

David Hamilton-Smith, owner of the China Blue audio post-production facility in London's Soho was elected the Association's new Chairman at the Board meeting held on 22nd November. David, who has a very broad experience of both the music recording and post-production world succeeds Focusrite's Phil Dudderidge who has held the position for the past 4 years.



DHS is keen to re-invigorate the APRS revenue streams so that new services can be developed that will

attract new members. Recognising the stresses and strains that have become such a regular feature of sustaining cutting edge recording facility business, DHS commented, "In such challenging times for all the audio industries, I am hoping to take the Association into a new era of development by providing focussed professional and new business advice to individual audio practitioners, and by reinvigorating the APRS profile throughout the industry. To me, the APRS badge has always been a symbol of excellence in recording."

ISSUE ALERT!

Remember the fuss about a 'blank tape levy' that raged some years ago? Well, prepare yourselves for another 'debate' on the same issue. The Music Business Forum has set a date to discuss the viability of a levy on blank media in order to respond to the UK government's obligation to the EU laws on 'private copying'. Hitherto, UK, Eire and Luzembourg were the only EU nations not to enact a levy on tape and hardware. This time there is powerful evidence that UK performers are being financially disadvantaged by the lack of a UK law. The BPI is not in favour of a levy as it believes the flexibility afforded by the many and various business models possible using DRM (Digital Rights Management) alleviate the need for a levy. If anyone remembers the arguments that were used last time this was a hot issue, please call Peter Filleul on 020 8699 1245

SESA Saga turns to Farce

Grants cut by 50%



The APRS's allocation of SESA grants for the Barcelona and New York AES Conventions has been drastically cut as part of the funding reductions being imposed on UK Trade and Investment by the DTI. As predicted in recent APRS Bulletins, the cuts are only the beginning of a radical review which will see 20% staff cuts at the DTI and the narrowing of the eligibility rules.

The latest government thinking on export support was presented at a special and often noisy meeting at the DTI's London headquarters on 19th November. The plans, responding to the Treasury's 'Spending Review 2004' which will come into effect in 2006/2007, failed to impress a roomful of representatives from Accredited Trade Organisations from the whole spectrum of British industry.

Presented as a 'consultation', the attendees were invited to contribute their ideas as to how they and UKTI might 'work together' to find new ways' to help exporters - but without the incentive of grants for exhibitors. To the incredulous hilarity of the attendees, the UKTI reps seemed surprised that UK exporters would be less enthusiastic about government help once the financial element was no longer available. The credibility of the UKTI position was further diminished by their own inability to answer the simplest of questions about how the future schemes would operate. "We simply don't know" was the most often heard response.

What was clear was that many of the ATOs at the meeting administer significant numbers of exhibitions and 'outward missions' every year, employing permanent staff and incurring overhead expenses to provide their services. Their inability to receive management fees to pay for the staff to administer the grants would put in doubt their ability to continue the joint ventures with UKTI - and also jeopardise the employment of hundreds of people.

The core change in policy revolves around the notion that only new exporters should receive export support and that the decision as to whether a company 'needs' the support will be taken by a new tier of generalist civil servants called International Trade Advisers sprinkled throughout the regions and devolved authorities. However, they only seem to have a sketchy idea upon what criteria these decisions will be based, or the definition 'new to export'

The effect of the cuts will be to reduce the number of companies that can receive the SESA grant in 2005 from 20+ to around 8 or 9. Priority will be given to companies regarded as 'new to export' - a somewhat *loosely* defined criterion that even the UKTI representatives don't seem too sure about. It is likely that in future years the grants will be further reduced and will very soon disappear altogether. UKTI SESA and other support schemes will offer 'support in-kind' such as the cheap market research and pre-trip briefings that have been so useful in the past. As one attendee mentioned, *"....it's a shame they didn't keep the grants and save the money they spend on providing all those cheap, amateur services. Leave the services to the professional trade associations."* Amen.

New APRS Studio Terms and Conditions

The latest edition of the recommended studio Terms and Conditions are due for publication after detailed consultations with the APRS Studio Accord and the Audio Post-Production Studios group and APRS legal advisers, The Simkins Partnership. The new guidelines take account of changes in the relationships between studios and their clients that have evolved largely in response to technological changes in recording techniques and client expectations of product deliverables. The new guidelines also outline responsibilities for studio pre-release content security, another issue that has caused considerable concern in recent months.

