

When it comes to directors Peter Jackson is right up there, renowned for his take on classics such as *Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong* and *The Lovely Bones* he has always achieved excellence in his profession and is currently one of the leading directors in the modern world. The two films I have decided to cover are *King Kong* and *Lord of the Rings the Return of the King*. Both have similar attributes that are unique to Peter Jackson.

Peter Jackson is probably most famous for the use of the language feature **Camera Angles. Whenever you watch any of his films you will notice that with every scene there will be multiple camera shots of the same thing, Peter Jackson pays great attention to the detail forming a large variety of different viewpoints this genuinely enhances the viewing experience making it much more appealing to watch** (1). Even in short scenes it is obvious to see how much effort has gone into acquiring the perfect shots and that is what really sets Peter Jackson apart when it comes to directing. He makes use of the four basic angles consistently throughout each of his films, these angles are: Normal Angles, where the camera is angled in a neutral position which is generally considered as eye level. Low Angles, the shot is taken with the camera below the subject. High angles, the shot is taken above the subject. Tilted angles, the shot is taken with the camera out of vertical alignment with the subject. All of these angles are used at-different times to communicate key ideas with the audiences.

**An example of Jackson's use of these multiple camera angles can be found in one of the final scenes in *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*** (2) this is the scene where Aragorn is made king. The scene starts off as a huge long shot of the kingdom of Gondor, it is then quickly zoomed in to display a huge ceremony. The camera continues to zoom right up to the stairs where Aragorn is being crowned; it then turns into a Low Angle Shot, where the camera is looking from the bottom of the stairs upwards this creates an atmosphere within the shot because you take on the point of view of the spectators attending. As Gandalf raises the crown above Aragorn's head the camera angle changes to a close up on the crown, this further explains what is going on in the scene, it is now obviously clear that Aragorn is about to be made king. The camera then quickly switches to a close up of Gimly, who is nearby the shot takes special notice of his eyes as they tear up creating a sense of emotion in the scene. The camera then returns to a neutral shot of Gandalf holding the crown, panning downwards ever so slowly until the crown rests upon Aragorn's head there is a minor pause as the camera holds in place for a small moment allowing the audience to admire the crown upon the new Kings head, then a close up appears on Gandalf's face as he says "now come the days of the king" followed by a close up of the newly crowned king Aragorn, the camera then briefly exchanges close ups of both Gandalf and Aragorn to show the bond between the two. The camera angle then returns to the low angle shot of the stairs, to keep the audience involved before changing to multiple shots of the crowd from all different points of view, after various shots of the crowd the camera returns to a close up of Aragorn as he says: "This day does not belong to one man but to all. Let us together rebuild this world that we may share in the days of peace". Aragorn then breaks out in song as petals fall from the sky. In the space of two minutes eighteen different shots are taken, there are multiple angles for certain parts of it. For example the crowning of Aragorn there are four different angles that show different points of view. The first is the Low angle shot of Aragorn and Gandalf at the top of the stairs, the close up of the crown held in Gandalf's hand, the neutral shot of the crown being placed on Aragorn's head and the close up of Aragorn afterwards.

**Another example of Peter Jackson's use of multiple shots can be found in a particular scene from *King Kong*** (3). In this scene Ann Darrow, the starring actress is playing out a scene on deck and she and Jack Driscoll have a moment. The scene starts out with a zoom in on the camera and director, this is a neutral shot because it is situated roughly at eye level, this angle firstly lets the audience know what is going on (a scene is being recorded). The camera then changes to a neutral shot of Ann Darrow who comes prancing on scene, the camera angle pans to the right briefly to follow her movement. The angle then changes to a zoom out, letting the audience have a good look at what is going on. It then switches back to the neutral shot of the camera which then switches to a long shot of both the camera, director and Ann Darrow followed by an intense close up on the director's face, you can see by his emotions he likes what he is seeing. The camera then focuses on Ann's face as she reaches up and touches her cheek before zooming

out again to the long shot of the camera and Ann again. The good looking Jack Driscoll then walks into the long shot the camera then focuses back to Ann's close up, she looks up and is clearly distracted by Jack's presence, she gives him a sincere look, the shot then turns to a close up of Jack's face, he replies to her gesture with a cheeky smile. Quickly Ann realises her mistake and the camera returns to the close up of her as she appears confused, filming stops and a shot of the director looking at Jack in a concerned matter occurs. Within this short scene there are multiple shots of the director and his camera, Jack Driscoll and Ann Darrow. Jackson uses these different camera angles to communicate key ideas to the audience.(4)

Sound, especially music can really set a mood in a scene. It is interesting to note that even with a simple note of music the mood can change. Directors use this to their advantage to portray what they want out of a scene to communicate with the audience. Peter Jackson is obviously a man who enjoys using music, in fact *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy has one of the most epic movie soundtracks ever created. It is clear to see that Jackson specifically uses sound to base his films. An example of sound being used to set/change the mood in a scene can be found in a particular scene from *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. This is the scene where Aragorn, the heir of Isildur becomes king. As soon as the scene begins a soft piece of music begins playing, the tone is gentle, calm and settling. Without the sound of music the scene would become very dull and simply would not have the same effect. Jackson uses music throughout *Lord of the Rings* to create intense moods. In dark and more intense moments more sinister music is played.

Music is also effectively used in Jackson's *King Kong*. The scene where Ann and Jack have a moment together while filming is very intense and meaningful and music helps portray this sense of romance. The music played is gentle and smooth. Ann is on the ship's deck twirling and prancing, until Jack shows up and she is interrupted by his presence, the music changes to a very intense and emotional state and shows the connection Jack and Ann have together (5).

Throughout *King Kong* sound is consistently used to enhance the viewer's experience, Peter Jackson communicates his ideas using music. Ambient sounds are also played for scenes with great intensity, for example; when the film crew is in the dense jungles of Skull Island. These Ambient sounds are uncomfortable to listen. Jackson is a master at using this type of sound, not only in *King Kong* but all of his movies, and is one of the reasons that have made him one of the greatest directors of all time, yes all time.

Not only this but sound is one of the true human senses it has the power to change how we feel, a soft gentle piece of music can brighten up the mood in any scene while a fast paced uncomfortable to listen to string can increase tension. All different kinds of sounds are used by Jackson in his movies to communicate his ideas to the audience. Each piece has a purpose and a reason for being there and it is this defining fact that keeps movies interesting. Jackson uses Sound to communicate a general mood with the audience, he is famous for orchestrated pieces that show great emotion and passion and this really shows in his movies.

## Conclusion

It is important to note that it is not just one language feature that makes a movie; it is a combination of all good quality features that creates a true hit. Yes having a good soundtrack can make a great movie, but combining that soundtrack with intense colours and dazzling camera angles will make that movie even better. This is why Peter Jackson is such a true master at what he does. He knows what it takes, and with his knowledge he has created some of the best movies to date.

We can only expect that in the future Peter Jackson will continue this roll that he is on and direct more fantastic movies. With upcoming titles such as *The Hobbit*, part one and part two we can only imagine how good they will be. He will continue to communicate his ideas to the audience using many different language features, most importantly: camera angles, colours and sound.