

Sebastian Stoppe (Hg.)

Film in Concert. Film Scores and their Relation to Classical Concert Music

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Stoppe (Ed.) · Film in Concert

Sebastian Stoppe (Ed.)

Film in Concert

Film Scores and their Relation to Classical Concert Music

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Film Music in Concert: Introduction

Sebastian Stoppe

In September 2013, one could read in *The New York Times* about a new initiative of the New York Philharmonic called “The Art of the Score: Film Week at the Philharmonic.” The idea behind this initiative is to have the orchestra play a film score live in the concert hall while screening the film simultaneously. You could experience *2001: A Space Odyssey* by STANLEY KUBRICK with ALAN GILBERT conducting (TOMMASINI 2013). So, film music has arrived at the concert hall, hasn’t it?

Well, it depends. *2001* is one of the best examples for a motion picture without a genuine film score. In the end, you were able to listen to some of the finest works of classical music by such composers like LIGETI, KHACHATURIAN, RICHARD STRAUSS, and JOHANN STRAUSS. KUBRICK loved his temp tracks (which are pieces of music that are used for editing but usually not intended to be included in the final film); and kept the temp music instead of an original score. Nowadays, it became clear that KUBRICK never intended to use an original score. He only commissioned a score by veteran film composer ALEX NORTH because the studio wanted it. But, however, NORTH’S score was never used and *2001* was released with music taken from existing recordings (TOWNSON 1993).

But nonetheless, the NY Phil has played original film scores as well—such as “music from Alfred Hitchcock movies” (TOMMASINI 2013). So, film music is not entirely banned from the concert hall anymore but, however, far from being recognized as a truly own style of music which is to be performed regularly in a concert hall. There are still strong prejudices about film music—too nice, too industrial, full of clichés, and unworthy to be performed live by an orchestra. We want to explore the nature of film music and its relation to classical

music in this volume—and we want to discover why film music is still underrated by music critics.

I myself, SEBASTIAN STOPPE, will start this book with an essay about film composers and their balancing between being an artist and a craftsman as well; while EMILIO AUDISSINO tells us more about the various forms of film scores in concert as well as why film music is still regarded as second-rate music in our first chapter. He also explores the renaissance of the symphonic film score by looking at JOHN WILLIAMS'S scores for *Jaws* and *Star Wars*.

BERNARD HERRMANN was an accomplished and well-educated film composer who is best known because of his long-lasting relationship with ALFRED HITCHCOCK. Unbeknownst to many, HERRMANN'S scoring technique shares certain similarities with RICHARD WAGNER—a topic that will be explained by JAUME RADIGALES. We will have a closer look at RICHARD WAGNER with IRENA PAULUS who compares WAGNER and especially *The Ring* cycle with the extensive opus of the *Star Wars* scores by JOHN WILLIAMS.

GENE PRITSKER is a New York-based classically trained composer who frequently works as an orchestrator in the film music industry. In 2012, he orchestrated the score for *Cloud Atlas* by TOM TYKWER and THE WACHOWSKI SIBLINGS and also wrote a symphony based on the film score. In his essay, we will learn more about why PRITSKER thinks that the majority of film scores are merely “music by numbers” and not do bear the complexity of concert hall music. Alas, he will also introduce us in the composing and orchestration process of the *Cloud Atlas* score and its symphonic pendant. KRISTJAN JÄRVI was very involved as a conductor in the original score recording as well as the world première. I was able to talk with him about conducting film scores and how film music derived from opera and concert hall.

LORENZO SORBO did a comparison of the film music of Italian composers ENNIO MORRICONE and FRANCESCO DE MASI. Both composers were strongly involved in the Italian western movie genre and MORRICONE was also a frequent conductor of live concerts of his own

scores. We will conclude the volume with two in-depth looks on films and an empirical study: MARCO COSCI analyzes the score of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* by FRANCES SEYRIG. The film is a very complex one, using a non-linear, quite surrealistic narrative which is constantly reflected and emphasized in the music score. PASCAL VANDELANOITTE will have a closer look on VISCONTI'S *Ludwig*. VISCONTI—perhaps best known for his extensive use of MAHLER'S *Adagietto from Symphony No. 5* in *Death in Venice*—relies heavily on WAGNER'S music for the film's soundtrack.

I feel very grateful that the idea of editing a volume about film music and its relation to concert hall music resulted in such a book. Of course, I have to thank all of my fellow contributors who kindly shared their ideas with me. Thanks to my publisher WERNER HÜLSBUSCH for giving me much leeway in conceiving this volume and for his openness to include my book in his program. Last but not least I like to thank KATARINA WERNEBURG for letting me do this project even when our spare time had to fall apart sometimes. Without all these people, this book would not have been made.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my dearest friend MATTHIAS WENGLER. MATTHIAS is a professional church musician and a terrific aficionado of classical music who—with his enthusiasm—has once introduced me into the world of classical music.

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Film Composing between Art and Business

Sebastian Stoppe

Although most film composers are well-educated musicians who learned their craftsmanship at renowned music colleges throughout the world, they are considered to be less an artist than other “serious” composers. Maybe the cause is that writing movie music became rather quickly a money-making profession still in the era of silent movies. When film composer MIKLÓS RÓZSA asked his colleague ARTHUR HONEGGER in 1934 how he managed to make a living, HONEGGER replied that he would write music for films because the producers do want some good, dramatic music for their films (BEHLMER 1991: 4). As for RÓZSA, the rest is history. During the studio system of Hollywood in the 1930s and 40s this process was pushed on further and the huge amount of sound films that were produced each year demanded a huge amount of film music as well (WIERZBICKI 2009: 135–140).

Still today, film scores are often considered to be produced very quickly; like a Ford from the assembly line. Scores are said to be completely subordinate to their respective medium, the motion picture, and cannot stand alone outside the motion picture world. So far, movie music is merely *Gebrauchsmusik*, and the film composer is rather a craftsman than an artist—working with musical set-pieces and stereotypes.

Film as *Gesamtkunstwerk*

Combining different artistic elements is not a new thing. It has not been unusual in the history of music that a composition was not created for its own sake (which we call “absolute music”), but it was affected by other works of art. Just to name a few examples: RACH-

MANINOFF'S symphonic poem *The Isle of the Dead* was inspired by the painting by BÖCKLIN, RIMSKY-KORSAKOV based his *Scheherazade* on the tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*), DUKAS' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* used GOETHE'S poem as a major source, MUSSORGSKY'S *Pictures at an Exhibition*¹ is a homage to a late friend of the composer who was an artist, and while composing his *Enigma Variations* EDWARD ELGAR took his inspiration from his own life, portraying different characteristics of his friends throughout the variations. This kind of music, which we call program music, refers explicitly to extra-musical ideas—in contrast to absolute music which do not want to represent something specific. RICHARD WAGNER even contended once that absolute music is purely an aberration, and that music should not be the “purpose” of composing, but rather be a “tool”. Therefore, he strived for the fusion of various arts to a romantic ideal of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. He conceived his music dramas as a close-to-perfect combination of fine arts (when you think of stage design), poetry (libretto), performing arts (singer), and music.

Now then, you can think of the film as a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*: just add another art to the aforementioned, the cinematography (ADORNO & EISLER 2003: 25–26). And although the first films have been silent movies, music has always been an integral part of the film from the early beginnings until today. There is a common myth that music was used to drown out disturbing noise of the projector or of the audience in the early days (GORBMAN 2003: 37). That is not true; instead, film music has always been a decidedly formal object. Film music has already a persuasive effect before the audience ever sees a single frame. “Its freedom from the explicitness of language or photographic images, its useful denotative and expressive values easily

¹ *Pictures at an Exhibition* is also a good example for how effective orchestration can be for the perception of an audience. Originally a piece for solo piano, the piece was orchestrated numerous times by composers like MAURICE RAVEL, LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI, or HENRY WOOD. With different accentuations, *Pictures at an Exhibition* functions in a very similar way like effectively orchestrated film music to the listener.

comprehended by listeners raised in the nineteenth-century orchestral tradition, its malleability, its spatial, rhythmic, and temporal values, give it a special and complex status in the narrative film experience” (GORBMAN 2003: 39).

Like an opera overture, the music introduces the following story. In the past, movies have had overtures indeed, with music playing to a black screen—just think of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where KUBRICK made use of such a device. When overtures were no longer deployed, main title themes came into use which introduced the main musical ideas of a score to the audience during the credits sequence. In latter days, most films begin without any credits, but still a film hardly ever starts without a characteristic music.

Thus, a film score does not differ much from program music in the first place. Its extra-musical ideas are: the movie itself, the plot, the characters, and the kind of visualization on the screen. The most significant difference to program music is that film music remains attached to its source of inspiration. The extra-musical idea is not only the point of origin, not only the seed from which the music emerged, but remains present continuously. Seen from this perspective, the music neither exists for its own sake nor for itself (the latter is given with program music), but depends directly on the cinematographed material.

As a general rule, film music is always non-diegetic; it does not belong to the movie’s universe. In this way, “the very existence of the nondiegetic score is of course an anomaly” (BROWN 1994: 67), but thus film music has the ability to fulfill a syntactic function, so to structure the film for the audience. As soon as a film director decides to make use of a film score, he has to adhere to this formal object. That is, because a film score creates an abstract meta-level, in which the plot is reorganized musically. Film music does not only structure the plot, it also functions as a commentary by musical means. The music guides the audience to experience a plot by emotion. Using music, the same scene can appear sorrowful, threatening, or even

humorous. Poorly written film music has also the ability to destroy a film. In this way, the role of the film composer is of major importance.

Film Music in the Industry

It is not a surprise at all that because of the history of film music, many composers of autonomous music composed movie music as well. One of the first original scores for the 1908 motion picture *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* was composed by French composer CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (*The Carnival of the Animals*) (BROWN 1994: 53).² HANNS EISLER, PAUL HINDEMITH, ERIK SATIE, DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, and SERGEI PROKOFIEV wrote film scores as well.

Usually, a film composer is called at a very late stage during the production of a movie. With few exceptions, a rough cut—if not a final cut—of a film does already exist before a single note has been written down. Thus a film composer's work is somewhat different to that of the actors, cinematographers, or art directors. The last three have to create a film from scrap. They must transform a writer's screenplay into a motion picture and serve the director's vision. For the film composer, however, a more or less complete version of the film is already available.

From that point on, director and composer will discuss which part of the film needs a score and how the score should be. A very common, but rather questionable practice is to temp-track a rough cut with pre-existing music. Often this is done by the editor (with or without direct suggestions by the director or producer). "The temp track, in most cases, is a veritable blueprint of a film's soundtrack—a musical topography of score, songs, culture and codes" (SADOFF 2006:

² WIERZBICKI points out that SAINT-SAËNS's score was not *the* first musical score for a motion picture, but "it would be more accurate to say that Saint-Saëns's music for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* is the first completely original film score by a composer who at the time was famous and who remains famous today" (WIERZBICKI 2009: 41).

166). Nonetheless, temp-tracking limits the composer's creativity in an unnecessary way that many composers decline. Jerry Goldsmith, for instance, says that "today directors often show prejudices about the film music because of permanent temp-tracking. It is like a curse! Every film is [already] full of music" (RUSSELL & YOUNG 2001: 61; own translation). "Directors and producers become so convinced, accustomed, and perhaps 'married' to the 'temp' ('temp love'), that composers are often requested to emulate it" (SADOFF 2006: 166).

Because a rough or fine cut of the film matches the director's vision of the complete movie in such a close way, it is no wonder that the relation between a film director and the composer is often a very personal one. Many directors have collaborated with the same composers for years. ALFRED HITCHCOCK worked with BERNARD HERRMANN—just think of his scores for *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo*, and especially *Psycho*. STEVEN SPIELBERG has been very close to JOHN WILLIAMS since *Jaws*, with WILLIAMS composing such scores like *Jurassic Park*, *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial*, *Schindler's List*, or the music for the entire *Indiana Jones* franchise.

Only after the demise of the Hollywood studio system such a close and repeated relationship between director and composer has become possible. During the studio system, composers were just employees at the music department of the studio. Led by a senior composer as head of department several composers, arrangers, orchestrators, copyists, and even orchestra players worked at these departments. Writing music was not notably valued in these years. When the Academy Awards were established in 1929, there was no award for film music. It was not until five years later that an Academy Award for Best Original Score was given for the first time. But, however, it was the music department's head who received the nomination or even the award rather than the actual composer. In 1938 ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD has been the first film music composer ever whose artistic work was truly acknowledged as an individual

achievement when he received his Academy Award for *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.³

Writing film music during the studio system was work-sharing. One (or more) composers who were on the studio's payroll were assigned to compose a film score. It was a common practice to re-use material for other films as well. This material was called "stock music". A composer would write a short score which contained themes and motifs as well as more or less detailed notes on orchestrations. Such a short score usually consisted of three or less musical staves. Once finished, a team of orchestrators had to expand these short scores into full scores. This task allows some creative input, too, depending on how detailed the composer's instructions are. However, there are some composers who always did or do their orchestration themselves like BERNARD HERRMANN or ENNIO MORRICONE. JOHN WILLIAMS is noted for giving his orchestrators very detailed instructions. In fact, WILLIAMS composes his scores on up to ten staves (MOORMANN 2010: 25)—thus producing a *particell* that is simply to be laid out by his orchestrators.⁴ Finally, copyists produced parts of the full score for the respective instruments, and the score was recorded on a soundstage by an orchestra in not more than a few days—conducted either by a hired conductor or the composer himself. On the whole, the entire process from the first note written down to the final recording of the score did not last more than four to six weeks.

When you compare this to RICHARD WAGNER, for example, you will see some differences. WAGNER composed his opera *The Flying Dutchman* in about eleven months. With roughly two and a half hours dura-

³ In fact, KORNGOLD never regarded film music as a genuine genre of its own. He never "differentiated between my music for the films and that for the operas and concert pieces. Just as I do for the operatic stage, I try to the motion pictures dramatically melodious music sonic development and variation of the themes" (RAKSIN 1995a).

⁴ This is the reason why orchestrators who collaborate with JOHN WILLIAMS get an on-screen credit, but are usually omitted from the credits on the CD releases of the particular score.

tion, this work corresponds to a huge film score in length. GUSTAV MAHLER needed the whole summer season of 1906 to compose his Symphony No. 8, and another half a year for the orchestration. In contrast, film composer HOWARD SHORE had to write seven minutes of music for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* to remain on schedule.⁵

Composing for film is a work which happens within a very short time frame, and needs to adapt to last-minute changes made by the film director. A film composer has to subordinate to such tight schedules and adjust his working method. Even though music departments like in the studio system do not exist anymore, basically nothing has changed when it comes to the working methods of film scoring.

It is somewhat common that a film composer gets replaced during a production due to creative differences. For *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, ALAN SILVESTRI was hired to compose the score. When director GORE VERBINSKI and producer JERRY BRUCKHEIMER became unsatisfied with his work, HANS ZIMMER was brought in at a very late time to undertake the job (GOLDWASSER 2005). With the movie running about two and a half hours, ZIMMER had only three weeks left for scoring. In the end, ZIMMER wrote some themes and motifs which were used by seven additional composers who collaborated on the final score (GOLDWASSER 2006). However, such a tight time schedule is the exception.

It is also very common that the director still makes changes to the rough cut of a movie after the music has been recorded. When there is neither budget nor time, a complete film score is often re-edited that the original intention of the film composer may get lost. When producer SAM ZIMBALIST oversaw the final sound mix of *Quo Vadis* he

⁵ As stated in the bonus material of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* DVD. However, HOWARD SHORE did all the orchestration on the entire *The Lord of the Rings* scores by himself—despite of all time constraints. Afterwards he received a rather unusual “Music composed, orchestrated, and conducted by” front credit for his work.

is even supposed to repeatedly have complained that the music was too loud (DEWALD 2012: 5). This demonstrates a great lack of understanding towards influence and importance of a musical score: an importance that composer MIKLÓS RÓZSA was certainly aware of. He was a well-educated musician, having studied at Leipzig Conservatory, which was once founded by FELIX MENDELSSOHN. Even though his work was not very well received from his producer, RÓZSA won an Academy Award for his score of *Quo Vadis* in 1952.

Film Music as an Art?

So the question is whether we can consider film scoring as art? Or is film music a rather simple attachment to a commercial product?

Then as now, motion pictures always were entertainment products which were meant to make money in the first place. Therefore, film music has to accommodate oneself to achieve this goal. But nonetheless that does not mean that film music is some kind of dirty work. Film composers are extremely versatile and experienced craftspeople in the first instance. You need to know much about music and its psychological effect on the audience to write a feature-length score in just a few weeks—even if you enjoy assistance from your orchestrator or your copyist. And since the beginning of film scoring the majority of film composers has been classically trained musicians. Self-taught composers like HANS ZIMMER are still the exception today. MAX STEINER studied in Vienna, BERNARD HERRMANN and JOHN WILLIAMS are alumni from the Julliard School. Indeed, several film composers composed and still compose for the concert hall. ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD has been a renowned opera composer in Europe when he came to the United States working as a film composer; and continued writing concert music after retiring from the film industry. “He devoted his final years to composing concert pieces, including a Cello Concerto, a Violin Concerto [...], a Symphony in F#, and many chamber works, three String Quartets among them” (RAKSIN 1995a). He

deliberately used material from his film scores for concert hall music. His *Violin Concerto in D major*, Op. 35 (1945) makes extensive use from his film scores. The main theme of the first movement *Moderato nobile* is taken from *Another Dawn* (1937), the theme of the second movement *Romanze* is quoted from *Anthony Adverse* (1936), and the theme of the final movement *Allegro assai vivace* derives from the score from *The Prince and the Pauper* (1937). It was not the only time KORNGOLD re-used themes from his film scores. In 1946, KORNGOLD composed his last film score for *Deception*. The film's plot demanded for a cello concerto which was an original work by KORNGOLD although it draws on material from two earlier film scores, *Between Two Worlds* (1944) and *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939) (CARROLL 2006: 22). Lasting about six minutes in the film, he subsequently expanded the piece and published it as *Cello Concerto in C major*, Op. 37, with twice the original length (KORNGOLD 1991: 9). For his only *Symphony in F-sharp major*, Op. 40, KORNGOLD quoted a theme originally written for *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939). However, KORNGOLD'S concert hall music was not welcomed by critics who "have in the past been less willing to embrace the composer's music, often holding Korngold's association with the movies against him" (KIMBERLEY 2004: 3).

After finishing his classical musical education, MIKLÓS RÓZSA became a promising composer for the concert hall. His first two compositions—the String Trio, Op. 1, and the Piano Quintet, Op. 2—were published by the renowned *Breitkopf & Härtel* publishing house in Leipzig, and "his first published orchestral piece, the Hungarian Serenade, opus 10, conducted in Budapest by Dohnányi, was praised by Richard Strauss; but an even greater success was his Theme, Variations and Finale, composed in Paris when he was 26. He showed his unpublished Symphony to several famous conductors, who thought it excellent but, at an hour's length, too long. On the advice of Bruno Walter he composed a new and shorter work, his opus 13, in 1934, which has been performed by Münch, Böhm, Walter, Solti, Ormandy,

and Bernstein, among others” (RAKSIN 1995b). RÓZSA’s *Violin Concerto*, Op. 24, was composed in 1953 by request of the acclaimed violinist JASCHA HEIFETZ (DEWALD 2007: 2).⁶ RÓZSA later adapted the piece for the score of *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970) because director BILLY WILDER “suggested that since the central character [Sherlock Holmes] was an amateur violinist, the composer might raid the concerto for some of the film’s themes. The lyrical subject of the second movement was transformed into the film’s ‘love’ theme, and the tempestuous opening of the finale served as a theme for the Loch Ness monster” (DEWALD 2007: 3).

Until today, film composers are active in the field of concert music. JOHN WILLIAMS frequently prepares so-called concert suites from his film scores to be performed in the concert hall. An example is *Three Pieces from Schindler’s List* that is frequently performed and began to enter the repertoire of classical violinists.⁷ Besides from occasional adapting his film scores into concert pieces, WILLIAMS also composes music only for the concert hall. Among his better known compositions are *Treesong for Violin and Orchestra*, his bassoon concerto *The Five Sacred Trees*, his *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra*, or *Air and Simple Gifts*: a quartet which WILLIAMS composed for the 2009 inauguration of BARACK OBAMA.⁸

A lot of outstanding film scores do have such a complexity that the audience experience only in a very subtle way. But if you listen to them without watching the film, you notice that these scores retell the plot of the movie on a much more abstract level.

When you listen carefully to the Imperial March in *Star Wars*, you will notice that WILLIAMS wrote the piece in G minor but uses also an E flat major chord. (G minor consists of G–B–D, whereas E flat major consists of G–B–E flat; so there is a difference of a half tone at all.) It

6 Incidentally, HEIFETZ also premiered KORNGOLD’s violin concerto.

7 Not forget to mention that the original soundtrack already featured the performance of renowned violinist ITZHAK PERLMAN.

8 For a more detailed listing of WILLIAMS’s oeuvre see MOORMANN 2010: 22.

seems as if WILLIAMS wants to tell us that Darth Vader has not been evil ever since but as if there is something good deep inside his heart still alive.⁹ And when JAMES STEWART forces KIM NOVAK into dressing like the dead Madeleine (which JAMES STEWART'S character still loves), BERNARD HERRMANN paraphrases RICHARD WAGNER'S *Liebestod* (literally "love death") from *Tristan und Isolde*.¹⁰ You cannot reveal the frame of mind of the main protagonist much cleverer like HERRMANN did here.

And sometimes, film composers do get such close with the film's plot that the film follows their music instead of vice-versa. When JOHN WILLIAMS composed his score for *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial*, his cue for the film's climax lasted half an hour—that is, when the children helped E.T. to escape from the adults. When recording the score at the soundstage, WILLIAMS encountered some problems to get his recording synchronized properly to the film's rough cut. WILLIAMS composed a cue which needed a very precise timing as there were many rhythmic changes and complex themes and motifs. In the end director STEVEN SPIELBERG shut off the projector and allowed WILLIAMS to conduct and record the cue without matching it to the rough cut. Later SPIELBERG adjusted his final edit to WILLIAMS'S music in the cutting room (WILLIAMS 2002).

Finally, a film score is not necessarily just a mere accompaniment to the film. Of course, film music is always related to the film and this is truly a restriction a film composer has to deal with. He has to comply not only with the specific demands of a motion picture in general, but also with the creative efforts of the editor, the director, and last but not least with budgetary restraints. But once he has accepted these circumstances, a film composer has a lot of space for his own thoughts to add his own musical interpretation of a film's plot. So a

⁹ IRENA PAULUS will enlarge this topic in her chapter in this book.

¹⁰ JAUME RADIGALES will also enlarge this topic in his chapter in this book.

film score does have its own place even in the concert hall re-telling a film just using the music and without a silver screen.

A film composer will always find himself trapped between art and commerce. But a film composer may use this discrepancy for his own benefit. You cannot dismiss that film scores are truly an artistic effort (at least, in the most cases)—even though many musicologists still think different today. Yet in my opinion, film music is no low-grade art at all.

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Overruling a Romantic Prejudice: Film Music in Concert Programs

Emilio Audissino

After years of ostracism, musicology has eventually accepted film music as a legitimate object of study. Yet, studies on the presence of film music in concerts are almost non-existent. In the last fifty years, the film music repertoire has been increasingly featured in concert programs—typically in those light-symphonic music concerts such as the Pops in the United States and the BBC Proms in the UK. Film music has come to fill the gap left open in the popular symphonic repertoire by the scarcity of widely appealing contemporary art music able to provide new melodic materials. Even though film music is now held higher in consideration than in the past, the old prejudice is still at work when film music trespasses on the concert-music realm. Let us try to see why.

Film music is applied music, created to accompany an extra-musical event. Art or concert music is absolute music, composed for a stand-alone listening experience. Concerts are for absolute music. Speaking from a semiotic viewpoint of the *Warsaw Concerto*—a piano concerto written by RICHARD ADDINSELL for *Dangerous Moonlight* (B.D. HURST, 1941) and then turned into a concert piece—UMBERTO ECO criticized this sort of concert adaptations on the grounds that it “stimulate[s] reactions not proportionate to its intentions and possibilities. [The music] is decoded using a code that is not the intended original one” (ECO 1965: 131). Film music should exist only within the film—in its original code—and its presence outside of the film is aesthetically objectionable, since it does not meet the original intentions of the author. However, what about those cases—the majority—in which the composer himself adapted the music for a concert performance? ADDINSELL himself prepared the concert version of his

Warsaw Concerto. In such cases the author's intention is indeed met—he adapted it into a concert piece intended for a stand-alone, “absolute” listening experience. At the same time, the new code is also consistent with this intention—film music adaptations are designed to be performed live in concert and they are consequently “re-encoded” according to the concert-performance code. Apart from semiotic disputes, common sense prompts one to argue that other types of applied music, like suites from ballets, incidental music and opera overtures, are regularly performed in concerts and nobody is generally objecting to this, at least not as firmly as in the case of film music. Ballets, operas, and incidental music are applied music—not concert music—but excerpts from these have long been played in concerts and accepted as a contribute to the concert repertoire. Obviously, in these works the importance given to music is generally greater than in films. However, films also have sequences in which music can assume a predominant position—think of the ambush sequence in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (M. CURTIZ, W. KEIGHLEY, 1938), for which ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD wrote a kind of ballet number. Therefore, why not perform the best stand-alone musical parts of a film score in concert as it is done with ballets or operas? Why do some critics and scholars seem to be particularly hostile towards film music and inclined to biased generalizations?

The prejudice against film music in concerts can be explained by its being, among all types of applied music, the more dependent on extra-musical elements and consequently the least “absolute.” However, this “applied music” versus “absolute music” ranking system, often adopted with dogmatic fervor as an eternal truth, is actually historically determined and therefore relative.

A Romantic Prejudice

In the aesthetics of the eighteenth century, the degrees of the scale were the exact opposite: applied music was considered the best. As a

matter of fact, before the nineteenth century practically all music was applied music, mostly dependent on a text and subjected to words:

[In the eighteenth century] they suspected the ‘artificiality’ of instrumental music of being a deviation from the ‘natural’, or its ‘conceptlessness’ a renunciation of ‘reason’. The traditional prejudice was deep-rooted: that music had to depend on words to avoid either degeneration into pleasant noise that neither touched the heart nor employed the mind, or becoming an impenetrable spirit language” (DAHLHAUS 1991: 9).

Things changed in the nineteenth century. The term *Absolute Musik* was disseminated by EDUARD HANSLICK, but previously used by RICHARD WAGNER himself (DAHLHAUS 1991: 10), and stemmed from the new philosophical paradigm of Idealism. Just as “absolute philosophy” is “a philosophy of the ‘absolute’, interpreted or denounced as severed from its roots in earthly and human matters, and thus ‘absolute’” (DAHLHAUS 1991: 21), similarly the purest music is the “absolute music”—*ab soluta*, that is untied from earthly, contingent, and prosaic ties. In his treaty *On the Musically Beautiful* (1854) HANSLICK stated that only music without a text, a function, a program is true music (DAHLHAUS 1991: 27). For WACKENRODER absolute music—as a manifestation of the Infinite to the senses deprived of any “material impurity”—has in itself the characters of Religion (DAHLHAUS 1991: 75).

The idea that music is a religion also changed the contexts and the attitudes of the listening experience: music could no longer be just a pleasant background for conversation and card games, as it had been up to the eighteenth century, but it must be received with a religious “attitude of aesthetic contemplation” (DAHLHAUS 1991: 80). Formally, the consequence was that music had to find completeness within itself and an intrinsic—not extrinsic—motivation. For HANSLICK, in a piece of music it is form that determines content (DAHLHAUS 1991: 109). It is evident that from this perspective, film music is the least pure type of music of all, being the most closely tied to extra-musical “material impurity.” Hence, how could such “non-religious” music be

admitted into the concert halls, the Temples devoted to the religious contemplation of Absolute Music?

Moreover, “The [N]ature to which the romantics turned was not one of fixed, hierarchic ordering, as it had been in earlier times, but one of change and growth, development and openness. The core concept of this Romantic view of nature was the metaphor of organicism” (MEYER 1989: 190). Organicism implies that in a piece of music each element must be justified by its own formal development, not following external rules but rules germinated within the very form of the piece, like a seed that grows spontaneously and inevitably. “Organic development is not only gradual, it is necessary” (MEYER 1989: 193). Film music does not possess such organicism, because its elements are not motivated by intrinsic necessities, but by extrinsic impositions.

The supposed emptiness of film music, its predilection for superficial, sensational solutions, its use of coloristic writing and outward frills are, again, against the precepts of the romantic aesthetics:

“The correlative of organic unity and necessity was the belief that economy is an important aesthetic value. [...] Economy meant that, generally speaking, whatever was understood to be ‘merely’ ornamental was deprecated because it lacked inner necessity—because it seemed an arbitrary and wasteful addition to the unfolding of the inherent germinal process” (MEYER 1989: 193).

The romantic perspective also explains why the repetitions and conventionality of film music are deemed to be unacceptable and why film composers are considered only mere imitators of other composers’ styles: “The man of genius is cramped by rules and laws of taste. He breaks them so that he can fly upwards to the sublime [...] He is constantly thwarted in his desire to express the passions that excite him, by grammar and convention” (MEYER 1989: 172). As for film music, the reasoning goes like this: undoubtedly a musical genius—he who can express the Infinite musically—would not be such if he agreed to be constrained by conventions; hence, the highly-constrained film music trade cannot have geniuses among its ranks;

hence, film music is not a product of genius—that is, it is not the expression of the Infinite; conclusion: it is not worthy of consideration.

There is more: the Romantic genius is by his nature an unacknowledged artist, too innovative to enjoy the success in a world that does not share his foresight. Are film composers unacknowledged artists? They may be unacknowledged because their work is denigrated, certainly not because they are ahead of their time. Actually, according to the Romantic perspective they are not artists at all: “The nonutilitarian pleasure of art confirms the distinction between art and craft (which almost by definition has a purpose), and it also confirms, as it were, the childlike innocence of the creative artist, for, eschewing the worldly temptations of patronage, fame, and fortune, the artist plays the game of art for its own sake” (MEYER 1989: 189).

These *absolute–applied* antinomy survived into the 20th century and was renamed *Vortragsmusik–Gebrauchsmusik* [Performance music–Utility music] (NETTL 1921). The “Romantic” separation of pure and non-commercial art from commoditized crafts was reprised by the Frankfurt School in its critical theory of modern capitalism and mass culture (ADORNO 1991). Craft—frowned upon by the Romantics because it was not the pure expression of Absolute—became the “Culture Industry,” i.e. mass-produced cultural commodities aiming to maintain the ideological status quo of the ruling class by anaesthetizing the conscience of the consumers through entertainment. Cultural commodities distract the masses from the real life in order to prevent them from becoming aware of the social inequality and consequently revolting against it. From this viewpoint, the Hollywood “Dream Factory” is one of the most insidious branches of such Culture Industry, and film music one of its most guilty servants.

A criticism of film music in these terms can be found in the 1947 essay *Composing for the Films* by THEODOR W. ADORNO and HANNS EISLER. The book revived the old romantic bias against applied music:

“The conventional demand for melody and euphony is constantly in conflict with the objective requirements of the motion picture. The prerequisite of

melody is that the composer be independent, in the sense that his selection and invention relate to situations that supply specific lyric-poetic inspiration. This is out of the question where the motion picture is concerned. All music in the motion picture is under the sign of utility, rather than lyric expressiveness. Aside from the fact that lyric-poetic inspiration cannot be expected of the composer for the cinema, this kind of inspiration would contradict the embellishing and subordinate function that industrial practice still enforces on the composer" (ADORNO & EISLER 2007: 4).

And here again is the Art–Craft separation: "The truth is that no serious composer writes for the motion pictures for any other reason than money" (ADORNO & EISLER 2007: 37). This argument is a successful one and systematically adopted by art musicians too when they speak of film music. Most of them denied any place for art in film music and admitted that they had accepted film commissions just because of the money—e.g. ILDEBRANDO PIZZETTI and GOFFREDO PETRASSI (MICELI 1982: 78; MICELI 2009: 341). Similarly, STRAVINSKY said: "the only function of film music is to make its composer earn good money" (CALABRETTO 2010: 48).

Given these premises, it is not surprising that a classical-trained musician or a musicologist—both hardly in the position to escape the influence of this well-rooted bias—may be suspicious of film music and perplexed at seeing it featured in concert halls. ENNIO MORRICONE—a classical-trained composer and one of PETRASSI'S pupils—began to regularly conduct his film music in concerts only in 1998. In 1979 he had stated: "Very often film music is really banal, it should not be performed. I'd be offended myself. I was invited all over the world to perform my music in concerts, and I have always declined because I perfectly knew that they wanted me to present my easiest pieces" (MICELI 1982: 313).

