

# PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

## SOUNDFIELD SPS422B MICROPHONE SYSTEM

by Ross Jobson

Whether you're an artist, a serious amateur, or involved in recording sound, a SoundField microphone system might be the perfect harmony between exceptional quality and ease of use.

Taking into consideration our readers, this review was conducted under two conditions: live performances in a "live" room in a house and a "dead" soundproofed studio. I should mention that the mic comes with its own preamp, so it's a complete mic/preamp system.

Using four signal outputs from the mic that create the three-dimensional sound image, the SPS422B makes a "copy" of the live event that can be reconfigured later to emulate different microphone positions. What you're recording is up/down, left/right, and front/back: the compass points of an acoustic image.

SoundField is 5.1 compatible and is preconfigured up to 10.1 so that as systems evolve, your recordings keep pace with whatever sound system you might use in the future. You can run a simple L/R stereo image on 2-tracks or use all six outputs on the SP451 rack processor for 5.1 Surround Sound. Of course this requires more tracks and horsepower from your hard disk, but creates better results.

For players who just want to record at home, don't be intimidated by the rack gear.

It's very simple to use and is just for gain level and trim, and provides options of pre-mapped mic placements. So all you do is place the mic, set the trim, and send the signal outputs to your recorder. For mic placement, put it where you hear the best sound. In a lively room, that's wherever you think it sounds best (get someone else to play while you listen); in a dead room, close-mic the piano.

In each test, the results produced were exact copies of the live performance. The finished recordings were stunningly accurate. Our acoustic piano recording captured the room shape and feel, while the amplified-instruments recording, played back via the same sound delivery system through which it was originally performed, was an amazing duplicate. Results were particularly impressive with the drum set, creating the sonic impression of multiple mics being deployed. Post-production options were not deeply explored for this review, however, just a glance at the product literature gave a taste of what options you have with your production-engineering skills, including changing the way mics are arrayed or the width between different pairs of mics – all after you have made the recording and archived it!

When you've bought the best piano in the world, it seems folly not to capture it as it's meant to sound. SoundField has come up with a microphone that captures a faithful recording that is miraculously like the original performance. Play, record, then close your eyes and listen to the playback. I defy you not to be impressed and, for almost \$10,000, you should be!

*System tested: Microphone system alone - SoundField SPS422B Microphone \$5,370. SP451 Surround Processor \$3,980. SoundField Research, Wakefield, Yorkshire, England, C/O Las Vegas Pro Audio. 702-365-5155*

