

# SMPTE/USC Spring '92 Seminar

## University of Southern California, May 9, 1992

By Charles S. Swartz

More than 100 industry professionals and students attended an all-day educational seminar, "MIDI Control for Film And Video," on May 9 at the University of Southern California's (USC's) Norris Cinema Theater. Presented by the Hollywood Section Education Committee, the seminar explored Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) control and time code applications for film and video post-production.

Although music production and "project" studios (home studios) are familiar with the use of MIDI for controlling and synchronizing multiple keyboard systems, few post-production facilities have come to terms with MIDI's creative opportunities. In the seminar, leading professionals discussed and demonstrated fundamentals and applications of MIDI, synchronization, time code, samplers, and how MIDI-capable outboard-effects units and mixing systems will expand the capabilities of production, post-production, and video-sweetening engineers.

The seminar opened with a demonstration of Cue and Vision, two widely used software programs published by Opcode Systems, which aid the composer in creating and synchronizing music tracks in the music-scoring process. Presenting the demonstration was Rick Johnston, a composer, musician, and computer programmer, who created Cue in 1986.

Leonardo del Castillo, chief engineer at Gray Engineering Laboratories, discussed fundamentals of time code, including its

history, drop versus nondrop frame time code, longitudinal time code (LTC) versus vertical interval time code (VITC), and time code equipment. Castillo is secretary of the SMPTE Working Group on Time and Control Code and wrote the 1992 revision of the SMPTE Time Code Standards document.

Fundamentals of MIDI were presented by Jeff Rona, a composer and synthesist. Topics covered included MIDI specifications, MIDI message types, MIDI setups, synchronization issues, and MIDI applications. Rona is the coordinator of UCLA Extension's Electronic Music Program, former chairman of the MIDI Manufacturers Association, and author of "MIDI — The Ins, Outs, and Thru's" and "Synchronization from Reel to Reel."

Avi Kipper, a record and scoring mixer who has mixed music for more than 300 network television episodes, demonstrated the perils of incorrect synchronization and discussed techniques to assure correct synchronization of audio and picture. Kipper is currently the production mixer for "Dinosaurs."

Scott Martin Gershin and Mike Perricone described applications using MIDI in sound design and sound-effects editing. Gershin spoke from the perspective of a sound designer and sound-effects editor; his credits include *JFK*, *The Doors*, and *Born on the Fourth of July*. Perricone presented his point of view as owner of Interlok Studios, where he is a sound-effects editor and mixer.

Using MIDI in machine control was discussed by Gerry Lester, chief engineer at TimeLine. Topics included machine

control of tape machines, DAT equipment, and CD players.

Lachlan Westfall, president of the International MIDI Association and a member of the Executive Board of the MIDI Manufacturers Association, joined Rona to look at the future of MIDI. They examined the professionalization of MIDI, extending MIDI applications beyond music to show control and multimedia, types of MIDI files, MIDI time code cueing, S-MIDI (a proposed standard to send MIDI samples over SCSI lines), using MIDI in LAN Systems, CD+MIDI (a proposed standard for storing MIDI on CD), and general MIDI (a method of storing MIDI instructions on CD to play music for an external MIDI source).

Rick Johnston returned with more demonstration of Cue, this time providing an opportunity for attendees to ask questions about its use and operation.

Finally, speakers gathered for a panel discussion and question-and-answer session moderated by Mel Lambert, author and columnist for *Mix*. Joining the panel were Paul Young of Tascam; Ray Colcord, composer for (most recently) "Dinosaurs"; and James Tannenbaum, CAS, a production sound mixer. Issues raised by the day's presentations were discussed along with new subjects suggested by the attendees.

Generous cooperation was provided by Apple Computers, Opcode Systems, Panasonic Broadcast Co., and Sony Corp. The USC Department of Cinema-Television, represented by Herb Farmer and Dick Martin, served as host of the seminar.

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## SMPTE Advanced Television and Electronic Imaging Conference

New York, N.Y., February 4 - 6, 1993

An all-day tutorial, entitled "Computer Graphics for the Moving Image," will play an integral part in the 1993 SMPTE Advanced Television and Electronic Imaging Conference, to be held February 4 to 6, 1993, at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in New York City. The tutorial, which is being organized by Linda Young, Du Art Film and Video, will feature in-depth discussions on systems integration, video compression, and image compositing.

The session will cover such topics

as: "A New Environment for Producing Moving Images," by Bill Kovacs, Wavefront Technology; "History of Computers and Character Animation," by Ed Catmull, Pixar; "Digital Technology as it Applies to Print, Broadcast, Corporate, Commercial, and Feature Projects," by 1992 Fuji Gold Medal Winner Robert Greenberg, R/Greenberg Associates; "Digital Visual Effects and Optical: What is Possible in Film Today," by Carl Rosendahl, Pacific Data Images; "The Meaning of Resolution for

Computers, Film, and Video," by Charles Poynton, Sun Microsystems; "Scaling the Medium," by Peter Owens, Quantel; and "Video Compression Basics," by Mark Schubert, Consultant. A panel discussion on "Computer Motion Graphics Created on Personal Computers," moderated by David Leitner, president of Leitmotif Productions, will complete the day.

Additional conference information will continue to be published in the *Journal*. — Carol King