

27
GEAR REVIEWS!!
100-WATT AMP HEAD ROUNDUP • VOX TONE GARAGE • PRS S2 SERIES
PEAVEY AT-2000 WITH ANTARES AUTO-TUNE • NEW BOSS PEDALS • AND MORE!

ANNUAL HALL OF FAME ISSUE!
CLASSIC TOMMY BOLIN FUSION LESSON • 140 YEARS OF EPIPHONE GUITARS

PLAY BETTER • SOUND BETTER

Guitar Player

**DEREK TRUCKS
& SUSAN
TEDESCHI**

ALEXI LAIHO

**LES PAUL'S
SECRET
WEAPON**



**THE DEMONS
IN HIS GUITAR!**

KEITH URBAN'S OBSESSION

WITH TONES, STYLES, AND HOOKS

NOVEMBER 2013 \$6.90



0 74470 01010 4

1 1 >

A NEWBAY MEDIA PUBLICATION





Radial Gold Digger 4-Channel Mic Selector

TESTED BY BUDDY SALEMAN

HOME STUDIOS OBVIOUSLY HAVE A few disadvantages when compared to big commercial facilities. There's typically no large, dedicated, tuned, and soundproofed recording space in the average house, nor is there a separate and sonically flat control room. Things will likely stay that way, too—unless you win the lottery or write a smash hit, and are crazy enough to build a professional studio within the walls of your just-acquired mansion. But one advantage the pros have over many home-studio musicians—the ability to critically audition multiple microphones on an instrument or vocalist in order to select the best mic for the job—does not have to hover out of reach.

For one thing, if you don't have a lot of mics, you can rent them or borrow a few from friends. In addition, if you have a Gold Digger (\$349 street), you can near effortlessly compare and contrast up to four microphones through a single mic preamp, and all while sitting securely in the sweet spot of your listening position. There's no more futzing around changing out mics one-by-one, and worrying if all the up-down-up-down action is skewing an accurate perception of how each mic really sounds.

The butt-simple Gold Digger offers four XLR inputs, one XLR output, and four channels, each with its own selectable phantom power (so you can compare condensers to dynamics

to ribbons), Trim knob, and on/off switch (for rapid-fire, mic-to-mic evaluations). Everything is housed in tough, 2.8lb box with a handy non-skid bottom. A power supply is included.

IN SESSION

I used the Gold Digger during vocal and guitar sessions, and routed the unit's output to my preamp of choice—a Manley VoxBox. For the vocal test, I plugged an Audio-Technica AT4050, an AKG C414, and a Neumann TLM 103 into the Gold Digger, used the Trim controls to dial in near-identical signal levels, and had the vocalist sing through each mic a number of times. The sound quality was excellent, and made it easy to discern even subtle differences in how each of the mics captured the singer's vocal timbre. A slight electronic switching noise was noted when depressing the channel on/off button. The noise did translate to tape, but that was no big thing as I was auditioning mics, not doing any serious tracking. *[Radial says the noise is due to phantom power and DC offset from the mics, and they did not add capacitors into the signal path to eliminate the slight clicking as it would compromise a "non-colored" comparison.]*

The test for miking an electric guitar amp involved a Sterling ST55, a Sennheiser MD 421, and two different Shure SM57s. Each mic was positioned somewhat off-axis to the center of

the speaker cone. Again, the transparent sonics of the Gold Digger made it possible to zero in on the critical midrange frequencies each mic reproduced, as well as compare low-end content and high-frequency shimmer.

Lastly, I used the Gold Digger to audition some studio workhorses—my collection of Shure SM57s. These guys have a hard life, so it was great to be able to compare them to each other, and hear which ones still captured complex mids, thick lows, and airy highs, and which ones were sounding a bit dull or shrill. It was in trying to hear slight tonal differences between the exact same mic models that I *really* appreciated the Gold Digger's transparency, ease of use, and instant switching between channels. What a great debugging tool!

CONCLUSION

For many home studios, gear acquisition budgets can be tough to come by. But if you're committed to always finding the absolute perfect mic to record a source sound, then \$350 isn't a heavy tariff to pay for peace of mind. This is a fantastic piece of gear for any serious engineer/producer.

Kudos Easy to use. Transparent sound. Good value.

Concerns On/off switches a bit noisy.

Contact radialeng.com