



Even if this course mainly focuses on visual storytelling, sound and music play a very important role in storytelling.

Sound is important because it engages audiences: it helps deliver information, it increases the production value, it evokes emotional responses, it emphasises what's on the screen, and is used to indicate mood. When used correctly, sound effects, music, and even silence, can enhance the storytelling dramatically. Bad sound, however, can ruin any good story, a slightly fuzzy photo is often more forgivable than poorly recorded sound. And yet, sound (and music) is often more of an after-thought for post-production, than treated as a key element in storytelling.



Sound in film has been around since the late 1920ies, and sounds are an important part of the narration. Sounds play an important role in creating a realistic impression of a scene, embracing the audience into the story.

Films are produced using three types of sounds: human voices, music, and sound effects. These three types of sounds are crucial for a film to be experienced as realistic for the audience. Sounds and dialogue must perfectly sync with the actions in a film without delay and preferably sound as they look. If a sound doesn't quite match the action on screen, the action itself isn't nearly as believable.

Another way to make a film more believable is by using sound as asynchronous sound effects, often in the form of background sounds. These sounds do not directly correlate to the action occurring in a scene, but they can bring a film to life. Including sounds typical of a city or rural area can help to make the film's setting more realistic.

Sound in film play two main roles:

- 1) Narrative role(s) - Different sounds have a direct storytelling role in film. The dialogue and the narration tell the story, and narrative sound effects can be used in a similar way to, for example, draw attention to an off screen event. Sound can also have a more subliminal narrative role. Sound is working on the audience unconsciously. Sounds are usually not perceived such analytically as visual objects, but rather perceived as a whole which can easily result in "a willing suspension of disbelief" in the audience leading to emotional involvement in the story. One typical example of this is film music.
- 2) Grammatical role - Sound plays a grammatical role in storytelling too. One good example of this is if sound is heard before an after a cut, as this suggests that even if the view may have changed, the scene has not changed. In that sense, sound provides a form of continuity or connective tissue for the story. Presence and ambience help to "sell" the continuity of a scene to the audience.

SOUND IN FILM

- The dialogue can be recorded while shooting, often extras afterward.
- Most other sounds are added on afterwards.
 - Environmental sound
 - Sound effects
 - Speaker, voice-over
- Sound ratio (Hz, dB, pan)
- Sound design



The dialogue can be recorded while shooting the film, but are most often added afterwards. Recoding voice is best done in a calm and quiet condition while the actor sits still. It is also hard to hide the boom stand and the microphone while shooting the film, therefore most sounds are added afterwards. The editor of the sound wants to have precise control over the audibility of the sounds, making sure that no inconsistencies can be found between cuts, or that the dialogue is suddenly interrupted by sounds in the environment. The best way to ensure this is to add all sounds, environmental sounds, sound effects, and/or voice-over, afterwards in the mix.

In the mix the sound ratio is important to consider. This means that the difference between the important sounds (like the dialogue) and environmental sounds (and film music) must be adequate to ensure that the right information is audible. This can be achieved by adjusting the sound levels, by filtering and EQing sounds, or by placing sounds in the audio space (like left or right in stereo, or left or front in surround).

As most sounds are added after shooting the film a lot of work in the sound design can be done. For many films also completely new sounds must be invented.

(RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, 1981)

(STAR WARS - A NEW HOPE, 1977)

(LORD OF THE RINGS: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, 2001)

(SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, 1998)

FOLEY SOUND

- Swoosh: Use wooden rods or bats
- Fire: Crunch cooking paper
- Body hits: Punch red meat
- Horse hooves: Coconut shells clapped
- Bones breaking: Snap pencils...
- Soft clothing noise: Rub specific fabrics
- Footsteps: Find shoes with a similar sole material and step different surfaces
- Snow footsteps: Corn flour pouch and squeeze



Text content for slide Foley is the art of creating sounds for film (and other forms as well). The sounds should sound realistic for the purpose, and when combined with an image as part of a story most sounds will sound convincing and “realistic”.

More ideas: Thin sticks and dowel rods produce excellent whooshing SFX. Old chairs and stools are perfect for controlled creaking. Heavy-duty stapleguns serve for excellent gun noises. Roll up a large phonebook for realistic body punches. Twist and snap sticks of celery for convincing bone breaks. Corn starch inside a leather pouch makes the sound of snow crunching. Cut a coconut in half and line them with a soft material for a horse walking. Ball up and walk over old audio tape for the sound of grass footsteps. Locate an old car door or fender to produce metal and car crash sounds. Flap a pair of cleaning gloves for the sound of realistic bird wings.

