

MIX

Professional Audio and Music Production

Cups 'N Strings Polishes Mountain Apple Masters

By Mix Editors

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Scoring Bruce Maddocks, chief engineer and owner of Cups 'N Strings Studios in Santa Monica, Calif., recently visited Waikiki to meet with representatives of the Mountain Apple Company, which produces and markets some of the best-selling recorded music in the history of Hawaii. Maddocks has been contracted by Mountain Apple for restoration and archival transfer of analog multitrack and stereo master recordings to digital for future replication. Among the artists on the label are the Brothers Cazimero, who received a Grammy nomination in 2005, the first year of the new Hawaiian music category.

Tapes being restored and archived date from 1963 through the early Nineties. Maddocks explained, "In addition to the usual sticky-shed and other complications of older tapes which require delicate baking of the masters before transferal to digital, some of the assets have suffered from mold deterioration due to the high humidity of the Hawaiian islands."

To remove the mold, Maddocks employs an archival level HEPA vacuum system for mold removal and stabilization of the tape. "It's basically the same system used by libraries for cleaning books and historical materials which have mold," Maddocks continued. "It's capable of very fine particle pickup, in the range of 0.3 microns." Due to the toxic nature of the mold spores on the analog tape, the cleaning process is done outdoors to prevent contamination of the Cups 'N Strings studio facilities. Maddocks also wears protective clothing, gloves, and a filtration respirator during the procedure. Following the vacuum process, there is a chemical wipe stage, and then the tape is run on a custom-fabricated tape machine transport fitted with cleaning and drying wipers.

"The resulting audio from Bruce's 96K x 24-bit sound files is spectacular," commented Mountain Apple engineer Dean Hoofnagle. "The producer of those '63 reels, Jack de Mello, was moved to tears when he heard the restored sound."

For more information, visit www.cupsnstrings.com.



In Waikiki, Hawaii, from L to R:
Bruce Maddocks, chief engineer/
owner of Cups 'N Strings Studios;
Robert Cazimero of The Brothers
Cazimero; Dean Hoofnagle and Milan
Bertossa, Mountain Apple Company
recording engineers.