



Discuss some of the creative strategies to sound designers/composers when designing solutions for moving image project. Use Examples to support your discussion.

Talisha weston

P149508

Film and TV Production

Sound and Moving Image

Word count - 1817

Rob Jones, Simon Kilshaw and Jenn Kirby

Table of Content

Introduction - Page 1

Chapter One - Pages 2 - 4

Chapter Two - Pages 4 - 5

Chapter Three - Pages 5 - 7

Conclusion - Pages 7 - 8

List of Illustrations

1. *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, Steven Spielberg (2008)
2. *War Horse*, Steven Spielberg (2011)

Introduction

Within this essay, based on sound and moving image, the creative strategies in which sound designers and composers use, will be deeply explored. With an analytical approach and studied to express these artists importance within a overall film production. Furthermore, how they have a great deal in captivating and impacting audiences within the film media. Popular names within the sound and film industry, one being, French composer Michel Chion and other, film director Sergei Eisenstein will be referred to and brought to discussion. However, I will be focusing mainly on sound designer Gary Rydstrom and Composer John Williams. The workers of great feature films, those including, *Jurassic Park (1993)*, *Star Wars - Empire Strikes Back (1980)*, *War Horse (2011)*, *Jaws (1975)*, and *Saving Private Ryan (1998)*. All the aforementioned variety of films have won Academy Awards for either their Sound Score, Best Sound Mixing and Best Sound Editing, or all of them. These films will be mentioned and why the music worked so well and has become iconic masterpieces. We as the audience all know the sounds and music from these films can link us back to each one, due to the way we are and sheer talent and dedication of the sound creators. This essay will also include a small scene analysis within World War One film, *War Horse (2011)*. To explore the use sound based techniques and their impact and overall purpose within the scene. Other major factors in this essay will be the relation to sound masteries, such as Temporization, Music Motif, Diegetic and Nondiegetic sound and the use of Dynamics and Silence, as they will be discussed and explained throughout this essay.

Chapter One

The importance of sound within moving image cinema has always been compared to video quality and many people have different opinions on which one matters more. However “While humans are visual creatures by default, our sense of sound is the most integral when it comes to communication, making audio an essential aspect of any broadcast.” (DaCast, 2017). I believe, whilst we and other animals are evolved to communicate more through noise and hearing and we appreciate that a scary film on mute is hardly the same, a person's view on whether they'd prefer to watch a silent movie or listen to a radio play, is a way to put it into perspective. However, silent films are now more the creative, silence in films, and when used correctly, extremely impacting. The silent strategy is typically used in horror films, music will build you up, keep you there, and then drop you in silence, making you as an audience feel possibly isolated and lost, because where has the music gone? In other genres, silence is often used at the heart and most emotional part of the film, making the audience free to bring them into the film.

Ideally, for me, the perfect sound film has zero tracks. You try to get the audience to a point, somehow, where they can imagine the sound. They hear the sound in their minds, and it really isn't on the track at all. That's the ideal sound, the one that exists totally in the mind, because it's the most intimate. It deals with each person's experience, and it's obviously of the highest fidelity imaginable, because it's not being translated through any kind of medium. – Walter Murch (Isaza, 2017).

Blockbuster films nearly always have a tune which the audiences that are a fan, associates with. One popular example being, the *Indiana Jones* franchise theme.



Fig. 1.

This is due to the sensory regions in your brain, those including smell, touch, sight, taste and sound, being a place also where emotion memories get stored. “Experiments revealed that the sensory cortices store information specific to the emotional meaning of sound” (Science, 2017). Making us as humans, automatically link both images and sound. Soundtracks and music in film started in Paris in the early 1900’s, but decades had actually passed before synchronized dialogue, captured in ‘short films’ became popular. Films in the 1920s that had recorded sound only included music and effects. Which at the time, was still groundbreaking for viewers to experience. ‘*The Jazz Singer*’ (1927) was the first feature length released in October that year. Diegetic and nonDiegetic sound is the terms use for sound within a scene and sound added later on. Diegetic sound being voices of a character or music and sounds made by objects within

the shot. Whilst non-Diegetic being the opposite, examples are atmosphere music, or a narration, generally noises you cannot see.

Chapter Two

There is filmmaker, experimental composer and publisher of four books in relation to sound in film, named Michel Chion. His creative contribution to sound theories could be seen as fresh and significant, much like Sergei Eisenstein. Michel Chion is a thinker on new ways to approach the audio-visual experience. Chion provides an outlook of the factors and aesthetics within Film and TV's sound. Furthermore, the multi-track sound and Dolby stereo on the audiovisual evolvement, and the inspiration of sound in regards to the perception of time and space is his area. He also explored strategies in contemporary forms of audiovisual media, ranging from music videos, commercial TV and video art. Sergei Eisenstein, was the heart of film montage, and the creator of the 'five methods of montage' which brought a huge impact with the sound of language. Continuing onto, Music Motif, a potential building block for composers. A motif in music is seen as a group of notes that can get repeated throughout a composition. A popular example would be *Beethoven's 5th symphony* (Beethoven, 1808). The 4 note motif becomes repeated throughout, by the different use of instruments in a variety of pitches and timbres, and is the heart of the piece. Although, another approach for sound in film is to place an artist's song in the soundtrack, a popular example of this would be '*Guardians of the Galaxy*' (2014), where many 80's hits were used cleverly to show emotion within certain scenes. More importantly, composers know they "have to sound good to the ear (and mind) if they are going to entertain for any length of time" (Tierno,

2015). Sound communicates on a level that will never be possible with imagery, even though it is nothing but air molecules. Getting the perfect sound will always be a challenge, with many factors on and off a film set to take into consideration. Basic to everyone else, little things like humming and buzzes in a room that you can barely hear will create a problem later on down the production line, and at the time be problematic for collecting dialog. 'Dialog is part of the action and gets its power from the plot' (Tierno, 2015). Although some people argue that it can be fixed later on, but it will essentially prolong the process and leave less time for more important sound scoring and editing.

