

Ashley Layhew: All right, so today is Tuesday, July 24th, 2018. I am Ashley Layhew, and I am Belmont's archivist.

Chuck Hodgins: I'm Chuck Hodgins, Belmont's system support librarian.

Pat McMakin: And I'm Pat McMakin, Director of Operations, Ocean Way Nashville, which is a Belmont owned recording studio.

Ashley Layhew: Thank you. So I just want to get started with basically a biographical introduction of you. So who you are, where you're from, and how you came to Ocean Way.

Pat McMakin: All right. I was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. And came to Nashville in a very serendipitous way. My parents happened to be down here on a tour of Nashville, 1974 or five. And on the Gray Line Tour, there was a recording studio on the tour. And the recording studio turned out to be the newly built one at Belmont. And that's one of the ways that Belmont was helping pay for their first studio, was by allowing tourists to go through it. So when my parents were here visiting, I had been at University of Kentucky studying business and they knew I was kind of a little discontent. So they brought me this brochure back and they said, "This looks like it might be something down your alley." So I came down and checked it out. And so I moved to Nashville in 1976 to finish my education at Belmont. And it was early in their music business program. But that sort of set the course for my life. While I was still a student at Belmont, gosh back in the 70s, they didn't have internships. You just went to work part-time at a studio.

Pat McMakin: So I got everybody's first job, way back in those days, was in the tape room, making tape copies. So I got a job over at a little studio over on 18th Avenue called Wild Tracks, it's no longer there. And I started working in their tape room, and was there for a while, I don't know, maybe six months or a year while I was at Belmont. And then my last semester at Belmont, I went to work at Quad Studios. And they had just done Dan Fogelberg's Netherlands album and they had had a lot of activity on Buffy St. Marie, The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down, or Joan Boaz, I'm sorry.

Pat McMakin: So they were kind of the rock studio in Nashville at the time. So anyway, I got a job there as an assistant engineer. Worked there about six months and a visiting engineer said, "Hey are you interested in a job?" And I said, "Yeah." And he worked at a studio called Audio Media, which was on 19th Avenue. And it just got torn down.

Pat McMakin: So I started at Audio Media. I graduated in December of 1978, and I started January 3rd of 1979 at Audio Media. And they didn't really use assistant engineers, so you were an engineer from day one. And it was really good experience. I got to work with really great musicians who were staff musicians. So we had the same band, the same studio every day. And we cut all kinds of music. We did jingles, we did sound-alikes, we did special projects for National

Geographic, some of them were big bands, some of them were small orchestra, most of them were rhythm section.

Pat McMakin: So that was a lot of fun. I worked at Audio Media for a few years and then, y'know, clients coming through the door, eventually I started getting freelance gigs at other places. But after a couple of years at Audio Media, and then doing some freelance work, in 1982 Tree Publishing, at the time, the largest country publisher in the world, actually they still are. Now they're called Sony ATV. But at the time in 1982, Tree Publishing hired me to come in and manage their one demo studio and engineer. So I took that job. I was newly married and needed a job with benefits and all that so I took that job.

Pat McMakin: Stayed there for a while, for 25 years. And over the course of those 25 years, Tree Publishing was purchased by Columbia Records or CBS. And then CBS was purchased by Sony, so it became Sony Music Publishing. And then they merged with Michael Jackson's catalog, ATV. So it became Sony ATV and then more recently, it became Sony/ATV+EMI. They now control the EMI publishing catalog. So it's quite a large company.

Pat McMakin: But over the course of these years, I got to produce, I got to sign artists and develop them. I got to engineer a whole lot. Everything from tons and tons of demos to ... I did a couple records with Ray Charles, where I did all the overdubs, instrumental overdubs, uncredited, thank you very much. And just was starting to show up on a couple records here and there. So that kind of is what opened the floodgates to other stuff.

Pat McMakin: And again, in the 90s, I was able to produce a little bit. I had a guy named David Curse that we did real well with. I think we had two or three number ones, or top tens. Produced an album on Aaron Tippin for Lyric Street, produced records up in Canada. Won a Canadian Country Music Award for album of the year on an artist named Patricia Conroy, about '93.

Pat McMakin: Gosh, there's so much in that 25 years. I don't know how much we wanna go into, but it was just an amazing time to be here and just to sort of have stumbled into what became the core of the music business. So I've always been a Music Row guy. I worked on Music Row my entire life, I've never gone to work anywhere else. So that's been kind of nice.

Pat McMakin: And then about 10 years ago in 2008, Belmont was looking for somebody to manage Ocean Way and asked me if I'd be interested. And my way of thinking, it was the best studio in town and I thought it was a terrific opportunity. I was a little wary of the country music business, trying to be a producer and trying to be a "player" in that world. And so when this job came on, it was just the right opportunity at the right time. So I took it and it's been great, never looked back.

