

Members: SAGE Newsletter

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SAGE Newsletter 2018, Volume 1

The leaves are falling fast, and almost half of 2018 has already passed. We'd like this opportunity to provide feedback of what has been happening so far and what we plan for the rest of the year.

Events

Cape Town had a SAGE social that took place on 23 February at Rick's Café Américain. Cape Town has also initiated monthly informal post-production get togethers. The first one was on Friday 23 March at The Stack. Anybody working in the post-production industry is welcome to join and network, share ideas, commiserate and gossip.



SAGE hosted an Acronym Evening on 20 February to honour our 2017 recipients, C.A. van Aswegen, Edgar Sibaya and Ula Oelsen. It took place at Panettone Café in Johannesburg. At the acronym evening it was mentioned that other members would like to see the recipients' work. Because of copyright and screening issues we decided to rather ask the recipients to write about one of the scenes they had selected for submission. Edgar and Ula give some insight about their editing styles below.

Edgar Sibaya on The Black Dark Dog, from Keeping Score Season 1

In this storyline our main character is that of Jade. She is a young woman dealing with her past and her current coming of age. In the world of the narrative the audience first meets her as a hardened person. As the story progresses we peel back more layers to reveal other parts of herself. The scene I'll be discussing is about her dealing with a big part of her past.

When I was confronted with this scene, I felt it necessary to give this scene enough of my time and patience. Although too often the nature of the television industry forces editors to work fast to meet tight deadlines, this scene was important to me because I could relate to what the character Jade was going through. I have been there for some people who have gone through something similar.

The scene is about Jade talking about her depression for the first time ever. She shares this intimate part of herself with the world via a video diary. The emotional state we tried to create was that of claustrophobia and sadness. As the editor I really wanted the audience to go on a journey of Jade's memories and emotions with her. Through all the sadness, anger and other emotions Jade goes through, she remains brave enough to continue telling her difficult story.

This scene is edited differently to the rest of the episode. The episode is cut following normal rules of editing and continuity. Cutting the scene in this way is effective in transporting the audience from the normal world of the narrative into the psyche of the character.

The jump-cut style used really helps the audience experience the juxtaposition of memories and varied emotions through her story. While editing, I felt it was important that we saw her saying her most poignant lines, instead of being on a cut-away at those points. I had to make sure that the scene had a good balance of being "in the moment" (Jade talking into her laptop camera) and "memory & emotional amplification" (Jade thinking and feeling).

I could not have successfully told the story of this scene without using my editorial intuition and instinct. I had to feel out all the footage to know what was important to her story and what was not...

Ula Oelsen

Uia Veisen

Deconstructing a cut from a show or movie feels like describing a date with an ex. The romantic first few days of falling in love with the ideas and the vision of the reference footage, the concepts of the shooting and directing styles, the drama and intrigue of it all, only to be pulled down to reality and facing the real person (show) sitting right in front of you.

In the case of Bloedbroers, I was teamed up with two faithful wingmen in the form of the uber talented direction of Jozua Malherbe and the visionary eye of Adam Bentel. The main challenge I put to myself was focusing on making the show feel relevant in pacing and form. The show had some very heavy dialogue scenes and could easily have felt a bit old and theatrical.

After running through most of the footage my main objectives were clear. 1) Be very concise using the stellar performances as a backbone and emote the feeling of the dialogue-heavy scenes with reaction shots to keep the viewers engaged. 2) Earn the moments to speed up the cuts in some scenes. 3) Give homage to the period, but push the cuts.

1) This bit was the hard work, combing through the takes, shaving dialogue and moments to make it feel precise and engaging. There was a lot of information the viewers had to work through and I had to make sure it was all clear.

2) To juxtapose the information heavy emotion scenes, I was let loose on the action scenes. The trench sequence was one of my favourite with lots of cut aways, double cuts and manipulating of the footage to create the at war feeling. It also helped to change the pace up from the other scenes that in turn made the slower scenes and the great performances feel even stronger, and the actors 'earned' more time on performances.

3) Probably one of the most fun but challenging parts was pushing the cut and style a bit. Period dramas can very easily fall flat and get over dramatic and drag. We discussed a lot of reference footage and shows we really liked and I tried to mimic this as we moved through the different time periods of Bloedbroers. From the jump and frenetic cuts of the war trenches (Saving Private Ryan), the emotional tensions scenes around the dinner table (No Country for Old Men), the sneaky jump cut montage club/singing scenes disguised with cross fades and all (Film Noir films) and the long developing shots made famous by Steven Spielberg.

It's easy to forget the special times one has with developing and cutting a show. The intention and energy you bring to the party, the troubles and challenges that seems insurmountable in the short time you have it in your hands. The loss and the pride when she makes her last appearance and all is said and done.

Till the phone rings again, and the date asks you if you want to go to place you have never been to before.

