

**Ampeg** *continued*

quite some time, the chassis was only warm to the touch.

My only criticism regards the limiter circuitry. Playing at loud volumes with the limiter activated choked the output power long before safe full output was attained, so the volume of the amp didn't reach its full potential. Also, transient response was degraded. Further bench testing revealed that the limiter did not prevent clipping when the input gain was further increased. Even though this may be a function of input-tube overload, it's a problem that should be addressed.

**Comments.** The original SVT generated excessive heat, often causing components to fail prematurely; the SVT-III should be far more reliable, thanks to its fan cooling and lack of high-voltage output-tube circuitry. Although the SVT-III may not have all the bells and whistles of some high-end tube products, it packs enormous punch and exceptional tone control into a relatively small package. At full power, it will give even the most rugged speaker system a rude awakening—and get your message through to the audience, loud and clear. If you like the warm sound of tubes, be sure to check out the SVT-III; I think you'll be impressed.

**Manufacturer's Response**

Ampeg's optocoupler limiter is much more accurate than other limiters based on FETs. It will, indeed, lower the overall output level; our limiter supplies up to 30dB of compression without distortion, which is why it's defeatable. The limiter is power-amp based only and therefore will not affect preamp-tube clipping, so the true SVT "grit" sound can be obtained by overdriving the preamp. The addition of the limiter coupled with the wide input-level acceptance enables a player to get sounds ranging from tight and compressed to raw-edged. And, to prevent the tubes from backing out during shipping, we've installed a new support bracket.



**Eventide  
Ultra-Harmonizer**

WHEN EVENTIDE INTRODUCED ITS H910 Harmonizer back in 1975, the world of effects was revolutionized: here was a device that could take a sound and play it back in real time at any preselected pitch. Almost immediately, the H910 found itself in studios everywhere as engineers discovered its remarkable chorusing, imaging, pitch-correction, and special-effect capabilities. Eventide has taken the H910 quite a few steps further with the Ultra-Harmonizer, a loaded-to-the-gills signal processor which, like its predecessor, has become a standard pro-studio workhorse.

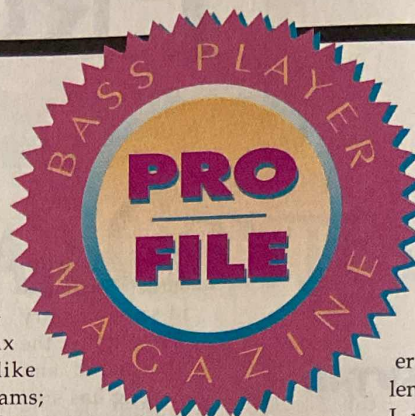
The unit is available in four models: the H3000S is the basic version; the H3000B is optimized for broadcasting, with time-compression functions and oddball DJ-ready sound effects; the H3000SE includes several additional high-end studio applications such as a vocoder and a tone generator; and the H3000KS, the "Kitchen Sink" model, has everything the others have, plus a circuit board that provides full-bandwidth stereo sampling with over 11 seconds of memory. The sampler lets you play back a sound at any pitch and any speed; it's possible to stretch a one-second sound over fifteen minutes and pitch-shift it up at the same time! Some of the pitch-shifting algorithms can work along user-definable scales, providing intelligent diatonic harmonization; a deglitching function lets you define the fundamental range of the input signal (which improves tracking of bass notes); and a pitch-quantizing mode can tighten your fretless intonation. Also included are a slew of digital delays, re-

verbs, choruses, and flangers, as well as special effects from "Martians" to Max Headroom-like stutter programs; many of these sounds are not conventionally used for bass, but they may open up new sonic horizons for you. The Ultra-Harmonizer clearly isn't a plug-and-play toy (its stereo ins and outs, for instance, are +4dBm balanced XLRs only), but if you're a serious player with balanced lines and a healthy budget, you might want to give it a try.

We spoke to four professional bassists who either own or have used an Ultra-Harmonizer, and we asked for their impressions of the unit and its applications for bass. Here's what they had to say:

**Mark Egan:** I own an H3000SE, and I have a number of applications for it. I like to use settings that generate perfect fifths, and I often regenerate the signal to get fifths on top of fifths on top of fifths—G plus D plus A, and so on. On my first record, *Mosaic* [Hip Pocket, dist. by Windham Hill], I used an Ibanez HD1000 harmony generator; that unit was really good at the time, but it was also pretty noisy and dirty, so stacking fifths didn't work that well. The Ultra-Harmonizer, however, is much cleaner and quieter, and it's very good at tracking bass if you use the deglitching function.

I also use the doubling and the chorusing settings. They sound great, especially in conjunction with other chorus units. Then there's a patch that takes your sig-



**Mark Egan**

**Dave LaRue**

**Muzz Skillings**

**Rob Wasserman**

nal and reverses it; I'm using that on my new solo album. The Ultra-Harmonizer is also an excellent mixing tool: if I record a keyboard track in mono, for instance, there are an almost infinite number of ways I can make it stereo—harmonizing one side, adding reverb to the other side, etc. The unit has a few special effects I don't find useful, like the cannons

and the helicopters; there aren't any sounds I don't like, but the wilder effects just don't do it for me. However, if you are into special effects, the Ultra-Harmonizer has something for everyone.

