AUDIO HORIZONS

New Ideas In Professional Audio From Martinsound

Fall 2000

Add Years To Your Console's Life

25 YEARS

Martinsound
HELPING YOU STAND OUT

We support those of you who are keeping classic analog consoles in service by offering products that can significantly extend the life of your familiar and reliable systems. You need to stay on the cutting edge to be profitable, but the bleeding edge of large digital consoles is full of pitfalls. Our products allow you to stay current by enhancing the console you already have. Here is an overview of Martinsound products you can add to your existing console. Each one is a proven way to attract more business without taking enormous financial risks that could put you out of business.

Surround Monitoring

MultiMAX
Page 4

Much more that just a level control. It's the surround monitoring controller that replaces the stereo monitor section of your existing console. Read why Emmy winner Ed Greene chose MultiMAX and request a free Report.

New!

PanMAX
Page 5

Our new automated surround panner lets you do dynamic sound motion and parameter changes. PanMAX supports all popular formats, locks to SMPTE, and much, much more!

ForMAX and VuMAX

As your surround business grows, adding ForMAX and VuMAX will give you the powerful formatting controls and precision VU metering of a full featured surround production suite.
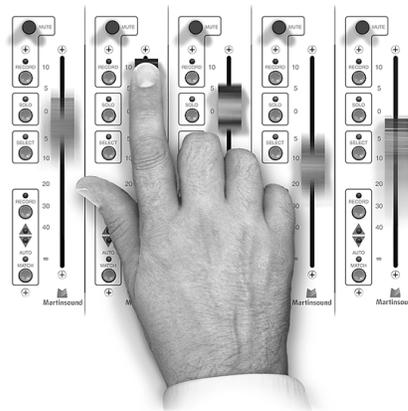
Moving Fader Automation

Flying Faders
Page 6

Only Flying Faders added to your favorite console has a proven track record of bringing in business. And it is now available only from Martinsound, its original developer. See why Sound Kitchen isn't satisfied with having only four rooms of flying faders.

ACX
Page 7

Need more Flying Fader inputs? Add a Flying Faders ACX sidecar to your console. If you have more than one Flying Faders system the benefits are multiplied. Read how Cherokee uses ACX to book bigger sessions.

Natural Sound Mic Preamps

Martech MSS-10
Page 3

You have to hear an MSS-10 in a familiar listening environment to know why natural sound takes you into a whole new category - beyond the best tube and discrete preamps. If you're still holding out for a demo, you can read why Grammy winner Al Schmitt wants a ton of them.

Audio Magic From MARTECH Natural Sound Lab

Natural Sound Report
Page 3

The benefits of natural sound go beyond pleasureable listening experiences. Hours of expensive studio time can be saved, during both tracking and mixing, by not having to "fix" the sound of acoustic tracks. Find out *How The MSS-10 Takes Hassles Out Of Tracking And Mixing*.

Is Analog Dead?

by Joe Martinson - President of Martinsound

Joe is also Martinsound's Chief Audio Pathologist.

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Article summary:
Question authority. Adding to your classic analog console instead of replacing it with a digital desk is the best choice for now.

Continuing with my morbid review of decay in certain sections of the Pro Audio industry such as audio quality, productivity and service, it's time to do a triage on analog. The question is, has digital finally killed off analog once and for all, or is there lots of life left in natural signals?

Back in the mid 1980's we were working on a digitally controlled analog console. We were worried that in just a few years everyone would be mixing only on digital consoles and our efforts would be wasted. Our paranoia was strengthened by rumors that Ampex had commissioned a study of the future of audio tape recorders. The word was that Ampex was trying to decide whether to continue making audio recorders and if so should they be analog or digital. The conclusion was that everyone would stop buying analog multi-tracks and switch to digital since digital audio is perfect. And since digital is perfect, no one would upgrade their machines. They assumed that around 50 multi-track digital recorders would satisfy the entire world market, forever.

Based on this, Ampex stopped making the popular ATR-100 and ATR-124 analog audio recorders and never built a digital machine. After all, who wants to make buggy whips when cars are just around the corner. Well, since that time Sony, MCI, Tascam and Otari have sold hundreds of analog and digital multi-tracks. And think of the market for ADATS. So much for market studies. It seems that the future is much easier to predict after it happens.

