



GEAR

REVIEW

GETTIN' LOOPY!

The Electro-Harmonix 45000 Multi-Track Recorder

Looping has a rich history, with roots tracing to modern classical composers like Phillip Glass, Steve Reich, and John Adams, as well as rock musicians like Brian Eno, Robert Fripp, Peter Dinklage, David Bowie, and U2 (The Edge's echo repeats on guitar, while played in real time, are essentially loops). More recently, guitarists like David Torn, Bill Frisell, Phil Keaggy, and Henry Kaiser have taken looping to new levels. There are looping conventions and a wildly active web universe devoted to the practice.

Looping gear is nothing new. Simple pedals record a guitar pattern, then repeat it, while higher-end models layer one pattern on top of another to create more-complex compositions. Compared to anything before, the Electro-Harmonix 45000 Multi-Track Looping Recorder is the mothership. Ridiculously easy to use, it has features that beginners will dig and will make more-advanced loopers drool.

The 45000's trump card is that it blends the world of looping and digital multi-track recording. This makes perfect sense since looping is, in fact, a method of recording. With this box, however, the player can build a composition *very* quickly. Building on Electro-Harmonix's previous looping pedals, the 45000 combines the layout of a multi-track digital recorder with easy looping functions. Each loop has four mono tracks and one stereo mixdown track. The 45000 records non-

compressed, 44.1kHz/16-bit CD-quality audio direct to a removable SDHC card (4 to 32GB) that can hold up to 100 individual loops. Loop speed is adjustable over a two-octave range, and reverse recording and playback are also possible. There's even a built-in metronome to a separate Monitor Out and a Headphone Out.

Price: \$476.21 (street);
\$119.25 (foot controller)
Contact: www.ehx.com

While musicians from the hip-hop universe will be all over this pedal, so will guitarists and bassists who know all about the ambient magic of layering guitar parts to create veritable symphonies of chords, arpeggios, rhythms, and melodies. Cooler still, this layering can be done live with the 45000 – just turn on a track, lay down a part, and deactivate it on the beat. Then do the same with the next track and so on. Four mono tracks can be mixed down to the fifth track, which is stereo, to free up four more tracks. And if a loop is a little long, the Quantize feature will make it fit perfectly to a 1/4 beat.

The Electro-Harmonix 45000 Multi-Track

Looping Recorder was tested with a '62 Gibson SG Junior. Playing with its features quickly led to some cool ideas that probably wouldn't have come to light without the 45000 (that's another secret of looping: one interesting loop can inspire another and, more often than not, a happy little "accident" of sound can take the music through the stratosphere).

What makes the EHX 45000 big news in the looping world is the interface. It's very easy to get going on this complex piece of gear. In no time the user can record reverse loops, change a loop's speed over two octaves, and overdub and punch in and out on any track, like with an old Portastudio four-track. The master unit can be tweaked by hand, but the 45000 Foot Controller (sold separately) is indispensable for creating, building, and triggering loops in real time. While it's an additional expense, it's entirely powered via a regular 1/4" cable from the main unit, so no extra wires or batteries are needed.

Those who have already been bitten by the looping bug will likely be intrigued by the 45000. Those new to looping can certainly buy cheaper – and sometimes more-complicated – units, but why not start with a device that, while a bit more expensive, has a shallow learning curve and won't discourage with a complicated interface? The EHX 45000 Multi-Track Looping Recorder is a killer device with buckets of power. There's a loopy new kid in town and it's a winner. – **Pete Prown**

