ENGINEER PROFILE

RICHARD SMITH, STAGEDOOR PRODUCTIONS

What areas of engineering do you specialise in?
Studio and live music mixing, and technical management.

What is your favourite kind of project to work on?
Good sounds and great playing; projects with people that have done their homework and built something special out of their ideas.

Are there any pieces of gear that you couldn't get by without?
My gig bag full of all the reliable bits that specialise in technical stress relief, along with my refurbished old studio stuff. Maybe my Telefunken V72 or V776 pres too. All those transformers, transistors, resisters and capacitors responsible our musical listening pleasure.

What do you like to see from an artist or band in the studio?
Skills, talent and enthusiasm. Not beating on my microphones.

Are you currently working for a studio or are you freelancing?
I freelance. However I have an interest in a recording studio where I also engineer and mix. My freelance life keeps me very busy on live shows and in the studio. Check out Stage Door Productions Rehearsal and Recording Studios for the latest studio project. Also Sydney Sound sometimes has new info on my projects.

Do you have any advice for young or inexperienced artists heading into a recording studio?
People are lucky the sound of a home studio is openly accepted as a modern sound with the independent music front mostly streaming. Again this proves the song and related genre stream is of most importance, so do some kind of easy recording to listen to where you are and enjoy it for a while. See what sticks in your mind and find what is important in your songs. Then take on the release recording process better armed. Enjoy it while you're young!

Do you have any words of wisdom for those wanting to become an audio engineer?
It seems the less mics you set up on a gig, the more you get paid…. Weird but true!!! (Music takes many mics)

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GEAR REVIEWS

URBANEARS ZINKEN HEADPHONES

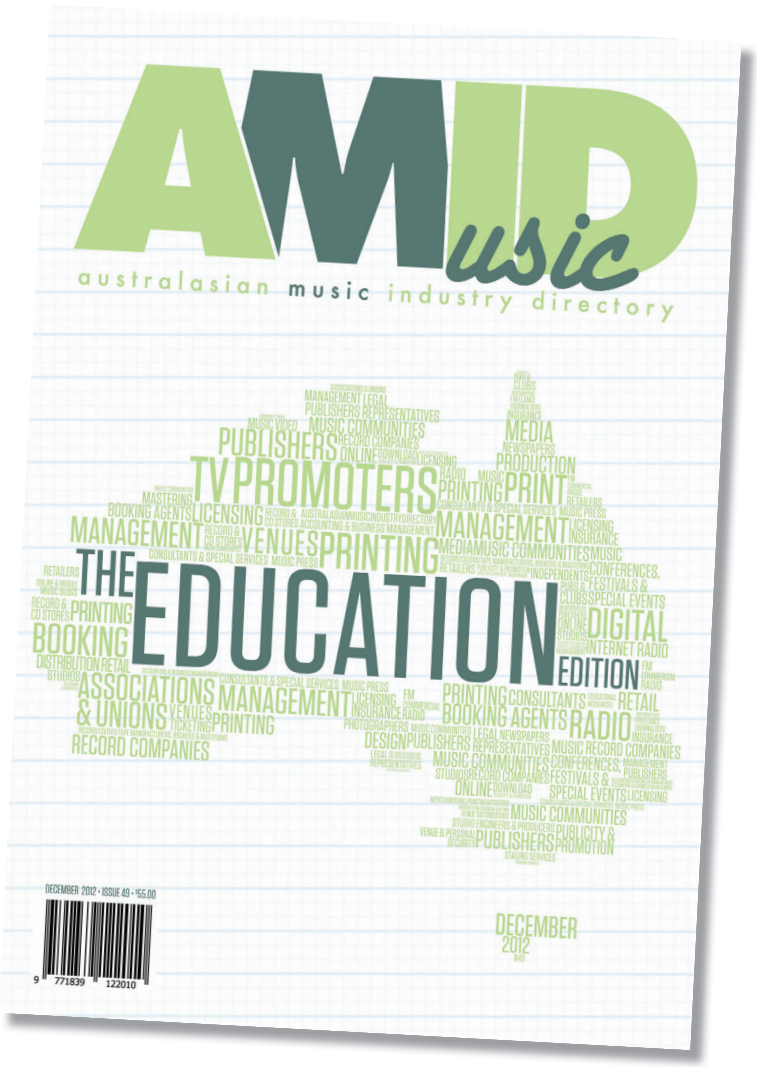
Although they've been created with the trendsetting DJ in mind, Urbanears' Zinken headphones provide a premium listening experience that, thanks to a not so premium price, music lovers of every ilk can enjoy. Full size on-ear monitors combine with excellent noise-isolation technology to ensure when you plug in you only hear what you want to hear, while the stylish build of the headphones manages to combine looks with durability, a proposition tougher than you'd think. The headphones come with both a 3.5 and 6.3mm plug, interchangeable thanks to the TurnCable, while a coil design means you get additional reach without loads of cord flopping about. Other cool features include the ZoundPlug, which provides link-up opportunities for friends wanting to listen to the same device, and collapsible ear pieces, which fold into the cushion-padded headband. Like all Urbanears products, the Zinkens come with a one-year premium replacement warranty on manufacturer defects; however, you're not likely to have to go down that path as these are built tough, with the hard moulded plastic exterior adding additional protection to cope with life's natural spills. Stylish and fun, plenty of smart features and offering fantastic sound quality, the Zinken headphones are another inviting prospect from the team at Urbanears.

Benny Doyle

URBANEARS PLATTAN HEADPHONES

Similar to the DJ-centric Zinken model but lighter on the head and ears, Urbanears Plattan headphones are the perfect getting-around-town set: comfortable, slick, practical. You'd be tested to find better value-for-money headphones out there, to be honest. Well under the $100 mark, the Plattan gives you everything you need, but does so with the highest levels of quality maintained, with regards to sound, looks and durability. The audio that you get from this model is brilliant and leaps out of the full-size on-ear speakers without punishing your senses or turning the music into a gluggy mess. And with each artist – each individual style – the response of the Plattan was special, with the bass sounding thick and compressed, while vocals, guitars and other treble lines managed to stay safely above the heavy lower sections. And, oh, how the Plattans look good. Actually, let's try that again... the Plattans look like a modern piece of pop art. No word of a lie. The block colouring is clean, the leather-cushioned earpieces subtle, while the fabric headband/cord that works together is a stroke of stylistic brilliance. And when you consider all the additional features, such as the microphone and remote compatibility, collapsible design and ZoundPlug for sharing, you've really got all you need with the Plattan.

Benny Doyle



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