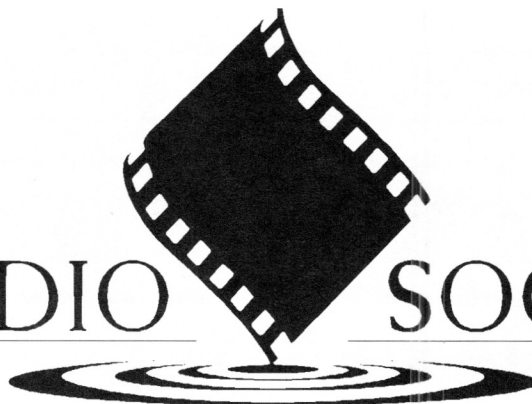


Journal of the

CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY



"Dedicated to the Advancement of Sound"

Final Nominees For 1996 C.A.S. Award

The final nominees for the 1996 C.A.S. Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing have been announced by The Cinema Audio Society. The nominees were determined by a written balloting of the C.A.S. Full Membership from a list of entry submissions. The top five nominees in each of the three categories will now be submitted to the membership in another balloting to select the final winners. The winning production and re-recording mixers will be revealed in a sealed envelope ceremony at the 33rd Annual C.A.S. Awards Banquet, to be held on March 8th in the Grand Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton Hotel. In addition to the C.A.S. Awards, Emmy and Oscar recognition awards will be presented that evening, as well as the Career Achievement Award, which will be given this year to THX developer Tomlinson Holman. (see interview on page 9). The nominees in the three categories are:

Outstanding Achievement
in Sound Mixing for
A Motion Picture

The Birdcage

The English Patient

Independence Day

The Rock

Twister

Outstanding Achievement
in Sound Mixing for
A Television Series -

Babylon 5 -
"Severed Dreams" -

Chicago Hope -
"Quiet Riot" -

ER - "Fear Of Flying" -

N.Y.P.D. Blue -
"Unembraceable You" -

The X-Files - "Tunguska" -

Outstanding Achievement in
Sound Mixing for A Television
Movie-of-the-Week,
Mini-Series or Special -

"3 Tenors At Giants
Stadium" - Special -

"Alien Nation: The Enemy
Within" - MOW -

"Gulliver's Travels"
- Mini-Series - Part 1 -

"Harvest Of Fire"
- MOW -

"In Cold Blood"
- Mini-Series - Part 2 -

Inside:

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Career Achievement" - Pg. 3

"Shaping Sound Effects
For Action Films" - Pg. 7

"Interview with
Don O. Mitchell" - Pg. 9
(Part Two)

NOTEWORTHY

Hawk Elected President of C.A.S.

The new Executive Board and Board of Directors of the Cinema Audio Society have been elected by the general membership. Steve Hawk will preside as the new Executive Board President. Serving with Mr. Hawk on the Executive board will be Vice-President Melissa Hoffman, Secretary Richard Lightstone, and Treasurer Mike Denecke. Winning re-election to the Board of Directors were Glen Berkovitz, Mark McNabb, Ed Moskowitz, Mark Rozett and Ed Somers. They will join current Board Members Robert Appere, Sam Black, John Coffey, David E. Fluhr, Senator Michaels, and Mark Ulano. Elected as a Board Alternate was Fred Ginsburg, who will be joining fellow Alternates Ron Estes, Christopher L. Haire, Marti D. Humphrey, Joe Kenworthy, Sunny Meyer and Robert Wald. Board members are elected for two year terms.

C.A.S. To Hold Television Screenings

The Cinema Audio Society announces a special screening to be held at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for the 1996 Television Nominees for the C.A.S. Sound Award.

PLACE: Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Conference Center
5230 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood, Ca.

DATE: Saturday - February 22, 1997

TIME: 8:30am - Sign-in, Coffee and Rolls

9:00am - Screenings Begin

1:30pm - Screenings End (Approximate)

(There will be a short break between the two categories)

PARK: Next door to the Screening Center.

RSVP: ASAP to CAS Office Mgr. Laura Long (818)752-8624

C.A.S. e-mail List

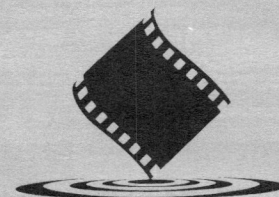
The C.A.S. has compiled an e-mail list to send out periodic news of the C.A.S., as well as notifications of forums and special events. If you are not currently receiving e-mail from the C.A.S. and would like to be added to our e-mail list, please write us at: **CinAudSo@aol.com**

Upcoming Events

**February 22, 1997
Screenings of
Television Nominees**

**February 26, 1997
Final Ballot
Return Deadline**

**March 8, 1997
33rd Annual
C.A.S. Awards
Banquet**



Tomlinson Holman -

1996 CAS Career Achievement Award Recipient

- Part 1 - "Playing Technological Leapfrog"

By Richard Lightstone, C.A.S.

When we first met Tomlinson Holman, it was almost by accident, in the lobby of a low slung nondescript building on the USC campus, in downtown Los Angeles. He was seated on a couch, wearing a simple plaid shirt and chinos, trying to unravel 5 audio cables that had become a rat's nest, from a recent demo at AES of his newest audio playback system - "MicroTheatre".

After a quick tour of his facilities at TMH Corp., Tom gave us a hands on demonstration of his latest development. It was like we had entered the 'Magician's Hut' from Disney's "Sword and The Stone." Tom can be characterized as one part professor, one part acoustical genius, one part tinkerer, one part listener - the parts are too many to describe the whole person. But, like his mentor, George Lucas, Tom Holman is a forward thinker and in this the first part of a two part interview, you will get an insight into the distinct character of this year's Cinema Audio Society's Career Achievement Nominee.

CAS: For the C.A.S. membership and our readers out there, we'd like to know what your background was and how you got into the film industry in the first place.

TH: Well, the thing that's probably not known about my career at all is that I spent the first five years after school mixing -- working for the University of Illinois in the Motion Picture Productions Center. I did production sound recording, editing (both picture and sound) and mixing. Also did a little bit of directing. We

did documentary films for television. I was working for 16mm optical and was mixing on Omega dubbers, three of them, and because we had no "punch-in," I was actually recording to a Nagra and cutting the 1/4" to make a finished mix, so it was pretty rocky times. The ultimate quality was limited by the mono academy optical sound track.

