

Delivering Audio Description with AUDIMANCE

Artistic and Technical Preparation

- 4 - 12 months out: Begin crafting your audio description, working with professional describing artists and strategize high quality and realistically timed recording. Communicate with your venue about using Audimance and make sure access information is going out on all your comms channels and ticket sales.
- 1-3 months out: Work with your production team to build cues and strategize how to cut your audio for precisely synced description. If using multitrack, create interlock and spatialization.
- Ensure your production team has an install running on an application server and communicating with your QLab machine, and is prepared to set up on the network at your venue.
- 2 weeks out: Load your final audio files into the system and begin listening to the description during tech runs as cues are being called and fired. Test multiple tracks and locations in the house.
- Customize all red text or red highlights in this document with your correct information
- 1 week: Train venue staff as below
- 1 day: Test EVERYTHING
- 0 day: Enjoy your audio-described performance
- After: Ask people about their experience and notice any differences in response between the visual audience and the audio description audience. Follow up with your describers & audio team.

Publicity, Ticket Sales, and Communications

Inform your audiences in advance about audio description and Audimance

In your marketing and the venue marketing or show information, on the web/on social/in print, here are some of the things you should do:

- Tell them that audio description will be available (use text and the AD icon, available online)
- Use image description for any images or videos
 - *Why would someone attend an AD'd performance if your marketing isn't accessible to them?*
- Tell them what other kinds of access will be available
 - *Such as: ASL, wheelchair-accessible seating & restrooms, no-step seating, quiet space, sensory kits, etc.*
- Check that all websites or online ticket purchase sites are accessible (screenreaders, alternate controls, keyboard control, timing) AND provide alternate methods to purchase or ask questions (box office phone & email)

Sample text for marketing purposes:

This performance will include audio description, for blind and low vision audiences, available to use on your personal smartphone via the Audimance app. Bring your own wired headphones and arrive early to the show to learn how to use the app!

Extended sample text:

Audimance is a web-based user-controlled app developed by disability arts ensemble Kinetic Light in partnership with CyCore Systems. Through an innovative interface, audience members can access and

mix specially-developed sound content.

In ticket purchase confirmations and pre-show emails

- Tell them that the audio description will be delivered via Audimance
 - They need to bring their personal device (phone or tablet) fully charged, AND
 - They need to bring WIRED headphones (bluetooth lag IS noticeable)
- Link to a webpage with any of your audio recorded content like the program, venue guide, and AD sample(s)

Sample text for welcome emails and for your program:

Tonight's performance includes audio description, available to blind and low vision audience members and other people who use audio description as a primary mode of experiencing performance, via the Audimance app. During the show, certain audience members may be listening to audio description through Audimance and wired headphones. If you would like to access the app or if you have questions, ask an usher.

What is Audimance?

Access to dance, theatre, and film for non-visual audiences has traditionally been in the form of audio description. Blind and low For years, the Laurel Lawson and disability arts ensemble Kinetic Light have researched, tested, and created a more encompassing, more aesthetic experience of verbal description, in collaboration with blind and low vision experts and audience members.

What if your audio description experience offered you choices—different styles of description, soundscapes, poetry, prose? What if you could listen to dance as an aural artistic experience and not just someone's description of the experience?.

Audimance is the first app that allows audiences to create their own experience of a dance. Using an innovative interface, audience members can access our specially-developed sound content and choose what to listen to and when.

Preparation on site

Make a place to orient audience members to Audimance

Assign 1.5 - 3 people to staff this area on day of show, depending on how many people you anticipate using audio description and how many people might ask questions

- Find an easy-to-access location, perhaps near the box office or in the lobby
- This location will need to have good access to the wireless network being used to serve Audimance (talk to your technical person setting up the network IN ADVANCE!)
- Make sure all box & FOH personnel know to direct people to the location
- Set up a small table and a few chairs
- Make sure it's quiet enough for people to converse and follow directions

- Make a QR code with your personalized webapp link and print out several copies
- Make a sign that says “Audio Description” and post it clearly on the table
- Print pages 4ff at the end of this document for your front of house personnel, and put at least a couple copies on the table
- If you have tactile elements or are offering other kinds of nonvisual access, you can also put them here
- If possible, have a few (inexpensive, disposable) wired headphones available in case someone forgets theirs

Train your lobby staff and ushers

- Once the network is set up, guide your staff through the app orientation using pg. 3-6 below
- Check-in with Audimance staff/ushers about half an hour prior to the lobby opening
- If the webapp is having issues:
 - First make sure the user is connected to the correct wifi network
 - Make sure it’s running in the Chrome browser
 - Reload the page
- Audimance staff/ushers should always ask for consent prior to touching someone’s personal device
- All ushers should be familiar with the simple help steps above in case someone needs assistance in the house before or during the show, or following intermission.

Day-of/Pre-show on site

Check the setup above and review information with assigned FoH staff & ushers

Confirm that the correct network is up and the webapp is working properly

Confirm the QLab machine is connected to the Audimance application server

- This is a common pre-show error – the QLab laptop has jumped wifi networks AGAIN.

Showtime!

- In the curtain speech, you **must** include that “Some audience members may be using their phones for accessibility.”
 - Why? We find that it’s sadly common for some audience members to police others around what they consider to be “inappropriate” behavior. It’s absolutely necessary to say that some people are using their phones and that’s okay.
 - You can absolutely still ask people to keep their screens dimmed and not to take photos
 - *Be sure your ushers all understand* that people are using their phones to access the audio description and that they should not police audience members. All ushers should also feel comfortable with assisting people using Audimance during the show (using the directions at the end of this document).

