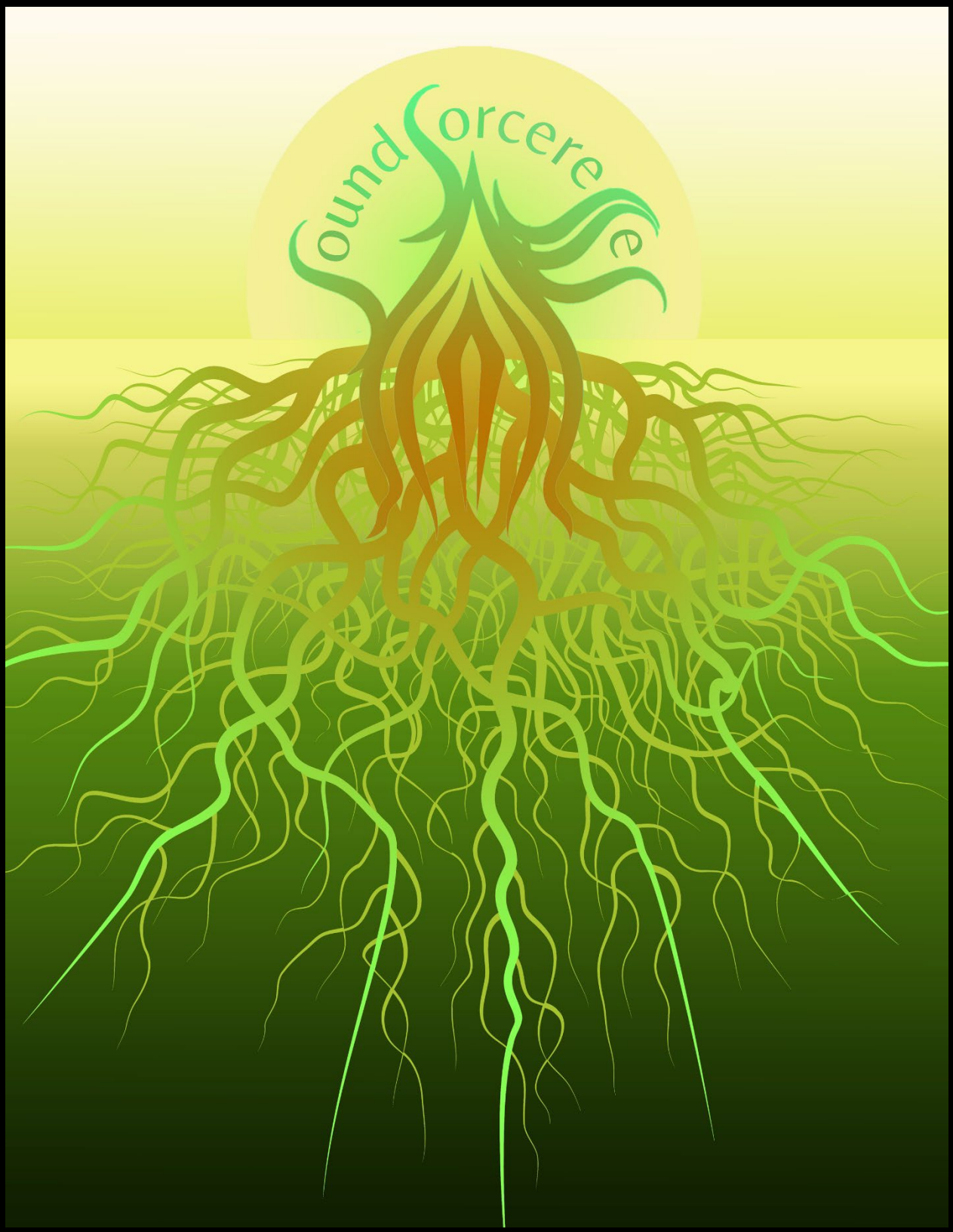

Sound Sorcerer

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WELCOME

Welcome to April 2024 and the third edition of Sound Sorceresses! For our readers in the Northern Hemisphere, I hope you are enjoying springtime. At the time of this publishing, there is still some snow on the ground at my home and I am eagerly awaiting the return of warmth.

