

student sound portfolio guidelines

OBJECTIVE

To more clearly define a standard for the development and presentation of student portfolios in sound.

STATEMENT

The contents of a portfolio in theatrical sound can be as varied as the personalities of its practitioners. While the overall character of a composer/sound designer's portfolio may never be the same of that of a sound engineer's, much of the basic paperwork and research involved in both jobs can be similar. With that in mind, these guidelines were developed to accentuate the similarities, while acknowledging the differences.

This document is meant to set guidelines for student portfolios and student presentations, and may be used as a reference for sound portfolios in general.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

For the purposes of presenting a portfolio, an early-career student should choose to focus on one complete and realized production. Including a complete body of work from one realized production allows the reviewers to assess the student's completeness and thoroughness of work and gain more insight into the student's individual process. Portions of additional productions documentation can be included in the portfolio, but one single complete production should always be included. Advanced students may wish to include multiple productions to show the breadth of their training and experience. These portfolios do not need to include all of the components of each show, but should still at minimum include one complete set of documentation for one production. When presenting assisting or drafting work from another designer, be sure to indicate what the scope of the work on the project was - assistant, draftsman, audio engineer, etc - and indicate the designer that the work was completed for.

All components of the portfolio should be labeled consistently with a minimum of name of show and producing company.

All technical drawings should conform to good practice conventions of theatrical drafting (title blocks, consistent line weight, standard sizes, etc.) Additionally, block diagrams should conform to the draft graphic standards set forth by the USITT Sound Commission.

For the purposes of this document, the sound student's portfolio has been divided into two distinct sections: General Information and Show Specific Information.

General Information

Resume and/or Vitae

The resume should be clear and concise while maintaining the general form of a theatrical resume.

Statement of philosophy

A statement of philosophy allows the presentation of ideas and views on theatrical sound without specifically referencing one single production. This statement is the presenter's chance to talk about their ideas regarding the use of sound in theatre and to explain their aesthetic ideas about sound in the theatre.

Show Specific

Preproduction

Text analysis and/or conceptual statement

This written component allows the presenter to speak in depth about the particular production that they will be featuring.

Show breakdown (Scenes/Cues)

The show breakdown may be done from many different viewpoints - the sound system designer, the mix engineer, and the composer could all have different, yet equally valid, show breakdowns.

Examples of research

The research components of different facets of theatrical sound may produce very different examples of research, the goal of this section is to show the thoroughness of work, and ability to organize that work.

Production related communications

This information is included to help assess the presenter's ability to process and respond to requests, and to fit into the production process.

Preliminary paperwork (annotated script pages, preliminary cue sheets)

The inclusion of this material provides a glimpse into the work process, and can be used to assess the progress from the early stages of a production to the completion of the project.

Drafting/Drawing

Speaker layout (plan & section view)

These drawings should be included to not only show the physical placement of sound system components, but also to show their integration with the other components of the theatre. They may also include detailed drawings of specific rigging or placement challenges.

Block diagram

This group of drawings should adhere to the newly proposed set of graphics standards for sound design portfolios. The drawings should include not only the sound system's specifics, but also any other systems that fall under the supervision of the presenter (communications, video).

Production Documentation

One line

This document provides the most complete look at the manner in which the sound system was implemented, and is the single most important component of a sound engineer's paperwork.

Pictures (construction, installation, and/or production photos)

The inclusion of these elements is to provide a reference for the scale of a production. They can also be used to judge the work's compatibility to the rest of the production or design elements. These items may be included as their own section, or embedded in the other portions of the portfolio as space allows.

Additionally, a presenter may choose to include additional components as applicable to a particular production; these additional components may include, but are not limited to, cue recordings, show recordings, working drawings, rigging details, and/or speaker distribution graphs.

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE

Letters of Reference

Press clippings