

Music editor job brings close-up of celebrities

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Working in Hollywood is exciting for Curt Sobel, originally from Southfield and now a supervising music editor for La Da Productions.

Meeting celebrities is part of the job at La Da Productions, where Sobel is one of 13 editors, nine of them supervising editors.

"For me, coming from the Midwest, it's all very exciting," he said.

"Everyone else there grew up with these people around them. The people I work with think I'm very naive because I get overwhelmed," he said.

Sobel was on his way to Toronto, where he was to work on the film "Highpoint," starring Richard Harris and Christopher Plummer. The score for the independent film was recorded with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

NOW A RESIDENT of Marina del Rey in Los Angeles, Curt Sobel owns a house in Southfield with his brother Michael, who is an assistant prosecutor in Oakland County. His sister Margo is working on a summer teaching program at the Michigan School for the Blind in Lansing.

All three Sobels went to the University of Michigan, where Margo is a senior. Their parents, Milford and Gloria Sobel, live at Country Corners in Southfield.

Curt Sobel went to California in October 1978.

"I moved there to look for a composing job in film," Sobel said. When he found it tough to break into that aspect of the music business, Sobel decided to switch to editing.

La Da Productions is an independent music editing company, used by producers who make their own films.

"None of them have editing services, so they hire us to work on films," he said.

Before going to Hollywood, Sobel studied music at Berklee College in

Boston. The school had a film department and, although he had written songs for years, he changed his focus toward films and music editing.

AT BERKLEE, he edited shorts and student films, as well as composed songs. In the summer of 1978, he composed the music for "Tattoo," a film about professional tattoo artists. "Tattoo" won an award at the Miami Film Festival.

Sobel said he has always worked in hospitals and was a secretary in a hospital for six months when, "One day I felt, 'It's now or never.'"

That's when he decided to go to California to pursue his music career. There he met Dan Carlin Jr., whose father is "a well-respected music editor in Hollywood," running La Da Productions.

There are five stages in music editing, Sobel explained. First is spotting the show, with the composer, director and producer.

"We get together and talk about where the music should go."

Second is the breakdown. The music editor gets a dupe of the picture and breaks down the scenes that will have music.

"He gives them to the composer, who writes the music with those sheets, second by split second."

THIRD IS scoring, recording the music with the composer and orchestra and one of the independent studios.

"I do everything except conduct the orchestra. They just have to be concerned with what the orchestra sounds like. This is the most fun stage."

Fourth is building, all the music is recorded, transferred on 35mm film.

"Building the music tracks, to run in synch on tape recorder with the picture."

Fifth and last is dubbing, or mixing, all the sounds are mixed together: the dialogue, sound effects and music.

Sobel's music editing credits for La

Da include both TV and movies. He worked on the TV series "Paris" and TV movies "Sex and the Single Parent," "Orphan Train" and "Plutonium Incident."

Fred Karlin was the composer on all of the above, except "Orphan Train," whose composer was Laurence Rosenthal. Sobel's movie credits include "Falling in Love Again," composer Michel Legrand; "Loving Couples," composer Fred Karlin, and "Highpoint," composer John Addison.

SOBEL SAID "Falling in Love Again" starring Elliot Gould and Suzanne York, has not yet been released. "It's a romantic comedy, and Michel's music makes it very lush and romantic."

"Loving Couples" starring James Coburn and Shirley MacLaine is Sobel's third film with David Susskind and Time-Life. It will be released in October through 20th-Century Fox.

He describes "Highpoint" as a "combination Mafia-CIA, tongue-in-cheek British spy thing."

Interestingly, Sobel said that at La Da "Everyone there plays an instrument, but only one there had a music background. In the past, music editors used to be old film editors."

Following music school, "everything's been uphill since. I've just been very, very lucky," Sobel said.



Curt Sobel describes the five stages in music editing, his specialty, for movies and television. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

Will-O-Way Theatre schedules open house

Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre will hold an open house for teens and their parents from 1-5 p.m. Saturday at the theater, 775 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Township.

Free performances will be given at 3 p.m.

Scholarship interviews may be arranged for tryouts for the new Edna Chaffee Noble Scholarship presented to

Celia Merrill Turner, Will-O-Way's director, by the Edna Chaffee Noble Alumni. The scholarship is to be used for a talented, needy teenage student.

The Alexandra Grange Hawkins Scholarship, for a teenager mainly interested in classic drama, will be presented again this year. "This scholarship is exciting because Martha Henry of Stratford was one of the first stu-

dents to receive it," Mrs. Turner said.

Other scholarships available are the Dr. William O. Merrill Scholarship for a teen in technical theater and two Turner Scholarships given to experienced students who act as a maintenance crew to pay for their training.

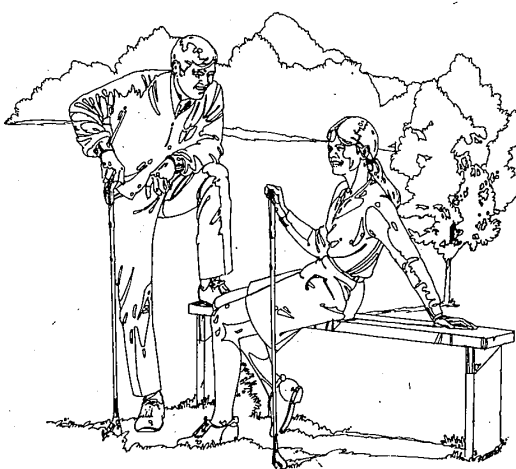
Will-O-Way's Summer Theatre Classes will begin July 14 and run 12:30-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday through Aug.

14. Registration is open for classes in psychology of performing, contemporary scene studies, classic scene studies, theater games, electives in diction and dialects, mime, movement, dance, make-up, playwriting, and directing.

Classes are open to students from age 8-18. Adult classes are held Sunday-Tuesday evenings. For further information call 644-4418.

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