

When Insects Eat Your Studio – What Can You Do?

RECORDING

The magazine for the recording musician

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Apogee Duet Interface
Arturia Analog Factory Experience
Sugar Bytes Effectrix
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Soundware by Big Fish Audio and Loops On Demand

Studio Secrets
on Bass Recording



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KRK Rokit G2 and VXT Monitors



Your studio

Is it all it can be? Are you making the most of your setup, getting the best return for your money and effort?

Failure or success, chore or joy—they depend on any number of items large and small that we investigate in this issue, with good advice from Devon Brent and Eric Ferguson.

If your needs and ambitions go beyond your existing setup, you'll be fascinated by Stephen Hart's report on the planning and installation of his new studio. Sure, it's a commercial facility—he's paid his dues for many years and is a consummate pro—but he took into account the changing times and planned it as a more or less one-room studio. Little did he know that he'd need to switch to Plan B—well, I won't give it away, his report starts on page 26.

Then there are those risks to our studios that we easily overlook but should know to guard against. When termites ate Jon Bare's studio, it was time for drastic action—his report starts on page 76.

Of course there are times when a commercial studio has what you need, like the space and facilities to record an entire group, and you need to make the most of it while the meter is running. André Fratto did just that when he produced Britt Neal's CD *Over That Bridge*—read how he did it and what challenges he overcame in bringing it in on time and under budget.

Have you considered expanding the use of your studio? Branching out into areas for which your equipment may already be sufficient? One area where expertise is at least as important as a few key pieces of specialized gear is that of forensic audio. Good ears are required, as is a good business sense, and lots of patience.

This was brought home to me recently when Prof. Rich Sanders (an occasional contributor to this magazine) invited me to attend the AES (Audio Engineering Society) 33rd International Conference, on Audio Forensics, held right here in Denver. Of the speakers I heard, some from as far as London (Metropolitan Police), Copenhagen and Moscow, there were several who had moved into this specialized field from more general audio backgrounds. They deal with fascinating problems in their work, problems that make our kind, things like eq-ing a shrill vocal or filtering out some low-frequency rumble sound like child's play.

Try "Forensic Analysis of the Audibility of Female Screams", or "Deciphering Gunshot Recordings"—just two of the discussion topics. And participants were invited to come to the conference with their solutions to previously assigned competition challenges—like isolating a speaker's voice from the general chatter recorded in a populated public place, or filtering out the waterfall in the background of a recording to unmask a human voice. Maybe you have enough of a Sherlock Holmes instinct in you to enter this field and, eventually, become the trusted (and well-paid) expert for attorneys or local law enforcement?

We thank the following readers whose studios are depicted on this month's cover: (l to r): John (JD) Stefan (info@catwerk.com), Edd Gryder (www.recordingedge.com), Raphael DeGiorgio (www.diamonddreamsmusic.com), and Joel Gonzalez (ganzo@projectstudio66.com).

Whatever your studio is like and whichever is your area of expertise, may the many articles and reviews of this issue lead to—

Happy Recording.

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By Rick Barrio Dill

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Part 2: Rock-Hop Guitar

Whether the music you deal with is Rock, Soul, Jazz or Hip-Hop, inevitably these styles are being influenced by one another, more and more every day. This is also true with respect to recording these new cross-genres. Samples and electronic sounds are more prevalent than ever.

Keeping this in mind, I like approaching these types of sounds just as if I had recorded that instrument, with the player and his instrument right there in the studio with me. I find that a little tweaking to sometimes sub-par samples can make the difference between a “stock” sounding track and one that is truly unique, whether its aggressive eq, over-ambient reverb, or even adding things such as distortion or overdrive with re-amping.

From kick to guitars

Last month I wrote about ways to try and combine real-world recording philosophies with modern sample/electronic techniques as it pertains to the kick drum. In the same way as adding a real kick-drum sample to an 808 can help give it more “beater” like a real rock kick drum, sampled guitar sounds and traditionally recorded “live” electric guitars can live in harmony on the same track as well. It just comes down to the approach on how we shape and place those sounds.

Over the last few years I have been starting to do more “Rock-Hops”. This probably can mean several things, but I generally start with full session tracks (or stems) that have previously

been recorded as Rock or Pop, and we strip out the verse vocals and re-record with Hip-Hop vocalists (or MCs) rhyming over the top. Usually, we keep the original chorus vocals and melody and have the MC or rapper improvise over the original chorus as well. Frequently, I even remix the tracks further and strip down the original music bed and lay new sounds over the top to come up with unique hybrid versions of songs.

Recently I was producing a Rock-Hop remix from rock/pop artist Duff Ferguson with guest MC Bradley Keys. I needed to fuse the originally recorded “Rock” guitars with a new Hip-Hop



drum beat that I put together as well as an acoustic guitar groove loop and new B3 organ line that we created. We wanted the sound to be different and dance oriented, but not so far apart that the new and original sounds seemed like they didn't belong together. With some hyper-aggressive eq'ing and specific panning lanes, I finally was able to get the sounds to live together in the track, but also to stand out if needed.

Acoustic with eq

Starting with the acoustic guitar groove loop we created, it was necessary for me to really thin out the sound on the low end as well as boost the top end a bunch, to get it to cut through and edge out a bit. You can see the roll-off of the low end in Figure 1 with also

some +5 dB boost to the eq at 2 kHz and a +3 shelf at 4 kHz to get it to stick out.

