

Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Sound Design Talkback - October 23

Final Version

[Crickets chirp, and a campfire crackles. A bright and sweet song is plucked on an acoustic guitar.]

Aabria Iyengar

Welcome, friends at the Fireside, to— okay, okay. I didn't write it down, but we came up with the best title. Fireside, colon, Sound Talkback, dash—the Sound and the Fury, parentheses, This is the Sound of Worlds Beyond Taylor, the Reckoning.

[Transcriptionist's note] Fireside: Sound Talkback - The Sound and the Fury (This is the Sound of Worlds Beyond Taylor) The Reckoning.

Aabria Iyengar

I am your host, proving immediately that I've done a terrible job and should never be allowed to do this again, Aabria Iyengar, and with me are—people just jump in, I don't know how to do this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey, I'm Brennan Lee Mulligan. Thanks for coming by. Fireside Extravaganza, Colon, music is all around us, chapter one, the Sound and the Fury.

[Transcriptionist's note] Fireside Extravaganza: Music is All Around Us Chapter One - The Sound and the Fury

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's a pleasure to be here, ahoohoo, and crackle crackle!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

Hey, it's your boy Lou Wilson here for—

[Aabria and Brennan gasp in shock]

Lou Wilson

—actually here, because this is such an important and special moment to be here at Fireside, colon, Raucous Life is Alive, dash, the Reckoning of Taylor?

[Transcriptionist's note] Fireside: Raucous Life is Alive - The Reckoning of Taylor?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

I just, you know. This is the first of its kind, so, you know I had to be there. Ahoohoo, crackle crackle.

Taylor Moore

Uh oh! And who's a-comin' in by a little airplane jet? [Jet noise] Nyooww! Oh, no, he's landing on a boat, the boat's coming up. [Foghorn noise] EHH OHH.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

[Laughing] And now he's DJing at a club in Ibiza. [Airhorn noise] EH EH-EH-EH-EHHHHH! It's me, crackle crackle motherfuckers! Ahoohoo to you and yours! It's me, Taylor Moore.

Aabria Iyengar

That was—

Lou Wilson

Wow.

Aabria Iyengar

—phenomenal.

Lou Wilson

Wow.

Aabria Iyengar

And now you know why you are truly the sound of Worlds Beyond Number. [Sigh] I was transported in that moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What you don't know is every sound effect is done with Taylor's mouth. What you just heard?

Aabria Iyengar

Yes.

Taylor Moore

Every one.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Every one of them.

Aabria Iyengar

All of them. And all the music.

Taylor Moore
Or my other orifices.

Aabria Iyengar
It would be easier if you learned an instrument, but you have just such a versatile mouth.

Taylor Moore
Guess what I'm using for this sound? [Pop noise]

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
Don't. No.

Aabria Iyengar
I love it here.

Taylor Moore
Taylor, put it away, we can see it on Zoom, alright? It's a sound to them—

Taylor Moore
It's for the show! It's for the show!

Aabria Iyengar
This is going to be the one that's on—like, that's going to have video.

Taylor Moore
You know how it's okay to smoke in a theater if you're in a play and your character is smoking?

Lou Wilson
[Chuckle]

Taylor Moore
That's the justification for what I'm doing now.

Lou Wilson
Yes.

Aabria Iyengar
Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Distant wheezing laughter]

Aabria Iyengar

100%. Beautiful. Well! We are all gathered here today to celebrate you, Taylor, and your life and your body of work, and we just have—we've gotten, truly, so many questions across this first arc and this first chapter about how you do all those mouth sounds so good. And we wanted to just dedicate a special time and place to assault you with questions, and give you your flowers.

Taylor Moore

Ahh!

Aabria Iyengar

And that was my moment of sincerity for the day.

Taylor Moore

That's wonderful. I'm so glad we're doing this questions I love, compliments and praise make my skin crawl with a poison I can't describe.

Lou Wilson

Mm.

Aabria Iyengar

Why are you like that? Because you're in a like, performance space, but you don't want to be perceived. The fuck is that about?

Taylor Moore

I want to be—I want to be feared, is—here's the thing.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay, okay.

Taylor Moore

I want people to do what I say, but I don't want to hear any compliments back.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay. Well—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I empathize. I get it. Hey, I get it.

Taylor Moore

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Hey, Lou, do you like when people say nice things about the things you do?

Lou Wilson

I go 50/50. I think there's like, an amount I can take. I can take like, "That was great!" And then somebody goes, "That was great. And—" and I disappear into the void, and it's like an echo.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

I'm standing at the end of a tunnel where they're going. [Quietly as if from afar] "It was awesome, that moment and I thought it was just so fun—" and I'm just going, like, I know that it's vaguely positive, but I feel like if I step too close to the ether, my ego will swell and my brain will explode out of my body, and I'll start pushing people down all the time because I think people like it. So I hide at the end of a tunnel when the richer compliments come.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay. I appreciate praise edging. That feels good.

Lou Wilson

Yes. Yes. There it is.

Taylor Moore

I think when I'm—if I just finished a set in Ibiza—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] You have to stop saying that.

Taylor Moore

—and someone's like, "I loved the song you played." That's fine. But if someone's like, "You're the best DJ in Ibiza?"

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Taylor Moore

I'm spraying paella all over everyone in the VIP area.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

EUGH!

Aabria Iyengar

It's the idea that you're eating a really rich sort of rice dish while out of your skull in a techno hole.

Lou Wilson

05:30 a.m., Ibiza, sun's coming up, Taylor just finished a set, walks over to his little kind of cool down area, and there's just a steaming hot 45 inch steel pan of rice and seafood! It's what the boy needs.

Taylor Moore
It's in my rider!

Aabria Iyengar
True. That is why we don't bring you more places. It's so fucking specific.

Lou Wilson
[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
Alright, let's get a couple questions in!

Taylor Moore
Sure.

Aabria Iyengar
First things first. Taylor, could you break down the sound design and scoring process for the podcast. Before we get into—

Taylor Moore
Oh, the process?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, talk about your process before we get into specific moments.

Taylor Moore
Oh, gosh. The process is this!

[Aabria and Lou laugh]

Taylor Moore
I take-a da show. I take out all the "ums" and "IN-credibles." I leave in one or two "IN-credibles" so people know what they're listening to. I take out some—

Lou Wilson
That's how they know it's not you without your southern accent.

Taylor Moore
[Laughing] That's how they know it's not me!

Aabria Iyengar
It's the shibboleth between you.

Taylor Moore

I take out all the times that people drop dice on the floor, and then I add aroogah car horns, and the crunchy sound of leaves when people are walking. And then I write a whole bunch of music for it and put it in there. Bing, bang, boom, we're done, folks! We're done!

Aabria Iyengar

Incredible. Well—

Lou Wilson

Wait, can I—jumping back on that. So you do a full pass that's just SFX. And then once you have all of that in, that's when you begin to actually start thinking about scoring wise, what will—or that's when you start to actually start to execute on the creation of scoring.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. So the actual answer is that the first thing I do is auditory—like just processing. Making everything sound nice. And then I do a spotting pass, where I listen to the episode and I write HUNDRED of notes on text tracks beneath the audio. One is like listing all the narrative beats, another is listing like, edits between different scenes that will have different ambiances. A whole track just to describe every single sound effect or vocal effect that will go in. And then another text track that is listing all the larger pieces of music, and then specific emotional beats within those pieces of music.

Taylor Moore

So the spotting pass is the second most intensive part of the process, that's the first thing I do, really. There'll just be hundreds and hundreds of notes. I've tried—in the past, when I've tried to work with other editors, I'll send them these notes and the response is as if they have seen Yog-Sagoth.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Taylor Moore

And they now sort of question their place in being. Yeah, I don't think anyone else marks them up quite as much as I do, but yeah, the spotting pass is huge. That's where the shape and everything comes from. That's where I decide what music is going to get made. And then, yeah—and then basic editing and sound design, it's the easiest part. And then music comes and the music is the real bear.

Aabria Iyengar

Amazing. Do you have an idea of what you want musically before you get to that, like, whatever the final vocal lock is?

Taylor Moore

Yeah, because I do a spotting pass before I edit the vocals. So, yeah, that's when I will figure like, "Oh, we need a big new piece here." Or, "Oh! I can use this old music cue here instead of a new thing." Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

So dope.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Um—I also—

Taylor Moore

But then it changes! Then you get to the end! Then you get to the end and you think it's done, and then you sit up in bed at two or yard before the episode drops and you're like, "No, it has to be horns or something." And then you go and you write it and change it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I will also say for listeners, the next arcs, the upcoming arcs, the upcoming chapters of the Wizard the Witch and the Wild One are our first chapters that have been fully and solely recorded all in person together in the same room, with the four of us IRL at the table, and Taylor right outside in the same recording studio as us. And it's super helpful to have Taylor there in person. I remember in this last recording, there was a moment where Taylor, you jumped out and told me the music that would be playing under the scene, and it helped me go back in and sharpen up a little bit of performance.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh! That's so cool!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I think that was really awesome to be like, "I think this is what the musical instrument or the instrumentation is going to be," and I was like, ooh, fun! And went back and we finished that—we were taking, like, a bio break, and I was like, let me finish that scene with this kind of energy underneath it. And it absolutely ruled. So it's a very cool—so I feel like, as much as the process is delineated out layer by layer, that it's very holistic in your mind, even in the moment of recording, you have a vision of what is to come, which I have found extremely helpful when we are all in the same place together.

