

SOUND DESIGN

SERENA BUNTING

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CHOOSING FOOTAGE

To start my creative process, I began by choosing footage from the Netflix^[1] show 'Blue Eye Samurai'^[2]. I specifically chose a fight sequence from the show, as I felt there was a lot of potential to use a Foley method for the sound. Using After Effects^[3], I shortened the clip to adhere to the assignment brief and removed all sound.



SOUNDBOARD PLANNING



To allow myself to have a basic idea, I created a small-scale storyboard using the footage, focusing on the ‘larger’, more prominent sounds within the sequence.

I think this worked effectively to provide myself an understanding of what sounds I would need.

These storyboards also allowed me to plan what sounds I wanted to create with the Foley method, and to develop an idea of the materials I could use.





FAST PACED, LIGHT FOOTSTEPS AS CHARACTER RUNS
GROW LOUDER AS THEY CLOSE IN
RUSTLING CLOTH

This was mostly planned to be achieved through sounds of cloth, the swords interacting, and footsteps or breaths being taken.



UPON IMPACT →
METAL CLANGING (FOLEY?)
METAL ECHOES AS SWORD IS IN THE AIR

QUIETER FEW SECONDS,
CREATING ATTENTION TO THE
SWORD BEING THROWN

SWIPE / WOOSH NOISE AS CHARACTER SWIPES SWORD





While this was beneficial to my creative process, I believe I could have improved it by adding more detail- or perhaps adding the captions to the moving shot so I could align everything during the storyboarding phase.

I think that would also help me develop my foley sounds far quicker, as I would not have to rely on visual cues alone if it is already prewritten for me.

In retrospect, I also believe that adding more detail to my short comments on the storyboard would have proven valuable.



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13/03/26

- Music between the shot of MIZU staring at the camera and the fight sequence.
 - ↳ Tense, quick paced. Tempo / music becomes faster during the fight.

OR

- ↳ Quiet and undisturbed. Wind, rustling of clothes.

- MIZU grabs her sword.

- ↳ Wind, subtle.

- ↳ Perhaps folie sound of someone grabbing something hard / solid.

△ Leather, clothes, rustling in palm?

- Covering face with snow.

- ↳ Folie of hand in sand?

MUSIC 

- String instruments and percussion.
 - ↳ Representative of traditional Japanese culture and art.

- Potential for music to be used in increments.
 - ↳ Drums or strings used sparingly for additional tension.

- + Adds unique tension to the pause.

- More caution is needed with additional ambient sounds.

Repetitive sounds are noticeable.

- Multiple wind assets are needed.

- Sounds for weights will need to differ.

- ↳ Clunking, heavy metal.

- ↳ Maybe the sound of machinery?

- ↳ Workout / Gym equipment.

Here is a smaller two-page map out I did for my sound, where I ran through different concepts of how I could change the tone and feel of the footage by adjusting things as such as the music or environment.

Ultimately, I decided against adding too much to the environmental soundscape, as I felt it drew away from the scene. Instead, I chose to keep to the instrumental backing, as I felt it had the best pacing for the animated sequence.



FOLEY RECORDING

Before sourcing other sounds online or within sound libraries, I wanted to create my own sounds using the Foley method so that I could apply my learning to the sequence.

I created a clanging metal sound, for the shot in which the characters swords hit together. I did this effectively with two forks, hitting the prongs loudly against one another.

I also recorded two other sounds using bundled up tissue paper. With this I created an impact sound (from punching the paper against my palm), and the sound of a heavy footstep lifting from snow.

I recorded my Foley using my iPhone 14^[4] – in retrospect, using a professional microphone would have been more beneficial as I would have had to edit out less background noise and static. In the future, I will seek out using professional equipment for my creative process to avoid having to review my recordings during production.



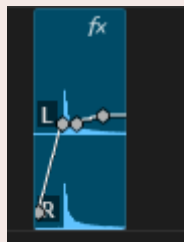
Here is the footage with only Foley recordings.

NETFLIX





I added a loud reverb to the clanging sound to divert the viewer's attention to the sword- I planned for this noise to be louder than others happening within this shot, so I compressed it to just under -12db.



I also added a fade in and out. This allowed the impact to be fast and sudden, and the effect of the ring to draw out.

