

The remarkable Portadrive is here!

The HHB Portadrive PDR2000 is now in store and attracting a great deal of attention.

The Portadrive is PD-4 / Nagra 4.2 sized and weighs 5 kg without battery, so it's roughly 1 kg lighter than a Nagra. It comes with a mains power supply and a 50 watt Lithium Ion battery (NP1 style) which can be charged inside the recorder. An optional canvas bag is available, and this can have its pocket section removed.

The three displays on the Portadrive are a strong feature of the machine.

On the top panel is a small backlit LCD display, rather like a miniature laptop. This is used to set up the machine's functions such as the recording channels and the parameters of their associated inputs, disc information, recording session and metadata, time code format, bus mixing, and many other settings.

The front panel of the machine has two displays. On the left side a coloured LED display that shows input or replay levels on all 8



channels, clipping and limiting indication and which channels are armed to record.

The central front panel display indicates various functions operated by the 6 'faders' below this display. These 'faders' are in fact rotary devices that work as channel faders or rotary switches. In fader mode a series of green LED's placed around the perimeter of each knob clearly indicates the setting, and of course can be seen

easily in low-light situations.

This centre panel is a backlit LCD that clearly indicates channel setting, levels, monitoring options, power, various times and take information.

A 2.5" 40G hard drive is supplied in a removable caddy, and with an optional docking station would offer a simple rushes delivery option for long term shoots. An optional DVD-RAM burner is also available for rushes downloads and backups.

The Portadrive can read or generate all time-code frame rates and synchronise to word clock, video sync and digital inputs. The machine will even chase from external timecode when interfaced using its Sony 9-pin RS422 port.

The Portadrive is robust, compact, and designed for high quality location recording.

Contact [Sound Techniques](#) for further details or for a hands-on demonstration.

New premises, new logo, better service

January 14th was an auspicious day for Sound Techniques when we opened our new store at 136B Newton Rd, Newton, Auckland. Finally we have the space and location to serve our clients in the professional manner we envisaged when we started up in the early 90's. We are buoyed by the positive response. We hope the move contributes to improving the standing of the craft of recording sound.

To celebrate we are introducing a new logo

and will have the initial outfitting of the store completed by mid March. Plans for the future include a demonstration area – and we have more surprises down the track.

For those who haven't called in, the address is 136B Newton Rd, Newton in the block on the corner of Newton Rd and St Benedicts St. Entry is off St Benedicts St on the same side as *Benediction*. New phone number (09) 366 1750, fax (09) 366 1749.



IN THE CAN

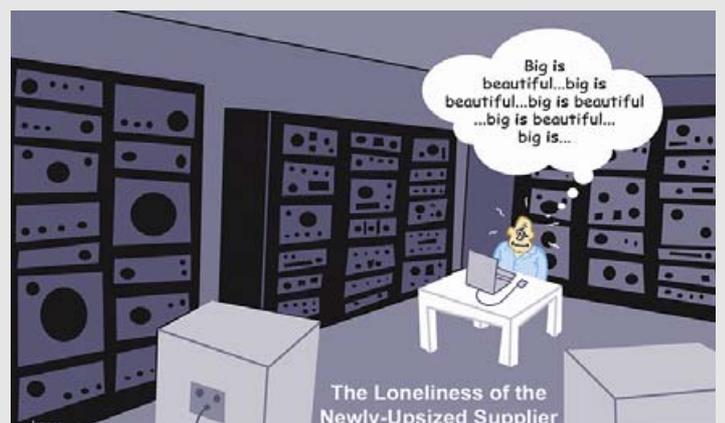
We finally did it. We moved.

Both Mike and I are enthusiastic about presenting audio recording in a professional manner. The transition over 10 years from back bedroom via home office to our new store gives us great delight.

We're confident both the music and motion picture industries will grow and develop. It won't be simple and we look forward to the challenge of adapting to new ideas and ways of doing things. At Sound Techniques we try to anticipate these changes and support our clients with the benefits of our research.

