

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Computer Recording Basics</i>	7
Chapter 1: Discovering What You Need	9
Chapter 2: Setting Up Your Recording Space	35
<i>Part II: Choosing and Installing Computer Hardware</i>	51
Chapter 3: Choosing Computer Components	53
Chapter 4: Examining Audio Components	65
Chapter 5: Connecting Your Hardware	97
<i>Part III: Choosing and Installing Recording Software</i> ...	113
Chapter 6: Understanding Computer Recording Software	115
Chapter 7: Finding the Right Software for You	127
Chapter 8: Installing Your Software	149
<i>Part IV: Revving Up the Recording Process</i>	173
Chapter 9: Getting a Great Source Sound	175
Chapter 10: Recording and Editing Audio	191
Chapter 11: Using MIDI	227
Chapter 12: Using Loops	249
Chapter 13: Exploring Software Synthesizers	259
Chapter 14: Mixing and Mastering Your Music	267
<i>Part V: Playing with Plug-Ins</i>	297
Chapter 15: Understanding Plug-Ins	299
Chapter 16: Using Equalization	309
Chapter 17: Using Effects Effectively	323
Chapter 18: Digging into Dynamics Processors	335
<i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i>	350
Chapter 19: Ten Tips for Improving the Performance of Your System	351
Chapter 20: Ten Great Internet Recording Resources	357
Chapter 21: Ten (Or So) Free or Really Cheap Software Programs	361
<i>Index</i>	367

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	1
Not-So-Foolish Assumptions	2
How This Book Is Organized	2
Part I: Computer Recording Basics	3
Part II: Choosing and Installing Computer Hardware	3
Part III: Choosing and Installing Recording Software	3
Part IV: Revving Up the Recording Process	3
Part V: Playing with Plug-Ins	4
Part VI: The Part of Tens	4
Icons Used in This Book	4
Where to Go from Here	5
<i>Part I: Computer Recording Basics</i>	7
Chapter 1: Discovering What You Need	9
Looking at the Larger Picture	9
Interpreting Input Devices	11
Instruments	11
Microphone	11
Sound modules and soft-synths	12
Examining the Audio Interface	13
Singling out a sound card	15
Examining AD and DA converters	15
Deciphering direct boxes	15
Perusing the preamp	16
Clueing In to the Computer	18
Signing On to Software	19
Meeting the mixer	20
Accessing the arranger	22
Exploring the editor	22
Managing the MIDI sequencer	24
Digging into digital signal processors (DSPs)	24
Monitors	30
Headphones	30
Speakers	31
Mastering Media	32
CD	33
Computer files	33

Chapter 2: Setting Up Your Recording Space	35
Preparing Your Room	35
Creating an efficient working environment	36
Taming heat and dust	39
Quieting your computer	39
Optimizing Sounds in Your Room	40
Keeping the sound in or out of your room	41
Getting the sound in your room under control	42

Part II: Choosing and Installing Computer Hardware51

Chapter 3: Choosing Computer Components	53
Selecting a Windows PC	54
Understanding minimum requirements	54
Opting on the operating system	55
Viewing internal components	56
Making your choice	57
Choosing a Mac	58
Making sense of minimum requirements	59
Opting on an operating system	59
Understanding Mac configurations	60
Making your choice	62
Getting a Handle on Hard Drives	62
Recognizing Your RAM Needs	63
Opting for Optical Drives	64
Viewing Video Monitors	64
Chapter 4: Examining Audio Components	65
Examining the Audio Interface	65
Understanding the interface	66
Exploring digital audio specifications	67
Taking a look at interface types	69
Finding the right interface for you	76
Making Use of MIDI	79
Understanding MIDI	80
Gearing up	81
Adding Microphones to Your Studio	89
Making sense of microphone types	89
Polarity patterns	92
Choosing mics	93
Monitors	93
Headphones	94
Monitor speakers	94

Chapter 5: Connecting Your Hardware	97
Making Connections	97
Analog	97
Digital	102
USB	105
FireWire	106
Getting Hooked Up	107
Connecting your computer	107
Interface	108
Input devices	110
Monitors	111

Part III: Choosing and Installing Recording Software ... 113

Chapter 6: Understanding Computer Recording Software	115
Audio Recording and Editing Basics	116
Track counts	116
Recording	116
Editing	117
Making Sense of MIDI Capabilities	120
Looking at Looping	121
Making Use of Mixing	124
Digging Into Digital Signal Processing	125
Finishing Up with Mastering	126
Chapter 7: Finding the Right Software for You	127
Determining Your Needs	128
Examining Popular Programs	130
Pro Tools	130
ACID	134
Cubase	136
Cakewalk	138
SONAR	139
Logic	141
Digital Performer	144
Nuendo	146
Chapter 8: Installing Your Software	149
Getting Ready to Install	149
Putting Software on a Windows XP PC	150
Configuring the Windows XP operating system	150
Connecting your hardware	158
Installing your software	159

Installing Software on a Mac	160
Setting system settings	160
Installing your software	162
Configuring Your Hardware	163
Setting up your interface	163
Configuring your audio application hardware settings	169

***Part IV: Revving Up the Recording Process* 173**

Chapter 9: Getting a Great Source Sound 175

Making Sense of the Signal Chain	175
Getting a Great Guitar Sound	177
Creating a Killer Keyboard Sound	178
Making the Most of Microphones	178
Tracing typical microphone techniques	179
Taming transients	180
Setting Up Your Mics: Some Suggestions	181
Vocals	181
Electric guitar	183
Electric bass	184
Acoustic guitars and such	185
Drum set	185

