

GC PRO PRESENTS AUDIO

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

This month I would like to make you aware of an exciting development for GC Pro's online presence: a brand new eCommerce experience that revolutionizes the way customers are able to browse our product offerings and interface with our team of professionals.

We are very excited to have launched our new GC Pro eCommerce site a few months ago. We've obviously had GC Pro online retailing in the past, but we've been working hard behind the scenes to design a whole new user experience. Without hyperbole, I can say that the new GC Pro eCommerce experience offers a level of service unique from what any other retailer has been able to provide. Of course our extensive inventory is there, straightforward and easy to navigate. Naturally, the pricing is competitive—these things are a given, and we wouldn't think of offering you anything less. But beyond that, there's a professional experience that you get nowhere else. We have worked with vendors to create specialized landing pages. You can access all kinds of detailed information on individual products, embedded videos, technical specs, and other really neat exclusive content. Sometimes the "research phase" of a purchase can be frustrating, but we believe that the resources offered by our new site make it a breeze.

The next phase is the purchase experience, and here you will notice how closely the eCommerce experience is tied in with our on-the-ground sales/technical team and our brick-and-mortar showrooms. You may want to actually reach out to a salesperson or get a demonstration or more information first-hand. So, the GC Pro eCommerce site allows the purchase experience to begin online and continue in person, or vice versa. It's virtually a direct line to a GC Pro representative whenever the mood strikes you, day or night. And with Guitar Center's 260+ retail locations and 40 GC Pro offices nationwide, there's a great chance that there's a GC Pro sales rep near you, and we are there to serve your needs in any way possible. You may be interested in a high-end piece of outboard gear or a nice microphone – we can set up a personal demo for you so you can evaluate it. This is unique to GC Pro, and we are proud to offer this level of service to our loyal customers. And pickups and returns can be set up for any of our retail locations, as well, making the online GC Pro shopping experience fully integrated with the personal service experience for which GC Pro is known.

Guiding the development of this new eCommerce experience has been Karam Kaul, GC's Director of Marketing for Guitarcenter.com. Karam attended Boston University for neuropsychology and pre-med, but he always had a love of music. "During my time at BU, my bandmates and I built a recording studio with the goal of recording classical musicians as well as our own music," stated Karam. He then started working at Guitar Center soon after graduation and the rest is history. His time at Guitar Center has included training, both regionally and then nationally, as the Director of Training for Technology Products. He then spent time as the Director of Business Development for Tech Merchandising, designing various programs including the following: a nationwide educational platform called Recording Made Easy, which evolved into the Music Mentor program; Electronic Software Delivery, a platform that offers thousands of software titles available electronically; and the Recording Experience, which features over 1,200 Apple Computers preloaded with hundreds of software titles. One of Karam's latest assignments as the Director of Marketing for Guitarcenter.com is to create an incredible GC Pro experience for all our customers. "To begin, we consolidated all the best of GC Pro's elements from the prior site, added even more intuitive features, and then re-launched the experience. We have plenty more things in the pipeline, and are excited to offer these enhancements to our customers in the near future."

To access our new eCommerce site, please visit guitarcenter.com/gcpro.

Rick Plushner
Vice President, GC Pro



SOLUTIONS

D.C.-AREA STATE THEATRE

NEARLY CENTURY-OLD VENUE IS A RENOVATED GEM THAT JUST GOT EVEN BETTER WITH A NEW SOUND SYSTEM



Looking at the splendid Art Deco marquee in front of the State Theatre in the Washington, D.C. suburb of Falls Church, Virginia, you might think, just for a moment, that you could step in and see *Thanks a Million*, the 1936 film starring Dick Powell that was the first picture shown at the facility nearly 80 years ago. But inside, it quickly becomes apparent that the P.A. components bring the space well into modern times.

A little over 50 years after that first show, the State Theatre closed its doors (the last movie it hosted was 1988's *Die Hard*) and later underwent a multi-million-dollar restoration and renovation that both buffed up its Art Deco design elements and added modern sound and lights with a 20-foot video screen, turning it into one of the leading live music venues in the region, sporting a wide-open dance floor and 200 seats in the restored balconies.

