



*ATEC at American*

# AUDIOTECH

N E W S L E T T E R



**Women in Audio Panel** (left to right):

Tessa Giasson (MA student), Gena Johnson, Emily Lazar, Gloria Kaba, Carolyn Malachi

# GRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

by: Deb Edattel, MA '23

## Daniel Kaiser, House engineer at Quad Studios



Daniel Kaiser's (2019, MA Audio Technology) advice for students entering the ATEC program today is to "collaborate with one another and be bold in [your] approach to the music creation process... For some reason engineers and producers like to gate-keep as if we are all competing and there isn't enough music to go around. If, in the medical field, doctors didn't share their findings, humans would suffer the ultimate price... We should share this same intensity regarding knowledge and sharing information in order to better develop the music landscape for all. Be willing to share knowledge, open to collaboration, and brave when experimenting within audio."

When Daniel graduated, his goal was to work as a sound engineer recording top musical talent. He used the skills he acquired in the program to land an internship at Sear Sound in Hell's Kitchen and ultimately a full-time paid position at Quad Studios, one of the premier recording destinations in New York City, where he worked his way up to house engineer and has had the privilege of working with H.E.R, Pi'erre Bourne, Cyndi Lauper, King Von, Busta Rhymes, London on da Track & Greg Forgue to name a few.

One of the projects Daniel (Daniel "DJK" Kaiser for eng/mix credits) is most proud of, WBAWP (Breathe) Ft. Kayla Shea by Brodie Fresh (pictured), was recorded while Daniel and Brodie Fresh watched the Black Lives Matter marches pass through Times Square from Quad's 10th floor studio window. "A truly humbling experience to work on music with such an important

message during a pivotal time in our country's history."

One more tip from Daniel: "My favorite ProTools quick key is Cmd + S. It's 'saved' me more times than I can count!"

## Matt Mulvihill, Recordist



Matt Mulvihill (MA, Audio Technology, '21) discovered his passion for post-production audio near the end of his undergraduate studies at Notre Dame in a 'Sound Design for Visual Media' class. "That was *the* class. It totally sucked me in. I put much more into that pass/fail class than the three that counted for my grades," he says.

After completing undergrad, Mulvihill pursued his interest in audio engineering through ATEC's graduate program in Audio Technology to develop his expertise with the goal of ultimately pursuing a career in post-production audio for film and television. He credits the mentor relationships he developed as a student during COVID lockdowns with much of his success. "I had the privilege of shadowing Cheryl Ottenritter for a time. She is extremely talented, respected, and hardworking. I connected with several mixing engineers and supervising sound editors in LA who were also very generous with their time and advice. Take advantage of your time as a student! Making contacts with your peers, instructors, and people within the industry, whether in person or over Zoom in other cities, is a great practice that makes all the difference."

Following graduation and in search of a job, he decided to put himself in the center of the action for

scripted projects: Los Angeles. “I saw many entry-level opportunities in L.A. film and television but didn’t get any calls back until I formally moved here. Getting a resume from a local address is a big deal, since hiring often moves fast. I was able to land a job because as a local, I could interview the very next day if they wanted that.”

Today, Matt is a Recordist (mix technician) at NBCUniversal working on the shows Law & Order: SVU and Chicago Med. His job is to keep the mix stage he is on running smoothly, whether that be implementing audio from sound editors, troubleshooting technical issues, or handling administrative tasks. Long term, he envisions himself as a re-recording engineer mixing sound effects for feature films.

His best advice for today’s ATEC students is to make mistakes. “You have access to an amazing amount of expensive gear that is hard to come by. Learn all there is to know. Screw things up while the stakes are low. Test your instincts. It’s great to fail now before you are in a professional setting where those mistakes will cost you.”

Matt’s last bit of advice for ATEC students who want to work in post-production: “There are so many students in the film department that need their films edited and mixed, but I was one of the few ATEC students to take advantage of that while I was at AU. Do it! You’ll learn so much, and if you’re lucky find some future clients!”

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

### Abhishek Dutt, Adjunct Professor



Despite growing up in India with a mom trained as an Indian classical singer, Professor Abhishek Dutt spent his formative years playing keyboards and guitars. “My mom tried to put me onto Indian

classical music, but I wanted to rock and roll.”

From his desire to rock, was born the Nu-metal band EESHAAN, in which Professor Dutt played keyboards and rapped for more than 10 years.

However, as the band evolved, they began undertaking commercial projects such as writing radio jingles and music for films. Many of those projects required the incorporation of Indian musical influences. “I kind of back-learned Indian music. We began incorporating Indian traditional folk, classical and Bollywood-type music into those projects. Eventually, we kind of became masters at that.”

So, when, after several years teaching in the ATEC program, Professor Dutt was approached with the opportunity to develop a new class, he immediately thought of Bollywood. “Bollywood music is not just Indian music, it’s fusion. Mostly, the base is Indian sub-continental music, but it consists of sounds and genres from around the world, amalgamating into Bollywood. So, my concept was to teach how to create rich Bollywood-type fusion music tracks by recording traditional Indian music and exploring modern production technics from other genres, which has served Bollywood music to become a unique international sound”

The first semester teaching his new class in Fall 2022, called Indian Music Production, was a success, he says. “The students created three projects each and some of them are so good that I could just sell those tracks to a Bollywood movie right now. We also recorded samples from simple kitchen bowls filled with water for creating an ancient Indian melodic instrument called “Jal Tarang” and the popular rhythm instrument “Tabla” with real samples recorded in-class from guest musician, both playable with MIDI. It was really cool.”

