

AMPS

The Association of Motion Picture Sound

Newsletter No. 10
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BKSTS Training

If you use radio mics or are involved with them in any way can we draw your attention to the article 'Radio Mics - A new Deal'. Licensing has changed and it affects you. It's important!

AMPS REPORT GAINS RECOGNITION

Members will be pleased to hear that the 'Original Sound Track Identification & Transfer Procedures' booklet, formulated, devised and produced by the Association, is being well received by the industry.

Not only has there been an enthusiastic response from our own production sound mixers and sound transfer operatives but the Cinema Audio Society of America have requested permission to publish the text in their Journal. They too realise the great need for standardisation in the US.

There has also been an order for 10 copies from Steve Buckland, chairman of the New Zealand Guild of Film Technicians. He considers it 'a thorough guide to sound transfer identification' and intends to promote it as a standard in the NZ industry.

Copies are being sent to Film Schools where it is hoped that tutors will point out to students the necessity of clear report sheets encouraging them to adopt the terminology and standards outlined in the booklet.

It is good to know that all the effort and time put in by the people of the two working parties that produced the final document is appreciated and paying off.

Council Activities

Report Sheets: With a view to encouraging production mixers to use the recommended type of report sheet (as in the Original Sound Track Identification & Transfer Procedures booklet), the Council are hoping to make arrangements with a printer that would be beneficial to mixers when ordering self-carbonating pads. The basic artwork would be the same for all orders but individual mixers or companies would supply their own logo to individualise their report sheets.

New Grade of Membership: Because of the large choice of Film and Media courses now available and the numbers of students in them, the Council considers it important that the Association should keep in touch with what is happening in that field.

With this in mind, the Council thinks that it would be wise to institute a Student membership grade. It is of course for the membership to decide and in due course an Extraordinary General Meeting will be called to discuss and vote on the matter.

Bob Allen

AMPS

This Newsletter is edited by Bob Allen and Keith Spencer-Allen and is published by the Association of Motion Picture Sound for distribution to all members. AMPS can be contacted through Brian Hickin, The Administration Secretary, 28 Knox Street, London W1H 1FS. Membership enquiries to Robin O'Donoghue, AMPS Membership Secretary, Twickenham Film Studios, St Margarets, Twickenham, Middx TW1 2AW. Any communications with the AMPS Newsletter should be addressed to 'The Editor, AMPS Newsletter, Old Post Office Cottage, Old Post Office Road, Chevington, Suffolk IP29 5RD.

Not The LA Way ?

One of our New Zealand members has sent the AMPS Newsletter a photocopy of a letter written by an American production mixer to an American Producer who was contemplating shooting a production in New Zealand.

The purpose of the letter was to warn the producer against using New Zealand sound crews, no doubt in hope of getting the job himself.

The said mixer having presumably worked in New Zealand on a three week TV movie shoot considered that all New Zealand sound people were 'well below the standard of their LA counterparts'.

Quoting from the letter, he says 'Let me caution you about the way production sound is practised in New Zealand. Their tradition of film sound recording is handicapped by practices that eventually waste costly production time and force looping that could easily be avoided'. This statement is heavily underlined in the letter. Pretty poisonous stuff!

He criticises New Zealand mixers for only using radio mics when absolutely necessary, claiming that when they do use them that the mixers and wardrobe people are inexperienced, not knowing the tricks for successful use.

Boom operators not using headphones is another big bad mark against New Zealand Sound. He colourfully claims that mixers communicate with their operators by 'shouting' or 'walking up between takes' and goes on to list ways why it is impossible for the boom op to pick up usable sound unless he wears phones. My boom ops always seemed to manage OK.

According to this guy, because the boom op doesn't wear phones, quote "there can be none of the communication from mixer to boomer (neither between takes regarding necessary adjustments, nor during set-ups) that is the constant and essential part of the way we practice sound here (in LA)" unquote.

Bullshit! Does he think that LA sound mixers are the only ones who maintain constant essential communication with their boom ops? I've done it for at least 40 years (including six NZ feature films) without 'shouting', 'walking up between takes' or imposing headphones upon the boom op.

Even if his claims were correct (and I assure you from my own knowledge of the New Zealand Film & TV industry that he's talking through a very large hole in his backside), it's a pretty shitty thing to bad mouth the local talent in order to get a job.

Bob Allen

FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

Arrangements have been made for a visit to the new recording facilities of AIR Studios in Hampstead. Built inside an old Church, the studios are the latest in technical equipment and acoustic design along with state of the art film and video post production facilities. It should be an interesting visit. Make a note of the Sunday 26th June.

A visit to a compact disc production plant has been suggested and the possibilities are being looked into.

Suggestions for future General meetings would be much appreciated by the Council, so if you have any ideas or topics you would like discussed, new equipment demonstrated or visits to facilities, phone or fax Brian Hicken on 071 402 5429 and tell him.

Visit to Imax

Plans are afoot to reorganise the abandoned trip to Bradford to see the giant screen process Imax. Since the previous attempt to set up the trip in 1992, a completely restored set of Cinerama equipment has been installed in a cinema adjacent to the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, which houses the Imax installation. Screenings of Cinerama, the 1952 three film widescreen process with 6 track stereo and Imax, a mighty 52 ft high by 62 ft wide screen also with 6 track stereo, are given daily.

