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Vol. 34, NOVEMBER 2010 • U.S. \$3.95/\$4.95 Canada



Power Tools for Cubase 5 from Hal Leonard

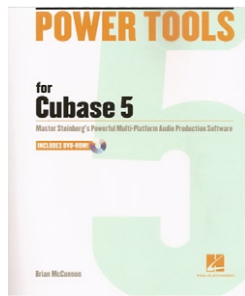
Ever wonder how and why certain features and operations in your DAW software are the way they are? This is just some of the depth you get in this *Cubase* learning guide along with an excellent collection of 50 useful tips from author and former Steinberg Media Technologies representative Brian McConnon.

McConnon starts you off exactly right in chapter one with the basics of *Cubase*—you'll get connected, start a new project, get the lowdown on virtual effects and instruments, editing, using the Mediabay and Pool, automation and the mixer, plus you'll learn about the whole world of ASIO drivers and VST terminology. The 11 subsequent chapters cover in succinct detail everything about song creation with: Beats and Loops; Vocals and Pitch Editing; Recording and Mixing; Workflow; and Hardware Integration.

The book continues with chapters, in a Q&A interview style, where noted producers, engineers and, most importantly, songwriters talk about the way they use *Cubase* in their creative processes. This human-interest component of *Power Tools for Cubase 5* is a big attraction for me because it breaks up the study tedium with very insightful commentary.

Chapter seven is about *Cubase* in the studio, chapter eight covers songwriting, chapter nine talks about video and game music with Joris de Man while Paul Mirkovich talks about his use of *Cubase* in live application in chapter 10. Chapter 11 has Kraftwerk taking on *Cubase* for electronic music and finally in chapter 12 you'll learn all about the history of *Cubase* from Steinberg founders Karl Steinberg and Manfred Rürup.

With an included DVD-ROM of *Cubase* session files and 50 video tips, *Power Tools for Cubase 5* sells for \$39.95 and is available from Hal Leonard publications, which are available through Music Dispatch at musicdispatch.com or 800-637-2852.



Slate Digital FG-X Virtual Mastering Console

As the name says, *FG-X* is a mastering engineer's workstation with everything you need to master your song recordings. An entire set of mastering tools is wrapped up in a single Native (VST, AU, RTAS, Mac/PC) plug-in. *FG-X* is designed to work on your stereo mixing bus or "after the fact" on completed and possibly already compressed stereo audio files. The detailed manual is tutorial in its presentation style of this powerful and advanced tool—you'll have no worries if the mastering process has always been, up till now, a mystery to you.

I installed *FG-X* into my ProTools HD 3 Accel rig here at my Tones 4 \$ Studios and went about comparing it to my usual mastering chain of a compressor followed by a peak limiter. Sonically, I immediately liked *FG-X* because, just like a seasoned pro mastering engineer, I have the ability to enhance mixes in very specific and artistic ways. I tried varying the Intelligent Transient Preservation slider that changes the sound from a harder quality to a smoother side—or anywhere in between.

The *FG* Level module also has the *Lo Punch* that makes low frequency elements "poke" more and *Detail* makes the mix sound brighter and weightier but not EQ'd. The *Dynamic Perception* section makes the overall mix and especially the drums and percussive instruments spikier. I liked it in small amounts and this feature makes *FG-X* a good drum bus processor.

In general, as I work *FG-X* into my mixing process, all my mixes are as loud as I'm use to making them but they have less of the deleterious and squashed artifacts I hear on so many of today's records.

Respect your music and your listeners, make it loud but do it in the best-sounding way with the excellent *Slate Digital FG-X Virtual Mastering Console*. *FG-X* sells for \$249 and is available at slatedigital.com. Download the demo at drumclassroom.net/demos.