We've got no shortage of ideas on what to do next (despite the cartoon :) and we look forward to the prospect of helping each of you from our new base in Newton. Enjoy the newsletter and call Sound Techniques when you want 'sound advice'.

Stephen Buckland, General Manager



TL Audio Unveils New Ivory 5060 Preset Valve Compressor

The 5060 Preset Valve Compressor is the latest addition to the best selling Ivory 2 series.

The 5060 couples a dual channel compressor with a high quality discrete mic preamp, plus stereo line and instrument inputs. The compressor stage features a selection of fifteen vocal, instrument and mix presets, plus a 'manual' mode that allows access to fully variable control of threshold, ratio, attack/release, gain make-up and soft/hard knee modes.

While not a direct replacement for the FAT-1 and FAT-2, the 5060 does feature both preset and manual compression modes and can be used as both a mono/stereo front end tracking unit and as a stereo mix-down processor, making it extremely flexible.

The preamp stage offers a total gain range of



100dB, with 48V phantom power and a 90Hz low cut filter. A single illuminated VU meter monitors the output level or the compressor gain reduction for both channels, with Drive and Peak LEDs providing a visual indication of valve drive and clipping respectively. Both balanced and unbalanced line outputs are provided which can be used simultaneously.

A 'Fat EQ' contour switch is provided in the output stage, which provides a subtle lift to the LF and HF response of the 5060, while dipping the

mid-range. This adds extra weight and presence to the signal without affecting the overall output level. The optional DO-2 digital output card allows 24-bit A/D conversion via a coaxial SPDIF output, with selectable 44.1 or 48 kHz sample rates and an external word clock connection.

Like all other TL Audio compressors, the gain control element of the 5060 compressor stage is based around a special transconductance amplifier, which avoids the use of VCAs and helps contribute to the smooth, open sound of the unit, along with the dual triode 12AX7 valve stage that lies at the heart of each channel signal path.

For information on the 5060, or any of the TL Audio range see www.tludio.co.uk or [contact Sound Techniques](#).

Ultrasono – only the best for your ears: Part 2

Paul Field and Isaac Lim follow last issue's review of Ultrasono's more professionally-oriented headphones with a look at headphones for consumer and hi-fi listening.

HFI-550 DJ One (\$215 + GST)

The HFI-550 range provided us with the most consternation – both the DJ One and the Beatmaster headphones appeared to be the same, albeit with cosmetic differences. However after a period of adjustment, slight differences became noticeable.



PF – An extremely good headphone. The DJ One exhibits most of the tonal characteristics of the 550 Beatmaster, but is particularly suited to bass frequencies, with a noticeable lift below 100Hz. Designed for use in a consistently loud environment, the 550 DJ One's have a number of interesting features specific to their use. They are significantly louder than their counterparts (103dB), and display very good isolation, handy in a consistently loud environment like a club, while the added driver sensitivity/loudness endears them to the 'one-ear-or-two' approach. The DJ One also comes with a coily cable designed to aid freedom of movement, which makes them ideal for busy DJ's. An added bonus is the white headphones and logo, which must look fairly interesting under black light!

IL – Not much to say except that they are awesome! Comfortable, with extremely good stereo imaging for those trance tracks and the bass is more than strong enough for the DJ to accurately monitor their mix! I would thoroughly recommend them to DJ's or lovers of electronica. You can't get

dance tracks sounding any better on this sort of budget!

HFI-650 DVD Edition (\$355 + GST)

PF – Again, good and airy. A slightly more spatial mix than the 550's, with a noticeably tighter, rounder bass that is pushing 'air', (i.e. the kick drum seems to push air before it like a stage kick). However, the lower mid-range frequencies are not as present compared to the 550's, probably because the DVD edition is designed to compensate for bass heavy DVD blockbusters like 'Pearl Harbour'.

IL – The most immediate thing I noticed was the strong presence of the upper-mids from the string section, which at times almost covered the vocals. Spatial imaging is extremely good. These headphones more than deliver on the Ultrasono promise.



