

AUDIBILITIES

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Professional Audio Services for Any Purpose You Can Think Of

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Where Does the Time Go?

In any profession where computers are used, the popular perception is that results will be immediate. It ain't so! If it were, I wouldn't have a job! In starting a new project, I'm often asked, "How long will it take?" When pressed for specifics, I have to admit that I don't know. The following comments may help to explain why.

► For a live music recording, each musician or group will have different requirements for setting up for the session. Before any music is recorded, the musicians have to decide where to sit or stand. Microphones will then be selected that are specific to their individual voices and instruments. The exact placement of the microphones is also critical. When setup is completed, music is played and basic recording levels are established. Finally, the actual recording process can begin. Each song will generally require multiple "takes" before the musicians are satisfied with their performance, but we're not finished yet. Because each voice and instrument is recorded on a separate track, the tracks must be artfully combined to achieve a proper balance. This is done by repeatedly playing back the recording while making adjustments to the controls. Once the musicians are satisfied, all of the tracks are then converted into a file type that will record on a CD. Now we have a finished recording, with a single tune requiring from thirty minutes to two hours from setup to mixdown.

► From a technical standpoint, recording of the spoken word by a single narrator is a fairly straightforward process. After microphone placement, and establishing a balance between recording level and earphone volume, the recording may begin. As there will always be occasional slips of the tongue, several sentences or paragraphs will need to be done more than once. Following the recording, editing will remove the "out-takes," fine-tune recording levels, add equalization where required and adjust timing and spacing. This can take longer than the original session, with a fifteen-minute script requiring as long as ninety minutes to produce a finished CD or MP3 file.

► Restoring a vintage record or tape can be a complex undertaking for a variety of reasons. A tape may break or not track properly; a disc recording can either skip ahead or become stuck in one revolution of the groove. A tape may suffer from low-frequency noise or high-frequency hiss, and all disc recordings include clicks and crackles of their own. A variety of techniques are used to deal with these issues, and all of them require time and skill.

► Whether recording music or voices, or restoring a vintage recording, there is no single button to press that will provide instant results. How long will your project take? We'll both know when it's finished!

of detail in the program. In a logical, step-by-step sequence, every possible eventuality was covered. It was quite an impressive script.

Dotting I's and Crossing T's

In our high-speed, highly technical society, documentation has become a major issue. Keeping written records of policies and procedures, tasks completed and tasks yet to be performed, is important. One reason, of course is safety concerns. Another is compliance requirements. It was interesting to narrate an online training program on documentation in a regulated and highly technical industry. The script brought home to me the importance of record-keeping – and reminded me of some improvements I could make here in the studio.

Online training programs of this kind have become increasingly popular, and provide an interesting challenge in the studio. We know that large blocks of text will be separated into smaller segments to accompany specific images. We just don't know exactly where these divisions will be made. Therefore, the narration must be done with complete silence between sentences – there can be no breathing sounds that might interfere with a cut in the video.

Healthcare

A major health insurance company has taken up the cause of clarifying complex matters with a distinctive and instructive PowerPoint™ presentation with an audio track narrated by a thoroughly knowledgeable company expert.

Created for retirees of a Fortune 500 company, the presentation offers accurate information in a pleasant manner that goes far beyond the traditional brochure. To ensure accuracy, we maintained telephone contact with a company executive during the recording session.

Music to the Ear

What a pleasure it is to work with someone with a passion for poetry. Mark's wonderfully expressive bass baritone voice adds both meaning and emotion to every selection on his CD.

IN THE STUDIO

Words

The Voice of Authority

Les Wolff of Smart Marketing has a new demo of his distinctive and authoritative voice. As a professional copywriter, he created five original scripts, each one distinctive in style, that allow him to showcase his talents effectively without the need of music as a differentiator.

For a powerful voice for radio or

any other form of audiovisual narrative, you may reach Les at 215-334-3432.

Handle with Care!

In a laboratory or production facility, handling of blood-borne pathogens requires extraordinary care due to the possibility of contagion. In narrating the instructive audio track for a web-based training program on this topic, I was impressed by the level

Cheers

Following up on Phillip Silverstone's radio show as described in the previous issue, *The Phillip Silverstone Radio Show* will broadcast on Thursdays at 1 PM on WWDB AM, 860 on your radio dial. The expanded time frame will allow him the opportunity to include his audience in all his other interests in life. With a variety of features and guests, the show will be upbeat and quirky with plenty of surprises! Tune in, won't you?

