MUSIC IN CINEMA

FILM AND CULTURE

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MUSIC IN CINEMA

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To Michel Marie

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THIS BOOK was translated during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021, when research libraries were closed. Accordingly, some references in the notes are incomplete, for which I apologize.

For their material and moral support, I wish to thank Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Liz Weis, Gill Anderson, Martin Marks, Daniel Goldmark, Estela Ibáñez-Garcia, Corey Creekmur, the wise Jennifer Crewe, my dear wife Pam Keeley, and my brilliant and generous friend Michel Chion.

PREFACE

MUSIC IN cinema, and not only "film music."

The original, French edition of this book appeared in 1995, the centenary of cinema (for which the prize it received from the French Union of Film Critics particularly touched me). Its title highlighted my desire to break new ground: I treat *all* music heard in a film, and not only how music transforms a film but the ways film transforms music. This complex subject was a great challenge to assume. Without sacrificing the dimensions that others have already written about, the book attempts to bring the topic back to its foundation and to my title—to write not only about music, but also about cinema.

The cinema is a place where music, whether made especially for the film or taken from a preexisting source, becomes something else, since it works as part of an ensemble, a greater whole. For this reason I have given more attention than usual to directors, who are the ones who oversee this ensemble.

The subject of music in cinema is so vast that I could not hope to treat it in an exhaustive and encyclopedic way; such an undertaking would take years of research and an entire team of authors. Nevertheless, I have taken as broad an approach as possible. The problem with an expansive view is that you risk dissatisfaction by not getting into the

weeds as more limited studies can do; the reward, on the other hand, is that with the big picture you can hope to open new paths of inquiry.

Film music often provokes passionate debate. I have deemed it useful to state my own arguments in an introductory chapter, instead of leaving them implicit or scattered throughout. I do not seek to impose them on the reader, but appeal to reflection, observation, and reasoning. In other words, it is up to the reader to decide.

When I first wrote this book, I organized it so as to reflect this position. Accordingly, the 1995 edition was divided into two parts:

I: History of film music. Four chapters trace historical perspectives that I hope are new, particularly for more recent periods. I propose historical periodization that takes aesthetic factors into account, and isn't the simple reflection of technical change.

II: Theory and criticism. In three chapters I consider music as element and means, as world, and as subject, metaphor, and model (music can serve in all these ways within a single film). Here too, the book aspires to an open pluralism, and tries not to minimize or obscure contradictions.

The French edition of 2019, which provided the text for this translation, added a third section, which consists of brief analyses of music in sixty films that represent the history and concepts outlined in the preceding chapters. For several reasons, the present English edition of *Music in Cinema* omits the third section. A good number of its analyses, however, have been skillfully integrated and adapted by Claudia Gorbman into parts I and II to illustrate and flesh out historical and theoretical arguments. I hope that the heterogeneity among movements and trends I outline will remain perceptible to anglophone readers.

I could not have written this book without the courses I have taught in the following institutions: the IRCAV (Cinema and Audiovisual Studies Research Institute) of the University of Paris III; the ESEC (Institute of Advanced Cinematic Studies) in Paris, created and led by Kostia Milhakiev; the ECAL (Cantonal School of Art of Lausanne); IDHEC (Institute for Advanced Cinematic Studies) in Paris; the program at the University of Paris X named after the great cinematographer Henri Alekan, which offers evening courses to film professionals; the INSAS film and drama institute in Brussels; the Pontifical Catholic University

INTRODUCTION

Music Redefined by Cinema

IN AN art as profuse as cinema, which uses an infinite variety of musical styles and genres, it is merely a convention for me to use the singular form "music," as if it were a single, undifferentiated entity. And as we begin, let me raise a parallel issue with the word "cinema": How legitimate is it to say "*the* cinema," also in the singular? In 1895, the year retrospectively assigned to the cinema's birth, as we know through historians such as Noël Burch, Richard Abel, André Gaudreault, and Laurent Mannoni, a profusion of devices and patents were in existence, bearing the most heterogeneous labels—praxinoscope, kinetoscope, cinematograph, Biograph, and so forth—which only later would be united under one name. In the decades before that, magic lanterns, puppet theater, opera, ballet, *féeries*,[1] stage melodrama, and cabaret had developed ways of integrating music. What would become known as *the* cinema abundantly borrowed from all these predecessors, but also became a domain of its own.

People often ask why music is present in films. Why accompany projected moving images and spoken dialogue with music's rhythms, harmonies, and melodies? We may as well ask why trapeze artists in the circus do not perform in silence, or why music accompanies magic shows, and why Shakespeare so often made room for songs.

What allowed *the* cinema to unify, at least apparently, was not just the creation of an organized system of distribution and exhibition to audiences, nor solely the appearance of the filmmakers who helped define it. It is also the word "cinema" itself, and the theory built upon this word. Cinema became an art in record time: by 1908, the French production company Le Film d'Art enshrined its existence by commissioning Camille Saint-Saëns to write original music for its production *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*. Though cinema started out as a working-class entertainment, Le Film d'Art was intent on attracting more highbrow audiences by gaining the imprimatur of a famous composer of operas and orchestral music. Critical reflection on *the* cinema came very early, collapsing considerable differences among practices, genres, films, and audiences—which allowed for writing *the history* of cinema, also in the singular. On the symbolic level this history exists,[2] and without it, cinema would perhaps not have lasted very long. Cinema in its most disparate guises, from the filmed dance number and the prurient skit to the anti-alcohol tract and the religious *tableau vivant*—to cite some of its "primitive" forms—was established as a homogeneous, coordinated practice through the discourse created around it. Theorists like Louis Delluc, Ricciotto Canudo, and Léon Moussinac set the precedent, and subsequently many directors started to speak of *the* cinema, proclaiming their faith in it. They made a standard of the word, a star of Bethlehem to follow.

The problem is that at the heart of the cinema-in-the-singular, *musics* heard along with it continued to be plural, dividing the audience.

But further, there is not only *the* cinema, there are films. And still today, fortunately, these films exceed what we know or believe we know about the cinema. Films are dumb regarding the history of cinema, they are full of memory but also forgetfulness, they are permeable to fashion, zeitgeists, snobbery—and also to the musics of the moment. They live lives that are always more than the life of *the* cinema. If cinema is in the singular, films, like musics, are in the plural. There is no need to sacrifice one to the other; in fact, it would impoverish both to do so. It would be particularly unfortunate to lose interest in new popular films, like some historians and critics who sacrifice them at the altar of preestablished notions of "great cinema." Some of the same people worship popular cinema of yesteryear, which they

"rehabilitate" as rescuers after the fact. This attitude is especially widespread with regard to music, whose obstinate presence in films breaks the illusion that cinema is sufficient to itself.

This book does not intend to play the singular against the plural, *the* cinema against films, or the pure against the impure, but to demonstrate their solidarity. I write not only about the cinema but also about films. Films of many genres, and all the kinds of music we hear in them—popular music, grand music, modest music, demiurgic music.

Thus I think it is indeed possible to write a history of *music in cinema*, a history that is neither heroic nor hierarchical nor dogmatic, and which can also avoid being nihilistic or disillusioned.

Let us resign ourselves to accepting the amorality of this history. Why amoral? Because it has nothing to do with logic or with distributive justice, reward as a function of work accomplished or merit accumulated. How can it be, we might ask, outraged and appalled, that movie score *x* has been added at the last moment, composed in one week using hackneyed formulas but which clever editing and a good sound engineer has welded into the body of a film masterpiece—this score they will now consider the heart of the creation—the heart of a shopgirl in a Venus of marble! Conversely, the most superb score composed with ardor and talent cannot save a film. The lyricism that Gabriel Yared bestowed on *The Moon in the Gutter* cannot do much to prop up the flaccid edifice built by Jean-Jacques Beineix, even when he had a poetic story and the beauty of Nastassja Kinski to work with—while elsewhere, pure masterpieces of cinema must be content with scoring applied by lesser talents.

Let's not kid ourselves: a great score in a great film, each reinforcing the other (the alliance between Welles and Herrmann for *Citizen Kane*, or between Fellini and Rota for *8½*), remains the exception—a scandalous exception, because they created no model to follow and proved nothing.

This hardly moral situation, of music in cinema, both fascinates and divides critics. But it has not prevented the topic from inspiring rigorous studies as well, such as those by Martin Marks, Philip Tagg, Claudia Gorbman, Jeff Smith, Robynn Stilwell, David Neumeyer, Nicholas Cook, and many others in English, by Hans Emons and Helga de la Motte-Haber in German, and more recently by Cécile Carayol and

Jérôme Rossi in France. Before these scholarly works, film music tended to be approached in extremely polemical terms, hoisting some composers onto pedestals and disparaging the rest. Either people saw the orchestral formulas of the 1930s to the 1950s as pure clichés and conventions—saving only a few masterpieces and two or three incontestable masters from everything else done in that era (Maurice Jaubert and Bernard Herrmann are often cited); or they mourn the coming of song and popular music to film during the sixties as overtaking the practice of classical orchestral accompaniment in an aesthetic catastrophe.

For my part, I am incapable of conceiving history according to the winners-and-losers pattern or worshiping masterpieces and scorning all the rest. Consequently, in contrast to some current and past writing on the subject (especially in France), you will likely find this book guiltily indulgent regarding a good number of films and recent aesthetic trends. I wish only to inform readers and reflect along with you, without oversimplifying. This does not mean I like all films, but I do maintain that each film has a right to be recognized for its ambitions, including the intent to entertain.

What follows are descriptions of several critical blinders that hamper the writing of a proper and salutary history of music in cinema. I hope not to fall prey to them.

FALSE ESPERANTO

To account for the entire history of music in cinema of the whole world—which a reader might expect of a book whose title, *Music in Cinema*, has pretensions of exhaustiveness—is no doubt beyond any one person. For one thing, an enormous repertory has accumulated over 125 years; for another, the historian would need many different competencies to speak authoritatively about, say, Chinese music, rock 'n' roll, baroque music, and Tuareg music of the Sahara. The author of this book, no matter how open and inquisitive he has tried to be, cannot do all that.

The cinema is the art par excellence where all kinds of music have a place and where musical styles and eras rub shoulders, sometimes

within a single work. Many who have never heard atonal music on the radio or in concert have heard it while watching a Hollywood melodrama of the 1950s. Others, those whose radio or computer are permanently tuned to a classical station, say, will discover a folk-rock or rap song in a movie theater; in the same place, soul or techno fans may have the opportunity to hear a few minutes of Bach, Ravel, or Marin Marais, an encounter that would perhaps never have happened otherwise.

Even back in the sixties, spectators of Fellini's *Satyricon* or Pasolini's *Medea* could discover in the "background music" a veritable anthology of "ethnic" musics served up to them all mixed up, with no labels or titles.

Would the filmgoer understand something of the spirit of these pieces of music? Can he or she follow its discourse, assess its value? Music in fact seems to be a *false Esperanto*, and therein lies part of the problem. A filmgoer who hears jazz on a movie soundtrack might believe she understands it, while in fact she gets only its external aspect; the qualities of tone, voicing, and phrasing and harmonies might well escape her. The same holds for other aspects of the film, of course—the flavor of dialogue, the astuteness of a screenplay regarding its subject. But the problem with music is the illusion that we have some sort of immediate grasp of it.

So the hastiest judgments often elicited by film music doubtless arise from the music's status as a false Esperanto, a false common language. I am a fan of recent American movies but I am fairly ignorant about hard rock, so when I go to the cinema I hear the same notes rock connoisseurs do, but I do not hear the same thing. What makes one band better than another escapes me. But this is not a reason to restrict my consideration of film music to what is already, culturally speaking, completely familiar to me. We must make an effort to discover and learn, but without hiding from ourselves that music in films is a piece of a whole, and that that is what we have to work to understand and to feel.

That's what we get with cinema: we must choose to like a film or not *as it is*, with its particular color palette, the choices in makeup for the actors, its style of musical accompaniment. With classical music, we have the advantage of opting to choose an interpretation to our taste: the experience of classical music allows for weaknesses in the composition to be compensated by the sublimeness of the execution. In

the cinema, we have to take it or leave it. And if we like the film, are we sure that it is "in spite of" the music? Might not this obvious "in spite of" often hide a secret "because of"? This is one issue I will try to explore.

THE DEFENSIVE VIEW OF CINEMA

Just as the *technological* history of film can become limited to focusing only on the devices and inventions that led to cinema (such as the projection of images by the magic lantern), so when we consider cinema as *art*, it becomes increasingly absurd to cut off its history from spectacle and drama, literature, and the popular arts. If we restrict inquiry to film alone, failing to examine what were its roots, what forms of noncinematic spectacle (with or without music) laid the groundwork for cinema or accompanied its evolution, we no longer understand the place of music in films, or we are reduced to talking about it in clichés.

It was permissible, even necessary, to write film history isolated from other arts and social practices, when scholars still had to declare and defend its dignity. But today, such a purely "defensive" account of cinema, defining film by opposition to the other arts and often even in contrast to its contemporaneous audiovisual arts (video installation, music video, television, TikTok . . .), as some French critics are currently doing, is at once a bad strategy for empowering the cinema—since it is being treated as a poor, fragile thing—and unsatisfactory.

THE MYTH OF THE TOTAL AUTEUR

The study of film music often falls victim to an attitude that consists of oversimplifying the aesthetic tensions in a film, either by attributing everything to the auteur, who is supposedly perfectly free in his decisions and master of his material, or by describing the auteur as being hampered by financiers, producers, distributors, or censors. Cinema becomes little more than a matter of good and bad actors, the good ones ceaselessly "reinventing" the cinema or "subverting" it, the others intent on miring it in the rut of

convention. This approach sidesteps the contradictory and dialectical notion of the work; moreover, it denies that a film is a collective enterprise.

In this vein, the subject of film music seems to inspire a tendency to pit one creator against another—in this case, composer vs. director, Herrmann vs. Hitchcock—or else reduce their relationship to an imagined perfect harmony. For my part, I continue to find that the notion of some directors as auteurs remains valid, but this approach should by no means dominate criticism as the sole model. For one thing, many great films are not directed by "auteurs." For film music, the model that consists of studying film composers via director-composer pairs (Hitchcock-Herrmann, etc.) is generally a misleading and incomplete one.

In rejecting this simplistic approach, I also do not mean that the solution is to multiply the potential auteurs of a film—establishing a "politique d'acteur" or a "politique du producteur" as caricaturally as the director "politique," as if the actor or producer were also free and not a socially determined individual.

THE CULT OF PERSONALITY

The mediatization of culture in the current corporate environment has led to valorizing the person of the creator as he or she presents and comments on the work in public, often at the expense of the intimate truth of the creator's work, the things it reveals that the creator may not. Media discourse accordingly tends to reduce the relations between a film and its music to the relations between the director and the composer and the motives of each. Did the composer and director meet before production while the screenplay was being developed? Did they agree or did they argue over the sequences that should have music?

This does not seem to me to be a satisfying approach. I take (and extend) the same position that Proust took against Sainte-Beuve.[3] That is, the work is much more than the product of the circumstances of its genesis; and it can also be much more than the reflection of the individual personality of an auteur.

There are films for which the director and composer hardly ever met during production, each accomplishing his or her work on their own—and whose result is magnificent. Examples of this include Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, with Herrmann's score, and David Lynch's *Elephant Man*, composed by John Morris. Because each person identified not with his "role" but with the film to be made. In other cases, the most conscientious and sustained collaboration can culminate in failure, for contingent and unforeseen reasons. A result for which, in my opinion, the director alone always bears responsibility—this is his role and his honor.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

Other writers of history might be tempted to take refuge in what we might call the technicist approach, which consists in seeing aesthetics as the simple result of new technical possibilities, or in blaming technical limitations for problems that have not yet been overcome. This conceptual framework would lead us simply to say, for example, that when sound technology permitted the recording of large orchestras, film scores then tended to systematically use the orchestra, just as the coming of synthesizers gave primacy to synth scores.

It is wise to avoid the determinism of immediate causal explanations. While technical evolution and aesthetic movements are interdependent, we should not try to account for one in terms of the other. Their correlation, in other words, is not a one-way causal relation.

In popular Indian films of the 1950s, for example, when many technical problems of lighting, editing, and so forth were resolved, the oversaturated recording of music (according to the classical Western technical rules, recordings were distorted, deformed by excessive modulation of levels) remained the rule for quite a while. This practice gave the films a tone that was more diffuse, less dry, and all in all more poetic. So it is prudent to consider this sound as a matter of taste, and not just as a technical fault.

In 1926 the goal of perfecting the synchronizing of music and image led against all odds to the *talking* picture. For complex commercial and

ideological reasons, and also because of nudges in the right direction by some auteurs and some important films, an invention that was initially intended to serve music instead veered toward a new kind of cinema, not all of whose consequences would become perceptible until long afterward.

Here is another example: in contrast with American film-music practices, the French frequently rejected large ensembles and full-bodied musical sound. This could be interpreted as a consequence of the harsh reality of meager budgets allotted to the recording of scores. The big American studios enjoyed the luxury of house orchestras, and this can explain their more opulent music. There certainly is a correlation, but it would be reductive to see the aesthetic promotion of a sparser orchestra and less voluminous scoring as a simple "cultural alibi" for a portion of the French film industry, particularly auteur cinema. Once something becomes an aesthetic choice, it is a choice we need to recognize as such.

THE UNITARY ILLUSION

The question of film music is largely a matter of words. When there is a bit of what is called music in a film, it's nevertheless not the entire musical work that is requisitioned and mobilized. A chord or flute melody to punctuate a scene is nothing more than what it is. It is not necessary to appeal to the entire musical system and everything represented by music in culture and discourse.

Symmetry of the terms "music" and "cinema" must not deceive us. In the issue of music in cinema, all cinema is in play, but all music is not. The fact that music is not maximally present in the film, that it is not mobilized in all its means and all its dimensions, has no special importance from the standpoint of the film and its effect on audiences.

We can say that the question of film music is first of all largely a question of names.

Persistent and (in my opinion) often futile problems are created by the fact that a single name, "music," is used both for what a composer writes in order to link or reinforce or punctuate or impel actions in a film, and what she composes as a work in its own right.

If it lasts a certain time and has obvious organization and presence in a film, of course, an assemblage of sounds is unquestionably perceived as a "musical passage" in the film, if not as a musical work. But why should it be that a thirty-second-long segment, analogous to the connective tissue that Mozart did not hesitate to use at some points in his works (cadences, virtuosic runs, drums, and so forth) is seriously examined and critiqued in the name of all music? The work at issue here is the film, and musical fragments are only one element of the work.

When a writer works for film, as has occurred with people as varied as William Faulkner, Jacques Prévert, Marguerite Duras, Peter Handke, and Tonino Guerra, his or her creation is called the "screenplay" or "dialogue." Under this different name, the writing is not examined according to the same criteria as writing that is called literature (although in some cases the writer can make a book out of it, which will be then be encountered and appreciated as a book).

Similarly, when a painter works for the cinema—something that has happened with artists such as Alexandre Trauner, Salvador Dalí, and Walter Reimann—what he or she aims to do is conventionally called set design, and is thereby not considered amenable to basic questions about pictorial art.

But when a musician composes for the cinema, legal practice retains the term "music" for something that appears in different form (in fragments), in a wholly different role, according to a different logic, and, above all, in an entirely different context from the stand-alone musical work in the sense that this concept has assumed in Western modernity.

DUALISTIC RIVALRY

Some approaches to thinking about cinema and music can become stuck in a hierarchical perspective, a dualistic vision according to which it is absolutely necessary for music to be either servant or master. "Music rules the image," says the critic, or, on the contrary, "The image is more important than the music." As you will see, I consider it far more interesting to view the film as a nonhierarchical composition—a position

that does not excuse me from self-reflection regarding the symbolic dimension of this tendency of dualistic thinking as a power relation.

Music in different European languages (*die Musik*, *la musica*, *la musique*) is grammatically gendered as feminine, while in these same languages *cinema* is either masculine or neuter. Moreover, music embodies a principle of independence in its apparent submission. Even when bound to a given scene by the chains of editing, it gives itself to be heard and continues to obey its own logic. As soon as we hear an instrument, an interval of two notes, we recognize music: it remains a principle to itself.

NOT TO HAVE MUSIC

Since the original edition of this book I have maintained, in opposition to received ideas, that many films use sound in magnificent, rich, and vibrant ways, and that those who consider sound a "poor relation" in film are seeing the issue superficially. What if, regarding the image, we only recognized the quality of films that make a big show of their visual originality?

Similarly, music provides the heartbeat of many films even when those films are not particularly noticed for it.

We must wonder if the scathing criticism directed at film music in its most modest and ordinary forms isn't in fact unconsciously aimed at cinema itself, and it expresses the reticence that some (without admitting it) have about cinema as the impure, mongrel, plebeian, and ambiguous newcomer that it is. Cinema is a wondrous medium thanks to its half-breed status, its impurity, its freshness—and honored and envied because of it.

The Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky, one of the great artists of the twentieth century, was certainly right to say that, theoretically speaking, cinema in its pure form should be able to do without music (even though he himself never completely applied this principle to his own films). But if cinema had found its pure and mature form without music, we would not have had the enchanting singing and humming of women at work in Fellini's *8½*. Nor the space that engulfs and transports us and opens to us once the theater lights go out. Nor all those

thunderings, tremolos, orchestral swells; nor the atmosphere that exudes risk, danger, frissons. The time of a film would be less mysterious and unpredictable. The sounds of the thousand pianos of cinema, all different, some spindly and out of tune, others full-bodied and rich, still others watery and dull or light as air, would all be missing from the movie experience. And in films where music is absent or barely present, another thing that music brings would be missing: its silence.

WHEN CINEMA BRINGS MUSIC'S REBIRTH

To end this introductory chapter, allow me to tell a personal story.

I was fifteen when I read a German novel that had a profound influence on me. The book, which I found in my high school library, was Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, written in the United States and published in 1947. I was fascinated by the descriptions of pieces of music that did not exist and that therefore could not be heard. They were works that the protagonist Adrian Leverkühn supposedly composed; their fictional status didn't prevent the narrator from describing them in great detail. Years later, when I had become a composer, I decided to try to bring Adrian Leverkühn's imaginary works into existence. In 1973 I created a work that he could have written, a requiem for the damned. It was ironic and despairing, like Mann's hero. But this requiem was created with the resources of musique concrète, on tape, from "fixed sounds," for which no score is possible, since musique concrète is a kind of music that cannot be notated and that comes out of loudspeakers. In a word, the most invisible of music.

When I read *Doctor Faustus*, I was listening to a lot of classical music on the radio and on record, and I was reading composer biographies. But I did not yet know how to read or play music, let alone write it. The signs on a musical score remained silent for me, like Chinese or Hebrew to those who don't know those languages. So I was dealing with three musics that did not intersect. The first was music that I imagined in my head without hearing it, while reading the novel. The second was music I listened to on the radio, or whose performers I could watch in concerts, but which was not connected

to the printed signs of music notation. A third music was made of those printed signs that as yet for me bore no relationship to what I was hearing.

The floodgates opened rather belatedly for me by comparison with other musicians. I learned to play piano, read music, and even write it (having studied harmony and counterpoint) before I moved to musique concrète, this music that cannot be written or seen. From the experience of a delayed apprenticeship in reading and writing music, there remains for me a kind of gulf between sight, words, and listening. What we see in the form of the score, what we hear through our ears, and what we imagine as we read Mann or Proust (the Vinteuil Sonata[4]) present three different faces of music, all incomplete, three dimensions that for me were fated not to meet up with one another.

The cinema allows these dimensions to either combine or exist in isolation. It is doubtless because of this that I am hypersensitive to the way films allow what I call "mute music" to exist.

Here again, the name "music" raises a question, especially because a piece of music can be present in a film in at least four forms:

- We hear it in excerpts or in its entirety but we do not see it being performed.
- We hear it and simultaneously see it played and/or sung.
- It is mentioned verbally—the title of a work or a composer's name.
- It is "shown" in the form of a score or sheet music.

These four forms can exist separately or in combination.

More generally, it's the pertinence of the term "music" even outside the framework of cinema, beyond it, that we need to reconsider. The same word, "music," is often used by scholars, historians, and people who love music whether they are speaking about songs, rituals with singing, opera, or hip-hop—in other words, about music *with words*—or about music *without text and words*, such as symphonies and concertos, electronic dance music, rituals with drums, or chamber music—what we call instrumental music.[5] And how should we define this latter term? Instrumental music is at once a purely material, pragmatic (i.e., played by instruments or generated synthetically), and purely negative definition in designating music not involving a singing or speaking

voice. Defining something via negative terms (i.e., by elimination) or pragmatic terms does not point to a real, unified domain.

In addition, there was a time in the history of music when even if one did not hear text and if the music was for instruments only, a text was frequently understood: either because a song was being played on instruments, evoking for listeners lyrics that had previously been sung to that tune, or in more than one Romantic symphony, when the music plays or imitates a Lutheran chorale.

In the nineteenth century in particular, music whose sounds played and heard are intended to evoke *other sounds* that are not heard (sometimes the sounds of voices) plays an important part. Music lovers are used to playing transcriptions of symphonies, but also piano pieces of an evocative nature in which, behind the notes the right hand plays, we are supposed to imagine a horn, a harp, a flute, a gondolier's song, a chorus. In the central part of Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor (op. 37, no. 1), the listener or pianist of the era immediately heard, or rather imagined, through the piano, a chorus singing imaginary words, or a chorale played on organ. So the piano's sound referred to other sounds and to absent lyrics. This aspect of music listening has disappeared today for most people: they hear only piano in piano sounds, and only Chopin in music of Chopin. An entire extremely coded dimension of music has been lost.

When Frédéric Chopin composed the first of his four ballades for piano in 1836, the ballade was a popular genre in the field of literature and poetry.

The title "ballade for piano" clearly meant to the audience "ballade for piano without words, but at moments suggesting words that are not pronounced, which are imaginary." Two years before this Chopin piece, Felix Mendelssohn composed the first collection of a cycle for solo piano that he called "Songs Without Words," *Lieder ohne Worte*. But after Mendelssohn, it was no longer necessary to explicitly say "ballades without words." That became implicit. Thus the wordlessness of this new genre of ballade for piano was redoubled, reinforced, because the qualification "without words" itself could be omitted.

More generally, during the post-Beethoven period, European instrumental music, especially the music for solo piano, was often mute twice over; it often suggests, not solely through titles but also because

of the recitativo declamatory quality, certain passages (especially in Liszt) of unpronounced words and imaginary lyrics, and besides, the title of the work was often mute regarding its own muteness.

I wish to emphasize this aspect of Romantic music because in the early twenty-first century we have made it a habit to listen to the music of Chopin, Liszt, or Mendelssohn as "pure music," even though this was not how composers produced it or listeners heard it at the time. Even if it is not true that Chopin's ballades were partly inspired by the ballads of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, as Robert Schumann claimed, at moments they certainly do have us hear something resembling a declamation without words.

This long but crucial preamble brings me to cinema, and to the way it redeploys well-known music. Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002) provides a beautiful example.

In *The Pianist*, whose story was inspired by a real person, the protagonist Szpilman (Adrien Brody) is a pianist, a Polish Jew who has escaped the Warsaw ghetto massacre and is forced to hide for many months. Always barely one step ahead of being captured or killed, he has no chance of playing piano except in his imagination. We see him moving his hands without making sounds, and we hear the music "in his head." Fifteen minutes before the end of the film, while the starving Szpilman is trying desperately to open a can of preserves he has found in an abandoned house in the ruined city, he is discovered by a German officer. I should mention that Polanski, in the desire to reach a worldwide audience, adopted the linguistic convention whereby the Poles speak English while the Germans speak German. In the section I want to discuss, the two characters speak German.

"What are you doing here? Who are you? Do you understand me?" asks the German officer (with long silences in between questions). "What are you doing?"

"I was trying to open this can," answers Szpilman.

"Do you live here? Do you work here? What do you do?"

"I am . . . I was a pianist" (*Ich bin . . . ich war Pianist*), says Szpilman.

"Pianist," repeats the German, who adds, "Come here," because there happens to be a grand piano in the next room. "So play."

Without speaking, without naming the piece he will play, Szpilman plays. When he has finished, the German officer says, "You are hiding."

Then he pronounces the fatal word, which would suffice to get Szpilman killed: "*Jude*," Jew.

How to describe what happens in this scene? Impossible, I think. "Szpilman plays the Piano Ballade in G Minor by Frederic Chopin," or "The German officer listens to the Ballade in G Minor," or even "He listens to the music." Neither of the two characters in this sequence pronounces the word "music" or Chopin's name or the title of the piece. The cinema creates a space in which things that are presented to our senses become enigmas again, and can be redefined every time.

After the playing of the piece, the German officer makes no reference to what was just heard, nor does he pronounce the word "music," but he continues his interrogation as if nothing had happened, using speech to wipe out what we have just seen and heard. Szpilman has not said anything either, but then he is the vulnerable one and his life hangs in the balance.

At the very end of this long film, when the war has ended and Szpilman—whom the German never denounced—has survived its horrors, we see him once more, in a tuxedo giving a concert in an elegant hall, playing Chopin's *Grande Polonaise brillante* for piano and orchestra. The context has changed; Szpilman's life is no longer in danger. Now he is surrounded and appreciated by benign people, but again, no one in the scene says anything before or after the musical performance. For me the feeling that arises from this scene, this final scene that plays with the end credits and should be the proverbial happy ending, is terrifying. Why? Perhaps because the scene gives me the sense that after the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust, everything can continue as before, as if the music has remained absolutely intact, untouched by the events. In doing so, it represents cosmic indifference.

Unlike painting, for example, music appears to bear no traces; it cannot be marked up or scarred; it remains untouched by history, horror, events.

At the end of the film, we can say it's *music*, for we see a familiar concert situation, with an audience, stage, orchestra, conductor. But in the previous scene when Szpilman plays before the German who says nothing about it, the cinema permits us, even asks us to forget that we're witnessing music. Even if we know the Ballade in G Minor, op. 23—one of its composer's best-known pieces—we have to listen to

Chopin: Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, op. 23 (excerpt)

it again as sounds that may or may not belong to a work, may or may not be music. Szpilman begins with an arpeggio, a succession of notes, as if he were trying out the instrument, also as if he were tentatively trying a key. It sounds almost like stumbling, and perhaps the officer wonders whether this emaciated, broken man can really play. Then Szpilman tries out something that could be the seminal motif of a melody: C–D–F♯–B♭–A–G. Of course, *we* know these notes are part of a pre-existing composition. It is no accident that Polanski chose this piece from the entire vast repertoire available to Szpilman. The G Minor Ballade does not begin by affirming itself as music; it begins with a sort of groping or feeling around, like a poem that begins with isolated words.

What we hear is just an idea, like some sketch you might rapidly jot down during a voyage. We can imagine Chopin in a horse-drawn carriage, scribbling a motif of a few notes on a bit of music paper with no idea of what will come of it. A fragment of a few notes that is perhaps a memory, an echo of something he himself might have heard. This is what he gives us in the beginning before creating the virtuosic ballade out of the motif.

In the end, as Szpilman finishes playing, we again hear something not normally called music, a succession of notes violently struck from the piano's highest to lowest range. The passage resembles an aggressively uttered sentence, albeit one that a speaker would not manage to say: as if "music" were a person who had no mouth or throat for saying something, and that he or she were capable only of imitating speech, like an awkward parrot.

What Szpilman plays at the end, which of course is strictly written on paper, resembles a struggle too: the struggle of someone who is struggling against his own body, or while being gagged, someone who is trying to say something with words and cannot do it. Here, "music," or rather the notes that Chopin wrote at the end of his piece, is mute,

as we say of an animal that it is mute, when it seems to us that it is try-ing to say something—in the same way that the two characters are mute regarding the "music" Szpilman is going to play or has played. There is no hope of a connection, of an interaction between what is played on the piano, the image, what happens in the scene, and what is spo-ken by the characters.

We have here a typical example of what, in a previous book, I call the effect of *c/omission between the said and the shown*.[6]

I call "the said," in a film, that which belongs to the verbal sphere—words that are read or heard (pronounced by a diegetic or heterodi-egetic voice). "The shown" consists of the seen and concretely heard elements—the very raw material of cinema. In a scene in his *Hamlet* film, Laurence Olivier utters the phrase "except my life" three times as he moves away from Polonius. The reverb on the phrase grows more pronounced, enveloping and prolonging each utterance of "except my life." This reverb is a concrete element of the film, soldered into it. The phrase thereby takes on a status somewhere between metaphor (giving resonance to important words) and accidental concreteness (Hamlet is passing under an archway). In this way, cinema highlights the relation between the said and the shown.

The visual frame, sounds, and temporal duration of a film enclose a series of saids and a series of showns, and in this enclosed environ-ment, where everything interacts with everything else, anything that is not verbal is liable to mean (in French, "want to say") something, in relation to what is literally verbalized either through dialogue or a voiceover, or through letters of the alphabet. By "anything," I also mean a texture as well as a shadow, the passing of a car as well as a camera movement, a frisson as well as a thunderous clatter.

C/omission—one of the five relations between the said and the shown that I have analyzed—describes the case where dialogue (or a voiceover) "is conspicuously silent about an event or a significant con-crete detail in the characters' environment."[7]

Here in Polanski's film, there is a maximum c/omission effect; it cre-ates mystery, malaise, as the signifier of an impossibility.

In the shown we see-hear just a pianist playing the piano. The func-tion of a piano, its utility, is to allow a pianist to play it, but as we know, hitting the keys without intentionality also produces sounds.

In Polanski's film, Szpilman chooses to play a piece that's all inter-ruptions and silences, which is like an improvisation or a poem—and which suggests muteness, not as a physical handicap, an absence of the organs needed to speak, or a physical malfunction of these organs, but as the impossibility of speaking.

Perhaps only cinema, through the dialectic of the said and the shown, and through the use of the c/omission effect, allows for express-ing this, and can bring back to life this forgotten dimension of music: to have it reborn, if we want it so, in every film.

1

DREAMS AND REALITIES

1895–1935

THE RECORDING of the moving sounds we call music preceded cinema by fifteen years. In 1877, the same year Edison took out a patent on his phonograph, Charles Cros was pursuing a similar principle in creating his Paleophone (which the French were slower to recognize and exploit), and celebrated his invention in verse:[1]

> Like tracings in cameos,
> I tried to make cherished voices
> A possession to keep forever,
> Make them repeat the musical
> Dream of the too-brief hour;
> Time tries to flee, yet I subdue it.

Here we see a vertiginous concatenation of models: sound recording is given as a preservation of the voice, itself likened to preserving human faces, which before photography had been destined to be forever lost. In the search to preserve "cherished traces," photography had been preceded by painting, sculpture, drawing, and, of course, cameos. But preserving the voice means introducing repetition into the heart of time. Lamartine's "O time, suspend your flight" becomes a reality. But what did most of the new terms for the various inventions that would eventually converge into cinema refer to? Their creators coined

words that pointed not to time but to *movement*: Edison's "kinetoscope" and the Lumière brothers' "cinematograph" take their root from the Greek word for motion.

We should not be surprised that the cinema in its beginnings was usually designated not as a visual art but rather as an art of motion. It arose during an era when visual arts, spectacles, and attractions proliferated like never before—stereoscopic photography in relief, dioramas, visual-effects spectacles, and magic lanterns and other projections—so it would have been ill-advised to proclaim cinema as a new art of the image. What was truly "modern" was the idea of capturing and preserving motion.

Vocal or instrumental music for the most part entails transposing and sublimating motion. But while this kinship was still rather obvious in the baroque and even classical eras, contemporary Western music, perhaps in an inevitable evolution, renounced the relationship by cutting music off from dance.

Motion is thus the first connection, the first bridge between music and cinema. The cinema is motion; it linked itself to the two allied arts of motion that preexisted it, dance and music. Or, if you will, dance is the common thread between music and cinema.

But this connection was not created out of thin air, and music was not introduced into silent film without inspiration from preexisting models. Swiss musicologist and media scholar Mathias Spohr rightly observes that the history of film music is often written as if it had sprung from nowhere, in accordance with standards transferred directly from concert music. "Starting from this premise, that 'ordinary' film music is of bad quality, people conclude that the only music deserving to be taken seriously is music by composers of so-called 'pure' music, music that can stand alone."[2] But to understand the nature of film music, we should take into account an older tradition that served as its inspiration, the tradition of theater music. Spohr reminds us that theaters (there were more than a hundred in Vienna at the start of the twentieth century) were often converted into movie houses, and the ensembles that had played for the theater found themselves playing movie music. This was particularly the case since, at the beginning of the century, screenings consisting of various short films were often inserted into live programs of dance pieces, variety sketches, and attractions.

Spohr writes that differences in musical practices between Europe and the United States are also reflected in ephemera like cue sheets (tailored lists suggesting existing pieces as music cues for given scenes) that were distributed with films. Cue sheets were used far less in Europe than in the United States, owing to differing traditions in the theater music that had come before. On the Continent the music director arranged if not an original score, at least a musical compilation in the tradition of eighteenth-century theater. Spohr also reminds us of the musical tradition created by the large-spectacle theater (like the shows at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris until the 1960s), which often staged melodramas featuring natural catastrophes such as floods, fires, and earthquakes, with adapted music.

We can thus see a through line from each country's preexisting or parallel theatrical musical traditions to its dominant film-music practices, giving birth to models that were developed consciously or unconsciously. Music for films developed differently in countries where opera was very popular (say, Italy), as opposed to countries where dance and song with characters in masks or makeup were the rule. Accordingly, Italian cinema resisted sound film (which at first meant anglophone talking films with no dubbing) much longer than other cinematic traditions, relying instead on its own operatic tradition. Did Great Britain's specific culture of film music (and program music in general) owe a debt to the prominence of music in Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama? Possibly. Likewise, the tendency of French cinema to limit music in films when it could, even to the point of eliminating it altogether, might be linked to the models of the French classical theater, which, with a few exceptions such as *comédie-ballet* and *pièces à machines*, make no place for music or songs.[3]

FEATURES OF SILENT FILM ACCOMPANIMENT

Silent film's earliest years, roughly 1895 to 1915—before cinema was even consolidated as a homogeneous domain—are today one of its best-known periods. A great many historical scholarly studies have

been devoted to this period, year by year, often reflecting upon their own method as well as the nature of cinema; Rick Altman's book *Silent Film Sound* is among the most significant. This profusion of writings, which emphasize the complexity of the period and the absence of a single model, can be dizzying for the reader. While not many people hesitate to proffer judgments willy-nilly about American film or television of the last fifty years, it is wise not to risk making generalizations about cinema's first twenty years, for fear of being countered by a multitude of specific cases and exceptions. I will nevertheless indicate some landmarks, with the aid of the courageous efforts made by other scholars, to aid in mapping out a simplified and artificially unified outline.

- The first films were short. Over several years they grew from a minute or two to about twenty; the feature-length film did not appear until the mid-1910s.

- Music heard during film screenings was most often played live (occasionally on a phonograph), by an ensemble whose size could vary from a soloist to a large orchestra, and sometimes by singers, who would sync to the image. The music generally consisted of a series of preexisting selections arranged for the occasion (original music appeared here and there during the 1920s). In Japan, it was combined with the *benshi*, an actor-narrator who mimed actors' voices, set the action, and offered commentary. The screening could also sometimes be accompanied by sound effects. In some cases a singer provided a song, the film serving to promote its sheet-music sales.

- The earliest films were not narratives. Some were "views" of places in the world, somewhat like animated postcards. There were restaged news events, or "actualities" (the coronation of a king, a boxing match); historical or cultural or religious *tableaux vivants* inspired from theater or painting; dance pieces and scenes from operas, cabaret, or theater (sometimes with a brief synchronized sound-musical recording); trick films (magic acts using cinematic devices for the trickery); scientific films showing human and animal motions; and illustrated speeches. Later, even after the cinema had, around 1906, adopted narrative and, as Noël Burch wrote, became "linearised,"[4] films often included self-contained scenes, spectacular or musical pieces that were basically autonomous entities. Movie comedy in particular—with Harry

Langdon, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, and of course Charlie Chaplin—would continue to assume this form of a collection of virtually independent sketches tied together by an overall plot, involving music that changed with each scene as well.

■ Cinema began as a popular form, exhibited in smoky and noisy popular venues. Gradually, owing to factors that were not solely commercial but also ideological and cultural—notably efforts to attract a "decent" clientele—films would attempt to acquire a pedigree through the subject matter they chose (literary and operatic adaptations, moral or religious themes), and in the production process. This included musical accompaniment, which was influenced by this aspiration to social uplift.

The preceding outline reflects the thriving, multitudinous, contradiction-filled early development of cinema. We can already see in its first twenty years the big issues that would affect film music and inform its major tensions, notably between popular style and noble or higher style, and between episodic form and musical continuity without breaks.

Bearing this framework in mind, we can proceed to consider more specific points.

THE "PRIMITIVES"

According to *Le Figaro* of May 8, 1893, one of the inventors of processes that led to a (relatively) unified cinema, Thomas Edison, issued a declaration. He intended to combine his kinetoscope—a sort of jukebox allowing individuals to view moving images through a peephole with a lens—with phonograph recordings. "My system will allow people to see an opera, a comedy, or a person at the same time as hearing them."

Note that Edison mentions opera first. He clearly viewed his invention as a means of reproducing and transmitting a preexisting reality, event, or spectacle.

One of Edison's first, ultrashort films was a Tyrolean dance, presupposing or implying music simultaneously played on a phonograph. Two other dance films, *Annabelle Butterfly Dance* (1894) and *Annabelle*

Serpentine Dance (1895), show Annabelle Moore imitating the famous dancer Loie Fuller.

In August 1895, a Brussels journalist cited by Laurent Mannoni saluted the new device: "Today the kinetoscope has been surpassed. Edison has invented the kinetophone. Not only do you watch the serpentine dance, but you hear the music that accompanies it. You see the belly dance and you hear that monotonous chant that mercilessly assailed people at the Exposition of Antwerp."[5] In Europe, the phonograph, and then the Berliner gramophone, which allowed for longer recordings, offered to Charles Pathé in Paris (with his Phonoscènes) and Oskar Messter in Berlin the possibility for a more systematic synchronization of film with sound.

In the first Lumière films of 1895, which focused on spontaneous documenting of reality and the outdoors (unlike Edison, who filmed in his "Black Maria," the first film studio), there are very few musical scenes or scenes that presuppose music—only a "children's dance" and a concert where we see a man playing violin with two women at the piano on an outdoor terrace. This doesn't mean that the film was shot as a "silent concert" lacking the music that was intended to be reintroduced with a phonograph or imitated by musical accompaniment during the screening. The concert was a subject long featured in painting—a not only silent but static art—and in many respects, these Lumière "views" were photographs or paintings that moved.

By 1895, Georges Demeny had proposed to Léon Gaumont an apparatus he called the "phonophone," "a combination of the Phonograph and the projection Phonoscope, *intended to work in synchrony*" (italics in the original).[6] What resulted was the "Gaumont Chronophone . . . , the system with which Alice Guy was to shoot more than 100 singing or talking subjects,"[7] some of which featured the participation of musicians or singers, in the first seven years of the twentieth century.

The question arises why the phonograph, already invented, did not enter movie houses when film developed in the direction of being projected to audiences—counter to Edison's prediction and commercial bet on the kinetoscope (he had cast his lot for his single-viewer "boxes" at five cents apiece). The reasons seem simple. First, it was very difficult to synchronize a perforated medium like film with a continuous

sound medium (cylinder or disc). Second, the quality of playback was mediocre for many instrumental timbres. Third, the sound was weak, because electric amplification did not yet exist. Finally, in a world without social security or paid vacations, the "live" musical workforce was more available and flexible. So in many cases, it was paradoxically flesh-and-blood musicians playing classically acoustical instruments who would provide the accompaniment to visual actions projected mechanically, with filmed and recorded characters.

SOURCES OF MUSIC IN THE MOVIE HOUSE

The very first cinema music (in an era when the concept of cinema did not yet exist) was presumably played outside the movie establishment, to catch the attention of passersby and lure them in. Music was an element of attraction and solicitation. And cinema was born amid a culture of songs: people gathered to watch street singers perform songs and they bought the "petit format" (a sheet giving the lyrics and the melody without accompaniment) to sing along; song and cinema would always be commercially linked. Also, films were presented in music venues such as the café concerts.[8]

Music soon entered the movie house. Its performers varied widely, from the local piano player (sometimes the same person who played the organ at Sunday mass) to the large orchestra in prestige houses, with the small chamber ensemble in between. Then there were the players of a widespread and beloved instrument in American theaters, the Wurlitzer organ, equipped with an effects keyboard for a wide range of sound effects. Up until the 1970s, the Gaumont-Palace, in Paris, had one of these organs, but it was hardly ever put to use in later years.

Movie orchestras sometimes developed out of an initial small ensemble. And as mentioned above, numerous isolated experiments were attempted, for example with live singers who performed for given sequences during the screening.

Music was called upon to create the appropriate cultural atmosphere—and to make the show a kind of ceremony, especially if there were scenes of the life of Christ (Passion films were among the

first movie genres). When Adolph Zukor decided to distribute *The Life and Passion of Jesus Christ* (produced in Paris at Pathé in 1906 or 1907) in the United States, he arranged for an organ and a quartet of singers. Because the movie theater in Newark was located near a big department store, he said, "A great many of the bargain hunters—I mean the ladies—dropped in early to see and hear the performance."[9]

Early films were often shown in ramshackle venues exposed to street noise and with audiences that were themselves noisy. In the absence of flesh-and-blood actors (actors onscreen can't interact with the audience), music helped to focus moviegoers' attention by emphasizing moods and key points. In this role it was occasionally replaced or accompanied by the voice of a commentator who would narrate and vocally act out the film's story. Music also tied together the often-disparate elements of the cinematic spectacle that could consist of a patchwork of slapstick scenes, documentary views, fictions, filmed performance numbers, and so forth.

As Noël Burch has written,

> Confronted with moving photographic pictures, music also did something it did not do in the circus, say. It created a "higher" space embracing both the space of the auditorium and the space pictured on the screen, and formed a kind of sound barrier around each spectator. Thus from the beginning music served to isolate the spectator from projector noise, coughing, whispered commentaries, etc. In this respect, the introduction of music at projection points was the first deliberate step towards what was to become the institution's interpellation of the film spectator as an individual. With the enclosure of the projector in a box and the development of the fairground cinema in Europe, then the nickelodeon in the USA, the function of music became to combat the contamination of diegetic "silence" by accidental noises from outside, by the audience's comings and goings in the auditorium, their conversations, etc., replacing them with an organised sound space.[10]

Let us add that music creates a narrative temporality. It says, "once upon a time"; it helps to create a break from everyday time, to create a time of the story's representation.

We can also consider, with Mark Evans, that music works not only to isolate each spectator in his relation with the film, in his individual dream, but also, conversely, to crystallize the audience's collective reaction by directing its attention to a specific detail or character. According to Evans, "The musician's principal function was to emphasize highlights of the action on the screen, particularly to make the audience instantly aware that the fellow in the black cape, glowering at both heroine and viewers, was to be roundly hissed."[11]

CHASE AND HURRY MUSIC

Music played a privileged role in chase sequences, which incidentally were not the exclusive monopoly of comedy films. In fact, it is perhaps the popularity of chase scenes in dramas and weekly suspense serials, melodramas, crime films, and westerns that gave comedy the idea of making chases an object of parody. Evans remarks on chase music in early melodrama: "Here it was the responsibility of the musician to see that the proper music accompanied the pursuit and identified hero and villain."[12] Noël Burch considers the chase a template for fiction film. Obviously the chase was not invented by cinema but had long been a famous and popular *musical* topos. In the form of the fantastic or infernal horse chase, it played a considerable part in musically inspired German poetry, especially ballads, the best known of which are Gottfried August Bürger's "Lenore" (which has been set to music more than once) and Goethe's "Erlkönig." Then it figured in the lied, the virtuosic piano piece (some of the Chopin preludes), chamber music (the "galops" in several Beethoven and Schubert quartets), and the symphonic poem (Liszt's *Mazeppa*). Thus music had full leisure to fine-tune its expressive formulas for urgency and hurrying. What the movies brought, especially with Griffith, was the miracle of parallel editing; that is, the possibility of alternating between the pursuer and the pursued, between the shot of the place serving as the goal and the shot of the automobile, the locomotive, the horseman racing toward that goal. You could say that Goethe's construction of the "Erlkönig"—from one verse to the next the poem alternates the Elf-King's seductive speech and the child's words to his father—is an early model for parallel editing.

The original or adapted screenplays brought to cinema were not based on a purely literary or linear model. They were, as they are today, pretexts to agglomerate various types of scenes, and some of these scenes were already popular in the domain of program music, the symphonic poem, or the symphonic tableau of opera. It is no surprise that the cinema, inherently a rhythmic and musical genre from the beginning, adopted them.

Opera had also attempted to represented horseback rides and chases as much as it could, given its scenic immobility. The beginning of the third act of Wagner's *The Valkyrie*, for example, uses the dramatic artifice of assembling the Valkyries onstage to describe the heroic deeds and the arrival of their sisters "offscreen." A good number of Wagnerian "hurries" are arrivals and departures, on foot, on horseback, even flying (Kundry in *Parsifal*), followed or anticipated by characters present onstage. The paragon of the breathless meeting of lovers running to each other to the sound of music, an archetypical movie scene (epitomized in Claude Lelouch's *A Man and a Woman*, 1966), can already be found in *Tristan and Isolde*, minus the slow motion.

So with the help of music, film took up these formulas, and through editing it brought an unprecedented capacity to infinitely stretch out these pursuits, these physical rounds of distancing and coming together. In so doing, it fulfilled to the letter Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. Even running at top speed, Achilles can never catch up to the tortoise who left before him, because, as Aristotle summed it up, "In a race, the quickest runner can never overtake the slowest, since the pursuer must first reach the point whence the pursued started, so that the slower must always hold a lead."[13] Music's role is to make movement subjective, as in opera: for example, to convey that haste is something other than speed in the mechanical sense, or to transfigure our sight of a singer's large body as she enters, or of a gallant horse, to give them all their evocative power.

The popularity of the "Ride of the Valkyries" theme in silent movies (Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*) and then in sound films (just a few: Fellini's *8½*; Tonino Valerii's *My Name Is Nobody*, with music by Morricone; and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*) is also due to its rhythmic and melodic simplicity: its pattern of ascending arpeggios is almost the symbol of an art that already was, etymologically speaking, an art of movement.

MUSIC ON THE SET

In the silent era it was common practice for instrumentalists, hired for the occasion or salaried, to play music on set, or for the crew to have a phonograph playing during the filming of short comedies. Music present during the shoot helped to create mood, lend rhythm to a scene, help the crew concentrate on their work, and guide the actors' expressions and gestures. So in a way, music played mirroring roles at both ends of the process: giving inspiration during production, and guiding the audience's reception during the screening.

Directors or actors had their preferred pieces for on-set music. Jean-Louis Leutrat recalls that John Ford liked to hear folk songs like "Oh My Darling, Clementine" and "The Yellow Rose of Texas." Mary Pickford, "America's sweetheart," who specialized in playing ingenues, feral girls, and victims, often used music for emotional support during filming; Kevin Brownlow tells us that Massenet's "Élégie" was a favorite of hers. Piano, violin, or sometimes a kind of piano-organ were commonly used instruments.

King Vidor confirmed that music "was very helpful to get the mood. John Gilbert liked 'Moonlight and Roses' on *The Big Parade*. Other actors would ask for something from opera. All through *The Crowd* I had Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* played. There'd be a theme that meant the picture."[14] All this confirms that, depending on the film, the era, or an actor's status, the choice of the pieces to be played often went to the director or the star.

There is a wealth of amusing anecdotes about music on set. The French director Maurice Tourneur, while working in Hollywood, "declared that a unit he saw filming a chase from the back of a truck were accompanied by another vehicle racing alongside—full of frantically playing musicians."[15] The contemporary American silent-film composer Carl Davis, doing research for a score, found a production still for *Greed* (1924) showing Erich von Stroheim in the final duel, which was shot in Death Valley. The photo includes musicians at work in the dreadful heat, a violinist and a harmonium player in suit and tie.

More recently, certain sound-era directors including Sergio Leone, Marguerite Duras, and Régis Wargnier returned to this practice for

some of their shoots, even when the scene itself was not conceived to have music either in the action or as nondiegetic accompaniment.

MUSIC ONSCREEN IN SILENT FILMS

Another common practice in so-called silent movies was to write a scene of music-making into the screenplay so as to affirm the musical quality—"musical" in its usual sense but also metaphorically (composition of lines and rhythms)—of the film itself, and also to lend a hand, so to speak, regarding how it should be accompanied in the theater. Few silent feature films failed to include a scene of popular dance, or a ball, classical ballet, carnival, people singing at a gathering, a cafe, concert, vaudeville revue, opera, circus act, orgy, religious ceremony, traveling performers, song, or popular celebration around a guitar, piano, or orchestra. All these scenes implied the presence of music onscreen; they would include repeated shots of the music-making (edited in or superimposed) to remind us of the source, be it soloists, singer, or band. This music was expressed by the accompanying music played during the screening only through a kind of transposition. The audiences had to accept a necessary discrepancy, not just in synchronism between what they saw and what they heard, but especially of space, content, and instrumental timbre. It's transcription, in a way. And remember that transcription was part of the common musical culture then: it was entirely normal to hear (or play) an orchestral piece reduced for piano, or an opera aria reduced to the sung line with piano accompaniment. Far from serving as just a poor substitute, the "imaginary transcription" had become a source of an entire poetics—for example, all the implied instruments—pan flutes, guitars, fanfares, Oberon's horn—evoked in Debussy's works for piano.

In *Strike* (1925), when the workers walk and sing to an accordion, a sequence Eisenstein shows in closeups and superimpositions, the effect is much more interesting if the musicians in the theater do *not* introduce an accordion, but use a piano, an organ, or an orchestra to play a melody that evokes the *feeling* of the accordion. This discrepancy or translation of one music by another, one timbre by others, is part and parcel of the magic of the silents.

In some cases, though, the music played in the theater must absolutely respect a specific melody that is presumed in the story—such as "La Marseillaise" in a sequence of Gance's *Napoleon*, or a specific song that a singer can sing beneath the screen making every effort to synchronize with the actor in the image.

Through editing, rhythm, and camera movement, some filmmakers can also work to create a visual translation or rendering of the whirl of music represented onscreen, and even of the production of the instruments' sound. After the wedding in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), the moving camera attempts to depict the trajectory of an inebriated trumpet player's sounds outside, up to the room in the apartment building where the equally inebriated, desperately unhappy protagonist hears it and sways to it.

EPISODIC OR SEQUENTIAL MUSIC

Music played to accompany movie screenings, whether arrangements of well-known tunes, compilations of cues taken from specialized collections, or, more rarely, original scores, was almost always in sequential form. By this I mean that the score consisted of a succession of distinct pieces, each with its own tempo and structure, repetitions, and cadences. Each piece would either be allowed to end conclusively, or segue into another piece (depending on bridges, transitions, or breaks) that had its own different tonality, rhythm, mood, and musical setting. We can get a good idea of this system by considering Chaplin's part-original, part-compiled scoring for *City Lights* (1931), a silent work with recorded music.[16]

The opening scene shows the official inauguration of a monument to "peace and prosperity." The sheet covering the monument is raised and reveals, to the crowd's stupefied eyes, the Tramp casually sleeping on the statue. The grandiose brass fanfare music heard up to that point, lending ceremonial splendor to the unveiling, is replaced by a chase-type cue in minor, with dotted eighth notes and breathless sixteenth notes with predictable harmonic progressions. Not that the characters are chasing one another. Quite to the contrary, once he's awake, the Tramp takes his time leaving, despite the vehement orders of the

authorities. So here the music expresses not the physical situation of running, but the general uproar—the various movements in the crowd as well as the indignant gestures of the mayor, all as it impels the scene forward. The hurry cue is prolonged via several reprises ad libitum, and gets interrupted only by a musical-visual gag: "The Star-Spangled Banner," played by the band at the ceremony, momentarily freezes the whole assembly standing at attention, while the Tramp's pants remain impaled on a marble sword on the monument. The anthem ends and it's back to the hurry music as the Tramp eventually dismounts from the statue. After a title card ("afternoon"), the hurry cue yields to calmer music that immediately establishes a walking pace and also undergoes as many reprises as needed: we find the Tramp walking through the street, far away from the commotion of the preceding scene.

The sequential character of silent film music was appropriate to the fluctuating speed of film projection (add or subtract your repeated musical pattern to "vamp" or shorten if the scene is projected longer or shorter than anticipated)—but also to the form of the films themselves. Films were divided into sections, particularly through the placement of intertitles. This sequential arrangement accords with the idea of music as a basso continuo, a mainstay, a rhythmic common thread to the play of looser and more subtle visual rhythms for the eye. The reprises made necessary by this system had the advantage of creating a sense of continuity and stability: viewers did not pay conscious attention to the music; they could concentrate on what they saw on the screen.

Film music's sequential character was much the same as in many musical accompaniment practices in popular theatrical forms of the period such as revues, music hall, and circus, for similar reasons and with the same particularities. It was also justified by the commercial principle of exploiting the popularity of well-known musical pieces to attract audiences—songs in fashion, popular tunes, familiar waltzes, genre pieces, usually written to familiar rhythms and forms. When the 1910s saw the passage of copyright laws that prevented the free use of currently popular music, exhibitors turned toward compilations or wholly composed sequences published in collections, or else they drew on pieces from the classical repertoire.[17] Likewise, when some "original" scores were written for specific silent films (scores that did

considerable borrowing or compiling of their own), they generally continued to conform to the standard model, and in this sense did not bring changes in the aesthetic of musical accompaniment.

While no one quite knew how it had begun, nor what role determinism played (the eternal chicken-and-egg problem), other characteristics of the silent cinema tended in this same sequential direction: the intertitles that punctuated a film, often like chapter headings, and the tinting of scenes with different colors according to their nature, contributed to the episodic tendency of the movie experience. Tinting a night scene in blue helped set it apart from a daytime scene that would follow, and heightened the sense of the film as a succession of distinct pieces. The refinement of cinema undertaken by some silent filmmakers consisted in attempting through different means (especially eliminating or vastly reducing intertitles) to smooth out the film in order to make a sole continuous movement out of it, exactly as successive pioneers from Gluck to Wagner had attempted to do for opera.

CUE SHEETS AND *KINOTHEKS*

While the music directors at large movie theaters prepared their own arrangements, in the small houses movie musicians turned to collections of prearranged pieces. As early as 1909, Edison began to publish "suggestions for music." Music to accompany projections was dispensed in cue sheets, the best-known compilers of which were S. M. Berg and Max Winkler. Cue sheets—single pages that indicated where in the film to perform suggested pieces—were published and distributed weekly for the release of each new film, and eased the pianist's and orchestra leader's work of devising the musical illustration of the film. They also helped the projectionist by indicating the length of each scene (estimated in feet) and the general mood of each, its dominant mood or situation (misterioso, entry of the villain), with possible suggestions from a composer for adapted musical pieces. The conductor or pianist could then either follow those suggestions or use his own selection. Cue sheets were widely used in the United States during the 1910s, and some of the pioneers of compiled and arranged film music,

such as Hugo Riesenfeld, David Mendoza, and Erno Rapee, cut their teeth by producing them.

According to Mark Evans, "Each theater maintained music in its own library. Such a library might contain many individual books, each one devoted to a specific mood, such as chases, love themes, or comedy music. . . . During his association with Hugo Riesenfeld, Irvin Talbot was asked to assemble compositions of appropriate length to match the timing of scenes in many films, including Cecil B. DeMille's epic, *The Ten Commandments*."[18] About five hundred American movie theaters had orchestras; in most of these houses, the music director would choose the music. In the smaller venues, as already mentioned, cue sheets with musical recommendations lightened the burden on piano players and small ensembles.

Among the collections of original pieces or piano/organ arrangements that furnished repertoire on command were J. S. Zamecnik's *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music* (first published in 1913), Erno Rapee's *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists* (1924), and the *Kinothek* of Giuseppe Becce (1925). Zamecnik and Rapee organized their selections according to moods (e.g., humorous, misterioso, neutral, quietude, sadness, passion, sinister), character types (burglar, Canadian mounted police, Arab sheikh), plot situation (children, sea and storm, orgies, railroad, hunting, battle), and cultural setting ("China and Japan," "Gipsy," western scene, Irish, church scene). Becce's compendium was organized according to musical type as well as mood ("sinister night," "cryptic shadows," and "wild chase," but also "largo tragico," "andante appassionato").

Commentaries could be found in these catalogs across from a title: " 'Indian Love Call' by Homer Grunn, a marvelous piece for desert scenes—suggests distance, immobility, and desolation, as well as Indian love."[19] This sentence emphasizes the fluidity and freedom of musical significations, which can translate into a spatial, objective, material dimension, on the one hand, and into a dimension that's both cultural and psychological, on the other.

In a manual for movie pianists and organists published in 1920, one reads that "the prime function of music that accompanies moving pictures is to reflect the mood of the scene in the hearer's mind, and rouse more readily and intensely in the spectator the changing emotions of

the pictured story."[20] The authors complement musical repertoires for lists of moods (sinister, joyful, light) with these categories: "nature," "love themes," "light, graceful moods," "elegiac moods," "impressive moods," "festive moods," "exotic moods," "comedy," "speed (hurries)," "waltzes," and such special situations as "impending tragedy," "aftermath of tragedy," "death," "battle scenes," "storm scenes," "villainous characters," "youthful characters," and "old age."[21] Musical suggestions reinforce, of course, racial and cultural stereotypes of the day:

> Rather gloomy and monotonous music will befit the desert, while brilliant and scintillating music should accompany the hustle and bustle of Oriental street scenes and bazaars. . . . [Oriental scenes are best accompanied by] a droning bass of either an open fifth or fourth, or a stereotyped rhythmical figure that is indicative of either the languor of the scene (opium dens, harems, etc.) or of its typical movement (Arabian caravans, Oriental dancers, Chinese junks). . . . Offering distinctly Oriental color [are] "Scheherazade" by Rimsky-Korsakov (for Persian and Arabian motives), the opera "Lakme" by Delibes and the ballet "Namouna" by Lalo (for East Indian and Arabian motives) . . . [and] the opera "Madame Butterfly" by Puccini (for Japanese motives)."[22]

Popular overtures by Rossini or Suppé were recommended, since they "contain brilliant and lively passages which will fit scenes in the wild West, hurries, chases, fights, and mob scenes."[23] "Neutral" music is included as well.

In France, an article by Gabriel Bernard in the *Courrier musical* enlightens us as to how, with no need of a cue sheet, certain conductors in the large theaters made their choices. According to the author, the determining factor is the duration of the sequence to be "musicalized."

"The conductor-arranger has already stored in his memory a collection of pieces and fragments of pieces, each one corresponding to a category of given cinematic effects. He knows that in order to accompany an idyllic scene he can equally use his number 1 or number 2. But number 2 has an advantage—it lends itself to unlimited repetition . . . Since the idyllic scene in question is rather long, he will go for number 2!" For the arrival of a character in distress, "the conductor's memory

will immediately suggest a rich choice of pieces full of mystery, anxiety, and menace. Let us say our man has a choice of five pieces at the very least. It happens that the character who is about to ruin everything appears onscreen for just a moment. So the conductor chooses the shortest of these five numbers that are full of menace, anxiety, and mystery."[24]

The writer then wittily lists the pieces constituting the "orchestral suite" made up in line with such criteria. In this particular example, the list shows a preference for favorite classics over popular music. We get an aria from *Cavalleria rusticana*, a waltz by Waldteufel, the "Clair de Lune" from Massenet's *Werther*, a tango, the Adagio from Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata, a quotation from Puccini's *La Bohème*, and Mozart's Turkish March.

Some critics have ridiculed the compilation method, more as a matter of principle than through direct experience. When in the 1970s Alain Lacombe and Claude Rocle unleashed their sarcasm regarding the "sorcerers' apprentices of the little miserable equations, tailors of ready-to-wear without depth,"[25] they could hardly have witnessed the method at work. Today, a number of adaptations of films and restored screenings, largely thanks to the Pordenone Silent Film Festival and the composer-conductor Carl Davis, have allowed us to actually hear this process at work; ultimately it is no more conventional than so-called original scoring. The mystique of the original work—and confusion abounds regarding the different meanings of the word "original"—can overshadow good common sense when critics approach these issues. The popular art of cinema has, like serious music before, submitted to a degree of standardization no more shameful than that which allowed Vivaldi or Telemann to produce hundreds of works.

Consider the issue in terms of the actual labor conditions of the era. One made-to-measure score for each film would entail—for every new film released—a composed score, rehearsals, and performances (the musicians played in person at every screening). What day of the week would they have started sight-reading through the music and learning it, with what time for rehearsal, for what salary? Under what working conditions, what chances for the music always newly composed to be correctly read and executed, then sent out into the world?

AN AESTHETIC MELTING POT

Another thing specific to the situation of the 1910s was the obstinate and even (in the eyes of some) shocking coexistence of light and serious music within a single film. This relationship fluctuated with changes in taste, the evolution of the movies, and copyright law. For example, Debussy came into fashion in France starting in 1919, and generally, serious music was used more frequently after World War I—hence the Surrealists' nostalgia for the years when the movie-house pianist banged out music in honky-tonk style. Movie palaces flourished In America in the twenties, and with them, the institutionalization of cinema as a middle-class entertainment; so the music had to honor this new audience and show off its class aspirations.

It is in the tradition of combining classical music with original scoring that the score for the first feature-length (part-)talkie *The Jazz Singer* came into being. Tchaikovsky or Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* alternate with popular songs and orchestra selections from minor composers of the day as illustration.[26]

If music in the silent era was often considered lacking, it was not only because of the variable quality of the compositions but also because of their execution, which depended largely on the musicians and the conductor, their working conditions, and the acoustics of the house. Raising the level of music, particularly its synchronization with the film, would be an obsessive preoccupation of the twenties all the way up to the sound film. Improvement was envisioned in different ways: some wished for a return to the "great classics" and others called for new original scores.

Some filmmakers, musicians, and critics at the time considered the coexistence of popular and serious musical styles in films to be a positive thing, betting on the notion that their differences would someday dissolve. The long-held dream would thus be to bridge the divide between popular and concert music in films—even while this gap was growing ever deeper in other arenas, owing to the separate internal developments of concert music and the ever-broader audiences for popular music, especially through radio. Some modernist movements in the twenties—particularly the aesthetic of the Group of Six, formulated by Cocteau in *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* (*Cock and Harlequin*) in 1918—advocated

wresting concert music from its decadence and sophisticated intricacy by drawing from jazz, circus music, and other popular modes.[27] Obviously such an idea wouldn't have come about if not for the melting-pot aesthetic that developed in film.

But the reconciliation of opposing styles was not to occur. Cinema preserved the disparateness of high and low music even when they met in films; variety and difference offered better dramatic options. Twenties cinema would remain a medium where all kinds of music cohabited.

SILENT OPERA

The practice of bringing operas to the silent screen might seem counterintuitive, but we should recall that in many cases silent cinema rapidly adapted a lyrical and operatic style in terms of rhythm, forms, and uses of dialogue. Regarding the practice of shooting with musical instruments present, Carlo Piccardi writes: "In truth, recitation in silent films did not take place to the rhythm of declamation of words but rather to the rhythm of the music, in the sense of the gestures that developed in dilated form, similar to hyperbolic curves typical of the movements of singers in opera. The astonishing number of opera singers who became film actors at the time is no coincidence . . . Lina Cavalieri, Gabriella Besanzoni, Mary Garden, Geraldine Farrar, the tenor Fiorello Giraud."[28]

It should come as no surprise that Italian filmmakers got the idea to commission original scores from well-known opera composers. Pietro Mascagni, the composer of *Cavalleria rusticana*, was offered the job of composing an original score for a film called *Rapsodia satanica* (*Satan's Rhapsody*); he conducted the first performance in 1917.

Already at cinema's beginnings, Georges Méliès made films of operas and scenes from comic operas such as *Faust*, *The Damnation of Faust*, and *The Barber of Seville*. The music envisioned for screenings consisted of instrumental or sung selections of the most famous arias.

Between 1900 and 1907, Alice Guy made, among many other Phonoscènes, "twelve tableaux for *Carmen . . .* and 22 tableaux for *Faust . . .* more than an hour's projection time: potentially the first 'talking'

feature!"[29] The music could be supplied by a phonograph, a piano reduction with a singer, or a small ensemble of instruments and singers. In 1909, legendary Swedish producer Charles Magnusson founded Svenska Bio, which promoted a sound-film process, and one of the studio's productions was a 1910 operetta adapted from a stage play, *Värmländingarna* (The Värmlanders), directed by Ebba Lindkvist, for which the actors mimed to songs on existing gramophone records. In Italy, filmmakers drew from their grand culture and history, and by no means neglected opera as a source; Mario Caserini directed both a *Siegfried* and a *Parsifal* in 1912.

More remarkably, *Gloria transita* (1917), a silent Dutch melodrama by Johan Gildermeijer, has characters who are opera singers. Screenings required performers to stand beside the screen and follow the characters' lip movements during the sequences that take place on the opera stage, providing the onscreen characters their voices. The 1987 Pordenone Silent Film Festival demonstrated through contemporary composer Hub Mathijsen's attempt to recreate the original score that the arias "sung" onscreen and presupposing live singing include excerpts from Gounod's *Faust* and Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Gildermeijer took this idea up again in *Gloria fatalis* (1922), and in 1937 he produced a *Fantasia musica* (before Disney's!) that tried to bring *Tannhäuser* to the screen.

One scene in Giovanni Pastrone's sword-and-sandals film *Cabiria* (1914), whose story by Gabriele D'Annunzio was partially inspired from Flaubert's historical novel *Salammbô*, was expressly conceived as a moment of opera. It shows children sacrificed by being thrown into the mouth of the god Moloch. For this scene Ildebrando Pizzetti wrote music for solo singer and chorus that can be performed synchronously with the film. The rest of his score makes surprising use of excerpts from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* arranged symphonically—absurd in the abstract but effective in the result.

Carmen was often adapted to film in the silent era (in, for example, a "film d'art" with Regina Beudet, in 1909; a version with Theda Bara and another with Geraldine Farrar, both in 1915; *A Burlesque on Carmen* by Chaplin, in 1926, with Edna Purviance; a version by Lubitsch in 1918, with Pola Negri; and a film by Jacques Feyder in 1926, with Raquel Meller). The answer to why there were so many versions does not necessarily lie in the opera's strictly musical qualities. Rather, its heroine

fit in well with the fatal, rebellious, and independent spirit of the era's stars, who embodied active, dangerous, and sensual women. An opera generally offers richer situations than a stage play, more numerous possibilities for exterior settings and scenes with spectacular effects. The interventions of choruses, crowds in movement, and wild natural settings are rare in nineteenth-century theater, even including melodrama. But they do figure in opera, and so silent film drew on opera for its stories and the ingredients it offered: historical or exotic settings, sensuality, passion, history, grand frescoes, and picturesque details—in a word, everything the public wanted.

As we shall see, the silents' debts to music and opera were even more profound, since some of the greatest directors, from Gance to Murnau, dreamed of making cinema nothing less than an opera for the eyes. This ideal also entailed making film a grand performance with special music, which could be manifested in various ways, including both arrangements of preexisting pieces and original scoring.

ORIGINAL MUSIC FOR SILENT FILMS

These days much is made of original scores for silent films, less because of their statistical dominance (according to Lothar Prox, original scores figured in only 1 percent of world silent film production) than as the good exception, valued over what was supposedly the bad habit, compiled music. In reality, the label is often deceptive. The original score by Giuseppe Becce for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920, directed by Robert Wiene) is in many places a rather weak pastiche of famous Romantic selections, and we might well judge that Ildebrando Pizzetti's tailoring of Gluck pieces for *Cabiria* yielded a far more vibrant result.

Directors were and still are divided between those who advocate original music, valuing the uniqueness of the score, and those who follow the irresistible desire to include preexisting music that inspires their own work. Take the more modern case (among a thousand others) of Fellini, who couldn't help requesting each of his successive composers—Nino Rota, of course, then after Rota's death Luis Bacalov, Nicola Piovani, and Gianfranco Plenizio—to include an allusion at some point to the song "Je cherche après Titine." Kubrick was attached

to Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* and Johann Strauss's "The Blue Danube," both of which he introduced into *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). These directors were preceded decades earlier by Griffith: for *The Birth of a Nation*, he collaborated with Joseph Carl Breil to produce a compilation of orchestral pieces that included Northern and Southern patriotic tunes and the inevitable "Ride of the Valkyries." One of the rare directors to get into the weeds with music, Griffith also wrote one of the themes for his 1919 melodrama *Broken Blossoms*.

For Abel Gance's *Napoleon*, presented at the Paris Opera in a three-and-a-half-hour version in 1927, Arthur Honegger prepared original scoring combined with excerpts from the symphonic repertoire. But since Gance continued to reedit his film until the last minute, Honegger tired of having to constantly rework the music and so he boycotted the premiere, turning over the baton to another maestro. Moreover, for his contribution he had drawn from his own previous compositions, including, for example, his theme for Gance's *La Roue* (*The Wheel*, 1923) and a piece he had written for an actualities film. Here we see a strategy of reuse that should be familiar to those who know the history of baroque music.

For the 1981 restoration of *Napoleon* two scores were prepared concurrently: one by silent-film-score specialist Carl Davis that consists of a patchwork of classical music (Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, Corsican songs, etc., as well as an opera by Giovanni Paisiello, *Nina*, for which Napoleon had a fondness), and the other by Carmine Coppola, Francis's father. In chapter 3 I further discuss the phenomenon of music for screenings of silent films for contemporary audiences.

The twenties saw many more original scores. For René Clair's Dadaist short *Entr'acte* (1924), made to be screened during the intermission of Picabia's ballet *Relâche*, Erik Satie—who also plays a small part onscreen—wrote his famous music. Paul Hindemith collaborated in 1928 on Hans Richter's experimental film *Ghosts Before Breakfast*. In 1925 Florent Schmitt wrote a huge musical accompaniment—he got no fewer than three orchestral suites out of it—for a silent version of *Salammbô*. Raymond Bernard's *The Miracle of the Wolves* (1924) enjoyed original music, including a chorus, by Henri Rabaud. Darius Milhaud composed a score for *L'Inhumaine* (*The New Enchantment*, 1924), Marcel L'Herbier's feature film, whose sets were designed by none other than

Fernand Léger. In 1932 Prokofiev wrote a sparkling score for a satirical film about bureaucracy, *Lieutenant Kije*; a five-movement suite from the score rapidly became a standard part of the orchestral repertoire. In Kozintzev and Trauberg's *The New Babylon* (1929), an epic evocation of the Paris Commune, Dmitri Shostakovich quotes Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* and *Orpheus in the Underworld* for scenes showing the bourgeoisie, as well as an old French song. In a word, in the 1920s a good number of concert composers wrote for films just as naturally as they did for dance. But of course the conditions under which their works were presented could not have satisfied them. Similarly, numerous silent films by Lang, Murnau, Walsh, and Eisenstein (e.g., *The Battleship Potemkin*, 1925, with music by Edmund Meisel) contained "original music" that reached audiences only in privileged circumstances.

Later, Milhaud expressed the problem aptly: "What happened back when a composer wrote a special score for a film? Only a few great filmmakers could have an orchestra big enough to perform it, and then in the small towns, the film would be shown with some sort of musical adaptation and the score would disappear." Hence his hopes for the talking film: its score "will be recorded forever and will be heard everywhere at the same time the film is seen."[30] What Milhaud could not foresee was that the survival of the music in the body of the film would bring a serious limitation: it would henceforth remain fixed once and for all in a specific form that was not necessarily ideal but a result of the conditions of its recording.

But silent cinema had its own problems, and dreamed of having music that would not be at the mercy of the various ways theaters exhibited it. Before Milhaud, Fernand Le Borne, who conducted the inaugural screening of *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*, with original music by Saint-Saëns, voiced the problem in 1918: "I would say we made the mistake of not demanding the performance of our music from the people who rented or purchased these films, so that even though it was printed, it fell into oblivion."[31] Composer Michel-Maurice Lévy (nicknamed "Bétove") recalled other material contingencies. "Musical adaptation for films was only possible for films exhibited in exclusivity. In places where the movies changed weekly, the orchestra conductor, who only had a ridiculously short time (one single rehearsal on Friday afternoon) to rehearse for the first show of the evening, could not

compose the musical patches connecting passage X from the Franck Symphony to passage Y of the 'Marche des Titis' and so the players had to stop to change pieces."[32] He continues by saying that it was possible to produce a good-quality musical adaptation specific to the situation if certain financial and material conditions prevailed.

Lévy recalls an experience that sobered him on this point:

> I composed the music for the fourth part of Abel Gance's film *The Tenth Symphony*. For several months I had followed the filming and took inspiration from it. But the remuneration for my efforts was quite mediocre. My work was performed at the screening in deplorable conditions. Since the company that released the film decided to cut scenes without letting me know beforehand, the music ended up totally out of place. In addition—also to save money—the orchestra didn't get sufficient rehearsal time, and it made for the loveliest cacophony.[33]

MUSIC AND "PURE CINEMA"

As I have already suggested, music in silent cinema was not limited to "acoustically present" music (by which I mean music seen beneath the screen and heard in the theater space). It could be situated *in the frame*, where creators such as Murnau, Eisenstein, Epstein, and Gance tried to make "music" transmuted into moving images. Never was the cinema so ready to achieve this than when "real" music, which is more infirm and less "ideal," played beneath the screen, as a condition for such transmutation. Indeed, through its very imperfection, real music enhanced the "music" that was accorded ideal and immaterial status in the image. A consideration of this paradox (which really isn't one) will allow me to finish out my discussion of this period.

In its most sublime efforts, such as Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921), Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), and Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928), silent cinema gave the illusion of absolute purity, but not the reality of it. Why? Because such masterpieces, symphonies for the eyes with prodigious plays of rhythms, presupposed the presence of musical accompaniment to support them (whether well or badly), and had the advantage of being perceived as not consubstantial with the accompaniment, even while it

was indispensable to them.[34] This is an astonishing formula: an art-work that predicates another complementary element in order to be complete—even while it is understood that this other element is not an integral part of it and is liable not to be up to the same aesthetic level. Music for the silents attracted opprobrium like a magnet. It was always possible to imagine a music that was so merged with the film that it would become inseparable. But as people came to realize, although it was easy to dream of it, it would prove more difficult to achieve.

Today music exacts cruel revenge on silent cinema; people present film-concerts that are basically vehicles for techno or avant-garde music, where the music takes off from the film and sometimes parasitizes it.

The silent film is self-sufficient without any music. A spectator can feel complete satisfaction and the greatest aesthetic pleasure watching a film by Dreyer or Kirsanoff in the complete absence of any recorded or live music. I remember the silent screening (silent if you subtract audience noises) where I first saw *Sunrise* and witnessed the miracle of a silence inhabited by a thousand sounds, a thousand vibrations ema-nating from the image and revealing themselves to spectators who sim-ply opened their eyes to them.

At the same time, it is convenient and aesthetically too easy to ignore that *Sunrise* and silent film in general were only possible, as great *pop-ular* art, with what is conventionally called musical accompaniment but which in fact was really musical guidance or *management*. Music pro-vided an indispensable scaffolding, even though some felt it to be increasingly unnecessary to the development of cinema.

What art strives for purity and for the absolute so early in its devel-opment (historian Roland Cosandey showed how quickly the idea of pure cinema took root, in the spirit of an era that sought to apply this notion to all the arts), and at the same time is constrained to rely on another, already existing art, as if still unsteady on its legs . . .

The simple experiment of making "pure films," without any accom-panying music, when there was a fervent and receptive audience for them in the twenties, was rarely attempted by artists of absolute cinema—and they could hardly be accused of timidity or lack of radi-calism. Paradoxically, they often chose some of the most commonly known music to go with their films. The "absoluteness" of silent cinema is thus founded on an illusion: it assumed the presence, the chaperon-ing, even the parasitizing of an external element, namely, music, at once

integrated and nonconsubstantial, and in this way it attracted the element of contingency.

