

The Psychology of Sound in the Genre of Horror Films

How does sound build towards the viewer's spine-chilling experience?

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) - Music Technology

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea 12th of December 2018

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Word Count: 5,643

Summary

This dissertation demonstrates the relationship between sound and moving image, the intensity of horror films, and how certain techniques are used in horror films in order to have a psychological impact on the viewer and enhance their watching experience. I will be researching into a number of composers and studying the specific techniques and methods they use in order to emphasise the movements of scenes, and over all enhance and enrich the audience's experience. Throughout my research I will be looking into specific techniques that the composers use, evaluating why they are appropriate, and illustrating how they work to compliment the moving image.

Introduction

Why are specific sounds in horror films perceived as disturbing and unpleasant, and how does sound contribute to the overall spine-chilling experience of watching a horror film?

During this dissertation I will be investigating and discussing the relationship between sound and moving image. I will specifically be focusing on how audio compliments scenes of films, as well as how sound can influence and effect the viewers of these films. Researching deeply into the genre of horror, I will be focusing predominantly on composers of films of this nature, along with the auditory techniques that these composers use in their film compositions. I will also be exploring why certain techniques are used in horror films, and how exactly these techniques influence the audience's viewing experience. Along side this, I will be investigating the psychology behind why we perceive certain sounds as frightening, for example children's nursery rhymes, and Church organs. I will also be exploring how these sounds are used in horror films and what affect they can have on the audience.

My dissertation will be split into three chapters, each expanding on different areas of my topic and coming together to form a detailed investigation into the power of sound in the genre of horror films.

Chapter 1 will explore the relationship between sound and moving image, presenting examples of the important role sound plays in film.

Chapter 2 will then lead into the intensity of horror films, delving deeper into the audio techniques composers use for films of this nature, and analysing how these are used to affect the viewer.

The third and final chapter will examine the psychology of horror films in more depth, in relation certain sounds that we as humans perceive as unsettling, and how horror film composers use these to ensure a heightened watching experience.

Chapter 1

The Relationship Between Sound and Moving Image

"Sound evokes. It holistically penetrates the human experience, touching us and putting us in touch with aspects of our lived experience not easily expressing in words." (Lederach et Lederach, 2010 p.141)

Music composition has always played a major role in film - it is as essential to the production of moving image now as it was during the period of silent movies. *The New Babylon (1929)* is one example of a silent film which was effective in using musical compositions to set the tone and narrative of the film. Based on the revolution of the Paris Commune in 1871, the story follows a pair of lovers on opposing political stances during this time. The score underpinning the film, composed by Dmitri Shostakovich, is said to be satirical and complicated, narrating the characters and their movements in each scene.

Throughout the film, the orchestral score is in sync with the scenes, getting busier instrumentally as the movements of scenes become more chaotic, doing so through using heavier accented playing styles and building in texture with more instruments. In the same way, as the movement of the characters calm, with less happening in terms of image, the composition reflects this - slowing in pace and dropping in texture.

Towards the end of the film, there is a scene where both political sides collide, resulting in the female lover being sentenced to death along with her people. Throughout this part of the film the music is thin in texture, very slow, low pitched and dramatic, and played in minor to emphasis the sadness. The couple look at each

other and tension rises as they understand their fate, the strings building in tempo as graves are dug in the background, emphasising what is to come. The score increasing in velocity is eventually released with a symbol and a beat of timpani drum, as one of the soldiers interrogates and intimidates the female character. The build in tension immediately begins again with gentle hits of timpani drums in 4 / 4 timing, the tense atmosphere continuing to rise until she punches the soldier, a movement which is accompanied by a single quick note played by woodwind - an example of the satirical elements of the score. Following this the soldier declares the death of them all, to which the music evolves into high pitched, dramatic, stabs of percussion synchronised with stabs of melodic instruments. The male on the winning side is forced to dig a grave for his love, and as this takes place the music quietens but maintains its tension, becoming harsher and harsher as he digs, causing discomfort to the viewer. The score suddenly, at the very end of the film, evolves into triumphant music as they all get shot, shouting '*long live the Commune*'.

