

Introduction. Why We Teach Soundwriting

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Prelude: How We Came to Sound

Michael's Narrative

When I was growing up on a farm in Iowa, sounds seemed either quiet or loud. There was no nuance to my childhood ears.¹ The quiet: The soft murmur of the high school football game heard from five miles away on a still night. The stillness after a snowstorm, when the sunlight bounced off an expansive sheet of fresh snow, the world only a visual with no discernible sounds. The silence of family members as their eyes were glued to the television (and the loud injunction to be quiet if we children interrupted). The loud: The roar of grain augers and tractor engines you couldn't hear people speak over. The thunderclaps during those awe-inspiring Midwestern storms. [*thunder in background (Fission9, 2020), followed by fading in of cows mooing (kilgore54, 2016)*] The bellowing from weaning calves at night as they huddled together, separated from their mothers for the first time.

It wasn't until I neared my teenage years that sound began to acquire nuance. Watching Reba McEntire on Country Music Television on Sunday mornings before going to church. [*basketball crowd fades in and then out (phillyfan972, 2017)*] Listening to Iowa State men's basketball games on the radio as my family drove home from our junior high games (sometimes held 45 or 75 miles away). Recording country songs from the radio onto my cassette player. (We could, from our farm, really only pick up a few local radio stations, all playing country music, Paul Harvey, and *Trading Post*, in which listeners called in looking to sell or buy an item.) And later, alternative rock (who can ignore or forget the voice of the Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan?) on my portable CD player or with my best friend

1. Audio versions of Michael J. Faris's, Courtney S. Danforth's, and Kyle D. Stedman's opening narratives can be found on the book's companion website.

while playing Final Fantasy III on the Super Nintendo [*Final Fantasy III tune plays (DarkEvil, 2006) for a few seconds*]; punk-ska concerts; poetry slams in college; the beats of “Tumbthumping” at high school dances long before I began to drink.

It wasn’t until I had been teaching writing for a few years that I began to see sound as a pedagogical and composing tool for college writing. In summer 2009, I assigned my first sound-based assignment. Students had written a literacy narrative that had to question or challenge a common assumption about literacy. I asked them to remediate their essays into audio essays. I remember listening to these audio essays on my blue iPod Mini as I drank coffee outside of a local coffee shop and wrote feedback to the students. It was the most enjoyable grading I’ve ever experienced. I just sat there and enjoyed student work for three hours as I wrote responses to the students’ lovely projects.

I can’t claim that assignment was radical or pushed the practices of composing far—either at that time or now. But this moment opened up a world of composing and teaching writing and the power of sound as a mode for student composition. I’ve later assigned podcast episodes and other soundwriting in my courses, and I’ve come to see sound as more integral to all composing than I had in the past. In grad school, I wrote best in coffee shops, with ambient sounds helping me to focus on the work in front of me. [*ambient sounds of a bar—talking, music, glasses clinking, door creaking—fade in (BurghRecords, 2018)*] And later, as a professor, I started writing at night at bars (as the day was too packed with teaching and admin work and meetings); I’d occasionally get interrupted by someone who would ask how I could work somewhere so loud: Talking, cheering at the football game on television, the clinking of glasses, the occasional dropped and shattered glass all became part of the ambience of my writing. [*ambience fades out*]

Rhetoric is about movement, and what better way to move than with sound.

[*Paul Harvey fades in: “. . . and now you know the rest of the story” (Harvey, n.d.).*]

Courtney’s Narrative

I lived in Australia as a baby and long-distance phone calls were too expensive, so my parents recorded audio cassettes of me learning to talk and sent those back to family in the States. “G’day, y’all” is my soundbite from that era; I was a soundwriter from the start.

Then I grew up as a cathedral chorister, later a singer in punk and bluegrass bands. I listened to a lot of talk radio—mostly BBC and NPR, but Howard Stern too. This all would have stayed a hobby if it weren’t for one fateful Saturday morning in my second year of graduate school.

I was injured by a hit-and-run driver while cycling. My broken neck was terrible, but it was the brain injury that was worse. Physically, I could see (when my eye healed) and I could hold a pen or type (when my arm healed), but the connec-

tion between those actions and the meaning of language had evaporated. In the impact or the coma, I lost the ability to read with my eyes or write with my hands. I lost whole languages I had learned, including the language of music. My health insurance (pre-Affordable Care Act) was tied to my employment as a graduate instructor, so my immediate concern was how to keep working while I figured out my recovery. And what I figured out was that I still had access to language through sound. If my first-year writing students read their papers to me out loud, I could give them oral feedback and I could still teach. So that's what we did.

I might have made different decisions had I known then what was ahead. I couldn't get treatment because I could still talk and reason capably. The campus disability office couldn't offer anything without a diagnosis. I couldn't get a diagnosis without insurance approval. My policy didn't cover injuries "resultant of a crime." I couldn't get a different policy with pre-existing conditions. There was no help. Eventually, I taught myself to read and write again, though now, more than ten years later, I don't think I'll ever regain even half the stamina I used to have. But all this time, however burned out my sight-reading gets, I have been able to call on soundwriting as an access point to language. I manage.

My experience prompts me to value sound as access to language for other people too. I show my dyslexic students how to read with voice synthesis. I get my English language learners to use speech-to-text when they're more comfortable speaking than writing. I try to give my blind students an easier time than I had. Soundwriting hasn't helped me teach my Deaf students exactly, but they remind me to be always purposeful about when and how I use sound versus visual versus any other media of composition.

As a student, a teacher, a writer, a reader, and an editor, sound has been a helpful "what about" to help me question my assumptions about language. It checks me and supports me in trying to be inclusive and fair and effective. While it may have begun professionally as a workaround, sound has always been a medium of access for me and I have come to value sound as an important contributor in its own right.

