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ISSUE THREE



A UNITED ENTERTAINMENT
MEDIA MAGAZINE



Studios of the Stars



Ironworks Studios Kiefer Sutherland and Jude Cole launch a major personal recording space

Kiefer Sutherland and Jude Cole at the SSL console.

The one is a respected producer/songwriter/artist/manager...the other is an immensely sought after film and television actor. Together they form a powerhouse team. Jude Cole and Kiefer Sutherland have created impressive bodies of work separately; Cole's five solo hit albums, his recent production and writing of the duet single for Lindsay Pagano with Paul McCartney, and managing the multi-platinum act Lifehouse are but a few of his accomplishments. Sutherland's lengthy list of cinema credits as well as his current run-away hit drama *24* (for which he has just received a SAG Award nomination as Best Actor in a drama series) only tells part of his success story.

It is with Ironworks Studios that this duo added "studio owner" to their list of credits. "I think it probably started six years ago when we built a much smaller home studio for Jude and made a record titled *Falling Home*, a favorite of mine," remembers Sutherland on why they decided to build a full production facility. "Then we realized if we ultimately wanted to break bands the greatest way to do that would be to bypass a major label and make the record that we want and shop an entire product around. Ironworks is a place that we can do that in."

Upon entering the 15,000 square foot building, you sense that a lot of thought was put into not only the

gear, but also the aesthetics, which were obviously designed for making records without clock watching. "This building was exactly what I had wanted on the inside. There was a lot of exposed brick and the wood trestle ceiling was something that was very hard to find in Los Angeles, so I fell in love with the building," admits Sutherland. "The studio part is 4,700 square feet and the back end of the building is more of a living area with a gym and kitchen. If the guys are working late they can just crash in the back area...you don't want to have to leave because if something's working you want to be able to stay as long as possible."

EQ: Acoustically and aesthetically this is a unique and attractive layout. Who designed the studio?

KIEFER SUTHERLAND: Jeff Cooper designed the studio and he did a fantastic job. Everyone that has recorded here so far has just been amazed with the variety of sounds. In the main studio that leads out into a corridor, there's a natural reverb that has countless variations depending on how you leave the door ajar. With a building this size that really is facilitating one studio, we've been able to take advantage and really have our inputs and outputs all through the entire building. So we have a lot of options.

Jude's been doing this for almost 20 years now. He was fantastic in the sense that every studio, I guess if you work in it long enough, you develop a complaint about it. So we were allowed to bypass a lot of problems just by virtue of his experience. Jeff Cooper did a beautiful design with regard to this studio.

In keeping with the history of the building (formerly an ironworks) I noticed a lot of ornate iron fittings, something that isn't the norm in most studios. How does that affect the acoustics in the tracking room?

JUDE COLE: You're right, there's iron everywhere the eye can see. But the iron has been hollowed out and filled with a substance that takes away any reverb effect. In fact, it even adds a very subtle high end but there's no reflection at all. We were curious at first about its effect and now it's really grown into its name [Ironworks]. Not to mention any pictures taken in this room will be instantly recognizable...it's very signature.

You didn't cut any corners when it came to equipment. How did you select the gear?

COLE: Mark Somguinari and myself selected most of the equipment. We talked about it, excluding the extensive guitar and amp collection Kiefer has, which is an exquisite collection that he takes pride in and for good reason. When you see all those guitars together it's a piece of work.

Mark and I pretty much went through the wish list and then reviewed the realities of the budget, which came into play. We put money where we felt it was going to be able to shine the best. We put a lot



The racks at Ironworks are stocked with new, vintage, and vintage re-issue gear. Among the highlights are a Lexicon 960L, Empirical Labs Distressor and Fatso Jr, and Universal Audio LA-2A and 1176LN. Mic preamps include Brent Averil's Neve 1073 clones and Chandler Ltd. TG2 EMV Abbey Road reissue and LTD-1 Neve clone. According to Jude Cole, "We've run the gamut of pre's, and nothing touches the Chandlers. We're running everything through them and they never disappoint. Big and open."

of money into compressors and we're just building a microphone collection. The console was very important and I knew I wanted an SSL. We found one that was previously owned by Larabee, an SSL 4000 G+. It's got a nice round EQ system and it really suits our needs.

Why did you go with the RADAR system?

COLE: I was really skeptical about RADAR at first. In fact, I second-guessed it so many times that I almost got two 24-track analog machines. In designing the room it was crucial that I