Let us add that music is not the sole factor in the illusion of purity. Aside from the well-known rare examples of works with no, or very few, intertitles (like Murnau's *The Last Laugh*), *text* obviously appears in most silent films in the form of intertitles, as a contingent and removable element not "absorbed" into the visuals. Intertitles created gaps in the visual continuum, and they set some people dreaming about what it would be like if they were eliminated. Text and music, read and heard as dissociated from "the film," were thus isolated from the cinema they were indispensable to, and preserved the myth of a pure cinema. This dissociation also allowed films to circulate freely in all countries, since text and music could be adapted to the languages and musical traditions of different countries.

Upon the advent of sound film, which might more precisely be called film with recorded and synchronized sound, text most often took the form of audible dialogue and music usually became inseparable from the film. (As we have seen, some music was not inseparable, allowing for dubbing of the music in the same way voices are dubbed.) But there were different effects of incorporating into film the two elements that had until then been conveniently put aside. The voice, perceived at first as an intrusion of too much naturalism—grafted on—was adopted for good, to the point of becoming (shall we say) inaudible, an absent object, "disappeared" or "spirited away," simply a vehicle of text, of acting, of emotion.[35] On the other hand, music, for obvious cultural reasons (the very term "music," and its very nature), would continue to be felt as separable even though it was indispensable.

Starting with the sound film, music would finally set foot onto the ground of the film and be incorporated physically into it, a step that would generate new contradictions in turn.

JEAN EPSTEIN AND PURE CINEMA

To illustrate the silent era's obsession with pure cinema, recall the case of Jean Epstein (1897–1953), one of the most important of the filmmakers who envisioned a transmutation of the naturalistic film image into something close to music. His beautiful *Coeur fidèle* (*The Faithful*

Heart, 1923), a social melodrama about a young orphan girl beaten by a thuggish drunk but loved by a dockworker, "achieves for me," he explained, "what I have called the *photogénie* of movement. . . . During the silent era, when speech did not submit the rhythm of editing to its own rhythm, we could truly endow the editing with the rhythm that seemed cinematically necessary to the film."[36] Note this crucial remark, for it was in structuring the sound film around speech, by creating a kind of ongoing *recitative* around speech, that the sound film (especially in Hollywood) would find a different musicality. It would be some time before new initiatives, both experimental and commercial, would allow editing to escape speech again and redis-cover rhythmic principles that were not necessarily subjugated to the pace of editing itself—in Tarkovsky and Fellini, for example, where rhythm is created inside the shot by moving elements independent of speech and the scansions of editing.

The carnival sequence in *Coeur fidèle* embodies Epstein's cinematic thinking. It is treated as pure movement, a bravura set piece of editing and impressions entirely in the spirit of the symphonic tableau, like those found in Murnau of the 1920s (e.g., the dazzling Luna park sequence of his *Sunrise*).

Epstein continues in his book *Esprit de cinéma*, revealing his very sys-tematic thinking: "I maintain a rule: each time I am not hampered [*sic*] by speech or by action within a shot, I only edit shot lengths that have a simple interrelation, exactly as in music. And it's all the more perceivable when the shots we use are shorter."[37] He was convinced that the montage sequences in Gance's *La Roue* obey this principle, which amounts to treating shot lengths like half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes. But this approach is valid only if there is no autonomous rhythmic element or complex movement within the shot, so that it can remain the equivalent of a note. We see how some filmmakers could be caught in the contradiction between movement within the shot and the rhythm created by editing.

Incidentally, these speculations are not limited to "artistic" or "elit-ist" films. They were also of interest to popular filmmakers, such as Hitchcock or Sergio Leone.

After the coming of sound Epstein had difficulty continuing in this vein. However, he did make some shorts of "filmed songs," music

videos before the fact; and he created the lyrical documentary *Le Tempestaire* (1947), shot at Belle-Île, off the Brittany coast.[38] In *Le Tempestaire*, whose "sound score" he entrusted to Yves Baudrier, Epstein applied ideas he had previously articulated regarding the expressive possibilities of aural slow motion. His precise and fascinating writings describe his interest in extending to sound the possibilities offered by the image: "The Futurists . . . had been the first to imagine that the sound domain too could produce the marvelous and the unusual. They ventured some experiments in noise music that proved inexpressive because this music relied on no instrument—not even a phonograph— capable of powerfully interpreting the noises, defamiliarizing them to make them surprising and uncanny. Yet cinema represents a means of surrealizing sound . . . [It] opens the way to the sonic materializations of the fantastic directly extracted from reality."[39]

Here is more proof that artistic evolution is a question of mindset, not just of technical resources. At the time Epstein was writing these lines so evocative of musique concrète, the cinema possessed an excellent tool for editing sounds, that is, optical film—a technical means that musicians never thought to make use of. However, in his writings as in his films, Epstein seems to have more or less forgotten about the perceptual as well as the technical specificity of sound film. One technique (playing a recording at slower speed) has radically different effects depending on whether you apply it to images or to sound. Because of his "forgetting" this concrete reality, his films tend to suffer the consequences; the soundtrack has a drabness that does not do justice to the film's beautiful conception.

THE INVENTION OF CHRONOGRAPHIC CINEMA

A small three-letter Greek preposition, *syn-* (with, together), has played a large part in film history. Scattered experiments in *synchronous* ("at the same time") projection of visual and aural recordings were relaunched in earnest in the mid-1920s. At first the idea had not been so much to make films talk as to improve the coordination between music and image, to synchronize the two channels better

for their union and collaboration and to have better control over specific effects.

At the time, radio was rapidly becoming widespread, and it began to air many music programs. Each radio station did music broadcasts with its own house orchestra playing live, as well as song recitals. Radio thus familiarized listeners with the experience of listening at home through a loudspeaker to music that was sweetly sentimental or dynamically lively. Radio dramas, punctuated by dramatic music that was often specially composed or arranged (Bernard Herrmann started out as a radio-drama composer in the 1930s), revived the tradition of melodrama. Radio drama proposed a formula different from that of the silent film: the music was no longer continuous but alternated with speech—speech coming out of a loudspeaker, actually heard, not implied from images and titles. It makes sense that the same listener who went to the movies could be attracted by the prospect of hearing a good broadcast orchestra and amplified voices.

Thus what was invented, consciously, was not the idea of sound-image synchronization (an idea that goes back to Edison's kinetophone and similar devices, as we have seen), but new or improved processes such as sound on an editable recording medium, ensuring true synchronization that would last longer; relying on the miracle of electrical amplification, it achieved much better quality with more power. It wasn't yet talking pictures, simply the technical process that would very soon enable the talkies. For the moment it was considered an improvement at the cinema's present stage of evolution, which is to say silent film with musical accompaniment. Synchronized music recording also meant economic rationalization: flesh-and-blood orchestras—which had variable quality and incurred considerable expense—were replaced by one single performance recorded for all the film's prints. The music was henceforth married to the film.

The indirectness of the sound revolution—since it took two years for recorded sync sound to be used for dialogue—has today become a theme for historical argument and controversy, a little like the mystery of the Iron Mask.[40] Some people, attached to the conventional word "talkie," end up saying that ultimately there is no justification for seeing a revolution or a rupture in the coming of sound . . .

The truth is that a revolution certainly did occur in 1926–1927. But the revolution did not take place where expected, and certainly not in the domain where people retroactively placed it. In my view, the revolution did not (at the outset) involve speech: the great shift was the phenomenon of recorded and amplified sound in sustained synchronization with moving images. This advance obliged the cinema *to stabilize the recording and playback speed of its images*. And that stabilization in turn allowed the cinematic art (the fixing of movement) to become a *chronographic art* (fixing time) as well. Until then, film rate had not been standardized and could noticeably fluctuate between shooting and projection with some degree of leeway. Sound no longer allowed this leeway, because any variation in speed resulted not only in a change in tempo (as for the image) but also changes in pitch. Sound made it necessary to produce the first motorized editing consoles. Silent film had edited movements and rhythms, not absolute temporal values. It is for this latter reason that a silent Tarkovsky (to cite an artist who made the cinema an art of "sculpting in time") would not be conceivable.

What should we call the cinema that was inaugurated in 1926 and that continues today along the same lines? It should be identified not only as sound film—a name contested by those who say, not without reason, that film beforehand already had sound, the sound of music played during screenings, together with sound effects and, in many cases, commentary. Nor should we call it "talking pictures"—a term that did not yet apply to it, and would not always be appropriate afterward. To be truly precise, we should call it "cinema with stabilized speed and recorded-amplified-synchronized sound"—in sum, an "audio-logo-visual synchrono-cinematograph."

What was being conveyed through this new means is another issue. The fact is that originally, the so-called sound film was conceived at Warner Bros. as the way to distribute the film with its music. Music would henceforth no longer be contingent; it might vary in each exhibition venue depending on local equipment and acoustics and other factors, but the music was now fixed to it, synchronous and recorded. And it has remained this way in most cases, even if today we see considerable efforts to recreate "live" film screenings, with music in the auditorium.

In the long run, music saw a redefinition of its role in films not just because it was now present in actual recorded form (a fact that most writings on film music, often too preoccupied with the score and the notes played, and not enough with the henceforth substantive and fixed nature of the music, do not sufficiently take into account), but also because it had to renegotiate its position with relation to dialogue and sound effects that were now actually heard. And this led to new problems and responses.

Broadly speaking, in the new sound film, music was reserved for sequences when an actual element in the action or setting justified it (a record player, radio, player pianos, singers, musicians), or when the film was inspired from forms of musical theater such as the operetta and comic opera, by transposing the works into a specific cinematic framework of space and time. (Among practitioners of this kind of adaptation were Rouben Mamoulian, René Clair, Ernst Lubitsch, and G. W. Pabst.) However, fairly quickly, the coexistence (not just alternation) of music and speech would find its language, its forms, and its balance.

Let us review technical aspects of several stages of this evolution that was so unpredictable and complex. The American Lee de Forrest, and the Danes Petersen and Poulsen, are pioneers of this history because of their invention of sound-on-film. As opposed to sound-on-disc, which was adopted for the first feature-length sound films at Warners and quickly abandoned because of its inconvenience, sound-on-film printed the sound on the perforated celluloid film and therefore it could be edited more easily. In 1924 one of the first films to synchronize optical sound onto film starred the Metropolitan Opera's basso Leon Rothier, who sang "La Marseillaise." William Fox used a different sound-on-film process, the Fox-Case system. This process was used to record the music for *What Price Glory?*, in 1926.

VITAPHONE AND MUSIC

The October 27, 1926, issue of *Variety*, the daily publication for American show business, saluted Vitaphone on its front page. What was Vitaphone? It was both a production process and a projection system that

allowed strict synchronization of sound with moving images in production, and then, in movie houses that purchased the equipment, to play sound and moving images synched together. But sounds and images of what? Although the name of the system does not specify it, the first efforts at sound film clearly reveal that the concern was to let audiences hear not so much spoken dialogue as music (accompanied singing or instrumental pieces, and in some cases sound effects). The first feature-length sound film is a "silent" film whose music is recorded: an adaptation of *Don Juan* directed by Alan Crosland and starring the legendary actor John Barrymore (1926). William Axt compiled the score for it, and it is heard through most of the film, performed by the New York Philharmonic.

Aside from the feature, the program showing off the new Vitaphone system included synchronous musical shorts: instrumental solos, songs, and opera ensembles performed by famous artists of the time, as well as a filmed speech delivered by the president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Will Hays, who declared, "In the presentation of these pictures, music plays an invaluable part. The motion picture, too, is a most potent factor in the development of a national appreciation of good music. That service will now be extended, as the Vitaphone shall carry symphony orchestration to the town halls of the hamlets. . . . To the Warner brothers to whom is due credit for this, the beginning of a new era in music and motion pictures, I offer my felicitations and my sincerest appreciation."[41]

"A new era in music and motion pictures": Hays' speech plays to both vistas, acknowledging music for motion pictures' "accompaniment," and also music in itself as a cultural object. Cinema needs music to present films—i.e., to showcase them—but film can also provide a showcase for "good music." His defense of good classical music was not disinterested: the industry aimed to gain a bourgeois and distinguished audience for the movies. The middle class had been reticent regarding an entertainment often considered low or indecent.

The Vitaphone process was founded on both the application of electronic amplification yielding better-quality sound and the engraving of sound on discs read by turntables that were electrically synchronized with the camera during shooting and with the projector at screening. Warners used this process in film production until 1931, before optical

sound (sound-on-film), which was more practical, especially for editing, came to dominate.

Let us return to Will Hays's inaugural speech. Its form is quite similar to what would subsequently be a filmed or broadcast speech like the thousands upon thousands that would eventually be recorded. But some small differences, regarding the relation between the orator and the movie camera, show how the amplified and synchronized sound of speech may have been experienced at the time, and thus why a direct jump into dialogue film was not necessarily an obvious step for the narrative film.

Hays addresses his recorded speech to us , but instead of addressing *the camera* as his intermediary to us, as we would expect today (and as Chaplin would do in *The Great Dictator* [1940]), he addresses the whole of the auditorium, as if the room's audience were present and as if he were present to them. He turns his head here and there, and directs hand gestures that accompany his speaking to the right, center, and left of this virtual auditorium. In sum, although he is recorded, Hays plays the card of real-time broadcast in a simulation of live address. Rick Altman's research has furnished us a luminous way to see this choice by demonstrating that in many respects, the sound film (what I have called the audio-logo-visual synchrono-cinematograph) would have been lived, felt, and theorized at the time as a *broadcast*, and not like the presentation of a work.

This is how one might explain the fact that the narrative processes of the silent feature film had been unable to directly and immediately adapt to real sound. Silent film created a specific space-time, analogous in some ways to literary and novelistic space-time; sound film would make it possible for dialogue to be heard, and for the implied or internal voices of literary fiction simply to be heard too, rendering unnecessary the often-frequent interruptions by intertitles in the silents. Heard dialogue, especially in tandem with the visuals, must have produced a vivid impression of liveness, immediacy, presence. Some of the first medium-length 100-percent-talking films, like *Lights of New York* (1928) in the US or *The Three Masks* (1929) in France, feel like filmed theater, not only because they play out in confined spaces analogous to a theater stage, but also because they seem to me to give us the sense of

being present at the broadcast of a play performance, in "real time," a transmission rather than a recreation. This also explains why, in these "broadcasts," music took a while to redefine its place.

The program presented by Will Hays consisted mainly of filmed classical music and singing. The only concession to light music was a segment with a short fellow named Roy Smeck playing a solo on Hawaiian guitar and then on ukulele. Seated on a bench on a small-village stage set, Smeck is filmed in a static long shot; he assiduously strums his instruments with an expressionless face as he concentrates (announcing one of the problems that would be encountered in filming classical music: the instrumentalists' inexpressiveness).

Because today we are used to seeing the pace of visual editing normally follow the music's rhythm and tempo, there can be something comical in a contrast between the speed of Smeck's playing and the static quality of the image, accentuated by the long shot. When in Marx Brothers movies several years later the basically static camera fixes on Chico playing the piano with his wacky fingering, or Harpo virtuosically plucking a harp piece, the tighter framing on the player aims more to emphasize the image's mobile dynamic element, the hands and the arms, and particularly, as an important focal point, the musician-actors' laughing eyes—eyes that have learned to play *to* the camera, as well as *on* their instrument.

As the highlight of the 1926 Vitaphone program, the audience got to view opera arias filmed and recorded in a studio. In particular, the famed tenor Giovanni Martinelli swept moviegoers off their feet with arias from *Il trovatore* and *Aida*, and especially with "Vesti la giubba," from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, where Martinelli is seen in costume, singing as if on an opera stage. The coloratura soprano Marion Talley met with less success in the aria "Caro nome," from *Rigoletto*, because, according to some, the recording system hardly favored her feminine register. Did the absolute, extreme quality of the female singing voice in its greatest moments threaten to be exposed under the magnifying glass of the microphone?

For Talley's aria, Warners also attempted both audio and visual editing, which was absent from the other filmed arias. As Richard Koszarski writes,

Modern screens are perforated to allow the loudspeakers to be placed behind the image, but this was not the case in 1926. At the *Don Juan* premiere the speakers were in the orchestra pit, and possibly at the sides of the screen as well. [Marion] Talley, singing the "Caro Nome" aria from *Rigoletto*, was seen in closeup as well as in long shot; critics were baffled by a change in the volume of her voice that accompanied this "movement" of the apparent sound source. *Variety* found that "at close range . . . her voice sounded away from her, to the side or rear." Richard Watts, Jr., felt "there were times when the sound seemed to come not from Miss Talley's mouth, but from some point behind her." The position of the speakers never changed, but reviewers had not yet learned to allow for this fact in their experience of a talking film.[42]

The Vitaphone program offered another novelty, by presenting the first filmed orchestra piece in film history, the *Tannhäuser* overture performed by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Henry Hadley. The sequence alternated establishing shots of the orchestra with closer shots of instrument groups. The program notes, as well as some critics, remarked on the pedagogical value of this technique of showing the instruments. Multicamera shooting was involved, so that the production did not have to do multiple takes and run-throughs. The multicamera system permitted the variation of angles and scales without requiring complex sound editing, which was very difficult at the time, as it would continue to be through movies of the early sound era, including filmed theater.

After this event, Fox added recorded musical accompaniment to several silent films. William Wellman's *Wings* (1927), a story of two pilots' friendship compromised by romantic rivalry during World War I, was shot silent and then distributed with a soundtrack that had sound effects in addition to J. S. Zamecnik's score. Zamecnik's orchestral arrangement would continue to be played live in the big theaters that still maintained their orchestras, while Paramount, which produced the film, only took out a copyright on a piano reduction of the score.

In April 1927 the Fox company launched *Movietone News*, the first sound newsreels, which were in fact largely *musical* newsreels shot with little sync sound. Because equipment for optical sound recording was very heavy and required a lot of electric power until the 1950s,

it was very difficult to record outdoors without a specially equipped truck, either plugged into power or traveling with its own generator. Such conditions were not amenable to recording news events, whereas silent portable cameras had been around for a long time. For years afterward, newsreels, almost all filmed silent, would require postrecorded sound effects taken from sound libraries (particularly for war newsreels) and would have orchestral musical accompaniment. Television, too, long maintained this principle for its news, even when portable tape recorders were invented and made it possible to capture audio in all places and circumstances.

A DIFFERENT SENSE OF THE MOVIE THEATER

It is no accident that the subject of the first synchronized sound feature, *Don Juan*, had long been honored in opera. Cinema dreamed of presenting complete filmed operas. However, considering the technical difficulty of such an enormous enterprise, producers limited themselves to excerpts, especially since they were not certain to attract a sufficiently large audience to guarantee a return on their investment. One advantage of filmed opera excerpts, such as the quartet from *Rigoletto*, was that they could be combined with lighter fare in variety programs. Several theaters also began to replace the "musical attractions" put on by live performers at the beginning of shows by projections of Vitaphone shorts, which offered the same ingredients of spectacle—dances, songs, virtuoso numbers—in a new form that was often less expensive, since they were recorded. Having shorts made it possible to adapt the program to the assumed tastes of the audience in specific venues and cities. As Charles Wolfe explained, "Unlike 'A' features, which tended to open with some fanfare, then moved through a carefully orchestrated pattern of first-run and zone-clearance distribution before being withdrawn, the Vitaphone shorts were treated less as motion-picture events than as a commercial library of recorded performances—phonograph records with visual accompaniment—that could be rented and replayed on a continuing basis."[43]

When there were orchestras in these shorts, the performers and conductors mimed being present in the house, in the same mode as Will Hays's speech. For example, at the beginning and ending of some films, viewers would see the conductor bow in various directions and not just toward the camera, as if he were standing in a real auditorium where the film was being projected.[44]

This convention of acknowledging the audience had long been abandoned for silent-film screenings. So it seems the music that was issuing now not from instruments visible in the auditorium's orchestra pit but from loudspeakers, in a way making the music exist in the whole room, created an *other consciousness* of the movie theater for a time, for lack of a visual anchor of spatial magnetization.

This was neither the first nor the last time that music would recreate the projection space. Dolby sound in the first rock films of the 1960s and 1970s would generate precisely the same sensation.

MUSIC MASTERED

Some composers' memoirs give us a "professional" view of the recordings of the era. Darius Milhaud wrote: "By 1927, I had heard the Vitaphone in New York. . . . It was an extremely long film with Sydney Chaplin.[45] The symphonic adaptation, played by the philharmonic orchestra, drowned your ears with a dense, slightly muddled sound, a kind of sonic fog full of good intentions but which left you unsure and confused. Then, as a demonstration, you heard a jazz piece, a singer accompanied by a piano, a flight of seagulls with their cries, the roar of an airplane engine, a string quartet. A kind of decongestion followed, you could breathe better. . . . The mistake was the idea of using the large orchestra."[46]

Milhaud, like most composers and technicians of the period, recalls here that writing a score made to be recorded requires the composer to use specific criteria of orchestration. He applied these criteria to his own film work, in, for example, Renoir's *Madame Bovary* (1934). For Cavalcanti's film *La P'tite Lili*, he specified that he had "used an orchestra technique that was specially adapted to the current demands of the microphone (not using the oboe, which does not

sound good, moderate use of the flute, which is often weak, and also going easy on timpani and percussion).” He prognosticated that such constraints would soon be eclipsed with progress in microphone technology. But he deplored that the German company where he was working, Tobis, which pioneered the development of sound film in Europe, was not equipped with an efficient synchronization system; so the orchestra conductor had to record a number of takes of a given sequence at diverse tempi, and then choose the one that fit best. Later, several processes, including conducting the score in front of a screen where the edited film is projected in fragments, would solve this problem. Finally, Milhaud marveled at the new capability to eliminate an off-key note from a horn, say, by replacing it with a good note from a different recording.

As for directors, many were obviously excited about their new ability to control the musical element by incorporating it into the film, when for silent films they had generally had no such control. Some filmmakers, such as Renoir, benefited from the artistic choice to have hardly any music when they deemed it appropriate. Frank Capra remarked in his memoirs: “Now we could put our own music on the picture sound track rather than depend on the random, ‘individual scoring’ of eccentric organ players, player pianos, or barroom ivory ticklers.”[47]

THE MOVIE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

For some time after that first 1926 screening, subsequent Vitaphone productions continued to give a dominant place to filmed singing, attaining the dream recounted in Jules Verne’s 1892 novel *The Carpathian Castle*.[48]

Warners made the first so-called talking feature, *The Jazz Singer*, around a popular singer of the era, Al Jolson; the film’s success decisively determined the future of sound cinema. *The Jazz Singer* tells the story of Jakie Rabinowitz, the son of a synagogue cantor. Despite his father’s opposition, Jakie persists in his ambition to be a successful jazz singer. He changes his name to Jack Robin, and sometimes dons minstrelsy blackface when he performs. The movie feels strange to

today's audience because it alternates between silent-film mode (the text of dialogue is presented in intertitles, and orchestral music accompanies the story) and a number of scenes shot with a live mic, with popular and religious songs synched to the action onscreen. The sole moment of "talking" consists of Jakie's (Jolson's) scrappy, playful monologue when he visits his mother, promising her that when he's rich and famous, he'll move her out of Brooklyn and shower her with presents. He plays and sings Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" for his mother—first at a moderate pace and then in keyboard-slapping "jazzy" rhythm. Apparently the audience was particularly struck by the highly symbolic moment when Jakie's stern bearded father interrupts his performance with a "Stop!"—plunging the film back into silence. It is silent not only because the singing and talking stops, breaking the vocal continuity, but also because, for several long seconds, all audible sound whatsoever ceases, before the recorded musical accompaniment (in "silent film" mode) starts up again, with a symphonic climax borrowed from Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* overture. Let us note, with Michel Marie, that Jolson improvised his one-minute-twenty-second spoken monologue, and while "the mother responds only in monosyllables and remains confined in voiceless representation, that of the silent cinema,"[49] Jolson's monologue keeps one foot in song, since while he talks, seated at the piano, he taps out chords like an accompaniment to his speech, to his "melo-drama."

This was not the first instance of speech in film history—other spoken words had been heard in previous short and medium-length movies—but this was the decisive one. A complex and abundant period followed, with "talking," "singing," and "sound" pictures (people never referred to "musical" pictures, and for good reason, because cinema was already musical), during which the most bizarre and disparate options and approaches were tried—just as, a few decades from now, future spectators will no doubt consider some of today's approaches to new technologies and devices odd.

For a time, when people called a movie merely a "sound picture," this ambiguous term implied that it did not have spoken dialogue, only continuous musical accompaniment (even if cues were separate pieces linked together in the style of the silents) recorded and synchronized with the image, with isolated sound effects as needed. Some films produced after the triumph of "talking pictures" remained

faithful to this aesthetic, including Murnau's *Tabu* (1931). It would last until 1936, thanks to Chaplin's *Modern Times*. We can even say that such a famous work as *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) represents its continuation, at least in the many sequences that consist of images without sounds or speech, edited to instrumental or choral music conceived as distinct pieces.

What is striking today in these films (including *The Jazz Singer*) where music is said to be uninterrupted is precisely that the music is sequential. Rather than a homogeneous and constant flow, the music takes the form of a suite of distinct pieces with contrasting moods and tempi. It is this sequential conception of the silents that some carried over into the sound film, and which we find even in a French film shot silent with sound added later, *Prix de beauté* (*Miss Europe*, 1930), directed by Augusto Genina, with Louise Brooks "sonorized" with the voice of Hélène Regelly. The aesthetic is reinforced by the practice of combining well-known tunes, popular pieces, classical themes, and so forth in the course of a single film, somewhat like contemporary road movies that feature songs of various genres under the pretext that the characters are traveling in a car and listening to the radio. In a reaction against this sequential model, composers in the 1930s attempted to create a more continuous musical fabric, melded with the film into a kind of musical recitative. These efforts were conducted through trial and error, in fits and starts.

MUSICIANS OUT OF WORK

Silent cinema's transformation into talking pictures took place at differing rates in different countries, depending on the available technology and geographical, political, and economic factors. It happened speedily in the United States.

Film exhibition often relied on hybrid regimes during the transition period. For example, the movie-house orchestra would continue to play at some points in the show, while at other times a phonograph recording would play what was called mechanical music.

Some were not at all angry that movie orchestras would henceforth be recorded. The composer Louis Aubert tried to reassure anxious music lovers by writing that the sound film, far from debasing musical accompaniment, would bring them "double joy. They can already be

confident that they will no longer hear their favorite composers mangled and betrayed by mediocre musicians, because that happened all too often. In addition, the recordings' perfection is such that the smallest nuances are reproduced and the instruments' timbres come through with all their personality."[50]

Upon the release of the first version of *Show Boat* (1929), *La Revue du cinéma* reported that exhibitors had a flesh-and-blood orchestra play along with the projection, with the excuse that they were "correcting the unpleasant aspects of mechanical music . . . To soften the unpleasant sound of the dialogue coming from the screen, the orchestra played to the room live."[51] For some projections of the French talking picture *The Three Masks* (1929), the recorded dialogue was accompanied—almost drowned out, according to some—by the orchestra playing in the theater.

This transitional period was something of a disaster for movie orchestra musicians, who were let go en masse, including thousands in Paris alone. According to *Cinémagazine*, "The unemployment that followed from the elimination of many movie orchestras, replaced by mechanical music and synchronic transmissions [*sic*], is becoming a real catastrophe."[52] The writer adds: "In the world of American musicians there is vigorous hostility brewing against the sound film; they're contemptuously calling it 'canned music.' . . . It is true that the new invention does considerable harm not only to orchestra musicians but also to instrument manufacturers. In the US about 70,000 of those who make their living from music are out of work."[53]

In Italy, resistance to the invasion of the foreign talking pictures led to a singular distribution practice. The films were made silent by cutting out the soundtrack and adding Italian intertitles; new music was arranged or composed by Italian orchestra conductors. But dubbing put an end to this practice. However, I happened to see an old dubbed version of *Citizen Kane* on Italian TV in 1995; not only were the voices Italian, but Bernard Herrmann's score had been replaced by symphonic music adapted from César Franck.

In sum, live players were doomed. This "mechanization" of film music is thematized in an early sound film, René Clair's *À Nous la liberté* (*Freedom Is Ours*, 1931), where a gigantic phonograph factory implicitly represents the end of the live movie-house musician.

Most lost their jobs, with a minority remaining in studio orchestras that recorded music for films. A few more officiated on sound stages when musicals were filmed. Indeed, since sound was often recorded directly in the studio during shooting, musicians had to play with every take, and so they could put in entire days of work in the process. A bit later, the adoption of the playback process, whereby the music is independently recorded beforehand, reduced musicians' working hours even further, since they were not needed for multiple takes.

In his second sound film, *Murder!* (1930), Hitchcock used the house orchestra of the London studio where he worked, having them play for a sequence synchronously with the shooting. They played the prelude to *Tristan*, which was supposedly issuing from a radio in the apartment of the protagonist while he shaved.

Subsequently, in imitation of the Vitaphone Symphony Orchestra, the major studios made it a point to maintain official orchestras to record movie scores. Each company's music director had the honor of composing the studio's musical logo.

The London Film Orchestra of Alexander Korda's studio, London Film, developed an excellent reputation largely due to its director, Muir Mathieson. Mathieson also solicited major symphony orchestras to record film scores. He began at London Film with productions such as René Clair's *The Ghost Goes West* (1936, music by Mischa Spoliansky) and Alexander Korda's own *Rembrandt* (1936), with Charles Laughton in the role of the painter. Mathieson's name would become associated especially with the Shakespearian film trilogy directed by Laurence Olivier; he conducted William Walton's scores for *Henry V* in 1944, *Hamlet* in 1948, and *Richard III* in 1955.

At the beginning of optical sound, filmmakers were constrained to record sound and image on the same strip of film. Since there is a lag between sound and image in projection, chaining the two together on the same support presented major difficulties for editing. Sometimes the problem was solved by having the scoring recorded by an orchestra present in the studio and by filming with several cameras. But generally the studios had to wait until 1930–1931 until they could put background music to dialogue—music that could be cut independently from the image. The new editing flexibility allowed music to serve as "connective tissue" between shots and scenes, as it had done

for the silents. By 1932 in Hollywood, dialogue, noises, and music could be recorded on separate tracks. The special-effects film *King Kong* (Merian Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, 1933) was a proving ground for the new technical arrangement, which also permitted studios to dub dialogue in foreign languages while retaining the original music. It also helped establish the principle of continuous music under dialogue. We can see *King Kong* as a landmark that represents the synthesis of the musical drama of the silent era and the naturalism of the sound film.

SINGING FILMS

The coming of sound produced a plethora of films in many countries that adapted stage plays; but also, following on the success of Al Jolson, there were many films whose stories focused on characters who were singers.

In the very beginnings of sound, the voice and the image had to be recorded simultaneously, as I have already said, and often, filmmakers used live-music dubbing or playback. For the filming in 1929 of the sound version of Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (which was also released in a silent version), a British actress, positioned off camera, spoke the lines of Czech star Anny Ondra, whose accent was deemed too strong. Similarly, a singer positioned offscreen could lend her voice to what we can call simultaneous lip-sync. A bit later, the song could be "dubbed," before playback or lip-sync was perfected in its current form.

The success of singing films in the late twenties and early thirties obviously coincided with intense exploitation in the record industry. This phenomenon had begun in the silent era—for example, Chaplin supervised recordings of his own compositions and played violin in them—but it is the singing film that gave it a new dimension. The only film music that was really marketed on records on a large scale was limited to songs and simple short themes (such as those of *The Third Man*, of 1949). Starting in the fifties, the 45 rpm record was the vehicle for some film-music recordings: just the main theme would be recorded, often with lyrics added. For many years the long-playing film-music record—before the immensely successful compilations of Ennio

Morricone's music—did not hold much interest for anyone but the most avid collectors; these LPs were often produced by fans or selfless professionals.

The singing films of the thirties also helped launch the successes of great composer-lyricist teams such as Rodgers and Hart, by exposing their songs to the mass audience.

In the screenplays of these movies, the singing voice of the male protagonist, his "organ," is often presented as a treasure hidden beneath his Everyman appearance, a treasure that surprises when it is revealed. His singing voice is located in an entirely different register and on a completely different plane of reality, of the "truth" of his being, than his speaking voice. This duality had not figured in theatrical genres like opéra comique, operetta, or vaudeville, which also alternated singing and speech. In France, one of the first big hits of the early sound film was Robert Florey's *La Route est belle* (*The Road Is Fine*, 1930), the story of a street singer who becomes a star, learns refined manners, and sings Mozart's *Don Juan*. Similarly, *La Chanson d'une nuit* (*Tell Me Tonight*, 1933), directed by Anatole Litvak and filmed in Austria, tells the story of a world-renowned opera singer (played by Jan Kiepura) who runs off to Italy to escape the pressures of fame, and who eventually has to prove his identity in a police station by singing an aria. Ramon Novarro is the hero of *Le Chanteur de Séville* (1931). The popular French opera singer Lucien Muratore stars in *Le Chanteur inconnu* (*The Unknown Singer*, 1931), directed by Viktor Tourjansky; its preposterous plot, again, involves the mask and the voice: "A singer believed dead is found in Russia with amnesia and returns to France. He gives a recital incognito, wearing a mask; he appears as a ghost to the character who had wished him dead, and to his wife who never stopped loving him."[54]

So the recurrent motif of the vocal talent couched in an ordinary-looking individual provides a narrative pretext for characters to move from one extreme of the social scale to the other, from the street to the swanky apartment. Such a formula lends itself to dramatic and comic situations, duels, dilemmas, and musical juxtapositions and contrasts. It yielded populist movies as well as films set in fashionable society; sometimes, to promote the dream of a classless society or, on the other hand, to critique such illusions, it was the element on which everything hinges. The tradition survived until the mid-1960s, and placed the

American heartthrob Mario Lanza and the Wagnerian tenor Lauritz Melchior in such roles as fisherman and trucker.

The early talkies, like the Marx Brothers themselves, were truly plebeian, raffish, populist, and insolent, and they danced with a sly smile. The singing-screen-star duo of Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald, in *The Merry Widow* (1934, based on Lehár's operetta) is typical in this respect. It dishes out caustic wit, and far from being an ideal or ethereal creature, MacDonald lends arch humor to her natural class. The sound film revived and transposed classical musical genres like Viennese operetta (a screen specialty of Lubitsch and Mamoulian), probably because of the happy balance operetta strikes between the erudite and the popular. On the other hand, the first sound films included very few operas (although as I have mentioned, Vitaphone started out by filming Verdi arias). One reason for the absence of filmed operas was that the classical singers of the era were not necessarily photogenic. (This problem would be solved later by the playback process, having an actress lend her body to a singer who provides only her voice.) Another reason: the return of the orchestra to sound films entailed technical problems. Even so, one of the most famous art films of the era is the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935) staged by Max Reinhardt and filmed by William Dieterle, with Mendelssohn's music arranged by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

The duel between longhair and jazz music in *The Jazz Singer* seems to have turned out to the advantage of the latter. Popular music got free rein for just a moment, to the detriment of classical symphonic music, which had played a major role in the silents. Their duel would continue until the mid-thirties, when American film in particular began to draw on orchestral composers and abandoned some of its musical populism.

JAZZ AND BLACK MUSIC IN AMERICAN FILM

Jazz—a word that at the time designated all dance music with swing to it—was a magical term, synonymous with the Dionysian impulse. Black artists were hugely influential when sound came to American movies, even though confined to a relatively small number of films. Films like

King Vidor's *Hallelujah* (1929), a melodrama of love, sex, religion, and murder with an entirely Black cast (in accord with ongoing segregationist practice), had a colossal public and critical impact. It is easy to critique the film's paternalistic representation of the Black man as a creature with insatiable appetites whose vital energy owes little to intellect or critical discernment. *Hallelujah* nevertheless remains an extraordinary work, particularly in the scenes with preaching and group singing, which have an intensity to them that cinema would not match for years to come.

The private and entirely personal quality of speech in most Euro-American films—each character speaks in turn—sometimes tends to limit cinema to bourgeois drama. But *Hallelujah* operates according to a principle of the collective group echoing the individual's speech in call and response, an approach that has the effect of integrating speech into the general movement onscreen. André Gide perceived this quality: "The crowd's music, songs, choruses, shouts, and interjections mix in a marvelous way with the movements of the whole, so that it is impossible to imagine the film without this musical element that makes *Hallelujah* into a kind of symphony with its own allegro, andante and largo, and presto agitato movements, where speech itself becomes a rhythmic element of the whole."[55]

In evoking rhythm and collective movement, Gide shows that he gets it; he doesn't opine about dead or scholastically defined aspects of the film ("the image," "the sound"), but focuses on what is *transsensory*—that is, rhythm and movement. I should add that *Hallelujah* was presented to the French audience without subtitles and not dubbed, so most French viewers had only a vague comprehension of the dialogue. These circumstances emphasized its operatic quality even as they limited the film's popular success in non-English-speaking countries. But if *Hallelujah* were to be released today with sound "perfected" by Dolby stereo in surround, this movie that is seen all too rarely would astonish crowds with its intensity.

Other Hollywood musical films with Black artists followed, like *The Green Pastures* (William Keighley, 1936), *Stormy Weather* (Andrew L. Stone, 1943), and *Cabin in the Sky* (Vincente Minnelli, 1943). These works were more restrained, more genteel, even as they allow us to admire such great performers as Ethel Waters, Bill Robinson,

Lena Horne, the young Cab Calloway, and the prodigious tap-dancing duo of the Nicholas Brothers, whose genius was honored all too rarely in the movies. Be that as it may, movies in the 1930s, sometimes in just one scene and often in antiseptic and ingratiating ways, preserved precious audiovisual records of some of these great performers.

THE ADVENT OF SCREEN MUSIC

In the beginning the cohabitation of noises, dialogue, and music on the soundtrack naturally led to a renewal of the uses of music. Since music, now that it could be recorded, occupied the same channel as "realistic" sounds, a great many early sound films made use of stories that caused music to arise in the action. I call this kind of music "screen music" (it is also called "diegetic music"). All the sounds could thus take on a unified status that linked them to the onscreen action; this arrangement led to a kind of "lyrical realism" that, in my opinion, has not received the consideration it deserves.

Robert Siodmak's *Abschied* (1930) is an intimist work that strikingly demonstrates the sonic inventiveness of early German sound film. The entire story takes place in a guesthouse. The young couple who live in the building have a pianist neighbor whose playing unwittingly provides appropriate musical accompaniment for a number of scenes. (Hitchcock elaborated on this idea in *Rear Window*.) In Jacques Tourneur's *Tout ça ne vaut pas l'amour* (*You Can't Put a Price on Love*, 1931), where Jean Gabin plays the part of a radio salesman and repairman, the only music we hear comes from his radio. Record players and radios naturally play an important role in many early 1930s screenplays as the occasion for meetings, communication, and confrontations between characters.

Such play with sources of music can provide the opportunity for surprising revelations and twists. In Julien Duvivier's *La Tête d'un homme* (*A Man's Head*, 1933), based on Georges Simenon's novel, a song sung by Damia keeps being heard in the killer's apartment.[56] It seems to be coming from a neighbor's radio or record player—until the camera

reveals that the great chanteuse is actually present, gracing a group of people with her singing in the apartment next door. In Renoir's *La Chienne* (1931) the only music we hear comes from a phonograph, from a child practicing piano in the neighboring apartment, and from a street singer, all of them part of the action.

Sometimes the music's episodic or fragmentary aspect and its connection to diegetic reality give these films an almost documentary, choppy feel, only allowing for occasional moments of lyricism provided by nondiegetic music, as in Jean Vigo's sublime *L'Atalante* (1934). Shy blond Juliette (Dita Parlo) marries the riverboatman Jean (Jean Dasté), perhaps expecting a life of blissful romance, but the story teaches her that life entails a constant back-and-forth between laborious reality and true love. The lyrics of the song we hear with the opening credits send out that clear notice: "We're not on the river barges to dawdle—we've got to work." Soon after, however, we hear a romantic waltz about girls whose hearts are stolen by boatmen. This love theme recurs at several turns: a modest accordion melody played awkwardly (as screen music) that's the sole accompaniment for the humble wedding of Jean and Juliette; segueing into a lyrical version for orchestra and solo saxophone when the wedding procession moves off; and still later, when Juliette has left to seek excitement in the city and Jean swims underwater in the river desperately searching for the face of his lost love.

Screen music propels the story. To entertain Juliette on the boat, old Père Jules (Michel Simon) pretends his index finger can serve as a record needle—his record player turns and music comes out (!), although it's really the cabin boy playing his accordion. Then there is the snarky peddler outfitted as a one-man band when he comes to see Juliette. Juliette's flight to Paris provides the occasion for many bits and pieces of songs and music of the city. The instances of screen music heard in the film—in dancehalls and cafes, on radios, accordions, and phonographs, and crucially, issuing from headphones and loudspeakers—are often interrupted, fleeting, rather like a big jumble in which we're constantly awaiting more discoveries, like the assortment of marvelous souvenirs Père Jules has kept from his travels. In *L'Atalante*, music does not break from reality, but extends and amplifies it.

DREAMS OF SIMULTANEITY
AND COUNTERPOINT

One of the great effects in opera consists of creating contrast through simultaneity—simultaneous representation of two elements that contrast in meaning, texture, or rhythm. This device had proven useful for either generating raw emotion or conveying a critical, didactic, or political message. An archetypal example of contrast through simultaneity is how the murder of Carmen is shown at the same time as the climax of the bullfight where Escamillo triumphs (producing what I call the "anempathetic" effect). Sound cinema can allow us to hear dialogue as we see an image that expresses the opposite, or to make us aware of a crowd far from the action by using sound. A number of early sound films take advantage of simultaneous juxtaposition for contrast or irony, and Hitchcock continued to make use of it throughout his career. Their experiments worked so effectively that most became clichés and completely lost their punch after a while. So almost everything filmmakers had dreamed of in the name of "counterpoint" became commonplace, no longer appearing bold or original.

Robert Siodmak, who brought such contrast into play in *Abschied* (see above), theorized: "Whereas silent cinema was based on relationships between the successive images, sound film takes its life from movement within the image . . . If, for example, a scene is to be filmed entirely in one shot, one should shift foreground movement (where the actors are) to the background, where furtive shadows interfere, where characters murmur unintelligible things, an instrument's melody is coming from the next room, etc."[57]

It is amusing to find here some old dramatic ideas propounded by Diderot in his speculations about theater, particularly in his *Entretiens sur "Le Fils naturel."*[58] The novelty was that Siodmak expressed the ideas via the musical term "counterpoint" (a term not often used—advisedly, since it is actually a case of simple contrast). In art, effects of contrast are disappointing by nature; they lose their power when they are used because they run into rhetorical binaries: happiness-unhappiness, slow-fast, and so forth, which tend to foreclose interpretation.

I have already noted that sound cinema made it necessary to redefine the position of music within the newly constituted realist

audiovisual world. In many talking films of the 1930s the entry of music has to be conspicuously justified by the presence of an unseen orchestra, a player piano, radio, or that device dear to movies of the period, the phonograph.[59] But this depiction of onscreen music sources did not arise solely out of concern for naturalism. Or rather, if the naturalist tendency is invoked from the outset by the idea that each sound we hear should refer to a concrete source, this choice also participates in the desire to transfigure or exalt the real through music, which permeates the world in real life.

What I am suggesting is that if music is often conceived of as something ideal, as opposed to reality that is considered prosaic, the "diegeticizing" of the musical source gives music some of the embodiment, the concreteness of reality, and material reality gains some of the ideal quality attributed to music.

MECHANICAL AND URBAN SYMPHONIES

The early sound period gave filmmakers an opportunity they had dreamed of: to bring to life some common metaphors, including the "city symphony" and the "symphony of nature." The editing of noises that finally became possible with optical sound, combined with the organizing force of musical rhythm, promised to open up a fascinating arena of experiment and expression, especially the chance to sing of modernity.

At the beginning of *Love Me Tonight* (1932), Rouben Mamoulian's musical with Maurice Chevalier, there is a montage showing Paris awakening in the early morning. We hear the sounds that go with these actions—the blows of a pickaxe, regular snores, the whoosh of a broom, the opening of windows, the strikes of cobblers' hammers, the beating of rugs, and so forth. The sounds repeat in rhythm and build on one another to form a symphony of the city neighborhood. But to me it seems rather puny. The flimsiness comes not especially from the rudimentary aspect of the era's technology (although it is true that the soundtrack's bandwidth at the time did not allow for a wide audio range), but from how the film tried to literalize for the ear the metaphor of the "urban symphony"—a phrase that doesn't designate mere

aural impressions so much as the organized, cyclic, and polyphonic simultaneity of rhythms associated with the life of the city in all its verticality, from the metro below to garrets above. *Love Me Tonight* just gives us sounds that are not very full, sounds made into signifiers, as the elements of this "symphony."

On the other hand, in "Slap That Bass," a number in *Shall We Dance* (Mark Sandrich, 1937)—which, arriving as it did in the late 1930s, had the technical advantage of much better sound definition—the noises of an ocean liner's engine room, with its rods and pistons, were created and cleverly edited into a veritable piece of musique concrète onto which Fred Astaire, playing a Russian classical dancer who has fallen for jazz, superimposes the sound of his taps. This tap-danced set piece of rhythmical sounds is, like a percussion solo, set in between refrains of Gershwin's song that are played and sung in a more classical way.

La Nuit est à nous (*The Night Is Ours*, 1930), a production filmed in both French and German versions by Carl Froelich and Henry Roussel, includes montage sequences of factory and car sounds. Émile Vuillermoz praised it in *Cinémagazine* as a true symphonic poem: "A big car manufacturer lives in a world where rhythm is king. There is rhythm to his factories: day and night, the machinery sings a beautiful symphonic poem of squeaking, grinding, and rumbling, the clang of glass or silver and the pathetic whine of iron and steel."[60] We might smile at this industrial lyricism, but it is remarkable that Vuillermoz, like Gide, understood that most everything in film is a matter of rhythm. Incidentally, he deserves praise for his lexicological precision in describing noises, compared to modern ways of approximating sound even among musicians.

A vibrant orchestrated simultaneity also dominates Dziga Vertov's famous cinematic poem *Enthusiasm* (1930), about the coal-mining area of the Donets Basin. This work makes a rhythmic montage of industrial sounds—Chaplin praised it as a musician's film. The phenomenon also figures in Joris Ivens's documentary *Philips-Radio* (1931), subtitled *Symphonie industrielle*, which went on to inspire René Clair's satiric film *À Nous la liberté*.

So the idea of bringing together humble noises and great music into a shared beat was embodied in many films. Sometimes sounds and music were combined, though more often, music emerged from the

sound, as Rick Altman has noted in elaborating on his idea of the "audio dissolve."[61] In *The Hot Heiress* (Clarence Badger, songs by Rodgers and Hart, 1931), the racket of rivets being pounded into metal beams of a skyscraper under construction sets the rhythm, and protagonist Hap starts happily singing "Nobody Loves a Riveter (But His Mother)." And in *The Cat and the Fiddle* (William K. Howard, 1934), Ramon Novarro suggests a new accompaniment for the songstress (Jeanette MacDonald), aided by the sound of the raindrops plopping into various receptacles that are placed under the leaks in her roof. This was the era when all the sounds of the film and the image worked to coalesce into a rhythmic continuum. The elements—speech, noises, music—are not yet separated out.

It's in the very opposite order—sounds emerging from music—that Fritz Lang's extraordinary crime film, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933), begins, as it connects elemental rhythms of machines and life with musical rhythm. Over the opening credits we hear a spectacularly loud and dissonant series of outbursts from the orchestra that sound positively apocalyptic. This "music" is progressively more ordered and channeled into an intense rhythmic bass, ultimately reduced to a regular beat of tympani in triple time. Then, during the opening traveling shot, through audio editing and amplification, the rhythmic musical pattern "becomes" an enormous throbbing pulsation of machines heard in an enclosed, cluttered room, where the sound visibly rattles a lamp and some bottles on a table. The music has been converted into mechanical rhythm and then pure noise. This sound, whose source is never clearly identified in the image (even if we understand that it is probably the sound of rotating turbines), is much more than an isolated matter in the story. It represents the idea of a world rhythm, powerful and physically irresistible—an idea embodied in that time by industrial machines.

Today, of course, with miniaturization, digitalization, and the crisis of industry, the world no longer appears to be moved by this elemental rhythm, this engine sound that still played such an impressive role in Satyajit Ray's admirable 1958 film *The Music Room* as the symbol of a new era. On the other hand, in our present world, rock and techno music, with its powerful bass and its hyperregular and emphatic beat, and the rhythm of the "planetary tom-tom" of TV

news logos, symbolize a rhythm that anyone with a portable camera can impose on, if not the world, at least oneself and one's immediate surroundings.

In this connection, the "beginning of the film" phenomenon found in a much more recent work, *Rain Man* (Barry Levinson, 1988), eloquently expresses the change that has occurred. As *Rain Man* opens, what seem to be rhythmic metallic sounds in the environment turn out to be the beginning of a pop song. Is this the opposite of the progression heard in Lang's *Testament of Dr. Mabuse*? The more defined the recorded musical rhythm becomes, the more it seems imposed on the external world. The music takes off from an element that first *appears as if* it's part of reality, but then it is revealed to be completely autonomous with respect to reality; it doesn't claim to express a rhythm of things, of machines. This is completely in line with our actual experience, where we carry music around with us (via smartphones with earbuds, for example), music that colors reality but does not claim to convey its underlying rhythm.

In any case, at the beginning of the 1930s, *pulsing noise* as an expression of the rhythm of modernity had an enormous presence in diverse genres of the emergent sound cinema, from popular entertainments to social-problem films. The same era that witnessed the apogee of dance musicals, where the clicking of taps plays an important part, also saw the popularity of prison films such as *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1932), *Hell's Highway* (Rowland Brown, 1932), and *The Big House* (George Hill, 1930). Their aural worlds were full of quarries where steel meets stone, the clink and clatter of mess halls, metal bars clanging in protest, and work songs. There were also films full of machine guns, such as Howard Hawks's *Scarface* (1932), and pro-worker films, some of which celebrated the "symphony of machines," others denouncing the exploitation of workers. Of course, these trends can also be explained in terms of Warner Bros.' policy of socially oriented films (as distinct from the approach of more family-oriented studios like MGM), or by pointing to the aftermath of the 1929 crash and subsequent hard times. In any case, certain subjects afford better opportunities than others to allow us to hear rhythmic noises—an effect to which Lars von Trier paid homage in his 2000 film with Björk, *Dancer in the Dark*.

Vitality, rawness, and dynamism thus characterize many of the most remarkable films of this period of the early thirties, and were abundant in the great Busby Berkeley numbers as well as in social comedies and violent crime movies.

THE WORLD IN RHYTHM

Why did shoe taps hold such a prominent place in 1930s musicals? Not merely because of a musical and choreographic style that would soon fade in popularity, but also possibly because (causality here is a matter of question) audiences loved hearing the rhythmic noise of those taps over the band's music. The tapping was generally rerecorded after shooting, by the performers themselves or other dancers. Its organized rhythm forged an alliance between "nonmusical" sound and music—an exhilarating alliance, embodying the noise of the world. If you listen to the tap-dancing sequences in films made fifteen years later, with a mature Fred Astaire or with the dashing and athletic Gene Kelly, you will observe that the sound of the taps is less foregrounded, less distinct in the mix with respect to the music, more integrated into the whole. It is as if the studios made an effort in the forties to diminish the *bruitiste* aspect of cinema, its noise aesthetic. A parallel evolution appears in the orchestration of musical numbers: after the thirties, the arrangements make the violins more prominent, and blend the rhythm into a more mellow overall sound.

The early thirties musical sequences choreographed and filmed by Busby Berkeley represent a high point in the union of cinema, words (the sequences include songs with lyrics), dance, and music, all under the sign of *rhythm*. Rather than blend in with the overall ensemble effect, rhythm is often distinctly highlighted, even hammered out—for example, by fifty pairs of dancers' feet in the stupendous massive group number in *Gold Diggers of 1935*.

Take the spectacular title number in *Forty-Second Street* (1933). To a tune by Harry Warren, it paints the modern city in all its extraordinary vitality, tragedy, and power. In a way perhaps equaled since but never surpassed, the sequence perfectly achieves what cinema has often aspired to: a tableau of the polyphony of the city, its drama, its

individual spectacles, its madness. In this ballet, with barbers, street vendors, pedestrians, cops, traffic, a mother spanking her baby, and even domestic violence, it's as if the whole metropolis is jolted, carried away by unbridled jazzy rhythm. Crime, sex, money, the city news beat: everything submits to this fundamental rhythm.

Moments like the preaching scene in Vidor's *Hallelujah* or the bravura numbers in the *Gold Diggers* series also represent an unleashing of organized power, a hymn to life coordinated and harmonized as it would seldom be in later years.

What did film bring to this impulse that the symphony, dance, or opera had not? Film could engage carnal and tangible reality with this fundamental rhythm; it could submit the entire world, the world's entire body, arteries and arterioles, veins and veinules, to its essential movement. On an unprecedented scale, cinema could fulfill Wagner's dream of organizing all of reality into rhythm. With Busby Berkeley, just as the girls are not just anonymous ciphers deployed to form geometric figures from above but also real women filmed close up (not without eroticism), so music, through Harry Warren's and Al Dubin's terrific songs that were both dynamic and tragic, was less glamorous than it would later become, more concrete and primitive, and darker, too. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that a good number of these songs are in minor keys ("Shanghai Lil," "Remember My Forgotten Man," "Forty-Second Street"), akin to pessimistic and powerful laments; they sang of nostalgia, the tragedies and grandeur of modern life, and the calamities of war.

As I have said, in this period a film was often constructed as a succession of pieces. You might call comedies and musicals of the early thirties the era's television, a kind of variety-show TV whose storyline often had the modest function of linking autonomous numbers together, the parade of artists with diverse talents forming a "program." Some critics were obsessed by the notion of unity, the idea of a seamless fusion of the film's heterogeneous elements, and did not see that the plot was merely the alibi, that it was precisely what permitted the tremendous creativity of forms *within* the juxtaposed numbers. One line of thinking in the 1950s argued that "the film musical remained planted for a long time in its original soil, the theatrical stage."[62] But although this may be the case on the superficial level of the plot, it is

not so at the level of the musical numbers themselves, which depart from the theater stage, explode it outward, metamorphose it into a sort of open, cosmic superstage in each number.

I am not remotely interested in yielding to the nostalgism of declaring that all later efforts, in masterpieces like *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), to integrate musical numbers into the story were futile or otherwise unsuccessful. However, such endeavor led to the underestimation of previous works that in their best moments can include ten or fifteen minutes of the purest cinematic poetry.

Alain Masson emphasizes that the imagery of Busby Berkeley's geometric choreographies takes its inspiration from music: "Like music, to whose iterative construction they tightly hew, [Busby Berkeley's figures] have melodic regularity (the play of geometric forms), rhythmic variety (gestural aspects), and instrumental color (the choice of concrete objects)."[63] Perhaps Masson goes a bit overboard in his use of systematic analogies, which presuppose that phenomena such as melody and timbre have their equivalents in the visual register; he is subscribing to a thesis of intersensoriality, to which I counterpose my theory of *transsensoriality*.

You cannot transpose some values of the auditory to the visual so easily. For example, a visual crescendo cannot make the screen get bigger, whereas a crescendo of sound literally expands the space it describes (and this is why music can be useful in creating a feeling of spatial enlargement or restriction). But through the play of audio-visual illusions and added value (value added by music to the image)—in other words, through a falsely synesthetic illusion—similar effects can be felt. I shall return to this point later.

THE MELODY OF THE WORLD

In a more sophisticated and intellectual way, a European film like *Allô Berlin? Ici Paris!* (*Here's Berlin*, 1932), directed by Julien Duvivier, with music by Karol Rathaus and Kurt Schröder, voices the same unanimist[64] and collective ambition as the films mentioned above, but it promotes the idea of a "world melody" more than the idea of a "world rhythm." This means that with rapid editing of images and sounds taken from

modern life (telephone, train, and so on), melodies can be created through montage.

This idea leads inevitably to meetings between the *factory*—the orchestra of progress—and *music*, either to suggest continuity and assimilation or opposition and contrast. In an early sound horror film, *White Zombie* (Victor Halperin, 1932), evil genius Bela Lugosi uses a drug to both enslave the working force of his sugarcane factory and subdue the white heroine. Noël Burch: "This parallelism . . . is echoed by the soundtrack: the mind-blowing sound effects of creaking and uncanny scraping in a nightmarish factory manned by zombie slaves are counterposed by the smooth harmonies of a piano, caressed at length by the nimble fingers of an ideally submissive woman."[65] Of course, this kind of transition was prefigured in Wagnerian opera, with the scene of the forge in the caverns of Nibelheim in *Das Rheingold*: the sound of the orchestra gradually disappears, to be replaced by the rhythm of anvils being struck, then the orchestra returns.

However, even if the success of "concrete symphonic poems" that made use of real sounds of trams, machines, and locomotives appears uneven, and even if they ran into many of the same contradictions already encountered by Eisenstein when he treated silent film images like pure ideograms, it would be a mistake to condemn the utopianism of these efforts. Not only did they help to enrich one of the most inventive and lively periods of film history, but also thanks to them, cinema succeeded in achieving aesthetic and technical mastery all the more rapidly.

MUSIC AND SPACE: THE MUSICAL CUT

The early sound period brought a wealth of experiments in working out the representational dimensions of music, in terms of diegetic space, realism, and specific relationships with the image. One example of these explorations is *The Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930). In this film, Sternberg gives both dramatic and symbolic value to *musical cuts*, which are produced when, for example, someone opens or closes a door. This effect assumes that one only need shut a door to completely shut off sound that's in an adjoining space; in any case this is the director's premise, and the spectator must accept it in spite of its unrealism.

When Professor Rath (Emil Jannings) opens the window while his pupils are working on a writing exercise in class, we hear children singing outside; soon afterward, he closes the window and the singing cuts out abruptly.

Until that point in the film, Rath is the only character who can stop music. His loss of power is figured by a long scene where he lingers in the dressing room of Lola Lola (Marlene Dietrich), the cabaret performer who will seduce him to his humiliation and eventual ruin. A sad clown and other performers constantly traipse through, each time opening and closing the door, thereby switching on or off the music being played (offscreen) onstage. The sudden starts and stops in the music, which could have been fabricated either through sound editing or by stopping the orchestra suddenly at the right moment during filming, restore a vivacity to the imperfect, bumbling playing we hear outside the door. Mixed with conversation and audience noise to form these Dionysian bursts of sound, music becomes a real, tangible object.

The abrupt switches on and off are not by any means the product of any clumsiness or technical limitations that the filmmakers decided to live with (for example, the difficulty of doing volume gradations or audio fades in this period). Far from trying to eliminate or minimize them so that they wouldn't be noticed, Sternberg actually multiplied them, creating an obsessive play of opening and closing doors to Lola's dressing room, conveying to us how impossible it would be for Rath to enjoy any intimacy with this woman.

Soon after *The Blue Angel*, Sternberg made *Dishonored* (1931), again with Dietrich, in which he tried a new experiment with musical cuts. This time Dietrich plays an Austrian ex-prostitute who turns to spying for her country. At one point she is at the piano, playing Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata at an extremely rapid and irregular pace. The film cuts between the living room where she is playing and another room where a Russian officer who has stolen in is rummaging through her affairs. This time, unlike what we see and hear in *The Blue Angel*, Sternberg does not cut the music off, but boldly varies audio level and presence depending on which room the camera shows: when we're in with the Russian, the music is muted. The result of the abrupt jumps in sound level is what I call the "X 27 effect" (so named after the French title of *Dishonored*), a device that would crop up many times in cinema thereafter.

SILLY SYMPHONIES

Animation, one domain sometimes omitted from "serious" film history, also played an important role in the early sound period. In cartoons anything can become a musical instrument, rhythm can be applied to any object, and "synchresis"[66] allows the whole construct to exist in rhythm. The "synchrono-cinematographic" cinema made this discovery possible, and its possibilities were magnified in the animated movies produced at Disney, among the marvelous revelations of the era.

When we speak of a musical film, in the dual senses of a film *with music and songs* and a film *about music*, we often forget the animated movie. And if ever there were musical films, they were above all Walt Disney's *Silly Symphonies*. In "The Skeleton Dance" (1929, by Ub Iwerks and Les Clark, where composer Carl Stalling quotes from Grieg's "March of the Dwarfs"), skeletons use their own bones as musical instruments. These cartoons reflect an era literally crazy for synchronization: every animated thing or action synchronized with a musical note *became* the music and the music became the thing. Synchresis allowed the animated world to sing and dance more easily than the filmed world, since the animated world is more malleable, abstract, and stylized. From then on, any resistance to having the world submit to rhythm and melody fell away. The glee reached its peak when objects and musical instruments started to play themselves in an enchanted "hylozoic" world (where everything is alive). For example, in "The Birthday Party" (1930), Mickey Mouse virtuosically plays the xylophone, which starts to stampede like a horse and then to play itself, jumping so as to make its keys fall back into place; the piano stool's legs turn into arms that reach up and play the keyboard; and flapping suspenders twang like a Jew's harp. Dance takes over everything in the environment, in the sensual intoxication of synchronism.

Several of the *Silly Symphonies* illustrate that pet situation of early sound films, the conflict between jazz and classical music—for example, in a musical war that ends in the reconciliation of the two realms thanks to the love between a Romeo-saxophone and a Juliet-harp. One wonders, then, if this subject ultimately served to represent the Dionysian power of music—even while mitigating it and presenting harmony as the musical antidote. We must remember that hearing a

loudly amplified rhythmic and danced music in an auditorium was still a new and thrilling experience.

At the end of the decade, the feature-length animated film *Fantasia* (1940)—more a dance film than a musical one, despite the presence of works by Dukas, Bach, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven that provided support—was considered the crown jewel of these experiments. But critics noted that *Fantasia* eliminated popular music. The Dionysian impulse, tempered and faded, became a picturesque mannered dance of fauns in Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony, or was expressed through the sophisticated barbarity of *The Rite of Spring*—which was (with the composer's agreement) submitted to a "digest" that neutered it. And if the power of the musical dynamic was represented at all, it was in a curbed and controlled way, using Dukas's "Sorcerer's Apprentice" in a sequence that emphasizes the magician subduing the elements that apprentice Mickey has been unable to control.

THE SOCIAL MUSICAL FILM

Finally, we cannot discuss this period without mentioning the numerous fascinating attempts to make film the vehicle of a new form of social operetta—pedagogical, political, and satirical, taking inspiration from the Brechtian *Lehrstück*.[67] In 1931 Pabst made a film of Brecht's and Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, in French- and German-language versions (as was common in this period, before dubbing became the dominant practice). In many cases, socially minded musicals were conceived directly for film, as Jacques Demy would do decades later with composers Michel Legrand and Michel Colombier in his dramas and musical films. Hollywood musicals often just transposed Broadway shows or compilations of preexisting songs, around which a screenplay was built. The aspiration was to make cinema into art with a message, an art of witness and struggle through song and dance. This sometimes included Warners musicals, when through Dubin and Warren's songs Busby Berkeley's girls denounced the calamities brought on by the Depression or lamented the fate of the widows of World War I veterans.

Robert Siodmak's *La Crise est finie* (*The Crisis Is Over*, 1934), filmed in French and German versions, is a social musical about a troupe

putting on a show. For *Dans les rues* (*Song of the Streets*, Victor Trivas, 1933), a drama about a boy forced by poverty into a life of crime, Hanns Eisler composed cues to be set to stylized didactic silent interludes. *The Robber Symphony* (1936), which Friedrich Feher, an Austrian in Great Britain, both directed and set to music, is a sort of social dance opera, popular and learned at the same time. Its story turns on a wad of money hidden in a barrel organ which is carried around by a troupe of traveling musicians in Central Europe. Social musicals persisted until the end of the thirties; one of Fritz Lang's first American films, *You and Me* (1938), still featured a few spoken choruses that carry messages addressed to the characters as well as to viewers.

The mobilization of music for political struggle or expression was international. Several Soviet comedies, like *The Accordion* (Igor Savchenko, 1934)—one of the first Russian sound films—participated in this trend, using popular melodies. The accordion in the hero's hands became a symbol and a weapon for recapturing the heart of his beloved, thus reconciling the quest for happiness with political struggle. In Grigori Alexandrov's *Jolly Fellows* (also known as *Moscow Laughs*, 1934), one of the era's big hits, the snobbish young Yelena mistakes the musician-shepherd Kostya for a famous band leader and invites him to her home. Kostya arrives with his flock, which ransacks her house. Then he leaves for Moscow, where he forms a jazz band of "jolly fellows" whose hot tempers get the group in all sorts of comic troubles. These films created a tradition in the Russian musical of integrating the theme of jazz, whether as the symbol of a decadent aesthetic or, later, as a symbol of freedom against apparatchiks. During this time, the Americans were producing more frivolous musicals, traditionally showing a classical composer or dancer arriving from Russia who blossoms in the new setting of Parisian or Californian pleasures. In this way, music became a metaphor for human, historical, and political themes.

In the Far East, the admirable *Street Angel* (Yuan Muzhi, 1937), a jewel of the Shanghai cinema, with music by He Luting, portrays the love between a young trumpet player who makes a living playing for weddings and funerals, and a young singer. The singer's sister, also in love with the hero, gives her life to save him from the mafia. With this musical melodrama set in a working-class milieu the genre found one of its masterpieces.

Street Angel was influenced (like many others of the genre) by René Clair, who had acquired international prestige at this point, and whose works served as models. A filmmaker often oddly classified as "anti-musical" owing to certain declarations he made, Clair passionately and creatively experimented with the form in a series of five films, from *Sous les toits de Paris* (*Under the Roofs of Paris*, 1930) to *Le Dernier milliardaire* (*The Last Millionaire*, 1934) and including *Le Million* (1931), *À Nous la liberté* (1931), and *Quatorze Juillet* (1933). In these works he explored all the possibilities of making "sound" film into the modern opéra comique—an opéra comique set not only in a timeless, picturesque world of little folk living in humble garrets but also in the modern world, with all its crises and rapid change.

The social message of Clair's works, which he elaborated so painstakingly, calling on such composers as Georges Van Parys, Maurice Jaubert, and Georges Auric—i.e., the best of the period—actually tends to weaken them, because it ultimately reduces the films to a good-natured anarchism. Clair actually made his innovative mark in *form*, finding his inspiration in Brecht's didactic opera. He dared to include "offscreen" spoken choruses that address characters in the story; singing internal voices (in *Le Million*); and other devices that would prove influential. Unfortunately he did not always achieve the working-class aesthetic of his projects with his musicians, and particularly in *À Nous la liberté*, the simplicity of Auric's melodies is contradicted by a scattered, busy, miniaturist instrumentation.

It is interesting to observe how the conventions used in *À Nous la liberté* differ from those that followed. The film does not appear as the perpetual recitative of classical Hollywood music, but rather as a model inherited from the silent era, whereby each musical sequence is punctuated by an obsessive main rhythm. At one point in the action, for instance, some thieves holed up in the phonograph factory are walking at a leisurely pace. But very fast music is heard, for the comedy of the scene. For our habits as spectators, there is a contradiction between its presto tempo and the tranquil, even static physical behavior of the characters. Indeed, Auric's plan was to write consistently lively and rapid music when the situation seemed to imply it, even if there was an interior monologue, reserving the slow tempi for somber scenes or romantic daydreaming. So *À Nous la liberté* does not always maintain

the vital link between character movement and music, and the music does not seek to fuse with the dialogue in a perpetual recitative.

Clair's film benefited from German technical means. Auric's rather complex orchestra is heard with a transparency and clarity that American films (and still fewer French-made ones) of the same era could not remotely equal. But as a consequence, this sophistication became a distraction. The marriage of serious and popular musics would not always be simple to consummate.

2

CLASSICISM TO MODERNISM

1935–1975

WE HAVE seen the efforts made in the teeming period of the 1930s to inscribe music into the movement of life—collective, physical life—and also to extract from reality its latent symphony. The great silent filmmakers had been motivated by quite similar preoccupations, and this is why I made one single chapter out of two periods that are normally treated separately. Experiments with editing by Walter Ruttmann, Abel Gance, and others in the late silent era (these explorations of editing continued until around 1930 in countries slower to change over to sound), and the experiments of early sound, were conducted in essentially the same spirit. Perhaps no surprise, since some of the same artists worked in both periods—Dziga Vertov, Jean Epstein, René Clair. All symphonists of *images*, they did not hesitate to seize upon *sounds*, to transmute them as well. Most of these artists, whom we could consider pioneers in musique concrète in many ways, distanced themselves from the classical style of underscoring, and would choose to turn their creative attention to noises.

As we have also seen, there were multiple endeavors to bring the rich new resources of sound film to the aid of one common element, rhythm (and sometimes music). But from the beginning of sound, one cinematic element resisted this impulse. In fact, quite unlike the other elements, it attracted them to itself, obliged *them* to model

themselves on *it*. This element is none other than speech, at least when speech is naturalistic. I explicitly use the adjective "naturalistic" rather than "natural": I'm not talking about resemblance to everyday reality, but about a *reality effect* in the context of cinema. After all, nothing is less natural than the sophisticated dialogue heard in many sound films, but it always sounds more naturalistic than, say, ordinary speech that is sung. In Jacques Demy and Michel Colombier's cinematic opera *Une chambre en ville* (*A Room in Town*, 1982), the characters' lines are closer to human and social truth than in most other films, but since they are sung, audiences did not notice, because they were too preoccupied by the way the singing infringed on naturalism.

At the beginning of the thirties, then, speech did not join in on the great dance of sounds, music, and image except when the film's style or the social or ethnic milieu of the story or genre allowed it to be nonnaturalistic—declaimed, rhythmic, or oratorical. Zeke's preaching sequence in *Hallelujah*, his rhythmic speech vigorously punctuated by the congregation, is a great example. Certain theatrically declaimed sequences in Eisenstein's two sound films, *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*, produce the same effect of overall movement, I think, because of their stylized speech rather than because of their use of music, which was pretty standard for the genre. Finally, some efforts to create *Lehrstücke* (see chapter 1) aimed to achieve the same effect without always doing so.

In the long run, naturalistic speech would win out, in many cases acquiring a new versatility and musicality.

So the aspiration for a smooth continuum from noises to music was abandoned, and the world rhythm was muted or disciplined. Noises became more unobtrusive and the orchestra took over their role somewhat, using a stylized language. Cinema became more linear, unified, and moderated in its classical form that centered on speech, and the speech-centric mode would yield great masterpieces. But this evolution would also mean sacrificing much of the Dionysian dimension brought by music's beating pulse. The beat would reappear later, with rock and disco films of the 1970s and 1980s, attracting a whole new kind of life, at the same time appearing as a break in unity.

FROM DISCONTINUITY TO CONTINUITY

To sum up in a few words the overall evolution of American film music through the 1930s, we might say that rhythm gradually gave way to melody or rather to recitative, and to a rat-a-tat, dynamic mode and more complex phrasing (in fits and starts or lyrically smooth), wrapped around speech. This is obviously a simplistic view, but it describes a definite phenomenon in cinema's overall evolution.

At first there was a reaction against the tartness, bitterness, and even crudity of many sound films, especially American ones. It would be a bit too easy to attribute such reactions exclusively to the (undeniable) pressure of the Hollywood studios' self-censorship and to a general puritanism in the air, even if this moralizing impulse did play an important role. It would also be wrong to ignore that a physical and erotic era often tends to be followed by a period of sentimentality and moral retrenchment.[1] Setting aside strict causal explanations, I still wish to point out that this erasure of more powerful, Dionysian modes of music in favor of lyric and recitative music occurred at the same time as other changes in film and in the forms of spectacle it presented.

Early thirties efforts to work out relationships among noises, speech, and music (whether in simultaneity or alternation) through bold experimentation resulted in the dialectical revelation of the discontinuity of the cinematic universe, its disparate character. Take Fritz Lang's superb *Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933)*.* Its scenes are linked together in brilliant ways, notably by echoes in dialogue (a character being spoken about at the end of scene A appears immediately in scene B) and even sound bridges (the ticking of an infernal machine at the end of scene C "becomes" the rhythmic sound of a man in scene D tapping a boiled egg with his spoon). At the same time, nothing is blended together; rather, it's like a set of blocks, whose pieces are meticulously assembled but remain distinct from one another. At times, the manner in which orchestral music enters forms a kind of gap, and gives to dialogue-only scenes the impression of sounding in a vacuum. Lang's style lends itself well to this structure, but with other directors, the nonfusion of elements creates a sense of lost unity and lost tension.

An easy explanation would be that various technical problems involving music had not yet been solved—problems of orchestration;

of adapting music to recording and playback in optical sound; of beginnings and endings in editing and layering; and of mixing music with dialogue. But most of these problems did find solutions fairly soon—usually involving the sacrifice of noises, which were the trickiest soundtrack elements to record and reproduce. In my book *Film, a Sound Art*, I explained how the relegation of noises to secondary status—after the proliferation of sound experiments in the early talkies, and before Dolby in the 1970s led to the restoration of sounds to prominence—allowed for the creation of a unified, harmonious, classical model of sound film.[2]

The evolution that film music would undergo, and also the development of a stable model through various experiments, would contribute to a unified formula in American film: controlled, smooth, and lyrical—*the classical cinema*. Among other things, this formula dictated the entrances and exits of music cues in such a way as not to undermine continuity. Music was both plentiful (in terms of timing in minutes) and in the background (in terms of the attention paid to it); it acted as a kind of bridge—between speech, whose rhythmic contours it marries in a kind of recitative, and the actions it discreetly underscores; as well as between the internal (since it expresses characters' subjectivity) and the external (in establishing settings—bustling city, the Western frontier, Morocco). Of course, music written to cohabit with dialogue must adopt a more readily blending style, with greater flexibility, and for that the Wagnerian instrumental recitative was the privileged model.

Music in many early sound films, whether from the "pit" or the "screen," was extremely limited or not used at all. Films set in World War I, like Pabst's *Westfront 1918* (1930) or Raymond Bernard's *Wooden Crosses* (1931), exemplify such extreme scarcity of music, as did *Dracula* (1931), crime films like Lang's *M* (1931), and some comedies. Later, filmmakers would try the opposite formula, scoring movies with almost uninterrupted musical accompaniment.

In *King Kong* (Schoedsack and Cooper, 1933), Max Steiner's wall-to-wall scoring allowed the story to transition swiftly between sentimentality and panic, between civilized and primitive. The music highlighted the movie's poetry and savagery, and at the same time its continuous presence helped create a unified whole of the film's sentimentality,

spectacle, glamour, jazz, and so forth, and subdued and assimilated them as well. Through constant experimentation, Steiner would help to develop the new classical mode. His "discontinuous music" for *The Informer* (John Ford, 1935) made a valiant effort to achieve a synthesis of silent and sound film.

Should it be surprising that the working-class appeal of the movies' stories, as well as the popular element of their music, became more subtle at the same time? In *Citizen Kane* (1941), dance music written in 1910s style—for example, at Kane's party for his newspaper successes—is associated with triviality, the profit motive, and vulgarity, not with healthy vitality. Little by little, the presence of popular music in films for the general audience diminished. Only in countries such as India and Egypt (the world's most prolific film industries) did popular music and dance continue to provide a central focus for films. Film music in India was (and is) so highly regarded that entire popular radio stations were devoted to it. Songs constituted their main musical form. A classical Indian film rarely had fewer than a half dozen songs, chosen and arranged under the supervision of a musical director; the songs' composers were for the most part anonymous.

Similarly, numerous American films in the past few decades have used for their music not scores but popular songs, or a mix of scoring and songs called a hybrid score.

In this sense, recent cinema continues, or has begun again, to disseminate and market popular music. Some critics find this distasteful and even distressing, at least those who believed that great cinema should be based on a unified and "high-class" model.

THE MERGER THAT DID NOT OCCUR

One subject of perennial disappointment in the history of music and film, for some historians at least, is the marriage never consummated between popular and serious music. With the arrival of sound, music was henceforth part of the film, recorded with and welded to it. But its new status did not produce the desired effects. Many had expected film music to rise to the level of art, and for cinema to attract great "serious" concert musicians into its fold.

Maurice Jaubert set the example, which subsequently encouraged the contributions of Francis Poulenc in 1942 for *La Duchesse de Langeais* (*Wicked Duchess*), directed by Jacques de Baroncelli; Darius Milhaud scored Renoir's *Madame Bovary* in 1933 and Malraux's *L'Espoir* in 1940. These "dual careers" in concert and film music were actually mostly a matter of concert composers taking on one-off film assignments. But Arthur Honegger succeeded in working on numerous films, including Raymond Bernard's version of *Les Misérables* (1934) and Anthony Asquith's and Leslie Howard's *Pygmalion* (1938), without compromising his symphonic career. Georges Auric fared less well when he transitioned to film scoring, and resigned himself to become a crafter of melodies like the one for *Moulin Rouge* (1952).

The forays of these composers into film, especially in France, were not sufficiently regular, nor were they sufficiently memorable, to influence the ongoing development of film music to any extent. The French system and its prevailing working conditions could have been partly responsible. Besides, the métier of film composer required different skills from those of a concert or ballet composer, and the finished films did not always highlight their music. Take the case of the talented Auric. He wrote elegant scores for some commendable films, including Pierre Chenal's *L'Alibi* (1937), but little attention was paid to them; and when he did more-ordinary scoring for other films (for which he delegated the arranging to others), he was accused of wasting his talent! In the case of *Beauty and the Beast* (1945), writer-director Jean Cocteau actually boasted that he reedited Auric's music and placed it in scenes where it had not been intended, thus robbing the composer of his own choices and judgments. Furthermore, for this film, the muddled acoustical quality of the mix and a time delay in the sound (a recurrent problem in French films) made it difficult for viewers to take the slightest pleasure in the soundtrack and its effects.[3] *Beauty and the Beast* was still a masterwork for all that, but we can plainly see the awkward position of the composer.

Thus the essentially popular art of film has never reconciled popular music with music of a more "serious" type; it has only replicated this divide within movies.

FILM MUSIC AS RECORDED

An obvious fact that so much film history has unbelievably neglected: film music became music *fixed* into a medium whose sounds and tempi, whose state of being recorded, forever wed it to the film, for better or worse. In our culture that fetishizes the role of the classical music performer, film music suffers the opposite fate: we minimize it, assigning little value to the quality of its sound and orchestra direction.

Of course, we rarely have a chance to compare differently scored versions of a given film. But at the very least, the appreciation of the role of music in the film should not be overlooked.

Take Max Ophüls's sublime *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948). The critic Claude Mauriac (François's son) took a cudgel to it in an article he entitled "Let's put an end to film music":

> Since we must lodge our assault on a precise target deemed the most vulnerable (and since what I am attacking here yet again is the traditional idea of cinema), today I am denouncing what is referred to as film music. Not that Daniele Amfitheatrof's score is worse than any other. What I reproach him for, I could have criticized in any other conventional soundtrack. For me this contribution to the film is unacceptable because it again excused the director, and by the most facile if not lowest means, from enriching his own images directly. Indeed, in its present form this kind of music serves no other purpose than to add an aural background that puts the viewer, who does not consciously hear it most of the time, into a certain affective state where neither art nor soul have much of a part. It overlays a scene with an emotional tint, so that the images groan under the weight of tenderness, emotion, love. A pox on this manipulation, and we should be ashamed to let ourselves be taken in . . . I myself have had quite enough of it.[4]

We might say that the only "shame" here is Claude Mauriac's own, and the same goes for his claim not to be affected by the music, which can easily be read as denial. It seems also that the idea of an element one is not conscious of—the direction that film music would clearly take by the late thirties—goes directly against the principle that the

apprehension of an art should be conscious and lucid. But let us also note that contrary to what Mauriac's term would lead us to believe, it is precisely not a "score" by Amfitheatrof that he heard, but in fact an interpretation and a recording, whose quality (or lack thereof) might have played a considerable part in the final effect.

In truth, Mauriac could not, or did not want to, know that this music that had prevented him from being carried away by emotion was also the music that had caused the emotion in the first place.

