



the official quarterly of the cinema audio society

Meet the
Winners
FROM THE
62ND ANNUAL
CAS
Awards

CAS • QUARTERLY

SUMMER
2026



Addressing Hearing Damage • Comms on *Peacemaker*
The 2026 NAB Show • Mix Music Production: Nashville

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

"CHAPTER EIGHT: THE RIGHTSIDE UP"

MARK PATERSON · WILL FILES CAS · STEVE NEAL CAS · CARLOS RAMIREZ
MICHAEL P. CLARK CAS · JUDAH GETZ CAS · PETER PERSAUD

"A MAGNUM OPUS."

THEWRAP

**"THERE WILL NEVER BE
ANOTHER SHOW LIKE IT."**

IGN



CONSIDER

**STRANGER
THINGS**

THE FINAL SEASON



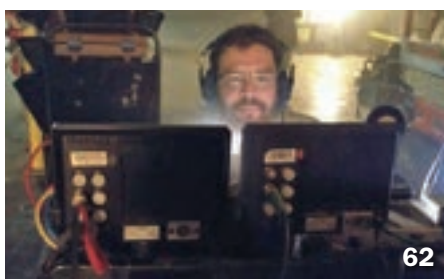
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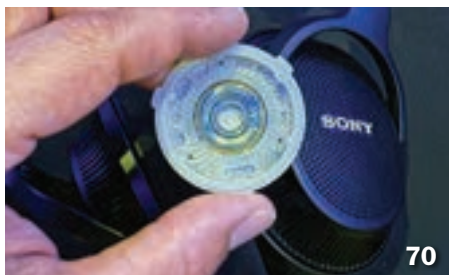
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Members check in





Hello to all CAS members and other readers!

Our CAS Awards Show this spring was a fantastic event. I hope many of you were able to attend. Our host, Chris Hardwick, was fantastic and the inaugural Jeffrey Wexler Award presentation was very meaningful to me and other friends of Jeff. But whether you were there or not, this edition of the *CAS Quarterly* has details about the winners and photos from the show. Congratulations to the winners and all nominees!

This year, the CAS plans for a number of interesting activities. More info will be announced via email and in later issues, but they will be split between Los Angeles and other parts of the country and the world. If you'd like to hold a CAS event in your geographical area, let us know, especially if you might be willing to participate in the planning. Events can range from simple gatherings to group dinners, and even seminars or screenings. Email the CAS office or contact Events Committee Chair Chris Minkler.

I want to briefly comment on a few of the articles in this issue. First, Ryan Pedersen has put together an important article about hearing loss in the mixing community. As a former emergency responder, I am very familiar with the hearing loss that can occur with sustained exposure to loud environments such as those many of us face every day. But it is also my firm belief that our listening skills are vastly more important than just our hearing. Still, sometimes technical compensation for hearing loss is a necessity but doesn't prevent us from using our experience, skills, and listening to do excellent work.

G. John Garrett has a write-up on the 2026 NAB Show that includes detailed info on new products and other aspects of the show I expect many of us will find quite interesting. There's also a great article on communication methods and technology by Matthew Nicolay, using his work on *Peacemaker* as a case study. This is another topic of great interest to me as a large chunk of my work has fallen into this area. I did two movies with Lee Orloff requiring extensive communication design and implementation, *The Abyss* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. The latter was puppet-centric which turned out to be great training for the puppet work in several other movies.

Speaking of shared experiences, CAS is about to embark on our own version of "Ask Me Anything" using our Zoom room to have selected experts—both members and other specialists—host informal sessions to discuss our work, techniques, and equipment. If you are interested in hosting one of these sessions on a topic you feel strongly about, we encourage you to contact our office.

This begins my last year as president, and it has been an honor to serve. But if there are other initiatives you've been hoping for, please let me know right away!

Peter F. Kurland CAS



CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY MISSION STATEMENT

To educate and inform the general public and the motion picture and television industry that effective sound is achieved by a creative, artistic, and technical blending of diverse sound elements. To provide the motion picture and 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 and television industry in the selection and training of qualified personnel in the unique field of cinematic sound recording. To achieve for our members deserved recognition as major contributors to the field of motion picture and television entertainment.

SUMMER 2026 NEW MEMBERS

Active

Nigel Albermaniche CAS
Jen Annor CAS
Jacob Bloomfield-Misrach CAS*
Dennis Dembeck CAS
Bradford Engleking CAS
Nicole Fletcher CAS*
Gareth John CAS
Veronica Kahn CAS*
Ron Mellegers CAS
Tom Taylor CAS
Daniele Turi CAS

Associate

Norah Abbas
Tinatini Babakishvili
Matías Caldarella
Robert Kornweiss
Mike Morgan
Colin Perry
Ryan Vaughan**

Academic

Adam Bloodgood
Denton Cordell
Carsten Paasch

*Upgraded from Associate status
**Upgraded from Academic status



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THE BEAR



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It had been many, many years since I last attended the CAS Awards, but everything lined up relative to schedule this year, so my wife Stephanie and I headed out to L.A. for a mix of fun and more fun. It was so rewarding meeting people who I've been communicating with via screen, phone, and email for years in person. The pre-party in the garden area was a great time to mingle and point out all the different faces to my wife, "She mixes this series. He did the location sound for this movie." Meeting many of the contributors to this magazine in person, and even

in front of the Dolby-sponsored *CAS Quarterly* photo booth, was a treat. The show itself was filled with laughs and celebration and was followed by a great after-party that seemed to end too soon—even though we left around 1:00.

[Photo and video coverage of the event can be found under the 62nd Annual Awards Coverage section of the website.]

This issue celebrates the award recipients from the evening. Thanks to those who took time to speak with the recipients and put together articles, including Sam Casas, Juan Cisneros CAS, Kurt Kassulke CAS, Peter Kelsey CAS, Blas Kisić CAS, Matthew Nicolay CAS, Brandon Schuster CAS, and Gregory Charles Vilfranc CAS MPSE. In addition to our "Meet the Winners" articles, CAS Associate Ryan Pedersen presents an article on hearing damage and Matthew Nicolay provides some insight into complicated comms setups in his case study article on the hit series *Peacemaker*. On the event front, G. John Garrett CAS shares his thoughts on some of the technology presented at NAB 2026 in Las Vegas and I provide a recap of my time attending this year's Mix Music Production event in Nashville. In the back pages, be sure to check out your colleagues' "Been There Done That" and "The Lighter Side" submissions. If an article makes you think of a friend or colleague, send a link to the online version of the *Quarterly*, available on the CAS website. Have something to share? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at CASQuarterly@CinemaAudioSociety.org.

What an exciting and whirlwind of a night the 62nd CAS Awards were. While it felt like speed-dating at times—three minutes with this person, three minutes with this other person—I am so glad I attended.

Matt Foglia CAS



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FOR YOUR EMMY® CONSIDERATION
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING
FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (HALF-HOUR) AND ANIMATION
EPISODE 8: "YUCCA VALLEY"
CHRISTOPHER BARNETT CAS, JEFF KING,
LIZ MARSTON, STEVE MORANTZ, DOC KANE

"A TRIUMPH OF STORYTELLING."

THE GUARDIAN



MARVEL TELEVISION

Wonder Man



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COLLABORATORS

CAS Associate member Sam Casas

has been working as a re-recording mixer and sound designer at Lime Studios in Santa Monica since 2003. He has found a successful niche mixing television commercials for global and national brands such as Adidas, Visa, QuickBooks, and Postmates, to name a few. In addition to his commercial work at Lime Studios, he finds time to mix the occasional independent feature such as *Lupe* for HBO Max, various shorts, and music videos for artists such as H.E.R. and French Montana.

Joining MPEG in 2017, and then MPSE and CAS in 2018 as an Associate member, Sam has a passion for acquiring and sharing knowledge. With a love of film and episodic television, the CAS has been a great inspiration in his goal to bring a cinematic approach to all his work. Connecting with other members while writing articles for the CAS *Quarterly* has been especially educational and rewarding.

Sam has a fully equipped and treated 5.1 studio at his home in Studio City, CA, which he has been able to make his primary workplace since the start of the pandemic in 2020. In his spare time, he enjoys reading books about acoustics, thinking about maybe starting to exercise again, and spending time with his wife Elise and son Sebastian.



Kurt Kassulke CAS

is a longtime effects re-recording mixer with an Emmy for *Ally McBeal* and diverse credits

ranging back to *The X-Files*, *The Practice*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *NYPD Blue*, *Castle*, *Under the Dome*, *Vampire Diaries*, and *Hawaii 5-0*.

Kurt's most recent work can be heard on *Grey's Anatomy*, *Project Blue Book*, *Big Sky* and more!



Juan Cisneros CAS

is a Los Angeles-based production sound mixer originally from Lima, Peru, with



Peter Kelsey CAS

started his career in sound at the illustrious independent recording studio,



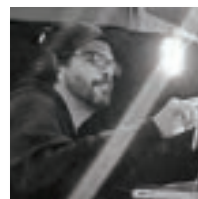
Blas Kisić CAS

was born in Venezuela, where he earned a BA in mass media, after which he moved to



Matthew Nicolay CAS

is a production sound mixer with more than three decades of experience in film and television.



Trident Studios, where all the early Elton John and David Bowie albums were recorded. Here, Peter learned from engineers and producers such as Rupert Hine, Ken Scott, Roy Thomas Baker, Robin Geoffrey Cable and David Hentschel. He was a second engineer on the Carly Simon album *No Secrets*, and part of the mixing team for Elton John's album, *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*.

After moving to the USA, he did a lot of work as a scoring mixer before moving into post-production sound. He has worked on many David Kelley shows, including *Ally McBeal* and *Boston Legal*, for both of which he won sound mixing Emmys. He worked for RH Factor for many years and for the last three years has worked for Smart Post Sound. He has also worked on *Speechless*, *The Chi*, *Arrested Development* and *Dead to Me*.

Peter has a degree in mathematics, a black belt in tae kwon do and loves to do public speaking.

Los Angeles to pursue a career in filmmaking. He's been blessed with a rich career spanning documentaries, unscripted television, and commercials, though most of his current work is in episodic TV. Most importantly, he's a family man who leaves a bit of time for Formula One, photography, woodworking, and Tottenham Hotspur (in no particular order).

He studied at San Francisco State University, where an early mentor introduced him to the craft of sound, an experience that set the course for his entire career.

After graduating, Matthew relocated to Los Angeles to pursue work in the film industry. Over the years, he has built an extensive body of work, including projects such as *The Haunting of Hill House* and *Hidden Figures*.

Matthew has been an active member of the Cinema Audio Society for over 25 years. The Summer issue marks his first contribution to the CAS *Quarterly*, an arrival he describes as long overdue: "I'm late to the party, but I got there."



CAS Associate member Ryan Pedersen has loved sound his whole life, even as a little kid. He originally planned

on working in live sound or recording music in studios but found his way into film production and has been doing that ever since. Ryan has seen a large portion of the world from his early documentary work but now spends most of his time in Los Angeles doing music and dialogue playback or mixing scripted projects. When not on set or at home with his wife and four kids, he finds refuge at his train club at Griffith Park.



Brandon Schuster CAS is originally from Atlanta, Georgia. He studied audio at the Conservatory of

Recording Arts and Sciences in Gilbert, Arizona, and then moved to L.A. to begin his career. Since then, he has worked in all avenues of the industry from recording audiobooks, mixing and editing trailers and commercials, Foley and ADR mixing, and assistant editing for reality television and features. For the last seven years, Brandon has been involved in localization where he works as a recording engineer and dubbing director for anime and live-action international episodic series and features.



Patrick Spain CAS is a re-recording mixer known for Ryan Murphy's **9-1-1**, **9-1-1: Nashville**, **9-1-1: Lone Star**,

Amy Poehler's **Lucy and Desi**, as well as Seth MacFarlane's **Family Guy** and **American Dad**.

He began his career at Signet Sound, a boutique film scoring studio occupying Motown's West Coast studio. During his time there, he worked on over 50 film scores for the likes of Randy Newman, Thomas Newman, Jon Brion, Terence Blanchard, and many others.

In 2007, he made the move to the legendary Ocean Way Recording (later re-named United Western), and Record One. Here, he had an education in classic recording gear and techniques for pop, rock, jazz, hip-hop, in addition to film scores. Throughout this period, Patrick was lucky enough to work for such wide-ranging artists as Quincy Jones, Burt Bacharach, Herbie Hancock, Dr. Dre, Beck, John Mayer, Dave Stewart, Seal, Pink, Dido, Erykah Badu, Brandi Carlile, Paramore, Gerald Wilson, Barry White (posthumously), and with composers such as James Horner, Patrick Doyle, and Mychael Danna.

In 2011, Patrick was offered an opportunity to work for Todd-AO. It was another expansive learning experience, this time in the state-of-the-art dub stage working on major motion pictures like **The Avengers**, **Lone Survivor**, and well-regarded television like **Girls** and **Nashville**.

Across these career moves, Patrick has kept busy mixing dialogue, effects, single-mixer films, and television, working everywhere from Technicolor, Warner Bros., Bad Robot, Advantage Audio, Formosa Group, and Pacific Standard Sound.



Gregory Vilfranc CAS MPSE is a re-recording mixer and sound designer originally from New York, who now

resides in the Greater Boston area with his wife and kids. Gregory is the co-founder of the boutique, fully remote audio post facility Franc Village Studios, where he puts into practice the professional skills he's developed over the past 20+ years while maintaining a "relationship first" philosophy for all his clients. In addition to providing audio post support for TV and film on the independent circuit, he's also contributed to the audiobook and podcast space where he's edited, mixed, and mastered over 60 published audiobooks. Recently, Gregory teamed up with Audible Originals in their podcast space, mixing and adding sound design to titles, including **Think Like a Champion w/ Russell Wilson**, **Soldiers of Science**, **In Love and Struggle Vol. 2**, and most notably, **Mandela: The Lost Tapes**.

In addition to audio post, Gregory is an accomplished composer and vocalist. As a BMI member, his compositions have been featured on networks, including VH1, Oxygen, and MTV, and have received placement in several popular reality TV shows like **Keeping Up With the Kardashians**, **Love and Hip Hop**, and others. Gregory is a member of The Society of Composers & Lyricists, CAS, MPSE, and the Television Academy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



THE CAS FORUMS!

In an effort to increase accessibility to other CAS members, we've launched a **Members Forum** through the CAS website. The intent of the forum is to allow for discussions related to work, the organization, and other topics of interest. Take a moment and give it a try. There's also a CAS Zoom Room available for live chats and discussion. If you haven't received an email from the CAS, be sure to log into the Members Portal to make sure your communication preferences are accurate.

New CAS "In Conversation" Podcasts Available!

Eighteen CAS "In Conversation" podcasts are available. For "In Conversation," Ep. 18, Paddy Hanlon CAS sits down with Oscar-winning sound designer and re-recording mixer Randy Thom CAS of Skywalker Sound. From his radio roots to shaping the sonic landscapes of classics like *The Right Stuff*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Forrest Gump*, and *The Incredibles*, the CAS Career Achievement honoree reveals the stories and philosophies behind decades of groundbreaking movie magic. This episode was recorded in New York and California. All episodes are available here:

<https://cinemaaudiosociety.org/podcasts/>

CAS YouTube Channel

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www.YouTube.com/CinemaAudioSociety



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63RD | AWARDS TIMELINE

The 63rd Annual CAS Awards will take place on Saturday, March 6, 2027. The 64th Annual CAS Awards will take place on Saturday, February 26, 2028.

Every year, the CAS Awards recognize Outstanding Sound Mixing in film and television, along with an annual Student Recognition Award, the CAS Career Achievement Award, the CAS Filmmaker Award, and now, the new Jeffrey S. Wexler Award.

“Our community of sound professionals continues to raise the bar year after year,” said Cinema Audio Society President Peter Kurland. “The CAS is proud to shine a spotlight on their remarkable work. We anticipate a great celebration of the best in sound mixing at the 63rd CAS Awards.”

63RD CAS AWARDS TIMELINE:

- The entry submission form will be available online on Tuesday, October 27, 2026, on the CAS website at: www.cinemaudiosociety.org.
- Entry submissions due online – 5 p.m. PT, Monday, December 7, 2026
- Nomination ballot voting ends online – 5 p.m. PT, Wednesday, January 6, 2027
- Final nominees in each category announced – Tuesday, January 12, 2027
- Nominee listing error and omission deadline – Friday, January 22, 2027
- Final voting ends online – 5 p.m. PT, Thursday, February 18, 2027
- 63rd Annual CAS Awards – Saturday, March 6, 2027
- Applications for the Jeffrey S. Wexler Award for Advancement in Sound Technology are due by June 30, 2026.

JEFFREY S. WEXLER AWARD FOR ADVANCEMENT IN SOUND TECHNOLOGY

The Jeffrey S. Wexler Award for Advancement in Sound Technology

The Jeffrey S. Wexler Award honors individuals, companies, and products that have had a profound impact on the art and craft of sound mixing. This award may recognize advancements that either extensively improved on existing methods or are so innovative in nature that they materially changed how sound is recorded, mixed, or delivered. The award may be given to a specific technology, individual or product, or to multiple technologies, individuals or products honoring a wider category of contribution.

The CAS Science Technology and Engineering Committee will review and evaluate all submissions to determine which submissions will be awarded. Applications may be submitted by committee members, CAS members, product manufacturers, and individual inventors.

- Applications can be submitted on the CAS website by navigating: AWARDS > 63RD AWARDS > JEFFREY S. WEXLER AWARD
- <https://cinemaudiosociety.org/jeffrey-s-wexler-award-for-advancement-in-sound-technology/>
- Click the “Award Submission Form” button and submit the completed form **by June 30** of the submission year.
- If you have additional materials describing the submitted item, please include under “Additional Supporting Materials” before completing the submission.
- After reviewing the form and any ancillary materials, the committee may request additional information or presentation.

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STATUS NEWS



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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

Larry Benjamin CAS
Re-Recording Mixer

Tim Hoogenakker
Re-Recording Mixer

Phillip W. Palmer CAS
Production Sound Mixer

Dave Porter
Scoring Mixer

Ron Mellegers
Foley Mixer

Judah Getz
ADR Mixer

 **tv**

PLUR1BUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS



eipma

Entertainment Industry
Professionals **Mentoring Alliance**

*Bridging the Gap between
aspiring professionals
and industry experts*

An update from our friends at the Entertainment Industry Professionals Mentoring Alliance (EIPMA).

EIPMA has been very busy providing opportunities and exposure to aspiring professionals. Thank you to all the professionals, studios, and facilities who help provide these opportunities. Here is a short recap of just a few of the events we've held over the past year.

On May 1, 2025, EIPMA & Universal Post coordinated with Tomorrow's Talent and hosted a tour of the post facilities at NBCUniversal Studios Post, including a mix stage, ADR stage, Foley stage, and coloring facilities for high school students from San Bernardino and Palm Springs School Districts.

On May 27, 2025, El Camino High School and EIPMA hosted "Careers in Entertainment Sound & Film." Moderated by Karol Urban CAS MPSE, the panel included producer Agatha Warren, picture editor Dorian Harris ACE, and sound designer/re-recording mixer Tony Lamberti CAS. The panel, which was also livestreamed, had a live turnout of more than 200 students. Industry professionals shared their career journeys, roles in the filmmaking process, and the diverse opportunities in audio production, video production, and post-production.



On February 28, 2026, EIPMA in partnership with ACE, CAS, and MPSE, hosted its annual Speed Mentoring event for the Student Award nominees from each of these organizations. Mentors and students connect via Zoom video conferencing technology, where individual mentees engaged with several mentors on a rotating basis for short, one-on-one conversations about employment opportunities and career strategies.

Everyone who has participated in Speed Mentoring has really loved it. We have connected with students worldwide and this event had students from China, the Netherlands, England, and across the USA.



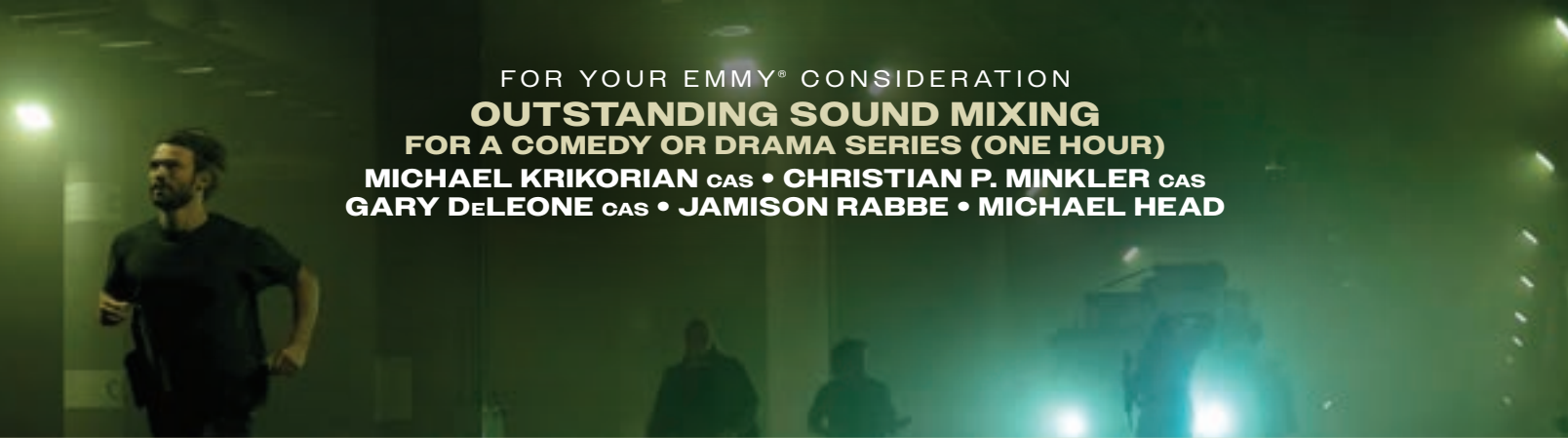
On May 18, 2026, El Camino High School and EIPMA hosted a livestream webinar "Foley for Film & Television." Sanaa Kelly from Reel Foley showed the students how Foley is programed, recorded, and edited live on stage. Our goal is to engage these high school students into this process.

Thank you to our incredible EIPMA Board and Advisory Council for doing so much to make a difference through informing, advising, mentoring, AND representing YOU, our member organizations in this endeavor.

Thank you to CAS, MPSE, VFF, and Avid for their generous donations supporting our mission, and to Warner Bros. Post Production Creative Services and Universal Studio Post for their past event sponsorships.

And MANY THANKS to YOU for your support and commitment to EIPMA.

We survive through your donations, so please help us and continue your support of our industry's future talent. Visit us at EIPMA.org



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FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE HOUR)
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GARY DELEONE CAS • JAMISON RABBE • MICHAEL HEAD



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EVEN STRONGER THAN THE FIRST SEASON.
THE STAKES ARE CONTINUALLY RAISED FROM ONE EPISODE TO THE NEXT."**
TECHRADAR

PARADISE



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OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES
and all other categories including
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING (ONE HOUR)



“Extraordinary”

THE GUARDIAN

**THE
BOYS**



OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTARY
and all other categories including
**OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR
A NONFICTION PROGRAM**

**“A triumph.
The best documentary
of the year.”**

COLLIDER

JOHN CANDY

I like me





OUTSTANDING COMEDY SERIES
and all other categories including
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING (ONE HOUR)

NICOLAS CAGE IS
“SPIDER-NOIR”



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AMAZON
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OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES
and all other categories including
OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING (ONE HOUR)



**“The attention to
detail shines”**

METRO

Fallout

prime | fyc

CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY 62ND ANNUAL CAS AWARDS

by Juan Cisneros CAS



Lights, camera, sound! The Cinema Audio Society presented a memorable evening of audio celebration, rolling out the red carpet for its 62nd annual awards on March 7, 2026, at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. More than a typical Hollywood gathering, this was our chance to honor the talented sound professionals who bring movies and TV shows to life with every mix and effect. Chris Hardwick hosted with great energy and sharp humor about our world of mics and mixes, keeping the room laughing while highlighting the passion we all share.

