

James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer, eds.
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The publication of *Music and Cinema* reflects the growing interest among musicologists in studying intersections of music and film, i.e., the soundtrack with its simultaneous images. Scholarship concerning music and film, which enjoyed its most vigorous growth spurt from the mid-1980s into the mid-1990s, seems to be largely motivated by three interlocking concerns: establishing the soundtrack as an indispensable component in film analysis, a field in which visual elements have always been favored; describing, analyzing, and categorizing the ways in which music bears upon understandings of film; and championing the composers of original scores who, until the appearance of this kind of literature, have not received due recognition for their achievements. This fecund period saw the publication of numerous monographs, which were frequently structured in two main parts: an exposition that posited a unique theory about film music's role, followed by an application of the theory to selected films.

Most significant to film music scholarship of this period is undoubtedly Michel Chion's *Audio-Vision* (1994), with its rigorous interrogation of the interactions of film image with sound, exhaustive categorization of audiovisual relationships, and lively analyses. *Audio-Vision* seems to be at once a bird's-eye view and a prescriptive blueprint of the field that other scholars have participated in realizing.¹ With such vital groundwork set, analytical questions and theoretical frameworks are entering a period of intensive sharpening and reshaping, and larger questions of methodology and scope are becoming more pressing. It is into this phase of the discipline that *Music and Cinema* emerges.

Edited by David Neumeyer, Caryl Flinn, and James Buhler, *Music and Cinema* contains a wealth of original approaches to a variety of film-music topics. The book is divided into five sections: Leitmotif: New Debates and Questions; Beyond Classical Film Music; Style and Practice in Classical Film Music; Gender, Ethnicity, Identity; and Methodological Possibilities. The articles differ greatly even within these five parts, offering glimpses into the complexity and vastness of each of these general subject areas, as well as the multitude of ways in which these areas can be negotiated. The perennial questions, however, concern identifying the objects of study; related to these are the questions of what might constitute a canon for film music studies, and whether such a body of films should be delineated at

all. Seeking suitable methodologies for approaching and analyzing these objects is also a crucial activity that comes to life on the pages of *Music and Cinema*.

Some of the authors seek patterns and models in film-music relationships, while others attempt to analyze some of the best known films and their respective soundtracks, perhaps working towards the assembly of a canon of films for this still new discipline. Each article, regardless of its apparent scope, suggests methods that beg to be applied to other films and soundtracks, which is the book's most promising and exciting aspect.

The editors' introduction neatly summarizes the most significant film music scholars' views on why films need music, reminding us how such basic questions have given rise to subsequent concerns that have shaped the trajectory of film music study to date. With great foresight, the editors point out the issue of canon formation for films and film music; with the availability of increasingly affordable technology, films can be made and distributed or transmitted quickly and easily, and it is likely that this trend will only grow. Since the media of film is in flux, the notion of film *as a genre* is unstable. This seems of justifiable concern to the editors, who argue that the many "technologically driven options are . . . disruptive to established wisdom" (22-23), and begs the question of how scholars shall determine which films to study. The presently open-ended question of the film canon for film music studies, whether asked from a technological or an aesthetic viewpoint, is one that has yet to be answered. Currently, however, this open-endedness yields a wide spectrum of writings in the pages of *Music and Cinema*.

It is encouraging that while these essays are all to some degree interdisciplinary, discussions and analyses of the music are terrifically solid, carefully crafted, and supportable—although, surprisingly, not all of the contributors discuss music in a significant way. In most of the articles, the methodology at work seems implicit rather than explicit; rarely does one see a collection of essays with premises and theses that speak so clearly for themselves. Across the board, the articles are captivating, representing some of the most creative and original work in the field, and at the same time, present sound observations and frames of analysis that draw on established models in other scholarly—mostly musicological—literature.

The scholars represented in this volume have chosen many different kinds of films, and strategies for studying them. Each article seems guided by questions that present themselves most naturally about relationships between the film and music, and is shaped by previous film music scholarship; absent from the articles themselves are discussions of what the canon might or might not be, though this question looms silently just beyond the margins. The variety of films and film music relationships taken as subjects

here only opens the door further for scholars to compare films on the bases of studio, director, time period, actors, type of music, or upon points of cultural context and reception.

As an acknowledgement to perhaps the most influential concept in film music scholarship to date, the first of the five parts of the book is devoted to the leitmotif. In "Star Wars, Music, and Myth," James Buhler adds some careful amendments to the multitude of previous scholarship in a leitmotivic reading of the film and its music, as well as a salient analysis of the score's Imperial March theme. Secondly, and more significantly, Buhler presents a compelling argument that the complex coexistence of the Force and technology in the world of the film is articulated by the coexistence of sound effects and music on the soundtrack. Buhler points to this construction of the *mise-en-bande* to point up relationships between the Darkside and technology.

Scott Paulin's "Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity: The Idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the History and Theory of Film Music," provides an excellent summary of philosophies regarding film as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or not, as the case may be. Paulin brings to light a host of strategies that have invited the categorization of film as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, such as evoking Wagner to elevate the status of film to high-quality entertainment, as well as minimizing film's discontinuous visual nature and downplaying the fact that it is mass produced. In considering the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk* more centrally than that of the leitmotif, Paulin traces ideological relationships between Wagner and the world of film.

