Text and Interview by Sara Pinheiro

Misconceptions of Sound Design:

Interviews with Jana Částková and Sandra Klouzová

In the past three issues of ArteActa*, we have presented interviews with theorists and/or practitioners of sound design for film. After we interviewed <u>Michel Chion</u>, it was our interest to add more content dedicated to the practice of sound design for film. That's how we decided to interview <u>Marie-Jeanne Wyckmans</u> and <u>Paul Davies</u> as well. However, we thought it would make sense to close the cycle by interviewing someone from the Czech scene, simply to shed light on the rich audiovisual environment that we – artists, practitioners, and technicians – live here. At the same time, we would hope to dissipate a few misconceptions and misunderstandings about sound design.*

The first misconception will not be a surprise to the reader of ArteActa *and concerns the prejudice that sound is a predominately male field. If you noticed the article "<u>Regardless</u>" you would have read one thing or two that can be said about that. In fact, I always wanted to follow up that project with a sort of "<u>Regardless 2.0</u>" dedicated to the field of sound in film, asking where are the earlier female practitioners of sound for film – boom operators, recordists, editors, designers, mixers? How many of these, despite the high quality of their work, have been included in academic syllabi, historical approaches, and theory books? Where are the statistics that show the unbalanced ratio in the working opportunities provided by employers or other committees (such as juries in schools, festivals, etc.)? In fact, reading these studies proves that gender bias is there from a very early stage.*[1]

The second misconception has more to do with the job itself. The general discourse about sound design tends to compress into one idea that is a composite of several practices, leading to many clichés and misunderstandings of what the job pertains to. As an educator, I started realizing that it is not just the job that is cryptic, it is sound itself that is misunderstood. Under the motto of "how sound works", I try to explain sound in a way that is empirical and therefore relatable to anyone, while at the same time, I also show how complex sound can be even if not delving into physics or mathematics. This means explaining the relationship between sound, space, and time – three elements that are inseparable – more specifically, focusing on how sound propagates in space, and unfolds in time. For example, a common beginner mistake is to choose a shooting location without caring about the acoustic conditions of the space, or the sonic surroundings. Too often students, directors, and artists in general, take sound for granted because they are used to watching films in their final form, without realizing how amended it was.

In fact, this is transversal to other contexts: we walk into a concert without realizing that the crew and the performers had to arrive hours earlier to do a sound-check, they had to equalize all separate inputs one by one, deal with feedback, deal with the change in acoustics between the empty room during sound-check and a full

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1   See, for example, Leslie Gaston-Bird. *Women in Audio*. London: Routledge, 2019; or Melanie Bell. Learning to Listen: Histories of Women's Soundwork in the British Film Industry. *Screen*. 2017, vol. 58, n. 4, p. 437–457. Available also from: https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjx037 (Accessed on December 7, 2022). In the context of filmmaking see the documentary *This Changes Everything* (Tom Donahue, 2018).
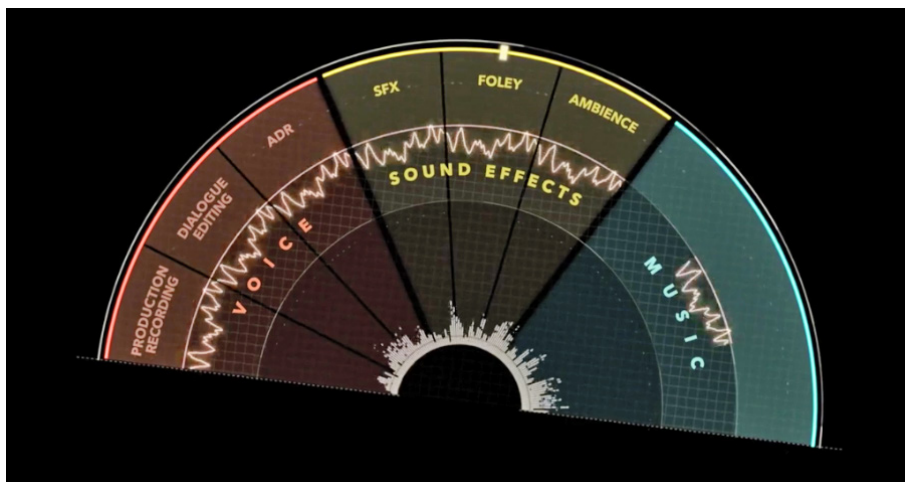
Fig. 1 – *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Midge Costin, 2019) [screenshot].

one during the performance, etc. We walk into a gallery without questioning why most audiovisual works are moderated by headphones or worse, wondering why no one realized that the sound of one installation would be leaking into the sound of another.

And, by the same token, when we look at a film, we look at the film as if it just happened like that. As if it was possible that a sequence of shots would sound continuous when each of the shots was recorded hours/days/weeks apart. We look at it knowing it is a fabricated product, a product of make-believe², but believing that concerns the actors, the filmmakers, and the locations. We look at it without realizing we are listening to layers and layers of added sound, edited to perfection: that a full sentence contains words and bits from different takes, that the sound effects were added to the scene, the acoustics of a given space was artificially created, etc.

Thus, when we decided to close this cycle of interviews with sound practitioners, we wanted to shed light on the multitude of practices there are in sound design. First, by dissipating some of the misunderstandings about sound design itself – because you can do a professional activity in sound and not be a sound designer and you can be a sound designer without being, necessarily, a technical agent. In other words, there is a general idea that a sound designer is a do-it-all person and an expert in everything concerning sound in film. That is not so. A sound design team is a sort of orchestra, composed of several groups and members in which each group has its incidence field (voice, sound effects, music, etc.).

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2   "Make-believe" is a core concept of fiction. Etymologically, fiction implies the making or manufacturing of something. It presupposes a creator. Additionally, it requires „the willing suspension of disbelief", which suggests that it is not completely detached from reality despite being a construct. See Gertrude Currie. *The Nature of Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Robert Stecker. „Fiction, Nature of". In: Davies, S. Et al. (eds.) *Companion to Aesthetics*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008, p. 275–278; and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Shawcross. *Biographia Literaria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1817.

Even more so, within each group, each field has its function, task, and skill. In this sense, you can be specialized in one thing without knowing much about the other. You can specialize in recording sound on set (which can mean at least two different positions – recordist and boom operator), in editing (and here, it can also mean different tasks, such as editing dialogue, foley, or effects for example), or in mixing (likewise, this implies different positions).

None of these activities mean sound designing per se. By the same token, you might do only post-production and never set foot in the film shooting (or the other way around) or you might be a re-recording mixer and never have a saying in the design itself. All these tasks imply decision-making which will have a direct impact on how the design comes across, but they are not necessarily executed with that in mind (they should be, which is why there is usually a "supervisor" to coordinate the different teams).

For this purpose, we have chosen to dissipate these misunderstandings by interviewing two practitioners in the field that illustrate two frequent paths to the job: Jana Částková and Sandra Klouzová, both based in Prague. Their paths provide us with a general understanding of their practices and, most of all, both unveil their practices from different perspectives while at the same time touching common points – not only among themselves but also with the previous interviews in this series.

Jana Částková has worked as a foley artist for Czech Television since 2006. Jana's story of becoming a foley artist is not too different from Jack Foley himself or Marie-Jeanne Wyckmans. This was due to the initial lack of training in the field and the fact that professionalization was achieved in loco – as with many other professions. Jack Foley himself was a general assistant (a runner, as we would call it nowadays) and when the need came, he started doing extra sounds for the film at hand.

Foley, however, is a performative art. There is a necessary predisposition for the technique and a full package of skills at stake. The foley artist performs the sounds of certain actions in sync with the image on display and, for that, they need to combine different skills. In a manner of speaking, the foley artist is a combination of an actor, a choreographer, and/or a musician. They need to become that actors, whose actions are to be mimicked. They need to impersonate the physicality of a certain type of body with a specific emotion in the scene. And, of course, they need to be quite sharp in their reactions, with a choreographic sense of movement, just like a dancer. Like a musician, the foley artist needs an acute sense of rhythm and tempo, following a score, reacting on time to cues, and being precise in their movements and gestures. All summed up, the foley artist is a sound performer.[3]

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3   Foley is the name of a specific way to add sounds to the film which consists of performing the actions in sync with the image (either ipsis verbis or just in a way that it sounds as-if). It is named after Jack Foley, the first (American) person known to use this technique. Due to this example, it was common to name the technique after a certain person or group of people executing that task. In the Czech Republic, the technique was referred to as "brunclík", named after a group of people performing the sounds in Barrandov Quarters, led by Bohumír Brunclík. In practice, it is more common to refer to "foley sounds" in Czech as "ruchy".