Taylor Moore

Oh, that's really great to hear you say that. A lot of people have asked, like, is anything piped into the room? Like, is there any music or effects piped into the player's table? No. No no no no no. But we have had some times like this, where it's like, "Hey listen, keep in mind there's going to be like, snare drums under this, you're in the military or—yeah, this is going to be like an intense heist scene." Because it's so easy to forget that stuff at the table, but then when you're in the editing room, ah! If the performance can match the rhythm and tone of the background, that's great.

Aabria Iyengar

Nice. I've got a question. How did you go about sort of picking the instrumentation for our three main characters? Because I think this is one of my favorite things when we first started talking about working together, when you did the sort of test pass on what ended up being the Wizard, Then and Now, where in my head and what we had talked about, the four of us was very band—like, marching band, and military coded music. But I don't think—but yeah, finding out later that information didn't get from me to you, and yet what I got back was exactly the thing I was thinking, was maybe the coolest thing, and I had to work very hard to not be overly effusive in the email being like, "Yeah, that was great. I like what you did there a normal amount."

Taylor Moore

Well, you can do it in an email. Email is okay. Email compliments are great. Love that. It's like seeing a picture of a spider, versus having one on your face when you wake up.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

Very different scenarios.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay!

Taylor Moore

I can look at a picture of a spider.

Aabria Iyengar

I think you guys need to go to therapy very badly and just learn to roll around in the compliment, dog.

Taylor Moore

It's so expens—another thing to schedule!?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

God.

Taylor Moore

Agh! Augh! Alright, so, so—yes, so at the beginning of the show, right? At the beginning here, we have a very hard break, a very hard division between the sounds for the three main characters. And the sound for the three main characters also sort of references the worlds that they come from. So, yeah, obviously, we start out with the witches and Ame's and Grandmother Wren's cottage are all string instruments, especially a lot of pizzacato.

Taylor Moore

Then you have the Spirit World, which is all flutes, and winds, and leather drums, and things like that. And then, of course, the Citadel is very brass forward, and literally drums from a marching band—all the drums you hear in the imperial stuff and the Citadel stuff, nine out of ten of those drum sounds are from an actual marching band drum kit.

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispered] Dope.

Taylor Moore

So it's the same sort of carried bass drum and things like that. But then, of course, sometimes we expand that set up to be very large. Now, as the show goes forward—as the show goes forward, I think—I know so, because I'm in the process of writing it—that's not so true anymore. As they go out into the world, as they interact more with each other and more with the world, we're going to see all these flavors like, combining and moving from each other to the next, so.

Taylor Moore

We'll still see some times where those sounds are hardcoded for certain characters or people or places but, generally in the show, I think we're going to be seeing more big ensemble things that don't stick to that rule as much as we did at the beginning. But also ya know, that's just—having rules like that at the beginning of a production, at the beginning of a piece, isn't just because you think it'll be good, it's a way to start, right? It's like, if you give yourself these rules, then every time you have to make a decision, you have a little helper. So you're never really faced with the terror of the perfectly blank canvas, you know—well, just think about this, well, I know it's got to be strings, so what's it going to be?

Taylor Moore

And the reason, I think, is very obvious, right? It's like witches, I think about strings, violin strings used to be made of catgut, what's witchier than catgut? There's also the motion of these witches like, plucking these herbs from out, and then when we first meet Grandma Wren, she's cooking, and taking pinches of things, which mirrors the motion of pizzicato strings, which I think is a lovely detail.

Taylor Moore

And then, of course, the World of Spirit, which literally means the breath. And we even talk about Spirits having breath, so we want those big, breathy instruments where you can hear the wind. And of course, flutes and things like that have been associated with the Spirit Realm and things like that for a very very very long time.

Taylor Moore

And then, of course, the Citadel, which is like, they have taken the metal of Umora and shaped it to their will, and so you have these very mathematically precise—this vision of the marching band, which is all wrought metal and mathematically precise drums and steps and things like that, and just feels like they're the most like—of the three themes, they're the most technological, so when you think of brass, you see all these tubes and pipes moving around, feels very much like an invention, whereas strings, even though they're made—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Taylor Moore

—there's something much more. Strings also, like two flappy things rubbing against each other, that's how the human voice works as well. So that's why string sounds so nice to us, because there's a lot being mirrored there with the human voice.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh I never thought about that!

Taylor Moore

Yeah yeah yeah! So yeah, that's kind of where—that was the first big creative decision. That was the, like, here are the main characters. What are we going to do? They each have to have their own area. And, of course, you'll notice that those three zones are also the three main parts of an orchestra. So as they meet—even as they first find all the three are brought together for the first time, we begin to hear like, all these things come together, and now, as the show goes on, we'll hear more full orchestra stuff, which is in a year, I'm going to wish I had traveled back in time and assassinated myself—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

—before I said that on record, because hoo boy!

Aabria Iyengar

Yes. I'm looking forward to your Lydia Tár era.

Taylor Moore

Ugh! [Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I also really like that, in addition to all these themes, there's also a sub theme, or a minor theme within the wizard then and now, which is a personal instrument for Suvi, which is the piano.

Taylor Moore

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Taylor Moore

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What made that decision?

Taylor Moore

So we have—in the wars—in the run, right? The family's running through the town, the attack is going on. We hear the horns—the first sound we hear when we open, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Are the Citadel horns. So I wanted something that could be a little bit more just for Suvi, just for the family, but still fit in the imperial aspect of the show. And so that was the piano. Which was a huge fucking deal for me because I do not play the piano. I had never worked with the piano. I had tried to stay away—

Aabria Iyengar

What??

Taylor Moore

—from a piano very much before in the stuff I was making in other work, and so to decide that one of the characters was going to have a keyboard instrument as their main instrument, was a big reach, but it was also the piano—

Aabria Iyengar

What a fun swing.

Taylor Moore

—piano is a very technological instrument, even though—you can make it sound so many different ways, but that thing is a computer.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's also very cool because a piano, while it is a very technological instrument, is also technically of the percussion family, which belongs to the world of Spirits, and has strings, which belongs to the world of Witches.

Taylor Moore

Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

Aww!

Taylor Moore

That's right!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So there's something very special going on here! [Loudly] There's something very special going on here!

[Everyone laughs]

Taylor Moore

And there's absolutely—listen, there's a lot of special things going on here. For instance.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
Look at this. [Pop noise]

Lou Wilson
Taylor. Taylor, put the mic—it's bad for the mic to be there, and then your mouth, alright?

Taylor Moore
Ah, I can taste it. Blech!

Lou Wilson
Ew!

Aabria Iyengar
Eugh!

Taylor Moore
Now the mic smells like it. Augh!

Aabria Iyengar
Like what—no. No. No.

Taylor Moore
It!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It.

Lou Wilson
It.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Cannot believe—I've never seen an orifice—

Lou Wilson
It's something!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—with that much embouchure before, that's incredible that you have the—

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You really have a muscular control over that opening that I've never seen before.

Taylor Moore

Well, if you don't, you know—

Aabria Iyengar

Practice practice.

Taylor Moore

Tone first.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Taylor Moore

Tone, the first concern has got to be tone. I—

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Taylor Moore

Now—oh, here's a fun thing about the piano sound. A lot of the work of the show was done in those first three segments, the preludes, sort of developing these things for each—each—each of the three branches that were going to come together. All the piano sounds during the Wizard—that's live playing. I am playing that live while I'm listening to the show.

Lou Wilson

Mm!

Aabria Iyengar

Amazing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh my god!

Aabria Iyengar

What?!

Taylor Moore

Yes. That is recorded live.

Aabria Iyengar

Dog!

Taylor Moore

That is like me literally playing along with the show. And, I did that out of panic.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

I did it out of panic because when we're doing what we call orchestral programming, which is you're writing MIDI notes in a piano scroll in ProTools and then asking the software to associate samples with those notes and play them—which works out fantastic for like, a horn section or a string section. But to program every note of a two handed piano piece is wild. And so I got so fraught—and this is way back at the beginning when I was still learning a lot of this stuff—very much so— I was like, this is going to take forever, this sounds like shit., I'm just going to do it live. And I loved it so much!

