



Family Leave Editors:
Fran (*The LJETPRO*) **Allen-Leake**
and
Danny (*The URBAN G*) **Leake**
Temporary EARS' Time Machine Editors:
Timothy (*Truffle Pig*) **Powell**
and
Mike (*Wheel Man*) **Konopka**

Volume 25, Number 10 • October, 2010

President – Blaise Barton

Vice President – Reid Hyams

Secretary – Bob Vodick

Treasurer – Eric Roth

OCTOBER MEETING

EARS MEETS WITH JIM TULIO AT BUTCHER BOY STUDIO

Tuesday, October 26th @ 7:30 P.M. – 11 P.M.

1224 Washington Street, Evanston, IL 60202 847-491-9037

Word From the Prez.....

Hello fellow EARS members and fans.

An iconic name in the music industry and well known producer/engineer working in Chicago and around the world, **Jim Tulio** has blazed a trail that few have traveled. Equally at home as a songwriter, performer, producer, engineer, and mixer, it is difficult to peg him into any particular style or genre based on his vast body of work. He has collaborated with a wide range of artists including Los Lonely Boys, Mavis Staples, Phil Collins and for decades headed of one of the most successful jingle houses in the U.S.

Mr. Tulio has graciously opened the doors of his private **Butcher Boy Studio** to EARS this month for what promises to be a fascinating and insightful evening. In addition to an

amazing collection of audio tools including a vintage Neve 8058 console, Jim will treat EARS to a design tour of this most unusual yet highly efficient studio which includes an open-air control room. The name "Butcher Boy" comes from the fact that the space was once a butcher shop in the late 19th century. Some of the original cold storage room and wood and glass refrigerator doors are incorporated into the studio design.

As an added treat, premier studio tech Mike Giampa will be on hand to disseminate the reconstruction of the vintage microphones at Butcher Boy. Mr Giampa and Mr. Tulio worked diligently at Butcher Boy to get everything just right and it really shows.

Attending the meeting will be **Mr. William Dillon**, a singer/ songwriter and latest album project from Butcher Boy. Mr. Dillon was freed from a Florida prison in late 2008 after serving nearly 27 years for a murder DNA proves he didn't commit. Scandal, frame job, and cover-up are all part of this most heart-wrenching and intriguing story. He will be on hand to speak about his experience and how it relates to crafting the songs for this album with Jim Tulio.

Seating at this meeting will be limited, and you might consider bringing your own folding chair or stool for yourself or others.

Comings and Goings:

In other news and on a happy note, we've just received the uplifting news that EARDRUM co-editor Danny Leake is quickly recovering from open heart surgery and may well be home by the time you read this. Danny went in for the procedure on October 10th and we are relieved to hear of his speedy recovery. See Danny's note below.

On a sad note, however, we learned of the passing of Jean Hicks Allen, mother of co-editor Fran Allen Leake. Jean passed the day before Danny's operation. Needless to say, Fran and Danny have a lot on their plate(s) and our thoughts and prayers go with them. Details of services for Jean Hicks Allen follow below.

Filling in for for Danny and Fran this month, we are honored to welcome back as guest editors Timothy Powell and Mike Konopka. For those unaware, Tim and Mike were co-editors since around the inception of EARS 25 years ago and cranked out hundreds of EARDRUM issues over the years. They are also members of your EARS Steering Committee, stalwart supporters and early architects of our esteemed group. We thank Tim and Mike for their contributions, past and present and for helping out this month. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Hey Blaise, we're still waiting for that box of Depends you promised.*)

Nominations for President:

As per our Bylaws, at the top of last month's meeting, the floor was opened for any nominations for President. No person other than myself was nominated. It is with honor and privilege that I accept the nomination and look forward to serving as President for another one year term.

New Website:

As part of my campaign platform last November, I vowed to create a new website for EARS to further enhance our group. I am happy to report that goal is nearing completion and will be unveiled soon. To help simplify this month's membership renewal process, I am publishing the membership gateway section early. You can now join or renew directly on the EARS website by going to

http://www.ears-chicago.org/membership_gateway.html

More on the new website is coming very soon.

Membership Renewal:

It's that time of the year where all EARS memberships are due for renewal at this next October meeting. If you are a new member and joined after April 27th, 2010 then your membership extends through October of 2011 so this does not apply to you. Dues for 2010-2011 are as follows:

- \$40 for the Professional Membership
- \$30 for the Associate Membership
- \$25 for the Student Membership

Thanks in advance for your continued support and for being a part of our vibrant community. There are three ways to join or renew:

1) Go to http://www.ears-chicago.org/membership_gateway.html

Here you can renew with a credit or debit card, PayPal account, OR download the membership application form, print it out and mail it in with a check or money order.

