## David lynchs use of sound and silence



David Keith Lynch (born January 20, 1946) is an American filmmaker, painter, composer, video artist, and performance artist. Lynch has received three Academy Award nominations for Best Director. He started his career intending to be an artist, but after winning a \$5, 000 grant from the American Film Institute he turned his attention to films and produced The Grandmother, a film about a neglected boy, who grows a grandmother from a seed. This film became a trademark for Lynch, though his use of sound and disturbing image. (Chion 15-40)

David Lynch & Angelo Badalamenti's partnership Angelo Badalamenti an Italian American composer, scored in films such as Gordon's War, and Law and Disorder before he met David Lynch for his new film. They first partnered together in a song called "Blue Velvet" in David Lynch's classical film called Blue Velvet. Badalamenti's name and music has become as much a part of Lynch's work since Blue Velvet as Lynch's own name. They went on collaborating on "Mysteries of love" which was written by Lynch and composed by Badalamenti.

Lynch asked Badalamenti to appear in the film as the piano player in the club where Rossellini's character performs. This film would be the first of many projects they would work together on. After doing a score in the film Lost Highway, Lynch and Badalamenti traveled to Prague to record part of the score with the Prague Film Symphony Orchestra (to get that authentic old-Euro sound). In 1990, Lynch did a film "Wild at Heart. "The soundtrack included jazz, both old and original pre existing rock-'n'-roll tracks "Up in Flames," sung by Koko Taylor and written by Lynch and regular collaborator Angelo Badalamenti.

Every director has his own way of working with composers, but Lynch's ongoing relationship with Badalamenti is now closer and more collaborative than those of such famous teams as Alfred Hitchcock and Bernard Herrmann, or Stephen Spielberg and John Williams. They have worked together on all of Lynch's subsequent film projects, as well as "Twin Peaks" and other TV projects, and the stage work "Industrial Symphony #1. "Besides his work for Lynch, Badalamenti has done the music for Paul Schrader's "The Comfort of Strangers," Norman Mailer's "Tough Guys Don't Dance" and Bob Balaban's "Parents."

Lynch says. "But Angelo has become a really good friend of mine, and I talk to him all the time. We've got a lot of projects going. So we can talk up front, and we can create temp things that inspire a lot of shooting. This is really a great way to work. "Music is important to Lynch's work, even at the script stage. "Sometimes I listen to music to get ideas," he says. "Every film has its own inspiration from music. It helps you write and get ideas. I tell those musical inspirations to Angelo, and he understands the mood and writes and original thing with that mood in mind.

Now when Angelo and I work, he doesn't score the picture in the normal way {with rigid stop and start marks]. He gives me lots of raw material, lots of beautiful music. In the mix I can juggle it around. Lately I have been sitting on the board and have been the music mixer. I've got technical people all around me to make sure it's working. But I can feel it and do it and work with the sound effects and the music. It's just based on feeling and experimenting until you get it right. " " I'm not a musician," David Lynchs says " I've been brought into the world of music by Angelo and by sound effects."

The unique sound that they have managed to generate for Lynch's film projects in particular Twin Peaks, and their unusual recording techniques for Lost Highway. Lynch claimed, " Angelo Badalamenti really brought me into the world of music, right into the middle of it. " Use of sound and Silence in their Films Lynch has many trademarks, especially related to sounds. Subversion of dialogue and prolonged use of silence and over-exaggerated background noises can appear to be out of context within his films, but they are an integral part of a network that enhances the audience's experience.

By shifting the audience's focus between what they are watching and what they are hearing, Lynch has been able to create films that challenge the viewer. On one level simple entertainment can be achieved by merely watching Lynch's films as one would a Hollywood blockbuster. But on the other hand one can marvel at the intricacies and hidden depths that he has created through his subversion and exaggeration of sound in relation to the on-screen imagery.

The supernatural, glimpses of unclear nightmarish images, lack of distinction between reality and dreams or imagination, unclear motives and outcomes, timeless retro style, revelations of the dark underside of seemingly normal situations, characters that lead dual lives, lack of easy explanations, and the use of actors outside their normal comfort zones. (Sheen and Davison 50-85) Lynch's not only uses noise to create a musical score, but he also forms an audio narrative for the viewer, a narrative that tells us the story from a different viewpoint.