I'm not going to try and predict the future of analog, but I do want to talk about some commonly held "facts". It all gets down to a phrase used during the OJ Simpson trial, the "Fallacy of the Assumed Premise" or FOTAP for short. No matter how good logic is, if you start with the wrong presupposition, you will get the wrong answer. The people who did the study made several errors. They assumed that analog was dead. They assumed that digital was perfect. They assumed that the market was not going to expand. And they assumed that equipment lasts for ever and that people wanted to keep it that long.

Honey, I Shrunk the Console. Wayne Szalinski may have shrunk the kids in the Disney film, but for digital console manufactures it is more like, "Honey, I shrunk the profits". In the good old days of analog consoles the joke was how do you make a small fortune making consoles? Start with a large fortune. For digital console makers it seems like they know they will lose their shirts and pants, but maybe they are good enough to keep their underwear.

Here is another area where FOTAP is at work. Digital consoles seem to be designed with the following assumptions: Smaller is better. 48K sample rate is all you need. Time delays of up to 100mSec are OK in the headphone mix when doing live recording or overdubbing. All the features don't need to work now since they can easily be added later with 'merely' a software change. Customers can live with consoles that crash like personal computers. Fewer controls make a console easier to use. The console with the most features wins, regardless of how well it works, how good it sounds or even if anyone wants it!

I've heard about the future of audio. It's assumed that someday everyone will be working over the web. Artists will phone in their performance and mixers will wear virtual reality helmets with built-in sound and 3D displays showing the console. What fun. And we can fly virtual jet fighters between takes.

Hey, I like high tech as much as the next guy (OK, maybe a little more), but the idea of having Wayne using his shrink gun on a console and mixing projects using a magnifying glass causes concern. What? Aren't all great records mixed by guys with pocket protectors?

What are your assumed premises? How do they affect your business? How can you pick the right equipment in a fast changing world? We believe that the best choice is to explore all technologies and pick the one which is right for your application.

There is no question that digital recorders are getting better as the number of bits and sample rates increase and prices drop. And some digital consoles are assumed to be amazing bargains. But what happens when you mix on a 48kHz sample rate console and send it to a 96kHz recorder. Do you wait to get that console until it catches up to the recorder? By then recorders may be at 192kHz or based on another format like Direct Stream Digital (DSD).

One nice thing about analog is that it is compatible with all sample rates. At Martinsound, we believe that analog lives! All of our products are designed to help you get the most out of your existing analog and digital equipment. Adding Flying Faders to your favorite console has a proven track record of bringing in more business. Our Flying Faders ACX console expander lets you book larger sessions by adding automated channels to your console rather than replacing it with a bigger one.

Our Martech MSS-10 Natural Sound mic preamp lets you bypass the console and go straight to a recorder, preserving the impact and details of the original acoustic performance that are significantly degraded by even your favorite tube or discrete preamp. It's amazing how much easier it is to record and mix great projects if the sound isn't wrecked before you even hear it.

With music being given away on the Net, record companies are looking for ways to protect their product and offer something new. They are searching for profits by re-purposing back catalog material for surround-encoded CDs, DVDs and, soon, DVD-As.

Instead of buying a new surround sound console to get your share of these projects, add our surround sound solutions to your existing console. MultiMAX brings surround monitoring to stereo consoles, ForMAX gives you resettable formatting, VuMAX adds precision VU metering and our new PanMAX lets you do automated surround panning. These integrated components can be added in any combination, allowing you to smoothly grow into a full-featured surround facility.

So before sending your tried and true analog console to the dumpster, think about the "Fallacy of the Assumed Premise". Do you want to be like everyone else, or do you want to make some money along the way? If you want to make money and have fun doing it, we would like to help. By the way, if you have a different view or also question some widely held assumptions, I'm dying to hear from you. My e-mail is jmartinson@martinsound.com. Let me know if you think analog is dead. Until my next autopsy...

Joe Martinson
President, Martinsound, Inc.

