

Journal of the CINEMA AUDIO SOCIETY



"Dedicated to the Advancement of Sound"

Emmy Nominees for Sound Mixing Announced

Nominations for the 50th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards for the 1997-1998 season have been announced by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The Awards presentation will be telecast on September 13, 1998. Nominees in the sound mixing category are:

- OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY SERIES OR A SPECIAL -

• *Ally McBeal* •

• "Boy To The World" •

Paul Lewis, Production Mixer; Nello Torri, Kurt Kassulke, Peter R. Kelsey, Re-Recording Mixers

• *Frasier* •

• "Beware Of Greeks" •

Dana Mark McClure, Production Mixer; John F. Reiner, C.A.S., Andre Caporaso, Robert Douglass, Re-Recording Mixers

• *Home Improvement* •

• "A Night To Dismember" •

Klaus Landsberg, Production Mixer; Charlie McDaniel III, John Bickelhaupt, Re-Recording Mixers

• *The Larry Sanders Show* •

• "Flip" •

Edward L. Moskowitz, C.A.S., Production Mixer; Ed Golya, C.A.S., John Bickelhaupt, Re-Recording Mixers

• *3rd Rock From The Sun* •

• "36! 24! 36! Dick!" •

Jesse Peck, Production Mixer; Todd Grace, Craig Porter, Re-Recording Mixers

- OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY OR MUSIC SERIES OR A SPECIAL -

• *The 70th Annual Academy Awards* •

Edward J. Greene, Production Mixer; Tom Vicari, Music Mixer; Robert Douglass, Patrick Baltzell, Sound Mixers

• *Fleetwood Mac - "The Dance"* •

Elliot Scheiner, Production/Post-Production Mixer; Sue Pelino, Post-Production Mixer

• *Garth Live From Central Park* •

John Harris, Don Worsham, Chris Taylor, Mark Miller, Production Mixers

• *The 40th Annual*

Grammy Awards •

Edward J. Greene, Production/Music Mixer; John Harris, Mark Hutchins, Don Worsham, Music Mixers; Richard Maitland, Sound Mixer

• *Stomp Out Loud* •

Mike Roberts, Larry Loewinger, Production Mixers; Ken Hahn, Re-Recording Mixer

- OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A DRAMA SERIES -

• *Chicago Hope* •

• "Brain Salad Surgery" •

Russell Fager, Production Mixer; Rusty Russell Smith, William Fresh, Re-Recording Mixers

Continued on page 17

Inside:	
"Radio Mikes in the New Film Environment"	- Pg. 3
"ReRecording "Everest" on site at IMAX"	- Pg. 7
"Production Mixing in 1928 - Part Two"	- Pg. 9

NOTEWORTHY

Trailer Loudness Standards To Be Aided By New Meter

In 1997, cinema sound engineers, exhibitors and the major studios formed the Trailer Audio Standards Agreement (TASA) to address trailer volume and develop a standardization procedure. Now their task will be aided by a new soundtrack loudness meter developed by Dolby Laboratories Inc., which will allow sound mixers to easily monitor the subjective loudness of trailer and other film soundtracks as they are being prepared.

The announcement was made in conjunction with a panel discussion on the subject of "Are Movies Too Loud." Digital soundtracks and improved theatre sound equipment are capable of higher peak levels, which many trailers are mixed to sustain throughout, in an attempt to grab audience attention.

Furthermore, if the volume is turned down at the beginning of a show in response to audience complaints about trailers, it is often left there for the rest of the show, with the result that the feature may play so low that its dialogue cannot be clearly heard -- resulting in still more complaints.

Unlike the level meters normally used for soundtrack mixing, the Dolby Model 737 monitors loudness over

Fourth Edition of CAS Directory Being Prepared

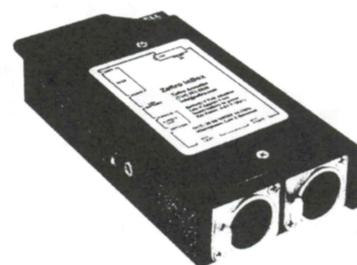
Directory forms will be coming in the mail soon to all C.A.S. members. Please read them carefully and correct and update your information. Remember, WE CAN NOT AND WILL NOT LIST YOUR ADDRESS AND OTHER INFORMATION WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION, so you must return your completed forms. The member listings will include all active and associate members in good standing (that means having paid your dues for 1998). And don't forget to send us pictures of you on the job to put in the Directory!

Businesses will also be an integral part of the C.A.S. Sound Directory. Those listed in the last Directory will receive a form to update. Businesses not listed in the last Directory who would like to be in the new one may contact the C.A.S. Office at (818) 752-8624 and leave their name, address, phone and fax number. We will contact you when we send out our information forms. We welcome any **sound-related** company's listing. Remember, BUSINESS LISTINGS ARE FREE!

The Sound Directory is a great source of sound listings from personnel to facilities to associations. Don't be left out - make sure you are listed. Better yet, take out an ad - the C.A.S. Sound Directory targets **your** audience!

Continued on page 15

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Radio Mics: Their Thoughtful Use in the New Film Environment

by Danny Michael, C.A.S.

Danny Michael, C.A.S. is a production mixer based in New York. He is a BAFTA winner and Academy Award Nominee for "Mississippi Burning." His credits include "In and Out," "Ransom," "Scent of a Woman," "Glengarry Glen Ross," "Billy Bathgate" and "The Paper." He most recently did the production sound for the upcoming "Meet Joe Black" and "Mickey Blue Eyes."

In the last 5-10 years, feature films have changed dramatically—well beyond their more publicized escalating budgets. Since the early 70's, when I found myself working on my first low budget picture, much has evolved in the way a project gets developed and, ultimately, filmed and edited. With the emergence of "superstars" that drive the engine that gives a film its 'green light,' the breadth of a project has changed the way various technicians and craftspeople must approach their responsibilities. It's understandable that, as the costs of making a high profile movie increase, the studios need to realize a quicker return on their money. This has forced those of us in production to get in step with the new economics or be left behind the speeding train.