I did get some jobs in Chicago as an undergraduate. My film partner was Andy Davis ("Under Siege," "The Fugitive"), so we did a bunch of things. He brought me in on some commercials in Chicago, then he came to the West Coast and we did a documentary on Linus Pauling for independent television in England. I came out and did production sound on those. And then he got a job to be a DP (Director of Photography) on "Cool Breeze," a non-union black-exploitation film in 1972. I came to be boom operator on that -- but I owned the Nagra and the microphones and Jeff Wexler got the job as mixer -- that was his first job. So we had an interesting relationship . . . I'm the professor, you see, and he's the real production sound mixer. I'd say things like "You know the directional microphone should not be near the ceiling surface because the soundfield is not . . ." and he'd say "Get the shot!" (Laughs) I guess it all worked out in the end.

CAS: What led to your departure from the University?

TH: The real problem at that time for me was winding up on academy optical mono. I was trying to mix for 16mm -- it was crazy. In the five years that I mixed, I had enough time to read everything in the library about audio and became more technical. You see, I started as an engineer as an undergraduate, but graduated in broadcasting. But I continued doing rather technical things and had built some things. I went off to Boston on a vacation, to see a friend, and on a lark went over to Advent. They had no openings, but they interviewed me because I was from the Midwest and showed them the things I'd done. I took this test which had some electrical engineering on it, but also things like the color code and various practical things. They called me back two months later and hired me over all the MIT graduates because those guys had all the technical stuff, but they couldn't ground something correctly -- they didn't have the practical skills. It just worked out that I had the combination of skills they were looking for.

I was mentored by Henry Kloss, who had founded Advent, and before that KLH and Acoustic

Continued on page 17

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

by *Steve Hawk, C.A.S.*

Following up on my last column in the Fall '96 Journal, I saw a rather timely article in the "Shop Notes" column in the "Production Sound Report" from Location Sound Corporation. Our own Edwin J. Somers, C.A.S. writes the column. Ed has been past President and Secretary of the Cinema Audio Society and currently serves on the Board of Directors. This article is reprinted with permission from Location Sound Corporation, one of our Corporate sponsors.

- Shop Notes -

*By Edwin J. Somers, C.A.S.
Service Manager, L.S.C.*

This column's focus is on R-DAT recorders. We continue to have problems with dropouts. Last month's column dealt with re-tensioning DAT tapes in an effort to reduce the incidents of drop outs. When we talk about drop outs we are talking about the momentary muting of the audio when the error rate exceeds the level that the Double Reed Solomon code error correction circuitry can correct. The excessive error rate can be caused by a number of things, including bad tape, incorrect tensions, head wear, head misalignment, heat, contamination, moisture, and mechanical shock to name just a few.

Wouldn't it be nice to know exactly where you stand regarding drop outs, and error rate? Wouldn't

it be nice to know that the tape you recorded on your DAT machine is going to play back properly on any other DAT machine?

Well you can! I discussed a procedure in this column some time ago, and it bears repeating. I suggest purchasing a Sony alignment tape. Sony part #TY-7551, Sony R-DAT Function Test Tape RD31136 R1. Price last time I checked was \$203.54. Wow!!! Play that tape and look at the error rate, if it is normal, then you know that your machine has properly aligned heads, and your tapes will play on any other machine. Further, to avoid ruining your expensive alignment tape, after you have verified that your machine is in alignment, make a "Daily Test Tape." Record 2 hours of swept tones from a test tone CD, like the Prosonis Studio Reference Disc at \$53.51, and play this tape about 30 seconds worth each day (without rewinding), just long enough to look at error rate. This tape should last for a year or more.

Now, how do you read error rate? I'm glad you asked! On the Fostex PD-2 you call up soft function #26. Press and hold <CLR>, then press <BATT>. Enter 26 on the numeric key pad and press <EXEC>. Press <QUIT> to exit. This procedure is in the operators manual.

On the Fostex PD-4 this procedure is not recommended by the manufacturer because you have to put the machine in "Service Mode" and it is possible to change many of the calibration settings inadvertently, which are only documented in the service manual. If there is sufficient interest, our service department can do this

procedure for PD-4 customers.

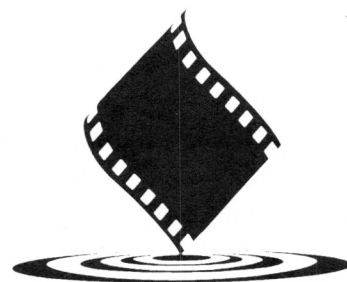
On the Stelladat you hold down the Tape/Direct button and the Display button at the same time, and release the Display button first. At the bottom of the meter display you will see two sets of numbers, one is labeled "P" for playback, and one is labeled "R" for record.

On the HHB you simply press <STOP> <PLAY> <PAUSE> & <POWER> to turn on the power and activate the test mode, select TEST Mode #4 "Displaying Error Rate" by sequentially pressing the <DISPLAY> key in STOP mode. Exit Test mode by turning the POWER OFF. This procedure is only documented in the Service Manual.

Contact me in the shop to obtain more information on the CD, the Sony test tape, and any questions you may have on interpretation of the results.

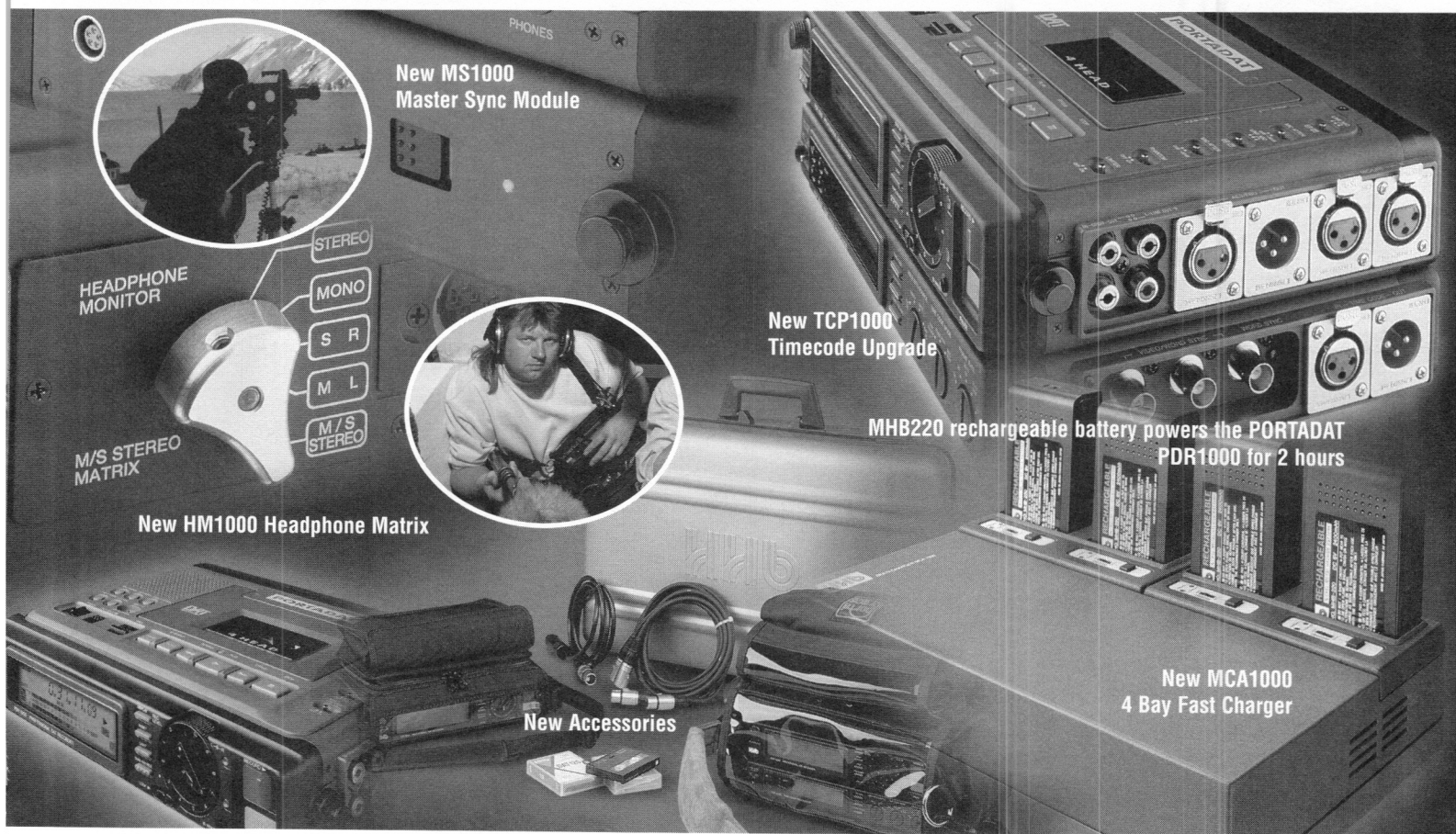
To get on the mailing list for the "Production Sound Report," call or write:

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New TCP1000 Timecode Upgrade PORTADAT PDR1000 owners can now upgrade to full PDR1000TC timecode specification.

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In the first part of a major agreement with Solid State Logic, Warner Bros. has installed two new SL 8000 consoles to join the two SL 8000s already in use at its Burbank Studios. An 88 channel film dubbing console has been installed in 'Dubbing Theater 5' for film re-recording and a 64 channel console is being used for TV sitcom re-recording in 'Dubbing Theater 7'.

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The Machinery Aimed At The Ear

- Shaping Sound Effects for Sci Fi and Action Adventure Films -

by Randy Thom, C.A.S.

Editor's Note: Randy Thom is a Sound Designer and Rerecording mixer. His most recent project was Tim Burton's "Mars Attacks."

I can remember a time, a generation ago in the 1970s, when these were still secrets. There was essentially no literature on the subject of editing and processing sound effects for movies. It had been done well and done poorly for fifty years by a small group of people who only taught what they knew to a few lucky apprentices.

- Way Past Real -

Dry Ice (solid carbon dioxide) rings, screams, and chatters when a piece of metal is pressed against it. The result can be used to make the sound of an alien monster voice. What makes the sound useful is not the fact that it comes from an unexpected place (beware of falling in love with sounds simply because of their origin) but because in fortunate moments it is familiar and alien at the same time. That's a sound design secret worth remembering.

George Lucas' idea that the look of "Star Wars" should embody what he called the "used future" was an amazing flash of insight that Ben Burtt carried into the sound of the films. Instead of using electronically synthesized sounds, like the sci-fi films

before "Star Wars," Ben recorded the ordinary objects around him (and a few not so ordinary) then processed and manipulated those sounds to make them believably foreign. The familiar aspect of the sound convinces us that what we hear is real in a way the sine waves in early sci fi films never could. The exotic face of the same sound suggests a dimension of reality we hadn't quite imagined before.

- Making/Choosing the Sounds -

Amplified reality is the basic goal in action-adventure and sci fi sequences. How do you produce sounds that have "amplified reality?" You begin by trying to forget for a while what the Nazi tank in an Indiana Jones film would "really" sound like, and start thinking about what it would FEEL LIKE in a nightmare. The treads would be like spinning samurai blades. The engine would be like the growl of an angry beast. You then go out and find sounds that have those qualities, or alter sounds to make them have those qualities. It makes no difference whether the sounds you collect actually have anything to do with tanks, samurai blades, or growling animals. The essential emotional quality of the sounds is virtually ALL that matters. When you find the sounds that make you believe a screaming mechanical beast

is about to rip you to shreds with enormous spinning blades, then, and only then, do you bring in actual recordings of a tank and blend them with the nightmare elements. If the "volume envelope" of the real and non-real sounds is similar, if they are in sync, if their pitch varies roughly the same amount from moment to moment, and their reverberation characteristics are similar then the nightmare sounds will tend to hide themselves from the conscious awareness of the audience. But their presence will never-the-less be felt.

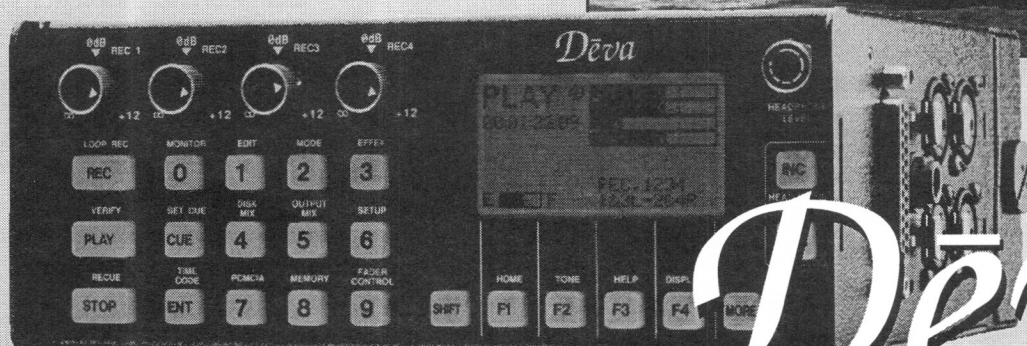
Using the nightmare approach, an apple being bitten is a useful element in the sound of a spear piercing flesh, chalk squeaking across a blackboard becomes part of a rocket engine screaming through the air, and the muzzle blast of a howitzer is slightly modified to become the muzzle blast of a 9mm pistol.

