

Ch. 7 - Sound in the Cinema

1. Sound is manipulated the majority of the time!
 - a. Just as flexible as other stylistic elements
 - b. Often goes unnoticed, background
2. Learning to listen to film is not easy...
3. Soundtrack = all the sound(s) in a film (the magnetic track on the celluloid)
([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))
4. Since 1970s blockbusters, we've been sonically spoiled!
 - a. Surround sound, Dolby noise reduction, expanded frequency, dynamic range, multiple track playback, digital sound technology, etc.
5. [Casablanca](#) & [Public Enemy](#) have "empty" soundtracks compared to films today
([Pirates of the Caribbean](#))
6. Home video/DVD/Blu-Ray prompted consumers to set up home theaters
7. Film has always had sound! ([Edison](#), [Melies](#), [Chaplin](#), [Keaton](#), etc.)
 - a. orchestra, organ, piano, live narrator, audience, etc.
8. Synchronization of senses, audio/visual, unify sound and image, one in the same experience
9. Sound can shape how we understand and/or feel about the image! ([Star Wars](#), [other music...](#)) ([Pretty Woman](#), [other music](#), [sound effect](#))
10. Sound can direct our attention
 - a. Narrator telling us where to look (*Shawshank Redemption* - [Opening](#), [Rooftop Scene](#))
 - b. Dancers dancing to music ([Swing Time](#))
11. Sound anticipates elements offscreen ([Poltergeist](#), [It](#), *It* - [clip 2](#), [Jaws](#), [A Nightmare on Elm Street](#))
 - a. soundtrack can clarify image events, contradict them, or render them ambiguous
12. Silence is also quite effective!
 - a. [Under the Skin](#), *28 Days Later* (DVD)
13. Fundamentals of Film Sound
 - a. Perceptual Properties
 - i. Loudness: volume, constantly manipulated ([Scott Pilgrim vs. The World](#)). "sneaking in, sneaking out": when music elevates and lowers in volume between scenes with dialogue ([Casablanca](#))
 - ii. Pitch: highness or lowness of sound, most sounds are batches of different frequencies, not pure like a tuning fork ([Jurassic Park](#), [The Exorcist](#))

- iii. Timbre: color or tone quality, texture or “feel” of a sound - nasal voices, mellow musical tones, etc. ([Pretty Woman](#), [Psycho](#))
- iv. These three combine and interact to define overall sonic texture of a film, help shape our experience of a film as a whole ([Wizard of Oz 1](#), [Wizard of Oz 2](#))

b. Three types of sound in cinema:

- i. Speech/dialogue, music, and noise (ambient, sound effects, etc)
 - c. [Foley artist](#): Creates sound effects for film typically using practical effects ([Singin' in the Rain](#))
 - d. ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement)/Dubbing: [King Kong Featurette](#), [Clan of the White Lotus](#), [Hercules in New York](#), [The Neverending Story](#), [Toy Story](#)
 - e. [Mickey-Mousing](#): matching movement to music or vice versa ([Looney Tunes](#), [The Big Sleep](#), [Pirates of the Caribbean](#))
 - f. [Wilhelm Scream](#): distinct scream sound used in hundreds of films
 - g. Sometimes sounds or score exist first and scenes/shots are built around them ([Bugs Bunny](#), [2001: A Space Odyssey](#), [Fantasia](#)). Sometimes sounds or score are created specifically for a film ([Star Wars](#), [Edward Scissorhands](#), [Lord of the Rings](#), [Back to the Future](#))
 - h. Different instrumental pieces for different characters, locations, narrative moments, emotions, etc. Motifs and musical unity ([Lord of the Rings](#), [LOTR 2](#), [Halloween](#), [A Nightmare on Elm Street](#), [Star Wars](#))
 - i. Dialogue is typically the most important sound in narrative film! All others are usually subordinate or help to support it. ([Lost in Translation](#), [The Rock](#), [Casablanca](#), [Modern Times](#), [Predator](#), [The Artist](#), [Inglourious Basterds](#))
 - j. Soundtrack typically cancels out distracting “realistic” noise ([Breathless](#), 40:35)
 - k. Sound perspective: the closer the source is to the camera, the louder it gets and vice versa. [Dumb and Dumber](#)
14. Sound Mixing: combining sounds using tracks
- a. dialogue, score, special effects, etc. all mixed together
 - b. Sound bridge: sound continuing over edits ([The Godfather](#), [other examples](#))
 - c. multiple tracks for any given soundtrack, airport vs. nature, [Skip James](#) vs. [Beatles](#) vs. [Pink Floyd](#) vs. [Girl Talk](#) w/ [visual](#)

15. Dimensions of Film Sound

- a. Rhythm: sound occupies a duration, affects our bodies with beat, pulse, tempo, accents (stronger or weaker beats), speed, etc.

- i. sound effects, speech, score
 - ii. mise-en-scene, editing, cinematography, and sound work together rhythmically
 - iii. [*Inherit the Wind*](#), [*Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*](#), [*The Philadelphia Story*](#), [*28 Days Later*](#) tunnel (DVD), [*The Devil's Rejects*](#), [*Requiem for a Dream*](#), [*Mortal Kombat*](#)
- b. Fidelity: not quality of recording, but faithfulness to the original source. If film shows barking dog and we hear barking, that sound maintains fidelity. If we hear a cat meowing instead, there's a lack of fidelity. [*The Exorcist*](#), [*The Exorcist real voice*](#), [*Duck Amuck*](#)
 - i. We accept laser blasters and lightsabers in *Star Wars* even though they don't exist outside of that world
 - ii. Unfaithful sound usually used for comic effect. [*Labyrinth*](#), [*Whose Line is it Anyway?*](#), [*Mouse Howl*](#), [*Mouse Howl 2*](#)
 - iii. Space: sound comes from a source in space
 - iv. diegetic: film world (internal and external) vs. nondiegetic: outside film world
 - 1. *Waking Life* orchestra (DVD), [*Iron Man*](#), [*Scorpio Rising*](#), [*Dune*](#), [*Little Shop of Horrors*](#), [*Magnolia*](#)
- c. Time: time represented on soundtrack may or may not be the same as that represented in the image
 - i. synchronous sound: matching of sound with image in projection, opposed to asynchronous sound ([*Singin' in the Rain*](#))
 - ii. Simultaneous sound: sound takes place at the same time as the image in terms of the story events
 - iii. Non-simultaneous sound: sound occurs earlier or later in the story than the events we see in the image ([*The Wonder Years*](#), [*Double Indemnity*](#))
 - iv. Sound bridge: sound from previous scene may linger briefly while the image is already presenting next scene ([*The Matrix*](#), [*Silence of the Lambs*](#))
 - v. Sound can also fade in and fade out, just like visual editing ([*David Bowie - Five Years*](#),), or abruptly begin or end ([*Star Wars*](#),)