As the demands grow for completing a movie in shorter time, the opportunities for "fine tuning" fall off rapidly. Under pressure from their producers, assistant directors are struggling to keep on schedule even as the risks and complexities of a project increase. Cinematographers feel this pressure and

therefore respond with even larger equipment packages and crews to give them more flexibility and speed. Naturally this too increases the cost of a day's shooting and the spiral continues. More and more, we see multiple camera packages being introduced on productions, even those that would seem too low budget for such a luxury. Predictably this type of production escalation affects all departments. Art departments are under pressure to complete their work, even though their sets are in constant flux from daily schedule changes. Property departments must anticipate their needs more than ever as shorter pre-production schedules make it more difficult to nail down specific props. Post-production teams and their sound counterparts are also under pressure to do considerably more in much less time. Consequently, editing staffs have expanded with a greater reliance on electronic editing systems that were introduced with the promise of reducing post-production schedules.

On our end of the scale, location sound has changed too. Even with a skilled director who favors a useable location track, the pressures are too great to achieve good tracks all the time. Here in New York, as location shooting increases in real-life environments, there is a decreased likelihood that an acceptable track can be achieved. Community resistance is growing to the disruption caused by location shooting and more and more limitations are imposed by the NYC

Police Department (particularly with respect to sound lockups on the streets). Add to that the expanding use of multiple cameras or complex shots designed to work 'all in one' and you've set up a formula for clenched teeth every time you shoot outside. With this come fewer opportunities to capture missed dialogue or to refine the track mix. Greater reliance on split or multiple tracks has been necessary to allow for options in the final mix and for treatment of problematic locations or miking due to location/shooting compromises. An outgrowth of these compromises is a greater "defensive" reliance on radio mikes in situations where normally it might have been possible to work with the preferred open boom mike.

Radio mikes have always been a useful tool for those situations where background noise is too heavy to allow for the reach of a mike like a Schoeps or a shotgun type Sennheiser or Neumann. As much as I have resisted the use of radios in situations where others might have gone to them right away, I find that the today's situations have forced me to re-evaluate their use in more and more circumstances.

On Ron Howard's "Ransom," my use of radio mikes increased dramatically as a defensive measure. Ron is a talented director who is hard to pin down. Things change all the time, including who and where someone speaks. Just when you think you've got it figured out, an additional camera

Continued on page 13

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

by Steve Hawk, C.A.S.

- Do-It-Yourself Headphone Selector -

One thing that has always annoyed me about mixing with headphones is trying to monitor multiple stereo sources. Most mixing panels aren't set up for multiple returns. Besides, it's a good idea to isolate return feeds because of possible cross talk or ground loops. How many times have you unplugged your headphones from one deck to check on another source or do a playback? Well I've got a solution that not only allows you to select from multiple sources, but will also route multiple sources for a Comtek transmitter or other monitoring. You could also use this in a machine room or with your stereo system at home.

Referring to figure 1, the #1 input (P1) would typically be the stereo headphone output from your mixing console/panel. This could be a 1/4" stereo phone jack, but I'd hardwire a 1' to 3' cable with a 1/4" stereo phone plug to eliminate using an additional cable. Inputs #2 (J2) and #3 (J3) would be from the stereo headphone outputs of two recorders or could also be the headphone returns from two Betacams or video decks (this is where those Betacam snakes really come in handy).¹ The selector switch (S1) is a 3-position, 3-pole rotary style. The reason to

use 3 poles is to switch not only the left and right channels, but to also switch the grounds. This will help any ground loops from occurring.

There are two stereo headphone outputs (J4, J5) that are wired in parallel. This is there just to give you an extra handy jack that could also feed a pair of monitor speaker/amps.

The "B" input jack (J7) is a 1/4" mono switching phone jack that is "normalled" to what source is selected from the rotary switch (S1) left channel only. In "normalled" use with the "B" input, you can send playback off one of the recorders out through the Comteks or plug in an external source for music cueing or prompting. The pot (R1) allows a balance adjustment between the "A" and "B" inputs. The "A" input (J6) can be an unbalanced monitor or Aux. send from the mixer that could allow for a separate mix feed out to the Comteks. The Comtek input

selector switch (S2) then determines what source gets routed out to the transmitter, to an external monitor amp or possibly even a floor loop system. I've included both a male XLR and a 1/4" phone jack for more flexibility.

As far as construction goes, map out your system but keep expansion and flexibility in mind. For instance, you might want to consider monitoring from more sources. Just add more input jacks and increase the number of positions on the rotary switch (S1). Remember that on 1/4" phone plugs and jacks that the tip is wired to the left (or channel 1), the ring is right (or channel 2) and the sleeve is the ground or shield. I've built a couple of these for my rigs into a typical project box from Radio Shack. A strip of Velcro can make for easy mounting and access on the side of your mixer. In laying out, consider mounting the switches and pot on the larger surface of the box lined up vertically (figure 2). This could line

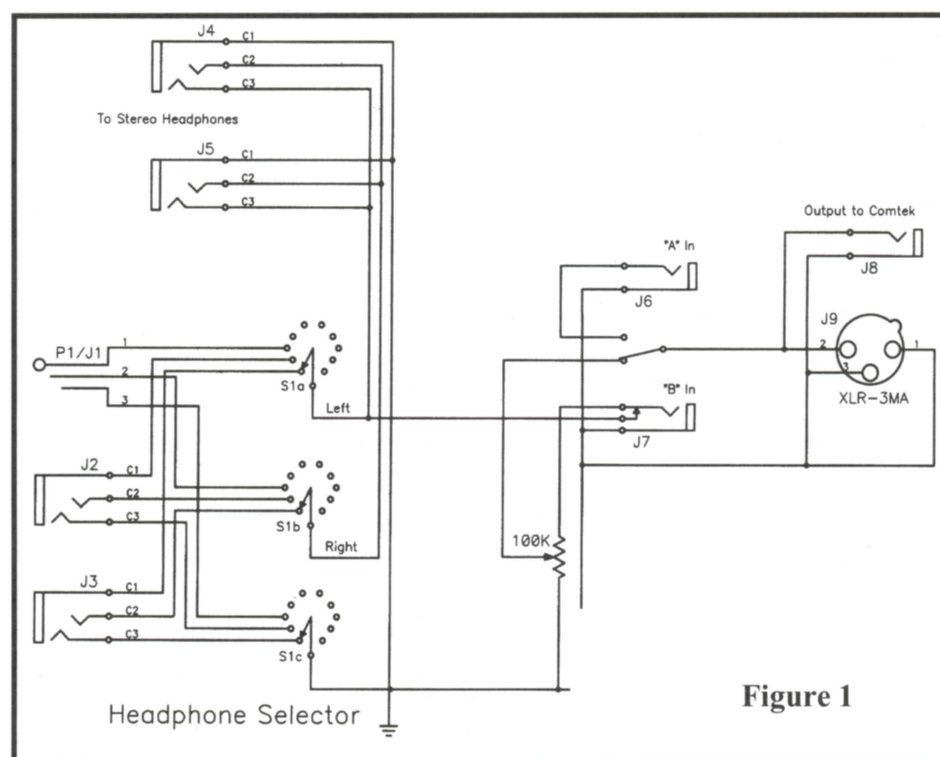


Figure 1

up with the side of your mixer. Try mounting the headphone outputs (J4 & J5) low on one side to face you and the input returns (P1, J2 & J3) opposite on the other side (away from you) with J6, J7, J8 & J9 above them.

