

Heard the News

**Big Sound and Picture Day
ASSG/ASE seminar**



Vale Syd Butterworth

**Julius Chan surveys
the state of the industry**



Awards 2002 call for entries and much more in this issue!

June was a very sad one for us with the loss of veteran sound recordist and ASSG member, Syd Butterworth. His death came unexpectedly and we offer Syd's family and friends our deepest sympathy. Syd won the ASSG 2001 Screen Sound Award for Sound Recording for his work on *Lantana* last year. He will be remembered as one of the gentlemen of the sound industry. There are further tributes to Syd from those who knew him well, later in this newsletter.

Sound Standards

Sound standards for digital television have been raised a number of times by members as an area of great concern. There is a general feeling that there are no standards. The next ASSG seminar would like to discuss this subject. The ASSG is interested in including presentations from members, television networks, distribution companies, technical evaluations, SMPTE and any other interested party. We would like to also include audience participation in the form of questions and answers.

We hope this will be part of the first step in establishing new guidelines for sound practices for digital television in Australia.

Some questions raised include:

- * What are acceptable levels?
- * What metering should be used?
- * Can there now be a greater dynamic range?
- * Why are levels accepted by one network, rejected by another?
- * What do the television networks say?
- * What about the future of 5.1 and Dolby E?
- * What is acceptable for international delivery?
- * Do different countries require different deliveries?
- * Who does the technical evaluations for programs and who decides what is acceptable?
- * What equipment do they do it on?

Please contact ASSG president, Stephen R Smith, to be included in this important event at president@assg.org.au or Tel: (02) 9906 2960.

Membership Renewal

It's membership renewal time and time to add your support for another year. The guild is the membership, and relies on both the financial support as well as membership input. The ASSG cannot survive without it.

While the committee is made up of unpaid volunteers, there are costs involved in running the ASSG. There are administration costs, accounting costs, the website, the newsletter, functions and our Awards. While the Awards are primarily funded by the generosity of our sponsors, membership fees fund other events.

We want the ASSG to have a strong membership base and we want members, particularly interstate members, to feel there is value for their fees. We don't want members to have to subsidise events that they will not have the opportunity to attend.

Over the past years there have been some members who have not kept up with their membership fees and are others who are

finding it difficult to continue on in today's difficult, and uncertain, industry. However, by simply not paying membership fees does not mean a member has resigned. Members are required to remain financial.

So, after much discussion, the committee has three important announcements.

1. The annual membership fees are to be reduced.
2. There will be a one-off amnesty on fees in arrears.
3. There will be an "Early Bird" offer of reduced annual fees for early payment.

Any member, who has outstanding fees prior to the 2002-2003 financial year, can wipe the slate clean by rejoining for a further 12 months and paying their new fees up front.

We ask every one to renew as soon as possible to take advantage of the special early bird offer as well.

The new fees for the Australian Screen Sound Guild from July 2002 are:

- Full membership - \$75 per annum (plus GST)
- or Early Bird offer - \$65 per annum (plus GST)
- Associate member - \$50 per annum (plus GST)
- or Early Bird offer - \$40 per annum (plus GST)

To take advantage of the Early Bird offer, payment must be received at our address, Suite 360, 3 Holtermann Street, Crows Nest before 5pm, 13 September, 2002.

To take advantage of the one-off amnesty on fees in areas, the same deadline applies, payment of membership renewal must be received before 5pm, 13 September, 2002. We will not extend the deadline.

As a result of the fees reduction, future events will be paid for on a "user pays" basis with a minimal door charge.

Contributions

This newsletter is always hungry for news or story contributions from members. If you have had an interesting experience on a job and feel the need to share it, please send it to us first.

If you have any photos of great moments in sound we would like to see those too. Or if you simply have a piece of gossip... let us know

Please send any offerings to: president@assg.org.au

2002 Awards dinner

The Annual Screen Sound Awards dinner has a new date. To work in with film screening dates for judging, the Awards have been moved back one week.

The Awards will now be held on Friday, October 18, 2002 at the Watersedge Restaurant, Pier One, Sydney.

Mark the social event of the year in your diaries now!

Stephen R. Smith
ASSG President
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Butters wins BAFTA

Former Audio Loc sound editor Craig Butters has won a British Academy of Film and TV Award (BAFTA) in the category of best documentary series sound for his sound effects editing on the British series *Hell In The Pacific*. The series screened in Australia on the ABC late last year.



Craig, who spent more than eight years at Audio Loc cutting his teeth and a heck of a lot of sound, left Australia eighteen months ago and after nine months of touring through Europe arrived in London where he has found himself consistently in demand and busy on worthwhile projects.

He was the sound designer on the recent Vinnie Jones picture *Mean Machine*, following which he returned to Australia in November last year to work as co-sound designer on the Imax movie Australia, *Land Beyond Time* and the Alex Proyas picture *Garage Days*. He returned to London in February and has been busy fielding offers ever since. John Patterson, who worked with Craig on more than twenty features said he was not surprised that Craig's excellent work and attention to detail was finding favour in the UK. "In the six years we worked together he proved himself to be the most intelligent and creative sound assistant I have had the pleasure of working with. He also deserves an award for his prodigious beer consumption and another one for his excellent guitar playing. I wish him all the best in London and I am sure we will hear a lot more of him (pun intended)."

Fairlight acquires DSP IP

Fairlight has acquired the intellectual property of the now-defunct DSP Media, including DSP's V motion and AV transfer products. Members of DSP's core R&D team, including founder Joseph Narai, have joined the company.

Narai said as funding was withdrawn just as DSP was getting established globally, it was logical to work with the Fairlight team.

"Our initial focus on AV transfer and V motion has delivered immediate results in enhancing the Fairlight product range by improving connectivity and video integration," he said.

"The future is also exciting as we are looking at combining the best of DSP's technology with the Fairlight's current state-of-the-art products."

Fairlight launched new releases of AV transfer and V motion as Fairlight branded products at NAB 2002 in Las Vegas.

Existing DSP customers are currently being supported by a third party company based in Australia however, Fairlight will not continue development on DSP's legacy editors.