CAS President Peter Kurland delivered President's Remarks and announced the 2026-2027 Board of Directors installation, adding some new faces to guide our society forward.

"Tonight, we celebrate the very best of our profession," proclaimed Kurland. "Sound mixing demands both technical skill and artistic intent, and these honorees exemplify the precision, creativity, and discipline that define our craft. We are proud to recognize professionals whose dedication and excellence continue to elevate the standard for our industry." Kurland's words set the perfect tone for the 62nd CAS Awards, underscoring sound's quiet power in every great story.

The emotional center of the night came from well-deserved honors for Filmmaker Award recipient, director Guillermo del Toro and Career Achievement Award recipient, re-recording mixer Skip Lievsay. Career Achievement Award presenters Jaimie Alexander, Eric André, Tig Notaro, and "Weird Al" Yankovic shared warm stories of Lievsay's remarkable career, turning complex tracks into the heartbeat of films we love.

A standout moment was the inaugural Jeffrey S. Wexler Award for Advancement in Sound Technology, created in memory of production sound mixer Jeff Wexler after his passing in December 2025. The award was presented to innovators Evan Brooks and Peter Gotcher (founders of Digidesign), and Glenn Sanders (founder) and Howard Stark (chief engineer) of Zaxcom for their forward-thinking audio tools.



CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY
**62ND ANNUAL
CAS AWARDS**

62ND CAS AWARD WINNERS & HONOREES

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUND MIXING FOR 2025

MOTION PICTURES – LIVE ACTION

F1

Production Sound Mixer – Gareth John
Re-Recording Mixer – Gary A. Rizzo CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Juan Peralta
Scoring Mixer – Alan Meyerson CAS
ADR Mixer – Michael Miller CAS
Foley Mixer – Dennis Leonard
Foley Mixer – Elizabeth Marston

MOTION PICTURES – ANIMATED

KPOP DEMON HUNTERS

Original Dialogue Mixer – Howard London CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Michael Babcock CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Tony Lamberti
Scoring Mixer – Erich Talaba
Foley Mixer – Giorgi Lekishvili

MOTION PICTURES – DOCUMENTARY

BECOMING LED ZEPPELIN

Production Sound Mixer – Nigel Albermaniche
Re-Recording Mixer – Nick Bergh

NON-THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES OR LIMITED SERIES

ADOLESCENCE S01 E01

Production Sound Mixer – Kiff McManus
Production Sound Mixer – Rob Entwistle
Re-Recording Mixer – Jules Woods CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – James Drake
ADR Mixer – Mike Tehrani
ADR Mixer – Simon Diggins
Foley Mixer – Adam Mendez

TELEVISION SERIES – ONE HOUR

THE PITT S01 E13 “7:00 PM”

Production Sound Mixer – Von Varga
Re-Recording Mixer – Todd M. Grace CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Edward C. Carr III CAS
ADR Mixer – Tami Treadwell
Foley Mixer – Alex Jongbloed CAS

TELEVISION SERIES – HALF HOUR

THE STUDIO S01 E08 “THE GOLDEN GLOBES”

Production Sound Mixer – Buck Robinson CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Lindsey Alvarez CAS
Re-Recording Mixer – Fred Howard
Scoring Mixer – Adrià Serrano
ADR Mixer – Brian Magrum CAS
Foley Mixer – Ron Mellegers

TELEVISION NON-FICTION, VARIETY OR MUSIC – SERIES OR SPECIALS

BILLY JOEL: AND SO IT GOES

S01 E01 PART ONE

Production Sound Mixer – Mark Mandler CAS
Production Sound Mixer – David Mitlyng
Production Sound Mixer – Michael Stewart
Re-Recording Mixer – Bob Chefalas CAS
Score & Music Mixer – Bradshaw Leigh
Music Mixer – Brian Ruggles
Music Mixer – Jay Vicari

CAS STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARD

MINGXI XU

National Film and Television School

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SKIP LIEVSAY CAS

FILMMAKER AWARD

GUILLERMO DEL TORO



With Hardwick's lively hosting, the Board installation, and moving tributes to Lievsay, del Toro, and Wexler's legacy, the evening beautifully embodied CAS's commitment to honoring our craft's highest standards.

As applause filled the Beverly Hilton, the 62nd Cinema Audio Society Awards ended on a high note of inspiration and camaraderie. This Los Angeles event showcased sound's power across film and television, honoring winners from the seven categories. Special recognition also went to Mingxi Xu for the CAS Student Recognition Award, celebrating the next generation of sound talent.

The festivities spilled to the after-party where conversations continued over coffee, cookies, cake, and other libations.

Beyond the awards, the evening celebrated our tight-knit community and shared drive to innovate. Even during challenging times for the film industry, CAS continues to encourage emerging mixers and support seasoned professionals, making these awards a true highlight of inspiration and connection.

Videos and photos from the event are available on the CAS website at: cinemaudiosociety.org/62nd-annual-awards-coverage/





Juan Peralta and Gary Rizzo CAS mixing *F1*

MOTION PICTURES – LIVE ACTION F1

by Brandon Schuster CAS

Helping to bring the story of veteran Formula 1 racer Sonny Hayes [Brad Pitt] to aural life were this year's winners in the Live Action category: production sound mixer **Gareth John**, scoring mixer **Alan Meyerson CAS**, ADR mixer **Michael Miller CAS**, Foley mixers **Dennis Leonard** and **Elizabeth Marston**, and re-recording mixers **Gary A. Rizzo CAS** and **Juan Peralta**. Here, they share their experiences working on this acclaimed project.

How did the opportunity to work on *F1* come about?

Gareth John: I initially met [director and writer] Joe Kosinski and [producer] Jerry Bruckheimer, who explained their ambitious plans for the project. They told me it would be a challenging job for the sound department and asked if I was up for it.

Elizabeth Marston: I kind of got lucky. I was working in our, we call it our archive stage, with those particular Foley artists at the time. And so, our sound supervisor/sound designer, Alan Nelson, wanted to work with that Foley team and I was the Foley mixer on the stage at the time. That was kind of how it came about for me.

Michael Miller CAS: Well, I've been working with [supervising sound editor] Gwen Whittle for years. We

worked together on the last two *Avatar* movies that came out. We worked on *Jurassic World*, just a bunch of projects in the past, and so she just reached out to me and said we have this film coming in. I've worked with the director for a couple other films, too. That's how it all lined up.

Gary Rizzo CAS: Well, I have a long working relationship with Joe Kosinski. Joe came to us even before he made *Tron: Legacy*. He had reached out to Skywalker regarding some initial test reels to get the film green lit. And we did a bunch of early work with him on that. And then when the film was green lit, we proceeded to move forward creatively working on that job.

I've done a number of his films. I did *Tron: Legacy*, *Oblivion*, and I worked a little bit on *Only the Brave*, but I did not do the final. I did a film that he made for Netflix that was called *Spiderhead*. We've got a long working relationship. Joe had mentioned that he was beginning to put together the Formula One film. And he just looked at me in the eye and he said, "Don't miss it. It's gonna be a good one."

Juan Peralta: I had previously worked with Joe Kosinski on several movies of his. I came in and helped out on *Tron: Legacy*, which is where I met him for the first time. And then when he decided he wanted to make *Oblivion*, he invited me to do that as well, so I worked on that with him. And after

that, there were a series of other movies he was making that I was trying to get on, but schedule didn't allow it. And then finally, when he told me he was making *F1*, I was like, I'm going to clear my schedule for this because I'm a big fan. I've been a fan for a long time and Joe and I, like I said, we go way back.

Alan Meyerson CAS: I've been working with Hans [Zimmer, composer] for many, many years, about 33 years. And usually when it comes to these larger films, Hans reaches out to me to do them.

Dennis Leonard: Liz [Marston, Foley mixer] had another commitment, and I was recording Foley and moved into this room. She left this Foley studio and I moved in. And I also became really good friends with Heikki [Kossi], one of the Foley artists, and he really wanted me to be down here. That's how it came about.

Can you share some unexpected challenges you encountered working on the film and how you overcame them?

GJ: During pre-production, I had a double fracture (tib/fib) of my lower right leg playing football (sorry, soccer!) with the mechanics and film crew 10 days before principal photography. Later that evening in the hospital, I was thinking I would 100% get fired. (You can't have a sound mixer with a broken leg.) Long story short, I had the leg pinned and the producers kept me on the project. I missed the opening race—thanks Al

MacFeely for covering me! I went back to work two weeks later on crutches. The actors' strike then took place, which slightly hindered the production but gave me some valuable recovery time.

EM: There's always challenges to every project. Like getting the right shoe sound. The production had sent us over a few props. They sent us some of the racing shoes, a suit, and a helmet. It was fun but it was challenging primarily because it was a lot of cues to get through in a quick period of time. We're not covering just the normal Foley, we're covering a lot of stuff for the cars and those pit stop sequences that are so fast. It was a lot to get through. We work on a lot of action films, but a racing film was a pretty unique experience for me. Getting carbon fiber sounds. We had to source that stuff, source the right tires, and source the specific buttons they use in those cars.

MM: Brad [Pitt] would come in with his helmet, and those things are tight as can be. So, I took a COS-11 lavalier mic, put it inside the helmet where the mouthpiece would be and taped it down. I also had put a cue in the headphones for him, because you can't hear anything when you're wearing the helmet. The director's in the same room, so we had a talkback button for him and Gwen.

It was funny, at the very beginning, because I brought the preamp and the transmitter all the way down and I'm still getting a little bit distortion. I was like, let me play this back for you. And I play it back and they're like, "That's perfect. That's exactly what I want it to sound like." I was like, okay. I'm anal



L-R: Elizabeth Marston, Michael Miller CAS, Juan Peralta, Gary A. Rizzo CAS, and Gareth John

BRAD PITT



about wanting it to be clear, but that's the way it sounds like in racing. And then we had another actor who came in and, for some reason, we didn't get the right helmet. We couldn't mic him that way. So, I just had him hold the lavalier and bring it in and out with each cue just to try to match it. We played it back and everyone at Skywalker said it worked out perfectly.

GR: I've got a couple little things that I'll mention. Part of our story has this element of trying to get around the dirty air. And for a while, we didn't really have a sound that defined dirty air. That was a challenge because, really, all it comes down to is a layer of just flat-out distortion which we didn't realize was going to be the answer.

We talk about dirty air, and we even built a component for a car that's designed to drive through the dirty air. But what is the dirty air? You can't see it. You can't hear it. So very strategic choices of where to play it and where not to play it and how much of it to have and where to pan it and where to put it. It only happens a couple of times, but I want to believe it's tastefully done.

We also worked right up until the print master on the Las Vegas race where Sonny Hayes is driving angry. And that was actually a very delicate balance between the score, the car, and

the dialogue. When I say dialogue, it's not necessarily driver to pit crew, but more about how much of those PA's to use. We had to establish those PA's at that point as kind of our anchor for a lot of the play-by-play. But at this point, we were really using it to play Sonny's perspective.

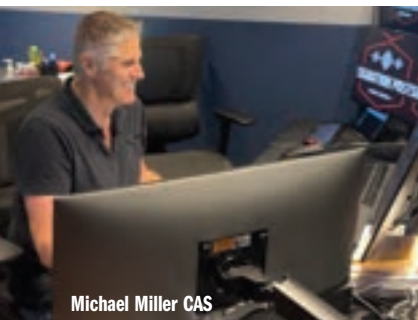
JP: The most unexpected thing is that when I was pre-mixing and we were doing a temp mix, he basically wanted us to all be on the same page that every single race in the movie should sound different. It was a good challenge for us to try to keep it as interesting as possible but have each one sound as different as possible.

The first Formula One race in the movie is at Silverstone, and in that race, there's no music. So, Joe's like, all right, this is the effects department. Make it as exciting as possible. All we had were the announcers and the cars. That was one aspect. And then on the second F1 race, it was a Hungarian Grand Prix. And that one was more like a music video, very music driven. Still some effects here and there but definitely leaning more on music. And then in Monza, it was a little bit of everything. Score, cars, the accident happens and all that. And then we go to Vegas and the entire race takes place inside Sonny's head. So, we're kind of underwater, kind of like going into a dream state.

AM: I honestly didn't have any challenges. I had a great team. It's good news for me knowing I'm going to hand my stems to Gary Rizzo. Gary and I have done so many films together. He's won three Academy Awards for films that I mixed the music for. So, I know that he's a very music-oriented dubbing mixer. I know that we're in good shape and I can make things as punchy as I want and I know that he'll handle it well. The team with Gary and Juan, they really do love the music. So, when the music is there, it comes through as opposed to having to battle for it. I think the first film I did with Gary was *Tron: Legacy* and we got to be very good friends. We have a good choreography between us.

DL: I ended up doing Foley because I'm kind of winding down from supervising shows. I was a supervising sound editor for many years. It's really been an eye opener in many ways. I already had a complete concept about film being what it is, it's a fabricated reality. Sometimes you have to enhance reality.

Just the other day, I can't discuss the show, but we were at a cafe. A couple was sitting across from each other, and one of the couples poured sugar in the other participant's coffee. And we had to create the sound of sugar pouring into a cup of coffee. Have you ever heard the sound of sugar pouring into a cup of coffee? No! I mean, usually you're in, say, a diner and the sound of pouring is very quiet, you don't hear it. And even in a recording studio, pouring sugar or any kind of granular substance into a cup that's got liquid in it doesn't really produce any sound if you put a mic even two inches



Michael Miller CAS



Alan Meyerson CAS



Dennis Leonard



Dash Mason-Malik

away. That's one of the challenges of Foley. And in a movie, you want to hear it.

What I want to cover in *F1* is totally directly relative to that. I just got chills, because it was a great experience. Coming up with a sound for two or three instances of a shot from the front of the car, which is miraculous, they got a shot from a car, some kind of boom that was hanging off the front of the car. Going around the turn, which was from screen left to screen right. And on the right side, the inside of the turn is a curb. And it's a ramped piece. The car can't hit anything hard and there are stripes on it, So the drivers, doing 200 miles an hour approaching the curb, see it.

To give you a little background, I raced go-karts as a kid, and up until a year and a half ago, I raced vintage go-karts. So, I've experienced it going fast on a track like that. And I'm experienced about using the curb, which all the F1 cars used in the film. And here's reality challenging film reality. Al wanted sounds for the cars going up on the curb. And he says, I know that it can't be rhythmic because there's a bump, because bumps would tear the cars apart. And in the middle of a late afternoon into the evening, we recorded something that worked for it. I can't divulge, of course, but we found the sound.

Working on this film with Joseph Kosinski, how was his approach compared to working with other directors?

GJ: With shooting at live F1 races, this job was unique and not a workflow we'd ever experienced. Joe's approach was that we were the 11th team at the track, fully embedded with the real race crews. Joe was the coolest/caldest person in mission control (our large video village setup at the tracks)

during fast-paced and very technical filmmaking. There was detailed scheduling (down to the second!) to enable us to shoot on the track on race days and achieve all the coverage we needed. Joe was fully supportive, knew what we were up against, and had our backs for the whole show.

EM: There's a filter generally between the Foley stage and the director a lot of the time. Sometimes the directors will want to come and see the stage and everything. We shot a lot of the Foley pretty far ahead of the final. But certainly, we had the edict through the effects reviews that they were having with Joe about what they wanted and how to make it sound authentic.

MM: He just takes everything in which helps with the movie. As he dives into stuff, even if it's *Top Gun: Maverick* or racing cars—which he's really into—he wants to make sure the balance of the dialogue and everything is mixed well. He really listens to the creative input that everyone will give him like, "What do you think?" Like when the guys in England did the commentary, it was pretty much playing the film, and they just did it on the fly. We would go back and we would maybe do some punch-ins. I learned a lot of lingo. I didn't know it was called this and they would explain everything. He's very kickback; one of the most delightful men to work with. He's great. Very creative.

GR: Specifically for this film, Joe definitely knew that we had to have a real signature. Not just the car engines themselves, but the dynamic of the mix and the dynamic of the overall integration of the track. He knew early on that it needed to be something that was different, really from the first race to know that this was going to feel different than most of your other movies.

Joe has never shied away from using sound to get people's attention at his film. Sound to him is not unlike light in that you can really affect the audience with color, and we do that with sound. We treat it that way. You know, how bright is too bright? And I don't just mean high EQ. I'm talking about magnitude, the way it comes off the screen, it is a feeling. Everything truly is an emotional feeling for him. Rarely does it come down to a technicality. It is always about what does it feel like? And where are we in the arc of our



Hans Zimmer and Gareth John



Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi

story? And where do we want to be utilizing this tool of sound to not just tell the story, but to move people the way that ultimately, emotionally, we want them to be moved?

JP: He loves sound. He loves sound in every way. He loves the music, loves the sound effects. He really watches the movie as an audience member, and he wants to feel excited and he knows the power of sound. He understands it. The great thing is that he trusts us. I mean, this is our third or fourth movie with him and we know, more or less, what he's looking for and how big to be whenever he gives those notes. He sees it as a great storytelling tool.

AM: Well, he loves music. He's a music guy. I think guys of his generation have come up in that time where they like to push the music a little bit more. Although, having said that, Michael Mann's also constantly pushing the music. Fincher is, too. But Joe's just a wonderful director and a wonderful moviemaker. He really knows how to use music and knows how to help guide the composer to get into what is his vision for the film.

DL: Sound is very important to him and it's why his films have good sound. He treats the sound as a character. I think that's as good as it gets to embrace it. Getting those pivotal sounds and hitting it on the head.

What was your mixing approach to this film compared to other films that you've worked on?

GR: The approach was pretty different because we were given the direction from Joe that he really wanted the soundtrack to have a very unique signature before we even started. We knew that we wanted to explore what that signature was going to feel like and what it was going to sound like early. So, we did a very elaborate temp mix months

before the final. They hadn't even shot most of act three; the final race, Abu Dhabi, didn't exist at that point. I'm not even sure that the Vegas scene was in there either. Basically, all the back three of the film were storyboarded when we did that first temp.

It wasn't just a temp for the purpose of a preview. It was with the purpose of really trying to figure out what the DNA of the mix was going to be. I think that served us really well. Because we did make some modifications, not just structurally of, oh, for this race, let's not use the music here but let's use the music here. It gave us a better sense early on to figure out where the intensity was working and where it wasn't working and figuring out really thematically where the pieces are going to land in this. It was almost the final, but not quite a final.

I know I did some dialogue pre-dubbing preceding the temp because of the complexity of the temp and because of the detail we wanted to give the temp. So, I used some of my budgeted final mix pre-dubbing time for that temp so that we were that much more prepared and we could do that much more exploration with it, which was great.

JP: I know we wanted to keep it grounded. And one of my biggest personal preferences was that because I'm such a big fan, I was kind of nervous about representing the sport as best as I could. I've been watching it since I was a kid and the only way I've ever watched it is on TV. So, you know, trying to elevate all these sounds to play in Atmos and IMAX, I was like, "How am I going to do this?" Especially considering the older F1 cars that I'm used to are very high pitched; they sound like mosquitoes almost. And then we are trying to fill the whole theater for about 300 people and put it in IMAX and make it as big as possible. So, for me, that was really one of the things I was worried about the most.

Al Nelson, our supervising sound editor and sound designer, went out to a couple races and recorded as much as he could. These cars are really hard to record. You can't put microphones on them because they go overweight. And if you stand on the side of a track, you'll get a sound that lasts three seconds. So, there was a lot of collaboration with *F1*.

What was the production sound planning process going into this show and what microphones and techniques did you use to capture the audio in a way that felt authentic to the environment of the film?

GJ: We knew the pit crew headsets would be crucial as multiple scenes played on those. We gave Gwen Whittle the option of the traditional F1 noise-canceling headset mics, then for a more open sound, we rigged DPA 6061's on the boom arms about an inch from the actors' mouths, then dressed the cable down and into a Sound Devices A20.

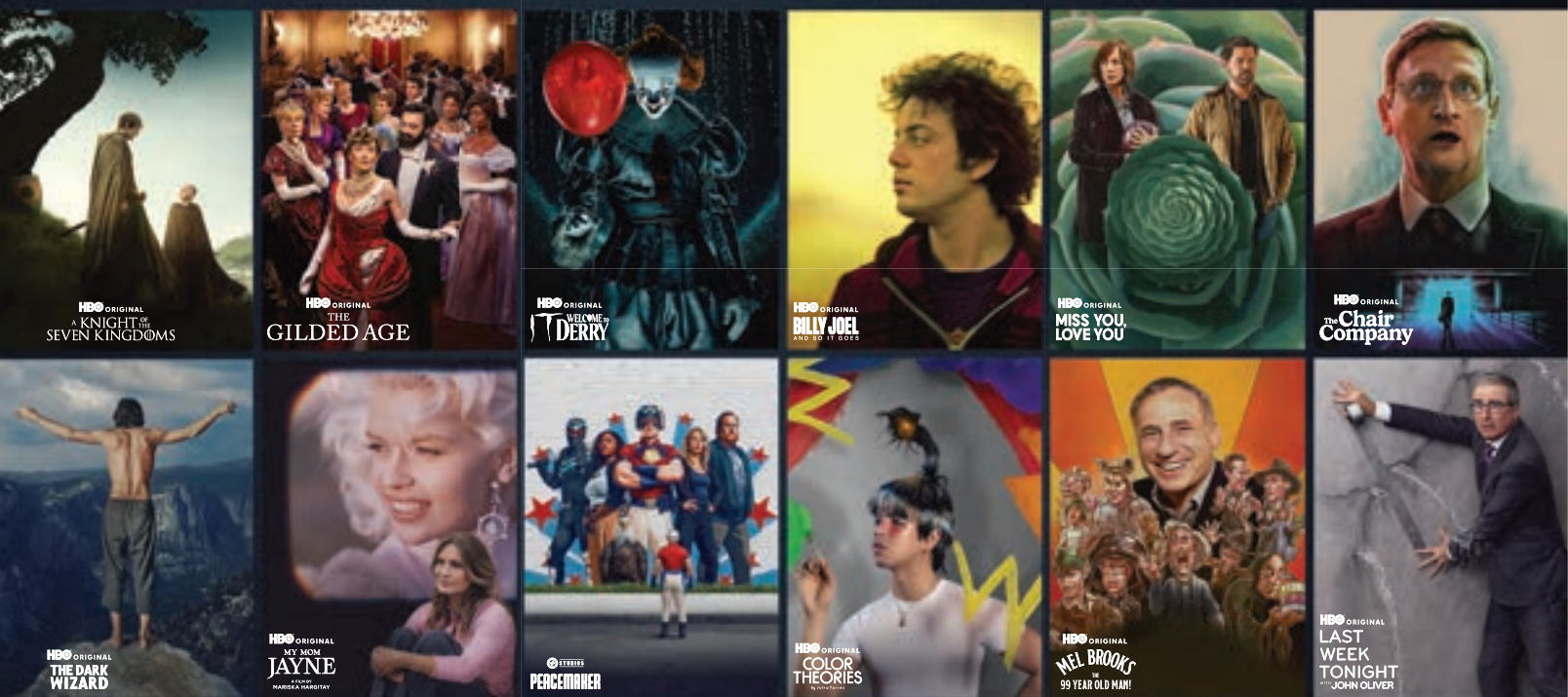
Mark "Gadget" Reed was our Bolero comms engineer, and



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we'd be regularly adjusting gain staging via the Riedel base station receivers. We also had a backup system on the Wendy house/pit wall in case of RF issues/Bolero failure, which involved Dante under the track to a Sound Devices 888 and a custom headphone amp/mixer designed by Mark McBride.

We worked closely with Joe Kosinski to create some large playback queue beats, made up of Brad and Damson's car dialogue for our cast on the Wendy house/pit wall to interact with, fed to them via the Bolero headsets. Michael Ling and Isla Bathgate knocked it out the park with the complex playback. RF coordination at the tracks was never straightforward, getting assigned multiple different channels depending on which country we were shooting in (UK, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, UAE, and USA). The Sound Devices A20 onboard recordings were a lifesaver. Exterior scenes were shot on Schoeps SuperCMIT's, with a mix of MKH50's and SuperCMIT's on interiors and DPA 4018C's for plants.

