

5th International Conference and Expo on

Computer Graphics & Animation

September 26-27, 2018 | Montreal, Canada

The representational, narrative, and mimetic functions of music in animated films from Steamboat Willie (1928) to Porco Rosso (1992): A hermeneutic study

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We are often able to recognize a specific animation by its soundtrack alone; yet when we question why that is we are seemingly unable to pinpoint the exact reason for this inexplicable acoustic association. Unraveling the compositional method in an animated film reveals much more than its methodology, but provides illuminating insights into the important effects that animation music has on the viewer's experience. At the intersection of music and visual perception through traditional animated media, we are able to make significant discoveries on the aesthetic, representational, and mimetic functions of music that aids narrative story-telling in an animated film. The label of 'Mickey-Mousing', therefore, can be understood as a pathway to theorizing the interdisciplinary nature of animation, through semiotic and analytical means. This presentation seeks, therefore, to explore various approaches and methodologies towards understanding and analyzing music in animated media. This conference will also discuss the hermeneutic nature of perceiving animation and how it affects the level of subjective engagement. The conclusion draws together loose threads in the discussion and theorizes about new ways of composing for, conceiving, and perceiving animation in the contemporary climate.

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