Most sound effects -- contrary to popular belief, even for science fiction films -- are not "synthesized." It's theoretically possible to synthesize them, starting from scratch with nothing but oscillators, but it isn't an efficient way to work. Real sounds are **really** complex. It takes so much time to synthesize them that it's still a lot quicker to just go out and record real-world sounds, then "sci-fi" or otherwise modify them by using

Continued on page 13

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INTERVIEW With DONALD O. MITCHELL

- PART II -

by David Weishaar, C.A.S.

Donald O. Mitchell -- his name is familiar to all of us in motion picture and television sound. His credit list includes such titles as "Raging Bull," "Silverado," "Terms of Endearment," "Top Gun," "Sneakers," "Black Rain," "Days of Thunder," "The Fugitive," and of course "Glory" for which he received an Academy Award. Don has fifteen Academy Award nominations to his credit. But more importantly he is best known as the true gentleman of sound. It was really a joy and thrill to spend this time visiting with Don Mitchell.

CAS: Both Feature Motion Pictures and Television have been affected by budgets today. Where do you notice the crunch most in feature mixing?

DM: Pre-dub time is cut down all the time. Our pre-dub time now is far too short. When push comes to shove we will go and pre-dub on another stage, so our stage can be dubbing something else. I will stay at nights, or come in weekends to pre-dub, so that it gets done. Once again we pay for that in the crunch with overtime. They never say "then don't do it."

CAS: When someone else is pre-dubbing your tracks, do you have to watch that pretty closely?

DM: That's a tough area. First of all, I try to have it done by people that I know. And people that know

me and what I do. If Bob Litt is available, if Kenny Polk's available, if Jeff Haboush is available. In other words any of those guys there that, I can just walk over to a Stage and say just do it like this, and put these marks on it, if reverb and certain processing are needed, I trust them to do it. I say to them if you want it and are convinced it should be that way, then marry it. If you're worried at all, then split it off. If there's a question, I won't marry anything together. I'll put it on two six track recorders. I keep all my production pre-dubs separate, my ADR pre-dubbs separate, production effects pre-dubs too.

CAS: Don, what would you say to a person coming up in the ranks has a re-recording mixer, if they were to ask you how they might best emulate your career or quality in mixing?

DM: I watch a lot of film. I go to all types of theaters. I try to make the big houses, but I go anywhere, multiples, big theaters, even drive-ins. And now I'm trying not to rent. I see a lot of film. I'll see a film and think "you know either I don't really like what the mixer did with this or the director made him do it." You don't really know for sure. I'm not a big fan of moving dialogue around for an example. Sometimes I think

I would sooner jump on him with both of my feet with cleats on before I'll move some words over behind the drapery. I find that highly distracting. But I know a lot of guys that feel "Hey its stereo, so I'm going to make this stereo." I don't really care for voices in the surrounds, but I know some people like that. Some wallas occasionally work there. But I don't like restaurant walla in the surrounds. I'm not really a center guy, but I'm pretty close to being a center guy. For dialogue that is. Although I've placed a voice by just edging it slightly one way or the other, but usually not to an extreme. How it plays depends on the size of the house. For an example the Hastings in Pasadena, I'm not sure how big it is, but this mass of humanity is incredible. The screen's bigger than the Academy. The screen is easily as big as the Cinerama Dome. And you start moving stuff in there, I mean it's out of the movie. It's over there by the popcorn machine or something. You put it in a little tiny narrow house (theater), it doesn't matter what you do with it, because it all plays in the middle anyway.

CAS: If a production mixer were to ask what you wanted from him in his recordings, and type of coverage, what would you say?

DM: I wouldn't have to say much, they almost all do it anyway. They all make backgrounds. Production mixers today do a fabulous job. They've got so much stuff to deal with, and we have none of that to deal with, thank God. It's a tough gig. It's three against a hundred. If the DP (Director of Photography) doesn't like working with you, you'll never get the sound you want. I still feel this way today although budgets don't allow for this: I think the Production company should give their movie to a dialogue editor. Pre-dubb it on a stage, sit down and say what part of this can't you live with, and that's what they go loop. If they did that the loops would be 1 per-cent, or it would be some really, really low number of loops.

CAS: What would say to the sound editor who works with you for the first time?

DM: We don't get to have that input anymore. It all comes down from somewhere. Today it's coming from some digital bay somewhere. We don't have much to say about it unless it's not working, but the editor knows that. The really good dialogue editors are wonderful -- oh man I love those editors. They make it peaches and cream. And there are others, known as editors from hell. They can really make it difficult. You've been there. I guess if I'd say anything I'd prefer stuff to be split left, right and so forth, but that's what they do, really. The stuff you work on is probably digitally edited.

CAS: Oh, yeah. We did a MOW

(Movie of The Week) last week, that came to us built entirely on DA-88's -- that's pretty common now. Lock-up leaves much to be desired, I think.

DM: I could never remember long enough to back up far enough, get going forward, have it lock, have it come on and think "now what am I supposed to do to this? What did I back-up for?" You know because a minute has transpired. Like in film you hear the ramps up and back, but it's there, right on, the same time every time. But also this is the format I'm used to mixing in.

CAS: I was also used to hearing my tracks in reverse, which could help in giving you extra time to EQ a track, set levels. Outside of the film medium you just don't have that anymore. Oh, maybe on a two-inch machine you can have the head lifters adjusted so that you can hear in reverse, but I believe that luxury is gone with the digital formats. At least that I know of.

DM: Absolutely, If I go through it once, then on the way back, I can get level, EQ, the fade in, I can get all of that and go, it's done. DA-88's -- it's nine times or whatever, and then you're never happy with it, you give up. You give up because you don't have enough time.

CAS: If you had a new wing guy or gal in either the effects chair or the music chair, would you make any requests of them before you rolled film?

