



TASCAM PORTASTUDIO 144

TASCAM was an American-based sub-division of the Japanese recording technology company TEAC (Tokyo Electro Acoustic Company). It was set up as TASC (TEAC Audio Systems Corp) and tasked to come up with ways of using TEAC's technologies for recording music in studios. In 1971, the US-based outfit TASCAM was created (the AM stood for America) to market and distribute the new recording products.

TASCAM marketed several high-end reel-to-reel multi-track recorders, like the 85-16B, a 16-track machine which recorded onto one-inch tape, weighed 90 kilograms and was squarely aimed at smaller pro studios.

But in 1979, TASCAM released the Portastudio 144, a four-track machine that used cassette tapes playing at double speed. For the first time, four-track recording was in the hands of people who could scrape together a few hundred quid, rather than several thousand. By recording and then mixing three tracks to the fourth track to free up three tracks for more overdubs, those four tracks became as many as you could record until "hiss said stop", to quote Peter Calvert, an ES reader who contributed to a recent lively discussion about home studios on our Facebook page.

Suddenly a recording studio was in the hands of the kids for the price of a day or two's recording in a damp 16-track studio under the arches of your nearby railway line. No clock ticking away, no surly long-haired engineer laughing at your proto-new romantic, European ennui stylings, just endless time to experiment and craft a musical revolution in your bedroom. The blue touch paper had been lit.