How was it miking the helmets and helping to create the tension and feeling of being in one of those cars firsthand?

GJ: The actors' helmets had push-to-talk noise-canceling driver mics (transmitted back to us and recorded via digital Motorola R7's) and we'd also rig a DPA 4062 up close against the mouth (connection via a breakaway cable down to a Sound Devices A20 in record mode, Velcro dual-locked into the cockpit). Our cast was driving 160 mph-plus whilst delivering dialogue, so the tension and realism was pretty much baked in.

There was an incredible team that literally carried me through the job. UK was Dash Mason-Malik, Freya Clarke,

and Michael Ling. Then Niall Cropper, Jo Vale, and Isla Bathgate (plus Jake Chilcott and Tom Fennell). USA was Patrick Martens and Michael Primmer with Eva Rismanforoush and Rebecca Chan. Richard Thomas was recording 120-plus tracks of *F1* broadcast mics on Pix 970's, with Mark "Gadget" Reed and James Whyard on comms. Mark McBride was tech support and Al MacFeely on second unit.

What was the approach for the Foley going into this film to help create this world authentically for both domestic and international audiences?

EM: We always try to cover as much as possible to make sure that when we take out the domestic dialogue, we're not missing pieces. We do that by covering all the actions of the actors. We try to make sure we get all their feet. We try to make sure anything they touch we cover. The dialogue editors do their best to help make sure that if we're missing something, we can go back and grab those pieces that they need.

It was a quick turnaround. I recorded the first part and then Dennis recorded the other part. I covered a few reels and then they figured out pickups because some of it, they hadn't finished shooting the movie when I worked on it. For a project like this, it was also cool because obviously, they knew what parts were going to be in the movie and they had the roadmap of what the rest of it was going to be.

DL: It's very important. It's one of the pivotal needs. In live-action film, when you take the dialogue out, all the production goes away as well. And then you have a twofold problem. You have to record the footsteps, record movement, cloth movement, and nuance. And you have to match it because the mix team and the director are going to want to have the international versions sound as close to the original version.

Then there's animation. I've done a lot of animated films, and animation comes with nothing, right? Nothing at all. One of the things I do since I've done a lot of mixing of music is footsteps are like percussion for me. I record it and treat it like it was drums. Technically, it is really part of the art of mixing Foley. Because what wants to poke through the most is the transient. But the sound of the surface or resonance, the nuance of the shoe [needs to be heard]. I suppose when listening to fabricated reality come out of a loudspeaker, the transients dominate. Controlling them and creating a treatment of these transient sounds that contains the peaks and brings the body to the foreground is very important.

What were some techniques to help blend the ADR against the dialogue recorded on set?



MM: I have a select track and alt track. And with all the stems that they give me, when we do a sequence, we'll go back and we'll play the whole thing. And then I will have that muted for what the actor just did, and I'll play back the whole scene. We would go from there. I would be like, "Okay, can we go back and pick that up?" if it didn't quite match going into the production line. The actor's voice might've been a little bit higher that day and so forth, and that's how we would do it.

Any closing comments on winning the CAS Award in this category?

GJ: It's a massive honor to receive a CAS Award. It's really wonderful to be acknowledged by peers who truly understand sound and everything it brings to a film. But it was only possible via the incredible crew we had on location and the amazing post-production team.

EM: It's a big honor. I was so happy I got to work with the *F1* sound team, and I feel very lucky that I could experience a little snippet of the accolades. Everybody worked so hard. It was a big group effort to all that came together. I feel really lucky for sure.

DL: I started working at Skywalker in 1987 and I've spent a lot of time cross-pollinating between engineering and the creative side. It really means a lot because the voting is absolutely from your peers. It's voted on by mixers for mixing, and that means a lot. It's nice to be recognized.

MM: To be part of that whole community of those other individuals who were nominated, that's just the greatest feeling, you know? I'm kind of a humble guy, so I'm in my own little bubble. I took my fiancée to the awards and walking into that room and just seeing everything, it's unreal. And then when you get on stage, you just see the people in the crowd and your brain just shuts off. It's like, what do I say now? I'm just humbled. It's this group of people that are all part of the same village that made it happen. It's great to be a part of that.

AM: I'm very grateful for it. I'm grateful to CAS for not forgetting about us [scoring mixers] and putting us in the category. I've actually been lucky with my CAS Awards, and I love every single one I've gotten. They're really a good group of people.

GR: Anytime that we get an acknowledgment from the CAS membership, it is incredibly humbling. And to know now after being in this business as long as I've been, to be awarded this, and to look into your community of peers and friends and acknowledge how huge the talent pool is. When I see people who I admire within that community, it is incredibly humbling. I don't know if I have other words for it. I've been



Michael Ling on playback



The team accepting their CAS Award

privileged enough and lucky enough to have won a few times, though not always in the feature Live Action category. I do appreciate the fact that I've been acknowledged in a variety of categories. But this one in particular, knowing how many fans of the sport are out there, and knowing that the community of the membership that we have is so good. They're so talented. It's never an easy walk from your table to the stage, because it is overwhelming every time for me.

JP: I can't tell you how grateful I was. When I came down to Los Angeles, I was working on another movie at the time. I met and I saw all my peers, friends, and even certain other mixers who I hadn't actually met face-to-face. Almost all of them were congratulating me on how great the soundtrack for *F1* was. I couldn't believe it. I worked hard on it. I work hard on all the movies that I work on. This one was really special because it was a passion project for me since I love Formula One and have watched it my whole life. To get that response from peers, it was amazing. It was really humbling and super special.



Erich Talaba

MOTION PICTURES – ANIMATED KPOP DEMON HUNTERS

by Gregory Charles Vilfranc CAS MPSE

Animation offers sound artists a rare kind of freedom.

Nothing is accidental. Every footstep, every breath, every swell of emotion is constructed from the ground up. But that freedom comes with pressure. When nothing is fixed, everything must be defined.

KPop Demon Hunters leans directly into that challenge. This is not a traditional animated feature with songs, nor is it a conventional musical. The soundtrack is not a layer added in post. It is a central force shaping tone, pacing, and performance. Dialogue, music, Foley, and effects are in constant negotiation, each fighting for space while still serving the same story.

What makes the CAS Award-winning work on this film stand out is not just its scale, but its clarity of intent. Across every department, there is a shared understanding of when to push, when to pull back, and how to maintain cohesion in a world built on contrast.

To understand how that balance was achieved, I spoke with this year's winners in the Motion Pictures – Animated category about the decisions, risks, and creative alignment that shaped the final mix. Following are excerpts from my discussions with original dialogue mixer **Howard London CAS**, scoring mixer **Erich Talaba**, Foley mixer **Giorgi**

Lekishvili, and re-recording mixers **Michael Babcock CAS** and **Tony Lamberti**.

One of the first things that becomes apparent in speaking with the team is that the foundation was laid early, long before the final mix stage.

Howard London CAS, the project's original dialogue mixer, has spent decades shaping performance-driven soundtracks, including his work at Sony Pictures. On *KPop Demon Hunters*, his focus was clear from the beginning: protect the emotional truth of the performances, even as the film pushed toward heightened stylization. "[Directors] Maggie Kang, Chris Appelhans, and

[producer] Michelle Wong had such a clear vision rooted in depth, culture, and a blend of cinematic and anime influences," London said. "From early on, it became about honoring that vision while still protecting the emotional core of the performances."



Giorgi Lekishvili

As the film evolved from early drawings into animatics and temporary animation, the team quickly realized how fluid the tone could be. Performances could shift instantly from grounded emotion to explosive expression. Rather than resist that, London and the dialogue team leaned into it. “With our principal cast, we pushed for range,” he said. “From quiet, vulnerable moments of doubt and despair to wildly expressive, almost metal-tinged vocalizations.”

That philosophy is on full display in the film’s opening concert sequence, where the sound of the crowd becomes a driving force. Instead of treating the fans as background texture, the team built them as an emotional engine. “We advocated for ‘unhinged’ levels of performance, especially with the fans,” London said. “Their chanting and cheering build into a frenzy. We kept pushing it higher until it reached a fevered pitch that still felt grounded and real.” That balance—stylization that enhances believability rather than breaking it—becomes a through-line across the entire soundtrack.

That range is not limited to spectacle. About halfway through the film, the energy collapses inward. Huntrix [the main protagonists who are a three-member girl group that also hunt demons] is alone in their suite, stripped of the performance, the audience, and the expectation. The tone shifts completely. What was once explosive becomes quiet, uncertain, and exposed.

For London, moments like this required just as much intention as the larger sequences. “At the hour mark, when Huntrix is alone in their suite, the tone shifts completely,” he said. “It becomes sincere and revealing. We all leaned into that journey for authenticity, making sure those intimate moments landed with real emotional weight.” It’s a subtle pivot, but a critical one. Without it, the scale of the film has nothing to contrast against. With it, the soundtrack earns its impact.

That same philosophy carried directly onto the re-recording stage, where the challenge shifted from performance capture to system-wide integration. **Michael Babcock CAS**, a veteran re-recording mixer with credits including *The Dark Knight*, *Inception*, and *Dune: Part Two*, approached the film with a clear directive from directors Maggie Kang and Chris Appelhans. “They didn’t want it to sound like a typical musical,” Babcock said. “They wanted the option for everything to become one within those songs.”

That idea fundamentally reshaped how the mix was approached. Instead of separating dialogue, music, and effects into distinct layers, the team treated every element through a shared sonic lens inspired by the polished, high-impact sound of K-pop. “It was the ultimate scenario where all departments had to truly find ways to handshake with each other,” he said.



L-R: Tony Lamberti, Michael Babcock CAS, Erich Talaba, and Howard London CAS



For Babcock, the most important metric wasn't technical, it was emotional. "The final judge on almost every mix decision was, honestly, an emotional one," he said. "When everyone's gut agreed with how they were feeling, we knew we were there." That approach allowed the team to embrace a surprising amount of dynamic range. Rather than filling every moment with sound, the filmmakers leaned into pacing, alternating dense, high-energy sequences with intentional space. "They weren't afraid of space on all levels."

Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning re-recording mixer **Tony Lamberti** took that shared philosophy and translated it into precise technical execution. While Babcock handled dialogue and music, Lamberti focused on sound effects, backgrounds, and Foley. His goal was not simply to support the mix, but to integrate those elements directly into its musical language. "I treated the effects as an extension of the music," Lamberti explained. That meant aligning effects hits with the transients of the music's percussion so the two

elements would reinforce each other rather than compete. It also meant making surgical frequency decisions, carving out the 200 Hz–500 Hz range in effects to preserve clarity in the music's low-mid energy.

Scale came from control, not accumulation. "The risk was in the dynamic range," Lamberti said. "Instead of filling every hole, we used what I call 'sonic vacuums,' pulling elements back right before a major sequence so the impact would feel larger."

Transitions became another critical tool. Rather than cutting abruptly from dialogue into music, Lamberti would build bridges using atmospheric elements, allowing the score or songs to emerge naturally from the environment. "It made the music feel like it was coming from the world, not just being switched on," he said. That approach paid off in the film's first concert sequence, which he described as the moment the mix truly locked in. "The effects and music became a single percussive engine," Lamberti said. "That's when the scale of the movie finally felt real."

While the re-recording stage focused on integration, that process was only possible because of the groundwork laid in the music. Scoring mixer **Erich Talaba**, whose credits include major studio features such as *Free Guy* and *Eternals*, approached the score as a bridge between cinematic storytelling and the film's K-pop identity. "The main thing was finding a way to balance the score with the songs," Talaba said. "Helping the transitions feel seamless while still maintaining the musical progression."

Working closely with composer Marcelo Zarvos and the music team, Talaba evaluated cues both in isolation and within the full mix, determining which elements needed to drive emotion and which needed to step back. "We would play scenes with and without dialogue and effects," he said.



“That helped us understand how the music could support the emotion without taking over the space.” Consistency across the score came from both creative and practical decisions. Recurring textures and musical motifs helped unify the sound, while recording live elements in the same spaces ensured a consistent sonic foundation.

At the same time, subtle shifts in EQ and mic balance allowed individual moments to feel intimate or expansive without breaking continuity. For Talaba, one of the most defining moments arrives early in the film. “Having Ejae singing in the opening monologue gives you a tease of what’s coming,” he said. “It blends the score with the K-pop sound right away.”

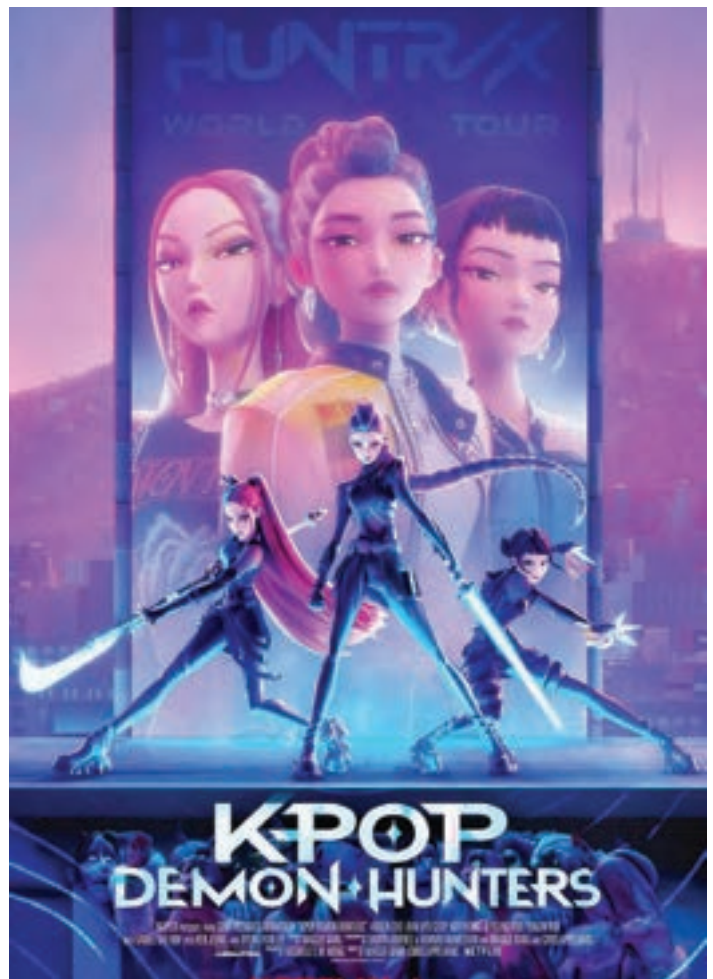
If the score and mix created the film’s macro identity, Foley helped anchor it at the micro level. Foley mixer **Giorgi Lekishvili** approached the project as a constant negotiation between realism and stylization. “It was a bit of both,” he said. “Some moments demanded stylization, others needed to stay grounded. We were always asking what the scene needed.”

Animation introduced its own set of challenges. The exaggerated movement of the characters required sound that could match the energy without tipping into caricature. “You have to find sounds that belong to the character,” Lekishvili said. “That took a lot of trial and error.”

In certain sequences, Foley moved beyond support and became a driving force. Transformation scenes gained weight through detailed fabric and body movement, while fight sequences developed a rhythmic quality, with footsteps and impacts functioning almost like part of the choreography. “At some point, Foley stopped supporting the scene and started driving it,” he said. Some of the most effective choices are also the most unexpected. For a magical giant cat, the team used the sound of snapping celery to create an organic, slightly eerie movement. For the main characters, distinct weapon signatures were developed early, becoming subtle identifiers that carry through the film. “Most people will never notice it,” Lekishvili said. “But it’s there.”

Across every department, a clear pattern emerges. The soundtrack of *KPop Demon Hunters* was not built by choosing between competing priorities—it was built by aligning them. Dialogue preserves emotional truth while embracing stylization. Music drives energy without overwhelming the narrative. Effects and Foley expand the world without breaking its internal logic. The mix itself becomes less about layering and more about integration.

Babcock described the process simply as “world-building,” but what stands out is how intentional that world is. There are no borrowed references, no attempts to imitate existing templates. The filmmakers and sound team established their



own rules and committed to them fully. The result is a soundtrack that feels cohesive at every level. It is bold without becoming chaotic, controlled without feeling restrained, and expressive without losing clarity. That level of alignment is rare. It requires not just technical skill, but shared vision, trust, and a willingness to push beyond familiar approaches. It is also exactly what makes *KPop Demon Hunters* worthy of its place among this year’s CAS Award winners.



MOTION PICTURES – DOCUMENTARY BECOMING LED ZEPPELIN

by CAS Associate Sam Casas

This year's winning documentary, *Becoming Led Zeppelin*, shares the origin story of one of rock's most iconic bands. Containing unreleased footage and interviews, the band's story is told from their own perspective, tracing their involvement in the 1960's music scene to their official formation in 1968, and culminating in 1970 as they were launching into superstardom.

Production sound mixer **Nigel Albermaniche** and re-recording mixer **Nick Bergh** shared their experiences working on the CAS Award-winning project. I hope you enjoy hearing their perspectives, philosophies, and a funny traffic hack as much as I did.

Nick, I know there have already been a couple of articles discussing your experiences on this film, and my main understanding was that this film was much less about restoration, but rather more getting the sound right before restoration. Along with documentary sound, your company Endpoint Audio Labs specializes in restoring classic films. Can you share how you used your experience to bring this film to life?

Nick Bergh: There is often a misunderstanding about sound restoration in that many people think extensive digital

manipulation is needed for good sound. However, more often the best sound is obtained by *avoiding* digital tools as much as possible. Of course, I have them, and often use many high-tech tools in my work, but the pinnacle of restoration is to get things so right on the analog side that the tools are barely needed at all.

This is actually the more difficult approach, though. Instead of half a day to restore a music cue, it might take weeks, months, or even years to track down the original master and set up the proper transfer process so that you *don't* have to restore it. It's a much more complicated and rarely done way to do these things because of time and budget restraints. Especially by the [time materials get to the] re-recording stage of a documentary, you usually just get what you get. "Fix it in the mix" and all of that.

Luckily on this project, director Bernard MacMahon, editor Dan Gitlin, producer Allison McGourty, and I had worked together previously on *American Epic*, and all of them understood the power of old recordings when done well. Trust was there so that when I would tell Bernard, "You know, we can get another 10% improvement if we do it this way," he would say, "Do it." For Bernard, sound was always just as much of a priority as picture. The entire core team was critical to the final audio.

We were all working closely together early on so shortly

after production that I began feeding final archival music cues to the picture editor early. A lot of picture decisions were revolving around how things were sounding.

Can you tell me a little about how you sourced these original elements for the film?

Nick: In a typical documentary scenario, there is a post supervisor helping to coordinate archival sources and such. But archival audio is so problematic these days that it often requires direct involvement from the director and producer to get access to what is needed. In other words, sources often become budget and political issues that can only be moved forward at the very top. As a result, sourcing audio elements was a priority led by Bernard and Allison. I could tell them I needed a specific source, and they would go to the ends of the earth, literally, to find it. The most extreme example would be the John Bonham tape. Drummer John Bonham gave very few interviews during his lifetime, and since the [new] interviews Nigel recorded sounded so great, we needed Bonham to be in the same space and of a reasonably similar quality.

The most important Bonham interview came from a bootleg record copy that sounded horrible. It was in the temp picture edit early on, but we knew it had to be replaced to hold up to the new interviews. The bootleg contained an interview done by an unknown journalist, but Bernard was able to identify him and eventually identify the radio station and archive where they

had a pile of thousands of uncatalogued tapes. These tapes were eventually sorted through. And almost three years after the initial search, the tape reel was flown from Australia to Endpoint to extract the highest possible quality out of it.

Wow! That is some extremely impressive dedication to finding the best quality!

Nick: Indeed! Another interesting thing I think not previously mentioned in earlier articles we've done discussing this project is that all the production audio in the film was from the boom. We did a number of audio tests early on in post and everyone was for the boom-only approach, especially the director. It not only provided a very "honest" aesthetic to the interviews, but it also allowed easier matching and cutting with the vintage John Bonham audio. However, even for us to consider this boom-only approach speaks to the quality of work done by Nigel.

Nigel, you recorded the interviews in the UK. Can you share a bit about your experiences and philosophy?

Nigel Albermaniche: In the field, I wanted to try and get it all on the pole [boom] as much as possible. I used an old-school Sennheiser 816 mic into a Sonosax SX-R4+ with the Sonosax SX-ST mixing desk to give it that authentic mono feel. The 816, it's a massive mic, but the idea in the field is that it would be part of the storytelling aspect.



Nick Bergh flanked by award presenters Kevin Nealon and scoring mixer Kirsty Whalley CAS



Nick Bergh at EndPoint Audio Labs

Bernard and Allison were quite insistent on being as authentic as possible, so I'm glad the boom was used. They were laughing at me dragging this totally old-school desk mixer everywhere, but I said we've got to try and get this authenticity. I'm a crazy guy, though, so for me, it was just fun for a documentary to throw something different there.

Nick: I think Nigel's choices helped later on with the transitions to the John Bonham audio, since the vintage interview was recorded more in that style.

Nigel: Right. If I went with a Schoeps, you know, a 41 on the end, or even if I went CMT 5U or whatever at that time, it would have just sounded too open and broad and deep. The 816 is a pain-in-the-ass mic to use (laughs), but it gives you the reach, so you feel like you're chasing the audio with the tunnel vision it gives. We even did some tests running through a Nagra recorder's amp on another track for a different sound.

That is so great! You were really, really going for authenticity!

Nigel: I always say, "Why not try?" We can always record multiple tracks.

Nick: The interviews are so strong, so I know a lot of work went into making [the interview subjects] comfortable to be able to open up in that way. It feels very intimate. Even set noises were kept to a minimum, so that made things easier.

Nigel: With those productions, it's all in the prep. If you prep a location properly, you should never walk into a location with any problems. That's my theory. So that in post, they receive the best potential version of the audio as possible, and it gives you more scope to play around with it, right?

We were shooting in a location near Goodge Street in London, which had its challenges. It was a wide-open space; there was external traffic noise and nearby schoolchildren on both sides of the street. So, I worked with the production



Nigel Albermaniche

designer, Chris, who I knew quite well and the DP to coordinate. I put blackouts over the top of the talent and told the DP, if you don't mind lighting with this around the subject, [it will help] to create a soundproof box in the best way possible. I wanted him to walk into an environment where it's free. On their chairs, anything that squeaked was not allowed. And I made sure their management sat miles away as well.

Since we couldn't afford traffic management, I created an out-of-the-box solution. I got runners to stand at the two traffic lights with radios at each end of the street. We timed it so that they could press the crosswalk buttons to stop the cars on each side in time for the take.

What a creative hack! Nigel, you got to spend a lot of time with the band. What was your takeaway?

Nigel: I think their drive, focus, and determination is second to none. And it's nice to be in the energy of people that basically have a one-track mind. Even in the face of early bad reviews, they kept going on the same path and showed the critics. And the fact that they are still passionate people about music, sound, and originality.

Nick, Nigel, any final thoughts?

Nick: Especially on the documentary side of the film world, I think people often have low expectations for sound and assume vintage audio always sounded poor in one way or another. However, as long as you can track down an original source and extract the audio in the best possible way, the sound can be incredible.

There are so many powerful digital restoration tools these days, and they can do some amazing things, but there's always some sacrifice. Transfer work is usually considered entry-level work in our industry, but for a film like this, getting the analog source audio right is really where the magic happens and where the fidelity gets locked in. It was wonderful being able to personally transfer all the vintage analog sources and ensure they were as perfect as possible in the raw state before putting them into the mix or even into the picture edit.

Nigel: It might come across as a technical role, but I see what we do as deeply creative. In many ways, we're shaping the emotional language of the film—like a director of photography does visually. My goal is always to give post options to provide a palette of sound so they can decide how far to push things or how subtle to keep it.

