

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

Social Dimensions of Hollywood Movie Music

Michael Pinsonneault

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Humanities

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

March 1999

© Michael Pinsonneault, 1999



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-43591-1

Abstract

Social Dimensions of Film Music Content

**Michael Pinsonneault, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 1999**

This thesis argues that various processes based in the social dimensions of our lives affect film accompanists, composers, and their work in a direct and pertinent fashion. Mediating social influences act upon the relationships between film musicians and the institutions or formations within which they function, and reflect the economic and political preoccupations of those collective bodies. These same factors also produce effects in the realm of social subjectivity, informing the internal attitudes of film accompanists and composers toward their metier and toward the individuals and groups with whom they interact in the course of making music for motion pictures. Social considerations further affect the processes in which film musicians produce the actual notes, timbres and styles heard in live accompaniments and on soundtracks, shaping the structures, idioms, instrumental media, and conventions that have evolved in mainstream film music over its century-long history. Finally, various residual and emergent elements are shown to challenge and redefine dominant film musical practice in different ways. In the former case, the coexistence of live performance and reproduced motion pictures during the silent era, and the echoes of live musical reception sensed when attention-demanding background music or commercial tunes are heard on soundtracks, are seen as bringing residual influences to the fore at times in Hollywood movies. In the latter case, general cultural shifts in postmodern society, indicating the evolution of more actively engaged forms of reception and participation and a related desire for greater personal

expression and participation among a critical mass of people, are explored as emergent trends transforming standard film musical practice and reception in a number of respects.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisors Allan Crossman, Catherine Russell, and Paul Heyer for their ongoing guidance during the completion of this work. Paul Théberge's tutorial was also helpful in connecting me with certain key concepts, sources and films during the early stages of the research. A number of other individuals contributed to this project by providing key pieces of information on the subject of film music, including George Unger, Jocelyne Clarke, Claude Rivest, Ryan Morey, Craig Morrisson, Schloime Perel, and Kevin Courier. Finally, I express my heartfelt gratitude to Betty and Agnes, Lynn and Sue, Elaine, and Avril for their emotional support throughout this process.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1: Film Music and Society	6
1. Theoretical Considerations	7
2. Institutions, Formations and Film Music	39
Motion Picture Music and Hollywood Institutions	41
Formations and Film Music	62
3. Economic and Technological Factors in Hollywood Film Music	70
Economics and Movie Music	73
Technology and Film Music	93
4. Power, Politics and the Film Music Maker	101
Film Music and Free Market Political Economy	103
Power and the Personal Dimensions of Film Music Making	120
Part 2: Social Dimensions of Film Music Content	143
5. Hollywood Film Music: an Analysis of Dominant Practice	144
Film Musical Content in History	145
Structural Characteristics of Mainstream Film Music	148
Conventional Factors in Hollywood Film Music Practice	159
Musical Reception and Film Spectatorship	172

6. Residual Influences in Film Music.....	181
Filmed Performance and the Residue of the “ Auratic”	
Past.....	183
Residual Effects in the Background Score.....	196
Residual Influences in Dominant Practice.....	201
Stars, Music, and the Residual.....	206
7. Emergent Trends: Reflections on the Future of Music and Moving Images.....	219
Postmodernism, Breakdown and Renewal in Movie Music.....	224
Changes in Subjectivity and Spectatorship.....	232
Production Platforms: Technology and Creative Emergence.....	243
Developments in Distribution and Exhibition.....	249
A New Paradigm for Motion Picture Music?.....	257
Conclusion.....	266
Bibliography.....	275
List of Films Cited.....	283

Introduction

Throughout Hollywood history, the musical presence in film has been a significant one. From the live accompaniments of the silent era to the expensively-produced soundtracks of the 1980s and 90s, music has consistently shaped the experiences and expectations of audiences vis-a-vis motion pictures. But while many journalists and writers have focused on film music makers, their compilations and scores, and the general ways in which music functions in the narrative cinema since the 1910s, only a handful of critics have considered the social implications of movie music in any depth. For a number of reasons, this represents a serious deficit, and a central objective of my work is to address this shortfall in the literature on mainstream film music.

Two examples typical of recent discussions on film music-related topics illustrate what I refer to in this regard. The 1997 documentary *Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies, and the American Dream* follows the Neal Gabler book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* quite closely. Both Gabler and director Simcha Jacobovici examine in some detail how the social backgrounds of the movie moguls who built the Hollywood studios (Adolph Zukor at Paramount, Louis B. Mayer at MGM, etc.), as well as those of the directors, actors and other production personnel who worked for them, influenced the content of mainstream pictures from the silent era until the early 1950s. But while the role of music and musicians during the "golden days" of the industry is examined to a degree in *Hollywoodism*, only filmed performances of songs with lyrics (from musicals, primarily) are considered. One can only speculate why Jacobovici chose to devote considerable time to Jewish songwriters like Harold Arlen

and Irving Berlin (presenting the former as "a messenger of Black music" for having brought African-American musical styles to the attention of mainstream white audiences via Hollywood films, and the latter as the promoter par excellence of patriotic American values through tunes like "America the Beautiful") and why he completely ignored the far more substantial film contributions of Jewish composers such as Max Steiner and Hugo Friedhofer. My sense is that, like so many who have dealt in one way or another with the subject of film music, the director in this case simply lacked the vocabulary or insight required to introduce the studio music department heads and other film music makers into the discussion. Because the Steiners and Friedhofers of classical cinema wrote instrumental background scores rather than melodies with words (whose social implications can be more easily assessed), these vital figures seem to have been excluded on the grounds that their work is too intangible to speak about in social terms. In my view, this is not only a disappointment, but a real shame, given that fascinating links between classical film scores and the social backgrounds of composers relevant to the theme of the documentary quickly become apparent when an appropriate analytical framework is applied to their work and careers. To name only one obvious example in this regard, the development of a quasi-universal romantic sound in movie soundtracks by Steiner and others, as well as their integration of patriotic leitmotifs in scores throughout the 1930s and 40s, indicate that their desire for a neutral, all-American identity that hid potentially dangerous ethnic origins was every bit as strong as with the movie moguls.

A second recent treatment of film music shows that consideration of the specific musical *content* of scores and accompaniments is equally lacking in coherence and consistency of late. A review by Doug Adams of

the music for *The Truman Show* (in the July, 1998 issue of *Film Score Monthly*) reflects on an eclectic soundtrack containing original work by two different composers (Australian film musician Burkhard Dallwitz and concert composer Philip Glass) as well as compiled works by Chopin, pop numbers, and other stylistically varied selections. Adams concentrates at one point on Glass's contributions to the film, describing his cues as "the most conceptually difficult leg of the score." Adams claims this difficulty lies in the fact that the pieces are "incredibly obvious as constructed music. The paths they take are dictated [more than anything else] by the desire to work through some sort of mechanism." This self-contained formal quality causes a certain amount of confusion in the picture, Adams insists, blurring the line between the background music "which reinforces Truman's humanity," and the music-within-the-film associated with the TV show that unscrupulously spies on Truman's life. But if one listens to these "confusing" pieces and keeps in mind a few basic concepts related to standard film musical discourse, their "problematic" ambiguity can be easily put into context. The Glass excerpt which plays when Truman first begins to suspect his squeaky-clean environment is not what it appears to be, for instance, is in fact entirely appropriate for the moment despite the fact that it was not composed specifically for the film and has the kind of self-contained quality Adams refers to. To label such pieces as misfits on formal grounds is an unfortunate oversight, in my opinion, because clearly the ambiguity Adams is perturbed by--in this case, at least--has nothing to do with any distracting stylistic imprint left by Glass, and everything to do with the fact that the selection's metric structure ($5/8 + 7/8$) gives it an off-kilter rhythmic feeling, and its harmonic underpinning alternates regularly between major and minor chords (musical gestures whose ambiguous narrative-musical shading is

grounded in socially-influenced practices discussed in later chapters of this work). Even the most basic of analytical concepts can help circumvent critical wild goose chases such as Adams's, and yet commentaries like his are the rule rather the exception in my experience, particularly in the popular print media.

The prevalence of instances such as *Hollywoodism* and the Adams article have convinced me that clear terms of analysis for music in film—particularly with regard to its social aspects—are required now more than ever. To this end, my treatment of mainstream movie music in the following chapters will be based on the proposition that the prime energy underlying cultural processes is generated by the dialectical tension between social subjectivity and collective being. The Hollywood film music milieu illustrates this interplay in the constant conflict it has seen between the personal interests and motivations of accompanists or composers on the one hand, and the economic or politically-related priorities of their institutional employers on the other. After outlining the main theoretical components of my thesis, I proceed to examine the wider institutional, formational, economic, technological, and political dimensions of the area in the remainder of Part 1, considering the general connections Hollywood movie music has forged with society as a whole. I then move on to assess the actual music of Hollywood film in Part 2, proposing that the content of movie accompaniments and soundtracks is produced not from some “pure” realm within the imagination of the film music maker, but from the nuanced subjective-collective relationships they bear to dominant practice and values, as well as to the various residual and emergent influences informing them and the broad-based realities surrounding their work at any given time. I also reflect at various points in the study on the roles and reactions of film

spectators vis-à-vis music, and the complex weave formed by film texts, music, and the social subjectivity of audiences at the level of reception.

I do not in any way claim that what follows in this work represents an airtight theory of movie music with all-encompassing explanatory power. But I do believe that the concepts I have synthesized from the scholarly literature on film music, and developed on my own using an interdisciplinary approach, are capable of meeting my core objectives of providing an effective and accessible framework within which mainstream scores, accompaniments, and source music may be evaluated in terms of their connection to the social. But there is an even more compelling motivation behind my having pursued this subject in the way I have, and a deeper objective underlying this project. From my perspective, Hollywood is one of the principal forces driving the current economic, cultural, and political push towards a particular form of globalization. The inequalities and injustices of this process as it exists at the turn of the millennium are serious and extensive, and for this reason an uncritical buying into the ideologically-charged image-sound-music package propagated by Hollywood and related cultural industries is entirely unacceptable to me. Mainstream film music is part and parcel of this apparatus, and even if the Hollywood apparatus is less monolithic than was formerly claimed by many critics, it is nevertheless imperative that the tools with which to question music's role therein must be developed if any meaningful alternatives to (or creative possibilities within) dominant practice are to be found. I believe examining the various social dimensions of Hollywood film music in as detailed and comprehensive a fashion as possible will provide an important push in this direction, and what follows represents my best effort to do precisely that.

Part 1:
Film Music and Society

Chapter 1

Theoretical Considerations

I will begin this examination of mainstream movie music by defining what, in my estimation, constitutes “the social” generally speaking, and what types of impact I see social factors having on cultural phenomena such as Hollywood film and film music. Friedrich Engels, Julia Kristeva, and other Marxian-influenced thinkers maintain that dialectical¹ processes are fundamental to the formation of our mental and social realities, a position I am in basic agreement with. In my view it is the interplay of various opposing interests, orientations, and perspectives that drives the unfolding of human society, and the dialectic of social *subjectivity* and collective social *being* is the principal fuel for that force. The awareness of oneself as a distinct entity (or, in the case of “pre-individualistic collectivities,”² of oneself as a distinct family, tribe, village, etc.) is thus constantly challenged and unsettled by a simultaneous awareness of the wider social spheres in which one is defined, giving rise to the essential dialecticism of our existence.

I would describe the subjective aspect of this dialectic in largely postmodern and post-structuralist terms: that is to say, subjective experience must be understood as a complex locus at which any number of defining social influences can be found, and not as an autonomous category standing in more or less independent relation to the social and historical conditions in which it exists (as idealist and humanist framings of the subject would have

¹ The term is used here and throughout this work primarily in the sense linked to Engels’ formulation of materialist dialectics, i.e., that internal contradictions and oppositions are a fundamental part of all living things and processes.

² Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno, Composing for the Films (London: Dennis Dobson, 1947) 21.

it). The dialectic's collective aspects, on the other hand, are played out in broadly Marxian terms in my perception: because our dialectical presence in the world inevitably leads to various types of action (struggling for survival or prosperity, propagating the species, educating our young, caring for the sick, controlling violence within the social group, etc.), it is also inevitable that increasingly elaborate economic, cultural, and political institutions evolve to organize and focus these activities as societies grow more complex. This reality leads Marx and other methodological holists³ to conclude that although the agency of social subjects is undeniable, (people do act—to survive, to propagate, to allocate power, etc.) that agency can only be properly understood in relation to the social conditions motivating and contextualizing it.

The manner in which I place Hollywood film and its music within this large canvas of the social is somewhat nuanced. Because of their commonly perceived status as artists or creative craftspeople, Hollywood filmmakers and film musicians are normally understood as functioning in the cultural domain. Moreover, the existence of substantial and diverse audiences for mainstream cinema reinforces the notion that Hollywood is primarily a cultural phenomenon with widespread influence in that area. But the significance of popular film as an economic and political phenomenon cannot be overlooked in an examination of its music, given Hollywood's importance in American society as the United States has grown to dominate not only the world's various cultures, but also its economies and polities, over the course of the twentieth century.

³ Including Durkheim, Mead, and Raymond Williams, to name only a few holist scholars.

It is again Marx in whom the theoretical tradition linking these three vital areas of culture, economy, and the political is rooted. His assertion that “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness”⁴ has served as the basis for a host of writings on the socially-defined nature of culture, some of which have included assessments of specific cultural forms such as the Hollywood cinema. Marxian-related criticism categorically insists that artists and craftspeople are not ultimately reliant on transcendent sources of inspiration, or even on inherent talents or gifts, in making their contributions to culture. Rather, it suggests that cultural producers relate to their work and to the audiences that consume it in ways which are socially-defined in every sense. Accordingly, the Marxian-inspired concepts used in film studies and cultural studies contribute substantially to my assessment of mainstream movie music. I must specify from the outset, however, which particular strains within the diversity of Marxian-related thought have been relevant in the limited scholarship on movie music, and in the areas of film criticism that scholarship is based on.

In the first place, Marx’s attempt to clearly separate “the consciousness of men” (a term which includes, in his view, all “the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms” making up the societal superstructure) and “social being”—comprised of those material “relations of production” constituting “the economic structure of society, the real foundation” or base⁵—resulted in a determination model too crude and limited to be of any real use to film criticism. For example: if, as in Marx’s well-known formulation, the piano-

⁴ Carl Marx and Friedrich Engels, On Literature and Art (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978) 41.

⁵ Marx and Engels 41.

maker is a productive worker and part of the economic base, while the pianist is non-productive and part of the superstructure (the former directly determining the social being of the latter), the model quickly breaks down in logical extension to the cinema (any suggestion that the owners of the means of production in that medium—motion picture equipment manufacturers and the capital investors controlling production, distribution, and exhibition—dictate in every detail the outcomes of filmmaking and film composition being far too simplistic, especially given more recent critical understandings of film as a discursive, textual phenomenon and of the possibility of multiple interpretations and readings of film texts by audiences).

Nonetheless, the influence of certain early modifications of Marx's base-superstructure determination model ("reflection theory" in particular, a slight refinement which conceives of culture as "reflecting" realities in the economic base rather than being directly "determined" by them)⁶ can occasionally be found in film studies work. Michel Renov, for example, has stated regarding World War II Hollywood films that "This period of social life... constitutes a moment during which a variety of disparate elements fused together to form a condensed ideological amalgamation, [a moment at which] the apogee of confluence between perpetuation of state policy and authority and the...cinematic institution [occurred],"⁷ implying that the war moment in America saw a relatively undistorted reflection in culture of the imperatives of the state apparatus (which, at that same historical juncture, exerted an exceptional degree of control over the means of production in the country and hence of the economic base).

⁶ Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* (London: MacMillan, 1981) 60.

⁷ Michel Renov, "The State, Ideology, and *Priorities on Parade*," *Film Reader* 5 (1982): 218.

Moreover, the concept of “mediation”, a further theoretical revision suggesting that social realities cannot be directly reflected in art because they have already passed through a process by which their content has been changed, continues to inform film and film music criticism in a relatively active way into the 1990s. Given that the mediation process includes the creation of commercial or non-commercial cultural artifacts, as well as the socially mediated imprint those works bear once they are completed and circulate within the culture, mediation has been interpreted in both negative and positive terms by various writers—either as a means by which various forms of ideological “distortion” are introduced through artists or the media in which they work,⁸ or as a concrete manifestation in culture and in specific artworks of the intrinsic relations between Marx’s “being” and “consciousness”.⁹ Thus, to name only two of many examples, authors such as Dana Polan argue in the former case that dominant forces in a society typically use narrative as a mediating device designed to neutralize conflicts and contradictions between and among its various groups and individuals, specifically by creating textual “figures of mediation” who take up opposing sides of issues, and by placing those figures within the coherent framework of an ideologically “correct” story.¹⁰ In the latter case, critics like Caryl Flinn posit an affirmative mediating function for certain utopian narrative elements in film, maintaining that such constructs can act as a strategy to expose lacks in the social status quo by portraying partially realizable alternatives to dominant structures.¹¹

⁸ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977) 98.

⁹ This more positive interpretation of mediation is largely linked to the Frankfurt School. Adorno, for example, maintained that “Mediation is in the object itself, not something between the object and that to which it is brought.” (“Thesen zur Kunstsoziologie”, quoted in Williams 98.)

¹⁰ Dana Polan, *Power and Paranoia* (N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1986) 18.

¹¹ Caryl Flinn, *Strains of Utopia* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) 150.

The theoretical modifications introduced by Louis Althusser, (which allow, among other things, for a degree of “relative autonomy” in what Marx had initially labeled superstructural elements) are also influential in much of film criticism. Asserting that cultural producers may have their own “specific effectivities” on society and on social subjects (as well as vice-versa), Althusserian relative autonomy goes beyond determination, reflection, and both negative and positive mediation in the sense that it potentially reverses the previous models’ “flow” of influence and sees the superstructural elements theorized by orthodox Marxism affecting those in the economic base.¹² Apparatus theory is one important example among many in film studies of a critical approach strongly grounded in Althusserian notions of a nuanced relationship between culture, social subjectivity, and society as a whole.

Marxian thought has also contributed to post-structuralist criticism’s insistence that the artist’s creativity is so thoroughly defined by social conventions and practices that the “death of the author” in contemporary culture can be postulated. Roland Barthes, for example, maintains that “the text...” [i.e. cultural artifact] “...is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.”¹³ Moreover, Barthes, Julia Kristeva and others extend the notion of the “death of the author” to include a simultaneous “birth of the reader”. Poststructuralist work has focused a great deal on the social

¹² It should be pointed out that Marxian-inspired film and film music criticism from the 1970s onward has tended to disregard the base and superstructure categories as obsolete in terms of the more subtle analyses of social subjectivity and the operations of ideology it has focused on. They are mentioned here to illustrate the evolution of Marxian thought into increasingly intricate conceptual frameworks for understanding the confluence of cultural and other socially-based factors in the creation of micro- and macro-level social realities.

¹³ Roland Barthes, Image-Music-Text (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1977) 146.

subjectivity of audiences and readers, as well as the impact of that formed subjectivity on the reception of cultural productions. Here again, the overwhelming consensus has been that “The reader, viewer or audience is actively involved in the construction of the work of art”, and that the “ideas and beliefs” audiences bring to the “de-coding” of artworks “always originate in...social structures and processes.”¹⁴ Recent work in cultural studies, film studies, and other disciplines has expanded the inquiry into subjectivity to include such factors as race, gender, ethnicity and class, while remaining firmly committed to the idea of the audience’s, author’s and artwork’s subjective-collective dialecticism.

Finally, Michel Foucault’s analysis of the modalities of power distribution in society are of direct pertinence to this study. In particular, Foucault’s notion of social “grids”—ideological configurations which position social subjects in relation to dominant values—is useful in understanding the internal and external dynamics of a cultural industry like Hollywood film. That the shaping of discourse—those systems of inclusions and exclusions creating social reality in social subjects—takes place within Foucault’s grids in a completely decentralized way, largely internalized by subjects during the actualization of their social being, very much describes the type of dialectical forces I see at play in processes such as film music making.

Although there are many disagreements and unresolved issues among the different points of view cited above,¹⁵ what is important here is the fact that Marxian and post-structuralist work consistently emphasizes the inseparability of subjectivity, cultural production and participation, and the

¹⁴ Wolff 95, 105.

¹⁵ For example, whether relative autonomy—a concept that posits an influential role for the artist and related categories—can coexist with Barthes’ insistence on the disappearance of those very categories.

economic or political currents within a society. It is therefore from the perspective of the Marxian/post-structuralist critical amalgam just outlined that I embark upon my examination of Hollywood film music.

If, as Raymond Williams asserts, the cinema is an “outstanding example...in which capitalist...corporations organize production from the beginning”, where “the scale of capital involved, and the dependence on...complex and specialized means of production and distribution” have important consequences on filmic reception and content;¹⁶ and if, as Janet Wolff reminds us, “film is a collective product” that involves “levels of social cooperation and mediation between conception and reception”, bringing together “producers, camera crews, actors, scriptwriters, and many others...”¹⁷; and if, as any number of critics in cultural studies, film studies and other fields have emphasized, the institutional, historical, ideological and apparatus dimensions of cinema are all shaped and defined by social forces, then the clear implication is that film music, only one part of the multi-faceted cinematic process, must necessarily be subject to the same degree of social influence as other aspects of cinematic production and reception.

In fact, the handful of writers who have taken a critical approach to film music all confirm this basic premise in various ways. Among the earliest to focus on the topic were T. W. Adorno and film composer Hanns Eisler, whose ground-breaking *Composing for the Films* appeared in the 1940s. Built on the Frankfurt School’s observations on the mediating ideological role of culture in society, Eisler and Adorno’s study asserts that “The motion picture cannot be understood in isolation,” but must be

¹⁶ Raymond Williams, Culture (London: Fontana, 1981) 52-53.

¹⁷ Wolff 4, 32.

considered “the most characteristic medium of contemporary cultural industry.” Specifically, the authors maintain that “The function of music in the cinema is [but] one aspect...of the general function of music under conditions of industrially controlled cultural consumption,”¹⁸ and point out the many ways in which ideology and aesthetic prejudices or assumptions enter into the production and reception of film music.

Almost three decades later, Irwin Bazelon’s *Knowing the Score* delved further into film music’s socially defined nature from a (less rigorous, but nonetheless) Marxian perspective. Concentrating primarily on institutional factors (e.g. the “businessman philosophy” that led to “the deliberate standardization of motion-picture music” during the studio era; the film composer’s status within the post-World War II Hollywood industry as “a temporary employee who can be discharged for any number of reasons, including the arbitrary judgment of his [producer] employers concerning the material he supplies”; and the concert composer’s being “frozen out of a featured role in the industry at its very inception” because of an “early Broadway-Hollywood show biz alliance”¹⁹), Bazelon also analyzes the different ways in which film music has been shaped by socio-economic reception factors. For example, he cites the “hit-title-song craze” that affected Hollywood soundtracks from the 1950s through the 1970s as a calculated device used to “lure customers [to the box office] through the judicious use of music”, insisting that the music accompanying films often panders directly to tastes and expectations in the general public that are largely cultivated outside of cinema by the recording industry.²⁰

¹⁸ Eisler and Adorno ix, 20.

¹⁹ Irwin Bazelon, *Knowing the Score* (N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975) 17, 20, 35.

²⁰ Bazelon 32-33.

In the 1980s, Claudia Gorbman's *Unheard Melodies* opened up new areas of inquiry into the social ramifications of film music. Although focused mainly on a structuralist-semiotic evaluation of film-musical reception, Gorbman's study also examines the ideological implications of background scoring using Marxian- and post-structuralist-inspired concepts. Among her particular concerns are the ways in which

[film] music removes barriers to belief: it bonds spectator to spectacle; it envelops spectator and spectacle in a harmonious space. Like hypnosis, it silences the spectator's censor. It is suggestive; if it's working right, it makes us a little less critical and a little more prone to dream.²¹

Gorbman emphasizes how this bonding, hypnotic function of film music does not occur in a vacuum, but is socially defined in every way.

Comparing background music in a film to "easy listening" music (of which the Muzak we hear in stores or on airplanes is but one example), Gorbman maintains that

...the overall purpose of film music is very much like easy-listening music: it functions to lull the spectator into being an *untroublesome* (less critical, less wary) *viewing subject*.²²

Gorbman goes on to explain that just as easy-listening music helps ward off the "economic tensions of shopping and the physical fear of dentist's drills", film music acts to mask various forms of displeasure. For one thing, it works to avoid "uncertain signification", supplying "information to complement potentially ambiguous..images and sounds." It also "establishes historical and geographical setting, and atmosphere, through the high degree of its cultural coding." Finally, like other cultural forms grounded in bourgeois ideology, film music prevents

²¹ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (London: BFI, 1987) 55.

²² Gorbman 58.

the spectator's potential recognition of the technical basis of filmic articulation. Gaps, cuts, the frame itself, silences in the soundtrack—any reminders of cinema's materiality which jeopardize the formation of subjectivity—the process whereby the viewer identifies as subject of filmic discourse—are smoothed over...by the carefully regulated operations of film music.²³

Gorbman's interest in the socially-defined nature of movie music was carried forward in the 1990s by Caryl Flinn, whose *Strains of Utopia* provides a detailed study of the ideological biases in classical Hollywood film scoring practice. Working from a theoretical framework drawn primarily from Ernst Bloch's Frankfurt School contributions, Flinn explores the nostalgic-utopic strain inherent in the romanticism of Hollywood film music. For Flinn, the "deeply nostalgic enterprise" of applying romantic-style background music to classical era films indicates that "the film score [was] treated as if it were able to restore an original quality or essence currently lacking—be it within the text, the apparatus, or the moment of consumption."²⁴ Music "functioned as a sort of conduit to connect listeners...to an idealized past, offering them the promise of a retrieval of lost utopian coherence."²⁵ Flinn connects these tendencies to numerous social, economic, and discursive factors at work in America during the 1930s and 40s, insisting that "...the classical approach to film music dominated a specific historical and institutional setting," and criticizing those commentators who have sought "to remove cinema music from its discursive and institutional contexts" or characterize the film score "as something ethereal, timeless, and deeply ahistorical."²⁶

²³ Gorbman 58.

²⁴ Flinn 48.

²⁵ Flinn 50.

²⁶ Flinn 91.

Finally, Kathryn Kalinak's 1992 work *Settling the Score* explores numerous other ways in which film music is connected to the social. Like Flinn and Gorbman, Kalinak limits her inquiry to classical era film music, which she sees as "a nexus of style, ideology, technology and economics which coalesced during a particular time and in a particular place."²⁷ Her study of the classical Hollywood score draws attention to the visual bias in Western culture that shapes the way spectators and critics experience a film, and to the important consequences this bias has had on the reception of film music throughout the history of cinema. Kalinak also emphasizes the historical dimensions of film music practice, examining its evolution during the silent era and the continuity of many musical conventions from previous forms such as theater and opera into early film musical accompaniments. Various technological and aesthetic considerations originating in the "functional" and "structural" dimensions of both silent and sound era film music are also expanded on in Kalinak's work. The crux of Kalinak's argument resonates with Marxian and poststructuralist thought, in that she sees the classical film score as defined by a set of institutionally-based conventions grounded in historical practice, maintaining that these conventions have consistently "exert[ed] a controlling influence on what audiences heard when they went to the movies."²⁸

My own study builds on much of this film music scholarship²⁹ by integrating many of its insights into the theoretical framework outlined

²⁷ Kathryn Kalinak, *Settling the Score* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1992) xiv.

²⁸ Kalinak 203.

²⁹ It should be pointed out that apart from the few critical studies covered in the preceding pages, the majority of work on the film score and film composers has almost completely "bracketed" the question of film music's socially permeated nature. [See, for example, Mark Evans, *Soundtrack: The Music of the Movies* (N.Y.: Da Capo, 1975); Earl Hagen, *Scoring for Films* (N.Y.: E.D.J. Music, 1971); R.D. Larson, *Musique Fantastique* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985); James Limbacher, ed., *Film Music: From*

earlier. There are, however, a number of specific theoretical challenges in attempting to analyze film musical *content* in terms of social influence (the focus of Part 2), which I will presently address. One of these issues stems from the fact that even though many commentators on music acknowledge certain general connections between musicians, musical practice and society, the vast majority continue to assign musical *content* to a category of its own, placing harmony, melody, rhythm and timbre in an autonomous realm that ultimately proves separate from or transcendent of the processes of language and symbolic discourse at the heart of social reality. Traditional musicologists are especially prone to drawing on such idealist framings of music, sifting out the literal content of “serious” musical works in particular from the social context in which it is produced. Some musicological commentaries of this nature treat music as a discrete aesthetic artifact whose content can only be examined in a self-referential, formalist fashion. Other treatments tend to be heavily informed by various types of romanticism. As Caryl Flinn points out, “Romanticism’s belief that music’s immaterial nature lends it a transcendent, mystical quality” led the historical movement “to emphatically separate music and musician from the world of mundane realities.” Moreover, romantic ideology has caused its latter-day proponents within and outside of the musicology field to adopt similarly idealistic approaches to the topic:

Because music depends on a relatively self-contained system of formal and mathematical relations, its existence was—and still is—considered more or less independent of the world as we

Violins to Video (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974); and Roger Manvell and John Huntley, **The Technique of Film Music** (N.Y.: Hastings House, 1975). The prevalence of formally-oriented works such as these is one reason I have chosen to begin my own assessment of Hollywood movie music by stating that its social permeability exists in my view, and in the opinion of several important authors on the subject.

know it. It is not believed to derive any influence from the social world nor to exert any upon it.³⁰

Romantic conceptions of music have led commentators like Victor Zuckerkandl to state that “music...speaks a language...understood by everyone... To assign a definite meaning to music is as impossible as to deny that it is supremely meaningful.”³¹ They have also inspired Suzanne Langer to claim that music is “the total analogue of emotional life,”³² implying that it has an immanent type of reflexivity that removes it from the realm of discourse and ordinary language. American musicologists have been particularly slow to move beyond romanticism’s limited perspectives on music in relation to society, leading one critic to observe that in the United States, “music has been perhaps the last of the arts to break away from the 100 per cent art for art ideology.”³³ Although I do not take a position against romanticism or formalism per se in this study, I have found it necessary to circumvent the shortcomings of romantic, formalist, and idealist methodologies in my own efforts to understand the very tangible, material connections that exist between music and society.

The challenges of articulating the linkages between musical content and social context go well beyond simply refuting obviously idealized framings of music, however. Far more theoretically sophisticated approaches to the topic are mired in similar, if more subtle, forms of musical idealism. Adorno, for example, while decrying the countless ways in which the culture industry has appropriated music for its own capitalistic purposes, nonetheless conceptualizes “pure” forms of musical creation and

³⁰ Flinn 7.

³¹ Victor Zuckerkandl, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959) 4, 5.

³² Suzanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (N.Y.: Scribner’s, 1953) 27.

³³ Barbara Zuck *A History of Musical Americanism* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Research Press, 1980) 113.

reception on the level of specific musical content. The complex dialectical relationship he sees between music and culture reveals this underlying idealism, insofar as music is characterized as being “commensurable with the outside world of social reality” on the one hand, and “not unequivocally identifiable with any moments of the outside world” on the other.³⁴ This latter “incommensurability” of music coincides with the “autonomy” Adorno sees great works of musical art possessing in relation to the culture industry, and also with the critical, distanced mode of reception he advocates when listening to such repertoire. Adorno’s continuous rigid distinctions between “genuine” musical art and “commodified” popular music further reinforce the impression that he reserves an idealized category for “pure” forms of musical expression, a category that ultimately transcends the social context surrounding it.

Other Marxists have tended to treat music as a sort of *tabula rasa* in relation to ideology, revealing additional theoretical problems in attempting to connect musical content to social reality. One Russian commentator, for example, has stated that “Music can take anything,”³⁵ implying that its non-representational nature as a sign system allows it to absorb a potentially infinite number of meanings and effects (a conclusion Eisler and Adorno seem to concur with when they state that “because of its essentially amorphous nature, [music] lends itself to deliberate misuse for ideological purposes”³⁶). Furthermore, the Marxian economist and social commentator Jacques Attali, though for the most part asserting that “music as an autonomous production is a recent invention,” and that “as late as the eighteenth century it was effectively submerged within a larger [social]

³⁴ T.W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1976) 44.

³⁵ Vladimir Jankélévitch, *La musique et l'ineffable* (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1983) 13.

³⁶ Eisler and Adorno 21.

totality”, contradictorily refers to music elsewhere as a “pure sign” that provides a “rough sketch of society,”³⁷ thereby distancing it from the social realities he believes it describes.

Post-structuralist criticism has also tended to assign musical content to an abstracted, removed position in relation to society. In certain Barthesian categories such as *jouissance*, for example, one senses a further tendency to separate musical content from ordinary experience (*jouissance* being a type of ecstasy arrived at through the perception of inherent “excesses” which “threaten the very boundaries of textuality and subjectivity,” a virtually transcendent state that is contrasted with *plaisir*—“something safe, predictable and established,” the mundane standing in sharp relief to the more idealized former experience³⁸).

Given these various difficulties in conceptualizing musical content vis-à-vis social context, how can the actual material heard on Hollywood soundtracks be appropriately theorized for the purposes of this study? Marxist scholarship offers some potential building blocks in this regard, especially in its notion of *structural homology*. Raymond Williams traces this concept back to earlier Marxist terms describing the relationship between art and culture, in particular Lukács’ *typification*, wherein “Art, by figurative means, typifies the elements and tendencies of reality that occur according to regular laws”, and Walter Benjamin’s *correspondences*, “resemblances in seemingly very different practices, which may be shown by analysis to be both direct and directly related expressions of and responses to a general social process.”³⁹ The more rigorous term *homology*,

³⁷ Jacques Attali, Noise: The Political Economy of Music (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1985) 3, 5.

³⁸ Flinn 61.

³⁹ Williams, Marxism and Literature 103, 104.

according to Williams, has a range that “ extends from a sense of resemblance to one of analogy... but... includes also a sense of corresponding forms and structures.”⁴⁰ In other words, homologies reveal that the structural characteristics of processes taking place in one socially-defined area correspond—in a variety of possible ways, e.g. analogies, resemblances, typifications, etc.—to the processes of another area.

If structural homology can potentially serve to illustrate the connections between film musical content and other social phenomena, then exactly what that content is proposed to be homologous with must be specified. Are the structures of music to be compared with those of the film medium itself, for example? Tempting though it may be to imagine such a linkage, it is not a valid one in my opinion. While the musical portion of Hollywood soundtracks is, on occasion, complicit with the visuals it accompanies (in providing the illusion of completeness to screen images when it issues from a visible or implied source within the film, for instance), its abilities in this regard are not the result of structural resonances. Indeed, the phenomenological differences between music and cinema are so marked and extensive, they would seem to preclude any significant homological correspondences between the two areas. Music is auditory while film is visual, for example; the soundtrack is an invisible, three-dimensional presence in the theater, while the image track remains fixed in space and two-dimensional; the musical medium by its nature tends towards continuity and formal coherence,⁴¹ whereas film must employ special techniques to conceal its essentially fragmented nature⁴²; and so on.

⁴⁰ Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 104-105.

⁴¹ In the sense that music relies heavily on a limited range of materials (e.g. seven basic pitches in diatonic tonal systems, twelve in serial music, a small palette of rhythmic values, etc.) as well as on basic configurations (scales, tone rows, metric cycles, common harmonic progressions, standard instruments and ensembles, and so on) the use of which is for the most part organized in accepted formal systems designed to facilitate coherent

Film *narrative*, on the other hand, offers considerable potential as a homologous textual and formal connection-point in relation to music. As we shall see in Chapter 2, the rise of the story film in the 1910s was coincidental with the increasing dominance of big business in the industry. The vast majority of Hollywood movies have been narratively-oriented ever since, and any examination of film-musical content must take this into account. But for narrative-musical homologies to be accepted, some specific objections must first be addressed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, for example, states his position on the possibility of musical narrativity as follows:

Can we say that when we hear a musical work, it is explicitly narrating something? When I read the phrase “the marquise went out at five o’clock,” I don’t need a *title* to know what has been narrated. When I hear the beginning of *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, I have to know that I’m dealing with a symphonic poem in order to approach the work with the intention of hearing it as narrative...If music could, in itself, constitute a narrative, then music would speak directly to us, and the distinction between music and language would disappear...

Music is not a narrative, but an incitement to make a narrative, to comment, to analyze. We could never overemphasize the difference between music, and music as the object of metalanguages to which it gives rise. Only thus can we start to outline its symbolic functioning... Music remains an “unconsummated symbol”.⁴³

While it is indisputable that music as a sign system is in most respects completely different from spoken and written language, this does not preclude structural similarities between most types of narrative organization and the dynamics of music (particularly tonal music, the essential musical

musical discourses in different styles.

⁴² The extensive debates in early film theory over whether sound should bear a “parallel” or “contrapuntal” relation to the image, smoothing over disjointed shots via adjoining musical passages and sound effects in the former case, and allowing the fragmentary nature of the cinematic apparatus to be perceived in the latter, further attests to the lack of any obvious structural similarities between sound, music, and filmic images.

⁴³ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990) 127-129.

paradigm of Hollywood film scores). Many commentators see narrative as delineating a type of “field” in which the reader’s (or viewer/listener’s) attention is focused on an implicit or explicit “center”—characters, situations, values or emotions the story revolves around—and in which the established center is challenged or destabilized in various ways by “peripheral” elements (twists in the plot, dangers to the central characters, instabilities in their situations, disturbances of the focal values or emotions, etc.). David Hull, for one, refers to the “central subjects” and themes in historical narratives that serve to unify and fortify their particular sequences and interpretations of past events against possible “chaotic” or “incoherent” interpretations of the same history.⁴⁴ Moreover, Steven Heath has argued that classical filmic narratives typically present or imply an initial set of stable conditions (a “center”, in my terminology), only to do “violence” to them (i.e. by introducing “peripheral” elements)—an “interruption of the homogeneity” of the initially coherent state that is the primary motivational and causal force within the story.⁴⁵ Along the same lines, Robin Wood suggests that horror narratives follow a fundamental pattern in which “Normalcy is threatened by the monster,”⁴⁶ and a similar premise underlies classical comedy when the potential for festivity is thwarted by forces of adversity.⁴⁷ The basic structural dynamics of most narratives can therefore be seen as fundamentally resonant with those of tonal music, implying that stories and music have been effectively and frequently combined in film and other media not because music functions as

⁴⁴ David Hull, “Central Subjects and Historical Narratives,” History and Theory 14 no. 3 (1975) 255.

⁴⁵ Steven Heath, “Film, System, Narrative,” Questions of Cinema (London: MacMillan, 1981) 136.

⁴⁶ See Robin Wood, “The Return of the Repressed” in The American Nightmare (Toronto: Festival of Festivals, 1977).

⁴⁷ See Polan 26.

Nattiez's "unconsummated symbol" in narrative contexts—existing in a realm of its own that somehow complements or runs parallel to that of narrative—but because of the underlying structural homologies between music's hierarchized "tonal field" and the "narrational field" of most stories.

The structuralist position on narrative is not dissimilar to what has just been proposed. In his "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative,"⁴⁸ for example, Roland Barthes states that "... by its very structure, the narrative institutes a confusion between consecutive and consequent, time and logic." On one side of the divide this distinction engenders, Barthes cites formalism as "holding absolutely to the unshakable principle of chronological order: ... time is reality, and for this reason it (is) essential to establish the story in time."⁴⁹ On the other, he points to "...Aristotle... (who), in contrasting tragedy [defined by the unity of action] and history [defined by the plurality of the actions and the unity of time] was already assuming the primacy of logic over chronology."⁵⁰ Barthes obviously leans towards the latter of these formulations, which, though ultimately utopian in design, nonetheless supports the idea that recognition of narrative *form* must ultimately inform the analysis of specific narrative *content*.

Lévi-Strauss's proposition that "The order of chronological succession (in narrative) is absorbed into an atemporal matrix structure"⁵¹ frames the issue in a similar way. If "matrix structure" is understood as an organizational scheme wherein narrative elements are arrayed around a

⁴⁸ Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative," *Communications* 8 (1966).

⁴⁹ Barthes, "Introduction" 11.

⁵⁰ Barthes 14.

⁵¹ As cited by C. Bremond in "Le Message Narratif," *Communications* 4 (1964).

discernible “point” (which the general, anatomical and mathematical definitions of the word “matrix” lead us to believe), then Lévi-Strauss’s proposal is also one on which the notion of narrative-musical homologies may build. Indeed, much of Lévi-Strauss’ work in the areas of mythology and structural anthropology can be interpreted as supportive of a center-periphery structure shaping most narratives. In his introduction to *Structural Anthropology*, he states that “If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds—ancient and modern, primitive and civilized—...it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs...”⁵² Later in the same book, Lévi-Strauss specifies that

... the question is not to substitute one particular content for another or to reduce one to the other, but, rather, to discover whether the(ir) formal properties present homologies, and what kind of homologies; contradictions, and what kind of contradictions; or dialectical relationships that may be expressed as transformations...⁵³

I submit that any successful analysis of music in cinema must be based on a premise closely related to the above: that when music and filmic images coalesce in the articulation of a filmic narrative, structural homologies between story and musical content are identified—consciously or unconsciously—by composers, filmmakers and audiences alike, and not only inform the creation and reading of films and film music, but also attest to the homologous relationship of that content to the wider cultural and

⁵² Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1963) 21. By “institutions and customs”, Lévi-Strauss of course includes mythology and therefore narratives in general, as later chapters in the work and later works in his corpus clearly indicate.

⁵³ Lévi-Strauss 85-86.

political-economic dimensions from which it emerges.

Lévi-Strauss further states that “mythical thought progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution,”⁵⁴ implying that it is a *centripetal* force which shapes many narratives’ center-periphery structure. Thus, comedy returns its protagonists to festivity after the forces of adversity are overcome, and classical filmic narrative resolves the “violence” inflicted on initial coherent conditions by providing a sense of closure—a new unity whose arrival dispels the dynamic instability driving the storyline. This centripetal patterning in narratives further emphasizes the homology between the structures of tonal music (which consistently affirm, in however fleeting or indirect a manner, a single center in a harmonic-melodic field) and those of certain stories. But to say that filmic narration universally—or even usually—conforms to essentially mythical patterns of storytelling would be somewhat of an oversimplification. Any analysis must take into account the great variety of filmic narratives, the different orientations of those narratives according to genre, *auteur*, and numerous other factors including the changes cinematic storytelling has undergone over the medium's history.

