



Dennis Andreas

# Railroad Report

## Bachmann Trains On30 2-4-4-2 Baldwin Locomotive

**Adding sound is simple and your customers will appreciate the service.**

Several months ago we had the pleasure of reviewing a Bachmann Spectrum On30 Baldwin series steam locomotive. That unit was DCC ready and had lighting functions controlled from the Bachmann E-Z Command DCC controller. This month, the folks at Bachmann have provided us with a new release, Baldwin 2-4-4-2 Articulated Locomotive with Tender. This unit is DCC Sound On Board Ready and Bachmann included the sound module. Because we've already visited the Baldwin history, this time we will focus on the technical wonders and accessories of this new On30 locomotive.

As usual, the Bachmann packaging is very nice. The product comes in a molded see-through clamshell container and is held securely, safe from any damage. The accessories are bagged separately and stowed safely in the clamshell with absolutely no chance of loss.

The workmanship on the 2-4-4-2 locomotive and tender is simply exceptional. The lines in the moldings and paint are clean and crisp. This particular sample came undecorated, so supplied with the loco are multiple options for the stack, headlights, and road pilot. For the tender, load options are either coal or oil.

With all respect to the previous On30 Baldwin, the tender connection was more than a bit awkward. However, I really like the way this new On30 tender connects to the engine. There are two mini-connectors toward the outside edge of the chassis. They are very easy to connect and do not interfere with, or hinder the coupling of the tender to the locomotive. Just make the connections and



place the unit on the track, an absolute breeze compared to the previous Baldwin.

Without the DCC Sound On Board installed, the purchaser has the standard functions available for use with the E-Z Command DCC system. The E-Z Command controls the lighting, startup, run, and slow down of the engine. This is all on par with the rest of the Spectrum line, very smooth and realistic but without any sound. But

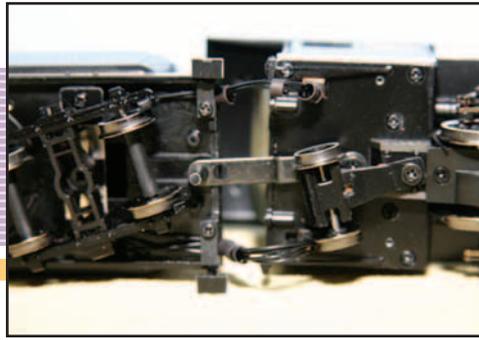
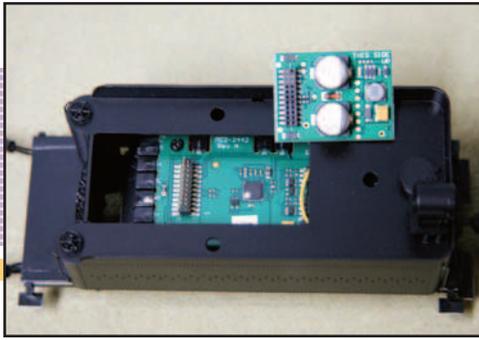
what exactly does the DCC Sound On Board do, and how is it installed? The module is installed in the tender under the load, and it could not be any easier.

Before we get started, let's begin with a simple warning: when working with electronic components, make sure you are not carrying a static charge. This can damage sensitive components. As an example, don't run across the carpet in socks and start working on the train. Do yourself a favor and save a pile of money by touching a water pipe or other grounded metal to remove any charge before beginning. Also, remove the engine and tender from the test track and let it sit for five minutes to allow any capacitive charge within the engine itself to dissipate.

Now we can proceed. To install the sound board, simply remove the tender load by gently lifting it from both ends. Once the load is removed you will see a circuit board with a double row of pins. This is where you will attach the sound module. The pin spacing on this connector is very close, so you might have to break out the magnifying glass. The board is installed with the two can-capacitors facing up. There are holes on the bottom of



*The sound module for the Baldwin adds a host of realistic locomotive sounds.*



*Left: The board fits into place in the tender and only takes minutes to install. Right: The new Baldwin 2-4-4-2 articulated features easy to use mini-plugs to connect the tender to the loco.*

the board that pass through to a connector on top.

Carefully align the board and with a little gentle pressure it will seat.

Double check your work, replace the tender load and it's ready to go. This is a very easy task to offer your customers during a sale, and it only takes seconds to accomplish. Customers are like elephants—they don't forget. They will remember which store offers service and which stores only take their money, then kick them out the door, so don't forget to offer service.

With the engine back on the rails it's time to startup the engine and experience the Tsunami of sound. Upon applying power to the track, the engine winds up to idle and blower and air-pump sounds begin. There are a multitude of sound offerings and to sample the other sounds one must first select the engine number on the E-Z Command controller. The default number on a new engine is three, but any number can be selected. Once the new loco is encoded into the controller a host of sounds like whistles, bells, and even coupler clanks, are available.

The sounds presented are very well done. The purchaser will hear some reverb (slight echo) that adds to the quality of the sound. Of course the running huff and puff steam

sounds are synchronized to the engine

speed when accelerating and slowing down. Another very cool feature is the ability to combine sounds. On this system you can have the locomotive sounds activated, and then take on water and blow steam all at the same time. This adds a lot of realism to a working train layout.

Operating in analog one can still experience the basic steam, chugging and braking sounds. However the sounds will not start until approximately five volts – about 25 per-



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cent – of throttle is applied. The user will not have the idling sounds that the DCC system can provide or the function button sounds. This is because in the non DCC mode, the voltage varies to run the engine from 0 to 20 volts and the sound board will not turn on until approximately five volts is applied to the engine. In DCC mode the voltage to the engine is constant. Approximately 20 volts is applied to the track at all times and the engine then "rides" the voltage.

For your customers to experience the full effects of DCC sound recommend an E-Z Command, and its full functionality. Demonstrate its versatility in your store and it will sell itself when they see it and hear it in operation. **HM**

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