

ISSUE 8 // MARCH 2014

THE ECHO

ASD
ASSOCIATION of SOUND DESIGNERS



Showcase: Happy Days on tour

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Game Audio industry
Selling yourself



ASD Winter School

Above: Gregg Fisher.
Below left: Tuomo George-Tolonen.
Below: Zoe Milton.
Opposite, clockwise from top left:
Steve Jones; Dan Savidge; Miguel
Lourtie; and Richard Carter.







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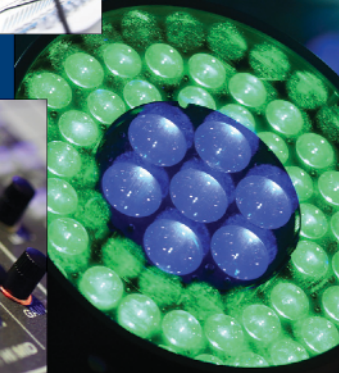
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The exhibition takes place across two halls, with exhibitors including Adam Hall, Amber Sound, Audio Logic, Audio-Technica, Bose, CUK Audio, d&b audiotechnik, JHS, KV2 Audio, Line 6, LMC Audio Systems, Martin Audio, Meyer Sound, Nexo, Orbital Sound, Peavey, POLARaudio, Roland, Sennheiser, Sound Distribution, Sound Technology, Warehouse Sound, and Yamaha, among others. Visitors can also expect to see the ASD at their stand; R-E07.

In What Does Good Sound Sound Like? a trio of audio experts will examine what we perceive as “good sound”. Tony Andrews and John Newsham of Funktion One, and the legendary live sound engineer Roger Lindsay, will demonstrate the influence of individual links in the audio chain. An interactive discussion of individual perception will also take place.

Darryn de la Soul, Head of Soulsound will present Getting a Foot in the Door – How To Make Your Way In The Live Sound Industry. This talk will provide aspiring sound engineers with advice on how to approach employers and how to get a response to your CV.

In Live Drum Micing Techniques, veteran sound engineer Justin Grealy will demonstrate a variety of drum micing techniques to help you get the best out of any situation, whether at your local pub with a low budget, or a massive gig where money is no object.

In An Insight into the World of RF – Is it a Dark Art? Tuomo Tolonen of Shure Distribution UK will unravel the mysteries of RF, enabling engineers to be confident in their dealings with radio mics and IEMs - now an integral, yet often misunderstood, part of the pro audio skill base.

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Arnold's

Showcase: Happy Days





GARETH OWEN

Happy Days, a new Musical
Book by Garry Marshall
Music and Lyrics by Paul Williams
Directed by Andrew Wright
Sound Designer: Ben Harrison
Musical Direction by Greg Arrowsmith

2014 tour dates include: Dublin, Southampton, Sheffield, Glasgow, Bristol, Norwich, Southend, Woking, Cambridge, Sunderland, Birmingham, Cardiff, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dartford, Canterbury, Plymouth, Wolverhampton, Milton Keynes, Salford and Nottingham.
More info at www.happydaysthemusical.com

I can't profess to having been a huge fan of *Happy Days* back when I first watched it on British television in the late eighties. Growing up in a distinctly working class part of Sheffield, the glitzy drive-in diner, cool clothes and wholesome American ideals of the 1950s TV show seemed a long way from my day-to-day school life. Perhaps it was a lack of imagination but the clean-cut stars, Richie Cunningham, Pinky Tuscadero and Chachi Arcola, (plus bad-boy star, Arthur 'The Fonz' Fonzerelli) seemed a million miles away from any one I knew, and frankly, I found them all a bit annoying.

Fast forward twenty-something years and I arrive at Brighton Theatre Royal, struggling to generate much enthusiasm for two hours of theatre I am, at best, ambivalent about. Settled in to my seat, and flicking through the program gives me my first clue that this might be better than I expected – some big hitting creative names grace the pages – Andrew Wright of Chichester fame takes the direction and choreography credits, while seasoned musical director Greg Arrowsmith heads up the orchestra pit. Another surprise – Henry Winkler, who starred as The Fonz in all two hundred and fifty five episodes of the TV show, is creative consultant, effectively putting his seal of approval on the show. Things are definitely looking up and as the house lights go down I'm treated to a roller coaster opening number

followed by great song after great song – far better than I expected – the two hours fly by and I join the rest of the audience for the standing ovation at the end. I'm begrudgingly forced to admit to that this show is actually very very good, so much so that I impulsively order the first season box set from Amazon in an attempt to find out what I've been missing.

