

building, we just decided to start with a clean slate and do it right from the beginning," says Ackerson. "Ceiling height and natural light were important to me. Taking out the second story created a tracking space with a 20-foot ceiling."

From the get-go, Flowers has worked out according to plan. Not only has the studio spawned Polara albums, including 1998's *Formless/Functional* and 2002's *Jetpack Blues*, but it's also sparked Ackerson's career as a producer/engineer. "Coming out of the indie rock scene happening in Minneapolis, I had produced a bunch of regional bands, but in the last five years, I've been fielding projects from both coasts," says Ackerson, who was named 2005's Producer of the Year at the Minnesota Music Awards. "It's all happened very organically. The studio grew up along with the community it was serving, and the scope has just continued to broaden at a steady pace."

Of course, key to the studio's success has been Ackerson's talent. Between his own music, and his involvement with artists such as The Jayhawks, Golden Smog and Soul Asylum, the studio owner and his workshop have a certain magnetism.

Just a few months ago, The Replacements picked Flowers to record their first new material in several years, and Ackerson produced and engineered it. The sessions produced two new songs that are included on a compilation out this month on Rhino Records. "I've known Paul [Westerberg] and Tommy [Stinson] for a really long time, and they were looking around to see who had a place that would allow them work the way they wanted to, in the right environment with the right vibe," says Ackerson. "The whole confluence of schedules worked out, and it was a really cool gig, very inspiring. Paul came with a few really great songs, and it just went down—one of those sessions where you do your takes and the magic sort of happens when it happens, on their terms. You can kind of steer it, but you certainly cannot manufacture it, from a production viewpoint—it's about enabling the thing to happen the right way."

Flowers embodies that production approach in its technical setup; it's equipped to enable, and inspire when necessary, just about any kind

vitalstats

FLOWER STUDIO

Studio Owner:

Ed Ackerson

Room Design:

Ed Ackerson

Consoles:

Trident Series 70; 1968 Electrodyne custom 16-channel sidecar (coming soon)

Recording and Playback:

Digidesign Pro Tools HD2, LE; Studer A-80 VU MK.II 2-inch 24-track; Otari MTR-10 1/4-inch 2 track

Monitors:

Urei 813b; Genelec 1031A; Yamaha NS-10M

Microphones:

60+ mic cabinet includes AKG; beyer; B+K; Earthworks; Electro-Voice; Neumann; Sennheiser; Shure

Outboard Mic**Pres/EQs/Compressors/Dynamics:**

API; Telefunken; Neve; Electrodyne; Focusrite; JoeMeek; Moog; Ampex; Alembic; Alan Smart; Amek/Rupert Neve; Aphex; dbx; Anthony DeMaria Labs; Drawmer; Empirical Labs; Pandora; TC Electronics; Urei

Outboard Effects:

Eventide H3000-DSX; TC Electronic M2000; Yamaha SPX 990, SPX-50; Roland SDE-1000, RE-301 Chorus Echo tape echo; RE-150 Space Echo tape echo; Watkins Copicat tape echo; Maestro Echoplex tape echo; Moogerfooger LPE; Lexicon Alex, Vortex, JamMan; DeltaLabs Effectron ADM 256, Effectron ADM 1024; MXR Flanger/Doubler; dbx 120XP, 905; Biamp MR-140 spring reverb; Orban 111b stereo spring reverb; Alesis MidVerb II; Line 6 Bass Pod; Electric Filter Factory, Mo-Fx, Warp Factory

Software and Samplers

Waves Platinum; TC PowerCore; Universal Audio UAD-1 Studio; BIAS Peak; Propellerhead Reason; MOTU Digital Performer; Waves L2 Hardware Ultramaximizer; E-mu E5000 Ultra; Akai S01; Roland MS-1; Casio SK-1; Native Instruments Battery 2.0