Kyle's Narrative

[Music fades in and plays beneath the following narration. It's rhythmic yet uneven, with airy synthesized notes jolting in and out—both upbeat and odd (Nctnm, 2017).]

In the early 1990s, my dad brought home an old-school karaoke machine—a heavy box with two tape decks, two mic inputs, and a big speaker. When my middle-school friends came over, we'd grab a tape of old sermons from my parents' reject bin and record over it with jokes and songs, the echo and gain jacked up until feedback screamed.

Two conclusions: For me, soundwriting means cassettes and community.

I wouldn't have called it "community" then, but that's what it was. Sure, I made a lot of recordings by myself—layering kazoo over the instrumental side of Boyz II Men's "End of the Road" cassette single, telling silly stories where I did all the voices—but I mostly remember making tapes with friends. They'd talk into the mic while I recorded, then I'd rearrange what they said and play it back for them later. We'd collaborate on audio dramas made for high school English classes, adding dramatic music and unexpected sounds to "The Masque of the Red Death," a scene from *Antigone*, or a retelling of the myth of Antiope—though we pronounced it an-tee-OH-pee. I was addicted to making something new with someone else (and, sure, for the feeling of pride when I played the finished tape back). Together, we'd scan the shortwave dial for something unusual, tape it, dub it in slow motion, dub it in slow motion again, blend it with sound effects or movie scores, and laugh and laugh and laugh.

[Music fades away.]

In grad school, I didn't initially plan for those sonic games to become part of my scholarly and pedagogical identity. But in 2009, when a professor asked us to read and present on a recent article in the field, I picked Jim Ridolfo and Danielle Nicole DeVoss's (2009) *Kairos* article "Composing for Recomposition: Rhetorical Velocity and Delivery," mostly because it uses the word *remix* so often. *That's a word I know something about*, I thought. *It reminds me of all those tapes I used to make—remixing old sounds into something new.* By early 2010, I'd started reading and blogging and publishing about remix, but always drawn towards the sonic side of remix studies: how fans and scholars record and remix, together.

And just as my tapes had built community in high school, I found academic communities eager to play and make and listen to sounds together. At my first Computers and Writing conference in 2011, I played audio clips of interviews I had conducted for my dissertation, which I had layered with music and edited for timing to emphasize their emotional impact. That soundwriting led to conversations and friendships with other scholars, which led to more conference presentations, more friendships, and more of the same cycle I remembered from high school: make an audio piece (sometimes alone, sometimes with others), play it for friends, repeat. Presentations, podcasts, and more connections followed. Instead of dubbing a copy of a tape for a friend, I could just upload a sound to Dropbox or Google Drive, but the concept was the same. Even better, these sonic communities affected my teaching, leading me to share more of these playful audio remix skills with students looking for more available means of communication.

[New music fades in and plays until the end: a slow electronic drone, as synthesized notes fade in and out, occasionally with electronic percussive blips (Nctrnm, 2018).]

So when Courtney Danforth emailed me in December 2014 about coediting a journal issue or edited collection on soundwriting pedagogies, it just made sense.

As editors, we'd be connecting in a deeper way to a community that was eager to make and listen and share soundwriting. Our first collection playfully broke boundaries in all the ways that soundwriting communities love to do, but it was smaller than the large vision we began with, with fewer voices featured than we'd hoped to share, so we expanded our work into two projects, then three. This collection thus represents the culmination of a trilogy, but also the ever-growing community of soundwriting teachers. (I wonder if anyone from high school will listen.)

Now we just need to figure out how to release it on cassette.

[Music gets louder for a moment, hits a brief major chord, and fades out.]

Why Soundwriting?

We share these three narratives to help attune you to the affective nature of and possibilities for composing with and in sound in rhetoric and writing courses. Just as we came to sonic rhetoric through our own individualized experiences with sound, our students and colleagues come to sound through the lenses of their own experiences. Our narratives—often invisible and inaudible to outsiders—shape our soundwriting and our approach to the field.

Indeed, in our discipline, sound has until recently been writing studies' invisible (rather than ugly) stepsister. As Cynthia L. Selfe (2009) showed, due to the historical separation of speech from writing in academic settings and due to a desire to "modernize" English studies by moving away from aurality, most writing teachers have focused on the visual, printed word and largely ignored the aural nature of rhetoric and communication. The multimodal turn in rhetoric and writing studies has offered the opportunity to reincorporate sound in rhetoric and writing courses, though sound perhaps at first took a backseat to the visual, which dominated much of the discussion of the turn to multimodality in the late 20th century and early 21st century.

However, the last two decades has seen a sonic turn in rhetoric and writing pedagogy and in the humanities more broadly. Sound studies has become a strong interdisciplinary field in which scholars from a variety of disciplines have studied sound production and reception from a variety of critical perspectives (Gunn et al., 2013; Lingold et al., 2018; Sterne, 2012). And in rhetoric and writing studies, scholars have now argued persuasively that sound deserves our attention for rhetorical analysis and theory (Comstock & Hocks, 2016; Eckstein, 2017; Goodale, 2011; Hawk, 2018a, 2018b; Kjeldsen, 2018; Lambke, 2019; Rickert, 1999; Stone, 2015; Stone & Ceraso, 2013; VanKooten, 2016), scholarly research methods and production (Ball, 2004; Carson, 2017; Detweiler, 2018; Wargo, 2020; Wargo et al., 2021), and, importantly, for this book here, pedagogy (Ahern, 2013, 2018; Alexander, 2015; Ball & Hawk, 2006; Bessette, 2016; Bowie, 2012a, 2012b; Ceraso, 2014, 2018, 2019; Ceraso & Ahern, 2015; Comstock & Hocks, 2006; Danforth et

al., 2018; Davis, 2011; Detweiler, 2019; Faris et al., 2020; Folk, 2015; Greene, 2018; Hawkins, 2018; Hocks & Comstock, 2017; Klein, 2020; Rodrigue et al., 2016; Sady, 2018; Selfe, 2009; Stedman et al., 2021).

