

PCTG Leslie O. Fulton Fellowship

THE CYGNET RADIO HOUR

Connecting through Radio, Podcasting & Live



Theater

Louanne Moldovan
2020 Winner

A Retrospective on the Results of the Fellowship

I. THE BEGINNING—Going Beyond Live Theatre

The creation of a show begins with an idea, a concept, a desire to create something for others to consume and enjoy.

In my case, with the Cygnet Radio Hour, this creative dream was a continuation of my production company, Cygnet Productions, which was established in 1992. Cygnet has produced dozens of theatrical performances, some of which you may know, such as *The Wild Party*; *Faith Healer*; *Not About Heroes* and *Vitriol & Violets: Tales From the Algonquin Round Table*.

When the pandemic hit, and live events came to a complete standstill in March 2020, I knew I wanted to create something that would help the performing arts remain vital and available to audiences everywhere. My goal was to develop a project that would be free and accessible to as many people as possible and keep our theatre artists performing.

The solution?
PODCASTING

Specifically—
The Cygnet Radio Hour

II. THE PROCESS

There are no shortcuts when it comes to creating a show, of any kind. Like live theater production and multi-media shows, the planning and preparing stages for a podcast are critical for defining the show's objective and format.

After raising the money and assembling a crackerjack team including a stellar Engineer/Editor, a veteran Stage Manager aka Line Producer, an established and gifted Sound Composer and Cygnet's longtime PR wizard, I drew performance material from the proven Cygnet canon, as many of the pieces are well-suited to audio presentations.

The Cygnet Radio Hour is now live with three productions behind us and three to go for 2021. Our works are available everywhere you find your favorite podcasts including [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Google Podcasts](#), so please find us, follow us and subscribe for updates and great radio theater!

Here is our recording process:

- Script the Promo
- Record it!
- Feedback - review and adjust
- Sound design and mastering
- Prepare for launch
- Syndicate the show
- Share, promote, market

III. SCRIPT THE PROMO

The show promo's job is to promote the program and encourage listeners to tune in and subscribe to our podcast. Traditionally, a Promo, unlike a commercial, is 1-2 minutes in length. It should leave the listener curious and wanting more.

This is Version 1 of Cygnet Radio Hour - Promo

CLOSE YOUR EYES.

WHERE ARE YOU?
ARE YOU IN BED?

OR ARE YOU LUNCHING WITH THE WEALTHIEST, MOST PRETENTIOUS WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB IN
LONDON, CIRCA 1910?

ARE YOU JOGGING?

OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO CAROUSE WITH A FLAMBOYANT BUNCH OF REVELERS DURING A JAZZ AGE
NEW YORK PARTY?

ARE YOU IN YOUR CAR?

OR ARE YOU PRAYING THE VAIN AND MESMERIZING FAITH HEALER YOU'RE TOURING WITH THROUGH
IRELAND WON'T ERASE YOUR IDENTITY AS HIS WIFE AND YOUR SUSTENANCE?

A VOICE IN YOUR EAR CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE.

THIS IS THE CYGNET RADIO HOUR.

I'M LOUANNE MOLDOVAN, YOUR HOST ON THIS RADIO JOURNEY FEAST WHERE EVERY OTHER MONTH
WE PRESENT READINGS OF GREAT PLAYS, POETRY, AND FICTION TO AUDIENCES HUNGRY FOR THE
LIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE.

LISTEN TO US FREE ON iTUNES, SPOTIFY OR WHEREVER YOU SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR FAVORITE
PODCASTS.

EASE BACK INTO THE DARKNESS WITH US.
THE CYGNET RADIO HOUR.

FEEL EVERY WORD...

