

Sydney Audio Engineer Awarded OAM for Development in Speaker Design

In this years Queen's Birthday honours Mr Neville Thiele was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), for services to audio engineering, particularly in the field of loudspeaker design and the development of audio engineering standards. Neville Thiele was born in Brisbane, Queensland, and graduated Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) from the University of Sydney. At E.M.I.(Australia) Ltd., he developed telemetry, radio and television receivers. At the Australian Broadcasting Corporation he designed and assessed equipment and systems for sound and television broadcasting, and, as Director Engineering Development, was responsible for the ABC's engineering research and development, including the introduction of digital audio. He is at present a consulting engineer on audio, radio, and television and teaches a post-graduate course in Audio Design at the University of

Sydney. Mr. Thiele has published 38 papers on loudspeakers, filters and testing methods for sound and vision broadcasting. He was awarded the Norman W.V.Hayes Medals of the IREE Australia twice, for best papers published in the Institution's Proceedings, the Silver Medal of the Audio Engineering Society (AES) in 1994 "for pioneering work in loudspeaker simulation" and, with Richard Small, the 2003 IEEE Masaru Ibuka Consumer Electronics Award "for major contributions to the synthesis and analysis of loudspeakers". Queen's Birthday Honours for 2003, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). He has been involved in standards for audio with AES and sound and television broadcasting with ITU-R and its Interim Working Parties on Audio Frequency Parameters and High Definition Television, and is a member of the ITU-R's Australian National Study



Mr Neville Thielle OAM

Group 6, Sound and Vision Broadcasting, and Standards Australia's committee on digital audio and video. Mr. Thiele is Vice-President of the Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA), a Member of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE), a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia and the AES, of which he has been Vice President International Region, 1991 to 1993 and since 2001.

A well deserved award and just recognition for years of hard work.

Congratulations Neville.



Budget Blues for the ABC

The Federal Budget delivered on May 13 was a mixed bag for the television and film industry. On the upside the Film Finance Corporation (FFC) funding has been renewed for three years and Australian Film Commission's (AFC) funding has marginally increased for development of projects. But any hopes that the ABC would receive a desperately needed increase were dashed. The ABC was hanging out for funds to establish an independent production partnership to drive the production of 180 hours of drama and comedy programs. The ABC had asked for an extra \$250 million over three years including \$62.5 million to drive the independent production initiative. Now hard decisions have to be made and program cuts are expected.

Digidesign Debuts DiSK

Daly City, CA (June 13, 2003)—Digidesign has launched DiSK (Digidesign Sound Knowledge), a new

free destination on www.digidesign.com for people who want to learn more about using Pro Tools. DiSK offers Digidesign's customers more educational and training resources and complements the existing resources provided on the Training and DigiZine areas of the site.

"We experienced huge success when we launched our online magazine, DigiZine, last year," states Paul Foeckler, Digidesign's director of Corporate Marketing. "Existing users couldn't get enough Pro Tools tips and tricks, and new Pro Tools users expressed a need for a place to get their feet wet before taking in-depth instructional courses from an authorized training facility. This year, we decided to launch DiSK to address these needs. It will show people how easy it is to use Pro Tools. Whether you have Pro Tools Free, Pro Tools|LE, or a Pro Tools|HD system, you can go to DiSK, download some loops, watch a few DiSK Flix, and start making music in no time."

DiSK is divided into the following sections:

DiSK Jockey - Downloads of thousands of free and for-purchase sounds, including professional sample libraries from Sonomic and sound effects from The Hollywood Edge

library. DiSK Flix - Short, online Pro Tools instructional videos that teach beginner, intermediate and advanced features of Pro Tools software. DiSKotech - Free downloadable Pro Tools templates and files, an excerpt from David Franz's book Producing in The Home Studio with Pro Tools for tips on how to set up a home studio, and tips about third-party plug-ins and software applications provided by Digidesign's development partners.

DiSKussion - A panel of diverse artists, engineers, and producers who provide answers to a different question each month about how they use Pro Tools in their music production. DiSKussion panelist include Grand Mixer DXT (turntablist, hip hop producer), John Feldmann (guitarist of Goldfinger and producer for The Used and Mest), Tal Herzberg (programmer and engineer for Goo Goo Dolls, Green Day, Vanessa Carlton, and Christina Aguilera), Brad Wood (producer and engineer for Smashing Pumpkins, Tortoise, Pete Yorn and Liz Phair), and Dave Audé (DJ, producer, and remixer for t.A.T.u., DJ Keoki, and Sting).

DiSK Trivia - a section of music trivia questions.

Digidesign
www.digidesign.com



Dolby AAC Provided for Streaming Audio Through Radio@AOL

America Online and Dolby Laboratories have introduced Dolby AAC technology, an enhanced version of the MPEG AAC technology. This streaming technology is being introduced with new versions of Radio@AOL and Radio@AOL for Broadband, offering an enhanced listening experience for millions of AOL members who tune in to the popular radio services. Working closely with AOL, Dolby developed and optimized Dolby AAC technology, which improves the radio-listening experience for consumers by streaming audio content with higher quality at lower bit rates (64 kbps for broadband and 14 kbps for narrowband). Dolby AAC will be streamed to Radio@AOL and Radio@AOL for Broadband listeners via AOL's proprietary Ultravox streaming media platform, which offers further benefits, including faster song starts and shorter time periods between songs. The AOL Radio@ Network leads the Internet radio market with the highest combined reach of any online radio service (ComScore Media Metrix).

