

## THE WAIT IS OVER: INTRODUCING THE VS-880EX!

The march of technology is relentless, as evidenced by the non-stop development of ever-more-powerful personal computers, communications devices, and even Roland's recent reinvention of its legendary VS-880: the new VS-880EX Digital Studio Workstation. This workstation carries on in the tradition of the powerful and affordable VS-880, adding some new features that have finally become cost-effective enough to incorporate into such an affordable unit. For those of you who like to cut to the chase, here's a summary of the VS-880EX's new features.

- Built-in dual stereo multi-effects: no optional effects card needed
- 8 tracks of simultaneous recording in MT-1 mode at 44.1kHz
- 8 inputs: 6 balanced 1/4-inch inputs plus a stereo digital input (coax. and optical)
- 8 outputs: 4 RCA-type outputs and 2 independent stereo digital outputs (coax. and optical)
- 128 Virtual Tracks for endless creative possibilities, configured as two banks with the ability to easily exchange tracks from bank to bank.
- 16 channels of automated digital mixing: 8 tracks plus 8 inputs
- Angled, backlit LCD and luminous track buttons
- Built-in EZ Routing navigation system

New to the VS-880EX is the acclaimed EZ Routing navigation system, which takes you through all of the steps necessary for recording, bouncing or mixing your audio. You can also store your own mixer routing configurations for fast access to common mixer setups. Or



create a new routing simply by holding a Track Status button and pressing any input(s) you want routed to that track. The luminous buttons will flash to confirm the routing you have chosen, greatly speeding up operations.

Also new to the VS-880EX are some very distinct effects algorithms, including Analog Phaser, Analog Flanger, Tape Echo and 3-Band Isolator. And the VS-880EX is of course fully compatible with song data from both the VS-880 and the VS-1680, and can be sync'd with either unit for a 16- or 24-track system. Best of all is the VS-880EX's low suggested retail price: \$2,195! So what are you waiting for?



### Some Frequently Asked VS-1680 Questions

Q: Can I use the stereo track pairs independently? If so, how?

In the VS-1680, Tracks 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-16 have one fader per stereo pair to accommodate the need for stereo tracking and bouncing and also to save real estate on the unit. However, "inside" the VS-1680, these are really completely independent tracks.

To access any pair independently, first press the Channel Edit button for that pair and turn the Link function off. Notice that the label on the top left side of the window has changed from [TR= 9-10], for example, to [TR= 9].

Now, if you hold SHIFT and press the Channel Edit button, you'll get the parameters for the even-numbered track.

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# in the SPOTLIGHT:

Jim Giberti and The Imagination Company

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If you press the Channel Edit button alone, you will get the odd-numbered track. The fader will now control the level for the odd-numbered track and SHIFT + the fader will control the level for the even-numbered track. The use of the Shift button to access two different functions from one button is also used to assign the effects returns.

Note that if the tracks are linked, you can still independently adjust the pan position of each track. To do this, press the Channel Edit button for the track pair, press PAN and then press F6, PRM V. You can now cursor to each individual track's pan position to place that track anywhere in the stereo field.

Q: What is the function of the Fader/Mute button? How can I access the faders for the inputs as well as the faders for the tracks? Why am I hearing my inputs when my tracks aren't in Record mode?

Much like the VS-880, the VS-1680's faders do double duty. They control the levels for the tracks and also the levels for the inputs. The Fader/Mute button selects which of these two functions the faders are controlling. Press the Fader/Mute button once and the faders will control track levels. Press the Fader/Mute button again and the faders will control input levels. It's that easy.

If you have a source such as a microphone or a keyboard plugged into an input, you will hear this source in your mix. The reason for this is that the input mixer settings default to sending the inputs to the mix with the fader at nominal 0 dB. This is great if you are mixing your tracks along with some other inputs, because you now have a 26-channel (16 tracks + 10 inputs) automated digital mixer at your disposal. However, you might not want this routing during the recording process. To keep from hearing the inputs, there are two easy ways to remove them from the mix. One way is to press the Fader/Mute button and then just lower the faders for the inputs you don't want to hear. Another way is to press the Channel Edit button for the input you want to take out of the mix and turn the pan section (master or mix buss routing) off.

Q: Why does the Enter button flash sometimes? How do I get a graph of my EQ settings?

If you press the Channel Edit button for a particular track and go to the EQ section, you will notice that the Enter button is flashing. This is a hint that pressing it will give you some more information. Pressing it, in fact, will bring up a graph of your EQ settings. Usually, the VS-1680's Enter button will flash if the workstation has some additional information for the function you have entered.



