

The Sounds of Horror

Music and Sound Effects in American Horror Film and Television

The strings accentuating Norman Bates's stabbing of Marion Crane in *Psycho* (1960); the simple, albeit extremely effective two-note ostinato representing the shark in *Jaws* (1975); the sinister atmosphere established by Ennio Morricone's *The Thing* (1982) theme; the critique of pop music to the (diegetic) tune of Huey Lewis & The News' song "Hip To Be Square" in *American Psycho* (2000); the poignant use of Lynyrd Skynyrd's song "Free Bird" in the concluding scene of *The Devil's Rejects* (2005); the pieces of classical music accompanying Hannibal Lecter's preparation of dishes containing human ingredients in *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-2015); sounds of chainsaws cutting off human limbs, alligator jaws snapping human bones, human bodies crushing to the ground; screams of terror and pain—horror films and television series are as much characterized by their uncomfortable or outright terrifying sounds as they are by their graphic images.

In her book *Deleuze and Horror Film*, Anna Powell emphasizes horror's affective dimensions, stressing that "editing and sound are pivotal tools of horror, used to arouse visceral sensations and to 'horrify' the viewer" (2005, 2). Similarly, Kevin Donnelly has argued that horror film music "attempts a direct engagement with the physical: for example, through the use of the very high [...] or the low [...]. These are not merely extremes of pitch, but are also tied to the intrinsic sounds of the human body" (2005, 105). Indeed, as Fiona Kelleghan has stressed, horror movies need "uncomplicated sound[s] that will disturb the audience viscerally rather than interest them intellectually" (2001, 48).

Drawing and expanding on these ideas, this panel will explore the soundscape of American horror, including (but not limited to):

- the meaning of intra- and extra-diegetic music in horror film and television
- horror film/television music/sound effects and affect
- the materiality of sounds in horror film and television (e.g., breaking bones)
- the spectrality of music/sounds in horror film and television
- how audio description can alter the perception of horror film/television

Panel Organizers

Michael Fuchs, Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck

Anna Marta Marini, Instituto Franklin-Universidad de Alcalá

Confirmed Speaker

Laura Álvarez Trigo, Universidad de Valladolid