

Background

Mercer Aplin draws from a strong background in live event management, theatrical sound design, and audio production to inform his current Audio Video system designs. At Threshold, Mercer has contributed to over 150 projects, with significant design responsibility on over 50 - including work the US, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Canada. His consulting practice is complemented by presentations to industry professionals and mentoring university and high school theatrical sound designs as well as active participation in professional societies (United States Institute of Theatre Technology). He now brings his system design experience to his students at Purdue University.

Education

2011-2014 Purdue University, MFA Theatre Design and Production, Audio Technology

2007-2011 University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, BFA Theater Design Technology

Professional Experience

Assistant Professor of Practice - Audio Technology - Department of Theatre and Dance - Purdue University | August 2024 - Current

Responsibilities Include:

- Creates and teaches new Audio Technology and Audio System Design Curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students including:
 - THTR29000 - Careers in Professional Audio (Spring 2025)
 - THTR29000 - Introduction to Audio Systems Documentation (Fall 2025)
 - THTR35300 - Theatre Audio Technology I (Spring 2025)
 - THTR55300 - Theatre Audio Technology II (Fall 2024)
 - THTR56900 - Audio Consulting for Performing Arts (Fall 2025)
- Participates in departmental committees including:
 - Chairperson - Department of Theatre and Dance Graduate Committee (Fall 2024 - Current)
 - Member - Department of Theatre and Dance Evaluation Committee (Fall 2024 - Spring 2025)
- Provides mentorship and guidance to undergraduate and graduate students.
- Oversees Audio Systems in the Hansen Theatre, Mallet Theatre, and Audio Production Studio.
- Contributes to Audio System Design for Fusion Studio for Entertainment Technology.
- Co-Hosts monthly "First Fridays" webinar at Fusion Studio for Entertainment and Engineering.
- Designs, procures, and implements new equipment for major system upgrades to facilitate new teaching pedagogy in:
 - Department of Theatre and Dance - Audio Production Studio
 - Department of Theatre and Dance - Dance Studios
 - Fusion Studio for Entertainment and Engineering - Martinson 4D Experience Lab

Senior Audio Video Consultant - Threshold Acoustics, Chicago, IL | February 2022 - July 2024

Responsibilities Include:

- Directs, supervises, and executes the design and specification of AV systems of significant complexity.
- Leads acceptance testing and optimization of completed systems.
- Holds primary responsibility for managing AV scope, fee, and budget during design and construction on a large number of assigned projects.
- Presents proposed system designs to clients and project stakeholders.
- Coordinates AV system elements and needs with architects and design engineers.

- Forges new professional relationships with architects and facility owners while maintaining contact with existing clients.
- Wields a large network of industry contacts for assistance and back-up with challenging designs.
- Navigates complex and high-stakes negotiations with clients and contractors.
- Contributes to user training sessions at the conclusion of system installations.
- Provides onboarding and training for new AV staff.
- Distributes project tasks to AV interns and junior staff. Provides reviews and markups of assigned project work.
- Pursues new project opportunities with existing clients. Remains in contact with former clients. Assists with proposals, qualifications, and presentations.

Audio Video Consultant - Threshold Acoustics, Chicago, IL | July 2015 - February 2022

Responsibilities Included:

- Managed, designed and documented small to mid-sized AV projects in a variety of markets.
- Participated in meetings and presentations with clients and collaborators.
- Provided on-site support during system commissioning and loudspeaker system tuning.

Staff Audio Engineer - Baltimore Center Stage - Baltimore, MD | 2014 -2015

Responsibilities included:

- Configured, operated, and maintained audio systems in the Pearlstone Theater (540-seat proscenium) and Head Theater (350-seat studio theater).
- Provided input on desired system and infrastructure upgrades for 2016 renovation to Baltimore Center Stage.
- Managed "shop builds" and equipment prep, configuration, and testing for large scale equipment rentals .
- Coordinated with artistic staff, production management, and other production departments.
- Mixed musicals and outside events.
- Assisted Audio Supervisor and guest sound designers during technical rehearsals.
- Managed over-hire labor during system load-ins/load-outs.