The AOL Radio@ Network encompasses AOL's first integrated radio, Radio@AOL and Radio@AOL for Broadband, as well as Radio@Netscape and Spinner. The AOL Radio@ Network offers more than 175 best-of-breed music, news, sports, entertainment, and seasonal stations, including features from today's hottest stars and most respected names in broadcasting.

Dynaudio Acoustics AIR Series Now Supports 192 kHz

Risskov, Denmark (June 24, 2003)—With the new AIR Software update Ver. 1.10, Dynaudio Acoustics AIR series monitors are able to operate at a sample rate of 192 kHz. Enhancements to existing features like bass management have been made, and features such as a single parametric EQ for the sub channel and preset storage of setup information have been added. On top of that, AIR 20 is now THX PM3-certified just like the AIR 6 and AIR 15. The ability to operate in 192 kHz (dual wire) is especially helpful for seamless integration with Digidesign's Pro Tools HD system. A 192 kHz digital output from Pro Tools HD system can be fed directly into the AIR

monitors supporting 2.1, 5.1, 6.1 and 5.3 setups.

The general bass management for both stereo and multichannel purposes are improved and Extended Bass Management has been added. Extended Bass Management allows the monitors to go to the full bandwidth, and utilizes the subwoofers to add extra bass output. With this update, it is now possible to change the timing of the standby/power save mode through the Utility Menu. Another new feature to be found in the Utility Menu is the possibility to control the backlight. The current Global Volume of the AIR speakers can also be controlled from the Utility Menu. All this can be done directly on the speakers or through the PC-IP software. The AIR PC-IP software has also undergone some changes and additions. The Advanced Bass Management mode allows the user to choose crossover frequencies for monitors and subwoofers independently. A single parametric EQ for the sub channel has also been implemented, and this feature will allow the user to optimize the performance of the sub channel in the actual environment at hand.

Dynaudio Acoustics
www.dynaudioacoustics.com



Apple Debuts G5s New 64-bit chip brings Mac models to 2.0 GHz

Apple has unveiled the highly anticipated Power Macintosh G5, a new series of workstations built around the IBM PowerPC 970 chip. The new line offers a revamped system architecture, incorporating several hardware enhancements (including PCI-X, AGP 8x and vastly expanded bandwidth) and will be available in configurations ranging from a single 1.6 GHz model to a dual 2.0 GHz model. All of the new G5s are expected to ship in August.

The new G5 models use IBM's PowerPC 970 chip, which offers a 64-bit architecture and other enhancements over the previous G4 chips, manufactured by Motorola. Apple says the new G5s are built for full symmetric multiprocessing can run 32-bit applications with "no problem." They offer up to 1 GHz frontside bus, support for up to 8 GB DDR RAM (up to 400 MHz 128-bit wide DDR) and 8x AGP graphics. Apple says the new machines offer 12 times the bandwidth of the

previous G4 models (8 GB per second), with 6.4 GB per second memory bandwidth. It also incorporates 133 MHz PCI-X slots with 2 GB per second bandwidth.

Other features include:

Serial ATA with 1.5 GB per second bandwidth;

One FireWire 800 port;

Two FireWire 400 ports;

Four USB 2.0 ports (including ports on the keyboard);

Bluetooth wireless connectivity;

Support for AirPort Extreme;

Optical audio inputs and outputs;

Nvidia GeForceFX 5200 Ultra or ATI Radeon 9600 Pro graphics;

4x SuperDrive in all models.

The new models are available in three configurations with the following specs (in addition to those listed above):

Single 1.6 GHz G5 with 256 MB RAM, 80 GB hard drive, 800 MHz front-side bus, 333 MHz dual-channel 128-bit DDR memory, four DIMM slots (up to 4 GB RAM), three PCI slots (64-bit, 33 MHz), Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra-64 MB DDR;

Single 1.8 GHz G5 with



512 MB RAM, 160 GB hard drive, eight DIMM slots for up to 8 GB memory, three PCI-X slots (one 64-bit 133 MHz, two 64-bit 100 MHz), Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra-64MB DDR;

Dual 2.0 GHz G5 with 512 MB RAM, dual independent 1 GHz front-side buses, 160 GB hard drive, three PCI-X slots (one 64-bit, 133 MHz, two 64-bit 100 MHz), eight DIMM slots for up to 8 GB RAM, Radeon 9600 Pro with 64 MB DDR RAM.

The 1.6 GHz model sells for \$1,999. The 1.8 GHz model sells for \$2,399. And the dual 2.0 GHz model sells for \$2,999. Apple also says it expects 3 GHz models to be available within a year. For more information, visit <http://www.apple.com>.



CSIRO developing a new kind of Web

Web users will soon be surfing video and audio content as easily as text and images thanks to some innovative Web tools being developed by CSIRO.

Dr Silvia Pfeiffer of CSIRO says the development of the Continuous Media Web (CMWeb) is as significant a development as was the emergence of the World Wide Web itself.

"It's the next big thing in terms of where the Net is heading," Dr Pfeiffer said.

"It's long been recognised that, while we can easily surf from text page to text page, when we want to experience rich content like video and audio we have to jump out to a separate application - and then all we get is a slower, jumpier version of linear TV or radio.

"Instead of just selecting a file and viewing it, now surfers can activate links while viewing video and audio files."

Annodex format media is the term coined by the researchers to describe the crucial twin processes of indexing and annotating content, the secret to fully integrating rich media content into the Web.