Ashley Layhew: So in your time before coming to Ocean Way, who would you say has been one of your favorite people to work with? Or one of the most memorable experiences?

Pat McMakin: The top of my list ... the most memorable was with Steve Martin, just because he's such a huge star. Real interesting guy, very quiet, very serious. But we worked on his first bluegrass album here. One the first day of that, the vocalists were Vince Gill, Dolly Parton. And I had worked with Dolly on her Nine to Five album when I was an assistant engineer, just out of Belmont, would've been about 1977. I was an assistant on that album. And that was really my first glimpse at a big time artist making a big time album. She had Mike Post producing. And at the time, Mike Post was on every TV show, you couldn't see a thing without seeing Mike Post in the cast.

Pat McMakin: And he brought in Leland Sklar that played bass. And Leland had played with James Taylor and all my heroes, so Leland was kind of a celebrity. But I would say that Dolly is probably my favorite just overall artist just because she's just so classy, she's so smart, she's so talented. And she can hang with the boys, cut up and tell jokes. She's always the funniest and raunchiest person in the room.

Ashley Layhew: Of course.

Pat McMakin: But all in good humor. She's got total class.

Ashley Layhew: Nice.

Pat McMakin: She's just the best. So that was really ... has always been kind of cool.

Pat McMakin: So I've gotten to work with her on the Steve Martin thing and then early in my career, I worked with her a little bit. And then she was in here doing some voice overs a few months ago and I did those with her. So I don't know, she's just somebody I really admire.

Ashley Layhew: Would you kind of go back into Ocean Way Nashville's history and just kind of start us from the beginning there.

Pat McMakin: Okay. And I'm telling this history as it's been told to me. So you can double check facts.

Pat McMakin: But as I understand it, the building that Ocean Way is located in was a church built in 1911. It had quite a history, part of which the pastor of the church was Tennessee William's grandfather. And the documented stories that I've read, are that Tennessee William's actually lived here in Nashville with his grandfather for a year and spent a lot of time in this building, he and his sister did. So that's kind of the building origins.

Pat McMakin: And then in the 70s, the Church of the Advent, the Episcopal congregation that was here moved out to the suburbs, out on Franklin Road, and the church was for sale. I think briefly it was a YMCA community center. And then Martha Ingram and a group of investors bought it and made it into a black box theater. And I didn't find this out until more recently, but I got a chance to ask Martha about it. And I think I'll have this right. The theater company that became the basis for TPAC [Tennessee Performing Arts Center] was formed here when this was that little black box theater.

Ashley Layhew: I think you're right, yeah.

Pat McMakin: So that theater group ... is it the Tennessee Repertory? Is that the name of our local company?

Ashley Layhew: Yeah.

Pat McMakin: I would bet that the Tennessee Rep probably got its beginnings here, whether they called it that or not, who knows. But anyway, that was not really a successful venture. She said they pulled out of it, or maybe it served its purpose. But at any rate, after that, the building was purchased by Tony Alamo Ministries. Tony Alamo, there's a whole Wikipedia article on him. I recommend that you go read it and incorporate it into the history of Ocean Way.

Pat McMakin: He was such a memorable character, I mean just an awful person. I'm not the only one that thinks that. When he was sentenced for child molestation, to prison for the rest of his life, after hearing his many misdeeds, the judge said, "You're the most despicable human being that's ever been in this courtroom."

Ashley Layhew: Oh, my goodness.

Pat McMakin: And Tony Alamo went out in handcuffs looking like Charles Manson saying, "One day the world will see I was just doing God's will." So that was for trafficking young girls. He also had gotten indicted for selling tractor trailer loads full of expired food to FEMA for the hurricane Katrina bailout.

Pat McMakin: If there was a dishonest way to make money, he could do it. But the main way he made his ministries built so big, started out he had followers that he would send out to job sites to work. And those followers, the paychecks would come to Alamo Ministries. And then for that, he would give them a place to live here at Ocean Way. And I think, this is the part that I don't really know, I think they might have actually worked on some of his western wear in this building.

Pat McMakin: So Tony Alamo, besides having a "ministry", had a clothing store called The Alamo down on Broadway. And he was making western wear in the same [inaudible 00:12:26] as Nudie and Manuel, the sequins and all the stitching and everything. So Tony had sort of a sweat shop of people doing that. I think it was here. And selling them downtown. And now those jackets, I mean Michael

Jackson had one. If you look for an Alamo piece on Ebay, and you'll see them and they're expensive. They're collector's items.

Pat McMakin: But Alamo Ministries, he was on the radio globally, he was televised, and when he lost this building to the IRS, his tax tab at that point was 10 million dollars. I don't know if it was the first time in prison, but that was one of his times to go to prison for tax evasion. So when the IRS seized the property and they closed it down, took it over, foreclosed on it, there was a fire here apparently during those years that damaged the parts of studio A. There used to be a picture of the Last Supper, I think, on the front wall behind where the pulpit would've been. And I think it had been defaced, it was apparently not a very nice scene when the new perspective buyers first saw it.

