

Producer Garth Richardson Employs Focusrite RedNet Interfaces

Allowing Him to Record Literally Anywhere on His Property



GRAMMY Award-nominated and Juno Award-winning music producer and engineer Garth “GGGarth” Richardson recently installed a large collection of components from Focusrite’s RedNet range of Dante™-networked audio converters and interfaces at his Farm Studios, which is on a sprawling, wooded estate on British Columbia’s Sunshine Coast, just north of Vancouver. And then, he says, “I went out and bought a tractor.”

Richardson took the opportunity during the COVID-19 lockdown to make improvements at Farm Studios, a seven-acre property with panoramic views across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver Island, where he has lived and worked since 2002. In addition to the cosmetic and acoustical upgrades that he’s made to his control room, he has installed a Dante-networked system comprising three RedNet A16R 16-channel analogue I/O interfaces, two RedNet HD32R 32-channel HD Dante network bridges, a RedNet MP8R eight-channel mic pre and A/D converter, a RedNet X2P 2x2 Dante audio interface and two compact RedNet AM2 stereo audio monitoring units. The rig will enable him to record musicians anywhere on his property, including the main house, separate recording studio building, band house

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and crew cabin.

Richardson had long fantasized about recording outside, he says, a fantasy he has realized through the new Focusrite system. “Do you remember the Led Zeppelin record where they recorded acoustic guitars outside?” he says, referring to “Black Country Woman” on the Physical Graffiti album, which was recorded in the garden at Mick Jagger’s Stargroves estate. “I can do that now.”

As for the tractor, “I had to dig trenches to run Cat 6 cables to all of my buildings. And I’ve run a Cat 6 cable down the hill to the band house, approximately 150 feet,” he says. “The great thing about this place is that you can record anywhere. I’ve done drums outside, Leslie cabinets outside. But I’d have to run mic cables from the control room and all the way across the courtyard, and that’s too far.” Now, with his RedNet setup, he says, setting up to record anywhere on the property has become much easier: “The technology that I have from Focusrite has given me so much more flexibility.”



Using the networked system, he says, “I’m able to immerse the artist and take them out of their norm. If the singer feels like he wants to sing over in the house, or in the main living room, I just take a RedNet mic pre, walk over and plug it into a Cat 6 connection. Let’s go! I can run a very thin cable down the hill, plug in the MP8R eight-channel mic pre and the AM2 headphones. I can record whatever I

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want, wherever I want, and there's no line loss. That's rad. Focusrite's technology is completely groundbreaking."

Richardson started working at his father's Nimbus Nine Studios in Toronto while still at school. His father, Jack, an Order of Canada recipient, worked with chart-topping artists such as the Guess Who, Alice Cooper, Poco and Badfinger and was known as the "godfather of the Canadian music industry." "I was the janitor at my dad's studio. When his partner, Bob Ezrin, produced the first Peter Gabriel record, I got to sit in the room and watch," he says. By age 15 he had his first "second engineer" credit, for Bob Seger's "Night Moves" single, which reached #4 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1977. In the 45 years since, his credits have grown to also include seminal projects by Rage Against the Machine, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rise Against, Atreyu, Biffy Clyro, Nickelback, Chevelle and numerous others.



But, he says, "I got tired of being inside studios, where you would come into a concrete bunker. I'd been doing this since I was 15 years old and I'd never see the sun." So, after 12 years working in Los Angeles, Richardson moved to his present scenic and sunny Farm Studios location. In 2009 he also established the Nimbus School of Recording & Media, a music and media technical school, with Bob Ezrin and producer, engineer and musician Kevin Williams, in Vancouver.

Richardson has plenty of projects lined up, but they are currently being held up by

the COVID-19 travel and quarantine restrictions. "I'm doing the next Devin Townsend record," he says. "He's going to bring the whole band here, 10 people. His band is coming from all over the world - Brazil, Spain, the U.K., the States. But this is not a bad place to quarantine for two weeks. I'm going to have them in each building, we're all going to have headphones and we're going to camp out. We'll be able to have everything everywhere. You couldn't do that in the old days."

A lot of today's music has no personality, he believes. "Everyone is using the same plug-ins, everyone is using the same gear and doing the same thing. To me, any bit of originality, anything to do with emotions, seems to be gone. No one is doing things differently." But with his new Focusrite setup, Richardson hopes to get something extra special out of his clients by recording them in new environments. "We spend so much time inside, so why not go outside when we can?"

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