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Radial Engineering Cherry Picker and Gold Digger

Mic and preamp switchers help you pick the right tools for the job

BY PHIL O'KEEFE

SUMMARY

STRENGTHS: Well designed. Noise-free passive signal paths. Silent switching. Rugged and road-worthy housing. Three-year transferable limited warranties.

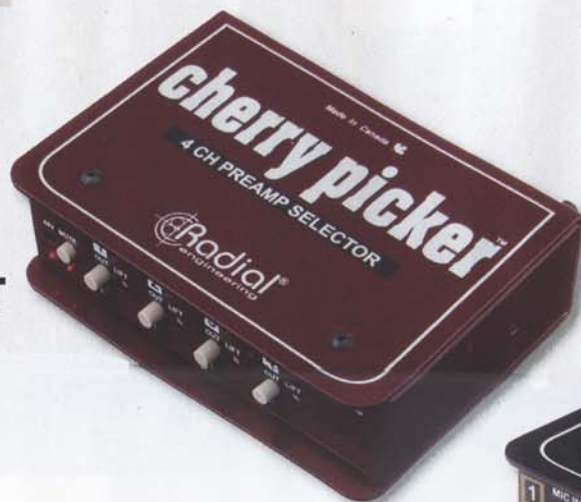
LIMITATIONS: None.

**\$400 MSRP each,
\$350 street each**
www.radialeng.com

SAVVY ENGINEERS know that the signal chain is crucial. Matching the right mic to the right singer can make the difference between a track you have to fight with in the mix and one that really fits.

Matching the right mic with the right preamp can also make a big difference, but quick comparisons aren't always easy. You often have to unplug one, then plug in something else, and by then you've forgotten exactly what the first one sounded like. Radial Engineering designed the Gold Digger and Cherry Picker to help solve the auditioning problem.

Both units are housed in heavy-duty, 14-gauge steel with a baked enamel finish. Neoprene bottom pads prevent them from sliding around and provide electrical insulation and mechanical isolation. Power is supplied by an included 15VDC external



adapter. The case's locking cable clamp helps ensure that the power plug stays connected. As with Radial's direct boxes, front controls are protected by a pair of metal lips that extend from the top and bottom of the enclosure, similar to the way a book cover extends beyond its pages.

Cherry Picker The Cherry Picker mic/line switcher lets a single XLR input jack (with 48V phantom power) feed one of four XLR outputs. This configuration allows you to connect a single mic to multiple mic preamps so you can audition them quickly.

The front panel has four output switches, each with a corresponding LED and ground-lift button. Select an output and the others are automatically disengaged. The Mute switch silences all four outputs so you can swap mics. The phantom-power switch and ground-lift buttons are recessed to prevent accidental activation.

The Cherry Picker can also be used as a line-level signal switcher or router, letting you send an input to one of four different processors or output destinations. Very handy!

Gold Digger The Gold Digger lets you connect four mics to one destination, so you can quickly determine which transducer works best with your sound source. Like the Cherry Picker,

it uses relays for switching in order to avoid pops. When you select an input, the others are automatically disengaged. LED indicators show the selected input.

Phantom power is individually switchable, so you can connect condensers and ribbon microphones at the same time. Because mics have different output levels, the Gold Digger has four attenuators so you can match levels and avoid being swayed by the louder-is-better phenomenon. And like the Cherry Picker, the signal path is 100% passive, with no active electronics between the inputs and output. The sound is neutral and uncolored: What goes in is what comes out. The Gold Digger can also be used to compare different direct boxes.

The New Switcheroo I have nothing but praise for both units. They're quiet and do not color to the signal path. Most importantly, they make the difficult task of performing direct evaluations among multiple microphones and mic preamps much easier, allowing for instant side-by-side comparisons, which helps you make better choices and, ultimately, better-sounding recordings. I highly recommended both devices. ■

Phil O'Keefe is a multi-instrumentalist, engineer, and producer. His credits include Alien Ant Farm, Jules Day, and Voodoo Glow Skulls.