Aabria Iyengar
Yay!

Taylor Moore

Recording stuff live is the fucking best!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So dope.

Taylor Moore
[Laugh] It rules!

Aabria Iyengar
We just do that with every instrument from now on. Just be fully in your Prince era.

Taylor Moore

And you can hear it, too. Another section that was played live is the entire scene with Sir Curran.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow! What were the instruments that were being—piano or what were the instruments that were being played?

Taylor Moore
The horns, baby.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The horns?

Taylor Moore

No, I'm sorry I'm sorry. Excusez-moi. That is an orchestral wind section broken up over the keyboard, is what you're hearing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wow!

Taylor Moore

—during the conversation. Once little Eursulon crosses the Ivy Door and begins seeing—Eursulon. Those sounds, that's me playing a wind section live.

Aabria Iyengar

Wow! Holy shit!

Lou Wilson

Now it makes a lot of sense that you stopped sleeping, when you say that. When you're like, the keyboard was a map of a wind section of an orchestra, and I was traveling along it as I listened to the podcast. That's unbelievable. [Laugh]

Taylor Moore

Truly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't know of anything more impressive. That's fucking wild, man. It's crazy. That's crazy.

Lou Wilson

So speaking of this learning thing, I saw somebody asked a question but I thought of it earlier today—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

—so I'm just going to ask it from my own personal perspective.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We're just going out of our way not to credit our dear fans—

Aabria Iyengar

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—for submitting questions?

Lou Wilson

I came up with this question myself, and then I scrolled through and I saw it, and I know they're gonna listen to this and think, "Oh, Lou didn't give me credit," because I thought of it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Why is your default to be so adversarial!?

Taylor Moore

I get it.

Aabria Iyengar
Hey, hey.

Taylor Moore
I get it.

Lou Wilson
I just want them to know.

Aabria Iyengar
Brennan don't scare Lou away.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Why can't it just be "Great minds think alike??"

Lou Wilson
See, this is why I fucking wand—this is why I wander around Central America.

Aabria Iyengar
God dammit he's gonna go back to Panama!

Lou Wilson
This is why I wander around Central America.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You cannot put this on me, I am a child of divorce. You cannot put this on me.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
None of this is going on in Belize. None of this is happening in Belize.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You cannot put this on me.

Lou Wilson
On the beaches of Belize, we all work together.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It is not on me whether daddy stays or leaves, okay?

Lou Wilson
In Belize—

Aabria Iyengar
It's your fault.

Lou Wilson
In Belize, this never happens. This never happens. I'll tell ya, I was in Belize for 18 days, and I never faced conflict. There was only peace.

Taylor Moore
[Wild laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Who—but of course, who in Belize are you making a podcast with? It—it answers itself! Good grief. What's the question that you and you alone came up with?

Lou Wilson
I—hey I'm not—they also came up with it, I just came up with it as well and happen to be on the podcast.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
The question is: Taylor, you've talked a lot about how you were learning—you learned to compose for this podcast, is there—

Taylor Moore
Ugh! I won't shut up about it!

Lou Wilson
I love it. I think it's the craziest thing that you ever—that was—to hear that—well, because I remember we talked about it on the very first Fireside where you were, like, "I told the person who told me that not to tell you that."

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
[Laughing] That's correct. That's correct.

Lou Wilson
Was there a moment in this arc, and working with composition, where you felt like you had kind of gotten your hands on it? Shout out to Noah B. who also thought of this question, but doesn't—

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, look at that. Attribution.

Lou Wilson
Look at that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wow.

Lou Wilson
I brought a little bit of Belize back with me.

Taylor Moore
[Laugh] Yeah. But it's like, the thing with... I think this is true with every creative area that I've tried, is that even early on, you get these small victories, and you see it. You see like, "Oh. Oh. I did that little bit right. I got that part right, and that feels fucking good." Even the very first stuff I wrote... Even that—even the opening cue of the horns and the big cymbal crash—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Taylor Moore
—you know, when Brennan's describing the Citadel and the Wizard, it was like, "Oh, I like that, that sounds good, okay this is gonna work." And then—and then you know, it's three days of the opposite of that. And then you have one more moment where you're like, "AGH! YEAH! No, this IS gonna work, everything's going to be great from here on out, I've cracked it!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
And then it's a week of like, hoping a meteor hits you, and then you get another little victory like that again. And I think some of the biggest victories were, just like, the piano chord progression for when Suvi changed—so from when Aabria moves from thinking about the answer, to giving the answer when Brennan asks her questions in that first segment, of how we go from the D minor to the F, the A minor and the—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Taylor Moore
Just very simple stuff, but how I was able to keep those chords warm, and timed well, and they're distinct between the remembrances of the two different parents. I was like, "AH YES! I'm a god! I am a vessel!"

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
"I can't believe everyone's not doing this all the time! I'm Ray Charles! Look at me!" For the dumbest shit in the world.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

And then it's like, "Oh god, I wish I was dead for a week." And then you get like—ooh! Because a big one was, when I first heard the tape, right? When I heard the recording of the entrance of the Great Bear in my head, I'm like, that's got to be a big moment.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

That has to be enormous. How—I've got to learn how to make a certain kind of music, so I can make that moment sing. And then figuring that out, and like—it's small little craft things like, trying to learn how to compose the harmonics of an orchestral run, and then get the levels right so it sounds good, but not intrusive, and it fits in the core—it's these little boring things that you finally click into place, then you hit play and it sounds like someone else who knows what they're doing made it. And then that feels good, baby!

Lou Wilson

Oh, I know it.

Taylor Moore

So, yeah, I would say the chords for Soft and Stone, the entrance of the Great Bear. Although I did also really love finding Eursulon's motif in the conversation with Sir Curran—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah! So good.

Taylor Moore

—and then the like—Ame's pizzicato theme when she's describing her bedroom. Those were moments in the first three big chunks where I was like, this might work out. I get it.

Lou Wilson

[Chuckle]

Aabria Iyengar

Ah, that's so good.

Lou Wilson

Well, it did, bro. It did. It did work out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It did work out.

Taylor Moore
It did—it did work out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I've got a question here—speaking of—so we've talked about music beautifully, but there's also some really incredible sound design work happening here as well. This one I love, when I first heard it, this is from Reverb. Thank you, Reverb.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And in parentheses, they say, (like the sound thing), which I love!

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Taylor Moore
The concept of reverb has written us a question.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I love it!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Reverb asks, "What was the sound design process for the vocal effect for The Stranger? I love all the details—"

Taylor Moore
Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"—and buzz while still maintaining super crisp dialog." I was blown away by that as well because, to get that much of an effect on a voice, you normally have to totally distort it. It sounded totally alien, and completely legible. It was crazy.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Taylor Moore
Oh, thank you so much for saying that, because ooh, it took some work, babey! That was one of the things that like, took a whole day.

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh! Amazing.

Taylor Moore

Because you have a big idea, then you have to execute on that idea and figure out how to do it, and then you have to tweak it a million times until it sounds legible. So! That's—this is a good question, because that's also one of my favorite effects on the show. So yeah! Just so people know, whenever we have—and it's almost always Brennan, sometimes it's the other folks—but when Brennan's doing an NPC that has a pronounced vocal effect. And most of the time that means it's either Steel talking through the telemet—or, sorry, the telemet—no, the mirror—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah

Taylor Moore

The telemet's the orb—is speaking through one of the great speaking mirrors or is being a Great Spirit, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Because the Great Spirits are where we really push the envelope with making them sound like not a human speaking. I always always always keep the naked track of Brennan's regular voice up front for legibility reasons. And then we build this sort of Great Spirit behind him, and I think that that works also thematically, because in my mind—this is just to me—as the Great Spirits project themselves into our world, the aspect that you are seeing is just sort of like a puppet they're holding—

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh.

Taylor Moore

—or like a mask they're wearing. And there's a greater—a much greater aspect that we cannot perceive in the material world of Umora, and so that—that works for me. There's something from another world kind of poking in. And so The Stranger—Stranger is great. The Stranger—and in my heart, I will always call him the King of Night.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Ah.

Taylor Moore

And that's what I wore to start with, like this—I see people talk—people asking—people asking.

Aabria Iyengar

You're doing great, sweetie, keep going.

Taylor Moore

[Jay Leno impression] I see—have you heard about this? You see this?

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Taylor Moore

People think the King of Night is like, another name for Death, or like, we're hiding that he's Death. No, he's the King of Night, there's no secret. We told you who he is, he's King of Night, The Stranger! So the King of Night. Alright, so this guy—in my mind, this guy is the aspect of what makes night different than the day, right? You're under the stars, the wanderer, this sort of unhitchedness, this—you're feeling unsafe. This is a man who brings darkness as a fabric billowing behind him.