There are many reasons to incorporate soundwriting in rhetoric and writing courses—from required first-year writing courses to upper-division classes for majors or as electives to graduate courses, and in all settings, including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, research universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and more. Before addressing these reasons, though, we'd like to address the central term of our collection: *soundwriting*. In our earlier collection's introduction, we take a deep dive into the history and meaning of the word, ultimately defining soundwriting as those practices when rhetors “manipulate recorded sound and make something new from it” (Danforth & Stedman, 2018, Part 5.0 section). What we mean by this is that soundwriting is the action and object created by drafting, revising, and delivering compositions in the aural mode. The term sets a fence around the kinds of assignments explored in this book: those where students actually compose and revise sonic projects (as opposed to listening to someone else's soundwriting, getting feedback through an instructor's soundwriting, or delivering content live without the opportunity to revise). The term *soundwriting* also prominently includes the word *writing*, which emphasizes that much of our disciplinary knowledge about writing—recursive strategies for composing, rhetorical situatedness, multimodality's centrality, and so on—applies to composing with sound as well. Thus, the term soundwriting suggests a disciplinary remix between sound studies and writing studies, but with a focus on the compositional and pedagogical side that terms like “sonic rhetoric” don't necessarily include. (See Katz, 2020, p. 2, for a recent discussion of the multiple terminologies emerging in this subfield.)

So why teach soundwriting? First, sound is rhetorically powerful and should be among the available modes for student composition; thus, including soundwriting in a course with a rhetorical framework helps address a historic and problematic gap in our field. As Selfe (2009) argued, multimodal composing—including in and with sound—is important for students, and

teachers of composition need to pay attention to, and come to value, the multiple ways in which students compose and communicate meaning, the exciting hybrid, multimodal texts they create—in both nondigital and digital environments—to meet their own needs in a changing world. (p. 642)

Sound, we suggest, circulates in a wide variety of media—from YouTube and TikTok videos, to podcasts, to music on Spotify and (for some) the radio, to the blurps and blips of social media apps and text messaging, to the ambient and environmental sounds of private, public, and work environments.

Soundwriting has the potential to call students' attention to how rhetoric does not solely *mean* but rather engages with affect and sensations (Hawhee, 2015),

as our personal narratives above emphasized. Many soundwriting scholars have called attention to the affective, material, and sensuous nature of sound (Alexander, 2015; Anderson, 2014; Comstock & Hocks, 2016; Ceraso, 2018, 2019; Davis, 2011; Harley, 2018). As Byron Hawk (2018b) observed, sound is material “energetic movements,” a view that affords teachers and students opportunities to

feel their bodies vibrate empathetically (embodiment); locate themselves in space via reverberation (spatial orientation in an environment); analyze language as with phonemes (communicate via speech); and capture and distribute sound via technological mediation (produce and circulate music and culture). (p. 315)

A second reason we should teach soundwriting is that sound is ambient and shapes our environments and experiences. That is, since courses in writing and rhetoric should engage in the environments and discourses of particular rhetorical situations, we should teach students to actively understand and participate in soundscapes. The concept of soundscape, most commonly attributed to R. Murray Schafer (1977), has become quite useful across sound studies to help scholars explore how sound shapes our experiences and relationships to environments. In her recent chapter on soundscapes, Kati Fargo Ahern (2021) defined a soundscape as a composition that

meets the following criteria: 1) it communicates some purpose or potential to an audience, 2) it can be experienced in some multimodal, embodied way, and 3) it includes some aspects of spatialization in addition to sound sources, simultaneity, and arrangement in time, which can be found in soundtracks. (2021, 2. Soundscape Studies section, para. 3)

Drawing from a variety of sound studies scholars, including in rhetoric and writing studies (Ahern, 2018; Ceraso, 2014; Comstock & Hocks, 2006; Rickert, 2013), Ahern suggested that rhetors compose soundscapes through composing with sound sources, temporality, layering of sounds, and spatialization, creating soundscapes that can shape how audiences interact with and understand their environments—whether digital or nondigital. As her chapter argued, students, as rhetors, can design soundscapes in order to create not simply sonic, but fully embodied, experiences for audiences. By asking students to compose with and in sound, we are also asking them to attend to how sound shapes environments, helping students to develop a sensibility or an “attunement between listener, materials, and environment” (Droumeva & Murphy, 2018, 4. Composing with/in Media Texts section, para. 14).

Third, sound is always multimodal and helps attend to materiality, embodiment, and the aesthetics of composition. Sound, like all modes, is material, and thus helps us as rhetoric and writing teachers and researchers attend to how rhetoric and writing is material and embodied. As Lisbeth Lipari (2014) has argued,

listening is fully an embodied, multisensory practice: “What if our entire body is one giant listening organ, one great resonating chamber? What if we are, in some sense, all ears?” (p. 30). Sounds, she explained, resonate and vibrate through our bodies, in ways that “we actually touch the sound” (p. 31) and listen with all of our senses. Likewise, Steph Ceraso (2014, 2018) has argued that listening is not simply a matter of our ears but rather a multimodal and multisensory experience. Multimodal listening, she argued, means understanding that listening involves multiple senses and modes simultaneously: “sound is always connected and experienced with multiple senses” (2018, p. 8).