In This Issue

Notices

Recording engineer Al Schmitt has earned the right to have 'legendary'

by Chris Walsh - V.P. Sales

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Products mentioned in this article:
MSS-10
Article summary:
This award winning recording engineer is using MSS-10s whenever he records, and he records a lot.

precede his name. Inducted into the TEC Awards Hall of Fame in 1997, earlier this year he added an eighth Grammy®, to a long list of accomplishments garnered during a distinguished career. Presented for Best Engineered Album, Non Classical, for *When I Look In Your Eyes* (Verve Records) by jazz pianist and singer, Diana Krall, the award is just the latest acknowledgement of Schmitt's engineering skills.

Schmitt was awarded his first Grammy in 1962 in the Best Engineered category, for Henry Mancini's Hatari. Over the years he has continued to receive the recognition of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, with six subsequent Grammys in the same category during the next few decades, for George Benson's *Breezin'* (1976), Steely Dan's *Aja* (1977) and *FM (No Static At All)* (1978), Toto's *Toto IV* (1982), Natalie Cole's *Unforgettable* (1991) and Quincy Jones' *Q's Jook Joint* (1996).

When I Look In Your Eyes was tracked in one of Al's favorite rooms at Capitol Records, where the orchestral sessions took place, and Avatar (the former Power Station) in New York City, for Krall's vocals and piano, and her accompanists. Schmitt's signal chain for vocals usually consists of a Neumann microphone, in this case a U67, a Martech MSS-10 mic preamp, and a Summit limiter. "It's my favorite vocal preamp," reveals Schmitt. "I use it all the time on vocals. I love the way it sounds; it has plenty of air, and it's warm."

Schmitt has recorded the last three album projects by Krall, who has been Grammy-nominated twice previously for her efforts. "I actually used it on Diana Krall's last couple of albums, and with Natalie Cole," he comments. Schmitt also reports that the MSS-10 works superbly on a variety of instruments. "Mostly I use it on vocals, but I've used it on bass, on saxophone and woodwinds, and on trumpet while recording overdubs." He also recalls using MSS-10s on a Barbra Streisand project to record room ambience.

But whenever possible, Schmitt uses as many MSS-10s as he can get his hands on. After initially being introduced to the MSS-10 on the scoring session for the 20th Century Fox picture, Hope Floats, at Capitol Studios, he is only too happy to use multiple Martech preamps on the orchestra. Schmitt was so impressed with the performance of the MSS-10s at that session that he was famously prompted to state, "From now on, whenever I record, I'll be using the MSS-10s. I would love to have a ton of them." True to his word, while tracking Johnny Mandel's orchestra for a Diana Krall album later that year, he used five MSS-10s, and several more were put to use on the sessions for Monica Mancini's 1998 album, which featured guest vocals by Johnny Mathis.

The MSS-10 had perhaps its finest hour for Schmitt while he was recording a Christmas album with Vince Gill in 1998, a project of which he is justifiably proud. Schmitt used four MSS-10 preamps on the sessions to track the background vocals. "I used them on the chorus. If you haven't heard that record, it's a spectacular sounding record," he enthuses. "It's a gorgeous record, it's just crystal clear."

And that clarity is what you hear when you experience the natural sound of the Martech MSS-10. There is no longer any need to correct the sound when you mix, to compensate for the coloration that other mic preamps introduce. Natural Sound means being able to hear the natural characteristics of each microphone and of the artist, allowing you to make creative choices based on your own decisions, instead

Al Schmitt   *photo by Edward Colver*

of having them made for you by those other preamp companies.

Al Schmitt's experience with the MSS-10 demonstrates the practical advantage of evaluating gear on a recording session. Judging the performance of a mic preamp like the MSS-10 is best achieved under familiar studio conditions. It isn't a decision you want someone else to make for you. That's why we offer a 60 day money back guarantee when you buy the MSS-10: because we're confident that, like Al Schmitt, once you try it for yourself, you won't want to part with it for any amount of money. ◢

Natural Sound And The Bottom Line

TALK TO US

Mail the Reader Response
Phone (800) 582-3555
www.martinsound.com

A free Report, *How The MSS-10 Takes Hassles Out Of Tracking And Mixing*

details the development of the critically aclaimed MSS-10. Read about our design philosophy and the uncompromising evaluation techniques used to create the first natural sounding mic preamp.

