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For Immediate Release

A-Designs Delivers Baez Message, Cowboy Singin', and Mouse Sounds

Jason Raboin sharpens road rig with A-Designs Audio's Pacificas and REDDI

WEST HILLS, CA -- FOH engineer Jason Raboin handles live sound duties for folk songstress and activist Joan Baez, Canadian alt-country rockers Cowboy Junkies and indie darlings Modest Mouse, among other artists. As the most recent string of Baez show dates transitioned to an intimate acoustic set, Raboin made some critical adjustments to his rig, adding a pair of A-Designs Audio Pacifica microphone preamps to help best deliver her message to international audiences.

"I started out as Joan's monitor engineer, but when the show became an acoustic trio, I started doing front-of-house and running monitors from there," Raboin describes, from the Baez tour in Spain. "In order to make this work we bought a small digital desk, which provided fantastic routing options, but the audio quality left much to be desired. When half of the show is just voice and acoustic guitar, you really need them to sound as good as you can."

Thus started Raboin's search for great sounding, 'studio-level' gear that was also portable and roadworthy. "The Pacifica fit that bill perfectly," he declares, citing it was Richard Bowman at TransAudio Group that suggested the Pacifica, a dual-channel solid-state mic preamp. "The thing about the Pacificas that make them better suited to the live environment than vintage and cloned preamps is the high end; the recording studio holy grail tends to be a thick low end, and this does not translate to the live environment quite as well. I am more interested in a solid upper mid cut, presence, and air without harshness or sibilance. That is the Pacifica."

(more)

Jason Raboin and A-Designs / Add One

On the road with Baez, Raboin says the Pacifica has made his job easier. “I am no longer plagued with sibilance problems, nor do I have to fight to get a stunning, present, vocal sound. What it does to the upper mids is pure magic. Joan noticed the difference as soon as I plugged it in!” Raboin has also been using an A-Designs REDDI tube direct-inject box on bass guitar with the Baez tour. “It does exactly what I need it to,” he says of the REDDI. “You get that classic all-tube bass amp sound.”

When mixing some smaller, promotional shows for the Cowboy Junkies recently, Raboin used the A-Designs Pacifica on lead singer Margo Timmins’ vocals. “I mixed monitors from the house console, and Margo was really impressed by her in-ear mix, that she didn’t need to have reverb or audience mics in her mix to feel like her vocal was sitting properly. While I took this as a compliment of my ability, I also let her know that the Pacifica was most likely a big part of the difference she was hearing.

“Besides vocals, I am using the Pacifica on a pair of beyer M160 ribbon mics that are my drum sound. I am totally in love with the depth of sound I’m getting there. I can’t believe how much low end from the floor tom I can get with just a pair of overheads. The drummer on this tour is Grammy-nominated engineer Dean Sharenow, and he has listened back to my show recordings and is equally impressed.”

Raboin’s Pacificas also shape Cowboy Junkies’ electric and acoustic guitar sounds. “The fourth channel of the Pacifica goes on the electric guitar amp; it’s a Fender Deluxe Reissue miked by a Heil PR-30, to the Pacifica and then a Distressor. As for Mike Timmins’ acoustic guitar, he informs, “Even with a large diaphragm condenser, I was able to just use the mic and not rely on the DI – it required no EQ.”

Signing off from the Baez stop in Spain, Raboin was about to head into a whole other live sound experience with Modest Mouse, sure to make another case for the Pacifica, which he mentions has held up perfectly on the road. “After transatlantic shipments, thousands of miles in trucks and buses, and dozens of load-ins and load-outs I have not had a single problem with any of my A-Designs gear,” he reports. “I start mixing Modest Mouse next week and certainly plan on taking a Pacifica with me for Isaac Brock’s vocals.”

(more)

Jason Raboin and A-Designs / Add Two

The A-Designs Pacifica mic pre is a single rack space, dual (mono/mono) channel mic pre with two front panel active Hi-Z 1/4-inch inputs for Direct Inject, custom input and output transformers, and phase, -20 dB Pad and 48V switches. A-Designs' fire-engine red REDDI tube direct box features a Neutrik combo 1/4-inch input, a front-panel 1/4-inch 'Thru' input, balanced XLR output, rotary level knob, 6NIP vacuum tube, toroidal power transformer and ground-lift switch and IEC AC power connector.

A-Designs Audio is a boutique manufacturer of high-quality professional audio products, including the MP-A Series (all-tube microphone preamplifiers), Pacifica (stereo solid-state microphone preamplifier), REDDI (all-tube direct box), ATTY and ATTY2'D (passive line attenuators), and new EM Series (500 Series-compatible microphone preamplifier modules). For more information, please contact A-Designs Audio at 818-716-4153 or visit www.adesignsaudio.com.

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Related images:

1) **Raboin_Pacifica.jpg** – For Modest Mouse's September tour, Jason Raboin (pictured here onstage at Brooklyn's McCarren Pool) used A-Designs' Pacifica mic pre on lead singer Isaac Brock's vocal and CB vocal mics

2) **Raboin_REDDI.jpg** – A-Design's REDDI set up onstage at Brooklyn's McCarren Pool for Modest Mouse bass player Eric Judy