No.7

## Mysterioso. (Burglars & Creepy Business.)

BY JULIAN RUTT.

· FRANCIS, DAY & HUNTER ·
138-140, Charing Cross Road, London W.C.2.
Copyright 1920 by Francis, Day & Hunter.



#### PROCESSIONAL See "March Processional"

#### PROHIBITION See "Drinking"

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#### FPA 386 FILM MUSIC

# LECTURE 1: INTRODUCTION

#### Outline of the Course found:

http://www.sfu.ca/~gotfrit/386\_main.htm

- Suggested Reading List (Web Site)
- Weekly Schedule
- Assignments
- Suggested Videos
- Weekly Lecture Materials
- Links & Internet resources
- contact: gotfrit @ sfu.ca

Course handout is "electronic" all of the material is on the web. Show web material and go through requirements and material. Note that course does not assume musical training and marking does not privilege students with those skills - rather thorough and thoughtful work.

Reading list & materials on line: Watching films, where to find films, research methods

Weekly schedule will be revised. I will be showing clips but not complete films - see web site post class for list of clips.

Assignment descriptions, examples. Will hopefully become clearer after a few classes. Despite lack of musical training, students can do very well - I've not been disappointed. Assignment dates next card. Go to website (internal file)

### Assignments due:

- Postcards (10) beginning Jan. 16
- Film Journals (6) bi-weekly starting Jan. 23
- Final Assignment April 10
   See website for details



(conducting film orchestra)

Comprises some of the most interesting and affecting music of the 20th/21st centuries and one with the largest audience.

Music (and sound) with moving picture is ubiquitous and generally unexamined. Theorists, critics, cinephiles, etc. dissect direction, image, script, acting but for the most part have tended to ignore sound and music. This is partly because without a score, it is challenging to analyze music - though new techniques in electroacoustic music analysis may be valuable here. Although the vast majority of films have written scores, they belong to the film production company and they have no reason to release them for academic use.

## Central component of a form in which the visual is dominant.

Composers are also protective of what is essentially proprietary and their "product". More about the business later. Many scholars are of the opinion that virtually all of our experience of moving pictures is guided by our ears - but because of the dominance of the visual, we are rarely conscious of the effect that music has upon our encounter with the silver screen. This is not to say that soundtracks in and of themselves are not listened to - they are a commodity - but that in the context of the cinema experience, they act upon us without our explicit knowledge.

#### Signifies:

- pure musical codes,
- cultural codes &
- cinematic codes.

Repeat -Music (and sound) with moving picture is ubiquitous and generally unexamined. Theorists, critics, cinephiles, etc. dissect direction, image, script, acting but for the most part have tended to ignore sound and music. This is partly because without a score, it is challenging to analyze music though new techniques in electroacoustic music analysis may be valuable here. Although the vast majority of films have written scores, they belong to the film production company and they have no reason to release them for academic use. Composers are also protective of what is essentially proprietary and their "product". More about the business later. Many scholars are of the opinion that virtually all of our experience of moving pictures is guided by our ears - but because of the dominance of the visual, we are rarely conscious of the effect that music has upon our encounter with the silver screen. This is not to say that soundtracks in and of themselves are not listened to - they are a commodity - but that in the context of the cinema experience, they act upon us without our explicit knowledge.

### Something of a "language" able to direct, affirm or subvert expectations of the viewer.

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## Often influences other musical forms.

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### film music - main concern:

- Effect
- Immediate rapport with audience

### film music is

Primarily a social phenomena...

### film music two tools/approaches:

semiotics

musicology

#### semiotics:

Cultural coding
 Communication to audience
 Pragmatic issues
 Purely communications

Semiotics is concerned with cultural coding, with the way that film music can communicate with an audience through its recognizable elements within certain contexts. Approach owes much to pragmatics = the study of meaning in relation to the specific context of its appearance, and is concerned with film music as a functional item that exists within the film purely for its communication value. - next slide -

Musicology suggests that there are other contexts in which to situate the music – its production and its relation to concert music. It also suggests that music is never a simple transitive communication between "text" and audience, but a more complex process where the music's meaning is imprecise, excessive to its context and can never be seen as finite.

Musicology's metalanguage evolved to study 19<sup>th</sup> century art music – heavily tied to notation as the abstract 'essence' of music. Concern with Schenkerian analysis: harmony. Such analysis often ignores the materiality of music: context of appearance, instrumental or vocal sound, ethos of rhythm, cumulative effect of rhythm and the relation of music to history, society, etc. i.e. musicology takes a formalist approach – apprehends the object in a void.

