

695 QUARTERLY

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695 QUARTERLY

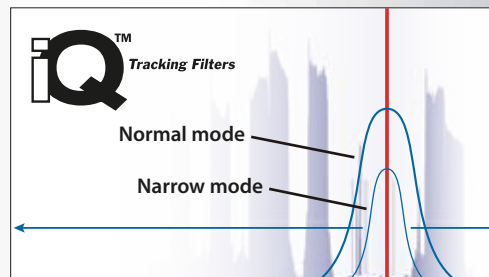
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FRANK A. MONTAÑO
RANDY THOM

BEST SOUND EDITING

*Supervising Sound Editing
and Design*
MARTIN HERNANDEZ
RANDY THOM
LON BENDER

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Cover: Jeff Fusting mixing with his Yamaha CL 5
Photo: Tim Puzo

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From the Editors



Director George Lucas once said, "Sound is 50 percent of the moviegoing experience." Danny Boyle, Director of *Steve Jobs* says, "The truth is, for me, it's obvious that 70, 80 percent of a movie is sound. You don't realize it because you can't see it." Documentarian Michael Moore at the recent PGA "Produced By: New York" said, "I tell students that sound is more important than pictures. The audience will forgive you if an image is a little blurry but not if they can't hear or understand what's going on. Sound carries the story."

So which is it?

As members of Local 695, naturally we believe that our contribution to the product is extremely important. However, to quote Local President Mark Ulano CAS AMPS, "We are players in the orchestra." The result we provide is only one part of the entire process and developing a good relationship with every department goes a long way in how successful our careers will be in delivering top quality.

The contributors in this edition of the 695 *Quarterly* explore the means of obtaining excellence and collaboration. Willie Burton CAS demonstrates that attitude in "Straight Outta Compton." In "Television's Dirtiest Word," Doc Justice gives us an inside look into reality television. Ric Teller shows us the world of an "A2" in "Keep Calm and Make a Patch" and Devendra Cleary CAS gives the Grip Department a little love in "Grips to the Rescue." And I get technical with "Dante Explained."

Happy reading.

Fraternally yours,
Eric Pierce, Richard Lightstone and
Mark Ulano

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of how America challenged and changed five young black men, and how they in turn challenged and changed America. It never lacks for something to say or to show us."

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— Manohla Dargis, *The New York Times*

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JON TAYLOR
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RE-RECORDING MIXERS

BEST SOUND EDITING
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STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

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The New York Times

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From the President

You can't mistake the progress happening.

We successfully lobbied the Sacramento congress for a new California incentive program and there has been a major jump in production here in Los Angeles: eleven television projects and eleven feature film projects are being produced here at home under the new legislation.

We are making regular visits to sets all over town, letting the community know that we are supporting our members and maintaining our jurisdiction. Real-world impact is happening and bringing many jobs to our members through these actions. When problems are brought to the union's attention, action is being taken to solve them.

At our strong request, Local 600 has sent an important letter of agreement to its members, acknowledging our jurisdiction of video playback on the set. The impact has been immediate; you can find it published on our website for reference or sharing. We are continuing negotiations with our sister local to reduce confusion and remain committed in our efforts.

I was privileged to attend the IATSE Officers Institute training program in September for a jam-packed program of intensive classes: governance, labor law, fiduciary obligations and leadership courses were taught. Experts were brought in from all over the country to teach, advise and prepare the current generation of IA union leadership. This program was well attended by officers from thirty-eight IATSE Locals across the USA, as well as the International President, Matt Loeb, for the graduation ceremony. I'm most grateful for the hospitality extended me by Local 720 of Las Vegas, NV.

Our recent quarterly membership meeting kicked off our series of informational presentations for our members. The two presentations at the October meeting were: Adam Leipzieg from Creative Future, a nonprofit group working hard to educate and promote the issues of intellectual property rights and their impact on our members' benefits, and Local 695's Union Council, Lewis Levy, who gave a great talk on the legal rights of our members in the world of social media. He covered California's unique privacy laws for individuals, NDAs (Non-disclosure Agreements) and Weingarten Rights. Lewis has been teaching labor law classes in Los Angeles for more than twenty years and was able to answer many detailed legal questions from the floor to the benefit of all members present. We will continue with this kind of programming.

Another important meeting was held on spectrum auction and the pressing issues affecting our members regarding the FCC and wireless allocation and licensing. The Local brought in Bill Ruck, an expert in this field. Bill gave an incredibly detailed talk and we'll be making the content available to our members shortly.

I urge all of our members to go to the Local's website and check out the learning opportunities being made available by our great deal with **Lynda.com**. This really expands educational opportunities for you by virtue of your membership.

Finally, Susan Moore-Chong has stepped down as the Local's Treasurer and I want to express our gratitude and appreciation for her long service and contribution to the Local. Phillip Palmer CAS has been elected to complete the term as Treasurer by the Board per the Constitution and By-Laws. Congratulations and thank you, Phil, for stepping up.

Warm and safe holidays to all.

Fraternally,
Mark Ulano CAS AMPS
Local 695 President



Our Contributors



Willie Burton CAS

Willie Burton CAS began his career as a Navy sonar engineer and after three and a half years, moved into sound mixing, joined Local 695 where he has mixed for over three decades, winning two Oscars and multiple nominations.



Devendra Cleary CAS

Devendra started his career in 1998 in Colorado and moved to Los Angeles in 2001, moving up from Utility Sound, to Boom Operator and Production Sound Mixing. He proudly serves on Local 695's Executive Board.



Doc Justice

Doc Justice is the owner of Audio Justice, Inc., a sound services company, and Halter Technical, LLC, creators of great audio products for broadcast and video professionals. He resides in Los Angeles, but will never give up his 215 area code from Philadelphia.



Richard Lightstone CAS AMPS

Richard began his career in Montreal and continues to mix in Los Angeles. He is currently on the Executive Board of Local 695, the co-editor of the 695 Quarterly and a former president of the Cinema Audio Society.



Ric Teller

Ric Teller started in television at KTLA in the '70s and has been a freelance television audio guy since 1985. He also is a pretty damn good baker. Here he is visiting Hoover Dam.

Photos courtesy of the respective contributors.

695 QUARTERLY

I.A.T.S.E. Local 695
Production Sound Technicians,
Television Engineers,
Video Assist Technicians and
Studio Projectionists

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and L.A. Central Labor Council

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Jake Tapper, CNN

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supervising sound designer
RANDY THOM

supervising sound editors
GWENDOLYN YATES WHITTLE | RANDY THOM

BEST SOUND MIXING

re-recording mixers
LORA HIRSCHBERG | RANDY THOM | LEFF LEFFERTS

Blue Sky
STUDIOS

THE PEANUTS MOVIE by SCHULZ

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Re-Recording Mixers

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BEST SOUND EDITING

Supervising Sound Editor/Sound Designer

OLIVER TARNEY

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humanity at its best,
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cinematically and intellectually."

Sandy Cohen | ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE MARTIAN

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From the Business Representative

'Tis the Season

It's the holiday season and the staff and I would like to wish everyone a joyous holiday. 2015 has flown by, but not without some exciting changes at the Local. I, along with our dedicated staff, continue to look for ways to improve our service to the membership.

We have a target date by the first of the year to launch our new Membership Services Software which will have added benefits to the membership. This new software will be replacing a system that has been in use since the late '80s. Once the new system is up and running, you will receive information on the new features.

Local 695 just submitted our training proposal to CSATF with many new training opportunities. These new classes keep our members up to date on the latest technologies. Input from the membership helps us design these training programs, so please continue to let us know where we need to add additional training.

We're seeing the number of shows in production grow and that means it's more important than ever to report your work to the Local. You can do so online 24/7 at www.local695.com. Our production-tracking data is only as complete as the information we receive from you and the employers. With more than five thousand productions already in our database, we have a good history of the work and of the employers over the past eight years. This historical information helps with grievances and contract negotiations, so keep it coming. Every show counts and the more information we have, the better we can help you.