The free Report also describes the immediate benefits of recording with MSS-10 mic preamps. Not only is there the excitement of hearing the full impact and exquisite details of artistic performances that happened in the room, but hours of expensive studio time can be saved, during both tracking and mixing, by not having to struggle to "fix" the sound of acoustic tracks.

Of course, there are problems the MSS-10 can't eliminate, including bad room acoustics, poor microphones, clumsy punches and other technical hassles. In fact, artistic performance issues are more noticeable because the MSS-10 lets you hear so much more detail. An out-of-tune piano sounds more out-of-tune, for example.

But when using MSS-10s you can say good-bye to the frustrating experience of trying to use EQ and other signal processing gear to fix tracks that just don't sound right.

Along with other MSS-10 users, you will discover that even the best tube and discrete preamps add coloration and obscure details of acoustic artistic performances.

Your tracks will be quieter too, especially if you've bypassed the lengthy signal chain of the console and connected directly to the recorder

Request the free Report - *How The MSS-10 Takes Hassles Out Of Tracking And Mixing* - that examines this issue by mailing the Reader Response, phoning or by visiting our web site. ◢

Audio Magic From

MARTECH Natural Sound Lab

MSS-10 is the Natural Sound mic preamp.

Much More Than Just A Level Control

The MultiMAX multi-format monitor controller is proving to be invaluable

by Steve Harvey - Director of Public Relations

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Article summary:
Audio pros are finding MultiMAX to be essential for their surround monitoring. How facilities of all kinds rely on this "fabulous box".

in project studios and smaller commercial facilities that are using the latest small-format digital console technology. Although versatile, the majority of these consoles offer no surround monitoring capability. We asked three studio owners in the Los Angeles area to share with us their reasons for installing MultiMAX.

Christopher Tyng, a film and TV music composer who provides the music for Fox's Futurama TV series, recently re-launched his World Tree Studios as a commercial endeavor after realizing that, while he was writing, his state-of-the-art Pro Tools-based studio was being under-used.

Tyng chose MultiMAX to manage the Quested LCR speakers, custom surrounds and M&K THX subwoofer in the main studio. This studio, with its large tracking room, is designed for 5.1 surround production of music and for post production.

"We got it because, as a standalone unit, nothing else does what MultiMAX does," enthuses Tyng. "The MultiMAX is a complete control room section for situations in which you don't have one." MultiMAX has been integrated with a 64-track Pro Tools and 32-fader Pro Control system at World Tree. "For a Pro Tools room, or a room with existing console technology that you can't integrate other solutions with, the MultiMAX is the best and the only game in town. It's a fabulous box."

Tyng reports that MultiMAX is being used to its fullest: "We use it in every way that it was set up to be used. We use the processor sends for multiformat multichannel encoding, and we use the premix returns so that we can return different mixdown decks and multi-stem mixes back into our 5.1 monitoring system. It's just an incredibly versatile piece of gear that answers a lot of problems."

John Van Tongeren is also an original music composer for a number of successful TV series, including *The Outer Limits, Poltergeist: The Legacy,*

and the mini-series, *Peter Benchley's Creature.* He has installed MultiMAX at his Tongerland Music production facility, located at The Blue Room. "I've been delivering 5.1 scores for *The Outer Limits*, for the future," explains Van Tongeren, who completed the sixth season of the series recently.

"I'm using MultiMAX to monitor my 5.1 mixes," he elaborates. "I'm using Yamaha 02R consoles and I'm recording onto TASCAM DA-78s." MultiMAX integrates with any stereo mixing console, or workstation, to provide extensive monitoring capabilities and precise control of multiple surround sound speaker systems. Van Tongeren reveals that MultiMAX is controlling a PMC 5.1 monitor set-up, powered by Bryston amps.

Tongerland Music is also the name of Van Tongeren's music publishing company. "I still write and produce songs - pop material," he explains, adding, "And we're currently in talks for possibly doing a video game music score, in 5.1." Van Tongeren initially came to prominence writing and producing hits for artists such as Chicago, The Pointer Sister and Al Jarreau, going on to play keyboards and score numerous movies with Hans Zimmer and Mark Mancina.