Head Audio Engineer - Theatre Aspen - Aspen, CO | 2013 - 2014

Responsibilities included:

- Configuration, operation, and maintenance of audio systems during
- Audio system optimization with guest sound designers
- Management of audio load-ins, change overs, and load-outs
- Coordination with all design and production departments
- Mixing 3 musicals and 1 straight play in repertory each summer (10 performances/week)
- Assisting guest sound designers
- Mentoring audio apprentices

Graduate Assistantship - Audio Technician - Hall of Music Productions - West Lafayette, IN | 2011 - 2014

Responsibilities included:

- Configuration, operation, and maintenance of audio systems in Elliott Hall of Music, Loeb Playhouse, Fowler Hall, and Slater Hill Amphitheater
- Advancing system requirements with touring engineers
- Management of in-shop equipment prep and configuration
- Coordination with all design and production departments
- Mixing live music performances, theatrical events, presentations
- Audio mixing and playback control for Purdue Athletics - front of house audio and audio for broadcast
- Field and studio recordings of musical performances, voice overs, and audio for video production
- Assisting Audio Supervisor and guest sound designers

- Managing over-hire labor during system load-ins/load-outs

Audio Technician/Event Production Manager - Clearwing Productions - Milwaukee, WI | 2011

Responsibilities included:

- Coordinating production operations with clients and venue managers
- Management of local crews (including IATSE stage hands) for events and festivals including:
 - Zoo Ala Carte (2010) - Milwaukee, WI Featuring Jon Anderson (the voice of Yes), The Gin Blossoms, Stray Cat Lee Rocker.
 - La Crosse Riverfest (2010 & 2011) - La Crosse, WI Featuring The Spin Doctors, Lucas Cates, Monkey Wrench.

Backline Technician - Clearwing Productions, Milwaukee, WI | 2009 - 2010

Responsibilities included:

- Shop prep, transportation, setup, and on-site support of backline equipment for performances and festivals including:
 - Summerfest 2010
 - Verge 2010
 - Milwaukee German Fest
 - Polish Fest
 - Irish Fest
 - Festa Italiana
 - African Fest
 - Pride Fest
 - Wisconsin State Fair
 - Washington County Fair

Select Projects at Threshold Acoustics as AV Consultant with Design Responsibility

(Complete project list available upon request)

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts - Anchorage, AK
 Austin Asian American Resource Center - Austin, TX
 Brown University - Granoff Center - Providence, RI
 Connecticut College - Palmer Auditorium - New London, CT
 Chicago Children's Theater - Chicago, IL
 Crested Butte Center for the Arts - Crested Butte, CO
 Crown Event Center - Fayetteville, NC
 Eton College - School Hall - Windsor, United Kingdom
 Expo 2020 - Al Wasl Plaza - Dubai, UAE
 Fredericton Performing Arts Centre - Fredericton, Canada
 Haverford College - Visual Culture, Arts and Media Center - Haverford, PA
 John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts - Arts and Ideals Exhibit, Washington DC
 MIT Metropolitan Warehouse Renovation - Cambridge, MA
 Milwaukee Repertory Theater - Milwaukee, WI
 Missouri State University - John Goodman Amphitheater - Springfield, MO
 Starlight Theater - Kansas City, MO
 Studebaker Theater - Chicago, IL
 University of Illinois at Chicago - ACC Academic Building - Chicago, IL
 University of Tennessee Health Science Center - Knoxville, TN
 University of Tennessee - Carousel Theater - Knoxville, TN
 Wheaton College - Conservatory of Music - Wheaton, IL

