

INTEGRA 8 REVIEW from Charles MCGougan - Redseal Productions December 2022

Opening my front door to a cold December morning revealed the great Malcolm Toft himself, with his new Intergra8 console in hand.

Following a most enjoyable chat, the serious task of testing this console began.

BUILD QUALITY

To begin with, the build quality of the Integra 8 is excellent! A solid chassis, with high quality components used throughout. The pots are high quality and have that re-assuring little bit of resistance that allows for very precise movements. The faders are accurate and smooth. In fact every bit of this desk is made with great care and detail. Something worth mentioning here is the power supply Toft used a much higher rated supply than would normally be used so it powers the desk with minimal effort and remains almost cold even after many hours of use, as does the desk itself. This does have a big effect on the sound quality of the Intergra8 which for a desk of its size and price point is frankly jaw dropping!

When I first powered up the Intergra 8 I wanted to see how noisy the desk was. I used some SSL compact desks I have in comparison. The SSL 6's when all faders and master fader is fully up have a bit of background noise through the master section...well a tad more than a bit! But when I did the same test on the Intergra8 I thought at first my monitors must be in sleep mode as there was total silence but nope my monitors were on and working. However there wasn't even the hint of any background desk noise...totally silent. Most impressive to say the least.

SOUND & USE

So let's come to its sound, wow! This thing sounds stunning. Like really really good!

Running some multi tracks through it that I know very well.

I thought I must of loaded up a sub mix rather than the raw takes off tape, as the vocals and drums had this rich warm and silky sound straight off the bat.

From the Integra 8 you are solely getting the sound of beautifully fashioned pre amps, signal path and monitor section. I think this is why the sound from the Integra is so silky with the forward mid sound normally associated with the classic A Range Trident.

But that's the magic with this desk! It still has the sound like one of the classic old Trident desks, just silkier in a very nice way. My Neve 8803's and SSL 611 black knob eq's sounded lush on this thing! With my SSL Fusion sitting on the master bus inserts. The same attention to detail has definitely been put into the Mic pre's too, these sound seriously good. Best way I can describe it is, if a Trident A Range married a Neve, their kids would sound like this. Open bright highs, lovely rich lows. The desk has 4 Aux's generous for a console of this size and MT has added a very nice feature here. If you push the Alt I/P button on the channel strip the Alt line input is brought into play. Alt 3 pot becomes volume, Alt 4 pot becomes the pan. Though limited in its controls the sound quality through this input is every bit as pure as the main channels. This is a really useful feature as it turns the Integra 8 into a inline console albeit with limited control on the Alt I/p channel. Both on the Master section the FX returns can be used as channels if required too and have solo /mute functions, giving the Integra 8 up to 18 high quality inputs which makes this a potent little desk to say the least!

Balanced insert points are on every one of the main channels and on the Master bus too.

Even though there are no insert points for the Alt I/p channels, this can be easily overcome by running out of your convertors into your outboard direct and out into the Alt I/p's on the console. This gives the Integra8 the potential to be loaded up with eq's and dynamics plus Fx on the 2 returns.

Each of the 8 main channels also has a direct output, handy for multi instrument recording, stem printing and DAW inputs etc.. Something which most consoles of a similar size don't often include.

Coming to the ease of use and workflow.

The Integra 8 is laid out intuitively and you can get a session running quickly and easily. I was surprised just how quickly I was able to get a multi track stems session to sound damn respectable! I love how this desk doesn't cram in everything right on top of each other and you feel your fingers have space to move about the board, Something SSL could look at with their desktop mixers. All in all this console is a pleasure to use it sounds fantastic and has the scope to be loaded up with all your favourite bits of kit. There aren't many desks this size that I think you could do a mix on but this certainly is one of them, looking forward to the expanded and larger versions yet to come. A great job Mr Toft!

But then I would expect it to be coming from the hands of a real master. Bravo 🙌