The manual is okay; since this is a complex unit, the manual might be confusing for the layman, and you need to have some familiarity with the technology or you'll be lost. Programming takes a lot of time, and it isn't easy to make more than minor tweaks to a setting. The H3000 is definitely geared for the serious, professional player, and it isn't user-friendly like many other multi-effects devices. So if you buy one of these units, you have to understand what you're getting into.

**Rob Wasserman:** I tried Lou Reed's unit and listened to a lot of different sounds. I heard some great possibilities. I haven't actually recorded with an Ultra-Harmonizer yet, but I'll probably get one very soon. The unit sounds especially fascinating with upright electric. I'm thinking of using it on a bass trio I'm doing right now; since there are going to be three basses, I want each instrument to





sound different and have its own distinctive "personality," and the H3000 will be perfect for that. I've never really

## Vital Statistics

**Type:** Harmony generator/signal processor

**Retail prices:** \$2,495 (H3000S); \$2,995 (H3000B); \$2,995 (H3000SE); \$4,590 (H3000KS)

**Front panel:** Level LEDs w/level select key; soft keys w/backlit LCD display window; program, function, and parameter select keys; "speed" knob; numeric keypad; line-in/line-out select key; power switch

**Rear panel:** Stereo balanced XLR ins and outs; MIDI in/out/thru jacks

**Dimensions:** 19" x 3 1/2" x 13 1/2"

**Weight:** 13 lbs

**Main specs:** 16-bit sampling @ 44.1kHz; frequency response 5Hz–20kHz  $\pm$  5dB; dynamic range >92dB; delay up to 1.5 sec; pitch shift up to  $\pm$ 3 octaves

**Manufacturer's address:**

One Alsan Way  
Little Ferry, NJ 07643

been involved with effects before, but I guess I'm jumping in by buying a Harmonizer.

**Dave LaRue:** I used the H3000 on the new Steve Morse Band album, *Southern Steel* [see page 69]. There must be a million things you can do with it—the first time I scrolled through the settings, I was dying to try it out. The sounds I used on the album were mostly stereo chorus patches with a little reverb. Steve did the programming, so I'm not too familiar with the user interface, but I loved the sound. The stereo imaging of the chorus seemed really pronounced, and the reverb settings sounded very nice. I'd love to get a Harmonizer and learn more about it.

**Muzz Skillings:** I used my Ultra-Harmonizer all over the last Living Colour album, *Time's Up* [Epic]. I've found that when you're choosing a sound from the H3000, a lot depends on how "out" you want to go. The choruses and flanges are killin' and the stereo delays are great, but there are also some weirder programs—"Stutter," for instance—that sound great with bass, if that's what you want. The Ultra-Harmonizer is as useful as you want it to be: when I used it on the album, I picked a different patch for every song, and sometimes the effect was subtle and sometimes it was extreme. When I was doing "Ology," I found that I could get just about any sound I imagined,

and that was really cool. I've barely scratched the surface in terms of what the unit can do.

The H3000 tracks bass well, except you need to adjust the deglitching parameters from time to time. But once that's done, the unit tracks down to E, which is great. I also like the way you can change parameters various ways—there's the control knob, the numeric keypad, and the up/down keys. Considering the depth of the functions and the number of algorithms and parameters, it's laid out pretty well. The owner's manual is straightforward, and it explains each algorithm with analogies so you can understand what you're dealing with.

The Ultra-Harmonizer is ideal for a player who wants to explore and stretch the outer reaches of bass. I don't think it's necessarily for advanced players only, but everyone should learn the rudiments of bass playing before taking on a device like this. Effects shouldn't take the place of the rudiments.



## Fodera Emperor Basses

By Roger Sadowsky

IN 1983, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS AS A bassmaker with Spector and Ken Smith, Vinnie Fodera established his own shop. Working with partner Joe Lauricella, he quickly established a reputation for building instruments that were beautiful to both eye and ear. Because Vinnie and Joe have always put their pride of craftsmanship ahead of the urge to produce a large number of instruments, they've kept a fairly low profile—but Fodera basses are now being played by many top bassists, including Victor Wooten, Percy Jones, and Anthony Jackson. [Ed. Note: Fodera's role in developing Jackson's 6-string contrabass guitar was profiled in the Summer '90 issue.]

**Construction.** I tried out two Fodera Emperors, a Deluxe 4-string and an Elite 5-string, instruments with offset double-cutaway bodies somewhat reminiscent of the Fender Jazz design. These basses are built to order, and the body may be made of Honduras mahogany, black walnut, swamp ash, or soft curly maple, capped with the customer's choice of book-matched exotic woods. Necks are all three-piece hard-maple laminates with fingerboards of ebony, rosewood, maple, or caviuna (also known as pau ferro or morado).

On the Deluxe, the neck is dovetailed to the body, and the wood cap covers the entire top of the body. The Elite has neck-through-body construction; the center of the body is the continuation of the neck and the wood cap is on the "wings" only. The

Roger Sadowsky of New York's Sadowsky Guitars Ltd. is an instrument maker/repairman whose clients include Marcus Miller, Will Lee, and John Patitucci.