Fig. 2 – Jana Částková at work.

Sara Pinheiro (SP): How did you first start working as a foley artist?

Jana Částková (JČ): It happened by chance. As a high school student, I was working at the reception of the Barrandov studios. There was a man who would come for coffee sometimes, he worked for the TV studios. One day he asked me whether I would like to join the foley group. I didn't know anything about it at that time, I just handed in the coffee. But sometimes they were doing a movie and I was thinking "hmm, that would be a nice job." I thought I didn't have a chance, there were just like ten people in the whole country doing it. It was like a dream, and I didn't even think about it. But this guy brought me to Czech TV, and they were looking for a new foley artist here. That's how I started.

SP: What is it about foley that you found interesting? Some sounds in specific, the performance itself?

JČ: When I was bringing the coffee to their studio, I would see them working and I fell in love with it. For me, all sounds are interesting, I don't have any favorite sounds, because everything needs to be done, and all of it needs to

Fig. 3 – Foley studio at the Czech Television quarters.

work together. I need to find an object, so I think "What makes the sound that I need?" and I need to do it on time with the image, where it's supposed to happen so that it all fits.

> *SP: Here, in the Czech TV studio, you have several islands of props. They seem to be in an organized mess of different sections. How do you prepare for each movie? Do you get a list of all the props you need?*

JČ: It used to be like that. The sound designer or supervisor would make a list of props and the producers would bring us the props. Today, it works differently. We do everything at the moment when we play the film. If we find out that there is something in the picture that we don't have in the studio, we call the production to bring it over. But it doesn't happen too often because the studio is so big, and we have been bringing props for so many years that we have almost everything. Unless it is something to eat, which we must bring in on the day.

For this system to work, the props need to be wellordered, so that when you need one, you know where it is. That is why there are different corners and groups here in the studio. Because if we don't keep them in the right places, we would never find anything, not to mention that it would take forever to get the shots done. Most of the things have been arranged in the studio like this for a very long time, by the people who did it before us. We are just continuing from where they started.

> *SP: Does it ever happen to you that you notice something, and you think "Oh, that would be a good prop to bring to the studio"?*

JČ: Yeah, sure, all the time. I find objects that I think we don't have in the studio, often around the recycling bins with paper and glass and stuff. Every time I just look if there is something, anything we could use here, and if there is, I bring it.

> *SP: How do you deal with sounds outside the foley pit?[4] Does it bother you to listen to the sounds of footsteps when you walk away from work?*

JČ: I like silence when I am home. I usually don't turn the TV on, I don't listen to the radio. Even in the car, I sometimes forget to turn the radio on because I have headphones on my ears all day. I don't wear noisy clothes or high heels because of the sound they make. But the moment I leave the studio, I forget about my work and live a normal, regular life. You need to forget about it because otherwise, you would go crazy.

I also don't really like going to the movies. It must be a movie that I really want to see. But I don't go much to the movies because I don't need to watch what plays in the movie theatres all the time. I do like the movies I work for, but I don't have to watch them all the time.

> *SP: Is it because you spend your day watching the same scenes repeatedly?*

JČ: Yeah, that's the reason. I know the movies I work on, but it is not very often that I see some movies just by chance.