Certain elements of literary criticism also support the above notions. In “Theory of Modes”, for example, Northrop Frye states that

...ever since Aristotle criticism has tended to think of literature as essentially *mimetic*, and as divided between a “high” form of epic and tragedy dealing with ruling-class figures, and a “low” form confined to comedy and satire and more concerned with characters like ourselves.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Lévi-Strauss 224.

⁵⁵ Northrop Frye, “Theory of Modes,” *Sound and Poetry*, ed. Frye (N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1957) 65.

Elsewhere in the same essay, Frye expands on the different types of mimesis as follows:

(In) the high mimetic ... a *centripetal* perspective replaces the *centrifugal* one of romance (i.e. low mimetic). The distant goals of the quest, the Holy Grail or the City of God, modulate into symbols of convergence, the emblems of prince, nation, and national faith.⁵⁶

Frye thus implies that most literary works (and, it may be inferred from the wide scope of his essays, most narratives of any type) are structured not only in a bipartite (center-periphery) fashion, but with different bi-directional “flows” as well. In the “centripetal pattern” already mentioned, dramatic interest is generated by temporary imperilments or destabilizations of the narrative center, which create tension and provoke interest in the plot even though the center is always eventually affirmed or reaffirmed in a final resolution (the “happy ending”, or at least the confirmation of the central characters or situations as positive, noble, or the like). In the “centrifugal pattern”, on the other hand, a story-center is delineated, but narrative energy tends to flow “out” from it without any definitive resolution—the tensions or contradictions inherent in central characters, situations or themes are left basically unresolved at the deepest levels of the story.

The majority of Hollywood narratives conform to one of the two patterns Frye alludes to. Classically-structured films normally follow the centripetal pattern, and are often further informed by what critics have referred to as “master narratives”—generally circulating mythologies (in the Barthesian sense) that color texts with ideological tones. The clusters⁵⁷ of narrative elements affirmed as story centers in Hollywood movies are

⁵⁶ Frye 58 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁷ In Lévi-Strauss’s sense of the term, i.e. the implicit or explicit groupings of factors commonly found in myths, fables and other stories.

therefore grounded in dominant, often utopian, social values as a rule. On the other hand, various “centrifugal” stories with ambiguous or outright dystopian central subjects and themes began appearing in the mainstream repertoire as early as the 1940s. According to Dana Polan, this reversal of narrative polarity began to occur during and immediately following World War II with the “breakdown in the [studio system’s] ability to confidently tell its stories.”⁵⁸ Around that historical moment, the dominance of unambiguous “central subjects” in film was challenged by the casting of strong figures of “continuous contingency” in key roles,⁵⁹ and by the sudden weakness or insubstantiality of central protagonists whose tendencies to self-doubt and questionable behaviour contrasted sharply with the often more compelling and seductive qualities of peripheral “figures of menace.”⁶⁰ The stability of classical textuality was further unsettled by the regular “derouting” or “mockery” of conventional narrative projects, compromising the tight system of closure Hollywood had previously established.⁶¹ Furthermore, these various developments within mainstream film coincided with a wider troubling of “master narratives” in society at large.⁶² The general discontent that existed in the forties can be seen as providing the basis for audiences’ responsiveness to what Julia Kristeva calls “the powers of horror” (that which “disturbs identity, system, order...

⁵⁸ Polan 31.

⁵⁹ Polan 200.

⁶⁰ Polan 226-227.

⁶¹ Polan 215, 216.

⁶² Social historians have suggested that widespread discontent with master narratives created the conditions for many of the twentieth century’s most traumatic developments: e.g. the emergence from reactionary or radical-leftist responses of alternative narratives such as Fascism and Communism, or the outright rejection of binding collective mythologies in Nihilism and Anarchism. This same trend can, however, also be seen in milder forms of social discontent such as the rise of unionism in early twentieth century America and the evolution of alienated or activist youth cultures in the postwar years.

the in-between, the ambiguous...”),⁶³ a fascination that continued to allow the mainstream repertoire to include a mixture of centripetally- and centrifugally-organized narratives in the decades following the classical era.

Other homological rapports involving music will be considered in Part 2 of this work, including the Marxian-based ideas put forward by cultural studies critic John Shepherd in “The ‘Meaning’ of Music” and “The Musical Coding of Ideologies.”⁶⁴ Shepherd suggests that comparisons can be drawn between certain harmonic-melodic systems and the social structures within which they developed, an observation stemming from his assertion that concrete forms of analysis “can, *within certain limitations*, elucidate the social meaning inherent in music.”⁶⁵ Shepherd insists these connections can be made despite the fact that musical content is often *implicit* in nature (meaning that it falls, in certain cases, into the category of experiences “which can only be sensed in consciousness and not specifically referred to”⁶⁶ and is thus entirely grounded in social subjectivity). The music of pre-literate societies, for instance, is not notated, nor is it discussed in theoretical terms by its practitioners, because “pre-literate man possesses neither the objectivity nor the high division of labor necessary to divorce music from its social context.”⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Shepherd outlines a number of specific ways in which the music of pre-literate groups informs such fundamental socio-cultural activities as the maintenance of traditions and the encoding of historical information.

⁶³ See Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection (N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1982) .

⁶⁴ John Shepherd, “The ‘Meaning’ of Music” and “The Musical Coding of Ideologies,” Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages (London: Latimer, 1977) 53-124.

⁶⁵ Shepherd 69.

⁶⁶ Shepherd 61.

⁶⁷ Shepherd 74.

Although more idealistic in his analysis of music's place in such societies than critics like Attali (who, as we are about to see, identifies music's use in delineating power relationships within pre-literate, ritual-based social orders), Shepherd nonetheless makes it clear that music has a political dimension in even the most basic collectivities.

Shepherd also sees connections between pre-literate musical expression and *explicit* music, in which consciously formulated abstract concepts and organizational structures come into play. Explicit music is generally found only in more complex, literate societies that have created a separation between written and spoken language on the one hand, and non-representational sign systems such as music on the other. Nevertheless, Shepherd maintains that homologies between implicit *and* explicit musical structures and the social structures surrounding them exist in all societies, and seeks to illustrate these by closely examining three key pillars of Western musical expression—pentatonicism, modality, and tonality—in terms of their structural resonances with the “world-sense” of the periods in which they have been most prevalent.

Shepherd argues that the pentatonic scale is the predominant implicit structure found in pre-literate melodic music, a fact he connects with its derivation from the harmonic series. Pre-literate singers and musicians intuitively isolate overtones from the physically-based series⁶⁸ in their implicit acts of musical expression, and arrive at a system of five tones that forms the basis of their spontaneous creations or more considered

⁶⁸ A musical note (i.e. a stable sound with a periodic frequency) is comprised not of a single pure tone but of a fundamental frequency and multiple overtones, all of which are higher in frequency and softer in amplitude than the fundamental. The overtones are near-exact arithmetical multiples (2x, 3x, 4x, etc.) of the fundamental, and form an invariable series of intervals above it: the octave, perfect fifth, perfect fourth, major third, minor third, etc. Shepherd insists the pentatonic scale is based on the primacy of these intervals in human hearing.

compositions. Shepherd asserts that when Western music became an explicit—i.e. notated and theorized—phenomenon sometime in the Middle Ages (via Gregorian chant and later church music), pentatonicism remained essentially intact in “newer” musical structures such as the church modes. Although the modes were based on seven-tone scales, Shepherd cites a variety of musicological and theoretical arguments that the extra notes introduced in plainchant served largely passing-tone functions, and insists all pre-Renaissance modality remained ultimately grounded in pentatonicism. This is essential insofar as the pentatonic scale establishes no one fundamental within its core structure. Despite its original derivation from the intervals between a given pitch and its strongest overtones, the pentatonic system in practice is one of interlocking, mutually interdependent fundamentals. Each note in the scale (C-D-F-G-Bb being a generic example) is a “center without margins”, able to serve as either a fundamental to which other tones in the scale may gravitate as overtones (G-C, for example), or as an overtone gravitating to other fundamentals (C-F, for instance). In this way, the pentatonic scale and modality in general articulate the social structures of the times at which they have been prevalent, periods when society—whether tribal or feudal—“was of a highly decentralised and localised type.”⁶⁹ Similarly, the structures of tonality are related to an entirely different “world-sense”: that of “industrial man”. With the development of the major scale, tones became strictly organized in a hierarchy wherein all components of the system “finally and ultimately relate back to one note.” Given that tonality developed in a period which also saw concepts of the individual and private property come into prominence, the rapid growth of towns, cities and

⁶⁹ Shepherd 90, 92.

factories, and the mass conversion of use-value into the exchange-value of wage labor,

the architectonicism of the tonal structure articulated the world sense of industrial man, for it is a structure having one central viewpoint (that of the key-note)... It is, in other words, a center-oriented structure with margins... Less important notes only relate to each other inasmuch as their position is defined by their relationships to the more important notes.⁷⁰

I have taken the time to outline Shepherd's homological ideas here because, as I shall explain in greater detail in Part 2, they are largely applicable to the harmonic-melodic paradigm of Hollywood film music, and provide further theoretical support for the notion that musical content can be linked to the dialectical subjective-collective realities from which it arises.

In addition to outlining the precise ways in which center-periphery and centripetal-centrifugal dynamics act to link Hollywood narratives and film music, I will consider the utopian and dystopian dimensions of these processes, drawing on the work of Caryl Flinn, Ernst Bloch and others in so doing. Beyond purely structural considerations, various conventional factors affecting film musical content will be assessed from a number of standpoints. Howard Becker explains the importance of artistic conventions as follows:

People who cooperate to produce a work of art ...rely on earlier agreements now become customary, agreements that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in that art. Artistic conventions cover all the decisions that must be made with respect to works produced, even though a particular convention may be revised for a given work. Conventions dictate the materials to be used, ...the abstractions to be used to convey particular ideas or experiences, ...the form in which materials and abstractions will be combined, ...[and] the

⁷⁰ Shepherd 105.

relations between artists and audience, specifying the rights and obligations of both.⁷¹

If “work of art” is understood to also include commercial works (and in Becker’s study it evidently is), then clearly any analysis of the practice and reception of Hollywood film music must examine the role of conventions in some detail. From the very beginnings of cinema, film musicians and their collaborators have relied on different conventions and principles to guide their compilation or composition processes. Many of these originated in previous forms combining music and drama (e.g. opera, stage plays, musical theater), while others were developed within film musical practice itself. The conventional factors I examine in Chapter 4 also include the different stylistic idioms and instrumental media that have shaped the sound of film music through the years. But as important as conventions in Becker’s definition are to this study, my own research has led me to seek an expansion of the concept in order that it may accommodate a wider range of materials. The work of biologist Richard Dawkins has been useful in this regard, in that his concept of the “meme” accurately describes many otherwise difficult-to-theorize elements found on Hollywood soundtracks (particularly those of a more commercial nature). Explaining that memes are “a unit of cultural transmission”, Dawkins specifies that

[in] the soup of human culture, ...memes propagate themselves ...by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation... Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch phrases, clothes, fashions... If a scientist hears or reads about a good idea, he passes it on to his colleagues and students. He mentions it in his articles and his lectures. If the idea catches on, it can be said to propagate itself...just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs.⁷²

⁷¹ Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: California UP, 1982) 29.

⁷² Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989) 192.

Because it is so common for widely disseminated, “catchy” musical elements (e.g. familiar timbres like rock guitar, melodic and rhythmic patterns heard frequently on records, trendy popular styles) to be used on Hollywood soundtracks, conceptualizing such elements as memes gives both flexibility and currency⁷³ to both the analysis of conventions and the general understanding of film music practice.

The chapters of Part 2 are further theoretically interconnected by their focus on different diachronic categories developed within Marxian scholarship. Walter Benjamin was among the first to formulate such categories, implying in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production”⁷⁴ that Western cultural history can be divided into two broad phases. The earlier of these is characterized by the primacy of ritual, magic, and the religious cult in the social order, and by the direct “use value”⁷⁵ attached to cultural artifacts and all forms of cultural participation. Benjamin’s second period begins when the magical or cult value of artifacts and participation acquire an additional “exhibition value”⁷⁶ and are partly or wholly experienced or contemplated outside of a sacral setting. In this latter phase, the “aura”⁷⁷ of performers and artworks—i.e. the belief-inspiring charisma or allure grounded in their uniqueness within the sacred/magical tradition that is their cultural heritage—begins to erode. Benjamin further indicates that the deterioration of “aura” and its ritualistic associations was accelerated and deepened with the advent of various forms of mechanical

⁷³ Inasmuch as film music has become steadily more commercialized in the post-classical era,

⁷⁴ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production” *Illuminations* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968) 219-253.

⁷⁵ Benjamin 226.

⁷⁶ Benjamin 226.

⁷⁷ Benjamin 223.

reproduction (photography, sound recording, and the motion picture foremost among them).

Decades later, Jacques Attali elaborated on these ideas in *Noise: the Political Economy of Music*,⁷⁸ extrapolating on the more oblique diachronic implications in Benjamin's work and positing that each of numerous historical phases is defined by its own political economy. Attali presents an early ritualistic period as pre-industrial and pre-capitalist, for example, characterized by intense (if implicit) concentrations of power in the shaman, priest, god-king, or other religious figures. An "auratic" middle phase sees the introduction of money into the social economy and the gradual replacement of sacrificial use-value by materialist exchange-value in Attali's version, while an ensuing era of mechanical reproduction steadily erodes or eliminates the "live" and the original in culture through the mass-production and proliferation of innumerable fixed commodities (e.g. recordings, films, photographs). Attali also adds a fourth period in his historical scheme, suggesting that an era of individual freedom and personal creativity may be emerging within the fundamentally alienated conditions of reproductive culture in the late-twentieth century.

Benjamin's and Attali's historical divisions overlay the better-known "residual", "dominant" and "emergent" dynamic categories developed by Raymond Williams, further guiding my exploration of the dynamic-historical aspects of film musical content throughout Part 2. In Chapter 5, for example, I connect the accompaniment and soundtrack materials produced by dominant⁷⁹ Hollywood practice to the era of mass reproduction

⁷⁸ See footnote 37 for full reference.

⁷⁹ According to Raymond Williams, the dominant phase in any social or cultural process is connected to the hegemonic. That is, it indicates a condition wherein certain sets of practices and beliefs achieve an overwhelming level of importance in a society, to the point that identification with and adherence to them is sufficient to marginalize other practices and beliefs not resonant with them. (See Williams, Marxism and Literature 117-

in which they have developed, a linkage I make based on the observation that the homologous structures and conventions of standard practice amount to little more than flexible “molds” from which mainstream film music is produced. Chapter 6 explores the notion that Hollywood soundtracks also contain “residual”⁸⁰ elements associated with Attali’s “auratic” phase. Although live musical accompaniment was gradually eliminated from classical sound era exhibition during the late 1920s, traces of live performance dynamics have lingered in mainstream film music long after that development (the various types of filmed musical spectacle or “spectacular” background music heard on Hollywood soundtracks constituting an important and ongoing residual presence in the medium). And finally, in chapter 7, I examine “emergent”⁸¹ trends in movie music, suggesting that Attali’s paradigm of personal creativity may indeed be in ascendancy relative to longstanding dominant practices.

127.)

⁸⁰ Residual practices are among those marginalized by the dominant, having been “effectively formed in the past, but...still active in the cultural process not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present.” (Williams 122.)

⁸¹ The emergent indicates “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [that] are constantly being created.” (Williams 123.)

Chapter 2

Institutions, Formations and Film Music

In *Conceptions of Institutions and the Theory of Knowledge*, sociologist Stanley Taylor suggests that institutions are “the constitutive tissue of human social existence,” pointing out that thinkers as diverse as Marx, Durkheim, Mead and Lucaks have insisted at various times that mediating institutional influences act on the very structures of human thought itself.¹ Similarly, Raymond Williams observes that cultural institutions such as the family, schools, churches, communities, places of work, and communication systems are intrinsically defined by processes connecting them to the social: that is, they highlight, according to him, a “selected range of meanings, values, and practices” at the expense of other possibilities, and thus establish specific ways of being and acting in society.² Janet Wolff resonates these points of view when she implies that institutions provide the very conditions under which cultural production—whether commercial or non-commercial—can occur:

In the production of art, social institutions affect, amongst other things, *who* becomes an artist, *how* they become an artist, how they are then able to *practise* their art, and how they can ensure that their work is produced, performed, and *made available* to the public...³

And Foucault’s social grids further indicate that institutions can be understood as key mediation points at which the distribution of power in society is facilitated (or, alternatively, subverted and/or redirected in various ways).

¹ Stanley Taylor, *Conceptions of Institutions and the Theory of Knowledge* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1989) 34-35.

² Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 117-118.

³ Wolff 40.

I see all of these observations as supportive of the notion I put forward in the preceding theory outline, namely that culturally-based institutions are both the outgrowth and extension of certain basic human activities, and a type of conduit through which key aspects of subjectivity find expression in the realm of collective being. Insofar as institutions comprise not only the concrete organizations and enterprises promoting various interests, causes or programs in society at large, but also the more amorphous patterns of behaviour and relationships that become established within a culture, they are of paramount importance when considering a cultural phenomenon such as film music. Consequently, this chapter will be devoted to examining the precise nature of the links film music has formed to various Hollywood institutions during the silent, classical, and post-classical decades of American cinema history, and to assessing the main functions film music makers have fulfilled within those institutions. While the main focus of what immediately follows is on the relatively narrow internal workings of the Hollywood industry, passing references will also be made to the more general cultural, economic and political connections Hollywood has formed within American society and with the international community as a whole (areas I return to in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3).

In addition, the status of film music making as a *formation* in and of itself will be assessed. Williams points out that formations are distinct from institutions in culture insofar as they constitute “forms of..internal organization which [are] concerned...with the practice...of the art itself...” Because there is a “strict relation” between formations, the webs of internal relations they circumscribe, and the larger institutions they are typically part of,⁴ movie music as a distinct cultural activity with its own inherent

⁴ Williams, Culture 57.

dynamics will receive separate consideration from a formational perspective in the final section of this chapter.

Motion Picture Music and Hollywood Institutions

During the motion picture's first three-and-a-half decades, music was an integral part of the historical processes taking place as the institutional fabric of the American film industry was established. Occurring as they did during a unique period in film music history, the sweeping changes of the early 1900s underline in a particularly clear fashion the fact that social and musical influences coalesce in the context of cinema as a whole. They also indicate that rapports between music making and filmmaking other than the ones currently entrenched in Hollywood practice are possible, and suggest that a wider range of relationships between the two areas is still feasible.⁵ But before examining the impact of these early processes in more detail, it will first be necessary to consider the different institutional *roles* that became established around music and musicians during the silent years.

Until the late-1900s and early-1910s, music was connected to cinema more or less exclusively at the level of exhibition. Nickelodeon or theater owners and managers were the ones who arranged for and paid pianists, organists, and orchestras to play live music in their venues prior to, during and after screenings. The production end of the industry had virtually nothing to do with music or musicians during that same period. But as Charles Berg has pointed out,⁶ even though movie exhibitors were quick to identify a general need for music—as a means of neutralizing embarrassing silences in the audience, of covering distracting sounds from within or

⁵ A point I take up in Chapter 6 of this work.

⁶ Charles Merrell Berg, "An Investigation of the Motives for and Realization of Music to Accompany the American Silent Film, 1896-1927," diss., U. of Iowa, 1973: 15-42.

without the theater (the noisy projector, conversation, street clatter. etc.), and of providing some sense of continuity and spatial depth to the cinematic experience—they were much slower to discover music’s potential to dramatically enhance the filmic images and narratives shown to their paying customers. It was common practice in early cinema, for instance, to use randomly selected player piano rolls, phonograph records, or live stage acts bearing no relation whatsoever to the film as accompaniment. As a result of this widespread lack of insight into the connection between movie and musical content, the early film musician (or his/her mechanical proxy) was largely confined to a single institutional role during the early years: that of a *performer*. Music was needed to fill the auditory space of the hall during the exhibition of films for all the reasons cited above, but there was no consistent requirement that performances match or reflect what was being shown on the screen.

In fact, the main demands made on musicians by exhibitors in early cinema stemmed from the variety format in which films were most often shown at the time, an entertainment approach that had dominated American popular culture for several decades prior to cinema. Miriam Hansen characterizes the overriding context of early cinema as a host of “attractions” and “appeals” to the audience that included concurrent exhibition elements—simultaneous lectures, music, and sound effects, for example—as well as activities that preceded or followed the films, such as overtures, interludes, illustrated songs, vaudeville acts or magic lantern shows.⁷ Once again, this indicates that music and musicians were first integrated into cinematic institutions at the performance level, as a generic

⁷ Miriam Hansen, Babel and Babylon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1981) 25-34.

sideshow whose purpose was to amuse, entertain, and fill exhibition venues with sound during the screening of films.

The performance aspects of music remained important throughout the silent era. Many commentators from the period noted that as late as the 1920s, musical and other stage performers often constituted a stronger draw for spectators than the movies themselves. *Variety*, for example, related how more than half the audience of the Chicago Theater walked out and demanded refunds when the curtain could not be raised because of a mechanical malfunction, and only the movies--not the accompanying stage show--could be presented.⁸

But the film musician's place in cinematic institutions began to become more nuanced and diversified within about fifteen years of the medium's inception. This was in large part the result of producers seeking to improve the quality of live musical accompaniments to films, forging some of the first significant links between exhibition and production via music. In 1909, for example, the Edison company began publishing cue sheets in trade magazines which included musical suggestions and timings of scenes for its pictures.⁹ While publication was a tenuous way to achieve quality film music (given that following the musical suggestions was entirely voluntary on the part of theater musicians), the Edison example was quickly followed by other producers, and similar attempts to ensure appropriate musical backgrounds became commonplace in the 1910s. More specific practices connecting production and the musical aspects of exhibition soon evolved, such as including cue sheets when movies were distributed. Though many producers were at first reluctant to incur the extra expenses involved in the preparation of musical accompaniment

⁸ Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1992) 52.

⁹ Berg 101-112.

suggestions for each and every one of their films (as opposed to general publication on a more selective basis), the inclusion of cue sheets in distribution gradually became standard practice during the second and third decades of cinema.

Among other things, these developments meant that the theater musician's role no longer simply involved straight *performance*, as it did during the earliest years. It also regularly required the *compilation*¹⁰ of musical excerpts for filmic accompaniment. The solo pianist, organist, musical director or conductor now as a matter of course had to choose either from among the film-specific selections provided by producers in cue sheets, from suggestions provided by the exhibitor and audience members, or, on a more generic basis, from classified musical excerpts in various published collections,¹¹ in the process of putting together appropriate musical backgrounds for films. The more refined compilation process superimposed itself, as it were, on the continuing importance of performance in silent film accompaniment, creating a role-combination that was prevalent among film music makers until the advent of sound technology.

Musical performance and compilation did, however, coexist with two other roles almost from the very beginning of cinema. Recent research by Martin Marks offers convincing evidence that *composed* musical film scores existed as early as the 1890s.¹² Charles Berg has also suggested that creative theater musicians, in collaboration with their exhibitor-employers, were

¹⁰ Compilation in the sense that theater musicians became collage artists of a sort, combining appropriate pieces of existing musical material (chosen in advance or on the spot) according to their perception of the dramatic requirements of a film.

¹¹ See, for example, Erno Rapee, Encyclopedia of Music for Films and Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists: A Rapid Reference Collection of Selected Pieces Adapted to Fifty-Two Moods and Situations (N.Y. 1924, repr. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1970).

¹² Martin Marks, "Film Music of the Silent Period," diss., Harvard U., 1989.

instrumental in actualizing “music’s role as an expressive or dramatic agent in the film performance” relatively early in the history of cinema, and that an important part of this process was based in original composition efforts.¹³

Whether or not these claims can be fully substantiated in empirical terms, there is ample evidence to suggest that by the 1910s, film exhibitors and producers had identified a need for musical specialists capable of composing or compiling scores suited to the needs of specific films. Examples of original film music from that decade are numerous: in 1914, the Universal Film Company commissioned original music for its feature film *Samson*; D.W. Griffith and composer Joseph Carl Breil collaborated on a part-original, part-compiled score for the former’s *Birth of an Nation* (1915); Victor Herbert wrote a much-publicized score for Thomas Dixon’s *The Fall of a Nation* (1916); in 1917, the Williamson Brothers Film Company announced the creation of a music department to provide tailor-made orchestrations and compositions for its pictures;¹⁴ and many original scores were composed in the 1920s for larger-scale productions. But despite these high-profile instances of original scoring work, film composition was to remain relatively marginal throughout the silent era, for reasons that will be explained more fully in the final section of this chapter.

In addition to *performance*, *compilation*, and *composition*, a fourth, more “floating” role, *improvisation*, was also a regular part of film music making during the silent years. A degree of improvising was involved in each of the other three roles, in that a type of instantaneous composition/compilation often took place in the live performance context of film accompaniment. It was also an intentional technique used by theater musicians to create a kind of spontaneous energy and excitement in live

¹³ Berg 43.

¹⁴ Berg 161-162

situations. While the unpredictability of improvisation was not something exhibitors and producers were necessarily comfortable with, it was nonetheless prevalent throughout the silent era in solo playing in particular, because the fast-moving, real-time projection of movie images (as well as the large volume of different films requiring musical backing) meant that rehearsal was usually impossible and the necessity of making accompaniment decisions on the fly was common.

As mentioned earlier, the four roles played by silent film musicians evolved against a backdrop of far-reaching developments in the movie industry, and the early decades of cinema were a unique time in terms of the institutional profile of music. The industry began as a decentralized, somewhat chaotic web of exhibitors, producers and distributors that evolved very rapidly in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The film music idioms and conventions Hollywood would later universalize took shape in this unpredictable, highly competitive context, in thousands of theaters across the United States, Canada, and Europe during the silent era. Prior to the “top-down”, production-centered approach established by the Hollywood studios beginning in the 1910s, a more “bottom-up”, exhibition-oriented process in which trial-and-error was common and local tastes and conditions were catered to predominated.

The big-business-led centralization that gradually supplanted this diversified institutional fabric came into prominence during the 1910s and 20s. As various monopolistic and oligopolistic forces vied for control of the rapidly-growing movie industry, a studio system integrating production, distribution, and exhibition replaced the more competitive (but less organized) earlier model. The exhibition practices of early cinema (including its “uneven” musical accompaniments) were among the first to

be targeted for change and vigorously attacked by the studio institutions. As Miriam Hansen points out, because films were distributed on a national and international basis, the unpredictable, live performance quality that local exhibition practices lent to screenings was of great concern to producers. As a result, these practices were suddenly denounced by production companies and often became the object of conflicts between individual exhibitors and producers. The latter exerted constant pressure on the former to minimize nonfilmic acts and activities or subordinate them to the film (in the case of music and sound effects).¹⁵ One reason for this assault was that each of the new, large-scale motion picture corporations emerging at the time was seeking to increase its share of the movie market by distinguishing its own pictures from those of competing companies. While the principal strategies employed in this battle revolved around capital-intensive publicity and the use of star performers as marketing tools, big business interests also began paying much closer attention to quality at the exhibition end. Seeking to establish full control over their products (including the live musical accompaniment that affected audiences' enjoyment of films), the studios began providing cue sheets with their pictures, insisting on stricter criteria of competency for theater musicians, and even commissioning original scores for some of their more elaborate productions.

But despite the increasing trend throughout the 1920s towards the control and standardization of film accompaniment, silent era movie music should not be misunderstood as a neat prefiguration of the studio music departments that were formed after the coming of sound. Early cinema music developed in a qualitatively different institutional atmosphere than the latter, as an exhibition practice grounded in the entertainment

¹⁵ Hansen 43-44.

approaches of vaudeville and the circus. Only with the transformation of the picture show into a dominantly narrative medium (a development that more or less coincided with the entry of big business into the film industry and the consolidation of the studio oligopoly through a long string of mergers and acquisitions in the 'teens and twenties) was the "crazy-quilt" of pioneering musical practices gradually transformed into a more standardized set of accompaniment procedures. Nonetheless, elements of the unpredictability and local specificity inherent in live performance remained a part of silent film until the technological means to eliminate them was adopted by the Hollywood studios.

The historical sequence of events leading from the silent to the sound era (via the development of "classical" Hollywood cinema) has been much discussed in film literature. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, among many others, have recounted how classical filmmaking began evolving little more than a decade after the medium's inception, and achieved its definitive form in Hollywood films of the 1930s and 40s.¹⁶ The classical system they describe was characterized by a formal reliance on narratives in which the psychological motivations of characters serve as primary causal agents, and which display strong degrees of closure in their endings; by a careful adherence to continuity editing and certain types of camera work or mise-en-scène elements designed to create coherent spatial and temporal relations within the classical film; and by the standardization of an institutional approach to production and the division of labor across the American industry.¹⁷

¹⁶ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1986) 364-367.

¹⁷ Bordwell and Thompson 98-116, 349-353.

A key commentary on the institutional and economic aspects of the classical period is Douglas Gomery's *The Hollywood Studio System*, which documents the rise in dominance of a few large entertainment companies in the American film industry early in its history. Included in Gomery's account is how the first attempt at an outright monopoly was made by a cartel of equipment manufacturers formed in 1908, the Motion Pictures Patents Company. Its intention was to extort fees from producers and exhibitors through complete ownership of film and projection technology. In a further effort to consolidate its hold on the industry, the MPPC formed its own distribution arm in 1910, the General Film Company. But the cartel's attempts to dominate the business fell apart by 1914, when infighting and antitrust legislation initiated by the U.S. government broke up the MPPC.

Around the same time that the MPPC was disintegrating, other corporations rushed to fill the void left by the embryonic monopoly. Taking a different approach that allowed a limited degree of oligopolistic competition, companies like Famous Players-Lasky (later to become Paramount) succeeded in eliminating most competitors through numerous mergers and acquisitions of theater chains, distribution operations, and production facilities. This led to a situation at the beginning of the sound era in which an oligopoly of five very large corporations (Paramount, Warner Brothers, Loew's, Fox, and the newly formed Radio-Keith-Orpheum) and three other companies with only production and distribution arms (Universal, Columbia, and United Artists) completely dominated the movie business in America, in addition to acting as a major force internationally.

As discussed in the previous section, anti-competitive trends such as the formation of the MPPC monopoly and the oligopoly of major studios

affected cinema music and musicians from the outset. It was with the arrival of big business that efforts to standardize cinematic products in terms of quality and content began and the targeting of exhibition practices such as live music took place. Moreover, the film medium made a more general shift from being a novelty item with diverse but static subject matter to a medium almost exclusively devoted to narrative, resulting in greater emphasis on the compilation and composition aspects of theater musicianship and the heightened status of musical specialists in film institutions.

The rise of the musical specialist indicates the nature of the institutional shift that occurred when sound technology arrived in the late 1920s. The takeover of the movie industry by large capital interests and the development of sound in fact coincided with a worldwide socio-economic trend of great significance: the rise of corporatism. The political philosopher John Ralston Saul has outlined the historical processes which have led to the corporation's increasing dominance as a force in Western civilization. Saul argues that with the rise of rationalism centuries earlier in the Enlightenment, a corresponding veneration of expertise and specialization—embodied in the professional—became increasingly prominent in the West. As a result, the rationally organized social structures that evolved over the ensuing period—most notably, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the corporation—strongly emphasized the division of labor into narrow bands of specialization, and encouraged the development of tightly-focused expertise.¹⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that with the domination of the film industry by a corporate oligopoly in the 1920s and the achievement of total control over film products through the development

¹⁸ John Ralston Saul, Voltaire's Bastards (N.Y.: Penguin, 1992) 38-41, 471-474.

of sound and other technological refinements during the early 1930s, the making of music for motion pictures was soon confined to a highly specialized area within the movie studios.

But prior to music's place in fully corporatized cinematic institutions being stabilized in the mid-1930s, an interesting transition period of several years occurred. Kathryn Kalinak relates how during the late 1920s and early 30s, after the introduction of sound but preceding the complete delineation of the Hollywood studio system, a variety of strategies regarding music existed. On the one hand, most studios clung to silent film practices (including continuous musical scoring) for some time, uncertain whether sound technology would ultimately supplant or coexist with the old medium, and still having substantial investments in the older form. On the other hand, a good portion of the emerging film oligopoly's top management believed that musical experts would *not* be needed in the sound era organization.¹⁹ Max Steiner's account of his own experience with the RKO studio in 1930 describes this situation:

...RKO decided they didn't want any music in their dramatic pictures. This was motivated not only by the economic factor [of the 1929 stock market crash and the ensuing depression], but because they had decided you could not have background music unless you showed the source. In other words, you had to have an orchestra in view, or a phonograph or performers, so that people would not wonder where the music was coming from. They felt, therefore, that they had no need for a full music department.²⁰

A combination of economic constraints and certain aesthetic assumptions on the part of studio management therefore resulted in most sound films of the early 1930s being produced without any background music whatsoever. Had audiences and critics not reacted favorably and vocally to background

¹⁹ Kalinak 66-71.

²⁰ Tony Thomas, Film Score (Cranbury, N.J.: A.S Barnes and Company, 1979) 76.

scoring in films like *Cimarron* (1932) and *King Kong* (1933), music's role in the sound-era studio system might have been quite different. Only sound technicians, along with a few performers and musical directors, would have been necessary to fulfill the objectives around music established by the film industry's corporate managers once sound technology became established. The composing and improvising roles of the silent era would have been eliminated altogether, and only limited performance and compilation would have been required of a select few musicians to provide source music cues.

What in fact happened early in the sound era was that composition, embodied in the composer-expert, came instead to dominate film music making in Hollywood. As financial investment in production increased in relation to exhibition in the industry at large, musical improvisation disappeared, subsumed within the compositional process of producing a finished, written background score for the self-contained talking picture. Performance became limited to a small circle of expert musicians recording in Hollywood studios, and compilation was similarly confined to musical direction tasks fulfilled by a few specialists in the studio music departments—usually the composers themselves.

Reducing music's presence in the film industry from tens of thousands of musicians employed by a host of exhibition enterprises to a tiny population of experts in studio music departments amounted to what would now be called a massive downsizing operation. Moreover, the institutional shift that saw a situation of full employment for musicians change to one of serious unemployment—permanently transforming the role of the musician in cinema in the process—was no simple accident of history precipitated by technological innovation and economic trends. (Although, as we will see in the following chapter, these factors did play a

key part). It was also very much due to the same corporatist, rational devotion to efficiency and specialization that has come to dominate economics, politics, and culture today. What happened to musicians during the transition from silent to sound film can in fact be seen as a typical example of what has been occurring in many sectors of society—for the same rational reasons—since the first industrial revolution.

The organizational aspects of the sound-era studio music departments are well documented in the literature on film music. Kathryn Kalinak, for one, describes it as a “hierarchy which positioned management over labor..., [and permeated] every aspect of a film’s production from its visual style to its music.”²¹ Caryl Flinn describes the top-down flow of power within the studios and its effects on musicians as follows:

The carefully stratified music department was structured much like a miniature version of the studio itself... Work tasks...were highly compartmentalized...[and], as with the studio more generally..., [the] specialized jobs were arranged hierarchically. Heading the music department was the music director..., a middleman of sorts...[who] was often called upon to translate the economic imperatives of the studio... into musical terms and instructions for composers, who were rarely part of production decisions... Below them [in the pecking order] were other, secondary composers, cue-sheet preparers, assorted copiers, and orchestrators.²²

Once established in the mid-1930s, music’s profile in sound-era studio institutions did bear some resemblance to certain aspects of silent-era music making. (For example, by relegating music to the post-production phase and requiring that musicians deal only with finished films, the studios in effect duplicated the after-the-fact quality of theater accompanists’ work.) For the most part, however, film musicians’ relationship to the studio music

²¹ Kalinak 75.

²² Flinn 18-19.

department stood in stark contrast to the rapports they had formed in earlier institutions. While in the silent era the multiple roles of improviser, composer, compiler, and performer were routinely combined in single cinema accompanists (who in turn had a relatively direct relationship with their exhibitor-employers), the sound-era music department employee was ultra-specialized, and related to the films on which he worked in a comparatively indirect way.

Even though, historically speaking, the sound-era studio institutions lasted only about twenty years in the stable form just discussed (from the early 1930s to the early 1950s), the influence of their organizational structures and management principles on the making of film music has extended far beyond that period, and is still strongly felt at the present time.

The institutional stability of the powerful Hollywood oligopoly was in no small part due to varying degrees of government cooperation with the film industry in the United States, which began as the studios took shape in the 'teens and 20s and lasted until the late 1930s. But when the Roosevelt administration filed an anti-trust suit against Paramount in 1938, claiming that the position the studios had carved out for themselves in the American entertainment sector amounted to an illegal monopoly, a series of legal actions began which would ultimately break up the studio system. In 1949, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the eight Hollywood studios could no longer control exhibition through its theater chains, and the studio system slowly disintegrated.

Another institutional shift within the film industry took place as a result beginning in the 1950s. Although the studios were allowed to retain much of their power in the production and distribution areas, the

independent producer suddenly became far more important in the post-classical era industry. Formerly a marginal part of the business, the independent production became the norm rather than the exception in Hollywood by the late-1950s.

A second key post-classical development was that as the divorce between the studios' production-distribution and exhibition divisions gradually proceeded in the 50s (MGM did not complete the required separation with its Loew's theater chain until 1959, and other studios were slow to comply), the structure of movie corporations began to change considerably. Due to reductions in revenue resulting from their theatrical divestments, and to the fact that television was fast becoming the American public's primary entertainment medium, studios were forced to make drastic reductions in overhead and production budgets. The music departments which formerly employed staff composers, conductors, music directors and orchestras were drastically cut back or dismantled altogether as part of this process. In their place, a system of outsourcing emerged, in which musical services were contracted to freelance composers and musicians on a film-by-film basis.

This shift had a profound impact on the ways in which music was created for films. Composer Fred Steiner has pointed out that whereas in the studio era, the music directors in charge of the music departments were "executives with sufficient power bestowed on them by the studio bosses so that their decisions were rarely questioned when it came to music making..."²³, in the post-classical era world of freelance work the composer "frequently finds himself in direct, one-to-one confrontations with [independent producers] who, skillful though they may be in other areas of

²³ Robert Faulkner, Music on Demand (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1983) 3.

film production, usually have little if any ability to understand the language of music and what it can or should do for their pictures.”²⁴ The direct, one-on-one mode of relating between composer and producer Steiner refers to, a rapport formerly mediated by the corporate executive/ music director, became part and parcel of the composer’s *métier* after the dissolution of the studio system, with major effects on the subjective aspects of film music making.²⁵

In his extensive study of Hollywood film composers, Robert Faulkner refers to this new type of rapport as “symbolic interaction”, and describes its interpersonal dynamics as follows:

The producer or director may know little about film scoring in general; understanding scores and what composers do, filmmakers may still not know what they want, they may not communicate it effectively to the composer; communicating it, they may be unable to adjust to the composer’s suggestions about how to go about achieving the effects they both desire...Not liking the score [that the freelance composer creates], they may throw it out, start over again, fire the composer and hire one of his colleagues. All of this makes communication crucial.²⁶

²⁴ Faulkner 6. Steiner’s view that musically unskilled producers have little idea what music can or should do in their pictures is debatable, and will be taken up in a later section on socially-based influences affecting film music content.

²⁵ An example of the studio music director’s mediating role in this regard is recounted by David Raksin (in Roy Prendergast *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (N.Y.: New York. UP, 1977) 63-64). While working on his score for the detective mystery *Laura* (1944), Raksin was unhappy with the cues he was coming up with for reel two of the picture. The music for reel one had been entirely based on his main theme, and Raksin was trying to develop new material for certain second reel scenes. He decided to seek the advice of Twentieth Century-Fox music department director Alfred Newman, and was gently told that to Newman’s more objective ear (and that of the audience Newman was able to project because of his extensive experience) the *Laura* melody was strong enough to serve as the basis for a uni-thematic score. Respecting Newman’s impartial and non-coercive advice to use the melody as much as possible, Raksin went on to write his most celebrated score. Had Raksin been forced to deal directly with the filmmaker in this instance (or had he elected to say nothing to the producer or director, fearing a negative reaction to his uncertainty regarding the score)—as would have been the case less than a decade after *Laura* was made—the outcome would no doubt have been quite different.

²⁶ Faulkner 13.

The tenuousness and difficulty of this process, as experienced by the many Hollywood freelance composers Faulkner interviewed in-depth, is constantly emphasized in his text. “Working in commercial worlds presents extraordinary potential for conflicts with producers and directors”, he states in relation to the post-studio freelancer’s lot, referring to the feelings of “indifference”, “resignation”, and even “contempt” they often experience towards their employers and working situations.

Yet to an outside observer, the fact that the outcome for composers has been largely negative in the wake of the studio system’s disintegration is far from a self-evident development. Why did the more positive potentials inherent in the new institutional configuration of independent producers and freelancers—potentials for a more integral musical role in the filmmaking process because of the direct rapport between filmmakers and composers, for example, or for greater creative freedom for film music makers because of the disappearance of many of the hierarchical strictures of the studio music department—why did these not come to pass for the most part in mainstream Hollywood? Faulkner’s survey implies that at least three answers to this fundamental question are possible.

