Ras Sparrow uses TASCAM Model 12



Starting in 2006 with the release of his debut album Ras Sparrow - Sovereign People, Venezuelan reggae and dub producer/singer/songwriter Eloy Carrero (aka Ras Sparrow) has enjoyed a steady stream of recognition for his creative flair. Since that time, Sparrow has released three more albums and numerous singles, including Zion Town (featuring Queen Sparrow), which became an international reggae hit, followed by Lion in a Cage, and By the Waters - both with the participation of his wife Mayerlein Garcia (aka La Makeda). And as far back as the early 90s, his creative endeavors were inspired by the opportunities his TASCAM Portastudio 414 MKII made possible.

These days, the TASCAM Model 12 Integrated Production Suite is central to Sparrow’s creative efforts. Based out of Santiago, Chile - he operates his Dub Ark Studio. According to Sparrow, for the past two years he has been using the Model 12 for recording and as the primary sound device when mixing and monitoring. “At the moment,” he reports, “the Model 12 plays a central role in my setup. It handles Main and Sub Outs to my studio monitors, two headphone outs, and two Aux sends for external hardware.”

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When queried about the Model 12’s features that he finds particularly beneficial to his manner of working, Sparrow offered the following thoughts, “I love the versatility and size of the Model 12. The fact that the digital outs can be used to route individual tracks from the DAW into each channel of the unit is, without question, one of my favorite features. This enables me to create live dub mixes and incorporate both my analog offboard and onboard effects seamlessly. The preamps, EQ, and compression on the Model 12 are excellent for mixing as well as recording. I also use it in standalone mode (which I affectionately call ‘Portastudio mode’) for on-the-fly idea sketching. I’m also very fond of the Model 12’s classic design, as it helps to make understanding signal flow and other aspects of the console that much easier to grasp.”

Sparrow also shared his perspective on how the TASCAM Model 12 is so well suited to his type of music. “Dub mixing is unique in the sense that the mixing engineer manipulates the console and plays it like an instrument,” he explained. “Due to the fact that the songs are mixed to print live, with no automation, the process of incorporating reverbs, delays, and echoes to create a reggae soundscape with a fresh and live vibe is an important part of the creative process. In this regard, the Model 12 is a terrific tool. Equally notable, gain staging (the process of making level adjustments) is a walk in the park with the Model 12 in DAW mode, as no mouse needed. The Model 12 was definitely one of the primary tools used to produce my most recent EP release, Dub in Stone.”

As with many types of musical electronics, questions or requests for feature modifications are routine. In this regard, Sparrow was very complimentary of TASCAM customer support services. “While I've never had to contact support with questions, thanks to the Model 12’s intuitive operation, I will say that TASCAM does a really good job of listening to customer suggestions. An example being the fact that the latest Model 12 firmware version included a fix for the headphone/main out control issue that, originally, didn't allow one to monitor only through headphones - unless the volume was turned down on the studio monitors or they were turned off completely. That condition has now been updated. Thanks for listening TASCAM!”

With a considerable amount of experience using the TASCAM Model 12 under his belt, Sparrow offered these final thoughts, “The Model 12, in my experience, is the perfect hybrid unit. I'm able to go full analog with external effects (onboard effects are pretty sweet as well), or switch gears and go full digital. And if you're like me in the sense that you want less mouse clicking and more fader pushing, the Model 12 is an excellent choice.”

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