Paulin explores the early-twentieth-century tendency among film music composers to emulate Wagner, and why notions of Wagner were attractive to early film audiences. Paulin also identifies Wagner as the force behind the debate between those who believe film music should reinforce or support the image on the screen and those who advocate a so-called contrapuntal relationship between music and image, a debate that has since broken down into more subtle questions of how sound and image inform each other and contribute to an aggregate effect.² While Paulin neatly packages relevant, wide ranging views, he also smartly comments, "It's hard to imagine what a truly 'redundant' musical accompaniment [i.e., the musical accompaniment would duplicate the meaning of the visual image] would take" (72-73), since some of the authors he summarizes don't take into account (at least not explicitly) the different representational capabilities of the two media: film and music.

Ultimately, Paulin reminds us that the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was a steady goal with a frequently redefined route for Wagner, suggesting that for film music composers Wagner's tenets are more symbolic than paradigmatic. This article makes significant inroads into the many questions of Wagner's

presence in film music and film music scholarship, and suggests that Wagner should not be invoked without knowing how and why.

In "Strategies of Remembrance: Music and History in the New German Cinema," from part two of the book, "Beyond Classical Film Music," Caryl Flinn notes the omission of music in scholarship on films of the New German Cinema, and displays how a refined conception of mourning (essential to these films by virtue of the centrality of grief and loss as themes) results when the music of the soundtrack is considered in conjunction with the images. Flinn brings music into lively, convincing analyses of a handful of films by Alexander Kluge, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. By way of example, Flinn examines some uses of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in various films. Though always taken as a symbol of high German culture, Flinn shows how Beethoven's Ninth, with various concurrent images, creates scenes of widely-ranging emotions and meanings.

The interaction of the visual images with the music, and the location of the music in the soundtrack (either nondiegetic or in one of the layers of the diegesis) make for a rich palette of possible emotional meanings and interpretations, providing persuasive evidence that the model of mourning in the films of the New German Cinema must be modified to include music, as Flinn asserts. Certainly, visual imagery has been a cornerstone in the articulation of mourning and history in the New German Cinema, but Flinn makes it clear that the music in these films is as important, and in many cases more effective, to achieving this end. Flinn ends the article with an insightful analysis of Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen*, following the life of the film's title song within the film itself. Here Flinn also displays the effects of repetition of music on the meaning of the film, and the mutation of familiar music into unfamiliar contexts.

Krin Gabbard's "Kansas City Dreamin': Robert Altman's Jazz History Lesson" is really more like Krin Gabbard's jazz history lesson, since nothing about the film announces that the events depicted therein are to be taken as factual. Gabbard outlines the great care Altman takes in presenting musical details true to 1934 Kansas City, though the references in the film to real-life musicians are understated and often, in my view, esoteric. After describing how the music came to be as it appears in the film, Gabbard goes on to describe some of the roles the music plays in highlighting significant nonmusical relationships in the film. Central to this part of his discussion is the way the presentation of music and musicians in the film captures and reflects aspects of white and black masculine display. Beyond this, Gabbard suggests Altman's fascination with race relations in the film is the director's way of returning, unconsciously, to childhood and identifying with the young Charlie Parker. Gabbard offers this

original and lively psychoanalytical take on the parts of the film about Charlie Parker as a way of understanding Altman's desire to realize his own fantasies, as well as a manifestation of Altman's own feelings about race relations at large.

The third and centrally positioned part of *Music and Cinema*, "Style and Practice in Classical Film Music," contains essays in which classical film music analysis can be seen at work. Martin Marks leads the reader through an engaging comparison of the music in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Casablanca* (1942). Though the two films—widely recognized as classic Hollywood movies—both came out of the Warner Brothers studio contemporaneously and star Humphrey Bogart, the similarities between them seem to end there. *The Maltese Falcon* is best categorized as film noir, while *Casablanca* is a romantic drama. Further, the scores were written by different composers; Adolph Deutsch provided music for *Falcon*, while Max Steiner heads the group of contributors for *Casablanca*. Despite all of these generic and musical discrepancies, which initially furrowed this reader's brow, Marks clearly presents a framework, based of course on the music in the films, for their comparison. Marks's article serves as an excellent example; the differences between the films turn out to be superficial in light of the compelling way the author crafts his analysis and overall strategy. Marks's writing reminds us that in determining subjects of study for film musicology, salient similarities or differences that invite the most revealing study may not always lie at the level of easily visible fact, but deep in the tissue of the film-music relationship itself.

In "Tonal Design and the Aesthetic of Pastiche in Herbert Stothart's *Maytime*," Ronald Rodman expertly reveals surprisingly sophisticated musical forces at work in this light-hearted film. Rodman follows a number of important intersecting threads in the complex musical fabric of the film: the significance and sequence of tonal areas, the juxtaposition of singing styles (opera, operetta, popular), and the number and order of each character's solo and ensemble songs in the film. Rodman displays how these attributes all work together to support the film's dual narrative focus on the two main characters, the social differences between the characters, and areas of narrative unrest and resolution. Rodman handles this abundant score with great elan. His article also touches upon the appeal of early film scores to a host of techniques of Western classical music, of which Stothart's films are excellent examples.