I have written somewhere else that "when you work with your ears, your ears never stop working".[5] But Jana shares another perspective. Not only is she able to disconnect from the constant magnified experience of sound but as a foley artist, she is highly visually oriented, or, better said, object-oriented. When she chooses a prop, she selects it for what she sees it can sound like.[6]

This job (like any other) influences the way we live our lives: the way we behave, talk, perceive the world, and the clothes we choose to wear. If one spends weeks editing dialogue, it will affect the way one listens to real-time conversations. In the interview with Sandra Klouzová, she shared that she likes listening to ASMR,

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4   A foley pit is a square panel made of individual frames with different surfaces (concrete, wood, marble, gravel, etc). The frames are constructed in a way that they can be re-configured to accommodate one to the detriment of the other or the need for a different surface. It is in these that the foley artist performs the footsteps.
5   Sara Pinheiro, "Field Recordings: A Manifesto," *Prace Kulturoznawcze*. 2022, vol. 26, n. 1, p. 129–146.
6   This resonates with an argument that I have posed within the research project "Acousmatic Foley". See Pinheiro, Sara. "Acousmatic Foley: sound-in-scène." *IJFMA International Journal of Film and Media Arts, Audiovisual and Creative Industries - Present and Future*. 2022, vol. 7, n. 2, p. 125–148.

Fig 4 – Sandra Klouzová
working at Soundsquare.

particularly to the sound of polishing shoes. I, on the other hand, cannot stand ASMR, especially when it comes to mouth clicks and soft speaking because it is precisely the type of thing I was trained to clean in the dialogue.

Sandra Klouzová is a sound engineer also based in Prague. She studied at the sound department at FAMU between 2011 and 2015 and has been working for Soundsquare ever since. Her most recent design, Okupace *(Michal Nohejl, 2021) was nominated for best sound by the Czech Film and Television Academy in 2022. Sandra sways between different tasks within her sound team, which is a result of her work environment.*

Sara Pinheiro (SP): Can I ask you how did you decide to study sound?

Sandra Klouzová (SK): I've always loved cinema. Even at the age of ten or eleven, I was watching special programs on TV where they would show classic films in the original version with subtitles. You wouldn't see that very often because everything was dubbed, and I couldn't really watch it like that. I also used to rent movies at video rental stores. But even though I loved film from a very young age, I got into sound completely by accident. At some point, I was a junior in high school, and I didn't really know what I wanted to study afterward. A friend of mine was in the editing department at FAMU at that time and she suggested I might be interested to study sound there. That

was the first time I started thinking about it. It was the first time I ever heard the term, "film sound". For me, the sound was automatically part of the film. I figured out what I needed to do in order to apply at that very moment. I never thought about it until I prepared for the entrance exams. I had never recorded anything, I had no experience with recorders, microphones, mixers, or sound composition in general. It was all new.

It was only in my first year that I gradually found out what the task entailed. At that time, I thought that film sound was equivalent to film music. It was a bit of a chimera, a bad guess. I applied to that school because I loved film and I also loved music. I sang and danced and played different instruments. But as time went on, I was very comfortable about it not being about music. Many of my classmates dropped out either after their first year or after their bachelor studies because they also thought it was about music for film, but I didn't mind that. I became interested in the sound, in giving the film some atmosphere through the sound and building a world through aural perception.

Coming to sound was more of a coincidence. I wasn't really a technical person, I wasn't recording anything before, and I wasn't in a band, anything like that. If my friend hadn't pointed it out to me then, I might not have found it on my own.

SP: How did you develop a taste for the technical aspects of the job?

SK: Concerning technology, I didn't change at all. I am not a very technically oriented person. Of course, I work on the computer, with software and all these devices, but my approach is definitely not about the technical aspects. When something new comes out, I'm not interested in trying it immediately.

There is a lot of discussion about Dolby Atmos currently, and I understand why some people are fascinated by it. But for me, it's far more important that the design has the right dramaturgy and works than how far you can go technically. Of course, for the design to come across it has to be well done technically but, at the same time, it can be a better experience for me to watch a good movie on my cellphone than a bad movie in a Dolby Atmos theatre, just because the technology is amazing and spectacular.[7]

I think that if you don't have an idea or a concept, having the best tools in the world is useless. It's more important to have a creative approach or a talent to invent things.

