

prosoundnews

July 2006

volume 28
no. 7

Terry and Augsburger Talk Harman

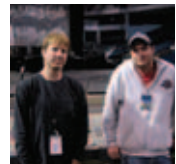
Outgoing HP president Mark Terry (pictured) and



incoming president Blake Augsburger talk exclusively with PSN. —page 5

The Boy Is Back

Monitor engineer Mike Baehler (left) and FOH



Kyle Chirnside keep the sound bright and sunny for Fall Out Boy. —page 66



PIRATED SOUNDS: Alan Meyerson stands at the conductor's position on the scoring stage at Todd-AO during the tracking of the score for *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*. Over Meyerson's head is a unique Decca Tree approach employing Royer R-122V vacuum-tube ribbon microphones. A total of 255 tracks were laid down to two Digidesign Pro Tools HD systems and mixed on a Euphonix System 5 console. See story on page 24.

Summer Touring Starts Up

by Clive Young

NEW YORK, NY—The hottest months are traditionally the biggest for touring, and 2006 seems to be falling right in line with that assessment. After a surprisingly strong spring for ticket sales, dozens of tours have taken to the highways and byways of the U.S., all in search of audiences ready to go out and have a good time. That, in turn, is keeping the major sound reinforcement companies busy.

"Touring seems to be experiencing a rejuvenation that we began to see last year and which is continuing this year," observed Dave Rat, president of Rat Sound. "9/11 really seemed to have a

lingering impact on touring."

"I think it's going to be a busy summer for everybody," concurred Jack Boessneck, executive vice president of Eighth Day Sound. "This year's vibe is that everybody else wants to work. Last year, what was it? It was all Stones and U2; that was all anybody heard about. This year, it's 'Oh, let's go to work.'"

Indeed, it's a common theory that big-name, big-budget, big-ticket tours curtail the potential revenues of other, mid-level productions, as consumers often have to choose whether they can afford to see a few moderately priced shows or one big

(continued on page 85)

Austin NAMM A Go

by Janice Brown

For the first time ever this month, the NAMM Show lands in Austin, TX for its 3-day Summer Session, July 14-16. Home to as many as 150 live music venues, Austin has been called "the live music capital of the world," and, as such, is a proper host for the annual summer gathering of music and music technology products manufacturers, dis-

tributor/dealers and consultants.

MI and pro audio retailers will be in attendance, like Guitar Center and Sweetwater, walking the show floor to catch up with vendors, see new products, and get the always valuable previews of products and technologies soon to come. Bill Wrightson, vice president, HiTech merchandise manager for Guitar Center, reveals his

(continued on page 34)

tech@psn fieldreport:

dbx DriveRack 4800

Network control, flexible configuration and sonic integrity characterize the 4800 Loudspeaker Management System. Page 60.



Hi-Def Disc Tools Emerge

by Steve Harvey

The battle of the blue-laser formats has begun in earnest, with Blu-ray Disc (BD) and HD DVD (HD) software and hardware finally becoming available at retail during the past few months. As backers of one or the other—some even of both—formats, the major film studios are the first to market with software product, of course, but for those content creators eager to enter the fray, the good news is that there are professional authoring tools available earlier in

the product rollout than for previous shiny disc formats.

Earlier this year, Dolby Laboratories introduced Dolby Media Producer, a suite of professional software tools for those working in multichannel audio for the two new formats, as well as broadcast, initially only for the Mac OS X platform. The company's first such software suite, which comprises Dolby Media Encoder, Dolby Media Decoder and Dolby Media Tools, has been developed for those utilizing the codecs

(continued on page 32)

ADVERTISEMENT



EAW NT SERIES
POWERED LOUSPEAKERS
NT-59

AFTER YOU HEAR IT, EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST A BLACK BOX.

With their proprietary Gammat Focusing™ digital correction, the NT Series of powered sound reinforcement loudspeakers boast sonic performance rivaling the best direct-radiating studio monitors. Response so flat, distortion so low, and prodigious peak output capability to convey all the power of live performances. Taken together, its enough to make all other powered loudspeakers sound like, well, black boxes.



THAT WAS THEN. THIS IS NOW.
WWW.EAW.COM One Main Street, Medford, MA 01905 800 882 5713 / 508 234 6100

Field Report

(continued from page 60)

yet uptempo didn't clip the input.