What is missing from *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, this heart-rendingly unrequited love story played by Joan Fontaine and Louis Jourdan? Nothing at all, if we stand by our basic position, taking the film as it is—and if it pleases us and moves us, not picking it apart to consider what it might have been. There is certainly room for criticism, not of the principle of romantic orchestral music to accompany the film (its structural function far surpasses isolated effects) but of the execution and the sound of the music. Universal's studio orchestra, directed by Amfitheatrof himself, does have a mushy sound, perhaps due to the quality of the players or the conductor's directing or conditions of sound recording or mixing. In this melodrama aquiver with emotion, where Fontaine trembles and sighs like a soprano singing with utmost delicacy, the music has the thankless role of serving as her accompaniment, constantly on the brink of excess. But then the music we actually hear in the film sometimes has a heaviness to it, simply because it is not at the exquisitely high level of the acting, the mise-en-scène and camera, and the rest. I am wagering here (without being able to verify my assertion) that it isn't the quality of the *composing*, which is entirely appropriate to the story, that is at stake, but of its *execution*. In *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, this "actress" that is the music does not play—is not played—to the same degree of quality as the other elements; its written "dialogue," the score, is not the problem.

Supposing that my judgment is shared by others, the ideal thing would be to be able to remix the film, rerecord the music, to give it the beautiful tremulous quality it deserves, and then rework the soundtrack to fit the era. This is no abstract speculation; it's entirely doable today, providing one has access to the original elements of the mix, with separate sound effects and dialogue tracks, and that those tracks have not deteriorated or been destroyed. The operation is quite costly, however,

and film conservators and archivists have other, more urgent fish to fry. Nevertheless, certain prestigious films, such as Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), have received the royal treatment of digital rerecording of the music in multitrack sound . . .

In a film made four years later in France, also by Ophüls, *Le Plaisir* (1952), the middling quality of the performance of an instrumental version of Mozart's "Ave Verum" in a scene of a country-church mass acts in a different way: it is *intended* that way; we attribute the sound to the little group of violins and organ that we see in the church. Such small differences are what make for the equilibrium of this recorded "score" that is a film.

RULE AND EXCEPTION

Certain Hollywood films supposedly represent the polished form of what is commonly referred to as the classical formula of film music. But is it legitimate to talk about "the" classical model of film music? If you take only the American and French cinemas of the 1930s and 1940s, the techniques, practices, aesthetics, and genres can differ widely, even within each country's industry. Certainly it is possible to discern tendencies, averages, and benchmarks. And it is obviously easy to judge all music in cinema if you select, say, ten films considered representative of the whole. Or you could proceed by establishing a priori abstract categories and consider only the films that fit those descriptions. Many film historians have fallen into these traps, and as a consequence they have neglected to watch and study more films.

On the other hand, it is all too easy—and not very enlightening—to oppose *all* efforts to generalize and synthesize a complex history by identifying films that represent the "exception" (and they are many) to laws that have been fairly well followed in general. Anyone can find, in a catalogue or on TV or at a screening, a movie of a given era or genre that does not conform to the model established to describe this era or genre, and use it as a weapon to label any construct or teleology as inadequate. Brilliant and enlightened scholars, out of disdain for ignorant generalizing, do not hesitate to alert us against formulas such as "the" silent cinema (which of course was not silent), "the" Hollywood score,

and so on. The proliferation of close studies of two or three privileged periods of cinema—mainly the beginnings of silent film, the transition to sound, and the 1940s classical Hollywood film—have revealed such diversity that people do not dare generalize about them too much. This position, however, risks serving as an alibi for theoretical laziness. Once it was shown that *The Jazz Singer* was not an isolated case, that the distinction between silent and sound film is arbitrary after all (more than one study establishes this), some believed they accomplished their goal, and stopped there.

But that is not enough. Take a movie considered representative of 1940s film noir, a film mentioned in all the reference books but not often actually examined: *Thieves' Highway* (Jules Dassin, 1949), a social thriller set in the milieu of the California produce industry. A war veteran who has become a truck driver has to face an unscrupulous wholesaler who exploits truckers transporting apples. To go by the reference books, especially those focusing on film music, nothing makes this movie particularly stand out. (Alfred Newman, a prolific and well-known composer, is credited for the music.) However, in following this remarkably executed work, we need to lend an ear to its music. From this point of view the film makes a total break with the film noir classics of the period. We hear a minimum of music, and it is always diegetic: as ambience in a bar, in a port, and so forth, in a deliberately anonymous, all-purpose form. But zero music is heard in the most dramatic scenes—and the film has plenty of these scenes, including a fatal accident and a truck chase; these climactic moments are punctuated solely by dense montages of concrete noises. And this is not an isolated case.

Under the impetus of producers like Mark Hellinger and Louis de Rochemont, the late forties saw efforts to rejuvenate film noir through an almost-documentary realism. In some of these films, shot in real locations, the didactic story treatments and authentic settings marry well with the usual "expressive" musical conventions and with non-diegetic music (incidentally, quite like Rossellini's in Italy in the same period). Other films made along the same lines attempted to return to early sound-film practices, sticking to no absolute formula and certainly using no homogeneous and coherent scoring from beginning to end.

And yet all that does not invalidate the notion of convention and models. An enlightened, thorough history of film—which for now is only an outline as far as sound is concerned, because not many of us devote ourselves to it—might certainly situate *Thieves' Highway* with relation to the rest of Dassin's work, and to film noir, both in the film's specific musical approach and the vein of social realism in which it participates, *and* as an alternative to other films produced at the same time. But this kind of historical work cannot be done by merely providing directors' filmographies or catalogues of composers. Nor can it be done solely by interviewing directors and composers—their remarks have historical value only if carefully compared and cross-referenced with other testimonials. You have to see many films, one by one, in order to discern practices and trends. Above all, avoid relying on the "label" represented by the name of a composer: depending on the case, the budget, and the contract, he might have composed a vast orchestral tapestry or contributed just two or three cues of all-purpose nightclub ambience from his back files.

In sum, I am attempting to highlight major trends, while bearing in mind that they mainly reflect averages and tendencies.

FRANCE AND AMERICA

Since we cannot possibly cover all film industries, examining one parallel between two national cinemas important for the "classical" era, the American and the French, will allow us to highlight the diversity of possible paths and the complexity of factors in play. In so doing, let us not ignore that drawing any parallel, with the facile symmetries it proposes, involves its own dangers.

If we disregard preconceived labels and value judgments and listen to a number of late 1930s French films, we find some patterns. Nondiegetic musical sequences, no matter the type of scene they accompany, tend to slip into a rather regular and marked rhythm, independent of the rhythm of the images or the rhythm of speech, which often make them sound like "excerpts" from concert music. In addition, they call on an often-intimate chamber-music style of orchestration.

Examining American films of the same period, on the other hand, reveals the use of fuller and more luxurious orchestration, as we would expect. But also—and this has not been noted as much—there is an abundance of fluid, lyric, recitative rhythms interlaced with the rhythms of the actors' lines.

Such general and abstract observation is only a start; we must also study the other film elements with which these musical sequences are combined. These elements are not only abstract and theoretical, like "the image" or "the screenplay." We should interrogate whether the actors' lines are meandering or terse. Stereotypes can be deceptive—an average American action film is often more chatty than a French psychological film. But in a French film you more readily notice the text and the isolated lines, because of the very fact that they are less frequent and many silences punctuate them. In this context the entrances and exits of music will not be perceived the same way. If you close your eyes you can listen to certain American film noir classics as if they were radio plays. The corresponding French films have more gaps, more breaks, and their rhythm does not feel unified. Of course, I am not talking about exceptions like Sacha Guitry, whose films feature veritable torrents of speech. But precisely, with Guitry it's not a matter of absolute quantity but of the way text is uttered and proclaimed. Plenty of American films are as full of dialogue as Marcel Pagnol's *La Femme du boulanger* (*The Baker's Wife*, 1938) or Guitry's *Faisons un rêve* (*Let's Make a Dream*, 1936), to mention two especially loquacious French movies, but they do not produce the same effect, because the dialogue, with the help of music but also the American actors' more fluent gestures, is more "blended" into the film itself, more equally distributed among the actors and among the scenes—smoother. This stems partly from the fact that Hollywood standardized its practices more thoroughly, and partly from differing uses of speech in the two cinematic traditions.

Classical American film is animated by what we can call a passion for *procedure and oratory*. In this tradition, speech seeks to convince, to argue, to appeal to the interlocutor. American films are not afraid of long speeches and especially opposing points of view and conflicts of principles. All speech postulates a response; it always interpellates the other, seeks his declarative reply. This cinema is thus more

favorable to a continuum; its rhetoric allows the film to unfold like a long debate, an eternal confrontation that directors and actors execute as action, without leaving us the time to be embarrassed or bored by its ultimately abstract quality.

In French films of the same period, speech is often used for an accent effect, for characterizing individuals, for claiming an individual position and attitude but without appealing to the other. It isolates each individual in what she says. And music cannot enter so easily into such a system.

Next, the streamlining of Hollywood technology allowed the studios to master most problems of sound recording and intelligibility of speech, and many issues of musical orchestration. These improvements in turn permitted the uniting of sounds, speech, and music into a correctly blended system, where the elements take turns and harmoniously combine with one another.

In French cinema, which was more artisanal even in the great studio era, a certain national curse often rendered sound a problem even though the image had been wholly mastered, because technical issues with sound were addressed piecemeal, production by production. The French were unrivaled for dialogue that was unintelligible even to their own spectators,[5] and for music that sounds dull or muddy, even while most other national cinemas had resolved the problem, either by focused attention on location sound recording or by the more radical solution of postsynchronization, which can foreground dialogue with clarity. The French problems of dialogue intelligibility were not only of a technical nature (e.g., lack of rigor or expertise in recording and mixing, inferior or misused sound technology, insufficient care by labs in transferring optical sound to prints—all of which did occur); they also lay in decisions by filmmakers such as Duvivier and Renoir who wished to recreate lifelike confusion, hubbub, indistinctness. A certain kind of culture consisted in refusing the slightest standardization in the creation of film sound. Ergo, music became an eternal problem: there's too much, not enough, it drowns out the dialogue, and so forth. These are only a few of the issues that demonstrate that music is not merely a matter of good artistic intentions, of directors' and composers' moods and thoughts, and of the budget and length of the production and postproduction schedule.

Since the first edition of this book, and thanks to new scholarly work, a technically and culturally informed history of music in cinema (a history that has come out of its infancy and is now based on solid archival research) has begun in earnest. Although I make no claim to rewrite that history in this volume, I think it can be of much interest and a source of enrichment for any reader.

CRITERIA OF HOLLYWOOD CLASSICISM

Very soon after the coming of sound, a symbolic device was invented in Hollywood: a kind of automatic mixing system designed to solve the problem of the coexistence of music and dialogue on the soundtrack.

Claudia Gorbman writes that the "up-and-downer," an apparatus perfected around 1934, automatically regulated the relative intensities of music and dialogue. When dialogue signals entered the soundtrack, the machine reduced the music signal. At the time, the sound engineer Edward Kellogg provided a psychological rationale for the music-dimming practice it automated, arguing that it replicated the perceptual activity of attention. Attention focuses on one auditory channel and then another, in turn: "In actual life we can usually take advantage of differences of direction in order to concentrate attention upon a particular sound . . . [Since in film] our directive sense cannot be brought into play, the suppression of the sounds in which the listener is less interested is accomplished by making them fainter."[6] This technical situation ought not to be interpreted aesthetically: the fact that the music is lowered under dialogue does not mean that music isn't important. This would be like saying that the set constructed for a movie scene is wasted because it is not constantly in the foreground.

In the sound era, composers were hired by the studio system just like the actors: they were bound by contract, and were similarly hired out to other studios. One of the great names in Hollywood's golden era, Miklós Rózsa, described his work environment: "While I was employed at MGM, various circumstances led me to write scores for films produced by other major companies. I was never involved in the negotiations. The studio heads talked to each other and it would be decided to loan me out to another studio."[7]

In the same interview, cited by Alain Lacombe, the composer emphasizes the superb quality of the musicians in the studio orchestra. "The studio orchestras hired the best soloists, which partly explains the fact that an official orchestra like the LA Philharmonic was extremely weak for a decade. This isn't surprising, because musicians, [given a chance] at salaries they weren't accustomed to, rushed to come work for the movies instead."[8] I find this point important because music is recorded for sound films. Having excellent (even if anonymous) players is critical for conveying artfulness and emotion; also crucial is the audio quality of the recording, which attained a surprisingly high level in Hollywood. Who knows if this beautiful sound—no matter the stereotyped nature of the actual music played—wasn't a primary factor in the emotion felt in experiencing these movies?

All this favored the development of "classical Hollywood scoring," in relation to which later modernist efforts would be defined. Claudia Gorbman elucidated the implicit principles of the classical model in her valuable book on narrative film music, *Unheard Melodies*. Here are the criteria she derived, with my own comments added.

INVISIBILITY

"The technical apparatus of nondiegetic music must not be visible."[9] In other words, just as projectors or the camera's reflection do not appear in the shot (aside from the modernist or other rupturing effect found in Godard, Bergman, or Andrzej Zulawski), nondiegetic instruments or singers are not shown. Contrary to what we would think, it is useful to articulate this obvious principle; doing so encourages us to think about the exceptions in films by Coppola, Resnais, Rivette, Rohmer, and others, sometimes for an isolated gag, and other times to try to create a different space of narration.

Let us add that although the mental representation of the filming apparatus (which the spectator notices via, say, camera movement independent of the movement of characters) has gradually gained a foothold in cinema without breaking the illusion at all, the same is not true for sound. Average spectators can be aware of the camera and its free movement on condition that they do not see it; on the other hand, they do not admit being *conscious at all* of sound's apparatus and processes.

By this I mean that the spectator finds it unacceptable to see the film's sound equipment, or to have a *mental representation* of the sound apparatus through, say, the distancing effect of an audio tracking shot that betrays the position of a mic, or through a technical adjustment raising or lowering the music's volume.

Gorbman analyzes a particularly revealing case in *King Kong*. The team of American explorer-moviemakers lands on a remote South Sea island and they happen upon a ceremony in progress among the savages who worship the giant gorilla. We see—and hear—the singers and the drummers in loincloths, "accompanied" in Hollywood style by an unseen orchestra, the orchestra for the movie score itself. The explorers quickly set up a camera to shoot this exotic scene, but the tribal chieftain spots the intruders, and with a gesture he orders the dancers and drummers to stop . . . and the RKO orchestra stops too. Gorbman points out, first, that the documentary-film crew within the story does not include anyone to record the sound—logical in an era when it was nearly impossible to carry around and deploy sound-recording equipment in far-flung locations. But, she notes, we do not even ask the question of what the group is in fact recording: the sound is "just there, oozing from the images that we see" (75) as if it is part of them.

INAUDIBILITY

"Music is not meant to be heard consciously" (73). It serves as an accompaniment to actions and dialogue; its presence is not designed to be noticed.

On this point, modern spectators have arguably changed since the films of the 1930s and 1940s. When we watch a Hitchcock film—say, *North by Northwest*, on the Internet or a DVD (which was not possible in 1958), we can hear its music, which is easily available today on disc, in a documentary on Hitchcock or Herrmann, in a commercial, on the Internet. We tend to be more consciously aware of it than viewers of the era were (similarly to the way we have become more aware of techniques of editing), without that preventing the film from continuing to function for us.

For Gorbman, music is consequently subordinated to the narration and to the length of sequences. A flexible kind of music, using short

motifs, with neutral connective tissue consisting of percussion rolls, sustained chords, tremolos, string pizzicatos, and so forth, best serves this conception. Let us add that Wagnerian opera, in the density and ambition of its composition, contributed to the musical raw material of this genre.

SIGNIFIER OF EMOTION

Music "may set specific moods and emphasize particular emotions, but first and foremost, it is a signifier of emotion itself" (73). Evidence of this is that music tends to disappear for more "objective" scenes that are less emotionally charged. At the same time, in classical scoring, music enters for scenes of storm, action, bucolic serenity, and so forth—situations for which we would not speak of emotion in the sense of human feelings and passions. We can, of course, say that it endows settings with a "mythic" value, amplifying and subjectivizing them. I will return in greater detail to this famous "function."

NARRATIVE CUEING

"We may divide the semiotic duties of music in classical film into two categories," writes Gorbman, and continues:

a. It refers the spectator to demarcations and levels of the narration;
b. It illustrates, emphasizes, underlines, and points, via what we shall call connotative cueing. (82)

Music demarcates the beginnings and ends of films, sequences, and sections of a film; it contributes to setting in terms of historical time, location, culture, and so on. Its appearance can signal a subjective point of view. It can cue the filmgoer to the point of view of a specific character by allying itself more particularly to her emotions, her tenderness, her panic, her anger.

Let us add that the mere presence of music can completely create the meaning of a scene or a character's glance.

Take Bernard Stora's *Vent de panique* (*Wave of Panic*, 1987), the story of a couple of con artists (played by Bernard Giraudeau and Caroline

Cellier) and the streetwise girl (Olivia Brunaux) they kidnap from her parents to sell as a prostitute. For the first hour, this appalling story is treated as laughable. At a given moment, a shot of Cellier alone, lying in bed thinking, is accompanied by a more serious music cue. There is only Jean-Claude Petit's music at that moment to lend human depth to this silent scene, which is totally "neutral" in visual terms (including Cellier's acting). We quickly understand that she is starting to think about her age, the way she's ruining her life . . . We watch her through a different lens and now see a woman who is worried. Such moments in movies are more common than one would think: when music, and music alone, shifts the story into a more tender and human dimension.

The "punctuation" or the "signaling" of connotation, as Gorbman formulates it, specifically concerns the way music contributes to the creation of mood: strange, demonic, bucolic, dashing, sinister, morbid, magical, religious, otherworldly. Of course, music can do this because it can draw on the denotative and connotative repertoire of opera, ballet, the symphonic poem, and the entire cultural history of musical styles and movements.[10]

Gorbman also enumerates a function of *illustration* by music, by which she means an instantaneous musical "tracking" of thoughts, dialogue, and action. She shows how technical systems and composing techniques in the execution of classical-era film music allowed for a tight, moment-by-moment synchronization of score to action in given scenes. This kind of synchronized music can easily imitate or transpose certain sounds, too, picking up on the devices of program music.

For my part, I do not think that this practice of enveloping the whole duration of a scene in music, and particularly of musical punctuation of certain sound actions (a door closing) or visual actions (a character starts running), had a ridiculously "imitative" function. Such musical cueing also resolved some problems encountered with the coming of sound: it absorbed the unavoidable disparateness of the film's aural world into a *continuum* of words and music. And in this continuum, noise—the acoustic element that had been least well "tamed" by existing technology, and also an element that was not yet perceived as capable of being poetically expressive or evocative—could be better hidden, less present, without its absence being noticed.

There is indeed a precise correlation between the abundance of music in some classical films and the scarcity of sound effects in them, except in isolated scenes. Why, in a scene with a storm at sea, did filmmakers then prefer to create an orchestral effect of "waves," in the tradition that ran from Mendelssohn to Debussy, rather than to record and use actual sounds of waves? Because the latter does not *render* the wave, give the feeling of the wave, just as the real sound of a gunshot is hardly ever used in today's movies but is rendered with a more dramatic digital audio fabrication.[11]

Let us add that in the classical Hollywood era, films were shot in the studio whenever possible, for several reasons, including the difficulty of sound recording outdoors in real settings, and that each studio in turn favored its own style and "look" in lighting, set design, and editing. Music held an important place in this stylistic differentiation among the film studios.

Among the devices of "narrative punctuation" that Gorbman mentions is the well-known effect called the "stinger"—a sudden chord, dramatic tremolo, short musical cell, or sudden silence, isolated from other musical discourse—which strikes suddenly to mark a sharp revelation, a sudden setback, a flash of understanding.

"Mickeymousing" is a related aspect of classical practice that consists in making music closely follow actions onscreen (the term refers to the close synchronization of music and action in Disney cartoons). This practice, the object of much criticism and ridicule, has caused the greatest misunderstandings through the decades. It was considered infantile, since by an effect of synchronic illusion people were persuaded that music that closely accompanies is music that imitates.

John Ford's *The Informer* (1935) is an example of a film that provoked this error in criticism. In 1937 Maurice Jaubert wittily and derisively commented on a scene in *The Informer* where the music is given the job of "imitating . . . , through a cheeky little arpeggio, the swallowing of a glass of beer in the gullet of a drinker." Jaubert's (inaccurate) observations on *The Informer*'s scoring have spawned a miniflood of similar commentary over the decades. But music lovers certainly tolerate and even admire when Stravinsky, Debussy, or Wagner musically punctuate certain actions in operas (for example, Mélisande's ring falling into the water in act 3 of *Pelléas and Mélisande*)—so why should they

ridicule the same device in cinema? Perhaps because for them cinema must be an art of the real, and as such, it disallows symbolic stylization. Ford and Max Steiner clearly desired to bring the principle of symbolic punctuation into film. That they did not succeed does not mean that the idea was absurd. Whether we appreciate such musical devices in film or not, we should not condemn film to naturalism, and neither should we condemn music to an antinaturalist essence.

CONTINUITY

"Music provides formal and rhythmic continuity—between shots, in transitions between scenes, by filling 'gaps.'" Indeed, music "smooths discontinuities of editing," bridges sequences, aids in connecting temporal ellipses, and in general, "as an auditory continuity, it seems to mitigate visual, spatial, or temporal discontinuity. Montage sequences—calendar pages flipping, newspaper headlines spanning a period of time, citizen Kane and his wife growing apart at the breakfast table over the years—are almost invariably accompanied by music."[12]

A composer might understandably rebel against being reduced to providing cues only a few seconds long—punctuations, as if a writer were asked to fork over a few words, or a painter a few dabs of color. Yes, but again, classical music or music for the theater involves every bit as much of this composing for transitions or punctuation, devoid of intrinsic substance.

UNITY

Gorbman rightly counts among the functions of music in classical film the formal and narrative unity it bestows on the work as a whole. One major way of creating unity is the use of a set of musical motifs that the film repeats in different forms and that are like the film's signature. Another is the establishment of an overall atmosphere or instrumental color. Here, of course, the thematic and cyclic processes perfected in the Romantic symphony and Wagnerian and post-Wagnerian opera are amply called upon. Some composers even boasted of deriving all the main themes for a score from one minimal musical cell. Most of

the music in Bernard Herrmann's brilliant score for *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) arises from a pattern of four notes (E♭, D, E♭, C); and his score for *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1975) can be reduced to a descending major second—two notes!

BREAKING THE RULES

Gorbman adds a crucial rule to the end of her list: the foregoing rules are not absolute and rigid, and the practice of the classical Hollywood film allowed for a more flexible use of them, because in specific situations one rule may contradict another. "A given film score may violate any of the principles above, providing the violation is at the service of the other principles" (73). For example, on many occasions music is eminently "audible" rather than unobtrusive, to emphasize an extremely emotional or comical moment or ironic twist; similarly, an abrupt ending of a cue might break continuity rather than assure it, for dramatic reasons.

We can see all the principles for classical scoring at work in Steiner's music for *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1943), which forms a network of echoes, resonances, and emotions as the film weaves its political and romantic alliances and their vicissitudes. Steiner's orchestra takes charge of the narration from the outset. The opening title music situates the geographic setting, with grandiose and exotic orchestral music over a map of Africa: open fifths and regular tympani beats underlie a melody with conventional "exotic" tonalities for the Middle East or Africa. Then comes the historical setting: the music segues conveniently to "La Marseillaise" as Max Steiner's credit appears, followed by the big credits for producer Hal Wallis and director Curtiz. Somber music in a minor key follows, to accompany the maps and images showing the exodus of refugees from "imprisoned Europe" early in the war. Music helps establish more specific settings: the conventional Arabic motifs of drums and sinuous woodwinds in a crowded street when the action opens, and so forth.

The score's main thematic materials are the theme song "As Time Goes By," for the fateful love between Rick and Ilsa; the national anthems of France and Germany; German and French military marches; and a host of other incidental music.

At the beginning, when a German occupation officer broadcasts a proclamation forbidding anyone from leaving Casablanca, it is preceded by an orchestral quote of "Deutschland über Alles." A tremolo and pedal effect cleverly imitate a military drum roll, now underlining the fatal gravity of the announcement.

The following scene shows a police roundup. Busy music unites many shots of commotion, its tension emphasizing the danger. When the Vichy police apprehend a man and look at his papers, the orchestra is more unobtrusive under their dialogue, a few notes in the lower strings leaving the upper register available for speech. Then, during this brief exchange, a musical motif surreptitiously makes its way, rising from the bass toward the midrange, increasingly agitated, and warning us a few seconds in advance of what will happen. The police realize the man's papers are expired, the resister tries to run away (cymbal crash and chase music, quickly rising), and he is shot down under a huge poster of Pétain. The sound of the fatal shot is prepared by the music and serves as its cadence. When police discover the Resistance documents in the dead man's pocket, "La Marseillaise" plays in minor, like a brief requiem in memory of this man—an incidental character whose role at the beginning of this story is to illustrate the brutal realities of war and the dangers faced by its valiant, anonymous fighters.

In the sequence, then, music announces what is happening slightly before it happens. This is one of the ways it stretches time, and at the same time it frames, signifies, and guides the action in a way that creates a specific kind of pleasure, the pleasure of being constantly carried along. Music also allows the film to rapidly modify the tone of a scene, and to help us accept the passage from tragic drama to exoticism to patriotism to lighter stuff. When the resistant has been killed, a brief scene shows a couple of English tourists seated at a café table who learn about the shooting from a pickpocket. The poor Englishman's discovery that his wallet is gone is musically underscored with sardonic notes from a trombone. Immediately afterward, an airplane flies overhead, raising the hopes of all the refugees desperately hoping to leave. In fact the plane is bringing a Nazi general to Casablanca. The music then becomes somber and bereaved. All in a few seconds, the underscoring has gone through many changes in tone and atmosphere.

The entire score shows Steiner as a sort of miniaturist, scene by scene, dialogue line by dialogue line, maintaining close synchronization with the story, with characters' looks, with the slightest inflections of action and gesture.

In the long run, a system like this would tend to produce stifling films, where the production schedule runs under masterful control and seemingly nothing has been left to chance. But it is important to reiterate that it is this same system and the same scrupulously applied working method that allowed for the creation of another masterwork that is considered just as "modern" and "personal" as *Casablanca*, including by its admirers, as it is "classical" and "collective"—namely, *Citizen Kane*. *Kane* strictly applies the principles of classical scoring to the letter, though clearly to different effect, and even if composer Bernard Herrmann injected his very strong personality into it. But "personality" does not mean originality or rule-breaking, even if we often tend to lump them together.

The question arises whether film scoring throughout the world follows the classical Hollywood rules. I would say yes. Without necessarily using the word "rules," most films do, no matter the genre, the director's stance, or the individual composer's style. The rules are part and parcel of an overall system, used just as often as the basic forms of scene construction and editing. And if in comparison with the Hollywood classics mentioned above everything seems different in movies like *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960, music by Nino Rota), *Sansho the Bailiff* (Mizoguchi, 1954, music by Fumio Hayasaka), *Jules and Jim* (Truffaut, 1962, music by Georges Delerue), *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (Wenders, 1971, music by Jürgen Knieper), *Vincent, François, Paul et les autres* (Claude Sautet, 1974, music by Philippe Sarde), *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982, music by Vangelis), and an infinite number of others, their *use of music* still essentially respects most, if not all, of the principles.

Even a good many "transgressive" films acknowledge and implicitly endorse the rules, in the very act of playing with and defying them. Take Godard, who is cited most often for revolutionizing the use of music in cinema. He applies a sort of counterrule that only affirms the rules all the more strongly in intentionally creating his closed system of transgression. He makes the source of music visible, makes music "heard"

by having it intervene and cut out in abrupt ways to create additional discontinuity, makes it drown out speech or enter to interrupt a mood, and so forth.

Most of Godard's work revolves around the theme of failure or impossibility, and to me these effects convey a nostalgia for the cinema and its world that they transgress. Observe that Godard applies the same rule to the story he tells: in most of his films, he cannot do without a narrative framework, even if it means disrupting it. The same goes for his mise-en-scène, to which he seems to apply the motto, "Can't live with you, can't live without you." Other films and other directors, be they Tarkovsky, Resnais, Tati, Bergman, Kurosawa, or Fellini (after *8½*), deviated much further than Godard from the implicit rules by ignoring them rather than overtly subverting them. This is not necessarily because they were trying to be original, but only because they were pursuing a goal of their own, unconcerned whether it was distancing them from classicism or returning them to it.

RELATIONSHIPS OF NATIONAL CINEMAS TO THE CLASSICAL MODEL

As we have seen, the differences among the various "national schools" arise from a rather varied and complex number of factors. Here I will give some examples of the way the one "international" formula can be applied to systems that are less rationalized than the one prevailing in Hollywood. I am allowing myself to flash forward a bit here and momentarily jump to the 1950s–1960s before returning to my linear historical account.

The Italians demonstrated remarkable straightforwardness in their use of music: they deployed it when it could help and omitted it when it was no longer necessary, without the meticulous construction and equilibrium that characterized American classicism. The intentionally overwhelming orchestral gestures of Renzo Rossellini that envelop some sequences of his brother Roberto's films go quiet when the film doesn't need them, following a seemingly ad hoc logic, which deploys music like a spot of emotional or cultural color here and there, without any particular strategy.

Take a 1954 film that sets a benchmark of "modernist" cinema for French critics, *Viaggio in Italia* (*Journey to Italy*). It may be modernist in its refusal of conventional dramatic construction, but on the level of music it appears quite classical. It tells the story of an English couple in a troubled marriage who, after wandering and lolling among the bleached ruins and beauty of Italy, miraculously reunite. When Ingrid Bergman visits a necropolis or a villa at Pompeii, Renzo Rossellini's symphonic music is evocative and expressive enough, but at the same time it is restrained by the sound mixing (the relative volumes of dialogue, music, and sounds), and the modest audio level at which it is set tempers its lyricism, which might seem paradoxical.

In one scene, the couple are angry at each other, ill at ease in their hotel room. The husband, at least, refers to the quiet and calm setting ("I must say one sleeps well in this country"), while we hear men singing and shouting in the distance. The couple do not appear to hear the men; in any case, they make no reference to them. In a good many scenes, in fact, there is singing that the couple say nothing about. The presence of songs on the soundtrack, songs that have no precise status as diegetic or nondiegetic, seems to be aimed at reminding us that they are in Naples. The songs are heard even while characters are driving, and it doesn't seem to matter that the quality of the voices and instruments has not been modified to suggest the songs are coming from a radio. The director does not seem worried about rendering the sound according to spatial logic.

At the end, when the couple is about to break up for good, their car reaches a town that is holding a procession for the Virgin, and a brass band is playing. The procession blocks their way. When Bergman gets out of the car, filmed from the exterior, the band music becomes much more audible, for no precise reason. For me this says, What does objective reality matter? The music is really about the central characters; it takes them up into its movement when they are swept up by an amorous reversal in their personal odyssey.

From beginning to end, it feels as if the music is summoned by demands of the moment, rather than forming a system of joins between scenes or of precise thematic echoes. Each time music appears, it is a self-contained unit.

For another Italian film from the same year, *La strada* (Fellini, 1954), Nino Rota wrote music that is very sentimental and also *noticeable*: not only because it is tied to the action (characters play music; the film's theme circulates between the violin and the trumpet), but also because it seems as if music can break out at any moment. Cues "happen" without the American tendency of careful blending with dialogue scenes through all the work of audio layering, instrumental bridges, and so forth. As with *Viaggio in Italia* (although the two films are otherwise fundamentally different), *La strada*'s music is "integrated" merely via *juxtaposition* with the other elements of the film. This is similar to the way the actors' voices are looped, frankly "applied" onto the images. Even in its most highly accomplished works, this Italian cinema conveys a sense of juxtaposed elements.

French cinema is more reticent about effusive outbursts of violins. It has its own musical traditions: for example, the tradition of having a solo instrument such as a saxophone emerge from the ensemble. (The saxophone is played entirely differently in these orchestral scores than it is in jazz, and was favored on French screens for a very long time.) Another tradition consists of the French taste for relatively erudite and abstract composing that avoids indicating a clear emotional tone: quite often, and in its best successes, classical-era film music in France had a predilection for an ambiguous, emotionally noncommittal style. Exceptions are heard in the realm of comedy and cloak-and-dagger films, where brisk and snappy music prevails. Georges Van Parys excelled in this mode (*Fanfan la tulipe*, Christian-Jacque, 1951).

FALSE OCCIDENTALISM: MUSIC IN JAPANESE FILMS WITH CONTEMPORARY SUBJECTS (NARUSE, MIZOGUCHI, OZU)

During the fifties and sixties the first Japanese films to be shown in international distribution (particularly in the United States and Europe) had subjects based on history or legend, with samurais, ghosts, princesses, and peasants. *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, 1950) won the Golden Lion at Venice; *Gate of Hell* (Teinosuke Kinugasa, 1953) won Cannes' grand prize in 1954; Mizoguchi made several

well-received films, including *Ugetsu monogatari* (*Ugetsu*, 1953); later, *Hara-Kiri* (Masaki Kobayashi, 1962) was widely seen in France. The Western audience was probably both disoriented and reassured by the films' exoticism, especially when they heard traditional Japanese instruments—koto, shamisen, shakuhachi—and were led to believe that the Japanese public recognized "their" traditional music. This would be the same thing as if, upon watching a French cloak-and-dagger film of the fifties and hearing minuets played on harpsichords, Japanese spectators presumed that midcentury French viewers recognized "their" music. In reality, for quite a while the Japanese audience had been listening to pop songs, jazz, swing, and tangos, as did people in other nations. Throughout the world, indeed, movies, records, and radio had contributed to the spread of rhythms and styles mostly originating in North and South America, onto which national popular music styles grafted themselves. Since there was French swing, there was no reason not to have Japanese swing.

This image changed only during the seventies, with the belated introduction of Ozu's films to France. With the exception of Kurosawa's masterpiece *Ikiru* (1952), Ozu's films were the first Japanese films seen in France that were set in contemporary Japan. The West saw Ozu's *Tokyo Story* in 1953, and later, with much greater success that solidified his reputation in France, *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962).

The modern-day narratives had the effect of "de-exoticizing" the Japanese for French moviegoers. Certainly, the movies' characters continued to speak in Japanese and have Asian features, but they used electric lighting, had radios and TV sets, and listened to rumbas, boleros, paso dobles, and tangos on jukeboxes, just like a large portion of the planet in the fifties and sixties. It would be a mistake to think that there is a particular ethnic intention in this taste for Latin dances, because in the rest of the world, particularly in France in the same period, pop music was largely based on Spanish, Brazilian, Cuban, and Argentine rhythms, and sometimes on Italian ones: anthologies of popular French songs in the 1940s and 1950s are quite telling on this point.

Musical underscoring in these and other Japanese films had a decidedly Western sound. For example, for the opening credits of Naruse's *Floating Clouds* (1955), Ichiro Saito wrote music that combined Western counterpoint with musical lines that are typically Japanese in timbre

and rhythm. A "classical" Western transverse flute is heard, played in a composite style (at least to my French ear) mixing Western and Japanese sounds. Later in the film, a moving scene between the heroine and the weak fellow she unfortunately loves is accompanied by sad music composed in perfectly Occidental style—sustained strings, minor key, and harmony and counterpoint in accord with composition as taught in the conservatories of New York, Paris . . . and Tokyo. Its emotional signification appears the same for the Japanese audience of the time and the French moviegoer today. In one way, however, there is a difference between that cue and what was being produced in Europe and the United States: its composition is scholarly, a bit rigid for film music. It hardly modulates—the music can remain for five minutes in the same key, which makes it appear insistent and static to a Western ear. American film music of the same period would not tend to behave in this manner. And periodically we hear something that recurs often in Japanese film music: a harp arpeggio over its whole range, imitating an instrumental effect of traditional Japanese music when the player strums all the strings (of a koto, for example) up and down.

The opening credits of another Naruse film, *Inazuma* (*Lightning*, 1952), are accompanied by a very convincing pastiche of one of Rachmaninoff's piano concertos. This should not be surprising: David Lean's melodrama *Brief Encounter* (1945), which itself uses one of Rachmaninoff's actual concertos (no. 2) for accompaniment, had enjoyed worldwide success at war's end. (Perhaps it was still fresh in the audience's mind ten years later, when Billy Wilder, in *The Seven Year Itch*, parodied the use of the same concerto.)

The phenomenon of numerous musical pastiches in films might have something to do with the frequent practice of putting sequences together in the editing room with the help of "temp tracks." Temp tracks are temporary sound tracks, generally consisting of preexisting music, classical or otherwise, that help the editor tease out the rhythm and mood of the visuals. Sometimes the director takes a fancy to the result, which leads him or her to ask the composer to write something as close as possible to the temp track's music. This is what has brought us countless scores "in the style of" Mahler, Wagner, Satie, or Debussy.

Another example that is less well known but even more spectacular is the "adaptation" of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony that plays over the opening credits of *Women of the Night* (Mizoguchi, 1948), a melodrama

influenced by Italian neorealism. The adaptation is particularly "pathétique"—pathetically badly performed and recorded . . . and yet the film is no less extraordinary for it.

Mizoguchi benefited several times from his collaboration with Fumio Hayasaka, which enriched not only his *jidai-geki* (historical dramas set in feudal times) but also *Miss Oyu* (1951), a movie whose story takes place during the Meiji era at the turn of the twentieth century. It includes yet another example of musical pastiche. There is a long, wordless scene when Shinnosuke is at Oyu's bedside; a quiet calm prevails between a man and a woman united by reciprocal but unconsummated desire. Instrumental music is heard; it suddenly stops when one of the characters starts speaking again. The cue is a pastiche of the first movement of Manuel de Falla's "Nights in the Gardens of Spain," characterized by lush Debussyan harmonies; but instead of de Falla's piano we hear a bucolic flute. In a Western context, this music would likely be perceived as poetic, an emotionally neutral evocation of nature, but the Japanese audience at the time would have received this cue, probably written by Hayasaka, as intensely passionate and romantic. Conversely, when in some 1950s Japanese films we hear the violin produce an extremely accentuated vibrato, which is associated in the Western tradition with romantic subjectivity, the vibrato is quite possibly just a pretty ornamental effect in the hands of a Japanese composer. This is one of the traps of film music: when it sounds familiar and universal to us, it is entirely possible that it doesn't at all produce the same effects or is encoded in the same way in the film's period or place of origin. This is the sense in which we can speak of music in film as a false Esperanto, as I argue in the introduction.

However, the idea that the codes are rigid and unchangeable for moviegoers in a given country must also be reconsidered. A question arises for the French spectator: For a Japanese film, what is "the code?" We are all convinced that in another country, someone who says something knows what he's saying and that his compatriots understand what he means. And when we hear music from another continent, we tend to think that this music is "in the blood" of that place, that it is made by musicians who know what they're doing, and heard by people who know what it says and means. I believe we need to put this illusion of transparency into perspective.

Mizoguchi's final film, *Street of Shame* (1956), scored by Toshiro Mayuzumi, is a melodrama about prostitutes. What is striking about it is the awkward, hopelessly dated presence of a musical saw, in a score whose weird modernism gives expression to the difficult lives and social marginalization of its characters. The saw emits spectacular vibratos and glissandi, its sound reminiscent of the Trautonium or the Ondes Martenot. (A musical saw was also heard the year before, in Kurosawa's *I Live in Fear*.) So in music, too, Mizoguchi's art proved highly receptive to tendencies in world cinema; the fifties were indeed one of the decades richest in film-music experimentation.

The situation is different for a filmmaker like Ozu, who, in his final films from the late fifties and early sixties, worked in the same genre and took on a recognizable style, technique, and troupe of actors. The work of composer Takanobu Saito on the last Ozu films relied on several constant elements. The scores were arranged for a small instrumental ensemble. They alternated between a sentimental theme with sustained notes without much rhythm, which enters at rare and precise moments, and ambient dance music, whose cheerfully bouncy accompaniment sometimes resembles the sprightly circusy tunes that Nino Rota wrote for Fellini (don't forget that *La strada*, which came out in 1954, was a global success). This dance music, often presented as the aural background in a cafe or an inn, and on other occasions permeating the air of outdoor settings, is equally dated, but in the most charming way. This musical style, with light and soothing orchestration and unobtrusive bass, not to be confused with elevator music, might be called "mellow."

Tokyo Twilight (1957), one of the darkest and most dramatic of Ozu's films, begins with opening credits accompanied by an innocuous bouncy tarantella. It is unobtrusively heard later, as a distant background strain seemingly playing inside a cafe during the particularly intense meeting between a wayward mother and her daughter. The tarantella is a short and simple refrain, and when it ends, Ozu plays it over, with enough reprises to take it all the way to the scene's end. Note that this ultrasimple process, which was common in the silent era when music was played live, is also used several times in Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975). This solution, which is actually quite lazy, can evoke a strong feeling of fatality.

POSTWAR ANEMPATHY: *THE THIRD MAN*

The Third Man (Carol Reed, 1949), adapted from Graham Greene's novel, tells the story of an American writer, Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), who travels to postwar Vienna under Allied occupation to join his friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles), and then to investigate his death. He discovers that Harry is not dead at all but trading in fatal black-market penicillin. Martins's investigations lead to Harry's capture and killing.

Anton Karas's zither is the sole source of music, reeling off slow or fast-paced themes, almost always in major; the director, Reed, apparently discovered the instrument during the filming, and it led him even to rethink his screenplay. The main theme, which is called the "Harry Lime Theme," is heard over what has to be one of the strangest opening-credit sequences in cinema. It plays while we see the zither in extreme closeup, strings vibrating with the music. The attacks of the notes we hear are slightly out of sync with the movements of the strings. Perhaps this mild asynchronism, associated with the deliberately innocuous and mindlessly cheerful quality of the rhythm, prefigures the strategy of what follows (i.e., to treat the subject with distance). Let's not forget that Martins is a novelist looking for a subject, sarcastic and cold, alcoholic and cerebral. The film features an odd pairing of striking visual expressionism (contrasty photography with a lot of black zones, and an abundance of canted framings) and a studied coldness in the editing and acting. It also has a particular and *anempathetic* way of following one music cue immediately with another—as if the cues were on two turntables and a master of ceremonies were playing them on autopilot.[13] Tied to Vienna and the obsessive presence of its architecture, the music, through its indifference, expresses the opaque and closed feel of an old city that retains its impenetrability despite the disasters of war.

Karas's music is particularly energetic and cheery in a scene where Martins walks through the cemetery to confirm Lime's death and happens upon the solemn burial ceremony. The disparity between the image's and music's moods could hardly be more apparent.

Much later, in the famous conversation between Martins and Lime in a carriage of Vienna's giant Ferris wheel, the humans far below appear tiny; they give tangible meaning to Lime's cynical suggestion: if Martins could make money by destroying them, "Would you really

feel any pity if one of those . . . dots stopped moving forever?" Lime's final remark, after commenting that great Italian art came about along-side the warfare, terror, and bloodshed of the Borgias, that the sole product of Swiss democracy and brotherly love was the cuckoo clock—is ironically punctuated by a happy flourish of the zither on the soundtrack.

This giant-wheel scene visually embodies the point of view of music itself: a circular movement, indifferent to anything else going on. Ulti-mately, the Ferris wheel is a visual analog of all those phonograph rec-ords that have been spinning since *The Public Enemy* (1931) like anem-pathetic merry-go-rounds, while murders and other horrors take place.

The "Harry Lime Theme" is based on a simple motif, G–G♯–A, a lament-like turn that Nino Rota would make into a major leitmotif in Fellini's *La dolce vita.* But its subtle melancholy does not correspond to anything in Harry Lime's appallingly cavalier and unruffled arro-gance. As played by Orson Welles, Lime displays none of the worry and guilt of Hitchcock's villains. The zither theme is really the film's theme, not Lime's. It contrasts an ironic "left hand" marking a duple rhythm, and a chromatic right hand that's sometimes slightly dreamy. Incidentally, note that the music goes firmly against stereotype, since it associates *duple* time, not the usual waltz, with Vienna.

On one hand, then, for postwar cinema *The Third Man* reactualizes and renews the power of anempathetic music; on the other, the film suggests many diverse musical formulas in relation to horror. The Sec-ond World War had occurred in the meantime, as well as the persecu-tion of the Jews, Auschwitz, and the bomb; with the result that Hanns Eisler for *Night and Fog* (1956), and Giovanni Fusco with *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), would entirely forego emotive expressiveness (Fusco even refused violins), in order to be more suggestive of the unspeakable, and to allow the space for music to mourn for sentimentality.

SOURCES OF REVITALIZATION IN THE 1950S

In the late 1940s and into the 1950s, the cinema incorporated some changes that were, if not perfect, at least tried and tested. Here I am referring not so much to abstract principles as to a series of actual devices and practices. In many cases these innovations and

modifications were added to established practices without necessarily unseating them.

Following World War II, the film industry sought ways to stem the emerging competition of television. Without television, which was confined to studios at the time, perhaps the cinema would not have been in such a hurry to move outside to shoot real exteriors. In addition, without television, cinema would perhaps not have been so readily receptive to more challenging social, psychological, or sexual themes. The efforts of some courageous individuals were key to this opening-out of cinema: producers such as Darryl Zanuck, Louis de Rochemont, and Mark Hellinger and directors like Otto Preminger, Elia Kazan, Roberto Rossellini, and Claude Autant-Lara pushed boundaries; actors including Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster took to producing; and all helped the movies reinvent themselves, often paying the price for risks they took. The cinema's postwar impetus would help in the refashioning of the functions and style of film music.

So in a number of areas, cinema fought against competition by television and against the decay of its own tested formulas.

One change was to highlight film as spectacle, in CinemaScope and color; television offered only black and white on a small screen with less definition, and most programs were filmed on the TV stage. Consequences for music were minimal in this domain. The two movie genres favored by widescreen and color were the color musical (often adaptations from Broadway shows) and the epic film, ranging from big westerns to costume epics. For these genres the classical formula functioned perfectly well. Films in stereo made during the fifties (and exhibited in the few theaters equipped with magnetic sound) remained too few to create a new style. The modern means served mainly to expand the classical model without replacing it.

Another factor in the revitalization of film was the exploration of new subjects, and the partial lifting of certain prohibitions. Fifties mainstream cinema started to deal more liberally with sex, drugs, and violence, regaining some of the freedom it had enjoyed in the late twenties and early thirties, before the moralizing prudery of the Production Code had reined it in.

The movies also began to seek specific new audiences, especially the youth audience, who became target consumers of music. A new crop

of movies told of young people and their malaise, treating psychological or sexual themes; and new kinds of music came with them, to depict the cultural milieu and to convey confused feelings in new ways. It was a period of psychological dramas and Freudian melodramas, whose composers were writing tenser, sometimes dissonant or atonal scores. The scores of the young Leonard Rosenman for the first two James Dean movies, *East of Eden* (Elia Kazan, 1955) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955), are exemplary in this respect. They retain leitmotif construction and continue to use music as a relay, bridge, and psychological indicator, but they rely on musical language that is more complex, floating, and tortured, with jazzy sounds, in complicity with the protagonists' tormented mental states.

The movies saw the entry of jazz and rock 'n' roll—the latter presented as the phenomenon of a new generation.

THE JAZZ WAVE

In the 1950s, jazz, often white orchestral jazz, was sometimes the sole idiom of a film's score; more often, it was a new ingredient mixed in with the others. Specific instruments—muted trumpet, saxophone, drums—came to the fore, as did characteristic riffs, rhythms, and harmonies. Those harmonies helped supply an *ambience* of jazz rather than what was really being played in clubs at the time.

The score for Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951, adapted from Tennessee Williams's play), with Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh, was signed by a newcomer named Alex North. North brought out the New Orleans setting and the screenplay's atmosphere of madness and sensuality, daring to write different material partly inspired from blues and jazz, and using solo instruments like the saxophone as musical characters. In his score for Laslo Benedek's *Death of a Salesman* (1951, based on Arthur Miller's play), North created a sensation by opening the story with a solo flute as Willy Loman returns home at night.

Both *Streetcar* and *Salesman* adapt plays in a deliberately intimate style, with no attempt to hide their theatrical nature, and the solo instrument in each case helps reinforce that theatrical intimacy sought—not disguised—by the direction. We should remember that the

solo instrument became fashionable as a result of the smash success of Anton Karas's music for *The Third Man* and its memorable zither sound.

Another movie that emerged as an "event" in this period was *The Man with the Golden Arm* (Otto Preminger, 1955). It was scored by the thirty-three-year-old Elmer Bernstein, arranged by Shelly Manne and Shorty Rogers, and orchestrated by Fred Steiner (no relation to Max). The movie's protagonist is a drummer, played by Frank Sinatra, who is struggling to kick his drug habit. We hear a quartet of trumpets in the high range and a chase sequence with solo piano and drums, in a 3+4 rhythm. Bernstein commented in an interview: "This was the first time a film score became a hit on the record market. Before, there had been the *High Noon* (1952) theme or the theme from *Gone with the Wind* (1939), but this time, it was the whole score . . . It created a tendency I find very harmful—encouraging producers to want scores that will be successful on their own—and that ended up affecting film music in general."[14] He claimed he was one of the first to compose in this style.

Preminger's role here should not be underestimated, since he was much more than a great director. An Austrian Jew who began in theater under Max Reinhardt, he immigrated to Hollywood in 1935 and had his first successes in the 1940s, with films such as *Laura* (1944), *Fallen Angel* (1945), *Forever Amber* (1947), and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950). He helped to modernize film music and to open the door to great Black artists, including singers (in the Black version of *Carmen*, *Carmen Jones*, 1954) and composers (like Duke Ellington, in *Anatomy of a Murder*, 1959), all as he was fighting social taboos in film as well as in the film industry.

Preminger's *Carmen Jones* has an understated, abrupt, stripped-down mise-en-scène that was no doubt dictated by the modest budget—there were only four weeks of filming, and audio looping was surely used for the soundtrack. The film is blunt and sensual, like a news story about a crime of passion but in the masterful hands of a great director of actors. "The idea," said Preminger, "was to make a dramatic film with music, instead of shooting a conventional musical film." Preminger (who also shot a *Porgy and Bess* in 1959) was proud to be a discoverer of new acting talent, and he was for musical talent, too. For *Anatomy of a Murder*, a courtroom drama that became controversial

for ts explicit handling of sexual subjects, he felt that hiring Duke Ellington would "produce a freshness which an experienced film composer might no longer possess." The first significant nondiegetic scoring to be written by an African American composer, it was hailed by critic Stanley Crouch as "one of Ellington's grandest accomplishments."

In 1957, with jazz musician Chico Hamilton, Elmer Bernstein created the music for *Sweet Smell of Success*, a noirish drama produced by Burt Lancaster and directed by Alexander Mackendrick. Not long before that, another Bernstein, Leonard, had written a dynamic score for *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954); it was typical of the kind of symphonic jazz then in fashion, featuring abundant use of vibraphone and percussion. For a while jazz was associated with drugs, violence, and social problems. Johnny Mandel, who had started as a jazz arranger, used a large orchestra for *I Want to Live!* (Robert Wise, 1958), the story of a prostitute (Susan Hayward) who is sent to the gas chamber for a crime she did not commit. The soundtrack includes music by the great saxophonist Gerry Mulligan. The next year, Robert Wise brought in the Modern Jazz Quartet for his film noir *Odds Against Tomorrow* (1959).

In France there were a number of films accompanied by jazz, sometimes improvised by a soloist or small ensemble. Roger Vadim engaged John Lewis and his Modern Jazz Quartet for *Sait-on jamais . . .* (*No Sun in Venice*, 1957), and worked with Thelonious Monk for *Les Liaisons dangereuses* in 1959. Miles Davis famously contributed his solo trumpet to Louis Malle's detective film *Elevator to the Gallows* (1958). We should remember that for spectators the jazz sound was not new at the time; it reflected the zeitgeist, wafted through cafes, accompanied some TV series, and was popular on records. And films had long had jazz as an element of auditory setting in scenes in restaurants, bars, cafes, soirées. It is possible that this was the beginning of the close association of movie characters with their personal music (music they played and danced to), as it was for the general public with the appearance of the portable record player. Marcel Carné's movie *Les Tricheurs* (*Young Sinners*, 1958) took advantage of the musical tastes of its main characters, depraved young Parisian playboys; the action is accompanied by a compilation of various jazz titles, from artists ranging from Dizzy Gillespie to Oscar Peterson.

Some composers steeped in jazz culture came into view through European films. Among them, one of the most gifted musicians of the young European cinema, the jazz pianist Krzysztof Komeda, scored the early films of Roman Polanski and Danish director Henning Carlsen's *Hunger* (1966) before his untimely death. His remarkable scores in the modern jazz tradition had a sharp, glacial sound. In Polanski's *Knife in the Water* (1962), the influence of John Coltrane and McCoy Tyner can be heard. More generally, the European jazz avant-garde engaged in music that was less orchestral, less sweet, more Afro-American than the jazz being played in the USA by talented composers like Johnny Mandel.

Some Japanese films also have a jazzifying saxophone in their music, such as *I Live in Fear* (Kurosawa, 1955), composed by Masaru Sato.

ROCK AND SONG

It is not certain, either, that the audience drew any clear lines between what we now easily distinguish as jazz, rhythm and blues, and rock 'n' roll. When viewers saw in Frank Tashlin's screwball comedy *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) a procession of singers and groups from the Platters to Fats Domino and Little Richard, as well as the crooner Julie London, could they—based on style, skin color, and genre—tell the differences as clearly as we do now, when all the albums in stores or online are classified into strict categories? Let us thank the "film music" section for being one of the last places you can find a refreshing diversity of genres all on one album.

However, rock 'n' roll managed to impose itself as a new genre because of the performers' and performances' visual appeal and rock songs' ability to reunite in a new way with the classical forms and conventions of the musical. In film, the song is a specific genre completely different from any other kind of music, since it includes lyrics, can be worked into action and into dialogue, and has no need for a complicated reason to be put there. It's enough for a character to grab a guitar, sit down at the piano, or be on horseback and in the mood to sing, for a full orchestra to accompany the song (with the blessing of nondiegetic music and the spectator's indulgence). On the other hand,

the entry of an instrumental cue in a scene often requires a moment when characters are silent; most often the action ceases, unless the screenplay makes this music into a background or a counterpoint for a parallel action.

Sometimes four minutes can suffice to "make" a movie and to change the course of film music. This happened with Richard Brooks's *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). The opening title music for this earnestly humane film, about a teacher (Glenn Ford) and the problems he encounters with the delinquent kids in his school, caught fire around the world and launched rock 'n' roll in the movies. Rarely does a movie's opening arouse much attention; typically, moviegoers are still settling in their seats or just beginning to turn their attention to the screen. But the opening song, "Rock Around the Clock," by Bill Haley and the Comets, electrified audiences. Much later, George Lucas chose to start his nostalgia movie *American Graffiti* (1973) with the same song, and it elicited the same instant enthusiasm in theaters.

In the movies' tradition of "music battles," the screenplay for *Blackboard Jungle* divides generations through the characters' musical tastes. The school's music teacher, a man who is liberal, modern, and always trying to empathize with his students, has a collection of jazz records, including rare recordings of trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, which the gang that runs roughshod over his class will destroy—creating the opposition between rock (associated with delinquency) and jazz (compassionate but defenseless liberalism).

Incidentally, the breaking of rare records to intimidate, or for retaliation or blackmail, is something of a cinematic topos. We see it in Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), when Mike Hammer (Ralph Meeker) brutally breaks a precious Caruso recording to make its owner talk. Like slashing a painting in a museum, the smashing of a 78 or $33^{1/3}$ rpm record is a profanation and a striking visual. It's so cinematically powerful because of how quickly it all happens (it is quite another task to rip apart or burn a book). At the same time it embodies a theme that obsessively runs through all sound film: the attempt to *break music*, because it stands for that which may keep going without us, indifferent to our death.

At about the same time, Elvis Presley began his movie career with *Jailhouse Rock* (Richard Thorpe, 1957). The music Elvis sings in his films

(which do not really constitute a series, since they are so varied) is often more sugary than the music that made his onstage reputation.

TUNES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Since the late forties, and after the hit records of the main themes of *The Third Man* and Preminger's *Laura* (composed by David Raksin), both of which brought in colossal receipts, composers were increasingly asked to include an easy tune or theme in the score that could also serve as song material. The song complete with lyrics did not have to appear in the movie itself; songs were often written afterward and independently, in different versions in different countries. They traveled from mouth to mouth, from singer to singer (no singer had exclusive rights, and multiple performers might record a song), and the song's content might bear only a vague relation to the movie. This practice fell to orchestral composers, who often had no choice in the matter. For example, Dimitri Tiomkin created the theme for Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon* ("Do Not Forsake Me, O My Darlin'"). Tiomkin did this repeatedly for other westerns, like *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (John Sturges, 1957), where Frankie Laine sings the theme song over the opening credits, and *The Alamo* (John Wayne, 1960), whose theme became the hit song "The Green Leaves of Summer." Another western with a theme song, also sung by Frankie Laine, is *Man without a Star* (King Vidor, 1955). Fritz Lang's *Rancho Notorious* (1952) begins with a song called "The Legend of Chuck-a-Luck." *The Hanging Tree* (Delmer Daves, 1959) has its song by Jerry Livingston and Mack David, sung by Marty Robbins; Max Steiner was assigned the orchestral score, in accordance with the normal distribution of tasks at the time.

The western lends itself particularly well to this arrangement, because of all the not directly musical film genres, it is the one that accords a place of honor to the ballad and the song. The singing cowboy Gene Autry was one of the ten biggest American stars between 1937 and 1942, with movies like *Melody Ranch* (Joseph Santley, 1940) and *Cowboy Serenade* (William Morgan, 1942).

The economical formula for *The Third Man*, with a simple and popular theme and the solo sound of the zither, could not be copied and

varied indefinitely. It is interesting to note that one of the rare films that did so, *Forbidden Games* (René Clément, 1952), with its solo guitar melody and an old tune arranged and played by Narciso Yepes, bears some thematic similarities to *The Third Man*. Both films show life continuing despite disaster and death; the music symbolizes the cruel indifference of existence through its ineluctable unfolding; conventional harmonic progressions and a calm rhythmic structure are strictly respected as unquestioned rules of the road.

So the late 1950s to early 1960s witnessed a new triumph of melody. Films now treated melody not as an unadorned motif to be used as raw material for motivic development, an element in a mosaic, but rather as melody that openly unfolds, proclaims itself to be heard and remembered—like Georges Auric's waltz for *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1953) or Jean Wiéner's harmonica tune for *Touchez pas au grisbi* (Jacques Becker, 1954). Some considered this new trend as utter heresy, representing the end of "good" film music. The cinema was overtaken for good by popular music and by extrafilmic commercial marketing. A new era was surely beginning.[15]

The predilection for melody prevailed also in suspense movies like Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956). Since the heroine, played by Doris Day, is a singer, Jay Livingston and Ray Evans's song "Que Sera, Sera" was integrated into the action. Melody starred in epics such as *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Michael Anderson, 1956), with its waltzy theme song by Victor Young. It appeared in comedies, too, such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Blake Edwards, 1961), with Henry Mancini's "Moon River." Even a spectacle movie like *Exodus* (Otto Preminger, 1960), about the founding of the state of Israel, had a theme by Ernest Gold that became a song for the album release called "This Land Is Mine."

In French film, the melodic trend illustrated across the sixties by Michel Legrand's music for Jacques Demy, Agnès Varda, and William Klein, or by Michel Magne (the headlining French movie composer of the decade) for Roger Vadim, drew from unexpected models such as Bach, who was known and loved at the time for his big melodic arcs based on stepwise repetitions of a motif, rhythmic dynamism, choirs, trumpets. Legrand's score for *Qui êtes-vous Polly Maggoo?* (*Who Are You, Polly Maggoo?*, 1966), William Klein's satirical film about the

fashion world, imitates this side of Bach, which offered a clear alternative to the languor and romantic or expressionistic turmoil forever being explored in Hollywood psychological melodramas.

Record sales for music "in the style of Bach" were enormous in the sixties, often treating Bach-ness with jazzy sounds and rhythms. Jacques Loussier did Bach for a trio of piano, percussion, and bass. The Swingle Singers did Bach as a cappella scat singing. This group, which included the wonderful Christiane Legrand, composer Michel's sister, created a characteristic sound of up-tempo vocalization on non-linguistic syllables in a high register. This style would long obsess French film, especially (and bizarrely) in comedy. Indeed, one cannot recount film history merely by writing about its composers, directors, and actors: it is also made up of such unpredictable phenomena, as well as of film's constant interaction with the musical trends to which it is always open. This is fortunate for cinema's vitality, even if its motive is so often an obvious commercial one.

Also, in my opinion the renewal of film music in the fifties and sixties should not be described only as a rejuvenation of genre and style and their reshaping by the jazz invasion, the song form, and finally pop. In a domain—that is, in film—where music is first and foremost *sound*, this period must also be seen for the way it renewed the very sonorities of instruments and of musical space. Superficially, we could describe the uniqueness of a composer like Ennio Morricone, for example, in terms of the "popular" quality of his themes; but that does not mean much, for his themes are often rather long and complex. Instead, it's the sound of his music that is quite characteristic, highlighting solos by instruments that had not previously been heard in the movies—"instruments" that included human whistling,[16] solo electric guitar, wordless vocalizing, and harmonica. Morricone also used audio gimmicks—occasional special sounds created by a synthesizer or a voice; for example, the vocal interjections "Sean Sean Sean" in the orchestral texture of the theme associated with the IRA character (James Coburn) in *Duck, You Sucker!* (Sergio Leone, 1971).

Music in French and American films of this period underwent profound changes in audio treatment. Moviegoers now heard, instead of the kind of blended overall sonority that had been widely used, strident brasses, bursts of percussion, humming voices, fast violin riffs,

and violent orchestral "punches." This explosive quality of music intervening to break a lovely continuum that has been painstakingly, gradually created—surrendering the film to its disjointed components— also gave an indispensable youthful jolt to many films.

DIRECTORS WHO CHANGED THE RULES OF THE GAME

Very few directors influenced the use of music in films as strongly as Sergio Leone. Before him, leitmotifs that were idiosyncratic and "up front" were not allowable, and grotesque or colloquial sounds were considered the height of vulgarity. Post-Leone, such things became perfectly admissible. This does not diminish Morricone's role and his great composing talent; but as a very good "musical actor," he was great at musically fleshing out ideas that he had not necessarily invented.

Leone loved to say that in some of his films music acts as dialogue, and this is why he needed to have it in advance and to be able to play it on the set, at least the musical ideas or sketches. Furthermore, he loved to use, aside from his expansive melodies, very simple ideas of music and sound. A theme could serve as a sort of call (the quick back-and-forth of the perfect fourth in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* [1966], the piercing three-note motif in *Once Upon a Time in the West* [1968], and quirky sound effects). With Leone, film music can proudly show off its facile, popular, and simplified quality rather than modestly couch itself in the orchestral flow.

Leone reminded an interviewer, Noël Simsolo, who compared *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* to a baroque opera, that he always relied on realism. More specifically,

> I prefer to compare it to a concerto. There is no realism in opera, which is another thing entirely . . . In the movie, each character has their own musical theme. And each is also a musical instrument that serves my scoring. In that sense, I play a lot with harmonies and counterpoint. I work with a musicality that enhances the sense of fable as much as reality. It was necessary, because of the difficulties involved with films describing a voyage. I show the itinerary of three entities that are amalgams of

all human flaws. I must purify this voyage. And I have to have crescendos and climactic high points that remain coherent with the general spirit of the work. So, music took on crucial importance.[17]

During the process of recording the harmonica theme of *Once Upon a Time in the West* associated with the quasi-mute avenger, Harmonica (Charles Bronson), Leone claims, he almost strangled the musician to make him render a certain sound. "He was on the verge of suffocating, his eyes were popping, in tears; I did very nearly choke him to death." Does Ry Cooder's plaintive guitar sound in Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* echo this?

However, Leone's concept, which is to make us aware of the music, and also to make us conscious of the person emitting it (a whistler is indeed more than an instrument; he is a character), could only appear in a specific tradition of spectacle. This is, of course, the Italian tradition, wherein dramatic effects can be foregrounded—very noticeable changes in lighting with Fellini, interpellating spectators and overtly showing narrative effects in Ettore Scola, and so on—without distanciation. This aesthetic runs contrary to other traditions that aim to *erase the means* as they produce their effects. The "invisible theater" of Bayreuth, upon which the classical Hollywood cinema largely modeled its concept of music, could never be imagined in Italy.

A phenomenon one American composer calls the "unrelated score" seems to have arisen in the sixties and seventies. This refers to a score showing no precise relation to the action. Such music sometimes seems to rule over the images, making *them* the accompaniment to *it.* Take, for example, Francis Lai's well-known theme for *A Man and a Woman* (Claude Lelouch, 1966), with its lyrics and onomatopoeias that command the spectator's conscious attention.

Director Lelouch made a considerable mark on world cinema. In his prolific career, from *Le Propre de l'homme* (*The Right of Man*, 1961) to *Chacun sa vie* (*Everyone's Life*, 2017, with another score by Francis Lai), practically all the films have a dramatic conception that is musical in nature, even operatic. The stories move from the individual to the collective, from the anecdotal to the historical, and resonate between generations, countries, and destinies—such that in the same way that the orchestra in Wagnerian opera weaves an overall continuity among all

the elements, even the most occasional and fleeting, with Lelouch everything is always interconnected across time and space. To that end, he works with bold narrative structures, some unfolding over two generations. *Les Uns et les autres* (*Bolero*, 1981) relies on a musical idea based on simultaneity, and recounts the parallel fates of four families between 1936 and 1980, all linked by music. In 1937, Simon the pianist falls in love with an orchestra violinist, while in Berlin, Kremer, a young pianist, meets a great orchestra conductor (James Caan) and consorts with the Nazi regime. The war passes, and Sergei (real dancer Jorge Donn) becomes a dancer, while Kremer (in a scene inspired by an episode from the real life of Herbert von Karajan) plays in New York in Carnegie Hall, which is empty since all the seats have been bought up by a Jewish organization. The film culminates in unanimist communion centered around a ballet in Paris being put on as a benefit for Cambodian refugees. The event is broadcast live on television, and the film's four families watch: the famous *Boléro* by Maurice Béjart and Maurice Ravel, danced by Sergei. Music and dance are thus mobilized to embody the idea of repetition, echo, eternal return.

Lelouch's *Partir, revenir* (1985) similarly features intersecting destinies and back-and-forths between eras; its music has the important role of carrying metaphysical preoccupations, particularly the idea of reincarnation. Lelouch said he based this film on Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto—having "added" to it a fourth movement, written by Michel Legrand. He describes the film as a "novelistic story for piano, orchestra, and movie camera." A good many of his films include a poem-song that synthesizes and recapitulates all the themes contained therein. This explains his reliance on songsmiths like Francis Lai and Michel Legrand.

Lelouch can certainly irritate, because of differences between his intentions and the sometimes-disappointing end results. His ambitious visions often end up with a rather trivial product, caught in the trap of cozy naturalism, with small moments of truth between characters, which can diminish his wildest ideas. But no one can deny that he was authentically generous with his bold strokes, and forever curious in his formal experiments. His works have choruses, monologues, silences, addresses to the spectator, and sung or danced musical numbers, all which display the films' discontinuous quality, and their musicality as compositions in rhythm, tempo, and pacing.

Theme from *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*

He does singular things with characters. Sometimes the children and parents in a story, twenty years apart in age, are played by the same actors, as if each generation could give birth to perfect doubles. On the other hand, for the characters played by Anouk Aimée and Jean-Louis Trintignant in *A Man and a Woman*, he gave their reappearing roles to Richard Berry and Evelyne Bouix in *A Man and a Woman: Twenty Years Later* (1986). A fanatic for themes-and-variations, he also fancied the play of mirrors in his films. In one sense, and apart from value judgments you might make about his work, Lelouch is a brother to Demy and to Fellini, in that all of them have repetitive and closed universes. But his films follow an entirely different, somewhat careless aesthetic, which did have its staunch admirers, Alain Resnais not least among them.

In comedy, the presence of song melodies (original or borrowed) had long been commonly accepted. But established convention did not prevent the great Jacques Tati from using songs in other ways than as simple anecdotal or ephemeral elements.

Music in Tati's films feels airy, with lightly orchestrated, insouciant musical diversions, simple melodies that feel as if they've been carried in on the breeze, weightless. Alain Romans's single theme for *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday* (1953) is a good example. A trumpet and then a vibra-phone, backed up by what sounds like a nightclub orchestra, play a series of languid phrases, each starting with three rising steps and resolving on a sustained note. As we watch the sea, each held note allows for rest and daydreaming; the sound of nature—a splash of surf—punctuates each phrase without interrupting the musical arc. The ending at an octave above brings the cue to a sentimental and expressive peak, which quickly goes silent. Similar characteristics can be heard in the theme written by Franck Barcellini for *Mon Oncle* (1958): steady rhythm, a taste for stepwise melody, and sentimental or melancholic verses, but in a more childlike style, like a piano piece for beginners.

Tati's credit sequences have a unique way of bringing music into the air of his films, interweaving music with the noise of the world.

Mon Oncle starts with characteristic originality. The credits are printed on signs at a construction site, and we read them in in a decidedly unpoetic atmosphere, over the sound of jackhammers and mechanical rattling. Only when the title *Mon Oncle* appears in the form of graffiti scrawled onto a moldering wall on an old suburban street and the mechanical noise dies out, does the theme begin with a solo piano, subsequently accompanied by instruments like guitar and accordion.[18]

Playtime (1967) is aggressive from the start, with a hectic, telluric noise—a madly breathless percussion solo, interlaced with tiny bursts of organ notes,[19] before the music (by Francis Lemarque, an excellent songwriter who unfortunately didn't "get" the tone of this film and provides a leaden orchestral cue at this point) brings in a melancholic sweetness. But do not think that there is polemical or satirical intent here. The initial percussive noise expresses not a negative vision of the modern world equated with an inhuman uproar, but an elemental dynamic and rhythmic dimension, indispensable and bracing, that emphasizes all the more the nostalgic melancholy of what follows. This typically "bipolar" use of music takes form more than once in Tati, through sudden bursts of frenzied jazz in *Hulot*, *Mon Oncle*, and *Playtime*: with no warning, a New Orleans–style cue will suddenly let loose and shake up characters and viewers, and then end just as abruptly. Everything in Tati works in a back-and-forth way.[20]

For his final feature-length fiction film, *Trafic* (1971), Tati engaged another songwriter, Charles Dumont, who, happily, genuinely grasped the tone of this comical chronicle of the road and the automobile. He wrote the theme in the form of a short jingle that can be whistled and that establishes a daydreamy mood.

SINGING THE COLLOQUIAL

Of the directors who made dazzling musical debuts in the film world of the 1960s, Jacques Demy is among the most widely recognized. He had the audacity to conceive and execute two entirely sung films:

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964), with music by Michel Legrand, and *Une chambre en ville* (*A Room in Town*, 1982), with music by Michel Colombier. Other Demy films are full of music and songs tightly woven into the story, too, such as *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (1967) and *Donkey Skin* (1970). There is also *Parking* (1985), a modern version of the Orpheus story, whose hero is, improbably, a 1980s rock singer. Finally, Demy's *Three Seats for the 26th* (1988) is a musical in which Yves Montand plays himself. In the last two films mentioned, the style of Legrand's music is unfortunately a problem, since it dares neither to be truly modern nor to come to terms with its dated style; in not finding a new sound it fails to show the composer's true colors.

Demy adored American musicals of the 1940s and 1950s—and also Bizet's opera *Carmen*, from where he drew a sense of tragedy that endows his sung melodrama *Une chambre en ville* with unforgettable power. The film's impact, of course, also comes from Colombier's score, a masterpiece of orchestration, musicality, and expressiveness. Demy's inspiration from opera for his dramatic construction translates well in *Une chambre en ville*. The setting of a workers' strike in the shipyards of Nantes during the 1950s and the demonstrators' confrontations with the police provide material for rapid, simple choruses, and create the atmosphere of an operatic collectivity. This ensemble effect is cleverly and regularly reiterated throughout, whether by a chorus of demonstrators or picketers, or by a simple line from a passerby. The scenes pair the characters into duets in multiple combinations, and the last sequence brings together most of the protagonists for a brief finale.

In *Une chambre en ville*, as in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, the "enchanted"-ness of Demy gives unique resonance to simple lines, a strategy that is often deeply moving. Let me give an example. The mother of Violette, the shopgirl in love with the hero, advises her daughter to leave home right away to "make her life" with a man. As she turns out the light that was illuminating the room where she works at home as a dressmaker, she adds, "As for me, I made mine." The fact that this line is sung, a simple melody in stepwise notes that eventually rests on the tonic, and the fact that in the silence between mother and daughter that follows, the orchestra lingers on this note, gives us the feeling that the film is prolonging the simplicity of the statement and enshrining this

conversational yet deep use of language, magnifying the line, freeing up its simple grandeur. With the help of the music that carries the line, it becomes more deeply etched in our memories. Paradoxically, seldom has a movie's dialogue been more heightened as concrete, real, and human than by this choice to sing it. Endowing colloquial words with musical resonance gives them distinctive symbolic weight, more than they could have in everyday parlance, and wrests them from naturalism to make them real.

Demy's en-chanted world, constantly intelligible thanks to the composing of Colombier and the diction of the singers chosen to record the music (singers who aren't necessarily the people we see onscreen), also allows the spectator to accept the slower and clearer articulation of words. It detaches the words themselves with relation to the voice that pronounces them, and the play of cadences and rests in musical phrases gives special value to certain phrases, as we have seen. Thus, for a prose text Demy achieves the equivalent of poetic conventions of rhyme and meter, which confer on the verse plays of Molière such as *The School for Wives* their expressive power.

THE POP INVASION

The arrival of popular music in American film gets a bad rap in some film-music histories and in alarmist judgments by some composers: pop is music that "makes you conscious of the music," akin to the devil. When composer-arrangers like Nelson Riddle, Frank De Vol (who regularly worked with Robert Aldrich), Quincy Jones, and Lalo Schifrin came on the scene, the "new sound" of pop and rock took on a prominence in film music that it would hold onto from then on.

The 1960s saw some spectacular shifts in composer-director collaborations. Bernard Herrmann's score for *Torn Curtain* (1966) was rejected in midstream, and the English composer John Addison gave Hitchcock's film a colder and more distanced tone. Otto Preminger stopped working with his usual collaborators David Raksin and Ernest Gold and secured the services of a "folksinger," Harry Nilsson.[21]

In the eyes of many serious composers, rock musicians were simply ignorant scribblers of songs. Mark Evans recounts a "typical"

scene of the time, withholding actual names, like in TV documentaries where faces are digitally blurred. He writes:

> One veteran composer described a recording session at which some musicians, obviously under the influence of drugs or alcohol, were brought into a studio, told to plug in their electric guitars and amplifiers, and "score" a film. On another occasion, an experienced vocal soloist arrived at a recording session to find the conductor (dressed as a railroad engineer) running about the stage giving each section of a chorus a set of nonsense syllables to sing. Each section sang as he pointed to them, and thus the "score" was completed. Timings, orchestration, color, and melodic development were totally eliminated.[22]

We can sense in this account, where details of clothing are mixed in with technical decisions, a horrified reaction to "tribal" culture. Even before finding that rock made for bad *film* music, some composers considered rock to be just plain bad music—or nonmusic.

Leighton Lucas, the British composer for *The Dam Busters* (Michael Anderson, 1955) and *Ice Cold in Alex* (J. Lee Thompson, 1958), confided to Evans: "I deplore the tendency to turn film music into a pop parade. I see no artistic justification in the propagation of film songs in serious pictures."[23] He denounced music producers' tendency to make him "overuse" strident and "screaming" sounds like the brasses.

Bernard Herrmann pointedly quit the Motion Picture Academy in protest against pop scores; many other composers feared the invasion of songwriters, whom they considered only good for creating piano themes. Francis Lai's Oscar in 1970 for the theme to Arthur Hiller's *Love Story* launched a protest. Michel Legrand triumphed the following year with *Summer of '42* (Robert Mulligan), whose score was considered a simple series of variations on one melody. But already, films such as *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969) and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969) jettisoned dramatic underscoring (that is, nondiegetic music that carefully married the dramatic line), using only preexisting songs embedded into the film here and there, complete with lyrics and their own rhythm.

The success of the Beatles and British pop music led to two lively films by Richard Lester, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965), where

zany action provided the basis for inserting a bunch of songs. Rock groups like Pink Floyd in *More* (Barbet Schroeder, 1969) created soundtracks calculated for wide record releases. But curiously, the fiction film was not the main vehicle that pop and cinema used to consummate their marriage and bring new life to the movies in the long term. Instead, it was the advent of the rock documentary, which interwove songs with interviews and anecdotes of the artists, producers, and audience, and showed visuals of the concert and everything else happening around it. Rock docs were widely exhibited in theaters and became a genre of their own. The cycle even inspired a comedy, *This Is Spinal Tap* (Rob Reiner, 1984), about an imaginary band—especially hilarious for viewers familiar with the films it parodies.

Hit films like *Monterey Pop* (D. A. Pennebaker, 1968), the documentary of the music festival in Monterey, California, featuring such artists and bands as Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, and Janis Joplin, inaugurated the cycle of rock-festival documentaries that culminated in 1970 with Michael Wadleigh's *Woodstock*. The critical and commercial sensation they made led to worldwide distribution of movies about music genres that had been unfamiliar to audiences abroad—reggae, for example, with *The Harder They Come* (Perry Henzell, 1972), about Jimmy Cliff.

Alice's Restaurant (1969), which starred Arlo Guthrie playing himself, took inspiration from his wonderful song by the same name. Director Arthur Penn succeeded in endowing his archetypal hippie movie with the nonchalantly nostalgic rhythm of a ballad. The year before, Jean-Luc Godard filmed the Rolling Stones recording their song "Sympathy for the Devil" (in a film originally titled *One Plus One*), interweaving this documentary footage with readings of dissident texts. Godard would later use this idea of turning a music rehearsal or recording session into the unifying thread of the story of *First Name: Carmen* (1983), with a string quartet, and in *Soigne ta droite* (*Keep Your Right Up*, 1987) with the rock duo Les Rita Mitsouko.

The coming-of-age comedy *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973) marked a definitive moment for film culture, when Lucas created a story integrated with a compilation soundtrack of popular songs.[24] No fewer than forty-two songs, spanning the rock 'n' roll era of the late fifties to the early sixties, are heard in the course of the film, which is set

in the summer of 1962 in a California town resembling the Modesto of Lucas's own youth. The central characters have just graduated from high school, some to go off to college and others not. Onto the classical unity of time (the story takes place over the course of a single night), Lucas grafts a "unity of radio station"—a device that was later exploited by other films such as *The Fog* (John Carpenter, 1980) and *Good Morning, Vietnam* (Barry Levinson, 1987). The characters, cruising in their cars or hanging out at the drive-in, are all listening to the same station. The songs are strung together by the patter of the local disc jockey (Wolfman Jack).

Walter Murch, who did the sound mix and sound effects for *American Graffiti*, tells a story about veteran film editor Verna Fields, who did the early cut of the film. In exasperation one day she took Murch aside and said, "Walter, you've got to convince George to drop this idea of having all this music in the film. People are just going to go crazy. They're going to want to reach out and turn that music off, because he's ruining a wonderful story with all this music."[25] Murch and Lucas developed a novel technique to give the radio (on-the-air) music a greater sense of occupying the diegetic space, a process they referred to as "worldizing" the music.

Critic Dave Kehr called the film "a brilliant work of popular art [that] redefined nostalgia as a marketable commodity while establishing a new narrative style."[26]

This kind of filmmaking, of course, arises from a new era: owing to the constant presence of music and songs in our environment, multiplied a thousandfold since then by the proliferation of FM radios, the portable transistor radio, the Walkman, and the Internet, contemporary life is accompanied by aleatory music.