However, as I'm here to review the sound my thoughts on the show as a whole are relegated to second place, which is a good thing, because Ben Harrison's sound design is loud and ballsy, crisp and clean, an exemplary piece of sonic art, easily competing with the best of the west-end and Broadway. Every word is clearly audible (this on its own would be an outstanding achievement), but within the confines of weekly touring theatre parameters is exceptional to say the least.

Weekly touring theatre parameters? Yes, to be clear, this four truck tour loads in at 8.30am on a Monday morning and opens at 7.30pm the same evening. The full sound system is installed and tuned in ten hours by just three people – Head of Sound, Andrew Fugle; Sound Number Two, Tom Cox; and Production Sound Engineer, Paul Johnson. With the help of two local crew they install Main PA, Pros Booms, Advance Truss, Centre Clusters, Subs, Front Fills, two rows of Delays, Stage Foldback, Orchestra Pit, Radio Mics

and a full touring Comms, Radio Comms, and CCTV system. In 33 man hours. Minus breaks. Any which way you look at it, that's pretty impressive.

Having watched the show and been given a thorough backstage tour I met Sound Designer Ben Harrison in London for a coffee. I asked him how much guidance he was given as to how the sound design should evolve: "Right from the outset the whole creative team had a clear vision of how we wanted to present the show. The TV series was so iconic, and we had to do that justice in every department. I'd done a few shows with Andrew where he had been the Choreographer, but this was the first time I'd worked with him in a dual role. He was very clear as to the sort of show he was after – a big and punchy rock and roll sound – which made things somewhat easier to plan."

Harrison feels that one of the biggest problems with mounting any completely new production is that, no matter how hard you try to prepare, nothing ever ends up being the way you think its going to be. He comments, "Trying to second-guess all the equipment I needed for this show was a nightmare. If I'm spec'ing one of my long running shows, say *Blood Brothers* or *Evita*, I can do it in my sleep. I've been designing *Blood Brothers* for over a decade, *Evita* for many years – I know exactly how many of what I need to get



the job done. With a new show that's never been done before you have to try and work out everything you need without screwing the budget! It's a fine juggling act."

Specifying a sound system for weekly touring is challenging in a number of ways, not least in the fact that the rig needs to be flexible enough to work in a vast array of different sized houses. *Happy Days* is travelling through all the major UK touring venues, from smaller theatres such as Nottingham Theatre Royal and Dartford Orchard to cavernous barns such as Southampton Mayflower and Birmingham

Hippodrome. To cover this vast array of possibilities, Harrison chose to keep his options open by utilising a complete d&b audiotechnik sound system – specifically small hangs of Q1s in the stalls with multiple Q7s up through the levels and a generous hang of T10s to form a centre cluster. This is augmented by E6 front fills and Eo delays ensuring detail is consistent from the front of the theatre right to the back. To support the main system, Harrison has opted for a weighty combination of d&b subs, specifically Q-Subs and B2s, coupled together in a big block to give an impressive thump.

The majority of amplifiers on *Happy Days* are d&b D6s with d&b D12s on the Subs and Q1 hangs. Unusually, Harrison has opted to largely ignore the d&b R1 system control software in favor of his own custom interface created within a Yamaha DME64. Sound Operator Andy Fugle explains, "The DME gives us much more flexibility when it comes to rapid setup. Not only does it give us all our EQ, delay and levels in one place, but it also allows us to create our own custom matrix off the back of the mixing desk. The power of the DME allows us to generate our own highly efficient custom control pages giving us just the right parameters at our finger tips at any particular moment of the day."

On stage the cast are provided with a combination of d&b E12s and E8s, chosen

primarily for their lightweight and ease of rigging combined with great quality audio. To further enhance their onstage experience, Harrison has added a set of d&b E4s neatly nestled behind the front fills pointing back at the stage. “Working with actors from a ‘Pop’ background always has its challenges, particularly when it comes to Foldback.” he says, “I always find things start to get a bit vague onstage when you get right down the front, which can be a bit disconcerting for your non-Musical theatre performers. Adding the E4s allows me to get a little extra sizzle and clarity downstage centre, which, lets face it, is usually where the money moments of the show get sung from!”

