
Subject: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [footchester](#) on Sat, 25 Apr 2009 00:04:28 GMT
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Coming back to recording after being away on a long term (non-audio) work project. Gonna finally move to PC based recording in place of dedicated recording hardware (DAT, Hard disk, etc.)

But I'm strictly a live / location guy without a recording space. A typical project might be an acoustic jazz trio, a solo piano gig, or even something as complex as a small chamber orch. (and the occasional recording of the next blues-jazz band I join...or is that jazz-blues?)

I had good luck in the past either recording 'live to 2' or going multi to an 8 track recorder (never did use all 8 tracks...). What would be a good, simple software recording system (PC, not MAC) for this type of minimalist recording? I still have great quality hardware for everything but the actual recording, so I'm not concerned about the DAW's mixing, or processing capabilities - I just want a reliable, not incredibly complex software recorder.

(In a perfect world, those Sound Devices 2trk and 4 trk recorders look really nice, but I've promised myself not to invest in another boat anchor, I've already set records in that dept.)

Suggestions?

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Jim Williams](#) on Sat, 25 Apr 2009 14:40:28 GMT
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In my experience, laptop live recording is a disaster. One blip, tick, crackle or slip and the whole show is ruined. A controlled studio is another situation, but live you only have one chance to mess it up, why give a cranky computer another try at messing it up?

I use a reliable HD24XR combined with a small analog console and some outboard preamps. It's never let me down and works flawlessly. I can carry it in in two loads, I can hand carry the console. Add mic stands, cables and a pair of headphones and it's complete. Give me two bar stools to set it all up. Actually, three as I need one to sit on. It's a ground compensated design so it's rather immune to hum and ground loops live. The results are first rate. Bought the console for \$500.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Greg Youngman](#) on Sat, 25 Apr 2009 15:55:03 GMT
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I have 3 options for live/acoustic recording.

Taking my studio computer for 24 track. Usually overkill.

An HP 2GHz laptop with a Digigram VXpocket 440 4-track card running Adobe Audtion and Reaper. Very quick and reliable.

http://www.digigram.com/products/getinfo.php?prod_key=11500
<http://www.reaper.fm/>

A Sony PCM-D50 2-track digital hand held recorder.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [footchester](#) on Sat, 25 Apr 2009 18:38:37 GMT
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Jim wrote:

In my experience, laptop live recording is a disaster. <-- snip --> Bought the console for \$500.

Thanks, and I agree. I've got the API 7800 / 8200 8ch mixer and I would NEVER trade that for mixing on a computer. And it fits in 2 rack spaces; 4ru including a pair of those huge Dorrough meters. But I've already burned through DATs, CD recorders and one of the most expensive, sweetest sounding, and least reliable HD recorders ever produced for sale. I can't see myself buying another piece of proprietary hardware that then requires me to drive the unit back to the manufacturer a dozen times just to get it running. And when the company went out of business, I ended up with a VERY expensive door stop. Enough guys are running pro tools rigs that do everything imaginable, I just want a system to record a couple of track reliably.

I don't want the PC/software to do anything more than record a handful of channels and then let me play them back at home (while I mix analog in the API). Who make the almost bulletproof software recorder that doesn't also include a 'virtual orchestra / effects library / MIDI Pilates workout program? - just a reliable software recorder?

Greg - thanks, I was already going to check out Adobe Audition. Can anyone tell me if any of the Sony products are not too complex for use as a simple recorder? I was happy using their CD Architect package back when I was using the 'never to be named' HD recorder.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Greg Youngman](#) on Sat, 25 Apr 2009 21:17:30 GMT
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footchester wrote on Sat, 25 April 2009 11:58:38

I don't want the PC/software to do anything more than record a handful of channels and then let me play them back at home (while I mix analog in the API).

Then you've got to check out Reaper. It's free! And don't be leery of it being a freebie. It's a very stable app... not bloated with a bunch of crap. There are all sorts of good VST plugins that come with it.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Barkley McKay](#) on Sun, 26 Apr 2009 11:26:34 GMT
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I've done a few live jazz and big band recordings using Digital Performer (v5.13) 2GHZ intel iMac (2gig), RME 800 interface and a second optical converter to increase the inputs up to 20. I also have a little Mackie 1606 VLZ which works well as mic channels direct to the converter.

Worked very well for me.

One thing I do in these live situations is always stop and save between songs/tunes to lower the probability of crashes and losing ALL the data.

Also I don't use any plugins or mess with it when its running.
There is plenty of scope for editing between tunes seamlessly later when its mixed.

cheers
barks

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Rod Affleck](#) on Sun, 26 Apr 2009 12:52:37 GMT
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Jim Williams wrote on Sat, 25 April 2009 11:40why give a cranky computer another try at messing it up?