At the last membership meeting, you heard about the current grievances filed by Local 695 to protect your work opportunities. We feel good about the potential outcome and will keep you posted as they progress. If you see any non-Local 695 member performing our bargaining unit work, call the Local. You are the eyes and ears for all your Brothers and Sisters. If you could not make the last meeting, please mark your calendar for the first quarter General Membership Meeting on Saturday, January 16, 2016.

Local 695 is growing in both membership and membership participation. As I have mentioned before, this is what makes the difference when it comes time to sit down and negotiate a new contract or work out almost any issue. I'm honored and proud to lead Local 695, the technical crown jewel of the IATSE.

Stay tuned for more exciting news in 2016. Your Board of Directors is leading the way for some exciting changes, so stop by, see the growth, see the changes and give us input. This is *your* union.

Scott Bernard
Business Representative



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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Website Address

Our website has a new address: **www.local695.com**, so be sure to change your bookmarks. Additionally, all the “@695.com” email addresses have been changed to “@local695.com,” so update your address book too!



Lynda.com

The IATSE has arranged a \$20 yearly membership license for its members to **Lynda.com**. Usually at \$360 a year, Lynda.com is a leading online learning company with courses that provide business, software, technology and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals.



The IATSE license runs from September 1, 2015, through August 31, 2016, but it's not too late to begin. <http://www.local695.com/html/lynda.php> has all the information needed to get started.

Audio Supervisors Brunch

On Sunday, October 25, Local 695's Technical Trends Committee/FCC Project hosted a brunch for Audio Supervisors in the unscripted television field. The intent was to present the history as well as the latest developments in the upcoming FCC incentive auction where the FCC will be auctioning off more of the UHF spectrum to big Telecom. Doc Justice, along with Mark Ulano and Jay Patterson, co-chairs of the Technical Trends Committee, were the hosts at Gordon Biersch in Burbank. This event featured Bill Ruck, San Francisco Area Volunteer UHF Spectrum Coordinator, and Tim Holly, Spectrum Coordinator at CBS Radford. This was an outreach event open to all non-scripted Audio Supervisors, IA and non-IA.

Bill Ruck gave a PowerPoint presentation that detailed the history of the evolving uses of the UHF spectrum, along with the congressional mandate to sell off the 600 MHz bands for profit. Topics included the reallocation of TV stations currently in the 600 band, white space devices and the outright disregard for professional wireless microphone users in the entertainment industry, sporting events, theater and houses of worship.

The Technical Trends Committee feels the information delivered at the brunch is important to all professional wireless mic users in the entertainment field. An edited video and a transcription of the presentation will be on open pages of the Local 695 website, available to membership and the general public.

In Memoriam

EVAN ADELMAN

Y-1 Sound Mixer

August 31, 1957 – August 26, 2015

ROBERT A. "DAN" DILLON

Y-1 Sound Mixer

January 14, 1939 – June 6, 2015

FRANK SCIUTO

Y-7 Video Tech

December 10, 1925 – September 12, 2015

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



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PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER

JOSE ANTONIO GARCIA

RE-RECORDING MIXERS

JOHN ROSS

MYRON NETTINGA

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SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR

JOHN ROSS

SOUND DESIGN BY

JASON KING



**"FINALLY, AUDIO BAGS
MADE BY AUDIO PEOPLE!"**

DON HALE, CAS

LARGE (KSTGL)



MEDIUM (KSTGM)



SMALL (KSTGS)



JUNIOR (KSTGJ)



FOR DR-70D (KSTG70)



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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Building Update

The Building Committee is exploring the long-term goal of purchasing a building that more suits the Local's needs and reflects who we are. The Committee expects to achieve this within five years.

The immediate goal is to take care of all deferred maintenance and updates on the building as both a positive image for the organization and for resale purposes.

Picture Quitting

MPTF (Motion Picture & Television Fund), the 94-year-old nonprofit serving members of the entertainment industry, received a \$25,000 CVS Health Community grant to support smoking cessation and prevention.

CVS Health presented the grant to MPTF CEO Bob Beitcher during a special luncheon where UCLA health staff and entertainment industry representatives convened to learn about the Picture Quitting Smoking Cessation Program, the first entertainment industry-led program offered in the United States that combines free counseling with low-cost medication.

Picture Quitting offers approximately six weeks of counseling: individual, group, telephone, email or webcam. Participants also receive follow-up phone calls for one year. All counseling sessions are free.

Picture Quitting also provides smoking cessation medications for a small copay. At the first visit, you will learn about medication options so you, your counselor and MPTF physician can work together to determine which choices are right for you.

For more information, please call 818-526-7644 or talk with your MPTF physician.

Save the Date!

The next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, January 16, 2016**, at 10 a.m. It will be held at the Local 80 Stage at 2520 W. Olive Avenue in Burbank.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING



BEST SOUND EDITING
WYLIE STATEMAN

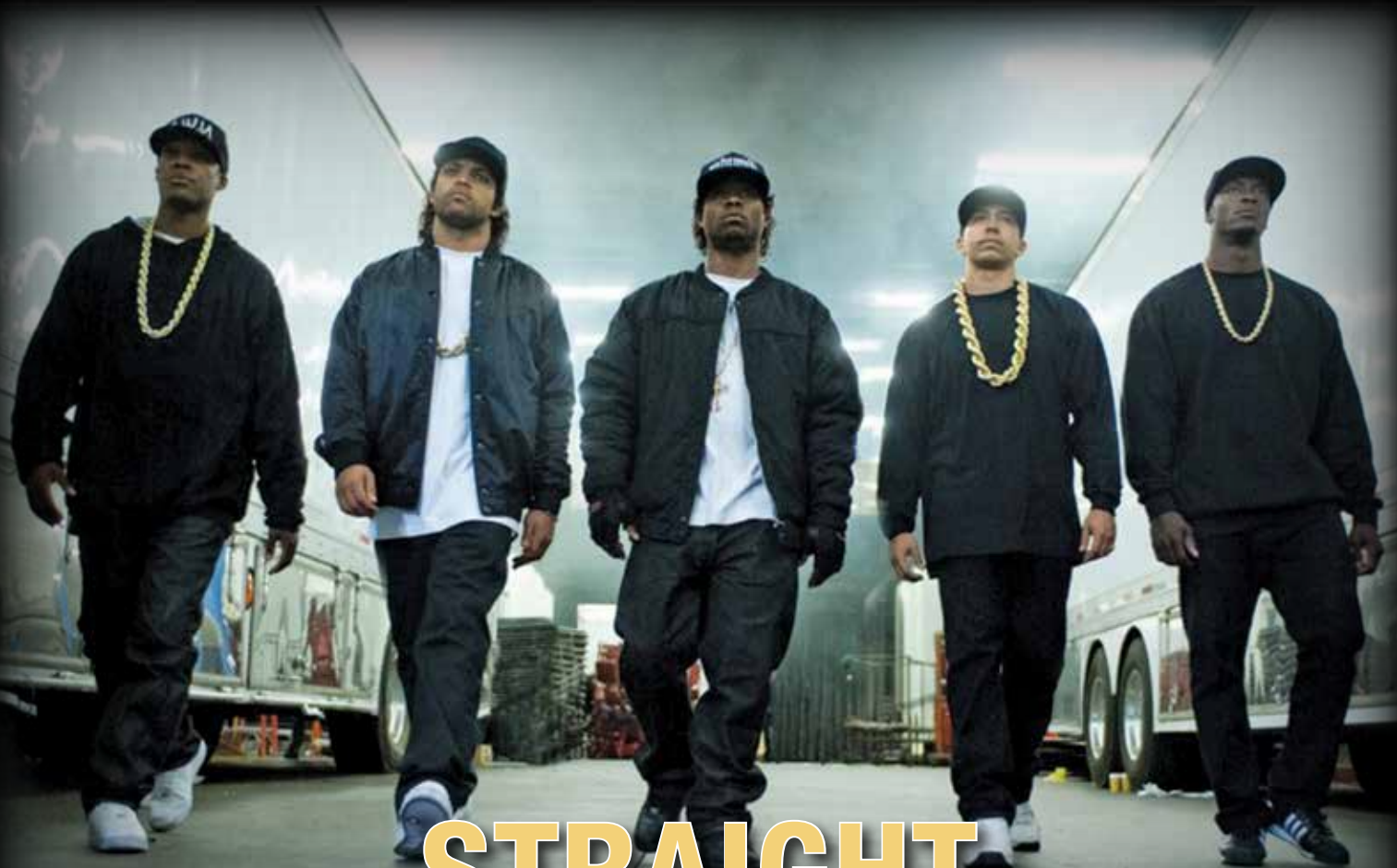
BEST SOUND MIXING
MICHAEL MINKLER, CHRIS MINKLER, MARK ULANO

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

THE 8TH FILM BY
QUENTIN TARANTINO

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From left: MC Ren (Aldis Hodge), DJ Yella (Neil Brown, Jr.), Eazy-E (Jason Mitchell), Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson, Jr.) and Dr. Dre (Corey Hawkins).

Photos by Jaimie Trueblood

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

by Willie Burton CAS

I was working with Matt Alvarez, one of the producers of the film *Beyond the Lights*, in September of 2013. Matt said he would be producing a film entitled *Straight Outta Compton*. I said, "That sounds like a great project and I would love to be involved with a movie of that caliber." Several months later, I was in Atlanta working on the film *Selma* and heard that *Straight Outta Compton* was in pre-production. I scanned through *Production Weekly* and saw that true to his word, Matt was one of the producers. I emailed him right away and asked if he would submit my name for the job. His reply was "yes."

A few weeks later, I received a call from Gigi Causey, the Production Supervisor, inquiring about my availability and if I was interested in the project. I explained to her that I was in Atlanta working on *Selma* and would not be in Los Angeles for a couple more weeks, but would love to be involved in the film. Gigi asked me to send a résumé to the producers and the director. Shortly afterward, I received another phone call; the producers wanted me to come in for an interview upon my return to Los Angeles. The script was emailed to me and, after reading it; I was hyped and excited about the possibility of being involved in such a prestigious film.

I finally went in for the interview. It was with Adam Merims, the Line Producer, and Gigi, which was very unusual. I normally interview with the director and producers. I left with mixed feelings as filming was set to start in a couple of weeks. My concern was short-lived as I was asked to come in and meet Director F. Gary Gray. I left that meeting feeling very positive and excited but wasn't sure if I had the job. I still hadn't heard from the production, a week before location scouting was set to begin. But happily, I received the call. "The director liked you and we want you to be on the scout Monday morning."

My first step is to break down the script and have a good understanding of the story. Scouting locations is also a very important element of filmmaking. It allows you to prepare and come up with solutions in helping to reduce background noise when shooting in noisy interior sets. Many times we don't get to scout and you end up with a lot of surprises and no time to solve the problem. I knew this was going to be a challenging project because of the large cast, as well as music playback, live recordings and earwigs for each member of the group N.W.A. For a project of this magnitude, you have to have the proper equipment and a great crew.



Producer Dr. Dre, Director/Producer F. Gary Gray, and Producer Ice Cube on the set of *Straight Outta Compton*.

My cart consists of a Zaxcom Mix-12, 2 Deva 5s each with 10 tracks, as a main recorder and a backup, as well as 2 Lectrosonics Venue receivers. I have an assortment of lav mics, Sanken Cos-11, Countryman B-6 and DPA. I use Lectrosonics UM400 plug on transmitters for the boom poles with Sennheiser MKH 50 and Schoeps for all interiors and MKH 50 and MKH 60 for all exteriors. I knew I would have to have a minimum of ten tracks, lots of wireless microphones and Comtek receivers.

I assembled my team, with Boom Operator Michael Piotrowski, Utility/Second Boom David Parker and Pro Tools Playback Engineer Mark Agostino. The second unit Sound Mixer was Bartek Swiatek. The one challenge was keeping up with all the IFBs and Comtek receivers that were used for both public and private communication. We started off with eighteen IFBs and increased the number daily until we reached a total of thirty-one. That was a challenge in itself. It was suggested by one of the producers that we buy a toolbox with a lock so we could keep track of all the receivers that were all over the place. We bought the toolbox and lock, but we never locked it as a number of visitors frequently visited the set and it seemed like every few minutes we were passing out receivers and changing batteries. We spent additional time each day looking for the units.



Aldis Hodge as MC Ren



Left to right: Neil Brown, Jr., Jason Mitchell, O'Shea Jackson, Jr., Aldis Hodge and Corey Hawkins

Each performer was equipped with a Lectrosonics SM 2 transmitter, Sanken COS-11 lavalier and earwigs. There were also live microphones on the stage. This allowed us to capture the performance and all the ad-libs. In each musical performance, we would do a couple of takes with playback through the PA system. Then record the vocals live with playback through their earwigs. We tied into the house PA system when possible, in conjunction with our own system that consisted of two Turbosound and two JBL speakers. I recorded timecode on one track and music on another from Pro Tools for reference. I also supplied Mark with outputs from the live performances in case we needed to play back the tracks and also for Post.

Recording sound on exterior locations is always a challenge, especially shooting in the city of Compton. You have to have many blocks of wireless frequencies. I used blocks 470, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and 26. Filming was challenging because of all the police radio traffic and the other devices being transmitted. We recorded as many wild tracks as possible to capture the real sound of neighborhoods and the location. Another challenge was rewrites and dialog changes being made at the last minute, which meant my team and I always watched rehearsal and were ready for whatever was thrown at us. We mic'd all the offstage lines for overlaps and protection. Being organized and thinking ahead is the key to being successful. Our DP, Matty Libatique, would run multiple cameras the majority of the time, incorporating wide, medium and close-up coverage. Panning from one cast member to another made it more difficult to capture the sound, which means the Boom Operator has to pay very close

attention to what is being filmed. None of it was predictable. Two wireless booms were used in conjunction with body mics. I used Channel 1 for my mix and each actor was recorded on a pre-fader isolation track in order to have protection if there were issues.

It is also much more challenging for the Boom Operator when all the sets are practical. We could not move walls in order to have more room to work. It was most important to have cooperation from our DP, camera operators, set lighting, grips, Art Department and our location team. Thanks to our director for trusting my team and me to do our job. The cast was very cooperative, allowing us to put radio mics on and make adjustments as necessary. This film was definitely a collaborative effort. Special thanks to my production crew and the talented post sound team for their work in all stages of post production. The post team did a great job with my production recordings and created a brilliant sound design and final mix.

We are always so busy doing principal photography, there is never the right time to take pictures with the cast or director. Dr. Dre threw this extravagant and fabulous wrap party in the Hollywood Hills. He was there, taking pictures with various people. This was my opportunity to take a picture with him. I gave my camera to a partygoer and wouldn't you know it, the flash didn't work. So I have a picture in darkness with him. If you don't see the photo in this article, you'll know why. I'm hoping the still photographer has a shot of us.

That's a wrap.



N.W.A hits the stage



Director F. Gary Gray (right) talking to cast members (from left) Jason Mitchell, O'Shea Jackson, Jr. and Corey Hawkins.

67th EMMYS

Newsweek Alexander Nazaryan

“BY FAR, THE BEST MOVIE THIS YEAR.”



OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (HALF-HOUR) AND ANIMATION

Modern Family “Connection Lost” ABC
Stephen A. Tibbo CAS, Dean Okrand CAS, Brian R. Harman CAS, David Michael Torres
Production Sound Team: **Srdjan Popovic**, William Munroe, **Peter Hansen**, Ken Strain, Corey Woods, John Sheridan, John Hays, Noel Espinosa, Brian Wittle, Devendra Cleary CAS, Steven Morrow CAS

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE HOUR)

Game of Thrones “Hardhome” HBO
Ronan Hill CAS, Richard Dyer, Onnalee Blank CAS, Mathew Waters CAS
Production Sound Team: Simon Kerr, Jonny Waite, Daniel McCabe, Bradley Kendrick, Kelly Stewart

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A LIMITED SERIES OR A MOVIE

Bessie HBO
Jim Emswiler, Roberto Fernandez, Damian Volpe, **Ed Cherney**, Evyen J. Klean
Production Sound Team: Thadd Day, Maaike Snoep, **Mark Agostino**

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR NONFICTION PROGRAMMING (SINGLE- OR MULTI-CAMERA)

Foo Fighters: Sonic Highways “Seattle” HBO
Fred Stuben, Jeff Fuller, Eddie Kim
Production Sound Team: Ian Wood

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL

Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special NBC
Robert Palladino, Bill Taylor, Marty Brumbach, Ezra Matychak, Bob Selitto, Chris Costello, Devin Emke, Josiah Gluck, Bob Clearmountain
Production Sound Team: Michael Ferrara, Tyler McDermott, Chris McKeivitt, Patricia Reilly, Jason Spence, Michael Witzer

Names in **bold** are Local 695 members

Modern Family

Game of Thrones

Bessie

Foo Fighters: Sonic Highways

Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special



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BEST SOUND EDITING **Paul Hsu**

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NEW YORK OBSERVER, Rex Reed

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ROLLING STONE, Peter Travers

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SPOTLIGHT

TELEVISION'S DIRTIEST WORD

by Doc Justice



Jeff Fusting working the Yamaha CL 5 on ABC's *The Bachelor*. (Photo: Tim Puzo)

In 1972, George Carlin delivered his famous monologue, “Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television.” Today, there is one word that encompasses all of the seven. This one word elicits groans, sighs, rage and disgust.

Reality. As in, reality TV. Gross!

It is the bastard genre of television, where nobody claims responsibility for the lack of parenting. Its fans only confess begrudgingly, its detractors denounce it with gusto. More often, viewers will cry “FAKE!” as one argument against the entire category.

Yet, here we are with 352 seasons of *Big Brother* shot and aired around the world. That number is not an exaggeration.



John Steigerwald at the console.
(Photo: James Hammer)

While all of planet Earth has agreed that reality TV is to be only enjoyed as a guilty pleasure; there are many sound mixers making their living from it. What are the skill sets needed to be a reality TV Mixer?

To answer that, we have to take a closer look at reality as a whole. After all, can a docu-follow such as *Real World* be treated the same as *American Idol*, *Survivor*, *What Not to Wear* or *My Cat From Hell*?

Every one of these productions is as different as the individuals who record the dialog. They offer unique challenges and custom workflows, and the people who are tasked with recording these shows must be creative, technically adept, quick to act and often, physically fit.

They are known as Audio Supervisors, and as the heads of their department, they have many of the same responsibilities as Production Sound Mixers on narrative sets. They must choose their gear, manage their sound team, interface with directors and producers, and coordinate with post.

On set, the Audio Supervisor is a different animal altogether. Instead of the usual team of three, the Audio Supervisor might work with a department ranging from one to upward of twenty crew members.



Justin Brunnler at Boston's Fenway Park for *Esquire's Best Bars in America*

On the docu-follow show *Esquire's Best Bars in America*, Audio Supervisor Justin Brunnler works as a one-man band. Justin mic's up the talent, sends mixes to camera, booms the public and is responsible for all of the audio that ends up on-air. Staying compact is key, since Justin maneuvers through the bars to boom the patrons as they order drinks. His bag has everything at his disposal, a Sound Devices 664 with Lectrosonics 411a receivers with sends for camera and IFB. Production typically visits three bars per shoot day in any given city, so it can be very hectic. His producers put a lot of trust in him, and he has rewarded them with two seasons of successful work. The producers could call a Sound Mixer in any of the cities that they travel to. They could probably get somebody cheaper to take the job. However, they insist on calling Justin, because the risk isn't worth it to them. Despite all the hours and travel, his demeanor and work ethic are of utmost importance. Justin delivers quality audio with a smile every time.

ABC's *The Bachelor* has aired eighteen seasons, and that doesn't include all of its spinoffs. Audio Supervisor Jeff Fusting, multitracks the audio for thirty-two individuals including the contestants, host and bachelor. Working with a Yamaha CL 5 in the house and a Yamaha CL 1 on the road, Jeff is able to rout all of his record tracks, to the story producers who are monitoring story beats, and the director. Those thirty-two



John Steigerwald's 'Control Room' for NBC's *American Ninja Warrior*

frequencies of cast transmitters are only the start. There are also 12 ENG rigs each consisting of a Sound Devices 552, 4 Lectrosonics 411a receivers and UM400a transmitters for camera hops and IFB. Along with the stereo camera sends and IFBs, there are a total of sixty-three frequencies floating in the air at any given time. Yet, coordinating those frequencies is a simpler task compared to staffing the show. Shooting takes place close to twenty-four hours a day, so scheduling more than twenty Sound Mixers per season can be a challenge. The team is vital to a smooth operation, and Co-supervisor Dan Norton helps to coordinate the ENG Mixers. If it all stopped there, it would be easy. Throw in the carnets, the earwigs, the PLs, and of course, the bikinis, and it is plain to see how difficult it is to capture audio for this show. Yet Jeff is there, season after season, making it happen efficiently and effectively.

To change gears completely, take a look at *American Ninja Warrior* on NBC. This is another beast of a show, with microphones all over the place. John Steigerwald collaborates with rental house Clair Broadcast to create a system that doesn't miss a word or a splash. Capturing all of the sounds is no simple feat as it is one big obstacle course that contestants must race through. John uses shotgun mics including Sennheiser 416P and plant mics like the Shure SM91 to not only capture the dialog, but all of the sounds in the obstacle course. His A2s run the course alongside the contestants with parabolic dishes to make sure no footstep is missed. Talent are wearing Sennheiser SKM5200s with Neumann capsules. Since the show sets up its giant obstacle course in cities across the country, above all else, efficiency in engineering and packing are key. All of the rack cases, mics, wireless and recorders have been whittled down to just a combination of eleven racks, trunks and workboxes. John's extensive background in touring has led to an expertly fine-tuned package. The Audio Supervisor job on this show is as much of a challenge as climbing Mount Midoriyama itself.

Audio Supervisors in reality TV must always take advantage of new technologies and systems. Multi-boxes begat Aviom Digital Snakes, which gave rise to MADI and Dante. Routing audio to different cameras, decks, Producer IFBs, Story Stations and PL is paramount to the job. Data management, mic wrangling and on-the-fly troubleshooting are all part of the everyday process. Sometimes it is a wonder how the jobs are accomplished. These productions learn very quickly that hiring the right Audio Supervisor is the single most important step toward sound satisfaction.

The job of the reality TV Audio Supervisor is really not too different than that of the narrative Production Sound Mixer, and yet, it is. Audio Supervisors work as hard and care just as much as those in the scripted world. One isn't better than the other, one just presents a different myriad of challenges than the other. The average Audio Supervisor is much more than the shows that require the "sound-mule" to wear one hundred pounds of gear.

Reality TV may have earned its own stereotype as dirty and cheap, but all Audio Supervisors should be applauded for their work. Next time you talk to somebody who makes their living off of reality TV, strike up a conversation and ask them about it.



Steig's microphone workboxes

Just don't do it in public, or somebody might think you actually watch the stuff.



