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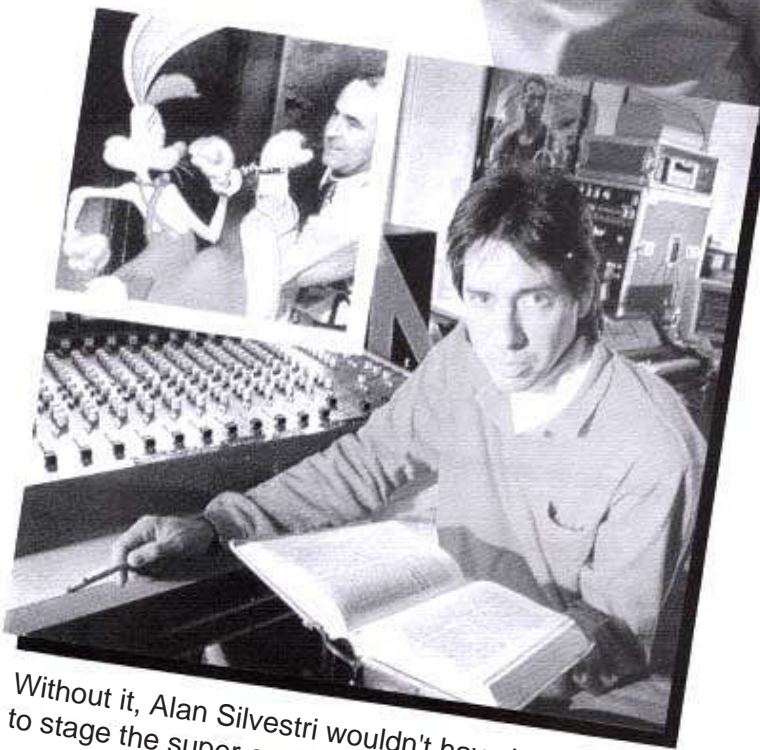
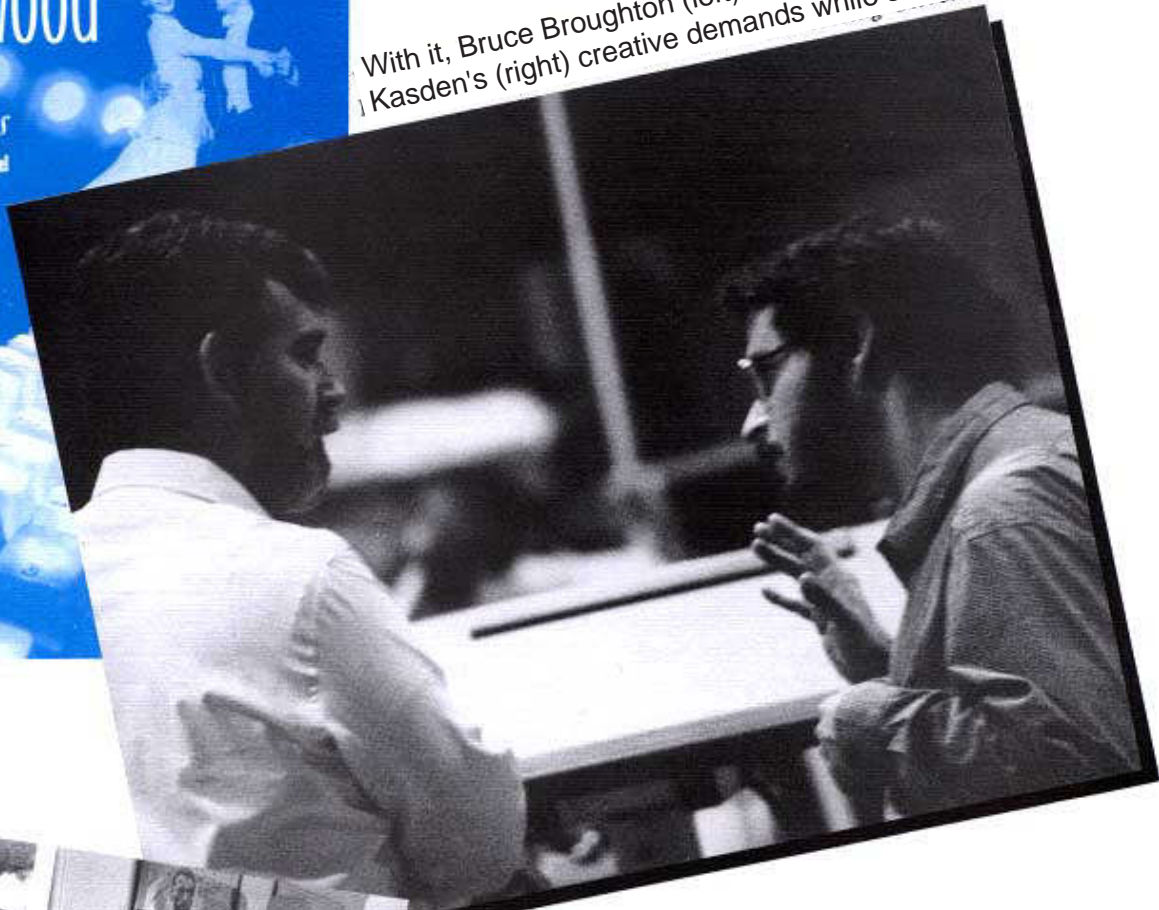
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AURICLE "Making Beautiful Music"

