Career Achievement Recipient Announced
PGA Produced By Coverage: The Producer's Perspective
Case Study: The Handmaid's Tale
RX6's Newest Features
SUMMER 2017
OUTSTANDING SOUND EDITING FOR A SERIES
Bradley North, Craig Henighan, Jordan Wilby, Jonathan Golodner
Tiffany S. Griffith, Sam Munoz, David Klotz, Noel Vought, Ginger Geary

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING
FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE HOUR)
Joe Barnett, Adam Jenkins, Chris Durfy, CAS, Bill Higley, CAS

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 EPISODE TELEVISION (DRAMA)

NETFLIX
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Cover: NAB Technology Show
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EMMY® NOMINEES FOR YOUR EMMY® CONSIDERATION

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE HOUR)
KEITH ROGERS, RE-RECORDING MIXER; SCOTT WEBER, RE-RECORDING MIXER;
ROGER STEVENSON, PRODUCTION MIXER; KYLE O’NEAL, ADR MIXER
“THE BICAMERAL MIND”

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE
GAVIN FERNANDES, CAS, RE-RECORDING MIXER;
LOUIS GIGNAC, RE-RECORDING MIXER;
BRENDAN BEEBE, PRODUCTION MIXER – “YOU GET WHAT YOU NEED”

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL
STEVE WATSON, PRODUCTION MIXER;
CHARLIE JONES, SOUNDEFFECTS MIXER;
STEVE LETTIE, FOH PA MIXER;
JONATHAN HERRERA, MONITOR MIXER
“SUB-PRIME AUTO LOANS”

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL
SUSAN PELINO, RE-RECORDING MIXER;
AL CENTRELLA, PRODUCTION MIXER;
JAY VICARI, MUSIC MIXER;
JOHN HARRIS, MUSIC MIXER;
DAVE NATALE, FOH MIXER;
ERIK VON RANSON, FOH MIXER;
SIMON WELCH, MONITOR MIXER

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

BIG LITTLE LIES
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

THE NIGHT OF
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

SILICON VALLEY
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (HALF-HOUR)
AND ANIMATION

ELMO PONSDOMENICH, RE-RECORDING MIXER;
TODD BECKETT, RE-RECORDING MIXER; BEN PATRICK, CAS, PRODUCTION MIXER
“INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY”
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EMMY® NOMINEES FOR YOUR EMMY® CONSIDERATION

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (HALF-HOUR) AND ANIMATION
JOHN W. COOK II, RE-RECORDING MIXER; BILL FREESH, RE-RECORDING MIXER; BILL MACPHERSON, PRODUCTION MIXER – “OMAHA”

LAST WEEK TONIGHT® WITH JOHN OLIVER
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL
STEVE WATSON, PRODUCTION MIXER; CHARLIE JONES, SOUND EFFECTS MIXER; STEVE LETTIE, FOH PA MIXER; JONATHAN HERRERA, MONITOR MIXER “SUB-PRIME AUTO LOANS”

2017 INDUCTION CEREMONY
ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL
SUSAN PELINO, RE-RECORDING MIXER; AL CENTRELLA, PRODUCTION MIXER; JAY VICARI, MUSIC MIXER; JOHN HARRIS, MUSIC MIXER; DAVE NATALE, FOH MIXER; ERIK VON RANSON, FOH MIXER; SIMON WELCH, MONITOR MIXER
Future-proofing the industry!

From David Edward Hughes’ first carbon microphone during the 1870s and Thomas Edison’s carbon button transmitter in 1886. To, importantly for our industry, the introduction of directionality by RCA and then the Electro-Voice shotgun microphone in 1963.

Today’s vast array of microphones, re-recording equipment, and software now available to the market is astounding. New technologies are being driven, not only by scientific breakthroughs such as those mentioned above, but also by the growth of new routes to market for our creative work.

We hear every day about the emergence of VR projects, new online and streaming services, new networks, and data centers being built. With this comes the establishment of new workflows to facilitate the new requirements.

With these new technologies comes a need for a new breed of operator. One who is able to adapt to revised workflows, learn emerging technologies, and to think strategically about the implementation of these.

While we all work hard to keep abreast of the changes in our specialty, I feel that we need, as an industry, to decide to go that step further. We must reach out to those professionals and colleagues in other areas of our field and understand some of their workflows and the challenges they are facing.

For the longest time, workflows evolved slowly, creating awareness over time of the challenges faced in other parts of our industry. However, with this greater evolution and diversity, we need to ensure we avoid making assumptions based on colleagues’ former/historical workflows. We need to recognize the truth that other workflows have evolved and are changing as rapidly as our own.

In conclusion, I encourage you to get out there during the beautiful summer months and attend mixers, screenings, and industry events. Participate and see what is there to be discovered. I will be doing the same and hope to see you.

Mark Ulano CAS
President
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As sound practitioners, we’re all reliant on content to apply our craft to. With an increase in consumer-viewing outlets and expanded international distribution, the media we work on has the potential to reach an even broader viewership than ever before. However, with the dramatic increase in available content, it’s highly possible our projects will be seen by fewer eyes—and make fewer dollars. These real concerns affect all who create and produce media content. In this issue, Karol Urban CAS MPSE provides some takeaways from the PGA’s 9th Annual “Produced By” Conference, sharing information we should be aware of as sound professionals. Speaking of sound professionals, we are thrilled to announce this year’s CAS Career Achievement Award honoree, re-recording mixer Anna Behlmer. Be sure to check out her biography and selections from her impressive credits list in these pages.

Also in this issue, Devendra Cleary CAS baits us with his article titled “What Shotgun Mic Should I Buy?” while David Bondelevitch CAS MPSE provides his thoughts on some interesting gear he came across at this year’s NAB. Karol Urban sits down with re-recording mixer Lou Solokofski to discuss Hulu’s hit series The Handmaid’s Tale. John Warrin MPSE gives us some inside feedback on the latest release of iZotope’s highly acclaimed RX software, RX6. Dorothea Sargent and Steve Urban MPSE report in from this year’s MPSE and CAS Annual Golf & Poker Tournament. Also, be sure to explore the adventures of our “You Just Can’t Make This Stuff Up” submitters. As always, you can read about the projects your sound friends are working on in the “Been There Done That” section and check out some photos in their “Lighter Side” submissions. Finally, Jim Corbett CAS remembers friend, colleague and CAS Career Achievement Award recipient, re-recording mixer Richard Portman.

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.

Matt Foglia CAS
Karol Urban CAS MPSE
If you have never had the opportunity to sit in audio during a live show, there’s nothing quite like it. Mixing a live show is not for everyone, but I happen to like it. The secret to success is finding the best people you can, come up with a written plan that all involved agree to, and LET THEM DO THEIR JOB!

I took myself off the Grammy Awards a few years ago when I found serious flaws in their primary and contingency audio plans and also due to my personal disaffection for much of today’s music (I guess I’m getting old). During all that time, the Grammy Awards were Emmy-nominated for sound several times and won three Emmys.

I suggested to the TV Academy that there were many more than the four mixers presently limited on the award who were also directly responsible for the sound of the show. I appeared before the TV Academy, Sound PGEC (Peer Group Executive Committee) to make the case that any mixer with hands-on faders, who mixes directly into the show, deserves an Emmy for their work. They agreed that on large music-variety shows and specials that, by petition, any mixer making a substantial contribution that directly affects the sound of a program can now be included in nomination for an Emmy.

EDWARD J. GREENE CAS

CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY ANNOUNCES TIMELINE FOR 54TH CAS AWARDS – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2018

Los Angeles, CA, 24 July 2017—The Cinema Audio Society has set the date and timeline for the 54th Annual CAS Awards. The CAS Awards recognize Outstanding Sound Mixing in Film and Television as well as Outstanding Products for Production and Post-Production. Recipients for the CAS Career Achievement Award and CAS Filmmaker Award will be announced later in the year.

The timeline is as follows:
• Entry Submission Form Available Online on the CAS website at www.CinemaAudioSociety.org Monday, October 16, 2017
• Entry Submissions due Online by 5 pm PST, Monday, November 20, 2017
• Nomination Ballot Voting Begins Online—Thursday, December 14, 2017
• Nomination Ballot Voting Ends Online—5 pm PST, Wednesday, January 3, 2018
• Final Nominees in each category announced Wednesday, January 10, 2018
• Outstanding Product Nominations announced Monday, January 15, 2018
• Final Voting Begins Online—Thursday, February 1, 2018
• Final Voting Ends Online—5 pm PST, Wednesday, February 14, 2018

54th Annual CAS Awards will be held Saturday, February 24, 2018, at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel at California Plaza—Bunker Hill Ballroom, Los Angeles, California

About the Cinema Audio Society

The Cinema Audio Society was formed in 1964 for the purpose of sharing information with Sound Professionals in the Motion Picture and Television Industry.

The objectives of the CAS are: to educate and inform the general public and the motion picture & television industry that effective sound is achieved by a creative, artistic, and technical blending of diverse sound elements; to provide the motion picture & television industry with a progressive society of master craftsmen specialized in the art of creative cinematic sound recording; to advance the specialized field of cinematic sound recording by exchange of ideas, methods, and information; to advance the art of auditory appreciation, and to philanthropically support those causes dedicated to the sense of hearing; to institute and maintain high standards of conduct and craftsmanship among our members; to aid the motion picture & television industry in the selection and training of qualified personnel in the unique field of cinematic sound recording and to achieve for our members deserved recognition as major contributors to the field of motion picture & television entertainment.

For CAS Award Advertising: IngleDodd Media CASAwards@IngleDodd.com or 310.207.4410

Mix Presents Sound for Film and TV September 16, 2017

Watch your inbox for your exclusive CAS member discount to attend the fourth annual Mix Presents Sound for Film and TV, to be held at Sony Pictures Studios, Culver City, CA, on September 16, 2017. The CAS and the MPSE are co-sponsors of the event. The day will feature expert panels, vendor exhibitions, a production sound exhibition, and much more. Learn more here: http://www.mixsoundforfilm.com/
The 2017 MPSE & CAS Golf & Poker Tournament

Carts at the ready for the scramble-style start of the tournament!!

Mike Draghi, Dina Morrone, Stephen Rivkin, Tom McCarthy

Ready for the “closest to the pin” competition that starts the day!

Golf tournament winners Ron Bartlett (right) and his son James

And no one got the hole in one!
It was a picture-perfect Southern California morning at Angeles National Golf Club as 84 attendees signed in at the registration tent for the MPSE & CAS Golf & Poker Tournament on May 21. This is the second year that the CAS has co-sponsored with the MPSE this event that brings sound editors, mixers, associates, and friends together in an enjoyable afternoon.

