

GERMAN TECHNICAL ADVANCES DRAW INTERNATIONAL CLIENTELE

By WOLFGANG SPAHR

Some of the leading West German recording studios have spinoff interests leading into record production or music publishing in order to provide the necessary finances to keep up with the constant demands for new equipment.

So says Dieter Dierks, who runs Dierks Studios in Stommeln, near Cologne. He builds on the point: "If you want to stay in business, then you have to keep up-to-date with the very latest trends. But that ambition creates its own problems."

"Technical matters develop so fast that you stand little chance of re-financing all the changes needed if you rely on ordinary studio hire rates. The question of a bigger desk, for instance, is difficult. You buy a new one and, almost before it is paid for, it is technically out of date. That's why we have to get into different areas of the business, production or music publishing being the biggest."

In fact, the Dierks Studio has the only 32-track mobile studio in Europe, and it has been used by many national and international artists. Says Dierks: "There really is a growing trend towards live recordings. They provide a special sort of kick for the consumer and the turnover is constantly building. This is one of the main development areas for the future."

And this view is shared by Helga Dickmann, manager of Musiciand Studio in Munich, another leading German recording center. She says: "There is no doubting that the technical side is becoming more advanced in Germany and generally it follows the standards set in other parts of the world. But certainly I'd go along with the belief that mobile studios are both recommended and in demand for live recordings."

Dickmann claims that the Musiciand Studio is cheaper in hire rates than most but adds insistently: "With its high technical standards, we can compete on even terms with the top studios in the U.S. and U.K."

And Dierks affirmed: "I honestly do believe the most important German studios are at least as well equipped as those in



Dierks Studios in Stommeln, near Cologne.

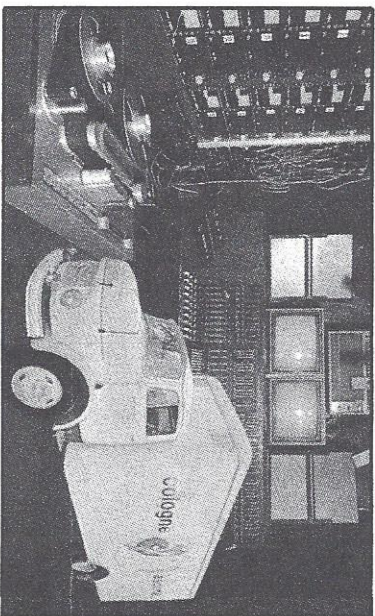
Britain and the States. And it is a fact of life that more and more international artists are doing their new productions in German studios. It all points to the fact that the German scene in record studio terms is now accepted at international level. This is gratifying and a reward for a great deal of arduous effort."

But Dierks feels that some international developments are, as yet, out of reach of most German studios, particularly in the digital recording field. He says: "Really the whole technique in the digital area is in the experimental stage and, for German companies, rather too expensive for us to be able to make predictions about its future."

"However I have the feeling that it will become the basic technology for the future and will force all conventional mixing and recording desks out of the studios."

"But where computerized mixing desks are concerned, I

Wolfgang Spahr is Billboard's correspondent in Germany.



The Dierks operation has the only 32-track mobile studio in Europe.

think one in two German studios already have one. This is really a matter of getting help in doing remixing. In that the computer takes care of some of the functions which normally have to be done manually. When the computer can tackle everything, in conjunction with the digital techniques, then we have something very special.

"I don't think there is any chance, whatever the international developments, that the German studio scene will become sterile in any way. Most certainly the arrival of so many international artists in our studios has led to a tremendously valuable exchange of knowledge."

"Those artists have different requirements, different styles of music, and their demands mean that German studios have had to become completely competitive in order to survive."

Dierks says his studio was the first in West Germany to offer an "all-round package" to artists and record companies, including studio, hotel and restaurant. He adds: "Most of the important international studios are offering that same kind of

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