Bringing post into the process earlier was a big part of that. It allowed sound to become part of the storytelling from the start rather than something that's just refined at the end. That collaboration is where the work really comes to life.





NON-THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES OR LIMITED SERIES

ADOLESCENCE S01 E01

by Patrick Spain CAS

This year's CAS Award winners for Non-Theatrical Motion Pictures or Limited Series are the London-based sound crew behind Netflix's acclaimed drama *Adolescence*.

The show's first episode hits you with the very jarring surprise arrest of a sleeping adolescent boy; taken directly from his bedroom with panicking parents in tow. The show's oner (one shot) style follows the police, administrators, and parents all the way through booking and to the interview rooms with the accused boy and father. I will not reveal the ending, but needless to say, it is as dramatic and jarring as the opening's breach.

The effect of the whole episode is disturbing, gripping, off-kilter, and hyper-realistic. There is virtually no music as extreme tension rules the day. And that is where I started when I had the pleasure of chatting with our CAS Award winners: re-recording mixers **James Drake** (who is also the supervising sound editor) and **Jules Woods CAS**; production sound mixers **Kiff McManus** and **Rob Entwistle**; and ADR mixer **Simon Diggins**. Foley mixer **Adam Mendez** and ADR mixer **Mike Tehrani** were, unfortunately, unavailable.

There is almost no music in this episode! In my opinion, this really serves to heighten the tension and make things feel more gritty and emotionally raw, but as a re-recording mixer myself, this also presents a

real challenge. Music is often a convenient way for mixers and editors to draw attention away from a myriad of other audio and even sometimes picture issues. Could you talk a bit about not having that safety blanket during this mix?

Jules Woods CAS: Largely, it came down to Rob and Kiff doing their job properly; and they did a beautiful job of it! Which meant we didn't have to search for many things to hide behind. We wanted to make sure that our atmospheres and sound effects were delicately placed. We didn't want it to sound like too much of a mess. It had to be quite intricate to allow us to shape things properly. It was tricky, but it was fine, really.

James Drake: Yeah, work in sound editorial was, at times, a lot harsher, harder and cut in a way, especially with dialogue, very tight. We used the reverbs to smooth through and fix problems.

Are you talking about room reverbs or center-fill type stuff?

James: We used Accentize Chameleon, had it running throughout and automated to each scene so we could dial in as we were going on those little ends of words and their tails

and give them perspective. It was always there just underneath so we could cut a lot tighter, be a bit harsh with processing at times, and build it up against other things. There wasn't anywhere to hide and occasionally we used little tricks to hide things under car passes or someone's footsteps down a corridor, for instance. And we had production sound, where we could use it all the time.

Kiff McManus: You guys did! I was just thinking about when you were presented with a quiet room, you layered, subtly, so many different things to give the space a presence which wasn't there! We intentionally made the interview rooms as quiet as possible. And there's so much almost subliminal stuff going on in there that was all added in post which really impressed me!

When watching it, I felt like there was a real opportunity effect-wise to do a lot that is kind of unseen to make it feel so realistic. It feels like you are there without seeming hyped at all. Is it just ambience and Foley?

James: It was a bit more built up than that. The original edit, pre-temp, was a lot fuller, and our director said let's bring it back. We brought it back one step and before the pre-mix, he listened to it again and said let's bring it back even more. So, mostly everything that was there stayed, but we just kept pulling it back.

I think by the final mix, we had just gotten it right. We were bringing up elements just to the point where you could feel them and never going further than that. There are many layers of atmosphere effects ... people down corridors and voices that were built. And slowly over time they became quieter and quieter and quieter.

Jules: One of the big benefits was that James spent a couple of weeks on set. This is something we are trying to do more and more of to be able to capture the real-world sound effects from the locations. Part of this stripping the show back was trying to make it more organic using those kinds of location-specific sounds.

Yeah, my assumption had been that with these long shots, Kiff and Rob were essentially attached to camera; running around trying to follow actors and stay out of the oners. It is so revealing that you were on set recording bits and bobs.

Kiff: It was really useful to have James around and to know what they were going to need. Because we were desperately trying to get this whole thing recorded which was quite complicated. Having James there capturing things that we could not was really helpful—because we were kind of busy!

Rob Entwistle: You know we were only getting about two takes per day. Not the traditional way of shooting things at all, but it played in our favor and left space for us. We were doing one take in the morning and one in the afternoon. And in between those points, we would have time to schedule in some time with our firsts to get specific sounds. In a more traditional shoot, things don't really stop. So, the single shot approach really helped us get those things that we needed.

How big were your crews on set? I'm assuming there were wires everywhere, but were there multiple booms?

Kiff: We had three booms. Three firsts [boom ops], two seconds [utilities], and a trainee who worked far harder than trainees are meant to! So, yeah, a team of eight!

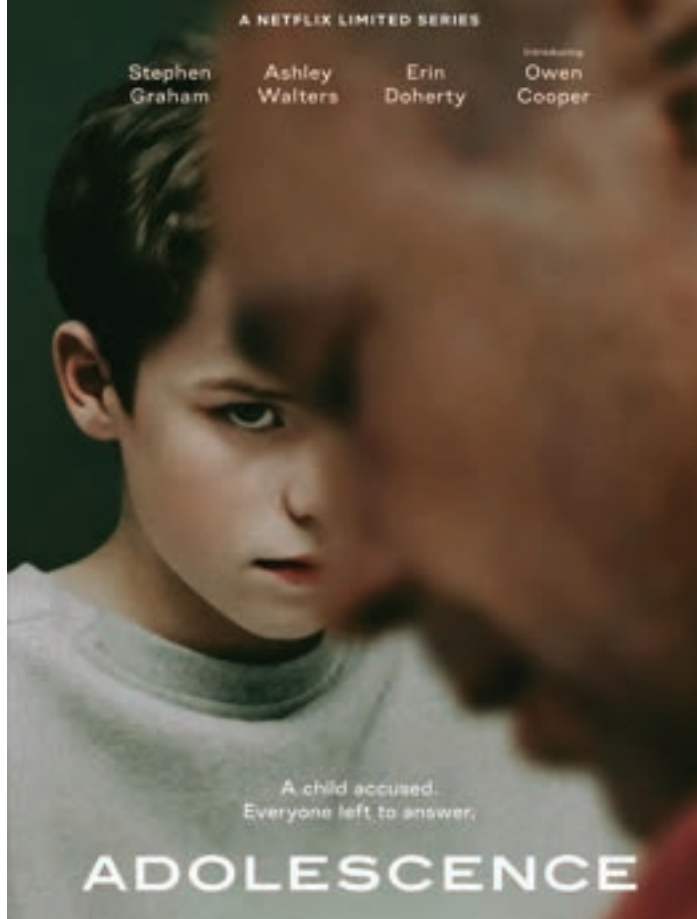
Rob: The most wires we had at once was 32, but that was Episode Two in the school.

Simon, when it got time for ADR, what were you covering in this oner situation? I'm assuming lots of group and crowds?

Simon Diggins: You know, the stuff that was coming through from production was really fantastic. So, in certain moments where something happened that wasn't expected, I would be asked to cover things. But because it was a oner,



Simon Diggins



there wasn't much re-writing going on. Really, when you think about what was going on for the production, I'd say the ADR count was very minimal.

In terms of the crowd, James had been on set so much and gotten a hold of so many recordings of schoolkids on set so we were very conscious when we were doing the crowd of how that was all going to work together. There wasn't a lot. The guys really did a great job!

To me, that speaks to being really well prepared because of the script being very solid.

Kiff: Well, that was kind of the beauty of this! Because it was a one-shot show, you couldn't use cutaways to change

dialogue. They were happy with their script and that's what the show was going to be, and there wasn't room for someone's fingers further up the chain to change things because they couldn't, really. I think it added a strength to the show. Writers Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham had a brilliantly conceived and executed piece of drama.

In doing a bit of research on this show, I read that for Episode One what we see is actually take two of the whole thing! That truly speaks to the strength of the script. But did that pose any challenges for you guys?

James: There were things that we were fixing, especially in the police station, where Rob and I were constantly going back-and-forth with the AD's asking, "Is there anything you can do to stop these people from walking through the shot this time, or ask them to walk softer?" And the other takes ended up leaving us with a wealth of material to use to make fixes.

That mention of footsteps brings to mind a question I had about how tied to production footsteps and the like you were in this POV kind of edit. Did it end up being mostly Foley?

Jules: They did a really thorough coverage. It was mostly Foley and effects. You know, one of the things we knew from the start was how much panning we wanted to do to give it that kind of immersive, first-person feel. To be able to achieve that, the dialogue has to be really clean, and we wanted Foley to be able to follow that pan as well. Not only did they cover it very well, they needed to edit it so that we knew that a character was on a specific track—and still have the delivery checkerboarded as well. So, if we wanted to pan someone off shot, their Foley would as well. Almost none of the human sounds you hear are from the sync recordings.

James: And if you think about it, whenever the camera moves, there are at least four other people who have to move with it from point A to point B. There is a lot of sound there that needs to be removed! We tried at one point to use what





was coming from set, using RX to pull things out, but it just became too much, and we abandoned that approach to focus on getting the dialogue crystal clear, then rebuilding the rest.

Simon: You mentioned the panning there, and that's the other place where ADR came into play. There were occasions where they wanted to move it off screen and that was interesting for us come ADR session one because we had to do live panning in the playbacks to present it properly!

Wow, I had not thought of that! Speaking of panning, where did you draw the line in terms of what felt over panned because I can assume that could get out of hand quite fast. Did you come up with ground rules on how that would work?

Jules: Yeah, we did!

James: Because we did a first pass on it and then we brought it into the stage for a spotting session and we were able to listen to it properly in Atmos, and we realized that some of it was too much.

Too distracting?

Jules: What was important for us to keep in mind was that the majority of people were going to watch it on Netflix—kind of half through TV speakers and half on headphones. So, we had many different chains to monitor from. Obviously, we were full Atmos on the stage, but we were constantly referencing on TV to make sure intelligibility was there, as well as listening to the pans. We did our own headphone passes, as well. When we would feel something going too far, we'd rein it in. It was always a little bit of compromise between those formats. That's really the main thing. Is it adding to the immersive nature of the show or is it distracting?

Any other insights you'd like to share?

Simon: Something else we really noticed in the ADR was the actors were coming in with a slightly different mindset. I think

that comes from what was happening on set. Because of the way it was shot and doing the whole thing twice a day for a week or so, they were coming in remembering everything, and it was great for ADR! Because what they shot for the day is what they were seeing in the final edits. They didn't have to react to something that has changed since it was shot. It was very helpful to get them back into that moment.



Yeah, it's a situation where the script is so thought out and agreed upon that you as an actor are not having to reinvent the emotional head space every time you need a line replaced.

James: This project has been an incredible experience. Learning so much, being able to push the craft to such a degree, and collaborating with everyone here has been a joy, and I do miss it.

Jules: Yeah!

James: And when we finished, I think we all had that moment of going, "We want to do it again!" It's been really challenging, but if somebody said, "Here's the script for Season Two, we're going to start on Monday," everyone would say, "OK, great! See you there!"

Kiff: I have never worked with such a collaborative group in post. If there is one major takeaway, it's that this works. This approach should be happening more often. It should not be just because it's a one-shot format show. It would help every production.

I couldn't agree more! Thank you and congratulations on your CAS Award win!



TELEVISION SERIES – ONE HOUR THE PITT S01 E13 “7:00 PM”

by Blas Kisić CAS

If you haven't watched *The Pitt*, you might be forgiven for thinking that all medical shows are alike. But watch even a single episode of this show, and you'll see why everyone is raving about it. It's a sensory experience like no other: The urgency of extreme medical emergencies competing for the attention of an understaffed, stressed-out, life-saving team will keep you on the edge of your seat.

The winning sound team partially responsible for the show's success got together to share their experiences: production sound mixer **Von Varga**, ADR mixer **Tami Treadwell**, Foley mixer **Alex Jongbloed CAS**, and re-recording mixers **Todd M. Grace CAS** and **Ed Carr III CAS**.

The unrelenting storytelling style was clear from the script. During his job interview, production sound mixer **Von Varga** said, “I read your script, and only one word comes to mind, and that word is ‘beast.’ Is it gonna be like this from beginning to end?” Varga actually turned down the job at first—but he eventually changed his mind.

“We didn't really know that much about the show,” explains re-recording mixer **Todd Grace CAS**, “so we started looking it up. We're, like, ‘Great, we love John Wells, he's awesome. Medical drama, he sure knows how to do those.’ But we

didn't know that it was going to be this sort of ‘guerrilla style.’” Foley mixer **Alex Jongbloed CAS** remembers, “We heard it was gonna be a medical drama, and I think the immediate go-to in your head is, you know, *Grey's Anatomy*. And then we saw the first episode, and we were like, ‘This is really good!’—also, ‘This is gonna be really, really hard!’”

During the first week of production, Von Varga wondered whether he'd be able to sustain that pace for the whole season. He and his team of boom operator (1st assistant sound) **Javier M. Hernández**, and utility sound technicians (2nd assistant sound) **Yervant Hagopian** and **Cristina Meyer** would have to—effectively—relearn everything they knew about production sound. The two mainstays that allow a film crew to deliver their best work—crew rehearsals and an established camera and lighting plan—were out the window. Von explains: “No marks on the floor. They're not allowed to take measurements. There is no dolly, there are no sticks. We get one rehearsal. It's not uncommon for them to turn on the lights, rehearse, and we are shooting 15 to 20 minutes after call. With the vision of one rehearsal, I don't get to practice the mix. I get one run at it, and then we shoot.”

UST Cristina Meyer added, “Our lightest day is most shows' heavy days. This show has absolutely made us all better at our

jobs. We had to rethink how we would adapt. And it's funny, we adjusted, we've come up with new plans. Now I can't imagine doing sound any other way."

The use of booms was a contentious topic—apparently. John Wells had laid down the law: There would be no booms on this show ... but nobody told Von! Before they started shooting, co-EP Terri Murphy called him in a panic, trying to confirm his team wouldn't use booms. "I had to explain to her that I never even agreed to that," shares Von. "We had no intention of doing it without booms. But we knew we had to handle this very delicately." And through that first season, they were able to win John Wells over, to the point that now Javier has carte blanche to deploy his boom wherever he needs to.

Re-recording mixer Todd Grace agrees: "Von really fought hard—he had to convince them that he could get a boom in without killing the shot, which he and his crew did, much to their credit. And man, those booms come in helpful, because there's a lot of times where I might need a little additional perspective, and the booms are really good for that."

"The lighting is all practical," says Von. "They have a China ball on a stick that Javier has to duel with constantly. He had to teach the lighting guy how to boom!" Javier points out: "It's hard sometimes to get a boom in. Reflections are very challenging. They catch the lighting booms or their reflections, and they think it's me." Javier gets help from utility Cristina Meyer. "I always tell her, 'Go check if you see me in the right corner!'" Cristina confirms, "I sit at the DIT monitors with the gaffer and the key grip every day. Of course, as soon as they see something, they tell me. They're difficult shots, with a lot of

reflections, but Javier is nowhere to be seen. The gaffer and the key grip have said, 'He's a magician. Where is he? I can't see him!' It gives me a lot of pride to say, 'Yeah, that's my guy.'"

Despite all the challenges, the crew as a whole—who are about to start their third season—has become a unit. "This is where we really have to give John Wells and his production team their kudos," Von indicates. "They interviewed well and pulled some people out of the woodwork that I had never heard from. These people are good! As big as the show is, I feel like everybody checks their egos at the door. It's really a team family effort."

Javier adds, "Everybody has to look out for each other. We're making these crazy big moves, the background is always moving, always active. It really does have to be a collective of people working all together. It's challenging, but it is fun!"

Von shares, "While I regret not mentioning it during the frenzy of the CAS Awards, I would have loved to have thanked our AD's—even the PA's, they are always in 'go' time. At any moment, someone's coming in, and they are so good at bringing them to us, or if there's information we don't know, we have some people that report directly to us. They literally come to us and say, 'Hey, get ready, this is what we're doing.' I can't give them enough credit. They have become part of this sound team."

One adjustment to the show's workflow was finding a location for Von's sound cart. "Our stage is literally built out fire lane to fire lane. We made them put out an 8'x8' square within one of the bathrooms that my cart never leaves from. Originally, they didn't want me to do it. I went to the producers and noted, 'You



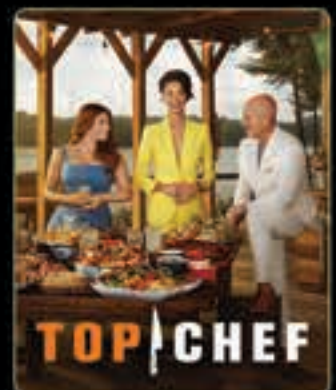
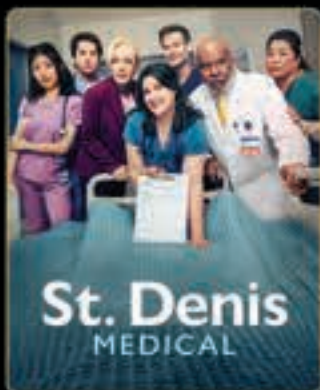
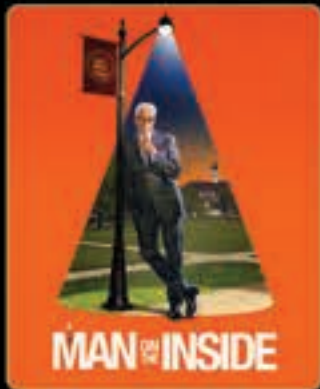
L-R: Alex Jongbloed CAS,
Von Varga, Tami Treadwell,
and Todd M. Grace CAS

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have to make me a spot. The way this stage is laid out, they go in circles; the show is always on the move. I would literally have to be pushing my cart and mixing.' I went to a whiteboard and showed it to them. They said, 'No problem. We're reserving this spot for you' and they painted it on the ground."

There are six antennas set up at the stage (two more will be added for Season 3). "Directionals on all four corners and in the center stage, we have two omni antennas." Von elaborates, "Additionally, there are three utility carts strategically placed at the front doors, right where everyone walks in. That's where Cristina and Yervant wire all the talent so that I can listen to them during the one-and-only rehearsal."

The post team had its own learning curve. Re-recording mixer Ed Carr explains, "We were told there would be no music, it would play a very small part, so we decided to make everything very energetic with the sound. We put backgrounds

in really strong. We did phones, we did all sorts of things to fill up those spaces. We thought it was great. So, John Wells came in and pretty much went, 'No, this is not what I wanted.' It was kind of a remix on the fly. He wanted to highlight the specific stuff that had been done in ADR and specific Foley stuff so that it wasn't this wall of noise. He wanted it to be very specific. Then we understood what he wanted."

Todd elaborates, "Ed and I watch the offline before we mix it to get an idea of the sonic shape of the episode. We want to see what the picture editors have focused on so we don't bury an important story point that we missed because we weren't paying attention to the dialogue."

Foley mixer Alex Jongbloed continues, "On the Foley stage, we start with the cloth pass under the entire episode—so we do get to watch it all. I annotate where the focal points are, which parts are really driving the story in each episode."

"One of the biggest challenges is that there's no music in the show," ADR mixer Tami Treadwell reports, "so everything that we do is heard. It's not buried under music." Alex confirms, "We all kind of reinvented our workflows to deal with the sheer volume of tracks. There are 15, 18 main characters, and you're constantly moving; there's a continuation and continuity throughout the season that you're trying to keep consistent. And any mistake you have is either amplified or not being played at all."

Tami agrees, "Alex and I are both doing live recordings for Todd and Ed to blend with Von's production tracks. I've done things on this show that I've never done before—but will definitely do again. For instance, to have it sound organic when the camera is following characters through areas of the ER with different levels of background activity, we swing the boom toward or away from the loop group. We loosened the height adjustment of my tall boom stand so it can rotate freely. Sound supervisor Bryan Parker will position the group actors for the density he needs, give them direction on where within the mic's movement they should start or stop talking,





and he'll do the mic move as the characters are walking into or out of a busier area. You really get a natural effect as the voices move on- and off-mic, feeling closer and farther away in the same take. We do a lot of experimenting with mic placement in loop group to get a sound that feels real to the space of the ER."

Alex sung Bryan Parker's praises as well: "Typically, on the Foley stage, we work with what we have available. But since the start of Season 1, Bryan's been bringing us props from the set. These are such specific medical tools, they sound a certain way, you know? He's bringing us bone cutters or sharps or whatever, so that we can give it authenticity and a realism to all of the sounds we're creating."

Todd added, "We should also credit Vince Tennant, who's cutting ADR with Bryan. They're really good at organizing themselves around this crazy schedule. They might be cutting episode five, recording ADR on episodes one, two, and three, and then preparing to do loop group on episode six. Quite an assembly line that they've got. And, to their credit, they make it look easy."

Todd continues, "We've kind of changed the way we might normally do a show. Ed's definitely playing a lot more of Alex's Foley, for example, because it's a really integral part. I'm playing a ton of the loop group that might otherwise be, as Tami said, buried under music. So, I have to be responsible and try to play that honestly and accurately. And I don't want to take credit away from composer Gavin Brivik, who does some nice tonal stuff, but, really, the focus should be on the realism and the authenticity. They're taking time to record Foley for some of these surgical tools and respirators, all that stuff really plays in, and I think that is worthy of note."

The post team commended Von Varga and his crew. Tami remarked, "For such a large cast, there's far less principal ADR than in many other shows I've done. And most of that ADR is due to a dialogue change or the addition of a new line." Todd agrees, "Praise to Von Varga and his crew,

because, honestly, that thing is racing at 100 miles an hour all the time, and they do a fantastic job of getting clarity."

UST Yervant offers, "If we hear an actor say to another, 'Yeah, I just came from ADR,' our ears perk up. We ask, 'What did you have to do?' And the answer is usually 'No, no, it's not you guys. They changed the dialogue.' And we're like, okay, perfect. But we're interested, we want to know!"

Todd and Ed also commend John Wells for the crew he has assembled. "The best thing about this entire project is it's a team," explains Todd. "Everybody is doing their job, everybody's rowing in the same direction, everybody wants the best outcome, and it shows." Ed emphasizes, "It kind of starts at the top, too, with John and all. You get a vibe that it's a real hospital, and you're just trying to stay out of the way."

The crew are about to embark on their third season together, proud of being recognized by their peers. For now, they reflect on their success. Von Varga's parting words were powerful: "Everybody brings their 'A game' on this show, and it's just the most pleasant place to be because everybody's there. You would never want to show up and be the slacker. Let me tell you, this is not the crowd." Alex Jongbloed added an uplifting thought: "There's a lot of trust between us. The whole crew helps us all to strive for perfection."





TELEVISION SERIES – HALF HOUR THE STUDIO S01 E08 “THE GOLDEN GLOBES”

by Matthew Nicolay CAS

Production sound mixer **Buck Robinson CAS**, re-recording mixers **Lindsey Alvarez CAS** and **Fred Howard**, scoring mixer **Adrià Serrano**, ADR mixer **Brian Magrum CAS**, and Foley mixer **Ron Mellegers** took home the CAS Award in the Half Hour category for their work on *The Studio*.

Of the shows on the current Apple TV slate, one of the funniest is *The Studio*. A sharply witted and keenly observed satire of the state of Hollywood and the lunatics running the asylum. Set inside the fictional Continental Studios, *The Studio* follows Seth Rogen as Matt Remick, a lifelong movie fanatic who suddenly lands his dream job: head of the struggling film studio. What should be the pinnacle of his career quickly becomes a daily battle for survival as Matt discovers that running a major studio means constantly balancing artistic ambition, fragile egos, corporate pressure, and the unpredictable personalities of Hollywood’s biggest stars.

Matt’s colleagues include seasoned studio veterans, overly ambitious assistants, and cynical producers who are all trying to survive the ruthless entertainment industry. Their daily work life involves chaotic production meetings, tense negotiations with directors, desperate attempts to manage difficult actors, and frantic efforts to spin bad publicity before it becomes a PR disaster.