Ed Greene, an independent television engineer who divides his time between post production and live TV mixing, including many major entertainment awards shows, recently installed MultiMAX to manage surround monitoring at his private studio. Greene, who regularly works on the hit TV show, *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, is currently using MultiMAX on a number of projects, including Barbra Steisand's New Year's Eve concert and a multiformat production of *Peter Pan.*

Greene states, "These projects, in particular the Steisand and Peter Pan projects, are also DVD projects, so I need to listen to the multi-formats, which this device does so well. I have it hooked up directly to my two Mackie D8B consoles."

World Tree control room

Noting that even the relatively small number of households capable of decoding 5.1 broadcasts also frequently include mono TV sets in the kitchen and elsewhere, Greene reports, "I spend a lot of my time listening in mono. That's where the Martinsound device is just marvelous."

Greene is using MultiMAX to control a Meyer HD-1 monitor system. MultiMAX will control up to four loudspeaker systems, handling a surround monitor system of up to eight speakers in a variety of configurations. Greene notes, "MultiMAX has been flawless, it's perfect for what it does. And because the Mackies have limited metering, I also use VuMAX." Martinsound's VuMAX is a rack-mounting unit, comprising eight precision VU meters, that further augments MultiMAX EX, and the ForMAX monitor formatter, to provide mixing systems with integrated metering for all current surround sound production formats.

Learn more about how MultiMAX can help you handle surround projects. In addition to detailed product information we are also offering two free Reports, *Secrets Of Doing Surround Sound On Your Existing Console* and *A VU On Downmixing*. Request both free Reports by mailing the Reader Response, phoning or by visiting our web site. ◣

Why Is Downmixing So Important?

In this brief excerpt from the free Report, A VU On Downmixing, *we discuss the folding down of the discrete channels of a multichannel mix to formats suitable for playback on systems with fewer channels. This could involve folding down a 5.1 mix for playback on a 4-channel LCRS system, or for stereo playback.*

Downmixing facilitates both format compatibility and channel redirection, and in order to be compatible with as many different playback systems and recorded

media as possible manufacturers like Dolby ensure that their reproduction equipment can process downmixes in a variety of formats.

A multichannel mix should similarly be compatible with as many formats as possible. Relatively few consumers possess playback systems capable of reproducing the original program, thus downmixing and downmix compatibility checking have become increasingly necessary as multichannel mixes flourish and various multichannel schemes for the distribution of digital audio are adopted worldwide.

Of course, it is not the mixer's job to second-guess what equipment his mix will be played back on. He cannot plan for a consumer's mismatched, missing,

badly aligned, or poorly positioned speakers, for example. But the simple fact is that, of the multichannel formats, stereo playback systems are still by far the most prevalent worldwide, and 4-channel playback schemes far outnumber 5.1-channel systems. A 5.1 mix will undoubtedly be heard on a system with fewer channels, so it had better sound just as good in those other playback formats.

Compatibility checking with downmixed formats may have become crucial, but it has a number of attendant problems.

Request the free Report - A VU On Downmixing - that examines these problems by mailing the Reader Response, phoning or by visiting our web site. ◣

New! PanMAX Surround Panner

Most stereo analog, and many small-format digital, mixing consoles offer only

by Shawn Micheal - V.P. Product Development

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Products mentioned in this article:
PanMAX, MultiMAX EX, ForMAX, VuMAX
Article summary:
New addition to the MAX line delivers automated surround panning.

limited panning capabilities, as well as providing only rudimentary monitoring functions for multiformat audio. Adding Martinsound's monitoring and metering solutions allow you to do surround projects on your existing stereo console but, until now, panning has remained a limitation, requiring some creative workarounds to achieve the results you and your clients demand.

Martinsound's PanMAX automated surround panner lets you do dynamic sound motion and parameter changes with a sophisticated multichannel, multiformat solution. One of a growing family of surround sound solutions from Martinsound, including the MultiMAX EX multiformat monitor controller, ForMAX surround monitor formatter, and VuMAX meter package, PanMAX offers yet another way to maximize the investment in your studio equipment.