HFI-2000G (\$355 + GST)

PF – The HFI-2000G, with the inclusion of velour earpads for comfort, seems to be primarily suited to hi-fi listening. The fit is looser and the headphones display less isolation than the more studio-suited 550 or 650 series, as well as a tendency for the listener to perceive a tonal change if the drivers are accidentally moved around the head. Bass is less defined, less punchy, but vocals are crystal clear, especially when recorded with reverb, which is much more noticeable through the HFI-2000G's than through any other



model of Ultrasono headphones. Mixes are produced in a much more spatial format that can be attributed to the combination of an open-back principle with Ultrasono's patented S-Logic system.

In general, the Ultrasono range can be divided in two:

1. For semi-professional or professional monitoring, tracking or live sound use, the HFI-15G, HFI-550 Beatmaster and HFI-650 Trackmaster. These headphones are low impedance (32 ohms) and a higher SPL (c. 100-103 dB) that caters well for noisy environments which require a high level of isolation as well as good frequency reproduction

2. For consumer hi-fi and DVD reproduction; HFI-550 DJ One, HFI-650 DVD series and the HFI-2000G. These headphones exhibit a greater frequency range (up to 25,000 kHz in the HFI-2000G) and a higher impedance (75 ohms) which makes for a more measured dynamic range.

Ultimately, Ultrasono's marketing claim is actually borne out by the performance of its headphones, in a market choking with 'innovative' products that rely more on marketing savoir faire than on technological brilliance.

So whether you are looking for a hi-fi headphone or something more isolated and durable for a recording or monitoring situation, Ultrasono has a range of headphones that can cater for all applications.

Why not try some out at Sound Techniques today?

For part 1 of this review see:

www.soundtq.co.nz/newsletter/DDDec03/

For more info see: www.ultrasono.com

For an independent views search 'Ultrasono' with Google.

Lectrosonics MM400A and UCR411A systems are versatile

Users praise the audio quality of Lectrosonics 24-bit digital hybrid radio mic with its user-friendly display system and built-in scanner which helps avoid conflicts whilst working amongst the 393 television transmissions that we have to share the spectrum with.



Now Lectrosonics have waved their magic wand again and produced more miracles.

MM400A Transmitter

This transmitter is a 96g belt-pack unit for use with 400A series receivers.

It is very small, watertight and housed in teflon-impregnated aluminium case, thus very suitable for high-risk situations or even rigs that simply need a small transmitter.

Available in blocks of 25.5 MHz and switchable just like the UM200 series.

Switchable in 100 KHz steps over its assigned block giving 256 frequencies.

Output is 100 mW, derived power from a single AA cell, with alkaline giving 2 hours and lithium

giving 4 1/2 hours of use.

Bi-colour LED's are used to indicate power and signal levels and this clever little marvel can be quickly programmed by the user to work as a Series 100 or Series 200 or Series 400, or as a Famous European brand transmitter – provided you have a receiver on the same block or frequency.

UCR411A Receiver

Lectrosonics has developed an additional receiver in the 400 series. The UCR411a simply mirrors the versatility of the MM400a transmitter and can be configured to receive Series 100/200/400 transmissions or to work with the Famous European transmitter. This receiver is a diversity type, intended for pouch operation or for use in a Quad Box.

Now we have both transmitter and receiver that work in conventional analogue or hybrid digital modes and emulate four different series of radio systems.

You can move forward with Lectrosonics technology by contacting [Sound Techniques](#).

Reasons to use Sound Techniques

In February 2004 Lectrosonics and Sound Techniques agreed to a new servicing arrangement.

While under warranty all products supplied by Sound Techniques will be serviced by Lectrosonics at the factory. When out of warranty Sound Techniques will encourage its clients to have any Lectrosonics repairs done by Lectrosonics. The return freight will be paid for by

Lectrosonics and the factory is aiming at a three-week turnaround – which is faster than we can offer here. As Lectrosonics radio mics get more sophisticated, with many of their functions on pre-programmed chips, such backup from the factory will be essential. We can only offer this service to clients who buy new Lectrosonics radio mics through Sound Techniques.