Heading out towards the mix position I am greeted by the friendly blue glow of Orbital’s LED-lit custom racks, somewhat washed out by a garish pink stage blinder blasting the mixing desk in a dazzling light. Slightly confused I turn to question Fugle as to the purpose of the pink. “It’s the Head of Lightings idea of joke,” he admits, looking anything but bothered. “He heard we were having our photos taken so he thought we might like some backlight.”

Having worked out how to defuse the stage blinder, Fugle gives me once over of the Yamaha CL5 mixing desk: “We’re running the desk in full Dante mode,” he explains, going on to tell me

how all signals are delivered to and from the stage via dual-redundant Cat5 cabling bouncing through gigabit NetGear switches. Reverbs are internal and they make full use of the Yamaha Premium Racks, which are also used for group EQ and delay. A computer screen displays Yamaha CL Editor which, Fugle explains, gives him an at-a-glance look at what is going on throughout the console. “The CL Editor software allows me to see PostFade meters on a screen while I still have PreFade meters on the desk,” he says. “There are a lot of tricky harmonies in this show and the ability to see how much of each vocal is actually going in to the system is a godsend.”

Fugle then proceeds to show me around the multitrack system, which, I am surprised to learn, is rather efficiently integrated in to the Yamaha control surface: deployed for the purpose of recording the show (and to help sound operators learn the show and hone the details), a reasonably powerful PC is located at FOH, loaded with nothing more than an industry standard network socket and a copy of Steinberg’s Nuendo. Add to this a copy of Audinate’s twenty-nine dollar Dante Virtual Soundcard and you have a fully integrated 64-ch hard disk recorder for less money than you would pay for a single channel USB interface from Behringer. Not only is it cost effective but it’s also exceptionally well integrated with the

mixing desk, driven, I suspect, by the fact that Yamaha now owns Steinberg. Not only can you control Nuendo’s transport directly from within the console, but you can also suck the channel names out of the desk straight in to your recording session, saving you hours of typing. The icing on the cake is that markers are automatically dropped in to Nuendo whenever you run a cue on the desk, making it a cinch to go back and find a particular part of the show. These features are not unique to Yamaha as everything mentioned above can also be done with an Avid Venue console linked to a ProTools system. What is unique however is the price – a couple of hundred pounds in software for the Yamaha implementation compared to tens of thousands of pounds of hardware to do it the Avid way.

Sound Effects and Click Tracks are controlled using CTR Electronics CSC show control software, which feeds eight channels of audio back in to the CL5 digitally via ADAT. Harrison explains further, “Most of the sound effects are used to preempt the arrivals of the larger than life characters, motorbikes feature quite heavily, and of course there is the all important jukebox in Arnold’s Diner that springs to life on command from Fonzie.”

Down in the orchestra pit I find another surprise – a break from the ubiquitous Aviom systems



favoured by so many other shows. Harrison decided to pump for the new Allen & Heath ME monitoring system, and, on closer inspection it became apparent as to why: The ME takes its inputs from the Dante network meaning that up to forty channels are available on each mixer via a single cable. The musicians can easily set up groups of instruments and assign them to a key, say “Drums”. They can then edit the mix of that Drums key individually without affecting other users – meaning each person can have a different drum mix, a different reeds mix, a different percussion mix. All this power is hidden behind a hugely user-friendly interface – indeed, talking to the musicians in the pit they were all unequivocal in their praise of the system, to a man declaring the ME to be far superior to anything they had used before.

Back on stage, Sound Number Two, Tom Cox showed me around the radio system. Shure UHR radios are the choice here, picked for their frequency flexibility, a versatility not always apparent on other industry leaders. Cast mics are DPA 4066 boom mics, a choice that, once fitted properly, makes for very happy and comfortable performers. In an attempt to catch the UK up with the rest of the world, Cox is using Varta rechargeable AA batteries with Fischer charging stations, a combination he finds proves more reliable than other brands he has tried. To get the show in and up in a day, production

engineer Paul Johnson has made extensive use of Orbital Sound’s considerable experience of mid-scale touring. Much of the equipment is housed in large three bay goug daddy-racks, greatly reducing interconnects and flight case stacking. What few separate racks there are benefit from multipin Veam link cables, and extensive use of custom looms.

