Meet the Winners from the 53rd Annual CAS Awards
SOUND MIXING

SOUND EDITORIAL & DESIGN

MASTERING

RESTORATION

SUPPORTING ALL IMMERSIVE AUDIO FORMATS
53rd Annual CAS Awards ........................................... 8

Meet the Winners ..................................................... 12
v. O.J. Simpson, Game of Thrones, Modern Family, and Grease Live!

Outstanding Product Awards 2017 ................................. 42

CAS Student Recognition Award ................................. 44
Third recipient announced

Mentorship: My Mentors in Education .......................... 48

DEPARTMENTS

The President’s Letter .................................................. 4

From the Editors .......................................................... 6

You Just Can’t Make This Stuff Up .............................. 54
Tales from the trenches

Been There Done That ................................................ 55
CAS members check in

The Lighter Side .......................................................... 58
Dear Friends,

It was with great joy and pride that I stood onstage at the Omni with John Debney and Seth MacFarlane to present this year’s Filmmaker Award to Jon Favreau. It made me think of the awards events I have been to and participated in over the years and the breadth and depth of extraordinary talent we have celebrated.

This year being no exception!

While the organization was sad to leave behind the beautiful Biltmore Hotel, it was truly incredible to see how the CAS had outgrown the Crystal Ballroom and settled into our new location at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel.

This growth has seen the inclusion of many new members and the increased profile of our events throughout the calendar year. I personally feel the commitment shown by the Board and volunteers demonstrates the outstanding ability we have as a community to look to the future.

One special point of pride for our Board of Directors was the presentation of the third Student Recognition Award. As Franklin D. Roosevelt famously said, “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

The future of our industry lies in the hands of our current students and we couldn’t have been happier than to have awarded Wenrui “Sam” Fan this year’s accolade. With consideration of the international interest generated by this award, we have revised our SRA year to fall more in line with current term dates and have now opened the application period to include the end of the previous school year.

The opening of the Student Recognition Award submissions for the 54th Annual Cinema Audio Society Awards on February 24, 2018, marks the start of a new and exciting year ahead where we look forward to more advances in technology, continued support of and from our colleagues and the possibilities of creative growth for all.

Warm regards,

Mark Ulano CAS
President

Correction

The picture in “The Lighter Side” on page 54 of the Winter 2017 issue of the CAS Quarterly depicted audio mascot, “Alive Cat” on the set of Stranded. This photo is incorrectly captioned as coming from CAS Associate member Tim Song Jones. In fact, this picture was submitted by Stacy Hill CAS, who mixed on Stranded in Taveuni, Fiji, this past year. Our apologies for the incorrect annotation.
Welcome to our annual “Meet the Winners” issue, where we get to know some of the people behind the projects that were honored at our CAS Awards ceremony in February. With the addition of a new category for documentary, we now have seven areas recognized for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing. Additionally, read about the outstanding product winners and our Student Recognition Award recipient. In line with the Student Recognition Award, David Bondelevitch CAS MPSE continues our series on mentorship with a very insightful article. Be sure to read the “You Just Can’t Make This Stuff Up” entries, a recurring column of submissions about your most ironic and unlikely tales of adventure. As always, you’ll find submissions from your fellow members in the “Been There Done That” section and be able to check out some pictures in their “Lighter Side” submissions.

The CAS Quarterly is produced as a service to our members on a voluntary basis. If you are a member and would like to contribute an article—whether on the production or post-production side—please let us know. Additionally, we greatly appreciate and want your feedback and suggestions—so send them in! Email us at CASQuarterly@CinemaAudioSociety.org. Finally, don’t forget that our sponsors are professionals like you who understand the business and needs of our industry. We encourage your commitment to them.
On February 18, the 53rd Cinema Audio Society Awards took place in the Bunker Hill Ballroom of the Omni Los Angeles Hotel at California Plaza. The event not only celebrated the incredible work in the field of sound mixing for pictures in 2016 but joined many old and new friends together. The elegant gala started off with a cocktail reception and dinner and, following the awards presentation, emceed by comedian Elayne Boosler, culminated in an after party hosted by the Awards Title Sponsor, Dolby Laboratories.

This year, in addition to previous annual awards given in the categories of Motion Pictures – Live Action, Motion Pictures – Animated, Television Movies and Miniseries, Television Series – One Hour, Television Series – Half-Hour, and Television Non-Fiction, Variety, Music Series or Specials, the category for Motion Pictures – Documentary was added. The CAS is proud to have the opportunity to celebrate the unscripted nonfiction narrative artistry of sound mixing for documentary filmmaking.

Additionally, our Outstanding Product Awards 2017 were presented as well as our highest honors of the CAS Filmmaker Award and the CAS Career Achievement Award. This year’s Career Achievement honoree was the talented Oscar®-nominated John Pritchett (Memoirs of a Geisha, Road to Perdition, There Will Be Blood). Scott Millan CAS and actor Jack Black presented the award in great appreciation of John Pritchett’s stellar work. Jack Black cleverly summed up the plight of sound for picture explaining that, while it is central to effective storytelling, it is
finally, a recognition award very close to our hearts and our core mission values at the cinema audio society, the CAS student recognition award was presented to wenrui “sam” fan of Chapman University. the CAS student Recognition Award is enthusiastically supported by both IMAX and Avid Technology.

the competition was stiff, but the evening was a warm event celebrating all those in sound. “we are blessed this year with a rich portfolio of Cinema Audio art applied. as the creative contributions of sound mixing to modern filmmaking becomes more obvious to the world at large, these productions truly represent the talents of our community,” said Mark Ulano. “we are proud to congratulate all our well-deserving nominees for their stellar work.”
Comedian Elayne Boosler hosts the show

Left to right: John Debney, CAS Filmmaker Award honoree Jon Favreau, Seth MacFarlane, and CAS President Mark Ulano

Left to right: Jack Black, CAS Career Achievement Award honoree John Pritchett CAS, and Scott Millan CAS

From left: Janina Gavankar (Sleepy Hollow) and Angela Sarafyan (Westworld)
“EXQUISITELY CRAFTED AT EVERY LEVEL”

- VOX

A hulu ORIGINAL
THE HANDMAID’S TALE

OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES
OUTSTANDING SOUND EDITING
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING
AND ALL OTHER CATEGORIES

huluFYC
La La Land is an original musical that echoes back to the silver screen days of the past while showing off the beauty of today’s Los Angeles, starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling. It is a timeless classic story of the trials and spoils of following one’s dreams. La La Land inarguably casted a spell over all of Tinseltown, leaving it abuzz this awards season. The movie garnered, among others, six Oscars®, six Golden Globes, five BAFTAs, and one CAS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing for Motion Pictures – Live Action.

The genre leans very heavily on its soundtrack and on the sleight of hand of its mixers to dive in and out of dramatic dialogue into fully expansive dance numbers and intimate heart-felt ballads. The award-winning team consisted of production mixer Steve Morrow CAS, re-recording mixers Andy Nelson CAS and Ai-Ling Lee, scoring mixer Nicholai Baxter, ADR mixer David Betancourt, and Foley mixer James Ashwill.

This production, indicative of its genre, has many unique challenges and possible workflows. Nicholai started recording and mixing the music before production even began to ensure significant material would be available for playback. Nicholai expands, “This started with recording as much as possible before we went to set, building the playback sessions for the shoot, managing playback and live recording on set, recording all of the music and vocals in post production, mixing the music for the final dub, and mixing the soundtrack.” Nicholai also had the unusual privilege of being present on set for musical numbers. “On most projects I’ve worked on in the past, I’ve been brought on during post production. This can be frustrating as you attempt to fix mistakes that were made on set, or struggle with not having the elements you need from the shoot. You end up applying a lot of bandages. Being involved from the very beginning, we were able to stop common problems at the source. I had the privilege/advantage of being able to record anything on set (as long as it didn’t interfere with the shot), record impulse responses of all the actual environments from the film, and keep a close eye on any potential sync issues or musical performance issues. This made what was already going to be a huge undertaking in post production much more manageable,” explains Baxter.

Andy Nelson, re-recording mixer, has mixed many musicals that were all playback and others like Les Miserables that were entirely live. He describes La La Land as “one that kind of fell halfway in the middle.” For example, the vocals for “Audition” and “City of Stars” were recorded on set while other tunes like “Roommates” had partial-production-recorded vocals and the song on the freeway was completely playback. Morrow explains that, in the opening traffic number, “The singers in the song were not the singers on screen for this one. So our main goal was to play the song out loud up and down the freeway on both sides while still hiding all the speakers and wiring. We put the playback speakers behind every other car’s bumper on the ground on both sides of the freeway. In addition, my boom man, Craig Dollinger, pushed a cart with two powered speakers and a generator on it to follow the main singer and make sure he doesn’t have an empty spot.”

The overall smoothness of the crosses from spoken dramatic lines to musical numbers was particularly impressive in La La Land. Nelson explains, “The ever problem of musicals is where you go from the spoken word to the songs or playback … obviously where it was a live vocal it was all live anyway, so
it didn’t matter. And where it was a playback, we talked about maybe recording a little ADR prior on a similar mic to the one they were going to record her vocal on, or Ryan’s vocal, and just use that as a transitional tool just to try and get across.” The ADR mixer, David Betancourt, took extra care to address this common musical challenge for the dub stage. “The main thing to consider is what mic gives you the best match when bridging the dialogue to the musical sections. Then, mostly monitor that particular mic. Musicals have a tendency to do a big vocal shift when you go from dialogue to singing. So you want to stay on top of the transitions. But don’t ignore any of the mics. This is such a subjective field, you never know what they might prefer on the dub stage. But it was just a matter of treating the ADR like regular ADR and the musical scenes like a vocal overdub. “Then selecting the mic that transitioned best,” reveals Betancourt. He also used a three-mic setup for dialogue to musical sections. “We used a boom/lav setup to cover our basic ADR and a U87 for singing. This, I think, gave more flexibility when trying to match in and out of production or music.” Steve Morrow also provided impulse responses from set that no doubt gave Andy Nelson another tool for handling this situation. Nelson reveals that in the end, “Each one had a little sprinkling—there might be a live line in the middle or something.”

Music playback in general, like what was used for the dance sequence and traffic number, can be a special challenge and opportunity in post. You are essentially shooting MOS from the post mixer’s perspective. Foley mixer James Ashwill explains, “It was a normal Foley schedule. We weren’t originally supposed to cover a lot of the musical sequences but, as it progressed, we were asked to cover more.” Lee reveals that in the end, “Each one had a little sprinkling—there might be a live line in the middle or something.”

Additionally, as the film was set all over Los Angeles, locations such as Grand Central Market and the Colorado Street Bridge had to have post-production challenges. “There were a few little noisy areas, but nothing more than normal. The realism of the film was such an important part of this in terms of the romance and the story that it didn’t hurt if it was a little noisy in places; that’s LA. It didn’t hurt. It wasn’t meant to be [that] beautifully polished,” explains Nelson. He continues, “And Steve Morrow [production mixer] on the other hand—I’m not blowing smoke—but he did an amazing job. Beautiful. So, it really helped me a lot.” Morrow explains that many of what would be more troublesome scenes, like the opening traffic scene, were playback, but “when you work around town, out on the streets, you tend to lean on radio mics for the majority of sound recorded. We use the SSM’s from Lectro and the COS-11 for lavs.” Morrow explains that maybe the most difficult scene for him was one of the visually simplest. “One of the hardest scenes for me and my crew was one of the simplest in the film. [They sing] on the pier. This seems easy, but Michael Kaleta, sound utility, had to run 6,000 feet of XLR and hide the run all the way down the pier. I had to stay on the shore to provide the proper Pro Tools playback tracks and the shot was a 360-degree turn with nowhere to hide. So we ran six 1,000 foot runs of XLR, one radio mic on Ryan, a Comtek of the director and Steadicam operator, an earwig feed for Ryan, a slate TC feed, a boom mic, and playback through a speaker. The scene came out perfectly. In the end, it was all playback, but we were always ready to go live when asked by Damien.”
As supervisor sound editor and re-recording mixer in charge of SFX, Ai-Ling Lee used many approaches to help the sfx contract, blend with production, and expand and dissipate around the characters. “I started on really early and, just from the initial meeting with Damien, one of his main concerns being a musical is having the seamless transition.” She explained she would, at times, “gradually play the backgrounds,” mixing it slowly in and around in favor of music. Other times, however, the backgrounds would be the element that would snap you back into reality and dialogue. Nelson complimented Lee on her careful weaving of atmospheres saying, “I think they work really well. Because you didn’t realize you were being taken somewhere.”

Lee explains how on her side of the board, “We’re trying to get more of a realistic soundscape for this film, but yet we want to envelop the audience with its environment so that when we go into a really fantasy musical moment when the sound drops out, it’s just the music … you have somewhere to go. So it’s just about playing the right sounds and placing them around the audience … or slowly dispersing the sound away, melting the sound away.”

Those special moments in La La Land were plentiful. The world would drop out and you found yourself alone, feeling these two characters were just in a world with only each other. One of the most incredible aspects of this particular film was the grand nature of many scenes juxtaposed by much more minimal and intimate scenes. Nelson recalls, “What I loved about this was the dynamics of it. Because it was the fact that it would go from very big, very rich, and full either orchestrally or with the jazz to just one finger on a piano. And I’d never worked on a musical that was so dynamic like that. So it was really fun for Ai-Ling and myself to kind of sit and work through these scenes where you could be as big and as sumptuous as you liked with the sound, but the minute it came down to that sort of solo piano, it was like just nothing, it was just a whisper of a background. So, for me, I think the challenge was finding those dynamics and making the film as big and as small as they wanted. It was just a little bit unique for this picture, which I loved.”

Indeed, scoring mixer Nicholai Baxter can relate to the efforts needed to go create the needed dynamics when conducting music recording and mixing sessions. With about 100 players in the A Orchestra, a rhythm section, and an occasional 40-piece choir, he used many different environments to piece together an organic feeling for both the numbers that called for grandness as well as those that called for isolation. Nicholai explains, “The orchestra was recorded at the Barbra Streisand Scoring Stage on the Sony lot. Our rhythm section and smaller jazz group were recorded at Conway Studios. Vocals were recorded at Igloo Music Studios and Marius de Vries’ home studio. I also mixed songs, score, and soundtrack at Igloo Music Studios.” While, in the end, the material delivered to Andy was the standard 5.1 stems along with a few Atmos stereos for the ceiling speakers, a diverse feeling of big and small was definitely embedded.

Additionally, while La La Land is not the obvious big Atmos soundtrack, the advantages of Atmos’ full spectrum monitors and spatial panning were employed very effectively and is, in a large part, responsible for the widening and closing worlds around the characters. Nelson explains, “We knew it wasn’t going to be Atmos in the sort of big scale of Atmos but, for me, it was just a little bonus that I could play the full-range surrounds for the music more than anything, and widen the screen out.” For the opening scene in Cinemascope, the music and sfx were artificially narrowed and then widened. “And then by going to those sort of outer screen speakers in Atmos, which is still full range of course, I was able to expand things—most of the orchestra lived outside the screen, most of it, yeah.” Lee explains that she also utilized the format to expand and contract her worlds hugging and floating out from the characters. “Mostly, I used it in areas such as when Mia was walking alone out in the streets, to help immerse the audience in different parts of the city. Also at the end of the ‘Roommate’ song when the camera spins around, I panned the sounds of the stomping feet, claps, and underwater bys, utilizing the Atmos overheads and full-range surrounds.” Nelson summarizes, “So it was kind of—I don’t want to say Atmos lite, but it was definitely a good use of Atmos, because people always think, oh, if it’s Atmos, is it going to be huge? Actually, I think when Atmos is subtle, it’s really powerful. I think that’s when you really notice it.”

The commitment to the narrative and openness to continually reevaluate what is effective use of sound from the entire sound team and director Damien Chazelle was paramount to its success. Nelson expanded on Chazelle’s vision. “From the first frame, [he knew] exactly how they’d love their film to sound.” Lee worked with Chazelle from the initial spotting sessions. She explained that, while he was very specific, Chazelle was also so open to how to achieve his vision that, at times, he would go back and structure the cut to allow for a successful marriage of sound and picture. Nelson reiterated this and explained this even happened on the dub stage. Lee, as the supervising sound editor and re-recording mixer, was creating, cutting, and mixing through the whole sound post process, and gives the example of the opening scene as one that was created, pre-dubbed, and completely revisited. “It was a last-minute decision to open with a sound montage, so there was a lot of going back-and-forth.
Hearing it together with the final scored music on the mix stage triggered further edit and mix adjustments.” She really enjoys the continual crafting from both the editing and mixing chair and is able to switch brains, never losing sight of the story. “As a second designer and mixer on the same film, you can’t be too precious about the effects. You have to see it as a big picture on the dub stage, see how it plays with the dialogue and music, and make sure they don’t clash too much.”

The film was an incredible technical and creative feat that left the entire crew invigorated and inspired. Betancourt expresses, “I think, after so many years, we all have the tendency to get a little jaded in what we do. But when a project like this comes around, it makes us go … ‘OH YEAH!’ So try to bottle that feeling and apply it to everything else.” Nelson concurs, “Every time I do something like this or see something like it, I go ‘Wow, we need more of these movies’ and thank goodness that Lionsgate backed it and supported it all the way through.” And Morrow, clearly not concerned about making all of us jealous, shares, “This is one of those films that the entire experience was fun from beginning to end. As much fun as it was to watch, it was 10 times more fun to make.”

“It’s been quite the ride. I think we all could see from the beginning that this project was special. Everyone was giving everything they had to the film from day one. When you see that kind of sacrifice and outpouring of creativity from the people around you, it’s contagious,” summarizes Baxter.

Clearly, Damien Chazelle had an incredible vision and fostered a team of incredible talent. Congrats from all of us at CAS to the sound team on *La La Land*!
MEET THE WINNERS

MOTION PICTURES – ANIMATED
FINDING DORY
by Jamie Gambell & Karol Urban CAS MPSE

The CAS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing for Animated Motion Pictures was taken home by the team on *Finding Dory*, the sequel to 2003’s *Finding Nemo*. The movie follows the adventures of the forgetful blue tang fish on her quest to find her long-lost parents and features the talented work of of Scott Curtis (Foley mixer), Doc Kane CAS (original dialogue mixer), Nathan Nance (re-recording mixer), Michael Semanick CAS (re-recording mixer), and Thomas Vicari CAS (scoring mixer). For this article, we spoke with Doc Kane and Michael Semanick, who see back-to-back wins, having received the same award for last year’s *Inside Out*, as well as Scott Curtis and Thomas Vicari.

SCOTT CURTIS: FOLEY MIXER
Scott has worked in Foley since the early ’90s. He has contributed to more than 150 titles as diverse as *Dexter*, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, *Whiplash*, *Moana*, and *Finding Dory*. In animation, he records the custom movement and elements that bridge the gap left by the fact that animation has no “production” sound. His work provides the sonic element of weight and movement in the space depicted.

He describes *Finding Dory* as a typical schedule and workflow for a feature animate.

“Before my Foley crew (John Roesch & Shelley Roden) and I recorded anything, we met up with sound supervisor Tim Nielsen and Foley supervisor Chris Flick, went over the move and formulated an efficiency plan. We would earmark scenes to postpone addressing due to incomplete animation and get clarity on some of the FX sweetening cues requested that would fall outside of traditional Foley. Then while recording, we would also on occasion, send Tim and Chris various examples of certain cues with the intent of getting feedback on their selected characteristics. Once those decisions are nailed down, then it’s all about completing the recordings.