"Symphonic in conception, at least in terms of fluidity and theme, Shostakovich sought a deeper engagement of music with image [...] Such diversity and complexity made the score a difficult read for the unprepared orchestras that premiered his work." (Titus, 2016 p.15)

Sounds provoke deeper emotion in films, heightening ambience, and often triggering and enhancing the emotional impact on the viewer. An example of this is the use of a melodic major piece of music to compliment a happy moment in a film, or a minor piece of music accentuating a sad moment in a film. The use of sound is a technique that can be used to underpin and intensify any emotion - anger, fear, suspense, shock along with many more.

A perfect example of sound contributing to, and complimenting moving image to affect and enhance emotion, is the opening scene of Pixar's film *UP* (2009).

Composed by Michael Giacchino, the scene uses only a single piece of music as audio, giving a backstory of the couple's life together.



(Fig. 1: *Up* - Opening Scene)

Throughout this scene a single musical identity is used, but is altered in terms of pace and instrumentation to set the ambience and match the visuals. Built from one piano chord, Giacchino took this very simple sound and added counter melodies and harmonies, using a full orchestra to push and enlarge the piece giving it a strong foundation, and altering its energy and motion.

"If I could sum up my feeling in one chord, what's that gonna be? For the film here is was this... it's not F it's not C it's almost both, it's an F Major 7th, but it has just a tinge of sadness [...] There's something about that chord that [...] reaches back." (Michael Giacchino scores *UP*, 2010)

The music composition begins up beat, in a major key, and is fast paced emphasising the youth of the two characters. Containing a plethora of bright sounding instruments, with a high octave leading melody, the music thickens in texture as their journey through life unfolds with exciting moments i.e. creating their dream home. The piece also thins in texture during more relaxed moments i.e. lying together watching the clouds. What is prevalent throughout is the leading melody which is an ostinato, and is set as the theme for the character Ellie, leading viewers to subconsciously identify that sound with the character. The melodies of the piece follow the characters and their emotional state, adjusting to the varying emotional moments. For example during the moment of Ellie's miscarriage the notes sustain into a much slower version of the leading melody, so much so that it is almost unrecognised for that split second. As they move on from this the music begins to pick up, again fitting their emotional state. Overall as the characters age, the music begins to slightly slow down but maintains its identity through key and melody. Eventually the composition slows down and loses all of its added texture, returning to Ellie's theme of a single piano, as she lay in hospital and at her funeral.

As stated by the director of the film, Pete Docter: *"Music ends up being a really powerful and almost invisible thing to the audience, like if its working well they're not conscious of it, they're not thinking 'oh there's Ellie's theme again', they're just watching the movie and they're engrossed in it, and subconsciously they know Carl's thinking about Ellie."* (Michael Giacchino scores UP, 2010)

Moving image is brought to life through sound, whether it be through using speech, sound effects or music. This audio is a fundamental part of film as it creates and builds the correct atmosphere, sets the tone, and emphasises the movements of

characters, objects and scenes. Overall this forms an enhanced experience for the viewer, giving them a much better guideline and understanding of the story.

Chapter 2

The Intensity of Horror Films

"Horror is a film genre seeking to elicit a negative reaction from its viewers by playing on the audience's primal fears." (Rowan, 2017 p.4)

Examining the genre of horror films in particular, having a good music score is vital in the success of really affecting the audience. Again, dating back to the era of silent films, one of the earlier examples of a horror film of this nature is *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror (1922)*, which was composed by Hans Erdmann. As this film is silent, therefore has no speech, music plays an immense role in shaping the narrative and setting the tone of each moment. *Nosferatu (1922)* uses orchestral music throughout, featuring very prominent organs, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The score continuously changes along with the movements of the characters and scenes, building stronger and louder to initiate anticipation, and dropping and settling, triggering tension in the audience. Due to there being no other sounds, the music score is endless, and although there are moments where the sound is less prominent than others, it is always there, setting the scene.

