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*Frank Morrone, independent re-recording mixer, Hollywood*

**In** detailing the accomplishments of independent re-recording mixer Frank Morrone, we could probably fill this article with just a list of his major film, television and music credits and awards, including his 2011 Emmy for Outstanding Sound Mixing on the popular and controversial mini-series, *The Kennedys*.

Other television projects include *Lost*, *Boss*, *The L Word* and *Sex and the City*. He has worked with directors Sydney Lumet, Gus Van Sant, J.J. Abrams, Jim Henson, Ron Howard, Tim Burton, Taylor Hackford, John Singleton, Janusz Kaminski and Lasse Hallstrom on projects including *Ransom*, *Shaft*, *Lost Souls*, *Cider House Rules* and the Oscar-winning documentary *When We Were Kings*. He also mixed the Jonas Brothers’ *Camp Rock*, earning a platinum album for the soundtrack.

Frank’s award-winning body of work also includes an Emmy for the worldwide cult hit series *Lost* and a Best Sound Satellite Award for Tim Burton’s film *Sleepy Hollow*, as well as four additional Emmy nominations and multiple CAS, Golden Reel and Gemini nominations.

Frank Morrone is pleased to note a growing appreciation of sound among film makers, “For directors like Ron Howard and Tim Burton, sound is 50% of the entire film.



I’ve been very lucky that way. Budgets may be getting tighter, but there is still awareness of the importance of sound.”

**Frank’s own personal journey in audio began as a musician.**

“I’ve been a drummer for so long, I don’t even remember when I started playing as a kid. I was in a lot of bands. I got into sound when I was working in a music store and one day the owner couldn’t pay me. Instead, he gave me a Teac four-track recorder and that’s what started me off in my career.”

“I absolutely loved it and couldn’t stop. I still have that recorder because of its sentimental value and I still keep it in my studio beside me. It was the first piece of equipment I ever owned.”

After earning a degree in electronic engineering, Frank honed his craft under the mentorship and tutelage of experienced recording professionals.

“Back then, we really didn’t have the academic training available that they do now. There are so many good schools now. I do lectures for AVID and I get to see what some of the courses are all about and what they encompass.”

“When I got into it, the only way you could get in was through apprenticing and mentorship.”

Frank began his career mixing music for film scores as well as jazz, rock and country albums. From there, he moved to film and television post production. In 1995, he joined Todd AO in New York. While in New York, he also did some lecturing for New York University Film School. He moved to Los Angeles in 2004 to work on *Lost*, and has since mixed several projects for Disney as well as freelance projects for other studios.

Looking back on his time in the industry, Frank sees one major game-changer: “Digital has made a huge difference. Without it, we couldn’t do the work we do today with the schedules and the budgets that are dictated. Our track counts keep getting bigger all the time. And in television now, we’re expected to deliver a 5.1 mix that is just as good as any feature film in a fraction of the time, usually three days. We just couldn’t do that without digital.”



"With the MK's, it doesn't matter what you put through them, whether it's classical music, a big score, dialogue or sound effects. Listeners are blown away. They just can't believe what we're putting these speakers through and they handle it beautifully."

"And the subwoofers - Before discovering MK, I had a subwoofer that really did seem to work, except when you got into higher SPL levels. It couldn't handle the really low bottom end, so I

Frank Morrone's most widely known work was an innovative six-year run on the television series, *Lost*, a unique J.J. Abrams concept that combined edgy human drama with off-the-wall science fiction.

Unlike most conventional TV fare where background music consists of the same recycled cues week after week, an original score was composed by Michael Giacchino (*Star Trek*, *Mission Impossible*) for every episode of *Lost* and recorded with a 40 piece orchestra. For a typical episode, there could be 60 dialogue tracks; 12 music tracks and 140 or more effects tracks.

Frank explains enthusiastically, "I've been very fortunate in that almost everybody that I have worked with professionally, most notably the people behind *Lost*, executive producer Bryan Burk and J.J. Abrams, are so into sound that they would participate tremendously in getting the final sound of the show. We also had a very talented team of editors that provided us with great material to mix. They delivered exceptional tracks every show."

*Lost* was shot on location in Hawaii, but editing and mixing took place at Disney's Buena Vista Sound in Burbank, California.

"I first encountered MK Sound at Disney. All of their DVD authoring rooms and all of their near-field set-ups are MK S150's. So my first exposure to them was more than six years ago when we started on *Lost*. We had a free hand in choosing our monitors. Disney was willing to let us use anything that we felt comfortable with, so we did a lot of testing with a lot of reference material that I knew very well."

started looking at various other options. **Working at Disney, I heard the MK's and it was a no-brainer. I was really, really impressed. The subs are just fantastic.**"

"Once the popularity of *Lost* was apparent, we had a lot of manufacturers approaching us and dropping speakers off for us to audition. **We'd listen to a lot of other speakers, but we'd always end up back on the MK's. They translate very well to the broadcast side of things and to the DVD side as well. They can handle an incredible amount of level and have a wide dynamic range.**"

"A lot of it has to do with what you're hearing in the midrange. In film and television, you really want a high level of accuracy especially there, because you're dealing with dialogue and ADR."

**"When you're working in television, your work gets broadcast just days after you've**



done it. It's vital to have accurate reference monitors for both on-air broadcasts and DVDs. **The MK's always delivered the most reliable reference for us."**

Frank Morrone just finished the pilot for yet another J.J. Abrams project, the new TV drama *Alcatraz*, shot on location at the shuttered penitentiary. The sound team spent nights there capturing the haunting atmosphere of the historic prison in the San Francisco Bay to be put to dramatic use as the series unfolds. He is currently working with Gus Van Sant on *Boss*.

Despite his increasingly busy schedule, Frank Morrone takes the time to stay active in industry organizations, as well as contributing to the education of future generations.

"I am very fortunate to be in an industry that I love and enjoy and I feel that giving back to the community is very important. I always give as much of my time as I can." Frank currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Cinema Audio Society and is also vice-president of the Motion Picture Sound Editors and a sound governor for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"Every year, I do a lecture tour for AVID, talking about workflow at film and technical schools all over the country, mainly because I wish I had had those avenues open to me when I was learning. It gives you valuable insight into how professionals work."

"This is the least that I can do for an industry that has given me so much."

For more information, visit [www.frankmorrone.com](http://www.frankmorrone.com)

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