Saying that, the biggest asset has to be working and collaborating with my Foley crew/artists John Roesch and Shelley Roden. Without their creative input and dedication to continue experimenting till we’re satisfied with the end product, I would have nothing to record.

“In closing, I would like to extend my humble gratitude to not only the CAS nomination for my work on *Finding Dory* but the honor of receiving the CAS Award for achievement in mixing in the animation category.”

DOC KANE CAS: ORIGINAL DIALOGUE MIXER
Doc Kane is world renowned as “The” premier ADR mixer in the industry. He has recorded for more than 35 years for hundreds of the most well-known actors and directors in Hollywood, including Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, Robin Williams, Tim Burton, Gus Van Sant, to name just a few. A four-time Oscar® nominee, Doc was awarded the Cinema Audio Society Career Achievement Award in 2016. For *Finding Dory*, Doc reprised his role as original dialogue mixer on *Finding Nemo*.

“Dory was such a great project to work on and Ellen and the entire cast were the best!! I drove Ellen crazy by moving the microphone around so much at the beginning of each of her sessions and making her drink water and chew on green apples but in the end, I hope she thought it was well worth the effort.”

The heavy revision and graphic element of animation demands a different workflow and timeline than that of live-action film.

“Our workflow process in animation recording is always a
two-channel record session. Channel 1 is always a Neumann U87 microphone and Channel 2 is a Brauner VM1.

There are several reasons for this. Since there is no animation produced at this time, all the dialogue is shot wild. The scripts and storylines are constantly evolving, which is just part of the creative process in writing for animation. Because of this process, a project usually takes two to three years to record. Once a certain part of the script is finished and okayed by the directors, it has to be recorded and then sent to picture editorial and eventually to the animators! The production coordinators are constantly chasing the cast around all over the world on whatever other project they have currently taken on! If a member of the cast happens to be shooting in a distant location such as Australia or South Africa, we will find a studio close by and have the talent record the updated script lines. Chances are good the remote studio will at least have a U87 to record with. Since we do so much international work, we have created a list of great studios we have worked with from all over the world. And we always send out a list of our record requirements such as the microphone types and Pro Tools specifications to the remote studio that will be handling the recording—just in case and as a friendly reminder!

Also, recording with two different microphones gives editorial an option on what microphone might sound better to them on a particular character. When recording Pixar’s Monsters University, we recorded Billy Crystal and John Goodman together. The picture editor thought the U87 sounded best on Billy’s voice and the Brauner on John’s voice. So he had an option.

Requesting that every studio involved in our sound recordings keep the same type of microphones that we have used throughout the entire recording process really helps in creating a seamless quality to the soundtrack. Making all the dialogue recordings sound like they came out of the same room is what we really strive for!”

When Doc works in live action, he also makes all efforts to ensure a good match by insisting on consistent microphone types but also trying to emulate distance.

“In a traditional ADR session for live action, we acquire information from the post supervisor on what microphones were actually used by the production sound crew. Whether it be a Schoeps or Sennheiser boom with a COS-11D radio mic or DPA, we always use the same microphones production sound used. We strive to match as close as we can to the original sound. We again record two channel with boom on channel one and radio mic on channel two. And many times, we record three channels with channel one front boom and channel two with a boom about a foot away in case the front boom sounds too close and still with the radio mic on channel three.”

He also creates dynamic choices for the re-recording mixer onstage to enrich environments by recording his group in multiple ways.

“Group recordings are shot in monos, LCRs, and 5.0. And telephone futzed recordings are always shot with a clean recording on channel one and channel two patched through a live phone for futzed audio.”

Doc’s attention to detail and care in his work yield a consistently superior product that is integral to the success of the soundtrack. But, filmmaking is a team effort.

“...The sound crew did such an amazing job and I don’t think I ever had a chance to thank them at this year’s CAS Awards dinner where Dory won for best sound in the animated category! So I am now thanking them … thank you Nathan Nance, Michael Semanick, Tommy Vicari, and Scott Curtis … what a fantastic mix!! I have to also thank Vince Caro up at the Pixar Studio in Emeryville, who does such a great job of recording many of the voices for all of Pixar’s animated movies! And thank you to all the members of CAS for this great award!!”

MICHAEL SEMANICK CAS: RE-RECORING MIXER

With nearly 160 credits to his name, more than 30 years in the business, and more award nominations than you can shake a stick at, one would think that Michael Semanick would see his CAS win for Finding Dory, the second win in a row for him and his team, as just another notch on his impressive belt of a career.

“The great thing about the CAS Awards is that it literally comes from your peers. It’s a truly beautiful honor to not only be nominated, but to actually win. I’ve got to be honest, I didn’t think we had a chance in heck!”

Michael saw Dory as an underdog nomination, partly because it was a sequel, but also because of the quality of the other projects in the same category. “I went along to the awards to have a good time, but I was literally flabbergasted when they called Dory.”

Speaking with Michael, one gets the impression that, even though he wasn’t prepared for the win, he is always more than prepared on the dub stage.

The sound team for Dory were sound supervisors Steve Slance and Tim Nielsen, music editors Bill Bernstein and Michael Zainer, sound effects editors Ken Fisher, Jack Whittaker, and Kim Patrick, dialogue editors James Spencer and Steve Slance. The mix was done at Skywalker Sound in Mix A on a Neve DFC. Nathan Nance and Michael were the re-recording mixers.
The whole team worked together focusing to achieve the director’s sonic vision for the film continually asking themselves “How do we help support the story?”

“I love to have an editor sitting next to me so that I can focus on the mix. Dialogue editors are the best de-essers in the world—editors have so much better a skill than I do. Dialogue editors know how many takes there are or alts, and they are constantly looking at sync. Sound effects editors know the library so well. Music editors know the inner workings of a score, all the layers and can tell what the composer’s intention was for a cue. I could turn to any editor on Dory and it would be done. Having people that are so good at their jobs right next to me, it makes my job so much easier.

“When you have a team working like this with another set of ears and eyes on it, who is paying attention to other aspects, [we’ve really learned] that you can take things away, you can work on what is important for the story.”

Something that may seem counter to the idea of being a re-recording mixer, which people associate with adding and clarifying sound, is the strategic removal of sounds to serve narrative.

“A director I worked with recently said that he’d never realized how much clarity comes from us taking things away. Movies are now so visually loaded that if we do the same with sound, the viewer doesn’t always know what to focus on.”

Sound has always been a part of filmmaking, even during the silent era, when the restriction of sound in movies was a technical issue rather than an actual storytelling choice. We often forget that the choices of when and how to use sound is just as important as how much sound is used.

“Moments that you may think are silent very rarely are. Sound has grown, and the viewer doesn’t always know what to focus on.”

Sound has always been a part of filmmaking, even during the silent era, when the restriction of sound in movies was a technical issue rather than an actual storytelling choice. We often forget that the choices of when and how to use sound are just as important as how much sound is used.

“In Dory, we had choices to make. Do we employ that sound which viewers associate with being underwater—that low tone—throughout the movie? Suddenly that becomes messy. The viewer knows that the characters are underwater, the brain knows the sound—you don’t need it all the way through. You establish it and then sneak it out and return it when you need it (like when music goes out). Like a traffic scene doesn’t need to be wall-to-wall traffic sounds. We really used sound to help establish where the characters were at physically and emotionally. We did a lot of that. Helping establish locations and then get out and let the story breathe so that the sound doesn’t eat up too much attention. It’s one of the great things with film sound you can do.

“We are storytellers. We need to know what the emotional beats are for the story and use the sound to help match those beats.”

Michael tells a story about working with a director on a scene that they were struggling with. “He left the room, and we stripped the scene down, we took everything out. When he came back in the room we played it, and he noticed what was missing and what we needed back in to tell the story. You start to know what you really need. In Dory, we had a lot of those moments. The team we had made the mix really easy. Pixar does such a great job with putting teams together—and they usually get the sound team involved really early, and they always give us enough time.

“In the end, it’s about making a great movie ... and they [Pixar] will really go to the nth degree to make a really good product.

“Sound has grown,” Michael adds, “I’ve seen visual effects grow and grow, but sound has grown along with this. Directors are seeing this and, even though we’re often the last step, more and more films are being made with us in mind, which is great.”

Michael mixes through a Neve DFC 3 standalone console, having the automation separate from the Pro Tools, which he likes, but he discussed the other systems available.

“That companies are investing, developing, and putting research into consoles, semi-consoles, or control panels for us is always a good thing. That companies are generally interested in helping us perfect our tools is a wonderful thing. It could easily fall by the wayside, could be seen as not profitable, so it’s great.

“With sound changing now from 5.1 Dolby Atmos to 7.1 Dolby Atmos, consoles have to change to accommodate that. They’re still evolving. When I started mixing, the sound effects console was 24 inputs wide and that’s it! Now you have, what, five thousand! It’s certainly gotten more complex!”

Once again, though, Michael stresses the importance of keeping his approach simple.

“These movies can very easily get out of hand sonically—and fast. Putting yourself in the place of the audience, you have to know what you should be listening to. There are times when big sound is needed and times when it isn’t. However, it’s very rare that sound ever drops off completely.

“Moments that you may think are silent very rarely are. You’ve got to be loud when you need to be loud, and if you use it well, that contrast can make sound more powerful with the slightest changes. You don’t need to push the audience away. The internet has been a wonderful thing in that people are now more interested in how films are made top to bottom. Having that awareness across the board helps push us to be better.”

Sound is so often tied to the emotion of the story. As the old adage goes, “It’s invisible until it’s a problem.” Understanding that idea, that the intimacy of the moment can be focused by, not only the visuals and the acting, but by
the subtle changes made through sound choices is something that Michael definitely seems to understand and is how he approaches his work.

“Sound is life—it’s always there. You cut sound from the pop to the tail pop. However, that doesn’t mean you have to use it all. You have to do what is best for the film and the storytelling. All the elements have to work together to make the story. Getting the CAS for Dory—it really says that people were listening.”

THOMAS VICARI CAS: SCORING MIXER

Thomas Vicari not only provided scoring mixing for Finding Dory but was the scoring mixer for Finding Nemo in 2002. His experience varies from modern classics such as Road to Perdition to the recent thriller Passengers to the celebrated docudrama Behind the Candelabra, for which he won a CAS Award in 2015, and finally to this year’s Oscar for Best Motion Picture of the Year, Moonlight. His ability embodying the vision of the director among so many cinematic sales and music genres is what makes him top talent in his field.

Here, Thomas Vicari explains how the music gets to the final scoring stage:

“Finding Dory was recorded in two parts. [It] starting in February 2016, and then resumed in April and May … approximately seven or eight weeks of recording.

“Typically, we start with pre-lay sessions. That is the augmentation of the demo mock-ups that (composer) Thomas Newman presents to the director. Recorded usually before I arrive by Shinnosuke Miyazawa. Tom’s demos usually consist of keyboards, strings, atmospheric pads, and any other samples Tom may use for that particular cue. We tend to do the bulk of recording at Tom’s home studio before we get to the scoring stage. At this point, under the direction of Newman and along with his team, the cue then evolves.”

Many instrumentalists lend their talent to these scores, and as Vicari reiterates, “All of these contributions help to create the mosaic that is emblematic of a Tom Newman score.” For Finding Dory, the following musicians were employed to work their magic: George Doering on bowed guitar, aeolian, wind harp, gopichand, dulcimers, electric guitars, bass, auto harp; Steve Tavaglione on acoustic flutes, granulated water phones, spectral ambiances, morphed EWI, human sleigh bells; Dan Greco on timpani, vibraphone, high-metal rhythms, toy snares, tambourine, bongos, devil chaser; John Beasley on percussion loops, piano, water rhythms, ROLI; Rick Cox on xaphoon loops, bowed harmonics, sample pads, slowed bass 9; Sid Page on violin, and, finally, Thomas Newman on piano.

“After days of recording, we then go to the Newman Scoring Stage, or in this case, Sony Scoring Stage, to replace any synth strings and horns with orchestra.

“Dory had about 80 minutes of music. So we probably had four or five days of double sessions on the stage to complete this task.”

The turnaround seems breakneck and the workload enormous but the team is clearly up for the job. Vicari explains, “Because of the amount of prerecords, my job is to mix them all while Armin Steiner overdubs the orchestra.”

After all of this, the team moved to The Village to begin the actual mix. But preparation is still not complete.

“[Audio editor] Larry Mah and I usually spend a day or two prepping the cues, doing any cleaning, basic construction of the cues before Tom gets there so he doesn’t have to sit through all the tedious technical chores.

“At this point, I have the task of merging all the prerecords with the orchestra. Each cue is unique and is treated as such. There are themes that are reprised, but always altered to the film.”

Vicari has worked on three Newman films for Disney Pixar, Finding Nemo, WALL-E, and Finding Dory. This experience no doubt develops trust in the creative input of the team but develops a shorthand.

“Tom is always present at the mix. Larry, Tom, and I audition any prerecords and takes that we have recorded. So the composition goes through various stages, but is not completed until the [final] mix.”

While Michael Semanick has yet to receive an Atmos mix from Vicari and Newman, Atmos decisions are able to be made on stage as a result of a delivery that provides great opportunities for manipulation and separation on the final dub stage.

“We usually deliver a totally discrete 5.1 mix to the dubbing stage. That is, orchestra, and all prerecords in their own echo, and totally separate.”

Music editor Bill Bernstein normally manages communication between the dub stage and scoring stage as a result of the schedule each room is trying to keep.

“I do have conversations at times with the stage, however, most of the time we are chasing to keep up with the dub and dealing with whatever changes that need to be made.”

The result is clearly tremendous. Our heartstrings were tugged and our bellies shook with laughter. The Cinema Audio Society congratulates the very talented team of Finding Dory and thanks them for their insight and contributions here.
MEET THE WINNERS

Pete Horner in his studio

Dimitri Tisseyre, Dennis Hamlin, and Peter Horner

MOTION PICTURES – DOCUMENTARY
THE MUSIC OF STRANGERS: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble

By Mary Jo Lang CAS

The Music of Strangers is a beautifully made documentary about the Silk Road Ensemble, a collaboration of musicians from around the world, started by renowned cellist, Yo-Yo Ma. It tells of their history and their dedication to world music and the bringing together of diverse cultures. The sound team members responsible for the amazing soundtrack are Peter Horner, re-recording mixer, Dimitri Tisseyre and Dennis Hamlin, production mixers. They did not meet each other until the CAS Awards ceremony, but their combined work on this project is truly remarkable.

PETE HORNER: RE-RECORDING MIXER
Did you have contact with any of the musicians, or was it mostly through the director, Morgan Neville?

The director was more available, but one of the performers, Kinan Azmeh, the clarinet player, came out to the mix for, I think, two, maybe three days as the emissary for the Silk Road Ensemble. He was wonderful, obviously cared about how things sounded, but also understood some of the challenges we were dealing with.

Did you work alone or did you work with a team?

There were three of us total on the post sound team. I was the re-recording mixer. Al Nelson was the sound designer. He really focused on bringing an authenticity to the international locations, and also had a significant influence on the sonic transitions. Andre Zweers was the sound editor. He’s great at cutting quickly, which gives me a lot to work with, but he’s also very musical in his approach to sound effects, having worked on the scoring stage at Skywalker for many years. In fact, all three of us have music in our backgrounds—Al Nelson even has an upright bass in his cutting room!

I noticed that there were two production mixers. Were they available to you? Did they come to the mix at all?

No. Actually, I met them for the first time at the CAS Awards! We talked a bit there and I got some sense of what their challenges were.

How did you get started?

I started out in music—I went to school specifically for music recording and really thought that music engineering was going to be my career path. The first job I found out of college was in film post production and it happened to be Francis Ford Coppola’s company, American Zoetrope. So, I didn’t actually realize the good fortune I had and wasn’t really interested in film. I thought it was nice and kind of related to what I wanted to do but that eventually I would leave it and go do music. But I had a formative experience working on The Virgin Suicides. The sound designer, Richard Beggs, pulled me aside one day and showed me what he was doing. I understood it immediately and realized that what he was doing as a kind of music. I decided, okay, film sound is what I want to do. This is a place that satisfies the musical itch but is also a place that I can thrive.

The fact that the documentary was about music, was that a plus then?

I love doing documentaries about music. Morgan Neville brought us 20 Feet from Stardom. That was the first project I did with Morgan and it’s just a dream project—to have music as my first love and then fully embrace film sound, but then have it come back together as a music documentary—just a pure joy.

Was there any need on this project to use any special equipment or apps or programs?

Oh, yes! Many of the tracks were very challenging. On an outdoor performance, for almost a dozen performers, there were only six lavaliere mics and they had to hide them to capture all that. Dimitri did a great job with a nearly impossible task, but that was certainly one of the more challenging tracks. We actually ended up overdubbing several players, particularly percussion. We would send the track to them and they would play along and send it back to us and we would hand sync it later.
For many of the concert pieces, there was an assumption that the Silk Road Ensemble would probably have someone recording all the performances and we discovered, after the fact, that many of them were not recorded well. One of the pieces was recorded only with a headset mic on Yo-Yo Ma. I was getting an incredible amount of breathing. That was the entire mic for that piece for the piano and the cello and it was just covered in breathing. So that was a case where I did a lot of Spectral Repair to try to minimize the breathing. Also, I leaned heavily on Altiverb to give it a fullness. I took what was a very thin-sounding mic with breath all over it, removed the offending breaths as much as I could, then tried to make it sound like a lush track. That was the most difficult challenge in the film.

Another challenge was filling a 5.1 sound field. In a lot of cases, all I had was a stereo source. For this task, I’m very fond of a plugin called Penteo. I think a lot of people think of it as just an upmixer from stereo to 5.1 period, but I think of it more as an un-panner. It has an amazing ability to give you five, or in the newest iteration, seven discreet slices of the stereo sound field and what you end up with is a center channel that often sounds like a dry vocal and a left and right that sounds like the reverb without the vocal. It’s astonishing to me how they are able to parse it like that. What it essentially does is give you a greater control of the tracks, so I can spread it out any way I want, and even tip the relative wet/dry balance or instrument balance. I made a lot of use of that tool on many tracks.

As far as your basic equipment, what kind of board do you use? I assume you are on Pro Tools.

Yeah, on Pro Tools, I’m one of those who is often on the bleeding edge. We have an incredible support staff at Skywalker—Danny Caccavo is a former DigiDesign employee who was responsible for the 7.2 release of Pro Tools that finally gave post-production people the things that we wanted. He’s now at Skywalker and will give me the beta versions and solicit feedback, so I’m always interested in pushing our tools forward and Danny is a great help in that.

I am pretty ambidextrous when it comes to mixing consoles. For this particular project, I mixed on the Avid S6, but I’m just as likely to be on an Icon or a DFC, depending on the workflow and what the project is like.

I noticed that you work on docs, fiction, TV, and film. Do you have a different approach in dealing with different genres?

Obviously, different films need different things, but I don’t necessarily feel like I approach documentaries as being very different from anything else in the sense that I feel like all films want to be cinematic, as full and rich as they can be. The stories that people are telling through documentary are every bit as rich and nuanced and sometimes epic as any blockbuster or narrative film. The one thing I do notice is that working in documentaries expands our palate because there is much more tolerance for “bad” sound. In a narrative, audiences won’t accept “bad” sound, but in a documentary, they will accept it and, in fact, it lends an authenticity in a strange way and that is something we can exploit. I will often reach for “bad” sound to add in because it has the right texture. Another thing with documentaries, the images are often of varied quality, and so, when an image is degraded in a certain way, it begs for a different sonic palate. So, I don’t flinch at putting in the sound that it wants. I think that is one reason why I love working on documentaries.