I also had some relatively calm compression behind that at 4:1 (Figure 2) and I sent the track into a fair amount of reverb to establish its own environment (Figure 3). You can hear this in the sound clip entitled AKU Groove Loop eq-comp-verb.mp3, available from Recording's website on the Downloads page.



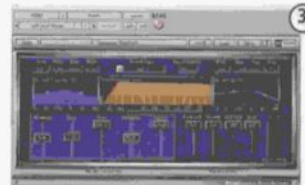
Acoustic with panning

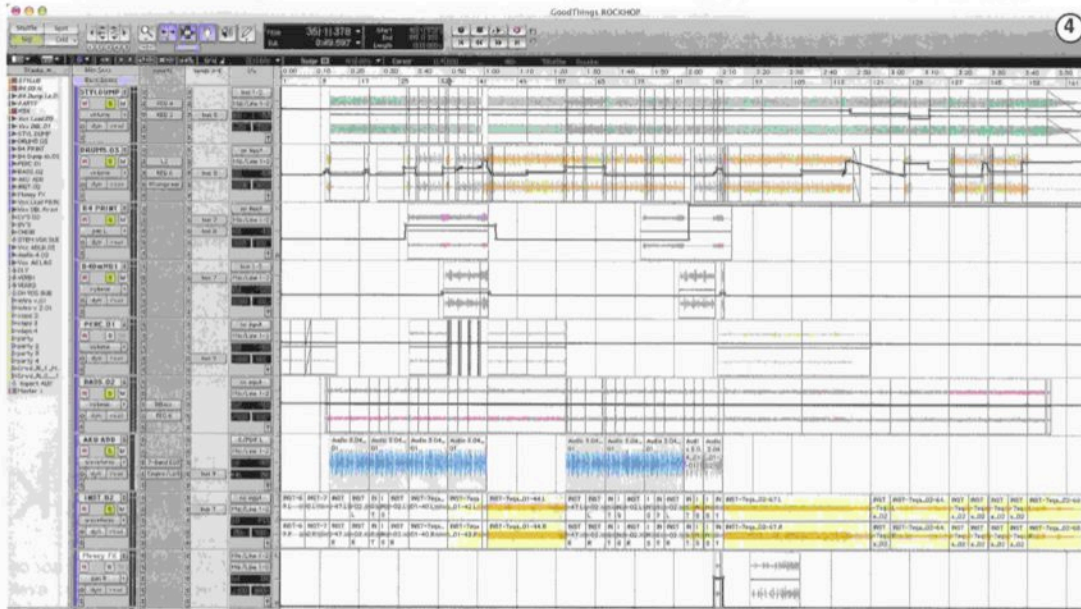
The real big key for me in getting this acoustic to work in the end was simply panning it at 50 to the left. Once I did that, it seemed to sit perfectly relative to the B3 overlaid part (which was stereo center) and the electric guitar stem (labeled INST.02 in Figure 4) that I chose to bring in only towards the end of the verses and had panned 50 to the right.

You can hear these 3 different parts come together in the second sound clip accompanying this article, Aku-Elec-B3 parts.mp3.

Listen to all

In the last of our sound clips, Full Rock Hop Snip.mp3, you can then hear these same parts all come together



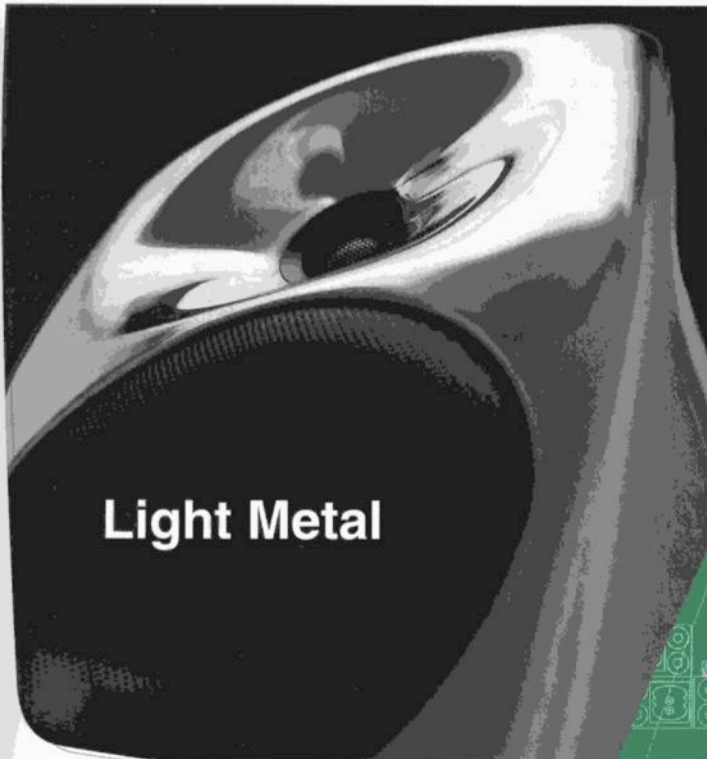


with the vocals/rhymes, new drum loop and original chorus drums that I hyper-compressed, limited and eq'd to match the edgy quality of my newly created drum loop. I only bring in the full original drums at chorus one to add to the stew. Otherwise, my basic Hip-Hop

drum loop works great for the "beat vibe" we were looking for.

You can listen to the original full track of "Good Things" as well as the "Good Things Rock-Hop Remix" that I produced at www.myspace.com/allduffmusic.

Rick Barrio Dill (dill@recordingmag.com) lives and works in the Los Angeles area, when he's not out on tour with his band 2nd Day Crush (www.2nddaycrush.com).



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