Yet, it is a fact that film music is played in concert programs and this should not come as a surprise. In the nineteenth century there was symphonic art music—think of JOHANNES BRAHMS'S symphonies—and there was popular, easy-listening symphonic music—think of the waltzes, polkas and quadrilles by JOHANN STRAUSS JR. These

were two distinct types of music, deliberately targeted at different audiences and with different scopes and functions—seeking new artistic challenges on the one hand, entertaining in an elegant way on the other—but they were equally legitimate on the concert stage.¹ Of course, people going to listen to a STRAUSS concert would not expect the depth of a BRAHMS symphony; similarly, people going to listen to a BRAHMS program would probably looking for and be prepared to engage in a more complex listening experience. The symphony orchestra as a medium and the symphony hall as a venue were shared by both the art and the popular music. In the twentieth century, art composers seemed to be mostly committed to writing art music that is as arcane and brainy as possible—catering to much more specialized audiences than BRAHMS’S—thus relegating the symphonic music in a (sometimes deliberately inaccessible) high-brow enclave. Yet, as the success of MANTOVANI’S albums and the “Reader’s Digest’s Light Classics” anthologies shows, people are still eager to listen to the sound of a symphony orchestra playing accessible, popular music. On the one hand, present-day “absolute composers” declare tonal music dead and write music that sounds like noise to the laymen; on the other hand, the tonal music played in “serious” concert programs

1 Of course the composer should be aware of and honest about which type of music she or he is composing. The harsh debate about Italian pianist-composer GIOVANNI ALLEVI—with critics and musicians attacking him vehemently— is precisely due to a confusion (and lack of honesty?) on the type of music ALLEVI produces: pleasant piano/orchestral music aimed at popular audiences or art music? (ALLEVI deems his output to be art music, calling it “classical contemporary music;” VIDETTI 2009.) For an English version of some of the controversial issues about the composer see <http://www.charlotteviewpoint.org/article/164/Giovanni-Allevi---The-New-Mozart> (retrieved February 13, 2014). Film composers are generally quite honest and realistic about their work and do not try to pass their music off as art music. Consider JOHN WILLIAMS—one of the film composers that are most active on the concert stage—and his statement in a 2003 interview: “[WILLIAMS is] the first to admit that he’s not in the ranks of BEETHOVEN and MAHLER. ‘My professional life is Hollywood,’ he said in a recent phone conversation... ‘[My music] may not be at the level of BRAHMS, but it was never intended to be’” (DALTON 2003).

comes from the usual pre-twentieth-century canonical works—the classics. Nowadays cinema really seems to be one of the few sources of new tonal symphonic music capable of reaching the masses.² In terms of popularity and as an outlet of memorable orchestral tunes, film music can be said to be the twentieth-century equivalent of the nineteenth-century opera. The best of film music perfectly caters to the “nostalgic” symphonic-music lovers: film music is symphonic music that still speaks to a wide audience and continues to use the universal language of the tonal system.³

How does film music function in concerts? It is like program music. In concerts it retains its connection with the film. This way, film music possesses an illustrative and connotative richness that compensates for and justifies its apparent formal banality. This separate listening experience—by allowing to focus on the musical texture without the distraction of sound effects and dialogue—makes it possible to appreciate how fittingly film music can be able to translate a film’s character into sounds, how inventively it can succeed in reproducing the film’s atmosphere, how skillfully it can manage to summarize musically the structure and the events of the narrative. What LEONARD MEYER says about program music can indeed be applied to film music in concert:

“Despite the appealing ‘purity’ of formalism, a title or program that denotes a particular phenomenon is, in my view, just as much an attribute of a composi-

² A clarification is in order here, as my use of “symphonic music” may be ambiguous. By this, I do not mean music written in such a way as to remind of the symphony/sonata form, but music written to be played by a symphony orchestra. “Symphonic” here refers to the medium, not to the form.

³ The comprehension and appreciation of a music style depends on music education and on the degree of familiarity with that style (MEYER 1956: 35, 160). However, scholars also maintain that the tonal system is more natural than atonality and hence more universal (JOURDAIN 1997: 100, 259; MEYER 1956: 76). Also, the romantic musical dialect is said to have a universal appeal (MEYER 1989: 322). Among such scholars, there are also cognitive psychologists providing empirical evidence to sustain the claim (SLOBODA 1991: 197, 235, 257).

tion as are pitches, durations, and other relationships notated in the score. The significance of a composition depends on the interactions among a set of stimuli (the sounding music), a competent listener, and a cultural context (including what we know about a composition). Knowledge of what is being represented changes the significance of composition not only because such knowledge affects human experience, but because by directing attention to particular features of a pattern, such knowledge influences our understanding and response to what is presented... [The] knowledge that the last movement of BERLIOZ'S *Symphonie fantastique* represents a witches' sabbath significantly alters the way in which we comprehend and respond to, for instance, the tolling of the bells and the presentation of the Dies Irae. An important consequence of this is that what is innovative in the case of BERLIOZ'S 'Witches' Sabbath,' MUSSORGSKY'S 'Great Gate of Kiev,' or any other piece that represents extra-musical phenomena, is not merely the sonorous patterning per se, but the relation of that patterning to the specified subject matter. In other words, it is not merely the purely musical relationships devised by a composer that are innovative, but the relation of these to whatever is considered to be represented by them" (MEYER 1989: 130-31).

ENNIO MORRICONE'S *On Earth as It Is in Heaven* from *The Mission* (R. JOFFÉ, 1986) is a fitting example. The piece can be appreciated by itself for its formal complexity and contrapuntal writing—or better, modular writing (MICELI 2009: 625). However, if the listener knows the film, the listening experience will be even richer and the piece even more remarkable. The formal complexity of the three modules—one choir singing the Latin motet "Conspectus Tuus;" a second choir singing "Vita Nostra" accompanied by ethnic percussions; the third module being a lyrical theme for oboe backed by strings—is a perfect musical re-telling of the film's narrative. MORRICONE'S three modules represent the three groups featured in the film—the official Roman Church, the Guarani indigenous tribe, and the "human" church of father Gabriel, respectively.

The evaluation of a concert presentation from the film-music repertoire is likely to be heavily influenced by the Absolute-versus-Applied bias. Here are two reviews of the same JOHN WILLIAMS concert at Carnegie Hall. The former is by a critic only concerned with intrinsic musical structure—we can call this an "absolutist/formalist"

critic—the latter by a critic who took into consideration the programmatic nature of this music—a “referentialist/expressionist” critic.⁴ In the first case, the critic chastises the suite from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (S. SPIELBERG, 1977). The concert piece is a musical re-telling of the film’s narrative, from an initial atonality expressing the fear of aliens evolving into a final RICHARD STRAUSS-like tonal romanticism that signifies the friendly encounter with the visitors and the discovery of universal brotherhood. The critic blames the music for its unmotivated stylistic inconsistencies and lack of form:

“But the excerpts from *Superman*, *Close Encounters*, and *Star Wars* reminded one that film music usually is a thing of shreds and patches. *Close Encounters*, for example, began with modern touches (a little SCHOENBERG, a dash of BARTOK) designed to evoke a sci-fi atmosphere, but then dipped incongruously into a pop-tune romanticism” (KART 1980).

The other review of the same concert is instead clearly positive:

“Mr. Williams is facile in a positive sense, in that he combines a real mastery of the orchestra with a sure command of various orchestral styles and enough flair and personality to avoid the excessively derivative. And it’s a sign of his success that one only realizes when one hears it in concert how much it contributed to the overall impact of the films: his sounds recall the visual imagery in telling details. The most appealing music on his program was from *Close Encounters*, which has the most serious theme of any of these films, incorporates music into its mystical message and drew from Mr. Williams a really interesting deployment of modern coloristic techniques” (ROCKWELL 1980).

As any existing phenomenon film music in concert should be studied. As any applied music, film music requires some sort of adaptation to stand on its own in concerts. So, a preliminary step would be to list

4 On the dichotomies “formalism/expressionism” and “absolutism/referentialism” see MEYER 1956: 1–3.

the principal forms in which film music is presented on the concert stage.⁵

Forms and Formats of Film Music in Concerts

In preparing a film-music piece for concert performance, one way is to follow the “traditional form,” which consists of turning the excerpted selection(s) into a piece possessing an overall self-sufficiency and a formal closure. This may be done by adding a closing coda to a piece that was originally left open to segue into the next musical passage, or by reworking the structure and the orchestration. WAGNER’S *Walkürenritt* and GIACOMO PUCCINI’S aria *Nessun Dorma* were adapted for concert performance by eliminating the vocal parts and compressing the structure in the first case, and adding a closing cadence in both cases. STRAVINSKY reworked his ballet *L’Oiseau de Feu* into no less than three concert suites (1911, 1919, and 1945) of different length and instrumentation.

The traditional form comes with a series of well-tested formats—suite, overture, medley, etc.—already in use for other types of applied music. The most common tradition-inspired formats used for film music are:

“Main Title From/End Credits From”

It is a single piece running from three to five minutes. It can be either the same piece that accompanied the opening titles—generally closed with a dominant-tonic cadence in instances where the film version was left open—or a new version combining music from the opening titles and the end credits. The former case is exemplified by the

⁵ The following survey is mostly based on an archival research that I conducted in the Boston Symphony Archives. Therefore, many examples refer to the case study of JOHN WILLIAMS and the Boston Pops Orchestra (AUDISSINO 2012). Additional sources have been the BBC Proms archive and the study of film-music symphonic albums, such as CHARLES GERHARDT’S RCA “Classic Film Scores” series.

“Theme” from *North by Northwest* (A. HITCHCOCK, 1959) and the “Prelude” from *Psycho* (A. HITCHCOCK, 1960), both by BERNARD HERRMANN. The latter case can be found in JOHN WILLIAMS’S “Main Title” from *Star Wars* (G. LUCAS, 1977)—which actually is not the opening title music, but the main title music plus the end credit music. The “Main Title” is the film-music equivalent of the “Overture,” “Prelude,” etc. in operas and ballets. Indeed, in some cases the very word “overture” is used, particularly for those classics with a pre-eminent position in the film-music canon—e.g. the *Sea Hawk Overture*, KORNGOLD’S concert version of his 1940 film score for the MICHAEL CURTIZ film of the same name, which combines the “Main Title,” the “Love Theme” and the “Finale.”

“Finale/End Credits”

It is generally a five-minute piece taken from the very last scene(s) of the film, or from the end credits roll—and sometimes from both. DAVID ARNOLD’S “End Credits” from *Independence Day* (R. EMMERICH, 1996) as played in concert is the very same piece heard over the end credits of the movie. In most cases the tag is not “End Credits”, even though the piece is indeed the end credit music: “On Earth as It Is in Heaven” is the concert title of MORRICONE’S end credit music for *The Mission*—although the concert version has a different orchestration, with no harpsichord and an added drum-set part. WILLIAMS’S “Adventures on Earth” is the slightly revised concert version of the final musical sequence of *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial* (S. SPIELBERG, 1982).

“Excerpts/Selections from”

It is a longer piece—more than five minutes—and combines different selections from the film score into a single piece. WILLIAMS’S “Excerpts from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*”, for instance, features music from the opening titles, the finale, and the end credits. In the case of musicals, “selections” may be preferred—*Selections from Gigi*

(arranged by RALPH BURNS) is a one-piece symphonic arrangement of the main songs of the 1958 VINCENTE MINNELLI film. WAGNER'S *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* can be seen as a predecessor of this format: it combines the Prelude with the final aria "Mild und leise" (scene 2, act III), with the soprano vocal part being optional and generally not performed.

"Suite"

Flourished in the Baroque era as a collection of dances, it is a set of autonomous and self-contained pieces—typically employed for concert presentation of ballet music. The same format—generally containing a minimum of three movements—is applied to thematically rich film scores—e.g. BERNARD HERRMANN'S thirteen-piece suite from *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* (J. SHER, 1960) or the thirty-minute five-movement suite from *Star Wars*, recorded by ZUBIN MEHTA with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1978. The *Lord of the Rings Symphony* by HOWARD SHORE combines music from PETER JACKSON'S *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003) into a six-movement two-hour piece for chorus, soloist and orchestra.

"Medley"

Unlike the previous examples, the medley is typically not made up of extracts from the same film but from several films either by the same composer or by diverse composers. It a single uninterrupted piece and, more so than others, it is a showcase for the inventiveness of the arranger, since the materials can be stylistically very different from each other. The overall unity is given by the skillfulness of the arrangement—a sensible selection of the original extracts, their ordering in a musically congruent way, and the apt use of modulating bridges that keep the structure flowing—and by a title indicating a unifying criterion—e.g. A Salute to Fred Astaire ("Top Hat", "The Carioca", "Dancing in the Dark", "I Won't Dance", "The Continental") ar-

ranged by ALEXANDER COURAGE. The medley could be seen as the descendant of the *Réminiscences*, *Paraphrases*, *Grande Fantaisies*, *Potpourri*, those 19th-century formats used to combine and elaborate famous arias and themes from the operas.⁶

“Concert Piece for Soloist and Orchestra”

Selected parts of a film scores can be arranged for soloist and orchestra—in one or multiple movements. The solo instrument featured in the concert version can be either a composer’s personal choice not narratively linked to the film—e.g. MIKLÓS RÓZSA’s *Spellbound Concerto* for piano and orchestra from *Spellbound* (A. HITCHCOCK, 1945) or FRANZ WAXMAN’S *Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra* from *The Paradine Case* (A. HITCHCOCK, 1947)—or it can employ the same solo instrument already featured in the film score—like the violin in WILLIAMS’S “Three Pieces from *Schindler’s List*” from the STEVEN SPIELBERG 1993 film of the same name, or the saxophone in WILLIAMS’S *Escapades for Saxophone and Orchestra* from *Catch Me if You Can* (S. SPIELBERG, 2002).

“Concert Piece for Narrator and Orchestra”

Hollywood cinema is a highly narrative medium—as is film music too. A fitting format to emphasize such narrative nature is that of adapting a film score into a piece for narrator and orchestra. Parts of the film score are coupled with a text inspired by the story of the film or directly drawn from the screenplay or from the original book—e.g. MIKLÓS RÓZSA’S suite from *Jungle Book* (Z. KORDA, 1942), originally narrated by SABU, and the suite from *The Adventures of Robin Hood* by KORNGOLD – narrated by BASIL RATHBONE. WILLIAMS adapted his score

⁶ The medley is the typical format used by brass bands or small ensembles. However, in this survey we deliberately focus on concert hall presentations with symphony orchestras.

for *The Reivers* (M. RYDELL, 1969) into a concert piece for narrator and orchestra with text adapted from WILLIAM FAULKNER'S novel of the same name. Among the past models are SERGEI PROKOFIEV'S *Peter and the Wolf* and AARON COPLAND'S *Lincoln Portrait*, while an earlier example can be traced back to the Italian melologo—the “melodrama” having an actor delivering his lines accompanied by music.

The second and more specific form of presentation of film music in concert is the multimedia form. As the orchestra plays live, film clips excerpted from the very film for which the music was originally composed are projected onto a big screen above the stage, more or less tightly synchronized with the music phrasing and gestures. In this audio-visual presentation music receives the proper emphasis as music—in most cases the film clips have either no sound or their soundtrack is conveniently turned down. However, being played along with the visuals which inspired its creation, music can also maintain its specific nature of music for film. The multimedia form is a way to appreciate both the musical stand-alone quality and its correspondence with the film. The principal multimedia formats that can be singled out are the “multimedia concert piece” and the “multimedia film piece.”

The “multimedia concert piece” is a film-music concert piece arranged according to the traditional formats but accompanied by projected film clips. The level of synchronization can be more or less tight. For example, there can be a visual part being a sort of illustration to the music—e.g., the “Superman March” accompanied by clips from the film, with a basic level of synchronization between the musical rhythm and the editing rhythm and with occasional more precisely-located sync-points, like Lois Lane landing into Superman's arms exactly on a cymbal clash. Alternatively, a montage can follow the musical narrative more tightly: in the “Raiders March” Indiana Jones's reckless deeds are shown over the march sections for brass—the A and B “male” themes—while the romantic moments between Indiana and Marion are shown over the cantabile section played by

strings—the C “feminine” theme. In this format, the projected clips can be said to illustrate the music.

The “multimedia film piece” is an entire scene or sequence of a given film—comprising dialogue and sound effects—which is accompanied live with the same music piece featured in the film. This is the format most specific of film music since it is the live re-enactment of the audio-visual combination of a film piece with its own expressly composed music—e.g. the shower scene from *Psycho*. Unlike the other multimedia format, in this case it is the music that accompanies the visuals—although the live performance assures a stronger foregrounding of the music than in the film’s sound mix. The level of synchronization is higher here because any slippage that might occur between music and visuals would be more evident than in the other format. Particularly outstanding for their spectacular quality are some dance numbers from Hollywood musicals in which the level of synchronization reaches the peak of virtuosity. The orchestra accompanies flawlessly each dance step and catches each sync-point in perfect timing: here, the dancers are not dancing to the music but it is the orchestra that plays to the dancers. Besides the music, the evocative images, and the consistent audio-visual blend, what makes these multimedia film pieces even more spectacular—particularly the aforementioned dance numbers—is the “high wire stunt” quality of such virtuoso sync-playing—a good instance is the “Barn Dance” from *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (S. DONEN, 1957, music by GENE DE PAUL and JOHNNY MERCER).

Apart from single multimedia pieces which may be featured in otherwise traditional concerts, there are entire events based on the multimedia combination of music and visuals, which can be seen as concert-length extensions of the previously described multimedia formats. These two multimedia events can consequently be called “multimedia concert” and “multimedia film.” In the former instance, we have themed programs having film projections across the whole

concert. In the latter, we have the projection of an entire film with live musical accompaniment.

The first examples of multimedia films coming to mind are the revivals of the silent cinema masterpieces. These screenings, with live musical accompaniment, have been increasingly frequent since the American and British projections of ABEL GANCE'S *Napoléon* (1927) in the 1980s. A recent example is FRANK STROBEL conducting GOTTFRIED HUPPERTZ'S score to the newly-restored full version of *Metropolis* (F. LANG, 1927), or TIMOTHY BROCK conducting *Modern Times* (C. CHAPLIN, 1936).

As for live-accompanied sound films, these are rarer because of the technical issues raised by the on-film soundtrack (dialogue and sound effects) that has to be blended with the live music performance. In 1991 SELJI OZAWA conducted PROKOFIEV'S score to the projection of *Alexander Nevsky* (S. EISENSTEIN, 1938) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 2002 JOHN WILLIAMS conducted his own score live throughout the two hour-long projection of *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial*. More recently, DAVID NEWMAN conducted the multimedia projection of *West Side Story* (R. WISE, 1961) with the New York Philharmonic in 2011 and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 2013. LUDWIG WICKI and the 21st Century Orchestra specialize in multimedia films and gave a number of such concerts in the last years—examples include *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of Ring* (P. JACKSON, 2001); *Gladiator* (R. SCOTT, 2000); *Pirates of Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (G. VERBINSKI, 2006); and *Alice in Wonderland* (T. BURTON, 2010).

The “multimedia concert” is exemplified by *Star Wars in Concert*; the show made its début on April 10, 2009, in London. It is a sort of road-show featuring a grand suite from WILLIAMS'S scores for the six chapters of LUCAS'S saga accompanied by montages from the six films and live shooting of the musicians playing—details of the single instruments, close-ups on the conductor, etc. The multimedia quality of the event does not merely consist of the interaction between the pro-

jected film clips, on the one hand, and conductor DIRK BROSSÉ, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, on the other. To live music and projected film, live theatre is also added: actor ANTHONY DANIELS—playing C-3PO in the saga—delivers brief monologues and serves as a narrator to bridge the various entries of the program. During the pieces, light effects, colored lasers, and smoke are also used to enhance the experience and make it more absorbing and multisensory.

Symphony halls have long accepted and are increasingly accepting film music as a legitimate concert repertoire. It would be time for critics and scholars to do it too. It is clear that film music is not absolute music, but at least it should be treated as the other types of applied music are. After all, as film composer JOHN WILLIAMS said, “Only one half of one percent of the music written in the 19th century is anything we ever hear today; surely there must be at least that percentage of good music written for films” (DYER 1980).

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Wagner's Heritage in Cinema: The Bernard Herrmann Case

Jaume Radigales

Wagner, a Herald of Cinema

The complexity of the theoretical and artistic work of RICHARD WAGNER has been said more than once to make him a herald of cinema. This is an aspect that BRYAN MAGEE, one of the scholars who have approached the German composer in more depth, seems to ignore in his compelling study *Aspects of Wagner*. Indeed, the physical conception (and acoustics) of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, which opened in 1876, provided considerable developments in what was then contemporary theatre and, thereafter, began to change its architecture as well as its relationship with the public. This view is largely based on acoustic and visual elements—the theories that WAGNER himself put forward in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849):

- Elimination of the lights in the hall, so that all the light is concentrated on a single point (the stage).
- Seating layout of the public as in a Greek amphitheater, democratizing the occupied seats and concentrating attention on a single focus point (the stage).
- Placement of the orchestra in a pit sunk below the stage, which allows for the elimination of points of light and gives balance between what is sung and what is played (invisible orchestra).

DAVID HUCKVALE—in reference to WAGNER—talks about *Das Kino der Zukunft* (TAMBLING 1994: 115–117) in relation to the type of concept for the score that the German musician created in the context of musical drama and references this same drama as art linked to a type of spectacle that, since the opening of Bayreuth Festspielhaus, formally

seemed to anticipate how cinema would be consumed in cinema theaters, as noted above.

The same can be said about writing music for films, for example, with the use of leitmotifs—those leading, guiding, short and fragmented structures. Considering these concepts, it seems logical to think that WAGNER conceived something that went beyond operatic reform (which GLUCK had done in the second half of the eighteenth century) and was stepping into the field of the recorded spectacle. Undoubtedly, cinema has been a recorded spectacle from its inception.

It is worth quoting that WAGNER said that the orchestra should be hidden “in the deepened foreground outside the scenic frame, it at like time forms the perfect complement of these surroundings; inasmuch as it broadens out the exhaustless *physical* element of Nature to the equally exhaustless *emotional* element of artistic Man. These elements, thus knit together, enclose the performer as with an atmospheric ring of Art and Nature” (WAGNER 2000: 150).

The concepts of atmosphere and emotion are closely linked to the future of music at the service of the performing arts and can be applied to the world of opera, incidental music and, of course, to cinema, understood as the culmination of the conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) in WAGNER’S words.

In WAGNER, the use of leitmotifs leads to a music that is conceived structurally, something that those responsible for synchronizing the music with the projected images in the early days of cinema must have been familiar with. We reject the theory that music served to drown the noise made by the projector that KURT LONDON defended in his *Film music* (LONDON 1936: 23). Instead, we believe that every sequence of images needs sound, be it music or noise. In the first projections, the figure of the narrator became important, although the musicians who performed various musical pieces to the images on the screen became even more important. Some of them were singers and occasionally even opera stars.

As we know, during the times of silent movies, many of the films did not have an original score specifically written to be played at the screening. Often short compositions were used that have been extracted from some catalogs as *Kinotheken*—or cue sheets, or from pre-existing musical scores proposed by the film's producer. Authors of catalogues of photoplay music and those who wrote cue sheets, such as MAX WINKLER, GIUSEPPE BECCE, and JOHN STEPAN ZAMECNIK, were heirs of a music-theatrical tradition in which WAGNER had much to do with his futuristic vision of the role that music would play in narrative-gestural representations. So were the composers who wrote expressly for silent films and in some cases drew their inspiration from WAGNER'S style for neo-romantic compositions such as those composed by HANS ERDMANN for *Nosferatu* (F.W. MURNAU, 1922), GOTTFRIED HUPPERTZ for *Die Nibelungen* (FRITZ LANG, 1924) and *Metropolis* (FRITZ LANG, 1927), and EDMUND MEISEL for *Bronenósets Potiemkin* (S.M. EISENSTEIN, 1925). This neo- or late-romantic style was used by the first generation of composers who wrote music for talking movies in the 1930s. This style was not devoid of Wagnerian influence and was used both by composers from Central Europe (the case of the Austrian ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD and MAX STEINER) and Americans of European origin, as the case of the composer that is the subject of our study, BERNARD HERRMANN (1911-1975), a Russian-born American Jew.

In these composers as well as in many of his contemporaries, such as MIKLÓS RÓZSA, DIMITRI TIOMKIN, and FRANZ WAXMAN, who did not stylistically follow WAGNER, the influence on the structural concept of music can be seen as they rely on the significant expressive cells which IGOR STRAVINSKY derided in his *Poétique musicale* but which undoubtedly have survived to this day in the form of scores written by JAMES HORNER, HANS ZIMMER, and JOHN WILLIAMS. The latter, both in his scores for the *Indiana Jones* saga and for the *Star Wars* series, used leitmotifs insistently and recurrently to define situations, characters, objects and even psychological states with resources that can perfect-

ly stand beside what WAGNER used in order to structure a piece as complex as *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in four parts. Alluding to HERRMANN and his generation, DAVID SCHROEDER notes that “[t]he technique used by Herrmann [...] and by a host of other film composers from the beginning of the talkies to the present, is perhaps the most striking appropriation of an operatic device by the cinema. When musical themes represent a person, an object, an event, a personal quality, or perhaps even an emotion, they have become leitmotifs, or literally leading motifs, a musical procedure applied by Wagner and defined by this distinctive usage of it” (SCHROEDER 2002: 75). Therefore, RICHARD WAGNER’S influence in the significant-structural conception of music written for films has been evident for more than one hundred years in cinema.

The Operatic Conception of Bernard Herrmann: Opera as a World in *Citizen Kane*

HERRMANN is the quintessential composer of “obsessive individualism” (SMITH 2002: 54) and this permeates all his film scores from the first to the last one—from *Citizen Kane* (ORSON WELLES, 1941) to *Taxi Driver* (MARTIN SCORSESE, 1976).

BERNARD HERRMANN was devoted to compose film scores, though his real ambition was always to conduct symphony orchestras and composing for a medium other than cinema. He tried that by writing *Wuthering Heights* (1951), based on the novel by EMILY BRONTË, his only opera. When one listens to it objectively and without thinking that HERRMANN is the author of the score of *Psycho*, one has the feeling that we are seeing a film because of HERRMANN’S ability to capture the psychological traits of the main character (Heathcliff) in the context of an atmospheric environment loaded with tension and distension, in a truly superb dialogue, which likens him to BENJAMIN

BRITTEN, the great composer of opera of the second half of the twentieth century.¹

Much of HERRMANN's music for the big screen closely follows an operatic conception, especially in two of the examples that we will now consider: two films directed by ALFRED HITCHCOCK, *Vertigo* and the already mentioned *Psycho*. But first, we should remember that ISHAGHPOUR YOUSSEF noted the fact that opera is music in action (ISHAGHPOUR 1995: 30). To which we could add that cinema is action *in* and *with* music.

Both opera and cinema also start from unreality: the first for its sense of time standing still before the challenge (until GLUCK and then until WAGNER) of an aria *da capo*, not to mention the artificial sense of the operatic spectacle itself, which moves us to tears making us believe that an obese soprano dies of consumption (and singing!) under the skin of Mimì in *La Bohème's* fourth act. Opera, then, is the triumph of artifice, which can be paralleled with the language of cinema, full of rhetorical devices such as ellipses or the dialogue between the shot and the reverse shot, something not possible in theater, not even in sung theater. ISHAGHPOUR notes in this regard that theater relies on the *ethos* of words (concretion), while opera is existentially driven by *pathos* (ISHAGHPOUR 1995: 33). This is something with which we have to agree, because music is abstraction of pure feelings, while cinema also conveys the *pathos* through camera movements, which elicit specific emotions in viewers through another element, the iconic one.

We have said above that, in the early film scores, opera was a common resource as a source of inspiration or for explicit quotations; and the use of leitmotifs contributed to the type of musical-cinematic compositions of the first composers of scores for the talkies (CITRON 2000: 31). This was, and still is, a common resource in that writing,

¹ This is not the space to do so, but it would be very interesting to compare HERRMANN's opera with BRITTEN's *Peter Grimes*, an opera that we can qualify as cinematic for its ability to evoke images of great impact with the music.

which has as many styles as composers. And, after more than one hundred years of dialogue between image and music, it has created an enormous corpus of functions and resources. In fact, the relationship between music and cinema is a pairing that may well be considered one of the luckiest in art throughout the twentieth century. The literature on the subject—plentiful and varied from heady academic works to popular essays—has explored the thousand nooks and crannies of an assembly that goes from the creation of musical scores specifically for the big screen to the use of pre-existing music that can add meaning to films.

The world of opera was portrayed in *Citizen Kane*, ORSON WELLES'S debut film and also BERNARD HERRMANN'S debut as score composer. HERRMANN was thirty when he started to work for the film industry. For the occasion and in the scenes in which Susan Alexander (played by DOROTHY COMINGORE) is seen in the opera theatre built for her by her husband Charles Foster Kane, HERRMANN wrote an interesting score, in a neo Meyerbeerian style, for a fictitious opera (*Salambô*) which becomes the most resounding failure in Kane's career and, incidentally, his second wife's in the context of a *grand opéra*, as dated as the tastes of the protagonist.

WELLES'S aim, achieved thanks to HERRMANN'S score, is to deride the world of opera (SCHROEDER 2002: 121) in its most decadent aspect, announcing Kane's failure in his attempt to help his second wife to become an opera diva. Previously, we are treated to the frustrating tutoring of forbearing Signor Matisti, who feels hopeless at the failure of Susan, whom we can see rehearsing the aria "Una voce poco fa" from ROSSINI'S *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. It seems that HERRMANN MANCKIEWICZ'S original script specified that the fragments performed by Susan Alexander were to be taken from MASSENET'S *Thaïs*, an opera in which SYBIL SANDERSON, W.R. HEARST'S lover, had performed.² But the increase in production costs due to copyrights made WELLES

² ORSON WELLES starred in the title role inspired by newspaper magnate WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST.

abandon this idea (CARRINGER 1987: 134). This led WELLES to request HERRMANN to compose an imaginary opera, based on the models of the French *grand opéra*, in the style of ERNEST REYER'S *Salammbô*, parodied by HERRMANN, but with text taken from the libretti of RACINE'S *Athalie* and *Phèdre* (SCHROEDER 2002: 124). On the soundtrack it was soprano JEAN FORWARD who actually sang the vocal part for actress DOROTHY COMINGORE. The composer himself explained the idea and the objective: "Our problem was to create something that would give the audience the feeling of the quicksand into which this simple little girl, having a charming but small voice, is suddenly thrown. And we had to do it in cinematic terms, not musical ones. [...] We had to have the sound of an enormous orchestra pounding at her while everyone is fussing over her, and then—'Now get going—go!' they throw her into the quicksand" (SMITH 2002: 79). Finally, what you hear is a loud passage, orchestrated in an expressly rough manner, in a thoroughly bad imitation of RICHARD STRAUSS'S symphonic style but with a French air, which produces HERRMANN'S desired effect: "that Susan is fighting without hope 'in quicksand'" (CARRINGER 1987: 134).³

Herrmann Draws from *Tristan und Isolde*: *Vertigo*

The collaboration between BERNARD HERRMANN and ALFRED HITCHCOCK began in 1955 with *The Trouble with Harry* and ended abruptly with *Torn Curtain* (1966). Eleven years of teamwork resulted in over nine films.⁴ This pairing is one of the most interesting and pro-

³ The irony is that, despite the clearly parodic treatment of this composition, opera singers such as KIRI TE KANAWA and ELLEEN FARRELL included this little masterpiece of the New York composer in some of their concerts or recordings.

⁴ HERRMANN actually wrote the score for *Torn Curtain*, but HITCHCOCK did not use his music and eventually used a score written by JOHN ADISON instead. The rest of HITCHCOCK'S films with music by HERRMANN are *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), *The Wrong Man* (1957), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959), *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963) and *Marnie* (1964). For *The Birds*, HERRMANN was only credited as "Sound

ductive in the world of cinema in terms of the relationship between music and image. It can be compared to other pairings from the world of opera, which has paired (a few times) great talents of literature and musical composition—librettist and composer in the case of opera⁵ and director and composer in cinema, with fortunate pairings such as FELLINI and ROTA; SPIELBERG and WILLIAMS; LYNCH and BADALAMENTI; and BURTON and ELFMAN.

The pairing between ALFRED HITCHCOCK and BERNARD HERRMANN produced a number of superb movies—visual symphonies in which the sound/music component establishes an exciting dialogue with the narrative/visual component, especially two key pieces: *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960).

Vertigo can be considered as an essentially musical movie in view of its linear circularity, a true visual symphony that is structured in episodes as follows:

1. Introduction: Scottie's acrophobia (*Death* of policeman)
2. Presentation and following of Madeleine (*Love*)
3. Love for Madeleine (*Love*)
4. Madeleine's suicide (*Love-Death*)
5. Judy (*Love*)
6. Madeleine's resurrection (*Death-Love*)
7. Madeleine's death (*Death*)

What *Vertigo* deals with is necrophiliac obsession, inspired by the novel *D'Entre Les Morts* by PIERRE BOILEAU and PIERRE AYRAUD. Thus, Scottie's obsession becomes ours, the spectator's (SULLIVAN 2006: 22). This topic had been featured in GEORGES RODENBACH'S symbolist novel *Bruges La Morte* (1892), which inspired ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD'S opera *Die tote Stadt* (1920). In both novels, the main

Consultant". OSKAR SALA and REMI GASSMANN designed an electronic soundtrack on a trautionium.

⁵ With pairings as interesting as BUSENELLO-MONTEVERDI; DA PONTE-MOZART; PIAVE-VERDI; or HOFMANNSTHAL-R. STRAUSS, among others.

theme is an infatuation with the love of a woman her lover wants to bring back “from the dead”, with a clear Orphic reminiscence. But this woman is obsessively sought because she fits the ideal woman model, a clear romantic element (EUGENE 2000: 88), linked, in the case of the film, to a main character with acrophobia. Love and death and necrophiliac passion make us think of WAGNER'S *Tristan und Isolde* and LUIS BUÑUEL'S *Abismos de pasión* (1954), filmed four years before *Vertigo*.⁶

The vision between realistic and dreamlike (unreal, therefore) makes HERRMANN write a score for HITCHCOCK'S film that is between tonal and atonal, with dissonances in synchronous episodes that underline the main character's (Scottie's) acrophobia and which also has to do with the timelessness of a music that quotes romanticism but does not fully embrace it, hence the tonal and even melodic ambiguity, a score that “can hardly be whistled” and that makes us lose all points of reference (KALINAK 1992: 5–7). This is a score of classic (romantic) conception with a leitmotif structure; it is modern because of the maturity and assumption of Wagnerian themes and because of its bold, ambiguous, unresolved harmony that conjures up a haunting acoustic perception in the listener/viewer. In short, this is a score that is linked to musical tradition, modernity, experimentation and speculation. According to CASTRO DE PAZ (1999: 27), “without actually proposing a break with the classical conventions of the Hollywood soundtrack, Herrmann's experimental drive and his constant instrumental search—forcing and taking certain resources of the traditional film score to their limit to turn them into something else—bloomed in *Vertigo*.”

Only three leitmotifs⁷ can be heard throughout the film: Madeleine's, Carlotta's, and the *love* leitmotif. But they are always linked to

6 WAGNER'S music, especially that of *Tristan und Isolde*, is of fundamental importance in the films of BUÑUEL.

7 We use both the terms “leitmotif” and “theme”, which are actually different meanings. “Leitmotif” is a short, constantly recurring musical phrase associated with a particular

Scottie's character, who takes a "journey of unconscious desire and impossible satisfaction, according to psychoanalytic theory" (CASTRO DE PAZ 1997: 37).

Madeleine's theme is clearly influenced by the prelude of WAGNER'S *Tristan und Isolde*. It is a *lento amoroso* in 6/8 time. It is a lyric theme played by the strings which will be identified as Madeleine's leitmotif and which grows in volume and intensity in the shots profiling her character. The theme can also be heard in the chase scenes. In the liner notes of the recorded edition of the score played by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by JOEL MCNEELY, KEVIN MULHALL (1995) notes that the theme structure is based on the repetition of short musical cells, announcing the future minimal music. According to GRAHAM DONALD BRUCE, this is the only truly developed theme in the film and it evolves from the presentation, to love after the kissing scene in the bay and finally to recognition (BRUCE 2000: 179).