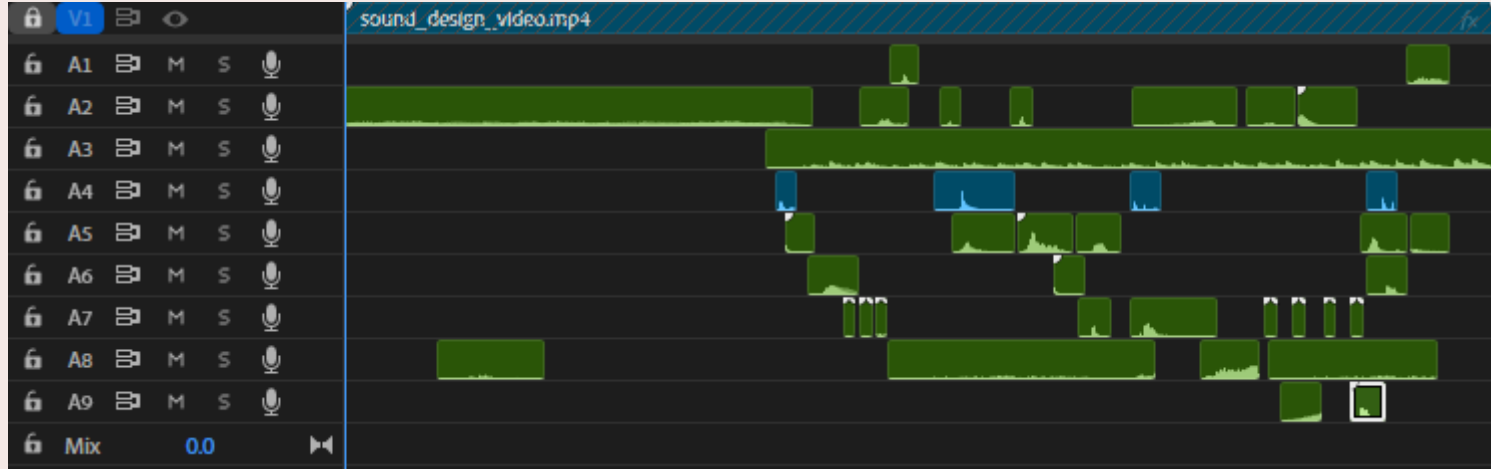


With this impact sound, I lowered the pitch to create weight- as it was made with a bundle of tissue. This gave it a heavier, crashing effect, but I later added on top of it with sourced sounds to make it obvious.

To improve on this Foley, I think I could use a heavier object (like a bag full of sand) to have this effect from the get-go. This would save me time, as I would not have to worry about adding extra weight to my sound during production.

SOURCING SOUNDS

For the rest of the sounds within my design, I sourced from online– namely from the online library ‘Freesound’^[5], as it provided me with unique and specific sounds for free.



All of the blue nodes are my Foley recordings.

Although this was resourceful and allowed me to spend more time on editing, I would like to create more of my own unique sounds in the future as I would like to have more control over the effect I bring forward.



EDITING

For the sword-strike, I overlayed another clanging noise over my Foley recording and added a large reverb. I think this worked effectively to create a strong, sharp sounding metal.

With the slice, I wanted to create a feeling of unease as blood is drawn, so I added a reverb and pushed the pitch up to make it sound like a whine. I really like the effect this created.





For the music, I wanted to add two different paces, so the viewer would understand when the fight is beginning.

I decided to stick close to the traditional instruments that are tied to Japanese historical culture, as I thought it was fitting of the theme and scenery. I chose a recording of a Shamisen and cut it before the bridge began to add a fade-out when the character's tense face is shown on screen.

Following the fading of the music, I added a recording of drums from a Japanese festival. I think that this was effective in adding momentum to the scene, as it was quicker paced and less busy, allowing the sound effects to be heard.

I used this switch of music to change from non-diegetic to diegetic audio in the scene.



FINAL

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I think that while my sword sounds were convincing, the yell that the male character makes is relatively loud to the scene and over compressed, as I had to compress the audio myself. In the future, I think having my own recording for the shot may work better, or being wary of how loud an audio is before importing it into my sequence to edit may improve the quality.

I am pleased with how the soundscape came out, and I look forward to improving my understanding of sound design in the future.



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LISTENING

