



By Mitch Bohannon

X-Tempo Designs POK

You're a guitar playing worship leader. You're a worship musician. You're a music enthusiast working with DAW's (Digital Audio Workstations). Or maybe you've just been wondering what those guys on stage have been punching into their MacBook Pro's... Read on, this is for you...

I'm assuming that you read my last review in the July/August 2010 issue of Worship Musician. If so, you know that I've been using click tracks through the Aviom for our worship band. It's made a world of difference, but it hasn't happened without some road-bumps along the way. I'm here to help you jump over some of those!

Taking one song at a time, running a click into our personal monitors tightens up the band, keeps us in sync, and helps us create a better feel in the entire sanctuary. (When your band is in sync, even non-musical folks in the congregation notice... they just may not know what they're noticing). The biggest hurdle comes with creating flow from one song to the next. Once you begin a click-track for

punch keys between songs. At first, I gave control, via a midi keyboard, to my drummer... later moved it to my drummer on percussion... later moved it to my lead guitar player. They all did a fine job, but there is latency between my "GO" signal and the actual downbeat! I can speak or pray or play segues between songs, but as the leader, when I think 'go' I want the computer to respond. Soon, I learned of the POK from X-Tempo Designs...

This thing is incredible! It's the coolest thing to come out since the Cut Capo (shameless plug). The POK (list

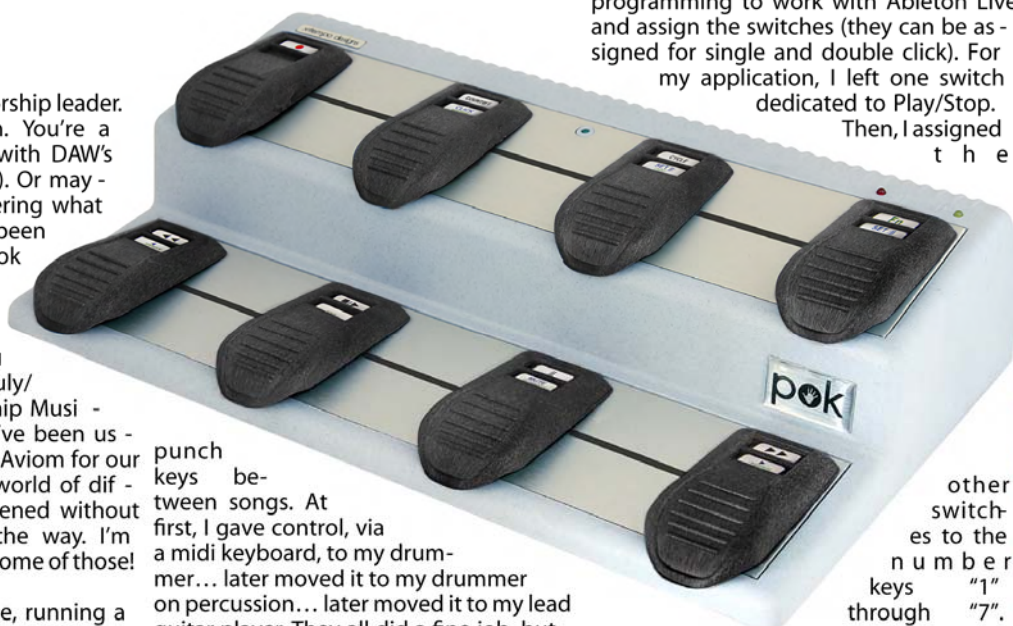
\$499 with case... street price \$349) is a wireless footswitch that controls DAW software through USB. The unit acts like a wireless keyboard, sending keystroke signals to your software. Pick one up and here's what you get... The POK comes in a custom hard case and has eight assignable switches (or pedals). It's a small, but sturdy unit, 12 x 7 inches. The wireless USB fob is the same size as a thumb-drive. The unit runs on three 'AAA' batteries and has an LED that signals wireless sync, button-press, and battery warning. The POK comes with an editor program on CD and it is set up ready for use with Pro-Tools. This is helpful for those recording some distance from

a song, you must have at least one measure, usually two, before the first downbeat. If there is a delay between ending a song and starting the next click, it can become a very awkward dead space! (been there).

I'm a guitar playing worship leader running Ableton Live. I am not in a position that I can have my Mac right next to me and

the computer, or when it's not convenient to reach the mouse or computer keyboard to start/stop recording. Through the POK editor, it was easy for me to switch the programming to work with Ableton Live and assign the switches (they can be assigned for single and double click). For my application, I left one switch dedicated to Play/Stop.

Then, I assigned the



other switches to the number keys "1" through "7". That gives me the ability to have seven songs that I can cue for worship. If I needed more cues, I could assign them to the same switches (double click).

I have my computer set up off stage (it works the same with Mac or PC). When I lead worship, my mic stand is about 20 feet away from my computer. I set the POK right next to my microphone and away we go! I have to say, after the first Sunday I used the POK, I received an email from a random person in the congregation commenting on how smoothly the song service went!

The POK is a very ingenious piece of equipment that, for my worship platform, is a must have. I didn't even mention battery life, which is almost 'forever'... because the battery is not being used unless the switch is being pressed. I've described the way I use it on the platform, but realistically, if you use a DAW that utilizes assignable keystrokes, you can assign those keystrokes to this footswitch for hands-free application!

Bottom line... freedom, creativity and flexibility.

Mitch Bohannon is the Worship Pastor at First Baptist Church in Dayton, TX. He helped develop the Short Cut Capo for Kyser Musical Products. Mitch and his wife, Noelle, have the three most awesome kids in the world!