Chapter Three

The sound designer of many feature length films, including '*War Horse*' (2011) and '*Saving Private Ryan*' (1998), Gary Rydstrom. Who is renowned for his music; after conducting research, revealed how he approached creating the score for the two war films. Even though the films were produced years apart, war and battle would still sound fairly similar. Many believe that the composer is one of the great storytellers, able to manipulate the audience and the overall feel of the film, which comes with great pressure and responsibility. "Whatever the style of music, film scores generally contain a central theme or melody" (Parker, 2007). Comparing the both previously mentioned films, a way he differentiated his approach; was due to the way the film was shot. *War horse* (2011), includes many wide angled and broader establishing shots where the audience can see what's going on, compared to '*Saving Private Ryan*' (1998) where the

film is more of a documented experience and has a realistic tone. So this left room to explore “more iconic sounds as opposed to gritty naturalist” (Rydstorm, 2011).



Fig. 2.

To continue, the scene between ‘54:20’ and 58:40’ of feature length film, War horse really shows how impacting sound is to the imagery. And how to sets the tone of what's going on at that time in the narrative. At the start of this scene, the men are off to attack on the Germans with their horses. As the men climb on top of the horses very light and quiet music starts to play, just a single instrument, that the audience links with heros and soldiers, it's simple, impacting and iconic. As they start to ride the horses into battle the music starts to get louder and us almost mimicking the running pattern of the horses, making it enhanced and sound more powerful. It shows confidence in the characters and makes them look like heroes. When in action the music almost drops, making you focus on the action and imagery alone. At 57:20 in, It gets revealed that the

Germans have developed better enhanced weapons and are clearly going to win the battle. It focuses on a soldier, and cuts into slow motion when he realises his fate, the sound copies and makes this a very key and emotional scene. Instruments that audiences associate with sadness and defeat start to play, which ends the scene. The role of the listener in this scene is to almost let the music guide along with the images; there is no effort to keep attention on this due to the powerful sound work alongside visually pleasing video.

Conclusion

To conclude this essay that explores themes of film sound strategies and the debates of the power of sound within film media shows that the power of sound has a great impact, not only due to personal beliefs but is nonetheless embedded within us. Many big names within the sound industry have made great and iconic work and will be the stepping stones for future artist to strive off. Along with the many techniques used within the sound world that many of us don't even think about, the technology is still advancing and the audience can only wait for what the future holds for sound technology. Breaking out of norms is something that gives new ideas and the thinkers mentioned in this essay are people that do that. One of the world's most iconic tunes is from work by John Williams and what he did in 'Jaws' (1975). That something so simple, even possibly too simple for most people and artists to think of, just really worked and become something that is still very popular today. As shown in the film scene analysis from 2011's War Horse, music can remove that sense of effort to watch a film and can help explain what

is happening in that moment and even enhance it. The sound does simply what footage cannot, making it one of the most important aspects of filmmaking.

Book References

Parker, N. (2007). *Short Films*. 1st ed. Harpenden: Kamera Books, pp.219-221.

Tierno, M. (2015). *Aristotle's Poetics for screenwriters*. 1st ed. New York: Hachette Books, pp.129-135.

Internet References

DaCast. (2017). *Why Audio Matters Most for Audiences – DaCast*. [online] Available at: <https://www.dacast.com/blog/audio-matters-audiences/> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Science, L. (2017). *Brain's Link Between Sounds, Smells and Memory Revealed*. [online] Live Science. Available at: <https://www.livescience.com/8426-brain-link-sounds-smells-memory-revealed.html> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Isaza, M. (2017). *Designing Silence*. [online] Designingsound.org. Available at: <http://designingsound.org/2014/06/designing-silence/> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Bibliography

DaCast. (2017). *Why Audio Matters Most for Audiences – DaCast*. [online] Available at: <https://www.dacast.com/blog/audio-matters-audiences/> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Tmckosky.asp.radford.edu. (2017). *Eisenstein and Sound*. [online] Available at: <http://tmckosky.asp.radford.edu/thea180/SergieCarSound.htm> [Accessed 30 Dec. 2017].

Science, L. (2017). *Brain's Link Between Sounds, Smells and Memory Revealed*. [online] Live Science. Available at: <https://www.livescience.com/8426-brain-link-sounds-smells-memory-revealed.html> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Isaza, M. (2017). *Designing Silence*. [online] Designingsound.org. Available at: <http://filmsound.org>. (2017). *Film Sound Cliches*. [online] Available at: <http://www.filmsound.org/cliche/> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2017].designingsound.org/2014/06/designing-silence/ [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Filmsite.org. (2017). *100 Best Movie Soundtracks*. [online] Available at: <http://www.filmsite.org/100soundtracks.html> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2017].

ilmsound.org. (2017). *Diegetic and non-diegetic sounds*. [online] Available at: <http://filmsound.org/terminology/diegetic.htm> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2017].

Tierno, M. (2015). *Aristotle's Poetics for screenwriters*. 1st ed. New York: Hachette Books, pp.129-135.

Tmckosky.asp.radford.edu. (2017). *Eisenstein and Sound*. [online] Available at: <http://tmckosky.asp.radford.edu/thea180/SergieCarSound.htm> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2017].

Soundworkscollection.com. (2017). *SoundWorks Collection - The Sound and Music of War Horse*. [online] Available at: <http://soundworkscollection.com/videos/warhorse> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2017].

War Horse. (2011). [DVD] Devon: Steven Spielberg.