TV STYLE

More unobtrusively, the influence of television shows was beginning to be felt in film music, offering a new tone. Many newer scores went for the more intimate, subdued model of accompaniment, stylized and a bit distanced, provided for stories viewers could watch without being so absorbed. For a long time, in Britain and the United States, at least,

television had been the "cool" medium, where sarcastic, jocular, or sinister stories were told and where emotion was kept at bay. The Argentine Lalo Schifrin wrote two themes for the hit TV series *Mission: Impossible* (1966–1973)—a lively, Latin-influenced minor one in 5/4 time, all bongo rhythms and brasses, and the other (also in minor) full of tension; his music gained cult status for the young TV audience of the 1990s. Was it a coincidence that he was sought out as a hot property for so many American action movies? No doubt he was perfect for a film industry that had been turning away from melodrama, epics, and other genres on the warm and effusive side, and toward deliberately cool suspense and thriller films that often had political leanings.

Peter Yates's film *Bullitt* (1968) is a notable example, famous for the musical conception of the famous car chase through the hilly streets of San Francisco, where the detective played by Steve McQueen chases the two bad guys in his green Mustang. When we view it again, it is astonishing to realize that Schifrin's music *prepares* the chase but does not actually accompany it once the murderous pursuit is definitively under way. While the two cars are in the city and driving at (relatively) normal speed, their occupants observe a religious silence and have impassive, even calm expressions; the music plays like a ritual that is taking all the time in the world—a slightly Latin-sounding rhythmic bass, then sustained dissonances in the brass and strings ramping up the tension, and occasionally a serpentine sax melody. The bad guys have been pursuing the Mustang but have lost sight of it; at the moment it shows up pursuing *them*, the saxophones' driving melody reappears, even accented by two dings of a passing trolley. But once the chase is on and the tires begin squealing, the music stops. The music has turned the heat up on the atmosphere—and in the theater too, for the chase that then takes place through breathtaking picture and sound editing (for which Frank P. Keller won an Oscar), shots of cars, roars of engines, clashes of metal. The absence of music for the next seven thrilling minutes does not mean it isn't there between the lines. The chase sequence is not only silent in terms of speech, but also by virtue of its musical silence. And the silence of the chase is a musical silence.

Generally, *Bullitt*'s score creates a kind of euphoria, a mild nervous fever, an electric current that leaves us slightly emotionally detached.

Perhaps that is why a generation that grew up in the 1980s with movies whose orchestras deployed almost crushing affectivity and pageantry welcomed Schifrin's TV-style music like a breath of fresh air.

NEW MUSIC FOR THE NEW WAVE?

It is not certain that the French New Wave of the late 1950s and early 1960s was accompanied by any revolution in film music. First, the films on which this label was pinned then, or the films that claimed it, are not necessarily those to which we apply it now. At the time, "new wave" referred to an insolent new tone, to young actors and filmmakers, to sexual audacity, but its boundaries were vague. A comedy by Michel Boisrond, *Voulez-vous danser avec moi?* (*Come Dance with Me!*, 1959); a "daring" love story by Louis Malle, *The Lovers* (1958); a story of childhood by François Truffaut, *The 400 Blows* (1959); and a crime movie by Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (1960) were first and foremost a comedy, a daring love story, a story of childhood, and a crime movie, respectively, and only secondarily expressions of the New Wave. For Boisrond's comedy, songwriter Henri Crolla wrote themes that were jazzed up by André Hodeir's arranging.[27] In Malle's "literary" film, the third-person voiceover of Jeanne Moreau is associated with the theme of the slow movement from Brahms's First Sextet, which the film made famous—a religious and spiritual Brahms in the manner of Bach. The melancholic themes by songwriter Jean Constantin for Truffaut's first feature, *The 400 Blows*, fall within the French or Parisian realist tradition. Finally, the jazzy piano of Martial Solal in *Breathless* is especially striking for the insolent way the editing interrupts and breaks it up, or reprises it in unexpected ways, and not for its very "American" musical tone, the same tone that was heard in the first films of Jean-Pierre Melville (who receives an homage in one scene of *Breathless*) and in the crime movies of Bernard Borderie with Eddie Constantine. In other words, there were as many musical approaches as there were films. Besides, the same composers, like Georges Delerue and Antoine Duhamel, and the same musical styles circulated without differentiating between popular movies and "auteur" cinema.

GODARD

The release of Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* caused a sensation, not for its use of jazz but for the way the music was subjected to editing.

Breathless presents a musical patchwork. A cool-jazz trumpet theme with a rising interrogative arpeggio is followed by a pleasant travelogue-like cue when Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo) takes off from Marseille in his freshly stolen car. (Impossible to tell whether either cue is diegetic.) As he drives he vocalizes happily and sings a pop hit of the moment, "Buenas noches mi amor,"[28] then playfully vocalizes on the name Patricia; the jazz theme from the opening credits plays as he plans the moves he'll be making in Paris; he tunes the car radio to an insouciant instrumental piece as he speeds through the countryside (but then his remarks to the camera, in rhythm to it, suggest that the music is really neither on the radio nor anywhere except in Godard's hands); on the radio we hear the refrain of a Georges Brassens song, "There's no such thing as a hap—" (abruptly stopping when Michel discovers a gun in the glove compartment; the moviegoer can finish the line if she knows it) "—py love" (quite a premonitory line); on another radio station he finds Martial Solal's jazzy music (or is this pit music rather than screen music? the movie does not take great care to distinguish); we hear a rhythmic sequence of the TV-chase genre when Michel flees on foot after killing the police officer; piano scales waft down into a courtyard when Michel goes to visit a girlfriend in Paris from whom he filches some money; the girl turns on her transistor radio and we hear a yé-yé pop song and then a New Orleans–style big-band number; a syrupy string cue accompanies the first shot of Patricia (Jean Seberg) hawking the *Herald Tribune* on the Champs-Elysées. And so forth.

The film's most memorable and most often imitated sequence, though, is the lengthy dialogue scene with Michel and Patricia in her apartment. Martial Solal's piano, with no diegetic excuse (that is, no one turns a radio on or off in the scene), will cut off abruptly or return a few seconds later behind the characters' lines. This unusual treatment highlights the dialogue's unstable, capricious quality, the alternately dangerous or enigmatic reactions of the characters and their moods. By turns, the music provides a ray of sunshine or a disturbing note; the reversals and contradictions are conveyed by the vagaries of

the music, or rather by the vagaries of its presence, entirely and arbitrarily dictated by Godard's editing. "I want to, I don't want to, I love you, I hate you," it says, less through content than by the way it enters or exits. Godard's approach can be applied to any style of music, and this is indeed what occurred in his subsequent work, where it drew from the classical repertoire.

From the outset, Godard had an unswerving faith in editing's power of appropriation—everything is fair game for cutting up, sampling, and reassembling—and he exercised it on music as on any other filmic element. Whether the director ordered a score from a composer only to assign parts of it where he himself decided, or borrowed classical pieces to saw up, it's all the same. The musical "sound signature" of Godard's works is his way of introducing music into a constant play of reciprocal ruptures and interruptions, whereas with other filmmakers, music is normally the only element to be spared.

Beginning in the 1980s, Godard mainly used classical music to score his films. Classical music is predicated on an autonomic development; any rupture in it feels like a brutal gesture. I think his decision entailed somewhat of a loss: the original scores by Georges Delerue for *Contempt* (1963), Antoine Duhamel for *Pierrot le fou* (1965), and Gabriel Yared for *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (*Every Man for Himself*, 1980) brilliantly crystallized Godard's characteristic tragic sensibility and romanticism and could deliver within seconds the emotion he sought. They gave those films a formal core, even when the director characteristically used the music by sometimes chopping it up and sometimes repeating passages to prolong them. This sense of a musical center is missing in many of Godard's later works.

TRUFFAUT

The American director Tay Garnett sent out a questionnaire to approximately a hundred directors about their working methods, including their use of music, for a book he compiled.[29] Many of the directors he asked proved evasive or overgeneralizing in their answers on the subject of music. Truffaut is one of the very few who stated a precise position, which he presumably arrived at through both reflection and trial and error.

I don't like the utilization of music like jazz or rock or any music that is not melodic, because it falsifies the duration of a scene, and makes it seem to last three minutes, when in actuality it lasts only one minute. In the screening of a film, unrolling like a ribbon ("a ribbon of dreams" said Orson Welles), music must also be a ribbon. It should not be pleonastic, but a music that accompanies the film like color. It must be *more* lyrical than the image, but must find a level that corresponds well with it. One can nearly say that cinema is a flat art to which music adds a feeling of depth.[30]

These comments on music are a world apart from Satyajit Ray's *The Music Room* (1958), which uses a kind of music that loosens time, makes it float . . .

Truffaut again:

No fixed rules [in the use of music] except this one: never put music in a dialogue scene that is supposed to be in the present, because it tends to kill the effect that it is happening now, by putting the scene back in the past or making it repetitive. . . .

My second rule is to reject the instrumental solo that is too easy to identify—like the piano or the harp—because I am afraid that the public will be inclined to superimpose in his mind—over the film's image—the nimble fingers of the pianist or the harpist.[31]

As we can see from his remarks, but also in his films, Truffaut assigned great importance to respecting the purity and the clarity of musical line. Maybe that is one reason that in *The Wild Child* (1970), based on a French doctor's 1802 memoir of a feral boy found in the woods of the Aveyron, he chose to have excerpts arranged from piccolo and mandolin concerti by Vivaldi. Vivaldi's refrains have symmetrically balanced phrase structure and extreme thematic simplicity. Their tried-and-true tonic-dominant harmony and their broad appeal as melody with accompaniment (but with a sound that's very "classical," refined, spare, and elegant), all these qualities converge to serve the didactic, clear, economical quality of this story about education as Truffaut intended, even as solo passages permit the song of a soul to modestly emerge.

But now and then, a Vivaldian tutti, heard when the good doctor elicits a glint of understanding from his little wild boy, comes to signal a kind of exultation, the triumph of light over dark, clarity over confusion.

It is doubtless significant that the music Truffaut requested from Georges Delerue for the "triumphal" sequence of *Day for Night* (1973), the scene where the film shoot goes well and the collaboration among the varied crew members creates the sense of a diverse yet harmonious whole, borrows its style from both Bach and Vivaldi (the Gloria). For Truffaut was not merely the director of dark and haunting tragedies like *The Woman Next Door* (1981) and *The Green Room* (1978). In light of his hatred for the pessimistic and complacent bleakness of Henri-Georges Clouzot, Julien Duvivier, or Claude Autant-Lara, it is important to note that in a good many of his films, like in *The Wild Child*, he expressed optimism with moving intensity.

Truffaut often assigned music the role of affirmation and positivity. Vivaldi's work, from which he might for a given scene take just two measures, embodies this struggle for life—like a healthy and purposeful Mediterranean response to the forces of chaos and stagnation.

Music for Truffaut is thus often at the service of the clarity of the narrative arc (he was a storyteller first and foremost) and the articulation of sections. The musical sequences in his films—whether borrowed from Maurice Jaubert's orchestral works or from classical composers, or composed for the occasion by Bernard Herrmann, Georges Delerue, or Antoine Duhamel—do not dissolve, when they end and lead to a new sequence, in the vague fog of an unresolved chord or in impressionistic effects, as is common these days. On the contrary, these sequences conclude with well-marked cadences, after which a new sequence begins cleanly, like a new book chapter.

Note also that Truffaut loved to combine two elements that are ordinarily difficult to reconcile: very *linear story and narration* with a *scattered presentation of scenes* in "small meaningful moments" separated by long time periods. Where many filmmakers condense their plots into around ten scenes, Truffaut loved to create numerous short scenes, as can easily be seen in *Jules and Jim* or in *The Man Who Loved Women* (1977). Music helped him adjust and support this meticulous and fragile mode of construction—fragile because it constantly threatens to

break the flow of time. To do this, the music can never be simple enough, more clearly outlined, nor sufficiently straightforward in its role as an opening, closing, announcement, conclusion, or transition. At other moments, out of the blue, music creates drama when we least expect it. In the deceptively likable comedy *Stolen Kisses* (1968), it's the would-be vaudevillian moment when a detective catches an adulterous couple in the act: Truffaut had Antoine Duhamel compose a brief cue scented with death and murder.

ROHMER

Éric Rohmer used music quite differently—neutralizing it, either through its total absence or by virtually devitalizing it even when the action requires it. This is itself an aesthetic choice, a full participant in the director's construction of meaning.

Le Beau Mariage (*A Good Marriage*, 1982) and *Pauline at the Beach* (1983) each feature for their protagonist a young woman from a good family. In both films, the need to reduce diegetic music to the most unobtrusive level possible verges on caricature. In the birthday reception organized by Sabine in *Le Beau Mariage*, young people are dancing to Jacno, intentionally chosen as the height of innocuous music.[32] What we hear is an electronic song for piano and synth that no one at a hip party would play. Characteristically for Jacno, it has hardly any bass—bass would threaten to acquire a physical existence that might take over the screen . . . Similarly, the song by Jean-Louis Valero to which the two young lovers in *Pauline at the Beach* start their flirtation is intentionally as colorless as possible—written, orchestrated, and recorded to leave zero impression on our attention or memory.

This extreme example of using music when obviously demanded by the situation and location shown (what would a birthday party with young people be without music, or flirting on a beach without a summer hit?), but selecting insipidly anonymous music and doing everything to avoid our noticing it or having it influence the scene's meaning, clearly shows that normally, music must be a catalyzing element—overflowing, oversignifying, and saturated with effects—determining how we see images and hear dialogue. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine Rohmer submitting to such an aesthetic shaving-down

of his decors, costumes, dialogue, visual compositions, or acting, and condemning them to the same kind of blandness. It proves *a contrario* music's ability to describe and frame, and its semantic, physical, and affective power, if a director as personal and assured as Rohmer—auteur of *The Marquise of O* (1976)—a masterpiece without a single note of music—was led to have to treat it as harshly as this.

Nevertheless, he tried, in *A Summer's Tale* (1996), to place the composition of a traditional-style sea shanty at the heart of the story. The protagonist, who has brought his guitar with him on vacation, writes the song a bit at a time and plays it for his succession of girlfriends, who find it brilliant. The spectator is placed in the awkward position of having to decide whether to agree with these possibly excessive judgments.

CHABROL

Another case that helps demonstrate that there is no musical specificity to the French New Wave is that of Claude Chabrol in the 1970s. Chabrol's movies were often seen as anti-bourgeois social satires, all firmly anchored in various regions of France. For their music, Pierre Jansen (who was followed, with less success, by Matthieu Chabrol) provided some "modernist" scores, marvelously written and adapted to their dark stories (*Le Boucher* [*The Butcher*], 1970) or their strange fantasies (*Alice, or The Last Escapade*, 1977).

RESNAIS

Alain Resnais enjoyed an excellent reputation among contemporary composers, because he was one of the rare filmmakers to call for atonal music. He engaged living concert composers; for example, Hanns Eisler for *Night and Fog* (1955), Hans Werner Henze for *Muriel, or The Time of Return* (1963) and *L'Amour à mort* (*Love Unto Death*, 1984), and Krzysztof Penderecki for *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (1968, where the music is limited to the titles). More recently, Resnais engaged Mark Snow for *Coeurs* (*Private Fears in Public Places*, 2006). Resnais particularly interests me, because of all the directors discussed here, he truly thought like a composer, in the sense that he constantly challenged himself to

build, connect, and make things work using elements of very dispa-
rate natures. This preoccupation did not derive solely from his experi-
ence as an editor, since other filmmakers who started out as film
editors—Robert Wise, Henri Colpi, and John Sturges—did not take
the same direction.

Resnais said of *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), his film written by Alain
Robbe-Grillet, that it consisted of "two or three themes that recur, that
are developed, that return. If you watch the image, it is entirely
musical."[33]

In *Providence* (1977), written by David Mercer, Resnais returned to the
musical plan, which I think is analogous—perhaps without his being
aware of it—to that of Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), which
the screenplay resembles as well. Both films are marked by a basic unity
of space and time, the same prominence of a prestigious writer father,
and younger characters grouped around the father as a family. The
characters in both—their rhythms, their styles, their personalities—are
distinguished like the sounds of different instruments in a chamber
piece. What I mean by the "musical plan" common to both films has
little to do with actual music: *Through a Glass Darkly* has just three min-
utes of a Bach cello sonata; *Providence* has an abundant orchestral
score. The idea is rather the construction of a narrative work through
separating or grouping characters into solos/monologues, duets, quar-
tets. Resnais was quite explicit about this idea for *Providence*; he con-
ceived of "a quintet whose violin would be Ellen Burstyn, Dirk Bogarde
the piano, David Warner the viola, John Gielgud the cello, and Elaine
Stritch the double bass. In other words, a Schubertian arrangement,
although the film's actual sound was closer to Alban Berg or Bartók,
with its sudden breaks and its alternations between bitter and sweet."[34]

Later he used a similar idea in a more systematic and more Berg-
manesque, way with *L'Amour à mort*, a film with a "quartet" of two
couples who are friends, a pastor and his wife (André Dussollier
and Fanny Ardant) and two lovers united by passion (Pierre Arditi
and Sabine Azéma). The film's premise is closely tied to music, which,
in Resnais's words, is "like a fifth character," via Hans Werner Hen-
ze's score, used in an entirely novel way.

In a 1984 interview Resnais noted that in his previous films, "I never
mixed sounds and music, but I have mixed music and voices. However,

this time [for *L'Amour à mort*] I wanted to take a step further and truly have only voices, then music, and then voices again."[35] This led him to an extraordinary idea, to have music in fifty-two short sequences with no action in themselves, where the music is heard exclusively in these short interludes between scenes, over a black void that is traversed by white, snowlike particles. It is obviously no coincidence that the Arditi character undergoes a false death in the story, a false absence, after which he "resuscitates," and then really does die. Resnais refused to give too precise a meaning to the "absences" made by the musical sequences that make us leave the narrative world—he wisely stuck to formal and external motives when interviewed. "What I wanted with the particles was to make, let's say, a nonfigurative image that would allow the spectator to follow the music better, to be distracted as little as possible by the ambience of cinema itself, and which especially wouldn't cause him to get up or to protest." He gave Henze a flexible visual structure in which to write atonal music that can be "in a much denser style than an ordinary film score."

So the composer conceived the music respecting the principle of fragments, "but attempting to build something that allows the listener who still aurally remembers the previous fragment—in an unconscious way—to get the sense of a developing form."

Here Resnais was addressing the way musical form normally dissolves in film and the spectator's amnesia about it. The concept of the music in *L'Amour à mort* is that of a game of dominoes, each fragment being attached to the previous one and the subsequent one. The composer worked by using a recording of the dialogue, "composing after the splice, the last word, the last sound, or the last silence."

Curiously, the director and his coscreenwriter Jean Gruault tied this use of music in the film to the particular way they wrote the dialogue spoken among the four characters, speculating on an effect of "communicating vessels": "We worked with Gruault to eliminate adjectives and everything else we felt was superfluous. To leave all possible room for Henze's music, we wanted dialogue with the fewest words, the fewest syntactic ornaments. As we edited the scene, the thing we repeated over and over was, 'We have to Webern-ize. Come on, let's Webern-ize!"[36]

A TIME OF MODERNISMS

The so-called modernism of some European films of the late 1950s and the 1960s took on a characteristic sound because of one crucial composer at that time, in whom French cinema except for Resnais oddly showed little interest. I am referring to Giovanni Fusco, who scored several Antonioni films and two by Resnais, including *Hiroshima mon amour*. His approach can be summed up in one word: economy. Economy in actual length and number of cues, economy in the size of the instrumental ensemble, and economy of expression, since his music avoids all excess.

Some efforts by the Antonioni-Fusco team have not convincingly stood the test of time. Their originality can feel laborious, and the effort to innovate can yield a result of iciness, as if it is not "felt." Such is the case, I think, with one of Antonioni's first features, *Il grido* (*The Cry*, 1957). The film describes the wanderings of a working man, Aldo, who leaves Irma (Alida Valli), tries out different existences in different locations, and ends up committing suicide in front of Irma, the only woman he truly loved. In the first section particularly, the film is full of visually astonishing scenes captured on film with Antonioni's unique spatial sense. Magnificently photographed by Gianni Di Venanzo, the story takes place largely in abandoned, sordid spaces: working-class homes, a gas station in the middle of nowhere where a woman is wasting her life, a construction site. No doubt concerned that music might solicit emotional responses to the images, and wishing to turn his back on sentimental miserabilism, Antonioni asked Fusco for "contrapuntal" music. So with very sad scenes set on the plain of the Po River, we hear short piano-solo cues that sound by turns either like an imitation Chopin nocturne, serene and dreamy, or like a pastiche of Ravel's "Ondine"—piano music that sounds bourgeois and aestheticized, in stark contrast to the story. Even so, even when the music distances us from the action—when, for example, at Aldo's worst depressive moment the piano reels off its Chopinesque nocturne—it conveys precise and necessary meaning. Likewise, in the final melodramatic scene, when Aldo throws himself off the sugar refinery's tower and Irma screams over his lifeless body, a totally inappropriate, grating waltz parachutes out of the blue and into the film's world, with which it has no relation;

it feels like the expression of an intellectualizing deus ex machina. We get the impression that Antonioni was musically paralyzed by his fear of bad taste, kitsch, or sentimentality, and that his enormous talent was thereby compromised. On the other hand, when music in his films is tied in with the action and makes no claim to distancing, it is wonderful—for example, the music heard issuing from a small local dance hall when the main characters have left.

The effect of Fusco's music in the opening of Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour*, on the other hand, is brilliant and deeply moving. The unreal, litany-like quality of the sequence, with the male and female voices speaking to each other as if outside time, allows the music, which unfolds in a repetitive and static way, not to seem imposed from without onto a naturalistic image, as it does in *Il grido*.

Also wary of readymade solutions and prepackaged and presignified emotions, French writer-directors such as Robert Bresson, Éric Rohmer, and, later, Jacques Rivette and Louis Malle swore by a rule of musical economy in many of their films. This position led them to adopt some radical solutions. Bresson brought in whiffs of preexisting classical music: in their new filmic settings, and also because of Bresson's dense style, they sound subdued, restricted, isolated in their own sphere, not spreading their emotional content or mood out into the rest of the film. Bresson's alternative strategy was to forsake any music at all. In some films by Bergman (again, *Through a Glass Darkly*, 1961) or Bresson (*Pickpocket*, 1959), the entry of a cue of austere classical music takes on the quality of some rare visitation of transcendence in a world deserted by God.

So-called contemporary music was courageously adopted not only by Alain Resnais in several films (including *Muriel*) but also by Jacques Rivette (with Jean-Claude Éloy for *La Religieuse* [*The Nun*], 1966), Pierre Kast (Bernard Parmegiani's electronic music for *Les Soleils de l'Île de Pâques* [*The Suns of Easter Island*], 1972), and Bergman (Lars Johan Werle's music for *Persona*, 1966), with stylistic traits such as atonality and rhythmic fragmentation, strange sonorities, and foregrounding of solo instruments. It was not the miracle solution certain critics advocated and wished for in the abstract ("for contemporary cinema, use contemporary music"). What contemporary music in fact conveys, through the very screenplays it accompanies, are notions of oppression, madness,

or science fiction, thereby reinforcing the stereotypes of which it is the object. Besides, owing to contemporary music's tendency at the time to be scattered, destructured, and atomized (it had not yet discovered repetition, as it eventually would do with minimalism), it produced only isolated effects without playing a structural role as a pivot or reference point of memory or as an element of formal articulation. In certain films it is incorporated in marvelous ways, though with Kast the electronic sequences by Parmegiani are awkwardly managed.

Resnais's *Muriel, or The Time of Return* "is based on a strong contrast between the prosaic quality of daily life . . . and an extremely audacious aesthetic experiment in which Resnais successfully mixes an almost cubist vision of the contemporary world and a twelve-tone score by Hans Werner Henze, all governed by quasi-Eisensteinian elliptical editing."[37] The music mirrors the fragmentation of the film's structure, and it rarely appears where we would normally expect it to.

As the music was arranged and recorded and presented in the film, it has us distinctly hear a mandolin player, a percussionist, a harpist, and a soprano (Rita Streich), very detached from one another; the soprano sings a series of verses written by the screenwriter Jean Cayrol (in such a way that it is impossible to understand the words).[38] At several points we have the sense of hearing parts of a concert that's occurring in parallel with the film, the music encouraging us to mentally visualize the musicians. This is only off-putting if it is not clear that having us mentally visualize the musicians is part of the plan, that it is the film's intention. Almost sixty years later, the work remains every bit as strange and appealing as when it first appeared.

Musical modernisms in the late 1960s inadvertently hastened a split between auteur films and so-called commercial films. However, modernism has less to do with the music's own style than with the way it is integrated into the film. For *Le Boucher*, one of Chabrol's biggest critical successes, Pierre Jansen's score, written in a very modern style, was remarkably conceived and incorporated, carrying emotional turmoil into a horrific story about child murderers. Conversely, the music of Georges Delerue for Godard's *Contempt* was composed in a style fairly similar to Delerue's normal idiom for other directors, and it was Godard himself who "modernized" it through his unorthodox editing and mixing.

Becoming somewhat of a genre unto itself, the auteur cinema no longer participated in general trends in film music, or accepted them only with reticence.

Whatever the case may be, to filmmakers it seemed that the cinema could no longer go back to certain "dated" methods. But they were mistaken.

3

BACK TO THE FUTURE

1975–1995

Back *to the Future*: this title that I have borrowed from Robert Zemeckis's 1985 film—a story about a kid who loves vintage rock 'n' roll and is transported to the fifties in a time machine—is full of meanings for this chapter, which focuses on a period when film music both innovated and looked back. In the mid-1970s new possibilities opened up for music in movies thanks to Dolby. Music could henceforth be heard with all its tonal color, all its highs and lows, and with every possible contrast in intensity. At the same time, dialectically, the new technical advancements accompanied and even reinforced a taste for retro in all things. Retro meant the return of the grand symphonic score to American films, as well as a return to other musical modes of the twenties, thirties, and especially fifties. New technologies also allowed a new operatic mode to emerge.

That operatic impulse infuses the work of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the most inventive and prolific of American filmmakers. His epic Vietnam movie *Apocalypse Now* (1979) includes the devastating helicopter bombing of a Vietnamese village accompanied on the soundtrack by the "Ride of the Valkyries" (countless commercials have imitated this sequence but shown only its triumphant side, forgetting the horror and scandal it was denouncing). Many scenes in *Apocalypse Now* are treated like the group tableaux of operas. And then there is the

interminable opening sequence edited to the Doors' "The End," where the blades of military helicopters and the blades of a ceiling fan create a mesmerizing rhythm orchestrated by sound designer Walter Murch. The film's "original" scoring, composed by the director's father, Carmine Coppola, and performed on a veritable orchestra of synthesizers, did not elicit the same admiration as these musical set pieces; the scoring made little impression on those who wrote about the film; it didn't "take."

Coppola's maligned masterpiece *One from the Heart* (1982) depicts the separate wanderings and affairs of a troubled married couple on the Fourth of July in Las Vegas. The movie's originality does not reside solely in its stylized studio filming, the product of the magnificent collaboration of cinematographer Vittorio Storaro and production designer Dean Tavoularis, but also in the director's idea to follow the parallel actions of the two principals through nondiegetic songs sung by two singers who are the musician doubles of the two actors. In other words, the songs are sung not by the actors but by Tom Waits (who also wrote them), with his raspy voice, and by the country singer Crystal Gayle. The songs are not what I call "on-the-air" (supposedly emitted from radios or other media sources in the image); but they come from one stable imaginary place. Their lyrics give a tenderly ironical tone to the action. For example, the wife (Teri Garr), in her nightgown, wanders through the couple's apartment, and Tom Waits's voice—quite different in quality from the voice of Frederic Forrest, who plays the husband—describes a man's lack of desire for a woman who's "letting herself go." The songs often express a sort of free internal voice of one character addressing or confronting the other.

It is no accident that Coppola had been one of the producers on George Lucas's *American Graffiti* (1973), in which songs heard on the radio acted as free-floating commentary on the action.

The beauty of *One from the Heart* has not been widely understood. Some critics scorned the idea of a musical with two main characters who could not dance or sing, while in fact that is the whole point. Coppola had no intention of making a musical with an actor-dancer-singer like Gene Kelly; rather, he was experimenting with a kind of dissociation, inherited from great archaic forms of theater, where the actor is

on screen and the singer is in the pit, while the dancer is the movie camera itself.

In *Rumble Fish* (1983), visually inspired by Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), Coppola experimented with an operatic kind of polyrhythm. For example, one of the first shots shows clouds traversing the sky in fast motion; later in the film these fast-motion clouds are reflected in the window of a bar, in front of which two characters are conversing at normal speed. The film was conceived around the obsession with clocks and time passing, and is underlined by a rhythmic soundtrack. During preproduction Coppola engaged Stewart Copeland, the drummer of the band the Police, to create a rhythm track based not on melodies but on processed urban sounds and percussion.

Finally, as director (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, 1992) and as producer (Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein*, 1994), Coppola helped create "spoken opera-films," in which the settings, orchestral music, and acting are stylized and deliberately overdone, aiming to create a spectacle that is at once lyrical, fantastic, and larger than life.

RESURGENCE OF SYMPHONIC MUSIC

The seventies brought another return that was totally unexpected: a resurgence of grand symphonic expressivity, associated with renewed interest in the old veterans of Hollywood music and their classical aesthetic. At first only a small number of fervent adherents shared this interest, including François Truffaut, who commissioned Bernard Herrmann for the scores or *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and *The Bride Wore Black* (1968). George Korngold, a record producer and music editor, was another passionate defender. In the early 1970s Korngold produced a fourteen-volume series of reorchestrations on disc of classical film scores that included music by Max Steiner, Bernard Herrmann, Franz Waxman, Miklós Rózsa, and his own father, Erich Wolfgang Korngold. In France the journal *Positif* played a significant role in this revival, highlighting symphonic film music through many interviews and articles.

Many believed that this style, deploying orchestral underscoring, leitmotifs, and all the rest, belonged in the past. The aesthetic appeared

in some unexpected ways. For example, with the thriller, it took on an almost ironic and allusive form when Brian De Palma commissioned two scores from Herrmann, *Sisters* (1973) and *Obsession* (1976)—the latter being one of the greatest works by both the director and the composer. Just as surprisingly, Alain Resnais went for a symphonic score in the classical style for *Providence* (1977), a story of the fantasies of an old egocentric writer, written in a cynical tone and full of incongruous elements. As a great fan of irony, Resnais had perhaps calculated his film as more comedic than audiences perceived; and the excellent English and American actors, the brilliant screenplay by David Mercer, and certain gags in the writing were meant to safeguard the film from any sentimentality. But it was Miklós Rózsa's music, composed in the sumptuous Hollywood style of the forties, that set the overall atmosphere and gave a sense of grandeur and drama to the magnificently directed and acted film.

For the comeback of grand orchestral music, something other than isolated masterworks was needed: genres that would welcome it, and advanced technical means to give it renewed vigor. These indeed did materialize: the new epic film, on the one hand, and the widespread adoption of Dolby stereo, on the other.

RETURN OF THE EPIC FILM

The revival of screen epics with a certain musical style to accompany them occurred at first almost by chance. American film in the early seventies was largely a cinema of antiheroes, political criticism, and urban crime, treated in everyday fashion. There was one backward-looking cycle that resisted the grit and crime of the likes of *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Serpico*, and which persisted in defending old-style glamour, stars, and grand emotions: this was the disaster film, whose memorable pillars were *Airport* (George Seaton, 1970, music by Alfred Newman), *The Poseidon Adventure* (Ronald Neame, 1972), *Earthquake* (Mark Robson, 1974), *The Towering Inferno* (John Guillermin, 1974)—these last three with scores by John Williams—and still with the same composer and a big orchestral score, Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975). It is interesting to note several obligatory ingredients in the disaster film, as

it inchoately began, arising from the success of *Airport*. Among the variety of characters brought together by unforeseen danger or catastrophe were aging icons such as Ava Gardner, Dean Martin, Shelley Winters, and even Fred Astaire, parading through the genre in a nostalgic procession. Old-school music, magnanimity and humanity in crisis, and outpourings of familial sentiment allowed viewers for the first time in decades to get out their handkerchiefs: a big part of it was all these screen stars of yore being brought back for a final curtain call.

But it is important to note that the new symphonism went on to permeate popular movies in general that featured actors of the new generation, including in important films by big directors such as Scorsese, Ridley Scott, Coppola, and James Ivory.

Two of the young directors of the American new wave, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, were key to this revival, as they recreated a cinema of collective emotion. Spielberg never hid his admiration for David Lean, director of *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962); for him, Lean was, after Hitchcock, the greatest specialist of film music. For his own films, he did not call on Maurice Jarre, who had scored *Lawrence of Arabia*, even though Jarre had moved to the United States, but on an already-proven composer whose name became as strong a symbol in the 1970s as that of Ennio Morricone in the 1960s: John Williams. If Morricone is synonymous with a tongue-in-cheek approach, both popular and sophisticated, with long nostalgic melodies, Williams is known for orchestral breadth, glistening spaceships, and hope in a new world, reaching a hand back into the past. While Morricone is associated with a world-weary and disillusioned cinema, Williams became associated with movies that want to believe everything can begin anew. But Williams follows from Morricone, too, since without Morricone, Williams might not have dared to create themes for *Star Wars* (1977) that were so conspicuous and recognizable, vividly limning each character and each moral camp.

One big change from the classical era of symphonism was the relationship between the music and the rest of the film's sound. While Williams's scoring for *Star Wars* reintroduced an epic narrativity that big movies had abandoned for the previous twenty years, it no longer functioned in the same way as Steiner's, Rósza's, or Korngold's for adventure films of the 1930s–1960s. For the first time, music coexisted

with legions of sound effects—the futuristic laser sword's rumbling whir, the roar of spaceship engines, the moaning of a shaggy creature and the beeps and whistles of a little robotic one. Because the film's strategy was to punctuate the speech of human characters with numerous sonic interventions by their living or mechanical companions, music could no longer claim to be the only element providing this auditory punctuation. Additionally, since music was sometimes kept at a distance from the action at hand, it was no longer tightly interwoven with dialogue. And physically in the auditorium, it was assigned to loudspeakers away from the screen; this arrangement allowed it truly to occupy an orchestra pit, or rather a kind of "orchestra heaven"—both separate from the action and in immediate, close solidarity with it.

FROM ROCK OPERA TO THE DISCO FILM

The rock opera movie (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, 1973, Norman Jewison) started not as a rupture, but as a subgenre of the rock 'n' roll movie. Rock operas appeared legitimately as the movie version of shows that had played on American or British stages and with whose titles the public was familiar. In this sense, the films were variants of the Hollywood musical, many of which were stage productions brought to the big screen in stereo sound. The difference, of course, lay in the music's style and sound—a sound that magnetic soundtracks (and later, Dolby) could serve well.

Jesus Christ Superstar was based on the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, and was shot in exterior settings on the biblical story locations. The producer was Robert Stigwood, a man who deserves our appreciation as the one who created the conditions for the Dolby revolution. He was also responsible for *Tommy* (1975), the Who's rock opera directed by Ken Russell, which was also the first film to enjoy large-scale distribution in Dolby. Stigwood developed a lucid production strategy, to create a new kind of movie spectacle to attract the youth audience that would soon become the principal clientele at movie theaters. "We kept watching the long lines waiting to get into rock concerts, and wondered why we couldn't attract the same audience to the movies. Why shouldn't we create that same excitement?"[1]

Anyone surprised by such opportunism probably doesn't know much about film history, and might believe that things had been different before. Hitchcock and Renoir, and even more so, producers as important for the classical musical as Arthur Freed, thought every bit as much about the kind of audience their films would appeal to.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show was the movie version of a parodic British horror rock musical and was released in Los Angeles in 1975 as well as in London. It instantly became a unique cult phenomenon, where each screening had the audience performing along with the film, providing appropriate gestures and singing. Moviegoers dressed up like the characters onscreen, shouted lines in sync with them, and added funny new lines in between the movie's dialogue lines. Dances in the film were imitated by the audience in the theater, who thus became actual participants in a ritual. In most cities, a single theater had the right to show the film (usually at midnight) for several years running. Although the very nature of this exclusive distribution prevented the film from becoming a gigantic commercial success, *Rocky Horror* nevertheless contributed to creating a new form of participation in the movies, mediated by music, and a new ritualization of the movie experience in theaters. The press spread news of this phenomenon far and wide.

Disco films like *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, 1977), with John Travolta, movies about student performers like *Fame* (Alan Parker, 1980), the movie version of the hippie musical *Hair* (Miloš Forman, 1979), John Landis's comedy revue *The Blues Brothers* (1980), inspired by his admiration for both Black R & B artists and the unbridled musicals of the early thirties: all these works embody aspects of this surprising renaissance—and they are not so different from the works that flowered in the early sound era.

No doubt because Landis, the auteur of *The Blues Brothers*, retained his adolescent sense of humor (but had also directed excellent music videos for Michael Jackson as well as comedies for popular stars like Eddie Murphy), he was not taken seriously as an artist. However, he deserves recognition for the way he celebrates the music of Chicago in *The Blues Brothers*, where he attained that mixture of grace and rusticity found in the musicals of the thirties (whose straightforward style he imitates, including visually). African American artists like Ray

Charles and Aretha Franklin and the aging Cab Calloway are guest stars in *The Blues Brothers*, whose story revolves around the white duo of actors Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi, but Landis features their numbers in a manner rarely seen in films. James Brown's dancing gospel sermon is one of the few movie scenes of our generation that has managed to equal the collective and evocative power of the best sequences in *Hallelujah*.

Landis's and Parker's films can certainly be criticized for rehashing old formulas, like the plots of 1930s–1950s musicals by Vincente Minnelli, Stanley Donen, Charles Walters, and George Sidney. Their stories revive the trope of young performers getting together to put on a show, with the same trick of "musical duels" (in *Blues Brothers*, the duel appears in the form of a satire of country music fans; in *Fame*, in the opposition between the young composer on synth and the venerable but timid music teachers at the performing-arts high school). But these "models" themselves drew from a preexisting repertoire of situations and never claimed to invent the motors that drove their plots. One has to wonder if in fact the critics were just hiding their distaste for rock or disco music, and cloaking it in formalist and abstract analyses. Of course, there was a return to certain subjects and certain forms, but it was with an eye to the future. Because of the new technology of Dolby stereo, the music now had a new presence and a new role, imposing its beat and its bass sonorities in a way that overflowed the boundaries of the screen.

DOLBY'S NEW KEYBOARD OF POSSIBILITIES

The movies' Dolby stereo process, in different versions and diverse technical forms, allowed many more films and many more theaters to exploit possibilities of sound that had until then been limited to a very small number of productions, and thereby to normalize the new resources and experiment with them on a much wider and more significant scale.

Before Dolby, theaters had to be equipped with special projectors for special film prints and with multitrack mag sound; not many

exhibitors acquired and installed such equipment, because it was difficult to amortize financially. The option of "high fidelity" (really, high-definition) sound had been limited to a few theaters that showed big musicals, big adventure films, and the odd auteur film shot in 70 mm, like Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967) or Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). These last-mentioned works were obviously artistic successes, but the minimal crop of films profiting from the technology hardly allowed for experimentation and invention. Much film production for the big theaters during this time (mostly musicals) was conceived basically to make the usual sound bigger, or as movies that would be compatible with normal screening conditions in theaters not equipped with Dolby, and therefore did not rely mainly on the possibilities that Dolby opened up.

When Dolby stereo did take over the market and spread to a large number of films and theaters, the concrete changes it brought involved three dimensions, each capable of directly or indirectly affecting music.

1. A big increase in bandwidth, treble, and bass. While standard optical sound leaves off in the high register at 8,000 Hz, Dolby sound can reach 12,000 Hz. (Digital sound has since pushed this upper limit far beyond that.) Consequences: orchestral colors and the harmonics of instruments were now transmitted in a much more precise, detailed, and complete way. A more expansive orchestration (using the lowest lows and the highest highs) and both more miniaturist and massive sound (from a single far-off or pianissimo melody to big symphonic moments in Wagner) could now be heard with utmost clarity. For rock and pop, the basses acquired a wholly new presence that moviegoers had never experienced before, since musicals and adventure films in mag sound in the 1950s and 1960s did not give such strong presence to low orchestral sounds.
2. Gains in sensitivity and dynamics; that is, in the contrasts now possible between the weakest and the strongest sounds.
3. The ability to allocate sounds to several independent tracks (between two and six tracks, depending on whether it was video or film), allowing more audio signals to coexist and not reciprocally mask each other for the ear, since they are spread over a wider space, and reach the listener from different points.

For music, the result of these changes was not only the deployment of new resources of expression, sound, and orchestral arranging, but also, as a consequence, the possibility of having a far greater physical impact on the movie spectator. In addition, Dolby stereo tracks offered a whole new "pit" role to the symphony orchestra. The orchestra could increase in tonal range and in the refinement of sonorities without covering dialogue and sound effects, which consequently could occupy more bandwidth and acquire an importance they had not previously had. However, aside from a few brilliant exceptions like *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), the cohabitation of dialogue, sound effects, and music no longer aimed to be fusional (in dissolves, on a continuum), as heard in the 1930s, when a single track was the obligatory channel for all sounds. Now the soundtrack consisted in a very separate distribution of places and roles.

There is no doubt that the resurgence of films devoted to classical music in the 1980s and 1990s, including *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984), *Tous les matins du monde* (*All the Mornings of the World*, Alain Corneau, 1991), *Farinelli* (Gérard Corbiau, 1994), *Immortal Beloved* (Bernard Rose, 1994), and quite a few others (Wagner was a favored subject), is linked to these new possibilities.

SYNTHESIZERS

Many American movie scores composed after 1975 were, shall we say, overorchestrated, but also capable of being more unobtrusive—even intimate and contemplative if the genre invited it. A trend of bellicosity that marked the 1980s—mostly in crime movies, adventure films, and science fiction—*Rambo: First Blood*, *Aliens*, and so forth—provided the occasion to hear snare-drum rolls setting the rhythm of the action throughout, with all of Dolby's hard-hitting precision, or sounds of punches written by James Horner or Basil Poledouris. Following on the heels of these movies came a wave of mysticism that made abundant use of seraphic choirs; for example, in Alan Silvestri's music for *The Abyss* (James Cameron, 1989).

The synthesizer, an instrument considered a priori as "modern" and therefore well suited for futurist plots, nevertheless did not get much

widespread exposure. True, it received intensive use as a bargain orchestra in low-budget films and in series of all genres (soap operas, adventure and horror movies); audiences then associated its sound with that kind of fare, and so it was cast in some degree of disrepute. Rare were the composers who, like Hans Zimmer and especially Vangelis (e.g., for *Blade Runner*), came to use synths in big-budget films, especially as the sole music source. Hence we saw Zimmer's original synth scoring coexist with a selection of rock songs in Barry Levinson's *Rain Man* (1988). And Vangelis's synth score for *Blade Runner* was completely enclosed within a "score" of sound effects, ambience, and voices created by the sound editors and the mixer—an orchestration that really makes the film and for the moviegoer becomes inseparable from it. Ryuichi Sakamoto's music in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983), Nagisa Oshima's film where the composer himself plays a role, and Vangelis's music for *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), are two of the rare almost-100-percent-synthesized scores noticeable as such that were imposed on "big" films.

Within a few years, the arrival of new models made synthesizers commonplace and allowed them to enter film music without much fanfare. For example, the synths in Maurice Jarre's scores for two Peter Weir films, *Witness* (1985) and *Dead Poets Society* (1989), did not attract particular notice, by the press or the general audience. This is all the more striking because the composer's son, Jean-Michel Jarre, was long famous for his "live" use of these same devices in gigantic concerts that included sounds, lighting, smoke machines, and other spectacular effects.

DISCO IS CHALLENGED

The disco phenomenon, though short-lived, opened the way to a revival of dancing in the movies. New dance films had nonsinging stars like John Travolta, Gregory Hines (the astonishing tap dancer who was a revelation in 1984's *The Cotton Club*), and classical dancers like Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Baryshnikov acted and danced in *The Turning Point* (Herbert Ross, 1977) and Taylor Hackford's *White Nights* (1985), in which the eternal duel between classical and popular

music was extended into the field of dancing. In the end, Black tap dancer Hines and Russian star Baryshnikov forge an artistic and personal complicity, following the example of Judy Garland as the "jazz" singer and Deanna Durbin as the "classical" soprano in short films of the thirties.

In the rock and disco films made in the new age of Dolby, extremely assertive bass became essentially an independent physical phenomenon in itself. The regularity of its beat helped decouple it from the fluid rhythms of the image. Spatially the bass beat seemed to exist independently from the screen (bass sounds, as we know, are not as localizable in space as treble sounds). Dolby's deployment of the throbbing bass produced a kind of violent, almost phobic response in some movie fans. It created a new effect of the *physical existence of music* (more precisely speaking, song) that was entirely autonomous with respect to what was happening onscreen. The physical force unleashed by this music even evoked images of demonic possession that must be guarded against. The critic Alain Lacombe laid into *Saturday Night Fever* for what he perceived as such possession, seeing the film "controlling a collective process. This failure, reactionary in its desire to channel bad music, shows the extent to which the audience has no problem with this thing they hum that escapes from their mouth when they least expect it."[2]

Lacombe seemed to be saying, indignantly, that since disco music's lyrics and melody are freely superimposed onto the story in disco movies, and since the sung lyrics are not intended to be consciously heard and followed, this is a shocking development. This *music with lyrics* seems to duplicate what movie music already does with notes and sounds—it produces effects that we feel without always consciously perceiving them.

The problem did not exist in the same way with rock in the 1960s and 1970s. Generally rock was characterized by collective musical power and diffuse sound, where the bass "melted in" with the sonorities of voices and electric guitars. On the other hand, one of disco's trademarks is to *lay bare the bass*, so to speak, making its impact physically perceptible as a process in itself, existing independently from the musical discourse that unfolds above it.

In a paradoxical way, the relationship between music, lyrics, and image in the disco film is thus marked by a sort of rhythmic independence

of the music, and by the perception of the music in its own right—you hear it in the theater the same way you'd hear it in a discotheque. The music is in the foreground with relation to the image, and often solicits the audience's participation without the mediation of the story.

But why wouldn't Dolby also make it possible to overcome the obstacles to the complete faithful restoration of bel canto and the opera film? After all, like the bass beat of the disco movie, in opera film the voice can become a sound element capable of addressing the spectator by short-circuiting the rest (i.e., the visual action, sets, dialogue, and characters).

We have seen that soon after sound came to the movies, technical obstacles (doubtless in tandem with ideological roadblocks) had put the brakes on the production of filmed operas, particularly because of the problems seemingly posed by the voices of dramatic sopranos. In the 1940s and 1950s, several operatic works were adapted for the screen, mainly in Italian movies. Now, technology seemed to have broken down the technical barriers.

OPERA FILMS

In the efflorescence of opera films that became a significant phenomenon in the 1970s and 1980s, one name dominates: Daniel Toscan du Plantier, the head of the Gaumont film company at the time. Some have claimed that he invented the opera film; in truth it is a genre as old as film itself (notably including several productions by the prolific Italian director Carmine Gallone in Italy during the 1940s and 1950s). But Toscan du Plantier had a different approach. Following the example set by the artistic and commercial success of Bergman's *Magic Flute*, made for Swedish television in 1975, he was inspired to have operas filmed by recognized film auteurs and not specialized directors. His project was roundly criticized by the cinephile and musical intelligentsia but it gave birth to a dozen films. Toscan du Plantier's enterprise had but one fault, in my opinion: he generally played it safe and failed to make room for young directors who might have managed to take more risks on smaller budgets. One after another, a *Don Giovanni* by Joseph Losey (1979), a *Parsifal* by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg

(1982), a *Carmen* by Francesco Rosi (1984), and a *Bohème* by Luigi Comencini (1988) were released. Franco Zeffirelli's *La traviata* (1982) does not belong to the same group, since it was produced by Tarak Ben Ammar, but it stood out no less as an artistic success, thanks to Teresa Stratas's Violetta, and also thanks to the much-maligned talent of the director.

One very great work emerges from the ensemble of Toscan du Plantier's productions. This was the sublime *Parsifal* by Syberberg, which unfortunately did not get the widespread distribution it should have. Like most of the others, it used playback (the onscreen actors lip-synched the prerecorded music). But instead of using trickery to hide the convention, Syberberg highlights it, in two ways. First, he dares to show faces and mouths in extreme closeup (the orchestra director Armin Jordan in the role of Amfortas, over the voice of Wolfgang Schöne). And second, onscreen we see *two* Parsifals in succession, one played by a man and the other embodied by a woman, over the same voice of Reiner Goldberg! This idea is embodied in one extraordinary shot where the two actors, one advancing toward the camera and the other receding, "transfer" the voice to each other, at the crucial moment when Parsifal has refused the temptation offered by Kundry and the flower maidens and thus attained a higher status. Parsifal 2, combining the voice of a tenor and the look of a girl, is thus eminently androgynous, utopian, and symbolic. As for Kundry, sung by Yvonne Minton, she is embodied onscreen by Edith Clever, who seems literally possessed by the voice that comes from her. Syberberg also resolves the issue of the setting in an astounding way, differently from Bergman. Bergman was inspired by early sound musicals to make the frame a performance in a theater on a stage, only to explode it, or "forget" it from time to time, and to return to it at the end. As for Syberberg, he had the inspiration to have Wagner's death mask reconstructed on a giant scale, to become the setting for the action—a setting that itself is broken down and forgotten when necessary.

Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, for their version of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* (1975), had chosen exteriors and direct sound, but an exterior that was magnified by their extraordinary sense of the historical sites—in the same way they filmed plays by Corneille and

Hölderlin in the original places of the action, Rome and the slopes of Mount Etna.

The filmed opera should not be judged according to the same criteria as for other kinds of film: since each viewer might compare vocal performances to others he knows, this leads to differences of opinion. One filmgoer will appreciate a given directorial choice but will remain unmoved by the singers chosen to act the title roles; another may react in the opposite way. This is the typical case where a unitary conception of cinema—that is, the notion that all the different elements of a given film be judged along the same axis, according to a single set of criteria—proves not to account for the complex range of responses.

Indeed, how important is it if one person admires the beauty and sensibility of the staging of Bergman's *Magic Flute* without being concerned whether the casting is the best possible (and if she is concerned, it's that she has not tried to understand the project of the director, which is not to show the performance but to make the film of one performance among others), or if another audio-viewer rejoices in seeing in *The Marriage of Figaro* filmed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, a stageful of extraordinary artists (Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Maria Ewing) and not caring whether this film, in itself a document of great performances, is well or badly directed? There is no way to achieve a perfect balance.

Furthermore, the filmed opera poses specific problems that can be approached as problems of cinema: What should one do, for example, with the overture? To what audience should it be addressed? Should one assume that the audience is familiar with the opera? What approach should be adopted to pair the style of recording of the music with the way the story is acted out and shot?

For his part, Bergman adopted a clearly popular strategy: he had the text sung and spoken in his native language, making the film accessible to the general Swedish audience. His choice was to show *The Magic Flute* in the modest spirit of Mozart's Singspiel.

His overture is based on an idea he was much criticized for, but which is so simple and humanly beautiful. To symbolize the opera's message of universality and brotherhood, the director shows a series of faces in the audience, faces of both sexes, different ages, various ethnic types and skin colors, all chosen not for canonical beauty but for truthfulness and spiritual radiance. The montage shows the people in

the supposed audience for Mozart's overture that we also are listening to. It makes us question: Are they really listening to the same thing? Since we cannot see listening, do we know they are hearing it? Even so, are they hearing the same music at the same time we are hearing it and seeing them? This is one of cinema's mysteries; Satyajit Ray based his beautiful film *The Music Room* on this very same question.

As for Syberberg, he uses the prelude to *Parsifal* to sum up—through silent images and puppets—the story that has led us to where we are in the legend; namely, to young Parsifal's quest. Zeffirelli's *Traviata* has the inspiration to open, with the first measures of Verdi, on the apartment of Violetta, who is abandoned and dying. The opera will then be the resurrection in flashback of her painful life, beginning with the gathering of guests at a brilliant soiree, as if the place remembered the moments and the voices this flashback contained.

The lively and sensuous *Carmen* shot outdoors by Rosi accords some importance to dance, which is also present in Bizet's opera. Toward this end he sought a singer who would be capable of dancing as well, to Antonio Gades's choreography. Having learned from difficulties that predecessors such as Losey had encountered in adapting the soundtrack to staging that was contradictory to it, he planned his filming before the music was recorded, under Lorin Maazel's direction, so that the music and the voices could then be "spatialized" according to the film's needs. In addition, Rosi went for the strategy of giving an important role to noises. Although the director said he expected protest from opera purists, the severest criticisms actually came from film critics. Some disparaged the coexistence of singing with sounds of nature, because they felt one was pasted on top of the other, and difficult to reconcile in terms of cinematic space and time.

It is for good reason that in musicals, traditionally, nature sounds are erased or unobtrusive during song numbers. In the famous song and dance sequence "Singin' in the Rain," the sound of rain is heard throughout, but this constant noise, like a basso continuo, does not draw attention away, nor does it break the rhythm. Rosi's *Carmen* does not behave the same way at all, with its anecdotal sounds of crowds, wagons, and insects.

Having chosen to set the action in authentic Spanish villages, Rosi has us hear "offscreen" choruses as we see typecast extras who clearly

are not singing. Further, he uses the intermissions to "present the myths of Spanish culture: bullfight, religion, destiny"; for example, we see a procession of penitents in Holy Week as we hear the menacing prelude to the final act. "And also, with Tonino Guerra, my screenwriter, in building the scenes I tried to show a bit of the life of the city and the countryside."[3] All this makes for a unique mixture, between a French opéra comique and a web of Spanish local color, between voices and faces, conventions and realism, the stage and the outdoors, the time of music and the time of real sound—without counting the transitions, always perilous, between talking and singing.

A late offshoot of Toscan du Plantier's series, Zulawski's *Boris Godounov* (1989), marked by the director's powerfully violent imagery, suffers in my opinion not from the reported disagreements between the orchestra director Mstislav Rostropovich and the film's director, but from Rostropovich's relatively stylized and formal musical conception and the actual sound of the recording (a bit muddy), and also from the frenetic direction by Zulawski and his characteristic speed (one review mentions his "galloping camera and manic actors").[4] As for staging: just as Bergman sets his performance in a theater, Zulawski cleverly sets his film, including exterior settings, in the framework of a movie shoot, showing us the spotlights or, mixed in with the extras, members of the technical crew in modern dress, who scatter along with the costumed chorus members when the tsar asks to be alone.

Similarly, in 2001 for his remarkable *Tosca*, Benoît Jacquot lets our eyes wander among scenes of the studio recording of the music to be used in playback, the real locations of the action in Rome, and the main stylized setting. The opera is performed in a deeply moving way by principals Angela Gheorghiu, Roberto Alagna, and Ruggero Raimondi, who embodies a terrifying Scarpia. Through means that might seem complicated, the film reaches astonishing heights of emotion and re-creates the tension of a live performance.

Into a category related to Toscan du Plantier's opera films, we might place *Une chambre en ville* of Jacques Demy (*A Room in Town*, 1982), with Michel Colombier's music, and also Manoel de Oliveira's *The Cannibals* (1988), with music by João Paes. Both the screenplays and the music of the two films were written for the screen, although the superb quality of "screenplay" and music would certainly qualify both to be performed onstage in an opera house. Other isolated works where composer and

director worked together as one deserve mention: two of these are Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium* (1951, with Alexander Hammid) and Friedrich Feher's *The Robber Symphony* (1936, music by Alfred Tokayer).

Overall, if you count them up, the opera film has probably yielded too few "great works" to be conclusive. But to judge it by numbers is to ignore that an art does not advance merely through its successes but also by means of its experiments and failures. No crossbreeds or mutants are without value. We may criticize each separate work (even as we admire successes of Bergman, Straub-Huillet, Syberberg, and Jacquot), and at the same time, treat the whole phenomenon in a positive light.

CURTAINS FOR THE OPERA?

The cycle of opera films resurrected essential questions about cinema, questions as old as silent film; and Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), whose story concerns the burial at sea of an opera singer's ashes in 1914, might well appear as the director's reflection on this trend. That is at least the meaning assigned to the film by Youssef Ishaghpour, one of our best theorists of modernity. It is appropriate to quote his point of view here, even though I do not share it:

> *E la nave va* [*And the Ship Sails On*] probably came out of the recent widespread fad . . . that resulted in the proliferation of opera films, which are a credit neither to cinema nor to opera. Instead of making an opera film himself, Fellini dealt with the deadly encounter between the two in a historical moment, 1914, when cinema was born and opera died. A program that united *E la nave va*, *Ginger and Fred*, and *Intervista* (Fellini's three films between 1983 and 1987) would show the evolution of technical reproduction and the culture industry through the century: the relationship between cinema and the great art it destroyed, in this case opera, and the destruction of cinema itself by television. Hence the funeral in *E la nave va* is allegorical.[5]

Not only is the idea of a cycle of reciprocal destructions of art/media forms by one another odd to me, but this reading à la Walter Benjamin—based on ideas exposed in Benjamin's famed 1936 essay "The Work of

Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"—while faithful to the spirit of Fellini, doesn't, I think, exhaust the subject. Far more novel and interesting in *And the Ship Sails On* is the relationship between the erudite old Western Europeans on the boat and the music of the Yugoslav refugees, a music these gentlemen opine on in ethnological terms and "explain." Here Fellini revisits a situation from his own *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) with great lucidity: in *Satyricon*, he indulged in a cavalier recuperation of the musical treasures of humanity, stirring in Balinese music together with African at will, with no care for their original cultural and musical meanings. Here, regarding the popular music and dances the film presents at length, their mystery and their opacity, he poses the problem of our modern Western ways of looking and listening. Once again, is music really an Esperanto?

Similarly, Fellini as a great witness of the modern world always enjoyed revealing our distracted attitude toward artworks, ancient or modern, European or "exotic," with which we surround ourselves.

Take the rich actor in *Nights of Cabiria* (1957) who brings Cabiria to his home. He eats, reflects, and muses to the sound of a Beethoven symphony that is playing on his record player; he stops consciously listening to it but continues to feel its effect. And in Trimalchio's banquet in *Satyricon*, guests gorge themselves while actors they ignore declaim Homer in Greek, like an outmoded precious cultural ritual. We see Fellini's insight in showing without judgment the way we relate to music and words we surround ourselves with: distractedly, not really paying attention. Cinema would later make this relation its own, to create an aesthetic of (apparently) aleatory superimposition of music and action.

ON-THE-AIR MUSIC

One remarkable practice that has diverged from the traditional film-music canon has spread widely, on the model of American TV serials like *Miami Vice*: an entire song with a strong beat plays over images and actions not closely synchronized with it. It could be perceived as the crude and careless superimposition of a musical rhythm onto moving images, but it is wholly intentional. An impression of floating or the slight fragmenting of attention results, since the points of

synchronization between sound and image normally created in rhythmic editing are not in operation here. This practice reflects our modern situation where music commonly reaches us through car radios or earbuds: the world itself becomes an aleatory superimposition of music onto what we see.

It has become commonplace to hear music outdoors when no human music source is around; it is certainly not new to hear classical music at home instead of at concerts; music can come from anywhere or from a box you carry with you when you go somewhere; music you listen to in a public space can become something you alone are hearing (not to count the odd musical emanations from nearby headphones whose owners have their volume turned way up); a Bruckner symphony might be heard not on expensive equipment with "frequency modulation" or in a discophilic ritual but traveling with you on your phone or other portable device. This era, our era, cannot be adequately captured in films whose mode of presenting music is the same that existed in movies of thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. Some filmmakers artfully play on this condition, particularly Scorsese and Wenders, as did Fellini for a long time along with them.

The Walkman and smartphone bring back a situation that characterized early radio: solitary listening with headphones. Now contemporary devices seen and heard in films enable situations of play and ambiguity, as, for example, when the spectator experiences songs or music that a character supposedly hears in her head. The music might begin as heard only by us and the character wearing headphones, then be revealed as coming from somewhere else, and then be established as what I call "on-the-air." "On-the-air" in a film describes voices and music that (apparently) come from a radio, loudspeaker, or other media within the story space. These sounds acquire the freedom to emanate from any point in space that is involved with broadcasting or phone transmission. This leads to many possibilities for playing on how we locate these sounds in (or outside) the narrative space.

An example of this sort of trick with the spectator can be found in *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991). After Louise (Susan Sarandon) shoots and kills a man who was trying to rape her friend Thelma (Geena Davis), the two heroines hide out and debate what to do—go on the run or turn themselves in to the police. While Thelma is trying to relax by

the motel pool where they have stopped overnight, Louise calls her boy-friend Jimmy (Michael Madsen), asking him to close her bank account and send her the money. During the lovers' conversation, which is shown through crosscutting, the image and the sound place us some-times in the motel with Louise and sometimes with Jimmy. As they talk, a song, progressively more insistent, is heard on the soundtrack behind the dialogue. The song brings together the two spaces and the two characters.

It is unclear where this song is coming from. A male voice is singing the song to a moderate rhythm. The music develops independently from the vagaries of the phone conversation. Heard at an unobtrusive level, it tends to be perceived as belonging to the space of the action (diegetic), not as music written to comment on the scene nondiegeti-cally. We might think it is being played either at Jimmy's or in Louise's space, on a record or tape player. But since the song is present in both spaces (which are supposedly hundreds of miles apart, and it could therefore not be coming from a single radio station), we can only under-stand it as "commentary" on the scene, albeit a strange one indeed, hardly narrative and definitely autonomous.

Next we see an exterior shot showing Thelma in her swimsuit by the motel pool in a chaise, with headphones and her Walkman. The song has been turned up, and Thelma doesn't hear Louise, who is in the car ready to take off and is urgently calling Thelma to get going. Louise is obliged to come over and take off the surprised Thelma's headphones. Thelma rushes to gather her things and get into the car. At this moment, many viewers (as I have found through observing students' reactions) are persuaded that the music behind the conversation is what Thelma was listening to on her Walkman all along, and convention has let us hear it in parallel over the conversation of Louise and her boyfriend. However, there is no audio indication such as reverb on the music, use of filters giving the tone color of "loudspeaker sound," or a change in the quality or presence of the song when we shift to a different space. There is no visual indication either, such as a closeup on Thelma's Walk-man or any other music player, that would allow us to attribute the song to a precise source. But the need to believe in a mechanical "source" of the music and the pleasure of pinning it on this Walkman is so strong with some viewers that they don't realize that when Thelma

is shaken out of her reverie, the headphones are taken off her ears, and she grabs her stuff to join Louise in the car, the song only continues to get louder and completely takes over as the car peels out to leave. Glenn Frey's voice sings, "You can never see tomorrow / Still we have to choose which way to go"—words that indeed echo the crossroads situation that the two women are living through. At that moment, the song, which overtakes the soundtrack, takes on the status of pit (nondiegetic) music.

An important detail: in this scene none of the three characters makes any reference to the music or acts according to it. Any move of this kind would have anchored it in their diegetic reality.

What is singular and eloquent is that in the analyses done by my students, they demonstrate a very strong, Frenchily Cartesian desire to assign a logical source in the story space to the song, which in their eyes doesn't have the usual quality of film music. So strong is the desire that the students firmly maintain their thesis of the Walkman as the song's retroactively given source—without considering the lie that the rest of the sequence gives to the thesis (the Walkman abandoned, yet the music ever more present). In so thinking, they are both wrong and right. They are wrong to think that one must at all costs assign a logical place that is physically in the action to the song that, without the two heroines realizing or talking about it, comments about them to us. But they are right, since they have located what we might call a feint effect. The director or the sound editor indeed expects that for a few seconds we will have situated the song as being heard by Thelma through her headphones, even if it means dropping this interpretation and letting the song fly freely in time and space.

The feint effect is specific to cinema. Sometimes it is produced to be resolved in a logical and closed way, yielding a surprise or gag: the grand piano that we hear playing Mozart is really sitting in the farmyard we see, and Godard has taken us by surprise in that scene in *Weekend*. Other times, it is produced as a fleeting moment of anchoring within a framework that constantly goes adrift, as is the case, for example, in *Thelma and Louise*, a film that in this respect plays with an entire tradition.

A good number of recent films, many road movies among them, also present a tapestry of songs heard on-the-air with varying degrees of presence and intelligibility of lyrics, and with numerous

effects of editing between the landscape traveled and the song, as occurs in real life when we travel by car, produced by happy accident as we listen to music. Cinema is only imitating this play of fortuitous encounters, assuming an independent, autonomous existence of action and music/song, to organize them more tightly and give them a precise dramatic and emotional meaning, but behaving as if they were occurring "naturally."

RAIN MAN: HYBRID SCORE
IN A ROAD MOVIE

In Barry Levinson's 1988 hit, a brash young dealer in luxury cars, Charlie Babbitt (Tom Cruise), discovers only upon his father's death that he has an older brother, Raymond (Dustin Hoffmann), who is autistic. His desire to inherit his despised father's fortune involves springing Raymond from the mental institution in Ohio and taking him to Los Angeles, and since Raymond fears flying, a long road trip ensues. The journey allows them to bond, and allows the car radio to play a tapestry of songs. Many of the songs are standards in unusual arrangements, like the legendary "Stardust" (Hoagy Carmichael, 1927) and the utopian "Beyond the Blue Horizon," from the 1930 musical *Monte Carlo.* In one scene in a hotel, Valeria Golino dances with Hoffmann in an elevator, emulating Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in the Gershwins' "They Can't Take That Away from Me" (*The Barkleys of Broadway*, Charles Walters, 1949)—which happens to be playing on Raymond's portable TV. The film does include contemporary songs (e.g., Bananarama's cover of "Nathan Jones"), but many of them hark back to the past as a nostalgic ideal.

The film starts on a kind of auditory pun I have already mentioned: first, a dark screen with the first film titles, and a few sounds of machines and metal; then, over a strangely geometric image (horizontal power lines, vertical wires holding a car in the air, city skyline in the distance), we hear a tinny mechanical rhythm that we might assume is coming from the seaport dock where the sports car is being unloaded from a ship. Only after a few seconds do we realize the rhythm is the opening of a song. (And this is why we should not study songs in films

based on soundtrack recordings: we would miss the music's relation-ships with the visuals and with other sounds.) Raymond's obsession with numbers, his reducing of what he sees to abstract lines, thus already appears in the film's first sounds and images. What we took to be a machine rhythm is actually the beginning of "Iko Iko," a children's song reinterpreted and performed by the Belle Stars.

Hans Zimmer's scoring arrives only gradually in the film, starting twenty-five minutes in, when Charlie abducts Raymond from the insti-tution. We first hear it in a subdued and rather nostalgic form, with a theme in minor. Unlike what might be heard in films of the 1950s or 1960s, the music does not result in a song with lyrics. A synthetic pan flute voices the theme with plaintive accents and plenty of reverb.

Underlying Zimmer's theme is an insistent, driving rhythm that links the scoring to some of the songs heard in the film, particularly the initial "Iko Iko." It reminds me of something from childhood. This aspect is found also in a memorable moment of on-the-air music when the brothers stop at a small motel at night. We hear the latter part of the Delta Rhythm Boys' version of "Dry Bones." As the Rhythm Boys recount the bones of the human skeleton, the phrases descend by a half-note each time, somehow corresponding to the image of the end of the day, like an invitation to sleep. At the same time, there is an affin-ity with the nostalgic and descending quality of other cues heard in the film, including Zimmer's main theme.

The theme plays during the end credits, where we see a montage of Polaroids of landscapes the brothers have driven through during their odyssey. The photos show no human beings, only abstract lines, places with no precise identity, power lines, roads . . . We know these photos were taken by the autistic Raymond, and we can believe they represent his world.

FILM MUSIC THAT DRAWS ON ITS OWN HISTORY

A fateful moment arrived when film music had created its own stock of references and began to draw on its own past. Composer X writes a score in the fashion of Bernard Herrmann—as did Philippe Sarde for

Barocco (André Téchiné, 1976). Composer Y draws inspiration from Max Steiner, as John Williams did for *Always* (Steven Spielberg, 1989), and Z gives far more than a wink to Nino Rota, like Danny Elfman in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (Tim Burton, 1985) or George Fenton for *Groundhog Day* (Harold Ramis, 1993). Sometimes the homage is heavy-handed: Elfman's "Nino Rota" was often too densely orchestrated, too noticeable, not sufficiently airy, and not quite right for the context into which it was placed. But sometimes too, rendering homage in this spirit can eventually lead to new discoveries.

The homage can become a literal quotation, as for example when, in 1991, Martin Scorsese remade *Cape Fear* (J. Lee Thomson, 1962): he asked Elmer Bernstein to orchestrate the themes Bernard Herrmann had composed for the original. And in *Casino* (1995) Scorsese reused excerpts from Georges Delerue's score for Godard's *Contempt*. But we should note that many spectators who discover Scorsese's films likely never saw the old films from which the music has been quoted.

I am not among those who see in this phenomenon a loss of innocence, or a sign of decadence or decrepitude in movies now reduced to recycling styles or subjects, a symptom of "Xerox cinema," as one critic put it. This is true only if you shortsightedly consider cinema's lifespan as a brief cycle on the scale of a human life. In the twenty-first century we should lay to rest such thoughts of cinema's autocannibalism (film music devouring its own tradition), in what is really a healthy *spiraling* movement that sometimes returns on itself but also constantly extends forward.

But it would be absurd to continue to isolate the history of film music from the history of musical tastes, musical practices, or our daily relationship with music in general. Who cannot see that the same process of revisiting and "returning" is also found in the evolution of all music and its consumption?

You cannot explain some milestones in film music solely as the product of cynical, profiteering producers who desire to attract the public. It is easy to condemn the profit motive, but that is what allowed the cinema in its dominant forms to remain popular, integrating "artistic" or specialized genres that are equally legitimate. The conventions of film also reflect the evolution of our listening and our sensibilities.

Since the very beginning, the history of film music has been closely linked to the history of popular music, and it will remain so as long as the seventh art endures. Popular music in our days doesn't have only the cinema as a universal vehicle, but also television, and music videos, and video games; at the same time, record companies are often involved in the production and planning of films. Logically, some of these films act both as the means of distributing a song and as artworks in themselves—just as, often in the past and still today, a given film was both a story in itself and the vehicle for its star's image. Many great screen works are born not from the total refusal of this reality, or on the contrary its passive acceptance, but from a dialectical play of the two, and music is no exception to this. A song can be placed onto the soundtrack of a film because of the eventual commercial profit, even as it enriches or complements the film, as well as by the skillful or beautiful way it is deployed.

NEW MUSIC FOR SILENTS

Another striking recent phenomenon (even if it has not led to significant commercial success) is the revival of silent films accompanied by scores that are recorded or played live. Some screenings aspire to recapture the spirit of the era, while others make a stylistic break, layering new music over silent-movie aesthetics. In Great Britain, the BBC and the historian Kevin Brownlow collaborated with the American composer and silent-film impresario Carl Davis on reconstituting or newly creating scores for numerous works. In Italy, the Pordenone Silent Film Festival has played an important role in restoring films and providing live musical accompaniment. In France, the organization Cinémémoire has presented programs of "cinema concerts" since 1991 through the work of Christian Belaygue; these concerts include reconstituted scores, scores composed in the spirit of the era and its films, and other diverse forms including jazz improvisations, contemporary music, and commissioned new works. For a number of years, rock or other musical groups like Un Drame Musical Instantané (An instant musical drama) toured with silent classics by Murnau or Marcel L'Herbier, supplying musical "counterpoint" to the film being screened. In 1975 I myself

put on a screening of this kind with Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), in collaboration with the composer and video artist Robert Cahen.

France's particular approach among these international efforts was to arrange pairings of contemporary music with silent film. The impulse here has been to reframe today's music, always considered arcane and difficult, by attracting the public via a film. This strategy has its dangers, the main one being that the film might not be well served by the enterprise.

The project inspired a lot of debate—in which I took part, since I wished to draw attention to the train wrecks that often resulted from the experiments done in France. It was a situation no one could be happy with. The audience's attention was often pulled between the action on screen and the music that demanded an autonomous existence. The composer complained that people didn't sufficiently attend to the music, and often refused to accept that it is the whole experience that matters, not its separate components. The film was treated somewhat as a pretext to draw in an audience, and thus was not always seen for its own beauty.

These are the risks that Carl Davis, who has done much orchestral composing and reconstituting of scores for silent movies, is aware of. It should go without saying that the first duty of music in this context is to serve the film and its aesthetics, while taking into account the dual cultural contexts of the 1920s and the present. "More than sixty years ago," said Davis in 1988, "when moviegoers heard an adaptation of a Tchaikovsky symphony—say, the main theme of the *Pathétique*—it was a novelty for them. Now we make films for sophisticated spectators who have heard more classical music and film music. You can't use a well-known theme in the same way now, as if it were new; otherwise it strikes the audience as a cliché."[6]

However, he recreated the symphonic music of *The Thief of Baghdad* (Raoul Walsh, with Douglas Fairbanks, 1924) based on themes from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, by referring to the movie's "Russian ballet" exoticism. "It seemed to be a good choice [for this film] because it was already second- or thirdhand." But then for *The Wind* (Victor Sjöström, 1928) and for Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* (1924), works that had very different artistic ambitions, Davis decided on music that would sound contemporary to our ears but still not anachronistic. For

Sjöström's *Wind*, an epic of survival in a hostile world, he chose instrumentation based on strings, percussion, and keyboards, in order to obtain a "very monochromatic and wild" effect, while for *Greed*, a sordid and lyrical drama, he deployed "one violin, one bass, and many wind and percussion instruments, to sound like Alban Berg." Davis clearly works not with absolutes but in the relative, seeking to take into account both the aesthetic of the era when the film was made and the aesthetics of today. He is perfectly aware of the contradictory position in which this places him, in a dialectical sense, and he does not paper over the contradictions. Exhaustive research on the film, together with vast expertise in different musical styles, is a constraint this composer places on himself; he sees himself as an interpreter. In this pursuit he and others encounter the issues involved in the quest for authenticity in the interpretation of old music.[7]

In France it is generally up to the composer invited to do the music for a silent film to decide to what degree to serve either as a "re-creator" or as a "director" of the film in question. Hubert Niogret identified a fundamental problem with this approach regarding the new score commissioned of two film composers, Antoine Duhamel and Jacques Jansen, for the presentation of Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916). "The *finale* chosen by Duhamel and Jansen, the very opposite of the naive triumphalism of the images and of Griffith's ideology, reveals itself as a general commentary that invites a [critical] modern reading of the entire work through its musical accompaniment."[8]

Niogret views this as analogous to the staging of plays or operas that are well known, or available in several versions, or in the form of a printed text (for the theatrical work) or a score (for opera). But is the silent cinema in this same situation at present? Furthermore, the naivete ascribed to Griffith might well arise from misunderstanding him in a condescending way. In any case, if the naivete is part of the work, it shouldn't be removed from it. It is also important to know that in this century, most of the audience at these screenings has never seen the Griffith film before, while they can read or see Shakespeare done with different stagings.

The Italian musician and producer Giorgio Moroder has composed many songs and scores for films—among others, the music soundtracks for *Midnight Express* (Alan Parker, 1978), *Scarface* (Brian De Palma, 1983),

and *Flashdance* (Adrian Lyne, 1983). In 1984 Moroder acquired the rights to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), and oversaw a new edit of the film that integrated newly discovered scenes but also cut out some material. He eliminated intertitles that punctuated the film and replaced them with titles superimposed on the images. Most radically of all, his new soundtrack was peppered with seven pop songs of his choice, sung by the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Pat Benatar. The French film press reviled this effort, even when they generously indulged other experiments arising from so-called avant-garde impulses. This leads me to think that a visceral opposition to pop music itself played a certain role in the *Metropolis* affair . . .

We ought now to try to draw some lessons from all the experiments that have occurred in recent years in the domain of music and sound for silent films. Not in order to mandate a single formula for how it should be done, but on the contrary, to enrich, improve, and multiply the variety of experiments from here on out.

Let us first remember that the question of how to put sound and music to silent films was a crucial one in the late twenties. As we know, some films in the transitional period were in fact sonorized films. Sonorized, and not just musicalized: sound effects, ambience, and sometimes synchronized dialogue were added in order to salvage films that had been shot silent. This process sometimes yielded surprising results.

Once the talkies arrived, there were constant efforts to rework silent films (especially comedies) as sound films to newly fill movie screens. Chaplin tried to do so for his pre–*City Lights* titles, adopting the solution of a musical score; for *The Gold Rush* he added narrative commentary. Other filmmakers also took an interest in how to adapt specific silent movies to sound. Jacques Tati later contacted Buster Keaton in the desire not only to add music but also sound, with taste and discretion, to Keaton's masterpieces.

There was a large cycle of German expressionist films that had screenings in France during the 1960s. Murnau's and Lang's films were accompanied by modern scores, sometimes with radical expressionist sound effects added. In the 1970s, the composer-producer Philippe Arthuys, a former member of Pierre Schaeffer's GRM,[9] did a project that was well received at the time (as I recall, the program was passionate

and elegant) involving *The Mark of Zorro* (Fred Niblo, 1920). Well versed in the techniques of musique concrète, Arthuys achieved a combination of traditional music and dramatic sounds that served the film quite well, avoiding the trap of a showily avant-garde score that desperately does battle with the film—a battle that generally leaves feathers scattered in its wake.

"TRANSCRIBING" FILM MUSIC?

More recently, a new step forward has been taken, perhaps much more significant in the long term: "improving" the music of sound and talking films themselves. I mean films whose music was recorded in the era they were created, and could thus be considered by rights inseparable from the images. The music is being replaced by either of two processes. The first is *live performance*. Carl Davis has conducted beneath the screen, with his usual precision and respect for synchronism, the orchestral score for Chaplin's *City Lights*, normally known in the 1931 version of the film with its recorded soundtrack. The second approach is to create a new *recording* of a film's music. This was the case in 1995 with Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938); Prokofiev's score was rerecorded and resynchronized with modern technology, and some sound effects were added that do not exist on the original soundtrack. The addition of sound effects to a "restored" version, done more frequently than one would think, is doubtless more significant. Whatever the anecdotal reasons were for the absence of these sounds in the original, this absence (which I will discuss elsewhere) confers a certain aesthetic on the film. Adding new sounds is a choice almost as crude as colorizing the image.

It is a mistake to write of the "restoration" of *Nevsky*, as some newspapers did. What was being addressed was not a soundtrack that had been degraded by time and whose audio color needed freshening up; from the very beginning the film's sound was strident and spindly. What actually occurred here was a reorchestration (Prokofiev having worked in a certain material and technical context) and the equivalent of a *transcription*. I have discussed the status of film music as recorded, and have outlined the advantages and disadvantages that follow from

this fact: the possibility of creating emotion through just the right sound in its specific line, vibration, and color; but also the impossibility of "saving" a piece of music when its recording does not do justice to it because of unavoidable circumstances at the time. Some have claimed that since Prokofiev did not have the ideal orchestra he wished, rerecording it in modern stereo sound is actually fulfilling his desire, just as when modern technology was used to rerecord Herrmann's score for *Vertigo*. Okay, but then when we can do so, why not digitally replace some actors by others that Eisenstein didn't succeed in getting for the film? In other words, where does it stop? Are there things we consider indissociable from the film for better or worse, including its "flaws"? Where should we begin with transforming a film according to what we decide is good for it?

It is possible that endeavors like the ones undertaken for Eisenstein's classic will set a precedent, and insofar as they can be perceived as sacrilegious, will actually tempt more and more people to "fix" classics for whatever motives, commercial or artistic. Cinema will not necessarily lose out: it has gained overall from the combined invention of dubbing and subtitling, which posed the same problem for movie dialogue. Dubbing ensured a certain universality and the popular dimension of cinema; the addition of subtitles allowed access to the original sound for those who wanted to hear it. At the same time, the dubbing industry does not exist everywhere in the world; viewers in some Latin American countries, for example, do not have a choice and see all films (including home movies) with subtitles. But arguing for one or the other form of transcription in the abstract when neither solution is perfect (each one implies both a loss and a gain) doesn't help. It is preferable to engage with both in dialectical play against each other and in specific circumstances.

