

SOUND NOTES

Notes from Timothy Corrigan & Patricia White's *The Film Experience: An Introduction* (3rd Ed.)

A SHORT HISTORY OF SOUND

1895-1920s: The Sounds of Silent Cinema

- The challenge of synchronizing sound was a feat that few were able to overcome, including Edison Studios.
- Silent films were anything but silent; they were frequently accompanied by lecturers, pianos, organs, small ensembles, or even full orchestras.

1927-1930: Transition to Synchronized Sound

- The industry was rapidly changing and moving into the mainstream.
- *The Jazz Singer* (1927) became the first “talkie” to convince the industry leaders that there was no turning back.

1930s-1940s: Challenges and Innovations in Cinema Sound

- Five major studios grew into behemoth sized corporations and stopped the production of silent films completely.
- Films were made in multiple languages, often simultaneously, for the first time.

1950s-Present: From Stereophonic to Digital Sound

- 1950s: Stereophonic
- 1970s: Dolby and surround sound
- 1990s: Digital sound

ELEMENTS OF FILM SOUND

- Sound and Image
 - Synchronous and Asynchronous Sound
 - *Synchronous*: When the images sync with what is being heard (lip movement matches dialogue)
 - *Asynchronous*: Images do not sync with audio
 - *Parallelism*: Audio seems to “say the same thing” as the video
 - *Counterpoint*: Audio and video seem to contradict in meaning
 - Diagetic and Nondiegetic Sound
 - **Diagesis** refers to the world of the film’s story
 - *Diegetic*: A sound that belongs in the world
 - *Nondiegetic*: A sound that does not belong in the world
- Sound Production
 - *Sound designer*: oversees the sound process
 - *Sound recording*: takes place simultaneously with the recording of a scene
 - *Clapboard (Slate)*: The clapboard being snapped designates the beginning of the scene
 - *Direct sound*: is sound recorded directly from its source
 - *Reflected sound*: is sound that is captured after it bounces off of walls and such
 - *Production mixer*: balances the perfect blend of direct and reflected sound

- *Postproduction sound*: The process of editing sound for a final cut of film
 - “*Sound editing* interacts with the image track to create rhythmic relationships, establish connections between sound and onscreen sources, smooth or mark transitions.”
 - *Sound bridge*: when sound carries over a visual transition in the film
 - *Spotting*: Evaluating the film for scoring and other sound cues
 - *Foley artists*: People who create and record sounds for film
 - *Postsynchronous*: Recorded after the fact and then synched with onscreen sources
 - *Automated Dialogue Replacement (ADR)*: actors dub their lines in studio
 - *Sound Mixing*: after Music, sound effects, and dialogue are “locked”, they are combined and “sweetened”
 - *Sound reproduction*: The final stage- the audience experiences the sound
- Voice, Music, Sound Effects
 - *Voice in Film* – What the actors say is crucial. They are often miked to ensure quality.
 - *Sound perspective* – refers to the apparent distance of a sound source
 - *Dialogue* – capturing multiple voices is easiest when each actor is miked
 - *Overlapping dialogue* – recording all actors simultaneously and individually then mixing later
 - *Voice-Off* – The presence of the speaker is implied but not scene
 - *Voiceover* – characters within the diegesis cannot hear the voiceover
 - *Talking Heads* – on camera interviews
 - *Music in Films* – provides rhythm and deepens emotional response
 - *Narrative Music* – nondiegetic music added to the background
 - Background music is also referred to as *underscoring*
 - *Prerecorded Music* – Popular music has always been a part of film soundtracks, but it has grown in popularity in recent years with growing demand for young adult films
 - *Sound Effects* - sounds added to the soundtrack to enrich and exaggerate the diegesis