What makes the situation even more volatile is the constant parade of celebrities, filmmakers, and executives who enter the studio’s orbit. Many guest stars appear as exaggerated versions of themselves, creating meta-comedic situations where Hollywood’s biggest personalities clash with the studio machine. These encounters often spiral into comically derailed film shoots, disastrous premieres, or marketing stunts that backfire spectacularly.

At its core, *The Studio* is both a love letter to filmmaking and a biting satire of the industry that produces it. Matt genuinely believes in the magic of movies and dreams of making something meaningful, but the realities of corporate filmmaking constantly undermine that passion. As the season unfolds, he struggles to reconcile his idealism with the compromises required to keep the studio alive.

The show ultimately portrays Hollywood as a high-stakes circus where art, commerce, and ego collide. Through absurd situations, rapid-fire dialogue, and uncomfortable comedic moments, *The Studio* reveals the fragile, frantic world behind the movies—where success can mean glory and failure can happen in a single meeting.

Episode eight, “The Golden Globes,” focuses on what would

be every producer's dream. A film project Matt has fostered at the studio is nominated for a Golden Globe. Matt's insecurities get the best of him as he fears the film's director (Zoë Kravitz in a cameo appearance) won't thank him during her acceptance speech. He repeatedly approaches Kravitz, trying to convince her to include him in her speech. At one point, he even attempts to manipulate the teleprompter or influence the speech structure indirectly. The evening quickly devolves into a pathetic and transparent downward spiral. Matt ends up embarrassing himself in front of colleagues, movie stars, and the Hollywood Foreign Press.

To make matters worse, Matt learns from Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos (playing himself) that many executives only get thanked because it's written into contracts. The revelation deepens Matt's worst fear: maybe nobody actually respects studio heads at all. Maybe it all means nothing.

The cornerstone of *The Studio's* visual style is long Steadicam walk-and-talk shots. The camera follows the characters as they move through hallways, studio lots, and crowded events, emphasizing the frantic pace of studio decision-making. This approach creates a sense of controlled chaos, mirroring the constant pressure and scrambling that defines the film industry and is something all the technicians who work on the show in real life can relate to, including the veteran sound team.

Production sound mixer **Buck Robinson CAS** is a veteran of more than 20 years in the film and television industry. His credits include *The Devil's Rejects*, *Mindhunter* for Netflix, and another Apple TV hit show, *Palm Royale*. I asked Buck about the challenges of *The Studio* and the task of capturing quality dialogue with the show's unusual visual style. "When I first read the script, I thought, 'Are they going to do these episodes as 30-minute continuous shots?' Our initial preparation was to have two completely redundant sound carts that would cover each half of the walk and talks. I brought Nick Allen to work the second cart and man the boom. As we dove a little deeper, we realized that there was no way the actors were going to get through 28 pages top-to-bottom. We were assured there would be some transition points that would be stitched together to appear as one shot. We only had to use the redundant cart once. We did have a bag rig on hand for several scenes that start in a car and travel to a second location where the scene continues and transitions to a sound cart at that second location. This technique is most notable in episode two of the series entitled 'The Oner.'

"The first dialogue for the Golden Globes episode begins in a limousine, but the bag rig was not necessary. The start point for the limo was at the end of the range for the RF but within acceptable range," Buck recalls.



L-R: Buck Robinson CAS, Fred Howard, Lindsey Alvarez CAS, Brian Magrum CAS, and Ron Mellegers



One of the great challenges for the production team on all the episodes of *The Studio* was RF integrity. “Production granted us a few RF scout days. Nick Allen went out to the various locations with Lectrosonics Wireless Designer [a spectrum frequency scanner that identifies RF in a given area] to take a look at the environment and get a fairly accurate picture of what we were going to be looking at when we got there. Even so, the RF spectrum in Los Angeles can be unforgiving. There were locations where we would be inside of a house for a scene and then we would move outside and do a scan, and it would be a ‘big black wall’ on the RF scan [meaning no clean frequencies]. Sometimes it took every trick we could pull to get two clean channels. With continuous shots and no coverage to fall back on, it was occasionally nerve-racking. In the end, we did everything we could to ensure success, and it all worked out.”

The costumes of the Golden Globes episode also presented a challenge. Possibly the toughest challenge a production sound team—and subsequently the dialogue mixer—will face are actors wearing ball gowns and tuxedos. Sequin dresses and starched shirts with tapered coats and snug polyester ties can be a nightmare when you’re dependent on the wires buried under all of that to capture usable dialogue. Buck took the costume issue in stride. “Washing a tuxedo shirt can do a world of good to soften it up. The show’s costume department was very accommodating, and

utilities Rachel Schroder and Kelsey Nie did a great job with the wires.”

The Studio’s dialogue and music re-recording mixer was **Lindsey Alvarez CAS**. She is a three-time Emmy winner, one of which was for *The Studio*. Her credits include *Only Murders in the Building*, *Daisy Jones & The Six*, and *Predator: Killer of Killers*. She refers to her duties as creating a convincing audio environment of the Golden Globes ceremony from scratch, complete with music in the background. The first brushstroke on the blank canvas is the dialogue.

“All the actors are wired, of course, and the boom may catch elements of the dialogue. Though it can also be helpful to record the sound of the room when the boom isn’t able to get in close due to the movement of the camera.” Alvarez continues, “The big hurdle for dialogue re-recording mixers is making the lav sound natural. However, with Buck at the helm and my contribution of EQ and compression, we achieved a nice, warm sound.”

On the dub stage, Alvarez ensured that every line of overlapping speech, red-carpet chatter, and backstage whispers remained intelligible, often blending production

Once Matt exits the limo, there’s a long continuous take where he has a brief encounter with a red-carpet influencer, witnesses a Zoë Kravitz television interview, and a walk-and-talk with the late, great Catherine O’Hara in one shot. What results is a continuous two-and-a-half-minute shot with multiple wired actors, one live mic, hundreds of extras, and 360-degree camera work.

Once the episode moves inside to the Golden Globes ceremony, the episode is “contained” but keeps a rocket ship pace. Robinson notes, “All the actors are wired, as many as 12 at a time. We had a practical mic on stage, but I didn’t want to depend on it, so everyone up there are on wires too.” Considering the physicality and varied vocal range of the performers, sometimes whispering and sometimes shouting, to get such well-balanced clean dialogue tracks is an amazing feat by Buck and his team.

The episode becomes a symphony of frenetic camera movement and performance by the cast taking the tension to remarkable heights. In the end, Sal Saperstein, Matt’s junior executive, gets all the credit Matt felt he deserved. Unthanked and dejected, Matt takes the long walk back to the limousine he arrived in.

audio with carefully matched ADR and loop group where necessary. While there was ADR, Alvarez noted, “Buck did an amazing job capturing all the actors’ dialogue beautifully that we rarely had ADR required for technical reasons. It was all mostly creative ADR because of performance or rewritten lines.” One interesting tool Lindsey mentioned is an ADR “shirt” that George Haddad, supervising sound editor, has actors wear during a session. A lav is placed under the shirt and outside the shirt, with a shotgun completing the trifecta. This technique ensures all perspectives are covered.

Alvarez continues, “George recorded a ton of loop group, close-up specifics [on screen background], random call outs [lines coming from off screen], and a ton of walla as if it were a crowded room. In ‘The Golden Globes’ episode, as soon as Matt exits the limo, the camera movement dictates what we hear. I played with a ‘swirling effect’ to match the movement. We also did dialogue panning on the principal characters to create a sense of movement. This is the only episode where we employed this technique due to the full [busy] nature of the setting. We tried it in other episodes but found it didn’t work as well as it did on the Globes episode.”

Overall, the episode demonstrates a disciplined mix philosophy: dialogue leads, music supports. That balance reinforces both the comedic nuance and the heightened

industry satire, letting the audience stay locked into character interactions while still feeling the scale and spectacle of what the real Golden Globes must be like in person.

The re-recording process for episode eight of *The Studio* is an intricate balance of clarity, energy, and tonal contrast. **Fred Howard** is the effects re-recording mixer on *The Studio*. Fred’s credits include *Outer Banks* (current season, mixing now), *The Night Agent*, and *Resident Alien*. He came up through the short form world and entered scripted television through sketch comedy with shows like *MadTV* and *Key & Peele*. I asked him about how he approaches these various types of projects, “In sketch comedy, sound effects can be big, funny, and cartoony.”

Fred moved on to single-camera shows like *The Middle*. He found the vibe of that project needed more finesse. “Those shows feature a soundscape that is more organic and real. You’d never put a sound effect in a modern show like *Shrinking* that called attention to itself like sketch comedy does. There are moments during the run of *The Studio*’s first season that are not quite ‘cartoony’ but would definitely be considered ‘big.’ That’s something that’s not prevalent in most single-camera sitcoms on television right now.”

“It’s not a traditional single-camera comedy that’s based in the same locations doing the same things over and over. Each



The production sound crew (L-R): Additional boom operator Cole Bluma, boom operator Nick Allen, production sound mixer Buck Robinson CAS, utility sound technician Rachel Schroeder, and video utility Evan Hare.



week uses new, unique locations, so we get to reinvent the palette for each episode, which is a unique experience and super fun.”

On “The Golden Globes” episode, Fred layered in the dense atmosphere of the event: camera shutters, distant applause, room tone shifts, and the subtle hum of a live broadcast environment. Music played a crucial role, weaving between narrative cues from the ceremony and the score to heighten tension and satire. “The soundscape of the show is 80% driven by percussionist Antonio Sanchez—the composer of the music—and his work behind the drum set, which was very specific to the rhythm of the episode and the entire series.”

Alvarez weighs in on the music from her side of the console. “In this series, we were working with a predominantly drum set-based score and many needle drops that ranged from mono jazz recordings to ’60s rock by the Rolling Stones. With the Globes episode, we were almost wall-to-wall with music so it’s a very delicate balance working with kick drum, snare, and cymbals that you ride in and out of sequences to really stress the scenario and to also give some reprieve.”

The Foley work Fred has at his disposal plays a crucial role in grounding the heightened, fast-moving environment in tactile realism. Foley mixer **Ron Mellegers** and his team recreate the subtle but constant movement of formalwear fabric swishes, jewelry clinks, and the distinct footsteps of dress shoes on polished floors, helping to sell the upscale setting. These details are especially important during backstage and walk-and-talk sequences, where overlapping dialogue and

camera movement could otherwise overwhelm quieter sounds.

Additionally, the episode relies heavily on prop-based Foley to enhance comedic beats and character interactions: the handling of envelopes, champagne glasses, chairs, and podium surfaces are all carefully performed to sync with timing and performance. Crowd scenes are supported not just by background walla, but by specific Foley touches like isolated claps, table bumps, and incidental contact that add dimension and perspective. Altogether, the Foley in this episode subtly reinforces both the realism of the awards show setting and the rhythm of its comedic pacing, ensuring that even in its busiest moments, the world feels physically present and believable.

In the end, the sound of *The Studio* proves that great television sound is rarely noticed precisely because it works so well. Every line of dialogue feels immediate, every room tone authentic, and every chaotic hallway walk-and-talk unfolds with clarity that keeps the audience inside the moment rather than thinking about the mechanics behind it. Achieving that kind of transparency requires meticulous coordination between production sound, boom operators, and re-recording mixers who shape the final sonic world of the show. The result is a soundtrack that feels effortless but is anything but. An invisible craft that supports the performances, heightens the satire, and ultimately helps make *The Studio* feel as sharp, fast, and alive as the world it portrays. The Cinema Audio Society congratulates *The Studio* on its well-deserved win for episode eight of a great first season.

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Billy Joel. Photo: Mark Mandler CAS

TELEVISION NON-FICTION, VARIETY OR MUSIC – SERIES OR SPECIALS

BILLY JOEL: AND SO IT GOES S01 E01 PART ONE

by Kurt Kassulke CAS

The winner of this year's CAS Award for Television Non-Fiction, Variety or Music – Series or Specials is *Billy Joel: And So It Goes*. It is an epic look across Billy Joel's entire career, interviewing musical influences, early bandmates, and important people throughout Billy's life. It features multiple looks at his stage show over the years, also focusing on more intimate moments of him playing musical examples on his piano while being interviewed. Capturing this broad range of topics, locations, and venues required a big crew, including production sound mixer **Mark Mandler CAS**, production sound mixer **David Mitlyng**, production sound mixer **Michael Stewart**, re-recording mixer **Bob Chefalas CAS**, score & music mixer **Bradshaw Leigh**, music mixer **Brian Ruggles**, and music mixer **Jay Vicari**. Four of the heart of the sound crew were available for interviews: Bob, David, Mark, and Brian. They shared their similar experiences working over many years on documentaries, and a deep connection with Billy Joel's catalog and career.

Bradshaw Leigh came into the project having worked with Billy Joel on every record since 1978's *52nd Street*, and more recently, doing Dolby Atmos remixes for a large part of his catalog "all in the last five years when they decided they wanted Billy's records in Atmos." This intimate knowledge of the original multitracks proved invaluable to the project as he

was able to create 5.1 mixes and stereo mixes for use in the documentary, along with instrumental-only mixes to be used as score within the project. Bradshaw also went back to original Billy Joel source materials for *Cold Spring Harbor*, and even further back to some 4-track Beatles-style recordings he did with his original band, The Lost Souls.

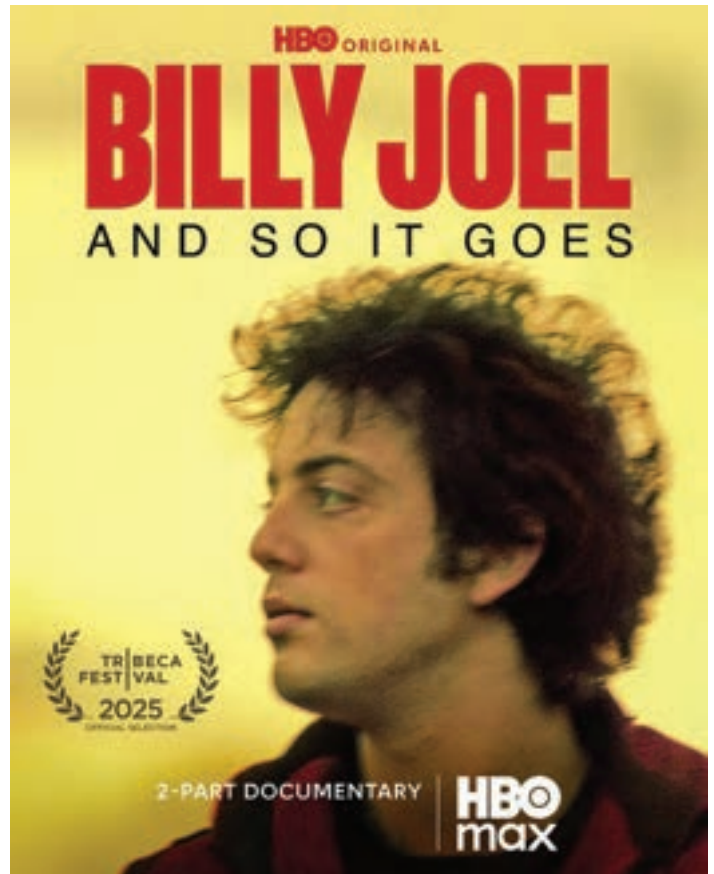
Re-recording mixer **Bob Chefalas CAS** shares, "I remember [Bradshaw] was having one really tough time with a vocal, trying to get this slap delay on a vocal and he kept trying all these different numbers, and then he looked at the [recording] sheet, and he saw a number 23, and he goes, '23?' And then he dials in, like, 23 milliseconds, and boom, he goes, that was it!"

Bradshaw also looked for more interesting archival material for the documentary. "The first thing I did was, long before the documentary even started, was just go through the vault and look for interesting, weird versions of songs, or dialogue between Billy and his producers, like Phil Ramone or Artie Ritz. We just scoured through the vault, looking for material that might work, be interesting, or provide information for the documentary. The thing I learned in the doc that I love was how close his songs follow the storyline of his life. Like, 'Say Goodbye to Hollywood' is a fun tune about how he was moving out of Hollywood."

Mark Mandler CAS and **David Mitlyng** both have a long history working production sound with Pentimento Productions, the documentary company responsible for producing *And So It Goes*. Mark being their East Coast go-to guy, and David being their West Coast favorite. David shares, "As a freelancer, I get tossed into these kinds of unique environments a lot and get pretty good access to people. I've been doing this in L.A. for about 36 years."

Both Mark and David started their careers working both camera and sound. David recalls, "I teamed up with the smart kids who wanted to be the writers and the producers, and I would handle everything technical. I'd shoot it, I'd edit." After working camera and sound, he decided he preferred lugging sound equipment to hauling "40-lb cameras."

Mark also worked multiple technical film roles in college and gravitated toward sound as his chosen field. Mark had already worked on one Billy Joel project about the 100th Madison Square Garden concert (*Billy Joel: The 100th: Live at Madison Square Garden*). For the *And So It Goes* East Coast interviews, Mark's sessions with Joel frequently involved Billy sitting at a piano, so Mark put a Schoeps overhead on Billy, and either Schoeps or an MS pair over the piano to be able to capture both a clean vocal and the richness of the music played.



L-R: Bradshaw Leigh and
Bob Chefalas CAS



Bradshaw Leigh

David's interviews involved a more standard miking approach, as they involved traditional talking-head setups. David also has extensive music documentary experience, having just finished up a documentary on Barbra Streisand (with special guest Paul McCartney). Both Mark and David recorded interviews with Elizabeth Weber, Billy's first wife and manager who helped pave the way to his success. Her story was fascinating throughout Billy's career. Mark noted how she said this was both her first-and-last interview on the subject.

Both the production and music mixers expressed how impressed they were with how well the diverse production and music tracks were managed, smoothed, and made even more expressive by the re-recording mixer, Bob Chefalas.

Bob Chefalas started out as an engineer in New York and had a special connection to Billy Joel's story. "When I found out it

was him [Billy], I was so happy. Because it's my hometown hero, you know? For me, living here in Hicksville, and his house where he grew up is only a mile from where I am right now. I would go in every day, and it was emotional. He talks about the town of Hicksville, the Village Green, and all these little phrases in his songs have a whole new meaning."

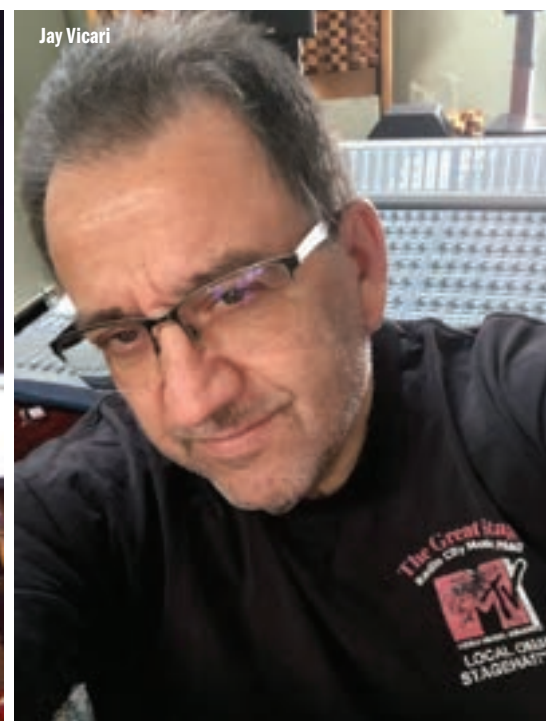
Bob's re-recording career evolved smoothly from his engineering start. "Right out of college, I got a job helping at a New York studio called TransAudio. At the time, it was the biggest re-recording stage in New York City and eventually became Todd-AO. I started out as an engineer, and I ended up becoming the chief engineer. When Todd-AO took over, I became Vice President of

Engineering for the New York facility. I would work with Richard Portman, Rick Dior, and I would do all these little projects, and I would sit with them, and just learn the trade. Richard Portman was great. He would mix and he would talk out loud and tell me everything he's doing. He would throw me faders. You finally get your chance to do your first student film and then it all worked out. I worked with Rick on *Apollo 13*. I did a couple films with Ron Howard, eventually doing 13 films with him in New York. And then I did all the episodes except for two of *Sex and the City* and that got me into TV."

Bob has been very happy at the flexibility the New York mixing world has provided him, allowing him to work across multiple genres and formats, from big feature films to TV series (like *Severance*) to a long string of documentaries.



Bob Chefalas CAS



Jay Vicari

Bob used all the tricks currently available to make sure the wide array of music tracks and production sources matched. “The iZotope RX EQ Match is a great tool. It gets tricky doing music documentaries. The tricky part is riding the music and getting to a point where you don’t lose it too much under the dialogue, where people forget that it’s there. Or if the music’s too loud under the dialogue, people listen to the music and don’t listen to the dialogue. You have to find that happy medium where it’s still there, it’s driving the scene and you have your chances to shine.”

Bob appreciated how every part of the filmmaking crew cooperated on the project. “The executive producer, Steve Cohen, has worked with Billy Joel for 40 years, he’s his lighting director and is Billy’s right-hand man, so he was responsible on the stage. He was from Billy’s camp, so he was always there for playbacks. And of course, we had the producers, Susan Lacy and Jessica Levin, from *Pentimento*.”

On the technical side, Bob noted, “Sometimes you had to stretch music so the tempo would be the same so that when it went from one song to another, it would be in the [same] tempo. But sometimes we were locked in because they’d cut picture to it and if they cut picture to a certain thing, we couldn’t change the tempo too much. However, we might be able to suggest, ‘Can we get an extra frame on this, or can we move a frame here?’ And we found that where we had to make an adjustment, they were able to make a picture adjustment.”

Bob gives a big shout-out to all his fellow mixers and the editorial crew that were able to deliver all the elements he



needed to evocatively tell the documentary’s story. *Billy Joel: And So It Goes* wove the work of all these creative sound, production, and post-production minds into a wonderfully engaging summary of a truly amazing musical talent.





Graham Hartstone and Mingxi Xu

CAS STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARD WINNER MINGXI XU

by Peter Kelsey CAS

In its 12th year, the CAS Student Recognition Award is open to any student enrolled and in good standing at an accredited college or university. Students may be pursuing any major but should have a demonstrated interest and experience in production and/or post-production sound for film and television.

Our industry is in very good hands. The high quality of the applications and the obvious love of the craft that our applicants demonstrated in their submissions speaks to the continued evolution of sound mixing. This is something I have been doing for more than 25 years and all the fun and joy I get from it has made this a truly wonderful experience that I see being continued by these outstanding students.

Guitar Center Music Foundation and Custom House sponsored the award, and prizes were given in the amounts of \$5,000 to the winner and \$1,000 to each of the other finalists.

All finalists received a valuable collection of software and other gifts from these generous companies: Acon Digital, Avid, Halter Technical, K-Tek, Krotos Studio, McDSP, Orca, ShotDeck, Shure, Todd-AO, Universal, and Zaxcom.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Student Recognition Award, from the applicants and their teachers and mentors to the sponsors and especially to the CAS members who donated their time to judge.

The award was presented by SRA Committee Chair Sherry Klein CAS, Guillermo Moya (last year's winner), and "Weird Al" Yankovic, who had great fun with his part of the proceedings.

The 2025 nominees:

Joseph Crews of Belmont University
Aidan Jones of Savannah College of Art and Design
Linnan Liu of University of Southern California
Evan Nowack of Chapman University
Mingxi Xu of National Film and Television School

Mingxi Xu was this year's recipient. Mingxi accepted the award with grace even though she had flown in from England, which is where the school is located, arriving that day. I wanted to find out about Mingxi's sound journey, so I sent her some questions and received the following responses.

What prompted you to leave China and study sound in the UK?

During my undergraduate studies in China, I found myself particularly interested in ambient sound and soundscapes. I became fascinated by how the flow of sound atmospheres can shape emotional perception.

As I watched films from different countries and languages, I began to notice that sound carries strong cultural identity. The treatment of space, dialogue, silence, and atmosphere varies significantly across regions.