BEEPS screens in HDTV

Queensland post production facility BEEPS has launched BEEPS Gold, a new theatre to allow film producers and directors to view and grade their film dailies in a digital cinema environment.

Located opposite the Warner Roadshow Studios at Oxenford on the Gold Coast, the cinema will show images projected in high definition on to a 5 x 3 metre standard cinema screen.

The facility features a 20-seat theatre and utilises the ITK Millennium telecine to grade and transfer film at 2K, High Definition or Standard Definition. It supports all of the standard digital tape formats including the Panasonic High Definition D5 Digital VTR which records and plays a multitude of HD formats including 1080/50i, 1080/60i and 1080/24p. Images can also be transferred in Cineon 2K Data format at 15 frames per second.

Audio Loc links to the Roxy Cinema

Audio Loc is now able to provide a projected screening at the Roxy Cinema in Sydney, playing the 5.1 soundtrack at film speed direct from Fairlight files in the company's Crystal Palace mixing theatre.

The audio routed to the Roxy can be either two printed 6-track mixes or two mixes derived from the Crystal Palace mix busses. The cinema can automatically switch between the two 6-channel mix feeds, which means that technically, there are 12 audio lines and two timecode lines linking the Roxy and the machine room.

Spool changes can be handled automatically for a seamless continuous screening, with the two 35mm projectors in the Roxy outputting a user-defined timecode set by an Alpermann and Velte timecode converter. These two time code outputs are fed to two Fairlights in the facility.

For example, the first projector would output 01.00.00.00 code and the Spool 1 audio would lock and chase it. The second projector would output 02.00.00.00 at spool change, and our Spool 2 audio would chase it. When the projectionist executes a spool change it triggers the appropriate audio playback.

This is a great cost and time saving innovation for all film-speed screenings.

For more info, please visit our website www.audioloc.com.au or contact Mary Dennison, Audio Loc Sound Design Pty Ltd 101 Eton Road Lindfield, NSW 2070 Phone: 61 02 9880 7081 Fax: 61 02 9880 7082

ClarityEQ announces NHT alliance

Digital signal processing (DSP) technology company ClarityEQ Pty Limited will develop exclusive processing circuitry and software for US speaker manufacturer NHT, specifically designed for NHT's reference speaker system that will be introduced later this year. ClarityEQ currently offers products that feature its proprietary EQ CALIBRATED processing to correct and improve speaker/room 'collaboration'.



ClarityEQ co-founders Kim Ryrie (l) and Paul Glendenning with the PDC-2.6 active DSP loudspeaker correction processor.

NHT's new system, which is still in the development stage, will be based around a two-way active speaker system, plus a three-way center channel and subwoofer system that makes up a complete surround package. It will feature a DSP engine designed by ClarityEQ to maximize driver performance dynamically, significantly reducing linear and non-linear distortion, while maintaining sonic neutrality at all power levels.

Digidesign/Rocket Network offer secure file exchange solution

Digidesign and Rocket Network have introduced DigiDelivery, a product that allows users to quickly and securely send any type of files – Pro Tools sessions, video, graphics, text, etc - to any email address.

DigiDelivery, available from DigiProNet.com, uses Rocket Network's secure network to provide a reliable file delivery alternative to FTP, couriers and standard email.

DigiStudio Control 2.6 with the new DigiDelivery functionality is available to both current and new DigiStudio users as a free download. Users pay for the DigiDelivery service only when they use it. Pricing is based on file size and the number of recipients for each delivery. All DigiDeliveries are automatically encrypted.

Senders need to have a DigiStudio account to take advantage of DigiDelivery, however, deliveries are free to recipients. Upon email delivery notification, recipients will be invited to download a free version of DigiStudio Control 2.6 to access their files.

Dolby provides hardware, service support to Boeing

Boeing Digital Cinema has purchased Dolby's Digital Media Adapter (DMA8) cinema interface units and hired its Technical Services Group for the initial implementation of the Boeing's In-Cinema Equipment (ICE) suite. The work Dolby has undertaken for Boeing Digital Cinema also involves site surveys, system integration testing, and other content-management functions.

First introduced at ShowEast 2001, the DMA8 Digital Media Adapter allows cinemas to decode multiple digital audio formats such as PCM, broadcast Dolby Digital, and Dolby E from multiple sources, including satellite, servers or fibre, and feed them into their existing cinema sound systems. Furthermore, with the technical specifications of digital cinema still unclear, the DMA8 has the built-in processing capacity to ensure it can be upgraded and provide future performance no matter what formats become popular down the line.

Digidesign launches Pro Tools training

Digidesign has launched the Training and Education Program, a program that lends support to Pro Tools users through a network of education partners offering a specialised training curriculum, online certification testing, and promotion of certified experts and operators.

Digidesign's new program will compliment Avid's long-standing training efforts through AAEC (Avid Authorized Education Center) and utilise all Avid training facilities. Digidesign will also partner with additional centres to expand Pro Tools training further worldwide.

One of the first of these new centres certified by Digidesign is Full

Sail Real World Education in Orlando, Florida. Full Sail already employs over 20 Pro Tools TDM systems within their curriculum, empowering students to enter the workplace with real hands-on experience. The addition of Pro Tools certification will help ensure their readiness as audio professionals, and provide additional credibility to secure future employment.

For the more detailed information and a current of list of training locations, visit the training area of Digidesign's Web site at <http://training.digidesign.com> or www.digidesign.com.

Blu-ray proposed as OD format

Nine of the world's largest electronics companies have agreed upon basic specifications for a blue-laser-based optical-disk system, named 'Blu-ray disk', and plan to have the first version of the specification finalised and ready for licensing within the next few months. The format is being aimed initially at recording of high-definition television video – an application in which more than 10GB of storage space is eaten up with just one hour of video – but for the industry as a whole marks a milestone in the road towards systems offering even more data storage than DVD.

Blu-ray disks will be rewritable, 12-centimetre disks and have a data capacity of around 27GB, enough for two hours of high-definition digital television. They will employ blue lasers rather than red lasers, which are used in DVD and CD players, which means the laser beam can be focused onto a smaller area of the disk surface. In turn, this means less real estate is needed to store one bit of data and so more data can be stored on a disk.