The Imagination Company studio 1.

For this issue's "Spotlight," we talked with Jim Giberti, a Vermont-based producer who creates national TV commercials and radio spots using two VS-1680 Digital Studio Workstations. But Jim's career started long before he purchased his 1680's. He founded his studio, The Imagination Company, using typical production studio equipment of the time: namely, an 8-track analog tape recorder and a small mixing board. As his studio became more successful, Jim added a TAC Scorpion board and expanded to 16, and later 24, tracks of analog tape recording. Six years ago, when the digital tape recorder revolution began, Jim switched to 24 tracks of digital tape-based MDM's as his main recorders and worked this way for several years.



Jim Giberti's private studio.

When the original VS-880 Digital Studio Workstation came out, Jim bought one primarily to use at home as a portable "sketch pad." After a few months, however, Jim realized that he wasn't even turning on his digital tape machines. The VS-880 allowed him to do quicker, more advanced editing and he no longer had the patching hassles. But Jim still needed more tracks occasionally, and when the VS-1680 came out with its low-impedance mic inputs with phantom power and 16 tracks of playback, Jim purchased it immediately.

After using the VS-1680 for a few months, Jim sold all of his other recording gear, which paid for a second studio including some high-end mics and another VS-1680. "It was incredible. I sold my old gear and outfitted a fantastic new studio with everything I ever wanted," exclaimed Jim. "Besides that, the projects I did in the first week or two completely paid for all of the gear a couple of times over... [It was] a big contrast to the old days when you had these big lease payments due each month."

As an avid VS-880 user, Jim found his new VS-1680's incredibly easy to use. In fact, on the day he purchased his VS-1680, he began working on a project which was due that day. A couple of hours later, Jim had the spot finished, sent over his ISDN lines to his

customer, and on the air! "It was very easy to become comfortable with the operations of the machine," Jim confirmed.

The Imagination Company offers complete start-to-finish production for video or TV spots. It has two Media 100 systems for video editing, two full MIDI production suites, and a large studio that Jim uses for video or film shoots. He uses the VS-1680 in these rooms for production, as well as to "mix to pix," syncing his VS-1680's to SMPTE via a MIDIman sync box. He's even planning on building a new video suite soon (including another VS-1680).

Believe it or not, over 50 percent of Jim's ad clients are from the West Coast. To overcome this distance, he has two ISDN lines installed in his studios and can send or receive high-quality audio to or from any of his ad clients or radio clients with ISDN capability. Due to his proximity to great skiing locations, The Imagination Company has captured a good portion of the ski resort advertising business. In fact, Jim just won a major award for his work with Mountain High Ski Resorts.

Because of its flexibility and low overhead, Jim's Imagination Company really can offer a full-service, "no job is too large or too small" approach.

Thanks in part to his VS-1680's, Jim can do everything from small-budget jobs for \$5,000 or the more typical \$150,000 video or film jobs. Flexibility is really the way to go in the '90s, and Jim's Imagination Company is proof. Congratulations and best wishes, Jim.

# TYSON'S TIPS

by Laura Tyson

One of the most powerful tools available in the VS-1680 is its non-destructive editing. That's because careful editing can make the difference between having your song sound good and having it sound phenomenal. In short, you can use editing to "clean up" your tracks.

Use Track Erase to get rid of all the junk before or after a recorded part, and to clean up headphone bleed on a vocal track. Use Track Copy to grab a perfectly performed vocal part and "fly" it around to different points in the song.

In this issue's "Tyson's Tips," we'll explain how to take a vocal track and copy it to a different point in the song. Use this as an exercise to become familiar with editing in the VS-1680. With a bit of practice, you should be able to edit tracks in the VS-1680 with speed and precision.

There are two steps to editing on the VS-1680. The first is finding the edit points, and the second is simply performing the button presses to do the edit. As you're learning to edit on the VS-1680, don't worry about making a mistake, because UNDO is only a button press away. So let's get started.

Step 1: Find and store the edit points.

The simplest way to store edit points is to save them as "locators." The locators are controlled by the eight buttons labeled 1 through 8 (found just above the transport controls). You can either place a locator "on the fly" (while the song is playing), or use the Value dial to cue up to the point you wish to store. If you make a mistake while placing a locator, simply hold CLEAR and press the locator once to clear it.

