Minutes: Advisory Board, Spring 2020

Commercial Music Program

Los Angeles Valley College

1. Introductions: Current Members (Jump to “Questions For the Advisors”)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
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| Joe Diamond | Joe Diamond Enterprises | joe@forthegoodtimes.com |
| Matthew Rodriguez | Sr. Talent Agent, Paradigm |  |
| Richard Vission | Grammy-nominated DJ |  |
| Dave Aude | Grammy-winning DJ |  |
| Michael Morales | DJ Kue |  |
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| Billy Sullivan | Sullystone Productions | billy@sullystonemusic.com |

1. State of the Commercial Music Program

* The Computer Music Lab, located in M110, is a major success for the Commercial Music department. It is constantly populated by students and deserves ongoing financial attention. Annual funding should be set aside for the ongoing development and maintenance of this critical component of the Commercial Music department. It is currently maintained by Professor Kahn and funded in full by Perkins MiniGrant money and the Career Education program.
* M110 has been hardwired for internet connectivity, as well as wireless connectivity.
* There a total of 15 iMac workstations, allowing for four 15-person lab groups per 60 student class
* All iMacs are outfitted with ProTools 12, Logic Pro X 10.3 and Finale 25
* The Commercial Music Program has discussed renewing its efforts to become an Avid Learning Partner
* The large screen monitor outside the departmental offices is fully functional and programmed with appropriate content that reflects the activities and offerings of the Commercial Music program.
* Play recorded examples of winning entries in Songwriting contests
  + - Jingle (tie): Marlina Haley and Miranda Zeiger
    - TV Theme: Susana del Carmen Prohias “Spy vs. Spy”
* Discussed putting a prerequisite or two on MUS 271 Songwriters Workshop, such as
  + - MUS 161 Introduction to Electronic Music
    - MUS 101 Fundamentals of Music
* Described events
  + LAVC Career Day and Health Expo (Wednesday, April 25, 2018)
  + LAVC Commercial Music Career Day (Saturday, April 28, 2018)
* Introduced new course: MUS 270 DJ Workshop
  + Discuss change in Music Technology Certificate
  + Discuss equipment needs
  + Possible alternate names for the class
    - * Club DJ Production
      * Club DJ Essentials (everybody seemed to like this one).
      * DJ Workshop

1. Strong Workforce Grant

Curriculum Development

MUS 270 DJ Workshops I AND II (developed by Lecturer Irene Gutierrez and Professor Richard Kahn)

Publications, Outreach and Marketing, Web Design, DVDs, Brochures

1. Avid Learning Partner contract.

Issue is re-opened

1. Effects of Mike Julian retirement

Need a second Commercial Music full-time faculty position

1. Current adjunct positions:

Recording Arts (Steve Goomas), Music Technology (John Buonomassa), Irene Gutierrez (DJ Workshops I and II)

1. New Music As a Business topic: Music Retailing

Discussion with Ryan re. adding music retail to the course content of MUS 137 Music as a Business

1. Perhaps we could organize a field trip to Guitar Center, hosted by Juan “Swift” Zavala
2. Music Vendor status:

Discussion with Ryan re. making Guitar Center our preferred music equipment vendor

1. ASMAC:

Discussed tightening the relationship between Commercial Music and ASMAC (American Society of Musicians, Arrangers, and Composers), particularly continuing to allow LAVC students attend sessions for free

**Introducing the LAVC Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Media: DJ Producer**

The Los Angeles Valley College Music Department is proud to present the Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Media: DJ Producer program. The certificate is designed to prepare students with a solid foundation in music, technology, and live DJ techniques. This program focuses on building a strong professional foundation by offering courses in DJ techniques, electronic music composition, songwriting and arranging, studio recording, and live sound reinforcement. This program creates opportunities for both students and returning professionals to compose, arrange, and produce music in a variety of contemporary commercial musical styles. The certificate program creates a pathway for success for DJ Producer students.

The curriculum for the Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Media: DJ Producer is listed below.

**MUS 270-1 DJ Workshop 1: 3 units**

Student operate, compose and produce original music on Pioneer’s DJ Software Rekordbox. Students develop DJ skills that include mixing, beat matching, music programming, MIDI mapping, FX techniques, and DJ setups of a live performance. Projects will include hands on exercises, essential techniques for creating sessions, live recordings, with original compositions performed using Apple Logic X. There will also be live DJ performances in class, as well as uploaded DJ recorded audio mixes every week. Student explore self-promotion and brand identification. Original compositions will incorporate an Electronic Press Kit video (EPK) created using iMovie. The class, having no prerequisite, will accommodate students at all skill levels.

**MUS 270-2 DJ Workshop 2: 3 units**

Students continue mastering techniques learned in MUS 270 DJ Workshop I, composing original commercial media pieces created with Logic X, intermediate beat-matching skills using Pioneer Rekordbox and Traktor 3, mixing live effects during performances, and basic music theory. Additional topics include advancing from amateur DJing to booking professional engagements, recording techniques using live instruments and vocals, vocal remix techniques, vocal mash-ups, MIDI mapping, and audio sampling. Students also engage in marketing and branding, streaming online, developing websites, social networking, creating and managing bookings, hiring agents, and producing Electronic Press Kits.

