

**Sean Tianihad - 15332647**

**MMT Y1 - Mar 2016**

**Audio Production Techniques: Assignment 2 – Sound Design for Visual Media**

**Musicless Music Video: Culture Club – Do You Really Want To Hurt Me**



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## **1. Approach to Brief / Chosen Material:**

Having done so much Foley work in the previous assignment, I wanted to continue exploring this in the second brief, and a musicless music video was the best platform to do this. After much deliberation (and watching music videos) I gave up the search for videos and settled on Culture Club's 'Do You Really Want To Hurt Me'. After studying the video several times I felt there was plenty of visual triggers and key gestures that could be recreated through Foley work, and so began the listing of all sounds that needed to be recorded.

## **2. Assessment of Sound Design / Objectives:**

Assessing the quantity of sounds that had to be created was done simply by going through the video shot to shot, and building a shopping list of visual gestures & triggers that would need a sound. The section of the song I have chosen is from the start to 3min 17sec, which consists of 5 scenes – Court scene 1, Club scene, Court scene 2, Pool scene, and Court scene 3. Once the list was made for each scene, briefly describing each scenario in which a sound was to be used, I then spent some time figuring out what could be used to recreate all the sounds (trying to think of things in my house I could use, to save on time more than anything).



### 3. Developing Backgrounds:

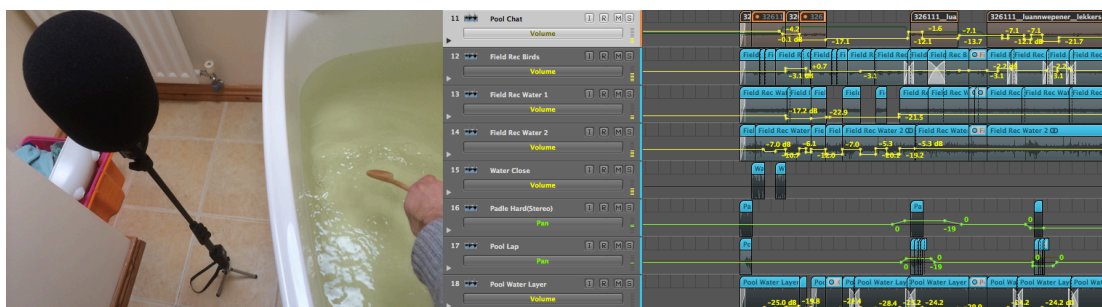
The settings in the video are pretty familiar to most and easy to recognize (court room, basement club, outdoor pool), so the first audio created was the background for each scene. Starting with Court scene 1 - the sounds of people talking low, the odd creak of wooden pews, and occasional coughing - were all sounds I created in my studio. Using my own voice for the people (and Autotune to try and create some diversity between the voices), and one of the creaky doors in my house (recorded on the Zoom H2n in M/S – to have the option of clean direct mono, or use some of the room ambience), I created a fairly convincing court background noise. However I did notice one thing it was lacking (in comparison to other similar recordings), and that was a low room hum (which I imagine comes from power sources, lights, etc), and this I could not re-create effectively, so I used a sample of a room hum, and mixed with my own generated background noise, created a convincing court room ambience.



*Court Ambience Layer;*

The next scene was the Club scene, which is a small venue and more like a restaurant style arrangement of tables, and the venue pretty full. Again I could not successfully create a

convincing crowd, nor record my own as every venue I went to already had playing music in the background, which was unusable. So for this I found a sample of a full restaurant and no background music. The applause that follows at the end of this scene was made with multiple claps I recorded and panned, and mixed with a sample of more applause and crowd cheering.



*Pool BG Layers;*

The Pool scene I was able to use recordings I took of a near by lake and a field recording of some birds on a calm day, this was mixed with some recordings of bath water which I used ladles to create the sound of moving water. Also a sample of some people chatter was also added here in some parts to match with the people sitting by the pool.



*Foley Studio Setup;*

#### **4. Foley Recording:**

The Foley work in this piece was all done in my studio and around my house using various household objects, and recorded with an AKG P120 & the Zoom H2n as mentioned earlier. I

wont go through how every single sound was created, but I will explain most of the props and processes used in creating the Foley.