Fourth, sound can be used to disrupt conventions about rhetoric and writing and about learning and teaching. Students often enter rhetoric and writing classes with preconceived notions about and habituated practices of research and writing (for instance, Howard & Jamieson, 2013, showed how students’ research habits led to patchwriting and little engagement with arguments), and introducing new and foreign modes can help to defamiliarize research, incorporating research, drafting, revising, arrangement and organization, and style and voice. Christina Sady (2018), for instance, argued that “teaching a multimodal genre encourages transitioning writers to extend beyond standardized genres and formulas learned in high school and to see composing as multimodal, complex, and audience-aware” (p. 256). As she explained, first-year students often carry standardized or formulaic genre conventions with them from high school, and teaching new media, like podcasts, “invites students to see writing in a new way” (p. 259).

Fifth, teaching sound can assist in social justice work. Sound studies scholars have increasingly turned to how sound and oppression are linked. Jennifer Lynn Stoeber (2016), for example, has shown how “listening operates as an organ of racial discernment, categorization, and resistance in the shadow of vision’s alleged cultural dominance” (p. 4). Sound, she argued, is racialized, creating what she termed the *sonic color line*, and listening practices are sensuously and epistemologically trained to create the *listening ear*, or “dominant listening practices [that] accrue—and change—over time” (p. 7). (See also Burns et al., 2018; Keeling & Kun, 2011; Robinson, 2020; Sano-Franchini, 2018). Ceraso (2018) argued that attending to sound can help us to re-attune to our environments. She called “for a reeducation of our senses—a bodily retraining that can help listeners learn to become more open to the connections among sensory modes, environments and materials” (p. 5)—a call similar to Lipari’s (2014), who argued for “an ethics of attunement” (p. 2). Ceraso’s and Lipari’s projects both call attention to how we have been sensorially trained to listen to or hear certain sounds and ignore others (a notion also advanced by Krista Ratcliffe, 2005). Ceraso (2014) suggested that “through multimodal listening practices we might retrain our bodies to be more aware, alert, and attuned to sonic events in all of their complexity” (p. 103). Indeed, if “listening is guided by positionality as an intersection of perceptual habit, ability, and bias” (Robinson, 2020, p. 37), then rhetoric and writing classes provide opportunities to retrain our listening practices. As Michael Burns et al.

(2018) argued, sound can be used in rhetoric and writing classes to “disrupt the circulating rhetorics of multiculturalism and other safe, schooled responses to racism” (Introduction section, para. 10).

Sixth, counterintuitively, soundwriting can be designed for access and accessibility. By using these two terms—*access* and *accessibility*—we have in mind James Porter’s (2009) distinction between the two terms. He explained that access is a matter of one’s ability to materially access “the necessary hardware, software, and network connectivity” to engage in digital literacy practices (p. 216; see also Banks, 2005, who complicated access as merely material access). Accessibility, however, entails designing for those with disabilities and ensuring that new media compositions are usable by disabled bodies. Regarding the latter, sound composition has been critiqued for its exclusions. Sean Zdenek (2009), for instance, critiqued podcasting for assuming students can hear sound and challenged the field to design sonic compositions for accessibility by considering a variety of embodied engagements with sonic texts, starting with universal design, and including transcripts with rich descriptions for sonic compositions. Many in rhetoric and writing have critiqued the ableist notion of the retrofit (Bose et al., 2021; Buckner & Daley, 2018; Butler, 2016; Dolmage, 2008, 2014; Yergeau et al., 2013). Stephanie Kershbaum defined retrofits as “reactive, responding to situations or problems that arise, rather than seeking to anticipate potential concerns with the design or production of a multimodal text or environment” (Yergeau et al., 2013, “Retrofitting” section).

However, we argue that if designed well, soundwriting assignments can be sites of accessibility and universal design from the beginning. In fact, we argue, designing for accessibility increases usability and accessibility for all users. Even for normative hearing bodies, transcripts or captions can help audiences follow and distinguish aspects of a sonic composition. For instance, well designed captions can help viewers understand the importance of sounds that they might otherwise miss (see Zdenek, 2015, on the rhetoric of captions). Or someone with hearing might be listening to something in public with poor headphones and the ambient sounds make listening difficult; a transcript can help. Or a researcher is returning to a sound composition a second or third time to find a key quotation: A transcript can help them find that quotation quickly, rather than listening around in the sound file. Further, transcripts can do rhetorical work for all listeners/audiences, serving as another version of the text (see Boyle & Rivers, 2016) that can highlight meaning in new and different ways by translating through description and design (Heilig, in Faris et al., 2020). Teaching soundwriting with accessibility and universal design in mind from the get-go is a must.

Regarding access, soundwriting offers the opportunity to value and practice with a democratic ethos and low-fidelity technologies to make the practice materially accessible. Rather than viewing the teaching of soundwriting as “a professionalization of technology” that requires high-tech and expensive recording hardware and software, soundwriting can be produced in rhetoric and writing classes through an ethos of “democratization of practice,” as Byron Hawk and

Greg Stuart (2019, p. 45) described it. That is, soundwriting teachers in rhetoric and writing classes can value amateur practices and technologies rather than professional audio production by offering students options that include recording with the technologies they already own and using audio-editing software that is free and open source (like Audacity).

Why This Book?

This book showcases 25 chapters that provide soundwriting assignment prompts, context for those prompts, and teachers' (sometimes along with students') reflections on those prompts and context. Additionally, chapters are accompanied by student examples of projects (along with transcripts) and an audio version of authors' reflections on their assignments, hosted on the book's companion website. These multiple ways of accessing our content are an important part of our mission, giving our audience multiple "access points to language," as Courtney put it in her personal narrative above.

