Review

Product: **Movie Maestro 1.0.1**
Company: SmartSound Software, Inc. <www.smartsound.com>

Minimum Requirements: Mac OS 9.0, CarbonLib 1.4; OS X; QuickTime 5; 16MB available RAM; 16MB hard disk space
Retail Price: $ 49.95 US
Test Rig: Ti4/500Mhz; 768MB RAM
Review Date: 10 September 2003

How many people reading this review have had to sit through endless replays of a close friend's kid doing something "adorably cute" over and over and over? Grounds for justifiable homicide, right? We thanks to the quickly blossoming technology, people can now edit these moments and make a home movie with their desktop.

But to make it something memorable, it certainly would be nice to have a soundtrack. Even better, a custom soundtrack, not Ms. S singing "Memories" for the umpteenth time (another justifiable homicid defense). Well, worry no more. Movie Maestro is here to rescue you.

THE GOOD

The interface is good; easy to navigate and uncluttered. It's an interesting amalgam that should mak both Mac users and Windows users happy. Very intuitive. And all in a respectfully-sized window that doesn't come near to covering your desktop.

The viewing window is formatted to run all formats, including 16:9 (widescreen). It's laid out pretty m as iMovie, except you have no clips bin (no need for it). The buttons are simply labeled and give you a choice of anything you wish to do or need.

For the sake of my test, I chose to simply build a soundtrack. If you were to build it to a completed visual, you would simply open that project and proceed in the same manner that I did.

First, you click on the "Add Music" button, then choose from a large number of different categories of the screen (i.e., blockbuster, family, select by style, etc.). I'll pick sentimental. Click on that and anoth screen asks me to pare my choice down further (classical or new age/easy). When you click one of t radio buttons, a brief description of your selection is displayed to the right of your choice, so you can better tell if this is what you're looking for. I make my choice and I then get to listen to it. This becom the source track on which my soundtrack will be based.

From there, the sky's the limit. You can pick from variations on the same theme. You can add other themes before it or after it, or simply repeat the one you've chosen via cut-and-paste! You can expor your soundtrack in several sound formats.

The music is of a wide and varied selection; all of it very professional and clean sounding. And if you forget how to do something, there's a "Tutorial" button right in the window.

THE BAD

Somebody is still going to inflict "Memories" on you at some point. But as far as Movie Maestro goes, every detail has been well thought out from the users perspective.

THE UGLY

Nothing.

NUTSHELL

First, I must confess - I was a video editor for many years and hold a BA in Television/Radio/Film. I've used different systems before. In fact, I started when you used to hand splice magnetic tape, dinosa roamed the Earth and the Red Sox were actually considered viable pennant contenders.

This is not a tool that professionals would use for scoring. This is directed at home auteurs and indus video makers. But don't think for a moment that this package is lacking. The music is of high-quality this is probably one of the most intuitive pieces of software that I have ever had the pleasure of testi

And at $49.95, you could actually have your guests ASKING if you've made any more movies lately. Imagine that!