In usage, put your tape decks or Betacams in the playback (tape) monitoring position. You can go from the direct mix to tape confidence monitoring and back on all your sources in no time at all. Not only that, you'd be surprised how many times I've caught a cameraman not rolling or forgetting to hit pause after a take.

Once again a big load of thanks to Ed Somers, C.A.S. for the drawings. Happy soldering!

PARTS LIST

S1 = 3 position (or more) 3 pole rotary switch

S2 = SPDT miniature toggle switch

P1 = stereo 1/4" phone plug

J2 - J5 = 1/4" stereo jacks

J6 / J8 = 1/4" mono jacks

J7 = 1/4" mono "switching" jack

J9 = XLR-3M male panel mount jack

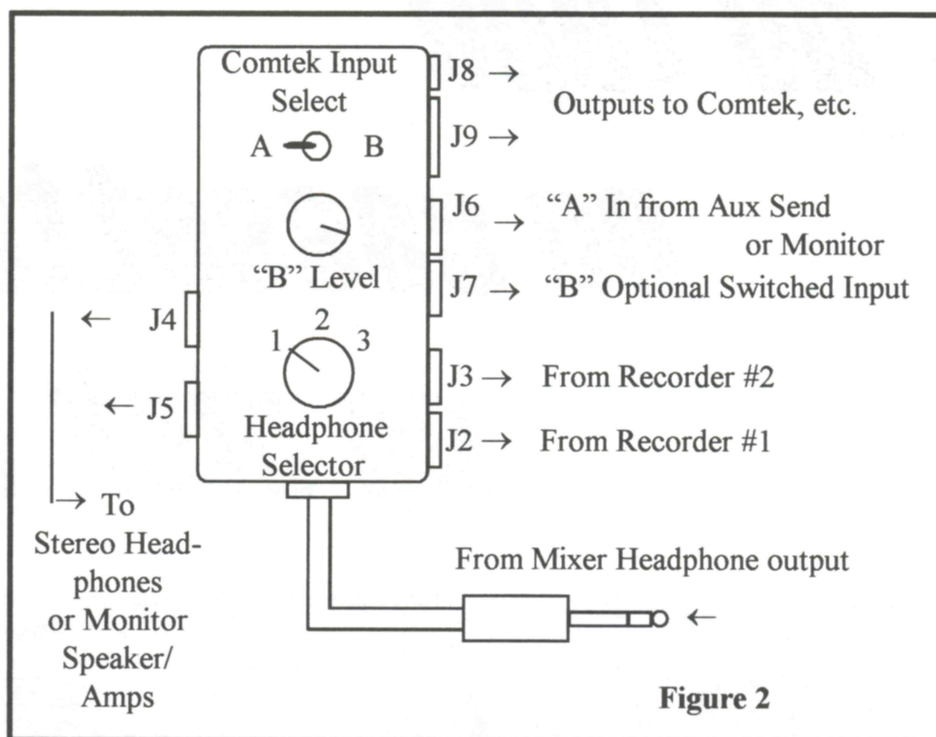
R1 = 100k to 1meg. audio taper pot
Knobs (2)

Hook-up wire and approx. 3' of flexible cable (if using P1)

Project box (approx. 6" x 4" x 2")

Labeling, solder and appropriate hook-up cables and adapters

¹ - Most Betacam snakes have a stereo 1/8" mini-plug on the headphone monitor return. You'll want to have a couple of stereo 1/4" phone plug to 1/8" female stereo adapters handy.



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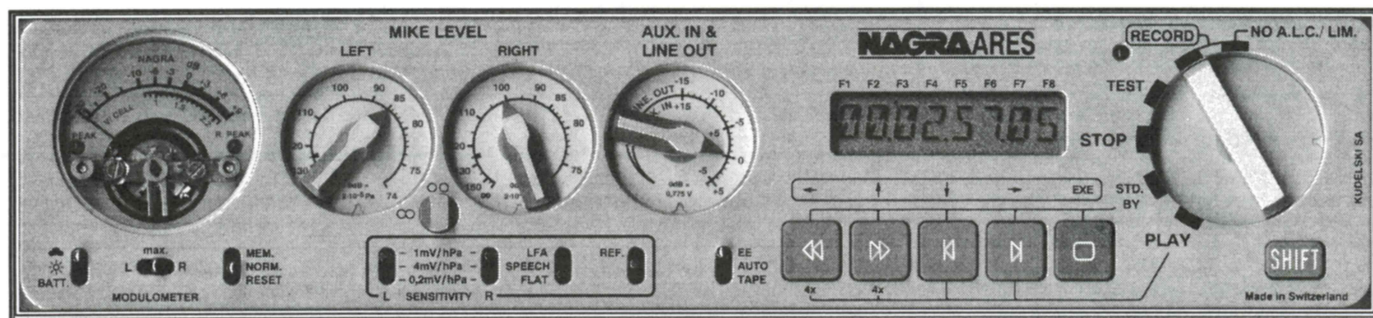
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BIG PICTURE, BIG TRACK

- Re-Recording "Everest" for IMAX -

by Ken Teaney, C.A.S.

I've been mixing for Greg MacGillvray of MacGillvray/Freeman Films for eight years now. I became involved in the "Everest" project almost two years ago when I mixed a sample reel to be shown at the ISTC convention in 1996. I knew then that the film would be one-of-a-kind -- who can beat pictures from the top of the world in IMAX?! Wow! Little did I know how exceptional it would be.

The IMAX format is a great format for sound. The large picture just cries out for a track to match. The speakers are enormous and the surround speakers are just as big as the ones behind the screen, which gives you so much flexibility and the chance to put the audience in the picture, instead of in front of the picture. In the case of "Everest," you feel the wind whipping all around you, you're buried by an avalanche and you find yourself ducking your head under helicopter blades.