HERRMANN wrote Carlotta's theme with a certain local taste. He uses, for example, a *habanera* rhythm with Hispanic resonance, which recalls The Mission San Juan Bautista (near San Francisco)—where the film's climatic scene takes place—or the character of Carlotta Valdés, the "dead woman" that Madeleine believes lives in her body and whose portrait hung in the art gallery seems to obsess her. So, the idea that HERRMANN would have preferred to set the film in New Orleans (SMITH 2002: 220; EUGENE 2000: 93) does not seem logical, as that would have meant giving Carlotta's theme a French air. The score conveys the spatial function that AARON COPLAND talked about in one of his references to the functions of film scores, whereby the film score should allow us to locate, from what we hear, a narrative time and space in the context of the film discourse. In this case, the *habanera* underlines Carlotta Valdés's Hispanic origin. But it also creates an obsessive, hypnotic effect that illustrates Madeleine's mystery

person, place, or idea. "Theme" or "musical theme" is a term relating to a longer musical phrase, not necessarily repeated. However, we are using both terms as synonyms.

and the late Carlotta's sensuality:⁸ in fact, Carlotta's theme is a rhythmic theme of little melodic interest, unlike Madeleine's (TÉLLEZ 1989–90: 114–115).

The love scene is drawn with a consuming passion that seems to be endless, as the "Liebestod" from *Tristan und Isolde*; it is an "allusive, not plagiarized" piece (SMITH 2002: 222).⁹ The theme becomes much more zestful when there are circular images around the two characters, evoking The Mission San Juan Bautista. The theme ends with a decisive and brilliant conclusion. It is, as HERRMANN said in 1973, "eight minutes of cinema without dialogue or sound effects, just music and film. He [Hitchcock] simply said to me, 'Music will do better than words there'" (SMITH 2002: 360). In any case, we agree that the love theme is, in fact, an evolution of Madeleine's theme.

Scottie does not have his own theme or, in any case, his would be the music heard during the credit roll, which refers to the abyss that opens up under his feet because of his acrophobia. He is a man trapped by his disease and, therefore, musically represented by the three main motifs in the film.

Scottie's girlfriend, Midge has no theme of her own. The music heard in her scenes is always an external music (diegetic), stylistically opposed to everything that has to do with Scottie and then Madeleine, with complex (Wagnerian) resonances. HERRMANN chose music by J.C. BACH and MOZART, whose pieces can be heard on Midge's phonograph in her studio.

One of the key scenes in the film is that of Madeleine's "resurrection" under the skin of Judy, who we see for the last time to the beats of the "perpetuum mobile" in the credits: Judy renounces herself, but there is also the element of "that time that returns and, at the same

⁸ It might be a reference to the famous *habanera* that Carmen sings in the first act of BIZET'S opera.

⁹ Authors like JACK SULLIVAN (2006: 10–11) state that the *Tristan und Isolde* material had been used by HERRMANN in the original English version of *Murder!* (1930) with music by JOHN REYNDERS.

time, is absolutely impossible to escape" (TÉLLEZ 1989–90: 118). Then Judy transforms and Madeleine seems, indeed, "resurrected" when she leaves the bathroom bathed in a lighting that makes the scene unreal, while the love theme plays. When Judy, however, locks herself in the bathroom to gather her hair, Madeleine's theme appears shortly and quietly. Madeleine's theme will no longer play because there is something new that has come between her and Scottie. HERRMANN composed a complex piece for this scene, an orchestral suite to reinforce the unreality of the scene, in which everything is turned around and the world that has surrounded the two characters until then can be seen.

At the end of the film when Scottie reveals Madeleine/Judy that he has seen through the deception to which he has been submitted thanks to the necklace around the neck of his girlfriend, the love leitmotif plays again. The theme was not heard in the preceding scenes and now it plays again above Scottie's line: "I loved you, Madeleine!" In this block, the music has a mood-setting function first and then emotive functions when the nun appears, by the way, after a musical silence before Judy/Madeleine's scream, while she falls into the void.

Scottie leans out of the belfry and stares into the void, having overcome his vertigo and a concluding coda leads to a bright key of C major, although "the resolution is far from satisfactory [...] Scottie becomes a tragic figure, cured of his vertigo but, once again, deprived of his Madeleine" (MULHALL 1995). This is, definitely, a conception of high melodrama, similar to the climax at the end of an opera.

The Triumph of the Leitmotif: *Psycho*

The music that BERNARD HERRMANN wrote for *Psycho* (1960) has been one of the most momentous and influential scores in film history. The composer himself held it in high esteem and used some of its themes in his last film, *Taxi Driver* (SMITH 2002: 352).

In *Psycho*, HERRMANN intelligently uses something so primal (and moreover crucial throughout the history of film music) as the leitmotif with apparent simplicity. Because this “symphony of horrors” (to paraphrase the slogan used in *Nosferatu*) which led to the birth of a character as charismatic as disturbing by the name of Norman Bates, acts as *Vertigo*'s dark side in its musical aspect: epic-nostalgic symphonic music for the first and chamber music treatment in *Psycho*, serving what is the most abject of the human condition: incest and homicide. Oedipal bases for a creepy story in which the spatial conception (the motel) has its musical translation in a theme like *The Hill*—that *moderato* in 6/8 time and in the key of C major—as if nothing unusual would happen, although something in that sound made it clear that the house on the hill overlooking the Bates Motel has all the appearance of being haunted.

Bates and his ghosts live in a house whose climax is the shower where Marion will be cleaned (a kind of atonement?) after calculating what to do with the money she had just stolen from the company she works for. The careful sound and visual design of the scene features, as a starring element, Bates's leitmotif as he suddenly breaks in to cut Marion's peace (and life).

The scene allows us to get into the shower with Marion, so the viewer is taken with the girl into a vital space to relax. The sound close-ups of the noise produced by the soap bar, the water falling from the phone—everything seems to invite peace and calm, until the shadow of a female silhouette is seen. When the curtain is sud-

denly drawn, that same backlit silhouette becomes a human being who threatens Marion and stabs her eight times.¹⁰

We see a sequence of forty shots that lasts one minute and sixteen seconds.¹¹

Molto Forzando e Feroce

Vivo :03

The musical score is for a full orchestra, including Violins I and II, Violas, Cellos, and Basses. The tempo is 'Molto Forzando e Feroce' and 'Vivo'. The time signature is 3/4. The score shows the first few measures of the cue, with a time signature change to 2/4 at the end. The music is characterized by a series of sharp, rhythmic stabs in the strings, marked 'senza sordis' and 'fff'.

Example 1. The beginning of the cue “The Murder” from *Psycho*.

The eight stabs seem many more due to the equivalence effect between images and riffs distributed along thirty-seven bars: black and

10 Originally, the sequence was intended to have no music. HERRMANN eventually convinced HITCHCOCK of the need to include a small composition for one of the most celebrated moments of the horror genre.

11 If we add the shots without music, the total rises to seventy-eight.

white in the first and second violins and violas, the first on an E flat ostinato that becomes plain E from the second bar (when the second violins join in), with a dissonance effect (ex. 1).

Soon cellos and basses are added in a canonical composition for a string octet that goes from E flat₅, played in a higher octave (E flat₆) of the first bars to the final C₃ of the cellos, in a grim return to the tonic (C major) (ex. 2).

The musical score for Example 2 consists of five staves. The top four staves are for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello, and the bottom staff is for Contrabasso. The music is in 2/4 time. The first two bars show a dissonant E-flat ostinato in the upper strings, marked with *sfz* and *pizz.*. The third bar marks the beginning of the resolution, with the lower strings (Cello and Contrabasso) playing a C major tonic, marked with *sfz (sost.)*. The final two bars continue this resolution, with the upper strings playing a plain E note. The score is marked with measure numbers :48 and :51.

Example 2. The last five bars of the cue "The Murder" from *Psycho*.

That sequence of just over a minute plays with the mind of viewers, by moving sharply from high screeching frequencies to low frequencies. Treble sounds are known to be vibrations with a high frequency range, which alter the nervous system, while low frequencies temper and calm the mind of the listener. From terror to rest, as in the case of this scene, in which we witness the unbearable sense of dread before a relentless and violent death, slowly, as the canonical composition juxtaposes dissonant sounds, we free ourselves from the tension before a life that is over. Marion agonizes over the bass

sounds of cellos and basses until, now dead, she pulls down the plastic shower curtain. At this time, the music mutes and the sound of the shower water at the forefront is the only sound that remains of this atrocity.

To this descriptive element, something that some critics have pointed out must be added: the *altissimo* sounds of the first and second violins are imitative of bird cries (BRUCE 2000: 210; EUGÈNE 2000: 108). It is a resource that the following HITCHCOCK–HERRMANN film (*The Birds*) will exploit to drive viewers to hysteria in a film that can also be qualified as terrifying.¹² But let's go back to *Psycho*: when Marion checks into the motel, Norman Bates lets her know of his interest in taxidermy. He fails to tell her that he keeps his mother embalmed in her room (that is something we will see later), but he tells her he loves dissecting birds. The music from the shower scene is pointing us to the real culprit with imitative sound of birds, contradicting what the images seem to show: an old woman. HERRMANN'S music, then, tells us that the real murderer is Bates: this is the function of the leitmotif.

This murderer's guiding motif is repeated in the following crime committed by the owner of the motel, when detective Milton Arbogast breaks into the house and once again we see, in a brutal overhead shot, how the "old woman" pushes Arbogast down the stairs and then brutally stabs him to death.

The third time we hear the leitmotif is when Lila, Marion's sister, discovers Mrs Bates's mummified corpse. Cleverly, the leitmotif breaks in when Norman, dressed in his mother's clothes, appears at the threshold of the door before pouncing on Lila. Sam, Marion's boyfriend, subdues Bates, who loses the wig and viewers understand what has happened. Bates's mother and Norman is both the same person: case solved. HERRMANN synchronizes those images with an eerie cue that closes the case, before the epilogue that shows Norman

¹² Albeit *The Birds* does not feature an original score as such but a complete electronically designed soundtrack.

Bates locked in a prison cell. This is a cue (it is, in fact, titled "The Discovery") in which we are witnessing a world in which the aural and the visual (BRUCE 2000: 211) cause cognitive connections in the viewer/listener, in an audio-logo-visual conjunction that lets us understand why Bates identified himself with his mother. The leitmotif, therefore, is completed with a final and conclusive resolution.

Conclusions

Cinema is a communication tool that relies on the conjunction between what is seen, what is heard and what is understood based on that audio-logo-visual relationship. As a unifying element, it has common elements with opera, to the extent of using some resources of musical theatre. With his theories on the musical drama, RICHARD WAGNER laid the foundation of an artistic phenomenon that goes beyond the conventions of a genre, to venture into a dialectical realm. Since its origins, cinema has seemed to continue on from Wagnerian theories, although their consolidation and full equivalence have occurred in specific moments, works or periods throughout its history.

In this sense, the musical and visual conception of BERNARD HERRMANN is one of those great moments when the confluence between what is heard and what is seen establish an absolutely inseparable relationship of affinity and dialogue. It can be said, then, that HERRMANN has an operatic vision of cinema, an aspect heralded in *Citizen Kane*, which lays the foundation of an absolutely unique relationship in cinema history. That relationship reaches its height with the scores that HERRMANN wrote for ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S films. *Vertigo* and *Psycho* constitute key elements in understanding the adoption and assimilation of one language in the service of another. However, such assimilation is only possible if we understand it as a starting point for WAGNER'S theories about musical drama and the structural concept of the works of RICHARD WAGNER, especially in the use of the leitmotif as an expressive and meaningful concept that helps to un-

derstand the internal structure of both the musical and film drama as narrative spectacles.

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Williams versus Wagner – Or an Attempt at Linking Musical Epics

Irena Paulus

Now, when very likely everyone has seen the latest installment of *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*, when the media hullabaloo has died down and when there is no longer any need to hunt for pirate copies of the film, when the long queues at the box-office are a complete thing of the past, we shall refer to a few sentences that rank the music of JOHN WILLIAMS for the *Star Wars* sequence quite above the level of the simple scores of entertaining “Saturday afternoon films.”¹

RICHARD DYER, *Boston Globe* journalist, in an article about the making of the latest *Star Wars* title, focuses on the director’s attitude to the music: “Lucas says he loves music, and it’s clear he does. He remembers the music in the films he grew up with—Liszt’s *Les Preludes* introduced the old Flash Gordon serials, which were a primal source for *Star Wars*. He calls the trilogy his ‘space opera’, and there are many narrative and mythic parallels to Wagner’s ‘Ring’ cycle” (DYER 1999: 1; own emphasis).²

1 The idea and concept of a *Saturday afternoon movie* derived from GEORGE LUCAS, and appeared in almost all the written comments on the old trilogy, or the new tetralogy, of *Star Wars*. Even JOHN WILLIAMS in one interview mentioned having addressed the score of the oldest installment of the series, *A New Hope*, in the spirit of a good Saturday afternoon film. In *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* VLADIMIR SEVER showed that the films entitled *Star Wars* have gone far beyond their initial idea (SEVER 1999).

2 In connection with the first part of the quote: as a lover of Flash Gordon and, together with it, LISZT’S *Les Preludes* (which appears in the main title of the series), and saying that KUBRICK used classical music in *A Space Odyssey*—the symphonic poem *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by RICHARD STRAUSS (this relatively unknown composition became exceptionally popular after being shown in the film) and the *Blue Danube* waltz of JOHANN STRAUSS—GEORGE LUCAS, four days before starting shooting *A New Hope* (the oldest

JOHN WILLIAMS also, in an interview for the journal *Film Score Monthly*, took up the view of GEORGE LUCAS: “The music for the film is very non-futuristic... It was not the music that might describe terra incognita, but the opposite of that, music that would put us in touch with very familiar and remembered emotions, which for me as a musician translated into *the use of a 19th century operatic idiom, if you like, Wagner and this sort of thing*” (BYRD 1997; own emphasis).

DOUG ADAMS, film music analyst and critic, after a copious review of the themes from the old *Star Wars*, also confirms the initial intention of both director and composer to speak in a science fiction film myth in the musical language of late Romanticism: “Doubtlessly, Williams’s cohesive construction of the scores can be pinned on any number of elements: *the pervasive harmonic language; the postmodern Neo-Romantic orchestrations; the external, internal, multiple-external arc of the three films. But, first and foremost, these are thematic creatures...*” (ADAMS 1999: 22; own emphasis).

These few sentences aroused my curiosity, and I wondered to what extent these writers were right. Almost every score by JOHN WILLIAMS, after the very first listening, recalls the composer’s reliance on the music of late Romanticism. However, the right question would run: are the three old scores of *Star Wars* really so close to the Wagnerian way of composing, or: is the film music of JOHN WILLIAMS close to the music of WAGNER’S operas, and if so, to what extent?

We will start with the obvious. Both WAGNER and WILLIAMS have used leitmotifs...

part of the cycle) was convinced that his space saga would be best suited by music composed of already composed works of serious music (he tried putting some of the works on the soundtrack). Luckily, LUCAS’S good friend STEVEN SPIELBERG brought JOHN WILLIAMS along to the recording of the oldest *Star Wars*.

Leitmotifs and Film Themes

Although the concept of the leitmotif appeared only at the end of the 19th century, traces of a theme repeated throughout the work to describe a given character, subject, idea or state of mind can be found as early as the Baroque, Classicism and early Romanticism. On the whole these were superficially used motifs of reminiscence and motifs of situation, the musical and dramaturgical functionality of which is way behind the complex web of leitmotifs from the operas of RICHARD WAGNER. WAGNER'S leitmotifs were not just themes that were linked from time to time with given characters; these were themes that escaped from the common framework of the periodical structure, themes that changed together with the characters, attaining at times a degree of unrecognizability, themes the dramaturgical and narrative role of which dictated the whole musical design, the orchestration and the composer's harmonic language.

In the work *Opera and Drama*³, RICHARD WAGNER writes that “the ‘recurrence of melodic elements’ the leitmotif technique, creates the principle behind a ‘unified artistic form which stretches not merely over restricted parts of the drama but over the whole drama, linking it together’. The ‘restricted melody’ of traditional kind of aria was to be expanded into the ‘infinite melody’ that embraces a whole work” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 131).

While WAGNER talked of leitmotifs largely descriptively, without giving a clear description of the concept (probably because he himself had a problem with finding new words best to express the means and

³ In *The New Grove*—in the entry on WAGNER—WESTERNHAGEN, DAHLHAUS, and BAILEY write that RICHARD STRAUSS called WAGNER'S central work *Opera and Drama* the book of books about music. The work is largely concerned with explicating the novelties in *The Ring of the Nibelung* tetralogy, but also explains WAGNER'S new ideas to do with text, music, set painting, motif development, harmony and rhythm. STRAUSS noticed that the book was difficult to read, because it contains thoughts that “came directly from Wagner's head and that required the establishment of a completely new dictionary” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 111).

objective of his operatic reform), today we can easily find a definition of running themes in musical encyclopedias textbooks and other works of musical theory. Usually, in such writings, the concept of leitmotif is fairly simplified.

Here I shall quote the definition of JOHN WARRACK, which seems to me the most acceptable. Warrack writes that the leitmotif is “a theme or other coherent musical idea, clearly defined so as to retain its identity if modified on subsequent appearances, whose purpose is to represent or symbolize a person, object, place, idea, state of mind, supernatural force or any other ingredient in a dramatic work, usually operatic, but also vocal, choral or instrumental. The leitmotif may be musically unaltered on its return, or altered in its rhythm, intervallic structure, harmony, orchestration or accompaniment, and also may be combined with other leitmotifs in order to suggest a new dramatic condition” (WARRACK 1980: 644).

It is in fact quite difficult to cram inside a single definition everything that inheres in a leitmotif.⁴ In WAGNER’S operas a leitmotif almost never appears literally (literal repetitions of themes and motifs are an exception with WAGNER, not a rule). After its first production in its basic form, in every subsequent appearance the theme is varied. Variations give different impressions of the same material. Everything is treated equally, but each subsequent impression serves to cast new light on a certain feature of a character, a different view of a situation or some other element of the drama.

Just as there were traces of it even before WAGNER, so the leitmotif continued to live on in works of classical music composers after

⁴ Very likely because of the size of the concept and the endeavor to explain it as well as possible in just a few sentences, some others forget that the concept of the leitmotif does not come from WAGNER at all. In his search for the most suitable word to describe his concept of the opera theme, WAGNER used the concept of the ground theme. It was only his young contemporary HANS VON WOLZOGEN, a passionate admirer and great analyst of WAGNER’S music brought in the concept of the *Leitmotiv*, leitmotif, or running motif. WAGNER himself said that WOLZOGEN was the coiner of the term leitmotif, which seemed to him more suitable than that of *Grundthema* (GOSLICH 1960: 584).

his death. However, as well as in the works of FAURÉ, DELIUS, HUMPERDINCK, PFITZNER, and RICHARD STRAUSS and in those of at the time very avant-garde composers like ALBAN BERG and PAUL HINDEMITH, the leitmotif showed itself to be an ideal composedly solution in a new medium that on the surface would seem to have no connection with music–film.

After music became an essential substitute for natural sounds in the silent film, and after it had got over the appearance of talkies, staying on in the medium as the only means capable confirming what had already been said and expressing what was unuttered in the film image, film music began to behave like a simplified operatic music, albeit subordinated to some other dramaturgical element (content, image).⁵ The early film composers (MAX STEINER, ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, and FRANZ WAXMAN) accepted the leitmotif as a perfectly logical means of describing film characters. Their successors also accepted it—BERNARD HERRMANN, MIKLÓS RÓZSA, and ALFRED NEWMAN, as did the successors of their successors, BURT BACHARACH, HENRI MANCINI, NINO ROTA, and ENNIO MORRICONE.

Because of the fact that the leitmotif was used in film music more from a technical point of view (the process of composing was essentially accelerated when the composer did not have to write a new theme for each new scene, but simply pulled down a universal means, a leitmotif) and less from an artistic, savvy film music theoreticians did not call it by this name at all, but simply called it a film theme. CLAUDIA GORBMAN defined a film theme as “any music—melody, melody-fragment, or distinctive harmonic progression—heard more than once during the course of a film. This includes ‘theme songs’, background instrumental motifs, themes repeatedly performed by or associated with characters, and other recurring non-diegetic music” (GORBMAN 1987: 90).⁶

⁵ The topic of the similarity of opera and film music does concern this article, but it is of much too great a scope to be addressed any more thoroughly.

⁶ For a comparison of film and opera leitmotif see also PAULUS 1997.

This definition tends to imply a conclusion about the similarity of film and operatic leitmotifs. Nevertheless, there is an essential difference between them. Film themes are much simpler from a musical point of view, and their dramaturgical function is also simplified, just as their forms of variation and transformation (not to say their mutual kinship) are reduced if not to the minimum then to the most simple possible of forms. A film leitmotif is rather similar to the pre-Wagnerian leitmotif: most often taken literally from scene to scene, it had the role of signpost for spectators, quite distant from the role of musical symbol with metaphysical implications found in WAGNER'S operas.⁷

A hundred years after the death of WAGNER, the leitmotif has remained an integral part of purely musical and of film scores. It also appeared in 1977, in the score of JOHN WILLIAMS for *Star Wars: A New Hope*.

JOHN WILLIAMS in his musical language carried on from the work of the old composers of film music of the thirties. He wrote symphonic scores at a time when such scores were a rarity in the film. He adopted overscoring (his films almost choke on their own music) at a time when an overscored film could not find justification in the immediate influence of the silent film. Among other musical antiquities, the technique of the leitmotif also showed up. However, alongside the old, WILLIAMS also used the new and brought the traditionalism of his own style up to date (for which reason the music of *Star Wars* does not seem out of date even today).⁸ His themes are not mere banal film themes that show up whenever the composer runs out of inspiration, but are genuine filmic leitmotifs that with their manifold

⁷ How superficially the leitmotif is used in films is discussed in EISLER 1947: 4–6.

⁸ JOHN WILLIAMS is *not* among those film composers who, though musically uneducated, have entered the history of film music. He studied piano and composition at UC (where he was a student of BOBBY VAN EPPS), at the Julliard (ROSINA LHEVIN) and privately with MARIO CASTELNUOVO TEDESCO and ARTHUR OLAF ANDERSEN. His thorough musical training (though initially aimed at the piano) came out later in his film scores.

roles, transformations and mutual kinship create a web of leitmotifs in a Wagnerian sense.

While WAGNER in his operas created webs of leitmotifs with a large number of themes (in *The Ring of the Nibelung* tetralogy⁹ alone there are a hundred of them), film composers have used just a few film themes the number of which can on the whole be counted on the fingers of one hand. JOHN WILLIAMS was the first to break with this tradition. In the old *Star Wars* trilogy, analysts counted some score of leitmotifs in the true meaning of the word.

Thematic Images: The Unity of a Score in the Wagnerian Way

The similarity of WAGNER'S and WILLIAMS'S leitmotifs appears right at the level of narration. Although WILLIAMS did not decide about the script, unlike WAGNER who wrote the models for his operas, the fact that both of them dealt with largely mythological themes¹⁰ helps in the comparison of their musical procedures. In both of them, that is,

⁹ The operatic tetralogy of *The Ring* consists of four operas: *Rheingold*, *The Valkyries*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of the Gods*. Many think that the similarity between WAGNER'S *The Ring* and LUCAS'S *Star Wars* lies in the fact that the parts of each cycle did not arise in their chronological order. WAGNER wrote the librettos of his tetralogy backwards. First, in 1848 he thought of the opera *Siegfried's Death*; later he called this *The Twilight of the Gods*. In 1851 he expanded this with the opera *Young Siegfried*, today just called *Siegfried*. A year later he resolved to expand his two part drama, and wrote the librettos for *The Valkyries*. Nevertheless, unlike the librettos, the music for all the parts was written in chronological order. On the other hand, since LUCAS, as we know, started writing his *Star Wars* series from the fourth part (he planned nine parts from the beginning), i.e., in the middle, JOHN WILLIAMS had a difficult job when he had to link the fourth, fifth and sixth episodes with the first with the music. Unlike WAGNER, he did not have the privilege of writing the music in order.

¹⁰ Here we will restrict ourselves to the score of the old *Star Wars*—the mythological character of the story does not relate to all the film scores of JOHN WILLIAMS (and even in *Star Wars*, apart from myth we can find other narrative influences). Myth is the center of interest for WAGNER, departing from it most in the *Mastersingers*, which has a historical content, and an obvious critique of the conventions of the music of his contemporaries and predecessors.

we find a clear division of leitmotifs into Good (Light) and Bad (Darkness) themes. In *Star Wars*, because of the relentless checkerboard division of characters into black and white¹¹ this division is practically more obvious than with WAGNER, whose characters will also sometimes be grey (in *Lohengrin*, for example, Elsa of Brabant is “pure of heart and innocent of soul, but too much a flesh and blood woman to be able to withstand the trials of uncertainty and keep quiet about the fatal question for which she loses Lohengrin for ever” (TURKALJ 1997: 408).¹²

Among the Good themes in *Star Wars* are: Luke’s theme (the film’s main theme, that is), Obi-Wan Kenobi’s theme (the Force theme), the Rebellion fanfare, the Princess Leia theme, the Han Solo and Princess Leia love theme, the Luke and Leia, brother and sister motif, the Yoda theme, and minor themes such as the droid theme, the Ewok and the Cloud City themes. Evil themes are: the Empire theme, the Darth Vader (or Imperial March) theme, the Emperor’s theme, the Star Death theme, the Jabba the Hut theme and the Boba Fett motif.

Although Evil has fewer themes than Good—not because Evil is underrated, but because there are a greater number of good characters—there is in the trilogy a kind of musical equilibrium between Light and Dark. In *Episode IV: A New Hope* the theme of Obi-Wan Kenobi or the Force dominates. In the sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*, the Darth Vader theme appears most frequently, while in the last part of the saga, *The Return of the Jedi*, all the themes are equally important, and none of them is particularly prominent. In this the music keeps up with the basic thread of the filmic fable. In the fourth

11 Not even Darth Vader is a grey character. He only changes color; at the beginning of the beginning, *The Phantom Menace*, he is white; later he becomes black, in *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and finally goes back among the whites in *The Return of the Jedi*.

12 The white knight Lohengrin saves the honor of Elsa of Brabant and marries her. The only thing he wants in return is her absolute trust; she must not ask who he is and where he comes. Of course, she cannot endure, asks the fatal question, and is left without her beloved, who has to go back to where he came from.

episode we only just get to know the characters to wonder at the power of the miraculous Force, in the fifth Evil (Darth Vader) dominates, and in the last episode the forces are evenly matched, though of course Good wins at the end.

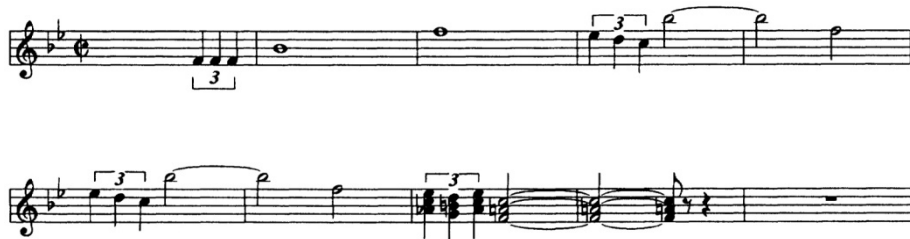
The appearance of a single dominant theme in a given film and its being given prominence in the context of a web of themes makes the dominating themes in *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back* take on the idea of Senta's ballad from WAGNER'S *The Flying Dutchman*. With a little exaggeration, it is true, WAGNER said that Senta's ballad was the "thematic seed of the whole of the music in the opera" and that it gave a "thematic image" from which he was later to build a web of motifs. Although this is not entirely accurate, because his themes in *The Flying Dutchman* were still at the level of motifs of memory (*Erinnerungsmotiv*) that appeared in the form of interpolations and not in the form of the foundation of all the musical happenings (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 127–129), his idea of a thematic image (which he was to develop in later operas) is reflected in the domination of individual themes in individual parts of *Star Wars*. The reason for the domination of these themes is more narrative and less structural in nature, but WILLIAMS did achieve with them what WAGNER also wanted to achieve with this thematic image—a unity of sound in his score.

Evil is Always More Interesting than Good

Considering that JOHN WILLIAMS (like RICHARD WAGNER) attempted to pull the score of *Star Wars* together via work on themes, that is, by stressing individual themes as the dominant ones, we come across one unusual feature in his space opera. Although the narrative and structural roles of the dominating themes are clearly indicated, the main character of the old *Star Wars* remained—as far as thematic work and domination of themes is concerned—somewhat in the shade. Not in one part of the trilogy the Luke Skywalker theme is

dominant, although the composer used it as the principal theme of the whole saga. It would appear that neither WILLIAMS nor LUCAS considered Luke a particularly important character. Alternatively, he was important as the title character of the story (and so not a single musical intro to *Star Wars* has been able to start without his theme), but his opposite Darth Vader was more interesting, while he was less important than the Force that surpassed him.

The Luke theme is conceived very grandly. This grandeur was necessary because the theme appears in a double function—as both main title theme of the film, and as theme of one of the main characters. Actually, when he created it, the composer was thinking more of its title function than of its function as representing Luke.¹³ The theme is “larger than he is. His idealism is more the subject than the character itself, I would say” (BYRD 1997: 7), JOHN WILLIAMS himself explained.



Example 1. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Star Wars*, Luke's theme/main title theme.

¹³ When CRAIG BYRD asked about each individual theme, WILLIAMS replied very briefly about Luke's theme, in general lines (elevated, idealistic, heroic), while about the main theme, although it is actually the same theme, he spoke fairly much at length: “The introduction to the film was visually so fascinating, with letters that came from nowhere and spaceships and so on, that I knew at once that the music had to have the flavor of what was going on in front of the audience's eyes, that it had to be exceptionally strong. In my head this is a very simple, very direct melody that dramatically jumps by an octave and contains a triplet that simply gets you by the throat” (BYRD 1997: 8). The octave jump in the main title theme is not direct, but always goes on by the characteristically Williamsian highlighting of tonic and dominant.

Irrespective of it being two sizes too big, irrespective of the composer's opinion about the character (which was clearly derived from the director's instructions), and irrespective of it not dominating the film, the theme nevertheless kept up with Luke and all his changes from farm boy to experienced knight of the Jedi very punctiliously: "In a *New Hope*, the theme is generally brash and brassy, heard in quick, flashy statements. *Empire* puts the theme primarily in the minor mode, especially for the Dagobah training sequences where Luke's optimistic determination is put to the test. [...] In *Jedi*, this theme is as much applied to the Rebellion as is to Luke, suggesting that the character has matured enough to understand his place in the larger effort" (ADAMS 1999: 22).

The character opposite but akin to Luke is Darth Vader. "Long ago, Darth Vader betrayed Ben Kenobi and the Jedi Knights. Now Vader represents the bad side of the Force" (MATESSINO 1996: 12). These words of JOHN WILLIAMS explain all the complexity of the Darth Vader theme, and it is also explained by the fact that the story about the "fall and redemption of the messianic figure of Anakin Skywalker" (SEVER 1999: 168) with the appearance of *Episode I*, is turned into the umbrella story of the saga. Because of all this we can say that Anakin Skywalker, or Darth Vader, is in no way the black figure he seemed to be in 1977, when *Star Wars* first appeared on the big screen, or in 1980, when the Darth Vader theme first hit the cinema speakers (in *Episode IV* JOHN WILLIAMS had not yet defined the Darth Vader theme; then, he was accompanied by the less effective Imperial motif).

The grey hidden in the ostensibly total black can also be read from the musical context: the theme balances major and minor, between the visible militant power and the hidden sadness. Although the composer put the minor sign after the key (in this case G minor), the head of the theme (the famed opening motif) is based on a melodic description of a major fifth (the sixth degree of G minor), which in a

melodic and occasionally in a harmonic sense recalls major (E flat major).

The game of lowering and turning back to the natural tone of the minor tonic (G flat to G) in the second phrase excites still more hesitation with respect to determining tonality. Tonality is totally obscured in the center of the theme thanks to the great chromatics at the beginning of the second musical sentence (from the domain of flats the composer shifts to the domain of sharps). In the middle of this chromatics come octave leaps that give the impression of the deformity, almost the pain in the fearful black figure (perhaps the composer wanted in this to put the stress on the right way that Darth Vader had gone at one time). In his last phrase the theme will come back to the main motif, that is to the unusual melodic vacillation between major and minor (the theme is in the minor, as is confirmed by the composer, but from the melodic context this can hardly be seen).



Example 2. JOHN WILLIAMS, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, Darth Vader theme/Imperial march.

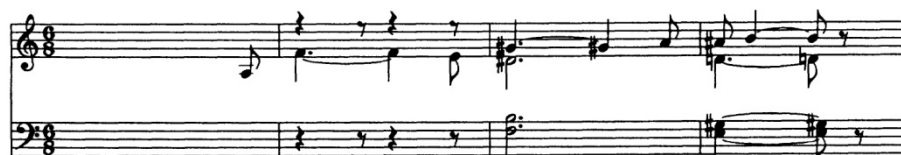
The Darth Vader theme is one of the most striking in *Star Wars* (in spite of, or perhaps just because of, its hesitation about tonality and its dense chromatics). Its exceptional rhythmicity (punctuated rhythm and ostinato figure in the base) and the orchestra (which has to be performed by the brass) give it, apart from a powerful melodiousness, a highly militant feel as well. That is why the real title of the theme is the Imperial March—it does not represent the figure of Darth Vader exclusively (although it is largely bound up with him) but is often a symbol for the whole of the Empire.

Talking about the Darth Vader theme, we should not pass over the associations with WAGNER'S leitmotifs. On the one hand, with its rich melodic language the Imperial March recalls the melodic and harmonic richness of the Tristan chord, the theme of the lovelorn Tristan who can neither live in his love nor die in it. The revolutionary chromatics of RICHARD WAGNER, which is according to many features the end of the tonal and the beginning of the atonal method of composing, is practically recalled in the descending chromatics of the Darth Vader theme. Of course, the chromatic linking of tonality, the play with tonal kinship and the modulations in the distant tones inside one theme do not represent anything revolutionary in this day and age, rather an imaginative exploitation of musical elements. Apart from that, WAGNER'S revolutionary chord is two dimensional (the theme is embraced by a melodic and by a harmonic component, and both stand apart from the standards of their time), while WILLIAMS'S theme is one dimensional (its complexity relates almost exclusively to the melodic component—the harmonic is not banally simple, but it is far from having the complexity of WAGNER'S).¹⁴

On the other hand, the procedures and transformations of the Darth Vader theme are actually in line with WAGNER'S endeavors to adapt the leitmotifs to the drama and to bring out all the psychological transformations of the characters through them. It is already said that his themes appear in their original form only on initial introduction. In each subsequent appearance they are (often increasingly distant) variations of the basic theme, which are manifested in melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and instrumentation transformations. In the case of the Tristan chord, the variations are numerous, the most important of them coming at the end of the opera, when the dissonant sound of the fourth chord is finally resolved into the consonant chord (during the whole of the opera, WAGNER takes the dissonant Tristan

¹⁴ Among other things, the Tristan chord is made up of fourths, one of which is augmented, while WILLIAMS, though playing with tones, never breaks up the third structure of the chord.

chord into new dissonant chords, leaving it unresolved until the very end of the opera).



