



# MIDI *in* MINISTRY

THE INFO SOURCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

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## 5 MINUTES with Michael Hodge

*Michael Hodge is a Nashville-based guitar player and producer who has worked with artists ranging from Chaka Khan to Sawyer Brown. He is also very involved in contemporary Christian music, as both a worship leader himself and clinician for Maranatha. A fan of Roland and BOSS guitar gear, Hodge recently spoke to Midi In Ministry about his use of the BOSS GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor and Roland GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer in worship.*

**MIDI in Ministry:** How do you view the role of guitar in modern worship?

**Michael Hodge:** Guitar really adds a lot of energy and mood, so it's really a great time to be a guitar player. Some of the things I really rely on doing are what I call "swells" or "pads" where you set up a couple different delay pedals with a real high regeneration and delay level. What's great about using the GT-3 is I can do clean swells and then kick on the distortion pedal and a more distorted swell. Then I can move right

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# DIGITAL STUDIO ON SAFARI

## Roland VS Studios 'on location' in Africa

by Frank Fortunato

*Last year I received a request from a small church in North Africa to help make a recording of inspirational songs from the region. Soon other engineers heard about the request and offered their help as well. As so little recording equipment was available in that part of North Africa we decided not only to do the recording, but to leave behind everything we brought into the country so other groups in the region could do future projects.*



### THE 'SWISS ARMY KNIFE' STUDIO

All of us were convinced that the rugged and reliable VS-1680 workstation would function like a Swiss Army Knife, handling many recording needs flawlessly. As the departure date approached, we set-up the entire studio in one of our basements and did a test drive of the complete studio. Everything was then packed tightly into four checked pieces of luggage, and a carry-on. What would have equaled a small truck load of equipment a few years ago somehow got squeezed into that one carry-on piece of gear—the VS-1680.

We asked the North African church leader to find a room for the recording, instructing him to cover the room top to bottom with blankets to prevent the room reflections from being recorded into the microphones. On arrival we were delighted to see a patch quilt-looking room, beautifully decorated with colorfully patterned blankets on the walls. We found out later that several of the church families endured cold November nights, having temporarily donated all their blankets for the project. We unpacked, set up the VS-1680, mics, headphone monitor system, keyboard and other accessories and were ready to go.

### LOCATORS AND MARKERS

Having about a week to record and mix ten tunes, we found ourselves working day and night. One of us worked the "all night shift"

reviewing all that had been recorded throughout the day, then setting up the editing sessions for the next day. As the songs had so many repeated choruses he used the locator buttons extensively, marking each verse and chorus. Having so many banks of locators available on the 1680, we dedicated various banks for various functions, easily switching from bank to bank for different needs in the editing process.

### SCENES

Our night shift engineer made use of the Scenes feature, making initial mixes with volume, EQ, panning, effects, etc. and saving his work as a Scene. This allowed the other engineers to review his mixes the next morning while leaving the raw recorded material intact.

As the days sped by and we became acutely aware of the time crunch facing us, we began to appreciate other amazing time saving features and editing capabilities of the 1680. Particularly useful was the Scrub and Track Edit functions to quickly locate thorny sections of music needing special attention. One of the best features of all was the unlimited "Undo" button.

### VARI-PITCH

Another remarkable 1680 tool that saved tons of time was the Vari-Pitch feature. We noticed that on one tune the singers seemed to struggle with lower pitches. Repeated takes did not seem

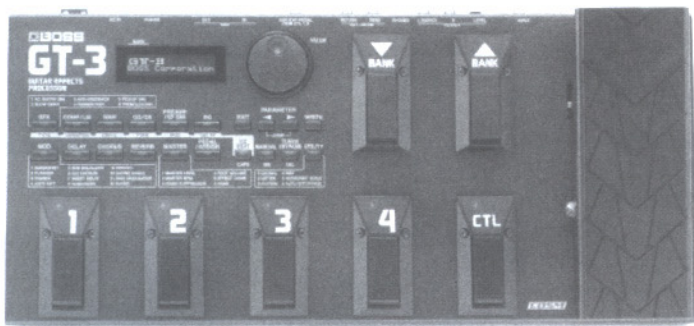
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# 5 MINUTES with Michael Hodge

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into a U2 euro thing and go right into some picking.

**MiM:** So you've found the GT-3 to be particularly useful in worship settings?



**MH:** The GT-3 works great for worship because it's simple to set up, it has a lot of things you can do, it's got a lot of really vibey effects and I don't get totally distracted by deep programming menus because everything is really easy to program. And when you're leading worship on electric, you really don't want to be distracted by a bunch of pedals and cords, so it's nice to just be able to plug into one thing and have it sound great through any amp [the church] might have. If I don't like the amp, I'll just use the amp simulators in the GT-3.