"That Money-Making 'Moon River' Sound: Thematic Organization and Orchestration in the Film Music of Henry Mancini," by Jeff Smith, is unique in this volume in that it takes orchestration (and consequently timbre) as a topic in analyzing film music. Smith traces the orchestration of Henry Mancini's scores as it relates to the big band of the 1940s, and

summarizes the connotations of the Mancini sound, as it has been adopted by the Cocktail Nation.

The other aspect of the essay deals with developments in the film and record industries in the 1950s and 1960s that influenced the way some film music composers wrote. Smith authoritatively discusses the relationships between industrial pressures and the musical content of soundtrack albums, including how the very format of the LP shaped the makeup of the soundtrack as we know it today. Most importantly, the production of LPs in connection with films resulted in a greater number of melodically distinct themes in a soundtrack, and it solidified the role of these tunes—theme songs and source music—as accessory products to films. Smith also situates the stylistic trends of the composers central to his discussion, mainly Mancini, with respect to contemporaneous techniques of other film composers.

I hardly mind that Lucy Fischer's "Designing Women: Art Deco, the Musical, and the Female Body" discusses music only cursorily, and does not work it into the meat of her discussion. In this article, from the fourth part of the book, "Gender, Ethnicity, Identity," Fischer offers a rich view of the Art Deco aesthetic—its connection with modern visual arts and its preoccupation with, and alteration of, the female body—as observed in film musicals of the 1930s. The musical thread in her essay is picked up only briefly, then lost; it is not meant to be central. However, since Fischer makes a strong case for Art Deco's suitability to intertextual flourishes, and explains Art Deco's visual manifestations in these films so incisively, this article will provide an indispensable source for those hoping to analyze the music in these films.

Each article in this book negotiates, for the most part implicitly, two interrelated issues: what constitutes and defines an object of inquiry in scholarly discussion of film and music, and what questions are to be applied to the chosen object. These issues, as the articles in this volume vividly display, have thankfully not been reined into any kind of formula. It is in "Disciplining Josephine Baker: Gender, Race, and the Limits of Disciplinarity," by Kathryn Kalinak (from section four, "Gender, Ethnicity, Identity"), and in "Inventing the Cinema Soundtrack: Hollywood's Multipane Sound System," by Rick Altman, McGraw Jones, and Sonia Tatroe (from the book's final section, "Methodological Possibilities") that these issues are best dissected and explored.

Kathryn Kalinak's article is the one most committed to the matter of what questions should be asked when attempting to understand the relationships between a film and its music, not to mention situating the aggregate in its social context. Kalinak begins by asserting that even interdisciplinarity is no safe bet in attempts to uncover the richest meanings in film-music intersections, and she goes on to illustrate this by presenting

numerous complex moments in the film and its soundtrack, consistently informed by aspects of reception history relating to race and sexuality. Kalinak's article serves as a reminder to those studying music in film that borrowing investigative principles and techniques of previous scholars is a relatively blunt tool while, on the other hand, the most salient and pertinent observations result from inquiries in which the object of study is given maximum freedom to guide and determine the kinds of questions asked of it.

The authors' main task in "Inventing the Cinema Soundtrack: Hollywood's Multiplane Sound System," is to advocate the study of finished films as texts. They do so by identifying fundamental differences between scripts as written and spoken language as heard in film, as well as the analogous relationship between film music as notated (or as heard on a soundtrack album) and as it appears in a film. Numerous film music scholars come from a background in musicology in which the notion of text—in terms of a piece of music from the canon of symphonic works, for example—is still up for grabs, and every time that piece of music is performed, the text is essentially being re-created anew. This article does well to make the point that unlike a piece of music, the written texts for films (the script, stage directions, score) are enacted and recorded to create one residual object, and that this resulting film, with its sounds *as heard*, becomes the text to be studied.³ The authors go on to propose a system whereby subtle aspects of the soundtrack, such as relative dynamics and reverberation levels, can be captured and made a part of film music analyses.

Music and Cinema will doubtless stand as a signal volume in film music scholarship; the articles are clearly indebted to earlier scholars in this field, and often turn the greatest unresolved issues of methodology and scope into the cleverest of analytical tools. The volume paints a picture of disciplinary open-mindedness that will hopefully continue to inform film music study. It has certainly yielded rich and varied results in this case.

Notes

1. Chief among these scholars are Claudia Gorbman (1987) and Kathryn Kalinak (1992), both of whom explore the history of film music and interrogate its presence and effects in film.

2. While nearly all early-twentieth-century manuals on film accompaniment advocated parallel relationships between music and image, Theodor Adorno, Hans Eisler (1947), and Siegfried Kracauer (1960) later led those who not only tolerated but preferred disjunct relationships between visual image and music, the type of which have been celebrated in the films of Jean-Luc Godard.

3. In many cases, scholars do not have the option of studying the written scores or parts used in recording film soundtracks since many of these have been lost or were discarded after being recorded.

References

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