

**Harrison Audio's New 32Classic Mixing Console: Building on Classic Technology Behind Grammy-Winning Recordings of the '70s**

*Introduced in 1975, the Harrison 32C was used at the Los Angeles' Village Recorder on Steely Dan's Aja, Supertramp's Breakfast in America, and many more*

**W. Los Angeles, California, December 17, 2024 — In 1977, the Village Recorder installed Harrison Audio’s new 3232C mixing console, with its revolutionary inline channel design and world’s-first 32 multitrack buses, in two of the studio’s three rooms. Over the following three years, projects recorded at the Village — Steely Dan’s Aja album (1978) and “FM (No Static at All)” single (1979), and Supertramp’s Breakfast in America album (1980) — consecutively won the annual Grammy Awards for Best Engineered Recording – Non-Classical.**

Fast-forward to 2024 and Harrison has begun shipping its new 32Classic console internationally. The 32Classic supports traditional or modern hybrid workflows, combining the brand’s renowned 32C four-band parametric EQ with variable high-pass and low-pass filters and 32 transformer-balanced Harrison mic preamps with 64 channels of built-in, high-end AD/DA conversion, 7.1.4 immersive monitoring and a Dante AoIP interface.

**Harrison 32C: The first inline design for multi-track recording**

The 32C, introduced in 1975, was the manufacturer’s first console to offer company founder Dave Harrison’s innovative inline design, featuring both an input and a monitor return path through each channel module, and was the world’s first desk with 32 multitrack buses. At the Village in 1977, a Harrison 3232C (with 32 inputs) replaced an MCI console in Studio A, Steely Dan’s favored room, while a 4032C (40 inputs) was installed in place of a Quad Eight in Studio B. Clients and the studio’s engineering staff were quick to take advantage of the novel inline functionality and large number of output buses on the new Harrison consoles.

“I remember how easy the Harrison was to use and the inline monitoring capability,” says Lenise Bent, who was hired in August 1976 and was one of four women among the six assistant engineers at The Village. She assisted engineer Roger “The Immortal” Nichols for over 10 months in Studio A during the tracking of Steely Dan’s Aja, followed by early sessions for the band’s next album, Gaucho (which also won the Grammy Award for engineering, in 1982), before joining engineer/producer Pete Henderson for Supertramp’s monthslong Breakfast in America recording dates in Studio B.

“I liked the fact that there were four ways one could choose to record, either inline or all on faders, and you could switch the mic and monitor functions,” Bent continues. “Also, I liked creating the subgroups and stereo pairs, making one track the master — so easy to mix. This was all quite innovative back then. And I don't recall anyone using any other preamps or EQs other than the ones on the console.”

”The fact that the EQ was parametric, the board had VCA automation and it had 32 buses was so much nicer than the old boards,” adds Hernán Rojas, an engineer and assistant engineer at the Village around the same time as Bent. Rojas worked on the Harrison consoles on numerous projects, including remixes of some of the singles from Fleetwood Mac’s Rumours album, alongside engineers Ken Caillat and Richard Dashut, and a string of disco releases for Butterfly Records.

**Novel inline monitoring system**

Having a second input path through the channels allowed Rojas to trigger an oscillator at 60 Hz or even 40 Hz on the kick drum sidechain to add sub-bass, he reports. “That was another thing that made the Harrison great, because if we ran out of inputs on the regular faders, we could come in through the inline monitoring system and add them to the mix. And in the case of disco music, where songs were long and you really wanted precision, equalization on the low end was very helpful.”

Jeff Harris, who started work at the Village around the same time as Bent and stayed for nearly 19 years, was both an assistant engineer and studio tech on sessions for Breakfast in America, Supertramp’s sixth and most successful album, which has reportedly sold over 25 million copies to date. “Pete Henderson was just brilliant at making the Harrison sound good,” he recalls. “It was a very punchy console for the day and he really got a lot out of it. Those were great sounding consoles, and flexible.” The Village had upgraded from 16-track to 24-track recording before the Harrisons arrived, and for the Supertramp sessions he synchronized two 24-track Ampex tape machines, Harris adds, making the most of the console’s 32 buses.

**Monitoring the mix on classic recordings**

The 32C featured six aux sends, Rojas recalls. “On a tracking session you could use two for cue sends and the other four to really sweeten the playback mix in the studio, so the band would come in to listen and it would sound similar to what they wanted. Also, for headphones, you could feed in some effects. Ken Caillat, who was my biggest mentor and was just coming out of Rumours, was heavily into making sure the headphone mix was creative enough to assist the musicians on live or overdub sessions.”

By the time she left the Village in 1980 to work with producer Mike Chapman, Bent had logged many studio hours on the Harrison consoles in both Studio A and B, on projects such as Frank Zappa’s Sheik Yerbouti and Joe's Garage albums, Dan Fogelberg and Tim Weisberg’s Twin Sons of Different Mothers, Art Garfunkel’s Watermark and The Buddy Holly Story soundtrack album. “The Marc Jordan album, Mannequin, was also recorded on the Harrison,” Bent says. “It was a very rich-sounding record and quite a success in the easy listening/smooth jazz world.” Engineered by Roger Nichols, Mannequin also featured many of the same musicians as Steely Dan’s albums of the time.

**Harrison: an important part of a very high standard**
“When Geordie Hormel started the Village, he wanted to have the best technology available for musicians in a nice, creative environment and at a reasonable price,” Rojas comments. Audio technology was about to take another leap forward, and the two Harrison consoles arrived around the same time as the studio transitioned to 24-track recording, and Dolby noise reduction and Eventide’s first digital delay line were also installed at the facility. “Geordie was quite a visionary, and a futurist. We had bleeding edge technology at the Village,” Harris agrees.

In 2013, Bent had an opportunity to engineer and mix an all-analog album to tape, then cut to vinyl, for rock band Primal Kings at Entourage Studios in N. Hollywood on a Harrison 4032C console for the first time since her Village days **(confirm this).** “It felt so good to record through the Harrison; it just all came back,” she says. “Everything was so wonderful — the energy, the music, the the band members, and this wonderful room that Roger Nichols had a big part in designing. That was like one of my favorite projects I've ever done in my career and the Harrison console was a very important part of the very high standard and quality of that recording.”

**About Harrison**

​Harrison has been designing, manufacturing, and marketing audio mixing consoles in Nashville, Tennessee (Music City, USA) since 1975. Our products serve the markets of music recording/mixing, international film and television sound production, audio post production, broadcast sound, and live sound reinforcement. Over 1,500 Harrison consoles have been installed worldwide, constituting a significant share of the overall world market for high-end audio consoles. Harrison's dominance of the high-end market demonstrates that customers who require solutions to complex problems invariably turn to Harrison to provide the answer.

**Contact:**

Jeff Touzeau
Hummingbird Media, Inc.

jeff@hummingbirdmedia.com
www.hummingbirdmedia.com