

INTERNSHIP SUMMARY

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Sony Music Studios

Wednesday January 26th – Friday, March 31st 2000

This paper serves to summarize the experience of my internship at Sony Music Studios for the Spring 2000 while taken for credit at New York University. I was selected to intern in the Classical Recording and Mastering Division of the Studios, managed by Kieran Connelly. A number of reasons informed my decision to accept this position. From a past internship at Greene Street Recording, I was looking for a recording studio that was better organized and managed in a more business like fashion. Moreover, I (perhaps incorrectly) assumed that since this internship was being taken under the auspices of University credit and was at a large corporation, I hoped that I would be doing more engineering related duties than the average studio internship (which mostly involves getting coffee, sitting around, and cleaning up). Also, I had begun to become fascinated with the profession of mastering, especially since the hours were supposedly more regular and less strenuous than those in tracking or mixing studios. Finally, I wanted to avoid listening to hip hop at extremely loud decibel levels, which seems to be a common practice in most New York City studios. To follow is a basic work log of my time at Sony Music. It is provided as a direct view into “what I learned and got out of my internship” if one can say that I indeed learned or got out anything.

Wednesday, January 26th:

Today was my first day. Kieran, my immediate supervisor and manager of Classical scheduling, began by showing me how to use the phone and intercom system. After this tutelage, we toured the mastering facilities of the third floor, and I was introduced to most of the engineers and staff at the studio.

Friday, January 28th:

Today I learned the work order system, used by Kieran and his assistant Denise to schedule the five mastering rooms and bill the clients for the appropriate time. Later on, I hopped up to the fourth floor. The entire fourth floor is one big tape library, including some small spaces for a dozen or so cubicles. I spent my time here taking master 1/4" reels off the shelves and putting them into boxes. While I did this, I also scanned each tape (each had its own unique barcode) in order to track which tapes I had boxed up. Finally, I dumped the information from my scan gun into a networked computer using the MTLIS archiving system

Monday, January 31st:

I began the day by entering work orders into the Primus System. It was not long before someone in another department required my services. They arranged for me to take a car service out to Hackensack, New Jersey to pick up a few CDs. After I picked up the CDs, I took the car service out to Westchester, NY and dropped off the CDs in some guys mailbox. The car service driver and I actually got talking and had lunch together. It turns out he is working on his M.B.A. at St.

John's University and likes the flexibility of the car service job while he is in school. Apparently I am not the only intelligent educated person whose talents were being squandered in this situation. Oh, did I mention that I sat in a car all day?

Wednesday, February 2nd:

Not much went on today. The only item in my work log is that I filed some work orders, putting them in numerical order. I should mention that a lot of my internship was spent sitting on the couch in Kieran's office, hoping for some sort of interesting project to undertake. During such sedentary moments, I did learn a bit by observing Kieran at work; he is definitely a professional studio scheduler...

Friday, February 4th:

Don't get too excited, but today I spent about an hour in one of the mastering rooms on the third floor. Engineer Richard King (McGill University Sound Recording graduate) was burning CDs in Room 311, which I had the supreme honor of watching.

Monday, February 7th:

Apparently, Tommy Wittola (CEO of Sony USA) was going to be in room 307 today, so I had the pleasure of doing "detail" on this room. "Detail" involves cleaning and organizing the room. Also, my tour of Sony Music Studios was completed today as Kieran showed me the first floor facilities.

Wednesday, February 9th:

Today I began an inventory of all the external hard drives belonging to Sony Classical; in other words, I associated each hard drive (numbered one through about a hundred) with its location. Most of these hard drives were continuously being misplaced by the engineers so that when Kieran assigned a hard drive to an engineer, the engineer often could not find the hard drive and so would just take whichever could be found. After starting this project, I helped Shannon (the 4th floor data entry person for classical master tapes) enter AIT masters into MTL's archiving system. To complete my training for the day, I boxed 2-inch tapes for shipment to an outside client.

Friday, February 11th:

The hard drive inventory continued today. Also, me sitting on the couch continued today. Sometimes Kieran and I would order Thai food for lunch.

Monday, February 14th:

Today was actually mildly educational. I began by attending a session with mastering engineer Ken Robertson. He was using 1630 machines to sequence songs for an upcoming Gene Autry compilation. Also, he was tweaking EQ, level, and fade ins/outs through Sonic Solutions, as well as working on de-clicking and de-hissing on the Cedar System. It actually surprised me that he preferred to edit on the 1630 tapes, using one as a source and just through punching in and out, recording the master version to another 1630. Apparently, loading a project into Sonic, editing the project, and then archiving the

information is basically three times the length of work as bouncing between two 1630 tapes. After this revelation, I attended a session with engineer Stephen Saper. He was adding PQ codes to a DAT pre-master using Sonic Solutions. Ironically enough, most of the time I spent watching him load into Sonic and then burning the reference CD. The actual addition of the PQ codes took an relatively extremely small amount of time.