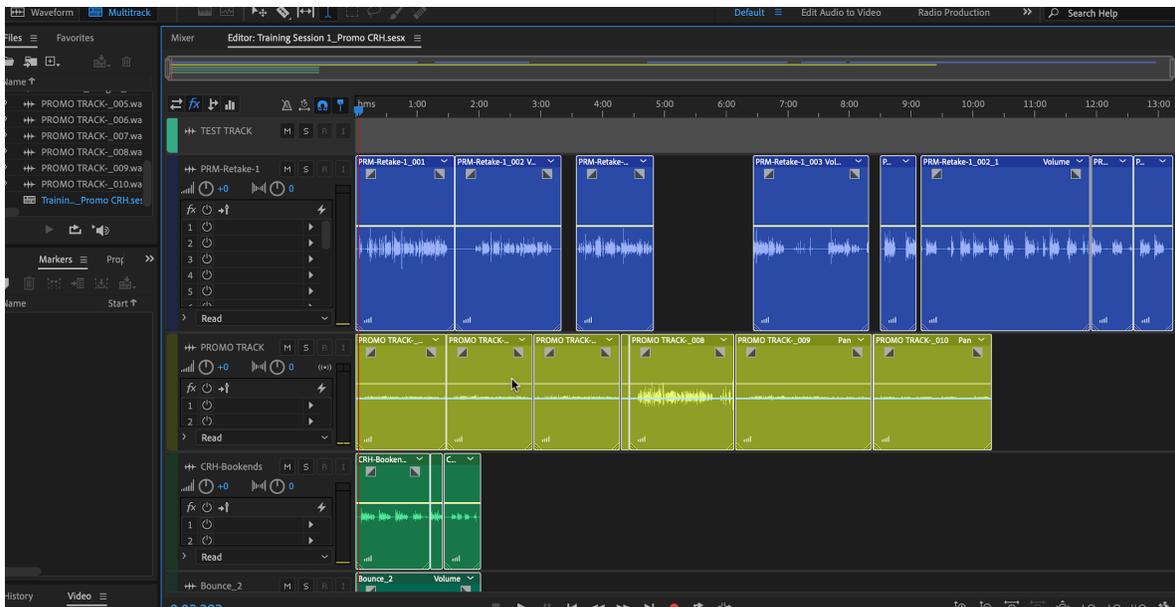
IV. RECORD IT!

There are many different methods for recording and capturing audio. After winning the PCTG Fellowship (thank you again!), I contacted Mike DiNapoli and the Studio at North Rim, as we had established an excellent professional and creative relationship when I previously produced “The Actor’s Nightmare” podcast with Mike at his studio. Mike has been a thorough and generous teacher, and just a few of the many things I learned from him were the importance of microphone placement, room selection and features, and how ambient and transient background noises can make huge differences in the quality of the recording.



← Version 1 - Cygnet Radio Hour - Promo 1

To create the promo, we recorded three good takes of the written script and then edited together a best version. The screen shot below is of our editing suite, Adobe Audition, in which we captured, edited, and assembled the promo for our show. Recording multiple takes helps ensure a successfully captured edit and final product. After we created the sound file to match the script, it was time for sound design and mastering.



V. FEEDBACK - REVIEW AND ADJUST

After we created our first version of the promo, we sent it to trusted colleagues to review. Feedback is key in the development of a new creative project; being open to criticism is crucial.

We heard that the promo wasn't quite balanced enough and needed to speak more to the male audience. The suggestions were subtle but, in the end, the team agreed, and we adjusted the script. Listed below is the updated script and the subsequent revised recording.

This is Version 2 of Cygnet Radio Hour – Promo

CLOSE YOUR EYES.

WHERE ARE YOU? ARE YOU IN BED?

OR ARE YOU LUNCHING WITH THE WEALTHIEST, MOST PRETENTIOUS WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB IN LONDON, CIRCA 1910?

ARE YOU JOGGING?

OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO CAROUSE WITH A FLAMBOYANT BUNCH OF REVELERS DURING A JAZZ AGE NEW YORK PARTY?

ARE YOU IN YOUR CAR?

OR ARE YOU CHEERING THE BLACK FIGHTER, UNDERDOG PANSY JONES, AS HE THRASHES HIS RAGING OPPONENT IN A SEEDY LOWER EAST SIDE BOXING RING?

A VOICE IN YOUR EAR CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE.

THIS IS THE CYGNET RADIO HOUR.

I'M LOUANNE MOLDOVAN, YOUR HOST ON THIS RADIO JOURNEY FEAST WHERE EVERY OTHER MONTH WE PRESENT READINGS OF GREAT PLAYS, POETRY, AND FICTION TO AUDIENCES HUNGRY FOR THE LIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE.

LISTEN TO US FREE ON iTUNES, SPOTIFY OR WHEREVER YOU SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR FAVORITE PODCASTS.

EASE BACK INTO THE DARKNESS WITH US.

THE CYGNET RADIO HOUR.

FEEL EVERY WORD...



<— Pick-up - adjusted text (The Set-Up)

Revision 2 - CRH Promo —>



VI. SOUND DESIGN & MASTERING

Once the edit and assembly were complete, we were ready for the mastering and sound design.

Mixing in the music elements and sound effects, plus the creative elements, is an exciting creative challenge and an entire project in itself. It was instructive to retain a director's sensibility while collaborating with Mike and gaining from his reliable technical expertise.