As we survey the field, while sonic rhetoric and soundwriting have been topics in scholarly literature for roughly two decades, few examples exist where rhetoric and writing teachers can "steal" assignments and adapt and teach them in their own courses. (As teaching lore goes, good teachers borrow; great teachers steal.) As editors, we wanted to make a resource available for teachers in rhetoric and writing—at all levels and in almost any context—to more easily incorporate soundwriting into their classes. Of course, the field has some wonderful examples from teacher-scholars who have shared their assignments and rationales. Ceraso's (2018) book *Sounding Composition* provided interchapters with assignment prompts and classroom practices on exploring the multimodal and embodied dimensions of composing with and in sound. Eric Detweiler (2019) provided scaffolding activities toward teaching with sound in his article "Sounding Out the *Progymnasmata*." Jeremy Cushman and Shannon Kelly (2018) shared their podcast assignment and scaffolding used in the first-year writing program at Western Washington University, as well as a wonderful podcast that explains how the assignment was received by both teachers and students. Other contributors to our collection *Soundwriting Pedagogies* (Danforth et al., 2018) provided some practical classroom practices as well. Jason Palmeri and Ben McCorkle (2018), for instance, provided a few short example assignments for classes that are "inspired by voices from the past" (Appendix section). And other soundwriting assignments written by those in our discipline can be found in various brief articles and blog posts as well, such as Alison Klein's (2020) "opinion podcast," Ceraso's "sonic object," and Ahern's "embodied soundscape design" (Ceraso & Ahern, 2015).

However, these pedagogical examples are scattered across publications and can be difficult for a teacher new to soundwriting to access and easily incorporate into their classes. By collecting the 25 chapters here, we hope to provide rhetoric and writing teachers—whether new to soundwriting or quite experienced with

teaching with sound—with examples they could easily translate into their own classes, with rationales to understand the approaches to the assignments, with teacher reflections to help situate and adjust the assignments to new contexts, and with student examples to share with students as models to provoke creative thinking and creative composing.

An important note here, though: We've asked every contributor to take access into account as they've shared their assignment and reflection. Access is an important aspect of teaching multimodality in general and teaching soundwriting specifically—and for teaching in general. Here, access has two important meanings, as we noted above: access in terms of material access and accessibility in terms of being accessible for students and teachers with a variety of disabilities. Every audio file on the book's companion website includes a transcript that is, to the best of our ability, descriptive of sounds instead of merely a transcript of words. We acknowledge that “the verbal reproduction of sound will necessarily be a metaphorical translation, fundamentally different from the sounds themselves” (Kjeldsen, 2018, p. 367), and so transcripts are never a faithful reproduction of sound (see Zdenek, 2015, on the rhetorical work of captions). However, we have striven to make this book as accessible as possible.

Our hope, then, is that readers can pick up chapters (or the whole collection) to draw inspiration as teachers of soundwriting, and that this collection continues to push the conversation about what it means to teach rhetoric and writing with sound. This collection should be useful to teachers of first-year writing at a variety of institutions. As we know, first-year writing is tasked with doing too much (teach all the things!), so the wide variety of approaches to soundwriting in this collection means that one (or more!) contributor's approach will hopefully be useful to most teachers. Also, as rhetoric and writing majors continue to be developed and grow across the United States, this collection should be useful to teachers of upper-division courses in the major or to teachers of rhetoric and writing courses with broader student audiences. This collection should also be useful for graduate courses in composition studies, multimodal literacies, digital rhetoric or literacies, and sonic rhetoric, or individual chapters could be useful in these courses or a composition practicum course. As graduate students are preparing to teach their own classes, individual chapters can inspire their own approaches to teaching multimodality or teaching soundwriting. Naturally, some assignments will be more or less useful in a particular context, depending on a course's level of study, curricular emphases, access to technology, and instructor preferences. We see this breadth as a strength, and we encourage readers to adapt assignments for their needs.

This Book's Organization

The 25 chapters in this collection bring together a wide variety of student and pedagogical practices related to soundwriting: remix, the use of music, primary re-

search, place-based pedagogy, teaching with stories, collaboration, audience awareness, public engagement, play, reflection, remediating projects, listening practices, and more. There's no right way to organize 25 chapters. We expect many readers will use this book as a reference guide, skimming the table of contents or searching the companion website for what they need. To help readers navigate the rich resources provided by contributors to this collection, we've organized chapters into four sections: Soundwriting Through Remix, Soundwriting with Music, Soundwriting with Primary Research, and Soundwriting with Stories. In the next section, we provide suggestions for other ways to organize chapters based on student practices.

But first, a quick reminder: The “stealing” principle we mentioned above is one of the book's core purposes; we want you to find assignments that work and adapt them to your own classrooms. That's why the student-facing assignment language is presented with an intentionally flexible license (Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International) that allows you to legally modify and distribute the assignments you find here without asking permission from the authors, as long as you attribute the authors and use them in noncommercial settings (like your own classroom). All other parts of the book can also be shared without seeking permission, but not in a way that modifies the original language or audio; everything except the assignments is under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives license designed to protect the original work, including the work composed by students.

Soundwriting Through Remix

The book begins with a number of chapters that add nuance to a type of soundwriting assignment that many instructors new to soundwriting begin with: asking students to download or gather recordings and mix them together for a new rhetorical purpose. Logan Middleton's “Mix It Up, Mash It Up: Arrangement, Audio Editing, and the Importance of Sonic Context” especially focuses on this rhetorical transformation of audio's meaning, as he asks his students to engage in “audio trickery” that leads to an audio mashup in a genre of their own choosing and then defending their rhetorical choices in a video reflective statement. Similarly, Crystal VanKooten's “Experimentation, Integration, Play: Developing Digital Voice Through Audio Storytelling” asks students to download and combine audio assets, but this time with a focus on the principles of digital storytelling. VanKooten's scaffolded assignment sequence also teaches students the basics of how copyright law (including fair use and Creative Commons licenses) affects our soundwriting work when we shape assets created by others. Sara Wilder's “Elements of Sound: Three Scaffolded Assignments” focuses less on the genre of the work students create and more on the types of assets students combine (music, voice, and sound effects) that they wield in three subsequent assignments. Like Middleton and VanKooten, Wilder encourages students to reflect on their work, each time writing “artist statements” to accompany their soundwriting.