Chapter 10: Recording and Editing Audio 191

Setting Up a Song to Record	192
Creating a new song file	192
Taking a look at tracks	194
Routing your input and output signals	198
Preparing to Record	200
Enabling recording	200
Setting recording levels	202
Monitoring your inputs	203
Creating a click track	206
Getting your click track to play	209
Hitting the Record Button	212
Recording your first take	212
Listening to your take	213
Punching in and out	213
Doing overdubs	218
Editing Audio	219
Selecting audio to edit	219
Editing regions	222
Editing audio data	224

Chapter 11: Using MIDI	227
Making Sense of MIDI	227
Perusing MIDI ports	228
Understanding MIDI channels	228
Setting Up MIDI in Your Computer	229
Enabling MIDI devices in Mac OS X	229
Enabling MIDI devices in Windows XP	231
Getting Ready to Record	232
Creating MIDI tracks	232
Setting inputs, outputs, and MIDI channels	233
Recording MIDI Performances	235
Enabling recording for MIDI tracks	236
Monitoring MIDI inputs	236
Recording MIDI tracks	237
Playing Back Your Tracks	238
Overdubbing MIDI Performances	238
Using MIDI Merge/Replace	239
Punching in and out	241
Editing MIDI Data	241
Manual MIDI editing	241
Performing MIDI operations/editing functions	246
Chapter 12: Using Loops	249
Understanding Loops	249
Using Loops in Your Song	250
Creating a loop track	250
Choosing loops	252
Assembling loops in your song	254
Editing loops	255
Creating Your Own Loops	256
Finding Loop Libraries	257
Chapter 13: Exploring Software Synthesizers	259
Understanding Software Synthesizers	259
Using Soft-Synths	260
Installing soft-synths	260
Recording soft-synths in your song	261
Changing sounds	265
Finding Soft-Synths	266
Chapter 14: Mixing and Mastering Your Music	267
Understanding Mixing	268
Mixing with Automation	269
Knowing what you can automate	269
Getting to know automation modes	270
Recording your automation data	271

Making Your Mix	273
Mixing in-the-box	273
Mixing to an external recorder	277
Mastering Your Music	279
Demystifying mastering	279
Setting up a mastering session	280
Optimizing dynamics	283
Perfecting tonal balance	285
Balancing levels	287
Mastering your mix	288
Burning Your CD Master	291
Getting what you need	292
Sequencing your songs	292
Making a CD for mass production	293
Protecting your rights	295
Burning the CD	295

***Part V: Playing with Plug-Ins*297**

Chapter 15: Understanding Plug-Ins299

Recognizing the Role of Plug-Ins	299
Taking a Look at Plug-In Types	300
Figuring out formats	300
Peeking into processing approaches	302
Using Plug-Ins in Your Songs	302
Installing plug-ins	303
Plugging in plug-ins	303
Processing your audio	306
Finding Good Plug-Ins	307

Chapter 16: Using Equalization309

Exploring Equalization	309
Parametric	310
Low-shelf/high-shelf	310
Low-pass/high-pass	311
Dialing In EQ	311
Inserting an EQ plug-in in a track	311
Examining EQ options	313
Equalizing Your Tracks	316
General guidelines	317
Vocals	318
Guitar	318
Bass	319
Drums	319
Percussion	321
Piano	321

Chapter 17: Using Effects Effectively323

- Routing Your Effects324
 - Inserting effects324
 - Sending signals to effects326
- Rolling Out the Reverb328
 - Seeing reverb settings328
 - Getting started using reverb330
- Detailing Delay331
 - Digging into delay settings331
 - Getting started using delay332
- Creating Chorus Effects333

Chapter 18: Digging into Dynamics Processors335

- Connecting Dynamics Processors335
- Introducing Compressors337
 - Getting to know compressor parameters337
 - Getting started using compression339
- Looking into Limiters340
 - Understanding limiter settings340
 - Setting limits with the limiter341
- Introducing Gates341
 - Getting to know gate parameters342
 - Getting started using gates343
- Examining the Expander343
 - Playing with expander parameters344
 - Getting started using an expander345
- Signing On to Side-Chains346
 - Setting up a side-chain346
 - A couple common side-chains347

Part VI: The Part of Tens350

Chapter 19: Ten Tips for Improving the Performance of Your System351

- Keep Your Drives Clean351
- Keep Your Hard Drive Free of Unnecessary Applications353
- Keep an Eye on Buffer Settings353
- Use the Freeze Function354
- Keep Other Programs Turned Off354
- Exercise Some Discipline355
- Use Submixes355
- Clean Up Your Tracks355
- Turn Off Unused Tracks356
- Bypass Plug-Ins356

Chapter 20: Ten Great Internet Recording Resources	357
Checking Out Online Chats	357
Gearing Up for GAS	358
Getting Help with Mastering	358
Finding Support for Setting Up Your Studio	358
Discovering CD Duplicating	359
Finding Industry Connections	360
Discovering Inspiring Indie Music	360
Chapter 21: Ten (Or So) Free or Really Cheap Software Programs	361
Recording Programs	362
Audio Editing Programs	362
MP3 Programs	363
Plug-Ins	363
MIDI Programs	364
Software Synthesizers	365
<i>Index</i>	367