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William Whittington

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#316753 in Books William Whittington 2007-02-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, 1.03 #File Name: 0292714319288 pagesSound Design and Science Fiction | File size: 24.Mb

William Whittington : Sound Design and Science Fiction before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sound Design and Science Fiction:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Sound and two Blade RunnersBy sjedisI'm one of those picky people when it comes going to the movies. I always go early and only to specific theaters to make sure I get the best seat. I want to see a movie the way it was meant to be seen. After reading William Whittington's Sound Design Science Fiction Film, I realized that where I sit is just as important if you want to hear the film the way it was meant to be heard. I've also gained an appreciation for what goes into how I experience a movie.One of the most enjoyable parts of

this exploration is that it focuses on my favorite genre, science fiction. It's a logical choice for experimentation and certainly technological innovation, after all, what does an alien, a light saber, or a pod racer sound like? Ask Ben Burt. It is up to the imagination of the designers like Burt to create the realities of that imagined universe. It's been 30 years since I saw Star Wars for the first time, but the sensation of the opening as Vader's ship passes, seemingly, overhead and onto the screen is still crystal clear. While Whittington explores the development of the sound design through films like THX 1138, Star Wars, Exterminator II, Alien, and the Matrix, my favorite chapter is the one on the two Blade Runners, one of my favorite films. I have my own issues with director's cuts and though I loved the visual sensation, music, and the Sam Spade-like voiceover of the original 1982 version, I almost wish I hadn't seen Blade Runner until the director's cut came out in 1992. But, it's like the judge asking the jury to disregard the previous statement, it took some convincing for me to see how the basic elements of the story had changed. Whittington goes carefully through both versions of the film and, skeptical the whole way, I had to re-examine my own memory of the story. Gradually I realized that not only were there two different stories, with basically different Decker's, but that the majority of the transformation comes from the sound design itself. Removing the voiceover and allowing the story to reveal, not explain the events, fundamentally changes the story and leaves open questions about Decker himself. Is he a replicant? Are his memories more real than those of Rachel? Those issues, unambiguous in the original version, are much more in the style of author, Philip K. Dick. Okay, you may not be interested in re-examining your view of Blade Runner; the way I was. Apparently, I was one of the few people who saw it the first time out. But, if you are curious and enjoy movies, this book will give you insight on the changes in sound within the film industry and in how we experience that when we view films at home or in the theater. On the other hand, if you're one of those hopeful future filmmakers it will give you a broader perspective on the power of sound as an integrated element of film. As for me, I'll just have to make sure I get the best seat in the theater, and give this director's cut a chance.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Challenging and rigorous
By Jeffrey C. Brown
I'm teaching "Sound Design in Science Fiction and Horror Films," and so was of course delighted when I came across this book. Academically sound and insightful, I had a sophomore the other day come up after class and say "I really like this book. I thought it was going to be boring, but it's really interesting." High, high praise. It's much more of a thematic, conceptual exploration than any kind of a "how-to" or even "how they did it," so if you're looking for information on how to create sound design for science fiction, this isn't your book. But if you are interested in examining, for instance, how in science fiction "the sonic landscapes begin to emphasize a greater uneasiness in relation to technology, scientific breakthroughs and the future" with some specific illustrations from movies like Alien, 2001, and Star Wars, then this book is for you. This is an area of study that could use a lot more books like this! Sound design studies, to the front. Next we need the same kind of treatment for Horror films.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic
By Timothy Dutton
Extremely academic, which is just what I was looking for. A nice compilation of a lot of information from a lot of sources.

Sound is half the picture, and since the 1960s, film sound not only has rivaled the innovative imagery of contemporary Hollywood cinema, but in some ways has surpassed it in status and privilege because of the emergence of sound design. This in-depth study by William Whittington considers the evolution of sound design not only through cultural and technological developments during the last four decades, but also through the attitudes and expectations of filmgoers. Fans of recent blockbuster films, in particular science fiction films, have come to expect a more advanced and refined degree of film sound use, which has changed the way they experience and understand spectacle and storytelling in contemporary cinema. The book covers recent science fiction cinema in rich and compelling detail, providing a new sounding of familiar films, while offering insights into the constructed nature of cinematic sound design. This is accomplished by examining the formal elements and historical context of sound production in movies to better appreciate how a film sound track is conceived and presented. Whittington focuses on seminal science fiction films that have made specific advances in film sound, including 2001: A Space Odyssey, THX 1138, Star Wars, Alien, Blade Runner (original version and director's cut), Terminator 2: Judgment Day and The Matrix trilogy and games milestones of the entertainment industry's technological and aesthetic advancements with sound. Setting itself apart from other works, the book illustrates through accessible detail and compelling examples how swiftly such advancements in film sound aesthetics and technology have influenced recent science fiction cinema, and examines how these changes correlate to the history, theory, and practice of contemporary Hollywood filmmaking.

"Sound Design is a major achievement in film studies that should be widely read as a general introduction to the underappreciated art and practice of sound. Whittington makes a compelling case for the centrality of sound to the modern Hollywood aesthetic. While surveying the evolution of sound technology, post-production practices and design in seminal science-fiction films of the last forty years, he concurrently provides a comprehensive introduction to the various components of the soundtrack and how they create meaning. He carefully defines terms such as Foley and source music not just in a glossary but as they arise, in such a way that the book can serve as a textbook on sound design in general, not just on the one genre...given the brilliant research that has been devoted to the transition to sound, I am particularly excited that Whittington has chosen to focus on more recent developments." Elisabeth Weis,

Screen 2008, issue 49 About the Author WILLIAM WHITTINGTON is Assistant Chair of Critical Studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.