

What is “Sound Design”?

- *Making decisions to communicate the right messages*
- *Creating the overall sound character for the video, film or game project*
- *Supporting the visual elements*
 - *Beginning in the planning stages of the project, a sound landscape is developed to support the thematic material, including **action** and **object** sounds, **environmental** sounds, **Foley** sounds, **dialog**, and **music**.*

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Job Titles in Film Sound

- Production Recordist
- Sound Editor
- Sound Mixer
- Sound Designer

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Production Recordist

- Recording during the actual filming of the movie
- S/he'll have a microphone on the set, and will gather dialogue and some sound effects if they are available during the actual shooting.

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Sound Editor

- Person back in a studio who generally has a collection of sounds
- Able to go out with a portable recorder and bring back and edit sounds and fit them into the soundtrack

Sound Mixer

- Person whose job is to blend together all the different sounds that make up the soundtrack

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Sound Designer

- Might do all the above: recordist, editor, and mixer.
- A new kind of job for a person who is in on the planning and involved with the director in making sound an integral part of the content delivery.

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Sound Production Sequence

1. *Collaborate with director. What is s/he trying to communicate? (“pre-production”)*
2. *Sound Asset Collection (“production”)*
 - Buy or record or build?
 - Build Example -mix an organic sound with a non-organic. Common in Star Wars
 - Inventing/recording Original Sounds
 - High quality and consistent level, tone
 - Make as dry as possible
 - Musical score if budgeted.
 - Loop editing is the least expensive. Can be OK+

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Sound Production Sequence

- 3. *Sound Processing* (“post-production”)
 - Compression, layering, EQ, Normalizing
- 4. *Mix and Master the tracks* (“post-production”)
 - Automation of effects such as levels
 - Balancing, normalizing, creating consistency
 - Producing alternate mixes for media variations

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Pre-Production Documents

- A Rough Outline or **Concept**
 - Statements by director
- **Story Board, Director’s Summary**
 - A range of documents from a set of illustrations to a formal proposal, or scope of work
- **Sound Map or Blueprint**
 - A plan to be approved
 - Adjectives describe sound, such as “Innocent, sinister, pulsing/driving dramatic, dark, magic light, magic dark, etc.”

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Sound Map Elements

- 1) **Environment** – nighttime, city, etc
- 2) **Foley actions** – walking, falling, things the actor does
- 3) **Objects** – wind, siren, crashes
- 4) **Clues to Emotion** – positive, negative, hurried, etc. Sounds and music.
- 5) **Moments of physical or dramatic transition** – things are changing for better or worse – Sounds and music.

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Sound Design Working Principles

- **Support the Images on the Screen**
 - Collect sounds that **match** the action, set the **scene**, create the **feeling**, tell the “**back story**”.
 - Manipulate sound elements such as pitch intervals to **suggest emotions**, etc.
 - Use music that will do the same, including methods such reoccurring themes for characters – (“leitmotifs”)

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Sound Design Working Principles

- Edit **timing, levels, location, compression**, etc.
- Listener overload? **About 4**
- Use EQ to **separate the frequency** ranges of potentially competing or masking sounds.
(Have a gentle peak at 2.5 k for one, and 1.5 k for the other)
- **Creative ideas?** Make communicative intervals out of non musical sounds that occur together in time. Use sounds that remind the listener of other sounds. (A wailing siren for a quiet but desperate character.)

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Sound Design Working Principles

- Make the **key sound elements** easier to notice/hear
 - Frequency range
 - Placement in sound field
- **Focus points** - “**beats**” in the production
 - We have a sound we want someone to notice:
 - It can be or be perceived as “louder.”
 - *Level* or *relative level* or *frequency*
 - We can open a hole in the tracks.

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