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7   The Dolby Laboratories is the American company responsible for projection licenses in film theatres across the world. The projections can have a stereophonic or a surround layout. For the surround format, there are different multichannel possibilities: the 5.1 or 7.1 formats mean there will be six or eight discrete channels around the audience, while the most recent Atmos format is a layout having both horizontal and vertical sound placements. Sandra Klouzová was part of the designing and mixing team on the first Czech film to use this technology – *Mars* (Benjamin Tuček, 2018). Unfortunately, this system is quite cryptic and requires a special license, not just in terms of software (which is usual) but also in terms of distribution. Currently, the studio Soundsquare is the only license holder in the Czech Republic, in the person of Pavel Štverák.

SP: When you were studying, did you enjoy the creative process more than learning some tools per se?

SK: Yes, I think what I enjoyed more was creating the design itself. I did a lot of sound for animations during school. And in animation, you can build that world any way you want, which is why it is so cool. Of course, there are some rules, but fewer than with a documentary or a feature film. With an animated film, you can make it sound ten different ways. Each one can be completely different, and they can all work. Then of course there's the issue of communicating with the director or the writer to come to an agreement. But in school, the collaborations with the animation department were a huge deal for me. Because I was completely open to the possibilities but still not sticking to an idea just because I could do anything, and instead looking for a concept or a design that could be justified.

And I enjoyed doing sound for animation a lot because there's a lot of blending between the more ambient music and the sound, it completely blurs that distinction.[8] That's what fulfills me the most. Building up that world and atmosphere through inventing the sound world.

SP: After your BA, you continued your Master's studies? Was it different?

SK: We were supposed to justify why we wanted to continue studying sound and come up with some project for that. The project should be basic because it should reflect the three years we had studied already. In a master's, you should already have the foundation, and you need to have some superstructure as to why you want to continue studying. I can't even remember what I came up with then, but I think it was something about sound dramaturgy. I was always more interested in thinking of the sound in the whole context of the film. I didn't want to fill in the gaps or work the scenes individually as they come – which maybe a lot of people have, that they don't have a view of the whole thing. I've never been interested in that because I find it too basic. I prefer thinking of some overall design that gives it more depth. You figure that out over time, of course, and sometimes by accident.

At the same time, I don't have these things extremely premeditated either. For example, in school, they teach you that the ideal is to have a concept for the post-production of the film, the final design, even before the actual shooting. Well, it doesn't necessarily work that way.

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8   This idea of "blurring the line" between music and sound design was previously discussed with Paul Davies and withdraws from Danijela Kulezić-Wilson's idea of the "integrated soundtrack". See Danijela Kulezić-Wilson. *Sound Design Is the New Score: Theory, Aesthetics, and Erotics of the Integrated Soundtrack*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Alternatively see Sara Pinheiro. The Audiovisual Musique Concrète: Towards the Integrated Soundtrack. *Iluminace*. 2021, n. 4, p. 69–74; and Sara Pinheiro. "Beyond Pristine Sound": An Interview with Paul Davies. *ArteActa*. 2022, no. 7, p. 133–144. Available from: https://arteacta.cz/beyond-pristine-sound-an-interview-with-paul-davies/ (Accessed on December 13, 2022).

SP: You started working at Soundsquare right after you finished your studies?

SK: I started working here a little bit during my studies, at the end of the first year or maybe the second, and then, since I finished studying, about 8 years ago, I have been here full–time.

SP: And do you always just design, or do you take on different tasks?

SK: We have such a team… We do films, miniseries, or series, both Czech and international productions. Our latest collaborations included Petr Jákl's *Medieval* (2022), Philipp Kadelbach's *Munich Match* (2022), and Jan Svěrák's *Betlémské světlo* (2022). To manage the time and the schedule in general, and to make it all work, we have several people working on the film at the same time. Everybody's doing a category and I'm doing more or less everything except the dialogue. That's not really my thing. I don't edit dialogue or record ADR with the actors.[9]

I do all the different categories that the film entails. I mean, I'm recording foley, and I also used to edit it a lot.[10] I also do a lot of ambiances; SFX, and sound design, so basically everything before the final mix. We're also trained in a way that when the film goes into mixing, it's pretty much ready. The transitions are already as they should be, if there is a subjective scene it is already as it should sound, etc. So, we actually pre–mix it.[11]

In every project, the team agrees on who wants to do what. So that we're all kind of happy, and we're all thinking about it together. Also, for some movies, I've done music dramaturgy, but that's not done very often in the Czech Republic, and it's a pity because it is very important. I feel that everybody [director, producer] relies on the composer to make music for the moments they selected and that it will just work like that. But it doesn't work that way at all. Of course, a professional musician will have the tempo right, the emotional tone in the right place, etc. But it happens quite often that the music looks like it is working at first, but once you start mixing it with the other elements, it falls apart.