New ASSG website

Check out our new and improved website at www.assg.org.au. Email us with your feedback and let us know what extra information and features you'd like to see on the site.

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In Memory of Syd Butterworth

By Don Connolly

It was a great shock to all his friends in the film industry to hear of the untimely death in an unfortunate car accident of sound recordist Syd Butterworth. I have been asked to write a few words in remembrance and have decided to confine my remarks to the days at the ABC almost forty years ago when Syd transferred from the PMG, where he had been involved with ABC Radio, and joined the Film Department at the Gore Hill Studios.

I had not been at the ABC very long myself, having migrated from the feature film industry, and after about eight months took over the Sound Department from Geoff Daniels.

There were very few people at that time with any knowledge of film recording and with the ABC Film Department expanding rapidly we were desperately seeking people with some recording experience. In this regard, Syd was a Godsend, he had been involved with recording for radio and readily adapted to the new medium, becoming a respected member of an enthusiastic team. Syd had worked with Spike Milligan in radio and like myself, who had worked on television commercials with Spike, was a great *Goon Show* fan, so we hit it off from the start. His enthusiasm for the Goons earned him the title of "Sydney Buttergoon". The ABC was the premier training ground in the sixties and Syd worked on all the top program including drama, documentary, news and current affairs. During the Vietnam war there were two sure ways to get into Vietnam, conscription in one of the services or go with the ABC. Syd did his tour with *Four Corners*.

As was general practice, the top grade recordists also did stints in the mixing theatre, and so gained better knowledge of just how a picture is put together, a great asset when recording in the field. Syd accomplished all attributes with enthusiasm. He was one of the industry's gentlemen and with the ability to work "with and for" people, so necessary in the industry; with his great sense of humour he was very popular with all who were fortunate enough to work with him.

I always remember the day in the transfer suite when he announced he was getting married and Fred Pickering, who at the time was delving into astrology said, "Ah, a Taurus wedding". Syd immediately broke into song with, "I'm getting married in the Taurus, Ding dong the bulls are going to chime!". I will leave Syd's later achievements in the industry and his violin making to others who were more closely associated at those times, for sound recordists rarely work with other sound recordists. Syd and I have been good mates now for forty years. We will all miss him and his passing is a great loss to film sound recording. What more can I say other than to recall a verse of Omar Khyam that says it all.

"The moving finger writes,
And having writ, moves on,
Nor all your piety and wit
Can lure it back to cancel
half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a
word of it."



Vale Syd Butterworth

By Graham McKinney

Syd's work as a recordist on such a fine list of films speaks for itself. He had a great sense of humour and was a very modest and dedicated person who inspired his students at AFTRS, and was held in high respect by all who worked with him. To quote many who knew him, Syd was a "true gentleman".

He was a lover of the Arts in general, but his main passion from an early age was music. Even as a schoolboy, he took himself off to symphony concerts, and over the years he acquired a staggering knowledge of orchestras, conductors, musicians and instruments.

He had a deep appreciation of the skills, discipline and artistic collaboration that make up a performance, and this had a big influence on his approach to music recording when working for the PMG and ABC. He admired technology, but was adamant that it should in no way hinder or change the original performance. Similar respect was extended to directors, actors and all departments in the process of film-making.

Syd's favourite instrument was the violin, and in the early 90's he attended a violin-making course. Shortly after, he moved to an old farm cottage in Windeyer, a half hour out of Mudgee, where he much enjoyed being part of a small community. Over the last 10 years he produced 12 violins, a viola, and had plans for a cello. He never sacrificed his developing craft for commercial gain, and was always striving for a consistent beauty of tone and playability that perhaps only a musician could fully appreciate.

During that period he valued highly his ongoing working relationship with Ray Lawrence and Cate Jarman on their commercials for Window and the Sydney Film Co., and was very proud to have been involved in the making of *Lantana*, which he considered the highlight of his career.

Though slight in build, Syd had the constitution of an ox, and recovered very quickly from a quadruple bypass back in 1990. This didn't deter him from a long list of commercials and tackling *Spider and Rose* in 1993. Nor did neck surgery and heavy radiation for a tumour in 1996 prevent him taking on *Lantana*, despite some physical limitations.

Syd was a most generous human being. It was a pleasure to know him and a privilege to boom for him.

Syd's Sound Credits

Lantana (2001)
Spider and Rose (1994)
Sky Trackers (1990) (TV)
Kokoda Crescent (1989)
Touch the Sun: Peter & Pompey (1988) (TV)
The Harp in the South (1987) TV Series
Poor Man's Orange (1987) TV Series
The Right Hand Man (1987)
Travelling North (1987)
For Love Alone (1986)
Burke and Wills (1985)
Five Mile Creek (1984) TV Series
Careful, He Might Hear You (1983)
Goodbye Paradise (1983)
The Wild Duck (1983)
Running on Empty (1982)
Highest Honour (1982)

ASSG/ASE seminar

By Jane St Vincent Welch and Anna Craney

About 60 people attended the Big Sound and Vision Day, an afternoon seminar jointly organised by the Australian Screen Sound Guild and the Australian Screen Editors on Saturday June 1 at the NIDA Theatre.

Everyone seemed to arrive on the dot of five past two and then got down to cheerful talk about who was doing what, when and why. Then, realising we were all there to learn something, the audience raced in to hear Andrea Lang and her welcome for the first speaker, Stephen Smith, president of the ASSG and owner of Tracks. Stephen began by explaining how important it was for us to be there.

“I think it’s a good idea the two guild’s work together on areas where we have a common interest to open up communication.”

He then introduced Julius Chan and Phil Purcell who would talk about how this could be done.

Julius Chan

Julius Chan was introduced as a self confessed techno Nazi.



Julius Chan

Julius started by introducing us to some colourful soundies’ acronyms: PEBKAC – problem exists between keyboard and chair; FUBAR – fucked up beyond all repair; and CUF – carbon unit failure. Use at your own risk. He accompanied his very entertaining and informative talk with a power point presentation of a lot of pictures of motorbikes and some rude bits.