Example 3. RICHARD WAGNER, *Tristan and Isolde*, Tristan chord.

In *Star Wars* JOHN WILLIAMS does not take his themes to such distant and complex variations (there is the ever-present fear that the watcher, absorbed in the story of the film, will not be able to recognize a theme that is very important to the composer). Nevertheless, the Darth Vader theme, following the transformation of the character, goes quite far in its variants. At the end of *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, Darth Vader is the victor (beating Luke in a duel), but the rebels have managed to save Luke and escape by jumping into hyperspace (all in the very nick of time naturally). The transformations of the Vader theme show his warm and cold feelings. The theme surrenders to the atonal-dissonant surrounds (when they inform Vader that the Millennium Falcon [Han Solo's ship] is ready to be pulled on board the Executor [Vader's]), passes into a high register (the flute) and conflicts with the deep register (wind and strings) when Vader once again telepathically contacts Luke and asks him to join in the Dark side of the Force, and is then drawn out into an exceptionally deep register (when Vader, disappointed, realizes that the rebels have managed to escape).

Just as the Tristan chord (and most of WAGNER'S other themes) gets furthest from its original form at the end of the story, so the Vader theme takes on a totally new sonority at the moment of his death (*Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*). At this moment, the Darth Vader theme stops being a militant march and turns into a gentle theme of a dying father. The uncommon reversal is carried out with

simple but effective musical means: slowing down the tempo, simplification of the rhythm (the punctuated rhythm is lost) and instrumentation (from high string flageolets which are not themselves certain what is going on, to instruments with increasingly warm tones—harps, oboes and horns).

Perhaps WILLIAMS'S procedure for the scene of Vader's death should rather be compared, not with WAGNER'S procedure with the Tristan chord, but with the procedure of BERLIOZ in the *Fantastic Symphony* (1830), into which he brought the musical idea of the *idée fixe*. As a forerunner of the leitmotif of WAGNER, the Berliozian *idée fixe* pulls the five programmatic movements of the symphony into a single whole (just as the Vader theme units the Empire score), and goes through various transformations (following the artist's amorous pains). The furthest variation of the *idée fixe* comes at the end of the symphony (when the artist is completely disappointed in love): through the instrumentation (the strident color of the clarinet in E flat), and via change in beat (the four part time turns into three part) and rhythm (shortening the note values) it becomes completely deformed, reaching a degree of unrecognizability similar to that of the Darth Vader theme.

We might almost say that BERLIOZ'S and WILLIAMS'S techniques are the same—the difference being that BERLIOZ goes into a negative and WILLIAMS into a positive direction of change of theme (the direction of the change was determined for BERLIOZ by the program of the symphony, for WILLIAMS by the script). The results are similar too: both themes are shifted from a medium or deep register into a glittering high register, both achieving a high degree of transformation in order to show a change into the opposition (the bad character becomes good, love turns into hate). The comparison leads us to the thought that although WILLIAMS'S model was undoubtedly WAGNER, his approach to the leitmotif is closer to that of the pre-Wagnerian age, when proceedings with themes and motifs were become increas-

ingly complex, but had still not got into that degree of profundity that is the mark of the Wagnerian work with themes.

The Force Theme: Thematic Image or *Idée Fixe*?

The second theme that dominates in *Star Wars* is the Force theme, which is the Obi-Wan Kenobi theme. This is a theme that was presented the first¹⁵ and the theme that, like WAGNER'S thematic image, or BERLIOZ'S *idée fixe*, unites all the scores of *Star Wars* (the Darth Vader theme unites only the score for *The Empire Strikes Back*). DOUG ADAMS notes that the theme of the Force, that is the Obi-Wan Kenobi theme, is the only one among the Good themes that abounds in descending interval leaps (although it starts with a characteristic WILLIAMS rising fourth in the functional relationship of the dominant tonic) and that is conceived in minor key¹⁶ and not in major, like all the other themes of the Good.



Example 4. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Star Wars*, Obi-wan Kenobi theme/Force theme.

However, for the functional role of theme in the film, its periodic structure is more important, the four phrases of which are clearly

15 In *A New Hope*, all the major themes are heard at the beginning, in the introductory music or in the first scene, and after that are shown individually, precisely connected with the first appearance of the given character.

16 DOUG ADAMS also says that the Force theme done in major key is ineffective: "try playing it in a major mode and you'll quickly realize why the composer never did that" (ADAMS 1999: 23).

separated by a halt on a long tone. The cadenced halts on the close of each phrase, which are actually quite unusual in musical structure, enable the composer to use as much of the theme as he needed to cover the scene. Also, all of the phrases are similar (the second, third and fourth phrases all derive from the first), and the theme can thus very easily be interwoven into a conversation like the one being carried on by Luke and Ben Kenobi in the dangerous desert of the planet Tatooine about Ben's real name and his connection with the old knights of the Jedi (*Episode IV: A New Hope*).

At the outset WILLIAMS'S theme is very tightly linked with the Ben character, that is, Obi-Wan Kenobi. However, in time it becomes clear that the theme represents something bigger than Obi-Wan, some that "gives the Jedis strength", that is "around us and in us", that "connects the galaxies" and represents "an energy field around all living beings."¹⁷ The theme appears at every mention of the Force, and then gradually takes on the meaning of fate when Luke stares back at the farm (the theme is subject to diminuendo and accelerated to have a nervous effect imitating the tension of Luke), seeing there the burned bodies of his uncle and aunt (augmentation, a broad execution of the theme in the strings), and when Ben in battle with Darth Vader looks significantly at Luke, puts down his light saber, and allows Vader to kill him. In the last case (as in some other situations), the theme tells the story in advance: its relation with Ben's look at Luke a moment before his death tells everything—both what we suspect (that Luke will become a Jedi knight) and what we do not know (in *A New Hope* the watchers still do not know that in *The Return of the Jedi* Luke will redeem his father, Darth Vader).

The Force theme has one more function. In *Episode VI: The Return of the Jedi* it almost completely replaces the Luke theme. Luke's theme, which has anyway grown beyond the character representing his physical characteristics, is headed towards the second function of

17 Obi-Wan's words explaining to Luke what the Force is.

the title theme and is linked with the rebels (the function of the Luke theme spreads out into breadth, while the Force theme takes on the role of various although more concretely oriented figures and ideas). Since Luke matures during the three episodes and turns from farmer into knight, the theme of Force in *The Return of the Jedi* becomes a synonym for his psychic maturity and the supernatural mental skills of a knight of the Jedi.

After Ben's death, the theme becomes almost exclusively a synonym for the Force.

In the last part of the saga, when Han Solo, Princess Leia, Chewbacca and Luke attempt to descend to the planet Endor on the stolen boat *Empire*, Darth Vader, with the assistance of the Force discovers that it is not his soldiers on the boat but his son Luke. And vice versa, Luke discovers that Darth Vader is on the Death Star, and that his presence is imperiling the rebels (father and son sense each other, with the help of the Force, over great distances). The flow of Force between the little shuttle and the Death Star (the Force is omnipresent, but invisible) could be done in only one way if banality is to be avoided—through music.

WILLIAMS, then, alternates pieces, phrases that is, of the Force theme with pieces of the Darth Vader theme, linking them musically with neutral sections as a synonym for the other characters, who do not guess what is going on (Han gives Chewbacca flying instructions, the imperial officer on the bridge seeks the code for the passage). In this scene the theme is equated with the Force; it is not a symbol for it, it does not have some hidden meaning or ask for any particular explanation—it is the Force itself.

The Obi-Wan Kenobi theme, or the Force theme, does not have, then, just a double role, its role (thanks to its domination over the other themes and its connection with the omnipresent supernatural force) is manifold: "I think of Ben Kenobi's theme as reflecting both him and also the Jedi Knights and the Old Republic that he remembers," comments the composer. "It also serves to represent the Force,

the spiritual-philosophical belief of the Jedi Knights, and the Old Republic” (MATESSINO 1996: 12). The function of the theme of the Force goes further still: it expands, from the role of representing a single character, to smaller meanings like those related to action (the final battle in *A New Hope*) and adumbration (announcing the defeat of the rebels in *The Empire Strikes Back*), and takes over a great role like the expression of the transformation of and awaking of new mental powers in the main character, and in the end is equated with much bigger concepts, such as fate, God and supernatural power. From this point of view the theme of the Force is musical material from which everything comes—both the musical and the filmic narration—and we could then define it as the core of narrative and musical happenings, or as a thematic image.

Family Connections, Thematic Webs, and Musical Unity

The theme of the Force, indeed, constitutes a thematic image that is completely different from that of WAGNER’S Senta’s ballad and from the musical core around which he shaped *Lohengrin*, but the ideas of thematic image in the two composers coincide at the broadest and most general level. At a lower level, it is reflected in the second unifying element of the dramatic score: kinship of musical themes. When we discuss thematic kinship, we have to recall that WAGNER, by the idea of thematic image, understood musical material from which all the other music derived. Put more simply, WAGNER had in mind some theme or other musical idea that he treated as the musical nucleus—from it, in various procedures of variation, he created new themes, from which came new variations, and from them new variations and so on. Thus he obtained a series of themes that were akin to each other, the kinship going so far that it was sometimes “hardly possible to draw a line, on one side of which a motif is the same one and on the other side of which it is a different one (with a different name)” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 121).

The result of this composing procedure was the ability to create a whole world of motifs on the base of a single musical idea. For example, the motif of nature in *Rheingold*, the first opera in the story of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, represents “a musical image of the elemental, the origin of things, consists of simple sound waves, which go on for no fewer than 136 bars of sublime ‘monotony’.



Example 5. RICHARD WAGNER, *Rheingold*, Nature motif.

Erda’s motif, the musical emblem of the earth goddess, is a minor-key variant of the Nature motif.



Example 6. RICHARD WAGNER, *Rheingold*, Erda’s motif.

The rhythmic diminution of Erda’s motif, the motif of Wotan’s restless wandering, symbolizes the fear that overcomes Wotan as the result of Erda’s prophecy of the gods’ doom: the diminution, expressing haste, is the psychological element, and its association with Erda’s motif is conceptual.



Example 7. RICHARD WAGNER, *Rheingold*, motif of Wotan’s restless wandering.

In the *Ring* rising movement means evolution, falling means decline: the Nature motif is inverted to produce the motif of the God’s downfall (“Götterdämmerung”), the apparent major-mode brightness

of which the lowered supertonic (the Neapolitan degree) of a minor key” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 131–132).



Example 8. RICHARD WAGNER, *Rheingold*, motif of the twilight of the gods.

Kinship of theme and motif enable WAGNER to create a web of leitmotifs that tightened his opera (and we should not forget that it is a very capacious musical genre) into integrated and united music dramas.

Star Wars too can be considered a kind of musical epic in which the requirement for the creation of a logical, united whole is not only justified but also necessary. As we have seen, JOHN WILLIAMS, following in WAGNER'S footsteps, has linked the three or four parts of the saga with common themes. In the individual parts he has created the impression of wholeness by giving prominence to individual themes that are dominant in the narrative. However, has he gone so far as to link the themes musically, creating a dense web of mutually akin leitmotifs?

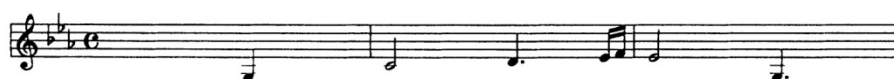
A small analysis of the theme of Good will provide an answer to this question.

I have already discussed two important themes from the group: the Luke Skywalker theme and the Force or Obi-Wan Kenobi theme. Since these two musical thoughts appear at the beginning of the old part of *Star Wars*, in *Episode IV*, the idea that they might have some kinship occurred. However, if there is a link between the two themes, it is certainly not strong. The only thing that links them is the introductory jump to the pure fourth (from the dominant to tonic). This jump is typical of WILLIAMS and we had perhaps better take it as his composer's mannerism rather than an attempt to link two themes together. It might be also understood as circumstantial that the domination of the tonic (or the dominant and tonic) functions in Ben's

and Luke's themes. The fact that both themes unfold in a single tonality and do not contain any unusual shifts in point of alteration and modulation might also be just accidentally similar. The origin of the themes from one motif that develops through four phrases might also be interpreted as coincidental.

Almost all these musical elements correspond to some typical features in WILLIAMS (which make his musical language identifiable), and this might lead the superficial analyst to think that this is a matter of standard rather than deliberately chosen and used musical elements. That there is a willed and not an inadvertent similarity can be seen from an analysis of other themes of the Good.

The Obi-Wan Kenobi theme (ex. 4) contains, at the transition from the first to the second phrase, a descending jump from the third degree to the dominant (since the theme is in the minor, this is a jump by a small sixth). Leia's theme begins with an ascending jump from the dominant to the third degree (a large sixth, because the theme is in major). This too is an accident, one might say. But it is not! Because the introductory motif of Ben's theme, read from that place backwards and turned from minor into major creates the introductory motif of the Leia theme. Since both themes (in the WILLIAMS manner) developed from the introductory motif, we can say that the Leia theme is a backwards form of Ben's theme.



Example 9. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Star Wars*, introductory motif of the Ben theme.



Example 9a. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Star Wars*, introductory motif of the Leia theme.

Now when by turning the Force theme round we have obtained the Princess Leia theme, it is not difficult to see that it is from the

Leia theme that the Han Solo and Leia love theme arises (which occasionally works as the Han Solo theme, since he does not have one of his own). Both these themes start with an ascending jump by a large sixth (dominant-third degree), both, in the second half turn off into a new tonality and both derive from the introductory motif that in the second part breaks into parts and turns into a somewhat more mobile musical sentence. There is one small difference. The Leia introductory motif is in a clear major, while the opening motif of the love theme, although major, flirts with a harmonic minor (flattening of the second degree).



Example 10. JOHN WILLIAMS, *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, Princess Leia theme.



Example 10a. JOHN WILLIAMS, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, Princess Leia and Han Solo love theme.

In an interview with a journalist from the magazine *Film Score Monthly*, JOHN WILLIAMS said that there was a link between the Leia and the Yoda theme (BYRD 1997: 7). Following up his words, we noted a jump by a large sixth, typical of the Leia and the love theme. However, more obvious than this jump (here WILLIAMS jumps from a tonic

to the sixth degree, and not from the dominant to the third degree) is the introductory fifth dominant-tonic shift (descending), which emphasizes the inversion of the beginnings of two basic themes: the Force theme and the Luke theme. The Yoda theme, then, as we might expect from the theme of the Jedi Master, is connected with all the themes mentioned so far—both the basic themes (Ben’s and Luke’s) and the derivations of them (Leia’s and the love theme). We shall see that the Yoda theme is constructed from a single basic motif, that it is rhythmically more mobile in the second sentence (like Leia’s and the love theme) and that it unfolds with no modulations (like the Ben and the Luke theme) but with one little alteration (as in the Han Solo and Leia theme).



Example 11. JOHN WILLIAMS, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, Yoda’s theme.

The Luke and Leia theme comes only at the end of the Saga (*Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*) because the main characters only then find out their close kinship. The Luke and Leia theme is stated by all analysts to be the musically most mature of all the WILLIAMS themes in *Star Wars*. It starts with a rising movement dominant-tonic-dominant that in its entirety recalls the Luke theme, and partially the beginning of the Ben theme (dominant-tonic rising) and the beginning of Yoda’s theme (dominant-tonic descending). After the introductory featuring of the basic tonal functions, the melodic line of the Luke and Leia theme moves gradually downwards and halts at the third degree that, together with the dominant from the beginning of the theme, creates a concealed large sixth, typical of the Leia theme

and the love theme of Han and Leia. This leap is clearer at the beginning of the second musical sentence, which starts with a major six-four chord (exclude the initial fourth and you get a large sixth).

In its second sentence, the Luke and Leia theme, like the Leia theme and the love theme moves into a new but very distant tonality (an enharmonic modulation from D flat major into D major). However, the second sentence of it is more reminiscent of the further variant of the second sentence of the Yoda theme. This is shown by the existence of the brother and sister motif, which regularly accompanies Luke and Leia, developing via a diminution of the second sentence of the Yoda theme.



Example 12. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Return of the Jedi*, Luke and Leia theme.



Example 12a. JOHN WILLIAMS, *Return of the Jedi*, brother and sister motif.

The Luke and Leia theme crowns WILLIAMS'S thematic work. At the end of the story, it summarizes all the main themes of the Good. Through it WILLIAMS binds together all the essential elements of the existing themes and in a new fairly complex melodic and harmonic context creates a new theme and uses it to conclude the story of the battle of the last knight of the Jedi against the Dark Side of the Force and the Evil Empire. What he started with the creation and domination of the Force theme, the composer has completed by shaping the Luke and Leia theme. Like a positive conclusion, it sums up all the composer's prior aspirations in the context of the Good and con-

cludes the great score on a note of Good. While Ben's theme functions as an exposition, the Luke and Leia theme works as a coda—and together coda and exposition confirm the wholeness and unity of the musical work.

The World of the Leitmotifs of John Williams

When WAGNER laid down the leitmotif system, he could not have suspected that his idea would have such wide application—not only in the opera (which he probably hoped for) but also in film music (which did not exist at his time). While some film composers use leitmotifs, or film themes, very banally, others make more careful use of them, attempting, to the extent the film image allows them, to come as close as they can to the Wagnerian concept. However, their application of the leitmotif has also remained at a fairly mundane level.

Although he has gone further than any of them, JOHN WILLIAMS too has remained at a lower level of use of the leitmotif in comparison with WAGNER. Analysis has shown that he has used them very carefully, almost copying the Wagnerian principle that required themes to be linked with given characters, subjects or ideas, to be seen in basic form and in variants, and thus to keep up with transformations of characters, and to be akin to each other, and to give shape, through their appearance, to a unified and single score.

It is the principle of the linkage of theme and individual character, idea or subject that is most controversial with WILLIAMS. Understanding it literally, as a rule, he pasted themes unconditionally onto given characters, which enables the slightly more attentive listener or watcher to predict quite easily when a theme is going to come up. Prediction is simpler and more certain than weather forecasting. If Darth Vader struts across the scene, his theme is going to be heard; if there is talk of the Force, the Force theme will ring out, if the camera shows first Yoda and then Luke, the music responds with a quick succession of Yoda and Luke themes. WILLIAMS only occasionally departs

from a rather hackneyed figuring forth of screen events. One such place is the death of Kenobi, where the composer uses the Leia theme, the most lyrical of the musical themes, in order to show Luke's grief at the death of his friend and mentor.¹⁸

However, not even WAGNER knew immediately how to behave with his themes/symbols. At the beginning he too used them like labels and only in later operas turned them into themes that were "succinct enough to make their descriptive points without interrupting the constant flow of changing poetic images" (GUTMAN 1968: 363). The predictable behavior of WILLIAMS'S themes can be linked, then, with the behavior of the leitmotifs from the earlier operas of WAGNER'S and with pre-Wagnerian opera.

JOHN WILLIAMS has taken the requirement that the motif has to keep up with the psychological transformations of the character it represents much more seriously. It is true, in the chronologically first film (*Episode IV: A New Hope*), his themes on the whole follow each other (and appear in easily predictable places), probably the result of the composer's conviction that he was writing music for a light film that would not have too much response from the public and hence did not require so very much effort to compose. However, when the box office success of *Star Wars* outdid the most sanguine expectations, and when Lucas stated that there would be sequels, the composer got down to work much more seriously. In *The Empire Strikes Back* and later in *Return of the Jedi*, the variations of the themes are not brought down to literal repetitions, to gentle melodic and rhythmic variations and distributing the theme from one instrument to another.

Although retaining certain procedures from *A New Hope* (e.g., the change, or even several changes, of instrumentation during the exe-

¹⁸ This does not mean that in Ben's death scene his theme is not-heard at all; when Obi-Wan puts down his light saber and looks meaningfully at Luke, allowing Vader to kill him, the Obi-Wan theme is heard. Leia's theme goes on from it, this time used only for its musical and not its functional and symbolic characteristics.

cution of a theme, a favorite procedure) in the sequels he used more complex forms of transformations of the theme. In *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, the themes compete with each other (the first Luke and Darth Vader duel)¹⁹, complement each other and engage in dialogue (Yoda and the projection of Obi-Wan urge Luke to stay on Dagobah and finish his studies, not to go off and save his friends in Cloud City), appear superimposed upon each other (which never happened in *A New Hope*), are abridged, extend and varied rhythmically, melodically and metrically to extremes, to the extent of changing their own character (in the scene of the freezing of Han Solo, for example, where the Darth Vader theme becomes a funeral march).

We have seen that JOHN WILLIAMS has succeeded in going on from RICHARD WAGNER, respecting his principle about the kinship of themes. Bearing in mind some kind of unwritten super-theme, which WAGNER defined as the thematic image, and WILLIAMS understood as the combination of the Luke and the Obi-Wan themes (the Force theme), both created variations in complex musical procedures, sometimes close, sometimes extremely distant. WAGNER went according to the principle of developmental variation: every successive variation was a variant of the preceding one, with later variations getting further and further away from the original, the source. WILLIAMS, however, created his own principle, and went in the opposite direction from the Wagnerian. His musical derivations of the original came up in pairs. New pairs condensed the musical elements of the old pairs, and their final product (e.g. the Yoda theme—the Luke and Leia theme) took on the significance of point of departure: an overriding theme or thematic image, at the beginning defined superficially by the Ben and Luke theme pair.

¹⁹ For the first Luke–Vader duel, the composer wrote much more music than is actually heard in the film. Since a good deal of it was lost in the cutting room, the Darth Vader theme dominates the duel, although WILLIAMS originally imagined the equal use of the Luke and the Vader theme.

Since JOHN WILLIAMS wrote his music epic for, after all, a film, and not for an opera, we have to say that in the procedures of themes and thematic kinship, he did go very far (although not quite as far as WAGNER). While comparing opera and film music we have to bear in mind that in the film, music is a backdrop for the actions of the film, and that seldom or never does it have the opportunity to assume all the weight for the telling of the story. But this was actually WAGNER'S aim (after all, music is always in the forefront in opera)—to tell a story in music that “is subject to the dramatic text.” This was WILLIAMS'S aim too, but he had to stop at a certain point, because his music really was, not just in the imagination, subordinate to the dramatic (filmic) events. Accordingly he was unable to carry on from certain of WAGNER'S ideas.

Wagner versus Williams and Vice Versa

One of the elements of WAGNER'S music drama that appeared as a direct product of the leitmotif was the endless melody. WAGNER brought in the concept of unending melody while *Tristan and Isolde* was being composed (hence at the time when his Romantic operas were turning into music dramas and when the leitmotif system was being worked out in detail), explaining it in the *Zukunftsmusik* essay. Melody is infinite if it avoids or bridges pauses and cadences. The purpose of such a configuration of melody was the creation of an unbroken continuity of the line of music.²⁰

While WILLIAMS'S themes, in a formal sense, could be compared with the themes from WAGNER'S Romantic operas (*Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*), he could very likely not, apparently, stand comparison with the endless structure of WAGNER'S music dramas (here one is thinking above all of *Tristan and Isolde*). For WILLIAMS, the period shaping of the melody lines is an important

²⁰ For information about endless melody see WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 121.

structural element. All his themes are built from a single motif that, through musical phrases and sentences, develops. This enabled him to use any part of a theme at any spot in the film, always remaining, however recognizable. The insistence on a regular periodic structure (his themes are regularly small periods built from two small sentences created by the linking of two two-bar phrases) is also the result of the need for the music to be adapted to film form. Because of the cadenced closes of the sentences and the emphasis on the phrase as the smallest unit of the music, the composer has enabled the director and editor to interrupt any theme at any given moment with the interruption remaining musically logical.

From that point of view, had WILLIAMS followed WAGNER'S idea of the endless melody, he would have had to set himself up in violent opposition to the nature of the medium he was working for. WAGNER'S medium (particularly since he was the creator of the entirety of the work) permitted and even welcomed the appearance of the endless melody; the use of this musical element in WILLIAMS'S medium would have been a senseless imposition.

In spite of this, the endless melody does in one respect nevertheless link the work of WILLIAMS and WAGNER. A more careful reading of *Zukunftsmusik* will reveal that WAGNER did use the concept of endless melody in places where he discussed the difference between melodic (expressive and symbolic) and non-melodic (arising on the basis of musical formulae and saying nothing) musical sections. This means that the concept is understood more in an aesthetic (endlessness is one of the fundamental categories of the art of Romanticism) and less in a technical sense. And in the aesthetic sense, endless melody works with JOHN WILLIAMS too, because "a melody is infinite when every note 'says' something, and it 'says' something when every moment of the music has dramatic relevance as well as being inwardly linked to other moments" (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 121).

In parallel with the concept of endless melody, WAGNER introduced concepts that link melody with speech and with rhythm. Concepts

like *Sprechgesang* and musical prose are concepts of the future, and will be developed by SCHÖNBERG and HUGO WOLF, but they are specific features of opera and vocal works, and can hardly be applied to film music, which is mainly instrumental in nature. On the other hand, such concepts do help in the easier understanding of the complexity of WAGNER'S rhythms, because the aim of them was to conceal the beat, and with it to destroy the regularity of rhythm that relief on the regular alternation of times.

And once again, WILLIAMS was unable to follow the idea of concealing the beat, because it was particularly connected with the idea of hiding or abandoning the periodic structure of musical phrases. This would have resulted, as we have said, in the inability to keep up with film form. However, WAGNER did not exclusively use musical prose and *Sprechgesang*, and did not have to rely exclusively on the specific accentuation of the text. Of course, his rhythms are in places regularly accented (depending on the opera), and are only occasionally irregular (an increasing irregularity of rhythmic formations can be sensed from the *Ring of the Nibelungs* onwards).

In fact, JOHN WILLIAMS behaves similarly in the area of rhythm; where simplicity is required, his rhythm is utterly simple, and where complexity is required, his rhythmic models become more intricate. It is true, his objective has never been to conceal the time (after all, he did not even have a song text that he was supposed to force to behave according to the rules of speech rather than by the rules of music), but inside the time he was able to make the musicians' lives more complicated. His favorite rhythmic figure is the small triplet—his main resource for shaping action scenes. Other rhythms include the most diverse of combinations: sixteenth models interrupted by pauses, punctuated rhythms, syncope, large triplets, small triplets, quintuplets, septuplets... His rhythms (like WAGNER'S) derive from the actions on the screen, or from the character of the scene. Sometimes he falls into mannerisms—rhythmic groups such as small triplets are experienced as a standard device—but WAGNER too had his own

standards. In both of them, such standard elements should be understood as elements of stylistic identity.

One of the elements of the stylistic identity of RICHARD WAGNER is certainly his harmonic language. "A description of Wagnerian harmony would have to clarify its position floating between a tonality that has been attacked by the weakening of the root progressions but not yet completely destroyed, and an atonality anticipated in the increased independence of semitonal motions but not yet reached..." (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 123).

And this is the position of WILLIAMS'S harmony as well. It behaves in line with the kind of tonality in which the composer writes, and there are several such kinds or genres. They are:

- *firm tonality* (irrespective of whether major or minor, minor major or the Phrygian mode, tonality is clearly expressed by the basic functions and typical melodic shifts);
- *expanded tonality* (tonality is expanded by numerous alterations, chromatic shifts and all kinds of modulations; sometimes, in a sequence of several successive modulations tonality is less immediately obvious);
- "*shifted*" *tonality* (dissonance and chromatics are used with so much freedom that tonality is hard to spot; these are scenes in which mood is important, like the scene of Luke's training on Dagobah); and
- *atonality* (tonality is completely lost through the composer's playing with sounds, instrumental colors and rhythms; atonal music, for example, follows the scene of the conversation between Darth Vader and the Empire in *The Empire Strikes Back*, where the Emperor as yet had no defined theme).

Although JOHN WILLIAMS handles tonal and atonal sections with ease, although he can cope excellently in such contexts, in both a harmonic sense (he likes enharmonic modulation, sequences of major fifths, all kinds of seven chords and inverted seventh chords and so on); his

music has nothing fundamentally new to offer. What in WAGNER'S age represented the start of a new approach to harmony and tonality (some historians consider the music of *Tristan* the beginning of the atonal manner of composing), is at the time of JOHN WILLIAMS just the sum of the endeavors of his forebears, old techniques used in the right place at the right time.

One thing that is common to the two composers with respect to harmonic shaping is that at their point of departure both composers rely on old models. WAGNER'S model was BEETHOVEN (according to some historians, it was BEETHOVEN'S symphonies that led him to devote himself to music), while WILLIAMS used as models the old film music composers (the creation of the *Star Wars* music was influenced not only by STEINER, WAXMAN, and KORNGOLD, but also by the incidental music that LUCAS juxtaposed to the images—works by HOLST, WALTON, and DVOŘÁK, as well as the *Ben Hur* soundtrack of MIKLÓS RÓZSA). Both, then, found their models in the classics of their basic area of interest—moving from them in the initial shaping of harmony and tonality they had in front of their eyes clear musical models that they could carry on from and that in their own ways they developed to a very high level.

However, with respect to the harmonic language, WAGNER was thinking not only backwards, but forwards as well. Some analysts have called his *Tristan* chord “a sound, and not a chord, that can be identified”, arguing that at the end of the 19th century, Wagner had already laid the foundations for the sound sensation typical of the 20th century, known in the literature as the *Klangfarbenmelodie*.²¹ Put more simply, Wagner shaped his *Tristan* chord not with respect to tonal functionality and the rules of the classical harmonic structure, but with respect to sound and color. “Sound (*Klang*) in which ‘chord’ and ‘timbre’ meet, is the word that is most exactly applicable to the

21 For color emancipation in the new music of the 20th century, see GLIGO 1987: 64–65 and 168–170.

facts of Wagnerian composition,” conclude WESTERNHAGEN et al. (1980: 124).

When NIKŠA GLIGO gave prominence to the simplified horizontal understanding of the melody of the sound colors of DAVID COPE, who defined his color pointillism as a sequence of different instrumental and/or vocal colors (GLIGO 1987: 169) he was certainly not thinking of applying this understanding to the works of JOHN WILLIAMS. But it was precisely in this essentially simplified sense that neglects “the dependence of [*Klangfarbenmelodie*] on the all intervals forming a vertical sound structure” (GLIGO 1987: 169) that JOHN WILLIAMS went on with the interpretation of the melody of sound colors, the essence of which WAGNER only just touched on, and which was later to be developed by new composers like DEBUSSY, SCHÖNBERG, and LIGETI.

There are many examples of a simplified handling of instrumental timbre, in the sense of the horizontal sequencing of colors, in the LUCAS saga. In a short scene in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke, in his X-wing, approaches Cloud City, where his friends are captive. His theme, in the instrumental imitation manner, moves from trumpet to flute, from flute to horn, and from horn back to the trumpet.

At the very opening of *Star Wars*, in *A New Hope*, the druids C-3PO and R2-D2 capture the little desert creatures, the Jawas. In the scene in which the Jawas load robots on the farm of Owen and Beru Lars, the theme of the Jawas is heard, three times repeated identically, but each time with a different instrumentation. Since the first time the theme is stated by the oboe, the second by oboe and flute, and the third time by oboe, flute and bassoon, we can talk of a kind of additive instrumentation, which in a colorist sense surpasses the horizontal of DAVID COPE and partially goes into the vertical.

Characteristic of WILLIAMS is the chopping of the theme into smaller parts so that each part should be stated by a different instrument. In the scene in *The Return of the Jedi* in which the bounty hunter (i.e. the disguised Princess Leia) negotiates with Jabba the Hutt about the price of the captured Chewbacca, the Jabba the Hutt

theme goes through almost the entire wind section, being stated in sequence by the tuba, the flute, piccolo, oboe, cor anglais, horn, and once again tuba solo.

Both WILLIAMS and WAGNER have only just touched on the sensation of the melody of sound colors—and once again the former did this relying on the experienced gathered by his predecessors, while the second set off boldly into the creation of a new musical world. However, with both of them we can notice that in the transparent invocation of past/future *Klangfarbenmelodie* there is actually an implicit love for the greatest and most complex of all instruments, the orchestra. For WAGNER the orchestra was so important that in *Opera and Drama* he wrote: “anyone who separates the harmony from the instrumentation when talking about my music is doing me as great an injustice...” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 124), while JOHN WILLIAMS in a similar spirit was to say that “symphony orchestra itself is one of the greatest inventions of our artistic culture” (BYRD 1997: 5).

It is not just points of view—there are great similarities in practice. Both WAGNER and WILLIAMS simply adore the wind section, especially the brass. Whenever they need to express drama, here comes the brass; when tension has to be expressed, there is the brass again; when the music needs to sound softer and warmer (because the context requires it), the woodwind is called up, not, as in many another composer, the strings. The strings have almost exclusively the role of filling in the emptiness and of jumping in when the wind lyrical instruments have already been used. Since both composers like experimenting with sound, there are many instruments in the orchestra.

WAGNER bought the famed Nibelung tuba in. WILLIAMS, working in a different age, uses whatever comes to hand—synthesizer, kazoo, children’s piano, tuned bells, other unusual percussion instruments and so on. WAGNER, to reinforce the illusion of the opera story (and to make it impossible to listen to orchestra and voice separately—for him the orchestra had a vital role, and the voice takes only a subordinate role in the story), hid the orchestra. WILLIAMS did not need to do

this—he lives in a time when the talking picture is the norm and the orchestra, present only in the form of a recording on the soundtrack, does not need any special concealment.