This narrative is made up of three key elements: background noise, silence and dialogue. These elements all help to shape the sonic story in Lynch's

films, but at the same time work independently of one another in order to cement the audio and visual structure of Lynch's films. Like the complex characters we see in his films, the key elements of the audio narrative give Lynch's stories an added depth; they conjure up explanations as well as creating more mysteries. Another interesting point is that throughout the film there are no natural sounds of birds, animals or the wind.

Instead the viewer is subjected to a phenomenon called 'room tone', which Lynch describes as the sound of silence that you hear in between sentences and spoken words. This room tone certainly creates tension and isolation, in that the silence between spoken words is a silence often associated with discomfort and isolation, but it is also a silence that allows one to ponder and think, or even dream. Early in his career while working with sound designer Alan Splet, Lynch became known for his use of sound effects and (in particular) industrial noise as a sort of film music concrete.

Eraserhead is one of the major technical achievements of its decade. It is a nightmare version of Citizen Kane because of the vitality with which it uses every element available. For example, the careful use of sound, in particular the sound of some mysterious industrial process, is an integral part of the film. "But it's not like I have one thing on a little roll of tape that I just like to slug in every once in a while, "he says. "The picture for the most part dictates the sound - music or sound effects - but sometimes in the reverse."

Through the use of particular sounds effect can be reversed, in that meanings can be twisted or distorted through the use of sounds. "Actually, I think sound effects are music. You can have a feel for things, and you don't really know where it comes from. And I just have a love for sound effects as

music. Now - thanks to Angelo - I'm sort of able to get into the world of music as well," (" You're sitting quietly, and something unfolds in your mind... ")

Blue Velvet (1986)

This was the first time they collaborated and Lynch asked Badalamenti to write a score like Shostakovich, with a Russian kind of a feeling juxtaposed with an orchestral score. During filming, he used megaphones on the set and played Shostakovich, to set the correct mood to be conveyed. For instance the scene where Jeffery steps into the apartment, this scene has a practically silent tone to the gruesome scene within. The silence here is purposeful in that Jeffery is silent as he skulks around, and the corpses of the Yellow man and Dorothy's husband are silent at this moment because they are, well, dead.

The quiet is pierced by a shrill whine, the television is "smashed in but turned on, and is emitting a high pitched hum". The sound that smashes the silence is a loud transmission from the Yellow man's police radio, eliciting a post-mortem twitch from the dead man, and a frightened jump from both Jeffery and the viewer. Everything returns to silence, until the radio barks up again, reporting the raid on Frank's apartment. (Blue Velvet) Entertainment Weekly ranked Blue Velvet at No. 100 on their list of the 100 Greatest film Soundtracks.

Critic John Alexander wrote, "the haunting soundtrack accompanies the title credits, then weaves through the narrative, accentuating the noir mood of the film." Badalamenti's success with the Blue Velvet let him to go on contributing to all David Lynch's Films. Lost Highway (1997) Lynch has many trademark devices commonly used in his films. In Lost Highway, Lynch used

sounds to build emotion and create symbolic collisions. There are Industrial sounds, very long takes, very less dialogue, silence at times, amplified at others, distorted reality, fire and smoke while orchestral pieces of music frame show the use of technology in the film.

For example, the phone rings twice accompanied by mood building music and the surveillance tapes use their own white noise with the music " mood Builders". The film opens to the imposing sound of Deranged by David Bowie. Car headlights illuminate road lines passing at a very high speed in the night, as if in flight. A horrifying mood is immediately established. Cut to Fred quietly at home, drawing painfully on a cigarette. (Lost Highway) Sound is an important component of a film for Lynch, who is highly involved in this aspect. " Sound and Film got to work together.

I keep saying that there are ten sounds that will be correct and if you get one of them, you're there. But there are thousands that are incorrect, so you just have to keep on letting it talk to you and feel it. It's not an intellectual sort of thing. " (" You're sitting quietly, and something unfolds in your mind... " ) Lynch was the sound designer of this film, and he worked with his friend and partner, Angelo Badalamenti to compose the original score for the film. The film has a killer soundtrack, which was produced (uncredited) by Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails.