



# Siren City: Sound and Source Music in Classic American Noir

*Robert Miklitsch*

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Hailed for its dramatic expressionist visuals, film noir is one of the most prominent genres in Hollywood cinema. Yet, despite the "boom" in sound studies, the role of sonic effects and source music in classic American noir has not received the attention it deserves. *Siren City* engagingly illustrates how sound tracks in 1940s film noir are often just as compelling as the genre's vaunted graphics.

Focusing on a wide range of celebrated and less well known films and offering an introductory discussion of film sound, Robert Miklitsch mobilizes the notion of audiovisuality to investigate period sound technologies such as the radio and jukebox, phonograph and Dictaphone, popular American music such as "hot" black jazz, and "big numbers" featuring iconic performers such as Lauren Bacall, Veronica Lake, and Rita Hayworth. *Siren City* resonates with the sounds and source music of classic American noir-gunshots and sirens, swing riffs and canaries. Along with the proverbial private eye and femme fatale, these audiovisuals are central to the noir aesthetic and one important reason the genre reverberates with audiences around the world.

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