Bright green gift bags stuffed with goodies were waiting for golfers and poker players at the registration tent. One item in the bag was a set of four golf balls emblazoned with photos and logos of MPEG National Executive Director Cathy Repola, MPSE President Tom McCarthy, CAS President Mark Ulano, and Honorary Event Chairperson, ACE President Stephen Rivkin. These keepsakes commemorated the first time that the Presidents of ACE, MPSE, CAS, and the Executive Director of MPEG attended a single event.

Mark Ulano commented, “This event is another terrific example of the bridge-building efforts shared by CAS, MPSE, ACE, as well as Local 700/MPEG and Local 695, whose respective memberships Cathy Repola and I represent. The mutual commitment to fostering community among these groups bears more fruit all the time. The greatest beneficiary, of course, are our filmmakers, whose projects we all so passionately serve.”

Thanks to Technicolor and Dolby Laboratories, attendees were welcomed with complimentary hot- and iced-coffee drinks, as well as a lunch of burgers and hot dogs before the tournament began.

Out on the course, volunteers joined Honorary Chair Rivkin and his wife Dina, who took to the golf carts to treat players to complimentary icy cold beverages and snacks provided by Amblin Partners, iZotope, and MPEG. Other event sponsors included Formosa Group, NAMM TEC Awards, NBC Universal Studio Post, and Timeline, that each helped make the day more enjoyable.

Hole-in-one challenges were scattered throughout the course. A laptop, round-trip plane tickets in the continental United States, and $10,000 taunted players in the tee boxes of three holes. No one took home the prizes, but there were some fantastic shots that got incredibly close.

Prize squares and Ball Drop balls were available to purchase again this year, giving even those who didn’t play in the tournament an opportunity to walk away winners. Donated prizes were available from vendors such as Avid, Blue Microphones, LA Sound Panels, Sony, WB, Zoom, as well as a variety of large and boutique sound effects libraries. There were so many prizes available that, even though all the squares were sold out, it felt as though nearly everyone who bought squares won a prize! Meanwhile, the Ball Drop generated a lot of interest throughout the day as the potential cash prize increased with every ball purchase. Closest and furthest from the pin won a percentage of the...
final pot with the MPSE’s Ethel Crutcher Fund being the real winner, scooping up the remainder.

The LAFD and its hook & ladder truck, made the Ball Drop a multi-story affair. Once the winning balls were measured out, everyone made their way inside to enjoy a wonderful buffet dinner of prime rib, chicken, and pasta.

After dinner, Mark Ulano and Tom McCarthy met at the podium to present and honor the Honorary Chairperson Stephen Rivkin. They were joined by Cathy Repola to present trophies to the winners of the golf and poker tournament.

The golf tournament was won by father/son duo Ron and James Bartlett. James also won the longest drive and the closest-to-the-hole competitions! We should mention that James had recently just missed the cut to become part of the PGA tour!!

The end of the poker tournament was a nail-biter with a head-to-head battle between eventual winner Mark Sussman and second place winner Linda DiFranco.

If you don’t want to miss out on the fun of next year, be sure to keep an ear out for our announcements. But you don’t have to play to have a great day at the course. About 16 dedicated MPSE volunteers helped to ensure the smooth running of the event. If you’d like to take part in volunteering at the next event, email office@CinemaAudioSociety.org and let us know!•
Golf teams top to bottom:
Ron & James Bartlett
Curt & Anna Behlmer with Scott and Lefko Horner
Mark Ulano, CAS President, and Mark Lanza, MPSE Treasurer, with the drone

Successful Ball Drop thanks to a big assist from the LAFD

What a happy group!!

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Cinema Audio Society President Mark Ulano announced that the organization will honor multiple CAS- and Oscar®-nominated re-recording mixer Anna Behlmer with the Cinema Audio Society’s highest accolade, the CAS Career Achievement Award, to be presented at the 54th CAS Awards on Saturday, February 24, 2018, Omni Los Angeles Hotel at California Plaza—Bunker Hill Ballroom, Los Angeles, Calif.

“It’s truly an honor to announce the selection of Anna Behlmer by the CAS for our Career Achievement Award at this year’s 54th Annual CAS Awards,” said CAS President Mark Ulano. “Anna is a world-renowned re-recording mixer with a huge portfolio of iconic credits. Her longtime collaborations with filmmakers and her work on over 150 projects is a testament to her excellence and creativity. She’s been nominated a dozen times for the prestigious CAS Award for her outstanding mixing work and is also multi-nominated by her peers at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and the British Academy as well, signifying the very high regard with which she is held among her peers. She is a beloved figure and I take great pleasure in announcing the CAS’ recognition of Anna and her terrific body of work.”

Behlmer, who grew up in Hollywood not far from Glen Glenn and Todd-AO, is a first-generation American, the daughter of Italian immigrants. Growing up, she used to walk to Hollywood Boulevard to go to the movies, sometimes to a double feature. She loved movies from the Disney films of her childhood to the B movies of her teenage years. Film was a big part of her life, but she never thought she would be involved in the film business.

In college, she started dating a sound engineer who worked at Ryder Sound in Hollywood. “I spent a lot of time there visiting him and, while I was there, I helped load dubbers and tried to help out any way I could. Gary Bourgeois was the mixer there at the time and he said to me, ‘You should get yourself a union card.’ Since I was a bit bored with school, I pursued getting in the union. I was advised to go to Glen Glenn Sound because they had two women working there, and a woman in charge of scheduling and hiring crews. I walked into Jan Olson’s office and asked her to help me, and she said yes,” recalled Behlmer.

Her first call was on the Paramount lot working on Laverne & Shirley and Happy Days as a Y-15 loader. She then went to work in the new Glen Glenn building on Stage 2 doing mostly television and was promoted to recordist, working with Bourgeois when he came to Glen Glenn. Glen Glenn merged with Todd-AO and they developed a mixer training program. In 1989, with the encouragement of J.R. DeLang, Chris Jenkins, and Bourgeois, Behlmer joined the program. There were no female re-recording mixers at that time. “I never looked back. I found something that was fun, that I loved doing, and that I had an aptitude for,” said Behlmer. She stayed at Todd-AO and worked with the great Richard Portman for several years. After working with Portman, she began an almost 20 year collaboration with Andy Nelson, which started at Todd-AO in 1993 and ended at Fox in 2012.

In 1996, Behlmer became the first woman to be nominated for an Academy Award in the Sound Mixing category for Braveheart. The following year, there was a second Oscar nomination for Evita.

Fox was opening new stages in 1998 and Behlmer moved over to Fox, where she mixed for the next 14 years. During that time, she added eight more Oscar nominations for L.A. Confidential, The Thin Red Line, Moulin Rouge!, Steet, The Last Samurai, War of the Worlds, Blood Diamond, and Star Trek. Additionally, she’s received six BAFTA nominations (with three wins), 12 CAS nominations, and five Satellite Award nominations.

In 2012, a new and exciting opportunity came her way; to be involved with the new Technicolor facility at Paramount. She now works about 50 feet from the place where she had her first call on Laverne & Shirley and Happy Days. She has come full circle, and the engineer she was dating is Curt—her husband of 33 years.
Behlmer is a longtime member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and has served several terms on the Sound Branch Executive Committee. She resides in Studio City, Calif., and is an avid runner, skier, and golfer.

This year’s NAB had a good number of new items on exhibit, as well as the usual conference seminars and parties. Read on to learn about some of the exciting highlights.

R.A.M.P.S./JWSound Party
Every Tuesday of NAB Week, there is a party hosted by CAS member Jeff Wexler’s website JWSound.net. Previously, it had been hosted by R.A.M.P.S., and their name still stays in the title as a reminder of the history (Note: See Devendra Cleary’s article on “Shotguns” this issue for some back story on R.A.M.P.S.) For the past few years, the party has been at Thai Satay, where the food has been excellent and the company even better!

Every year, the party ends with some giveaways from manufacturers and salespeople. I’m always amazed by the generosity shown at this party. This year for the first time, the CAS donated two tickets to our awards show. CAS President Mark Ulano was on hand to present the tickets to a lucky winner!

MPSE/Rogue One Event
MPSE Officer Paul Rodriguez was present to introduce one of the most highly anticipated events of the week, a panel discussion with the post-production team from Star Wars: Rogue One. Carolyn Giardina of The Hollywood Reporter moderated. Matt Wood MPSE was there to discuss sound design with the audience, but the star of the panel was
Above: MPSE/Rogue One event. Opposite page from top: R.A.M.P.S./JWSound Party; Paul Rodriguez introducing the panel at the Rogue One event; the panel.

the visual effects from the movie. Supervisor John Knoll was greeted with gasps of amazement as he showed the steps involved in the digital reconstruction of Grand Moff Tarkin, played by deceased actor Peter Cushing. Also present was animation supervisor Hal Hickel. This event was sold out, and at the end of the presentation, it was clear that the audience wanted even more!

From the Show Floor: Production Tools

**Aaton** introduced the sound mixer/recorder Cantar Mini, a 16-track digital portable mixer/sound recorder capable of recording 24-bit, 192 kHz audio, with channel delays and EQ.

**Ambient** showed its NanoLockit. To use this system, jam any Ambient Lockit and set it as the master timecode. Then any Lockit, NanoLockit, or Ambient ACN-LS Lockit Slate within the ACN network will automatically jam. The rechargeable battery lasts up to 35 hours. In addition, the NanoLockit has the ability to jam DSLRs with audio timecode.

**Audio-Technica** introduced its new 6000 Series High-Density Wireless System, which allows 31 channels in 4 MHz of bandwidth. The channels are spaced at 125 kHz intervals. The system works in the 944 MHz-952 MHz band.

**Lectrosonics** introduced Duet, a new digital wireless monitor system. It uses the M2T dual-stereo half-rack transmitter and M2R diversity
belt pack receiver. Duet works in the UHF frequencies of 470 MHz-608 MHz in a single range. It can use analog input or Dante inputs.

**Shure** showed its Axient Digital Wireless System. Axient Digital uses Shure’s UHF-R, ULX-D, and Axient wireless systems. Axient Digital’s wide tuning range of 184 MHz for all transmitters and receivers covers an extended range of spectrum and simplifies inventory.

**Sound Devices** introduced its MixPre series. The MixPre 6 can record up to six channels of professional-grade audio. The mixer can be wirelessly controlled by Bluetooth technology. You can record iso tracks, adjust to various recording frame rates and bit rates, and customize your outputs. Although nowhere near as extensive as their Pro series, the MixPre series provides an entry-level recorder that is usable for documentary and news crews.

**Zaxcom** showed its ZMT3-Phantom Transmitter. Zaxcom users will appreciate that this transmitter works perfectly with ZaxNet technology, enabling you to adjust transmitter gain or frequency selection over a three-block wideband remotely. The ZMT3-Phantom also weighs a mere 2.02 ounces with battery.

