

# home studio

by paul tingen

I was a pretty late developer with regards to having my own home studio," says Steve Howe as he explains the ins and outs of his equipment and working methods at Langley Studios. It's his private recording space, located in a wing of his country home in Devon, the green heart of southwest England. The perennial Yes guitarist's studio is not only a compact and modest eight-track affair, but also a "computer-free zone. Not many people can imagine that anymore. But it's right for me. My way of working is really hands-on. I play virtually everything that I do. I don't see computers and MIDI and other hi-tech stuff as my connection with music. My studio has everything that I need for my purposes. And sometimes when listening to my pieces, I find it quite hard to imagine how I got it all on eight tracks."

Howe built his studio around 1983. One room was converted into a control room, and an enormous room adjacent to it was split in two. The smaller section houses much of his current 85-piece guitar collection (considerably scaled down from the 150 he owned in 1993, immortalized by the book *The Steve Howe Guitar Collection*), including the pictured 1963 Gibson Super 400-CES 1. The larger part functions as a live room, used for recording drums and/or bands. But since Langley Studios is only used for projects that Howe is directly involved in, and because he's a fan of the overdubbing method, most recording takes place in the control room.

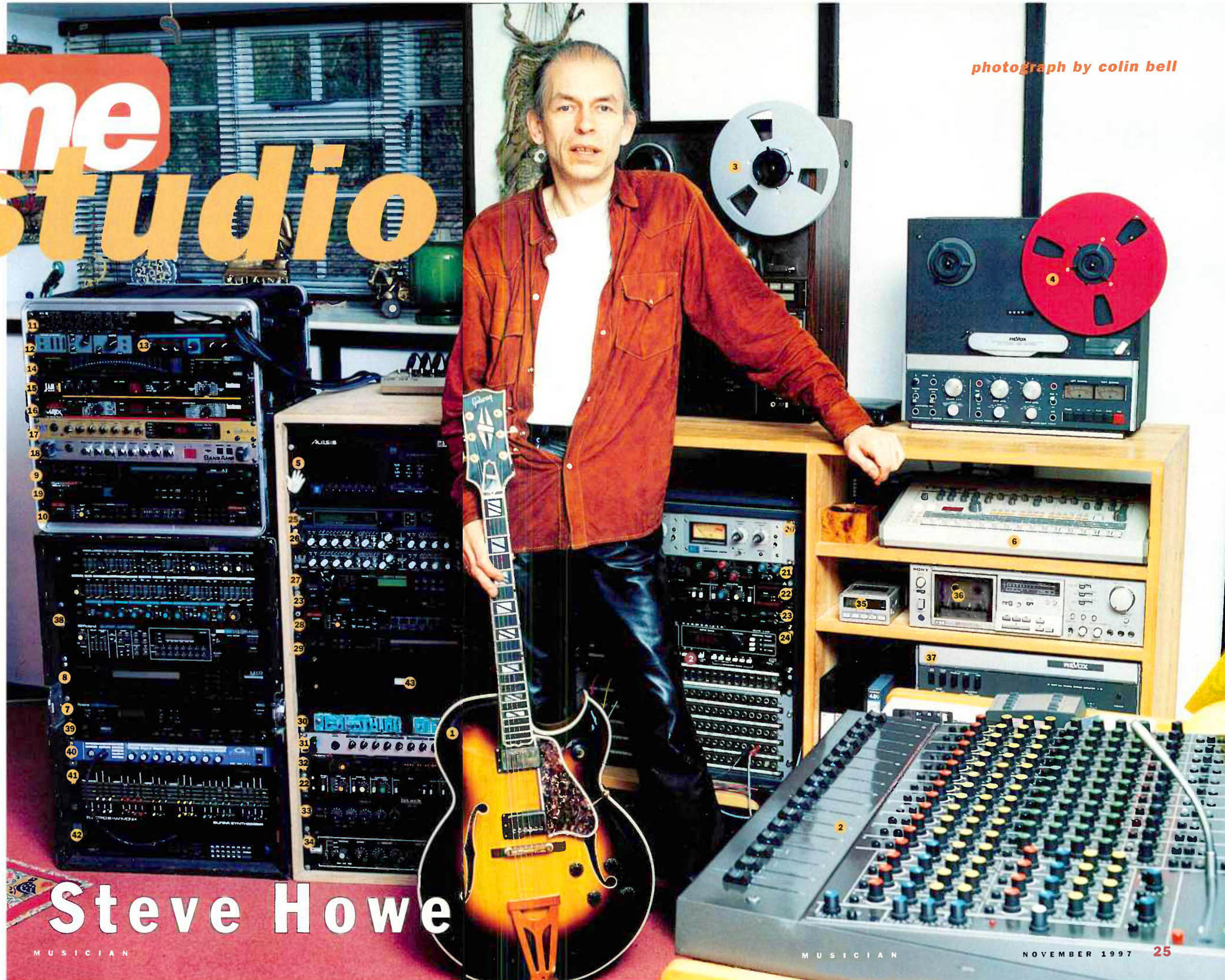
The equipment that Howe works with is in part still the same as in the early Eighties. He still has the same Alice 12-48 console 2, which is "an English desk that's still being made. It's very basic, but I like it a lot."

