, a post-fade mix, and a back-up. The R-44 captured a 'live' stereo mix from the M-400 for reference."

Simon Kenning pointed out that, with the addition of another M-400 and stage box, the system could be used for FOH control, monitoring and multitrack recording. "This kind of versatility means that you can make your money back very quickly if you use M-400 as part of a rental business proposition."

www.rolandsg.co.uk

SADiE LRX2

The SADiE LRX2 location audio workstation was selected by Richmond Studios Productions' Toby Alington and Richard Lancaster to record both the *Children In Need Concert* at the London's Royal Albert Hall and the *F1 Rocks* event that followed the *Singapore Grand Prix*.

Said Alington: "SADiE is one of just two workstation systems that have never let us down. For these concerts, we simply plugged in MADI, Wordclock and timecode, and the system ran perfectly. The ability to record to two discrete drives is a reassurance, not least that when you've finished the gig you've got a first-generation back-up already done."

www.sadie.com

DiGiCo SD8

A year ago, Finnish band Eppu Normaali enjoyed a hugely successful tour with a pair of DiGiCo SD8 consoles supplied by Akun Tehdas, the band's own audio production company owned by the band.

So successful was the tour that TomFloor Production, an associate company run by producer and engineer Tomi Pietilä, has since purchased its own console for Location Factory — the world's first SD8-equipped mobile recording facility.

"There were a few options which I considered, but very soon it became obvious that the SD8 had more pre-amps, more power, more everything compared with other brands," said Pietilä.

"Having used the SD8 to make Eppu Normaali's live recordings, I already knew that the pre-amps sound so good that it feels like having an old British analogue desk, not a brand new one. And with Akun Tehdas already owning DiGiCo consoles, it is also easy to build expanded systems, if needed."

He continued: "For every piece of live or location work I've done with the SD8, it has been very reliable. I don't remember ever having to restart the console after set-up. It completely satisfies my requirements, whatever kind of recording I'm doing."

www.digico.org

LMS MOBILE STUDIO

Finally, if a vintage flavour is more to your taste, look no further than the recently-revived LMS Mobile.

Founded in 1972 by Faces bassist Ronnie Lane after he imported an Airstream trailer from the States, its clients during the '70s included Led Zeppelin (*Houses Of The Holy*), The Who (*Quadrophenia*), Bad Company, Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, Mott The Hoople, Bob Marley, Marc Bolan, David Bowie and Van Morrison.

Now fully refurbished, the LMS is under new ownership and features a classic Cadac J-Type analogue recording console within its great-sounding control room.

Despite its unrivalled hallmark, the LMS is available at surprisingly attractive rates to record your gig in any location.

www.lmsmobilestudio.com

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