DIMITRI TISSEYRE: PRODUCTION MIXER

I see you were one of two production mixers. How did you divide the work?

Dennis took care of the LA and Nebraska part of the movie and I did New York and Turkey.

I see you compose music, too. It must have been a thrill to work on a documentary about music.

It was. I was lucky to meet Morgan Neville back in 2012, we worked on 20 Feet from Stardom and it turns out that Morgan and I are both upright bassists (I think he still plays). He has done a lot of music films, so this was a treat. I am also a composer and sound designer at Envelope Music [my studio in New York, which I operate] with my two partners.

Do you mostly do production sound?

I like to divide my time between production sound and studio time. It all depends on what job comes in. Sometimes, I get to stay in the studio for months at a time and other times, I am out in the field.

What kind of gear do you use? Is it different for film or TV?

I brought two recorders with me. I used a Sound Devices 788T for live performances and a Zaxcom Maxx recorder for recording in the street when I had to travel light. I also carried two small Zoom recorders that I would hide in different places. I used quite a few Lectrosonics wireless and Neumann mics.

In documentaries, there is a lot of improvisation, meaning that things happen and you have to grab it right there and then—we usually do not have second takes. It makes the job
exciting and also challenging at times. The opening scene was the hardest one because it was a pop-up performance with the entire ensemble playing together in an outside square in Istanbul. The camera was going 360 degrees around the musicians and a small audience gathered in front of the ensemble as they started playing. I had to hide the mics the best I could. I put it on the instruments where it would not come out so much and I had to try and hide myself, but I think it came out well. Peter did an amazing job with putting it all together. But we did this in one take! If something went wrong, we were not going to do it again. In Turkey, it was a lot of “Okay—they’re going to play right here, right now” with barely no time to set up. Just record it and make the best of it.

How did you get started?
Being a sound mixer was not my actual plan in life. I wanted to be a professional upright bassist, but I had an over-stress injury when I was in college from playing too many gigs. My dad, Claude Tisseyre, is an engineer in Toulouse, France, so I decided to follow his path, thinking that when my hand gets better, I will go back to music. I’m back to music now, but I’m doing engineering AND music. It’s a great combination and is better than being a straight-up musician because the life of a musician is very, very hard. I also think it helps with the audio because I hear things differently. You know, most of the Silk Road people were my friends from back in my music days. It was really enjoyable to work with people I’ve known for a long time. It made the process even more fun.

Did you use any special programs or apps? Or did you record mostly straight?
There was a time when I recorded Kayhan Kalhor in the Cistern Basilica (in Turkey), the old Roman underground reservoir. That was actually my favorite part of the whole trip. We got to go when no one was inside and Kayhan, the kamancheh player, played a solo for us. For this part, I used a condenser mic that I hid and placed in front of him, a lavaliere mic on his chest to get his breath and a stereo mic a little further out to get the ambience of the space. Afterward, I put it together in Pro Tools and sent it to Morgan. I think that’s what he used in the final. It was a great project and I’m glad I got to be a part of such an amazing team.

DENNIS HAMLIN: PRODUCTION MIXER
How did you get started in the sound business? Did you have a mentor or someone who you looked up to as you came up in the ranks?
I actually stumbled into sound by being hired as a PA for a company that had an in-house camera guy but no sound. I had no previous experience at the time but was very familiar with recording music, so I was hoping I could figure it out on my own. They took me up on the offer to buy the gear and have me do their audio at a cheaper rate and I taught myself one shoot day at a time. It was very stressful initially.

What was it about this project that was particularly challenging or interesting? Were there any “stories” you could tell about the making of this documentary?
For me, this was a dream doc to work on because I wasn’t familiar with a lot of the instruments we were going to be recording, so I had to do some research as to what the instruments were and how they were generally recorded. Those are the weird things that excite me. I love working with Morgan Neville because he likes to keep things natural and use space that feels organic to the subjects. That makes it challenging sometimes for the recording of music but keeps it from feeling staged and stifled.

What kind of equipment do you use? Did you find any particular program or equipment that helped you in this project?
I use Sound Devices mixers, Lectrosonics wirelesses, and Schoeps booms. Pretty standard stuff. In the past, I’ve brought in studio mics, but this film had a more organic feel to it and it didn’t seem necessary.

You also worked on some of my favorite documentaries—20 Feet from Stardom and Best of Enemies. From your career history, I saw that you work on both docs and fiction, TV, and film. Is there any difference in your approach to a project depending on the genre?
Yes. They are completely different. TV and film are much more controlled and, although you still use external elements at times, they are usually not preferred. What I love about shooting docs is the ability to use what’s around you and that being an asset to making the sound more organic and real and not being afraid you’re going to ruin the world your director is trying to create in, say, a scripted film.

I also saw that you compose. So many hats! Do you enjoy more working on projects related to music?
Yes! Music is the world I come from and has always been a passion of mine. My wife and I started my sound rental company a long time ago and we also have a band together, if that says anything.

What was your relationship with Peter Horner? Were you present during the post process?
It’s funny, I’ve been working on films with him for years but just met him for the first time at the CAS Awards. He seems like a really cool guy and I enjoyed hearing his stories about dealing with Dimitri’s and my audio.

Great film, great guys, great meeting them all.
TELEVISION MOVIES AND MINI-SERIES

THE PEOPLE V. O.J. SIMPSON: AMERICAN CRIME STORY

by Karol Urban CAS MPSE

The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story was the first season of the FX Network’s true crime anthology. The production at times, mirrored the footage we all remember from the infamous televised 1994-1995 trial and, at other times, plunged up into a docudrama world. There was also an ever-present suspenseful feeling—typical of Ryan Murphy Productions—that something you couldn’t know was going to be unveiled was lurking on the very next frame. The sound mix team that artfully pulled us all back into this tale of mystery consisted of production mixer John Bauman, ADR mixer Judah Getz, Foley mixer John Guentner, and re-recording mixers Joe Earle CAS and Doug Andham CAS. I reached out to each of them and they opened up to some crazy experiences and masterful decisions.

JOHN BAUMAN: PRODUCTION MIXER

How did it feel on the set recording such a televised and infamous story?

We had some of the real locations. It was interesting in the Kardashian house where O.J. basically got in the Bronco and drove away. See, that house was shot. Well, [all] the Brentwood locations were very close to the original. They weren’t in fact, the actual locations. But, the Kardashian house was the actual house.

There’s a scene where O.J.’s in what is Kim’s bedroom. And Robert Kardashian comes in and says, “Don’t kill yourself in Kimmie’s bedroom.” And you start thinking about the fact that that may have gone down just like that at that house, I mean, those conversations were happening because, apparently, O.J. was suicidal.

And I’m sure they took some dramatic license, obviously, to tell the story … but details like: Did he have a gun? Yes, he had a gun. Was he suicidal? Yes, abso-

What was the most challenging aspect of working on this production?

It’s hard to say because every show’s different, but the challenges often are the same. What I mean to say is, yes, I think the most challenging thing about this show was it was our first time working for Ryan Murphy Productions. So, I think the biggest challenge to really any show, and this one was no different, is just learning how they want to operate. Because, in order to do our job on set, we have to anticipate. We have to anticipate the needs of production, whatever that’s going to be. And sometimes it’s easy because you have lots of information from which to sort of anticipate the needs of production. Other times you don’t. This was a time where you didn’t have a lot of information. So, that was a challenge. Oftentimes, we just weren’t sure one way or the other how things were going to be going. And it was new for us at the time. So, we needed to learn how the production staff wanted to work and how the energy and the sets were going to be. It was that more than the actual technical nuts and bolts of, well, we can boom this or how the lighting is or what the shots are. This show had lots of Steadicam. So, [there was] lots of movement. We wired 90 percent of the show probably, at least.

How was the cast to work with?

They were all awesome. The cast was fantastic. How were the ADs to deal with? They were fantastic. You know what I mean? Everybody was really great, really professional. And I got the sense very early on that when you work for, you know, and this was true for when I’d go and work on shows with him, but when you work for Ryan Murphy, there’s a level of expectation. And if you don’t meet it, you’re gone. But, if you do meet it, you’re gold. You’re gold. He really loves his people, you know what I mean?
Did you have any communication with your post team before or during the process?

It’s usually the first thing I want to do is just to, whether it’s the post supervisor, whoever, just to say, “I’m available. Here’s my information. Anytime.” And the thing is that a lot of times, even when I go day play … [for instance] I was working on the show Scorpion. Scorpion has a big cast, right? I sent my information out. So I said, “I’m filling in for the mixer for a couple of weeks and here’s my info.” And wouldn’t you know it? They contacted me after I’d been done for a week or so. And so, I was able to provide this to them a week after I was done. Helped them out. Stuff like that. It’s always like that. They’ll call me up and they’ll have some, something. They’ll have a problem with something. Anyway, I’m just able to help solve things because I know why usually.

Did you actually get to meet your re-recording mixers?

I went to Technicolor and sat in with them. And it was great because the post supervisor was there, Alexis Woodall. But now, I have a trained ear for what I do. But sitting in with those folks because Alexis, she’s like, “I don’t like the way that’s decaying,” and she’s talking about the music behind the scene. I’m sitting there and I’m going, “I thought that sounded awesome.” She’s like, “I don’t really like.” And, you know, she’s “Literally, here, here. What is that? Is that a dog barking?” I’m going, “What?!?” “Dog barking?” “You’ve got dog hearing.” I can’t. I’m listening to the words only and she’s listening to everything. And everything she says, Joe and Doug know exactly what’s going on. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. It was really cool.

Who was on your team?

I had a number of people come through the show. My primary team was [boom operator] Ace Williams and [boom operator/utility] Kris Wilcox. Kris is the utility but pretty much he’s the second [boom]. On that show, it was just mics, mics, mics everywhere. But he didn’t start the show. I had a bunch of people. I started with [boom operator] Andy Adams, and then Andy left and I had [boom operator] Don Coufal. Kris was the guy for the whole time.

It was an interesting thing because the guy I wanted wasn’t going to be immediately available. So I got Andy to start the show, knowing that he had another show to go to. And then he had to leave early and I got Don Coufal who is like, you know, he’s a rock star. Don’s like, he’s that guy. You bring him on and you don’t think about another thing. And then, Don left and I had [boom operator] Dennis Fuller. Then Dennis left and I got Ace Williams … and in between all this, Kris is jumping in and Kris is always there. He’s the constant. So, it was great because we had somebody consistent to deal with the cast, wiring, and things like that. And Kris, like Ace and those other guys, he’s a guy I don’t have to tell him what to do. He’s been in it for 25 years. He just takes care of everything.

Excellent. Is he a regular partner for you when you do a production?

If I’m working and he’s available, he’s my guy. Ace and Kris. Yes, they’re the two guys that did Feud with me and they’re going to do American Crime Story moving forward. I’m very excited to have them.

Was there a specific crazy day or moment that you had to think on your feet to find an on-the-spot creative solution?

When we did the Bronco chase. So they had an insert car with the process trailer. And they had this whole thing set up and we blocked off the north side of the 710 where the freeway ends or begins depending on your point of view. So we’re going to do some shots and they’re setting up the process trailer, and Ryan wants to go. He’s directing the episode. So he’s like, “Let’s just go. We’ll do some free driving stuff. It will be great.” So I’m in scramble mode because they’ve got this whole video village set up in a big Mercedes sprinter van. They’ve hung blacks in this thing and they’ve put their big microwave antennas suction-cupped to the roof. And they’re all sitting. Ryan’s back there, so it’s like a disco back there. He’s got all the producers, all the writers. It’s a party. They’re listening to music, they’re having a great time. And I’m like, I don’t know what to do because they’ve got the cameras handheld in the Bronco with the actors.

And I’m thinking … we’re going to free drive. How are my wireless, right? If I get out of range—well, this is another great reason that I use Zaxcom because the transmitters record locally with timecode. So, if I have any problem, I can replay what it recorded. And then this is the thing about NeverClip. So we’re doing this sequence. I’m in the front seat in a bag. I’ve got my antennas kind of out the window, suctioned onto the roof. And so anytime I got a drop, I’m thinking, okay, no problem. I can retransfer those. But if they get loud, and this is all ad-lib, right? None of it’s scripted.

This was the nature of working on the show. We went from “We’re going to do process trailer” to “Let’s start rigging it” to “No, we’re just going to go drive.” And they’re having a ball back there. So they don’t even want to go in the process trailer. We’re not doing the process trailer. The last thing they were thinking about was sound recording. So they didn’t even use the process trailer. For two days, they’re like, “No, we’re not using that anymore.” It sat there. We didn’t use it. We did free driving for the whole sequence. And we sort of, make it work. What was great in terms of the NeverClip was, sure enough, I’ve got Cuba Gooding in the back seat and he’s obviously going through this range of emotions. And all of a sudden, he does this thing and it’s in the show. If you actually watch Episode 2, he goes, “I’m tired of you driving me around, A.G.” He screamed out this line. And I had the fader pumped because I’m like, I can barely hear
him. And all of a sudden, and I have no monitors, I can’t see what’s going on. I don’t even know if he’s on camera. And I’m just telling the driver, “Don’t get too far away.” It’s like, it’s old school. I’m blind.

This is a great story.
I have no idea what’s going on. I don’t know what the camera’s seeing and I just know that I’ve got to leave both mics kind of up because there’s no script, right? So we’ve got plant mics for both of them, which didn’t work for A.C. in the front seat because his clothing was too noisy. So we’ve got the visor mic for him. And it didn’t work for Cuba in the back seat because he’s doing all kinds of stuff. He’s all over the place. But the wire was the only thing that was working for him. And when he yelled, it was like, you know. And I’m using wheel pods on a Nomad and I don’t even have faders. So I’ve got no gain knob that I can really crank down. I just got these knobs. And he yells and that transmitter held and I was just like, “Hallelujah. Hallelujah. That worked!”

It was so cool. The whole thing, the way it turned out. I mean, there were a couple of times where I rode in the back. But most of that whole sequence I was mixing in the front seat of the sprinter van, just sort of…

Trying to keep proximity?
And guessing what the dialogue was going to be.

How does it feel to be recognized for your work on this production?
Every time I watch the awards, even when I was a kid, it’s like, “I’d like to thank all these people.” Yes, yes, whatever. But then if you get nominated for one, you’re really faced with the possibility that you’re being recognized for something as an individual. You realize it’s not really an individual award.

My production people, my boom operators are so good. These post people … I mean sitting in with them and watching how they do it.

JUDAH GETZ: ADR MIXER
The ADR seemed quite seamless and transparent next to the production. How many cues were typical in a given episode? Were most cues for add lines, production challenges, and/or creative/performance?
Regarding principal ADR, when it comes to Ryan Murphy projects, including O.J., he doesn’t like to do any if at all possible. There are times when it’s required such as voice-over or something that’s so terrible, technically, that even he doesn’t want to live with it, but these are extremely rare occasions.

My work on O.J., specifically the episode we won for, was the recording of the Group ADR. There were a ton of tracks needed for several of the scenes, such as the crime scene with reporters and officers, and some of the crowd scenes where we recorded several layers of ‘pro’ O.J. folks and ‘anti’ O.J. folks. A lot of these scenes involved recording several tracks of beds, free & clear call-outs, chants, etc.

It must be nice to work with folks like Sarah Paulson, who you have done so much work with on other Ryan Murphy projects.

Do you find you begin to build a rapport that helps you get what you need more efficiently?
I work hard to provide a comfortable and creative space on my stage, and try my best to be as prepared as possible so that the sessions are efficient feeling without stress. I work intimately with the sound supervisors, Gary Megregian in this case, who’s just an amazing and humble individual, to know exactly what they need or want, such as mic choices and/or configurations.

The truth is that I never in a million years expected to be included on the ballot for O.J., but Joe went completely out of his way to include me, and let me know how invaluable my contribution is to the finished product. I will forever be indebted to him and Doug for their selflessness and willingness to share the limelight.

JOHN GUENTNER: FOLEY MIXER
How much of the courtroom treatment is created organically in your record versus on the dub stage?
Joe and Doug could probably shed more detail on this, but we try to record Foley with distance perspective in each scene as well as adjusting level for quiet, intimate scenes versus loud scenes with music & fx where Foley will have to be hotter to cut through the mix. Also, a big part that we try to achieve is using the room mic to match production. The age-old saying in Foley of “If you did your job, no one knows it’s Foley” is something we always try to strive for. We want to deliver something to the dub stage that doesn’t require a ton of treatment to fit in the mix. So all in all, I would say it’s probably 50-50 dub stage treatment versus organic treatment during recording.

Did you use anything surprising for a particular sound?
Most of the sounds on O.J. were normal day-to-day sounds of office, home, etc., so nothing really surprising, but we did use a strange-looking mini-chandelier-type bracelet as a dog collar in the opening scene of Episode 1 where a neighbor is walking his dog and discovers Nicole Brown-Simpson’s body. It worked really well as a cheat!

What was your favorite prop used?
Favorite prop was an old bag of golf clubs coupled with some
metal rods for O.J.’s golf bag in Episode 1. Not a common prop in most TV, so it worked perfectly for an older style bag of golf clubs and O.J. walks with them for a while in the episode in a relatively quiet scene, so it totally sold it well.

How much time were you given to complete an episode?
These episodes were given two days. One day for feet & cloth, one day for props.

Who was on your team?
The main team consisted of Nick Neutra as Foley supervisor, myself as Foley mixer, and Noel Vought as Foley artist. Jacob McNaughton (mixer) and Ginger Geary (artist) also worked on a couple episodes.

JOE EARLE CAS: RE-RECORDING MIXER
You and Doug have worked together for some time on a number of Ryan Murphy projects. However, each one is very different from the other, Glee to American Horror Story to this. Do you meet with Ryan to discuss the tone of the project and how this one will be treated?

[It was a] slow burn. The opening montage of The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story is a microcosm of what is to come. It starts very quietly, pulling you in (Rodney King being beaten), then builds to a riotous explosive crescendo (LA riots) that ends with a whisper, and a legend, “Two Years Later” … and so it starts. A quiet night on Rockingham Avenue, O.J. Simpson emerges from his home and climbs into a limousine and tells the driver, “Sorry I’m late … had to take a shower.”

There are some filmmakers that believe that sound is something that happens only as an afterthought. Ryan Murphy builds sound into the fabric of his scripts. Many of the shows that Doug and I have done for Ryan ask sound to compete with dialogue. The TV and film world are not like that at all.

While in depth and seeming as if around every corner a secret to the case would be depicted, The People v. O.J. did retain a dramatic but neutral perspective. Did you find yourself working with your mix partner to imply or misdirect the audience to keep this suspense and tension?
Back to the burn. A neighbor, out walking his dog at night finds something. We don’t even see what it is, but his reaction tells us it’s frightening. The police arrive, their conversations are subdued, matter of fact. Three detectives go to the Rockingham Estate, meet Kato Kaelin, and have a subdued phone call informing O.J. of his wife’s demise. No overblown score here, just a haunting tonal undercurrent. The discovery of the glove builds, not in volume but in depth. Marcia Clark’s home introduces us to her life and its chaos. Playful boys, intrusive cartoons, breakfast before school, all while taking the phone call from Van Ater describing the findings at Rockingham. The district attorney’s office becomes even busier. Office activity, typical of most legal shows, but topped with very active group voices, phones, typewriters, and overlapping dialogue sets up the complexity of the things to come. Still we held back a bit not wanting to “show our hand” in the storytelling.

