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Conceptual Sound System Design for Clifford Odets' GOLDEN BOY

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Conceptual Sound System Design for Clifford Odets' GOLDEN BOY

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Design)

by

Yang, Yen Chun

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2015

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The thesis of Yang, Yen Chun is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015

## DEDICATION

To my family and all the people who have ever supported me.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very thankful to all the wonderful people that I have been work with in my graduate studies. Everything I learned from you will keep driving me forward and pushing me crossing the boundaries after graduation.



## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Conceptual Sound System Design for Clifford Odets' GOLDEN BOY

by

Yang, Yen Chun

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Shahrokh D. Yadegari, Chair

There are two different aspects in the process of sound design, “Arts” and “Science”. In my opinion, the sound design should engage both aspects strongly and in interaction with each other.

I started the process of designing the sound for GOLDEN BOY by building the city soundscape of New York City in 1937. The scenic design for this piece is designed in the round, putting the audience all around the stage; this gave me a great opportunity to use surround and specialization techniques to transform the space into a different sonic

world. My specialization design is composed of two subsystems -- one is the four (4) speakers center cluster diffusing towards the four (4) sections of audience, and the other is the four (4) speakers on the four (4) corners of the theatre. The outside ring provides rich sound source localization and the inside ring provides more support for control of the specialization details.

In my design four (4) lavalier microphones are hung under the center iron cage from the four (4) corners of the stage. Each microphone is ten (10) feet above the stage. The signal for each microphone is sent to the two (2) center speakers in the cluster diagonally opposite the microphone. With the appropriate level adjustment of the microphones, the audience will not notice the amplification of the voices; however, through my specialization system, the presence and location of the voices of all actors are preserved for all audiences clearly. With such vocal reinforcements provided by the microphones, I no longer need to worry about overwhelming the dialogue on stage by the underscoring.

A successful sound system design should not only provide a functional system, but also take the responsibility of bringing actors' voices to the audience and engaging the audience with the world that we create on stage. By designing a system which reinforces the actors' voices while at the same time providing control over localization of movement of sound effects, I was able not only to make the text present and clear for the audiences, but also to support the storyline strongly through my composed music, environmental soundscapes, and underscoring.