**From the Show Floor: Post Tools**

**Avid** showed a preview of Pro Tools 12.9, coming in the fall. This upgrade features a comprehensive Dolby Atmos workflow, including built-in Dolby Atmos panning.

Perhaps the most interesting news for post audio was Blackmagic purchased rights to Fairlight hardware.
Blackmagic’s announcement that it had purchased the rights to the Fairlight hardware. Bob Caniglia, Director of Sales Operations, took a few moments to talk about it with me. Fairlight was an early competitor to Pro Tools, and was so popular that some editors still use it even though it has essentially been unsupported for years. The news that Blackmagic will be supporting it could create big changes for sound editors. Unfortunately, the new controller software was not available at press time and, for now, they are simply supporting existing hardware. Eventually, Fairlight will be integrated into the new DaVinci Resolve 14. New features will include up to a 10 times performance improvement, a new audio post-production suite, and multiuser collaboration tools that let multiple people edit, color, and mix audio from multiple systems, all in the same project at the same time.

iZotope somehow manages to top itself each year with a new iteration of its RX software. This year, it was demoing RX6, which has introduced several new tools: wind and mic rustle removal, voice isolation, composite editing, de-bleed, spectral de-esser, and breath reduction plugins. See John Warrin’s review in this issue.

Nugen Audio’s Halo Downmix is a new method for delivering accurate downmixes. It provides visual controls for relative levels.

The Quantum 5X AquaMic paired with the Countryman EMW Lavalier
On April 26, 2017, Hulu released *The Handmaid’s Tale*, created for television by Bruce Miller (*The 100*) and based on the bestselling novel (1985) of the same name by Margaret Atwood. While the story was adapted before, for the big screen in 1990 in a film starring Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn, Hulu’s version has again seduced viewers into the dystopian world of Margaret Atwood. In the first week of its release, it became the most-viewed premiere of any series to date, original or acquired, on Hulu. It has since been renewed for a second season.

The story is told from the eyes of Offred, a handmaid and political prisoner, who has been pulled from her own child and husband and forced deep into a conservative fundamentalist society called Gilead. Gilead now occupies much of what was the United States, and she is forced to serve as a childbearing concubine for ruling households who have proven unable to bear children. This new world is a puritanical state set after pollution has ravaged natural resources and fertility rates. Gilead enforces a strict class system, reducing the value of many individuals to their ability to serve the ruling commanders.

While the narrative of Offred has spoken to many as politically relevant to current events (the Handmaid’s dress even being worn by protestors to defend reproductive rights), I was immediately taken aback not by the politics but by the mesmerizing dance of picture and sound to tell this very poignant story. Not only is it clear the cast was well-chosen, script was well-adapted, and photography incredibly orchestrated, there was a clear and complete amalgamation of image and sound. There were so many opportunities given such as extended rack focus shots, extreme close-ups, narration over present action, jump-cut action sequences, and abrupt-time cuts that sound was really pushed to the forefront as a narrative vehicle.

So I reached out to the lead re-recording mixer, Lou Solakofski who, together with his very talented longtime mixing partner Joe Morrow, mixed this incredible soundscape at Tattersall Sound in Toronto, Canada.
Karol: What I really liked about this piece that made me want to interview you was that it seems to really be a show that was constructed to integrate sound’s full psychological influence. This particular show was shot so incredibly well for sound and your team took advantage of these opportunities. I particularly loved all of the out-of-sync dreamy in-the-head sequences of the chanting women reinforced by blurred images and extremely tight close-up hyper-sharp shots. I found that really effective. Were those moments that you were guided by the guide track and then finessed and made better and set in space? Or were these actual moments that you were able to creatively decide and experiment with on the dub stage?

Lou: I think your comment is true that you rarely get to work on something where sound is thought about very, very early on, and I think there was space in the scripts for sound. And then I think another big step into the sound was the director, Reed Morano, who definitely was thinking about sound before even day one of shooting. Enough to actually write down a bunch of thoughts and impressions about the sound before filming and to give it to us so that we could be aware of it and be thinking about it. And then during the picture edit, she really helped bring a lot of those concepts into the guide track. So I would say, particularly for the first three episodes, that a lot of the construction of the transitions and flashbacks were there as placeholders in the guide track. And it was our job to make it not just a reverb flashback kind of thing. But the place where they wanted to go—surreal or stylized—was definitely thought about in the cutting room.

Karol: Were you guys given a lot of time and latitude to interpret how that would be done?

Lou: Yes, absolutely. I mean, there were some transitions completely reinterpreted, and some we did exactly what they did in the cutting room. If you’ve seen a few episodes, you’ll see sometimes we’re using music to pull you into the next thing, a flashback or whatever, or it might be a dialogue pre-lap that’s affected. Pulling you back out of the flashback could be a slow transition or a hard cut with a sharp sound on it. So, in many cases, in the first three episodes [which were directed by Reed Morano], I would say that those ideas were framed-up for us to execute. But occasionally, we’d come across something that just worked better and there was a really great willingness on [creator/writer/EP] Bruce Miller’s side and Reed’s side to check out the idea and let it play if it worked.

Karol: So, the editor and the director were both very open-minded to reinterpretation?

Lou: And the showrunner, yeah.

Karol: When did you first hear of the project and were brought in to collaborate?

Lou: I heard that the showrunner on Penny Dreadful had actually called Bruce Miller and recommended us as a crew. We were coming off Penny Dreadful last year, so it timed out really well. They were shooting in Toronto, so we got a chance early on to meet with Bruce, get some of his ideas about what the show was going to be, and just get some early thinking going on. They were shooting sort of late summer last year. I think sound editorial started sometime around November, December, and we didn’t start doing mixes until about January. [But] we did a temp mix sometime before Christmas and that was a good opportunity for us to get a bunch of sound stuff figured out and concepts ironed out and get

by Karol Urban CAS MPSE
Karol: There was a distinct difference going from her voiceover to her production, but it didn’t sound like a floaty documentary-read narrative.

Lou: And when we met Bruce, he talked to us a little bit about voiceover and he did so much research on how films use voiceover … how to adapt a book and use a voiceover … how to use it. He spent quite a long time thinking about it. So, it gave us his thoughts and concepts. Then we just sat with it for a while. I was actually given a day in the studio to try to come up with some various schemes for making the voiceover different than the dialogue but at the same time, have it integrated into the conversation. If you’ve watched the show, you know that the Offred character is in the scene, but the voiceover’s going on and she’s acting to the voiceover. So it becomes a character in the scene. It took some time and some playing to figure out what the voiceover that would fit into the scenes but stand apart from the production dialogue. Everyone was very … very interested in finding out what it was going to sound like and how were we going to do it.

We did pre-records of the first episode so they could do playbacks on set. I think Lizzy, she just had it all in her head anyway. So, after the first episode, they abandoned the playbacks and she just acts it in her head while the scene’s being filmed. Then we would just come in and do it later in the studio and get a clean version of it and do some processing on it to make it fit the scenes.

Karol: Wow. Elisabeth Moss did not use ears with playback on set. I’m … that’s pretty impressive. [Laughs] That’s awesome. [Later, I was told that Lizzy came into hear the voiceover treatment and was so happy she high-fived Lou—surprising him so much that he almost left her hanging!]

Did the book come to life on-screen the way you had begun to imagine it?

Lou: In some aspects, yes, but in other aspects, no. The characters that you’re imagining in the book—like the Commander’s a lot older and so is the Commander’s wife. So, these were fresh ideas with Bruce’s interpretation.

Karol: The book was written in the early to mid-’80s. But I liked how they placed small tech details in the storyline to make things more modern and more tangible to today, but yet were very, very true to the original storyline. Gilead is surrounded by new technology but is so yesterday in concept in many ways. That must be an interesting world to create. An old throwback to almost colonial living amongst known modern-day technology.

Lou: Yeah, I think the political concepts for sure hold. It’s more the people and, I guess, making it more contemporary. But an interesting thing about what you were saying about the old world and modern world … when we were spotting early on with the first rough cut, we had a lot of discussion about what is Gilead exactly. We thought visually it looks almost period. But the interesting thing is the back story on Gilead. They’ve taken over a modern United States. So all the technology that was there before still exists. It’s just that they’ve chosen to not use some of it. They’re big on solar and renewable energy. These [pollution and lack of resources] were problems that were caused in the previous political situation that almost caused this Gilead takeover.

So, one of Bruce’s wishes was that the technology being used by people in Gilead was actually slick and efficient and so those big black vehicles have electric assist on them. They’re not just straight big V8 engines, but they have an electric whine to help them. So, they’re being actually environmentally conscious … probably out of necessity. He even kind of threw it at us. I mean, I don’t know if it’s exactly in his script, but he would propose things like, “You know, they probably have a trade deal with Germany. So, you can put a German dishwasher in the kitchen that operates very quietly.” And we tried all season to get a vacuum cleaner in, but we couldn’t. [Laughs] It would always mean something if we had it there and so it just kept getting turned [off].

Karol: I see the action would have been too significant. But you could get away with something purely environmental.

Lou: Those are the kinds of things. [For instance], in a later episode, you see the Commander at the dining room table with a laptop open.

It was weird to us initially because you’re working on something and, as a mixer, you tell yourself, “I’m in period.” So, if there’s a car pass on the production sound, I got to do something about it or an airplane flyby and all that. But actually, in this case, we didn’t have to do that because it is a modern world and it just looks old. So, that was kind of an interesting headspace to get into.

Karol: Well, it sounds like they actually spent a good amount of time investing in some time for you guys to actually process the concept of the story before you started mixing it. I find that to be a fantasy of a project
The crew of *The Handmaid’s Tale* joined for a group photo.

Pictured are:
- Ian Keltie (Sheila Hockin’s assistant)
- Andrea Rusch - Mix Assistant
- Joe Morrow - Re-recording Mixer
- Sheila Hockin - EP
- Yuri Gorbachow - Music Editor
- Lou Solakofski - Re-recording Mixer
- Brennan Mercer - FX Editor
- David McCallum - Dialogue Supervisor
- Jane Tattersall - FX Supervisor
- Wendy Hallam Martin - Picture Editor
- Michael Perlmutter - Music Supervisor
- Corrie Gudgeon - Post Production Supervisor
- Ana Yavari - 1st Assistant Picture Editor
- Kathryn Blythe - Post Production Co-ordinator
- Krystin Hunter - Assistant Dialogue Editor
- Dale Sheldrake - ADR Editor
to work on but, oftentimes, a very unusual situation. It sounds like this really demanded, from the beginning, a cerebral journey for you guys in interpreting the story as a team across departmental lines. Would you say that’s correct?