Doug and I have worked very hard for years now to fill up the environments without intruding on the show. I had the pleasure of working with Elmo Ponsdomech for years at Technicolor. He, like me, started mixing sound effects before moving to the dialogue chair. We did shows like Six Feet Under, True Blood, and Dexter, to name a few. We arrived at the same conclusion. There is always enough room for everything. I will often push for something I’m not hearing in the effects tracks just to fill in those missing frequencies. I will also ask for more space from Doug when I feel the dialogue is being masked. The more we work together, the better that understanding between us becomes. But like a song, we want to be able to hear every instrument as well as the vocal.

From the outset, we tried to lead the viewer through the events as they unfolded without stepping into the experience. We stayed organic. We tried to stay “real.” I hate when mixers show their hand. If I hear my fader move in a music cue, I back up and take another pass. Even in designed moments of heightened reality we tried to use real elements as sonic accents. Our supervising editor, Gary Megregian, provided us with clean, grounded elements that helped us stay in that real part of the storytelling.

What was the most difficult scene to manage as far as production noise?
Production mixer John Bauman did a great job on the set. He provided clean dialogue with as much separation as possible. This wasn’t always easy given the free reign the actors had for overlapping dialogue to keep the real feel of the show. Having said that, the opportunity to work with Sarah Paulson, Cuba Gooding, Courtney Vance, Sterling Brown, John Travolta, Bruce Greenwood, and David Schwimmer to name a few, was a gift to us all. The performances were so good that many times all we had to do was stay out of the way.

How did you approach the transitions from the sound of the familiar news footage of the events to the dramatic scenes? Did you employ any lo-fi treatments or compression/reverb treatment changes to help the audience move from one perspective to the other?
As the story progresses, the news footage does. Many times I was provided with original recordings of the newscasters and only had to clean them up a bit. Sometimes new ADR was provided and had to be matched into a combined broadcast. A bit of filtering, compression, and eq would often make the match, or sometimes a trip through the Speakerphone plugin did the trick. Of course, if those failed, Gary was able to degrade the sound offline so that I could keep working. There is a sequence where O.J. is interviewed by police. The recording bounces
The choice was made to make the change in vocal quality as slight as possible regardless of the image. The interview plays more in your face than is typically done in reality-based drama.

The funeral of Nicole Brown was interesting. It allowed us to use sound design to get into O.J.’s head, spiked with flashes of real cameras and press walla. It also allowed us to introduce the haunting music theme by composer Mac Quayle that would play throughout the limited series.

The final sequence at O.J.’s home is a tribute to fine acting. There is momentum moving toward the escape in the Ford Bronco, but most of the work here was done by the terrific actors and the great recordings of John Bauman. Our hats are off to Ryan Murphy, Alexis Martin-Woodall, and all in their production camp for continuing to make shows that push at the boundaries of television broadcast dramas.

**DOUG ANDHAM CAS: RE-RECORDING MIXER**

**How did this project differ from other Ryan Murphy projects?**

Joe and I, along with supervising sound editor Gary Megregian, usually meet with Ryan’s team, led by executive producer Alexis Martin-Woodall, prior to starting each project. Alexis will discuss Ryan’s plans for each series and how it may be different from other projects of his. The great thing about working with Ryan is that no series is the same. Whereas on *American Horror Story* we tend to heighten every moment that can be heightened to increase suspense and scare the audience, *The People v. O.J.* is more about taking the viewer on the journey of discovery and understanding how the events unfolded and required a more delicate touch.

**Did you find yourself working with your mix partner to imply or misdirect the audience to keep this suspense and tension?**

As always, our approach to the sound was in support of the story. This show, for me being the fx mixer, was about supporting the reality and naturalism of the locations the characters inhabit. The cast and writing was so phenomenal that sonically, it was more about making sure that their environments felt real and allowed them to tell us the story.

**Was there a particular scene that you feel the sound design truly elevated and made come alive?**

The opening of the show is made up of different news footage of the Rodney King beating and the unfolding of the LA riots. It was very important to show these scenes to the viewer so that they could understand where Los Angeles was as a city, as a people. The first image of the show is the footage of the Rodney King beating. We started very quietly, you could barely hear the sound fx, you heard the news anchor explaining what was going on, and each subsequent image shows how the LA riots grew out of this event. As the footage progressed, the sound design grew louder and louder and the sound fx spread out wider and we added layer upon layer that built to a crescendo as the riots went on and then went to nothing as we go to black. From there, we start quietly and build the slow burn and boil through the rest of the episode.

Gary Megregian and his team of sound editors filled it out with multiple layers of crowds and violent sounds of glass breaking, sirens, helicopters, explosions, fire, loop group, and the different newscasters’ audio to tie it all together.

**How did you approach the transitions from the sound of the familiar news footage of the events to the dramatic scenes? Did you employ any lo-fi treatments or narrowing of pans, etc.?**

The sound fx start in the center at the very first shot of the show and spread out as the sequence unfolds, getting wider and louder as the news footage sequence revealed more, and then went to absolute quiet before we transitioned to the dramatic scenes. The overall soundtrack becomes very dynamic from this point on, starting quietly with O.J. being picked up in a limo to go to the airport, which starts our slow boil throughout the rest of the episode, alternating from scenes of quiet discovery as the investigation unfolds, to the craziness of the crowds and paparazzi as it becomes a news story, back to moments of quiet such as occur with Darden and Cochran in his basement office, to the frenzied office of the district attorney filled with phones and activity that is spread throughout the 5.1 environment. The soundscape alternates between a sense of quiet and dread at times to heightened moments of activity, and back to quiet, and back to that sense of boiling activity, depending on the scene and its emotion, allowing for a very dynamic and full mix.

**Any closing thoughts?**

I would just like to say that working on this show has been a highlight of my career. We have such a great team and it is an absolute joy to come to work on our stage with Joe and Gary and our incredibly hard-working mix tech Robin Warren. We try to keep it light and loose on the stage and it is a positive environment for creativity as a result.
This year’s Cinema Audio Society Award for Television Series – One Hour went to *Game of Thrones* for the huge episode “Battle of the Bastards.” This is the fourth win in a row for *Game of Thrones* and the sixth nomination. Production splits between two crews, “Dragon Unit,” mixed by Ronan Hill CAS, and “Wolf Unit,” mixed by Richard Dyer CAS. Brett Voss CAS is the Foley mixer. Onnalee Blank CAS is the dialogue and music re-recording mixer and Mathew Waters CAS is the sound effects re-recording mixer.

For fans of the series, “Battle of the Bastards” is a watershed episode where multiple storylines intersect and climax in a huge onscreen battle. Jon Snow and his half-sister Sansa Stark must try to retake their castle on Winterfell from Ramsay Bolton. Even by the standards set in previous seasons, this is a magnificent battle scene that took 25 days to film and required 500 extras, 600 crew members, and 70 horses.

**RONAN HILL CAS: PRODUCTION MIXER “DRAGON UNIT”**

*How did you get into sound? Do you have any mentors that helped you get where you are?*

My career in sound started when I was 7 years old, working on occasion with my father, Patsy Hill, who was a freelance news cameraman. If there was a soft news story local to our home in Ballycastle on the North Antrim Coast, I would hope to be involved. This is where I got my love for film and the business. Little did I know that years later, I would revisit some of these picturesque locations as production sound mixer on *Game of Thrones*. Through my father and his work, I met lots of talented sound recordists, including CAS Board member Peter J. Devlin. They were an inspiration and font of knowledge.

**Did you work on previous seasons?**

Since the pilot, I have worked as production sound mixer on all 67 episodes.

**What mikes, transmitters, mixer, and recorder do you use?**

I am still mixing on a Cooper 208D. It sounds as good as ever. The only reason I can imagine changing it would be for a desk with more channels. The Sound Devices 788T SSD is my main recorder. The 788T has proved extremely durable and reliable for the job. I have spoken to Sound Devices through the seasons, to encourage them to release a recorder with more inputs, as on a show like *Game of Thrones* with only eight inputs, I am maxed out a lot of the time. I can only hope a replacement with at least 16 fully fledged inputs and a bulletproof—or should I say “swordproof” limiter—is just around the corner. I have replaced the Sound Devices 744T with a Sound Devices 688 as backup on the cart. This now allows me to parallel all the ISO’s from the Cooper 208 and have four spare inputs.

I have used Audio Ltd. 2040s since Season 1, and I hope to start integrating their new digital radio mic systems on Season 8. An internal SD card recorder seems like a great “belt and braces” idea, and encryption, I imagine, will become mandatory in the future.

I have three Sennheiser MKH 60s and an MKH 70, which I use for exteriors. For interiors, I have four MKH 50s. I also have two MKH 8050s and two MKH 8040s with all the accessories, which allow us to break them down and place them in areas too small for the 50s. For Season 6, I purchased three of Rycote’s new Cyclone baskets and suspensions for the 60s, to cope with the local weather. They sound more open than the old baskets and are proving to be an asset in our fight against the elements. I also purchased a couple of their new softie wind covers and baseball windshields for the MKH 60s and MKH 50s.

The DPA 4071s are definitely the way to go for a natural sound with great isolation. The accessories are very useful, although at this stage, we have adapted and created a few of our own. They are more fragile than other lavs, but DPA has taken measures to rectify this. Time will tell. For wireless headphone monitoring, I use the Sennheiser IEM 2050 transmitter and 2000 receivers, which allow great flexibility. I don’t run a return for video playback to the mixer; instead I provide a transmitter for video on an adjacent channel. By pressing one button on the IEM receiver, it can be switched from ‘Sound’ to ‘Video’ depending on whether you want di-
rect sound or playback. It can also be utilized for two-zone use.

**How many tracks are typically recorded and what is the track layout? How do you deal with dailies?**

The workflow is relatively straightforward. The production mix for editorial is on track one, the main boom on track two, stereo and ISO lavs then follow. The poly WAV file is recorded to the internal SSD and compact flash on the 788T and backed up on the fly to another compact flash using a FireWire card reader for dailies. Post backs up all files and imports track one for editorial. As they have all tracks, I don’t get any calls to forward any material such as stereo FX. Timecode is used as the primary method of sync with conventional boards as backup. We don’t send any guide to cameras. Timecode has proved to be remarkably accurate between the Sound Devices 788T and the Arri ALEXA.

**Do you do any processing in the field?**

I don’t do any processing in the field. I imagine on some jobs there is merit but I am still of the opinion I should be able to hear all offending noise so we can work on a plan to reduce or eliminate it on set and limit the need for this to be removed later. I also think I am best to record as much of the original signal as possible and trust the talented team in post to eradicate or clean up where necessary.

**Do you ever do wild lines or ADR in the field?**

We rarely record wild lines but when we do, we try to record them using two mics, one close and one wide to allow perspective to be mixed according to the shot. We do record ISO tracks for various cast mics and, on shots where the artist is not in the shot or shot from behind, we cheat the mics into better open placement. This negates the need for wild lines on most occasions.

**What unique challenges did you have to deal with on this particular episode?**

One great thing about *Game of Thrones* is the meticulous planning that goes into every episode. “Battle of the Bastards” was a fine example of this with every sequence mapped out in advance. With a plan at hand, we prioritized characters with dialogue to radio mic and action to record with stereo effects.

For me, it’s never enough just to record the dialogue, and we try to record stereo effects in addition to a mono boom where possible, to get a real sense of drama. We also fitted mics to cameras on tracking crane arms and radio mic’d a few horses—placing the capsule on the girth to get clean horse hoof effects for the charge into battle.

In addition to boom and stereo mics, Jon Snow would have been radio mic’d with particular attention to mic capsule placement and transmitter placement. When you fit a radio mic to a person, their body absorbs some of the signal. The fact that he is surrounded by a large, compressed crowd makes getting a radio signal from his transmitter very difficult but it is essential to record the integrity of the original performance.

**The battle scenes give you a sense of the scale of the battle-field and this huge area required a degree of flexibility. I tend to find the best plan is for the sound cart to be on the edge of the shot, as close to the action as possible. The sound cart is powered by lithium batteries, which means it can be moved quickly to facilitate the setup when there is no handy corner to hide. A second Sound Devices 788T is rigged for “run and gun” situations, or when the setup does not allow me to use a cart. The Audio Ltd. radio mics performed very well with good range using high-gain Yagi antennas and, as you have the flexibility of using the 2040 transmitter as a body pack or with a phantom power lead as a radio boom, setups can be quickly changed.

Mud is part and parcel of “Dragon Unit” and “Battle of the Bastards” was no exception. The equipment was cleaned on a daily basis. My sound van was covered in mud from “Battle of the Bastards,” which dried and ended up on the floor of my garage. As I placed the last of it in the bin, I wondered if I had missed a classic eBay opportunity!

**Is there anyone you would like to mention or thank?**

Firstly, I should mention my team, boom operator Simon Kerr, sound assistants Jonathan Riddell and Jonny Waite, and trainee Andrew McNeill, as well as producer Greg Spence, whose support and influence since the pilot has encouraged other departments to reduce their negative impact on production sound and ensure ADR is kept to a minimum. He keeps a close ear to the sound right through the final mix.

Also, I should thank supervising sound editor Tim Kimmel MPSE and his team for the fantastic work they do in post, and every member of the crew on “Dragon Unit” for their help and assistance. And thanks to the membership of the CAS for its continued recognition and appreciation of our work.
FROM PRODUCER GREG SPENCE:
“We should mention that, in addition to ‘Dragon Unit,’ we have ‘Wolf Unit,’ a completely separate unit shooting simultaneously, and that the final soundtrack involves both Ronan’s work and that of Richard Dyer, the Wolf on-set mixer. While Ronan and Richard have different styles and different equipment, it all comes together flawlessly on the mix stage.”

BRETT VOSS CAS: FOLEY MIXER
Where are you from? How did you get into sound? Did you study audio in school? Do you have any mentors that helped you get where you are?
I grew up in Livonia, a city outside of Detroit, Michigan. I was pretty heavily into music, so it made sense that I found myself attending Full Sail University (then called Full Sail Real World Education), learning how to record instruments, and ultimately, the study and exploration of sound.

I’ve had many sound mentors throughout my career; my first real industry job was working as a runner at Todd-AO Lantana, which was filled with so many incredibly generous people happy to share knowledge and advice.

But, if pressed, the three people who really stick out would be Cecelia Hall, Jeffrey Wilhoit, and Hunter Menning. Cece taught me how to think of sound as a storytelling tool. Jeff opened my eyes to the delicate world of Foley, and how it can help propel or hinder the story. Hunter, my friend and former teacher (and current Ambassador) at Full Sail, continues to offer great advice throughout my career.

Do you have a musical background?
I’ve played guitar since I was 17 or 18 years old. Before that, I played clarinet in the symphonic band at Churchill High School in Livonia. Prior to that, I played the recorder in fifth grade, and the pots and pans on the kitchen floor.

How did you become involved in Game of Thrones?
Peter Brown (Season 2, sound supervisor, now at Formosa Group) was looking for a feature crew to tackle this TV show we’d never heard of. He stopped by our stage to chat with us, and very fortunately, it worked out. We’ve been on Game of Thrones since Season 2.

What mikes, mixer, and recorder do you use?
We use four different mikes presently: Sennheiser MKH 60, a Michael Jolly modified large diaphragm, a Neumann TLM102, and a PZM. All four mics go into a GML 8304 pre. I also have a Grace 101 for a little warmth from time to time.

Because I simply need a rock-solid system that moves when necessary, I’m on Pro Tools 10 HD with a Pro Control.

How many tracks are typically recorded, and what is the track layout?
I hold 16 tracks for Feet and 16 tracks for Props available for delivery. Props typically include anything touched or used, and gear movement. We shoot specific gear for story point characters plus a schmutz pass. Sometimes we go over track count, depending on the episode. Something tells me this season will be wider.

Do you do any processing before delivery?
Not really. I record 1, 2, 3, and/or 4 mikes to one printed track, and that’s what is shipped. It’s all about mic placement. I hardly ever (if ever) print additional reverb or process.

What unique challenges did you have to deal with on this particular episode?
Every episode is a challenge on its own. It is like shooting a mini-feature (sometimes not so mini) every week. This episode was really no different. I’d say creating the horse body falls were particularly time-consuming.

Is there anyone you would like to mention or thank?
Thanks to Greg Spence at HBO, and re-recording mixers Mathew Waters and Onnalee Blank for their amazing attention to detail and kindness. Tim Kimmel for being our fearless editorial leader. Ronan Hill and Richard Dyer, our wonderful production sound mixers who were not able to attend this year’s CAS Awards.

Jeff Wilhoit, Dylan Wilhoit, Brad Katona, Paula Fairfield, John Matter, Tim Hands, and Pernell Salinas. David Barbee, Mike Marchain, Mike Minkler CAS, Scott Millan CAS, Craig Mann, Duke Lim, Richard Burnette, Liliana Zurawska, and everyone else who helped along the way at Todd-AO. Michal Marks (RIP Sophie), Seann Dougherty, and Jimmy Moriana.

And of course, God, and my parents Jim and Diane Voss, for
all of your help on this ridiculous journey. Oh, and my brother James Voss for stealing my Wampa when we were kids.

**MATHEW WATERS CAS AND ONNALEE BLANK CAS: RE-RECORDING MIXERS**

Where are you from? How did you get into sound? Did you study audio in school? Do you have any mentors that helped you get where you are?

**Onnalee:** My backstory is that I used to be a professional ballet dancer, dancing with various companies in the United States. I got into a car accident and was forced to focus on something else, so I chose music! I went to a music engineering trade school in Los Angeles and started working.

My mentors are Mike Minkler and various mixers I have worked with over the years.

**Matt:** I was a radio/TV major at San Jose State University. I thought I was going to go into radio. In February of my senior year, Stephen Flick, who had just won the Oscar for *RoboCop*, came and spoke to our class. I didn’t even know this career existed. But, hearing what he did for a living, I decided to change my career path that very day and I moved to LA the day after graduation in May.

Do you have a musical background?

**Matt:** I was a percussion music minor. I played in some garage bands. I have always loved music.

**Onnalee:** I do. I used to play in orchestra and a bit of piano. I engineered at recording studios The Village Recorder and Ocean Way before getting a job with Rick Rubin. I worked for producer Rick Rubin for a few years on various albums which was such a fun time. An opportunity came up to help Danny Elfman in the studio so, at that point, I left Rick Rubin and went to build two of Elfman’s studios. Working for Elfman opened my eyes to how creative film is. I loved it even more than music but in a different way.

How did you become involved in *Game of Thrones*?

**Onnalee:** In Season 2, they were bringing back the post to Los Angeles after Season 1, and I did various interviews for the job, and got it, to my surprise!

**Matt:** We have worked on *Thrones* since Season 2.

What console and DAW do you use?

**Onnalee:** We have always been on an Icon. Every once in a while, we would do a premier mix on a Euphonix System 5. This season, we will mix on an S6 console.

How many tracks are typically delivered to you, and what is the track layout? How do you split the mix between the two of you?

**Onnalee:** A ton. Ha! I have about 20 production tracks of dialogue, 20 ADR tracks, and between 80-100 group tracks that are split up between domestic and foreign. I have a separate machine for music which carries about 120-140 tracks of music.

What are your favorite plugins to use? How do you make things sound “fantastic” and seem bigger than life?

**Matt:** I use the Lexicon reverbs, PhoenixVerb, and now my go to is the FabFilter Pro Reverb plugin. I will use them all for different spaces and together as well to give different depths of field in some spaces. I use Slapper for delays. Love delays.