**MiM:** MiM: Do you program a lot of your own tones?

**MH:** That's one of the great things I like about the GT-3: It's got a thing called EZ Edit and you can just come up with really cool programming in just a manner of minutes. It sounds really good out of the box and it's real easy to change. It's also got a really cool mode for guys that are used to using pedals—I think it's called Pedal Mode. You hit the Manual switch and in the manual mode it's just like having seven guitar pedals!

**MiM:** What kind of settings do you usually dial in?

**MH:** I'll have a compressor and a delay. Then I can have a chorus unit and a long delay which I'll use for pads and swells—and I'll have a distortion in there after the

compressor. Then I'll put a loop in with another distortion pedal which is really cool, and I've got another pedal on tremolo and one on a thing called auto-wah; I use the volume pedal as a volume pedal. It works great that way!

**MiM:** You're also using a GR-33. What got you into guitar synthesis?

**MH:** I've been using guitar synths for some time as a producer and a programmer. Since I'm a guitar player, it's nice to use a guitar to program my stuff and the GR-33 is by far the best guitar synth I've ever used. Normally with guitar

synths you kind of get used to the quirks, and the thing about the GR-33—especially with the Fender GK-Ready Strat—is that it tracks amazing. And when I'm programming for a record, it's great. I can play into the computer that I'm sequencing on and then the computer will play it back through the GR-33. I've used it as a sound module and it's great for that.

**MiM:** What are some of the things you do with the GR-33?

**MH:** I'm using the GT-3 and the GR-33 hooked up together, so if I'm doing pads on the GT-3, I can support that with a synth pad on the GR-33. And if you're missing a keyboard player it's fabulous for acoustic guitar, because it's easy to lead on acoustic. Then you can have that GR-33 playing a pad underneath your strumming which really fills out the sound with the band. It's also got some cool loops that I use sometimes to start songs off with, like a tabla loop or some Spanish-type loops.

**MiM:** So the GT-3 and GR-33 have really enhanced your performance...

**MH:** A lot of things to me about modern

worship have to do with setting a tone... setting a worshipful mood—and that's one of the things that both of these units really help out with because you can really set a great mood with a pad. A lot of what's really important about modern worship is what's called "Selah" moments, transitions between one song and the next. These units are wonderful for that because you can really play those pads that just kind of swell in and out. They're really, really good for just leading people into a deeper place of worship.

**MiM:** You also teach worship leader workshops for Maranatha. What are some of the things you try to impart to guitar players?

**MH:** I think what I really try to impart to guitar players is several things. One is to be a worshipper; you can't take someone where you haven't been. Secondly, I try to impart to them the great responsibility of being a worship leader. On a musical side, I really encourage guitar players to practice and to really figure out how to play in tune. I also talk to them about the importance of setting an example, because when you're a guitar player on a worship team you're kind of like the "cool" guy because everything's so guitar-based right now.

Also, if you're a worship leader you have to submit to the pastor—even if he wants you to do a song that you hate. And secondly,



with your worship team, you know if there's guys that really have bad attitudes or something, I'd rather

lead worship with just me and an acoustic guitar than have a team of people that are immature as far as bad attitudes. I think that when you have a worship team every member has got to be on link. It's not just a gig where you're just going to play songs, it is a huge responsibility as well as an honor.

*If you have any further questions for Michael Hodge, feel free to drop him an e-mail at [mbhodge@home.com](mailto:mbhodge@home.com).*

# Hot New Gear

## Summer NAMM Show Report

Roland and BOSS recently debuted some incredible new products at the Summer NAMM trade show perfect for use in ministry.



## FANTOM

This all-new keyboard packs the incredible sound engine of the XV-Series into a 76-note synthesizer complete with onboard sequencing, a stunning range of effects, plus killer Arpeggiator and Rhythm Generator functions. This is Roland's workstation for the future, and it might be all your church needs to create some wonderful accompaniment.

## RD-700 Digital Piano

If you're looking for a digital piano that can also cover as a synth, check out the RD-700 Expandable Keyboard. On one hand it's an incredibly expressive digital piano, thanks to an 88-note weighted keyboard with Roland's best graded hammer action and some of the most realistic stereo-sampled pianos around. On the other hand, the RD-700 is a synthesizer packed with 64MB of XV-quality



sounds, and some amazing organs with "virtual tonewheel" technology from the VK-7 Combo Organ. Two instruments in one; you simply can't go wrong!