You do not need a PayPal account to renew with a credit card.

2) Go to the EARS Facebook Fanpage and click the "JOIN EARS" tab at the top.

Then click either "Download Membership Application" OR "Apply on-line using PayPal".

3) Bring a check or cash to the next EARS meeting and give it directly to Treasurer Eric Roth.

See you at Butcher Boy Studio!

REWIND: EARS MEETING SEPTEMBER 2010

In September, EARS convened at UPTOWN RECORDING STUDIO, a beautiful recording complex around the corner from the Aragon Ballroom on Lawrence Avenue. Housing two separate studios and control rooms, there was plenty of room to spread out in this spacious



facility. Our hosts, owner Matt Denny and chief engineer Rob Ruccia were very friendly and openly welcomed EARS into their operation. Uptown features a nice collection of outboard analog gear and a rebuilt MCI 2" 16 track analog deck. The meeting was well attended and after the usual social hour, President Blaise Barton called the meeting to order with an official fanfare on the piano. The top order of business was the nominations for the upcoming EARS Presidential election. The floor was opened for nominees, but none stepped forward. Roughly nine or ten people nominated Blaise for another term to for President which he humbly accepted and thanked the members.



Shortly after, the video screens lit up in preparation for our Skype meeting with our special guest producer/engineer Jim Gaines. Several videos were played with tracks produced and engineered by Jim, including Steve Miller's "Fly Like an Eagle", Michelle Branch and Carlos Santana's "The Game of Love" and Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Crossfire". The room was treated to the premier of a brand new, unreleased track from the forthcoming Huey Lewis album recently completed with Mr. Gaines. Our special guest appeared to a roaring applause from EARS members as we got down to a fascinating and interactive exchange with Blaise doing the interview.

Jim Gaines, who now resides outside of Memphis, regaled us with stories of his start at Stax Records. One of his first jobs early on was to copy and label hundreds of unmarked master tapes from the Stax roster, and got to hear many rare and unreleased takes by artists like Sam and Dave, Booker T and the MG's, and Otis Redding. The night Martin Luther King was slain, Steve Cropper called

Jim to bring his car to the studio so they could fill it up with as many master tapes he could carry to save them from the ensuing riots. The shopping mall across the street from Stax was set ablaze.

He later moved to San Fran to work as Wally Heider's studio manager, but immediately began engineering records when one of their other engineers dropped out to go work with CCR. Eventually, Jim was booking so much time for Wally that he was told to go and pick out a brand new car of his liking, compliments of the studio.

Upon signing off, Jim was very complimentary of EARS and really liked what our group was all about. He declared "I've had so much fun tonight, let's do it again!" We really enjoyed meeting with you, Mr. Gaines, we will take you up on the offer.

To view Jim Gaines extensive discography, go to:

<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/jim-gaines-p78487/credits>

Many thanks to Matt and Rob from Uptown Recording for hosting a fun and informative event!



EARS regular David Moss chows down!

A packed house!



Word From the Treasurer.....

Dear fellow EARS members,

On behalf of the Engineering and Recording Society of Chicago, I thank you for your past membership and support. After all, without members like you, there really would be no EARS.

During the past year, EARS has grown significantly. We now have 129 members. Your membership has enabled us to accomplish so much this year:

- With the creation of a new Facebook Fan Page earlier this Spring, we attracted a great deal of interest worldwide, and now have over 1000 Facebook fans, plus many new members.
- Our monthly meetings have gained in stature, featuring world renown guest speakers including producer/engineers Eddie Kramer, Bob Clearmountain, and Jim Gaines.
- We have many more exciting things coming your way in the next year.

Our friends at Shure, Inc. tell us that they have searched high and low, and could not find another group in the country that is similar to EARS. (A new recording society was recently launched in Boston). That is to say, EARS is a unique society dedicated to the audio professional and excellence in the field of audio recording. In the coming year, we have some very exciting projects in the works which your renewed membership will help make possible.

- With the completion of a new EARS website, members can opt to be listed in the members' directory, which will include a profile page you can use to talk about yourself and describe your area of expertise. This will be a fantastic benefit to members looking to network and bring in new business.
- EARS began working with Lawyers for the Creative Arts this year, for the purpose of organizing our group into a 501(c) not for profit corporation. This status will allow EARS to accept tax deductible donations and grants from the state, trusts, and foundations, allowing EARS to do bigger and better things.