Indexing means that each

segment of a program is uniquely identified and tagged.

Annotating means that each segment is described using a combination of formal metadata and free text descriptions - which can include transcripts.

Annodex format media can contain hyperlinks to audio, video or text content - so the whole Web becomes truly seamless. CSIRO has developed conventions for inserting hyperlinks into streaming media and specified a file format for combining an anchor (link), metadata and media information in a single file. They have also developed tools for creating Annodex format media files and created the first CMWeb browser.

The core CMWeb tools are an open source development kit to encourage broad uptake of the concept. This includes the Continuous Media Browser for Apple's Mac OS X and server tools for Linux, and tools for other platforms will be forthcoming. A number of companies are already exploring the use of CMWeb in their software. Among the first is Australian digital media specialist, PIVoD Technologies.

MOTU Releases FireWire Audio Interface

Cambridge, MA (May 19,

2003)-Mark of the Unicorn (MOTU) has released its 828mkII, a single rack-space, FireWire audio interface for Macintosh and Windows computers. The 828mkII replaces the 828 at the same price (\$795) and adds many new features, including more simultaneous inputs (20) and outputs (22); 24-bit 96 kHz operation; 8-bus monitor mixing with front-panel LCD programming; standalone operation; front-panel mic/guitar/instrument inputs with preamps and sends; SMPTE time code sync; and MIDI input/output.

"The 828mkII is equally well suited for both studio and stage," said Jim Cooper, director of marketing at MOTU. "It gives you all the analog and digital I/O you need for desktop recording, including convenient front-panel mic inputs with sends for your favorite compressor, EQ or guitar amp. You can program multiple monitor mixes on-screen with the included CueMix Console software, hit the road, and then tweak mix settings at your gig using the front-panel LCD display, without the computer. And we've added convenient MIDI jacks so you don't need to carry an extra MIDI interface."

Mark of the Unicorn (MOTU)
www.motu.com

**A Lot Of
Networking
Warner Bros.
Finishes
Networking Audio
Post Facilities In
Time For Matrix
Sequels
By Dan Daley**



Sound editors on the sprawling campus of the Warner Bros. film studios have a new reason to cheer, though it will take a bit of looking to find the source of their joy. Running throughout the multi-acre lot, a new local area network system has transformed the way sound elements move around the facility, allowing editors to pull down a file at their local workstation, work on it, then post it back to the server for another editor down the line.

Time was, you could wear out a few pairs of sneakers moving production elements around the huge complex of edit suites and studios at Warner Bros. from remote service locations.

The system — and the concept — are new enough that the economics are still also evolving. Barnett says the impetus for the network came primarily from trying to address the creative needs of clients and staffers in the here and

now. The notion of monetizing stored assets in the future was secondary. “The digitization of media from a technical point of view is taking us in new directions,” he says. “What’s driving it is creative opportunities.”

From the system’s inception, Warner’s post department would be taking in large numbers of digital elements from an array of production sources. Thus, in devising the LAN for the post production facility, Deas and Collier determined that interface compatibility would be critical. They chose to use an open system encompassing Macintosh, Windows NT and OS9 (the Fairlight operating system) to offer as much cross-platform conformity as possible. “The Linux servers are platform-agnostic,” says Deas. “There are areas in the server for Mac, for NT, but it’s all on the same server. The point was to keep as many of the incoming digital audio files in their original formats as

possible.”

The Warner sound campus was wired first, but within that framework the server network is designed to move accompanying picture around in the MPEG-2 format, replacing 3/4-inch video for working prints. This also eliminates the need to duplicate videotapes for VTRs or other video playback devices throughout the department. Deas asserts that the digital video, properly encoded, is close to DVD quality and removes the 3/4-inch VTR, the last non-random-access device in the chain, from the editorial process. Furthermore, Collier points out, most picture for sound editing purposes is temporary anyway, and having the incoming picture digitized just once, instead of by every editor at each stage of the post-production process, saves money and stress on the picture elements.

The goal of maximizing efficiencies — of time, money and creativity — was at the root of the project.

Illustrating the benefit of the shift to virtual facility distribution, Deas explains, "We had been using SCSI drives to move elements around for years, and while they were 4 GB drives when we started, they had gotten up to 18 GB within a few years, as the cost of drives declined.

Nonetheless, though we were buying ever-larger drives, the reality was that we were on average using about 10 percent of each drive. You would have an 18 GB drive with only 1 GB of material on it.

"The RAID server system literally reverses that ratio, giving us upwards of 90 percent efficiency instead of 10 percent. Also, no one's going to drop a RAID while walking from one building to another, so you have that much more security and safety for the elements."

The system is also compatible with Internet-based FTP delivery of sound elements, which is used heavily on foreign-dub versions of films. "FTP is an occasional thing now, mainly because of the transfer times for large files," says Collier. "But people are beginning to encrypt more, and as the pipes get bigger, I expect to see more FTP use in the future. The system was designed to accommodate that."

Backups are performed automatically, and each server has a mirror server or LTO-format tape backup in another building for an added layer of safety. "The most that we could lose would be 24 hours of material, and everything resides in at least two places," says Deas.

But archiving rich media in a system designed for far smaller packets of information remains a challenge. "Existing backup solutions are structured for business applications," Deas explains. "The way we work with larger files is foreign to the mainstream applications of data backup. We're backing up rich media, which, due to its file sizes, implicitly has a larger potential for failure."