FOLEY STUDIO

- Get a good recording room, with space, good acoustics, and sound proofing
- incorporating sound diffusion and sound absorption to nullify room acoustics
- Get a (or a pair of) decent microphone(s)
- Preamp and sound interface



Creating foley effects are not very expensive, the challenging part is to “invent” the sounds and realise them. However, having a good recording room with enough space for doing various kinds of audio recordings is preferable. Ideally, the room should have good acoustics and sound proofing for improving sound quality.

Having a pair of good microphones also improves the sound quality, but also enables recording of more diverse things. A good microphone preamp and a good sound interface further improves sound quality.

THE ART OF FILM MUSIC



There are different types of film music: Dramatic underscore the classical background music that emphasises emotions and impressions in the film, Popmusic the use of already well-known popular music, or the same musical style that becomes a famous hit after the movie, or Source music where the music is part of the movie and heard by the characters.

(HANS ZIMMER IN HIS STUDIO)

CONTENT & NARRATIVES

- Diegetic music, part of the story
- Non-diegetic music, not part of the story, narratives
- On, shows on screen
- Off, not on screen



The film uses different forms of music: diegetic, and non-diegetic music. The diegetic music directly refers to something in the film. A tape recorder or music from an orchestra in a scene from a concert. The diegetic music is mainly used as real sound and sound effects. The non-diegetic music is the music that is in the background, the “inaudible” and influential film music.

(GOOD MORNING VIETNAM, 1987)

PRINCIPLES OF FILM MUSIC

- Invisibility
- Inaudibility
- Creator of emotions
- Narrative clues
- Continuity
- Cohesion



The following seven principles can be seen as applying to composing, mixing and editing for film music: Invisibility: The symphony orchestra does not need to be visible in the image when using non-diegetic music. Inaudibility: Film music should not be heard consciously. The image and dialogue are the most important things in film. Carrier of emotions: Special moods and emotions are portrayed and amplified in the music. Narrative clues: The music indicates point of view and establishes environments and characters (narrative). The music interprets and illustrates events in the film (connotative). Continuity: The music fills gaps and builds a rhythmic continuity between clips and scenes. Cohesion: By repeating and varying the music, the structure and cohesion of the film is strengthened. It is possible to break any of the above points, but only if it is in favor of another point.

(INTERSTELLAR, 2014)

FUNCTIONS OF FILM MUSIC

- Boosts/changes the mood
- Creates continuity and expectations
- Marks things, leads/focuses the eye
- Clarifies, defines the environment
- Places the story in the room, geographically and temporally
- Portrays characters
- Describes things that are not visible



(M, 1931)

The film music can enhance / change the mood in a scene, all according to the director's wishes. Film music has two ways in which it relates to the action of the film (the narration), whether it resembles a scene in the film or not. If the music resembles a scene, such as a picture of a sleeping person, the music should be calm or quiet. The audience would experience that scene harmoniously. If the music were violent, the music would not resemble the scene and the audience would get the impression that the sleeping man had nightmares.

The film music also creates continuity, between clips and between scenes, and creates expectations about what will happen in the next clip or in the next scene. Furthermore, the music marks and flags important things, guides the eye, and focuses on selected details. The music also clarifies movements etc in the image (with the extreme point Mickey Mousing) and defines physical surroundings. Furthermore, it places the plot in the room, making it easier with diegetic music because it is part of the plot. Furthermore, the music can place the plot geographically and in a certain age, although this may require a slightly higher code competence in the audience in order for it to understand.

The music also shapes the characters. In film music, themes are often used to present characters or different places, for example. This is a legacy from Wagner's "Leitmotifs" from the mid-19th century. A theme can have different meanings in different contexts, or mean the same thing but for different characters. Different arrangements or nuances can give the theme different meanings. A motif is a theme, which is always unchanged and always relates to the same thing. Title music is an important part of film (also in TV and radio). The title music has three functions: reveille (reveille = wake-up signal in the morning for troupe, the title music should wake the audience), influential preparation (the title music should create the right mood in the audience before the film starts) and mnemonic identification (the title music should facilitate identification of and remembering the characters in the film).

In conclusion, the music can describe things that are not visible in the picture, both by changing the experience of the film room, as previously pointed out, but also through associations that the music gives rise to.