What unique challenges did you have to deal with on this particular episode?

**Onnalee:** “Battle of the Bastards” (Episode 609) was unique in the sense that it was shot so cinematically and with huge battle scenes. Mathew Waters and myself really tried to make every frame unique, detailed and clean, which was a challenge with so much going on onscreen.

**Matt:** This episode was unique because it had a 25-minute continuous battle scene. Not only is it fun and challenging to simply manage all the tracks, but to also figure out how to make a huge battle sequence stay interesting and how best to help tell the stories that need to be told. Obviously, it starts with the great writing, then directing and picture editing. They do such a great job of putting together the film to help let the audio have wonderful moments.

Also, I would say the last scene where Ramsey gets killed. Onna and the dialogue crew did a fantastic job with an incredibly difficult dialogue scene. It is amazing how much their work helped with the emotion of that scene.

Is there anyone you would like to mention or thank?

**Matt:** Well, from the sound side, I would like to mention and thank sound supervisor Tim Kimmel and his crew. The reality is that, after you do this for a while, you realize that it takes a village to create awesome work. And without Tim and his crew, we wouldn’t be able to reach the goals we have for ourselves.

**Onnalee:** I would like to thank HBO and David and Dan for creating this amazing show to be a part of. It is a joy to work on such an amazing piece of art.
MEET THE WINNERS

TELEVISION SERIES – HALF-HOUR
MODERN FAMILY
“The Storm”

by Stephen Fitzmaurice CAS

For the fifth year in a row, the CAS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing for Television Series – Half-Hour has gone to production mixer Steve Tibbo CAS and re-recording mixers Dean Okrand CAS and Brian R. Harman CAS for their work on Modern Family’s “The Storm.” I had the opportunity to speak with Steve and Dean about this year’s win and, perhaps more importantly, how it is that they maintain such a high standard. Brian Harman was, regretfully, unavailable and we would like to offer him our sincerest congratulations.

STEVE TIBBO CAS: PRODUCTION MIXER

Congratulations, Steve! You guys just keep doing this over and over again and I think, for me, that’s the most interesting part of this story. Clearly, you and Dean (Okrand) and Brian (Harman) make a great team. From what I’ve read in the past, you get a lot of support from the producers of the show.

Thank you! They absolutely do. And we get a lot of cooperation between departments. You have to make compromises in the filmmaking and television-making process. When they bring that third camera out because they’ve got 12 or 13 characters that they’ve got to cover, that’s when it ends up getting to be tricky. That’s when I’ve got to be on my game and I might have to go to that director or the DP and see if I can talk them out of that wide and that tight shot at the same time. Hopefully, I can help them see how they can work with us and still have the shot be effective. The other thing we do in the field is, I try to boom everything, but also we try to wire everyone all the time. So when I have to use the wire, it’s the same wire, the same transmitter and the same eq that’s already matched to the boom on that person every single day. It’s not like I’m using one [mic] on Alex [today] and it goes on Haley tomorrow. That way, when I need to use it, it’s there and it’s ready.

It sounds like it can get really complicated really fast. How many tracks will you be recording on the big day? Sixteen? Oh yeah, easily. I’ve done up to 30, that’s insane. But I try to keep it as simple as possible. We’ll get everyone wired, we’ll make sure everyone sounds good. It’s great because, when it gets big like that, they’re okay paying for the additional equipment and boom operators because they [the producers] get it. So, for instance, on “The Storm,” we’ve got the whole family and all these kids. I think at some point everybody ended up there. For those big scenes, I get an extra boom operator if not two. So it’s Serge Popovic, William Munroe, and Peter Hansen. So I had the three of them swinging for the big scenes. On Modern Family, we may have six scenes, we’ll have six setups in a single day. They’ll do everything they’re going to do in 10 takes. You’ve got to capture a winner every single time. Everyone’s on mics, there’s overlaps. It’s got to sound good. And you give Dean and Brian everything they need.

At more than 180 episodes, have there been a lot of changes, or do you find that you’re doing essentially the same thing? I’m doing the same type of job, I’ve just gotten better at doing it and anticipating what producers or directors are going to ask of me. For example, [EP] Steve Levitan likes music live. It’s much easier to be playing back but, more often than not when we have music in an episode, it ends up being live and I have to track it. In an episode last year called “Man Shouldn’t Lie,” I played back their instruments, and we tracked all live vocals.

In terms of keeping things consistent, I’ve changed some of the recorders out, but my systems kind of remain the same. I’ll tell ya, I try to boom everything. It doesn’t always work, but Schoeps shotguns 95 percent of the time. The other five percent, maybe an MKH 50 or a Sennheiser 8060s. In terms of cars, I’m 99 percent of the time using Schoeps BLM 03s. So you have consistency through all scenes—especially that classic warm Schoeps sound. And that’s a decision you make on the set.

In terms of lavs, I’m generally using Countryman B6s. You can get them out button holes and hide them in plain sight. Do I think maybe a Sanken COS11 or a DPA or a Sennheiser might sound better? I do, but a Countryman B6 with no clothing rustle sounds way better than any of those with it.

That’s one thing I definitely noticed about the show, it seems like there wasn’t any of that. We all work very hard at that.

It shows.

You know the other thing is we just try to do whatever we can...
You know Alex, Ariel. I put her lav right in the side of her eyeglasses. She can be running around and when you'd normally get a ton of clothing rustle, we get none.

In the episode “The Storm,” you had to deal with a lot of water. Are there special accommodations you made to contend with that?

Sure. One of the things is having the rain slicker so you don’t hear the rain on the mic itself. Typically, we use K-Tek boom poles with the side mount, but that’s not a good idea in the rain. You want it to go all the way through the pole so you can wrap it all up and keep everything dry. The other thing is making sure you have enough Hog’s Hair, it’s like a loose fiber material. When water hits it, it keeps water from making as much noise when it hits a surface and fortunately, the guys from FX made sure we had enough. There were scenes where we’re using practical rain. Haley and Andy run out of the house and declare their love for one another. That was tricky. There was no room for Hog’s Hair. I used Countryman EMW’s because they’re more water-resistant. Even then you have to be ready to get in there with canned air and take care of it.

We’re here in your studio where you also work as a re-recording mixer. How has working in post affected your work on the set or has it?

Oh, it’s affected my work in many, many ways. I’ve been working in post for over 10 years now. I know what I can get away with and what I can’t. I know how much time things take to fix, and I know how much time Dean and Brian have to do a show. I know if something didn’t sound right on the day, I’ll get a wild line for it. Whenever possible, we try to do ADR for the show on the set. It’s easier for the actors and we’re able to record the actor through the same equipment and, oftentimes, on the same set that we originally shot the scene.

This is great. I hope it keeps rolling for you.

You know, every day I have fun at work. I get a script and I read a scene and I think, “How am I gonna pull this one off?” When you manage to pull it off, it’s such a joy. It’s an amazing thing to be part of.

I have to tell you this (the most recent CAS Award), I was really, really surprised. I was telling Dean before the show, this is a big win for us just to be coming here, but we’re not going to win tonight, and he goes, “No, we’re not.” And it’s amazing that so many years into the show, that we even got a nomination. We were both tickled and genuinely shocked. And I have a dear friend, Ben Patrick, who does Silicon Valley, and before that, The Office. He’s a brilliant mixer! I was so rooting for him to be up there on stage and have the experience.

DEAN OKRAND CAS: RE-RECORDING MIXER

Congratulations on your win! What do you think has led you and your team to this place where you keep winning the CAS Award?

I was wondering that myself, but what I know is that the sound jobs on the show are really consistent. Steve Tibbo is really meticulous with his production audio. He fights and is not afraid to speak up when something isn’t working right—which has proven to bring in tracks that are so much better. Steve does a great job. We have the same team of editors we’ve had since the inception of the show. Sound supervisor Penny Coghlan is fabulous. She keeps me honest.

Our dialogue editor was the sound supervisor before Penny took over. And Penny used to cut the dialogue. They sorta swapped places. Lisa [then Varetakis, now Donahue] moved to Northern California. She keeps cutting the show so she knows how Tibbo records things. She knows how to find things in the multitude of tracks that Tibbo supplies and she knows the actors well enough to know when to look for alternates.

It sounds like you’re in good hands if you have the show’s former sound supervisor doing your dialogue editorial! Can you walk me through your process?

One of Lisa’s jobs is to figure out the best series of tracks for each situation. We try to use booms whenever we can. We try not to use the mix tracks, but sometimes you have to.

On the stage, we mix the show in a day. I do a dialogue pass while Brian Harman does an FX pass. We work in the same room, out of the same monitors at the same time. But we’re not
locked up. If one of us has to hear something uninterrupted for a moment, we’re cognizant of that and sit out. There’s not a lot of music in the show, so I tend to mix music while I’m mixing dialogue. Usually, it’s a piece of source music or something. I’ll go back and do group. We lock it up, play it back, and do our fixes.

One thing we’re doing this year as opposed to other years, is a remote playback. The editor and their assistant are at Fox and we’re in Burbank with the associate producer. They have a playback room which is smaller and has minimal acoustic treatment but utilizes the same monitors and amplifiers we mix on. We use Source-Connect and Skype and we do our notes that way.

Was there anything about “The Storm” that made it particularly challenging?
We had to keep the storm alive. There was so much rain in that show. We had to keep it alive and feel real without having it become overshadowing. There were times where you have someone who’s outside and they get electrocuted. Well, then the storm has to be a big deal. But if they’re in an intimate conversation, we have to play it differently. It was just real important for the audience that they always knew that the big storm was happening.

Let me ask you some nuts-and-bolts stuff. Is there anything about your setup that you’ve changed over the last eight years to better accommodate the show or do things differently that you like?

The only thing that’s really changed are the compressors a little bit. I just try to mix as though I’m watching the show for the first time. I want my shows that I work on—I don’t want you to hear angle changes. I spend a lot of time and make sure there are really good long handles but, to me, that’s more important than a particular piece of equipment or a chain. I like to keep things simple. Signal path is really important but if I’m dinking around with it all the time, then I’m not really sure what I’m listening to. I think you can get a lot done with simplicity. If you’re meticulous and you take your time, you can get a lot done without a lot of gear in line.

Congratulations, guys!
THE STANDARD IN SOUND, EVOLVED

TRXLA3 100 MHZ WIDE-BAND DIGITAL RECORDING WIRELESS TRANSMITTER

- ZHD MODULATION
  a 50 KHz wide signal spaced as close as 100 KHz apart with outstanding transmission distance
- INTERNAL BACKUP RECORDING
  capture quality back-up audio in the most hostile RF environment

QRX200 200 MHZ WIDE-BAND RECEIVER WITH ENHANCED RANGE AND AUTOMATIC TRACKING FRONT END FILTER

- ENCRYPTED AUDIO
  keeps transmitted audio private
- DIGITAL MODULATION
  100% digital modulation for superior quality

zaxcom.com | 973-835-5000

THE ULTIMATE IN RECEIVER FLEXIBILITY

audio dept

built by sound mixers
run by sound mixers
for sound mixers

877.566.6526 audiodept.com Burbank, California
MEET THE WINNERS

TELEVISION NON-FICTION, VARIETY, MUSIC SERIES OR SPECIALS

GREASE LIVE!
by Matt Foglia CAS

The bump out VO of Act 3 in *Grease Live!* announces: “Eight weeks of blocking scenes, creating characters, memorizing lines, rehearsing it again and again—until, finally, it all comes together.” *Grease Live!* combined the theatrical and film elements of the iconic musical and re-created them for a live broadcast. Working on a live program that is so heavily scripted requires significant choreography—and not just from the cast. I was able to chat with production mixer J. Mark King, music mixer Biff Dawes, playback & SFX mixer Eric Johnston, and Pro Tools playback music mixer Pablo Munguia about their work.

J. MARK KING: PRODUCTION MIXER

So, how did you first get into this crazy world of sound?

In college, I was a singer in a Christian rock band. We (the band) recorded a demo and I became curious and interested about the recording process. The recording engineer and I became friends and I started hanging around his place whenever he had a session. Lack of motivation caused me to flunk out of college after my sophomore year. Late that following summer, I was contacted by one of my friends from the aforementioned Christian rock band. He had left that band and had decided to take a year off from college to tour with another Christian singing group. He told me that the group was a week away from leaving on tour and they did not have a soundman. Would I be interested? Needless to say, I jumped at the chance. Within a week, I had learned the PA system and set list and off we went. We toured for 10 months all across the US and western Canada.

Were you living in California?

No. I’m originally from Nyack, New York, a little town north of NYC. While on tour, we had performed at a church in Long Beach, California. El Dorado Park Community Church used to televise its morning services and, while the church had its own video cameras and control room, the audio was lacking in both equipment and competent operators (mixers). The pastor asked me if I would consider moving to California and becoming their full-time soundman. Again, I jumped at the opportunity. So in 1974, when the tour ended, I moved to California and became their soundman for the next seven years.

Were you focusing on work relative to the church or were you trying to pursue other engineering jobs?

I was taking anything and everything I could. The church music director, Don Marsh, was a well-established composer/arranger and he would often have recording sessions to which he would invite me. One of the studios he frequented was Martinsound Studios in Alhambra, California. It was a new studio owned by a young Joe Martinson. (The readers may recognize that Joe is the inventor of the Flying Faders Automation system.) Don eventually asked me to engineer a vocal overdub session at Martinsound. I had no second engineer and no other help. I simply bluffed my way through the session, but Joe had taken notice of the job I had done and began hiring me as a freelancer to engineer demos and to second on bigger sessions.

So that got you into the music studio, but how did you end up getting into the non-worship broadcast world?

Chris Donovan, the Director of the Television Ministry at El Dorado Park Community Church, was an actual director and technical director in the secular world. He had his own remote video truck and gave me several opportunities to work with him on commercial gigs and industrials. He then began recommending me to other television producers and studios.

You also worked on the re-recording side, correct?

Yes. I worked at Complete Post as a post mixer. I was always freelance and did post on nights and weekends while working production sound on sitcoms during the week. I wanted to do post work in order to better myself as a production mixer so that my deliverables would be better. You know, we always heard the phrase, “We’ll fix it in post.” I wanted to understand what could or couldn’t, or would or wouldn’t be fixed in post so that
I would have the knowledge to say to a director while on set, “You won’t be able to fix that in post.”

That is very admirable.
I tried to get my hands on anything and everything related to audio. I have an innate curiosity for all things audio and love learning. I believe that you must continue to find new challenges or else your skills begin to atrophy.

And it shows with the different types of audio positions you’ve held throughout your career. How did you first get into live broadcast programming?
Dick Clark Productions was the first to give me a shot in live TV with the Soap Opera Digest Awards. Definitely sweating on that first one! But that led to them hiring me for the Golden Globes and then the Academy of Country Music Awards.

What were you handling on those jobs?
For the first seven years, I handled all the production elements and music mixing live. As the shows and music acts became more complicated, I asked for a separate live-music mixer and was able to bring Biff Dawes on board to handle all of the live/live performances—and he’s been with me ever since.

How were you dealing with inputs then?
In the analog days of the ACM Awards, I had a main console which handled the production elements and performance vocals. Then I was surrounded by consoles of different sizes and configurations to handle the various band inputs. I had to create a cockpit-like situation so every fader was within arm’s reach. Of course, these days, not only have we separated the production mixing duties from the music mixing duties, we all have digital consoles. That means higher input and output counts in a much smaller footprint and snapshot recall capabilities as well.

Were you also dealing with comms?
On certain smaller shows, yes. On larger shows, the comms were given to a separate crew.

Let’s discuss Grease Live! Obviously, a heavily scripted show.
I’m used to live-scripted awards shows and I worked on sitcoms for 15 years, which are also scripted. That gave me a lot of experience cross-fading between microphones. With Grease, it was the combination of live production and unrelenting cross-fades between microphones and transitions between scenes. It was the hardest show I’ve ever done!

With the continuous transitions and scene locations, I’m trying to imagine mic configurations and placements. How early on did you start addressing them?
In early November, two months before the show airdate, all of the creative and technical departments had a meeting. The wardrobe and hair departments were part of that meeting. Wardrobe was very familiar with incorporating mics and wireless packs since they came from Broadway and were the best in their field. We gave them a wireless pack and DPA mic as an example of the mics we were using and they designed pouches and ways to conceal the gear into the wardrobe. For example, for some of the wigs, they’d put two DPA mics and two packs in the wigs when possible. Also, the A2s we hired knew how to deal with the logistics of changing mics and packs during wardrobe and hair changes.

Given how large the cast was, how many dialogue inputs were you dealing with?
We had 54 wireless microphones, including backups which had to work everywhere at all times. Dave Bellamy at Soundtronics designed an antenna system so mics would work all over the set at Warner Bros. He had to coordinate frequencies with the Warner Bros. lot because of all the other projects going on. We stopped at 54 because, basically, we ran out of frequencies—so it was because of physics! All actors retained the same input. We had two pre-hear positions where audio assistants would check mics constantly to let us know if something was having an issue. If it was, and knowing that my hands were busy mixing, they’d re-patch it on the fly so the backup would land in the same fader as the primary. We also had a few fishpoles, a couple of Fisher booms, and some area mics for ambience and perspective.

How did you set up your console?
Principals were assigned dedicated faders. Secondary characters important to each act would land in different positions. My
VCA assignments depended on the needs of each act. I did have to do some manual reassigning in the middle of some of the acts because of the limitation with the number of VCAs I had in front of me. Each act had its own snapshot. Even though the principals had their own dedicated faders, the rest of the cast did not. Therefore, each act had the principals plus whichever additional cast members were in that act. The script was 384 pages long. At times, the pace of the dialogue was so quick and complicated I did not have time to turn the pages, so I memorized those places in the script. I also memorized the entire first act just so I would be completely focused.

384 pages! Did you have an assistant helping you with cueing?
No, I didn’t have someone helping with cueing because it would add to the reaction time—which could result in my up-cutting a line.

It must have taken a number of rehearsals to get things right. How many did you do?
We had a week of rehearsals, then we did four full-dress rehearsals. One without an audience, one with friends and family, one with a hired audience, and then we did a final full-dress rehearsal the day before with a full audience.

How are you dealing with levels on the show?
While I’ll check LKFS along the way, once I’m in the moment, I feel confident that I’m where I need to be. Actually, I still like to mix to VU meters. We had to rent them for *Grease* because the truck didn’t have any. I ended up taping them to the top of the center speaker right in front of me.

What do you do when you’re not working on a show?
I am either prepping for my next show or riding my horse.

What are you up to next?
I mix the music for *Dancing with the Stars*, so I’m on that for a couple more weeks and then I go to Washington, D.C., for the National Memorial Day Concert for PBS and then back to D.C. for the Fourth of July National Concert, also on PBS. I will then do the weekly live *Big Brother* broadcasts. The MTV VMAs are also coming up at the end of August.

**BIFF DAWES: MUSIC MIXER**

You’re LinkedIn profile shows Wally Heider’s as your first audio job. What led you to the field of audio?
I was a radio-film-TV major in college. I started part time at Wally Heider Recording, Hollywood in 1972 while I was still in school.

Since there were facilities for both at Wally’s, was your initial focus studio sessions, remote sessions, or both?
If you worked at Heider’s, you worked in the studio and on the mobile units. That’s where I started mixing.

Do you recall the first job where you were the main engineer?
The first album was Richard Pryor’s *Is It Something I Said?* Eventually, I would engineer and produce two of Richard’s live albums for Warners. I think I finally considered myself an engineer when Wally asked me to sit next to him and record a live Woody Herman album at the 1979 Monterey Jazz Festival—even though I had already recorded some pretty big studio and live albums by then.