That comes less from hardware than from software. As Collier points out, the 30 GB to 120 GB LTO tapes are more than adequate for large-scale

archiving, but most off-the-shelf software for creating them is designed for the general business environment rather than for rich media content. "If one part [of the tape] fails, most systems don't write enough header information to allow you to bridge the problem," Collier explains. "In an enterprise-type system, if any part of a file corrupts, then the whole file is regarded as corrupt. In rich media, it's more like a stream mentality. You can plug in and still retrieve information on both sides of the corrupted area. Jim [Deas] is coordinating software that will allow us to restore partially readable tapes and get as much information off of failed tapes as possible."

Then there are the issues of managing the information. "This approach to archiving will let us store more material, such as pre-dubs and stems of films," Collier says. "But whether we'll be able to find them immediately when needed remains to be seen." Collier



points out that collecting elements from films several decades old is difficult now, even though older films typically have a fraction of the discrete elements, such as stems, that contemporary movies do. And then there's the format issue: "We have to ask ourselves, will a Pro Tools version from today work five years from now? The bottom line is that we're not seeking an absolute solution, because there isn't one. Rather, we're acknowledging that we're making a commitment to archiving that will be ongoing."

Collier, Deas and their colleagues at Warner and elsewhere are watching developments such as the new AES 31 standard and the still-evolving Advanced Authoring Format (AAF) standards sets. "Archiving is the strategic question mark," he says. "We know we can get things into the archive, but we have to be adamant about keeping up with the changes in the entire storage industry and in the entertainment business until some kind of broader, more widely accepted standards are established."

Norm Barnett agrees that enterprise-oriented storage and networking solutions aren't yet perfectly adapted to film post, but that that shouldn't stop studios from leveraging them now.



"We're still learning how to create an economic model for this," he says. "But it didn't have to be completely fleshed out before we started. The basics are there and they work and we'll grow with it."

As leading-edge as the new sound network system is, it did not require any radical adjustments on the part of the post department's personnel. "This way of working really came in with the workstation concept itself," says Collier. "Any resistance to changes in the technology culture took place years ago."

Everyone in the business at this point has gotten with the digital program and the understand and embrace it when new technologies come along. It just takes a certain amount of coordination.

The system's operation is transparent to editorial; it's just an icon on a desktop — but one with a whole lot of storage attached to it."

FFC's triennial funding renewed in Budget

The Federal Government has announced in its May Budget that it will renew the triennial funding of the Film Finance Corporation Australia from 2004/05 to 2006/07 at the current level of \$50 million per year. The Budget also confirms additional ongoing funding to the FFC of \$10.5 million per year to be directed specifically to adult and children's television drama. This extra funding was first announced in 2001, as part of a package introduced by the Government to support local production at a time when it was introducing a tax rebate to attract foreign films to Australia



Media job layoffs in the US continue in poor economy

Apparently the bleeding hasn't stopped. Media companies continue to cut jobs in a weak American economy. U.S media layoffs—since the summer of 2000— have now reached 70,000, reports I Want Media, a Web site that reports on such media statistics.

The most recent layoffs include 70 staff members at Showtime, the cable network, representing about ten percent of Showtime's workforce. The cable channel didn't offer details of the cuts, but analysts say it was the result of dramatic cable industry consolidation and demands by Showtime's parent company, Viacom, to increase cash flow. Most of the layoffs came in the areas of affiliate relations, marketing, creative services and programming.

There were also reports that HBO recently laid off about 20 affiliate sales employees. Again, media consolidation was blamed. "We have restructured our

organization to reflect the ongoing changes in the industry," said Eric Kessler, HBO's president of sales and marketing.

Last month, Boston's WGBH-TV reduced its work force by about 75 people. Approximately 25 employees were laid off, while the rest departed under buyouts, attrition and the conclusion of short-term contracts.

WGBH told the Boston Globe that the cuts were the result of the economy, which has caused a reduction in funding from corporations, foundations, state and federal government, PBS, and its own endowment. The uncertainty caused by the war in Iraq also had an impact on funders who are reluctant to make commitments, the station said.

"What we're experiencing is not any one thing but a whole lot of small things that all add up to a very harsh economic climate," said Henry Becton Jr., WGBH president, who asked every department to cut its budget. "We are tightening our belt across the board in order to weather this economic downturn."

Even Harris Corporation, which had hoped to profit from the sluggish DTV transition, has not been immune. Last week the

company that manufactures television and radio transmitters—as well as other consumer-related products like DSL equipment—announced "cost reduction actions aimed at reducing corporate overhead expenses and increasing operating income in its commercial businesses."

These actions include approximately 230 total positions being eliminated from its corporate headquarters in Melbourne, Fla., and among the Broadcast Communications Division in Quincy, Ill., Mason, Ohio, and Sunnyvale, Calif.

Howard L. Lance, president and chief executive officer of Harris, said he was "pleased with the company's solid financial performance," yet, "our commercial division results have been lagging. [The] actions being implemented in the Broadcast Communications Division will reduce costs and improve profitability at its current level of business and position it for growth as the transition to digital technology regains momentum."

For more information visit The United States Department of The Treasury at www.treas.gov.