One is that the comparative insecurity of the new, more loosely-structured institutional environment in post-classical era Hollywood led not so much to open competition and diversity among film music makers seeking to establish collaborative relationships with filmmakers, but more to a type of new anti-competitive oligarchy made up of “central” freelancers:

Both freelancers and filmmakers...strive to dominate the world in which they work. Cooperative advantages and...control over conditions of employment hinge on gaining access to power and publicity...Since for composers this means getting access

to films and their makers as important sources of opportunity and industry legitimacy, they will seek a central position within networks of film producers. And since for the producers this means hiring only the most visible, 'hottest' and productive composers in Hollywood as solutions to risk and uncertainty, they will be equally determined to select discriminatingly from within a narrow circle of freelancers.²⁷

What this translated into after the dissolution of the studio system was a situation in which "small numbers of freelancers capture a disproportionate share of the available film projects and awards." A number of Faulkner's empirical studies bear this out: in feature films made between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, for example, only 3% of the 450 composers surveyed had scored over 10 films, while the vast majority had scored only one.²⁸

A second set of constraints imposed by the new freelance hierarchy revolved around the creative freedom of film music makers. According to the composers Faulkner interviewed, even though occasional opportunities for greater creativity in film composition could arise for the freelancer—that is, when the direct filmmaker-composer rapport was ideally configured (in other words, when "symbolic interaction" was working smoothly and to the composer's advantage)—by and large the pressures to produce conventional musical work and to avoid experimentation actually increased when independent productions became the Hollywood norm in the 1950s and 60s:

[The composer] quickly learns that the one element [the independent] producer...most wants to minimize in his work life is randomness. The producer calculates, plans, strives, "hypes", exactly in order to reduce the hazards of something unexpected or *too* unexpected. Reliance on musical conventions is a major part of the producer's effort to minimize randomness in the film project, but the composer's attitude is likely to be more complex. [He knows] the difference between

²⁷ Faulkner 10.

²⁸ Faulkner 28.

craft and art, between knowing what one has to do and what one wants to do, or could do.²⁹

But again, the fact that greater conventional restraints should be placed on composers in an institutional environment where they are afforded more, not less, direct access to the filmmaker, seems rather paradoxical. Nonetheless, in conservative, profit-oriented Hollywood, a highly conventional approach and consistent limitations on innovation in film scoring became commonplace after the classical era. These pressures resulted in a return of the silent era *compiler* role, a latter-day mutation of the function that has proven to be a distinctive characteristic of post-classical film music making. As creative latitude in movie composition has been consistently eroded by the risk-reducing demands of independent producers and directors, the composer has in effect become a kind of high-level compiler of clichés and predictable scoring choices, a process which, despite technically being “original”, resembles all too closely the collage-like assembly of existing musical materials for film accompaniment during the silent years.

A third factor hampering the more positive possibilities for film scoring after the breakup of the studio system was the continued relegation of music to the final post-production stages in the filmmaking process. This was perhaps less surprising than the suppression of real competition and innovative creative expression, given that the technical flow of creating a film had already been established in the classical era. Nevertheless, the logistical position of music in filmmaking continued to have a largely negative impact on composers' work in the era of independent productions.

²⁹ Faulkner 98-99.

In his forward to Faulkner's book, Fred Steiner recounts how from the very earliest years of the sound era,

...most filmmakers regarded music as a necessary evil, about which they understood all too little...Once a picture was finished, the necessity of adding music to it would often try the producer's patience because it would hinder the preparation of his film for its theatrical release—all of which would lead him to continually urge the composer on.³⁰

If time pressures regarding music were prevalent even in the relatively controlled environment of the Hollywood studios, they would become far more acute when independent productions (with their pressing financial imperatives) became the norm. Faulkner relates how the post-classical composer “works under extraordinary time pressure”, despite having to carry out a complex series of activities (including “spotting” the film, establishing timings for musical cues, creating sketches and maquettes of key musical passages, composing and orchestrating the score itself, and more) without the benefit of a music department staff to share parts of the burden. Faulkner's survey is riddled with complaints from composers about the time restrictions imposed by the continued postproduction position of music. The rational principles behind adding music only to the finished film have thus overridden opportunities afforded by the more open-ended freelance process for earlier intervention in the creative process by film music makers.³¹

³⁰ Faulkner 1. Based on an interview with RKO music department head Max Steiner.

³¹ On the other hand, the privileged and powerful position of studio music department directors sometimes allowed them to sidestep standard procedures during the 1930s and 40s. In *Settling the Score*, Kathryn Kalinak recounts how the Academy Award-winning music for *The Informer* (1935) was created by composer Max Steiner in an exceptional collaboration with director John Ford, emphasizing that “Steiner's involvement in the film before and as it was being shot provided him with the opportunity to reverse the usual practice of postsynchronizing the score to edited footage.” (Kalinak 114-115.) More will be said about this unusual instance in film music history in chapter 6.

While the changes that came about after the dissolution of the Hollywood studio oligopoly were wide-ranging and complex, the factors discussed above were such that the shifts occurring in the 1950s and 60s did not necessarily result in a new and more interesting institutional place for film scoring. Instead, the substance of film music making—what was demanded by filmmakers of film composers, and the actual functions of the scores they produced—remained relatively unchanged after the classical era. And this was the case despite the fact that the nature of the institutional demands made on film music makers were far greater, more difficult and more direct than when composers worked in music department teams under a musical director.

Faulkner's *Music on Demand* examines the state of affairs in post-classical era Hollywood until about 1980. More recent studies, such as Karlin and Wright's *On the Track* and various journals dealing with the subject of film music, tend to confirm that the dialectical tensions between composers and producers have remained in place until the present day. In Karlin and Wright's generally upbeat 1990 manual (marketed largely to aspiring and beginning film composers), the authors nonetheless acknowledge that "The composer training to work in films must...be prepared for high levels of stress. There are time pressures, commercial pressures, and artistic pressures..."³² They also describe some of the pitfalls in the "symbolic interaction" between directors, producers, and composers:

Some directors...have volatile personalities and you never know what their response will be to a particular situation...Sometimes directors don't want what they say they want...[and] the director usually suffers from some amount of insecurity during the weeks when the composer is writing the score...

³² Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright, *On the Track* (N.Y.: Schirmer, 1990) 3.

Sometimes a producer may want to guide the composer, though he really doesn't have the background for it. His language may reveal his weakness in this area...The composer...is compelled to give him what he wants and still find a way to make it work for the film and for...the composer himself...³³

Trade journals such as *Film Review*, *Music from the Movies*, *Film Score*, and *American Film* also confirm that Hollywood film music credits continue to be concentrated in a small circle of high-profile individuals such as Randy Newman, Danny Elfman, Bill Conti, Hans Zimmer, Christopher Young, and other recognized film composers.

Although the institutional changes that occurred in the transition between the classical and post-classical periods were of a less radical nature than those accompanying the shift from silent to sound films, they nonetheless had a profound impact on film composing in general and on the shrinking number of working film music makers in Hollywood.

Formations and Film Music

If, as I have suggested to this point, various social influences based in Hollywood institutions have had a significant impact on film music throughout the history of cinema, then the importance of different types of "internal organization" *within* the film music area must also be considered. In other words, the manner in which film musicians interrelate among themselves, as well as the ways in which the associations and coalitions they have formed with other groups, organizations, or formations at various times have significantly modified and transformed the reality of film music

³³ Karlin and Wright 14, 15, 20, 21, 22.

making over the course of cinema history, must be assessed in addition to wider institutional considerations.

There is strong historical evidence to suggest that the influence of film musical formations was at its peak during the silent era, and then abruptly declined as film music making became specialized with the coming of sound. Charles Berg's research indicates that until the late 1900s, the typical business arrangements around motion picture accompaniment seldom involved more than a simple, straightforward contractual arrangement between individual exhibitors and musicians. Few, if any, forms of organization among film musicians are mentioned in historical sources from the earliest period. But the appearance of cue sheets in 1909 indicates that film musical formations had begun to take tangible shape at the beginning of cinema's second decade. Although the Edison Company was the first to publish accompaniment guides in 1909, during the 1910s and 20s it was largely film musicians themselves who pushed for and developed the cue sheet. Moreover, producers were criticized by musicians in trade publications for their initial reluctance to provide accompaniment guides, and theater musicians were largely responsible for refining the cue sheet from a series of general musical suggestions to a precise document providing details of screen actions, the character, tempo and timing of musical cues, and lists of specific musical pieces which could be used as scene-by-scene accompaniment.

A further indication that various forms of formational communication and feedback were prevalent among musicians during the silent period were the many film music columns in motion picture trade magazines. Publications such as *Moving Picture World*, *Dramatic Mirror*, *Moving Picture News*, *Metronome*, and *Melody Magazine* all featured various

forums and discussions around film music during the 1910s and 20s. The *World's* column, for example,

...provided an ongoing forum which enabled film musicians across the country to exchange views and suggestions. The invitation to share experiences and opinions which was extended from the column's outset was immediately seized upon. There followed lively debates on the merits of sound effects, the superiority of the orchestra versus the lone keyboard player, and improvisation. There were also questions on where to get Chinese or Western music and how to interpret flashbacks. Musicians and exhibitors...sent in their own musical suggestions.³⁴

Formational activity among film musicians also inspired the publication of extensive "libraries" of musical selections for compilation purposes. These first appeared in the mid-1910s as collections for solo keyboard players, but by the 1920s they also included orchestral reductions and fully orchestrated "mood music". Like cue sheets, these compendiums drew on the professional experience of film accompanists in making their repertoire selections for publication, and "libraries" would be continuously changed and revised to reflect the needs and innovations of film music makers working in the field. The various handbooks and guides for the theater musician that also appeared during the silent era [*What and How to Play for Pictures* (1913), *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures* (1920), etc.] provide further testimony to the depth of formational musical activity throughout the period.

Furthermore, musical formations were engaged in various significant ways with other parts of the film industry during the silent years. As previously mentioned, musicians were not the only ones contributing to the development of cue sheets and the film music forums in trade magazines;

³⁴ Berg 115-116.

producers, exhibitors, and even audience members participated as well, a sign that different types of input and feedback regarding music were circulating within the movie business at the time.

Other formational relationships in the early industry involved composers and their associations. Because most silent era producers and exhibitors resisted incurring the expense of commissioning original scores for their films, and because compilation of existing music, performance and improvisation were far more cost effective from a business perspective, these roles were encouraged and became dominant in film accompaniment until sound technology was introduced. Moreover, when legal issues began to put pressure on the compilation area in 1917, original composition was still firmly rejected in favor of compilation by the industry. After a United States Supreme Court ruling in favor of composer Victor Herbert, royalties had to be paid for any public performance of a copyrighted work. ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, then asserted that the ruling applied to cinema performances as well, and had their claim backed up by the Court.³⁵ What ensued was a type of inter-formational battle, with composers and some publishers on one side, other publishers and exhibitors on the other, and theater musicians caught between the warring factions. The ultimate outcome proved to be a confusing mix: some publishers sided with dissenting exhibitors and boycotted the ASCAP tax by putting out collections of “public domain” materials by classical masters and others that were classified for film accompaniment. Musicians working in the boycotting venues had to put together their compilations using only these libraries. Other exhibitors complied with the new copyright laws and allowed more current, copyrighted material to be included in

³⁵ Berg 141-144.

accompaniments. Other publishers unscrupulously altered copyrighted pieces in an effort to pass them off as original film compositions (which were not yet subject to the copyright tax). But this last type of activity was uncommon, and compilation continued to marginalize composition in film-musical formations through most of the silent era.

The advent of sound technology not only consolidated earlier trends towards increasing standardization and efficiency in the filmmaking process (radically altering the institutional reality for film music makers in the process), it also signaled the effective end of significant formational activity among film music makers. As Kathryn Kalinak points out, many of the silent era devices that served as communication links between film musicians were eliminated by the corporatization of filmmaking in the classical period:

The mediating devices which regulated the conventions of the silent film score (manuals, columns in trade papers, musical encyclopedias, and cue sheets) were, for the most part, produced independently of the studio whose authority had only an indirect and limited impact on the music... [In the sound era studios, on the other hand, a] structure of accountability affected the composer's responsibility for the score and gave the studio more direct control over how a score would be fashioned... This intervention marks a major difference between the classical film score and its silent predecessor.³⁶

Kalinak goes on to explain one of the principal reasons that the studios' growing power scuttled formational activity:

What the sound period did was institutionalize a mode of production which contractually bound the individual agents who create a film to the studio. The [classical era] score developed during a period which saw the solidification of the power of the producer. A composer, like other craftspeople employed by the studio, experienced a relationship to any

³⁶ Kalinak 76.

given film that was specific, transitory, and subject to the authority of the studio.³⁷

In contrast to the informality and diversity of silent era relations between accompanists and exhibitors, the centralization of authority in the studio system discouraged formational activity by isolating individual composers in strict, binding contractual arrangements. Moreover, the studio corporations' devotion to efficiency also tended to have an isolating effect in these terms. As Caryl Flinn emphasizes,

[Musical] work tasks, like those in the studio at large, were highly compartmentalized: film composers, for instance, seldom oversaw the orchestration of their own pieces and frequently worked in isolation from one another, sometimes on the same assignment (during the preproduction of *Gone with the Wind*, David O. Selznick apparently hired Franz Waxman to write a backup score for the film in case [Max] Steiner's proved unsatisfactory). So pronounced was the division of labor that it was not uncommon for composers to turn over their basic melodic lines to other composers to be harmonized or developed.³⁸

Not only were composers isolated in the filmmaking process itself, they were usually unable to avail themselves of the intra- and inter-formational links common in labor organizations, being the only non-unionized employees in the studio music departments. Sound technicians, recording engineers, and recording musicians all had unions to protect their interests and act as formational rallying points, but the composers did not. According to Flinn, even ASCAP, the performing rights organization, "was unable to protect the film composer, whose work...legally...belonged to the studio, which, having initially commissioned the score, was then given legal proprietorship of it."³⁹ Although some formations like the Studio

³⁷ Kalinak 72.

³⁸ Flinn 18-19.

³⁹ Flinn 19.

Composers Association (1945) and the Composers and Lyricists Guild (1950) eventually took shape, they have either been short-lived (in the former case) or largely ineffective in protecting film music makers (in the latter).⁴⁰

The formational isolation of film music makers deepened after the classical period. Faulkner, Karlin and Wright all indicate that heavy competition among freelancers has resulted in fewer, not more, levels of interconnection between film music makers. Although Faulkner does emphasize that various informal types of association exist among musical freelancers in the Hollywood scene, it is clear from his study that the client-composer relationship is central to all of them. The “war stories” composers exchange with their colleagues (or the occasional contracts they pass on to one another) typically revolve less around musician-to-musician exchanges regarding the craft than around their business and symbolic-interactive dealings with producers and directors.

A possible exception to the above is the limited degree of communication that has occurred among film musicians via different books and periodicals published after the classical period. Karlin and Wright’s *On the Track* is an example of this trend, a large tome containing extensive essays on virtually every aspect of current film composing, from musical materials and scoring examples to business suggestions. Many similar works have appeared since the breakup of the studios, in fact the vast majority of literature on or related to film composing has been published

⁴⁰ The main accomplishment of the Composers and Lyricists Guild was to organize a brief strike in late 1971 and early 1972, after which an antitrust suit demanding greater copyright ownership of film scoring work for composers and more reasonable time allotments in which to complete scores was filed (a development I will return to in Chapter 2). The suit was unsuccessful, however, and to my knowledge no further actions of significance have been initiated since by the organization.

since the 1950s. But given that the increasingly tiny number of working Hollywood composers are contributors to or authors of this material, not its readers, and the fact that most composition-oriented publications are sold to aspiring or neophyte composers on the outer fringes of the Hollywood scene, the formational significance of such works is questionable.

In sum: the organizational structures of Hollywood institutions have provided both restrictions and opportunities to film music makers, often constraining the free expression of their creativity but also connecting them to mainstream American and international culture through commercial film. The ongoing dialectical relationship between the interests and aspirations of accompanists and composers and those of the film industry have resulted in different types of integration and selection of musicians for work in the Hollywood scene, and in numerous historical shifts in employment patterns and policies therein. The often confrontational quality of this interplay has also led to the evolution of various levels of interconnection among film music makers, formations which have themselves been subject to dramatic changes over the course of cinema history.

Chapter 3

Economic and Technological Factors in Hollywood Film Music

I have so far presented movie music as a chameleon-like presence in the film industry, an area of production in which musicians and composers—whether as individuals or in formational collectives—have attempted to adapt to the shifting historical conditions of American cinema, and have been integrated into or rejected from mainstream film institutions in the process. But because Hollywood has been part of a capitalist system from the outset, a system in which the realities of inter- and intra-sectoral competition and the imperatives of profit-making are constantly at play, economic factors have always had a determining influence on movie music and virtually every other aspect of commercial filmmaking.

The interconnections that exist between the structural dynamics of economies and those of the cultures they coexist with have been noted by a number of commentators. Paul Gilbert, for example, refers to the “international paradox” in twentieth century history, a dialectical configuration clearly applicable to the American film industry. Gilbert points out that on the one hand, an “ideal conception which inextricably links communal identity, cultural values, and economic role” has been operative in many social groups over the past hundred years, a nationalistic (and at times xenophobic) worldview in which “culture reflects and reinforces the way of life founded upon the modes of production and consumption made possible by [a specific] place.”¹ On the other hand, Gilbert notes that parallel to this identity-bound consciousness,

¹ Paul Gilbert, “Nations, Cultures and Markets: An Introduction,” *Nations, Cultures, and Markets* ed. Paul Gilbert and Paul Gregory (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 1994) 4.

...there has been an increasing globalisation of markets in commodities and products. Few countries of the world, if any, now operate largely self-sufficient economies. With the globalisation of markets has come...a corresponding global culture.²

These two opposing tendencies can plainly both be found in the economic-cultural confluence that is mainstream American film, in that Hollywood has, in the former sense, consistently “elaborated a profile of Americanism by confirming individualism, pragmatism, and free enterprise initiative—the ideological pillars of the American system”³—and thereby amounted to a type of national cinema, while at the same time relentlessly searching for new markets around the world and acting as a key force in the globalization of American culture. Giuliana Muscio identifies a similar juxtaposition of economic and cultural forces in 1930s Hollywood in particular, pointing out that

the inextricable link between politics, economics, and communications...emphasizes the connection between... business...and 'the movies'. Bank of America was an early supporter of the film business; Goldman, Sachs financed Warner Bros. in its escalation toward the status of major studio. We should consider that the film executives' frequenting of Wall Street and the business community...might have affected not only their business methods and industrial practices but also their cultural and political integration.⁴

The Temporary National Economic Committee appointed by the Roosevelt administration in the late 30s came to the same conclusion about Hollywood, noting that American cinema had developed into an “important social and cultural force” whose power and influence needed to be gauged “in terms other than the conventional one of dollars and cents.”⁵ Similar

² Gilbert 1.

³ Giuliana Muscio, Hollywood's New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997) 74.

⁴ Muscio 6.

⁵ Muscio 142.

characterizations of Hollywood as a key economic and cultural element of society have appeared frequently in film criticism since the Second World War. Moreover, the film music area itself has been broadly connected to the confluence of various socio-economic factors in Hollywood: Roy Prendergast, for one, states that

Film is an extremely commercial form of art and, as such, must always pay its own way...The film composer has always been at the mercy of economics. A composer can write an opera with nothing more than pen, paper, and his own creative imagination. A film composer, on the other hand, cannot write a film score without a film, whose production is a costly endeavor.⁶

In addition, as mentioned earlier, Adorno, Eisler and Bazelon have all underlined music's "pandering" to the commercial imperatives of the Hollywood film industry in their commentaries.

Given these different areas of concern, I will devote this chapter to examining the impact of key economic considerations on film music making, again assessing the silent, classical, and post-classical decades of Hollywood history in so doing. A second preoccupation of this chapter is a topic closely related to economics: technology. Raymond Williams has stipulated that all technologies (which in his view involve not only the inventions and innovations that lead to their emergence in culture and in the economy, but also the modes of distribution allowing large numbers of people to use or experience them) are deeply grounded in social relations.⁷ Similarly, Neil Postman states that technology has had a "lengthy, intimate, and inevitable relationship with culture," and that cultural-technological interactions merit careful consideration and reflection.⁸ Movie music has of

⁶ Prendergast 41.

⁷ Williams, Culture 108-109.

⁸ Neil Postman, Technopoly (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1993) xii.

course never been impervious to technological influences throughout its development, and I will evaluate its relationship to technology from three different standpoints: how film music itself has inspired various types of technological change; how the technological evolution of cinema as a whole has affected film music making; and how technological innovations outside of the film industry have influenced the film music form. I must emphasize, however, that space and the general orientation of this study do not permit an extensive exploration of music technology in film scoring and recording here. Rather, the following discussion is focused on clearly making the point that technological influences are among the many social factors tangibly felt in film music making, and to assessing the most important ways in which these particular connections have had an impact on Hollywood soundtracks.

Economics and Movie Music

As discussed earlier, the 1910s were watershed years in the economic transformation of the film industry from a diverse, competitive web of smaller motion picture enterprises into a big business oligopoly. Music and musicians were vital to both small and large scale economic competitors throughout the silent era. From the earliest days of the nickelodeon, exhibitors identified music as a box-office draw, and the hiring of musicians (or, at the very least, the purchase of a mechanical keyboard) was a virtually universal practice. Moreover, the use of music as a competitive tactic did not change appreciably during the ascent of the Hollywood studios: it was clearly understood by locally- and nationally-based entrepreneurs alike that music constituted an audience draw and was a necessary expense in the commercial presentation of films.

The lengths to which exhibitors would go to gain an advantage over competitors through the use of music were often extensive. Accompanists were regularly promoted as special attractions in their own right, and many were known for their distinctive film music “styles”.⁹ Musicians would take requests from the audience, include popular material in their accompaniments, and generally “work” the crowd during their theatrical engagements. Certain spectacular elements were often added to their performances as a means of highlighting their presence in the live event. Special lighting, formal dress, elaborate entrances and stage gestures were all used to enhance musicians’ profile inside theaters, and their drawing power outside of them.

Certain commercial practices connected to music did not survive the industry’s transition to centralized control by the studios, however. The “song slide”, for example—essentially a still projection of song lyrics on the screen as part of an organized audience sing-along between films—was eliminated in the late 1910s and early 20s. Although a proven box-office attraction, with known vocalists sometimes engaged to perform the tunes and lead the audience in the singing, the song slide (along with other non-filmic elements) was actively repressed in studio-owned theaters. The same was true of “photoplays”, an early precursor of music videos. Song performances would be illustrated with a series of still images projected on the screen, an extra-filmic attraction that also had proven audience appeal when a reputable singer was employed. But, as Miriam Hansen has pointed out, non-filmic elements were linked to the heterogeneous nature of early

⁹ Charles Berg recounts how the “film funner”—an accompanist who played tunes with titles that provided a commentary on film images as they were projected—was a common figure in the earlier silent years. Other film musicians were known for their sensitive interpretations of dramatic moments on the screen, and others still for their virtuosic performances.

audiences and were strongly discouraged during the corporate takeover of the film business.

Nonetheless, other promotional techniques clearly derived from extra-filmic practices paradoxically came into vogue during the 1920s, years after most of the participatory features of early cinema had been eliminated. The “theme song” approach, for example, was common from the early 20s until the coming of sound (and, as we shall see, would periodically return as an important commercial device in subsequent decades). A song relating in some way to the dramatic content of a film would be composed, published in sheet music form, and often released on disc or “plugged” in live performance in advance of the movie’s release. Advertising for the film would then tie in the song’s public exposure by promising to feature it prominently during screenings. The theme, either in complete form or in various fragments, would subsequently be played repeatedly in the instrumental accompaniment to the picture. More surprisingly, a full (and usually extra-filmic) performance of the song—sometimes by one of the film’s stars—was also routinely offered to patrons during exhibition, a clear departure from the spectatorial regimen encouraged by the Hollywood studios.

One indication of the increasing effectiveness of musical accompaniment as a commercial enhancement to exhibition was the steady rise in musicians’ wages—particularly those of “star” performers—throughout the silent period. There was often intense competition among exhibitors to acquire the services of the best accompanists, who would be featured prominently in publicity campaigns and on theater marquees to attract patrons. Even the theatres’ organs (the “Mighty Wurlitzers” being a prominent example) and their capacity to produce special effects and

orchestral sounds were routinely mentioned in advertisements as a means of attracting patrons and augmenting ticket sales.

In the same vein, as theaters expanded in size with the influx of large capital investment, so did the musical presence in exhibition. Small ensembles and medium- to large-size orchestras became commonplace in the picture palaces, although solo accompanists remained the norm in smaller venues. But as we have already seen, the willingness of movie corporations to hire conductors and orchestral musicians at considerable expense did not typically extend to commissioning original compositions. It was the spectacular presence of music in the theater that was of primary commercial value to them, not the original content of what was played as accompaniment. In this sense, it was economic considerations that were largely responsible for marginalizing composition in relation to compilation during much of the silent era.¹⁰

Finally, music was integrally involved in a more subtle but ultimately very far-reaching economic project spearheaded by big business from the late-1900s on. Central to this initiative was, in Miriam Hansen's words, "The creation of the classical spectator", a category which was not only subjective in nature (a "position anticipated by strategies of narration and address"), but economic as well. The earlier variety format in which movies were shown was looked upon unfavorably by investors, whose reticence was not so much due to there being anything inherently unprofitable in the

¹⁰ As Kathryn Kalinak points out, even though original orchestral scores were a "mark of distinction, and the public came to expect them in big-budget, prestige productions," they nonetheless "presented problems in production and distribution which limited their use. The cost of commissioning a score far exceeded the cost of economical cue sheets. Not all movie houses had an orchestra, and the logistics of arranging and publishing parts for the various combinations of instruments that existed in pits throughout the country confined the performance of orchestral scores to major houses in large cities. [Moreover] conductors, who had gained status through their control of musical accompaniment, were resistant to relinquishing their power to published music." (Kalinak 53.)

format (it had contributed to the success of countless entertainment enterprises over the previous decades), but to its tendency to attract “a distinctly lower class of patrons.” Following the example of vaudeville, whose impresarios had consciously sought to cultivate a more affluent, middle-class clientele, film industry magnates made a concerted effort to develop their enterprises along similar lines. But they did so with far more at stake than in the earlier decades of cinema: the “emerging mass audience”¹¹ in North America and elsewhere constituted an enormous economic prize, and every effort was made to capture it.

Music was clearly a part of the overall move in this direction from the beginning. As Charles Berg points out, it was one of several “harbingers of a new era for the film industry”:

The vermin-infested nickelodeon with its hundred or so uncomfortable hardback chairs gave way to the thousand to three-thousand seat picture palace with its ornamental plaster reliefs on ceilings and walls, cavernous lobby, decorative box office, plush carpeting, and countless other refinements. The lone pianist or organist or two or three piece “orchestras” expanded to an orchestra of twenty, thirty or more. The accent was on refinement and bigness. As the film business shifted from an essentially working-class medium to a medium for all the people..., music was instrumental in winning patrons from the middle and upper classes.¹²

Among the specific contributions film music made to this strategy was the frequent inclusion of classical pieces by known European composers as movie accompaniment. The titles of the refined selections were often shown on slides prior to or following films, or written on programs to simulate a recital or concert event. Moreover, exceptions were again made to the avoidance of extra-filmic acts when classical singers and instrumentalists

¹¹ Hansen 59.

¹² Berg 250-251.

would be hired to perform serious repertoire in the picture palaces as an introduction to films or during intermissions. Film producers sometimes complemented the efforts exhibitors were making by casting opera divas in starring roles, or in some cases filming entire operas.

The transition to talking pictures had many far-reaching consequences on film music, all of which stemmed from the series of alliances and cooperative ventures between AT&T, RCA and certain movie studios that led to the latter's development of a completely autonomous audio-visual product.¹³ As Douglas Gomery has pointed out, eliminating musicians and other live performers from the cinema through the rapid introduction of sound was a key part of the power play that saw two aspiring monopolists enter the ranks of Hollywood's "big five". Warner Brothers and Fox,¹⁴ lacking sufficient capital in the mid-20s to establish theatrical chains of their own and to compete on an equal footing with the top three majors who did, both gambled on investing heavily in synchronized audio as a means of acquiring a monopoly on sound shorts. This strategy paid off. The filmed orchestral overtures and vaudeville acts offered by Warner Brothers and the newsreels innovated by Fox resulted in large cost savings for exhibitors, allowing the replacement of expensive live performers and musicians, and became instantly popular among theater owners and audiences alike. The two studios reaped windfall profits and were soon able to acquire their own exhibition chains through various mergers in the late 1920s. While competitors resisted the move to sound for a brief time because of the technology's association with Fox and Warner, eventually the widespread

¹³ AT&T had a monopoly on sound technology until RCA (in association with the RKO studio) introduced its own system in the early 1930s.

¹⁴ Later to become 20th-Century Fox.

demand for talking films was so strong that the industry as a whole changed over to sound.

Prior to these developments, the cost-effectiveness of acquiring licenses for copyrighted materials to be used in compilations began to be eroded for exhibitors as silent film productions became more elaborate in the 1920s and audience expectations regarding music increased. This led the studios to pursue more cost-efficient options, because, as Caryl Flinn emphasizes, “Rising publishing houses maintained a near-monopoly on available music” at the time¹⁵ (backed as they were by the Supreme court copyright ruling of the late 1910s). Studios like MGM suddenly began seeing the wisdom in establishing their own publishing operations and of hiring composers to create original film material that the studio would then own outright, and a similar type of bottom-line thinking would guide the studios’ decision-making regarding music once the transition to sound had been completed.

The studios’ overarching plan to universalize the motion picture (undertaken as a means of capturing the widest mass audience possible) was also a strong determinant to the place music ultimately assumed in classical sound film institutions. The industry’s efforts to “define its audience as ‘universal’ in order to conceal the too generic and commercial concept of ‘mass’—a definition that displeases everyone”¹⁶ were conscious and deliberate. Moreover, music constituted an important part of this strategy. As Flinn further indicates, the “uniformity” of classical era scores can be traced to the fact that most background music “was composed in a manner deeply influenced by late-romantic composers like Richard Wagner and

¹⁵ Flinn 15.

¹⁶ Muscio 111.

Richard Strauss.”¹⁷ Hollywood’s eventual approval of the romantic idiom as an appropriate background-musical style for the new talkies is therefore unsurprising, given it arguably contained the most “universal” elements of musical listening vocabulary known to the public of the time. It had been used consistently for decades in prior entertainment forms such as melodrama, operetta, and various forms of theater, and was familiar to virtually everyone. It also had the advantage of being widely associated with cultural edification and prestige, making romantic music an ideal fit with the economic aspirations of the studios.

There was a further economic dimension to the selection of romanticism as the musical sine qua non of the classical sound film. As the worldwide depression deepened in the 1930s, Hollywood came to serve, somewhat paradoxically, as a beacon of hope for ordinary people. The opulence and extravagance it often portrayed on the screen, not to mention the high salaries and lavish lifestyles of its stars, filmmakers, and top executives, “had in fact the collateral effect of promoting optimism” among the citizenry.¹⁸ A key reason this occurred was that the Great Depression saw the culmination of a longstanding battle between two socio-economic strains in American society: an older, “Puritan-capitalist culture”, and a more recent “culture of abundance”.¹⁹ Hollywood epitomized the latter far more than the former, and in the hard times of the depression years constituted a strongly attractive symbol of plenty for much of the population. The large symphony orchestras that became the dominant musical medium of the classical soundtrack were part and parcel of Hollywood’s opulent, abundant image, and contributed to the sense of

¹⁷ Flinn 13.

¹⁸ Muscio 120.

¹⁹ Muscio 3. These terms first appeared in Walter Susman, Culture as History (N.Y.: Pantheon, 1984) xx.

economic optimism it projected (in a way that smaller, more modest popular ensembles or other musical combinations could never have done).

Although music remained as strongly influenced by big business's profit motives in the classical sound era as it had been during the silent years, the manner in which it contributed as a box office draw changed considerably after the coming of sound. Instead of providing a physical presence in theaters, as well as a degree of spectacular flair as a live addition to movie presentation, the new film score was invisibly inscribed on the soundtrack and was by and large not heard consciously by the audience. Now inextricably wedded to the processes of narrative, music served more as a type of polish applied to films than as an identifiable element of exhibition in its own right. It was a means among many others (stars, cinematography, mise-en-scene, etc.) by which to distinguish the film products of one studio from those of its oligopolistic competitors. On the other hand, the temptation to exploit music for its commercial potential was never far from the minds of Hollywood filmmakers and executives throughout the classical era, and this modified film music's profile to a certain degree during the period. The industry quickly began cultivating film composers as minor "stars" in their own right, for instance (the first Academy awards for music in 1934 being one example of how public attention and recognition of film scoring was cultivated at the time), reviving in modified form some of the silent era's promotional techniques regarding music. In general, then, filmic accompaniments assumed a more subtle but nonetheless important role in the overall commercial promotion of a motion picture during the studio years.

Kurt London²⁰ and Roy Prendergast²¹ have also referred to a revival of the “theme song” promotional approach—replete with advertising tie-ins and coordinated publishing and recording releases—that occurred during the early sound years. We have seen that Hollywood sound films avoided background music almost altogether until the mid-30s in favor of visible or acknowledged “source” music. This temporary aesthetic did, however, allow for the performance—in whole or in part—of commercially attractive theme songs on the screen.²² Even though the approach was overused, and audiences eventually tired of the continual suspensions of dramatic action that the rendering of theme songs required, the possibility of successful soundtrack music was something few classical era filmmakers were ever entirely indifferent to.

The example of David Raksin’s “Laura” (1944) is informative in this regard. More than a decade had passed since the theme song approach had fallen out of fashion, and “The tremendous success of the song ‘Laura’ as an entity apart from the film” (it reached the top of many popular hit parades at the time) “was something of a phenomenon in 1944 Hollywood.”²³ Unsurprisingly, the moment soundtrack music’s commercial potential had again come to the attention of studio executives, economic pressures were brought to bear on film music makers. As Raksin himself recalls, “In the noble Hollywood tradition, in which imitation is more than the sincerest form of flattery—it’s a way of life—those who were not trying to write ‘another Laura’ were demanding that others write it for their pictures.”²⁴

²⁰ Kurt London, *Film Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936) 118-124.

²¹ Prendergast 25.

²² I will return to the subject of musical spectacle in chapter 5.

²³ Prendergast 39.

²⁴ Prendergast 59.

The general impact corporate structural organization had on film music making in the Hollywood studios was mentioned at several earlier points. The highly fragmented, specialized approach to scoring that was standardized in the music departments resulted in compositional techniques often resembling those of eighteenth century “pasticcio” opera.²⁵ A number of composers would be involved in writing the different acts of those operas, and many would insert arias and overtures from other pieces into the overall work. Similarly, classical sound film composers would write different parts of the same score, or divide up the compositional tasks associated with given cues (e.g. orchestration or the elaboration of basic melodic ideas). Clearly these and other working techniques (such as the regular reuse of musical cues from one film in others produced by the same studio) were very much the product of the industry’s economic priorities. Studio composers did not invent such procedures, but were obliged to adopt them as part of their jobs, despite the fact that they bore little relation to the logical evolution of film composition based on the creative and practical experience of Hollywood musicians at the time.

But there were tangible economic benefits within the studio system for the chosen few who worked in the music departments. The classical sound era saw what was probably the most substantial labor and capital investments in music ever on the part of the film industry. In addition to the payroll costs involved in retaining the numerous music department employees (“executives and their secretaries, bookkeepers, librarians, rehearsal pianists, composers, arrangers, orchestrators, copyists, proofreaders, and orchestral musicians”), “there was usually a music building on the studio lot containing executive offices, cubicles for

²⁵ Prendergast 30.

composers to work in, a music library, and a sound stage where scores were recorded.”²⁶ Add to this the expense of recording equipment, and it becomes clear that the studios were firmly committed to music financially speaking during the classical years.²⁷

Moreover, composers in particular received collateral financial benefits from the studio system. Over eighty per-cent of Hollywood film music written between 1930 and 1950 was licensed for theatrical performance by ASCAP, which then paid royalties to film composers (albeit in “scant” amounts according to a complaint filed against the society in 1945). When ASCAP lost a suit filed against it by the U.S. government and 164 theater owners in 1950 (who claimed it violated antitrust laws by demanding fees from both producers and exhibitors of motion pictures), it was prevented from collecting the million-and-a-half dollars in royalties that it averaged per year from theatrical sources.²⁸ According to Roy Prendergast, “the resulting financial impact on film composers was relatively severe,”²⁹ as the supplementary royalties often vital to the livelihoods of film composers were suddenly cut off. This in effect brought to an end the only period in which the average film music maker received significant revenues beyond his or her straight salaried or contractual remuneration.

Many have referred to the classical sound era as the “golden days” of Hollywood filmmaking, and authors like Caryl Flinn have concluded that

²⁶ Prendergast 59.

²⁷ In some areas, the studios did nevertheless impose economic constraints on the music departments. When a number of composers and music directors in the mid-40s began demanding that more string players be hired in the studio orchestras in order “to maintain a [properly] symphonic orchestral balance”, for example, management refused because the twenty or thirty extra musicians this would require constituted an unacceptable expense. (Prendergast 95.)

²⁸ Prendergast 57-58.

²⁹ Prendergast 58.

the period was equally “golden” for film music.³⁰ From my perspective, given that a situation of full employment for silent era musicians was brought to an end by the very catalysts of the classical sound film period—the adoption of sound technology and the complete corporatization of film music making—the classical period perhaps appears more “golden” in relation to what followed it than what came before.

Rather than ensuing from relatively sudden technological changes such as those that ushered in the sound era, the onset of the period following the classical years was marked primarily by legal and demographic developments. As we have already seen, the Paramount antitrust ruling effectively broke up the studio system by permanently separating exhibition from production and distribution, resulting in a general decentralization of the film industry³¹ and the rise of independent production in Hollywood. A system of outsourcing, in which the services of freelancers were contracted on a film-by-film basis by movie producers, progressively replaced the permanent jobs provided by the studios, until the creation and recording of film music was exclusively carried out by freelancers by the late-1950s.

Coincidentally with these legal and institutional developments, a significant demographic shift was underway in the United States. Record

³⁰ “During the [classical] period..., the Hollywood studio was operating at its most efficient. It seems only logical that this golden age of film composition should coincide with a period of wider economic vitality and gain, and indeed the classical conception of film composing did find considerable support within the studio.” (Flinn 18.)

³¹ In relative terms, at least. Compared to the highly centralized studio system, the motion picture business did see an increase in competition as of the 1950s. But the former studios all retained powerful production and—far more importantly—distribution operations. Although most productions were independent, in the sense that the studio did not in the majority of cases take direct responsibility for budgets, schedules, etc. as was the case in the classical era, a distribution deal with one of the “majors” was a virtual prerequisite to a film’s success for many years after the studio system broke up, and the companies spun off or restructured from the classical era studios retain much influence in the industry to this day.

numbers of people were moving away from large urban centers to suburban areas in the postwar period. This meant that much of the clientele of the downtown movie palaces now lived at a considerable distance from them, and small, utilitarian suburban theaters—often organized in multiplexes for maximum profitability—soon sprung up to capitalize on the shift in population. Moreover, television further eroded moviegoing audiences everywhere by allowing young families in particular to enjoy audio-visual entertainment in their own homes without having to organize an outing to the cinema.

These combined trends had the effect of increasing competitive pressures on producers and exhibitors alike. With audiences dwindling in numbers, productions had to be made more cost-efficient in order to keep profit margins at acceptable levels. In spite of this, the quality of films was more important than ever, given that patrons had to be enticed into movie theaters (and away from their television sets) by compelling content and a “special” cinematic experience. Music was tied to both of these revised economic necessities, in that composers continued to provide effective dramatic scores through the new freelance system while the music they wrote was reproduced in most venues via technological enhancements like stereo sound.³²

As mentioned earlier, the shift to independent production saw filmmakers and the creators of film music routinely dealing directly with one another for the first time. The “symbolic interaction” resulting from this new institutional reality was, and remains to this day, heavily imbued with the economic concerns and aspirations of filmmakers. From the earliest

³² Stereo sound was one of many technological additions to film exhibition designed to offer spectators sensorial experiences television could not provide. These also included wide screen projection, cinemascope, 3-D, and other innovations.

years of the post-classical period, the pressure was on independent producers to attract box office revenues and create profitable films (which would, in turn, be chalked up in the all-important “track record” of the filmmaker). This created a built-in dilemma for film composers, who continually had to juggle career and artistic ambitions in their film work because of relentless commercial pressures from the financial backers of films.

As Robert Faulkner points out, this has resulted in the post-classical composer working in two separate but strongly interrelated “markets”, one “external” and the other “internal” to the industry. The first is created from the fact that “Each film project is a separate piece of business whose ultimate purpose is profit from sale to a mass market of audiences”³³ (in other words, the market that drives the economic motives of film producers). The “internal” market, on the other hand, consists of “a shifting set of business transactions constituted for the film project and dissolved after completion of the work”—i.e. the market in which film composers and other freelancers compete with each other for movie contracts. The former market sees film musicians “sinking” or “swimming” according to the fortunes of their filmmaker contacts and individual movie projects, while the latter consistently requires that post-classical composers learn “to be part artists, part technicians, part diplomats, and part dramatic actors or actresses in selling themselves to nervous and powerful filmmakers.”³⁴

Having to deal with these two levels of competition is in essence a return to the past for the film musician. During the silent years, film accompanists also had to achieve competitive advantage over various rivals for theatrical jobs, by providing exceptional quality or spectacular appeals

³³ Faulkner 21.

³⁴ Faulkner 21.

in performances, compilations or improvisations. These contributions would, in turn, help the exhibitor's wider competitiveness by creating a potential audience draw. But there are a number of significant differences between the doubly-competitive scheme of the post-classical years and that of the earlier silent period.

First, in terms of the "outer" market referred to above, the relationship between film music and film has changed radically in the latter time period. Instead of being unique to the films shown in a particular theater (or even unique to each screening of the same movie), as accompaniments generally were in the silent era, sound era scores are a permanent part of the film product. The choices that the composer makes are duplicated in each and every theater exhibiting a film, and therefore become the focus of much anxiety and concern on the part of producers. Music is only one of many elements the independent producer is responsible for bringing together that can make or break a film, and its post-production position in the filmmaking timeline makes it a particularly nerve-wracking undertaking. Given the difficulty of these circumstances (to which the inevitable and often oppressive financial stresses of producers are typically added), it is less than surprising that persistent snags in filmmaker-composer "symbolic interaction" have occurred ever since the breakup of the studio system.