The great love of the film composer for the symphonic orchestra has raised above all modern understandings of the orchestra as being an obsolescent means of expressing emotion on the screen. During the 1950s and 1960s, when WILLIAMS started working, songs and instrumental pop groups were preferred for the soundtracks. When *Star Wars* appeared in the movie houses, the orchestra came back again to the screen. It might be said to be JOHN WILLIAMS'S achievement to have brought about a renaissance of symphonic music in the film, and this might be compared with the revolutionariness of the operatic reform of RICHARD WAGNER.²²

And at the end of this short duel between WILLIAMS and WAGNER, we might mention their attitude towards musical form. At the time WAGNER was working, the musical aesthete and theorist EDUARD HANSLICK was also at work. While HANSLICK expressed himself positively about WAGNER'S operas at the beginning,²³ in time (with the appearance of the music dramas) it became clear that the two of them were at opposite poles. While HANSLICK thought that every musical element had to be subordinate to form (in his work *On the Musically*

22 I cannot resist adding certain instructions that WILLIAMS gave the LSO during the time of recording the music for *The Phantom Menace*. "Nothing seems to ruffle William's [sic!] composure or the old-fashioned courtesy that seems fundamental to his nature—not even 10 successive takes of the same passage. 'Thank you' he says to the players after a problematic reading... 'Let's see if we can make a more noble sound,'" he will say to the brass and percussion, including himself in the equation... 'It's not too loud,' he says, 'but the sound is too close; it will obscure the dialogue.' 'Could you menace without getting louder?' he asks. 'The audience should feel this rather than hear it.' 'Let me ask the harp not to play here—I think the sound of the harp will take the eye away from what it needs to see right here'" (DYER 1999: 6).

23 Confirmed by WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: "*Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, works displaying no small measure of innovation, were accepted almost unanimously by the 1850s by the educated German middle class—including, people like Eduard Hanslick who rejected the later musical dramas" (119).

Beautiful one can read sentences such as: “Naked form is beautiful in itself” and “The forms set off by tones are the substance of music”) WAGNER was of the opinion that every musical element, and form too then, had to be subordinate to drama. For this reason he had to abandon the architectural form of the musical work and address the logical form that sprang out of work on theme and motif. Since the musical forms followed the development of and links between leitmotifs, many theorists found it easier to say that his operas simply have no form; however, WAGNER’S musical structures (at the macro and micro levels) emerged from the web of leitmotifs. “Symphonic’ form, in which the ‘web’ of motifs is the basis of the inner cohesion” replaced “architectonic’ form, consisting of a discernible grouping (using contrast and repetition) of distinct components” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 117).²⁴

Interestingly, film music is often accused of having no form, of not following formal patterns set in advance. The reason for this charge is similar to the reason for HANSLICK’S attack on WAGNER. Film music is subordinate to the film medium, and it is the medium, not the composer, that determines its structure. In the case of WILLIAMS’S *Star Wars* music the similarity with WAGNER’S conception of form is still greater, because the composer developed the leitmotif system or web, and this also determined the shaping of the music. Formal schemes like a rondo with two themes (*Return of the Jedi*: Luke surrenders to the Imperial forces and talks with his father, Darth Vader), a rondo with one theme (*Return of the Jedi*: Luke is brought before the Emperor and the Emperor tries to persuade him to become his pupil) or a three part song (*Return of the Jedi*: Luke and Vader in the middle of a duel; after Vader discovers from his sons feelings that Luke has a sister, Luke attacks him in a rage and defeats him) are actually musical forms that are determined by the shape of the image (content,

²⁴ ALFRED LORENZ attempted to reduce these forms in WAGNER’S music dramas to the old German forms of songs: the Bar form (AAB) and the Bogen form (ABA), but went too far, and had to twist his analysis to make it fit the formal patterns given.

framing, position and movement of figures in the scene, dialogue and so on).

The film story also conditions the macroform of the music. All three films are imagined in two parts. In the first part there are usually two parallel actions going on that separately follow the good and bad characters, while in the second part all of the characters are in the same place for the final reckoning. This scheme is particularly obvious in *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. In the first part of *A New Hope* the action goes on in parallel on the desert planet Tatooine and on the Death Star, while the whole of the second part takes place on the Death Star. The two different places of action in the first part are also made emphatically separate by image (the space perspective of the Death Star) and music (the Death Star motif is short, but musically extremely powerful). *The Empire Strikes Back* also takes place in two different places to begin with: the ice planet of Hoth, where the rebels are located, and the space destroyer Executor commanded by Darth Vader. Part two takes place in Cloud City, where all the characters get together again and where, alongside the dominant Darth Vader theme, the love theme of Solo and Leia is given increasing development. Thus the music both brings things together (each of the films has its own dominating theme) and at the same time splits up the filmic architecture.²⁵

From all this it follows that WILLIAMS and WAGNER agree in the area of structural design. They approach form as means, as resource, not as end in itself, subjecting it to the musical procedures and narrative events. In their hands, the question of formal amorphousness or of the absence of any formal shaping, or of non-form, becomes obso-

²⁵ The film macroform of *Jedi* is reversed: the first part goes on in one place, the palace of Jabba the Hut, and the second part, in which the final reckoning is done, in two: the Death Star and the forest planet of Endor. Because of equal treatment of the themes in this episode, and because the director did not use linking frames, to separate the two parallel places of the action, the musical macroform is not as clear as in episodes IV and V.

lescent, because it is connected with the idea that a work has form only if it follows a model determined in advance. A hundred years ago a HANSLICK could think like this (it would have been strange if at the end of the 19th century there had been no single critic of Wagner and his avant-garde conception of music), but today, after all the experience of the new music of the 20th century, such a way of thinking is completely beside the point—as are criticisms that film music has no form. Today, artistic form is looked at very differently, because it is considered that “every work of art that exists in time has some form, although no known model for it is particularly easy to spot. While some forms, i.e., formal models, can be independent of a formal scheme, form is, qua process of mutual relations, a universal procedure of integration that is necessary for the listener’s reasoned understanding” (GLIGO 1987: 101).

The Avant-garde and the Tradition

Although it is found that in the form all the elements of (film) music are gathered, and that they contribute to its final formation, the ultimate aim for both the composers, is not the structure of the work of art. The ultimate aim of WAGNER was to create a music drama, a work founded on the old roots of opera in which all the musical elements were subject to the drama. The ultimate aim of JOHN WILLIAMS was to take part in the creation of a film in which the music served to shape the content and help all the other filmic elements to work. In fact, their aims were extremely similar, although...

WAGNER first used the concept of the music drama in the work *Über die Benennung ‘Musikdrama’* of 1872, to clear up some erroneous interpretations of his operas, such as one that spoke about “drama that served some musical purpose.” Quite to the contrary: WAGNER aspired to the creation of a music drama, an opera, in which music was a means, and the drama the ultimate objective. His concept of music drama was powerfully influenced by the philosophies of

SCHOPENHAUER, NIETZSCHE, and FEUERBACH, but the “elevation of music to the dignity of an ‘opus metaphysicum’” (NIETZSCHE) and the aspiration towards “corporeal reality, and against abstraction” (FEUERBACH) led to unnecessary complications of the concept, perhaps to contradiction (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 121).

That is, the “the anticipatory postulate that the music must be one of the means of expression available to the drama (introduction to *Oper and Drama*) is countered by the retrospective definition that in musical drama the events on the stage are ‘the acts of the music made visible’” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 121). WAGNER changed his attitude to music after the writing of *Tristan* and after studying SCHOPENHAUER’S philosophy, which says that only music, not words or images, can penetrate the hidden most essence of the world.

This was an important revolution, which shows not only how important music was for WAGNER, alongside drama, but makes it impossible for us to say that film music, long after WAGNER, tightly followed his concept—being even more successful than him. Because film music is really, in every element, even in the area of leitmotif work, absolutely subordinate to the drama. With WAGNER, this subordination existed only on paper. In fact, in reality, the music was always of the essence of his operas (both the Romantic operas and the music dramas).

A hundred years after WAGNER’S death, JOHN WILLIAMS has attempted, according to WAGNER’S original demand (and according to the demands of directors, and the role of music in the film medium), to make everything subserve the drama. This has led him to two extremes. While on the one hand in *Star Wars* we can see a web of leitmotifs, dense layers of harmonies, numerous modulations, all types of tonality, the most various rhythmic structures and a totally open attitude towards form, on the other hand we can find the overscoring typical of the early film composer, frequent musical illustrations of the image brought to the very verge of triteness, the mosaic sequencing of musical blocks as the result of illustration and other procedures

that today—even in the realm of film music—in these quantities too—are considered old fashioned.

Could we suppose that GEORGE LUCAS had really wanted to create a space opera that would be flooded with music; we still have to face the fact that the music of JOHN WILLIAMS is so illustrative that it simply cannot be peeled off the film image. Looked at from the perspective of the film, this is good, but looked at from the point of view of music; it is primitive (and makes any attempt at a concert performance out of the question). The leitmotif procedures are at a somewhat higher level, though they are often used as finger-pointing devices that yell—that's Leia, that's Han Solo. At a lower level there are procedures that come down to banal description. For example, on the spaceship of the Jawas there is a kind of lift; whenever the lift goes up, so does the melody, and when the lift descends, the music drops too. Alas, there are plenty of such examples in the trilogy. In places WILLIAMS is much more inventive; in the scene at the beginning of *The Empire Strikes Back*, where the camera quickly pans through the cave of the white beasts of the planet Hoth, at the end showing Luke hanging by his legs, the movement is followed by an ascending string glissando the vocabulary of which adumbrates the pitiful scene of Luke upside down.

However, not even WAGNER could avoid musical illustration. Let us recall just the sentence we quoted earlier: "In the *Ring* rising movement means evolution, falling means decline..." (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 132). Though this music is disguised as symbolism and is not as direct as WILLIAMS'S, it is clear that in WAGNER too one can find examples of literal musical description.

This contrast between the obsolescent and the advanced is a little confusing. It is more marked with a film composer, because of the nature of his medium. Although he is musically educated, although he skillfully uses the knowledge of his immediate and distant predecessors, although his music is in the rank of composers of an extremely high quality, we do nevertheless find in it the banality of both literal

description and overscoring. WILLIAMS is a traditionalist by nature (look at his attitude to the symphony orchestra), but the film story of *Star Wars*, in its childish naivety, is such as to permit going astray into traditionalism. There is no substance that requires any great thought (though it does have its own message), and additional musical explanations, direct and indirect (illustration and leitmotif), are justified by the number of characters and the complexity of the tale (which started much earlier and goes on after the old trilogy).

In fact, the biggest problem in the WILLIAMS–WAGNER duel is the hundred-year time difference. Both use music in a similar way, both compose high quality music, using similar composedly and technical procedures, both occasionally go astray—one into overscoring, illustration and the predictable use of leitmotifs, the other into too great a reliance on current philosophies and into literal description. We consider the older revolutionary and advanced; the other, the younger, we think of as a sound composer who adds nothing new, summing up the discoveries of his seniors.

In an attempt to arrive at a proper judgment about them both, we shall forget for a moment the time difference, and look at them from the perspective of their presents. JOHN WILLIAMS, in his old-fashionedness, relies on the old film music composers—MAX STEINER, ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, MIKLÓS RÓZSA, and others—and renewed some traditional procedures (heavy scoring, predictability of musical behavior, illustration, bringing the symphony orchestra back into the film). RICHARD WAGNER, in his version of obsolescence, drew on the BEETHOVEN symphony (approaching his operas as symphonies with a dramatic model) and the Handel oratorio (for the monumentality). He built his reform of the opera on bases that were used by earlier operatic composers some of whom were themselves reformers—LULLY, RAMEAU, GLUCK, and MEYERBEER. If we can complain that WILLIAMS relied on film composers of some forty or fifty years earlier (the pioneers of film music), and of a hundred years earlier (WAGNER),

what are we to say of WAGNER himself, when his models were in excess of two hundred years older?

JOHN WILLIAMS, in his avant-garde aspect, summed up the knowledge of his forebears. He is avant-garde in relation to other film music composers, because he is not interested in the superficial employment of two or three film themes but, like WAGNER, constructs a whole web of interwoven leitmotifs, akin and multifunctional. The avant-garde WILLIAMS (as against his Hollywood colleagues) can be seen in a harmonic sense (sequencing chords of the same kind like DEBUSSY), in tonality and in a pure sound sense (atonality, *Klangfarbenmelodie*), in a melodic sense (although they have a strictly periodic structure, the melodies are rich in alterations, modulations and major leaps) and in formal (open form) and rhythmical (diversity) aspects.

In his own avant-gardeness, WAGNER gave us a series of novelties that have marked the 20th century. These spring from his transformation of opera into music drama, because of which he introduced the web of leitmotifs, the division of the opera into scenes because of which he actually concealed the orchestra from the sight of the audience. His understanding of music was futurist, because with the new concept of harmony and treatment of chords as sound he heralded the total collapse of tonality and the domination of sound color in the works of certain 20th century composers. His total freedom of view of form and melody (which are or should be endless or should act according to the laws of speech) also announced future aspirations towards the opening up of form and the use of the *Sprechgesang*.

When we look a little more closely, the avant-garde aspects of both composers actually derive from their obsolescence. Both are equally traditional and innovatory. Each achieved much in his medium, and since the younger looked up to the older (to the extent his work allowed him) there are a number of points of contact between them. Apart from in the area of the relation of music to the scene (image, stage) and events on the stage, in the area of purely musical relations too, there are points of contact in the area of the reciprocal suffusion

of the tradition and the avant-garde. Applied to RICHARD WAGNER and JOHN WILLIAMS “avant-gardism and traditionalism are contradictory but mutually complementary phenomena... As STENDAHL put it: the Romantic of today, however revolutionary his attitudes and behavior may be, and precisely because they are revolutionary, is sure of being the classic of tomorrow” (WESTERNHAGEN et al. 1980: 119).

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Golden Age 2.0: John Williams and the Revival of the Symphonic Film Score

Emilio Audissino

The Classical Hollywood Music Style

The classical Hollywood music style—the film music of the Golden Age—was characterized by an almost continuous musical flow that accompanied the film’s narrative. The language was inspired by the European late-Romantic music of the second half of the nineteenth century—RICHARD WAGNER, GUSTAV MAHLER, GIACOMO PUCCINI, PIOTR TCHAIKOVSKY, and SERGEI RACHMANINOV being the most prominent models—and the so-called non-diegetic score consisted of instrumental music played by a symphony orchestra, while songs and popular music were presented as diegetic music.¹ Why Romantic music? A functional reason was the strong narrative form of Hollywood films. In the classical Hollywood cinema, the primary purpose was to tell a story. Consequently, film-makers had to ensure that viewers were able to connect empathetically with the characters and to follow and understand the narrative in the simplest way possible. All formal devices that built the film had to be functional to a narration that should be as straight and clear as possible. Devices—for example, a camera movement, or an editing match—should not be gratuitous and should not draw attention to themselves as technical processes. Likewise, music—as a cinematic device—should cooperate in the film’s formal construction without drawing attention to itself. “The main function of the Golden Age music was to enhance the specta-

¹ Music or sound are ‘non-diegetic’ when they are not part of the film’s world (film viewers can hear it; characters cannot). On the contrary, when they originate from some source within the film’s world (and can be heard by film viewers and by characters as well) they are called “diegetic” (GORBMAN 1987: 20–26).

tors' understanding of the action by directing their attention towards the crucial narrative information that was conveyed by image and dialogue" (LARSEN 2005: 97). Romantic music—because of the widespread familiarity of its language—was the best choice to fit the functional transparency that devices were required to have.

KATHRYN KALINAK remarks that the fundamental characteristic of the classical Hollywood music was the "musical illustration of narrative content, especially the direct synchronization between music and narrative action" (KALINAK 1992: 187), which was known as mickey-mousing. Mickey-mousing is a technique in which music adheres closely to the visuals through a tight series of explicit sync-points: musical gestures duplicate visual actions—think of the *Tom & Jerry* cartoons, when Jerry Mouse moves stealthily around the house accompanied by plucks of pizzicato strings synchronized to each of his steps. Nowadays, mickey-mousing sounds like an exaggerated musical device, suitable for farcical comedy—or cartoons indeed. Yet, in the classical Hollywood cinema, this technique was commonly used for dramatic effect as well. For example, in a famous drama like *Casablanca* (M. CURTIZ, 1942) there are certain sequences of mickey-mousing. When Captain Renault finally sides with the anti-Nazi cause and symbolically throws a bottle of Vichy water into the dustbin, MAX STEINER marks the fall of the bottle with a synchronized low chord. STEINER himself, the undisputed champion of mickey-mousing, stated that film music had to "fit like a glove" (DONNELLY 2001: 45). The other main technique was the leitmotif—adapted from RICHARD WAGNER'S own—which consisted of a network of very recognizable musical themes or motifs clearly associated with the film's characters or narrative themes and reprised intensively throughout the film whenever the related character/situation appeared or was mentioned. Both the mickey-mousing and the leitmotif technique were aimed at making the music closely adherent to the visuals. As the classical Hollywood style itself, classical Hollywood music was "excessively obvious" (BORDWELL et al. 1985: 3) and its goal was to make the

comprehension of the film as simple as possible for the viewers. As to musical means, the standard classical Hollywood sound was that of the late-nineteenth century symphony orchestra. However, while WAGNER'S, RICHARD STRAUSS'S and MAHLER'S orchestras had more than a hundred players (BRIGANTI et al. 1996: 633), studio orchestras were assembled for recording, not for live performance, and consisted of no more than sixty players (KARLIN 1994: 183–186). The symphony orchestra was the standard musical means for the entire period of the classical Hollywood music style. The first reason is historical. In the silent era, projections were accompanied by a pianist or a couple of players in cheap nickelodeons, and by a salon orchestra made of a dozen players in bigger theaters. Only luxurious "Picture Palaces" could afford a full symphony orchestra, and the most ambitious and important film productions—such as *The Birth of a Nation* (D.W. GRIFFITH, 1915)—used to tour along with a large symphony orchestra (WIERZBICKI 2009: 48–49). Thus, the sound of the symphony orchestra began to be identified with quality screenings and first-class motion pictures. When introducing synchronized sound, Hollywood kept up with this association and also enlarged the string section: violins, violas, cellos, and basses. As a matter of fact, these instruments—mostly for timbre reasons—are those which better blend with dialogue without masking effects, but this predominance of the string section—particularly evident at MGM and 20th Century Fox—can be speculatively seen as another aftermath of the silent era. A large string section was indeed typical of the symphony orchestras of luxury theaters and distinguished them from the smaller "salon orchestras" (ALTMAN 2004: 308). So, the reasoning might go like this: the symphony orchestra means prestige; a large strings section means a symphony orchestra; therefore, a large presence of strings means prestige. The choice of the symphony orchestra can also be explained in narrative terms: the symphony orchestra is the richest ensemble as regards instrumental timbres, and is capable of so many color combinations and hues as to make it very versatile in meeting a wide array

of narrative needs and situations. Finally, the standardized use of the symphony orchestra until the end of the 1950s was also due to union agreements stipulating that each studio had to maintain an in-house orchestra. Hence the studios—following a criterion of efficiency—obviously tended to utilize the tools that they already had at their disposal.

The Classical Hollywood music style as such lasted from 1933—the release year of *King Kong* (M.C. COOPER, E.B. SCHOEDSACK), whose MAX STEINER'S score was seminal in launching and shaping said style—to 1958, when new contractual agreements led to the dismissal of the in-house studio symphony orchestras and ushered in the use of alternate ensembles, such as chamber orchestras, solo players, jazz combos, etc. (WIERZBICKI 2009: 186). After 1958, classical-styled symphonic scores became progressively less and were increasingly perceived as out of fashion.

The landmark event of this decline was the sacking of composer BERNARD HERRMANN by ALFRED HITCHCOCK, after Universal pressed the director to feature an easy-listening song in his *Torn Curtain* (1966) (SULLIVAN 2006: 277). HERRMANN—a conservatory-trained composer who had penned the scores for eight of HITCHCOCK'S most successful films—refused to adjust to the new fad. Thus, one of the most fruitful partnerships in film music ended traumatically and this sounded like the death knell for symphonic film music.

The shift from the classical style to what can be called “modern style” had many reasons. In the 1960s Hollywood cinema was weakened by a severe crisis—box-office figures had plummeted—and it tried to renovate its image by looking at the “Nouvelle Vague” and the European art cinema (THOMPSON & BORDWELL 2010: 470–476; BALIO 1999: 1463–1482). European film music had always been less pervasive and less inclined to musical illustration than Hollywood music. This was accentuated in the 1960s modern cinema: some *auteurs* were openly hostile to film music, as ÉRIC ROHMER: “Music is cinema’s

falsest friend, as it deprives film time of its peculiar exclusivity and objectivity” (CALABRETTO 2010: 155).

Besides up-to-date poetics imported from European cinema, Hollywood revised its musical style mostly for a market-oriented reason. Abandoning the old-fashioned symphonic sound and shifting to the contemporary pop sound was a tactic to attract young audiences, which were the basis of cinema attendance now (THOMPSON & BORDWELL 2010: 472–493). The first consequence was the growing importance of pop songs as core elements of the music track, to the point that in the second half of the 1960s a typical musical approach was the *compilation score*, namely having a music track built out of repertoire pop songs (SMITH 1998: 163–172).

Showcasing pop music and songs in films was not only a way to entice younger viewers, but also a way to complement the box-office revenues with those from the record market. The strategy was that of controlling both the film and record industries and applying a carefully devised synergistic cross-promotion. This consisted in advertising the film via the presence of the song on the radio and in record stores and, reciprocally, advertising the song having it showcased in the film. In the 1960s every major studio became a shareholder in some existing record company or created its own subsidiary in order to raise profits from both markets (SMITH 1998: 40).

All these factors led to a stylistic shift which disfavored symphonic music. Symphonic orchestral film music did not disappear entirely but became definitely less common, mostly confined to prestige films, epics and period films, such as *The Lion in Winter* (A. HARVEY, 1968, music by JOHN BARRY), *Patton* (F.J. SCHAFFNER, 1970, music by JERRY GOLDSMITH), *Ryan's Daughter* (D. LEAN, 1970, music by MAURICE JARRE), *The Wind and the Lion* (J. MILIUS, 1975, music by JERRY GOLDSMITH).

Song writers and pop musicians became film composers—for one example, BURT BACHARACH—while conservatory-trained composers, like JERRY GOLDSMITH, were a minority:

“Well, many of us composers are upset about this, because we get requests from producers that we’ve got to write a hit song. It’s a real pain, because they forget what we’re really supposed to be doing. It’s a completely commercial device to try to promote the film. [...] It has nothing to do with anything dramatic in the picture, and this is a great annoyance to us all, but it’s one of the syndromes of the business, and there isn’t very much we can do about it” (BAZELON 1975: 190).

One of these was JOHN WILLIAMS, who started in the late 1950s as a pianist in the Columbia Pictures orchestra. It is widely agreed that WILLIAMS was responsible, almost single-handedly, for bringing back the classical-styled symphonic music in the late 1970s, namely with *Star Wars* and its Korngoldian score.² Yet, *Star Wars* did not come out of the blue, as a merely fortunate case of a composer uncannily capable of finding exactly the right musical sound for that film—i.e. the sound of Hollywood’s classic adventure films. WILLIAMS had already shown his penchant and flair for the classical-styled symphonic music much earlier.

Williams’s Restoration

In the mid-1960s WILLIAMS was pigeon-holed as a comedy composer, writing scores for *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home!* (J.L. THOMPSON, 1965), *Not With My Wife, You Don’t!* (N. PANAMA, 1966), *Penelope* (A. HILLER, 1966), *A Guide for the Married Man* (G. KELLY, 1967), *Fitzwilly* (D. MANN, 1967), and *How to Steal a Million* (W. WYLER, 1966). Instead of siding with the modern style of composers like QUINCY JONES, BURT BACHARACH, and HENRY MANCINI—who was probably the most successful Hollywood tunesmith at that time and the indisputable role model for comedy scoring—WILLIAMS preferred more classical approaches based on symphonic writing and, above all, on old-fashioned mickey-mousing. Consider *Fitzwilly*: the main titles are not accompanied with a pop song but with an overture in Baroque-ish di-

² On *Star Wars* and the revival of the classical Hollywood music see AUDISSINO 2012.

alect played by trumpets, harpsichord and tuba. Then, the music starts again at the fifth minute of the film and accompanies the protagonist on his shopping activities around New York. Music continues uninterruptedly and adherently for the next five minutes: it accompanies the car journeys with variations of the main theme in march form; it gets thinner in the presence of dialogue, repeating cells of the main theme during the pauses between lines; it even emphasizes the shifts of place and marks the closures of the sub-episodes with harp glissandos and many occurrences of tightly-synchronized old-fashioned mickey-mousing.

When he moved away from comedies, WILLIAMS provided outstanding classical-styled scores for *The Reivers* (M. RYDELL, 1969), for which he adopted AARON COPLAND's Americana idiom to paint a lively score to this story set in the 1905 Mississippi area. For *The Cowboys* (M. RYDELL, 1972) WILLIAMS penned a driving theme for full orchestra in line with the COPLAND–JEROME MOROSS–ELMER BERNSTEIN tradition of Hollywood Western—and in contrast to the more up-to-date ENNIO MORRICONE–JERRY FIELDING modern Western style featured in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (S. LEONE, 1966) and *The Wild Bunch* (S. PECKINPAH, 1969). Though important they might have been, *The Reivers* and *The Cowboys* cannot be said to have been ground-breaking as to the return of symphonic scores. Indeed, both are period films in which a more classical-styled score would have hardly been an unexpected presence. The really seminal film was *Jaws* (S. SPIELBERG, 1975).

Firstly, WILLIAMS's score was fundamental in giving credibility and an aura of invincible power to the rubber shark. And this is an element that already links the *Jaws* score with the classical period: the same thing had happened with the score for *King Kong*. The producers of *King Kong* feared that the stop-motion puppet would cause laughter instead of fear and it was MAX STEINER's score that saved the day by making the puppet credible. STEINER's score was not only a major factor in the film's success but was also instrumental in demonstrat-

ing how powerful a narrative tool music could be and it was seminal in founding the classical style. Similarly, the *Jaws* score can be singled out as a milestone which paved the way to the return of symphonic scores.

The leitmotif technique was the first old-fashioned trait that this score retrieved. The shark comes with a very memorable leitmotif. WILLIAMS opted for a musical equivalent of the beast, not a melody but rather the primitive rhythmic simplicity of an ostinato: a hammering and unrelenting repetition of two notes periodically broken by a third accented note (ex. 1).



Example 1. The *Jaws* motif.

Those famous bass notes recall the heartbeat, the primordial rhythm of life. Their mechanical repetition—seemingly unstoppable—represents the nature of the shark very effectively: a primitive yet proficient killing machine, driven only by the instinct for eating. In addition to characterizing the nature of the monster, the shark motif performs another important function in the film. Being an ostinato, the shark motif can be easily shortened, extended or reiterated in loops as required by visuals, so as to act as the aural equivalent of the shark's movement through space. In other words, the shark motif not only performs the function of classical leitmotifs—musical equivalents of a character that reinforce its presence when on-screen or evoke it when off-screen. It is also a peculiar type of mickey-mousing: the music adheres perfectly to the movements of the beast, in this case, mostly off-screen movements:³ “the music [...] does not

³ It must be said that the shark has actually two leitmotifs: one is the ostinato indicating the movements of the beast and heard only when the monster is around; the se-

merely signify [the shark's] presence, it is its presence" (DONNELLY 2005: 93).

Jaws also features more typical instances of mickey-mousing—employed not in comedic scenes but in dramatic actions, as happened in the the classical Hollywood music style—which results in many explicit sync-points: for example, when Quint gets his hands cut by the rope we hear a rapid and biting piccolo upward scale followed by another acute scale mirroring the shark's fin splashing water over the boat; when one of the barrels falls into the water we hear a perfectly synchronized cymbal clash, and so on.

Another of WILLIAMS'S intuitions was to emphasize the adventurous spirit of the film. SPIELBERG reports: "When I first showed *Jaws* to John, I remember he said: 'This is like a pirate movie! I think we need pirate music for this, because there's something primal about it—but it's also fun and entertaining!'" (BOUZEREAU 2000: 7). WILLIAMS was referring to the old Warner Bros. pirate films boasting ERROL FLYNN'S reckless deeds and ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD'S operatic scores. Parts of the *Jaws* score retrieved that late-Romantic language. The barrel chase sequence in the open sea, for example, is scored with fanfares and lush symphonic music clearly reminiscent of those classical adventure films.

More importantly, among the early 1970s films set in the present time and designed to become box-office hits, *Jaws* was the first one without any theme songs or pop music. Its music track features nothing else but instrumental symphonic music. A significant example is the montage sequence displaying the flocking of tourists into the island to celebrate the Fourth of July. This ninety-second sequence would have been the ideal spot to showcase a marketable song, perhaps in the style of THE BEACH BOYS' surf music—a choice that would have been clever from a commercial point of view but would have also been interestingly motivated by the contrast between the cheerful

cond one is the horn and tuba three-note raising arpeggio that can be heard when someone talks about the shark or just thinks of its menacing presence.

tone of the music and the deadly danger looming over the tourists. Instead, the montage is accompanied by a Baroque-ish piece for strings, solo trumpet and harpsichord. Underneath the serene and formal surface of the piece, the shark ostinato can be heard played by the basses—offering a kind of black-humored comment on the pending menace. This choice confirms WILLIAMS'S preference for the traditional Hollywood scoring and cleverly expresses in music one of the film's themes: the city council refuses to close the beaches, preferring to ignore the threat lest the Fourth of July incomes may be jeopardized—as in the music, a formal and pompous surface stating that everything is fine conceals a pending danger.

SPIELBERG admitted: "I think that [John Williams's] score was clearly responsible for half the success of [*Jaws*]" (BOUZEREAU 2000: 8). More than others, WILLIAMS demonstrated the contribution that traditional symphonic music could still offer to contemporary films: "In the Sixties and Seventies directors were interested in super-realism and a kind of proletarian leanness, where the cosmetic effect of a large symphony orchestra was just exactly what was not wanted. But now fantasy films have come back into fashion, and as a musician I'm very happy about it," he commented (FARBER 1983: 11). WILLIAMS completed this revival with *Star Wars* and provided more case studies with *Superman: The Movie* (R. DONNER, 1978), the subsequent episodes of the *Star Wars* saga, *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial* (S. SPIELBERG, 1982) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (S. SPIELBERG, 1981)—a truly MAX STEINER-like score. After years of market-oriented music, his narrative-oriented scores brought back to the general attention the importance of music in films and the fundamental narrative help that symphonic music in particular can give. WILLIAMS was also seminal in restoring the symphony orchestra as the musical means for film music, now in an enlarged version as compared to the studio orchestras of the Golden Age. As LIONEL NEWMAN—ALFRED NEWMAN's brother—stated in 1980:

“What he does enhances the film. [...] Furthermore, he has taught us to use full orchestra; in the old days, 50–60 men on a picture was considered a large orchestra—now, because of him, you can’t think of a big movie without thinking of using a full symphony orchestra. But his biggest contribution may have been to make people aware of the importance of music to films; his work has stimulated the use of music in films” (DYER 1980a).

A Neoclassical Trend

Was this a stable return of the symphonic score; a rebirth of the classical Hollywood music? Not quite. To state that *Star Wars* restored the classic Hollywood music style is not correct, as it is not correct to say that after *Star Wars* the symphonic score has become dominant in Hollywood cinema. Only six months after the release of *Star Wars*, the BEE GEES’ disco music in *Saturday Night Fever* (J. BADHAM, 1977) not only was a central factor of the box office success, but also became the best-selling album in history at that time (WIERZBICKI 2009: 216). Similarly, GIORGIO MORODER won an Oscar for his electronic pop music for *Midnight Express* (A. PARKER, 1978), defeating both MORRICONE’S lyrical symphonic score for *Days of Heaven* (T. MALICK, 1978) and WILLIAMS’S old-fashioned score for *Superman: The Movie*. Indeed, as early as 1980 WILLIAMS said: “I don’t expect what I have been doing for the last two or three years will last—nothing does; already in some studios they are calling for more pop music, for more youth-oriented pop noise” (DYER 1980b).

In the following years, new idioms emerged as hugely successful in Hollywood. Among them, the above-mentioned disco music, new-age impressionism, world music, minimalism... In particular, the 1980s are not so much the decade of the hegemony of symphonic scores as of the triumph of synthesizers and electronic music, preferred by a number of emerging practitioners: VANGELIS in *Blade Runner* (R. SCOTT, 1982) and *Chariots of Fire* (H. HUDSON, 1981); GIORGIO MORODER in *Flashdance* (A. LYNE, 1983), *Top Gun* (T. SCOTT, 1986) and the already-mentioned *Midnight Express*; the ANGELO BADALAMENTI and DAVID LYNCH collaboration starting with *Blue Velvet* (1986);

HAROLD FALTERMEYER in *Beverly Hills Cop* (M. BREST, 1984); director/musician JOHN CARPENTER in *Halloween* (1978). The diffusion of the trend is attested by the fact that even the previous-generation French composer MAURICE JARRE—formerly famous for his Hollywood-like turgid symphonic scores to such DAVID LEAN’S films as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Dr. Zhivago* (1965)—discarded the symphony orchestra and opted for the synthesizer in *The Year of Living Dangerously* (P. WEIR, 1982), *Witness* (P. WEIR, 1985), and *Fatal Attraction* (A. LYNE, 1987). The style of film music after 1978 is perhaps best defined as “eclecticism” (WIERZBICKI 2009: 209–227). The eclectic style is characterized by a freer, hybridized and very varied wide-range mingling of elements from diverse past and contemporary styles. Cases of mickey-mousing, leitmotif, electronic music, rock, pop, jazz and symphonic sound coexist not only in the general paradigm but sometimes also in the same film.

If there was not really a symphonic film-music renaissance, how can WILLIAMS’S work be defined within the post-*Star Wars* Hollywood eclectic paradigm? It can be said that WILLIAMS has founded a “neo-classical trend” of which he still continues to be the greatest exponent. The peak of this trend can be placed between 1975 and 1983. The former is the release year of *Jaws*, while 1983 is chosen because in that year the album from the score to *Return of the Jedi* (R. MARQUAND, 1983)—the closing chapter of the first *Star Wars* trilogy—was not released as a double-LP but as a single LP—unlike the successful symphonic albums from the previous two films. And unlike the two previous albums, it sold disappointingly (MALONE 2005: 14). 1983 also marked the last collaboration between WILLIAMS and the “*Star Wars* orchestra,” the London Symphony, the “official” and most sought-after orchestra of the neoclassical trend.⁴ Indeed, in 1984, for the adventure film *Romancing the Stone* (R. ZEMECKIS) the emerging

⁴ See <http://lso.co.uk/page/3151/LSO-and-Film-Music>; in “Film Composers on the LSO”, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JI3TitDFaM, Williams discusses his working relationship with the orchestra (both retrieved November 1, 2013).

composer ALAN SILVESTRI used electronic means and a modern pop dialect instead of following in WILLIAMS'S neoclassical footsteps. The following year, his theme for *Back to the Future* (R. ZEMECKIS) sounded more symphonic rock than classical Romanticism—and the songs “The Power of Love” and “Back in Time” by HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS were the highlights of both the film and the album. A further proof of the anything-but-hegemonic role of neoclassicism is the case of *Legend* (R. SCOTT, 1985). In the American release, JERRY GOLDSMITH'S rich symphonic score was discarded and replaced with TANGERINE DREAM'S electronic new-age music (COOKE 2008: 469).

