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Item Type	undergrad_thesis;article;undergraduate thesis
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Download date	2026-05-13 00:37:51
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/500

Research and Sound Design for

Much Ado About Nothing

on Royall Tyler Stage

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors

In Theatre

By Clare Devlin

April 13th, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 3

PREVIOUS WORK..... 4

HISTORY..... 6

DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE OF PROJECT..... 12

SIGNIFICANCE..... 22

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 23

APPENDICES..... 25

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is presented in supplement to the practical project of being the Sound Designer for the production of *Much Ado About Nothing* on Royall Tyler stage. The Department of Theatre has a video recording of the production in their archive should anyone wish to reference it. In this paper, I will explain the history and development of sound in the theatre, how my previous work in music and theater prepared me for this project, my design concepts and experiences from the project, and the project's significance.

Sound is a long standing part of the theatre, but its practitioners have only recently gained appreciation for their contributions. Perhaps because it was less understood, sound has not always been viewed as being at the same level as other design fields.

“The production of sound effects... was understood to involve artistry of some kind, but in terms of the organizational structures of the theatre practice it belonged in technical... not design departments... Sound design challenged category and terminology. Sound effects fitted into and around the text – so if there was design there it surely was done by the author and the director. Whereas the concept of sound *system* design was acceptable, there was considerable cultural resistance to allowing the word design to be used in relation to what we might call the sonic ‘content’ or ‘programme’ of the theatre” (Ross 11).

Therefore, sound was not considered to be important enough to require a designer. The first Tony Awards for ‘Best Sound Design for a Play’ and ‘Best Sound Design for a Musical’ were not given until 2008 and the committee retired the awards in 2014 (“Tony Awards History”). Many directors don’t even realize that they have the option to expand their production in this way. Sound adds another level of meaning and context to the production.

PREVIOUS WORK

I have been a musician since age six, playing the piano and percussion, with a specialty in mallet instruments. I am actively involved in several ensembles at UVM and music is a passion of mine. Theatre has been a part of my life and identity since the sixth grade when I first attended a set build with my older brother. I tried performing, but found myself more comfortable backstage. Building upon my passion for music, I became involved in my high school's theater company, and started working on sound. We used a CD player for cueing sound for the first two years, and then we got an iPod Mixer, which basically allows the user to cross-fade between two iPods. I used this in my sound design for Massachusetts's statewide one act drama festival for three years. I also learned how to mix body microphones for musicals.

When I arrived at the Department of Theatre, I specifically sought out opportunities to do sound. I was told that there were no specific courses in sound, but was offered the opportunity to be the sound board operator for the first show *Stop Kiss* about a month into my first semester at UVM. After that, I was the sound board operator for the theatre department's annual show *The Toys Take Over Christmas*, as well as *Stop Kiss*, *Beaux Stratagem* and *Urinetown: The Musical*. *Urinetown* had a live pit orchestra and the actors had body microphones which required me to work with new and different technology and expectations. Overall, the experience of mixing *Urinetown* was very educational and I realized how similar the job was to playing a musical instrument, and how important the sound board operator can be to a production.

My other work includes the sound design for a one act play adaptation of the short story *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. The dream sequences in *Walter Mitty* allowed me great creative license to create sounds for machines that do not exist in our world. I was the assistant sound designer for *Heidi Chronicles* which required a lot of research because the show followed a very specific timeline and there were specific songs mentioned in the script. So I worked with the

sound designer to make sure that we had the specific tracks and that the other tracks we were using had been released in the right years. I was then the sound designer for *Toys 2013*.

At my job as Technical Assistant at UVM's Dudley H. Davis Center, I have done live sound reinforcement for several on campus a-capella groups, bands and DJs. These events required me to set up a sound system and microphones in the venue and then balance volume levels during the performance. These shows are much more spontaneous and sometimes the technicians don't really know what the artist will want until they show up, so flexibility and improvisation are required at all times. These traits are critical to successful collaboration and the mixing and musicianship only improve my ear for use in sound design.

HISTORY

Aristotle was one of the first recorded dramatic theorists. He wrote his *Poetics* sometime around 335 BCE, which is widely acknowledged as the defining work on the analysis of tragedy. Purportedly, there was a matching treatise on comedy but it is said to have burned in the fires at the Library of Alexandria. Aristotle divides the traditional Greek tragedy into six main parts: Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Music and Spectacle (Worthen 90-91). These are ranked in descending importance, with plot being most important and spectacle being the least important. Today's audiences, however, seem to rank these parts in the reverse order, with spectacle as most important and plot considerably less so. As John Leonard puts it, "there is an increasing tendency to use music in theatre as aural wallpaper; I suspect that this has come about through exposure to film and television scores where bad plots are upholstered by music scores that are intended solely to manipulate the emotions of an audience when the dramatic action fails to do so" (Leonard 41-42). The detail of film scores and sound effects can be applied to theater too.

The tradition in Ancient Greek theatre was that actors wore masks to portray the class and gender of the characters. The mouths of these masks were also designed similar to a megaphone to help project the actors' voices. The semi-circular design of the amphitheaters also gave a boost to the acoustics. Many current theatrical terms also come from the Greeks; "the original Greek *theatron* meant watching place, but the watching happens within an *auditorium*, the Latin word for listening place, and is done by an *audience*, a congregation of listeners" (Ross 5).

During Shakespeare's time, music played a major part in the plays. Mostly, it consisted of trumpet and drums for alarms or to announce royalty.

“At this time, trumpets and drums were not considered to be primarily musical instruments. Trumpets were not used in art music until...1607. For the [King’s Men] they were exclusively for outdoor signaling, either ceremonial fanfares and sennets or military tuckets and ‘alarums’. A ‘sennet’ was a polyphonic trumpet-call, while a ‘tucket’ could include drumming” (Gurr 78).