Julius has worked on features as diverse as *Babe* and *The Hard Word*, as well as TV drama. He deals mainly with OMFs from Avid rather than EDLs. He gets very few OMFs from Lightworks and he says they’re often problematic. Running through the pros and cons of OMFs and EDLs, Julius noted that the main drawback of using OMFs for film post production was that the loading of the audio was done in the picture department where the environment is often “not very sound friendly”. Monitoring and pathways may not be correctly set-up or not of good quality and sound problems may not be identified until later, sometimes not until the final mix.

On the positive side, OMFs eliminated the double handling of media and sped

things up. For a feature EDL conform Julius allowed a week for loading and two to three days for synching and checking, whereas an OMF transfer could be done in half a day. Sometimes a disaster happens, like when the OMF of an entire scene just disappeared and they had no EDL reference! That particular job had to be manually sunk up and took days to find what takes had been used.

Communication with the sound team was the key to smooth OMF preparation, according to Julius. He likes to go to the picture facility when the OMF is being done “to check the right buttons are being pushed”.

One bit of software he would like to see in picture facilities is Digidesign’s DigiTranslator, which allows picture editors to open OMFs in a ProTools session to check it’s all correct. In the meantime, Julius recommended having the spotting session at the sound facility that could serve a dual purpose to check the OMF transfer and sound quality.

Julius said he would like to see “big, long, nasty handles”, up to 10 seconds from picture editors. Assistant picture editors could also help sound editors by making separate bins for wild lines, spot fx and atmos, which could then make up part of the OMF transfer.

Philip Purcell

Philip Purcell works mainly on television series such as *Getaway* and *RPA*. He has hours or days to work on projects so OMF has been very helpful. Previously, EDL conform was a luxury – the editor would often have to output two or four tracks from the Avid to tape to be mixed with no handles unless track space allowed overlaps.

Philip works on stand-alone Fairlight systems and is using AV transfer, a new third-party software support for Fairlight that cleans up OMFs, fulfilling the same function as DigiTranslator for ProTools. While still not yet bug-free, Philip sees it as a great leap forward.

The main drawback of OMF, according to Philip, is that it’s not standardised, everyone implements it differently. He looks forward to the introduction of AES31, an international standard currently being formulated.

With quick turnaround television that is mixed in half a day, Philip said the editor was effectively the tracklayer, so it’s important that there is some common sense in the

tracks. For example stereo pairs must be on 1&2, 3&4, 5&6 etc, not 6&7. As for handles, he’s grateful for any at all, just to allow for a cut to be a fade or for a more accurate hard cut. If there are no handles, he says, it’s better than working off the old tape cut-only output.

Editors coming on to a series needed to talk to their sound team before they digitised and also check the sample rate the other episodes had been using. If they cut an episode using a different sample rate, it means the sound team can’t use any of their library sounds.

“Generally it doesn’t make the editor’s life more difficult, it just means we’re all playing on the same field.”

Talking and making sure you both understand the terms and the technology helps stop problems recurring.

Panel discussion

Sound editor and owner of Digital City Studios Michael Gissing said he and editor Emma Hay (AFI winner for editing *Secret Safari*), said they had started the

“No OMF” Club. They found the time taken to-ing and fro-ing to get the OMF right meant there was no time advantage over an EDL conform, but there was a discernable advantage in the sound editor going back to camera tapes – the technical quality was better. Input levels could be standardised, especially when a mix of source formats could be used.

Michael reckoned EDLs for docos could be loaded in about five hours, whereas he doesn’t have the time to go over and massage the picture editor to get the OMF right.



Philip Purcell said while it was possible to convert 44.1k audio from CD to 48k, the conversion was often badly handled and could lead to some sound distortion.

Panellists recommended dubbing CD materials to DAT or Betacam and emphasised the importance of always digitising from timecoded source material, just in case an EDL conform was required.

Julius said the inclusion of dissolves and rubber-banding was no problem for ProTools, but according to Philip, they created a lot of problems for Fairlight and he recommended making a copy stripping off all effects. Philip also always advises putting two-pips on the head and tail of each track to check sync as the Fairlight tended to delete effects like fades and pull up the track by that amount. The pips helped detect any drifts of synch. The Fairlight also takes hours to create its OMF files.

Michael Gissing had some final advice to editors to help overcome the vagaries of audio set-ups in editing suites.

“Buy a pair of headphones – then you know what things sound like and you can always plug them in the front of the deck bypassing everything else.”

After a break the audience watched clips from two films – *Secret Safari* and *Stolen Generations* – edited by Emma and mixed by Michael. Michael began by declaring that in documentaries it was the content and not the performance that was at the core of the discussion-making as material may not have been shot in ideal or controllable environments. Emma said she might choose a noise interview in the street over a quieter one in an office because it told the story the best way. This created a challenge for the sound team who had to work hard to make the sound as clear as possible, especially when the interview was used as voice-over.



When creating sound for archival footage, Emma and Michael agreed there were no rules – it came down to a matter of taste and time as to how you used the sound. You must be careful that sound effects didn’t draw away from the story, but enhance it whilst remaining convincing.

Michael made the point that a run through with the editor and director was really important to understand the style and tone of the film. This is beyond the information that tracks on their own can reveal. For example, establishing where a character lives could be done through sound clues.

Michael said a hour documentary would take about six days over a two week turnaround with either OMF or EDLs.

Next to grace the stage were sound editor Andrew Plain (*Charlotte Gray*, *Lantana*, *Facing the Music*) accompanied by editor Dany Cooper (*Angel Baby*, *The Well*, *Queen of the Damned*).

Andrew talked about the studio system in the US. It was alright to lay tracks and do rough mixes in Canada, but the final mix had to be done in Hollywood – they did not trust personnel or facilities outside Los Angeles. Andrew also talked about the

strict pecking order present in a mix, as in who tells the mixer what to do, from the producer down to the sound editor. However in the mixing studio for director Michael Rymer’s *In Too Deep*, the American’s were horrified that Andrew and Dany both had a say in the final mix.

