Hollywood & History: Making Movies Through the Eyes of a Historian: The Directors

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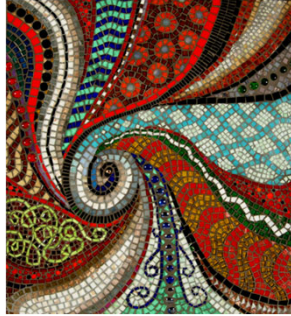
Directors' Challenges

- Script
- Theme
- Creative control
- Funding & budget
- Shooting schedules
- Scenery, sets, backlots
- Weather
- Working with actors
- Costumes
- Camera work
- Editing and continuity
- Sound
- Studio politics
- Communicating visually

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The Pianist

Schindler's List

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Vicarious Experiences

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Long Shot

Inglorious Bastards
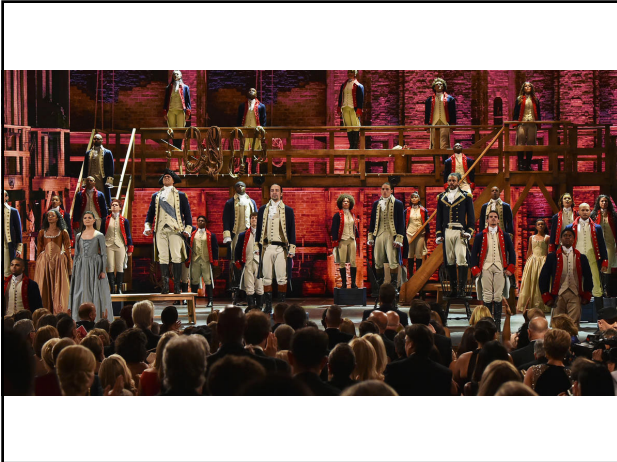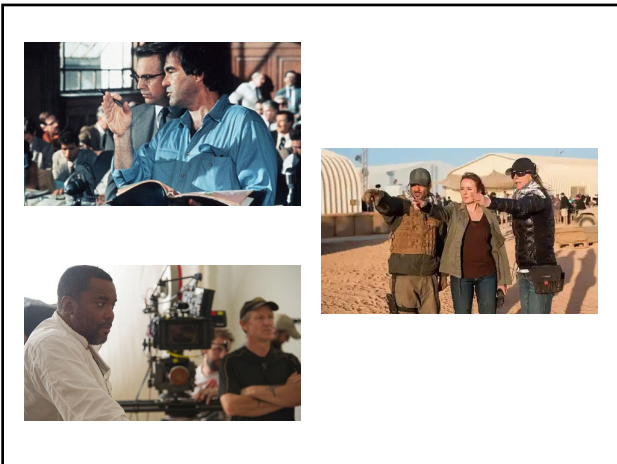
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Long Shot

The Pianist

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Establishing Shot

Schindler's List

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Medium Shot   Framing shots

The Pianist

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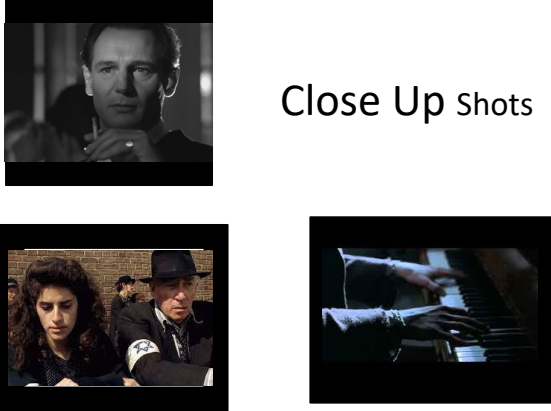
Close Up Shots