A two day weekend trip with an overnight is planned for the Autumn. More details and information about Cinerama in the next Newsletter

There is also talk of a visit next year to Futuroscope, the European Theme Park of the moving image, near Poitiers in France. OmniMax, Imax 3D, Showscan and Le Cinema Dynamique are but four of the twelve exciting image and sound systems included in the park. A must for all interested in sound with moving pictures

WHAT? YOU USE A FOSTEX PD2 FOR PLAYBACK?

As most of you know, using DAT for playback is easy and does not require the use of complicated synchronisers. In fact, one or two people use a DAT Walkman without any problems. But I use my expensive Fostex PD2 for playback because location of the playback point is accurate and extremely quick, especially when using time code for reference points.

Towards the end of last year I worked on a series of music programmes for TV which were edited on a Sony 9000 on-line editing suite. Apparently it took approximately 2 to 3 minutes to synchronise each take. At £140 per hour that could cost a lot of money per programme so we decided I should use my Fostex PD2 DAT recorder to playback a timecoded audio playback cassette which was a copy of the Music Master Recording. It was timecoded identically to the Master Recording.

During playback a feed from the timecode output of the PD2 (a three pin XLR male socket) is fed to the timecode input on the Betacam (well some of us have to work with video!!) with the Betacam timecode selector switch set to Free Run so that the camera timecode will slave to that recorded on the music DAT cassette.

When the music is played back from the same point for more than one take, the timecode will obviously be exactly the same at each point in the music. Because the same timecode could be repeated many times it is necessary to help the editor identify each take. This can be done with both a visual ident, using a clapper board at the beginning of each take (even video editors appreciate these), and also by altering the setting of the Betacam User Bits. Unfortunately there is no way of altering the user bits from the PD2 because they are taken from the prerecorded cassette track. During editing, the user bits can be used to identify each take automatically whilst the timecode is used as a reference for picture editing.

When recording the action, it is important to allow at least a 10 second run-up of both the camera and the playback DAT recorder. There are two reasons for this. During recording of the picture when the camera first reads the timecode from the DAT recorder there is a picture frame roll which lasts for about 1 sec whilst the long run up time gives the editing machine a little time to lock to the picture time code. The Fostex PD2 also needs just under five seconds of timecode to locate to any given time code point.

So what is to be gained from using this system? Between two and three minutes is saved on syncing each take to the master sound track thereby reducing the overall editing time. By referring to the timecode, all the takes can be intercut without even listening to the music and once the final picture is complete its timecode should match that of the master sound track with perfect synchronisation of both image and sound (here we assume that the artistes were good at miming).

Even if a timecoded playback cassette is not provided, should a second DAT recorder be available (we all have a back-up machine don't we? - even a DAT Walkman) it is worth making a timecoded copy on the PD2 for playback because editing time can be saved.

So the higher cost of hiring a Fostex PD2,

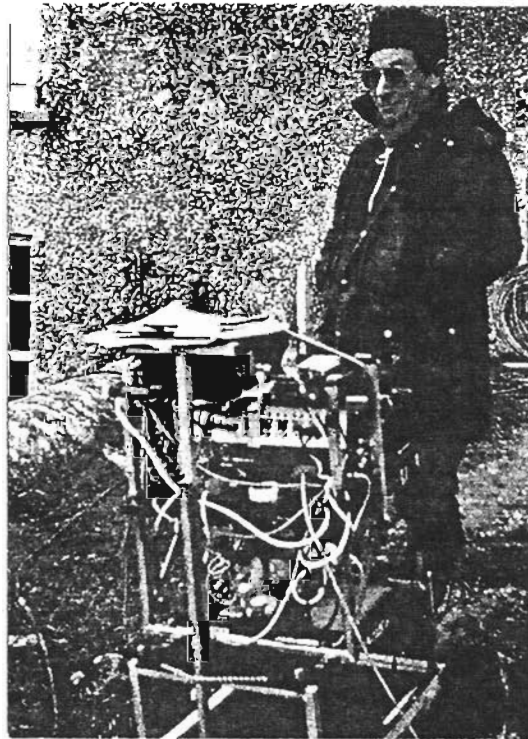
compared to that of a DAT Walkman, is more than recovered by the reduction in editing time/costs and I certainly feel more like a professional when using the PD2 than if I were to use a Walkman.

Incidentally the Fostex saved the day during post production because the beginning of one of the musical items on the Master Audio DAT cassette clipped when it was played back through any of the Sony 7050

Studio DAT recorders used for editing. There was no fault with the 7050 DAT recorders! Fortunately it would playback perfectly on the Fostex PD2. I discovered that the sampling frequency of 44.1 kHz on the blank space immediately preceding the music on the Master suddenly changed to 48 kHz on the very first note of the music. No one is able to tell me how that happened!

Though we haven't tried it, there would appear to be no reason why this system cannot save time when editing off-line on Avid or Lightworks editing systems.

