

FEATURES  
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## Tools Of The Trade

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### Scoring the Blues

LOS ANGELES — When agency David and Goliath asked for a fresh approach for two spots on automaker client KIA's new SUV, Hollywood post house DeepMix created an anti-jingle.

DeepMix creative director Dave Curtin, working with his partner Brad Colrick and staff engineer Jake Policky, synergized rootsy sounds and contemporary beats. "Miles" is a bluesy number with acoustic, electric and slide guitars set against a hip-hop loop. "We recorded the blues spot in Capitol Records' recording studios, which are right next door to us," says Curtin. Local blues legend and club owner Kal David cut a blues groove to which DeepMix added harmonica and an ad-libbed scat vocal, creating a track with little definable melody and no discernible lyrics, but oozing vibe.

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"We recorded it to two-inch analog tape," says Curtin. "That helped keep the authenticity of the blues vibe on the track, which we enhanced by letting Kal use some of his own vintage amps and guitars. Then we transferred it to the Pro Tools HD system we have at our facility. Once it was digital, we could cut it up, pulling bits and pieces of the vocals and the guitar licks like samples, cutting and pasting them in to create the right feel against the picture cuts. Recording analog gave us vibe. Editing digitally gave us creative options."

Aside from the cool stew of vibe and groove, the spot's audio also achieved another, more subliminal goal. "We married an older feel with a hip, contemporary beat," says Curtin. "It perfectly matches the demographic the agency was trying to reach. They want to sell cars to people who are 30 to 35 years old, and those people are familiar with both blues and hip-hop, analog and digital. Perfect."

### Deep Diner Channels Classic Soundtracks

NEW YORK — When Deep Diner Music was commissioned by Radio Shack's in-house agency, Circle R, to put together the company's latest spot, Allan Schwartzberg and Bob Mann, the two studio musicians who founded Deep Diner, set out on a highly compressed trip down the audio branch of memory lane. "The spot called for music to evoke very specific movie and television themes, from *Casablanca* to *Star Wars* to the *Ponderosa*, all in 30 seconds," says Schwartzberg. Deep Diner had to compose scores for each segment, five to six seconds long, that elicited the sense of time and place.

The music for the *Casablanca*-like segment used strings from a KORG Triton sound module, which was then leavened with a live violin. "We recorded the violin using a plug-in to mimic a vintage mic-preamp, and then rolled a bunch of the high end off of it, and pushed up the mids," Schwartzberg explains. "Then we squashed it using a WAVES Renaissance compressor plug-in for Pro Tools. We ran the violin and strings through the same EQ patch to get that grainy old black-and-white soundtrack feel."

Similar techniques were used to evoke *Star Wars* and *Bonanza* settings. Combinations of digital and live instruments were processed to approximate their original media.

"It was a challenge to try to get the effects for each segment in only one or two phrases," says Schwartzberg. "But it was also fun, because we were reliving the music of our childhoods."

— Dan Daley

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