“Engaging in the whole process of developing a new class curriculum and then seeing that through was an awesome feeling,” says Dutt, particularly when receiving student feedback. “Some students were really into Indian music before the class and some knew nothing about Indian music at all but they ended up loving the course. It’s really given me a lot of satisfaction.”

Visit on [soundcloud.com/n96XP](https://soundcloud.com/n96XP) to listen to a sample of the tracks produced in Dutt’s Fall 2022 Indian Music Production class and look for it on the Fall 2023 class schedule.

## Tommy Lee James, Guest Lecturer



Veteran songwriter Tommy Lee James has collaborated with and written songs for country, dance and pop artists from Taylor Swift, Armin van Buuren and Tim McGraw to One Direction. During a recent guest lecture, Mr. James provided ATEC students with insights into songwriting as a skill and a profession. One of his most important tips is to know yourself as a songwriter.

“Analyze your skillset and identify your niche,” says Mr. James. “For example, I don’t do ‘clever’ well. My strength is heartfelt and sincere songs, connecting on an emotional level. That’s what I personally try to bring to the table.

Of course, one can only know oneself as a songwriter through practice. “Write three or four songs per week and try to finish them even if you don’t think they are exceptional. Then always move on to the next song. It’s the 10,000 hours principle. The song you thought was good last year might not seem so great the next. The first few years I wrote at least 500 mediocre to not-so-good songs. I didn’t write my first hit until my fifth or sixth year of being in Nashville but being there I had encouragement from other songwriters and my publisher. It wasn’t an instantaneous thing, at least not for me. Sounds cliché but you have to love it and commit to the time.”

Ultimately, he says, his goal is to always write the song that “breaks the door down” for radio. Radio play, he says, is valuable to the artist because it exposes that artist to a wider audience. It’s also the

key to getting paid as a songwriter. “If you are going to make a living at songwriting these days you have to write the single.”

His final tip: “Don’t try to build Rome with every song you write. Write something you like. Write something that you’re feeling. A great song is often simple. If you can convey even a small emotion that can be enough.”

Check out one of Mr. James latest releases, *Easy to Love*, performed by Armin van Buuren and Matoma featuring Teddy Swims and available on streaming now.

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## INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Wolftrap Center for the Performing Arts, Vienna, VA

[www.wolftrap.org/education/internships.aspx](http://www.wolftrap.org/education/internships.aspx)

### Warner Media

[www.wmg.com/careers](http://www.wmg.com/careers)

### Aspen Music Festival

- [www.aspenmusicfestival.com](http://www.aspenmusicfestival.com)
- [recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/Details/1403503](http://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/Details/1403503)

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It's no secret that women make up an overwhelming minority of the professional audio world, just 5-7% of audio professionals according to a 2019 Audio Engineering Society (AES) study. Similarly, here in ATEC, women are a small portion of the student body, an experience that can be isolating for some but is generally accepted as a reflection of the wider world. True enough. Of course, being the sole woman or one of a few in class doesn't mean we can't thrive – both individually and collectively. Enter Women in Audio, a student-run group started in 2019 and officially recognized in 2021 to provide networking opportunities and sense of community among AU women pursuing careers in the audio industry.

“The men who teach in ATEC have been wonderful advisors and teachers,” says Celeste Carter, one of WIA's founding members, “yet it's easy to be reminded that you are the only woman in class, which can lead to moments of frustration. It's important that we have an opportunity to support each other and learn from one another.”

In addition to providing a safe and comfortable environment for women to network, learn and collaborate, WIA also hosts panel discussions with professional women in the field and offers hands-on experience through recording sessions and live sound events run by women.

“WIA-run studio recording sessions have been a great way for ATEC women to review material in a neutral (ungraded) environment as well as gain more confidence as the engineers and producers in this heavily male-dominated world,” says Celeste. “It's great to get that reminder: I've got this under control and I am as capable as anyone else in this program. It's empowering.”

Saxon Kropp, an ATEC minor, joined a WIA-run recording session as artistic talent with her all-female acapella group, Trebel in Paradise. “It was easier for us to feel comfortable in a studio environment surrounded by women which makes a difference in performance. We're fortunate to have a safe space at AU although it's not the same experience in the real world. But now we can go into professional audio with greater expectations of what it can be.”

Women in Audio had an exciting panel event on Wednesday, April 5th in Kreeger G01. Panelists included mastering engineer Emily Lazar, Nashville studio engineer Gena Johnson, writer, engineer, mixer and producer Gloria Kaba and Grammy-nominated artist, producer and engineer Carolyn Malachi.

You can follow WIA on Instagram [@women\\_in\\_audio](https://www.instagram.com/women_in_audio).

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