

## I. Presentation

a) performance

b) diegetically → char also hearing it

↳ is the music used in quotation? lyrics correspond to what's on screen

allusion → cultural context (usually diegetically)

trans-diegetic

c) non-diegetic (dramatic scoring, underscoring)

d) in-between (supra-diegetic, intra-diegetic, internally diegetic, source scoring)

## II. Function

intra-filmic work

a) emotion/mood

b) narrative "cueing" → music used to bring attention to sth. onscreen

c) continuity

d) construct formal narrative / leitmotivs

→ extra musical associations  
primes us for things in narrative

## THE SOUNDTRACK TRIANGLE:



1. tempo: speed of musical activity

2. Meter: "boundaries" of music, joined together + recurring

↳ how is beat subdivided? → usually 2 & 3

↳ what is the hierarchy of beats?

3. Rhythm: distinctive grouping of notes

↳ regular & irregular

4. Volume: pianissimo (very soft) + fortissimo (very loud)

louder (crescendo) + softer (decrecendo)

5. Pitch: 20 Hz - 20,000 Hz

↳ higher pitches → angelical (we hear less overtones, + pure)

↳ lower pitches → ominous

6. Harmony: simultaneous combination of pitches

↳ consonant vs. dissonant

↳ tonal vs. atonal, "something is off, less centered"

7. Timbre: character/quality of sound

8. Orchestration: mix&match different timbres

a. Texture: how different musical strands ("layers") interact with one another (foreground and background)

↳ monophony: solo line or sustained harmony (epiphany, etc.)

↳ homophony: all lines in same rhythm

↳ melody + accompaniment: clear (solo) foreground & background delineation

↳ polyphonic: independent lines (feels like multiple things happen at once)

↳ a-melodic: so much polyphony you can't tell what's going on (chaos, confusion)

## NOTES

Melody, tempo, dynamics, range, beat  
can each be manipulated for dramatic effect.

tempo: perceived rate of sound or musical events. (measured in BPM)

"Bride of Frankenstein": persistent drum beat develops

- low woodwinds build up suspense until finger moves - then cut out
- bright horn chord upon eyes opening.

can be established through conversation, background noise, etc.

- characteristic talking tempos are often used by well-known actors.

accelerando: gradual speeding up of tempo

ritardando: gradual slowing down of tempo

meter: regular, recurring unit of time corresponding to groups of beats.

• duple vs. triple:  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{4}{4}$  vs.  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{6}{8}$

volume: physical strength of music, loudness (measured in decibels)

• dB is logarithmic  $\Rightarrow +10 \text{ dB} = 10 \times \text{amplitude}$ .

• 0 dB = threshold of hearing

volume is altered in...

- 1) initial unrecorded sound
- 2) recording of sound
- 3) mixing of recording to print
- 4) output of speakers

dynamics may be altered

"The fellowship of the Ring"

• whisper is amplified  $\Rightarrow$  chords play in background.

timbre: distinct coloring of sound  $\rightarrow$  wooden vs. metal bat

• recording distortion: any purposeful change to audio

this is lowkey mouthfeel like... just feel the vibe

"Patton" (1970)

• mutes on trumpets? echoing chord - organ comes in, slow, ponderous, then trumpet (through Echoplex)

pitch: musical measure of frequency

• chords / sonorities make up pitch groups

• consonance: notes going together

• dissonance: notes that would make someone w/ perfect pitch go "!!!"

"fundamental" note: base note that a harmony is built on.

orchestration: how timbres are arranged in a piece of music (instruments etc.)

• timbre is often chosen specifically to evoke a specific feeling: bright + crunchy gravel = alert, etc.

"The Godfather"

• Music choice is strange to me b/c I've never seen The Godfather but the music is much too ominous and somber for a relieving moment. I'm starting to think... this man is in the mob...

texture: functional relation of musical lines to each other.

• thick texture = multiple lines, well organized

] created by layering lines over, low frequency + impression of density.

• thin texture = few lines

density also created by volume - liveliness created by amount of layers.

means of controlling textures:

• monophony: single melodic line (monologue can be considered monophony)

$\rightarrow$  FOCUS on foreground



- homophony: more than one line, with relatively similar rhythm. → FOCUS on foreground + some background
- ★ melody + accompaniment is the most common musical texture - this can be musical or just background noise. → Middle ground
- polyphony: shallow hierarchy between musical lines (ex. fugue or canon) → chaos is polyphony = which line is primary?
- a-melodic: no melody!
  - ' accompaniment may serve to introduce a melodic pattern (ex "vamp" in jazz)

## SOUND/MUSIC IN SILENT FILMS

music gives life to film

- would add music + sound effects (limited to what could be played live)
  - usually no live narration since lip movement + sound wouldn't match up
- why music in film?

### I. Pragmatic functions

- covered noisy projectors
- "smoothed over" projector breakdowns

### II. Philosophical/Psychological functions

- Music gave "depth"
- Mediated "uncanny" silent figures

### Eras

#### 1. Early Cinema [1895-1905]

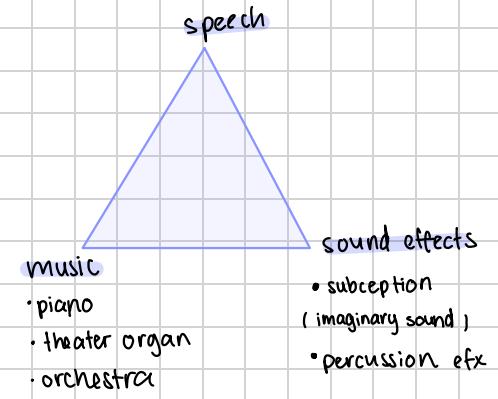
- \* no standard medium
- \* would be shown between vaudeville acts
- \* newsreel & entertainment
- \* acc. usually only a pianist
- \* musical melodrama tropes
- \* would sell sheet music after