Many other variations on the collage are featured in the book as well. Chad Iwertz Duffy introduces his students to the concept of “disabling soundwriting,” a concept he describes as “fundamentally about centering disability in the production of soundwriting” in his chapter, “Disabling Soundwriting: Sonic Rhetorics Meet Disability Pedagogy.” As in the assignments featured in previous chapters, he asks students to find and remix existing sounds and to reflect on that activity, along with a focus on writing rich, complex transcripts. Scott Lunsford’s “Sound-Play: A Sonic Experience of Digital Loose Parts” focuses on another angle: His students use recorded and downloaded sounds to create a soundscape that evokes a “play ecology” from their childhood, remediating and reconceptualizing a written play narrative they write first. A similar playful attitude and similar sequence of assignments (from written to sonic work) is present in Thomas M. Geary’s “Electrate Anti-Definition Sound Collage and Transduction,” in which students are asked to playfully define (or “anti-define”) a term through sonic collage. “What does ‘freedom’ sound like to different people?” he asks his students. “What audio captures ‘success’ for most?”

Ben Harley’s “The Sonic Collage Assignment: Aesthetics, Affect, and Critique in Audio Sampling” transitions the first chapters’ focus on remix to a collection of chapters that deal in some way with one of the most ubiquitous forms of audio surrounding us: music. Harley’s remix assignments help students investigate music by creating dense, rich mashups, either in the genre of concept art (in his original prompt) or a musical history in which students soundwrite “an audio track composed of short samples from different iconic, important, interesting, or essential songs from within that genre.”

Soundwriting with Music

Coming at music from a different angle, Rich Shivener uses his 20 years of experience as a working musician to inspire his students to remediate or “recast” their research into an audio essay that relies on the affective power of music, as described in his chapter “Cultivating Signal, Noise, and Feeling: Songwriting Practices in Digital Rhetoric Courses.” Todd Craig also uses his experience as a musician—a hip-hop DJ—to guide his soundwriting pedagogies; in “How *Eve* Saved My Soul’: Sonic Lineage as the Prequel to the Playlist Project,” he invites students to investigate the deep impact hip-hop albums have across decades, as they sample the past and influence the future. Justin Young’s assignments are also inspired by DJ practices; “Sampling Sound, Text, and Praxis: Student and Teacher as Producer in a (Somewhat) Open-Source Course” describes how students move through a series of assignments asking them to analyze how musical remixes work before collaboratively creating a sonic remix of their own.

Music is a central part of Doyuen Ko and Joel Overall’s chapter, “Audio Engineering and Soundwriting in an Interdisciplinary Course,” yet in a different key from the chapters preceding it. Ko (professor of audio engineering technology) and Overall

(professor of English) teach linked courses at their university that introduce students to terminology for understanding sound and music from both audio engineering and rhetorical contexts, ultimately asking students to share what they've learned in a group podcast series. Students collaborated in a very different way in Trey Conner's "The Resonance Is the Composer: Students Soundwriting Together," a chapter he cowrote with students Emma Hamilton, Amber Nicol, Chris Burton, Kathleen Olinger, Alyssa Harmon, and Ivan Jones. Their chapter describes an inquiry-based, experimental course where students remixed downloaded sounds, improvised in the classroom with "noisemakers" of all kinds, and brought their listening and songwriting skills to a Tampa Bay harbor, where they reflected on (and recorded) the sounds around them. The next chapter also features unexpected sounds and student involvement, in a way: In "The Sound of Type: Multimodal Aesthetics," Helen J. Burgess describes how her assignment asking students to explore typography through a multimodal lens led her student (and coauthor) Travis Harrington to compose a multipart musical work by "isolating qualities of type and mapping them onto similar qualities of sound." The chapter features Burgess's reworked version of the assignment, which invites students to make sonic choices as Harrington did, along with Harrington's reflections on his musical composition process.

Soundwriting with Primary Research

As described in "From Cylinders to WordPress: Using Digital Sound Archives for Short-Form Radio Programs," Jason Luther's students might listen to music, but they might also listen to any other audio genre housed in the massive archives of digitized recordings available online. His chapter begins a series of chapters that ask students to use soundwriting as part of research projects, often using sonic materials and archives to create a sonic composition that helps audiences experience those materials in new ways. For instance, Luther's students create 90-second radio spots that explain, contextualize, and share an archived, digitized recording. Brandee Easter and Meg M. Marquardt frame research as part of a feminist act of listening in their chapter, "Toward a Feminist Sonic Pedagogy: Research as Listening." Their students research and share real-world "mysteries" in a series of podcast episodes, using the physical act of listening to introduce ideas of embodiment and rhetorical listening to their students. Instead of seeking out local stories as Easter and Marquardt's students did, Timothy R. Amidon's students composed soundwriting based on the words that came to them: In "From Postcards to PSAs: Activist Soundwriting," he describes how his students collected postcards from their campus from members of the community that described "stories about their experiences with online privacy and security." Those written experiences from the community were then performed aloud in a public space and remediated into public service announcements for the campus radio station.