The advantage (if we can call it that) with the case of dialogue is that no ambiguity is created. I know Meryl Streep is not really speaking French when I see the French dub of one of her movies, and I know that when I read the subtitles while simultaneously hearing the actress's real voice, it is only a translation. Film music, in its false obviousness (it seems to be there naturally), does not always let us know what we are dealing with when we see a film. It is much better for the spectator to be clearly informed about what she is seeing and listening to, and to

be made aware when the music has had a "makeover." Communicating this contributes to a richer and more authentic experience of the work.

The issue is not completely new. Jacques Tati spent money to "freshen up" the orchestration of *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*'s music, and I have no doubt that he would have remade a new version of soundtracks for his films every ten years if he could. Chaplin did not fear readapting his own films as new generations evolved. With new technologies, will we see films enter into a spiral of successive rereleases, each time with a new version of the music? Will the scores of Max Steiner come out in films (and not just on CDs or music platforms) in spruced-up arrangements?

In principle I am not hostile to what would be a "transcription." But a transcription can be good in its intent and execrable in the final result for the audience. As I see it, what is important in order for the cinema to retain the original freshness, still miraculously preserved, of its "spectacle" in the broad sense, is for us to remain real "spectators." By a real spectator I mean, by definition, *someone who has no principles*, who likes something not because it belongs to a genre or an aesthetic or a movement, but because—yes, that's it—in her body and heart she gets it, and on another viewing it won't feel that way, she won't love it any more, although it can seem to be the same thing. Let us thank cinema for letting us continue to feel it, and let us also thank those who love cinema.

4

WHITHER FILM MUSIC?

1996–2020

NEW TECHNOLOGIES:
SCORING MADE EASIER

THE WORLD has changed: music is everywhere, we can carry hundreds of hours of it around on a smartphone or listen to just about everything online. Integrating music into films has become a painless process, since digital editing and mixing allow us to try anything out in a few keystrokes. We do not have access just to music of the present day: all the musics of the past and from around the world join in the round dance on the Internet. Pieces formerly unavailable to all but rich collectors and globetrotters can speak to us, move us again and again.

As I have said, this book does not subscribe to the historical model that views aesthetic changes in cinema as the simple reflection of technical developments. Nevertheless, the advent of digital technology, an extremely diverse phenomenon over time, has had an enormous impact. One consequence is the ability to edit and mix films very rapidly. And preexisting music, instantly accessible or downloadable, can be tried and tailored (sometimes modifying the key or tempo) for any sequence.

Claudia Gorbman writes that while she sat in on an editing session where Agnès Varda was working on *The Gleaners and I: Two Years Later*

(2002)—a follow-up to *The Gleaners and I*—she saw how the director, with the aid of her editor, recycled a musical snippet from Joanna Bruz-dowicz's score for the first *Gleaners* film. In no time at all, Varda was able to lift the fragment and reuse it for an incongruous moment in the new film (a dog peeing onto a flowerpot). " 'You see,' the septuagenarian commented triumphantly, 'digital makes this so simple and fast now.' "[1]

What Gorbman describes regarding filmmakers' uses of composers' work holds equally well for the composers: more and more, they work rapidly at home on editing consoles, now able to move elements around, work with samples, and so forth. The music mock-ups and sometimes the final tracks can be done with sampled instrument sounds.

The world has changed for the music industry, too. Musical themes have become ring tones we can purchase, their chirps, beeps, and tunes making public spaces into a sort of musical aviary. There are notes everywhere: not only ring tones, but jingles in train stations before announcements on the public-address system, audio signa-tures for radio and TV stations and programs, signals at crosswalks, beeping melodies for kitchen appliances, security-system chimes when doors open.

The access to all the world's music via the Internet, which movies appropriate legally or otherwise, has had consequences that could never have been predicted. Far from imprisoning us in an eternal pres-ent, it has contributed to the creation of a culture of film music, a cul-ture no longer maintained through the cumbersome and costly medium of records but through YouTube and online purchases. In France, composers like the Argentine Lalo Schifrin, the Italian Ennio Morricone, and the Frenchman François de Roubaix have cult follow-ings; admirers have "rediscovered" them through TV rebroadcasts and streaming services. Through the films, fans often associate their music with a sixties and seventies imagined as more dashing, more free, more transgressive, more rebellious.

THE COMPOSER'S CHANGING ROLE

It is not the case that there are no more important composers, but their role has changed. Particularly in France, composers get respect only if they are recognized abroad—a regrettable mentality but a long-standing

national tradition. The prolific Alexandre Desplat is now treated like a king and invited to give concerts at the new Philharmonie de Paris now that he has composed for Terrence Malick, Wes Anderson, and Roman Polanski. Often the films he has worked on juxtapose his own scoring with all manner of citations and reprises of classical and popular music. For example, in Anderson's wonderful *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), his scoring cohabits with liberal amounts of Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and *Simple Symphony*, a citation from Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals*, and songs by Hank Williams and Françoise Hardy. And in Malick's sublime *Tree of Life* (2011), Desplat's music is hardly noticeable between Smetana's "The Moldau," Couperin's "Barricades mystérieuses," Preisner's "Lacrimosa," Berlioz's Requiem, and symphonic excerpts from Brahms, Berlioz, and Mahler. So Desplat's contributions often end up with the "neutral" role of musical connective tissue, melodically unobtrusive rhythmic material assigned to connect the other selections or at least navigate among them.

This is the contemporary paradox of original film scoring. It has become a celebrity, it is ceremoniously invited into concert halls, and at the same time it ceases to reign alone in movies. A program for "Music and the Image" has been created at Paris's national music conservatory, and yet perhaps not since the silent era have the movies deployed such a potpourri of popular and classical pieces.

The phenomenon of the return of songs in films, which extends throughout the world, is one aspect of this evolving patchwork model of movie music. First let us explore the hybrid score, music for a film that combines original scoring with songs.

HYBRID SCORE

By combining borrowed songs from various periods and in different versions with an original score—which, unlike in classical Hollywood practice, does not "communicate" with the songs and seems to exist in another world, not only because of its style but also because of its acoustical characteristics—recent cinema can produce strange mixtures of eras and realities.

Take, for example, a big commercial movie, Todd Phillips's *Joker* (2019). Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix), a loner and aspiring comic living with his mother, descends into insanity and becomes a killer. The film's imaginary city of Gotham is modeled on New York of the late 1970s–early 1980s, before the city's cleanup and gentrification: we see subways covered in graffiti, decaying neighborhoods, garbage everywhere. In a key scene, three young "Wall Street guys," drunk and aggressive, harass the clown-garbed Arthur on the subway while singing "Send in the Clowns" (from Sondheim's 1973 musical *A Little Night Music*), until Arthur shoots them down. We also hear, on several occasions and in various versions, one of the themes that Chaplin wrote for *Modern Times* (1936), as well as its song "Smile." When Arthur is in front of his TV set in his dark apartment, the movie on the screen is the 1937 musical *Shall We Dance*—more precisely, the number "Slap that Bass," on a theme by George Gershwin, introduced by African American workmen including Dudley Dickerson, and danced by Fred Astaire. A folk song from the 1960s, "My Name Is Carnival," created by Jackson C. Frank, also has a role in *Joker.*

Notice that popular music of the late 1970s—the kind that would normally surround *Joker*'s characters, that they would hear in the street and in restaurants, listen to at home, or walk with a portable radio to—is almost entirely absent. *Joker* casts us into a strange cinematic world that has lost the music that could characterize it, and consequently loses its temporal anchoring. Where did the pop music go, the funk, soul, New Wave, heavy metal, and disco that were the dynamic sounds of the time? This wholly deliberate absence helps to create a subjective universe.

As for the Oscar-winning original score by the Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, it largely consists of lugubrious solos played on an electroacoustic cello humorously called the halldorophone, and it belongs to an entirely different world than the songs. The solos, associated with Arthur Fleck's tormented mind, are often monodic, in an uncertain key, with a rough and plaintive vibrato-less sound. The instrument's sonic characteristics allow it to mix sometimes with the audio setting of the city or the hum of a refrigerator and then emerge from the environment. In relation to what we see, *Joker*'s music is thus either charmingly dated (as in the unreal scene in a

1940s-style movie theater whose entire audience is in formal evening wear, where the protagonist disguised as an usher watches a scene in *Modern Times*), or timeless and hallucinatory. Cellist-composer Guðnadóttir's musical creativity gained particular notice for the scene where Arthur dances for himself alone in the sordid public toilet: the cello resounds with poignancy.

This is certainly not the first time that a solo instrument has dominated a movie soundtrack. But in *Joker*, owing to the fullness and precise spatiality of digital sound, the cello takes on all the dimensions of a large pipe organ.

Is it any coincidence that not long before *Joker*, Iñárritu had the idea to entrust the score for *Birdman* (2014), which also concerns a character imprisoned in his subjective world in the middle of the metropolis, to a solo percussionist, Antonio Sanchez, in a style that was also completely foreign to the story's era and milieu, as if to isolate his male character in a bubble?

This is one of the paradoxes of the technical evolution of sound in the cinema of spectacle, with its loudspeakers with ever bigger acoustic outputs, capable of transmitting immense orchestral sound: it magnifies the solitude of an instrument, and the main character with it.

FILMS WITH SONGS
ON AND BEFORE THE SCREEN

Characters sing onscreen in infinite ways—"professionally," as in musicals or biopics, or as casual expressions, in the way ordinary people might sing a tune. Their choices of songs and manner of singing can bring out character traits, convey the character's state of mind, launch flashbacks, unite a couple or group, or comment on the narrative itself (with or without the character's awareness). The angry wife having an affair in *American Beauty* (Sam Mendes, 1999) defiantly sings in her car along with a show tune, "Don't Rain on My Parade," while her alienated husband in his own car rocks out along with the Guess Who's "American Woman" ("stay away from me"). Meryl Streep and her mother (Shirley MacLaine) momentarily overcome their fraught relationship in *Postcards from the Edge* (Mike Nichols, 1990) to share an

innocent children's song when the mother lands in the hospital. In *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) sings, or rather mutters and whispers, "You Are My Lucky Star," as a kind of incantation to ward off the monster alien who has hitched a ride on her solo space ship.

Near the end of *My Best Friend's Wedding* (P. J. Hogan, 1997), Jules (Julia Roberts) has brought her gay friend George to the wedding-eve banquet; Michael, the man she loves, is about to marry someone else. In order to stir Michael's jealousy, George makes up a story of how he met Jules and supposedly fell in love with her when she sang "I Say a Little Prayer" (Burt Bacharach's 1967 song made into a hit by Dionne Warwick). George starts singing the song by himself, and little by little the song spreads among the guests like fire in a pile of matches. People of all ages join in; one of the partygoers sits down at a piano and provides accompaniment. And voilà, suddenly we have a completely diegetic musical number of amateurs, uniting the generations.

No one expected Alain Resnais to get into popular music, but he found his greatest success with songs in *Same Old Song* (1997), a film about depression that is both light and profound, funny and awful. Jean-Pierre Bacri and Agnès Jaoui (who both act in the film) wrote the screenplay, whose characters are unpredictably seized by the sudden desire to briefly break into song: they lip-synch to the real recorded voices of bygone pop singers ranging from Arletty to Alain Bashung[2] (they occasionally "sing" in a famous voice of the opposite sex). They appear possessed by these voices, and no one around them seems surprised. The film, inspired by the work of the British playwright Dennis Potter, to whom it is dedicated, revitalizes the process of lip-synch: to these characters who are functioning well in society but individually facing meltdowns or collapse, the song moments bring a temporary surge of energy and vibrancy.

The success of *Same Old Song* generated a small wave of French movies with singing characters, including Christophe Honoré's *Les Chansons d'amour* (*Love Songs*, 2007), François Ozon's *8 Women* (2002), and Christophe Barratier's *Faubourg 36* (*Paris 36*, 2008).

In Taiwan, just after Resnais made *Same Old Song*, Tsai Ming-Liang made the remarkable film *The Hole* (1998), using a similar strategy, where characters onscreen lip-synch song "standards." All five songs

that appear in *The Hole* are those of the fifties Hong Kong movie and singing star Grace Chang, and each song becomes a musical number of a sort, in a strange, perverse, marvelous version of a movie musical, where music and nostalgia arise in the midst of disaster as if in a nightmare.

> In Taipei on the cusp of the millennium, a mysterious virus has taken over the city, most of which has been evacuated. The virus starts innocently with cold-like symptoms, but then fatally turns people into photophobic human cockroaches. Two characters remain in a dilapidated apartment building despite the dire health warnings; He (Lee) lives above Her (Yang), and a never-finished plumbing repair has left a hole in what is his floor and her ceiling. The atmosphere is palpable: it is muggy, and constantly and loudly raining, as the two characters, each in isolation, mechanically perform their various bodily functions in a perpetual state of waiting.
>
> Late in the film, the woman downstairs lies in her bath and suddenly sneezes—an ominous symptom. The sneeze motivates the "Achoo Cha-Cha," an extravagant musical number in Cantonese whose mise-en-scène and mood could hardly differ more from the relentlessly damp main story; from the characters' drab existential monotony the film moves to campy, colorful glamour and music. In the musical number Yang slinks down a staircase, like the Monroe of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," in a pink sequined minidress with a fuchsia feather stole and white gloves, lip-synching to Grace Chang's cha-cha song, while a phalanx of four tuxedoed men dance around her. The high point of each verse of the song comes with the "Ah-choo!" followed by her alluring "Gesundheit!" to the camera, in a hilarious concoction of campy surrealism.
>
> [. . .] Tsai's decision to locate even these ostensibly escapist musical numbers in the apartment block has the effect of amplifying the film's *huis clos*.[3]

Because of Tsai's talent, and thanks to art cinemas across the world, a popular star of 1950s–1960s Hong Kong was revealed to tens of thousands of moviegoers across the planet. The Internet would soon follow, putting all these beloved musics of yesteryear and elsewhere into circulation for free (temporarily?) and universal dissemination.

In the United States, Damien Chazelle directed the highly success-ful neo-musical *La La Land* (2016), with a score by Justin Hurwitz. The main character, Sebastian (Ryan Gosling), wants to make it as a classical jazz musician and resists invitations to play jazz-rock, while heroine Mia (Emma Stone) dreams of breaking into the movies. Recounting their relationship, which ends with a bittersweet separation, the film pays homage to the sixties, but in my view, its music does not have the life of the models on which it is based. The overture, a group dance number that was filmed on a Los Angeles freeway, evokes both the "city awak-ening" sequences of early thirties films (such as Mamoulian's *Love Me Tonight*, 1932, set in Paris, where the rhythms of shutters opening, shoemakers hammering, and so forth combine into a city symphony) and the opening dance sequence on the barge in Jacques Demy's *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (1967). But it has neither the comedy and class conflict of Mamoulian's film nor the strong melodramatic subtext of Demy's. Gosling and Stone, who move and sing nicely but not fantasti-cally well, are neither dubbed with other singing voices nor replaced by doubles for dancing; this choice, paired with the absence of power-ful feelings or dynamics and the predictable classicism of Hurwitz's music, gives this slightly lackluster film the taste of frozen food reheated. In any case, it enjoyed great box-office success and many awards. (Two years earlier, Chazelle gained richly deserved attention for *Whiplash*, a more original and unusual film about a jazz drummer and his teacher.)

The movies-with-songs tendency inevitably includes film adapta-tions of shows originating in London or Manhattan theaters, many to popular acclaim. *Les Misérables* came to the screen in 2012, with Hugh Jackman in the role of Jean Valjean; the film, including its dialogue, is essentially sung, so in France it was not subjected to the usual dubbing even for big-city venues. Naturally the French critics detested it, even though it did not lack warmth, because it put Anglo faces on the char-acters Victor Hugo had invented. Nevertheless, we should note that in France, at least, the great French popular novels—by Hugo (*The Hunch-back of Notre-Dame*, *Les Misérables*), Jules Verne (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*), and Gaston Leroux (*The Phan-tom of the Opera*)—have rarely engendered films worthy of their global fame.[4]

One of the biggest hits since the opening of the new century was *Chicago* (2002). In an earlier era its coauthor Bob Fosse might have brought it to the screen, but Rob Marshall succeeded in giving it vitality. John Kander's music, fleshed out with additional sequences by Danny Elfman, retains its vigor, and the bitterness of the story is well defended by Renée Zellweger and Catherine Zeta-Jones in the roles of the two murderesses. Let us not forget that the show was created for Broadway back in 1975, meaning that it had to wait twenty-five years to be brought to the screen: further evidence that the movie musical is no longer a thriving genre but tends to appear now only in isolated productions.[5]

Occasionally these belated adaptations make for really fresh films, which is the case for *Mamma Mia!*, based on songs dating from the 1970s by the Swedish group ABBA. Phyllida Lloyd directed the 2008 film, whose stars included Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan. Its warm reception led to the organization of screenings at Paris's Grand Rex theater that revived the sing-along: moviegoers could sing the words at the bottom of the screen just as the audience of early talkies did with the bouncing ball for filmed song numbers. Live audience participation is not just a nostalgic phenomenon. Moviegoers in the present period live with social media, are used to participating beyond spatial barriers, playing online games, and routinely communicating through shared digital culture.

The subgenre of the singer biopic, and the fictional singer biopic, has yielded many films and songs, arguably from *The Jazz Singer* onward. In *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942), Michael Curtiz effervescently portrayed the career of George M. Cohan through James Cagney. Other notable films include *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Michael Apted, 1980, about Loretta Lynn), *Sweet Dreams* (Karel Reisz, 1985, about Patsy Cline*)*, *La Bamba* (Luis Valdez, 1987, about Ritchie Valens), *Selena* (Gregory Nava, 1997), *8 Mile* (Curtis Hanson, 2002, with Eminem), *Ray* (Taylor Hackford, 2004, about Ray Charles), *La Vie en Rose* (Olivier Dahan, 2007, about Edith Piaf), and *Rocketman* (Dexter Fletcher, 2019, about Elton John).

Walk the Line (James Mangold, 2005) was one of these increasingly numerous singer biopics. Joaquin Phoenix, its star, sang all the Johnny Cash songs in his own voice, judging that what would be lost in one kind of authenticity (Cash's real voice in playback) would be gained in another, his investment in the part. Since his voice did not have Cash's

natural bass register he had to force the low notes to approximate Cash's sound. But the effort paid off: the singer is depicted as a man seeking his way, doubting, and finding his rebel identity. The film clearly shows the creation of a sound and a style, but also, it plunges younger viewers into the bygone world of records, and studio recording sessions using tape.

In an excellent study of the diegetic representation of recording studios in films, Rémi Candillier has written that scenes showing the recording of music—within the already recorded medium of film—create a *mise en abyme*.

> With *Walk the Line*, we get . . . into the idea of a very concrete temporal embodiment through mechanical means. When Joaquin Phoenix sings the title song in the middle of the movie, we witness what I call a temporal unreeling. The song serves as a rapid narrative illustration of a period in Johnny Cash's life, done in dissolves forming a very linear vision of time . . . to symbolize the rise to success of the person whom June Carter misses so terribly. But we can take this idea of unreeling still further.
>
> Through the sequence we see magnetic tape going from reel to reel. This allows the film to represent the song "Walk the Line" being recorded, and offers the spectator a reconstituted view of the "real" recording through showing the technical means at work. But more importantly, this unreeling of tape, whose position in the frame moves from right to left to make room for another image, suddenly makes palpable a double or even triple temporality at work: that of the narration, the song, and the film itself. This is to say, a certain time that elapses, reduced to the duration of a song, itself integrated into the temporally visible apparatus of cinema. The regular turning of the reels echoes that of film . . .
>
> The cinema thus does not film just one definitive version of a song, i.e., its completed form. It proposes to construct an echo of its own temporality, by bringing visible time to auditory time, their marriage resulting in a representation in depth of these two temporal mechanisms.[6]

In our era, when recording on tape is on the precipice of extinction, and when very few films are shot on celluloid—two media that employ reels—biopics of twentieth-century popular musicians are meaningful not only for telling the singers' life stories in all their suffering and

humanity, but also for the way they trace the history of the arts of recording—cinema being one—and *restore form to time.* What I mean by this is that unlike digital recording and storage, which makes an abstraction of the duration of what is recorded (you cannot see it), celluloid film and magnetic tape and the phonograph record *give a visible and tangible volume to time*, but also a *form*, that of the spiral. This form is what compellingly appears in these films.

A NEW SYMPHONISM

At the same time, symphonism has continued to exist in film, but in new and redefined form. Pierre Berthomieu describes it well:

> In the 1990s, thanks to *Rain Man* (1988), *The Lion King* (1994) and a whole series of action movies (*USS Alabama*, *The Rock*, etc.), the sound created by the German Hans Zimmer achieved unprecedented success and gradually took over as a dominant, even tyrannical form. Crafted by teams working under Zimmer, this sound exudes the energy of modern electronic rock. For the complex orchestral production of symphonism Zimmer substituted immersive musical sound (horn calls, extended and repetitive string motifs, overwhelming aggressive percussion, systematic uses of minimalist ostinatos) in a style that avoids any complex development. The orchestral elements are doubled by massive samples that create a wall of sound. The style has its roots in world music and mystical minimalism (the ecstatic contemplative style of Arvo Pärt) . . . What does this approach fear most? Detailed orchestrations, presence that is too identifiable, and above all, grand themes . . . The theme that undergoes development is worrying: it's too much like classical music . . . The triumph of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, with music by the Zimmer team with a lovely thematic richness (and even delicate and romantic solos in the third episode), seemingly contradicts the dread of symphonism.[7]

Zimmer created studios named Media Ventures and Remote Control, and after the successes of the Batman films directed by Christopher Nolan, he adopted a style Berthomieu comments on:

The power of classical symphonism attested to a transcendent presence over the narrative raw material, whereas the Remote Control sound acknowledges a world overwhelmed by sonic material and aims for the integration/dissolution of music. Music is treated like sound design, whose tracks it shares. Restricted to the registers of human voices and physical action, it literally invades space but no longer transcends it. Musical presence thus retains the omnipresence of the classical era (reconquered in the John Williams age), but cohabits with the whole range of sound design, like a relentless ambiance.[8]

Should we consider the taste for Pärt's and Philip Glass's music in films as one of the forms that this dissolution has taken? Alternatively, we might consider the trend as a reaction against it, bringing a kind of transcendence amid the world's cruel reality through the intervention of a pure and ethereal music that seems to come from another world outside the normal lives of the characters.

THE END OF MELODY?

Philip Glass's music appears in a good number of films, whether composed specially by him for a given film or borrowed from already existing works. Even more numerous are the scores influenced by his composing style. By his style I mean a system not only of staggered rhythms but also of looped and repeating harmonic patterns, abrupt modulations that seem to take us afar but return as if by a rapid shortcut to the initial key, all of which creates an effect of euphoria and of a "harmonic bath." These traits have inspired other composers. For example, an "original" theme by Alexandre Desplat can often be repeated and varied ad infinitum; it's a state of permanent levitation, since it evades the notion of the dominant-tonic cadence, like a huge deceptive cadence.

Similarly, the popular song by Yann Tiersen that became "Amélie's Waltz" in Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Amélie* flaunts traditional melodic rules; it is more of an ostinato rhythm that perpetually loops back on itself, suggesting that there is no possible ending other than a sudden

interruption, and uses the 2-against-3 beats that Philip Glass and Michael Nyman also favor. One cannot set lyrics to that.

And pieces that were adapted or directly created (by Cliff Martinez) for Nicolas Winding Refn's film *Drive*, which was a success in 2011 not only in theaters but also for soundtrack sales, are mainly constructed on sound, atmosphere, beat, and rhythm. You can find melodies if you look, particularly in the electro-pop song "Nightcall," by the French musician Kavinsky, but these melodies do not fit the usual notions of a melodic arc.

We have seen how thirties cinema dreamed of being the place where serious, symphonic, full-bodied music would cross-pollinate with popular music. Both kinds of music had two principles in common: the strong affirmation of melody, and the tonic-dominant-tonic tonal scheme. A melody could act as motif or leitmotif, an easily remembered melody (as in classical American films) that could be reprised and reduced in the orchestra to its most identifiable notes, and could undergo variations in accordance with the mood of given scenes. Max Steiner's scoring could easily digest the theme of "As Time Goes By."

The age of melody, as an element that can circulate among musical styles, migrate from an accordion to grand symphonic development, and be broken down into motifs, seems (for the time being) to have come to an end, or at least to be in suspension.

THE ARVO PÄRT EFFECT

Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1998) was not the first movie to incorporate a preexisting piece by Pärt ("Annum per Annum") into its musical fabric—before that, John Akomfrah, Keith Gordon, and Tom Tykwer, among others, did so—but Pärt's music in films did not make a sensation until *The Thin Red Line*. After Malick, who would go on to feature pieces by Pärt in almost all his subsequent works until his *Song to Song* (2017), dozens of other films incorporated Pärt into their soundtracks, including by the Americans Gus Van Sant (*Gerry*, 2002), Derek Cianfrance (*The Place Beyond the Pines*, 2012), and Paul Thomas Anderson (*There Will Be Blood*, 2007); the Quebec filmmaker Denys Arcand (*The Barbarian Invasions*, 2003), the Turkish director Reha

Erdem (*Times and Winds*, 2006), the Russian Andrey Zvyagintsev (*The Banishment*, 2007; *Loveless*, 2017), the Italians Nanni Moretti (*Habemus Papam* [*We Have a Pope*], 2011; *Mia Madre* [*My Mother*], 2015) and Paolo Sorrentino (*The Great Beauty*, 2013), the Portuguese Miguel Gomes (*Arabian Nights*, 2015), the French François Ozon (*Le Temps qui reste* [*Time to Leave*], 2005), the Franco-Swiss Jean-Luc Godard (several films), and the Franco-Senegalese Alain Gomis (*Félicité*, 2017). The presence of a composer whose process could be easily imitated has become a global phenomenon, often linked with a plurality of musical styles in those same films, for the last several decades.

In most of these films, Pärt's music coexists with very different kinds of music cues that are visceral and full of rhythm, celebrating the bass, making you want to move your feet and your pelvis. Or, in *There Will Be Blood*, the Pärt music ("Fratres for Cello and Piano") contrasts with original scoring by Jonny Greenwood that has a tense and bitter sound, appropriate to the tightly wound oil prospector played by Daniel Day-Lewis.

Moreover, through its nudity, Pärt's music often speaks of the *fragility of the note*, by laying bare the process of its production. The note, that fragile miracle Pärt has us hear it as, implies an impeccable relationship between signal and noise, requiring our forgetting the recording medium. Pärt's music was recorded on disc by a well-known label, ECM, created by Manfred Eicher, whose slogan was "The Most Beautiful Sound Next to Silence." ECM encountered great success with *The Köln Concert* (1975), the album of Keith Jarrett's solo improvisations, but it was also ECM that launched Arvo Pärt before he was famous.

The angelic purity of Pärt's music in films is directly connected to the intensity and purity of the silences made possible by digital recording and reproduction.

We might point out that films of very different countries all use Pärt's music to express the universality of the soul. But note that the instruments used for these pieces—piano, violin, organ—are a historically Western source of music, plainly laid bare as such; generally there is no doubling of instruments playing the same melodic line together (like the doubling of flute and violins in Bach's Second B Minor Suite, for example). But these instruments that came from Europe were "universalized," thanks to cinema, also thanks to musical practice. The upright piano was adopted everywhere, in music schools around

the world, adapted to almost all kinds of music. On the other hand, nontraditional non-Western instruments like the erhu (the Chinese viol with two strings), the Indian sitar, the Japanese biwa or three-stringed shamisen, the mbira or sanza from sub-Saharan Africa, or Andean flutes, have not—or not yet—been "universalized" in the same way in film music.

In some films, music was once shown as the means of communicating above and beyond languages, civilizations, and conditions. Think of two mythical sequences, the "dueling banjos" in *Deliverance* (1972) and the extraterrestrials' communication with humans via musical notes in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). For decades the orchestral scoring of a Steiner or a Waxman prevailed, capable of "digesting" varieties of musical styles and inflections. But now it seems that we no longer believe in music as universal; the enormous variation and multiplicity in musics in contradictory confrontation reflect this new awareness. The music of Arvo Pärt perhaps no longer represents "music" in itself, but music in its whimpering, embryonic form, tapping timidly on the doors of the ideal and the lost universalist paradise.

ARVO PÄRT IN *FÉLICITÉ*

An exception to the rule of the Arvo Pärt effect comes in French-Senegalese director Alain Gomis's 2017 *Félicité*, set in the sprawling capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is the story of proud and independent Félicité, a Kinshasa bar singer, whose teenage son is injured in a motorcycle accident. Félicité desperately tries to scrape together the money for the operation that could save his leg from being amputated. We follow the heroine as she performs, seeks the needed money, loses herself in the streets of the city, and awakens to a man who comforts her and her son.

In this very unlikely place we hear Arvo Pärt's music, in stark contrast to Félicité's dance music and the sounds of the city. But unlike the way it appears in virtually every other film that uses it, Pärt's music here does not float down from the heavens. It first appears diegetically. In a scene wholly unrelated to the heroine's story, an arrangement of Pärt's "Fratres" is being played a bit uncertainly—terrestrially—by the devoted

amateur musicians of the Kinshasa symphony orchestra. Later we hear their Pärt rendition as pit music over other (silent) images—Félicité walking, finishing a performance in the bar, traveling through the teeming city.

The film also shows the playing and singing of "My Heart's in the Highlands," the Robert Burns poem adapted by Pärt,[9] also rearranged by the Kinshasa symphony conductor. Burns's lyric evokes an entirely different landscape from the ones seen in the film—mountains "highcover'd with snow"—but takes on the sense of universal nostalgia. This nostalgia is all the more acute for Burns's language—"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here / My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer." Although the words are archaic and the landscape they evoke a specific one, they become universal in this new context.

Here we have Pärt, the twentieth-century Estonian, adopting a poem by an eighteenth-century Scotsman; then a Congolese orchestra conductor adopts and adapts Pärt's song, after which Gomis adopts it by incorporating it into his film, even adopting the visible record of it being executed—and it becomes something omnicultural. Pärt's music has no bass, freeing us from the weight of our body.

Compare this with the very same song as heard in Paolo Sorrentino's *The Great Beauty*, which retains Pärt's original arrangement for single voice and organ and typifies the Arvo Pärt effect. The environment in which Sorrentino sets it is diametrically opposite *Félicité*'s—Rome, the capital of the Catholic European world, its well-to-do characters surrounded by utmost beauty. (Similarly, though, nostalgia is expressed in a language foreign to the language of the film: Lingala in *Félicité*, Italian in *The Great Beauty*. Might this suggest that English has become a language without borders—or the representative of language itself?)

Again, with "My Heart's in the Highlands," Gomis chose to show the actors, their faces, their instrumental and vocal work, while continuing to express universal nostalgia. The music that expresses it comes from the effort and the hope of those Congolese women and men who generate it—contributing, I think, to the exceptional power of this film.

Félicité never tries to fuse its disparate musics together. The Arvo Pärt effect is predicated on the plurality of musics in a film and, in the end, the disappearance of any expectation that any one author could

make a single music from the many. The time is long gone when one composer—perhaps Maurice Jaubert in France or Max Steiner in America or Nino Rota in Italy—could sign his name to the various kinds of music in a film and ensure overall thematic unity by digesting and bringing the divergent styles together. We are resigned to musical plurality. What is needed, as we see with Pärt, is a music that stands apart from the rest, which *speaks* music in its nudity, and exists in itself, in its confrontation with other musics.

Nevertheless, these other musics do not exist in isolation. They form a chain around the world and through history. This round dance of musics is, in a different way, reaffirming and revitalizing the universalism whose hope shines through music.

5

MUSIC AS ELEMENT AND MEANS

PROSPERO'S ISLAND

In one of the great creations of the human spirit, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Prospero, the former duke of Milan who was usurped, rules a faraway island through magic. He has the power to unleash tempests and to subdue aerial creatures and a monstrous servant. He can also summon mysterious musical spirits who play bewitching invisible harmonies for astonished human visitors whom he has shipwrecked on his shores.

Shakespeare's works abound with musical occasions, of course, but if there is one dramatic art that has succeeded in making palpable the magic of Prospero's island to the point of lassitude and saturation, it is cinema. Cinema creates worlds where music can appear from nowhere or abandon you with no warning, filling your heart with haunting regret.

The Tempest has been brought to the cinema several times, with varying degrees of success. Modern adaptations include those by Derek Jarman (1979), Paul Mazursky (1982), and Peter Greenaway (*Prospero's Books*, 1991, with Michael Nyman's music). Science fiction also gave us a version, *Forbidden Planet* (Fred M. Wilcox, 1956), in which a scientist raises his daughter among robots on a planet, a kind of Noah's ark,

where she remains ignorant of men. Music on the island-planet exists in the form of a constant rain of mysterious sounds created for the film by Bebe and Louis Barron; the sounds went by the name of "electronic tonalities" and were a real innovation in the domain of film music.

If film music is already present in Shakespeare, why should it not be found on these Prospero's islands that are all films?

THE FUNCTIONALIST MODEL

What is the music on Prospero's island "for?" Nothing in particular; it is a *presence* before being a means. As if for reassurance, scholars like to reference lists of music's "functions" in films, but I hope we can agree from the outset that music in films is always more than the simple sum of its uses.

I propose that we consider the issue with an open mind, as an exploration, and not claim to present a total inventory, as if we could ever account for all of music's uses. To suggest the contrary would imply that using music is a process fully conscious of what it is doing, or a process that submits to "natural" laws.

I take an anti-functionalist position. There certainly exist what we can call conscious *practices* of film music, practices that can be learned, employed, and progressively mastered, but music cannot be reduced to assignable and finite functions any more than editing or acting can.

Ready-made terms, as well, are deceptive and insufficient. Is it right to say (as those influenced by traditional models do) that orchestral music in a film "accompanies" the film, when the music, even music added after the fact, can be a vital source of energy, a rhythmic impulse radiating through the film? Would we fall into the opposite excess if we claimed that music carries the film, as if the film in turn were the plaything of the orchestra's swells and surges? There can certainly be alternation: a visual, verbal, or sound element (or rather, an element conveyed via the visual or auditory channel) can guide the music, before then floating like a cork on the orchestral sea.

It is mistaken to speak of music as "accompanying" a film for another reason: music is part of the film. Would we say of actors that they

accompany the story? We cannot contend that music accompanies the image because in a given moment it's this phrase in the dialogue, that look, that editing device, that movement, that twist in the screenplay—in other words, not necessarily something visual—that is picked up and highlighted by the music. How about saying that music irrigates or innervates the film? These might be more fitting terms for the way music circulates, is mobile, never exclusively where we try to pin it down.

PIT MUSIC, SCREEN MUSIC

In my book *Film, a Sound Art* I call film music a "spatiotemporal apparatus," because it allows the film to link to different places and times, to the future and the past.

As in opera, there can be continuity between music played onstage and music that punctuates and comments on the action. For music played in the world of the action we only need mention the orchestra playing during the meal in *Don Giovanni*, the aria "La donna è mobile" in *Rigoletto*, the horn in *Siegfried*, or the tavern band in *Wozzeck*. In films, too, the two types of music can be freely linked and superimposed, meeting or separate.

To designate these two types, film scholars often adopt the terms "diegetic" (music belonging to the action) and "nondiegetic" (coming from an imaginary source not present in the action). For various reasons, including possible confusion about the term "diegesis," I often use the term "screen music" for music that is clearly heard as coming from a place seen or suggested in the story world; examples would be music produced by a street singer, a phonograph or radio, an orchestra at a concert or social event, a loudspeaker, a jukebox, or headphones. "Pit music" (or "nondiegetic") is music the spectator assigns by default to an imaginary orchestra pit (or pit musician) that often accompanies or comments on the action and dialogue without being part of that onscreen world.

Quite often, the factor that leads us to identify a piece of music as pit music is the way it sounds. It has presence, definition; it is in the auditory foreground, without flaws revealing the vagaries of its

execution or the imperfections of the instruments. It usually dominates or replaces noises, and normally it allows itself to be covered only by the voice, in dialogue or commentary.

I call a "materializing sound index," or "MSI," any sound element or quality that points to the materiality of a sound's production. For a singing voice, sounds of breathing would be an MSI, as could the humid sounds created by moving lips and tongue on the palate. MSIs for an instrument could be the flutist's breathing, the clicking of woodwind or piano keys, or the brush of the violin bow. Other MSIs might consist of slight mistakes in pitch or falterings in tempo, or one instrument or voice sticking out from the ensemble, or a shortcoming in sound reproduction or propagation (a loudspeaker that distorts or filters the sound, or reverb as a consequence of a real space). In pit music, as in the normal treatment of voiceover commentary—the other traditionally nondiegetic element of a film—care is generally taken to avoid or eliminate materializing sound indices, which might lead the spectator to connect the sound to its physical source and thus locate it in the reality of the scene.

In his book *The American Film Musical*, Rick Altman points out the "constant crossing-over" between the two levels in musicals—particularly the passage to pit music through the intermediary of screen music. A character starts to sing, and the song causes an entire imaginary orchestra to strike up to accompany her; Altman calls this device an audio dissolve.[1] He notes that as a number begins, often through rhythm (characters walking in rhythm or "other ways of visibly beating time"), the music track can take over the image, extreme examples being Busby Berkeley's production numbers. After the audio dissolve to orchestra on the soundtrack, "*the movement which we see on screen is now an accompaniment to the music track. A new mode of causality now appears . . . wherein the image is 'caused' by the music rather than by some previous image.*"[2] Is it the music, or just its rhythm, only one element of music? Something to ponder.

Post-1960s films increasingly have "on-the-air" music, as we see in examples from *American Graffiti* and *Thelma and Louise* discussed in chapter 3. On-the-air songs are freely superimposed, determining neither movements onscreen (as in the dance sequences Altman describes) nor wedded to the contours of the action—action that

usually consists of dialogue scenes. On-the-air music is heard in musical continuity and can occupy the auditory foreground, as if the spectator and the film were directly "plugged in" to the radio station that the film characters are (or could be) listening to.

THE UNIVERSAL FUNCTION OF FILM MUSIC

It is so frequently said that music "serves" the film—that it is used as a cure-all, a stopgap, a binding agent, seasoning, a fill-in, a fig leaf. In the assemblage that is a film, music can indeed act as strong glue, a Swiss Army knife, combination pliers, a toolbox, or the miracle tonics hawked in days of yore. Music connects or separates, provides ambience, hides breaks or flaws in sound and image.

However, music accomplishes these things neither more nor less than in an opera by Wagner, Debussy, Britten, or Dallapiccola. Do we really think that in the overarching vision forged by the master of Bayreuth, music is always there to . . . be attended to solely as music?

Take the first act of *The Valkyrie*, a model for film music whose direct influence can be felt, for example, in Max Steiner's score for *The Informer* (1935). The opera's stormy orchestral prelude starts out by imposing both the psychological and meteorological setting. Once the story gets going, music punctuates the characters' movements from place to place, reveals their conscious thoughts and unconscious states, gives breath to the spring and salutes the arrival of new characters—it follows not the rhythms of its own musical logic, but the rhythm of words, gestures, and feelings. If we do not necessarily realize this, it is because the dialogue is obviously *sung*. The fact that dialogue is sung as recitative doesn't change the fact that it is a *text*; and understanding the text even superficially is absolutely necessary to process and impress upon the viewer the unity of what she hears.

A sort of invisible borderline frequently stands between the singing and the orchestra, despite the illusion that both are unfolding in the same world, in the first act of *The Valkyrie*, especially in the beginning, where the music's quality of suspension, intimacy, and discontinuity prefigures Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. It's a border analogous to the one that more obviously separates dialogue and musical

accompaniment in a sound film. Wagner and others demonstrate the division by having many of the leitmotifs (e.g., the sword and Hunding) almost never be heard in the sung parts, only in the orchestra. Thus, to the extent that the artist aimed for a union of word, music, and drama (*Wort*, *Ton*, *Drama*), his conception, applied throughout the *Ring* cycle with an admirable consistency, most often led him to renounce certain characteristic forms of musical and operatic stylization, such as repetition of words or phrases, ensembles, repeated lines or words, or easily singable melodies—a renunciation that, despite the play of alliteration in the libretto, pulls his opera in the direction of prose. Consequently, even though it may be strange to say this, Wagnerian drama actually tends to approach a naturalist theatrical model wherein music becomes largely *utilitarian*. This is the model of a conversation or action with music, where music both participates in concrete and linear action, and carries the action to a universal or mythic level, beyond the naturalism that was its point of departure: in other words, the very formula of cinema itself.

MUSIC, THEATER, AND NATURALISM: PUNCTUATING AND STRUCTURING

Within the "audio-logo-visual synchrono-cinematograph" that is sound film, supposedly based on a realist model (with scenes spoken in prose, without duplication or repeated words, "as in real life"), music has the advantage of being this free-ranging element not subject to rules of verisimilitude or justified by something in the screenplay. Or when it is, it's so efficiently done (by including, say, a radio or a record player in the scene) that the problem is instantly solved. Music prevents the sound film's realism from becoming overbearing, and through its lyricism it allows cinematic time to breathe.

Until the late nineteenth century, theater in the Western world had license to use nonnaturalist ways of speaking that allowed speech to "lift off," to convey emotion and prolong time beyond the evanescent, objectively measurable temporality of real life. One of these modes of verbal articulation is *versification* (which gives Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, for example, its musical continuity, even when its

alexandrine verses are fragmented). In addition, theatrical speech includes antinaturalistic conventions such as the aside—the character expressing her private thoughts out loud—and the monologue.

What is music "for" in the sound film? First of all, it is present to loosen cinema's realist constraints, allowing the film to prolong the emotion of a sentence beyond the necessarily brief moment of its utterance; or the impact of a look beyond the fleeting second it shines forth; or the significance of a gesture long after it has become just a memory. Music helps a word, a movement, or any single occurring element stand out and endure, just as in theater a rhyme, an enjambment of one verse line to another, or the end of a monologue can isolate and heighten.

To make things even clearer, consider an absurd speculation: that if speech in the sound film regularly took the form of verse, films could do without music.

It would be mistaken to think that cinema's naturalist and realist vocation is "natural" or arose from necessity. Born in an era that was reacting against timeworn conventional forms of stylization and symbolic theatricalization, where poetry, theater, and even opera were turning toward realism and prose, the cinema followed the realist impulse. But it retained some resources (as did music), kept some escape hatches open—managing to do so amid the era's great ferment and change. The sound film with music is generally a hybrid art form, but in this state it gains its vibrancy. As to silent film, we have seen that the myth of its "purity" was largely an illusion: silent film took music as its tutor, as a sensory complement, and also as a neutralizer of its silence, even while it treated music as a nonconsubstantial element.

There is no use of music in sound cinema that doesn't draw its meaning from the evolution toward realism in theater and opera (even Alban Berg's lyrical and apocalyptic form of realism): real temporal duration, realistic sets, banishment of repeated dialogue lines.

Even the most naturalistic theater in its excesses in France around the turn of the century (I am referring to Antoine's Théâtre Libre [free theater],[3] against which Giraudoux, Claudel, and others reacted by bringing back tirades, monologues, incantations, and solo performances)—that theater retained at least some means of dramatic punctuation and ritualization that included pauses in lines and action

to accommodate audience reactions, entrances and exits of characters, and often the aside and the internal monologue, not to mention changes in lighting and curtains between acts. Now, when music comes in during a classical film, it very often serves these same functions. Music also connects cinematic space-time: it reduces the fragmentation created by numerous temporal ellipses or frequent changes of scene, which were two new modes of presenting space and time made possible in films.

Metered speech—particularly French verse, subjected more strictly than its English or German counterparts to a mathematical count of syllables and to strict phonetic literality of rhyme—introduces a musical dimension into dialogue. It imposes rhythm, meter, and aural echoes onto speech, which is normally fluid and less regular. In ancient and classical French poetry and theater, meters function as musical laws, since they make us anticipate the end of a sentence, just as in music the rhythmic and harmonic structure and the melodic arc make us anticipate cadences. As we shall see, music can structure the time of a film sequence into a series of cadences and anticipations, just as the French alexandrine organizes the temporal dimension of linear discourse.[4]

There is a reason that Abel Gance wrote his *Cyrano et d'Artagnan* (1964) in verse. And even while the movie version of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, 1990) opted to break up the poetic lines and avoid the usual stress on each line's final syllable in order to avoid monotony, the poetic meter of the alexandrines continues to carry and support the characters' lyrical flights just as music would do. Using a very different approach, when Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet filmed verse dramas by Corneille (*Othon*, 1970) or Hölderlin (*The Death of Empedocles*, 1987), they directed the actors to make the rhymes and the place of tonic accents very clear; in this way they retained the cyclical, musical, ritual quality of the Cornelian alexandrine and German hexameter.

There may be in the text of some sound films a nostalgia for a poetic or versified style of speech, with rhymes, repetitions, and litanies (in Jean-Luc Godard, Marguerite Duras, and Bertrand Blier, for example). These directors like to have words recur, to play on homophones (as in rhyme), and to repeat sentences word for word (analogous to refrains

in medieval verse forms). But in the great majority of films, this nostalgia is expressed through music that plays over naturalistic prose dialogue. The sound film "accompanied" by music is an obviously hybrid form, and in that capacity has never quite solidified into a fixed system; thus the sound film with music is quite ordinary, but it is also appealing, as well as inexhaustible.

Its forms are above all *not codified*: there are no precise rules, not even in the Hollywood sound film, that dictate the overall proportion of music. The apparently strict rules governing music's deployment, so precisely identified by Claudia Gorbman, are negative in large part, as we have seen, and moreover they are empirical and always subject to reconsideration. Maybe it is paradoxically this very absence of codification that has hindered development, since there is no framework against which to react or upon which to build. Hence the movies endlessly integrate music on a piecemeal basis, and in apparently inexhaustible forms. I would say that the classical forms of theater carry no fewer stereotypes and no fewer repetitions than those for which the sound film is criticized. But in the case of theater, the conventions for music are less irritating and intellectually more satisfying, since they are often tightly framed and codified.

ON THE "UNIQUE AND NECESSARY" RELATIONSHIP

Before studying the relationships between music and film art, we should dispense with the myth of a unique and necessary relationship between a film sequence and its music.

Let us undertake an experiment with an audiovisual sequence from a film that is not well known. We begin by cutting out the original sound (including its music), and instead apply to the sequence various pieces of music with different styles, which will fortuitously yield different meanings. Finally, like a statue unveiled, we show the sequence with the original sound that was created for the film, its speech, music, and sound effects. Conducting this exercise (which I have done many times with students) ultimately demonstrates that the "real" sequence will then appear strange and arbitrary. This is because the music cues

that have been randomly imposed on the sequence never fail to bring out subtle details in the image, whether for a brief moment or a sustained period: details of a character's gait or glance, or the lighting or action, which the "official" version of the film might have ignored. New cues we apply to the sequence bring out neglected potentialities of the image not exploited by the filmmaker—quite fortunately, for she would have then created a hodgepodge of individual effects to the detriment of the film's larger arc. Putting music to a film leads as much to closing off some possibilities as opening up others, and this closing-off is part and parcel of the act of creating, of making choices in the drama.

I shall flesh out these remarks by describing a class demonstration that used a short scene taken at random from Krzysztof Kieslowski's *La Double Vie de Véronique* (*The Double Life of Véronique*, 1991)*.* The heroine Véronique (one of the two roles played by Irène Jacob), a music teacher, carrying a set of small tubular bells, crosses a schoolyard full of children and then walks down a corridor leading to a large classroom, where she finds a man. The man lowers his eyeglasses to look at her, they exchange a few words, and she exits.

I cut the original sound from the segment, which has no music and, aside from the dialogue, is dominated by the bells' jingling. I replaced that soundtrack with the following series of substitutions:

- music track from the title sequence of *Field of Dreams* (Phil Alden Robinson, 1989), composed by James Horner
- Purcell's march from his "Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary," arranged for synthesizer by Wendy Carlos for *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971)
- a "cool jazz" record by Dave Grusin.

I placed each cue at random onto the sequence; this produced surprising effects that were sometimes even mildly comical, but never neutral. The James Horner selection has prolonged notes and slow melodies in the horns, which resemble hunting calls, as well as sustained synth notes with the sound of a large pan flute. While Véronique walks across the courtyard, this music emphasizes the breadth and expanse of the space. It anticipates and magnifies her entry into the school's interior, even endowing it with a kind of majesty, perhaps

because its movements do not correspond moment by moment with the events in the image. Only an imperious and solemn arpeggio, which by chance matches up with a glance from the man in the classroom over his glasses toward Véronique, yields an effect that's both comical, because of its unintended emphasis, and irresistible—my whole group of students responded to it immediately.

Over the same suite of shots, the synthesized Purcell march from *A Clockwork Orange* emphasizes and gives a beat to Irène Jacob's walking, which we follow step by step because of the music's inflections and undulations. While the effect with Horner's music was *spatiotemporal* (giving the sense of open space, and giving the scene the sense of expansive time, through the anticipation of cadences), with Purcell-Carlos it becomes *physical*, following the image's motor dynamics: the music stays with the character's movements. Finally, the Grusin jazz cue, which is laid-back music with no precise arc or direction, at once alert and relaxed, makes the least impression: it gives the scene a certain banality, because of its even flow and rhythm, and the scene no longer has any dynamics.

With the Horner cue, via a fortuitous encounter, the moment of the man's looking thus becomes the most important thing in the image and in time (it inadvertently became a synch point, in my rendition) even while Kieslowski's visuals do not especially punctuate this look. The character is filmed from a distance and his look is emphasized neither by the action nor by lighting or visual composition. A simple musical or aural punctuation thus suffices to draw our attention to the way the man looks at the woman, or to the woman's walking.

Moreover, in timing the placement of our cues in an aleatory manner, we found that the first two generally worked. They might surprise us a bit because of certain contradictions of meaning with the everyday realism of the scene (Horner's music a bit too mystical and ethereal, Purcell-Carlos somewhat overdramatic). But if we were to realign the music with the image slightly differently, a few resynchronizings and changes of tone could well suffice to make each cue feel like an integral part of the sequence.

This experiment should not lead to the nihilistic conclusion that anything works just as well or badly as anything else. It should simply remind us (we suspected as much, but it's always useful to confirm) that

much like the relationship between music and speech in a song, the relation between music and images has meaning and importance only in the time and space of their union, in the context of the subject and overall form.

MUSIC AT MINIMUM

Another preliminary question is how to identify a sound element in a film as *musical* rather than as realistic, incidental, or neutral.

In sound film, which relies on a particular and heretofore unprecedented formula of cohabiting noises, spoken dialogue, and music, it is sometimes necessary to define music, in its often fragmented, scattered, and invisible form, *by elimination*, as that which is neither noise nor words.

What gives the average movie spectator the impression that he is perceiving music? Often, quite simply, there is a music source treated musically—in other words, an instrument being played. This is an empirical and materialist definition, but an inescapable one. For proof, take a sequence of a Bergman film, *Persona*. At the beginning, we hear a series of strident upward glissandi. Viewers not familiar with contemporary music are mostly aware of the sliding aspect of the sounds, and they tend to hear them as a noise they describe as sounds from a siren. Those with greater musical education recognize that these glissandi are produced by string instruments, and they talk in terms of "music." The difference lies in such slender distinctions.

But there are other criteria that are also quite minimal.

In Truffaut's *Stolen Kisses* (1968), the brief appearances of an enigmatic man in a raincoat who shadows the hero's fiancée are punctuated by low pizzicati repeated on the same note and in a regular metronomic rhythm. This repetition of brief sounds, deprived of all artistic form and content, is nevertheless not identified as being anything other than music.

Also recognized as music, or in any case as "musical," is an articulated discourse of notes—of tonic (or pitched) sounds.[5] Certainly there exist erratic tonic sounds that can be picked up within all sorts of

natural or mechanical sounds in a film: a car motor, the hum of an elevator, or some of nature's buzzes and drones; but these tonic sounds do not develop into musical discourse unless there is the perception of an intentional organization of them. If the sounds are first situated as the "natural" emanation of what we see in the image, we do not perceive the sound as musical.

The spectator then often concludes that something is music through a simple process of elimination. In the physical universe of the film, sound that escapes the laws of diegetic reality is sometimes music: that which apparently exists on the soundtrack independently of what we see. And insofar as this dimension exists independently of the film's diegetic reality, it can represent the symbolic, creative order that can act upon the rest of the film, organize and guide it.

This identification by elimination, based on empirical criteria, explains how electroacoustic music in a film (which often entails sounds whose sources are impossible to identify) does not present the same problems as atonal music, in which we continue to recognize an instrumental source (which can be a synthesizer with a keyboard used to play notes).

There is certainly a prevailing ambiguity about how to define electroacoustic music in cinema. Take *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), for which Vangelis composed and recorded a so-called electronic score. The music consists primarily of themes, dance rhythms, and harmonic progressions that are perfectly musical in the usual sense, played on synths. But some scenes in the film have a multitude of layered electronic sounds: layers of sustained chords rising and falling in waves, and electronic chirps. Following conventions of science fiction, all these sounds can be interpreted more or less as noises of the technological world where the action takes place. At the same time, some of the sounds are bonded through intervallic relationships. How do you discriminate sometimes between Vangelis's music and the concert of electronic blips and surges created by the movie's sound-effects team and orchestrated by British soundman Graham Hartstone? We follow an ordinary sort of internal logic that emerges in the succession or superimposition of the sounds: here a melodic line bonds the notes, there a rhythmic continuum is keeping a relative independence from the visible luminous rhythms in the image, and so forth.

A piece of electroacoustic music is experienced in concert or in dance as a composition of sounds, since it is not competing with other audio elements. The film image, through its figurative dominance and its power of spatial magnetization, dissociates the sounds from their own internal logic, and creates with some of them immediate associations of meaning, space, and origin that destructure the composition.

What is *music* becomes defined, differentially, as that which is not absorbed by the film, that which in its rhythm remains nonabsorbable. This brings us to the problem of the boundary or separation between music and other soundtrack elements. Compositions by Hildegard Westerkamp, which Gus Van Sant and the sound designer Leslie Shatz incorporated into the sound ambience of the film *Elephant* (2003), just about completely dissolve away and become a vague audio ambience. Much in the same way, "borrowings" of Pierre Henry's piece *Le Voile d'Orphée*, used in Tarkovsky's debut film *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), and in Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980), are merely heard as sound effects.

CONTINUUM AND DISCONTINUUM

Unlike some other theorists, I do not reject the conventional tripartite division of sound in narrative films into speech, noise, and music. This division designates three clearly distinguishable orders of phenomena at the level of film production, characterizing both how the sound is made and how it is heard, and thus its structure. In addition, the division has the advantage of letting us clearly pinpoint the cases of overlap among these "families"—organized noise becoming music (as in thirties musicals), indistinct crowd speech becoming background noise, or singing based on speech as well as music. Certainly any separation among the three domains that would claim to be based on purely acoustic criteria is fallacious; in this sense Michel Fano was right to speak of a "sound continuum."[6] There are, of course, real distinctions, confirmed by easily identified exceptions and borderline cases—but the distinctions are made not at the level of the *material signifiers of sound messages*, but rather in the *modes of listening to them*.

If there is a sound continuum, there is also a perceptual discontinuum, or more simply put, breaks in perception. For example, the voice

is not only a vehicle for language, but also a physical index, a noise produced by the person. If we listen to it musically, we hear it as still something else. We thus jump constantly from one mode of listening to another, without being able to reduce these three listening modes to one. The three, by no means airtight, domains of the perceptual discontinuum—musical listening, causal or anecdotal listening, and linguistic listening—the sound film throws them all together onto the soundtrack; it mixes speech, music, and noise into a stew more thoroughly than theater or melodrama ever have done.

Thus it happens, paradoxically, that in the sound film, when music intrudes, it often brings out the discontinuity of sound elements, their disparateness, since it makes a rupture with the rest. It is commonly held that music serves to unite and blend sounds and speech; this is true, but no less frequently, through its intermittent occurrence, music divides and disunites. Except when in the extremely precise and constraining formula of the Hollywood-style recitative, such as we witness in a melodrama like *Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942, music by Max Steiner), music accompanies the slightest inflections of the intimate dialogue between Paul Henreid and Bette Davis, eliminating noises or at least reducing them to barely audible narrative or decorative details.[7]

Nothing is easier than to declare in the abstract a continuum between speech, music, and noise, and to dismiss the traditional distinctions as arbitrary. It is also relatively simple to make gradations among these categories. The nineteenth-century symphony orchestra created well-crafted "dissolves" between noise and melody by drawing on percussion, low tremolos in the basses, or violins in the high register to make music emerge from the hubbub of the world or the rustling of nature, as heard, for example, in Berlioz, Mahler, Debussy, and in the Prelude of the *Rheingold* (as we hear at the beginning of Terrence Malick's *The New World*, 2005). Nonetheless, we continue to know when we are engaging in a given mode of listening, and when we have switched to another mode.

SYMBOLIZATION

Even before serving the film, music symbolizes it, expressing the film's world in condensed form. I will try to demonstrate this through a discussion of three movie themes.

With the opening title sequence of Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976, music written and arranged by Bernard Herrmann) we hear the main theme. It consists of a series of pairs of chords; in each pair the first chord grows in intensity and the second fades down, symbolizing and summing up the tightly wound mentality of the protagonist, taxi driver Travis Bickle. The volume and tempo of this theme, arranged for brasses and percussion and repeated several times with variations, convey an almost-physical sensation of alternating threat and relaxation. But even the relaxation is chilling, since when the music's rhythm settles, it takes on an obsessional fixity. The model of breathing applies here: inhaling is associated with crescendo and acceleration; exhalation translates to diminuendo and a slowing and stabilization of tempo. The cue expresses variations of physical pressure and release, and plunges me into the protagonist's world from the very outset; the music is like a signifier of the character, a microcosm.

Another condensed portrait comes in the initial theme of *Fellini's Casanova* (1976, music written and arranged by Nino Rota). From the opening titles, the theme symbolizes the director's vision of his protagonist—not as the lusty bon vivant that readers of his memoirs have imagined, but as a kind of slave to sexual performance, stuck in a repetitive infernal circle, a being never born, a squirrel in a cage. First, over the image of dim lights playing on the water's surface, an imperturbably regular gentle rocking sets in, like that of a pendulum, a hypnotic chiming (perhaps on glass harmonica), on two intervals of descending fifths (A–D, F♯–B): the cage. Then, added to this rocking pattern, we hear, to an equally regular rhythm, a fragile melody made of stepwise rising and falling, in the ridiculously reduced ambitus of a diminished fifth (its F-natural, unlike the chime motif's F-sharp, suggests a kind of collapsing, confinement, loss of vital energy): the movement of the squirrel. The melody's range seems all the more "diminished" in that the chime motif continues to alternate its perfect fifths, its expression all the more fragile in that it's played

Opening theme from *Casanova*

on an instrument with a dull timbre and no variation in intensity, probably an electric organ. In a general way, all the sounds in the cue are murky, imprecise, and pale: the glass harmonica and feeble organ tones seem at once to reflect and create the aqueous and lunar world of the film.

Another, more brilliant motif in *Casanova*, entitled "L'uccello magico" (the magic bird) is associated with the mechanical bird symbolizing the hero's sexual activity (and "little bird," "*uccellino*" is an Italian sobriquet for the male member). For this motif Nino Rota directly imitates a famous waltz by Stravinsky, cleverly combining contradictory qualities: on one hand, there's a lively rhythm and a large melodic range of almost two octaves (unlike what I have called the squirrel motif), but on the other, a ridiculously narrow and dry timbre and a total absence of dynamic life and expressive fluctuation, evoking a . . . mechanical instrument. Rota here uses a device perhaps created by Tchaikovsky (who may have inspired Stravinsky), which consists of separating out musical characteristics that are normally associated: a big sweeping melody is played with restrained sonority, a swirling waltz is severely tempered by meager orchestration and dynamics.

My third example is from *Blade Runner*, a science fiction film set in a future when outer space is colonized. Even though its story takes place in the bounded space of a city, Vangelis created a wide, ample, solemn, hymnlike theme whose big melodic intervals are accompanied by large fluctuations in intensity. The theme is first heard solo, couched in vast reverb—suggesting an immense emptiness—while the opening titles appear on a black background. Then, with the first spectacular images of Los Angeles in 2019, the theme is repeated in its entirety, with vast, long chords on synth, as if on a large pipe organ. The concept of the opening is clear. The theme as the film's symbol establishes an epic atmosphere, but also, even before the curtain rises, it creates a void. What follows fills this void visually and acoustically via a sensory

explosion of colors and sonorities. Most often, besides, the audience does not realize that the theme they hear over the first images is the same as the musical line that played over the opening titles.

So, independently from the later developments of these themes by Bernard Herrmann, Nino Rota, and Vangelis, respectively, independent of their role in the stories and in the impressions made on viewers, they are first of all like epigraphs: symbolic statements in themselves. Only afterward comes the question of music's effects in relation to images.

ADDED VALUE, A FUNDAMENTAL EFFECT

These effects of music in association with the image and the film's other sound elements participate in the much more general case of an audiovisual effect I have written extensively about that I call "added value."

Added value is the effect by which the audio-viewer spontaneously projects information, emotion, or mood conveyed by a sound element onto what she sees, as if this meaning naturally emanated from the image. It often paradoxically leads the audio-viewer to criticize sound or music as "redundant" with what she is seeing, as if sound and music were just the shadow or emanation or double of the image, while in reality the image is seen through what is heard; the image is structured, imprinted by sound. No doubt because of the "idolatrous" need to preserve the myth of the image, there is a perennial desire to overlook such an important effect, which applies also to the relation between speech and images.[8]

Music commonly produces the effect of added value. If you see a neutral face and hear music you identify as happy, meditative, or tormented, the music you hear will influence the face's expression. The phenomenon can also work in the other direction, when music is colored by aspects of the image. In the lively opening sequence of Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), two helicopters are flying over Rome and several attractive, well-to-do women are tanning on a building rooftop, while a snippet of on-the-air pop music (composed by Nino Rota) is heard. The music participates in the gaiety of this film moment, and creates added value of rhythm and movement on the perfectly static initial shot

of the women. It would be just as fitting over a melancholic sequence in a bar at dusk, or on an empty beach at the end of summer in a Tati film; we could describe this music as "on the fence," important for this sequence, conferring on it all its ambiguity.

SYNCHRESIS AND DISSONANCE

Another audiovisual effect that involves music, and which explains how early 1930s cartoons managed to make music issue forth from any object, is what I call "synchresis" (from the words "synthesis" and "synchronization"). Synchresis is a psychophysiological effect that is normally dismissed as "natural" or "obvious," whereby two simultaneous sensory phenomena are instantly perceived as a single event coming from the same source: here, of course, image and sound. Among other things, synchresis authorizes the practices of dubbing and Foleying, since it allows the use of sounds that do not precisely match, or even resemble, the initial sound produced by a filmed event to be felt as being the sounds of what is seen in the image.

Music uses synchresis for effects of synchronous punctuation—Mickeymousing is a prime case—and also for everything relating to instrumental or vocal postsynchronization, including lip-sync.

Music that is slightly out of sync can generate a particular poetry. The opening title sequences of two well-known films, *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949) and *Shoot the Piano Player* (François Truffaut, 1960), include closeups of the music's instrumental source, or rather the immediate source of each note. In *The Third Man* (as mentioned in chapter 2) it's the zither strings vibrating in closeup, and with Truffaut we see the hammers hitting the barroom piano strings. Precisely because of this quasi-entomological proximity, we catch ourselves being on the lookout for the slightest lack of sync between what we see and what we hear.

For *Shoot the Piano Player*, composer Georges Delerue apparently had the formidable task of writing and recording the music over shots of honky-tonk playing that had already been filmed, so he had to do the matching-up. But the slight imprecision in this musical postsynchronization, in spite of the care brought to it by the musician writing the

piece and by the director aligning it with the image, introduced a very poetic fluctuation. I tried to approximate this in a scene of my own short film *Éponine* (1983), where the problem was to synchronize a new original piece over the shots of the hands of a young girl playing a piano piece, which had been shot silent.

The *Éponine* experiment is worth describing further. In order not to give precise musicological meaning to the choice of the piece that was played, I had decided to write and to reedit after the fact some music other than the children's piece by César Franck that had been played onscreen; this led me to compose a little piece in the same style. It was fun to try to sync notes to the image that weren't those seen being played. For example, when the left hand of the young actor Cécile Sacco plays a note in the lower half of the keyboard, the sound heard is higher. All this was done in a fairly nuanced way, so as not to produce great surprise, only a mild audiovisual dissonance. The word "dissonance" seems right to me, more than audiovisual "counterpoint" (a frequently misused term), which describes the confrontation of visual and auditory channels for a certain duration of time. In addition, like in the honky-tonk piano of *Shoot the Piano Player*, the instrument here sounded out of tune, as if awakened from a long sleep by the little girl's fingers, a hint of unreality created by this double dissonance effect.

This personal example illustrates how, in the art of precision and of vibration that is cinema, a minimal audiovisual variance—of which the spectator is probably unaware, at least in casual viewing—is capable of producing effects as significant as a more conspicuous discrepancy.

MUSIC, TIME, AND MOVEMENT: CREATING TEMPORAL VECTORIZATION

Sound and, in a specific way, music act on the image's sense of time, or rather on our perception of the image's temporality, through a specific effect of added value.

I call "temporalization" this effect whereby a sound or series of sounds, which by definition necessarily occur in time,[9] give time and duration to an image that in itself does not necessarily have a temporal dimension. A man is seated, perfectly still, on a chair against a wall:

this shot in a film is not inscribed in any particular time, since it does not involve movement and does not lend itself to expectation regarding its duration. But a sentence spoken over this image, an offscreen sound of a passing car, or a melody—three elements taken from the domains of speech, noise, and music, respectively—arriving concurrently or successively, can inscribe this image into time, give it temporality and rhythm, and also create anticipation—projected onto the image through added value—regarding when this image will end, or the course it will take.

Not only the music's tempo and rapidity of notes, but also the tonal and formal system in which this music participates, contribute to temporalization, especially through the phenomenon of harmonic and melodic *cadences*, and of *bar structure*. That is, a piece of music written in a tonal style and in a given division of measures (e.g., four-bar or eight-bar melody) creates anticipation of the moment when it will resolve, and this anticipation becomes part of our perception of the image. Music contributes to giving structure to the time of a film sequence not only through rhythmic beats, but also through setting up expectations of cadences—expectations that are normally reflexive rather than conscious.

A musical crescendo (for example, in the main theme of *Taxi Driver*) can generate a special kind of expectation, an awaiting that is constantly defensive: we cannot know when the increase in volume will terminate, and so we're on the alert, anticipating. Except when we have been able to "test" the loudspeaker's technical range beforehand (it does not exist as mental limits), the sound that emerges from them does not appear to have any upper limit for volume; we get ready to protect our ears or even run out of the theater (or turn down the volume at home). Conversely, an isolated diminuendo describes a slope that we tend to anticipate as going toward silence, and we quickly stop listening.

We must also distinguish between internal crescendos and diminuendos on one individual instrument (which plays increasingly louder or softer within physically imaginable limits) and crescendos created by modifying the orchestration[10] or through parameters of mixing. In *Taxi Driver*'s opening theme, the crescendo in the brasses, in tandem with the accelerating percussion, conveys a sense of danger through its

deliberate, accentuated pattern. There is also the sense that more instruments might come in at any time. The particular nature of pit music in the sound film, as opposed to in silent film, is that we have no way of knowing the limits of its power, since it is not present physically; this indeterminacy can be the source of a specific effect of suspense.

A good illustration of the way music can temporalize the image occurs in Bergman's short film *Karin's Face* (1986), a simple montage of family photos of Bergman's mother. The sole sound heard over these mute photos that show the growth of the baby into a little girl and then the mature woman, is a succession of embryonic melodies, melodic sketches played on a piano as if by an unfocused or distracted pair of hands, leaving notes to resonate. Nothing comes in between the notes, so we have the time to hear them fade away. The idea of the passage of time is constantly present, and the piano sounds imprint this on the old photos, these inert images: the way the present glides into the past.

DOUBLE OR TRIPLE TEMPORAL VECTORS

Of course, the shot itself can also create expectation as it unreels at the same time as the sound we hear. The expectations created by sound and image in parallel create "double temporal vectors," representing *in time* an effect analogous to that of perspectival lines converging to a vanishing point *in space*.

Someone moves away or comes closer: we anticipate the moment when she will disappear into the distance or bump into the camera. At the same time, musical phrases are heard. Seeing this image and hearing this music, we engage in a constant play of double or triple temporal expectations, with infinite possibilities.

Take the well-known musical phrase of Ravel's *Boléro*, with its interminably awaited and deferred cadence. Say we hear this over a mobile shot, a pan traversing a landscape, creating a brief expectation if it's filmed with a telephoto lens (i.e., with a narrow field of vision), where we see only bits of space and cannot know if we are going to discover a road, a barrier, a path. We foresee the possible intersection in time of the melodic cadence and the sight of a precise object—a character, for

example—for our gaze to rest upon. This example comes from Godard's video essay *Lettre à Freddy Buache* (*A Letter to Freddy Buache*, 1982), in which the director uses yet a third element involving anticipation: his own speech, since the film includes his voiceover commentary throughout. The improvisational tone of his text, his hesitant voice, sentences that constantly trail off, verbs that seek their direct object, create a constant state of hope for some resolution, some verbal cadence. So here we have three temporal lines, which in the Godard example hardly converge at all, or very fleetingly so. With other filmmakers, on the other hand, all the pleasure resides in the fulfillment of the expectations and the grace and skill with which they are honored.

Here, with respect to other sound elements, music offers the pleasures of a complex play of projections thwarted or fulfilled (a play that is rarely permitted or created by "natural" sounds), and, of course, its ability to enter at any point in any scene.

EROTICISM AND SLOW MOTION

Ravel's *Boléro* is a model for so much film music (in every movie genre) for a good reason. It has been imitated in the score for Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950, music by Fumio Hayasaka) and in Lalo Schifrin's musical accompaniment for *Bullitt* (Peter Yates, 1968). Its combination of sustained notes and repetition in the melodic line, both anticipatory and deferred until it is almost unbearable, and its resolution with an implacable, static rhythm, seems appropriate to this "treadmill," this "motionless journey" that is cinema, since such music associates immobility and movement in a fascinating and sensuous way.

It makes sense that erotic films use music inspired by this model. The idea there is establishing a particular temporality, both immobile and oriented toward a goal, and finding the right balance. In a film called *Joy* (Sergio Bergonzelli, 1983, with music by Alain Wisniak[11]), the music expresses a similar idea. When the characters have sex, it tries to endow the scene with ceremonial grandeur, aiming to help the spectator-voyeur feel less guilty by elevating the act to the status of a sacred ritual. The music sounds something like a Bach chorale, with a slow melody accompanied by rapid, rhythmic ostinati and

figures in imitation. A portrait of Bach even adorns the heroine's living room! The soft-porn sex act is thus reduced to a succession of swoons and caresses, not oriented toward consummation. The music installs an ad libitum temporality, with no precise time frame, and helps create a static and ritual temporality of repetitive acts.

One other specific and stereotyped usage, which thus demands scrutiny just as much as other obvious or "natural facts" that turn out to be neither natural nor factual, is the frequent association of music with the cinematic effect of slow motion—for example, the slow-motion animals in the documentary montages of Frédéric Rossif (*La Fête sauvage* [*The Wild Nation*] 1976), which first brought the young composer Vangelis to public attention.

The slow-motion movement of an animal's mane, or human hair flying as a couple runs to unite on a beach, embodies the pleasure of conquering (for a time) the law of gravity or weight. The weight remains palpable, and the slow-motion even details this heaviness, makes the hair-falling last longer, while it emphasizes the gracefulness of the movement. Music takes this movement that has been wrenched from real time and works to inscribe it into a temporal framework that feels less unnatural, and also to embody (temporary) mastery over, and suspension of, time.

Especially when music replaces real sounds (which are signifiers of linear quotidian time), it has the particular capacity to create *timelessness in time*—time placed in parentheses. The musical parenthesis in many films, embodied by these sequences of happiness or death, of dreaming or destiny, that correspond almost always to a moment when sounds and words disappear, represents a moment of extreme pleasure, excitement, and sometimes horror, escaping from chronometric time.

So we can thus speak of a "parenthetical" value of music, new and specific to sound cinema. This term designates the parenthesis that music is capable of creating, and of enclosing in its own temporality, in the film's action, while the rest of the film apparently unfolds in a naturalistic kind of time. Music introduces stylization into this temporality by contracting or dilating time, creating a parenthesis within a whole whose progression is strictly, precisely calculated. It forms a bubble, a small island of freedom where events are unbound from fugitive time. This can be felt even in films that only have a few seconds of

music. This use of film music is completely distinct from other of its functions such as linking scenes, inherited from theater music.

In solidarity with moments of unmitigated happiness when characters have escaped for a few moments from the hell of their situation and the traps of the story, and cavort in the countryside and deeply inhale the world's beauty, music is there to express harmony, but at the same time it suggests the ephemeral aspect of the idyll, insisting, for example, on the cadences, which is to say the things that mark the music's own finiteness. Music can also raise the presentiment of darkness that threatens this happiness, by imposing accents of gravity on the sun-dappled images.

ATONALITY AND TEMPORALITY

The temporal anticipation that a piece of music can elicit clearly depends on its style and on the spectator's familiarity with it. Atonal pieces, for example, are often unpredictable in their rhythmic and temporal dimensions; they often unfold in a static or erratic time, fluid and without much of a beat.

It is often said that the general audience, which cannot tolerate atonal music on radio or in recordings, adapts well to it in the context of a film—which speaks well for cinema. We know that classical music has been popularized by films; for example,

- Mahler's Fifth Symphony in *Death in Venice* (Luchino Visconti, 1971)
- Barber's "Adagio for Strings" in films including *Elephant Man* (David Lynch, 1980) and *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986)
- The Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* in *Melancholia* (Lars von Trier, 2011)
- Brahms's Violin Concerto in D Major in *There Will Be Blood* (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2007),

but rarely has the public rushed out to buy a CD by Hans Werner Henze or Leonard Rosenman unless the film has given them sufficiently powerful images to think back on while listening (Ligeti's *Requiem* in *2001: A Space Odyssey*).

What seems to stop the general audience from engaging with particular kinds of music is not so much the music's stridency and dissonance (which is also in a lot of rock and pop these days) as the absence of a perceivable direction and hence predictability as the music progresses. An atonal piece, or music with fluctuating modality, as in psychological films of the 1950s and 1960s, becomes something else onscreen. In a narrative film the music is immersed in a strong dramatic context that gives it a context and a direction. The music is no longer the guiding principle, but one line among others; its arabesques trace almost floral or expressionistic motifs that marry with the straight lines of dialogue and editing.

MUSIC CO-IRRIGATES AND CO-STRUCTURES THE FILM

Music does not merely accompany a film, it often co-structures it. By this I mean that along with other elements, it contributes to the film's overall rhythm in accordance with the placement of cues. The result is all the more striking when music is used sparingly.

If we consider a film essentially as an ensemble of circulating elements that, owing to cinema's rhythmic nature, can shuttle between the soundtrack and the image, the real and the imaginary, we can easily see that music is the most privileged element in this circulation, as the most flexible and capable of the most immediate communication with the others. Released from demands of realism, it does not have to justify its occurrence by some narrative artifice (although the earliest talking pictures felt they had to do so). Music can appear in as minimal a form as one chord, a few seconds, a few minutes ad libitum. Its sound level, and thus its presence, its felt importance with respect to the other elements of action, dialogue, noises—can easily be modulated and untethered from rules of diegetic coherence. By its nature, music is the most elastic element of film art. Even the most fluid and virtuosic visual movement has something rigid and limited about it when compared with the flexibility of a well-managed musical phrase or an orchestral cue that can bring in any number and kind of instruments as it progresses.

But then, a constantly fluid and transformable image with no stable element (like images in many animated films, even before synthesized images came along) would clearly be disconcerting for humans, accustomed as we are to the relative stability of the visual world, while auditory phenomena can be unpredictable, fluid, and labile.

Finally, in film, even the freest and most mobile image necessarily encounters a boundary, a limit where it hits a certain inertia—the frame, which is always visible. On the other hand, perceptually speaking, *music has no frame.* Because of its invisibility and its greater or lesser freedom from the concrete world of the story, it knows no limit as to the space it creates.

The song theme represents the circulatory element par excellence. The song theme can slip in anywhere in a film and take on all sorts of guises; it can migrate from a character's unobtrusive whistling to a grandiose reprise in the whole orchestra; it makes itself noticed, gets forgotten, is restated and reaffirmed, skirts barriers of time and space—it *unifies and irrigates.*

Instead of sticking to the common, reductive formula that says music "accompanies" the film, let us say that music co-irrigates and co-structures it. The prefix "co-," of course, alludes to the notion that music is not alone in playing this role, and that a film is an integral, nonhierarchical assemblage. We would be mistaken to attribute a dominant role to any one film element over any other.

By the irrigating function ("irrigating" evokes the idea of a nurturing fluid that can spread out and branch into channels to flow through), I mean a dynamic animating principle of creation and maintenance of energy.

The structuring function pertains to the fact that film music occurs intermittently, but even in films where it runs constantly, it still punctuates, separates, and emphasizes. The proverbial effects of underscoring, which dominated in the 1930s–1950s—whereby a synchronized chord from the orchestra punctuates an actor's gesture or a door that slams or a character's stunned expression—are *points of synchronization* or *synch points*, i.e., vertical points of congruence between image/action and music, which contribute to the structuring and scansion of a film's rhythmic, dramatic, and emotional flow. Let us not forget that unlike theater and opera, where divisions of the story are usually

marked by a change of acts, an intermission, or lights extinguished in the auditorium, a film normally consists of unmarked dramatic continuity, not cut up into sections. Even in Italy, for example, where by tradition the movie house interrupts the screening in the middle to sell drinks and allow the audience to smoke or go to the restrooms, the break is imposed almost at random, following a chronometric principle having nothing to do with the film's internal structure. In that case, music serves to divide the film into parts.

CIRCULATION OF THE LEITMOTIF

Leitmotifs in film have been much criticized. Eisler and Adorno were among those who sarcastically railed against their use in their 1947 book *Composing for the Films* (which continues to be quoted like a sacred text in discussions of films that mostly came after it). But the leitmotif is still in force in many films. It is not arbitrary, however; independent of the fact that it can represent a precise and fixed meaning, identifiable by a name (Casanova's theme, the theme of solitude), it embodies the very movement of repetition that, in the cascade of movie images and sounds, gradually delineates an object, a center.

The leitmotif guarantees a sort of elasticity to the musical fabric, a slippery fluidity, that of dreams. At points when filmmakers grew tired of it and more or less stopped using it, it was not so easy to come up with another set of ground rules.

With Bernard Herrmann, contrary to what has sometimes been said of him, not only was the leitmotif not abandoned, but it is actually more insistent. Except Herrmann pared it down rhythmically and melodically, and treated it with a conciseness that gives it a sort of autonomy. Herrmann's leitmotifs act to generate anxiety and obsession; they are not solely an element of psychological signification, thanks to their increasingly pronounced rhythmic assertiveness.