Audiences readily internalize the cultural coding of film music. One cannot ignore this shared understanding. On the other hand much of the great film music was (is) based upon 19<sup>th</sup> century concert music. Form and function are not the same. Film music is fragmentary and relies on a logic that is not an organic part of the music but a negotiation between the logic of the film and the logic of the music.

Semiotics should be used more – especially music that has aimed to produce a synesthesia – where certain timbres or gestures evoke visual or psychological responses. Audio and video can be intimately linked in film (and in performance as well) – like the horror film's sting or the action film's hit. – the equivalent of a visual shock. Semiotics implicates the social level of music's life where it is seen as a transaction between the sound and the listener.

#### musicology:

Situates musical context

19th century meta-language

Often tied to notation

Often ignores materiality

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### **Basic Premise:**

The aesthetics of the soundtrack has arisen from a set of codes that have evolved from:

The important words here are:

Code - music as a very efficient mechanism to transmit information (information being anything from emotion to location, etc.)

Film music must be read within a cultural context - either a "world culture" or more regional or locale mores. Film music, particularly in the early years, was constrained by recording technology - and despite changes in technology, that influence lingers. (Elaborate later)

### **Basic Premise:**

- historical practice
- social & cultural influences and the
- constraints of technology

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The soundtrack does not represent the sound of the *world*, but *rather* the sound of the *film experience*.

Walter Murch

Walter Murch quote. VERY important notion.

## To understand this phenomena we'll examine:

some of the basics of music and acoustics

• the antecedents of film music practice

 music in the pre-synchronous era (1985 – 1926)

• music in early synchronous sound films (1927 – 1935)

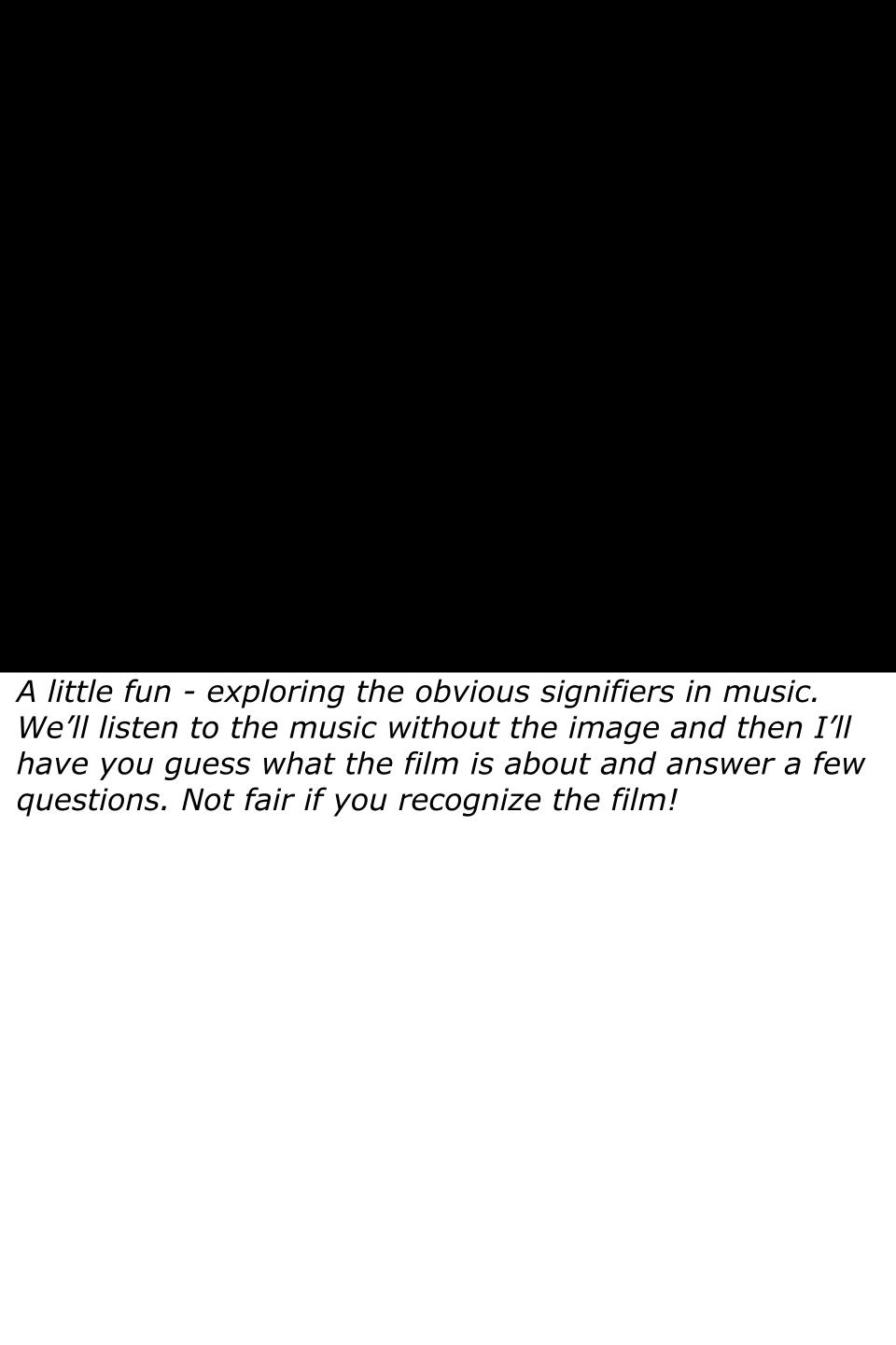
 the "golden age" of Hollywood film music practice (-> 1950s)