Taylor Moore

So to my mind, I want to try and capture, like—I want to try to find some sounds that trigger the same feeling that that triggers in me. So I want the sounds of night. One of the most terrifying sounds of night is the sound of a predator, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

We're prey animals, and night is cover, but also we cannot see them! So it's very, very very scary that there is a predator in the dark. So part of what you hear in the King of Night is a black leopard's growl. Like, that's a big part of what makes up his—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Taylor Moore

Yeah, that's a big part of what makes up his voice is literal recordings of a leopard growling. And there's some other large—I went for like, jungle creatures, and some of their sounds in there as well. There's also an insect whine. There is a—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yesss!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Taylor Moore

—cicada call that's pitched up, high above—almost so high you can't hear it. Some people might not even be able to hear it, but there's that sort of insect piercing whine, and there is also the breaking of stone. There is like, this low rumble, that is the shifting and breaking of large blocks of stone.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah.

Taylor Moore

And that is just to communicate power.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Taylor Moore

That is a great way to add power to a sound, is large things moving on each other. Doesn't have to be legible as to what it is, our brain just perceives the reverberate natures of those large objects as power. [Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Incredible!

Taylor Moore

Yeah. And of course, all these effects are being fed through different processes and reverbs, and then at the bottom of it, at the very very bottom of it, you hear his subharmonics are boosted. So his—all that I just said is taken, you find the harmonics of it, you find the notes of it and waaaaay down at almost a level you can feel but not hear, there's the bass of night.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, that's so cool

Taylor Moore

That's that—and there's some other things in there that I'm not gonna say.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eleven secret herbs and spices! Oh my god!

Aabria Iyengar

I recently did a cool deep dive into infrasound in horror films, so this feels very very cool. Yeah. Yeah, the idea of bypassing a scary sound into a scary body feeling is very dope.

Taylor Moore

Yeah, and it's. I like to do that a lot. We'll use like, binaural—

Aabria Iyengar

Yes!

Taylor Moore

—they're called binaural beats on YouTube. I've used some of those. I think even actually in The Stranger I have some of the harmonics divided into left and right channels. But also, there have been some effects on the show where if you're listening in like, a car with a serious bass system, you hear it differently.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Because most headphones will not even play bass that low. But if you're in a home stereo system or a car, you'll get it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Damn.

Lou Wilson

Piggybacking on this, I Saw Dano—thank you, I Saw Dano—had the question "Taylor, your sound design is splendiferous. What is the weirdest source used for any of the sound effects created so far? And how was it used?"

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Taylor Moore

Yes.

Lou Wilson

I mean to hear fuckin' that you're out here using just the sound of stones moving? There's part of me I want to hear what that—what is that sample! But anything else in that kind of vein.

Taylor Moore

Well, let me see. The weirdest stuff. I mean, you'd be surprised. Well, I'll tell you some of my favorite sound—yeah okay, here we go. So I have one sample of someone picking up a backpack, putting it on a chair, opening it, pulling something out, closing it, and putting it down, that is probably in every episode, at least five time.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] That's your Wilhelm Scream?

Taylor Moore

Yes. This backpack, has—it is the most valuable, the highest ROI on a sound sample. Anytime you hear someone reach in their pocket and give someone something that is the same person opening and closing the same backpack.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

It is the most beautiful textural rustling sound. I love it. There is—I use samples of an instrument—I don't even know the name of the instrument. I used some of the samples for some sounds and sound effects in the Citadel when we were there for the first time, before Suvi left the Citadel, and some of those sounds were based on samples of a musical instrument that is just a large block of stone that is played with a bow. Let me see if I can't find.

Aabria Iyengar

Amazing! You talked so much shit about how the Citadel is like the extractivist exploration of metal in the ground, exploited to make instruments, and then one of them is just a bow on a rock.

Taylor Moore

Yeah, well, that's because! The culture of the Citadel is one thing, but the Citadel is this giant stone monolith, I mean like—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

And the different platforms and everything moving around. This is a massive stone object, and so finding sounds for that is so much fun. And it's actually one of the few times we've used synth—there's two times I've used any sort of synthesis on the show.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Taylor Moore

One is the giant sound the fox hears as the fox is being uplifted into consciousness.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

The other is some of the sounds of the giant magic machinery, the Citadel moving. Some of that, we use granular synthesis on some of the samples that we have to sort of give it sort of this sort of supernatural ring and scale. But I'm trying to find the name of this musical instrument—it is literally just a big block of marble or sandstone that you can hit with a stick, or play with a bow.

Erika Ishii

A block of sandstone that you can hit? You're talking about like a violin bow, yes?

Taylor Moore

Yeah. Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Dope.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Also Erika just joined us! Hi Erika!

Taylor Moore

Hey, Erika! How's it going!

Aabria Iyengar

Erika's been here the whole time!

Erika Ishii

You have a view of my spooky, dark, cyberpunk studio, because I can't get my little in-booth webcam to work right at the moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, our listeners have no view of any of that. They have absolutely zero view of—

Erika Ishii

Well, They should understand that it looks like Paranormal Activity in one of the boxes on Zoom here.

Aabria Iyengar

It does.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, but I'm here. I came from—straight from LAX. I had a 14 hour flight, and I'm here, and what did I miss? What did I miss? What did you talk about for sounds? Tell me about your sounds. Taylor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We've only been talking about stone lithophones for 50 minutes.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Taylor Moore

Thank you! Yes, it's called the Lithophone, and I just put a link to one on Etsy in the chat.

Erika Ishii

A lithophone?

Aabria Iyengar

Are we going to get this for you?

Erika Ishii

[Gasp] Ooh!

Aabria Iyengar

And you can conduct sound healing whenever we have camp?

Taylor Moore

If a listener wanted to buy me one of these lithophones, I would not say no. Listener, they are \$600 a piece.

Aabria Iyengar

Make it yourself, you coward.

Taylor Moore

I have the stuff! I got this diamond—I have—I bought this giant—

Lou Wilson

You bought A diamond?

Taylor Moore

It's a diamond encrusted wheel.

Erika Ishii

A diamond encrusted wheel? Taylor.

Taylor Moore

Yeah yeah yeah, a saw blade for my grinder, and now I can cut through concrete with it, and I'm very excited. So I could make one of these. But you gotta get the big block—

Taylor Moore

[To the tune of "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" by Paul Simon] They say he's crazy, he's got diamonds on the hubs of his wheel.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Taylor Moore

It's more on the outside, but I'll allow it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Cackling] It's all on the outside!

Erika Ishii

[Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar

That was gracious of you, Taylor!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well!

Taylor Moore

Well, it's a song parody, and I think I'll make some space for song parody.

[Everyone laughs]

Lou Wilson

When are you going to do the River Road, but it's a comedy—when is Weird Al going to do the River Road?

Taylor Moore

[Laugh] What would the Weird AI—what would the Weird AI Rain road be?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Uh, the Brain Road—

Taylor Moore

What would it be?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Rain Chode.

Lou Wilson

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Ohh! Yeah yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

No, he's not that nasty, he's for the children.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's true, it's true. Wow. I'm going to really go deep on that.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, Erika's just joined us, so I think we should do a question from "Erica Iverson, or EMI, I have the same initials as Erika Ishii"

Erika Ishii

Ooh! Another EMI. Ooh!

Aabria Iyengar

Oooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Two EMI's thank you—

Taylor Moore

Oooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—thank you, Erica, for the question. Erica asks, "I think silence is just as important as sound, and I appreciate its beautiful use in the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One. How do you decide when to underscore, and when to let silence ring?"

Taylor Moore

That's a great question.

[Long pause]

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, he's doing a bit.

Lou Wilson

Clean.

Taylor Moore

I get nothing—Aabria is going to sell me out, just immediately undercut.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Taylor Moore

I don't know—well, sometimes, it is because there is a finite amount of time I have to make this stuff.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Taylor Moore

And so the episode's gotta go out! And you just don't have time to score everything. Other times, well, you know. I mean, so much of everything is in the differential between the crest and the trough, the warp and the woof, you Wanna—is that it? Woof?

Erika Ishii

Warp and the weave?

Taylor Moore

The warp and the woof?

Lou Wilson

Hey, works for me.

Aabria Iyengar

I thought it was weft.

Erika Ishii

Weft, yeah. The weft.

Taylor Moore
Weave! Woof and woah!

Aabria Iyengar
The warp and the woof.

Taylor Moore
It's the same about everything. Loud quiet loud quiet, loud.

Erika Ishii
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
There it is.

Taylor Moore
[Laughing] Right?