Happy Days is a thoroughly enjoyable night at the theatre, enhanced dramatically by the exceptional quality of the audio. Harrison is quick to share the credit, summarising “PJ (Paul Johnson) was absolutely instrumental in making the show ‘tourable’, turning my ideas and drawings into practical lumps of kit – gear that can be built, taken apart and moved within a tight timescale.” I asked him if there is any one thing that he can credit for such a great sounding show: “A lot of it was there from the offset, the design and equipment choices ensured that, but having a good operator should never be underrated – someone who can constantly adjust the mix to make space for vocals or story telling. A bad operator can ruin the best design and I’m really lucky to have Andy Fugle, one of the best.”

MORE INFO

www.happydaysthemusical.com

Mini profiles



HELEN SKIERA

What is your current project and role?

Sound designer and composer on *The Legend of Hamba* for Tiata Fahodzi. Very exciting, as we are devising this as a company; so I get to sit with Ableton Live and a guitar and play all day. It will be performed at a variety of outdoor venues so that will present some challenges no doubt! We're also simultaneously reworking *The Epic Adventure of Nhamo the Manyika Warrior and his Sexy Wife Chipo* for a tour.

What is the favourite part of your work/process?

Putting the sound into the performance space and hearing it as it should be – when all the hard work of rehearsals and writing and editing all comes together, and it sounds as good as, (or better than!) you hoped. Particularly when the work is heavily collaborative, as I think the whole company enjoys it more.

What would you change about your work / the industry?

I think the industry is already changing in the ways I'd like it to – it feels progressively more inclusive, and I feel sound design is being recognised more and more as an essential part of a production. Having better guidelines/legislation for fees would also be good for everyone.

What's your top trick / tip?

I often take sound away to emphasise something, rather than always adding. I will run something like an earthquake, at a subtle level, raise it with a long fade, then take it out altogether to focus in on something like an important speech, or a change in tension in the action of a show.



GEORGE DENNIS

What is your current project and role?

I've just finished designing Headlong's *Spring Awakening* and am about to head to Suffolk to work on *Peddling* as part of the Hightide Festival.

What is the favourite part of your work/process?

When all the days/weeks/months of collaboration begin to pay off and the piece starts to come together in tech and previews.

What would you change about your work/the industry?

I'd like to see a greater awareness in the wider industry (notably theatre criticism) of what the job entails and what a sound designer does.

What's your top trick/tip?

I've been using it to transform sounds for a few years now, but paulstretch (often combined with varispeed and reversal) is a really simple way to generate some interesting material.

What am I listening to at the moment?

Death Grips' *Government Plates* is a suitably abrasive listen for a morning commute.



A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

ED CLARKE

Ed's first sound design work was at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in the mid-90s, followed by a spell at the Lyric Hammersmith. He then worked on the edges of the rock'n'roll circus for a while, before being re-absorbed into the theatre world. Shows include *Frankenstein* at the NT, Little Bulb's *Orpheus*, and *The Railway Children*.

So what are his favourite things?



I was asked to write about my favourite things in sound design world – I think the guys were expecting, you know, actual gizmos and bits of kit. Truth is, I don't have many favourite bits of kit: they're just the machines we use to make our ideas happen. So here are two of my favourite elements of sound design and one favourite plug-in. I think these ideas are often overlooked.

Delay time and tonality

The time alignment of a distributed rig of loudspeakers is obviously critical: we all know about the precedence / Haas effect and so on. What people seem to pay less attention to is the filtering effects produced by hearing two or more speakers at the same time and the ways in which this can (I would say 'should') be used to tune a system. We can't get away from those filtering effects, so why not make it your friend? For me, correct delay time setting is just as

much about tonality as it is about imaging – and I am someone who believes that imaging of vocal sound is absolutely paramount. I work with time much more than I work with EQ.

The high-pass filter

In all live situations I enable the high-pass filter on almost every channel that doesn't absolutely need low end, and do this often before anything else. It isn't just a get-out-gaol-card.

If you've got 120 channels of microphones open, you need only the smallest amount of LF getting back through all those to add up to enough level to make all your low end response cloudy and indistinct – and all those channels will be hearing ambient low end as well as whatever they're pointed at.

Think of sub-bass as your foundations: if your foundation is a mess...