Barrie A.B.White



Barrie White on location

PEOPLE



*Caption unnecessary;
Congratulations are.*

- **Walter Murch** had been awarded the Cinema Audio Society's (CAS) Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his work as Production Mixer, Rerecording Mixer, Sound Designer, Film Editor and Director with an Oscar Nomination in 1974 for *The Conversation*; in 1979 an Oscar for sound on *Apocalypse Now* along with a nomination for film editing. He has also had film editing Oscar nominations for *Julia* (1977), *Ghost* (1990) and *Godfather III* (1990). Congratulations. Well done Walter.
- **Douglas Trumbull**, special effects man behind *2001*, *Close Encounters*, *Blade Runner* etc and developer of the 70mm 60 f/s Showscan process has purchased the Canadian IMAX company.
- **Paul Whiting**, involved with Sennheiser for over 19 years has been appointed general manager of Sennheiser UK.
- **Mike Bradley** and **Steve Angel**, instrumental in the development and launch of HHB's Portadat location recorder have been appointed to the board of HHB Communications as Technical Director and Sales Director respectively.
- **Michael Eisner**, Chairman of Walt Disney Co. earned \$203 million (£137 million) last year, mainly from selling stock options. According to Business Week, this makes him the highest paid chief executive ever. Nothing 'Micky Mouse' about him!
- **Oprah Winfrey** - King World Distributors have agreed to pay her more than 500 million dollars. The deal could extend her show through the year 2000. The show has ratings twice as high as any other daytime talk show. Who said talk was cheap?
- **Diane Sawyer**, wife of film director **Mike Nichols**, recently signed a 7 million dollar a year contract with ABC-TV turning down bigger deals with CBS and Fox. She insisted that the money isn't important. Husband Nichols said "She gave up enormous amounts of money without blinking". Wish we could all see it her way!
- Rerecording mixer **David Old** has moved round the corner from Magmasters and is now based at De Lane Lea.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

The March Of Time

Readers who use a clock which receives hourly sync pulses from the Rugby transmitter are advised that this year's period off the air for maintenance will be from July 4 - 17 inclusive. So don't interrupt the mains or battery power supply during that time or you may be unable to reset the clock.

The Halt of Time

To correct for the Earth's poor timekeeping, the last minute of June 30th will be 61 seconds. At midnight on that date the BBC will broadcast seven pips instead of the usual six. The International Earth Rotation Service based in Paris has instructed the world's timekeepers to bring extremely accurate atomic clocks in step with time defined by the relatively erratic rotation of the earth.

WAVEFRAME DCS MEETING AT ANVIL FILMS

There was a good turn out of AMPS members at Denham on Sunday morning, 13th March, to attend a demonstration of the Waveframe DCS workstation. The location was Anvil's super new theatre complex, in its own building, at the side of Rank Labs.

In the large Post Sync and Foley stage Alan Snelling was putting a WaveFrame through its paces and showing assembled members the ADR software package. In the main dubbing theatre, the larger of the two, Keith Sherry was demonstrating another WaveFrame with the latest software. Keith is the technical wizard at Syco Systems, UK distributor of WaveFrame.

The WaveFrame's operating system is based upon a 486 IBM compatible PC running with Windows 3.1 so some members were already familiar with this operating platform. In addition to the main computer there are some extra cards needed - an analogue-to-digital and digital-to-analogue converter, a timecode reader, RS232 control and several gigabytes of hard disk drive to store the digitised sounds.

Keith took us through the various updates on the latest software known as 'Look And Feel'. Once the basics were explained, there followed some examples of what could be done with digital sound editing including - Cut and Splice,

Paste, Time Expand, Time Compress, Auto Dial Conforming, Drag And Drop, Fades In and Out, Level Adjustment. All these functions are output to 8 tracks on the present software but 16 and 32 tracks will soon be available. If you get bored with the display, it can be customised to your own tastes.

Also demonstrated was an ASC Virtual Recorder that digitises video and stores it on hard disk. From this computer the picture was fed through Anvil's video projector and on to the screen in the theatre. This was then locked to the WaveFrame. The result of this hook up and the joy of random access hard disk systems was instant sound and picture at any chosen location. It also allows us to scrub an area frame by frame without the problems normally associated with video tape systems.

At the end of the demo, members were free to get some hands-on experience upstairs in the cutting rooms as three machines were hooked up ready to use. Some more questions and answers followed and the meeting ended about 2 PM.

AMPS would like to thank Ken Somerville and Alan Snelling at Anvil Films for providing the theatres, Keith Sherry and Nick Williams from Syco Systems for their demo and not forgetting Mary in her kitchen for the tea and coffees.

Rodney Glenn

NAMING OSCAR

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was formed in May 1927. Leading figures in the US industry established a non-profit making organisation to improve the artistic quality of motion pictures.

One of the members, an art director named Cedric Gibbons, sketched the design for a golden statuette on the table cloth at a banquet. His design became the model for the Academy's trophies, the first being presented on May 16, 1929.

At first the trophy was simply known as 'The Statuette'. In 1931, Margaret Herrick, the Academy's librarian claimed that the statuette

looked like her Uncle Oscar. Her remark was repeated around the industry and the name stuck.