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Close Up Shots

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Soft Focus

Sound of Music

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Rack Focus

Downfall

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Rack Focus

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Deep Focus

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Deep Focus

Citizen Kane

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High Angle

Alone in Berlin

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Low Angle

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Eye Level

Generation War

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High Angle to Eye Level

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Dutch (or Canted) Angle

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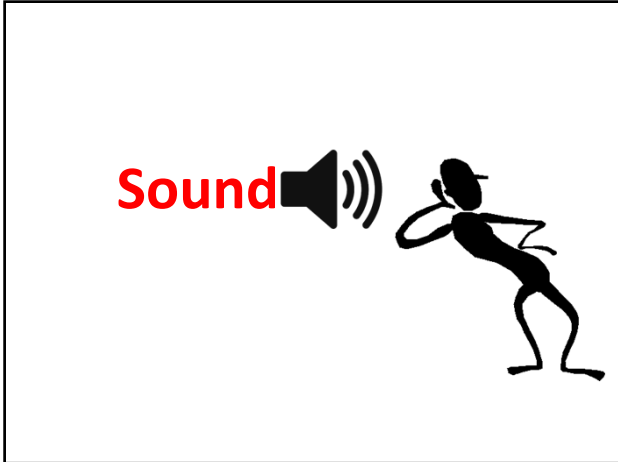
Sound 🔊

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Diegetic Sound

- Sound that could be heard logically by the characters within the film
- Background noise, traffic, dialogue
- Audience and characters are sharing the experience
- Internal diegetic, meaning that the sound can be heard only within the mind of one character (suspense, foreboding, foreshadowing, irony)

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Non-diegetic Sound

- Director intends the sound only for the audience, not the characters
- Create suspense, anticipation, manipulates mood somehow
- What moods are created with this sound clip?

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Moods created?

Sound 🔊

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Editing
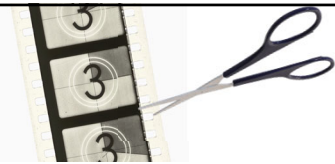
"Directors and editors are keenly aware of their power and responsibility. Together they pore over screen moments, refining them by fractions of a second. A well-edited movie has been built up and stripped down dozens of times, until the story is just so ..."

(1995, p. 47-48)
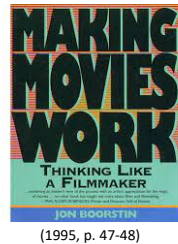
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Crosscutting (parallel editing)

- Cut to action that is happening simultaneously
- Shows events occurring simultaneously in two or more spaces
- Can create suspense
- Can create connections between a person and his/her actions or between two or more characters who do not even see each other
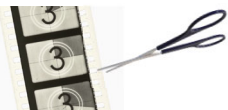
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Cross Cutting *Schindler's List*

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Fade

- Scene fades to black or white
- Often implies that time has passed
- Tends to be particularly slow, not very realistic

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Dissolve

- An image fades into another
- Can create a connection between images, objects, or characters

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Flashback & Flash forward

- Movement into action that has happened previously
- Often signaled by a change in music, voice-over, or a dissolve
- What is the information that the audience is being given at the flashback?
- Who in the scene does not have information can add tension or foreshadowing?

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Eye-line Match or POV Shot

- Shot of a person looking, then a cut to what he or she saw, followed by a cut back for a reaction
- Looking at action or object that a character is looking at
- May reveal what the character is thinking
- Gets audience to feel what the character feels

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Filmmakers Ultimate Challenge?

"'as it really was'"?

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***Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust* (2004)**

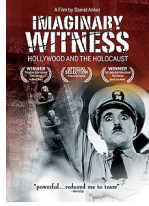**Essential Observations about Film as an Art Form when the Holocaust is the Subject:**

Annette Innsdorf: "Film gives the greatest illusion of truth. We assume there is a certain authenticity…always some degree of distortion." [near quotation]

Sidney Lumet: "unless you are doing a totally abstract movie, you are dealing … the vocabulary is literal. … How do you find a representative image?" [near quotation]

Steven Spielberg: "The Holocaust is perhaps the most difficult story to put on film … ineffable experience only understood by those who experienced the camps." [near quotation]

"It's impossible to do it justice. …. It's impossible to portray it as accurate. …. You can never portray it, but the dilemma is should you not do it?" [near quotation]

"Ethos of Hollywood is first of all the art of the middle, that is, it's meant to appeal to everyone."

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