

Sound & PICTURE

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The Roland S-0808

By Brett Grant-Grierson, CAS

In the last twenty years I have constantly raced to keep up with technology. This doesn't mean that every piece of equipment out there is necessarily better, but I continually strive to make my sound cart smaller, lighter and more efficient. My mantra is "work smarter not harder."

In this never ending quest to lighten up my cart and simplify everything, my good friend and fellow sound mixer Joe Foglia and I are constantly scouring the web surfing for cool gadgets and gear. Looking for a smaller alternative to the Aviom Digital Snake that utilizes a single Cat-5 cable to send and receive multi-tracks, we came across Roland's Digital Snake system. The S-0808 is small, light and compact.

The timing was great. The unit had just arrived in the USA and Roland's sales dept coordinated with Fabi at Coffey Sound to get a demo unit for us to play with. It didn't take much to see how the S-0808 could be utilized; 8 ch I/O for communication, playback and recording. Also the ability to expand the unit if needed was great. The size of the unit was important to me. It's light but built rugged enough to handle any abuse. Easy to operate; just plug it in, add power and it's good to go. The S-4000R remote controls all the I/O's and phantom power. A 20dB pad has come in useful on a few recordings where the talent has been extremely loud. I prefer the gain structure set low to eliminate the possibility of any clipping no matter how loud the talent gets.

Making adjustments to all I/O levels is quick and the selected channel is easy to monitor. I configured this with a few other components to become my on-set satellite. After coming up with a mounting platform, I took a couple of Lectrosonic IFBT4's, one for the director communications and the other for the boom operator's private line.

Lectrosonics also came out with their new Quad-pack, which holds two SR dual channel receivers. This allows four wireless receivers and the IFB's to be right on set in close proximity to video village: plugging a regular mic cable into the S-0808 makes the heavy duplex boom cables redundant. Getting rid of 500ft of duplex cable really lightens up the utility cart.

Roland's Cat-5 cables are wired in "crossover configuration" and come standard with the Neutrik's ethercon connectors. The 300ft cable drum provides a much longer cable run than any of the duplex cables I've had. A Remote Audio BDSv3 distributes power with the source supplied by onboard 12v IDX lithium batteries that can be piggy backed together, lasting a good ten hours. It sits on an American riser stand with wheels; this blossomed into a boom holder and cable caddy.

The system is great for car rigs and process trailer work; I put my whole assembly in the back of the car and run one cable to the slave unit in the cab. It gives me a lot of options on the fly. The Roland S-0808 is rugged, reliable and with my current configuration, a versatile addition to my equipment package. I like to plant my sound cart in one place on stage or location and run one cable. Work smarter not harder!



Digital Snake in action



Sound Cart-788T, Deva, Sonosax Mixer

Portable, battery powered digital snake

S-0808 8x8 Input / Output Unit

The S-0808 is an 8 x 8 digital snake designed for professional field recording and location sound applications. The lightweight and rugged construction make it ideal for film, sporting events, or newsgathering. The S-0808 is powered by REAC Embedded Power, External Battery Options or Power over Ethernet (PoE). External battery options include NP Style, V-Mount (IDX), or Gold Mount (Anton Bauer) battery systems.

All inputs employ a high quality preamp with fully discreet circuit design resulting in outstanding sound. Input gain (-65 to +10dBu), Pad and full Phantom Power can be remotely controlled via a dedicated S-4000R Remote Controller or the free PC Remote Control Software (S-4000RCS). When using as part of a V-Mixing System, these parameters are controlled directly from the M-400 or M-380 Digital Consoles. The S-0808 can be used in conjunction with the S-4000M REAC Merge Unit to expand the number of inputs used in the digital snake configuration.



Location Sound Example



www.rolandsystemsgroup.com/s0808

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