News Release

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NEW YORK CITY'S ULTRA SOUND REHEARSAL STUDIO COMPLEX CONTINUES TO FEEL THE MIDAS™ TOUCH IN THE SHAPE OF 22 VENICE 160 CONSOLES

New York, NY (October 14th, 2002): Last February, the world's most lavishly equipped rehearsal studio complex, New York City's Ultra Sound (ultramusic@nyc.rr.com), purchased 22 Midas Venice 160 consoles for five new studios and sixteen existing spaces. Ultra Sound's owner, Gene Sinigalliano, undertook an exhaustive process of elimination whilst shopping around to outfit his spaces, and only the best would do. Gene's idea was to create rooms that would feature the very best equipment working in harmony to allow the finest sound in any rehearsal complex anywhere in the world. Eight months later, Gene feels he has achieved this goal, and places his Midas Venice 160 consoles at the epicenter of this achievement.

Sinigalliano left no stone unturned during his hunt for the finest pro audio equipment, and worked with some of the industry's most experienced professionals in his selection process. Doug Jones and Jack Alexander, who write the "Viewpoint" section of *Live Sound*, carried out the install at Ultra Sound. Jack was an independent consultant, assisting in the equipment selection process. Doug was chosen as an acoustician, to help design the acoustic properties of the 21 rooms. Both flew to New York and tweaked out both the gear for the rooms and the dampening material. Gene briefed the experts with a core objective he describes here: "My thing wasn't really how much stuff cost, it was really based on designing the finest sound systems ever used in rehearsal. I listened to everything. I listened to every kind of mixing board you can think of. Why the Midas? It's an easy answer. It sounds like a Midas. That's the answer. Here you've got a rack mount, and I needed a rack mount because I've got 21 rehearsal studios, and in each studio the PA system and components are in a locking rack that my techs can open and adjust. In a rehearsal setting a lot of bands don't have educated sound people – you really don't want people tweaking at stuff. My techs can go in, they set the stuff up the way the band wants it, and then they lock the rack. So it needed to be rack mountable. The Venice 160 is. It also needed to be at least 16 channels. Not that we put everything through the PA, we don't. It's basically really mostly a vocal PA system, because the rooms are not that big where they'd need everything mic'd. But we needed 16 channels because a lot of the new bands have DATs or they have drum machines and lots of other stuff they put through, so that was important to us. Did I need all the sub groups? No. Some people will, I didn't. Why then would I spend all this extra money and buy Midas? I can tell you right now. It sounds like a Midas."

It seems Midas has created a compact console that delivers the kind of warm, quality sound that make the brand's high-end boards legendary. It is not simply a compact unit wearing the esteemed Midas name. Sinigalliano feels the Venice 160 is fully worthy of the badge: "Midas has done a good job of basically building the board to sound like a Midas, so that when you get on the EQs with the sweeps they really work, they sound like a big live mixing console. What we're doing is live sound here; we don't need some digital-sounding recording console.

We want that nice fat Midas sound. We want a high and a low mid, and to have a sweep on there so that we can deal with individual mic's. Rather than compromising various mic positions, it's much better to go on the strips for each individual mic and tweak the stuff out. You can't do that with a lot of boards. With the Midas you can. With the nice sweeps on the upper and lower mid's you can set the sweep where you need to get rid of the stuff you don't want, and the EQ's work and they sound good. Also the mic pre's sound good. I know of a guy over here that has a jazz studio, and basically he has a cheaper brand of board. We all know what most of the studios use; they use what we were using before. The mic pre's don't sound as good, so he's got two mic pre's. He had to go out and buy two mic pre's that sound good. You don't have to do that with the Midas – the mic pre's sound good."

The Midas Venice 160 consoles were selected to work alongside some particularly classy company at Ultra Sound. Sinigalliano explains why he couldn't cut corners when selecting a board: "One more reason 'why Midas?' Because everything I have is unforgiving. What do I mean by that? I've got Martin Audio WT-3's, which are probably one of the most gorgeous sounding speakers at close range. I had mine custom built. Because the rooms are small, you hear everything. And because the rooms are so well tuned with sound tuning devices – there's probably about five thousand dollars worth of acoustical tuning in each room - basically you hear everything, and nothing is hidden. If you have a board that sounds a little ratty, or if you've got mic pre's or EQ's that sound a little ratty, you're gonna hear it in two seconds." Along with picking a British mixing board and British speakers, Gene listened all the way across the Pond for his power amps: "I wasn't looking to save money here. We listened to every power amp that exists. The power amp I picked happened to be a power amp nobody in America even knows – yet – but they will. Lab Gruppen amps. They're just crazy good."

Along with the Chevin amps Gene also uses, the Midas Venice 160 contributes to an unsurpassable combination of equipment, unlike anything else found in anything called a rehearsal studio. Sinigalliano is understandably proud of his claim to run the world's finest rehearsal facility, and adds that he just didn't go shopping arbitrarily for the most expensive gear, simply the best for his requirements. The Midas was therefore drafted in to work symbiotically with a mixed bag of premium brands in a mixed bag of room sizes, each of which Gene feels has been made-to-measure like a fine suit. Eight months after the selection and purchasing process, Gene reports that things are working out splendidly at Ultra Sound: "That combination is an awesome combination. To put any board in there with that kind of stuff doesn't make sense. In a sense I'm amazed the Midas boards are as reasonably priced as they are, because one big Lab amp I think costs almost as much as a Midas board. It's really an incredible bargain if you think about it, for what it's giving you and the sound quality it's giving you. Maybe people won't believe it at first, but believe it – this thing sounds like a Midas. The EQ's sound like a Midas. Even Jack (Alexander), who's used a million Midas consoles, knew the board was great, he goes 'you know, I love this thing! You just turn the EQ, it's a Midas.' And this guy's got golden ears!"

