

JOHN RODD'S ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS

COMPANY: John Rodd — Scoring Mixer

CONTACT: www.johnrodd.com

LOCATION: Los Angeles

KEY CREW: John Rodd

"A great-sounding score is really about a great-sounding room, with great music, really well orches-

trated, with great musicians playing great instruments," says scoring mixer and recordist John Rodd. "And what I'll do is get some great microphones, put them in the right places, and then not screw it up."

With credits as scoring recordist for the *Matrix* trilogy, *I, Robot*, *X-Men*, and *Unfaithful*, and studio orchestral recording and engineering credits on tracks for Madonna and Michael Jackson, Rodd is well-honed as an expert when it comes to orchestral recording.



FROM TORONTO TO LOS ANGELES NON-STOP

After a degree in media-arts, John Rodd started recording at Manta Sound in Toronto, where he got to record large orchestras. "I enjoyed that," he explains. "But that type of tracking would happen about once a month and the rest of the time we'd be doing television jingles and records."

He moved on from Manta to do freelance engineering in England, a stint working at a place called The BANFF Center for the Arts in Canada, and then 10 months recording orchestral sessions at Ocean Way Studios in Los Angeles. Finally, Rodd got hired to be the Staff Recordist for the Newman scoring stage at Twentieth Century Fox.

But after a sizeable stint — seven years — at Fox, Rodd has broken out and launched his own independent orchestral recording and mixing biz: John Rodd — Scoring Mixer. Preferring the variety of working at different studios — or at his well-equipped home studio in L.A. — Rodd gets the best of all worlds now as film composers hire him to go various places to record and mix their music.

"The job at Fox was fantastic," says Rodd. "But more and more often, composer clients of mine would call asking me to do a string date, or to record and mix a feature film score for them. I enjoy the challenge of the wide variety of projects that I get to record and mix now as an independent — be it a string quartet or a huge orchestra."

WILL RECORD, MIX, OR BOTH, FOR FOOD

Rodd tends to wear different hats for different projects. "On *The Curse of El Charro*, I was there recording everything," he says. "On another feature film project I'm working on called *Chasing Ghosts* that was composed by Scott Glasgow, an orchestra was recorded in Eastern Europe and I'm just being brought in to mix it."

So why do people turn to Rodd for recording? "When a composer contacts

me, right from the beginning, I'm always very keen to sort out all of the critical, yet sometimes overlooked, technical details in terms of sampling and frame rates, clicks and pre-records," he says. "I put in a lot of preparation ahead of time so my sessions tend to go really smoothly. With an orchestra in front of you, there's no time or room for surprises."

HIS MIC FAVS

When recording orchestras, Rodd leans toward the standard high-end Neumanns and Sennheisers. "Although sometimes I'll use Royer ribbon mics on brass sections and so forth," he says. "Generally, I'll try to use what's available at the studio we're working at. And I'll bring in whatever additional high-end mics that are needed. That's always the fun part: balancing out what's available to what sounds right."

"I like how the Sennheiser MKH series microphones work either as room or sectional mics on strings," he adds. "Although the Neumann TLM170s also have a very faithful reproduction as spot mics."

PROTOOLS AND PERFORMER

He is also versed in two of the major DAWs used for film scoring. "I work on a range of projects of different sizes. So if it's a smaller budget project, a client can give me a hard drive with a series of cues on it and say, 'Here, mix this — I'm working on the next set of cues.' And I can pull their files up in Digital Performer and just do it," says Rodd.

But when it comes to recording, he tends to use Pro Tools. "It seems to be emerging as the new standard for film," says Rodd.

THE BEST REVENGE

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