I think the very first think you'll notice about this edition of Sound Sorceresses is that we have a lot of interviews! I want to extend my very sincere gratitude to Yaneti Bekele and Jill Du Boff for taking time out of their very full lived to talk about your podcasting journey!

In addition to the delightful interviews, there is something very special I want to draw attention to and that is our first article, written by Holly Taylor-Zuntz and Susan Thompson. Their article felt like especially perfect for this edition, sandwiched between Women's History Month in March (for much of the world, anyway) and Georgian Independence Day on May 26.



Editor-in-Chief: Rachel Hanson

I am reminded of Audre Lorde's poem, *Movement Song*, where she says, "Do not remember me as a disaster nor as the keeper of secrets."

There are no secrets to be kept in these pages this month, just women speaking their truth and making the most of our incredible gifts.

In closing, I would be remiss in my duties as Editor-in-Chief if I didn't remind you to visit us at soundsorceresses.substack.com to read and support the work of these incredible women.

TRY, LEARN, TRY AGAIN

Written by Holly Taylor-Zuntz and Susan Thompson



Mountain view from the remote village of Merisi, 700 metres above sea level, where we travelled to interview 17 year old Khatia Turmanidze.

Voices of the Ancestors is a podcast about Georgian songs and stories. We are talking about ancient three-part harmony songs from the Republic of Georgia on the Black Sea, nestled in the Caucasus mountains.

We are two British women - Susan & Holly - enchanted with the traditional songs of Georgia, which have been passed orally down the generations, and now on to non-Georgians like us. We have both spent time living and travelling around this small but diverse country. Both together and independently, we learn from and interview local singers.

A big theme of our podcast journey is 'Try, Try, Try again', at every stage: recording, editing, growing listenership and monetization.

At the beginning, we heard the advice 'make sure you're interested in the subject matter, and you'll keep wanting to talk about it'. We were surprised to hear that 90% of podcasts don't make more than three episodes. We knew that Georgian singing was the perfect topic for us; even now, after three years and 17 episodes, we're nowhere near running out of ideas, guests, or enthusiasm!



Recording Episode 11 Series 1 - 'Khatia Turmanidze Finds Her Voice' with the Tascam and Blue Yeti mics. From left to right - Susan, Khatia and Holly.

You'd be right in thinking Georgian polyphonic singing sounds niche, and in fact, we took our niche even further, showcasing only the women who sing Georgian songs. When it came to monetization it was hard to imagine a grassroots podcast on such a specific topic attracting an income. We spent time and energy trying to attract sponsors like Georgian wine merchants; we applied for arts grants, only some of which were unsuccessful; we poured time into creating social media content on myriad platforms, getting sporadic 'likes' and few comments. In a nutshell, it was an active, but generic and scattergun approach.

After twelve months of self-funding our project, we took advice from Arielle Nissenblatt of *Squadcast* to 'hone in on our audience, identify our tribe and communicate directly with them'. We stopped looking for sponsors and started the process of converting our listeners into donors.

We identified our potential listening base as being Georgian enthusiasts, intrepid travellers who are interested in off-the-beaten-track locations, ethnomusicologists and learners of English as a Second Language. We shared the podcast in Facebook communities and set up our own, we reached out to Georgian choirs around the world and the Georgian diaspora. We directly appealed to listeners in each episode to financially support us.



These horses can be heard in Series 2, Episode 4 of Voices of the Ancestors. They live in the Georgian village of Svaneti.

These targeted interactions led us to be almost fully listener funded. We are supported on Patreon and Ko-Fi by devoted listeners who are as passionate as us about hearing these women's stories.

Once we started listening to our listeners, other opportunities and streams of income also appeared. One suggested we apply for a bursary from the British Georgian Society - we were successful. One suggested we present at a Conference for ethnomusicologists in Italy - we did and grew both our newsletter audience and listeners.