Dany said it was necessary to take the whole picture of film as a combination of light, movement, dialogue, sound effects, music and projection when cutting.

“I don’t just edit the pictures, I try to imagine the sounds as I am editing or temp them in, because they are the things that support the suspense, drama, emotion etc, all culminating in that suspense of disbelief that makes cinema,” she said.

“The pictures are like line drawings and the sound adds colour and texture and I guess where necessary, the glue.”

Dany also said sound added dramatic shape to a show.

“If I am thinking sound-wise when I cut, then my rhythms will allow space to be filled and for silence. A good sound editor enhances the work that has already been done and can take mine and a director’s work to another plane.”

Barry Fernandes

By Steve Murphy

At last year's ASSG Screen Sound Awards, the Fairlight Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Barry Fernandes, recognising his achievements during 16 years of television audio production, and his later contribution to screen sound education during 15 years at the Australian Film Television and Radio School.

Barry Fernandes started in television at Melbourne's HSV7 in 1960. His first job was tracking Lyle Hughes on boom, for the *Club 7* show, which starred Frank Wilson. Frank would test the boom team, walking just a bit further than the boom cable would allow - although, in the great tradition of the early days of live television, when he realised they had not kept up to him, he would take a few steps back to stay on-mic.

In the early days, Barry also worked in news - at a time when location news sound was recorded with an Auricon single system camera recording optical sound. He also worked as grams operator and mixer for the *Happy Hammond Show*.

Barry moved into drama, working on every episode (except the pilot) of *Homicide*. In those days Crawford's producer, Dorothy Crawford, was of the opinion that any actor who spoke up for television would lose their performance - this was television, not the stage! Leonard Teale, however, was always out to "help" Barry with more level, and would project in a way only he could. Before a take he would say confidentially into the boom mic, "I'll help you Barry"... but since everyone else was afraid of Dorothy (and losing their job), Leonard was the only one who projected, and Barry would end up chasing every line: ducking the fader for Leonard, pushing it for the others.

In those days of television, people did it all. As well as drama and variety, Barry worked on VFL (now AFL) footy broadcasts for 16 years and also worked on the broadcasts of concerts by major international acts touring Australia.

Barry remembers one Saturday making the trip all the way to Geelong for the coverage of a footy match, which was sent down the line and taped back at HSV for delayed broadcast. Barry and the crew arrived back at the station just in time for the 7pm broadcast. Watching it go to air, Jack Edwards, who had commentated the match, turned to Barry and said, "there's something wrong with the audio, Barry, but I can't tell what it is. Can you?" Well, Barry had quickly realised the problem: the commentators on air weren't Jock and his partner, Bluey Adams, but someone else! Telecom (it may have even been the PMG then) had patched the wrong feed from Geelong back to HSV.

When Barry later moved to Sydney, he continued working on the footy - covering the Sunday broadcasts of Swans games from the SCG. On these, he worked with his old mates - the key crew and commentators came up from Melbourne for the match.

The concert broadcasts were done from venues such as Melbourne's Festival Hall, Sydney Myer Music Bowl and the Sir Dallas Brookes Hall, but sometimes required travelling the country with the acts. Or even just a brief trip interstate, such as when Barry needed to record a pick-up of just a few seconds of a Rick Wakeman concert in Sydney, to cover a splat in the original Melbourne recording.

Some shows meant going on tour with the artists. In 1966 HSV7 brought *The Seekers* back to Australia, and the band and 17 crew, Barry included, travelled to Surfers Paradise, Sydney, Canberra and the Barossa Valley to produce *The Seekers Down Under*. This show was the first Australian television program produced in colour.

Barry had another brush with fame when colour television was introduced in Australia. His photo appeared on the back page of one of Melbourne's major

newspapers, the Herald Sun. The picture, with Barry seated at a Neve mixing desk, was used to publicise the start of colour television. Why use an audio operator and mixing desk to advertise colour TV? Because the desk had lots of coloured knobs!

In 1976, Barry moved to Sydney to take up a position at the then-named Film and Television School. When the School opened a year or so before, it had advertised its curriculum and the names of those who would teach there - it sounded so exciting, Barry wanted to go there and study! Instead, he made the move interstate to work there, and he stayed there until his retirement this year.

Some of the sound students Barry taught at the School include: Steve Hope, Peter Miller, Mark Lewis, Bruce Emery, Steve Murphy, Jikou Sugano, David White, Cate Cahill, Liam Egan, Robert Sullivan, Tony Murtagh, Dominic Brine, Tony Vaccher, John Dennison, Ian McLoughlin, Peter Grace, Gary Carr and Mark Ward.

This is not to mention the many students from other departments who learnt about sound from Barry, and who today are better camera operators, directors, producers etc., because of him.

As well as teaching in the fulltime courses, Barry was actively involved in the School's short courses, and special projects and secondments to other courses. Among these were courses at TAIMA, WIN TV Wollongong, Capital TV Canberra, Tamworth TV, and at AFTRS offices in Melbourne, Tasmania and Adelaide.



Barry Fernandes (second from right) with former ABC TV senior cameraman Richard Bond (second from the left) at one of the overseas ASEAN teaching jaunts.

Then there were courses for ASEAN, with time spent overseas helping many countries raise their sound standards. Barry taught in China at the Beijing Film Academy, the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, and Xian Film Studio; in Tonga for the South Pacific Commission; in Brunei at Bandar Seri Begawan for participants from six ASEAN countries. Two years later he returned to Radio Television Brunei to conduct a course on Sound Recording of Public Performances.

Other ASEAN courses were conducted in Sydney, with students from Burma, Papua-New Guinea, Fiji, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Many students were the first ever television audio operators in those countries. Others, China for example, learned valuable skills such as recording usable dialogue on location!

Whether in Australia or overseas, Barry has played a pivotal role in the production of screen sound: from the earliest days of television, doing it for the first time, to today, where the work of many leading film and television sound practitioners around Australia and South-East Asia is dependent on what they have learnt from Barry. Indeed, it could be said that Barry Fernandes has had a profound influence on everything we, and our Asian neighbours, hear on TV.

