

Darren Tate in Future Music interview

A studio breakdown of international DJ and record producer Darren Tate

MIXING

Mackie D8B Console
Mackie / Sony A-DAT I/O Card
Mackie / Sony Analogue I/O Card
Mackie Word Clock Card
Yamaha PROMIX 01 18 Ch. Digital Mixer
Pioneer DJM-600 DJ Mixer
Fostex Model 2016 Line Mixer

The D8B was a good call six years ago (when I used to run lots of equipment live) but I'm afraid it's somewhat dated now. The compressors never really worked very well and the EQ and converters aren't exactly the warmest around (and forget driving it). It's mainly used as a hub for monitoring these days and will probably be replaced in the very near future.

SUB

MONITORING

Quested VS3208 Midfield Active Monitors
Yamaha MSP-5 Nearfield Monitors
Yamaha MSP-3 Nearfield Monitors
Yamaha NS10M Nearfield Monitors
Sampson Servo 260 Amplifier

I still love the 10M's even though they sometimes give me a headache. I think I must have blown about twenty pairs of bass drivers. The 3208's are superb – round and tight they're great speakers for getting a vibe on a mix. As far as I'm concerned the more monitors the merrier, only thing is there's only so much room..

SUB

COMPUTER

Apple G4 733 + 512MB / 40GB INT. Computer
Apple 22" Cinema Widescreen Disp Monitor
Lacie 80GB Firewire Hard Drive External Backup Hard Drive
ATTO Dual. Ch. SCSI Controller Card
Glyph Ultrastar Dual 18GB External Audio Hard Drive
Digidesign ADAT Bridge I/O 16 Ch. ADAT I/O
Digidesign Protools 24 Mix Plus V5.1.1 DSP Cards (16 Ch. Operation)
Emagic Logic Audio Platinum 6.4 Upgrade Audio / Sequence Software
Sony Oxford EQ + GML (TDM) Software Plugin
Lacie Big Disk Triple Interface 500GB
Lacie Big Disk Triple Interface 1TB
Maxtor Disk 250 External Backup Hard Drive
Emagic Logic 7.0 Upgrade Software Plugin
East West Symphonic Gold Pro Software Plugin
Spectrasonics Trilogy Bass Module Software Plugin
Spectrasonics Atmosphere
Spectrasonics Stylus
Steinberg Groove Drummer Software Plugin
Logic ES1, ES2, EXS24, ESM etc etc
MCDSP Filterbanks
Line 6 Echo Farm

WAVES TDM Bundle

I should start by saying about to undertake a MASSIVE studio upgrade which fundamentally will include Apogee converters, a Mac Pro, Symphony, Powercore, UAD plus a tonne more (I want PT-HD BUT DOES TDM WORK WITH LOGIC ON INTEL MACS???. NO).

However (until a few weeks ago when my G4 blew and took a protocols farm card with it) I had semi-happily been running a stable Protocols mixplus system on OS9. I say semi because like many I'm working more natively than ever and desire huge amounts of plug in capability from my setup without bouncing down 1000 times. There's a whole host of plug ins I use with Protocols including the fabulous MCDSP suite, the amazing Oxford GML EQ, Line 6 Echo Farm, Moogerphooger Phaser, the Waves library plus a tonne more. They ALL find a use somewhere along the way. Synth-wise Spectrasonics kick ass with their suite of plug-ins and the East West library is a good middle of the road orchestra (though I have my eyes on many rather tasty new libraries). Not of course forgetting Logic's own synths and emulations which are excellent and find their uses throughout my mixes.

SUB

OUTBOARD

Joe Meek Twin QCS Dual Ch. Compressor
Joe Meek VC6Q Mono Ch. Compressor
Joe Meek VC6Q Mono Ch. Compressor
Alan Smart C2 Stereo Compressor
Oram HI-DEF 2 Channel Dual Ch. Equaliser
SPL Transient Designer 2 Compressor
Behringer Ultrafex II Enhancer

The Oram is a lovely EQ – very musical and adds some warmth to all the digital noise listed above. On the other hand I don't think I've ever used the Ultrafex II on a mix! The C2 is a good compressor and the Joe Meek 'ok' though there are many better options out there (good value however).

