

December is a good time to round up some of the highlights of this year in gear, so we've compiled a list of the kit that the Audio Media contributors and editorial peeps judged to be major highlights in terms of originality, technological progress, audio quality, and usefulness. There were many more worthy contenders than we have space for here, but we had to whittle it done, and whittle we did. These are they (in no particular order)...

## Apogee Symphony

Apogee's **Symphony PCI Express Card** acts as a bridge between Apogee converters and



an Apple Mac Pro (or Power Mac G5), offering connectivity, scalability and performance that makes the Symphony system the most professional native audio solution available - according to

the manufacture, of course. Notable

specs include what is purported to be the lowest latency available in a native audio system (1.6ms at 96kHz) - impressive in itself.

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

*"Apogee's Symphony PCI Express system for Apple G5 marks the moment that the Native DAW can rise above previous standards set by Digidesign - with no restrictions or proprietary formats." (David Helpling, Audio Media November 2006)*

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

The soundcard market has been looking for something more than simple I/O for sometime - quality, flexibility, and connectivity to match the rapidly increasing power and sophistication in native processing and native applications. Symphony is just such a step forward.

## SE Electronics Reflexion Filter

The sE Electronics Reflexion Filter is basically a portable device for recording live sound sources with reduced room ambience; an advanced composite (six-layer) wall, which is positioned behind any microphone (using the included variable position stand clamp assembly), whose main function is to help



obtain a 'dry' vocal or instrument recording, it's especially useful in studios without proper acoustic treatment, but equally at home in control rooms where performers are also operating recording devices.

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

*"The Reflexion Filter is one of those things that, once you've tried it, you wonder why you didn't start using it before." (Jerry Ibbotson, Audio Media April 2006)*

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

Once in a while someone has a brilliant idea. The Reflexion Filter makes the holy grail of a good recording, independent of the environment, significantly closer. In-promptu voice-overs, critical instrument recordings, podcasters, home-based recordists, and many more will benefit from this idea.

## Studer Soundcraft Vi6



Soundcraft's Vi6 Digital Live Sound Console is billed as being a third-generation affair on account of its being a joint development with sister company Studer. As such, it uses Vistonics II technology, itself a derivation of the latter's acclaimed Vistonics user interface, to ease navigation around what is - to all intents and purposes - the former's vision of what a digital live console should be. Intuitive digital console control is the name of the game here, and the design succeeds on that level - and others, too.

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

*"The Vi6 is a digital live console that brings a tried and tested 'performance' solution to the game." (Paul Mac, Audio Media March 2006)*

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

To a large degree, processing power is now taken as read. The real challenge for large console manufacturers is the interface - is it easy, intuitive, and suited to the intended application? The Vi6 is an impressive implementation of the wonderful Studer Vistonics system for the sound reinforcement market: an obvious space for a special innovation.

## Focusrite Liquid Mix



Focusrite's Liquid Mix is a FireWire-based desktop hardware/software control combination for simultaneously hosting up to 32 class EQs and 32 vintage compressors using the same Dynamic Convolution Process found in its Liquid Channel rack-mounting unit, each appearing as separate VST/AU/RTAS effects channels. Originally a Mac-only product, the latest (version 1.5) PC software is now available directly from Focusrite's website.

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

*"Whether in audio post, pro recording facilities, or the bedroom project studio, mixing 'in the box' has just gained a mighty set of wonderful-sounding high-end vintage tools." (David Helpling, Audio Media September 2006)*

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

Dynamic convolution technology has given Focusrite a reason to be digital - a brand such as that cannot be seen to endorse anything that doesn't do justice to the analogue domain. Liquid Mix gives carries this endorsement to everyone, whatever your budget, in a simply amazing price/performance ratio. It's a piece of kit that certainly opens DAWs.