



RECORDING • LIVE SOUND • POST PRODUCTION • INSTALLATIONS

FALL 2012

# AUDIO SOLUTIONS

## BACK TO BASICS

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**STUDIO STORIES**  
*TWO FROM BROOKLYN*



## RUBBER TRACKS WILLIAMSBURG, NY

By Jaques Sonyieux

Just over a year ago, well-known sneaker brand Converse opened up a top-shelf studio in the heart of the U.S. indie-music scene: Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Appropriately dubbed Rubber Tracks, the studio is a world-class facility with a well-appointed live room, two control rooms, and a team of highly experienced engineers. All this is provided at no cost to the musician, provided they get accepted into Converse's program [sign up for consideration at [www.converse.com/rubbertracks](http://www.converse.com/rubbertracks)]. When

the program was started, there was some uncertainty as to whether the concept could work, but after hundreds of recording sessions and a seemingly endless queue of inspired new talent, it is clear that it has worked and even exceeded expectations.

Williamsburg was the obvious choice for a location because of its proximity to one of the world's largest music scenes. "Initially, we were looking at locations on the lower east side of Manhattan, but building it out here was a really smart move," says studio manager Brad Worrell. "It is very convenient, and there is so much music here."

Rubber Tracks consists of three primary spaces: a 22- x 19-foot control room, a 25- x 22-foot live room, and "Studio B" — a 10- x 17-foot room with full production capabilities that also doubles as an administration office. In addition to these spaces, there is a nice-size iso booth, an amp locker, and also a large rehearsal room. There is also an enormous multi-purpose space that includes a kitchen and a live stage.

GC Pro played a key role in appointing Rubber Tracks with an A-list of equipment, including an Allen Sides-designed, large-format Ocean Way HR2 monitoring



system, which is said to be the only one in New York City. GC Pro also provided a variety of amplifiers and electric guitars, as well as percussion and other instruments. "Many of these artists are coming into [a professional] studio for the very first time, and might not have top-of-the-line gear — so it's great to be able to offer such a great assortment to them," says Worrell.

Studio B, which was formerly an office, has turned out to be a multi-purpose workhorse room at Rubber Tracks. In addition to a Digi 003 running Pro Tools 10, the small room boasts Adam A7X monitors, a UAD Quad card, and a Waves software bundle, so overdubs and mixes can be passed back and forth with Studio A. Worrell uses Studio B to help

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The centerpiece in Studio A's control room is an API 1608 console, which is economically sized yet emanates a large sound. "We knew we wanted an analog desk. I didn't think any sort of automation was going to be necessary, realizing that a lot of that was going to be done in the box," says Worrell. "Also, artists that come through here are probably going to want to do some more work on their mixes, so we didn't need any kind of built-in automation." Rubber Tracks also features outboard from manufacturers such as Empirical Labs, Universal Audio, Neve, Drawmer, Lexicon, and others.

artists complete vocal overdubs or put the finishing touches on a final mix. He also uses it to master and sequence some of the compilation recordings that Converse has released.

Worrell says that Rubber Tracks has helped artists gain a better understanding of themselves, since it is the first professional studio many of them have set foot in: "Many of the bands we have had in here have never really heard themselves," he says. "They will come into a control room for the first time after laying down a track and say, 'Wow, that's what we really sound like?'" ■

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