

A Day in Kyoto

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This project takes listeners on a journey that I once took myself while I was visiting Japan. The theme of this piece was inspired by the rich history of this traditional city and the modern touches that have been added to it. It starts off in the morning and ends in the late evening, giving listeners a full day of exploration of 3 from many amazing things that can be done there. It incorporates natural sounds, trains, chatter, footsteps, and cheers of locals. Since Kyoto is large, I felt that presenting a geolocative location for different types of travelers would be a great experience; One for families, the Kyoto Aquarium, one for history buffs, Gion which features a festival, and one for those who only wish to relax, a ryokan.

“A Day in Kyoto” uses sounds I personally recorded in Kyoto, narration made separately, as well as sounds borrowed from others to create excitement and hold the listener’s interest. It’s a wonderful way to spark inspiration and share a bit of the city’s history. The walk through begins a Japanese bullet train that brings listeners into the city and stops at the first location, the Kyoto Aquarium. Next, listeners move on to Gion, a historic town within the city, and finally to a Ryokan to enjoy hot spring baths and wear Japanese robes called yukata to unwind. In the final recording you can hear the bullet train coming into the station, the chatter and camera shutter of other guests in the aquarium, a local train, the sound of a festival and water filling up a private hot spring bath in the ryokan. The sounds borrowed from freesound.org feature walking and background music that match the aesthetic of the overall project.

The overall purpose of this project was to share with other travel lovers a day in a place they may not have experienced themselves in person yet. I visited Japan a few years ago and fell in love with the beauty of the country and the niceness of the locals. This prompted me to create a project based on inspiration from “Coming-of-age in a coming-of-age: The collective

individualism of podcasting's intimate soundwork.” Murray explains how the definition of soundwork is “employing three basic elements of expression-music, speech and noise – to create a lively economy of sound commodities and institutions” (p.302). I felt that with the narration I made coupled with the music and sounds I acquired, displayed a great example of soundwork.

My project also incorporates ideals from “Urban Soundscapes as Narrative: Intentions and Interpretations of Field Recordings. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*.” Seaward talks a lot about how one can create a soundscape in an urban environment and making it more intimate. The sounds of water filling up the hot spring bath is an example of that. Seaward says “It is the romanticism of quiet, idealizing the ecological over an urban environment that proves contradictory to what field recording is striving to attain. This means there must be a balance between unedited field recording and sound manipulation” (p. 302). I decided to incorporate this sound at the end of the recording because naturally occurring sounds, such as running water, is something that provides relaxation. Kyoto is a city after all and there are a lot of unnatural sounds, so for listeners to be able to experience just a bit of a natural one should be a pleasant surprise.

The narration in my recording involved a lot of rerecording and editing due to it being my voice. It was a bit difficult to be fully content, so I decided to be as authentic as possible to give my listeners something to relate to. “In the Field: The Art of Field Recording” (Lane and Carlyle) interviews Felicity Ford. In it, she is asked how she feels she’s present in her recordings and she replies “In two ways I think about using my voice in my recordings. I don’t think I will ever be fully satisfied when I listen to a recording that features my voice – I am so used to hearing that sound within my head that to hear it outside always feels strange to me.” (p. 90). This struck a chord with me because I have similar thoughts, but she also says, “When I am interested in

linking sounds with life, the life I have access to is mine and my voice does so much to contextualize the things I hear.” (p. 90) I feel that is the overall reason I decided to stick with my own voice. It brings a part of my life and soul into my work that I hope resonates with others and makes it livelier.

In conclusion, this geolocation and mobile audio project allowed for storytelling that plays right into what has been discussed in class thus far. It showed how incorporating different elements into a recording can allow for such a meaningful and unique piece. Love for Kyoto especially should be made clear in the recording I created. The music mixed with the sounds and the personal touch of narration should bide well with listeners. It also shows how one can create natural sounds within an urban area and make it as if it regularly occurring. It’s interesting how many different ways one can interpret a recording so it’s with great hope that listeners can pick up on all the different elements that have been included. All of these themes are of great importance when discussing geolocate mobile audio. When all of them are combined, it creates a recording like mine and brings “A Day in Kyoto” to life.

## References

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