



2021 Pro Audio Holiday Gift Guide

By Russ Long

I'll be damned if another holiday season isn't already approaching and I've yet to buy a single gift. I have so many people to shop for, but thankfully I have a plan.

With dozens of hits under his belt and more around the corner, F. Reid Shippen knows the importance of accurate monitoring, which is why I'm giving him a pair of **Auralex ProPOD Acoustic Decoupler** sets. I picked them up for myself last summer and was amazed at how much they improved the low-frequency clarity and imaging of my monitor configuration.

If you aren't a listener already, you owe it to yourself to check out *A Little Bit Famous with Ted Marotta*, a fantastic podcast that only gets better with the right microphone, which is why I'm giving Ted Earthworks' new **ETHOS broadcast mic**. I've been playing with the mic for the past several weeks and have already used it to record nearly a dozen voiceovers. I'm blown away by the sound quality.

The **Satsuma** and **Honeydew IEMs**, manufactured by Campfire Audio, offer pro-level IEM performance without the excessive price tag. I've been impressed with their build quality and superb sound performance. The Satsuma (\$199) is the more accurate of the two (and my favorite). I'm giving a set of these to Vance Powell so he can check his mixes out while running from studio to studio.

I'm getting "**The Beatles: Get Back Book**" for

mastering engineer Jim DeMain. I always thought *Let It Be* was the Beatles breakup album. The book, with text made up entirely of dialog from documentary footage shot during the making of the album, is worth it for the photos alone—Jim is also a world-class photographer. The accompanying Peter Jackson documentary titled **The Beatles: Get Back** debuted in November, and based on the teasers I've viewed online, it's going to be fabulous!

Renowned studio engineer Steve Marcantonio frequently engineers sessions in Studio A at Nashville's Blackbird Studios. The studio's backbone is a Neve 8078 console (previously owned by Donald Fagen!) that has been highly modified. I know Steve misses the sound of that desk when working at his home studio, so I'm going to give him the **KIT Plugins BB N105 plug-in**, which perfectly emulates the sound of the classic console, modifications included!

After Dinnie Miller (FOH, Miguel & Volbeat) and Kenny Sellers (FOH, Twenty One Pilots) turned me onto the **Peak Design Everyday Backpack** that they each carry, I picked one up last summer and fell in love with everything about it. It looks great, it's flexible, it's well made, and it easily carries all the gah I need traveling between studios and live gigs. I'm going to give one of these beauties to Matt Herr, who travels the world as Elton John's FOH mixer.

Synth sage Tony Miracle is an in-demand

programmer and remixer, as well as a founding member of the synth-pop underground superstar group Venus Hum. Tony has been a good friend for over 30-years and has an encyclopedic knowledge of synths and their contribution to modern music. Mike Metlay's new book "**SYNTH GEMS 1 - Exploring Vintage Synthesizers**" will keep Tony drooling for hours, and as an Erasure fan, I know he'll love Vince Clarke's introduction.

I'm getting **Sonnec's Sound Bullet** for my buddy Jay Vicari, who has been the music mixer for SNL for decades. Jay can't afford to miss an input, and while the Q Box performs great, the Sound Bullet is a fraction of the size, has more features, and is built like a tank.

A longtime member of Michael McDonald's legendary band and one of Nashville's most sought after studio bassists, Jacob Lowery hosts the hilarious *The Sideman Chronicles* podcast, where he talks to studio legends about their craft. He records his podcast from his home studio, but I know if I get him **AKG's new ARA USB microphone**, he'll be able to record it from anywhere.

All of this shopping has me exhausted, but I've saved myself for last. All I need to put a smile on my face this holiday season is the new **Mojave Audio MA-37**. This modern classic was inspired by the Sony C37-A, which has been a studio mainstay for decades.

Okay, back to mixing. Looks like I'll be needing some extra cash. Happy holidays everyone! ■