Speaking of ballad versus uptempo, another truly tricky feature is the Auto Warmth insert, which exploits the ear's decreasing sensitivity to lower and higher frequencies as the SPL decreases (ala the Fletcher Munson-based loudness button on your stereo). When a mix decreases in level (or you turn the stereo down), the tonal balance of the mix is en-

hanced by increasing the low- and high-frequency content present in the mix. The control macro for this feature has one button and two faders, "Threshold," "Amount" and "On." Try it; you'll like it. This feature is assignable as an insert on the outputs, which can be stereo-linked. I bet it rounds out 70-Volt ceiling speakers in installs just a bit, too.

OK, clearly this can continue for days and I know, if you're interested in this product, you've read the cut sheet or sat through the mildly scary training modules that dbx has on its website. If not, go here: <http://www.dbx-pro.com/Download/index.htm>. Download the first module, turn off the lights and close your eyes. Tell me this guy doesn't sound like his

day job is getting your sister to sign over her house to his cult. Weird.

Here's the bottom line: The dbx DriveRack 4800 is world-class. It's highly flexible, it sounds great and it's extremely easy to use. The GUI appears very stable, and it integrates nicely with other networked Harman devices. If you want to make a significant upgrade to your systems without replacing all of the really expensive stuff, buy one (or four) of these. Spec it in installs with confidence; it's no longer a choice between something good or something inexpensive. *Get both.*

But not the one I have...I'm snatching it and disappearing into the outboard gear protection program. CYA.

SPARS Tech

(continued from page 59)

to getting that show through QC.

Some key points to help get your mixes through QC: The traditional mechanical analog VU meter is best. Most mechanical VU meters have a 300-millisecond lag in response, thus the meter displays an average level over 300 milliseconds, which helps when leveling speech. It is common to observe a 10 dB or so difference between the loudest peak and the lowest valley of a given spoken sentence. This natural variance is within the bounds of normal conversation, but most likely outside the bounds of what the average network wants to broadcast. Instead of using a limiter to control the peaks (which can throw off your average), I've found it best to go through the show word by word and turn down the loud syllables and turn up the quiet ones—tedious, yes, but a good way to get consistent levels without over-processing dynamics.

I've also found that by mixing the majority of the dialog and voiceover sections of the show so that speech reaches about 80 percent of the scale, I'm able to have good Peak, VU and LM-100 values. I have an old mechanical VU meter with -20 VU at the bottom of the scale and +3 VU at the top. So for me, -2 VU is my target. That said, a half dozen hits up to 0 VU are OK (as long as it doesn't go over!) and not much speech below -10 VU. Many modern meters have "VU mode" which puts the display on a VU scale, but without the 300-millisecond average, they are not very useful for mixing for TV.

Communication is without a doubt the most useful tool of all. Nothing can replace a conversation with a QC technician or supervisor. Try to get to know these people. Call and ask questions, let them know how serious you are about submitting good work. At the end of the day, it's better to have them on your team.

Include your own QC document with the masters. Take account of the program's averages and peaks on both VU and dB scales. If you have an LM-100, include that value as well. Include a list (with time code) of problem areas that you were not able to improve. This can keep the QC tech from faulting you for something that can't be fixed. There is a difference between dB and VU! Make sure that you keep your scales clear. Hopefully, the QC tech you deal with will understand the difference...but no promises.

References:

"Dolby LM 100 Broadcast Loudness Meter Spec Sheet" Dolby Laboratories, 2005.

Found at:

www.Dolby.com/professional/pro_audio_Engineering/lm100_01.html

"Standards and Practices for Authoring Dolby Digital and Dolby E Bitstreams"

www.dolby.com/resources/tech_library/index.cfm

"PBS Technical Operating Specification, 2005 edition" Public Broadcasting, 2005.