EdiTrace™

Introducing EdiTrace *The Conforming Solution for Sound and Video Editors*

During the sound postproduction of 'The Quiet American', almost two years ago now, we developed a new way of reconforming. From the outset the schedule required us to complete several temp mixes with very little time between delivery of new pictures and beginning of the temp mix. As a member of this sound team, this led me to develop a program that could create a change EDL by comparing the differences between an old and new picture EDL. This change EDL or 'Trace' EDL could then be loaded in TITAN – Flash Cutter. A program developed by Synchro Arts that can re-cut a Pro Tools session in a few seconds. This system was successfully used to accurately reconfirm dialogue, effects, crowd, and music sessions (including stems) for the numerous temp mixes and pre/final mix. It also gave us more time

to devote to editing new sounds and improving our tracks for the final mix.

EdiTrace also proved to be a lifesaver as, after each temp mix, the stems were loaded back into the AVID.

Following this, the guide tracks that came with every new picture cut could not be used as a sync reference.

Hence, we relied on the Trace EDL and TITAN to accurately reconfirm our tracks. Since the initial program was developed, the code has been re-written to enable it to run from an internet web server.

This provides access to the program (from either a Mac or PC) without the need to install or update software. During the past year EdiTrace has been used to successfully reconfirm sound tracks for several films and television programs. These include 24, 25 and 30 FPS projects where the pictures were edited on an AVID and Lghtworks. See the website 'Credits' page for more details. Features of EdiTrace

- Creates true 24FPS EDLs for Film Projects.
- Reads CMX and GVG EDLs.
- Able to trace 24, 25 & 30 FPS EDLs.
- Converts 25FPS Film EDLs to 24FPS.
- Options to create Healed or Checkerboard tracks with handles in Trace EDL.
- Trial Run offers checking facility that EDL files can be read and used to trace. (Access to Trace EDL not provided)
- Several editors can log into a company account sharing EDL files and billing traces to one company.
- Displays graph on completion of a trace. This summarizes the picture changes that have been made.
- Calculates Trace EDL in a matter of seconds once picture EDLs have been uploaded.
- Trace EDL's can be used to reconfirm tracks on Pro Tools, Fairlight or any other platform that has an associated autoconform package.

For more information and access to a Trial
www.editrace.com
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NT Audio Film Labs Becomes Early Adopter of Lake Contour

Santa Monica, CA (May 16, 2003)—NT Audio Film Labs in Santa Monica has become one of the first facilities in the world to install Lake Technology's DSP-based loudspeaker processing system, Lake Contour. NT Audio has installed multiple Lake Contour units to control the multichannel speaker system in its newly completed screening and quality control room. NT pioneered the 1/2-speed optical soundtrack negative recording process and was the first to record all four cinema sound formats on the same negative. The new screening room gives NT Audio the ability to screen and QC soundtracks in all four formats simultaneously.

A total of nine input channels of Lake Contour processors provide essential crossover, equalization, and time

delay functions for the main room speaker setup. "The main room is essentially an 8.1-channel system," elaborates Shawn Jones, engineer and technologist at NT Audio, which was founded in 1983. "We're configured for left channel, left-center, center, right-center, right, and subwoofer behind the screen. Then there's a left surround, a right surround, and a rear surround channel. We have Lake Contours on every channel."

Lake Contour is a 2-input, 6-output unit that provides not just equalization, but also crossovers, dynamics and delays. Typically, a unit will be set up as two single-input, 3-output modules with 2- or 3-way crossovers implemented, but a 4-way crossover may be configured using a single unit.

For the NT Audio screening room, Jones says, the Lake Contour units are each programmed differently. "Three of the Contours act as they would in a touring environment, driving the five 3-way units." Those Contour units driving the surround speakers pass full-range signals but apply EQ, limiting and other dynamics functions.

"Each of the five front channels is a 3-way speaker system, so the Lake Contours are being

used to provide 3-way crossovers and EQ," Jones explains. "They're also driving the subwoofer crossover and EQ." Five JBL 5671 speakers are positioned behind the screen, with Electro-Voice TL-880D subwoofers supporting the LFE channel.

Front-panel controls have been kept to a minimum on Lake Contour, with most functions accessed through the Contour Controller software. "Everything is controlled from the projection booth via Ethernet, which is another handy thing," says Jones. "Typically, you have to be right at the unit or use some clunky 9-pin interface. This is much nicer—and they sound great. No one even knows that they are there. They're transparent, and they do what they are supposed to."

Lake Technology
www.lake.com





MXF gets ready

Just when you thought it was safe to dive into the digital waters, the industry is embarking on a new interchange standard called the Material Exchange Format (MXF). MXF will allow one manufacturer's server to communicate with another's so that digital files can be transferred back and forth across a common network without having to transcode them. Transcoding processes, that convert a file or program from one format resolution to another, often result in image degradation.

From the looks of things, MXF will be one of the subplots of this year's NAB convention, with numerous manufacturers, including Avid Technology, Panasonic, Pinnacle Systems, SGI, Snell & Wilcox, Sony, Thomson Broadcast & Media Solutions, and others, announcing support in their product lines.

The MXF format is built on the existing Advanced Authoring Format (AAF) and uses the same

underlying object model that AAF uses to represent time, structural metadata, timecode and any other program descriptor data. While AAF is optimized for the post production industry, where complex projects are interchanged between editing, coloring and CGI stations, MXF is a "flattened" version of AAF, designed to move content between different servers for ingest, playout, rough-cut editing, and into / out of post.

This simplification of AAF was done to allow features such as streaming (e.g. for VTRs) and partial restore functions to be easily utilized, according to Bruce Devlin, a vice president of new technology at Snell & Wilcox. He has written 10 of the 14 signature white papers on MXF and has edited all of the others. "There is a very close association with the AAF, and we have a Zero Divergence Doctrine (ZDD) in place to prevent divergence between the formats creeping in," he said. "In fact, many of the prominent companies in AAF are also prominent companies in MXF (such as Snell & Wilcox, Sony and Thomson).