Many of the research-based soundwriting assignments in this book led students to learn more about their local communities. Jennifer J. Buckner's students

explored specific discourse communities through interviews, composing discourse ethnographies in the form of audio essays, as explained in her chapter cowritten with students Benjamin Flournoy, Katie Furr, Sarah Johnson, Katie Lewis, Angela Meade, Hannah Ray, Garrett Simpson, Kate Vriesema, and Ally Ward, “Research Remix: Soundwriting Studies of the English Language.” Lance Cummings’s students, including student coauthors Hannah Lane Kendrick and Devon Peterson, created audio tours to help introduce guests to a local historic home and museum, as described in “If These Walls Had Ears: Applying Sound Rhetorics Through Audio Tours.” L. Jill Lamberton’s students walked through a lengthy, scaffolded series of assignments that introduce them to methodologies for recording interviews with members of their local community and then editing that interview recording into a final, shareable form, as she explains in “Engaging and Amplifying Community Voices: An Interview Assignment Sequence.” Janice W. Fernheimer’s students, including student coauthors Madison Cissell, Hannah Thompson, Hannah Newberry, and Laura Will, collaborate with the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence (JHFE) and Jewish Kentucky Oral History Collection. Their chapter, “The Sound(s) of Sustainable Stewardship: Indexing and Composing Audio Essays with the JHFE,” details how students interview community members and edit those recordings into shareable audio formats—in their case, collaboratively authored audio essays. Mariana Grohowski’s students research the spaces and stories of their local community, allowing them to record brief audio stories and required transcripts designed to be uploaded to the mobile app and website VoiceMap, as she writes in “Producing Community Audio Tours.”

Soundwriting with Stories

Daniel P. Richards’s students also research their community, collaboratively creating publicly accessible podcast episodes about their city for a show called *Of Norfolk*. In “Place-Based Podcasting: From Orality to Electracy in Norfolk, Virginia,” he describes how his assignment relies on the affordances of orality and a focus on storytelling to keep the attention of listeners. That focus on stories weaves through many of the chapters in this collection, but especially in the chapters that deal more explicitly with fiction. For example, Jasmine Lee and Jennifer Geraci’s “YA On the Air: A Scaffolded Podcast Assignment on YA Literature” describes an assignment that asks students to use the power of soundwriting to creatively respond to or review a work of young adult literature, always focusing on using the affordances of audio to achieve their rhetorical purposes. Jennifer Ware and Ashley Hall’s “Let’s Get Technical: Scaffolding Form, Content, and Assessment of Audio Projects” also relies on stories but more as a way to introduce students to the technical skills needed for any soundwriting work. Their students brainstorm creative things that could have led to the “audio capture of a strange sound” and “unexplained disruption to the broadcast” at a real shortwave radio numbers station. By creating soundscapes that explain this unexplainable phenomenon,

they learn basic skills such as working with tracks, loops, field recording, vocal recording, and audio editing.

Tanya K. Rodrigue’s “Speech, Invention, and Reflection: The Composing Process of Soundwriting” closes the collection by focusing exclusively on reflection, a metacognitive activity that has been heard through the entire book. Instead of giving her graduate students a specific task, she instead asks them to choose an audio genre and compose something effective within that rhetorical situation. This focuses her chapter instead on the reflections students make, both along the way in a series of “audio process notes” and in a final reflection.

Alternative Organizations

Of course, the collection could have been organized in many other ways as well. Below are just a few alternative ways to organize chapters to help readers looking for particular kinds of activities or focuses. These lists are of course imperfect as well; they attempt to pull together major focuses of chapters for generalized broad swaths, not respond to every little detail of every chapter.

- **Collaborative Work:** Many chapters in this collection encourage or require collaborative work as students compose with and in sound. Readers interested in teaching collaborative soundwriting projects should consult chapters by Amidon, Conner et al., Cummings, Easter and Marquardt, Fernheimer, Ko and Overall, Lee and Geraci, and Young.
- **Podcasts:** The popularity of podcasting naturally leads to many assignments that ask students to create episodic compositions that are part of a larger podcast show. For examples of podcasting pedagogies, see Easter and Marquardt, Ko and Overall, Lee and Geraci, and Richards.
- **Public-Facing Deliverables and Public Engagement:** The following chapters detail pedagogies that ask students to create deliverables to be experienced beyond the classroom itself, including radio shows, museums, audio tours, and public SoundCloud accounts: Amidon, Cummings, Fernheimer, Grohowski, Lamberton, Lee and Geraci, Luther, Richards.
- **Remediations of Other Texts:** Rhetoric classes commonly ask students to transform content experienced primarily through one mode into another in a process often called “remediation.” Examples in this collection are found in chapters by Burgess and Harrington, Geary, Iwertz Duffy, and Shivener.
- **Listening Practices:** Good soundwriters are also good listeners. Instructors who emphasize listening in their pedagogies include Easter and Marquardt, Grohowski, Ko and Overall, and Shivener.
- **Place-Based Research:** As scholars of soundscapes have taught us, sounds are intimately tied to the places where they’re experienced. Chapters that ask students to emphasize and engage in local places include Cummings, Fernheimer, Grohowski, Lamberton, and Richards.

