

Book reviews:

Sync Sound with the New Media:

"The first practical, sensible guide to film timecode interfacing."

--Mike Denecke, Timecode equipment manufacturer

DV Magazine, November 2002

The best source for technical information about this subject is Wolf Seeberg's self-published Sync Sound and the New Media, available at location sound equipment suppliers. Seeberg, a Hollywood recordist and specialist, covers every possible combination of film, NTSC and PAL video, DAT, HDTV and on-set playback.

--Jay Rose, Forum Moderator

Jay Rose is a Clio- and Emmy-winning sound designer with an abiding interest in the technical side of things. He delves into this topic and others at greater depth in the second edition of his book Producing Great Sound for Digital Video (CMP Books, 2002) due this December.

"Jay Hartigan" <jhartigan@home.com>

You didn't mention that Wolf's book is not just a text book, it's a fun read too! Keep it in the bathroom within easy reach. I bought several and gave them to clients and other sound "professionals" who didn't seem to get it. Some actually read it.

"Sync Sound with the New Media" by Wolf Seeberg is packed with practical, real-world tips that you won't find in textbooks. I found it to be informal, funny, and helpful. In addition to sync procedures, the book features machine-specific hints and other sources of information. It covers not only technical skills, but also people skills. I recommend the book for all technical production personnel in video and film.

--Bruce Bartlett, Author "Practical Recording Techniques"

"The Time Code manual is very well written, informative, funny and entertaining... a good resource for almost anyone who has been given the task of sorting out time code issues relating to film."

--Jeff Wexler, Hollywood feature film sound mixer <jwsound@pacbell.net>

"Even with a cursory read I've learned a couple of things. On 'Hercules' we record at 30 frame ND and film at 24 fps and I've often wondered how the sound is synced up."

--Stephen Buckland, <stephen@soundtq.co.nz>

"Neat book Learned a lot about sync combinations, and had a lot confirmed... stuff I thought was going on at the shoot, based on the tracks that come in. But what was most surprising is how similar your book's philosophy is to mine: that it's not rocket science but you do have to think things through; and that the most important factor is planning and communication between the techs who'll be doing the actual work. It's a worthwhile handbook for the professional recordist to have.

-- Jay Rose <jay@dplay.com>

"Love the book! And it is so much fun!!"

--Simon Bishop, English sound mixer <101477.3254@CompuServe.COM>

"...P.S. Thanks for a very interesting and useful book Wolf."

Mike Cooper: "mikecooper" <mikecooper@wcostasol.es>

"Mutual congratulations as a couple of weeks ago I bought a copy of your book from Barrie White (no relation) and as far as I am concerned it is THE time-code Bible. "

--Tim White <Tim_White@compuserve.com>

"I like Wolf's book too, glad we don't have to deal with TC in our mixers!"

--David Hadaway. AUDIO DEVELOPMENTS LTD mobile@audio.co.uk Britain

"Wonderful stuff from Wolf - Where DOES he get all those lovely tidbits of information, and also the time to write it all??"

--Dave McVittie <dmcv@pointproms.co.uk> Britain

Wolf, Just read your Sync Sound With New Media. How refreshing to hear someone tell it like it is! The trades certainly won't because they're advertiser supported (ie: political stranglehold!) --Tony Kremer, Kinetic Productions, kinetic@skylink.net

Your book has been well received over here. Best Regards Kishore, KPATEL@AudioLtd.com

Another good source is "Sync Sound with the New Media" by Wolf Seeberg. It deals with real world set-ups of machines that we field mixers use (and misuse) in our real world situations. Many of scenarios might seem complex and esoteric (to a person from the land of EBU), however I have used many of the set-ups that Wolf describes. One needs to know this stuff in the U.S. or else risk making mistakes that will drive post people crazy and cost lots of money. <Far too many film mixers in the U.S. are not time code literate!> An added bonus to this informative book is Mr. Seeberg's superb sense of humor.

