Christian Olde Wolbers uses Focusrite RedNet and ISA



Christian Olde Wolbers – an accomplished multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, composer and producer – has been a fixture in California's metal scene for more than two decades, contributing to influential projects including industrial-metal pioneers Fear Factory, crossover thrash band Beowülf, and Bay Area thrashers Vio-lence. Originally from Belgium, Olde Wolbers moved to the West Coast in 1993 to join Fear Factory, quickly becoming immersed in the region's heavy music community. Even in those early days, one thing stood out to him in every professional studio: Focusrite gear. "The ISA 430 was in every studio," he recalls. "I remember seeing the blue front plate and the yellow dials, and I came to associate that look with great sound. I eventually got my own 430 MkII and loved it."

Now a full-time member of iconic hip-hop group Cypress Hill, Olde Wolbers decided to take his Los Angeles studio setup to the next level, and he turned to Focusrite's RedNet interfaces and ISA preamps to meet the demands of his increasingly high-profile projects. The result: a flexible, always-ready recording environment that supports everything from spontaneous upright bass jams to full-band tracking. "I've been using Focusrite gear for years, but switching to RedNet was a game-changer," says Olde Wolbers. "It was like night and day. Everything in the studio suddenly felt more professional. And once I moved to HDX, it opened up so much more flexibility in my workflow."

Olde Wolbers' setup centers on the Red 16Line and RedNet A16R interfaces, giving

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him 32 channels of pristine conversion. Combined with 20 channels of Focusrite ISA preamps – four ISA 428s and one ISA 828 – his system is tailored for live instrumentation and efficient capture. “I record a lot of drums and upright bass, and I like to keep all my signal paths dialed in. My studio isn’t a revolving-door space. It’s built to be consistent, fast, and always ready to go.”

He continues, “When I’m working with artists in their 50s, like members of Cypress Hill, with tight schedules and now with family obligations, I can’t afford any downtime,” he explains. “Even if it’s a demo, I track it like it’s going on the record. You might never get a second take, so your setup needs to be dialed in and capture-ready at all times. That’s what Focusrite gives me.”

That consistency is crucial, especially when working with Cypress Hill. Olde Wolbers is currently producing the group’s upcoming record. In a unique fusion of genres, the legendary hip-hop Cypress Hill performed an exclusive concert at the Royal Albert Hall in collaboration with the esteemed London Symphony Orchestra. This special event commemorates the 30th anniversary of their groundbreaking album Black Sunday, featuring bespoke orchestral arrangements performed by a full 70-piece ensemble – a project he says is set to be released this June.

He describes the move to RedNet as more than just a gear upgrade – it’s about ensuring professional standards from the first note to the final master. “In today’s music world, your interface is your window,” stated Olde Wolbers. “If what you’re feeding into your DAW isn’t top tier, it’s hard to make up for it later. RedNet gives me that musical, clean capture on the front end. If I want to dirty things up after, I can. But I always start clean, high-quality audio, especially if it’s going to a major label.”

His admiration for the Focusrite ISA preamps runs deep, particularly their natural tone. “What I’ve always loved about the ISA gear is how balanced and musical it is. A lot of preamps have too much color, but Focusrite feels natural and organic. I use them constantly on drums and bass, especially with my SSL and API EQs in the chain. It just works.” With projects spanning hip-hop, hardcore, metal and symphonic collaborations, Olde Wolbers’ studio must support rapid creative output. He keeps everything – mics, signal chains and routing – preconfigured so nothing slows down the creative process.

“I’ve got all my gear in touring-style rollable racks, just like a live rig. My upright bass rig is always patched into eight dedicated channels. That’s the sound I use on the Cypress Hill tracks, and now I don’t have to re-dial in anything. I can just walk in, arm the tracks and hit record—done! Eric Bobo, our percussionist and drummer in Cypress Hill, was in the Beastie Boys during the time when they would do the instrumental, funky, jazzy lounge music stuff . He was part of that whole era. He's the son of Billy Bobo, one of the most famous percussionists in Latin percussion. When he comes into my studio, the feel and soul that man has in his fingers is amazing. When I play with him, we just create on the spot constantly, and again, that's why I need everything set up to be able to capture everything we do on a

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minute’s notice. And there's a lot of music on our fingertips, and it's more than just one record! That’s why I have this set up in my own studio. A professional HDX, a RedNet setup, and I am good to go.”

That efficiency extends beyond his work with Cypress Hill. Olde Wolbers is also producing a hardcore project featuring Brad Wilk from Rage Against the Machine, Nick Oliveri (formerly of Queens of the Stone Age), and Tom Capone from Quicksand – all tracked in his South Bay studio. He’s also developing a solo metal project, where he steps out front as the lead vocalist.

For all the gear in the room, Olde Wolbers says it’s Focusrite’s technical support that makes the difference when it matters most. “I’m not the most technical guy,” he admits. “So, when something goes sideways, I just hit up Focusrite. I get someone on the phone, they remotely take over my computer in real time, help me fix what needed fixing, and I’m back in action within minutes. That kind of support is rare – and it means everything when your sessions are on the line, and you have artists waiting to record. You also don’t want to lose that creative moment and Focusrite tech support gets that.”

With RedNet at the core of his setup and ISA preamps shaping his sound, Olde Wolbers’ studio is engineered to keep up with a career that shows no signs of slowing down. “Whether I’m tracking a symphony at Abbey Road or laying down a bassline for Cypress Hill, I know the gear is going to deliver both from a high-quality audio standpoint and reliability. That’s why I stay with Focusrite.”

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