Secondly, in terms of the "internal" market for the services offered by film music makers, there are again striking differences between the silent and post-classical periods. Given that film accompanists were in high demand during the earlier years, it was largely a seller's market internally, the consistent escalation of film musicians' wages at the time being one indication of this situation. By contrast, the decades following the classical

period saw a shrinking number of freelancers taking an increasing share of available film work. A key reason for this development was that nervous producers, with their financial preoccupations, are invariably more comfortable with “name” composers and proven track records than with lesser-known musicians. The awarding of film work after the classical period has therefore tended to pyramid up to a few select composers, leaving the majority of film music makers at the periphery of the Hollywood scene. Although television and other fields have offered some extra employment to composers, the same “top-tier” structure soon developed in many of the new areas as well, and persist to the present time.

The way film music is commercially exploited has been subject to further transformations during the post-classical decades. The use of theme songs almost immediately came back into vogue after 1950 with the success of soundtrack recording releases from films like *High Noon* (1952) and *The High and the Mighty* (1954). Eager to capitalize on any opportunities to make their films profitable, independent producers quickly realized that collateral sales from soundtrack albums (the long-playing record had just been developed in the early 50s) could greatly contribute to a movie’s economic success. According to Roy Prendergast, this turn of events had a lasting impact on post-classical era composers:

The aesthetic effect on film music was immediate and devastating. Every producer, in order to help assure the financial success of his film, now wanted a film score with a song or instrumental number of a type that would “make the charts”. No longer did producers care if the music written for their films was the best possible music for that specific picture, they now wanted music that would sell *away* from the picture...[The composer] was now asked to impose a strictly musical form and style, the pop song, onto a film whether it was appropriate to the film or not.³⁵

³⁵ Prendergast 103.

This was a significant departure from earlier practices. Classical era songs like “Laura” had come upon their successes almost by accident, with name performers choosing to record and popularize them after-the-fact because of the overall popularity of the film and its integral music. Even in the silent years, solid links between the lyrical content and general musical character of theme songs and the films they were part of were consistently made.

Moreover, the commercialized use of music in film not only blossomed in the 1950s as never before, it metamorphosed and evolved into even more blatant forms in the 60s and 70s. In 1964, the Beatles’ soundtrack album for *A Hard Day’s Night* made profits in the area of two million dollars for United Artists, and Simon & Garfunkle’s pop song score for *The Graduate* enjoyed similarly massive commercial success. These precedents led independent producers to seek *multiple*-song soundtracks for their films, to maximize their chances of large revenues from recording releases. “Name” pop stars, with millions of dollars of marketing and promotion already behind them in their musical careers, were actively recruited as contributors to films, a practice which continues to this day in Hollywood. (Before the mid-60s, it was far more common for seasoned film composers like Dimitri Tiomkin and Max Steiner to do double duty and compose pop tunes in addition to their romantic-idiom background scores.³⁶ Indeed, the 1960s developments led Steiner to comment that “[film] composition is a highly developed art that’s now dominated by young men who can only hum a tune.”³⁷ In a similar vein, David Raksin has stated that in the post-classical era, the film soundtrack has been relegated “to the humiliating status of an adjunct to the recording industry.”³⁸)

³⁶ Steiner’s 1959 hit tune “Theme from *A Summer Place*” being one example in this regard.

³⁷ Prendergast 148.

³⁸ Prendergast 164.

From an economic perspective, then, the film music maker's role in the movie production has been significantly different after the classical period than at any other time. The composer is a freelancer whom, on the one hand, producers routinely expect to combine numerous tasks formerly executed by different studio music department employees (composition, arranging, orchestration, conducting, rehearsal accompaniment, even copying and technical work). These tasks can be and often are subcontracted to others, but they are nonetheless considered the responsibility of the individual composer, who has suddenly been transformed into a music department director and music department rolled into one. On the other hand, the commercial imperatives of Hollywood independent producers have led to a further fragmentation of film music making into a number of specializations such as pop song writing, record producing, and background scoring, each of which have as a matter of course been carried out by different people with different musical backgrounds and commercial profiles since the mid-60s. (The pop record producer, for example, entered the Hollywood picture as soon as commercial songs became *de rigeur* elements of independent film soundtracks. As recently as 1990, Karlin and Wright observe that "Record producers are objects of both envy...and disdain [in Hollywood circles], because they are often put into responsible situations in filmmaking even though they may not have the film background to make things work well.")³⁹

The brief strike carried out by the Composers and Lyricists Guild in the early 1970s, and the antitrust suit brought by the organization against the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers when the strike

³⁹ Karlin and Wright 559.

ended, are indicative of the type of economic constraints Hollywood composers are still faced with. There were two principal issues that the actions sought to address: the amount of time composers were given to complete their work in post-production schedules; and the need for greater copyright ownership of their synchronized audio-visual compositions. In the latter case, full publishing ownership of film music makers' synchronized work has belonged to the producer ever since sound technology was introduced, and with few exceptions this situation remains unchanged to this day.⁴⁰

In the former case, it had become clear that continuous cost-cutting measures were resulting in often-ridiculous shrinkages in the time allotted to film music making:

In the [studio system] days a composer was usually given about six weeks to provide a score for a feature film, short enough time in itself. Today, however, with the many low-budget, quickie...movies..., a composer may be given as little as ten days in which to write and record his score. There are instances of a composer receiving only six days to complete forty minutes' worth of music.⁴¹

The same budgetary pressures that have led to these time compressions can also be seen in the emergence of a two-tier wage system for film freelancers. While "name" composers, pop artists, and record producers receive very high remuneration for their contributions to a Hollywood production, wages and the very livelihoods of those closer to the freelance periphery have often been subject to heavy downward pressures, a fact David Raskin alluded to in a 1974 *Variety* interview:

⁴⁰ "Name" composers often have had the power to demand half ownership of the publishing for their film work. John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith, Henry Mancini, and others fall into this category. But for the great majority, one hundred per cent ownership of publishing by the producer, the maximum permitted under copyright law, and zero per cent for the composer, is the standard division.

⁴¹ Prendergast 156.

Many people believe the industry has been plundered, ruined...by men whose principal interests—whatever they may be—do not lie in film-making. The disastrous unemployment resulting from this circumstance has become worse as film companies have made more and more pictures abroad. American composers find it difficult to believe that the use of foreign composers is not related to the fact that they work for less money.⁴²

Technology and Film Music

We have become accustomed to thinking of technology as associated primarily with the invention of various machines, and with subsequent improvements and innovations those machines tend to inspire. But cultural studies and communications scholars have long insisted that even the most basic of tools, materials and techniques—such as those involved in writing—and the various innovations *they* may introduce (e.g. the development of an alphabet and the evolution of written language itself) can and should be considered technologies as well. This is an important point insofar as non-machine technologies were very much a part of silent movie music and its evolution. Although the very *raison d'être* of film music was the invention of the moving picture camera, projector, and film—machines and machine-related matériel—it was nonetheless non-mechanical inventions like the cue sheet that helped film music evolve from its rudimentary beginnings to a mature form with an enduring presence in the cinematic medium.

The cue sheet was, in effect, a type of synchronization device, designed to coordinate music and sound effects with moving images on the screen by providing accompanists with descriptions of shot sequences and

⁴² Prendergast 162, 164.

other actions in the film. As mentioned earlier, these descriptions became more and more detailed during the silent years, eventually including musical and expressive suggestions, precise timings of screen events, and other information.⁴³ The continued use and further refinement of the cue sheet in the sound era (it is still employed on an almost universal basis today, albeit in more sophisticated—usually computerized—form) indicates that its invention in the 1910s and 20s was a significant technological development in the history of film music.

Mechanical inventions and innovations were also important to music in the silent era. What is unique about the period is that the ubiquitous presence of music in the large number of venues exhibiting films actually *drove* many of the technological developments taking place. For example, Kathryn Kalinak indicates that

Pianos and organs were...produced to help insure a continuous stream of music. During this era a number of manufacturers... marketed mechanical and electrical “player” pianos and organs to cost-conscious theater owners... Unique in their double-head construction, these player pianos and organs could hold two rolls simultaneously. This allowed the operator to cue up one roll while the other was playing, thus insuring continuous music.⁴⁴

Specially designed musical instruments became more expensive and elaborate after the upright pianos and mechanical keyboards of the nickelodeon period were replaced by large organs in the picture palaces. For instance,

⁴³ As the cue sheet became more refined, its fabricators did make use of certain related machine inventions. Charles Berg recounts that “One method of preparing cue sheets was described for *Photoplay* by Joseph O’Sullivan, music director of the Mutual Film Company. In the first stage as the picture was screened, O’Sullivan dictated the plot and action in proper sequence and speed to a phonograph. The second stage consisted of playing back the record and jotting down appropriate musical selections. A timing device linked to the phonograph enabled the precise timing of each scene. (Berg 107.)

⁴⁴ Kalinak 50.

In 1912, the Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra (the patent rights of which were acquired by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company) was introduced. For \$20,000, an exhibitor could provide “the music of a full orchestra” and an array of sound effects including thunder, rain, wind, gun shot, and a lion roar.⁴⁵

Helping theater owners cut costs was only one tactic among many employed by instrument manufacturers in their efforts to gain film exhibitors as customers, and as Charles Berg explains, keyboard companies made inroads into most major theaters in the United States during the silent era:

Even with the evolution of the large orchestra [in the later silent period], the electric organ (either a Wurlitzer, Moller, Reuter, Kimball or Barton) became a standard fixture of every “important” picture house. It helped bridge transitions, when the orchestra paused to change music, filled in phrases for missing instruments, and provided the accompaniments for the supper show when the orchestra was on break.⁴⁶

Douglas Gomery’s work has helped clear up the misconception that the introduction of sound technology in the late 1920s was exclusively motivated by the desire to capture the human voice on film. Warner’s introduction of sound shorts almost entirely dedicated to popular musical acts indicates that encoding *music* on the soundtrack was at least as important a consideration as the recording of dialogue and narration in the technological push towards the sound film.

Regardless of the motivations that led to its emergence, primitive sound recording technology imposed serious constraints on film music makers for almost a decade after its introduction.⁴⁷ Post-synchronization

⁴⁵ Berg 249.

⁴⁶ Berg 250.

⁴⁷ It also imposed important restrictions on the film medium as a whole, though for a shorter time. The noisy cameras of the late 20s and early 30s had to be encased in booths so as not to be captured on the soundtrack, making camera movement virtually impossible. The technological imposition of this static visual approach could only be

(the ability to add music, sound effects, dialogue or voiceovers after the shooting of a film) was not developed for several years. This meant that all personnel required for both the soundtrack *and* the visual track had to be present on the set for the live recording of scenes, including the entire orchestra, their conductor, sound effects and foley artists, and sound technicians. The tremendous expense this entailed was notorious (Max Steiner recalls short scenes of one or two minutes taking two days or more of filming because of acoustical problems and the many takes required), as were the logistical constraints the technology of the time imposed on filmmakers.⁴⁸

On top of synchronization-related difficulties, the microphones used in early sound era recording posed serious problems of their own. Among the instruments that recorded poorly through them were violins, horns, and timpani, all vital in the late-romantic orchestrations that were becoming the Hollywood scoring norm at the time. The microphone problems were of sufficient severity and duration as to inspire the creation of special “microphone instruments” like the saxtrombone and the saxhorn, which produced timbres with overtone qualities that were more easily picked up and reproduced in film recording. But these were only marginally used, and disappeared in the early 30s. More significantly, a good number of film composers orchestrated their scores in ways that compensated for microphone weaknesses, deemphasizing problem instruments and bringing

lifted when quieter cameras, the boom microphone, and other innovations allowed camera mobility to return in the early 30s.

⁴⁸ “...during the filming of a certain picture... it took us two days to find a suitable spot for the double bass, as the acoustical conditions on the stage were such that every time the bass player touched his instrument the soundtrack would *overshoot* (distort or blur). This experience with the entire company—actors, singers, and musicians—cost the company seventy-five thousand dollars.” (Max Steiner, in Prendergast 23.)

forward woodwinds, trumpets, pizzicato strings, and other acoustically appropriate timbres.

From a technological point of view, then, the early sound period was a reactive one compared with the earlier silent era. Instead of innovation being driven by demand from theater musicians and owners, most of the new technological factors at play were linked to different ways of coping with the technical realities of sound films. But after the initial problems were ironed out by the mid-30s, a period of relative technological stability set in. It was only towards the end of the classical sound era that composers began experimenting with (and appropriating for soundtrack use) various technologies from outside the film industry per se.

The tape recorder, for example, first became commercially available in the United States in the late 40s, and composers soon began incorporating it into their film work. Many of the techniques they employed were inspired by those of the “electro-acoustic” school, including the playback of various sounds at faster and slower speeds (with corresponding timbral, pitch and duration variations), and the editing of tape to alter the attack and decay characteristics of sounds.⁴⁹ Electronic instruments such as the *Ondes Martenot* were also heard for the first time in film during the classical era. But given that most technologically-inspired sound experimentation came late in the period, the bulk of it has occurred from the 1950s to the present.

Composers’ experimentation with electronic instruments and other technologically-based sound sources did indeed accelerate after the classical

⁴⁹ This type of work was anticipated in earlier years by certain ad hoc experiments with film equipment. David Raksin, for example, created an eerie timbre for a scene in *Laura* with the help of a sound engineer, who figured out a way to alter the playback speed of a soundtrack playback device, through which a piano rendition of the melody was played. The attack of individual notes was then altered by manipulating the dials of the device’s mixing console.

era. Miklos Rosza's famous use of the Theremin, for example (an early electronic instrument whose single pure tone is pitch- and volume-controlled by the movement of the player's hands around an antenna), greatly popularized the instrument during the 1950s.⁵⁰ Moreover, synthesizers were employed in films from a very early stage in their development, as were digital samplers and other sound-generating modules.⁵¹

The post-classical period also saw the introduction of stereo sound, as mentioned earlier. This exhibition innovation was immediately used to musical advantage in films like *Julius Caesar* (1953), with music by Miklos Rosza. One example of how Rosza employed the stereophonic technique was to help distinguish intertwining contrapuntal themes from one another, each of which would represent different dramatic elements in a particular scene. The themes were individually assigned to a different place in the stereo spectrum (e.g. one in the right speaker, another in the left, converging on the center as the scene develops). Stereo sound in exhibition has since been enhanced in the 1980s and 90s by "surround" sound, which assigns different audio mixes to a number of speakers positioned at the front, back, and sides of theaters. Typical uses of surround include the assignment of certain "motion" sound effects to side speakers, dialogue to front speakers, and music to front and back speakers.

⁵⁰ Rosza has commented that although his idea to use the Theremin in films was appropriate and even original the first times he included the instrument, producers were soon pressuring him and other composers to overuse it once audiences and reviewers had reacted favorably to the instrument's dramatic effect. Whatever power the unusual timbre once had soon evaporated, and it became a cliché, almost comical sound after incessant repetitions on sci-fi and other soundtracks.

⁵¹ Synthesizers generate tones from simple electronic wave patterns (square, sawtooth, triangle), and allow for subsequent manipulations through envelopes, filters, frequency, and other controls. Digital samplers are able to record any input from a microphone or line, and allow for subsequent tape recorder-like and synthesizer-like manipulations of the recordings. Most electronic modules encode digitally sampled sounds in silicon chips, making them available for performance only through the MIDI protocol (see below).

Even more significant among post-classical era technological developments affecting film music has been the evolution of personal computers and digital musical instruments. The MIDI protocol (which allows electronic instruments made by different manufacturers to communicate in a common language), in conjunction with digital synchronization devices, affordable sequencing software, and other computer-assisted composition tools, have allowed many film composers to work in unprecedented ways. The ability to assemble audio performances of themes and sketches of cues using sequence-driven sampled acoustic instruments or abstract electronic timbres has modified a great many composers' working methods, providing a self-contained feedback mechanism that did not exist before the 1980s. Furthermore, the same technology can provide previews of cues and entire soundtracks for consideration by producers and directors before the final recording and dubbing sessions take place, significantly altering the dynamics of the film musician's symbolic-interactive relationships. In some cases full scores are completely executed by electronic devices, eliminating the need for studio musicians. As Karlin and Wright point out, "...there are so many young composers who are prepared to do a synthesized score in their own studios, and who want to score a picture as a career move, even if it isn't profitable,"⁵² that Hollywood production budgets for music have often been dramatically trimmed as a result.

In sum, since the early years of cinema, film accompanists and composers have been consistently affected by the wider economic and technological objectives of the movie industry, just as they have been

⁵² Karlin and Wright 557.

driven by monetary and career motivations of their own throughout Hollywood history. Whether in live performance situations or behind-the-scenes post-production work, the *métier* of movie musicians has been tangibly shaped by the imperatives of profit and competition, by the “trickling down” of effects from broad industry developments such as the cultivation of a middle-class clientele in the silent era or the move to independent production after the breakup of the studio system, and equally by relatively localized, internal industry issues such as the terms and conditions of contracts. The overarching context of a capitalist, free-market economy has therefore been a key connection point between Hollywood film music and society all along, a prime conduit through which the actualization of the subjective-collective dialectic I proposed earlier has taken place in the area.

Chapter 4

Power, Politics and the Film Music Maker

While the institutional, formational, economic and technological factors I have dealt with so far all constitute important sources of social influence in the film music area, the critical issues of power and the political they are invariably intertwined with have been only obliquely touched on in prior discussions. Consequently, I have chosen to examine these issues separately in the present chapter, in order to assess in some detail what are perhaps the least obvious social dimensions of film music.

Questions of power have traditionally been the preoccupation of political economy,¹ and I will rely on a number of theorists whose work relates to that discipline in elaborating my own views on power in film music. What follows this brief introduction essentially consists of two discussions. In the first of these, I examine the relationship of Hollywood film and film music to the evolving political-economic grids of American society. My view is that these grids are heavily informed by the principles of “classical” political economy (not to be confused with the “classical” cinema), and the subsequent permutations of that paradigm in neoclassical, Keynesian and neo-liberal economics. It is also my contention that the basic tenets of classical political economy coincide with the film industry’s

¹ The discipline of political economy is a vast one, and even basic definitions of what it comprises vary from author to author. Vincent Mosco, in *The Political Economy of Communication*, outlines several contrasting definitions of the term taken from various works on the topic. Some of these tend to emphasize the economic side of the discipline: *The New Palgrave*, for example, states that “Political economy is the science of wealth.” Others focus on the political dimensions of the discipline: communications scholar Dallas Smythe describes political economy as “the body of practice and theory offered as advice by counselors to the leaders of social organizations,” and *The Dictionary of Economic Terms* qualifies it as “a branch of statecraft.” [Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication* (London: Sage, 1996) 24.] As stated above, political economy is understood in this study to mean a critical evaluation of power relationships and their impact on any given socially-defined area, in this case Hollywood film and its music.

understanding of itself and its systemic internal and external relationships to power, and I will consider the impact of that free market-based self-image on the film music area as well. Finally, this initial series of reflections will touch on the more diffuse influence Hollywood's various animosities and alliances with other cultural, economic, or political institutions have exerted on movie musicians throughout cinematic history.

The second discussion tackles more subjectively- and personally-oriented issues, examining the force and effect of dominant structures on film music makers, the knowing or unknowing accords or conflicts with power that accompanists and composers have experienced from the silent era to the present, and issues of authority or control affecting movie musicians within the industry. I am alert in all of these assessments to the possibility Dana Polan raises of certain "spaces and practices that exist outside the immediate sway" of dominant grids—conflictual or contradictory attitudes and actions that coinhabit the social sphere with the very values and structures they clash with.² These "little places" of challenge to dominant engridding³ illustrate Foucault's theory that power is most effectively disseminated through decentralized, nodal points in the social fabric (rather than from centralized sources of authority, as some maintain), and can be subverted or contradicted from those same localized points because of the widespread nature of its distribution. I agree with Foucault insofar as Hollywood movie musicians seem on the one hand to exemplify his concept of *le souci de soi*, voluntarily allowing their subjectivity to become a site of self-imposed control⁴ by willingly expressing dominant values in their mainstream film work, while at the

² Dana Polan, Power and Paranoia (N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1986) 43.

³ Polan 7.

⁴ see Michel Foucault, Le Souci de Soi (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

same time also seeming to contradict those same values in various ways. The continual tension in these dual possibilities reveals that Hollywood film musicians are not as thoroughly entrenched in mainstream practice as many assume, and the power implications in this ambiguity are considered in the second discussion.

This chapter will complete my overview in Part 1 of the more general social forces I see mediating and interacting with mainstream movie music. I will then proceed to an analysis of Hollywood film music practice in Part 2 that takes into account the actual musical content of soundtracks as well as the various social dimensions informing the production and reception of that content.

Film Music and Free Market Political Economy

In many ways, the history of American cinema can be seen as a compressed microcosm of the country's political-economic evolution as a whole. The industry began in the highly competitive, opportunity-filled environment of late nineteenth-century America. From its inception, the United States had openly espoused (in rhetoric, if not always in fact) the virtues of self-reliance, free enterprise, and the pursuit of individual self-interest—all key features of classical political economy—and the early film industry exemplified some of classicism's best features. As Tino Balio puts it,

The motion picture business in its infancy was wide open and freewheeling. It took relatively little capital to enter the field, and numerous small producers, distributors, and theater owners vied to make quick profits. No single company or alliance controlled the marketplace.⁵

⁵ Tino Balio, ed., The Hollywood Film Industry (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1976) 103.

This was very much what Adam Smith and his English counterparts David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill had foreseen when they developed classical theory in the eighteenth century: economic sectors or entire economies comprised primarily of small producers and workers, functioning and competing in an open and rationally self-interested way. Smith's famous statement in *The Wealth of Nations* that "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest"⁶ encapsulates this vision, as does his broader concept of an "invisible hand of the marketplace". According to this latter construct, an invisible force fueled by the enlightened self-interest of individuals provides a built-in system of checks and balances in society, and serves as the primary guiding energy of classical political economy. The historical eddy in which the film medium first appeared and developed in America was therefore characterized by the very sort of conditions Adam Smith would have considered ideal.

Musicians benefited from the give-and-take, competitive dynamic of the movie business during much of the silent era as a result. Film accompanists were both employees and entrepreneurs of sorts in that period, working under contract for exhibitors in the vast labor force at the exhibition end of the industry, but also offering unique services vital to the presentation of films that gave them a degree of bargaining power. As long as a sizable number of exhibition enterprises were actively competing for market share, those able to offer special or even merely competent musical services could easily find and maintain employment. Also working in musicians' favor was the fact that plentiful opportunities existed for

⁶ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 2 vols. (Everyman's Library, nos. 412, 413) book 1: 14.

performance and accompaniment work outside of the film business per se. Vaudeville and other forms of entertainment were similarly booming in the diverse, competitive sector, creating a seller's market for musical services throughout the early decades of cinema. The leverage created by this general situation resulted in an increasing number of musicians becoming unionized: the American Federation of Musicians was established in 1896 as an affiliate of the AFL-CIO (the nation's largest labor organization), and rapidly became a national body representing the majority of performing musicians—including film musicians—by the 1910s and 20s.

Taken together, these aspects of the early industry meant that performers and compilers of music for film all had at least a minor, personal stake in the business that provided their livelihoods. They were not only able to compete with one another for the best jobs, but could spark competition among their employers when they had something special to offer in the way of performance flair or interpretive sensitivity, and could do so with excellent prospects of success in a thriving marketplace. The incentive to improve one's craft was strong given these circumstances, and gave rise to trade journals and a variety of formational associations. In this way, the small army of film musicians working in the silent era enjoyed relatively favorable socio-economic conditions compared to subsequent periods, reaping the benefits of a well-functioning classical political economy in the American entertainment sector until the 1920s.

But this early historical stage proved to be short-lived. The competitive diversity of the industry was soon compromised by monopolistic forces growing within American capitalism, forces which represented a significant distortion in the model proposed by Smith and other classical economists. The early theorists had failed to anticipate the

practice of monopoly or oligopoly capitalism by large, vertically-integrated corporations, a practice that had become increasingly common in market economies worldwide over the course of the nineteenth century. As the industrial empires built by the likes of J.P. Morgan, the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts steadily expanded their influence, the business strategies they employed became anti-competitive in the extreme, contradicting classical theory by aggressively attempting to eliminate rivals through mergers and acquisitions, or by driving them out of business altogether using a variety of legal and commercial tactics. Within years of the film business's inception, its top investors were following along a similar path, seeking monopoly control over the burgeoning industry.

The Motion Picture Patents Company was the first major instance of this trend. The cartel formed by Edison, Biograph, and eight other equipment manufacturers in 1908 was able to dominate not only the sale of movie cameras and projectors, but also of film stock through a strategic alliance with Eastman Kodak.⁷ The MPPC could maintain its effective stranglehold on the industry because equipment sales and rentals comprised the bulk of revenues in the film business until the mid-1910s. Because the public was for some years more fascinated by the novelty of moving picture technology than with the content of specific films, movie production and distribution remained secondary aspects of the business until the early to mid-'teens, and hardware sales were vital to early film enterprises.

The cartel was finally dissolved a decade after its inception by an unholy alliance (in classical political-economic terms) between its business competitors and the federal government. Classical theory regarded the role

⁷ Jeanne Thomas Allen, "The Decay of the Motion Picture Patents Company," The American Film Industry (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1976) 119-134.

of government with a great deal of caution and skepticism, advocating policies of complete non-interference in markets by public sector institutions in general. But with the rapid rise of monopolies and oligopolies in the United States, the federal government had been obliged to create a corrective mechanism in the antitrust laws⁸ as a check to the economic distortions caused by monopolism. The combination of a federal antitrust suit filed against the MPPC in 1913 and growing pressures from competitors as the cartel weakened in the mid-1910s were sufficient to break it up once and for all in 1918.

The end result of the MPPC episode appeared to indicate a victory for classical economic principles after a protracted challenge from anti-competitive forces in the industry. But ensuing developments in the 'teens and 20s proved this to be a misleading assumption. The smaller-scale producers, distributors, and exhibitors who had challenged the MPPC did provide meaningful competition for many years, introducing key innovations such as an emphasis on narrative and acting stars in production, the establishment of distribution exchanges permitting theater owners to rent films instead of purchasing them outright by the foot, and more effective uses of music in exhibition. But because the genie of monopolism had already been let out of its bottle in the early film business, there was no easy way to get it back inside. The competitive, creative independents that the MPPC had struggled so hard to eliminate (Kessel and Baumann's New York Motion Picture Company, Laemmle's Imp, and Powers foremost among them) were soon eclipsed by more ambitious entrepreneurs like William Fox, Adolph Zukor, and Marcus Loew as the trust disintegrated.⁹

⁸ The Sherman Antitrust Act was passed in 1890, and was supplemented with the Clayton Antitrust Act and the establishment of the Federal Trade Commission in 1914.

⁹ Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America (N.Y.: Vintage, 1994) 33-47.

The latter then proceeded to repeat history in modified form, acquiring and merging with competitors until their mushrooming operations had evolved into the “big five” and “little three” Hollywood oligopoly—a de facto new cartel that became established in the 1920s.

As I alluded to previously, this loss of diversity and competition to the distortions of big capital monopolism had a progressive impact on movie music. The new oligopolists were inclined to view film musicians as unpredictable impediments to standardized exhibition (even though accompanists were clearly taking their work seriously by the ‘teens and 20s, demanding cue sheets from producers and engaging in discussions about their craft in various journals). As theaters became part of vertically integrated movie companies, musicians were made increasingly accountable to expert conductors or music directors, and were reduced from creative craftspeople to mere performers of pre-approved compilations or scores. As the industry became increasingly corporatized and anti-competitive (in tandem with the wider American economy), exhibition practices were subjected to mounting standards of efficiency and productivity—the sine qua non of the new “antimarket” capitalism¹⁰—and film musicians fell victim to the prevailing belief that large numbers of employees tend to compromise both of these key objectives.¹¹

¹⁰ Manuel de Landa, “Markets, Antimarkets, and Network Economics,” lecture, Concordia University, September 1997. De Landa cites the economic historian Fernand Braudel [*The Perspective of the World* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1986)] in relation to the concept of antimarkets: “Braudel has shown with a wealth of historical evidence that as far back as the thirteenth century, and in all the centuries in between, capitalism has always engaged in anti-competitive practices, manipulating demand and supply in a variety of ways. Whenever large fortunes were being made..., market forces were not acting on their own, and in some cases not acting at all. In short what Braudel shows is that we must sharply differentiate between the dynamics of many interacting small producers... [and] the dynamics of a few big businesses (or oligopolies, to use the technical term), in which... spontaneous allocation by the markets [is] replaced with rigid planning by a managerial hierarchy.”

¹¹ Saul 266.

I believe the political-economic processes just described are deeply intertwined with the later adoption of sound technology by the industry and the complete elimination of live accompanists brought about by that development. Moreover, I see those same events resulting from the basic paradox of silent film's historical position: that is to say, the mere fact that the cinema—a “reproductive” medium, to use Benjamin's term—was juxtaposed for more than three decades with the “auratic” presence of live music underlines the contradictions inherent in the period from my perspective. For in a very real sense, the entire richness of pre-sound film music can be seen as flowing from one simple fact: that a delay of some thirty years occurred while the full technological implications of film were being worked out, creating the temporary need for live sound in what was destined to become a fully reproduced audio-visual medium. But the combination of “auratic” and reproductive elements was in the final analysis also a clash of competing political-economic paradigms and subjectivities, a topic I will return to in the following section.

The growth of big capital's power in the United States continued largely unchecked until the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression. The rapid rise of big business had been supported since the mid-nineteenth century by neoclassical economic theory, which revised classical political economy by insisting on the complete separation of the economic and political realms, ideologically freeing individuals from any substantial social obligations in their pursuit of wealth. But the crises that began in 1929 provoked a major rethinking of neoclassical economic principles. It had become clear that the distortions of monopolism, boom-and-bust cycles, and mass unemployment were out of control, and certain

left-leaning mainstream economists such as A.C. Pigon and John Maynard Keynes made a case for increased government intervention in the economy. Public support for their recommendations regarding a more equitable tax system, subsidy policies for small and medium businesses, and fiscal initiatives to create employment grew as the Depression deepened, and major initiatives such as the New Deal and the Keynesian welfare state came into being despite fierce opposition from Western élites.

The newly consolidated Hollywood oligopoly epitomized the kind of business approaches many perceived as having caused the Great Depression, and the industry was specifically targeted by certain Keynesian regulatory measures during the 1930s. For example, the Code of Fair Competition for the Motion Picture Industry was passed in 1933, apparently in an effort to shift the balance of power in the industry towards labor. Among other things, the Code banned company-organized unions (which tended to weaken rather than strengthen workers' position in negotiations with management), established minimum wage scales, and allowed labor to bargain collectively. But the Code also implicitly condoned the ways in which the studio oligopoly conducted its affairs. By sanctioning such strategies as the block booking system, clearing and zoning¹²—practices that “had been used either to drive independents out of business or to keep

¹² As Powers, Rothman and Rothman explain, “The practice of block booking forced theaters to buy movies in packages, ensuring that all of a studio’s films, regardless of quality or length, would make at least some of their money back. Of course, this contract practice with the theaters also served to deaden competition from other studios or producers...The run, clearance and zoning system further helped to monopolize theater business through shrewd administrative tactics. Under this system, which was regulated by clearance and zoning boards in each particular area, the large studios were able to control when and where their pictures played, and to prevent nonaffiliated movie houses from showing the film until a certain period of ‘clearance’ had passed. This reduced the film’s drawing power, because it could not open in a second-run theater until its novelty had already begun to wear off.” [S. Powers, D. Rothman and S. Rothman, Hollywood’s America, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1996) 15.]

them in a subordinate position”—the Code in effect “legalized the monopolistic structure of the industry.”¹³ Furthermore, while Keynesian-inspired regulation did result in some redistribution of wealth within the studio system (mostly by requiring wage hikes for non-executive employees),¹⁴ and led to the general spread of unionization in Hollywood, by and large the industry continued to function as it had during the pre-crash years.

Steven Ross points out that non-interference in the movie industry was also motivated by the fact that federal, state and local levels of government were themselves directly involved in film production and exhibition in the 1930s and 40s.¹⁵ Not wanting to impede the growth of an audio-visual mass medium rapidly evolving into an effective instrument of power they could themselves use, governments by and large left the Hollywood studio system to its own devices, turning a blind eye to its continually disproportionate economies of scale and anti-competitiveness.

The hands-off policy of government towards the film industry during the 1930s more or less sealed the fate of film music makers for decades to come. Publicly-funded employment created by the New Deal did manage to offset Hollywood’s massive downsizing of theater musicians to a limited degree, putting some 7,000 instrumentalists and vocalists back to work in the Work Progress Administration’s Federal Music Project between 1933

¹³ Balio 28.

¹⁴ Although some high-ranking studio executives briefly took voluntary pay cuts during the worst depression years because of a public outcry, and also lobbied unsuccessfully for salary caps for their acting stars, no substantial reductions in top earners’ salaries ever took place in the studio era.

¹⁵ Steven J., Ross, “Cinema and Class Conflict,” R. Sklar and C. Musser, eds., Resisting Images (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990) 76. Ross also notes that the other major protagonists struggling for control in early twentieth-century America—big capital and big labor—were equally eager to use the cinematic medium for their own promotional and propaganda purposes.

and 1939 (in orchestras, dance bands, choral groups, and a variety of music-related jobs.)¹⁶ More significantly, the longer-term economic improvements brought about by Keynesian reforms and full employment during World War II (e.g. more disposable income, optimism in the economy, etc.) allowed the entertainment sector to thrive well into the post-war era, picking up further slack from the sudden rise in unemployment among musicians after the coming of sound. But within the film industry itself, the corporatist approach of the studio system guaranteed a comparatively limited place for musicians in movie production and exhibition. The “assembly line” or “plant”-like efficiency of the studio music departments¹⁷ was achieved through two important means: keeping the musical labor force as lean as possible; and extracting maximum productivity from those employees who were retained by the studios to produce and record soundtracks. Both of these strategies resulted in only a select few specialists—composers, arrangers, orchestrators, recording musicians, and copyists—ever being offered the privileges and security afforded corporate employees. The legions of skilled accompanists once vital to the business were, on the other hand, cut off in perpetuity and left to their own devices, no longer considered the problem of the studios after the coming of sound.

Many would no doubt characterize this outcome for musicians as an inevitability, a self-evident development given standard business practices and the prevailing ethos of the times. I view the matter somewhat differently, though I must resort to a degree of retrospective imagination to make my point. The Roosevelt administration was obviously prepared to act

¹⁶ Bruce J. Bustard, *A New Deal for the Arts* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1997) 9.

¹⁷ A characteristic which has been referred to by several authors, including Kalinak 72, Flinn 18, and Prendergast 36.

on behalf of musicians in general, sponsoring concerts, recitals, dances, and composers' forums in the Federal Music Program.¹⁸ It could also, in a similar spirit, have obliged the Hollywood studios to create some employment for musicians at the exhibition end of the industry as well as in production. It is not inconceivable to imagine mixed live musical-cinema evenings in the picture palaces, sponsored by the studios from the huge profits they realized from the mid- to the late-30s, or even special screenings featuring live orchestral or ensemble accompaniment to talking films (perhaps conducted by music department composers and including an instructional component regarding film scoring). But such initiatives—which could not only have served to relieve unemployment among former theater musicians, but also to enrich and diversify the evolution of spectatorship during the first decades of sound—would most certainly have never materialized unless forced through legislation, given the studios' bottom-line priorities. Instead, as Douglas Gomery points out,

The US federal government through the National Recovery Act (NRA) helped [the studios] by openly sanctioning the monopolistic behavior of the Big Five. Instead of the informal cooperation which had existed throughout the 1920s, open and explicit collusion and exploitation took place, free from any threat of anti-trust action... [For example], the NRA...outlawed all give-aways by exhibitors. Such a sanction helped the Big Five at the expense of independent exhibitors.¹⁹

I think it is no exaggeration to say that fallout from the missed opportunities and unfair practices of the studio era vis-à-vis film musicians carried well over into the post-classical decades, engendering a fundamental disconnect between big business and labor that can still be felt in the film music area to this day.

¹⁸ Bustard 9.

¹⁹ Douglas Gomery, The Hollywood Studio System (London: MacMillan, 1986) 22.

Despite being kept in check by Keynesian-inspired policies for several decades, antimarket capitalism survived and continued to evolve into the 1970s. At that point, it received a significant ideological boost from revisionist theories developed by Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics. Alternately known as neoconservatism and neo-liberalism, the new paradigm was both laissez-faire and monetarist, advocating that government's key economic role lies in manipulating the money supply to control inflation. To this end, neo-liberal theory favors the maintenance of a "natural rate of unemployment" to keep wage pressures low, significant reductions in government spending of all types, privatization of state-run or state-subsidized enterprises and programs, the complete liberalization of national and international trade, and the unfettered movement of capital around the world. The United States and other powerful Western governments began buying into the neo-liberal program during the mid-70s, and since then international agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the GATT/World Trade Organization have succeeded in imposing neo-liberal measures on many developing nations as well. In this way, neo-liberal ideology has become a central driving force in the process of globalization,²⁰ and while Keynesian policies can still be found in the policy-making apparatus of some nations today, few would argue that neo-liberalism has not acquired the upper hand in most economies since the Reagan-Thatcher 1980s.

Although the film industry came under some financial pressure after the 1948 Paramount ruling (from demographic shifts and the rise in

²⁰ Generally speaking, globalization is understood to mean the trend towards the increasing integration of national and ethnic cultures, economies, and political organizations into unified global entities.

television viewing, principally), and also suffered the divisive effects of the blacklisting practices coming out of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee hearings in 1948 and 1951-54, Hollywood nonetheless managed to retain its significant position within the changing social grids of postwar America.

Some significant changes in the nature of the industry did occur once the studio system was dissolved, however. While big capital continued to control the film business, vertical integration and cut-throat competition of the sort seen from the 1920s through the 1940s were held in check by a number of factors. One was the rise in independent production, mentioned in previous chapters. Another was the increasing globalization of the American film industry itself. Hollywood movies had been an international phenomenon since the larger film studios began aggressively seeking marketing opportunities for their products around the world in the late 'teens and 20s. But the nature of Hollywood's global reach changed dramatically beginning in the 1960s and 70s. The shift was part of (and in fact a locomotive force behind) a more general movement towards cultural, economic and political globalization in societies around the world, a trend that was becoming increasingly prominent in the United States at the time. According to one commentator, this still-ongoing process has evolved into a situation where

American films dominate the world market in a manner that far surpasses its leadership in other areas... Where it survives in other countries, domestic filmmaking is... mainly devoted to low budget imitations or replicas of Hollywood blockbusters... With or without resistance, nations with proud traditions of filmmaking independence like France, England, Sweden, India, Indonesia, and Japan are in fact gradually succumbing to the irresistible lure of product that is... predominantly American.²¹

²¹ Benjamin Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld (N.Y.: Ballantine, 1995) 95, 90.

The hegemonic status of American culture in the new global economy therefore exists on a completely different scale than the nationally and sectorally-based dominance of the classical era studios. Most of the key elements of the current movie industry—its production and distribution operations, exhibition chains, even its freelance talent represented by large agencies like CMA or William Morris—are now either part of larger entertainment enterprises including television, print and other operations, or else comprise only one part of the entertainment divisions of even larger conglomerates. Vertical integration of the sort seen in the 20s, 30s and 40s is therefore of no real interest to the power brokers in the new configurations, given the far wider objectives they have begun to focus on.

The contradictory nature of Hollywood's recent evolution has been noticed by a number of critics. While most movie companies have been subsumed by larger corporate entities, there has simultaneously been a marked trend towards diversification and decentralization in the business. While the movie industry of the 1980s and 90s is in one respect heavily oriented towards high-grossing, mega-blockbuster hits (with their attendant huge budgets and financial risks), the proliferation of multiplex theaters—which typically include a number of small rooms in addition to one or two larger ones—and widespread ownership of VCRs has meant that markets for lower-budget films catering to niche audiences have also opened up, acting as a counterbalance to big productions. The global/local, big/little dialectic of globalization is thus felt on every level of the industry: in its ownership structure, its production, distribution, and exhibition sectors, and among its professionals.

Accelerated movement towards globalization in the film industry has been aided in large part by the coincidental rise of neo-liberalism,

particularly from the 1980s onward. The deregulation of industrial sectors, the lifting of restrictions on mergers, acquisitions and the movement of capital, and the privatization of state-run enterprises around the world (including many national film studios) have all helped establish the global hegemony of Hollywood films in recent decades. Domestically, while many Keynesian regulations remained in place in the United States until the 1970s, the film business was once again basically left to run its course after the dissolution of the studio system.

Another feature of the fully-globalized Hollywood industry has had a direct impact on the film music area. As we have seen, the accumulation of power, prestige and high paying work in the careers of “name” actors, directors, producers, and composers has resulted in a top-tier/lower-tier split among freelancers in post-classical era Hollywood. The upper tier in this scheme tends to become part of a global élite that includes not only entertainers of all types, but also politicians and celebrities from every sector of society, while the lower tier is to a far greater extent anchored in local realities, whether geographic or professional. The two sides of the globalization coin can therefore be seen in the widening gulf between the industry’s few “big winners” and their giant “supporting casts”, and between Robert Faulkner’s “Big Hollywood” and “Little Hollywood” career categories.²²

Accordingly, film music makers have found their status in the industry evolving in one of two directions since the 1950s: on the one hand, a tiny élite group has built impressive track records of successful film scoring credits and has risen to a central position in the freelance scene.²³

²² Faulkner 240-267.

²³ Faulkner 225.

On the other, a much larger group of musicians with few, if any, credits of significance has struggled at the Hollywood periphery.