Further research revealed that the naming of Oscar had also been attributed to Bette Davis and Sidney Skolsky while HL Mencken ties the story to the Academy but with a different angle. Miss Margaret Herrick later became Executive Director of the Academy and so her version has clearly become the favoured story.

Other sources have suggested two other facts about the Oscar. Firstly, handle any Academy award presented during the second world war with care - it was made made of plaster.

Secondly, it is stated that the Academy will buy back unwanted Oscars at the rate of ten dollars each! Business does not appear to be brisk.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

Re the BT Video snippet (Newsletter 9, 'Busy Line'). BT are not permitted to offer cable services until 2001 though there is a review in 1998. They do have the system working and it is intended to offer home shopping, information etc as well. The product was to be named 'Services On Demand' but that's been dropped because of the acronym!

The Newsletter is excellent. Thank you

Damon Osborne
Chiswick, London

Dear Sir

I was very interested to receive a copy of your newsletter recently. I hope that you will be able to send us a copy regularly.

I would just like to correct one or two points in your article about the National Sound Archive. There are no concrete plans for us to move to the new St Pancras Building, though we may be moving to a separate building closer to it. Also all our telephone numbers were changed last August and whilst each department now has its own separate outside line, for general enquiries your members should now ring 071 412 7430, fax: 071 412 7416

Yours faithfully

Benet Bergonzi
Curator of Artefacts,
National Sound Archive, London

Dear Sir

I am delighted that my opinion on the plight of the production sound mixer generated debate. May I reassure Robin O'Donoghue that I was in no way undermining the good work of the rerecording mixer.

My comments referred to one feature film, "In the Line Of Fire". The general consensus of the people I spoke to after viewing the film was the sound track left much to be desired. We were informed that we were hearing the sound track in ideal conditions. So why was the dialogue so sibilant and the level so high it left one's ear drums vibrating. Even the odd intimate dialogue scenes in the movie were, for me, at an unacceptably high level. Is this really the new generation of cinema sound? What happened to the original sound track?

Contrary to Nick Lowe's comments, in my experience original sound is often replaced for no reason. Even the most conscientious sound mixer covering dialogue scenes with wild tracks and FX has found that their efforts have been to no avail. With a conscientious sound editor who is prepared to spend time consulting more with the location

mixer could result in a great deal more original sound being used in the final track. All too often the floor mixer only gets criticism from people who have no idea of the problems the mixer faces. Many location mixers share my views that we are becoming more bound to post production technology which is making our task much more difficult.

Time code is one example which effects a production. How often have mixers looked at sound reports expecting a comment on signal-to-noise etc, and the only feedback refers to lack of time code run-up. I would dread to think what film stock wastage there is on a ten week location shoot using time code. As long as the technology gets its ten second run-up, to hell with the frustrations of the crew. Location Stereo Sound has now become the norm and any mixer will know the problems without me going into detail. Yet I dread, that the production mixer now has to start thinking about, wait for it, 'Surround Sound'. Maybe someone out there can explain to me how it will be achieved

The sound crew is now down to a team of three, or often two, on a movie. Yet I find we seem to need more and more equipment to carry while the daily set-ups increase. Not only do we need to be competent, we also have to be athletic to keep up. My philosophy has always been to record the best sound one can without getting bogged down with technology. Keeping it simple has worked for me over the years. I have rarely had to listen to the proverbial words from the 1st Assistant Director "Waiting for sound". To accommodate the demands of post production the location mixers' lot is becoming more and more exasperating. Hold your hand up those who agree.

Most freelance mixers own their own sound equipment. I recently came across some of my old invoices from when I kitted myself for my first movie; two Nagra 3 recorders, seven microphones and various accessories - total cost £1,500. I thought I would make a comparison with a sound kit that I feel would serve me well for the next five years working on features. While I still feel the ideal location DAT recorder is yet to arrive, I would include the Nagra D, while hanging on to my analogue Nagra 4S TC.

Two Nagra D digital recorders and accessories
Time code Nagra 4 (carried for assurance/playback)
Basic four system diversity radio mic kit
Cooper Sound mixer
Small DAT recorder PD 1000TC (for on the run work)
Small mixer, SQN or equivalent (for on the run work)
Three M/S stereo mic kits - Sennheiser/Sanken etc
Headphones, poles, cable, sound cart etc etc

Before you read any further, what do you think my ideal kit would cost? Yes, you're right - it's mega bucks! If you invested in the above equipment you would have little change out of £75,000. OK, you would have the latest technology but I ask, would you ever get the right return for that investment? I rather think not. Even with the above kit, the mixers problems would be the same; wind, aircraft, camera noise, the proverbial whisperers and so on. Whatever equipment is at our disposal at the end of the day, a good mixer will provide a decent track given just half a chance. So let's not over complicate our task by accepting technology which leaves us not knowing our arse from our elbow.

David Wynne Jones
Harpden, Hertfordshire

GOOD NEWS ABOUT LECTURE TAPES

The Cinema Audio Society (CAS), our American equivalent, has given us permission to distribute copies of their meeting tapes to any AMPS members who wish to hear them.

