

I work almost exclusively with DSD on an everyday basis and have since 1996 and have worked with every DSD recording system and workstation made so far.

There is a HUGE difference between how SADiE and Pyramix handle DSD editing. Same for Sonoma vs Pyramix.

All start with a 1-bit DSD source. All can deliver a final 1-bit DSD "master." How they get there is a different story, though.

The Pyramix, the instant you put the system in edit/mix mode, converts the DSD source to 24bit,325.8kHz pcm for all editing and then re-converts back to DSD for the output to DACs or mastering. All DSD audio, from beginning to end of what you're working on, has gone through the conversion/re-conversion process. This is NOT just simple math being performed. The audio goes through internal pcm and sigma/delta converters for the process.

SADiE (or Sonoma) keeps the DSD source as DSD (no conversion) except at the actual edit crossfade, where an insert occurs the length of the crossfade of 8bit,2.8Mhz pcm and back to DSD. This conversion occurs ONLY at the crossfade. All DSD source on either side of the edit is untouched as long as the "bypass mixer" button is pushed (how I almost ALWAYS run the SADiE DSD). I defy anyone to hear the conversion effect for the duration of an edit crossfade! However, even if the mixer is inserted, the audio integrity is more transparent than that of the pyramix to MY ears. There is no low-pass filtering used or needed. The "annex" DSD metering verifies there is no increase in UHF noise.

(Here's where I pull on the flame-proof clothing ) In MY experience, there is a big difference in how these system sound as well. The Pyramix, as soon as the DSD source hits the 325 mHz pcm mixer (that's every mode other than source recording), changes the sound in an unacceptable manner, IMO. Philips and Pyramix claim otherwise, but I have had 6 very experienced DSD editors and skilled listeners here pick out the Pyramix vs SADiE or Sonoma audio every time. The SADiE and Sonoma keep my DSD source intact.

As with any tool in any format, taking care in how intrusive one is on the source audio will make a difference in the final outcome. The vast majority of my DSD projects can stay in native DSD except for the edits. For any processing or mixing, I come out to analog via EMM Labs dacs and record the process or mix back to DSD via EMM Labs adc. All properly-designed analog gear has no problem whatsoever with the DSD source - no low-pass filtering needed here either! This conversion to analog and back in MY experience is actually less intrusive than the Pyramix 325 mHz conversion process (I'm pulling on the second layer of flame-proof clothing...). Others may disagree (they may own a Pyramix), but this is the way I hear it!

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With Best Regards,

Michael Bishop

There's nothing "pristine" about any recording system. I doubt there ever will be. The only "pristine" part of the recording process is the live performance going on in front of the microphones. Past there, it's an interpretation of what occurred. It's up to the individual to choose tools to get the job done, and there are many excellent tools in ALL formats to choose.

Out of any part of the recording chain, for ME, the recording platform needs to be as transparent as possible. If I choose to add color anywhere, it'll be with mic placement and/or choice, the venue we record in, or any outboard gear used, but I want the recording device to be neutral. For my work, the DSD SADiE or Sonoma fit that bill best.

The Pyramix is still quite a remarkable recording system, despite that I don't like what the internal process does to DSD sources. Pyramix has the best GUI I've seen. It's a really fast, efficient editor and an extremely versatile all-around system. Claude Cellier and Merging and Philips, all put together a terrific recording platform. Lots of excellent productions - pcm or DSD - have been recorded and edited/mastered on Pyramix systems. I had several discussions with Claude and others when the Pyramix was in for evaluation. Merging was kind enough to loan the system for a very extensive trial. It all came down to what I and several other users in our place preferred in the recording process. We chose the more transparent path, IMO.

If SACD went away tomorrow, I'd still be recording on a DSD system out of choice. I've got (up to) 192 kHz or analog multitrack systems I could be using, but I'm working with DSD.

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With Best Regards,

Michael Bishop