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M&E Creation and Delivery Guidelines for Nonfiction

It is imperative that the Music and Effects Package reflects the original version mix to preserve creative intent. The goal is to ensure that the Lip Sync dub Viewer experiences an immersive soundscape and SFX consistent with the original Language Viewer.

For Nonfiction M&E, an Augmented M&E should cover at minimum the following:

- **Background:** sounds not linked to story points are not covered
- **Midground:** only sounds linked to story points are covered
- **Front ground:** all sounds are covered

Depending on project complexity, a foley pass may or may not be required. Nonfiction M&E is new territory for many sound professionals, so nuances and edge cases exist beyond these recommendations. Different kinds of Nonfiction content require differing levels of engagement; please consult your GEM Post Manager for fill depth guidance.

When required, deliver a fully-filled Music & Effects Package as long-play, discrete channels meeting GEM Nearfield true-peak requirements (Sound Mix Specifications and Best Practices). Files should be conformed and synchronized with final media delivered to GEM. M&E levels should generally match the original mix. Do not alter Music levels, and do not modify FX levels beyond what is needed for a properly filled M&E. Optional channel assignment should align with the top-level mix.

For select titles, GEM may provide specific mixing notes. Unless otherwise directed, apply these general guidelines and contact GEM Post or International Dubbing with questions.

Preparing M&E Assets

- Audio deliverables must sync to the final IMF picture; head leader and pops may be present.
- See [M&E Creation Guideline] video for step-by-step scripted M&E creation; many best practices apply to Nonfiction.

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With Foley and Without Foley Recommendations

- Foley quality is critical; post houses vary in foley capabilities.
- If no foley stage exists, production sound should record distinct on-set sounds (e.g., blender, welder).
- Foley is usually not budgeted in Nonfiction; discuss needs with your Nonfiction Post Manager.

Foley Pass Recommendations

- A cloth pass helps fill ambient noise often captured by lav mics in reality content.
- A props pass addresses plot-relevant effects removed during production; fill via props foley or foley libraries.
- Footsteps passes are optional; add only if plot pertinent or contextually needed, such as in re-enactments.
- Foley cues are at the discretion of sound, producer, or post supervisors; generally recommend stepping through content without explicit cueing.
- Without a foley budget, deliver married music stem and sound effects stem plus a separate dialogue stem; International Dubbing can create faux M&E for foreign dubs.

Dialogue Stem and Production FX Recommendations

- Split DME stems form the foundation for M&E creation.
- The dialogue stem may include production sound effects (PFX) usable in M&E, reducing Foley necessity.
- An editorial PFX pass should be accounted for in domestic mix or during M&E mix.
- When PFX cannot be extracted, Foley or Foley libraries are required.

Dipped vs Undipped Recommendations

- Episodes often have dipped and undipped split stems for archiving and versioning flexibility.
- Use dipped stems for filled M&E creation.
- Music and hard effects should remain unaltered; production FX, Foley, dialogue efforts, breaths may vary.

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Optional Stem Recommendations

- Nonfiction often involves multiple characters with dramatic reactions needing capture or isolation of indiscernible dialogue events.
- Capture crowd, foreign dialogue, archival audio, human efforts, and reactions in separate optional stems when relevant.

Naming Convention

- Include all pertinent metadata in file names; follow the [Naming Convention] article before uploading to Content/Creator Hub.

M&E QC Requirements

- Required assets for QC:
  - Reference Video (same picture used during mix)
  - M&E Track (5.1 wav)
  - Optional Tracks (5.1 wav)
  - Dialogue Guide (5.1/5.0 Dialogue Stem or Mono Mix down)
  - Print Master (5.1 wav) uploaded per episode in Content Hub
- Dialogue Guide: A reference dialogue track used in M&E validation.

Optional Track Definition

- Separate tracks with language-specific elements such as:
  - Language-specific walla, crowd chants, cheers
  - Dialogue from TV or real-life sources
  - Foreign language speakers in content
  - Character vocals from on-screen singing (story relevant)

- **Recommended to exclude:**
  - Breath/effort vocals during slight pauses or within 2-3 seconds around dialogue
  - Telephone filtered voice (not announcements)
  - PFX ambience and sound effects
- Optional tracks can be Mono to 7.1.2; add material there when unsure.

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Examples:

- Optional A - Character vocalizations
- Optional B - Group ADR and Walla (by Language)
- Optional C - Foreign language dialogue
- Optional D - Archival Material
- Optional E - Song vocals (separated if possible)

Category	Music and Effects Mix	Optional Tracks	DX Guide/Remove
Crowd	- Walla and non language-specific crowd noises, reactions, cheers, etc. - Generic crowd walla bed that matches the intent of the crowd reaction in original mix (if production bed contains crowd noises with discernible language that must be removed)	- Group dialogue that is not discernible in mix but is made up of distinct individual dialogue (possibly on group-specific stem) - Live (and/or database) audience laughter/reactions (should be placed on reax-specific track) - Crowd chants of a person's name	- Specific, distinct lines of dialogue within walla bed or crowd stems - Discernible language within audience reactions

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Music	- Background music exactly as it is represented in the original language mix - Instrumental tracks for on-screen musical performances original to or produced for show.	- Vocals from performances original to or produced for show. - Instrumental/vocal mix if isolated vocals from on-screen performance are not available	- Discernible dialogue overlapping with musical performance
Foreign/Fictional Dialogue		- All dialogue that is in a language (recognized or original to content) different than the original version language. Separate overlapping speakers if possible.	- Short words/phrases interrupting lines of original language dialogue
Existing IP/Archival Audio	- Music and effects from audio source	- Dialogue of audio from outside sources (archival, outside film/television IP, etc.) - Full audio mix of outside sources if tied together	- Dialogue of anything scripted and recorded specifically for mix

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Babies	- Babies/young children crying, screaming, etc. in non-discernible language - Non-language "mouth sounds": groaning, coughing, grunting, heavy breathing, etc. occurring separate from dialogue	- Non-language "mouth sounds": groaning, coughing, grunting, heavy breathing, etc. if it occurs close to dialogue	- Babies/young children speaking in a discernible language

Optional Track Recommendations:

If GEM does not provide specific instructions, use your professional judgment to determine if this material should be placed on Optional tracks.

Category	Body of M&E	Optional Tracks	DX Guide/Remove
Yelling	- Non-dialogue yelling, screaming, crying, etc. from characters who never speak discernible language in program	- Non-dialogue yelling, screaming, crying, etc. from speaking characters	- Yelling, screaming, crying, etc. that contains dialogue

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Breaths/efforts	- Breaths/efforts from characters who never speak discernible language in program	- Breaths/efforts from speaking characters not occurring next to dialogue	- Breaths/efforts from speaking characters occurring within lines of dialogue