At present, two are available - 'Original Sound Rerecording Requirements' and 'Use of Radio Mics'. Both are highly recommended listening.

Remember too, copies of our own meeting tapes are still available to members free of charge. These include :

- Stereo Sound for Cinema & TV : General Forum
- Dolby Systems: John Iles / Tim Partridge
- Time Code Practices: Panel of Speakers
- Keycode: Tony Harcourt, FBKSTS, Kodak
- Introduction to Tapeless Recording & Hard Disk Editing:
Yasmin Hashmi, Sypha
- Nagra-D Presentation: J Rudling / C Burton, Nagra UK
- Fostex PD2 Presentation: Richard Wear, Fostex UK
- Alesis ADAT Presentation: G Robson & P Scrivener,
Sound Technology plc

Interested members please phone Bob Allen on 0284 850332

ELSTREE FILM & TELEVISION FESTIVAL

Borehamwood made movies back on the big screen

The Festival is recommended as a great nostalgic trip for all AMPS members who worked on movies made in Borehamwood when Boreham-UK was the equal of Holly-USA. The following is a list of events:.

Sunday 19th June 2pm, The Venue Cinema

Marathon screening of *Star Wars* trilogy (*Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*) with two intervals. £6.00 for triple bill

Tuesday 21st June 7.30 & 8.30pm, Borehamwood Library.

Showing of 1989 BBC documentary *Elstree - Britain's Hollywood*. Tickets are free but must be applied for in advance on (081) 953 1962

Saturday 25th June, 8pm, The Venue Cinema

Elstree Film Festival Anniversary Evening - A celebration of 80 years of movie making. Showings of *The Elstree Story* and *Precious Images* with music from the BBC Elstree Concert band and celebrity guests. Tickets £4.00, £2.50 and concessions.

Monday 27th June 2.30 and 8.00pm, The Venue Cinema

That's Entertainment 2 - a compilation film encapsulating the Golden Era of MGM movies

Wednesday 28th June, 8.00pm, The Venue Cinema

Where Eagles Dare - Richard Burton, Clint Eastwood

Sunday 24th June

Open Day BBC Elstree Centre - Entrance by ticket only.

The Venue Cinema is located in Elstree Way, Borehamwood. Box office (081) 207 6655. Matinee screenings £1.25; evenings £2.75 and £1.75, concessions

AMPS NEW MEMBERS

FULL MEMBERSHIP

PETER HODGES

RAYMOND FRENCH

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

MICHAEL TRUSSLER

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

DAVE HILDYARD

GEOFF LATTER

ERIC PALMER

CONGRATULATIONS BOB!

On behalf of the membership of AMPS the Council would like to extend its congratulations to Bob Allen on being made a Fellow of the British Kinematograph Sound & Television Society. His citation reads as follows:

"Robert Allen, a highly esteemed location sound recordist of many years standing, through his involvement with the Society's training programme, helped organise and run sound recording courses. With publication of papers on the same subject, he has played a significant part in helping young sound recordists develop their skills. He has given much time and energy to the Society's training programme and in so doing has contributed greatly to ensuring a high level of operation in the sound recording branch of our industries. It is for this work that Robert Allen is awarded a Fellowship."

(PS: Bob didn't know this was going in the Newsletter - 'THE OTHER EDITOR')

A Soundman's Director



Mai Zetterling, May 24 1925 - March 15 1994

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the death of Mai Zetterling.

Mai was a soundman's director; always intent on using sound creatively in her films. Always keen to get the best possible original tracks. Always aware and tolerant of sound technical problems. Always appreciative of the efforts of her sound crew.

I first met her in 1963 when she needed tracks recorded for her short film 'War Games'. One of the effects required was a toy cap pistol firing. My wife was quite startled answering the phone one day, hearing a foreign accented female voice saying, "Tell Bob, s'gun is in s'porst. He will know what to do with it"! Mai and Shirley also became good friends and many times laughed at the possible implications the message may have had.

I was privileged to work for Mai on a number of her short films and two of her features.

"Flickorna" ('The Girls') was a Swedish feature; the dialogue all in Swedish and I, the sound mixer, the only non-Swedish speaker on the production. With a Swedish boom op and Mai directing a great cast of Swedish artists my task wasn't difficult. Speech clarity and extraneous noise problems are much the same in any language.

The general public probably knows Mai better as an actress having starred in many top line British movies during the fifties and sixties: movies which are now enjoying re-runs on Channel 4 afternoons.

Mai was also a successful script writer, novelist, a great cook and a super person.

She will be missed as a sensitive and creative film maker. And I will miss her as a very good friend.