Another role of music was the songs and dances of the fool characters and jigs at the end of acts. For example, Feste in *Twelfth Night* is asked to sing several songs, as is Amiens in *As You Like It*. In *Winter’s Tale*, there are several dances called for in the script. The actors, such as Will Kemp (for whom the role of Falstaff was written) and Robert Armin (for whom the role of Feste was written), either accompanied themselves or were accompanied from offstage by tabor (a kind of drum) and either lutes or pipes. The offstage musicians were on a balcony above the stage at the Globe and behind a curtain at Blackfriars (Gurr 79).

The assortment of instruments varied between the two playhouses. Since the Globe was outdoors and had raucous audiences, fewer stringed instruments were used than at Blackfriars. Blackfriars came with a resident ‘consort’, which was “comprised [of] five strings: treble and bass viol, cittern, lute, and bandore, with either a recorder or flute and a woodwind” (Gurr 81-82). One of the composers hired by the company was named Robert Johnson, who played lute for the king and wrote music for the court masques of Inigo Jones, a famous theatrical designer. Johnson probably wrote the music for Shakespeare’s later plays such as *Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* (Gurr 84).

Songs were used “as purified language [and] as satirical intensifiers” (Gurr 84). The fool is the character who always speaks the truth. In *King Lear*, the fool is the only one who is honest to Lear about his madness; in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Puck is the cause of all mischief but speaks the truth and explains things to the audience. Since the fool speaks the truth, they frequently put their truths into song, using the purified language to prove their honesty. In *Much*

Ado About Nothing, Dogberry and his men are the fools. Their goal is to find the truth about Borachio and Conrade's treachery and reveal it to Lady Leonora. Contrary to the other plays, Dogberry does not sing any songs.

Author Deena Kaye notes that "as the Restoration, Neoclassical and Romantic periods of theatre evolved, emphasis on offstage sound and music went in and out of style. As costumes, sets, props and lights became more lavish, sound was no longer needed to establish so many of the production elements" (Kaye 5). By the time Realism and Expressionism became accepted theatrical styles, the technology of sound had developed to make it easier to include in productions. During the Italian Renaissance, a lot of changes to theatre technology were made. These included the movement towards using proscenium stages and flats painted in perspective for scenery. These changes provided more backstage space for sound effect technology.

Before electricity, percussion was one of the few options available to theaters to produce such effects. Ross Brown says that the "standard ways of realizing the scripted sound effects of the repertoire, [are] much as a percussionist might describe the methods employed to meet the precise needs of the classical repertoire" (Brown 16). Effectsmen used wind machines, thunder runs, crash boxes, drums and all sorts of percussive materials to create a wide variety of sounds, ranging from a tempest to a horse and carriage to a war. They were essentially musicians and were required to make the effects at exactly the right time and with exactly the right volume so as to be heard by the audience from behind the set. Even to this day, live sound is an important part of productions everywhere. This includes but is not limited to pit orchestras for musicals. Performers accompany themselves with instruments and practical effects like doorbells are common. Sometimes the quality of sound produced by a live effectsman will far exceed the quality produced by an electric sound source.

Thomas Edison invented the wax cylinder phonograph and patented the carbon microphone in 1877, and then in 1896, Marconi patented the radio apparatus (Morton 2006). With these inventions, music became more available to the public. Previously, if someone wanted to hear music, they either had to go to a concert venue and sit through a formal performance or buy sheet music and learn how to play it themselves.

Radio in America started when KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania went on air in 1920. They were joined in 1926 by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC)'s Red Network which went on air in 1926. The first radio drama was a 40 minute adaptation of Eugene Walter's *The Wolf* (1908) by Edward H. Smith in Schenectady, New York in 1922. Probably the most famous radio drama was Orson Welles' 1938 episode of "War of the Worlds" on CBS's *The Mercury Theatre on the Air* that allegedly caused mass panic in the streets (Wild 2014).

Sound was critical to the success of radio drama. Every show had a theme song; to this day, people recognize the *William Tell Overture* as the theme song to *The Lone Ranger*. Music was also played as a bridge between scenes and as an underscore to action. The sound effects were produced in the same manner and used many of the same materials as the effectsmen of the theater such as rain drums and crash boxes (Wild 2014). But sound for the radio had to contain more detail. Unless the director was attempting naturalism, effectsmen didn't have to worry about the sounds of coffee being poured or bacon frying. Door slams would be practical effects, actual doors as part of the set. These sounds and attention to detail, however, are critical to the success of a radio drama.

Minute attention to detail is also critical to the production of Foley sound for film. Sound was first introduced to Hollywood when Warner Brother's Studios released *The Jazz Singer* in 1927. Jack Foley, for whom Foley sound is named, was working for Universal Studios at the

time and was the driving force behind their release of the musical *Showboat* with sound in 1929. Foley was the first person to provide a complete sound and effects track for film. His “technique was to record all the effects for a reel at one time” (Singer 2008). This was done by projecting the film on a large screen in a sound stage and then having an orchestra play the music and Foley used props, studio junk and other effects materials to create the sound effects. The role of a Foley artist is therefore a counterpart to the effectsmen of the theatre.

Edison’s phonograph was first used in the theater in a 1902 production of *Henry V* in Berlin. This is earlier than what some believe to be the first use of recorded sound: a recording of Lenin speaking in Piscator’s 1904 production of *Rasputin* (Ross 17). By 1925, the 78 rpm record was commonly available, followed by the 33 and 1/3 rpm long-playing and 45 rpm single records, patented in 1948 and 1949 respectively. The reel-to-reel tape recorder, invented in 1935, evolved into Compact Cassette tapes, invented in 1964 and followed by Compact Discs patented in 1970 (Morton 2006). In 1963, the engineering company Bradmatic “created a tool known as the sampler that allows the user to play a prerecorded sound at any time. The sound can also be pitched, stretched, cut up, rearranged, looped, layered and reversed” (Gao 2004). Samplers allowed technicians to have all of the cues available at the push of a button without having to worry about cueing tapes or records. Technology made another big jump in 1992 with the Sony MiniDisc, a format which was portable and could digitally record and playback anything from its analog microphone input (Robson 2013). This technology didn’t really catch on in popular culture, and was overshadowed by the invention of the MP3 compressed file format, which was patented by the Fraunhofer Institute in 1995 (Morton 2006).