The use of the surround speakers to change the audience point of view is a big part of a good IMAX mix. For example, when looking at a close up of the helicopter rotors, there is a specific blade "thwop" for every blade, and it travels around the theater. From the right front, to the right rear, to the left rear, then the left front, and then to the center to start all over again. All the while going faster and faster as we build up to lift off. The next cut is a long shot of the helo going up a mountain canyon and the sound is very distant and only in the center speaker. Followed by a shot

where you are looking out of the helicopter and the sound is all around you again as you ride along with the climbers. This type of aggressive panning adds to the feeling of motion you get from the large image and raises the emotional experience for the audience.

We began the mix by prelaying the music. The music is by George Harrison, orchestrated and remixed by Steve Wood and Daniel May. Steve did an amazing job of mixing for the IMAX format, using the four "corner" speakers to envelop the audience and several overdubs that travel from speaker to speaker to keep things interesting. We then predubbed the narration and voice-overs, as well as the production dialogue. Because the IMAX camera is so loud, all of the production dialogue was put through the "No-Noise" process to minimize camera noise and then had to be heavily EQ'ed in order to put some life back into it.

We then moved on to the background predub, where we worked forty or so tracks of just wind into one six-channel predub. The key here was to make each cut have a different feeling in order to help the audience know where they were on the mountain by just the sound of the wind alone. Then there was another six-channel predub for the storm section of the film with hurricane force winds and blowing snow and ice. The temperature on the mountain was minus 100 degrees and by the end of this predub, it felt like that on the stage as well.

The foley shot for the film was great

and every footstep, ice axe and snow crunch puts you right there with those climbers. The crevasse crossing scene becomes a terrifying reality with the sound of the crampons catching on the ladderrungs and the safety rope clanging along behind. Add to that the breaths of the climber (provided by our sound effects editors) and it's you looking down into a bottomless crevasse, struggling across a ladder and hoping you won't fall.

With the very full backgrounds and foley there were still many other sound effects needed: birds flying into and out of the surrounds, helicopters, boats, bikes, monks, tent and flag flaps and, of course, avalanches! Many people have died on Everest in avalanches and I think we killed a few more getting these avalanches predubbed!

With "Everest," we were going to do something we had not done before on any other of our IMAX films -- we were going to do the final mix on location in an IMAX theater. So when we layed out the final tracks we had to keep a lot of things separate so we would have the most flexibility when we got to the theater. We record only to the Sony 3324 digital multitrack, giving us 24 tracks to work with. We decided to make separate effects, backgrounds, foley, music, narration, voice-over and dialogue stems. Six channels each for effects, backgrounds and music, three channels for foley, and one each for the narration, voice-overs and dialogue. We mixed on our stage

Continued on page 15

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The State of the Art - 1928

- Part 2 -

- Motion Picture Sound Recording In Its Infancy -

by Edward Bernds, C.A.S.

*E*d Bernds was a pioneer of production sound recording in the first days of the "talkies." He worked with legendary Hollywood figures from Douglas Fairbanks to D.W. Griffith. He recorded the sound on virtually all of Frank Capra's films, then went on to a successful career as a director. Last February, he was honored by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures for his achievements. This is the second in a series of excerpts from his upcoming book, "Mr. B. Goes to Hollywood," courtesy of Scarecrow Publishing.

When the stampede to sound picked up speed in the summer of 1928, the Hollywood studios had millions of dollars worth of silent films on their hands. As more and more theaters installed sound equipment, the studios, including United Artists, attempted to salvage what value they could by providing recorded scores for silent films, calling them "Sound Pictures."

People would pay money to see and hear sound sequences inserted into silent films. The part-talking films were misbegotten hybrids mercifully short-lived. The film came on, silent, with a recorded musical score, the photography beautiful, the music reasonably good. Then suddenly, with a jolt, the talking sequences came on - the photography flat (those damned camera booths) and the sound raucous, scratchy, and much too loud.

I could understand why the old-line producers and directors hated us, with our obnoxious microphones and two-

ton camera booths and camera motors that ran backwards. We were interlopers, a bunch of young upstarts who were destroying the beautiful art form they had spent years perfecting.

UA had a half-dozen of such silents. Three of them were scored in New York by a formidable composer-conductor, Dr. Hugo Reisenfeld. When the UA sound equipment was ready, we prepared to record music for our Hollywood productions. The doctor insisted that he would place the microphones, arrange the orchestra, and instruct the man in the monitor booth how to handle the mix of three microphones.

Another doctor appeared, one J.P. Maxfield, a Ph.D. in architecture, his specialty: acoustics. He had been hired by the UA partners to assist Reisenfeld in obtaining the best music recording quality.

Maxfield went to work immediately -- in what seemed to us to be a weird routine. He went to the center of the empty scoring stage, clapped his hands, then quickly cupped his ear to listen for reverberations. He repeated the process from all points of the stage. We sound men, with not a single Ph.D. among us, wondered if this was a sober, scientific procedure or a gigantic practical joke.

Finally we were informed that the doctor had found the best places for our microphones: he called them "nodes." Reisenfeld expressed his approval of Maxfield's microphone placement, and the UA partners thanked Maxfield for his contribution to better UA music.

Maxfield should have quit when he was ahead. Roland West, director of "Alibi," was an interested observer of Dr. Maxfield's tests. The men talked. Maxfield asked about the on-the-set recording techniques, and was appalled when West told him that the sound men positioned their microphones over the actor's heads, as close as the camera-line would permit. That was wrong, Maxfield said. The ears of the audience were not above the actors. Their ears -- the microphones -- should be where their eyes -- the cameras -- were.

Roland West welcomed that idea. He told Maxfield that he stood beside the cameras and was able to hear every word spoken by his actors. Maxfield was triumphant, his theory was vindicated. He was so enthusiastic that the UA studio heads asked him to make a test, and one was arranged, with hired actors and a full camera crew. Maxfield set up his two microphones -- "two ears" he said -- and placed them close to the camera booth. To complete his setup, he fastened them to a medicine ball, to simulate a man's head.

Maxfield's idea ignored one important fact. The cameras -- his "eyes" -- might not move, but the lenses could be changed. With a 75mm lens, a camera, from a distance of about twelve feet, could get an excellent closeup of an actor's teeth, if he smiled -- and if he had teeth. With a 50mm lens, the actor would be seen in a nicely-composed medium closeup. With an 18mm lens he would be a distant figure.