The State Theatre just got another upgrade, this time with a

new RCF dual-hang line array sound system, managed by a dbx DriveRack 4800 speaker processor and mixed through an Avid SC48 Venue digital FOH console, supported by a 32-channel Yamaha LS932 digital desk for mixing monitors. There is also a new High End Systems Road Hog 4 lighting control console and 16 new Chauvet LED and PAR lighting fixtures. All of these components were sourced through GC Pro and installed by Koko Brothers Entertainment, a proud member of the GC Pro Affiliate Program.

A GOOD CHOICE

"That's one of the things we love about working with GC Pro — any product we think we might need on a job, GC Pro will always be able to get it for us," says Angelo Kokkinakos, who (with his brother Lou) owns and operates Koko Brothers Entertainment.

[continued on page 35]



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 **UNIVERSAL AUDIO**

D.C. AREA STATE THEATRE



The Baltimore-based firm is one of an elite group of approved vendors in the GC Pro Affiliate Program, which includes a growing number of award-winning companies and individuals who specialize in key areas of professional audio systems design, integration and installation. Koko Brothers was a particularly appropriate choice for the State Theatre project; coincidentally, Angelo and Lou were involved with the venue's updated lighting system during the original renovation in the mid 1990s. But Jonah Joffe, the GC Pro Account Manager based at the Washington, D.C.-area office, didn't know that. What Joffe did know, however, was that Koko Brothers are good at getting difficult rooms to sound good, as evidenced by several previous projects they've tackled with GC Pro.

"There were a couple of challenges this time," says Angelo Kokkinakos. "It's an old, landmarked building, so there's not much you can do from an acoustics point of view, because the historical nature of the interior must be maintained. The owner" — Thomas Carter, who with a partner bought the State Theatre and brought it back to life — "wanted better sound. What had been in there was a ground-stacked system, which was good, but the coverage was uneven; it needed a number of under-balcony fills to make it work. Working with Jonah, we determined that a flown line array would be the best choice."

PICKING A P.A.

When it came to choosing a P.A. system, members of the

Legwarmers, a successful and sought-after 1980s tribute band (their website informs that "the Legwarmers take the stage like it's prom night in a John Hughes movie") that consistently sells out its shows at the State Theatre, mentioned several different line array brands they liked, but Joffe steered them in the direction of RCF modules. "And when we explored the different options and prices, the RCF came up as the right solution for the job," says Angelo. "And once we had it installed, it really exceeded our high expectations. And that's what I mean about working with GC Pro: whatever we might ask for, they'll always tell us, 'No problem! We can get that!' And if something comes up in the middle of the project, like it did here when we discovered that the crawl space between the FOH position and the stage was longer than the snake we had specified, no problem — GC Pro and Whirlwind worked together to get us the items we needed to modify the snake."

Koko Brothers Entertainment is already working on their next venture with GC Pro, at the Old Bridge United Methodist Church in Woodbridge, Va., where they're upgrading the audio systems. "It's a great partnership," says Angelo Kokkinakos. "Every project has turned out exactly the way it's supposed to. Clients love that!" ♦

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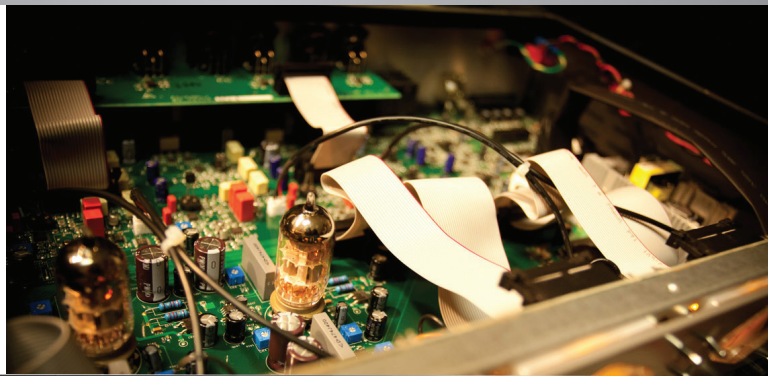
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PRODUCER'S CORNER / JIMMY DOUGLASS

Jimmy Douglass (also known as The Senator) is an American four-time Grammy-winning recording engineer and record producer, whose prolific career has spanned more than four decades.