The audio signals reproduced in all of these formats all came from the same technology, patented by Thomas Edison in 1877. Microphones are designed to convert the air pressure of a noise into an electrical signal. The scientific explanation is that

“Sounds from the real world can be recorded and digitized using an analog-to-digital converter (ADC)...the circuit takes a sample of the instantaneous amplitude (not frequency) of the analog waveform. Alternatively, digital synthesis software can also create samples by modeling and sampling mathematical functions or other forms of calculation. A sample in either case is defined as a measurement of the instantaneous amplitude of a real or artificial signal. Frequencies will be recreated later by playing back the sequential sample amplitudes at a specified rate” (Hass 2013).

Basically, once a sound wave has been converted to an electrical signal, the computer converts it into the ones and zeros of binary, which can be interpreted by a program such as QLab. After being processed by the program, the audio file is stored to the hard drive and then converted back into an electrical signal and sent to the speakers to be converted back into sound waves. This entire process can be accomplished using digital media servers, which were first invented in 1957 at Bell Labs (Hass 2013). These devices house an ADC and the processing unit that sends the binary signal along to a program that users can manipulate the signal with.

This evolution of technology has led to what theatre practitioners use today. Royall Tyler Theater’s sound system is comprised of a computer running a cueing software called QLab, a 16 channel Mackie mixing board, a MOTU digital interface, two subwoofers and 6 passive JBL speakers hung in pairs facing each section of the house (see Appendix 4). If I had had more time, I would have liked to adjust the speakers so that they were aimed more directly at the seats. There is a slight but noticeable drop off point in the volume of sound between the top of the sections and the first row of seats. The MOTU, a digital media server, connects the Mackie board to QLab via FireWire. This provides a cleaner, more reliable signal than the previous method of using the headphone output from the computer.

DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE OF PROJECT

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare is a comedy about deception, disguises and hidden affection. Director Mark Alan Gordon chose to set this production in 1917, during the Great War in England. Therefore, my design concept called for music that was written prior to that date. Fortunately, my background as a musician and education in music history provided me with a large body of classical music to choose from.

During our first sound-specific meeting on December 4th, Mark Alan expressed his ideas for the show to me. We agreed that using emotive adjectives to describe the music would provide a mutual understanding. He knew that he wanted to start the show with “The Flower Duet” from the opera *Lakmè* by Leo DeBiles. He specifically asked me to find a version with an instrumental introduction followed by the recognizable vocal melody. We also discussed the possibility of making it sound as if it were being played on an old gramophone player. The rest of the show’s music was intended to be symphonic or string quartet and other pre-jazz music, mostly in major keys. Our goal was to indicate the passage of time. There was a long scene which would be underscored by dance music using directional speakers on stage to simulate an offstage orchestra and party. We discussed a few composers’ work including Grieg, and Mozart. I decided to avoid Beethoven and Bach because their music is usually too bombastic for our concept. Mark Alan also told me that he was planning a sonic and visual montage at the top of the show, a prologue of sorts. This was to set the context of World War I for the audience because the men of the play come from the front lines to this ‘verdant Elysium’ of the women’s world.

For the prologue, I listened to several British propaganda songs such as *Long Way to Tipperary* and the *British Grenadiers March*, as well as German and Prussian military songs. None of them had the right feeling of ominous destruction felt on the front lines, which is what

John Forbes was depicting with his projections. I wasn't entirely sure what was actually going to happen during the prologue until I saw the images of soldiers in trenches, covered in bandages. We eventually settled on a military snare and bass drum beat. I ended up really liking this choice because I realized that, if the prologue underscore had been recognizable to the audience in any way, they would have associated their personal memories of that piece with the show. The starkness of the drums put the listener in a military context and let the images speak for themselves.

Our next meeting on January 20th was a more specific discussion, to which I brought some examples of songs. Mark Alan told me that he wanted the curtain call music to be *Girls Chase Boys* by Ingrid Michaelson. I did not really like the sudden anachronism of this song, but he explained that he felt that theatricality was permissible during the curtain call, and he was very enthusiastic about this choice, so it stayed. Another choice he was excited about was finding a theme song for Dogberry and his constables. The descriptor he used was 'Looney-Tune-esque' and he didn't mind a bit of theatrical anachronism, so I found a brass band version of Noel Coward's *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* that I really liked. During tech rehearsal, I discovered that the actors were actually singing along to the sound cue and breaking the fourth wall a bit, so I extended that cue and made sure that the actors could hear it onstage. This ended up being one of my favorite moments. Even though there are no songs written into the script, this moment tied back to the fools of Shakespeare's time, who spoke truths with the "purified language of music" (Gurr 84).

In describing his concept, Mark Alan first referred to the British television show *Downton Abbey*. So, when he wanted a fanfare for the entrance of the men, as would have been heard at the Globe, I found the old introductory theme song to *Masterpiece Theater* (another

British television show). The end had a very nice eight measure phrase with just the right pomp and instrumentation. And, since I was including brass in my design, when the director asked for Bach's *Sleeper's Awake*, I found a beautiful version by Douglas Major & Empire Brass. We decided that since we were using thematic music for Dogberry and company, the *Sleeper's Awake* would be a good theme song for the lovers. I put it before the scenes of deceiving Beatrice and Benedick and then again before the scene where they are trying to write love letters to each other. For the latter, I faded the cue to an underscore until they each realized that the other was there. Also, *The Land of Might Have Been* by Ivor Novello could be recognized by the audience as being from the movie *Gosford Park*. This was the only song that I used with words in English; I had to figure out how to fade the cue out without the words seeming to be cut off.

