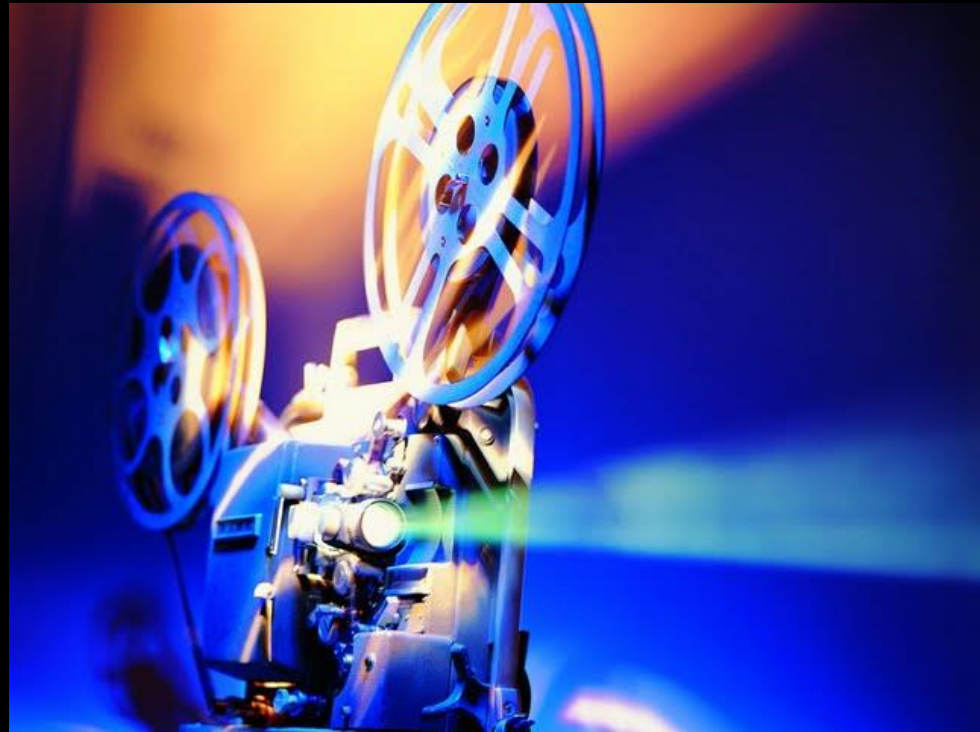


SOUND DESIGN

Middle School Film Studies
Unit 19



Film Sound

- Sound, voice and music are very important parts of most films.
- Even the earliest silent films were often shown with live musical accompaniment.
- Sound enhances the imaginary world. It can provide depth, establish character and environment, introduce a new scene or cue the viewer to important information.



Very early sound recording.

Diegetic vs. Non-Diegetic Sound

- **Diegesis:** A word that describes the world experienced by the characters in a narrative.
- **Diegetic sound** is any sound that the character or characters on screen can hear. For example, the sound of one character talking to another would be **diegetic**.
- **Non-diegetic sound** is any sound that the audience can hear but the characters on screen cannot. Any appearance of background music is a prime example of non-diegetic sound.
- Example



In *Say Anything*, the music from the boom box is heard by the characters.



Marion Crane does not hear Bernard Herrmann's score in *Psycho*.

Direct Sound

- **Direct sound** is all of the sound that is recorded at the time of filming.
- Using **direct sound** places emphasis on the characters' dialogue and creates a more realistic, believable ambiance (atmosphere).
- Example



French New Wave films, like *Breathless*, predominantly used Direct Sound.

Non-simultaneous Sound

- **Non-simultaneous sound** is essentially sound that takes place earlier (or later) in the story than the current image we are seeing.
- This type of sound can give us information about the story without us actually seeing these events taking place.
- Example



Voiceover, used in *Fight Club*, is one example of non-simultaneous sound.

Synchronous Sound

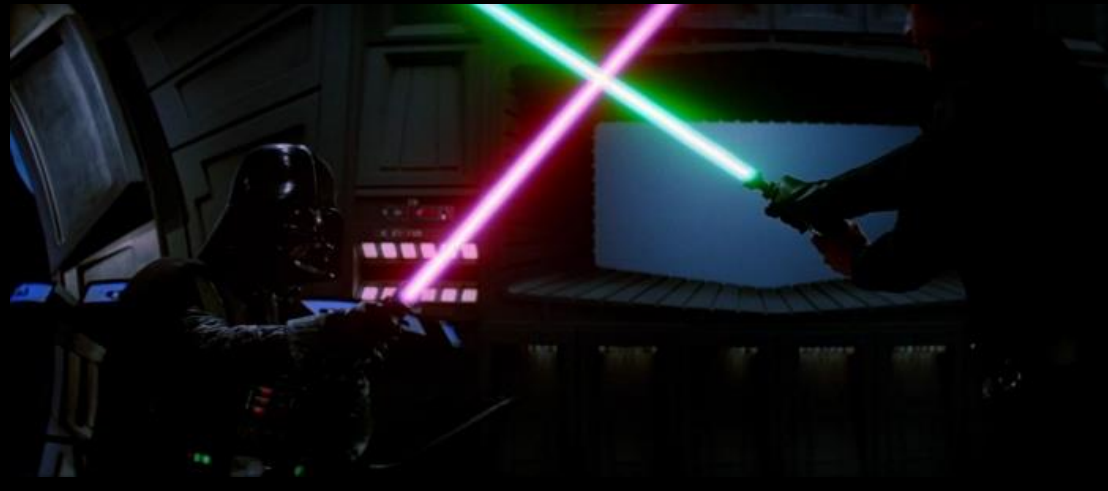
- **Synchronous sound** is sound that is matched with the action and movements being viewed.
- For example, a character is playing the piano, and the viewer hears the sounds of the piano simultaneously.
- Example