I realized that if I wanted to develop a deeper and more refined listening practice, I needed to place myself in a more international and collaborative environment. The UK has a rich artistic heritage and strong connections to global film industries, particularly with the U.S. and Australia; an international collaborative hub that felt like an ideal place to grow. Studying here has allowed me to broaden my listening perspective and develop a more rigorous, professional, and globally informed approach to sound storytelling.

Please elaborate on your journey into the world of sound. What inspired you and what drives you to increase your skills and become a better mixer?

My relationship with sound began very early through listening. My grandpa was the first person who taught me how to engage with the world through sound. Before language, there was listening, and for me, listening became a way of understanding emotion.

I was initially intrigued by sound design, especially the creative process of building sound worlds. However, through collaboration, I gradually realized how crucial mixing is in shaping the final emotional experience of a film. Mixing is where all creative decisions are ultimately resolved. It is the moment where the soundtrack becomes final, where intention becomes perception.

What drives me is a curiosity about emotional clarity, how sound choices influence what an audience feels and understands. I'm deeply interested in decision-making: what to keep, what to remove if it's distracting, and how to guide attention to the story through sound.

What's your favorite part of the sound-for-film process?

My favorite part happens in the final mixing stage, re-recording. This is where details are refined and brought into focus. Subtle elements that were once hidden begin to find their place, and the soundtrack gains a sense of movement and cohesion.

Although mixing may appear to be about balancing, it is fundamentally about decision-making, about shaping flow, refining detail, and knowing what to prioritize to support the story. It is also one of the most collaborative stages of the process. Sitting together with the team, discussing choices, designing transitions, and feeling the film emotionally "lock" into place. That moment is incredibly rewarding. For me, mixing represents the final polish and wrap of the storytelling journey.

What does the CAS Award mean to you and what will you do with the money?

Receiving the CAS Student Recognition Award is both an encouragement and a responsibility. It reassures me that my pursuit of becoming a re-recording mixer is meaningful, and it recognizes the progress I have made so far. At the same time, it motivates me to remain humble and continue learning.

The prize will directly support my professional development. I plan to upgrade my home studio from a stereo setup to a 5.0 monitoring environment with LCR and surround speakers, upgrading my audio interface, and investing in an Avid S1 control surface.

Having a reliable 5.0 setup will allow me to make more informed creative decisions before stepping onto a professional



L-R: Linnan Liu, Joseph Crews, Mingxi Xu, Aidan Jones, and Evan Nowack



mix stage, which is especially important at this stage of my career. I will also invest in acoustic treatment to improve the accuracy of my listening environment. A well-calibrated space not only improves my own judgment but also builds trust when collaborating with directors. This financial award enables me to invest directly in both craft and collaboration.

Having won this award, do you have any advice for someone who would like to apply for the Student Recognition Award?

I think it's important for applicants to communicate their creative journey honestly and clearly. Mixing is not just technical; it is about storytelling and collaboration. A strong submission should demonstrate thoughtful decision-making, not just clean sound.

Even though mixing is the final stage, many creative ideas are realized and refined during this process. It's important to show how you listen, how you collaborate, and how you make decisions. Passion is important, but clarity of intention is equally essential.

Do you have any advice for someone starting out in the sound-for-film business?

I'm still at the beginning of my own sound journey, but something I often remind myself is to listen before speaking. Be patient, stay humble, and take the time to build meaningful relationships. Before focusing on plugins or software, try to understand how sound conveys emotion and how different materials feel. In collaboration, avoid dismissing ideas too quickly, explore them together and allow space for discussion. When working with more experienced professionals, listen carefully. Even if you don't fully agree, their experience is always valuable.

Do you have any stories or challenges from your path that would be fun to share?

One project that challenged me was *Mermaid*, a science and natural history documentary I worked on during my first year at NFTS. We had only one week to complete the entire

soundtrack, starting with just interviews and narration. I spent a significant amount of time focusing on detailed sound effects editing rather than the overall balance.

The main challenge was balancing three competing elements: the director's emphasis on detailed industrial fishing sounds, a vocal-heavy score inspired by sea shanties, and the emotional clarity of the narration. Due to limited communication, our first mix felt disconnected. I realized the issue wasn't technical, it was collaborative. I had rushed the process and overlooked the importance of dialogue.

Later I invited the director back for a second mix, approaching it with more patience and openness. That experience taught me that successful mixing depends not only on technical skill, but also on trust and empathy.

Who have been the people that have influenced you the most and what did you receive from them?

My grandfather, Xu Keming, was the first person who taught me how to listen to the world. He guided me through sound before teaching me language and how to speak, and that foundation continues to shape how I perceive and work with sound today.

Professionally, Graham Hartstone has been one of my most important mentors. He taught me how to listen to film, and to understand rhythm, space, and restraint. From him, I learned that mixing is not about adding more, but about choosing wisely.

What's your next step?

My next step is to continue building industry connections and seek opportunities as an assistant re-recording mixer or mix technician. At the same time, I'm open to starting in sound editorial to deepen my understanding of complex film sound design. My goal is to build a strong technical and collaborative foundation to support a long-term career in re-recording mixing.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I would love to see more women, especially Asian women, enter the field of re-recording mixing. Diversity of perspective is incredibly important in storytelling. I believe that richer listening experiences lead to more powerful and nuanced films.



“I’m sorry, can you repeat that?” **Addressing Hearing Damage**

by CAS Associate Ryan Pedersen

There is not a single place in existence on this planet void of sound. I’ve been to some really quiet places and one of my favorites is on the eastern bench of Zion National Park in Southern Utah. This area is far from any city or town, dozens of miles from any paved road and, aside from an anechoic chamber, is the quietest place that I have been. If you stop and stand still on one of the many trails in this area on a calm day, you can experience what I call your own self-noise. Even in such a place, there is still the sound that the fluid in your ears creates, your own heartbeat, or the subtlety of each breath. This would be very similar to experiencing an anechoic chamber. Although I do find the outdoor location to be a much more peaceful and fulfilling experience than standing inside a chamber isolated from the outside world with no sound reflections whatsoever.

In our daily lives, we are surrounded by an abundance of sound. Even those that might live in a rural area have many sounds around them. We use these sounds or vibrations to interact with the world. They give us spatial awareness, create emotional responses, and allow us to communicate. A world without sound would be an awfully boring place. That being said, our ability to hear is something that we need to care for and not take for granted.

One in eight people in the United States (13% or 30 million) ages 12 or older has hearing loss in both ears, based on standard hearing exams. Approximately 15% of American adults (37.5 million) ages 18 and over report some trouble hearing.

About 28.8 million U.S. adults could benefit from using hearing aids. Of those needing hearing aids, roughly one in five use them. Roughly 10% of the U.S. adult population, or about 25 million Americans, has experienced tinnitus lasting at least five minutes in the past year. Men are almost twice as likely as women to have hearing loss among adults ages 20-69. Hearing loss is the third most common chronic physical condition in the U.S., with the prevalence rising to more than 50% for those over 75. Globally, hearing loss is expected to affect 2.5 billion people by 2050.

These are all current statistics released by the National Institutes of Health. Hearing loss is twice as prevalent as diabetes. There is a high likelihood that you know at least a

human tendency to do nothing and hope for the best, usually while pretending that everything is fine. What's even more interesting is, on the visual side, those with the need for glasses usually tend to get them. Most people experiencing hearing issues wait more than 10 years before addressing the problem.

Hearing aids have had a dramatic shift in the last couple of years with big changes made by the FDA. You used to have to go to an audiologist to get your ears tested and then fitted for hearing aids that only they could change or adjust in their office. That is no longer a limitation as you can do the entire process from your own home, although visiting an audiologist semi-regularly, especially for those of us with livelihoods based on our ability to hear, is highly recommended to track your hearing.

Before we get too far, let's review some hearing anatomy. There are three areas to our auditory systems; the outer, middle, and inner ear. The outer ear consists of everything that you can see on the side of your head and everyone else's. This is called the auricle or pinna. Each little fold or crevice of your ear has a name, but we will just name the concha which is the part that leads to the ear canal, which is the second part of the outer ear. Your ear canal winds in an S-shape down to the third part of the outer ear, your eardrum. Your middle ear transmits from your eardrum through tiny little bones called ossicles. These bones transmit to a small, membrane-covered oval window which

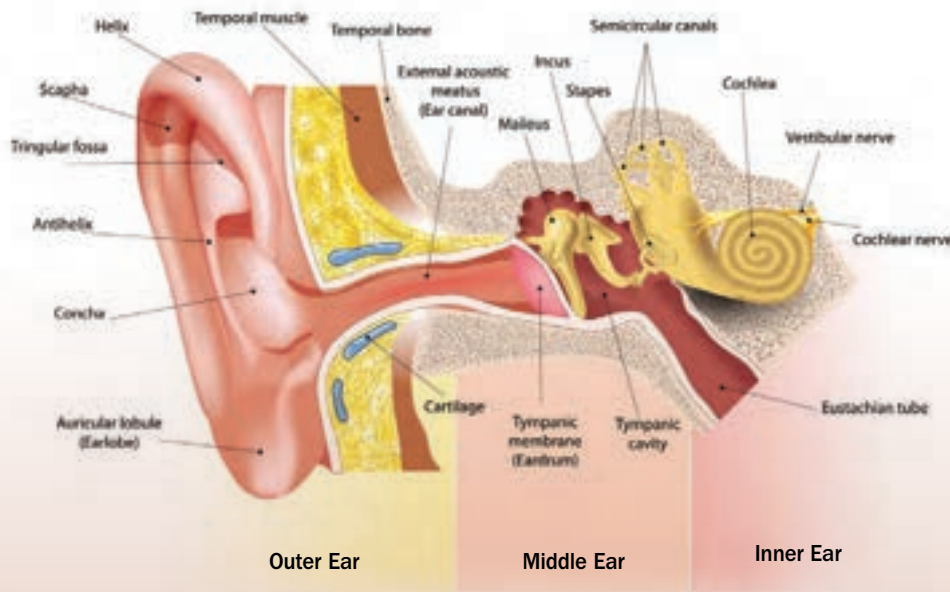
is the start of the inner ear. The middle ear cavity is air filled and also includes the Eustachian tube, which leads to the throat and balances your ear pressure. The final part of our auditory system is the inner ear. This third part is a very complex, fluid-filled structure located within the temporal bone. The different structures within contain tiny hair cells that convert sound waves and motion into electrical signals and transmit them to the brain via the auditory nerve.

The two types of hearing loss are associated with these different parts of the ear. Conductive hearing loss is a result of an outer or middle ear blockage. It can be as simple as earwax buildup or fluid behind the eardrum. More complicated conditions such as

few people experiencing hearing loss and it's certain that there are many more around you who are experiencing it and either hiding it or not having it corrected.

Our hearing problems are often worsened because of the

otosclerosis, which affects the ossicles in the middle ear, is also a possibility. Conductive hearing loss is usually corrected through earwax removal or surgery for more complicated issues. While surgery can repair much of your conductive hearing loss, it doesn't result in 100% recovery of the loss.



Sensorineural hearing loss affects the inner ear and auditory nerve. This type of hearing loss is permanent and cannot be reversed and would be managed through hearing aids. Considering an average lifespan, everyone at one point or another will have some form of sensorineural hearing loss during their life.

There is also a third condition called tinnitus that affects many people with or without hearing loss. For the purposes of this article, we won't delve deeper into it, but it can be a debilitating condition that heavily affects your hearing.

If hearing aids have become cheaper and more accessible, then why do people still put off getting them? While we won't get into the history of deafness, it's worth mentioning that the stigma surrounding hearing loss has existed since well before hearing aids even existed.

Those experiencing hearing loss as stated previously wait for long periods of time before actually managing their hearing loss. Many feel like they will be looked down upon because of their hearing loss and the need for hearing aids. That perception is magnified within our profession.

Bruce Beacom is an L.A.-based sound mixer who had severe otosclerosis and lost his hearing. He has been able, through multiple surgeries, to regain some of his hearing and manage the rest with hearing aids. There are multiple articles in *Production Sound & Video* from Local 695 and from other manufacturers about Bruce's experience. He has stated how hard it was to overcome the perception that he couldn't do his job because of his condition and the need for hearing aids. There are other sound mixers that wear hearing aids who are actively and successfully working in the audio industry. Having hearing loss and managing it through hearing aids does not mean that you can no longer bring value to your own work and the industry as a whole. We don't rush to judgment when a director of photography wears glasses. We have tools to correct human limitations such as poor eyesight and hearing loss and it's very beneficial to use those tools.

One of the most common things that people say when they first get their hearing aids is how loud everything is around them. They have been missing out on so many things when they could not clearly hear the world around them. One of the more difficult situations to be in with hearing loss is noisy environments where people are speaking to each other, such as a restaurant. Sometimes, however, it can be almost impossible for someone with higher level hearing loss to be able to

understand the words coming from the others in the room.

Using hearing aids allows those with hearing loss to interact again with their friends and family in social situations. There is a big correlation between hearing loss and depression due to the loss of social interaction and the feelings of inadequacy. Untreated hearing loss is also strongly linked to a higher risk of developing dementia, with chances doubling, tripling, or even quadrupling based on the severity of the untreated hearing loss. So, not only do hearing aids help with depression, but they can also help reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Sound is a critical part of not only our lives as professionals but also to each person on this planet. The landscape of sound allows us to communicate with each other, have spatial awareness of our surroundings, and creates emotional responses within us. Imagine watching a scary movie with no sound. I question whether you would feel any type of fear or even jump during the jump-scare moments. Think about not being able to hear the beautifully written score and the intricate sound design that are key to having us feel love, sadness, or bravery.

I recently watched *My Girl* with my two oldest daughters, and the terrible tragedy toward the end of that movie would not have the same effect on the human soul without being able to hear through the soundtrack the emotions being portrayed and perceived by the viewers. Our jobs as audio professionals have given us something special that allows us to communicate in a very special way to the rest of the world. We have the privilege to hear, and we also get to allow others to experience hearing in different and exciting ways.

I encourage all of us to be more mindful of our own hearing and to take care of it. We should also be mindful of others that are experiencing hearing loss and encourage them to not be ashamed but to try and get it managed so they can continue to live life to the fullest.

If you're looking for a couple of good books on hearing, I recommend *The Universal Sense* by Seth Horowitz and *Volume Control* by David Owen. *The Universal Sense* explores the connection of sound to the mind and *Volume Control* is about the practical consequences of hearing loss and the corrective opportunities. I also recommend that you visit your audiologist and get a baseline if you don't already have one. If you already have a baseline, make sure you follow up every three to five years to get a new hearing test done. Let us help break the silence on hearing loss and embrace the advances that allow everyone to hear the world around them.

WAR AND PEACEMAKER COMMS

by Matthew Nicolay CAS

With Kurdice Neal, Alex Lowe CAS, Michael Wynne CAS, and Brittany Myers

In the summer of 2024, I landed a dream gig, *Peacemaker* for HBO Max. It's an understatement to say that it was one of the most challenging jobs of my career with a top-notch camera crew, a versatile cast, and a very creative and intense creator/director. One advantage of coming into a show on its second season is that I was already a fan of the show and didn't need to be brought up to speed on the lore.

Working on *Peacemaker* was a pretty unique mix of big-budget superhero filmmaking and loose, almost punk-rock creative energy.

A lot of that comes from the show's creator, James Gunn. He runs a set that's very collaborative but also very specific. He tends to write with particular actors in mind and encourages improvisation once the scene is working. That meant actors like John Cena could lean into the awkward humor and emotional beats of *Peacemaker*, often pushing scenes further than what was on the page. As production sound mixer, I had to be ready for any vocal projection or whisper at any time.

The show is fast-paced and physically demanding. I was given plenty of prep time and was able to read all eight scripts before we started. There would be changes, of course, but the series of events never really changed. Production was really good with communication and made themselves available to handle any questions about any situation that was coming up. However, I didn't have a lot of designated prep time before each episode, so I had to make sure I was very diligent about whatever was happening the next day, the next week, the next episode. The upside is that you have very little time to second-guess or overthink the process.

Episode eight, the season finale, was directed by James Gunn and promised to "pull out all the stops." After reading the script, it was clear why: The entire cast, along with 10-15 background performers and stunt players, would be involved. As the characters explored different corners of the multiverse, they'd all be suited up in hazmat gear.



Early rendering of the suit



Filming the opening sequence to *Peacemaker*



Actors on set in their suits



Playback rig of Alex Lowe CAS



ALEX LOWE CAS



Alex Lowe's setup

What I had imagined in my head (think Peter Coyote in *E.T.* with a large domed helmet) didn't quite match what production had in mind. Michael Crow, our costume designer, stopped by set to show me the prototype headgear. It turned out to be a tight-fitting, hard plastic helmet. "Oh, it's like a spacesuit," I said. I was also delighted the suit would be made of a soft rubber and completely silent instead of noisy "swishy" polyester-type material.

Luckily, I had some experience with that. On *Hidden Figures*, which depicted the Mercury-era missions, I worked with single astronaut helmet setups. We miked the helmets and gave the actors earpieces connected to IFB's so they could hear the director. On *Fly Me to the Moon*, things got more complex. There were two actors in helmets, which meant they needed to hear and talk to each other. In that case, I ran the two actors, director, and script supervisor VOG [Voice of God] through my board and distributed from the custom outputs of the Sound Devices Scorpio to three Comtek transmitters to the various people who had to hear different elements. The usual suspects heard the mix and the actors playing the astronauts heard the other actor but not themselves and the director and script supervisor but not any other elements of the mix. Later, I expanded to stunt performers and a moment coordinator. I brought in Keegan Osburn to assist with distributing receivers and earpieces, but I was already pushing the limits of my system's technical limitations

Peacemaker took it to another level entirely. We were looking at 10 principal cast members, plus stunt performers and background players—all wearing suits and helmets. When you're staring down a situation like that, you do what every production sound mixer does when communication gets complicated: You call Alex Lowe CAS.

Alex, an Atlanta-based musician and audio specialist, works across a wide range of disciplines like film scoring, post-production sound, playback, and communications. I'd previously worked with him on the Netflix series *Dolly Parton's Heartstrings*, where each episode reimaged one of Dolly Parton's songs. I brought him on for playback, and his command of Pro Tools was remarkable.

At one point, Dolly Parton wanted to change a single line in a verse. In my experience, playback tracks are usually locked and final. He quickly routed a mic into his Pro Tools rig, had Dolly record the revised line cold, and then dropped it seamlessly into the track. It was flawless.

I'd also worked with Alex on communications before. On *Fly Me to the Moon*, director Greg Berlanti wanted practical playback and believable two-way phone conversations. Alex showed up with his full kit—earwigs, Pro Tools, everything, and crushed it.

Below, some of the team share their experiences working on the project.

ALEX LOWE CAS: Playback/Communications

When Matt called me about the *Peacemaker* project, he mentioned there would be up to 10 actors in helmets who needed communications between each other, James Gunn, and our AD Ed Tilden's VOG's. Because of the pace that I know James likes to work at, I made sure I was prepared to receive all the signals from the actors' isolated tracks.

I think there were 10 tracks coming from Matt's transmitters into my system. We set up a rig with Lectrosonics DSQD

receivers so I could tap into the talents' wires mounted in the helmets and then send them back out with Lectrosonics M2T units to M2R belt packs. I had done a similar communications setup on *First Man*.

With playback/monitor mixes, I created mix-minus feeds so any actor could hear the rest of the group but not have to listen to themselves in their earpieces. When James or Ed spoke, I had side-chained compressors to push down all the feeds so their directions were the only audio heard in the earpieces.

We were called in well into shooting, so there wasn't going to be an opportunity to have a tech rehearsal with the sound team. We were given a day to set up with six stand-ins, but didn't have the mic packs, so I rented some Lectrosonics SMV units and mics and strapped them onto the belts for rehearsal. We had the VOG's set up into the helmet. We also sent the stand-ins' audio to a speaker to help with communication, something that wouldn't need to happen when filming, though.

After the successful rehearsal, I coordinated frequencies with Matt, and using Wireless Designer, set up our frequencies. We threw every scenario we could think of to test the stability of the system. How quickly could we swap out batteries? What if we needed to change frequencies and how long would that take to incorporate into our mix-minus setup? We had everything timed so we could give good estimates in case something happened.

We taped all the earpieces so they wouldn't come apart when tugged at. The actors would be doing some running and aggressive movement, so we needed to make sure our rigs could stand up to that.



KURDICE NEAL

KURDICE NEAL: Utility Sound Technician

When the opportunity arose to design the sound of the hazmat suits, it felt less like a technical assignment and more like stepping into the first moments of a story already in motion. The brief came with constraints—limited space, active cooling systems, fully enclosed helmets—but also with just enough creative latitude to turn those limitations into something intentional. The goal was clear: preserve performance, protect intelligibility, and make the technology disappear.

Working alongside production sound mixer Matthew Nicolay, whose kit was as comprehensive as it was reliable, we began not with equipment, but with the physical reality of the suits themselves. Time spent with the costume department proved essential. Each helmet varied slightly in size and internal structure, and those differences would ultimately define our approach. We also prepared for contingencies—developing parallel strategies for moments when helmets were removed to ensure continuity in tone and clarity across transitions.



MATTHEW NICOLAY CAS

MATTHEW NICOLAY CAS: Production Sound Mixer

I had a meeting with costume designer Michael Crow before the helmet design was finalized. There would be a small air pump in the backpack each of the actors would wear. An air hose would run from the backpack to the helmet so the actor's face shield would not fog up. The costume department asked, "Do you want the air hose to enter the helmet at the chin of the helmet or the back of the helmet?" They liked it coming into the chin for design reasons, it just looked cooler.

Running the air hose into the chin put the airflow right where I was going to put the mic. I did a test with both, and it was



Nick's monitor during filming

clear that the back of the helmet was better because the actor's head would block the noise from the hose. I suggested we use head-worn mics, but there just wasn't time to have them made, nor did they want to spend the money to do it.

I made a demo recording of each air hose position and sent them to the producers. We all agreed the hose in the back was the way to go. The helmets did yield one distinct design advantage for us. Between the padding at the top of the helmet was a perfect space for a Lectrosonics SMWB transmitter. There were some early discussions about putting the transmitter in the suit and running the wire up to the helmet. This would have meant that we had to dislodge and resecure the mic every time they took the helmet off. With the transmitter and the microphone both in the helmet, all the actors had to do was put on the helmet and they were ready to go—which ended up being less invasive and a huge time-saver.

KURDICE NEAL: From there, the lavalier cable was routed discreetly beneath the padding, guided in a curved, L-shaped path toward the actor's mouth—similar in principle to a theater headset mic, but entirely concealed. Once exposed near the lower portion of the helmet, the cable was secured with black moleskin, blending seamlessly into the interior. Every detail—from the choice of black wiring to the placement of the capsule—was designed to disappear visually while remaining acoustically present.

The environment inside the helmet presented its own set of challenges. Built-in fans, essential for airflow and actor safety, introduced a constant layer of noise. Close mic placement required careful gain staging and thoughtful positioning to mitigate plosives, breathing artifacts, and turbulence. Each lavalier was fitted with black wind protection and offset slightly from the direct airflow path, striking a balance between proximity and clarity.

Before committing to the full build, we tested the configuration with background and stunt performers. The results were

immediate and encouraging—no discomfort, no perceptible difference in wearability. More importantly, the audio told us we were on the right path.

With the microphone positioned so close to the source, transmitter gain was reduced to near-minimum levels, preserving headroom and preventing distortion. Each hero helmet was pre-rigged, labeled internally for efficiency, and prepared for rapid deployment. Lavalier cables remained in place throughout the shoot, while the Velcro-mounted transmitters allowed for quick swaps, maintenance, and overnight removal. Utilizing the transmitters' remote sleep functionality, we were able to conserve battery life during downtime—reducing interruptions and keeping the workflow fluid on set.

