

DIGITAL AUDIO PROJECT:
PODCAST

ASSIGNMENT: Review or report on a CD, artist, or band from your own music collection. Present this in the form of a podcast (or radio piece). (Note: Please choose music you have on **CD** , or can get burned onto a CD. Using iPods in the Music Lab can be problematic.)

DETAILS:

- Required length: **3 to 6 minutes**
- Your piece will feature scripted commentary as well as musical soundbites (clips from the music). These elements should flow seamlessly and form an overall piece that holds together and stands on its own. (See outline on back.)
- You must create a **storyboard** outlining the piece (using the sheet provided).
- You must create a **typed script** that will be recorded digitally as a narration.
- You must include **at least 4 soundbites** from the music. Soundbites typically range from 30 seconds to 1 1/2 minutes in length. In general, soundbites will serve as a backdrop for your commentary. However, each soundbite will generally have a **featured moment (or moments)** where the commentary drops out and the music takes center stage. Often those moments are set up by the commentary (ex: “Now listen to...”)

WORKFLOW:

PHASE ONE (project planning):

1. Select the CD (or artist/band) you will be reviewing or reporting on. Consider specific songs/pieces to be featured and discussed.
2. Create a **storyboard or outline** covering the specific soundbites used and the specific points to be made.
3. Write the **script** (word-for-word) and type out your final copy. As you write, continually read it aloud (slowly and clearly) to get a sense of how it sounds in narration.

PHASE TWO (project creation):

4. Import the music into iTunes and then into GarageBand.
5. Record the narration (in “chunks”).
6. Assemble your podcast by arranging and editing the soundbite and narration regions.
7. Bounce project to iTunes.

GENERAL OUTLINE

Most podcasts of this sort follow this general outline:

- A. **Introduction**: 1-2 sentences that name the CD/artist and “set the stage.”
- B. **Background** about the artist/band or about the CD:
 - a. About the artist/band:
 - i. Who are they? Where did they come from?
 - ii. What style of music? Influences (you might play an example)
 - iii. Previous “hits” (you might play an example)
 - iv. Can they be grouped or compared with other artists/bands?
 - b. About the CD:
 - i. An interesting story behind its conception or recording
 - ii. Previous CDs or songs that may have led to it
- C. **About the Music**: Describe/assess the music generally and specifically. Reference certain songs, even moments of songs. Talk about what makes the music good, bad, unique, etc., and use soundbites to support your points. For example:
 - a. Does the music stay within a certain style or does it break out of the style with unusual characteristics?
 - b. Are the songs varied or all similar? How so?
 - c. Musical elements to consider:
 - i. Tempo (how fast or slow the songs are)
 - ii. Groove vs. no groove (Is there a beat?)
 - iii. Instruments/voices used (Standard or unusual? Acoustic or electric? Clean or distorted?)
 - iv. Melodies and/or harmonies (Simple or complex? Repetitious or constantly changing?)
 - v. Texture (Does the music sound dense or thin?)
- D. **Conclusion**: 1-2 final sentences that “wrap up the piece.”

CHECK OUT EXAMPLES:

A great source of examples can be found at the website for National Public Radio: www.npr.org. There you can access the archives of radio pieces dating back to 1996. Use the search feature to locate music reviews (search “CD review,” “music review,” an artist’s name, a style of music, etc.).