I then discussed with Stefan Jacobs the possibility of renting the two Peavey speakers owned by the UVM Dance Department. He graciously let me borrow them free of charge for the two weeks of tech and performances. I positioned these upstage right for underscoring the dance scene and added the small powered speaker owned by the department upstage center left for the record player effect. After the prologue finished, the *Lakmè* played through the house speakers and then faded to the upstage powered speaker to give the effect that the actors onstage were listening to the song on a gramophone. The sound was then cut when an actor took the needle off of the prop record player. The speaker that I used had an adjustable tone knob, which I turned up to better simulate the quality of sound from a gramophone player.

Directional sound was a key part of my design concept. I wanted the sound to bring the audience into the world of the play and include them in the action. The fade of the *Lakmè* from the house to the upstage speaker made the transition from the violence of the prologue to the

peace of the top of the show work brilliantly. The same went for the dance; the audience could hear what the performers could hear and this made it more inclusive.

At my next meeting with Mark Alan, just after the full run through on the 26th (see Appendix 1), we went through the script and I wrote down where each cue was intended to go. I attended this run so I could see where the actors would be and hear any cuts to the script made during rehearsal. I followed along and made notes to myself where cues should go and approximately how long scene changes were. On February 6th, Mark Alan, John Forbes (the lighting and projections designer), Alex Dunker (the stage manager) and I had a 'paper tech'. This means that we went page by page through the script and numbered all of the cues and made sure Alex knew when to call them. I then had a work day (Appendix 1), during which I placed my directional speakers, ran the snake and dropped power from the 'Yellow Brick Road' (RTT's lighting grid and catwalk), patched everything into the board, made sure headsets were run, and put cues into QLab.

During tech rehearsals, which were held from the 11th to the 13th (Appendix 1), I adjusted the levels and fade times of cues and occasionally the length. A lot of time was spent on the prologue sequence due to the projections being constantly adjusted. I had to loop the drum track to allow for errors in the projections and to ensure that the sound would not just suddenly drop out. I added a pistol shot when a slide of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand being shot appeared. I also added an explosion at the end of the sequence before the *Lakmè* began playing as a punctuation of the military and war images.

I spent a good bit of time getting the levels of the gunshot and explosion right. The goal was to find middle ground between scaring the audience and ensuring the cues are present and important. I found that pushing the level more through the subs than the house made the effect of

the explosion much more dramatic. If you push the subs too far, you can actually feel the vibrations in the house. I had to find the right sound source that had enough low-end and an appropriate fade out. The same applied to the gunshot; most were too dry or echoed too much. If the gunshot was part of the action of the play, I would have had several options: using a blank in a real gun on stage, having a starter's pistol shot off backstage, or using a recorded sound. If I had been doing this production before electricity, I would have had an actual gun shot off and probably used a crash box for the explosion.

The next big part of the show that I worked on was the dance underscore, which is one of the things I'm most proud of from this design. The goal was to have the music start in the house as a transition, then fade to the two upstage speakers and stay at a level that was unobtrusive to the scene going on but still present enough for the audience to recognize that it was still there during pauses in the text. I started with the highly recognizable *Emperor's Waltz* by Strauss, followed by two dances from the *Holberg Suite* by Grieg, a minuet from Handel's *Water Music*, and a Haydn *Minuet and Trio*.

It took several rehearsals to the levels to get it right. All of the different tracks were at different volumes when played at the same level and there was some trouble with the cueing sequence. The best way to get levels was to listen to the whole scene through with the actors speaking, but that only happened once per rehearsal. Also, when using directional speakers where I placed them (see Appendix 4), I had to consider that the cues will sound louder on house left nearest to the speakers and directly across from them in house right than in the center section. To balance this, I walked around and sat in different seats during that scene. In the end, several patrons came up to me and said how well it worked with the scene.

Choosing preshow and entr'acte music was the point in the process that I felt I had the most freedom. I took the opportunity to draw from my musical background and chose some of my favorite pieces. I didn't want to give away the prologue with ominous music and wanted to set the tone of the beginning of the first act so I chose joyful and peaceful music. We started with the *Overture Music for the Royal Fireworks* by Handel, Wagner's *Huldigungsmarsch*, and the "Largo" from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. I also included "Un Bel Di" from *Madame Butterfly* because it was one of the most popular songs of the early 1900s. There were a few extra songs, such as a Brahms Violin Concerto, included in case the stage manager needed to hold for house. For intermission music, I decided to use all four movements of Mozart's *Symphony No. 41 in C Major* because it segued nicely into the Haydn piece at the top of Act II.

I also spent a good bit of time working on the wedding sequence. I chose to use the "Prelude" to Handel's *Water Music Suite* as the wedding processional. Mark Alan didn't want to hear the traditional organ music or "Here Comes the Bride", so I chose Handel because it is joyful and triumphant. There is a little scene between Lord John and Margaret before the actual procession begins, so we originally had the Prelude start before that scene and then restart at the procession. I didn't like how choppy that felt so I moved Cue 16.5 to later in the song where it was a bit more mellow and then made the jump to the top of the piece in Cue 17.

The end of show sequence was another thing that we spent a while getting just right. John Forbes likes to say that if you get the beginning and end of the show right, the middle of the play will sort itself out. The play ends with the second (real) wedding of Hero and Claudio, as well as Benedick and Beatrice finally coming together. The way Mark Alan blocked it was that Benedick gives his final line, everyone except him and Beatrice exit, and we go to black on their kiss upstage center. Since the curtain call music was going to be so recognizable, I decided to use

Bach's *Suite for Solo Cello No. 1 in G Major* performed by Yo-Yo Ma. The piece itself is not anachronistic, but Yo-Yo Ma is a contemporary artist and many people recognize the piece from the book and movie *The Soloist*, so I found the transition into Ingrid Michaelson slightly less jarring with this as a segue.