Zen and the art of working in the sound industry

By Julius Chan

It has been a tough year, so far, for practitioners of sound. Not a day goes past without the odd phone call (and I do mean odd, we are odd people) from sound editors and assistants trying to snaffle some fresh work. Work has simply not been forthcoming and for most of us, especially the feature film workers, we have been reduced to sitting around twiddling our thumbs, hoping for that certain phone call to say that the cat will be fed for a certain period of time. A quick ring around to colleagues interstate has reaffirmed the conspiracy that surrounds us. Sydney - weather's been nice, Perth - not much to do, Melbourne - not a lot more, Adelaide - a barrel of laughs, Queensland - strange things afoot.

When you look at the press floating around, it seems that the industry "couldn't be better". Just look at some of the articles in this newsletter for further proof. What with all the big name features like *Star Wars 2,3*, *Matrix 2,3*, *Scooby Doo* and all the 1000s of jobs that are being created/helped by new sound stages in NSW, QLD and VIC. We should be thriving, the politicians say we are. So what gives?

Most of the big work traipses back off overseas to LA and San Francisco sound post houses. Certainly our shooting crews are getting work, although the US producers still want to post "back home" locking Australian sound workers out. Even some local productions are heading OS. The new Heath Ledger *Ned Kelly* film is said to be posting sound back in Blighty. A co-production it seems... first they give us Sir Mick Jagger, now they take the sound away.

What loyalties does this display. None unfortunately. Thanks Gregor! The best films to work on seem to be the low-budget Aussie flicks just because they are Australian. This gives one a certain amount of pride in that we can still produce excellent films/soundtracks even with a modest budget. There is a downside side to this though. Can't afford sound stages, can't afford proper pay rates, can't afford to even put a proper sound recording team together due to costs. Our best sound recordists are actually refusing work on feature films just because the productions cannot/refuse to afford to give them the crew they require to do the job properly. As for the shooting crews, they are basically learning how to ignore the importance of sound as most of it is going to be ADR'd due to flight paths, noisy sets and uneducated crews. We have a lot of work to do to try to remedy this situation.

Things are not all that rosy in LA either. The news that I have been receiving from post houses there is grim. This has been put down to the last two SAG "strikes" and the general downturn in the US economy, not to mention the "War on Terriers" (nasty little yappy things). New Zealand is going from strength to strength with *Lord of the Rings* which has used the

talents of Aussie, Kiwi and US soundies to create what has got to be one of the best soundtracks to emerge from the lands of the long white cloud. Luckily for local workers, *LOTR's* has taken quite a few Aussie/Kiwis out of the gene pool thus giving some work for the scraps we get tossed.

All in all, it is not all doom and gloom. The current forecast looks good for work at the end of the year. We simply must wait it out.

As a sound community we must remain strong to ensure our industry survives. This means ongoing membership for our guild and education for our co-workers (read producers/directors/actors/grips etc). Assistants and students should be told that ours is not all glamour, red carpets, hob-knobbing with stars and jetting off to exotic locations. If you are in a position to teach the youngins, tell 'em how it is. Also tell 'em to join up to the guild! They are our future. You may have read about the ASSG's fee amnesty. Tell all! Time to come back to the fold and clear the slate (we're even lucky to get slates these days... mmmm).

As for my good self, I have been using the time off to investigate new techniques in arriving at corners and exiting them. This involves a nice flat white at the Road Warriors Cafe at Mt White, a motorcycling heaven just outside of Sydney. Here I can read the papers and generally tell lies about my prowess upon the bike. The unfortunate listeners are normally Ulysses Club members, a group that has membership for the over 40s/50s only whose motto is "Grow Old Disgracefully". We have come up with a theory that work and good times can be instantly ascertained by judging ones tyre wear.

I myself have been using the tread wear method of calculating a good year. This astounding theory hinges on the wear and tear on the tyres of "Grover" my trusty steed. Normally, if work is good, the tyres wear out in the middle of the tyre, due to the arduous commute to and from work battling Volvos and Mums' Big 4WD Urban Terror Units. This is not generally a good thing on a motorcycle as the bike tends to fall off the flat spot in the middle when cornering. If work is lean, the tyres are worn up to the edges due to the lack of commuting/work and the tendency to try to travel from corner to corner just for the fun of it. Other interstate bi-wheeled travellers in the sound fraternity have also noticed this puzzling phenomenon and concur with the theory's validity. The Catch 22 with the tread wear method is that when the tyres are wearing evenly there is no work in order to replace said tyres.

Unfortunately for car drivers, your tyres just wear out evenly. No "living on the edge" for the tintops... unless, of course, you work in the film industry.

Barry Fernandes Credits

Homicide (300 episodes)
Sports - including tennis, golf, boxing, football, cricket and motor racing
Penthouse Club
Music for the People
Sunnyside Up
Time for Terry
Happy Hammond Show

Brian and the Juniors
The Seekers Down Under
Variety/concert specials including:
Roy Orbison
Shirley Bassey
James Last
The Beach Boys
Sammy Davis

Dave Brubeck
Cilla Black
Sunbury Festival
Don McLean
Peter, Paul & Mary
The Bee Gees
The Moscow Circus

Peaceful Coexistence

While we are finding our way through the digital transition here in Australia, similar problems are being faced overseas. Here Tomlinson Holman looks at how the problems are being addressed in the US.

Previously, I discussed the thinking behind dialogue normalization. This is the process of using a “floating headroom” reference to accommodate the widest range of program material within a channel, utilizing practically all of the bits on each type of material. It also provides a means to reproduce the program material at a more nearly constant volume control setting (at least one that doesn’t make you reach for the remote for each segment).

Since digital sets all employ dialnorm by FCC decree (and little else is actually required of a set, not even a picture!), the customer gets reasonably consistent levels. Some program material, like movies, will have high headroom, while other program material, like a newscast, will have little. This causes a problem because the audio is expected to serve both ATSC and NTSC broadcasts for some time to come.

