21M.380 Music and Technology
Sound Design

Recording and editing assignment (ed)
Radio play scene

Due: Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 9:30am
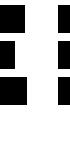Submit to: MIT Learning Modules ▸ Assignments
5% of total grade

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Table 1. Student groups

1   Instructions

Implement the sounds (dialog plus sound effects) for the script of the radio play scene that you have prepared in class. The total duration of the scene should not be longer than 30 seconds.

2   Guidelines

Together with your group, you will first complete the script together and then record the required sound material. The actual editing of the recorded sounds is every student's individual job, so we'll end up with multiple implementations of the same script, based on the same sound recordings.

2.1   Script completion and sound recordings (group work)

- As a group, complete the script that you have started to write in class.

- As a group, borrow a (single) Zoom H4n recorder from the front desk of the Lewis Music Library (14E-109) and record all required sounds together. Please make sure you return the Zoom as soon as you are done (next day at the latest).

- Put some effort into the dialog (by letting different group members perform different voices, for example), but focus primarily on the role of the sound effects in your script.

- You can use 'placeholders' for sounds that turn out to be too demanding to record, or where a recording might turn out less satisfactory than 'faking them'. Remember the widespread use of celery for the sound of crushing bones in horror films (Ament 2009)! Mimic the sounds to be replaced with your own voice or any other instruments and devices of your choice.

- Consider the perspective of your narration. For example, in the following example dialog from our textbook, one would need to consider which end of the phone line to represent. Are we listening through the ears of spy 1 or spy 2?

> spy 1: Picks up telephone **(sfx: Dialing tone from handset)**
> spy 1: Dials number **(sfx: Ringing tone from handset)**
> spy 2: "Hello, this is the Badger."
> spy 1: "This is Fox. The dog has the bone, the seagull flies tonight."
> spy 2: "Good, Fox. Now the Americans will pay for their deception… hold on…"
>   **(sfx: click—telephone line goes dead)**
> (Farnell 2010, ch. 25)

2.2 Sound editing (individual work)

- Use Audacity for your editing, unless you are already familiar with another editing suite.

- Use only recorded, not synthesized sounds. *This assignment does not involve any use of Pd!*

- Use only sounds that you have recorded with your group. This prohibits the use of sounds that you find on the internet or elsewhere. No exceptions!

- Make use of panning and stereo recording. Submit a true stereo file with two differing channels and try to make use of the opportunities that stereo offers you (e.g., spatial separation of different sound sources).

3 Assessment criteria

Timing is the most important aspect of a successful dramaturgy. Edit your scene towards very tight timing. Avoid idle moments.

Emotion beats realism It is less important that your sounds are
'realistic' than that they convey the intended emotions and set
the mood of the scene. Your sounds should be 'recognizable'
as what they are supposed to represent, but achieving this
might require unexpected, creative solutions.

Playfulness Ideally, the fun you will (hopefully) have while imple-
menting this script should be evident from the end result.

4 Submission format

Your submission should include two files:

- The final script (as you implemented it) as a single-page `.pdf`
file. Even though this is the result of a group work, every group
member should upload the script with her or his assignment.

- Single stereo `.wav` file at 44.1 kHz and 16 or 24 bit (30 seconds
max)

References and useful resources

Ament, Vanessa Theme (2009). *The Foley Grail. The Art of Performing
Sound for Film, Games, and Animation*. 1st ed. Focal Press. 216 pp.
isbn: 978-0-240-81125-3. mit library: 002181600. Printed copy
(incl. DVD) on course reserve at the Lewis Music Library.
Farnell, Andy (2010). *Designing Sound*. Cambridge, MA and Lon-
don: MIT Press. 688 pp. isbn: 978-0-262-01441-0. mit library:
001782567. Hardcopy and electronic resource.

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