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DM No, I generally never butt in or interfere. I'm going to trust that my effects mixer knows what they're doing. The same way with the music -- I seldom make a music comment. With something like music you have to be very careful. Because it can become a 'Me' thing. You know, most of the time how you feel about a particular score or cue, is very subjective. In other words, the music mixer and myself can disagree on a piece of music. Maybe I have a problem with loud brass. Well, I can't let that interfere with the mix. That's just my particular taste, and so forth. So I'm real careful about that too. I think everybody plays end-credit music too loud. I would love to have the music end, the last cue play, and I would like the audience to sit there and be able to reflect, or walk out and talk about the movie, without being killed.

CAS: What do you think about where we are going with digital dubs? Have we created a new monster that's going to blow out our hearing at a young age?

DM: I think the mixers are doing something about it -- I really do. Everyone I've talked to about it is real conscious, real careful. I think it was a learning period for all of us. While that was all happening, I was thinking -- I was praying -- I wish we just had SR-D (A Dolby Dual-Process: SR-Analog, and Digital combined on the same print). It had a nice sound. Good head room. Good enough for everybody, but now with the unlimited Digital formats and stuff, there seems to be no limit. And that's the danger. But, I really think that problem is fixed now, because it's a self-fix.

CAS: Do you have a favorite type of film to dub, i.e. action adventure, etc. . . . ?

DM: No, I've never really thought about it like that. I'd rather do this, I'd rather do that. No I never have.

CAS: Don, have you mixed to a lot of the different digital formats -- DTS, SDDS, SR-D and so forth?

DM: Yes, we sure have. In fact the last ten projects have had every format on them. We usually mix to a six track discreet. (35mm magnetic film) and then make all the different printmasters in the formats called for. We try to do this all on our stage, but sometimes it has to go to another stage. Sometimes we send a mag. print master off to the SDDS people and they will do a digital master. Most the time we mix them. We'll mix it directly to the digital medium.

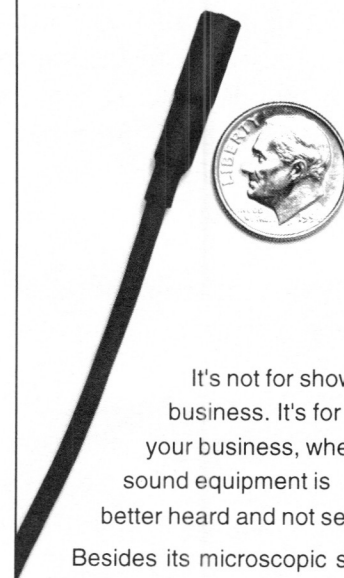
CAS: You are at the pinnacle of re-recording in Hollywood, or in the world of film sound. What aspects of your job have given you the roughest time or been the most difficult to handle personally, professionally or technically?

DM: Ah, lets see, maybe a noisy production track. (laughs) Well, for one thing, when things don't work, they just don't work. Production has better energy than good ADR. Production has got to be pretty bad in order for me not to use it. I'll do everything I can to clean it up.

CAS: Did you ever have to leave a show or get fired so to speak?

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DM: A couple of them. It was just personality disagreements.

CAS: That's something I would've never thought happened to Don Mitchell.

DM: Well, it was pretty mutual, because on both of these instances we had only been together a day -- maybe two days. And I realized I wanted off the picture, but unfortunately they beat me to the punch, both times.

CAS: And that doesn't affect you negatively with the studio at all?

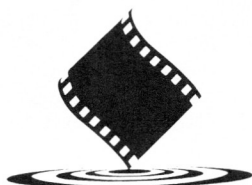
DM: No, not a bit. Actually both of those pictures got pulled and they went somewhere else. I don't know what that says, because if it didn't happen all those other years, why does it happen now, and twice in a row? I've reflected on why that was and I don't really have an answer. At the time my only defense was -- "I don't need this." It points out some of the changes we go through with time. I rather like it. It seems more honest.

CAS: Well, Don it looks like I've run out of questions. That wasn't too painful was it?

DM: Ah, no. (laughs)

CAS: Thank you very much, Don.

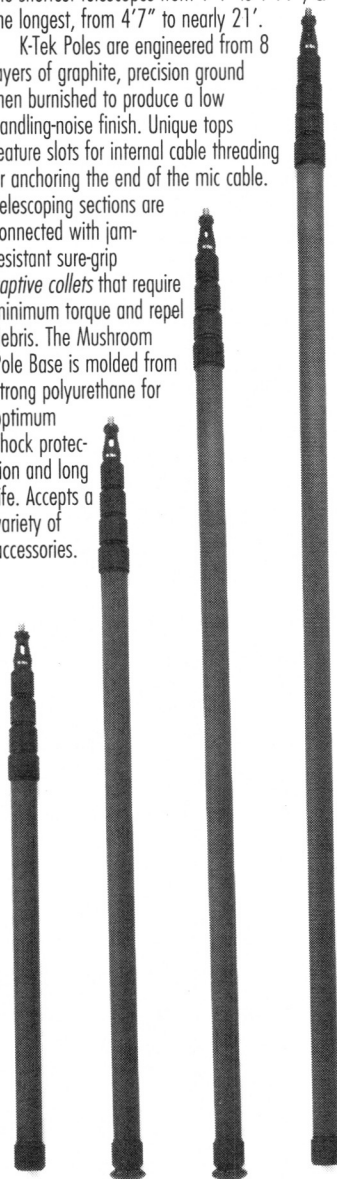
DM: You're welcome.



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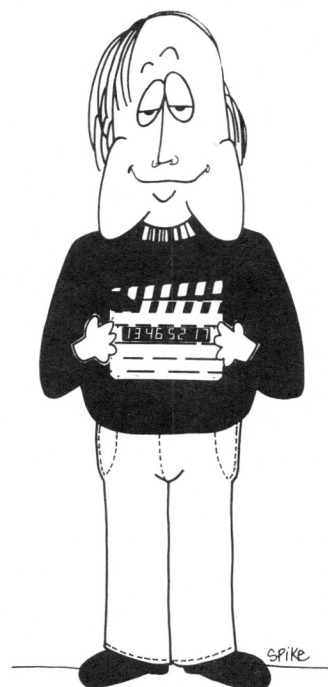
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"Machinery" - *Continued from page 7*
various kinds of processing.

- Gadgets -

At the moment, the most common tool of choice for "designing" sounds is Digidesign's ProTools workstation. It is by far the most versatile in terms of allowing you to alter the pitch, equalization, dynamics, and reverberation of any given sound, as well as more exotic processing like ring modulation. This is largely because of the proliferation of so-called "third party plug-ins" made by other companies to work in the ProTools environment. Its current 16-bit limitation has caused some golden-eared types to turn up their noses at ProTools, but in practical terms -- at least for sound effects and dialog in my humble opinion -- 16 bits is just fine. When 20 or 24 bits comes it'll be noticeably, but not enormously, better . . . and that'll be great.

