

# THE EARDRUM

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## EARS CREDO

"Hey, Mike, it's really great that everybody is happy about the new look and readability of THE EARDRUM. And now that THE EARDRUM has a fax number (708-998-6421), I'm starting to worry that we've become boring and respectable!"

"But dude, aren't we going to continue to write silly articles and report all the slander and dirt that oozes from the 'Penis of the Plains'?"

"Yeah, but now everyone can actually read the nasty things that we've been writing about them!"

"You mean that Marty 'Papa Smurf' Feldman, Hank Nueberger, and all those downtown cats that we razz all the time are going to wait outside the EARS meeting and ambush us with mic cables? What are we gonna do...worry about what others think or write the (w)hole truth, or something close to it?"

"You're right, Mike, let's give the people what they want. We're gonna make 2 Live Crew look like Donny and Marie! This month's Classic Credo: More reverb in the headphones? @#\*& you!!!"

Put that lemonade down, get off the hammock, and come to the next EARS meeting. Sponsored by NARAS, Chicago engineers, studio owners, students, and producers meet monthly to discuss issues facing the Chicago recording industry. Sometimes we start on time, sometimes we start after a few Shirley Temples in the front bar. But whatever time we start, you can be sure that a jammin' good time is had by all. The meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, August 28th at the Legendary Keenan O'Malley's, 2125 W. Roscoe (3400 N) in da great city of Chicaga.

## AGENDA

Come the EARS meeting and schmooze with your fellow studio pals. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 28th. The agenda will include:

EARS will definitely not discuss 2 Live Crew or freedom of speech issues...Let's leave that stuff to the politicians and MTV.

We will conduct a round table panel discussion about Studio Construction. Featured panel members include Paul Smith from Acme Audio (covered in sawdust and in the middle of building a new studio now), Larry Schara of SG Audio, and EARS Chairperson Tom Haban of Seagrape Recording.

We will discuss the upcoming EARS Election for Chairperson and Vice Chair-person. Bring your cigars for this back-room political free-for-all.

## **EARS/NARAS/WOMEN IN MUSIC PICNIC A SUCCESS!**

by Susan Gosstrom and Karen Risinger

We would like to thank all you who came to the joint (?) picnic this past month. For all of you who came, you know how good of a time was had by all. For all of you did not...your loss. Congratulations to Dave Lorino who won the Mic Toss Contest with a toss of 65' (the Peavey mic did not make it intact past the practice tosses, but duct tape and rocks held), and to Paul Wertigo for winning the Outrageous Recording Awards (ORA) for his song "The Dog Shit Blues". Also, thanks to Tom Haban and the good folks at Seagrape for the beer provisions and Jeff Hamilton of AGFA Corp. for donating the cassettes for the Mic Toss prize. We hope that next year will be even better time and turnout. Thanks!!!

(Let's all give Susan Gosstrom and Karen Risinger of Women in Music a big hurrah for all the hard work they put into organizing this event.)

## **CUB TECH TIPS**

by Mike Konopka

What, use a direct box on a guitar amp? As strange as it may seem, a direct box can be a great addition to any guitar amp recording and miking scheme. First, by adding a direct box to your existing mic set-up, you increase the safety factor for the guitarist by incorporating his rig into the ground scheme of the console itself. And as an added plus, many tube amps run cleaner and quieter when grounded in this fashion.

(Editor's note: We consulted with that famous Chicago engineering institution, Malcolm Chisholm, about guitar recording with direct boxes. Malcolm isn't sure who originally came up with the idea, but he thinks that it started sometime in the 1930's. When he started working at Universal in 1955, there were already well-worn direct boxes in use. Blues fans will be surprised to learn that most of the great guitar sounds from Chess Studios in the 50's were actually recorded direct! According to Malcolm, they used a UTC microphone transformer wired in reverse...the secondary was clip-leaded to the speaker wires and the primary side was sent to the console input. Malcolm states, "Little transformers don't work for direct. The bigger and fatter the transformer, the bigger and fatter the guitar sound.")