When we finished our assembly, the file was scored by the Sound Composer and sent back to us as a near-final product. With this file we would begin the process of creating our show's podcast platform and social media footprint.

Here is the final promo element:

Cygnets Radio Hour - FINAL- Promo —>



VII. PREPARE FOR LAUNCH

Now I had a promo ready, but then what? Do we send it to Apple, Spotify, Google, Sticher, iHeart and all the many distribution sites?

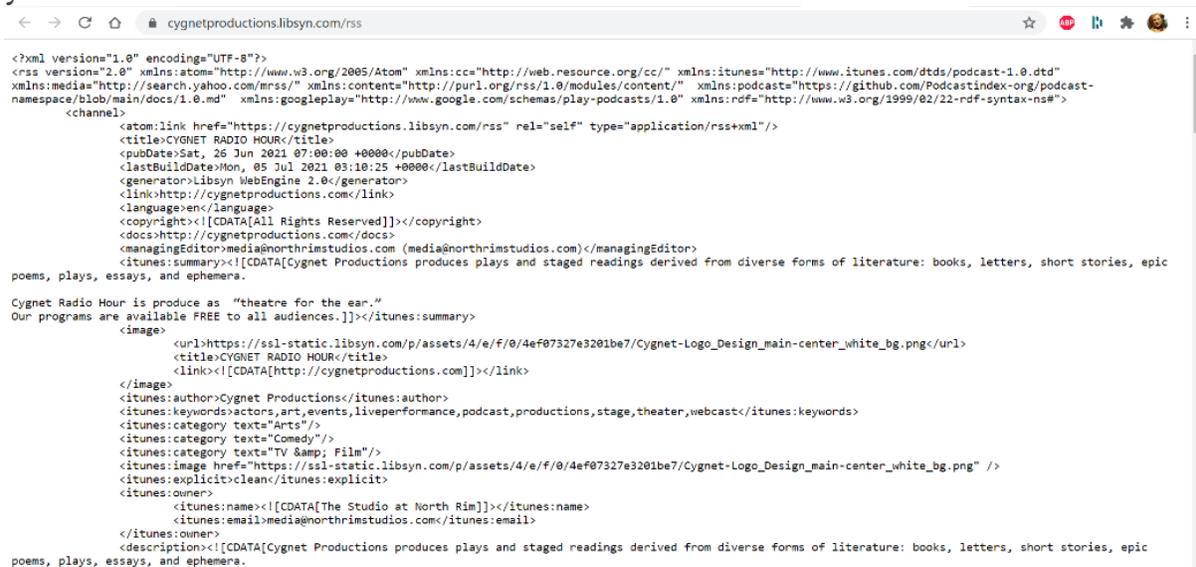
Surprise, surprise - there's another technical step that the podcast engineer must do. Mike had to choose a hosting provider where our audio files would be uploaded and stored for streaming and broadcasting. There are several services like this on the market. Many people on a 'prosumer' and hobby creator level use Soundcloud. For CRH we host our show through Libsyn (www.Libsyn.com). Through Libsyn, we can host our audio files, have a simple website and, most importantly, we're provided with an RSS feed for our hosted content.

*An **RSS** (RDF Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication) is a web feed that allows users and applications to access updates to websites in a standardized, computer-readable format. These feeds can, for example, allow a user to keep track of many different websites in a single news aggregator.*

For Cygnet Radio Hour, our RSS feed is:

• <https://cygnetproductions.libsyn.com/rss>

If you follow the link above, you'll see a string of web code used to tell the syndication sites the who, what, where, when and why of the show for the web and network backend. The RSS feed is what we used in the next step - Syndication.



```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="2.0" xmlns:atom="http://www.w3.org/2005/Atom" xmlns:cc="http://web.resource.org/cc/" xmlns:itunes="http://www.itunes.com/dtds/podcast-1.0.dtd"
xmlns:media="http://search.yahoo.com/mrss/" xmlns:content="http://purl.org/rss/1.0/modules/content/" xmlns:podcast="https://github.com/Podcastindex-org/podcast-
namespace/blob/main/docs/1.0.md" xmlns:googleplay="http://www.google.com/schemas/play-podcasts/1.0" xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
<channel>
  <atom:link href="https://cygnetproductions.libsyn.com/rss" rel="self" type="application/rss+xml"/>
  <title>CYGNET RADIO HOUR</title>
  <pubDate>Sat, 26 Jun 2021 07:00:00 +0000</pubDate>
  <lastBuildDate>Mon, 05 Jul 2021 03:10:25 +0000</lastBuildDate>
  <generator>Libsyn WebEngine 2.0</generator>
  <link>http://cygnetproductions.com</link>
  <language>en</language>
  <copyright><![CDATA[All Rights Reserved]]></copyright>
  <docs>http://cygnetproductions.com/docs</docs>
  <managingEditor>media@northrimstudios.com (media@northrimstudios.com)</managingEditor>
  <itunes:summary><![CDATA[Cygnet Productions produces plays and staged readings derived from diverse forms of literature: books, letters, short stories, epic
poems, plays, essays, and ephemera.

Cygnet Radio Hour is produce as "theatre for the ear."
Our programs are available FREE to all audiences.]]></itunes:summary>
  <image>
    <url>https://ssl-static.libsyn.com/p/assets/4/e/f/0/4ef07327e3201be7/Cygnet-Logo_Design_main-center_white_bg.png</url>
    <title>CYGNET RADIO HOUR</title>
    <link><![CDATA[http://cygnetproductions.com]]></link>
  </image>
  <itunes:author>Cygnet Productions</itunes:author>
  <itunes:keywords>actors,art,events,liveperformance,podcast,productions,stage,theater,webcast</itunes:keywords>
  <itunes:category text="Arts"/>
  <itunes:category text="Comedy"/>
  <itunes:category text="TV & Film"/>
  <itunes:image href="https://ssl-static.libsyn.com/p/assets/4/e/f/0/4ef07327e3201be7/Cygnet-Logo_Design_main-center_white_bg.png" />
  <itunes:explicit>clean</itunes:explicit>
  <itunes:owner>
    <itunes:name><![CDATA[The Studio at North Rim]]></itunes:name>
    <itunes:email>media@northrimstudios.com</itunes:email>
  </itunes:owner>
  <description><![CDATA[Cygnet Productions produces plays and staged readings derived from diverse forms of literature: books, letters, short stories, epic
poems, plays, essays, and ephemera.]]></description>
</channel>
```

VIII. SYNDICATION

Syndication is simply the process by which we distribute the podcast across the web. Sites like Apple iTunes, Google and Spotify have what seems to be an endless supply of shows, songs and artists. What many don't realize is, these sites are hosting and storing none of the actual content.

These sites are indexing sites, like a digital card catalogue of each of the shows and albums. They collect and bookmark RSS feeds and when end users find a show they like, whether on Spotify, Apple or Google, the place they actually listen to it from is the hosted file that you've created.

It's important to stress, these sites don't share links or catalogues. It's the podcaster's responsibility to share the RSS feed with the indexing sites and do the work of promoting and marketing. For CRH we syndicate to:

- Apple Podcast
- iHeart Radio
- Spotify Podcast
- Google Play
- Radio One
- Tune-In Radio
- Deezer
- Amazon Music
- Player.FM
- Radio Public
- Gaana

IX. SHARE, MARKET, PROMOTE

Now that the show has been properly established and syndicated its time to share, promote and market the show. Cygnet Radio Hour has Facebook and Instagram pages, and a website. Each week we share and promote which show is currently playing, as well as what's coming soon. Consistently presented episodes and regular social media engagement are key ways to grow the show.

On average, a new show will have limited exposure and marketing will be an uphill climb. As people find the show and subscribe, with each new episode they appear as an automatic count in the downloads. I made a habitual effort to talk about and share the show with friends and family, and I ask them to share it with their friends and family. Word of mouth is still a powerful tool in marketing.

Popular places to market the show are on personal Facebook pages and in Facebook groups. Instagram can also be utilized as a promotional tool by posting recording pictures and guest headshots. There are many social media options. Other social media options I hope to branch out with are Linked-In, Twitter, Twitch, TikTok, etc. Having a sophisticated promotional package is essential to an effective PR campaign.

X. In Appreciation

Thanks to the support I received from the Leslie O. Fulton Fellowship, I've expanded my skill set to support new forms of theatrical creativity, including:

- Speech audio recording and editing
- Music recording and editing
- Audio file archiving

I would not have been able to produce the Cygnet Radio Hour or promote its content without PCTG's Leslie O. Fulton Fellowship, and our thousands of listeners would not have had the opportunity to hear these extraordinary works. Your support has made me a more multi-faceted artist and given theatrical riches to arts lovers everywhere.

THANK YOU!

Most sincerely,

Louanne Moldovan

Louanne Moldovan