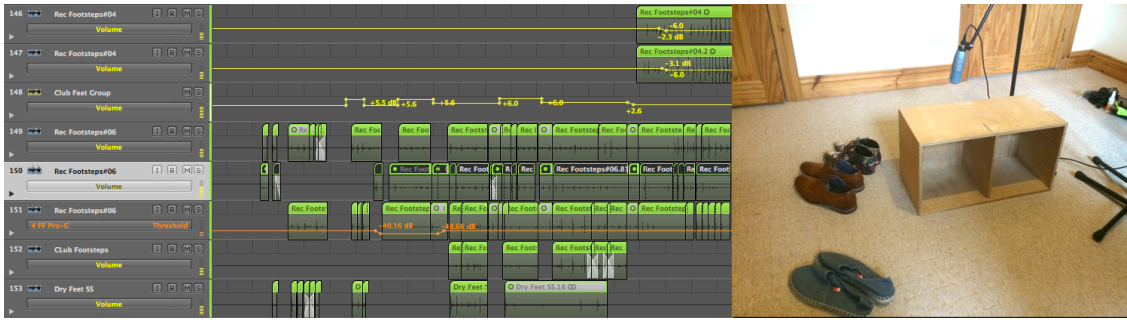


Starting with Court scene 1, the sound of the squeaking pews the mimes are sitting in I recorded using the Zoom H2n, and the sound source used was creaky floorboards and a creaky door. Layering was key for this sound, especially as there were nearly a dozen mimes sitting in 3 pews together. Next in this scene were the backing singers, both the rustling clothes and the sounds of them breathing out (to match the visuals in a humorous manner), this was done using 2 different thicknesses of jackets held in front of the mic and then myself breathing into the mic. Finally the sunglasses he puts on (twice throughout the video) I used similar material glasses to sound authentic.



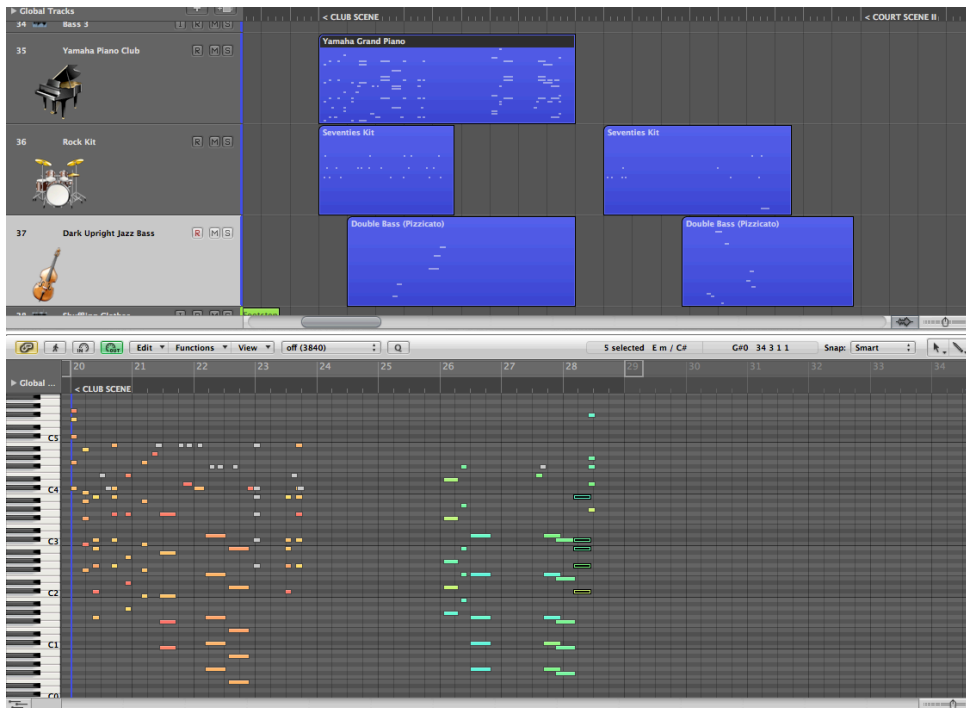
*Various Foley work for Court & Club scenes;*

The Club scene had quite a lot of Foley involved, with some nice visual triggers that are easily recognizable - for example, what looks like a mans monacle falling into his drink, I used a key hitting a glass tumbler, and then a water drop sound which I can make with my mouth (by flicking your cheek and whistling up in pitch at the same time).



