



Tom Stasinis
Mixing Entourage



WEXLER Building Reality
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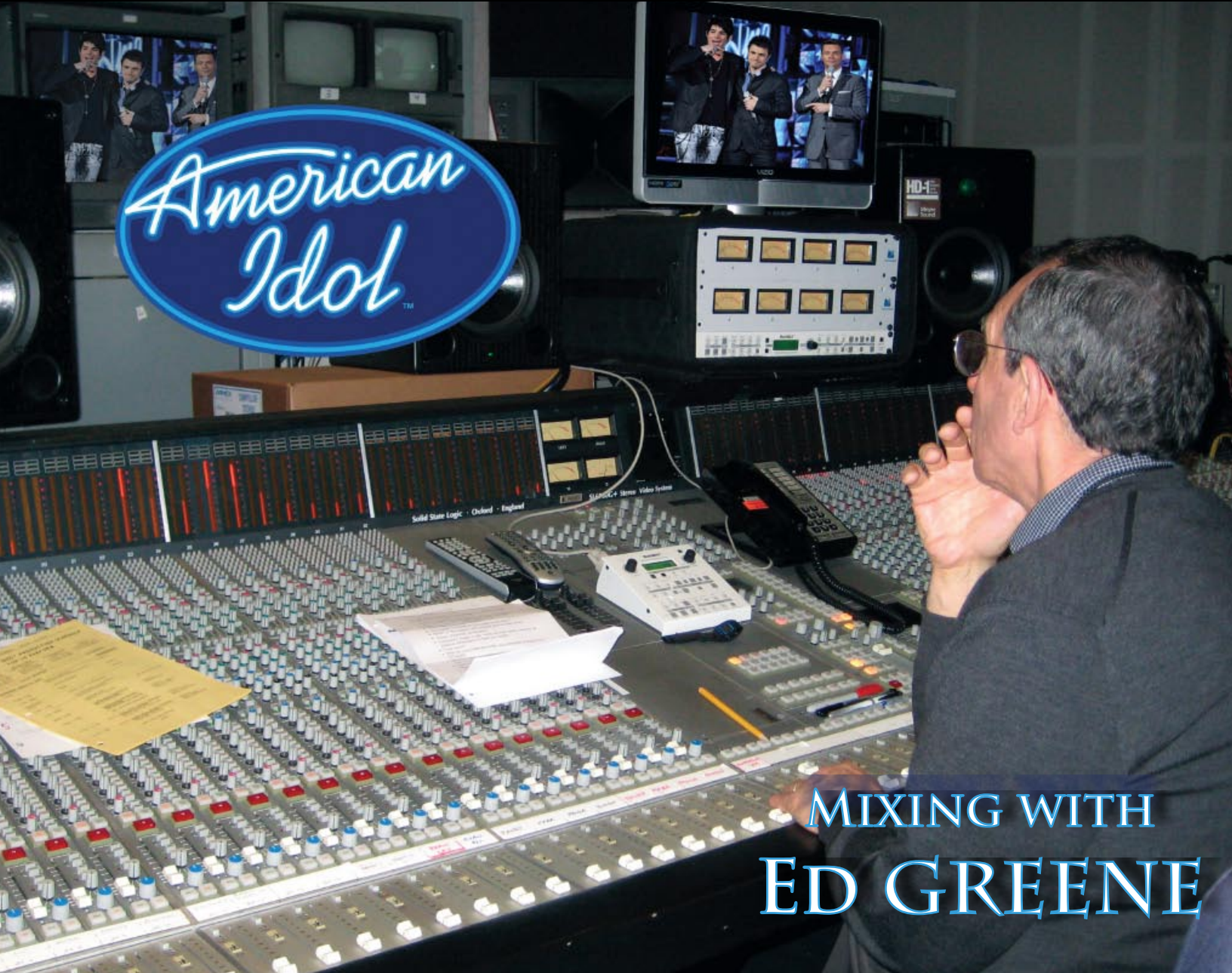
The Interior
by Gary Hoffman



Fostex FM-3
Portable 3 Channel Mixer

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MIXING WITH ED GREENE

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to record the
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from Aerosmith's
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Jim Tanenbaum
revisits the 1987
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Brian De Palma



Mad Men
Peter Bentley
journals a typical
day mixing this
popular AMC
series.



Tom Stasinis
Sound Mixer for
entourage

John asked me to write a detailed article on ENTOURAGE for “The Audio Files Magazine”. It only took me to my 3rd Season to get around to it. So here I am working on a truly fun yet challenging, rocket ship of a ride...with some nice people! My first challenge was to establish my style on a show where the sound department turnover rivals Spinal Tap’s drummers. Five sound departments within the first 3 seasons. The reality was, I found myself on a show so grand & ambitious that the only way to meet the need was to break a few molds. Entourage is all about finding solutions to push the limits of everything we do. You can only achieve that with some pretty great crewmates and leadership. Entourage has an abundance of both. Somehow I fooled them, because they keep inviting me back.