At 'in person' live events (singing workshops, Georgian film screenings etc) we meet people who tell us about an episode they love and that they have been meaning to become a podcast Patron or buy us a cup of 'Ko-fi' for ages. Then the next day they sign up.



Photo by yucar studios on Unsplash

Starting from scratch, meant that we learned something new every day for the first few months - and actually it still feels like that! In the first year we had to record remotely due to COVID lockdowns We tried so many different platforms including Squadcast and zoom. Now we've settled on recording ourselves into our own mics while speaking on the phone and then stitching the audio together.

Right from the beginning it was important to us to make the podcast as accessible as possible - our first guest - Jen Morris is a teacher of the deaf and advocated for us having a transcript of each episode. Again we've used many programs: Otter.ai, Google Voice and Descript. Most AI transcription products struggle with Georgian names, for example Gvantsa and specialist terms, like a Georgian yodeling style called krimanchuli. Having transcripts is valued by listeners and has become part of our sound editing process. It's much easier to 'shape' each episode when we can search the transcript for specific words and spot duplication easily.

For sound editing we started with Audacity, which went well until all the saved, almost complete files, were lost just before a Christmas episode was due to be published. After that we tried IMovie and now use Reaper. And yes, we learnt to be more methodical about saving the project during editing.



Recording Episode 2 Series 2 'On Folk Instruments with Nino Razmadze with the TULA mic. From left to right Holly, Nino and Susan.

Not to mention all the different recording equipment we tried! We started out using the equipment we had - Focusrite Scarlett Solo with Shure SM58 mic, a Tascam DR-05 handheld recorder with pop guards made from tights. And then, once we thought we were sorted, the world started opening up again, and we could interview singers in person. This changed our setup yet again, and we invested in lavalier mics. We learnt the hard way that they don't give any warning that the batteries are low and about to stop working ☹. We tried a Blue Yeti mic but found it a bit bulky when travelling. We've been happily using a combination of Tula mic and the Tascam DR-05 for the last couple of years.

Whenever we record 'in the field' the circumstances are so different. No matter how prepared we are, our interviewee's setup is always unknown, we've faced dodgy internet, crackly mics and chaotic homes. We always ask for 'a quiet place' to record and still have found ourselves in; a school hall with parents knocking on the door; a yard with cockerels; a bar; a 'Svan' tower with logging trucks passing below.

To sum up, making the podcast is a constant learning journey in which no two days are the same. If you enjoy hearing women's stories and songs weaved into an audio tapestry, we hope you'll enjoy listening to Voices of the Ancestors.


Voices of the Ancestors
voices of the ancestors
the podcast bringing you songs and stories from Georgia.
www.voicesoftheancestors.co.uk
Spotify
SOUNDCLOUD


What is she listening to?
We will never know whether the model was actually listening to anything when this photo was taken. But you can make sure that readers listen to your podcast by advertising it on this page. The full page is just 500 dollars.

VOICES FROM THE CLUB: A PRESIDEN'TS PODCAST JOURNEY

An Interview with Yaneti Bekele and Rachel Hanson

Rachel:
I'm here with Yaneti Bekele. You're the president of the Inver Hills Community College Podcasting club. Now, did you found the club, or had the club already been founded and you ran as an officer, what was that journey like?

Yaneti:
So, the podcast club, a long, long time ago, was just organized for students to go in and do whatever they want to do. So, when me and my friends that are no longer my friends anymore, when we saw the podcast club, or just the podcast room, we were invested. We were interested because we're the type of people that will never shut up. So, let's just be in this room, and let's just talk. And we got really interested, and they kind of threw the burden of presidency onto me. They kind of didn't want to take that role because they knew it was, like, a big role. I had to handle a lot of the meetings, a lot of the appointments, and we just made it a podcast club and now I'm just running it on my own.

Rachel:
I am also an Inver Hills alumni and also have student leadership experience and it really does something to people. I'm sorry that you had that experience. But it seems like you've really grown it into something kind of amazing because the club itself has a podcast, right? Let's Talk About Truth. Am I recalling that correctly?