Peaceful coexistence involves getting from the potentially wide dynamic range ATSC channel into the narrower NTSC one. This is of interest to a great many people, as was pointed out to me recently by Charles Pantuso, a well-known high definition engineer. I realized before I got to answer Charlie that there is an answer, one that I had worked on some years ago.

“Peaceful co-existence involves getting from the potentially wide dynamic range ATSC channel into the narrower NTSC one.”

It seems we had a similar situation with home theatre masters of movies: the main audience wanted a narrow dynamic range mix (VHS), while a specialized audience wanted a wider range, one more like the theatrical experience (digital tracks on Laser Disc at that time, now DVD). What we came up with may thus well serve today as being the best possible representation of wide dynamic range audio in a narrow channel.

We turned the loud program material, like movies, down by 5 dB below the reference level, and added approximately 5 dB of good peak limiting. This amount of limiting is relatively benign, being audible on a direct a/b comparison, but not very audible—except perhaps to the original mixers on an open loop situation.

We found at the time that a mix peaking at -10 dBFS using SMPTE reference level on digital video tape of -20 dBFS would serve many purposes, such as distribution over microwave relays for networks, distribution amplifiers to a zillion VHS recording duplicators, and the like.

So we recorded two mixes on one piece of videotape as LtRt (left total, right total, Dolby Surround matrix encoded LCRS), with both referenced to tones at -20 dBFS. We did this with one using the full headroom and only the peak limiting applied in the mixing studio needed to get the program to fit within 20 dB of headroom.

The second LtRt pair is recorded with the level dropped by 5 dB, and peak limiting applied so that program peaks do not exceed -10 dBFS. This pair could be used directly today for stereo NTSC broadcasts, and so far as I know, they are. These may not be completely compatible with compressed dynamic range commercials, but they are internally consistent with one another and will not overload the NTSC channel.

The same thinking can be applied wherever a 20 dB headroom mix is to be reproduced on an NTSC channel.

The digital world has 5.1 channel original audio on movies, which brings up another factor in the ATSC standards: mixdown. Centre content can be set to be mixed equally into left and right, with the possible levels of -3, -4.5, and -6 dB.

“With mixdown and level adjustment handled, there’s only one more incompatibility between the ATSC and NTSC channels: pre-emphasis.”

Normally mixdown involves a little less capability to separate voice from backgrounds and music, so the -3-dB situation probably dominates.

Surround mixdown from left surround into left front and right surround into right front can occur at -3 and -6 dB or off. The off condition (called minus infinity in the standard) is for situations where the surround information could easily overwhelm the front channel content, such as sports, with heavy spectator participation. Minus 3 or 6 dB is chosen by ear, listening to the program material, but here -6 dB is probably the more conservative choice.

With mixdown and level adjustment handled, there’s only one more incompatibility between ATSC and NTSC channels: pre-emphasis. The bugaboo of FM broadcast (of course it also applies to TV broadcast as well, and with a narrower permissible peak deviation), the dynamic range of television is more limited (in mono) than FM by roughly 10 dB. The need for pre-emphasis is caused by the very nature of FM broadcasting – it is unacceptably noisy without pre-emphasis in the transmitter and corresponding de-emphasis in the receiver. Its presence is only made benign most of the time by the fact that most program material has significantly less high-frequency energy than low, and thus, most of the time it’s not a problem.

During a cymbal crash, however, it’s a big problem. The way to overcome the incompatibility between ATSC (flat headroom) and NTSC (significantly reduced hf headroom) is to use additional frequency dependent limiting in the NTSC signal path compared to the ATSC one. This is in order to prevent limiting the ATSC performance to that of NTSC’s capability.

What’s news?

If you have any news or information from your state, location or facility please email it to us. Without your contributions, we won’t have a newsletter.

Email to tmurtagh@zip.com.au

Audio Raid in DAW environment

By Mitch Gallagher

If you’re one of the growing number of digital audio workstation (DAW) users, then you’re probably all too aware that the fate of your audio hangs by a tenuous thread. Putting your trust in a thin magnetizeable disk whirling at speeds up to 10,000 RPM borders on the ludicrous, if you think about it (I, for one, try not to).

While hard drives have become inexpensive and reliable in the past few years, the demands audio production puts on a disk remain significant. Not only must the drive have large capacity and be able to spit out large amounts of data

“While hard drives have become inexpensive and reliable in the past few years, the demands audio production puts on a disk remain significant.”

on a continuous basis, but random-access editing means that the drive must be able to access many chunks of data (which may be spread across the disk) nearly simultaneously. Current drives are fast enough to handle this load, although the strain the drive is under doesn’t inspire much confidence.

One solution to the problem is to spread the audio file load across multiple drives, which also increases the available storage space. But this approach can be a pain when it comes to file organization and backing up.

A Striping Solution

MedEa offers another solution with its AudioRaids, which combine multiple hard disks into a single enclosure and use proprietary ‘striping’ software to spread data across the drives. This reduces the load on any single drive, and increases access speed and data transfer rates. The beauty of the AudioRaid is that it appears as one huge drive to the user and their software and computer. Two AudioRaid models are available, the 4/60, which uses four 15GB drives for a 60GB total capacity, and the 4/120, which uses four 30GB drives for a 120GB total capacity. For this review, MedEa provided me with a 4/120.

No special drivers or software are required; simply plug a 68-pin SCSI cable from your computer to the AudioRaid, follow the simple step-by-step directions for setting the drive up with your particular OS, and you’re happening – this took me all of 30 seconds to accomplish. The AudioRaid looks cool, finished in stealth-black, with muted blue lights indicating when each drive is accessing data. It’s reasonably quiet, although it’s too loud to have near open mics during tracking.

In use, the AudioRaid handles the necessary file tasks in the background, writing each individual data file across the four drives in sections. Playback for a single file starts momentarily on the bottom drive, then shifts briefly to the top drive, to the second drive, the third drive, then back to the bottom drive, where the cycle starts over again. This spreads the data reading/writing requirements across the four drives, reducing the load any single drive must bear.