As stated by George Marriner, an Artistic Director: *"Composers can use a number of musical effects for the purpose of disturbing us. [...] Pitches that clash produce a very real, tense, physical response in us. When a composer keeps this up for a while, they know what it will do to us."* (The Discovery Orchestra, 2018)

Orchestral music works especially well for film scores, due to the potential of using a variation of sounds and layers, that are able to be built on throughout the

composition. It is also possible to build layers of sound for a film score through modern day softwares and technology. The symphony orchestra has existed for more than four hundred years, and one of the reasons orchestral music works so well in horror films, is down to the ancientness of the sound. It is very easy to perceive old fashioned properties of sound as frightening for many reasons, such as: the historical background, the placement and even in some cases unexplained conspiracies. Other examples of age equating to freight could be an antique doll, a clown, a Church or a Church organ. Each of these can easily be perceived as creepy, and more so horrific in the right setting.

Music scores and compositions are created for, and used in horror films to compliment the movements in the scenes through auditory illusions and techniques. This technique of using orchestral scores to enrich the scene and build on the viewer's watching experience, is something that is still used in modern day.

Benjamin Wallfisch states in an interview regarding his score for the film *IT* (2017):
"So much of the atmosphere came from just how quiet you can create, how quiet can orchestra play" (Benjamin Wallfisch (Composer) - *"IT"* Premiere 2017, 2017)

A more recent example of this use of orchestral sound is in the film *IT* (2017) directed by Andrés Muschietti, specifically the scene '*A Penny Kills Georgie*' musically composed by Benjamin Wallfisch. Based on a novel by Steven King, the storyline follows a group of children who have to eliminate an evil clown surfacing from the sewers and targeting them. The scene '*A Penny Kills Georgie*' demonstrates a great use of appropriate sounds and timing - in line with the moving image.



(Fig. 2: IT - A Penny Kills Georgie Scene)

Opening with a piano, the notes used are very simple, scaling down from F major, to C minor, to C major, to G minor. This is a clever use of notes, creating suspense and mystery for the audience by mixing major and minor notes. As previously mentioned, the use of major is usually an indicator of happiness, whereas minor often perceives sadness. For this particular score, the pattern of both major and minor creates confusion, merging happiness with sadness, and overall establishing a mystifying tone. This effects the viewer through initiating suspense, and the questioning of what is going to happen next. The sense of questioning compliments the image of a paper boat floating with the rain, down the edge of a road towards the guttering - the transitioning and flow of the score intensifying this imagery. The dynamics layer up with busier, accented, piano note patterns called sixteenths as well as string layers creating a rise in mystery and suspense.

“Psychologically speaking, the filmic crescendo is a locally conditional setting of feeling to expect the unknown or the possibility of things to come.” (Nagari, 2015 p.48)

Georgie suddenly hits his head and gets knocked down, to which point the music stops, creating space to build up the suspense yet again. This technique of stopping the music at a relevant point creates a large amount of atmosphere for the viewer, and dropping texture in dynamics in this way is important when creating an atmosphere and building on suspense.

Georgie then gets up and exactly the same piano music begins again, simultaneously to the image of Georgie running after the paper boat that is floating away with the rain. Following the movement of the paper boat, the music stops yet again as the boat drops down the drain and out of sight. This complete silence, bar the natural trickling of the water down the drain, creates a suspenseful atmosphere, leaving the audience unsure of what to expect next. The suddenness of the appearance of Pennywise in the drain is sharp due to the silence left beforehand, and paired with the immediate stab of audio, synchronising with the opening of Pennywise's eyes, it is made all the more powerful and impactful.