The camera people didn't mention

"1928" - *Continued from page 9*
 the lens-change problem. They probably wished so fervently for relief from the obnoxious overhead mikes that they hoped, somehow, that Maxfield's theories could be implemented.

When the test was run the next day, it was a disaster. Even when the actors faced the camera their voices were weak and indistinct. When they turned away, their voices had a distant, voice-in-a-rainbarrel quality. The embarrassing test film was quietly taken out of circulation and Dr. Maxfield was seen no more.

Another series of tests brought equally distressing results. Mary Pickford had bought the successful play "Coquette," and chosen it to debut in her first talking-film role. She made tests -- first silent, with an open camera -- then with sound, the camera in one of the hated camera booths. Mary, a dedicated, hard-working film-maker, was aware that the camera booth was a formidable handicap; it robbed the camera of its mobility. Worse, it caused inferior photography -- shooting through a pane of plate glass caused superb lenses to become mediocre ones. A young camera assistant told me "you shoot out of one of those damn booths, and what you get is flatter than a platter of pea soup." I think he said pea soup.

Two talking films had been made at UA before "Coquette" -- "Alibi" and "Bulldog Drummond." "Alibi" was a crime melodrama. There was an unfortunate breakdown in communication between camera and sound, director and film laboratory. Nobody told the camera crew that they had to give up part of their film area to make room for the sound track. In silent filming, the cameraman could use the entire 35mm width of his film with the traditional aspect ratio of three to

two. Sound on film, however, required that the soundtrack be printed beside the picture, and that the 4mm width of the soundtrack had to be taken away from the cameraman. He lost not only the left edge of his negative, he also lost his 3 x 2 aspect ratio. The remedy was to use a new, smaller aperture in the camera that maintained the classic 3 x 2 ratio, and of course, ceded the left edge to the sound track. But no one informed Ray June, the cameraman, or Roland West, the director. The cause of the communication breakdown may have been that many studio people were thinking of Vitaphone -- of sound on disc, in which optical soundtrack would be re-recorded on disc for theater release. That technique had been abandoned by most of the Western Electric-equipped studios, but no one told anyone.

About half of "Alibi" was shot before the error was corrected. The result was that well-composed camera angles became poorly composed, and scenes in which there was action close to the left frame line lost that action. Some of the damage was replaced by close shots, retakes and inserts, but Ray June was disconsolate. Many of the scenes on which he spent time and effort were still mutilated.

After a series of sound tests, Mary was dissatisfied with the way she was photographed. Her future depended on how she looked as a very young woman. The looming menace of sound threatened her place in the hearts of millions of fans.

There were more tests, and then finally we began to work on film that would go into theaters. The filming of "Coquette" began in mid-December, 1928. It was a struggle against long odds, against cumbersome sound techniques and

CHRIS NEWMAN

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the inferior photography that sound imposed on the cameramen. In the silent era, Mary Pickford had been in control -- film-wise, camera-wise and story wise. She no longer had that control. Scenes were shot with agonizing slowness. We in sound took much time setting our microphones. A grip would go high up to the stage catwalk and drop a rope to us. We would tie a microphone to it; it would then be raised to clear the top frame line of the widest-angle camera, and ropes from the light platforms would be used to pull the mike into position.

It was laborious and time-wasting, and if the staging of a scene or the camera setup was changed, our mikes had to be repositioned in the same cumbersome way.

The director of "Coquette" -- Sam Taylor -- used multi-camera setups; two, three and even four cameras. That multiplied the cameraman's problems and also hurt our sound. The clumsy, nondirectional CTA mikes had to be as close as possible to actors to get good closeup sound. In one of Sam Taylor's four-camera setups, the top-line for our mike was set by the camera with the widest angle lens, and our microphone might be seven or eight feet from the actors -- too far for good closeup quality.

This was particularly damaging in closeups of Mary. She had what Douglas Fairbanks Jr. called a "small, tight voice" -- a voice that needed to be caressed by a microphone close to her. Instead, she was required to strain that small voice to reach a too-distant mike. In an interview years later, Pickford described the filming as a painful experience. Restrictive sound and camera techniques and frequent equipment failures, Mary said, made it impossible to create good scenes.

As for Fairbanks, I saw him at his

carefree, prankish best during the silent filming of "The Iron Mask." Then I saw what the coming of sound did to him when we filmed a talking prologue for the picture. A ten-foot-high blowup of a page of the Dumas novel, simulating ancient parchment was mounted in a frame. Doug slashed through the page with his sword, sprang into the foreground and delivered his prologue speech. We did the scene over and over -- I can still remember Doug's lines: "Out of the shadows of the past, as from a faded tapestry dim and vast, I bring you a tale of long ago."

Finally we got a complete take, and, as was the barbaric custom in those days, we played it back. Sound equipment was touchy and inefficient then. Sometimes speed would go out of control. When we made that playback for Doug, we had a "runaway" on the wax playback machine, just fast enough to give Doug a girlish falsetto. Mercifully somebody pulled the loudspeaker plug, but I think Doug never really recovered from the shock of hearing that gibbering runaway version.

There hadn't been much improvement in production efficiency in the year since those first few efforts. Camera booths were still used, and we, the sound people, were still hiding microphones in flower arrangements and hanging them from sound-stage catwalks. We heard rumors that sound booms were being used in other studios, but our chief engineer, Howard Campbell, was adamant: mikes were not to be swung around recklessly. They would be placed carefully and judiciously, and the actors would be instructed how to "play to them."

He had other anti-boom arguments; a heavy CTA at the end of a long boom-arm would be dangerously tip-prone,

and the camera booths and the lights monopolized the front of the set. There was no room for a clumsy mike boom.

Some of us were not convinced. We felt that a boom could be counterweighted, and if we could demonstrate the need, room would be found for us in the front of the set. I was beginning to see things from the point of view of the film makers. There was a need for a microphone that could follow the actors and give the directors and actors the ability to stage scenes the way they, and not the sound men wanted them.

We sound men in those days used monitor booths -- glassed-in rooms suspended from the walls of the sound stages. The men who designed the early sound systems thought we needed a full set of theater-type speakers to monitor the sound quality properly. A far cry from the featherweight set of earphones the sound man uses today.

I was in one of those monitor booths during filming of "Bulldog Drummond," Samuel Goldwyn's first all-talking picture. Goldwyn and his aide, Mike Levee, completely ignoring the presence of the sound men in the booth, argued violently about continuing to make sound pictures. Goldwyn disliked the way the filming was going. He said Ronald Colman's acting was ruined by sound, and that Joan Bennett, "such a beautiful girl, she don't look so good when they have to photograph her out of those goddamn doghouses."

