

Auricle Granted Software Patent

Ron and Richard Grant, the Sherman Oaks, California, based inventors of the Auricle, have already both won Emmys and a Motion Picture Academy Scientific and Engineering Awards for the device. Now they have been awarded something even more luminous: a patent.

Auricle is the man-machine interface devised by the brothers Grant for their Film Composers Time Processor (FCTP), a device that greatly eases the task of scoring films and television. Widely championed by composers such as Bruce Broughton [*Young Sherlock Holmes*, *Silverado*] it has quickly become an industry commonplace.

The patent, formally entitled "Integrated Environment Computer System Control Structure With Natural Language Interface," is for the ultra-friendly interface between the machine and the user. It is, significantly, the first patent awarded a software operating environment.

Although the Film Composers Time Processor is at the moment the only commercially

available usage of the Auricle interface, the brothers stress that the Auricle is independent and can be used to manage other complex processes. Richard Grant is sanguine about the usefulness of the Auricle in CD-ROM and CDI applications, "...because of the simplicity with which it gets at complex functions." He adds, "I think there is a need for more than a menu-driven interface when you're dealing with gigabytes of information.

The FCTP, which now interfaces with MIDI, was recently used by scorer Alan Silvestri [*Romancing The Stone*, *Back To The Future*] to drive the synthesizers on the 20th Century Fox release of *Predator* and by Jerry Goldsmith [*Star Trek II*, *Hoosiers*] to both generate and click track [for a live orchestra] and drive an [electronic] arpeggiator [simultaneously] in Warner Brother's *Innerspace*