

# CHANGING STUDIOS

✧ EVERY MONTH OUR EXPERTS SUGGEST WAYS OF IMPROVING YOUR SET-UP BY OFFERING ADVICE TO A READER. THIS MONTH OUR PROS HEAD TO MIDDLESEX TO SORT OUT STEVE JARVIS...



## MEET THE READER

**Name:** Steve Jarvis

**Age:** 33

**Address:** Uxbridge, Middlesex

**Occupation:** Customer Services Representative with ICT Eurotel

**Unashamed plugs:** "I have a couple of tracks on [getoutthere.com](http://getoutthere.com), under the Garage and Drum & Bass sections. I also have two tracks in the Pete Tong section at [www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/rate\\_artist.shtml?artist=472](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/rate_artist.shtml?artist=472). And I'm working on a personal website."

## MAKEOVER BUDGET




"At the moment money's very tight. I'm trying to raise a family and pay the bills. So for the time being I'll be buying one bit of kit at a time."

**Budget key**

 money's tight

 money's OK

 money's easy

OUR *CHANGING STUDIOS* feature has become infamous among Future Music readers for being the article where our pro experts barge into readers' studios and show you how to improve things. And even if you don't share exactly the same set-up as our *Changing studios* 'victim', hopefully you can draw some useful advice from our experts' suggestions.

This month, we've sent pro engineer and music technology lecturer Trev Curwen (he produced Portishead's debut album, among many other things) along to FM reader Steve Jarvis's house where he's got his set-up crammed into a corner of the main bedroom. "My partner Claire really is understanding about my music," explains Steve, "but I know some day she would like to have a spare room."

Ideally Steve would like to move house, but there's also the possibility of perhaps moving the set-up into the loft. "It's big enough to stand up in, about 12 feet long and eight feet wide, maybe bigger so it could perhaps be converted into a studio. Our garden is too small for a shed or outbuilding, and there are no spare rooms available, so maybe the loft will come in handy."

Well, before we decide where Steve is going to have his set-up, we need to find out a bit more about him and his music-making, so it's question time...

## The history

Steve has been into music for a long time – "I started messing around at about 10 years old, playing my nan's grand piano, learning music at school, playing on home keyboards and listening to records and to music on the TV and radio" – and by the age of 12 he was playing around with record players ("trying to mix records by crossing them over just using volume sliders").

Initially Steve was influenced by music heard on the TV and radio: "I

loved watching *The Hitman And Her Club@Vision* and, of course, *Top Of The Pops*," recalls Steve, "and I still remember watching the Jean Michel Jarre concert from Houston... his music grew on me big time."

A few years on and Steve had started accumulating some decent gear. "I can't remember exactly when I got my first keyboard," begins Steve, "but I had a few cheap ones when I was young, then got a couple of slightly better ones around the age of 17. I know one of them was a Casio HT-700 with a built-in RAM card slot. It's one of those keyboards you wish you'd never got rid of; it had some great sounds."

It wasn't long before Steve added a computer to the set-up. "I went through a range of computers and consoles, like the Binatone Pong, the Vectrex, ZX81, Spectrum 48k and BBC," lists Steve, "but finally I got my first 'super computer', the Commodore Amiga 500... what a joy! I got a lot of public domain demo disks and stuff from magazines and I especially loved all the music and animation ones. Around the age of 22 I got Med, my first music tool, which started off my music production skills, before moving onto Octamed, which improved them even further. I then got an Amiga 1500, which I upgraded with extra memory for doing animations and video, which I got into big time."

This set-up also gradually expanded, as Steve explains: "In 1994 I bought a pair of Soundlab decks and a Roclab MRT60 mixer. I tried DJing but the decks were useless (there wasn't enough pitch control when crossing over) so I started to mix records with bits from movies, TV shows and adverts instead. I did some mad stuff. I sold one of the decks, but kept the other to play vinyl on and I still have the Roclab mixer, which is OK."

Steve's set-up today looks good but it's gone through some changes since



## STEVE'S KIT LIST

- 1 JBL Control 5 monitors
- 2 Pentium III PC, 500MHz with SoundBlaster Live Player 5.1 running Making Waves Audio V3, SoundForge, FruityLoops 3, Reason, ReBirth (demo) and lots of VST/DX plug-ins
- 3 Korg M1
- 4 Soundcraft Spirit M8 mixing desk
- 5 Boss DR-660
- 6 Yamaha DJX
- 7 Technics Tuner
- 8 HBB BurnIT
- 9 Sony DAT
- 10 Technics AMP
- 11 Technics MASH CD player
- 12 Technics Twin Tape

plus ...  
Roclab MRT60 mixer  
Soundlab deck

these early days. "After about a year and a bit of hard saving," recalls Steve, "I was reading about MIDI and needed a keyboard so I bought my first serious piece of kit, a second-hand Korg M1 (I couldn't afford a brand new one but at least it worked) and a MIDI box and leads for the Amiga 1500 and I was away, with the M1 and Octamed tracks programmed and running together via