Wednesday, February 16th:

I was given the important assignment of assembling a few coat racks for third floor mastering rooms. Unfortunately, the manufacturer of these coat rack parts had not designed these coat rack parts to conform to rigorous enough standards. Eventually, I used tools (hammer and saw) from the maintenance shop to custom fit the coat rack bases to the coat rack stands. Oh yes, today I also vacuumed the third floor.

Friday, February 18th:

Despite my lowly status as an intern, the maintenance department (ESD–Engineering Services Department) trusted me enough to let me make about 30 short BNC Coaxial cables. Later on in the day, I assisted Keith Dorgan (the classical archivist) relocate master and safety tapes to different shelves and rooms.

Wednesday, February 23rd:

Today, I continued to assist Keith Dorgan relocate master and safety tapes to different shelves and rooms. Basically, this job involved taking tapes from boxes

that were sitting on the floor in the archive department and moving the tapes to actual shelves. Again, the relocation was tracked with MTLs. Sometimes, I encountered new “items” created from the session that used the master tapes. I had to enter these unbarcoded master tapes into MTLs, barcoding them in the process.

Friday, February 25th:

Not much happened today. Mostly, I observed Kieran schedule rooms and engineers. Some of the engineers often pop down to Kieran’s office to see what is going on in the studios and to basically shoot the breeze. Of course, my existence in the office is barely recognized or acknowledged by these lofty professionals of the recording industry. Today, however, I discussed the digital interconnect policies of Sony with one of the ESD technicians; the techs were generally more friendly.

Monday, February 28th:

The library on the fourth floor began to become a second home for me at Sony (second of course to the couch in Kieran’s office). Almost all of my time in the library was involved with moving tapes from one location (incorrect shelf, boxes on the floor, or the temporary area) to a more permanent but still as temporary area. Today, I assisted another intern named Michael (a German student who had cleared his schedule this term to come to the US and intern for a prestigious American studio, i.e., Sony Music Studios). We cleared master tapes from

archive shelves and stored them in IMAR boxes (IMAR, affectionately known as Iron Mountain, is an external company that acts as Sony's warehouse facility for storage of tapes).

Wednesday, March 1st:

With the help of Michael, I archived old master tapes into boxes in preparation for shipment to IMAR (same project as Monday). Basically, we were shipping these tapes to IMAR to make room in this area (the pop masters) for the pop singles masters. Once we moved these pop singles masters, there would be room for the classical masters that were currently in boxes sitting on the floor. The whole archive department operated on this domino effect. To help make the move a little smoother, I calculated the amount of space to leave on each shelf (using the amount of shelves and the amount of tapes as a guide) to allow all the UMATIC singles masters to be relocated to master pop masters area.

Friday, March 3rd:

Today, I assisted Jim Barton (who kind of functioned as a library operations manager) recall master tapes from IMAR for remastering work. After this project, I delivered an AIT tape and a floppy disk of Appalachian Journey to 550 Madison (Sony Corporate Offices). While out in the real world, Kieran had me pick up a PAL sync rack unit on Lexington and 44th and deliver it to Mark Betts, ESD technician. A lot of my duties revolved around the classic intern task of courier. I began to regret that I hadn't chosen to do the internship in summer

instead of the most brutal months of winter. My final task for the day involved listening to a transfer of a PCM-800 tape to an ADAT of solo cello for Richard King in 310. Basically, Richard wanted to make sure there were no digital drop outs or noises in the transfer process,

Monday, March 6th:

Once again, I assisted Keith Dorgan inventory master tapes in a temporary area. Besides master tapes full of recorded material, the fourth floor also houses all of the blank media for the studios. Today I was charged with taking an assortment of this blank media (some blank cassettes, CDRs, reel-to-reel tapes, DATs, etc.) to a couple of the mix rooms downstairs on the first floor.

Wednesday, March 8th:

Sometimes, even when I was on the fourth floor, there was not much to do (this was partially due to my desire to avoid moving tapes all day). Today, I boxed up some 2 inch master tapes to ship to an external client.

Friday, March 10th:

One cannot avoid the inevitable. I continued the project of relocating UMATIC masters to make room for singles masters.

Monday, March 20th:

Today, the receptionist on the third floor called in sick. In lieu of calling a temp agency and hiring a temp to cover her position, Sony decided that I should cover the third floor reception desk. Does this have anything to do with engineering?

Not really. I answered phones and directed visitors to the correct rooms, which occupied very little of my time. Mostly, I worked on a crossword puzzle I was trying to make from scratch. I ended up finishing it by the day's end. One time during my shift, the tape duplicator supervisor came up and asked me to format and print a few CD J-cards and face labels. I obliged.

Wednesday, March 22nd:

Someone has to do the grunt work. Today, I transferred master tapes from boxes on the floor to temporary shelving in "agony row". I certainly learned from this internship that boxes of UMATIC tapes can get rather heavy.

Friday, March 24th:

Well, the receptionist for whom I covered on Monday was out sick again today, so I was called upon to cover her shift again today as well. Net surfing commenced.

Monday, March 27th:

I moved tapes in boxes once again.

Wednesday, March 29th:

See Monday of this week for an exciting description of my chores.

Friday, March 31st:

On my last day, I tried to avoid the unpaid menial labor.