**MUS 270-3 DJ Workshop 3: 3 units**

This is the third in an advanced series of courses that introduces basic practices of acoustics, audio systems, microphones principles and techniques, terminology and recording studio equipment and multi-track recording procedures using ProTools and other such Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs). Students will continue techniques acquired in DJ Workshop 270-1 and 270- 2 and include a live graduation performance, blending vocalists, instrumentalists, and engineers.

**MUS 101 Fundamentals of Music: 3 units**

This course is designed for the general student and covers the fundamentals of music, including notation, meters and rhythm, scales and key signatures, intervals, triads, and musical symbols and terminology.

**MUS 137 Music As A Business: 3 units**

Students learn the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the many careers available in the music industry. It covers the roles of personal managers, agents and attorneys, the process of producing, publishing and copyrighting songs, and record production and marketing. Included is an ongoing analytical discussion of current affairs in personal finance and the global market situation.

**MUS 321 Elementary Piano: 3 units**

The student receives instruction in basic piano skills with an emphasis on learning to read music, play finger patterns, scales, chords, and beginning pieces.

**Summary Analysis**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, DJs are classified as “*public address system and other announcers”* (27-3012) and typically need a high school diploma with some short-term on-the-job training. With entry-level wages near that of the California minimum wage ($12.12 in the region) and no higher education necessary to perform work-related tasks, it would appear upon first glance, that DJs do not need formal community college training. However, if courses within the DJ Production Artist program go beyond training students to become DJs and train for other related technical occupations, such as audio and video equipment technicians or sound engineering technicians, a community college program would be appropriate for occupational training. If the DJ Production Artist program trains for technical occupations such as audio and video equipment technicians and sound engineering technicians, then the data provided within this report is accurate.

Furthermore, based on the available data, there does not appear to be a supply gap for these two middle-skill commercial music occupations in the region. Awards conferred by community colleges and non-community college institutions in related programs “may signal an oversupply”of students entering the local workforce. Therefore, the COE recommends further research on potential employers and viable pathways.

**[Questions for the Advisors:](#_top)**

* Q: After reading the above descriptions of the curriculum for the “The Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Media: DJ Producer,” **can you share your assessment of how the courses contained within the Certificate are critical and necessary in today’s DJ Music Industry?**

**Matt**: These courses are absolutely essential to the working DJ. This employee will be asked to wear a number of different hats when they approach their work with clients. Some clients will need for the DJ to have some working knowledge of musicianship. These clients may say things like, “We need something in a minor key here.” Or, “This scenario needs to be accompanied by a Latin groove at 132 beats per minute.” In other situations, the working DJ and technical sound support may be asked by a client to negotiate terms as a vendor or they working DJ may be asked to provide legal or contract documents to represent a team of sound-reinforcement laborers. The point is that this employee must have a robust enough music industry skill set that they do not need to deplete their salary by hiring outside contractors to handle technical sound reinforcement issues, musical aesthetic demands and business particulars. The coursework required in this certificate will assist the worker in being fully functional on the job.

**RV**: The courses that are being taught are essential to have a productive career as a DJ and producer. The DJ/Producer has to know every aspect of DJing at clubs and festivals, as well as know how to write and produce a great song. There are very few places to get the right education in this field. LAVC is such a place.

**Dave:** Abelton, Logic X and Rekordbox

**KUE**: It is very well rounded. It's important that you cover not only the DJing side in mixing music, but also creating music as well. You don't need to be a maestro to create music, but understanding the basics will go a long way especially when you begin to work with others that have a greater mastery.

* Q: The DJ Producer music industry has increasingly become a constantly innovative trade. Considering how rapidly skill sets evolve, **what seminars and conferences do you recommend that would be relevant to the certificate of achievement program?**

**RV**: A couple of conferences that I would recommend are Winter Music Conference, Amsterdam Dance Event. If that’s not in the budget, I would recommend things here in LA like NAMM, DJ City Hangouts and visiting producers’ studios.

**KUE**: NAMM for sure. It's local in your area, and I believe that through their educational program, you should be able to get passes for the students that are enrolled.

* Q: According the most recent LMI (Labor Market Information report), DJs and DJ-related fields are included in within the rather low-paying category of “Public Address System and Other Announcers.” **What factors do you think can be added to show that this is a growing field with high wage and high growth potential?**

**Matt**: As stated in the earlier information provided by the college, students need a broader skill set than spinning records only. Having other audio-visual skills are essential to persons wanting to enter this market. These workers must need to know how to trouble shoot problems when they are heading into unknown venues and sound reinforcement situations. A case in point may be the engineer who would be running sound for a college graduation ceremony. It’s great that this worker can play a recording of Pomp and Circumstance. What if the sound system goes down? What if there is no way to troubleshoot the hundreds of potential errors and the worker has had no training on multiple kinds of media equipment? The ceremony has to go on with a less-than-optimal sound reinforcement or perhaps not. The powers that be will look only to the technical person. In this case, the audio engineer who is also serving as the DJ. This worker would never be hired again if he couldn’t come up with answers. By having a greater skill set, the worker can be more assured that they will be re-employed by the same client.