While body mics are used to record these actors' dialogue, the boom mic will pick up other synchronous sounds to be mixed in.

Post-synchronization Dubbing

- **Post-synchronization dubbing** describes the process of adding sound to a scene after it is filmed.
- For example: explosion sounds and music.
- Example



Since light sabers aren't real, their sounds must be added in post-production.

Off-screen Sound

- **Off-screen sound** describes sound assumed to be in the space of a scene yet remaining off-screen while the action takes place simultaneously.



The character hears something, but we can't see what it is yet. It looks like it's to the right of the frame somewhere.

Sound Perspective

- **Sound perspective** refers to the apparent distance of a sound source, evidenced by its volume, timbre, and pitch.
- This type of sound editing is most common in how the audience hears film characters' speech.
- While the scene may cut from a long shot of a conversation to a medium shot of the two characters to close-up shot/ reserve-shot pairing, the soundtrack does not usually reproduce these relative distances and the change in volume that would naturally occur.
- Actors in these situations are miced so that the volume of their voices remains constant and audible to the audience.
- Sound perspective can also give us clues as to who is present in a scene, where they are, and their relative importance to the film's narrative.
- Example



If the sound of the oncoming hoof beats is getting louder and more distinct, the sound editor is making use of sound perspective.

Sound Bridge

- A **sound bridge** is a type of sound editing that occurs when sound carries over a visual transition in a film.
- This type of editing provides a common transition in the continuity editing style because of the way in which it connects the mood, as suggested by the music, throughout multiple scenes.
- For example, music might continue through a scene change or throughout a montage sequence to tie the scenes together in a creative and thematic way.
- Another form of a sound bridge can help lead in or out of a scene, such as when dialogue or music occurs before or after the speaking character is seen by the audience.
- Example



In a famous example from *The Graduate*, a sound bridge of dialogue is used between two scenes for humorous effect.

Voice Over

- A voice over is a sound device wherein one hears the voice of a character and/or narrator speaking, but the character in question is not speaking those words on screen.
- This is often used to reveal the thoughts of a character through first person narration.
- Third person narration is also a common use of voice over to provide exposition.
- Example



Films made of novels with first person narration, like *The Great Gatsby*, often must make use of voice over to preserve important parts of the text and provide exposition.

Sonic Flashback

- A sonic flashback describes the technique of using sound from earlier in the film during a later scene.
- One character may be present on the screen, but he or she is hearing a voice or action from a previous time in his or her head, often showing an important revelation or realization on their part.
- Example



The climactic revelation at the end of *The Sixth Sense*, uses sonic flashback to show the realizations occurring in the main character's head.

Foley

- **Foley** is the reproduction of everyday sound effects that are added to film, video, and other media in post-production to enhance audio quality.
- These reproduced sounds can be anything from the swishing of clothing and footsteps to squeaky doors and breaking glass.
- The best **foley** art is so well integrated into a film that it goes unnoticed by the audience.
- **Foley** helps to create a sense of reality within a scene. Without these crucial background noises, movies feel unnaturally quiet and uncomfortable.
- [Example](#)



ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement)

- **ADR** is the process of re-recording dialogue by the original actor after the filming process to improve audio quality or reflect dialogue changes (also known as "looping").
- **ADR** is also used to change original lines recorded on set to clarify context, improve diction or timing, or to replace an accented vocal performance.
- Noise from the set, equipment, traffic, wind, and the surrounding environment often results in unusable production sound.
- During post-production, a supervising sound editor, or ADR supervisor, reviews all of the dialogue in the film and decides which lines must be re-recorded.
- [Example](#)



Music

- A film score is original music written specifically to accompany a film.
- The majority of film scores have been orchestral, and rooted in the Western Classical tradition.
- The score is often recorded so that dramatic events in the music match dramatic events onscreen.
- In early films, orchestral music is considered non-diegetic, and vocal music is considered diegetic.
- This began to change in the 1950s, and since then, many films make use of non-diegetic popular and contemporary songs with vocals.
- [100 Greatest Music Scenes in Movies](#)