As again stated by Marriner: *"Sudden unexpected very loud sounds in real life and in music can be startling. The importance of dynamic and expectations manipulation cannot be overstated."* (The Discovery Orchestra, 2018)

Another technique used in horror film composition is the use of non linear - sounds that are pushed beyond their natural range. For example a villain when played softly can create a gentle harmonic sound, if played more harshly the sounds become more aggressive yet still harmonic, and when pushed to its limits a violin can produce high pitched screeching sounds due to the stings vibrating more quickly. These

sounds, uncomfortable for the ears, are very atmospheric and can cause uneasy suspenseful feeling in the listener.

"Nonlinearities [...] seem to be broadly evocative in vertebrates and their analogues can be used to influence human emotions." (Blumstein, Davitian and Kaye, 2010 p.753)

This technique can sometimes also be referred to as 'scare chords' - louder, sudden and short stabs of sound which provoke tension, unease and fright. These scare chords usually follow a build in tension through sound and moving image, a very effective example of this, as outlined in my proposal, is the 'Shower' scene from the film *Psycho* (1960) composed by Bernard Herrmann.



(Fig. 3: Psycho - Shower Scene)

During this scene a woman is seen to be having a shower, when suddenly the shower curtain is drawn back by a second figure who proceeds to stab the woman

over and over again. Simultaneously to the stabbing motions, a violin screeches in a non-linear fashion, creating quick, sharp, aggressive and distressing sounds. These sounds compliment the moving image, as it is a perfect metaphor for the scene - stabbing sounds enhancing the image of the woman being stabbed. Viewers of the scene experience an emotional impact from these screeching strings, with the violin straining past its natural range.

Silent tension begins with a shadow behind the shower curtain of the door opening, and a figure entering the bathroom, the woman in the shower completely unaware. Tension rises as the shadow of the figure comes closer to the shower, enhanced by the absence of sound, leaving the viewer feeling rather uncomfortable. This absence of sound causes the violins to become even more prominent and impactful as the curtains are drawn and the stabbing commences. This technique of unpredictable elements of sound, most definitely leaves the listener in a sense of uncertainty and unease.

"If the music is dissonant enough, the emotional effect will be unsettling." (The Discovery Orchestra, 2018)

My chosen example of a music composer who has composed for a number of horror movies, is Charlie Clouser - a perfect example of the previously mentioned techniques being used in film, having composed for horror films such as *Saw (2004)*, *Dead Silence (2007)*, and *Jigsaw (2017)*. As outlined in my proposal, Clouser's composition for the scene '*The Reverse Bear Trap*' in the film *Saw (2004)* contains techniques that are prevalent across the horror genre in producing a spine-chilling atmosphere for the viewer.



(Fig. 4: *Saw - The Reverse Bear Trap Scene*)

The scene begins with one of the leading characters, Amanda, recalling a horrific experience she has gone through. In terms of audio, the scene opens with a sudden and impactful sound, resembling a sound of someone instantly waking from a dream. Uttering the words: *'I woke up'*. The camera begins to pull away from the close up shot of Amanda's head, which has a bear trap attached to it. At the very moment that the camera pulls away, a reversed sound is simultaneously heard, complimenting and emphasising the movements of the scene.

In addition to the sound of Amanda's struggles and moans, there are also sounds implying things that cannot be seen, but are yet very relevant to the ongoing of the scene. For example, sounds similar to a growling bear, with the addition of a significant amount of reverb giving it an overall dreamy, and more of an imaginative sound - as opposed to being a real bear in the room. This certainly intensifies the

scene in a number of ways, the most obvious being that Amanda's head is stuck in a bear trap. The 'growling of the bear' indicates a reminder of the absolute agony this device can cause, adding to the tension the viewer experiences, whilst watching the character in this circumstance. In addition to this, the sound creates an uncomfortable and monstrous atmosphere, which works well in building the anticipation, until it's release with a high pitched scream. Overall, this metaphoric sound has a considerable psychological impact on the audience.

Following on from this, there is a great use of silence, which adequately builds on the atmosphere and generates extensive suspense, allowing any small, subtle, or sudden noises to become even more impactful when they appear. We as a human race often perceive silence as uncomfortable and sometimes chilling, due to naturally being caught up in life, which consists of mainly loud noises - so much so, that when we are met with silence it can feel almost unnatural to us.

