



ATEC at American

AUDIOTECH

NEWSLETTER



ATEC Students Tim Madden and David Greenburg recording Imogen Heap

GRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

by: Deb Edattel, MA '23

Carolyn Malachi



Carolyn Malachi (2019, MA, Audio Technology) was a Grammy-nominated musician and producer touring the globe when she landed in Kuwait for a gig that altered the course of her career. That was the day she and her band arrived for sound check to find the mixing console and monitors sealed in their original packaging... no sound engineer in sight. “We could have turned right around and walked out,” Carolyn said. “But I wanted to play.”

So how did Carolyn make it happen? For the next six hours, she FaceTimed with a live sound engineer pal in Washington, D.C. – halfway across the world and in the middle of the night – who walked her through the entire setup step by step. By go-time they were up and running. “That situation revealed a gap in my knowledge that I hadn’t considered before. I learned the basics of signal flow that night,” Carolyn says, “and I knew that I never wanted to feel that disempowered again.”

Fast forward two years and – after researching various graduate-level audio programs – Carolyn was enrolled in AU’s ATEC program building on that hard-won knowledge. “I was impressed with the diversity of AU’s offerings – from advanced production techniques to digital instrument design.” Today she says her academic training has completely changed the way she approaches collaborations with music producers, sound engineers and other artists. “I can create music that’s truly faithful to an artistic vision in a way that simply wasn’t possible before,” she says.

In addition to her continued success as a performing artist and songwriter, Carolyn now produces and engineers music for a variety of artists. She also

shares her knowledge with the next generation of musicians, engineers and producers in her new role as an educator at Howard University’s Cathy Hughes School of Communications where she teaches audio production. You can follow all of Carolyn’s endeavors on Instagram @CarolynMalachi.

Julia Gollin



Julia Gollin (BA, Audio Production, 2018), who runs front-of-the-house sound for the legendary Viper Room club on Los Angeles’ iconic Sunset Strip, gets pretty excited when she has the opportunity to work with another female engineer. “We’re pretty rare across the field of audio engineering but particularly in live sound. Out of all the touring crew that I’ve worked with, seeing another woman or nonbinary person is so uncommon it’s notable – it definitely makes my night.”

Yet, when Gollin looked for industry data to better contextualize her professional experience, she found it didn’t exist. “There is some limited research exploring gender inequality on the performance side of the industry: for example, artists signed to major music labels and booked at music festivals. But there was nothing focused on the live music workforce. I was surprised.”

So, when the Covid-19 pandemic shut live music down for an extended period, Gollin saw an opportunity. She would take that time to research the issue herself. The result was “Backstage Barriers: Occupational Gender Segregation in Live Music Production,” a qualitative review and two-

part mixed-method survey of industry professionals, the first industry analysis of its kind and Gollin's thesis for her Master of Arts in Music Business.

"The pandemic brought the vulnerability of the live music workforce to the forefront, which raised awareness of this issue among the press, industry organizations and policymakers. Ironically, the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating impact on live music may be a catalyst for positive change. I hope my research can contribute to that change."

Jack Schlandt



Jack Schlandt (MA, Audio Technology, 2021) isn't a fan of cold winters. But a simple mix-up landed this Florida native his dream job as a recording engineer in something of a winter wonderland: Vermont. How's that? "I'd done about 4 months of serious job searching when I came across a fantastic opportunity via the ATEC listserv. The posting said it was in Arlington – right where I was living at the time – so I responded right away. About halfway through the phone interview, I came to realize the job wasn't in Arlington, Virginia... it was in East Arlington, Vermont!"

But by the time that realization set in, he'd already been impressed enough to consider it a real possibility. "They wanted to know as much about me as a person as they did about my skills and training as an engineer," says Schlandt. "It really felt like a good fit right from that first conversation."

