

Trainspotting 4.2004

Center for Pro Tools

By Boe Gatiss

If you're after top-notch Pro Tools training in Florida and you prefer an intimate environment for the enlightening of your brain, look no further than the Center for Pro Tools (or CPT) in Orlando. Opened in August 2002 by the inimitable Shilpa Patel (with some help from Digidesign's Andy Cook), the Center for Pro Tools, as you might suspect, is strictly all about Pro Tools. So not only do students benefit from the undiluted focus, but they do so under the tutelage of Ms. Patel, a true expert in the ways and means of Pro Tools.

Some background on Shilpa: She was introduced to Pro Tools in 1991, and has been working with it professionally since 1995. She began training Pro Tools users in the Avid program in 1998 under Joel Krantz as an Avid Certified Instructor, then through the Digidesign Pro School program once it was launched.

Along with running CPT, Patel also worked for other training centers. And she remains immersed in studio work on album projects such as Creed and Submersed, as well as continuing to work with individual musicians, producers, and engineers, and doing tech work for studios. Her contributions to the Digidesign training program — writing exam questions and the first edition of the 310M book — were instrumental in helping to get it off the ground.



Shilpa Patel tweaking sounds with GRM Tools plug-ins

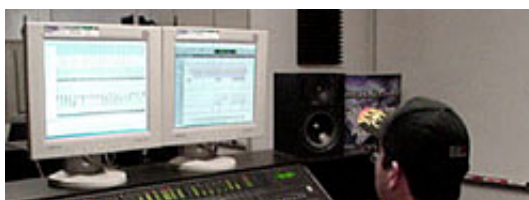
headphones, a PRE, a MIDI I/O, a Sync I/O, a Digidesign custom keyboard, a MIDI keyboard, dual monitors, a CD player, and SCSI and/or FireWire drives.

Generally, CPT offers a set of classes at least once a month (prospective students should refer to the CPT website for the latest schedule). Small class sizes are intentional, ensuring that students get plenty of personal attention while still enabling interaction between them. And, as Shilpa says, "I still do studio work and projects outside the training center, which helps the students with real-life experiences, and



The Center for Pro Tools, then, is a beneficiary of a wealth of valuable, real-world experience. As a full-fledged Pro School, CPT offers all the courses available for both music and post, from 100-level through 310-level classes. Post classes are available upon request, but as the region tends to be more music oriented, the CPT schedule leans in that direction. While the focus is on the Digidesign course training, the school also offers more customized Pro Tools instruction if students have other specific interests they would like to address.

CPT accommodates up to four students at a time up through the 200-level classes. 300-level courses condense to two students at a time and employ two full Pro Tools|HD 2 (soon to be upgraded to Accel) workstations — one with a Control|24, 96 I/O and Genelec 1030s, and the other with ProControl with Edit pack, a 192 I/O, AVoption|XL, and a Genelec 5.1 surround system. Both systems also include



hopefully with what they can expect if they want to pursue a career working with Pro Tools." "Our philosophy on training is to focus on quality and not quantity," she continues, "which is why we do not offer large classes — but the students work on fully complete systems that you would find in any pro music or post facility. We discuss with students their interests and backgrounds before they sign up for a class so we can be sure they are in the courses that are appropriate for them. Plus we offer extra hands-on time and the ability to retake classes, if necessary.



"We want to make sure the student gets the best education possible. CPT is the result of years of experience with Pro Tools in the music and post production industry. Through personal attention to our students' needs, we can tune the training to fit any student's abilities and desired skill set."



To further students' possibilities during and after their educational experience, CPT makes a point of maintaining quality relationships throughout the music industry and scene of central Florida, of which they are the only Pro School. In addition, they work closely with the Valencia Community College student body. "By getting to know our students and their interests and abilities through the courses," Shilpa says, "we can offer references and recommendations. Our connections in the industry can help students find opportunities that are appropriate for them."

Along with customized training, CPT offers tech support, hosts clinics with third-party developers, and participates in Digidesign events. For financial

assistance, they offer a payment program, assist students in locating lenders, and provide access to special third-party plug-in discounts.

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