Studio Stats

CONSOLE: SSL 4072G+ with Ultimaton
RECORDERS: iZ Technology RADAR (2), Studer A-827 24-Track 2-inch tape, Digidesign Pro Tools Mix Plus
MONITORING: Genelec 1032, 1034B; Big End 18-inch sub, Mackie HR824, Yamaha NS-10 (3 pair), Beyer Pro 4B (4)
PROCESSING: Lexicon 960L, PCM90; Yamaha REV-7, SPX-908; TC Electronic D-Two, Line 6 Echo Pro, POD Pro; Universal Audio LA-2A, 1176LN; Drawmer 201, Empirical Labs Distressor, Fatso Jr, Chandler Ltd. TD1
MICROPHONE PREAMPS: Chandler Ltd. TG2, LTD-1; Brent Averil 1073
MICROPHONES: Audio-Technica 4050, 4060, 4047, ATM-25, AKG SolidTube, C10005, D190E, Electro-Voice RE-20, Groove Tubes 1A, Neumann U47, U47FET, U87, KSM184, TLM103, Oktava MK012, Sennheiser MD421, Shure SM57, Beta 58A
GUITARS AND AMPLIFIERS: Almost 70 vintage guitars (all with SIT strings), Fender Harvard (1958), Twin Reverb (1955), Bassman w/2x12 cab (1964), Vox AC-30 Top Boost (1963), Marshall 2104 2x12 combo (1979), JCM 900 50 watt w/1960TV 4x12 cab; Matchless-combo prototype (1991), Bogner Shiva combo
KEYBOARDS/SYNTHS/SAMPLERS: Hammond B-3 organ with foot pedals and matching PR-20 Tone Cabinet & Leslie 147 (1958), Wuritzer 200 (1972), Korg Triton, Micro: Roland RS-5, various cool Casio battery-powered bb-makers, a plethora of MIDI gear
MISCELLANEOUS: Monster Cable throughout, full guitar/repair shop on premises with Stewart-Mac tools. Every guitar pedal known to God and man (okay, close!) Almost every '80s beat box and drum machine ever on record. JVC plasma and Mitsubishi flat-screen monitors.

Studios of the Stars

didn't want to use this room with my eyes. I spent the last two years making Pro Tools records. I really felt like I was beginning to disassemble some good work. Like you go in and cut a track and it would be good and feel really fresh and then you get in with Pro Tools and you start using your eyes. It's really using the wrong sense to create. I think, music is supposed to move people with their ears.

Pro Tools has its place but I wanted to do that in another room, I didn't want

that to be a part of the main room. So I was really skeptical about using RADAR. The first couple things I cut in this room were on tape and it sounded wonderful. Then it was time to transfer the 48 tracks to RADAR. . . now I doubt very much that I will go back to the tape. It's wonderful. I can't say enough about it.

Tell us about the Pro Tools room at Ironworks.


COLE: Our Pro Tools room has a window directly on the main tracking



Processors at Ironworks include a Lexicon PCM90, Yamaha REV7 and SPX900, TC Electronic D-Two, and a Line 6 Echo Pro.



Dynamics processors in regular use at Ironworks include a Universal Audio LA-2A and 1176LN, a Chandler Ltd. TG1, and a Drawmer DS201.



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room. It's really a nice feature that I haven't seen in a lot of other rooms. We can track in the Pro Tools room while we're mixing a session in the main room. So while it's a relatively small studio, it really uses every square inch to it's fullest potential.

How did you come to amass such a collection of vintage guitars?

SUTHERLAND: The guitar collection started when Jude and I first met. He's one of the most beautiful guitar players in the world and there were just some guitars that he should have been playing and he couldn't afford. So I would buy a couple guitars and then I would lend them to him. The collection started like that and Jude started to do really well and I said, "I want my guitars back" and that's when I realized we had kind of a collection going and have just been adding onto it over the years.

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All the Les Paul's are really amazing. The '58 and '56 Les Paul Special, '54 Les Paul Jr., '55 Les Paul Jr., those are fantastic guitars. I've got a '59 Strat, a '66 Strat that plays beautifully. A lot of people like to come in, friends of mine from different bands; they'll borrow it for a session. It's really difficult to say which ones are my favorites, the collection is so extensive — I've got a '51 ES225, which is a rare Gibson hollowbody, that I like as well.

What are the pros and cons of

being in a studio partnership so far?

SUTHERLAND: I don't really have any cons because the people that are working here are people that I really like as well as the music that they're making. Our whole vantage point is to make records and have those records sell — that will ultimately be the business end of the studio.

As for the partnership with Jude — Jude's like a brother to me. We've been best friends since I was a teenager and we just knew we were going to kind of



Although Kiefer Sutherland and Jude Cole own a massive selection of vintage guitar amplifiers, a Line 6 Pod Pro is available as a convenient guitar processor (and for processing other signals).



The Ironworks' main tracking room is quite spacious, and features unusual decorative iron accents. All the iron has been specially treated to reduce resonances and reflections.

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live our lives together. For me to watch a talent like that and want to do everything you can to kind of — I don't know — partner up with him and make sure that they've got every opportunity available to be able to express what they do.

COLE: We've just been kind of brothers for the last 17 years. We've always had a great time. It's always been about great music as well. Kiefer's been an incredible supportive friend in my life and obviously there are a lot of musicians that he loves and would love to have the ability to help along the way. I think he just loves the whole environment and he's also a pretty damn good guitar player.

As for the studio, the nice part is not having the constraint of a budget when developing an artist. It's the nicest luxury I've ever had. I'm humbled by it because it took a lot of faith on Kiefer's part to get it going and put it together. This is a product of something that's come from a conversation that's lasted for the last 15 years.