SUB

EFFECTS

TC Electronics M-3000 2 Ch. Reverb Unit
Sony DPSV77 Multi Effects
Lexicon MPX 1 Multi Effects

The TC is a fantastic reverb box. I do now desire those series 6000 engines but for vocals the VSS3 engine is fantastic. The Sony is also a very good box, very versatile and I've used it across many mixes.

SUB

MIDI

Emagic Uitor 8 MIDI Interface
Emagic AMT 8 MIDI Interface
EMU E4XT Ultra inc. 16 OUT / 128 MB Sampler

Was my main sampler but to be honest isn't switched on very much these days (let alone my S760)!

Korg MS2000R Synthesizer Expander

A few nice bass squidges but apart from that I'm not too keen on this units sound (so why did I buy it? Good question).

Roland XV-3080 Synthesizer Expander

I still use my 1080 and 3080 boxes as they've got some great expansion cards in them with very useable presents (the orchestra libraries are very immediate which is great if you want something loaded quickly).

Korg Triton PRO-X Keyboard

Clunky full weighted keyboard but the Triton does find it's way into my mixes – again it has some nice presets but it's all a bit obvious.

EMU Proteus 2000 + XLR/Pure Phatt Synthesizer Expander

Takes a lot of EQ getting anything to sound decent out of this box however there are a lot of noises and again they've found their way on tracks.

Electrix Filter Factory Filter

A fun cheap filter that I sometimes use in conjunction with the JP-8.

Roland Jupiter 8 Keyboard

Well yes I wanted one as a kid so I got a MIDI retrofitted one eventually. Can't beat the real deal..

Nord Lead 1 Keyboard

The Nord still sounds good today – it's got a unique thinnish noise but it really cuts through mixes.

Roland JP8080 Synthesizer Expander

What can we say? It's all down to that double saw which is just huge. However that's by far it's most impressive feature. Note: The 8000 is NOT as good do not be led..

Roland JV1080 + 3 Boards Synthesizer Expander

See 3080 above.

Roland S760 Sampler

See E4XT above.

Novation Nova Synthesizer Expander

My second "virtual analogue" (cough) synth. To be honest this baby once programmed (not so easy) has made a lot of noises that features on many of my tracks. You may just be able to pick out some.

Korg M3R Synthesizer Expander

Roland U110 Synthesizer Expander

Both often switched off. I thought about switching the M3R on recently to check out it's M1 piano again but couldn't be arsed.

Access Virus C Synthesizer Expander

Monster synth that's fun to use and sounds just great. Why can't Access offer an upgrade to the TI however? Boo..

Roland V-Synth Synthesizer Expander

Roland gave me this on the basis that I program them some nice sounds, something which I'm still working at (I know they're going to be knocking on my door any day soon). It's a very good synth with sounds remarkably fat for a digital unit. Don't expect the double saw to sound as good as the 8080 however it isn't really about that. It's got more features on that I've had hot dinners that's for sure.

SUB

REC + MISC.

Smartlight SLP 1000 Power Conditioner
Tascam DA-20 MKII DAT Machine
Tascam DA-45HR DAT Machine
Tascam DA-45 Remote Remote Control for DA-45
Tascam CDA-500 CD / Tape Deck
Tascam CDRW-700 CD Writer
Yamaha SCSI CD-ROM
Iomega ZIP 250 ZIP Drive
Hitachi CD ROM
Technics SL1210 MKII Record Deck
Rhode NT2000 Mic
Rhode NT1 Mic
Peavey PV Mic
Sure SM58 Mic
Sure SM57 Mic
Pioneer CDJ1000 CD DJ Deck
Pioneer CDJ1000 MKII CD DJ Deck

I use the NT2000 and get reasonable results but not "blown away" results. The SM's are still usable for a punchy thin noise but if you're looking for good old fashioned tube warmth nothing really delivers here and I'll end up recording out of the studio. Naturally the CD decks are where much of my live mixing is done and the rest of the gear is pretty redundant. Offers anyone?