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KEEP CALM AND MAKE A PATCH

Notes From an A-2
at the Grammys

Lang Lang, Pharrell Williams & Hans Zimmer perform during The 57th Annual Grammy Awards at Staples Center in Los Angeles. (Photo: Monty Brinton/CBS ©2015 CBS Broadcasting, Inc. All Rights Reserved)

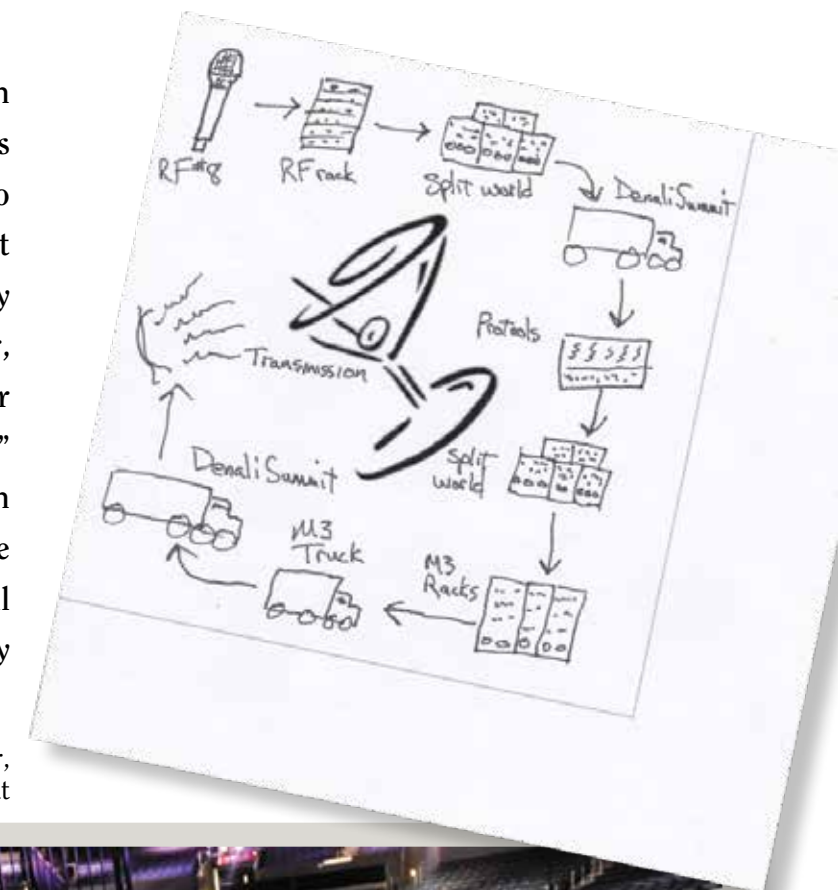
by Ric Teller

Quite a few years ago, I was working on a show with Murray Siegel in the days when Murray was still on the audio crew. During the show, or maybe it was during rehearsals, my memory is a bit fuzzy on the details, Walter Miller, the iconic director, got on the PL and told everyone that “the floor A-2 job was no career for a grown-up like Murray.” Working as an A-2 in television for more than thirty years, including more than half of the live televised Grammy Award ceremonies, I can tell you without question that Walter was absolutely right.

If you can’t act a bit like a kid, scoot around on the floor, laugh out loud, poke a little fun and have some poked back at you, dance a little, be enthralled by the presence of some music icons, and come out of it wanting more, this job may not be for you.

To be sure, there are challenges in doing the Grammys, not the least of which is that we are under a lot of pressure to perform our stage audio-ballet, or more aptly, a rugby scrum, in a timely manner. We try our best to make everyone happy, the artists, the Director, Production Staff and especially the rest of our amazing Sound Crew. The group of mixers and techs that bring each and every part of our production to the show that you hear on television are supremely talented engineers and more importantly, are very nice people. Together, we have had some true successes including a clean show in 2015 and along the way we have had a few bumps in the road. Our A-2 crew has been lauded in print as an example of audio excellence and after one tough year, derogatorily identified as members of the Santa Monica High School A/V Club. Go Vikings!

In 2014, the Grammy road was decidedly bumpy. The dress rehearsal was a train wreck. There is a specific amount of



FOH Mixers Mikael Stewart and Ron Reaves on dual DiGiCo SD consoles

time allotted for each of the 128 items in the show and the only time we do the band-to-band staging transitions in real time, is in dress. We were late on four or five changeovers, band carts arrived on stage slowly and we had several audio and instrument issues. I am not one who believes a ‘bad-dress’ means ‘good-show.’ I like it all to be good.



AC/DC performs during *The 57th Annual Grammy Awards* at Staples Center in Los Angeles.
(Photo: Monty Brinton/CBS ©2015 CBS Broadcasting, Inc. All Rights Reserved)

In the live show, if something doesn't work, we quickly evaluate if the broken part of the setup will have a major impact. Let's say, we are ten seconds away from a performance and the problem is Viola 3 or Snare 2 bottom, or anything else that won't be noticeable to the viewing audience, we just let it go (damn that Viola 3 mic). If it is something more important, such as a vocal mic, a lead guitar or piano and it is not easily fixable, then we tell the Stage Manager, who tells the Head Stage Manager, who tells the Director and the Executive Producer and they decide the potential impact of a flawed performance. Sometimes they will try to give us a little more time to resolve the issue, a longer tape package and an extended acceptance speech. That twenty seconds or so might be enough time to make a game-saving difference.

It is late in the Grammy show and we are pitching a shutout. After our relaxing eighteen-minute meal break, we cleaned up the band risers, made sure the mics were in the correct positions and secretly replaced a critical problematic cable. All the issues from dress rehearsal seem to be resolved.

Band carts are flying up the ramp, The Highwaymen guitar rig is behaving, and Paul's vocal in the Taylor Swift number is clean. It is item 108, Macklemore and Ryan Lewis with Trombone Shorty, and we are line checking.

Strings good, guitar good, vocals good, nine RF instrument mics all good. Choir 1 good, Choir 2 good, Choir 3 ... not good.

Remember, we are in a live show, musicians are on stage and their performance is seconds away. I pivot and reach down to change the Choir 3 input from Pair 3 in our sub-box to Pair 7, then go to the main box and reach down for the cable on top, barely looking to see if it is the correct one. I know it will be, because Eddie McKarge, my partner on the B-stage, has been sending Pair 7 signals directly to the patch part of my brain. The connection is made, he casually checks the mic one last time and of course, it is good. Shutout preserved and maintained through the end of the show.

The Grammys are in the best way, a collaboration of more than sixty sound people led by our own audio coordinator ... err ... complicator ... err ... aggravator, Michael Abbott. Mike has worked on nearly thirty Grammy shows and is in charge of the audio details large and small that make everything work as smoothly as possible. He also runs interference when needed. Without Mike's guidance, no one would know how RF #8 gets to the final mix. Really, how does it?

Staples Center is the home for three Los Angeles professional sports teams that are all in season during the Grammys, so our access to the venue is quite limited. We begin on the Tuesday, before the show by running thousands of feet of cable. Fortunately, much of the connectivity is done on fiber these days. That big copper stuff is way too heavy. Wednesday, we have an audio meeting to address the specifics of the show and then continue our setup. Rehearsals begin on Thursday and continue for three very busy days.

Finally Sunday arrives. First we rehearse anyone who we haven't seen yet, next we do a full three-and-a-half-hour dress rehearsal, followed by a three-and-a-half-hour live show. We finish show day with four or five hours of wrapping cable and putting our toys away. It is a very long, fun day.

The broadcast this year was filled with a wide variety of performances. Two of my favorites were AC/DC, who opened the show in fine fashion, and Usher who did a lovely version of "If It's Magic," accompanied only by a harp until the last few bars when Stevie Wonder joined in. It was magic.

