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MAINZ CERTIFICATE A VITAL FIRST STEP FOR AWARD-WINNING SOUND EDITOR

Working with directors like Peter Jackson, Baz Luhrmann and Vincent Ward on movies such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Rain of the Children* and *Australia* might seem like a distant dream for students enrolling at MAINZ but they're taking the all-important first step says award-winning film sound editor and MAINZ alumnus, Polly McKinnon.

"Having a qualification like a MAINZ certificate is a vital first step for young people wanting to get into the industry," she says. "There's just not enough time to teach people the basics on the job."

After graduating from MAINZ in 1997 with a Certificate in Audio Engineering and Music Production, McKinnon worked as an intern/assistant sound editor with Pacific Sound Ltd in Wellington, before going freelance in 2000. Since then she has worked on many critically-acclaimed movies and television series here and in Australia, including most recently *The Lovely Bones*, *District 9*, *Australia*, *The Strength of Water* and *Rain of the Children*.

"My job involves working with directors, producers and actors to bring their vision for a movie to life," she says.

A large part of McKinnon's job in motion picture sound editing involves dialogue, such as working with actors in the studio on dialogue replacement, as well as editing sound effects and post-production sound work.

While technology is always changing and "it's the sort of job you have to learn by actually doing it", McKinnon says her time at MAINZ was vital in getting her where she is today. "I don't think I could have done it without my training," she says, which included the fundamentals of computers and audio equipment, ear training and critical listening.

Her advice to budding sound editors is: "Get a qualification like the one from MAINZ" and get as much experience as you can.

“A lot of people do unpaid work to begin with; the more experience you can build up, the better. Anything you can do to make connections will help you,” she says, although she reminds graduates that knowing your stuff isn’t enough to get you regular work.

“Technical knowledge is only one part of it; it’s about communication skills and getting on with people. If you have a good attitude and are nice to have around, you’ll stick with the crews long-term.”

McKinnon has won numerous awards for her work, including Best Sound Design at the 2009 NZ Film Awards for *The Strength of Water* and Best Contribution to a Soundtrack for *Earthquake* at the 2006 NZ Film Awards. She was nominated for Best Sound Editing – Foreign Features for *Australia*, *King Kong*, *Lord of The Rings Return of the King* and *Lord of The Rings The Two Towers* by MPSE (Motion Picture Sound Editors).

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About the Certificate in Audio Engineering and Music Production

The Certificate in Audio Engineering and Music Production at MAINZ introduces students to the world of audio from a studio and computer recording perspective. During the year, students gain a solid foundation in the theory and practice of recording and mixing music.

The 34-week programme consists of 10 hours of theory and 12 hours of scheduled practical time each week. Students are also able to use the MAINZ studios and MIDI suites for self directed learning.

Graduates will have developed the skills necessary to run a project studio or to find an entry point into the industry. The year also provides excellent preparation for the following Diploma year, and is generally considered the prerequisite.

About MAINZ

MAINZ is a division of Tai Poutini Polytechnic, attracting approximately 300 students per year to its music and audio programmes. As well as the Diploma in Creative Enterprise, MAINZ offers programmes in Audio Engineering, Contemporary Music Performance, Live Sound and Event Production, and Music Event Management.

The school also delivers short courses in song writing, Logic, DJ'ing and Pro Tools, the industry standard audio software used in the majority of recording and post-production facilities internationally. MAINZ prides itself on having New Zealand's only Digidesign Certified Training Locations to deliver the internationally recognised Pro Tools qualifications.

MAINZ has two campuses - one in Auckland City, the other located in Christchurch. Their programmes are supported by Industry and approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.