MXF is designed for interchange of finished material such as programs, commercials or news stories. Devlin said the required documents are nearing completion as SMPTE standards. These

documents—describing D-10 MPEG, D-11 MPEG, DV compression, and simple clips—have passed through the SMPTE balloting process, while work on long GoP (group of pictures) MPEG, VBI transport, editing capabilities, and rich metadata is currently moving forward.

Devlin said that the development of MXF started several years ago, in Europe, with a project called "Generic Format for storage" (G-FORS), that is now completed. It began with an idea that "what if you could create and send a digital file as easily as you can email?" MXF has since evolved to include economical ways of storing files and the reliable interchange of broadcast material as well.

"The [G-FORS] project adopted the MXF format, after about a year of work, after evaluating other formats, and evaluating the effort involved in creating a custom format," Devlin said. "MXF seemed the best candidate in terms of technical performance and political acceptability."

There is no license fee for manufacturers using MXF in their products. The many contributors have privately agreed to these terms and the Pro-MPEG Forum is looking at legal ways to formalize the arrangement. "No one to our knowledge has filed any patents



directly associated with MXF. There may, however be patents involved in the underlying compression formats, such as MPEG,” Devlin said.

To be compliant with MXF, an application must create a file which is in accordance with the MXF File Format Specification (SMPTE 377M). The use of the format is constrained according to an Operational Pattern (e.g. OP1a is a tape replacement type of constraint and is SMPTE 378M.) The Essence needs to be wrapped correctly, according to the Generic Container specification (SMPTE 379M) and its own mapping document (e.g. Long GOP MPEG is mapped in SMPTE 381M). If the application needs to add Standardized Descriptive Metadata, then the DMS-1 scheme (SMPTE 380M) will be needed.

Snell & Wilcox has built MXF capability into their PCI plug-in card range and Ingest station. Avid Technology has announced that MXF (and AAF) will be in all of its products. Pinnacle Systems said that MXF will be the on-disk format in new products, Sony is shipping the eVTR, and companies like SGI, Panasonic, Thomson Grass Valley are all including MXF inside their products.

“I expect there to be significant product announcements at NAB,” Devlin said, “but strangely enough our competitors don’t tell me in advance.”

Going forward, Devlin said that the MXF documents have passed their Technical Approval stage within SMPTE, but still need to go to Trial Publication before they become a ratified standard. “There is a small procedural holdup at the moment because some of the numerical values within the standard are defined in the SMPTE dictionary,” he said, “but have not yet passed technical ballot themselves. Once these procedures have been completed, we will have a fully ratified MXF standard.”

He said the process is unlikely to change the standard further. Devlin said there have been many implementations of MXF, and the interchange success rate is growing with each trade show. “There tends to be ‘plug-fests’ at NAB and IBC where implementers can see if everyone has agreed with their interpretation of the specification. This parallel process with the documentation of the standard has helped create something which is much more robust than it would be without the implementation.”

The Pro-MPEG Forum will

soon launch an MXF Implementation Group to help manufacturers create MXF applications, devices and to share MXF knowledge.

“It has been a long standing dream of mine to make IT networked production a reality, and a benefit to the end users,” Devlin said. “It is a privilege to work with so many like minded individuals who share this dream, and to have to backing of a company as prestigious as Snell & Wilcox to make it a reality.”

For more information visit www.ist-nuggets.tv and www.snellwilcox.com.

Live Sound Award goes to Cabaret - All Bases Covered

Congratulations to Victorian based John Scandrett and Julian Spinks for winning best sound design at this years Helpmann Awards for their work on Cabaret. Their odds of winning were pretty good because their company was responsible for the sound on all four nominated best musicals.

Revitalized, Refinanced Fairlight Commences Operations

Sydney, Australia (June 13, 2003)—Fairlight.au has officially reopened for business at the company's former Sydney, Australia manufacturing and operations center. According to Fairlight CEO John Lancken, the company has been producing product since the middle of May and has already shipped its first orders of DREAM Satellite and Station systems to Chiyoda Video, Good Audio Sense, Imagica, Media House, NHK and Yomiuri TV. The company also announced it has received an order for two DREAM Consoles from Audio Recording Unlimited in Chicago and that the backlog of orders received to date is over 20 systems at an estimated value of over \$1 million.

"This is a really great start for the new Fairlight," Lancken said. "We have received a tremendous amount of support and encouragement from Fairlight customers around the world, and we are grateful for both. A lot of people worked very hard to keep the Fairlight dream

alive. Some have invested their labor and their talents; others their capital. All of these people share a common goal, to make the new Fairlight a better company that is able to respond quickly to meet a customer's requirements."

Fairlight has formed a worldwide network of independently owned and operated distributorships, in every instance with the support of Fairlight's previous staff, providing continuity in each of the regional markets. "Each distributor is responsible for their own sales, marketing, training, and support," Lancken explained. "We will provide materials, major trade show support, and an umbrella marketing and communications program to help them achieve their individual local market objectives."

Fairlight's new distributor network includes Media Gear in North America, guided by former employees Philippe Guichard and Rod Revilock. Lancken expects the global distributor network to grow over the next several months.