Putting It To The Test

I ran the AudioRaid as my primary audio drive for work in Pro Tools, Digital Performer, and Logic Audio with nary a glitch or problem, even when playing digital video along with large surround multitrack audio sessions. The drive feels solid, responds quickly, and at 120GB, is gloriously spacious. I felt confident having my data residing on it – but not to the point where I didn’t back up!

But how do you go about testing the limits of the performance of such a hard disk system? You could do low-level data transfer testing, measure seek times,

and so on. That works for a lab, but it’s just not very meaningful in the real world.

Instead, I came up with four tests for the AudioRaid using scenarios (albeit somewhat extreme) that might have some relevance in day-to-day studio work. For the sake of comparison, I ran the same tests, using the exact same files, on my trusty 7,200 RPM Ultra2-Wide SCSI 9GB hard drive. Both the 9GB and the AudioRaid were freshly formatted/initialized before I started testing.

Keep in mind that the AudioRaid results are very conservative because, due to my system’s limitations, I was unable to test with high sample rate audio. Pro Tools is limited to 64 tracks of 24-bit playback, and Digital Performer tops out at 96 tracks of 24-bit playback on my computer.

Test One: Number of tracks of simultaneous continuous playback with a unique 24-bit/44.1 kHz audio file on each track. In the case of the 9 GB, it (obviously) read all the audio files from one disk; the AudioRaid divided the files across its four disks.

Results – Pro Tools: 9GB - 64, AudioRaid - 64; Digital Performer: 9GB - 71, AudioRaid - 96.

Test Two: Number of tracks of simultaneous continuous playback, with the same 24-bit/44.1 kHz audio file on each track. This required the hard drive to read many times “simultaneously” from the same point in the file, and also limited the AudioRaid to playing off of one disk at a time, as opposed to splitting file access across its four disks.

Results - Pro Tools: 9 GB - 60, AudioRaid - 6,420

Test Three: Number of tracks of simultaneous continuous playback. As with the second test, the same 24-bit/44.1 kHz audio file was loaded into all tracks. But this time, the track entrances were staggered 100 msec apart, thus requiring the hard drive to read “simultaneously” from a different point in the file for each track.

Results - Pro Tools: 9 GB - 64, AudioRaid - 64

Test Four: Playback of one 1/2-second 24-bit/44.1 kHz audio file, cut into many tiny regions (the largest was 10 msec long). Those regions were then randomly assembled across eight tracks to the point where the disk was too slow to accommodate playback. At this point, crossfades were added until playback was impossible. As with the second test, the AudioRaid is forced to play audio solely from one disk. When the AudioRaid is allowed to spread file access across multiple disks, the edit/crossfade density can be much higher. On the 9 GB, I was able to add four more regions and six more crossfades before it was too much for the drive to handle.

Evaluating The Results

As mentioned, these tests (except for the last one, which is a worst-case scenario) provide conservative results. In general, the computer/audio software topped out long before the AudioRaid was even breathing hard. With the 9 GB drive, the computer/software response became more and more labored as heavier loads were piled on. The AudioRaid response remained snappy regardless of the load put on it.

If you’re looking for the pinnacle of DAW storage solutions, the MedEa AudioRaid is the best I’ve seen. Throughout my time with it, it performed flawlessly; only through extreme measures was I able to push it to the point where it was unable to deliver. It’s expensive – you could buy equivalent hard drive storage capacity for significantly less than the AudioRaid’s sticker – but for serious applications, the convenience and bulletproof operation the AudioRaid provides are worth the investment.

Mitch Gallagher is editor of EQ magazine, a sister publication to Government Video.

Australian Screen Sound Awards 2002 Call for Entries

The 2002 ASSG Australian Screen Sound Awards will be held on Friday, 18th October at the WatersEdge Restaurant, Pier One, Sydney. The Australian Screen Sound Guild committee welcomes entries from members and non-members of the ASSG. All entries must be by the entry form. Entry forms and Terms and Conditions of Entry are available at www.assg.org.au.



The deadline for entries is:

Friday, 30 August, 2002

(Videotapes to be received no later than Friday, 6 September, 2002)

Judging: If you are a full member of the ASSG and would like to take part in the judging, contact Stephen Smith on (02) 9906 2960 or president@assg.org.au

Send entry forms by fax to: (02) 9906 4128; by email to: awards@assg.org.au; or by post to: Suite 360, 3 Holtermann St, Crows Nest NSW 2065

Enquiries: Trevor Harrison, Awards Coordinator 0414-967-585; Stephen Smith, President (02) 9906-2960

Australian Screen Sound Awards 2002 Entry Form

1. Name of Program / Film:

2. Production company:

3. Producer:

4. Contact for entry:

5. ASSG membership No. (if member)

6. Phone: Fax: Email:

7. Please mark category entered:

Television Categories:

- Best Achievement in Sound for a Television Commercial
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Non-Drama Series - episode
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Drama Series (Videotape) - episode
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Drama Series (Film) - episode
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Drama Telemovie / Mini Series

Video or Film Categories:

- Best Achievement in Sound for Animation
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Documentary
- Best Achievement in Sound for a Short Film

Feature Film Categories:

- Best Achievement in Sound for Location Sound Recording
- Best Achievement in Sound for Dialogue & ADR Editing
- Best Achievement in Sound for Foley
- Best Achievement in Sound for Effects Editing
- Best Achievement in Sound for Mixing

8. Sound personnel nominated

Terms and Conditions of Entry

1. You do not need to be a member of the Australian Screen Sound Guild to enter. 2. There is no entry fee for any Award categories. 3. The entry must have been completed (to answer print / video master stage) between July 1, 2001 and July 31, 2002. 4. The entry must be an Australian production, as per the qualifications for an AFI entry. 5. All entry forms must submit a completed entry form no later than 5pm Friday, 30 August, 2002. 6. All entries, other than feature films, to be supplied on VHS HI-FI videocassette. 7. Whilst all care will be taken of any material received, the ASSG accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage. 8. The ASSG Committee reserves the right to determine the suitability of any entry to be accepted in the Awards and to determine the appropriate category for each entry. 9. The decision of the ASSG or its delegates, including the decision of any jury, shall be final.