Audio engineering

It's that time of the year when the excitement of results and the rush for admission gives way to normal life. While many of your peers may be happy about going to college, you may still be wondering if you are doing the right thing by pursuing a course which you don't entirely like.

Perhaps you have taken it because your dad thought that is the right thing for you or may be because your close friends are doing it. Whatever it is, if you are different from the pack and harbour a desire to do something creative, then you might like to try out a subject like audio engineering. And given that sound engineering plays a key role in almost all aspects of entertainment, finding a career path will not be so difficult.

Booming industry

"Audio engineering skills are vital to radio production to films," says Rithish Babu, CEO, School of Audio Engineering (SAE), who have trained about 600 professionals in the last eight years. "And despite the recession, our entertainment industry is booming. So there is always demand for qualified sound engineers."

The SAE, established in 1977 in Sydney (Australia), has campuses in 40 cities across the globe. With several commercial studios, recording facilities and courses approved by governments and universities, the School has become the best-known for learning audio engineering and other technical aspects of music, film, radio, television and outdoor sound productions.

In India

The institute arrived in India in 2000 and offered its 18-month diploma course from its state-of-the-art training centre in Chennai. Besides starting its branches in five Indian cities, the institute also added a three-year bachelors degree to its offering and obtained accreditation for the courses from UGC.

Rithish explains that the diploma prepares a student to work as a sound engineer in different verticals. "We primarily concentrate on four broad areas in the course," he says. "Recording, post-production, broadcasting and music production. Besides, we also provide in-depth training in eight verticals—films, television, mobile VAS (Value Added Services), light and sound for outdoor shows, radio, remix and background music, cross-track format support."

Starting from the physics of sound and human ears, the course deals with the important aspects of indoor and outdoor sound such as acoustics. Students are also given hands-on training in formats such as analogue, digital, midi etc. "With all this training, a successful student should be able to work as a studio engineer, mobile VAS development or a broadcast engineer. There are at least 30 to 40 choices available for him/her," Rithish says.

The Bachelor's course deals both with the technical and marketing aspects of media, providing students an understanding of cultural history, consumer psychology, marketing techniques etc.

On the technology, the student also learns advanced music production, script writing, adapting scripts to music and films etc. "We also give them a glimpse of background scores for films," Rithish adds. Though Higher Secondary or Pre-University with 60 per cent in physics is set as basic qualification for the course, Rithish insists that the ability of a student to be creative is more important.

"We get about 800 applications for the 200 seats we have in our Chennai and Mumbai centres," he says. "More than 40 per cent of the applicants are from the tier 2 towns, eager to prove themselves in the world of entertainment or films. Besides assessing their performance in the entrance test we conduct, we also look at their ability to be creative and their understanding of music and sound, as these are often the foundation to be a good sound engineer."

SAE also has a centre in Bangalore, where only music production (excluding post-production and other advanced training) has been taught. Visit www.sydney.sae.edu/L Subramani