Lou: That’s for sure. And I think the person who coordinated that and instigated it is one of the Canadian EPs, Sheila Hockin. She’s with Take 5. One of the co-producers. But she really pushed us in there and introduced us to Bruce early and introduced us to Reed. And, because there were some voiceover pre-record sessions and because there was a temp mix of the pilot, all of these opportunities to get the key creatives in the building and talking to us happened in really good time for us to be able to figure out stuff. But you’re right. It’s rare to be involved so early and to be given an opportunity to figure all these things out before day one of the mix.

Karol: Who would you describe as your core audio post team?

Lou: We’ve got a dialogue supervisor, David McCallum. We’ve got someone on dedicated ADR. His name is Dale Sheldrake. And he’s a traveler. He’s constantly between U.K., Canada, L.A., New York. He’s moving around following the talent. And then, Jane Tattersall is the sound effects supervisor. Her effects editor, Brennan Mercer, did a lot of the design-y ethereal-type things. And my co-mixer [FX re-recording mixer] is Joe Morrow. The Foley team is not in our building. They’re a facility called Footsteps. I’m sure you’ve probably heard of them.

Karol: Did you know when you were taking this on that the book had such a following? Did you recognize this was a world a lot of people had already imagined?

Lou: I mean, we just knew that in Toronto, Margaret Atwood is a big thing. So, we knew that anything that’s going to be adapted by Margaret Atwood is something that we would all jump at a chance to work on. I think there was that when we were initially doing it, and then working with the Take 5 producers who are co-producers on the project.

Lou: To me, the vision is Bruce’s from the page and so I feel our job is to give him that as best as we can. It’s been so shaped by a director in the way they shoot it, and an editor in the way they do the picture. So, I just feel we pile on one more layer of getting him closer to that. And occasionally, we’ll come up with a really great idea that he’ll respond to and say, “Wow. I didn’t think of that. Let’s do that.”

We had a [creative] spotting for every episode. Bruce was here for most of them early on while they were shooting with Reed, who did the first three episodes. She Skyped in for a couple of them and was here in person for the first one. So, it was encouraging to us to hear them speak. So, now we’re watching a rough cut. We’re listening to the guide track. We’re in the studio. The whole sound crew plus them. And to hear them say, “Okay. Here’s why we did it this way here. And so this is our intent. If you guys think you can do that or do it better, then please do.” And that’s a rare thing.

You tell yourself, ‘I’m in period.’ So, if there’s a flyby and all that. But actually, in this case...
When we mixed the pilot, we had a little extra time on it because we wanted to do an initial playback for all the keys. I think we let it sit for a couple of days. I'm not sure why. But then we came back and did another pass on revisions. And so, while we were mixing, it was just Joe and I. The keys couldn’t be here. And we went down a number of rabbit holes on the transitions.

There’s one thing in the pilot which is, you go to a flashback and then you’re in that flashback and you go to a further flashback, and then you have to come back from that and then into her present. And so you know how when you’re mixing and you think to yourself, “oh, I have to make it different.” I have to signify that these worlds are changing. First, she’s flashing back into her earlier days in Gilead, and while she’s in her early days in Gilead, then she’s flashing back to her life before Gilead.

And so, situations like that … You can overthink it and we went too far. So, when we had our first playback, we got pulled back a little bit, but each transition had to be different. Sometimes it’s just a voice. Some might just copy the actual dialogue pre-lap and mess it up with a plugin—a vibrato or something like that—and then only feed a reverb off of that so that it just feels different. And if it can draw you into the next thing, then it works. But I think initially, we started off with maybe a little too much of that sonic geekery.

Karol: That is always a danger, too! [Laughs]

Lou: We relaxed by episode two and just used what gently moves you from one thing to another unless you need a hard shock.

Karol: Well, it’s exciting to have a client come to you and have planned to give you extra time to interpret and create. That’s such an expression of respect and recognition for what you do. [Laughs] That’s great. How much time were you given to mix one of these episodes? And how, I guess, much longer was that pilot time?

Lou: We must have had an extra day and a half, I think, on the pilot. So, they’re tough to get done because they’re not 45 minutes. The last one is almost 60 minutes. But generally, we get two days to mix. The Canadian EP, Sheila, who’s overseeing the post, she comes in on the third day and so we play for her and she vets all the stuff that we need to tweak and then the next day, we will do a hookup with L.A. so that Hulu can watch it and—

Karol: And they watch from remotely?

Lou: They watch remotely. So, Bruce was here for, I think, the first six or seven, and then shooting and editing was done so he went back to L.A. So he actually watched with Hulu for the last three.

Karol: Okay. And how do you guys do that? What are you guys using for your remote approvals?

Lou: We’ve been booking Formosa. We do an ISDN hookup. We send down a printed six track and play the show. We’ve done it in the past with other shows … [We have had] four studios all running simultaneous because we had producers in Ireland and New York and L.A. We do multi hookups. But for this one, we were just playing back in one studio. So, we hit play here. Everyone watches it. We conference call the notes and then, when Bruce was here, we would do options and alternates for him here but when he’s there in L.A., then we would go to input and make changes via ISDN. Sometimes it might be swapping out source music, etc.

Karol: So we’re talking about a two-day mix generally for you and Joe, and then a day for Sheila and your director, and then a day or more often a half-day for Hulu.

That’s pretty cool about the remote playback. I know so much work is being done in Canada, but I often wonder about that because there are so many of the networks and the producers here. It makes a lot of sense.

*The Handmaid’s Tale* shows a striking world. I felt a clear manifestation of the narrative from both my senses of sound and vision and the cohesive artful nature of both led to such an incredible production value. It really helped me lose myself in the story. In fact, I found the experience so intense that I could not binge-watch this show. However, I could also not anticipate more the arrival of a new episode. I can’t wait to see next season’s episodes and congratulate the producers and directors for creating an environment that fosters collaborative storytelling and truly values the power of sound. The result is astounding.
On June 10 and 11, directors, producers, and industry professionals flocked to 20th Century Fox to enjoy a series of panels, exhibitors, mentoring roundtables, and networking.

I went as a member of sound to observe just what is on producers’ minds and what occupies their radar on the day-to-day.

I attended six panels across the two-day span covering subjects such as what programming buyers search for, how to work internationally and create internationally attractive content, how to navigate contracts to maximize producer share participations (or contract-dependent producer payable amounts paid as a result of the exhibition and distribution of created media), building your financing and distribution team for indie projects, the art of the pitch, and minimizing costs due through workflow.

The main takeaways that I feel dramatically impact us the most in the sound community are: there is no way to tell where what you are working on will end up, there is decreasingly little consistency in budget level versus distribution and overall success level concerning content outside of studio-backed big-budget features, and that payout from producer participation shares of previous projects and production incentives are often hugely important to your clients’ ability to fund their next project and bring you aboard.

And simply put, producers are navigating an entirely new landscape. While many aim to excel exclusively in a traditional theatrical or classic network television market, the market itself is changing and what the buyers, distributors, and
Franco, Kate Micucci, and Aubrey Plaza. Buyer and co-panelist Matt Kaplan, President, Awesomeness Films, described a business model that “recognizes that Generation Z does not consume media in the same way as past generations.” Awesomeness’ business model seeks influencers and stories picked from YouTube, Snapchat, and various other social media sites which are then often casted as talent in productions and then marketed back through the same social media channels that created them to gain an audience. Sanjay Sharma, President and CEO, All Def Digital, explained that the risk involved in big-budget films make interesting stories go the way of smaller budgeted features. But with growing channels of media and marketing, Beatrice Springborn, Head of Originals, Hulu, summarized: “It is a seller’s market.”

This was echoed by the panel of “Putting Together Your Indie Dream Team,” sponsored by Variety. Generally, all members of this panel expressed how every film has a path that is right for its story and demographics and the right team to finance, distribute, and/or acquire your film is a unique team who can marry that film’s story to that specific target audience. Much to the dismay of many producers I spoke to who were very definitive in describing their productions as film or television, Hal Sadoff, CEO, Silver Pictures Entertainment, says, “It’s all content now. There is no TV or film anymore.” The goal is finding unique, engaging stories, and reaching demographics.

Additionally, when determining if productions will stay local or go abroad or if productions will travel with their original sound mixer or hire a local crew on remote locations, the bottom line is extremely important and incentives make a huge difference. US production incentives are available in more than 38 states and territories and range from rebates/grants to transferable tax credits and refundable tax credits, the highest levels of which can reach up to 30 percent-45 percent in some areas with most areas offering 20 percent-30 percent. However, many international markets can beat that significantly and are building to grab the media market. For example, Sarah Platt, International Engagement & Business Development, Wanda Studios, shared how her company is completing a world-class film destination complete with some of the largest locations of marine production facilities, soundstages, and backlots in the world and can...
help manage everything from payroll management to immigrant worker assistance to get your crew to its destination. They offer a 40 percent on-the-ground local rebate on production cash and a 10 percent business tax rebate program. So, get on your government representatives. Incentives in your area must compete or you will lose work.

Also, while producers do receive monies for their work and role as the practical producers, their ability to collect on their participation shares (or backend payouts) and negotiate for good conditions of payout are what generally makes your producers profit greatly from a successful project versus simply getting a lot of attention and perhaps an award. Sadly, these types of backend profit-sharing agreements are very rarely extended to below-the-line personnel like sound. Perhaps this should change as many of us have seen a marketplace where budgets are sinking and projects we have lovingly completed for a song go onto levels of success that we could never have anticipated.

Finally, there was much to be gained from “The Art and Craft of Pitching for Film & TV.” I often see what I do on the dub stage as part engineering craft, part storyteller, part artist, and a huge chunk diplomacy and air traffic control. “Pitching” to me can be anything from convincing your husband/wife as to the benefit of making the bed each morning to convincing your producer that they can relax because you will walk through fire to make sure they have what they need and their ADR will sound amazing in just another few minutes. The ability to clearly and succinctly communicate ideas while engaging, quelling concerns, and open others’ minds is a universally invaluable skill.

Firstly, they describe how every idea needs to be developable in different ways: a cable version, a network version, a streaming version. Can you envision your idea morphing to fit the content for ABC versus CBS? Through the lens of each channel, your idea will naturally present itself differently. Stories can have political undercurrents but not opinions, example: *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In other words, don’t change your idea for your audience, be authentic, but know your audience and how it will be colored from their perspective.