Your next move was to Westwood One in 1982, where you’d stay until this decade. Given your experience with Wally’s mobile unit, did they come after you?
Yes, Westwood One and Norm Pattiz came after some of us who had worked at Heider’s to build and staff Westwood One’s first mobile unit. Myself, Jim Seiter, Dave Farragher, Doug Field, and Mike Carver. The original trailer caught fire and burned by the side of the road in El Paso, Texas, en route to a show. We rebuilt a similar one in 1998 and the trailer is still used for a couple NFL shows every year for Westwood One Sports.

What were some of your job duties while with Westwood One?
To record and mix all the live concerts for the radio network’s concert series. Westwood One’s concert shows became widely syndicated. We were recording concerts of many top acts from the ’80s on. Everyone from Stevie Ray Vaughn to The Who, Fleetwood Mac, Nirvana, Aerosmith, Pat Benatar, etc. We also did music mixing for award shows and cable concert specials.

When working on a show with a variety of musical acts, such as the ACM Awards, what is your typical timeline as you get ready for the night of broadcast?
Preproduction of listening to songs and instrumentation usually finalize a few weeks before. Rehearsals a few days leading up to a full-dress rehearsal right before broadcast.

I was talking to Mark King and he recalled that the first time you two worked together was on an ACM Awards show when the demands on the music side became too much to manage—given that he was addressing the other production elements. Do you remember the first time you worked together?
I think it was 1999 for the ACMs. I don’t know how Mark had done all the mixing prior to that. The show had become very big, a full house band and numerous self-contained acts. Plus he was mixing production.
ERIC JOHNSTON: PLAYBACK & SFX MIXER

What originally sparked your interest in audio?
My sister got Black Sabbath’s *Master of Reality* as a birthday present and didn’t care for it. So she gave it to me and, at 9 years old, I was hooked. That led me to collecting records and building a DJ mixer. I was also hanging out with friends who had bands—helping them out on gigs. I chased a rock-and-roll stage.

Did that lead you into the studio with those bands?
Not really. I actually ended up getting a “real job,” working at the processing center of a bank. But I had hair halfway down my back and was not excited about my job. Then my parents said, “Why don’t you do what you love?” So I went to sound school.

That’s awesome that your parents encouraged you to pursue your true interests.
It was! And that led me to getting a job at Princess Cruises, then Leeds Rehearsal Studio where I’d take care of the studio and mix bands that would come there.

How long were you there?
About six months—because Le Mobile was next door to the studio and Guy Charbonneau [Le Mobile’s owner] noticed me. I did everything I could there. Guy let me practice mixing on the multitracks he had and he’d teach me how to mix better. That’s when I started to work on TV shows. I remember working on a show; it’s two in the morning and I’m pulling cable in the rain. Next to me are the TV utility guys and they’re laughing. I ask, “What are you laughing for?” And they go, “Everything is funny in double time.” At that moment, I became aware of the union and realized that these guys were making in an hour what I was making in eight! That’s when I sought out how to get in the union.

Do you remember your first union gig?
It was on a sketch comedy called *All That* in the early ’90s and I was a Booth A2 for Evan Adelman. Now I’m a playback mixer because I’m controlling the levels of my material at the console. I then picked up *Mad TV* and did that for 11 years with Evan. Those shows gave me lots of experience with getting my timing right because my sound effects had to follow the visuals and land in time.

What was your first show that was truly live?
It was one of the *Soul Train* awards type of shows—I forget the exact name. But since then, I’ve been fortunate to be a part of the crews for Mike Abbott, Tommy Holmes, Mark King, Bruce Arledge, Jr.—some really great guys.

What kind of system are you using for playback?
I use a proprietary software system called SpotOn. It’s kind of like Ableton Live except it has button interactions and runs off a touchscreen. It allows me to have up to 320 cues that I can trigger, layer, and group however and whenever I want. For example, on the CMAs, I handle play-ons, play-offs, VOs, sound effects, and performance playbacks. So I’ll have a VO bus, a bus with walk-on and bumper music, a sound effects bus, typically four stereo performance splits, a click track, a pitch track, and—this is great for synchronizing performance to lights and video playback—a timecode generator that creates an LTC WAV file.

That sounds really robust!
It’s great. The flexibility is perfect for live broadcasts.

What’s your typical schedule like for an awards show?
I usually have four to five days for an awards show. A couple of weeks before, I’ll have an idea of what the show’s needs are and I’ll ship my gear. I’ve built my system so it installs quickly with consoles. The style of the director will determine how the next three to four days of rehearsal go. Some directors wait until dress rehearsal to see how everything works and flows together. That approach gives me additional time to get my materials together. Other directors will want to top-and-tail the show at the start so they can be aware of any production issues and address them. That approach, obviously, requires me to get everything going really quickly.

How about for *Grease Live*?
I showed up on the first day and installed my system. I then began gathering my materials; finding what the producers were thinking from a sound effects perspective, collecting music and other elements. After reviewing the rundown, I decided how to organize the material in SpotOn. I then loaded and built the show and assigned outputs. I had about a day for that.

How did you go about building the sound effects?
Doing the show at Warner Bros. was great because they actually gave me access to their sound effects library—which was wonderful. I built and scored all of the ambiences on *Grease*—and there were a lot of them. I’d have them on loops and then cross as the cast went from location to location. With SpotOn, as the show changes, I’m not married to a timeline. I have flexibility and can follow along live.

How do you incorporate your sources with the material Mark is working with?
We were on a 72-fader console and Mark gave me the first bank of faders for my sources. This is needed especially if I have to apply processing live. For example, one scene takes place in the hallway outside the gym. Inside the gym, the band is playing and there’s ambience from the kids. In the hallway,
there is dialogue going on, but people are going into the
gym—opening up the door between the hallway and the gym.
When the door was closed, I eq’d one fader for ambience and
band to sound like they were on the other side of the door.
When it opened, I had a second fader adjust to the eq to
make it match the door position. Then I chased the door.
One of my favorite things was that, during the rehearsals,
Mark would sometimes be looking to see if he had an open
mic—but it was my stuff he was hearing. Let that me know
that I was in the ballpark.

I take it Grease was a fun show to work on?
Honestly, Grease was one of the best experiences I’ve had pro-
fessionally. Having the TV, theatre, and film worlds converge
to do this one show—with everyone working together to find
the best way of doing something for the benefit of the show—
it was awesome.

Mark mentioned a similar sentiment.
Yeah. It was really a great experience.

So what other projects are you up to?
Well, I usually end up doing about 20 different shows a year
between awards shows and studio shows. This year, World of
Dance went into a Super Bowl pre-show, the Grammys, and
then Love Connection. I did America’s Got Talent auditions for the
month of May and callbacks happened at the end of April. I’ll
be on the Billboard Music Awards mid-May.

Before we wrap up, I have to ask: Under your name on your
email signature, it reads “Single Batch Coffee Roasters.”
What is that about?
Well, I’ve been a coffee fiend since I was 14. Over the years,
I’ve had a lot of bad coffee but, every now and then, I’ll have
one and think, “Why can’t I have this all of the time?” A
friend introduced me to the idea of “fresh” coffee—right
from the roaster—since most stuff we get in stores is actu-
ally months old. I started roasting batches in a popcorn pop-
per. Since then, I found some vintage, 120-year-old, gas-fired
coffee roasters with perforated drums and had a machinist
friend and I rebuild them. I went to a roasting school in Mill
Valley that taught me a bunch more and now I can control
what is in my cup by how I roast.

What a fun thing to have a passion for! Having that kind of
serious equipment, do you sell your beans?
Every morning, I make a two-liter carafe that I can drink
and share at work. I’ll also bring along 10-15 bags—and I’ve
gotten a lot of people hooked! And while I can’t be available
every day to roast because of my real job, I launched the
SingleBatchCoffee.com site so folks who have tried it and
would like more can get some—even though we may not be
working on a job together for months.

PABLO MUNGUIA:
PRO TOOLS PLAYBACK MUSIC MIXER
You’re being honored here for your professional audio work,
but you also took the role of Director of Berklee’s Master

of Music in music production, technology, and innovation in
Valencia, Spain, this past fall. How is that going?
It’s going really well! Thanks for asking! It is a tremendous
experience to work in the vibrant campus in Valencia, Spain,
where the four masters programs in scoring for film, television
and video games, contemporary performance, global enter-
tainment and music business, and my own program interact
and cross-pollinate ideas. The students in all four programs
are constantly collaborating on projects, concerts, and new
technologies. It is great fun to see the students’ ideas come
together and bear fruit!

Your academic background is in materials and engineering
(with degrees from MIT and UT Austin). What was the initial
interest that led you to pursue that field?
Well, I was always very good at math and science. My favorite
subject in high school was physics. I never thought that I could
make it in music, so I naturally gravitated toward a career in
science. At MIT, I was introduced to materials science my
freshman year and, although at first I wasn’t crazy about it, I
came to love it and majored in it. Then I went on to start my
PhD in materials engineering at UT Austin. It was then that I
switched directions, and got my master’s instead.

How did that lead to you eventually attending Berklee and
receiving their professional degree?
I had a great thesis advisor in Texas. His name was Al Tasch.
I’d never met anyone as motivated and genuinely excited
about his field as Al was about what we were doing. Whatever
he was drinking, I wanted some of that. In that interaction, I
learned the difference between doing something you’re good
at, and something you’re passionate about. It’s easier when
you’re passionate because it doesn’t feel like work. A death in
my family and the end of a relationship provided enough of
a pause for me to step back and take stock. I realized I didn’t
have the passion my advisor did, and looked for what it was
that I did in my free time. I found that recording and music
were something I kept going back to year after year when I
was on vacation from whatever I was doing at the time. That
was the key. I made a bet against myself that I would only
go to music school if they accepted me and if they gave me
a scholarship—to know that they were willing to invest in
me as well.

I looked in a career book in the library before Google or the
internet was around, and found that Berklee was the only
college that taught music production. I was also in a hurry, I
figured education was going to be the fastest way to get there,
since I had already spent 10 years pursuing science and didn’t
want to waste another minute.

And after Berklee, you landed a job at Westlake Audio. That
must have been a great introduction to audio engineering as
a career.
Westlake was great. After you leave school, you think you know
how everything works, but really, it’s in the studios, in front
of musicians, with the clock running that you really learn how
to record, mix, and produce music. Westlake is also awesome.
At what point did you make the decision to shift from being on staff at Westlake to going freelance?
After three great years, mostly as an assistant working long hours. Even though I was earning overtime, the base rate was designed to make you want to leave if you became successful. By the time I left, I was the first call for all sessions, so I had made a lot of great connections and contacts at that point.

Were you doing tracking, overdubs, mixing, or sequencing—or some of it all?
I was doing a little of everything, yeah. Each session had different needs and the job was basically to get things done. I was always happy to have all my skills get used every day.

How did you first become involved in live broadcasts?
I had met Tommy Vicari at Westlake in a Quincy Jones session. He invited me to work on other sessions with him, and we hit it off. One day, he called me and asked me to replace his brother Danny Vicari, because his brother was out on tour with Bobby McFerrin. So of course, I said yes! The TV show was the Academy Awards. So I was really lucky. I was Bill Conti’s assistant, and helped Tommy with the orchestra in the pit. The learning curve was VERY steep, but it was also such an amazing opportunity. I just gave it my all and, thankfully, at the end of the day, they liked me enough to invite me back the following year.

Did your relationship with other mixers lead you to be called for the high-profile projects you currently work on?
Absolutely. Tommy was the first to call me for a show, but a relationship with Westlake also led to another call from Michael Abbott, who hired me for my first job posting a TV show. Michael brought me onto other shows he was involved in, such as the Grammys. Through the Academy Awards, I met Ed Greene, who invited me to work with him on a LOT of shows. That led to the Super Bowl Halftime Show, and shows in China and around the world. Mixers such as Pat Balztell and Paul Sandweiss have opened up many doors, and have also become dear friends as well. Mark King has generously invited me to work with him on several shows, such as Grease Live!

Tell us about the kind of work you do on a “typical” broadcast variety special such as the Grammys?
The cool thing about what I do is that each show is different. On some shows, I run the central music playback system for all the prerecorded tracks for all the bands on the show. On other shows, I may run only the typical Booth A2 music playback system, and in some shows, I run both systems at the same time. I also run systems where I can change the length of the arrangement of a piece of pre-recorded music in real time. This is useful, for example, in an event where the music has to play over a particular moment that can’t be locked down, such as an opening-ceremonies torch ceremony or a flag-raising ceremony. Because the music on the shows I work on is critical, I always run redundant systems that go through a proprietary switching system I designed that automatically switches from the inputs of the primary to the backup system in case of any failure in the primary.

Relative to a show like the Grammys, where you have a couple of days for prep/rehearsals before air, how was it working on Grease Live! where you had more time but a very dense script filled with musical numbers and lots of scene changes?
Grease Live! was all about concentration for the whole three hours of the show. We had more chances to rehearse but not that much more, actually. We make copious notes, and relied on [the cast] to ‘perform’ the show exactly the way the director and the choreography expects it to go. Another very cool part in Grease was precisely changing the length of the arrangements in real time. That is when it gets fun!

Are you also creating the monitor mix for the vocalists or is that another mixer?
I was creating several mixes at the same time from my system. One was feeding the broadcast music mixer, Biff Dawes, and another one was hitting the stages, and then channeled to the vocalists and dancers. Yet another mix fed certain areas of the stage for specific purposes. The tricky part about this was keeping track of who was getting what mix. The monitor mixers definitely helped keep me honest!

Any “Aha!” moments from Grease?
Well, there was a choir that was supposed to be a choir on camera, except that it really wasn’t—they were actors pretending to be a choir. So we kept rehearsing with them, because I needed to follow their lead musically with one of these arrangement changes I discussed. They kept changing the way they did it, and I kept getting the wrong cues by looking at them. After a few rehearsals, I realized that I was expecting them to behave as singers and musicians, and they simply were not behaving that way! So, I shut my eyes for that section and just ran the music the way I felt it and, suddenly, it worked! So, for the rest of the rehearsals, I just shut my eyes for that section—and also for the live show!

When you’re not teaching or on location for a broadcast, what do you like to do?
I just had my first baby boy, and we have a Siberian husky that loves to go for walks in an emptied riverbed near our house in Valencia. So my favorite thing to do is to take them, with my wife, for a nice long, lazy walk. My wife and I used to run marathons in LA but now, between our son and our dog, we are in a constant marathon!

Congratulations, guys, on your great work on what sounds like a very fun show to be a part of!
This year’s CAS Awards for Outstanding Products went to **McDSP** for its SA-2 Dialog Processor plugin and **CEDAR**, for its DNS 2 portable dialogue noise suppressor at the 53rd Annual CAS Awards ceremony.

**OUTSTANDING PRODUCT: POST-PRODUCTION McDSP SA-2 DIALOG PROCESSOR**

It’s not every day you can have a one-off piece of signal processing gear built just for you, but former CAS Career Achievement Award winner and past president of the CAS, Michael Minkler, did just that. His “Sonic Assault,” a multi-band limiter for dialogue, was used with great success on many films. The problem? There was just one, and it was getting along in years.

Enter Ceri Thomas, who asked Colin McDowell of McDSP to model and replicate the hardware box as a plugin. The result is the SA-2. Here are some excerpts from a conversation I had with Colin McDowell.

**How did Mike Minkler’s tech, Ceri Thomas, find you and how difficult was it to model the box he was using?**

Ceri’s been a client for a long time and regular McDSP user. Different people had tried to model the Sonic Assault but never got it quite right. Ceri called and I visited with them at Todd-AO, and began developing the SA-2 with different modes so I could fine-tune it to Mike’s taste. We put an analyzer on the box and, having done active processing before I went in, I had some idea how the hardware would behave. There were some tricky things, sometimes there were band-to-band differences we had to observe. Mike knew what he wanted, he was very specific, so if you were off, he’d tell you. Mike made it way easier because you had a super-experienced ear for feedback.

**So, the SA-2 looks like a multi-band limiter from here.**

The big tricks are the smart parts in the active circuit. Because of that many bands, we thought it had to be a certain way, and those guesses worked out well. Even the metering was Mike’s preference, using percentage (100% = 12 dB, 50% = 6 dB) instead of dB reduction. We did some things simple and some clever things for phase coherence in the active processing.

**Do you publish the center frequencies and Q of the presets?**

Not really. The original box was mislabeled for center frequency—it does move around based on the modes. Both are adjustable in the variable mode and the selectivity of the trigger frequency moves around a little, too, when you’re doing that. (There are three preset processing modes and one variable mode in the plugin, an improvement over the original hardware design.)

**Is there anything about the development of the SA-2 that has made you think about developing other products for motion picture production?**

Yes. Noise reduction, surround processing, and getting out talking to the right people.

**Did you enjoy the awards ceremony?**

We were happy to be invited, it was fun, and we would go again. We thought we were going to be a fly on the wall and we won!

**Congratulations to Colin and McDSP for their development of the SA-2 from Mike Minkler’s “black box!”**

**OUTSTANDING PRODUCT: PRODUCTION CEDAR DNS 2 DYNAMIC NOISE SUPPRESSOR UNIT**

I recently caught up with Gordon Reid at CEDAR to talk about the DNS 2, their portable two-channel noise reduction system that won the award on the production side this year.

**How long have location mixers been bugging you for something like this?**

I think we probably received the first request within days of
launching the DNS 1000 back in September 2001, and we soon found that location sound recordists and outside broadcast teams (what in the US you’d call remote teams) were using the DNS 1000 in the way in which we now envisage the DNS 2000 is most often used.

What were the obstacles associated with making it work in the field?
The huge difference between the manually controlled DNS products and the most recent ones is the development of the Learn Algorithm, which enables the new models to determine the noise content of the signal automatically, even while the speech is going on. And it wasn’t until that mathematics was developed that, eventually, a version showed very promising results. Once that (Learn Algorithm) had been developed, it was then a question of making it as computationally efficient as possible and making it possible to control with the minimum number of controls so that it was very simple and intuitive and quick to use in the field. Although the algorithm is a DNS process, the way the audio is handled is completely different. I would imagine we started developing the Learn Algorithm sometime in the mid-2000s, because we launched the first product with it in 2012.

Understanding that some mixers are reluctant to do a lot of processing in the field, do you find instances where people use it more to audition the possibility of noise reduction for post, or recording processed and unprocessed tracks simultaneously?
All of the above. The DNS 2 has the ability to take a single channel of audio and output both the raw audio and the processed audio simultaneously, so that deals with those people who are, understandably, cautious that what they’re hearing in the field may not be the best possible and that they want the raw audio for post. It’s also used in very much the same way as a confidence test, and one will often find that the lower the budget, the more frequently the audio processed in the field is used (in the final product). And if you can cut your post time by a significant percentage, and your post costs by a significant percentage, and you don’t expect the audio to improve noticeably, then the audio that’s processed in the field may well be as good as it gets.

How is this changing production across the board?
From people who are now live broadcasting in very difficult environments that previously might not have been possible. Particularly, sports broadcasters and news broadcasters are now able to go live to air intelligibly and with the background noise suppressed to an adequate degree that you still have the atmos of what’s going on but without it drowning out what you want to hear which is, of course, the reporter or anchorman.

For film production, particularly in the low-cost arena, it’s made a huge difference because some low-cost film and TV productions that possibly didn’t even have the budget for any kind of serious cleanup in post, now the audio that’s being provided to the mixers may already be suitable for the final production.

