

## Troubadour Magazine, April 2004 Eureka



By Sven Erik-Seaholm

I like golf. It's not just the fresh air, little electric carts, bizarre dress code and ability to smoke cigars and drink beer while doing it either. Part of the attraction is that every time you go to swing the club, a laundry list of all you've ever learned and practiced comes into play. How your feet set up. Where your shoulders are. How you time your backswing. The speed and angle of the downswing. How you follow through. It takes most folks decades to approach what they feel is their 'best game', and there are no guarantees (although considering the price of playing the sport, perhaps there should be). Until we're all teeing up in virtual simulators at the mall, golf will remain the province of those with enough time and money to chase a little white ball while dressed like somebody's Granddad. Having little of either, I pretty much just watch little televised snatches of it and marvel at guys like Tiger Woods.

Now there's a guy I can really respect. The highly coveted slots on the PGA tour are hotly contested and precious few, and bringing one's game even near that level requires an overwhelming amount of talent and a lifetime of commitment. Tiger didn't just meet that challenge, though. He beat the hell out of everybody for a couple of years straight. He exceeded the mark by such a large margin that his competitors had to completely rethink their approach. They had to become physically stronger. Their focus and intensity levels needed to be even further honed to an atom-splitting sharpness. In a phrase, the entire tour had to raise its game.

By Tiger pushing himself and his colleagues to new heights of excellence, the very sport itself is ultimately what has benefited most. Anything that is worth your all of your time, all of your resources and your total dedication should be treated with the same sort of passion and respect exemplified by Mr. Woods' approach to golf. Songwriting, performing and recording are all noble crafts. They're also a lot of fun, and it's easy enough for scores of people to do them, but if you've decided this is what you want to do with your life, shouldn't you bring the full force of your talents and passion to the proverbial table every time?

In the past few years, the cost of microphones and preamps has come down drastically while the quality of these items has increased by an almost equal proportion. Increased competition for a growing consumer-oriented market, paired with its thirst for higher quality results has in essence forced manufacturers to raise their game as well. PreSonus has been well within the fairways of affordable, high quality audio for almost 10 years now, and with the introduction of their Eureka single channel preamplifier compressor and equalizer, it looks like their competitors are going to be scurrying back to the practice tees in large numbers.

At first blush, the Eureka would appear to be a smaller cousin to the popular but pricey Avalon 737sp. You've got that juicy oval VU meter, cool color illuminated buttons and a similar basic layout. But the Avalon is a tube-based unit, while the Eureka is solid state. Both use discrete class A components, which for the sake of brevity I'll simply define as: The really, really good top shelf stuff, put together in the best possible way.

I recently had the opportunity to use Eureka with a really great microphone, the Telefunken Elam 251, a vintage tube microphone from 1959 the sells for upwards of \$25,000. I also tried it with a much more modestly priced Shure SM57. After an initial bit of trial and error, I started to get some really great results in a short amount of time. Later, I used the SM57 dynamic on an electric guitar amp and for some acoustic guitar, and I mic'd a bass drum with an AKG D112 through it. The Eureka's silky bottom and ultra sparkling clean top end were hallmarks of all these tests, and the Eureka definitely displayed a chameleon-like quality in being able to tackle all these chores easily. This thing sounds like stuff that costs four times as much!

I like the variable microphone impedance feature, as well as the "Saturation Control" which adds a bit of tube emulation sweetening to an already impressive trick bag. The compressor even has soft or hard knee compression, and three fully parametric bands of eq. The only real quibbles I had were that the power button is inconveniently located on the rear of the unit, and instead of utilizing that beautiful VU meter for input level metering, they relegated that very important task to a 3 segment LED meter.

Still, this thing totally does an awesome job of bringing really great sounding gear into the affordable price range for folks like us, and I recommend you take a close look at this piece the next time you're considering raising your studio's game.

*Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning recording artist and producer who writes and performs with The Gandhi Method and The Wild Truth when he isn't working with other artists through his company, Kitsch & Sync Production ([www.kaspro.com](http://www.kaspro.com)).  
[www.SvenSongs.com](http://www.SvenSongs.com)*