Characteristics of Sound

TIMBRE: tone and color qualities, i.e. harsh, guttural, whooshie, brassy, etc. I.e. clarinet gives a reedy sound to perhaps accentuate the plaintiveness of a movie scene.

PITCH: lowness or highness of sound.

Low sounds: levels of deep feeling, subtly register warmth, growing determination or possibly fear
High sounds: more playful or can be terrifyingly shrill

VOLUME: loudness or softness of sound. High-action can overpower with volume, love story can soothe with muted volume.

RHYTHM: sound patterns, basic, simple, complex, irregular.

TEMPO: rapidity of the patterns. Soundtrack with slow tempos are languid and reassuring. Fast tempos put audience at edge of seat.

ATTACK and DECAY: alludes to the way sound begins and ends.

Categories of Sound: Dialogue, Music and Sound Effects (SFX)

Dialogue

Story Advancement: provide exposition

Character Development

Getting a Laugh: to relieve tension

Continuity

Types of Film Music

Source Music: recognized as having a realistic origin within the context of the story
I.e. character breaks into song, plays music on stereo

Underscoring: music in movies that comes from nowhere, music has no recognizable source, used to add emotional meaning to a shot, scene, or entire film.

Applications of film music

• Music to introduce and conclude a film
• Music for establishing a time period or providing a setting: can pinpoint a period.
• Music to enhance specific action.
• Music that sets the mood and pace.
• Music as leitmotif (leading motive, a musical idea common in the opera): associate leading characters or important events, locations, or ideas with specific music.
• Music that comments on the internal state of a character.
• Music to bridge shots and scenes: used in montage, transitions, "traveling music".
Sound Effects (SFX): all the sounds in a movie that are neither speech or music, inspired SFX establish the essential texture of the film experience, woven into the film by layering into various tracks.

**Ambient:** background sounds

**Hard effects:** Foley

Jack Donovan Foley:
- sound editor at Universal Studios in the 1950s
- known for his advancements in synchronized sound effects
- Foley studio

**Denotative** (associated with something specific) / **Connotative** (implied meaning)
- to highlight action
- to provide ambiance
- to bridge shots and scenes
- to evoke emotions

**Approaches to Sound Effects**
- some films have special effects explicitly indicated
- may be added as the film is being edited
- laid in postproduction when background source-sound of film shot on location are cleaned out

**Applications of Sound Effects**
- to fill-in the environment.
- to highlight action.
- as a signature.
- to bridge shots and scene.