Some sound designers prefer to work mostly with samplers, which operate in "ram" rather than on a hard drive, and the sounds are usually triggered to play and stop playing with a piano-style keyboard. In some ways, the old Synclavier (which is a combination sampler and sequencer - the sequencer allowing the keystrokes to be remembered) has never been surpassed in its ability to quickly manipulate lots of sounds.

Others prefer hard disk based workstations. ProTools, which was designed around hard disk storage, can be integrated with a sampler as well.

The kinds of processing available have increased because of digital technology, though the vast majority of processing still involves altering

the pitch, eq, introducing phasing or flanging, adding reverb, and playing things backwards -- all techniques which have been used for many decades.

- Mixing the Sounds -

Though it's true that in order to produce the sound effects for a typical action scene you usually have to begin with hundreds of tracks, you almost never want to actually hear all of those sounds at the same time in the finished mix. Whenever you hear more than three or four sounds at once they become noise, which, by definition, is meaningless. The goal in mixing is not to attempt to "mix" the largest number of sounds possible together. In fact the goal probably should be to eliminate as many of them as you can. As you mix you are assigning priorities from moment to moment to the sounds you have available; constantly making decisions about which sounds to feature, which to play in the background, and which to eliminate.

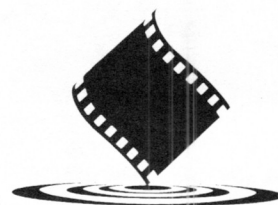
The music department typically has no idea what the sound effects department is doing, and visa versa. Producers and Directors should see to it that there is some coordination of the two, but they virtually never do. Lack of coordination of this kind is rare during production. But most Producers and Directors are so befuddled about sound that the best they can usually manage is to tell both the music and sound effects departments to throw as much crap as possible at the canvas, trusting that some sense can be made of it in the final mix.

It ends up being about choices, of course. Invariably, the last pass in a

final mix before print mastering consists of lowering sound effects here and there, raising dialog, and mostly raising music. The sound designer is secretly happy that some of his material was lowered to inaudibility. He'll feel less guilty using that stuff on the next project!

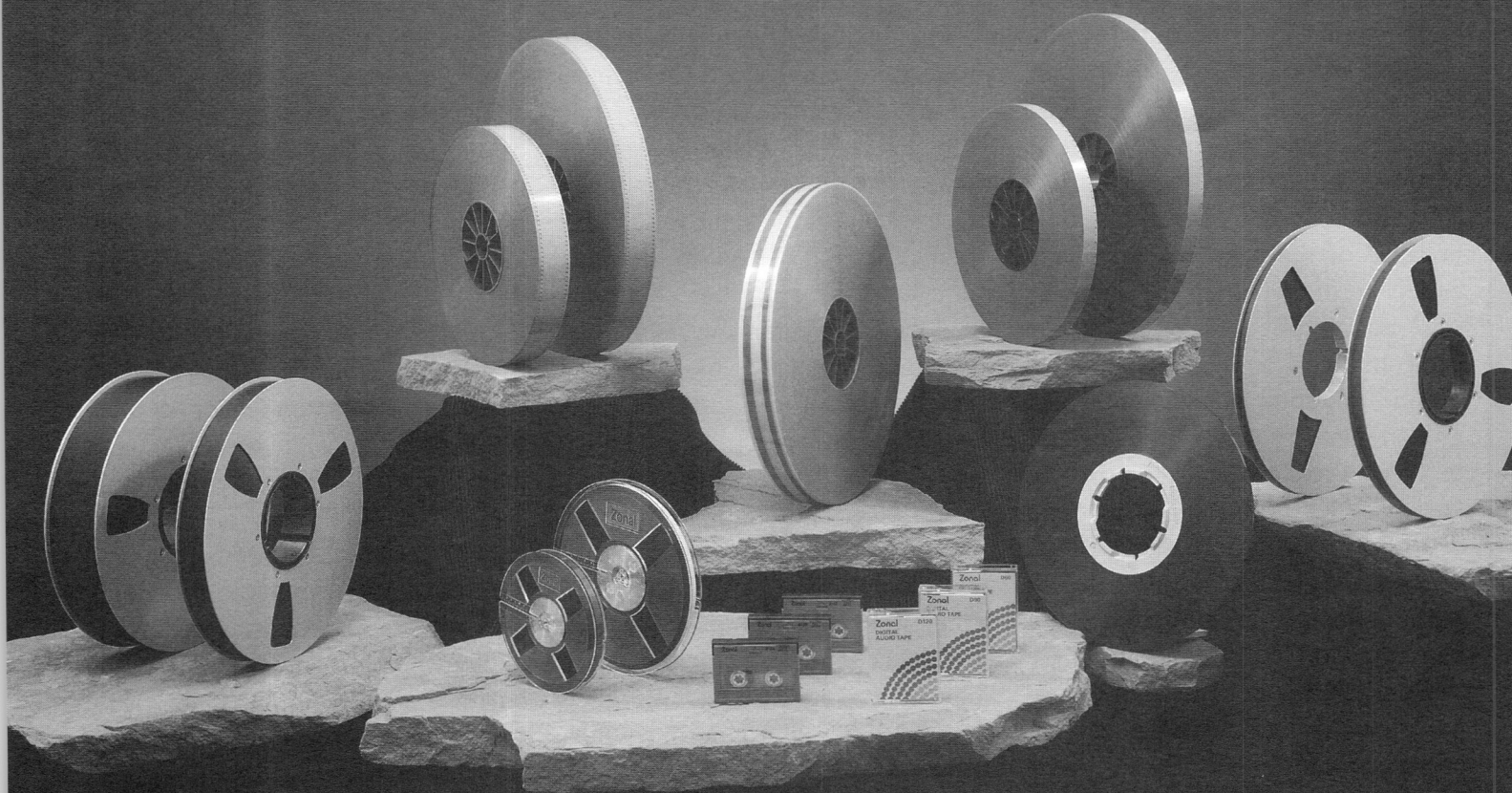
On a not completely unrelated subject, I want to congratulate the Sound Branch of the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for nominating "The English Patient" this year for an Oscar. Before "Star Wars," most of the films nominated for Best Sound were nominated because of their music. Since "Star Wars," most have been nominated because of their sound effects. The mixes in the vast majority of these films could never be accused of subtlety. "The English Patient" is one of those rare sound nominees whose music and sound effects were extremely well-crafted without being overstated; powerful but not obvious; complementary, not antagonistic. "The English Patient" may or may not have been the "Best" film sound job this year, but the Sound Branch deserves some credit for recognizing that great sound and ear damage aren't always mutually dependent.