Pat McMakin: The buyers were Allen Sides, who for many years had Ocean Way Studios in Los Angeles on Sunset, 6050 Sunset Boulevard. And he's always said or always claimed, and I don't doubt it, that Ocean Way and Hollywood was the most awarded studio in history. The most amount of Grammy's, the most gold records, the most ... all that, chart records, all that. So they're obviously a very important studio, very successful studio, and a huge name.

Pat McMakin: So Gary Belz was the other person that invested in this, and Gary had House of Blues in Memphis, a studio in Memphis called House of Blues. And then he had a studio in LA called House of Blues, and I think House of Blues Nightclub might be Gary. So that was Gary and Allen. Gary Belz, B-E-L-Z, and Allen Sides. So they started this place, they bought the property, spent a lot of money renovating it. I'm sure it took quite a long time. And opened it in 1996 as Ocean Way Nashville.

Pat McMakin: At the time, the concept that brought in Gary ... Gary Belz family is from Memphis and they own the Peabody Hotel, so he's familiar with hospitality. And so I think the idea was to bring in a hospitality guy and a studio guy together. Gary, he's a studio guy too, but to bring those guys together and offer amenities that were sort of beyond anything that Nashville had seen.

Pat McMakin: So they opened up with that in mind, there's a kitchen in the lounge downstairs with a full kitchen. It used to have a commercial stove in it, and they used to have a chef. So I think you could sort of put in your food orders in advance and the chef would cook them for you. And it worked great on those big album projects, big budget albums, which is what they really had planned on doing pretty much exclusively. And that's also back in the era when people might book a month to make an album, they just book your studio out. Maybe they track in studio A, go to studio C to do overdubs and mix it in studio B. So that was kind of the business model in the 90s.

Pat McMakin: So at any rate, after about five years of operation, I think the owners realized maybe they had overbuilt for the market a little bit. The market wasn't coming up with enough budget to sustain what their offerings were here. So after five

years, they were ready to sell. And they put it on the market. And they were having a tough time finding buyers for it because it was so expensive. And Belmont, I don't know how that connection got made between Dr. Fisher and Allen Sides, but somehow it did. So then Belmont started entertaining the idea of purchasing Ocean Way. They were growing their AET program, they needed more studio space, it's right down the street. Mike Curb had just donated 11 million dollars to Belmont. It's my understanding that Dr. Fisher saw the need for the Curb Event Center as being the greater need than for a new music business center.

Pat McMakin: So the funds mostly went to fund the Curb Event Center. But a portion of the funds were used to purchase Ocean Way. So that's how it became a Belmont facility.

Pat McMakin: As a matter of fact, when Dr. Fisher came over to look around, thinking about whether to buy or not, at the time I was at Sony and my boss, Donna Hilly was on the Board of Trustees at Belmont. So of course Dr. Fisher called Donna up and said, "Hey, we're thinking about buying this studio, do you think it's a good idea?" And she said, "Well I don't know anything about studios. Pat's our studio guy." Anyway, Donna and I and Dr. Fisher came over here, we walked through the building and looked at it. I said, "I think it's a good idea if you could somehow figure out a way to use sort of the teaching hospital kind of concept here." And I think he liked that idea, so they bought it soon after and started operating in 2001.

Ashley Layhew: Awesome. So what was your very first impression the first time you walked in here?

Pat McMakin: Breathtaking. The very first time ... I came to an open house shortly after they opened, and I mean, the console in studio A alone is such an incredible thing that you just don't see in studios much anymore. And it's massive in size. The size of the studio A room was bigger than anything ... I hadn't been in any scoring stages or anything like that. But just the way ... the décor of the building, the top notch equipment, top microphones, top everything. And so yeah, you would walk into this building and just get a sense of wow.

Ashley Layhew: Can you walk me through the process of how somebody comes to record here?

Pat McMakin: Yeah, yeah. Well actually, going towards that answer, and you may have to put me back on track in a little bit, but going towards that answer, when Belmont got it, I think, there was probably a pretty good period of adjustment. Figuring how to take a commercial studio operation and merge it in with an academic institution. Not necessarily common bed fellows, if you will. You know? So when I got here, I think they had an operational methodology, but it was still a little rocky at times, or maybe I just didn't understand it. So we had to sort of figure out how that marriage was gonna work.

Pat McMakin: And the way it does work is studio C, it happens to be that studio C is harder to rent out commercially because you hear studio B leaking into studio C. However, studio C is a good room, so it makes for a great place to teach students. So we use studio C more academically than any other way. Students have mixing techniques classes down there, so that's where they learn how to mix records, is in our C room.

