

Eel Pie Recording



Art Noxon
Acoustic Sciences Corporation
385 Lawrence
P. O. Box 1189
EUGENE
Or. 97440
U. S. A.

Dear Art,

OUR SAMPLING ROOM

I'm sorry it has taken such a long time to reply, and that I could not get back to you prior to your lecture at the AES.

I've used the room a lot now. I don't know that it is fair to base too much on this particular room; it is essentially a poor shape to start with. Nevertheless, we have had quite extraordinary, and unexpected, results.

Firstly, as you know, the traps damped the low end hump in the room after only five or six were up. The room still has a small room sound, but there is no boom, and conversation is clear and bright.

Secondly, we discovered several axes on which fast reflections were better developed (or were more audible). Facing the window is the best for mono acoustic guitar work (the only sound so far to give us any difficulty at all), bear in mind that in this case the microphone is actually quite low, below the window level. We are still finding spots in the room which have distinct character.

I find this most unusual and very attractive. In a large room you expect to be able to find areas that are good for guitars, or finger cymbals, or vocals, or a small string section. In a small room, you tend to expect the room to sound even. Our room is indeed even right over the middle four feet, but has real personality changes towards the edges. Bear in mind that this is

01 891 1266

The Boathouse, Ranelagh Drive,
Twickenham TW1 1QZ England.
Telephone 01-891 1266/7/8/9
Telex 932577 EelPie.

not because sticking your head in the corner brings up some bass - it doesn't, it is something changing high up in the spectrum. It's fun to work with.

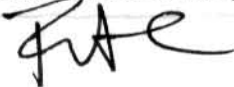
Thirdly, recent group vocals and brass sessions recorded for ultimate sampling have produced the most workable results imaginable. We recorded vocals through Neve modules (no EQ) using a Schoeps binaural pair strengthened by a central Neumann M49. Brass was recorded mono, using two STC 4038 ribbon mikes. Medium was N.E.D. Direct to Disk system. Up to 4 tracks were recorded, then groups were mixed and sampled for sequential use.

I discovered that the sound quality "grew" in quality when a part was double tracked. Normal. But the growth was *ten times* more powerful than usual. The effect of artificial reverberation is similarly increased. What is also fascinating is that any track heard soloed, and dry, sounds quite strange - almost an outdoor sound - but when mixed in with music it comes to life. I suppose there is more than enough high frequency content for the brain to make complex psycho-acoustic calculations when setting up "imaginary" stereo pictures. Sometimes we have found it hard to tell which of a group of mikes was actually up because although the mike chosen might be well of axis, it still provides an intimate and interestingly attractive sound. I am currently doing experiments with mike positioning which our studio trainees take to be confirmation of their belief that their boss did indeed drink one bottle of brandy too many in his hey-day. I tried a figure of eight *behind* a singer and produced a sound of a room at least four times the size: reflections are so useful in this context because the *detail* is evident, not lost in big room slush or small room boom.

Certainly this room provides clear stereo space without any evident reverb at all; for sampling we couldn't ask for more.

The tendency so far has been to mix everything recorded in the room flat and dry. I will send you an example or two. I think the tapes speak louder than words, but I hope these few paragraphs are helpful to you in compiling future lectures.

Yours sincerely,



Pete Townshend
1st November 1987