

DACs Ltd,

Magix AG's UK distributor, has released V9 of music production package Samplitude. The latest incarnation enhances the offer's audio quality and workflow tools with further professional plug-ins, the Hybrid Audio Engine to boost users' PC power, and a Score Editor, among other features.

Samplitude V9 arrives in three packages: Master, Classic and Professional. "The new features represent a unique and significant move forwards in terms of workflow, performance and usability," commented Dr Douglas Doherty, MD of DACs.

W ♦♦ www.dacs-audio.com

CEntrance

has launched Ideal Driver (ID) for FireWire audio interfaces. The Windows software, says CEntrance, features "one third of the latency" and higher stability than drivers usually shipped with FireWire audio interfaces. ID is compatible with ASIO2, GSIF2 and MIDI applications, and supports sample rates of 44.1 to 192kHz at 16 or 24-bit resolution. Designed to work with the majority of commercially-available audio hardware – including Alesis, Apogee, Behringer and others – the product is available for purchase directly from the CEntrance website.

W ♦♦ www.CEntrance.com

TC Electronic

has released two new TDM reverb plug-ins ported directly from System 6000 – DVR2 and NonLin2. DVR2 Digital Vintage Reverb is billed as "the most precise EMT250 emulator to date", and is suitable for both studio and live use. Qualities of the original processor – including sweet modulation, spectral balance, spaciousness and saturation – are said to be presented in this plug-in. NonLin2, meanwhile, is an effects reverb capable of generating vocal ambience, percussive and dramatic drum sounds, reverse reverbs and new "twisted" effects. The plug-in features an amplitude envelope capable of rendering an untriggered, gated reverb, and a "twist" parameter that can radically alter the sound. Both of the new plug-ins are available now for Mac and Windows/Venue.

W ♦♦ www.tcelectronic.com

Spectrasonics

has announced that the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA is now using Spectrasonics virtual instruments to teach their Film Scoring courses. Spectrasonics' Atmosphere, Trilogy and Stylus RMX are featured software that students at Berklee get to work with in the film scoring lab for their own school projects. Spectrasonics software has been used in major films such as *Crash*, *World Trade Center*, *Batman Begins*, *King Kong*, *Lord of the Rings*, and acclaimed television shows including *Lost*, *24*, *West Wing*, and *CSI*.

W ♦♦ www.spectrasonics.net

Adobe

is demonstrating its toolsets in editing and effects, design, graphics, audio, web, and mobile at IBC, including Adobe Production Studio, Adobe Premiere Pro and Macromedia Flash. Visitors to Adobe's booth are promised a free DVD with 30-day trial software.

W ♦♦ www.adobe.com

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SOFTWARE NEWS

Roger that

Roger Nichols Digital, Inc, was launched just before the Paris AES. How, why... and what next?

US: Simply stated by Nichols, "Roger Nichols Digital was founded to deliver plug-ins that perform two tasks: to do things better than any other plug-in can do them, and to do things that nothing else does. Roger Nichols Digital will provide the direction, and Elemental Audio will assist in the development. If I design a great home, I want the best possible builder to complete my dream. This is the relationship we have here."

Nichols has been developing plug-ins for some time, though always on an as-needed basis in his record making, and not on any grand scale. "When I mix a record, I listen to the result to make the adjustments," says the seven-time Grammy winning engineer/producer. "If a particular plug-in won't provide what I am looking for, then I will try other brands, and then as a last resort, I will build my own. So far I have the only copy of many of the plug-ins that I have built. These problem solvers are the basis for the framework and plug-ins that Roger Nichols Digital is producing."

Over the past couple years, he's been searching the marketplace for a good programming partner to assemble his plug-ins for mass dis-

tribution. "I was looking around for a team that was making plug-ins that I could enhance, and who I could trust to be the programmers for some of my own plug-in designs," Nichols says. "When I started using the Elemental plug-ins and seeing what they could do on real records, I saw a few things that I could tweak and intensify that would really take them up to the next level."