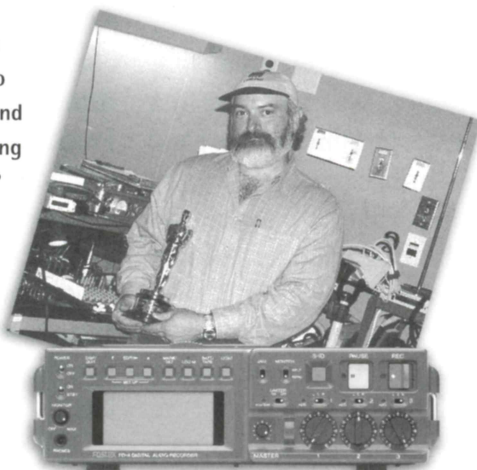
Mike Levee argued that sound was here to stay, and that sound and picture quality would improve. Not a bad prediction.

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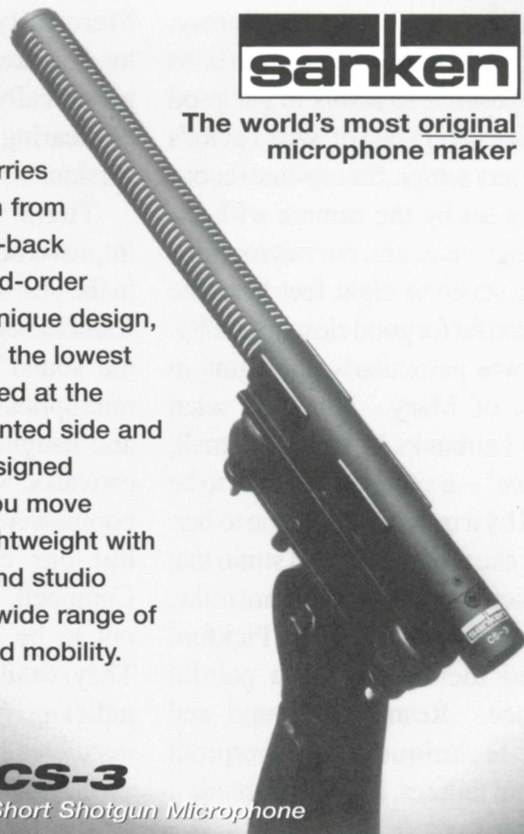
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"Radio Mikes" - Continued from page 3

shows up, quicker than you can say "Give me unit #3". This does not mean that I will allow myself to be satisfied with the compromises inherent in using the radios — they remain a tool that must not be abused. Assuming there is coverage that allows for closer miking, I will always consider returning to an open mike. Obviously, this open mike track must work with the tracks you've already recorded. Let's say the radio mike track had a fair amount of clothing or wind noise due to clothing restrictions. If the track was marginal, wouldn't it be best to try to cover all that track with a better miking option given the opportunity?

When working on Marty Brest's movie "Meet Joe Black," the two leads — Brad Pitt and Claire Forlani — were often pushing the "whisper envelope." Radio mikes were standard issue on any exterior in NYC with them. More often than not, the radios barely coerced enough level from them to override the noisy exteriors. With so much gain pulled up and little wind protection from light summer clothes, it was getting difficult to overcome wind noise and even some clothing noise. When the cameras started to push in, I had the choice of living with barely useable tracks or to switch gears and work from below with a Schoeps 441 in a rycote screen.

Why from below? I was able to obtain much more bottom end and energy from the frail voices they offered and the closest match to radios on an actor's body. I ended up with very useable tracks that tested the will of my boom person Andy Schmetterling, who had the thankless task of trying to squeeze a gray blimp between two easily distracted actors.

The reason for going through all this

trouble is that I know from feedback that most editors are very pleased to get even one clean track all the way through, so they have the option of 'stealing' a piece here or there. This is especially true since the time available to "successfully" record a wild track for missed dialogue has become harder to find during the course of a shooting day. If you're in the habit of reaching for radio mikes on a regular basis, their use might become a defense mechanism. Directors or their AD's will suggest you put them on before shooting a scene because "you'll probably need them." There's no point in arguing — it's easier to just put them on.

I want to be very clear, this does not put into question my utmost respect for those sound mixers that freely use radio mikes as part of their initial approach to any sound recording. Those who have mastered this style don't need to make excuses for an approach so well crafted. The way we achieve our tracks as individuals is the net result of our personal tastes gathered over many years of experience that are too complex to compute.

On the more dialogue driven projects that I tend to work on, feedback from film and sound editors suggests they prefer that I work with open mikes wherever possible. They like hearing the ambience of a room or exterior and the effects that come with it (within reason, of course). The re-recording mixers don't like the high levels of equalization that the use of radios require quite often. As you know it's very hard to undo the effects of a heavily equalized track. The last thing you want to do to the post-production people is tie their hands. Keep in mind, as their time with a film decreases, they also begin to find it difficult to find the time to correct problems with the tracks. ADR

becomes an easy crutch for questionable sound or worse yet, sometimes questionable tracks will "just have to do."

You must always be conscious of what the impact of your tracks and the way they're handled will have on post-production. Use your sound reports aggressively and by so doing you will help an interested sound editor improve your tracks. Consider marking spots on your sound reports that will guide editors to more useable takes of sound that they might lift from your tracks. Try to get wild tracks with your actors whenever you can. Be subversive -- if the AD's can't give you the time to get them on set, elicit their support to take the actors off the set to get your tracks. Another helpful approach is to use split tracks and record off camera dialogue from your actors so that in effect you're recording wild tracks during the shooting of the scene. Don't forget, however, to label your sound reports accordingly and inform the script supervisor whenever you record split tracks for that purpose. I'm sure you've all faced the concerns reflected in this article. Hopefully putting them in print will help us all address the need to develop meaningful solutions. 

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"Everest" - *Continued from page 7*

at EFX the way we thought it should be (keeping the separation) and then we would print/master at the theater. In a perfect world, we need only to set it all at zero and watch it go down... yeah, right!

The quality of the track is our big focus, so we needed to stay digital. And we couldn't upset the theaters daily showings so, we needed to be able to get it done in one night. We needed to decide not only how, but *if* we could do it!

