

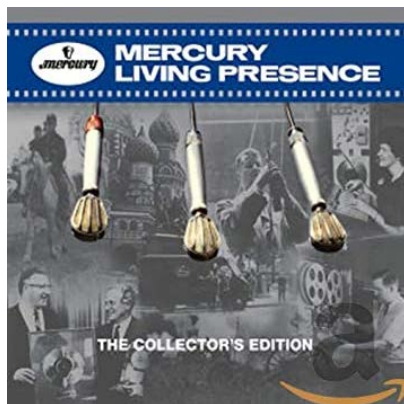
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**AES** Audio Engineering Society - Pacific Northwest Section

*Around the Puget Sound, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.*

## **Mercury Living Presence — A Technical History Presented by Tom Fine - Tom Fine Audio Services**

**ZOOM MEETING 6:00PM PST (UTC -8)  
Wednesday, 11 November 2020**



Our November meeting traces the technical history of one of the world's most highly regarded classical music labels. Recognized for a catalog of groundbreaking recordings from the 1950s and '60s, the label began to flourish in the early 1950s with the single-microphone technique to record an entire symphony orchestra. When stereo recording dawned in the mid-1950s, Mercury's technique evolved to 3 spaced omni-directional mics. The label focused on symphonic music with conductors Antal Dorati, Paul Paray, Howard Hanson and Rafael Kubelik, and on Frederick Fennell's pioneering Eastman Wind Ensemble. Among many firsts was a 1962 recording trip to Moscow, the first time an

American crew recorded Russian musicians using American equipment. Long loved by vinyl collectors, Mercury Living Presence was entirely out of print at the beginning of the CD era. The original producer, Wilma Cozart Fine, was hired to remaster most of the stereo catalog and some mono titles for CD. In the past decade, Universal Music Group – Decca Classics, the current owner of Mercury Living Presence, brought back into print all of the 1990's CDs, plus 27 newly-remastered titles. In no prior era was this much of the catalog available at the same time! The full catalog will soon be available on the major streaming platforms, and new reissues are planned for 2021.

Tom Fine, son of Wilma Cozart Fine and C. Robert Fine (original producer and engineer), was consulting engineer and booklet co-author for two of the 3 CD box sets, and remastered 20 of the newly reissued CDs. He also oversaw all-analog LP reissues of two titles for Chad Kassem's Analogue Productions. In this presentation, he will detail MLP's progress from single-mic mono through the 3-spaced-omni stereo techniques. He will also discuss the 35mm mag-film recording medium and detail the 1990s CD reissue program and the more recent remastering projects.

### **Our Presenter**

Tom Fine is a member of the Association of Recorded Sound Collections, the Audio Engineering Society and the

Adirondack 46rs. He operates an analog-to-digital transfer and mastering studio in Brewster, NY. Recent projects have included transferring 4-track Quad recordings of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, transferring hundreds of oral-history tapes for the state of New Mexico and Oregon State University, transfer and remaster work for audio used in a Netflix documentary about Nina Simone, and remastering for the new Mercury Living Presence box sets. Mr. Fine is a student of audio and recording history, and has published articles and equipment reviews in the *ARSC Journal* and *TapeOp* magazine as well as the *AES Historical Committee* website and *Preservationsound.com*. He also reviews music for *Stereophile* magazine, *ARSC Journal*, *TapeOp* magazine and *Blackgrooves.org*. He has also presented at several AES Conventions and Events.



**For more about Mercury Living Presence, visit:**

<https://www.speakerscornerrecords.com/news/details/4/mercury-living-presence-the-history>

**THIS EVENT IS FREE, OPEN TO ALL, AND AES MEMBERSHIP IS NOT REQUIRED**

## PNW AES Zoom Meetings

We started holding our meetings via Zoom beginning with the April 2020 meeting. Zoom has dramatically increased our reach, well beyond our Section's geographic area. Since doing this, we've had attendees from Canada, and as far away as Indonesia, and Australia. Zoom gives the ability to record our meetings, and those recordings will be posted in our past meetings [Archive](#).

### [Register to Attend](#)

Register [here](#) through Eventbrite. When you register and when you enter the Zoom meeting, please use your real first and last names so we can get to know each other. You do NOT need to create an Eventbrite account to register.

**The Zoom URL will be given as soon as you register. Be sure to copy it down!**

## Tea\* Time Topics

Former Chair Dan Mortensen started the custom of people introducing themselves at our meetings. The breadth and depth of your skills and interests led to Dan wanting a more in-depth kind of presentation but without the preparation needed for a full-on meeting.

The idea behind these events is that "Audio" is a big subject with



many specialties, and at our meetings we all focus together on one subject. When we do our self-introductions as part of our meetings, it's ALWAYS fascinating to hear about the kinds of things our audience members do to manifest their love of audio.

Dan thought it would be fun to create an event where the meeting IS the audience members' descriptions of what you do, preferably with pictures/recordings/movies or whatever will help you convey to us what you're up to/interested in/want to learn more about.

## Format

The TTT meetings take place each Saturday afternoon via Zoom, and will continue for the foreseeable future, if not beyond. If things open up and people start getting busy again, we'll adjust the schedule. We've been doing this for several months now, and the topics have been varied and interesting.

## Registration to attend Tea\* Time Topics

You will need to register by contacting Dan via [email](#). When you register, please give your real first and last name.

Note that these Tea\* Time Topics events are in addition to our normal 10 times/year (not in July or August) Section meetings and not a replacement for them.

**Footnote:** \*This is Dan's normal time for tea. You may have whatever refreshments you wish, but if you get unruly/belligerent you'll be bounced without apology.

## Greg Dixon

*AES PNW 2020-2021 Section Chair*

**n.b.** *The material presented at our meetings is the opinion of the presenter and not necessarily that of the Society. You are encouraged to conduct your own research and to form your own opinions before adopting the presented material as Truth.*

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