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***Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: A Critical Overview*, Graeme Harper, Ruth Doughty and Jochen Eisentraut (eds.). New York & London: Continuum, 2009 (877 pages). ISBN: 9780826458247.**

A Review by Penny Spirou, Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia)

Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media is a mammoth project undertaken by book editor Graeme Harper, film editor Ruth Doughty and music editor Jochen Eisentraut. Over fifty scholars were involved in the project, which covers a vast amount of topics. This publication represents a solid contribution to the ever-developing scholarly study of music and sound in visual media and would benefit student and scholar alike.

The overarching objective of the edited compilation is to show how music and sound in visual media exert tremendous influence over how we perceive the (moving) image. Michael Chion has observed that "the sound makes us see the image differently" (Chion 2). It is a simple yet powerful statement that takes the emphasis away from the "visual" in what we call visual media. Although scholarly discourse on film music has been in existence since the early 1990s (with some valuable research published even earlier), *Sound and Music* also paves new ground for the study of the sonic elements of television and gaming, even if only to a minimal extent.

The chapters in *Sound and Music* run almost chronologically, focussing on film, from silent cinema to the birth and development of synchronised sound, tracking its (scholarly) interpretation from novelty to art form. Genre, national cinema, key composers, production companies and methodologies are covered and perspectives are offered from authors with industry experience as well as purely academic backgrounds. Chapter Eight, "Sound Effects: Strategies for Sound Effects in Film" by Barbara Flueckiger, is one with significant industry knowledge. Here, Flueckiger investigates the function of sound effects, including semantic and sensory strategies that contribute to the film audience's understanding of narrative and character development in cinema.

Sound and Music's chapters are divided into the broad areas of technologies, sound-scapes, cultures, people, industry and approaches. The bulk of the chapters in all sections are based on discussions of various aspects of film and cinema, with the others centred on television (advertising, news, MTV, talent shows, rockumentaries and TV musicals) and a single chapter on videogame music (Wood 129). Thus, the book might be more appropriately titled *Sound and Music in Film and Television*, as there is only one essay on digital/online media in this publication, the final chapter, "Metamusic: Metamusic in the Age of Metamediation" by Holly Tessler. Tessler explores the relationships (and tensions) between music, media and technology in the digital age. She discusses P2P file sharing in the online

marketplace and how this intersects with the film and music industry. As the issue is extremely relevant in the digital age, this chapter of the book is a vital one.

The abundance of film-focussed chapters and lack of in-depth analyses of other media suggests that the editors' scope may have been too broad. Crucial discussions on topics such as the rise of YouTube and iTunes, and devices including tablets and smart phones that would have been quite effective in this volume are lacking, apart from a passing mention of blogs and podcasts in James Deaville's chapter on television-news music and, of course, Tessler's aforementioned chapter. To cover that potential breadth of material, *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: An Overview* perhaps should have been spread across multiple volumes to live up to its title.

A key visual medium explored to a small extent in the book is gaming (and its accompanying sound/music tracks). Gaming is a new area of study as gaming itself has only been in existence for just over thirty years. The industry enjoys notable commercial success (more than the music and film industry combined) with revenue of $US 10.3 billion in 2002. Boyd suggests that "We love to throw around statistics about the gross revenues of our respective industries, as if these numbers somehow add credibility to our endeavours". However, when something is so broadly popular, it inevitably attracts scholarly interest. Music in gaming is of great interest to fans (or gamers), spawning music concerts with symphony orchestras (amongst others, *Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy* is touring internationally in 2012) and academics (with conferences including Game (held at Macquarie University, Australia in 2011) and Meaningful Play (USA 2012)).

In *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: An Overview*, Sandy Thorburn hones in on television musicals, arguing that they are seen as the intersection between live theatre ("highly stylised") and television (naturalistic) (261). Most of Thorburn's chapter on television musicals is a historical recount of musical programming on US television dating back to before World War II. The methodology and framing of the television musical in terms of genre and categorisation is highly dependent on Rick Altman's seminal study of the film musical. I am uncertain if this works, as film is of course a markedly different form to television. The writer lumps children's programmes under the genre classification of the fairytale musical (268–70) and considers *That's Life* (1968-1969) as a folk musical (270). The argument that stands out in this chapter is that the difference between film, live theatre and television lies in the audience. Television is more personal (because of where it is viewed, in the privacy of the home), as opposed to the public spaces of the cinema and the theatre. However, even this does not hold up, as television is no longer a completely private experience considering convergence with digital media.

In his chapter on music in advertising, Ronald Rodman observes: "Music has been a staple of advertising in the electronic media from the earliest days of film and radio. The first musical advertising jingle was heard on the air in 1929 when a barbershop quartet sang a song about the breakfast cereal called Wheaties on a Minneapolis radio station" (620). Rodman then goes on to produce a musicological/semiotic analysis of advertising sound and music. He focuses in on music in "mini-narrative" advertising and argues how the music reinforces the idea of narrative. This is one of the most compelling chapters of the book, reinforcing not only the value of music in visual media, but also the profound effect of music television programming and advertising.

In an unusually short chapter on television news music, James Deaville draws attention to this academically undervalued area. Although music was not an integral part of news programmes until they moved to a thirty-minute evening slot, he suggests: "television news music has not attracted significant scholarly attention in part because of its invisibility. Even in studies of television news, media specialists tend to ignore the musical components to the same extent that film scholars neglect the soundtrack" (615–16). The chapter summarises how music and sound are utilised in television news, but offers no engaging analysis or insights into the effects that certain music tracks have on how audiences view the news. Even the mention that CBS News "banned the use of music and sound effects from their news programmes, with the intention of keeping the news free from elements of entertainment and thus maintaining its credibility" warrants further examination that is not pursued here (613).

While it is not possible to cover all forty-seven chapters of *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* here, in singling out the key chapters discussed above, it is clear that this collection would prove very beneficial for those looking for a brief overview of the impact of sound and music in visual media. Film, music and media scholars are now aware of the value of studying music and sound in this field, however, there is still a need for more research to be undertaken in the areas of television, gaming and digital media, which will hopefully follow soon.

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Penny Spirou recently completed her PhD from Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia). Her thesis, "The Musical Biopic: Representing the Lives of Music Artists in 21st Century Cinema", focuses on contemporary representations of life narrative through the musical film genre. Penny currently teaches media studies at Macquarie University and is pursuing her research interests in music auto/biography.