This was my first time being a designer for a mainstage production at RTT. From this experience, I learned how to make compromises between what the director wanted, what I wanted and what was realistic. I also had never worked with Mark Alan before, so we needed to establish a common language for discussing sound. At a few points, I had to ask for clarification on what he wanted. I also misunderstood what he wanted a few times. I learned that I needed to speak up about what I thought might not be a good idea and what I thought might work instead. Making a suggestion without an example to back it up isn't a good idea. These are natural parts of the design process, especially when working with new people.

In addition, I learned that sometimes directors have ideas that are simply not going to work, or just don't fit with where the show is going. For example, at one point, Mark Alan wanted the preshow to consist solely of howling winds. When I heard the suggestion, I said hesitantly that I'd think about it. I later made the argument that the preshow is supposed to set the mood for the rest of the show and reminded him the play is a comedy, suggesting that music would be a better choice. Fortunately, he changed his mind and agreed with me.

I needed time to get comfortable with balancing my interactions with my collaborators: the director, stage manager, other designers, and my board op. Each of us has our own responsibilities and skill sets. I don't have much experience in an authority position. In most of my work experience, I have been the new staff member. I have, in my work on the Davis Center Tech staff, been called upon to train people in areas where I have more experience, such as Pro

Tools and most audio setups. I tried to draw from these experiences when working with my board operator, Jace. A new experience for me was that, as a designer, I was considered on the same level as my professors. At times, I found it difficult to express my opinions to faculty members who have so much more experience than I do, but in the end I got everything across.

Theatre is an art in which every person has a different role and makes a contribution to the production. Therefore, collaboration is key. My collaboration with Mark Alan was to make sure that the sound of the production worked with and enhanced his vision of the show. My collaboration with the other designers was to make sure that Mark Alan's vision was presented in a cohesive manner. My collaboration with Jace was to ensure that the sound ran efficiently and correctly.

I found that I had some difficulty with not being the technician during this process. At first, instead of explaining what I wanted my board operator to do, I went and made the adjustments myself. At the very beginning, it was because Jace was learning the system and QLab but I needed to let him learn how to do things and I needed to learn how to clearly explain what I wanted. It was my responsibility to make the design choices and it was his to execute those choices. Together, we worked through the usual technical difficulties associated with a production that and, after extensive troubleshooting, they were all fixed by opening night.

Another place where I had some difficulty was assigning the preshow, dance, and intermission cues into groups (see Appendix 3). QLab has two functions for getting cues to connect. The developers' website describes them, "If a cue has an auto-follow, as soon as the cue is fired the next cue in the cue list will fire as well. If the cue has a post wait as well as an auto-follow, the post wait will be honored before the next cue is fired. Auto-continue: A cue with an auto-continue will cause the next cue to fire as soon as the first cue (and any associated pre and

post waits) have completed” (“QLab Documentation” 2015). It might have been my limited experience with the new version of QLab or maybe a quirk of the system but, when assigned to groups with auto-continue the cues all played at once instead of in sequence. The workaround we ended up using was to auto-follow all of them and add a post-wait time that equaled the duration of the previous cue (See Appendix 3). This means that both cues would fire and the second would wait for the duration of the first cue.

Looking back on the whole process, there are a few things that I would have liked to have done differently. I would have liked to spend more time on the beginning of Act II. I changed Cue 16, the transition from the intermission music into the top of Act II, several times and the transition worked well enough. But, the smoothness of the transition was dependent on when the top of Act II was called, which changed every run because the duration of intermission was never exactly the same each night. If I were doing the project over, I could have chosen intermission music that would be appropriate to run into the action of the top of Act II.

Cue 16.5 into Cue 17 had the same problem. The length of the little scene between Lord John and Margaret was slightly different each night, a normal part of live theatre. Therefore, the transition back to the beginning of the Handel *Prelude* did not always line up rhythmically or melodically with the end of a phrase. A different solution to this would be to have used a different song that had a soft beginning that built to a fanfare but Mark Alan and I really liked how the Handel sounded. The only other thing that bothered me was the group cues not functioning as intended but I’m proud of the workaround we figured out.

I think that I held to the timeline that I proposed at the beginning of the project. All of my tasks were completed on time, but occasionally took longer than I thought they would. Also, some of my tasks were dependent upon others. I had to wait for the speakers to arrive at the

theater and for the floor backstage to be painted before I could place them and figure out patching. Patience, flexibility and managing my schedule to make room for meetings and research are lessons that I will carry forward in my career.

SIGNIFICANCE

This project is the culmination of my work in RTT. All of the shows that I have worked on in various capacities have taught me how a production comes together and how to work collaboratively. Being a technician allows me to communicate better with the board op when I'm a designer, and being a designer will make me a better technician because I understand the design process and how each role works. This is important because I intend to pursue a career in theatre or live production after graduation. I have taken classes in scenic and lighting design, in which I learned about the design process and how I work as a designer. The design process requires research, planning and collaboration. A designer must plan out their work and research the period in which the play is set to avoid historical inaccuracy and to stay on schedule. Then the designer must collaborate with the director and other designers to present a unified production.

It is worth repeating that theatre is an art in which every person has a different role and makes a contribution to the production. If one person does not come through, it affects the whole project. Everyone is essential and they work together to create a unified vision of the production. Aristotle thought that the plot of a play was the most important part, and spectacle and music least. Today, what Aristotle would call excess is the most intriguing part of a show. Our production of *Much Ado About Nothing* on RTT stage would not have been the same without my contribution of sound. The production would not have had the same power or cohesiveness without the music. This project was significant to me personally because I had the opportunity to design a mainstage show, experience the responsibility of that task, and collaborate with new people. I plan to build upon this experience as I go into the working field of technical theatre.

