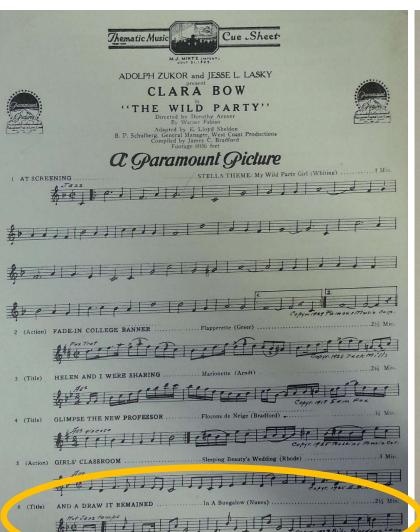


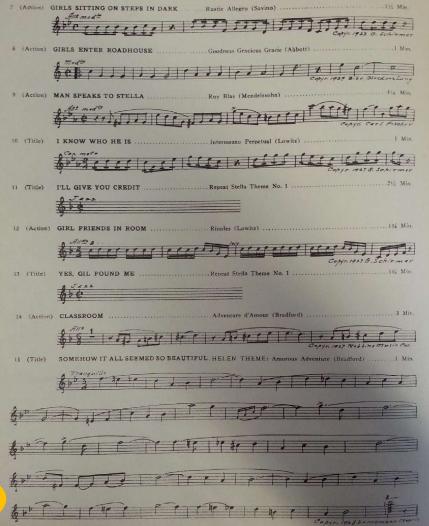
Key Concepts

"Silent" film
Cue sheets & accompaniment
Sound on disc
Vitaphone
Impact no. 1: cinematography
Impact no. 2: theaters
Impact no. 3: stars
Dolores Del Rio
Impact no. 4: genres
Sound on film



In-theater musical accompaniment, from a single piano or guitar all the way up to a full orchestra





Cue sheet for Clara Bow film The Wild Party (1929), which was released as both a talkie and as a silent film.

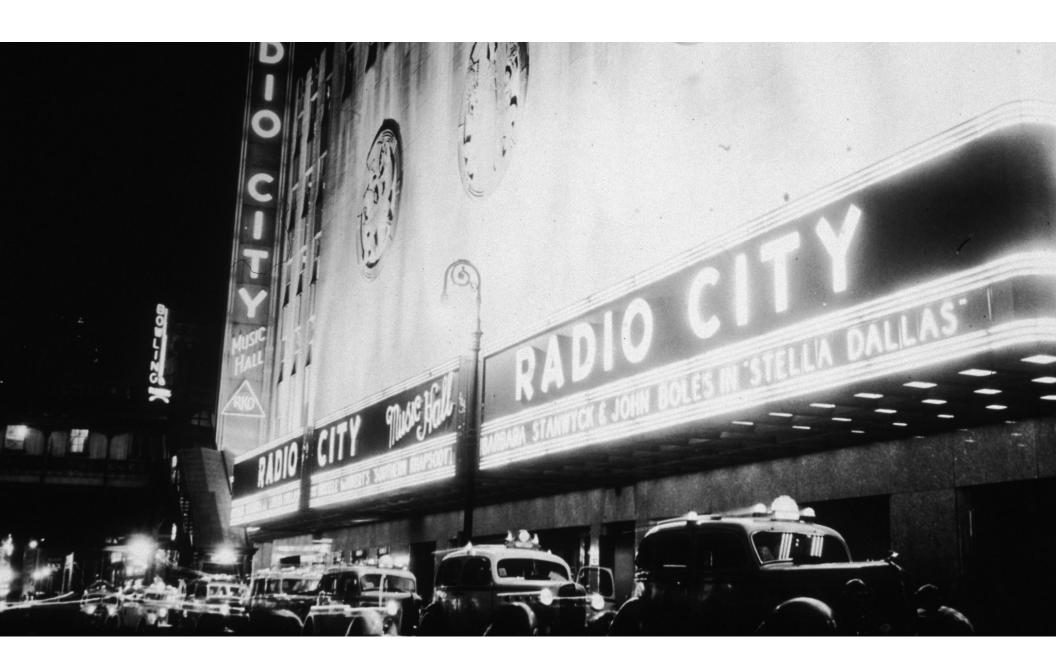
Pause the lecture for a moment.

Click the link on the page below for the Abe Lass interview and listen to a very brief but *very charming* radio story about a former silent film piano player demonstrating his old profession.



