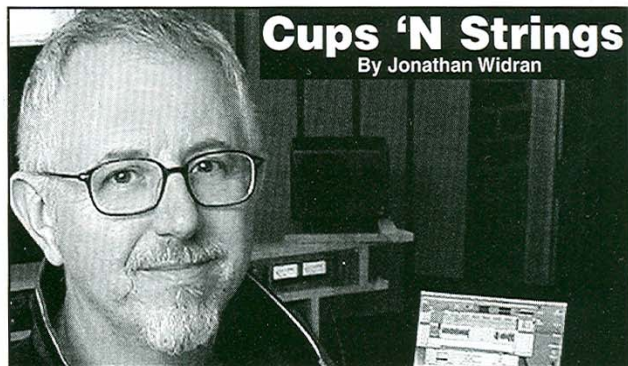


# MUSIC CONNECTION

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CLOSE-UP



## Cups 'N Strings

By Jonathan Widran

**Bruce Maddocks, Cups 'N Strings**

In early 2002, Bruce Maddocks brought an incredibly diverse 30 years of sonic expertise into the launch of his three-room surround sound and digital transmission facility known as Cups 'N Strings.

Maddocks first learned the art of multi-track recording and mixing from Elliot Scheiner and Phil Ramone, before working with the classic rockers and engineers at New York's famed Hit Factory. It was at this time when he was first exposed to the concept of surround sound while doing the tech setups for the mixes on Paul Simon's motion picture *One Trick Pony*.

After eight years as an engineer at the Record Plant facility in Los Angeles, Maddocks developed a TEC award-nominated line of loud speakers which were used by Dolby Labs, Solid State Logic and a Sony Pictures scoring stage. Later he designed modular sound and video recording packages for Sony Pictures and rebuilt the CD mastering suites, the vintage Studio B control room, and the live echo chambers at Capitol Studios.

Following his trademark credo "Digital Detail...Analog Attitude," Maddocks' aim with Cups 'N Strings was to create a surround sound mixing environment and digital transmission center that would be backed by both cutting-edge technology and vintage analog equipment.

Whether he's working for high-profile clients like Hans Zimmer, R.E.M. and Steely Dan, or lesser known cult bands like Boiled in Lead, the New West Symphony, or the Hawaiian-based Mountain Apple Recording Company, Maddocks has one objective: to provide the finest possible audio recording, mixing and mastering facility for clients seeking optimum sound quality for analog to digital and surround sound transfers.

"I want people to know that we have great digital chops with all the detail and editing flexibility that entails, combined with the analog trademark of getting the best possible, intimate performance," says Maddocks. "We can do a project digitally that sounds like analog, which is the best middle ground for pleasing strict proponents of each camp."

Cups 'N Strings is set up to handle any professional analog format and digitize any analog product up to a 192 sample rate. The facility can also do analog to analog transfer, which helps preserve the original analog sound as sample rates and bit depths migrate upwards. This year, the facility will be working for the first time with the Super Audio CD capability, a high-resolution storage format which is effective for archival purposes and formatting for SACD releases. Recent projects have included preparing R.E.M.'s entire Warner Bros. catalog for surround sound format by taking analog multi-tracks and digitizing them to 96/24 wave files, utilizing the Nuendo 2.0 system. He also did the same for the Steely Dan catalog.

Although Maddocks' corporate clientele includes Warner Bros., Disney, Rhino, and on the advertising side, McDonald's and the California Highway Patrol, there is also a more personal side to his digital transfer business. "We're able to reach out to musicians who have older analog tapes they want to hear after years in storage," he says. "They can dust off things they worked on years ago, load them into Pro-Tools, and work on the tracks again in a modern context. It's also good for clients who haven't had access to a tape machine in a while.

"Interestingly," Maddocks continues, "it's not just musicians who seek my expertise. I get people with old analog two-track recordings of family gatherings or old band rehearsals they want in a digital format and put on a CD. One client was part of a band of soldiers stationed in Germany in the Sixties who had tapes of their performances at some of the clubs the Beatles played. We were able to create three CDs of band performances for them. We do oral histories, speeches and a great variety of things. There aren't that many facilities that have hung onto their classic analog gear, and so there's a real need for this type of service."

Contact Cups 'N Strings,

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