About that RF #8 question. It originates backstage in the RF rack and gets to the split world via a two-hundred-foot **W4** cable. At split world, the RF goes into split C, Pair 8, which is split to the FOH and monitors **DiGiCo Rack**, the Music Mix Mobile preamp rack, and the **Denali Hydra**; all on short W4 cables. This signal then goes to those mixing destinations through various forms of **fiber**. In this example, let's say that RF #8 also gets a Pro Tools effect. The RF is patched into Hydra 1, Pair 8 and goes to Denali Summit, the broadcast truck, on a 500-foot TAC 12 fiber cable, where it is sent on a **MADI** stream over a 5-wire coax mult to Pablo Munguía's Pro Tools mix position located in a nearby Gelco trailer.

After the RF has received the proper Pro Tools treatment, it goes back to split world on a three-hundred-foot **W2** cable where it is patched into a music split. Let's call it split A, Pair 52. That pair along with the rest of the music split inputs goes to the Music Mix Mobile preamp rack on a fifty-foot W4 cable and from there it is sent to the music mix trucks on fiber. RF #8, now a Pro Tools return track, is then mixed with the rest of the music inputs and sent back to the broadcast truck via an AES pair on a five-wire coax. The last stage is where A1 Mixer Tom Holmes combines RF #8 and the entire music mix with any other elements such as audience reaction and sends it to transmission on an embedded fiber. Quite a journey for our RF #8.

As you can imagine, there are hundreds of people involved in a show of this magnitude. It is advanced television. In our little B-stage world, there are audio, video, production, lighting, staging, props and backline people, plus the terrific techs and mixers that come with the artists, as well as some fantastic musicians. I am honored to work with all of them.

Interfacing with our mixers and techs is a true pleasure and I have great confidence just hearing their voices on my headset. Many people feel that they are among the finest at their craft. I can assure you, that is the truth. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the entire A-2 crew including the A-stage guys who really had a lot of big setups this year. The **Dish Stage Crew** that made bands magically appear on that very small space and the B-side boys who always make my Grammy experience so much fun.

I would like to add a special thank-you to head A2 Steve Anderson for reigning in the chaos that comes when you do a live TV show with twenty-five performances and for helping us stay on track to get through the long days with a sense of humor that Walter Miller might appreciate.

Yeah, probably not.

Glossary

Denali Hydra: Denali is the broadcast facilities truck company used at the Grammys, Oscars and many other television events. Hydra is the stage box for the Calrec audio console found in the Denali truck.

DiGiCo Rack: A multichannel input/output rack connected to FOH and Monitor consoles.

Dish Stage Crew: Performances at the Grammys take place on three stages. The A- and B-stages are stage-right and stage-left sides of the main stage. The third performance area is the dish stage, which is a small performance area in the audience. Our crew is divided into the A-stage crew, the B-stage crew and the dish stage crew.

Fiber: A fiber optic cable for transmitting audio signals from one location to another. The Production Truck, the Music Mix Mobile Truck and the FOH and Monitor consoles are all fed by various systems through fiber.

MADI: Multichannel Audio Digital Interface, an AES standard protocol that carries multiple channels of digital audio.

W2: A sixteen-pair copper connection multi cable.

W4: A fifty-six pair copper connection multi cable.



Dante Explained

by Richard Lightstone CAS AMPS

There is a new buzzword, DANTE. It's a networking protocol and it is quickly being integrated into many Production Sound Mixers' workflow. Full disclosure, I am a Dante user, which I had to license by purchasing a Dante-enabled product.

Dante is owned by Audinate, an Australian company, the seeds of which were sown by some former employees of the Motorola Research Labs, shuttered in 2003. Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer Aidan Williams explains. "I was constantly connecting my synth to a mixer, to a sound card, MIDI cables, all sorts of different connections," he recalls. "To me, it seemed like a networking problem. Why make all those different connections when you could integrate it into a single network?" In 2006, David Myers joined Williams to form Audinate

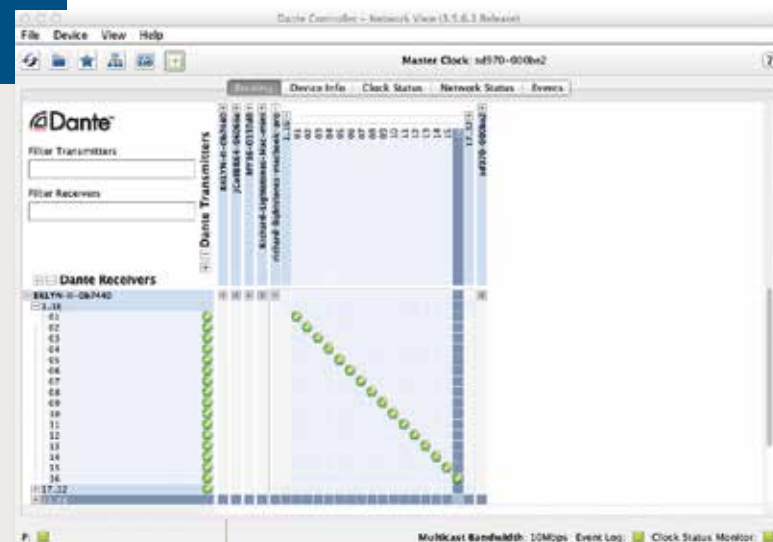
Bruce Jackson, Vice President of Dolby Labs' Live Division, an early advocate, made the Dolby Lake Processor the first Dante-equipped professional audio device to be used at a performance of Barbra Streisand in Washington, D.C., in 2008. That same year, Lee Alison joined the company, opening its US headquarters in Portland, Oregon.

Dante has played a role in numerous mission-critical events; from the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, the Pope's appearance at World Youth Day in Sydney, to hundreds of concerts by major music performers. There are more than 170 manufacturers who have partnered with Audinate, representing more than five hundred different products that are Dante-enabled.

How Dante works?

In its simplest form, Dante is a protocol for communicating multiple audio channels over standard Ethernet and IP networks. Audio signals between Dante-enabled devices are routed using Dante Controller software. In the analog world, audio connections are point-to-point and individual copper cables representing each channel. In Dante, the physical connecting point is irrelevant as long as all the devices are connected to the same network, audio signals can be made available anywhere and everywhere. Patching and routing are configured in software and not over physical wired links. Depending on the application, Dante allows up to 512 bidirectional channels of audio to be sent and distributed over an Ethernet network, using CAT-5e or CAT-6 cable.

Dante was built to work on Gigabit Ethernet, so it already rides a fat pipe. Those 512 bidirectional channels can be sent on a 1Gb link, uncompressed, 48kHz, 24-bit audio. Latency can be as low as .25mS. One link can simultaneously carry audio with different sample rates and bit depths. You can also set up a system with multiple network zones, each with a different latency to match the needs of your equipment.



Dante Controller showing everything on the network and channel routing

There are other AOE (Audio Over Ethernet) protocols available. The most popular are:

CobraNet

Peak Audio developed CobraNet in 1996. It accommodates up to sixty-four bidirectional channels of audio over a single CAT-5 or fiber-optic cable. You aren't going to get advanced features like self-configuration, bandwidth adaptation or error correction. Since it's a digital signal, equipment does have the ability to process the audio, but that's a function of the manufacturer's gear, not CobraNet itself.



Richard Lightstone's Dante setup; Soundcraft Expression 1, MacBook Pro running Pro Tools, Main Mix cart, networked with CAT-6e cable

MADI

MADI (Multichannel Audio Digital Interface) was an AES standard protocol, developed in 1991 and further improved by AMS Neve, Solid State Logic, Sony and Mitsubishi. It is a unidirectional (point-to-point) approach that allows up to sixty-four audio channels over coaxial or fiber-optic cables and less commonly CAT-5 from a few manufacturers.

How to use Dante?