The coming year will mark our 25th year in existence. It is going to be a very special year and we want you to be there for it. Please renew your membership today. An EARS membership is for one year and begins on the last Tuesday of October through the last Tuesday of October the following year. We would like to see all membership renewals completed on or before the next EARS meeting, Tuesday October 26th.

There are three ways to join or renew:

1) Go to http://www.ears-chicago.org/membership_gateway.html

Here you can renew with a credit or debit card, PayPal account, OR download the membership application form, print it out and mail it in with a check or money order.

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3) Bring a check or cash to the next EARS meeting and give it directly to me, Treasurer Eric Roth.

With warm regards,

Eric Roth

Treasurer, EARS

Farewell to Mother, Friend & Neighbor ...

I am fairly certain that you have received word of my mother's recent passing. Many thanks to all of you who've sent messages of sympathy via phone, e-mail and Facebook. Thanks also for the outpouring of concern & caring for Danny as he faced open-heart surgery. We are truly blessed & comforted by your expressions of love and compassion to us during this really difficult time. This has been a challenging year for our family; yet I know that the sun will shine tomorrow and that there are brighter days ahead. God has shown His favor in allowing me the presence of both my parents until this year; and in directing the surgeon's hands last week for a successful outcome to Danny's bypass operation. (Danny's doing quite well and came home this week.)

Following is the information on Mama's services. If you can attend, please do. If not, just knowing that you are with me in spirit is immeasurable comfort.

Wishing you peace, Fran Allen-Leake



Mrs. JEAN HICKS ALLEN

To Our Friends, Neighbors & Colleagues:

It is with profound sadness that I announce the recent passing of my mother -- **Mrs. Jean Hicks Allen**. She has now joined my Dad -- **Silas** -- who left us on March 31 of this year.

Mama's family invites you to join us as we bid her Farewell and Celebrate her life on this earth.

Thursday, October 21, 2010

A.A. Rayner & Sons Funeral Home
318 E. 71st St. Chicago, IL 60619
6 p.m. – 10 p.m. – Lying in Repose

Friday, October 22, 2010

A.A. Rayner & Sons Funeral Home
318 E. 71st St. Chicago, IL 60619
10:30 a.m. – Visitation
11:00 a.m. – Funeral Service

Five Ways To Improve Listening In Your Control Room

by Mike Konopka

Many times, folks ask me what I think of the spectral balance in their control rooms and listening rooms. Everybody has their own unique tastes in regards to monitoring, power-amps, speaker wire, powered monitors, and the like. But here are five suggestions I usually offer to improve listening conditions in any room.

1. Get off the wall!

One of the most common listening pitfalls is to crowd the console and monitors into the front wall of a control room. And while bass-trapping is an important aspect of achieving a balanced listening room, pushing your monitor speakers right up against a front wall is a sure-fire recipe for non-linearity. That front wall or window is actually a bass trap of sorts. That is, it will resonate at a given frequency and remove that frequency at your listening position. And whatever frequency peak the wall absorbs, the neighbor frequencies will likely be boosted. Worse yet, when you shove the monitors into corners, frequency loading in those corners will really throw things askew. *Move your monitors and console off the front wall a bit.* I like to be

able to walk behind the console and near-fields which is also helpful when patching, doing maintenance, or dodging annoying producers.



2. De-couple it!

Speaker manufacturer's go to great lengths to give their speakers a given response curve. That's the "sound" you're paying for. But when you plop them down directly on speaker stands, or console meter bridges, you throw that carefully honed response curve right out the control room window. Pliantly isolating, or *de-coupling* the monitor will help it sound as it should. And you don't have to spend big bucks on speaker decouplers that they sell at Banjo Mart either. Sleeping bag pads, gardener's kneeling pads, Sorbothene pucks, and other spongy materials will do the trick in a pinch.

Hit the home center. You can de-couple the speakers from the stands, and then also decouple the stands from the floor.

3. Grab a mirror and a friend!

Find a small mirror and a buddy to check out each of your speaker's initial points of reflection. While sitting in your listening position, have your helper move the mirror around on a sidewall until you see the reflection of one speaker's tweeter. Mark this spot with tape, etc.. Do the same thing for the floor and ceiling for each speaker. The trick here is to *place an absorptive element wherever a first reflection spot exists*. Killing those nasty first reflections can really improve your listening experience. Now about that nose hair...

