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## TAPE OP HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT THE WELLSPRING REVERB SYSTEM:

Sometimes when great pieces of gear cross my studio desk, a part of me almost wants to keep them secret. This is one of those times.....

.....Beyond basic spring reverb tones, which are awesome on this unit, I feel certain it's going to be different in the hands of everyone that uses it.....

.....This was pretty cool and – more importantly – fun and creative.....

.....When used on a bus and sending different elements to it in a mix, the *Wellspring* added a nice ambience and depth.....

.....Looking to spark creativity and create unique sounds? Many of the current reverb plug-in options are outstanding, but I doubt any could capture the sound and excitement of a unit like the *Wellspring*.

**Geoff Stanfield**  
*Tape Op Gear Review Issue #155*  
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64/TAPE OP #156/GEAR REVIEWS/

## Lindell Audio

### *LiN2A leveling amplifier*

When I first saw the Lindell Audio *LiN2A Vintage Leveling Amplifier*, I admit I got excited. I use my Lindell Audio *LiN76 [Tape Op #153]* quite a bit, so I couldn't wait to try this one. As soon as I pulled the *LiN2A* out of the box, I saw that one of my minor nitpicks of the *LiN76* had already been addressed – no outboard power supply; a proper IEC jack and cable instead!

But let's back up, because I'm getting ahead of myself. The *LiN2A* takes inspiration from the renowned Teletronix (Universal Audio) *LA-2A [26]*. And speaking of UA; as much as I love the UAD plug-ins, I prefer using a hardware compressor while tracking vocals.

The *LiN2A*, like the *LA-2A*, has two main knobs – Gain and Peak Reduction. The two-rack space *LiN2A* has a large, backlit VU meter in the center and heavy-duty toggle switches for power and selecting compression or limiting mode. A smaller rotary switch selects the signal displayed by the VU meter (gain reduction or output). The Gain and Peak Reduction potentiometers are fully detented, although I noticed the "clicks" didn't always land on an indicator. On the back is a jack for the IEC power, an input voltage selection switch (115/230V), a small potentiometer for meter calibration, and 1/4-inch TRS jacks for input and output. Like the *LiN76* there are no XLR jacks, but I don't mind since I'm going to a patchbay anyway.

A major sonic influence on the *LA-2A* is the T4 (or later variations) optical module. A modern Black Lion Audio T4BLA optocell is used in the *LiN2A*. This module, which slips into an octal socket (like a vacuum tube), contains an electro-luminescent panel and a pair of photocells (one for audio, one for the meter). The *LiN2A* is a feedback-style compressor. A sidechain circuit, controlled by the Peak Reduction control, sends more signal to the optical module, which then applies more compression or limiting to the main audio signal. In other words, there's a light and a sensor, and the light gets brighter when the input signal is louder. When the light is brighter, more compression occurs. Of course, all this occurs inside the cell so don't expect to "see the light" except for maybe a slight glow of tubes. The optical module affects the compression, attack and release characteristics, which are a big part of the overall sound. The *LiN2A's* compression is fixed around 3:1, or ∞:1 in limiting mode, attack time is around 10 ms, while the release is variable and level-dependent.

I mentioned tubes, didn't I? Yes! They amplify the signal and drive the compression circuitry and VU meter. The *LiN2A's* tube complement is slightly different than an *LA-2A* to allow for more widely available modern tubes. If vintage correctness is your thing, it is possible (after moving a jumper and utilizing an alternate socket) to use the exact same tubes as an *LA-2A*. Inside, Cinemag transformers are on the input and output as well as a massive toroidal transformer for the internal power supply (a toroidal design can help keep power supply EMI out of the audio signal). The tubes and a voltage regulator use the rear panel as a heatsink and generate some heat, so I recommend leaving an empty rack space above the unit.

On the *LiN2A*, there is no sidechain pre-emphasis potentiometer – that's the one you need a screwdriver to set. With an *LA-2A* this was to allow for more compression of the high-frequency signals to prevent it from over-modulating when broadcasting on FM radio. It was recommended to run it "flat" in the studio. However, some studios found that this could be useful for applying some modest de-essing on vocals or cymbals, etc. I've only rarely done this myself (with plug-ins), so I probably won't miss it.

I ran a bass guitar track through the *LiN2A* where I had previously used a plug-in. The Gain and Peak Reduction knobs were in different positions, but the end result was very close, with the plug-in having a slight boost in the sub frequencies. I also compared a vocal track where I was using the same plug-in. Once again, I could get a similar sound, but in this case the *LiN2A* was less sibilant, while still adding a smooth midrange presence boost and working better in the mix. When tracking a vocal, the *LiN2A* did an excellent job of keeping the level consistent while adding a subtle thickness to the track.

Once again Lindell Audio has found a way to build an affordable "classic" for those that don't own (or don't have the budget for) the original. I will definitely purchase this review unit, and can't wait to use it on more sessions! (\$699; [lindellaudio.com](http://lindellaudio.com))

-Mike Kosacek <[doubledogrecording.com](mailto:doubledogrecording.com)>

## Iron Age Audioworks

### *Custom Analog Console*

I recently got an email from Matt Walton at Iron Age Audioworks, "Hey John I'll be in the San Francisco Bay Area in a few weeks installing a console. Maybe we could meet up for a beer or coffee?" Installing a new console? I was intrigued, and so it was that a few weeks later I rode my bike over to meet up with Matt Walton and Fernando Romero of Iron Age, as well as with Walker Phillips, whose The Colourful Way studio is less than a mile from my house in San Rafael. After coffee and doughnuts, we went over to Walker's studio (where he records his band Tabernacle @tabernaclesf, among other projects) and I was able to see the console as it was being installed. The Colourful Way is an all analog studio – no computer – and Walker is running an 8-track Tascam 388 tape deck (with a 1-inch MCI machine going in soon), so a