Erika Ishii
And that is the formula, boys and girls, and—

Aabria Iyengar
It's so funny how technical and precise and deeply knowledgeable you are about music and sound, and then sometimes we ask you a question and you give the most dirtbag answer. [Laugh]

Erika Ishii
[Cackle]

Taylor Moore
[Laugh] Well—like, I think the times where we use silence that's really good, is when you want—you want a spotlight on the most delicate performances in the vocals of the cast.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think you left a lot of great—the funny thing is, I think sometimes you have very great silences which are totally without score or sound effect, and there are others where score and sound effect is present, but I would still call them silent. For example, I think the Will Gallows scene, you specifically did not tighten up the pauses that were there in the performance, which normally there's a lot of great—I mean, Taylor's cleaning up a TON of our improvised performance in the show, and that Will Gallows scene, will Gallows would say something and you would just hear the sound of sweat.

Aabria Iyengar
Yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Like, there were a lot of those pauses.

Taylor Moore
Yeah, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And some of them had a music bed under them and some didn't, but either way, it's a choice for silence that I thought worked REALLY really well for that—

Erika Ishii
Taylor has threatened that in an upcoming season, in the most harrowing episode of my life, that he is going to leave in all of the pauses and the silences [laughing] and—and the mouth sounds.

Taylor Moore
Oh!

Erika Ishii
And he's going to need to put a whole ass trigger warning just for silence.

Taylor Moore
Yep. 100%.

Erika Ishii
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
Yep. That is absolutely the case. There's an upcoming—well, not soon, but in the future, there's an upcoming episode that is going to break you, listener. I—we are going to reach out with—I'm barely involved.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
Erika—this cast is going to reach out to you, and with nothing more than the human voice and some pauses, psychologically destroy you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Cackle]

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh!

Erika Ishii
Ah!

Aabria Iyengar
What a fun little threat!

Taylor Moore

Your anxiety is going to go through—it's like Uncut Gems level.

[Everyone laughs]

Taylor Moore

Nerve. Nervous.

Erika Ishii

Oh god!

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just picture Ame saying, this is how I win.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh my god.

Aabria Iyengar

I just imagined Ame saying [in the manner of Julia Fox] Uncuh Gams.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Uncuh Gams.

Erika Ishii

Uncuh Gams. I couldn't not—

Taylor Moore

Ally!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ally!

Aabria Iyengar

Ally!

[Everyone laughs]

Lou Wilson

Taylor, can I just ask you a personal question?

Taylor Moore
Yaaas queen.

Lou Wilson
If there was—if an artist that you admire was going to cover the Rain Road, who do you hope it would be, or who would you wish it to be?

Taylor Moore
Jonathan Richman.

Lou Wilson
Who?

Aabria Iyengar
Who?

Taylor Moore
Jonathan—

Erika Ishii
Hosier! [Screaming] HOSIER! Sorry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Jonathan Richman!

Taylor Moore
Usher??

Erika Ishii
Hosier!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Usher.

Taylor Moore
Usher.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Usher would do an amazing cover—

Aabria Iyengar
Usher!

Lou Wilson
Usher worthy? Did you say Ursher Baby, is that what I heard?

Aabria Iyengar

He would do it at the Super Bowl. And it's pronounced Ursher.

Erika Ishii

Ursher, yeah.

Taylor Moore

[Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, what did you say? Because I still don't understand the person you said, Taylor.

Taylor Moore

Jonathan Richman.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't know who that is.

Taylor Moore

Jonathan Richmond is a wonderful person, whose music I adore very very much. I also think Andrew Bird would knock me on— my two favorite musicians living right now are Andrew Bird and Gillian Welch, so if they—

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh.

Taylor Moore

—and David Rawlings, obviously, so if any of them did a cover, that would be, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Dope.

Taylor Moore

The end of my life.

Lou Wilson

I was really hoping—

Erika Ishii

ABBA.

Lou Wilson

—you'd say Swedish House Mafia, but that's ok.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

That's my—that was—I was hoping we would sync up on that. But that's okay, it's totally—these guys seem great.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's awesome.

Taylor Moore

It's so sad that the house music scene has been invaded by organized crime.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing laugh]

Lou Wilson

Another podcast, Taylor, another time.

Aabria Iyengar

If there's a lot of—like, Five Families, and I can't think of more things other than adding Glitch Mob in there. Shit, I'm only at two. It's a techno gang war.

Taylor Moore

Wouldn't fly an Ibiza.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wouldn't—you think that shit flies in Ibiza? I don't think so.

Taylor Moore

No. Keep it clean.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is a question from Kelcello. Thank you, Kelcello. "Taylor! Can you talk—"

Taylor Moore

What!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I mean, he put your name with an exclamation point at the top of the question. "Taylor!"

Taylor Moore

Ahh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"Can you talk about the use of classical music in the show?"

Aabria Iyengar

Mmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"Dvorak, Serenade, Neptune, from The Planets. Why/how do you choose certain pieces?"

Erika Ishii

It's actually pronounced Dvořák (duh-vaw-zhak)—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh yeah—what's that?

Erika Ishii

It's actually pronounced Dvorak.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Dvorak? Did I say Dvorak?

Erika Ishii

No, it's Dvořák.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Dvorjak?

Erika Ishii

That's fine.

Taylor Moore

Dvořák.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

It's okay. It's fine.

Erika Ishii

No, no no.

Taylor Moore

It's really okay.

Erika Ishii

I was trying to do a callback to—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"Taylor! Can you talk about the use of classical music in the show?"

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Taylor Moore

Here we go. Yes. So. I wrote all the music for the show except for three pieces. Number one is the closing credit song, which is Dvorak's "Serenade for Strings" baby! Why, why why why? And also in the first episode, episode number one—not the Preludes—episode number one, we use Holst's "Neptune, the Mystic." And no one noticed! Nobody noticed! The third piece of music, I did not write in the show—

Erika Ishii

Drop of Nelson's Blood?

Taylor Moore

—and if anyone can pick it out—

Aabria Iyengar

Turkey and the Straw.

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Erika Ishii

Drop of Nelson's Blood?

Taylor Moore

Well.

Erika Ishii

Well, you did an arrangement.

Taylor Moore

I rearranged that, so I'm counting that as mine—

Erika Ishii

Okay, okay.

Taylor Moore

—because it's a traditional that I arranged and rewrote. But no, there is a piece of music in there that is like—I will tell you, I believe—I can't even remember what it was now—if it was Mozart or Beethoven, but I got some fucking awful Baroque classical music, and put it through a bunch of shitty sounding instruments and filters. An, that is the muzak that you hear playing in the dining room of the Kalabel chantry.

Aabria Iyengar
SHUT UP!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
That's so good!

Taylor Moore
Because I wanted it to be like, this guy would definitely want, like Baroque, like—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Taylor Moore
What does an asshole—what music does an asshole put on to impress guests?

Erika Ishii
[Cackle]

Aabria Iyengar
Hey. Hey.

Taylor Moore
And it's like shitty classical music.

Aabria Iyengar
Put some respect on our caked up king!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
Listen, I'd get in that butt.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackle]

Taylor Moore
I didn't say I wouldn't get in that butt. Watch this. [Pop!]

[Everyone laughs]

Taylor Moore
But his taste in music is bad, Baroque fuckin' blows. Do not at me.

Erika Ishii
Wha!?

Taylor Moore
Do not leave a comment. Do not—

Aabria Iyengar
That's so... Bold.

Erika Ishii
I—WHAT!?

Taylor Moore
It's a necessary step in our civilization's musical development. But anybody who puts it on as a choice, no thanks.

Erika Ishii
[Outraged] Vivaldi is Baroque!!

Taylor Moore
Eh!

Erika Ishii
I'm sorry, you're going to tell me that the summer movement of the Four Seasons, like—[Scandalized stammering]

Taylor Moore
That's pushing it.

Erika Ishii
Pushing it.

Lou Wilson
Erika hoppin' off a plane—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Lou Wilson
—and just, heated. Heated.

Erika Ishii
I—

Aabria Iyengar
Damn. Came in CREASED.

Lou Wilson
I love it.

Taylor Moore
I love—I love—I love—I love some Summer, I love the Seasons, but that's pushing it out of Baroque, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
Okay.

Taylor Moore
Boy, I wish the listener could see the looks I'm getting right now! Did not know that was a trap I could step in!

Erika Ishii
Johann Sebastian Bach and his good kids.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hey, I'll tell you what.

Erika Ishii
It's—Fugues. FUGUES!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I'll tell ya what. If it ain't Baroque, don't fix it! Our next—

[Everyone roars with rage.]

Taylor Moore
Je-sus CHRIST!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Our next question comes to us—

Aabria Iyengar
[Demanding] New question! Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Our next question comes to us—I actually—you know what? I'm going to double back, because I think—you know we made a big deal, and it's wonderful to have Lou here for Fireside Extravaganza, colon, Music Is All Around Us, chapter one, the Sound and the Fury.

[Transcriptionist's note] Fireside Extravaganza: Music Is All Around Us Chapter 1 - The Sound and the Fury

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But—

Aabria Iyengar

Let me be clear. You keep pushing that specific title, and I don't know if we're going to go with that, so.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay!