Place locators as follows:

- LOCATOR 1: Just before the beginning of the vocal chorus.
- LOCATOR 2: Just after the end of the vocal chorus.
- LOCATOR 3: Just before the beginning of the vocal chorus (same as Locator 1).
- LOCATOR 4: Where you want to copy the chorus to (i.e., where you want to "paste" it).

These locators correspond with the four different edit points the VS-1680 needs:

- START: The beginning of the audio you wish to copy.
- END: The end of the audio you wish to copy.
- FROM: Usually, the beginning of the audio you wish to copy. This is technically the sync point (more on this in future *Track Notes*).
- TO: Where you want the copied audio to land.

Hint: If you set up a tempo map before recording your song, you can use the Time/Value dial to select measure numbers and save these as locators. For example, if a vocal phrase starts at measure 17 and ends at measure 22, and you want to copy it to measure 38, set up the locators as follows:

- LOCATOR 1: Measure 17
- LOCATOR 2: Measure 22
- LOCATOR 3: Measure 17
- LOCATOR 4: Measure 38

Step 2: The button presses.

Once you've set up your edit points as locators, the button presses are easy.

1. Hold SHIFT and press F2 [TRACK].
2. Press F2 [COPY] for Track Copy. If you don't see COPY above [F2], press PAGE until it appears.
3. Press LOCATOR 1 to locate to the start of the vocal chorus.
4. Hold SHIFT and press LOCATOR 1. This loads the value of Locator 1 as the start point.
5. Press LOCATOR 2.
6. Hold SHIFT and press LOCATOR 2. This loads the value of Locator 2 as the end point.
7. Press LOCATOR 3.
8. Hold SHIFT and press LOCATOR 3. This loads the value of Locator 3 as the from point.
9. Press LOCATOR 4.
10. Hold SHIFT and press LOCATOR 4. This loads the value of Locator 4 as the to point.
11. Press the SELECT or CHANNEL EDIT for Track 3. It stops blinking, letting you know the audio on Track 3 will be copied to a different time position on Track 3. Track 3 [STATUS] lights red.
12. Press F4 [EXEC].

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That's it! Your edit is done. Go back and listen to the song. If you like it, great. If you don't, simply press UNDO. When you're done editing, press PLAY/DISPLAY to return back to the Playlist display.

#### Precision Editing

In the above editing example, we used locators to indicate edit points. This is a fast and easy way to edit dialog and vocal parts. For looping music beds and other music edits, however, you'll need to find the edit points with much more precision. Once you've gotten familiar with the button-pushes, try experimenting with the Waveform display and Scrub control to help you set up locators more accurately.

To view the waveform (wave)

1. Decide which track you need to view the audio waveform for.
2. Use the Up and Down cursors to select the track. The track number will be highlighted in the bottom left side of the Playlist display.
3. Press F5 [WAVE] to bring up the Waveform display. (If you don't see the label WAVE above F5, press PAGE until it appears.)
4. Press F1 [ZOOM+] and F2 [ZOOM-] to make the waveform taller or shorter.
5. Press [F3← →] and [F4→ ←] to zoom in or zoom out.
6. Press F5 [WAVE] once again to clear the Waveform display.

#### Track Editing vs. Phrase Editing

The VS-1680 offers two different methods for editing: Track editing and Phrase editing.

Every time you start and stop recording, the VS-1680 creates a block of audio in the display. These blocks are called "phrases." If you put a track into record at the very beginning of a song, press the Play button, and record all the way to the end, you will have one phrase. On the other hand, if you punch-in and punch-out of record, you will end up with many different phrases, one for each punch-in/punch-out.

All editing functions except for Cut and Erase have four parameters: Start, End, From and To. In a Track edit, you must provide the VS-1680 with all four of these different edit values. In a Phrase edit, the Start and End points are already defined as the edges of the phrase. So in Phrase editing, all you need to provide is the From and To points.

So whether you use Track or Phrase editing depends on how you record your audio. If you typically record all the way to the end of a song, you'll need to use Track editing. On the other hand, if you punched in and out frequently while recording, you'll find Phrase editing faster to use. Since the Start and End points of a section of audio are already defined by the "edges" of a phrase, you'll spend less time finding and defining edit points. You may end up using Track editing on the drums and bass, which tend to play all the way through a song, and Phrase editing to move vocal parts around.

Are there other topics you'd like to see covered in future editions of "Tyson's Tips?" Just e-mail your ideas to [ltyson@compuserve.com](mailto:ltyson@compuserve.com).

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