

THE EARDRUM

Published by the Engineering And Recording Society of the Chicago Chapter of NARAS

Volume 5 Number 9 September 1990

Editor, typist, and desktop publisher: Timothy "Cub Run Kentucky" Powell
Cub Reporter, typist, and sports editor: Mike "Ghost Writer" Konopka

EARS CREDO

It's back to school, back to cool, time to get down to work, so put away that hammock and come to the next EARS meeting. Sponsored by NARAS, Chicago engineers, studio owners, students, and producers meet monthly to talk shop and discuss issues facing the Chicago recording industry. The mood is informal, the talk is cheap, and the bad jokes and barbs fly like mosquitos around a girl scout camp-out. The meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, September 25th at the Legendary Keenan O'Malley's, 2125 W. Roscoe (3400 N) in da great city of Chicago. This month's credo: "The only things that you can count on are death, taxes, and the ever-rising prices of those damn vintage tube mics."

AGENDA

Come the EARS meeting and schmooze with your fellow studio pals. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 25th. The agenda will include:

Yes, it's election time! If you thought that you could get away from those stupid Lynn Martin political ads by going to the EARS meeting, well sorry dude! We will have nominations for the upcoming EARS Election to be held next month!! (All prospective candidates for Chairperson should meet at the bar by 7:30 pm and bring plenty of money to buy drinks for the thirsty EARS crew. You never know, you may be just one vote short on election night, one vote away from the power and glory of being Chairperson of EARS. Think about it!)

Bob Tjarks from Gand Music & Sound will hop off a plane from Lost Angeles and present a video presentation from the AES Show. If you couldn't pry yourself away from the Acid House remixes of the Kibbles & Bits spots to go to LA., here's your chance to see all the new goodies.

APPRECIATION FILE

Thanks to all who made last month's meeting a hip-hoppin' good time. Special thanks to Malcolm Chisholm...Living Legend, Paul Smith from Acme Audio, and Larry Schara from SG Audio for their discussion on Studio Construction. The discussion evolved (or degenerated) into a long talk about studio security and because of the interest shown, Malcolm has offered to give a demonstration of security systems that should include every conceivable bell and whistle.

CUB TECH TIPS

by Mike Konopka

This month's tip: use your sequencer to control effects program changes in mixdown. Your friend, the sequencer, can be a great addition to any mixdown setup. It can control many effect processors such as the SPX-90, Quadraverb, PCM-70, TC-2290, and many more devices via

MIDI control. The best case scenario is if your sequencer can receive sync via SMPTE because you won't have to recue to the beginning of the song in order to "sync-up".

Try using in one or more of the following ways: first record program changes into the sequencer for your various intros, verses, choruses, and solos. Next, you will need to MIDI channelize your stack of MIDI-controlled devices and deselect MIDI omni on these devices. You can even get as tweak as programming patches that are mute programs to minimize effect return noise during your mixes by programming these patches with "0" output volume.

One example of this might be a MIDI controlled echo unit like the TC-2290 where program #1 would be used for the lead vocals, and when the background vocals occur, program #2 (initiated by the sequencer on cue) could lengthen the delay times slightly. Next, program #3 could be your "mute" program for use on the bridge of the song where no delays are needed. Then program #4 could be that quick "slap echo" program for use on the guitar solo etc...

By using the sequencer to control these effect changes, you can get double and triple duty out of your effects rack. Remember, the song doesn't need to be a sequenced song. All you need is one free tape track for your SMPTE or clock info! Dare to be awesome!

MICROPHONE OF THE MONTH

Here's a new column that will occasionally appear in The Eardrum: Mic of the Month. This month's beauty is the Beyer 713 small diaphragm condenser. Most engineers know Beyer for ribbon mics (the 160 and 260), the M88 dynamic (great for kick and toms), and the MC-740 multipattern condenser (which got high marks in the EARS mic shoot-out). One Beyer model that isn't well known is the 713, which part of the MCM system. This line features interchangeable capsules, different pre-amp bodies, and a wide variety of accessories.. not unlike the AKG 451 series.

There are 7 capsules and 2 pre-amps available, but the most common combination is the 713 which is comprised of the CK-703 cardioid capsule and the CV-710 (48 volt powered) body. The 710 includes a -10db pad and a low-frequency roll off of -10db at 50 hz. The switches are concealed by the capsule which covers them up when screwed on, making them well protected but difficult to change. The 703 capsule exhibits a -2db roll-off at 40 hz and a smooth top end shelf of +2 db beginning at 6K. The mic is solidly constructed, more robust than an AKG 451 but probably less abusable than a Shure SM81. The stand clip is a rather standard unit made of plastic, but it seems to hold the mic snugly. Well designed shock mounts are also available.

Enough of the specs...how does this mic sound? Comparing the 713 to other more popular small diaphragm mics like the AKG 451, Shure SM-81, and the Neumann KM-84 produced impressive results. The 713 was not as "ice" bright as the 451, but it definitely had more top end than the SM-81. It didn't have the same kind of warmth that the KM-84 has, but the 713 does produce a silky kind of top end that seems to make ride cymbals sing. Even though the mic is made in Der Fatherland, it seems to sound British (?) in the same way that KEF and B & W speakers have that wonderful high end. The mic works great for acoustic piano, drum overheads, percussion, acoustic guitar, strings, and choir vocals without the need to crank gobs of eq to make the NS-10s blow some Kleenex .

The Beyer 713 isn't cheap... the combo now lists for \$625. But since it isn't that well known, many dealers will discount heavily if they have a few sitting on the shelf. If you're looking for a different sound from your mic closet, try the Beyer 713 out. It's cool!

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.

Paul Smith from ACME Audio (our favorite pen-pal) sent in a letter he received from Parents for Rock and Rap. Here's what they wrote:

PARENTS FOR ROCK AND RAP
P.O. Box 53
Libertyville, IL 60048

"The purpose of this organization is:

- to have a center for a network where people can be reached to put pressure on governments on the local, state, and federal level who attempt to take freedom away from artists.
- to respond en masse to other types of organizations bent on censoring or eliminating works of artists.
- to boycott corporate and other organizations disposed to back those who censor or who themselves censor.

When you hear, read, or see evidence of the above, let this center know and the network will reach out to help pressure the organizations to back off from their attempted suppression of artistic freedom.

Paul, thanks for your letter. We'd like to be on the mailing list for The Eardrum. We need the recording people to fight censorship...Mary Morello"

Parents For Rock And Rap was formed by Mary Morello, a 66 year-old retired teacher from Libertyville, whose son is a member of the Geffen metal group Lock-Up. The 200 member organization, with members in 25 states, has begun a letter writing and phone-call campaign to protest the increasing number of censorship cases in the U.S. Membership is free, but Mary requests a \$3 donation to offset mailing costs.

Parents For Rock And Rap "advocates four things: first freedom of expression under the First Amendment. Second, that parents, not outside forces, be in charge of their children. Third, the oursuit of racial justice in the U.S. And fourth, that we keep this whole thing in perspective- there are issues that are more important."

The Eardrum applauds Mary Morello's efforts and we urge all EARS members to join her organization now. (Thanks to Moira McCormick and Billboard for the article that we lifted!)