

Lost on the Way: Original Score and Sound Design for Short Film
Sam Kyzivat, Class of 2018

For my honors project, I created an original score for a 23-minute short fiction film, writing for string quartet, electric violin, and synthesized instruments. This project was carried out in collaboration with Nevan Swanson '18, a visual arts major, who wrote, directed, and shot the film. As a music major in the composition track, my role on the project was to function as composer, as well as sound designer/mixer. I worked under the mentorship of my academic advisor, Professor Vineet Shende, making this the third large-scale project I have carried out under his tutelage (a three-movement piano quintet during the summer of 2016, as well as music for a short film during the spring of 2016).

The film revolves around two characters, Nick and Sarah (played by Nick Barnes '18 and Sarah Guilbault '18), on a journey for closure, exploring their relationship through themes of documentation, memory, and loss. One of the big questions the film attempts to bring light to is the obsessive need for documentation that infuses many of our lives, and the tension that ensues from those who believe documentation heightens an experience, and those who believe it inhibits an experience.

Shooting for the film commenced at the beginning of October, and my time in the fall was split between composing string quartet cues based off of the screenplay, as well as attending all shoots with Nevan and our actors, using purchased audio equipment to record dialogue and ambient sound. Using funds from the Grua/O'Connell Research Award, I purchased a portable digital recorder, two wireless lavalier microphone systems, a super-cardioid shotgun mic, a boom pole, and an adaptor for the recorder to add more inputs. This equipment was altogether invaluable throughout the project, and really added to the quality of the final product, allowing me to create a detailed soundscape without feeling limited by my gear. The string quartet music was recorded in early March in Studzinski Hall by the Portland-based Amarantos Quartet. Following that, my spring semester mainly consisted of recording electric violin and synthesized instrument cues for the parts of the film that didn't warrant string quartet music, as well as placing music and audio to picture. A short compilation of shots from the film were on view for a week in the Edwards Center for Art and Dance during late-April, and the full film was premiered on May 12th in Smith Auditorium (Sills Hall) for an audience of close to 150.

Faculty Mentor: Professor Vineet Shende
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