

THAR 5211: Sound Design and the Director

Internet Resources

This is just the beginning. I plan on expanding this list exponentially, but this will get you started. Particularly useful for this class are the free sound effects sites listed. Enjoy!

General Music Reference

All Music (www.allmusic.com) Probably the most comprehensive music site on the web, ranging from classical and opera to pop, rock, jazz and everything in between. Search by artist, instrument, composer, instrument, even by mood. In depth biographical essays and complete discographies. Absolutely essential.

Music Services

Time was, streaming music online meant logging onto Pandora and crossing your fingers. But now there is a dizzying array of other services to choose from. Here are some of the best deals:

Rdio With on-demand access to over 18 million songs, Rdio makes it easy to search for and instantly play any song, album, artist or playlist. Unlimited streaming is available free with ads, \$4.99 a month without, \$9.99 a month to go mobile. Newcomer Rdio has by far the best app and online interface.

Spotify With 20 million songs and 20 million songs, Spotify is the new behemoth of music services. Its cumbersome desktop interface needs a full redesign, but there are tons of eclectic playlists. Same prices as Rdio.

Rhapsody This service is ad-free, but does not come with a free option plan. In addition to your computer, phone, and tablet, the decade-old Rhapsody has interfaces in TVs, home-audio devices, and even TiVos. Currently offering a 3-month half-price deal (\$5 a month).

Grooveshark Users upload libraries onto cloud servers, which means fewer catalog holes. But there's only an Android app, and the web interface can get sluggish. Unlimited streaming free with ads, \$5 a month for ad-free.

Songza Radio services have no on-demand option to find the exact song you want. Still, Songza has an excellent array of stations, including exquisite playlists based on your mood and the time of day, and for such activities as waking up, working out, commuting, concentrating, unwinding, entertaining, and sleeping. Users can find playlists not just based on artists, songs, or genres, but also based on themes, interests, and eras, such as "Songs in Apple Commercials", "90s One-Hit Wonders", and "Music of Fashion Week".

Pandora The wildly popular automated music recommendation service and custodian of the Music Genome Project. You just enter a song/artist that you enjoy and the service responds by playing selections that are musically similar. You then provide feedback on approval or disapproval of individual songs, which Pandora takes into account for future selections. While listening, users are

offered the ability to buy the songs or albums at various online retailers. Over 400 different musical attributes are considered when selecting the next song. These 400 attributes are combined into larger groups called focus traits. There are 2,000 focus traits. Examples of these are rhythm syncopation, key tonality, vocal harmonies, and displayed instrumental proficiency. Free streaming radio, \$36 a year to go ad-free.

Last.fm Using a music recommender system called "Audioscrobbler", Last.fm builds a detailed profile of each user's musical taste by recording details of the songs the user listens to, either from Internet radio stations, or the user's computer or many portable music devices. This information is transferred ("scrobbled") to Last.fm's database either via the music player itself (Rdio, Spotify, Clementine, Amarok) or via a plugin installed into the user's music player. The data is then displayed on the user's profile page and also compiled to create reference pages for individual artists. By April 2011 Last.fm reported more than 50 billion scrobbles. Free for a mix of on-demand and radio, but new music is slow to arrive.

Other music service sites providing similar services to those listed above include Batanga, deezer.com, The Hype Machine, iLike, imeem, Libre.fm, Live365, Jamendo, Jango, MeeMix, MOG, mflow, Moozone, Musicoverly, Playlist.com, Radical.fm, Radiolicious, rara.com, ShareTheMusic, Slacker, SpiralFrog, Tunewiki, We7, and Zune Social, with many more sure to arrive with each day.

Free Sounds on the Web

A1 Free Sound Effects (www.a1freesoundeffects.com) Free sound effects downloadable as WAV or MP3 files, including animals, buttons, cartoons computers, household, people, radio, siren, sports, television, transportation, weapons, weather and christmas/holiday sounds. They also sell sound effects CDs.

Absolute Sound Effects Archive (www.grsites.com/sounds/) Now with 1,980 high quality sound effects. One cool aspect of this site is that you can either download the sound the regular way or e-mail the sound to yourself!