Old Mill Road Recording, Schlandt came to learn, is something of a destination studio with its 30+ studio buildings including a performance space, clients from all over the country, and top-of-the-line equipment including a 48-channel SSL duality mixing console – just like the one AU students learn on. It's idyllic setting features some older technology

too, including a genuine historic Gristmill dating back to 1764.

Within a few short weeks, he'd packed his bags and started buying winter gear. "I'm still not a fan of cold weather – and it gets *really cold* here. But this is 100% the right job for me. I know I got lucky."

You can learn more about Old Mill Road Recording on Instagram @oldmillrd.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

Noah Deetz



Have you ever wondered about a research grant but hesitated to apply? Perhaps you thought they were only available at the graduate level or were exclusive to very specific areas of research or study. Maybe you worried you weren't qualified enough. "Imposter syndrome is real, but it's important to recognize what you can bring to the table" says undergraduate Noah Deetz, recipient of the NASA District of Columbia Space Grant Consortium and the College of Arts and Sciences Mathias Research Fellowship. Noah's advice? "Don't assume you aren't qualified. If you are passionate about it and willing to work and learn, apply."

After reading about the 8-week undergraduate research grant in a general ATEC newsletter, Noah worked with ATEC Professor Braxton Boren to develop a proposal. Noah, a 5-year Audio Technology BS/MA student who hopes to work in project management for an audio software company, ultimately decided to spend the 8 weeks developing an algorithm that will accelerate the process of creating a digital model of a room, a practice used to predict how a particular room will respond to sound.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

by: Deb Edattel, MA '23

Rachel Neel



In theory, Noah explains how various measurements of a room can be used to help construct a digital model which can be used to predict the sound of a certain space. This process may seem simple; however, many rooms contain large amounts of variation, making it time consuming for humans to model them accurately. For example, the walls aren't likely to be perfectly flat or smooth. Or perhaps you are working in a building with ornate surfaces such as a historic cathedral and can't (in any practical way) measure every surface of those intricately carved gargoyles. In those cases, estimations are made. But what if our best estimates produce a digital model that isn't accurately predicting how your real-world room is responding to sound? Perhaps your digital model predicts a 2.5-second decay time but the actual room has a 3-second decay time? That's where Noah's research comes in. Rather than manually (and tediously) fine-tuning room parameters to improve the accuracy of the model, Noah hopes to create an algorithm that will automate that process thus closing the difference between the real room and the mathematical model of the room more quickly.

"AU has great opportunities for undergraduate research and really supports students," Noah says. "Talk to your professors. Your path is valid. Just go for it!"

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It's pretty easy to pinpoint the origins of her career as a professional audio engineer, says Adjunct Professor Rachel Neel: a bad breakup her junior year at the University of Texas. "It was a true turning point for me, my first real heartbreak. As a sociology and gender major, I had *a lot* to say about it. That was when a friend of mine invited me to cohost her feminist talk show, Lip Service, on the student-run radio station KVRX. I had a blast."

At the time she says she didn't take her role at the station very seriously, but she did accept a 2-month internship at Marfa Public Radio (KRTS) in West Texas – she stayed 2 years. During that time, her skillset expanded to producing and reporting and her work covering Texas' deadly wildfires earned her a prestigious regional Edward R. Murrow Award. Most importantly, Neel says, she fell in love with working at a station which became her career path.

Her pursuit of a career in radio took her to Austin's National Public Radio affiliate, KUT where she landed a role as a weekend host. Alas, a full-time permanent position at the station proved elusive and when the death of her beloved grandmother left her with both immense grief and a compelling urge to *live life to the fullest*, she left it all to move to New York City. She had no job, but excellent timing: in 2013 the immense growth of podcasts as a creative medium was just starting to bubble up. She took a few odd jobs and hustled every connection until she

landed at WNYC Studios, the then-newly launched podcast production arm of New York Public Radio. “I really blossomed in the podcast production space,” says Neel who produced some early podcast megahits for the network including *2Dope Queens* and *Sooo Many White Guys*. This semester, in addition to accepting a new role as Senior Director of New Content for Lemonada Media, she brought her podcast production expertise to AU’s ATEC department through a new class offering on podcast production.