With regard to contemporary cinema, truly symphonic classical-styled scores are few.⁵ The main stylistic contribution of WILLIAMS'S restoration has been the large orchestra as the sound de rigueur for blockbuster films, regardless of the language, which can range from DAVID ARNOLD'S Williams-esque score to *Independence Day* (R. EMMERICH, 1996) to HANS ZIMMER'S rock music arranged for orchestra in *The Rock* (M. BAY, 1996)—and the HANS ZIMMER sound that rules contemporary Hollywood, in spite of its resorting to a massive orchestral sound, can be hardly called symphonic in terms of writing.

If the influence on contemporary musical style has been limited and circumscribed to the most superficial traits of WILLIAMS'S work—such as the use of the symphony orchestra and the thickness of the orchestral sound—the importance of WILLIAMS'S neoclassicism and his retrieval of classical-styled symphonic scores consists above all in having drawn attention to the classical Hollywood musical heritage.

Apart from his success and artistic achievements, JOHN WILLIAMS has been a key figure in cinema and film-music history due to his fundamental role in bringing the classic Hollywood music style and its canon into the limelight, favoring a better attention and higher consideration. The rediscovery of ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, MAX STEINER, and MIKLÓS RÓZSA is also due to the fact that WILLIAMS, as a

⁵ A report on contemporary Hollywood film music compared to WILLIAMS'S old-fashioned artistry can be found in JURGENSEN 2011.

composer, revived some stylistic traits of their works in a period in which they were considered outdated. At the same time, during his seminal fourteen-year stint as conductor-in-residence of the Boston Pops Orchestra, he programmed the best of the film music repertoire in a time in which it was still strongly out of favor in the concert halls.⁶ Certainly ground-breaking, JOHN WILLIAMS'S contribution has yet had more consequences in historical rather than in stylistic terms.

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⁶ WILLIAMS'S neoclassicism and his role as composer and conductor in this revival are studied in detail in AUDISSINO 2014.

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On Film Music in the 21st Century

Gene Pritsker

Unlike many of my colleagues, I was never inspired by music from films when I was growing up. Some of my composer friends always tell stories that when they heard the music in movies such as *Star Wars* and *Superman*, this was the first time that orchestral music excited them and from there on they went on to discover the beauty of classical music. I grew up on orchestral and chamber music, as well as jazz, and in my teenage years added hip-hop and heavy metal and other genres to my interest in the world of music. Growing up in a musical family, my mother being a classical pianist and a Domra player (traditional Russian string instrument), and my father being a saxophone, clarinet player and band leader of various ensembles, including big band, Klezmer wedding groups and Russian pop music, I was taken to the opera and the ballet at an early age and heard jazz records and orchestra music at home. So when I heard film music in the popular movies of the late 70's and early 80's, I was not so impressed with the big orchestral sound of WILLIAMS, HORNER etc., like some of my fellow composers were. Don't get me wrong, I loved these movies and thought the music fit perfectly, but it was not new to me; it seemed natural that this would be the music for these epic stories.

As I began heavily studying composition, and heard the music of STRAVINSKY, SHOSTAKOVICH, STRAUSS etc., I started realizing that this was the source; this was where the originality of 20th century orchestral music came from. The movie composers adapted some of the techniques and colors created by these masters; their talents were not innovative in a musical sense but more in a utilitarian sense, to add to these pictures. Their music was part of a bigger project and not the most important part of it. This is where it gets tricky, since musical composition, in my opinion, is the most important art, it is the focus,

and cannot play a supporting role to any other art form. In fact, movie composition does the opposite of what I do as a composer, it strives to blend in and support a narrative while my music demands to be heard and cannot be passively listened to, or listened to while the concentration is on something else. Even when I write opera, that has a narrative, the music is always the central focus. Sometimes, the music tells the story more than the words themselves. In fact, one critic once wrote this about my music, which I find to be extremely flattering and exactly what I strive for: "Pritsker's music is not designed for easy listening or to melt into the background. It is insistent. It demands attention and curiosity" (YAP 2003).

There are great movie composers who add mood, memorable melodies and a general essence to a movie, but in the past 10–20 years this art has become formalized to a point that from movie to movie you are basically listening to the same music. I call this "music by numbers." Where the same material, with very slight variation, is heard from one film to the next. An action scene will have the same string ostinatos, and percussion grooves, while the love scene will have a similar piano or string background. The differences from movie to movie are fewer and fewer; there is some variation in pitch choices and rhythm, but the basic essence is exactly the same. This in turn causes much of the art of movie music to be the most unoriginal art form. I would guess that temp. music is to blame, where the director uses temporary music from other films on a scene to show his composer what he wants, and when the composer delivers something too original, something too far away from the temp, the director is not happy, so the composer just copies the temp, changes it up a bit and; Bam! You got 'music by #'s.' I think this is a big problem and it totally kills any creativity a movie composer might have had in the past. The director I mostly work with, TOM TYKWER, has a great, yet very expensive solution. We record a lot of the music before the film is even shot, and use our own music as the temp; updating and modifying it with midi instruments. After the film is done, the composers

score it with their own music and we re-record the whole thing for the movie. It's an original approach that ensures that the music composed for the film is original and sets the essence for the project.

I think a great movie composer should be able to write music that is forever identifiable with the film. For instance, when you think of the movie *Jaws*, everyone sings that four-note theme written by JOHN WILLIAMS. The movie *Psycho* has a very unique and scary motif written by BERNARD HERRMANN. JOHN WILLIAMS was also able to accomplish great movie scores with such films as *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, *Superman*, and *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial*. Each of these movies has a very unique musical presence that remains in our memory with the whole experience. I have not seen a movie for a while where this is the case. Some other great movie composers that have accomplished this include: NINO ROTA, LALO SCHIFRIN, ELMER BERNSTEIN, MAX STEINER, ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, HENRY MANCINI and many others. This list also includes composers for whom the main focus was not films, such as PROKOFIEV, BERNSTEIN, SHOSTAKOVICH, COPLAND, GLASS, QUINCY JONES etc. As you might have guessed, I do not identify myself as a movie composer at all. While I have orchestrated movies and have had my music placed in some of these pictures, and short films, I have trouble when it comes to the art of movie composing. One reason is, as stated above, it is hard for me to write music that is supportive as opposed to being the main focus. Another reason is I find it difficult trying to fulfill another artist's vision, getting inside the mind of a director is an art in itself, one that I am not so good at. So, for all these reasons, I am very interested in movie scoring, since in the end I feel that I want to improve upon what I don't understand and want to become more proficient in this art. Not just the supportive, unoriginal role that it has taken in the last twenty years or so, but back to a time where the music takes center stage in the film and becomes part of the very fabric of the narrative and the essence of the work.

Besides writing original sounding music that gets away from the temp of other composers, movie composers should also look into expanding their pallet. Movie composers have kept up with the 20th and 21st century modern experimentation utilizing orchestration, rhythm, color, and some of the newer sounds to fit their movie musical needs. But, as far as harmony and melody, it feels that they are still stuck in a post romantic, late 20th century prison. Many of the scores become very cheesy and at times harmonically stale when it comes to writing love scenes and slow music. I believe movie composers can expand their harmonic language as well as their melodic writing. It is important to remove oneself from familiar traps and write music that stands out, even for a brief period in a film, music that one goes away remembering and identifying as something special, something additional to the movie, not just a constant unheard underscore. I know this is a tall order, but I believe film composers are so busy trying to please the director that they are failing at their job of showing these directors new avenues that music can take their film to. The director is relying on the composer not just to score his film but also to enlighten him about what music can do. This is of course a bit dangerous since some directors might react badly if told how their vision can be expanded through music. However, the fear of being fired from a picture, the fear of taking chances and listening to your inner art is what keeps the whole genre of film making stale in every aspect, not just music. If you think some of the great films that pushed the boundaries of what was before them, you will always find experimentation and risk taking. Every great piece of art is built on this, film scoring no exception.

I also think there is room for more experimentation in the way films are scored. I know there are some standards to follow, some things that work extremely well and are almost expected from movie to movie, but, I know we can find new approaches if we just allow ourselves room for experimentation. For instance, the first time I saw SAMUEL BARBER'S *Adagio for Strings* being used as music for a war sce-

ne, I was blown away, as it was an experiment in using the opposite of what one would expect. It does not always work but if you do not try it you run the danger of becoming stagnant. Many directors skip the composer all together and just use already written music for their films, like the BARBER piece mentioned above. Recently, I saw the director LARS VON TRIER use only WAGNER'S Overture to *Tristan and Isolde*, to score his entire movie.¹ In my opinion, it was an amazing accomplishment. He found, within this one score, every type of nuance and shading necessary for his film. Composers should feel this freedom to write more complex and coherent orchestral music when scoring films, and let the director choose the music from the vast universe created for the movie. I think this type of experiment can create some interesting collaboration between a composer's freedom to write and a director's freedom to choose what works for his film.

I do feel optimistic about the art of movie scoring, as it seems some composers are trying new things and venturing out of the stale box we are currently residing in. However, we need directors, producers and executives who will allow something different, something experimental, and new to happen in a motion picture they are involved in. These risks create films that stand the test of time, inspiring movements and new standards to emerge that influence the next generation of movie makers and film composers to say, "I want to do that. I want to experiment, try something new." Not just to become a film composer so I can make a lot of money and get an Oscar. We need to put the art back into this art form, because from what I see it has become standardized and clichéd, not just in music but in many areas of film making and, like the innovators before us, we need to recognize that this is happening, and push the boundaries of what can be.

¹ Note from the editor: This refers to LARS VON TRIER'S *Melancholia* (2011).

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“A Soundtrack to Our Lives...”

Kristjan Järvi

KRISTJAN JÄRVI was born in Tallinn, Estonia. He emigrated to the United States as a child and grew up in New York City. He studied piano at the *Manhattan School of Music* and conducting at the *University of Michigan*. He began his career as Assistant Conductor to ESA-PEKKA SALONEN at the *Los Angeles Philharmonic*.

From 2000 to 2004 he was the principal conductor and musical director of the *Norrlands Opera Symphony Orchestra* in Sweden and from 2004 to 2009 he was the principal conductor and music director of the *Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich* in Vienna, Austria.

He currently leads the oldest Radio Orchestra in Europe; since the 2012 season he has been the principal conductor of the *MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra*. *The New York Times* once described him as “a kinetic force on the podium, like Leonard Bernstein reborn as a conductor of fusion bands” (TOMMASINI 2001).

JÄRVI is renowned worldwide for inventive programming, brave collaborations and cross-cultural/cross-genre repertoire. He combines his classical music origins and his love for traditional repertoire with a powerful passion for original concert programs, that catapults concert halls and audiences around the world into the 21st century.

As a recording artist JÄRVI has more than thirty albums to his credit. He has been honored with a Swedish Grammy for “Best Opera



Performance”, German Record Critics Prize for “Best Album”, a Grammy nomination and a BBC Record Award nomination. KRISTJAN JÄRVI’S latest releases include “Carmina Burana” with the *MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra* and “Bach Re-Invented” with the *Absolute Ensemble* which was co-founded by JÄRVI and fellow composer GENE PRITSKER. The *Cloud Atlas Symphony* marks JÄRVI’S continued work in film music, having recorded the soundtrack the Hollywood film *Cloud Atlas* with *MDR*. The symphony is based on the original film score and was commissioned by KRISTJAN JÄRVI and adds to a body of more than one hundred new works for which JÄRVI has actively sought the commission.

Being the editor of this volume, I had the opportunity to conduct an interview with KRISTJAN JÄRVI about his connection to film music:

Let us assume that film scores are merely Gebrauchsmusik, purely functional music, and therefore they cannot be regarded as art. What would be your answer as a conductor?

Well, you are only fifty percent right. I think there are pieces which are definitely functional and, in fact, kind of fill a hole that exists when a director has already everything in mind but is missing the music. So he plugs something in and it can be anything actually. And unfortunately, they get so used to that particular piece which they have chosen themselves that they are not very happy with the piece which they get usually afterwards as the commissioned film music. And so they usually are in the very last stages of film production, writing at the very last moment, recording at the very last moment and your piece is actually chopped up into million pieces which is sometimes uncontrollable and unrecognizable. So in that sense, yes, it is very functional.

But then it depends on who you work with. Because there are people like [film director] TOM TYKWER [*Cloud Atlas*, *The International*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, *Run Lola Run*], for example, who ac-

tually starts from the music. And I am lucky enough to have an association with him and be able to influence the outcome of the film and set the whole dramaturgical development. So in that sense, the music actually carries the film.

And it's so strong that it can stand alone. And this actually goes back to the tradition of the old Hollywood studios. They were people like MAX STEINER and [ERICH WOLFGANG] KORNGOLD and MIKLÓS RÓZSA and also many others who essentially were not plugging in functional music. They were actually writing incredible music that sometimes was much better than the film. And you can also look at cinema in countries like Russia, for example, with composers like SCHNITTKE, PROKOFIEV, or SHOSTAKOVICH—the tradition goes way back—who have, in fact, written much better music than the films that they wrote for. So, fifty-fifty...

Absolute music is developed within its own timeframe. You have a certain freedom as a conductor to play around with tempos, for example. But with film you have a very discrete timing. You have cuts, you have sequences; and a film score has to oblige to the film. So as a composer and as a conductor you haven't any freedom of varying tempos, have you?

That is true. But I feel like even if you have a click [track], for example, there is a way to make music within that click which is actually just as music, believe it or not, as if you pull the tempos around left, right, and center. I think that there may be certain cues and the pieces may not be so long in length and they might be functional in that aspect, but I think it is all relative to what you are dealing with.

For example, I conducted the *Sinfonica Domestica* which is a huge, forty-five-minute work by RICHARD STRAUSS and what I told the orchestra is that this is very much a story-telling autobiography. In fact, every single piece by STRAUSS is autobiographical but this one in particular. And we have to play it as film music to a silent film, in fact.

Which film?

Well, the one that was never made. About STRAUSS at home. And I see everything in a way visually.

And I think that anybody in the concert hall who visit a concert doesn't listen to pure music, absolute music like we have been educated to listen, but they actually see a concert and they listen by looking, you know, not only hearing. And a conductor is in many ways that film itself. Through mimicry and ways of explaining the story you are actually telling the story. Maybe it is very subjective to you but it's better than just playing it down. Because there is no possibility for great music to stand alone or to be as great as it potentially can be without a great interpreter. And I think this is actually the function of music for a film if there is great music. I look at it the other way round: rather than music functioning only to be a support for a visual aspect, so I think the visual actually supports the music because the music is so abstract. And I think that it needs that visual help.

And the more the interpreter can help the audience understand the story you can guide them without forcing them into the exact story but give them a direction of a story. So they say, "Yeah, look, what he [the conductor] just did..." and how that relates to that phrase. They wouldn't think about the phrase but about that gesture. Whatever happened there [on the concert hall stage]? Because it makes sense somehow.

Because that is how I would communicate with you. Look, I'm moving my arm, I'm talking, I'm coming closer... So that's actually music. And that's how we support a film musically as well.

Do you see the roots of film music in pieces like Sinfonica Domestica, in other tone poems, or in symphonies by MAHLER or BRUCKNER, for example?

Absolutely. I mean look, you know, in a piece like *Don Juan*, for example, by STRAUSS... [Humming the love theme.] It is so expensive and incredible and then you think, wait a minute, where is MAX STEINER getting... [humming the theme from *Gone with the Wind*]? Because STRAUSS was his teacher, you know. MAX STEINER'S teacher was STRAUSS and basically they took STRAUSS, brought it to Hollywood and made it American film music.

The same thing: MAHLER is so close to KORNGOLD'S music, in fact. KORNGOLD'S whole way to orchestrate thing is very similar. They brought the most sensual European sound and turned it into something like very pictorial tone poems. What are tone poems or even MAHLER symphonies? They are stories. It is not absolute music. There is actually no such thing as absolute music. I don't believe in that.

You think everyone wants to tell a story.

Yeah. Look at the MENDELSSOHN *Violin Concerto*. You think, that's not a story? It is a fantastic story. In a concerto you even have a protagonist. You have somebody who is basically the lead singer. Maybe they are not using words but depending on the interpreter, the lead in this particular story, it depends on how they deliver it. That makes it really different on how the audience reacts to. Because they are not there [on stage] for only technical acrobatics, they are there to tell a story.

I believe 100 percent in the development of what we now see as an outgrowth of an idiom which was coming together of theater, plays, music, opera, electricity. Movies also have some kind of animation. We are constantly developing enhancing our senses. Now it has come to a point where all these things come together. All these video games you see, for example. I mean, they wouldn't exist without a good soundtrack. Even if it is some kind of an army game, you need the

music. In fact, the music is so important that the players, unfortunately, feel like in a war because they have music blasting in their headphones, but they basically playing [just] video games. They are shooting at completely abstract objects but they happen to be real. It is a crazy world we're living in.

We are so far removed from reality in so many ways and I think that sometimes it's so great to come back to a symphony orchestra and listen to some real music which is produced by real people. Where you can actually almost smell the music.

What is the difference between conducting film music in the concert hall or in the recording studio?

Well, in a recording studio you are obviously conducting to film, to clicks. You are kind of fitting a Lego block on another Lego block. Everything has to be at the right place at the right time. You have a lot more freedom in the concert hall with a piece like *Cloud Atlas Symphony*.

Obviously, as I told you before, I am not really into "music with film" type of performance [where an orchestra plays the score live to a film projection]. I just personally feel there is absolutely no reason for it because I can get a much better sound if I were in a theater. I've this huge surround speakers; I'm sitting there and can actually physically feel the film. And an orchestra cannot produce that, it's just organic. I don't think it's a good idea. Maybe other people think that's the only way to get an audience into a concert hall. But if that's what we're gotta do then we are definitely being not creative.

When E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial was re-released to cinemas, JOHN WILLIAMS conducted an orchestra at the première live to the film. It was extremely difficult to get it synchronized.

And the quality cannot be the same. What are people thinking? There is no comparison of a surround sound in a movie theater. You feel like in a movie yourself.

But it could be seen as a contradiction that you have film score music for a medium that demonstrates realism. Film is said to depict realism.

Yeah, but you know, so are the plays by every single playwright. There is maybe no music there but as soon as you have opera there is music there and there is singing and they depict realism, too. Even though it is a different genre. This is a genre that deals with multimedia before multimedia existed. And then it became a form of entertainment which is based highly on music and wouldn't survive on the music alone. That evolved in all these Broadway shows and this type of musicals actually. That's exactly what KURT WEILL and all these incredible highly trained musicians started to kind of take over and mix.

Look at something like BERNSTEIN'S *West Side Story*. That depicts realism more than everything else. It's set as a Romeo and Juliet story at the same time but has a soundtrack which is just... you don't need the film. It tells the whole story without the film. Depicting realism is..., well, we all have a soundtrack to our life. We don't necessary hear all it. But we all have one.

So, in fact, film was an outgrow of something which was opera.

Speaking of BERNSTEIN, he was totally frustrated with his only film score On The Waterfront in the end. And he didn't compose any film scores afterwards.

He was waiting, in my opinion, for a much bigger role and a better film. And his music actually—the suite from *On The Waterfront*—is played quite often. The music is good. I don't think it is one of his most successful pieces in general, but I think he wanted to make it much more of a tragedy than it actually was.

It was heavily edited during postproduction.

Yes. And so I think he pursued the same genre in a much better way through musicals like *West Side Story*.

When we think of STRAUSS' Alpine Symphony, the composer used cow bells and a thunder machine etc. So the music imitates nature. Do you think that this is a certain cliché like ADORNO said once that film music is full of clichés, strings playing when the loved ones find to each other...

Well, it was not a cliché at the beginning. It has become a cliché because it's been overused. Because it's worked and it's worked well and people said: "Well, whatever! Take that thing. Love scene. Great. Done." And I think that is, unfortunately, a matter of practicality because people don't have money to produce their own content.

We now need to make sure that if we are gonna develop further from where we are that we are good at developing content, that we're just not a distributor of existing content and culture, so to say. But that we are a creator of culture and content. That is the stage that we're at in development worldwide.

When you think of the 1950s and 1960s there was much electronic music. Then there was JOHN WILLIAMS with Jaws and Star Wars. Star Wars is special in a particular way, because it is a science-fiction movie set in the future, but with a totally romantic soundtrack. Why is that?

Because people want to be explorers by nature. We need to go and spread our existence throughout the universe if we could. And this portrays something that's a romantic fantasy for us because we are not there yet. But we know we'll gonna get there at one point. And in a way it is kind of a nostalgia to even think about that because in a way we think about our past and where we came from and where we are now and we're thinking, "Oh my God, that is really gonna happen." And I think that's why it works. It doesn't actually appeal to our emotions only because it's something that is comforting and used to because we know it. But it's because it's something that we long for and actually it's like you love somebody and you can't really have them. Maybe you have a chance but you're not sure about that. It is a very similar emotion. And I think that to see that kind of thing like, wow, that's scary but at the same time it is really exciting and daunting.

Look, this whole *Star Wars* film score of JOHN WILLIAMS is, I mean, inspired by HOLST'S *The Planets*.

When I listen to *The Planets* I absolutely get shiverish down my spine. It is one of the most incredible, greatest masterpieces [of music]. If he would have only written this one piece, that's all he needs. Because *The Planets* is unreplaceable. Simply because in a way it shows how small we are but shows also how big we are. We are like tiny little ants. But look how much we already achieved as a civilization. But we intimidated by this incredible universe. And the fact that every single war and dictator and every single medical breakthrough and beautiful flower and all the water that we know and all the great art that we know, it exists only here actually. And when you look at how small the place is we are in, it's just mindboggling actually. We're

not even a drop in a bucket if you look at the whole universe. And frankly we start to question our own existence and why and also what we've got. And the whole thing becomes a very mysterious subject. And there are two planets particularly [in *The Planets*], *Saturn* and *Uranus*, which have just this kind of mythical and mystical sections.

And it's this kind of thing which, if you see in a movie, people all the sudden think, "Oh, wow, this is a great movie." And really it switches. Maybe it's not even a great plot, maybe it's not great acting but at that moment it becomes a great movie because it touches you, it goes to your inner core somewhere. And you don't even know why but something just happened. I've been in movies like that before. And I think that can happen very easily in a concert as well if you've got great music.

Music, in fact, even though we live in a visual world and the visual overpowers the auditory sense; it's still possibly more important and more powerful than anything visual. That's my feeling.

When JOHN WILLIAMS wrote the Imperial March, which is the theme of Darth Vader, he switches between minor and major mode because, in a way, that is WILLIAMS'S reflection of Good and Evil. That's a good example of how subtle film music can be, I think.

Yeah, you're completely right. A lot of thought goes into this process. It's not just that I sit down at the piano and throw out a couple of notes. And JOHN WILLIAMS is a complete master. People don't realize what a master he is.

Usually, film scores are non-diegetic which means they are not part of the film's reality. But sometimes they suddenly become a part of it. For example, you have the Cantina Band in Star Wars. In Cloud Atlas, you have the little piece, the Cloud Atlas Sextet, which also becomes diegetic. What kind of effect does that have?

I mean first of all, it's very interesting that people start to think that that music was created by a character, by somebody who is in the film actually. If it's part of the storyline it's pretty cool. It's like *Amadeus*. He [Amadeus] created all the music and we like him for it. But if that is also a kind of recurring theme it becomes kind of a leitmotif. That is something which is wonderful because that's how we start associations with certain characters: the composer's assistant [Robert Frobisher, who actually composes the piece in the story of *Cloud Atlas* but is not recognized for]. He is this tragic figure and this kind of romantic and everything and kind of misunderstood. He wants all the best but only gets walked on. But there is a fine line because in a way he creates something which will never actually be. Maybe it [the Sextet] is great but it will be forgotten.

And if people listen to it, I mean, look, the storyline of actually "Whoa, that piece is so beautiful," I personally don't think that's a very strong part of the film because I just don't think that [in reality] I would ever listen to a piece and be like "Whoa! That is so beautiful" when I'm walking by a hot dog stand or so. I would listen to something that is pumping hot which would grab my attention. Like "Man, I've never heard a groove like that." Not like some kind of sweet melody. So in that sense it doesn't really go with my understanding of the world.

But I would have to say that if it was a different piece of music it definitely would affect me and I would have that kind of association. In this movie it had to be that because it was part of the storyline and that was how all the different karmic themes were connected. It is

almost like *déjà-vu*, I heard that somewhere before but I do not know where and how.

You have commissioned a Cloud Atlas Symphony based on the soundtrack. Why did you do this?

First of all, I think there is a lot of good material there. Look, a piece like *Ivan The Terrible* which was written for a film score by ALEXANDER NEVSKY. Why did he turn this into concert pieces? Because the material is pretty damn good.

And I felt that this material was very good, too. And since they were composing in a team and a guy who actually is a classically trained composer, GENE PRITSKER, somebody I've worked with for a long time, is part of that team I said, look, take the elements, add something of your own, and write a symphony because I think it warrants that. And he thought it was a pretty cool idea.

So we have examples of that in the past with really great pieces by PROKOFIEV, for example, who did it himself because he could. And the era has changed. Now we write music in teams. Somebody like JOHN ADAMS—I mean, if he'd take the material of [his opera] *Doctor Atomic* and turn that material into a symphony, we can do this with film. I mean, that's modern day opera in my opinion.

KORNGOLD used his own film score material and arranged it into his violin concerto. RÓZSA did it, too, the other way round. He used his violin concerto to expand it into the film score for The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.

Exactly. Look, it wouldn't be the only time. I'm sure that's gonna happen in the future as well. I'm really glad that we did it because I think that's one of the best bigger symphonic works which, I think, will be very successful in the concert scene of new music in the com-

ing years. I certainly will perform it and I hope other people will perform it as well.

Why film music is so rarely heard in concert? Not combined with a film projection, but just in concert.

Because people think it's second-rate. People dismiss a lot of things because it is easier to dismiss things than to actually deal with them.

A lot of composers— just like many writers or scriptwriters in Hollywood or elsewhere weren't really successful at writing novels or writing their own stuff—couldn't make a living as a composer who is successful in their own right. And so they went to do that [scoring films] instead.

And that's kind of that stigma of a person who is stereotyped in that way. People live basically by giving other people stereotypes. And this is it only when it comes to film music. You name it. Even if the job is good it's a stereotype. It isn't a right stereotype but people are just used to it.

So you say that people think that film composers cannot write high rated music by definition.

Yeah, because [people think] he probably never kind of made it. It's like a lot people think that orchestra managers or critics they couldn't really make it. So they became a manager or a critic. But that's not necessarily the case. There is much more gray than black-and-white.

Unfortunately, we live in a world of stereotypes. In a way I try to break these stereotypes all the time with programming and doing music which shows parallels. I did a program which I called "Vienna in Hollywood" [with music by MAX STEINER and ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD]. I wouldn't call any of these composers second-rate. They are more than first-rate composers. Look, people say about KORNGOLD'S

Violin Concerto that it's sentimental, it's cheesy, and it's like too beautiful. It's film music.

I mean those people actually have a right to think whatever they want but I haven't to agree with them. And I don't have to go with the flow—and I don't.

The editor likes to thank Antonia Klöpf and Katarina Werneburg for their assistance in preparing the interview. Photo by Peter Rigaud; used by permission.

Reference

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Composing *Cloud Atlas Symphony*

Gene Pritsker

The 2012 motion picture *Cloud Atlas* (T. TYKWER, A. WACHOWSKI, L. WACHOWSKI) has been the most expensive German independent film ever since. Adapted from a novel by DAVID MITCHELL, the film consists of six related and interwoven stories spanning a time period from 1849 to a distant future. The film features an ensemble cast of TOM HANKS, HALLE BERRY, JIM BROADBENT, HUGO WEAVING, SUSAN SARANDON, and HUGH GRANT among others who play different characters in each of the stories.

Highly unusual for motion pictures, three composers are credited for the film music: TOM TYKWER, REINHOLD HEIL, and JOHNNY KLIMEK; who have composed music for former films by TOM TYKWER like *Run Lola Run*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, or *The International*. The music received critical acclaim and has been nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Original Score and a German Film Award for Best Film Score in 2013.

The score was orchestrated by GENE PRITSKER and performed by the *MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony* which is the radio orchestra of Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, the public broadcasting station for the German states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia. In conjunction with orchestrating the score, PRITSKER has been commissioned to compose a symphony based on the film score. On November 11, 2012, the *Cloud Atlas Symphony* had its world première at the Impuls Festival in Halle, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany with KRISTJAN JÄRVI conducting the *MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony*.

How did the film scoring start?

Composers TOM TYKWER, REINHOLD HEIL and JOHNNY KLIMEK meet a year or so before a film is even shot and start writing melodies and various musical materials for this project. Some months before the first recording session with the orchestra, they give me this material, some of it very electronic and bare and some of it arranged with sampled instruments. They ask me to orchestrate it, create new colors, expand on certain ideas and add some of my own. In some films I will even write some additional music from scratch. We then record this material with an orchestra—remember this is still before anything has been filmed. As the picture begins to take shape and we head over to the post production phase, this material we recorded, starts getting put to the picture as the temporary score, but unlike other directors, who use other music for their temp, this is temp of original music, much of which will be in the film. They of course modify some of it, add more, delete some things that don't work, loop, chop, copy/paste etc., and after they decide on what the final version is, I re-orchestrate the whole thing as it is supposed to be in the final film. We then re-record with an orchestra this material, and that is the final film score.

There are three composers credited for Cloud Atlas. What do they do?

TOM, REINHOLD, and JOHNNY all write lots and lots of material, some of it makes it, some of it does not. But they each have their distinct style and era of expertise. TOM writes very beautiful melodies, JOHNNY is able to combine varied elements and create beautiful textures, REINHOLD has a very unique sense of harmony. It is my job to make sure it all works for the orchestra and add colors that they might have not thought of or that don't really happen unless you carefully put them on a score.

What did you do as Lead Orchestrator?

My main job is color I would say. I use many modern extended techniques as well as expand on standard ways to write for an orchestra. Sometimes the simplicity of the music that is created for these films gives me lots of room to experiment and add a whole new dimension with the orchestra. I love when the composers give me an electronic track and I translate this track into an orchestral piece. How do you orchestrate a sine wave bass line, a techno-like synth groove, or a strange effected world instrument with lots of microtonal bends and slides, etc. This is my favorite work, sometimes what I create reminds the composers of what they did on the computer but it's a different piece of music all together. In *Cloud Atlas*, there was an electronically modified cello line, that wobbled in and out and created a synth like drone, I orchestrated this with many effects and new ways of communicating swells to create a very interesting texture. I even start of the second movement of my symphony with this texture.

My main assistant on this project was JUSTIN BELL, who firstly created the sampled mock-ups of some of the orchestral music and orchestrated some for the more straight ahead orchestral cues. We had to hire two other orchestrators to help us with about four cues, only because of very tight deadlines. I was working ten hours a day to finish it all on time, and JUSTIN was preparing cues for me while trying to get his cues done, and at one point we knew we could not make it, so we hired a few people to help us in the home stretch.

Why did you compose a whole symphony?

I look at this symphony as separate from the movie music. To me it's another part in the *Cloud Atlas* artistic creation. There is the novel, there is the film, there is the movie music, and then there is my symphony. They are all connected by the story of course, and my symphony has echoes of some of the material from the film music, some

movements more than others, the 6th movement is the most direct quote from the movie, although the harmonies are completely different. This is the only movement where I kept the main melody the same. I see it as STRAVINSKY taking the music of PERGOLESI and writing his *Pulcinella Suite*; this piece is very STRAVINSKY but there are the melodic and even harmonic aspects of PERGOLESI. Same with my symphony, this is my music for all intensive purposes, but the influence of the movie music is made clear from movement to movement. I wrote the symphony because I was inspired by this project and felt I can add another point of view to this story.

The novel features six separate stories, and every story influences the other ones. In the film, the six stories are more interwoven but the connection between them has been maintained. Your symphony has six movements, too. Is there any reflection of the six storylines of novel and film in your symphony as well?

Well there are six movements because of the six storylines, but they do not really correlate to the stories or the characters too much. *Cloud Atlas Symphony* is more of an over view for the full novel as opposed to focusing on individual story lines. The 3rd movement is about the comic character, and the end movement is heroic and can be linked to the story of oppression, and of course the sextet theme from the movie is linked to everyone, so that appears both in the 1st movement and the 5th movement. I try to use music in its beautiful abstract expression that goes beyond trying to characterize certain plots or characters; unlike movie music my symphony does not have to follow a scene or sequence or underscore a particular emotion, it is free to express essence.

What are the differences and the similarities between score and symphony?

With each movement I take something from the movie music and make it my own.

For example, in the first movement: “Evolving”, I take the sextet theme (ex. 1) and develop it note by note.



Example 1. Theme from *Cloud Atlas* Sextet.

I start of, about five minutes of the symphony, with just playing on the first two notes of the theme (ex. 2).

Cloud Atlas Symphony

1. EVOLVING

Music by Gene Pritsker
based on music from the film 'Cloud Atlas'
by Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek & Reinhold Heil

♩ = 80

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Flute 1
Flute 2
Alto Flute
Piccolo
English Horn
2 Clarinet (Bb)
Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoon
Contr. Bassoon
French Horn 1-2 (F)
French Horn 3-4 (F)
Trumpet 1-2 (Bb)
Trumpet 3-4 (Bb)
Trombone 1-2
Trombone 3
Tuba
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Percussion 4
Piano
Harp
Voice 1
Voice 2
Voice
Cello
Contr. Bass

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Example 2. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 1, Page 1. First two notes of theme development.

I combine these two notes with my own melody that I introduce, then at bar 44 (ex. 3) I add the 3rd note, A flat, and then proceed to develop this.

The image displays a musical score excerpt for Example 3, consisting of six staves. The top two staves represent the first violin section, and the bottom two staves represent the viola section. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The first two staves feature a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs. The third and fourth staves show a sustained chord in the first violin part, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a fermata. The fifth and sixth staves show a melodic line in the viola part, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a trill (*tr*) over the first note. The score concludes with a final chord in the first violin part, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a fermata.

Example 3. Excerpt from *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 1, Page 6. The 3rd note of the theme (A flat) is being introduced in the violin section (first two staves: 1st violin; bottom two staves: violas).