genres and their respective soundtrack stylings

 the relationship between sound/ dialogue and music

 important composers, composer/ director collaborations & their techniques

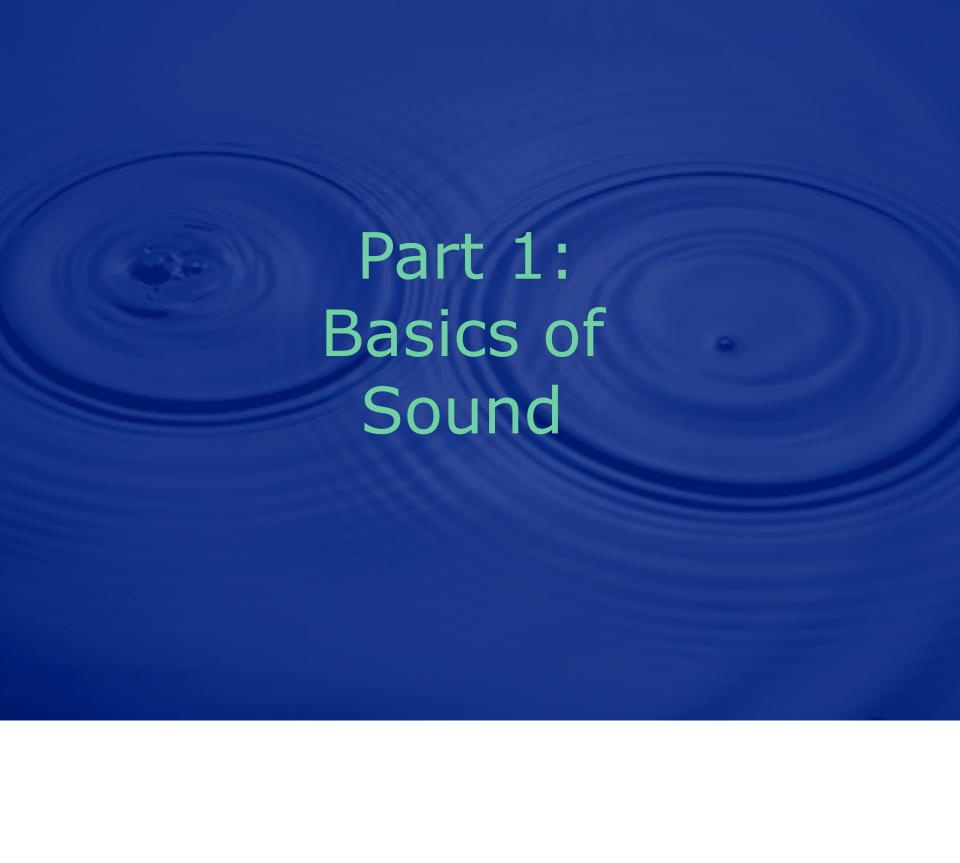
 non-Hollywood cinematic and musical forms, other world cinemas and experimental work



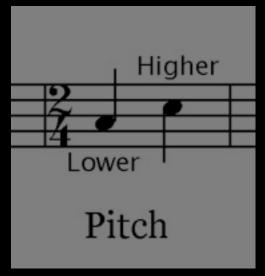
## EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE: OVERTURES

- LOCATION (MIGHT BE CONTINENT, SPECIFIC NATION, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (DESERT, FOREST, JUNGLE, ETC) URBAN, RURAL OR SUBURBAN, ETC.)
- HISTORICAL PERIOD
- PROTAGONIST (ABOUT)
- PLOT (ARC OF STORY &/OR FINAL OUTCOME)
- **GENRE** (ROMANTIC COMEDY, THRILLER, SUSPENSE, HORROR, FANTASY, MYSTERY, DRAMA, COMEDY, ETC.)
- LOVE INTEREST (IF ANY)
- OTHER?)