#### 2. Nickelodeon [1905-1929]

- \* Began in storefront theaters
- \* 2/3 single reel films (c. 10/18 min/reel), illustrated songs in between
- \* solo pianist / small orchestra
- \* (except for film d'art) derived from popular songs

#### 3. Picture Palace (1915-1929)

- \* major metropolitan areas
- \* theater organs + orchestras of different sizes
- \* orchestras → prime-time ; lunch, dinner, late-show → organist
- \* music, 1/2 budget
- \* specific compilation score (pre-existing music put together)
- \* 1912/1915 → theme songs



# The transition to sound

## I. Arguments against sound

- \* ASSUMES loss of poetic aliveness → poetic interpretation
- + adding sound to a montage makes it "grounded" while montages are meant to be time going by
- + "cementing" of musical score
- + FINANCIAL language becomes a barrier for foreign markets
- \* destroys economic viability of music-making as a profession

## II. Arguments for sound

- + more control over film, quality control
- + couldn't pay musician's wages

## Developments

- \* Rhythmophone → allows better sync
- \* Audion Vacuum Tube → amplifies
- \* Vitaphone (sound on disk, expensive)
  - ↳ Warner Bros. release first "talkie", just had some ad-lib
- \* Optical Soundtrack (1927)
  - ↳ visual+sound linked together
  - ↳ cons: bc of limited portability → limited camera movement
    - ↳ microphones dictate visuals → have to talk into the mic
    - ↳ music was diegetic (had to include violin in scene to have it be heard)
    - ↳ single take
    - ↳ audio range is limited
  - ↳ pro: cinematic sound!
- \* Moviola (1930)
  - ↳ editing frame by frame
  - ↳ independence of film+sound
  - ↳ allow for "otherworldly" effects → thoughts as voiceovers

## The Golden Age of Hollywood (Studio System) → "studios" control movie industry

- \* Movies produced in studio-owned lots
- \* Almost all personnel (actors/directors) in contract with specific studio
- \* Movies shown in studio-owned theaters (MGM studio → only MGM movies)
- \* Ind. studios had to sign "block booking" contracts

### 5 major studios:

- ↳ MGM: comedies
- ↳ Paramount: epic, comedies
- ↳ Warner Bros: gangster, swashbuckling
- ↳ 13 others

### Why Hollywood?

- ↳ climate (usually nice+ sunny)
- ↳ varied geography (good backgrounds)
- ↳ loose regulations, weak unions

### Why Studio System?

- ↳ high financial costs for sound upgrades
- ↳ Great Depression
- ↳ WWI

## Technological advances:

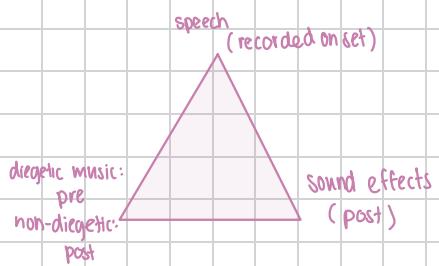
- \* Microphones: bidirectional, discrete range (pickup only actor's voices / not backg.)  
unidirectional
- \* acoustically "transparent" screens
- \* JBL separates frequencies, creating more clarity of sound

## Creation of the Soundtrack:

### Music Department Divisions

- I. Research + prep: clearances for licensed music, budgets, music libraries for players
- II. Production: schedules recording sessions, hires players, hires voice coaches, records music
- III. Post-production: sound-mixing, modifying cue sheets
- IV. Creation: composers, orchestrators

report to Music Director



### process of score creation → 4/6 weeks

- ↳ meet to decide on composer
- ↳ after rough cut → maybe "spotting session", talk through music in film
- ↳ composer makes short score
- ↳ orchestrators fully realize scores
- ↳ research+prep: cue sheets, writes + copies parts; music editor preps film w/ "Streamers & Punches"
- ↳ score recorded with musicians

# Standard musical conventions and leitmotivs in golden age of Hollywood

Extra-diegetic: sets atmosphere + primes audience for leitmotivs → begins before movie plot

Sonata → exposition (1)

↳ development (2)  
recapitulation (3)

exp. dev. recap.  
Theme A (key X) frag. A. A+B  
Theme B (key Y) b+ (unstable)

LEITMOTIV DEV.

Music for continuity (+ leitmotiv development)

↳ connect space & time

↳ montage

Music for narrative cueing

↳ CB: horse

↳ CB: throw guy to sea

Ostinato, tempo, silence

↳ repeats

Timbre / Music used as Sound Painting

↳ for "exotic" sound painting

Music depicts internal emotion

↳ first Arabella meet (CB)

Underscoring: dialogue punctuation

↳ action + music

- ① "seeded" as fragmentary forerunners to eventually become full themes
- ② Absence + return of an expected leitmotiv
- ③ Abrupt truncation of theme as narrative cue
- ④ Change Key / mode  
harmonic "corruption" and "redemption"
- ⑤ Narrative change thru change in leitmotiv orchestration / texture
- ⑥ Narrative info thru "thematic complexes" two themes w/ similar material in different ways for subconscious association
- ⑦ Other elements may be recombined in order to convey specific narrative associations between leitmotivs
- ⑧ Leitmotivs may be used as formal markers for the film
- ⑨ Fragments of leitmotivs used to sum up