

JANE TATTERSALL: POST-PRODUCTION SOUND SUPERVISOR WITH AN EAR FOR EMOTION

According to acclaimed post-production sound guru Jane Tattersall, sound is a highly underrated conveyor of emotion in the film medium. So much effort goes into making the image, she points out, that schedules can become derailed and budgets run dry by the time it comes around to sound. Instead of consistently being able to provide 100 per cent of the results she knows she can deliver on a film, time or money may constrict her to 90 per cent. While Tattersall admits this seems like a slight margin, she also believes that audiences can tell the difference.

Tattersall recognizes that today's audiences are conscious about music's ability to build emotion into cinematic moments. Far less obvious to them, she believes, is the way that sound design carries emotions when there isn't any music. She'll begin a job by watching the picture cut and gathering all kinds of sounds that represent feelings she has noted. She'll also meet with the director to discuss the film's intent. Then Tattersall begins to play, and much like a painter working with brush strokes on a canvas, she balances different sound elements until she shapes the results she wishes to hear.

To heighten the emotions in a key scene for the new mini-series *Sex Traffic*, directed by David Yates and set for release this fall, Tattersall amplified everyday sounds to convey internal shock and a feeling of other-worldliness. The movie is about the selling of Eastern Europe women in the sex trade, and the sequence follows a woman who has been through something horrific as she enters a room where some of the other girls are hanging about. When she hears ambient sounds in the room, such as music filtering through headphones, the crunching of potato chips and the brushing of teeth, they are isolated and exaggerated. This supersensitive sound treatment helps to show that she is feeling outside herself.

Post-production sound designers work with all things related to sound. Tattersall cleans up the dialogue, supervises additional dialogue recording and gathers and cuts sound effects, and unless there is a music editor she also lays in the music. After eight years in the business, she formed her own post-production house. Tattersall Sound has been going for 12 years now, enhancing the tracks of acclaimed directors, including David Cronenberg, Sturla Gunnarsson, John Fawcett, Deepa Mehta, Daniel MacIvor, Larry Weinstein, Barbara Willis Sweete, David Wellington and John N. Smith, on films that have earned her dozens of international awards and nomination certificates.

Tattersall has culled a team of sound editors and takes pride in having built positive relationships over time. She can entrust various dialogue or effects tasks to David McCallum or Garrett Kerr, for example, knowing they'll give her the results she anticipates, and freeing her up to carry out other duties. She gets particular enjoyment from collaborating with composers, handing them scenes with as much sound cut in as possible so that they can work some effects into their compositions if they like, as she did recently with Gemini-award-winning composer Jonathan Goldsmith.

Having access to the picture editor is always helpful when she prepares the sound design because they know the intent of every scene intimately. She also works closely with directors and recalls Deepa Mehta being great on *Republic of Love* because she was warm, intense and decisive—not the type of director who lingers and wonders about a sound, but one who either likes it or doesn't. Working with Bill Phillips on *Foolproof* stands out because he was appreciative, patient and willing to go through every frame carefully, discussing ADR in detail.

Before she undertook the sound design for Istvan Szabo's *Being Julia*, set to open the Toronto film festival this year, she had worked with him on *Sunshine*. She finds that it helps to work repeatedly with a director because a trust can develop, explaining that Szabo expressed his suggestions for each scene and then had faith in her instincts with the choices. She describes some directors as wanting to stockpile sound effects, while Szabo is precise, careful and sparse. He wants to use only what is necessary to convey the feelings he's after. And when she finally 'hears' the finished film at the festival premiere, it will be the first time she 'sees' it as a whole instead of experiencing it incrementally as part of her job.

I ask Tattersall how often she has had a film at the Toronto festival featuring her sound design. She realizes there has been one almost every year; after a short pause, Tattersall notes that it's been an annual event for roughly 20 years.



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