Yaneti:
Yes. Truth be Told. It could be based on religion or anything that you want. A lot of people say I have the mindset of a businessperson. That's why I'm majoring in business. And so, whenever someone mentions a podcast thingy that they want to do and we make appointments with it, it's like, my mindset is like, business. That's all I'm thinking about. And so, I'm just like, okay,

what day do you want it? Whatever your schedule looks like. Then let me be in your schedule and stuff like that. I allow people to have the meeting with me whenever they're available.

Rachel:
Yeah. And I have to admit, I have not listened to the podcast because your show has a very popular name, and I was having a hard time finding it. Is it just you that's doing the interviews, or are there other club members who also will interview guests about their truth?

Yaneti:
It's only me right now. And with the editing, I had an editor, but he kind of bailed on me because of personal reasons.

Rachel:
Terrible for both of you.

Yaneti:
Yeah. I kind of didn't have the time to just sit there and edit because I was trying to bring that video or the auto to my computer. So, my brother was able to record, do the editing part, but I didn't know how to do that, so I didn't have the technique, like, the technical skills. Yeah. The capabilities of being able to do that. So, my advisor was helping me a little bit, but I was still confused. I don't know. I kind of felt alone. I kind of felt defeated at that moment, but I feel like there's a lot of new people that are in my life right now. They're kind of motivating me. And now, I might collab with the BSU.

Rachel:
Yes. They're amazing. They're on campus. I love them.

Yaneti:
I love them, too.

Rachel:
That's awesome. Well, I wonder if you. That technical piece is so. It's a journey, right, to gain those skills. I wonder, as you're thinking about the business side of the club and the podcast. and I guess I'm asking this as a magazine editor and also as a member of the community, do

you feel like you're getting the support that you need to recruit more people into the club and to identify those skills gaps or is it really just Yaneti who is running the Inver Hills Community College Podcasting Club?

Yaneti:
I think my advisor is helping me a lot. And I met this one girl. Her name is Fardosa. she is helping me recruit other people, but she's also the president of the MSA, so she's recruiting herself for her own.

Rachel:
Right.

Yaneti:
So, I have one person that wants to be, like, vice president, but I still need to continuously reach out to her to see if she's able to take that role, even though it's like a big role.
Rachel: Right. Just thinking through your time in the club, is there somebody that you've had on the show that you were really excited about? That was like an amazing experience that made you maybe want to keep going or anything like that?

Yaneti:
Yeah, I did. I was really excited to have someone that I'm still friends with to this day. I was really excited when he did it because I feel like those that really have the energy to really say whatever they want to say and just speak on their own experience and be vulnerable at that state. It just makes me happy because they know it's a safe place. They know they're okay expressing their feelings and stuff.

Rachel:
Yeah. Going back to kind of like that safe space piece, do you feel like there's anything special that you do, to kind of create that safe space where people can be vulnerable on the show to talk about their truths?

Yaneti:
Yeah, of course. Before I hit record, I tell them, do you really want to do this? I don't want to put you out there. If you don't want to speak, I can just ask you some questions, or if you just don't want to do it at all, that's your choice. I'm not going to force this on you. I've done that a

lot with a lot of people, and some of them are shy, but then when they got comfortable with the stuff, I was asking them and how I was engaging and making eye contact with them and making them feel seen, they just felt very comfortable, and they went out of their way and spoke. I don't know. I've seen a lot of people's true side really are through that podcast, and it just makes me really happy.

Rachel:
Yeah, it's so awesome. And I think, there's also really some safety in, an audio only podcast, right? You're just having a conversation with somebody and sharing your truth. Sometimes it helps, right? Like, if your face isn't attached to it. I find that to be really helpful. Anyway, when I'm doing interviews and stuff like that, that people go, you have a lot of control, right? People can know what you look like or not know what you look like, and that's really nice. Yeah.

Yaneti:
See, I love, you know, it's like people, I feel like when people hear my voice, they're like, oh, she's a little kid. But then when they see me, right, when they see me, they're like, wow.

