Soundscape Narrative

*Reflection*

For my soundscape narrative, I looked to reflect life stages through sound. My ideas of these sounds relatable to the majority of the population and audience, as well as easy to understand. My original ideas shifted as I played with sounds and found a narrative that best suited my concept. I ended up with a life cycle beginning at birth and restarting somewhere around one’s late twenties. I purposefully left out older age, because I feel that a lot of that is then dedicated to children and watching them grow through those same phases.

I started my narrative with the sounds of a hospital, babies crying, and a lullaby. As life progresses, I transitioned into a toddler crying, young children playing with toys and the clamoring chaos that goes along with such ages. Continuing their growth, I then mimicked school days, with a bell, playground noises, and the bustling of children. This was followed by a car starting, the beginning of the teenage years, texting, graduation music, and the car stopping. When I thought of the two most vital parts of your early twenties, I thought of work and going out with friends. I used the sound of heels clicking to indicate movement from work to the bar. I wanted to show a cycle of life, so at the end I mimicked the beginning by adding back in hospital noises and babies crying to indicate the later part of one’s twenties or thirties.

To meet the baseline criteria, I ensured that my soundscape played just under four minutes. I focused on change from birth to adulthood throughout my piece to create movement and narrative. I also recorded the car starting and stopping, the sound of toys, and feet clicking. In conjunction with these sounds, I borrowed the sounds of babies laughing with permission from my classmates. These all culminated to being more than a minute long amongst the other sounds. Within my narrative, I also overlapped three layers many times throughout the piece. To my knowledge, I met the baseline criteria and built my soundscape with these in mind.

In regard to aspirational goals, I attempted to meet all of the criteria. I used fades and volume controls to create depth and meaning to the work. I overlapped four tracks and incorporated the mystery sound as a seatbelt during the car stopping. I (hopefully) was able to successfully use Github for commit and version history, assuming my success in that was indeed correct. Lastly, I utilized the effects in audacity to add some character to the narrative. The constant heartbeat in the background indicates stability within so much change and growth. The heartbeat speeds up during play or exciting moments and slows down during times such as work. I did this by using the change speed effect. Other effects I used included enveloping the sound on many tracks to create smooth transitions and blend the sounds together easily. When it isn’t an abrupt stop, it is nicer on the ear and creates unity within the piece. I also increased and decreased the volume on individual tracks to emphasize certain sounds

The biggest thing I struggled with was creating the illusion of separate phases of life. I tried to solve this by creating spaces between each phase where only the heartbeat was playing. I also tried to start of with one sound and add layers as the phase went on. In most of the feedback I got, people understood my intention, but some were slightly off, so I changed the baby crying at the end in order to encourage people to think about the narrative.

I enjoyed the creative freedom given with this project and felt that it was a learning experience for me to develop experience outside of adobe programs as well as learning how to use git and github.