Neel’s words of wisdom her new students: “Find your passion and then get to the places where people are doing the work you want to be doing. Bet on yourself, be kind to everyone and never say no to work.”

Professor Rogério Weis Naressi



As a kid with a love of both music and technology, Rogério Weis Naressi didn’t struggle with what profession he would pursue after completing his primary education. “When it was time to choose what I would study in college,” Rogério says, “audio engineering seemed the best way to merge both worlds.” It was a risk, but at 17 years old he applied to only one secondary education program, an undergraduate sound production program in his hometown of Curitiba, Brazil. Before his 18th birthday he was studying at the Federal University of Paraná (Universidade Federal do Paraná) and well on his way to achieving his dream of becoming an audio engineer. “It’s always rewarding when you take a risk and it works out,” he says.

Today as an accomplished musician, recording engineer and now educator, Rogério encourages his students to view AU’s studio facilities as a laboratory. “First-hand experience is key to truly understanding the concepts and techniques taught in class. Now is the time to experiment with

the amazing technology in front of you: compare microphones, mic placements, preamplifiers, hardware units versus their digital emulations... and record an instrument in the stairway!”

When asked about his legacy, Rogério say, “we spend a lot of time figuring out the content we will cover in class. If students are applying those skills in the real world, that’s my legacy.”

His final words of wisdom: “Collaborate as much as possible. There’s a lot more creative potential than producing alone on your laptop and the networking is invaluable. Ah, and when you go to concerts, wear earplugs!”

Follow Rogério on Instagram @rogerionaressi to see his latest projects, including a new album of original music – and his debut as a singer – in 2023!

Professor Matt Twiford



ATEC Professor Matt Twiford’s early interest in music was sparked by the theme song of the classic television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. “It was really captivating,” says Twiford. “I was maybe 5 or 6 years old and my dad and I would turn the volume way up every time it came on. A local radio station played it every Saturday night at 5pm and we would tune into that, too. It became a ritual and it never got old.”

From there Twiford played guitar in various local bands – becoming a multi-instrumentalist along the way by learning whatever instrument needed playing when someone didn’t show up for band practice. Overtime his artistic interests evolved towards electronic music – perhaps chasing the thrill of those iconic *Star Trek* sounds – a pursuit he continues today through the duo Slightly Faded.

As a professor, Twiford describes his style as that of a coach and his classroom as a team. “That’s the beauty of the classroom environment: each student brings different capabilities and creative perspectives. We become a community sharing successes and failures and learning from one another. I try to push each student to their limit, to put them into situations where they will grow and ultimately get to the next level. Mess up in here,” he advises, “because once you graduate, it’s showtime.”

Outside of class, Matt’s advice to his students is to practice the craft every single day. “Audio technology as a form moves so quickly, you will fall behind if you don’t. Stay on top of things and always be expanding your skillset.”

Following his own advice, Twiford has begun pursuing engineering projects outside the studio as a sound engineer in the field capturing nature in its undisturbed state. “I hope to contribute to wildlife conservation by capturing some of the sounds that are in danger of disappearing from the natural world,” he says.

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INTERNSHIPS & POST GRAD OPPORTUNITIES

Wolftrap Center for the Performing Arts, Vienna, VA

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts (originally known as the Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts and simply known as Wolf Trap) is a performing arts center located on 117 acres (47 ha) of national park land in unincorporated Fairfax County, Virginia, near the town of Vienna. Through a partnership and collaboration of the National Park Service and the non-profit Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, the park offers both natural and cultural resources.

- www.wolftrap.org/about/employment_opportunities.aspx
- **Cate Bechtold** (she/her) | *Director*, Internships and Community Programs
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts
1645 Trap Road | Vienna, VA 22182
- cateb@wolftrap.org | Office: 703.937.6304 | Ext: 4100

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- **To Apply:**
Submit resume to ericka@layc-dc.org

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