

Lunchbox legends debut Channel Strip Preamp, compressor and EQ in one

Legendary mixer manufacturers API have announced a new recording front end called the Channel Strip. A 1U rack, its signal-conditioning and processing facilities are split into four sections: a mic preamp, an EQ, a compressor and a line driver, all of which are based on existing API modules.

The preamp is identical to API's own

Finally, the line-driver section offers an output level control, and features a VU meter that can be set to display either the line-driver's output or the output level immediately after the mic preamp.

The Channel Strip's rear panel hosts a multitude of sockets, including both mic and line inputs, and an XLR line-level output. In addition to these are a number

popular six-module rack. The 500 6B, as the revised version is known, has a more powerful PSU than before, and can now supply 215mA per slot, allowing you to fill the rack with high-current-demand units without running the risk of some modules being undersupplied.

The power rails for each slot now also have their own individual, user-replaceable



512C Lunchbox module, which is based on API founder Saul Walker's original designs from the '70s. This provides up to 65dB of gain, as well as phantom power,

of jack sockets, which allow you to patch into and out of the Channel Strip at various points in its signal path. A Pre Out jack socket lets you take a clean, unprocessed

fuses, which eliminates the risk of one defective module damaging others in the rack. Additionally, the front panel of the new Lunchbox rack features LED indicators for each of the three supply voltages (+16V, -16V and +48V), so you can tell at a glance whether the PSU is behaving itself.

Finally, the 500 6B's rear panel features two D-sub connectors for the eight inputs and outputs, in addition to the usual XLR sockets, should you want to connect all eight outputs to a recorder via a single

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a -20dB pad, a polarity invert switch and a mic/instrument input selector (for use with the high-impedance jack input).

Next comes the compressor, which is based on another Lunchbox module, the 527. As well as the usual attack, release, threshold and ratio controls, this features soft/hard-knee switching, a Link button (for chaining two units and compressing stereo sources), a feed-back/feed-forward switch (for selecting between modern- and vintage-sounding compressor topologies), and a pre/post-EQ switch, which determines the order of signal processing. There's also a button labelled Thrust, which engages a high-pass filter in the control-voltage signal to help prevent pumping caused by low-frequency sounds triggering the compressor. A 10-LED meter shows the amount of gain reduction being applied.

To the right of the compressor is the EQ section, which is identical to the 550A module. This offers independent control over three bands, each of which has a ± 12 dB range, and a choice of seven different frequencies. The high and low bands can be switched between peaking and shelving filter types, while a button labelled BP Filter engages a band-pass filter that rejects frequencies below 50Hz and above 15kHz.

signal immediately after the preamp stage. There are also two insert points, both of which have separate, balanced jack sockets for the sends and returns. A side-chain input for the compressor, and a Link socket for chaining two Channel Strips together, conclude the array of socketry.

Being based on existing Lunchbox processors, which are themselves derived from API mixer modules, the new Channel Strip effectively squeezes the sound of a classic API console into a 1U rack. Such quality doesn't come cheap, however: the Channel Strip carries a retail price of \$2995. It's available now.

The aforementioned Lunchbox modules can, of course, be bought individually and housed in one of API's Lunchbox chassis, and the company have recently updated the technical specifications of their very



cable (for example). Two extra pairs of XLRs give you access to inputs and outputs 7 and 8, even when using the D-sub connectors.

Also available now, the API Lunchbox 500 6B carries the same price as its predecessor: just \$499, including VAT. For more info, check out the API web site. **API +1 301 776 7879** www.apiaudio.com