Eventide 'Blackhole' algorithmic reverb

I love algorithmic reverb – convolution is all very well if you're trying to fake something (and great for playing silly with), but for sound design reverb, nothing beats the control that algorithmic stuff gives you. And if you really want to go outside the 'natural' then there is nothing better than I know of than this toy.

The control names on this plug-in are unusual (what else has a 'gravity' setting?) but quite intuitive after a session or so, and as soon as you start playing with the automation it really opens up a vast canvas of spaces. Most particularly though, it is very musical. I don't have to spend hours trying to get rid of the high-frequency artefacts that I find so irritating in many other reverb plug-ins. Oh, and it's pretty cheap too:

www.eventide.com/AudioDivision/Products/PlugIns/Blackhole.aspx



Game Audio for the theatre sound designer



CAROLYN DOWNING

The all-consuming anticipation as you wait for the black and red lines to turn to blue and yellow while being assaulted by the most indescribable noise as the tape spools rotate achingly slowly... (me, aged 8, Spectrum ZX).

My earliest memories of gaming lie in misspent hours helping Spectrum's Horace dodge cars as he tries to buy some skis or getting dizzy falling head-over-heels for Sonic, filled with blips, beeps and coin ker-chings. I have become increasingly intrigued by this medium however, after a chance encounter with the legendary film sound designer Walter Murch. He suggested that rather than looking to Hollywood for a fresh approach to sound design, I should take a glance at the gaming industries on my doorstep. I soon realised that I am attracted to the process of designing an immersive

environment that extends the interaction we as theatre sound designers have with audience members, to one that provides the player with a palette with which to control their own perspective.

The gamer experience

Like theatre or cinema audiences, gamers are looking for an experience – to be taken into another world and be challenged or entertained for an amount of time. A game audio designer plays a huge part in creating this experience. Their contribution helps to bring meaning and emotion to various aspects of the gameplay as well as adding realism to 3D environments. As sound designer Tom Maddocks explains: “Personally I really enjoy story driven games. There is something very engrossing about a good story in a video game. When done right it

is a medium that can be on par with a great film, or a great theatre production. Because a game story takes place over a longer period than most movies, by the end there can be a real connection to certain characters or even settings. Of course audio can play a big part in helping tell that story.” The difference for a game user is that they are controlling their own experience and they typically tend to be alone in this task, though increasingly the games industry is developing platforms and technology that allow players to interact with other players and create social events that go further than two mates skiving double-maths to conquer the next level of their favourite beat-em-up!

The time frame of the game experience is flexible and ongoing rather than a fixed, so the sound designer is creating a whole world for a

player to freely explore, akin to an installation or exhibition space rather than a soundscape that only exists until the curtain comes down. Gamers want to be immersed in sound and with the advent of domestic surround-sound systems and bespoke Dolby 7.1 gaming headsets, sound designers are able to experiment further with spatial distribution, in the same way we often can in a theatre space. According to the advertising blurb, the headsets “...create an immersive 360-degree sound-field that lets you hear what you can’t see. Footsteps. Enemy fire. Sirens. Because when you have eyes in the back of your head, you win.”

Gaming is one of the fastest growing creative industries in the country, and the demand from players to have fuller and richer experiences from the game is driving new technologies and design concepts. The recent launch of *Grand Theft Auto V* sparked a healthy debate on Radio 2’s Jeremy Vine show, showing that the gaming demographic is vast and varied, from young to old. The audio design of these types of games is becoming increasingly sophisticated, often

comparable to Hollywood blockbusters. In GTA5, players are able to explore the fictional city of Los Santos in what is referred to as “an open-world setting”. The sound design for this world is detailed, including intricate phone conversations from passers-by and a seemingly infinite array of in-car radio station selections inside multi-layered, evolving city and nature-scapes.

Process

As with most other media, the games industry is enjoying the growth of technologies and platforms available to them, so a games audio designer working for an independent company may well be working on an iOS or Facebook game one day and a major platform multiplayer the next. At first glance, the working life of a game audio designer seems to be fairly similar to that of a theatre sound designer – the type and amount of work necessary depending on the size of the team, type of project and level of responsibility. Sound designer Graham Gatheral describes a typical day: “It can include performing and recording Foley, sound editing,

music editing, trailer sound design/mixing, audio quality assurance, dialogue recording, asset management, location sound recording, and of course implementation.” Sounds familiar, right? Hold on. Asset management, quality assurance, implementation? Pretty alien concepts to our kind. I decided to investigate.