He also still has his tape recorders from previous

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# Steve Howe

photograph by colin bell





decades, like the **TEAC 80-8** eight-track ● and **Revox B 77** ●, which are now only used for playback of old tapes. But his regular workhorse is a single eight-track **Alesis ADAT** ●. "I'm really happy with it," he says. "I've had a few little hitches, like it's frozen in record two or three times when I was confusing it, and it scrunched a little bit of a tape once, before I'd made a habit of winding them back before I take them out. Eight tracks is sufficient for me

to work with, although I am considering getting more ADATs to be able to do extra vocal tracks and so on. But I'll never do final drums or keyboards here. The way I work is usually by putting down a click, then rhythm guitar, and once that's in time I'll manually play in guide drums from a keyboard, using sounds from the **Roland TR-909** ● or **U-110** ● or the **Korg M1R** ●. I may record the drums on various tracks, but they'll always be mixed down to one

single track. I may also put down some guide keyboards, and often all the guitars, apart from the guitar solo, before I take it to a larger studio."

The ADAT is locked in a flightcase together with two items from Howe's live guitar rack—a **Korg A3** multieffects processor ● and a **Roland SDE-3000** digital delay ●—when Howe needs a "portable mini-studio" to take to other studios. The rest of that rack consists of, from top to bottom: a **Boss Pro MX-10** half-rack mixer ●; an **Applied Acoustics** acoustic guitar preamp ●; a **Lexicon LXP-1** ● reverb; a **Korg DT-1 Pro** tuner ●; a **Lexicon Jam Man** ● and **Vortex** ●; an **ART DST 4** processor ●, a **Tech 21 SansAmp PSA-1** ●, and a **Roland GP-8** processor ●. Howe: "The whole rack is designed to be DI-ed straight into my desk here, or live straight into the P.A. I hardly ever use amps in the control room—I DI, or I use a mic, or I go through effects."

Langley Studios' outboard gear includes two **Urel LA-4** compressor/limiters ●; a **Trident Audio C-89066** compressor ●, two **Roland SDE-2000** digital delays ●, two **Yamaha SPX90** multieffects units ●, an **Eventide H948 Harmonizer** ●; an **ART Effects Network** ●, two **ART SC2** compressor/limiter/gates ●, a **Yamaha SPX1000** ●; a **Roland SRV-2000** reverb ●; another **Korg A3** ●; a rackmount **Scholz Rockman** ● and **Tech 21 SansAmp I** ●, another **Roland SDE-3000** ●, a **Statik SA-20** spring reverb ●, and a **BEL** flanger ●. His speakers are **KEF 104 Minors** and Fifties **Wharfedales**, and his microphones include two **Shure SM57s**, two **AKG C414s**, a **Sennheiser MD120**, and two **Electro-Voice RE20s**. Howe mixes down with the help of an **Alwa** pro DAT ●, a **Sony TC-K8** cassette deck ●, and a **Revox A 78** stereo amplifier ●.

Besides the U-110 and the M1R, Howe's keyboard rack features a couple of **Roland Super Jupiter MKS-80** modules ●, a **Yamaha TX81Z** ●, a **Q Systems MIDILink 448** MIDI router ●, a vintage **Electro-Harmonix Guitar Synthesizer** ●, and an **Ibanez IMC1** guitar controller ●. Still, Howe confesses to using his keyboards less and less, and never taking refuge in the **Yamaha QX7** sequencer that's gathering dust in a drawer ●. He repeats that he's a "hands-on player" with no time for computer-driven gizmos. His studio therefore has a decided Seventies feel. As he puts it, "I'm generating things that are real here." ●

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