The “big winners” in this configuration—i.e. the “stars” of movie music—now relate more or less as equals to their filmmaker collaborators, in ways even the studio music department heads were often unable to.²⁴ Moreover, as the concentration of power in this central elite has increased, the importance of their work *outside* of the film business has grown proportionately. The success of songs or instrumental selections on soundtrack albums, for example—albums which are released and promoted by the recording industry—is often as vital to a composer’s (or pop artist’s, or record producer’s) reputation in the movie business as the background film scores they create, and their parallel careers as performing artists can also be of significance.²⁵

But the legions of musicians not included in this inner circle are in a dramatically different position. Doubly disadvantaged from a historical perspective, enjoying neither the stable employment of the studio composer nor the plentiful opportunities of the silent era accompanist, this group is obliged to tirelessly promote themselves in a buyer’s market of too few projects being chased by too many musicians. Compounding the difficulties of those at the Hollywood periphery is the deteriorating situation for most musicians in the music and entertainment industries at large. Massive technological unemployment has resulted from a number of developments in recording and in show business, to name only one of the more obvious problems. A general overabundance of supply in the economy— including

²⁴ Faulkner 230.

²⁵ A composer such as John Williams, for example, who is well-known for his film scores but who has also enhanced his celebrity by conducting famous orchestras and performing as a soloist or in his own ensembles, is not atypical in the Hollywood scene of the 1980s and 90s.

the supply of musical recordings and talent—lies at the heart of these difficulties according to a number of political-economic commentators.²⁶ Sampling and other technologies have eliminated the majority of jobs in the performance and recording areas; many music companies have been downsized or driven out of business in the often-savage capitalist environment promoted by neo-liberalism; and many government grants and subsidies to the arts have been reduced or eliminated for similar reasons. All of these trends have radically limited the economic options of all but the most powerful film music makers working in mainstream cinema.

As emphasized previously, Faulkner's *Music on Demand* identified this polarization in the Hollywood film music scene as it had been unfolding up to 1980, pointing out the stark contrasts between the “small army” of composers with low-credit, fragile profiles in the industry and “the chosen few” at the center of the Hollywood scene.²⁷ From my perspective, the study also reveals how relatively narrow fields such as film music evolve in ways resonant with the larger political-economic fabric within which they exist. If one examines how the American and Western-dominated global economy is structured in terms of wealth and power, for example, one sees a shrinking percentage of the population—CEOs, high government or bureaucratic officials, celebrities, and the managers attending to these central figures—reaping hugely disproportionate rewards and enjoying extensive influence in cultural, economic, and political affairs worldwide. But one is equally aware of a rapidly growing majority—the middle and lower classes of industrialized countries, and the bulk of humanity in the developing world—that is experiencing the opposite, a marked deterioration

²⁶ See, for example, William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not* (N.Y.: Touchstone, 1997).

²⁷ Faulkner 101, 225.

in livelihoods and lifestyles as the progressive reallocation of wealth and power under neo-liberalism has occurred. As I see it, Hollywood film music after the classical era has developed along strikingly similar lines, with the industry allocating more and more to an inner circle of “name” stars in high-budget productions, while at the same time arbitrating film scoring wages lower in secondary films.²⁸ This analogue is far from coincidental in my opinion, as the complete pegging of Hollywood film and its music to the fluctuations of markets from the 1950s onward has virtual guaranteed conformity between the two in the unregulated environment of neo-liberal capitalism.

Power and the Personal Dimensions of Film Music Making

If, in Dana Polan’s words, Foucault’s *souci de soi* “implies the spread of power everywhere,” a dissemination of control and authority via innumerable “little acts of enunciation”²⁹ performed in the daily lives and work of social subjects, then it becomes clear that consideration of the individual experiences and points of view of film music makers vis-à-vis power and politics must form an important part of any examination of the area.

As mentioned previously, silent era accompanists were able to approach their various negotiations and conflicts with exhibitors from a position of relative strength. Trade journals from the period indicate that the industry as a whole considered the inclusion of quality music during film screenings an important competitive tactic, and believed according

²⁸ In this regard, film industry agent Richard Elmer estimated in the late 1980s that three out of four Hollywood movie scores were being done inexpensively at the time in electronic studios. (Karlín and Wright 420.)

²⁹ Polan 7.

musicians a status exceeding that of menial employees (and remunerating them accordingly) was definitely in the best interests of exhibitors. The steady rise in wages for musicians and the growth in importance of musical accompaniment throughout the silent years confirms that this advice was listened to by the majority of exhibitors and industry entrepreneurs, even after the balance of power had shifted in favor of big capital.

But from a more recent perspective, the leverage enjoyed by musicians prior to the coming of sound was based on more than their ability to smooth over certain aesthetic, apparatus, and reception problems in the early medium, or even on the existence of plentiful outside opportunities in a thriving entertainment sector at the time. Whether consciously or unconsciously, exhibitors and producers alike must have realized that the live musical component of film acted as a vital conduit, a type of cultural connector linking the dominant values expressed in different musical or performance styles with the new types of spectatorship and consumerism developing in the motion picture business. When theater musicians would cater to audience tastes by taking direct requests from patrons or skewing their accompaniments to reflect the ethnic composition of the crowd, for example, they were in effect fulfilling this connective function. Similarly, when they would “educate” movie audiences by playing selections from the classics or operatic arias,³⁰ film musicians would reinforce wider industry efforts to cultivate a more affluent, cultured clientele through their introduction of established, mainstream musical entertainment values into the moviegoing experience. Because of the vital and acknowledged role they played throughout the silent period, then, film musicians as a general group were able to strike a power balance between themselves and the

³⁰ Berg 245-246.

movie industry that was probably more even than at any other time in cinema history.

But as Foucault and Polan also point out, “little acts of subversion”³¹ are equally possible from localized power points such as those embodied by silent era accompanists. These intentional or unintentional acts can contradict rather than support prevailing ideologies or accepted patterns of behaviour, and because film music makers have been equally prone to pursuing their own interests over those of their employers or audiences at times, the possibility of minor “subversions” or contradictions of dominant authority and values on their part must be considered as well.

Various incidents of this nature were reported in silent era publications. *Cadenza*, for example, related how William A. Krauth, conductor and first violinist of Boston’s Loew’s Orpheum Theater Orchestra, used a string of performances in 1915 to underline his importance as an audience draw to his employer. Krauth had consistently been using the showman-like strategy of performing a flashy violin solo behind at least one key scene in every picture, and claimed the applause this invariably garnered was inspired by his contributions rather than the films being shown. Management begged to differ, insisting it was the synergy of music and picture that won the crowds’ favor. To prove his point, Krauth purposely left out his solos during an entire evening of screenings, and after the theater manager received a number of complaints and demands for an explanation regarding the omission from patrons, Krauth’s hand was strengthened in future dealings with Loew’s.³²

³¹ Polan 7.

³² Henry J. Harding, “Music and the Pictures,” *Cadenza* (February, 1915): 2.

Somewhat more serious than examples of this nature were the many incidents involving incompetent pianists and organists, whom the trade press identified as ruining movie screenings for patrons on regular occasions. Although industry and formational pressure was strong on such musicians, reinforced by threats of contract termination and a steady stream of articles lambasting their poor craftsmanship, the seller's market for accompaniment services permitted such minor acts of sabotage to continue through much of the period.

Of a more subtle nature were generally accepted practices such as "film funning" and the inclusion of extra-filmic performances. Here film musicians entered into conflict not with exhibitors, who condoned such practices and usually organized non-filmic performances themselves, but with the wider objectives of the increasingly production-oriented industry from the mid-'teens on. Given that these activities by their very nature distracted from narrative (film funning by drawing attention away from the screen to the musical puns of accompanists, non-filmic numbers by juxtaposing the live "aura" of singers and soloists with reproduced filmic images), their inclusion drew musicians directly into the tug-of-war between exhibitors and producers at the time, a battle which would end in the elimination of all but the most narratively-subservient or commercially essential live musical practices by the 1920s.

In contrast to the comparatively direct exhibitor-musician relations of the silent era, those composers and musicians who survived the transition to sound technology found their access to power in the studios to be considerably more circuitous. Only a handful of music department directors had any substantial connection to the real decision-makers within the studio

organization, and given music's secondary status in the classical filmmaking process as a whole, even their influence was limited. Many composers have commented in later interviews on the frustrations inherent in the studios' power structure. Hans J. Salter, for example, recalled that

in the order of importance, music was at the very bottom of the heap... It was a constant hassle, and once I was even 'asked' to stay away from the dubbing room so [the producers] could finish their picture without any interference. 'Keep that God-damned music down' was a popular battle cry,³³

Miklos Rosza, for his part, noted that "The real difficulty [lay]... not in the composer's ability... or in the audience's receptivity, but mostly in the producer's musical taste, since it [was] the primary job of the composer to satisfy him."³⁴

As for the other musical personnel who worked under the department heads, most functioned as employees and were treated as subordinates. Contracts were long-term, drawn up with the studio through the music department, and allowed for limited bargaining power on the part of film musicians.³⁵ Moreover, even though composers with specialized skills were often sought out as candidates for jobs, there is little evidence to suggest that competition for studio positions was a real factor. Openings were usually filled through personal references passing through the department head or other higher-ups in the studio, consolidating the organizations' internal power structure through the creation of tight webs of personal association. Examples abound of how well-known studio-era composers got their start in the business: Hugo Friedhofer was a personal friend of George

³³ Studio composer Hans J. Salter, interviewed in Tony Thomas, *Film Score* (Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979) 108.

³⁴ Miklos Rosza, interviewed in Thomas 37.

³⁵ Hans J. Salter has commented that "no matter how well you did the job, the producers rarely made any comment. Perhaps they were afraid that if they paid us a compliment, we would ask for a raise." (Thomas 108.)

Lipschultz, music director at Fox studios; Hans J. Salter was introduced to Universal through three key European acquaintances of his at the studio (a writer, a director, and a producer); and in Bronislau Kaper's case, his connection went right to the top:

In the summer of 1935, Louis B. Mayer happened to be vacationing in France, and everywhere he went he heard the song 'Ninon', which Kaper had written for tenor Jan Kiepura. Mayer found out who wrote it, asked Kaper to come to his hotel in Paris, and within an hour signed him to an MGM contract.³⁶

But the employment stability and strong connections offered by the studios came at a considerable price to composers, as the top-down command structure and vertically-integrated insularity of the former imposed serious creative constraints on them. As Kathryn Kalinak puts it,

The hierarchy which positioned management over labor permeated every facet of a film's production from its visual style to its music... Control over music was most directly felt in the influence wielded by studio production chiefs and line producers... David O. Selznick's famous memos often contained intricate instructions on the music... Irving Thalberg once wrote a memo on main titles requesting MGM composers to 'kindly refrain in the future from using minor chords'.³⁷

The power structure of the studio system was therefore such that classical period film music makers necessarily displayed different types of compliance with authority compared to their silent era predecessors, and also experienced new kinds of conflict and contradiction in their attitudes towards the industry and the mainstream audiences supporting it. To be sure, the majority of composers working in the 1930s and 40s understood their position in the studios to be one of a lesser rank, and behaved accordingly. Bronislau Kaper, for example, reminded an interviewer that the

³⁶ Thomas 117.

³⁷ Kalinak 75, 76.

film composer “is not his own boss,” and must as a matter of course take orders from superiors who “know a lot less about music than he does.”³⁸ Miklos Rozsa emphasized that “film music is an integral part of a collective effort of many artists and technicians,” and that any composer “who refuses to coordinate his music to the requirements of this collectivity...should stay away from films.”³⁹ And Dimitri Tiomkin similarly insisted that

The screen composer, like every artist, must work within limitations... He must, to some extent, compromise. For a motion picture is a collective art, and the composer’s contribution must enhance, not dominate.⁴⁰

These statements illustrate that studio composers were for the most part cooperative with the overall objectives of their superiors, and more than willing to act (in Foucauldian terms) as nodal points through which the dominant values and ideologies of Hollywood film could be musically expressed. The manner in which this took place could be quite explicit at times, the various power relations in American society and within the industry itself being inscribed directly on the soundtrack in certain cases. Examples of musical expressions of the business’s internal power structures include the various instrumental flourishes that were routinely timed to coincide with the appearance of the studio’s logo or certain producers’ and directors’ names in the opening titles. Numerous instances of the “external” type can also be found in classical film, but I will cite only one here before re-examining issues around power and musical content in Part 2.

Portions of the score for *Stagecoach* (1939) demonstrate the ability classical era film music had to underline dominant ideas around power during the period. The musical soundtrack in this case reinforces a sharp

³⁸ Thomas 119-120.

³⁹ Thomas 33.

⁴⁰ Thomas 100.

distinction between the Apache Indians under Geronimo on the one hand, and the central white protagonists traveling through frontier New Mexico on the other. Moreover, it makes this distinction in a particularly telling way, by accompanying the Native Americans with pentatonic materials and the stagecoach passengers with tonal passages. Recalling John Shepherd's linking of pentatonicism to an archaic world-sense and tonality to a more recent, hierarchical social order, the significance of this scoring decision becomes apparent. The Apaches are carefully constructed throughout the film as a force of pure menace, a direct danger looming over the central characters and all of the white frontierspeople in the story. Geronimo and his braves have gone on the warpath, murdering Americans and cutting the telegraph lines, emblems of the great, technologically advanced civilization then in the process of spreading over the North American continent. They have "broken out of the reservation," and in so doing have exceeded the terms of assimilation dictated to them by their American conquerors. Moreover, their threatening nature is further reinforced by the fact that they do not speak a single word in the entire movie, only send up war signals and attack innocent civilians.

The composers rely on stereotypical "Indian music"—i.e. a pentatonic melody, harmonized in open fifths or fourths, driven by a monotonous quarter-note beat—to reinforce the image of barbarity and primitiveness assigned to the Apaches. This musical cliché—based on conventions established by Tin Pan Alley popular songs and silent film accompaniments to connote Native Americans (and, with slight modifications, East Asians)—reinforces the Apaches' textual status in a number of ways. Given that open fifths and pentatonicism are at a remove from the tonal system conventional classical scoring is based on, the music

is meant to be perceived as “other”, something lying outside of the standard harmonic-melodic scoring idiom and therefore harmonically strange. Just as Geronimo and his braves have been confined to the reservation, a place at the outer fringes of civilized society, so the music that accompanies them is marginal in relation to European-based tonality. To further support this musical characterization, the cues accompanying the stagecoach passengers are based on nostalgic tunes from the frontier past that are brightly orchestrated, brisk in tempo and in major key. The sharp contrast between the “Indian” and stagecoach cues is most strongly emphasized in the ambush sequence, when the camera pans back and forth from the Apaches amassing on the cliffs to the stage thundering along the salt flats, and we hear the score alternating between pentatonic and tonal passages in sync with the visual movements.

What this brief segment illustrates, from my perspective, is that dominantly-informed framings of power were able to find ready musical expression in the classical era, even in a score that can, from a production point of view at least, be considered less than typical (insofar as it was put together for United Artists⁴¹ by a team of contract musicians, rather than by staff composers as would have been the case with any other studio). In a few quick passages, the musical caricatures in *Stagecoach* are able not only to identify the Apaches as a savage threat to the power structure of the frontier past, but also to nostalgically connect the passengers and the charging cavalry with America’s manifest continental destiny at that time. Moreover, because many clichés of this sort were entrenched in Hollywood film scoring practice by the mid-1930s, no explicit instructions from the

⁴¹ United Artists was itself atypical in the classical era, in that it did not possess a studio per se as the other members of the Hollywood oligopoly did, renting space and hiring personnel as required for its various productions.

filmmakers would necessarily have been required to achieve the desired result. In all likelihood, the composers simply knew what to do given the situation being portrayed, having internalized various appropriate ways to express dominant values in musical terms, and being eager to do so from their particular “localized points” in American culture and society.

As I have already pointed out, the “personalized” dissemination of dominant values via film music was not unique to the classical era. Silent era exhibitors and studio producers alike were almost invariably untrained musically, and hence unable to directly control the outcomes of film compilation and composition processes. They therefore necessarily relied on something resembling *le souci de soi* on the part of film musicians to effectively shape the accompaniments and soundtracks of their movies. Furthermore, the reputations and career paths of classical era composers were largely dependent on favorable responses to their work by superiors, support they could gain only by learning to reproduce the dominantly-grounded musical preferences of their bosses.

Numerous critics have pointed out movie composers’ acquiescence to dominant ideology,⁴² notably Eisler and Adorno in the classical era itself. From their Marxist perspective, the majority of mainstream movie composers colluded in a socially damaging enterprise: Hollywood communicated with the public only through the box office, and systematically suppressed audience participation in its theaters. It replaced genuine spontaneity and involvement on the part of its patrons with passive

⁴² Raymond Williams’s definition of ideology basically corresponds to the sense in which I use the term in this study: “Ideology...is used to describe...the characteristic *world-view* or *general perspective* of a class or other social group, which will include formal and conscious beliefs but also less conscious, less formulated attitudes, habits and feelings, or even unconscious assumptions, bearings and commitments.” (Williams, Culture 26.)

illusions of immediacy and identification, illusions that shielded spectators from both the material workings of a film and their own alienated condition outside of the movie theater. The movie score, among other cinematic devices, accomplished Hollywood's objectives by "regressing" spectators into a hypnotic state, bringing about "psycho-technical identifications" with movie narratives and the capitalist ideology underlying them. Eisler and Adorno's work, though limited in its neo-Marxist perceptions of a one-way flow from the productive to the consumptive end of cultural processes, nonetheless describes with some degree of accuracy the complicity of classical era composers in dominant framings of culture and power.

But despite compliance being the norm among film musicians in the 1930s and 40s, some important exceptions must be noted as well. There were, for example, a number of prominent incidents involving movie composers that saw outright conflicts or various forms of power jockeying taking place within and outside of the industry. Among these were Bernard Hermann's threat of legal action against RKO when he discovered two-thirds of his score for *The Magnificent Ambersons* had been removed in a radical cut of the film; Max Steiner's defection from RKO for Warner Brothers, a move linked to his disputes over working conditions with the former studio;⁴³ Erich Korngold's exceptionally favorable contracts with Warner, leveraged by his international stature as a concert composer;⁴⁴ and David Raksin's forced testimony before the House UnAmerican Activities Commission, after an internally-conducted sweep by MGM revealed he had been a member of the Communist party.⁴⁵

⁴³ See Gorbman 92 and Thomas 78.

⁴⁴ See Thomas 86, 88.

⁴⁵ See Victor Navasky, Naming Names (N.Y.: Viking, 1980) 249-252.

More important than these rather exceptional instances, however, was a virtually universal trait shared by studio composers, a personally-subjectively-based phenomenon that can be best described as an inner resistance to the imperatives of power. One detects in the various statements studio composers have made to interviewers over the years a type of stubborn *auteurism*—an insular, self-protective attitude towards their music indicating a personal, critical distance from the demands made on them by powerful superiors within the studio system. This inclination to an attitudinal subversion of the studios' corporate hierarchies and control structures grew out of the fact that "film music was, like other aspects of film, an industrial product" in the classical era, and from the marked tension between the priorities of art and business this reality provoked.⁴⁶ Indeed, studio composers seem to have unanimously viewed their work as art rather than craft in the period. Hugo Friedhofer, for example, insisted Albert Camus' statement regarding theater (that "putting lofty ideas to a wide audience, in which imbeciles sit side by side with intelligent people...demands great art") was equally true of film music.⁴⁷ While classical era composers did not necessarily agree on their responsibility towards the moviegoing public (some, like Friedhofer and Franz Waxman, believing in an "educational" or culturally "guiding" role for film music,⁴⁸ others such as Korngold and Hermann openly disregarding or disparaging public tastes),⁴⁹ they were in univocal accord on one fact: that their own expertise and musical instincts were far superior to those of the filmmakers and studio executives they worked under. While the latter

⁴⁶ Prendergast 36.

⁴⁷ in Thomas 54.

⁴⁸ Thomas 54, 64.

⁴⁹ Thomas 89, 150.

had the authority to force bad scoring decisions on composers in conflictual situations, the feeling was that their musical ignorance could—and should—be circumvented through the use of various tactics. These could be of a gentle, diplomatic nature (as with Friedhofer, who recalled that “The thing to do seemed to be to give them what they wanted, and little by little to do a bit of cultural boring from within... [through] a slow, subtle process of musical indoctrination...”).⁵⁰ Or auteurist resistance could be of a more outwardly intimidating and confrontational sort (as with Hermann, who stormed out of several productions protesting interference with his work,⁵¹ and made it generally known he would walk away from any executive who insisted on a particular musical style or approach to a score.)⁵² Regardless of the nature or the intensity of tactics such as these, the auteurist attitudes behind them can be seen as the root of many localized, “subversive” acts of resistance to power on the part of classical film composers.

The sense of artistic insularity felt by film music makers in the 30s and 40s also distanced them from certain wider forms of political control during those decades. Censorship, for example, never really touched the studio music departments, although it certainly would have if the function of music in film had been understood by the forces behind it. Film content had generated social controversy since the beginning of cinema: as early as 1909, the industry (via the MPPC) was obliged to respond to vigorous complaints from various powerful groups by establishing its own board of censorship.⁵³ By 1922, the Hollywood studios had established another self-

⁵⁰ Thomas 66.

⁵¹ Kalinak 158.

⁵² Thomas 151.

⁵³ “The Production Code,” *Movies and Mass Culture*, ed. John Belton (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1996) 135-136. The National Board of Censorship was the self-regulating body’s official name, which would be changed to the National Board of Review in 1916.

regulatory body (The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, commonly known as the Hays Office),⁵⁴ and its production code laid out self-censorship rules for the industry that strongly affected Hollywood filmmaking from the mid-1930s until the 1960s.⁵⁵

But the content of musical scores—even as it related to narrative and screen content vigorously questioned by the Hays Office—never came under the self-censorship of the industry to my knowledge. Composers appear to have been able to interpret certain highly scrutinized dramas more or less on their own terms, creating discursive associations that contradicted PCA imperatives regarding the visual and spoken aspects of the same films. Three soundtracks from 1940s movies dealing with controversial narrative themes—marital infidelity, crime and betrayal—will serve as an example in this regard. In *The Letter* (1940), Leslie Crosby (Bette Davis) murders a man she has conducted a long-term affair with in the first scene, and then proceeds to empty the bank account of her unknowing husband Robert (Herbert Marshall) to obtain an incriminating letter held by her slain lover's wife. In the original W. Somerset Maugham stage drama, Leslie is exonerated of her crime, and goes on in her marriage to Robert despite admitting that she still loves the man she killed. The Hays office strongly disapproved of this outcome because it appeared to condone Leslie's adultery, and imposed an ending in which Leslie is stabbed to death by her lover's wife in an act of vengeance.⁵⁶ Yet despite the Office's insistence on

⁵⁴ Belton 136. The MPPDA was nicknamed after its president, former postmaster general and chairman of the Republican National Committee, Will Hays.

⁵⁵ The code was established in 1930, but was somewhat laxly applied until heavy pressure from the Legion of Decency and other organizations led to the powerful Production Code Administration being set up in 1934. Strong PCA enforcement of the code prevailed until it was finally abandoned in 1968 after various legal challenges in the 1950s and 60s led to the more flexible ratings system still in effect today.

⁵⁶ N.Y. Times 23 June, 1940, 12:6

a negative framing of Leslie as a “monstrous” woman deserving of ultimate punishment, Max Steiner’s score does much to encourage a contradictory interpretation of her character. By accompanying many of Leslie and Robert’s joint scenes with cues in the major key (which, as I will point out in Part 2, has strong discursive connotations of positivity in a film musical context), Steiner in effect undercuts the censorship imperatives imposed on the film, and would surely have been obliged to change sizable portions of the score had Warner Brothers or the PCA realized the implications of his insular textual-musical interpretation.

Similarly, Miklos Rosza appears to have disregarded (or remained oblivious to) Hays Office directives in his score for *Double Indemnity* (1944). The James Cain novel of the same name was already well-known to the public, and censors were concerned that the movie version be a straightforward crime-and-punishment saga with no sympathetic angle on its central couple.⁵⁷ But while the film does treat the sordid affair between Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) and Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck) in highly negative terms textually, the musical soundtrack again runs counter to the overall tone created by the filmmakers at several points. Major-key harmonies accompany many of the moments that the illicit, conniving couple spend together (including the affection they share after brutally murdering Dietrichson’s husband to obtain an insurance settlement), and Rosza surprisingly seems to attempt a textual redemption of the Phyllis-Neff couple even as strenuous textual efforts are being exerted in the other direction.

Finally, in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), MGM staffer John Bassman virtually duplicated Steiner’s and Rosza’s earlier scoring

⁵⁷ N.Y. Times 7 September, 1944, 21:1

decisions in his treatment of another negative romantic couple watched carefully by the PCA. In the case of *Postman*, the Hays Office's anxiety centered around the steamy sensuality contained in the original James M. Cain novel, and on the need to eliminate any textual ambiguities that might condone the heinous acts committed by the two lovers (e.g. by justifying their adultery and murder of Cora's husband as crimes of passion).⁵⁸ But the soundtrack once more seems to provide precisely what the censors sought to avoid: a sympathetic musical angle on the love between Cora (Lana Turner) and Frank (John Garfield). Not only are their initial meeting and kisses underscored by positive, major-key passages, but even the final cue accompanying the death row scene modulates into the major at the mention of Cora's name as Frank awaits execution. This musical legitimization of the couple flies in the face of the restrictions imposed on the picture, but evidently passed undetected because of the hermetic status of film music at the time.

What all of the above indicates, from my perspective, is that many classical era composers, despite being compliant for the most part with the negotiated, mediated nature of their film musical work, nonetheless clung to the belief that musical content itself exists in a realm of its own. This idealist notion was the basis of a mild "subversiveness" that existed in dialectical tension with their acceptance of dominant values, a resistant conviction that only they knew the secrets and mechanics of musical discourse, and no matter what commands or requests were made regarding specific film scores or cues by their superiors, it was the composer—not the producer or director, or even the Hays Office—who was the final arbiter of

⁵⁸ N.Y. Times 3 May, 1946, 15:3

what harmonies, melodies and rhythms were written on the page and recorded on the sound stage.

The structures and practices developed within the studio system established the basic “symbolic-interactive”⁵⁹ patterns that would continue to shape the relationships and attitudes of film music makers toward the industry in the decades following the classical era. These patterns were, however, affected by the significant institutional and economic changes in the film business that began in the 1950s. Key among those changes were the rise in independent productions and the outsourcing of film scoring to freelance composers, which quickly led to a major power realignment between filmmakers and certain film music makers in Hollywood. Because the freelance system gave increased clout to star actors, directors, cinematographers, and composers (most of whom were no longer locked into long-term contracts with studios, but negotiated contracts picture by picture through powerful agents), the pool of people vital to commercial filmmaking suddenly found their influence in the business greatly expanded. The balance of power within Hollywood élites therefore tipped from buyers to sellers of talent, with movie production houses obliged to compete for the “names” that could make their films a success (rather than stars being largely dependent on a studio to make their names). The financial backing for a given picture became linked to the contracting of key personnel, and known film composers (or—increasingly in the 1960s and 70s—the star recording artists and record producers who put together pop

⁵⁹ In Faulkner’s sense of the delicate, often highly subjective and emotional forms and processes of communication taking place between filmmakers and film music makers during the creation of a score. (Faulkner 120-145.)

scores and soundtrack albums) were routinely included in the lists of essential participants.

In some respects, this overall situation reestablished the favorable power dynamic film music makers had experienced during the silent era—but only for a select few. While most accompanists with anything remotely special to offer were in an advantageous position in the exhibition-oriented pre-sound industry, only a handful of musicians who could rise to the level of being production stars had any leverage to speak of after the classical era ended. But although film musicians' personal power in the business still depended on a basic ability to elicit favorable (i.e. dominantly-aligned) emotional responses from mainstream audiences, their influence became strictly tied to box-office and soundtrack album successes after the studio system disintegrated.

For those film music makers who entered the exclusive club of “known quantities” in Hollywood, the situation had never been better. Composers able to work within the “functional”⁶⁰ restrictions of commercial movies—i.e. who were willing to serve, as silent era accompanists had, as effective conduits for popular musical values through their film music—and who also had the good fortune and contacts to obtain scoring credits in one or more hit films, were rewarded in hugely disproportionate terms financially and career-wise compared to earlier times. Nonetheless, the enhanced status of élite film musicians in post-classical era Hollywood also changed the nature of the conflicts they experienced within the industry. Even the top freelance composers, though influential and in closer general proximity to the filmmaking process than

⁶⁰ A term used by film composer Leonard Rosenman to describe “music written not primarily for performance alone, but specifically for literary-image media over which the composer has no control...” (Thomas 234-235)

ever before (in the sense that respected film musicians often made vital scoring decisions or even textual interpretations of their own⁶¹ in direct consultation with producers or directors, rather than through a music department director or other intermediaries), were nevertheless subject to outright dismissal or other forms of professional humiliation on occasion. [Henry Mancini and Bernard Hermann had scores thrown out by Alfred Hitchcock, for example, and Alex North's music for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) was replaced by the temp track⁶² put together by filmmaker Stanley Kubrick.]

Moreover, the pressure on composers to remain within the bounds of accepted conventions and formulae grew even stronger after the industry switched from plant-like production in the classical era to independent productions requiring investment and profitability on a film-by-film basis. This was a somewhat ironic development, given there was a general relaxation of external pressures on the industry during the same period. With the 1952 Supreme Court ruling concerning *The Miracle* (1948), a film that had been heavily censored by the Hays Office for its "sacrilegious" content, the movie industry was effectively granted First Amendment rights to freedom of expression similar to those enjoyed by the press and radio under constitutional law, resulting in a considerable liberalization of motion picture content thereafter. But economic pressures have proven stronger than political ones in the post-classical period, and "subversive" tendencies

⁶¹ As, for example, in the scoring choice Jerry Goldsmith describes having made for the film *Patton* (1970). The scene in question superimposed a prayer for victory read by Patton's chaplain onto visual footage of violent battle scenes, and Goldsmith proposed it should be accompanied in an unconventional way, with solemn, sad music implying an anti-war message—a suggestion that was accepted by his production boss Frank Schaffner. (Thomas 227.)

⁶² Karlin and Wright define temp tracks as "the musical examples used as role models, [which] are actually cut and dubbed into the film prior to scoring." (Karlin and Wright 39.)

in the work of film musicians take on an entirely different meaning in this environment. With the commercial stakes high for every picture, scores have often been rejected because of excess experimentation or stylistic innovation on the part of composers,⁶³ or sometimes because filmmakers have simply felt more confident in the work of a more conventional composer than in the overly-original scores created by certain top Hollywood names.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, the continuing auteurist tendencies of certain key Hollywood film musicians did lead to numerous stylistic and idiomatic innovations in the 1950s, 60s and 70s that permanently expanded the film scoring vocabulary. Bernard Hermann in particular is often cited as a key influence in this regard. Largely through the sheer force of his uncompromising personality (he never signed a long-term contract with a Hollywood studio, was highly selective in choosing the film projects he worked on, and became highly confrontational with filmmakers when differences of opinion regarding music arose), Hermann was instrumental in freeing mainstream scoring practice from its long entrenchment in romanticism and moving it towards more modern techniques. In so doing over the course of the 1940s and 50s, he paved the way for other early modernists in the field such as Alex North and Leonard Rosenman, and generally broadened the range of harmonic, orchestrational, and idiomatic

⁶³ Composer Christopher Young recounts one such incident concerning his rejected electronic score for *Invaders From Mars* (1986): "I wanted to be very experimental and bring something to film that has never been done before... It just was not Hollywood enough," (Mark Cooper, "Christopher Young," Music From the Movies spring 1998: 40.)

⁶⁴ Many examples of this scenario have been cited in the literature on film music, including Leo Schifrin's "brilliant, neurotic subtext score" for *The Reivers* (1969), which was thrown out by producer Mark Rydell in favor of a tamer offering by John Williams, and Bernard Hermann's *Torn Curtain* (1966) score, rejected by Hitchcock as having "missed the point of the film" and replaced by John Addison's less modern-sounding interpretation. (Faulkner 122.)

materials in mainstream film composing for subsequent generations of film music makers.

But for those masses of movie composers unable to attain entry into the Hollywood *élite*, a power shift of a completely different nature has taken place in the decades following the studio system's decline. These musicians have in effect been squeezed by two conflicting tendencies within the film music scene, each of which has evolved in more and more extreme directions since the 1950s and 60s. On the one hand, the filtering of high-profile, high-budget contracts and credits to a handful of first-call composers has shrunk the heart of the Hollywood working scene to a concentrated core of recognized names.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Faulkner, Karlin and Wright, and others point to the legions of composers working at the periphery of the Hollywood scene who are so eager for entry into the business that they are willing to work on literally any film project, often for rock-bottom remuneration. The presence of these musicians—many of whom are capable of autonomously producing entire soundtracks in home studios—have put strong downward wage pressures on the lower end of the Hollywood freelance hierarchy (as mentioned in chapter 2). With fragmented musical careers in which film scoring may play only a minor part, this outer band of the mainstream film music scene is disproportionately large and constantly growing (hence Richard Emler's comment that "There are simply too many inexperienced composers out

⁶⁵ It should, however, be noted that the freelance pool which replaced the classical era music departments also includes middle and lower echelons of composers working on lesser films and struggling to make upwardly mobile moves in the competitive milieu, as Robert Faulkner's study confirms. In addition, those employed in the mini "music departments" created by the busiest film music makers—i.e. the freelance orchestrators, music editors, sound designers and studio musicians hired to organize and execute the often fully-outsourced musical soundtracks produced by name composers—must be included in the mainstream film music *élite* as well, as a type of service sector catering to its needs.

there willing to do [film scoring] work,” and Karlin & Wright’s statement regarding the surfeit of young composers in Hollywood clamoring to do soundtracks at any price).⁶⁶

Summarizing, this chapter has explored key aspects of the political and power issues faced by accompanists and composers throughout Hollywood history. These particular social dimensions have originated both in wider, collectively-based factors affecting the area as well as in the more personal and subjective aspects of film music making. The former factors include the prevalence of various forms of free-market political economy and ideology in American society during the twentieth century, while the latter factors are based in the fluctuating inner and outer relationships and attitudes of film musicians towards power holders in and outside of Hollywood. Although the early industry evolved such that a degree of leverage and a personal stake in the business were possible for film accompanists, the restructuring of Hollywood filmmaking along corporatist lines beginning in the mid-‘teens fundamentally changed the nature of movie music, distancing most of its practitioners from the core of power while allowing a select few name composers an unusual degree of influence.

Once again, what I see in the allocation of power and money in Hollywood film music is the operation of a corporatist *modus operandi* similar to that driving globalization as a whole, the results of which in this case find an élite coterie of top composers and their associates reaping disproportionate benefits at the top end of the system, a huge population of aspirants struggling to survive at its bottom end, and a shrinking middle

⁶⁶ Karlin and Wright 420, 557.

area of upwardly or downwardly mobile participants being drawn towards one of the two extremes.

Part 2:

Social Dimensions of Film Music Content

Chapter 5

Hollywood Film Music: an Analysis of Dominant Practice

I have emphasized at different points in Part 1 that the collectively- and subjectively-based social factors affecting movie music also inform the musical content film music makers produce in accompaniments and scores. For example, I identified the shifting institutional emphases on performance, compilation, improvisation and composition in the film industry as key mediating influences on the actual music audiences have heard from the silent era to the present. I also indicated that Hollywood's economic priorities have often determined the kinds of music which have been played live during screenings or recorded onto soundtracks over the years, and have ascribed a similar influence on the area to more diffuse political and power elements.

What I will attempt to do in this and the following chapters of Part 2 is to provide an analysis of the precise ways in which the social shaping of musical content has taken place in the context of Hollywood film, and to explain the structural, conventional, and receptive characteristics I see issuing from the interface between mainstream movie music and its various social dimensions. The fundamental features of film musical content will be examined from the perspective of dominant Hollywood practice in this chapter, while the residual and emergent elements also found in film accompaniments and scores will be examined in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

Film Musical Content in History

To begin with, I must reiterate that from the perspective of certain Marxian-inspired diachronic categories, the American cinema came into existence on the cusp of an “auratic” and a “reproductive” age. As Attali pointed out in his later expansion on Benjamin, up to the turn of the twentieth century—from the Renaissance and Enlightenment through the first and second industrial revolutions and the development of classical political economy—Western societies had been functioning under a system reliant on various forms of spectacle and the symbolic control of violence and other antisocial tendencies:

the entire history... of classical political economy amounts to an attempt to make people believe in a consensual representation of the world. In order to replace the lost ritualization of the channelization of violence with the spectacle of the absence of violence. In order to stamp upon the spectators the faith that there is harmony in order. In order to etch into their minds the image of ultimate social cohesion achieved through commercial exchange and the progress of rational knowledge.¹

The world into which the film medium was born had long since replaced the ritualized sense of belonging in traditional and feudal societies with individualized consumption in a market economy. Douglas Gomery reminds us that

during the first decade of innovation of the picture show, attempts to introduce a profit-making, movie-dominated programming strategy failed... Entrenched leaders of business, government and education clung to [the] traditional forms of entertainment... —opera, theater, and European music— [that] contrasted with the rising tide of popular arts... —vaudeville, popular music, and the circus. Entrepreneurs knew they faced a daunting task [in this regard].²

¹ Attali 96.

² Douglas Gomery, Shared Pleasures (Madison : Wisconsin UP, 1992) 3-4.

All of these forms of commercial spectacle—whether considered of “high culture” or “low culture” status—relied heavily on what Benjamin termed “aura”, their specialized performers in effect embodying the roles formerly played by priests or the animators of village festivals, reenacting in various live situations the vestigial traces of ritual (only now for an admission price). But even though this “auratically”-based regime was dominant in the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century, it was also in the process of being replaced by an altogether different paradigm, one in which the cinema would play an essential part.

For film proved to be no ordinary spectacle: those involved in the “show” it provided did not physically appear in the exhibition venue, their presence having been recorded in advance by a motion picture camera. The exact same visual performances could be exhibited—reproduced, in effect—in hundreds or even thousands of different times and places, because they had been permanently encoded on film stock. This had profound economic implications for the motion picture, as Attali points out:

The [reproductive] economy is characterized first of all by a mutation in the mode of production of supply, due to the sudden appearance of a new factor in production, the *mold*, which allows the mass reproduction of an original... The necessary labor for production is no longer inherent in the nature of the object, but a function of the number of objects produced. The information included and transmitted thus plays the role of a stockpile of past labor, of capital.³

But the film medium from its origins evolved with a foot in two worlds, as it were, containing significant elements of both the “auratic” and the “reproductive”. While the labor of producers, directors, cameramen, actors, and other supply-side participants was indeed stockpiled within a film and reproducible ad infinitum, on the demand side the services provided by

³ Attali 128.

those at the exhibition end of the business (including musicians) remained in the real-time realm of live performance. Each musical accompaniment of a picture, for example—even if “repeated” over multiple screenings of the same film—was relatively unique, containing errors, minor expressive variations, or wholly different improvisations each time. In this way, live film music more resembled the varied performances and interpretations of theatrical or operatic works—i.e. “auratically”-based phenomena—than perfectly reproduced motion picture “performances”. It was only when big business finally realized the potential inherent in the film medium—a potential intrinsically linked to economies of scale and the exact reproduction of moving images for audiences separated in space and time—that music and other localized real-time elements were targeted for elimination.⁴ Cue sheets, the appointment of expert conductors, and general pressures from movie producers all combined to make film accompaniments increasingly mold-like and standardized throughout the 1910s and 20s, until the technological means by which to ensure the film product’s visual *and* auditory uniformity from screening to screening were developed.

The notions of the reproductive *mold* and *molder* are therefore key to this chapter. If it is kept in mind that the film music “mold” is a highly flexible one, amounting to a collection of parameters and guidelines more than a rigid set of rules, and that the creative “molder” shaping Hollywood practice is no one person but a complex amalgam of producers, financial backers, directors, writers, musicians, and spectators involved in putting together and consuming mainstream films and film music, then the fundamental notion underlying my analysis begins to become apparent. The characteristics of this “mold” are, to be sure, relatively simple—sufficiently

⁴ As was discussed earlier in chapter 3.

so for industry personnel and audiences with no musical background to have participated in its development, evolution and implementation from the earliest years of cinema. But at the same time, the precise application of the mold's parameters to the musical content produced by film composers, compilers and musical directors has been carried out through diverse and variable processes. I will therefore emphasize in the coming pages that from the standpoint of mainstream practice, film scores and accompaniments can be understood as specific *readings* of film texts arrived at by the composer and other individuals, "little acts of enunciation" or "subversion" that can flawlessly adhere to dominant values just as they can contradict them on occasion. I will also continue to stress that film audiences add a similarly wide range of readings and interpretations of their own to those of production-end personnel, making the internal distinctions between production and reception elastic ones in my analysis.

Structural Characteristics of Mainstream Film Music

As I stressed in the introduction to this study, the principal structural characteristic shared by film narrative and film music is activity within a bipartite, center-periphery field. In my view, there are four important variations on this basic pattern, each of which is associated with its own narrative and musical materials. I call the first and most straightforward of these narrative/musical configurations the "*unambiguous*" center-periphery pattern. Here, narrative elements comprising the "central subject" of a film—not only the focal characters, but also the situations and values around which the story revolves—are clearly presented as positive, and are generally resonant with socially-sanctioned "master narratives." Examples of unambiguous stories are plentiful in Hollywood film, ranging from

silent-era melodramas such as *Orphans of the Storm* (1922) through classical era swashbucklers like *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) and later romantic dramas such as *Pretty Woman* (1990). In movies of this type, central protagonists are invariably constructed as sympathetic or heroic in order to evoke positive identification in audiences. When characters are assailed by various problems or dangers issuing from the narrative periphery, there is no real question whom we should be rooting for and concerned about, or whom we should feel satisfied on behalf of when things work out for the best at the end. In other words, the narrative in these cases is more or less a black-and-white affair, configured according to the conventional good guys/bad guys, hero(ine)/villain, cowboys/Indians oppositions common in Hollywood films.