In-theater musical accompaniment, from a single piano or guitar to multiple musicians

Movie palaces had live entertainment, an orchestra, and showed a program of short and feature films





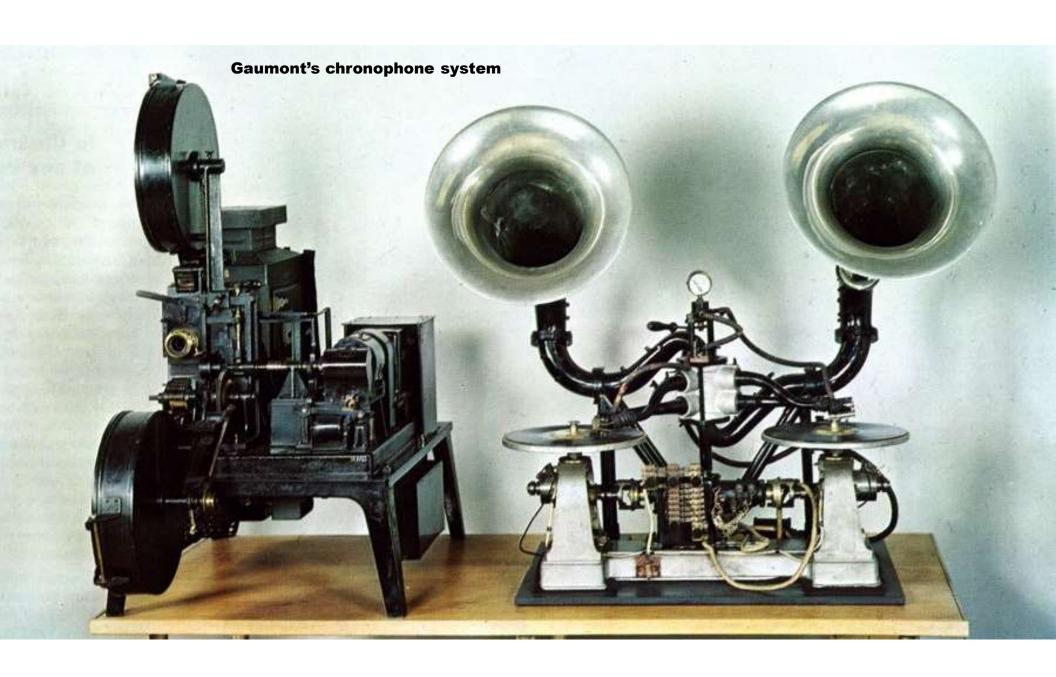
In a picture palace,

a movie presentation often included live acts like singers and dancers—and which might even be themed to the movie!—followed by **short films like cartoons** or serials, newsreels, and then your feature film. The features might be accompanied by an organ or an orchestra. By the mid-1920s, theaters were the foremost employers of musicians in the **United States.**

In-theater musical accompaniment, from a single piano or guitar to multiple musicians

Movie palaces had live entertainment, an orchestra, and showed a program of short and feature films

Early experiments in synchronous sound like Gaumont's chronophone, which Alice Guy-Blaché used in over 150 films





Advertisement for some of Gaumont's chronophone film (perhaps some directed by Alice Guy-Blaché?)

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Movie palaces had live entertainment, an orchestra, and showed a program of short and feature films

Early experiments in synchronous sound like Gaumont's chronophone, which Alice Guy-Blaché used in over 150 films

Chatty audiences!





Mabel's Dramatic Career (d. Mack Sennett, 1913)



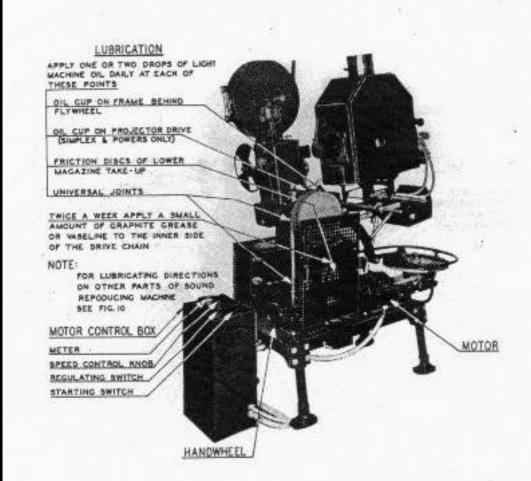


Mabel's Dramatic Career (d. Mack Sennett, 1913)

The Vitaphone

Developed by Western Electric*
*based on work by Lee DeForest
Sound is recorded/played on discs
Original use is "canned vaudeville"
Success of shorts → sound features

Acquired by Warner Bros. in 1925



PROJECTOR AND WESTERN ELECTRIC REPRODUCER SET

DRIVING SIDE

FIGURE 2





The Jazz Singer (1927)

Pause and think for a moment.

Imagine you're the head of 308 Pictures, an influential Hollywood studio in the 1920s. You've watched *The Jazz Singer* and you see all the money Warner Brothers is raking in....but you're not convinced. What are some reasons you might NOT want to adopt sound technology?