The world of high-end mixing boards is especially competitive in this price bracket. Gene Sinigalliano feels the Venice 160 occupies a place on the price line that makes it proportionally exceptional value for just-a-little-more money. Gene and his associates are in agreement that there is no better value at this point: “Basically in his (Jack Alexander’s) opinion, and now of course that I’ve had them in all the studios for a number of months, there isn’t. The truth of the matter is this console sounds way more expensive than it is. It’s amazing how good it sounds for how reasonably priced it is. Yes ‘is it more than some of the other stuff out there?’ It is, but usually what you find is that you get that old adage, ‘you get the most value and the most improvement to a point, and then there’s that thing where you can spend a lot more and you only get a little better. That’s how it is in the audio industry on most components, but that’s not the way it is with this Midas console. With the Midas console can you spend twice as much as a (main competitor)? Yeah, but it’s three or four times better, not ten or twenty or fifty per cent better. The Midas isn’t a couple of percent; it’s three hundred percent. It’s an amazing difference.”

That difference is most evident in the quality of the famous Midas EQ’s and mic pre amps, which are as workable and worthy on the Venice 160 as on the mighty XL4, the Midas range’s world-beating flagship. Sinigalliano wholeheartedly endorses that big board’s rack mountable baby brother from this perspective: “As soon as you put the Midas in, not only do the mic pre’s sound amazingly better, but as soon as you get a finger on the EQ, not only does the EQ work, but it works the way an EQ should, it’s smooth. Once you add a little something, it’s not like all of a sudden you hit that ‘boom! It’s way too bright,’ where there’s nothing in between. It’s nice and linear in the way that it adds the dB’s, and it’s smooth as you add, even in the high frequencies it doesn’t get harsh. You hear the extra brightness, but it’s smooth brightness, it doesn’t add that harsh edge to the brightness like a lot of other boards do.”

Sinigalliano is also the nations top dealer in vintage, boutique and rare guitar amplifiers, and is a self-proclaimed “tube freak.” The Midas therefore had to accommodate certain aesthetic prerequisites that stem from Gene’s tube-driven tastes: “The thing with the Midas is, I know it’s not a tube board, but it behaves in many ways like a tube board, meaning that as you change the EQ and the treble, and as you change the EQ and the mid, it doesn’t sound transistory, and most boards do. The Midas isn’t like that. The Midas adds the EQ and still sounds warm and fat. That’s the beauty of that board, and that’s why people use it live. That’s why it’s probably the most high-end live board (of this size). I think it’s for someone who’s looking for a high-end board with gorgeous sound, with great mic pre’s – they don’t have to go out and spend another three grand on tube mic pre’s, and where the EQ is really functional and sounds good and gives you the sweeps that you need to deal with problems on individual mic’s in a live setting… For a sixteen-channel board it’s laid out very nicely – it’s pretty simple and straightforward. I hate boards that have a million buttons that you’ve got to push to make anything work. The buttons on this board are ones that you really do need: EQ in and out, mute in and out. If they try to make one board everything for all people, that’s a compromise that creates longer signal paths. That’s part of the genius of this board… It gives you a million monitor and auxiliary sends, you

basically got two sets of monitor sends, you've got two sets of things you can use for delays and reverbs, you've got two auxiliaries you can use. By choosing those you can have pre or post EQ, and you can have the reverb coming through or not, which is very cool for the monitors. It's a great board."

Eight months has passed since Gene purchased his Venice 160 consoles, plenty of time to accrue some serious client feedback: "Everybody loves it. I mean people can't believe how wonderfully warm yet articulate the system is, with great vocal intelligibility. That's the key. Any time you make something fatter and warmer, it's not easy to make it more articulate and intelligible, because those two things fight each other. The beauty of the Midas is that it's warm and fat, but it still has the speed and smoothness to provide that great articulation and intelligibility. That's the really gorgeous thing about it, with most things, even guitar amps, it's trade-off: you can either have very lean and articulate or very fat and warm but mushy. Those two things fight each other. The Midas does both well…There really isn't another board out there for live stuff that sounds anywhere near as good. Most boards are made to such a low common denominator. Speakers are the same way. For a little bit more, without having to spend a lot on extra pre's and stuff, you're getting an incredible sounding board." And as a sounding board to the performance of his stable of 22 Midas Venice 160's, Gene Sinigalliano of Ultra Sound is incredibly convincing. Find the world's finest and largest professional rehearsal facility just feet from Madison Square Garden, at 251 W. 30th Street, New York City.

The compact Midas Venice 160 is an 8 mono/4 stereo mixing console weighing in at just 36.2 pounds. It's dimensions are 22.4" x 19.3". Along with the 240 and 360 models, it features a 4 band sweepable EQ, 6 Mix Sends, Direct Output, 2 stereo masters, and 4 audio Sub Groups. It features the same kind of premium quality mic preamps and EQ found on the larger Midas consoles.

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