We can see the leitmotif's roles of giving structure and fluidity in Max Steiner's music for the great wartime romance *Casablanca*. The score elaborates on German and French sentimental, patriotic, and military themes, as well as its fetish song, "As Time Goes By," and weaves them together into the film's fabric of memory, emotional

echoes, premonitions, and indecision. The music undergoes constant mutation, a fitting reflection of Ingrid Bergman's character's in-between status, torn as she is between her love for Rick (Humphrey Bogart) and her loyalty to freedom-fighter husband Victor (Paul Henreid). "As Time Goes By" plays the greatest role, expressing the lost love between Rick and Ilsa. A consideration of two minutes of the score, taken from the final scene at the airport, will show how this leitmotif operates.[12]

Suddenly reversing the two lovers' secret plan to leave Casablanca together, Rick sends Ilsa off to freedom with Victor instead, having finally understood that their love "doesn't amount to a hill of beans" in the face of the gravity of the war. To Ilsa's astonishment, Rick instructs Captain Renault to fill out the exit papers for Ilsa and Victor, as a snippet of "As Time Goes By" is heard in the music, which is full of chromatic tension. The song continues to punctuate the underscoring during Rick's self-sacrificing speech to Ilsa; then, when Ilsa asks, "But what about us?" and Rick famously answers, "We'll always have Paris," "As Time Goes By" emerges in full major-key splendor, romanticizing their past and casting it into History. Moments later, after the hill-of-beans remark, the score modulates to a higher key and insistently states the leitmotif as Rick says, "Here's looking at you, kid," over a full closeup of Ilsa with a tear glistening in her eye.

Now with the three together, Victor thanks Rick, and Ilsa and Rick bid adieu. Not until she and her husband walk away toward the plane do we hear a minor-key rendition of the motif, which colors it with tragedy, now giving us access to Rick's internal state. The airplane starts moving on the runway. The motif plays for the final time when Renault, instead of arresting Rick for just having killed Major Strasser, orders the police to "round up the usual suspects." Rick (in closeup) recognizes Renault's complicity; we understand this especially because we hear the first two measures of "As Time Goes By" in the orchestra. Until this moment, the motif in its many iterations has signified Ilsa and Rick's love. It may still signify love, but now it suggests patriotic love, love for country—reflecting a powerful movement of the entire drama. If Ilsa has served as a narrative strategy for telling the story of commitment to the anti-fascist cause—romance at the service of politics, or better

yet, anti-fascism romanticized—"As Time Goes By" finally shifts its referent as well, contributing to *Casablanca*'s larger thematic/propagandistic concerns.

MUSIC, SOURCE OF VISUAL MOVEMENT

In his book on the Hollywood musical, Rick Altman emphasizes that music, or rather music's rhythm, is often present in the film as a motor force, especially in the history of the musical when the synchronous sound film very tightly "subjugated" the rhythm of sounds and images to each other. Beforehand, there had been a relative freedom, a play of desynchronization between sound and image.

Commenting on the jazz short *Black and Tan Fantasy* (Dudley Murphy, 1929, starring Duke Ellington) and the superimpositions of dancers in one of the main musical sequences, the critic Louis Chavance remarked: "We know through the example of cartoons that when a truly musical element comes in, it immediately takes over and controls all the necessary logical and visual deformations."[13] It is this impulsive power that interests me.

In historical essays on film music, critics see music's most lamentable role as that of a stopgap that saves the film. Henri Colpi, in his very valuable book, denounces the use of music made for John Ford's war drama *The Lost Patrol* (1934).[14] " 'At first no music had been planned for this film,' says its composer Max Steiner, 'but once it was finished, the producer deemed it necessary, because of long silent scenes in the film, to endow it with supportive music.' The music supported nothing in this instance," declares Colpi, who saw in the affair a perfect illustration of the "fear of silence, the fear of a gap in the sound." If there is a twenty-second silence, the composer can obviously build nothing in twenty seconds. But that is not what matters—what matters is to plug the hole."[15]

But who said that film music's goal was to allow the composer to "build" something? Besides, the cinema is all continuity and rupture; picture editing is a dialectical movement between continuity (through matches in action and composition) and rupture, each asserted by the other, so music is not alone in playing this role.

Steiner was talking about "supportive" music, and supporting is not plugging. It refers rather to the idea of impelling something forward. The film image is this strange energetic phenomenon that is actually rather static (since it is hardly more than forms moving around in the reduced aquarium of a frame that is normally smaller than our visual field); thus, the film image is a perceptual phenomenon with weak impact, which seems to need a propelling force.

Kurt London, one of the first to write about film music, in the 1930s, wrote: "The reason which is aesthetically and psychologically most essential to explain the need of music as an accompaniment of the silent film, is without doubt *the rhythm of the film as an art of movement*. We are not accustomed to apprehend movement as an artistic form without accompanying sounds, or at least audible rhythms."[16] But this audible rhythm that is music is often more than an accompaniment. It becomes something like an active and generative force. Music seems to come in as *an imaginary source of the movement of images*, whose real source is mechanical projection.

In particular, the rhythmic, *respiratory* element in sound (that of music and that of the sound of breathing), as long as the sound is both periodic and not too mechanical, is felt as dynamizing, carrying visual rhythm. In many cases music also plays the role of a chronometric *rhythmic calibrator*, in contrast to which we feel the untidiness of the more fluid and irrational rhythms produced in the image by behaviors of bodies, noises, lights, editing.

The tonic sound (in the Schaefferian sense), such as music gives us to hear (for example, a sustained note in strings in the high register, or a repeated bass note), also functions, in a film's complex rhythms, to center, to polarize or crystallize. It acts as a generative element not only for what we hear but what we see. When in certain parts of *Blade Runner* we hear a drone—for example, in the form of an extended electronic note in the bass—we get the impression that it carries both the film's auditory and visual mobility.

We could define a film as an assemblage of rhythms. The image might show the luminous beat of a rotating beacon, or the clicking of a flashing light, or the rhythmic stirring of a tree branch, or someone's footsteps, or the visual rhythm created by the succession of telephone poles seen from a moving train or car. Regular landmarks given by

music are then often organizers of this visual assemblage, they form the basso continuo that carries the organization of rhythms.

MUSIC MODULATES SPACE

What is normally called the filmic image—this moving figuration inscribed in a frame—offers no less than two spaces in which to "pick up" sound and receive it, and from which it is hard for sound to escape:

- The container called the frame, always present in the spectator's mind, since the image is delineated by the objects that the frame includes or excludes. We can say that there is a *visual frame of the visible*, while generally there is no auditory frame of sounds.
- The container of the place shown by the film (an exterior, a room or hallway, outer space), a place that can never be shown completely at once, and which always offers in its *offscreen space* (i.e., the actual space imagined to be outside the frame, extending the setting) a welcoming place for nomadic sounds.

It is extremely difficult for a film's realistic sounds (noises and dialogue) not to acquire their signification in terms of visual sources (owing to spatial magnetization).[17] In other words, sounds not identified as music are necessarily interpreted as real sounds whose meanings depend on the action on screen. They become absorbed into the image, in the sense that their meaning is tied to what we see.

A realistic sound, unlike an image, can describe a space only under certain conditions that are rarely present—for example, if the space is reverberant and if the realistic sound in it is loud enough to reverberate. Such conditions arise only occasionally, and temporarily at that.

Music often supplements realistic sound as an expression of space, using its own codes, and this is one of its functions that deserve more critical attention.

Cinema has the special ability to play with the closeup or the long shot, with depth and flatness; it can thereby modulate space. Sometimes music is deployed to complement what is shown; or else it can suggest the space that the image does not wish to or cannot depict; or

it can restore the continuity of space and action that has been broken up by visual editing.

Let us take the example of high mountains, where many documentary and fiction films are set. Those who have gone mountain climbing know that it is very hard to render the magnitude of a mountainous setting in images, even using extreme long shots, because in the mountains there are few precise points of reference for scale and no clear perspectival lines. This is where music comes to the rescue. A string chord with only perfect intervals (as in the symphonic poems of Richard Strauss or Vincent d'Indy) or scoring that includes all registers from very low to very high helps evoke the enormity of space that the image cannot express.

There is nothing more dry, flat, and lacking in perspective than most sounds you hear or produce at high altitudes. Music can provide an opportune way of "depicting" this space where sound is largely unheard, and where we can see only at irregular intervals.

Further, there are moments when music widens the frame or narrows it, in a much more subtle and intangible way than camera movements could. Nothing is more graceful and elegant than those moments of Gene Kelly's dance in *Singin' in the Rain* when, after a triumphant orchestral tutti, the scoring suddenly shifts to a lighter and smaller arrangement, invisibly tightening the frame of our attention in a physical and immediate way. Visually speaking, though, when the camera shows Kelly and the set up close or at a distance, it can only do that within a fixed frame, that of the projection itself.

One might ask why a western needs to resort to music to depict space, its monumentality, its perspectives, while the image would seem to suffice in doing so on its own. It's not as easy as all that for an image to convey the expanse of the great outdoors unless it is reconstructed in the studio—whereas music has developed an entire coded vocabulary for this, inherited from the symphonic literature. Certainly, music in westerns does not serve only to give the impression of vast spaces; sometimes, on the contrary, it can focus us onto two characters riding across the plains and conversing as they would on a theater stage. But music can do this in the continuity of a single stream while (especially during the era of classical continuity editing) the image does it generally through the discontinuity of cutting.

MUSIC, AN IMPELLING FORCE

It has been stated that sound, and music in particular, sometimes seems to be a motor force, impelling both what is happening onscreen and what is happening within us.

Anatomical factors may cause this. While the luminous impact of an image is localized in our visual field, sound does not act the same in our ears and body. Sound also has an increased presence, owing to the fact that it is already bisensory in itself: it is an auditory figure in the ear, and a vibration perceived in the skin and in the bones. Bisensory phenomena (i.e., those involving two senses at once) have greater efficacy and more immediate impact.

Music in cinema is a more channeled and more concentrated form of sound than others (because of its rhythmic and tonal character) that constitutes a driving force. By "driving" I first mean in the sense of acting on the characters: not surprisingly it often shows up to participate in narrative moments involving effusion, success, emergence, or blossoming of a soul or a body.

Maurice Jarre, the composer for *Dead Poets Society* (Peter Weir, 1989), has talked about the famous final scene, where the students stand on their classroom desks one by one to defiantly signal their freed minds and honor their teacher who has just been fired. Jarre's challenge was to write music that impels the characters to act, without infringing on their freedom or revealing too much to viewers and implying a foregone conclusion. He came up with a hymnlike march. In some movie theaters where exhibitors have the deplorable habit of cranking up the volume no matter what kind of movie is playing, the music can unfortunately hit you like a steamroller. This example shows the extent to which the role of music as a driving force raises new problems in the Dolby era.

Obviously the idea goes way back, and can be found, for example, in Alfred Hitchcock's *Murder!* (1930). Two scenes involving a juror, Sir John (Herbert Marshall), who seeks the truth in order to exonerate an actress suspected of murder, show two ways to integrate music into the action. The first is an audacious internal monologue where Sir John listens to the radio while he shaves. The scene shows him looking at himself in the mirror while we hear his internal thoughts

expressing doubt that the actress is guilty of the crime. Music coming from the radio (which the orchestra must have been playing offscreen during filming) seems to give birth to his ideas: a fortissimo erupting after a silence in the Prelude of *Tristan* triggers a realization without his noticing. The Wagner is then both the accompaniment to an internal debate and the "prewritten" power manipulating his thoughts. This ambiguity—whether the music follows or leads—is found at the heart of many scenes in movies.

In the other scene, showing a family in an apartment, a little girl is awkwardly playing the piano as we see brief shots showing the parents preparing to go out. But when a letter arrives that makes them joyous, the little girl, offscreen, shifts to a happy waltz. We do not know if she is driving their euphoria or merely following it.

Music engages in the same relationship with violence in films. During a particularly brutal scene in *Mo' Better Blues* (Spike Lee, 1990), jazz trumpet player Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington) plays a frenetic solo in his club while outside the stage door, without his knowledge, his manager is getting beaten up. The editing rapidly alternates shots of Bleek with shots of the attack while the music continues throughout. This gives the sequence meaning and makes the music both the expression and the agency of the violence taking place outside. A little later, Bleek goes out and joins in the fight; at that point the musical instruments in his hands serve as weapons.

Another case where music represents both the life force and the agent of death is found in *The Wages of Fear* (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1953). For this thriller, Georges Auric wrote only a few minutes of music, mostly for the opening credits. The story, set in Latin America and inspired by a novel by Georges Arnaud, centers on four European men down on their luck who are hired to drive two trucks loaded with nitroglycerine over dirt roads high in the mountains. After two and a half music-less hours of unbearable suspense (the nitro could all explode at any moment), Clouzot arranges a final dramatic twist. Mario (Yves Montand) is the only one of the brave truckers that survived; he pockets his hard-earned wages for having transported the dangerous cargo. He is happy to be seeing Linda (Vera Clouzot) soon, and in his haste to rejoin her he refuses another driver's help and prefers to drive the truck back over the treacherous roads himself, despite his exhaustion. The

truck's radio (confirmed as the music source by insert shots) is playing the "Blue Danube" waltz, performed with particularly frenzied rhythm. Linda in her café is shown listening to the same music, happily dancing with the bar's regulars as they all await Mario's return. Mario gets carried away by Johann Strauss's euphoria that echoes his own, and starts driving his truck recklessly, swerving to and fro. Clouzot alternates shots of the party in the café and shots of Mario driving—everyone acted upon by, and drawn into, the same music from their radios. Mario takes a corner too fast and plunges through the guardrail to his death, literally assassinated by the music if not by his own suicidal behavior. The simultaneously internal and external aspect of the waltz as it is deployed here, on the precipice between physical and psychological, objective and subjective, pit and screen, gives the sequence all its power.

The pursuit makes for an archetypal film scene, even though we have seen its origin in certain poetic and musical forms. Consider one more example.

It is not enough to show us a moving car (especially in silent film) to express the psychological feeling of haste; since motor vehicles have existed, speed can be a purely functional and practical dimension. The symbol of speed is not the image of a high-speed train going 100 miles per hour: the train is going fast not because it is in a hurry, but because that is its purpose. But a horse galloping with flaring nostrils and flying mane, or a car driven pedal to the metal, express the anxiety of those holding the reins or the steering wheel. Music in a pursuit sequence, especially in the silent era, then serves to express the psychological aspect of anxious haste, using its own expressive means—a notion that is not necessarily conveyed by showing a machine or rapid montage.

MUSIC SUBJECTIVIZES

In most films, particularly because they have voices and noises that are actually heard, our point of view tends necessarily to become focused more and more externally, and cinema starts to lose its nature as a waking dream. Following the model of the internal-monologue experiment in Hitchcock's *Murder!*, music in these "naturalistic" sound films

also works to maintain the continuity of the subjective and psychological dimension.

For example, why, in a classical action movie that most often consists of dialogue scenes, is music used to fill the gap in a scene transition, or between one location and another, or where the characters are momentarily silent? Because in practice, viewers of early 1930s films noticed that a "hole" was created when dialogue ceased. This phenomenon is hardly felt in stage plays (where silent scenes are rare), and still less in literature: as a succession of words, literature is hardly exposed to the abrupt breaks that cinema must constantly deal with.

Music in this context maintains the continuity of human presence and subjectivity, and does not abandon the character to this physical, too physical world that is the world of sound film.

The reason *noises* do not serve this function more often, particularly in the classical film of the 1940s and 1950s, is that a realistic pretext has to be found to bring them in, and everyone notices their expressive and punctuative roles instead of feeling their effects. Some settings do, however, lend themselves to creating an expressive sonic environment, and cinema does take advantage of them: war scenes with detonations and explosions, seaside settings with foghorns, and so forth. But obviously the screenplay has to lend itself to them.

But the thing that music translates the most richly, and which no other film element is capable of, is the changing flow of a character's emotions. In one of the strongest scenes in Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946, screenplay by Ben Hecht), the Nazi Alex (Claude Rains), married to Alicia (Ingrid Bergman), reveals to his mother that he has discovered that his wife has married him in order to spy on him. The mother, her suspicions confirmed in her hatred for this woman who has usurped her place beside her son, listens coldly to him. Roy Webb's score fills this sad scene with interweaving motifs: now it bathes the action in a troubled atmosphere, and now on a closeup of Alex as he speaks it suggests the confused and contradictory movements of his feelings. For example, when Alex says, "I must have been insane" (to think this woman loved him), the music evokes a nostalgia for the love he thought they had had. The oft-used Wagnerian style, the continuous flow characteristic of *Notorious*'s score, is perfect for evoking this stream of consciousness whose movements are like waves that wash multiple inflections over the

numerous shots of faces. In accordance with the style of the era, the actors' faces and bodies are generally sober in their movements and expressions, and it's the music that represents their internal turmoil.

Webb's score is a case where music reaches absolute ductility and fluidity. None of the themes really reach the listener's consciousness. Legato is the rule; no accented chords come to rend the fabric of this continuity. The uniformly liquid consistency created by the well-blended orchestration and by the rarity of accented notes or staccato elements is particularly striking if you listen to it on a recording separately from the images, sounds, and dialogue.

The choice of musical "fusion" and continuity was interpreted by 1970s modernist critics in terms of the ideology of mystification and illusion. Many critics maintained that turning this option into its opposite—the foregrounding of elements and processes as such—would be a "deconstructive" and demystifying strategy in service to lucidity, following Brecht's idea. But then others argued that when it came to music, the opposite style was just as seductive and no more instructive or distanciating. Indeed, films like those by Sergio Leone, especially with Ennio Morricone's musical ideas, form a corpus where all the elements are separate and distinctly audible, and where you can isolate the music from the rest of the film (you can even whistle it as you leave the theater) and from the montage of the action to which it gives rhythm. But you end up with just as much of a cinema of effects. On the other hand, if in certain films of the Taviani brothers like *Padre Padrone* (1977) the music tries to stimulate critical reflection through skillfully calculated effects of cultural shock (the "Blue Danube" waltz again—heard over desolate arid Sardinian landscapes), it is because the directing and the film's ideas serve that intention. But even in the case of *Padre Padrone*, who knows if the psychological power of music and rhythm isn't sometimes the stronger, drowning out critical reflection?

THE FILM'S BEATING HEART

Sometimes the paths of cinema and music cross in strange ways. In 1960, when still a boy, I saw a movie in a small Parisian theater. It may have been exhibited as a commercial movie, but it would stick with me

all my life (as it did for others). Each time I have seen it, beneath its thriller or crime-film veneer it has worked the same seduction and the same romance on me: Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. The poster showed a man being attacked by a small prop plane and escaping in an endless flat landscape, describing a spectacular work of pure fantasy.

Watch Cary Grant as Roger Thornhill. Two gangsters have abducted him from his normal daily life of meetings and business lunches, and suddenly he is in mortal danger. Hitchcock required the actor to remain cool, caustic, sardonic, and restrained during the whole of Thornhill's long adventure. The beating of his heart is suggested solely by the music: a chromatic triplet figure in the strings, in minor, tormented and haunted, that twists around inside an octave.

The famous main theme has a kind of syncopation (called a hemiola) that rhythmically plays triple meter against duple meter.[18] This rhythmic effect gives the music a sense of breathlessness, which Herrmann deploys in various different ways. Onto this very marked rhythm Herrmann wrote a score that's deliberately noisy and dissonant, full of major sevenths, cues that are in two keys at once, string and harp glissandi (two harps crossing their glissandi, one rising and the other falling).

The music works to counteract the outward coolness of the hero and the constant external action onscreen. *North by Northwest* abounds with comic scenes: for example, when Thornhill's mother is present and when Thornhill (the villains having forced whiskey down him) is brought to the police station roaring drunk. When the scene is comic, it generally lacks music. But elsewhere, Herrmann's music seizes all available opportunities to create dark, threatening, and suffocating atmospheres, even if the image does not necessarily provide such signs. Listen to the music that plays for the two visits to Townsend's Long Island house that is "borrowed" by the villainous Vandamm: both cues are tormented, magical, and lunar (as we see Thornhill waiting in the library), as if the house were haunted, even while it is sunny and bright outside and Thornhill still seems to think he's just the object of some kind of prank. It is somewhat magical that this "hijacking" of the scene—there is no indication that Hitchcock asked Herrmann for it—works so well.

The score includes a very chromatic theme that is associated with the idea of Vandamm: a serpentine, tormented, gloomy cue. We do not hear it when the villain is actually onscreen, but just *before* each of Thornhill's encounters with him, as if in anticipation. For example, when the kidnappers' car enters the large estate and we hear the theme, the music is not particularly there to express Thornhill's feelings—true to his sarcastic and blasé self, he continues his ironic bantering with his abductors, even while inwardly he is beginning to worry. Many critics make the error of seeing music in classical films as always revealing the private feelings of characters onscreen. But this holds only in some cases, whereas in others, the music often creates an atmosphere that the characters might well not be aware of.

Could we claim that Herrmann was the heart of Alfred Hitchcock for the movie? Really, only the film matters: in the coolness of what we see onscreen, the music is the film's heartbeat.

We might even wonder if there hadn't been in this kind of cinema an effect of "communicating vessels" and rather mismatched complementarity between such films' style and their music. Many cinephiles rightly admire the understated editing, directing, and acting in American films of the era, this smooth, almost objective quality that renders them classical. At the same time, those same cinephiles deplore the music's expressive excesses, as if it were a black spot on the films' perfection. Perhaps in their judgment they are inconsistent and ungrateful. For it is doubtless the fact that these scores are so expressive that allows other elements such as acting, scene construction, and dialogue style to be so understated and apparently transparent, "effectless."

One typical example out of hundreds is a shot in the sci-fi thriller *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) where Bennell, a doctor, is called in by a friend who shows him something strange, covered by a sheet, on his pool table. In a restrained and professional manner, Bennell raises the sheet. His face shows no expression. The camera filming the scene in long shot remains immobile, just like the characters in the shot, even while what the hero sees is not visible to us. Against the silence of the characters we hear an explosion of apocalyptic, convulsed orchestral music (composed and conducted by Carmen Dragon)—and the shot becomes a sensational turn of events.

Today it is easy to consider Siegel's unassuming direction and Dragon's musical hyperexpressivity as antagonistic. But why shouldn't they be independent? With no music, the shot not only fails to be expressive, it does not even narrate anything. It is the music that gives the scene the clarity and efficacy that we so admire today.

This observation is corroborated by equivalent films of the sixties, where music tended to become more detached and objective, while on the contrary the acting took on a degree of expressionism. Again, the manner in which the music is conceived seems to me inseparable from the film's overall concept.

THE WALTZ OF LIFE

Some films have an opening theme in triple time, either original or a borrowed piece, which from the outset establishes life as a whirlwind, a waltz, or a pulse. These movies range from *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999), with the waltz from Shostakovich's *Jazz Suite*, to the beginning of *Amélie* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001), with a waltz written by Yann Tiersen. The waltz form might be replaced in other films by a regular rhythm of 120 beats per minute—in *Millennium Mambo* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 2001), or in *BPM* (*Beats Per Minute*, Robin Campillo, 2017)—which creates much the same effect, suggesting that life continues as long as the pulse lasts. In those films, as in the films of Ozu with the little dances by Takanobu Saito, or in those of Fellini with their bouncy pieces by Nino Rota, the movement is impersonal, is life itself, that of everyone, belonging to no one in particular.

In the eyes and hearts of many (including myself), three of Ophüls's greatest films, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948), "La Maison Tellier" (the central of the three episodes of *Le Plaisir*, 1952), and *The Earrings of Madame de . . .* (1953) are among cinema's great masterpieces. Music plays a crucial role in each: by Daniele Amfitheatrof for the first, arrangements of Mozart, Pierre-Jean de Béranger, Maurice Yvain, and Offenbach for the second, and by Georges Van Parys based on a waltz by Oscar Straus for *Madame de. . . .*[19] The music in each case embodies this ebb and flow, this ocean swell that by waves takes and retakes the characters and the spectator and pushes them from scene to scene in

a maelstrom of emotion. The three films are also based on the circulation of one musical theme, either associated with the hero's profession as a pianist, or explicitly present inside the action itself (the song by Béranger), or only in the score—a circulation that echoes other circulations and echoes of feelings and of objects (of a pair of earrings in *Madame de . . .*). Few directors have trusted so much in the movement of music, sought so seldom to resist its charms, and reaped so much reward.

EMPATHETIC AND ANEMPATHETIC EFFECTS

In most perfunctory analyses, film music is generally credited with the role of emotional reinforcement. But music acts in a more complex way than usually thought—an idea that led me to coin the terms "empathetic" and "anempathetic" music.

I call "empathetic" the effect whereby the music reinforces or seems to adhere directly to the feeling generated by the scene, in particular the feeling that is supposedly felt by certain characters: grief, panicky realization, poignancy, elation, bitterness, joy, and so forth. This is the kind of music-image-story relation that is normally called "redundant." In many cases, as we have seen, the redundancy effect functions in accordance with the principle of added value. A scene visually presented as neutral but "colored" by music as happy or sad often seems to be expressing that affect by itself, without apparent need for music. Conversely, as in the example from *La dolce vita*, music itself can be "colored" in a certain way by the scene it is attached to. Images and music heighten expressivity in a reciprocal relationship.

The empathetic effect of music functions only if something in the scene, a visual or rhythmic element, "grabs" the music and sticks. In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the story and dialogue lend themselves to it: the hero has been prepared, in this instance by his writer friend who calls him in the middle of the night, to discover something out of the ordinary. Furthermore, the image I described behaves perfectly in its neutrality to "receive" the music's effect, via its directly dramatic lighting with zones of shadow. But when image and story completely repel music and give it no space to play, with neither looks nor

places to grab on to, the empathetic effect bounces off and is lost as an effect.

I call "anempathetic" (with the privative "a-") an effect not of distanciation but rather of tenfold emotion—when, during a particularly traumatic scene (say murder, torture, or rape), the music we hear flaunts its supreme indifference by continuing to play as if nothing were amiss. The indifference is often marked by rhythmic regularity and absence of contrasts in volume or fluctuations in phrasing. Such is the case of countless murder scenes in which the crime or horror occurs to the sound of a cheerful hurdy-gurdy or merry-go-round organ (Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train*, 1951; *Hangover Square*, John Brahm, 1945). In Kurosawa's *Ikiru* (1952), an elderly man dying of cancer has just faced his mortality in a conversation in a restaurant; as his hope for life and happiness drain from him, some girls at a party nearby are gaily singing "Happy Birthday." In *Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959), an almost playful waltz accompanies horrific images of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Note that the anempathetic effect can arise from pit music (in the *Hiroshima* example) although it is more frequently abetted by screen music.

The music's indifference is thus not some anomaly, a perverted form of the mechanism of emotion, but it is the background against which all emotion stands out. Anempathetic music arises simply from a shift in framing: instead of occupying the whole space with the *character*'s individual emotion, it forces us to see *the world*'s essential indifference. In this new perspective, emotional intensity is by no means diminished, but rather taken to new heights. Indifference to the extreme—and, in this sense, the indifference of music, ultimately, is always the mother's indifference.

Without analyzing it in these terms and without naming it, Eisler and Adorno identified the phenomenon in their essential *Composing for the Films*. They rightly credited opera as the origin of this device of dramatic contrast—which incidentally can also be found in novels (for example, the death of Emma Bovary as the beggar outside her window sings his vulgar song). Eisler and Adorno: "In his *Outline for a New Musical Esthetics* . . . , Busoni cites the end of the second act of the *Tales of Hoffmann*, in the palace of the courtesan Giulietta, in which a bloody

duel and the flight of the heroine with her hunchback lover are accompanied by the quiet tender rippling of the Barcarolle. By not participating in the action, the music expresses the cold indifference of the stars to human suffering, and is, as it were, congealed into a part of the scenery. Almost every motion picture affords an opportunity for such dramaturgic ideas."[20]

Eisler and Adorno also give an example from Victor Trivas's film *On the Streets* (1933), where "a bloody fight" occurs to the sound of music that is "tender, sad, rather remote." True, the action is set in an "early spring landscape," which permits the authors to analyze the effect as being that of a contrast between the event and the setting. To this anempathetic device favored by cinema they seek to assign an intellectual and ideological meaning: for them it means that "those who commit the brutalities are themselves victims."[21] Okay, but in the case of Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train*, Robert Walker's character does not appear to be a victim in any way, simply a psychopath.

Bach's music has been used anempathetically as a symbol of serenity; for example, Hannibal Lecter's cassette player plays the *Goldberg Variations* on piano during his savage killing of two policemen (*The Silence of the Lambs*, Jonathan Demme, 1991).

Although the anempathetic effect predates the cinema, it takes on far more forceful, immediate, and acute meaning in films. The effect arises from the indifferent, mechanical, and regular unspooling of film from the reel (or videotape or digital file), of which the anempathetic gesture reminds us.

Cinema also makes it possible to show that music is recorded, irrevocably fixed in its course. *The Public Enemy* (1931) was probably the first to use the now-classic image of the record player that proffers its sentimental music in complete indifference to a dramatic tragedy that unfolds onscreen before us. This juxtaposition of music and drama derives its power, I think, from the way it consciously or unconsciously refers to how we experience another phenomenon that is equally calculated, chronometric, and calibrated to the second—film itself.

Further, the director can precisely control, and allow us to hear, variations in how the music is executed, and thus make this fluctuation (which is fleeting but also *recorded* and fixed) into yet another emotional element.

In a beautiful scene in *The Double Life of Véronique* (Kieslowski, 1991), a very sentimental piece for piano by Zbigniew Preisner accompanies a marionette show for a room full of children. Much like the film's director, the marionette artist takes a delicate jointed puppet out of a box; he briefly brings her to life to dance, and then allows her to swoon and then die. The music is hesitant at first, becomes more passionate, and finally dies with the marionette—not at all because of the composed music but because of the performance by the invisible pianist who recorded it for the film. This progression of the scene is deeply moving, for the music's fluctuations evoke for me the very fragility of a human destiny. Should we then declare that it is the execution and not the writing of the music that touches us? If so, we would understand nothing of what film music has become: it is never just one or the other that accounts for the effect, but their cooperation and the possible separation between them. A piece of music that is calm and steady but played with increasing, then declining, fervor, for example, has a power all its own in cinema. The piece carries within it, engraved into the film, the fragility and ephemerality of the moment of performance.

Music in film should also be considered in relation to the continuum of speech through intermittence, interruption, or silence (the scene in the Kieslowski film is wordless). And reciprocally, music can make the words it interrupts resonate in a special silence. Let us consider an example.

In Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945), the Gestapo chief leaves the room where he has supervised the torture of a Communist resistance fighter. He enters another room, a salon occupied by other Germans, and engages in discussion about their lost war and the "master race." As he talks, a soldier is amateurishly playing a Tchaikovsky waltz on a slightly out-of-tune piano. The piano music contrasts with the horrific torture and the talk of master and slave races. An officer who has perhaps drunk too much makes defeatist and seditious remarks about the certain failure of Nazi ambition; at the moment when his comments become scandalous for his compatriots, the waltz stops, as if the player can no longer tolerate what is being said. In the judgmental silence created by the cessation of the frivolous music, the commandant's angered replies sound all the more accusing.

So a piece of music was placed in the scene so that its *interruption* would define a threatening void around the officer's words.

A bit later, the tortured resistance fighter dies before his executioners; the Italian priest blesses the victim and curses the Fascists, and a tragic nondiegetic orchestral cue accompanies his speech condemning the Germans' brutality. A German officer enters with the inebriated Marina, the Italian woman who betrayed the Communist resistance fighter. Then, in their wake, like some wafting breeze, comes the same waltz as before, but this time it continues uninterrupted when the woman discovers the bleeding body that she is responsible for, shouts, and falls in a dead faint.

Music stops, music continues: these two figures are used for similar, symmetrical effects, just a few minutes apart, with the same musical material.

MURDER AND SONGS

Songs have often accompanied scenes of horror or murder, because in the film's continuous unfolding they symbolize something finite and self-contained, a moment in time—and are thereby able to enclose something eternal in their measures and their lyrics.

The climactic scene of Renoir's *La Chienne* (1931), for example, is the murder of Lulu by the man she has swindled and betrayed, the pitiable Legrand (Michel Simon). The scene of the murder is "encased" in a street song that is being sung in the street below; a clump of bystanders have gathered to listen to the musicians unaware of the drama unfolding upstairs.[22] As Jean-Louis Leutrat writes, "Not only does the length of the murder scene coincide perfectly with the song, but the closed and repetitive form of the lament constitutes an intensely dramatic center in the film's continuity."[23] Leutrat emphasizes the double-edged play of song lyrics on the action that's simultaneously unfolding upstairs: "The entreaty 'Be good, o my lovely unknown beauty' refers to the present situation, while the entreaty that prolongs it—'Give me charity'— prefigures the ending of the film, as Legrand has turned into a street bum . . . The lament takes on various meanings depending on which moment you hear it. It comes in as soon as

Legrand realizes that Lulu has deceived him. It stops after the character has departed. The singing stops then, but the violin and guitar keep going and accompany the arrival of Dédé [Lulu's pimp, who makes money off Lulu's duping of Legrand by marketing his paintings as hers], until he leaves the scene as well. Suddenly a relation is established between the song's lyrics ('If I pass beneath your window like a gallant minstrel') and the dialogue exchange in the bedroom that quickly turns to insults . . . This relationship is one of opposition and contrasts."[24]

We should add that this scene where, as Leutrat shows, Renoir brings into operatic simultaneity the spaces of bedroom and street, is based on the idea that Legrand and Lulu, murderer and victim, seem unaware of the song that makes them act or in any case frames the dramatic events; the very power of the parallel editing is that whether the action is "determined" by the song is left as an enigma.

Hitchcock played on many occasions with the idea of a song performed or heard simultaneously with a dramatic action. He discovered new effects in this device every time: contrasts, parallelism, coincidental similarities, influences on characters, warnings that go unheeded. In *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), there is the encoded song "transported" by the elderly lady spy; in both versions of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934, 1956), songs also play key dramatic roles. In *Rear Window* (1954), the composer neighbor is seen and heard gradually writing the love song that becomes the theme of the film. In *The Birds* (1963), the children inside the schoolhouse sing the endlessly repetitive song "Risselty-Rosselty" while, outside, the heroine waits for the end of class unaware that an ominous flock of birds is assembling behind her, in parallel with the song.

MUSIC AND EFFUSIVENESS

As we know, the story of *Singin' in the Rain* is set in the transitional period between the silent era and the talkies. Wittily written by the screenwriting team of Betty Comden and Adolph Green, the film affectionately parodies silent movies of the late twenties, particularly the romantic and acrobatic swashbuckler films being made by such stars as Douglas Fairbanks. Don Lockwood (Gene Kelly) and Lina Lamont

(Jean Hagen) form the ideal silent-screen star couple; the success of *The Jazz Singer* causes the studio producers to hastily revise their latest movie to make it into a talkie. After many comic riffs on Lina's horrible voice and the entire movie crew's general lack of experience with sound, the new version of the film is ready to premiere to a test audience. The diegetic audience, who liked the scenes (however stereotyped) when they had no audible dialogue but were accompanied by dramatic pit music, now finds the same scenes ridiculously stupid as soon as they actually hear what the actors are saying. Lina's voice as revealed by the new talking film is nasal and shrill, her working-class accent is the polar opposite of what her aristocratic role would demand, and the mic grotesquely amplifies the tiniest noises made on set. But the talkie version is also so laughable because sound no longer tolerates—not in the same way, in any case—a dimension that the silent film could easily manage, taking it from opera: *effusiveness*.

We can speak of effusiveness when the excess or intensity of a feeling demands to be expressed and externalized, bypassing the ordinary bounds of time and space. The audience enjoys the film-within-a-film *The Dueling Cavalier*, when the swordsman played by Don covers Lina's arms with ardent kisses all the way up to her neck, with musical accompaniment. But in the talkie version, when he does it again and literally says, "I love you!" three times over, the same audience bursts out laughing. The lesson of this scene is that the naturalism of spoken dialogue cannot serve as a vehicle for effusiveness. The "rescue" of *The Dueling Cavalier* in *Singin' in the Rain* consists in transforming it into a musical, putting the excessive romantic words into new form as song lyrics.

Music here has the function of imparting the awakening emotion of the story, the expression of faces, looks, gestures, and words, beyond the spatial and temporal limitations in which these actions, gestures, and expressions must be confined.

Ozu's last film, *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), uses effusive music in a manner that starts out by being independent of the characters. A sentimental violin theme, first heard over the opening credits, plays with marked vibrato over several scenes during the film, giving a kind of impersonal sentimentality to simple shots of streets, buildings, sky. Near the end, the protagonist, Hirayama (Chishu Ryu), a widower,

discovers his daughter Michiko in her wedding kimono, and she turns to him with eyes that are both happy and sad; the sentimental theme plays, now really pulling out all the emotional stops. His daughter, who has taken care of his household, is leaving to have a family of her own.

Many people, including me, are overwhelmed by this moment. What spectators might not notice, though, is that the pit music in use here has been prepared by some screen music. Earlier in that sequence, we see small houses, a quiet street, and two young men shining up the automobiles that will carry the wedding party; then Hirayama's youngest son makes a phone call. During all this, children can be heard singing, accompanied by a piano, presumably coming from a school in the neighborhood. The children's song alternates with their solfeggio exercises, and finally the piano alone plays the melody. Then, after a few seconds, comes the (nondiegetic) string leitmotif. On one of very few such occasions in the film, the "sentimental theme" attaches to a face, that of the daughter who turns toward her father and us with a bittersweet gaze.

The characters go off to the wedding, and the music continues to sentimentalize shots of the empty apartment. Indeed, Ozu often has the most sentimental melodies play over urban or domestic images with no people. The theme returns for the film's final shots, to underscore Hirayama's aloneness; we see him from a distance in his kitchen, pouring tea. The sentimental violin theme becomes one with the hunched figure, fragile and mute, of the aging man who has lost his family to inevitable change.

CINEMA AND THE "LETTER ARIA"

In a film that retains the use of spoken discourse and in which the characters speak in prose, which is the case for most "talkies" or sound films, the closest equivalent to the classical aria is the scene of the reading of a letter. The letter can be read aloud or recited internally; we can experience its writing or witness the finished product; and we can hear it either in the voice of its author or that of its reader.

The letter (or the diary page, as in a film like *Taxi Driver*, which uses both devices) escapes the naturalistic constraints of film dialogue, and

between the words it allows for pauses, silences, sighs, or other unvoiced thoughts that surround and prolong it. It is thus no surprise that two of the high points of the work of one of the most musical of directors, Max Ophüls, are two scenes where a female voice reads a letter, intimate and charged with emotion.

In *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948), the spectator hears the letter with the voice of the woman who sent it, as its recipient—the man she has loved and whose child she bore without his knowledge—reads it. But the voice belongs to a ghost: "By the time you read this letter, I may be dead." In *The Earrings of Madame de . . .* (1953), another letter written during a train journey is never sent, but reduced to little scraps by the heroine; she throws them out the window of the moving train, and these scraps carrying words that we hear pronounced by her voice fly and mix in the air—a sublime cinematic metaphor—with snow that floats down like love. In both cases, the pit music has the both modest and precious function of having the speaking voice and images "take off" from the naturalistic bounds of physical time and space.

The moment of the letter being read, magnified by music, is an aria heard as if it were recited internally, with heartbreaking intimacy.

6

MUSIC AS WORLD

THE MUSIC OF THE WORLD

More than any other dramatic form, cinema welcomes all kinds of music, serious and popular, from all continents. Inevitably it has attempted to represent the music of the planet, a utopia that can be discovered even in the lightest films.

Take *A Song Is Born* (Howard Hawks, 1948), a likable Danny Kaye vehicle and a comedy not considered one of Hawks's major works.[1] A remake of the director's own *Ball of Fire* (1941), it transforms a story about lexicographers into one about music and musicians. Where in *Ball of Fire* a group of musty old scholars marveled at discovering slang thanks to a cheeky young woman, in *A Song Is Born* musty academic musicologists discover jazz. Which hardly explains why we should pay attention to this movie.

Leaving aside the unassuming crime plot, we find that *A Song Is Born* is captivating in terms of music: not only because several of its scenes offer the chance to bask in the playing of Louis Armstrong or Lionel Hampton, but because its subject is nothing less than the universality of music.

In a sweetly antiquated music school, a group of eccentric academics has been writing an encyclopedia of world music. The window

washers, a couple of Black fellows, help them discover jazz; the researchers get excited about this music they've never heard before and decide to include it in their encyclopedia. But only in their own fashion: they will explain jazz's historical evolution, thus fitting it into the research protocol of their magnum opus.

The movie presents today's topic of "world music" well before its time. In a scene where the scholarly team is trying to record a musical example for the encyclopedia, Frisbee (Danny Kaye) narrates into the mic the (imaginary) origins of the song, announcing the musical examples that are being performed by a singer and instrumentalists. This setup results in something both disparate and coordinated. First they play the African drumbeat, then chanting is added to the drums, then words, then the new sound as the music travels through Latin America and Southern Black culture, and so forth, all of it fused into a pleasant global mishmash.

The plot's outcome is highly symbolic. Taken hostage in their residence by gangsters who hold them at gunpoint, the school's inhabitants vainly seek a way to escape. Suddenly Frisbee recalls that several days earlier, during a jazz session, the music's vibrations had caused a heavy gong to fall from a shelf above, and the same gong now happens to be positioned above the armchair in which one of the gangsters is sitting. So the men decide to use some excuse or other to play for the leering thugs. Everyone unites in the effort, jazzmen and scholars, Black and white, to raise a musical racket (first the "Anvil Chorus" and then a hot jazz tune) that succeeds in dislodging the object and decking the bad guy. Music has deployed its physical power, but it has taken a transnational rhythmic noise to do the trick—the very sounds that had evolved according to the fantasy genealogy narrated in the recording scene I mentioned.

The scene is, of course, a comic version of the story of Joshua and the trumpets playing in front of the walls of Jericho until "on the seventh time the walls fell." But also, it is a way to raise the issue of the notion that rhythm is the common denominator of all musics: rhythm might seem to reconcile them, but cannot do it alone; it only creates the illusion. The variety of colors and forms of music in the world, of music *as* a world, is thus not so easy to bring together, since what you

end up with is the equivalent of the gray that results from all the different colors on a spinning disk.

Four decades later, a film whose music (by Ennio Morricone) would become successful on record and even at political rallies, Roland Joffé's *The Mission* (1986), reiterated the theme of musical interbreeding in quite different terms. The story's protagonists are Jesuit missionaries in the eighteenth century who establish a mission in the jungle, integrating with the culture of the New World. It shows Christianized Guarani children singing classical music. For the occasion Morricone composed a score in this spirit of mixing European and Indigenous voices and sounds, a polyrhythmic collage of styles. We might find that the Indians seen singing deep in the virgin forest—no doubt doing so via lip-sync—have voices that are a bit too well organized and form an ensemble that's a bit too nicely harmonized, but that is exactly the idea. This musical utopia, this reconciliation of "cultures," could never last, and it would be wiped out, just as the mission itself tragically would be, on the orders of the political and ecclesiastical authorities of Spain and Portugal.

In order to create this music that only cinema could inspire, Morricone engaged the London Philharmonic Orchestra and a small South American group called Incantation. François Tressour, the music reporter for the monthly *Première*, described the unusual combinations: "Tom-toms, drums, pan flutes, maracas, and guitar provide the constant rhythmic basis for church songs, and long, beautiful ominous waves of strings take over at some times and take a back seat at others . . . In the cue entitled 'On Earth As It Is in Heaven,' sustained strings and the romantic melody of a flute gradually become submerged in a chanting staccato chorus that sings at the same tempo but sometimes in syncopation, punctuated by tympani on the downbeat, and always supported by the bongos, exoticism *oblige*." The critic does what he can to account for this amazing musical house of cards erected for the film, fragile and seductive; in the end it is displayed as a juxtaposition of colors (and cultures) that refuse to blend together.

So between *A Song Is Born* and *The Mission*, we see that the utopian "universality" of music, which it was still possible to posit in movies of the forties (at the price, of course, of watering down Black music) pretty

much comes to an end. A few exceptions aside, such as the pentatonic-scale message sent by Spielberg to extraterrestrials in the name of all humankind (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 1977)—the music utopia gave way to simple motley juxtapositions of instruments, modes, and colors. These sounds sometimes had great appeal, as with Peter Gabriel's work for Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) or Philip Glass's for *Kundun* (1997), by the same director, about the Dalai Lama's childhood. In between, imported records revealed strong and specific national musical "tastes" and styles of all the world. But film history left us nostalgic for the time when through music alone, particularly South American dance music, we "traveled" to countries that we could still imagine as enchanting.

FILM LAND

"Brazil" is the title of a tune by the Brazilian composer Ary Barroso, the very essence of those pop songs about the delights of the tropics. *Brazil* is also the title of Terry Gilliam's dystopian sci-fi film (1985) that became a touchstone for the 1980s generation, about a stifling bureaucratic society located somewhere between Orwell and Kafka. Gilliam has explained how he got the idea to make a film based on the song:

> Several years ago I was scouting locations . . . [and] one evening I was in a town in Wales called Port Talbot. An ugly, sad place in a mining region, the very picture of everyday life with no hope. I went to the beach, where there was a sort of dump area, and a guy with a portable radio was listening to this music that was so happy and syncopated, conjuring up a Latin paradise. This is the image that gave birth to the film, and I insisted that the title be the same as this song despite everyone's objections.[2]

Nothing can sum up cinema better than a movie idea like this, which contrasts the world's sordid reality with a piece of music that briefly opens up a clearing in the dark sky. Films that seize on this opportunity belong to what we can call "film land": they're so good at transporting us from the here and now to another place, contrasting the concrete and the ideal. With Tarkovsky, it's the light of Beethoven's

"Ode to Joy" shining out like a promise from the noise of a nearby train that is heard passing by a miserable shack (*Stalker*, 1979). Andrey Zvyagintsev gives us some respite from the bleakness through music by Arvo Pärt (*The Banishment*, 2007) or by Philip Glass (*Elena*, 2011). It can be just a few fragile notes on a recorder, a tiny sound in the vast world, that moves Frankenstein's creature to tears. It's Patrick Dewaere listening to the old sound of Duke Ellington's "Moonlight Serenade" (a sound that seems filtered, constricted, but always evocative of a better world) while he lives the sordid existence of an official in a wintry suburb (*Série noire*, Alain Corneau, 1979). Or the protagonist of *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1977), who vegetates in a sort of industrial and familial hell inhabited by the shouts and moans of a storm, barking, and machine sounds: in spite of everything, we hear the imperturbably cheerful sound of Fats Waller on the Wurlitzer organ. The list could go on, not even including the films in which the musical "clearing" is reduced to almost nothing.

TARKOVSKY: ELIMINATE MUSIC, OR LOCALIZE IT?

Consider the striking case of Tarkovsky. His films can't live with music, can't live without it. Metaphysical and physical at the same time, both mystical and sensuous, aspiring to the ideal and conveying the haunting flavor of the simplest childhood impressions, the works of the great Russian director express the impossibility of reconciling these two dimensions, each as necessary as the other: the world of the symbolic (heightened by the ubiquity of the arts of literature, painting, and music in his films) and the world of nature and matter, presented in their most tangible, fluctuating, and unpredictable form, foreign to man and above all ephemeral.

With Tarkovsky, then, music is torn between two extremes. Taken from the treasury of the Western tradition, it presents itself as a heterogeneous cultural object. On one hand it is possessed of unsurpassable and irreducible beauty, like a Platonic ideal, as represented, for example, by the prelude "Ich ruf zu dir" from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*, heard three times in its entirety in the science fiction film *Solaris* (1972).

At the other pole in the same film, rendered by Eduard Artemyev's electronic sounds (on several occasions Artemyev collaborated also with Nikita Mikhalkov, using a more traditional musical style), it appears as a voice blended in with the continuum of nature from which it is hardly distinguishable. There is no middle ground: no musical phrases, punctuations, or underscoring for accompaniment.

Tarkovsky, who published a compelling book of essays on film called *Sculpting in Time* (1986), was aware of the difficulty in which a piece of film music is caught if it wishes to be ignored as music. Electronic music, which has its own tradition in film, often faces this problem.

> The moment we hear what it is, and realise that it's being constructed, electronic music dies; and Artemiev had to use very complex devices to achieve the sounds we wanted. Electronic music must be purged of its "chemical" origins, so that as we listen we may catch in it the primary notes of the world.
>
> . . . Electronic music has exactly that capacity for being absorbed into the sound. It can be hidden behind other noises and remain indistinct; like the voice of nature, of vague intimations . . . It can be like somebody breathing.[3]

But then in what way does it remain an element different from the others?

"We wanted the sound [in *The Mirror*]," he explains, "to be close to that of an earthly echo, filled with poetic suggestion—to rustling, to sighing."[4]

To be sure, the director did not always succeed at such a transmutation, and in a masterpiece like *Stalker* (1979) the electronic effects continue to hover above the sounds of nature and can be identified as sound effects—which by no means takes away from films as extraordinary as his. One instance in which he came closest to his goal was in the highway sequence in *Solaris*. For this trip on a terrestrial path, filmed in Japan and treated in an abstract manner like a voyage in interstellar space, Artemyev created a vast, shifting sound, at first indistinct, like the steady, uninterrupted whoosh of traffic; then, out of this overall sound, vague, floating sound embryos emerge, differentiated electronic cells within the continuum of infinite movement,

which return to the overall sound after having—hardly—emerged. This passage lies at the border of formlessness, in fascinating terrain.

In his writings Tarkovsky also considers the problem of music's externality to the filmic world:

> Music in cinema is for me a natural part of our resonant world, a part of human life. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that in a sound film that is realised with complete theoretical consistency, there will be no place for music: it will be replaced by sounds in which cinema constantly discovers new levels of meaning. . . .
>
> It may be that in order to make the cinematic image sound authentically, in its full diapason, music has to be abandoned. For strictly speaking the world as transformed by cinema and the world as transformed by music are parallel, and conflict with each other.[5]

The director had the artistically fruitful honesty to take on conflict and contradiction, citing the music of Bach, or Japanese flute music in *The Sacrifice* (1986), as foreign bodies that cannot be assimilated. His filmmaking is directed toward the essential; and it makes into the very subject of his films this impossibility of fusing their disparate elements. Are his characters not desperately seeking to graft art onto nature, which pays it no heed? And the artist's final film ends with the image of a dead tree being watered by a child who is trying to make it grow again—to the heartbreaking sound of an aria of supplication taken from the *St. Matthew Passion*: "Erbarme dich, mein Gott"—God, have mercy.

FILMS WITHOUT

Film narrativity needs only the bare minimum to function, as Noël Burch has demonstrated. The spectator's engagement with a story is strong enough that almost nothing is absolutely indispensable to a film, including music. Just as there are films with no men, films without women, films with mute characters, films with no editing (or almost none), and films in which the screen is blank most of the time (*L'Homme atlantique*, Marguerite Duras, 1981; *Blue*, Derek Jarman, 1993), there are

films without music—often wonderful ones such as Rohmer's *The Marquise of O* (1976) or Pabst's *Westfront 1918* (1930). Does it matter whether a film has no music—does the absence of music actively affect the nature of the film?

It can be argued that there is no sound film for which the absence of music is of no consequence. Music is scarcely heard at all in Buñuel's *Nazarin* (1959); in this religious story, the rarity of music feels like a refusal to convey transcendence. In Pabst's fine pacifist film *Westfront 1918*, a single note of music, even something heard through the intermediary of a gramophone, would have represented a glint of hope, but the director declined. Generally speaking, in fact, many films that depict a devastated world with no hope or with no God, like Bresson's *L'Argent* (1983), reduce music to almost nothing, where any minimal sounds of music we might hear signify through their extreme fragility.

That being said, you can also find comedies and screen adaptations of plays that basically have no music, their scoring often limited to the credits and not very significant. In such movies, abundant dialogue fills up the screen time (in numerous films by Rohmer, for example), whereas in films with lots of exteriors and/or movement such as the Pabst films, Bergman's *Shame* (1968), and the Bunuel film mentioned above, shots with no dialogue but just silent movement suggest (through a conditioned reflex from all the other films we watch?) the possible presence of music that we do not hear.

Let us take this even further. When music does appear as music being played onscreen, as it fleetingly does in Bresson—for example, the Bach piece briefly played by an old man on a household piano, in *L'Argent*—and when it is recorded with "realistic" sound, as it would indeed be heard in a cramped little room, does this music with all its tonal imperfection retain the power to transcend and to move us? Yes and no. Obviously when Bresson (unlike Jane Campion in *The Piano*) submits his piano's sounds to the same laws as the other diegetic sounds, when he confines them inside the walls of a bleak apartment, limits them to the old wooden case of a mediocre upright piano and subjects them to the fingers of an amateur . . . in other words, when he does all he can to limit music's ability to take flight, he treats it in totally materialist fashion. A similar effect occurs in *Le Diable probablement* (*The Devil, Probably*, 1977), by the same director, when Monteverdi comes

out of a cheap record player brought in by young squatters in a church. But at the same time, music presented this way can suggest all the more strongly the impulse to transcend the here and now. Bresson deploys music as an assertion of soul, even if muffled, within the horrible reality created by evil, money, and the very worst impulses of humanity. Even when the glass of wine the amateur piano player has set on the piano falls, breaking up the music and signifying a rupture in its idealism, music lives on.

The same thing can be found in many older films. However, depending on the genre and the period, in some films we notice the absence of music and in others we do not.

I have already mentioned films with no pit music, or almost none. The early sound period in particular had many such films, including Hawks's *Scarface*, Wellman's *Public Enemy*, Lang's *M*, Duvivier's *La Tête d'un homme*, and Renoir's *La Chienne*. But those works usually had a lot of screen music, for nothing was easier in that period (and today too, for that matter) than placing the characters in situations and places that included a source of music—cafés, fairgrounds, banquets, concerts, street musicians, and so forth. Let us stick to films where music exists neither within the diegesis nor outside it, at least not more than minimally. The 1960s produced a number of movies that explored the idea of end-of-the-world catastrophes, or at least calamities. Among these were *Fail Safe* (Sidney Lumet, 1964), which treated roughly the same subject as Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*, from the same year, but in a serious vein. Later, there was Bergman's *Shame*, with a couple plunged into chaos and deprivation after an outbreak of war. With Lumet, the absence of music (except during the credits) contributes to a sense of theatricality. The plot of *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) focused on a hostage situation that goes from bad to worse: here the lack of music lends an impression of objectivity.

More recently, in an era when our world is increasingly "naturally" saturated with music (but so are many films), its absence is once again all the more striking. Examples are *No Country for Old Men* (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2007)—with a deranged killer cooked up by Cormac McCarthy—and *Flanders* (2006), by Bruno Dumont—a tale of young men thrown into war—as well as most of Dumont's other works. The films of Michael Haneke might also be cited in this context. But we

should emphasize that in these recent films, the density and fine detail of the sonic texture, including sounds of nature or of the modern world, can create a feeling of plenitude that might prevent us from noticing the lack of music.

MUSIC AS A CHARACTER'S MILIEU

Even before being "in the film," music first inhabits the world of the characters, as an element of the scenario. Even when not the subject of the story, music helps establish the story's milieu and the characters' social class. To this end, cinema draws on stereotypes comparable to those it uses for costumes, sets, gestures, and dialogue.

In a crime film by Ridley Scott, *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1987), a working-class cop is assigned to guard the safety of a rich woman. Several scenes that take place in her home are accompanied by classical music and opera that apparently emanate from the home, in line with the usual Hollywood way of signifying an upper-class milieu. (This was not the case in the silent era, when music was not as culturally marked.) In reality, nothing prevents an ordinary police officer from appreciating opera, but if you were to make a film about a cop, you'd have to go out of your way to convey his affinity for this music— showing him buying opera recordings, and so on. The music will then define this character in relation to his milieu and not symbolize the milieu itself. On the other hand, in *Someone to Watch Over Me* the presence of classical music in the setting connotes luxury and distinction, like a perfume in the rich woman's apartment, though nothing in the screenplay has overtly specified that she knows this music and loves it.

In *Diva* (Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1981), a young letter carrier has a fanatical love for opera singers' voices; using a professional tape recorder at a concert, he makes a pirate recording of a diva (Wilhelmenia Fernandez). There surely do exist postmen who love opera just as much as executives and gallerists do. In the film, though, this taste is not portrayed as merely a taste, nor is it rendered particularly credible. The fact that he is shown equipped with a tape recorder is not enough to convince us that he has a passion for opera—so he rather resembles a machine user, a recording technician.

In film, every object, every element of a situation possesses a stereo-typed symbolic resonance, and it is not so easy to escape from this auto-matic symbolization. For example, a tape recorder is a device for police officers, spies, or technicians. In film, musical taste is conventionally demonstrated by a character's record collection, or by a scene that shows a character hearing an unseen piano, which fascinates her, makes her stop in her tracks, and so forth.

Characterization of a milieu through a given musical repertoire has its more or less arbitrary clichés. The problem is that these stereotypes of artistic/musical tastes and behaviors are often based in real life. For example, some people have taken offense at the overly "typical" aspect of the moving scene in *Philadelphia* (Jonathan Demme, 1993) where Beckett (Tom Hanks), dying of AIDS, is overcome as he listens to his favorite aria in the presence of his attorney (Denzel Washington), who is deeply moved by Beckett's emotional reactions to the gorgeous music. But plenty of gay people love opera. Are we not all stereotyped, and also unique?

Satyajit Ray's *The Music Room* (1958) evokes the fading opulence of the world of a lord who desperately clings to his disappearing way of life. His greatest joy is the music room in his palace, where he has hosted lavish concerts over the years. His passion for classical Indian music overshadows everything else, and the dawning age of money and machines leaves him impoverished by the end. In many scenes, music seems to abolish real time and overflow the present.

Toward the end of the film, the protagonist, his fortune gone, beholds the grand chandelier in his music room, now covered with spider webs. He reaches up with his cane and touches it; the gesture magically unleashes the sound of music in the immense empty room. A succession of fragments of different pieces (melodic instruments, tabla, a singer) echo all the musical occasions the man has held in this place, while all we see is the deserted room. Like Marguerite Duras's *India Song* (1975) or Terence Davies's *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (1988), Ray's film gives form to this mysterious phenomenon that is the evanescence of sound. Whether it is an embassy salon (Duras) or a working man's dining room (Davies) or a maharaja's palace (Ray) makes little difference. They all pose the same question: These walls that have enclosed the most wondrous moments of harmony and music, can they not have retained something of all that beauty, or was it simply allowed to disappear?

MUSIC AND GENRE

Given musical clichés are associated with given movie genres. Stereotypes used by advertising or in pastiches of old movies would have us believe that there was a specific type of music for film noir, a different specific style for westerns, and one for romantic melodrama. When director Mel Brooks and composer John Morris created a series of genre pastiches—sending up the western with *Blazing Saddles* (1974), the Hitchcockian thriller with *High Anxiety* (1977), silent cinema with *Silent Movie* (1976), science fiction with *Spaceballs* (1987), and horror with *Young Frankenstein* (1974), the two collaborators drew on established musical archetypes, each time drawing on a precise era for each genre: the thirties for horror, the forties for film noir, the fifties for the western.

The truth is that in the history of a genre, many stereotypes might be available, depending on the audience to which the pastiche is addressed and their degree of familiarity with the conventions. For those who know only the archetypes for westerns that were created by Ennio Morricone and Sergio Leone, a whistled tune and electric guitar are in order. For those who have seen Howard Hawks and Anthony Mann westerns, orchestral underscoring is the right kind of music. But anyone following a genre's history through the decades will notice that its scoring undergoes constant stylistic evolution, as well as changes in concept and functions.

Science fiction historically went from futuristic electronic effects (*Forbidden Planet*, 1956) to neo-Wagnerian symphonic music (the *Star Wars* franchise, starting in 1977) along with pop rock (Queen for *Flash Gordon*, 1980, and Toto for *Dune*, 1984). So obviously the genre has no one musical sound. In *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), Jerry Goldsmith's music is devitalized, while in its sequel, *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986), James Horner's score mobilizes the orchestra's warlike sounds with martial percussion. This is not just because in the second film a team of trained marines arrives to confront the extraterrestrials (the now-multiple aliens basically eat the marines for breakfast). The success of the first two *Rambo* films, of 1982 and 1985, decidedly terrestrial action movies, along with *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984), had brought both male and female warriors and their muscles into fashion. Today's commercial cinema, on the other hand, favors the

"dedramatizing" of interplanetary space. Recent space odysseys come with strains of country music—Hank Williams Jr. at the beginning of *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2013), or the disco of Donna Summer and Gloria Gaynor in *The Martian* (Ridley Scott, 2015). We even see in the facetious Marvel superhero sagas *Guardians of the Galaxy* and its sequel (James Gunn, 2014 and 2017) that the hero Peter Quill, abducted from Earth in 1988, takes with him a precious cassette tape that his dear departed mother had lovingly compiled for him. This plot device allows us to hear David Bowie, Marvin Gaye, the Jackson Five, Fleetwood Mac, George Harrison, Cat Stevens—in other words, artists of various Anglo-American pop genres of the 1970s and 1980s. Alongside these recorded songs, many scenes of action or conflict and also comedy are accompanied by Tyler Bates's scoring, written to be less consciously noticed (and which refrains from trumpeting its themes as in *Star Wars*), to perform the usual function of supporting the story.

During the same period, the continuation of the *Star Wars* franchise with new episodes—the first of the "sequel trilogy" being *The Force Awakens* (J. J. Abrams, 2015)—reiterates the widely known orchestral themes created forty years earlier by John Williams.

As we can see, then, there is no musical identity specific to a genre or even to an era. Nothing is fixed in stone or strictly codified; practices are much more varied than is generally believed. The "code" consists merely of references and touchstones. So, for example, for music in fantasy and "metaphysical" films, which explore themes such as good and evil, the Devil, the origin of life, and so forth, the use of choirs has emerged as somewhat of a tradition. Kubrick in his choice of music cues for *2001* did not deviate from the norm here: the choral outbursts of the Kyrie from Ligeti's *Requiem* symbolize the relationship between humanity and the cosmic order. No one complained about it; perhaps no one noticed. But people might notice if a fantasy film score doesn't have any choirs: commenting on Patrick Doyle's music for *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Kenneth Branagh, 1994), one columnist indeed pointed out that there were no choruses, which happens to be what set me to thinking about this trope.

The same goes for the historical film and the famous issue of anachronisms that are sometimes on full display. In Sofia Coppola's *Marie*

Antoinette (2006) we hear rock and electronic music right along with Vivaldi and Rameau. Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* (2001) takes place in the belle époque but features a cavalcade of all sorts of twentieth-century popular music, from David Bowie to Labelle and Madonna. Some anachronisms can only be identified by specialists, such as dance music of the Renaissance in movies set in seventeenth-century France, or the andante of Schubert's Trio in E-flat, composed in 1827, heard non-diegetically in Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975), whose story is set late in the eighteenth century. In my view, we should be tolerant about this, just as we are about the language spoken by characters and their accents. While Kubrick stated that he tried to remain true to lighting typical of *Barry Lyndon*'s era (interiors were shot in candlelight), he never claimed to have researched and used the accents spoken by Englishmen and Irishmen around 1780.

The topic of conventions in film music, as in other aspects of so-called commercial cinema, brings out a mildly hypocritical attitude in many film academics, a kind of embarrassed fascination. They overtly frown upon such tropes, poke fun at them, or condemn them, but at the same time a lot of writing is devoted to reproducing (with relish) those 1920s catalogs of "music for the moving image." Eisler and Adorno are frequently cited as an aesthetic and moral reference on the subject; the two authors certainly did not resist the temptation to belittle and criticize. In their short book on the film music of their forties era, the number of pages devoted to the stereotypes to be avoided and the alternatives they proposed is quite telling. Everyone seems certain that commercial practices were (and are) strictly codified. However, reality is more complex and fluid, and it requires immense labor and research for us to apprehend it in all its variety.

All this suggests a culture and a society that, having lost its bearings, cannot hide its nostalgia for artistic conventions that it considers more constraining and simplistic than they actually were. Please do not expect me to present a catalog of film music no-nos. There is nothing about stereotypes that I consider artistically condemnable. Scholars are mistaken in centering their study of film music on them, because stereotypes have never been anything but a basis on which to build infinite variations.

ON ORIGINAL MUSIC

Looking at a Japanese manga film from the early nineties, *Urotsukidoji III*, featuring fights among horned demons as big as mountains, humans and monsters copulating, death rays, and cosmic wars, we are surprised to hear abundant excerpts of Dvorák's *New World Symphony* dished up in every shape to accompany the frenetic action. And this is in spite of the crediting of the music to Masamichi Amano for the score that's played entirely on synths. Why the *New World Symphony*, for goodness' sake? But then again, why not? This work, like a number of popular late nineteenth-century symphonic pieces, turns out to be a veritable treasure trove of musicodramatic situations. It has love songs, battles, bucolic reveries, passionate outbursts, and picturesque tableaux. Conveniently rearranged and orchestrated, the famous symphony can easily serve in infinite ways, providing material for all the basic plot situations. For example, the scherzo's canon theme is easily adaptable in its effervescence to a lively Japanese street scene in the movie; and the symphony's slow movement works well in the *2001*-like mystical sequence—after all, this theme also gave birth to the Negro spiritual "Going Home." It is funny to encounter, in a place we wouldn't have thought to find it, a piece that had already been used in the silent era, with the same principle of arrangement, only with the synthesizer replacing the piano.

But let us return to the basic issue: if Masamichi Amano had created a so-called original score for the same film, would he have conceived it in a style all that different?

The tenacious myth that "original music" separated from the film is like a cut flower that would die and lose all its meaning is entirely false. We should remember that Bach, Mozart, and Handel never hesitated to recycle a melody taken from a secular cantata and use it in a sacred work, or put new words to already-composed music, and this certainly does not make them any lesser composers for it. Employing a piece of music in a new film with new story situations is like putting new words to a known melody. The possible combinations are limitless, and they can always be given new flavor and resonance. To say this, of course, is not to deny the existence of specificity, of the uniqueness of the cinematic work with its music.

In the case of a Fellini film, for example, music by Nino Rota is a full partner in the work, comparable to an actor's contribution. It would be foolish not to recognize the unique and irreplaceable character of the bond that forms between the music and the film's other elements. If the music is taken out of this magical frame, it must be recognized as something completely other—certainly liable through memories and associations to evoke the film for the audio-viewer who knows it from that context. But outside the film, it becomes something at once new and indefinitely available and open to many possibilities. Music is an actor, nothing more or less, and an actor (with a few exceptions) is not forever connected to just a single film.

Music is also an element that we have grown accustomed to hearing extracted from the film in the form of the "original soundtrack recording." Rarely does dialogue work this way, despite a few efforts to publish film dialogues or transpose them to the stage (e.g., some Marguerite Duras films or Ingmar Bergman's television miniseries *Scenes from a Marriage*, respectively).

However, not much film dialogue has been adapted to the stage. This doesn't prove anything: neither that lines that are difficult to deliver outside their film are less "good"—or "better" because that would demonstrate that they are more specifically cinematic; nor that those lines that provide a beautiful text for reading, or are exciting to see recited on a stage, are superior to them.

Paul Schrader said that when a screenplay is well conceived, with strong story situations, a character might only have to utter the most banal sentences, such as "I'll have another cup of coffee," for the line to take on a tragic resonance.[6] He was right. But it would be a mistake to say that in this case the dialogue is "better"—because then there aren't lines that can be considered as an element in themselves, that can be appreciated independently from the rest; there is the film and that is all.

A musical phrase that is particularly meaningful in a film and insignificant outside it can be the equivalent of this "I'll have another cup of coffee." Cinema sings the glorious banality of music.

Conversely, when the music is famous or beautiful, it can just as easily become the "frame" for a scene, as certain urban or natural sites have, such as Monument Valley as filmed in all those John Ford

westerns. The person who would deem it unusable or condemn it just because it can serve for a variety of works would be a sore loser indeed.

A film is an ensemble, in most cases constituted of assembled pieces, and we are supposed to consider it as a whole. Its identity is not merely the sum of its "original," unique collaborations, but due to the overall framework that a director or the spirit of a team or some miracle have managed to create and that transfigures each separate element.

As for so-called original music scores: they are rarely original in their style, and why should they be, if not for begging the question, and in accordance with a reductive concept of cinema? Not even the scores of Nino Rota or Bernard Herrmann are. They are *unique* (and this is different), because of a particular twist or accent on the use of given formulas, or in the way they synthesize musical references and allusions.

IS THERE ONE FILM-MUSIC STYLE?

Let us say without the least pejorative intention that film music does not have one style. It takes what it wishes from anywhere and everywhere, following the example set by concert and opera composers. The difference is that the concert composer has all the time to create a personal style, based not only on what he invents but also on what he takes from others.

From a certain point of view and until recently, the situation was no different for the other types of music, but no one noticed, or else did not consider it important. Depending on the kind of work Bach was composing, he would draw from French, German, and Italian styles. As for classical and Romantic symphonies, they often invite us on a voyage through styles, with—from one movement to another—references to different types of composing. If the film composer also borrows from all kinds of styles, it is in the same way based on the genre for which she is composing as well as the director's requirements; and if she seems to endlessly recycle popular and serious styles of yesterday and today, it's because these styles are part and parcel of our culture and constitute the same reservoir of possibilities and colors, including local color, as that which opera composers like Meyerbeer drew from.

Only, in that era, the most commonly heard music was contemporary by definition; and it was through printed scores, not concerts, that Mozart could discover the "old" music of Bach. Romanticism gave rise to the practice of both reperforming old music (Mendelssohn rediscovered Bach's *Passions*) and combining the styles of different eras in new works (as with Louis Spohr's "Historical Symphony," and more subtly, with Brahms and Mahler). In this sense, then, nothing new.

The fundamental differences between film music and the other kinds, in most cases, result from the music's status as an intermittent element in a hybrid ensemble, and from the commercial, practical, economic, and cultural conditions that give rise to it.

As an element in a rather complex whole, film music must generally be simpler and more redundant than "pure" music. Because it is incorporated into the film, it is only one component in a complex network of rhythms, sensations, visual data, verbal data, kinetic data. To fault it for its "poverty" would amount to the same thing as condemning the left hand of a Schubert sonata or the cello part of a string quartet for not being as complex as the score taken as a whole.

It is this simplicity and redundancy that can make recordings of even some of the best music written for film tedious and unlistenable. The album of Herrmann's complete score for *Psycho* (1960), for example, is frightfully monotonous, although the music works so perfectly in the film. The "original soundtrack" recording of Nino Rota's music for *8½* (1963) seems like an endless theme-and-variations on the same two or three motifs. Obviously, it's great to be able to listen to these scores on disc for the memory, for enjoyment or emotion, and all the more so when the disc includes some of the sound effects and dialogue from the film. This has been done increasingly often since the 1980s; one of the first soundtrack recordings in this vein was *Apocalypse Now* (1979). But soundtracks with sound effects cannot be listened to like other music, nor should the same criteria be applied to them as to recordings of music alone.

Then, because of its very nature as intermittent, scattered through a film, music for the screen is not a genre that lends itself well to the shaping of a self-contained, independent form. There is no question of using a film composition to signify, to say something. The composition is the film itself in the totality of its audio-logo-visual elements.

THE MYTH OF THE
DIRECTOR-COMPOSER "TANDEM"

Contrary to what the newspaper editor says in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), legends are not always better than reality. Sometimes, they impoverish it. So it is with the legend of the director-composer partnership that works in perfect harmony. This construct brings joy to film-music historians: Blake Edwards and Henry Mancini, Claude Chabrol and Pierre Jansen, Robert Aldrich and Frank De Vol, Ozu-Saito, Coen-Burwell, Burton-Elfman, Miyazaki-Hisaishi, and, of course, Fellini-Rota, Eisenstein-Prokofiev, Leone-Morricone, and Hitchcock-Herrmann. But no matter how compelling it may be, the tandem legend is reductive, shrinking films to stories of tête-à-têtes, of productive or stormy collaborations, of submission or conflict. In reality (which is better than the legend, in this instance), the composer is not there to please someone or to submissively implement the all-powerful idea that has sprung from another brain. He is there to contribute to a work whose shape no one, including the director, ever entirely knows in advance, but which has its own life and a certain goal.

The best-prepared film, the one most thoroughly planned in advance, can be kicked into another dimension with music. This is not to say that we are hearing the heartbeat of the composer; it's the heart of the film he has managed to set to beating. Pierre Jansen did this with *Le Boucher* (1970), and director Claude Chabrol had the wisdom to make the necessary room for that to happen.

The idea of the tandem, which alludes to two co-auteurs, is also somewhat misguided. Are there not other partners in the film, such as the screenwriter, the producer, the actors, the editors . . . ? Fortunately the reality of history is much more complex, and it should acknowledge both collective movements and individual decisions, proactiveness and chance, the unconscious as well as the conscious.

The cinematic work is thus more than the expression of a single ego; it is the result of many actions and projections; its destiny transcends overt intentions. It differs from a work by a single creator (painting, novel), in that it can *create* its auteurs.

What is more, a few exceptions aside, it seems to me artificial to desire at all costs to track down a movie composer's "fingerprint"

through all his scores; or, conversely, to discount those composers who, like Georges Delerue, have made it a point of honor to work in as many genres as possible. What follows is my critique of the myth of the tandem, using specific examples.

IS THERE A HERRMANN-HITCHCOCK TANDEM?

In a gilded legend to which numerous scholars subscribe, Bernard Herrmann revolutionized film music by breaking conventions and rewriting the rules of the game. Indeed, Herrmann's music bears his profoundly personal stamp, which has been widely imitated, quoted, and literally reused. However, the ways it enters into relationships with the image and action are strictly the same as those that were roundly criticized when Max Steiner used the same devices. These include leitmotifs (*Citizen Kane* has one motif for Kane's ambition and another for the nostalgia for childhood embodied by Rosebud); synchronous punctuation of significant moments (the light turning off in the window as Kane dies, the first sight of the protagonist as a boy playing in the snow, even the derisive muted trombone "wah-wah" to emphasize a failure); and, in a general manner, tight collaboration between music and the scene's mood as conceived and acted. So we should not describe Herrmann's formula as a rupture, but, on the contrary, as an extension and systematization of certain practices so as to give them another meaning.

In an excellent American television documentary on Hollywood music, the composer David Raksin, trying to explain Herrmann's obsessive and reduced-to-the-minimum style, had the seemingly preposterous idea to go to the piano and play the initial motive of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, G–G–G–E♭, F–F–F–D, and then to suggest that, transcribed into the Herrmann style, it would become G–G–G–E♭, F♯–F♯–F♯–D—in other words, two major thirds descending stepwise. The major-thirds version is just as strikingly stated as Beethoven's, but it does not point to a resolution, and it opens up an infinite chain of repetitions. Raksin then plays a theme from Herrmann's score for Brian De Palma's *Sisters* (1973) that corresponds precisely to this pattern.

It does seem that one part of Herrmann's thematic raw material is the infinite playing-out of this pattern of descending thirds in coupled

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, op. 67 (excerpt)
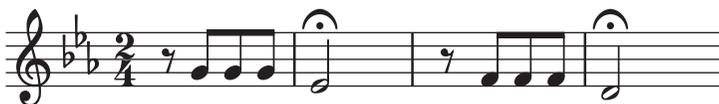
Herrmann/Raksin
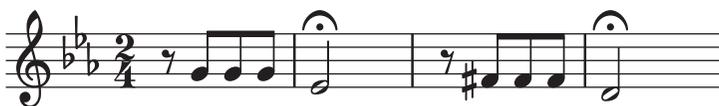
Herrmann's *Sisters* theme

chains, like linked wedding rings. Four-note themes, which can be broken down into two by two, are also very significant—like the descending arpeggios in the opening titles of the thriller *Cape Fear* (J. Lee Thompson, 1962), for which Herrmann wrote a score that was reorchestrated in 1991 for Scorsese's remake. The music often feels as if Herrmann sought maximum simplicity. Its power, however, comes from an internal contradiction: the harmonies are vague and the themes go nowhere, but they are stated in an often impetuous, raging, seemingly desperate manner. Vagueness affirmed with vehemence, that's the trademark of Bernard Herrmann.

As an orchestra conductor, Herrmann worked with great conviction and commitment, and it is quite possible that his musical style is inseparable from his passionate conducting. The beauty of his orchestral sound, his determined conviction to highlight a Wagnerian dominant ninth in *North by Northwest* (for example, in the love theme) is shattering, because the orchestra plays as if this is the first time a dominant ninth has ever been used. And in *Vertigo*, it's no accident that his romantic score was championed by a masterful British conductor famous for his collaboration with Laurence Olivier, Muir Mathieson.

After having started out in music for radio drama, Herrmann had the good fortune to gain recognition through Orson Welles's blaze of

glory, *Citizen Kane* (1941). The unforgettable opening, over the images of the ruins of Kane's estate in a dark and gloomy atmosphere, has music with extraordinary murky mixtures of sonorities (bass clarinet, vibraphone). This scoring was so striking that it established the composer's reputation. After *Kane*, Herrmann was often solicited for unusual, nostalgic, or fantastic films, such as *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1947), and for stories of obsession and monomania by Truffaut, De Palma, and Scorsese.

CHAMELEON COMPOSERS

During a discussion about the music for Fellini's *Casanova*, a film student asked me if Nino Rota might have been influenced by Philip Glass. The student thought he had perceived some analogies between Glass's repetitious style and Rota's score. This query caused me to think about film-music style and composition in a new way. I could obviously have answered that in historical terms such an influence is highly improbable, but that Rota could have found inspiration in previous music. Still, this doesn't get to the essence of the question for me. For the powerful German sequence near the end of *Casanova*, for example, Rota imitated Stravinsky in a strange way. To help evoke a chaotic gathering of soldiers, drinkers, and local country squires in the castle of Dux, he wrote a forceful cue whose ostinati and syncopated accents are reminiscent of passages in "Les Noces" or "The Rite of Spring." It is impossible for Rota not to have known what he was doing. He was not "influenced"; he just made use of a reference that seemed appropriate to yield an effect of barbarism. All film composers do the same thing. Most, in fact, are pickup musicians—as one says of pickup basketball or baseball players in a neighborhood—able to pick up styles to adapt to a scene's needs.[7]

The film composer is thus the person most conscious of his style: the very opposite of the concert composer, he plays with style for allusions and techniques. This could create an identity problem for film composers, as it can for actors—but that is another story, and each individual is different.

To begin with, the musical concept for a film is one thing; a composer's style is another.

Nino Rota himself wore several hats: he did not write for Visconti (*The Leopard*, 1963) or Coppola (*The Godfather*, 1972) the same way he did for Fellini, and there is no reason to believe that he was more "himself" when he worked with Fellini than when he composed for those two directors or for Sergey Bondarchuk (*Waterloo*, 1970) or Franco Zeffirelli (*The Taming of the Shrew*, 1967).

Besides, the Fellini-Rota collaboration varied quite a bit depending on the film. The scores of *Il bidone* (1955), *Casanova*, and *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1978) have three distinctly different musical styles. For the requirements of *Satyricon*, Rota (whose music is interspersed with a tapestry of citations of "ethnic" musics from all over the world) took inspiration from ancient music, or what is known of it, writing an archaic-sounding monodic melody. For *Casanova*, depending on the screenplay's requirements, here he would write a jumpy, distorted pastiche of baroque opera, and there he would compose a (fake) popular tune.

Fellini's musical "concept," for lack of a better word, survived beyond his principal musical collaboration when Rota died, in 1979. Luis Bacalov's score for Fellini's *City of Women* (1980), Gianfranco Plenizio's for *Ginger and Fred* (1986), and Nicola Piovani's for *Intervista* (1987) and *The Voice of the Moon* (1990) have a Fellinian spirit to them more than a Rotaesque one, even while they quote some of the musical gestures created by the departed master.

A musical idea or framework can precede the individual composer who brings it into being. Ten years before meeting Angelo Badalamenti, David Lynch had already charged *Eraserhead* (1977) with a very precise musical atmosphere. But the jazzy feel that's part of the atmosphere associated with the director today may well have been brought in by Badalamenti, who became Lynch's habitual collaborator, and contributed to establishing the "Lynch touch" better than Lynch alone would have been able to do. The most personal auteur is the product of the talents and visions others contribute to the work.

Film-music history reveals two kinds of specialized composers: either they limit themselves to one genre, or they collaborate with one

particular director through a number of films (with greater or lesser regularity). In either case the role of free artistic choice should not be exaggerated. Some director-composer partnerships and certain specializations have occurred as a matter of convenience, or arose from conditions of production; another obvious factor was friendship and artistic complicity, but it was often circumstances that determined them.