9   ADR stands for "Automated Dialogue Replacement" and it consists of re-recording the dialogue lines in sync with the image. Once it was chosen in the editing process what take would be used, it is typically used in scenes in which the direct sound would be very difficult to use (high-action scenes, for example in a helicopter, or with explosions), but also in soft-core scenes that include production elements that somehow damage the sound, as for example when using a rain machine, or in a shot in which other members of the crew interfere with the recording. See: Michel Filimowicz (ed.). *Foundations in Sound Design for Linear Media: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. New York and London: Routledge, 2019.
10   Despite how accurate a foley artist can be, there is always the need for some editing. It can be because the performance is one or two frames off sync (which is equivalent to 1/24 or 2/24 of a second, and yet it does make a difference) or because amongst all the layers of foley sounds (a typical foley session has about 16 different tracks), one has to decide what is essential and what is disposable and balance all these layers together in particular in relation to the other groups of sounds – dialogue, atmospheres, SFX and music.
11   Mixing is one of the final stages of the film post-production. Once all elements are gathered from the different teams, it is up to the mixing engineer to make sure that it all levels up together, not only aesthetically but also technically, meeting the industry standards. In fact, even within the mixing category, there are plenty of variations. Paul Davies mentions how he designed the sound of *You Were Never Really Here* (Lynne Ramsay, 2017) but it was up to Andrew Stirk to re-mix the original multichannel version into a compatible version in stereo. That too is a "specialization". See: S. Pinheiro. "Beyond Pristine Sound", p. 138.

I'm rather amused when you put some music on a picture, let's say, just for testing and suddenly you find out that some of the edits work brilliantly. But if you would have been trying to come up with some sophisticated concept, you wouldn't necessarily achieve that. Sometimes it's just a work of chance, which can have a freshness to it, but at the same time, it feels like it was meant to be from the beginning. That's how I like it best when the ideas emerge from "just trying" when it's not really thought of beforehand, but it emerges out of the need to figure it out. You can't rely on it either, of course, but sometimes over-conceptualizing doesn't work either. It's all very dependent on the project.

SP: Do you think that the organization of the team can lead to different results? Do you think it is recognizable when it is your *sound design?*

SK: I think so, but it can be both a plus and a minus. I can be like "wow, I've got my style" and especially when people praise it, I'm like "yeah, I'm doing this right, so they'll probably also like the next thing I will do". But then I wonder if I'm not repeating myself and if I'm not approaching all these films in a similar way. I hope it is not the case, but it's hard to say. Everybody's got a certain taste, and that's where my sound choices really come from. But, of course, I have to take into account whether it's a minimalist atmospheric film, a very realistic story, or if it's a megalomanic production.

So hopefully, I'm able to differentiate between genres. But it already happened to me that people told me that they recognized my sound design and that when they saw my name in the final credits, they were not surprised.

SP: The film Okupace *was nominated for the best sound. How was your experience designing it?*

SK: If you didn't see it, I recommend it, as it is a Czech film that's different from the others. It's very theatrical, it's set in one single space, so it's built upon the dialogues, and there wasn't much room to do anything magnificent or with big gestures. But that is not the point either, because you're supposed to serve the film as it is. So I chose to create a modest approach with a few subjective moments in which I could create a dramatic atmosphere with the sound. So maybe that is why it was nominated.

SP: Do you have something of your own design coming up soon?

SK: Not right now. We were talking with a Slovak director about her debut film, because she wants to work with me, but it won't be until next year. It's more of a lighter genre, but from the script, it seems like the sound could be playful. There is a lot of imagery of an inner world, so it might be interesting to see what comes out of that. Otherwise, we're currently working on team projects again. Right now, we are working on *Úsvit*, by Matěj Chlupáček.