Select Theatrical Sound Design Experience

Sound Designer, *RENT*, Montgomery College, David Gram, director
Sound Designer, *Spring Awakening**, Purdue University, Kristine Holtvedt, director
Sound Designer, *Medea*, Purdue University, Mike Lenz, director
Sound Designer, *The Understudy*, Purdue University, Richard Sullivan Lee, director
Sound Designer, *Sunday In The Park With George*, UW - Stevens Point, Tim Howard, director
Sound Designer/FOH Engineer, *Floyd Collins*, UW - Stevens Point, Tim Howard, director
Sound Designer, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, UW - Stevens Point, Roger Nelson, director
Sound Designer, *Never The Sinner*, UW - Stevens Point, Steve Trovillion Smith, director
Sound Designer, *Julius Caesar*, UW - Stevens Point, Steve Trovillion Smith, director
Sound Designer, *Afterimages*, UW - Stevens Point, various student and faculty choreographers
Asst. Sound Designer/FOH Engineer, *RENT*, UW - Stevens Point, Sound Design by B. Baumgardner
Asst. Sound Designer, *Legally Blonde*, *The Musical*, MSU, Sound Design by Richard K. Thomas

*MFA Terminal Project

Select Mixing / Production Sound Experience

FOH Engineer, *Marley*, Baltimore Center Stage, Sound Design by Shane Rettig and Alex Hawthorne
FOH Engineer, *Fully Committed*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by Brian Ronan
FOH Engineer, *Next to Normal*, Baltimore Center Stage, Sound Design by Ryan Rumery
FOH Engineer, *Little Women*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by Nevin Steinberg
FOH Engineer, *The Full Monty*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by David Thomas
FOH Engineer, *The Cottage*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by David Thomas
FOH Engineer, *Les Miserables*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by David Thomas
FOH Engineer, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, Theatre Aspen, Sound Design by David Thomas
FOH Engineer, *Urinetown: The Musical*, UW - Stevens Point, Sound Design by Jesse Cyr
Audio Systems Tech, *Hairspray* and *Aladdin*, Tuacahn Amphitheater, Sound Design by D. Swenson Sound Engineer,
Iphigenia and Other Daughters, Purdue University, Kristine Holtvedt, director
Production Sound Engineer, *The Miracle Worker*, Purdue University, Richard Sullivan Lee, director

Select Teaching / Presentation Experience

Sound Mentor, *RENT*, Carver Center for Arts and Technology, Baltimore, MD
Sound Mentor, *RENT*, Montgomery College, Rockville, MD
Recording Studio Teaching Assistant, Purdue University
Teaching Assistant, Purdue University - Sound System Design and Optimization
USITT Presentation: What Can a Consultant Do for You?
USITT Presentation: *Conduit: Empty on the Inside*.

Honors / Awards

- 2014 USITT Robert E. Cohen Sound Achievement Award for *Medea*
- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Award, Excellence in Sound Design for *Never The Sinner* (Region III). Advanced to KCACTF National Competition

Software Proficiencies / Additional Skills

AutoCAD • Revit • VectorWorks • Smaart • MAPP 3D • d&b Array Calc • L-Acoustics Sound Vision • QLab • MOTU
Digital Performer • Adobe Photoshop • Dante Controller • Logic Pro • Final Cut Pro • Microsoft Office • Set Construction • Basic Lighting Design • Video Production/Editing • Currently pursuing FAA Type 107 Certification • Valid Driver's License • Valid Passport

Additional Competencies / Areas of Interest :

- Design of Immersive Audio Systems including: L-Acoustics L-ISA, Meyer Sound Spacemap-Go, d&b Soundscape.
- Design of large-scale production networks including: Dante/AES67, Q-LAN, AVB/MILAN, NDI, Extron NAV, Crestron NVX, SDVoE Protocols.
- Training seminars from manufacturers including: Yamaha Professional Audio, DiGiCo, d&b audiotechnik, Meyer Sound, L-Acoustics, JBL Professional.
- Frequent participation in industry conferences and trade shows including: USITT, NAB, InfoComm, Integrated Systems - Europe.

Industry Certifications :

- QSC QSYS - Level 1
- Audinate - Dante Audio - Levels 1-3