4. Don't over tweak!

Back in the 70's when we weren't busy driving our Chevy Vegas and sprucing our shag haircuts, equalizing control room monitors was all the rage. 31 band White EQ's graced every dusky wood paneled control room. URIE 813's loomed and boomed overhead menacingly. Trouble was, all that EQ only created more difficulties than it solved. The first problem was that the 813's didn't sound flat. The second problem was the gnarly control room acoustical issues made the 813's not sound flat. *Equalizing the rig actually compounded the woes.* Now the 813's were EQ'd out of linearity, and the control rooms acoustics still sucked. You see, the EQ only works for a few feet. Once the sound projects past this short distance your crappy acoustics are back in play. You really need to treat your acoustical issues first. And while I know many of you love your little tweaks on the back of your cutesy powered monitors, don't say I didn't warn you!

5. Diffuse the rear!

Prices have really come down on diffusion panels in recent years. Time was RPG and other home built 17th order quadratic-residue diffusers were the only real alternative to diffuse a control room's back wall. Now, there are lots of choices out there. Some work better than others but the important thing is to realize that *adding a bit of diffusion to your listening area's back wall will make your room easier to work in.* Less ear fatigue and smoother overall sound are some of the benefits to enjoy. Have I diffused you?

Get Well Soon, Danny Leake!

Let's give a hearty EARS Shoutout to Ace Engineer and EARDRUM Co-Editor **Danny Leake** who just left the hospital after having successful heart surgery. Here's a note from the Man himself:

"Hi Guys,

Some of you know, but for those who don't:

On my Japan/Korea tour I noticed I didn't seem to have the energy I usually have. I chalked it up to old age or my blood pressure medicine but when I had to run through the airport to make a flight, I felt something in my chest I had never felt before.

When I got back to Chicago I asked for a stress test...I failed it. Then I was given an angiogram where they found I had blockages in three of my arteries. (100%, 70%, and 50%). If all goes well, I should be back up in four to six weeks.

I want to thank everyone for being a friend and I am looking forward to "Getting Back In The Saddle" again.

*All The Best,
Danny*





Where's The Beef?

by Timothy Powell

I'm baaaaaaack! Did ya miss me? Don't worry, NARAS® fans, this won't get EARS threatened by a lawsuit. Maybe I've mellowed in my old age. Or maybe I miss Mike Greene!

After many years in the live recording biz, I've seen the vast range of sound engineers and tour managers. British engineers have a style quite different than folks from the U.S. Crusty, old school fader-jockeys are radically different than the i-Pod generation Digi-Nerds.

When I advance a show with the band's crew, I always try to get an input list and a stage plot. You wouldn't believe the variety and styles that the crews send. Some are childish scribbles, barely legible. Others have a clean, technical draft quality. There are artsy, colorful versions with comical graphics.

One thing is certain, however. The lists that are sent before the gig almost never reflect what's actually happening on the stage. I'll bring a copy of the forwarded list to check it with the FOH engineer. "Oh, that's from our last tour." Or, "Nah, that doesn't include the bagpipe section."

It gets so bad at some of the outdoor festivals, I started a secret reward program. If real mic list matches the sent list, I give the FOH engineer \$20. Over the last three years, I might have paid out \$120. You wouldn't believe the reaction of the newly rewarded folks. After their happy shock, they'll agree to my audio suggestions. I can even convince them to upgrade their crappy Far-East overhead mics for some Neumanns or add a bottom snare mic.

About a week ago, we had a radio performance/interview gig at a local club. I advanced the show with the tour manager. When we started to pin the stage - Voila!- both lists matched. I pulled out a twenty for the band's engineer. He laughed and said, "I remember you. You gave me a Twenty Spot a few years ago at Grant Park. I've worked with many audio trucks and nobody ever gave me money besides you." After that, the soundcheck went great. The engineer asked me if I needed anything else. I replied that we needed to add a vocal mic for our radio host. I explained to him that he needed to be ready to open up the host's mic after each song for potential interview segments. "Sure," he replied, "I'll make it work."

Well, you can probably guess what happened next. The engineer missed every cue. Our host was at the mic nervously trying to talk to the audience. "Hello...Hello...HELLO?" This disrupted the event and was going to make my post-production editing much more difficult. Yeesh, I gave this guy beer money and he fell asleep on the gig. I wanted to brandish a mic stand and demand my money back. It's always something on location.

So now I started a new Cash-For Clunkers program, but it's not secret. For these radio gigs, I tell the engineers before the show that I'll give them \$20 if, and only if, they hit all the host cues. It will be worth it! Now, if we can only get a proper set list....