

In Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*, the film's sound effects and soundtrack help the film convey the constant urgency and heightening tension the soldiers felt throughout the Dunkirk evacuation. The almost palpable tension that's created by the sound draws the audience to it, immersing each member of the audience into what the Allied soldiers, pilots, and civilians experienced either at Dunkirk or en route to Dunkirk.

*Dunkirk's* unbridled sound effects are so powerful that they completely immerse viewers and place them among soldiers - often directly behind soldiers through the use of over-the shoulder - as the soldiers experience attacks or other events during the evacuation. In the opening moments of the film, the soldiers' steady and only slightly audible footsteps are interrupted by the loud and jarring cracks of rifle and machine gun fire. These cracks of gunfire reveal the jarring yet common physical pressure almost every encounter with the enemy placed on soldiers. This jarring nature of the sound effects becomes a common theme throughout the film, from machine gun fire from planes to exploding bombs, and the audience is at the edge of their seats, both anxious and startled in response to the onslaught of deafening sounds, enveloped in a sense of urgency and tension. The caveat that emerges when one analyzes the jarring sound effects is that Christopher Nolan has made this movie focus on one event of 6 years of war, in which these extreme events became a common occurrence.

The one sound effect that persists throughout the film is the ticking of a watch, which creates a sense of urgency and serves as a constant reminder that all the characters in the story are in a struggle to survive. The audience is more aware of the ticking's presence during stressful scenes, such as when Collins is desperately trying to break the hatch to escape his sinking plane, as well as when the ticking betrays what the audience sees. When the second ship tries to sail away from Dunkirk, the soundtrack becomes quieter and the soldiers, along with the audience, are given a few moments of peace. It finally seems as if these soldiers will make it back to England, but the subtle ticking of the watch foreshadows

an ominous future. The ticking serves as a reminder that the soldiers must still fight to survive and are not safe yet, and the second ship is torpedoed by the U-Boats underneath the water. The ticking only stops during the resolution, when the soldiers are back in England and are finally out of the battle at Dunkirk, signifying that they are, at least momentarily, safe from the battle at Dunkirk.

The sound effects in *Dunkirk* strongly complement its soundtrack. Zimmer's score makes use of a *Shepard Tone*, an illusion of a sound that continually ascends or descends in pitch. In *Dunkirk*, the soundtrack seems to continually rise in pitch throughout the film, which increases the tension throughout the film, for both the events playing out on screen in that moment and the events to come.

*Dunkirk* is shaped by its background and foreground sound effects and soundtrack, and the blending of the three results in almost complete immersion, inciting very strong reactions from the audience as they believe they are placed into the scene with the soldiers, fearing for their lives. The background sound effect of ticking creates a strong sense of urgency, while the foreground sound effects of gun fire or explosions draw viewers into the scene and make them dread what's to come. These sound effects, coupled with the soundtrack convey the extreme sense of urgency and tension Christopher Nolan and Hans Zimmer intended us to feel.