Bob Allen

BAFTA & The Oscars 1994 SOUND AWARDS

OSCARS

BEST SOUND ACHIEVEMENT

Nominations:

An American Legend	Cliffhanger
The Fugitive	Geronimo
Jurassic Park	Schindler's List

and the winner is JURASSIC PARK

Garry Summers, Shawn Murphy, Ron Judkins

BEST SOUND EFFECTS EDITING

Nominations:

Cliffhanger	The Fugitive
Jurassic Park	

and the winner is JURASSIC PARK

Gary Rydstrom, Richard Hymns

BAFTA

FEATURE FILM BEST SOUND

Nominations:

The Fugitive	Jurassic Park
The Piano	Schindler's List

and the winner is THE FUGITIVE

John Leveque, Bruce Stambler, Becky Sullivan, Scott Smith, Donald Mitchell, Michael Herbeck, Frank Montano

TV FACTUAL BEST SOUND

Nominations:

The Killing of Kennedy	
Hookers, Hustlers, Pimps and their Johns	
Isles of Scilly	Traffic Jam

and the winner is TRAFFIC JAM

Stuart Bruce, Bob Jackson, Kathy Heaton

TV FICTION BEST SOUND

Nominations:

Between The Lines	Casualty
Lipstick on your Collar	The Snapper

and the winner is THE SNAPPER

Kieran Horgan, Peter Joly, Dan Gane, Peter Maxwell, Mick Boggis

DOLBY SR-D UPDATE

As part of their continuing promotion of the SR-D digital cinema format, Dolby issued some new figures on where the UK stood in May. At that time there were 27 SR-D cinemas, 3 laboratories equipped to print SR-D film and 3 optical transfer facilities equipped to make SR-D negatives. In comparison, the US had 245 cinemas, 4 laboratories and 4 optical transfer facilities. On the film side, there have been 60 original productions and 53 foreign language versions released in SR-D format to date.

WARNING

IF YOU USE RADIO MICROPHONES, YOU MUST READ THIS

Under the Wireless & Telegraph Act of 1949, a licence to operate is required before handheld microphone transmitters of over 2 milliwatts and up to 10 milliwatts of power; or body microphone transmitters of over 2 and up to 50 milliwatts of Effective Radiated Power (ERP), can be legally used.

Illegal use could result in immediate confiscation of equipment as evidence, a fine of up to £5000 and or 6 month imprisonment on summary conviction, or conviction on indictment, an unlimited fine, two years imprisonment and forfeiture of equipment.

CATEGORIES OF USE

☐ Regulated equipment conforming to performance specification MPT 1350 for general use in the United Kingdom - *Licence Required*

Body microphone transmitters, maximum 50 mW effective radiated power. Handheld microphone transmitters maximum 10 mW effective radiated power.

☐ Regulated equipment conforming to performance specification MPT 1350 for use on fixed sites in the United Kingdom - *Licence Required*

Body microphone transmitters, maximum 50 mW effective radiated power. handheld microphone transmitters maximum 10 mW effective radiated power.

☐ Equipment conforming to MPT 1311 or 1345 using frequencies of 173.8, 174.1, 174.5, 174.8 and 175 MHz with a maximum effective radiated power of 2 mW is deregulated and does not require a licence to operate in the United Kingdom. Due to the restricted power, this category is not suitable for professional use, however use could be made of it for 'on set' headphone links.

A NEW DEAL

Radio Microphone Information Update compiled by Sandy MacRae & Ken Weston

ASP Frequency Management Ltd, agents of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have recently introduced a multi channel licence for use by independent programme makers. The multi channel licence covers 19 frequencies allocated in three groups. They are:-

5 VHF Frequencies: 191.9, 199.7, 200.3, 208.3 and 216.1 MHz

7 UHF Frequencies (low): 854.9, 855.275, 855.9, 856.175, 856.575, 857.625 and 857.950 MHz

7 UHF Frequencies (high): 852.2, 858.65, 860.4, 860.9, 861.2, 861.55 and 861.75 MHz

All frequencies are restricted to the max 10 mW ERP for handheld use and max 50 mW ERP for body worn use.

These frequencies are for the sole use of the independent sector of the Film & TV Industry in the UK and have not been allocated to any other users. This means that when using these frequencies, the freelance sound mixer with the appropriate licence can safely and legally operate radio microphone channels on most locations (including studios and theatres) for feature films, TV series, broadcast and corporate productions

There are however restrictions on the VHF frequencies in Northern Ireland, The Isle of man and the Channel Isles. The Radio Communication

Agency should be consulted if work in these places is intended.

The licence fee for each group is £130 per annum which is considerably cheaper than the £110 per annum each for any of the frequencies previously allocated to the independent sector.

There is also what is known as a Band Edge Licence for use at fixed sites; a fixed site being a building consisting of four walls and a roof. The licence is available on a yearly or a renewable seven day basis. It covers the VHF frequencies of 173.7 to 175.1 MHz and spot frequencies 176.4 and 177 MHz, operating on the 10/50 milliwatt effective power regulations with equipment conforming to the MPT 1350 type approval

In a studio complex, each set not under the same roof requires a licence taken out by the site owner. Studio renters can operate under the umbrella of the site licence on the licensed frequencies. These licences would not apply to filming in the studio grounds or back lot where either independent or broadcast frequencies appropriate to the production must be used.

