

Silencing the digital audio tape

Due to opposition from the recording industry, U.S. consumers won't be hearing it any time soon

By WILLIAM TAGGART
Staff Writer

It is better than the cassette deck and as good as the compact disc player, and several major electronics companies have them ready in Japan to bring to the United States.

But consumers won't see the newest in audio technology — the digital audio tape (DAT) — for several more months because of complications with Congress and the recording industry.

"There is definitely a sensitivity about the whole situation," said David Kawakami, manager of corporate communications at Sony, based in Park Ridge, N.J.

There is friction between the United States and Japan about the trade deficit, but the conflict is between industries, not nations, Kawakami said.

Because DAT is digital and not

analog like traditional audio cassettes, music can be copied repeatedly without affecting the quality of the sound, he said.

The recording industry is worried that copyright laws will be violated when consumers, using DAT, will be able to copy music at a professional quality, he added.

The record companies have lobbied extensively in Washington, creating a situation in which Congress and the companies are pitted against DAT manufacturers, Kawakami said. CBS Records suggested putting a "spoiler chip" in the system to alter the quality of music re-recorded on a digital audio tape. Congress has supported similar suggestions, he said.

A spoiler chip is not necessary because the DAT machine contains a built-in feature that changes the quality of music recorded off a

compact disc, he said. The recording industry obviously does not think this measure is enough, he said.

"Sony is opposed to any sort of legislation or technology in the form of spoiler chips that would prevent consumers from making tapes for their own purposes," Kawakami said.

Verle Rader, marketing services director of Marantz Corporation in Chatsworth, Calif., said, "The situation is pure politics."

Marantz announced its plan last June to start marketing DAT machines in the United States in the fall of 1987, Rader said. The company was unable to carry through with its plan because of the situation with Congress and the record companies.

Although the Japanese officially deny it, there appears to be an embargo on the part of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade on sending DAT to the United States,

Rader said. There is no technological reason for DAT to be unavailable here, he said.

Record companies are scared of losing money as a result of increased home taping, he said. But studies have shown that consumers who re-tape music at home purchase more professionally recorded music than other consumers, so this fear is irrational, Rader said.

Casio plans to begin test marketing DAT machines in May, said Steve Nosek, marketing service director for Casio in Fairfield, N.J. Despite the current stance of Congress and the recording industry, Casio does not expect many problems, he said.

"Once the units hit, the record companies will jump on the bandwagon," Nosek said.

Nosek also expects CBS Records, one of the most vocal opponents of DATs, to back down because of

Sony's recent acquisition of the record company. "They won't fight their own corporation," he said.

Many people industry-wide think Sony bought CBS to bring DAT into the United States, but Kawakami disagreed. The acquisition has the potential for a lot of cooperation between manufacturing and recording, but Sony will not wave a magic wand and bring DAT into this country, he said.

"CBS is a separate company with management intact," Kawakami said. CBS Records could not be reached for comment.

Electronics stores in the area had mixed expectations for DAT coming to the United States.

Rick Fessoms, manager of Soundhaus Stereo in Durham, said he expects to see manufacturers bringing DAT machines into the country by June. There will be a market for it,

but not until the price goes down, he said. The average price is between \$1,800 and \$2,500, Fessoms said.

Richard Chichester, assistant manager of Electronics Unlimited in Durham, did not know when the store would first sell the DAT. He said even if other stores carried the machines, Electronics Unlimited would not offer the DAT right away. There will not be a big market for a number of years because of the high cost of the system, he said. Chichester said the average price of a DAT is \$1,600-\$2,500.

Kawakami said Sony's DAT machine costs around \$1,600 in Japan, depending on the strength of the dollar. The price in the United States could be as low as \$1,500 and up to \$2,000.

The retail price of the Casio DAT machine, a portable model, will be \$1,199, said Nosek.

Cat's Cradle hosts benefit concert for five local bands

By DAVID HESTER
Staff Writer

Area music lovers will get a chance to sample from a rich smorgasbord of original music tonight when five local bands stage a concert at Cat's Cradle.