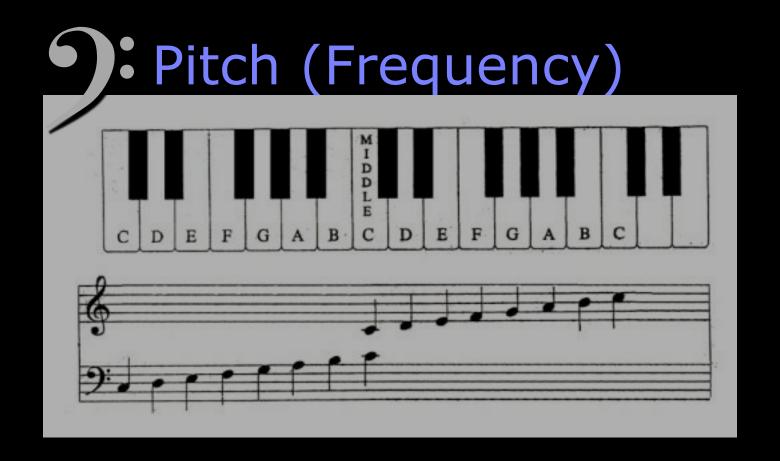
- Ghost Dog/1999Jim Jarmusch M:The RZA Opening titles
  gong w/ hip-hop follows.
- Great Escape, The /1963 John Sturges M:Elmer BernsteinOpening title – does the music reference the two cultures?
- Chinatown (iTunes) 1974 Roman Polanski M:Jerry GoldsmithOpening titles – clues as to protagonist?
   Setting?
- Man on Fire/ 2004 Tony ScottM: Harry Gregson-Williams
   Music cue #1 w/sfx sets place and genre?
- Edward Scissorhands/ 1990Tim BurtonM: Danny Elfman
   Opening title
- Dances with Wolves/ 1990Kevin Kostner M:John
   BarryClassic narrative of opening title use CD for MOP
- Solaris/ 2002 Steven Soderbergh M:Cliff MartinezSpace evocation
- •Taking of Pelham 123 Joseph Sargent, M David Shire,



# Pitch (Frequency)



Frequency is measured in Hertz (Hz) or cycles/ second. The range of human hearing is roughly 20-20,000Hz or 20KHz. We lose high frequency hearing as we age and as we endure loud noises: realistically our upper end is 14-18Khz. To reproduce an 18KHz tone a speaker must move in and out 18, 000 times/second. Middle C on the piano is 262 Hz, the A above Middle C is the tuning standard 440.0, the refrigerator sings an out Bb at 120Hz and the transformer of your TV sings 14KHz. The ubiquitous test tone is 1000KHz.



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Energy of the sound wave, measured in a logarithmic scale called decibels (dB). Human hearing range is 0- 120 dB with the WCB level for protection required being 90 + and most rooms having an ambient level of 45-55 dB. Loudness is dependent on frequency & vice versa. Sometimes referred to as volume.

In musical terms: dynamics.

Piano (soft) Mezzo piano (medium) & forte (loud) are the musical terms. "ppp" is the softest - "fff" the loudest



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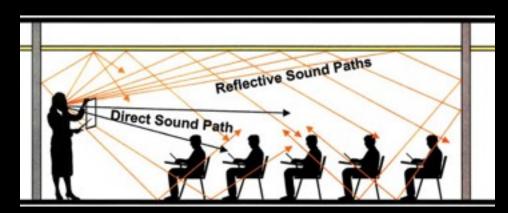


# Timbre, Tone Colour (Spectrum)



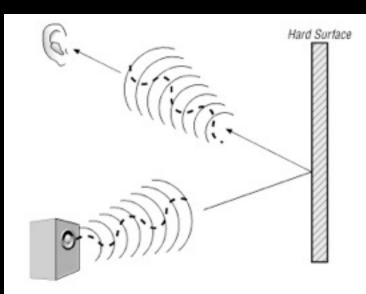
Most sounds are a complex collection of various frequencies with different amplitudes. The ear is very attuned to this spectrum or colour.

(Why an oboe sounds different from a clarinet).



