Sound in Animation

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A truth whispered among animators is that 70% of a show's impact comes from the sound track.”

– Michel Dougherty

“The right music can help your animation flow, and sound effects can give your work a solid feeling that adds to the illusion of life.”

– Mark Simon

“Sound effects play an important role in conveying action. Music helps express emotion.”

– Michael Geisler
Sound in Animation

- Scratch track: “sketch” of soundtrack (done with the storyboard)
- Sound effects can come from standard libraries (CDs), everyday sources
- Sounds are shorter in animation than in real life
- Doesn’t need to be a connection between object creating sound and picture! (e.g. coconuts for horses’ hooves)
- Don’t wait for the animation to be finished to start thinking about sound!
First Sound: Steamboat Willie

- First “talking picture:” The Jazz Singer (1928)
- Steamboat Willie (1928) was one of the first experiments in composing an audio soundtrack for animation
- Willie screened with (live) sound when animation was half-finished – test audience was wildly enthusiastic
History of Music in Animation

- Warner Bros. owned hundreds of songs
  - Animation composers required to use a snippet in every animation
- Disney owned few songs in 20’s and 30’s
  - Encouraged composers to write variations on well-known themes
  - Original work in Silly Symphonies, starting with “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf” (1933)
  - Music in feature-length animations (1939 on)
Music in Animation: Carl Stalling

- Often regarded as the greatest animation composer ever
- Started as a organist, improvisationist for silent movies
- Worked for Warner Bros. 1936 to 1958, after Disney and Iwerks
- Famous for musical gags, from orchestral accents (pizzicato violins for tiptoe) to obscure references
- We’ve learned that cartoons should work without the sound. His cartoons worked without the picture!
History of Voices in Animation

- “It feels like the character came from some place before you see him on the screen, and when he’s done he’s going to go some place else. There’s a life for this character that happens exclusive of the 22 minutes you see him on screen.” – Rob Paulsen

- “I don’t just stand still in front of the microphone and speak. I put my full body into the performance just as I would on stage.” – Greg Burson
Voices in Animation: Mel Blanc

- Radio and Vaudeville
- Started with Warner in 1937 with Porky the Pig, after being rebuffed for 1½ years
- Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Foghorn Leghorn, Sylvester Pussycat, Woody Woodpecker, Speedy Gonzales, Tasmanian Devil, Pepe LePew, Marvin the Martian, Roadrunner, etc.
Voices in Animation

- **Daws Butler**
  - Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound
  - Mentor for many other voice actors

- **Nancy Cartwright**
  - Acted throughout youth
  - Went in to audition for Lisa Simpson, landed Bart instead

- Recent trend toward using celebrities for voices
Mel Blanc and Carl Stalling in Action

- Rabbit of Seville
- Fast and Furry-ous (1949)

Files:
- tweety-puddytat.wav
- bugs-whatsup.wav
- elmer-laugh.wav
- marvin-bitnice.wav
- daffy-despicable.wav
- marvin-delitful.wav
- foghorn-goaway.wav
- Thatsa.wma