*Shoe Foley;*

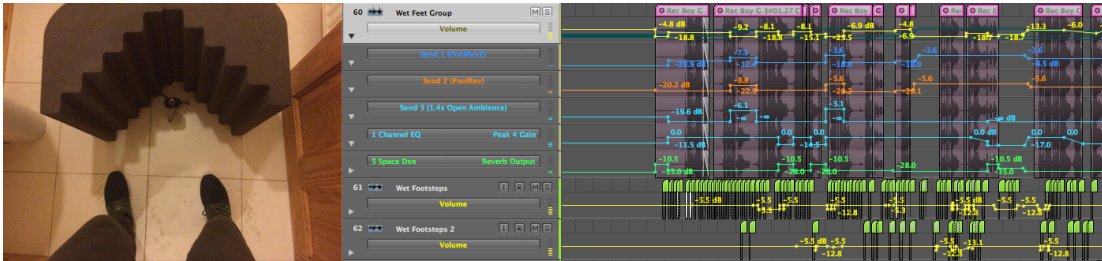
Then the obvious sounds like Boy George's footsteps as he dances around the room, I simply used a soft sole shoe (to match what looked like a similar material shoe he wore) on a wooden box I use for storage, I also recorded the two bouncers shoes (hard sole shoes) on the same box. The more shreds-esque elements in this scene (and the pool scene) are the band in the background, which I just used logics sampler instrument ESX24 and programmed the badly played notes but placing them frame by frame where it looked liked they were played by the band members, and live instruments for the pool scene.



*Programming Instruments;*

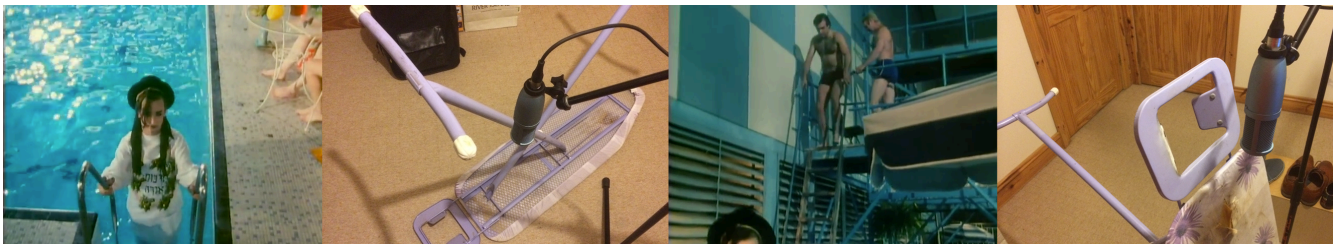
The second Court scene was pretty much the same Foley-wise as the first, except more vigorous movement and breathing from the backing singers, as well as added expressions from the Judge and crowd members, and the Judge turning a page.

The Pool scene was without a doubt the most Foley-heavy scene to produce, and there was such a wide spectrum of sounds to recreate, nothing short of a challenge when only using items found in my house.



*Wet Shoe Foley;*

The first sound tackled was Boy George's footsteps, which now had to sound wet and squeaky as he had just climbed out of the pool. I used the same shoe as before but wet them and basically recorded myself sliding around a tile floor in front of the Zoom H2n (recording in mono to leave out as much of the room ambience as possible), and placed two bass traps behind the Zoom to try and isolate the recording from behind.



*Ironing Board Foley for Pool Rail & Diving Platform;*

Next was the sound of Boy George holding onto the pool rails as he climbed out of the pool, this I used an ironing board which served two purposes – first the pool rails, which I wet the legs of the board and just tightly rubbed my hands along until I recorded the perfect squeak to match the visual – and second, the sound of people climbing & walking on the diving platform, which I used the metal base which the iron sits on and simply tapped it repeatedly. Also when I was recording the bath sounds for the pool, I ducked my head under to record myself trying to sing the original song under water, to use while his head is submerged.



A more complicated sound to reproduce was the sound of the man walking onto the diving board, which I used my hand on the wooden box used for the shoes, and then used a filtered slap delay to make it sound like the board was wobbling as he walk onto it.



*Diving board Foley;*

Other miscellaneous sounds include slurping a drink, a table shaking with the two men arm wrestling and subsequently an arm hitting the table, a person eating food, a page being turned and a paper being hit.



*Miscellaneous Pool Foley work;*

The final court scene has some extra Foley differing from the other two court scenes. The sound of the mimes clapping hands with gloves on, the Judge grunting (and farting which I recreated with my mouth and treated with EQ & convolution reverb), the gasps from the backing singers as Boy George is taken away, and the footsteps of all three men walking out

of the court room (done using the same technique as before – hard sole shoes/wooden box). For the sound of the Judge’s gabble I used a wooden ashtray, striking the box I used for the footsteps, and the whoosh sound was half a mic stand being swung in front of the Zoom. The only processing used for this sound was EQ, compression, and convolution reverb. The Judge also screams in this part, which I used a character from the TV show ‘Blue Mountain State’ (my voice wasn’t high enough for what I had envisioned for him to sound like here).