Fig 5 – *Okupace* (Michal Nohejl, 2021). Photo Bontonfilm.

SP: With that Slovak debut, do you get involved in the pre-production?[12]

SK: No, it's not set yet. She hasn't finished the script yet. But I'm certainly not going to interfere with that. Usually, these films are co-productions, so they already have a recording engineer who's going to record the sound on the set and then we care about the post-production only. Because it is a co-production, the first thing I thought of, of course, is that the recordist can take care of the dialogue because they naturally know the material they recorded. They could deal with the dialogue (edit it, clean it, etc.); and then I would take care of everything else – the design and the mixing.

With *Okupace*, we had meetings before they started shooting, of course. I visited the set, and we were also figuring out the music beforehand: where it was going to be, and what type. But I am not super specific about the script or locations. For me, it doesn't work at all to deal with these things in such an early stage of production. The film can evolve in a completely different direction over time and then you have to work with it differently. Usually, it is teamwork, and because I work within Soundsquare, most of the time, we work on the projects as a team. And I'm not the main one on the team [the supervisor]. So, when I get to do my part of the job, it is already picture-locked, edited, and it is all "figured out". It is rare that I take it as "my project".

SP: Is there anything you would like to do next?

SK: I don't think about it, it can either be a completely atmospheric slow film with no words, or it can be a blockbuster or just a romantic film. All these options can be interesting if they are well-made and have some depth. That's probably the most important thing for me. So, rather than having a dream thing, I crave good projects that I know will stick with me years later and are worth being involved in. Especially if it's with people that you trust, and that

12   Pre-production is everything that precedes shooting the film. It can refer as back as to the writing of the script, but also to scouting locations, casting actors, set design, etc.

trust you. The collaboration process is the biggest criterion. It's a matter of the heart. That's what fulfills you the most, and if it's successful and it has some impact, that maybe it's in some people's minds that it was a good thing to do, that's what I want the most.

With sound, the good news is that even if you're working on something that you don't really enjoy or have no relation to, you see it more from a professional point of view and you want to give it as much as you can at the moment, so it gets better than it was. So, you start to enjoy the process. That is also a good challenge to take when you have to improve the product that came to you.

It's funny because every time people, friends, and family ask what I do, I'm not able to explain. Maybe after twelve years, I should have created some simple explanation that would have made it clear to them, but I always get caught up in it and start going into details when they have no insight at all. But sound is so… It is possible to explain what film editing is, what directing is, or even the camera's job. But if the sound is done well, it's so natural that the viewer wouldn't imagine it was originally not like that. When I say I do film sound, everybody either thinks I'm holding the microphone on the set or that I'm doing the film music. If I start telling them it's neither of those things, that when the film is shot on the set, it comes to us very empty and we create the feeling of the scene and the emotion, that we add everything in there, layer by layer, I think very few people understand, because it sounds so abstract. Few people understand what the job takes, but it is quite cool to be a little bit mysterious in this world.

Hopefully, these interviews helped clarify that. Even if very often, this job comes by chance, unannounced, unplanned; even if there is a general assumption that we are or should be musicians, or that the gender bias is justified, this craft includes all the core elements of filmmaking.

In sum, both Jana and Sandra resonate with the interviews of Chion, Davies, and Wyckmans. On one hand, all these practitioners are attracted to sound means themselves, rather than the technological apparatus that facilitates them: Chion claimed that sound has always been immersive, and the current terminology is simply a branding strategy, and Sandra emphasized the importance of having a design concept before anything else, just like Paul Davies shed light on how his social and cultural surroundings have a direct impact on his creativity. The core of their practice is the same because the essence of film remains the same: in spite of anything else, a "make-believe" product. That is also why Jana and Marie watch films without their "foley-cape" and have a certain detachment, while at the same they are affected by their surroundings and sonic environment in real life. And that is, ultimately, why I pose that sound is simultaneously concrete and abstract, relatable, and ungraspable.

Transcription and translation by Magdalena Vostárková