Sound Environments:

Fostering Diverse Compositional Practices in an Undergraduate Music and New Media Program

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Brief Background

Bachelor of Music in Composition and New Media

▶ Interdisciplinary degree with Music and Digital Media Department at University of Massachusetts Lowell.

▶ Planned rollout in F2016.

▶ Degree balances commercial and art-centered learning objectives with practical technology implementation.

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Portable Recorders and Digital Technology

Influencing Curricular Design

Ease of use for novice recordists.

Clean signal for uncompressed audio.

Portability inspires sound gathering in diverse environments.

Cost-effective and rugged.

Archival and transfer of files is quick and seamless.

Introduces beginners to field recording techniques.

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Digital Tools and Participatory Culture

Creation & Consumption – Millennial Composers

Technology

Values

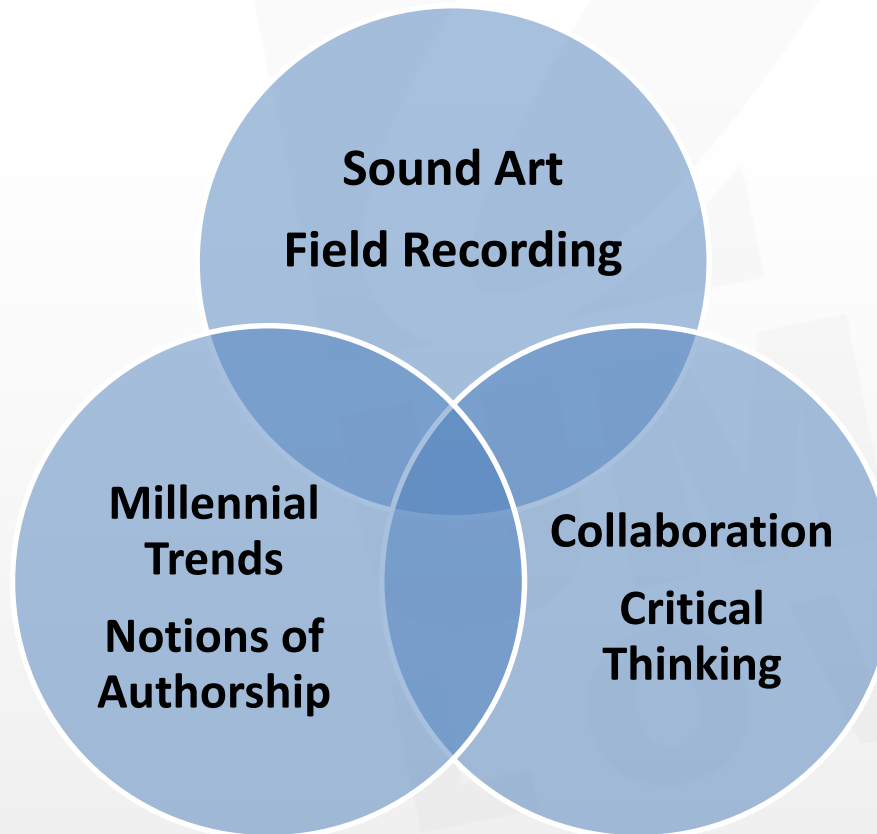| Online Music Communities	Open-Access Software	Less Concern for Profit	Transparency in Information Access
DAW-Influenced Compositions	Global Information Exchange and Collaboration	Simple Attribution Policy is Favorable	Many Communities are Self-Policing
Creation and Reuse of Original Content		Remixing and Gaming Communities as Examples	

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Digital Synthesis and Remixing

Collaborative Composition Assignment

- Students upload raw sounds to a secure internal server.

- Sounds are edited and logged for quality and length but no processing.

- Students must use only sounds from other class members to create a new piece.

- Students import sounds into standard DAW for arranging, mixing and manipulation.

- Students workshop their piece and discuss creative approaches with original sound author.

- Restrictions force the student to think critically to conceive new ideas.

Learning Objectives

Creative-Technological-Cultural

Sound Art
Field Recording

Millennial Trends
Notions of Authorship

Collaboration
Critical Thinking

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Future Considerations

Planning and Implementation

▸ Discussions with administration, IT, and faculty to implement the right server for file-sharing purposes.

▸ Supplement lab exercises with relevant music business and copyright discussions.

▸ Report preliminary results for future dissemination and qualitative case studies.

▸ Balance contemporary and traditional methodologies to enhance student learning in specific courses and the degree as a whole.

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Thank You!

Please email Daniel_Walzer@uml.edu for a PDF copy of the full paper.

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