The secret is to not use a cranky computer, but one that has proven itself reliable. While I grant that I've only been doing live location recordings for a little over a year and I'm fairly small-time (between two and eight channels in, maximum of two to three hours), my laptop has yet to let me down.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Jim Williams](#) on Sun, 26 Apr 2009 14:56:43 GMT
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evil robot wrote on Sun, 26 April 2009 05:52Jim Williams wrote on Sat, 25 April 2009 11:40why give a cranky computer another try at messing it up?

The secret is to not use a cranky computer, but one that has proven itself reliable. While I grant that I've only been doing live location recordings for a little over a year and I'm fairly small-time (between two and eight channels in, maximum of two to three hours), my laptop has yet to let me down.

Once burned and you too will think twice. No second chances live.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [ryan streber](#) on Mon, 27 Apr 2009 17:17:04 GMT

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I use a portable PT HD setup (MacBook Pro with the HD card in a Magma expansion box) with Apogee AD16x's, and it's been very stable for me. I routinely do up to 20 or more inputs at 88.2 for live orchestra and band recordings and I've been happy with stability, flexibility, portability, etc. I ALWAYS run a Sound Devices 702 as a backup recorder split off the main LR pair, just in case some goes wrong. But over all, I've been using this setup regularly for over a year and have had very few problems.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Blas](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 11:57:40 GMT
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We just started rolling out our DAW in a well padded road case (as the new built DAW is getting in place in the studio). I really like the idea of a 'mobile DAW' always ready now! For Pre's we use one or two Focusrite Octopre's (depending on the event's needs). If we have to roll above 16 tracks, then we use our MX-2424 and another rack of pre's.

We use Nuendo and haven't had a problem with stability both in studio and esp. out.

As Jim so rightly stated, it's a one shot deal. So you live and die by making the best choices upfront.

Just a reminder, for this set-up you do need a small mixer for your foldback.

Good luck,
Joe

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [jnorman](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 16:32:56 GMT
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i also would recommend against a laptop based setup. i just got through experimenting with a couple of setups to replace my Roland VS1880 - i tried a macbook with logic, but hated logic so badly, i sold that setup fast. i then tried an IBM thinkpad T61 running Reaper - better, but still many problems, and really missed my dedicated worksurface on the roland. in the end, i went out and bought a Roland VS2400 - totally stable (my VS1880 never crashed a single time in 5 years), great worksurface, wonderful blend of DAW (mouse and external display) and dedicated software/hardware, and excellent sonic results.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [BruceB](#) on Tue, 05 May 2009 18:54:44 GMT
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Metric Halo 2882 box with a laptop has been reliable for me for many years.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Halfway Competent](#) on Wed, 06 May 2009 05:40:38 GMT
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I use a Pro Tools Digi-002 rack remotely. I've used it with a desktop PC (large show with a couple days' setup time), with a Powerbook G4, and with my Dell XPS laptop.

Before recording any show with your DAW setup, do a burn-in test first. Set up your computer, hard drives, interface, and DAW session exactly as you plan to at the show. Then, hit record. It doesn't matter too much if nothing is coming in, you're looking to see if it quits on you. (Feed it if you want to.)

My 002R live setup is pretty utilitarian-grade stuff. Digi-002R, Presonus Digimax LT preamp to ADAT input, dbx 386 preamp to S/PDIF input, Mackie Onyx mixer (for preamps, to analog inputs). The aforementioned computers, and a properly fast external USB (2.0!!) or Firewire hard drive. You can also get external hard drive enclosures with eSATA connections, which are faster. You can pick up eSATA controllers that go in the laptop's Express Card slot.

Here is a sample of a local band that I recorded in a coffee shop off the live board (Mackie Onyx 1620). Analog direct outs from the board to analog inputs on the Digi-002. Drum mics were not amped (except for the kick), and went straight to the Digimax pre. Lead vocal mic is Shure Beta 87A, EV Raven on guitar amp, EV Raven on kick, Beta 57 on Snare, pair of Audio-Technica AT4033s for overheads.

<http://www.tewsnet.com/dropbox/JMSample.mp3>

Mix is a bit rough, but should give you the general idea. :)

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [Andy Peters](#) on Sat, 16 May 2009 06:02:49 GMT
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I record live shows off the FOH console using my MacBook Pro and MOTU 828 mk 2 and whatever eight-input ADC w/ADAT out that I can borrow. Inputs to the recorder come from console direct outs and a pair of room mics.