A complex game title will combine upwards of 40,000 game and production assets, ranging from bitmaps and textures to 3D models, sounds and music, and source code files. An asset is any piece of data or content that can be saved and added into the asset database and uniquely identified across all project databases by a NameID string. ‘Asset management’ for an audio designer is the process of tracking the status of voice and other sound files throughout the game. The Asset Manager is responsible for maintaining the database for all departments who need to access the assets and their associated information. They are also required to ensure that the system by which departments share and implement these assets runs smoothly.

‘Implementation’ is the process of making sound files (assets) play back in the game at the right time and at the right level so that it sounds natural. This is actually very similar to our process of creating audio content, building a

“The audio design of these types of games is becoming increasingly sophisticated, often comparable to Hollywood blockbusters”

cue list and plotting levels but the technologies and software to do this are very different. Where we may 'implement' using QLab or CSC, game audio engines such as UDK or Unity and middleware such as Wwise and FMOD are used. These applications allow game designers from a range of disciplines to build and implement content for games without (or barely) touching programming code. In the case of the sound designer this means that instead of their job ending with the delivery of audio assets and a list of instructions for a programmer to code, they can implement not only the asset but also the relationship that asset has to game events; their relationship to other sounds; what and how digital signal processing is acting on those assets; and, if a prototype of the game is up and running, test and adapt these behaviours without having to change coding. Firelight Technologies' FMOD system has recently been used on titles such as Eidos Software's *Deus Ex*, Rockstar's *LA Noire* and Warner Brothers *Arkham Asylum Batman* games. Audiokinetics' Wwise played a key role in the creation of Bioware's *Dragon's Age* and *Mass Effect* titles, Ubisoft's *Assassins Creed* series and LucasArts' *Force Unleashed*.

'Quality assurance' ensures that the audio in the game is robust and fully functioning and that the work of the sound department achieves the



standards that the game company expects. This is a way of receiving progress reports throughout the process before the game is launched to the public. An audio designer would use this in the way that we might use dress rehearsals and previews, though over a much longer period of time, honing the design until it's ready for release.

Time scales differ hugely to the schedules we are used to. A game audio designer will be working on a project over a time span of at least a year; longer if working on an AAA title (a big budget game developed for major platforms). Their process has more in common with that of a film sound designer in that respect. Graham Gatheral elaborates: "Working in a small team in

a company with multiple projects on the go can present workflow challenges. It's important to prioritise work and make sure everyone is in the loop about what you're working on and when their task request will get to the top of the pile. Also, most companies work to monthly milestone deadlines, so there's always pressure to make sure everything's on target."

Most projects require new custom audio playback features so it is important that the game audio designer has an audio programmer on hand to make sure those needs are met. The audio team would also continually liaise with the game designers, animators, QA (quality assurance) team and producers.

So what is it about the gaming that attracts sound designers? By all accounts, it comes from a love of the medium and interaction with video games from an early age. An obvious draw is the challenge to a designer's creative urges as well as a tickling of the technical brain cells. Sound Designer Tom Maddocks hints at the satisfaction he earns from his process: "Implementation is a big part of the work because a game is a non-linear experience. It feels like you're creating a world that people will go and prod and test with the characters. Making a believable world is essential to that player having an immersive and unique

experience." Some of the most recent game releases with well-seasoned sound designers on board seem to suggest that designers are becoming less interested in making games from systems or scoring mechanics and more as emotional experiences, a prime example being *The Last Of Us* (Naughty Dog).

The future

The future of game audio design, in the short term at least, lies with the recently launched next generation consoles, namely PS4 and Xbox One, due to inclusion of expanded memory for audio content and the potential for 7.1 virtual surround sound. The longer term future may well lie in real-time DSP such as ray tracing game geometry to calculate reverb parameters in real time, or convolution reverb, as you might have used with AltVerb or Space Designer in your DAW. This allows the sound to communicate a greater sense of location and dynamics when it is triggered from a point in 3D space and is reflected off the architecture of the immediate surrounding area at any given point in the game. More fascinating times are promised in the development of Procedural Audio, or real-time sound effect synthesis to you and me. It is the creation of non-linear, synthetic sounds that have the ability to respond fluently to a player's choices and actions within a game [Ed: see article on PA in The Echo #5].