The concert will feature Angels of Epistemology, Slush Puppies, Egg, the Black Girls and Wwax — and proceeds from the show will go toward financing the boxed set of singles the five groups have recently

released. The boxed set of 45s is called *Evil I Do Not To Nod I Live*, and music from this set will be featured tonight.

Each of the five bands will play a short set of about five or six songs, according to Cradle manager Frank Heath. Heath said there was a great sense of camaraderie among the members of the different bands, and he said the bands may share basic equipment, such as drum sets.

Heath said all the bands came together during the finale of a multi-group show at the Cradle last fall, and he said there may be another en masse performance tonight. Last fall's show also featured a short film produced by one of the Angels of Epistemology, and Heath said the Angels "may have something up their sleeves again tonight."

Although the bands' play lists will consist almost entirely of original material, Egg member Job Bishop said there may be a few cover tunes played as well. Bishop said his band may play a few Jimi Hendrix tunes,

for example, and he said the Slush Puppies may play a Who song.

Bishop is also a member of the Angels of Epistemology, and he is one of three people who play in more than one of the bands on tonight's program. Mac McCaughen is in both Wwax and Slush Puppies, and Jonathan Newmann is in Egg and Slush Puppies.

Bishop said this sharing of band members indicates the closeness of the bands, and he said many of the musicians have known each other for years. He added that some of the members of different bands had also

played together in the past. The bands have been working together particularly closely since the release of the boxed set, and tonight's concert follows a group concert last week at the Brewery.

Evil I Do Not To Nod I Live was released on the Palindrome Productions label. This label was specifically formed by the five bands in order to produce their records, and tonight's concert was planned in order to promote sales of the boxed set and make money to pay off Palindrome Production's bills. Bishop said there are no specific plans for Palindrome

to cut any other records but the option to release other records will remain open.

Tonight's concert presents a unique opportunity for concert-goers to hear different styles of rock 'n' roll presented on the same stage on the same night, in addition to providing them with a chance to help support the growth of the burgeoning local music scene.

The Evil I Do Not To Nod I Live show will be experienced tonight at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

Jordan

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Grade School Construction Plan over the opposition of this governor, and we passed the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program," Jordan said.

The N.C. Teaching Fellows Program is a \$10 million program which provides four-year scholarships to graduating high school seniors who pledge to teach for four years in N.C. schools. The program is in its second year and applications have increased by 50 percent over last year, he said.

In answering questions from the audience, Jordan said he was reluctant to support a ban on smoking in state government offices because tobacco is an important state industry.

"My dad died of emphysema," he said. "I don't smoke . . . but you let the people in the workplace make that determination."

Jordan said he also supports a balance between environmental and industrial concerns.

"I'm doing everything I can to save Champion Mill," he said, referring to the paper mill in western North

Carolina that has badly polluted a nearby stream.

He said a "happy balance" between concerns also applies to nuclear power. Although he doesn't support closing existing plants, "I don't think we'll ever build another nuclear power plant," he said.

Jordan also said he wasn't worried about the Sunday Charlotte Observer poll, which showed Martin with a 16-point lead. "Polls don't really mean anything at this stage of the game. Rufus (Edmisten) was 40 points ahead of Jim Martin," he said, referring to the Democratic candidate Martin defeated in 1984.

"There were no surprises (in the poll) . . . we were told a long time ago as long as Martin's under 60 percent, don't worry," Jordan said. "The good old days are yet to come," he said. "The future is very bright . . . I'd trade places with any of you."

The speech was co-sponsored by the UNC Young Democrats and Students for Bob Jordan.

Liaison

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position will be more useful if the president does not serve as the liaison, Bailey said.

"The president is already tied down with so many responsibilities," he said. "It will be most effective to name someone who will be able to fully devote himself or herself to this job."

The council passed the resolution with little discussion. Council members agreed that students needed

information about town government and access to its processes.

"Students are looking for a formalized line of communication between the town and University," Mayor Jonathan Howes said.

Howes said the council would reserve a place for the liaison in the council meeting room. The liaison would also be recognized and have the chance to speak at the meetings, he said.



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