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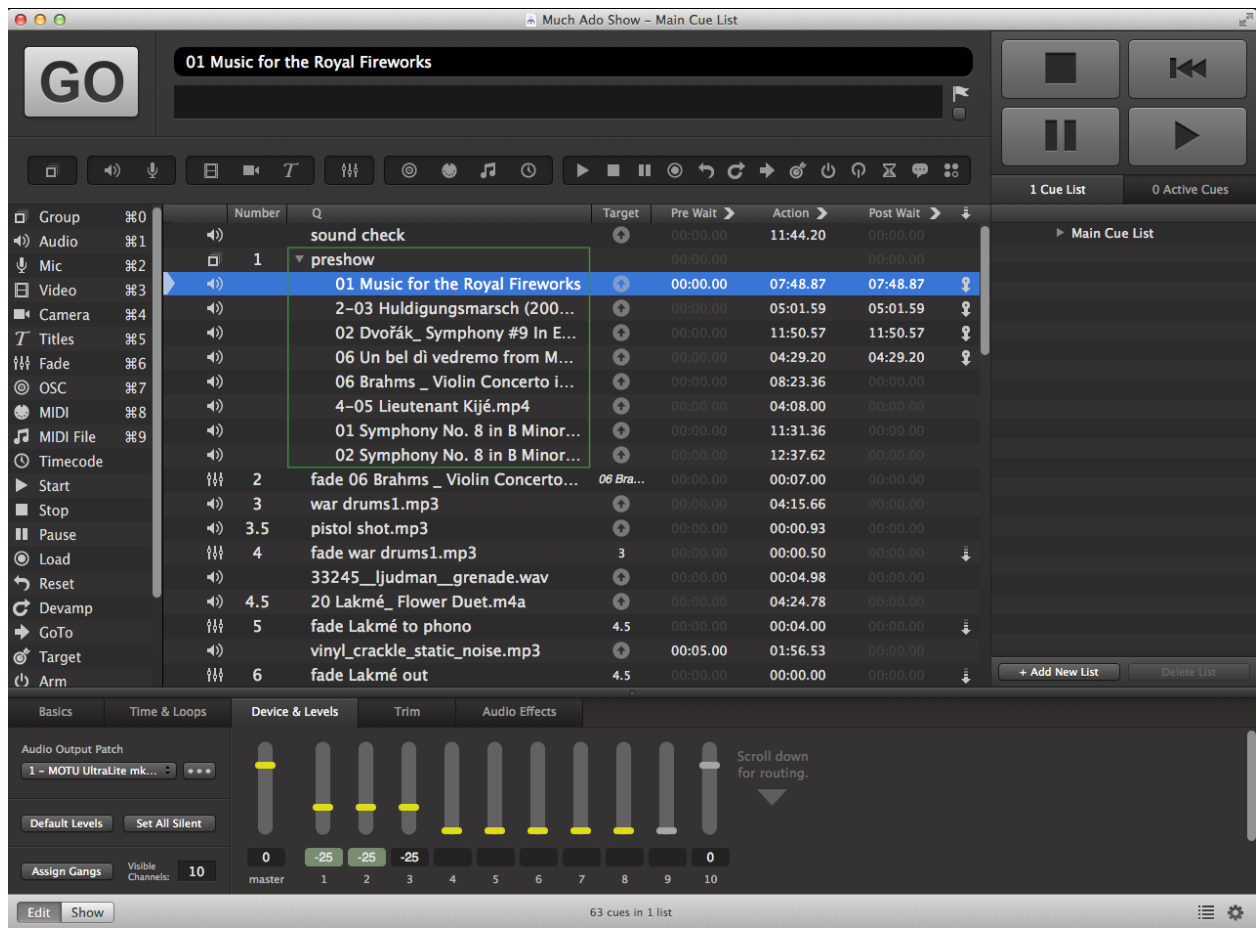
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Timeline of Project

- Fall 2013: Approached the department about sound designing a mainstage show and approached my advisor John Forbes about Honors Thesis Project
- April 2014 – Initial design meeting with director Mark Alan Gordon and other designers; Approached thesis committee members
- September: Confirmed thesis committee; Submitted Honors Thesis Proposal
- October: Received acceptance of Proposal
- 11/19: Design meeting #2
- 12/3: Production Meeting #1
- 12/4: First sound specific meeting with Mark Alan
- 1/14/15: Production Meeting #2
- 1/15: Advising meeting with John Forbes
- 1/20: Production Meeting #3 and sound specific meeting with Mark Alan
- 1/26: attended a run of the show
- 1/27: Production Meeting #4
- 2/3: Production Meeting #5
- 2/6: Paper Tech with Mark Alan, John Forbes and stage manager Alex Dunker
- 2/9: Sound work day and attended a run of the show
- 2/10: Production Meeting #6
- 2/11: Dry Tech
- 2/12: First Tech
- 2/13: Second Tech
- 2/14: 10 out of 12 rehearsal, including run of show

- 2/15: First Dress Rehearsal
- 2/16: Second Dress Rehearsal
- 2/17: Invited Final Dress Rehearsal
- 2/18: Opening Night
- 2/19-22: Run of Show
- 2/22: Strike
- 2/24: Advising Meeting with John Forbes, Began work on thesis
- 3/10: Advising Meeting with John Forbes
- 3/24: Advising Meeting with John Forbes
- 3/31: Advising Meeting with John Forbes
- 4/13: Submit Thesis materials to committee
- 4/20: Defend Thesis