Has noise reduction reached its peak?
A most resounding no! It’s come on a huge long way in 30 years, but it’s still got a very long way to go, and there are many recordings and many live situations where current noise reduction remains inadequate. I think there’s a lot of research to be done, a lot of new products, and a lot of exciting new algorithms still to be developed.

Any closing words?
We are always hugely grateful for recognition from the Cinema Audio Society and we value the recognition of the CAS very highly.

Congratulations to CEDAR for its groundbreaking field noise reduction system!
It was an absolute pleasure to sit down for lunch at the lovely Urth Caffé in Santa Monica with this year’s Student Recognition Award winner, Wenrui Fan, also known as Sam. This tough competition had applicants from all over the country—and all over the world. Being only the third winner of this prestigious award, Sam is an originator as well as someone who has cemented himself into the upper echelon of the industry at a very young age.

I’ve always felt that success in anything consists of three parts: TALENT (an extremely loaded term—which I will consolidate to include work ethic, pure skill set, and a collaborative personality), CONNECTIONS, and then lastly, LUCK. There was such fierce competition for this award this year that no matter how you look at it and no matter how much talent one has, luck plays a huge role. What I’m really expressing is, it’s nice to see good things happen to good people. Excerpts from our conversation on the noisy patio of Urth Caffé on a Friday afternoon brought a smile to my face. Sam has clearly made this a priority in his already busy, post-prestigious, and well-deserved award-winning life.

Give us some background on yourself, Sam.

I came from Beijing, China, where I was born and raised. I earned my bachelor’s degree at the Beijing Film Academy (BFA) where I studied in their sound department. After that, I came to the US to earn my master’s, studying at Chapman University’s Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, in film production. So at BFA, it’s a pretty good school in Asia for film, and so within the four years of my undergrad, I had some experiences in working in post-production sound. After I graduated, in my second year I had a commercial shoot with the people who were a little bit older than me. They asked a person who they knew in school if they would bring them to the set to record production sound and maybe do the post for them, just for experience in the real world. The producer was from Taiwan and so they found a local production sound mixer in Beijing and that person is my professor and my friend, and he grabbed me as a utility and boom operator for the shoot. So it’s the first time I experienced the American industry. I learned a lot from them and this really makes me want to explore more in the workflow. I decided to apply for the master program in the US and my parents also wanted me to have more experiences in traveling abroad and living outside the country. I also wanted to go out and see what happens on the other side of the world—yeah, that’s here. I came and Chapman offered me the position in a short amount of time.
Talk to me about what your life has been like since you graduated.

Okay, after my graduation—actually, I started working/interning and learning from the 424 team last year. The person I’m working for with the company, the dialogue supervisor—her name is Erin—and she came from Chapman about 20 years ago. She’s like the top notch of the industry. Supervising sound editor for *Pitch Perfect, Ride Along 2*, and all the big shows.

Oh, wow! That sounds like the perfect place for you to land. Tell me more about your experiences at 424.

424 Post is a facility in Culver City next to Sony. Oscar-nominated for sound supervising and sound editing, they have some great supervising sound editors like Sean McCormack and Ben Cook—he’s the winner of this year’s Emmy for *Black Sails*. They were supervising sound editors for *Apocalypto*, for all of Mel Gibson’s movies. They have some collaboration with one of the post facilities in Shanghai, so I know the post managers in Shanghai and they said, “If you want to study anything or get training, you definitely want to hang out with those people.” So I go there, and I hang out with them. They are super nice to me. That’s basically a year and, also, I have some other freelance jobs like I’m mostly doing the post and sound design and editing for short films. I also have some gigs from China, like these kind of overseas kind of things, but not a lot because of the time zone difference.

At 424, they let you leave work in the middle of the day to meet me for this interview?!

Yeah, it’s great! They treat me so well.

So how has your life changed since winning the Cinema Audio Society Student Recognition Award?

Yeah, I would say the awards show was very important to me—even at the award ceremony because, as you say, I’m an international student, I’ve never been to this kind of awards show, and a lot of people that I know or I read about back in China. Now today, suddenly they show up in front of me and we were shaking hands and saying “Hello” to each other—this is really amazing, you know? It’s really great, and I contacted some of the mixers like Stephen Tibbo CAS—he gave me his card and I just emailed him and he emailed me back, he’s like, “We will meet up after shooting, and we will figure it out later.” These are all good resources and good contacts for me.

He’s a great guy and it’s good for you to know him. I’m sure you know he does production sound on *Modern Family*, and he does post-production sound for many other projects, and then sometimes for *Modern Family*, as well.

He responded to me very quick and he was really polite and interesting. After he finishes all these shows, he may have some work for me, so this is all great for me.

We were conversing a little bit about what you admire about California and why you came here to begin with. Hollywood film has been around for so many years, so the whole industry from my point of view is very mature. People know what they are doing because the standard is so high and their skill is so high. Also, with all the protections like the unions and labor and the rules of how many hours you have to shoot for a day and what’s your break during the night and you have your own life and all that. I think it’s really what I want to experience. I also want to learn because we don’t have that in China. That’s all the reasons that make the Hollywood film industry the strongest and the best all in the world. I want to experience, I want to learn, and I also want to sometime later, go back to [Beijing]. I can let them know or I can teach them about all of this.

At 424, they let you leave work in the middle of the day to meet me for this interview?!

Yeah, it’s great! They treat me so well.

So how has your life changed since winning the Cinema Audio Society Student Recognition Award?

Yeah, I would say the awards show was very important to me—even at the award ceremony because, as you say, I’m an international student, I’ve never been to this kind of awards show, and a lot of people that I know or I read about back in China. Now today, suddenly they show up in front of me and we were shaking hands and saying “Hello” to each other—this is really amazing, you know? It’s really great, and I contacted some of the mixers like Stephen Tibbo CAS—he gave me his card and I just emailed him and he emailed me back, he’s like, “We will meet up after shooting, and we will figure it out later.” These are all good resources and good contacts for me.

He’s a great guy and it’s good for you to know him. I’m sure you know he does production sound on *Modern Family*, and he does post-production sound for many other projects, and then sometimes for *Modern Family*, as well.

He responded to me very quick and he was really polite and interesting. After he finishes all these shows, he may have some work for me, so this is all great for me.

We were conversing a little bit about what you admire about California and why you came here to begin with. Hollywood film has been around for so many years, so the whole industry from my point of view is very mature. People know what they are doing because the standard is so high and their skill is so high. Also, with all the protections like the unions and labor and the rules of how many hours you have to shoot for a day and what’s your break during the night and you have your own life and all that. I think it’s really what I want to experience. I also want to learn because we don’t have that in China. That’s all the reasons that make the Hollywood film industry the strongest and the best all in the world. I want to experience, I want to learn, and I also want to sometime later, go back to [Beijing]. I can let them know or I can teach them about all of this.

Is there anything else you want to tell me? Anything that you want to talk about in winning your Student Award this year? Any last words for the CAS or anything that you want to express about your award in closing?

First, I have to say thank you, CAS, for the award, for even letting me have this chance to be in the room, to be that close with all the famous re-recording mixers and production sound mixers, the sound workers. I mean, when I first got into the hall and I saw *La La Land*, the whole crew was sitting next to me. Because I really liked the film and I like the director, he’s really young and *Whiplash* was one of my favorites, and I saw him. I saw the director sitting, like, two steps away from me! I’m like, “This is a dream come true!” And thank you for every professor that I’ve ever had—like Michael Kowalski, he’s my mentor at Chapman University, and thank you to all my friends back at Beijing Film Academy. They support me so much and thanks to my family, my girlfriend, all my friends who are supporting me here. As an international student, we don’t get too many chances to get into the core center of the industry, but I’m lucky and I know all these people and, hopefully in the future, I can bring more value communication-wise. It’s a little tough for me when I first came here with all the language and cultural differences, but I’m a fortunate guy to have all my friends and all the people, all the mentors who have guided me through, working through all that and I really appreciate everything so very much.
The Cinema Audio Society is now accepting submissions for its 2017 Student Recognition Award. This award is intended to encourage student interest in production and post-production sound mixing, and to recognize individuals with exceptional and demonstrated passion for the field. The selection criteria will focus on the student’s short essays in response to application questions and a professor’s recommendation letter.

Five finalists will be selected and invited to attend the 54th Annual CAS Awards as guests of the CAS, where the Student Recognition Award winner will be announced (travel expenses not included). The Award recipient will receive a $2,500 cash award. All 5 finalists will take home a gift bag filled with many outstanding tools of the trade contributed by top audio manufacturers*

Eligibility for this award is open to any student enrolled in a bachelor’s or master’s degree program at an accredited college or university. Students may be pursuing any major but should have a demonstrated interest and some experience in production and/or post-production sound mixing for Film, Television, Gaming and VR. Please encourage all students who fit the criteria to apply.

Sincerely,

Mark Ulano, CAS President
The Cinema Audio Society is now accepting submissions for its 2017 Student Recognition Award. This award is intended to encourage student interest in production and post-production sound mixing, and to recognize individuals with exceptional and demonstrated passion for the field. The selection criteria will focus on the student's short essays in response to application questions and a professor's recommendation letter.

Five finalists will be selected and invited to attend the 54th Annual CAS Awards as guests of the CAS, where the Student Recognition Award winner will be announced (travel expenses not included). The Award recipient will receive a $2,500 cash award. All 5 finalists will take home a gift bag filled with many outstanding tools of the trade contributed by top audio manufacturers.

Eligibility

Students must be enrolled in good standing at an accredited 4-year degree-granting college or university during any school term between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017. Students at US or International institutions are eligible provided the school is accredited. All application materials must be submitted in English. Student applications must be accompanied by a recommendation from a professor or instructor.

Selection Criteria

The CAS Student Recognition Award is given to an individual based on the recommendation of an instructor or professor at the student's college or university and on the student's accomplishments, enthusiasm and demonstrated potential in the field of sound mixing and/or sound recording for film, television, gaming and/or VR. It is not an award of excellence based on a specific student project.

Application Requirements

1. Students must submit the following materials online:
   A. Unofficial transcript (please highlight and explain relevant coursework).
   B. List of projects in which you were the primary person responsible for production and/or post-production sound mixing.

2. Once you have completed your portion of the application, a link will then be auto-generated and sent to the professor’s email address you’ve provided. We strongly suggest that you follow up with your professor.

3. Shortly after submitting your application and documents, we will send you an email confirmation that it has been received.

4. Finalists will be asked to submit a 2-minute example of their work and an informal introductory video, 3 minutes or under.

Applications and all accompanying documents must be submitted no later than Saturday, September 23, 2017 at 11:59 pm PST. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Please check the CAS website for student nominations the week of October 16, 2017.

Additional Information

- The CAS Student Recognition Award will be announced and presented at the 54th Annual CAS Awards in Los Angeles, CA on Saturday, February 24, 2018. Five finalists will be invited to attend the Awards as the guests of CAS. Any related travel expenses are the responsibility of the student nominees.
- $2,500 will be awarded to the selected student.

Please visit our webpage for the online application.

CinemaAudioSociety.org

*Any related tax liability is the responsibility of the individual.
I have many role models and mentors in other areas of my life, but my earliest mentors in film sound all come from my days as a graduate student at USC in the late ’80s. The history of the cinema program at USC includes about half a dozen faculty who were there for decades. I matriculated at a pivotal time, as the end of that era saw a large transition in faculty.

When I got to USC as an MFA student in 1986, the sound department had two full-time faculty members, Dan Wiegand and Ken Miura. Dan was loved as a mentor by many people before my time, but he retired my first semester as a student. As such, I did not really have a relationship with him. Ken Miura, however, was around for a long time. He was no longer teaching regularly when I arrived. He was an administrator when I started, but I do remember him doing guest lectures. Ken was born in the US to Japanese immigrants. I remember that he peppered his lectures with references to Japanese thought. As one example, he would talk about the fact that sync did not matter if there was a lot of movement onscreen, and he explained that in Japan there is a different word when a group of people is three or more. Psychologically, we treat a larger group differently, which is why we do not need to sync background footsteps for all the characters in Grand Central Station; only the featured two or three main characters are necessary for the audience to believe what they are seeing and hearing.

Unfortunately, during World War II when Ken was a teenager, he and his family had been interned along with 120,000 Japanese-Americans. When I found this out, I
asked him what it was like and why he still loved America after what they had put him through. His answer was short and simple. His father loved America, and he had been taught to love the country without question, even though they had been mistreated. What I did not know at the time is that Ken also served in the armed forces within a few years of being released, where he was stationed in Japan. I did not know this because Ken is not a man who brags. In Japan, he worked with a photography unit. After Korea, he went to USC Film School (which must have been difficult at a time when there were almost no Asian-American students in the program) and, after graduating, became faculty. In all, Ken was employed at the university for almost 50 years, retiring officially in 2006. He now spends his time with his two daughters and their children in Torrance, California.

Because I worked in the sound department as a teaching assistant, Ken’s mentorship to me was not the typical student-teacher relationship. I saw him more as manager and administrator than a teacher. One of the great things about working in the department was that we had the keys to the facilities. This was before you could edit and mix your film on a laptop; we were editing 16mm mag. Seven-time Oscar winner and CAS Career Achievement Award recipient Gary Rydstrom recounts a story familiar to all sound department employees. Student films had strict time limits on their access to the dubbing theaters.

“We thought we were pulling a fast one by coming in late at night and doing ‘Midnight Mixes’ on films that needed a little more help. We knew that Ken would touch the dubbers in the morning to see if they were still warm from a midnight mix, so we would wrap a few hours before he got in. What we didn’t know was that Ken had installed a counter on the recorder and it was clear to him when people were working at night, but he never called out the students. He was aware that he was helping us by looking the other way.”

Interestingly, when I was a student employee, Ken did make it clear that student mixes had to end on time, which made me much better at allocating my own time in the studio in later years. Yet at the same time, he knew that students who were willing to mix all night probably deserved support as well.

Ken mentored many famous USC alumni, including George Lucas, Walter Murch CAS, Ben Burtt MPSE, and Gary Rydstrom. Tom Johnson CAS was a teaching assistant at the time that Gary was a student. I knew that Ben Burtt had used a recording of Ken as the voice of ET in one scene where ET drinks some beer and appears to be drunk, so I asked Ben (four-time Oscar winner) about his relationship with Ken:

“Ken was absolutely a pivotal force in my life. He recognized my passion for movie sound, which was not a common trait among film students in 1971-1975. He demonstrated a calmness under fire, a patience, and a work focus which set the example for me as to what perspective a sound person...”
should have to succeed in the production ‘machinery’ in Hollywood. He gave me the opportunity to assist in the teaching of a filmmaking class for non-majors. I was a filmmaker at heart, and he saw that in me and encouraged me to learn sound with an understanding of the whole film creative process. Most significantly, when George Lucas and producer Gary Kurtz came to him looking for an eager, talented student whom they might train in their own methods to work on the first Star Wars film, Ken recommended me. The connection was made, and the rest is history for me. He set me on a track which carries me along even today. He always remained a friend and mentor who injected a wry, ironic sense of humor into every situation.”

Gary Rydstrom agrees. He remembers Ken recommending him for his job at Lucasfilm in similar fashion, and keeping in touch for many years. Gary made a very funny animated short film as a student called The Committee. The film was about the faculty members at the school and they all voiced themselves. One night decades later, Ken heard about an explosion near San Anselmo (where Gary lived) and took the time to call Gary personally to make sure he was safe. This is typical of Ken; to remain a friend for life.

Sound editor and professor Rodger Pardee MPS says, “It is hard to underestimate the influence of Ken Miura and Dan Wiegand. There is a shared experience to those of us who had them. They were great examples of demeanor and were good role models.”

Ken hired me as an adjunct faculty member in 1993. I became full-time faculty in 2001 and stayed until 2008, when I moved to CU Denver. Ken shared an office with me for some of the years that I was an adjunct. Ken was also instrumental in hiring the three other sound mentors I had during my time as a student at USC.

When Dan Wiegand retired, Ken tried to get another former student and teaching assistant, Ron Curfman, to interview for a replacement position. Ron declined, as he was at the height of his career as a production mixer. In addition to being the production mixer on Dallas, he also had a small rental company and a small studio in the Valley. Taking a full-time faculty position would be a large pay cut. Later, Dan & Ken talked him into coming down to campus to give a guest lecture and to show the (then) new facilities. He came down and met with Ken and the other major faculty members at the time and, as the conversation progressed, Ron realized they were interviewing him for the job. At the conclusion, they made him an offer. Ron thought it over and decided to accept. A few weeks before classes began, he got an offer to work on a large miniseries that was shooting all over Europe. Unfortunately, he had to turn it down due to his commitment at USC.

Ron had been a teaching assistant when he was a grad student at USC (MFA ’74). Ben Burtt was in his 290 class; he remembers Ben’s projects as outstanding. He began teaching in 1987 and I was in his first class. Ron taught production sound far better than anyone before him, as he had so much on-set experience. His knowledge
of how to deal with production situations was extensive. He also understood post-production mixing because his studio, Score One, did voice-over, ADR, and music recording. In fact, the scoring program frequently used his studio for recording assignments with as many as 15 live musicians. Ron was really the one who recommended me as a teaching assistant, and that changed my life forever. Ron was also one of the people who wrote a letter of recommendation for me to join the CAS. So, in many ways, this has come full cycle for me. Ron retired in 2000, remarried, moved to Texas and now has a 15-year-old daughter!

Rodger Pardee MPSE got his MA from USC in 1981 (and was also a teaching assistant in the sound department). He came to USC to teach part time in 1988 (where I was his teaching assistant) after working as a sound editor on several Hollywood films, including *Rambo III*. He continued at USC off-and-on until 1996, while balancing a full professional life as a sound editor and sound effects recordist. In 1998, he taught a class on the other side of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University. He eventually accepted a full-time position there and is now a Full Professor.

Rodger was an important mentor to me in many ways. His knowledge of sound editing and his years of experience helped fill the gaps in my sound education that Ken and Ron had not really taught. But there was much more to his mentorship than that. Rodger has been a lifelong support system for me, especially when I became a full-time faculty member. He mentored me as an academic as well.

I asked Rodger about his opinions on mentorship, and he pointed out that it is always difficult to mentor a large number of students. The students who end up becoming mentees are the ones who seek help outside of classes. I asked about students he had who went on to success, and he mentioned several from LMU. Rodger helped get a student an unofficial position shadowing re-recording mixer Anna Behlmer. Laura Weist is now a mixer on her own. Rodger is also proud of former student Corey Eccles, Class of 2007, who now teaches in the same program at LMU. Rodger said, “She is doing a really excellent job for us and has taught a variety of sound classes at both the grad and undergrad level. I look to her to help ‘carry the torch’ to the next generation of audio students.”

Rodger also quoted an email he had just received from a former student from USC, Dave Grecu, who is both a picture editor and sound editor who now works on *Conan*: “Even to this day, you have affected my thought processes as a professional, and in a good way!”

His former student, Rachel Corrales Simmons, recently won an Emmy as sound editor on *Houdini*. Rachel was happy to share her mentorship experience about Rodger, and says it much more eloquently than I:

“Rodger is very significant to my foundation in sound and storytelling. The motto I have always carried with me throughout my education and career is something he said in my first class as a freshman at LMU. He told us,
Ken was absolutely a pivotal force in my life. He recognized my passion for movie sound, which was not a common trait among film students in 1971-1975. He demonstrated a calmness under fire, a patience, and a work focus which set the example for me as to what perspective a sound person should have to succeed in the production ‘machinery’ in Hollywood.