We brainstormed about many different lists of equipment and finally decided on playing back the stems digitally off of DaD's through two Yamaha O2R consoles and recording back to a Fairlight digital workstation. We would also take a 3/4" video deck and a video projector. The whole system was locked to, and motion control came from the Fairlight. We also made a mag time code stripe so that, at the end of the night, we could play it back to the IMAX film. We built the whole system on our stage at EFX first, learned the equipment we had not worked on before, and then packed it all up and headed for Irvine.

We arrived at about 10:30 p.m. and began to unload and to build a dub stage in the middle of the theater. We built a plywood desk over the tops of the seats to put the consoles on and carried up racks of equipment. We ran electrical from what seemed like a mile away and put a snake through the window in the projector booth to get into the patch bay. We set up the video projector and were happy with an image that looked like a postage stamp on that big screen, and after a little struggle to get all of the clock rates set... off we went!

The first thing we noticed was the sub bass. In IMAX, anything below 120 hz gets routed to the subs; very cool on the avalanches, but not so

good on the narrator. Next, with the speakers so far apart, we found that we could push the backgrounds more and still not lose the dialogue. And, in fact, the dialogue cut great and we had room to push the other stuff up around it more.

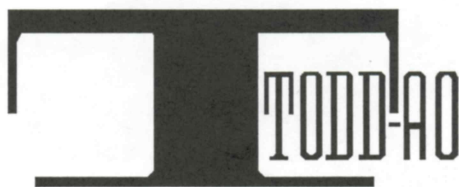
At around 5 a.m. we were ready to lock it to the print and do a playback. We fed time code to the Fairlight from the mag and, of course, the mag and the print were locked via bi-phase. We all held our breath, but it locked right up and we had a great playback. After tearing it all down, loading it back up, we were back at EFX, a mere 25 hours after we started our day.

I remarked more than once that I felt like we had climbed Everest in getting the track mixed (especially when carrying the 3/4" video deck up the theater steps), but it was a great experience. And now that we have done it once, the next one will be easy. Yeah, right!

"Loudness Meter" - *Cont'd from page 2*

time -- for the entire length of a trailer, for example. The unit also mimics the human ear's varying sensitivity to sounds in different parts of the hearing range.

At the end of the selection being measured, the Model 737 displays an "annoyance factor" number. On a scene with an occasional very loud sound, such as isolated gunshots, the number will be relatively low. On a scene with very loud sounds sustained over time, such as unremitting machine-gun fire, the number will be high. While these numbers currently have no specific calibration, once mixers become familiar with the meter's use, TASA will specify a maximum reading for trailer mixes which will be presented to the studios for adoption as a volume standard.



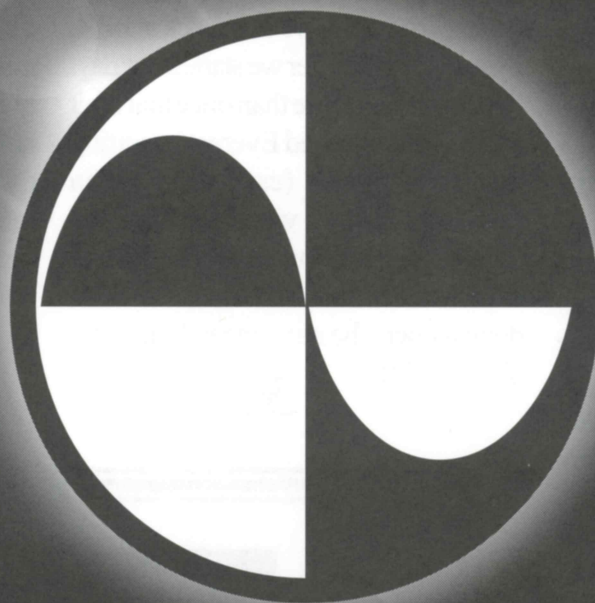
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BEEN THERE, DONE THAT . . .

Paul Massey and **Doug Hemphill** have recently finished mixing "**Les Miserables**" and are presently doing "**The Negotiator**" at Sony Studios. "**The Vivero Letter**" is the latest rerecording project for **Mark Rozett, C.A.S.** and **Ken Novak, C.A.S.**, working entirely on MMR-8's at **Interlock**. Also using MMR's, **Vine Street Studios** has **Patrick Cycone** and **Michael Keller, C.A.S.** working on "**What Dreams May Come**" for Interscope, after which they will mix "**Election**" for Paramount. On Stage 2, **Melissa Hofmann, C.A.S.** and **Brad Sherman** are just starting up on "**A Simple Plan**." **Peter V. Meiselman, C.A.S.** completed "**Deterrence**" with Kevin Pollak & Timothy Hutton and has begun "**The Big Brass Ring**," an adaptation of a script by Orson Welles being directed by George Hickenlooper. **Sterling Moore** is booming, with **Ross Levi** handling the cable. **Brett Grant-Grierson, C.A.S.** and boom operator **Jon Udell** are at work on "**Net Worth**," a feature currently in production in Park City, Utah. **Tim Cooney, C.A.S.** just finished pickups on "**Payback**," starring Mel Gibson. His usual crew of **Todd Bassman** on boom and **Bill Shotland** on second boom now leave for Rosarito beach to do "**Deep Blue Sea**," with Renny Harlin directing. **Fred Ginsburg C.A.S.** will be "teaching the teachers" about sound recording at the annual conference of the University Film & Video Association this August in North Carolina. **Greg von Buchau** did a feature in Colorado this summer called "**Home on the Strange**," directed by Rick Schmidt. **Michael Williamson C.A.S.** shot the production tracks for a MOW titled "**Beauty**" for CBS and is now in Nova Scotia doing "**Blue Moon**." **Four Media Company's Marti D. Humphrey, C.A.S.** will be continuing on "**Mad About You**," while **Ron Garrard** will be busy with "**Malibu**," "**One World**," "**Saved by the Bell**," "**USA High**," and "**Just Shoot Me**." Also at 4MC -- **Jerry Clemans, C.A.S.** and **Dave Yamamoto, C.A.S.** will be mixing "**Touched by an Angel**" and "**Promised Land**," while **Tim Philben, C.A.S.** continues on "**Jag**" and **Bob Harman** does "**Pacific Blue**." The production tracks on the latter are being recorded by **Bill Robbins, C.A.S.** **Glenn Berkovitz, C.A.S.** reports he and his crew are beginning the third season of the Paramount single-camera series "**Clueless**" -- "using every quasi-bleeding-edge toy we can find (Deva, RF booms, etc.) How do we stop this thing . . .?!" Production sound mixer **David Husby, C.A.S.** and boom operator **Rick Bold** are doing "**Ballbusted**" for MGM in Vancouver. They recently returned from Toronto where they worked on "**Dick**." The Phoenix Pictures film will be rerecorded by **Dave Fluhr, C.A.S.** and **Adam Jenkins**, who have just completed "**Permanent Midnight**" with Ben Stiller and Elizabeth Hurley. In between they'll be doing "**It Had To Be You**" and "**Varsity Blues**." **Bob Israel, C.A.S.** has completed work on a feature film shot in Seattle titled "**Book Of Stars**" for ShadowCatcher Entertainment. Another Robert, **Bob Deschaine, C.A.S.** reports he completed the ADR for H.B.O.'s "**The Rat Pack**," and is looking forward to a busy schedule. **Don Hale, C.A.S.** is presently in the pre-production stages of sound design for the "**1998 Eco-Challenge**" in Morocco this fall. **Randy Thom, C.A.S.** is spending his summer on "**Arlington Road**" which stars Jeff Bridges, Joan Cusack and Tim Robbins. He then starts on "**The Iron Giant**" which is a full-length animated feature being done by Warner Bros. He'll also be sound designing and mixing "**Step Mom**" at Skywalker with **Gary Summers**. Also at Skywalker, **Summers** and **Gary Rydstrom, C.A.S.** are mixing "**A Bug's Life**" for Walt Disney Pictures, while **Lora Hirschberg** will be having a very busy summer. She'll be mixing "**Halloween H2O**" and "**54**" with **Gary Rizzo**, and "**A Midsummer Night's Dream**" with **Tom Johnson**. **Darren Brisker** has returned for "**Viper**" season number three.