Musically speaking, the unambiguous center is sustained by a number of syntactic components, the most prominent of which is the major key and scale. Whenever the narrative focal point is explicitly or implicitly stated (through the physical presence of a central character on-screen, for example, or through an indirect reference to focal elements in the speech or thoughts of secondary characters), the major tonality tends to be present in the background score. Inversely, whenever the center is being challenged or destabilized by peripheral elements, a range of more tense harmonic-melodic materials is generally used. In cases where tension is of a milder variety (e.g. when there is a spat between lovers, or at moments of longing, nostalgia, or regret), the music might simply stray to the relative minor or some other non-major chord within an overall major diatonic field. In more intense peripheral instances, the background score often settles in the minor key outright, introduces non-scale tones or chromatic elements, or moves through a rapid series of modulations obscuring the tonal center. In the most

extreme cases of peripheral tension (horror, tragedy, death), dissonant or even atonal materials are frequently used. Thus, in a film like *Captain Blood* (1935), the main protagonist Peter Blood (Errol Flynn) is archetypically heroic. A medical doctor sympathetic to the rebels trying to overthrow King James of England during the eighteenth century, he is repeatedly shown in the opening scenes to be a great humanitarian, a man of noble spirit, and a lover of truth, freedom and his country. Composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold musically establishes the Blood character as a point of centripetal attraction for the mid-1930s American audiences the movie was addressed to, by routinely accompanying Flynn's presence on-screen with cues in the major key. In the second and principal part of the film, peripheral tensions of differing intensities are introduced to move the story along: Blood is arrested as a rebel collaborator and sentenced to a lifetime of slavery in the colonies; he meets a seemingly unattainable love interest in the person of Arabella Bishop, daughter of the colonial superintendent, when he is summoned to treat her father's gout; and he escapes from captivity with fellow rebel prisoners, pursuing a life of piracy on the high seas with them in order to survive. Korngold accompanies many of these periphery-driven scenes with the type of materials just discussed, using milder meanderings from the major tonality behind Blood's meetings with Arabella, and dark minor or diminished harmonies to accompany the pre-escape slavery scenes. But when Blood overcomes his various difficulties, reaffirms the film's core values, wins justice by leading his men against the French at Port Royal on behalf of the new English government that has replaced King James in his absence, unites with Arabella and is appointed governor of the colony that formerly enslaved him, the background scoring characteristically returns to the major key and reaffirms the center,

completing an overall exposition-development-return narrative pattern common to myth, fairy tales, and folk stories.⁵

A second narrative/musical structure is characterized by what I term “*centripetal ambiguity*”. Here, while the essential dynamic of the narrative field is similar to that of the unambiguous story, the center is somewhat differently constituted. In contrast to the clear-cut heroes and sympathetic central characters or situations just discussed, certain of the focal components in centripetally ambiguous stories may for some time appear peripheral in character as the plot unfolds, or at least have a purposely uncertain status. In *Stagecoach* (1939), for example, the Ringo Kid (John Wayne) at first appears to be a menacing character, an escaped prisoner potentially threatening to the central group of travelers. But as the plot develops, he becomes increasingly vital to the passengers’ efforts to survive, and steadily gravitates toward the narrative center. Ultimately, he is fully ensconced there, achieving heroic status and becoming the object of the female lead’s romantic attractions. Similarly, in *Casablanca* (1943), the hard-nosed Rick (Humphrey Bogart), though cynical and shady in his business dealings, does the right thing in the end for the allied war effort, and is assimilated into the center as a result.

While in one sense centripetal ambiguity is simply an extension of the basic technique of using peripheral tension as an engine of narrative

⁵ Note that I have only spoken of the harmonic and melodic aspects of narrative-musical homologies thus far. As the last section of this chapter will further emphasize, these are by no means the only musical parameters organized in this fashion. Rhythms with an obvious pulse and/or meter tend to be more “centered” than those of an amorphous, rubato-like quality. Uniform dynamics and Western instrumentation tend to be perceived in a similar fashion in relation to sudden dynamic changes and non-Western instruments (by the mainstream American audiences listening to film music, at least). All of these tendencies are exploited on a cue-by-cue, passage-by-passage basis by film composers, and determine the type of reading they and the filmmakers who ultimately approve the release of their work give to the film text.

development (only now applied to central elements), it is significant in musical terms in that narrative ambiguity often receives special treatment in the score. Composers have a number of options for scoring an ambiguous scene: the audience can be made to buy into the apparently peripheral status of a character or situation at a particular moment by featuring dark, tense sounds in the accompaniment [Alan Silvestri's ominous treatment over several cues of an ultimately harmless obsessed fan in *The Bodyguard* (1992) being one example in this regard]. Or, the yet-to-be-revealed central status of certain narrative elements can be anticipated with hints at major-tonality sounds [as in Franz Waxman's scoring of Johnny (Cary Grant) during the latter scenes of *Suspicion* (1941)]. A third option—purposely scoring a passage to sound ambiguous and revealing nothing of substance regarding the narrative status of uncertain elements—has also been commonly used in background scores. In these instances, “impressionistic”-sounding harmonies and rhythms are routinely employed: e.g. complex chords containing high-harmonic components (7ths, 9ths, 11ths, 13ths) that obscure the fundamental; uncentered tonal structures like the whole-tone or diminished scales dividing the octave into equal parts such that no tendency to a tonic is detected (modal and pentatonic structures having a similar effect, as John Shepherd has pointed out);⁶ or vague, floating rhythms that make the detection of a pulse or regular meter difficult. Thus, in a film like *Rebecca* (1940), where Max de Winter (Lawrence Olivier) is under a cloud of mystery and suspicion for most of the movie, much use is made of ambiguous musical techniques by composer Waxman. Max appears close to suicide in the opening scene, and although his romance and whirlwind marriage to a new young bride (Joan

⁶ Shepherd 78-105.

Fontaine) lifts his spirits somewhat, he continues to heavily live down the recent loss in a boating accident of his powerful and beautiful wife, Rebecca. When her body is finally discovered and an autopsy suggests she was murdered, suspicion falls on Max. Not only is Max's narrative status unclear at this point (is he a peripheral wife murderer, or a central bereaved widower trying to put his life back together?), his deceased wife also shares in the ambiguity, as her ghostly presence seems to haunt their home (the Manderlay manor) and inhabit the minds of her former servants (the austere housekeeper Mrs. Danvers in particular). Much is uncertain for most of the story, even though Max eventually resolves towards the narrative center when his innocence is discovered and Danvers moves in the opposite direction, towards the extreme periphery, when she burns down the mansion rather than surrender the positive memories of her mistress when the truth of Rebecca's despicable character becomes known. Waxman chooses not to "show his hand" on the soundtrack until the last possible moment in deference to these story factors, scoring Max, Manderlay, Rebecca's presence and Danvers throughout with ambiguous chromatic or diminished materials and unusual modulations or tonal movements.

Similarly, ambiguity is prominent in David Raksin's score for *Laura*, in that we are made to believe for the better part of the picture that the narrative focal point, Laura Hunt (Gene Tierney), has been brutally murdered, when in fact she proves to be very much alive.⁷ Raksin's main theme is appropriately ambiguous melodically and harmonically, restlessly moving through a cycle of fifths progression that seems to have no ultimate

⁷ Some retrospective readings of the film suggest that its construction around the key moment when Laura reappears implies that her apparent resurrection is in fact no more than an elaborate fantasy on the part of the detective Mark MacPherson (see Polan 221). As interesting as this analysis may be, my treatment of the *Laura* score here is based on the more apparent, intended storyline.

resting point. Its presence in the background score thus succeeds in preserving the mystery of Laura's status until it is revealed in a later scene. In the case of *Laura*, however, musical ambiguity can be said to have a more "suspended" quality than in the Waxman example, serving to forestall the revelation of the main character's central status [she eventually becomes the love interest of the male lead Mark McPherson (Dana Andrews)] rather than perpetuating the false notion that she is a peripheral element.⁸

A third pattern features "*centrifugal ambiguity*", and begins to reverse the classical lines of narrational gravity in Hollywood film texts. Here story elements are presented as central, but do not, at least in the final analysis, prove to have the same sympathetic and positive qualities as the previous two centripetal configurations. Centrifugally ambiguous characters or situations typically display a mixture of traits, some attractive and some repulsive to audiences, and the musical score usually reflects this more modern form of narrative ambiguity. One of the most remarkable characteristics of centrifugally ambiguous narrative construction is that it is used in Hollywood film as both a conscious and an unintentional device, depending on the picture and the period. In a post-classical era drama like *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), for example, this type of ambiguity is present by design. A veteran navy officer, Captain Philip Queeg (Humphrey Bogart), assumes command of a battleship during World War II. Initially, Queeg appears very much like the centripetal characters Bogart had played in many previous films: i.e. tough, unconventional, but ultimately properly aligned

⁸ It should be noted before looking at the other narrative-musical patterns that both "unambiguous" and "centripetally ambiguous" stories often, though not invariably, constitute the center as *utopian*. Caryl Flinn points out that this is particularly true in cases where the core textual values expressed are of a nostalgic nature [rooted in America's small town past, for example, as in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)] or inspired by various romantic notions (as in heroic adventures, classical westerns, historical dramas, etc.)

with American social values. (Queeg has a heroic and patriotic record as an officer that reinforces the intended assumptions about him in the drama.) The audience is at first led to believe that the “mutiny” which will inevitably take place (having been announced by both the film’s main title and opening intertitle) must be a peripheral force that Queeg has to overcome. But instead, it turns out that the captain himself is mentally unstable, endangering his crew and the ship with reckless, unbalanced decisions in crisis situations and destroying morale through his compulsive adherence to navy regulations. Queeg thereby gravitates gradually to the narrative periphery after having been presented as central in earlier scenes, a surprising inversion of classical narrative patterning.

In terms of the musical accompaniment to stories of this type, film composers again choose from a number of different options. The yet-to-be-revealed centrifugal status of a central element can be anticipated with tense musical materials in the score, for example. Or it can be concealed through the use of major-key red herrings, as it were, or else underscored by musically ambiguous materials. In *The Caine Mutiny*, Max Steiner chooses to indulge in only one outright deception near the beginning of the story. Two major-key themes (previously connected to the navy and to the ship and its motley but gutsy crew, respectively) play behind the scenes where Queeg officially assumes command of the vessel and begins taking control of the ship. But because the entire ship's company is present in the former scene (including the outgoing Captain deVries), and because other characters interact with Queeg during the latter, it is unclear what the music is intended to accompany. A number of unaccompanied scenes follow, in which Queeg slowly begins to display unbalanced and harsh behaviour. When the music returns, Queeg has degenerated, displaying increased

paranoia and abusing his power on a regular basis, and Steiner begins shading the score towards the peripheral. The darker materials now textually frame the tyrannical Queeg, contrasting with the more positive-sounding Caine motif (a configuration which attempts to resolve the initial ambiguity and remains intact until the end of the picture).

In addition to movies like *The Caine Mutiny* that appear to include elements of centrifugal ambiguity by design, seemingly unintentional instances of the pattern have also occurred in Hollywood film. For example: many 1940s movies contain textual “excesses” in central characters and situations that tend to pull the narrative in two directions: toward an intended centripetal core on the one hand, and to an unintended centrifugal periphery on the other. In *The Letter*, for example,⁹ the narrative seems split from the outset. In one respect, the conjugal love between Leslie and Robert is constituted as central. Nearly twenty minutes into the film, for instance, the couple has the following exchange after Leslie has shot and killed the man who has yet to be revealed as her secret lover:

Leslie: We have been happy, haven't we?
 Robert: You've been the best wife a man could have. If only there was something I could do
 Leslie: You can love me, that's all I need.
 Robert: I've always loved you.
 Leslie: Yes, but now?
 Robert: Leslie darling, if I could love you any more, I would now.

Max Steiner's musical accompaniment reinforces the intended central framing of the scene with major passages in a score otherwise dominated by minor, chromatic and dissonant materials. Subsequent lighter moments the couple enjoy together are treated similarly. But when Leslie's affair is exposed in mid-film and it becomes apparent that the killing was not in self-

⁹ Discussed earlier in connection with censorship.

defense but a crime of passion, her supposed love for Robert is redefined as a narrative deception. The centrality of the Crosby marriage is then replaced by an inanimate centrifugal object (the incriminating letter Leslie wrote begging her lover to visit the night of the murder) as well as the female lead's increasingly contradictory character traits. Leslie has monstrously "exceeded" the societal norm of monogamy, and committed murder in the process. At best, her current relationship with the ever-devoted Robert is a "ray of hope" in classical terms, the hope that she can perhaps be redeemed. But when Leslie is murdered by another "excessive" female character, the Asian wife of her slain lover,¹⁰ it becomes clear that the closed system of classical narrative cannot fully accommodate either of the women. Each is made to absorb the excesses of meaning they bring to the story, in order to protect the system's integrity. The lengths gone to in this regard are extensive in *The Letter*, and music plays a key part in these efforts. Even if Leslie has succeeded in destroying her marriage, in perjuring herself in court and forcing an ethical attorney to defend her unjust cause, and in emptying her husband's bank account of hard-earned money to obtain the letter, the marriage is *still* musically treated as it *should have been*, i.e. the rightful, if not actual, centripetal core of the story. That the letter at one point replaces the upright marriage (and is accompanied by peripheral materials in Steiner's score) is contradictory in classical terms, but entirely logical in terms of the centrifugal patterning that became common after the classical era ended.

A fourth and final homologous pattern linking film music and film narrative follows the tendencies of the third pattern to their logical conclusion, creating a category of fully "*centrifugal*" stories. In such

¹⁰ Meting out the textual punishment demanded by the Hays Office.

instances central elements, while continuing to serve as a narrative focal point, are largely or entirely devoid of conventionally attractive classical qualities. Instead, the main characters can be read as entirely negative by some viewers, or at best as presenting a confusing mix of favorable and unfavorable traits. In certain films of this type, an outright dystopia is constructed as the central situation, inverting classical tendencies and testing the very foundations of standard Hollywood narrative. Again, there appears to be both intentionally and unintentionally constructed centrifugal stories in mainstream film, for the same reasons cited in the case of centrifugally ambiguous narratives. Classical era pictures such as *Double Indemnity* seem to have established precedents in this regard without setting out to do so, featuring narratives focused on depraved characters for whom no real possibility of audience sympathy exists (as well as soundtracks dominated by tense, peripheral musical content).¹¹ Later films intentionally portraying hellish or degenerate situations also tend to devote their musical soundtracks to establishing a negative or menacing atmosphere. In *Taxi Driver* (1976), for example, the psychotic, violent world of Travis Bickle (Robert DeNiro) is accompanied by music ranging from plaintive, harmonically ambiguous jazz to heavy dissonance in Bernard Hermann's score. Angelo Badalamenti's soundtrack for *Blue Velvet* (1986)—a film dealing with the nightmarish underbelly of a small American town—avoids any reference to centripetal musical structures like the major key altogether, limiting the background score to ambiguous and peripheral materials.¹² And

¹¹ Despite Miklos Rosza's contradictory hints at a positive musical reading of the couple mentioned earlier, the bulk of his score for *Double Indemnity* contains minor and dissonant materials consistent with the dystopic nature of the drama.

¹² Although certain background songs (including the title piece "Blue Velvet") and source music cues heard during the film are in the major key, their cheerful sound is

in *Barton Fink* (1991), the exclusively peripheral musical materials are organized in a relative field of their own, with more stable minor sonorities linked to the tense, contradictory focal point in the Fink character (John Turturro), and dissonances or atonality accompanying extreme peripheral story elements such as the hellish environment of 1940s Hollywood and serial killer Charlie Meadows (John Goodman). In each of these cases, and in centrifugally-constructed film narratives in general, music is typically used to guide audiences towards an unsettling or dark reading of dramatic events by coloring the soundtrack with different shades of peripheral material.

Conventional Factors in Hollywood Film Music Practice

While I would characterize the preceding narrative-musical structural homologies as the heart of mainstream film scoring and accompaniment, other factors affect the creation and reception of Hollywood soundtracks as well. Many of these are connected to conventional practices, some of which had evolved in musical-dramatic forms prior to the advent of motion pictures, others of which have come into being at various times during the history of cinema. These include the musical idioms, instrumental media, conventions and principles of musical use in Hollywood film, all of which will presently be discussed.

Musical Idioms. The musical idioms of film scoring are in content terms perhaps the most immediately apparent among conventional factors. As mentioned earlier, silent-era musicians turned to earlier musical-dramatic models in their efforts to effectively accompany films. The

always intentionally and obviously ironic in relation to the images they accompany (as I will discuss in more detail in chapter 6).

incidental music for stage plays and melodrama, operatic and symphonic program music, and the more popular fare found in vaudeville shows, all provided effective precedents in this regard, and a wide range of stylistic traits was drawn from them by film musicians everywhere. But by the 1920s, big business's efforts to distance cinema from its working class roots resulted in the stylistic traits of nineteenth century romantic art music being adopted as film music's dominant idiom by the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many of the prominent composers in Hollywood at the time were European emigrés thoroughly steeped in the music of Mahler, Wagner, Strauss, Puccini and other romantic and neo-romantic composers.¹³ Though many were also familiar with impressionist writing and with the modernist innovations of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Berg and Webern, for the most part Hollywood composers' inclinations towards contemporary compositional devices found no place in the working environment of the studios. Although some exceptions began "seeping through" in the soundtracks of certain films noir and suspense movies by the 1940s (when twentieth-century techniques and jazz music were occasionally used for "excessive" narrative contexts such as the depiction of madness or altered and drug-induced states), classical film music remained firmly rooted in the late-romantic style throughout the period. As Kathryn Kalinak observes in her comments on Erich Wolfgang Korngold's 1935 score for *Captain Blood*,

Korngold's neo-romantic score. . . so precisely reconstitutes the musical idiom of late romanticism that most listeners cannot

¹³ Max Steiner, an Austrian, was then department head at RKO, and was subsequently a chief composer at Warner Brothers along with compatriot Erich Wolfgang Korngold; Bronislau Kaper and Franz Waxman were Polish, Miklos Rosza Hungarian, Dimitri Tiomkin Russian. While Americans Alfred Newman, John Green and Victor Young were active in the 30s, it was only in the 1940s that a wave of younger American composers (including Hermann, Raksin, Elmer Bernstein and others) began achieving prominence in Hollywood circles.

distinguish between [his] original compositions and the two extended selections he borrowed from Franz Liszt.¹⁴

Among other things, the dominance of romanticism in Hollywood practice resulted in rhythmic, dynamic and orchestrational parameters being generally subordinated to melody and harmony in most film accompaniments, particularly where the use of leitmotifs and themes predominated.¹⁵ The principles of Wagnerian opera in particular were so influential in Hollywood that musical expression was generally subordinated to dramatic action in classical films. Nevertheless, Hollywood film music did not embrace all aspects of musical romanticism. The pragmatic studio music departments adopted only those elements of the style they felt would work in the mainstream productions of the studio organization as a whole, and rejected as impractical the large, elaborate forms and small instrumental combinations most romantic musicians were fond of.

While the romantic idiom remains central to this day in background scoring practice, popular idioms began to be featured more prominently in source and non-diegetic scoring as of the 1950s. In addition, the use of contemporary and older “serious” musical styles, as well as idioms found in non-Western cultures, has slowly become acceptable in standard practice. Karlin and Wright cite the music of Bach and Vivaldi as frequent models for post-classical era film composers, for example, and add that “ethnic” and “period” are common descriptive terms used by producers and directors in communicating their musical wishes to film music makers.¹⁶ The same authors also present a wide palette of harmonic languages as

¹⁴ Kalinak 102 and endnote 49, 223.

¹⁵ Leitmotifs and themes are discussed in more detail in the following subsection.

¹⁶ Karlin and Wright 34-35.

available to the 1990s movie composer, including modality, polytonality, quartal and twelve-tone techniques.¹⁷

Instrumental Media. Closely related to the historical idioms of Hollywood film music have been the different instrumental media they have been expressed through. We have already seen that the solo piano and organ dominated early film accompaniments, only to be replaced by the orchestra as the picture palaces expanded in size and exhibition became a more lavish affair.¹⁸ A pared-down version of the Romantic symphony orchestra was to remain the standard ensemble of the classical sound film score, and the European composers who became department directors in the studio system put the arsenal of romantic orchestrational techniques they had acquired in their conservatory backgrounds to good use. They also tended to hire staff composers who were capable of using similar devices. Accordingly, certain conventional connotative instrumental effects linked to European orchestral forms made their way onto classical soundtracks, as Kurt London observes:

When the picture of an irate man appears, brass trumpets are heard;

¹⁷ Most of these are clearly associated with peripheral dramatic situations. In the case of twelve-tone technique, for instance, Karlin and Wright state that its normal use is “for moments of tangled texture and stress,” and cite a cue from Jerry Goldsmith’s score for *The Omen* (1976) in which an evil nanny attacks the main protagonist as an example. (Karlin and Wright 217-228.)

¹⁸ As Attali points out, “the orchestra... has always been an essential figure of power... It is everywhere a fundamental attribute of the control of music by the masters of the social order... The constitution of the orchestra and its organization are also figures of power in the industrial economy. The musicians—who are anonymous and hierarchically ranked, and in general salaried, productive workers—execute an external algorithm, a ‘score’... The orchestra leader, [on the other hand], is... the representation of economic power, presumed capable of setting in motion, without conflict, harmoniously, the program of history traced by the composer.” (Attali 65-66.) It is therefore unsurprising that the orchestra became the chosen medium of film music during the studio period, when the concentration of power within the industry was at its most focused. Even the earlier instrumental media of the piano and organ can be traced to similar political origins, insofar as “The bourgeoisie, unable to afford a private orchestra, gave its children pianos,” and the connection of the organ to the power of the church is well known. (see Attali 69.)

chubby-faced bassoons, when a fat man is seen coming along; oboes, when a quiet valley with cattle is shown on the screen; plaintive violins to accompany a picture of a pair of lovers.¹⁹

. . . mountain peaks invariably invoke string tremolos punctuated by a signal-like horn motif. . . the tremolo on the bridge of the violin, which... years ago was intended even in serious music to produce a feeling of uncanny suspense and to express an unreal atmosphere, ... has become common currency.²⁰

In more practical terms, Kathryn Kalinak notes that “the string family, . . . because of its proximity in range and tone to the human voice. . . (was most) often used to express emotion,” and “Horns, . . . because of their link to pageantry, the military, and the hunt, . . . were used to suggest heroism.”²¹ In any event, it is clear that the body of instrumental practices developed in nineteenth century symphonic music became an integral part of Hollywood film scoring practice during the classical sound era.

Because the romantic idiom continued to be prominent in Hollywood film music after the classical period, symphonic orchestration tended to as well. But parallel to the idiomatic opening that occurred in the 1950s and 60s, other instrumental combinations and sounds were more frequently heard due to the increased profile of jazz and pop music in film. Electronic scoring became far more common in post-classical era Hollywood film music as well, both in soundtracks featuring non-acoustic timbres like synthesizers and, in the 1980s and 90s, sampled scores imitating orchestral acoustic instruments.

Conventions of Musical Use. Also essential to dominant practice are the structurally cohesive functions music has fulfilled since the silent era.

¹⁹ London 160-161.

²⁰ Eisler and Adorno 13, 17.

²¹ Kalinak 13

As Charles Berg points out, the assignment of melodic motifs to characters and situations in film texts began early in the medium's history:

Film musicians turned to opera and melodrama and borrowed the Wagner-inspired leit-motif system for the purpose of identifying or labeling each major character with a specific musical phrase. Typical of the advice on how to use the leit-motif was [the] recommendation that the theme have emotional appeal, be easily recognizable and be adaptable to alteration; the theme was articulated in the introduction (under the credits), reiterated and emphasized at the first appearance of the character, restated with the character's subsequent appearances (or when the character was referred to by other members of the cast), and then received its "ultimate glorification" in the film's finale.²²

The advice regarding the use of leitmotifs in various books and trade magazines during the 1910s and 20s also reveals that conscious use of structural narrative-musical homologies of the "unambiguous" type was prevalent at the time. Creating melodic variations on motifs by modulating from major to minor key was a common device, for example, but its use was recommended only in peripheral situations where "the heroine was under emotional stress or troubled with sorrow," or else "At moments of hesitation, of indecision or doubt."²³ Silent film practitioners also carried forward romantic notions regarding the inherent emotional qualities of certain keys, which were thought to affect leitmotifs in modulations. Ab and Eb major would suggest warmth, for example, Bb or G minor sorrow, A or D major brilliance, and so on. Furthermore, the fact that uniform, unobtrusive dynamics were considered desirable for the majority of scenes, while fluctuating levels were reserved for peripheral narrative

²² Berg 170-171 Film music advice in Edith Lang and George West, Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures (Boston: Boston Music, 1920) 8.

²³ Berg 172.

circumstances,²⁴ implies that assumptions about musical subjectivity in areas other than melody and harmony were already operative.²⁵

Claudia Gorbman emphasizes that the leitmotif continued to play a structurally unifying role during the studio era, and had an additional denotative function in the period:

When in *Stagecoach* Ford's camera pans across Monument Valley to the Indians lying in wait, rhythmic "Indian music" is heard. The motif is redundant (redundancy is far from being a "bad" feature of this film, whose poetry of archetypes depends on repetition and reinforcement)... Recalling Wagner's reason for the linguistic origin of the motif—denotation—we note that the cinema has other means at its disposal for establishing such denotation; aspects of framing, notably the close-up, can single out the referent to which the music will be associated.²⁶

Although its use became increasingly subtle during and after the classical era, the leitmotivic approach remains an important practice in Hollywood film music-making to this day (a fact confirmed as much by the musical content of current soundtracks as by recently published film music manuals such as Karlin and Wright's *On the Track*).

In addition to fulfilling a structural role, music has also conventionally been employed to underline or illustrate explicit screen events. Action scenes, editing patterns such as montage sequences, shot changes, closeups and a variety of other filmic devices have consistently been supported in a direct fashion by music. In the silent era, before the

²⁴ Berg comments that "Variations in the volume of the theme were made in accordance with shifting intensities of the dramatic and emotional situations." The latter included chase scenes, whose backgrounds would include changes in both tempo and dynamic intensity. (Berg 179, 187.)

²⁵ A point I take up in a following section. Berg states that silent film musicians debated whether leitmotifs worked exclusively on the subconscious level for film spectators, or whether audience members could be aware of thematic assignments to characters and subsequent variations. He suggests that the answer to this question is "a qualified yes and no. The musically sophisticated were consciously aware of the music's changes while the bulk of the audience was not." (Berg 180-181.)

²⁶ Gorbman 26-27, 29.

advent of synchronized soundtracks, much attention was devoted on the job and in the trade press to illustrating on-screen events, to providing “source” music for filmed performances within the picture, to “mickey-mousing” or accenting the movements of a character in the film, and to providing synchronized sound effects. Many of these preoccupations of course disappeared with the advent of sound technology, but a number of explicit musical techniques—notably “mickey-mousing” and the timing of musical accents to coincide with cuts and camera movements—have remained part of Hollywood practice to the present time.

The musical treatment of implicit narrative events has also been important since the earliest years of narrative cinema. Music in these cases is intended to express implied but “unstated” or “invisible” aspects of the storyline, most notably the emotions experienced by characters, the mood or atmosphere of scenes and dramatic situations, or the subjective worlds of characters (dreams, altered states, thought, etc.). The trade journals of the silent era were also filled with advice in this area, as were later commentaries by classical practitioners such as composer Aaron Copland, who stated that “Music can create a more convincing atmosphere of time and place, [and] can be used to underline or create psychological refinements—the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation.”²⁷

Principles of Musical Use. A number of unwritten principles have further guided the conception and composition of film music in each of the major historical periods. Many of these have been crucial to communication between exhibitors, producers, directors, and musicians, coming into play

²⁷ Prendergast 201-214.

during the various pre-release consultations, screenings, and spotting sessions²⁸ that have determined film music content since the silent period.

Foremost among these have been principles affecting the general placement of music in relation to film images. During the silent era, continuous musical accompaniment to films was considered an absolute necessity. The principle of providing an uninterrupted stream of music during exhibition was linked in part to the practical considerations of concealing projector noise and other extraneous sounds, and became a conventionalized practice until the advent of sound technology. It also established an aesthetic standard of sorts, conditioning audience expectations to the point that any period of silence more than a few seconds in duration during a screening was considered highly inappropriate. (Allowing such silences became “an unforgivable offense” on the part of film musicians, as was severely emphasized in the trade press.)²⁹ The issue of silent era musical placement was therefore focused not so much on *where* music was to be employed in relation to a film (its blanket presence was taken for granted), but on the internal *content* of the continuous streams of accompaniment provided. There was, for instance, much debate in 1920s trade journals on whether the small details of a photoplay—e.g. sequences of rapidly changing shots, conspicuous elements in certain images, etc.—should be musically illustrated in their own right (resulting in more fragmented, reactive accompaniments), or whether the broader narrative themes of a film should be emphasized in a more cohesive, melodically-based approach to the background score.³⁰ Somewhat ironically, both of

²⁸ As we are about to see, the spotting process takes place in sessions where the composer and key production personnel make final decisions regarding the placement and duration of musical cues. (see Karlin and Wright 45-52.)

²⁹ See Kalinak 49.

³⁰ See Berg 202-218.

these contrasting techniques were to survive into sound era musical practice, whereas the principle of continuous accompaniment underlying them did not.

The transition from silent to sound films saw a variety of musical approaches vying for prominence in Hollywood practice, as we have seen earlier. On the one hand, certain studios attempted to carry silent film principles such as continuous musical accompaniment forward into the sound film. As Kathryn Kalinak points out,

Transplanting the silent film score more or less intact to the sound film was the initial strategy adopted by the industry... Influential composers/compiler of silent film music..., finding themselves musical directors for the new sound films, reproduced the model familiar to them... Even as late as 1932, Max Steiner transplanted the continuous score to the sound film in *Bird of Paradise*.³¹

At the other extreme, many films of the late 1920s and early 30s limited the use of music to source contexts only, eliminating the background score altogether. Between these two diametrically opposed approaches, a third category of film employed a mixture of techniques, including intermittent background music passages, source music, and unaccompanied sequences with dialogue and sound effects only on the soundtrack. By the mid-1930s this mixed approach dominated Hollywood practice, and new principles affecting the placement of music in relation to film narrative began developing as a result.

These principles emerged largely from within the studio system's sophisticated production process during the 1930s and 40s. Preliminary consultations between production and music department staffs would routinely take place in which the script would be discussed, ideas for the

³¹ Kalinak 67.

general musical style of the score considered, and details regarding the general functions music was to play in the film gone over. This was in preparation for the more important spotting session, which would be held once an edited version of the full film was available. In those sessions, the producer, music director, and others would decide where music should be used in the film, what length individual cues should be, and what type of musical content was called for in various instances. Film music conventions would play a vital role in spotting, often facilitating communication between musically untrained production personnel and film music makers. The practice of positioning music to coincide with points of shifting dramatic emphasis (e.g. scene changes, reaction shots, certain camera movements), a convention drawn from previous dramatic forms and from early sound film experience, was one example of how conventional practices could smooth spotting decisions by providing an accepted framework within which placement choices could be made. Conventions regarding the beginnings and endings of musical cues (entries typically crafted to be as unobtrusive as possible, exits calculated to occur just beyond the end of the accompanied sequence) would have a similarly facilitating effect. Guidelines pertaining to underscoring (music with dialogue) were also of vital importance (e.g. relying on strings rather than winds and avoiding extreme registers behind spoken sections, using melody rather than counterpoint along with simple rhythms, slow tempi and soft dynamics in similar circumstances). These and other classical period conventions continued to be of relevance after the period, many in fact becoming even more critical in determining the success or failure of direct “symbolic interactions” between filmmakers and freelance film composers.

Memes. Finally, both live and recorded film music have included conventional structures of a somewhat broader social derivation than those already discussed. “Meme”-like materials—elements of musical discourse propagated among a critical mass of listeners because of their retainability, imitability, and general popular appeal—have long been a vital resource for film music makers. The popular tunes employed by “film funners” during the silent years are one example of early meme usage:

The film funner’s stock-in-trade was a mischievous sense of humor which exploited practically all films for their comedic potential regardless of the film director’s intentions. The film funner would, for example, accompany a dramatic scene where burglars are craftily entering the heroine’s home with the strains of the romantic love song, “Meet Me in the Shadows.”³²

Richard Dawkins reminds us that the successful propagation of memes in the cultural “meme pool” can be gauged by the number of brains able to reproduce them at will (or, in the case of a popular tune, “by the number of people heard whistling it in the streets.”)³³ Film funners would, in effect, rely on the presence of certain memes in the minds of audience members in order to make their musical puns and humorous commentaries on the screenplay. The same may be said of silent film musicians’ “sizing up” of audiences as part of catering to their tastes:

If the audience was largely Italian, Italian compositions would make up a large part of the accompaniment. If the audience considered itself cultured and sophisticated, excerpts from the classics predominated. If a particular popular song was sweeping the nation, it would be included.³⁴

³² Berg 244.

³³ Dawkins 194.

³⁴ Berg 245.

These silent era tactics of course took for granted a different kind of film spectatorship, a form of audience participation that was, in the end, eliminated by the Hollywood studios during the 1910s and 20s. Nonetheless, even after new spectatorial habits had been firmly established in the classical period, “meme”-like elements could still be heard on Hollywood soundtracks of the 1930s and 40s. In fact, many memes prominent in classical sound films had been introduced during the latter silent period, primarily in the form of “atmosphere” music. To establish the ambience of a geographic location, for example, composers and compilers would rely on popularly-formed impressions of “foreign” music that had been propagated in the public domain by Tin Pan Alley songwriters and vaudeville entertainers. While musical impressions of this sort would more often than not have little or nothing to do with the actual music of the social groups supposedly represented (e.g. Native Americans, African Americans, East Asians, etc.), they would be effective nonetheless precisely because they had become part of a majority of audience members’ listening experiences via popular song, and had been converted into memes as a result. Recognizable melodic motifs (drawn from popular tunes and ditties, national anthems, etc.) were also used in leitmotivic fashion as a standard unit of film musical discourse during the 1930s and 40s.

The increasing commercialization of musical soundtracks after the classical period resulted in even more prominent uses of memes in film music. Popular musical styles and sounds from the rock n’ roll era onward were routinely heard in the background scores of films beginning in the 1960s. In a made-for-television police drama of the 1980s, for example, a car turns into a dark alleyway in a “bad part of town” while heavy, distorted rock guitar is heard on the soundtrack. The sounds connote, for

most listeners, the dangerous image associated with “biker rock” and “heavy metal” groups (an image cultivated in large part by the music industry promoters of those artists), and the cue accomplishes its dramatic purpose largely through this meme-based association. In fact, the makers and marketers of post-classical era films are usually eager to include as many commercial “hooks” as possible in their film products, and musical memes in the background score (along with outright music video-like performances worked into the main body of the film) are considered desirable elements for many commercial movie releases.

Musical Reception and Film Spectatorship

If, as I have just suggested, most Hollywood film music is produced from a type of flexible “mold”, a paradigmatic model from which film music makers, working within the reproductive economy of cinema, have created filmic accompaniments in response to institutional and audience needs throughout the medium’s history, then it remains to be seen how conceptions of musical subjectivity have contributed to that model. This section will explore the assumptions—conscious or unconscious—that have been made on the part of film musicians and the film industry as a whole regarding musical and film-musical reception, as well as the viewing-listening subject to whom film musical discourse (the “readings” of film texts from which live or recorded film music results) has been addressed during different historical periods. The influence of more direct forms of audience feedback and of reception-based theoretical discourses on dominant practice will also be briefly considered.

During the earliest years of cinema, a fairly crude conception of film-musical subjectivity appears to have prevailed. Little thought was given to the effect different types of music might have on audiences: while it was generally understood that patrons could not psychologically tolerate the “silent” projection of films, and that movie images became “flat” and “ghostly” without aural stimulation of some sort during exhibition,³⁵ the choice of music to provide that stimulation was largely a pragmatic one on the part of film exhibitors. Finding a cheap and effective way to make the viewing of films palatable to paying customers was their top priority, not experimenting with ways in which to improve the film-musical rapport.

But as film musicians drew on previous forms and adopted willy-nilly the more sophisticated spectatorial approaches of opera, operetta, melodrama, and other forms, a complex process took place in which audience reaction and feedback concerning music, commentaries and advice in trade journals, formational interactivity among film musicians, and a general institutional grappling with the issue of film accompaniment all contributed to a marked transformation of film music from the neutral filler it had initially been to a vital component of an audience’s experience of a film.

The evolution of a narrative cinema that anticipated an absorbed classical spectator, and industry successes in orienting audiences to a new regime of reception, were also essential in this regard. Well before the advent of sound technology, classical spectatorship had more or less been perfected and standardized in moviegoing audiences, and dominant film music is largely rooted in this historical development. The efforts made by silent era musicians, commentators and theorists to facilitate a synthesis of

³⁵ Eisler and Adorno 75.

music's inherent subjective qualities with those of the new classical film reception led to the emergence of the very techniques and principles that carried over into the classical sound period and eventually became the core of Hollywood film scoring practice.

From an institutional and economic perspective, then, there is much to suggest that an effective synthesis of musical and classical film subjectivities took place early in the medium's history. Musicians made a relatively smooth transition from accompanying films in "primitive" variety situations to providing more sophisticated backgrounds for classical narrative films, for example, without unduly alienating audiences or causing music's changing role in exhibition to be seriously questioned by critics or the general public. Music was also a consistently positive factor at the box office throughout the 1910s and 20s, indicating that film accompanists were successfully adapting to the changes in spectatorship taking place then. And the majority of silent film musical techniques and principles managed to survive into the sound era (albeit with some significant modifications), implying that they were already well aligned with classical film spectatorship prior to the coming of sound. Nevertheless, the essentially circumstantial evidence surrounding these developments begs some more fundamental questions. Precisely which aspects of musical subjectivity *were* incorporated into classical spectatorship if the historical synthesis just referred to occurred, for example? And what exactly does musical subjectivity consist of, how can it be defined, and how can its essential functioning be said to operate during the viewing of a film?

Most scholars who have considered such questions tend to focus on music's more general properties. Flinn, Gorbman, and Kalinak, for example, all refer in their attempts to theoretically frame musical subjectivity to Guy

Rosolato, Julia Kristeva, and others working in the psychoanalysis area. As mentioned earlier, these writers tend to understand music as an essentially nostalgic enterprise, one that regresses the subject to pre-oedipal childhood or even to experiences in the womb. For them, the basis of musical subjectivity is derived from the fact that musical sounds have many traits in common with those heard within the womb (insofar as both occur within a “sonorous envelope,”)³⁶ or those heard in early childhood (the pleasure of musical listening being rooted in its ability to regress the subject to a time when an imaginary fusion with the mother existed).³⁷ Beyond this psychoanalytic perspective, we have also seen how Marxian scholars like Adorno and Attali posit music’s general ability to penetrate the consciousness of social subjects, establishing a conduit for ideological conditioning through the openness of its non-representational sign system. Moreover, formalists like Eisenstein, Balázs and Arnheim have taken for granted music’s ontological difference in relation to the visual, focusing their inquiries on issues such as the subjective consequences of the “parallel” or “contrapuntal” relation music bears to film.³⁸ As useful and informative as these works are, however, few accounts of musical subjectivity in the cinematic context seem to have dealt with its basic constituent elements, or with the ways in which film subjects relate to specific musical content on the soundtrack. It is these seldom-mentioned areas that I will now explore in the following paragraphs.

First, musical subjectivity as I see it can be loosely defined as the processes through which musically trained or untrained listeners experience

³⁶ As formulated by Didier Anzieu, quoted in Kalinak 36.

³⁷ As suggested by Guy Rosolato in “La voix: entre corps et langage” Revue française de psychanalyse 38, 1 (Jan. 1974): 81-82.

³⁸ See Kalinak 24-25.

music, whether on a conscious or unconscious level. Its constituent components are the perception of tone, time, dynamics, and timbre, the first two parameters usually outweighing the others in importance in Western music. Given these basic components, attempting to isolate musical subjectivity within the film viewing experience raises questions as to precisely what can be considered “musical” in a cinematic context. Ambiguities often occur in movies that make the institutionalized subdivision of the soundtrack into dialogue, sound effect and musical components a difficult one to sustain at times. For example: should a character’s unaccompanied singing or humming on the voice track be considered musical when it occurs incidentally in a flow of dialogue? Or, when sound effects are not diegetically justified, but behave more like electro-acoustic montages with narrative and discursive significance, should they be considered as music rather than as fulfilling their usual diegetic functions? And what is to be made of music’s often-confusing relationships to the diegetic story-world in Hollywood films (as when background music seamlessly segues into source music, or vice-versa)?

Assuming that movie audiences typically include both the musically initiated and uninitiated, as well as individuals who pay some conscious attention to the soundtrack and others who do not, I believe the key to unraveling the above questions lies in conceptualizing an extremely simple “lowest common denominator” of musical subjectivity, the substance of which facilitates an easy incorporation of musical subjectivity into cinematic subjectivity. This “denominator” is derived from the core components of what most cultures consider musical: that is, the phenomena of *tone* and *cyclic pulse-rhythms*. Whether in the form of simple musical utterances produced by the inherent resources of the voice (in song) and

movement (in various forms of dance, like tap and body slapping, that generate sound), or in the perfection of sophisticated instruments and forms of expression, music can be said to boil down to one or the other (or a combination) of these essential elements. But it must also be emphasized that *cultural selectivity* is at work in the constitution of tone and pulse as the essential materials of music. Certain audible materials are chosen over others as important in musical subjectivity, and this is not an entirely “natural” occurrence.

Think of tone. Even though the full range of sounds a human being is exposed to, whether in the industrial age or in pre- or non-industrialized cultures of the past and present, consists primarily of unstable sounds (babbling brooks, the noisy friction of interacting surfaces, the cries of animals or human beings), most cultures select a comparatively rare phenomenon—the stable tone—from the vast panoply of irregular sound waves as the central element in their melodic expression. That the norm of stable, unwavering notes is an almost universal trait of traditional musics throughout the world is therefore far from coincidental. Neither is the fact that it is by the measure of stability that we gauge passages from speech to music in vocal expression, including on film soundtracks. In addition, generating stable tones is the core objective behind the design principles of most musical instruments, meaning that instrumental music, too, is recognized as such primarily because of the essential stability of its sounds.

