



GEAR BOX



M-Audio Fast Track Pro

By Rusty Cutchin

Cramming a lot into a small package, M-Audio's versatile new Mac- and PC-compatible recording interface sounds great and is perfect for the guitarist on the go. The 24-bit, 96-kHz Fast Track Pro includes dual mic and instrument preamps, MIDI I/O, a 1/4" headphone jack with level control, and an A/B source switch. You can use the S/PDIF connector to access other digital units. Two front-panel combo-connector inputs offer phantom power for condenser microphones and inserts for outboard effects. The rear panel provides two sets of analog outputs. You also get direct and low-latency monitoring, so delay is not a problem when over-

dubbing. The unit's USB connection is bus-powered, which means you don't have to use a wall-plug adapter.

The Fast Track Pro is a very convenient way to record guitar and vocal demos on the road with a laptop. M-Audio even provides GT Player Express and Ableton Live Lite 4 software, so you can get cool guitar sounds while you build tracks. GT Player Express includes virtual stompboxes and can play AAC, MP3, and WAV audio files, letting you practice and play along with your heroes. After you set up the unit with M-Audio's software control panel, the Fast Track Pro will turn your computer into a truly versatile recording system.

\$299.95 maudio.com



Diamond Compressor

By Michael Ross

Don't let the no-frills look fool you: the Diamond Compressor contains some serious circuitry. A low-noise, opto-based unit with an EQ, the Canadian-made pedal employs 2% polypropylene capacitors, 1% metal film resistors, and a pro audio-grade opamp that costs many times the industry norm. A bi-color LED indicates depth of compression, shifting from green (on) to yellow and red as the level increases. Though considerably more subtle than MXR or Boss compressors, the Diamond will give you the extra sustain and snap that you expect from this type of effect, along with additional EQ colors, while minimally degrading your tone.

\$179 diamondpedals.com

Evidence Lyric HG Cable

By Michael Ross

Evidence uses solid core conductors, as opposed to the stranded ones in typical guitar cables; the company claims that this "preserves clarity and focus, revealing harmonic detail and articulation." Though I'm normally wary of cables that purport to make a significant sonic difference, I must say that the Lyric HG convinced me. Even amid the din of the Winter NAMM trade show, its sound was definitely livelier and more present than that of

a respected stranded cable, almost as if a blanket had been lifted from the amp. Back home, it allowed my own guitar and amp to be all that they could be. Yes, it's stiffer than the usual cable, and certainly more expensive, but the HG's obvious sonic benefits seem worth it. Evidence also makes a less expensive, more flexible model (the

Melody) that still offers a noticeable improvement. And don't just take my word for it—tonemeister David Gilmour is now using these cables exclusively.

\$105 audionova.ca