--David A. Terry, DATSYNC, dterry@datsync.com :

its a pleasure to be writing to you, your books have proved incredibly valuable to me. please keep it up. its not easy finding a technically savvy book that's also a good read. i keep them in my kit all the time.

continued success, and thanks again for all your help over the years.

-- griffin referencetone@gmail.com

Book Reviews:

Film Crew Magazine:

One problem with the sound field is that although many audio people can make sound recordings that are fine (you can understand the dialogue and the sound edit department may not have problems), sooner or later there comes a day when the only solution becomes a sync sound solution. Personally, I am asked many technical sound questions. This latest edition of Sync Sound for the New Media should keep most problems out of the way. The more choices available, the more you have to know.

This book has a set of technical guidelines that should keep most of the post people from losing another chunk of the production budget, and keep many technical people sane by clearly explaining the process to weary producers. For example, what really happens when you need to film TV monitors in a shot? There are several variations. If you shoot at 24 fps, with a shutter angle of 144°, then all is very simple. Change one thing however, (let's say your film camera can't have a shutter angle of 144°, or you need to use several monitors and can't have a large video set-up) then what? If you shift one thing (like film frame rate to compensate for 29.97 video) what happens to the sound sync? Or let's say you have spent the time and money on a 24-frame video set-up for the day. Just what shutter angle must you use? And while we're talking about it. Since there are in fact two different frame rates still in use for "24 frame" playback, what happens to your DAT recording or are there still advantages to recording on a Nagra IV S and not a time code machine? Case by case, problems are outlined, defined, and solved.

An earlier edition of this book saved a producer I worked with several dollars and sleepless nights though he doesn't know this. I received a phone call late one night from an edit room with my name preceded by a four-letter word. It seems my sound was not syncing up, it was drifting and they couldn't get it to stay locked up. They had loaded the first day's worth of footage into an AVID (un-synced to save money) and had not accounted for the speed change). By the way, there are other methods for establishing sync in AVID, but there were limits to my knowledge of the AVID then and this worked just fine.

Who Should Own It: Anyone who wants answers on their own: producers to understand "bigger" pictures, camera department people just starting off, and sound people to give to everyone else when their voice becomes weary.

Best Part: The table of contents, although the organization of the book is not what one might expect. The "flow chart sense" in the table of contents allows you to find the answer to most questions quickly.

This is not a repair manual; it is a clear, organized set of how-to's. This is also not a book of basic math/science. If you can't think logically, you might need someone to explain it. It is a set of technical requirements that are well thought out. (You want to achieve x, do a, b, c.) Often, the worst part of a new media book is that by the time it gets to press, it is outdated. Not here. Wolf Seeberg has updated his book every year. As software and tools change, so does this fine book. There is no extended information on the DEVA, but it is listed; and there are many manufacturers and leading technical people at various labs and facilities listed with contact information.

Worst Part: The title. There is little "new media" discussed. Current media in relation to some old problems, some new solutions with some new tools, but don't go looking for information about CD-Rom sound tracks here. As more and more alternative or indie projects use the latest technical gizmos to solve problems that didn't exist in the first place, the more that common sense seems to disappear. The rise of DVC alone has caused more consternation than most people would confess to, as well as the resulting post-production concerns. Perhaps because of the huge collection of "prosumer" and multimedia choices, new media production is beyond the scope of any one publication. I wanted more, but then, look who's talking.

Rating: 3.5

Reviewed in Issue #24 of "Film crew: The Art & Craft of Production", by Steven Robinson, location sound mixer with a background in both studio and classical music recording techniques, as well as video engineering.

'Now for something completely different', "Sync Sound with the New Media"

an 84 page booklet written by American Recordist Wolf Seeberg who is a fellow contributor in this issue [of "Line Up"] and now honorary Timecode Guru to IBSNET... The arrival of this book in Britain was most timely and certainly helped us clarify a few points. "Sync Sound with the New Media" and subtitled Double System Sync Sound between film and sound: DAT, video HMI and computer monitors. Perhaps it should be called 'THE Time Code Manual'?