*Next Issue: Dealing with
Interpersonal Politics
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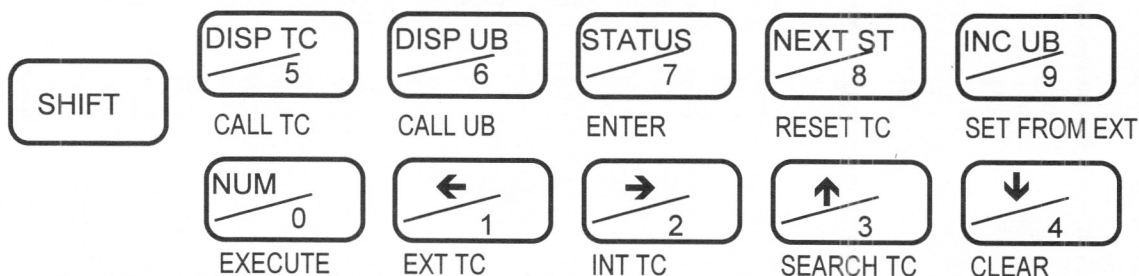
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Simple Instructions for programming the Nagra IV-STC to time of day and date (User Bits)



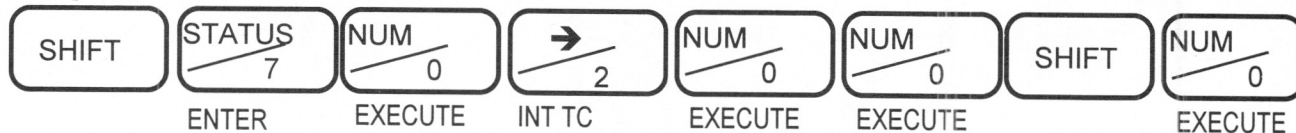
To check timecode status, press **STATUS**. There should *NOT* be any marker under where "**Drop Frame**" is engraved on the display. Presence of a marker indicates Drop Frame Timecode, which is not what is normally used for film. Press **NEXT Status** to check frame rate (should read "**30 Fr**").

To reset frame rate and/or drop/non-drop frame, turn function switch to **STOP**. Open deck and set frame selector knob to desired frame rate. **30 fps NDF** (non-drop frame) is the industry standard for film cameras running 24 fps or 30 fps. *Do not use other settings without WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS from your production company, or they may complain to you later when they can't get stuff to sync!*

Turn Nagra function switch back to **TEST** and repeat **STATUS** and **NEXT Status** check to verify settings.

To clear machine of previous programming: **SHIFT, ENTER, 0200 SHIFT, EXECUTE**.

Example...



To program the user bits for use in the date format, press **0106, SHIFT, EXECUTE**.

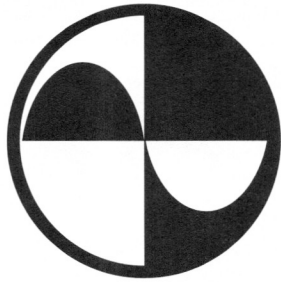
To enter the time of day, press **50 (HOUR, HOUR, MINUTE, MINUTE), 0000, SHIFT, ENTER**.

To enter the date, press **60 (DAY, DAY, MONTH, MONTH, YEAR, YEAR), 00, SHIFT, ENTER**.

To display the new Time Code, press **5**.

To program the Nagra for **RECORD RUN** timecode (code advances only during Record), press **SHIFT, ENTER, 0100, SHIFT, EXECUTE**. Note that this feature is only available on machines with software Version 1.95 or above. To check software version, press **STATUS**, and then repeat pressing **NEXT Status**. To return machine to regular timecode mode, follow the above instructions for **CLEARING** the machine and then setting time of day.

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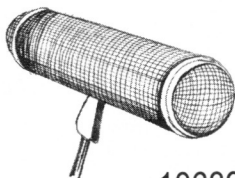


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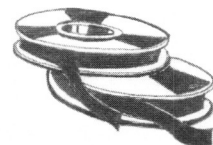


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"Holman" - *Continued from page 3*
Research. Henry was an unbelievably bright guy. He literally designed the Advent loudspeaker on a weekend to make some cash (laughs).

I was very excited to go to Advent, because in 1973 they were premier in loudspeakers. Good, practical inexpensive loudspeakers. What I didn't know when I went there was that they had projection television. It was so far ahead of the curve it was mind-boggling. In fact, it was home theater--only there were no VCR's or laserdiscs -- there was live broadcasting and that was it. So we got a video link to

WGBH across the river so we could look at good quality pictures off their cameras. It was way ahead of its time.

Because Henry was so engaged in the tubes and the screens and so forth, within 6 months I kind of inherited the audio to develop electronics and a loudspeaker line, along with Andy Kotsatos, who's now president of Boston Acoustics.

I worked with a lot of very very bright wonderful people and that's what kind of helped me along a lot. I had to suddenly live up to this, and I could technically, but I had to be able to present my case in public and all those kinds of things.

I worked there for four years, and then left when management changed. I founded a company with a partner who had been the chief video engineer called APT corporation -- making pre-amps and power amps.

CAS: How did you get back into film sound?

TH: During my years at Advent and APT, trends had happened in film sound. 70mm had made a comeback, the multiplex cinema had saved the movie industry, the technology was improving, and so forth. And then the combination of Dolby Stereo and "Star Wars" became a new

... we're at some limit because we're at the limit of the audience's capability to handle the sound pressure levels. We're aesthetically at the first time where everything is transparent and where different people's perceptions are the driving difference.

platform of what sound could be for movies. So it had become re-engaging and more interesting. I got a call that Lucas Film was looking for a chief engineer for post-production. This sort of combined the film part and the technical part of my career and I interviewed there. It was basically George's thought that we should improve things. He said "Fix it" -- he didn't say what to fix. It was mine to identify that. I was given about a year to look at the whole chain -- and I looked at everything, from production sound recording to transfer room. It was a real examination of a whole process, I think.

