



Dick Huppertz behind the camera during the filming of the home workshop sequence in "Sky Sailing." Tony Doherty and Paul Schweizer sit on the sidelines and act as codirectors.



Photo by R. E. Huppertz

A recording session for the theme music for "Sky Sailing," the first music especially composed for the sport of soaring in the U.S. Composer Bob Trow is holding the score by the microphone.

about sailplane cinematography during a visit to Hummingbird Haven in 1960.

The aerial photography in "Sky Sailing" was made possible by using the latest Bell and Howell gun camera, the model KB-3A. This camera is electrically-driven and can use a special 100 foot film magazine. It was powered by dry cells located in the nose of the sailplane; wires located in the wing and fuselage ran to the different camera positions. Each film run lasted nearly three minutes — quite an improvement over the old thirty second run of the spring-driven camera. Several camera locations were studied and two selected, one on the starboard wingtip and the other immediately behind and above the cockpit. With the use of six different focal length lenses, a variety of shots were obtained from the wingtip location. A remarkable ultra-wide angle lens (10mm) made it possible to film the entire sailplane in flight, including most of the wing on which the camera was located. The view from behind the cockpit included the pilot, instrument panel, and a good deal of the area in front of the sailplane. A camera position on the tip of the vertical fin was found to produce a much too confusing view for use in the film. It was actually impossible to see the cockpit from that position, and the sailplane looked like a flying cross!

Bernie Carris, the star of the film, did the flying for all these specially photographed sequences. Bernie switched the camera on and off from the cockpit as he flew. He often utilized a full magazine load of film per flight. In spite of this excellent

equipment and control, dozens of flights were made in order to obtain enough useful footage. Uncontrollable variables cropped up time and again; clouds would suddenly obscure the sun and create an under-exposure; insects would become stuck on the lens filter; too steep a bank by Bernie would make the horizon spin on the screen; and perhaps worst of all the camera shadow would often appear on the side of the sailplane or above the cockpit when the angle of the sun was not exactly right. The avoidance of this shadow took perseverance and timing, most of the shots were therefore made with the sun in the high position. All of this was quite a challenge to the pilot, the producer, and the entire flight staff of Schweizer Aircraft.

"Sky Sailing" is perhaps the first film about soaring for which special music was composed and recorded. A talented young Pittsburgh composer, Bob Trow, composed the theme music for "Sky Sailing" after having lived with a development of the film for several months. This theme attempted to capture the spirit of soaring flight. It is heard in several variations ranging from choral groups, and orchestral arrangements to a piano solo. "Stock music" available for film scoring was found simply not appropriate for the theme. With the help of Richard Roxas, a well-known Pittsburgh industrial film producer and sound expert, the various elements of the sound track were combined and put onto the optical track of the film. This process, a rather complex one, was handled by combining the original recording tapes of the music,

narration, and sound effects directly onto the film sound track. This was rather unique, even by today's sound standards, since an intermediate combined tape sound track is usually made before transferring to the film. By eliminating this step additional clarity and fidelity in the sound track was obtained.

"Sky Sailing" was conceived as an institutional film about soaring as it exists today in the United States. Its primary aim is to promote soaring as a concept and as a sport wherever it is practiced and with whatever equipment is used. It is hoped that "Sky Sailing" will be of interest to all people, ranging from the experienced soaring pilot to the layman. It conveys some of the sensations of soaring flight, but of course can not equal the sensation of an actual flight. It should build confidence in modern sailplanes and destroy the old image of wooden, "flying broomstick" primary gliders and the cumbersome troop gliders of World War II. The sport has long left this era; the film states this fact.

Much credit is due to Schweizer Aircraft and especially to Paul Schweizer and Tony Doherty for making this film possible through their sponsorship and considerable personal time given to this project. "Sky Sailing" should prove to be a very worthwhile addition to the existing films about soaring.

The author hopes that you will have the opportunity to see "Sky Sailing" in the coming months, and most of all, show it to your friends, who perhaps can not quite understand this motivation to practice this most unusual but most satisfying of all sports.