## GT-6 Guitar Effects Processor

Guitar players will want to check out the BOSS GT-6 Guitar Effects Processor. This floor-based multi-effects unit gives you 30 of BOSS' best amp models, plus all-

new Distortion/Overdrive Pedal Modeling, Wah Modeling, and new "Uni-V" and "De-Fretter" effects. And did we mention it costs less than the original GT-5?

## V-Club™ Set

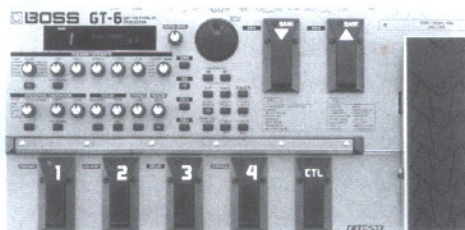
The Roland V-Club™ Set—the perfect way to get your church into the world of electronic percussion. This affordable new V-Drums® set is based around the all-new TD-6 Percussion Sound Module,

newly developed rubber drum pads, and new dual-trigger cymbal pads with choke capabilities, giving drummers everything they need to sound and play their best.

Check out these and all the latest Summer



NAMM gear at [www.RolandUS.com](http://www.RolandUS.com) and [www.BossUS.com](http://www.BossUS.com).



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to help. To our ears, still grappling with local styles, we were not sure if their singing was North African improv, notes that were in their scales and not in ours, or just simply out-of-tune singing by inexperienced singers. We concluded we had a simple case of de-tuned singing. One remedy was to redo the tune in a higher key and bring all the instrumentalists back to record again. But there was no time for that. So, we simply raised the pitch of the entire instrumental track to a more comfortable range using Vari-pitch. The vocalists easily handled the higher pitches and then we returned everything flawlessly to the original key.

## COPY & PASTE FROM VIRTUAL TRACKS

Another time saving feature to get us through our one week marathon was the copy and paste provision. We used the copy and paste within a vocal track and took the best "chorus" and pasted it over the weaker choruses. This was nice because some songs had about six choruses. More than once we took a lead vocal and put it through separate processing, saved that to a separate Virtual Track, and then ended up picking and choosing the best of those tracks. At other times we would just "punch-in" over a measure or two that was weak. The Auto Punch let us mark exactly where the punch in and out would occur, so even when we were tired, we didn't carelessly mess-up the rest of the track. And I can't say enough about the two effects cards in the 1680, including the "mixdown" mastering effect. We used the preset 'as is' and it worked great for our final mixes.

## CHANNEL LINKING & AUTO MIXING

With channel linking we assured ourselves that the stereo tracks, i.e. keyboard parts, got equal processing. With auto mixing we were able to change effects within a track. And when the soloist went into overdrive we were able to make the necessary adjustments as we played back the song. In fact, we discovered that the auto mix mode was one of the best time savers.

As the ninth day approached we burned an audio CD so the locals could review the mixes after we left. Then, we backed-up all the 1680 data on CD and brought it back home. We loaded that data back into one of our home 1680s and within a few days the worship recording, called "The Voice of Carthage" arrived, complete with gorgeous Middle Eastern artistic lettering and calligraphy.

## ENGINEERS WANTED

As word started circulating about the North Africa project, other churches in other nations started contacting us to do similar projects for them. So, we are on the lookout for engineers who want a little adventure to join us for future projects.

For more information, e-mail Frank Fortunato at [fort@usa.om.org](mailto:fort@usa.om.org) or telephone 770-486-8702. Frank Fortunato is a church musician living in Peachtree City, GA, a community near Atlanta.



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 Maranatha and Integrity

## Roland Sponsored Training Seminars

Maranatha Music and Integrity Music host training seminars at churches around the country. This is a great opportunity for church musicians and worship leaders to refine their skills and get new ideas. Roland is a key sponsor of Maranatha's *Worship Leader Workshops™* and Integrity's *Praise & Worship Seminars*. Be sure to take advantage of these valuable training resources this Fall.



September 17-19	St. Louis, MO
October 1-3	Fairfield, CT
October 22-24	Charlotte, NC
October 29-31	Columbus, OH
November 12-14	Birmingham, AL

Call - 800.239.7000.

or go to:

[www.integritymusic.com](http://www.integritymusic.com)



Sept. 21-22	Houston, TX
October 5-6	Roanoke, VA
October 12-13	Grand Rapids, MI
October 19-20	San Jose, CA
October 19-20	Hawthorne, NJ
October 26-27	Pittsburgh, PA
November 2-3	Louisville, KY
November 9-10	Seattle, WA

Call (800) 245-SONG

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