Appendix 2 – QLab Layout



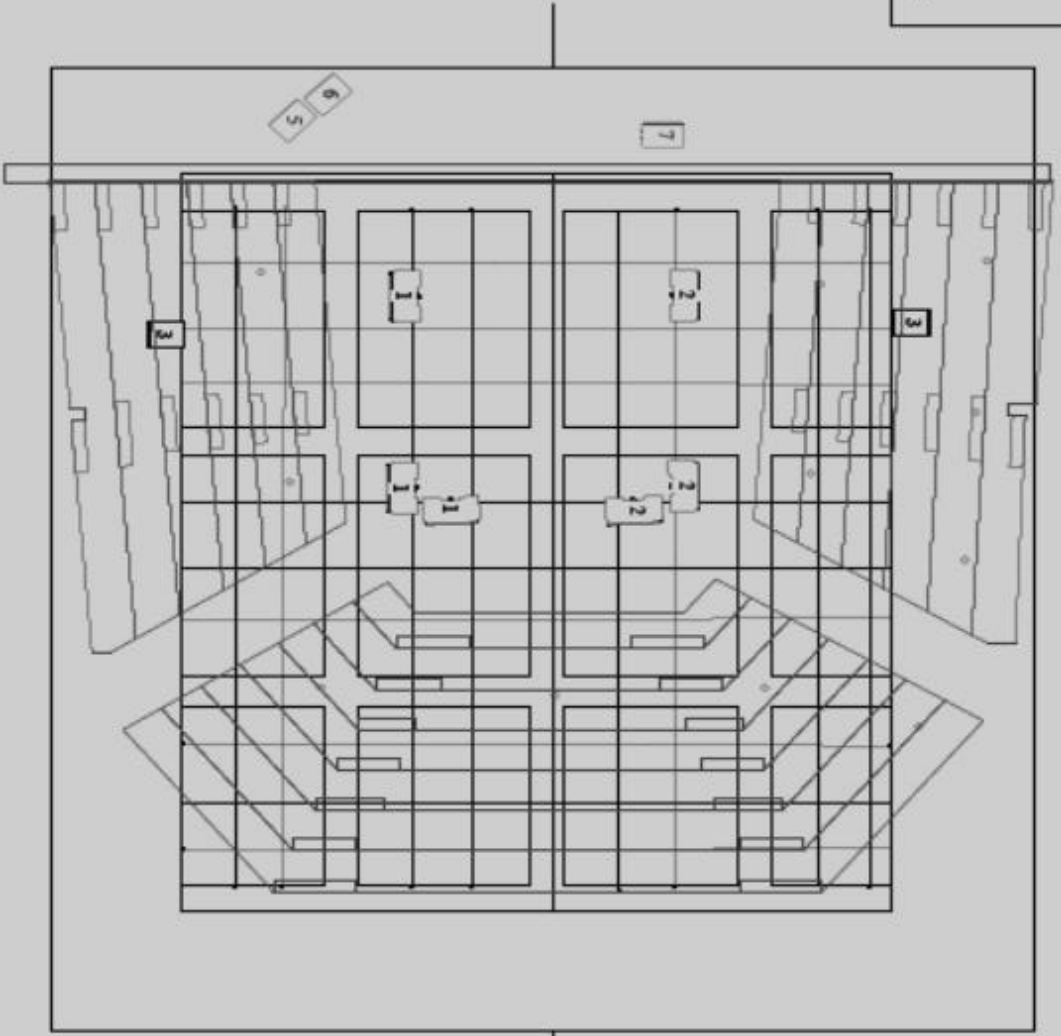
Appendix 3 – Cue List in QLab

	Number	Q	Target	Pre Wait	Action	Post Wait	
🔊		sound check	⬆️	00:00.00	11:44.20	00:00.00	
☐	1	▼ preshow		00:00.00		00:00.00	
🔊		01 Music for the Royal Fireworks	⬆️	00:00.00	07:48.87	07:48.87	👇
🔊		2–03 Huldigungsmarsch (200...	⬆️	00:00.00	05:01.59	05:01.59	👇
🔊		02 Dvořák_ Symphony #9 In E...	⬆️	00:00.00	11:50.57	11:50.57	👇
🔊		06 Un bel dì vedremo from M...	⬆️	00:00.00	04:29.20	04:29.20	👇
🔊		06 Brahms _ Violin Concerto i...	⬆️	00:00.00	08:23.36	00:00.00	
🔊		4–05 Lieutenant Kijé.mp4	⬆️	00:00.00	04:08.00	00:00.00	
🔊		01 Symphony No. 8 in B Minor...	⬆️	00:00.00	11:31.36	00:00.00	
🔊		02 Symphony No. 8 in B Minor...	⬆️	00:00.00	12:37.62	00:00.00	
🔊	2	fade 06 Brahms _ Violin Concerto...	06 Bra...	00:00.00	00:07.00	00:00.00	
🔊	3	war drums1.mp3	⬆️	00:00.00	04:15.66	00:00.00	
🔊	3.5	pistol shot.mp3	⬆️	00:00.00	00:00.93	00:00.00	
🔊	4	fade war drums1.mp3	3	00:00.00	00:00.50	00:00.00	⬇️
🔊		33245_ljudman_grenade.wav	⬆️	00:00.00	00:04.98	00:00.00	
🔊	4.5	20 Lakmé_ Flower Duet.m4a	⬆️	00:00.00	04:24.78	00:00.00	
🔊	5	fade Lakmé to phono	4.5	00:00.00	00:04.00	00:00.00	⬇️
🔊		vinyl_crackle_static_noise.mp3	⬆️	00:05.00	01:56.53	00:00.00	
🔊	6	fade Lakmé out	4.5	00:00.00	00:00.00	00:00.00	⬇️
🔊		fade vinyl_crackle_static_noise.mp3	vinyl_c...	00:00.00	00:00.00	00:00.00	
🔊	7	fanfare	⬆️	00:00.00	00:17.09	00:00.00	
🔊	8	07 Emperor Waltz.m4a	⬆️	00:00.00	04:19.33	00:00.00	
☐	8.5	▼		00:00.00		00:00.00	
🔊		fade 07 Emperor Waltz.m4a	8	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:05.00	👇
🔊		03 From Holberg's Time.mp4	⬆️	03:55.00	03:30.65	03:30.65	👇
🔊		11 Holberg Suite.mp4	⬆️	00:00.00	03:48.66	03:48.66	👇
🔊		06 Water Music Suite_ Menuet...	⬆️	00:00.00	05:07.80	00:00.00	
🔊		6–07 Symphony in G.mp4	⬆️	00:00.00	03:18.53	00:00.00	
🔊	9	dance out	06 Wat...	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:00.00	
🔊	10	transition	⬆️	00:00.00	04:29.55	00:00.00	
🔊	10.5	fade transition	10	00:00.00	00:04.00	00:00.00	
🔊	11	Sleepers Awake	⬆️	00:00.00	04:29.55	00:00.00	
🔊	12	fade Sleepers Awake	11	00:00.00	00:06.00	00:00.00	
🔊	13	06 Mad Dogs and Englishmen.m4a	⬆️	00:00.00	00:49.67	00:00.00	
🔊	13.5	fade 06 Mad Dogs and Englishme...	13	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:00.00	
☐	15	▼ Intermission		00:00.00		00:00.00	
🔊	14	06 Mad Dogs and Englishmen....	⬆️	00:00.00	00:49.67	00:49.67	👇
🔊		01 Symphony No. 41 in C Maj...	⬆️	00:00.00	08:38.92	08:38.92	👇
🔊		02 Symphony No. 41 in C Maj...	⬆️	00:00.00	09:47.89	00:00.00	
🔊		03 Symphony No. 41 in C Maj...	⬆️	00:00.00	05:12.00	00:00.00	
🔊		04 Symphony No. 41 in C Maj...	⬆️	00:00.00	06:08.59	00:00.00	
🔊	16	fade 02 Symphony No. 41 in C M...	02 Sy...	00:00.00	00:06.00	00:00.00	⬇️
🔊		pre wedding	⬆️	00:01.50	06:49.64	00:00.00	
🔊	16.5	fade pre wedding	pre we...	00:00.00	00:03.00	00:00.00	
🔊	17	wedding	⬆️	00:00.00	01:21.13	00:00.00	
🔊	18	fade wedding	17	00:00.00	00:03.00	00:00.00	
■	19	stop wedding	17	00:00.00		00:00.00	⬇️
🔊		09 Water Music Suite_ Prelude.m4a	⬆️	00:00.00	02:03.18	00:00.00	