- Continued on the next page -



MORE BEEN THERE, DONE THAT ...

Peter F. Kurland, C.A.S. is mixing the production tracks on **"Wild Wild West"** for Warner Bros. with **Steve Bowerman** on boom and **Kat Craig** doing the utility. **Jim Rillie** is currently location mixing on Prince Edward Island on the third season of the Canadian series **"Emily of New Moon."** **Mike Hall, C.A.S.** has just started **"Running Red,"** a Jeff Speakman vehicle, for PM Entertainment. **C.A.S. Associate Don Broughton** along with mixer **Darrell Henke** completed a MOW for Chuck Norris' production company called **"The Hit Man - Bound by Honor"** which will be aired on CBS sometime this fall. **Andy Wiskes, C.A.S.** having crossed the Waterloo on Warner Bros.' **"Soldier,"** retreated to the studio to post mix **"U.F.O.'s"** a feature documentary by Paul Lawrence. **Philip Perkins C.A.S.** recently completed audio post for the documentary **"Red Ribbon Week"** and did major sound design projects for Sony, Novellus and NEC. **Steve Luka**, a student at Columbia College in Chicago majoring in Acoustics just finished doing the location mixing for a film by Michael Frolichstein entitled **"Adventure Day."** As if his lengthy television schedule weren't enough, **Edward L. Moskowitz, C.A.S.** squeezed in production sound responsibilities for the Joe Geisinger feature **"Idle Hands"** for Sony. **Richard Lightstone, C.A.S.** is currently finishing Tom Clancey's **"Netforce,"** a 4-hour ABC mini-series. Lensing began in Los Angeles and then moved to locations in Virginia and D.C. At the same time Richard is busy producing a documentary feature on **"The Art of Sound in Film"** with writer-producer Michela Zanchi. Production mixer **Dave Schaaf's** recent projects include **"Picture Of Priority"** and **"The Hungry Bachelor's Club,"** shot in Denver. **Steve Nelson, C.A.S.** and **Tom Hartig** on boom survived the heat in Austin and will be starting **"The Debtors"** in August. **Cameron Hamza, C.A.S.** is currently working on Universal's **"Great Falls"** through September, while **Christopher Taylor, C.A.S.** is on **"Party of Five"** for the next 9 months. Over at the **Wilshire Stages**, **Sergio Reyes** and **B. Tennyson Sebastian** have just completed **"Disturbing Behavior"** for director David Nutter and MGM. With a two week push on the release date, **John Taylor** and **Chris David** were brought in on Stage B to help with the final mix. Also joining in on the predubs, were **R. Russell Smith, C.A.S.** and **Robert Glass.** Foley was recorded by **Matt Beville.** At EFX, **Ken Teaney, C.A.S.** and **Marshall Garlington** recently completed the independent film **"Clay Pigeons"** for Gramercy and are finishing up the final on the new Wesley Snipes vampire/thriller **"Blade"** for New Line Cinema. **Eric Thompson, C.A.S.** is working on the ADR and Foley record for the new Babylon 5 MOW -- **"River of Souls"** which will be mixed by **Larry Benjamin** and **Liz Sroka.** **Marc Fishman** and **Lance Brown** have finished the mix on the independent film **"The Thin Pink Line,"** while **Pacific Ocean Post's Mitch Dorf** recently mixed a Wynonna Judd concert special for Direct TV's pay-per-view service. **Wolf Seeberg, C.A.S.** not only recorded the sound for a travel movie in the Provence, France, but also produced it. **Joe Foglia, C.A.S.** is working on **"Mortal Kombat Krusades."** It is shooting in Orlando at Disney MGM studios. **Kim Ornitz, C.A.S.** is currently mixing **"Lost and Found"** for Warner Brothers. It is a light comedy starring David Spade and Sophie Marceau. He is joined by boom operator **Mychal Smith** and cable man extraordinaire **Dick Hansen.** They will wrap at the beginning of August and go on to **"The Muse"** for Universal starring Albert Brooks and Sharon Stone. Production Mixer **Don H. Matthews, C.A.S.** and his crew, **Charlie Bond** on boom, and **Rock A. Walker** as second boom/utility start production in August on a brand new TNT series **"Crusade."** **Rob Young C.A.S.** is currently working on **"Double Jeopardy"** with Ashley Judd and Tommy Lee Jones.

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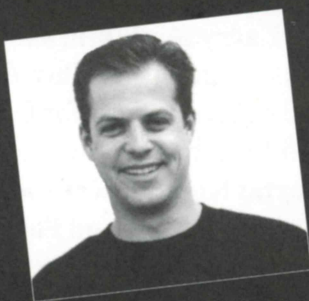
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