Taylor Moore

TBD.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

TBD.

Lou Wilson

I did like the use of the reckoning. The reckoning felt right.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, the reckoning felt good.

Lou Wilson

This is a reckoning in many ways

Aabria Iyengar

And I feel like you're not really honoring—

Erika Ishii

Go for Baroque.

Aabria Iyengar

—my artistic—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Welcome to Music the Reckoning, Sound is Fury, hyphen, Taylor Goes Loco, Volume Four.

[Transcriptionist's note] Music the Reckoning: Sound is Fury - Taylor Goes Loco, vol. IV

Aabria Iyengar

Damn. Yeah, that's it. That's it.

Erika Ishii

Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But I think Noah B. actually had a slightly different question from Lou earlier in the episode, I think it's a little bit of a different question. Because I think Lou's question was about when you felt mastery over the—over the track, and Noah's question was "For Taylor, what was a eureka moment for you while editing any of the episodes from Arc One"? Like, if there was a sudden blast, that—if something came to you in the bathtub, kind of like—that was like a sudden shock or revelation.

Taylor Moore

Oh shit.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

Oh shit. That's a good—eureka is a good—okay. That's a good question. Okay. Alright.

Aabria Iyengar

While you're thinking, why don't we all sit and discuss the etymological root of the word eureka!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Archimedes.

Taylor Moore

That's easy. It's Greek.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Archimedes—

Aabria Iyengar

No, Taylor—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He didn't come up with it!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, Taylor, we got that part. We're giving you time to think.

Erika Ishii

It's also, our state motto for those of us—

Aabria Iyengar

It is!

Erika Ishii

—in California.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Really?

Erika Ishii
Yeah, eureka!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Erika Ishii
It's supposedly you know—

Aabria Iyengar
Gold rush!

Erika Ishii
Gold rush.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Whooooaaa!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. Because we found gold in them thar heels.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That's cool that you—because eureka is sort of a nice mirror to excelsior, which is New York's.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, I didn't know that!

Erika Ishii
Wait, New York says Excelsior? Is that why Stan Lee—

Aabria Iyengar
It's after Stan Lee. No, it's in honor of Stan Lee.

Erika Ishii
You're kidding. Are you serious?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Peter Stuyvesant was a huge fan of Spider-Man.

[Wheezing laughter from Aabria and Taylor.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He was walkin' around, worried about those British cannons, and he was like

Peter Stuyvesant (Brennan)

One day this town shall give birth to a superhero, who's just a kid.

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Peter Stuyvesant (Brennan)

Think about that!

Peter Stuyvesant (Taylor)

A kind of "spider'd man!"

Aabria Iyengar

Taylor, don't jump in on the bits unless you have your answer.

Taylor Moore

Sorry! Sorry!

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

Eureka moment..?

Aabria Iyengar

Do your homework! [Laugh] He's still thinking.

Taylor Moore

It's a hard—it's a fuckin' hard—it's a hard question! A eureka moment. Eureka: I've found it! Eureka: here it is!

If you seek a perfect peninsula, look around you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What?

Aabria Iyengar

What?

Erika Ishii

What?

Taylor Moore

That's Florida's. I think—isn't that Florida's?

Erika Ishii

If you seek a—

Lou Wilson
Their motto is a sentence?

Aabria Iyengar
It's a whole phrase?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
If you seek a perfect—

Aabria Iyengar
Perfect peninsula.

Lou Wilson
There's a comma in the Florida motto?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So Florida's state motto is geared to someone who's questing for a perfect peninsula, and doesn't know they're in Florida.

Lou Wilson
"In God we trust."

Erika Ishii
Isn't that how the colonizers found it?

Lou Wilson
It's "In God we trust."

Erika Ishii
Because of like, the whatchamacallit, the—

Aabria Iyengar
The Fountain of Youth.

Erika Ishii
The Fountain of Youth. Yeah.

Taylor Moore
I'm so sorry. Michigan. "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you."

Erika Ishii
Michigan—I guess it's—

Aabria Iyengar
Go off Michigan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is geared—

Lou Wilson

Straight up. Florida stole theirs off the dollar bill. Theirs is just "In God we trust."

Erika Ishii

"In God we trust?"

Aabria Iyengar

Huh!

Erika Ishii

That's like, so appropriate for Florida because that's basically "Jesus take the wheel."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. If you see that many gators and go, no, I'm still going to live here. Yeah. You're taking it to the Lord in prayer on the regular.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Lou Wilson

Ya-yay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Tennessee's got a great—

Lou Wilson

When I go to God, that's the sound I make.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Is every—are we just looking up—okay, go.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Tennessee's got a pretty bad state motto.

Aabria Iyengar

What is it?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"Agriculture and commerce."

Aabria Iyengar
Oh.

Erika Ishii
Eugh.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh.

Lou Wilson
Texas's is "Friendship."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hey now!

Erika Ishii
Texas's is "Friendship??" No, thank you!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. Not your friendship. Just friendship.

Erika Ishii
I do have a lot of friends who live in Texas though, it's true.

Aabria Iyengar
I guess like a big swing.

Erika Ishii
But that's a lot.

Lou Wilson
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
Yeah, that's a lot. Awfully presumptuous.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
I would say.

Aabria Iyengar
Agriculture—

Erika Ishii
I don't know. When you decided—how did you decide the different themed instruments for everyone?

[Aabria and Taylor chuckle]

Taylor Moore
That was the first question we did today!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, we did that.

Erika Ishii
And there was no aha moment for when you were discovering that?

Taylor Moore
Well, yeah, I mean, the biggest aha moments are like, in the preludes, when we hear certain details that clue me in, into like, oh, that's what we're going to do, that's how it's going to work. There were some other big moments where I stumbled on something that I felt at the time was like, "Oh thank god. I've broken through—I've broken through some sort of barrier and I'm to the next place." There's a music cue called Happy Hunting, which is—it was a huge deal for me. So the—making the music for when Ame and the other one, Suvi.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh] Thank you!

Taylor Moore
I still can't remember the character's names.

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Taylor Moore
When Ame and Suvi are going on the hunt—they're on the trail for—

Erika Ishii
Oh yeah, and the Fox is, yeah.

Taylor Moore
—Eursulon. That—like, composing that song and then having it turn into another—like having it change key, and then adding new instruments, and I believe you hear that cue as they are on the boat approaching—as they're on the boat approaching Port Talon. And THAT moment—that moment was kind of an interesting moment for me as well. This is so inside baseball, and so particular to me, but—this is stupid. I'm going to say it anyway.

Taylor Moore

So I was—there's only been a couple of moments in the show where I was confused. Most of the time my problem is I figure out exactly what I want very quickly, and then it's achieving it is very difficult. But there's been a couple times where I didn't know what to do, and one of those times was when the gang is on the boat approaching Port Talon, because I didn't know what emotion I wanted to go for. There was two essential options. One was, now is the time to set out the motif and set the tone for Port Talon. Because Brennan is describing the city, they're on the boat. The other option was, I just felt like I wanted to heighten other aspects of—I wanted to heighten everything about that moment EXCEPT for Port Talon and the vibe of Port Talon.

Taylor Moore

I wanted to highlight—because they had not been together for very long! The group had only—y'all had only been—so you found each other, you left, there was that really sweet scene in the house with the baby, and we do get this really nice moment as Eursulon's falling asleep and looking up at the stars, and we hear the same music that we heard from the top of the hillside after they had said goodbye to Grandma Wren, and there's that beautiful music playing, before they meet the Fox. And we hear that again, as Eursulon is sort of looking up at the stars and wondering what's going on. And then there's—there's a horrible battle on the boat. And so the group had not really had any good vibe music—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

—together. The group had just not had—I just wanted a sitcom—I wanted a sitcom—the Tanners are all sitting at the table laughing together moment. Or like some sort of thrill of adventure. Because if I played that moment as gross, ominous foreshadowing of what's coming, then the game never gets that moment again.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Because I knew how everything was going to shake out. There isn't a, like, let's just hang out and goof around moment. And the only time we were going to have the gang altogether, feeling good feelings—at all!—in the rest of the arc, was this moment where they're on the boat watching the city come in, and they think that they're making progress, they're getting closer. So—this is so stupid, I can't believe I'm analyzing this one cue this much. But it was very important for me because I really didn't know what to do. I was really of two minds about what to do.

Taylor Moore

And so I stuck with the upbeat, hopeful, exploration vibe, fantasy music that tried to capture how the gang was feeling and how I wanted people to feel about the gang, rather than, I think, what the more mathematical thing to do—or the more traditional thing to do, which would be use that moment to foreshadow Port Talon. Insane. Insane that I can have so many thoughts and feelings about this one moment that passes in less than 30 seconds.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But it's great—

Erika Ishii
Well also, I mean—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—it comes back in the Kalabel Chantry in the library, when Ame is about to find out that Wavebreaker was Naram's sword. Happy hunting is there as well.

