

# VERDEN RECORDING PREPARATION INFO

## Overview - What Equipment to Use

At Verden we have a wide selection of world-class guitar effects, drum kits, cymbals, microphones, preamps and other recording equipment. Getting the best result for your session involves getting the right balance of our equipment and yours to ensure your band's sound is preserved while getting the best possible results.

All equipment is subject to availability and change without notice. Please read the following notes on our sessions and the equipment lists and come back to us with any queries or your proposals for session plan.

## 1-Day Session Plan

Time is obviously of the essence. If you wish to gain access to the room earlier, this may be possible by arrangement, but our engineer won't start until the booking starts.

Once the booking starts its advisable to get set up quickly. There is unavoidable time which must be spent configuring recording levels & cabling - this is different for every band and layout. This setup will usually take 1.5-2.5 hours. Once done we are ready to start tracking.

Generally the setup would consist of setting up the drums in the live room and mic-ing them up, DI-ing the bass from the same room, and mic-ing guitar amps in separate rooms. The singer can sing in the same room as the whole band if need be to record a guide vocal.

Following this setup we enter the multitracking, or tracking phase, where the band performs and the audio is recorded. This process may involve adjustment of sounds levels and mic positioning and so generally an initial test track is performed, the band takes a listen, adjustments are made and then all songs are tracked. This process takes again 1-2 hours.

In the 1-day session its advisable then to quickly record additional guitar parts and solos (see Guitars later) for 30-45 minutes and then move to vocals. This leaves little time for 'comping' multiple takes of solos.

Vocals are then re-recorded with a more sensitive mic in isolation. Again, any backing vocals can be quickly recorded but there will be little time for comping.

Finally in the remaining time a basic mix - balancing individual levels and adjusting tonality followed by finalizing the mix to a commercial level (-0.3dB) is done before a CD is given to the band to take away.

## 2-Day Session

In the 2 day session setup and tracking of the basic 'backing tracks' is performed on the first day - more time can then be spent on the additional guitar and vocal parts, any overdubs, percussion tracks etc which are performed on the second day, with more time devoted to the final mix.

## **Weekend Session or Longer**

On a weekend session setup and test tracking is performed on the Friday night. Some bands may find that they proceed to basic tracking on that day, if not the next day is devoted to tracking and overdubs, perhaps with time for a basic mix to be taken away for review before the final day when mixing is performed. A 2-hour review session at another date is often scheduled to review the final mixes. In longer sessions we will organise a custom workflow plan for you to suit your requirements. Please note that should any estimate be given on time, additional creative decisions made by the musicians may result in this time being extended for which we will charge the standard hourly rate.

## **Individual Instrument Recording**

### **Drums**

If you are bringing your own drumkit you should ensure skins are fresh and the kit is tuned to your satisfaction. If you use double bass drums, more than 3 toms, or any other non-standard arrangement we should be notified.

Our engineers are skilled enough to get excellent drum recordings using only 4 mics - kick, snare and overheads - and this is often preferable due to phase issues which multiply the more that you use additional microphones. Channel limit at Verden is 13 world-class simultaneously with up to 20 professional-class channels possible at one time.

We will usually add a bottom snare mic and close tom mics if time permits to give options at mixdown.

If you are using our kit it's worth coming to check the kit over and perhaps coming in early on your own time to set the kit up for your drummer, subject to availability.

We generally assume drummers will bring their own cymbals and snare which are integral to their sound. However we do have Zildjan A Custom cymbals and multiple high-quality and vintage snares available for use, for which a surcharge may be payable (see Kit Lists below).

### **Bass**

Basses should have fresh and/or spare strings and musicians should have a quality tuner. Cables should be high-quality and checked before bringing them here. We keep some spare guitar cables but dependent on your setup you should have your own to suit your length & effects run. If you are at all concerned about the condition of your instrument then book it in for a service with us. Intermittent problems are the worst and are guaranteed to pop up in the middle of the otherwise perfect take.

For bass guitar we usually find a high-quality bass DI through a high-quality preamp is the best solution for speed and tone. However some bassists may feel strongly they wish to impart percussive feel through use of an amp and speakers - in this case a notification to us is advisable together with perhaps booking an extra couple of hours or using a 2-day deal to ensure there is time to properly configure and isolate the additional amplifiers and mics.