Additionally, Marshall Herskovitz, Partner, The Bedford Falls Company (*The Last Samurai, Thirtysomething*), talked about something called “concentric circle theory.” He said that both the pitcher and the executive or audience receiving your idea are on the spot. Understanding that there is

Finally, there was much to be gained from ‘The Art and Craft of Pitching for Film & TV.’ I often see what I do on the dub stage as part engineering craft, part storyteller, part artist, and a huge chunk diplomacy and air traffic control. ‘Pitching’ to me can be anything from convincing your husband/wife as to the benefit of making the bed each morning to convincing your producer that they can relax because you will walk through fire to make sure they have what they need and their ADR will sound amazing in just another few minutes.
pressure in both directions helps you to communicate. In fact, making the pitch a discussion as soon as possible will relieve the pressure on both sides quickest. It makes the recipient a participant. People are more invested in what they participate in. He recommends pitching your idea in one sentence, then in three sentences in more detail, and then finally, in 10 sentences with even more detail. By the third set of sentences, you should aim to be in an active conversation with your audience.

The final panel I attended, “Anatomy of a Workflow-Minimizing Costs for Productions,” sponsored by Panasonic, consisted of a panel of tech wizards that centered heavily on cameras and video codecs, who continually reiterated that communication among departments is the most important characteristic of creating a productive and efficient workflow. Additionally, we should all consider “snowflake” workflows or workflows that are custom-created to each and every project. And while audio was barely touched on and post only lightly mentioned, Mitch Gross, Cinema Product Manager, Panasonic USA, cited not considering post as a major common mistake. And Steve Wolfe, CEO/Producer, Sneak Preview Entertainment (500 Days of Summer, Twin Falls Idaho), did summarize the need for good audio expressing that a film can have bad picture but if your audio is terrible, your film will be unwatchable.

While the conference offerings represented a clear concern with contract negotiation skills, pitching concepts, finding benefactors, selling created content, and minimizing production costs, the overall message was clear; it is a new game and the specificity of distribution and marketing outlets allows for the development of, not only the rare big-budget feature concepts but, what would be traditionally more risky project development. Producers are advised to have lots of irons in the fire and to look at each other as partners and not competition. Perhaps this is good advice for us, too.
DID THEY JUST ASK

‘What Shotgun Mic Should I Buy?’

by Devendra Cleary CAS

INTRO
This is not an article about shotgun mics … at least, not all of this article. This is an article about the nature of the World Wide Web of production sound education or the internet discussion groups.

This particular question has been asked on various online production sound forums since before I can remember. I grew up reading R.A.M.P.S. and if that acronym sounds vaguely familiar but you have no idea what it stands for, then this article is just for you. There will be more on its historical context later, but it is where trolling was born as far as I could tell. While I certainly don’t support public, online berating, I’ve seen enough of it and it probably stopped me from asking that very question when I first started perusing these early production sound discussion groups.

R.A.M.P.S. AND JWSOUND
CAS member Jeff Wexler’s JWSound is as durable as the Sennheiser 416 (classic shotgun mic pun intended!). Jeff Wexler and I sat down and chatted about all of this recently. War stories that I could listen to for hours, mixed with specifics of how the discussion group has evolved over the years, and the continuation of the “R.A.M.P.S./JWSound” party at NAB in Las Vegas.

First, let’s examine the birthplace of JWSound. It came out of the exodus from the newsgroup R.A.M.P.S. (Rec. Arts. Movies. Production. Sound.) Before R.A.M.P.S., Jeff remembers: “Way, way before all that … I can’t remember the year that R.A.M.P.S. was started, but I know that we were coming off an even older system which was the BBS system [the bulletin board system], because a lot of those sound people obviously were very tech-oriented already … I think David Yaffe might have started it, yes. And R.A.M.P.S. was so much better than the bulletin boards, but was still very limited. It served the great purpose of getting those immediate answers to things when people were having problems with something and they really needed a very quick answer. So, you felt like you had your whole community of people, and it wasn’t that many people that actually were on R.A.M.P.S. in the beginning. [It] was very beneficial.”

Before I get to the exodus from R.A.M.P.S. and migration to JWSound, I asked Jeff about what led to that. “R.A.M.P.S. was really, basically, unmoderated because the way newsgroups worked [then], they really couldn’t be moderated the same way groups can be or forums can be these days because nothing is stored on one central server. And even though there is an administrator, they had limited ability to do anything and then things got sort of totally out of control and people were getting less and less [from it]. The benefit of R.A.M.P.S. was being diminished because there was so much trouble. I decided to start something else and I actually experimented with a number of different [things]. And we didn’t even call it social media because that wasn’t even the term that was used.” And this is where JWSound was born as most of the conversation was migrating over to JWSound. Jeff remembered: “R.A.M.P.S. pretty much died out in terms of tracking the number of posts, you know, and it’s there still to this day. [At press time], the last [relevant] post
on R.A.M.P.S. was made March 18 [2017].”

I’m not sure the masses really know how much work Jeff has put into growing this. JWSound is a thick, rich wealth of knowledge that has a global following. It didn’t get there overnight but I was curious how it did get there. I was reading and sometimes posting on this forum, unknowing of all the work and innovation going on behind the scenes. Jeff explained: “And this is prior to Facebook having anything like the Facebook groups or any of the rest of that stuff. But I also realized that it had been so open and not particularly focused on any one thing. I wanted to do something that was more focused for sound people. So, I finally segued into doing JWSound, first using Simple Machines Forum—SMF—which was software that you load onto your own server. I had a couple of server accounts because I had done some websites and stuff like that. SMF turned out to be kind of squirrely software that was really fighting me all the way. But I was getting people signing up every other day and it seemed to be something that people were really going to participate in. So, we ran that for maybe a year or so and then two years later, I went over to Invision Power Services for Invision Power Board—IPB—as the software backbone or platform, and everything got a lot better because it was much better in terms of posting images.”

I’ll note a pattern I’ve seen with any interactive internet discussion is that it often segues into a physical gathering. This idea is well over two decades old as the “R.A.M.P.S./JWSound” party at NAB shows us. Jeff tells me the huge number I was waiting for on the age of this party: “Well, our last R.A.M.P.S. party actually was at its 27th [anniversary] this year. Eric [Toline] has been doing the party and when I had been to the R.A.M.P.S. party many, many years before the year that, we started JWSound, and I said, ‘There’s no way we’re going to change the name.’ Well, the next year, everyone said, ‘You really ought to change the name,’ because—also, everything to deal with the party was happening on JWSound. (The announcement and the sign-ups and all that.) So, I then agreed one year and said, ‘Well, let’s call it the R.A.M.P.S./JWSound party.’”

This gathering trend continues today here in Los Angeles and across the country. Steve Morantz CAS had put together many impromptu lunch gatherings over the years and now collaborates with myself and Chris Howland CAS in organizing a variety of gatherings year-round with the help of the internet—well, the
point when L.A. Sound Mixers branched off with the creation of an offshoot group called Inner Circle, which I think was just bad terminology. But it did force me to internally examine this debate. On one hand, one could think, “I don’t want to be a part of that.” But, on the other hand, it could be, “Why aren’t I in the Inner Circle group?” Chris replies, “What’s funny is that group’s now called the Narrative Production Sound Group, which is probably a more on-track name for what it is. It was meant for people who are maybe a generation ahead of us to share in a forum that’s a little more chilled-out and not have all the kind of questions from new people. It was more established people who do narrative work and people not just from L.A. either.” What’s interesting is he created a group almost on the same philosophy of the disdain I have in this article for people asking silly questions like, “What shotgun mic should I buy?” Possibly, it was a way to try and start solving that problem. But it was more than that. I think Chris wanted to attract wisdom. “The Inner Circle name—it may have been a bad [name] to start out with—but at least I think the message I wanted to get across with that name was that it was for people who are a little bit further along in the craft and not necessarily going to speak out on the bigger forums.”

L.A. Sound Mixers has also hit a major milestone, which is notable for being a fairly small and closed group. “L.A. Sound Mixers, which is mostly local, just went over a thousand members, but I would say about 750 or 800 are local.” This reminded me of the numerous other offshoot groups Chris has started on the Facebook platform. “There’s New York Sound Mixers. There’s Texas Sound Mixers, which is a much bigger group because it encompasses Austin, Dallas, and Houston. And Tyler [Faison] is a Dallas-based guy who does the Lone Star Mixer every year in January and a really cool cat and really knowledgeable. Then, there’s the Bay Area Sound Mixers, which we opened up because there was a couple of our L.A. Sound Mixers that moved up there and are working up there full time. I felt like having a group dedicated to ENG workflow [ENG Warriors]. There are so many mixers that do so many different styles of work, and the ENG style of recording is the way they want to do it. I felt like it was time to have a page just dedicated to that because there’s really cool guys like Bal Rayat and Tom Schaeffer and that’s what they do. And they make a great living at it. And, as
you know, Mark [Ulano]—I always say he’s my favorite “ENG Warrior” because he did a lot of The Hateful Eight in the bag, and he did a lot of Inglourious Basterds in the bag.”

My hat goes off to Chris because a lot of what he is doing is outreach that manifests into educational events. So this extends the educational platform away from just relying on asking questions online. He continued, “The other thing you can do with locally focused groups is have educational initiatives and social functions that are tailored to your group—and that’s one of the things we do really well at L.A. Sound Mixers. So we love doing that. People love to learn.”

With everyone I talked to for this article, I wanted to get Chris’ take on the type of questions like, “What shotgun mic should I buy?” I think we have had people ask questions that are very basic and very simple. Like, page three of the manual would tell you. But sometimes people are out in the middle of nowhere or they may not be able to look it up. I always kind of—I look at it in a couple of different ways. The group can be seen as a life jacket and, sometimes, people are quick to use it. We all go through that learning curve. We all get caught with our pants down at some point. But for L.A. Sound Mixers, there’s no hard and fast rule like, ‘Please never do this.’ I do have in the group description: ‘Please respect the time of the professionals. Do your own due diligence’—and it’s always been there.” Chris added, “So establishing yourself with your peers is a huge step to moving forward and growing. And learning. You never stop learning. And then you’re talking about exclusivity, I guess the other thing that should be acknowledged is that—and this took another mixer explaining this to me for me to really get it—the really big forums that will accept anybody and everybody can contribute—but they’re a little bit more of the Wild West.”

**THE BIRTH OF “IT DEPENDS”**

Senator Mike Michaels CAS was a frequent poster and replier on both R.A.M.P.S. and JWSound. The frequent answer from him to every question just stated: “It Depends.” In my opinion, this answer is 50 percent condescending and 50 percent brilliant. On the surface, it can be perceived as rude and combative, but it deeply and truly exemplifies the very answer to most questions regarding our craft. It demonstrates that there are a variety of answers to every question—each depending on individual circumstances that can vary day-to-day and minute-to-minute and shift unpredictably depending on the various moving parts of any situation. Honestly, nothing replaces experience. An answer of “It Depends” is found on the heels of a question that suggests the only answer is to go out and experience the craft and potentially make mistakes and then you’ll know. But as we also know, learning and building from others’ past mistakes can be an efficient way to enrich the entire community with knowledge. The debate between these two wings of thought is a good thing to elaborate on. Why is this important? It examines the philosophy and divide between the sharing of knowledge and the exclusivity of knowledge.