Fairlight.au PTY LTD
www.fairlightau.com

Schoeps Debuts Low-Pass Filter

Germany (May 9, 2003)—Schoeps has debuted its LP 40 inline low-pass filter which, combined with an omnidirectional microphone, serves for improving the bass response of supercardioids. When the signal, e.g. of a Schoeps MK 2 omnidirectional capsule, is added to that of an MK 4 cardioid or MK 41 supercardioid capsule, a constant frequency response is obtained down to the lowest frequencies. The application of the LP 40 is not restricted to Schoeps microphones.

Technical specifications of the LP 40 include a cut-off frequency (-3 dB) of 40 Hz, an output impedance of 40 Ohms @ 1 kHz with Schoeps CCM compact microphones and CMC standard Colette microphone amplifiers. Gain is 0 dB, maximum output voltage: ca. 1 V @ 4 mA. The filter has a diameter under an inch and length under 4 inches with a nickel surface finish.

Schoeps
www.schoeps.de



Shanghai Digital Film Studios Installs Largest Studer Vista 7

Shanghai, China (May 8, 2003)—Studer has supplied its biggest ever Vista 7 console to Shanghai Digital Film Studio, one of the largest film production companies in China, which has been operating for more than 50 years with Studer equipment. The Vista 7 installation project is part of a wide-ranging upgrade of the film studio's existing infrastructure, and the 60-fader digital console will be used for film post production and music mixing in 5.1 surround format. The choice of the Studer Vista 7 followed demonstrations of its Vistonics control surface technology at seminars during BIRTV 2002 in Beijing and in Shanghai, where its "easy operation and user-friendly DSP" proved very attractive to Shanghai Digital Film Studio. The installation was completed at the end of February 2003, and the first production—a film entitled Purple Butterfly—began in March.

Studer
www.studer.ch

Sony Pictures Studios Selects Neve 88R

Culver City, CA (May 23, 2003)—Sony Pictures Entertainment has selected a 96-channel Neve 88R console with scoring panel for its scoring stage. The new console will be used for scoring feature films, television shows and traditional music sessions. Installation is scheduled for September 2003.

"The Neve 88R is the 'next step' in console design," said Mark Koffman, senior vice president, engineering, Sony Pictures Post-Production Facilities. "Our V Series Neve has served us well for the last five years, but today's demands in film scoring require more inputs, several 5.1 simultaneous mixes or stems and a very versatile monitoring system. AMS Neve has met these challenges by customizing the 88R with a new film scoring center section. We're already well acquainted with Encore automation, so the transition to the 88R will be very easy."

Sony Pictures Scoring

Stage is the largest motion picture scoring venue in the world, measuring 93 feet wide, 82 feet deep and 33 feet high, with a volume of 252,000 cubic feet. Within the last 10 years, the 59 x 42 foot control/machine room has been completely renovated. The main scoring or studio area of the stage has remained unchanged since the 1930s, to preserve its revered acoustics and unique ambience.

The historic scoring stage on the Sony Pictures Entertainment studio lot has been the site of hundreds of legendary film scores, such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, Herbert Stothart), *Gone with the Wind* (1939, Max Steiner), *Ben Hur* (1959, Miklos Rozsa), and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962, Maurice Jarre). Recent film soundtracks scored on the stage include *Catch Me If You Can* (John Williams), *Road to Perdition* (Thomas Newman), *Spider-Man* (Danny Elfman) and *Minority Report* (John Williams).

AMS Neve plc
www.ams-neve.com

Take local TV off the Free Trade table

71% oppose an FTA that sees fewer Australian shows on TV - As Australia's Free Trade negotiators fly off today to meet with their American counterparts in Hawaii, the Coalition of Cultural Industries has called for local TV content rules to be taken off the table. The Coalition pointed to recent polling by UMR Market Research that showed 71% of Australians opposed a Free Trade Agreement with the United States if it meant fewer Australian shows on TV. Australia's local content rules are designed to foster the Australian film industry. 55% of Australian free to air television 6am to midnight must be locally made. 41% of what Australians watch on TV is from over seas - and 93% of that is American. Furthermore in the film industry - 90% of Australia's box office takings go to America. But according to the US free trade negotiators this is not enough. Powerful US lobby groups want Australia to abolish its local content quota system as part of the FTA. On the last occasion

the Free Trade Negotiators met in March this year - it was announced that the abolition of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme would not be pushed by the USA. Similarly the Coalition of Cultural Industries says its time to take culture off the table as well. Australian Screen Directors Association CEO Richard Harris, and spokesperson for the Coalition says, "71% of Australians are opposed to a Free Trade Agreement with the United States if it would lead to fewer Australian made television shows and movies being seen on free to air television." Richard Harris was citing a UMR Market Research telephone poll conducted 1-8 March 2003 of a 1000 Australians on the US Australia Free Trade Agreement. The same poll found that 89% of Australians would oppose an FTA with the United States if it lead to a higher cost of pharmaceuticals. "Australians don't want the Gilmore Girls replacing Secret Life of Us and Ricky Lake replacing Rove. Australians have worked hard to build a successful and internationally recognised film and television industry, with stars, directors, camera crews, and designers recognised worldwide," Richard Harris said. "Australians have had 17 Academy award nominations in the past ten years - and this success hasn't happened by accident. Government policy such as the local content quota for TV is a big

part of this.' "The local content quotas for TV are working - and they are working in Australia's national interest. The Australian audiovisual industry is interdependent - what this means is that the vitality of one part of the industry impacts on another" Richard Harris said. The Coalition includes the Screen Producers Association of Australia, the National Association for the Visual Arts, the Music Council of Australia, Museums Australia, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Copyright Agency Ltd, CREATE Australia, the Australian Writers' Guild, Australian Society of Authors, Australian Screen Directors Association, Australian Publishers Association, Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society, Australian Library and Information Association, Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association, Australian Guild of Screen Composers, Ausdance, Australasian Performing Right Association, and the Arts Law Centre. [released by ASDA]