## **Guitars**

Guitars should have fresh and/or spare strings and musicians should have a quality tuner. Cables should be high-quality and checked before bringing them here. We keep some spare guitar cables but dependent on your setup you should have your own to suit your length & effects run.

Guitarists will often wish to use their own amp and effects to impart 'their tone'. In this case amps should be serviced without noticeable crackle, buzz or hum, and single-coil guitars should be properly earthed, wired and shielded. Cheaper guitars with improper shielding may exhibit hum or buzz and there is little we can do about this within the scope of a session. If there is any doubt about the condition of your guitar then please book it in for a service with us. Intermittent problems are a waste of time and are guaranteed to raise their ugly heads right in the middle of your killer solo.

Guitar Distortion is a tricky subject - generally multiple tracks with less distortion are advisable to impart thickness and crunch rather than one very high-gain sound. We may suggest using your amplifier with one of our higher-quality cabinets dependent on the time you have paid for as a hardwood cabinet with high-quality speakers can make a big difference - but may alter your sound from your intended. Again contacting us to discuss your requirements is advisable. If you are bringing your own effects they should have fresh batteries or power supplies and if you wish to use our effects, speaker cabinets etc it may be advisable to book additional time to give us time to arrange this.

## **Vocals**

Vocalists should have their words learned and be aware of techniques for warming up and maintaining their voice together with pitching.

## **Mixing**

Mixing Distinctions - please be aware that mixing in the terms we offer comprises adjustments of audio level, tone, dynamics and basic effects work to provide a final mix. Creative mix work such as adding vocal effects, multi-layering and filtering, or any post-production audio work considered to be part of the creative process is termed production and not mixing and requires additional paid time.

One would expect a single-day session to involve basic mixing to a 'professional demo' level with use of Waves audio manipulation tools such as compressors, EQs and reverb. A 2-day or longer session may involve re-amping/bouncing via tube equipment or analogue tape, use of outboard equipment such as the Manley Massive Passive Equalizer, Lexicon PCM70 professional reverb unit, Buzz Audio Stereo Optical Compressor, etc.

## **Mastering**

Audio mastering is a frequently misunderstood term involving a secondary facility (the 'mastering house') working on the finished 2-channel mixes to provide a replication-ready 2-channel digital or analogue master. By its very nature we cannot provide mastering within Verden Studios in its true sense as you require a secondary engineer and facility. We will perform what we correctly term 'finalizing' of your mix - involving many of the tools used in the mastering process to provide a commercial-level stereo mix. In longer projects we may engage a second 'mastering engineer' to evaluate and finalize your mixes.

## Kit List

### 1 & 2-day Session Deals

For 1 & 2 Day Session Deals we make the following equipment available:

Drums: *Pearl Master Series kit, use own cymbals, DrumDial quick drum tuner - (2-day sessions gain access to the Yamaha Stage Custom Advantage Recording Kit)*

Bass: *Tech21 Sansamp Bass DI, Trace Elliot or Ashdown Bass Amplifier Heads & Trace Elliot / Warwick Cabs*

Guitars: *Marshall JCM or Anniversary Valve Heads/Combos, Cornford & Orange Recording Valve Amps*

Vocals: *Neumann U87ai, Shure SM7b, Audiotecnica AT4025 and Rode K2 recording mics*

Acoustic Instruments: *D-TAR Solstice Dual DI, EQ & Preamp*

### Weekend & Longer Deals

For weekend and longer deals the following equipment is available:

Drums: *Yamaha Stage Custom Advantage Recording Kit, Zildjan A Custom Cymbals*

Guitars:

*RetroKing RK45, Rivera S120, and Orange Rockerverb Custom Valve Amp Heads  
Custom RetroKing 2x12 speaker cabs fitted with Celestion Greenback, Vintage 30 & Heritage Speakers*

*Custom Effects Rack with Keeley modded compressors, Keeley Modded Tubescreamer and BD2, BK Butler Tube Driver, Big Muff Pi, EH Musicman, Boss GT-PRO, Digitech GSP2101, Line6 Delay Modeller, MXR1500 vintage digital delay  
Patrick Eggle Berlin Pro & Berlin Legend, Fender Custom Shop Eric Johnson Strat*

This equipment is available for shorter deals on payment of a £50 supplement and provision of valid credit/debit card details. In all cases breakage of or damage to cymbals or guitars is subject to a charge of 75% of the replacement cost.