

Tom Krol: TK Audio, Inc. ::

COMPOSING AND SWEETENING: SCORING MUSIC AS NEVER SOUNDED SO SWEET!

Imagine composing music for Harold Ramis, who is sitting in a rowboat on the Chicago River. Tom Krol, who founded and composes at TK Audio (Chicago), is scoring "Chicago Filmmakers on the Chicago River," a documentary produced by Film Foetus' D.P. Carlson, which features Chicago filmmakers noting their feelings on making movies in Chicago versus filming elsewhere in the country. Scheduled

to be released early next year, the film includes remarks from filmmakers Harold Ramis, Andy Davis, John Landis, and a handful of others (who don't actually sit in rowboats). For Krol, composing beats finding canned music. Not only does it employ Krol, along with other composers, but it also gives projects a unique sound. Canned music can sound too busy, especially for a project like "Chicago Filmmakers," which needs background music while people are speaking.

Composing has also been made easier by new equipment. "Technology and computers are fast enough now to keep up with creative brainstorming. Before, while waiting for the computer, you would lose your idea. Now you can do a week's worth of work in a day. It's also more fun because you are free to create. The computer becomes another instrument in and of itself."

Although Krol is scoring a separate sound for each filmmaker speaking in "Chicago Filmmakers," he creates a "cohesive sound within the film, encompassing a theme, which ties it all together."

Krol also commented on the sweetening process. "One advantage to being the composer and sweetener is that you can go to the original track in the sweetening session, which allows you to avoid delay."

Krol started TK Audio in 1994 in Chicago. Since then TK Audio has made four moves--to Northfield, Wilmette, Skokie, and back to Chicago. Each move has meant more space for the ever-growing company. After moving back two

years ago, Krol realized that being downtown has its advantages and disadvantages. "The city has a wealth of talent at my disposal," commented Krol. "And not just music talent, but also engineers." TK Audio doesn't match the wave of companies that are similar, according to Krol. The multi-faceted business doesn't hang its hat on composing alone. Krol knows they couldn't survive that way. Instead, TK Audio provides recording, digital audio production, CD mastering, and custom music.

Another recent project for Krol includes producing a Chicago artist, John Lawler, whose CD should be released at the beginning of next year. The sound can be described as jazz, although the mix of folk and R and B combined with the absence of drums brings a boogie feel to the album. Being an artist himself and producing an album for someone else gives Krol an advantage. Having been on the other side of the process, Krol understands an artist's stamina and can bring out the best in a vocalist.

Krol also has two independent CDs, featuring rock and smooth jazz sounds; "Another Day in Cowtown" and "Smooth," respectively. While his specialties are guitar and sound design, as a teen he received a piano scholarship from a Julliard teacher and later was awarded another scholarship from his alma mater, DePaul University, for clarinet performance. Krol is accomplished in six different instruments. "I'm kind of a one-man band," Krol explains.

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