SHORT ENDS

Academy Awards

Congratulations to the Oscar nominees for Sound Mixing of *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. Christopher Boyes, Michael Semanick, Michael Hedges and Hammond Peek. Hammond Peek has now been nominated three times for an Oscar and Mike Hedges twice for the Oscar.

What a line-up of New Zealanders in the nominations. Good Luck.

NZ Film Awards

Congratulations too for the 'Best Contribution to a Soundtrack' at the NZ Film Awards 2003 to Tim Prebble, Dave Whitehead, Gethin Greagh, for work on *The Locals*.

New Customer Support Manager

Sound Techniques has employed Gavin Ludlow as new Customer Support Manager. He starts here on March 8th. Gavin's recent background includes working at the Rock Shop and for Buzz Audio. He completed his Diploma of Audio Engineering at SAE Auckland in 2003. While Gavin has limited experience with location sound equipment he brings a range of related skills which we will make good use of.

Paul Field and Ee Isaac Lim have both done such a great job working part time that we postponed the decision on a permanent replacement for Nathan McDonald for twelve months.

Thanks Isaac and Paul for a year of part-time job-sharing, of what is meant to be full-time position.

Got a DV camera?

There's less excuse for bad sound with the introduction of two mixers for DV camera use.

The **PSC DV Promix3**, 3-channel ENG mixer, is now in stock with most of the features of mixers costing three times this. List price \$895 + GST

Call Sound Techniques or see:

www.professionalsound.com/catalog/DV/Promix.html for more information.

We also stock the **Beachtek DXA-8 'Ultimate'** adapter for the owners of DV camcorders that have manual audio controls such as the Sony VX2100, Canon GL2, etc (or DAT walkman, Discman etc). The DXA-8 is a superb front end for DV camcorders with:

- Dual 48 volt phantom power for professional microphones
 - No fuss limiters on each channel
 - Easy to set up – only requires the adjustment of one gain control for each channel
 - Limit indicating LED's ensure proper gain setting.
- Call Sound Techniques or see: www.beachtek.com/dxa8.html for a demonstration.

IN THE DIGESTIBLE DOMAIN

Crumbed Fish

The Manager gives you his Saturday night standby recipe.

Fish and chips are often a disappointment. The grease and salt overwhelm what's left of the flavour of the pre-cooked fish and the pre-frozen chips.

Here's the way to make your own. Thanks in part to Ray McVinnie.

Fish

125g panko crumbs. (Japanese breadcrumbs found in the 'International' section of the supermarket)

Finely grated zest of lemon

1 teaspoon of crushed garlic

4 fillets very fresh firm white fish, skinned and boned, about 200g each (whether lemon fish or snapper, it'll be delicious)

Flour, for dusting

1 egg beaten with 1 cup milk

Olive oil, for frying

Mix the panko crumbs, zest and garlic and set aside in a pile on a large plate.

Dust each fillet in flour, then dip completely in the egg mixture and finally place in the pile of crumbs.

Cover the fish with some of the crumbs and, with the flat of your hand, gently push the crumbs into the surface of the fillet. Turn over and repeat.

Shake off any excess crumbs

Either fry in hot olive oil until crisp, golden and cooked through, or use the chef's trick and finish the fish in the oven, which makes sense if you're cooking potatoes as well.

Recipe for chips next week...

END CREDITS:

Get well Andy Thomas; Thanks to Paul and Isaac, Scott Creighton (AUT), Jeff Cameron, Clayton Carpinter, Keith Lambert, Greenstone TV, NZ Idol, Cream TV, Magic Lantern, Bruce McPherson, MAINZ, South Seas Film and Television School, Anthony Spear, TVNZ, Ben Vanderpoel.



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