Rachel:
Wait, you're a grown up. Yeah, I get that a lot too.

Yaneti:
It's actually insane. But I actually like it because it's like, wow, you found me. It's like finding Waldo.

Rachel:
For real. It really is.

Yaneti:
No, for real.

Rachel:
I think maybe for anybody who's reading this interview, do you have any advice for people who might want to start this type of a club on their own college campus?

Yaneti:
If you're really passionate about something, if you really want to do something, don't hold it off and try to wait on it later on and try to go and try new things. Even though it's scary, even though you can feel uncomfortable some days, if you just go out there and do something, it could really not only form other people's life, but it can also transform your life. It makes you become a new person, and it makes you become more courageous, more motivational. That's when people are going to know who you really are because of the stuff that you're doing, because you're going out of your way, and people will see you as a leader. And with that leadership, that's when people are going to want to hang out with you, want to be around you, want to try new things with you because they see a new person in you.

Rachel:
I love that so much. And you touched on this a few times as we've been talking, right? That people that you are friends with and you're not friends with them anymore, that doing the things that you feel strongly about and are excited about are also going to attract the right kind of people to you. And I think that that's really powerful as well.

Yaneti:
You never know. You can find your best friends in a podcast kind of state or in any state.

Rachel:
I will say then, Yanetti Bakeley, thank you so much for your time and for letting me weirdly record this conversation for the magazine. I appreciate your time.

Yaneti:
I'm so happy that I got a chance to do this.

FROM THEATER TO PODCASTING: A JOURNEY OF SOUND DESIGN WITH JILL DU BOFF

An Interview with Jill Du Boff and Kara McGuirk



From Broadway to Black Panther…. Jill BC DuBoff's career is an audio road map of creativity, talent, and success. In addition to being one of the most gifted sound designers in the industry, Jill is a consummate professional, strategic thinker, and all-around kind human.

I had the pleasure of working for Jill in the audio department of Marvel Entertainment. She is currently the Head of Sound Design at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. We met up late one night on Riverside after all our kids were put to bed.

Kara:
Hi Jill. Thanks for chatting with me. Let's start with your education…. Where did you go to school and what did you study? And how did that lead to sound design?

Jill:
I studied dramaturgy at Bard College which is a historical and theoretical theater. I met a stage manager and saw her show and she told me to hang out for a few minutes and talk to the sound designer.

He told me that the way that he got his start was by assisting people and learning the business that way. So, he hired me for a job to be a second assistant on a show, and I started working at that theater.

I left Bard and went to school in New York City and continued working. I did everything from sound to casting to reading scripts for Williamstown Theater Festival and just anything to work in theater and make some money. And then I met another sound designer and became his board op, his engineer. His [sound] design was unlike anything I'd ever heard. It was gorgeous. He designed to emotion, and I just thought that was so beautiful.
The sound would literally grip the audience and they would lean forward and then a note would change, and they would sort of lean back or physically shift. [I knew] this is what I wanted to do. I stayed in theater for many, many, many, many years.

Kara:
So how did you make the leap from theater to radio and podcasting?

Jill:
I met a guy who worked for "On the Media." I shadowed him a couple of times and then ended up getting an internship at WNYC which parlayed into a freelance job. And during that time, I was still working in theater, and I started teaching at Sarah Lawrence College. After a little while I was able to get a job at the New Yorker on their audio team.

We got a whole bunch of people from WNYC, and we started the New Yorker Radio Hour. I worked on that show and ran the other four podcasts that are still at the New Yorker. I stayed there for about five years and then this job at Marvel opened up and I thought, this is perfect!

After having been at the New Yorker for five years and a bunch of those being under the Trump presidency, I would love to be working in a fantasy world for a little while. I was hired by Sarah Amos.

Kara:
Thank goodness you were hired at Marvel! So, I'm going to go back to theater for a second. What exactly is sound design in theater?

Jill:
So sound design in theater, it contains a multitude. It's vast. When you walk into a theater space, there's nothing there. You have to design the whole sound system. You have to decide what speakers you want, where they go, how they get hooked up, and you have to stay within a budget.