Simply purchase a mixing console and recorder that has Audinate Dante available. Consoles such as the Yamaha 01V96 and 01V96i have a single-card slot to accommodate a Dante card. There are many other consoles that do the same; Behringer, Allen & Heath and the Soundcraft Expressions and Performer series to name a few. Many manufacturers have Dante built in like the Yamaha QL-1, the Sound Devices PIX 260i, the 970 and the Cantar X3.

Dante devices have a primary and secondary port for redundancy, meaning, there are two identical but separate networks providing a failsafe if one of the networks fails. You can disable Dante Redundancy Mode and use the second port to connect to another Dante-enabled device.

Daisy-chaining Dante devices can be done, with caution, but it is recommended to use a Gigabit Switch in a "star" topology to connect to multiple Dante devices.



Netgear GS105 Gigabit Switch



Dante Virtual Soundcard

Gigabit Switches

Gigabit Switches are just that, multi-port switches that can handle high-speed audio traffic with excellent management, often called QoS or Quality of Service. Some of us are using simple 5-port switches, such as the Netgear GS105, which retails for around \$40 and can be powered via 12 volts. Others prefer the Cisco brand, starting with eight ports and up. Whatever you purchase, make sure they are not EEE (Energy Efficient Ethernet), also known as Green Ethernet. These units will reduce power to individual switches during periods of low network traffic, resulting in poor synchronization and even signal dropouts!

Dante Controller will also work with other DAW software like Boom Recorder, Pro Tools (9 and up), Logic and Cubase up to sixty-four channels. This is achieved via Dante Virtual Soundcard software.

Larry Provost and Paul Padilla working the sub-mix for *Show Me a Hero*



Dante networks are not restricted to digital consoles and peripherals. You can connect analog equipment to Dante interface boxes that do the A to D conversion.

DANTE SETUPS

Brett Grant-Grierson CAS and Joe Foglia CAS

Production Mixers Brett Grant-Grierson CAS and Joe Foglia CAS have similar setups. With the Sonosax ST8D console along with his Sound Devices PIX 260i, Brett has the ability to record twenty-six channels on the PIX.

Brett uses the Lectrosonics BOB Dante interface as well as the Shure SCM820 8-channel IntelliMix automatic mixer. "The Lectrosonics BOB Dante interface gives me 8 I/O via Dante to the PIX 260i. The Shure SCM820 IntelliMix has two auto mix features, Shure's IntelliMix and the Dan Dugan automixer, both assignable to the A&B outputs. I use the Shure SCM820 for all the additional cast members and prioritize by the amount of dialog in a scene and then assign the cast with the least dialog to the Shure inputs. All the tracks are iso'd on the PIX 260i, including the auto mix outputs via Dante. I take one of the line outputs from the Shure into the Sonosax, and this gives me the ability to include the auto-mixed cues into my production mix. I can have 26 tracks assigned on the PIX 260i; 8 from my Sonosax AES outs, 8 via Dante BOB and 10 outs from the Shure SCM820 (8+2 Mix)."

Frank Stettner CAS

The setup used on *Show Me a Hero* involved Frank Stettner's main cart and an additional sub-mix setup. This configura-



Frank Stettner and his sound cart

tion was used for all city council scenes. Frank's cart had an 8-channel Cooper CS 208D mixer feeding a Lectro BOB. The BOB then fed into two Sound Devices 970s. The sub-mix used a Yamaha QL-5 and a RIO1608 stage box.

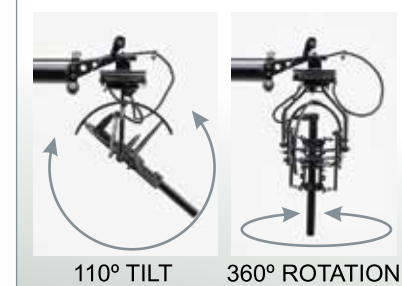
Practical mics on camera fed into the RIO1608D off stage. The RIO fed the QL-5. Larry Provost, the sub-mixer, was able to create a sub-mix that fed into a single channel on Frank's Cooper. Frank was able to mix the single channel in for synching dailies. This was the only analog link between the two setups. All other interfacing between the two setups were done via Dante. The 970s on Frank's cart were able to record all iso's from both his Cooper and the QL-5.

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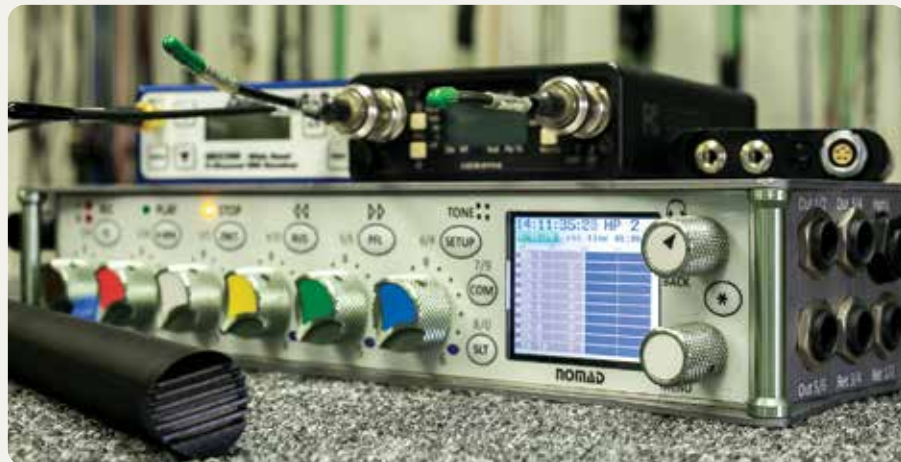
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AUDIO DEPARTMENT



Dante Controller showing all the devices on the network with Pro Tools

Richard Lightstone CAS
 AMPS

My Dante setup on my main cart is the Yamaha 01V96, the Sound Devices 970 and the JoeCo BBR Blackbox Recorder as backup. I use my cart-based Mac Mini to run Dante Controller and the Dante Virtual Soundcard to Boom Recorder, which is open but only as a failsafe recorder. I also have a Soundcraft Expressions 1 console with a Dante Card for music playback. I run Pro Tools on my MacBook Pro routing the outputs directly to the Soundcraft channels via Dante. The Soundcraft's Secondary Dante Port is connected to my main cart, where I can route any Pro Tools stem to my 970. Usually the Master Mix and Playback Timecode.

Here is an example of an interesting solution made simple by Dante Controller. I had a wireless connected to the output of an electric guitar for a scene. The wireless is routed to my Yamaha

01V. I was able to also route that signal to a channel on the Soundcraft, where it could be folded back and heard over the playback speakers. This is all done with two CAT-5e cables between the playback setup and my main cart. Elegance in simplicity.

The use of your Dante setup has multiple possibilities beyond the mix cart. Audinate has new software they are just rolling out called *Dante Via*, which will allow different computers and their peripherals, whether it is audio devices or hard drives to all be connected as long as they are on the same network. The software works with Windows 7 (SP1) through 10 and Apple OS 10.9.5 through 10.11. Dante Via enables any USB or Firewire audio device with network connectivity, allowing you to easily expand your Dante system with hundreds of available products. Connect your device and check "Enable Dante" in the Dante Via interface, and it's ready to connect with your entire network, unrestrained by short cable runs. It will discover all connected audio devices and applications and give you intuitive drag & drop interface for connection management, including routing audio from different applications to different locations at once. Imagine sending your live ADR, voice-over or wild line session directly to the picture edit suite or the Mix stage?

Peter Schneider of Gotham Sound & Communications, Inc., says it best: "The ability to 'expand on demand' without fuss is a feature unique to Dante. Any traditional cart can be expanded to accommodate a great number of sources, but no system can do it across such a broad range of manufacturers as easily as Dante can with one CAT-5 cable."

I want to thank those who helped me in 2014 to set up Dante; Phil Palmer CAS and Scott Harber CAS, as well as Mike Paul of Location Sound Corp, who assisted me with background for the article.