In any combination, or as a complete, comprehensive package, Martinsound's surround panning, monitoring and metering solutions add years of life to your stereo console, maximizing your profitability and allowing you to attract more business.

PanMAX, which will be available in the 4th quarter of this year, replaces OmniSound's cinema processing system, offering a number of additional enhancements not just for film and video post production but also for music production, live performance and broadcast applications. A fully automated surround sound panning solution that interfaces with any 8-bus mixing console or workstation, PanMAX provides sophisticated control of dynamic sound movement for any type of audio production.

Whether you are producing music for DVD-A, or a movie-of-the-week in Dolby Surround Pro Logic, PanMAX provides automated control of multiple standard multichannel audio and film production formats. The system will even simultaneously handle LCRS and 5.1 or 7.1 and 70mm, and allows you to handle a variety of formats that include DTS and Dolby Digital 5.1, SDDS, and even large-format film schemes like IMAX and IMAX PSE. Any format may be automatically translated into any other format with the press of a single switch.

PanMAX provides 8 outputs, is expandable to up to 16 input channels, and may be configured with single or multiple remote controls operating in parallel. The system offers control of sound

PanMAX joins the MAX line of integrated surround monitoring and control products

position, level/vertical, divergence and stereo width, storing over 24,000 positions in memory, and locking to SMPTE timecode to ensure frame-accurate playback of the memorized sound positioning and parameters. Data for up to 16 processing channels may be archived to a floppy disk or MIDI sequencer. The system offers various panning curves, auto-mute when no sound movement is recorded, and an offset function for adjustments against timecode, useful when synchronizing with picture actions, for example.

The remote control unit features a high resolution LCD display indicating SMPTE timecode, the selected surround sound format, the selected processor, joystick position, loudspeaker positions, plus level/vertical, divergence and stereo width fader positions, as well as the coordinates of the sound position and the fader values.

Additionally, it shows the positions of the recorded sound, fader movements and their coordinates. The sound positions of all processors and their respective processor numbers may be shown simultaneously.

In addition to the system control keys, the remote includes three 100mm faders controlling level/vertical, divergence, and stereo image width, plus an automated joystick. The joystick can be assigned to different inputs in succession and all moving sound sources can be played back simultaneously in SMPTE synchronization. A joystick lock feature allows the operator to move a mono or stereo source along a left-right or front-rear axis with a single motion. Up to 10 controllers may be connected simultaneously to a 10-channel or larger system for

a higher degree of manual panning control.

The divergence control varies several parameters simultaneously with a single fader, with the creation of different panning transition zones for front, front-rear and surround channels, and the simultaneous focussing of the sound over a narrow or wide area of the soundfield. The stereo width control further allows the engineer to vary the stereo separation in real time as the sound source moves, expanding or collapsing the image during the movement.

PanMAX offers automated frame accurate step recording of dynamic sound movements, allowing the operator to set a start and end point, or a set of reference points, with associated sound positions. Played back against timecode, PanMAX will interpolate between the reference points, producing smooth and continuous movements.

Whether you require sophisticated, automated multichannel and multiformat panning as a simple standalone system or as part of a complete, comprehensive surround sound add-on package, PanMAX can help you preserve your investment in your existing mixing system. As your business grows, you can build your system to add more channels of panning, more sophisticated monitoring control, and metering.

Martinsound's multichannel, multiformat monitoring, metering and panning solutions can be added in any combination to your existing stereo mixing console. Our products give you the ability to attract more business; increasing your profitability by getting maximum return on your equipment investment. ◣

Don't Let This Be Good-bye

25 YEARS

◣ Martinsound
HELPING YOU STAND OUT

We wish it didn't have to be, but without a response from you, this

could be our last mailing to you. One of the ways we find people who are interested in our products is to rent mailing lists. We know what kind of people and facilities are on each list, but we don't know who you are and if you're interested in receiving

more information from us until you respond by either returning the Reader Response on the back page, phoning, or filling out the Request Form on our web site.

We would like to hear from you today. ◣

He Made The Faders Fly

It is hard to list all of the people who have made Flying Faders a success but I would like to take this opportunity to honor someone very special.