⏮	20	fade 09 Water Music Suite_ Prelu...	09 Wat...	00:00.00	00:03.00	00:00.00
⏮	21	Mad Dogs and Englishmen.m4a	⬆	00:00.00	00:49.67	00:00.00
⏮	22	fade Mad Dogs and Englishmen.m4a	21	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:00.00
⏮	23	The Land of Might-have-.m4a	⬆	00:00.00	04:18.05	00:00.00
⏮	24	fade The Land of Might-have-.m4a	23	00:00.00	00:07.00	00:00.00
⏮	25	Sleepers Awake!	⬆	00:00.00	04:29.55	00:00.00
⏮	25.4	fade Sleepers Awake!	25	00:00.00	00:04.00	00:00.00
⏮	25.6	fade Sleepers Awake!	25	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:00.00
⏮	26	wedding #2	⬆	00:00.00	02:46.08	00:00.00
⏮	27	fade wedding #2	26	00:00.00	00:06.00	00:00.00
⏮	28	the kiss	⬆	00:00.00	02:31.50	00:00.00
⏮	28.5	fade the kiss	28	00:00.00	00:05.00	00:00.00
⏮	29	curtain call	⬆	00:00.00	03:41.41	00:00.00
⏮	29.5	fade curtain call	29	00:00.00	00:06.00	00:06.00
⏮		03 The Ladykillers (Boccherini's M...	⬆	02:06.00	03:12.31	00:00.00

Appendix 4

- Speaker Key**
- 1. House Left JBL
 - 2. House Right JBL
 - 3. Subwoofer
 - 4. Unused Channel
 - 5. Upstage Right Directional
 - 6. Upstage Right Directional
 - 7. Upstage Center Left Powered



University of Vermont	
Royall Tyler Theater	
Show: Much Ado About Nothing	
Designer: Clare Devlin	
Director: Mark Alan Gordon	
1/4" = 1'	4/13/15

Appendix 5 – Cue List

Much Ado About Nothing

Sound Cue List (2/12/15)

<u>Act</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Cue#</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Notes</u>
I	2	1	Preshow	
	2		Preshow out	
	2	3	Prologue	With Lighting/Projections
		3.5	Gunshot	on picture of assassination
		4	Explosion	on guy on barbed wire
		4.5	Lakmè	B/W garden
		5	Lakmè to phonograph/crackle USL	Boracchio enter
		6	Lakmè out	visual cue, pick up needle
4	7		Entrance of men	Masterpiece Fanfare
13	8		Begin Dance	Emperors Waltz, Holberg, etc
		8.5	fade to USR	
25	9		End of Dance	
27	10		Transition	Sleepers Awake
		10.5	out	
34	11		Prepare for wedding	Sleepers Awake
35	12		out	
39	13		Dogberry and constables	Mad Dogs and Englishmen
49	13.5		out	
44	14		End of Act I	Mad Dogs and Englishmen

15 Intermission tunes

--- INTERMISSION ---

II	45	16	Top of Act II	cross fade to Haydn
		16.5	out	
	47	17	Wedding Processional	Water Music Prelude
	48	18	fade	
		19	swell	restart song
		20	out	
	59	21	Constables	Mad Dogs reprise
		22	out	
	63	23	Leonora think	Land of Might Have Been
		24	out	
	70	25	Letters	Sleepers Awake
		25.4	fade to underscore	Benedick sits
		25.6	out	
	72	26	Second Wedding	Peer Gynt
	73	27	out	
	76	28	The Kiss	Bach cello suite
		28.5	out	
		29	Curtain Call	Girls Like Boys