#### reverberation





Physical space & its relationship to music: EXTERIOR – usually no echo no reverberation

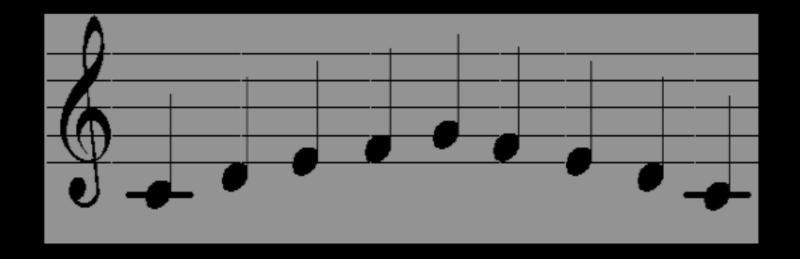
INTERIOR may have both. rev &echo influence musical ideas, performance styles, instrument design, etc.

We hear the space the music is in as well as the music. The space carries meaning!

Film music is mediated by technology (recorded) so it needs to exist in the film space.

# Part 2: Basics of Music (A Film Music Primer)

# Tonality



Most traditional Western music can be labeled as tonal: a piece centers around a particular note (a point of departure and a point of return). Music shifts away from the tonal centre in order to create an anticipation in the listener of the return to the origin, drone or tonic.

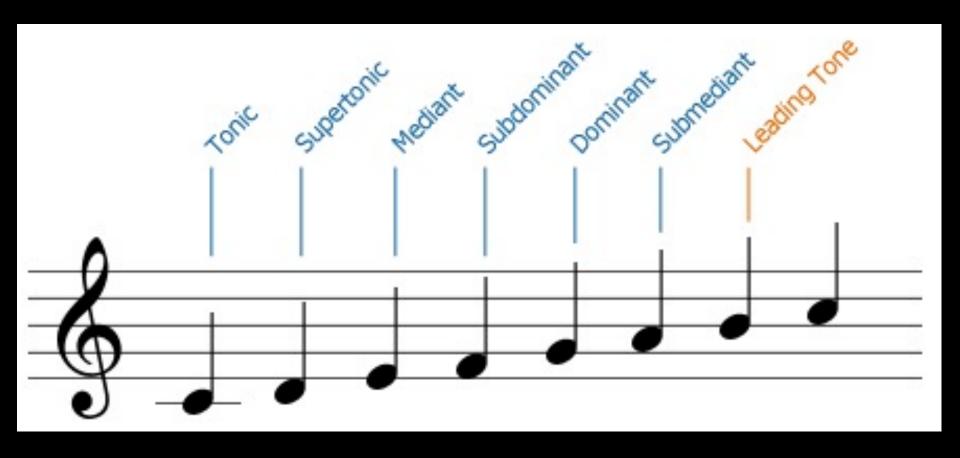
# **Tonality**



In non-Western music (such as music from the Indian sub-continent) the tambura drones the basic tonal centre of the raga which the instrumentalist or singer plays to. \*\*\*Tonality sets up an order, uses departure from that order to disturb and reassures with its return.\*\*\*



Any given scale is one of the myriad of ways to divide up all the frequencies of the audible spectrum into a gamut of "musical tones". Based on the principle of the octave (or doubling) of any given frequency having the same "pitch class" (not true in all cultures) the octave is divided into 12 steps (known as semitones) or "chromatic" scale. Western music is based on the principle of the octave (or doubling) of any given frequency having the same "pitch class" (not true in all cultures). In western music the octave is divided into 12 steps (known as semitones) or a "chromatic" scale. The distance between the steps is equal (a relatively recent invention, again primarily in Western music) or "equi-tempered".



These twelve steps are given a further hierarchy by placing greater importance

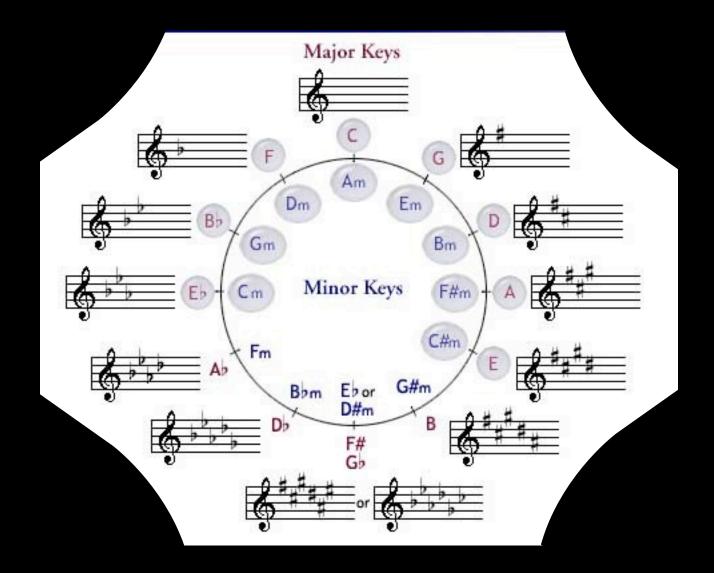
on an order of 7 steps or notes called a scale. Scales usually have steps of various sizes: 1-3 semitones. We label the notes with the letters A-G. The most familiar is the key of C containing the steps C D E F G A & B. If the work seldom strays from the 7 notes we call it harmonically diatonic, if it allows the other (excluded) 5 notes to enter, which we call sharps & flats, then the work is more chromatic. This 7/5 hierarchy is not the only one: We are also familiar with pentatonic or 5 note scales as well as the more than 20 divisions in an Indian raga. However, because many cultures have a strong, often deeply rooted sense of the Western scale, one may communicate very effectively