’Sincerity sells.’ I have found that this influences, not only the quality of work and storytelling I strive for as a professional, but also in my decisions in life. Rodger is a person that exemplifies that statement and is a positive role model. The other thing that he impressed upon us is that there are no stupid questions, only the questions you don’t ask. It is very important to ask questions when you do not know how to do something; we are always learning. He taught us the importance of humility. He always made sure that we could ask him something, whether it was specifically related to his class or not, and even after graduation. He is never hesitant to go above and beyond but doesn’t call attention to it.”

She continues, “A year into my first industry job, I joked with my boss about how nervous I was when I interviewed, and he told me that I was essentially already hired because Rodger wrote to him beforehand. I had known that I was brought in for the interview because of Rodger’s connection to my boss, but I did not know the extent he went to make sure I was hired. I also think the level of trust and respect my former boss showed for Rodger’s opinion speaks volumes. I really have a lot of respect for Rodger as a professional mentor and as a person. Not only is he very accomplished, he is also very kind, and the caliber of his character is what makes him an excellent mentor and person. I am grateful to have his support, which he has always given so generously.”

Years ago, I got an email from Rodger asking if I had any students who knew music editing. I recommended my teaching assistant (TA) at USC at the time, Paul Apelgren. It turned out that Rodger had a request from a former student of his at LMU, Alex Levy, who was working as a music editor for Michael Giacchino. Alex wound up hiring my TA as an assistant. Paul is now a music editor on his own, and has won two MPSE Golden Reel Awards, including one for The Force Awakens. It is very gratifying to see that several generations of USC students have continued the mentoring process at USC and elsewhere.

The last of my mentors from USC that I would like to discuss is CAS Board member and Career Achievement Award recipient Tom Holman. Tom was different from my other faculty mentors in that he did not come directly from film production, he came from engineering at Lucasfilm.

One year when Ken Miura had a sabbatical year, his former student George Lucas invited him to spend the year at Lucasfilm, where he could work in the sound department doing research. Ken had breakfast practically every day for a year with Tom Holman, and spent the year trying to talk Tom into accepting a teaching position at USC. It did not happen until a couple of years later in 1987, when I was his first teaching assistant. Tom had a huge influence even after he stopped teaching regularly.

Tom did not come from USC, so his mentors were different. Although Tom had intended on majoring in engineering, he was drawn to the theater department at U. Illinois and eventually changed majors to journalism and communications, which was a broadcasting program. He wound up working on films for years there, and later went to Hollywood where he operated boom on the film Cool Breeze for production mixer Jeff Wexler (also a CAS Board member and Career Achievement Award recipient). The film is also Jeff’s first film as a mixer.

One of Tom’s classes at USC was a lecture class to all production students, which could have as many as 120 students. (After I became faculty, I taught the class a few times when Tom was on sabbatical.) The class was loved by students. On the first day of class, he showed the production track from the first scene in the first Star Wars film, complete with plywood footsteps, muffled dialogue through various characters’ masks, and the voice of British actor David Prowse as Vader instead of the iconic James Earl Jones voice. He would follow that up by playing the individual stems from the rolling boulder scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark. Tom says he could
judge the caliber of the students by their reaction to those scenes, and I agree. Whenever I watched it as TA or teacher, I saw that it was the lightbulb moment for many people who wound up getting into sound. But if people were bored with that (and many were, they were there to be directors, not sound designers or mixers), it could be a trying semester.

Sometimes challenging students can turn out to be strong. John Singleton admits he struggled to pass Tom’s class (it was notoriously difficult), but was the first to thank Tom when he gave a commencement speech at USC, pointing out that he got the gig directing *Boyz n the Hood* by explaining that he would stick to the low budget by using sound design and lighting effects rather than having to rent a helicopter and other vehicles for the film. Tom says that the greatest pleasure is seeing former students’ names in credits (a sentiment echoed by Ron Curfman). Yet he is quick to point out that the students who force you to raise the bar as a professor are the ones who will get the most out of mentorship. He cites sound designer Erik Aadahl, two-time Oscar nominee for *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* and *Argo*, as one who made him step up as a teacher.

Ironically, since Tom was the only person teaching in the film school who had a complex understanding of statistics, he was asked to do a survey of alumni to see what they thought of the program. Although Tom’s name was not on the survey, the alumni overwhelmingly chose his class as their favorite at USC. Some of the other faculty questioned Tom’s involvement, so they re-did it the following year with an outside group, and got the exact same response. Tom left USC in 2011. The day after spring commencement that year, he went to a wedding. The next day, he drove to Cupertino and, in typical Tom Holman fashion, three days after commencement, he began work at Apple Computers without a break. Tom is still very active on the Board of the Cinema Audio Society and various other organizations.

Tom has been a mentor to me since he first chose me as a TA in 1987. Coming up on the 30-year anniversary of our relationship, I am incredibly thankful for all the guidance he has given me. Tom filled-in other gaps in my audio education, including the technical aspects of the industry, and he brought a working knowledge of post production to USC that was far more in-depth than my other mentors. His position in film sound is unique as he designed THX sound, which created a high standard of quality that sound designers and mixers want to live up to. Because of this, he taught re-recording mixing more extensively than the other faculty. It has also been tremendously important to my career for me to have people who were experienced in academia like Tom and Rodger as mentors. He has helped me innumerable times over the decades, and I am proud to consider him not only a mentor, but a lifelong friend.

Ken Miura, Ron Curfman, Rodger Pardee, and Tom Holman combined to give me the mentorship I needed. While I was still a student, I got my first paying gig as a music editor on a theatrically released feature film. Immediately after graduating, I was hired by Bill Varney (former president of the CAS) to start working as a trainee at Universal Studios, and less than a year after that, I was mixing at a small facility in the Valley. I would never have been ready to sit down as a mixer without the combined knowledge and support of these four gentlemen, and for that, I am forever indebted. •
You Just Can’t Make This Stuff Up

About a month ago, a producer called about a small indie movie, but I turned it down due to its low budget. When recently walking into my local salon for a hair appointment, I find a film crew in there shooting on the exact same project I had turned down. Ironically, I ended up being in the soft background getting my haircut during one of the scenes. Knowing all the crew and some of the actors, they never even asked me to sign a release. If this picture ends up gaining traction in distribution, I may just talk to a lawyer … just kidding. Small world.

–Jamie Scarpuzza CAS

It’s no secret Stevie Wonder is a gifted musical genius. His songs, his playing, singing, and performances are nothing except unique one to the next. He was a performer on a program called Motown Returns to the Apollo, the grand reopening of the famed Apollo Theater on 125th Street in Harlem. Other performers included Patti LaBelle, Joe Cocker, James Brown, Diana Ross, etc., etc.

When Stevie arrived for rehearsal, he came into the audio booth with a request. He wanted to sound on stage as “Little Stevie Wonder,” that is, as he would have sounded as a young man. The song he chose was from that period but to make it sound proper, his voice needed to be modified to a higher pitch.

These were the days of analog audio, so all I had available was an Eventide Harmonizer. In this device when the pitch is modified, it changes the key. He knew the key of the orchestration, but to arrive at the vocal sound he wanted meant his singing in a lower key, but listening to his modified sound in the key of the orchestration. I don’t know of any other singer who would even try to do anything like what he was attempting to do. We spent some time arriving at the sound he was looking for and I assured him it would be on his microphone for the performance, so we took it to the stage.

Working with Stevie is always a musical surprise but this particular performance was the most remarkable of all for me. Later that evening after good rehearsals, he successfully sang for the audience in a lower key while listening to the higher key in his monitors and PA as “Little Stevie Wonder.”

–Edward J. Greene CAS

DENECKE, INC.
Makers of the original SyncBox ®
Introduces the SB-4!
More features and higher stability than before.

Denecke, Inc.
25209 Avenue Tibbitts
Valencia, CA 91355
Phone (661) 607-0206 Fax (661) 257-2236
www.denecke.com Email: info@denecke.com
Associate CAS member Tim Song Jones is booming on the new Fox pilot called Behind Enemy Lines. The show was mixed by Robert Janiger and the utility sound technician was Rocky Quiroz.

Frank Morrone CAS and Ken Burton CAS are mixing Criminal Minds at Technicolor. Frank Morrone and Colette Dahanne CAS are mixing The Good Fight at Technicolor.

Mark Rozett CAS recently completed the dub on the Netflix miniseries Five Came Back for Amblin Entertainment. He then put the finishing touches on Dare to Be Different, an indie doc about '80s music groups and the radio station WLIR, premiering at Tribeca.

After over 35 years, Eric Batut CAS is retiring. He won’t miss the Fraturdays or the all-night shoots but he will miss all the colleagues and filmmakers he had the chance to work with, to know, and to appreciate the collaborative process that is filmmaking.

Jamie Scarpuzza CAS is getting ready for Season 2 of Comedy Central’s Detroiters.

John Pritchett CAS is having a busy time. John with boom Dave Roberts, Hawaiian utility Jon Mumper, and Atlanta utility Tyler Blythe recently finished Jumanji, not a reboot, but a sequel, shot mostly in Hawaii and then Atlanta and starring Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Jack Black, and Karen Gillan and directed by the amazing Jake Kasdan. Following that, Pritchett came back to Atlanta with Dave and Tyler to begin Avengers: Infinity War, which will likely shoot all of 2017. Directed by the also amazing Russo brothers, it will feature pretty much every superhero in the Marvel universe, too many to name here.

Steve Weiss CAS had Vince Schelley on boom and Dennis Carlin utility for an NBC pilot of Spaced Out, a comedy take-off of rocket launching company “Space X.” Steve, Vince, and Dennis will also return for a fifth season on TNT’s Major Crimes.

Fred Ginsburg CAS PhD will once again be part of the Audio Technica booth during NAB 2017 in Las Vegas to answer questions about production sound and to provide hands-on instruction. Sound Devices, K-Tek, and Rycote have all provided demo equipment for the sound cart. During March, Fred (who currently teaches audio at Cal State Northridge) was invited to guest lecture at the film department at UNLV. Earlier this year, Fred purchased a property in Las Vegas and has set up a satellite office since he is in Vegas so often on business. The house is named “Sage Manor” in memory of his first dog.

Kevin Sands CAS had a big day on the set of Unreal 3 last month. Ian Tarasof joined him to mix along with Steve Hooper on boom, Andy Bishop and Dillon Bochon on wires. We recorded a 9½ page oner that lasted 13 minutes over multiple sets that featured 14 speaking characters. It was a blast.

Beau Baker CAS finished his 12th season of Grey’s Anatomy, with Derrick Cloud and Bryan Mendoza. Now he is onto Season 2 of One Mississippi. As always, thanks to the 2nd unit people, among them, Steve Morantz CAS, James Clark, and Steve Morrow CAS.

A very busy 2016 has drifted into a promising 2017 for Buck Robinson CAS. He traveled to Pittsburgh this past May to mix the new David Fincher series Mindhunter for Netflix. In typical Fincher fashion, the 140-day schedule grew to 174 days of shooting, with Robinson not returning to Los Angeles until the end of February 2017. Los Angeles boom operator Cole Bluma accompanied him, with Pittsburgh local Jason Jouver filling the sound utility spot. Additional utility work was performed by another local, Kelly Roofner.

After a couple of weeks of R&R, Buck was back at it in Los Angeles, mixing the 20th Century Fox half-hour comedy pilot Type A, starring Eva Longoria. Once again, Cole Bluma boomed the show. This time, Christopher Siverman handled the utility duties. Finishing that, the trio of Robinson, Bluma, and Silverman continued on to do another half-hour comedy pilot, Hannah Royce’s Questionable Choices, which wrapped the middle of April. After a week off, Buck, Cole, and Chris are starting Season 2 of the Hugh Laurie drama series Chance for Hulu, which relocated from San Francisco to Los Angeles this year.

Karol Urban CAS MPSE and Ross Davis are finishing up Season 13 of Grey’s Anatomy for ABC. Additionally, Karol Urban mixed the Netflix original feature #realityhigh and is excited to hear another feature she finished for Sundance in December, Band Aid, has been picked up by IFC.

Tod Maitland CAS, Mike Scott, and Jerry Yuen ended two films that were honestly wonderful: Snatched, with Amy Schumer and Goldie Hawn in the jungle in Hawaii—how bad can that be? And The Greatest Showman, a big musical chronicling PT Barnum in 1850s New York, directed by the nicest, most talented first-time director he’s ever worked with, and starring Hugh Jackman (truly the nicest man in showbiz). This all coupled that with two of the songwriters from La La Land and The Freedom. They built out live sound around the music tracks making it sound “real.” A great experience all around! Both films were masterfully crafted by very experienced crews, but the true experience came from something very simple—being treated as a part of the creative process—the way we used to be treated—not just as expendable cogs in a wheel. It was a wonderful feeling that reminded Tod of what this whole business meant and means to him. He gives a good portion of credit to producer Don Lee, who
assembled a great group and treated them like the talented craftsman they have worked to become. Date we say it, “Old School” works and the projects benefit in every way.

Greetings from Las Vegas! **George A. Flores** CAS is enjoying the NAB Conference this year with Associate CAS member **Kevin Cerchiai**. 2017 continued the back-nine episode pick-up of the Warner Bros. Television/Fox one-hour dram-action-comedy *Lethal Weapon*. He acknowledges all who made me look good: Boom op Colin Campbell, alternating sound utilities Alexis Schafer, and Eva Rismanforoush … shouts to our double-up day players: Mixers **Steve Grothe** CAS, Mary Jo Devenney, **Steve Nelson** CAS, Jaya Jayaraja, Coleman Metts, Jake White, Brian Wittle, and **Stephan von Hase** CAS. Also, to boom and utilities **Steve Evans** CAS, Michael Nicastro, Nick Carbone, **Sara Evans** CAS, Rob Cunningham, Alexander Burstein, Heather Fink, Chet Leonard, Jeff Zimmerman, and Jason Kubota. After a pilot for ABC and pickups for *Transformers V* (courtesy of **Peter Devlin** CAS), he finds himself here in Sin City to enjoy fun in the sun and getting his audio geek on.

**Steve Guercio** CAS contributed to the PBS show *The Talk: Race in America*, a documentary film about African-American and Latino families in America that are teaching their children how to react when stopped by the police. In addition, he worked on *America By the Numbers* with **Maria Hinojosa: The New Deciders**—a PBS documentary series on how Asian American, Black Millennial, Arab American, and Latino Evangelical voters are growing strength and influence in the 2016 election. Steve also wrapped another successful season with NFL Films by mixing throughout the conclusion of the season including *Wild Card Divisional games, AFC Championship Game, Pro Bowl*, and *Super Bowl 51* in Houston.

**Steve Morantz** CAS has had a busy 2017 so far. Having just completed 26 episodes of the Amazon series *Just Add Magic* at the end of the year, he hit the ground running with two pilots, *Splitting Up Together*, as well as *Will vs. the Future*. With him are Dirk Stout, Mitch Cohn, Anthony “Tony Cruz” Ortiz, and Tim Salmon. Special thanks to **Steve Morrow** CAS, **Beau Baker** CAS, and Robert Sharman.

**Aron Siegel** CAS wrapped Season 1 of 20th Century Fox TV’s *24: Legacy*, with boom op Matt Derber and sound utility Nik Waddell in late February. Mixer Chris Mills was on 2nd unit. Aron also finished a low-budget indie in March, *St Agatha*, directed by Darry Lynn Bouseman (*Saw 2*), with boom op Robert Vardaros and utility Dusty Fields.

Despite his cart catching fire in Season 3, Aron returned to mix Season 4 of AMC’s *Halt and Catch Fire*, with boom

---

**RX 6**

**THE INDUSTRY STANDARD FOR AUDIO REPAIR**

Learn more at izotope.com/RX
op Matt Derber and sound utility Nik Waddell until late July.

Additionally, the feature biopic of Tupac Shakur, *All Eyez on Me*, directed by Benny Boom, is slated to open June 16, mixed by Aron Siegel CAS, with boom ops Kurt Peterson, sound utilities Matt Derber, and Chris Mills. Playback was John Maskew, and it was post-produced by Craig Mann.

**Brendan Beebe** CAS, Dennis Fuller, and Rebecca Chan are knee-deep in *Sharp Objects*, with Season 7 of *American Horror Story* around the corner. Thank you to a hard-working crew always getting in those quick fixes!

At NBC Universal:

For feature mixers Jon Taylor CAS and Frankie Montañó, it's almost a wrap on *Hitchcock* as the team completes the extended cut on *The Fate of the Furious* for director F. Gary Gray and Universal. Up next for the boys is *The Solutrean* for director Albert Hughes and Studio 8, with sound supervisor Kelly Oxford.

Mix 6 will go dark for the month of May while we prep the stage for Dolby Atmos, Imax, and Auro installation.


Mix team Rusty Smith and Bob Edmondson are shacking up on Mix 2 to mix Season 1 of *Midnight, Texas* for NBC.

Over on Mix Stage 5, mixers Pete Nusbaum CAS and Whitney Purple are mixing *Just Add Magic*, *Blackish*, *Marlon*, and a few episodes of *SVU* for NBC.

**Nello Torri** CAS and **Alan Decker** CAS are mixing Season 6 of *Homeland*, *Outlander*, *Bates Motel*, and *Grimm*.

Pete Reale and Todd Morrissey are still in Chi town mixing *Chicago P.D.* and *Chicago Fire*.

---

**Got Broken Equipment? Send It Our Way!**

Lectrosonics - Zaxcom - Sound Designs Sennheiser - Shure - Cooper Mixers

*If your equipment is not listed here*

Contact Us At: 1.888.259.4684 or Visit our website at: dwsoundservice.com
Mixer Rodney Gurule CAS, boom op Jay Collins, and utility sound Daniel Duerre are working on Horse Soldiers in the White Sands Missile Range.

CAS Associate member & boom op Tim Song Jones is at work on a new Fox pilot called Behind Enemy Lines on the deck of the USS Hornet, a decommissioned aircraft carrier in Alameda, Calif. The show was mixed by Robert Janiger and the utility sound technician was Rocky Quiroz.

Ian Tarasof joined Kevin Sands CAS to mix Unreal 3 last month, along with Steve Hooper on boom, Andy Bishop and Dillon Bochon on wires. We recorded a 9½-page oner that lasted 13 minutes over multiple sets that featured 14 speaking characters. It was a blast.

ATV stands for audio terrain vehicle.

Bryan Mendoza (L) and Derrick Cloud (R) rigging car mics ... looking like The Blues Brothers.
Defining Production Audio

The Sound Devices 688 portable audio system redefines superb quality in audio production. The 688 is a high-performance, extremely durable, multi-channel mixer with integrated recorder that rapidly transforms into a very flexible, fully cohesive, cart-based system when combined with the CL-12 linear fader controller. Your work demands the highest quality available... The 688 is the perfect choice for audio professionals, offering the power, performance and versatility wherever your job takes you!
WINNER
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD
OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
BY AN ENSEMBLE
In a Drama Series

WINNER
AFI AWARDS
OFFICIAL SELECTION
TV PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

WINNER
PRODUCERS GUILD AWARD
OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF
EPISODIC TELEVISION
Drama

TIME

“THE NOSTALGIC TONE OF ‘STRANGER THINGS’ SUCCEEDS LESS
FROM DISCRETE MOMENT TO MOMENT THAN AS AN OVERALL AMBIENCE;
in synthy music, vivid shooting style, and deeply earnest performances...
it’s reviving a way of seeing the world.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING
FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE HOUR)

STRANGER
THINGS
NETFLIX