- **Play:** Soundwriting is an inherently playful activity, as rhetors test audio assets against each other, serendipitously finding connections that can reach audiences effectively. Chapters by Conner et al., Geary, and Lunsford emphasize a play angle.
- **Storytelling:** The word story is used in many different soundwriting genres, from fiction and drama to journalism. An emphasis on effective storytelling in one or more of its many forms appears in chapters by Easter and Marquardt, Lee and Geraci, Richards, Rodrigue, VanKooten, Ware and Hall, and Wilder.
- **Scaffolded Practices:** Many of our chapters highlight assignments that were part of a scaffolded series of course activities, from early low-stakes assignments to final reflections. While these contexts are mentioned in many chapters, readers will find the most support for a series of pedagogical practices in chapters by Cummings, Easter and Marquardt, Fernheimer, Grohowski, Ko and Overall, Lamberton, Lee and Geraci, Middleton, Richards, Rodrigue, VanKooten, Ware and Hall, Wilder, and Young.
- **Student Reflection:** A hallmark of multimodal composition is a focus on student reflection, allowing them to share their rhetorical purposes and strategies developed along the way and after sharing a finished project. Those reflection activities are available in chapters by Fernheimer, Grohowski, Iwertz Duffy, Ko and Overall, Lamberton, Middleton, Rodrigue, and Wilder.
- **Technical Practice and Guidance:** One of the challenges for students and teachers new to soundwriting is understanding and practicing using audio-recording hardware and audio-editing software. Some chapters in this collection provide guidance for students and teachers to navigate these functional literacy practices. Readers might consult chapters by VanKooten and Ware and Hall.

Outro

It seems impossible—and irresponsible—not to acknowledge the larger cultural and political context of this book's publication. Though many chapters in this collection were begun much earlier, many of them were revised and rewritten during the global coronavirus pandemic that began in 2020, during an increased demand for antiracist action across the United States, and during the last few years of the Trump presidency, which instigated crises of democratic and institutional norms. We suggest that these crises—a global pandemic, ongoing systemic oppression, and assaults on democracy—are sonic events, warranting our and our students' attention as soundwriters and as citizens.

As colleges and universities rapidly moved online in March 2020, rhetoric and writing teachers quickly adjusted their pedagogies for online instruction. And as

we write this in summer 2021, many colleges and universities are still swimming through the uncertainties of the next academic year, including what policies they'll devise about in-person learning and vaccination requirements. The pandemic brought many problems to the forefront: disparities in access to health care, how systemic racism is a public health issue, disparities in access to learning technologies for remote learning, the challenges (especially for parents and especially gendered) of working from home, and more. The sonic aspect of teaching and learning became quite apparent as many moved to teaching online and holding meetings via Zoom (the challenges of reminding people to mute themselves, or to unmute when they speak, comes to mind). And for in-person instruction, many teachers and students worked through the challenges of being heard while wearing facial coverings.

In August 2019, the *New York Times Magazine* published "The 1619 Project" (Silverstein, 2019), reminding (sometimes informing) readers just how long and how inextricable the legacy of racial violence is in America. In May 2020, George Floyd was lynched by police in Minneapolis on video, sparking stunning daily protests about the individual deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Trayvon Martin, Laquan McDonald, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Botham Jean, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Yvette Smith, Alton Sterling, David McAtee, Walter Scott, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Stephon Clark, and legion unnamed others (see Kadir Nelson's "Say Their Names," 2020) at the hands of police (see also Ore, 2019, on lynching and anti-Black violence). Protests addressed both the individual victims and institutional injustices at blame. In September 2020, after 118 straight days of protest in Louisville, the state of Kentucky declined to bring charges against any of Breonna Taylor's executioners in alignment with the president's vision of "law & order." Among the further chants amplified by marchers have been "No justice, no peace," "I can't breathe," and "Whose streets? Our streets." Led by #BLM activists, protestors call to "defund the police" and reallocate funds to public works less prone to immediate racial violence like social work, schools, and libraries.

The chant/command/plea to "say their names" directs witnesses to, literally, say the names of victims of racial violence. Fundamentally, it is a sound action. Through *elocutio*, *pronuntiatio*, we commemorate. While epideixis has been largely ceded to the speech side of rhetoric, 2020's summer of #BLM protests offers an opportunity to renew our dedication to this skillset in the writing classroom too. Marching matters, art matters, song matters, banners matter, chants matter. Sound matters. Both participation and receptivity to these methods matter. Black lives matter. (See Richardson & Ragland, 2018, on the literacy practices of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, which includes a discussion of their use of sound.)

In addition to the crises of the global coronavirus pandemic and the long history of systemic racism is a current crisis in democracy. This crisis is multifaceted: the demagoguery of the Trump presidency (Mercieca, 2020), the breakdown of the norms of democratic institutions, the rise of post-truth rhetoric (McComiskey, 2017), the increased spread of conspiracy theories, and more. These events are thor-

oughly sonic, from the cadence and rhythm of Trump's rhetoric to the demagogic chants at rallies to aesthetic qualities of conspiratorial rhetoric. And responses to these crises have also been thoroughly sonic. For instance, the U.S. presidential inauguration of 2017 began with one of the largest international, protests in history (Wikipedia says up to 5,246,670 in the United States ["2017 Women's March," 2021]): the "Women's March." From chants to musical performances, protestors engaged in an affective politics that worked, in part, through the agonism of sound (see Tausig et al., 2019, and hear the sounds of the march in Rodrigue, 2017).

Admittedly, the chapters in this collection do not directly address these contexts—though some student examples do. For example, Carmen Greiner's sound-writing project commemorates Black lives lost to police brutality (Iwertz Duffy's chapter); Lesley M. Rodriguez and Christian Nevarez-Camacho's soundwriting project responds to protests against police brutality and Trump's responses to those protests (Middleton's chapter); and Abby's project responds to and critiques Trump's hateful rhetoric by remixing it with hip-hop and the opening from *The Twilight Zone* (Harley's chapter). What these and other student projects show us, we believe, is that students are aware of the sounds of the world around them, and that by incorporating soundwriting into rhetoric and writing classes, teachers can help students develop their awareness and their rhetorical agency in using soundwriting to address and respond to problems.

We hope this book gives you some new ideas to engage soundwriting in your own rhetoric and writing pedagogy. Thanks for reading (and listening).

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