

Why the iPod is good for the studio business

About a year ago I was invited to a meeting of the APRS (Association of Professional Recording Services). It was called 'Does anybody want to buy a recording studio?' and I was participating an interesting debate on running recording studios in the current climate.

However, it turned out to be more of a general conversation about the benefits of analogue over Pro Tools – an interesting topic, but not the one we were here to mull over. I listened to the discussion with some interest but mainly frustration: there we all were – supposedly the cream of the recording studio industry – and the vast majority of people were utterly demotivated and dispirited. They were also all too happy to direct their wrath and disaffection in just one direction – the iPod generation.

They talked of the good old days' when analogue ruled and the quality was so much better. They then compared this to 'today' where we all still strive to make music sound as amazing as possible, only for it to end up on someone's iPod or other MP3 device sounding compressed and dreadful... but I think this is missing the point.

MP3s are for convenience (the age we live in), to capture the vibe of the music and to spread the word. Teenagers listen to MP3s on their phones and say to friends, 'This is a great track', and as a result someone else discovers a new album and – hopefully – goes and buys it. This has to be a good thing for everyone involved in the industry.

For my own part, I've fully embraced the MP3 generation. Right now, as I write this article, I'm listening to my iTunes collection through my laptop. I love listening to MP3s while at the gym, and at home I have 150 gigabytes of music which I stream wirelessly around the house through various awful compressing apparatus that make the sound invariably

worse than most of the CDs that sit on the shelf gathering dust.

So why I have gone down this road? Because to me listening to music is not about the 1/4 dB rise on a guitar lick, it's about the excitement of the bands and the music. If they can deliver an album that sounds good on an MP3, then it's a good album, end of story. If you listen to the new Killers album the amazing production is not lost due to the fact that it has been horribly compressed, and the songs don't suffer either. Music is all about the live music scene has done so well this year?

Back at the APRS meeting, there was a suggestion that we needed to educate end-users to not listen to music on MP3s; that their doing so was sabotaging everything professional studios try to do.

But mass users have always listened to music on inferior quality machines! The infamous Walkman every whirr and flutter made music

and connecting cables, but Campton stresses that it is the speed with which connections can be made, as well as the flexibility, which is key to the system's success: "At a facility like this, there can be up to 10 different sessions in each room every day – that's more than 400 per week. And the configuration for each one could be different. For example, in one studio alone you could go from doing a simple one-voice Pro Tools recording, to multiple voices dubbing a TV show or movie, to recording two actors and simultaneously – with one here and

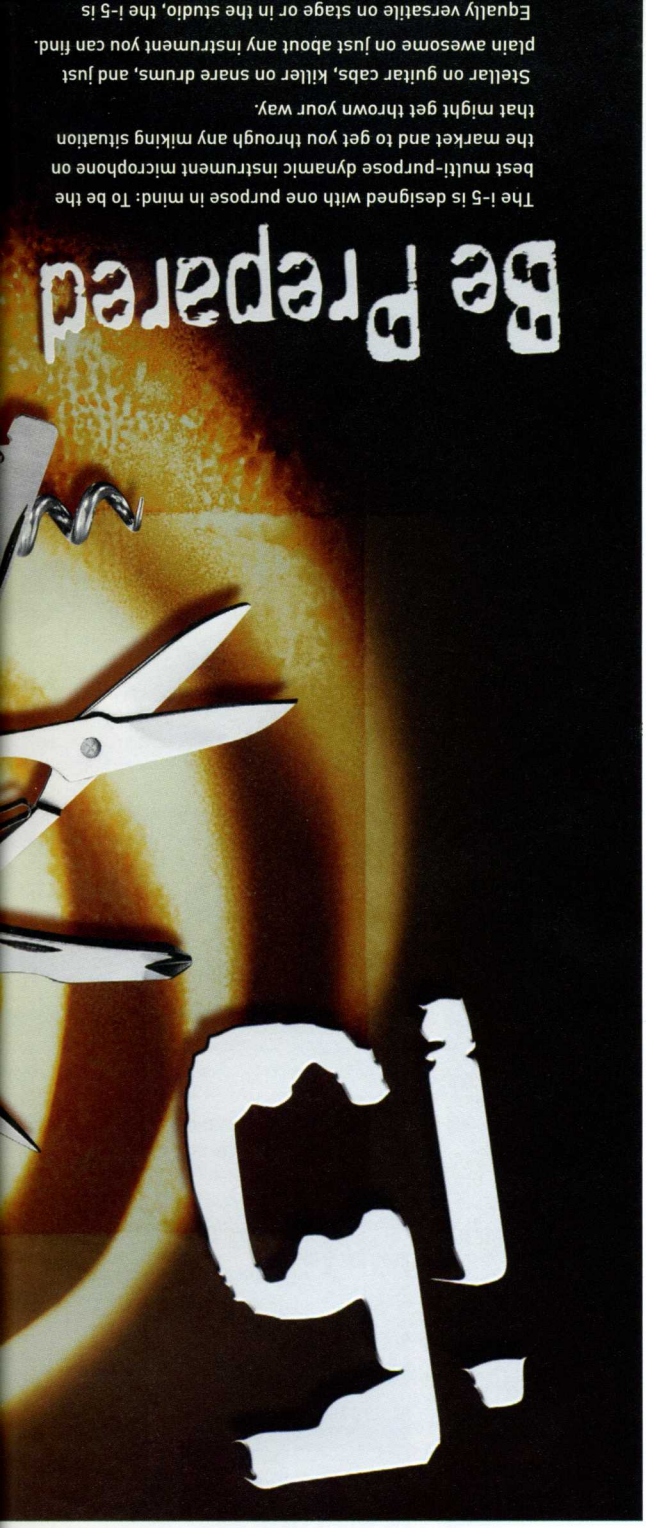
about a year ago I was invited to a meeting of the APRS (Association of Professional Recording Services). It was called 'Does anybody want to buy a recording studio?' and I was participating an interesting debate on running recording studios in the current climate.

However, it turned out to be more of a general conversation about the benefits of analogue over Pro Tools – an interesting topic, but not the one we were here to mull over. I listened to the discussion with some interest but mainly frustration: there we all were – supposedly the cream of the recording studio industry – and the vast majority of people were utterly demotivated and dispirited. They were also all too happy to direct their wrath and disaffection in just one direction – the iPod generation.

They talked of the good old days' when analogue ruled and the quality was so much better. They then compared this to 'today' where we all still strive to make music sound as amazing as possible, only for it to end up on someone's iPod or other MP3 device sounding compressed and dreadful... but I think this is missing the point.

MP3s are for convenience (the age we live in), to capture the vibe of the music and to spread the word. Teenagers listen to MP3s on their phones and say to friends, 'This is a great track', and as a result someone else discovers a new album and – hopefully – goes and buys it. This has to be a good thing for everyone involved in the industry.

For my own part, I've fully embraced the MP3 generation. Right now, as I write this article, I'm listening to my iTunes collection through my laptop. I love listening to MP3s while at the gym, and at home I have 150 gigabytes of music which I stream wirelessly around the house through various awful compressing apparatus that make the sound invariably



The i-5 is designed with one purpose in mind: To be the best multi-purpose dynamic instrument microphone on the market and to get you through any miking situation that might get thrown your way.

Stellar on guitar cabs, killer on snare drums, and just plain awesome on just about any instrument you can find. Equally versatile on stage or in the studio, the i-5 is