Make your connections as follows: hook up the direct box to either the pre-amp out or the speaker output before even plugging in the power cord. Double check to see that you have selected the proper position on the speaker-instrument switch on the direct box! When powering up the amp, be sure to float the ground pin on the AC cord because the amp will now ground through the direct box connection to the console. If you are mixing the direct signal with a microphone, don't forget to check phasing. Many cool guitar effects can be gotten by mixing out-of-phase mic and direct signals together. Happy tweaking!!

## **APPRECIATION FILE**

Thanks to everyone who made last month's meeting a rockin' good time: a special EARS sampled cheer and thanks to Brian Tucker from Studer-Revox for his very detailed and cool demonstration about the Dyaxis digital workstation. (So cool, in fact, that everyone went back to their studios and threw away their razor blades). Special thanks to the LA mob man Joe Tortoricci for his insider's report on the Lost Angeles studio scene. Joe's thumbnail sketch of the West Coast left us with the impression that we Chicagoans are not such hillbillies after all. But we had to take Joe's comments with a grain of salt after we found out that Joe has joined the union (?). Good luck, Joe, in Los Angeles and may all your sessions be mellow.

## LETTERS TO THE EARDRUM

Due to the wonders of modern technology and fax machines, it's easier than ever for you to give us your input. If you have a beef, a tech tip, or a wacky comment, fax it to THE EARDRUM at (708) 998-6421. Here's this month's letters:

"Dear Eardrum,

I just wanted to drop you a note concerning EARS' upcoming discussion of censorship and Freedom of Speech.

Of course, any clear thinking American will be in favor of protecting the civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights from attack.

Furthermore, in the case of Luther Campbell and 2 Live Crew, we see artists who have been singled out for legal persecution by local authorities who have an obvious racial bias.

But before we adopt 2 Live Crew as heroes and standard bearers in the anti-censorship fight, let's all be clear about one thing. The body of work that 2 Live Crew has created celebrates physical and sexual violence against women. Those of you who have gone to the trouble of checking out the records will not be amused; you're more likely to be revolted. Worse yet, their recordings seem to exhort other young people to violence towards women by suggesting that it is entertaining and fun! So when we are done fighting the very shrewd efforts of the radical right to limit our freedom of speech, let's exile 2 Live Crew to oblivion.

Best regards,  
Hank Neuberger

(Editor's note: After careful listening to the 2 Live Crew album, we agree wholeheartedly that the band should not be glorified or applauded for their misogynist views. In fact, we believe that anyone who promotes or is seen doing violence towards women should be castigated [or castrated?...]right, Hank?)

"Dear Eardrum,

On Tuesday, August 14th 1990, I had the opportunity to call Fostex about a part I needed for some T-20 headphones. Unfortunately, I didn't realize until I dialed that it was almost 7 pm. As it started to ring, I figured I'd get a recording telling me to call back during regular business hours. Fostex is in California, so there's the time zone difference, but lo and behold, they don't close at 4:30 pm.

The next surprise was that a real person (named Angela) answered in a very cheery, but businesslike manner. I told her that I had a broken part on a pair of Fostex T-20 headphones. She asked me to hold for one moment.

Within forty seconds of being put on hold, another person answered. (Unfortunately, I don't remember her name). She asked if she could help, so I explained the problem about the broken part. She wanted to know if it was the model T-20 or T-20 RP. I wasn't sure, but I told her that they were an older model. She said they were the T-20.

"What part is broken?" she asked. Anyone who is familiar with the T-20 knows which part I needed. It's the little hinge plate on the headband that holds the earpiece. She then proceeded to fill out an order form and within four or five minutes of my first contact with Fostex, I had gotten an order placed. No minimum order, no long waits on hold, no music on hold (thank you),

just friendly and fast service. My hat's off to Fostex for a job well done and I look forward to doing business with them in the future.

Paul Smith, Acme Audio

(Editor's note: Thanks, Paul, for the letter. But you neglected to tell us how the headphones got broken. Could it be that you were pumping too much reverb in the cans and they jumped off the musician's head? Just asking!)

### **WHERE'S THE BEEF?**

There's not really much to beef about this month. The only recent complaint is the damn high price of repair or replacement parts for Neumann mics from Gotham Audio. What a bunch of gangsters! Replacement capsules for KM-84s are about \$325.00, which is about \$75.00 more than the street price for the whole mic. Do you ever wonder how many more Neumanns you'd own if somebody else was handling the U.S. distribution?