I sat down and discussed some of this with Senator Mike Michaels recently. “People who want everything handed to them without putting in some effort—that’s where one of my sides comes from, you know. If you can’t pick up the instruction manual, and if you can’t do your own de-bugging, and if you’re unwilling to even pick up the telephone and call the manufacturer for some reason when that’s what you’ve got to do...” This sounds similar to my earlier ranting, but with a different generational spin to it. He adds, “In my day, when I was working on ham radio stuff, we didn’t have the internet. Long distance was considered a luxury and expensive. If you were in Cleveland, Ohio, and the equipment was manufactured someplace in Oklahoma, you didn’t just pick up the phone every morning and call them up and talk to them.”

I hadn’t even thought about this. I come from the generation unofficially called “Xennials.” Basically, in-between “Generation X” and “Millennials.” The reason this is relevant is Generation X and earlier didn’t grow up with technology and internet as we know it today. Xennials, on the other hand, experienced a childhood where the World Wide Web and its relating technologies were rolled out as they grew up. Millennials have had pretty advanced internet and technology their entire lives. So, it was enlightening to get Senator Mike’s perspective on this. He embraced technology, but applied his old-school logic to it. He continued: “What we’d find is these people would just go, ‘I don’t have to know anything. All I got to do is put out a search on the internet and enlightenment will land on me, and it’s a no-brainer, and I’m entitled to it.’ The kind of stuff that would turn me off is when people would
look up a professional, in-progress, ongoing discussion group and just jump in and ask the same question that’s been discussed and discussed to death. So, back to your title—‘What’s the best shotgun mic?’ or ‘What mic should I buy?’ or ‘Which is better, Sound Devices or Zaxcom?’ All of those questions to which the only true answer is…” And in unison, we both stated: “It Depends.” Further along from “It Depends,” Senator Mike has coined two other gems of efficient answers. He explained: “RTFM [read the f@cking manual], contact the manufacturer, and it depends… Those are the three answers.”

FORUMS VS. MENTORS
This raises the question of the current state of mentorship. When I was 19 years old I did not ask that question not just because I witnessed those who did being chastised; it was also because I was sampling and listening to various mics in the field with various mentors of mine. I did not need to buy one yet because I had access to many already. Mentors are good for much more than microphone testing. The frequency of seemingly unnecessary questions on sound forums proves the thinly broached percentage of mentorship in this current state and time. It typically begs the question: “How did they get the job if they find themselves asking this question?” It’s often painfully obvious the lack of qualifications a questioner seems to reveal about themselves. But the problem isn’t lack of qualifications, it’s lack of mentorship.

This question could also be seen as a “badge of honor” and as an entry point for new professionals coming into the fold and revealing how “green” they are. And how they can wear this proudly as they forge on to learn more and understand our unique industry and craft. It reminds me of my interview, with Danny Maurer for our “Mentorship” article. This conversation was so many things. It was an interview, a mentoring session, and a candid yet recorded discussion between true friends who are both passionate about sound. What I found interesting and relatable was that Danny wanted so badly to be perceived as reasonably experienced to the crew he was working with in the story he told me. When you’re new to a profession but you are also extremely driven and talented, you want to paint yourself as someone who knows what they are doing. Be this as it may, truthfully, you do know what you’re doing even in this junior state but true expertise is a deep, vast ocean of knowledge that manifests into effortless understanding. My perspective was coming from a place of realizing (maybe even in that exact moment) that I’m no longer a “young” practitioner. I do believe that I wanted Danny to embrace his junior status. How amazing it would be to still be inexperienced. Why? The possibilities are endless! Your trajectory has not yet been set and you have an almost empty sponge of a mind to fill with knowledge. I wish I had simple questions in my mind as opposed to complicated, potentially career-jeopardizing scenarios swirling in my head. I miss simplicity and I envy this. Danny may envy the credibility that only years of experience give you. This is because he is so smart and so talented that it is probably extremely frustrating to have all of that going for him. Dear Danny: You should rock the junior status (for now). You will be a grumpy old sound guy (like me) before you know it and your fondest years will be the ones where you remember how you stumbled through new and exciting situations and learned techniques the hard way. You’ll be telling newbies, “It Depends” soon enough!

It’s almost as if here at the Cinema Audio Society, we can’t seem to stop talking about mentorship. Jeff Wexler reminisced on his early protege experience: “When I did my first job recording sound, I had never recorded sound before, okay? I hired as my boom operator, Tom Holman, who was a schoolteacher. He wasn’t a boom operator. He had never operated a boom, okay? But I knew that I had to learn a lot of stuff and I had to learn it on the first day, on the second day, on the third day.” I interjected: “Fake it till you make it.” Jeff continued: “Fake it till you make it. But I was faking it with the assistance of a brilliant teacher, okay? So, when I asked him, ‘This switch. This low-frequency attenuation switch on a Nagra labeled LF1 and LF2, high-pass 1, high-pass 2, when should I use low-frequency 1 versus high-pass 2?’ So, before using that switch on a Nagra, Tom would give me a whole dissertation about the differences between low-frequency roll-off and high-pass in terms of 12 dB per octave and the slope and the turnover frequency. So, he gave me a whole education about how to use that switch. Instead of saying, ‘It Depends,’ or instead of just saying very loosely, ‘If you’re in a really noisy environment, go ahead and high-pass 2 because that’ll probably work because that’s what I did on my last job and they didn’t
yell at me and everyone said it was fine.’” On an internet discussion group, a “newbie” may get the answer of “It Depends,” but with a mentor, you get a much needed and deserved dissertation that will contribute to the transformation of this protege into having a deep, vast ocean of knowledge that manifests into effortless understanding.

FORUMS LEAD TO MENTORS
My cherished mentor is L.A.-based sound mixer David Barr Yaffe. Dave Yaffe founded R.A.M.P.S. I didn’t know this at the time but, nonetheless, when I was 18 years old, I started religiously reading R.A.M.P.S. postings on a daily basis. I would look at Location Sound’s website, Coffey Sound’s website, and then click on links to websites of various sound mixers across the country. One summer, a few years into my obsession with production sound, I was working on an HBO film in Colorado (and Wyoming) with sound mixer Bob Abbott. Every night after wrap, I would come home and read as many topics on R.A.M.P.S. as I could before falling asleep in front of the Packard Bell desktop PC. One night, I came across a topic that stated: “I’m changing up my lineup next season and am looking for a new utility.” The posting was by Dave Yaffe. I knew who he was even though we had never met in person. I knew because he had a website that was linked-up from probably both Location Sound and Coffey Sound. I jumped in my chair and immediately replied that I was interested. Our exchanges to follow were both encouraging and not encouraging. He was interested, but the roadblocks were: this position required I be a member of the IATSE, which I was not yet. This HBO movie I was on, the tail end of had flipped union. I told him, as far as I knew, I was eligible to join the IATSE (Local 695 specifically). He suggested I call the union to iron this all out. After leaving a dozen voice messages with no reply, I reported back to Dave on a Friday evening and it had seemed that this roadblock was the end of this journey. He said he would call the union on Monday. Not thinking anything would come of this, I miraculously received a call from one of the union’s officers mentioning they spoke with Dave and understand I had days earned from a flipped-to-union movie and asked if I was interested in joining and if I could meet with them in the office this week. (!!!) I booked a flight for the next day at the cost of $750. This trip was also to meet with Dave Yaffe and Kevin Hyde to see if we got along and if they wanted to hire me. With no guarantee of a job, this trip was risky and exhilarating. I later learned that this expensive airline ticket was what landed me the job. This is what they wanted—someone with this excited attitude and a youthful, moldable disposition. I got the job and started on this journey of learning from some of the best sound professionals in the business. I can certainly attest to the fact that it changed my life. As a treasured mentor, he is one of the reasons why I’ve never needed to ask this: “What shotgun mic should I buy?” question. So here is a story of how you can go from the internet discussion group path of receiving production sound education, to a real-life mentorship.

INTERNOT: EVEN MORE QUESTIONS
Why do people ask the question: “What shotgun mic should I buy?” Why do they ask any of the following questions I’ve recently come across such as: “Where should I set my Lectro’s gain at?” It is an infuriating question—given that fundamental audio knowledge should include an understanding of proper gain staging. Or, how about these: “What blocks are good in NYC?” or “My Sound Devices 633 froze and taking out the battery didn’t turn it off! Help!’’ or “I’m in the Culver City area and I need a timecode cable! 5-pin Lemo to RED Epic TC In! Help!’’ This question is for the “just beyond” “newbie.” You’ve done some jobs and you’re a working sound professional, but you are clearly unprepared for the rigors of high-end production sound that include being the Eagle Scout who is prepared for everything. When I read the subject line of an internet posting like this, I read it as: “I’m waaaay in over my head and completely unprepared for this job and I didn’t realize you had to properly prepare a workflow and have backups for everything in this line of work and that’s why I’m supposed to charge a premium amount for equipment rental that reflects this preparation and investment … as opposed to undercutting my competition in order to get this job! Help!’’ Sorry to be
super judgy and a curmudgeon about this but, honestly, this craft is serious business. Why are you doing a gig that you have no business doing? Did you get this gig because you were the cheaper person? Do you want to be known as that person? These debates can often ignite people who are very experienced in our craft but maybe don’t work as often as they used to and thus feel like they are experiencing the direct effects of this newbie- Undercutting conundrum. I do empathize with those who hold that point of view, though I’m not fully on board with chastising the newbie either. I’m honestly still infuriated by sound forum posts that are clearly started by people who have no business doing a gig they are doing and then asking for help from people who maybe should be doing the gig. However, we have an amazing sound community here in Los Angeles. So many polite, enthusiastic and like-minded sound professionals come together in the workplace and at social gatherings and would totally come through for that 5-pin Lemo to RED Epic timecode cable. They are just all-around nice, genuine people who are supportive of one another’s success! Similarly, I have called fellow mixers on the same studio lot as me for emergency earwigs (thanks, Stephen Tibbo CAS).

So I know how this can feel. This is where I don’t always let myself get sucked down the rabbit hole of being bitter about newbies asking questions that paint them as unprepared and unqualified. I am more likely to get on the bandwagon of communal support and social understanding. I don’t want to condemn the novice, but I also don’t want to let him completely off the hook. True professionals spend years perfecting their craft and refining their workflow and business model and it can be frustrating to see people who are unqualified and unprepared but are reaping the continuous benefits of communal support as well as intellectual and equipment generosity.