The concept of 'deliverables' has become a key issue since multi-format products have become a regular part of client needs. The APRS T&C's will be made available to members as guidelines together with access to regularly up-dated lists of delivery formats that have been devised by the Producer and Engineer Wing of NARAS, the U.S. Recording Academy based in Los Angeles. An Audio Post-Production Deliverables list compiled by APPS will be available to APPS members as a part of the guidelines package. The T&C's do not remove the need for the specific contractual needs of every APRS studio member but they serve as a solid foundation upon which member studios can build. The new Terms and Conditions are expected to be available early in the new year.



The complex world of feature film finance has impacted strongly on film facilities here in the UK. Tomb Raider, Harry Potter, Upside of Anger, Troy, Alien versus Predator and so

forth - all big American studio productions - were post produced here. Many financial incentives, along with international co-production, now mean that there is a very good reason to come to Great Britain to make your film. This is potentially a great time for our studios and effects houses and sound facilities. The scope of facilities here in the UK is extensive, but our American cousins may not be as aware of what is available to them when they are setting up a production here. Showcase was an attempt to change this.

For three days, starting with a gala dinner on the Monday evening, the UK Film industry brought a touch of British style to Hollywood. Over 60 UK based companies set out their wares at the new Hollywood Renaissance Hotel on Highland at Hollywood Boulevard. The setting could not have been more Hollywood. This is the complex where the Oscars are held, just below the famous Hollywood Bowl and along the 'Walk of Fame'.

Every day presentations were held in the main theatre on topics such as Film Finance, Production, Post Production, VFX, Digital Intermediate and case studies. I was pleased to see on the programme that one of the films my company Videasonics was responsible for (together with Pinewood Shepperton), 'Alien vs Predator', was the opening day's case study. Too bad the panel members decided to extend the Gala Dinner festivities from the night before into an all-nighter. (Note to new chairman David Hamilton-Smith: teach the Americans how to party and still be able to walk in the morning!)

The Finance sessions drew a large audience every day as you would expect, but hearing heads of post, such as Greig McRitchie (Universal), Bruce Marko (MGM), Charlie Davis (Fox) singing the praises of UK facilities in the other sessions impressed the over 700 delegates who attended the three days.

There was good representation from APPS with members De Lane Lea, Goldcrest, Lipsync, Pinewood Shepperton, Ascent Media Group, Soundeluxe, St. Anne's and others making a good showing for audio in the UK. Our APRS area represented the wider membership.

The British Consul-General hosted a cocktail party on the Wednesday evening that also included guests that were in LA for the AFM (American Film Market), which coincided with Showcase.

Showcase was a tremendous opportunity to meet the people who drive the productions that will come to the UK in the future. By being there I feel that we were able to tell the community about the range of facilities in the UK, and make them aware of just how extensive the UK Audio industry is.

There is a lot of discussion about next year. Many delegates would like us to come again in 2005. The opportunity to network with the British was a positive event for them. Meeting them certainly was for us.

(Thanks to Dennis Weinreich for this report)

Unis



This year's Jacques Levy Memorial Prize, the annual award that the APRS donates to the best final year project on Surrey University's Tonmeister course, has gone to Peter Ward for a project entitled "An investigation into the effect of interactivity on the perception of audio-visual asynchrony in a simple computer game environment".

This award is particularly gratifying as it shows that Tonmeister studies are providing opportunities for students to focus on audio issues in fields that have hitherto received little attention in the APRS arena. Whilst the computer games industry may seem alien to many of us, it is a growing and increasingly significant sector and Peter's success is a healthy indicator that students are becoming aware of the fragility of employment prospects in the conventional audio world. Well done and good luck to Peter in his future career!



DTS have some spanking new 6.1 surround stuff which, by all accounts, is jolly good. Peter Gabriel has been road testing their Pro Series 6.1 Surround Encoder down at Real World on his *Play: The Videos* project.

Also, if you happen to be close to a cinema near Twyford don't be surprised to see Annemieke Groeneveld, DTS's new Director of European Marketing for DTS Europe (Digital Theater Systems (UK) Ltd). Annemieke has been given the task of developing their Cinema and Consumer Licensee business.



