

Blackbird singing in the dead of night... with a Control 24

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Perth-based *Blackbird Studio's* owner and operator Dave Parkin recently won the *West Australian Music Industry (WAMI)* award for Best Record Producer / Engineer for 2006. As the winner of the same award in 2005, Dave's music production skills with primarily "independent" bands are exceptional. He has worked with *Jebediah, Snowman, Red Jezebel, The Panda Band, The Hampdens, The Avenues* and *Bob Evans* just to name a few.

"The last 4 and a half years here at *Blackbird* has been an amazing experience," says Dave. "I've had the opportunity to work with some incredible bands, and be part of many great records."

As demand for *Blackbird Studio's* award-winning production services continually grow, Dave decided it was time to upgrade his studio system to a Digidesign Pro Tools HD rig. For this transition, Dave enlisted the help of *Kosmic Music's* Digidesign Product Specialist Dale Higgins, literally around the corner at Osborne Park.

"Kosmic made the whole studio upgrade to Pro Tools very easy," says Dave. "Dale set up the entire system, so all I had to do was start recording – now that's sweet!"

Dave and Dale decided to install a Digidesign HD3 (PCI Express) Accel system running on a G5 Mac. This system includes one HD Core card, and two HD Accel cards –the most powerful Pro Tools core system available, one 192 I/O audio interface with a 192 AD expansion card, a 96 I/O audio interface and Control 24 control surface.



Dave Parkin working into the night on his Control 24

"I wanted my track count and processing power to be powerful enough to handle any creative idea," says Dave. "A HD3 PCIe rig powered by a G5 was the way to go".

Blackbird Studio projects vary considerably from solo artists, right up to full bands. Dave was conscience of having enough ins and outs to handle recording a full band. Dave and Dale decided that a 192 I/O audio interface with a 192 AD expansion card, and a 96 I/O audio interface would cover these requirements.

"Considering the style of studio *Blackbird* is and the array of artists it attracts," says Dale. "A HD3 (PCI Express), 192 I/O, 96I/O and Control 24 was a perfect compliment to the existing array of outboard gear and instruments within the facility."



A great sounding room

Mixing with a mouse was never going to be an option for Dave, who was looking for an intuitive work surface to compliment his powerful system. After looking at an array of digital controllers available on the market, in the end the choice of a Control 24 work surface for Dave was a pretty simple one. The 24 touch-sensitive motorised faders coupled with the "hands on" control of Pro Tools functions were pretty appealing.

"It is so easy to do my automation moves on the C24, whether it is pan, fader, inserts or other mixing essentials," says Dave. "The options on the C24 are awesome."

Dave is also pleased with the sonic qualities of the I/O audio interfaces and 16 Focusrite Class A mic/line preamps on the Control 24. This multiple award-winning producer believes that they are as good, if not better, than the many digital and analogue systems he has used in the past. .

"I'm four albums into Pro Tools at the moment," says Dave. "I feel they are the broadest and deepest recordings I've ever produced".