When I looked at the whole chain, what I saw was that Dolby had made this great improvement in the format, but they really hadn't done anything about the theatre acoustics or the sound systems. And if you looked at those in detail, you found that they were very old, clunky and limited in

many ways. THX was a kind of consolidation of what many people had done over the years with a few added ingredients. The wall, for instance, I knew about from Watty Watson at Universal and Jeff Cooper designed it into our room. We ran some tests on an unbaffled loudspeaker and a baffled loudspeaker, and saw what the headroom improvement was and the lack

of reflections from behind it and all the advantages that it had.

I'd done enough around rock and roll road shows to know that they're

different in every venue. They'll say they tune it, but they always sound different, and the reason was always the acoustics. So THX's stock in trade, and this is the first time I think it's ever been done, is mass-produced acoustics set to a standard. To cookie-cutter it and get a film to play the same way, everywhere was a new idea. It involved setting standards for reverb time, background noise level, and in later days when we began to understand it better, level of reflections, freedom from echos and timbre changes.

THX was built to handle the dubbing stage format. It was format independent because it was built for 70mm without limitation in every theatre -- even though that theatre might only be equipped with 35mm A-type optical. Of course, that's proved prophetic too as time has gone by and the A-chain has caught

up. I call this "playing technological leap frog." There was a certain level of quality with the Mono Academy optical sound track and the A-4. Dolby leap-frogged the soundtrack itself, then I did the THX and it keeps going like that.

Now you have to wonder -- we're at some limit because we're at the limit of the audience's capability to handle the sound pressure levels. We're aesthetically at the first time where everything is transparent and where different people's perceptions are the driving difference. It's the producer screaming "louder, louder, louder" and the audience turning it down to 5 1/2 on the fader. Technical problems have kind of gone into the background.



- End of Part One -

- Special thanks to Dave Weishaar for his help in the transcription of this article -

Next Issue:

The 33rd Annual
CAS Awards Banquet



Dealing with
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Interview with
Tomlinson Holman
Part Two



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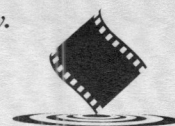
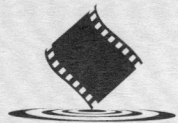
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BEEN THERE, DONE THAT . . .

Mark McNabb C.A.S. has started production mixing for "**The People**," a **Western Sandblast/Paramount** T.V. Pilot. **C.A.S. Associate Tom Backus** recently completed sound design and mixing for a new **Kodak** film demo called "**Glimmer**." He handled all the post audio sound design, recorded the film score at The Eastman Theatre, mixed the music in L.A. at **Waves** on their **Euphonics** console, and did all the foley and final mix to pic at **Deluxe Sound** in Toronto. **Philip Perkins C.A.S.** has two projects in progress: "**Forever Cool**," a 25-part "Internet documentary" for the **Microsoft Network**, and 2 new attractions for **Paramount Parks** involving sound effects design, remixing of sound from feature film clips and live action. **Sony Pictures Studios** finds **Kevin O'Connell** and **Greg Russell C.A.S.** finishing up the mix of "**Lolita**" in the **Cary Grant Theater**. **Paul Massey** and **Doug Hemphill** are finishing the new **Jim Carrey** vehicle "**Liar, Liar**," while **Greg Watkins C.A.S.** finishes pre-dubs on "**Anaconda**" with **Dan Leahy**. **C.A.S. Associate Charles Tomaras** has been mixing "**Before Your Eyes**," a **CBS News Primetime** 2 hour documentary for 6-8 days per month for nearly two years, burning over 225 hours of tape. **Michael Williamson C.A.S.** is still working on "**The X-Files**," but looking forward to seeing everyone down in L.A. at the **C.A.S. Banquet**. **Kim Ornitz C.A.S.**, **Gary Theard**, and **Paul Coogan C.A.S.** are recording "**The Wedding Singer**" starring **Adam Sandler** and **Drew Barrymore**. The pic features large amounts of live recordings of Adam's vocals, as well as the back ground vocals. Playback and recording are all in the digital domain. **Tom Nelson C.A.S.** is production mixing "**The Broadway Brawler**" with **Bruce Willis** and **Lee Grant** in Delaware. Booming for Tom are **Danny Rosenblum** and **Doug Martines**. Currently working on **Tom Hank's HBO** project "**From the Earth to the Moon**" is **Joe Foglia**, who is production mixing, and **Kevin Santy** and **Vince Nuccio** who are the boom operators. The huge project is filming in Orlando on three sound stages at **Disney**, surrounding locations and **Kennedy Space Center**. The project chronicles the 12 remaining Apollo missions in one-hour dramas. Principal photography began February 12, 1997 and ends September '97. **Paul Ledford C.A.S.** is staying home in south Louisiana working on commercials after spending time in L.A. completing "**The Brave**" directed by **Johnny Depp** with **Depp**, **Fredric Forest**, and **Marlon Brando**. The ever-busy **Randy Thom C.A.S.** is currently at work on "**Mimic**" and will start in a few weeks on **Bob Zemecki's "Contact"**. **Brit Warner** is doing the post sound design on "**Starstruck**," for which he also did the production mix. Up at **Skywalker Sound**, projects currently in varying stages from sound design through final mix include "**Titanic**" with **Gary Rydstrom C.A.S.** and **Gary Summers**, who are additionally working on "**The Lost World: Jurassic Park**" with **Shawn Murphy C.A.S.** Also at **Skywalker** is "**B.A.P.S.**" being mixed by **Bob Edwards**, and **Lora Hirschberg** -- who is also working on "**Reach the Rock**" with **Michael Semanick**. **Disney's** stages find **Terry Porter C.A.S.**, **Mel Metcalfe** and **Dean Zupancic** at work on "**Anna Karenina**," **Rick Alexander C.A.S.** and **Tom Dahl** mixing "**Incognito**," while **Doc Kane** is shooting the ADR for "**Mad City**."

*"Been There, Done That" would like to hear about the projects you've been mixing lately.
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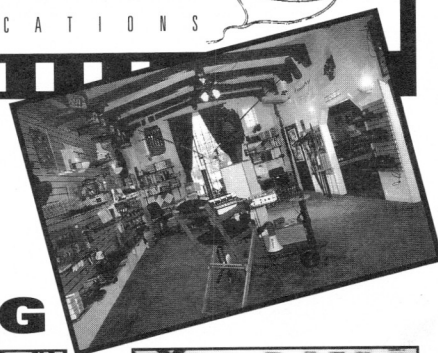


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