Fans of film music—those who collect soundtrack albums, publish or subscribe to specialized publications—have contributed a lot to the knowledge of this vast repertoire, of which just a small helping was available in record stores until recently. But not all fans take their greatest pleasure in auteur composers; sometimes it is a specific style of music that they go for. Some even prove merciless toward their own favorite film musicians, whom they categorize according to particular successes or genres, and whom they rebuke if they leave their assigned domain.

For example, John Williams wrote a lovely, intimate score for Martin Ritt's *Stanley and Iris* (1990), well suited to the movie's subject—Jane Fonda teaches illiterate adult Robert De Niro how to read. Since Williams did not produce the grand symphonic score normally expected of him, many fans automatically declared him no good here. And this, when the opposite criticism also gets leveled at Williams—of repeating himself too much, as if he has a choice and works in the abstract with full creative freedom.

GEORGES DELERUE

Like Herrmann, Georges Delerue, my third example, wrote operas and much other stage music. His subsequent reputation as a film composer did not help toward the performance of his earlier works, even in concert version. Through Delerue, of whom I will try to paint a portrait worthy of his personality and his complexity, I hope also to illustrate the case of a number of other composers, particularly French composers, among the best that have worked in film. Along with others such as Maurice Jarre, Michel Colombier, and Michel Legrand, Delerue ignored barriers between auteur cinema and popular cinema, and he felt that the working conditions offered to him were more interesting in the United States. And finally, like others, he is not easily categorizable as either a "tandem composer" or "*auteur maudit.*"

Delerue is a household name to French cinephiles, but he is famous for only a thin slice of his actual production—mostly some of the fetish films of the early New Wave (Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player*, from 1960, and Godard's *Contempt*, 1963). He wrote a considerable number of scores for popular comedies by Philippe de Broca—the best being *That Man from Rio* (1964) and *King of Hearts* (1966)—and for other French directors labeled "commercial." And how many people remember that he did the impressive score for Ken Russell's famed 1969 film *Women in Love*?

The prolific Delerue seems the ultimate embodiment of the chameleonic and unobtrusive movie composer; he excelled at serving whatever genre he worked in, or whatever director he worked for, and at playing the game of making his music evaporate into the very atmosphere that it creates. A sort of bulimia for all movie genres led him to try to practice his craft in all possible circumstances: upset by being classified as a "nostalgic" composer, he regretted not having gotten the chance to write more often for fantastic or dark works such as Harry Kümel's *Malpertuis* (*The Legend of Doom House*, 1971).

Once in a while a Delerue score attracts notice; when this occurred—for example, with Godard's *Contempt*—critical attention focused more on the original way the director's editing used it and made it tragically punctuate the film than on its own style. Ultimately, the audience heard it as a "quotation" of a beautiful classical piece taken from some unpublished work rather than as an entirely original creation by a contemporary composer.

Unlike Herrmann, who specialized largely in suspense and fantasy, or films on the dark side, Delerue was highly versatile and flexible. His music did not strike the ear with the recognizable trademark of a given mood, a specific genre (like the western), or an auteur director. Even with Truffaut, Delerue adapted his style to Truffaut's ideas of alternating romantic comedy with sentimental drama, period films with noir.

Finally, with only one exception,[8] Delerue did not become one of those "famous anonymous songwriters"—anonymous, that is, to the general public—who penned songs that spread worldwide. Partial neither to jazzy music nor to show tunes, he was a typical symphonic composer with solid classical training. Unlike American cinema's lavish orchestrations, Delerue's arrangements tend to employ a smaller variety of instruments and instrumental colors. He preferred to have one

solo instrument provide a characteristic atmosphere and color the mood or locale: for instance, an accordion, banjo, flute, or clarinet on a "bed of strings." This modesty of resources led American critics to consider him "typically French." He had occasion to write for numerous period films, pastiching all imaginable styles, old or foreign, with equal success. He even pastiched avant-garde music of different periods—the twenties (the neo-brutalist Russian ballet dance in *Women in Love*) and the sixties (in Andrzej Zulawski's film, *L'important c'est d'aimer* [*That Most Important Thing: Love*], 1975).

Among the many things Delerue excelled at was rendering painful tragedy, either expressing it in few notes (*Contempt*) or through a dense full orchestra where strings have the starring role. His key references are Bach and Brahms (a musician who sought a balanced synthesis between Romantic language and classical objectivity). "Balance" is a key word that comes up repeatedly in his rare and modest declarations of principles. Even when the most torrential temperament of a director like Ken Russell gave him the chance to unleash musically, he continued to employ a somber full orchestra, having the color of one solo instrument break through (the clarinet was his favorite).

Delerue brought his working method with him to the United States, and he appeared touched by his American colleagues' warm welcome. Oliver Stone engaged him for two political and war films (*Salvador* and *Platoon*, both from 1986); the Australian-born Bruce Beresford became his regular working partner after Truffaut's death. He scored French megaproductions centered around the Revolution (*Chouans!*, 1989, by Philippe de Broca), and delicate psychological films where his light and sober touch were appreciated, such as Fred Zinnemann's *Julia* (1977) and Mike Nichols's *Silkwood* (1983).

When illness prematurely took his life, at sixty-five, Delerue was showered with honors and homages, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States. But in France his name had become so familiar through his countless contributions—as much for television as for movies of every genre and movement—that he was somewhat trivialized and devalued.

The mythology of film music loves tandems, as we have seen. The often-mentioned legend of the Truffaut-Delerue duo does not correspond to reality.

This collaboration was not uniform. For several years Truffaut stopped working with the composer who had contributed to some of his first international successes (*Jules and Jim*, 1962), but also to the commercial and critical flop *The Soft Skin* (1964), now back in favor. Then, in his final years, following a series of films with Antoine Duhamel as composer, Truffaut returned to Delerue exclusively for several films.[9] For that period, we see that Truffaut often solicited Delerue in the serious, tragic, or romantic mode (*Two English Girls*, 1971; *The Woman Next Door*, 1981), but looked to other composers for his comedies.

With the agreement of the director, Delerue composed a score for *Shoot the Piano Player* that, rather than punctuating the turns of the plot moment by moment, remains faithful to Maurice Jaubert's spirit: the music works to create monotony and nostalgia condensed into an almost-static form, in complicity with the protagonist's reserved and secretive side.

In *Jules and Jim*, Delerue gracefully adopted the spirit of period pastiche to create a simple and nostalgic score. This music established a certain image of his talent (melancholy, sobriety, fragile happiness)—and an idea of Frenchness the composer would later seek to break away from. For example, he used a melody reduced to four notes and a uniform waltz rhythm to express the harmony of privileged moments (sequences of bicycle rides in the country).

The paradox (but is it even a paradox?) has it that it's Godard who deliberately played Delerue's music against the public's idea of it. For *Contempt*, Godard requested a somber and tragic German Romantic score to go with images awash in sun and blue skies. In so doing he glorified Delerue's music; he most artfully placed it outside its normal sphere even as he appropriated it for his unique uses.

Delerue composed a rather brief score for *Contempt* and allowed Godard to use it as he wished in the editing. By taking a few sequences of the score and using them repeatedly, integrating them into scenes through his unique approach to editing, Godard doubled or maybe even tripled the length of the score. Also, Godard foregrounded the beginnings and endings of cues so unconventionally that the music is constantly brought to our attention.

Is this a counterexample to his collaborations with Truffaut? Not so much as it may seem; oddly enough, there is a commonality between

the two pairings. We can see a robust classicism and density in the two most striking moments of Delerue's film-music work. The gorgeous "grand chorale" sequence in Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) and the opening credits for *Contempt* are both based on the same principle of a Bach-like style with rhythmic regularity supporting an expansive melody. In these two moments the composer's style reached a kind of timeless impersonality that seems mysteriously to have been his ultimate intention, his achievement, the sign of his success—and this, beyond all the "auteurist" conceptions that are usually put forward on the subject of film music.

MOVIE COMPOSERS IN SPITE OF THEMSELVES

There are also "involuntary" film composers, who could not have predicted that allowing one of their compositions to be used in a film would forever tie them to the movie, because of its success. One good example is that of György Ligeti and the third section of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). After *2001*, Kubrick would return to Ligeti for two more films—*The Shining* (1980) and, more prominently, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), where one movement of Ligeti's piano suite, *Musica ricercata*, functions not as accompaniment but as an essential thematic element.

A second example is Yann Tiersen, who would curse the day he gave permission for the use of his music in a film whose global success no one, including the director, could have foreseen. This was *Amélie* (2001), which in some countries was titled "Amélie of Montmartre"—a bit of bad luck for a composer proud of his roots in Brittany.

The newspaper *Midi Libre* wrote:

Stop talking to Yann Tiersen about *Amélie*! Despite its success in movie theaters and a César award for best music, the Breton musician has such bad memories of the experience that he no longer wants to be associated with it. He feels he's been misunderstood by *Amélie*'s audience, "who only see my music through this movie. I had given permission to Jean-Pierre Jeunet to use some pieces that were on albums I'd made, and he chose ones that fit in with the Montmartre ambiance, this folklore I find so irritating. If I had it to do again, I certainly wouldn't. People focused on this

naive movie—a nice one but not my cup of tea—and they associated me with its world. I found myself with an audience aged fifteen to thirty, foreign to my music. The auditorium would empty out when I spoke, which was fine with me!"[10]

THE TYPECASTING TRAP

Like the actor, the film composer, willingly or not, is often asked to create effects or moods that were appreciated in a prior film, and which he has no reason not to take up again. And also like the actor, he is often trapped by his very success into projects that do not necessarily reflect the range of his abilities. Vladimir Cosma and Gérard Calvi, composers who excelled in French comedies, would certainly have wished to break out of their "jobs" more often than they had the chance to do. But when Cosma, the fortunate composer of the pan-flute theme of *The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe* (Yves Robert, 1972), got the chance to work for a horror thriller, *Mort un dimanche de pluie* (*Death on a Rainy Sunday*, Joël Santoni, 1986), it's as if his name in the credits became transparent, and the rest of his career seems not to have been affected at all. In this respect the film composer is what you might call an invisible actor. But when he is too visible, he has other problems.

Ennio Morricone is a composer overtaken by his own legend, especially his imitations, but who later found success in working in different genres, analogous to the "compleat actor."

"As far as westerns are concerned," he declared, "I've turned down a hundred of them and only made thirty, which is not a lot out of two hundred eighty films. I did not want people, especially those in the industry, to think I was a specialist in westerns, which would have shut me off from other genres that interested me."[11]

Not everyone has had this good fortune, or perhaps this ambition. In the United States, Bill Conti (*The Right Stuff*, Philip Kaufman, 1983), Michael Kamen (*Die Hard*, John McTiernan, 1988), and Alan Silvestri (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, Robert Zemeckis, 1988), known for action and fantasy, would no doubt have liked to compose more often for psychological dramas. Even Henry Mancini, immensely popular from the *Pink Panther* theme, among many others, and for helping create the

world of Blake Edwards, might have had a dormant Bernard Herrmann lurking within. Peer Raben (talented composer for many Fassbinder films, who also created an elegantly ironic score for *La Femme flambée* [*A Woman in Flames*], by Robert van Ackeren, 1983) or Jürgen Knieper, known as Wim Wenders's faithful composer (*Wings of Desire*, 1987), might have hit singles stashed away. And who knows if Scott Bradley, forever associated with Tex Avery's best cartoons, didn't have the right stuff for dramatic films, and wouldn't have changed place with Frank Skinner, who worked with Sirk on some of the latter's great romantic melodramas (*Imitation of Life*, 1959)? Or whether Richard Robbins, who spent much of his career in the shadow of the justly well-reputed films of James Ivory (like the beautiful *Howards End*, 1992) wouldn't wish one day to be "invited" into other genres, or wouldn't Stanley Myers, who works with Stephen Frears (*Prick Up Your Ears*, 1987)?

Likewise, James Horner (*Aliens*, James Cameron, 1986; *The Name of the Rose*, Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1986; *Glory*, Edward Zwick, 1989) is one of these "all-terrain" composers who can flourish in several domains; some admirers tend to underestimate him, because they cannot peg him to a specific director or genre. I think of the charming, magical atmosphere his music can convey with just a piano and a synthesizer, in the fantasy drama *Field of Dreams* (Phil Alden Robinson, 1989).

VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE ACTOR

A creator of film music is thus often misunderstood, and she is not necessarily credited for either her work in researching music or the evolution of her career, like an actor disappearing behind her different roles. I am thinking particularly about this very specific phenomenon whereby some French composers whose classic films are seen frequently on TV seem to have become invisible to their compatriots if they work in a different setting or in Hollywood. *Dead Poets Society* (1989), made in the United States by Australian-born Peter Weir, had enormous success in France and was talked about for months, but no one referred to its composer, Maurice Jarre. Once Jarre started working in Los Angeles, as did other French composers like Michel Colombier and Michel Legrand, he became like a shadow to our French

critics. And this, even though for the detective film *Witness* (1985), Jarre dared to use science-fiction and synthetic sounds, creating a mood of suspense and anxiety that was wholly original for the genre.

Sometimes famous elder statesmen who become heroes after they pass away cast a shadow over their successors. Pino Donaggio is often viewed—wrongly, in my opinion—as an imitator of Bernard Herrmann because he contributed to a number of films by Brian De Palma, many of whose early works emulated Hitchcock. But while it is true that *Dressed to Kill* (1980) is a variation on *Psycho*, Donaggio's music is not a second-order work paralleling Herrmann's. Unlike Herrmann, and aided and abetted by De Palma, Donaggio likes to create sentimental, even glamorous music; he is not afraid of writing scores that are like concertos for piano and orchestra in forties style. Their lush sweetness creates malaise when juxtaposed with morbid violence onscreen, and at the same time they give expression to the director's singular romanticism. De Palma gave Donaggio free rein for the marvelous long, dialogue-less sequence in *Dressed to Kill* where Angie Dickinson, to her great misfortune, is followed by a man in an art museum in New York. The sequence is a bravura piece, as the music, which is foregrounded, accompanies and romantically supports her meanderings. But few films offer such space to their composers.

Of course, as with actors, some composers are sought for certain films because of the musical world they hail from, from a métier they often seek to broaden. Danny Elfman came from pop music; and if a project requires orchestral music, he must rely on an orchestrator, as he did for Tim Burton in films like *Edward Scissorhands* (1990). Another composer coming from songwriting might make it a point to pursue further musical training. The problem is that the fragmented and ad-hoc aspect of a movie's music requirements do not often give musicians much leisure in which to do so.

ACTOR AND CREATOR

Unlike the actor—unlike certain ones, in any case—the composer rarely has the option to exert much control over the film for which he is writing, because he is not involved in its production like some

actors are. However, just as the profession of acting does not prevent people from also directing, playwriting, or screenwriting, some film composers have produced entire stand-alone repertoires for the stage or concert hall. Well-known examples include Antoine Duhamel, Miklós Rósza, Georges Delerue, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and Toru Takemitsu. Shostakovich, Honegger, and others reworked some of their film music into symphonic versions for orchestral suites. Superb scores remain buried within both renowned and obscure pictures. I am convinced that the beauty and density of Michel Colombier's score for *Une chambre en ville* (Jacques Demy, 1982) would make for a wonderful opera, once necessary changes (for example, transposing settings) were made; it's a shame that this music is not appreciated more widely. What would prevent its rerelease to gain this recognition? When Bernard Herrmann, thanks to the efforts of devoted followers, finally rerecorded his score for *Citizen Kane*, it became evident that the "Salammbô" aria, which you can hardly hear in the film, is easily the equal of some classics of opera when performed by Kiri Te Kanawa.

By centering this book on music in cinema, I did not mean to deprive music written for movies of the possibility of leading an autonomous existence. On the contrary, good music should be permitted to enjoy a rich and varied life. I simply wish to remind readers that film is a unique locus, a space where many of the usual laws do not hold.

And this is particularly because another "composer" intervenes in the making of a film, one who bears the greatest responsibility for it as a whole: the director.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

As we have seen, silent cinema made widespread use of preexisting classical music. But classical music was relatively rare in the first two decades of sound film. There were exceptions, of course, including Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto heard in David Lean's *Brief Encounter* (1945) and a number of classics in Max Ophüls's *The Novel of Werther* (1938); classical music was also heard in many melodramas made in Italy, where the silent era's tradition of compilation scoring persisted. Only gradually did classical music regain favor in the fifties

and sixties, mainly in auteur films. Renoir was among those who used classical pieces, in *The Rules of the Game* (1939) and *The Golden Coach* (1953). Other highlights of this period include:

- Jean-Pierre Melville—*Les Enfants terribles* (1950), using Vivaldi and Bach
- Luchino Visconti—starting with his brilliant use of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony in *Senso* (1954)
- Robert Bresson—Mozart in *A Man Escaped* (1956), Lully in *Pickpocket* (1959), and Schubert in *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966)
- Ingmar Bergman—beginning with *The Devil's Eye* (1960), with music adapted from Scarlatti
- Stanley Kubrick—*2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), with Johann Strauss and Richard Strauss.

Many other French filmmakers adopted classical music, such as Agnès Varda (the Mozart soundtrack for *Le Bonheur*, 1965), and Louis Malle (the Brahms sextet in *The Lovers*, 1958). Bertrand Blier, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Claude Chabrol also made frequent use of classical recordings.

Many of the elaborate films "composed" by the director Michel Deville (after Deville stopped working on the screenplays of Nina Companeez, with whom he cowrote charming comedies in the spirit of Musset) consist of varying doses of detective film, eroticism, comedy of manners, literature, and narrative and formal experimentation, and in them music is not merely a raw material but a clear reference as well. Each of his films stands as a different kind of challenge: two women's wandering, punctuated by real and made-up accounts of their sexual experiences, in *Le Voyage en douce* (*A Sweet Journey*, 1980); a film without dialogue called *La Petite Bande* (*The Little Bunch*, 1983, music by Edgar Cosma); a couple's postcoital nightlong conversation until dawn in the single set of an apartment (*Nuit d'été en ville* [*Summer Night in Town*], 1990).

The music for Deville's films is most often borrowed from classical composers, always used for transitions and echoes in an erudite layering. But he avoided simple or popular pieces such as the Vivaldi concertos that Truffaut favored, or pieces that convey immediate emotions. Music with Deville seems not to want to provoke emotion, but rather to emphasize formal articulations.

His film *Paltoquet* (1986) is based on the idea of a round of suspects of a crime, in a stylized enclosed space (a mod café-bar). The director states:

> The film begins with a car honk and construction noises that subside. The Paltoquet [wise guy] puts on a record, a quartet by Janáček. The music accompanies and announces the entrance of characters: the theme remains the same, the instruments change. (But the characters of Lotte and the woman manager each have personal musical themes.) At the end there is a second beep; the exterior noises invade the interior space. Michel Piccoli leaves both the dream and the factory, and says to his driver, whom we recognize as the doctor: "Home, Lucien." Then the dream music starts again, first on the driver, then on the others.[12]

Michel Piccoli's character, the Paltoquet, is a kind of ringmaster who directs the action through phonograph records. Note also that the structure Deville describes amounts to an endless dream—people awaken from it only to find they are still inside it, as in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986).

For *Péril en la demeure* (*Peril*, 1985), Deville turns to Brahms, "whom I liked because of his grand lyrical impulses, his violence that stood in counterpoint to the film's dry elliptical narration." He also used Schubert and Granados to render the feminine world, as he put it. "I also liked the contrasts among solo instruments—piano and guitar—and chamber music, the trio." Indeed, the filmmaker almost always chooses music for soloist or small ensemble, and sometimes has it rearranged that way. Deville has the unique habit of often choosing one sole composer per film: Camille Saint-Saëns for *Le Mouton enragé* (*Love at the Top*, 1974) and Bizet in *L'Apprenti salaud* (*The Apprentice Heel*, 1977).

The classical tendency has culminated in the later films of Terrence Malick. *The Tree of Life* (2011) has cues by Smetana, Berlioz, François Couperin, Bach, and Mahler, among which Desplat's original music serves as connective tissue. In *Knight of Cups* (2015) Hanan Townshend's original scoring does the connecting among Grieg, Debussy, and Vaughan Williams. We find this predilection also with Lars von Trier—for example, for *Melancholia*, whose striking and gorgeous opening plays the Prelude of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

To be sure, silent films and sound films differ enormously in the way they use classical pieces. While silent cinema made use of arrangements, with piano or small-ensemble reductions played live with vastly varying performance quality, sound film offers the authentic sound of music taken from a recording, allowing for an entire symphony orchestra and peerless performance. In other cases—for example, films that borrow Mozart or Bach—the music is almost always rearranged for orchestra or tailored to fit the needs of the particular situation.

The composer Philippe Sarde, who did an adaptation of Bach for a scene of Claude Sautet's *A Simple Story* (1978), whose characters are musicians, stated that "it is very difficult to use classical music in films without reworking it. In this scene, characters listen to music but then, when they're leaving, this music becomes the film's music. It is no longer Bach when we get to the closeup of Romy Schneider. 'Bach' is only the first phrases heard with the concert performers." And when someone countered that Kubrick used classical pieces as-is, Sarde clarified: "The music is adapted, reworked, even if it changes only a few measures or modifies the way it is played."[13] This is also true for *Barry Lyndon*, but less so for *2001*, where the pieces of Ligeti, Richard Strauss, and Johann Strauss are integrated using preexisting recordings.

I am not about to run through all the thousands of examples of classical excerpts in films—an entire book would be needed just to take stock of cinema's major uses of classical music. In the paragraphs that follow, the composers who interest me are not only those who have been most quoted and admirably incorporated into films, but also those whose style has served as a model for certain directions taken by film music, and thus seem to fit the needs of the seventh art.

VIVALDI AND BACH

It is surely no coincidence that Vivaldi is one of the most frequently quoted and pastiched composers. Simple and immediately popular, even as it maintains stylish and skillful aplomb, isn't Vivaldi's music synonymous with movement, and isn't movement (etymologically speaking) part of the word "cinema"? Movies have featured numerous versions of Vivaldi's works—as in the frothy teen movie *A Little Romance*

(George Roy Hill, 1979), in an arrangement that ironically won Georges Delerue his "Best Score" Oscar—and countless references to *The Four Seasons* (even in films by the Soviet documentarian Artavazd Peleshian and the Marseille filmmaker Robert Guédiguian). Vivaldi has been imitated, too, in the most unlikely circumstances. Chaplin was inspired by Vivaldi's adamantly repetitious harmonic progressions for the comic boxing match in *City Lights*, and this allusion adds a touch of humor and elegance. Other, more predictable music "in the manner of" Vivaldi can be heard in swashbuckler movies.

Film history has deployed several Bachs. First we have Bach as the symbol of eternal joy, triumphant regularity, and the sublime flow of life, as heard in so many French films of the 1960s. Among these, many adopt Bach verbatim: the C Major prelude from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* in Jacques Demy's *Lola* (1961) that highlights a moment of perfect felicity; or the Bach of the religious cantatas pastiched by Michel Magne in Roger Vadim's *Love on a Pillow* (1962), or by Michel Legrand in *Who Are You, Polly Maggoo?* (William Klein, 1966). We should not confuse that Bach with the ascetic and purified Bach of the solo cello suites, which Ingmar Bergman used on several occasions (*Through a Glass Darkly*, 1961; *The Silence*, 1963; *Persona*, 1966) as emblematic of cinema in quest of essential truth. All things being equal, Michael Nyman's original music for the films of Peter Greenaway and Jane Campion, or Philip Glass's scores—whether written specially for the screen (*Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, Paul Schrader, 1985; *Kundun*, Martin Scorsese, 1997; *The Hours*, Stephen Daldry, 2002) or quoted, as, for example, in *Merci la vie* (Bertrand Blier, 1990)—play somewhat the same role as the references to Bach during the sixties: expressing a regular and domesticated flow of radiant energy, as an alternative to the naturally romantic and expressionistic tradition of film music.

It is often "effective" to deploy Bach in movies because some filmmakers, such as in Disney's *Fantasia* (1940), wish to use his music as the basis for a ballet of nonfigurative imagery (the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor). Not only that: Bach's imperious abstraction can create a surprising and dramatically forceful collision with the solid, physical quality of cinema. With Bergman, for example, and also with Tarkovsky, the music resonates in a world of bodies, skin, blood, and mud.

In Jacques Audiard's film *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* (2005, a remake of James Toback's *Fingers*, 1978), a Bach toccata was chosen both

for its sovereign order and for the violence it succeeds in expressing; the protagonist, played by Romain Duris, leads a criminal life at the same time he aspires to be a concert pianist. In David Fincher's *Seven* (1995), the "Air" from the Orchestral Suite no. 3 in D Major resounds (as screen music), while the cultured, world-weary policeman played by Morgan Freeman, in a library, consults ancient religious texts and images from the Bible and Dante that may have inspired the perpetrator of some frightful crimes he is investigating. In these two cases, the pious composer's music confronts evil, as it certainly does in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

MOZART

The Mozart favored in the movies is, of course, the Mozart of the popular opera arias—for example, from *The Magic Flute*—for reasons not hard to see. The piano concertos and especially their slow movements, those in which several piano notes spread out above the strings in a sort of contemplative space, are beloved by filmmakers (e.g., in 1967's *Elvira Madigan*, by Bo Widerberg), perhaps because they can represent the fragility of the human soul through the fragility of sound and of music itself. The sound of the piano becomes this thing that the smallest event might rupture, and in this form fixed onto film and created by editing and splices that is cinema, the result is a particularly dramatic and moving effect of precariousness. Similarly, the immense melodic phrase of the "Ave verum," rearranged in Ophüls's *Le Plaisir* (1952) so that it seems to emanate from a modest ensemble in a country church, intervenes, in the deeply moving sequence of the prostitutes present at a First Communion, as if to hold out a fragile bridge between God and humans, and to embrace in its arc a huge moment of emotion. Here as elsewhere, cinema has not remained insensitive to Mozartian phrasing and to its unique way of "temporalizing" a scene, as I discussed in the last chapter.

One movie cliché consists of hearing sung Mozart pieces in particularly horrible, perverse, or threatening situations. In *The Night Porter* (Liliana Cavani, 1974), the former SS officer played by Dirk Bogarde finds his "victim" (Charlotte Rampling), the wife of an orchestra conductor, during a performance of *The Magic Flute* at the Vienna Opera years after the war has ended.

BEETHOVEN AND SCHUBERT

Beethoven's music, familiar in 1930s and 1940s films and rarer since then, is traditionally the incarnation of power, grandeur, and the human drama, and of tragedy as well. For these purposes it can be quoted directly or it can be plagiarized; the latter occurs in a surprising way in Mizoguchi's realist melodrama *Women of the Night* (1948): officially the music credit goes to Hisato Osawa, but it's the Allegro from the Fifth Symphony.

The second movement of the Seventh Symphony, the Allegretto, with its variations, is regularly reprised in the "finale" of many films, such as *Zardoz* (John Boorman, 1974), *The King's Speech* (Tom Hooper, 2010), and *Of Gods and Men* (Xavier Beauvois, 2010). But one of the most beautiful examples is the one in Jacques Demy's *Lola* (1961). This music seems to be the perfect weapon to open hearts and jerk tears.

The Sixth ("Pastoral") Symphony is one of Beethoven's most frequently cited works in film. Not only did it inspire the ballet of the centaurs and naiads that comprises the worst section of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (1940), but it is also part of the music for a moving scene in Richard Fleischer's *Soylent Green* (1973), owing to its very "postcard" quality. In a chaotic dystopian future (the year 2022!), an elderly researcher, played by Edward G. Robinson, in his final role, dies by assisted suicide, surrounded by images (projected on the walls) of idyllic scenes of a nature that has ceased to exist. The world as we know it has been wiped out by overpopulation and pollution . . . These naive images of long-gone forests, deer, and sunsets are accompanied by the Pastoral, which becomes all the more poignant as an obsolete musical witness to a civilization in its final throes.

We should note that this presence of classical music, the harmonious voice of a world forever lost, acts in a similar way in *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Inside a gigantic rusty space ship where we see not the least trace of culture, where squalor, brutality, and—with the monster's intrusion—mortal peril reign, the captain tastes some ephemeral seconds of comfort with the slow movement of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, the sole island of light in this night.

Godard made significant uses of Beethoven's late quartets in *A Married Woman* (1964) and especially in *First Name: Carmen* (1983). He deploys the string quartets in the form of small fragments that abruptly

cut off, are interrupted, and are pasted in. This treatment emphasizes their tense and combative quality, giving the impression of music that's constantly on high alert, in harmony with his own world of inexpiable struggle between the sexes.

Doubtless because of its mysterious and enigmatic opening, where the music arises from silence, Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" haunts the cinema in a wide range of genres, from Robert Aldrich's noir thriller *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), where we hear it as a shudder of the coming apocalypse, to Kurosawa's populist postwar chronicle *One Wonderful Sunday* (1947), which uses it in a surprising way I will describe in the next chapter.

The frequent association in Schubert with a rhythmic structure that is simple, popular, straightforward, lively, based on a walking pace, and full of pathos, marked from the outset by destiny (while ethos in Beethoven is allied with variations in tempo and effects of phrasing), has seduced many directors, who have directly drawn from him, the French perhaps most insistently. Claude Miller used the "Fantasy for Two Pianos in C Minor" in *Dites-lui que je l'aime* (*The Sweet Sickness*, 1977), the story of an obstinate and hopeless love, based on Patricia Highsmith. Schubert is also brought into play by Bertrand Blier in *Too Beautiful for You* (1989) and Christian Vincent in *La Discrète* (1990). In French film, which adores emotional reserve, Schubert is often used for modest scenes as the composer of individual distress, of suffering behind the cheerful mask.

CHOPIN

Chopin's music is the easiest to introduce diegetically into a film, since the works are among the easier pieces an actor can actually play on a piano. In *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978) it is quite moving to hear George Dzundza awkwardly reel off Nocturne no. 6 on a bad bar piano. His playing silences his loud, drunken comrades who have to leave for Vietnam soon. In chapter 7 I will discuss the famous and cruel scene of Bergman's *Autumn Sonata* (1978) where a mother demolishes her daughter's interpretation of Chopin, and the complex and moving scene with Chopin's G Minor ballade in *The Pianist*, which I described at length in the introduction. Also, let us not forget the apocalyptic and martial Chopin, like the one Albert Lewin has Dorian Gray play (to a

young Angela Lansbury) in his magnificent adaptation of Oscar Wilde's novel (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1945). Finally, of course, there are numerous filmed biographies of Chopin, too.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Just as there are two Bachs, the screens show us two Tchaikovskys: the one of bursts of passion and despair, as heard in *The Jazz Singer*, and, almost as important for cinema, the enchanting, falsely gay Tchaikovsky of the ballets, especially *The Nutcracker*. The latter seems to have influenced the universe of Fellini and Rota, perhaps by way of orchestral arrangements heard at circuses and bandstands. The fictive music directed in Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal* is at times somewhat in the spirit of *The Nutcracker*: sentimentality and liveliness contained, compromised in a minuscule and spindly sound (especially with the flutes).

The inescapable Wagner demands a whole section here.

WAGNER, FILM COMPOSER?

I read in Loïc Pierre's doctoral thesis that one Peter J. Wise published a comparative study proving the existence of a prominent relationship between John Williams's score for the *Star Wars* trilogy and Wagner's tetralogy, on the following grounds.

a. The two composers elaborated their work based on leitmotivs;
b. Wagner and Williams both utilize a large orchestra with a large brass section;
c. Late nineteenth-century Romanticism and chromaticism are important to the two works;
d. Williams revisits the dramaturgical systems used in the tetralogy, such as the punctuating of action by music;
e. Frequent use of rhythmic and melodic ostinatos to extend the thematic material;
f. Williams utilizes Wagnerian devices such as bugle calls (*Siegfried*).[14]

Let us recapitulate. Probably nine-tenths of all classical-era and modern film scores are built upon leitmotifs; American scores of the

forties and fifties often use a large orchestra; late nineteenth-century Romanticism and chromaticism are more than common in cinema; and, finally, using ostinati to support speech is the most widespread (because the most practical) composing device in film music. Ergo, many hundreds of film scores present the same "astonishing resemblance" to Wagner.

The moral of the story is that everything is in Wagner and Wagner is in everything. Wagner did not claim to reinvent everything, and on several levels all he did was help himself to tried and true operatic and symphonic practices. As to certain of his compositional principles, they were massively adopted after him in the orchestral literature for ballet, stage, and concert, and thus became common currency.

On the other hand, Wagner's dramatic ideas, beginning with his notion of an invisible orchestra, were much more crucial for cinema, and these ideas include what some people have judged to be his weaknesses—monologues and narrations—and which seem retrospectively to have summoned the cinema to correct them.

In my view, it would be a mistake to consider that the lengthy narrations by characters to recap story events, accounts that punctuate each episode of the tetralogy, are merely the result of the scenic and technical limitations that the Wagnerian utopia had to settle for, and that the Master of Bayreuth would have replaced them by moving photographic images had he been a contemporary of cinema. Quite to the contrary, his embedded stories contribute powerfully to the mythic resonance of his work. But perhaps this error of interpretation, in its naive teleological thinking, has been more productive and stimulating for the cinema than a more objective assessment would have been, since it provided cinema both a grandiose model and a challenge to rise to.

I am thinking specifically of an essay by Jacques Bourgeois, who shows a refreshing lack of reverence for the author of *Parsifal*.[15] "The limited setting of the opera theater lay at the origin of Wagner's other dramatic mistakes. The slowdown of the action, due to the length of the stories that punctuate the drama, would disappear if the events the character relates could be shown: 'And then Wotan felled the World Tree and piled the branches very high around Valhalla' (*Götterdämmerung*, act 1, Waltraute's account)."

Besides, Bourgeois adds,

certain parts of the story, which Wagner wrote with grandiose scenic ideas in mind, can be realized only imperfectly on a stage but would lend themselves to illustration in a film. We only need mention the bacchanal of Venusberg [in *Tannhäuser*], the entry of the gods into Valhalla [*Das Rheingold*], the ride of the Valkyries [*Die Walküre*], Siegfried's battle with the dragon [*Siegfried*], the scene of the transformation of Montsalvat [*Parsifal*]. Finally let us point out that the directing notes for the finale of *Götterdämmerung* present a veritable shot list for a movie—with establishing shots, closeups, pans, and tracking shots.[16]

Cannot we make the very opposite argument—that Wagner saw these narrated accounts as precisely *not* destined for scenic illusion, which were not "necessary" for the simple progress of the plot, but that on the other hand the cinema, in working out its way of presenting narratives, positioned itself as the art that allows us to see the mental images born from the words of a character?

The list of films where large orchestral excerpts and, less often, vocal excerpts are heard, is endless. It runs from *The Great Dictator*, by Chaplin, which plays *Lohengrin*'s prelude twice over, to Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*. In between are films by Visconti, Boorman, Syberberg, Malle, and Coppola.

DEBUSSY, RAVEL, STRAVINSKY

Another composer with an equally large influence on film music, and not always where we would expect, is Claude Debussy. If I say that by paying close attention to the "fandango" action theme of Herrmann's score for *North by Northwest* you'll hear Debussy's "Nuages" lurking within, you might take this remark as a facile jest or yet another paradox. And yet, using his own musical vocabulary, Herrmann was able to take inspiration from the French composer, even as he gave the material an entirely different sense. He infused vehemence and strongly marked rhythm into a vague harmonic and modal language, depressive downward turns in the melodic line, and frequent duplications of motifs—three traits of Debussyesque style.[17]

Theme from *Alien*
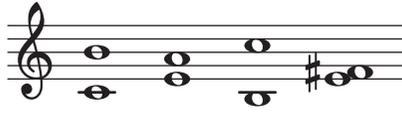
Works such as "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," "Ibéria," and *La Mer*, with their spatial effects of resonances, their echoes, their patterns of ebb and flow, and their fluid rhythm appropriate to accompany the living spectacle of nature, have inspired an incalculable number of musical sequences for scenes of travel or the great outdoors. Debussy has yet another very clear influence on film music . . . in horror films. People seem to forget the importance of the role that fear and anxiety play in *Pelléas and Mélisande* (e.g., in the terrifying scene where Prince Golaud uses the child Yniold to spy on the two heroes) and in the unfinished opera *The Fall of the House of Usher*, based on Poe. In my view, Debussy is the composer who in the most discreet and effective manner has managed to express anxiety, apprehension, and the void.

While German expressionist music, as found in Alban Berg or in early Schoenberg, is roiled by constant dramatic climaxes, appropriate for films whose stories are in a constant state of overexcitement, Debussyesque style goes particularly well with scenes of expectation and vague menace. And such scenes—I must remind readers who do not watch many horror films or those who maintain a stereotyped idea of them—occupy the most screen time of many of these films and in fact constitute their attraction.

It is not surprising that Jerry Goldsmith, one of the most creative of the movie composers who came into their own in the 1970s, borrowed much of his musical vocabulary from Debussy for his score for *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) and not just from the 1960s–1970s noise music of Xenakis, Penderecki, and the so-called Polish school. It's because this great science fiction thriller aims to establish a sense of dread and of the supernatural, of the mute allure of the void.

The theme in *Alien* associated with the void of space is a four-note motif, strung together in disorienting intervals (major seventh, a perfect fourth, minor ninth, major second), similar to the beginning of Debussy's "Nuages," played without inflection on flute, as an expression

of solitude in the cosmos. The theme naturally recalls many passages in Holst's "Planets," but especially—through or beyond Holst—Debussy. With its tonal indecision and vague rhythm, it becomes the vocabulary of murky foreboding, of something embryonic. But when, at the beginning of the film, the crew on the spaceship is awakened from their cryogenic sleep, in a scene that feels both enchanted and frightening, the references that enter Goldsmith's music are rather the "magical" orchestral effects dear to Ravel, particularly in *Daphnis et Chloe* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*. These two French "impressionist" composers synthesized a vocabulary of tonal color, sensation, raw material free of any academic rigidity, and this musical language can ally itself admirably with film, which is so often the art of mystery and night.

In this necessarily cursory and incomplete list of composers I consider central to film music, I wish, finally, to mention Stravinsky. His sense of thematic economy, his reduction of music to a play of simple elements that lend themselves to immediate perception, influenced film music in an extraordinary way. I should cite, among others, Fusco's score for Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and Herrmann's for Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry* (1955). In addition, Stravinsky's revisitation of styles of the past, once called neoclassicism,[18] corresponds especially well to certain problems of cinema. Pastiches and imitations of certain sequences of *The Rite of Spring* or other ballets haunt the original music of many films, whether we think of *Fellini's Casanova* (1976) (e.g., in the sequence composed by Nino Rota of the drinking binge and soldiers singing in Dresden, accompanied on various organs), or sequences in the animated movie *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001), with an orchestral score by Joe Hisaishi.

These seem to me to be the principal references, at least in terms of classical repertoire, for film music, the references from which it has drawn its methods and devices. But cinema can also try to make music its very subject, as well as its raw material. The next chapter explores how.

7

MUSIC AS SUBJECT, METAPHOR, AND MODEL

MILOŠ FORMAN said that the seed for his film *Amadeus*, one of the first great popular and critical successes in the thorny genre of the composer biopic, was planted one evening when he went to see Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*. The play, on a fictional theme that had already been treated before by Pushkin and Rimsky-Korsakov in *Mozart and Salieri*, contained only about ten minutes of music. That inspired him to make a movie and include what had been missing. "For a reason I don't really understand, theater—with the exception of opera, of course—is resistant to music. I know that Shaffer, who was a music critic and who adores Mozart's work, would have wanted more music in his play, but he couldn't figure out how to do it. And film, for its part, attracts music."[1]

There is an explanation for Forman's observation about the difference between film's attraction to music and theater's resistance to it. The resources of editing and mixing enable films to coordinate and regulate music sound levels, dialogue, and action, and they can combine musical space and visual space with great freedom; spoken theater does not allow this flexibility. Historically speaking, the movies created a new tradition whereby music can enter or cut out at any moment, and this makes things a lot easier. That said, in some modern theater, the actors wear microtransmitters that amplify their

voices, and recorded musical elements can be embedded and played with precision; so, technology now enables this type of musical-visual balance onstage, as we see in some of Robert Wilson's productions.

The unique thing cinema contributes to this domain is the pairing of the closeup human face with music. In this encounter, cinema can reveal two mysteries: how music is born, and what happens when we listen to it. These are by nature invisible phenomena. And naturally, invisibility is of interest to cinema.

FILMING MUSIC

We should not expect films whose story involves an orchestra or music to show them in a realistic way. Most often, movies about composers, too, are either stereotyped or obfuscated. In masterpieces such as Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) or Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1978), music is presented as if it exists on its own, without someone to create it. The issue of its origin, its signature, is seldom actually treated. Not to say that these films are fraudulent, but rather that they appear to arise from the kind of immediate and archaic impressions that one gets from music in early childhood, whereby music is an autonomous force, an expression, a voice in itself.

The way the creative process of music-making is shown in films has always amused specialists. Everything seems caricatured, idealized, or simplistic. Of course, the manner in which cinema presents reality in general is itself simplistic, and some degree of stylization has to be accepted for music as well as for the rest. In the movies a meal lasts two minutes, cars take off in a second, work is shown in a condensed and conventional way, and symphonies get composed with a flick of the quill pen when they don't spring directly from the writer's head already orchestrated. But let us avoid playing the finicky professor who collects the most flagrant inaccuracies in a clip reel for laughs.

Musicians have good reason to be aggravated. In many a biopic of a composer, improviser, instrumentalist, singer, or orchestra conductor, the subject serves as a prop for some metaphor—of creativity, power (especially in films about orchestra conductors), interpersonal relationships, love (in musical melodramas), and so forth. At the same time,

it's not just the realm of music and musicians that gives rise to such metaphors.

The essential difference from films devoted to painters or writers (whether historical or fictional) is that music can serve a dual function in a single film, since music can be both the "star" or subject and the accompaniment. Generally it moves from the screen to the pit (i.e., from diegetic to nondiegetic), where it resumes its usual functioning. Rare are the films that do not use it in this way, killing two birds with one stone. Among the exceptions, where the music remains onscreen, are Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal*—the director refused to use the music the musicians play to support dialogue and action—and the beautiful, rigorous *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (1968).

In an austere style, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* shows the everyday work life of Johann Sebastian Bach (played by the noted harpsichordist-conductor-musicologist Gustav Leonhardt), and unlike conventional dramas, it allows us to watch and hear the playing of a number of Bach's pieces in their entirety. Straub and Huillet filmed these extended musical performances with direct sound and no cuts.

The film, as I see it, tackles the issue of the relations between the instrumental cause and the sound, between external space of performance and internal space of musical discourse. Few things are more disappointing than watching instruments being played in a film. You get the impression that the camera is never "where it's happening." Straub and Huillet avoid the stereotypical imagery of playing that consists of presenting many shots with constant changes in angle to mimic the movement of the music—and is a way of avoiding the question of "where it's happening." I am distinguishing here between filmed singing and instrumental music; it is the latter that especially creates this ambiguity regarding the relations between the cause (the instrument) and the place of the sound.

In a concert, the listener's attention, consciously or otherwise, ceaselessly wanders among three things: focusing on the music, watching the spectacle of the performance and the audience, and daydreaming inspired by the music without necessarily following its discourse. Straub and Huillet oblige us to pay attention to our inattention, with no escape hatch. The film gives us the feeling (which is not unpleasant

if we consent to play along) of being glued to our chair with our head locked into looking one way. The setup of a film screening itself (the auditorium in darkness, the image in a frame) no longer leaves the possibility of letting our eyes wander.

Another issue posed by instrument-playing in film, which *The Chronicle* addresses, is that a performance in a confined space, which the player concentrates on without saying a word, can quickly become boring. That is, unless the player makes a show of it, which some musicians certainly do. A Keith Jarrett or Glenn Gould who mimes, hums, and gesticulates is a *character* on film, while others with equal talent offer the camera only a smooth and monotonous surface.

In the Straub-Huillet film, presented as a narration (Anna Magdalena's voiceover reads a diary), there is also the issue of music as dramatic action. According to Claudia Gorbman, filmed music is caught up in its narrative framework, and it is difficult for us to pay attention to the musical discourse itself. She cites the scene in Rohmer's *My Night at Maud's* (1969) where the camera is fixed on the violinist Leonid Kogan playing a Mozart sonata.

> Narrative context wins out . . . Even though the music claims the foreground, the spectator pays attention to it only incidentally, for two other factors preempt his/her interest. First, since previous shots have strongly suggested that the concert is seen from [protagonist] Paul's point of view . . . one tends to concentrate as much on the fact of Paul's spectatorial presence as on the explicit content of the scene (musicians and music). . . . Thus, in this supposedly purely musical scene, musical codes are still vying for attention over visual and cinematic codes.[2]

The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach further demonstrates this phenomenon, *a contrario*, because of the effort it demands of the spectator.

> The film consists primarily of musical performances; any nonmusical elements are there to add authenticity and meaning to the Bach works performed. The actors deliver their lines in a flat monotone, constantly denying the viewer the pleasure of immersion in a fictional continuity. For this reason, *Chronicle* may require at least two viewings, so that the

viewer learns to experience the music without insisting on cinematic (narrative) discourse. . . . In *Chronicle*, . . . the drastic degree of cinematic minimization necessary in this enterprise attests eloquently to the enormity of the spectator's will—or conditioning—to impose narrative motivations in viewing a film. As an exception to the rule, *Chronicle* reconfirms the fact that musical meaning is subordinated to narrative meaning in the standard feature film.[3]

MUSIC AS COMPOSED OR AS "NATURAL"

With Straub and Huillet, the musical work is presented as having already been composed. Even when a film focuses on a rock band making music, as Godard worked to show on two occasions (*One Plus One*, 1968, with the Rolling Stones, and *Soigne ta droite* [*Keep Your Right Up*], 1987, with Les Rita Mitsouko); or when, in Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), paralleling the main story, we see a songwriter across the courtyard progressively writing a song over the course of the film, symbolizing the awakening of Jeff's love for Lisa, the overall result often remains unconvincing. We seem to prefer clichés using music born from fever and sweat, as if the notes spring forth too fast from the musician's mind, since in a certain way these clichés translate something of the gap that always exists in the creative process between the moment of conception and the moment of execution.

Sometimes this convention involves the myth of "natural music," as opposed to music as something arduously composed by professionals. *The Shout* (Jerzy Skolimowski, 1978) juxtaposes a sickly, cerebral avant-garde composer (John Hurt) with a powerful and physical sorcerer (Alan Bates). We see Hurt trap a wasp in a jar to record its buzzing; his attempt to capture the power of sound is set in contrast to the forceful grandeur of nature, Bates's shout heard in the hills.

Skolimowski wrote the film, and he commented on his process: "I thought a lot about the composer-husband's personality. I made him a modern composer because in Robert Graves's original novella there is a sentence that just mentions him seated at the piano, that's all. I used precise criteria. First I had to answer the question, Is he a genius, a hack, or a good musician? I decided that answering this question was

not this film's mission. So I decided to leave the answer open: I showed him only in the first stages of his creative work, such as collecting sounds, and not yet composing."[4]

This strange logic led to a depiction of the composer as simply a collector of sounds, depriving him of what actually makes a composer. So this is how Skolimowski answered the question.

As for Jane Campion's sublime *Piano*, in its rawness it poses the question of the objective value of Ada's music, which Michael Nyman composed to represent the thoughts that the heroine, without even thinking, endlessly lets flow from her fingers. Never mind the willful anachronism of its style—because of certain "postmodern" harmonic features, it hardly resembles what a lady in the nineteenth century could have improvised. One would prefer Ada's music to be more astonishing, more worthy of the film's depth and the spirit of its auteur. We simply must listen to it with loving ears, so to speak, and not expect realism in a film possessed of such imaginative power.

Campion's idea is that this music is an aural flow, a current of energy the mute heroine produces as if bewitched by her instrument. She never has any sheet music in front of her. This is not music she has learned. Ada conveys this at a point when she communicates to Baines (Harvey Keitel) that she no longer wants to play, not through words (since she never speaks), but by vacuously attacking a Chopin prelude. It is her way of saying, okay, now I'm the dutiful child playing by heart, like a poem memorized in class, and I'm no longer expressing myself.

Is her own music "improvisation"? Not that either, since we see her playing the same pieces on several occasions. Therein lies the movie's mystery.

As we know, the movies' archetype of the composer hails from the Romantic period, or rather from a certain image the twentieth century had of it. He (and it is almost always a man) is a hermit or a decadent, a social climber or ill-fated, rejected as an artist, then admired. Like the protagonist of Abel Gance's *La Dixième symphonie* (1918), he pours his frustrated passions into composing a great work. When it is Leslie Howard in the 1939 version of *Intermezzo* (Gregory Ratoff), he is fickle and weak. In René Clair's *Les Belles de nuit* (*Beauties of the Night*, 1952, with music by Georges Van Parys) he has the juvenility of Gérard Philipe; he is unknown for a while, dreams that he voyages through the centuries, then his last opera is accepted and the lovely neighbor to whom

he gives harpsichord lessons offers him her love. In a word, the movies most often show the composer as sensitive and attractive, reflecting the music he supposedly composes. However, the sarcastic and secretive musician-composer portrayed by Oscar Levant in *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951) is arguably truer to life, while remaining a sympathetic character. In one irony-filled scene where he fantasizes a performance of Gershwin's Concerto in F, he sees himself playing the piano, directing the orchestra, being the percussionist and a whole row of identical violinists, and finally applauding loudly from a balcony—a whole flock of Oscar Levants who supply him a narcissistic image of himself.

Then there are the frenzied biopics directed by Ken Russell. In spite of all their oversimplifying, they take fewer liberties with history than we would think. Tchaikovsky truly was the tormented depressive depicted in *The Music Lovers* (1971), and Mahler, in the eponymous film (1974), was that egocentric and willful artist. These works created a less sugary image of the composer, less ridiculous and more committed, just as Trevor Howard played an inspired yet unsympathetic Wagner for Visconti's *Ludwig* (1973). Might we also ask why (to my knowledge) artists as interesting and with similarly fascinating, rich, and hidden life stories as Debussy, Ravel, or Satie have not inspired a single French feature film?

The composer in movies is sometimes robbed of his masterpiece by a plagiarizer, notably in the various film versions of Gaston Leroux's novel *The Phantom of the Opera*. Among these *Phantoms* is the delectable rock version by Brian De Palma, *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974). Remember that this idea is at the heart of *Amadeus*, too. It's the legend that is eternally attached to Mozart's *Requiem*—a commissioned work performed under someone else's name.[5] The popularity in cinema of this theme of musical plundering, even though it is not hugely significant in music history—certainly less frequent than accounts of literary or art fakes—has something about it that intrigues us. It no doubt embodies the irrational belief that we haven't really created the music we compose—all we are doing is transmitting it; some kind of voice has dictated it to us. It could be concluded that there is no original author of music. Music is never entirely contained in the score, unlike the book inside its jacket or the painting in its frame; it seems always to be subject to re-creation.

EXTERNALIZING MENTAL MUSIC

In *Amadeus*, two scenes that are particularly striking, but also typical for their depictions of internal hearing of music, are the ones where Salieri describes the adagio of Mozart's Serenade for Winds (*Gran Partita*), pointing out the entries of the different instruments, and the scene where the dying Mozart dictates to him the *Requiem* from bed. Not only does the scenes' deliberately didactic aspect, reminiscent of Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, integrate admirably with the story. The scenes also find an organic way to describe musical creation, whereby themes seem to give birth to themes. With the composer as mediator, the music displays its own genesis, starting with an initial rhythmic beat. Then the superimposition and layering of voices can each be heard distinctly, eventually forming the whole. It is as if we were witnessing the miraculous constitution, within the disorder of the world, of order and harmony.

As director Forman said, "Cinema has the ability to break down the different parts of a score, to separate the violin from the bassoon or the flute. Then we can better understand what is going on in the composer's head. Then you can put the different instruments together again and reconstitute the work [in fact, a short fragment] in its totality. It's like an anatomy lesson but without claiming to explain things logically. It's like seeing a complete car and then discovering the engine, the exhaust system, the brakes. By understanding more, we can better admire the engineer's genius."[6]

But most importantly, cinematically speaking, the power of these scenes is to short-circuit the material work of music (writing it down, editing, reworking, having musicians learn it, etc.) and to have it spring from a *mind* (Salieri's, for example, as he reads the score). In a way Salieri plays the role of the viewer, as the envious, admiring, hardworking one.

One scene that is less well known, but which is only possible in a film, shows how mental music, music in the mind, emerges into reality. It uses the opening of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony," itself a work conceived by its composer as a genesis: it begins with a discreetly tentative theme in the basses, then the basses are joined by a rustling of strings in the middle range, from which the theme

voiced by the oboes and clarinets then rings out. This scene occurs in a film I have already mentioned, Kurosawa's *One Wonderful Sunday* (1947), and it makes a surprising appeal to the audience's complicity.

Titled by antiphrasis, this very sentimental work belongs to the Japanese genre of *shomin-geki*, dramas of the common man. A sweet, impoverished pair of young lovers arrive too late for the outdoor concert they were going to attend on a date. Kurosawa said:

> The poor couple are in an empty concert amphitheater and in their minds they hear Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony." Naturally, the movie's sound track should have no music on it for this scene. The girl breaks the rules of filmmaking and turns to the screen audience to address them. "Please, everyone, if you feel sorry for us, please clap your hands. If you clap for us, I'm sure we will be able to hear the music." The audience applauds, and the boy in the film picks up a conductor's baton. As soon as he starts to wave it, the "Unfinished" comes in on the sound track.
>
> My intention here was to elicit audience participation in the film by addressing them directly. . . . I wanted to . . . transform the audience into actual participants in the plot, to make them seem to affect the outcome of the film.[7]

Let me add that I have seen the scene Kurosawa faithfully described be received with attentive silence by a small audience during a screening at the Cinémathèque Française. Their silence made it all the stranger, even though Kurosawa recalled that in the screenings he himself attended, the Parisian audience cooperated with applause, unlike the Japanese audience.[8]

The idea of turning mental music into real sound that surges into the world, the awakening of something absent or forgotten, anamnesis, and especially the genesis of the love that "moves the sun and the other stars" (Dante), finds a kind of culmination in *Three Colors: Blue* (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1993). In *Blue*, a renowned composer has died in a car accident. In the wake of the terrible shock of her husband's and little daughter's deaths, Julie (Juliette Binoche) leaves the family estate behind and takes refuge in anonymity. The film consists of the story of her return to life, in tandem with the reconstitution of her husband's unfinished cantata.

Even as she is just recovering at home from her injuries, the subjective music begins. Dozing in a chair, she is awakened by the theme "in her head," the trumpet intoning a beautiful somber melody over the orchestra. With Binoche in the image, the color saturation changes in sympathy (and synchrony) with the music's progression. In another scene, locked out of her apartment in the middle of the night, Julie sits on the stairs alone in the dark and the theme plays "in her head," now with pizzicato strings and a humming chorus, while small blue lights dance in the image.

Music in *Blue* gets transcribed, goes from a solo recorder played by a street musician to an orchestra tutti, circulates from concrete, profilmic reality where it is submerged in other noises to another, internal and ideal reality outside time and space. Thanks to the audio treatment, the melody that we hear mentally, as if it were waiting to come into existence, at first seems metaphorically engulfed (music is even aurally "ground up," when Julie throws rolled-up draft manuscripts into the compacting hopper of a garbage truck), then it reemerges—more clearly when the heroine, who is swimming in a swimming pool, surfaces from under the water.

The story consists of the coming to life of lost sounds and unwritten notes buried in Julie's memory and on scraps of music paper. We sense the fragility of music, like a message in a bottle bobbing on the sea, and its ability to pass from human to human, to belong to everyone even when it is the expression of one individual.

THE ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

Just as I have no intention of listing and categorizing all composers (both fictional and not) who have ever appeared in the movies, neither shall I write at length here about the figure of the orchestra conductor, who has been the subject of dozens of films. However, I cannot resist the temptation to mention some key themes that arise around this figure.

First there is the theme of unleashing music as an active form of violence, an influential force, or an expression of the worst impulses. In

Preston Sturges's comedy *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948), Rex Harrison is a great conductor mistakenly convinced that his wife is cheating on him. During a concert where he is conducting Rossini, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky, he fantasizes three different ways to get rid of his wife and her presumed lover. The movie is even more delectable when you take it as a parody of late 1930s–1940s Hollywood musical melodramas with similar premises. Its music often embodies this power that tests the limits of good behavior and morality.

The conductor is frequently an ambiguous character, and consequently fascinating: he can subdue music's might even as he unleashes it. A famous sequence of the hit comedy *La Grande Vadrouille* (*Don't Look Now . . . We're Being Shot At!*, Gérard Oury, 1966) subjects this power to marvelous satire when the temperamental Stanislas Lefort, played by Louis de Funès, grandiosely conducts Berlioz's "Hungarian March."

The conductor appears differently with Fellini, subtly depicted in *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1978) not as a hot-tempered figure like Toscanini (a real person who inspired Louis de Funès), but as a dryly caustic character, a sort of idealist wounded by the nonchalant vulgarity of his musicians and prone to morphing into a terrifying Hitler figure. The political metaphor is pretty clear. When the director was asked how he first got the idea to make a film about a conductor and his orchestra, he answered:

> When I was present at recording sessions for my films, I was always struck with surprise and disbelief, and I was also amazed to witness the miracle of it each time. People all so different from one another would arrive in the recording studio with their various instruments, but also with their personal problems, their bad moods, their health problems, their portable radios . . . and I was astonished to realize that . . . after several rehearsals they succeeded in blending this heterogeneous mass into one unique, even abstract form that is music. This process of transforming disorder into order greatly moved me.[9]

Here for Fellini the orchestra is the emblem of a democratic society, where it is possible to make something cohere even while all the individual participants remain uniquely themselves.

What is the music they play in *Orchestra Rehearsal*, and where does it come from? Let us note that Fellini's story did not deal with the issue of the composer. The composer is taken to be anonymous or unimportant; there's no reference made to his personality or desires.

Fellini does not dwell on the power of music, emphasizing instead the coordination of the instruments and the workout involved in executing a piece with a rapid tempo; in one sequence a gallop is played faster and faster. He wanted the orchestra small, and it sounds that way. The pieces were composed by Nino Rota (this was Rota's final film score) as complete pieces, as ballet scenes, not unlike band-shell selections: "Twins in the Mirror," "A Little Melancholic Laughter," "A Short Wait," "Grand Gallop." In the end, a strange plot twist with an apocalyptic tinge interrupts the orchestra's heckling of the conductor: a wrecking ball suddenly demolishes the fragile walls of the old oratory building where the ensemble and its leader are rehearsing. From the start, Fellini insisted on this location, its acoustics and its limitations, and the music is clearly given as tied to it, contained in this frame. In other words, the music never exceeds the boundaries of the screen. An effect of elemental force does not come from the orchestra, as it often does in movies, but rather from the wrecking ball, a symbol of brutality and chaos and of fascism as well. By showing music as an ideal not of fusion but of coordination (in which each instrument retains its personality), Fellini situates music clearly on the side of democracy, to show (as is not so often done in the movies) its touching fragility in the face of runaway power.

The big success of 2009 in France, *The Concert* (Radu Mihaileanu), uses a broader brush to depict the same theme, the contrast between the individual instrumentalist, here devoted to "small jobs" (the story concerns Russians who have immigrated to France after their orchestra disperses), and the collective power that erases differences and mediocrities in the sacred circumstance of a concert.

The same idea can apply to the choral ensemble. It is interesting to note that rehabilitating delinquent boys and disadvantaged children through group singing is a classical subject in musical melodrama. In France alone, there is *La Cage aux rossignols* (*A Cage of Nightingales*, Jean Dréville, 1945), and a more recent film it inspired, *Les Choristes* (*The Chorus*, Christophe Barratier, 2004). *The Chorus* is set in the immediate

postwar period; Bruno Coulais wrote the music that the protagonist (played by the comedy star Gérard Jugnot) supposedly composes.

Andrzej Wajda created an entirely different allegory in *The Conductor* (1980, based on a screenplay by Andrzej Kijowski), which is roughly contemporaneous with Fellini's *Orchestra Rehearsal*. The film's main music is none other than Beethoven's Fifth, and the conductor conforms more to the conventional imagery in his imperious nobility. In a town in Poland, Adam conducts the local orchestra, which includes the young violinist Marta. Marta brings the conductor John Lasocki (John Gielgud) from New York, where John rose to fame. While Adam conducts with too authoritarian a style and loses the orchestra members' confidence, John obtains much better results from them, owing to his understanding and a more intuitive, less analytical style. But the weakness of Wajda's film, beyond its allegorical value (the director admitted that the theme was a pretext), comes from the fact that it is nothing more; it doesn't contain even an implicit reflection on music itself. Because of the choice of the all-purpose Beethoven symphony, music becomes a sort of neutral text with no resonance for the story itself.

Looking at the anonymous individuals who form an orchestra, we find, again with Fellini, a fascinating series of portraits free of clichés, which explore the psychology of each orchestra position. Other films, however, from the excellent to the merely entertaining, are awash in stereotyping. In the Italian erotic comedy *X-Rated Girl* (Pasquale Festa Campanile, 1971), a cellist gets annoyed because the director never remembers his name. Ingmar Bergman's *Shame* (1968) shows a violinist couple who have had to abandon their musical careers because of war, in a terrible world where music has gone quiet. This world is symbolized by the dream recounted at the beginning by Max von Sydow, a dream of the slow movement of Bach's fourth Brandenburg Concerto, whose theme he hums like a sweet morsel retrieved from the limbo of his sleep. There again, this choice must be seen in relation to the fact that *Shame*'s opening credits have no music, but only the sounds of guns and voices from wartime radio broadcasts, joined by a steady heartbeat from tympani. As in numerous war films, the relationship between music and chaos, one the inverted face of the other, is clearly affirmed.

MUSICAL MELODRAMA

The musical melodrama, a genre frequently scorned, is surprisingly tenacious. The period of the late 1930s to the late 1940s produced a wave, or at least a wavelet, of such films in Hollywood. It was but a ripple in other countries. Still, in France there was Henri Decoin's *Les Amoureux sont seuls au monde* (*Monelle*, 1948), where Louis Jouvet plays a composer who falls in love with a young pianist and whose wife commits suicide. Some of the American ones:

> *Song of Russia* (Gregory Ratoff and Laslo Benedek, 1944)—a Russian woman pianist falls in love with an American conductor
>
> *Deception* (Irving Rapper, 1946)—Bette Davis is a pianist in love with a cellist
>
> *Humoresque* (Jean Negulesco, 1946)—John Garfield, in a tortured relationship with older patroness Joan Crawford, plays violin, dubbed by Isaac Stern
>
> *Rhapsody* (Charles Vidor, 1954)—violinist Elizabeth Taylor must choose between a pianist and a violinist
>
> *I've Always Loved You* (Frank Borzage, 1946)—another woman pianist smitten by another conductor.

In these stories, the woman is often the musician. When it's a man, his mastery of his instrument is sometimes shown in a disturbing, even satanic light. In Albert Lewin's 1945 adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the brooding young seducer Dorian (Hurd Hatfield) plays Chopin's Prelude in D Minor as a theme that represents his damnation. Yet again, there is a double for the onscreen piano-playing: if not the hands, in this case the real player is Lela Simone, who worked for MGM at the time.

The mad pianist's hands cast him to the worst fate, as if they had a mind of their own; this is a familiar theme of the horror novel. The story by the Frenchman Maurice Renard, "The Hands of Orlac," underwent several screen adaptations, and indirectly inspired Robert Florey's melodrama *The Beast with Five Fingers* (1946), which draws a parallel between the pianist's hand (one character is a virtuoso whose right hand is paralyzed) and that of the strangler. In other cases there is a

mad composer committing crimes during psychotic episodes, as in John Brahm's *Hangover Square* (1945), with a magnificent score by Bernard Herrmann.

Although the musical melodrama in general was concentrated in this period of the forties, we should note that between *Amadeus* (Miloš Forman, 1984), *Grand Piano* (Eugenio Mira, 2013), and beyond, there has been a resurgence, to which the French have contributed more than once: e.g., *Tous les matins du monde* (Alain Corneau, 1991), *La Femme de ma vie* (*The Woman of My Life*, Régis Wargnier, 1986), *Un coeur en hiver* (*A Heart in Winter*, Claude Sautet, 1992).

Intermezzo (Gregory Ratoff, 1939) is a quintessential early musical melodrama. Famous composer and violinist Holger Brandt (Leslie Howard) comes home to his wife and children in Stockholm after a tour. His little daughter has a new piano teacher, the vibrant young Anita Hoffmann (Ingrid Bergman), who is thrilled to meet the great musician. They fall in love. Brandt takes her abroad as his mistress and accompanist, leaving wife and children behind. Eventually, though, both characters come to terms with their duty. The young pianist resigns herself to having only been an "intermezzo" in the composer's life.

Intermezzo inaugurates a number of tropes that would be redeployed in subsequent musical melodramas. For example, the orchestral music that opens the film over the sign for the Selznick studio is heard as pit music but segues seamlessly into the first diegetic image of Brandt playing violin in concert with a piano on stage (with the unobtrusive exit of the opening orchestra). Music retroactively becomes a concrete element in the action.

As for Brandt's "Intermezzo" composition that symbolizes his and Anita's doomed love, its four-note core motif serves the film well. Music is given as a contemplative impulse, a direct expression of passions (the composer is not shown composing), which can be reduced to a sign.

During the evening walk where the two fall in love, pit music responds to their dialogue. As they watch the ice melt in the river below, Brandt compares Anita to a Viennese waltz, and nondiegetic Strauss comes in on cue. Then he evokes Sinding's "Rustle of Spring," and Anita hums it for him, accompanied by the pit orchestra as if it had been lying in wait for this moment.

Intermezzo illustrates some of the problems posed by the representation of musical talent on the screen. To show the musicianship of the young pianist, the film has her play a spirited and showy arrangement of Grieg's A minor piano concerto, a solo to which the suddenly smitten Brandt adds his violin. Hollywood reduces the issue of talent, this thing that is so intangible and elusive to even a musician's ears let alone to the ears of amateurs, to a matter of virtuosity.

Which leads to this question: in musical melodramas, whether the protagonist is a psychopathic pianist, an alcoholic violinist, or a paranoid orchestra conductor, is music really the basic subject? Can it be replaced in the plot by athleticism, for instance? Indeed, musical execution in the melodrama is often treated like a physical, digital, and mechanical performance (which in fact it is).

MUSICAL MELODRAMA AND
THE VIEWER'S SUSPICION

The story of *The Seventh Veil* (1945) combines the motifs of the sinister pianist—here, a tyrannical and possessive invalid, Nicholas (James Mason)—and the victim-pianist, his docile creature, Francesca (Ann Todd). The young woman is in his thrall, and because of her love she allows him to discipline her pitilessly with the intent of making her into a great soloist. He is forever advising her to be careful with her hands, and the film serves up a veritable feast of closeups of hands gloved and ungloved, at rest or in action. It's precisely these precious hands that in a moment of anger Nicholas strikes with his cane, plunging the young woman into despair, since she is persuaded that she will never be able to play again. She tries to end it all by throwing herself into the briny deep. Saved from drowning, however, she is placed in the care of a strange psychiatrist who has her reexperience her trauma under hypnosis and restores her confidence in life, if not the use of her hands as a virtuoso.

The Seventh Veil features several scenes of symphony concerts. In one of them, before a very well-dressed audience, poor Francesca, who ceaselessly wrings her hands when they are not on the keyboard,

reaches the end of Grieg's piano concerto (yes, the same piece Ingrid Bergman's character plays in *Intermezzo*) under the cold eye of the conductor.[10] We watch the usual succession of shots where the performer is filmed at various angles and distances. Sometimes Ann Todd, shown frontally, moves her arms while her hands are hidden by the keyboard, and we strongly suspect that she is merely miming as a pianist. Sometimes we see her at three-quarters from behind, running her hands over the keyboard, and we admire the overall synchronization of her arms (if not her fingers) with what we hear. And sometimes, closeup inserts of two agile hands confirm the synchronization, and even the most innocent viewer suspects that in this case the fingers are not hers. In retrospect, we know that it's Eileen Joyce (not named in the credits) who played the piano, taught Ann Todd the arm movements, and lent her beautiful fine hands to the closeups.[11]

An insert shot of this kind could be considered cheating—automatically creating what I shall call the spectator's "horizontal suspicion": this body part that I see isolated by editing might not belong to the character (and her actor) whose story I am following.

Nevertheless, before the arrival of videocassettes, DVDs, and digital files, all of which make it possible to freeze the film on an image, the spectator in the theater agreed, in the heat of the action and the story's forward movement, to "play along" and to impute to the characters and their actors their marvelous virtuosity.

This has not always invariably been the case. During the 1970s and 1980s, some actors made it a point of honor to refuse inserts of hand closeups. In *The Competition* (Joel Oliansky, 1980), Richard Dreyfuss and Amy Irving, who play contestants in a big international piano competition, show us that we can watch their faces, their arms, even their hands in the most difficult passages, and that the synchronization seems flawless. The historical opposition between the female victim/creature and the male manipulator has also disappeared in this film. The two contestants have the same poise and aggressiveness required to win.

Today the advantage of digital synthesis arouses a new form of suspicion: you can so easily "graft" virtual arms and hands onto an actor.

Let us return to these poetic and apparently naive closeups of virtuosic hands inserted between shots of an actor. They tell a certain truth: that *your hands do not completely belong to you*. The hands are trained and driven, but they can also be enticed, drawn in, carried along by another force not betrayed by the rest of the body. They embody what psychoanalysis calls partial drives—desires for aggression, predation, rape, the same impulses that advertising's daily assaults seek to arouse in us when we select one detergent or yogurt over another.[12] The hands are at once the body part that is the most endowed with dexterity, and the most likely to "escape" us. We should add that the human animal is lateralized (i.e., asymmetrical in terms of hand skills); and the fact that each hand is an "individual" is an evolutionary mystery.

The theme of the training of the fingers inevitably brings to mind the 1953 musical that became a cult film, *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T* (1953). This oneiric movie was directed by Roy Rowland based on a screenplay signed by Dr. Seuss, with music by Friedrich Hollaender. A little boy dreams of a fantasy world ruled by a dictatorial piano teacher who enslaves children and condemns them to practice forever. Among its highlights is a keyboard with five thousand keys on which five hundred children in two enormous undulating rows are forced to play. The mad pianist imprisons and tortures the non–piano-players (i.e., the other instrumentalists) in a dungeon—which allows for a stupendous sequence of musical hell à la Hieronymus Bosch.

As the movie opens, the kid's mother obliges him to play and sing an inane song about the pianist's ten fingers:

Ten little dancing maidens, dancing all so fine!
Ten happy little fingers, and they're mine, all mine!

This insistence on the notion that "my fingers are mine and they obey me" seems to me not a neutral statement, but rather an expression of denial. In truth, as we well know, these ten fingers are not ours, whether they try to obey a piece of music or automatic mechanisms (which are so useful in everyday activity such as writing), or express the revolt of the partial drives.

Cinema is lying when it has us believe through hand inserts that Ann Todd is really playing the piano in *The Seventh Veil.* But at the same time, it is telling a truth through the lie, when it metaphorically illustrates its fundamental division and fragmentation through editing and the contrast between the heroine's tense face and her agile hands.

In one of the film's most disturbing scenes, the psychoanalyst Dr. Larsen has his patient listen under hypnosis to a record she once made of Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata (on the "His Master's Voice" label); he tries to make her move her fingers on the keyboard in sync with her recorded self. Francesca can only approximate her own music with painful awkwardness; she escapes from what I call "vertical suspicion," the suspicion of dubbing that the viewer senses, even when what is called direct sound is involved.

Just as spectators of the first silent films using editing were very aware of the cuts and had their "horizontal suspicion" on alert, several years later, viewers of early sound films were distrustful about voices supposedly belonging to bodies, and bodies to instruments. By no means naive, they experienced "vertical suspicion" laid bare—because some of these films often told stories of ventriloquism, usurped voices, whistling apart from the whistler, and invisible men, or because others they saw were animated films.

In 1946, not long after the successful run of *The Seventh Veil*, William Wyler's film *The Best Years of Our Lives* lent poignancy to the issue of piano synchronization. This almost three-hour-long work portrays three American soldiers returning to their hometown after World War II. Some of them have survived physically intact, but Homer (played by an actual amputee, Harold Russell) is disabled; his hands have been replaced by hooks that allow him to grasp objects. Wyler stages a scene in which Homer and his bar-pianist friend, Butch (Hoagy Carmichael), play "Chopsticks."[13] They form quite a surprising duo—four hands, but for ten fingers and two hooks. But vertical suspicion even creeps into that scene: Carmichael and Russell might perfectly well have "lip-synched" their own recorded duet.

There has been criticism of Alain Corneau's film *Tous les matins du monde* (*All the Mornings of the World*, 1991), a big success in France that

starred Gérard Depardieu, about Marin Marais, the master viola da gamba player during the reign of Louis XIV. Critics complained that Jean-Pierre Marielle in the role of Marin Marais's teacher Sainte-Colombe mimes his gamba-playing quite badly, when the film could have shown closeups of professional hands playing the instrument. The director retorted mischievously that the same situation in reverse occurs in Straub and Huillet's *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, when the real harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt plays Bach and wears a wig. And since the critics contrasted Corneau's choice with Jacques Rivette's *La Belle Noiseuse* (*The Beautiful Troublemaker*, 1991), in which Michel Piccoli as a painter is indeed "dubbed" by the artist Bernard Dufour for the insert shots of hands drawing, Corneau added: "Could we have uncoupled the hands of an actor and those of a musician? Right or wrong, I thought: no way. Jean-Pierre Marielle would have been unhappy about it. He played those scenes with his entire body. He completely immersed himself listening to the music."[14] The kind of emotion evoked by the playback process, as I tried to show regarding opera in my book *The Voice in Cinema*, derives from the fact that the actor is listening to the vocal or instrumental sound that he is supposedly producing.

The director of *Tous les matins du monde* did not make this film randomly. He greatly admired Satyajit Ray's *The Music Room*, which clearly influenced him in stylistic terms. He had conceived some of his prior films as jazz riffs. Patrick Dewaere in *Série noire* (1979, with dialogue by Georges Perec) and Richard Anconina in *Le Môme* (*Extreme Justice*, 1986) both play like crazy soloists improvising through the night.

Corneau, a drummer himself and a fan of the free jazz of John Coltrane, Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders, and Albert Ayler, said in a 1974 interview, when his first film came out (*France, Société anonyme* [*France Inc.*], in which he made original use of Clifton Chenier's Cajun music), "I'm especially interested in improvised music. . . . In written music there's the idea that you can achieve a nonproliferation of events, while jazz seems more connected to the Orient. It's not insignificant that Coltrane listened to music from India. And so he tends toward multiplicity, toward things it's harder to think about in an abstract way."[15] In *Tous les matins du monde* the emphasis on the production of sound

over the score (which is treated simply like the canvas) permitted him to transpose his tastes for jazz and Indian music.

Moreover, *Tous les matins du monde* is the archetypical film about music as mystery. The line spoken by the venerated and intransigent master Sainte-Colombe when he refuses to take on the young Marais as a student is the very model of a remark with no possible comeback—it delivers a judgement that is hard to contradict and leaves us to judge: "You make music, Monsieur, you are not a musician." Which must obviously be interpreted as: "Your work is external, it is 'made.'" Note that we could reverse the sentence and the audience would find it just as convincing: "You are a musician, Monsieur, but you do not make music." By this we would understand: you practice a trade, but what you do is not worthy of the word "art."

The cinematic power of this kind of film is precisely that it remains on the precipice of judgment; it doesn't allow us to wrap it up in a tidy package. Imagine that the film had accentuated the young Marin Marais's "soulless" playing in order to reinforce Sainte-Colombe's judgment. Merely caricature, this would have become uninteresting.

THE MUSIC LESSON

The music lesson has often made for a more compelling movie scene than the concert performance, because it lends itself to doubt and ambiguity and hence the potential for richer drama. In a powerful scene in Bergman's *Autumn Sonata* (1978), a plain young woman (Liv Ullmann) plays Chopin's E Minor Prelude for her mother (Ingrid Bergman), who is a famous virtuoso pianist. The mother cruelly picks her playing apart, calling it inept and clumsy, and leaves her devastated. The scene does not indicate who is "right": we're placed in a space of undecidability and imperfection, a domain that film, the art of the tangible, can play in with refinement.

This idea recurs in the Coen brothers' *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001). Birdy, the aspiring teenage pianist (Scarlett Johansson), plays Beethoven divinely, at least to the ears of protagonist Ed Crane (Billy Bob Thornton). But a music teacher describes her as a "typist," lacking

any musical soul: a judgment we spectators are not necessarily obliged to share.

Characteristically for Michael Haneke, *The Piano Teacher* (2001) certainly does not shy from emphasizing the sadism of the teacher-pupil relationship as we watch Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert) train her students. There too, the audience is made to take one position or the other in relation to Erika's abusive remarks about her students' performances: Is harsh discipline necessary to produce excellence?

The subject of the music lesson brings together several issues—that of the contract, of money, of talent, of paternity, and of art—and so this situation is inexhaustible in film. It gets a very "materialist" treatment in *Padre Padrone* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 1977), where a young Sardinian shepherd, Gavino, buys an old accordion in exchange for two lambs. With great effort he teaches himself to play, and brings the sounds of Strauss waltzes, a new world, to his brutishly archaic environment. Unlike music in many films set on traditional soil (including Sergei Parajanov's admirable *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, from 1965), and also unlike many "folk" musicals made in Hollywood, Gavino's music in *Padre Padrone* is not the natural emanation of a people and a landscape in the vein of "singing is like breathing for them." With the Tavianis, music gets learned, it is purchased, it has a cultural meaning; we can recognize the drive for lucidity that reflects the Marxism of these talented auteurs.

In Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) the terms of the contractual agreement for lessons are surprising in many ways. The lessons Ada gives to Baines to buy her piano back, key by key, are not really lessons at all, and they hide a darker deal whereby he may now watch her and listen to her make music, while she herself seems to play without apparently ever having learned from anyone. This marvelous progression of music ends up forever stamped (or rather mutilated) by a small bothersome noise, the noise made by Ada's prosthetic finger as it taps the keys, after her jealous husband tried to chop her hand off.

In Campion's film the piano substitutes for the voice that the heroine never uses, keeping it like hidden treasure. In this respect it rejoins a myth the movies have portrayed so many times, namely the theft of voices or the desire to have mastery over them: a voice cannot be bought. This myth lies at the heart of *Citizen Kane*, with Kane's relentless effort

to make his wife into a singer by means of fancy voice lessons and building opera houses for her. It's also the theme in *Diva* (Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1981) and of various versions of *The Phantom of the Opera*. All these films tell stories of a man who tries to appropriate a woman's voice, to almost literally make it his own. Is it to protect her voice that Ada hides it away? (Her internal voice on the soundtrack, as she tells us, isn't her real voice.)

Moreover, through the very premise of the screenplay, Campion's film presents music as being hinged to muteness. In the talking film, the nonverbal is precisely that which resonates between words. A specific emotional force arises from having music when words cease, when words no longer suffice. The emotion sometimes feels all the stronger when an economic dose of music is delivered to contrast with a deluge of words. Maurice Pialat handled this masterfully in his adaptation of Bernanos's novel *Under the Sun of Satan* (1987). After long back-and-forth dialogue scenes, Pialat shows the village priest running through the fields—at the end of his words, you might say—and only then do we briefly hear the poignant sounds of Henri Dutilleux's First Symphony.

So music readily enters the sound film as the voice that rises where words do not work, or like the internal cry that a character has been suppressing. The harmonica in *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Sergio Leone, 1968) and Ry Cooder's guitar in *Paris, Texas* (Wim Wenders, 1984) are the expression of the main characters' muteness, both characters having been traumatized in childhood. At the same time, this device allows music to be treated as direct affective communication, an elemental nonverbal language, without the "loss" and dispossession involved in the use of language proper. It is an illusion, of course (Lacan demonstrated this once and for all), but a touching one. Its archetype is the music heard by Frankenstein's creature, who has not yet mastered human speech.