CONCLUSION [SHOTGUNS I REALLY USE]
Okay, if I baited you with this title because you have a genuine interest in shotgun mics and navigating their tricky buying options, I apologize. To make amends, let’s talk a little about shotgun mics. The first shotgun mic I purchased during my sophomore year of college was a Sennheiser 416 P48 with a full Rycote zeppelin, high-wind cover and Windjammer. This is the mic that every sound mixer should have in their inventory. You could hammer nails into wood with it. They can also withstand almost any weather conditions. I have had mine doused with water and, after being dried out, work perfectly. I felt such audio bliss when recording with this mic back in the day and still enjoy its sound quality. Currently, my favorite go-to shotgun is the Schoeps CMIT. It’s more delicate than other mics, but I love the natural sound and substantial reach it has as it scoops up close-up sounding dialogue pushed several feet up. And wow! How about that Schoeps MiniCMIT?! Gorgeous piece of art, not to mention an amazing sounding mic in an updated, power-efficient and tiny package. What about all of the other mics? Some sound mixers have an absolute affinity with the Sanken CS-3e. It has an incredibly narrow reach with an off-axis rejection not maintained by many other shotgun mics. The elephant in the room—the Sennheiser 816. I have watched and listened to masterful boom operators operate this microphone—which is not for the average practitioner. This mic can pinpoint soft dialogue from a distance like no other. It can also be the victim of harsh reverberation—which should go without saying—but can also have a harsh bounce outside with inconsistent beach surf and traffic. And let’s not forget the Sennheiser MKH60 and MKH70. Let’s see what else? DPA 4017B! I have not personally used these but have heard amazing things. Old-school choices include Neumann KMR81 and KMR82. Inexpensive brand choices include Rode and Audio-Technica. Even with contemporary choices, many of these listed have existed for the last three decades! There are so many choices! I can see why this question has been asked. But I can also see why it has been condemned as an unanswerable question. To problem-solve and make this question answerable, here we go: It depends on the application. It depends on what your budget is. It depends on what your ears are pleased with. Also—all of them are fantastic. Choose one you like and buy two of them. Then you’ll be off to a good start.*
You Just Can’t Make This Stuff Up

Grammys at the Opera

Coming originally from music recording, but after moving mostly to television, I felt truly honored to have mixed the Grammy Awards on air for more than 30 years. In the beginning, I mixed all but the orchestra myself, both production and music groups (the orchestra came to us from a local studio). Eventually, a music truck was added but I continued mixing production and shared the music. One year, when the Grammy Awards came from New York’s Radio City Music Hall, the show honored a nominated opera singer.

On the Wednesday prior to the show, the Academy held a special event for this opera singer.

A performer, a big fan of both opera and the nominee, sang the same aria he would sing on the broadcast.

For the show, there was an 82-piece orchestra on an elevator, several floors below the stage. At the proper time, the orchestra was raised to the stage where the honoree was to sing his signature performance of this well-known aria. This mix was on my dance card.

Don’t Leave Coffee on My Cart!

Years ago, I was production mixing an episode of a TV series, and noticed an addition to my sound cart when I returned from lunch. Some idiot had left a half-filled ceramic mug of old coffee right in the middle of my cart! In anger, I flung the offending object into the nearest trashcan.

About 20 minutes later, an older crew member (maybe a grip or electrician?) walks up to me at the sound cart and asks if I knew where his cup was? I pointed to the trashcan, and then began to give him a serious reprimand, along with a lecture about why one NEVER puts anything spillable on the sound cart. I made it extremely clear to him that should anything or anybody cause that cup to tip over, it could possibly ruin a lot of expensive electronic recording equipment—forcing us to shut down for a while, as well as costing thousands in repair charges.

The old man obviously got the message, and looked down sheepishly.

At that point, all I could mumble was “Ooops.” (I actually used other language, but not nice to print.) Extending my hand to the DP, “Well, I guess it has been nice working here. Hope to see you all in the next life.”

Aaron smiled and then laughed. “Fred, relax. I can see that you were actually looking out for MY BEST INTEREST. You’re right, leaving that coffee there was a dumb thing to do. Now, everyone, go shoot me a show!”

Although I had received many a paycheck from him, that was the first time that we ever met in person. Happily, I did continue to receive many more checks from him over the years.

You know, you just can’t make this stuff up.

–Edward J. Greene CAS

Now, during rehearsals and the broadcast, I am joined by a senior member of the Academy Broadcast Committee, one of the most successful and respected record producers, a Juilliard graduate musician and an old friend. He spoke to me for three days about the great surprise for the opera honoree as this singer performed at the Grammy event.

Skip ahead to Grammy show day. Either shortly before or as we went on air, production called the truck and announced the singer was unable to perform that evening. After hearing about the Wednesday performance for three days, without much hesitation, I turned to my friend and suggested, “Why don’t you have the singer who performed at the Grammy party do it.” Almost immediately, someone came to the truck for the rehearsal recording of the opera orchestra to see if the key would work for that performer.

Once again, I guess you know where this is going. The person who sang at the Grammy party stepped in, sang the aria, and the audience went wild. If you happened to see that program, that singer and opera fan was Aretha Franklin, the honoree was Luciano Pavarotti, and the aria was “Nessun Dorma.” The friend that always sat with me was Phil Ramone.

You know, you just can’t make this stuff up.

–Fred Ginsburg CAS PhD

This Really Did Happen

Can I say from the outset that I am not superstitious at all but I was working on a movie in the depths of South Wales in the U.K. last year. The location was an old manor house and was reputed to be haunted by the ghost of a young girl.

We had set up the cart in the billiard room and on about day three, I sat at the cart when I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned round but there was no one there. Strange I thought, must have dreamt it. About 10 minutes later, both the boom op and I watched a Rycote windshield roll about two feet along the billiard table which is an absolutely flat surface. When we told the housekeeper, she just said that was the dead girl just checking us out.

–Malcolm Davies A.m.p.s. CAS
iZotope’s RX software has become an indispensable tool for the audio-post professional. While each major version has succeeded in making significant improvements, RX6 makes an incredible leap in functionality with its incorporation of machine learning.

Five years ago, iZotope acquired Imagine Research, a developer of intelligent audio analysis technologies. We are now seeing the fruits of that acquisition in products like Neutron and now, RX Advanced. In Neutron, machine learning is used to automatically differentiate between different instruments, so as to make calculated decisions on how to process the audio. In RX Advanced, it’s used in two new modules: Dialogue Isolate and De-rustle.

Machine learning is the construction of algorithms that can learn from data, and subsequently make predictions on data. Prior to the incorporation of machine learning, we started seeing what’s called “Intelligent DSP,” which gave us the “adaptive” functionality seen in the RX series. With machine learning, the algorithm is fed examples of something and it learns on its own how to identify the commonalities. In the making of RX6 Advanced, the team fed the algorithm numerous examples of good “clean” dialogue and then fed it examples of bad dialogue, and the software learned to differentiate. The examples are used to teach the algorithm and the algorithm learns on its own. The resulting algorithm would be impossible to code by humans, let alone understand it. Machine learning is the future of computer software and it’s exciting to see it incorporated into a product that’s used daily by so many audio professionals.

The two standout modules in RX6 Advanced are De-rustle and Dialogue Isolate. Both modules are based on machine learning and both perform incredible feats of noise reduction. They have profoundly changed the way I mix. Since taking over as the re-recording mixer on Deadliest Catch in March of this year, we’d been heavily using RX5 to clean up dialogue. Several episodes in, RX6 was released, and it quickly became apparent that this was a game changer. Dialogue Isolate now gave me the ability to not only lower the ambient noise floor, but to easily lower the loudness of random metal banging and chaos in the background that was occurring at the same time as the dialogue. I use Dialogue Isolate liberally throughout the show. I do use it pretty lightly though—intelligible dialogue is the main goal here. And as with any other noise-reduction software, there are severe artifacts if you push it hard. The other interesting side effect of Dialogue Isolate though, is that I’ve found it often actually makes the dialogue sound better when used lightly—getting rid of offending frequencies. In practice, I find myself having to EQ dialogue less when I’ve run it through Dialogue Isolate.
One of our dialogue editors on Deadliest Catch, John Creed, and I have both found De-wind and De-rustle to be very effective as well. De-wind is great at removing wind on mic sound, and we use it in conjunction with De-rustle to remove the cloth flap sound and cloth rustle. It performs very well with truly impressive results. In practice, I often find myself reaching for Dialogue Isolate first though, as that simply solves a whole host of issues.

In general, the layout of almost all of the RX windows has been updated to be more logical in its layout. They (RX windows) look great and show the signs of a product that has matured over time with a very active user base. The shade of the plugin windows is much darker, closer to black. It gives all the windows a really nice look—although in my opinion, it does make it slightly harder to read the text. Supposedly, standard black text on a white background is easiest for the eyes, but it doesn’t look as cool, so I guess they’re going with form over function a bit here. But I don’t mind at all.

Many of the windows are more consistent with the layout of sliders. For instance, in De-hum, the Slope was vertical and the Harmonics selector was horizontal. It’s much cleaner now with everything horizontal. Those might seem like little things, but when you’re staring at these windows all day long, you do notice it being easier to quickly see and digest the information you need.

The History and Preset buttons are now more properly placed alongside the Settings button on the top right of the plugin window. It makes for a much cleaner layout and, in general, all of the plugin windows are much cleaner looking. The Bypass button has been moved to the left side of the window sitting above Avid’s built-in Bypass button. I think this was another great decision, as it seems more fluid and easy to see quickly.

In RX De-click, the Click type drop-down menu has been removed. Selecting the Click type has now been rolled into the Preset menu. It does make sense for them to do this, but I do sometimes miss the convenience of quickly selecting between Click, Thump, and Discontinuity. However, having more specific built-in presets, such as Remove Thumps, Random Thumps, and Periodic Thumps, is a good trade-off. Again, the focus in RX6 is a cleaner interface and more logical placement of buttons.

In RX6, Voice De-noise replaces Dialogue De-noise. Voice De-noise has a setting to optimize for dialogue or music. And the Manual and Auto mode buttons are now replaced by a checkbox for Adaptive mode.

De-noise is now called Spectral De-noise. Other than the Smoothing no longer being a pop-up window (it now sits on the main window), it’s largely unchanged.

RX De-ess is another nice addition and offers a much more convenient and quick way to deal with sibilant audio.
RX De-plosive is now available as an AudioSuite plugin. A very handy tool to have quickly accessible.

RX Mouth De-click is another incredibly useful tool and time-saver. As its name implies, its main use is for sounds specifically made by the mouth (mouth weirdness), without the same risk of affecting transients of words that can be very problematic with the standard De-click. You can really apply Mouth De-click liberally with impressive results. This one’s truly a time-saver.

While I have not used De-bleed yet myself, some of my colleagues have been thoroughly impressed by its ability to remove mic bleed.