AUDIMANCE guide for Access doulas, ushers, and FOH

What is Audimance?

Audimance is a webapp which delivers audio description via audience member's own phone or tablet.

What is Audio Description?

Audio Description is a way in which someone who is primarily nonvisual might experience performing art or visual art. This can be done through live or prerecorded audio such as narrative description, physical description, poetry, tone poem, soundscape, foley sound effects, or other content which accompanies the show. People using Audimance will hear the show soundtrack (room sound) as well as the additional description coming through their headphones.

Who is this for?

This is for people who use audio description as a primary way of accessing performance. This may include audience members who are blind or have low vision, as well as some neurodivergent and other nonvisual people.

Multitrack audio description is not intended to augment the experience of nondisabled sighted guests. If a nondisabled sighted guest (someone not experienced with audio description) wants to try Audimance, tell them we can only accommodate a limited number of people each evening, and we are prioritizing everyone who requires audio description for access. Our ability to provide access for this depends on the number of doulas available to support people in the theater.

The spatial Audimance experience centers people who primarily use audio description and have a listening practice: it does not center the nondisabled ear. You can tell them that this is a complete auditory experience and is an alternative way of accessing the show through sound rather than vision; it's not a special add-on component. Offer to take their name on a waitlist. Invite them to learn more about Audimance at <https://kineticlight.org/audimance>.

The nonvisual, audio experience of *Under Momentum* can be accessed through Kinetic Light's Audimance app. Rooted in feedback from blind and low-vision audiences and colleagues, our approach to audio description invites listeners to choose their own experience of the work. Rather than experiencing a single line of description, listeners can mix one or more descriptive tracks, provided by the artists, which may feature a range of styles and techniques.

If multiple tracks are available, spatial mode may be enabled

Spatial mode: The spatial experience is explicitly created with and for blind and low-vision audiences whose primary experience of dance is through sound. (Detailed info on pg. 2)

NOTE: Due to iOS function locks, the spatial mode only works within Chrome - NOT Safari.

Menu mode: The menu mode is non-spatialized: users will not hear tracks as if coming from different stereo locations in their headphones. It allows people to select individual tracks. Users may select multiple tracks in this mode, but this is primarily useful to people who want to listen to only one track. (Detailed info on pg. 2)
Menu mode functions in both Chrome + Safari.

The goal is to make sure that all people who access the show through description have access and are appropriately supported. Please guide folx through Initial Setup + Aud. Tour:

I. INITIAL SETUP: When someone comes up for the setup, you can ask if they would like you to take their phone and do this part of the setup, or guide them through it:

- Confirm those using the spatialized mode have Chrome installed on their device.
- Join the "YOUR NETWORK NAME" wireless network
- Wireless password is: "NETWORK PASSWORD" (tell them not to share this password as it's dedicated for audio description access only)
- Open the web browser (Chrome) and go to [https:// INSERT YOUR REAL LINK HERE](https://INSERT YOUR REAL LINK HERE)
- Set phone display brightness to lowest level
- Make certain headset is functional (make sure sound will not play aloud over the speakers)

II. AUDIMANCE TOUR – Please give them this part as verbal instructions:

- Once inside the app:
- The first page contains the audio program, which can be listened to at any time before the show or during intermission.
- Once the show starts, either click the "Go to Performance" links or let the browser automatically take you to the performance
- Once at the live performance page, you are presented with two choices for experience: Spatial Mixing and Menu Mixing.
- **LIST THE NUMBER OF TRACKS AND GIVE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF EACH (STYLE, CONTENT)**
 - **Spatial mixing** is an immersive experience, where your phone's display is transformed into a field in which any click will move your listening position in that field. When you enter this page, it will take a few moments to load, and then you will be presented with a "Click to Play" prompt. To begin this experience, be sure to click that prompt first, which will allow us to play audio to your device. Description will not begin playing until you click this at the beginning of each act.
 - **Menu mixing** provides a simple interface by which you may individually control the playback of each track. This is nonspatial and for use if you want to isolate to a single track only.
 - Please note that not all tracks have playback at all times during the show. If you are uncertain if something is playing, try another track.
- If you think there is a problem with the app during the show, reload **YOUR WEBAPP LINK** to start fresh. The application will always stay synchronized with the performance. Also make sure the device is still connected to the "YOUR NETWORK NAME" wireless network.
- You can ask an usher for assistance at any time during the performance by holding out your phone. It will be easier for an usher to reach you for assistance if you sit on or near an aisle.

III. TROUBLESHOOTING IN SHOW:

- make sure they're on the right wifi (**YOUR NETWORK NAME AND PASSWORD**)
- reload **YOUR WEBAPP LINK**
- if spatialized mode is not working, confirm they are using Chrome
- text **YOUR AUDIMANCE PERSON OR LIAISON** for assistance

Audio Track Information

Describe what you are offering here!

-How many tracks (even if it's just one)

-What style is it

-Who created it (the artists, the describer or scripter, the voice actor, the recording engineer &or mixer – your credits)



Convenience QR Codes

Newer Android and Apple phones support configuring WiFi settings via QR Code. Most phones also support opening web pages via QR Codes. If you find it easier to scan the codes than type them in, here are the codes for the wifi config and Audimance page.

<p>Paste your wifi QR setup image In this box</p>	<p>Paste your AD weblink QR image In this box</p>
<p>Audimance Wifi Setup</p>	<p>Your Show AD webpage link</p>

These codes are for Audio Description access only and will **not** give you internet access.

Please use the public “[venue]” network for internet access.