



Score for Elizabethtown Captured Via Sennheiser, Neumann, True

by Mix Editors

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According to Carl Kaller, recording engineer for Cameron Crowe's upcoming *Elizabethtown*, just three Neumann microphones—two TLM127s and an M150—and a TRUE Systems Precision 8 mic preamp were needed to capture composer Nancy Wilson's multi-instrumental talents, requiring almost no signal processing.



Kirsten Dunst and Orlando Bloom in *Elizabethtown*

Kaller is currently recording Wilson at her home in a studio (dubbed Little Ruckus) that has been put together for the project. Although a pair of high-quality compressors is on hand, he says that roughly "Eight-five percent of the music that we've recorded is what's hitting these mics and going to Pro Tools|HD. Once I have the level I need and the mics where I need them, I don't need those compressors.

"It's an all-wooden live recording—guitars, mandolins, autoharp, harp, hand percussion," he continues, "all recorded in the house. Everything travels through the air before it hits the disc; even with the electric guitar, we always go through the amp."

Kaller, a music editor with a resumé that stretches from *Sixteen Candles* to *Natural Born Killers*, has worked with director Cameron Crowe in the past. "I've been mixing and editing music for film for the last 20 years. This is the first time I have hung a microphone to record anything. That's one of the reasons I went to Sennheiser. What I needed, most importantly, was to have the best mics I could get my hands on," he says.

As far as setting up the microphones, he explains, "It's all about putting the headphones on and moving the mics around until we're happy. For the most part, I'm using the TLM 127s to create stereo. Mostly what I'm creating is an LCR, using the 127s, and then I move the M 150 around for a center. It's getting a lot more of the low frequencies.

"These things are fantastic. I'm impressed with the quality. I'm really impressed with the 127s, considering they're chip-based mics. They've performed really well on the acoustic guitars, the piano and the harp, and various zithers.

"We've got an upright piano downstairs," he continues, "I've found that if I bury these 127s inside the piano, it gives us a really great, rich sound, with the harmonics just flowing over you. However, yesterday, we were looking for more of a Bruce Hornsby sound, so I ended up leaving them in their cardioid mode, turning the mics from the piano and stood them about five feet away. We got a really nice, soft recording off that."

Working in the house with a sole performer has imposed its own character on the project, Kaller observes. "We've been going for what we can get within the environment. We have no soundproofing, so we duck between the trash pickups and the kids running down the street!

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"And because I have a single musician and we're writing as we're recording, most of the time we don't know what we're going to end up with, so it's a guess as to where we want to capture all our harmonics. Most of the time, I'm getting in as close as I can. In some instances, that forces me to go back and re-record some instruments once we realize what's running the track.

"But those compressors are rarely needed. Nancy is very consistent. I've turned them on for some of the percussion stuff because they tend to jump out at you. But I'm not doing any vocals. So I don't need to worry about anything launching off and hitting the ceiling."

For more information about Sennheiser and Neumann, visit www.sennheiserusa.com and www.neumannusa.com, respectively.

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