At bar 64, the 4th note is introduced, G, etc. I keep adding notes of the theme and developing my own various melodies around it until you hear the full theme in the climatic end.

In the second movement: “Meditation”. The only material taken from the film score is the begging texture and progression (ex. 4). As mentioned above I took an electronically modified sound and orchestrated it to make this texture. In the symphony I expand on this and add original melodies and other textures that make up this movement.

Example 4. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 2, Page 1. Opening texture.

The third movement: “Influence”, is probably the most experimental movement of the symphony. I took an older piece of mine, a concerto for viola d’amour and orchestra called “Unseen” and took all the melodic content out of it. I left all my harmonies and all the counter melodies and all the orchestration, but I took out the main melodies that I wrote for this piece and of course I took out the solo viola d’amour. I then took a melody from the film music (ex. 5), a funny fast melody that occurs during chase scenes and other humorous parts of the film, and inserted this theme into my score.

Example 5. Humorous theme from *Cloud Atlas* film music.

This score is the opposite of what the theme represents, its slow, dark, moody and very serious (ex. 6).

Cloud Atlas Symphony

Music by Gene Pritsker
based on music from the film 'Cloud Atlas'
by Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek & Reinhold Heil

3. INFLUENCE

00 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Flute
2 Flute
Alto Flute
2 Oboe
English Horn
2 Clarinet (Bb)
Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoon
Contrabassoon
French Horn 1 (F)
French Horn 2 (F)
Trumpet 1-2 (Bb)
Trumpet 3-4 (Bb)
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Percussion 4
Piano
Harp
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Example 6. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 3, Page 1. Humorous theme inserted into a dark score.

Cloud Atlas Symphony

4. GROOVE

Music by Gene Pritsker
based on music from the film 'Cloud Atlas'
by Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek & Reinhold Heil

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Example 7. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 4, Page 1. Drum set for orchestra.

The challenge was can I make this theme work in this world, with these harmonies, with these colors and with these counter melodies that have nothing to do with it. I of course had to move some things around and make sure it all worked together but the result, I believe, is very original. If you know the movie and are able to reference this theme, it's almost as if I decided to go deeper into these characters, that are portrayed in a humorous matter, and try to flesh out what they are feeling, even if they are presented as buffoonish, they are still people with deep emotions, and when "their melody" gets severely re-interpreted, what do we see?

The fourth movement: "Groove", is maybe my favorite. I make the whole orchestra into one giant drum set. The beginning (ex. 7) is basically a drum set groove for orchestra, with lots and lots for extended technique for all the instruments. Over this, I take a melodic phrase from the movie music and turn it into a sort of minimalistic cannon (ex. 8). This movement is mostly minimalism that grooves throughout with climaxes that keep restarting the groove.

The image displays a musical score for Example 8, consisting of five staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom three are in bass clef. The music is written in a rhythmic, groove-oriented style with many slurs and ties, suggesting a continuous, driving motion. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'mf' and 'mp'. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of a 'drum set groove' for an orchestra.

Example 8. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 4, Page 4. Canonic development of melody from film music.

-2-

11 12 13 14 15 16

Flu. 1
Flu. 2
Clar. 1
Clar. 2
Viol. 1
Viol. 2
Viola
Viola
Viola
Viola
Cello
Cello
Cello

11 12 13 14 15 16

Example 9. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 5, Page 2. Colorful orchestration and echoes of sextet melody.

The fifth movement: “Melody”, goes back to the sextet melody, we heard being developed in movement one. But this time there are just echoes of this melody, with very impressionistic harmonies and colors. As if you kind of hear the melody but it is blurred, like impressionistic art does. The orchestration is lush and very colorful (ex. 9).

The last movement of the symphony; “March” is actually in the closing credits of the film as well. The composers wrote this march melody, which I always liked, and then harmonized it with, what I felt, was very standard chord progressions. With those harmonies it reminded me of a lot of other music. So I asked TOM if I can do my own versions of this theme, with my own harmonies and bit more colorful orchestration. In fact this movement was the first I wrote, before I started any other movement of this symphony. I left this very catchy melody as is, and added my own harmonic language and a big sparkling orchestration (ex. 10).

-21-

174 175 176

The image displays a page of a musical score for the *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 6, specifically pages 21 and 22. The score is a full orchestration of a march melody, spanning measures 174 to 176. It features a large ensemble of instruments including Piccolo, Flutes (Fl. 1-4), Oboes (Ob. 1-2), Clarinets (Cl. 1-2), Bassoons (Bsn. 1-2), Horns (Hr. 1-4), Trumpets (Trp. 1-4), Trombones (Tbn. 1-2), Percussion (Perc. 1-4), and Strings (Str.). The score is written in a complex, multi-staff format with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The page number '-21-' is located at the top left, and the measure numbers 174, 175, and 176 are indicated at the top and bottom of the score.

Example 10. *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, Movement 6, Pages 21 and 22. March melody with new harmonies and huge orchestration (both pages).

-22-

177 178 179 180

The image displays a page of a musical score for the *Cloud Atlas Symphony*, specifically measures 177 through 180. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for different instruments. The instruments listed on the left side of the page include Percussion (Perc.), Timpani (Tim.), Snare Drum (Sn.), Bass Drum (B.D.), Cymbal (Cym.), Trumpet (Trp.), Trombone (Tbn.), Horn (Hr.), Violin (Vl.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is written in a complex, multi-measure format with various dynamics and articulations. The page number '-22-' is located at the top left, and the page number '159' is at the top right. The measure numbers 177, 178, 179, and 180 are printed at the top and bottom of the page.

The Dramatic Functions of Italian Spaghetti Western Soundtracks: A Comparison between Ennio Morricone and Francesco De Masi

Lorenzo Sorbo

Brief Introduction on Italian “Spaghetti Western” Movies

The term “spaghetti western” was initially coined by American critics to identify a particular genre of Italian western movies with reduced budgets. About 600 spaghetti westerns were produced in Italy between 1964 and 1978 with a peak between 1966 and 1972 (FRAYLING 1998). This genre soon became popular all over the world due to its distinctive features, often very different from those of classical American western movies of the “golden era” included in 1940–1960. Traditionally, the so-called “*Dollars Trilogy*”¹ directed by SERGIO LEONE is considered the archetype of the spaghetti western genre, but its stylistic evolution has gone through different phases affecting plots, themes, characterizations and settings.

The genre was initially codified in the films by SERGIO LEONE and SERGIO CORBUCCI where the plot is usually based on a lone hero without a past but fast with the gun, almost ghostly and always in search of revenge or more simply of money. Instead the theme of revenge has affected another vein, sometimes with moral implications, which ushered in the western on Mexican Revolution typically based on two characters: a central one, usually a peon, faced with the alternative to be a bandit or a revolutionary and a charismatic and more cynical for-

¹ Made up of *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966).

eigner.² Later the western corrupted with contaminations belonging to other genres like horror, musical, circus movies³ and comedies.⁴

Most spaghetti westerns were made on low budgets, using about 100,000,000 lire (GIUSTI 2007). At the beginning many movies were shot in the Province of Almería, in southeastern Spain, because of the similarity of some arid landscapes with those of the American Southwest and Northern Mexico, but above all because it was cheaper to shoot in those locations.

Later the settings would move to Italy, mostly in the countryside around Rome and Viterbo's areas, the Gran Sasso Mountain's area, in Sardinia and even in Puglia's "Tavoliere" where the lands assumed the typical characters of desolation and wild vegetation thanks also to the widespread presence of cactuses.

In the spaghetti western the main character was never a hero, but an antihero more often driven by interest rather than by idealistic reasons. Therefore the Italian western was neither optimistic nor moralistic as the classical American one, being always the money as the only true interest of the characters. Therefore the plots and scenes were generally bloodier and the characters more cynical with a lot of violence and action sometimes pushed to the most extreme levels. So in this genre the classic distinction between the "good" and the "bad" is thus considerably blurred compared to the American western. Especially with the stylistic revolution imposed by SERGIO LEONE on, all the characters and even the positive ones look generally more cynical, scruffy, ironical but basically more realistic like the most in-

2 In this vein: *Quien sabe?* (1966) by Damiano Damiani, *La resa dei conti* (1967) and *Faccia a faccia* (1967) by Sergio Sollima, *Tepepa* (1969) by Giulio Petroni, *Il mercenario* (1968) and *Vamos a matar, compañeros* (1970) by Sergio Corbucci.

3 As in *Ehi amico... c'è Sabata, hai chiuso!* (1969) by GIANFRANCO PAROLINI and *La collina degli stivali* (1969) by GIUSEPPE COLIZZI.

4 Two western comedies by E.B. CLUCHER (that is ENZO BARBONI) were hugely successful: *Lo chiamavano Trinità* (1970) and *Continuavano a chiamarlo Trinità* (1971) played by the couple TERENCE HILL and BUD SPENCER.

hospitable environments and the desolate and dusty villages. Obviously one of the typical characters and protagonists was the gunman, usually represented in a particular dress, with an unshaven face, wearing a hat pulled down over his eyes and smoking a cigarillo. He was also equipped with a particular and distinctive weapon and soon every gunman on the screen owned a “brand” feature; there were maimed gunfighters, gunslingers without a hand, priests-gunfighters, blind or dumb gunslingers, epileptics, ghost-gunslingers and even homosexuals. Many gunslingers became so popular, such as *Django*, *Sartana*, *Sabata* just to name the most famous, to frequently recur in dozens of movies and creating long sagas where the character increased his fame being already known to the audience. Often new protagonists were created very similar to each other and their nicknames often included *Joe* or *Colt*.⁵

Morricone and De Masi: Comparison of Two Styles

The spaghetti western’s soundtrack was undoubtedly one of the key features that helped to form the genre’s dramatic structure, in fact many soundtracks are still known today more than their original movies.

Though the association SERGIO LEONE–ENNIO MORRICONE has been traditionally acknowledged as a sort of *dramaturgical criterion* in the western soundtrack genre, it must be said that many other academically trained composers contributed to enrich the spaghetti western dramatic functions.⁶

5 Among the actors associated to the most famous characters: GIAN MARIA VOLONTÉ (Ramon), FRANCO NERO (Django), GIULIANO GEMMA (Ringo), TOMAS MILIAN (Cuchillo), LEE VAN CLEEF (The Bad), GIANNI GARKO (Sartana), WILLIAM BERGER (El Cisco), ANTHONY STEFFEN (Shango).

6 It is worth to mention LUIS ENRÍQUEZ BACALOV, BRUNO NICOLAI, RIZ ORTOLANI, CARLO SAVINA, PIERO UMILIANI, GIANNI FERRIO, and CARLO RUSTICHELLI.

In this chapter I focus on two composers, ENNIO MORRICONE and FRANCESCO DE MASI. I will not dwell on a musicological analysis of their works, which has already been widely conducted in previous studies on MORRICONE and much less on DE MASI, but I will examine how their style and language has influenced the dramatic structure in some scenes of the films.

At least according to their intentions, the two composers differ in their aesthetic conception of the western score. MORRICONE clarifies his position on the matter when he states:

“It has always been my belief that one of the most important tools for a film composer is timbre. I began to experience this way of thinking about music specifically for the scene and especially for the character in *A Fistful of dollars* and then in all the other Leone’s films. The western genre has given me this help, because the genre, at least as envisioned by Leone, is picaresque, playful, dramatic, amusing, bittersweet, completely over the top. The grotesque figure of the protagonist is intentionally forced by the director. [...] Having in mind such an intended rule, also supported by excellent results, comes the need for me to use unusual sounds which could be equivalent to those ‘excesses’ described. Everything, including the sound part, had to sound much more than it was. That’s the reason for the bells, whip, whistle, anvil, ocarina, voices and many other things. The need to make the movie look epic brought to inflate the tone of the instrument, to refer to a choir, to *crescendo*, to the strings with their galloping rhythm (I think to the strings in Monteverdi’s *The Combat of Tancredi and Clorinda*) and all other possible artifacts to give the music the qualities necessary to ensure that Leone’s movie character took off and that the film was believable” (MORRICONE & MICELI 2001: 165).

DE MASI’S conception of the western score rests instead on another aesthetical basis and musical concepts. For DE MASI the orchestra represents the “expressive palette” for the western soundtrack. Thus his soundtracks are conceived as some kind of *symphonic poem*, in which the main themes, although assigned to specific and characteristic timbres, describe the scene in the style of program music. This concept allows him to evoke the character or scene in an epic different from that produced by MORRICONE. DE MASI makes this clear:

“I have always considered Western in another way. In Italy, after *A Fistful of Dollars* everyone has given a label to the western music in the wake of what Morricone did, which was marvelous. But for me it was something else. I always thought to Tiomkin, Williams, these who made the symphonic western.

But why? Because it deserves. Some films deserve to have a great treatment. There are also situations suitable for a music made not only by guitar, harmonica, banjo.

Besides I like to write music in a certain way and as a result I have always thought so. In movies like *Arizona Colt*, *Any Gun Can Play*, *Kill Them All and Come Back Alone*, *Cost of dying* I always wanted to write an important music. In the latter the director asked me an advanced composition writing, something not based only on guitar and mandolin, but a modern music like Stockhausen, Berio, these kind of composers. Then I wrote some quite unusual pieces for a western movie” (DE MASI 2006: 203).

“As for the western movie, I made the music for the first two shot in Italy. Before Sergio Leone, who was a great director and is considered the father of western. I would say, enough before. Obviously I relied to the style of American western movies... Tiomkin... nothing to do with the kind of music later become routine with guitars, whistles, bangs. Marvelous, I do not doubt it, but it always remained at the bottom of my feelings. My idea of the epic western movie, in fact, refers to Tiomkin. That for me was the western movie” (DE MASI 2006: 208–209).

By using the term “symphonic western”, DE MASI refers to a precise epic concept of the western based on the models of the American western and its composers as DIMITRI TIOMKIN and ELMER BERNSTEIN. It is useful to remark that DE MASI had already written several soundtracks for *peplum* movies⁷ in which the orchestral magniloquence was a distinctive character. Quite different is MORRICONE’S epic conception in LEONE’S films which reinvent the myth of the western with a personal direction, in fact, “whereas in the classic western the referent is given by the historical past on which to build a myth, in the

⁷ The *peplum* (or *sword-and-sandal*) is a sub-genre of historical movies in costume which includes both the action and fantastic movies set in biblical contexts or in Greek or Roman period. The term comes from the Latin word *peplum* which indicates a female Greek tunic, easy to implement and made on a low budget.

spaghetti westerns the referent is this myth revised in the light of a dark present” (MICCICHÉ 1975: 115). DE MASI ironically talks about “guitars, whistles, bangs”, it is a clear reference to MORRICONE⁸ and apparently the reader understands his grip away. Similarly MORRICONE did not rely only on timbral effect, but showed his skills in the thematic elaboration as well as in the orchestration. Besides, even DE MASI used similar strategies originally designed by MORRICONE. In fact both of them came from academic studies with renowned teachers, studied classical composition and particularly the techniques of the great symphonists of the twentieth century (such as STRAVINSKY or RAVEL) applied to their soundtracks each one according to their own style. Therefore, beyond their programmatic statements, one can see many similarities in their music, considering the fact that they shared many common musicians and collaborators. There are many examples of timbre invention scattered in *For a Fistful of Dollars*. One of these inventions consists of a simple descending scale of sixteenth notes in the range of a fifth which characterizes the Man With No Name “almost the evocation of a glissando on the five pipes of a pan flute” (MICELI 1994: 115). At the beginning of the film he stops and drinks from a well, sees a running child and we exactly hear the scale of five notes, as if to indicate his curiosity and suspicion of something wrong. When the gunman gets into the desolate San Miguel, all the timbres are poured into the musical theme of the opening credits, as the famous Alessandrone’s whistle which is enriched with strings and unusual instruments such as the whip, the bell and the anvil, all of them evoking the rural world and the archaic village corrupted by the presence of outlaws (MICELI 1994: 115). The guitar’s lopsided arpeggiated accompaniment evokes the gait of the horse carrying the solitary protagonist, always identified by the de-

⁸ FRANCESCO DE MASI, the composer’s son, told me that MORRICONE and his father were friends and had mutual respect, because they began to work together as arrangers for RCA in Rome in the 1960s. So the statement should be read in affectionate and not controversial key.

scending scale as if to represent his ideal descent into hell. A curious case is the movie *For a Fistful in the Eye* (1965), a comic parody of LEONE's film starring the comic duo FRANCO AND CICCIO. Here the soundtrack's musical parody is written by DE MASI who reuses timbres and techniques belonging to MORRICONE's style. In particular, the descending scale which originally denoted tension, is here "comically" turned in an ascending one with a opposite dramatic effect, scattered in almost all musical sequences, often giving a satirical effect as in the track *Franco and Ciccio Ballade* based on an ensemble made up of bass, jaw harp, electric guitar evoking a certainly not heroic ride, but clumsy. The arrival of the bandits in a desolate village is another frequently used *topos* at the beginning of many spaghetti westerns. In most of these scenes, DE MASI uses his "symphonic western" as in *Any Gun Can Play* (1966). The film begins *in medias res*, without opening credits, on the arrival of three cowboys in a desolate village. The viewer does not know who they are, but it is clear from their looks that do not bode well. The track used in this scene *Wind and Whisky* is constructed by juxtaposition and development of some basic rhythmic and melodic elements depicting the characters. The primary element is an ostinato guitar arpeggio on an A minor pentatonic scale that recalls the atmosphere of the desolate landscape, supported by an interlocking rhythmic accompaniment with drums, castanets and claves. The entry of the cowboy is accompanied by the main theme entrusted to the harmonica, later passed to the winds just as the rhythmic accompaniment is emphasized with the snare drum. When a cowboy laughs seeing the worried faces of the villagers, the track quickly reaches its maximum development. On first there is a modulation of a semitone higher in the key of B flat minor and the theme goes to the solo trumpet, while the whole orchestra's crescendos translate the obvious threat represented by the characters. However, the track returns to the introductory section decreasing exponentially when you see a cart with three coffins intended just to the cowboys. Only after this meaningful beginning the headlines scroll through on the

scene of a steam train racing along a barren and desolate land. Here the dramatic construction is interesting, in fact we see a close-up of the drive wheels accelerating quickly and only after reaching the maximum speed we hear the song “Stranger”⁹ performed by the singer Raoul with his particular iron vocal timbre (ETTORE DEL VECCHIO). The train’s pace is musically imitated with a fast arpeggio syncopated of the acoustic guitar on a train rhythm of drums played with brushes, and the choir’s staccato parts recall the violent locomotive’s steam puffs. When Raoul sings the verse “Stranger, stranger. How is your face?” the harmonica’s melody imitates the theme (F–C–Eflat–C), later, in the second half of the verse, the steam whistle is synchronized in response to the word “stranger” as a dialogue with the harmonica. This process seems to confirm the predilection of DE MASI in his usage of musical sounds and not only instruments, a concept learned by his maestro ANGELO FRANCESCO LAVAGNINO. “Take into account the noise! Maestro Lavagnino always dreamed of writing a single score with a foley, because he said that noise was sound too” (DE MASI 2006: 197). Moreover an excellent example of a “symphony of noises” is found in the initial twelve minutes in *Once Upon a Time in the West*, in which the expectation of three killers in a train station is not stressed by any musical score, but marked by a forest of environmental noises such as crunches, squeaks, wind, telegraph, water, footsteps that dilate the time of narration by involving the viewer/listener to the expectation of the same train. Other good examples lie in the scenes of duels. In the initial part in *A Fistful of Dollars* the Man With No Name occurs in the presence of four members of the Baxter gang. After a joke, in the style of the cynical humor Leone’s films, CLINT EASTWOOD looks up, and the viewer hears again the scale played by the flute. The rising tension is described by an acute note of the strings held for about thirty seconds that ends abruptly on the bang killing all four bandits. The same procedure is used in the final duel

⁹ The title has a double meaning, refers to both the name of the bounty hunter and to the sense of alienation in those lands.

with Ramon, the same note is held for thirty-five long seconds until the bang does not kill Ramon's bandits. Even here MORRICONE expands the time of the tension through a minimal but effective element, without falling into clichés often heard in the scenes of tension, as the abused strings tremolo to increase the suspense of a scene. Let's see how DE MASI treats a duel scene: At the end of *Any Gun Can Play* the three protagonists Clayton, Monetero and Stranger are held simultaneously at gunpoint in a typical Mexican standoff which, however, is not resolved in the most classic movie cliché, which is the elimination of one or more rivals. In fact, the scene is constructed in such a way as to deceive the viewer who sees the three drawing the gun and waiting to know who is going to win the treasure of \$ 300,000 which is the film's central motif. In this final scene the music also helps to deceive and distract the viewer from the true ending. In fact DE MASI writes a piece for solo organ that resembles a BACH *Toccatà*, as MORRICONE had done in the duel scene in *For a Few Dollars More*, with a quotation of J.S. BACH's *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* (MICELI 2001: 126). Significantly the setting is a former church too. DE MASI's *toccatà* recalls the physical place where the money is kept: in some reeds of an old organ in ruins. In addition, it embodies the tension through a chordal writing on an unstable minor harmony depending on the suspense of the scene. Also it takes the shape of funeral music, as the outcome of the stall will have negative outcomes. Instead the tension and deception are solved in a different way, the camera frames the shot of the three guns actually pointing at the organ pipes, dropping gold coins for the joy of the three who will share the loot, instead of killing each other. The "triello" is an excellent dramatic pretext for MORRICONE too, as in the final scene of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* thanks to a music that suspends the narrative time through a complex tripartite structure well analyzed in (MICELI 2001: 125–130). In this final scene a further proof of the importance of the timbres is provided for the understanding of the persistent carillon sound throughout the film thanks to the melodic loops created

by MORRICONE. In *Quella sporca storia del West (Johnny Hamlet, 1968)*, a western transposition of Hamlet, DE MASI experiments MORRICONE'S techniques blending its "symphonic western" with effective timbre inventions, as in the tracks "In Memory" and "Johnny on the cross" written for the chorus "I Cantori Moderni di Alessandrini." These are examples of moving epicediums where the vocals are traversed by energetic shelled classical guitar chords and punctuated by bell tolls. DE MASI often resorted to the choir to accompany the tragical scenes. Also interesting is the intrusion into ethnic music of "Santana's village" with a contamination of symphonic with folk Mexican rhythms and the echo in "Santana's onslaught" an experimental and dark piece.

From this brief selection one can realize that the comparison between the two composers becomes much more interesting if it is not placed as an antagonism between the two styles, but as a result of a musical language experimenting new solutions in relation to the drama of western movies. In this direction, such a perspective would therefore be useful to start a comparative analysis of several other films and contemporary composers to trace commonalities and differences within a coded language of music.

Conclusions: Music Off the Screen

The music of MORRICONE and DE MASI, albeit with different fates, have had a life of their own beyond the screen.

Obviously MORRICONE'S western soundtracks have greatly influenced the style of many other composers of film music, but mostly keep on existing beyond their original films. In fact, since 2001 MORRICONE has personally conducted his live concerts around the world and all programs have invariably provided tracks from LEONE'S films.¹⁰ The interest and the musical language of MORRICONE has in-

¹⁰ On 20 and 23 March 2014 two concerts were performed in Los Angeles and New York with an orchestra and a choir for a total of two hundred performers.

fluenced many artists since its inception and list all of them would be redundant. I limit myself to a few eloquent cases. One of the first was HUGO MONTENEGRO, an American film composer who in 1968 achieved the worldwide success with an album containing rearrangements of tracks from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. In 1985, the American composer and saxophonist JOHN ZORN released the successful tribute album *The Big Gundown* (1985) blending the original MORRICONE'S themes with an eclectic style made up of bebop, Japanese folk, rock, country, jazz. Another important case relates to the single *Clint Eastwood* (2001) by GORILLAZ who immediately became a hit all over the world. The title of the song is much more meaningful not only for its reference to the protagonist of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, but owes its success in part to the sampling of excerpts of the original soundtrack. Even more noteworthy is the fact that the refrain "I ain't happy, I'm feeling glad. I got sunshine in a bag" is a direct reference to the bag with the loot that the character of CLINT EASTWOOD takes away at the end of the film. A further consecration was the tribute album *We All Love Ennio Morricone* (2007) performed by international artists with the first three tracks dedicated to the Italian western.¹¹ I would like to conclude this brief roundup citing the reasons for an award given to MORRICONE in 2010, just because it sums up the meaning of these thoughts:

"The Polar Music Prize 2010 is being awarded to Italian composer, arranger and conductor Ennio Morricone. Ennio Morricone's congenial compositions and arrangements lift our existence to another plane, making the mundane feel like dramatic scenes in full Cinemascope. When, in 1964, Ennio Morricone scored the soundtrack for the Western 'A Fistful of Dollars', budgetary constraints prevented him from using a full orchestra. Instead, he built up a brand new kind of music that set the tone for half a century of film music, but also influenced and inspired a number of musicians in the spheres of pop, rock and classical music" (POLAR MUSIC PRIZE 2010).

11 1. Celine Dion - I Knew I Loved You (Once Upon a Time in America), 2. Quincy Jones feat. Herbie Hancock - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, 3. Bruce Springsteen - Once Upon a Time in the West

As for DE MASI, we face a different matter for other reasons. Surely his recent death in 2005 did not contribute to bringing his soundtracks in live concerts in the same way as MORRICONE. This could have been possible because DE MASI was also an active conductor, but his live concerts focused rather on the composers of classical music than on his soundtracks. In addition, especially since the eighties onwards, he has focused on teaching activities at the Conservatory and less on film music, although he had not both abandoned. On the other hand, a large community of fans and admirers of spaghetti westerns has grown exponentially over the years all over the world and FILIPPO DE MASI, the late composer's son, provides a proof in a memoir dedicated to his father, including a selection of a large collection of messages posted on the web, forums and magazines as well as testimonials from friends and associates (DE MASI 2006: 91–166). Furthermore, the same FILIPPO DE MASI has finished editing a documentary in which the father tells his career and the genesis of many of his film scores. An evidence that his soundtracks have become authentic “cults” lies in the fact that they are reprinted through specialized labels (Cam Records, Cinedelic, Beat Records) with a worldwide distribution, especially in the Asian market (DE MASI 2013). Since 2007, the festival *Cinevento De Masi* has taken place in Italy, collecting enthusiasts, filmmakers, musicians conferences on the figure and work of the composer (DE MASI 2013). In 2008 was released a monographic disc *Francesco De Masi. Ritratto di un Autore* (Sound Track Collector 2008) with several spaghetti westerns tracks and the label Beat Records has released so far the original soundtracks of nine western movies in a collection emblematically entitled *My Western Vision* to provide “an ‘American’ perspective in the sense that he has always loved to represent the western through an impressive symphonic music, employing a large orchestra to give voice to strong feelings” (DE MASI 2013).

As it turns out, MORRICONE and DE MASI, after all, have many points of contact with respect to their intentions and the fact that in

recent years the music of many other film composers—such as those mentioned in the second paragraph above—have been revalued, reinforces the need for further critical essays that would enrich the academic studies on spaghetti western music.

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Musical Labyrinths in Time: Alain Resnais' *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*

Marco Cosci

“so that I spent my time running from one window to the other to reassemble, to collect on a single canvas the intermittent, antipodean fragments of my fine, scarlet, ever-changing morning, and to obtain a comprehensive view and a continuous picture of it.”¹ (PROUST 2000: 268)

L'Année dernière à Marienbad (1961) is a complex film. For the best part of an hour and a half we witness an obsessive attempt at persuasion involving two characters who have neither names nor a history. Are we in the present or the past? Is it all happening in the mind or in reality?

Far from being the outcome of a casual procedure, the difficulties of interpretation posed by the film lie in the abundance of sense provided by the various strands of expression. Each detail of the production is so carefully supervised that it is impossible to establish the hierarchical relationships necessary for a unitary narration: images, words and music seem to proceed autonomously.

In its clear rejection of traditional realism *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* dispenses with the norms of traditional film going. The audio-viewer is confronted with a type of creation which has much in common with music theatre, and in fact on more than one occasion ALAIN RESNAIS referred to the film as an operatic production. He re-

1 « Si bien que je passais mon temps à courir d'une fenêtre à l'autre pour rapprocher, pour rentoiler les fragments intermittents et opposés de mon beau matin écarlate et versatile et en avoir une vue totale et un tableau continu. » (PROUST 1999: 521).

marked, for example, that “in *Marienbad* there is the structure of a musical poem, a hypnotic effect produced by repeated text, a recitative-like tone that corresponds to opera. One constantly has the feeling that the characters might stop speaking and continue their utterances singing”² (PRÉDAL 1968: 30). The association with opera is not only due to the particular use of the voice charged with inflections that rarely feature in cinema, nor to an approach to the text that favors a lyrical repetitiveness; the hotel and gardens in which the action takes place possess both a visual and an audio dimension, made up in each case of a verbal and a musical means of communication. *Marienbad* exemplifies a multimedia universe in which the network of *Wort-Ton-Drama* postulated by WAGNER emerges in all its potency, doing away with the congenital sense of alienation that generally characterizes the musical component of a film. RESNAIS creates an authentic opera based on the typical tripartition of dramatic levels. This does not mean that the film adopts a theatrical organization for the soundtrack; rather, that the music has to be recognized as a constituent element of the world of the film. Even dance music—however much it may seem to be a functional audio element—actually reveals the absolute marginality of the traditional notions of diegetic or non-diegetic music.

More in general, we can note that RESNAIS had a profound interest in the mechanisms by which memory functions, and investigated them above all through the soundtrack. The art of remembering is in fact a musical process: it takes place over time, it calls into play our emotions, and it activates processes of meaning which are labile but by no means secondary. His exploration of the complexity of memories led in two directions. At a first level *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* was conceived as a film concerned with the memory of cinema itself,

2 « Il y a dans *Marienbad* une structure de poème musical, une valeur incantatoire du texte qui se répète, un ton de récitatif qui correspond à l'Opéra. À tout instant on a l'impression que les personnages pourraient s'arrêter de parler et continuer leur texte en chantant. »

setting up a powerful intertextual filter linked to precise choices regarding instrumentation. Even though the screenplay provided by ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET was quite detailed, it was inevitable that RESNAIS' film should be a cinematographic reworking that differed significantly from the text as imagined and set down on paper by the writer, and one of the aspects which most clearly set director and author apart was undoubtedly the musical element (LEUTRAT 2000: 25). The most significant and recognizable change introduced by RESNAIS, of which there is no trace in the original screenplay, concerns the generalized use of music that is almost exclusively for organ. Not surprisingly right from the start he wished to commission OLIVIER MESSIAEN to produce the soundtrack, but the composer politely turned down the invitation, explaining he was not willing to compose in response to a preordained timing. After considering collaboration with XENAKIS, RESNAIS turned to a pupil of MESSIAEN, who was also the brother of the film's leading lady: FRANCIS SEYRIG. He asked him to write avant-garde music, although at some points in the film, and specifically in the recurrent *Waltz*, it had to be in the style of music from the twenties (PINGAUD 1967: 83). Not only is the organ the main instrument with which the director seeks to achieve an effect of aural continuity, in order to give "a beguiling, hypnotic impression, and where it [the organ] is freed from its associations with church"³, but it is also the means to conjure up the sort of fascination exerted by silent films (THOMAS 1989: 258). The constant dimension of the music for organ in fact recalls the accompaniment that was typical of the age of the silent movies and often involved an organ, not just the piano. The hypnotic continuity and sheer persistence that characterize the film's soundtrack go on to create an aura and a specifically musical sound world that are characteristic of that age.

At a second level, the music conveys the actual substance of the memories by means of the compositional technique that is quintes-

3 «une impression envoûtante, hypnotique, et où il échapperait à l'idée d'église»

entially associated with memory: the leitmotif. In this case, too, RESNAIS complicates matters. As everybody knows, one of the most notorious abuses of the leitmotif on its transfer to the cinema was the simplistic and often wholly pleonastic use made of WAGNER'S technique, reducing it "to a musical lackey who announces his master with an important air even though the eminent personage is clearly recognizable to everyone" (ADORNO & EISLER 1994: 6). In this film, to continue with the metaphor coined by ADORNO and EISLER, the perspective is actually inverted: we are surrounded by really rather ill-mannered musical butlers who simply do not bother to present their respective masters. One challenge facing the audio-viewer has to do with the problem of segmentation. Rather than being an autonomous thematic unit, each musical intervention can be made up of several recurring units which combine with and affect one another. A further challenge involves deciphering the respective semantic fields. The audio-viewer has to construct the complex network of meanings as the film progresses, verifying the plausibility of a specific interpretation time by time. The difficulty lies in identifying the segment in which a given musical fragment corresponds to the images or dialogues, recalling it later on, and recognizing the association each time so as ultimately to be able to grasp its meaning. Not only are we deprived of the standard exposition of the main themes during the credits (BIANCOROSSO 2013: 209–210), but the organization of the network which links the various motivic-thematic cells is constantly fraught with doubt. RESNAIS displays great awareness in confronting the lack of a precise denotative *Ur*-function for instrumental music: the leitmotif technique provides him with a fundamental compositional device for setting in motion processes of semanticization. He can be seen attempting to assign a specific semantic field to a particular musical element, in order not only to relate two visual segments which are underscored by the same music, but to set up autonomously, at the musical level, a specific meaning that can encounter, or on occasions clash with, the meanings asserted by the image and the words.

So what is the music able to tell us about what went on in Marienbad, and how does it help us to get our bearings in the meanders of its multimedia labyrinth? And again, at a broader level, to what extent does the scope of a tradition that is so firmly established as that of Western art music influence the approach of a leading exponent of the French New Wave?

Film Music Within The Film

The film begins with a series of grey title cards with black lettering seen above loud, tumultuous music in the style of a Hollywood film. However, only the first five placards, giving the names first of the two producers and then of the cast, are accompanied by this orchestral music. After reaching a climax with trumpets and cymbals well to the fore the piece ends, just as if this was the conclusion of a blockbuster. The silence that follows is perfectly synchronized with the appearance of the next placard giving the title of the film. A man's voice begins a long monologue, indistinct at first, and the organ enters immediately. In this clear distinction of timbre we begin to perceive two quite distinct filmic registers: the first, represented by the orchestral music, is dramatic—in the sense of the representation of a drama—based on the interaction between the actors/characters according to the narrative canons formulated by fiction films; the second, featuring the organ, is associated with the components of the screenplay and is independent of the superficial level of the articulation of genre. The film is seen to be an interweaving but also, particularly in this case, a combination and permutation of elements endowed with three salient dimensions: image, word and music. Precisely when we come to one of the last placards giving the names of the sound engineers, the equilibrium between musical and verbal components begins to falter, to the detriment of the latter: the voice, heard again in a loop reciting the initial portion of text, is swallowed

up in the silence out of which it emerged by means of a fade, although this does not affect the music channel.

