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Mbox Helps Graduate on the Move

06/08/04

By Stephen Bruel

Life is on the move for recent Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) graduate Megan Wedge who won the School's inaugural Digidesign Award for Excellence in Sound Design which recognises her talents in using Pro Tools for post production.

After two years at AFTRS in Sydney, Australia, where her course "covered all areas of post-sound for film" Megan walked away with a Master of Arts in Sound Design and her award prize — a state-of-the-art Mbox featuring Pro Tools software.

And to top things off, one of the short films she worked on using Pro Tool is eligible to be nominated for a 2005 Academy Award.

"It was a pretty intense two years but well worth it," says Megan. "I am looking forward to being able to set up my own Pro Tools system and edit at home."

"I'm planning to travel in the near future and the portability of the Mbox will be very useful," she adds.

AFTRS head of sound Jenny Ward says it's great that the students develop a relationship with Digidesign, as Pro Tools is the most widely used software in sound post production in Australia.

"The Digidesign Award for Excellence in Sound Design provides tremendous encouragement to a graduating sound student by creating the opportunity for them to set up their own portable or home studio," says Jenny.

"They can continue to use Pro Tools on future projects, enhancing their work and way of working by further exploring the technology."

Country manager for Digidesign Australia, David Corazza, says Digidesign is proud to support AFTRS whose graduates are highly sought after by industry.

"By donating an Mbox for the student who has shown excellence in sound design we are giving the graduate a truly competitive edge," he says.

"Mbox is Digidesign's Pro Tools LE-based portable micro studio which offers novices and pros alike command of any project and full session compatibility with other Pro Tools systems.

"Digidesign wishes Megan the best of luck for the future and we are sure she will make great use of the Mbox."

Before enrolling in AFTRS, Megan "spent a few years working and studying in Melbourne in sound design for theatre".

"I moved back to Sydney to study sound editing for film at AFTRS," she explains.

It was definitely a good move. Along with the AFTRS/Digidesign Award for Excellence in Sound Design, Megan and her projects have won several other industry awards.

Throughout her studies, Megan was sound designer for several short films including the 10 minute animation Birthday Boy and the 17 minute drama Black Berries, which screened at the 2004 Cinema des Antipodes at Cannes.

Her work on these films led to the Australian Screen Sound Guild naming her the Student Encouragement Award recipient for 2003 and she received the Critics Circle Award for Best Sound Design in an AFTRS Student Project for 2004 for Birthday Boy.

"Birthday Boy won the Annecy International Animation Festival's 'Jean-Luc Xiberras' prize for Best First Film and was winner of the Yoram Gross Animation Award at the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films at the 51st Sydney Film Festival," adds Megan.

"This film also won the Best Animated Short Award at the 2004 ACM SIGGRAPH Computer Animation Festival, making it eligible for nomination in the 2005 Academy Awards."



Both films were finished on film and were edited in the AFTRS facilities, which include four sound editing suites that utilise the Pro Tools platform, including one with a ProControl desk.

"We have a studio where we record foley, ADR and music which uses the Pro Tools platform with a Control|24 desk," explains Jenny Ward.

"There is also a Pro Tools system within the audio control room of the TV studio and our mixing theatre currently houses two Pro Tools systems, one using a ProControl desk."

Jenny says the School has a number of upgrades planned for the coming year including a new mixing console and upgrade of all sound editing suites to Pro

Tools version 6.

"We are hoping to build two new sound editing suites that will have Pro Tools systems and we are researching the appropriate software to use in a Mac Lab situation which will enable us to teach sound post production in a classroom situation," she adds.

As for Megan's future, although she is still involved in theatre sound, Megan says her long-term career aspirations are to "work in post-sound for film and TV, in Australia and elsewhere".

"I have a short film coming up and am working on "Crime", a Danish play in Melbourne later in the year, which will be a lot easier now given the mobility of the Mbox," she says.

