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Introduction

The purpose of this project is to research and investigate the effect music and sound effects have on horror films, specifically, the natural phenomena known as infrasound. Just outside our range of hearing at 20 Hz, infrasound may not be audible, but can still cause physical reactions such as anxiety, uneasiness, and extreme sorrow (Morrow, 2017). I am creating a horror video-comic that heavily relies on musical cues and the incorporation of infrasound to build up parts of the story. This project explores creative ways to incorporate the usage of musical cues and infrasound in horror to illustrate the vital role this phenomenon has on the effectiveness of horror films. In addition, I hope that by incorporating sound into a visual project, this will provide a more immersive experience for the audience.

Background

Infrasound, the sound that can’t be heard, plays a vital role in setting an ominous tone. Infrasound is a wavelength of sound that is just out of range for human ears to hear, however this does not stop it from causing a reaction in humans. Specifically in the case of horror films and haunted houses, the usage of infrasound contributes to viewers’ or guests’ feelings of “uneasiness, anxiety, fear and anger” and naturally puts them more on edge as they begin to anticipate the next scare. Infrasound has most commonly been described as “extreme bass waves or vibrations” and can be described as a low humming sound, however, infrasound is not used alone to create this effect. Musical scores and sound effects build up on-screen tension and are able to overwhelm the viewer to an extent with a sudden change in audio and visuals. A great example of this sudden change in music is the ending of *Carrie* (1971) and *Friday the 13th* (1980).

Annotated Bibliography can be accessed through this QR Code:

Methodology

I am incorporating musical cues, and infrasound in a video-comic to demonstrate their importance and ability to effectively set the tone for the story. I also include metareferences to clichés of the horror genre within the film to create lighthearted, enjoyable moments for the audience. Metareferences are prominent in throughout *Scream* and pay homage to several works of horror in addition to poking fun at the genre’s stereotypes.

Results

The comic itself is in black and white and incorporates a comical story with elements of horror that follows three curious little ghosts as they explore a haunted house. More of the horror elements are incorporated as they explore this house that they find incredibly frightening. By combining a unique format for my visual story with effective audio elements, I was able to successfully create an entertaining comic that incorporates elements of horror, comedy, and suspense. I have included an image of the haunted house from my comic as well.

Conclusion

I was able to successfully explore the importance of sound effects, a sudden change in music, and the low drone of infrasound to create an audibly surprising project. Sound effects contribute to the on-screen activity while the sudden change of music unexpectedly surprises viewers. The usage of infrasound leaves viewers unsettled throughout the scene leading up to the ‘scare’.