**RV:** There are DJ’s who make more than Superstar athletes like Lebron James, Tom Brady and Stephen Curry. The wage field has exploded! DJ’s are Not public addressors. That is an old and outdated definition from the 80’s. Even radio now calls them ‘On Air Personalities’. Ryan Seacrest on KIIS FM is an On-Air Personality. Steve Aoki, Skrillex, Zedd and Calvin Harris are DJ’s. DJ’s play music and entertain people at clubs and festivals. DJ’s tour and have residencies. DJ’s produce and write music.

**KUE**: It could be maybe a reclassification of what encompasses a career in DJing. With this program, even though it does focus on DJing and music production, I think when you look at artists in the mainstream, they see themselves as music producers with a DJ skill set. You could highlight each skillset and how they complement one another as well. For example:

As a music producer. The following skill sets help me when approaching remixing:

1. Knowing how to mix - I know the proper arrangement that a DJ needs to be able to play my song

2. Current trends - With DJing, what are the current trends in music? If someone approaches me with a certain genre, will I know what they are talking about? Having a finger on the pulse of commercial music is very important.

3. DJing and the PA - When DJing, I know how tracks sound in a club setting. I use this information as a music producer to make sure those tracks sound and move my crowds the same way.

**Equipment and Software:**

A current list of equipment was compiled assuming that regular updates would be necessary. The following items are located in two separate spaces: a classroom computer laboratory (M110) and a recording studio (M112).

15 iMac Desktop Computers, c. 2010 – 2012 (M110)

10 Pioneer DJ400 Controllers

15 Pioneer Rekordbox DJ Software

1 Pioneer XDJ-RX2

1 Pioneer DDJ1000

2 Pioneer CDJ-2000NXS2

2 Pioneer XDJ-1000MK2

2 Pioneer XDJ-700

2 Pioneer PLX-1000

4 Pioneer PLX-500

1 Pioneer DJM-900NXS2

2 Pioneer DJM-450

15 Logic X Pro (current version)

15 Protools (current version)

15 MIDI Controllers

2 QSC K122 2000W powered speakers (pair)

12 Harbingers 15-inch powered speakers (pair)

1 iMac Pro 3.2GHZ 8-Core Intel Xeon W Processor

1 Serum VST Plugin

1 Spire VST Plugin

1 Massive VST Plugin

1 Native Instruments Ultimate Komplete 12 Collector’s Edition

1 Native Instruments MIDI Controller

1 studio monitors (pair)

10 professional headphone amplifiers

snakes and mic cables for both live and studio applications

With few exceptions, our current iMac studio houses iMacs from 2010-2012. They cannot be upgraded beyond OS 10.6.8, which is circa 2012 software.

* **Q: Based on the list of our current software and hardware located above, what additional software and/or hardware should we pursue in order to continue to expand our DJ program?**

**Matt**: A prospective student for this certificate program would be attracted to the commitment of the College, seeing that the investment has been made to ensure the student’s professional success. The student’s success in the program will encourage positive word-of-mouth endorsement of the certificate, the program, and the larger Campus offerings.

**RV**: Many of my colleagues use Logic X, Ableton, RekordBox and Serato. Furthermore, Electronic techs & producers utilize Serum, Spire, Massive and many other VST libraries along with live musicians.

**DA**: This is a high priority. Software is changing rapidly, and you want to give your students the best advantage and relevant tools possible. Also, you don’t need as crazy of a computer as you did a decade ago, a standard iMac should suffice. I would also add that Ableton Live is now the standard for most new producers and DJs.

**KUE**: The only thing I would add is Ableton Live. When talking to other people that get interested in production, it's surprising that they know about Ableton Live than anything else. I think the workflow is suited to get on the ground running quick when producing. But, I think it's also important to show other DAWs as well to demonstrate that there is no one size fits all.

* **Q: Should we replace the existing un-upgradeable iMacs with new iMacs that can run current versions of music software?**

**Matt**: Without question, these stations need to be replaced if they cannot be upgraded. Not only is this essential to the education and training of these student music producers, but is necessary to replace these lab stations if Valley College is to remain a credible competitive force in the upper educational choices for potential students.

**RV**: You should have updated software so your student can be prepared for the workplace. Your iMacs should be 2017 and up.

**KUE:** As long as your iMacs can run Catalina, you should be good. If not, I would recommend that you update them. This will pay off with future software updates.

* **Where should this be on our departmental priority list?**

**Matt:** If Valley College is to remain a potent viable option for Career Education

students, this need should be placed as the highest priority in purchases for the Music department.

**RV:** Agreed

**KUE**: Agreed

**Billy**: Agreed

**Joe**: Agreed, as well.

**Everyone:** Agreed