Pat McMakin: And then studio B, we do recording workshop there on Saturdays, which is a four and a half hour class, it's an eight week, half semester class. And during that, the students get some time to come in and record their project, so they get a chance to come here as clients or as users. So that's kind of part of our model.

Pat McMakin: And the other part is the commercial side. For the commercial side, we're very unique in that most of the studios in the world are purpose built because that organization just records a lot of stuff, at least this is the old school model. We do not actually produce anything in-house. We have large studio needs because we're Belmont University, but we don't produce anything in-house. So our business model is simply renting studio time. We provide the place, we provide as much personnel as you need, and you come in and do whatever you want. And that's pretty much how it operates now.

Pat McMakin: You know? You book it, you pay for it, you come in and record. There's no audition or any kind of, are you good enough? We get beginners to season pros in here, and we treat them all the same.

Ashley Layhew: So that's very atypical you said from what other studios do, in that when others studios might have to audition or-

Pat McMakin: No, I think other studios are really more attached to a producer or maybe an engineer owns it. And that engineer has built up his reputation as a mix engineer, for example. Then projects come to the engineer and he takes them to his studio and he mixes them. Or maybe it's a producer out of the facility where they use it to develop artists. So maybe you're a new and unsigned artist, they bring you in, they record you, they pitch you and get you a record deal.

Pat McMakin: There's just a million little different ways. There's some studios when you walk in the door, there's already a band there and an engineer and a producer. So there's all kinds of different models about how much, in terms of those services, they provide. But in markets like LA, New York, London, Nashville, the studio market is big enough that it relies more on freelance engineers than anything else. So as a result, every day is a different engineer, different set up, different crew, I mean everything's different from one day to the next.

Ashley Layhew: Okay. That's interesting.

Pat McMakin: But in some studios, it's pretty much the same crew every day, maybe a new artist or new project, maybe they're doing commercials or library music or something. So yeah.

Ashley Layhew: So how has, in your opinion, the partnership with Belmont been?

Pat McMakin: Oh, it's been terrific. I mean, as far as I can tell, I don't think this place would've survived the mid-2000s without Belmont. Belmont essentially saved a historically significant piece of property, and what is now a very significant recording studio. So besides them buying it for their purposes, they did a real major favor for the recording community in Nashville.

Pat McMakin: And the reason I say that, there's a lot of studios in Nashville, so it's not like Nashville just needed another studio. But there's not many big studios, there's not very many studios that you can put a 70 piece orchestra in. In fact, there's only one other one. It's RCA studio A, and that studio has been leased by Ben Foles for, gosh, maybe 15 years. And then after Ben had it, now a producer named Dave Cobb has it. He does Jason Isbell and Chris Stapleton, all my favorite artists.

Pat McMakin: So that's what goes on at studio A. That, they've never really renovated that place and modernized it and put new consoles, really made it a full on pro studio like we are. So that's why they really couldn't handle the commercial orchestra business that comes through. So we're kind of the only game in town for that.

Ashley Layhew: That's not a bad place to be.

Pat McMakin: Not a bad place to be, not a bad place to be.

Ashley Layhew: So what do you see for the future of Ocean Way Nashville?

Pat McMakin: And that's a pertinent question. So the fact that we can do orchestra, when I was here, I started in 2008, 2008 was probably the worst year for recording studios in history. Because the music industry had been in a terrible decline, the record industry I should say, in a terrible decline since Napster in 1998. It signaled the beginning of piracy and then eventually streaming. So the revenue models, still to this day aren't right, they're not fixed. But boy, they were worse then, because nobody knew what to do.

Pat McMakin: And so budgets were low. And then the overall economy in '07, we had that big crash because of the mortgage stuff, and that further tanked it because people weren't buying records. So the labels, they just had a hard time surviving. And studio rates were down and studio business was down. When I got here in '08, the business was so slow, it was honestly scary. You could come in and there'd be a week on the books with nothing.

Pat McMakin: So I got here, and it's like well first, let's fix the place. So we started working on the place. And we've improved every square inch of it physically, we've gotten rid of any bad mics and bought great mics. Any bad equipment, got great equipment, so little by little, we've replaced everything that needed to be replaced. And again, wouldn't have happened without Belmont, because we were doing some of that in years that were not profitable. But Belmont understood the vision and they also understood the need to keep the studio up if they were gonna own a marquee studio.

Pat McMakin: So at any rate, I don't know, about 2009 or '10, I was talking to one of the orchestra musicians and she said, "Well really, we need to get more orchestra work and this is a great place to do it." And the players in Nashville are killer players, so I was like, "Okay, let's go after orchestra work." So I started going to Los Angeles and having meetings with composers and composer agencies, I had no idea what I was doing, I had no idea who any of these people were. I mean, I came out of the country music industry. So it was all new to me.

