

FOR BARBRA STREISAND'S HIT ALBUM, SOLID STATE LOGIC AWS 900 MAKES MIXING A PLEASURE

AWS 900 and John Merchant Behind Another Hit Record



MIAMI—Twenty-five years after her multiplatinum Guilty, Barbra Streisand's Guilty Pleasures, which debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 album chart, is another artistic and commercial triumph for the legendary singer.

The long-awaited Guilty Pleasures once again pairs Streisand with producer Barry Gibb. For engineer and producer John Merchant, the Solid State Logic AWS 900 Analogue Workstation System was indispensable in the creation of Guilty Pleasures at two critical stages of the process—Streisand's vocal overdubs and mixing. SSL's most popular console ever, the AWS 900 is a proven hit-maker for the top engineers and producers who recognize the dual benefits of the console's SuperAnalogue™ signal path coupled with a comprehensive DAW controller.

Basic tracks for Guilty Pleasures were recorded through the SSL 9000 J Series console in Studio A at the Hit Factory/Criteria in Miami, with overdubs recorded to Pro Tools at the Bee Gees' Middle Ear Studios, where Merchant served as chief engineer for more than 10 years.

"Barbra really wanted to do her vocals at home," said Merchant. "She gave us this beautiful cottage with sweeping views of the cliffs of Malibu, looking out at the mighty Pacific. But we needed to create a studio, so we rented an AWS 900 from Advanced Audio and Pro Tools rigs from Design FX. "I'd had a demo on the AWS 900 at GC Pro and really liked it," Merchant recalled. "It's very intuitive. We sat down, pushed up the faders and everything sounded great, surprisingly great. Within an hour, after seven or eight takes, Barbra came out and said, 'That sounds fantastic.' She said that from the first day to the last."

Back at Middle Ear, mixing on the studio's own console was proving a frustrating experience. "Usually, I'd spend a day on the mix and then Barry would come in," Merchant explained. "But I kept telling him I wasn't ready yet. After three days, he finally came in



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Caption

Engineer/producer John Merchant used a Solid State Logic AWS 900 console for vocal overdubs on Barbra Streisand's hit album Guilty Pleasures, recorded at the artist's home. Merchant used the same AWS 900, rented from Advanced Audio, to mix the album. Photo: Gary Ladinsky

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and listened, and I could tell he was holding something back. I finally said, 'It's just not the same, is it?' and he said, 'It really isn't, it's not what we got used to.' Merchant contacted Advanced Audio, and the same AWS 900 used for vocal overdubs was shipped to Miami. "Because of its size and portability," said Merchant, "it went in a flight case and was here the next day. We set it up, and there was that great sound we had gotten used to for three weeks in California. So the album was mixed on the AWS 900, too."

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