Functions of music in Storytelling

3. depict identity or personality
   - suggest gentle or violent person, or evil
Functions of music in storytelling

4. Lyrics as Narrator (Jennifer Van Sijll, Cinematic Storytelling)
   - voice of a character
   - reveal thoughts
   - voice of narrator
   - thematic information
   - presented poetically
Lyrics as Narrator
Apocalypse Now
this is The End by the Doors

◆ 60’s band, Vietnam Era
  ● historical anchor
  ● nihilistic lyrics
  ● critical view of the war--the underbelly
  ● inverted sense of right and wrong
  ● this is the End---at the beginning
  ● we see Martin Sheen upside down
  ● Not “literally” about the war
  ● cost prohibitive..........................
Functions of Music

5. emphasize or intensify action
   ✤ crescendo or repetition
   ✤ rising tension
   ✤ This is the End--instrumental
Functions of music

6. Provide counterpoint--classical music and bombs--from Platoon
Counterpoint

- Power of juxtaposition
  - combine seemingly unrelated parts
    - effect more powerful because of difference
  - Music is:
    - Adagio: Samuel Barber
    - originally for string quartet
    - reworked for string orchestra
Functions of music in storytelling

7. Unifying transition--overlap, lead in, segue
8. Evoke--atmosphere, feeling, mood
Functions of music in storytelling

Apocalypse Now by Francis Ford Coppola

◆ “Orange” synthesized by Carmine and Francis Coppola
  ◦ serves as transition music

◆ Ride of the Valkyries from Die Walkure by Richard Wagner
  ◦ set the tone for the assault
  ◦ was played in attacks by German tanks in WWII
  ◦ Wagner was a proponent of the German super-race
Sound Effects
Van Sijll

More than just the sounds of a scene
- layers of meaning
- can reveal
- can suggest
- can hide/disguise
- can establish
- can be tied to specific event or character
Diegetic and non-Diegetic Sound

Van Sijll

✦ Diegetic
  • organic to the scene
  • realistic
  • can be altered for effect
  • can be contextual or narrative

✦ non-Diegetic
  • not logically heard in the scene
  • added for narrative effect
Diegetic and non-Diegetic Sound from Platoon
Diegetic Sound from Platoon scene

- water dripping
- jungle sounds
  - insects
  - owl
- slapping bugs
- snoring
- movement sounds
- explosion/guns
- provide context
non-Diegetic Sound from Platoon scene

- Music
  - dissonant
  - builds to crescendo
  - pitch is high--lower notes added
  - timbre is “scratchy”
- Heartbeat--builds to crescendo
- Builds Tension--
- Leads to release
- Narrative role