The rest is designing content and content can be pulled music. If you're trying to evoke a time period, it's shorthand to say, if you're listening to Gloria Gaynor, you know you're in the 70s. Or if you're listening to, Elvis, you're in the 50s. Or you compose your own music, and you compose for transitions or underscoring or accents. And then of course, there's also all the sound effects. Over the years have recorded everything from every single door in every apartment I've ever lived in. I've recorded the knocking and the doorbell, all my cats, both my kids and my niece. I've recorded all of them crying at various ages.

Kara:
Back when we were just doing news, we never put music under anything. You should be emotionless. You should let the audience decide how they want to feel. And podcasting has opened up this whole new world of storytelling where we can enhance and encourage different emotions. And so all the words that you just used to talk about theater and sound design…are now applicable to what we do in the audio world and podcasting.

So now I understand how the transition was probably pretty seamless for you going from theater to radio and podcasting.

Jill:
It was pretty seamless for me, but when I was trying to get a job in radio (before I took the internship at WNYC,) I kept applying for all these jobs and people were like, I just don't

understand how what *you* do translates to what *we* do. And I'm just like, **directly** for the most part! It was teaching people, and now there are theater sound designers all over radio.

Kara:
You were just ahead of your time essentially and had to convince everybody that there was a direct correlation between sound design and theater and what was going to become this crazy podcast landscape. Tell me about the tools that you use, and software or hardware, you mentioned speakers, but what else are you working with during a live performance?

Jill:
Actually, during the live performance, I am not there. I designed the show and then I leave an engineer there to run the show. I'm super committed to Pro Tools, both in broadcasting and in theater, to create the audio. And then it's played back on a program called QLab, which is theatrical focused playback software.

And in a lot of plays these days, people kind of expect it to be a little bit louder. So, a lot of actors are wearing mics. And so, [engineers] are mixing mics or using floor mics, because many of the theaters are very big and need some sort of reinforcement.

But there's also obviously software used like Logic is a big one and Ableton.

Kara:
So this is really hard to ask because you've done so much amazing work. Do you have a favorite episode or a show that best illustrates your design work?

Jill:
I used to do a lot of stuff for Studio 360 for Jack Handey, that was really fun.
When Daniel Radcliffe first went from being Harry Potter to being on stage in Equus, [I did a piece about] Lorenzo Pisoni [who played the horse.] I loved the story because he has such a cool backstory, and it was so much fun to design.

Kara:
You've had such an amazing career. What are some of the projects that you are most proud of?

Jill:
So there is a show I did really early in my career for Adobe Theater Company, which is no longer there, but they were a downtown theater company and I worked with them a lot, they were the best, still like a great group of people.

They did such fun work and they always took a lot of risks. And they did a play called *Poona the F**K Dog and other stories for children.*

There was so much sound in that show. And this is when we were all on mini discs. So, I had this genius board op, her name was Cindy, and she was able to make the show happen with four mini discs.

Kara:
It makes me so happy that that's like the first thing that came to your mind. The woman who has done like, you know, how many Marvel podcasts and created the New Yorker Radio Hour, but no, Poona the F**K Dog.

Jill:
Yep. Exactly. Exactly.

For theater shows, there's a ton that I was really happy with, but there was one that I got to have a lot of fun with called *Hand to God*. And that was just like a really fun sound design. But as far as like the things that I was the producer on and didn't actually do the sound design for, I love *Marvel's Squirrel Girl: The Unbeatable Radio Show*. I'm so proud of that show.

Kara:
You should be. That was an amazing podcast for so many reasons. But what was it about Squirrel Girl that that you loved? Because there's so much to love.

Jill:
Yeah, so many reasons. I thought the story was great. It was accessible. It was fun. It was an incredible standalone podcast with six episodes. You could not know anything about Marvel and then listen to it and become a fan. I thought that Ryan North, the writer, did such an amazing job. So funny and so smart. It's just wonderful. I also was really proud of the *Marvel Method* podcast, which was with Method Man.