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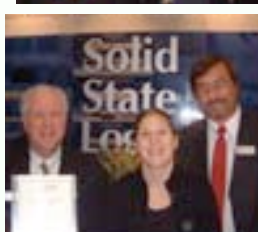
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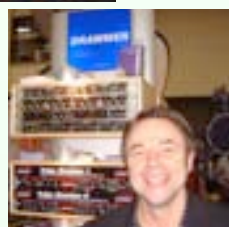
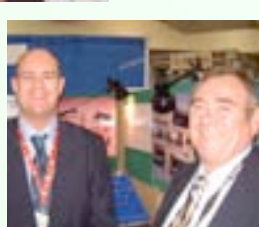
Happy Bands or
Motley Crews, the AES
in San Francisco once again
proved to be a great time to
meet old friends and to show the
strength of UK innovation. The
APRS was proud to assist 20
manufacturers from the
professional audio industry
develop their export
opportunities
in California



Martin Audio
Novation Digital Music Systems
Penn Fabrication
Quested Monitoring Systems
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Solid State Logic
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ULTIMATE SOUND MACHINES

The Dynaudio Acoustics wing of TC Electronic have landed a coup by beating competition from 9 other brands to be chosen to provide monitors for BBC Radio & Music. Their AIR 6, AIR 20 and BM5 reference monitors are to replace systems designed by the acoustic section of the BBC's own R&D Department.

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GearBox

sound and vision

Soho's equipment sales and rental kings, Gearbox have relocated close to the new Apple Store in Regent Street and are providing 'free' facilities at their 'Soho-X-Suite' demonstration studio. Potential clients will be able to try out a stunning range of the fab-est Apple Power Mac G5 and Pro-tools kit stuffed to the gunnels with every plug-in known to man. No hourly rate at Gearbox - just call Richard Eastwood on 020 7437 4832 to pre-book a session.

soho@gearbox.com

NEW APRS MEMBERS

Julie McLarnon
Professional membership
Universal Sound Principles
APPS (provisional)
Steelworks -
Studio Accord (provisional)
Hebden Sound
Supplier
Ovi Barba
Associate
Patrick Cooper
Student
Tim Keep
Associate
Sonic Distribution
Supplier
Gerry O'Riordan
Associate
Ian Arthurs
Student
British Grove Studios
Studio Accord
Tekcare
Supplier

During 2004 the APRS acquired a total of 35 new members

APRS supports Industry Workforce Development Plan

As part of the development of Creative and Culture Ltd, the proposed name for the Creative and Cultural Industries Sector Skills Council, the vehicle that will oversee the education and training needs for much of the audio industry, the APRS and a number of its members have contributed to devising the first ever Workforce Development Plan created by and for the music industry in the UK.

Robin Osterly, Chairman of the National Music Council of which the APRS is an Executive member, explained "In an age where the music industry finds itself under growing pressure from international competition as well as technological developments, there is a shared recognition that improving the skills of the employees and trainees in the sector is now necessary rather than simply desirable." The key objectives of the WDP, as set out below, are supported by detailed plans and schedules for a wide range of specific activities. These will be available for the industry to peruse shortly - but here is a preview.

1 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 At least 50% of the industry workforce to undertake training /skills development for the equivalent of at least 45 minutes per week (i.e. 36 hours per year) for full-time workers and pro-rata for part-time workers.
- 1.2 Secure sustainable funding where necessary for new and established industry training programmes, e.g. those organised by trade associations.
- 1.3 Initiate and establish a 'passport' system for the documentation of learning attainment by individuals within the industry.
- 1.4 Set benchmarks for the non-formal learning sector (NFL) to include the assessment of training outcomes and assessment of training schemes for those delivering training in this sector.
- 1.5 Design and support with financial and human resources a mentoring pathway in either a sub-sector or a geographical region as a pilot for the industry as a whole.

2 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 A specified number of companies of all sizes to apply for Investors in People status.

3 ENTRY TO THE WORKFORCE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 A structured dialogue to be initiated with relevant providers in schools, further education, higher education and the NFL sector.
- 3.2 Provide an online 'meta-source' to direct potential entrants and others to information and advice on currently available training.
- 3.3 Ensure that the design and delivery of existing and future programmes prioritise the need for greater diversity in the workforce so that it more accurately reflects the demographics of the country as a whole.
- 3.4 Ensure that all induction courses include an introduction to the industry as a whole.



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Corporate Sustaining Members



www.digidesign.com



Sanctuary

www.sanctuarygroup.com



Tel: 020 8745 2121

www.fxrentals.co.uk

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0870 744 0095

For all business problems
Tax, Finance, Employment law,
VAT, Health and Safety etc.

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