

DAVID REMEDIOS: ARTIST OF SOUND

I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF THE WORK OF SOUND DESIGNER DAVID REMEDIOS AT MAINE'S PORTLAND STAGE. IN A TWO-CHARACTER DREAM PLAY, "MARY'S WEDDING," REMEDIOS INFUSED OVER 300 INDIVIDUAL LAYERS OF SOUND THAT SEAMLESSLY TRESPASSED INTO THE WORLD OF DREAMS, TRANSPORTING THE ACTION FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND BACK TO THE PAST.

Rolling thunder, clock chimes, automatic gunfire, pounding rain and the chortle of frightened horses were dubbed and overdubbed in an evocative undulation that underscored all of the action. It compellingly illustrated the illusion of two actors caught in the matrix of an ever-changing dream.

Brilliant sound design strums the strings of consciousness in a complex way, subtly eliciting emotive responses that sometimes affect us almost imperceptibly.

Of all the artists who participate in the collaborative chemistry of the theater, it was often true that practitioners of sound were recruited from the rank and file of the production team. This, however, has changed. The "effects man" has evolved into an integral part of the design team, and the role of the sound designer has become integral to stage magic.

Boston's David Remedios is a leading exponent of this current breed of stage artists who have, with advancements in technology, transformed the theater-going experience.

Remedios began his theatrical interest in high school as an actor and musician, then studied music and classical guitar in college along with American studies and theater arts at California State University, Fullerton. Here his interest and experience in the world of sound were incubated. He moved east to join the sound production staff at Harvard's American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), designing sound for over 50 productions during his 16-year residency.

His first forays as a full-fledged sound designer were with A.R.T.; he's currently a freelance sound designer for Boston's Huntington Theatre Company, Lowell's Merrimack



Center of Gravity at Portland Stage.

Repertory Theatre and Maine's Portland Stage, among others.

As this issue of artscope approached press time, Remedios was completing work on the world premiere of "The Luck of the Irish" with the Huntington Theatre, then traveling to Portland Stage for their production of "Marie Antoinette: The Color Of Flesh," which runs through May 20. He was also continuing work on the new incarnation of "Car Talk: The Musical!!!" with Underground Railway Theater at the Central Square Theater in Cambridge (which will run from June 14 through July

15), and planning Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's production of "Coriolanus," destined for the Boston Common on summer evenings in July and August.

Remedios revels in the diversity of projects for which he often composes original music along with his soundscapes. His process begins with a script analysis, discussions with the director, production meetings with his fellow designers and then long hours of rehearsal, where he studies the work of the actors making a concerted effort to meld his sound with the rhythms of the acting



David Remedios (photography by Robert Torres).

performance. His many hours of participation in the rehearsal process yields an in-depth understanding of the staging and a knowledge of how he can best underscore and enhance the storytelling. This method allows experimentation with different sound and musical ideas and immediate feedback from the director.

Returning to his home studio, Remedios conjures his sonic themes, mixing music, echoes, reverberations, percussives, concretes and a variety of ambient sounds from his extensive library of effects. He is never without his hand-held digital recorder, ever ready to capture a unique sound event. All is compiled on his personal laptop which accompanies him to the technical rehearsals where he is able to tweak his sound score to its final synthesis, timing it with lighting effects and making the many

adjustments that transpire during the last minutes before the opening performance.

MIDI and digital technology have launched a rapid evolution in sound design aided by the Internet, where designers can acquire research material in a flash. Now essential to designing the live show, the mobile laptop studio offers a wide latitude of innovation.

Remedios is currently experimenting with a guitar MIDI controller, new to him, that holds great promise as a production tool. Samples of his original soundscapes can be heard at his website: remediossound.com.

| **Greg Morell**