Obviously this is not very practical for film studios and it is recommended that freelance mixers make their own provision to use radio microphones legally on these sites. ➡

LICENCES NOT YOUR OWN

When radio microphone channels are rented from a hire company with their own licence, an SAP 3 form covering the end user must be completed and signed by the hirer

It is possible for freelance mixers to use frequencies allocated to the BBC and ITV companies whilst working on productions directly commissioned through an independent producer. Both the BBC and ITV have offices and staff to regulate this use. It is simply a matter of making a phone call to the office stating the production, production company and general geographic area in which the radio microphones are to be used.

As there is a frequency sharing arrangement between the BBC and ITV operated by a Joint Frequency Management Group (JFMG), it is possible, subject to availability, to licence a BBC frequency for use on an ITV production and vice versa.

The administration staff at both BBC and ITV offices are very helpful, putting emphasis on making the production happen. They ask for as much notice as possible to carry out the necessary checks and paper work for which there is no charge. Telephone numbers are listed at the end of this article.

USERS BEWARE

Users should be aware that the VHF frequency of 199.7 MHz can be reserved for high power use allowing up to 1 watt ERP on specific sites, with licences issued for periods up to 7 days. Use is restricted to mainland UK only. In the south East of England to the east of a line drawn between Sheerness and Bexhill, Transmission Power is limited to 100 milliwatts.

Intended for use on TV outside broadcasts such as Golf tournaments, freelance mixers using 199.7 MHz with the 10/50 ERP maximums in the vicinity may experience interference. However as directional transmission aerials are required for the high power operation risk of interfering with other users is minimal.

Users should also be aware of the importance of Type Approval as only equipment conforming to this standard can be licensed. This could mean that any radio microphone equipment purchased outside the UK may not be legal even if on the correct frequency.

LISTENING FOR OTHERS

Radio cue programme/talkback link frequencies are only licensable on a specified fixed site for multiples of seven day periods. These are aimed at theatres, TV studios and outside broadcast applications. There is no frequency allocated for multiple location use so this provision is fairly useless for freelance mixers. It is permissible however to use any legal licensed radio microphone frequency for this purpose. Whilst it may not be

desirable to surrender one of the new regulated frequencies for this use, it might be worth considering using the deregulated radio mic frequencies of 173.8 to 175.0 MHz conforming to MPT 1345 at the 2 milliwatt power levels. These frequencies are sufficiently spaced from the regulated frequencies and should cause no interference problems. Because of their low radiated power fading may be a hazard but since their only use is supplying monitor headsets for directors and script supervisors, this could be tolerated.

This systems would require no licence and equipment is available on the non-professional market at reasonable prices. Some of our radio microphone manufacturers are looking into this idea of manufacturing low power deregulated equipment tailored to the needs of the freelance sound mixer. It is well to remember that there would be a problem using this system on a fixed site with a Band Edge type licence if the 173.8 to 177 MHz equipment is in use.

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Precipitated by a clash between a London West End theatre and a BBC radio news team both operating on the same frequency, the Department of Trade & Industry in the 1980s investigated the radio microphone situation. To avoid further problems, frequencies in both VHF and UHF bands were allocated to BBC, ITV, theatres and conference halls and independent programme makers. The BBC got 67 frequencies; ITV 47; theatres and conference halls 32 and the independent programme makers a meagre 13.

The reasons for the small number of frequencies allocated to the Independent programme makers was because so few licences had been taken out for the already existing 173.8 to 175 MHz frequencies allocated to film production, it was considered by the DTI that there was little usage of radio microphones in the independent sector.

This was quite wrong of course but difficult to prove as so many operators in film and independent production had been using their equipment illegally.

With the introduction of this Multi Channel licence it is imperative that mixers owning their own radio equipment take out a licence or licences in the group or groups of their choice.

There is great pressure on the Radio Communications Agency to provide more spectrum for other high power users making these frequencies unsuitable for low powered radio microphones. If insufficient licences are taken out using the 19 Multi Channel frequencies, then it could again be considered that the independent sector had little use for them and the frequencies reallocated for other use. ➡

(Radio microphones continued)

For those with radio mics on any of the old frequencies, it is quite practical to have the frequencies changed within the same band. The major radio mic manufacturers have a price structure to realign the older systems and are willing to carry out the work to the correct specification.

Because the bandwidth and the effective radiated power still have to conform to MPT 1350 type approval, it's not simply a matter of 'changing the crystals'. It is however a cheaper option than replacing the units.

VHF OR UHF ?

The choice between VHF and UHF frequencies is very much a personal one. It is true to say that UHF frequencies are much less susceptible to interference than VHF. Body absorption however is greater the higher the frequency, thus the usable range is reduced making it almost essential to use diversity receiver systems to improve the range.

The same diversity receiver systems can be

used in the VHF band to reduce interference and extend the usable range.

Another point to be considered is that UHF radio mics consume about 50% more battery power - not a major problem with modern alkaline batteries but should be taken into account.

In UHF's favour, particularly when using the diversity receiver system, the aerials are smaller and less cumbersome than VHF aerials.

So you pay your money and take your choice but please licence them.

A PLEA TO USERS

It is now certainly a matter of using the frequencies legally, or losing them. It is in all our interests that as many licences as possible are taken out to keep the frequencies available.