In the early 1970s at Atlantic Records studios in New York City, he started his studio career as a part-time tape duplicator while still attending high school. There he learned how to operate the studio's custom-made 16-channel console and observed, was trained by, as well as worked with some of the greatest engineers, producers and record moguls including Tom Dowd, Arif Mardin, Jerry Wexler and Ahmet Ertegun. For his first time behind the faders, he was encouraged by Wexler to engineer the session recording for a demo of a new band. He went on to work with great Atlantic Recording artists such as Aretha Franklin, Hall & Oates, Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway, Foreigner, Led Zeppelin and AC/DC, to name a few.



During the 1980s, Douglass continued to hone his engineering skills while also taking on the role as producer. He engineered and produced established artists including The Rolling Stones, Slave, Odyssey, Roxy Music and Gang of Four.

Douglass started the first half of the 1990s, working mainly on jingles and post-production. This style of work taught him the importance of working efficiently and capturing the vibe, which would greatly benefit him in the years to come. In 1994, he began working with up-and-coming contemporary R&B/hip-hop producer Timbaland and served as his main engineer for more than a decade. They would eventually collaborate on classic projects from artists such as Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, Ginuwine and Jay-Z.

Beginning the new millennium, Douglass continued engineering and mixing more Timbaland-produced projects including Snoop Dogg, Björk and Grammy-winning albums for Justin Timberlake. Among the artists he also mixed are Rob Thomas, Sean Paul, Kanye West, Ludacris, Al Green, John Legend, Duran Duran and Pharrell Williams.

Presently, he continues to display his versatility by remaining current while drawing from his years of experience. Douglass is best known for bringing unconventional techniques into the studio and encouraging artists to transcend genre restrictions. He is credited with bringing a raw edge to sound and specifically bringing a heavy funk bass sound into rock music. His hard work and immense talent has carved a place for him among some of the most respected engineers and mixers in the world.

What was the last project you released?

A few major recent projects to come out that I was involved in were Pharrell Williams' *GIRL* LP; Blood Orange's *Cupid Deluxe*; both volumes of Justin Timberlake's *The 20/20 Experience*; and Kelly Rowland's *Talk a Good Game*. I am also excited about an upcoming project from The Fryers, with the song "Girls Fly High."

What is the most challenging aspect of the current business climate from your perspective?

With such advances in technology over the last few decades, it is easier than ever for one to make music with only basic skills. That has really changed since I began my career. At one time, the only way to really record was in a professional recording studio with real "engineers and mixers" who grew up learning their craft working their way up the ladder starting with being an intern in the studio.

Now, as consumers have so many audio resources at their fingertips, making and recording music has never been more prevalent—from playing and recording on your front porch using a laptop, to even recording using your smart phone. You now can have a multi-track situation easier than ever before, and you can then share your recordings with your friends and the world with just the click of a mouse or push of a button. It's amazing.

The world has also been flooded with distribution possibilities. Where once music was available and distributed by giant record companies, now there are thousands of ways to get your music out to the masses. The result is that we now have an oversupply of independent music out there, and independent artists vying for attention. There are so many choices and ways to consume, enjoy, accept and critique music. It's harder to find truly great talent, and even harder to navigate through artists without a fully developed sense of their art yet.

While publishing and live performing still remain lucrative, the income stream for recorded music now sees people less willing to pay for their music, while its availability is exponentially more apparent.

But the other side of that statement is that there are so many more ways for skilled musicians, producers and artists to get paid, because of more abundant outlets, like music for gaming, music for hire, music for publishing and film/advertising placements. For artists willing to work hard, think outside the box and get creative, there are a lot of options for a revenue stream.

How has your production workflow changed in the past few years?

In recent years, my production flow has leaned a little more towards trying to work a little faster, as sometimes today's good ideas end up as yesterday's lost thoughts. If you don't get them down and done quick enough, they might be lost. I'm also working to spend more time and attention on the clients' needs, and that means taking a different role with each project. As always, the artist comes first.

With all the plug-ins available today, I find that sometimes finding a solution is easier than ever. Some of the instant fixes make the audio workflow a dream. Whether you spend all day cooking a meal, or you make an instant one in the microwave, the hungry man's stomach walks away equally as satisfied!

Have you discovered any new gear or software this year? If so, what, and why do you like it?

I can think of two pieces of gear that I've been loving this year in particular: the Roger Mayer 456 solid-state analogue tape emulator—it's a half rack-width wide and one rack space tall, a stand-alone unit; and the Elysia Xpressor 500 series analog Universal Compressor. ♦

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