With it, Bruce Broughton (left) met director Lawrence Kasden's (right) creative demands while scoring *Silverado*.



Without it, Alan Silvestri wouldn't have been able to stage the super-speed piano duet in *Roger Rabbit*.

Camera pans back and forth between the two pianos as Donald Duck plays them with his hands, his feet and tail. Donald stretches himself taut between the two pianos as he plays them both with his hands and feet. Daffy Duck pops out of the grand piano with a boxing glove and punches Donald back into the upright.

-from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*
copyright 1988 Touchstone Pictures
and Amblin Entertainment; by
Jeffrey Price, Peter Seaman

In the original script for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, Donald and Daffy played no part in the big cabaret scene. But during the filming in London, *Roger's* director Robert

Zemeckis was struck with a flash of brilliance. The scene, he proclaimed, needed something to liven it up. He decided on a pair of live pianos played faster than humanly possible. Daffy Duck would play at one keyboard, Donald at the other.

Zemeckis' inspiration presented composer **ALAN SILVESTRI** with a complex dilemma. How to create the super-speed duet? A live orchestra could not play it. A speeded up tape of a Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody would sound more like a speeded-up tape than live music. And while the toon characters would sit at player pianos, the keys were not designed to move fast enough.

To help save the day, Silvestri had L.A. based J. L. Cooper Electronics custom-build computer boards with MIDI interfaces for two Marantz player pianos. He then programmed the tune into New England Digital's Synclavier and transmitted the song to the boards in the electronic player pianos. Voila - the piano keys began racing away at superhuman speed. Later, Silvestri (with AURICLE's assistance, see below) dubbed in the music with the Synclavier.

Music timing software gives movie composers better reason to turn to computers. The matching of music and action can be another headache. In the old days, film composers used a 500 page click track book to determine film-to-music tempos. But for *Roger Rabbit* Alan Silvestri

avoided spending days flipping through the book by using *AURICLE: THE FILM COMPOSER'S TIME PROCESSOR* by Auricle Control Systems of Sherman Oaks California ((818) 990-8442). Setting up the AURICLE (now on the Yamaha C1/IBM-PC Music Workstation) alongside a video monitor, Silvestri synchronized the tempo down to individual frames of film. Like a hi-tech metronome, the computer clicked out the tempo. If a music cue was to end on Reel 7, Frame 6, Silvestri could program the AURICLE to make it so. Even more importantly, the computer automatically recalculates the matches when the music's signature changes, say from 4/4 to 6/8.

AURICLE proved a lifesaver (not only in the dueling piano scene, but) for *Roger Rabbit's* opening animation sequence. In cartoons, the composer usually writes the music first, and animators draw to suit the tunes. This time, the cartoon was created first, so Silvestri had to work backward. "There were an amazing number of major hits, areas where something just had to happen musically," he explains. Using AURICLE meant he didn't have to rescore everything manually each time he changed the music. And it gave him the precision to nail the more than 100 music hits in the main title sequence alone.

In music, as with camera control, "precision is the key", says Silvestri. "If you score a piece of music

and the climax comes two seconds after the guy jumps off the bridge, you blew it."

By eliminating the manual drudgery of trying to fit music to film, AURICLE enables composers to focus their energies on developing stronger musical pieces. Film composer **BRUCE BROUGHTON**, credited with such films as *Young Sherlock Holmes*, Michael Jackson's *Moonwalker*, and *Silverado* (for which he received an Academy Award nomination), says that the AURICLE makes him more productive on the scoring stage conducting an orchestra. "If a change is needed in the music, you can make it right there, on the AURICLE," he says. "In the old days, you would have had to send the orchestra home to return another day and it would then take hours to rewrite."

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