Back in March of 1989 we had shipped the very first Flying Faders system to Neve for Rumbo Recorders. By the end of that year we were shipping one system a day for a total of 85 systems. That meant that over 5,000 motorized faders needed to be meticulously assembled and tested in less than nine months.

That mammoth undertaking needed a team unafraid of hard work and long hours, so I cajoled Chester Hamren and his wife Juanita into taking the job. Chester mounted the motors and pulleys while Juanita excelled at the nimbler tasks his calloused hands couldn't handle. Juanita also ran the Quality Control department. It didn't say Flying Faders until she said they were good enough to be Flying Faders, leaving poor Chester to rework many a fader.

Even though Chester had a bum ticker during the two decades that I knew him, he always had a good heart. Always friendly, always loving, always loyal to his family. I should know, because over twenty years ago he gave me his daughter, and only child Annette, to marry. So it is with great sadness and a sense of loss that I have to report that Chester's great old heart stopped early on the morning of August 23, 2000.

It's a gift from God that Chester lived as long as he did, but he loved life and lived for others. I believe that the joy he got from being with his grandson and perhaps a little stubbornness kept him going these last 5 years. All of us who were fortunate enough to know him will miss our friend deeply.

So the next time you see a fader fly, take a moment and think of Chester who built each fader with a little piece of his heart.
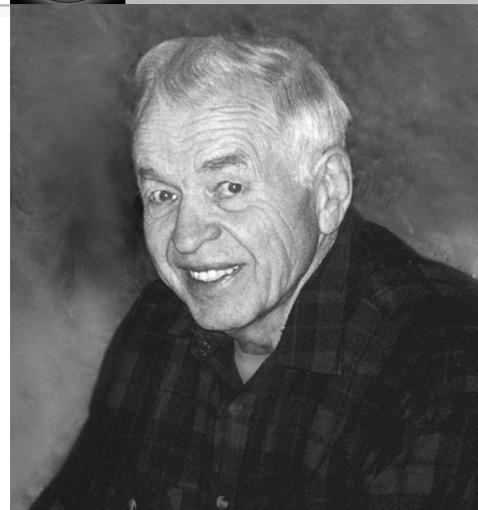
Chester Hamren

Flying Faders Cooks At Sound Kitchen

The Sound Kitchen, located in Franklin, TN, has been growing rapidly over the last few years. Initially a two-room facility, The Sound Kitchen added four more rooms during 1998, expanding to become a 27,000 sq. ft. complex. A seventh room, configured as an editing suite, is close to completion. The Sound Kitchen is now the largest recording studio complex in the Southeast, and is reputedly the third largest in the country, attracting a long list of clients that includes Garth Brooks, Elton John, Dolly Parton, Brooks and Dunn, Vince Gill and Lee Ann Rimes.

Co-owners and brothers, Dino and John Elefante, have long had an affinity for Martinsound's Flying Faders automation system. Of the six rooms, four feature Martinsound's motorized fader automation: Studios A and B, which both house AMS Neve VR Legend consoles, and Studio E, which features a 60-input AMS Neve V3. The V3 was originally installed in The Big Boy, a 5,000 sq. ft. tracking room that is the pride of the complex. That room was recently upgraded with the installation of an 80-input API Legacy Plus. "We chose to put Flying Faders on our new API because our clients love the system," says Dino Elefante. "The reason that we have four rooms with Flying Faders is because we give our clients what they want."

The other two studios both feature SSL consoles, and Elefante notes, "Our customers like the SSL consoles, but they prefer Flying Faders automation. The support from Martinsound has always been phenomenal, so we now plan to work very closely with the company to help develop the Flying Faders system for implementation on our SSL consoles." The system has previously been custom-fitted on a variety of SSL 5000 Series film re-recording consoles for a number of major clients, including Lucas Films, Universal Studios, 20th Century Fox, and Todd-AO in New York and Los Angeles. The plan is to now develop a version of Flying Faders that will be made available to the much broader SSL music recording console market.

Boasting a customer base of studios with AMS Neve, API, Focusrite, Helios, MCI, Neotek, SSL, Trident and classic Rupert Neve-manufactured consoles, Flying Faders has become the most requested motorized fader system in the world. Studio owners the world over have found that, when they ask their customers which automation they should fit to their consoles, Flying Faders is the only system that their clients mention. And, time and again, owners report that once the system is installed they experience a notable increase in their bookings.