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GRIPS TO THE RESCUE

The grips simultaneously rigging the Technocrane and 20 by 20 on the Fox Studios New York Street.

by Devendra Cleary CAS

This is the first time I am sharing this experience. In June of 2002, I was the Boom Operator on a movie on the western slope of Colorado. I was now LA-trained and not afraid to show it. On this particular night, we were shooting on a farm, doing a fourteen-hour split day. We had multiple wires, long takes and the boom fully extended with a shotgun microphone in a zeppelin. As I look back and complain about my physical exertion that day, it still pales in comparison to the work of the grips.

We wrapped around 2 a.m., the end of a Fraturday, and I helped to load the sound gear into the truck. I got into my Toyota 4Runner and drove past the grips who were still wrapping in the dark. I headed down the ten-mile dirt road back to our hotel and was driving the same way I did for the past year: as if I was on the 101 freeway.

I was going 60 mph as I hit the curvy part. I fishtailed for a few turns before it was too late to recover, losing control of the vehicle and flipping the truck onto its side into a ditch. I was extremely fortunate, as I could have tumbled over and over, but the ditch stopped me. Escaping the vehicle out of the passenger door, my adrenaline was pumping and I was terrified beyond belief. I paced the dirt road, still in shock, but very grateful I was not seriously injured.

What was I going to do, walk to the hotel, call a tow truck or sleep here on the side of the road? My despair was lifted when I saw a pair of headlights headed my way. It was the grips; they spotted my overturned truck and me. Without any hesitation or conversation, the key grip and the best boy grabbed a cluster of rock-climbing ropes and proceeded to attach a tie-off to the bottom of my truck and to their front tow hitch. It was done with precision and efficiency as if they had done this a thousand times before. Within seconds, they had my truck flipped back on its wheels.

Now what to do with the traumatized Boom Operator? They split up and the best boy grip drove my truck back to the hotel. I was a passenger somewhere, but honestly to this day, I have no idea which vehicle I rode in. What a night.



The 'Grip Cloud' on Olvera Street, downtown L.A. Photo: Josh Kuykendall

This was the first week of the movie and up until this point, I think all I did was try and convince these guys how awesome and experienced I was without showing the proper respect that they deserved. These amazing people who came to my rescue humbled me. Colorado Local 7 Grips, I am forever in your debt. I believe they were doing what any grip would do in this situation. I am grateful and have carried my respect for their entire profession since.

We know them as Local 80. The grips are more invisible than we sound and video professionals. The layman may look at them as crew members who put sandbags on camera tripods, hold stands when it's windy, move set walls, build scaffolds or lay dolly track. But these are gross oversimplifications of the work that these highly sophisticated, and trained professionals do every working day. They are not laborers, yes, they may do a ton of manual labor, but film sets have an uncanny way of utilizing people's talents in laborious ways. They do so much more.



The Technocrane on the Chapman crane

The first assistant director may be in charge of your safety, but the grips are the ones who are really looking out for you. They keep you safe by properly rigging and operating the cranes, the ‘20 bys,’ camera risers and everything that supports the work of the camera and lighting departments. Now do I have your attention?

I was working on season one of *Murder in the First* and had my hands full with a “Burning Man”-style set of party scenes with plenty of dialog, playback and VOG for three hundred extras. I had enough time to watch the grips while they mounted a small Technocrane to a Chapman and then take that magnificent rig to its highest point, effortlessly, giving the director exactly what he wanted. Then the director changed his mind and they skillfully gave him exactly what he wanted ... again. The key grip was giving instructions over his walkie, taking care of the needs of camera as well as an extremely complicated lighting setup. The grips have to have the same level of sophistication as the camera department, yet they never get treated like the royalty camera does.

I think when we ask them to help us rig a plant microphone, a flag to kill a nasty boom shadow or help video assist rig an antenna, they must be amused at the simplicity of these tasks. These guys and gals are my heroes.

Speaking of heroes: A Sound Mixer whom I have idolized since the beginning of my career by the name of Agamemnon Andrianos CAS, speaks fondly of our grip brothers. He says: “But that dynamic when you’re working with the grips. I put them first because they’re the CEMENT of the whole crew.” Cement. They are rock-hardened yet malleable cement. They bond the whole crew together. We couldn’t do any of this without them.

As I moved from Utility to Boom Operator to Music Playback Operator and then to Production Sound Mixer, I felt a divide between the grips and myself. I noticed my Utility and Boom Operator were more acquainted with the grip side than I am now as the Mixer. They knew each other’s names before I did, forged camaraderie before I did and I was envious. Fortunately, this was a multi-season

“ But that dynamic when you’re working with the grips. I put them first because they’re the CEMENT of the whole crew. ”

–Agamemnon Andrianos

assignment, so I was able to adjust my flawed dynamic and forge the friendships that I needed.

The grip department on my last show was incredible and I cannot let their talents go unnoticed. One day, we were shooting an exterior on New York Street at Fox Studios. The grips were wrangling their daily task of positioning and operating our Technocrane. This in itself was a full-time job. The grips were also responsible for the massive metal frames that held the silks. Sometimes the wind picks up unexpectedly and the combo stands that are supporting the frames are compromised and need to be additionally secured by ropes for them to be safe for the actors and crew. Like the choreography of a synchronized swimming team, they sprung into action and had the rig secured in under two minutes. They all knew their part; who’s going up high, who’s on what stand. Simultaneously, tying their “sheep shank,” “bowline” or “clove hitch” knots. All low

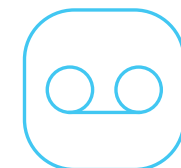
key, under the radar, with speed and always with safety first.

The grips seem to be something different to all of us. To the AD staff, they may just be the equipment movers who are constantly asking them to get out of the open doorways. To producers and UPMs, they are necessary manpower that they would love to minimize, if they can. To the camera department, they are their unsung heroes, for they know they can’t do the job without them.

Local 80 Dolly Grip Adam Eichhorst points out, “We have to have the strength of a weightlifter with the grace of a ballerina.” These guys push a 500-pound dolly with two people on board, hitting precise marks, starting and stopping with absolute style and grace. To the sound department, they are collaborators in shaping light for the Boom Operator. The grips likeliness to assist sound has every-



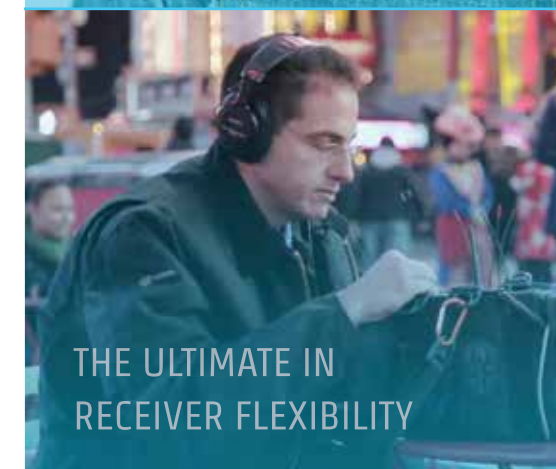
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thing to do with our relationship with them. Their help can sometimes be "on-the-fly," as sound is not their top priority. But I have found the stronger and more organic our department's relationship is, results in more collaboration. It should serve as a lesson on how we interact with every department on any film set.

Why did I want to give praise to the grips? Because I love drawing attention to misunderstood and sometimes underappreciated professionals. There is still a difference in awareness of their intricate contributions depending on whose looking glass we're looking through. They deserve to be put on a pedestal for what they do. This will only reinforce the grips who already know they are the gods of film production, and also empower grips.

If you're not already doing so, show the grip side some love. Thank a grip, hug a grip and tell a grip their daily efforts aren't going unnoticed. Let them know they truly are our filmmaking cement.



Joe Kenworthy booming from a crane in Billings, Montana, on *The Missouri Breaks*. Director Arthur Penn (in white) and Jack Nicholson are in the foreground.

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