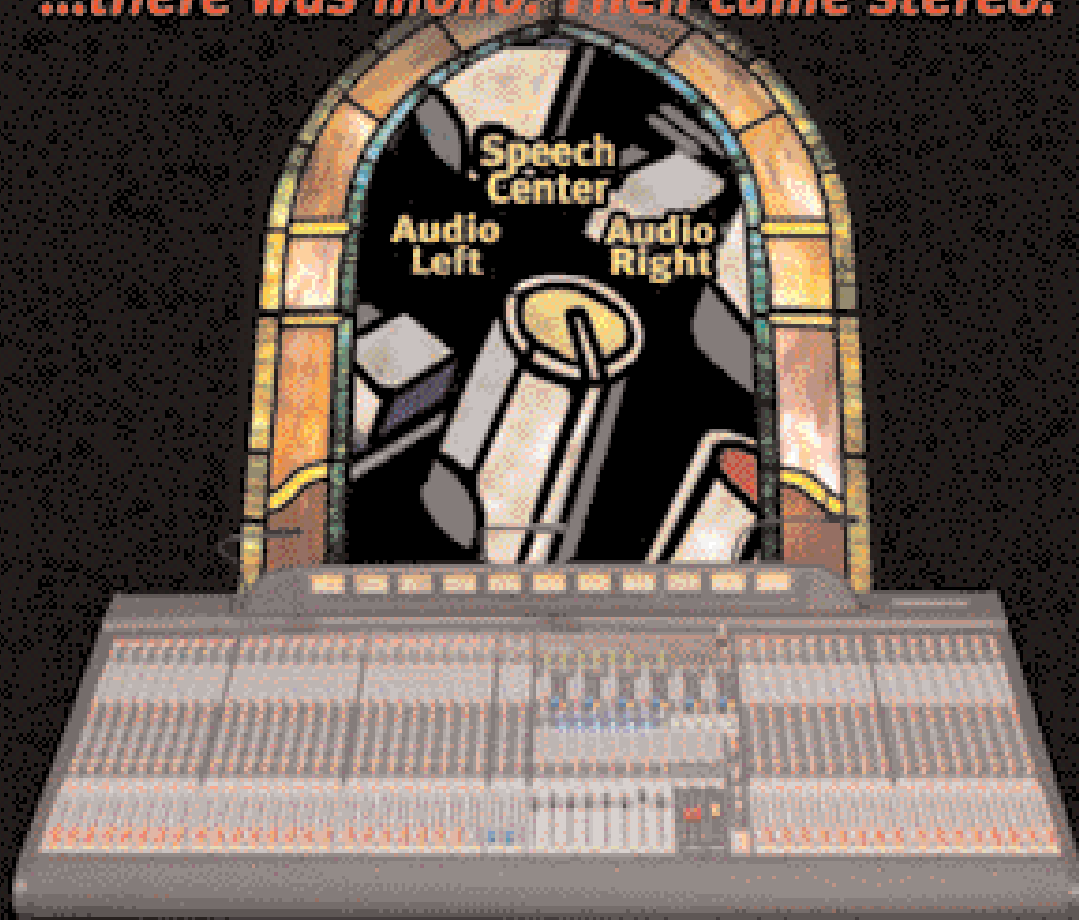
"General Standard Definition Technical Requirements" DCI, 2006.

Aaron Keane is senior engineer/composer at Blazing Music and Sound.

Membership in SPARS, the Society of Professional Audio Recording Services, is open to studio owners, producers, engineers and anyone else involved in professional recording. For more information, contact the organization at 800-771-7727, or visit www.spars.com.

In The Beginning...

...there was mono. Then came stereo.



Now, Inter-M brings you True L-C-R performance.

The new Kensington LCR full-featured mixing consoles put you squarely in command of a true LCR mix. That's stereo music left-and-right, and speech supported by a central cluster, all with univalued imaging control.

Perfect for live sound reinforcement, permanent installations (especially churches), Kensington LCR consoles were developed by a global engineering team that included some of the industry's most renowned designers.



Offered in 24, 32, or 40 mono input channels, plus two stereo input channels, our Kensington LCR consoles also offer —

- True LCR routing and panning
- Superb mic preamps "British EQ"
- Individual circuit boards
- Sweep high-pass filters
- 8 group/8 aux with fader flip
- 4 matrix mixes
- 6 stereo returns

Exceptional quality, affordable price. Only from Inter-M. Contact us to learn more.

interM
We make it easy.

1 E. Beacon Light Lane • Chester, PA 19381 • 866-694-1793 • www.inter-m.com