A similar claim may be made for stable rhythms. While periodicity is an observable and obvious part of life (in the alternance of day and night, in the progression of the seasons or the movements of the moon and planets, in the beating of the heart and the rhythms of walking and breathing), it is also clear that aperiodicity is in great auditory evidence around us and inside us

as well. Wind makes leaves rustle and branches creak in a complicated, irregular way; the barking of dogs or the laughter of children is seldom evenly spaced rhythmically; water does not usually drip and fire does not usually crackle in metric patterns. It is therefore through being cued by the regularity of a rhythm that we subjectively perceive certain successions of sounds as musical.

Beyond the selection of stable tones and stable rhythms as the foundation of musical subjectivity, cultures also tend to organize tones and rhythms (and sometimes dynamics and timbres) into various systems. As we have already seen, many of these evidence a centripetal dynamic, particularly in post-Renaissance Western music. In tonality, for example, a particular tone is selected as central, and musical pieces unfold as a type of dance toward and away from the central tonic via the peripheral tones surrounding it. Similarly, complex arrangements of simultaneous sounds have also evolved in Western harmony, functioning according to elaborated tonal principles. Moreover, many musics organize rhythmic pulses into cyclic meters, which establish an ongoing pulse and designate one set of beats as primary, creating a time field in which there are not only on-beats and off-beats, but also “strong” and “weak” pulses.

I see all of these different factors indicating an overall centripetal dynamic in Western music, a tendency to perceive musical sounds in hierarchized fields (i.e. tonality, meter, conventional versus unconventional instrumentation, and so on) that was prevalent in both “serious” and popular American music during the early twentieth-century. This established regime of musical reception appears to have been identified by many in the film industry at the time as fundamentally resonant with the forms of classical cinematic narrative and spectatorship then being

developed. I find it logical to assume that as silent era film musicians, exhibitors and audiences were seeking effective ways to combine music with filmed narratives, the link between mainstream musical reception and the new classical spectatorship became increasingly obvious, a path of least resistance through which a synthesis of audio and visual receptive modes could be arrived at in the cinema. One of the principal reasons I believe the film musical structures, conventions, idioms and instrumental media described in this chapter evolved in the way they did was to consolidate and maintain this commercially and aesthetically successful integration of musical and cinematic receptive modes.

To briefly recap: my suggestion in this chapter has been that Hollywood movie music—one facet of a commercial filmmaking apparatus that is fundamentally reproductive in nature—produces its content from a type of “mold”, the flexible features of which guide production-end decisions regarding music as well as the receptive responses to those choices in audiences. Vital to this “mold” are the similarities in structure between the principal patterns of mainstream film narrative and those of music, correspondences which, in conjunction with the various idiomatic, instrumental, and conventional inclusions and exclusions developed throughout Hollywood history, permit the effective use of source and background music for discursive and ideological purposes in motion pictures. The linchpin of the entire system binding music to film is a successful merging of cinematic spectatorship and musical subjectivity, attempts at which began approximately midway through the silent period and was more or less fully accomplished by the advent of talking pictures. The “mold” described in the preceding pages is still central to Hollywood

practice today, although its dominance continues to be challenged by numerous factors I will explore in the next two chapters.

Chapter 6

Residual Influences in Film Music

The analysis of Hollywood film music I have just presented is by no means all-inclusive in scope. Although the strictures of dominant practice have shaped mainstream movie music to a considerable degree, at no point have they ever sealed the area off completely from alternative or contradictory approaches. One has only to listen to any number of important movies to realize that atypical soundtracks challenging to mainstream standards and assumptions are not uncommon in the Hollywood repertoire. To name only a few obvious examples, there is Anton Karas's zither music for *The Third Man* (1949), a score which sidesteps the classical paradigm on the levels of idiom, medium, and syntax (the alpine folk-styled music ignoring for the most part normal center-periphery dynamics in favor of a uniformity of texture and content that generates a strikingly different atmosphere in the picture). Stanley Kubrick's heavily ironic use of music in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) is another instance in which mainstream expectations around background music are purposely upended, in this case by the assignment of major-key centripetal materials to evidently centrifugal/peripheral characters [Alex (Malcolm McDowell) and his "drong"-gang members]. And Fritz Lang's expressionist uses of source music—e.g. in *Scarlet Street* (1945) when Johnny and Kitty, a low-life couple stuck in a dead-end relationship, listen to a popular song on a record that skips at the words "in love..., in love..., in love..."—raises its normal atmospheric function to the level of discourse in a way that is again exceptional in conventional film music terms. Moreover, in addition to "little acts of subversion" such as these, there are the many "slippages"

found on Hollywood soundtracks—slips of the composers pen, as it were, or in the production process generally, that result in contradictory materials or misreadings of the dominantly-grounded discursive intentions of a film making their way into the final background score. (*Double Indemnity*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, and *The Letter* were discussed in this connection previously.) And there are also historical realities such as the “uneven” accompaniments of the silent era or the narratively disruptive uses of commercial songs in post-classical era films to consider in this same regard.

But there is a second, wider sense in which Hollywood movie music regularly steps outside the bounds of dominant practice. As mentioned earlier, certain residual elements whose fundamental features are paradigmatically distinct from dominant practices and conventions also play a vital role in Hollywood film music. We have seen that the cinema—a medium inherently reliant on technological reproduction—retained many important aspects of live performance during its early development. While the projected film itself was a mass-reproduced item whose exact copies different audiences would pay to see, musical performances and other live aspects of exhibition remained variable from venue to venue throughout the silent years. Many “showy” musical practices that had previously been an integral part of direct performer-audience rapports (virtuosic flourishes, special stage dress and gestures, spectacular improvisations, etc.) were transferred to film exhibition and remained important in movie presentation for decades. Moreover, certain types of silent film images—moments of visual grandeur, scenic or visually “descriptive” sequences, wide angle shots, landscapes or other epic sights—were paired with special types of “spectacular” musical accompaniment rooted in the concert hall and pre-

cinematic entertainment forms. (Because visual spectacle tended to make narrative recede to a certain extent, and could potentially bring about a rupture in spectatorial absorption, “compelling” musical cues were routinely employed to counteract the disruptive effect and maintain the impression of continuity essential to classical spectatorship.)

In Foucauldian terms, this confluence of past and present influences amounted to a historical collision of considerable magnitude, i.e. the coexistence in the same cultural space of two very different social configurations, one grounded in the power of spectacle and the “aura” of live performers, the other in mass reproduction and the “stockpiling” of original performances in fixed commodities such as the phonograph record and the motion picture. This comingling of the residual and the dominant in early twentieth-century American culture was therefore fundamental to the formation of the mainstream cinematic medium as we know it, and residual influences have continued to affect Hollywood film and film music in various ways ever since.

Filmed Performance and the Residue of the “Auratic” Past

As Jacques Attali points out in his reworking of Benjamin’s observations on “aura” and mechanical reproduction, the strong sense of connection between audiences and performers that existed prior to cinema was radically attenuated in motion picture spectatorship. A key reason this occurred is that the power behind the live performer-audience rapport was in fact based in much older forms of collective experience: although most performers had long been specialized professionals paid by those attending their shows, they nonetheless assumed a contemporized version of the roles once played by shamans or priests in pre-industrial societies, and acquired

much of the “aura” of those powerful figures in the eyes of the public as a result. It is precisely for this reason that Attali insists pre-cinematic performers had the ability to make people *believe*—in them; in the system of exchange that made their presence and “aura” as showmen and women possible; in entertainment itself. They elicited a type of faith from audiences because their performances enacted what amounted to a simulacrum of the ritual sacrifice, a type of resonant invocation of collective memory that cut to the core of the human psyche and imagination. That the cinema technologically removed the “aura” of these important figures, offering only the secondary recorded presence of its performers to audiences, constituted a serious problem for the nascent medium. In light of the historical context in which early exhibition practices developed, then, many of them can be seen as having grown out of the movie industry’s efforts to deal with an ongoing cultural transition from the “auratic” past to a present increasingly dominated by mass-reproductive technologies. The various live musical and non-musical extra-filmic acts that were an integral part of early film presentation acted as an important bridge for movie audiences, emerging during the period that saw the spectatorship of nineteenth-century forms such as opera, vaudeville and the circus gradually assimilated into a classical regime of reception. This regime would eventually bring about the full acceptance of technological reproduction and the complete loss of “aura” in the sound film.

This is not to say, however, that the elimination of extra-filmic acts in the 1910s and 20s, or even the arrival of the talking film itself, signaled that such a transformation of spectatorship had already been seamlessly accomplished. On the contrary, audiences’ attachment to live performance was so deep that the film industry felt the need to compensate for the

medium's essential lacks in that regard well into the 1950s. To begin with, music continued to provide a live presence in film exhibition right up until the end of the silent era, sometimes even allowing movie audiences to enjoy the "auras" of well-known singers in extra-filmic performances of theme songs or other live in-theater events. But cinema's ongoing links to the "auratic" past went well beyond these more obvious instances of lingering spectacle in the movie venue. As Dana Polan argues in relation to 1940s Hollywood,

the tendency toward spectacle—for example, the freeing of perception from the bounds of obedience to story and storytelling requirements—has always been a tendency of cinema. The forties were in one sense merely the continuation of a process: for example, the continuation with the rise of B movies and double features in the thirties of film-going as a rich experience: features, shorts, cartoons, all becoming equally part of a show. Indeed, the show can take priority over story as even the very act of entering the cinema—crossing the display-filled lobby of the movie palace—becomes itself a kind of spectacle.¹

John Ellis makes a similar observation, referring to the spectacular "promise of cinema" as one of the medium's key features. These arguments point to the fact that even after all live elements were eliminated from movie exhibition with the coming of sound, considerable efforts were still being made to carry forward in some way the lost spectacular aspects of silent film and earlier entertainment forms. (Polan in fact goes on to argue that the early sound years saw an *intensification* of spectacular elements in and around the talking film, implying that a kind of institutional overcompensation for the loss of live "aura" was taking place at the time.²)

¹ Polan 297.

² Polan 297-298.

One reason so many echoes of the “auratic” past were able to linger in the Hollywood cinema is that classical spectatorship and the older forms of live reception were not entirely incompatible in certain respects. Attali reminds us that “the most perfect silence reigned in the concerts of the bourgeoisie, who affirmed thereby their submission to the artificialized spectacle of harmony.”³ It was this same bourgeois regime of spectatorship that show business entrepreneurs had successfully imposed on their largely working class clientele in vaudeville and silent film. What big business movie entrepreneurs attempted to do as the initial trial-and-error phase of cinema slowly came to an end in the 1910s was to transfer the submission and belief of bourgeois spectatorship to the “aura”-less context of motion picture viewing. That they managed to accomplish this from the ‘teens through the 1940s amounted to an extraordinary coup in and of itself. Nothing of the kind had ever been attempted before: even though mass-reproduced media like the printing press and photography did exist prior to film, they were not real-time media, and the appearance of motion pictures meant that a new, secondary form of spectatorship suddenly became prominent in American culture.

By its very nature, the fully-reproduced sound film changed cinema’s connections with the “auratic” past. For one thing, the replacement of live sound with a recorded soundtrack created a much sharper distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic music in the picture. While silent era accompanists had routinely been required to produce “source” music and sound effects during screenings, the explicit nature of audio recording and the presence of voices and sound effects on the soundtrack were such that

³ Attali 47.

the dividing line between sounds within and without of the story-word portrayed on-screen became far more obvious than previously.

Reacting to this new aesthetic reality, filmmakers rejected the use of non-diegetic musical cues almost altogether during the early years of sound, and as a result almost all of the music heard in late-1920s and early 1930s Hollywood movies issued from some visible performance or other source on the screen. This transfer of music from a live location within the theater to a recorded presence within the reproduced film had a certain echo effect in film spectatorship, juxtaposing formerly “auratic”, physically present aspects of exhibition (musical performance and certain sound effects) with newly reproduced elements (voices and ambient effects) on the soundtracks of talking films. The musical performances in early sound movies often seem rather jarring in retrospective viewings because of this initially rough form of integration, drawing audiences’ attention away from an absorption in narrative by partially or completely suspending the storyline and forcing spectators to relate to the spectacle shown for a given time. (Think of Harpo Marx’s musical recitals in Marx Brothers’ films, or the many narratively groundless numbers in early singing cowboy pictures).

But with Hollywood’s reincorporation of background music in the mid-1930s, and the standardization of a mixed approach to the soundtrack in which a balance was struck between diegetic music, background scoring, and lapses without musical accompaniment, the treatment of filmed performances and source music accordingly became more refined. What in effect occurred over the 1930s and 40s was a process of gradual assimilation in which the residual influences in sound films were more or less incorporated into dominant practice itself. Raymond Williams refers to a similar scenario in broader cultural terms, distinguishing between two

types of residual phenomena: in the first type, “certain experiences, meanings, and values, which cannot be experienced or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue—cultural and social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation.” In the second type, “the active manifestation of the residual (this being its distinction from the archaic)... has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture.”⁴ In the case of cinema, then, we see an initial stage in which “auratic” phenomena were juxtaposed alongside reproductive elements, so to speak, and a latter stage during which the two paradigms were more or less seamlessly combined, the residual within the dominant. In the former phase, live music and other non-reproduced elements were handled strategically, integrated into the delicate balancing act of fitting bourgeois spectatorship to a reproductive medium by allowing the residual elements to act as a bridge from the past to the cinematic present. But these remnants were gradually integrated into the silent film text, then into the fully autonomous sound film (live music being the last holdout, as its assimilation had to wait for certain technological developments to be perfected), until only the “display-filled lobbies” of the movie theater remained as a distant reminder of cinema’s initial reliance on live performance and spectacular display. At that point Williams’s second type of residual integration was achieved, the mass-reproduced films themselves now wholly containing any residual traces within their texts, in effect providing the “active manifestation” of “auratic” factors within the reproductive cinematic medium.

What in fact happened in this connection during the classical era was the evolution of a fairly broad range of different treatments of filmed

⁴ Williams, Marxism and Literature 122.

performance and source music within dominant practice. Some of these were aimed at assimilating moments of musical spectacle into the narrative flow as fully as possible, while others allowed performances to temporarily draw attention away from the storyline to varying degrees.⁵

A sequence in *D.O.A.* (1950) is typical of the former, more fully assimilative, approach: Bigelow (Edmond O'Brien), a flamboyant businessman, walks into a San Francisco jazz club during a wild night on the town. A quintet is playing a frenetic bebop number onstage, and the music continues throughout the scene. But while frequent shots of the sweating, bug-eyed musicians emphasize that the scene is revolving around a filmed performance, the sequence is complicated by other front-on shots of audience members writhing in their seats in a type of Dionysian frenzy. Readily identifiable as part of the then-topical "beat generation" counterculture, they constitute as much of a "show" as the jazz players onstage. Overall, however, the narrative grounding of the scene is strong: many of the audience shots include Bigelow and his recently befriended companions listening to the music, including one in which we see him receive an unwanted flirtation from a married woman as her jealous husband looks on, a situation which propels Bigelow away from the group to the bar where the film's most important narrative development—his poisoning—takes place.

What we see in this instance is the purposeful use of a source performance to serve a particular narrative function: the bebop sequence both "enlarges" and exaggerates the images it contains in a way that

⁵ Nonetheless, even these latter approaches to musical spectacle were ultimately assimilative in nature, because music's presence remained subject to "the enormity of the spectator's will—or conditioning—to impose narrative motivations in the viewing of a film," (Gorbman 14) a receptive reality insuring that in the end, even the most extreme instances of on-camera spectacle or other paradigmatically problematic aspects of music in film tend to be recuperated by classical spectatorship.

distinguishes them from ordinary narrative images on the one hand, and at the same time reins in spectatorial tendencies to become too engrossed in the spectacle itself by creating ongoing links to the story throughout its duration.

But as mentioned, dominant practice also continued to include musical performances with far weaker narrative justifications and connections throughout the classical era, risking disruptions in audience attention or jarring juxtapositions of story and spectacle in so doing. Singing cowboy westerns like *Git Along Little Dogies* (1937) and *The Yellow Rose of Texas* (1944) are filled with such instances, and less likely genres and types of film often contained largely uncontextualized musical performances as well. Near the high point of intrigue in the detective drama *The Big Sleep* (1946), for example, a song with virtually no relation to the story (“Sob, Sob Sister”) is performed by Vivian Rutledge (Lauren Bacall) at a party, a seemingly arbitrary insertion that “prompts the question: what is it *doing* there?”⁶

Many of the classical conventions around filmed performances were developed within the Hollywood musical genre. From the beginning, musicals were somewhat of an anomaly in the Hollywood repertoire, for a number of reasons. In the first place, the musical contradicts classical emphasis on narrative by making its stories mere pretexts for spectacle. Not only do the plots of musicals often revolve around the putting on of a show (e.g. in *Top Hat* (1935), *Babes on Broadway* (1941), *Summer Stock* (1950), etc.), the frequent eruption of singing and dancing routines is part and parcel of the genre regardless of the story premise. Furthermore, the spectator is consistently addressed with a directness that runs counter to the normal

⁶ Flinn 114

third-person narrative approach of classical film. The musical's stars and other performers routinely play directly to an audience within the film, which through a series of conventions ends up standing in for the cinema audience itself:

The conventional camera location for recording an onstage performance in a... musical was from an imaginary third-row-center seat within the audience. The resulting shot over the backs of the first few rows of the audience onto the stage (especially when projected upon the enormous screens of the past) gave the spectator the illusion of sitting adjacent to the internal audience, perhaps in the fourth row.. The shot which includes the spectator in the internal audience is never used alone, however, because once our subjectivity is established in the internal audience, we need to see more closely what that audience is seeing. Typically, there will be a cut to a closer view of the performance taken from the theater audience's point of view but eliminating them from the frame. In this second shot, ... the spectator replaces the internal audience... We are, as it were, lifted out of the audience we actually belong to (the cinema audience) and transported into another audience, one at once more alive and more ghostly.⁷

Some musical films even go so far as to have a character stare into the camera and address the audience in the first person [e.g. in early Chevalier vehicles like *The Love Parade* (1929) or *The Lady Dances* (1934), or in later films such as the Garland-Kelly musical *The Pirate* (1948)], a device consciously used to recall the intimacy of live entertainment.

Even when the musical's storyline does not involve the putting on of a show and forms of direct address are not used, many musical numbers are filmed as if they were on a stage (e.g. performed in doorways resembling a proscenium arch, sung through window frames or between cars on a train, etc.). Regardless of the approach taken, Hollywood openly employs and even celebrates the type of direct, hard-sell approach to entertainment it

⁷ Jane Feuer, The Hollywood Musical (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993) 22-28.

supposedly left behind in the 1910s and 20s in instances of this type. The mere fact that musical numbers or other types of spectacle were regularly included in the mass-reproduced sound film from the outset is strong testimony to Hollywood's successful assimilation of the "auratic" past.

A second reason the musical stands out among Hollywood genres is that it routinely depicts and idealizes the very type of communal participation in spectacle that the reproduced motion picture made impossible. The audiences of the fictional shows-within-musicals rarely resemble movie-going audiences, but rather are glorified portraits of residual spectatorial regimes:

The Hollywood musical is one degree further removed from 'folk' art in that it involves mechanical reproduction and mass distribution. From the movie musical's industrial origins stems an alienation that has both a sociological and an aesthetic dimension... Instead of a community where all, at least potentially, may perform, relations of production are alienated from those of consumption... . The performers do not consume the product, and the consumers do not produce it. The Hollywood musical perceives the gap between producer and consumer, [and]... seeks to bridge the gap by putting up 'community' as an idealized concept. In basing its value system on community, the producing and consuming functions severed by the passage of musical entertainment from folk to popular to mass status are rejoined through the genre's rhetoric... The Hollywood musical becomes a mass art which aspires to the condition of a folk art, produced and consumed by the same integrated community.⁸

This integration of the false pretense of folk or popular art into the movie musical was a bold move on the part of cinema, in that it brought to the fore the vital question of whether the medium's assimilation of the "auratic" past was fully operative enough to risk reminding audiences of the earlier period's lost strengths. Given the musical's popularity during the watershed

⁸ Feuer 2-3.

decades of the thirties and forties, and its general decline after the classical era, the answer to this question is by no means self-evident.⁹

A third way in which the musical genre distinguishes itself from other types of film is that it regularly tests spectatorial credulity by exceeding the classical film's usual presentation of "reality". This is a particularly dangerous form of flirtation with receptive limits, in that challenging the suspension of disbelief that is an indispensable element of classical spectatorship (through the regular presentation of such unrealistic acts as the spontaneous bursting into fully rehearsed song and dance routines, or of "bricolage" sequences where "found" objects in the environment magically become props in sophisticated choreographies¹⁰)—and introducing these fantastic acts when the normally-repressed spectacular dimension of film is ideally positioned to take over where the prominence of narrative leaves off—has always been a somewhat risky strategy. Despite offering a kind of utopian fantasy that some viewers find enticing, the quasi-realism of the musical ultimately seals it off from other forms of mainstream filmmaking because it pushes the envelope of even Hollywood's presentation of the real:

Musicals are unparalleled in presenting a vision of human liberation that is profoundly aesthetic. Part of the reason some of us love musicals so passionately is that they give us a glimpse of what it would be like to be free... But the musical presents its view of the unfettered human spirit in a way that

⁹ In this regard, Feuer points out that "Musicals are built upon a foundation of dual registers, with the contrast between narrative and number defining musical comedy as a form. The dichotomous manner in which the story is told—now spoken, now sung—is a very different mode of presentation than the single thread of the usual Hollywood movie. The narrative with its third-person mode seems to represent a primary level. But unlike other kinds of movies, a secondary level, presented in direct address and made up of singing and dancing, emerges from the primary level." (Feuer 68-69.) Feuer's "primary" and "secondary" modes correspond closely, as I see it, with classical and live reception, respectively.

¹⁰ See Feuer 3-11.

forecloses a desire to translate that vision into reality. The Hollywood version of utopia is entirely solipsistic. In its endless reflexivity the musical can offer only itself, only entertainment as its picture of utopia. The very terms it set up for itself, however unconsciously, as an apology for mass art, prevented the musical from ever breaking out of its self-imposed hermetic universe.¹¹

Nonetheless, filmmakers working in other types and genres of classical film borrowed openly from the musical when on-camera musical performances were included in their pictures. The techniques developed in the period to deal with such instances ranged from paradigmatically risky treatments foregrounding musical spectacle and suspending narrative action, to comfortable assimilations of screen performances within storylines [as when the unobtrusive music of nightclub or ballroom orchestras accompanies dances and conversations between characters in films like *The Thin Man* (1935) or *Gilda* (1946), acting as virtual background music with no disruptive effect on narrative].

The wide gamut of options for dealing with filmed performances carried over into post-classical era film, but the motivations for their use changed to a certain extent. As discussed earlier, the economic imperatives of independent production were such that the profitability of individual pictures has been a top priority since the 1950s. The success of a film's soundtrack album became increasingly vital as a result, and on-camera performances of theme songs have often been included in pictures to help boost record sales. Unsurprisingly, narrative assimilation of such financially-motivated numbers has been problematic on many occasions. In *The Caine Mutiny*, for example, a romantic subplot involving Ensign Keith (Robert Francis) and nightclub singer May Wynn (who goes by her real-life

¹¹ Feuer 84.

stage name in the film) is thinly justified in narrative terms. Although set in 1944, the *Caine* story has neither the urgency nor the ideological linking of the homefront and battlefield found in actual wartime movies.¹² Instead, the two sites are presented as having almost nothing to do with one another: Keith relates to May exclusively on shore leave or outside of his naval duties, during which time virtually no mention is made of the dramatically-central goings-on aboard the *Caine* battleship or at the court martial where Keith and others are accused of mutiny. A nightclub sequence near the beginning of the film is used to showcase the movie's designated theme song "I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me". Though some effort is made to assimilate the moment into the storyline (by showing May's change of facial expression as Keith enters the club in mid-song, for example, reflecting the tension she feels toward him over an earlier incident), the fact that the performance takes place within a fragmentary subplot that seems to exist primarily as a pretext for musical spectacle and the integration of a catchy commercial theme makes it all the more precarious in textual terms.

But Hollywood filmmakers have also managed to incorporate economically-motivated performances more effectively into narrative since the classical era. In *The Bodyguard* (1992), for example, a movie dealing with the dangers of stardom in America, on-screen performances by pop diva Rachel Marron (Whitney Houston) are essential to the drama. Rachel's repeated stage appearances are in fact a key plot premise in themselves, as they put her in a vulnerable position at a time when she is receiving death threats from an unknown stalker. Less commercially-oriented source musical performances have also continued to be used for textual purposes in

¹² See Polan 45-47.

post-classical era Hollywood movies. *Pretty Woman*, for example, features a discordant piano improvisation by millionaire tycoon Edward Lewis (Richard Gere) that describes the tangled, conflicted emotions his character is experiencing much as a fully textual background cue might have. Moreover, the instrument itself becomes the site of a narratively important lovemaking scene between Edward and Vivian (Julia Roberts) after she approaches him in mid-performance.

Residual Effects in the Background Score

The examples cited above indicate that a relatively smooth carry-over of conventions and techniques around musical spectacle took place from the classical era to post-classical Hollywood film. But while the entire spectrum of assimilative approaches to musical spectacle developed in the 1930s and 40s was reemployed and refined in various ways from the 1950s onward, the situation has been somewhat different in the area of “spectacular” background music. As mentioned earlier, silent era accompanists not only provided a musical spectacle of their own during exhibition, but were also expected to back visually spectacular images on the screen with “showier” music than would accompany strictly narrative scenes. These separate functions would translate into two distinct sets of film-musical conventions in the sound era, one dealing with the kinds of diegetic performances just discussed, the other complementing moments of visual spectacle from the background score.

Pertaining to the latter conventions, Claudia Gorbman points out that classical “spectacle” music “invites the spectator to contemplate” the images it accompanies, lending “an epic quality” to the screen events it coincides with. Dominant classical practice would further accentuate

“spectacle” music by increasing its volume on the soundtrack, and by fading down or eliminating dialogue and ambient sound effects while it was playing.¹³ The “larger than life” effect of such cues contrasts with what Gorbman calls “intimate identification” background music, which is designed to “draw the spectator in” and is unconsciously felt rather than consciously listened to.¹⁴ But the fact that background cues are more likely to be heard at moments of visual spectacle than at other times indicates that dominant practice was confident in classical spectators’ ability to accommodate a type of shifting of gears, a subtle switch from the full narrative absorption normally demanded by the reproductive medium to a mode of reception closer to what is required by live performance. Gorbman adds that audience members may even experience an increased awareness of each other at such moments, an outcome the structures of classical film normally work strenuously to avoid.¹⁵

Thus, in sequences such as the setting sail of the pirate ship in *Captain Blood*, shots become noticeably longer and more panoramic as the ship is shown from a number of spectacular angles. Majestic, rousing background music rises up on the soundtrack as the sounds of the sea and the sailors’ shouting voices fade out. For a short time, narrative cedes its normally dominant place to spectacle, and music is used to smooth the shift in spectatorial mode this brings about.

The fact that it was usually *instrumental* background music that accompanied such spectacular moments gives a clue as to the score’s real purpose in such instances. Non-diegetic music is essentially a narrative device, and its presence tends to work to assimilate filmed spectacle into the

¹³ Pointed out in Kalinak 97.

¹⁴ Gorbman 68.

¹⁵ See Gorbman 68

narrative whole that classical Hollywood film always aspired to. From a historical perspective, this is the case because once the live orchestra was removed from the movie theater with the coming of sound, no music whose source was not visible or implied on the screen could distract from a visually showy moment with its own complementary spectacle. Rather, background music in the sound film served as a kind of “brake” in spectacular instances, providing a reminder (along with other cinematic devices) of the underlying narrative premise as images with more tangential connections to the story are being shown. In *King Kong*, for example, the spectacular opening vistas of Skull Island are attenuated by the fact that its sighting is a key plot development in itself. Moreover, each of the island shots contains or is accompanied by a number of narratively grounding elements: snatches of dialogue and sound effects continue on the soundtrack throughout the first shot; the landing party (which includes all the main characters) is clearly visible in a small boat in the second; and shots of the island’s natives performing an elaborate ritual dance regularly alternate with others of the landing party sizing up and discussing the situation [including one of Carl Denham (Carl Armstrong), a silent film director in charge of the expedition, verbally framing the spectacular scene with his comment “Holy mackerel! What a show!”]. Max Steiner’s background music unobtrusively binds all of the above together, surging forward slightly when the more spectacular images are present, pulling back under the fragments of dialogue, then synchronizing itself with the natives’ ritual drumming and chanting. Here spectacle is undeniably present, but a minimal pull away from narrative is felt because of all the devices—including non-diegetic music—used to contain its potentially distracting effect.

The classical reliance on instrumental background music at moments of visual spectacle was stretched to include non-diegetic songs with lyrics beginning in the 1950s. *High Noon* (1952) was one of the first Hollywood films to employ this device, placing Dimitri Tiomkin's ballad "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin'" behind the opening scenes without any diegetic justification. Numerous other 1950s and 60s pictures used background tunes [e.g. *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962)], but it was the full pop-rock scores of the mid-to late-1960s [in movies like *The Graduate* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969)] which set precedents by pairing spectacular moments on the screen with songs by popular recording artists, greatly accelerating the approach and more or less standardizing it in dominant practice by the 1970s.

But the commercially-motivated exploitation of non-diegetic pop songs has entailed certain risks similar to those of weakly contextualized performance numbers. The lyrical content of background songs can draw attention to itself as songs are played on the soundtrack, for example (as can spectators' awareness of the recording stars involved and their extra-cinematic careers), potentially distracting from narrative. Indeed, the simultaneity of the strong performance connotations of pop music and the spectacular visuals background songs usually accompany often bring about a synergistic effect that has even greater distractive potential than on-screen musical numbers.

In *In the Name of the Father* (1993), for example, playful rock video-style montages backed by U2 songs are scattered throughout the film, and their relatively thin narrative pretexts suspend the narrative flow of an otherwise serious film about a group of Irish youths wrongly accused of an IRA bombing in London. On the other hand, background songs with lyrics

can, like diegetic musical performances and “spectacular” instrumental background music, be more effectively integrated into narrative. In *Pretty Woman*, for instance, the title song is immediately contextualized narratively by its connection to lead actress Julia Roberts and her fictional character, Vivian. Moreover, its coincidence with a shopping sequence in which Vivian tries on beautiful clothes in preparation for an important plot event further ties the song and its lyrics to the fictional character and narrative context. Background songs are often dubbed at low levels in situations such as these (just below or just above the threshold of intelligibility of the lyrics) to attenuate their distractive potential and enhance narrative grounding.

Curiously, background songs are often initially justified in narrative terms as secondary source music (i.e. as recordings played within the diegesis). In *Thelma and Louise* (1991), for example, a car radio serves as a pretext for the pop tunes played during several travelling sequences. But the radio and its loudspeakers are almost never directly shown, only inferred by the characters briefly singing along with songs at certain points in the car. Moreover, the fade-down (or completely out at times) of all other diegetic sounds in the road scenes strongly signals the basic non-diegetic context of the music. In fact, secondary source music in general has received as wide a range of filmic treatments as on-camera performances since the classical era. At one extreme, source music can amount to little more than a *mise-en-scène* element whose presence establishes a certain atmosphere: *The Last Picture Show* (1971), for instance, employs numerous country-western songs emanating from television sets, home phonographs and other sources to evoke the milieu of a Texas town in the 1950s. Or else diegetic music can serve a more discursive function and be effectively assimilated into

narrative at the textual level (as in *D.O.A.*, when a sultry vocal ballad played from the club's jukebox "describes", in terms almost identical to conventional non-diegetic music, the "blonde bombshell" Bigelow approaches at the bar following the bebop performance).

But some uses of secondary source music are less strongly assimilated than in these instances, and carry a greater inherent risk of narrative disruption. Harry Stoner's (Jack Lemmon's) intense listening to tape recordings in *Save the Tiger* (1973), for example, while narratively justified to an extent by the character's impending psychosis and a growing pathological obsession with the past, nonetheless potentially create a situation in which audience attention is torn between the storyline and the well-known standards being played.¹⁶ Moreover, strong performance connotations can be connected to source music emanating from radios [as in *The Killing* (1956), where broadcasted jazz is prominently heard during several key scenes] or even from playback devices (as in *the Bodyguard*, when videos of Rachel's performances are viewed on several occasions).

Residual Influences in Dominant Practice

Whether in the background or source music areas, the assimilation or juxtaposition of residual elements has influenced dominant film musical practice in a variety of ways. For one thing, filmed performances and non-diegetic pop-rock songs led to the appearance of many new musical idioms and timbres on Hollywood soundtracks. Jazz was introduced largely through on-camera performances in movies like *D.O.A.* and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), for example, as was rock n' roll in pictures such as

¹⁶ Including the Bunny Berrigan recording of the Vernon Duke-Ira Gershwin favorite "I Can't Get Started With You," Benny Goodman's "Air Mail Special," and other recognizable tracks.

The Girl Can't Help It (1956) and *Rock, Pretty Baby* (1956). Moreover, the use of popular background theme songs in 1950s movies and full pop-rock soundtracks from *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) on unleashed a flood of new materials and sounds into film music that seriously challenged the previous idiomatic hegemony of late-romantic scoring for the first time.

The narrative-musical patterns and structural homologies of dominant practice were also transformed by residual effects, particularly by the tendency of musical spectacle and “spectacular” background music to act as “enlargers” (or, to use a less visual metaphor, *intensifiers*) of structural elements and their gravitational patterns. In the Hollywood musical, for example, narrative structures are basically similar to those of other films, even when stories act as mere pretexts for spectacle. Central and peripheral elements (sometimes even ambiguous ones) are arranged in narrative-musical fields, typically of the centripetal type. *The Band Wagon* (1953), for example, starts out at the narrative periphery, as we witness the disastrous attempts by an egotistical, snobbish director to put together a show. His project seems doomed to failure: technical difficulties abound, the leading lady Gabrielle (Cyd Charisse) is a tempestuous prima donna of the first order, and the sympathetic leading man Tony (Fred Astaire) seems powerless to turn things around. But of course things eventually do turn around, and the centripetal lines of gravity in the story (which move towards a center whose core is a new, more accessible and contemporary version of the initially troubled play) are confirmed. Given this overall narrative scheme and the musical structures reinforcing it, the effect that takes place at the many moments of musical spectacle in the film is fairly clear. In the case of the centripetally ambiguous Gabrielle, for instance, her initial numbers emphasize the stiffness and inaccessibility of her classical

ballet approach, tending to amplify the peripheral ruse around her character by displaying her shortcomings in the context of a performance. But when she begins to overcome her inhibitions by dancing in the dark with Tony later on, her centripetal movement towards the narrative center is accented by the spectacular context in which it takes place—written somewhat larger than in purely narrative films, as it were. Similarly, Tony—whose centripetal status is never in doubt, but whose ability to fully express it is initially blocked by peripheral circumstances—radiates his positive centrality in an especially intense way through song and dance routines the moment those troubling circumstances begin to change (i.e. when he rediscovers the secrets of popular appeal by dancing with a shoe-shine man at the site of his former vaudeville glories).

In this way, instances of musical spectacle—whether in the musical as above or in other types of film—tend to intensify structural elements and narrative lines of attraction, magnifying certain story elements in such a way that they are perceived as if in slow motion, with more ample time and space in which to contemplate them than in non-performance instances. The jazz number in *D.O.A.* slows the pace of the narrative down just prior to Bigelow's poisoning, a brief pause in the forward momentum of the story seemingly designed to accentuate the key plot development that immediately follows it. Similarly, Sam's (Dooley Wilson's) performance of "As Time Goes By" in *Casablanca* emphasizes Ilsa's (Ingrid Bergman's) feelings of nostalgia by permitting a long closeup of her wistful expression as the tune is sung. Such intensified moments can, however, also be narratively disruptive when they amount to non sequiturs with little or nothing to do with the story. The pause created by Vivian's "Sob, Sob Sister" rendition in *The Big Sleep* is more of an interruption than anything

else, a narratively empty moment during which spectators simply wait for the dramatic action to resume. Banjo's (Jimmy Durante's) musical routine in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1941)¹⁷ is no more than an amusing sideshow in the picture as a whole, and Elvis Presley's crooning in *The Trouble With Girls* (1969) and other films is narratively disruptive in its attempt to showcase the star's talent.

Well integrated or not, the "magnification" function of musical spectacle can intensify elements based in the wider social dimensions of Hollywood film as well. In *Stagecoach*, for example, the sole instance of musical performance is heavily laced with ideological implications connected to race and ethnicity. On arrival of the travelling party at a fort en route to their final destination, one of the Mexicans who welcomes the stage explains to a startled passenger that he has married an Apache woman to avoid problems with Geronimo. The woman does not speak to the white visitors at all, but later that night we see her performing a soft song for other Mexicans in the fort. The Spanish lyrics are sung in minor key, and after the song's last verse the woman urges her listeners to steal the stage's extra horses and escape. In this, we see the use of musical spectacle (and the power of its charismatic performers to make people believe in them¹⁸) as an intense symbol of cultural otherness. The slowed-down moment of spectacle allows the audience ample time to contemplate the implications of the Apache woman's transformation of song into a weapon that menaces the white American characters at the center of the drama.

Similarly, the *D.O.A.* bebop sequence is far from neutral in political and power terms, its intimations of substance abuse among the "beat" audience members and unpleasant racial stereotyping of the black musicians

¹⁷ Discussed further in the following section on cinema stars and music.

¹⁸ As Attali points out repeatedly in *Noise*.

containing a marked ideological slant emanating from the conservative and ethnocentric values of its time. Furthermore, music's role in objectifying women at moments of scopophilic spectacle [e.g. when a burlesque-sounding trumpet accompanies a point of view shot of Cora (Lana Turner) when Frank first sees her in *The Postman Always Rings Twice*] reinforces the patriarchal values which have long insured women's marginalization as subjects within filmic discourse.¹⁹

We also saw that the intensity of the residual echoes of "aura" and live performance in film have been used towards economic ends by Hollywood: May Wynn's singing of "I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me" in *The Caine Mutiny* is little more than a commercial plug, an employment of musical spectacle at a narratively suspended moment in the picture to "magnify" the catchy tune and increase spectators' desire to buy the film's soundtrack album. Moreover, specific Hollywood genres (the musical, the singing cowboy western, the teen picture, etc.) take advantage of the commercially attractive effects of musical spectacle, and the standardized use of pop source and background music on soundtracks after the classical era has further institutionalized the assimilation of influences from the "auratic" past to achieve the economic objectives of the industry.²⁰

¹⁹ As argued by many feminist film scholars, including Laura Mulvey in her influential "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." [*Screen* 16,3 Autumn (1975): 6-18.]

²⁰ In this same regard, Attali points out that twentieth-century capitalism has routinely employed live media to "showcase" mass reproduced products. Having inspired the very structures and content of the film and musical recording, residual forms are now relegated to promoting the fixed cultural commodities of its mass-reproduced progeny, as it were. In this way, live concerts serve primarily to promote record sales in the music industry, and appearances by movie stars and directors before television studio audiences or at live events such as award ceremonies serve a similar function in relation to Hollywood films.

Stars, Music, and the Residual

A final area in which I see residual influences affecting musical content is cinema stardom. As previously mentioned, the consistent use of stars in films began during the years of the MPPC monopoly, not at the initiative of the cartel itself but through the business strategies of the aggressive independent production companies struggling to compete with it. In fact, the MPPC purposely avoided the cultivation of stars as marketing tools to promote their films, knowing full well that the rising popularity of certain actors with the film-going public would lead to inflated salary demands. At its own peril, the trust decided that selling the general experience of cinema alone was sufficient to ensure its survival and continuing dominance of the industry. It then stood by and watched as competitors voraciously gobbled up its market share in the 1910s, primarily through use of the very marketing device the cartel was stubbornly avoiding. What the early independents seem to have understood that the MPPC did not was the deep need their customers felt for charismatic performers to focus on and identify with, a need that was clearly rooted in the entertainment forms and regimes of spectatorship that preceded moving pictures.

The direct transfer of a star's "aura" from the performing stage to the film medium was by no means a self-evident process, however, as Jane Feuer points out:

Charismatic entertainers—Jolson and Maurice Chevalier were two of the earliest—... epitomized every quality... Hollywood sought to appropriate from its live ancestors... The 'hard-sell' vaudeville personality [brought with it]... a style of performing whose goal was direct contact between performer and audience... Yet the dream of immediacy came up against the

reality of technological truth: film was not a 'live' medium. Performances in film are recorded performances.²¹

Despite the fact that the subject matter of the earliest sound shorts (1926-27) almost exclusively revolved around live musical and vaudeville acts, the novelty of being able to see name performers in smaller venues that could never have afforded to book such entertainers soon wore off. Audiences quickly recognized that the filmed performance of an Al Jolson or a Maurice Chevalier was in no way equivalent to the live experience of seeing those charismatic headliners on the stage.

Because "aura" was not readily transferable from a live to a reproductive medium (even after sound technology made it possible to capture the full presence, including the speaking and singing voices, of popular entertainers), it was clear that a different type of star would be required for the cinema. Relating this to Williams' comments on the residual, a star whose "auratically"-based charisma stood in juxtaposition to the reproductive medium in which he or she appeared would, in the mainstream context of Hollywood cinema, not be nearly as effective in commercial terms as the star whose appeal could be effectively assimilated into the reproductive economy of the motion picture.²² This assimilation was facilitated by the fact that there was some common ground between the new and old forms of stardom: as Attali reminds us, the earliest true "stars" of the mid-nineteenth century were, in their own way, phenomena that anticipated reproductive culture. Although the "aura" of performers was

²¹ Feuer 1-2.