South African Film and Television Awards 2018

Several SAGE members have received SAFTA nominations for Best Editing in 2018. The nominations were announced in early February, and the awards ceremony for technical crew was held on 22 March at Sun City. SAGE members who were nominated are as follows:

Best Achievement in Editing for Documentary

WINNER: Megan Gill S.A.G.E. for The Giant is Falling

Best Achievement in Editing for Feature Film

Nick Costaras for Beyond the River

Best Achievement in Editing in a TV Drama

Sandra Vieira for Bedford Wives

Melanie Jankes Golden for Hard Copy

Best Achievement in Post Production - TV Soap/Telenovela

Maryke Kruger S.A.G.E., Tanya von Abo & Talya Kahan for Ring of Lies 2

Congratulations to all our members who were nominated and especially Megan Gill for winning a SAFTA! We are also aware that many programmes that were awarded in other categories were edited by our members. We are immensely proud of you.

Sound Update

We are in the process of updating our sound post-production definitions and would like to focus more on this department in order to improve conditions. As part of this focus, we'd like to share interviews with sound editor Juli Vandenberg S.A.G.E. and composer Quinn Lubbe.

Juli Vandenberg S.A.G.E.

Juli Vandenberg has worked as a sound editor and sound designer for more than 20 years, on films such as the Oscar-winning Tsotsi, The Story of an African Farm, The Last Lions and Otelo Burning. She has been involved with SAGE for many years and is an acronym holder.

What makes you passionate about Sound Editing/Final Mix?

I have always loved sound, its textures and flow. Sound on films can be replaced or completely recreated, which allows for a lot of creativity.

How did you first get into Sound Editing?

I started as an assistant in a Final Mix studio and worked at night as a Sound Editor as an apprentice.

What software do you use? Is this important for your workflow and/or creative process?

Pro Tools is my software of choice. It is the international standard and allows for collaboration anywhere in the world. It is very user-friendly in terms of working with sound.

Is your workflow process the same on all the projects you work on?

The workflow is influenced by budget, time frame and client needs, so is flexible.

What is a common misconception people (filmmakers and lay people) have about what you do?

They don't realise that time is required to do a good job and deal with the challenges and expectations of a production.

What are the challenges you regularly encounter?

The sound recorded on set is often problematic and takes a lot of work to get it to delivery standard.

What advice would you offer someone considering a career in post-production sound?

Find out if the market is there for your career to flourish. South African budgets don't always pay the bills.

Quinn Lubbe

Quinn Lubbe is an editor and composer, whose score for *Modder en Bloed* was nominated in 2017 for a SAFTA in the category Best Original Music Score - Feature Film. He has also composed scores for *Raaiselkind* and *Ellen: The Story of Ellen Pakkies*, and edited films like *Vuil Wasgoed* and *Wolwedans in die Skemer*, as well as the TV series *Getroud met Rugby* and *Hartland*.

What makes you passionate about Sound Design/Composing?

Composing music for film is incredibly fulfilling because of the powerful impact that music has in supporting and driving the story. As a composer, you're starting with a blank canvas with a guideline from the director and editor through reference music and discussions that you've had based on the offline edit. Although that can be daunting it is also very rewarding once you start creating music to picture and experiencing the impact that the music you've created has. Each project is also very unique, even though it may fall into the same genre as a previous project and this allows you as the composer to constantly change and grow.

How did you first get into Composing?

My dream was always to write music for film and television and I originally wanted to study music after school. By chance, I walked into the TUT Motion Picture Academy open day when I was researching tertiary institutions. I had studied music throughout my school career, but realised that in order to write music for film, I needed to understand more about the storytelling process. So rather than study music, I decided to enrol at the Motion Picture Academy at TUT. It was there that I was able

to write music for some of the short films that were being made by my classmates and leaving film school with some of my work to show (although it was quite modest) definitely helped me to promote myself.

What software do you use? Is this important for your workflow and/or creative process?

I use Logic Pro to compose and mix in. For my sampled instruments I use EastWest Composer Cloud as well as various Kontakt sampled instruments. Logic is built for composing and although there are many DAW's to choose from, I've always preferred Logic because it is very stable. I'm also a Mac fan, and Logic isn't available for PC. As far as the sampled instruments are concerned I think that EastWest's Hollywood Orchestra virtual instruments are some of the best out there.

Is your workflow process the same on all the projects you work on?

Although the workflow is usually the same in terms of viewing the offline and discussing the film with the director and editor, the process of creating the music can vary drastically. With each film being unique in its storyline, setting and characters, the music will reflect that and will call for different approaches in both the instrumentation, orchestration and tone. Being a pianist, I tend to sketch a piece on the piano and then build it from there, orchestrating the different parts depending on what is needed for the scene.

Do you have a project or scene that you've worked on that challenged you creatively and unexpectedly; if so why?