Kara:
As we wrap up, any tips or tricks to share with other sound designers?

Jill:
I'd say a tip would be you really have to love what you do. If you don't love it, then pivot. I think that there are so many jobs available to audio people, to sound designers, to people who know audio. And it's not super hard to translate your skills into another arena.

Be kind.

Just get to know people, get to know what they do, see what's out there. And you never know. You may fall in love with something that you just didn't know about. And also, like, the medium is changing so rapidly. When I first started, there were no podcasts, so I had no idea that that was going to be what I absolutely fell in love with.

Kara
That's excellent advice, which I'm also going to take to heart. Is there anything that you are working on now that you want to share?

Jill:
I'm working on a play called *Mother Play*, which is going to be at 2NDStage on Broadway in April, May, and the beginning of June.

I am also freelancing back at a portion of my old job at The New Yorker producing the fiction podcast and the poetry podcast.

Kara:
That's gonna be fun.

Jill:
Oh my gosh, I'm so happy... It's so much fun to be back. It's so nice to see everybody. And you know, those shows are a blast. When I worked there, those were two of the shows that I knew I would miss so much. So just that I get to do it, you know, even for the short time, I'm so happy.



Kara McGuirk-Allison is a long-time audio and podcast producer who has done work with NPR, Platform Media, and Marvel.

Classifieds



Photo by Artem Beliaikin on Unsplash

Angela Mason Creative

Flloyd Kennedy

Forest Freeter Productions

KPC Creative

Nathan Hanson

Ocotillo Sound

Platform Media LLC

The Podcast Host

Pod People

Spiked Eggs Podcast

Quirky Voices

Thank you to each of you who have financially subscribed to Sound Sorceresses! If you're interested in learning more about financially supporting the magazine, check out what we have to offer here.

We'll see you again on July 1, 2024!

For Immediate Release

Film, TV, and video game mega-stars align for the world's first Autism in Entertainment Conference in Bel Air on April 5

*Noteworthy contributors include panelists from **Nickelodeon**, **Ubisoft**, **Exceptional Minds**, TV personality/animator/educator **Dani Bowman**, acclaimed animation creator/director **Jorge Gutierrez**, and renowned writer/producer/director **Scott Steindorff**.*

Los Angeles, CA, March 19th - The world's first **Autism in Entertainment Conference** is a one-day, in-person, groundbreaking event that takes place on Friday, April 5, 2024, at the prestigious **Skirball Cultural Center**. The gathering features a roster of high-profile industry names, such as **Nickelodeon**, **Ubisoft**, animation director **Jorge Gutierrez** (Book of Life), animator/reality star/educator **Dani Bowman** (Netflix's Love on the Spectrum), and writer/producer/director **Scott Steindorff** (Understanding Autism, Station Eleven). In addition, twelve neurodivergent entertainment academies/mini studios – **Brainstorm Productions**, **DaniMation Entertainment**, **Ed Asner Family Centers**, **Exceptional Minds**, **Jazz Hands for Autism**, **Game Gen**, **Inclusion Films**, **JDS Creative Academy**, **The Miracle Project**, **Silver Drawing Academy**, **Spectrum Laboratory**, and **Visual Arts Academy** are set to participate as educational partners.

All of the above unite on common ground to bridge the employment gap between creative adults on the spectrum and studio (plus other content production) employers.

The goal of this gathering is to facilitate communication between studio/producer employers and talented neurodivergent individuals who seek careers in the entertainment industry. Areas of emphasis include film and television production, voice-over and on-camera performance, animation, and video game design.

Autism in Entertainment (AIE) is the result of a strategic collaboration between the nonprofit **Orange County Asperger's Support Group (OCASG)**, disability-focused staffing and consulting firm **Zavikon**, and generous grant funding from the **California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**. AIE seeks to connect entertainment top brass with work-ready job candidates who are on the spectrum. All activities occur in real time and on-site during the one-day event in West Los Angeles, California. The Conference goal is to manifest a friendly forum - for both employers and employment seekers - by way of mutually beneficial learning and networking. The program includes panel discussions, breakout sessions, and other activities.

