



# Terminology in sound

In this list you will find some of the terminology commonly used by professionals working with sound and music.

## A

**AAC – Advanced Audio Coding** is the standard audio codec used for online video and live streaming. It's compatible with every device on the market today.

**Acoustics** the science of sound. It can also refer to the effect a given environment has on sound.

**Acoustic material** is the acoustical properties of a material. Usually a material designed to absorb sound.

**Ambience** is the sound character and atmosphere of a place.

**Ambient sound** is background sounds which are present in a scene or location.

**Ambisonic** is 3D sound, a technique for capturing, synthesizing and reproducing a sound environment (spatialization). The listener is immersed in this virtual environment through a number of loudspeakers, varying from three to several dozen.

**Amplifier** is a term for a device that amplifies incoming audio signals to make them audible.

**Anechoic** very low or no reverberation, free from echoes.

**Audio visual sync** synchronization of the live audio signal with the live video data. If the synchronisation is off, the viewers will hear the audio ahead of the video, or vice versa.

**Auditory area** is the sensory area lying between the threshold of hearing and the threshold of feeling pain.

**Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR)** describes sensory reactions you may get from certain stimuli, for example sounds.

## B

**Background noise** is noise from all sources unrelated to a particular sound that is the object of interest.

**Bass** is the lower range of audible frequencies.

**Beaming** is the phenomenon of sound being emitted within a comparatively small solid angle. This characteristic becomes more acute as the frequency increases.

**Beats** periodic fluctuations that are heard when sounds of slightly different frequencies are superimposed.

**Beats per minute (bpm)** describes the tempo of a piece of music.

**Binaural** human hearing – as in listening with two ears.



# Terminology in sound

**Binaural audio** is capturing audio using two microphones to simulate sound coming from a specified location.

**Bitrate** is the output quantity of audio or video signals for digital multimedia formats per time unit

**Boomy** is a listening term, referring to an excessive bass response that has a peak in it.

**Break** is a physical gap in the assembly or construction, which acts to decouple sound vibrations from traveling through a structure.

**Bright** listening term. Usually refers to too much upper frequency energy.

## C

**Capture device** is a tool for capturing elements of a stream, including various types of cameras and microphones.

**Clap** is a small panel where the number or name of the scene is written as well as the number of the take. It produces a sound that is used in post-production and helps to synchronize sound and image.

**Clipping** refers to a type of distortion that occurs when an amplifier is driven into an overload condition.

**Codec** is a program or a device for encoding or decoding a digital piece of information, both audio or video, for easy transmission over the internet. The most common video codec is H.264, and the most common audio codecs are AAC and MP3.

**Coherence** is a listening term that refers to how well integrated the sound of the system is.

**Coloration** is a term used to indicate audible alterations to sound due to its environment. Coloration can be a result of standing waves or room resonances.

**Contrapuntal sound** is a sound that contrasts strongly with the image that you see on screen.

**Critical distance** is the distance from a sound source at which direct sound and reverberant sound are at the same level.

**Critical frequency** is the upper or lower limit of the frequency range up to which a speaker can reproduce an undistorted sound signal.

## D

**dB** decibels, are often used to describe sound level, electrical signal strength and digital signals.

**Direct Sound** is sound that has traveled directly to the listener without reflecting.



# Terminology in sound

**Directional audio** creates fields of sound using an array of small speakers to control the direction of audio output.

**Distortion** anything that alters the musical signal.

**Doppler effect** the increase (or decrease) in the frequency of sound, light, or other waves as the source and observer move towards (or away from) each other.

**Dynamic range** is the range between the loudest and the softest sounds that are in a piece of music.

E

**Early reflections** are reflected sounds that arrive relatively soon at a listener's location.

F

**Feedback** when an audio signal is being fed back to itself.

**Flat** the term is used to describe an even frequency response in which no frequency is accentuated.

**Frequency range** refers to a defined range between the lowest and highest tone in which a loudspeaker can reproduce measured or audible signals. Humans, with normal hearing ability, can hear sounds from 20-20000 Hz.

G

**Gain** increase in level. The function of a volume control.

H

The **Haas effect** (also called the Precedence Effect) is described as the ability of our ears to localize sounds coming from anywhere around us.

**HDMI – High-Definition Multimedia Interface** is the most frequently used HD signal for transferring high definition video and audio over a single cable.

I

**Interference** is a superposition of at least two sound waves of the same frequency.

J

**Jitter** is the time distortion of recording/playback of a digital audio signal.



# Terminology in sound

## L

**Late reflections** are reflected sounds that arrive relatively late at a listener's location.

**Limitter** is a device that limits the maximum amplitude of a signal.

**Location sound** (or direct sound) sound recorded during production.

**Lossless compression** video/audio compression format that maintains every bit of original data from the sources, full quality.

**Lossy compression** removes some of the information from the source in order to process and stream your video.

## M

**MIDI – Musical Instrument Digital Interface** is a technical standard describing – communications protocol, digital interface, and electrical connectors that connect an array of electronic musical instruments, computers, and other audio devices for playing, editing, and recording music.

**MP3** is a popular compression method for audio files.

**MP4** is a digital multimedia container format most commonly used to store video and audio.

**Muddy** a listening term. A sound that is poorly defined, sloppy or vague.

## P

**Playlists** a collection of songs by one or more artists that are connected by some theme or concept.

**Positional audio** – audio triggered by the position of the headset. The sound can be manipulated to make it seem like it is coming from different directions – in front of the user, behind, above, and from the left or right.

**Precedence Effect** see Haas Effect.

## R

**Resonance** – the sympathetic vibration of an object (or air column) at a specific frequency when it is excited into motion by a sound wave of similar frequency in the immediate vicinity.

**Reverberation** the persistence of sound in an enclosure after a sound source has been stopped.

**Room acoustics** describes the acoustic properties of a closed or semi-closed room. Factors include reflection, absorption and diffusion of the sound.



# Terminology in sound

## S

**Silence** is the lack of audible sound or the presence of very low intensity sound, can be used for dramatic effect or to give the user a breather after climactic scenes.

**Sound emission** refers to the output of sounds from a sound source.

**Sound localization** determines the location of a sound's origin, or the suggestion of an object's location based on the manipulation of auditory cues.

**Sound spatialization** is the representation of a sound within three-dimensional space.

**Soundtrack** the audio part of a video recording, all the different layers of sound voice, background music, sound effects etc.

**Streaming** – delivering and receiving media, audio and video, via the Internet. Live streaming is streaming media that is received and viewed in real-time.

**Sweet spot** is the position in a room where the sound of a sound system is at its best.

**Synchronization** making sure that the sound and the image line up perfectly.

## W

**WAW** is a raw file format, usually containing lossless or uncompressed audio.

## X

**XLR** is an industry standard for electrical connectors in professional sound reinforcement and recording studio technology.