Recording To-Do List

Pre-Production
  • Create a to-do list with all of the production/pre-production/post production to-dos.
    • Meeting should be scheduled early in the semester
    • Dates noted below are when the meetings should be completed
  • Create a Folder in the file cabinets in Walker 212 (first two weeks of class)
  • Schedule a meeting with the project advisor, the show director/conductor, the production manager, and the rest of your recording team. (meeting should be three weeks before concert, earlier is good)
  • Attend the planning meeting (two weeks before concert)
  • Create an input list (1 week before load-in)
    • Include a conductor/director listening microphone for the studio
  • Create a mic plot (1 week before load-in)
  • Use Google to schedule the recording studio for all rehearsals and performances as well as some extra lock-out time.
  • Schedule a meeting with your advisor and the director/conductor to insure you have a good handle on the show and maybe get some reference recordings (meeting should happen 2 weeks before the show)
  • Schedule a meeting with your advisor to review the mic plan (meeting 1 week before load-in)
  • Create a scene for your console and ProTools file and review them with your advisor in a scheduled meeting (4 days before load-in)
    • This should have the full file structure put in place as well as all of your channels labeled and proper plug-ins inserted.
    • Make sure you have a reverb bus or multiple busses set-up and in ProTools make sure you have plug-ins on all of your channels - you cannot add or remove plug-ins or busses while recording so you must have this all set-up in advance.
    • File Structure:
      • Base folder with title in the format: ID# (YYMMDD## where ## designates the number of the recording for that day) Group name (may have concert name)
        • Example: *05092501 Chamber* (This designates year 2005 recording on September 25 2005, being the first recording of the day.)
        • ProTools file with title that matches the base folder
        • Audio Files Directory (created by ProTools)
        • Fade Files Directory (created by ProTools)
        • Album Master directory (ID# description Album Master: *05092501 Chamber Album Master*)
          • Bounce files(s) (titles: ID# and description)
          • DSP-Quattro document(s) (descriptive names)
          • DDP image (title: ID# and description DDP: *05092501 Chamber DDP*)
        • Text document noting any special arrangements (esp. if there are broadcast versions of the CDs or other considerations)
        • Alternative Album Directories (title: ID# description (ie. Broadcast CD))
          • Bounce file(s) (titles: ID# and description)
          • Waveburner or DSP-Quattro X document(s) (title: ID# and description)
          • Waveburner image or DDP image (title: ID# and description)

Production
- Create a Call Sheet and distribute it to all sound crew (2 weeks before load-in)
  - Live engineers will want some tuning/testing time outside of other load-in times
  - All engineers need to plan to test microphones every day there is activity in the space before rehearsal and performances. Things sometimes get rematched or break or… Make sure you find out and fix these things before the musicians show-up.
- Attend all load-ins, rehearsals, performances, and strike.
- Record claps on stage in order to (these should all be complete before the final rehearsal):
  - confirm all microphones are what you think they are (especially that left and right are correct)
  - confirm all microphones have proper polarity
  - time align the microphones (depending on the show this may or may not be important)
- Set up a mic by the conductor that picks up his voice while talking to the ensemble. This will help you know what is going on and know more about what the conductor is looking for out of the ensemble. Turning the woodwind mic up when the conductor has asked them to play louder is generally a bad idea because they are then too loud for example. Make sure this is in place from the first rehearsal. (may not be possible for Jazz concerts, might be used in the mix for pep band concerts)
- Record each rehearsal to ProTools with a logic back-up.
- Run a test of the stream at each rehearsal
- Record your compressed and uncompressed mixes to ProTools and the Logic back-up.
  - Note that if you do your job right the mix will be recorded and done at the end of the performance.
  - Advanced students may also want to record a mix-minus or stems. Talk to your advisor about these terms and what that will might mean in your case.
- **During Rehearsal:**
  - Engineer:
    - Practice, practice, practice - you need to nail the broadcast mix, get it great before you are on air - write down notes for each piece of music about soloists or specific changes in the mix you need to make. Get ready. Stay focused. Make sure the compressed broadcast mix rocks.
    - Get the gains set ideally for every track.
    - Make sure all the microphones are set up the best possible way.
    - Constantly listen to insure you are not missing parts of the music.
    - Drop ProTools markers at the **start** of each piece and movement.
      - **WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING** - in ProTools enter (on the number pad) adds a marker. Return (by the letter keys) stops recording and returns to 0. Hitting the wrong key makes for a very bad day.
  - Assistant Engineer:
    - Monitor the stream and the back-up recording.
    - Pass along any notes to the engineer. Make sure everything sounds good.
- **After Each Rehearsal and Performance:**
  - Engineer:
    - Back up the recording to the vpa_audio share in the proper semester folder. Use the visual differ app to update the previous backup.
    - Make sure the input list and other paperwork is updated.
    - Insure microphones are set and that all elements of the setup are documented so that if someone does a studio session before your next recording and you have to do a big reset it is easy to do.

- Assistant Engineer
  - Make sure any notes are properly filed in the file box in the studio, tidy up the space, assist the engineer on any items needed.
  - When there is down time ask the lead engineer about the set-up and mix. Make sure you know how to set everything up on your own. If you don't understand something make sure you take time to talk with the lead engineer or advisor about it. Do not waste this learning opportunity.
  - Bounce files for the conductor/director to review if required
- **During the Show:**
  - Assistant Engineer:
    - Monitor the back-up recording and stream encoding
    - Have a printed program from the show and write down ProTools time code for the start of each piece and movement. This is especially important for Jazz concerts where they might not follow the program. These notes will be supplied to NPR should the concert be broadcast so think about how you are representing yourself professionally. Times noted should be the beginning of each piece. Endings are not required.

Post Production:
- **Immediately After the show**
  - Start a back-up copy
  - Strike the microphones first so they are not damaged while the rest of the crew strikes chairs etc…
  - Clear and reset ("Zero") the mixers
  - insure all files are in the file cabinet in 212
- **Completed 1 week after the show**
  - Scan or otherwise insure that all important paperwork is in the archive folder on the server.
  - Have a completed mix that you review with the project advisor and the music conductor/director if they are available
- **Complete 2 weeks after the show**
  - Master the album using DSP-Quattro
  - Review that master with the project advisor
  - Make sure the full archive is completely backed up on the server
  - Add final mastered files in vpa_audio:CD Archive:(Correct Semester):ID# Description:ID# Description CD# such that the individual audio files could be dragged onto any CD burning application and burned to disk or any individual piece can be quickly identified and retrieved for online sharing.
    - File Structure:
      - **vpa_audio:CD Archive:(Correct Semester):ID# Description**
        ex. *vpa_audio:CD Archive:2005 Fall:05092501 Chamber*
        - **Text or PDF document** with Mastering Information
        - **Text Document** with any needed notes about types of CDs (if there are special CDs such as an NPR broadcast CD with extra crowd noise or a CD with limited tracks prepared for a grant application).
        - Folder **ID# Description CD#** for example
          ex. *vpa_audio:CD Archive:2005 Fall:05092501 Chamber:05092501 Chamber CD#1*

Final Production folder in Walker 210 should have:
- A copy of the show program, with track start and end times marked on it, along with any additions (common in the case of Jazz recordings).
- A diagram showing the placement of all microphones on stage and in the house
- A copy of the input list
- Any and all notes made in the process of making the recording
- The master recording on CD
- A copy of the CD label, the booklet and the double J.
- Any other information pertinent to the recording.