

Season's
Greetings

Great Holiday Gift Ideas for the FOH Reader

By George Petersen

Let's face it — sound reinforcement pros are not easy to shop for. We have enough cutesy chachkas and useless trinkets. What we could really use is something meaningful that could make a difference in our everyday lives. So with that in mind, we present our annual holiday gift guide. Just leave this issue of *FRONT of HOUSE* laying

around (opened to this page, of course) where the right person can find it. Then use your trusty Sharpie to circle any items of interest so potential gifters will spot it and voila... in a few weeks, you hopefully will receive gifts you'll truly appreciate. It's easy and fun, so give it a try! Here are our suggestions of great gifts for the 2018 holiday season.

APC Back-UPS Pro BX1000M UPS (\$129)



Get yourself a little peace of mind and add an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) to your FOH setup. You don't need to run your entire system off this in case of a power outage, but an inexpensive UPS can help you avoid that excruciatingly long wait for your console to reboot should you briefly lose power. This APC Back-UPS Pro BX1000M will provide up to 600 watts (plenty for most medium-size consoles, which typically draw in the 85- to 175-watt range), and at \$129, it's insurance anyone can afford.

apc.com

Fishman Aura Spectrum DI (\$349)



If you regularly work with an acoustic guitarist, do them (actually yourself) a favor and get one of these. Much more than "just" a direct box (yeah, it does that, too), it offers the renowned Aura Acoustic Imaging technology, onboard 3-band EQ / compression / feedback suppression, 16 user presets and a built-in chromatic tuner with bright LED readout. And it's a great way to add natural-ness to that typically sterile sound of piezo undersaddle or soundhole pickups.

fishman.com

Nano Shield NS085 Hook-up Wire (\$15.99)



Even in these digital days, very once in a while (sometimes more often) we all wind up needing to fix something. Here's a handy set of six 23-foot rolls of stranded, silicon-insulated, 22 AWG copper hook-up wire for your DIY projects. And that spiffy dispenser box not only keeps things tidy, but reminds me of those crayon boxes of yore with all those pretty colors. (You can find it by just going to Amazon and searching for "Nano Shield NS085.")

amazon.com

Neutrik NA2-IO-DLINE Dante Interface (\$293)



By now, you've hopefully figured out that Dante is here to stay, and to make interfacing easier, Neutrik offers the NA2-IO-DLINE, a simple, rugged box with a Dante port and XLR inputs and outputs for converting up to two stereo analog sources to any Dante stream. Easily feed non-Dante-equipped amplifiers, speakers or mixing desks with signals from the Dante network, and it runs off power over Ethernet (POE), so no wall warts or power supplies are needed.

neutrik.com

Sound Tools XLR Sniffer/Sender (\$55)



I've had one of these for more than 15 years and won't do a gig without one. This simple 3-LED unit tests any XLR audio cable for shorts, opens or cross-wire conditions, but it can also be used remotely, without needing to bring both ends of the cable together, or test audio snakes by applying phantom power from the console. Just plug it in and if the LEDs read all green your cable is ok. Also offered are versions for testing NL4, ¼"TRS and DMX cables.

soundtools.com

Waves SoundGrid Mobile Server (\$849)



It's tiny, but packs a powerful punch, with an onboard Intel Core i5 processor and 4 GB of RAM that's ideal for boosting your plug-in processing power. Latency is a low 0.8 ms at 44.1k to 96k Hz. Use with any SoundGrid audio interface (including DiGiGrid I/O's) for real-time processing for live-mixing/recording with plug-ins. The downside? It doesn't ship until early 2019, but some things are worth waiting for.

waves.com

Whirlwind Qbox (\$218)



A must-have in my gig bag, Qbox is a multipurpose testing device used for checking audio lines and can send or receive audio signals at either mic or line levels, as well as detect the presence of phantom or intercom voltage on the line. It also has an onboard 440 Hz sine wave generator, and a built-in speaker and headphone output actually lets you hear the signal being monitored, to listen for audio distortion conditions, while a built-in electret mic is provided for convenience.

whirlwindusa.com

Parnelli Awards Ticket (\$199...but really priceless)



If you're part of the live industry, attending the Parnelli Awards is the place to be — and be seen — as the industry salutes its finest companies and practitioners. The Parnelli Awards take place at the Anaheim Hilton, on January 25, 2019 (during the NAMM show), so attending is more convenient than ever. Best of all, your ticket includes access to the pre-show festivities and cocktails, the dinner and awards ceremony and the exclusive after-party. So why not reserve a table for 10 and celebrate with your clients or crew?

parnelliawards.com