

# ERIC BACKUS

## COMPOSER, SOUND DESIGNER, EDUCATOR

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www.ericbackus.com

**SUMMARY** A fun and creative artist with over 15 years professional experience as a composer, sound designer, and audio engineer. Enthusiastic collaborator and story teller, providing exceptional music and sound for a variety of mediums including live performances, podcasts, and film. Passionate mentor and educator to middle school, high school, and undergraduate students. Pronouns: He/him.

**TEACHING** **Northwestern University - Evanston, IL**  
Mentor theatre sound design students serving as assistant designer and engineer on the production *Everybody*. Spring 2023.

**Columbia College - Chicago, IL**  
Mentored theatre sound engineering students on musical theatre mixing for productions of *Cabaret* and *Head Over Heels*. Spring 2022.

**Trollwood Performing Arts School - Moorhead, MN**  
Developed and taught musical theatre sound design curriculum for high school and middle school students. Led and mentored student sound crews in a musical theatre production. Summer 2021.

**Bolingbrook High School - Bolingbrook, IL**  
Mentored theatre students in sound design and script analysis. Fall 2020.

**New Trier High School - Winnetka, IL**  
Mentored theatre students in sound design and engineering for several musical theatre productions. Spring 2018 - Fall 2021.

**Arizona State University - Tempe, AZ**  
Presented special lectures on theatrical sound design and engineering to musical theatre students. 2013-2017.

**Walter Payton College Prep. - Chicago, IL**  
Mentored theatre sound engineering students. Spring 2015.

**Phoenix Country Day School - Paradise Valley, AZ**  
Mentored musical theatre students. 2006 - 2011.

**New School for the Arts and Academics - Tempe, AZ**  
Developed curriculum for music courses in compliance with Arizona state and "No Child Left Behind" guidelines for charter schools. Taught middle school courses on music theory and music history. 2004-2006.

## EDUCATION

**BA in Theatre**

*Arizona State University - Tempe, AZ*

*May 2010*

Focus on Theatre Design & Production and Music

Graduated Cum Laude

**MFA in Sound Design**

*University of California, Irvine - Irvine, CA*

*Expected June 2026*

## COMPOSITION

Collaborate with theatre directors, film directors and producers, and podcast producers. Present examples of music research and facilitate conversations about musical style, aesthetic, period, and emotion. Create unique, genre-blending original music for film, plays, podcasts, acting reels, and promotional videos.

Composed and arranged more than 60 unique scores for theatrical productions to date - inspired by a wide range of musical genres including jazz, Western classical, pop, and ambient/electronic.

Carefully program software instruments to create nuanced, lifelike performances with MIDI recordings. Utilize Logic Pro X to mix and master cues for playback and publication.

## SOUND DESIGN

Worked Off-Broadway, regionally, and locally (Southern California and Chicago), designing sound on over 200 theatrical productions to date. Versatilely design in a variety of spaces ranging from 50 seat storefronts to 1,000 seat auditoriums to 4,000 seat amphitheatres. (Full theatrical credits resume at [www.ericbackus.com](http://www.ericbackus.com))

Create compelling soundscapes and dramatically appropriate sound effects that compliment the overarching narrative and engage the audience.

Mix a variety of live performances including plays, musicals, concerts, and dance. Mix recorded audio for musical tracks, streaming videos, and podcasts.

Design sound systems that utilize professional audio equipment - including digital mixing consoles, Dante networks, and wireless microphones - for a wide variety of applications.

## RECORDING AND EDITING

Record voiceovers on location or in studio using field-recorders and/or professional grade microphones. Process low quality recordings and clean up unwanted environmental noise using iZotope RX.

Edit voiceovers, sound effects, and music.

Record music for song tracks, post-production audio, and streaming video.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Independently manage time to work on multiple projects simultaneously, completing projects to meet deadlines.

Manage and catalogue a personal library of digital audio assets including sound effects, recording files, and software instruments.

**PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT  
continued**

Supervise and coordinate production teams locally and remotely to execute physical installation of sound equipment.

Find creative solutions that fit budgetary constraints and utilize existing resources.

Serve a variety of clients, including commercial and non-for-profit theatres, public and private educational institutions, and individuals.

**RECOGNITION**

**2023 Non-Equity Jeff Award - Sound Design**  
*Solaris*, Griffin Theatre

**2023 Non-Equity Jeff Award Nomination - Original Music in a Play**  
*Solaris*, Griffin Theatre

**2019 Jeff Award Nomination - Sound Design, Midsize**  
*Wolf Play*, The Gift Theater

**2019 Jeff Award Nomination - Sound Design, Midsize**  
*The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey*, American Blues Theater

**2019 Syracuse Area Live Theatre (SALT) Award Nomination -  
Sound Design of a Musical**  
*Murder for Two*, Merry Go Round Playhouse, NY

**2017 Non-Equity Jeff Award Nomination - Sound Design**  
*A Wrinkle in Time*, Lifeline Theatre

**2010 AriZoni Award - Best Sound Design for a Musical**  
*The Rocky Show*, Arizona State University Lyric Opera Theatre

**2010 AriZoni Award Nomination - Best Sound Design for a Musical**  
*La Cenerentola*, Arizona State University Lyric Opera Theatre

**SKILLS**

Music composition  
Sound mixing/editing  
Music and voiceover recording  
Theatrical storytelling  
Mentoring and teaching  
Proficiency in Logic Pro, QLab, Kontakt, iZotope RX, misc. audio plugins;  
OmniGraffle, Finale, MuseScore, Adobe Design Suite, Vectorworks, MS Office  
Networking and Show Control Protocols (Dante, MIDI, OSC)  
Sound system design and optimization  
Team leadership  
Time management  
Collaboration  
Customer service  
Zamboni driving

**REFERENCES**

*References available upon request.*