Creative Sound Design (www.therecordist.com) Mostly a state-of-the-art sound design facility for the video game industry, this site does offer several hundred free sound files for download – airplanes, science fiction sounds, avalanche, thunder strikes, wind, water, fire, crashes, boats, trains and doors.

Epic Sound (www.epicsound.com) This site has an incredible Guide to Sound Effects – that is, creating your own sound effects using everyday objects like they used to do on the radio. Everything from Alien pod embryo expulsions to vomiting. A lot of fun.

Find Sounds (www.findsounds.com) This site is basically a sound effects search tool featuring thousands of free sound effects from different sources.

Results open in a new window, giving multiple choices for your search. Excellent site.

Flash Kit Multimedia Resource Site (flashkit.com) This site has thousands of sound effects and music loops for royalty free use. Categories include Ambience, Cartoon, Communication, Domestic, Electronic, Industrial Commercial, Instruments, Interfaces, Mayhem, Mechanical, Nature, People, Recreation, and Transportation. Available in .wav and .mp3.

Free Sound Effects (www.free-sound-effects.com) Similar to Find Sounds site listed above.

The Freesound Project (www.freesound.org) This is a collaborative database of Creative Commons licensed sounds, focusing only on sound, not songs. There are tens of thousands of files and a half million users. Some pretty odd and interesting things. Also has a forum for discussion of field and effects recording. Definitely one of the best sites on the web.

Ljudo (<http://ljudo.com>) Free access to 1,200 free sound effects available in two formats: RealAudio and Mp3.

PacDV Free Sound Effects (www.pacdv.com/sounds) Not a large collection, but includes ambient backgrounds, household, beeps and clicks, machines, mechanical, music, humans, transportation and voices.

Partners in Rhyme (www.partnersinrhyme.com) Quite a large collection of free sound effects ranging from crowd scenes, nature sounds and vehicles to sports, horror, animals and musical instruments. The majority of their website is taken up with royalty free music links (which are not free).

Rob Grant's Telephone Pages (www.tones.plus.com/index.htm) Just what it sounds like – a collection of WAV files of telephone tones and associated sounds. For telephone enthusiasts everywhere.

SoundGator Sound Effects (www.soundgator.com) Free high-quality mp3 sound effects in various categories.

Sound Jay (www.soundjay.com) Another free site, featuring backgrounds, button sounds, communication sounds, human, house and mechanical, machine, music, nature and miscellaneous sounds.

*Note: You are often prompted to right-click on a file name and choose "Save Target/Link As..." in order to download a file. This is what you do if you are a PC user. If you are a Mac user, what you normally do is Ctrl-click on the file name, choose "Download Linked File" or "Save Link As..."

Unique, Weird, Wonderful

Carousel Music (<http://music.carouselstores.com/>) Source for CDs and cassettes of merry-go-rounds, the circus midway, old-time automatic music machines including Wurlitzer and European band organs, calliopes, carousel organs, barrel organs, nickelodeon pianos, barrel monkey organs and more.

Cylinder Preservation and Digitization Project

(<http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/index.php>) With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the UCSB Libraries have created a digital collection of nearly 8,000 cylinder recordings which can be freely downloaded or streamed online. Extraordinary resource for thousands of musical and spoken selections from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a little-known era of recorded sound.

MediaOutlet.com This is a huge archive of historical media from the web's original historical multimedia archive, with a particular emphasis on classic tv, movies and old-time radio on Mp3, DVD and CD. Also contains cartoons, social guidance films, WWI and WWII, nuclear war films, etc.

Natalia Paruz (www.sawlady.com) This fascinating website focuses on a woman who has spent over a decade bringing the rare art form of playing music on a carpenter's saw to audiences around the world. Also includes a list of all the saws that were made especially for music, a Flex-a-tone page, theremin, English handbells, pitched cowbells, 4-in-hand hand bells, etc. Unique.

Old-Time Radio (www.old-time.com) If you are interested in radio programs from radio's golden age, this is the website for you. Packed with history, programs, databases, reference materials and other good stuff.

Stock Music Libraries (Sounds & Music for Sale)

Audio Network (audionetwork.com) This is a stock music music library, based in England, and designed for use in television and films. The company built its catalogue organically, recording the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and coordinating with a network of some 300 composers. It has commissioned and recorded some 40,000 original music tracks and 50,000 sound effects.