# Harmony

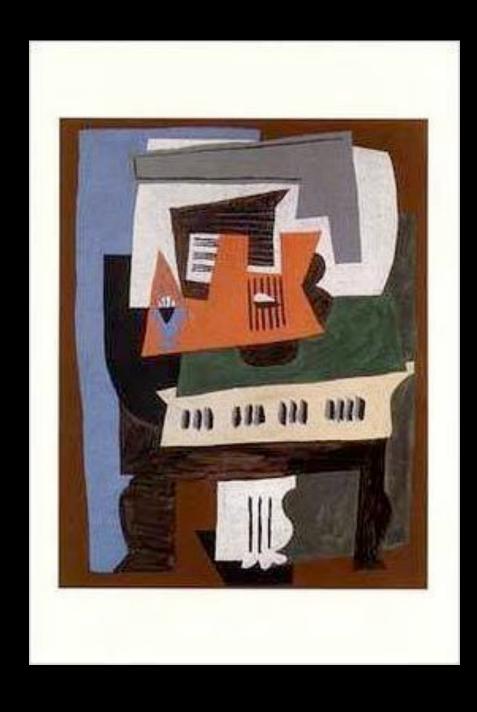


The distance between the notes is known as an interval. We can think of these as horizontal (moving from one step of the scale to another) or vertical (when two or more occur simultaneously or overlap). When two or more occur vertically we call this a chord. In Western music tradition certain intervals are considered more stable or consonant than others. Octave, Fifth, Fourth, Third, Sixth, Seventh, Second - all based on the "step number". That is the fifth is five scale steps from the root of the scale counting the root as 1: C (D, E, F) G.

The expectation of completion is best expressed by playing the first seven notes of a scale and leaving off the return to tonic: Anecdotally how Mozart's mom got him out of bed. The triad or three-note chord is basic building block of harmony/the song/etc. Important is the seventh chord, so named because it contains a note soven stone from the root of the shord. The tonic is the



Another important element of tonal music is the major/ minor dialectic. Although there are various "modes" or scales in Western music the two most important are the major & minor scales:



Both of these scales have a "leading tone" or half step leading us back to the tonic. The minor mode (for whatever reasons) tends to evoke the darker, more serious side of human emotions. Leonard Meyer in "Emotion & Meaning in Music", U. of Chicago, Chicago: 1956, writes that the minor mode is more ambiguous and less stable because there are more possibilities for vertical harmony and therefore progressions are less *predictable*. Major mode has fewer potential directions and therefore is more predictable, stable and orderly.

Of course it follows that dissonance suggests disorder, madness, the other. It is suggested that dissonant intervals need to move; are restless while consonant intervals are stable...



Music is usually based upon a primary pulse also referred to as a *tempo*. Although the tempo may shift (accelerando, etc.) it usually remains constant during a section of music. The groupings of this basic pulse (subdivisions or multiples) form the basis for assigning (in notation) when a note will occur and what its duration will be.

Important to note discrepancy and confusion between notation (representation) and the music itself. (This discrepancy is most pronounced in notation's difficulty with rhythmic subtlety)

Music is often based on small groupings of the basic pulse of the work (2 - 8) called *bars*: In Western music the most common is 4/4 or four beats in the bar followed by 3/4 or the waltz. We are also familiar with others also associated with dancing like the *Polka or 6/8*. This system also allows for telegraphing expectation, resolution.

