

## Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects

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### Recommended Citation

Chambers, Hannah M. (2022) "Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects," *Journal of Applied Communications*: Vol. 106: Iss. 3. <https://doi.org/10.4148/1051-0834.2437>

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## Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects

### Abstract

Book review of *Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects*, edited by Kathryn Kalinak.

### Keywords

Video, Sound, Music, Textbook, Supplemental Resource

### Cover Page Footnote/Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Jefferson Miller for encouraging me in this endeavor.

*Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects*, edited by Kathryn Kalinak, is a comprehensive and concise book documenting the evolution of sound in Hollywood that could serve as an ideal supplemental resource for agricultural videography and communication courses at universities. It is part of *Behind the Silver Screen*, a seven-book series on video production including topics such as directing, editing and special effects, cinematography, and more.

Many universities with agricultural communication degree programs offer some form of videography, podcasting, broadcasting, or radio course work, or cover these topics within their other communication curricula. The agricultural industry needs to remain prevalent with popular online communication and marketing methods to best promote agriculture to those outside of the industry and online video content is rising in popularity. While the book was published in 2015 and is not updated with today's current sound technologies, it provides a well-rounded and informative explanation of the history of sound in film and would serve as an excellent supplemental textbook alongside an updated work on the subject.

Video platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, are quickly growing in popularity. As a result, short-form video content is quickly becoming one of the most effective methods for electronic communication, particularly on social media and with younger generations (Genoveva, 2022). In addition to this, studies indicate that consumers are more likely to click out of a video with low-quality sound and high-quality video, as opposed to a video with high-quality sound and low-quality video (Sidaty et al., 2014). This implies that having high-quality sound in video content is imperative to its success in online distribution. This book helps students gain an understanding of the history of sound in video content, which then helps them better understand the most effective ways to utilize sound today.

Kalinak opens the book by briefly describing the importance of live orchestras during silent films, film soundtracks, actor dialogue, and sound effects, before introducing the key sections. The book follows the major eras of the Hollywood film industry and discusses in detail how each impacted sound and brought changes to the film industry.

Chapter one follows the Silent Screen era of Hollywood, 1894-1927. It describes how motion pictures were often played with accompanying orchestras, and therefore always had an element of sound. Recording devices included large, hidden microphones that would pick up the actor's voices and many surrounding sounds, making it highly important that all other aspects of the film crew remain quiet. The Classical Hollywood era, 1928-1946, describes the dramatic change synchronized sound brought to the film industry. The rising need for sound in films removed the jobs of live orchestra players but created new employment for sound technicians and recording specialists. By the mid-1930s, recording sound for films had become a sophisticated process.

Postwar Hollywood, 1947-1967, is explained in chapter three. This era brought in the creation of magnetic tape that allowed sound technicians to cut, loop, and rewind sound the same way they could a reel of film. Chapter four opens by describing the Auteur Renaissance era of Hollywood, 1968-1980. In an effort to improve profit, companies began to release music from the film soundtrack before its release date to create interest. One example of this is the early release of songs such as "How Deep Is Your Love" and "Stayin' Alive" to promote the upcoming movie *Saturday Night Fever* (1977).

Chapter five, New Hollywood, 1981-1999, described new roles for sound engineers while paying homage to the origin of sound in films. This era turned from using popular pop music as movie scores and returned to composing music with full orchestras. Sound effects were still created in natural ways, with digital influences beginning to emerge. Chapter six rounds out the

eras with a summation of the modern entertainment marketplace, 2000-present. With the new technology capabilities, sound producers wanted to do it all. As a result, these more recent films often involved louder and busier soundtracks. However, it is important to note this book was published in 2015, making this section somewhat outdated. The book is completed with lists of Academy Award winners for sound and music. Providing this additional content further solidifies the reader's understanding of the important role sound has played in film and media since the first talking picture.

The book remains engaging throughout by naming numerous well-beloved films and film scores created throughout the decades. This book has the capacity to serve as a great source of additional recommended reading or a supplemental resource for a communication course focused on or discussing videography, podcasting, broadcasting, or radio within the agricultural field. Despite its short length, it provides deep insight into the many eras of Hollywood sound technology, careers, styles, and effects. From start to finish, the book provides a well-rounded history and discussion on the importance of sound in media and could serve as a beneficial resource for videography and communication courses at universities.

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