Pat McMakin: So I did a few of those trips and then we kind of got a lucky break. In that first year I was here, we did one big orchestra session, it was the full Nashville Symphony, 80 pieces. And the orchestrator happened to me a woman from LA. And she happened to be asked by somebody from Sony PlayStation about recording scoring stages in the U.S. outside of L.A. That's what he was interested in. So mainly because the L.A. Union had made it so the video game industry really couldn't record in Los Angeles. Or conversely, maybe it's because the video game industry never agreed ... whatever, they never came to an agreement. So that business was never gonna be in L.A. and they were going mostly Eastern Europe and London. If they had a low budget project, they'd take it to Prague, and if it was a high budget project, they'd go to Abbey Road or AIR Lyndhurst.

Pat McMakin: So Sony talked to that woman and said, "We'll give Ocean Way a try." So they came and did a session here. We had done orchestra before but we were doing it on a new level. These are guys that that's already they do and they've done it all over the world. So we knew we were being compared to the top studios in the world. And I saw that and I went to the Sony PlayStation engineer and I said, "I want you to make a list of every wrong thing you run across. I don't care if it's a squeaky chair or a bad mic, I wanna know about it." And he said, "Okay." So we have a little debriefing after his sessions, very sweet guy named Mark Senasac, he and I are dear friends now.

Pat McMakin: But Mark would sort of say, "Well here's what you got right, here's what you need to improve and here's how." Which really made it easy for us, you know? So again, slowly over time, we made all the improvements and more that were recommended to us. And Sony had such a good experience in that first video game, that they told all of their composers and all of their composer peers and all their video game peers, everybody they could, because they were so happy to have their problem solved of not having to fly to Europe to record an

orchestra. So they told everybody in the game business and word traveled and it crawled around and crept around. And just again, doing more video games and started building that business.

Pat McMakin: We had one year when it came really big and we thought, "Boy, this is it." And then it went away again, so it's been kind of a dramatic ride. But then Electronic Arts discovered us, that's another huge video game company. The head of Music Globally for Electronic Arts is a guy named Steve Schnur. Steve used to work in Nashville at Arista Records and went to LA to get into the video game business. And Steve was ready to make a move back here, I think he was going through a divorce or something, and so he bought a house in Brentwood, and he basically said I'm gonna move all my business to Ocean Way Nashville, or it's gonna be Abbey Road or Ocean Way.

Pat McMakin: And here he is, the most powerful guy in video game music. And he's telling everybody in the world, "Go to Ocean Way." So he's become our biggest marketing guy. My job to market this place is difficult, I don't know how to get Hans Zimmer on the phone. Steve Schnur is good friends with Hans Zimmer, because he and Hans go way back. Steve Schnur said, "Hans, you gotta try Ocean Way." So we've worked with Hans Zimmer. John Debney, another huge composer. Steve's like, "John, try Ocean Way." He came, he loves it. We don't do all of the work that John Debney does or Hans Zimmer does, but we're starting to get clients like that. We've gotten big composers before that, so we're growing in that world in leaps and bounds.

Pat McMakin: Our business went from about two or three days a month doing orchestra sessions to now, about three days a week on average. So that's becoming our primary business model. And so as far as our future goes, I would love to see studio A blow up to 100% of the time at a very high rate recording orchestra scores. That's what I would like to see studio A doing.

Pat McMakin: I know that there's always gonna be a certain amount of record business that wants to be here. There's certain producers that won't cut their albums if they can't get the drum sound that they get out of our studios. So they book their album's tracking dates around when they can get in Ocean Way. So we'll always have some record business. What I love about this place is it ... because the diversity of business that comes in, everything from country demos to classical orchestra scores to hip-hop, you name it, we do it. And it makes us have to be sharp in a lot of different situations. It's been great for our staff, our assistant engineers, it's just really gotten everybody on their toes here. And we don't even get nervous anymore. We see a big client or something coming in, it's like, "Well, we're just gonna do what we do because we've done it now enough years we know what we're doing is working. And people like it."

Pat McMakin: It's like if they're not satisfied with kind of what we are, they're not gonna be satisfied, you know?

Pat McMakin: You know the movie The Shack?

Ashley Layhew: Yeah.

Pat McMakin: We scored that here.

Ashley Layhew: Really?

Pat McMakin: Yeah. And the composer came in for it ... I'm gonna have to find his name. Oh, my gosh, I can't believe I can't remember it. But it was so funny, I think he's a New York or L.A. guy. But he's very nervous, very type A, like New York kind. Aaron Zigman is his name. And so Aaron's just a little neurotic and he was very nervous. I don't think he made the selection to come to Ocean Way, somebody else did. When I first started talking to supervisors out in L.A., music supervisor about doing orchestra in Nashville, they would just sort of look at me like I had two heads. It's like, "You just said orchestra and Nashville in the same sentence and it doesn't really go in the same sentence there." And the joke I used to use, "Yeah, it's 50 banjos, you know?"

