

Allen Hind uses TASCAM Portacapture X8



Whether it's recording vocal performances, instrumental tracks, or ideas for future projects, guitarist and music educator Allen Hinds is always looking for new ways to broaden his range of musical activities. Over the years, he has recorded or performed with Natalie Cole, BeBe & CeCe Winans, The Crusaders, Hiroshima, Roberta Flack, Randy Crawford, Bobby Caldwell, James Ingram, Marilyn Scott, Eric Marienthal, Marc Antoine, Gino Vannelli, and Boney James to name just a few. With a track record of this caliber, the ability to adapt to a wide range of musical styles is crucial - and to help capture the best possible audio for his various applications, Hinds relies on his Portacapture X8 8-Channel 32-Bit Float Portable Audio Field Recorder from TASCAM.

With a wide range of projects to his credit, Hinds is also involved in music education. He has led workshops, masterclasses, and clinics worldwide and is also a published author. *Modern Blues Slide Guitar*, *Fusion Blues Guitar Soloing*, and *Liquid Legato* are among his published titles. Further, *The Good Fight* is his latest album offering. Hinds has much to offer aspiring musicians, and his Portacapture X8 is central to much of what he does musically. He discussed his experience with the recorder.

"Over the roughly two years that I've had my Portacapture, it's become central to much of what I do," Hinds explained. "I first acquired this unit to help capture the great voice of Randy Crawford, the well-known jazz and R&B vocalist. I toured with her for several years, so we have a long-standing relationship. These days, she's been in a wheelchair so she's not touring. I wanted to capture her vocals, but doing so required that I bring the recording gear to her. The Portacapture X8 made that possible."

"I also work with a few bands around the LA area, and nothing really captures the sound as nicely as the Portacapture," Hinds added. "The Portacapture X8 combines high-resolution sound quality with intuitive app-like control. The recorder's 32-bit float point recording means you can capture a wide range of dynamic sound sources without worrying about clipping. Equally noteworthy, the Portacapture is just as capable of capturing indistinct audio from quiet sources."

When asked about those Portacapture X8 attributes that he finds most beneficial for his manner of working, Hinds offered the following thoughts. "Having XLR connectors in addition to the onboard stereo mics provides a lot of opportunity for different types of recording tasks and it provides high quality reproduction of whatever it is that I'm recording. This unit can capture as many as 8 tracks simultaneously - 6 inputs plus the stereo mix - and it also provides overdub and punch in/out capability, so there's a tremendous amount of creative flexibility available as well."

The TASCAM Portacapture X8 offers a variety of presets to make the recording process easy. These include presets for multi-track recording, podcasting, music, voice, field recording, and ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response), which can be thought of as relaxing or calming 'environmental' sounds. These presents make it easy to optimize the recorder for a variety of recording tasks. The Portacapture also has a Manual Mode that enables one to adjust the various recording parameters by oneself. Hinds described his experience with these Portacapture features.

"I've used both the presets and Manual mode," Hinds reports. "I used the Voice preset when I recorded Randy Crawford and I also like the Field Recording preset, which I have used when capturing live performances. I've experimented with most all the presets, and they do a good job of delivering quality reproduction of whatever it is that you might want to record. Equally important, they make using the Portacapture pretty darn intuitive."

"Another nice aspect of the presets is that you can use them to get close to what you want and then fine-tune the parameters in Manual mode. All of this is quite easy to grasp, and the recorder's large 3.5-inch color display provides all the visual feedback you might need while doing this. Another really nice feature of this recorder is that all the connections are made with sturdy construction. It just feels very professional and durable in every way."

With much of today's electronic equipment, questions periodically arise. As a result, capable and responsive customer support is crucial. Here too, Hinds was very complimentary of TASCAM, "TASCAM support agent Neil Faison has been a great help explaining how to best use the recorder. I've also spoken with one or two other TASCAM people, and they've always been helpful, friendly, and informative."

Prior to turning his attention back to the business of the day, Hinds offered these parting comments regarding his TASCAM experience, "The Portacapture is so well made, I feel as though this will still be a useful tool 20 years from now. It's built like a tank and is easy to use. The bottom line is that it sounds terrific and is highly portable. I believe TASCAM makes quality gear and the staff members I've met have always been helpful and friendly. Keep up the great work!"

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