The daily sound challenges are wide & tight, walk & talks, lights, AC units, fountains(you name it left on at all locations) and finding clear frequencies for the 8 radio mics at each stop. One scene comes to mind; the location was a café on Sunset Blvd. with outdoor seating. The actors were seated ...yep..street-side. A bus pulled away and it was so loud my glasses almost vibrated off my head, the director looked over and asked, “We ok”? All I could do was smile.

Here are the basics of our Show:

1/2-hour sitcom, two-35mm handheld cameras, shot on location. Entourage is shot as a feature...everything is big. Last week we had 600 extras. Season 5 we traveled to Hawaii, Vegas, Joshua Tree, & New York. (I did mention it’s a 1/2 hour sitcom.)

My Equipment:

My main cart is built on a custom Chinhda V3 cart. Lectrosonics wireless feed a Cooper 208 mixer, which distributes to 3 recorders. A Deva 5.8, Metacorder with 12 inputs and a 702T. Both Deva & Metacorder record the 8 ISO tracks + 2-track mix. The 702T records the 2-track mix. All recorders mirror to DVD-RAM.

The Over the Shoulder Pack again has Lectrosonics wireless feeding a Sound Devices 788T with the CL8 controller plus a 744T. The 788T records the 8 ISO tracks + the two track mix. The 744T records the two-track mix. All recorders mirror to DVD-RAM. With this configuration the over the shoulder pack can provide the same track count & delivery DVDs as the Main Cart. This is important to “Entourage” because I am over the shoulder 80% of the time. This is due

to being on location most of the show. Sometimes five a day. We can start with a walk & talk that begins in one building and continues across a street then into another building. Next shot is inside a Beverly Hills store, then into the backseat of some of the coolest cars around, to drive & shoot to the next location. All that before lunch...you get the idea.

Monday I will have a back seat review of the new Ferrari, which in California, won't be allowed on roads till 2010. On Entourage, we end up on lavs 80% of the time. If mixed with the correct amount of air they can sound ok. Sure I would choose a boom over a lav every time, but this is about meeting a need not perfection. A very popular cartoon character's slogan states "It's not just good.... its good enough"! Truth is, thanks to the great work of my crew, Dennis Fuller & Debbie Pinthus, we get some great sounding results. Good thing Entourage was not my first 2 camera handheld show that was heavily location-based, because I was lucky enough to do all 3 seasons of "Arrested

Development". The big difference is I could fly 2 booms 90% of the time then, but it did prep me for a more unpredictable style of shooting. My recorders back then were a good old PD4 & ProTools LE. Yes, I ran ProTools on set for years and it was a big hit with post. This was due to the fact that I was a re-recording mixer and knew ProTools (& by necessity Macs) inside and out. I was able to bring ProTools multi track to the set long before the great all in one boxes were common.

When it comes to gear I like to keep things current. I usually sell my gear after three years. This way I experience fewer failures and am always up on the current systems. There are a few exceptions, like my Cooper 208 & my Chinhda cart; I plan on keeping them as long as I can! A few words about the Cart. I discovered Chinhda through our fearless leader Mr. Mark Ulano. When Mark asked Adam Blantz who he should hire to configure and migrate his systems onto this new cart, Adam gave me a call. What I saw



Tom on stage manning his cart



Debbie Pinthus and Dennis Fuller in a happy moment on set.

was truly amazing, I was hooked. I just finished Mark's new cart in time for Grindhouse. I knew then that I wanted a Chinhda cart, but my cart was fine and the price was, shall we say, a tad high. That was however, until my cart was all but folded in half...not saying who...just was.... things happen sometimes for a reason. My Chinhda cart made its debut on Season 5 Entourage and it has proven to be worth every penny.

The reason I use my 788T instead of my Deva for my over the shoulder rig, was the fact that with the CL8, I could have a hardware fader & per-amp gain control for every channel. Also, I could still fit a second recorder in the bag for the 2 track mix output and the 7 series recorders will write to 3 medias simultaneously. This provides me with a backup to take home on compact flash without additional mirroring. I have always been involved in electronics and if something did not exist I built it. This includes such projects as a programmable automatic rocket launcher for my model rockets to Owner of "Firestation Recorders", partner in "Blankenship" Custom Guitar Amps and my current effort "The Director's Friend" a portable handheld director's monitor. Right now, my business partner & I are developing a new boom pole with a very unique design. Hope John gets a smile from knowing all my recorders (less my early 744T & Pro Tools) came from Coffey Sound...Thanks for the Deva 5.8, Metacorder, 788T & 702T, Love them all! Also, thanks for all the great service!



Tom suiting up for another ride.