Soul Survivor

Former aircraft captain Joe Townsend is lucky to be alive. When his small single engine plane suffered engine failure and crashed in the dirt just 300 yards from the airport runway, he was the sole survivor.

After multiple surgeries and months of rehab, he finally got back on his feet again – but it wasn't easy. Aside from the physical pain, the emotional drain alone would have killed a lesser man.

He and writer Shawn Doyle have written and published a book about Joe's experience. And now we've begun creating an audio version of it. Hearing the story, told by the man who lived it, is both heart-wrenching and fascinating – an inspiring story of one man's triumph over adversity. I'll let you know when the CDs become available.

Relax!

Therapist Sally Martin has just ordered another 50 copies of her popular CD, *Transforming Stress/Smiling Within*. In her wonderfully warm voice, she instructs the listener how to calm the mind and release and transform stress with guided meditations. In our increasingly stressful society, Sally's approach offers an alternative to traditional pharmaceutical relief.

The majority of copies will be offered at a major conference. The rest are available for sale. To order your individual copy, please call 610-323-3067.

Online

Two of us have begun narrating what may become an extended series of web-based commercials. With well-written scripts, we use both male and female voices to address separate issues for gender-specific products. Web advertising has fewer time restrictions than traditional broadcast media, allowing us to present the messages as effectively as possible.

Music

"Misspent Youth"

That's the title of my new CD of original songs. The title is appropriate because while others were being responsible and working at real jobs, I was writing and playing music.

Recorded live during one of my performances, it presents thirteen of my home-made tunes in what I hope is an enjoyable manner.

You may order a copy now by sending me a check for fifteen bucks. I'll spring for the postage.

School Days

A classical guitarist, Bill never needed more than two takes of any one selection to capture the music. In the CD to be included with his college applications, he included classical favorites by Bach and Satie, plus an original composition of his own. The purpose of the CD was to enhance his chances of gaining entrance to the university of his choice. It worked!

Sweet Harmony

I've been in love with vocal harmony since I first heard the Andrews Sisters on the radio in 1944. Barbershop singing carries on this tradition of precision group vocalization. The separate parts are often learned by the singers from individual tapes or CDs, each one containing either the tenor, lead, baritone or bass parts. The parts are learned individually, then assembled in rehearsal. It was fun to convert a set of barbershop audio cassettes to CD and improve the quality of the sound along the way. And, although tapes don't synchronize well, it was possible to mix all four parts in the computer to gain a (very) rough idea of what the finished arrangements will sound like. Although the wonders of digital technology allowed combining the four parts, the actual synchronization had to be done by ear.

FROM THE ATTIC

Words

More from the Admiral

A fascinating three-hour interview with retired Rear Admiral Edward Ellsberg, recorded on audiocassette twenty years ago, has now been carefully converted to MP3 files for his website. Admiral Ellsberg's adventures throughout his long Navy career are truly inspiring. Listening to him tell the story in his own words is an adventure in itself. He was smart

enough – and gutsy enough – to challenge authority when he felt the situation called for it. The story about the overheated converted cruise ship serves as an excellent example. Visit www.edwardellsberg.com for the full story.

This Old House

Some homes are just lived in, while others are loved and cherished. The Carriage House, in Collingswood, New Jersey, is a case in point. Two years ago recorded interviews of its long and colorful history were converted to CD. This year, I was able to use an original artist's rendering of the house to create a custom cover for the recordings. The visual image will enhance the listening experience for those who were associated with and affected by this unique structure.

Pickin' the Banjo

Converting an open-reel tape from forty years ago to CD provided me with an afternoon of outstanding five-string banjo music. The client was a banjo enthusiast, and wanted his home-made tape converted to something more durable. The banjo style popularly known as "Scruggs Picking" is tremendously exciting to listen to. How so many notes can be played so perfectly – and so quickly – boggles the mind!

Pretty Pictures

Although photographic restoration and retouching may seem a little out of the norm for an audio studio, it's not. Over the years, so many clients have requested custom covers for CDs of family members that it was quite natural to begin offering photographic services as a separate menu item.

Current projects include retouching a damaged vacation photo and restoring a picture of an elementary school class taken in the late 1800s. The image is in good condition – except for a few scratches. A few hundred careful strokes with a digital paintbrush will remove them.

More New Toys

Richard Singer from D2A2D Services has recently completed installation of my *seventh* Mac-based workstation. This gives me a primary system for daily use, and two complete fully-operational spares loaded with duplicate applications and files.