

Can you believe we're already almost done with another year? This year has gone by so fast it's unbelievable. So many great soundtrack and show releases from all manner of soundtrack and show labels. Our latest announcement, the complete score to *Carrie* by Pino Donaggio happened so fast it made my head spin. When I found out the rights were available I jumped on it, as I love both film and score. The original album was always weird to me in that it contained only music from the second half of the film (save for the main title). When I checked the inventory at the MGM vaults I was rather astonished to see not only the album masters, but also a bunch of three-track masters along with an equal number of sixteen-track tapes. I pulled everything and was amazed and delighted to find we had the entire score, save for a couple of pop songs that MGM didn't and doesn't own. I couldn't believe our good fortune. I then made the decision to use the three-track tapes, as they sounded crisp and clear as could be. We've done this before and it's always worked out fine. These three-track tapes are done for the film's post-production sound mixers – groups of instruments are put on the three tracks so the mixers have some control over the blends and balances. *Carrie* was originally a mono film back in 1976. And they extracted the mono mix of the music from these three tracks. But one can make a sort of pleasant faux stereo out of them – usually all the strings end up on the left channel, and then the other instruments are spread across the other two channels – and if there's a prominent solo instrument on a cue, that's usually assigned its own channel. By folding in the sound you get a pleasant-sounding mix. So, we transferred all those tapes and our wonderful mastering engineer did his usual great job – I'd done my edit road map and I combined a few of the really short cues to make them play seamlessly, and from that he assembled our master. As I began listening, I was very pleased. And then, as it went on, I became less

pleased because something about what I was hearing was bugging me. Oh, it all sounded terrific, really, but my ears were constantly telling me something wasn't right about certain cues. I finally discussed it with James Nelson and we both knew what it was – in all the other albums we've done this way, everything was consistent, so it made aural sense. But with *Carrie* there was no consistency in the strings. Because several cues are string heavy, they would frequently split them over two or three channels and those cues sounded “right” because the strings had a true stereo spread. But then suddenly all the strings would be over on the left in mono and it was just weird to me, this aural jumping, which sometimes happened between one cue and the next or, worse, within the combined cues. I honestly don't think many people would have been bothered by it, but I was, and if there's one thing you can count on it's that I'm a perfectionist and I want the best that I can get.

So, I made a difficult decision, at least financially difficult. I decided to scrap all the work we'd done and transfer the sixteen-track tapes. I knew it would put our shipping back a couple of weeks, but because I always allow a lot of lead time from announcement to ship date I knew we'd be okay and we'd still, in fact, ship ahead of the date by a week or two, but not our usual four weeks ahead. So, we began from scratch, mixing from the original sixteen-track session tapes, which were, I'm happy to say, in perfect condition. Obviously the first generation sources sound best and the recording, while extremely dry, was excellent. They'd already added a very clean and excellent-sounding reverb to the three-track tapes, so we had that as our guide (we did not want to do quite as heavy a reverb as the original LP and CD releases had). We got everything to the engineer I've been working with lately, John Adams (we did the remixes of *Promises, Promises* and *Sugar* together), and the remix began. In his words, “This

shit sounds great!” And so we've got a true and wonderful stereo version of the complete score now and I'm really glad I made that decision. It cut into what is already a very small profit margin, but I knew the title would sell out and I just felt the score was too important to do anything by half measures. I couldn't be more pleased with the result and I hope you will be, too. We have a few more releases this year (we will not be releasing them on some *Black Date* and showing four titles in all at once – that way madness lies), and many planned for next year. Some will be complete and wonderful surprises, others will be reissues of previous CDs, but we hope with better sound and some extras (although occasionally I just reissue something because it's a personal favorite score of mine and think it should be available for a little while longer).

We have a new show release coming next, and then we're back to our soundtracks for the rest of the year. Next year, we'll also be doing some more original recordings – two singer albums, and maybe some other stuff.

As always, we thank you for your continued support.

— Bruce Kimmel