The development of these capabilities has significant implications for game audio departments, as Graham Gatheral explains: "When PA becomes more prominent, we will see game sound designers spending less time creating sample-based sound effects on their DAW and more time looking at how the sound behaves in the real world to create procedural audio models." One of the biggest advocates of Procedural Audio, Andy Farnell, further explains that "although at first these new techniques may seem alien to the creative process, they will actually enhance the sound designer's connection to the artform."

Gaming is one the fastest-moving creative and technical industries of our generation. Our game audio counterparts are pushing the boundaries of our art form and how it engages with individuals, driving the development of technologies that pave the way to completely turn it on its head.

The future of their craft potentially puts the perception of their art into the hands of the player so much so that they appear to completely relinquish artistic control. The player may begin to experience games audio the way an audience member does a theatre sound designer's work that is so fluid and intrinsically integrated into the piece that it becomes invisible.

Selling yourself, selling your work



GARETH FRY

Show business is a slightly strange business. Jobs are rarely advertised, and often it seems like the first time we know a job is available is when someone rings us up and asks us if we're available to do it. Clearly in order for potential employers to call you they have to have heard about you in the first place. In the past this was a relatively straightforward process that happened in a place called 'the real world', and generally involved getting to know people at work and sometimes in the pub. How we sold ourselves was a matter of how we dressed and how we acted, both in terms of the work we did and how we did it. This paradigm is still true, but increasingly now we are judged on our online presence first, long before we get to meet anyone in person. The three key goals to bear in mind when working out how you sell yourself are:

To help people to find you amongst your peers.

To encourage them to employ you by providing them with clear, positive information about yourself, your skills, your business attitude, your employment history and any other pertinent information.

To encourage your peers to recommend you for work.

In order to sell yourself effectively, you need to be clear about what you are selling. Be clear with the services you can offer, and the jobs you are aspiring to get. Design work can be difficult to make a living from, so many of us make part of our living through other jobs, or by working in other industries. Be careful to sell yourself in a way that is inclusive to all your potential clients.

It is useful to have multiple CVs, each targeted towards a different type of work, or your website might direct different types of clients to different pages. Perhaps you have a page that is optimised for corporate and events work, and another for theatre design. Equally, don't be afraid of stating your intentions. If you want to work on musicals, you're more likely to get work with a generic CV that starts off with the phrase 'I am very interested in working on musicals', than with just a generic CV. People respond to passion and interest.

For a lot of people, your name is your brand and it is you that people want to employ. It can be very tempting to set up a business and promote your business name. This can work well for some sectors but often not for theatre. A director is rarely going to turn round and say



that they want GJF Services to come in and design their show – most of the time clients want to employ a specific person because of their specific skills, experience or attitude. Only if your company has grown to be relatively big and has a very good reputation can you afford to trade off its name.

That said, it can be important to seem business-like in order to convey a level of professionalism. One of the easiest ways to project business professionalism is to adopt a ‘look’ for your business. A look doesn’t have to include a logo: it could just be a set of colours or a certain typeface that you use consistently across your visual output, whether that be on your websites, business cards, letterheads or schematics. Some people opt for the plain approach but a Microsoft Word template does nothing proactively to promote you. A strong visual look on the other hand can show off your design aesthetic and make you appear more professional. It’s worth bearing in mind that the administrator who is processing your invoices now might well be executive producer in ten years’ time.

Ways to stand out

Being multi-skilled is very useful in the real world, but it doesn’t help you to stand out from the online crowd. Becoming known for working

in a certain niche of theatre, or having a certain specialist skill, will attract certain clients to you. Determine what you are most interested in doing or are best at – whether it be an encyclopedic knowledge of Serialist music, a proclivity for recording high speed cars or a talent for synth programming – and use that as a selling point. Once you have hooked a client with your special skills then you can sell them with your broader skill set.

Many websites offer us the opportunity to write a profile or bio about ourselves. These are great opportunities but require careful thought.

Have a look through the ASD directory to see the different approaches people take and how they are selling themselves. You can take the formal third person list of credits approach, or the more casual first person prose, or anywhere in between. Just remember who you want to read it – who you want to employ you – and write it for them, in a style that would appeal to them.

