Playing with Sound: A Theory of Interacting with Sound and Music in Video Games (MIT Press)

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In *Playing with Sound*, Karen Collins examines video game sound from the player's perspective. She explores the many ways that players interact with a game's sonic aspects -- which include not only music but also sound effects, ambient sound, dialogue, and interface sounds -- both within and outside of the game. She investigates the ways that meaning is found, embodied, created, evoked, hacked, remixed, negotiated, and renegotiated by players in the space of interactive sound in games. Drawing on disciplines that range from film studies and philosophy to psychology and computer science, Collins develops a theory of interactive sound experience that distinguishes between interacting with sound and simply listening without interacting. Her conceptual approach combines practice theory (which focuses on productive and consumptive practices around media) and embodied cognition (which holds that our understanding of the world is shaped by our physical interaction with it). Collins investigates the multimodal experience of sound, image, and touch in games; the role of interactive sound in creating an emotional experience through immersion and identification with the game character; the ways in which sound acts as a mediator for a variety of performative activities; and embodied interactions with sound beyond the game, including machinima, chiptunes, circuit bending, and other practices that use elements from games in sonic performances.

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