Ashley Layhew: Welcome to Nashville.

Pat McMakin: Yeah. So trying to get over that perceptual hump of what Nashville is, so when Aaron got here I think he was carrying with that this whole hee-haw mentality of what Nashville must be. And he gets up the podium, down beat was at 10 a.m. and he's chain smoking and sweating. He gets up on the podium at 10 and he raises his baton and he starts the first cue, and he's conducting it. And it's going pretty good, he's listening, okay it's good. Maybe do it again, conducts it. He goes, "Okay, let's take a break." It's 10 minutes after 10. They had worked for 10 minutes. And he took a break, got off the podium, went outside, smoked a couple cigarettes, calmed himself down and came in and had a great day.

Pat McMakin: But he had to know they could play. He had to get offer that confidence hump and once he did, it was like, "Okay, I get it now. There's a great orchestra, we're good to go."

Pat McMakin: Yeah. We hear stuff about our players, it's so complimentary. We get compared favorably with London and L.A.. These big name composers are saying, "We don't feel like our quality suffers at all when we come to Nashville." So that's a testament to the musicians, it's a testament to our facility here. And again, I think it's a testament to Belmont. You know? Because Belmont is not just in terms of providing an educated workforce, but they're important to the music business in a lot of ways. And I think this is one of them.

39.14 Ashley Layhew: Chuck, do you have anything you wanna ask?

Chuck Hodgins: Sure. Let's see, so you talked a little bit about this but what would you say sticks out to you as top most exciting or memorable projects that have happened here since you've been here?

Pat McMakin: Since I've been here?

Ashley Layhew: That's good.

Pat McMakin: I mean, Paul Simon was in for a couple days working on a project with E. Brakell. Dr. Fisher, I got him to come over and meet Paul Simon. You know, Bob Seger is in periodically and it's always a thrill because what a great artist he is.

Pat McMakin: Alice Cooper was in for a week last year with Bob Ezrin. Bob Ezrin used to produce Pink Floyd. I mean he did Animals and The Wall. So that's kind of cool. You get these legendary people. My memory only goes back about eight months. So I'm just trying ... gosh. Again, that Steve Martin was a big one for me just 'cause he's such a cool guy. What other big ... I'm trying to think of long term. Like last year, we had writing camps forever for Kelly Clarkson. They would book all three rooms here and the two rooms down at Star Struck and bring in producer writers from all over. And she would just go from studio to studio contributing song ideas.

Pat McMakin: So she could be a co-writer on all the songs. Let's see, I don't know. Golly. I almost have to go back and look through old calendars to sort of jog my-

Chuck Hodgins: Those are great ones.

Pat McMakin: 'Cause you know how it is, the worst questions somebody could say, "Who all records at your studio?"

Ashley Layhew: Yeah, I know.

Pat McMakin: You know, it's almost like let me think about who doesn't record in our studio.

Chuck Hodgins: Of course, of course.

Pat McMakin: You know, I think one of the first Kings of Leon album, I think it was done here.

Ashley Layhew: Youth and Young Manhood, I think.

Pat McMakin: I think so, at least parts of it, if not all. Oh Brother was done here. That was a huge album.

Chuck Hodgins: Yeah.

Pat McMakin: Oh gosh, that just reminded me of another one, let's see. Oh Brother, Kings of Leon, oh, Beck was here for part of Morning Phase, which won a Grammy for

Album of the Year and Best Rock Album of the Year. So that was exciting to be on that.

Pat McMakin: You know, it's weird, in my role, I don't feel the excitement, I don't feel ... I mean, yeah it's cool Beck's here. But Beck walks in, I mean Sting was here. Walk in, close the door, work, leave. You never see them, you never meet them. Their people don't want you to come around. And it's not meanness, they just need their privacy to get their work done. So I don't feel bad, I don't have that, "Boy, I was in there for five days, it was so awesome." You know?

Ashley Layhew: Yeah.

Pat McMakin: I don't have that experience so much. But my guys do, my assistants do.

Chuck Hodgins: Are there any fun or funny stories that you are comfortable putting on the record?

Pat McMakin: Just crazy stories?

Chuck Hodgins: Yeah.

Pat McMakin: You know, again, fewer than in my past life, because I was on the record side more. And the record side was really the fun kind of wilder side. And I used to work with songwriters and did we ever fun? I mean, we had fun. Again here, I'm here in a business capacity for Belmont, I'm not out rocking with my clients after hours, I'm too old for it, and it's not the kind of place, you know? The studios that don't cost as much to be in, people spend more time in them. So you might have an artist come in and be there for a month, you know? You get to know the artist, end up going and have a meal or two together, there's a relationship that establishes. But our business model, and especially with the industry changing as much as it has, we might ought to kind of address this a little bit, artists are in for a day and they're so bust cramming through their projects that they don't come to visit. They don't have time for lunch, they bring lunch in.