It's expensive!
Is it a fad?
Will I limit my
market?





How Talkies are MADE

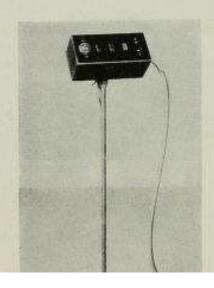
The sound film has changed everything—Here is the first complete description of the new film methods

By Al Cohn

SILENCE: That's the loudest, most important word today in the making of what the English euphoniously term "the audible cinema." Just now we call them "talkies" and it is rather paradoxical that the most important requisite in the creation of these noisy shadows is "Silence"; for without absolute quiet during actual production, the talkie would be a rather messy affair.

In other days, the magic command was "Lights! Action! Camera!!" and then the director began shouting and his pappets walked or made love, smiled or wept, rolled an eye or heaved a bosom.

Now, after ascertaining if things are all okay in the camera booths, the recording room and the monitor panel, the players take their places, there is the command "Silence" or "Quiet." The director or his technical assistant with phone in hand calls, "Interlock." For



The cameraman no longer stands with cap reversel, turning his crank nonchalantly and looking about in a bored manner. He either stands outside his booth, in the case of a fixed camera, or crouches inside twisting or turning his camera to follow a player or moving scene,

EVEN the lowly "juicer" has a whitecollar job under the neworder. There are no dirty carbons to handle because the Klieg, the Sunarcs and allied illuminants have given way to the huge, noiseless incandescent bulbs—the answer to the humble electrician's prayer. So much for the mechanics of talkie production.

The scene is "shot," the director gives the signal for a "play-back," if one is desired, and players, technicians and any others listen to every sound of the preceding scene as it is run off again.

whole process of photoplay making

sound is grist to its mill. It looks innocent enough as it hangs in the midst of a set while preparations are made for a camera shot, but it is working all the time. Usually it passes on to the monitor room nothing more exciting than a distortion of noises and volces, as actors, props, grips, electricians, assistants of all sorts, get things ready.

get things ready.

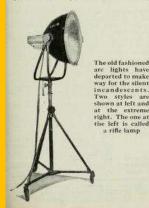
But occasionally there are unconscious, confidential whisperings immediately under the mike." Then the monitor room may hear some official high in the production department suggest to the director, "How is little Helen Hotilps getting along on this picture? I am particularly auxious that she may have a full opportunity to make good," Or a couple of grand dames from the serious drama may lean their heads close together and tell the one about the Pullman car conductor and the artist's model.

No definite technic has been established for the making of talkies. Most of us are still struggling along trying to develop something approaching that of the stage and screen—a sort of welding of the two but ever keeping in mind that "it's still pictures"; that the sounds and talk must be subordinated to the visual results.

In some of the studios the movie director is assisted by a stage director who rehearses the talking sequences. In others a stage technician actually shoots the spoken scenes. But there has been a noticeable lack of movement in the early talking features and audiences have grown restless, watching—or listening to them.

Our first talking picture made at the Metropolitan Studios for Paramount release was. "The Carnation Kid," starring Douglas Mac-Lean. It had originally been intended as a silent picture and was shot as such while the sound stages were being built.

In shooting the sound picture we learned that three-sided sets produced hollow voice reproduction— [CONTINUED ON PAGE 110]



A Dictionary of New Talkie Terms

In sink—in synchronism; picture and sound perfectly timed together.

Outa sink-not in synchronism.

Phased, or interlocked—all motors of sound and picture recording equipment lined up in readiness to start out in perfect step together.

Monitor man—the person who operates the volume control on talking picture production, modulating sounds as they come through the microphone so as to get a more even and natural tone.

Three bells—the ringing of three bells in a sound picture studio as a signal that a scene is to be taken and that everyone must preserve silence.

One bell—the ringing of one bell to indicate that a picture has been taken and that normal noise may be resumed.

Sound track—the narrow band of space along the left side of picture film on which is printed the ribbon-like strip of light and dark lines which constitute the record from which sound is projected.

Camera booth—the movable sound-proof box with a glass front, in which cameras are enclosed in a taking the sound of the camera may not intrude in the picture.

Mike—microphone, corresponding to a telephone transmitter, through which the sounds on the set are picked up and sent to the recording machin-

Inkys—incandescent mans, one stient lights used for talking pictures in contrast to the old noisy arc

Movicola — miniature projection machine with earphones used in the cutting room of a talking picture studio for rapid viewing of pieces of film.

Amplifier—the electrical apparatus similar to that in a radio which magnifies the strength of the electrical current from the microphone before recording.

Tormentor—a large portable wall draped with special material to prevent echo and resonance on the sound set.