Videos

- [The History of Sound at the Movies](#)
- [The Science and Engineering of Sound](#)
- [Introduction to Foley and Sound Effects for Film](#)
- [Introduction to Automated Dialogue Replacement](#)
- [The Fundamentals of Sound in Post Production](#)
- [The Basics of Recording Audio for Digital Video](#)
- [Sound Design in Star Wars: Episode II](#)
- [Sound Design in Wall-E](#)
- [Gary Hecker: Foley Artist](#)
- [Sound Production of The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey](#)

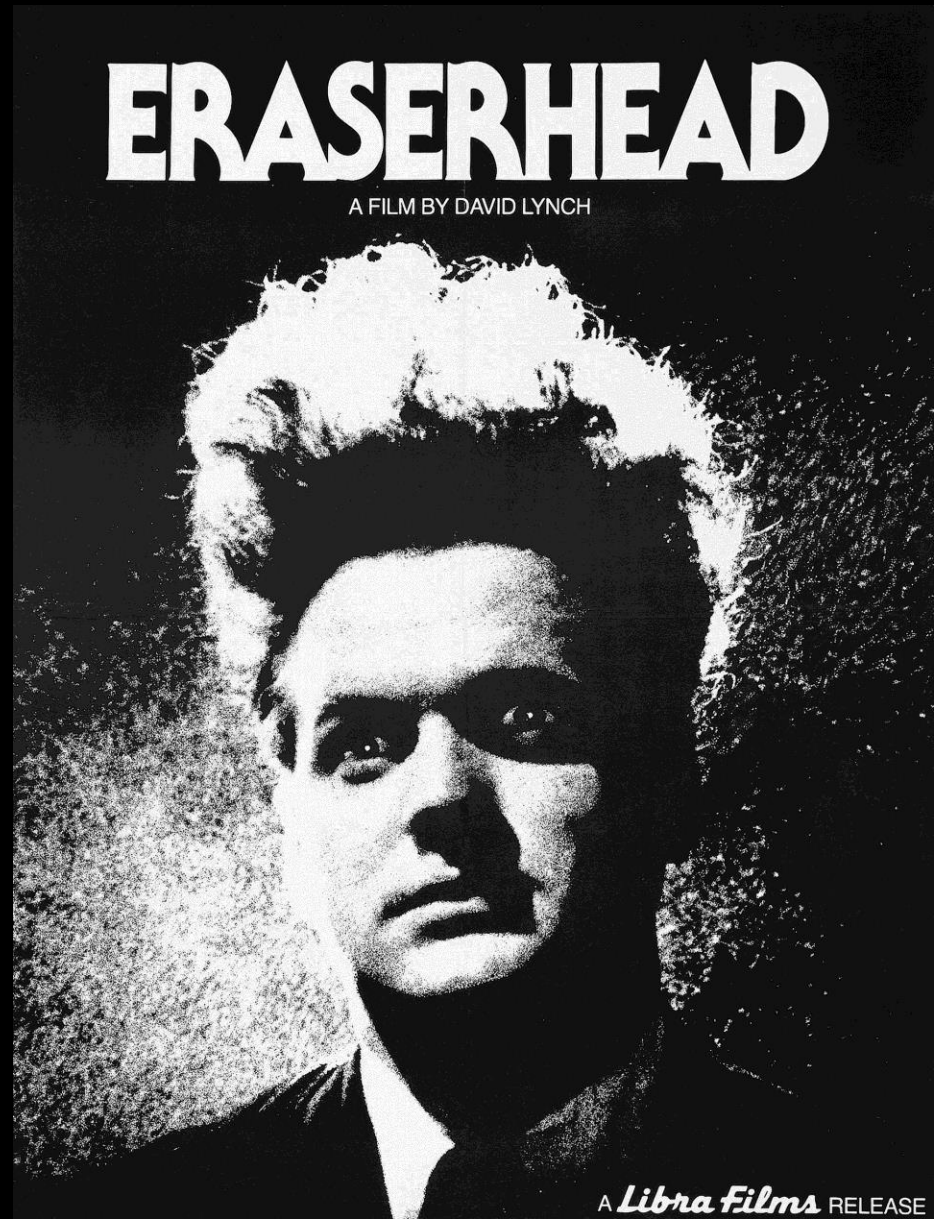
Sound Design: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the effect the sound design has on your experience of the scene.
- *Star Wars (1977)*



Sound Design: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the effect the sound design has on your experience of the scene.
- *Eraserhead* (1977)



Sound Design Quiz

1. What is Diegetic Sound?
2. What is Non-Diegetic Sound?
3. What is Non-Simultaneous Sound?
4. What is Direct Sound?
5. What is Sound Perspective?
6. What is a Sound Bridge?
7. What is a Voice Over?
8. What is Foley?
9. What is A.D.R.?
10. What is a Film Score?

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