"Life is loud. When silence hits, we often aren't sure what to do with it. It just sits there surrounding us, empty and paradoxically deafening. With a nearly constant stream of music, talking, TV, cars, weather, insects and beyond, it's rarely actually silent." (Holm, 2016)

Breaking the silence a TV turns on next to Amanda, to which she instinctively turns her head - the audio in perfect sync with her movement, as we hear the sound of a door slam. The relationship between the sound and the moving image here is impactful in that the sound, although separate from the movement, is used to emphasise the movement, keeping the viewers on the edge of their seats. Without

these subtly synced moments, the scene would not be as successful in creating that tense atmosphere, and maintaining the viewer's undivided attention.

"Horror movies as a genre are often read as safe explorations of the audience's worst fears." (Lerner, 2010 p.1)

Horror films are significantly intensified through the use of sound - sound effects, auditory illusions, and compositions. This genre of film would not be as successful in having such a vast affect on its audience without such a strong relationship between sound and moving image. Sound techniques are vital for film, specifically for horror, in terms of ensuring tension and suspense is built, and also ensuring the delivery of the relevant emotional impact on the audience.

Chapter 3

The Psychology of Horror Films

"At its simplest, the abject is the scab on your knee which, as a child, you were repulsed by, but could not resist picking." (Blake et Bailey, 2013 p.3)

Horror films generally have a negative physical and psychological affect on their audiences, which could be considered unusual that people enjoy watching them so much. Whilst viewing a horror film, it is common that people feel a mixture of negative feelings such as anxiety, nervousness, tension, and fright, but it is also possible for some to feel a sense of adrenaline coursing through them - being able to watch these horrific scenes in the comfort of a screen.

"It reaches us at a deep psychological level and allows us to explore areas of the psyche within the confines and safety of a story." (Blake et Bailey, 2013 p.12)

There are certain things in life that we as a human race perceive as creepy and uncomfortable. One major example of this is confinement, due to its connotations with being locked away, having freedom taken from you, and being trapped without any control. Confined spaces play an enormous role in the psychology of horror films, as viewers are able to experience second hand the horror of being held captive without being in any danger themselves.

"Total institutions take us close to evil and in doing so allow us to celebrate our own righteousness." (Kerr, 2016 p.55)

This technique is made all the more powerful through the use of sound, enhancing the frightening situation, and bringing a tense realism to the watching experience for the viewer. Sound can be used in situations of this nature through playing on uncertainty and enhancing existing fears. The perfect advantage of sound is that it is not always clear where it is coming from - which can inflict unsettlement in the viewer / listener, when used in specific ways. This is very beneficial in the making of moving image for horror, as it can create an impression that something is there without having to clearly show it through imagery. Any noise from outside a confined space, whilst being trapped inside the confined space, rises tension and causes the panicking questioning of: 'Who / what made that noise? Where did it come from? Am I not alone?'.

"When considering sound localisation we cannot rule out the use of our sight - we will look for the source of sound as well as listen for it and this is often the dominant sense." (Ionides et Howell, 2005, p.157)

If we hear a noise, but cannot see it's source, it is hard to determine where it has materialised from. This is greatly advantageous for film music composers, as they are able to use this to build on tension during scenes, and promote alarmed questioning.

One example of this technique being used in a horror film is the scene 'Kayako in Wardrobe' from the film *The Grudge 2* (2006), composed by Christopher Young. During this scene three girls are trespassing in an abandoned house, where they find

a very old cupboard leading to the dark attic. Two of the characters pressurise the third, Allison, into sitting in the cupboard for ten seconds with her eyes closed, and during this time they close the cupboard door, locking her inside as a joke.