An accordial component of the graft of film music revelves

### **Timbre**



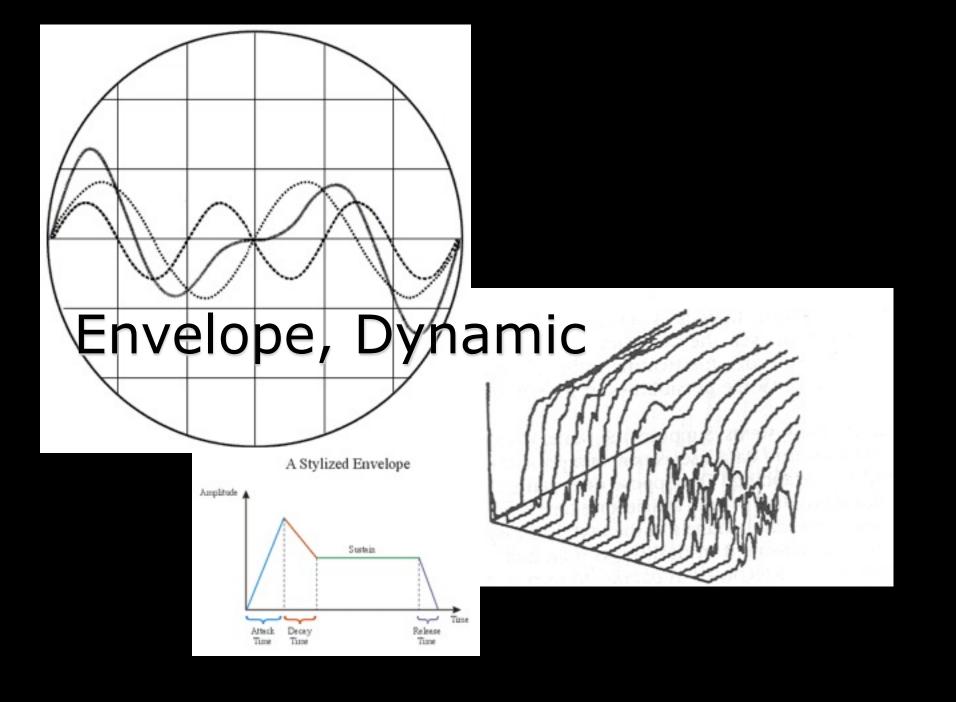




The actual colour of the instrument is important to delineate the various lines in the music and for the associations the timbre has. By now many of these associations come from film music as well as other music traditions. Timbre may be simple (flute, piccolo) to complex (oboe, cello) and is based in part on the overtones or harmonics associated with the sound.

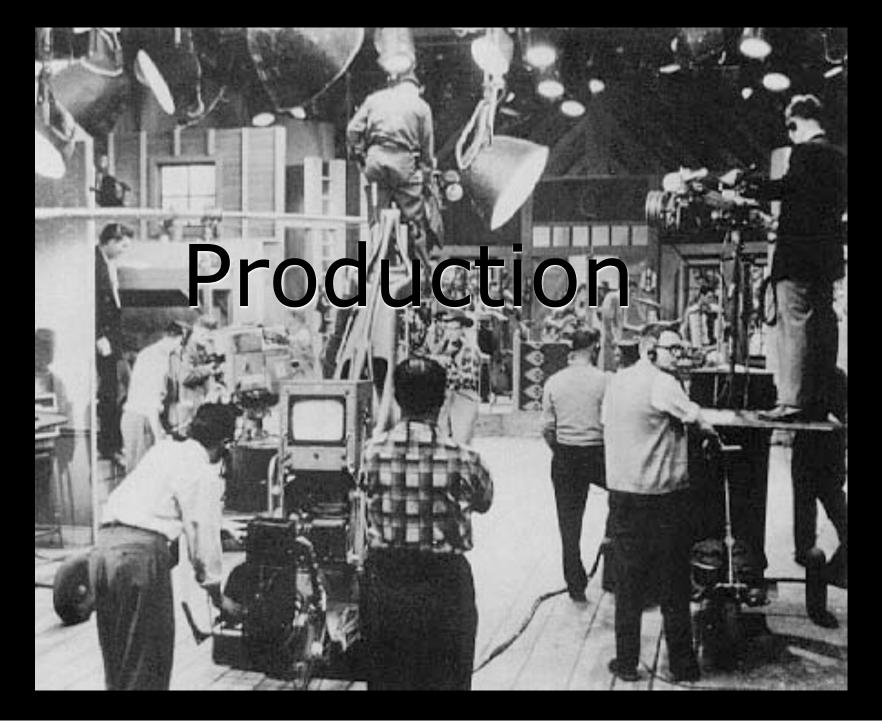


A reproduction system will creates dramatic alterations to the timbre if it fails to reproduce the higher harmonics.



Every instrument usually has a characteristic amplitude envelope (attack, sustain, decay) which helps identify it and which reflects the method of sound production and the performance. Some instruments (plucked strings) have a swift attack and no sustain (rather - a long decay) while woodwinds/bowed instruments may have slow attacks and a true sustain. (dependent on breath) Percussion instruments have very characteristic dynamic envelopes, which when altered, create dramatic effects. (i.e. backwards gong or backwards piano.)