But the secret is to record using Boom Recorder. Mac only, though. What's great is that you can set it up to record each input to its own track, with specific names (like Kick, Snare, etc). And when you are recording, if you hit the record button, it will close the set of files you're using for song 1 and open a new set for song 2. A cool FIFO feature allows you to add a short overlap in the files, so song 1 really ends 5 seconds after you hit record, and song 2 really starts 5 seconds before.

The interface is really clean -- just a bunch of level meters and transport controls. It writes broadcast WAV and has time code, if you need it.

-a

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [tom eaton](#) on Sat, 16 May 2009 16:23:45 GMT
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There's always RADAR... you might never need all the tracks, but you'll never need more and you'll be hard pressed to find a more reliable device. You simply WON'T find better tech support.

You could print 1-8 tracks multitrack AND a two mix to the RADAR, plus extra things with no shortage of room.

And it sounds great, too!

tom

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording

Posted by [James Perrett](#) on Thu, 21 May 2009 12:17:56 GMT

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If you are lucky enough to have an RME interface then download their DigiCheck analysis tools. DigiCheck now includes a basic multitrack recorder.

For my live rig I use Reaper with a Focusrite Saffire Pro26 on an Acer laptop but I also run an ADAT or two for backup.

Cheers

James.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording

Posted by [Tom D](#) on Thu, 21 May 2009 15:14:23 GMT

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I'd have to agree with Jim Williams, the HD24. Especially if you have killer pres/mixer. They're my first choice for multi-track recording, I use them ALL the time. There are a lot of hard disc "flash" style recorders out there for 2 track recording, and depending on the model some have XLR in's, and most will record at least 16 bit.

Tom Durso
First Bass Audio
Macomb, IL

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording

Posted by [Hallams](#) on Mon, 25 May 2009 04:14:30 GMT

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Not a problem here using Logic and a laptop for 16 ch for the last seven years. The limited session time of Logic was an irritation but is now fixed. That said it is always preferable to have a backup recording medium from splits. If i'm doing a "cheap option" live recording from the FOH mix inserts i don't bother with the backup, but with the well paid full price option i think its a must. So my set up is the HD 24 and Logic. Most of the time i treat the laptop as the master and the HD 24 as the backup.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [bjornson](#) on Fri, 12 Jun 2009 00:01:18 GMT
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I use two mx2424's with an active split and two sets of converters.
Both are recording at all times.

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording
Posted by [WD Smith](#) on Mon, 15 Jun 2009 17:26:36 GMT
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Are you sure want to move to a PC system?

How about a:
Yamaha AW4416.

Up to 16 tracks @44.1/16. It has native Yamaha pre's for 8 tracks as delivered but you will need to have extra Yagi cards to bring in outboard pre's via AES, ADAT, or Tascam protocols for the other 8 of the tracks. Later variant the 2400 has USB outs to transfer tracks directly to your computer for editing and massaging but the 4416 offers a lot that the 2400 doesn't. The 4416 has a steep learning curve so Yammie dumbed it down a little in the 2400.

To transfer your tracks to computer in the 4416 you burn them to a CD in a proprietary Yammie format as a Backup. You then insert the CD into your computer and use some shareware called AWExtract to convert the Backup files to .WAV. If you don't need extensive PT type manipulation, the 4416 is capable of extensive mixing and routing even with outboard efx. The 4416 has it's own stereo recording buss and you can mixdown and burn your own CD.

The only oversight to me w/ the 4416 is that Yamaha only provided 2 XLR in's to the native preamps thereby limiting you to only 2 channels with 48v phantom power available. The remaining 6 are 1/4" in's which can be converted to XLR's but no phantom will be available. If you use an 8 channel outboard pre such as an ADA8000 or Digimax or best of all the Audient ASP008 no problem as you will have 8 channels available with phantom.

You can bring the AW, mics, and stands to a remote location and be set up and stable in minutes. Best of all you can buy a clean AW4416 or it's smaller lighter cousin the AW16 or AW1600 for \$400-800. Outboard Yagi cards run about \$150 each.

Otherwise, if you want to spend more money, an HD24XR is a nice way to go.

Food for thought.

File Attachments

1) [aw4416.jpg](#), downloaded 50 times

Subject: Re: DAW for live / acoustic recording

Posted by [Stephen Payne](#) on Fri, 31 Jul 2009 23:49:00 GMT

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I have a Macbook running either Logic Express or Tracktion 2. I use T2 on small track count jobs, then mix on my PC based desktop or a Imac . Interfaces are Presonus Firestudio + Digimax for up to 16 tracks or Audiofire 2. Never a problem in 2+ years. Ideally you should run a redundant recorder off a split but I haven't gotten to that point yet.
