TASCAM's Portacapture X8 used by Sunny Lau



When a key part of your work is creating sounds for documentary film makers, there is almost no limit as to what a producer might want to use. Hence, the ability to quickly and easily sample and archive sounds of all types is a central part of one’s creative efforts. Such is the case for Sunny Lau, who as a field recording engineer, uses the Portacapture X8 8-channel 32-bit Float Portable Audio Field Recorder from TASCAM to make it all happen.

Sunny Lau ‘s life is steeped in technology. In addition to his audio work, he is a skilled computer programmer who is actively involved in the creation of tools for E-commerce. His penchant for music and sound led him to sound acquisition, as it enables his creative side to contribute to one of his favorite subjects: documentary film making. “I have been using the TASCAM Portacapture X8 in the creation of a sound library,” Lau explained, “as it enables me to go out and capture just about any sound one can imagine. Since film creators are always looking for new and unique sounds and effects to support their creative efforts, there is a seemingly endless amount of opportunity for me.”

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Lau reports that he has been working with the Portacapture X8 for a year and a half. During that time, he has discovered several Portacapture attributes that are ideally matched to his manner of working. “The Portacapture’s 4 mic/line inputs with phantom power can handle practically any combination of sound sources,” he said. “This gives me the ability to use everything from microphones - be it the onboard mics or external ones - to a variety of line level sources. I find the onboard mics to be excellent because they can be configured for either A-B or X-Y style recording. This capability, combined with the 32-bit floating point recording enables me to capture sounds with a high degree of detail.”

Another one of the Portacapture X8’s most notable features is its onboard presets, which help one to optimize the recorder quickly and easily for capturing various types of audio such as multitrack recording, podcasting, music, voice, and field recording. Equally notable, users can create their own settings that are optimized for particular environments, one’s manner of working, etc. The Portacapture X8’s presets have proven very useful for Lau. “The presets on the Portacapture X8 are terrific,” Lau reports. “I actually prefer the presets - particularly the field recording one - as it enables me to maximize the recorder to the type of recording project that I am typically involved with.”

“The Portacapture’s Manual mode provides all the customization capability that I need,” Lau added, “but to do things right, it requires more time and effort. While I am gradually getting comfortable with it, I find it quicker and easier to use the presets. I can, of course, start with a preset and fine-tune it more to my liking. And there lies the real value of the Portacapture. It enables one to work in whatever manner is most comfortable.”

With many electronic products, quality customer and technical support services are crucial. Here too, Lau was very complimentary of TASCAM. “I have been very impressed with TASCAM’s support services. During the time that I have owned my Portacapture, I have received several firmware updates. In multiple cases, these updates have not only included enhancements to existing features, there have also been new features introduced. For me, the company’s technical support has been very impressive.”

Before shifting his focus back to the business of the day, Lau offered these parting thoughts, “The more I use the Portacapture X8, the more I like it. The combination of features, the intuitive layout for accessing its various capabilities, and its solid, robust build quality inspire confidence. When it comes to music and sound, we’re all different and we all have our own unique manner of working. The TASCAM Portacapture X8 has the versatility to let one do things in whatever manner they find most comfortable. I find it to be unique and I’m confident others will too.”

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