Erika Ishii
Yeah and, it also—this sort of thing happens just sort of reflexively, almost. It's like you do think all those thoughts, but not in that order. And it just kind of happens when you make those choices? Taylor? Yeah?

Taylor Moore
Yeah, well, I mean, this was agonizing. This was a decision like, I tried it both ways. I tried it all these different ways. And at the end of the day, like, my gut was torn. And I hate that, because my gut is very rarely of two minds. My stomach will usually tell me the way to go. But this time I was like, I don't know what to fucking do. And so it was kind of like a coin toss, and I was like, well, fuck it. I've got this music cue that I made that I love, and so I'm just going to stick it in there, because we need some happy vibes!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Taylor Moore
I'm just going to trust the math that we need some kind of happy vibe.

Erika Ishii
I—I think it gives—

Taylor Moore
And there was—

Erika Ishii
—like, anytime, even in storytelling, have—giving those happy moments, and the happy vibes, and the moments of rest, gives stakes to the drama. Otherwise, it's just like moving from one sort of action set piece and trauma to the next, you know.

Taylor Moore
I hope so. [Laughing] I fuckin'—yeah, because we hear that—we hear that tune several times, right? We hear it again, we hear it sort of chopped and screwed when Eursulon's drunkenly walking back—

Erika Ishii
[Laughing] Yeah.

Taylor Moore
—from the Ace of Wands.

Aabria Iyengar
Yes!

Taylor Moore
It's just like the happy hunting song! But it's just like swaying back and forth. We hear it again in the final episode of the arc, where things are going well, Ame is like, talking with the village elders and stuff like that. Occasionally we do hear it again. I will ask you this. So, speaking of like, when things are divided, there have been two times when I knowingly, or intentionally went against Brennan's description for something—

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh.

Taylor Moore
—in putting sounds in. Can you name them?

Aabria Iyengar
Oh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
No. When are they?

Taylor Moore
There's been two times where the sound design intentionally went against what the description said.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I'm so curious, what are they?

Erika Ishii
I think—wait, was there supposed to be like, chamber music for Ace of Wands—

Aabria Iyengar
Ace of Wands.

Erika Ishii
—and then it became, like, piano, sort of like a saloon style?

Taylor Moore
That's one of them. Yep.

Erika Ishii
I remember that.

Taylor Moore

That's one of them. Yeah, the Ace of Wands is described as being much more subdued than I went with the design.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

I liked it.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, me too. I loved that.

Aabria Iyengar

That was good.

Lou Wilson

What's the second?

Taylor Moore

The other one was—the Ace of Wands was tough because I was like, I know what he's going for, I know what he's saying. But. I feel like—we needed something sonically to break up the episode, and low level chamber music would have felt like, too samey from what we were already doing—and you never want—same reason silence is good.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

You never want the episode to sound like one sound all the way through. We needed some—we needed a change of energy somehow. So—but the other thing—the other one was completely selfish [Laughing] There was—I believe it's still in there, but Brennan said that when Naram throws the derrick away into the ocean, that there were no wizards on it, but if you listen closely, you can hear people screaming.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! [Laugh] That's— Aww, way to just introduce a little body count, bud.

Taylor Moore

Well, I didn't say they were wizards. They could have been other people.

Lou Wilson

[Chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The janitors.

Erika Ishii
Don't say that!

Lou Wilson
Amazing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Naram fuckin' hates janitors, dude. They're all toast.

Erika Ishii
Dammit!

Aabria Iyengar
I've got a question for the group, I was hoping we would have time for this, and while we've got Taylor here, I have a question for everyone else. Has—listening back to Arc One and the choices that Taylor's made emotionally and sonically for your characters, have you noticed any difference or transformation in your play, in response to like, hearing the way your character sounds? In the pod...cast...story that we do? I'm going to stop talking.

Taylor Moore
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
So you're asking if I've changed the way I play, based on the sound—the way Taylor supports my play with his sounds.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. And I guess it doesn't have to be changed, but have you noticed any sort of effect on your play now that you hear how Eursulon sounds?

Lou Wilson
Massively.

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh!

Lou Wilson
Massively. Ginormously.

Erika Ishii
Woah.

Lou Wilson

I think that there's something very special about this podcast, and I think the opportunity to work with Taylor Moore, that I think asks—like, we talk—Taylor was talking about his gut, and I think my gut has very much pulled me in a direction and a space that's a bit quieter, and a little bit more bombastic than I imagined playing? Because I think—because I know that I don't have to do it all. Because I know that my quieter and smaller, and I think more minute choices, are going to be supported and emphasized—that the small choices I make will be GIVEN gravitas after the fact by Taylor. So I'm a lot less trepid about smaller things being picked up by the audience, because I know that Taylor's got my back.

Taylor Moore

I got your back. I gotchu, baby.

Erika Ishii

Ooh that's a good answer.

Aabria Iyengar

That's a really good answer. And I don't want to follow that.

Erika Ishii

Damn!

Aabria Iyengar

Damn.

Lou Wilson

Well it was—because at first my thought was no, and I was really about to say no. And then I went, what are you talking about? Especially, like Brennan was saying earlier, since we started playing together in the room—in the house with Taylor there, I'm in the present—it's—it's this constant reminder, even, that that support is in the other room listening to you, and thinking about how it can set you up for success. Not it. He. Taylor.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think—

Lou Wilson

But I guess if I'm talking, also Taylor's holes, are going to set me up for success, so.

Taylor Moore

[Pop!]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There it is!

Aabria Iyengar
The embouchure.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I know that I'm not a PC, but absolutely. I think Arc Two, a big part of my creative energy going into Arc Two, was lovingly coming up with places that I thought Taylor would have fun rendering in music and sound design.

Erika Ishii
Mmm.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, that's fun!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In the same way that I make plot things to delight my players, I think I make setting things to delight Taylor. I think it's all a love letter to like, what kind of place can I make come true, that will be like a sonic sandbox, that will be like a fun playground to see what is brought to life there.

Aabria Iyengar
Nice.

Erika Ishii

I've caught myself doing that too I know, but I can't think of a specific example of it. But I know there's definitely times in which I've described—I've described sounds, because that's like a big part of my sort of atmosphere, and the way that I see the world? I think—I don't know if, Taylor, if you can think of anything too, but a lot of—oh, especially like, oh my god, like in the first description of when Ame is doing different spells, of the idea of listening to the sounds of nature, and—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii

—describing, you know, trailing my hand in the water, and the things that I feel and sense and—yeah, I definitely am more liable to put that in, because we have more—we have more room to play, and Taylor does what he do, and we don't always have that for on camera stuff. Not that same kind of—

Taylor Moore

Erika, one of my favorite—one of my favorite moments that I've ever made, was the scene of Ame sitting on the pier, and her consciousness going through the water, and reaching out—her witch vision, reaching out into the water to see Naram, because as you're describing these things passing by, you can hear the things underwater just passing by—I love to follow the camera, ya know?

Erika Ishii
Eee! Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Taylor Moore
So yeah, when—that was a great moment of describing what it feels like to make this journey, that's just so much fun to design and score.

Erika Ishii
Yeah, I think—Yeah, cinematically, I think about sound design a lot, and I—I'm not the person that mixes it, but whenever a soundscape is especially rich in a film or TV show, I'm like, "Ooh! I'm there! How immersive!"

Aabria Iyengar
Hell yeah.

Erika Ishii
So it's cool to be part of that.

Aabria Iyengar
I just wanna, like—yeah, I think for Suvi, it is feeling acoustically supported in how strong, and occasionally strange, her instrumentation is? It felt like a really fun feedback loop, to keep Suvi a little emotionally distant from the group? It's very easy in gameplay to be like, "Yeah, I'm going to hit the squad's vibe. I like them as people and I like these characters," but it felt really good to start hearing back Suvi in the final podcast, and be like, oh yeah. She comes from a place with such strong, specific sound that I think she always hears it a little bit, and it keeps her from blending well with the group.

Taylor Moore
Mm.

Aabria Iyengar
And, yeah, I just really enjoyed that affirmation, because it feels like it heightened everything she was doing, and made me feel more comfortable leaning into that, as a character of like, yeah, this is—this is what the Citadel is, and here's how you are still sort of always listening to it in the back of your mind, and it became like, this fun heartbeat for her—

Erika Ishii
Agh.

Aabria Iyengar
—that she can't quit easily.

Taylor Moore
Yeah. That's great. I wonder if we'll get to enjoy—I wonder if we'll get to work on that anymore.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore

I wonder.

Aabria Iyengar

Eh, nah. She's fine now.

Taylor Moore

It would be interesting themes to play with, I hope that we return.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Want to do one last question here?