The music that follows on from the orchestral overture creates a fracture in terms not only of timbre but also of compositional technique. For this first lengthy segment which runs from the placard announcing the title of the film to the scene set in a room where a play is being acted, SEYRIG composed three different pieces all featuring three-part polyphonic writing. In the third (ex. 1) he composed the parts in imitation in triple counterpoint, making it possible to edit the music according to the various possible organizations of the parts, obtaining different results from the various ordering strategies of the same material.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three staves. The notation is complex, featuring a variety of note values, rests, and accidentals. The first staff begins with a circled 'No. 12' in the left margin. The music is written in a style that suggests a high degree of polyphony and counterpoint, with many notes beamed together and frequent use of sharps and naturals. The staves are connected by a single brace on the left side. The handwriting is clear and legible, with some annotations like 'p' and 'f' indicating dynamics.

Example 1. FRANCIS SEYRIG, *L'année dernière à Marienbad*, No. 12, mm. 1–32.

In this case the medium of music almost serves as a meta-language which, while furthering its own purposes, highlights the combinatory principle which underlies the whole film. In fact, starting from a limited number of words and spaces, RESNAIS constructs a film based on the constant sensation that everything that passes across the screen has already been seen, or heard. The audio-viewer constantly has the sensations of *déjà-vu* and *déjà-entendu*.

Precisely when the piece of music we have just described ends, a tracking shot interrupts the coming and going in the hotel corridors to show a play being acted: on the stage a man succeeds, after a degree of resistance, in seducing a woman. The curtain comes down and the overture that accompanied the opening credits is heard once again with the ovation from the spectators. The orchestral music thus delimits this first macro-sequence, which contains and condenses the processes that have been set in motion in the film in terms of both form and contents. On one hand we have been shown, above all in the aural dimension, the combinatory processes which are to inform the audiovisual structures; and on the other, the final exchanges between the actors in the play sum up the relational dynamics that link the two characters indicated in the screenplay as X (G. ALBERTAZZI) and A (D. SEYRIG). In the film's final sequence, after A has once again been stalling, the two leave the hotel during a performance of this same play, bringing a sequence that seemed doomed to go on and on forever full circle.

The opening piece of music serves not only to delineate the boundaries of the introductory programmatic segment but also to problematize the experiential codes associated with film viewing in the traditional sense, which are here called into question. The director seeks to show the mechanisms of signification which underlie the musical component in filmic audio vision, in two distinct orders. At the more immediate level a piece of this kind requires a type of orchestral music in the late Romantic style, in line with the classic Hollywood blockbuster. An orchestral *crescendo* of this type, led by the

strings and sustained by repeated cymbal clashes, could perfectly well stand in for one of MAX STEINER'S orchestral themes, and its meaning would be in no way altered. Music is used precisely because it is able to conjure up, even before it is introduced into the audiovisual grid, a certain sphere of meaning which has been sedimented in the collective imagination thanks to the use of certain standard compositional expedients. The semantic field that can be related to "sentimental passion" is indeed activated in this case by means of stylistic devices that have been consolidated in the classic American cinema, but clearly its roots go back to the European tradition of music theatre which was the common background of composers such as STEINER, KORNGOLD, and WEILL. From the viewpoint of the collective cinematographic imagination, which ROBBE-GRILLET goes out of his way to evoke in the screenplay, and which in all likelihood was also shared by RESNAIS, a piece composed and orchestrated in that manner links up with the tradition of Hollywood and hence with the dramatic and sentimental sphere associated with this musical typology. Nonetheless, when we know that SEYRIG described the opening piece as "a parody of an 1860 Overture"⁴ (PORCILE 1964: 57), it is clear that the composer was working against the background of the late Romantic musical tradition rather than that of the classic American cinema, even though this too undoubtedly had its origins in that tradition.

The type of sentimentalism being pursued here can be related to the processes set in motion by OFFENBACH in his brand of operetta (to remain in the time frame indicated by SEYRIG). In its abundant sentimentality this genre pursued an effect of alienation which was directly opposed to the involvement sought in grand opera. The same alienating effect, with a view to keeping one's distance vis à vis the subject being represented, is obtained no longer because operating within a light-hearted and comic genre such as operetta, but precisely because the context is that of European *cinéma d'auteur* which has lit-

4 «une parodie d'une ouverture 1860»

tle or nothing to do with such redolent emphasis. Moreover, this discrepancy between an exacerbated musical sentimentalism and genre is brought out by the brusque juxtaposition with the piece for organ which follows, beginning predictably enough on the appearance of the placard bearing the film's title. Thus here we have film music of the sort that reinforces the emotional highpoint reached by the spectators of the play as they finally witness the much awaited union. In the dual mirroring of the two actors on stage and the protagonists in the film, on one hand, and of the spectators and audio-viewers on the other, the orchestral intervention reveals norms of viewing which are taken for granted, attributing to this type of music a function which goes against the perceptive conventions it is supposed to evoke. In fact the redefinition of roles between observed and observer involves the awareness of the subsidiary role of the latter; the fact that the observer sees her/himself represented on screen exposes the discrepancy in genre between filmic context and the semantic field activated by the music. The audio-viewer is obliged to become more aware of her/his position of subordination also because, while the orchestral music is playing resoundingly, the visual and verbal dimensions are frozen in fake stills—the actors seen in fixed postures—which suspend the time of the action. In this way, by introducing the element of statuary immobility—an element that will recur several times in the course of the film—the complete extraneousness of that type of musical intervention vis à vis the spatial-temporal dimension of the image is affirmed definitively and in the most drastic way possible. The music only belongs to the timeframe of the audio-viewer, who thus stands back from the contemplated object, rejecting the strategies of consumption and signification that have been codified by the American film industry. Instead of emotional involvement there is now a distancing: in this way, the amplificatory and inclusive character of the musical component is overturned, and it becomes exclusive.

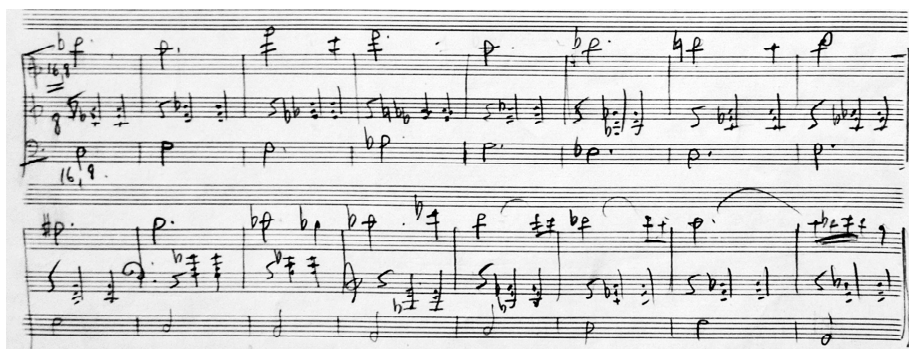
Dance Music

One of the most celebrated pieces of music in the film is undoubtedly the *Marienbad Waltz*. Its success reflects its innate tunefulness, making it the most memorable composition in SEYRIG'S score. It is also one of the least ambiguous, since at first sight it can be taken as a simple illustration in sound of what is happening on the screen. It first synchronously appears with the movements of the actors during the ball sequence. Although it is not a diegetic piece in the traditional sense, the fact that the castle of Marienbad has no specific musical dimension of its own makes it inevitable that the waltz tends to be assimilated into the narration (WINTERS 2010: 236–238). In the form of incidental music (as the term is used in opera), it becomes an authentic aural memory. It first appears in the ballroom; just seconds before the piece ends, when X and A (in the present) have finished dancing and are standing near the buffet, the melody bursts out again inside the woman's head, a sort of heightened memory which she projects into the bedroom. With the woman obviously deep in thought a brief fragment of the waltz is heard with a muffled timbre, as if coming from far away, like an echo of a pleasant memory which ends with a muted chuckle. In the audio-visualization of her memory the woman remembers having had an experience—connected with a broken heel—which the man reminds her of, and above all she remembers having heard this piece before, and dancing to it with X. The woman is sucked irresistibly into the spiral of persuasion precisely by means of the re-elaboration of a musical memory that produces an audiovisual short circuit.

The *Marienbad Waltz* displays a ternary structure (Intro + ABA). Section A is the materialization of an actual aural memory, linked to the meeting in the ballroom, belonging to the woman and hence also to the audio-viewer, obliging both to establish a precise correspondence between present and past.

Section B (ex. 2), and in particular the bass, becomes an interpretative tool available only to the film's audience. It is crucial for recon-

structuring the subterranean network of meanings in which the nature of the events shown on the screen often proves problematic and elusive. The sequence of notes played on the organ pedal part is a structural element linked to the meeting of the two protagonists, which took place in the past and is destined to go on in the present; it takes the form of a sort of *basso ostinato* that can be combined with the spheres of meaning expressed by the other musical levels.



Example 2. FRANCIS SEYRIG, *L'année dernière à Marienbad*, Valse, mm. 33–48.

The *Waltz* always features these two components: on one hand section A returns as an aural memory, representing a thought, or perhaps merely a doubt, concerning the union that lingers in the woman's mind; on the other, the series in the bass orients the meaning in the subsequent turning points, marking the main stages of A's subjection to X. The waltz, as music for a pair to dance to, is the allegorical figure which symbolically expresses the meeting of the two protagonists, a meeting which can only take place in the presence of common parameters of space and time. This particular type of music, with a set rhythm and movements, expresses the need to accept the conventions in order to achieve a proper synchronization of two individuals dancing *in time*. The idea of the dance as an agreement between two parties returns in the very last sequence, in which the woman finally decides to go off with X. In fact the last two occurrences of music in the film take up again the series that is irrevocably

linked to the musical harmony that characterizes the protagonists during the ball. These two pieces are separated by the images of the play, so that in this film, too, RESNAIS emphasizes the cyclical nature of time. The series of the *Waltz* becomes a structural element covering all the various levels of stratification of the polyphonic texture. It reappears several times, both at the original pitch and on different levels of transposition. However, it is no longer just a *basso ostinato*: at each repetition it moves, first to the central part and then to the upper part, thus becoming a melody in its own right that is not linked to the occasion of the ball. The sense of circularity evoked by the images of the play is also conveyed quite clearly by the music, since the constant progress towards the surface of the contrapuntal texture keeps to the writing in triple counterpoint which characterized the *ars combinatoria* of the initial sound.

Editing Using Music

Once SEYRIG had abandoned tonality, one of the options open to him was serial composition. While he did not adopt the twelve tone technique systematically or exclusively, on some occasions—as in the series of the *Marienbad Waltz*—the exact recurrence of pitches in the original or transposed version becomes a linking factor. In other cases the composer focused not so much on the exact succession of certain note sequences as on a perceptive allusion triggered by certain modules of intervals, modifying their concatenation by means of repetitions, variations or interpolations.

This process of linear transformation is particularly evident in a series of musical fragments based on groups of pitches which revolve around a specific event: X's sudden appearance in A's bedroom. After a first occurrence when it is only hinted at, the series of notes is heard during the imaginary murder of A (ex. 3). This is a particularly enigmatic passage: RESNAIS' editing de-structures any possible relationship of cause and effect, including the relationship between X and

M (A's current partner), seen in the room with the former near the door and the latter the window. The music presents an authentic twelve tone row, synchronized with the shot of X staring threateningly, and ends a moment before M shoots A. However, the shock at the murder of the protagonist is immediately attenuated by various shots showing her body in a series of different positions, all in a profound, religious silence. From the last shot, showing her closer to in a medium shot, the music returns, stating the same series in retrograde motion. The end of this new statement coincides with a wide shot which links M to X and A, who are in a corridor next door. X describes the exact position of the woman's arms, concluding that this cannot be the right ending because he needs her alive.



Example 3. FRANCIS SEYRIG, *L'année dernière à Marienbad*, Nos. 84–85.

The music turns back in on itself, cancelling an event that is tragic and above all has not really taken place, from the time span of the actual events. The order of the notes takes on its full importance when the serial retrograde motion becomes the means not only for subverting the general order of things but also, in the choice of musical instruments, a cinematographic operation comparable to editing. The music serves to remove something to which it had attributed a time span. The specular image of the music, represented by the retrograde motion, provides an effective reconfiguration in aural terms of the dialectic between real and virtual which characterizes the visual dimension of the hotel at Marienbad. In the third and last sequence we clearly see how the meaning can be profoundly modified by the way in which the pitches are disposed along the temporal axis: A appears

wearing the same peignoir decked with white feathers, and the organ and orchestra blend into a single metalinguistic device. The series is synchronized with the shot of X mounting the steps and ends with the camera backing away, showing the man approaching the bed where A is lying terrorized. The series is repeated and modified obsessively as the tension is heightened by a progressive rhythmic diminution. The notes are largely the same but the sequence of intervals is modified by the inversion of some of the intervals or the permutation of certain notes. X refuses to accept the version whereby the meeting in the room was an act of violence: he believes that A was consenting. Then the story is rewritten in a point of view shot of X in which he becomes the director of his own actions. As the director, he shoots the images again, and now they are accompanied by the orchestral piece heard at the opening, conventionally used to highlight the emotional climax in a film: a music that has to support the new version of the events, transforming them into a wholly sentimental episode. Once again the music condenses the essence of RESNAIS' multimedia operation in which, starting from a few sparse elements, new meanings are constantly constructed, generating that continuous sense of bewilderment mixed with familiarity that characterizes the film. The only hope for finding one's way in the musical labyrinths of *Marienbad* is to arrive at a total "audio vision" by reassembling the many intermittent fragments.

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Ludwig: Consonant Music in a Dissonant Life

Pascal Vandelanoitte

Visconti, Ludwig, Wagner

It is often said that LUCHINO VISCONTI constructs his films as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which all the arts are united and the relationship between art and society is substantial (SCHÜLER 1995). Art is taking up a social role, as catalyst or precursor. It is no coincidence that a Wagnerian term is frequently used to characterize VISCONTI'S films: opera was near to his heart and plays a role in many of his films (CHION 1995). In the choice of pre-existent music as well as in the film scores written for the film, he mostly uses late romantic music by VERDI, WAGNER, BRUCKNER, and MAHLER (VILLANI 2008). Music and opera not only serve as inspiration or illustration in VISCONTI'S films. The music is often synched precisely with camera, montage and/or acting (see e.g. PREMUDA 1995) and gets a signifying character in the development of the story and the film. Moreover, it often actively plays an essential intertextual/intermedial role in interpretation.

VISCONTI filmed *Ludwig* (1972) as the third part of his so-called "German trilogy", following *La Caduta Degli Dei* (1969) and *Morte a Venezia* (1971). *Ludwig* focuses on the decline of Ludwig II, king of Bavaria from 1864 to 1886, who ascended the throne at the age of eighteen, full of romantic ambition, but could not realize his dreams due to a lack of vigor and social and political changes. The film's visual splendor is striking, but makes it look like an empty mausoleum for a long gone king, as if VISCONTI created homage to a waning aristocrat who isolated himself in a crucial historical period. Yet, looking at the figure of Richard Wagner—whom Ludwig patronized—and the use of classical music, it becomes clear that VISCONTI is idolizing neither

Ludwig nor WAGNER, but takes on a critical attitude towards both historical figures.

In *Ludwig*, most music is by WAGNER. Fragments of SCHUMANN, mostly out of *Kinderszenen* (“Scenes from Childhood”, op. 15), are used in an illustrative way. *Kinderszenen* is a cycle of thirteen pieces for piano solo, echoing remembrances of childhood. All pieces bear a title that refers to a specific anecdote or memory: *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen* (“Of Foreign Lands and Peoples”), *Kind im Einschlummern* (“Child Falling Asleep”), etc. *Kinderszenen* is used appropriately in the film when Ludwig and Elisabeth meet each other for the first time in five years: Ludwig is only eighteen; their collective memories date back to childhood. The second time it is also associated with Ludwig and Elisabeth. The fragments of *Kinderszenen* follow the dialogue: *Wichtige Begebenheit* (“An Important Event”) at the moment Elisabeth asks Ludwig if the rumor that he is still a virgin is true; *Kuriose Geschichte* (“A Curious Story”) when she talks about her wanderings around Europe (BUTTET 1990). The third time, we hear *Der Dichter Spricht* (“The Poet Speaks”) at the moment Ludwig’s mother converts to Catholicism and Otto, Ludwig’s brother, turns away from her. The music stresses the loss of youthful harmony and the distance between mother and son.

Music by OFFENBACH adds cynicism. The two fragments in *Ludwig* come out of Viennese operetta and are coupled with lightheartedness and superficiality. The first fragment, from *La vie parisienne* (“Parisian life”), is played by Wagner on piano when Ludwig visits him at home. Wagner adds the bitter remark: “Germans love this music, not mine”. The second time the fragment comes out of *La pèrichole*, about a viceroy who wants a street singer to become his mistress. We hear this in the background when Lila von Buliowski visits Ludwig on his request, but is incited by his entourage to seduce him—an unsuccessful attempt to cheer up Ludwig’s life.

The music by WAGNER is used in an intertextual way, not only as an illustration or comment, but in dialogue with the story, the film

and Visconti's look on LUDWIG and WAGNER. The blending of music and film is enhanced by featuring Wagner as a central character in the first half of the film. WAGNER wanted his music to emphasize the mission of art in society, without compromising the purity and independence of music as a form of expression (DEATHRIDGE 1996). Whereas WAGNER'S intention was artistically ambitious and contained social aspirations, VISCONTI'S approach is more resigned, distant: art is a goal, but VISCONTI also acknowledges its limited power and used the interplay of different art forms not to preach a revolution but to outline its downturn (ISHAGHPOUR 2006).

Both Ludwig and Wagner had to operate within the historical context of the second half of the 19th century, a turning point between monarchy/aristocracy and democracy. This dichotomy takes a central place in *Ludwig*. Not only is Wagner trying to strike a balance between the financial dependence of patronage and the urge to create and execute freely. Ludwig is trapped between his social and political roles as a king in a changing public climate and his wish to live life as a dream; he is stuck between dream and reality, between his kingdom and the kingdom of his dreams. These discords mark the transition from (late) romance to (pre)modernism, away from privileges based on birth, evolving towards rights based on merit. The growing democratization not only meant that Ludwig's power became limited, but also that in the people's view it was no longer a royal privilege to appoint a court composer. Thus the controversy and public opposition to WAGNER'S presence had already started before he arrived in Munich. After all, how could the King of Bavaria appoint a composer from outside of Bavaria, while there was so much native talent at hand? WAGNER was doomed from the start to remain an outsider in the conservative Bavarian environment. Wagner had two battles to fight: first, justifying the fact that he had come from outside, second, reconcile his grand musical and stage requirements with his financial and social realities.

The contrast between the characters serves as a pointer that both Ludwig's quest and Wagner's ideals are doomed to fail. These reflections become solid statements when we look at the specific intermedial use of classical music in the film. Whereas the music by SCHUMANN and OFFENBACH function as cheeky comments, both the choice and placement of fragments of WAGNER'S operas are delicate and precise, and the music becomes the critical voice the film mostly lacks on narrative and visual levels. WAGNER'S music in the film does not only symbolize the arrival of a new social and political area but also illustrates Ludwig's shortage of decisiveness and lack of sense of reality. As such, it is used as part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* where different disciplines meet and reinforce each other.

***Lohengrin* or the False Fairytale Prince**

LUDWIG'S admiration for WAGNER'S music started in his teens: already in 1858 he read WAGNER'S theoretical publication *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (The Artwork of the Future) on art and musical drama. At the age of sixteen (in 1861) LUDWIG attended *Lohengrin*, a moment he recalled as decisive in his later correspondence with WAGNER (MÜNSTER 1986).

WAGNER based the story of *Lohengrin* on "Parzival" and "Lohengrin" and the legend of the Holy Grail. Elsa is falsely accused by Ortrud, rival to the throne, of having killed her brother Gottfried to reign over Brabant herself, but she is saved by the Knight of the Swan who marries her on condition that he can remain anonymous. The Knight of the Swan becomes Duke of Brabant, but is forced to reveal his identity as that of Lohengrin, son of Parsifal, King of the Holy Grail. Because of this revelation he must return, but before disappearing he manages to free Gottfried, who had been transformed into a swan by Ortrud. Lohengrin can ascend the throne, but Elsa loses her beloved Lohengrin and dies grief-stricken.

In the film the theme of the opera is used as a leitmotif in both story and music. Ludwig identifies to such an extent with the figure of Lohengrin that during his engagement with Sophie he usually calls her Elsa. The opera, however, is also about parting: Elsa will not live to be a wife and dies of grief. Ludwig's nickname for his love is an ill-fated one. The music is connected with disillusionment (BACON 1998). The overture from *Lohengrin* first resounds when Ludwig, this is his first royal deed, sends his clerks to fetch Wagner; the second time when Ludwig tells Wagner that he wants to postpone his marriage to Sophie. The third time we hear an aria, sung hesitantly by Sophie in the presence of Ludwig. Not only the choice of the aria is meaningful—"Einsam in trüben Tagen" (Lonely, in troubled days I prayed to the Lord, my most heartfelt grief I poured out in prayer), but the sound as well. Sophie's singing sounds remote and seems to distance itself even further, as if with every false note, the gap between Ludwig and Sophie increases. The painful grimace of Ludwig is quite significant.

Every use of *Lohengrin* is linked to imminent farewell and the shattering of Ludwig's illusions as king, patron of the arts, and husband-to-be: the forthcoming and inescapable banishment of Wagner from Munich, the chasm between Ludwig and Sophie. These occurrences make Ludwig even lonelier, intensifying the image of Ludwig as a lonesome Knight of the Swan. But Ludwig is no Knight of the Swan who withdraws after a successful mission—securing the throne and creating political stability. He is no statesman and leaves politics to the ministers and the army; he is no protector of Bavaria but fails to secure its throne and status as an independent entity in Bismarck's German Empire. No Lohengrin, but a failed fairytale prince whose dreams even get to feel cold and dreary in the course of time.

***Tannhäuser*: To Love or Not (To Love)**

This contrast between dream and reality is also apparent in VISCONTI'S use of the location of the cavern of Venus that is featured in *Tannhäuser*, based on German legends. Tannhäuser is an artist who struggles with emotion and reason. He loves two women: Venus, who gives him sensual love, and Elisabeth, who gives him pure love but limited passion. At a singing contest he praises the sensuality of love and confesses that he has been in the cavern of Venus—equivalent to idolatry. Elisabeth can only subdue the anger of the crowd by sending Tannhäuser on a pilgrimage to the Pope in Rome to ask for forgiveness. His sin, however, is not redeemed, and when he comes back a broken man, he immediately turns to Venus again. However, right before passing away, he calls out for Elisabeth, upon which God forgives him.

LUDWIG had a replica constructed of the cavern of Venus at the castle of Linderhof. The cave was originally intended as a place to stage WAGNER'S operas, but as it turned out its acoustics were totally unsuitable. LUDWIG frequently demanded to navigate him around the lake of the cave as a Lohengrin in a swan-shaped boat. In the film, the cave is the meeting place between the actor Kainz and Ludwig. At the request of the king, Kainz travelled to his castle and VISCONTI turns Kainz into a failed puppet who incarnates instead of impersonates the theatrical and operatic characters. In WAGNER'S opera the cavern of Venus is a place of imagination, sensual love, sexual freedom, an escape from prevailing morality. In the film, emphasized by the cold lighting, the cave is a chilly place where two people can hardly understand each other, where not the meeting but the distance between two persons is accentuated, where the encounter is not spontaneous, but staged (PORTELLI 2008). Ludwig, a lone man feeding the swans in an artificial cave, turns into a dramatic figure, a lonely individual who has lost touch with reality and with his heart. He does not dare to live his feelings—neither pure love, nor sensual love.

VISCONTI also uses music from *Tannhäuser*. At various times we hear the melody of Wolfram's song: "O du mein holder Abendstern" (Oh thou, my gracious evening star) from the second scene of the third and final act. This melancholic melody was not randomly chosen by VISCONTI. The aria is situated at the end of the opera. *Tannhäuser* seems not to return from his pilgrimage to Rome; Elisabeth withers away and is likely to die of grief. Wolfram, who also worships Elisabeth, sings how the Evening Star (Venus) shows the way out of the dark valley (the earth):

Like a portent of death, twilight shrouds the earth and envelops the valley in its sable robe; the soul that yearns for those heights dreads to take its dark and awful flight. There you shine, o fairest of the stars, and shed your gentle light from afar; your friendly beam penetrates the twilight gloom and points the way out from the valley. O my fair evening star, I always gladly greeted thee: from a heart that never betrayed its faith greet her when she passes, when she soars above this mortal vale to become a blessed angel in heaven!

We hear this cry for deliverance from earthly suffering twice through a music box. The first time when Otto, Ludwig's brother, leaves the front during the war against Prussia to visit Ludwig. Ludwig reacts indifferently to Otto's testimonies from the war they are losing, and points to a mobile at the ceiling with the quarters of the moon, moving to this melody from *Tannhäuser*. Ludwig says to Otto: "I do not want this war." Through using this specific music, VISCONTI suggests that Ludwig wants to know very little of worldly affairs and tries to reach for heaven. VISCONTI makes the music box blend into an orchestral version of the same melody, until the scene is shown in which Ludwig sees the servant Volk bathing nude in the lake. Once inside, Ludwig (allegedly homosexual), kneeling, murmurs repeatedly: "Help me, help me!" A battle between emotion and reason is unfolding.

At the end of the film, Ludwig, imprisoned in his castle in Berg, listens to the aforementioned music box again. The room he is locked in has a spyhole through which they keep an eye on him; to eat he is only permitted dessert cutlery but no knife. In short, he is deprived of

his freedom. This situation too asks for a cry for deliverance. But this time round, only the music box is used and the mobile with the moon is absent. Not the moon, but Ludwig goes in rounds (LIANDRAT-GUIGUES 1999). A projection into eternity?

The melody of the aria is used three more times. Once in the cavern of Venus when Kainz encounters Ludwig who is at the time already totally forlorn. The second time the theme is used off-screen. Ludwig and Kainz ride at night through the snow on a sledge and Kainz (in voice-off) recites from *Marion Delorme* by VICTOR HUGO: “The peaks quiver, the weak bridge trembles, but the hunter walks a difficult path with a steady heart. With bold steps, he crosses on the treacherous glacier. Over there, where spring never comes and branches never dare grow.” In the next scene, Kainz refuses to continue acting on order and seals the segregation between them. We hear the melody a last time when Elisabeth attempts to visit Ludwig in the megalomaniac but unfinished and apparently desolate castle of Neuschwanstein. In these scenes as well, the music underscores Ludwig’s emotional isolation, his lack of trust in his feelings towards Elisabeth, Kainz and others, and finally his desire to become an angel amongst planets and stars.

Tristan and Isolde: Love after Death?

The opera *Tristan und Isolde* (Tristan and Isolde), based on a Celtic legend of the doomed love between Tristan and Isolde, is also used. Both lovers are reunited and separated several times and only finally united in death. The fragment in *Ludwig* is an instrumental version of “Liebesnacht” (Night of Love) in the second act. Accompanying the first physical union of Tristan and Isolde, the text runs as follows:

Descend, o Night of love, grant oblivion that I may live; take me up into your bosom, release me from the world! [...] Thus might we die, that together, ever one, without end. Never waking, never fearing namelessly enveloped in love, given up to each other, to live only for love! Thus would we die, that together -

ever one, without end; never waking, never fearing, namelessly enveloped in love, given up to ourselves to live only for love!

This melody of the Night of Love already contains references to the “Liebestod” (“love death”) (MILLINGTON 2006), the unity in love after death that finally unites both lovers at the end of the opera. It is featured for the first time when Wagner (and with him his greed) enters the film. The music starts when in the vocal version the phrase “Thus we might die” is intoned (BACON 1998). It is a theme that predicts an infinite devotion to each other, but by carrying an echo of the forthcoming Liebestod, it is also the harbinger of its impossibility in this life. A second time we hear the melody immediately after this introductory scene. Wagner’s conductor Von Bülow plays the melody on the piano, alone in the living room of Wagner’s residence. At the same time, Von Bülow’s wife Cosima announces to Wagner in the bedroom that she is carrying his child. By making Von Bülow, the deceived husband, play the music, it forms a sharp contrast to the idyll of the night of love of Tristan and Isolde.

The third time this musical theme accompanies a horse ride at night time by Ludwig and Elisabeth—who are Tristan and Isolde in their own right, obviously yearning for each other but never experiencing their night of love. Here, the music can be read as a comment on Ludwig’s double attitude: at that time he rather stays with his cousin in Bad Ischl while Wagner is waiting in Munich. Appointing Wagner as court composer and giving him the necessary facilities and financial support is a matter of state importance to Ludwig, but it has to wait. He prefers to dwell in his pleasures with Elisabeth even though he knows the affair is dead-ended and he will never be able to live the love for his married niece. The fourth time the music comments once more the doomed relationship between Ludwig and Elisabeth: the music starts when the servant Weber begins his testimony towards the end of the film. Weber testifies that Ludwig erupted in tears after Elisabeth’s attempt to visit him in Neuschwanstein and

Ludwig's refusal to receive her. The melodrama is complete: Tristan does not dare to face his Isolde anymore.

The Ring of the Nibelung: The Valkyrie

In an unexpected place, a small reference to WAGNER's grand cycle *Die Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung) is intertwined. In the second half of the film, a drinking evening from Ludwig's servants attended by Ludwig glides into an orgy scene, but Ludwig is too impotent to partake. Everyone is sloshed and drunken and some men sing a popular melody accompanied by accordion. After the ending of the song, the music blends into solo accordion, playing the end melody of *The Valkyrie*, the second part of WAGNER's tetralogy (BUTTET 1990).¹ "Wotan's Farewell" is the moment when the god Wotan banishes his daughter Brünnhilde from the Gods' realm. A striking parallel to Ludwig who is gradually "banned" from his own throne and will also be demoted to an ordinary man. In the pub, we even see a silhouette of a dead tree, referring to the tree in *The Valkyrie* with Wotan's sword Nothung in the trunk that could only be pulled out by Siegmund.

Also significant is that this is the only piece of music by WAGNER that is used on screen in the presence of Ludwig (except for Sophie's small catastrophic attempt to sing an aria by WAGNER). And apart from the *Siegfried Idyll*, played in front of Wagner and Cosima (see below), all other music of WAGNER is used off screen. Neither the viewer nor Ludwig see Wagner at work in the film, none witness Wagner's creative power directly. The only time we see Ludwig listen to WAGNER's music, it is played on the popular accordion and instead of the royal robes of fur and expensive fabrics; Ludwig is dressed in civilian clothes. No glorious theatrical setting, but a dark tavern in drunken hours.

¹ BUTTET set us on the right track by mentioning that music from "The Valkyrie" is used in this scene, without identifying it.

Instrumental Music from Wagner

Two other pieces from WAGNER appear in the film. At Cosima's anniversary, Wagner surprises her when musicians play a new short symphonic piece. The *Siegfried Idyll* was effectively composed for COSIMA'S birthday in 1870. The cheerful piece, echoing a lullaby, was also dedicated by WAGNER to Siegfried, their son, named after the eponymous hero of WAGNER'S *The Ring of the Nibelung*. VISCONTI uses this on screen, in a scene similar to the actual event on Cosima's birthday (BLUNT 1973). Significantly, this is the only cheerful piece of music in the entire film, which suggests that only Wagner and Cosima are truly happy. Ludwig is not present at that moment.

The other piece, the *Elegy in A flat Major*, also composed for COSIMA, is intertwined as a leitmotif throughout the film. This composition is built on a strong contrast between free, lyrical high notes and a slightly dissonant bass accord, as if a dark cloud might cover the sun any moment—and VISCONTI uses it appropriately. It resounds during the opening titles and the beginning of the first scene. VISCONTI uses the same clip again when WAGNER, after the scandal with Cosima, is given the royal order to leave Munich. The same melody sounds when Elisabeth in vain tries to visit Ludwig in Neuschwanstein, and it is repeated a last time at the end of the film when we see a close-up of the drowned Ludwig. Here, the melody blends into the prelude from *Tristan und Isolde*, as the final title screens close the film.

Rise and Fall

WAGNER'S heroes are mythological ones, out of time and space, untied to a historical context. This does not mean that WAGNER'S operas are beyond time and space, but they can be interpreted as such at first level. WAGNER used mythological or epic stories independently of a concrete historical context but did use them to analyze social relations or sketch visions of the future, for example that there would

come an end to the comfortable privileges of the bourgeoisie (CONRAD 1999). Ludwig, however, gets stuck on the first narrative level and identifies himself too literally with the imaginary heroes in WAGNER's operas (LAGNY 2002). He sees himself as the King of the Swan Lohengrin, he calls Sophie Elsa, and castle Neuschwanstein is literally "a new castle for a swan". That *Lohengrin* (which was premiered in 1850) is actually a story about a king who unites a fragmented kingdom eludes Ludwig. However, in those decades it was very applicable to the fragmented city-states of Germany and conceivably LUDWIG and Bavaria as second largest principality (after Prussia) might have played a greater role in Germany's unification.

The fact that in *Ludwig* voices sing only one time (apart from the desperate attempt by Sophie to sing WAGNER) enforces this critical regard towards LUDWIG. Only the soldiers in the orgy scene sing popular songs. The other musical pieces are almost all used off-screen and either purely played on the piano, or instrumental. We do not see nor hear WAGNER'S operas as such; they are reduced to background versions. The scarce integration of music even takes place at moderate volume, as if the music is bound and envelopes the characters even further inside their own thoughts without being able to bring them to life (CHION 1983). This reduction of music to a seemingly side note also has its impact on the interpretation of the figure of WAGNER. Not only does VISCONTI portray him as an opportunist and a greedy man, caring more about ordering expensive curtains and furnishings for his home than effectively living up to his ideals. The way his music is used also means that VISCONTI critically judges both the figures of Wagner and Ludwig.

The image of Wagner as sketched by VISCONTI is also a reflection of Ludwig's fate. What happens to Wagner also befalls Ludwig: financial constraints—money collecting for the construction of castles, a prominent topic in the film—resulting in the waning of his creative urge, his disappearing from the political and social stages, and finally,

like Wagner, becoming an iconic image. Black-and-white: Wagner as the megalomaniac bombast, Ludwig as the melancholic dreamer.

The music in *Ludwig* is used to contrast with Ludwig's inaction and adds a cautionary note to Ludwig's illusions. The musical fragments from WAGNER describe in specific ways that his dream castles turn out to be castles made of air. Behind the apparent grandeur of Ludwig's pompous environment only emptiness is to be found.

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