

## DESN 275 Wk 9 Assignments – Spring 2017

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### Assignment #1: Complete the *John Henry Story*

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#### Assignment #2: *You Can't Get Out*

Use the supplied script, record the narration "You can't get out!" Then, **create a stereo sound track**, a ready-for-radio drama, using our DAW, with Audacity if necessary, that supports the narration and brings it to life. You can get the Foley sounds anywhere you wish. Or you can create them. Include simple music and ambient and object sounds to communicate the following:

- 1) **Environment** – nighttime, open area outdoors, graveyard, small hole, (possibly rustling leaves, nocturnal wild animals, etc.)
- 2) **Actions** – walking, falling, trying to climb out, scrambling, jumping, running, sweating, breathing, etc.
- 3) **Objects** – wind (and footsteps) are the only ones mentioned, but you might decide to include a gate or a vehicle passing on the road.
- 4) **Clues to Emotion** – fear, guilt, amusement. Music would be typically used for this.
- 5) **Moments of physical or dramatic transition** – dark to scary to terrified to adrenalin-filled to amusement and resignation. Music would be typically used for this.

#### Planning – This will be turned in with the track.

First **create a "sound map" plan** using the form supplied (PDF or Excel). Listen to the narration and listen for objects, actions, environments, emotions, and transitions. Jot them down in column one. These are your *cues*. Think up adjectives to describe what should be communicated and jot them down in column two. Note the location by seconds in column three. (In video projects this would be by frame.) Note your ideas for sounds in column four. Note your ideas for the musical notes that would work in column five. (Use the ideas in the *Music Cookbook Notes* sheet.) Filling in the form by hand is appropriate.

This sound map will significantly affect your grade. Be thoughtful and clear. Don't mix up the categories of sounds.

#### Important Criteria and Options:

- Never overpower the narration. Understated sounds are better.
- Do not obscure key words with sounds that use the same frequency range as the narrator's voice.
- Add a little time before the narrator begins, or after he ends. Use the time to set up the scene, and the emotion.
- Perhaps think up another sound thread that might

make the story more interesting or unique or funny, like a dog that accompanies the main character, or footsteps that seem to indicate a regular limp or a stagger: you get the idea.

- There are two characters in the story. You might try to develop a separate musical motif for each and use them each time a character appears.

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#### #3: Scene Creation: Stranded in Space

We need a sound track (like a radio drama) for this demo. You can get the Foley sounds anywhere you wish. Or you can create them. The total time should be between 40 – 60 seconds.

Write a script and record the voices. Each character speaks only three or four times. This should result in a 40 – 60 second scene if you don't rush the dialog. You can use your voice for only one of the characters. Please avoid silliness.

**Story Treatment:** Our hero/ine, Captain Chris Strong, is in danger of being abandoned on a dry planet, but doesn't know it yet.

S/he is communicating with the mother ship that is supposed to be orbiting the planet, and wants survival supplies beamed down. But a tractor beam from an enemy spaceship, cleverly disguised as an asteroid, is actually pulling the mother ship away.

As our story opens, the captain is in a cave on the planet, talking to Undercommander Aaron Tyre (or Misty Meaner if you are using female voice talent) over a communications device, making arrangements for the supply drop, when the communication system starts to mal-function. (The malfunction is due to the mother ship being pulled farther and farther away from the planet.)

The captain then walks outside of the cave to get better reception. Outside, after 20 more seconds of deteriorating communications, they figure it out about the tractor beam. But they are too late, and the communicator ceases to work.

In the end, the captain is left alone musing on what to do next. The scene fades out with the sound of the wind on the lonely planet.

#### Planning – This will be turned in with the track.

Again **create a "sound map" plan** using the form supplied (PDF or Excel).

#### Sound Design Details:

1. This is a stereo mix. The captain is always panned a little toward the left channel and we always hear him/her clearly, as if we are standing right there. The

undercommander's voice will be slightly on the right, coming out of the communicator. Use a high pass+low pass EQ to simulate typical limited communication bandwidth for undercommander Tyre.

2. The planet is so dry and gravelly that it almost sounds as if Captain Strong is walking on corn flakes as s/he shuffles around. There is a slight wind blowing at the mouth of the cave to the right.

3. Undercommander Tyre is heard at first fairly clearly, although with high+low pass "cell phone quality." However, as the communications start to deteriorate, we hear background noise rising in Tyre's communication, frequency bandwidth narrowing even more (more drastic high and low cuts), and occasional short *dropouts*. These are little gaps in the voice track, filled with noise, as if the equipment stops working ("drops out") for a few 1/100s of a second. The gaps need to be cleverly fit in, however, so that we don't actually miss any of the dialogue.

4. Also, in the undercommander's communication track, we can begin to hear the tractor beam building up power in the background. Tyre (or Meaner) should notice it him/her self.

5. Other sound effects may be added, if appropriate and not distracting.

6. Add a subtle musical supporting background by adapting parts of either 1. *Facades*; 2. *The Swan of Tuonela*; 3. *Daphinis Et Chole*; or 4. *Der Fliegende Hollender*. These music files are on the class website. Click on *Music Examples > Music Classical Moody*.

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## Study Questions – Communicating with Music

Describe the details in our typical **sound map**.

What is *spotting*?

What are music *cues*?

What is an *interval*?

In a **12-half-step scale** (Considering every note available, not just the notes in a key) how many half-steps would we use to communicate...

1 hs	<i>troubled</i>	Minor <b>second</b>
2 hs	<i>uneasy</i>	Major <b>second</b>
3 hs	<i>darker, sad</i>	Minor <b>third</b>
4 hs	<i>harmonious, but changing</i>	Major <b>third</b>
5 hs	<i>darker, tension</i>	Perfect <b>fourth</b>
7 hs	<i>harmonious</i>	Perfect <b>fifth</b>
12 hs	<i>harmonious</i>	<b>Octave</b>

(Answers included above)

If you were creating a simple music sound track for a video, *which interval* would you choose to communicate *power, strength, or victory* in a scene in a media project?

*Answer: Octave, and 5th*

What is a musical *octave*? How are the frequencies of two notes an octave apart related?

What is a *chord*?

*Answer: several notes played together, usually 3 to 4. Yes there are six notes in a guitar chord, but 2 or 3 are octaves.*

What two *intervals* are typically used to build chords?

*Answer: choose every-other note in the key, or 4 half-steps and 3 half-steps*

How does a music **resolve**? What are two examples? What emotion does that communicate?

*Answers:*

- interval changes from minor 3<sup>rd</sup> to major 3<sup>rd</sup>.*
- chord returns to the starting chord, as to the C chord in the key of C*
- interval changes from 4<sup>th</sup> to major 3<sup>rd</sup>.*

*Emotion? Relaxed, safe, storm is over, home again*

What are ways to use music to communicate rising energy level, or lowering energy level?

In music editing software, why can we do everything in the key of C?

What does *transpose* do?

What is MIDI? What is in a MIDI file?

What is a *software instrument*?

What does it mean for a software instrument to be *sampled*?

What is a *loop*? What is the difference between a recorded sample loop, and a MIDI-based loop?

How many half-steps are there between chords in a typical blues form such as 12-bar blues?