# Part 3: Basics of Film Sound (A Film Music Primer)



- Studio Recording
  - Playback for Music Scenes
    - -Techniques explained later
  - •Problems with noise on primitive optical tracks in early sound films: therefore music was often played on set during filming either for musicals or for score purposes.

#### Some Relevant Terms:

- ★ Scene (sequence of shots from theatre)
- ★ Shot (within a scene)
- ★ P.O.V. (point of view) or perspective of shot

Scene

Shots (within a scene)

Note: continuity issue with synch sound/music

POV (point of view) or perspective of shot MOS (mitt out sound) Cue (music sequence)

#### Some Relevant Terms:

- ★ M.O.S. (mitt out sound filmed without sound)
- ★ Cue (music sequence)
- ★ Montage (literally assembling editing)

Scene

Shots (within a scene)

Note: continuity issue with synch sound/music

POV (point of view) or perspective of shot MOS (mitt out sound) Cue (music sequence)

## Film music may be described as

either:



diegetic, screen\* or source

\* terms from Michel Chion

Video of the Pianist - The Pianist - Ballade No1 in G minor Op23 - Chopin

#### Or:



non-diegetic, score or pit music\*

\* terms from Michel Chion

Most of the examples we've seen today



Music Scoring (the subject of this course!)
Music Editing

Assisting the composer
Arranging for songs or
other previously composed music
Cutting the music into the film

#### Mixing

Critical point for the completion of the soundtrack, including music.

Will be covered in lecture on composing practice

See presentation formats -

# EARLY HISTORY



So-called silent era was never silent

Music acc. For both presentation and production

Many ideas to account for music's presence in the early days of cinema

Functions and conventions of early film music influenced by the traditions of 19<sup>th</sup> c. melodrama/music hall/theatre/opera

Context of projection (theatre) great importance
Music and sound could be live or from recordings.
Gramophone systems appeared almost immediately –
some providing reasonable synchronicity. Narrators
(Japan), on/off stage voices, sound effects, etc.

Four time periods (Martin Marks)

1) 1895 – early 1900 vaudeville / music hall orchestra accompaniment – films part of variety shows (short subjects)

,







# Aesthetic challenges; the inevitability of synchronous sound?

1. Sync sound not a question of realism as (there are periods when film was shot and projected at different speeds) although synchronous sound brought the first realistic experience — According to Evan Cameron:

Before 1927 cinema like all the other arts was unnatural. This was simply the result of the great limitations upon it (flat B&W images, non-synchronous sound of poor quality). Like the Grand Opera compensations were made: stereotypical characters moving with grace in highly melodramatic situations. The arrival of synchronous sound removed the need for these compensations: A natural art emerges (according to Evan Cameron) for the first time in history. The film becomes the means of communication of some naturally occurring event rather than the art object itself. Even theatre was "staged" and formal – we knew that the gun fired on



#### Consequences of this change

1. The presence of diegetic sound places music all the more clearly outside the story space. Suddenly producers are reluctant to use any music except for source (define this term) or title sequences.

The Virginian, 1929

Blue Angel, 1929

Public Enemy, 1931

- 2. Because of dialogue, music had to learn to stop and start, to accommodate the speeches and other important sfx
- 3. The narrative sonic space required new consolidation: continuity, auditory realism, pacing, spatial and temporal coherency, etc. Nancy Wood (cited in Gorbman)

"Compared to its silent counterpart, the talking cinema was considered an "inflexible institution", above all because certain latitudes in spatial and



#### -Shift from Dream to Drama

-Art form was very dream-like – it was not theatre on the screen – synchronous dialogue could and did grind this development to a halt however Rudolf Arnheim argues that in all composite forms one medium must dominate the others. In theatre, which combines visual spectacle with speech, speech dominates; If cinema is to differ from theatre then the image must dominate. Since the image is always "speaking", there is a conflict with the speech on the soundtrack – it is redundant or at odds with the image. It adds nothing to the images and reduces their power because speech is privileged over that of objects which in the silent film had a voice.



Black Pirate/1926 Albert Parker

Napoleon/1927 Abel Gance music Carmine Coppola

Wings/1927 William Wellman

Earth(Zemlya)/1930 Alexander Dovzhenko music: V.

Ovchinnikov (Vertov, Pudovkin, Eisentstein+)

Jazz Singer/1927 Alan Crossland music: Louis Silvers

(incidental) "You ain't heard nothin' yet"

Blue Angel (Der Blau Angel) / 1930 Josef von Sternberg music:

Frederick Hollander Diegetic source

Public Enemy/1931 William A Wellman music: David

Mendoza Diegetic source







#INO