


A person in a blue shirt is standing on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The person is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and their back is to the camera. The ocean is in the background, with waves breaking. The sky is a pale blue. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Sound Ideas Releases the Soundelux Sound Effects Master Collection

BY KOREY PEREIRA MPSE

For decades, Soundelux was the largest independent post sound house in the world. Hearing the sound in films like *Gladiator*, *Black Hawk Down* and *Natural Born Killers*, all posted at Soundelux, were part of the reason I personally got into sound. When Todd-Soundelux filed for bankruptcy in 2014, Rob Nokes of SoundDogs purchased their sound effects libraries and trademarks in



US Federal Bankruptcy Court. For five years, SoundDogs worked on authenticating and mastering the Soundelux library. Most recently, Sound Ideas has acquired SoundDogs and the rights to the epic Soundelux library and has been painstakingly finishing the editing and mastering of the collection for commercial release in 2022.

The Soundelux Sound Effects Master Collection includes the work of the best recording engineers and sound designers in the world. The content represents sound effects that were recorded and developed for countless major motion pictures and popular television shows; the films include many Academy Award-winning productions and many of the TV shows are Emmy winners.

To better understand the work that went into recording the library, we spoke to MPSE President Mark Lanza, who spent his first eight years in the industry working at Soundelux.

At the time, Mark was a computer science major in college and a friend brought him into the fold for the film *Born on the Fourth of July* to help create a database of sounds for the project. He then started logging sound effects and loading them into WaveFrame for other projects. Mark was working at Soundelux at night, while still attending college during the day. Mark eventually made the transition to working at Soundelux full time.

Wylie Stateman was instrumental in teaching Mark the ropes and getting Mark involved in the recording process. Wylie started sending Mark out on recording sessions and meetings for projects. During his time at Soundelux, Mark remembers being given the chance to do things right as well as do things wrong. He was given a chance to really grow as an editor and recordist. This boiled down to recording, listening back to the recordings and re-recording things as needed again until he got it right.

The culture at Soundelux really supported going out and recording original sounds whenever possible. Obviously, a lot of sounds still came from libraries or previous recordings, but they always tried to get the really cool stuff that mattered on a project that was going to play loud or be a key part of the story.





There were more great stories to be told than can fit on the pages of this article, but I would like to highlight a few of my favorites that will be a part of the upcoming Soundelux library.

One of the first recordings Mark did was for the film *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*. They needed to get recordings of a lawnmower from underneath the mower. At 10:30 p.m. in their front yard, they put a mower on cinder blocks and placed a mic underneath. They recorded idles, revs, then bys (slow, then faster). If the neighbors were watching, they must have thought they were out of their minds as they were running back and forth mowing the same strip of grass over and over at night. For the same film they suited up in full beekeeping wear and recorded swarms of angry bees.



For the film *Glory* the team went out and recorded musket fire. Some of the best recordings from that session were from placing microphones in a ditch and capturing the sound of the bullets whizzing over the mics. For another film Mark once headed out to the desert with Roland Thai to record ricochets and skips off marble and other surfaces along with impacts with turkey carcasses and watermelons with various modern weapons. For the film *Born on the Fourth of July*, they spent the day at the LAPD Police Academy's gun range near Dodgers Stadium. They were able to fire a variety of weapons. An armorer and Vietnam vet, Dale Dye, was their armorer for the session. They recorded M16s, AK47s and even an M60. By the end of the day, they had gone through thousands of rounds and captured plenty of great recordings. Also for *Born on the Fourth of July* they went to Will Rogers State Park to record soldier walla. Dale Dye instructed the soldiers running by, screaming, and recorded period-





accurate radio calls. They paid a lot of attention to detail. By recording outside and having the people running by the mics, it captured a natural perspective.

For any fans of the sound design in the film *Natural Born Killer*, there are a number of recordings from that film in the upcoming library. In particular there are violent transitions, ethereal transitions, synth pads, and scary stingers.

Another film Mark worked on was *Nothing but Trouble*. The film featured a roller coaster in a mansion. To create the sounds for that, they went to Magic Mountain for the day while it was closed down to capture the sounds of Colossus, a wooden coaster, without crowds or people screaming. While they were there, they also recorded a number of the other rides both onboard and from the ground.

By far my favorite story from my

chat with Mark was the time he was tasked with recording a Bengal Tiger for Michael Jackson's music video for "Remember the Time." Mark loaded up his gear and headed out to the Wildlife Waystation in Santa Clarita. The animal handler set Mark up close to the Bengal Tiger, separated by only a chain link fence. At one point during the session, Mark remembers the tiger staring right at him before it lunged at the fence, causing it to bow. Mark, being a true pro, jumped back, but didn't scream and kept rolling without blowing the take.

With more than 200,000 sounds slated to be included as part of the Soundelux Sound Effects Master Collection, these stories and corresponding recordings are just the tip of the iceberg.

When speaking to Brian Nimens, CEO of Sound Ideas, about the upcoming release of the library he said, "I feel privileged to have

"I feel privileged to have acquired this show piece of entertainment history and I pledge to honor its legacy."

—Brian Nimens

acquired this show piece of entertainment history and I pledge to honor its legacy." For myself and everyone else who grew up hearing many of these sounds in our favorite films and television shows, it is exciting to finally have access to this amazing collection for use in our own projects.