For Blood and Glory (Modder en Bloed), I spent an entire day composing a piece of music that on the piano worked really well with the scene. I then started to orchestrate it and when I came back to it the next day, I realised that I had composed a piece that would've worked well with a sweeping scene in a Disney film. Not quite ideal given the subject matter of the film. I knew that I had to start from scratch, losing a day's work in the process, but sometimes it's necessary to scrap something altogether, rather than try and salvage something that might take you in the same direction again.

What is a common misconception people (filmmakers and lay people) have about what you do?

I think the biggest misconception is that anyone who can compose or play music, can compose music for film. Film scoring is more about understanding story and supporting narrative than creating beautiful music. As a composer you want your music as a supporting role - you don't really want people to notice the music while they're watching the film. It always has to be about the film, not about how much you can shine as a contributor.

What are the challenges you regularly encounter?

Time is always a big factor in completing a project. It takes a huge amount of discipline to sit down each day and write a certain duration of score. It's often an exponential process in that the going is really slow in the beginning when you're

trying to establish your themes and you tend to write more music towards the end when you have your themes and sub-themes. You're also under a lot more pressure towards the end and you have to hit a deadline, which for some people works well - I'm one of those!

What advice would you offer someone considering a career in post-production sound?

Understand how story works. Ultimately it is all about the story that is being told. Understand how what you want to do supports that story and enhances it. Every person, from the production designer through to the VFX team, is creating elements that will tell the story and fulfil the director's vision. So if you want to write music for film or television, start by taking a feature film or short film that you know well and write the score to it. Then compare it to the original and see what works and doesn't and why. Also, work on as many projects as you can, even if they don't pay at first. It really is a case of, "practice makes perfect".

Rough Cut Lab

Last year we launched the first Rough Cut Lab in collaboration with Encounters Documentary Film Festival and The Refinery. The Edit Lab focuses on independent feature-length documentaries that are deep into the editing process and in need of consultation on obstacles encountered at this stage.

SAGE manages the project and some of the best of our documentary editors are paired with the three projects selected. The second Rough Cut Lab is being planned for later this year, which we are very much looking forward to.

Two of last year's Lab documentaries were successfully finished by the end of 2017 and are premiering the festival circuit this year. We like to think that we helped at a crucial part of their journey.

Kurt Orderson's Not in my Neighbourhood, edited by Chris Kets, screened at the African Film Festival in Luxor, Egypt and together with Xoliswa Sithole's Standing on their Shoulders, edited by Tshililo Waha Muzila, will have special screenings at Encounters 2018.

We are very much looking forward to the 2018 Lab. If you would like to participate as a mentor, you are welcome to write to us: info@editorsguildsa.org.

SAGE Outreach

As part of our outreach endeavours, SAGE has been in contact with various tertiary institutions in the country that offer editing as part of their degree or diploma programmes. We sent out a flyer offering free membership to students, and offered the guild as a resource to lecturers in terms of our website, workshops and masterclasses.

masterclasses.

We have received positive feedback, membership applications, as well as requests for SAGE members to give various quest talks. Several lecturers also asked about the possibility of internships for their students. Topics of interest are workflow, working conditions, After Effects, Resolve, and the politics of editing. If any members are willing and able to talk on these (or any other great editing topics), or have capacity for an intern, please contact info@editorsguildsa.org.

Website security

On 22 April, the SAGE [website](#) was compromised with what appears to be an automated malware attack. The SAGE website runs on Drupal, and a recent Drupal security flaw was exploited to gain access to some of the website's back-end.

The flaw has now been patched by Drupal and the patch has been applied to our website, which is now back up and running. No data appears to have been deleted in this attack.

However, there are two security-related consequences of this security breach: All SAGE website passwords have been reset. The next time you log in to the SAGE website you will need to create a new password under the tab "Request a new password". Enter your email address and a password reset link with instructions will be emailed to you.

If you had previously used the same password on SAGE's website and other websites, you should consider that password no longer secure.

SAGE's website stores your passwords as encrypted ("hashed"), further secured by a process known as salting. While extremely unlikely, it is nevertheless possible that your actual password has been leaked as a result of the breach.

We therefore recommend that you change passwords on any sites where you used the same password as your old SAGE website password.

We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused. SAGE takes your privacy very seriously, and we will redouble our efforts to keep your information secure in the future. We have already upgraded the website to use HTTPS on all pages, further securing any login information.

Lastly, we are busy redesigning our whole website from the ground up. The new site will provide some long-overdue upgrades to the membership system as well as a refreshed public-facing design. We are aiming to have the new website up and running in the next few months.

Keeping in touch

~~Keeping in touch~~

We'd like to remind members that if you have interesting news to share about projects you work on or which has done well, you are more than welcome to share it with us. You can also post on our [Facebook](#) page, as well as tweet on [Twitter](#). We have also launched an [Instagram](#) page recently.

Please remember to update your details regularly, especially if your email address changes, as well as your surname. You can do so by logging into your profile on our [website](#).

We hope that you have enjoyed reading our announcements and that the rest of 2018 is going to be a great year!

Kind regards,

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