IMPLEMENTING THE NEW BACHELOR OF SOUND PRODUCTION AT BOX HILL INSTITUTE

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1. ABSTRACT

In 2016 a new Bachelor of Sound Production degree will commence delivery at Box Hill Institute. This paper details the development and integration of this new degree within the existing framework at Box Hill Institute.

2. INTRODUCTION

In 1987 Ken Barker published the book *Identification of statewide training needs for the music industry report to Curriculum Services Office of the Technical and Education Board of Victoria* (Barker 1987). With this he justified and began running a music course at Box Hill College of Technical and Further Education. Over the next two decades the music program grew a strong local reputation. At this point the Institute rebranded itself as Box Hill Institute (BHI), and began delivering undergraduate degrees. The Bachelor of Applied Music was the first undergraduate degree to be delivered at Box Hill Institute. Currently BHI delivers 12 undergraduate Bachelor degrees, including an updated Bachelor of Applied Music, and two postgraduate Masters degrees, including the Masters of Music (Contemporary Practice). Commencing in 2016 they will now also deliver the Bachelor of Sound Production.

3. PROPOSING THE BACHELOR OF SOUND PRODUCTION

Over the past 12 years the Bachelor of Applied Music at Box Hill Institute has grown and expanded to the point where BHI has become Australia's largest specialized contemporary music program, and one of the largest in the world (NACTMUS 2014). The Performance stream in particular has been in high demand. Within the Bachelor of Applied Music however there was one stream with a slight identity crisis: Audio Production. On one hand it included a full music theory curriculum including aural skills and performance opportunities, and on the other it was aimed at audio engineers, music producers, and sound designers, and included engineering and other technical skills.

For some students this was a perfect blend, they got the musical knowledge they wanted, and also learned how to set up and run their own studios. For others

however this dichotomy in musical perspectives could not be resolved. The skills and knowledge required for audio production and live sound mixing require significantly different approaches and techniques. They require the students to think of sound sonically and timbrally, rather than musically. Students need to be able to pick up on distortions, flutters, phase shifting, noise and signals, across multiple channels coming from multiple locations simultaneously, instinctually and fluently acting upon them with their mixing consoles and computers as if they were playing a musical instrument (Brown 2001).

With this dichotomy in mind it seemed the best option was to create a new degree that diverged from the Bachelor of Applied Music. In consultation with numerous audio engineers, live sound experts, and other industry leaders, a program was put together over a couple of years, with the final version being submitted and accepted by TEQSA in 2015. Incoming students for 2016 now have the option of enrolling in the existing Bachelor of Applied Music Audio Production stream, which shares units with the Core Applied Music Program, or they can specialise in a much broader field of sound production.

4. COMPONENTS OF THE NEW DEGREE

The structure of the Bachelor of Sound Production is intentionally very simple, belying a much more comprehensive and profound bachelor course. If you refer to Figure 1 on the following page you can see how these subjects fit together to create a cohesive new degree. The units are designed in a way that many projects can be integrated with particular Bachelor of Applied Music projects. For example the Performance students have projects that need to be recorded, which they will propose to the Sound Production students who will run the studio sessions. In order to convey an idea of what is covered in the course the following section broadly outline the contents of each subject area within the Bachelor of Sound Production

4.1. Studio Techniques
Studio Techniques covers all the techniques and knowledge required to work productively in a music studio environment, from simple microphone placement right through to multi-track mixing and post-production. It also includes certification in an industry standard

digital audio workstation (DAW), which is currently the Pro Tools certification program, however this will be updated if another DAW takes its place in the industry. On top of the practical techniques required to master this area, Studio Techniques will cover aesthetics, production values and audio theory, including digital signal processing. By the end of Studio Techniques, every student will have created a commercial level, fully self-produced album, as well as many other smaller projects that can become part of a folio for future employment.

4.2. Live Sound

Live Sound covers the techniques and knowledge required to work in a venue for live performance or live broadcast. This covers areas from bands in pubs, to musical theatre, from Rockwiz to the tennis. It includes live mixing techniques, backline, sound checks, etc. Live Sound covers various communications protocols, especially concerning wireless equipment, and low latency networking for audio streaming. It also covers acoustics, including acoustic design, room analysis, and acoustic theory. Live Sound also covers aural, pertaining to the needs of an audio engineer. This includes tuning, keys, clipping, distortion, phasing, and many other audio issues that can be identified with a trained ear.

4.3. Music Production

Music Production covers a multitude of aspects of electronic music creation. This includes sequencing and arranging music, synthesis, sampling, and signal processing. Within the sequencing and arranging components, music theory will be covered in a practical manner, enabling students to create well structured musical works with effective harmonies, rhythm and melodies. It covers the history of music production technology, including the pioneers, practitioners and seminal works that define new advances in music production technology. Music Production also delves deeply into computer music programming, including MIDI manipulation, algorithmic composition, creating digital synths and plugins, using external hardware as controllers, and also hacking non-musical devices to use in live musical performance, composition, theatre, circus, and installation art works. Third year especially allows them to work on large-scale projects of their own design.

4.4. Sound For Media

Sound for Media focuses on sound design for television, film, documentaries, computer games, and other media. It includes the art of Foley, recording audio on set and on location, diegetic and non-diegetic music, and other sonic events. Sound for Media also examines SMPTE and linear musical environments, contrasting it with interactive non-linear environments. By the end of Sound for Media, all students will have a folio of works designed to help them seek work in film and computer games audio design.

	6 Points 4 hours	6 point 4 Hours	6 point 4 Hours	3 point 2hours	3 point 2 hours
Semester 1 (1st year)	BSP111 Studio Techniques 1	BSP112 Live Sound 1	BSP113 Music Production 1	BSP114 Sound for Media 1	Elective 1
Semester 2 (1st year)	BSP121 Studio Techniques 2	BSP122 Live Sound 2	BSP123 Music Production 2	BSP124 Sound for Media 2	Elective 2
Semester 3 (2nd year)	BSP131 Studio Techniques 3	BSP132 Live Sound 3	BSP133 Music Production 3	BSP134 Sound for Media 3	Elective 3
Semester 4 (2nd year)	BSP141 Studio Techniques 4	BSP142 Live Sound 4	BSP143 Music Production 4	BSP144 Sound for Media 4	Elective 4
Semester 5 (3rd year)	BSP151 Studio Techniques 5	BSP155 Business Skills	BSP153 Music Production 5	BSP154 Sound for Media 5 (6 point)	
Semester 6 (3rd year)	BSP161 Studio Techniques 6	BSP165 Work Placement	BSP163 Music Production 6	BSP164 Sound for Media 6 (6 point)	

Figure 1. Overview of Units

4.5. Business Skills

Business Skills is a subject that prepares students to either seek work, or create new work opportunities. It is geared towards the music industry, and includes creating business plans, self-promotion, publication, project management, strategic and financial planning, business pitches and many other employment skills.

4.6. Work Placement

Work Placement is an opportunity for students to spend some time in a real work environment. In this capacity they will be expected to meet the needs of their employer, using the skills that have been covered throughout the rest of the course. Various opportunities will be presented, giving the students an option of trialing in an area that suits their field of expertise. The employers will provide feedback on their time there.

5. CONCLUSION

The Bachelor of Sound Production is really exciting. It has been a work in progress for a couple of years now, but a lot of consultation and thought was put into each specific area, producing a strong and cohesive whole. Of course the test will come when the students arrive, but we all feel it will prove successful.

6. REFERENCES

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