The licence application forms are relatively simple to complete and it is only a matter of paying the annual fee of £130 for a Multi Channel Independent Programme Makers Licence. A quick phone call to ASP Frequency Management will get you an application form. Please do it to support the industry and make yourself legal.

CONTACTS

For Information and Licence application forms:

ASP Frequency Management Ltd

Edgcott House, Lawn Hill, Edgcott,
Aylesbury, Bucks HP18 0QW
Tel: (0296) 770458, Fax: (0296) 770423

For ITV, Channel 4 and SC4
commissioned productions:

**Broadcasters Joint Frequency
Management Group Ltd**

Richard Greenleaf or Philip Harris
Tel: (071) 737 8443 / 8434, Fax: (071) 737 8644

For BBC commissioned productions:

Steve Dunn

Tel: (081) 993 9312, Fax: (081) 992 6701

For Independent radio:

Derrick Connolly

Tel: (0909) 731317

Still Uncertain? Ask Ken Weston or Sandy MacRae via AMPS

APRS '94 Exhibition

This year's APRS Exhibition is to be held from June 22 - 24 at Olympia 2, Kensington, West London. This is the 27th year of the exhibition and aside from the large exhibition of professional audio equipment, the show will see the introduction of 'key industry briefings' - forty minute seminars on specific topics.

Briefings of particular interest include the ISDN demonstration by Bill Foster of The Audio

Exchange in conjunction with Dolby showing the ability to link remote facilities (June 22, 12.30 and June 24, 1.30); 'Are You Getting The Most From DAT?' with Phil Wilton of Sony (June 23, 4.30); Radio Frequency Management with Brian Copsey of the ASPFM - as covered in this issue of the Newsletter; and the Institute of Broadcast Sound's Forum on hard disk editing systems in the world of post production.

Opening hours are 10.00AM to 6.00PM on all three days.

BKSTS Training

Sound Recording - Level 2

21/22 June 1994 at Pinewood Studios, Iver Heath, Bucks

COURSE INFORMATION SHEET

Aimed at :

Candidates who have a good knowledge of location and studio analogue sound techniques, who may also have attended the Level 1 course. Candidates will have access to a range of sound equipment including digital recording and time codes. The maximum number of delegates is 6

Course Content :

A two day course of demonstrations and hands on training for sound recordists who require practical knowledge of digital recording and microphones, the correct use of time codes and the pros and cons of documentary and drama stereo.

The above techniques will also be discussed relative to linear and non-linear film and video post production requirements.

Course Tutor : John Lunsden

Course Fees :

BKSTS Member	£260+VAT = £305.50
Non-member	£290+VAT = £340.75
*Freelance	£130+VAT = £152.75

* This course is subsidised by the Skillset Freelance Training Fund. Freelancers who wish to take advantage of this reduced rate must first become members of the BKSTS.

Application forms are available from this office and staged payments towards membership may be made. The Fund will also contribute up to £35 to the cost of overnight accommodation and up to 50% of the cost of travel for freelancers living more than fifty miles from the location of the training (Standard class rail fare or agreed mileage allowance).

For further information and application forms for any of the courses please contact Karen Kendon at BKSTS Training on:

Tel: 071-242 8400 or Fax: 071-405 3560

SUPPORTED BY
SKILLSET
Freelance Training Fund

British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society
M6-14 Victoria House, Vernon Place, London WC1B 4DF

Overheard at the May Council Meeting:

Hugh Strain: Sorry, there are only fruit or biscuits tonight.

David Old: Oh, that's fine. I'm something of a biscuit connoisseur myself.

Peter Musgrave: Really? Does that mean your VU meters are marked in Peek Freen?

.....Collapse of stout party!

FOR SALE

☐ AIWA HHB 1 PRO DAT Recorder. Has done one series and two docs (23 tapes), as new with unused Nicad - £500; or with Sub 'C' Nicad system, 4 batts, voltmeter, car fast charger - £600. Call 081 995 9057 / 0836 6261912

☐ MICROSOFT PC program 'Works For Windows' Vn2.0, seven disks and full manuals etc. Excellent WP, spreadsheet, charting, database and drawing abilities. Under a year old - £25. Ring Peter Musgrave 0895 635010

☐ TWO AUDIO LTD RMS 14 dual receivers, four Audio Ltd RMS 14 transmitters, leads and spare battery packs, diopoles - £1,600; Two Audio Ltd RMS 2000 receivers, two Audio Ltd RMS 2000 transmitters, leads and diopoles - £1,600. All prices exclude VAT. Tel/Fax Ian Voight 081 543 0036

☐ SONY PCM 2000 portable R-DAT recorder (smaller than a Nagra or Fostex PD2 but larger than a Technics SV260A or Sony ProDAT 10). Records externally produced LTC. Powered by an NP1 battery or an external 12V supply. Complete with shoulder strap and combined PSU/NP1 battery charger - £1,000 plus VAT, offers? Barrie White 0446 774708

TO LET

☐ HOLIDAY FLAT at Fuengirola on the Costa del Sol. Sleeps six, huge pool, good facilities. Ring Peter Musgrave 0895 635010

This space is available to members who wish to sell or buy equipment or other items. Please send your ad to The Editor at the address on page one.