For scenes without helmets, the suits themselves offered a secondary solution. Integrated backpacks—designed for air intake—also provided concealed compartments for additional transmitters. The costume department collaborated closely, ensuring that cable paths remained hidden while maintaining full mobility for the actors. This dual-layer approach ensured continuity, whether the performers were sealed inside helmets or fully exposed.

One of the more immersive aspects of the design was the internal communication system. With the suit fans active, natural vocal projection became ineffective. To address this, we implemented a dedicated communication channel within each suit, allowing performers to hear one another in real time—mirroring the function of real-world astronaut systems. These feeds were also routed to playback, keeping production connected to the performance even when it was physically isolated.

At first glance, the challenge seemed formidable—multiple systems, confined spaces, competing noise sources. But in practice, it became an exercise in precision and collaboration. Every adjustment, every test, and every refinement served the same purpose: To protect the integrity of the performance while embracing the reality of the environment.

In the end, the success of the system wasn't just measured in clean dialogue, but in its invisibility. The audience never sees the solution—and ideally, never hears the problem. That's where sound design, at its best, becomes part of the storytelling fabric.

Bringing the hazmat suit sequences in *Peacemaker* Season 2 to life required more than technical execution—it required trust in the process, collaboration across departments, and a willingness to solve problems where they physically exist. It's in those constraints that the most compelling work often reveals itself.

MATTHEW NICOLAY: One of the problems with this process is that we never had the luxury of having the helmets, the gear, and the cast all at the same time. I suggested the possibility of holding a full rehearsal on a Saturday. Not surprisingly, no one liked that idea except me, so that just wasn't going to happen.

ALEX LOWE: Most of the wireless transmitters were in use at first unit. I brought a rough version of the communication setup to the *Peacemaker* production office. It was pretty much two stand-ins, not the cast. We only had the helmets because the suits weren't ready. We had all the necessary components to make an effective demo. In the end, James Gunn and Ed (1st AD) understood what we were trying to accomplish.

MATTHEW NICOLAY: The day before shoot day, Kurdice Neal and I coordinated frequencies of the wireless transmitters.

KURDICE NEAL: I had a two-hour pre-call at the stage. The costume department gave me the "hero helmets" and I went to work placing the transmitters and microphones in the helmets. There was a room at Trilith Studios next to the stage. It was an assembly line. Extras and stunt performers get suits first, then Alex's utility would hook up the IFB earpiece, then the boots, then gloves, last but not least, helmets.

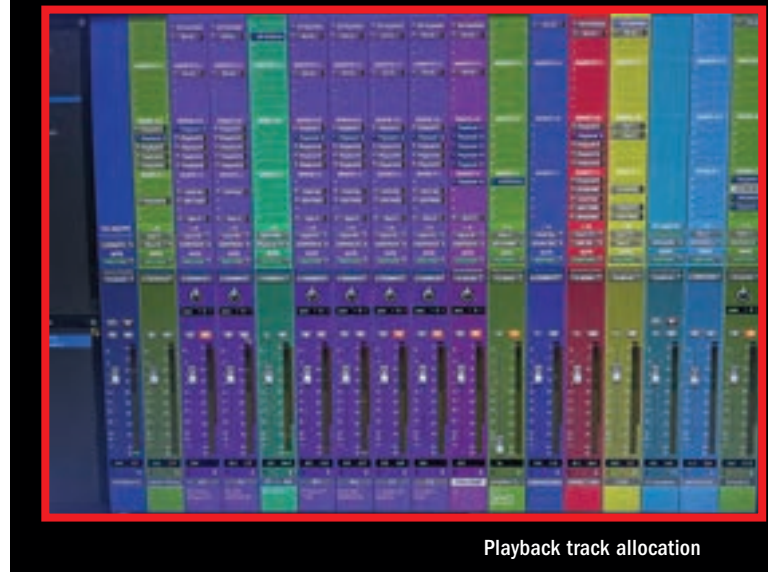
MATTHEW NICOLAY: One by one the cast arrived to get their helmet, do a sound check, and head to set. That's when we had our one-and-only problem.

ALEX LOWE: On the day, we quickly realized our #1 frequency was going to be the boom. As I'm a playback operator, it's not something that I'd typically think of. I had lined up all the channels according to their corresponding cast member. There was no need to send the boom through the workflow. Thankfully, Lectrosonics is so intuitive, we quickly found a new frequency and adjusted.

We had to wire and put in earpieces away from set and the rest of the cast, one by one, so we didn't have a chance to test it before the whole cast was on set and ready to film. There were a few costume adjustments that we worked out. A quick "Everyone can hear us?" and then it was "Roll camera!"

MATTHEW NICOLAY: I thought, "Straight up, if we get a first take without any technical problems it will be a miracle!" I pushed the record button and the scene played out. Ed called "cut" and I waited for one, two, SIX people to say, "I can't hear anything," but it never happened. I exhaled; we had done it.

ALEX LOWE: Take one went as if we'd been doing it all week. And then for the next two weeks, we'd add some cast. We added another VOG for the stunt coordinator that fed a Comtek setup into the stunts. And, as with most productions, we made adjustments along the way.



As with any setup, I walked away learning some new tricks, things I would adjust for next time. The whole show went really well. The cast were super pleased with their comms setup, and I feel it helped to add a sense of realism to their performance. You could see the surprise on their faces when they were in a group, "So you can hear me? I don't hear myself, but I can hear everyone else." And then they just took it for granted and the jokes started coming out when cameras weren't rolling. A win.

MATTHEW NICOLAY: Having won the day on stage, there was one more battle left to fight. The production would have a few practical locations, and we would have to take our hazmat suits out into the real world. Michael Wynne CAS took on the not easy task to sub for me in the last few weeks of the production. I did extensive prep sessions to make Michael's transition as smooth as possible.

ALEX LOWE: I designed my system to be mobile and work in any environment. Moving outside to an open field made absolutely no difference. However, Michael Wynne had a pretty significant learning curve to undertake.

MICHAEL WYNNE CAS **Additional Production Sound Mixer**

On *Peacemaker* S2, I had the benefit of falling into the signal flow and mix workflow established between playback Alex Lowe and Matt Nicolay for the "zombie helmet" scenes, with the primary difference being that we were at an exterior location rather than a stage.

Coming on later in the show to take over for Matt for the last two episodes was no small task. It was quite apparent that the crew was very dialed in, including his team that I had the pleasure to work with. Our director, James Gunn, was very focused, and let's just say he really appreciated when things worked without a hitch!



Actors on set in their suits

While prepping for the last two episodes, I reached out to Alex and Matt to get myself up to speed on the workflow. They were both able to provide valuable feedback on the process and the variables to look out for—especially in the world of RF coordination for the helmet scenes. I knew from my own experience that going into an exterior location with a high wireless count between playback, Alex and myself would require careful coordination and planning. Using Soundbase to pre-coordinate and Wireless Designer to deploy, I was able to do a clean RF coordination of all our channels—including talent, comms, and headset IFB's—before we arrived on set. I only needed to check my TinySA Ultra on arrival to ensure the scans matched what I was seeing on set.

BRITTANY MYERS: Additional Utility

The comms systems on *Peacemaker* required diligent collaboration between both the sound and costume departments. The wires in the helmets had to be placed strategically for clarity, with reliable wind protection, because once the suits went on, there were no halts to filming. This was often the easy part, though. On a fast-moving, large production, this process often felt more theatrical than a traditional film set, with quick changes and helmet switches behind a costume rack just off set.

Often during scenes, we were switching quickly between stunt performers and real actors, using earwigs for director feedback as well as helmets wired for communication and recorded dialogue. On days where we had multiple performers switching back-and-forth, it was useful to have a second utility in the

sound department to manage helmets and wardrobe, as well as a playback operator to manage earwigs. Keeping diligently aware of all the moving parts and pieces was essential to make sure communication from the directing team, as well as the recording was as seamless and faithful as possible.

MICHAEL WYNNE: It's also worth mentioning that Alex and I were both using Lectrosonics D2 digital wireless systems for both the IEM's and talent wireless, which proved to be very robust. The duets in the helmets had no issues with the DBSM transmitters in close proximity, which I had tested in advance. Being prepped, preplanned, and pre-coordinated was critical to not wasting time on what was a fast-moving day with lots of work ahead.

We started our first scene on a daylight exterior in a tall, grassy field. Due to the nature of the shots, they wanted everyone as far back as possible. We ended up negotiating to push our carts onto the field at a distance of about 300 feet from talent, but we were able to run a pair of Wisycom LFA's out to set with a 100-foot run. Fortunately for us, the transmitters and IEM's for talent, plus the communications systems, were in the helmets and not buried in the costumes. That gave Alex and myself an advantage for range and robustness when it came to signal-to-noise.

On my cart, I also use a Wisycom SPL2208, which has two input zones and multiple RF output sends on a patchbay. So, I was able to provide Alex with the RF receiver he needed from the same pair of antennas, minimizing our footprint. Also on



MICHAEL WYNNE CAS



Playback is outstanding in the field

wireless was a mix feed, using a digital hybrid SMQV/411a combo, to Jay Adkins, our very dialed-in video assist, who also was feeding the Comteks with a BST-75 transmitter I had planted on his cart. Being as minimal as possible with cabling, using wireless, and combining our antenna efforts always helped speed things up in between setups. It was a real pleasure working on the show, and I'm grateful to Matt, his team, and Alex for making me feel welcome.

MATTHEW NICOLAY: What made the communications challenge on *Peacemaker* so satisfying is the same thing that's kept me engaged throughout my career: Taking on something that feels almost unmanageable and finding a way to succeed. This was one of those moments. It all could have easily unraveled without the right approach.

I leaned heavily on Alex Lowe, along with Kurdice, Michael, and Brittany—each of them experts in their own lane. Everyone had a critical role to play, and there wasn't time to micromanage. You have to trust that the people you've chosen will deliver.

It's a bit like stepping off a cliff and trusting that the bridge will be there when your foot comes down. And when everything clicks, when the system works, when the scene plays and no one's thinking about the technical hurdles, that's the part of the job that never gets old.



When Judomaster wants to check playback, you let him



MIX MUSIC PRODUCTION

NASHVILLE

by Matt Foglia CAS

It was Tuesday when CAS Operations Manager **Carol Thomas**—who is the executioner of all things that need to get done for the CAS (and much more) and who, I believe, lives in some Einstein-approved universe where her days have 30 hours instead of the limiting 24—let me know that she and husband **Ceri Thomas CAS**—whom I affectionately refer to as “Mr. Immersive”—were going to be in Nashville and, among other events, attending the Mix Music Production event on Saturday, May 16.

Photo: Brad Pouncey/Unsplash

While not the scope of the Mix Sound for Film and Television events that have been happening since 2014 (with the next one slated for September 26 at Sony Pictures Studios), the tagline of this music production-focused event—now in its fourth year—was “Immersive Audio Meets Straight Ahead Stereo Recording.” I looked at the agenda, saw that a couple of my former students were on panels, that there would be some cool demos followed by an evening studio crawl, and that I’d get to hang with Carol and Ceri—sign me up! While I didn’t get to attend every discussion (obviously) or see every vendor, here are some things I found interesting.



With RCA engineer
(and former student)
Phillip Smith

The event kicked off at BMG with opening remarks by *Mix* magazine’s **Tom Kenny**, followed by a panel titled “Bringing the Music Back to Music Row.” While the panel that followed, “Breaking In: Launching a Career in Music & Recording,” included my MTSU colleague **Clarke Schleicher**, I walked over to historic RCA Studio A. Along with Columbia Studio A, this is one of the main rooms scoring mixers will use to record score. My former student **Phillip Smith**, who is the main engineer at RCA, was the focus of a discussion where he

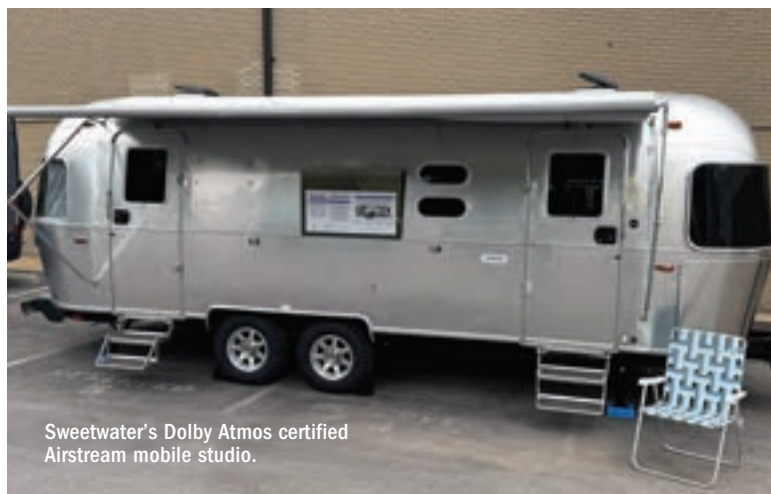
shared insights into how he uses the live room and the vast array of mics and gear to capture in the space. While Phillip’s discussion was not score-centric, it was great to hear the acoustics of the room, along with sample recordings of how he records most artists playing live with full bands in order to capture a more organic and natural performance.

In the parking lot of RCA was Sweetwater’s Dolby Atmos mobile studio—an Airstream whose interior is an incredible sounding mix room. Sitting at the table when I walked in was studio design legend **Russ Berger**! You just never know who you’ll run into at these kinds of events. With the 7.2.4 speaker system hidden behind fabric, and a front visual monitor using a laser projector that only required an 11-inch throw, every inch was maximized for extremely well-balanced presentation. The machine room was on the other side of the “front” wall. Russ shared some insight into how they were able to manage the low end because one has to wonder given the length of the room. The trailer can be towed and parked anywhere for whatever mixing scenario you need. Dolby certified and very cool.

Walking over to the Curb 43 studio, API was showing off their AXS console. We installed one in our Studio B at MTSU last summer and I wanted to say hello to some of the folks. In the live room, Sony was displaying some mics and headphones, along with the MDR-MV1 open-back cans that were designed specifically for their Sony 360VME system. [See the article on VME in the Spring 2026 *CAS Quarterly*.] Sony Senior Product Manager **Andy Munitz** provided insight



The driver of the Sony
MDR-MV1 headphone



Sweetwater’s Dolby Atmos certified
Airstream mobile studio.



With studio design legend
Russ Berger



Engineer Franco Galetto testing his Sony VME profile.

on the newly designed driver meant to reproduce super low frequencies (down to 5 Hz according to spec) to present immersive audio more accurately.

While I was speaking with Andy, it was announced that music production icon **David Leonard** (search his name and see his credits) was taking attendees over to Digital Audio Post on 16th Avenue South, where the VME team from Sony was creating individual profiles for guests. Five of us drove the short distance in David's SUV, chatting about mixing immersive content over headphones. David was there as he uses Sony's VME system and is extremely pleased with the translation to speakers.

Once we arrived at Digital Audio Post, I was the first to sit in the chair to capture my 9.1.4 profile of the room. I have

another profile from when Sony's Director of Professional Solutions **Hiroyuki Komuro** and his team came to MTSU in the fall to shoot profiles of students and faculty. I told him about the article on VME from our spring issue and he was very excited to read it.

After some sweeps, they used a race scene from the movie *Gran Torino*, allowing us to listen over headphones and then speakers for a realistic A/B of the system. I started and stopped many times with the only thing that really stuck out being the inability to "feel" the low end when listening on headphones. The frequencies certainly seemed to be playing, but the interaction of air in a room and the body—especially the air reproduced from very low frequencies—is something that would need assistance. While I'm aware of "seat cushions" that can vibrate when triggered by low frequencies (such as the ButtKicker LFE), my recently graduated graduate student, **Franco Galetto** (shown in the picture), told me about a vest that does something similar from a company called Woojer. Regardless, the reproduction was very convincing.

Something funny happened when Franco's girlfriend—who is not versed in audio but is aware given Franco's studies—had her profile taken. The amazement and "What in the world?" reaction of her face was similar to a kid who just saw an unbelievable magic trick. After realizing that she really *was* listening on headphones, she asked Hiroyuki, "How do you guys do that?"

The day just flew by, and I missed a number of other demos I had hoped to see, but one panel I didn't want to miss was the day's closing discussion titled "Rethinking Space." Featuring mixers Nick Mac (Post Malone, Maroon 5), Vance Powell (Chris Stapleton, The White Stripes), and Richard Chycki (lots of Rush), it also featured my former student Bryce Roberts (Kenny Chesney, Willie Nelson) as the "young" engineer (even

Map of the five studios participating in the evening's studio crawl.





L-R: Tom Kenny, Vance Powell, Richard Chycki, Nick Mac, and Bryce Roberts

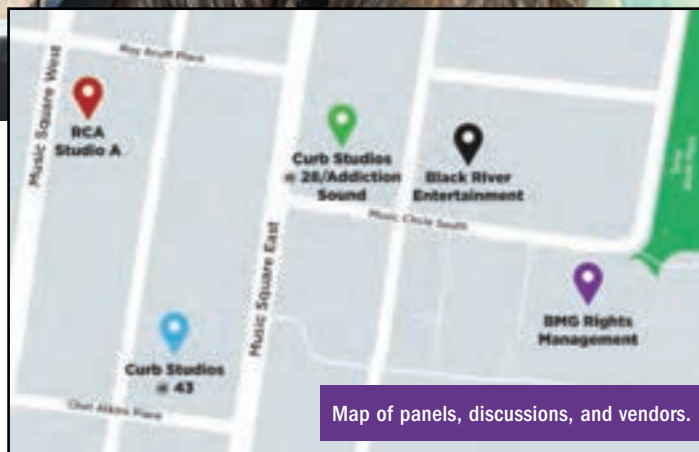
though he's in his 30's). Discussions about mixing in stereo versus immersive and use of space/reverbs/delays ensued. Fun insights and even funnier stories to close out the event.

While lots of recording—and business—is done in and around Music Row, Berry Hill is where some would say a majority of music recording is done in Nashville. There is a very high concentration of studios within structures that look very much like houses as opposed to traditional studio “buildings” given that it's, basically, a neighborhood.

Five studios opened their doors for the studio crawl, which was slated to be from 6:00–8:00, but I was there from 5:30–9:30 before making myself leave. Starting with a very generous food and drink spread (including Nashville staple Hattie B's Hot Chicken) at Blackbird Studios, attendees were able to see the large facility, along with the incredible-looking Studio C (if you haven't seen it before, you've probably seen it in photos). Moving onto East Iris Studios, Ceri was able to get us exclusive access to David Leonard's 9.1.4 Studio D, which features the console David recorded some of Prince's *Purple Rain* on.

More beautiful and unique rooms—each with their own vibe—followed as we progressed through Gold Pacific, Sputnik (where owner Vance Powell blew a breaker cranking up Richard Chycki's Atmos mix of “Tom Sawyer” just a touch too loud), ending the evening with MTSU alum and Soultrain Sound Studios engineer **Justin Cortelyou** sharing some entertaining stories about his time at MTSU.

It was a great day in Nashville catching up with colleagues, former students, and meeting other industry professionals in a different setting. With this year's AES Convention taking place in Nashville October 30 through November 1, I'm looking forward to seeing more folks—and hopefully you—in person.



Studio D at East Iris Studios

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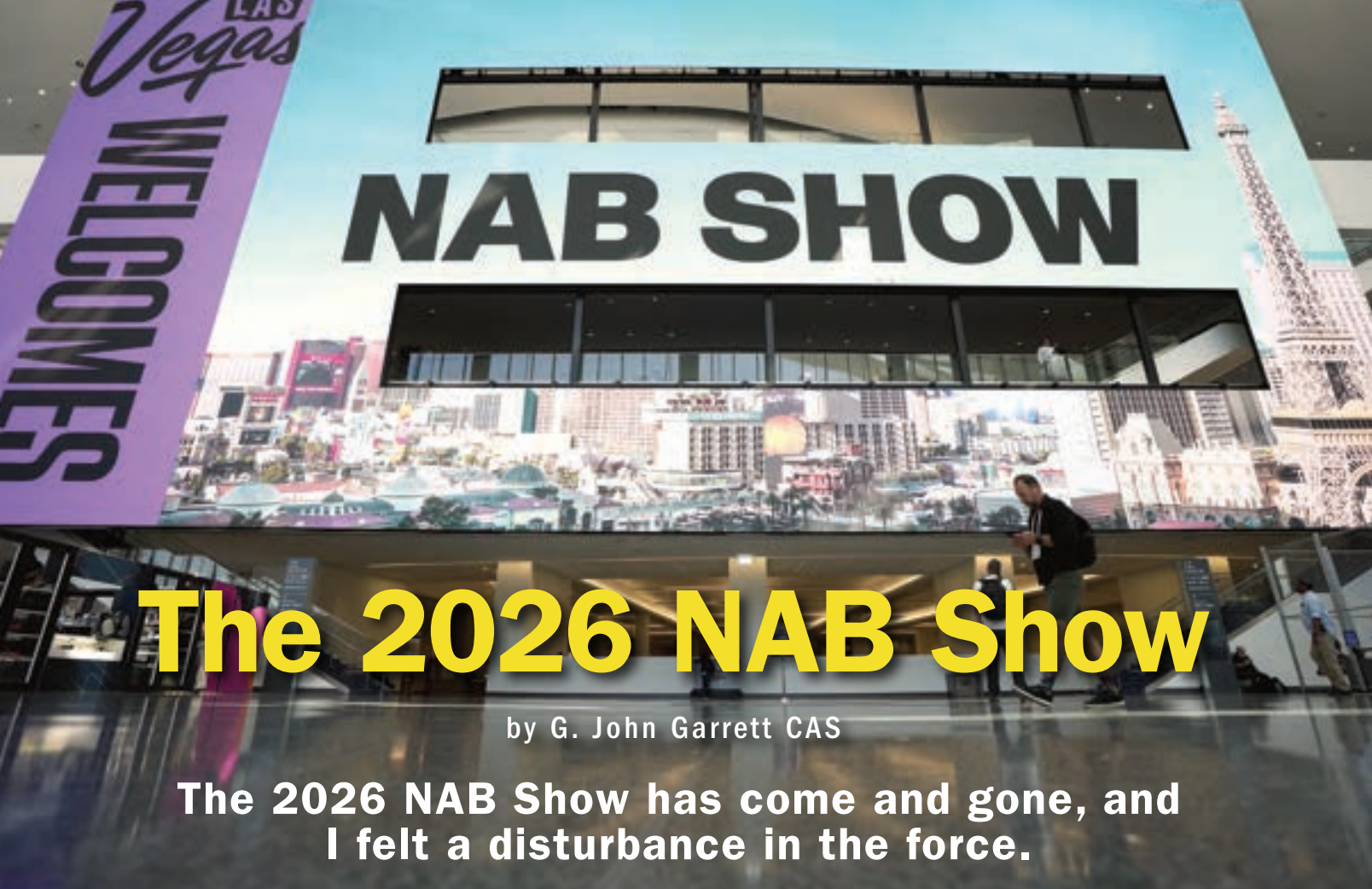
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The 2026 NAB Show

by G. John Garrett CAS

The 2026 NAB Show has come and gone, and I felt a disturbance in the force.

The show was lively, but attendance was down—even with 58,000 registrants—likely due to several factors. Price increases at the Las Vegas Convention Center, along with the increasing predatory pricing nature of the Las Vegas retailers in general, did not help. Recent travel cost increases affected attendees more than exhibitors, who were locked in months ago, but there were fewer attendees, and that's the *raison d'être* of the expo. The contraction in the film industry seems to have had an impact; runaway production and the general lack of domestic production have had a big impact on manufacturers and retailers alike.

I didn't see everything, having missed Sanken in the North Hall, but here are some of the new and upcoming products showing up in the market that piqued my interest.

We live in an amazing time for technology in motion picture production. Cheap spectrum analyzers, easy frequency optimizing in wireless, super wideband wireless, near real-time raw content transmission to post, miniaturization, intelligent spectrum management tools, advanced microphone designs, and more and more Dante integration.

So, in no particular order, here are some tools you may find useful if you have work to make purchasing worthwhile.