Tascam Intros DAW Control Surface

Montebello, CA (May 14, 2003)—Tascam has introduced the FW-1884, a professional DAW control surface and audio/MIDI interface that uses the FireWire high-speed data transfer protocol. With FireWire's high-bandwidth capabilities, the product provides audio and MIDI interfacing to computers, as well as control of DAW parameters via eight 100mm motorized, touch-sensitive channel faders, one master fader, and controls for pan, solo, mute and select functions on each channel. Tactile control for four bands of parametric EQ, a weighted jog wheel and a variety of shortcut keys for various software applications are also included. Co-designed by Tascam and Frontier Design Group, the FW-1884's DAW control capabilities include comprehensive mixing, automation, editing and navigation tools. In addition to its faders, dedicated controls and assignable/pre-assigned shortcut keys, the FW-1884 provides eight balanced XLR analog mic/line inputs with high-quality mic preamps, phantom power

and inserts on every channel. Using 24-bit/96 kHz A/D and D/A converters, the FW-1884 offers full 96 kHz operation on all analog I/O channels with compatible DAW software. For use with condenser microphones, the FW-1884 offers phantom power that is switchable in groups of four channels. In addition to its two FireWire (IEEE 1394) computer interfaces, the product gives users eight channels of ADAT lightpipe as well as stereo S/PDIF inputs and outputs. Users who require more dedicated tools for DAW control than the FW-1884 provides can add the FE-8, an 8-channel fader expander. The FE-8 offers all the channel strip capabilities of the FW-1884 (100mm motorized faders, dedicated control buttons, etc.), minus the master section and interfacing. As many FE-8s may be added to an FW-1884 system as needed for big console functionality with any DAW system.

Adobe Acquires Syntrillium Software

San Jose, CA (May 22, 2003)—Adobe Systems has signed an agreement to acquire the technology assets of Syntrillium Software. Syntrillium's flagship product, Cool Edit Pro, will join the company's existing line of professional

digital video products that include Adobe Premiere, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Encore DVD and Adobe Photoshop. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed. Adobe expects that the acquisition will not have a material impact to earnings per share in Q203 or FY03. "Cool Edit Pro has won recognition across the music and video industries, and by teaming up with Adobe we will be able to bring this complete multitrack recording application to an expanded set of customers," said Bob Ellison, president of Syntrillium. "Introducing Cool Edit Pro into the Adobe family is great news for our customers, who will benefit from the company's complementary product line and commitment to delivering high-quality products." Bryan Lamkin, senior vice president of Digital Imaging and Video Products at Adobe, added, "Cool Edit Pro's loyal customers, that span musicians to broadcast professionals, can look forward to us building on the product's innovative history. Today, professional audio editing is essential to digital video and DVD production, and by adding Cool Edit Pro to our product line, Adobe is delivering a complete workflow for video pros and DVD authors. Syntrillium Software www.syntrillium.com

Adobe Systems



Steinberg Ships Nuendo 2.0 Media Production System

Chatsworth, CA (June 2, 2003)—Steinberg has begun shipping Nuendo 2.0, a complete media production system, designed to meet the demands of working professionals in all genres of audio production: composition, film, broadcast, music, post production, surround, game sound and multimedia.

Nuendo 2.0 is about surround with multichannel architecture through the entire signal path. Every input, audio track, effect, group and output now offers up to 12 discrete channels, ready for full-scale 5.1, 7.1, or even 10.2 productions. To make routing transparent, the user can now customize multichannel input/output configurations and switch between them with a single keystroke. Several input and output busses can be utilized at the same time, with any type of configuration possible—mono, stereo or any of a

wide range of surround formats—and any track can be routed to and from any of these busses. Nuendo 2.0 allows switching between multiple speaker arrangements and can simulate a wide variety of end-user monitoring environments.

Nuendo 2.0 offers a flexible mixing experience for digital media production. Its 32-bit, floating-point mixer has been completely reengineered and now features multiple multichannel input and output busses. This new architecture allows for recording in either split or interleaved surround audio file formats and makes managing a surround project easier than ever before. Nuendo 2.0 always keeps track of which part of the signal chain is multichannel and which is simply stereo or mono.

A new version of the world-standard Steinberg VST technology provides flexibility in signal routing to and from virtual effects for each and every track. Nuendo 2.0 even adds effect return channels that allow effects to be added to the input signal while recording, as well as full delay compensation throughout the signal path.

Nuendo 2.0 features compatibility with support for major file and exchange formats including AES31,

OMF, OpenTL 3.0, and Microsoft's WMA Pro. Nuendo also features import of Cubase SX projects. In addition, Nuendo supports SONY 9-Pin, ReWire, and Steinberg's VST System Link, a technology which allows the user to increase the real-time processing and mixing power by adding by adding additional computers.

Nuendo 2.0 is available at select Steinberg dealers for \$1,499.99 US MSRP. An update from previous Nuendo versions is available for registered users for \$299.99 US MSRP. Upgrades can be ordered at Steinberg's website.

Steinberg
www.steinbergusa.net





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