The Sound Kitchen is no exception. Elefante reports that their rooms are filled to capacity, with one or more clients on hold for cancellations, and The Big Boy room is pre-booked for months. There are already plans to add another three or four overdub and mix rooms in the future.

The Sound Kitchen has also recently purchased

Sound Kitchen - Nashville

an MSS-10 mic preamp, and uses the MultiMAX multiformat monitor controller. "We inspected the available controllers and researched deep into all of them before selecting MultiMAX," says Elefante. "The alternative was to purchase a new console with the same functions built-in, but we want people to be able to use whatever console they want, and are familiar with, and not have to go through a learning curve. MultiMAX works elegantly on any console."

The Elefante brothers now spend a lot of time producing for their own music label, and Dino is especially proud of one recent surround project. "We took the ten best choirs of the biggest churches in America: it's called *Great Choirs of America*. We mixed it in 5.1, using the MultiMAX controller, and it's unbelievable. It's a colossal event."

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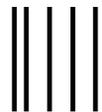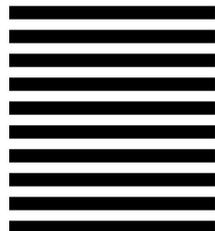
Cherokee Knows How To Please

The legendary Los Angeles recording studio is entering its fourth decade. Designer

Greg Thompson worked in the early '80s for Cherokee owners, Donaldson brothers Bruce, Joe, Dee and his wife Susan, and their father Dave. Greg shares an old story and then some of Dee's comments from a recent interview.

The Donaldson's first studio, The Ranch, was located in the Hollywood hills. It needed a live echo chamber and the solution was to place it underground, which required a big hole. No sooner said than done; father and sons quickly dug a hole deep enough to require a ladder for access. Late one afternoon some other project required temporary use of the ladder and Dave was left to continue working in the hole while the boys turned their attention to other things.

Unfortunately for Dad the boys got distracted by a session in the studio and it was many hours later before they remembered him and rushed with the ladder to the hole. Dave climbed out, speechless with rage, leaving the chagrined brothers wondering if they would ever see him again!

Greg's association with Cherokee began in 1984 when he was hired to repackage a vintage Trident A-range they had bought from Trident Studios in England. That console, which they hand built with circuit designs by Toby Foster, still serves Studio 1, where its ultra low profile provides unobstructed views of the large tracking room. Currently being considered to recieve Flying Faders, this console is still going strong. It's familiar controls and great sound offer a highly productive environment for the demanding clients Cherokee has built their business around.

Cherokee's first experience with fader automation was Necam 2, which they installed in 1982. Their long experience with automation includes Necam 96, SSL systems, and GML. "We put Flying Faders on Studio 3's vintage Trident A-range in 1992. Clients were asking for it and the response has been phenomenal." Says Dee. "The system is very reliable and it's made a huge difference in the kind of projects Studio 3 can handle."

Funk pioneer George Clinton wanted to book mix sessions earlier this year on the vintage Trident but 48 channels was not enough to handle his project. The solution was an ACX sidecar with 24 channels of Flying Faders. ACX quickly and easily adds outboard channels that are totally integrated with the console's

Cherokee Studio 1 and its custom Trident A range

multitrack, stereo, aux and solo buses and Flying Faders automation system. Notes Dee, "We couldn't have done the Clinton mix sessions in Studio 3 without ACX."

The Donaldsons are all involved in the day to day operations of the studio they founded more than 30 years ago. Their commitment to providing world class service and the ability to offer the latest audio technology keeps Cherokee at the forefront of music production facilities worldwide.

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Sorry, there's no flash or elaborate programming, just solid information for audio pros who are working hard to stand out. You can download product literature. Look in the Library for product articles and applications, presented by the engineers who designed them. Read how other studios are using our equipment. Browse current and back issues of *Audio Horizons*.

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- ❑ Radio
- ❑ Remote

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- ❑ Film
- ❑ Video
- ❑ Advertising

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