Try to be as concise as possible. Highlight repeat work – it's an indicator that a past client has thought your work so good they keep employing you. Check the names and spelling of companies, venues and manufacturers, etc. Run it through the Microsoft Word spelling and

grammar check. Add a recurring event to your calendar app to update it every three months.

Social media can be a great way to advertise yourself and create awareness of what you're doing now or in the future. Careful use of who you connect with, comments, retweets and @mentions can really help to spread the word. However, there are inherent dangers in all of them.

Facebook is both a blessing and a curse: it is by far the easiest way to blur the lines between your work life and your social/family life. Employers are increasingly looking at people's Facebook pages to try to get a sense of the person behind the image. Consider your Facebook privacy settings carefully – especially as Facebook changes these often – and keep a watchful eye on what goes up and how it reflects on you professionally. Consider creating a 'Page' that represents your work and keep your profile for your friends and family only.

Twitter can allow connections with anyone without having to go through a 'friending' process. Careful interaction with potential employers can get them to follow you and build their awareness of what you're working on. However, it's just as easy to lose people by oversharing.

LinkedIn, Stage Jobs Pro and the ASD directory all provide a very business-focused environment to advertise your wares. They are all used increasingly by potential employers to look people up.

A blog often seems like a great idea but like a lot of New Year resolutions they are difficult to carry through for more than a couple of months! Think of how many blogs you've seen that have a few early blog posts, then a gap, then another one six months later, then nothing since 2011. Not helpful from a marketing point of view.

There are plenty of other social media sites out there – often they don't have so many users, but this means that you have a better chance of standing out.

One of the frustrating things about sound design is that it's incredibly difficult to find a way to represent it online – often something that sounds great in a show sounds rubbish removed from the context of the performance it was designed for. If so, don't put it online. Sounds you've made for web trailers or to accompany video design often work well. SoundCloud and Vimeo offer good ways of uploading your media and embedding it in your profiles, in a way that be heard on the plethora

of smartphones and tablets. It is always worth adding a note that the audio will be best heard over headphones, rather than on an iPhone speaker.

Business cards are well worth having, even though you may find yourself only giving out one or two a month. They create a better impression than trying to find a pen and scribble your email address on a scrap of paper, and they can drive a visit to your website to find out more about you. You'll more likely find yourself giving these out to a producer, production manager, OB team and other sound professionals. Don't include too much information; your name, job description, phone number, email and website are plenty. Check out magazines like *Creative Review* for inspiration on the more far out designs.

Pay attention to the paperwork you send out, including invoices, schematics, and plans. Look at what you get from other people and see if there are things you should include on yours. If you're a member of the ASD you can place the ASD

logo somewhere strategic; it's all about establishing your credentials as a professional.

A website can be useful for creating a central hub of information about you. Maintaining up to date profiles across the many different websites can be difficult to achieve. If you're struggling, then go for a brief profile and link to your website for a production-by-production listing. Websites can more easily contain sounds to listen to, movies to watch, CVs to download and a variety of different pages targeted at different client bases.

Personal websites can be easily created, often for free, using tools like Wordpress or Wix and will create websites that look good on smartphones and tablets as well as on a computer. Make sure your contact details are on every page of your website. Most visitors to your site will have arrived via a search engine and won't necessarily go to the home page first.

Register a domain name with a company like 1&1. This will enable you to get a web address

like www.joebloggs.com and email that is sent to and from mail@joebloggs.com. Far better than 'joe_bloggs_471@yahoo.co.uk.'

ASD and other industry events are a great way to make your name known in the industry. If people know your name and what you do, that's the first step to getting work via your peers. By organising or speaking at events, you can speed up that process considerably (and it benefits the ASD and everyone else when you share your expertise). These events are great for meeting people outside your normal professional circuit.

Many sound designers and engineers juggle multiple clients and are often unavailable for all the projects they're asked to do. They are often asked if they can recommend someone else, and so they recommend people they know.

Above all, don't oversell yourself. Whether face-to-face or online, no-one likes someone who is too pushy or has misrepresented their actual skill sets. Remember you are trying to encourage people to employ you, not irritate them with spam or scare them with cyber-stalking!

And remember, there is no one way to sell yourself. Every potential employer is different and will want different skills, experiences, attitudes and approaches.

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