What do Tupac and Dave Matthews Have in Common?

A wide diversity of musical masterpieces all found their power in this one piece of tech: the SSL mixing console.

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For more than four decades, SSL (Solid State Logic) mixing consoles have powered legendary recordings, from Rush's *Moving Pictures* to Tupac Shakur's *All Eyez On Me*. More platinum albums have been recorded on SSL equipment than on all other mixing consoles combined, and they can be found at world-famous facilities like Hit Factory and Abbey Road Studios.

We spoke to James Gordon, CEO of Audiotonix, to find out how the company keeps an eye on SSL's incredible past, while always looking to the future.

For music lovers who are not gear-heads, can you explain how one recording console is different from another?

For an audio engineer, their mixing console is their instrument. It is how they manage and control the musician's individual instruments and ultimately balance what the listener hears. This connection with the engineer means how the console sounds, combined with the accuracy and feel of the controls, is critical to the end result. This interaction and the physical layout of the console become part of your muscle memory and engineers instinctively know where to reach to get the result and sound they are looking for. This means engineers are very connected to their preferred brand and its physical layout.

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As CEO of Audiotonix, how do you balance the legacy of a brand like SSL while continuing to change and innovate?

Part of the legacy of SSL is innovation, so in fact, it is in the DNA of the R&D team to constantly look for new ways of doing things or adding to what is possible. The hardest job is prioritizing the ideas they have and turning them into real products. We recently had this with the SSL 2 and SSL 2+ USB interfaces, where we were aiming to introduce the brand to the next generation of musicians and engineers. The team wanted to hold their audio values and give the true SSL experience, all of which had to be engineered to the right price point. They did an amazing job and we now have a rapidly growing number of people experiencing what it means to have that quality at the start of creating their music.

What is the process for new product development?

We spend a lot of time with our clients, listening to their challenges or aspirations drives much of our development. We then have a comprehensive think tank process where all the technical leaders in Audiotonix come together to evaluate the development challenges and commercial viability. It sounds a pretty intensive process, but I think all the design teams would say the products always get refined for the better. The brands in the group are very focused on their specific core market and the customer base they are working with are therefore very close to the sales and product teams. This unrivaled connection and single focus on the market and products means we are able to react and often drive the next trend.

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How do you see music recording changing in the coming years? What are the trends you see musicians embracing?

There seems to be a collaboration trend now returning to

music, where musicians want to work closer together to create. This is more of a classic approach and I think this trend will contribute to the success of ORIGIN, as it is a console you can sit around and create together. Covid-19 has also played its part as musicians are starting to collaborate through online platforms, which has really boosted the acceptance our ACP (Audio Creation Products) like SSL2 and SSL2+.

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How is the music community coping during these difficult times?

As a company we are trying to support our complete supply chain in the best way we can, this is both our clients and suppliers, some of whom are having very challenging times. We are actively involved in a number of campaigns worldwide to highlight the challenge for our industry and the magnitude of freelancers that work in it and are in a frightening number of cases falling through the gaps. If readers would like some awareness on this, please look at the work being done by #WeMakeEvents and #LetTheMusicPlay. There are many others, but these highlight the challenges and the reason we are trying to get local governments to consider extended support.

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