Glyph Product Technologies' Triplicator

Glyph's new Triplicator is an appliance for making simultaneous data sets or copies. A new addition to Glyph's top line of both hard drives and solid-state storage systems, the Triplicator units act as a kind of data "hub" by easily connecting two or three target hard drives together via eSATA device ports and then interfacing this entire system to a host computer via FireWire 800, USB or eSATA.

I liked this half-rack space unit's size and the LED indicators that show power on the drives and how many drives are attached. If you were to "triplicate" three 1TB drives to your computer, only one 1TB drive will show up. When a copy is finished, identical data will be present on the target drives without the user having to go through the process of actually making separate copies. The drives are ready to be disconnected from Triplicator and used as if they are individual originals for editing, backing up and archiving. Data backup becomes built-in to your workflow automatically and is secure and totally transparent otherwise.

More on this technology, including pricing, is available at glyphtech.com/triplicator.



ZT Amplifiers' Lunchbox Cabinet



If you happen to already own one of the popular Lunchbox amps, you have to buy the Lunchbox cabinet. In a nutshell, the Lunchbox cab is a Lunchbox amp without the amp. It is exactly the same dimensions (7.5 x 9.8 x 4.4-inches) and finished so you can stack your matching Lunchbox right on top of it. It has a sealed cabinet that sounds complementary to the speaker in the Lunchbox amp—they make a killer combination.

The ZT Lunchbox Cab is a passive extension speaker designed for Lunchbox products only and weighs less than seven pounds, yet blasts out over 120dB. It also has a polarity or phase flip switch on the back panel for obtaining a spatial effect when spacing your Lunchbox amp and the Cab apart on the stage.

The sound of the Lunchbox amp takes on a whole new dimension while simultaneously driving the Cab. Sometimes I liked using the Cab only—being on the bottom, its proximity to the floor influences the sound. You can change the phase/polarity switch while playing and it is very noticeable when you flip it—the low frequencies thin out and if you separate the Lunchbox amp and the Cabinet horizontally, giving that phasey and wide effect.

We like putting them in phase and stacking the amp on top of the Cab—this is a mighty sound that belies the diminutive amp stack standing before you. A pleasant surprise from ZT Amplifiers, the Cabinet is a must-have for all current owners of the Lunchbox amp. It sells for \$199, and for more information check out ztamplifiers.com.

Lexicon Native PCM Reverb Plug-in Bundle

Lexicon's *Native PCM Reverb* plug-in bundle offers great, usable factory preset sounds and also "deep as you want" intense programmability for creating your own unique reverbs. Ported in VST, AU and RTAS Native formats for both MACs and PCs, there are seven separate reverbs in this bundle: Chamber, Concert Hall, Hall, Plate, Random Hall, Room and Vintage Plate. Each reverb uses its own unique algorithm and has its own set of parameters. All have a three-dimensional real-time analyzer color display that allows the visualization of the reverb's shape, character and evolution over time. *Lexicon Native PCM* is intuitive to use—no manual reading required and there are excellent factory presets to get you going ASAP.

I've been using this bundle on every mix I've done since acquiring it a few months back. Frankly, there are few reasons to bother with any other reverb plug-in—so if you wanted to just buy one awesome, top-flight reverb that'll work in any music, I'd get this bundle. I like that all seven reverbs are consistent in the way they "sit" and work within the mix, plus there is not another plug-in GUI to figure out if I change my mind from using the Chamber reverb plug-in over to the Room.

I have no other reverb, plug-in or hardware with this much versatility. In every mix I always run at least two or more instances of the *Lexicon Native PCM* reverb—it's rock solid sounding. *Lexicon Native PCM* sells for \$1,899.95 MSRP and you can purchase and download of the plug-in directly from lexiconpro.com/product.php?id=163.



MICRO-BIO: Barry Rudolph is a recording engineer/producer/mixer with over 30 gold and platinum RIAA awards to his credit. He has recorded and/or mixed: Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hall & Oates, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, the Corrs and Robbie Nevil. Check out www.barryrudolph.com for more.