The music composition starts with a sustained, low frequency sound which subtly introduces the anticipation as Alison steps into the cupboard and starts to count. As she gets locked inside Alison begins to panic and the composition compliments this well with atmospheric, screeching noises. Panic stricken, Allison desperately tries to escape the cupboard, whilst the other two are holding the door closed and laughing. The three soon realise that the cupboard door is in fact being held closed by something other than themselves, as the two girls let go and cannot get the door open.

Trapped in this confined space, a feeling of discomfort and claustrophobia washes over the audience, and tension builds as Allison's panic and terror increases with no apparent escape. During this stage of the scene an auditory illusion technique called the Shepherd Tone is used to enhance the anticipation felt by the audience. This is the consistent playing of three tones layered on top of one another, differing by one octave between each other. All tones move up in scale - the high pitched tone decreasing in volume, the centre pitch staying loud, and the low pitched tone increasing in volume. When all played at the same time and looped, an illusion of the music continuously rising is created, when in reality the music is not rising in volume or pitch at all.

The composition is dissonant, and clashing provoking a sense of unease, and allowing the audience to feel the terror of the character themselves. The tension of this technique hits its climax as Allison spots the face of a terrifying figure in the crack of the floor of the cupboard, resulting in her screaming in panic and cutting across the composition, leaving an eerie silence in its wake. During these alarming moments, uncomfortable creaking sounds begin to emerge from the attic above, leaving Allison and the audience in chilling anticipation of the unknown in terms of what is causing these sounds, and what is coming nearer and nearer to the character.

"Hearing is less sharply discriminatory than sight, which gives sound its potential for unsettling effect at a basic psychological level." (Heldt, 2013, p.176)

The composition begins again more quietly than before, building on the suspense along side the creaking sounds. This continues until a frightening character slowly emerges from the attic above, resulting in blood curdling screams of terror from Allison - not long after, she escapes the confinements of the cupboard and the tension of the scene is released.

Another psychological technique in terms of sound used in horror films, is sounds that are usually perceived as 'creepy'. A creepy sound may be, as mentioned above, sounds from an unclear / unknown origin, sounds from children, nursery rhymes, animals in distress, or oppositely predators, and ancient sounds i.e. church organs.

"In the image of an evil child, horror units two apparent extremes, evil and innocence, raising the question whether innocence and evil are the opposites they appear to be." (Kord, 2016, p.180)

Children in horror films can be identified as terrifying due to the juxtaposition of real life children. In reality children are very small, pure, and innocent, but placing these characteristics in the opposite setting creates something so wrong that it is perceived as creepy. A child's laugh can very easily leave an uncomfortable eerie atmosphere in a film, as well as the sound of children playing. Taking these innocent sounds, slowing them and adding auditory effects such as reverb, quickly changes the connotations of the sound.

This is also apparent in the use of nursery rhymes in horror films, again playing on the juxtaposition of the innocence of children. Playing a nursery rhyme or lullaby in a slower and more high pitched key creates an eerie atmosphere, and is a technique that is often used in horror films. An example of this use is the rendition of the nursery rhyme *'One, Two, Buckle My Shoe'* used in the final scene of *Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)*. Replacing the words from *'one, two buckle my shoe'* to *'one, two Freddie's coming for you, three, four better lock your door'*, this nursery rhyme is transformed into a very disturbing song, sung by three little girls, dressed in white and skipping with a rope in the garden.

As cited in the BBC article *'What makes a great horror movie soundtrack?'* by Arwa Haider: *"The music in horror movies reminds us subconsciously of primordial times," says Rowan Hooper, managing editor of New Scientist. "Non-linear sounds like*

Psycho's violin 'stingers' mimic the sound of animals in distress; they trigger our fear of being chased by dangerous predators. Things that feel harsh and unfamiliar manipulate us emotionally." (Haider, 2018)

The sounds of animals can be recognised as psychologically chilling in horror films, both in terms of injured animals, and predators. Hearing the cries and howl of animals in pain and distress, or sounds alluding to this, causes a psychological affect on humans as we can often empathise with the animal. Using this technique in film leads the audience to fear that the pain inflicted on the animal, imaginary or otherwise, causing the distressed cries, will also be inflicted on the human characters, hinting at what might be to come. In the same way the use of predator sounds can be used in horror films to give a sense of the characters being hunted by predators. Again often created for this purpose through using auditory affects, mimicking the sounds of growls and alluding to danger. As previously mentioned this is evident in the scene 'the reverse bear trap' from the film *Saw (2004)* where sounds similar to bear growls can be heard as the character is revealed to have her head attached to a bear trap.