Under the new Roger Nichols Digital brand-name, the Elemental group (already much lauded by plug-in fans) goes behind the scenes as RND programmers.

Their existing plug-ins – Dynamizer, Finis, Frequlizer, Inspector XL, Uniquelizer – have been upgraded according to Nichols' recommendations and designs; the new RND-branded versions are now available and iLok-authorized.

Nichols declines specifics on the tweaks to the Elemental library to protect the ingredients added to the initial recipes, though he does reveal that the revisions address shortcomings he'd found in other EQ plug-ins over the years. The changes are reflected in new prices. Except for Inspector XL, which retails for \$299 in the US, the plug-ins are retailing at \$249, up about \$100 from the previous price-point (Nichols has exclusive distribution with Rage Audio Distribution in Spain, Arva Trading AB in Sweden and Simola Eichmann Communications GmbH in Switzerland, and will add others as appropriate).

Nichols promises a lot of bang for the buck, by post-



New pre-sets for the Frequlizer are available as free website downloads



The Uniquelizer has been upgraded using Nichols' recommendations



Seven-time Grammy winning engineer/producer Roger Nichols

ing new presets for Dynamizer, Frequlizer, and Uniquelizer as free website downloads for customers.

Nichols assures that Elemental Audio will continue to support its existing customers.

Additionally, he points out, "Any customer who wishes, can cross-grade an existing product to the Roger Nichols Digital version by contacting Elemental Audio."

As for Nichols' new plug-ins, the plan is to have an initial three – the Wendelizer, Bitchinizer, and Levelizer – ready by AES in October. But there are numerous plug-ins in various stages of development, for vocal processing, drum replacement, dynamic restoration, auto mixing, and much more. "You can have loud records and still retain dynamics," he hints. "You can have up-front vocals that don't sound squashed. You can have drum tracks that you can't tell are machines."

Sceptics need only look to Nichols' groundbreaking inventions like the drum replacement interface, Wendel, custom-built in 1978 to help facilitate the Steeley Dan *Gaucha* recordings (first used on the track *Hey Nineteen*), and then the playback-only version, Wendel Jr, still in use on many top tours.

The original Wendel design was based on Nichols' findings from his analysis of real drummers' playing and timing issues therein, findings that the current drum replacement software on the market has left relatively untapped, according to Nichols. "The newer drum replacement plug-ins allow you to pick from a whole bunch of samples, just like my Wendel," he says. "But there are two other things that no one else thought about when dealing with drumfills and the way a drummer plays – those two extra things are being incorporated into Wendelizer."

The Bitchinizer is actually a plug-in Nichols created back in 1992, to help retain dynamics when

the labels started demanding that records be louder. "I knew that there would be a way to compromise – make the record sound louder but keep the dynamics," he shares.

"I figured it out and coded it into a DSP chip and put it into a piece of hardware that I've been using for mixing and mastering since 1992. My clients started calling it the Bitchinizer."

"Computers weren't fast enough to do this as a plug-in until HD came out, but now that they're faster and it can be RTAS and VST, it's possible."

Roger Nichols Digital is entering this competitive plug-in marketplace with unique positioning. Take the presets: Nichols predicts there'll be at least 50 presets designed for each plug-in across the line.

"With the presets I'm not targeting the super high-end engineers, but the guys who are good musicians and are learning about Pro Tools and engineering," he explains.

In line with the presets offered, Nichols will also be providing an "EQ My Track" service, where artists can send him a track and he will personally send them the specific presets to achieve the best results.

"Pre-requisite to the 'EQ My Track' offer is that I'll be using one of our plug-ins, so it does have a sales angle," he confirms.

Nichols feels his life-long experience in the trenches as a producer and engineer is his company's greatest asset; the results are 30+ years of R&D getting applied to products that aren't meant to replace innovative tools, but fill gaps.

"There are some very good plug-ins out there, and I use them," Nichols adds. "We are not re-inventing those, we are covering new ground." □

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