Orca has some useful add-ons to their solid line of sound bags including the OR-152 antenna mounting brackets, which mount securely to most models with 1/4" and 3/8" threads and a cold shoe on each bracket. Coming soon is the OR-153, a set of dual-sided threaded connectors for attaching antennas or other accessories.

I asked the folks at **Neutrik** to hook me up, and they showed me their new 8+2 TOP (Total Outdoor Protection) connectors, great for CAT5e performance (plus 16A of power at 50V) or your favorite analog multipair application.

Wisycm is always making progress and showed off a couple of their latest creations. The MPR60 wideband EIM/IFB diversity receiver can receive up to three mono IFB channels or stereo IEM feed on a single 200 kHz carrier. Pair it with the MTK982 wideband transmitter, which can

create six audio channels per carrier. Four bands of operation, from 470 MHz to 1,260 MHz. Pretty cool... Then there's the portable PFL-R2 and PFL-T2 diversity RF over fiber boxes for two diversity RF channels. Remote control and Gigabit Ethernet are part of the package, and it will run on mains, a DC supply, or V-Lock battery. Can you hear me now? They also are featuring the MATF, a new 8-zone diversity RF distribution manager using optical or copper inputs. It works from 170 MHz to 1,260 MHz. You can control gain and filtering of Wisy smart antennas through coax.

Adding a new pro-centric option for their handheld recorders and the F3, **Zoom** has introduced a timecode module, the TCA-1. Plug it in, jam it, and it's accurate to 0.5 seconds over 24 hours.

Audio Technica has a miniature stereo microphone, the BP350ST-UB. It can be fixed in a boundary mount or gooseneck for car mounts, plants, etc. The preamp has switchable XY wide, narrow, and M/S modes.





ZOOM TCA-1



AUDIO TECHNICA
BP350ST-UB



ZAXCOM QRX400



Q5X RECHARGEABLE
BATTERIES

Zaxcom has three products of interest. The DCiRX, a direct conversion UHF receiver/recorder with ZaxNet. You can receive two channels of RF, connect a local hardwired mic, and record it all to SD card with three ISO's and a mix track. USB-C outputs with timecode to a phone or other device, and it runs on three AA batteries. It has discrete timecode out and headphone jacks, plus a balanced TA5 for camera feeds... Building on their new direct conversion design is the QRX400, featuring two or four channels of reception (depending on diversity settings), ZaxNet control, and internal recording in the traditional QRX form factor. It's due out later this year... And finally, the ZRC, a portable 2.4 GHz ZaxNet controller and timecode source. Coming Q4.

Q5X has added major runtime options with a series of plug-on rechargeable batteries for their Incognito series of transmitters. They have a charging sled that holds several batteries with batteries delivering runtimes into the dozens of hours.

Viviana has a couple of impressive new products. First, their Pebble antenna, a small wide-field flat panel antenna that connects via SMA, which greatly reduces or eliminates body shadowing of your belt pack signal. Plus, their current elastic belts have a pocket made just for the Pebble... Next, what may be their most impressive piece of kit yet, the Cloud. An IP interface for mirroring your files directly to a cloud server (e.g., Frame.io, Dropbox, Google Cloud) or secure client storage environment. Designed by Ambient, the unit is tightly integrated with Sound Devices 8-Series recorders, but will accept SD cards and USB-C. No more waiting all day long for those pesky rushes, they come at you continuously. 128GB internal SSD, it converts ZAX files to WAV with timecode and

creates MP3 files with timecode from BWF. Their free app lets you upload to one server and copy files. The advanced (affordable subscription) does it all, including merging mono files into poly files. Internal battery, TA4, or USB-C.

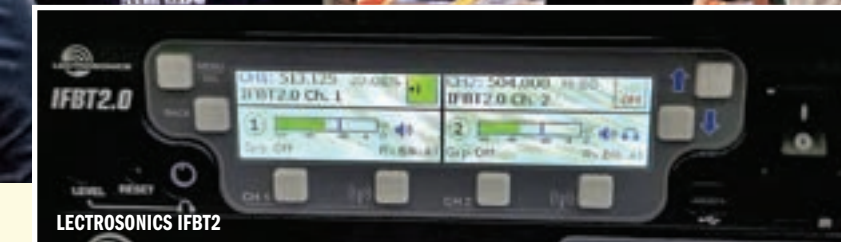
Deity has a new, tiny four input six-channel mixer recorder, the PR-4. It features two balanced XLR inputs with phantom and two unbalanced inputs via 3.5mm jack. Good for radios.



VIVIANA CLOUD2



DEITY PR-4



Lectrosonics has some new hardware, too. The L1 lavalier microphone, based on a waterproof miniature MEMS capsule, claiming an 11 dB noise floor and 134 dB max SPL. It comes with a pair of EQ capsules. The one I saw was being continually dunked—with a transmitter—into a tank by a robot arm... The new S1 short shotgun mic looks nice. At 8.4 inches, under three ounces, and Lectro's quality reputation, it will find a home in many a sound kit. Built with RF biasing and draws less than 2mA... The digital plug-on transmitters now have internal antennas and a revamped XLR locking mechanism that can be retrofitted to any of their plug-on transmitters. The IFBT2.0 dual-channel IFB transmitter takes analog, AES, Dante, and wet intercom inputs, and connects to Wireless Designer for setup and coordination. Improved RF output stages reduce intermod from strong adjacent signals, too.

Canare has a series of half-rack connection bays that I haven't seen before. This could come in handy where space is at a premium—such as on production carts!

Glensound has some cool new kit items. The Dark 22M has two independent channel-networked mic pres with line, USB, and Dante bidirectional connections. POE or USB-C powered, with dual RJ45 and SFP connectors. It can be locally controlled or via UDP controllers on the network. Featuring great mic pres and extensive processing options,





SOUND DEVICES ASTRAL MINI PLUS

too... The Greater Divine POE+ powered speaker takes eight Dante channels, headphone out, and an analog line in.

Sound Devices' new Astral Mini Plus is a waterproof digital mini transmitter, ultra-wide band, from 16 MHz to 1,525 MHz, waterproof, 8-plus hours runtime, with Astral GainForward architecture, NexLink remote control, and internal recording, where available. They are moving to paperwhite displays, readable in full sunlight and even when powered down.

Fostex has Dante-enabled versions of their classic powered monitor, the 6301DT, and the rackmount monitor, RM-3DT, bringing Dante connectivity to some familiar kit.

The **Studio Technologies** 5206 measurement microphone interface looks like it could come in handy when setting up multi-set shows or for getting impulse response files anywhere.



STUDIO TECHNOLOGIES MEASUREMENT MIC INTERFACE



SHURE SLXD4D+

Shure was showing off their SLXD4D+ two-channel receiver and SLDX1+ bodypack transmitters. An affordable, compact, flexible system with complete transmitter remote control from the receiver or connected mobile device. 138 MHz tuning range, 24-bit digital audio, and easy, automatic pairing and setup.



FOSTEX 6301DT

Small Rig is doing breakdown carts now and had a remote-controlled motorized concept cart at the show that they plan to develop with adjustable table height.

Wireless Mic Belts has a variety of belts, pouches, and garments for mounting wireless rigs. Their latest item is a shirt with a couple of pockets for transmitters, fabric channels for wire, and a high-wind mic mount/cover. They were used in Olympic skiing. A cool design!

The **Sennheiser** MKH 8018 is a new lightweight stereo mic for field recording. It's a switchable-pattern short shotgun with narrow and wide XY and M/S outputs, two low-cut filters, and a 10 dB pad.

DPA has made improvements to their Microdot connectors, now employing a screw-on locking mechanism with step-faced "Nord-Lock" type connection that can be released by retracting a knurled collar on the wired device. Hopefully, this will add some brawn to the traditionally fragile connection.



SMALL RIG MOTOR



WIRELESS MIC BELTS



SENNHEISER MKH 8018



We cross paths with many people over the course of a career. Some are quick acquaintances, some become regular colleagues, while still others we are fortunate to call friends.

Gary Alper CAS



New York-based production sound mixer Gary Alper CAS passed away in March. Alper, who was active in the industry for more than 50 years, had two CAS Award nominations for *Phil Spector* (2014) and *Recount* (2009), and worked on film projects, including *Sleepy Hollow* and *Night at the Museum*. CAS President Peter Kurland shares, “Gary was the first

production mixer I ever met. He hired me as a sound PA in 1982 for a TV movie. He taught me how to use a Nagra, how to prepare and do music playback, and how the rental business worked! The only person I’ve known who had a battery-powered portable multi-channel Studer mixer. As a sound PA, I still remember how much it weighed!” The CAS extends our heartfelt condolences to Gary’s family and friends.

Kirk Francis CAS



Oscar-winning production sound mixer Kirk Francis CAS passed away in February. In addition to his win for *The Bourne Ultimatum*, Kirk also received an Oscar nomination for *L.A. Confidential*, two BAFTA wins and two CAS Award nominations for those films, along with a third CAS Award nomination for *The Bourne Supremacy*. With more than 70 credits to his name across five decades, Kirk retired in 2014 following his work on *Jurassic World*. Outside of his professional work, Kirk was a gardener, falconer, environmental activist, and cook—even publishing a book in 1998 humorously titled, *I’ll Never Cook Lunch in That Town Again: Recipes and Comment from the Sit Down and Shut Up Café*. Once asked to describe himself in four words for a December 12, 2001, article for the *South Whidbey Record*, he chose, “Loud, bombastic, generous, and very much alive.” The CAS extends our condolences to Kirk’s family, friends, and colleagues.

The CAS wishes to recognize those who have worked in the industry and have recently passed on, leaving a great legacy behind them to our membership.

Tom Menrath CAS



Pro audio veteran Tom Menrath CAS passed away in April after complications following an automobile accident. Describing himself as a “gear-obsessed musician,” Tom demonstrated his passion and knowledge over a career spanning four decades. Among his many ventures, he is credited with creating Guitar Center’s GC Pro division, serving as Director of Strategic Development at Vintage King, and worked in collaboration with Avid and Sweetwater Sound, to name a few. In 2016, he became VP/audio team director for integrator Advanced Systems Group where his knowledge and experience across multiple facets of the pro audio industry were utilized

daily. Many memories of Tom and thanks for his help in opening doors to the industry have been shared across social media. The CAS shares our condolences to Tom’s family, friends, and colleagues.

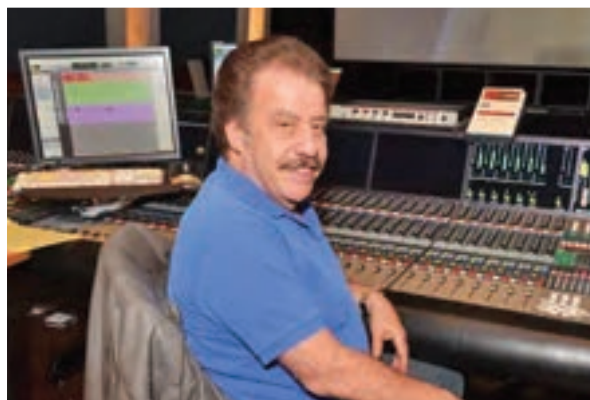
Steve “Maz” Maslow CAS

Renowned re-recording mixer

Steve Maslow CAS passed away in April after a battle with cancer. With Academy Award wins for *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Speed*, and four additional nominations for *Dune*, *Waterworld*, *Twister*, and *U-571*, his hands and ears sculpted soundtracks enjoyed by millions.

Starting his career in the entertainment industry in 1969 as a roadie for the band Strawberry Alarm Clock, Maz moved into engineering for dozens of groups and received platinum records for songs such as The Four Seasons’ “December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night).” In 1978, he took his music mixing skills to the dub stage and transitioned to film re-record mixing with projects such as *The Last Waltz*, *Hair*, and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* before going on a spree of Academy-recognized projects. Steve would go on to mix more than 200 films, 130 of them with longtime mixing partner Gregg Landaker.

As tributes to Steve fill social media, the CAS expresses our deepest condolences to Steve’s wife Ronna and their family and friends.





Gavin Fernandes CAS started the year wrapping Netflix's *One Piece*, then mixed the feature *Someone's Daughter*. He went out to NIFCO in St. John's for *Smash & Grab*, then started summer with *Stunt Driver* for director Michael Dowse in Montreal.

Richard Lightstone CAS has re-teamed with his crew of boom operator Eddie Casares and 2nd boom operator Jennifer Winslow for the fifth season of *Criminal Minds: Evolution*. This marks the 20th year for this long-running franchise!

Devendra Cleary CAS here! My wife and I had the biggest blessing of all in December 2025 as we welcomed our baby boy Luca to the world! In January 2026, my team and I started up on a Universal Television half-hour comedy called *Dig* with Amy Poehler starring and Morgan Sackett as our showrunner. Sound team consisted of myself, Chris "Catfish" Walmer on boom, Maribeth Powers as utility, and Rocio Camacho as trainee. We had a blast! Next up after a short break is *Paris Paramount*, a feature film for Warner Bros. Pictures, written and directed by Nancy Meyers. This sound team consists of myself, Patrick Martens on boom, and Maribeth Powers

as utility. We're hoping for a fun ride on this one through the summer!

Shayna Brown CAS has been keeping busy at her post-production studio in Austin, TX, Chez Boom Audio, mixing ADR for a number of projects, including *R.J. Decker*, *Marshals*, *M.I.A.*, *Chicago Fire*, *The Terminal List* S2, *Matlock*, *The Boys*, and *High Potential*.

Ron Bailey CAS has recently mixed *The Gentlemen* S2 for Netflix, *The Night Manager* for Prime, and *MobLand* for Paramount+.

Karol Urban CAS MPSE is currently mixing a theatrical Atmos feature documentary exploring the history and cultural impact of electronic dance music, while also preparing for S2 of the Netflix series *The Hunting Wives*. Additionally, she is celebrating the feature documentaries *Dream Touch Believe*, which is winning many awards and will have its international theatrical premiere at the 2026 imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in Toronto, and *An Auschwitz Album Story*, which had its theatrical debut presented by the Holocaust Museum LA for International Holocaust Remembrance Day at The Grove AMC in L.A. to a packed theater. It's such an

honor to contribute mixes to such impactful and inspiring stories.

Re-recording mixers Aaron Levy and **Joel D. Catalan CAS** are coming off a big stretch—wrapping S2 of *NCIS: Origins* for CBS and S2 of *Diarra from Detroit* for BET+/Paramount+. Currently, they're in the mix on *Einstein*, a comedic crime drama for CBS. Next up, *The Body*, a Netflix coming-of-age thriller from writer/director Quinn Shephard. Off the mix stage, Joel has been building something special over at "Mastering Post-Production Sound" on YouTube—a channel dedicated to pulling back the curtain on what it really takes to build a career in post sound. He's on the hunt for fellow CAS members to sit down with over Zoom and share their journey. If you've got a story worth telling (and let's be honest, you do!), Joel wants to hear it. Email him at joel@masteringpostproductionsound.com

In addition to celebrating the college graduation of his son Michael, and his daughter Savanna's continuing education as a CRNA, **Matt Foglia CAS** has been keeping busy on the unscripted mixing front with Animal Planet's *Nevada Wild* and the wrapping of S5 of two A&E series, *Customer Wars*

and *Road Wars*, with S6 of both starting this summer, along with a new series for Discovery, *Fairbanks Police Department*.

Ross Levy CAS started 2026 finishing up *Matlock* S2 for CBS and then jumped on *Bosch: Start of Watch* right after for MGM+Amazon. Grateful to be a part of the *Bosch* universe!

From **Sean Byrne CAS**: Happy to say that Ryan Kennedy and I just wrapped-up S1 of *Rooster* on HBO and S4 of *Will Trent* for ABC and Hulu. All were mixed on our beautiful Warner Bros. Dub Stage 20. We are currently working on S4 of *Ted Lasso*.

From **William Martel, Jr. CAS**: I spent some time in the fall working on S3 of *Lioness* in Texas. Thanks to Brian Robinson, Charles German, and Altstadt. Returning to L.A., I have stayed busy in commercial land. In my downtime, I've built a new follow cart and kept active in the gym as call times allow. Fortunately, 2026 has been heading in a better direction than 2025.

Production mixer **Scott D. Smith CAS** and his crew wrapped up shooting the 5th and final season of the hit FX show *The Bear* this past March. With scenes involving as many as 25 actors, rain FX, ad-lib dialogue, and multiple cameras,

there was no shortage of challenges to be dealt with. A huge shout-out to my amazing crew: Joe Campbell (boom), Sean Kirkpatrick (boom), Nick Price (utility), Sharon Frye (utility), Brie Birt (utility), Nick Fanelli (boom), Katie Campos (utility), Jesse McAlpin (additional mixer), **J.T. Mueller CAS** (additional mixer), Stephen Young (Fisher Boom operator) and our stellar intern Mikey Wilson. Could not have done it without you!

Josh Anderson CAS, boom operator Gregg Harris, and 2nd boom/utilities Patrick Ferrell and Luke Iaciofano teamed up in pursuit of a new serial killer each week on the second season of NBC's *The Hunting Party*. After that, Josh, Gregg, and Patrick dove right into the *Line of Fire* pilot for NBC, which was recently picked up for its first season.

From NBCUniversal Studio Post:

On Mix 1, Mark Fleming and Myron Nettinga just wrapped up on Season 2 of NBC's *The Hunting Party* and *St. Denis Medical*... **Keith Rogers CAS** and **Steve Bucino CAS** are mixing *M.I.A.*, *Deli Boys*, *Five Star Weekend*, and *Joseph of Egypt* for Amazon on Mix 2... Mix 6 has **Larry Benjamin CAS** and **Tim Hoogenakker CAS** mixing *Tracker* for CBS

and *Ransom Canyon* for Netflix... On Mix 14, **John Cook CAS** and **James Parnell CAS** mixed the last and final season of *Hacks*. It's been a great ride! John and James also mixed the new season of *Scrubs*. Last but not least, John and Brian Dinkins mixed *Abbott Elementary*... **Pete Nusbaum CAS** and Whitney Purple mixed *Running Point* for Netflix on Mix 15... On Mix 16, **Pete Elia CAS** and **Jason Coleman CAS** are mixing *POWER* and *Nemesis* for STARZ... Mix A saw **Kevin Roache CAS** and **Adam Sawelson CAS** mixing *Chicago Med* for NBC... **Todd Morrissey CAS** and Milo Train mixed *Star City* and *Blood of My Blood* for Apple, and *Chicago Med* for NBCUniversal on Mix B... Mix C has **Bob Edmondson CAS** and Ruben Ripley mixing *CIA* for CBS and Dick Wolf... Andy King and John Mete mixing *Law & Order: SVU* for NBC on Mix F... Mix G has **Darin Heinis CAS** and Alex Lee mixing *FBI* for CBS and *Law & Order* for NBC... On the Hitchcock Stage, re-recording mixer Frank Montano just wrapped two titles for Universal Mastering & Archival, the 1976 feature film *Car Wash* and the 1986 feature *An American Tail* for Amblin/Universal.



THE LIGHTER SIDE

On April 23, **Cheryl Ottenritter CAS MPSE** was given the Women in Film & Video (WIFV) Women of Vision Award in Washington, DC. She was honored alongside Kate Beyda of New Line Cinema and Phyllicia Rashad. Pictured are Alex Ketch, Cheryl, **Kim Howell Cates CAS**, and Donna Gureckas.



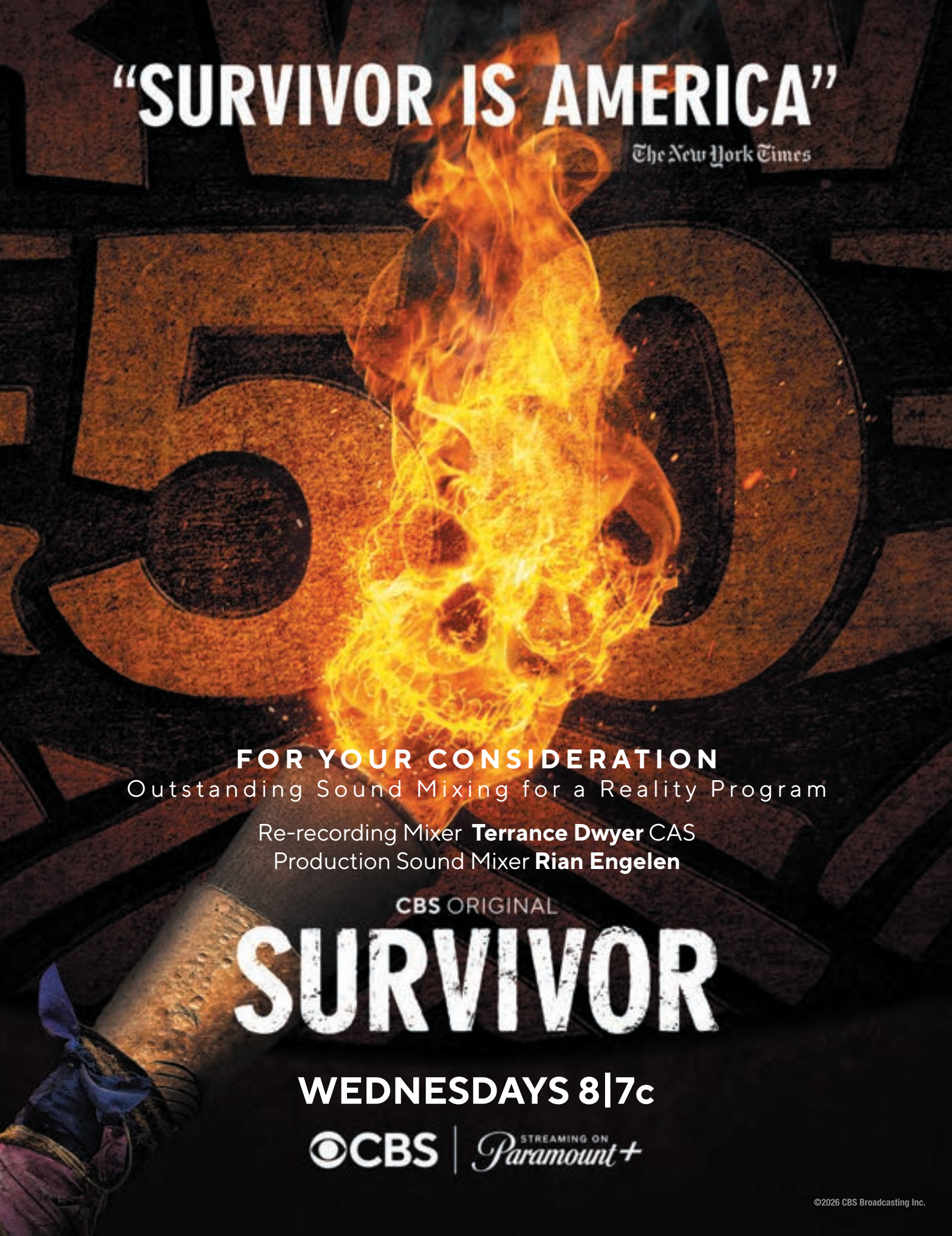
While out in L.A. for the CAS Awards, **Matt Foglia CAS** visited the Fox Studio Lot where he caught up with former student and current mix tech Griffin Saunders for a quick hello and hug.



William Martel, Jr. CAS capturing it all cleanly during a commercial shoot in L.A.

Scott D. Smith CAS and his crew from the final season of FX's *The Bear*. (Front row L-R): Mikey Wilson, Sharon Frye, Brie Birt. (Back row L-R): Sean Kirkpatrick, Jesse McAlpin, Scott, Nicholas Fanelli, Nicholas Price, Joe Campbell. Not pictured: Katie Campos, **J.T. Mueller CAS**, and Stephen Young.



A dramatic promotional image for the TV show Survivor. In the center, a human skull is engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames. The skull is positioned in front of a large, dark, metallic-looking number '50'. The background is dark and textured, with some mechanical or industrial elements visible. At the bottom left, a person's arm and hand are visible, wearing a blue and purple patterned sleeve and a dark glove, holding a torch that is the source of the fire.

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