Which doesn't leave me very much to say except that the style is different to that of the Sound Production Handbook. Sync Sound with the New Media is written with some humour, and in an idiosyncratic style, contains a few cartoons and a number of epigrams but, importantly, clearly explains how time code is used. The bias is obviously American dealing with "pull-up", "pull-down", odd frame rates etc. but there is much in it that is useful to us too. We're just lucky were not to be plagued with 60HZ and drop frames in Europe.

There is also a very useful, but more soberly written section by Bruce Bartlett on How to maintain Your DAT and MDM - (modular digital multitracks). The booklet is worth buying for that section alone. This book may appear to be expensive but we can learn a lot from it. Buy it and cut that umbilical with the camera. It is small enough to be carried in a PDR1000TC carrying case.

-- review in the UK magazine: Line Up. Jan. 1997

"Sync Sound with the New Media"

As we all know, film is shot at 24fps but less known is the fact that it is actually transferred in telecine at 29.97 fps. Sound recorded at 30 fps is slowed in telecine to 29.97fps. This booklet delves into the many technical problems and solutions created by these differences. Certainly of more interest to sound editors than picture editors, it should be mandatory reading for all sound recordists. Topics covered include: how you could use a DAT source direct to your Avid, and the ramifications if you finish on film or tape; details about playback and music videos and how to assure that your multi-track (30 fps) masters run in sync with your 29.97 dailies; how to trace various sound problems that appear in telecine; details about properly filming monitors on the set; information on specialized software products such as DAT, digital picture editing and EDLs; how to shoot in the U.S. at 24 fps and then speed it up 4% for European broadcast at 25 fps; how to shoot in Europe and go back to NTSC video release. The book even has information on DAT and MDM (modular digital multi-track) maintenance, manufacturers, service providers and machine-specific hints.

--Copyrighted Book review for the Editors Guild Newsletter by Pam Malouf-Cundy. Jan 1997

Wolf Seeberg's 24 P for Sound and Video Assist and Sync Sound for DAT, DV and DVD

Book Review by Pi Ware

from the studentish/Sundance screeners magazine "Filmmakers Alliance Spring 2005"

Reading Wolf Seeberg's books, **24 P for Sound and Video Assist and Sync Sound for DAT, DV and DVD**, is quite a bizarre experience. The books are one part disorganization and one part incredible technical precision. Seeberg takes his readers to extreme depths of technical know-how, but doesn't even attempt to explain the basics. In fact, if you haven't been trained in field recording or video assist, don't even crack the covers. But if you're in the sound field, Sync Sound will become your bible. And if you're shooting 24P, there's no better geeky companion than Wolf Seeberg's 24P.

The abundance of darkly humorous quotes makes the spiral-bound tomes great Christmas gifts for the cynical sound mixer, but also makes the text read like a high school senior's blog. One bonus of Seeberg's informal writing is that Sync Sound for DAT, DV and DVD contains the comprehensive list of film-related light bulb jokes, from Union Lighting Technician to Agents. You can never have too many light bulb jokes. Despite his inexplicable outbursts ("Be prepared not to get a 3XLR from camera!!!") and vitriolic "love letters" to the Sony Corporation, Seeberg's books are incredibly useful.

He guides you through such processes as doing double system sound with two timecodes, dealing with drop and non-drop time codes, distinguishing between 24 fps and 23.98 fps, NOT distinguishing between 23.98 fps and 23.97 fps, and — most importantly — navigating the real-world idiosyncrasies of specific cameras and sound recorders, from HD to DV, from Nagra to MiniDisk. The books are loaded with frontline reports from other mixers and technicians, and Seeberg lists dozens of links to web articles and websites that can further guide you through the trying technical processes of filmmaking. Each book costs \$36, and the easiest place to find them is online at www.trevaudio.com/catalog While Seeberg's use of sentence fragments, indecipherable abbreviations, and jargon-heavy tech speak will ensure that his self-published books stay self-published, 24P and Sync Sound will help the professional filmmaker avoid costly downtime on the set and keep sound and camera running smoothly in sync.

Also call us for our general catalog.

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