Pat McMakin: But yeah, the other thing we were talking about, what 2008 looked like in the studio business. 2008, maybe a few years before, but that's sort of to me is a demarcation when besides the record business going in the toilet and budgets going down, the other thing that made it hard for commercial studios was that home studio capabilities got so much greater. I mean you could do a full record at home in bed, you don't need a studio. Studios are something that you used to have to have, you had to go to a recording studio if you wanted to make a record. Now, you don't.

Pat McMakin: So the big commercial places, like ours, the business is really about capturing music. We record the orchestra, we record the band, and then it leaves, it goes to somebody's home studio for the focal overdubs, all the time consuming background vocals, the little instrumental additional parts, the overdubs, that

kind of stuff, all that is done in a home studio. And then all the mixing is now down in a home studio, the mix engineers' personal studio.

Pat McMakin: So the business of an artist coming in and booking a month or six weeks to make their album, that same artist is now here for two days. They come in, they're very organized, they come in and they knock out five or six or seven songs in those two days, and then they go off to a private studio and finish them up. And then they might come back a few months later and do another three or four, and albums get made like this.

Pat McMakin: Like Maddie and Tay are an artist that have been here recently, so we might see Maddie and Tay for two days in February, we probably saw them for a day or two in March and some days in April. And the other thing that's tough is tracking what you're recording. We don't know what that album time is, when it was released, and we don't have a lot of manpower here to track all that down, you know?

Pat McMakin: Thankfully our student workers are pretty good, when she's here during the school year. And then with these scores, so often, it's top secret. Like video games, you can't talk about ... like I were to come out right now and say that I know XXX is the composer for the upcoming Call of Duty, 'cause we are working on the upcoming Call of Duty. First of all, I can't say we're working on Call of Duty because some blogger will pick up on the fact that they're scoring it in Nashville, and they'll say, "Oh, Call of Duty is going away, they're not spending the money. It's obvious they're scoring in Nashville." Which is not true, but that's what the blogosphere kind of does. So those big media companies, I mean you signed NDAs, you gotta protect your data, it's intense. So yeah, again, we'll do projects and then like the guy that's the mix engineer or the assistant, they'll know three months later, "Or by the way, that's what we did." Or even just sit in on the session and everybody's talking about code name, Wooden Door, and what is it really?

Pat McMakin: So they'll tell them but we can't talk about it. So I don't know? And then months later it's like okay, what was this, what was that, what was that?

Ashley Layhew: It's catching up.

Pat McMakin: It's like holy smokes. I remember Christmas, I remember getting the call where somebody called and said, "Look at this video game, it's gonna use like 100 hours ... no, 100 hours? 100 hours of music, some crazy amount of music. Most video games, for the four hour game, which is about what they take to play all the way through, I hear, I've never done so, they use about 100 minutes of music. So they're able to deploy those bits and pieces and then the full piece and so forth. So yeah, I forgot where I was going with that.

Ashley Layhew: One recording had an insane amount of hours.

Chuck Hodgins: 100 hours.

Ashley Layhew: 100 hours of music.

Pat McMakin: Oh yeah, yeah. So again, I know the company is called Bungie, and that's all I know. Well then all of a sudden, Destiny 2 starts showing up for sale and it's like oh, that's what we did. Bungie was our single biggest client that year. One video game.

Ashley Layhew: Oh, my goodness.

Pat McMakin: Yeah. It was huge.

Chuck Hodgins: Is Marty O'Donnell doing that?

Pat McMakin: I believe it is, yeah. Yup.

Pat McMakin: Well he's one of them, there's many, many composers on it 'cause there's so much music.

Chuck Hodgins: There's a lot of music.

Pat McMakin: Sky Luan is one of the big composers. Maybe Marty's the other guy, it might be Sky and Marty are the two main guys.

Pat McMakin: Let's see, we did the movie My Little Pony. You know? We didn't score that one but we mixed it.

Chuck Hodgins: Oh, the new one?

Pat McMakin: Yeah, yeah.

Chuck Hodgins: That's great.

Pat McMakin: We did Boo, Madea, Madea Halloween, Mother's Day. Oh, gosh. All kinds of crazy things. Anyway, I'm sorry I got off on that little tear. But sometimes it's hard to know what we do and we hear about it later.

Ashley Layhew: Okay. I have one tiny curious question. This actually has nothing to do with the digital repository, I'm just curious. Let's say I had an orchestra, and I wanted to record something. How much does studio A cost to rent?

Pat McMakin: \$2,400 for a 12 hour day.

Ashley Layhew: That's a good project.

