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Worldwide Collaborative Music Group INTERCONTINEN7AL Records Album Remote

With Several Members Employing Focusrite Interfaces to Capture Their Socially-Distanced Contributions



Maryland-based musician Matt Smith began 2020 as many working musicians did – performing live and recording in workspaces with his close friends and collaborators. But when the pandemic hit, the realities of being a songwriter, performer and producer were upended. But never one to rest on his laurels, he saw the potential in the virtual platform BandLab, which allows musicians to collaborate remotely and even seek out contributions from strangers and new friends. One thing led to another, and now a new group has formed – dubbed INTERCONTINEN7AL – with a new album of 12 original songs available raising proceeds for the COVID-19 relief fund, featuring musicians who recorded their parts on all seven continents. This is likely a first (a Guinness World Record may be pending), and it was accomplished largely with the help of components from leading audio interface and creative instruments brands Focusrite and Novation, which were the tools of choice for several of the worldwide contributors.

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Before the project took shape, Smith's Columbia, Maryland-based band Toast began using BandLab to co-write ideas for an upcoming album while staying socially distanced, and eventually on a whim they leveraged the power of BandLab to seek ideas from the site's network of worldwide creators with hashtags like "#needsvocals." Before long, they were getting submissions from total strangers from the world's remote corners, including South America and Australia. A whole album was taking shape, and the idea then struck Smith to close the circle and use BandLab to mine talent from the world's other continents, including the most challenging one - Antarctica. Once the project had real momentum, Smith chose to reach out to the research stations of Antarctica personally, and he was able to find not one but two musicians who were eager to contribute instrumental parts from their research posts. All in all, 22 musicians contributed to the album, which is available at the band's new site (see below).

Several of the album's musicians recorded tracks using Focusrite Scarlett interfaces, including Smith himself (using a Scarlett 2i2 for guitars and vocals), and American bassists Devin Heritage and Alex Burke (who used a Scarlett 2i2 and Scarlett Solo, respectively). Smith recalls, "Midway through the recording process of the album, I had been using a different brand of interface but was searching for a better way to record my guitar tracks. After some research, I settled on Focusrite Scarlett, based on the favorable reviews and reasonable price point. After being very pleased with the results, I recommended it to Alex and Devin, who also purchased the interface and used it on the album!" Additionally, Japanese drummer Tnbt uses a Scarlett 2i2 to record drums, and South African guitarist Josh Pearlson uses a Novation 49SL MkIII MIDI controller to fine-tune his arrangements.

And the project is going strong and growing. Smith notes, "We actually are already plugging away on our second album, and hope to have this ready for release in the next few months. The goal for the second album is to make it more eclectic, with a wider variety of genres represented. As with the first record, any and all proceeds will be going to charity (the specific charity for Volume Two is to be determined). We have also expanded the number of musicians collaborating to 44 in total and still counting! That's up from 22 for the previous album. And those of us who used Focusrite or Novation on the first project are using that approach on the second one, and several of our added group members are Focusrite users too, including Jukerok from Egypt, Us and the Otters from USA, and Alexander Laurence from Japan. So long story short: there are at least nine musicians in the group that have used or are using Focusrite or Novation products."

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