

Sound and the Moving Image: Critical Characteristics for Spectator Response

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The prevailing wisdom in the film and video production industries is that audio information outweighs visual information when it comes to spectator responses, but there are few empirical studies to support this claim. In previous research, four critical characteristics of sound have been identified: (1) Music, (2) visual/sound contradictions (defined as sound that is inconsistent with audience expectations based on visual information), (3) multi-channel sound, and (4) sound quality. Building on our previous research into music and film, we have found that many researchers have looked into the question of how music affects emotions (Eschrich et al., 2008; Have, 2008; Konecni, 2008; etc.), but few have investigated how music affects spectators' perception of a film. Research into the effects of the other characteristics is almost non-existent and does not include any empirical studies. We propose four experiments to investigate the four different characteristics and how they affect spectators (e.g., their presence responses, affective measures, enjoyment). We have produced a short film, "Chase Her," that will be manipulated in various ways (including adding music representative of different genres and recording realistic sounds and "contradictory" sounds in our new Foley studio) to test the four characteristics' effects on audiences.