*Judge’s Gabble Foley;*

## 5. Dialogue Recording:

For the dialogue, or in this case the lyrics, I happened to have a very badly made acapella from the original, which I used when rerecording the vocal track – this made it a lot easier than trying to time it with the lips on screen. For comic value I did a creepy whisper for the whole piece, which worked perfectly with the reactions from everyone who looked upon him with puzzled and nervous expressions.



*Lady Falling;*

Also in the pool scene there is a lady that falls off the diving board into the pool while screaming, but in slow motion – this I recreated by recording myself screaming and pitching

it down (as it was slow motion it didn't really have to be a female voice originally) and used some low pass filtering & automation, then blending the vocal with the sound of a large stone being thrown into a lake (from one of my field recordings). I added extra dialogue to the characters that interacted with Boy George in the video, for example the two bouncers that remove him from the club, and the two men that approach him at the pool, as well as various expressions from crowd members and more frequent cast members (mimes, Judge, etc). The processing for all the dialogue consisted mainly EQ, compression, and Autotune, changing the pitch and throat of the voices so they didn't all sound like me.



*Vocal Processing;*

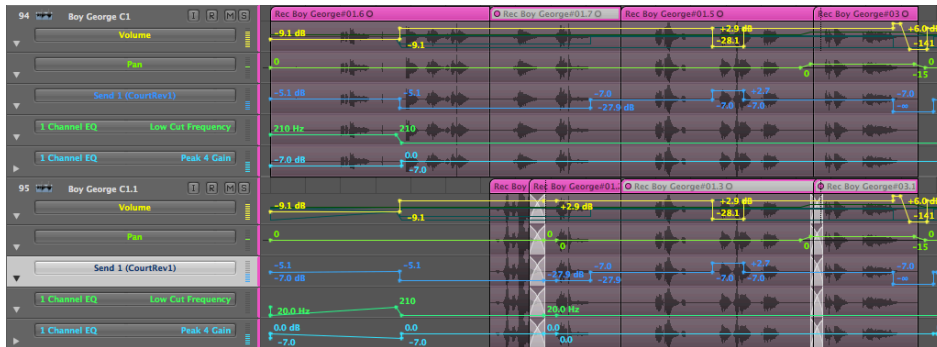
## 6. Perceived Space:



*Space Designer using Impulse Responses;*

I found the biggest challenge of this project in trying to convince the viewer that you're actually watching a recording of the settings without music, was multiple changing camera angles of each scene. This required both editing the background and foreground noise levels

& EQ, as well as using multiple impulse responses and filtering, and above all, lots of automation. Choosing the right reverb for each shot and each sound, as well as the amount of that reverb, was a vital component of placing the elements within each setting.



*Automation & IR on vocals;*

## 7. Final Editing / Mixdown:



*Compression & Multiband Sidechaining;*

The finishing edits to the piece was mostly levels and cleaning up audio clips by cutting takes and removing blank audio (getting rid of unnecessary noise), as well as fading out any ends that were popping. The next process was to create bulk groups and start using some mild multiband sidechaining (making room for dialogue), and further compression to tighten up the mix (plus some stereo widening on certain groups using MS multiband Comp), the groups are as follows – Background Noise, Foley (foreground), Background Dialogue, and Main Dialogue (Boy George). The master chain consisted of only a few processes – Multiband compressor, SSL compressor, Ozone 5 (Foley broadcast patch), and AOM Invisible Limiter, with around -3dB headroom.



*Main Vocal Dessers @ 7.4kHz & 8.8kHz;*

Some Dessing was use on the main vocal (and also on the squeaky wet shoes in the pool scene, which had some sharp resonance around 1.8kHz & 3.5kHz). Also to tighten up the footsteps I used a noise gate to remove unwanted room reverb and attenuate the transients.



*FabFilter Pro-G tightening up the Footstep Foley;*

## 8. Reflection / Conclusion:

As with the previous assignment, I found Foley work a very enjoyable but challenging process. Having to create sounds from scratch to match a visual takes some quick and inventive thinking, but the results one can achieve with household objects I found can be pretty impressive. The one thing I took from this assignment is that your attention to detail heightens by staggering amounts the more you delve into the Foley work. I found that towards the end of the project I had to stop myself from putting too much in, as mixing it would have been incredibly messy with the amount of audio trying to be heard in the mix. The overall result of this piece I am pleased with, I feel the timing and visual triggers I have

done to the best of my ability and access to resources, and it come across as a convincing musicless music video. If I was to approach a similar project in future with more time and access to more voices other than my own, I think I could definitely take on the project with confidence.