Breath Control is another useful addition that will surely come in handy on VO.

Ambience Match is now available directly from AudioSuite. In conversations with our dialogue editor, he said it has a more consistent tonality and the gain is more consistent with the source material than in previous RX versions.

It’s nice to see a company continually improve current features in addition to adding new ones. In my opinion, the time it will save you is well worth the price of admission here. I highly recommend upgrading to RX6 Advanced. I’m excited to see what iZotope brings us with the next version! On its website, iZotope hints at the possibility of synthesizing dialogue that is irrecoverable. Needless to say, with iZotope, whatever’s next always manages to save us even more time.

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Australian sound designer Craig Carter was a multiple AFI Award winner for films such as *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, *The Lighthorsemen*, *Ground Zero*, and *Malcolm*. With early credits as a sound editor on feature films such as *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* and *Crocodile Dundee*, Craig was currently working with producer Tait Bradley on Clayton Jacobson’s film *Sibling Rivalry*. Craig dedicated 34 years of his life to sound and the entertainment industry. Craig’s presence will be sadly missed by the global sound community but his incredible contribution to storytelling through sound will no doubt continue to touch generations who will continue to enjoy his great work on many iconic films.
You Never Forget Your First: Remembering Richard Portman

Above: Richard sitting down. (FSU College of Motion Picture Arts)
Photos from left to right:
Richard Portman at mixer (FSU College of Motion Picture Arts)
From left: Richard Portman, William McCaughhey, Darin Knight, and Aaron Rochin, winners, Sound (The Deer Hunter) with presenters Margot Kidder and Christopher Reeve, third from right, backstage, 1978 (51st) Academy Awards ceremony. (© the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences)
Portman in mix (FSU College of Motion Picture Arts)
Richard Portman had a huge impact on my life. Here are a few recollections.

The year was 1973. I was working at the Burbank Studios, now known as Warner Bros. Burbank. I had been an ADR/Foley mixer on the lot for a few years. One day, I got a call from Don Rodgers, who was the Sound Director at the Samuel Goldwyn Studios (later known as Warner Hollywood). He said he was looking for a music mixer and I would be working with Dick Portman. Naturally, I knew Dick had a vast reputation in Hollywood.

That night, I talked it over with my future wife Ruth. This was a big decision in my career because I would be leaving a steady, full-time job, for what could be a temporary gig.

The next day, I accepted and gave my notice. A few days later, I drove over to Goldwyn’s to meet the lead mixer, and to my surprise, Dick walked onto the dub stage in full black leathers. At the time, he rode a motorcycle to work.

The director/producer on the movie *Papillon* was Franklin Schaffner, who was a sound perfectionist. I remember he was especially picky about the ADR of Dustin Hoffman. Dick did a magical job of blending it with the production dialogue. I worked on one more show with Dick, *Day of the Dolphin*. I learned a lot about mixing and then we went our separate ways.

About 10 years later, in the early 1980s, I was working at Todd-AO on Stage C. Dick was hired to mix on Stage B. In this phase of Dick’s career, he was a one-man band. Meaning, he mixed the dialogue, music, and effects. At that time, he was ahead of the curve with this style of mixing. He was also into long, flowing hair, flowing robes, and the scent of hemp was in the air on his stage. This was a much softer, mellower Dick Portman than I had met at Goldwyn’s. He and I would hang out in the parking lot at lunch discussing world events.

Fifteen years later, I was at the CAS Awards ceremony in 1997 when Dick received the CAS Career Achievement Award. Past President Steve Hawk CAS put on an incredible show. It was really more like a roast than an awards presentation.

Dick was a great mixer and a great friend. We will miss him dearly.

Jim Corbett CAS
Cinema Audio Society Historian
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
CinemaAudioSociety.org

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CAS STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARD

The CAS will begin accepting applications Saturday, April 15, 2017. All applications must be completed and submitted online no later than Saturday, September 23, 2017. The CAS Student Recognition Award recipient will be announced at the 54th Annual CAS Awards in Los Angeles, CA on Saturday, February 24, 2018.

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.
Karol Urban CAS MPSE completed mix of the Netflix original film #realityhigh, as well as a Mar Vista film called Monster, that addresses bullying at all ages. She also finished Grey’s Anatomy Season 13 with Ross Davis and is looking forward to Season 14. Now she is mixing a six-episode documentary series for Netflix called Mortified and ramping up to start two new series late this summer.

After finishing up The Last Man on Earth Season 3 for FOX, the dream team of Devendra Cleary CAS, Scott LaRue, and Tanya Peel went onto a pilot called Ghosted with many of the same faces and it seemed to go by so fast! With one day in between as a wrap day and prep day, the three of them loaded onto a brand-new camera truck for the FX pilot Mayans MC. Motorcycles were testing his (Cleary) limiters one day, whispery dialogue was testing his patience another. This project flexed the talents of all three of the team members. Focus amid chaos has been the name of the game. Then Devendra had a short summer break with a couple Dr. Pepper commercials mixed in. Now he is prepping for Season 4 of The Last Man on Earth, starting at the end of July!

The fun never stops for Gavin Fernandes CAS. After finishing two Canadian features, as well as HBO’s Big Little Lies, Gavin is on the new NBC/Universal series The Bold Type and the Quebec feature The Threesome (Trip à trois), as well as a few MOWs for Incendo Productions.

Devin Golub CAS just wrapped Netflix’s Medal of Honor. It is such a very rewarding project. We were shooting 100 percent exteriors, sometimes in 100-degree heat. William Munroe on boom and Jay Golden kept us snake-free and the gear working. A thanks to Noel Espinosa for coming in for the final week. Thanks for the hard work and for making it fun.

Steve Nelson CAS finds it hard to imagine that he is well underway on Season 5 of TNT’s The Last Ship. He’d never even completed a Season 2 of anything, so making it all the way from pilot to what is likely the final voyage, feels monumental. Since the very beginning, when the crew met in San Diego on the pilot, he’s been accompanied if not carried by the indefatigable and indomitable John Sheridan, who has lately been mixing our double-ups as well. Since episode two, Knox White has been commanding the set, swinging the boom or rather threading the needle through our very difficult Navy destroyer sets. They are justifiably known as very challenging shows; he cannot think of a better crew to have on this journey. He thanks all for the great work and for keeping it fun. And thanks to a great group of collaborators, craftspeople, cast, and production who have worked so well together to make a great show. They’ll go through September … and after that?

Sherry Klein CAS and Scott Weber have just completed Season 1 of Bull for CBS and looking forward to starting Season 2. They also completed a pilot Reverie for NBC, which was picked up and will start mixing in late fall. This summer on Stage 5 at Smart Post Sound, they’re busy mixing Season 2 of Queen of the South for USA and Season 3 of Unreal for Lifetime.

Alex Markowski CAS and Alex Nomick have finished editing and mixing Season 2 of Saints & Sinners at Audio Kitchen Post. They have also wrapped up the three-part PBS historical documentary series F.S. Key for producer/director Phil Marshall. The summer holds work with independent projects, Senegal Cinema for Josh Gibson and Abigail Falls for Erica Dunton.

Steve Weiss CAS is on set mixing Major Crimes Season 6 with Vince Schelly on boom and Dennis Carlin utility. On many days, there are 12-14 wires and 3-4 cameras.

Cory Rizos CAS just recently completed back-to-back mixes and sound design for three feature documentaries: Let There Be Light and Manic for EyeSteelFilm and Park Extension for director Tony Asimakopoulos. Also, late last year, he finished mixing and sound design for two other feature documentaries: Resurrecting Hassan by Carlo Guillermo Proto and Shadows of Paradise by Sebastian Lang.

Philip Perkins CAS completed mixes for the second season of the PBS series Global Spirit, an episode of the Earth Focus series (KCET) and the documentary Road to Zuni. Some cool side projects included the mix of the score for LINES Ballet’s Figures of Speech, the recording and mix for Alvin Curran’s Self Portrait, and recording and mixing artist Rigo 23’s video and LP for his Un Encuentro live show.

Erik H. Magnus CAS relocated last year to Atlanta and hit the ground running. He was finishing up the Baywatch movie when Mark Weingarten CAS had to go to Europe to mix Dunkirk. Rob Disner was boom operating and Andy Sleet was on utility sound. Next up was the HBO movie The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, with Rob Disner on boom and Tiffany T. Mack joining as utility sound. This segued into a Jeremy Irons feature comedy titled An Actor Prepares. Recently, he also finished the CW pilot Insatiable, with Jorge Del Valle as utility sound rounding out the crew.

Phillip W. Palmer CAS winding up another project in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thanks to my crew on NBC’s The Night Shift Season 4, Ben Greaves as boom operator and Steve Willer as sound...
utility. Looking forward to heading home soon to clean out all the dust before we head back here next year for another run of *Better Call Saul* for AMC.

**Edward L. Moskowitz** CAS and Team Purple have been slowly getting back to work after some travel time to the Mediterranean. Before that, they covered for Jesse Peck on *Dr. Ken* and then did some 2nd unit work for **Dave Yaffe** CAS on *10 Days in the Valley* before and after going on the Dave Koz Cruise after NAB 2017. They did some guest speaker career counseling with college-bound high school students at the PUC Schools Glen Oaks Education Complex. They have also completed additional photography units on the Morgan Freeman/Tommy Lee Jones feature *Villa Capri* and then went onto an additional photography unit for the Weinstein feature film *Polaroid*, before starting up the 2nd units for Doug Schulman on *Lethal Weapon* Season 2. Thanks to the Team Purple members: Chris Sposa, Eli Moskowitz, Leonard Moskowitz, Chet Leonard, Sheraton Toyota, R. Steven Evans, and Keith Birchfield for all their hard work. They are looking forward to seeing last fall’s sound efforts premiering on TBS’s *The Guest Book* in mid-August.

**Bob Bronow** CAS is honored to have been elected Governor of the Sound Peer Group at the Television Academy. He also recently finished mixing the first season of Nat Geo’s *Genius*, with Mark Hensley and also had a great time recently mixing *Nightcap*. 

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Fred Ginsburg CAS PhD wears his stylish doctoral regalia at CSUN’s 2017 commencement. His students could not miss him, what with his signature steampunk topper!!

Just another beautiful day in Seattle for Karol Urban CAS MPSE mixing the final episode of Grey’s Anatomy Season 13!

Bob Bronow CAS and Mark Hensley pose with their team from Nat Geo’s Genius.


When you misplace your headphones, you get the special pair. And you have to take a selfie with the Sound Department. Phillip W. Palmer CAS, Ben Greaves, and Steve Willer pose with their bunny-eared lead actor, Eoin Macken.

June was punctuated for Bob Bronow CAS and family with the cowboy wedding of our dear friends, Rob and Mark!
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