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Taylor Moore

Yeah, we can do one last one!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let's do one last one. This is from Michael Bartz. Thank you, Michael.

Taylor Moore

[Goofy voice] Michael Bartz.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Michael asks, "First off, the fact I'm being called Honored Friend is melting my soul."

Taylor Moore

Oh no!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I hope that's positive Michael. "First off, the fact I'm being called Honored Friend is melting my soul. Second, how much of the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One is improvised and what percentage is cut from the final edit?"

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh.

Taylor Moore

It's all improvised, baby!

Erika Ishii
It's all improvised.

Taylor Moore
Brennan—I imagine Brennan has a few lines of description occasionally written down before hand.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You know, I actually—that's something that's very funny, because I know most DMs do that. I never do that.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It always fucks me up a little bit, to—I always—improvising a paragraph of text, is way easier than improvising a story structure? Does that make sense?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
Oh yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, my notes are always macro story scenes.

Erika Ishii
Yeah high level stuff, I just like—bullet points.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Bullet points. We're all bullet points here, baby. Proper nouns.

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cuckle]

Taylor Moore
Ha ha ha! So yeah, it's all improvised. And how much is cut out? You know, not a whole bunch. We actually—a month ago, back when the Arc One was ending, we were like, oh, let's put out an episode of cut scenes—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Taylor Moore

—and bloopers or whatever. Folks, there's not enough to release. There's not enough cut scenes to release. We just don't cut a lot of meat. Most of what gets cut is silences and vocal static,—which is the name we give for, like, ums, ahs, and you know like, crutch phrases, everybody's got their different crutch phrases, stuff like that. People repeating themselves, nothing—

Erika Ishii

Yeah like, talking about rules, or questions—quick questions about rules.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. Some, but not all. Because if the rules question is part of an emotional journey—

Erika Ishii

Yeah, yeah that's true.

Taylor Moore

—that's usually kept in. But some of that, for sure. Some of that rule stuff is not compelling at all, and do not at me. Baby, don't at me. No, that's not a critique! It's the way of the business!

Erika Ishii

No, no, he's right!

Taylor Moore

That's the business. That's the art form we're in, kiddo! The show must go on! But no I mean—no one needs to hear us fumble through paper and remind ourselves how surprise round works with sneak attack. We don't—there are no rogues in this show.

Aabria Iyengar

And there never will be.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Even more reason to not review surprise rounded sneak attack on a mic!

[Aabria and Taylor laugh]

Taylor Moore

Yeah, one of the best reasons! But no. Very, very, very few substantial things get cut out. It is mostly vocal static and smoothing, anytime you have a group of people improvising paragraphs, conversations—ESPECIALLY. ESPECIALLY planning conversations. Planning conversations, are both the hardest and easiest thing to edit. Hard because you got to find—there's a lot of dirt and clay around those dinosaur bones you got to get off. But it's also easiest because you get to cut a whole bunch of it. Because when groups of people have improvisation scenes where they are planning something in character, what they do is they repeat—and this is a natural social thing that we all do, because we are trying to build consensus and come up with clear ideas. Whereas if you watch a TV show or a movie, like, Billy Ocean—not Billy Ocean.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
It's not that Ocean's Eleven!

Erika Ishii
Billy Ocean.

Aabria Iyengar
No, I like that.

Taylor Moore
Timmy O—Timmy—

Aabria Iyengar
I want that remake, now.

Taylor Moore
George Ocean.

Erika Ishii
Frank Ocean, yeah.

Taylor Moore
George Ocean is not like, "Alright, do I have everyone's buy in on this bullet point of the ten bullet point plan? No." We don't see that. But when actual people who care about each other and want to be correct, and are improvising, plan things, hoh baby. There's constant recursive discussion, everything that is very hard to listen to as an outsider. This is across all the shows I've ever worked on. I think it's just something endemic to the way we make our stories. So stuff like that, that gets cut.

Erika Ishii
How much planning do we do? When I think about it, like—

Taylor Moore
Not a ton.

Erika Ishii
Cuz like, I—

Aabria Iyengar
Not enough, maybe.

Erika Ishii

I feel like—well, but that's the thing, is that you guys will go, and just make a big ol' swing and I'll be like, "Oh, we didn't talk about that. Wait, why would we have talked about that? Our characters wouldn't have talked about that."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Or I'll find myself, Brennan will be like, what do you want to do? I'm like "Uhhhh. Uhhhhh I'll do this!!!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hopefully—I know that sometimes I have a reputation as being a very, like, "ha ha, I'm gonna kill that dog" like Dungeon Master, but I hope that I don't come across as a Dungeon Master who punishes—

Erika Ishii

Punishes—no! No no no! And see, that's the thing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—like a lack of planning, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Not even a little bit.

Erika Ishii

Well but that's the thing, is that, it's not. It's like, you reward bold choices.

Aabria Iyengar

Yes.

Erika Ishii

And so that's what I've kind of been trained to do in this campaign. And I feel like a lot of D&D is like—it's very D&D to sit around and plan, right?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Yes.

Erika Ishii

And I get that, and that is part of the fun of it. Like when you're just playing with your friends, but when you're telling a story, it's different and you have to kind of just go? And so I feel very comfortable making those choices, as a player. But then, as a storyteller, I'm scared because I'm like, "Is this good? Is this anything?" And, it's worked out so far, but yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

It's always been something!

Erika Ishii

It's always been something.

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispered] Quest fever!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Quest fever.

Lou Wilson

Quest fever!

Taylor Moore

Yeah so—and what's the math on that?

[Aabria, Brennan, and Taylor laugh]

Taylor Moore

Raw episodes are anywhere between one and a half hours and two and a half hours. And we edit that down to—I think our average length is around an hour and a half.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Taylor Moore

Which is wild to think that you can do that, but you can.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Amazing. Yeah. Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was just going to say that this has been a fuckin' delight!

Aabria Iyengar

You want to close it out? Yeah, go ahead, close it out Beans!

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Taylor, an absolute gift and an honor and a privilege to be able to dive in—I don't know, I feel like the deep, deep insight into the thorny, fussiest details of your process are the things that are the MOST interesting to me, because that's where the magic happens in everyone's skill set is like, the corner cases, and the trick shots and stuff like that, so it's been a delight getting to talk with you about it.

Taylor Moore

Well, thank you so much! What a delight to speak on it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Can you pop your butthole one last time?

Aabria Iyengar

[Burst of laughter]

Taylor Moore

Oh, is that what you thought I was doing? [Pop!]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh!

Aabria Iyengar

[Rhythmically] All you wizards pop yo' butthole like this.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. I'll turn around so you can see what's actually happening. Look at this. [Pop!]

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sorry. The orifice of Taylor's penis looks exactly like a human butthole. So sorry. That's my mistake.

Erika Ishii

[Deeply, deeply confused] Sssso was there..? Did everybody else do this? Did I miss this?

Taylor Moore

[Strained] Tighten it up. Tighten it up.

Aabria Iyengar

Hey, Erika? Nope. Nah, you're good, you got it. You're seeing what we're all seeing and experiencing the sound of Worlds Beyond Number my dog has just opened the door to the studio.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Gasp]

Aabria Iyengar

With the doorknob, so let's close it out from here. [Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Clever girl...

Aabria Iyengar
[Sigh]

Taylor Moore
[Straining] Don't let your dog see!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Wheezing laughter]

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah! She is a child. She does not deserve this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laugh]

Taylor Moore
The grownups are busy!

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
Thank you so much for joining us for this very special Fireside. What was that title one more time Brennan?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Reckon, the reckoning, a search for drama in the music of the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One, colon, the Taylor Moore story, chapter four, this is chapter one.

[Transcriptionist's note] Reckon the Reckoning - A Search for Drama in the Music of "The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One": The Taylor Moore Story ch. IV - This is Chapter One

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh] Perfect! Cut it, print it. Until we meet again to talk about all the cool things you do, in future acts and future games in future worlds, I've been Aabria Iyengar, crackle crackle, apologies for always being too quiet on the mic.

Lou Wilson
It's Lou Wilson, crackle crackle, I don't know what to apologize for.

Aabria Iyengar
No!

Lou Wilson
Probably—I gotta—there's gotta be an apology. I'm sorry, Taylor. I'm sorry!!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is Brennan Lee Mulligan, apologizing for probably being too loud on the mic, but ya know, I had just moved recently, and so it's in a different spot than it normally is, this microphone.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Crackle crackle, ahoohoo, baww baww buh-GLOCK!

Erika Ishii

And I'm Erika! Ahoohoo!

Taylor Moore

And I'm Taylor. Yes, we will be releasing a soundtrack someday, stop asking me, I love you, crackle crackle!

[Everyone laughs. Lilted pipe flute flutters above drum beats and choral tones as the song of the Spirit Realm from the Children's Adventure starts]