Pat McMakin: Yeah, I mean it's a good price. But you know, so if you said, "I've gotta an orchestra project," first of all, you don't bring your orchestra in. You would call a contractor. The contractor goes out and hires the orchestra on your behalf. Different contractors will hire different players, but I'd say there's about an 80% overlap. You see the same people, a lot of them. But if you have a decent size orchestra on the floor, they're getting like \$75 per person, per hour play. I think I figured out it was about \$10,000 an hour is what the cash burn is when you run an orchestra session.

Pat McMakin: The reason I figured that out, the first big orchestra session we did, one that had 80 pieces. I had a young guy on it and he was our best guy but he still ... Belmont students weren't coming out very prepared in 2008, they are now, but they weren't then. But anyway, we put him in as the assistant engineer and I saw him on a break and I said, "How did everything go in there?" And he goes, "Oh, it went great, it went great." "Any problems?" "Yeah, he said the computer crashed once but no big deal." I said, "The computer crashed once?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "How long were you down?" "Oh, five minutes." "Okay, great." So I came up here and I did the math. What that five minutes would cost a client, you know? It was like \$6,000 or something. I mean obviously not at \$10,000 an hour. But with that many people on the floor, it was a big number.

Pat McMakin: And you don't want your folks to be so scared they can't function, but you want them to have respect for what's happening in that room, you know?

Ashley Layhew: Yes. Absolutely.

Pat McMakin: And all that pressure sits on the assistant engineer's shoulders. Lowest paid guy in the room. Isn't that crazy? The assistant engineer sets up the room, patches everything, makes it all work. And the engineer comes in and does the sonic part of it. But yeah, it's a lot of money to put on a 25 year old Belmont students' shoulders. But I can tell ya, they've all handled it very well.

Pat: All right. So, kind of the part that I left off is the most recent news and the most exciting. Back in 2010 when we started talking about getting more into the orchestra world, as I made those trips to Los Angeles I learned from some music supervisors out there that a lot other states have tax incentives for filmmaking, and some of them include for music making for those movies. So I came back home and I started investigating what Tennessee had available, and Tennessee's bill was ... It was a film bill to help the film industry, and so if your movie was done here, then you could get some incentive money back, or some tax credits back, if you did the music here, too.

Pat: But that didn't really help us as a music community. So I started working first by myself, and then with the Recording Academy, we formed an advocacy committee, and we worked for eight years to get a new tax incentive passed for post-production and scoring. Specifically ... Here was the thought. The thought was if the record business is dying, studios are dying with it, how do we keep

studios in business? How do we keep this important infrastructure of buildings and people and talent busy enough so that if the record business, or any other music business comes back, they're here. The infrastructure, especially human, is so important. The talent is everything in this.

Pat: So we just got it passed. It was signed into law, effective July 1st, 2018. I've been still working with the state trying to help them figure out how they're going to set the program up and run it. They're still looking at what some of the minimum spends and some of the qualifications are going to be, but I've ... The Recording Academy hosted a meeting last week with the commissioner, Bob Raines, of the Tennessee Entertainment Commission, and he came over and just listened to everybody. How can we do this that'll work good for you, work well for you.

Pat: Then I hosted a ... Or, there's a group of studio managers and they have lunch every month, and so I got Bob to come to the last one of those last week. You know, I want my competitors to know this, too. It's not some advantage that I want to keep to myself. Or as I've said, I worked hard for many years on this. I don't make any more money. Belmont's not going to give me any kind of increase in pay because I got a tax rebate passed. Even if my own business, if my numbers start going through the roof, no one's going to pay me any more. And I don't need for them to, because I'm pretty happy, you know?

Pat: It's a fair deal. But it's just something I felt was important for the musicians and the studios. So I'm trying to propagate that right now.

Ashley: That's awesome.

Pat: There was a party at ... Our friend of Electronic Arts hosted a party in LA and invited the people from the state to come out and talk to music supervisors and composers about the incentive. Louisiana has one and Georgia has one, but they don't have the talent that we have, so we're already ahead in that race. We throw this little 25% on, it'll make a big difference. One of our competitors is Prague, and I know what the rates are in Prague. To record a minute of music, 70 piece orchestra, it costs about \$450 a minute in Prague. Costs about \$700 a minute in Nashville. It costs about \$1,400 a minute in London and in LA. So, that's why people come here.

Pat: This is a right to work state, so we can work either union or non-union, and that's a huge issue. So, yeah, all those factors put together. I'm very proud of that.

Pat: Again, lot of years of hard work. Actually, we had the discussion. I mean, we were almost nailed down two years ago and the Recording Academy walked away. They said, "No, the minimum spends are so high it won't benefit enough of our numbers." So they kind of walked away, but I had already got Steve Snarr

on my committee, and so Steve was already in it, and so he sort of picked the ball up and ran it.