Judi Uttal, AIE founder/chair and OCASG president, has a personal stake in the groundbreaking gathering. In addition to being an autism advocate and activist, she is the mother of an adult son (Joshua) who was diagnosed at age 3. Today, Josh is a Cal State Fullerton graduate whose vocation is video post-production.

"Many individuals on the spectrum have the passion, aptitude, and skills that make them well-suited for entertainment industry employment," says Judi. "The AIE mission is to increase awareness of these skill sets and forge pathways to internships, apprenticeships, and placement into paid opportunities."

The Conference program kicks off with a huge, public personality: keynote speaker **Jorge Gutierrez**. AIE invites attendees to join a heartfelt presentation with the Emmy and Annie award-winner. Gutierrez promises a tour of his Hollywood career as a creator/writer/director/artist and elaborates on autism as his personal super power.

Afternoon breakout sessions branch into separate tracks targeting performing artists, behind-the-scenes creatives, plus custom workshops for small and large employers. For example, during one seminar, video game giant **Ubisoft** shares aspects of its neurodivergent employment program. Audiences have the opportunity to hear ways that Ubisoft champions people on the spectrum in its workforce.

Between-session entertainment includes several Spectrum Spotlight mini-documentaries, which highlight standout talent. One of these short films - "Autism in Entertainment Spectrum

Spotlight: Dani Bowman - Animator/Educator)" - already boasts KIDS FIRST! Film Festival official selection status.

Event registration is free for qualified professionals on the spectrum and for entertainment industry hiring entities.

For agenda updates, distinguished advisory committee biographies, employer benefits, and sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.autisminentertainment.org and subscribe to the AIE news bulletin. To make a tax deductible donation that directly supports AIE Conference initiatives, see http://www.memberplanet.com/campaign/ocasg/aie-conference-2024-donations, or contact sponsorships chair Marlene Sharp for details at marlene@pinkpoodleproductions.com.

About **Autism in Entertainment**:
Established in May 2022, the Autism In Entertainment Workgroup includes educators, professionals, and family members who believe that individuals on the autism spectrum can contribute in entertainment-related fields, including film, television, social media, and game design. The goal of Autism In Entertainment is to drive employment efforts in entertainment-related careers.

About the **Orange County Asperger's Support Group**:
The Orange County Asperger's Support Group is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for autistic teens, adults, and their families in the community. They achieve this through providing support, organizing social activities, and education. Their goal is to empower the autism community by creating a safe and welcoming environment where individuals and families can connect with others who share similar experiences and challenges. We believe that through support and education, individuals with autism can achieve their full potential and become valued members of the community. For more information, visit www.ocaspergers.org or contact ocasupport@gmail.com.

About **Zavikon:**
Zavikon is an employment agency and consulting firm dedicated to placing individuals with disabilities and those who are neurodivergent in career-oriented employment. They do this in a supportive manner, providing continued guidance along the way.

Zavikon believes there is a job out there for everyone to apply their talents and skills in a meaningful way and they are dedicated to being a bridge to an inclusive working world. For more information, visit www.zavikon.net or contact info@zavikon.net.

About Jorge R. Guiterrez

Emmy and Annie Award-winning Jorge R. Gutierrez is a Mexican animator, painter, voice actor, writer and director. A CalArts Experimental Animation BFA & MFA graduate, Gutierrez has completed various films, cartoons, and paintings exploring his love affair with Mexican pop and folk culture. Gutierrez was director and co-writer of the Guillermo del Toro-produced animated feature The Book of Life, which earned him a 2014 Golden Globe Award nomination. Along with his wife and muse, **Sandra Equihua**, they created the multiple Emmy Award-winning animated series El Tigre: The Adventures of Manny Rivera for Nickelodeon. Gutierrez most recently created, wrote, and directed the event series Maya and the Three for Netflix. The project won two Annie Awards and four Emmys. Gutierrez currently is writing/directing a Netflix animated feature named I, Chihuahua with **Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias**.

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