



Oh, yes, Joe does a little bit of music in addition to ham radio! Here he is in his basement recording studio with his home-assembled Synthesis Technology 28-module analog synthesizer system.

Outside of a crowded sofa, a grand piano, and a cluttered coffee table, he is entirely correct. A Collins 300-J broadcast transmitter looms 7 feet high at the far end of the living room adjacent to the fireplace and can hardly be missed when walking in the front door. Below that, a giant L-shaped table is arranged with multiple active operating positions, each with a sweeping view through tall arched windows of the ornate backyard pool and the suburban LA vista below. Amid guitars and amplifiers, still sporting yellow post-it notes marked "Joe," fresh from the studio, sat boxes of unopened radio goodies and just-delivered ham gear covered in bubble-wrap waiting a turn on the bench.

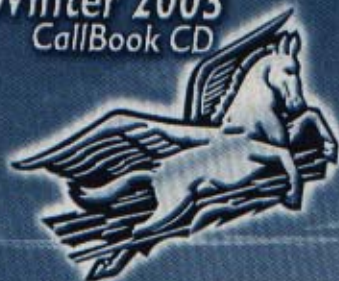
Around the house abound a myriad of memorabilia and awards from Joe's stellar music career: the platinum plaques for *Hotel California* and *When Hell Freezes Over*; keyboards, amplifiers, synthesizers, and guitars; props from record-album photo sessions from Joe's earliest days up to his "Ordinary Average Guy" solo release of the early 1990s; his trademark Uncle Sam top hat beside a KWM-1 high atop a bookcase; a personal photo of Ringo Starr. However, it's almost as if music is secondary to the radios. Even downstairs in and around the recording studio there are far more radios than audio processors and effects boxes, and it's clear that music is what Joe does, but indeed radio is what Joe loves.

As we moved around the house finding different backgrounds, we approached a large workbench with parts cabinets and bins stuffed with components, soldering irons, and assorted radio parts; it occupies most of the dining room. "That's not a dining room; it's a shop," Joe quipped. "Surely you have a dining table in your shop, don't you?"

We relocated the shoot from the main radio room into his library, where the Gold Dust Twins are set up on a desk beneath a beautiful light-up, round-embellished Collins sign. Joe struggled with a power cord for a while under the desk, moving gear and rearranging, trying to get the sign to light up. Finally the aging fluorescent bulb inside the massive circular chrome frame flickered to life, and Joe sat down beside the immaculate Collins twins. As he donned a pair of vintage headphones and tapped Morse code on a bright-red straight key, it was obvious that at the controls of a radio, Joe Walsh was no longer the legendary rock star, but in fact just an ordinary, average ham. ■

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