MUSICAL COMPLICITY

The sometimes-fanciful stories in thirties films in which music functions as a coded language to carry state secrets (Sternberg's *Dishonored*, 1931; *Disk 413*, Richard Pottier, 1936; Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, 1938)

often allude to this between-the-lines space of direct communication. But more recent cinema also gives us two famous scenes that center on the momentary complicity that can arise around a few musical notes.

One of these scenes takes place in John Boorman's memorable *Deliverance* (1972). The film tells of four "city boys," young men who take a river-canoe trip to renew themselves in nature; they discover that nature has its hardships and dangers and that it can harbor murderous degenerates. At one point the men come upon a settlement of backward country folk, among them an inbred-looking kid with a banjo. One of the men communicates with him by playing a few short notes on his guitar, and the boy replies on his banjo, tentatively at first. The back-and-forth messages grow more complex; melodies and notes accumulate. The exchange ends up in a jaw-dropping bluegrass duet, where the two players compete virtuosically, the young banjo player easily triumphing over the guitar player. Of course, the "dueling banjos" piece that made the film's record release a success (with music by Steve Mandell and Eric Weissberg) encapsulates the dream of universal nonverbal communication. It is appealing especially because it's the equivalent of the choreographed duets in musicals where two talented partners test each other in symmetrical fashion, challenging each other with steps and moves before ultimately ending up in synchronized harmony.

In the *Deliverance* scene, cinema—in any case, the "audio-logo-visual synchrono-cinematograph" that is the sound film—is the vehicle of a specific emotional effect when in this game of mirroring it seems to record the very slight mismatch, the tiny wait and reaction time between the phrases. In fact the scene must have made an impression on Steven Spielberg, who took the idea of universal communication through a musical code to a new level five years later. In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the scientists welcoming aliens to Earth attempt to communicate by playing a simple pentatonic melody on a giant synthesizer. A huge flying saucer replaces the young man of *Deliverance*. *Close Encounters* reverses the relationship and the initiator of the exchange: the human species that proposes the game and sends the message is here the "slow" boy, with relation to the civilization that has immense wisdom and advanced technology.

Theme from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*

In the *Close Encounters* sequence a large visual keyboard of colored rectangles doubles the notes heard in synchrony; it's a sort of utopia of audiovisual synesthesia. To start with, a musician engages in a dialogue with the spaceship, and starts by proposing the melody in the treble, to which the spaceship answers with bass rumblings that are a bit comical. Then the ship itself becomes a sort of instrument with an elephantine sound, rather like a pipe organ, in the rapid dialogue that ensues. The tonal jousting recalls the myth of Jericho, since a specially low and powerful sound breaks the glass of a floodlight.

After the famous pattern D–E–C–c–g that the instrument has repeated, the sounds that follow, heard in synchrony with the light-keyboards, are presented no longer as music but as a language coded in sounds, always based on the five notes. This passage from music per se to functional language (a language that is not decoded in the screenplay) is signified by the idea that the notes are played without rhythmic scansion; they simply follow one another in a rapid and monotonous delivery. Just like the kid in *Deliverance*, the big flying saucer hesitates, remains mute in the face of sound "proposals" sent by the humans, seems heavy and stupid for an instant, then wells up, answers, and finally matches the human music in speed. The difference here is that the extraterrestrials pick up the same instrument the humans use to try to communicate with them, and launch into a brilliant toccata of notes and colors, with long and short notes.

Spielberg's scene derives its power from the contrast between the enormity of the setting and situation (the spaceship is as big as a mountain) and the improvised quality of what's going on. Ever since film began capturing sound as it had captured movement, any vocal or instrumental improvisation has taken on the quality of a poignant snapshot, owing precisely to the quality of being tightly fixed second by second.

Sound film is wonderful for the way it magnifies informal music-making, giving emotional resonance to those moments when a song gets taken up by a group—for example, in Terence Davies's film *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (1988). The sound film can present music as not "perfect," with homogeneous and blended voices, but "imperfect," with voices of different ages and different timbres, different degrees of being in tune, on key, and together on tempo. It's like a snapshot of a moment of music: we feel its fragile balance, its ephemeral harmony. Even in musicals where all the numbers are supposedly flawless, directors make sure to introduce moments of studied spontaneity. An example is the convivial, improvised jam that the performers in a show that has just had a horrible premiere create for their own joy and consolation; the jam seems to arise from three discordant notes that Oscar Levant plays on the piano. I am alluding to the number "I Love Louisa" in *The Band Wagon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1953), one of the greatest works in the genre.

Cinema captures and re-creates the moment when dislocated rhythms line up and reorganize; when modest finger-tapping gives rise to a whole song; and when some sounds randomly sounded out on an untuned piano turn into a pleasing creation.

Here too, as for other types of musical scenes, the idea preexisted cinema; it was not born with film and could have been (with greater or lesser success) simulated or "rendered" by written music. Among the examples of natural cacophony reconstituted or of a fragile birth of music, we can mention the moment in Debussy's "Ibéria," in the section "Le matin d'un jour de fête," which, the composer liked to say, "does not feel like it was written." But it was cinema, hardly having premeditated or agreed to it at the beginning, that became the art that most favored the attainment of this utopia, and which sometimes finds great moments of emotion in it. The beauty of so many sequences in musicals—in *West Side Story* (Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 1961) and *The Blues Brothers* (John Landis, 1980), for example—never fails to surprise and delight.

In numerous scenes of karaoke and group singalongs that have appeared in recent movies, from *My Best Friend's Wedding* (P. J. Hogan, 1997) and *500 Days of Summer* (Marc Webb, 2009) to *Place publique* (Agnès Jaoui, 2018), *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola,

2003), and *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999), it is often both funny and moving to hear the initially hesitant voices of characters played by Cameron Diaz, Bill Murray, Hilary Swank, or Jean-Pierre Bacri join in song. The act of singing becomes so fresh in these moments.

HITCHCOCK: A TRAJECTORY NOT TO BE INTERRUPTED

In her excellent book on sound in Hitchcock, *The Silent Scream*, Elisabeth Weis analyzes a crucial scene illustrating the meaning of music in Hitchcock's films. The bass player Balestrero, the future *Wrong Man* (1956), instructs one of his sons, who has let his younger brother's harmonica playing interrupt his piano practicing. Whatever happens, he tells the boy, "Don't let anything throw you off the beat. You do well till you get mad and hit the piano."[16]

Weis shows the many forms that loss of control and disruption of rhythm take in Hitchcock's work. Philip, one of the two young murderers in *Rope* (1948), is interrogated by his suspicious professor while, significantly, he is playing the first of Poulenc's *Mouvements perpétuels*. The professor sadistically "tries to force Philip's confession by operating a metronome faster and faster. Its 'presto' ticking, which presumably echoes Philip's heartbeat, forces Philip to abandon his playing in distress."[17] The jazz drummer in *Young and Innocent* (1937), knowing that he is being pursued, gives himself away during a performance by being unable to keep the beat, thus drawing attention to his guilt. In the concert in the Royal Albert Hall in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (both versions, 1934 and 1956), the tension doesn't just arise from awaiting the final cymbal crash that is supposed to give the signal to the assassin. The question is, will a gunshot or a woman's scream be able to disrupt the enormous mechanism led by the conductor—the symphonic orchestra and the vast chorus engaged in the execution of a stodgy cantata, whose score is even presented to our eyes?

Faithfully reflecting his own meticulous and methodical way of working, Hitchcock's cinema often represents music as a matter not of improvisation and verve, as in the films I have previously

mentioned, but of respect for an established course. Hitchcock, who pushed professionalism to the sublime, shows music as a job, a profession, a matter of control.

SONG

At the other extreme, where film proves just as effective using the simplest means, is song. Consider a little girl with big dark eyes who puts a song on her 45 rpm record player. It's a pop love song, "Porque te vas,"[18] always the same, forever etched into the grooves. Little happens in the scene other than the playing of the record; the orphan girl listens without crying. There is no improvisation of music caught on the fly here, or notes that shape themselves into music bit by bit—just the act of putting on the record and the unwinding of the prerecorded song, in the record's fixed duration, giving us the opportunity to listen again to the intro, simpleminded and heart-wrenching with its flatted seventh, and to note in passing the repeated little gimmick of the drum's syncopated cymbals sound, and to try to make out the lyrics in Spanish that allude to solitude and abandon. But based in part on this scene, Carlos Saura's heartbreaking film *Cría Cuervos* (1976) received high acclaim, and made the record a success.

During the heyday of the 45 rpm record, between the 1950s and 1980s, its short playing time made it the very symbol of the song in movies. The cinema seemed drawn to its modest format, its hole in the center, its rapid and visually expressive rotation speed (sometimes in fascinating contrast with slow music that emerged from it). There is also the mechanism of the record player, or better yet the jukebox, that reaches out mechanically and selects the title, puts it on the turntable, and sets it in motion with indifference, like a moment of "canned" poetry and dream. All this was admirably represented by the 45 and the three minutes of happiness it brought. With Claude Miller's *L'Effrontée* (*An Impudent Girl*, 1985), which deployed a naive Italian song on the model of the *Cría Cuervos* scene, the 45 was also a means to evoke, by opposition to the world of "great music" that the heroine would discover and be dazzled by, the genteel and insular world in which Charlotte Gainsbourg's character lives and is bored during one summer.

What does a song have that other musical forms do not?

First, it repeats a refrain, and thereby naturally enables a textual repetition through music. But it also gives the opportunity to apply different sets of words onto a same two-line tune, and thereby to point out the magical and disturbing qualities of the arbitrariness and gratuitousness of the word-music relation, by opposition to the continuous melody of the operatic aria for example. The sound film, insofar as it plays on effects of aleatory and contingent superimpositions (words from one character heard as we see the image of another, music in "counterpoint" with a parallel scene) cannot help being interested in such a situation.

A song is both the symbol of our connections to the most intimate aspects of our *individual* lives and to the things that move us, even as it remains free as a bird—and remaining the most widely *shared* and common thing in the world since it is the most widespread, least esoteric, most anonymous phenomenon of music.

A song's tune is also sometimes a code: the code of the implicit lyrics that it points to even when we do not hear them, and which are like the notes' unconscious. For example, in *The Blue Angel* we hear instrumental passages from an aria of *The Magic Flute*. And *When Harry Met Sally . . .* lets us hear repeated phrases—not sung with lyrics—of the song "It Had to Be You." Not only does this allude to the romance of *Casablanca*; it suggests that the two protagonists are "made for each other."

But above all, in a film—this continual flow of impressions presented as a reproduction of life—the song is something that, owing to its very simplicity, becomes engraved into memory, forever associated with a moment of existence, then wraps this fate within itself—which it then can transport to a new place. It represents the ephemeral and specific quality of the *fatum* but also, at the same time, its impersonal aspect. And destiny, in cinema—this art that resorts to juxtapositions and encounters, this art of constantly shifting relations between figure and ground, between the individual and the whole—finds a particularly strong symbol in the song.

When we consider film as a form of expression that combines such diverse elements—words, sounds, images, colors, movements that interact in constantly new and changing ways—we see that the song is bound to have a special role: it allows a given element to be lost and then reemerge triumphant. The song is this simple, distinctive element, the symbol of a fate enclosed in some notes and some words, that can meander through an entire film—whistled, hummed, intoned with or

without lyrics, onscreen or from the pit. In films it is the very embodiment of the principle of circulation.

Casablanca gives a very clear picture of this circulation. "As Time Goes By" becomes associated with the couple's happiest moments. Rick has tried to rid his world of the tune by forbidding his pianist Sam to play it, but it seems to ooze from everywhere in the film, it rings out in the score, it finally gets played at the request of the woman who has returned, it sets flashbacks in motion, it wells up in the score over and over. Indeed, nothing can stop the song once it is launched. In Mizoguchi's *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), it is a sorrowful lament that the mother separated from her children invents to console herself in her suffering, and which contains their two names ("Anju, Zushio"). The song overcomes time and space to alight, via the voice of a slave girl, on the ears of her now-grown children, who are living in servitude many miles away; and still years later, it draws the son to his blind old mother when he hears it sung on the seashore.

The central episode of *Le Plaisir* (Max Ophüls, 1952), "La Maison Tellier," is similarly based on the circulation of a song, Béranger's "Ma grand-mère."[19] The theme is heard first as screen music, coming from the brothel, which the camera never enters, where the tune is played on a player piano. Then it comes from the pit orchestra in various rhythms and arrangements; and it is hummed quietly by one of the characters, Rosa (Danielle Darrieux). A bit later it is taken up by the whole group of prostitutes as they pick flowers in the countryside; finally, it is brought back in melancholic form by the pit orchestra when the women have left again for the city, and when the carpenter sadly arrives back at his farmhouse. The idea here is that the song, at first allusive, takes on more and more shape, becomes clothed in lyrics that give it its precise meaning ("O how I long / For my arm so plump / My shapely leg / And time gone by"),[20] spreads by contagion, becomes laden with all the emotions and all the encounters the characters experience, and finally goes away after having effectively haunted the story.

Lili Marleen (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1981), which appeared subsequent to other films inspired by the famous ditty after which it is named, is the very model narrative of the song that catches on and takes over the world. Within the movie, it wanders constantly between pit and screen, between the isolated character and the broader society.

One ingenious case of such circulation is a counterexample found in Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962). Its emblematic song, sung by Catherine (Jeanne Moreau), is limited to one single moment of the story. It is sealed into this scene even though it refers out to the entire film. I am referring to "Le Tourbillon" (whirlwind): "We lost sight of each other, we lost sight again": a marvelous piece written by Cyrus Bassiak, alias Serge Rezvani, who in the role of Albert accompanies Moreau on guitar. The funny thing is that everything circulates in the film—characters, emotions, the woman who crystallizes the two male characters' love, and fate—but not the song itself.

Alas! Watching *Jules and Jim* again in the midst of fact-checking for this book, I realize that the orchestra does reprise a bit of "Le Tourbillon" in the movie's very last seconds. Delerue orchestrated it quite badly. It is important not to pay any mind, not to get stuck on this one last detail that could ruin the whole thing. There is no detail that ruins it in cinema, neither in art nor in life.

MOVIES ARISING FROM A SONG

A song can accompany the opening credits and then take on a narrative life as if it were the movie's nucleus. Among a thousand examples, let us mention René Clair's *Quatorze Juillet* (1933), with music by Maurice Jaubert. It starts with a song that sums up the story: "In Paris, in each neighborhood / Every day the sun above / Brings into flowering bloom / A dream of love . . ."

Songs also launch films as different as *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and Marguerite Duras's *India Song* (1975). *Singin' in the Rain* was developed out of the catalog of songs written by producer-lyricist Arthur Freed and musician Nacio Herb Brown; the writers Betty Comden and Adolph Green built their marvelous screenplay on the songs.

In *India Song* the piano theme by Carlos d'Alessio never has lyrics but is simply referred to by the disembodied characters' voices as "song." It somewhat resembles Rodgers and Hart's famous "Blue Moon," with the same lilting 6/8 time signature, but is in a minor key. The film's "story," such as it is, takes place at a reception in the French embassy in India in 1937, where protagonist Anne-Marie Stretter (Delphine

Seyrig), the ambassador's wife, interacts with several men, a few with whom she will have an affair, and another (Michael Lonsdale) who is desperately in love with her. Never do any of the characters speak onscreen. We hear "offscreen" voices exchanging observations about the characters we see, speaking listlessly with long pauses, as if slowed down by the tropical heat and humidity.

An amateur-sounding ensemble, never seen, is heard from a distance playing Charlestons, rumbas, and blues (all by composer d'Alessio) in styles of yesteryear. What anchors the music in the action is that we see characters start dancing when the music begins, or stop dancing and join the other guests when a piece ends—and also that the music is continuous while some of the offscreen voices refer to it: "I am listening to 'India Song.'"

Some films focus on the genesis of a song. I have previously mentioned Hitchcock's *Rear Window* and Rohmer's *A Summer's Tale*; the songwriting process undergoes a variation in Altman's film *The Long Goodbye* (1973).

So many films are named after a key song. Some notable American ones (and Hollywood does this far more than other national film industries) are *Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986, after Bobby Vinton's hit), *Stand by Me* (Rob Reiner, 1986, after Ben E. King's song), *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar-wai, 2000, with Bryan Ferry's cover), *Baby Driver* (Edgar Wright, 2017, after Simon and Garfunkel), *Jumpin' Jack Flash* (Penny Marshall, 1986, after the Rolling Stones), and *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990, after Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman").

JAZZ

Jazz in film is an entire subject in itself. For a long time, it was tightly circumscribed in a film or associated with something proper and polite, or else it established a certain musical atmosphere for the action without being the actual subject of the story—in part because the great majority of important jazzmen were Black artists. Not until the 1980s and 1990s did we see, thanks to Bertrand Tavernier ('*Round Midnight*, 1986, with Dexter Gordon), Clint Eastwood (*Bird*, 1988, a biography of

Charlie Parker played by Forest Whitaker), and Spike Lee (*Mo' Better Blues*, 1990), entire films devoted to Black artists and composers, real or fictional. Don Cheadle recently directed and starred in the biopic *Miles Ahead* (2015, about Miles Davis), but we continue to await movies still owed to other giants, such as Duke Ellington and John Coltrane.

Spike Lee's film is a fictional story, breaking free from the usual constraints of the biopic in its portrait of a jazz musician. In *Mo' Better Blues* Denzel Washington plays Bleek, a jazz trumpeter. The film has been criticized for not alluding to the persistent reality of drugs in the lives of its characters. But no one seemed alarmed by the fact that in all the other films that glimpsed the milieu of Black jazz musicians (like Scorsese's *New York, New York*, 1977, whose protagonist is a white sax player played by Robert De Niro), more screen time was devoted to musicians taking drugs in nightclub toilets than in practicing their art. Lee was entirely justified in reacting against this automatic association. He tried to show us a man in the grip of actual romantic and professional problems, particularly problems he encounters in reconciling his personal and professional lives. Bleek's coolness in welcoming his girlfriend who drops in, because it's his practice time, leads her to liken him to a stationmaster: "Everything's on a schedule, a timetable." He replies to her that life is short and he wants to amount to something. A little later, he is furious because in their lovemaking his companion has bitten his lip, and a jazz trumpeter needs to take care of his lips like a runner her legs. Similarly, he has problems with authority with his jazz quintet and money issues with the manager—in a word, this is an artist but also a real man, something films do not often show.

Films focusing on musicians and songs are obviously based on the notion of music that has circulated in the world before the film was made, circulates within the film, and will continue to circulate outside it. In some cases this seems to jeopardize the idea of the film as a unique work that would forever "have ownership" of all its elements. If this ideal has given birth to some beautiful films, are those that deviate from it automatically inferior to them? I don't believe so, and we should recall that the connections between cinema and popular music (in all senses of the word "popular") cannot be reduced to a passing trend or a simply commercial calculation.

MUSICAL FILM AS POPULAR FORM

Statistically speaking (and with no judgment), film music is first of all basically music that can exist, or can have existed, or can be destined to exist, *outside* the framework of the film.

Here I cannot devote to non-Western cinemas—African, South American, Indian, Japanese, Chinese—the attention they deserve. But in any case, looking at the films from around the world that are easily accessible, consulting sources and examples available on the Internet, and listening to imported discs suggest an apparently universal fact: everywhere on the planet where popular cinema survives (that is, has not been entirely supplanted by television), you will find "musical" movies, movies that bring together words, singing, instruments, and dance. They thrive to such an extent that the only films that remained authorized in Mao's China were dance films. The greatest movie successes, Disney animated movies among them, give pride of place to music and song.

And why, from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to *Frozen* (Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, 2013), *Coco* (Lee Unkrich, 2017), and beyond, does the feature-length animated film have the perennial tradition of sung and danced musical numbers? Because animation and the margin of unreality it authorizes, along with its infinite possibilities for shape-shifting and flexible deformation, gives filmmakers enormous latitude to "counterpoint" a song with visual details and stage business that are enjoyable precisely insofar as they remain unsaid, independent from the sung text and content.

For example, while Louie, the king of the monkeys in *The Jungle Book* (1967), sings "I Wanna Be like You" (with the voice of Louis Prima), he's gesturing as an ape as he addresses the boy Mowgli. The gestural detail delights us because it is independent of the song the character is performing, and his visual "apeness" does not have an audible equivalent. While the song humanizes the character by endowing him with words and music, the visual gestures confirm his animality, amounting to a comical counterpoint using animation's infinite resources.

Song can give films a kind of universality. One of the rare French films to have enjoyed worldwide success, including in China, was an

entirely sung film with music, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Jacques Demy, 1964, composed by Michel Legrand). The most famous director in history, Charlie Chaplin, took particular care with the music in his films, and he himself wrote the songs. One of them, "Terry's Theme" in *Limelight* (1952)—later to become known as "Eternally" in anglophone countries and "Deux petits chaussons de satin blanc" ("Two little slippers of white satin") in France—became a hit, recorded by many performers.

Even aside from Elvis Presley and Judy Garland in the United States, or Tino Rossi in France, the biggest stars of many national cinemas have been singers. Little Joselito, "the boy with the golden voice," brought success to Iberian screens throughout the 1950s; people liked to say that "the biggest economic calamity of the history of Spanish film occurred . . . when his voice broke!"[21]

In the history of Egyptian cinema the most legendary stars were also singers, such as Mohammed Abdel Wahab between 1933 and 1950. The popular Farid al-Atrash produced movies in which he also starred and sang, like *Immortal Song* (*Lahn al-Kholoud*, 1952, directed by Henry Barakat).[22] An amusing aside: aside from *Immortal Song*'s numbers, the orchestral accompaniment consists of a patchwork of Bizet, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Berlioz, and Verdi(!), following a long-standing tradition in Egypt.

History shows that "collusion" between successful popular songs and a movie (e.g., Whitney Houston's singing in *The Bodyguard*, Mick Jackson, 1992) is by no means a new phenomenon, since it has been around since the late 1920s. The significant difference in more recent films is that rather than being performed by characters in the film, the songs have often migrated to the pit, the nondiegetic soundtrack, or else to the on-the-air space, heard as coming from radios or TVs or other devices shown in the image. Other songs, instead of appearing in the opening credits as they did in a lot of westerns where songs acted as a kind of epigraph, install themselves in the privileged musical moment of the end credits. Some big American hits like *Thelma and Louise* include a montage of songs over clips and stills from the story.

This double life of songs today takes multiple forms. Into the musical fabric of his lyrical and violent road movie *Wild at Heart* (1990), David

Lynch incorporated two songs by Chris Isaak that preexisted the film by several years and had not gotten much traction on their own. In the film we hear them only for a few seconds, submerged in the overall soundtrack and presented as ambience on the car radio. But the CD of the movie's "original soundtrack" includes them in their full versions. Thanks to this boost, they had a great second career, especially the ballad "Wicked Game." Such reprogramming of songs onto soundtrack releases, even songs hardly heard in the actual film, is quite common.

CINEMA AS DANCE

Although I chose generally to bypass the vast domain of musicals in this book, it is at least necessary to cite one of the greatest influences on the very idea of the musical film, Michael Powell. Powell is not only the auteur of the horror film *Peeping Tom* (1960). After the international success of Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948, based on a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale), where Moira Shearer dances a fourteen-minute ballet to a piece by Brian Easdale, Hollywood's MGM sensed a challenge in the air and gave carte blanche for the wordless "impressionist" ballet number in *An American in Paris*, produced by Arthur Freed and directed by Minnelli in 1951. The longest dance film of all, of course, remains Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

The British Powell, admired by Scorsese and Coppola, among others (*New York, New York* [1977] and *One from the Heart* [1982] show his influence), who long worked in tandem with Emeric Pressburger, had a grand conception of the studio-made film, wherein color and music are calculated to integrate into a patently artificial whole. The first expression of this concept is Powell and Pressburger's melodrama *Black Narcissus* (1947). Their *Tales of Hoffmann* (1951), based on Offenbach's uncompleted work, made a strong impact as well. Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994, produced by Coppola) can be considered an offshoot of this tendency. The re-creation of the world in the studio (where not only the interior of Frankenstein's castle was made, but also the town of Ingolstadt and the final scene on the ice) goes well with the abundant and almost uninterrupted use of Patrick Doyle's

score, contributing to the creation of a space that is both cinematic and stylized in the lineage of Powell.

We can also consider certain forms of animation film, both abstract and otherwise, as a cinematic revitalization of dance: the luminous works of Canada's Norman McLaren would be an example.

In 1983, addressing the question of how he got into filmmaking, the great McLaren, who made *Blinkity Blank* (1955), *A Chairy Tale* (1957), and *Synchromy* (1971), answered: "Listening to music on the radio, I'd often close my eyes and I'd see music in the form of figures, shapes, and color that move and dance. But I was puzzled, wondering how to make them visible to the eyes of others. But when I saw Oskar Fischinger's *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 5* (1929), I immediately knew that film could do it."[23]

Contrary to the article that quotes these remarks, it does not seem judicious to me for its author, François Thomas, to see in his words a quest for a "necessary link between image and music, to the exclusion of speech and noise." McLaren was actually seeking to re-create mental images triggered by hearing music, and not to create a bridge between the two domains. This bridge automatically exists in any case, and almost impersonally, though the effect of synchresis. Music in these films functions as a rhythmic base, a generating element. Even when (as a limit case) McLaren "makes" music from lines on the optical soundtrack and lets us see the visual "cause" and the auditory "effect" together in perfect synchrony, it's the sound that symbolically continues to be perceived as the cause of what we see.

Like the New Zealand filmmaker Len Lye, who preceded him in many experiments, McLaren often worked from jazz pieces, making use of changes of color to highlight the musical form, its refrains and its modulations. Of course, some of his films might lend to "unitary" criticism that would accurately show them to be the opposite of what they claim to be—an illustration of music, analogous to a ballet (see *Pas de deux*, 1968) and not the creation of a piece of music for the eyes.[24] But the essential thing is that the films are a source of enchantment, provided that we admit once and for all that a completed film is an ensemble from which it is not legitimate to separate the smallest element even if (as is often the case for music) it is a preexisting element.

DRAWING ANALOGIES:
CINEMA AS DANCE OR MUSIC?

Curiously, despite the many affinities existing between the two arts, the cinema is rarely compared to dance, even though it has long been commonplace to liken cinema to music. The musical analogy has allowed filmmakers and critics to talk about "pure cinema," distancing it from the naturalistic theatrical model it has forever been associated with. The reference to music has always been dear to filmmakers also because music is for them the (idealized) model of abstract order imposed on the tangible world, an order ruled by laws that the uninitiated always consider much more rigid and deterministic than they are.

Abel Gance, unabashedly proclaiming a likeness between the physical quality of sound and that of the image—in a classical false analogy—cut to the chase when he stated, "There are two kinds of music: the music of sounds and the music of light, which is none other than cinema; and the latter is higher on the scale of vibrations than the former."[25]

In fact there is as little relationship between the perception of the note A and the number 440 vibrations per second, as there is between the perception of a color and the periodicity of light, which is much more rapid. It is certainly not at this pseudoscientific level that a serious parallel can be established. But in the 1920s, at the threshold of the sound film, people were passionate about the cinema-music analogy and the marvels it offered, and pursued the richest investigations of its implications.

Germaine Dulac declared, for example: "Music . . . plays with sounds in movement, just as we play with images in movement. . . . The complete film that we all dream of composing is a visual symphony, made of images in rhythm, and which only the sensibility of an artist can coordinate and cast onto the screen."[26]

The critic Émile Vuillermoz was also very taken with such comparisons. "There are extremely close fundamental relationships between the art of assembling sounds and the art of assembling notations of light. The two techniques are thoroughly similar. We should not be so surprised, because both are based on the same theoretical postulates and on the same physiological reactions of our organs to moving phenomena. The optic nerve and the acoustic nerve, nevertheless, have the

same faculties of vibration."[27] His "nevertheless" is delectable, showing that the author realizes that he has yielded to the temptation of drawing facile parallels.

There are perceptual phenomena that I call "transsensory"—meaning that hearing and sight can perceive certain common dimensions like rhythm; but this does not mean that all musical-auditory phenomena and all visual phenomena can be reduced to a common set of rules.

It is tantalizingly easy to run with the analogy and to systematically apply musical terms to film, in a context in which they necessarily take on a different meaning that is more poetical than precise and not a little arbitrary, if we write, for example, that a "cinegraphist must know how to write melodies onscreen for the eye, presented in the right motion, with suitable punctuations and the necessary cadences," as Vuillermoz did. We could just as well say that dance is a melody for the eye, the instrument being the body, and that the moment the dancer pauses is the equivalent of a cadence. These analogies prove only one thing—that there is a language of references that circulate among the spheres called music, dance, and cinema.

And this is with good reason, since one musical melody is in some respects a transposition of physical movement, while others are transpositions of speech. But speech itself is often, in its intonations, a transposition of gesture.

FALSE PARALLELISM

The cinema-music parallel certainly served well when film needed to assert its artistic worth, and when people felt it necessary to raise awareness of film's own formal and abstract dimensions, above and beyond the cultural categories of "genres." This task is not yet completed, in my view, given that film is only misleadingly recognized as an art. But when the comparison becomes merely a repertoire of verbal stereotypes no one really thinks about, it loses its meaning and requires finer tuning—as, in fact, Jean Mitry, who made the 1955 experimental film *Symphonie mécanique* (among other works), did brilliantly in his book *Le Cinéma expérimental*.[28]

Many a critic has expressed surprise that the Schoenbergian idea of the series, as soon as it arose, was not applied to film. Periodically, enthusiastic critics call this or that new film based on formal montage and dislocation of elements, such as Alain Resnais's *Muriel* (1963) or Godard's *Passion* (1982), "the first dodecaphonic film" or "the first serialist film." These are labels that the films' own authors have not by any means used for their works.

Musical analogies do have some justification, but nothing more. If you take an idea conceived to describe music, regarding pure values like pitch or duration, and carry it over into the sphere of concrete images, this transposition can only produce different effects. First, the eye does not have the same properties as the ear, and the play of mathematical relations of intervals is not perceived by vision in the same the way it is perceived by the ear. Second, the eye does not register the absolute salience (dominance) of one quality in relation to others, as is the case in music for the qualities of regular rhythm and pitch.

In most tonal music, if several sounds are linked together, the variations in pitch among these sounds dominate perception, giving rise to the system of scales, modes, or Indian ragas. This does not mean that we do not perceive other differential relations, of "timbres" or "intensities"; it's only that these other factors do not have the same properties and do not have an obviousness for the ear that lends itself to the same resources of abstract organization. Valiant efforts to create modes of rhythmic values or intensity (with Messiaen) or "melodies of timbres" (with Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie*) demonstrated that already, at the very heart of the musical domain, the transposition of one principle of organization of a dimension like pitch into another like duration does not work, which is to say that it no longer has the same quality of salience.

Extending this reasoning, we might be tempted to say that logically this must be all the more true if you go from one domain into another, from the ear to the eye. But again, there is what I call a unitary illusion in such a move. This illusion, based on formal speculation—cut off from all experience—consists in taking it as fact that music is organized according to a unitary law that applies to its different elements.[29]

Unfortunately, even in its "purest" and most formalist form, music is not itself a homogeneous system. In Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, where musical discourse is seemingly reduced to the most abstract elements

possible, the organizing principle of note lengths is not, and cannot be, the same as the principle that organizes pitches—or if it is the same (we can always amuse ourselves by making "modes of rhythmic values"), it will not have the same structural effects in any case. Thus even the most abstract music is already split into two dimensions, one of pitch and the other of length, which are not subject to the same kinds of perception such that they could simply be woven together. So what's to be done with a whole late nineteenth-century orchestra score!?

This was the pleasing illusion many filmmakers had in the belief that music was synonymous with an ineluctable order, and they referred to it as a model (so much the better that it bore fruit for them). But the laws of music provide only a framework, not a law of creation. An understandable error, which musicians, too, commit at times . . .

Ingmar Bergman's comments about *The Silence* illustrate this point.

> I remember that . . . *The Silence*, just like *Winter Light* [his previous film], began with a piece of music: Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra.
>
> My original idea was to make a film that should obey musical laws, instead of dramaturgical ones. A film acting by association—rhythmically, with themes and counter-themes. As I was putting it together, I thought much more in musical terms than I'd done before. All that's left of Bartók is the very beginning. It follows Bartók's music rather closely—the dull continuous note, then the sudden explosion.[30]

The Silence indeed begins with impressions of a train voyage as experienced by the little boy. The sound is continuous, muted and quiet, and what he sees through the window is threatening and ambivalent. Then comes the "explosion": the boy and his mother and aunt are in a city hotel, and through the windows they perceive the brutal light of a bright, sunny day and the cries of street vendors and a cacophony of car horns.

Bergman is a master of modulations of atmosphere, rhythm, and characters' moods, and studying his work on the level of tempo changes—which music influenced in him—would merit an entire book. These fluctuations of mood and atmosphere are never abstract, though, but always embodied, linked to states that are both physical and psychological.

CINEMA AND POLYPHONY

There is often another agenda in referring to music, which is the notion that the art of music should be able to orchestrate moving lines *in combination*—a possibility for which cinema, itself an art of movement, stands in envy. In the quest to assert its identity as "music of the present," silent film lacked the means to easily express what has long been accessible to the most basic music: the simultaneity of voices.

It's not that cinema didn't make efforts in this direction. Superimpositions, rapid editing, and sometimes splitting the screen into several sections to stage simultaneous actions, as in René Clair's final silent film, *Les Deux Timides* (*Two Timid Souls*, 1928), or multiplying the screen by three, as in the triptych sequences of Gance's *Napoleon* (1927), were employed to create superimpositions of rhythms, some constant and others temporary, producing the sense of a coordinated multiplicity, of polyphony that we associate with music and with the term "symphony" ("syn" = together, and "phon" = sound). These devices were not widely adopted, and they remained at the stage of technical effects; the effects were sometimes poetic but did not really achieve their aim. In Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), the mastery of overall rhythm—down to the passersby in the background walking behind the young couple in the streets of the big city—is such that we get the impression of music before our eyes. But what artfulness was required to achieve it!

In simpler terms, the silent cinema, reduced to one image, appeared doomed to *monody*. What did music bring to it—even the most unpolished, which fleshed it out during projections? Quite simply the *beat* on which to inscribe its rhythms, hence the possibility of a kind of simultaneity.

Although Émile Vuillermoz praised cinema's ability to express counterpoint, the truth is that the most visually "polyphonic" film must break the rhythm of the image as soon as it uses editing, and thus break the beat. Music is often the modest and indispensable element that guarantees the film's continuity. I feel it when I watch a silent film with no musical accompaniment today, since then I internalize this beat.

The paradox is that when film went on to incorporate synchronized sound, and sound started to be an integral part of the film (not entirely, as the dubbing process demonstrates), it began to be perceived as a

discordant, divided whole, precisely when sound endowed it with the means for authentic polyphony, or to be more exact, polyrhythm.

This perhaps explains why the "purest" cinema, in the fascinating experiments of filmmakers like Bruno Corradini, Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, and Walter Ruttmann; later, Len Lye and Norman McLaren; and, more recently, Patrick Bokanowski and Artavazd Peleshian, to name some of the pioneers and artists in this domain of pure cinema, has rarely gone without music.

These "alchemists" use music even when they are trying to produce a kind of pure music in the visuals themselves, to bring cinematic concreteness into an abstract order through composition and content of images, and rhythm and editing. The music chosen can be a simple rhythmic kind of figured bass, or a piece that the film seemingly illustrates and also surpasses as a dance does (with McLaren), or a more complex creation tightly interwoven with the images like the music of Michèle Bokanowski for Patrick Bokanowski's *L'Ange* (*The Angel*, 1982).[31]

In other cases, though, the sound film would find its essence and its definition by shunning the least music in order to establish a dialectical relationship with theater and to promote the notion of "ontological realism," as defined during the 1950s by André Bazin, perhaps the greatest critic and theoretician of the sound film. It is no accident that Bazin simply made an abstraction of most questions related to music as a form, an element, or a means, as a subject and as a model. In fact, the only thing that the diverse theoretical directions taken by film criticism and research from the 1940s to now have had in common was to avoid the troublesome analogy between music and film, which they considered to be an antiquated model, too formalistic or reductive. We will see, however, that for directors and in films, even after what can be called the theoretical devaluation of this theme, music has not ceased to be present—insistently so, despite the ardent refusal or neutralization of it.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

I N THE Middle Ages there was a popular genre that consisted specifi-
cally of songs of the unhappy wife. These pieces were complaints in
the voice of young women who had been married against their
will to a brutish older man or simply to a man they did not love. As we
know, this practice of forced marriage still exists in many countries.

Several years ago, at an official Paris institution grandiosely named
the Cité de la Musique—built at the end of the twentieth century and
containing concert halls, a national music school, and a museum of
musical instruments—a large exhibition was mounted, conceived by
the critic N. T. Binh. It was called *Music and Cinema: The Marriage of
the Century?* The title, which at least had the decency to include that
prudent question mark, immediately made me think that if you can call
it a marriage, it is music that occupies the position of the unhappy wife.
The organizers contacted me about giving a talk as part of the event; I
refused their invitation.

I had several reasons for declining. For one thing, I am a composer
of musique concrète, and owing to tenacious prejudices that consider
it nonmusic, musique concrète had never been programmed for con-
certs there. I let them know that I wouldn't enter the building until
the day musique concrète was admitted too—which has still never
happened. For another thing, to me the idea of a marriage seems

historically false and misleading. There is actually neither equality nor complementarity between music and cinema—no "couple," either. That is why the title of my book is "music *in* cinema," that "in" by no means signifying "and." My title says that a film is a frame that everything can enter—theater, poetry, painting—but it's a frame that appropriates all that it incorporates, whether it be passages of a Beethoven string quartet, or a pop song, or Berber music from the Sahara, or an "original" instrumental score.

As mentioned in chapter 5, musique concrète, too, has been incorporated, often anonymously and crudely, into passages of some films. One among many cases in point involves a work by Pierre Henry (1927–2015), "Le Voile d'Orphée," composed in 1953. You can hear a fragment of this piece in Tarkovsky's first feature film, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962). Tarkovsky used it without the composer's permission. Spectators do not recognize it as music, and that is basically for two reasons: because we hear no sounds of traditional instruments, and because musique concrète is made not out of musical notes but out of sounds with no precise pitches. This also explains why I have refused to allow my own music to be used in any films but my own. It would probably get folded into someone's "sound design," like what happened to pieces by Hildegard Westerkamp that Gus Van Sant incorporated into *Elephant* (2003).

But even for the vastly more common cases of music using voices, instruments, and actual notes, I often end up feeling sorry for film composers. From my historical study of film music, and also through direct accounts by the musicians I have met and interviewed, I know that for a composer who has ambitions to have his music heard, gaining recognition for film scores is both rewarding (you can make far more money in film than with concert music) and tragic. On several occasions I have met French composers famous for their scores, such as Antoine Duhamel (Godard's *Pierrot le fou*, 1965) and Gabriel Yared (Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient*, 1996). Both Duhamel and Yared had worked on successful films and made royalties they couldn't ever have dreamed of otherwise. But both suffered from an almost total lack of public interest in their concert or dance music. This was also the plight of Bernard Herrmann. His music for Welles's and Hitchcock's films often plays on the radio or in concert, but no one cares about his

wonderful opera based on Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. That opera, which he wrote between 1943 and 1951, was never staged during the composer's lifetime, and it has rarely been performed since his death in 1975, although in my view it is easily the musical and dramatic equal of Britten's operas. We have been able to hear it in France, but only in a "concert" version, with no sets or costumes, at the Montpellier music festival . . .

In 1996 I met Colette Delerue, the widow of Georges Delerue (1925–1992), on the occasion of a film project devoted to her famous "film composer" husband. She showed me the manuscript of an opera he wrote in 1957 with a libretto by the French writer Boris Vian, *Le Chevalier de neige* (*The Snow Knight*). The opera was never performed again after its debut at the Festival of Nancy. And so it goes. To succeed as a film composer is to bring a curse onto your concert or opera music.

It's true as well for the people I call involuntary film composers—those who become famous not through concerts but because something they wrote has been used and reused in films. The best known is Samuel Barber (1910–1981) and his (too) famous "Adagio for Strings," which can be heard in at least thirty films or television episodes, ranging from *The Elephant Man* and *Platoon* to *ER* and *Seinfeld*.

In watching David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* I am profoundly moved by the final scene. The severely deformed John Merrick has been liberated from cruel exploitation, once more taken in by the hospital and its sympathetic doctor, and he is overwhelmed with gratitude. He chooses to die by moving away the bed pillows that have prevented him from asphyxiating himself, so that he can sleep "like everyone else." The scene is accompanied musically not by the very talented John Morris, who had composed such a heartrendingly enchanting score for the rest of the film, but by Barber's "Adagio." I feel for Morris, who was left out of the most touching moment.

Of course, this sort of treatment is no aesthetic or moral mistake by directors and producers: it's the rule of the game in the movie industry. Cinema gobbles music up. Don't talk to me about a marriage!

This situation also explains why my book chooses to place "original" scores and "borrowed" music on the same level. My approach surprised Jean Nithart, the executive editor of the music collection at the French publishing house Arthème Fayard. Although I had clearly explained my

argument to him, when he read my manuscript he was initially quite surprised that I would discuss popular music right along with classical music and "respectable" orchestral composers like Herrmann. Cinema equalizes all kinds of music; it uses them in a manner that is as cynical as a colonialist pillaging the natural resources of a "barbarian" land. Fortunately, music is, of course, not a human being. But a composer who engages in film scoring has to know what awaits her music.

A more interesting parallel to draw in terms of equality would be the one between opera and narrative cinema. On many levels, fiction film took over the effects and the ambitions of opera, which was in decline at the end of the twentieth century. Contrary to what today's music lovers believe, for quite some time the opera was not a place where music reigned supreme. There was also the story, the subject, the set, exoticism, love, the passions, the people, the actors, the singers. And the libretto. In eighteenth-century Europe, the name of the poet-librettist Pietro Metastasio was more famous than most of the composers who set Metastasio's words to music. The libretto he wrote with the title *Adriano in Siria* was put to music more than sixty times, by among others Johann Christian Bach (a son of Johann Sebastian) and Luigi Cherubini. That's opera's history for you: the history of sometimes-tense relations among performers, composers, and librettists (which encouraged composers like Berlioz or Wagner to become their own writers). Similarly, the cinema must be considered not as a "pure" art disengaged from social and artistic tensions, but as a composite art, and most often, a collective one. This is the story I have tried to tell.

GLOSSARY

ADDED VALUE (Chion, *Le Son au cinéma*, 1985): Sensory, informative, semantic, narrative, structural, or expressive value that a sound heard in a scene leads us to project onto the image, to the point that it creates the impression that we are seeing in this image that which we really "audio-see." This effect is unconscious for most people who experience it, like that of harmony on the melody it accompanies.

ANEMPATHETIC sound or music (Chion, *Le Son au cinéma*, 1985): Music or sound belonging to the action that, through its imperturbable and even happy quality, imparts strong irony or pathos to the dramatic situation onscreen (e.g., someone is killed while we hear a happy crowd outside). Anempathetic music is often produced by a radio, record player, mechanical piano, or music box. *See* **EMPATHETIC**

DIEGETIC: of or pertaining to the reality of the film's narrative world, its space-time continuum. Diegetic voices are those of characters in the story; nondiegetic voices include voiceover narrations. Diegetic music is that which the characters can or could hear. *See* **SCREEN MUSIC**

EMPATHETIC music (Chion, *Le Son au cinéma*, 1985): Music whose tone or emotion matches with or reinforces the emotion suggested by the action onscreen. (Not to be confused with the word "emphatic.") *See* **ANEMPATHETIC**

HORIZONTAL SUSPICION (Chion, *La Musique au cinéma*, 1995): Effect inadvertently created by insert shots of actors playing instruments. "The body part that I see isolated by editing might not belong to the character onscreen." *See* **VERTICAL SUSPICION**

HYBRID SCORE: Said of a film's music that includes both songs and instrumental scoring.

MATERIALIZING SOUND INDICES, or **MSI** (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): details of a sound such as brushings, irregularities, breathing, "impurities," the click caused by fingers on piano or wind-instrument keys, etc., which remind us that the sound comes from a material cause. Applies to speech and noises as well as music.

NONDIEGETIC: of or pertaining to elements of a narrative film that are not part of the story world, including opening and closing credits, voiceover narrations, and musical scoring. *See* **PIT MUSIC**

ON-THE-AIR (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): On-the-air sounds are the sounds in a scene that we assume to be transmitted electrically by radio, telephone, TV, intercom, etc. in the scene, such that they escape "natural" mechanical laws of sound propagation, and can traverse space as they remain situated in the real time of the scene. On-the-air music, especially a song, can travel freely from a position of being screen music to being pit music, and vice versa.

PIT MUSIC (Chion, *Le Son au cinéma*, 1985): Often called nondiegetic music. Pit music (from the notion of an orchestra pit with respect to the stage or screen) is the music perceived as coming from a place and a source outside the time and space of the action shown onscreen. *See* **SCREEN MUSIC**; **NONDIEGETIC**

POINT OF SYNCHRONIZATION (OR **SYNCH POINT**) (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): Audiovisually salient synchronous meeting of a sound event and a visual event. Examples: a dramatic cut in both image and sound; a sound effect, striking musical note, or emphatically spoken word, coinciding with an action, a zoom in, etc.

SCREEN MUSIC (Chion, *Le Son au cinéma*, 1985): often called diegetic music. Music that emanates from a source that apparently exists in the diegetic world of the film, in the present of the scene. *See* **PIT MUSIC; DIEGETIC**

SPATIAL MAGNETIZATION (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): the psycho-physiological phenomenon that results when we hear a sound and,

even though its real source may be elsewhere (a loudspeaker in back of us, say, or a fixed place in a monaural projection), we perceive it to come from a source seen onscreen. The image of a source seems to attract the sound, as though magnetically.

SYNCHRESIS (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): the forging of an immediate and necessary relationship between something one sees and something one hears at the same time (from "synchronism" and "synthesis"). The psychological phenomenon of synchresis is what makes dubbing and other aspects of postproduction sound possible.

TEMPORAL VECTORIZATION (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): Temporal perspective that is short-, mid-, or long-term, which gives us an evolving phenomenon. It applies equally to a traditional melody that sets up the expectation of a cadence, to a character or camera movement, or to the course of a sentence uttered whose end we await. It is particularly salient in cinema when a certain number of audio and/or visual elements, each evolving in its own time, are put together in a manner that makes us anticipate their intersection, meeting, or collision in a certain time span that is foreseeable to a greater or lesser degree. (Each of the elements that sets up such expectation in time is a temporal vector.) Temporal vectorization can appear in the image as well as in sound.

TONIC SOUND or TONIC MASS (Pierre Schaeffer): a tonic sound is one with an identifiable pitch, as distinguished from, for example, sounds of thunder or crowd noise, which have "complex mass."

TRANSSENSORY: describes phenomena that are perceptible by different senses. For example, hearing and sight can perceive common dimensions such as rhythm. Other transsensory perceptions would include movement and texture.

UNITARY ILLUSION (Chion, *La Musique au cinéma*, 1995): The belief that an aesthetic or scientific domain obeys laws that all correlate and are in harmony with one another. For example, some filmmakers and critics have believed—in error—that one can transpose the organization of musical pitches or notes onto the visual plane.

VERTICAL SUSPICION (Chion, *La Musique au cinéma*, 1995): The viewer suspects that the voices belonging to onscreen bodies, or bodies playing instruments onscreen, have been dubbed. *See* HORIZONTAL SUSPICION

X 27 EFFECT (Chion, *L'Audio-vision*, 1990): I coined this term based on an early sound film, Sternberg's *Dishonored* (French title: *Agent X 27*), where the effect appeared in a striking way. This effect, which shows up in many films, consists in having screen music (played by characters, or heard on radio or record in the action) heard alternately close or distantly, depending on whether the camera is near or far, inside or outside. Editing (between inside and outside, for example) causes corresponding jumps in volume that do not interrupt the music's continuity.

NOTES

1. *Féerie*, sometimes translated as "fairy play," was a French theatrical genre popular in the nineteenth century (also in Great Britain and Germany), known for fantasy plots and spectacular visuals, including lavish scenery and mechanically worked stage effects. *Féeries* incorporated music, dancing, pantomime, and acrobatics, as well as magical transformations created by designers and stage technicians, to tell stories with clearly defined morality.—Trans.

2. What I mean here is that once the word exists to designate a medium of art or expression, it is given a history—a discourse that may not be accurate, which might not even take into account the variety of its forms, but which endows it with a horizon, a teleology.

3. See Marcel Proust, *Against Sainte-Beuve*, a series of essays Proust wrote between 1895 and 1900 (published posthumously in 1954). The essays repudiated the aesthetic ideas of Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, who took a biographical and psychological approach to literary criticism.—Trans.

4. A fictional sonata described in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. The character Swann associates a musical phrase in the piece with his love for Odette de Crécy.—Trans.

5. There is also wordless vocal music—scat singing, singing on the syllable "la," humming.

6. Michel Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 387–92. Chion's evocative French word, translated here as *c/omission*, is *le creusement*: the effect that results when spoken

dialogue makes no reference to something very significant occurring in the scene. The word *creusement* means a hollowing out; it poetically expresses the *lack* of expected words in the situation, a gap or vacuum, a conspicuously present absence. Thus the translation *c/omission*—a portmanteau term that evokes both committing and omitting.—Trans.

7. Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, 472. See also note 6.

1. DREAMS AND REALITIES

1. Paleophone: "voice of the past." Cros, a poet, humorist, and inventor, proposed this sound-recording device to the French Academy of Sciences, but before he was able to develop a working model, Edison introduced his phonograph in the United States. Cros's poem is entitled "Inscription."—Trans.

2. Mathias Spohr, "Les Racines théâtrales de la musique de film hollywoodienne," *Dissonanz: Die neue schweizerische Musikzeitschrift / La nouvelle revue musicale suisse* 42 (November 1994).

3. The *comédie-ballet* was a primarily seventeenth-century genre of French drama that mixed a spoken play with interludes containing music and dance. *Pièces à machines* were plays (mostly in seventeenth-century Italy and France) that prominently featured spectacular stage effects via machinery and set changes to depict flying divinities, lightning, raging seas, and so forth.—Trans.

4. Noël Burch, *La Lucarne de l'infini* (Paris: Nathan, 1991), trans. and ed. Ben Brewster as *Life to Those Shadows* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

5. Laurent Mannoni, *Le Grand art de la lumière et de l'ombre: Archéologie du cinéma* (Paris: Nathan, 1994), 375.

6. Demeny was an inventor, photographer, and assistant to Étienne-Jules Marey, one of the nineteenth century's most important investigators of the phenomenon of movement; Gaumont was a photographic-equipment manufacturer, whose business soon incorporated motion-picture production and eventually became one of the world's most important studios.

7. Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, 27.

8. The café concert (also called the "café-chantant" or, for short, the "caf'-conc") was a musical establishment typical of the belle époque in France—usually an outdoor café where small groups performed popular music for the public.—Trans.

9. Cited in Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, 122.

10. Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, 235. Burch calls "institutional mode of representation" (2–3 passim) the normalized narrative cinema and its system of spectatorship that gradually imposed itself during the 1910s as the

almost-exclusive model. For Burch, this was a cinema addressed to each viewer in isolation, not to the collective of viewers.

Diegetic: belonging to the narrative world of the story. Diegetic silence is silence within the story space.

11. Mark Evans, *Soundtrack: The Music of the Movies* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1975), 3.

12. Evans, *Soundtrack*.

13. Aristotle, *Physics* 6.9.239b15.

14. Kevin Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone By* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 387.

15. Brownlow, *Parade's Gone By*, 385.

16. I wrote a detailed analysis of the musical structure of *City Lights* in my short book on the film, *Les Lumières de la ville* (Paris: Nathan, 1989).

17. In the United States, Congress passed the Copyright Act of 1909, which protected published works (including music) that were copyrighted. Works without a notice of copyright affixed to them became part of the public domain.—Trans.

18. Evans, *Soundtrack*, 6.

19. Cited by Jean-Louis Leutrat, *La Chienne de Jean Renoir* (Paris: Éditions Yellow Now, 1994), 67. [There is an "Indian Love Song" from 1916 and a "My Sweet Love Call" in a 1923 collection of Indian-themed songs, both published by Sam Fox.—Trans.]

20. Edith Lang and George West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures* (New York: Schirmer, 1920), 1–2.

21. Lang and West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures*, 27–30.

22. Lang and West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures*, 42.

23. Lang and West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures*, 29.

24. Gabriel Bernard, "La Musique et le cinéma," *Courrier musical*, January 1, 1918.

25. Alain Lacombe and Claude Rocle, *La Musique du film* (Paris: Francis Van de Velde, 1979), 20.

26. For a thorough rundown of the evolution of the film's music, see Daniel Goldmark, "Adapting *The Jazz Singer* from Short Story to Screen: A Musical Profile," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70, 3 (2019): 767–817.

27. Cocteau's short book *Le Coq et l'Arlequin: Notes autour de la musique* (Paris: La Sirène, 1918) is a manifesto on music from the Group of Six's perspective. It praised the epigrammatic simplicity of Satie, and advocated enriching musical inspiration from music hall, circus, black American music, and noises such as sirens and typewriters.—Trans.

28. Carlo Piccardi, *Ciné-Mémoire 1991: Films retrouvés, films restaurés* (publication of the first international conference "Cinémémoire," Paris, 1993), 85.

29. Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, 242n2.

30. Darius Milhaud, quoted in Roger Icart, *La Révolution du parlant vue par la presse française* (Perpignan: Institut Jean Vigo, 1988), 177–78.

31. Fernand Le Borne, *Le Film*, quoted in Emmanuelle Toulet and Christian Belaygue, *Musique d'écran: L'accompagnement musical du cinéma muet en France, 1918–1995* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994), 34.

32. Quoted in Toulet and Belaygue, *Musique d'écran*. ["La Marche des Titis" was a popular song of the mid-1910s.—Trans.]

33. Toulet and Belaygue, *Musique d'écran*, 37.

34. By this I mean that it benefited *the film* that music was not perceived as an equal partner: the film could then star as music for the eyes, an entity unto itself.

35. I have attempted to show what happened with the voice, in my book *La Voix au cinéma* (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1982), trans. Claudia Gorbman as *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

36. Jean Epstein, *Esprit de cinéma* (Geneva: Jeheber, 1955), 53.

37. Epstein, *Esprit de cinéma*, 54.

38. The *tempestaire* of the title is the "storm master": according to the film, local legend had it that in the old days there were men who could talk to the wind and tame it. The film is a poetic documentary with a touch of the fantastic.—Trans.

39. Epstein, *Esprit de cinéma*, 176. This passage translated by Christophe Wall-Romana in *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 377.

40. The "Man in the Iron Mask" was an unidentified man arrested in 1669 and held in various French prisons until his death in 1703. No one is known to have seen his face, because he wore a mask. Theories abound regarding his identity, ranging from Louis XIV's twin brother to a valet, and the mystery has served as a popular topic in literature and popular culture.—Trans.

41. Hays's speech can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pxQC ktFCok, YouTube video, 4:06, accessed December 25, 2020.

42. Richard Koszarski, "On the Record: Seeing and Hearing the Vitaphone," in *The Dawn of Sound*, ed. Mary Lea Bandy (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 18–19.

43. Charles Wolfe, "On the Track of the Vitaphone Short," in Bandy, *Dawn of Sound*, 38.

44. "Conductor Herman Heller, viewed in long shot at the close of 'The Spirit of 1918 Overture' (1926), preserves theatrical protocol by bowing; then when the film cuts to a closer, side view, Heller turns to the second camera and bows three more times—left, right, and finally center—as if the camera stands in for yet another auditorium that had to be surveyed on several fronts." Wolfe, "On the Track of the Vitaphone Short," 38.

45. Presumably *The Better 'Ole* (1926)—Warners' second Vitaphone film, after *Don Juan*. Syd Chaplin was Charlie Chaplin's older stepbrother, an actor who also helped manage his famous brother's career.—Trans.

46. Darius Milhaud, "Deux Expériences de films sonores," *La Revue du cinéma* 1, 5 (1929): 36–40.

47. Frank Capra, *The Name Above the Title* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 103.

48. In Verne's novel, a count who once vied for the affections of an Italian prima donna soprano visits the castle to investigate stories he has heard about her. He thought she was dead, but he sees her image and hears her voice coming from the castle. It is later revealed that it was only a projected still image accompanying a high-quality phonograph recording.—Trans.

49. *Dictionnaire des films*, ed. Jean-Claude Lamy and Bernard Rapp (Paris: Larousse, 2002), 131.

50. Louis Aubert, quoted in Toulet and Belaygue, *Musique d'écran*, 96.

51. Michel J. Arnaud, "Cinéma parlant: À propos de *Show Boat*," *La Revue du cinéma* 2, 10 (1930): 68.

52. Quoted in Toulet and Belaygue, *Musique d'écran*, 100.

53. Quoted in Toulet and Belaygue, *Musique d'écran*.

54. SensCritique, s.v. "Le Chanteur inconnu," accessed January 5, 2020, https://www.senscritique.com/film/Le_Chanteur_inconnu/10320960.

55. André Gide, "Quelques opinions sur *Hallelujah*," *La Revue du cinéma* 2, 11 (1930): 41–43.

56. Damia was a "realist singer" in the tradition of Mistinguett, Fréhel, and Edith Piaf. See Kelley Conway, *Chanteuse in the City: The Realist Singer in French Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), especially 155–63.—Trans.

57. Robert Siodmak, quoted in *Du muet au parlant: Panorama mondial de la production cinématographique, 1925–1935*, ed. Christian Belaygue (Paris: Éditions Milan, 1988), 63.

58. Diderot published, together with his play *Le Fils naturel* (1757), a text that came to be known as "Conversations About *Le Fils naturel*." The "Conversations" consisted of a series of dialogues on the subject of serious drama, which Diderot argued should have a social function.—Trans.

59. The phonograph is eminently "cinegenic," in that it shows cyclical motion, akin to a film reel unwinding.

60. Émile Vuillermoz, "Une Victoire européenne," *Cinémagazine* 10, 2 (1930): 11–13, 69, 77.

61. Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 62–74.

62. François Porcile, *Présence de la musique à l'écran* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 181.

63. Alain Masson, *Comédie musicale* (Paris: Stock Cinema, 1981), 170.

64. Unanimism is a concept in modern art of the period, formulated by the French poet and writer Jules Romains: art should not concern itself solely with individual stories of characters each enclosed in their own emotions and problems, but also with what connects human beings and gives them a single soul ("unanime" = one single soul). This spirit is evident in many films,

such as Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, and in moments in many other films of the era, musical and nonmusical, that present a whole city or neighborhood, like the Busby Berkeley number "Forty-Second Street" in the eponymous 1933 film.

65. Noël Burch, in Belaygue, *Du muet au parlant*, 55.

66. A term by which I designate the automatic psychophysiological association between an isolated aural phenomenon and a visual phenomenon, based on the sole factor of their synchronism (their simultaneous occurrence) and independent of the credibility of their linking.

67. *Lehrstücke* stem from Brecht's epic theater; but as a core principle these plays explore the possibilities of learning through acting, playing roles, adopting postures and attitudes, and so on. The *Lehrstück* no longer maintains a divide between actors and audience. Brecht himself translated the term as "learning-play."—Trans.

2. CLASSICISM TO MODERNISM

1. Space considerations prevent me from doing any justice to the complex history of the period—the Catholic Legion of Decency's enormous political as well as moral influence, the battles over censorship through the 1920s that culminated in the imposition of the Hays Code.

2. Michel Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 76–79.

3. A new digitally "restored" version of the film has since been made, in 2013.

4. Claude Mauriac, "Il faut en finir avec la musique de film," *Le Figaro littéraire*, 1948, quoted in Henri Colpi, *Défense et illustration de la musique dans le film* (Lyon: SERDOC, 1963), 47–48.

5. On this topic see my book *Le Complexe de Cyrano: La langue parlée dans les films français* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 2008).

6. Quoted in Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 77–78. For a description of the device, see W. A. Mueller, "A Device for Automatically Controlling Balance Between Recorded Sounds," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* 25, 1 (July 1935): 79–86.

7. Alain Lacombe and Claude Rocle, *La Musique du film* (Paris: Francis Van de Velde, 1979), 36.

8. Lacombe and Rocle, *La Musique du film*.

9. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 73. Text references are to page numbers of this edition.

10. A repertoire whose conventions I have tried to catalogue in my book on program music, *Le Poème symphonique et la musique à programme* (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

11. On the topic of rendering, see my previous works on cinema and audio-vision, for example *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 109–120, and *Film, a Sound Art*, 237–45.

12. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 89.

13. Anempathy: the effect produced when cheery music on the soundtrack appears ironically "not to care" about dark events on screen. For more on anempathetic uses of music, see chapter 5, in the section "Empathetic and Anempathetic Effects."

14. Elmer Bernstein, interview by Michel Ciment, *Positif*, no. 389–90 (July–August 1993): 121–31.

15. See Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

16. Whistling appeared not only in the score of Leone's films but also in François de Roubaix's music for *Les Aventuriers* (*The Last Adventure*, 1967), directed by Robert Enrico.

17. Noël Simsolo, *Conversations avec Sergio Leone* (Paris: Stock, 1987), 129.

18. We might add that Tati's humorously ironic juxtaposing is already in full force here: as the piano plays the sprightly music, as in a nightclub, we see a dog relieving himself on a fire hydrant in the foreground in front of the title on the wall.

19. These small fragments, played on what sounds like a Hammond organ, prefigure the more melodic theme that comes in shortly after the drums.

20. On the to-and-fro pattern in Tati, see my book *The Films of Jacques Tati*, trans. Antonio D'Alfonso (Toronto: Guernica, 2006). Originally published as *Jacques Tati* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1987).

21. Nilsson created the score for Preminger's *Skidoo* (1968). See Mark Evans, *Soundtrack: The Music of the Movies* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1975), 197.

22. Evans, *Soundtrack*, 198–99.

23. Evans, *Soundtrack*, 196.

24. Note that the compilation phenomenon was not created entirely by cinema: radio stations specializing in "oldies" inaugurated the nostalgic revisiting of the past through music.

25. Walter Murch's account of his career can be found in the online collection "Web of Stories—Life Stories of Remarkable People." His remarks on *American Graffiti* are in numbers 53–55 of the 320 Murch videos, starting with Walter Murch, "The 42 Songs of 'American Graffiti,'" YouTube video, 5:33, accessed December 24, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z2JxIQzfkk&list=PLVVor6CmEsFzCodipONmNiROhYCUWyz_U&index=53.

26. Dave Kehr, "American Graffiti," *Chicago Reader*, accessed December 28, 2020, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/american-graffiti/Film?oid=1150459.

27. Crolla was a jazz guitarist and composer known for songs he wrote for Yves Montand. André Hodeir was a classically trained violinist, composer, arranger, and musicologist; in 1954 he founded the Jazz Groupe de Paris.—Trans.

28. "Buenas noches mi amor" was recorded in 1957 by Gloria Lasso, the Spanish-French singing star, and also by Dalida, the Italian-French star whose fame eclipsed that of Lasso starting in the late 1950s.

29. This project became Tay Garnett, *Directing: Learn from the Masters*, ed. Anthony Slide (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1996).

30. Garnett, *Directing*, 267.

31. Garnett, *Directing*, 267.

32. Jacno: French music star (1957–2009) who with his girlfriend Elli Medeiros first brought punk to Paris, in 1976, with a band called the Stinky Toys; then, in the early 1980s he did a hit solo techno-pop album, followed by another with Medeiros.—Trans.

33. Alain Resnais, interview by Alain Masson and François Thomas, about *L'Amour à mort*, *Positif*, no. 284 (October 1984): 8–16.

34. Alain Resnais, interview by Robert Benayoun, about *Providence*, *Positif*, no. 190 (February 1977): 6–12.

35. Resnais, interview by Masson and Thomas.

36. Alain Resnais, interview by François Thomas, about *Mélo*, *Positif*, no. 307 (September 1986): 7–12.

37. Michel Marie, in *Dictionnaire des films*, ed. Jean-Claude Lamy and Bernard Rapp (Paris: Larousse, 2002), 504. The film's editing has been described as shardlike and kaleidoscopic.

38. The writer Jean Cayrol, a concentration camp survivor himself, also wrote the screenplay for Resnais's short Holocaust documentary, *Night and Fog* (1956).—Trans.

3. BACK TO THE FUTURE

1. Robert Stigwood, interview by Laurent Rigoulet, *Libération*, December 19, 1994.

2. Alain Lacombe, in Lacombe and Claude Rocle, *La Musique du film* (Paris: Francis Van de Velde, 1979), 75.

3. "Francesco Rosi à propos de *Carmen*," *Positif*, no. 278 (April 1984): 7–12.

4. *Variety*, December 6, 1989.

5. Youssef Ishaghpour, in *Le Théâtre dans le cinéma*, vol. 3 of *Les conférences du Collège d'histoire de l'art cinématographique*, ed. Jacques Aumont (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1993), 162–3.

6. Interview with Carl Davis, *Positif*, no. 326 (April 1988): 47–53.

7. The writing of scholar and musician Nikolaus Harnoncourt, an authority in historically informed performance of baroque and classical works, can usefully be brought to bear on the domain of film music.

8. Hubert Niogret, "Musiques pour un art silencieux," *Positif*, no. 299 (January 1986): 54–56.

9. The Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM), created in 1958 and now part of France's National Audiovisual Institute (INA), is a beehive of creativity in sound and electroacoustic music. It creates programs for French national radio, puts on concerts, and sponsors composers and scholarly work.—Trans.

4. WHITHER FILM MUSIC?

1. Claudia Gorbman, "Auteur Music," in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 149–50.

2. Anglophone viewers know the great actress-singer star Arletty from *Hôtel du Nord* (1938), *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939), and *Les Enfants du paradis* (*Children of Paradise*, 1945), among many others. Alain Bashung was credited with reviving the French chanson tradition. He had many rock hits, especially through the 1990s and early 2000s.—Trans.

3. Gorbman, "Auteur Music," 159–60.

4. These novels have, on the other hand, inspired Anglo-American films. Richard Fleischer made *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* at Disney in 1954; *Around the World in 80 Days* had great success soon after, in 1956; and there have been various adaptations of *The Phantom of the Opera*, including Brian De Palma's rock-musical horror-comedy *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974).

5. In live-action feature-film form, that is. The animated film, music videos, and TV reality shows such as *The Voice* and the annual Eurovision Song Contest are audiovisual forms that have overtaken the public's unending desire for popular musical performances.

6. Rémi Candillier, "Le Studio d'enregistrement musical au cinéma," *Il était une fois le cinéma*, accessed December 13, 2020, https://www.iletaitunefoislecinema .com/le-studio-denregistrement-musical-au-cinema/.

7. Pierre Berthomieu, in *Musique et cinéma: Le mariage du siècle?*, ed. N. T. Binh (Paris: Actes Sud /Cité de la Musique, 2013), 136–37.

8. Berthomieu, in Binh, *Musique et cinéma*, 137.

9. Pärt composed the exquisite "My Heart's in the Highlands" for the countertenor David James, on his fiftieth birthday, and for organ. Burns's poem is conveyed in the countertenor part in syllabic singing on a single note, its static quality compensated by the organ part, which shows each note of the vocal part in a new harmonious coloration.—Trans.

5. MUSIC AS ELEMENT AND MEANS

1. Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 62–63.

2. Altman, *American Film Musical*, 69.

3. André Antoine founded the Théâtre Libre and produced plays there, many too controversial to be performed in more-established theaters in Paris, between 1887 and 1896. It was known for its naturalistic staging and gritty realism, to the point of having real animal carcasses on stage.—Trans.

4. The alexandrine was the predominant classical French poetic line form from the seventeeth century on (Corneille, Racine, and Molière wrote their plays in alexandrines). It consists of twelve syllables; a major stress falls on the sixth syllable, preceding the caesura (pause) in the middle of the line, and another major stress normally occurs on the twelfth syllable.—Trans.

5. "Tonic" in the sense given to this word by Pierre Schaeffer: sounds whose mass consists of a specific pitch (as distinct from sounds without a pitch, such as crashing surf or applause, which Schaeffer calls "complex mass").

6. Michel Fano, in *La Musique en projet*, ed. Brigitte Marger et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 155.

7. See Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 65–67.

8. See my book *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

9. A wholly even sound, with no added events or variation (falling rain heard at a distance, the ring of a telephone) can be considered atemporal, but it represents an exception in the sonic world.

10. For example, in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, after the murder of Marie, a B-natural in the orchestra grows progressively louder as a function of the increasing number of instruments joining the unison.

11. Alain Wisniak is a composer who also worked with director Andrzej Zulawski on a film rich in sex scenes, *La Femme publique* (*The Public Woman*,1984).

12. For more on *Casablanca* as an illustration of principles of classical scoring, see chapter 2.

13. Louis Chavance, review of *Black and Tan* [*sic*], directed by Dudley Murphy, *La Revue du cinéma* 3, 21 (April 1931): 67.

14. Henri Colpi, *Défense et illustration de la musique dans le film* (Lyon: SERDOC, 1963), 51.

15. Colpi, *Défense et illustration*, 51.

16. Kurt London, *Film Music* (1936; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1970), 35.

17. Spatial magnetization: psychophysiological phenomenon that results when we hear a sound and, even though its real source may be elsewhere (a loudspeaker in back of us, or a fixed place in a monaural projection), we perceive

it to come from a source seen onscreen. The image of a source seems to attract the sound, as though magnetically.

18. A famous example is the song "America" in Bernstein's *West Side Story* ("I like to be in America . . .").

19. Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857) was a popular French poet and songwriter-lyricist.—Trans.

20. Hanns Eisler [and Theodor Adorno], *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 27.

21. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 27.

22. The song is "La Sérénade du pavé," the "sidewalk serenade," made famous in the late 1890s by one of France's first *chanson réaliste* singers, Eugénie Buffet. (Edith Piaf revived the song in the 1950s.) The lyric's "narrator" is a poor street singer who appeals for money to a woman up in an apartment building; if she won't throw him a couple of coins, a piece of bread or any other "charity" will do.—Trans.

23. Jean-Louis Leutrat, *"La Chienne" de Jean Renoir* (Paris: Editions Yellow Now, 1994), 35.

24. Leutrat, *"La Chienne" de Jean Renoir*, 38.

6. MUSIC AS WORLD

1. *A Song Is Born* was released in France under the rather off-putting title *Si bémol et fa dièse* (B-flat and F-sharp). It hardly ever reappeared in theaters and was available only in archival screenings until video and DVD allowed us French to rediscover it.

2. Terry Gilliam, interview by Emmanuel Carrère, *Positif*, no. 289 (March 1985): 2–5.

3. Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: The Great Russian Filmmaker Discusses His Art*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 162–63 (second ellipsis in the original).

4. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting*, 162.

5. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting*, 159.

6. "*Taxi Driver*'s Screenwriter, Paul Schrader," interview by Richard Thompson, *Film Comment*, March–April 1976.

7. "Pickup musicians," "chameleon composers": Chion coins a wonderful term here: "musiciens de composition." It plays on the existing French term "acteurs de composition," character actors, who change their voices, gestures, etc. from role to role. "Acteurs de composition" emphasizes the process of constructing (composing) the role through many details. Applying this notion to movie composers allows for the wordplay ("composition").—Trans.

8. "Trois petites notes de musique," or "Three Little Music Notes," a tune from Henri Colpi's film *Une aussi longue absence* (*The Long Absence*, 1961).

9. *Two English Girls* (1971), *A Gorgeous Girl Like Me* (1972), and *Day for Night* (1973).

10. Julien Mielcarek, "Yann Tiersen: 'Si Amélie Poulain était à refaire, je ne le referais pas,' " quoted in *Pure Médias*, April 7, 2011, https://www.ozap.com/actu/yann-tiersen-amelie-poulain-refaire-referais/409902.

11. Ennio Morricone, interview by Hubert Niogret, *Positif*, no. 266 (April 1983): 2–8.

12. Michel Deville, interview by Françoise Audé, Michel Ciment, and François Ramasse (about *Paltoquet*), *Positif*, no. 307 (September 1986): 19–27.

13. Quoted in Michel Sineux, "De la Musique avant toute chose: Musique et musicalité dans les films de Claude Sautet," *Positif*, no. 485–86 (July 2001): 11–16.

14. Cited in Loïc Pierre, *Musique et cinéma, de "Psycho" à "The Shining"* (master's thesis, Université François Rabelais, Tours, 1984), 89–90. Pierre is a well-known musician in France, a composer as well as the founder and director of the choral group Mikrokosmos.

15. Jacques Bourgeois, "Musique dramatique et cinéma," *La Revue du cinéma*, no. 10 (February 1948): 25–33.

16. Bourgeois, "Musique dramatique et cinéma."

17. Depressive: Musical symbolism often associates low notes with the earth toward which gravity attracts us. In the psychological state of depression, the subject has difficulty overcoming inertia and gravity; this is what Freud calls *Todestrieb*, the death drive, the wish for sleep, peace, death. Debussy's music is often characterized by melodic turns directed downward: the English horn motif in "Nuages," the first of the three Nocturnes, starts by rising stepwise, then slowly falling, as if losing energy, attracted by a descending tropism. The theme of the "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" has a similar trajectory.

18. Stravinsky helped set the trend in the interwar period to return to aesthetic precepts associated with "classicism," emphasizing order, balance, emotional restraint, and clarity. This was a reaction the unrestrained emotionalism of late Romanticism.—Trans.

7. MUSIC AS SUBJECT, METAPHOR, AND MODEL

1. Miloš Forman, interview by Michel Ciment (about *Amadeus*), *Positif*, no. 285 (November 1984): 21–28.

2. Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 13.

3. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 14.

4. Michel Ciment and Hubert Niogret, interview with Jerzy Skolimowski, *Positif*, no. 214 (January 1979): 22–29.

5. Mozart's *Requiem* was unfinished at his death. A completed version dated 1792, by Franz Xaver Süssmayr, was delivered to Count Franz von Walsegg, who commissioned the piece for a Requiem service to commemorate the anniversary of his wife's death. The autograph manuscript shows the completed *Introit* in Mozart's hand and detailed drafts of other sections. It cannot be shown to what extent Süssmayr may have depended on now lost "scraps of paper" for the remainder; he later claimed the *Sanctus and Benedictus* and the *Agnus Dei* as his own.—Trans.

6. Forman, interview by Ciment.

7. Akira Kurosawa, *Something Like an Autobiography*, trans. Audie Bock (New York: Vintage, 1983), 153.

8. "The Japanese audience sat stock still, and because they couldn't bring themselves to applaud, the whole thing was a failure. But in Paris it succeeded. Because the French audience responded with wild applause, the sound of the orchestra tuning up at the tail end of the clapping gave rise to the powerful and unusual emotion I had hoped for." Kurosawa, *Something Like an Autobiography*, 153.

9. Federico Fellini, interview by Michel Ciment (about *Orchestra Rehearsal*), *Positif*, no. 217 (April 1979): 2–7.

10. The conductor is played by Muir Mathieson himself; Mathieson directed many scores for British films.

11. Eileen Joyce was an Australian pianist whose concert career spanned more than thirty years. For the movies, she also recorded Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 for the soundtrack of *Brief Encounter* (David Lean, 1945).—Trans.

12. Drives are understood as an organism's automatic response to the biological needs basic to life. These include hunger, thirst, the elimination of waste, the avoidance of pain, the attainment of comfort and sex. Sigmund Freud first defined drives in the first of his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality.*—Trans*.

13. Pianist-composer Hoagy Carmichael appeared onscreen in several films, from *To Have and Have Not* (Howard Hawks, 1944) as Cricket, who accompanied Slim, the twenty-year-old Lauren Bacall, to *Young Man with a Horn* (Michael Curtiz, 1950) as the friend of the brilliant trumpet player played by Kirk Douglas and based on the life of Bix Beiderbecke.

14. Laurence Giavarini and Thierry Jousse, "Entretien avec Alain Corneau," *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 451 (January 1992): 66–70.

15. Michel Ciment, interview with Alain Corneau (about *France, Société anonyme*), *Positif*, no. 160 (June 1974): 4–12.

16. Elisabeth Weis, *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 98.

17. Weis, *Silent Scream*, 99.

18. "Because you're leaving," recorded in 1974 by Jeanette.

19. I analyze this episode's musical structure in detail in my book *Film, a Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

20. "Combien je regrette / Mon bras si dodu / Ma jambe bien faite / Et le temps perdu."

21. Jean-Claude Seguin, "Joselito, l'enfant à la voix d'or," *Archives* (Toulouse), no. 32 (May 1989).

22. Mohammed Abdel Wahab was a prominent Egyptian singer, actor, composer, and oud player. After a visit to Paris, he introduced a lighthearted genre of musical film to Egyptian culture, eventually composing eight musical comedies between 1933 and 1949, with music that departed from Egyptian musical tradition. Farid al-Atrash was also a composer, singer, actor, and virtuoso oud player. He recorded about five hundred songs and starred in thirty-one movies between 1941 and 1974.—Trans.

23. Quoted by François Thomas in "McLaren ou la musique des sphères," *Positif*, no. 316 (June 1987): 63–66. A more recent and more accurate account comes from Holly Rogers, "The Musical Script: Norman McLaren, Animated Sound, and Audiovisuality," *Animation Journal* 22 (2014): 68–84. Rogers writes: "It was McLaren's first encounter, as a student at Glasgow School of Art, with the work of Oskar Fischinger that encouraged the young artist to turn his hand from printmaking and painting to film . . . After a showing at the Art School's Film Society of Fischinger's *Study No. 7* (1931), a film set to Brahms's 5th Hungarian Dance (1869), McLaren recalls that: 'I thought, that's it! Film is the medium to express my feelings about music . . . I dreamt of forms, and here was someone else dreaming of different forms of music, but he actually had turned it into a movie. I was greatly influenced by that film.' " (Quoted by Donald McWilliams, "Norman McLaren: A Filmmaker for All Seasons," *McLaren's Workshop App*, National Film Board of Canada, https://itunes.apple .com/gb/app/mclarens-workshop/id622560819?mt=8.).

24. The "unitary illusion" is the belief that an aesthetic or scientific domain obeys laws that all correlate and are in harmony. Some filmmakers and critics have believed—in error—that one can transpose the organization of musical pitches or notes onto the visual plane. I consider the unitary illusion a modern phenomenon, evident, for example, in twentieth-century ideas about global organization of music (cf. Boulez), and also, arguably, in the conceptualization of nature as an ecosystem wherein all organisms and elements are absolutely interdependent following universal laws (cf. Lorenz's "butterfly effect").

25. From a 1926 speech, "Le temps de l'image est venu!," reproduced in *L'Art cinématographique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1927).

26. Quoted in Jean Mitry, *Le Cinéma expérimental: Histoire et perspectives* (Paris: Seghers, 1974), 86. from *Schéma* 1 (December 1925).

27. Émile Vuillermoz, "La Musique des images," in *L'Art cinématographique*, vol. 3 (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1927), 41–66.

28. Jean Mitry (1904–1988) was a French film theorist and historian, critic, and filmmaker, and a cofounder of the Cinémathèque Française. He made several films based on music by modern composers. In *Symphonie mécanique*, electronic music by Pierre Boulez is paired with a montage of mechanical imagery—mechanical parts in movement, a bottle factory, the making of cookies and cigarettes and metal parts, and so forth. The film's title and visual content clearly play on Fernand Léger's silent film *Ballet mécanique* (1924).—Trans.

29. See note 24.

30. Stig Björkman, Torsten Manns, and Jonas Sima, *Bergman on Bergman: Interviews with Ingmar Bergman*, trans. Paul Britten Austin (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 181.

31. Patrick Bokanowski (b. 1943) is a French filmmaker of experimental and animated films. *The Angel* is his most prominent and obsessive work, with musical soundtrack by his wife, Michèle Bokanowski. Artavazd Peleshian (b. 1937) is a prizewinning Armenian poetic/experimental documentarian.—Trans.

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