(Continued on page 110)



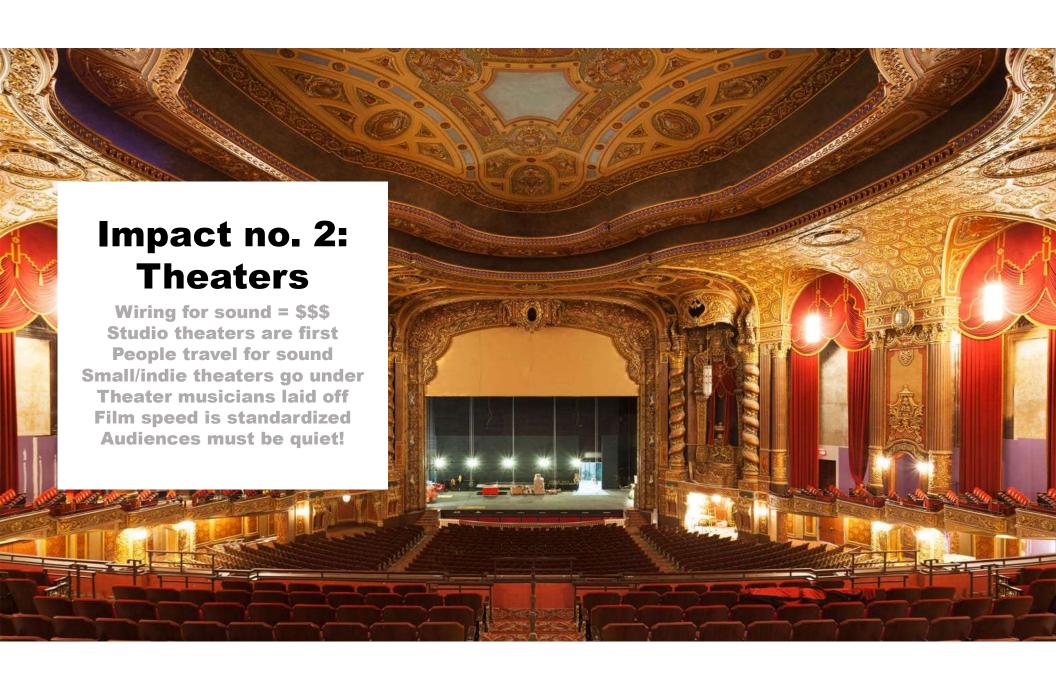


Microphone trouble scene from *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)



Demonstration of a carbon arclight.

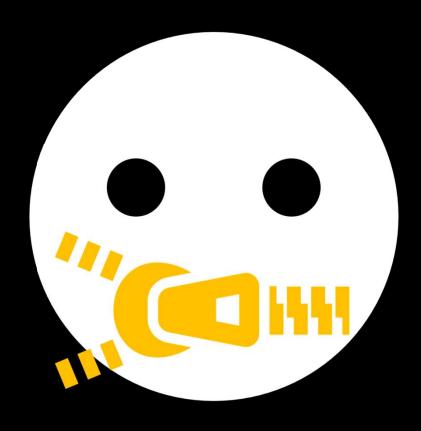
They were loud as all get out and gave off ultraviolet light that could burn performers!
They were replaced with other forms of incandescent light because they were so noisy.



talking audiences for silent pictures...

...became silent audiences for talking pictures

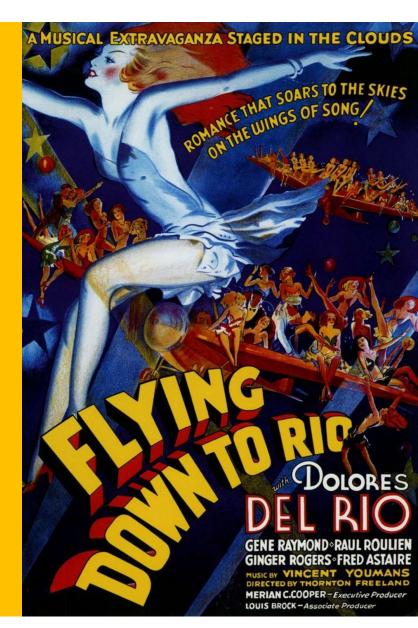
Robert Sklar, Movie-made America







Flying Down to Rio (1933)



Impact no. 4: Genre

Film capitalizes on sound Gangster films (BANG BANG!) Musicals (LALALALALA!) Screwball comedy (see clip)



His Girl Friday (1940)



Sound on film (vs. sound on disc)

Vitaphone breaks open the market, but sound on film becomes the standard very quickly. *The Jazz Singer* came out on Vitaphone in 1927, but by 1930 Warner Brothers had already abandoned sound on disc technology.