Another sound that is often used in horror films and perceived as creepy is the use of the organ. Traditionally played in Church this instrument has connotations of ancientness, and can be referred to as playing haunting music. A classic instrument for horror movie scores and compositions, the organ is capable of creating eerie and bone-chilling music due to it's natural pipe sound, which can easily go slightly out of tune, very different to a piano.

One of many examples of an organ being predominant in the setting of a horror scene is one the older horror films *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1931)* which begins with a piece of music played on the organ setting a chilling atmosphere. The organ here, is played with heavy velocity making the sound harsh and impactful, complimenting the menacing atmosphere that is being created in the scene. The chords played are mostly minor producing an overall sinister, dark and sad sound.

An organ is traditionally an instrument of the Church, and is used for playing songs to, and about, the Lord. However, taking this 'holy' instrument and placing it in a sinister context, the sound can become quite rebellious, resulting in more of a dark and evil atmosphere.

“Watch a horror movie and there is a good chance you will hear an organ, probably a pipe organ. [...] The minute we hear the organ underscoring we know something is up.” (Lerner, 2010 p.1)

Psychologically horror films do have a rather significant impact on its viewers, ensuring the audience have a bone-chilling experience whilst watching. Film composers of this genre are masters of tailoring sound to unnerve viewers, often using sounds that we as humans naturally perceive as creepy and unsettling. Horror film audio can tease viewers with eerie sounds of children laughing, playing, and singing nursery rhymes - taking something that is normally perceived as joyful and innocent, and slowing it down to induce a ghostly atmosphere.

Conclusion

In conclusion, sound most certainly has a very strong place in the world of film, and it is used as a technique of enriching and intensifying the ongoing of a moving image. Sound has been an essential element of film since its very beginning in the era of silent movies, and prevails to be just as essential in modern day. Music and sound evoke emotions, whether it may be a happy emotion, a sad emotion, or a fearful one, audio is the perfect tool for underpinning the ongoing of scenes. Sound allows us to empathise with characters, understand their situations, and be completely engulfed by a narrative. Taking us a step further into the experience of a story, audio - music, effects or auditory illusions - penetrate deep within us, consciously and subconsciously impacting our watching experiences.

Horror films use a variety of sound techniques to immerse the viewer in the moving image, ensuring that feelings of discomfort, unease, and absolute terror are felt. Whether through the presence of sound, or through its absence, every moment of audio in a scene and in a film is designed to make us feel - more often than not without us even noticing. From orchestras playing grand compositions, to the tiniest creak of a floor board breaking through absolute silence, viewers can be left with the hairs on the back of their necks standing on end, and sitting on the very edge of their seats, completely immersed.

Sound can most definitely have a psychological effect on viewers, as mentioned previously, sound can play with the fears of the audience in tense situations by alluding to coming danger, whilst for example being trapped in a confined space. Playing with the juxtaposition of the innocence of children and nursery rhymes,

incorporating animalistic sounds - both predator and victim, and utilising the traditional and potentially eerie sounds of Church organs, film composers have a vast selection of sounds to play with, which naturally have a psychological effect on the audience.

Overall, sound is a fundamental component in the production of horror films, and is integral in aiding the film to successfully impact the audience on an emotional, psychological, and physical level - inducing tension, adrenaline, unease and fear.

"Sound evokes. It holistically penetrates the human experience, touching us and putting us in touch with aspects of our lived experience not easily expressing in words." (Lederach et Lederach, 2010 p.141)

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