²² Williams specifies that certain residual elements (which correspond, in my view, to the transplanted stars of older entertainment forms featured in the cinema of the 1910s and 20s) tend to stand in an alternative or even oppositional relationship to the dominant when appearing therein, an obviously inappropriate and unwanted position given the mass-market objectives the studios have had from the outset. The assimilated star, on the other hand, tends to reinforce and confirm dominant practices and values, a far more desirable outcome in Hollywood terms.

based in their unique presence in time and space, as soon as their live appearances in spectacle were introduced into the realm of money and the original use-value of their connection with audiences converted into exchange-value, an inevitable process was set in motion:

Ruthlessly, the logic of political economy accelerated the process of... commodification, ...[and] the selection and isolation of... those who were 'profitable'—in other words, the *stars*—producing a new kind of consumer good necessarily implied by the key rules of competitive exchange—*success*.²³

The same emphasis on stars and marginalization of lesser performers that occurred in the film industry from the 1910s on had thus been foreshadowed in the European music world of the mid-nineteenth century:

Introducing music into exchange... submitted it to competition. It thus necessarily entailed the triggering of the process of selection and concentration—the durability of those who adapt the best to the system's rules of functioning—and made it impossible to preserve a localized, nonhierarchical usage of music. Selection and universal consumer access to the same music set a process in motion whereby the market expanded for certain musicians, and disappeared for others. ...Localization quickly became incompatible with exchange. Production for a wide market became the rule, paving the way for mass production, after replication became possible. Thus if the star preceded [mass reproduction], both were a consequence of the entry of money into music.²⁴

As we have seen, the type of “pyramid scheme” this led to became an increasingly central feature of the Hollywood industry after the disintegration of the studio system and the rise in independent production during the 1950s.

John Ellis defines the star as “a performer in a certain medium whose figure enters into subsidiary forms of circulation, and then feeds back into

²³ Attali 68.

²⁴ Attali 68.

future performances.”²⁵ This type of “feedback loop” is fundamental to the economy of mass reproduction, and the “subsidiary forms of circulation” Ellis suggests create the loop in cinema stardom are based in other media covering the star’s life and work (e.g. newspapers and magazines in various articles, radio and television in interviews and features, fanzines and advertisements, etc.). Of course this coverage has the collateral effect of promoting the movies in which the star appears, and Ellis sees these extra-cinematic supports as crucial insofar as they issue a relatively specific “invitation to cinema” as well as containing a more general “promise of cinema”. The former “invitation” is focused on particular films, and implies that the various “teasers” and partial views of the star circulated in subsidiary media will be completed by the experience of the star’s more substantial presence in a specific movie. The latter “promise” functions in a similar way, but is more diffuse in nature, relying on constantly circulating gossip and speculation about stars (again creating incomplete impressions of them) as a means of increasing general demand for the Hollywood films that are their *raison d’être*.

But these promises and invitations to cinema are based on a number of essentially false premises, according to Ellis. Principal among them is the fact that stars are simultaneously present and absent in their films, as well as in the subsidiary promotions of those productions. Echoing Roland Barthes’ work on the still photograph in “Camera Lucida”, Ellis calls this particular paradox in the star’s makeup the “photo effect”:

The cinematic image (and the film performance) rests on the photo effect, the paradox that the photograph presents an absence that is present. In this sense the star image is not completed by the film performance, because they both rest on

²⁵ John Ellis, “Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon,” *Star Texts*, ed. Jeremy G. Butler (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1993) 303.

the same paradox. Instead, the star image promises cinema. It restates the terms, renews the desire to experience this very particular sense of presence-absence.²⁶

This tension between the presence and absence of stars is complemented by another dichotomy—their “ordinariness” and “extraordinariness”:

The stars are presented both as stars and as ordinary people: as very special beings, and as beings just like the rest of us... Thus we have Bette Davis’s recipes [and] Tyrone Power’s baseball achievements; Audrey Hepburn’s affinity for Givenchy clothes [and] Errol Flynn’s big game hunting. Photographs similarly will show stars in the most mundane of postures, feeding babies or just relaxing in old clothes; and then in the most exotic, performing stunts at a lavish party or meeting the King of England. These are the general rules that govern the specific coverage given to stars: there are two aspects, one the ordinariness of the star, the other the totally exceptional nature of the star, endowed with some special talent and position.²⁷

In addition, the star image itself enters into a frictional rapport with the “narrative images” stars help create. Narrative images provide a foreknowledge of film plots as part of a promotional campaign (in movie trailers, for example), and stars usually figure prominently in them. But given the fictional basis of a film’s narrative image, and the rather differently constituted star images of the lead actors in the film (which invariably include built-in paradoxes and different layers of mystery and incompleteness), the two types of image are not necessarily compatible.

What all of Ellis’s observations point to, from my perspective, is the fact that stardom in a reproductive medium is built on a somewhat fragile foundation. If the charismatic figures of live spectacle had the power to make people believe in them (as well as in certain ideologies and depictions of the world), then mass reproduction could only carry that ability forward into cinema through an effective assimilation of stardom and a smooth

²⁶ Ellis 304.

²⁷ Ellis 305.

adaptation of its “auratic” features to fit a new set of economic and cultural objectives. Hollywood film managed to accomplish this by the 1920s, transforming stardom into a textual and intertextual phenomenon whose links to the “auratic” past became increasingly assimilated and passively residual in Williams’ sense of the term.

But once again, as with on-camera performances, “spectacular” and source music, this process of assimilation was more or less successful depending on the film and the star, and the musical content accompanying stars’ presences on the screen has been similarly uneven as a result. Perhaps the riskiest, most jarring instances of residual effect occur when eruptions of musical spectacle directly involving stars (as singers, dancers, or musicians, typically) occur in Hollywood films. Stars with strong images as stage performers can be particularly problematic in such occurrences, in that the absence of live “aura” is perhaps felt most tangibly in their cases. Jimmy Durante is an example in this regard: his film appearances in roles such as Banjo in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* amount to little more than filmed vaudeville routines, replete with self-accompanied songs and physical comedy bits. Although thinly integrated into the storyline in this instance [Banjo is a friend of central protagonist Sheridan Whiteside (Monty Woolley) who visits the injured guest during his extensive stay at the home of a small town Ohio socialite], Durante always seems indelibly himself in such parts, his live performance-based presence appearing to transpose itself into a reproductive medium only with a certain degree of difficulty.

In less extreme instances than these, the nature of a star’s fictional role in a picture can nonetheless have considerable influence on the residual effects spectators sense in relation to it. For example: John Ellis points out that if the fit between actors’ film parts and their real-life personalities (or,

as is more usually the case, between their movie roles and their circulating star images) is consistently a close one, then a minimum of friction between the casting of the star in a particular story and the star as a generally circulating, extra-filmic phenomenon is felt by the audience. This is perhaps a best-case scenario in terms of dominant practice, as distraction from narrative is negligible in these instances, and the musical approach to the star's presence on the screen is generally clearly circumscribed as well. (Errol Flynn is one example of a star requiring a relatively straightforward set of musical accompaniment choices, his energetic and adventuresome persona on and off the movie set having invariably called for positive, unambiguously heroic-sounding backing from Korngold and others who scored the pictures he was in.)

Similarly, when roles are “to one side” of a star's image (i.e. when “certain elements of the publicly circulated star image complex are used by the film, other elements are refused, and further elements are added”²⁸) little conflict between role and image is normally experienced by spectators, and film music makers are generally free to treat the star's fictional part independently of his or her generally circulating image (or even to call attention to the interplay between the two aspects). John Travolta's portrayal of hitman Vincent Vega in *Pulp Fiction* (1994) is an example in this regard: while the violence and drug addiction of the character do not necessarily fit Travolta's overall image, the film makes use of this slight mismatch for satirical purposes, particularly in a scene where Vince and Mia (Uma Thurman) enter a dance contest in a 1950s retro diner. The spectacle of their twist number acts on one level as a clear reference to Travolta's famous dancing role in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), and colors

²⁸ As was the case with many of the parts played by an actor like Doris Day, Ellis adds. (Ellis 311.)

the Chuck Berry song “You Never Can Tell” accompanying it with intertextual associations linked to the star’s general image.²⁹

The situation changes somewhat when different degrees of tension exist between a star’s image and the fictional role they assume in particular films. In *Suspicion* (1941), for example, Cary Grant was cast as Johnny Aysgarth, a suspected high society swindler and murderer. Had the RKO studio elected to stick with the original story in the Anthony Berkeley novel³⁰ [in which Johnny proves to be precisely what his new wife Lina (played by Joan Fontaine in the film) fears he is], this would have amounted to a strong contradiction of Grant’s uniformly positive star image at that point in his career. But the movie version was changed (over Hitchcock’s objections, reportedly³¹) such that Johnny’s suspicious behaviour is quickly explained away in the very last scene to preserve Grant’s overall sympathetic persona. Nonetheless, Franz Waxman’s musical treatment of Johnny/Grant reflects the tension between role and image that exists throughout the film. Early scenes are purposely scored to reinforce audience assumptions around Grant’s role, abounding in playful, light cues in the major key. But when Lina’s suspicion of Johnny begins to mount, the musical accompaniment takes a marked turn towards peripheral sonorities, and remains in that area until the final longshot of Johnny’s car returning home (where he and Lina will supposedly work through the rift caused by her mistrust). Waxman was careful, however, not to push the audience’s reading of Johnny too far in a negative direction prior to his somewhat

²⁹ The same music would sound very different in films like *The Buddy Holly Story* (1978) or *American Graffiti* (1973), for example, in which none of the humor and satirical edge in the *Pulp Fiction* instance would likely be present for spectators, given the more reverential treatment of music from the same period in those pictures.

³⁰ *Before the Fact*, written under the pseudonym Frances Iles.

³¹ See Jay Robert Nash and Stanley Ralph Ross, *The Motion Picture Guide* (Chicago: Cinebooks, 1985-1987) vol VII: 3228-3229.

abrupt redemption at the end, and inserted several brief modulations to the major in cues accompanying the couple, even at the height of suspense and doubt about Grant's character.

Some filmmakers purposely take advantage of strongly established role-image resonances in particular stars—and audience expectations around those resonances—to ultimately contradict them. Music can play a key part in such approaches, as In *Barton Fink*, where the soundtrack is instrumental in sustaining an extensive ruse around John Goodman's character Charlie Meadows. The star's jovial, good-natured image outside of the film matches the surface mannerisms of the fictional character, who converses with Fink in a pleasant, affable fashion through most of the film. These interactions are unscored until well into the story, when Fink is told by two detectives that Meadows is a wanted mass murderer. Only then are the remaining scenes involving Charlie and Fink accompanied by heavily peripheral cues, which are thematically connected to earlier events immediately following or preceding Meadows' presence in Fink's hotel room (e.g. the surrealistic peeling of wallpaper from the heat of Charlie's demonic being in the adjacent room, and the bloodstains seeping through Fink's ceiling as Meadows stashes one of his victims' corpses on the roof). The scoring strategy employed by composer Carter Burwell then becomes clear: in order to reinforce audience assumptions around Goodman and enhance the shock effect when the extreme negativity of his character is discovered, peripheral music is only indirectly applied to Meadows prior to the point judged optimal for dropping the key narrative ruse revolving around him.

Instances in which certain details of a star's real life become publicly known via news and gossip, and are sufficiently powerful to penetrate into

her or his fictional roles, are even more delicate in this regard. Musical accompaniment is often affected in such scenarios, particularly on the level of spectatorship. In a film like *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), for example, Alfred Newman's jazzy clichés accompanying Marilyn Monroe's presence on the screen are standard musical significations of female desirability in 1950s Hollywood films. But in retrospective viewings (after the tragic details of Monroe's life and the heavy toll stardom took on the actress became widely known), such musical caricatures take on an entirely different meaning, their discursive framing of Monroe as a sex symbol less readily acceptable than prior to her death.³²

Similarly, musical flexibility in the treatment of certain stars is affected when they have been strongly defined as actors and actresses by particular narrative patterns and polarities. For example: actors who are repeatedly featured in positive roles often require special musical accompaniment if their casting pattern is ever broken. Consider the example of *Vertigo* (1958) in this regard: Jimmy Stewart, a star whose many film roles had established him as "the personification of American idealism" and as "a man of honor with an unswerving sense of duty,"³³ was cast as Scottie Ferguson, an unbalanced ex-policeman obsessed with the wife of an ex-classmate [Madeleine Elster (Kim Novak)]. Bernard Herrmann's score blankets the soundtrack with peripheral musical materials, all of which accompany Ferguson alone or in his warped dealings with Madeleine. One senses in this and other Hitchcock pictures featuring Stewart³⁴ that composers were working from a certain premise, i.e. that because of the

³² Also consider the example of Christopher Reeve in this same regard, a star whose becoming a quadriplegic after a riding accident has permanently colored audiences' retrospective perceptions of his roles in the *Superman* films and other pictures.

³³ International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers vol. 3, *Actors and Actresses* (Detroit: St. James Press, 1997) 1156.

³⁴ *Rope* (1948), *Rear Window* (1954), and *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956).

leading man's overwhelmingly sympathetic image, audiences would assume any peripheral music coinciding with his presence in the film must necessarily signify dangers from without rather than negativity from within the characters he played. This is indeed what Hermann plays on at the beginning of *Vertigo*, when strongly dissonant cues accompany the traumatic incident which is the cause of Ferguson's vertigo, as well as subsequent nightmarish memories of it. But Hermann then spends considerable time building a negative-centrifugal portrait of the character, repeatedly applying dark minor harmonies and dissonances to Ferguson's voyeuristic spying episodes and tense moments with Madeleine—an insistent framing I see as necessitated largely by the previous positive polarization of Stewart's star image.

The reverse scenario can also be true, however: that is, a star associated primarily with negative-centrifugal characters can equally create challenges for composers when the narrative polarity of his or her role is out of the ordinary. Vincent Price's portrayal of the Inventor in *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) is an example in this regard. Although the gothic castle in which the Inventor creates Scissorhands is musically accompanied in stereotypic fashion with eerie, peripheral sonorities, the elderly Inventor himself is sympathetic and kindly in this instance, and receives special musical treatment that counteracts Price's previous typecasting as a host of menacing or ghoulish characters. Composer Danny Elfman consistently builds a positive musical framing for the Inventor throughout several scenes, balancing minor harmonies with the major key to underline both the sadness of Scissorhands' incompleteness and the Inventor's loving attentiveness towards his creation. But the overall lightness of texture and orchestration, as well as the child-like quality of all the Inventor cues, leave

no doubt as to his positivity, a carefully thought-out musical portrait designed to realign expectations around Price for the purposes of the film.

On the other hand, stars who have consistently moved between positive, negative and ambiguous roles can be unproblematically accompanied by many types of musical material because of the flexibility of their images. The screen performances of a star like Laurence Olivier, for example—which range from unambiguously positive roles in films such as *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957) to the ambiguous Max de Winter in *Rebecca* and outright villains like the ex-Nazi dentist Szell in *Marathon Man* (1976)—are sufficiently broad as to allow for virtually any kind of discursive musical treatment in relation to his characters without any conflict with Olivier’s generally circulating image.

In sum, I have emphasized throughout this chapter that for a variety of economic, institutional and textual reasons, dominant Hollywood practice has consistently worked to integrate within the reproductive cinematic medium the residual effects of live performance, musical spectacle, and other elements connected to the “auratic” past. Attempts to assimilate these residual effects can be seen in a number of key areas, including the evolution of cinema stardom, instances of musical performance and secondary source music in films, and the use of “showy” background music at moments of visual spectacle. The residual traces of the “auratic” past have also required a special kind of structural integration within dominant practice, as “intensifiers” of certain narrative elements or the centripetal and centrifugal lines of gravitation in stories. Moreover, various conventions have evolved to deal with the potential distractions of musical spectacle in film, many of which were developed in the musical genre and

other types of classical film featuring musical performances. From the 1950s on, a number of significant developments in film music have been fueled by new conventions around “spectacular” background music, including the introduction of new musical idioms and instruments through the use of jazz and pop-rock songs in non-diegetic scoring.

But as we are about to see, many of these residually-related practices and conventions are ironically also part of certain emerging trends in Hollywood film and film music, trends I believe may eventually redefine the entire paradigm on which mainstream movie music and the motion picture industry as a whole are based.

Chapter 7

Emergent Trends:

Reflections on the Future of Music and Moving Images

Jacques Attali's assessment of the course Western civilization has taken from its origins until the late-twentieth century is a sobering but accurate one in my opinion. In Attali's formulation, pre-industrial societies relied on the channelization of antisocial impulses through various sacrificial rites, the symbolism of which amounted to "the ritualization of a murder substituted for the general violence."¹ This early social code then mutated into a paradigm which substituted ritual sacrifice with various simulacra enacted in different forms of live spectacle. The later code in turn mutated into reproduction, whose recording, telecommunications and broadcast technologies made the unique physical presence of politicians, stage artists and other key figures an option instead of a necessity, and allowed for the "stockpiling" of live performances in records and films. By causing former codes of belief to break down through their endless repetition, proliferation and mutation in widely disseminated fixed commodities, the reproductive paradigm has led to the most profound of crises in the West according to Attali. Our societies now lurch forward amidst a cacophony of chaotic, near-meaningless communications, inundated by a multiplicity of cultural forms devoid of any real content or the ability to inspire belief, all blindly competing for the minds and money of consumers. In the absence of effective codes to suppress violence, we are witnessing its general return, and a type of ignominious collective and

¹ Attali 25-26.

subjective death-by-reproduction seems to draw closer with each passing year.

This disturbing picture places us squarely in the current period, during which Attali's crisis conditions clearly persist. What we are in effect now witnessing, from my perspective, is the globalization of reproductive culture's deepest problems and contradictions as it spreads to virtually every corner of the world. I again see this occurring through a dialectical process, in that "globalization and localization are Janus-faced aspects of the same process,"² the reproductive-technological drive towards a homogenized world economy and culture taking place amidst continuing traditional and place-specific realities all over the planet. The global dimensions of this situation—particularly as pertaining to the internationalization of American culture via Hollywood film—have been touched on previously in this study. What the present chapter will focus on are the more localized and individually-based aspects of the globalization dialectic, and the manner in which the specificities and diverse realities it contains may affect the future of music for moving images.

Both Benjamin and Attali have suggested that more hopeful mutations in the social code may yet emerge from within the hegemony of reproductive culture. For his part, Benjamin hoped for a radical politicization of art through mass media like the cinema, believing that because of their non-reliance on the live, "auratic" presence of charismatic figures, reproductive technologies could free humankind once and for all from its long "parasitical dependence on ritual."³ Technological

² Malcolm Waters, Globalization (London: Routledge, 1995) xii.

³ Benjamin 226.

reproduction could, in his view, spawn various new forms permitting masses of people to become actively and personally involved in culture and the economy, a possibility he claimed was being squandered in Western Europe while rapidly becoming a reality in the early Soviet Union:

Some of the players whom we meet in Russian films are not actors in our sense but people who portray *themselves*—and primarily in their own work process. In Western Europe the capitalistic exploitation of the film denies consideration to modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced. Under these circumstances the film industry is trying hard to spur the interest of the masses through illusion-promoting spectacles and dubious speculations.⁴

Echoing these observations more than a half-century later, Attali proposes that a possible subversion of capitalist-reproductive culture may be showing signs of concrete emergence in the late-twentieth century. In his interpretation, the choice that now lies before the West is a clear and unavoidable one: either we allow the crisis of technological reproduction and the breakdown of univocal values to consume society, helplessly watching the spread of a kind of collective cancer whose ever-multiplying “cells” of reproduced meaning engulf all communication in social noise, or we embark upon an uncharted course set by a new paradigm, one that subverts the tendencies of reproductive culture and changes the destructive trajectory it has put us on:

We are all condemned to silence—unless we create our own relation to the world and try to tie other people in the meaning we thus create. That is what [the new paradigm] is. Doing solely for the sake of doing, without trying artificially to recreate the old codes in order to reinsert communication in them... Playing for one's own pleasure, which alone can create the conditions for new communication... A concept such as

⁴ Benjamin 234.

this... relates to the emergence of the free act, self-transcendence, pleasure in being instead of having.⁵

Attali thus presents individual creativity as the cornerstone of a renewed culture, an alternative mode made possible in large measure by technological reproduction itself (insofar as the explosion of commonly available models, materials and tools it provides can be gradually transformed into grist for personal creative work). The emergence of a paradigm of personal creativity also portends “the death of the specialist,” according to Attali, the end of the creative process as a narrowly rational, corporatized activity carried out by specialized individuals or groups.⁶ The crux of cultural activity radically changes loci in this scenario, becoming focused in “immediate enjoyment” and “daily communication” rather than in confined spectacles and commodities. Moreover, the new goal of labor

is no longer necessarily communication with an audience [or] usage by a consumer, even if they remain a possibility... The nature of production changes... , labor is not confined within a preset program. There is a collective questioning of the goal of labor... The economic organization of this form of production [lacks] defined goals, and [creates a] new relation... between man and matter, consumption-production and pleasure.⁷

This amounts to a near-total rejection of “the division of roles and labor as constructed by the old codes” of ritual, simulacral spectacle, and reproduction. The pyramidal hierarchies of the reproductive economy in particular—with their emphasis on rational, corporatist structures, the prosperity and property of small elites, and uneven distributions of wealth—are negated by the core principles of Attali’s paradigm. Even the very categories of consumer and producer, the “most fundamental division of

⁵ Attali 134.

⁶ Attali 136-137.

⁷ Attali 142.

roles in all societies in which usage is defined by a code,”⁸ are blurred in his new economy, a definite “refusal to be standardized by money” allowing the “consumer” to act simultaneously as producer, distributor, and cultural participant, taking pleasure and deriving equal satisfaction from the creation, reception, and dissemination of the projects she brings into being.⁹ Thus,

production melds with consumption, and violence is not channelized into an object, but invested in the act of doing, a substitute for the stockpiling of labor that simulates sacrifice. Each production-consumption... entity can call its program into question at any moment; production is not foreseeable before its conclusion. It becomes a starting point, rather than being an end product... The wager of the [new] economy, then, is that social coherence is possible when each person assumes the violence and the imaginary individually, through the pleasure of doing.¹⁰

In this way, the new social code leads to a radical localization of the creative process, a taking for granted of the wide availability of tools and techniques whose use does not necessarily entail the long and difficult apprenticeships of former codes, and a general lifting of many prerequisites to self-expression. Creativity thus becomes a matter of personal choice, a series of elective paths allowing the complex tools and signifying systems of older forms to be mastered and employed if they happen to be aligned with personal goals, but also affording options to create and communicate using simpler, more readily accessible materials and techniques.

Attali openly acknowledges the utopian nature of his vision, but insists that “opportunities to grasp an aspect of utopia, reality under construction, are too rare not to attempt to use this scanty clue to reconstruct

⁸ Attali 135.

⁹ Attali 136, 144.

¹⁰ Attali 144-145.

that reality in its totality.”¹¹ In my view, Attali’s outline of an emerging political economy of personal expression is corroborated by a number of critically-identified trends I will explore in this chapter.¹² What I am interested in examining here is the impact these emerging currents are having on mainstream cinema and its music, and how the creation of music for moving images may be fundamentally changing as a result of their influence.

Postmodernism, Breakdown and Renewal in Motion Picture Music

Among the factors I see indicating an emerging transformation of the reproductive social code is the influence of postmodernism, key traits of which many film scholars have identified in movies of the last two or three decades. Scholarship on postmodernism in cinema is fairly extensive, and much of it focuses on subjects beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, because many of the agreed-upon characteristics of postmodernity can be seen as either confirming the progressive breakdown of the dominant reproductive paradigm or supporting the notion that emergent trends contradicting or subverting it are developing late in the twentieth century, I will consider certain aspects of postmodern movies and film criticism as part of evaluating Hollywood film music in this same regard.

A number of film scholars have emphasized the breakdown aspect of the above-mentioned scenario. Christopher Sharrett, for example, while

¹¹ Attali 133.

¹² It should be noted that most of the trends I explore on the following pages are more or less common knowledge among a large number of people, in that many have been exposed to them through any number of publicly-disseminated presentations or discussions. Nonetheless, I feel it is important to include brief descriptions of these developments as part of underlining their paradigmatically emergent nature (a dimension of those same trends which has not, by and large, been emphasized in the broadcast media or in print).

echoing Fredric Jameson's claim that cinema has "replaced the novel in art's traditional function of illustrating the characteristics of the society in which it is produced", insists the "ground-tone of society" that seventies, eighties and nineties film has conveyed is characterized by an overriding feeling of apocalypse (not in the biblical sense of revelation, but in the more common sense of "doomsday, disaster, the end").¹³ My own observation is that the music of films expressing this dark, anxious *Zeitgeist* is often instrumental in their portrayal of an apocalyptic atmosphere. In *Apocalypse Now* (1979), for example, the diegetic playing of Wagner's triumphant "Ride of the Valkyries" during a helicopter gunship attack on a Vietnamese village frames the sequence such that the deep amorality and absurd theatricality of the action are underlined. Similarly, the compiled portion of *A Clockwork Orange*'s soundtrack works to discursively emphasize the utterly dystopic nature of the future society. The use of uplifting passages from Beethoven, Rossini and Elgar¹⁴ to accompany Alex's morbid fantasies and his gang's acts of "ultra-violence"—the orgy of beatings, rapes, and murders they inflict upon innocent victims—does much to color the drama with apocalyptic tones through the intentionally ironic misapplication of centripetal musical materials.

Sharrett further points out that although the films of directors like David Lynch are not fundamentally disturbing to the tenets of mainstream spectatorship, they nevertheless project the sensibility of "profound nullity and bankruptcy" underlying the postmodern moment. There is a resolute anti-utopianism about films such as *Blue Velvet* and *Wild At Heart* (1990)

¹³ Christopher Sharrett, "Introduction: Crisis Cinema," *Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film*, ed. Christopher Sharrett (Washington, D.C.: Maisonneuve Press, 1993) 1, 4.

¹⁴ Some of which return as secondary source music that mentally tortures Alex during and after his imprisonment and forced behavioural modification program.

that resonates with the more generalized social rumblings around a “crisis in meaning” in postmodern culture, or the anxieties around a possible “end of the social” as we know it.¹⁵ Music again regularly plays a vital role in establishing the nihilistic tone of these pictures, as when Dorothy Valens (Isabella Rossellini) sings the syrupy title song in *Blue Velvet* after details of her perverse private life have become known to viewers (a jarring, almost ludicrous juxtaposition of appearance and substance that is brought out musically at several other points in the picture).¹⁶

In a similar vein, Giuiliana Bruno maintains that Hollywood films like *Blade Runner* (1982) offer a vision of postmodern society as permeated by waste and degradation. Ridley Scott’s futuristic Los Angeles is filled with images of “postindustrial decay” and “disintegration”, and the ambience of the urban landscape with its omnipresent garbage and pollution—inevitable byproducts of the reflexive, repetitive patterns of consumption *Blade Runner* also portrays—is further reinforced by an aesthetic of “exhibition and recycling” in the film.¹⁷ Two moments of spectacle involving music make this aesthetic explicit in the picture: when Decker (Harrison Ford) tracks down the replicant¹⁸ Zhora in a cabaret-dive, she performs an off-camera dance so revoltingly obscene that even the seasoned ex-blade runner¹⁹ must avert his gaze; and later in the story,

¹⁵ Sharrett 1.

¹⁶ The smooth presence of the title song during the crippling stroke suffered by Jeffrey Beaumont’s (Kyle MacLachlan’s) father being another such instance, along with Ben’s karaoke performance of the sweet Ray Orbison hit “In Dreams” just prior to Jeffrey’s savage beating at the hands of Frank Booth’s (Dennis Hopper’s) gang.

¹⁷ Giuiliana Bruno, “Rumble City: Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*,” ed. Sharrett *Crisis Cinema* 239.

¹⁸ Genetically engineered super-beings who, in the *Blade Runner* story, have returned to earth from banishment in the off-world colony of Mars to seek an extension of their lifespan, which is about to expire as part of their planned-obsolent design.

¹⁹ A police-sponsored assassin specialized in the killing of replicants.

Rachel (an experimental replicant produced from advanced genetic programming techniques) performs a piano piece in Decker's apartment, indicating that the artificial being's design allows her to endlessly reproduce elements from the cultural past. Moreover, the constant reuse (for clothing, habitation, transportation) of ever-scarcer materials and resources in the picture gives the impression that an endless, continuous blind loop of consumption and production is being acted out in the future society portrayed by *Blade Runner* (the same type of "recycling" that has taken place in mainstream movie music generally speaking under postmodern influences, as for example in the constant reuse of old pop songs in pictures like *Pretty Woman*, *Stand By Me* (1986), and *The Crying Game* (1992), or the increasing percentage of soundtracks taken up with pre-existing recordings).²⁰

All of the above points to the breakdown of old codes, to the empty echoes of the ritualistic and "auratic" past rendered meaningless in the postmodern dystopian nightmare. In this process of disintegration, even more unsettling developments are occurring in the motion picture. Many critics have noted the phenomenal increase in the levels of violence portrayed in postmodern film, for instance,²¹ a trend I see as indicating a type of aberrant paradigmatic mutation, traces of the "auratic" past breaking away from their formerly assimilated place within the reproductive textual economy of dominant film to become commercialized spectacles of torture, rape, and death. Giuiliana Bruno points to the murders of the female

²⁰ The musical soundtrack of *Pulp Fiction* is typical in this regard, containing only seven minutes of original background music and over three quarters of an hour of various source pop recordings.

²¹ See, for example, Catherine Russell, "Decadence, Violence and the Decay of History: Notes on the Spectacular Representation of Death in Narrative Film, 1965 to 1990," *Crisis Cinema*, ed. Sharrett 173-201.

replicants in *Blade Runner* as instances of this new sort of “exhibitionism”, an “iconography of death” that is “scenographic” in nature.²² We have also seen how background scoring, secondary diegetic music, and source performances are used to smooth the integration of similar spectacles in *A Clockwork Orange*, and other examples abound in the Hollywood repertoire. [*Reservoir Dogs* (1992), for example, features a graphic torture scene accompanied throughout by an upbeat pop number²³ which the torturer briefly dances to during the gruesome process.]

But one nonetheless senses that the effectiveness of such efforts at integration is compromised amidst the currents of change being discussed in this chapter. Dana Polan’s argument that the forties point to “the breakdown of a univocal symbolic meaning” in mainstream cinema²⁴ (and that Hollywood has been struggling since then to maintain the integrity of its classical textual system) suggests that Hollywood film—particularly in its more spectacular aspects—was already evidencing reproductive culture’s disregard for prior social codes and the consensus built around them during the classical era itself:

Spectacle doesn’t so much offer the transcendence of breakdown as a confirmation of the intensity of that breakdown. That is, the art of forties spectacle is not an innocently redemptive art; the musical, for example, as some sort of efficient reconstruction of aura in an age of materialism. Quite the contrary, spectacle confirms the materialism of the modern age and renders it attractive or seductive. But the seduction is an endlessly deceptive one. Spectacle works not by the delivery of that which it promises, but by the endless making of promises that are not always kept.²⁵

²² Bruno 242. Slow background music is an integral part of the first of these spectacular depictions of murder, a slow-motion sequence in which Decker chases Zhora through the streets and shoots her to death as the replicant crashes through a plate glass window.

²³ The 1973 Steelers Wheel hit “Stuck In the Middle With You.”

²⁴ Polan 303.

²⁵ Polan 303.

This definitive leaving behind of the “auratic” past was what led to a collective fascination with “display for the sake of display” in the postwar era, Polan further explains:

Mass culture becomes a sort of postmodern culture, the stability of social meaning dissolved into one vast, spectacular *combinatoire*, a dissociation of cause and effect, a concentration on the allure of means and a concomitant disinterest in ends.²⁶

The inclusion of ever-more-violent scenes in features beginning in the 1960s can be seen as a continuation of these same trends, with visually spectacular portrayals of violence and death in films like *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *The Wild Bunch* (1969) indicating a marked shift away from the narratively assimilative techniques classical practice had previously prescribed for instances of spectacle. In fact, the spiraling violence in Hollywood films of the last three-and-a-half decades can be understood as an ongoing response to the threats and pressures on classical textuality posed by postmodern culture as a whole, tensions I see as emanating from the growing dialectical tensions between diverse, locally-based realities on the one hand and those emanating from globalization and reproductive technologies on the other.

In my view, all of this supports Attali’s notion that a crisis in reproductive culture—provoked by the current dominant paradigm’s ceaseless stockpiling and congealing of once-living codes, and by its destruction of meaning through consistent patterns of oversupply and waste—has created a “state of emergency” whereby Western culture is set on a perilous course towards the return of a “general violence” long suppressed by the structures of the “auratic” past. But Attali and others

²⁶ Polan 295.

have also identified more positive postmodern trends, seeing in the tense and contradictory interplay between globalism and localism the emergence of an alternative paradigm subverting dominant structures and values in a variety of ways. Frederic Jameson, for example, while acknowledging the general alienation brought about by late capitalism, nonetheless sees the postmodern response to that alienation as qualitatively different than modernism's. In fact, one of postmodernism's defining features according to him is its rejection of the oppositional styles of high modernism and their later canonization by reproductive culture.²⁷ Postmodernism purposely blurs the once-prominent distinctions between "high" and "low" (or mass-) culture, for example. While modernism and its predecessors "had a vested interest in preserving a realm of high or elite culture from philistinism", postmodernists "have been fascinated precisely by [the] whole landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and grade B Hollywood movies."²⁸ [In the movie music area, this can be seen in the increasing uses of musical kitsch in soundtracks, such as Sailor's (Nicolas Cage's) Elvis impersonations in *Wild At Heart* and Sueleen Gay's (Gwen Welles's) tacky country-western performances in *Nashville* (1975).]

But while postmodern influences seem in many respects to constitute a mere subset of the dominant paradigm, using the products of reproductive culture as raw material and producing works for mass audiences, it is nevertheless clear that postmodernism stands out from its surrounding context as a distinct phenomenon and mode of expression. Consider the use

²⁷ Jameson cites "Abstract Expressionism; the great modernist poetry of Pound, Elliot, or Wallace Stevens; the international style (de Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies); Stravinsky; Joyce, Proust, and Mann" as examples of high modernism. [Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *Movies and Mass Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1996) 186.]

²⁸ Jameson 186.

of pastiche, for example, a central technique in postmodernism according to Jameson. Looking to the realm of literature as a bellwether of society as a whole, Jameson suggests that

perhaps the immense fragmentation and privatization of modern literature—its explosion into a host of distinct private styles and mannerisms—foreshadows deeper and more general tendencies in society as a whole... Suppose that in the decades since the emergence of the great modern styles society itself has begun to fragment in this way, each group coming to speak a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its private code or dialect, and finally each individual coming to be a kind of linguistic island... The very possibility of any linguistic norms would vanish, and we would have nothing but stylistic diversity and heterogeneity.²⁹

This description of a breakdown in the accepted “norms” established by paradigmatic codes, and the de facto emergence of a new code characterized by the “privatization” of meaning in small groups and individuals, resembles in many ways Attali’s analysis of contemporary social conditions (even if Jameson does not necessarily share in the latter’s utopian hopes for a future dominated by personal expression). Jameson sees embedded in pastiche the assumption that true stylistic innovation is no longer possible in a postmodern culture, the ubiquity of reproduction being taken for granted in his case. Pastiche in effect then becomes another kind of recycling exercise, a postindustrial program through which existing styles and fragments of material are reused in different combinations and in more or less novel ways.

Consider Mason Daring’s musical soundtrack for *The Opposite of Sex* (1998) in light of the above: comprised of a stylistic collage that includes country swing, lounge-elevator music, pop-rock, and romantic film-musical clichés, it displays neither the structural unity nor the idiomatic

²⁹Jameson 188.

homogeneity of classical era scores. Rather, it illustrates the *combinatoire* approach (i.e. the flexible assembly of a variety of musical gestures, styles and sounds according to the dramatic and commercial needs of a picture) that has increasingly dominated post-classical era movie music. In this and many other instances of film-musical pastiche, we see a noticeable shift from a largely univocal idiomatic and stylistic approach to a more fragmented and diverse situation in which composers access virtually every niche and nuance of popular musical culture in search of appropriate musical materials.

Regardless of the inseparability of postmodern pastiche from reproduction, however, the marked rise in its use—coinciding as it does with the greater availability of accessible creative materials and Jameson’s widespread “privatization” of cultural codes—points to a possible subversion-in-progress, an undermining of the current dominant paradigm from within by forces oriented to personal expression and interpretation, rather than to reproduction from various pre-determined patterns or molds.

Changes in Subjectivity and Spectatorship

Because the ordinary person is the basic unit of meaning and power in Attali’s new political economy of localized expression, various dimensions of individual subjectivity must be considered as key mediating forces in the determination and extrapolation of the new code’s modalities, limits and boundaries. Accordingly, I will attempt to assess in this section how the evolution of postmodern subjectivity and other processes of paradigmatic change might be affecting motion picture music and film spectatorship.

As with postmodernism in general, much of the work on postmodern subjectivity has focused on processes of disintegration (e.g. the demise of bourgeois individualism in the late-twentieth century, the “death of the subject” as announced by Barthes and others; and the poststructuralist notion that any sense of unique personal identity amounts to no more than a false ideological myth). The postmodern subject is seen by many critics as having been born in a state of siege, and as continuing to exist in such a state. Jameson, for example, maintains that if much of postmodernism is extremely nostalgic, imitating and often romanticizing the dead styles of the recent or distant past, it is because “cultural production has been driven back inside the mind within the monadic subject; it can no longer look directly out of its eyes at the real world for the referent but must, as in Plato’s cave, trace its mental images of the world on its confining walls.”³⁰

From my perspective, even such pessimistic pronouncements point to certain emergent realities appearing within the siege conditions of decaying reproductive culture. If indeed we live “in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, and all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum,” it is still possible to imagine an increasingly generalized impulse towards personal expression taking the path of least resistance and manifesting as nostalgia and pastiche in that same social environment. This is not to say, however, that more innovative options for following up on such impulses do not exist and are not actively being pursued by postmodern individuals everywhere. But before proceeding to examine some of these emergent pursuits, I shall address the descriptions critics such as Jameson have put forward regarding the postmodern

³⁰ Jameson 193-194.

subject—descriptions that seem, at least on the surface, to contrast in their assessments with Attali's vision of a resourceful and independently creative individual functioning within a new social grid.

In Jameson's influential formulation, for example, the postmodern subject has much in common with Lacan's schizophrenic. In spatial terms, this subject is characterized by a sense of disconnection between signifiers and signified, between material signs and meaning. On the temporal level, there is also "a breakdown of the relationship *between* signifiers... the experience of temporality, human time, past, present, memory, the persistence of personal identity over months and years."³¹ Jameson sees the postmodern individual as having a heightened experience of each isolated moment and image, an existential vividness that comes at the price of a coherent sense of self and history. All of this Jameson rightly connects with the rise of transnational capitalism in the post-World War II world; in other words, the postmodern subject is inextricably tied to consumerism, the defining of identity by media and advertising, and other elements of postindustrial society. The subjective "transformation of reality into images" and the "fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents" under postmodernism are therefore understood as prerequisites for and the inevitable results of the relentless advance of global corporatism.

The soundtracks of Hollywood films have often expressed these new subjective realities, in both positive and negative terms. I.Q. Hunter points to the *Bill & Ted* movies as examples of utopic (if also satirical) portraits of postmodern society, in which an instant-by-instant consciousness permeated by pop culture (and especially rock music) prevails. *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1988) in particular offers direct musical symbols of the

³¹Jameson 190.

postmodern-schizophrenic preoccupation with an intense present moment: Bill (Alex Winter) and Ted (Keanu Reeves), threatened with failing a history exam, kidnap various key figures from the past (Socrates, Napoleon, Beethoven, and Freud among them) with the help of a time machine, and cast them in a rock concert-like presentation that earns the teenagers a passing grade. The devotion to a “perpetual present” saturated in popular music is made explicit both by Beethoven’s unruly experimentation with a synthesizer in a mall music store (from which he has to be physically removed by security guards when his passionate improvisation gets out of hand), and by a flashforward to the distant future, at which time rock musicians have become the respected elders of society. Similarly, in *Back to the Future* (1985), Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) transports the postmodern preoccupation with an intense present moment back into the 1950s, stunning a high school dance with a narcissistic, writhing-on-the-floor guitar solo whose style is completely unfamiliar to the early rock n’ roll audience.

More common than the above, however, are the negative or cynical musical expressions of the postmodern *Zeitgeist* found in various Hollywood films. In *Natural Born Killers* (1994), for example, Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis) stab and shoot an entire restaurant full of people during the opening credit sequence, then calmly absorb themselves in a long embrace as “La Vie en Rose” plays from the soundtrack in the bloody aftermath. Willard (Martin Sheen) is similarly focused in the moment as he performs a martial arts routine to rock music in *Apocalypse Now*; and Vivian (Julia Roberts) is completely oblivious to the outside world as she sings along to music in her Walkman while bathing in *Pretty Woman*.

But if, as Jameson insists, “postmodernism replicates or reproduces—reinforces—the logic of consumer capitalism”³² (as it does in all of the above instances), how can it be claimed that it also contains the seeds of a subversive new paradigm, one running contrary to those same socio-economic and cultural trends? I believe the answer to this becomes clear if one understands postmodernism as a watershed period during which the dominant culture of reproduction is gradually receding and emergent realities are slowly coming into existence. Any conclusions reached on cultural phenomena in such a period are likely to be colored by a “half-empty” or “half-full” perception of the current situation, informed either by the state of the recessive dominant, by the emerging trends, or by a mixture of both.

Two examples will illustrate the dilemma this dialectic of reproduction and individual expression presents to analysis, the first taken from Jameson’s assessment of a postmodern poem, the second from Peter and Will Brooker’s critical reading of the recent Hollywood film *Pulp Fiction*. In his analysis of the poem “China” by Bob Perelman, Jameson seeks to illustrate how the “schizophrenic” qualities of postmodernism can be detected in contemporary art forms. (I include only a fragment of Perelman’s piece here):

We live on the third world from the sun. Number three.
 Nobody
 tells us what to do.
 The people who taught us to count were being very kind.
 It’s always time to leave.
 If it rains, you either have your umbrella or you don’t.
 The wind blows your hat off. The sun rises also.
 I’d rather the stars didn’t describe us to each other. I’d

³²Jameson 202.

rather we do it for ourselves...³³

While Jameson acknowledges that “there does seem to be some global meaning here,” (e.g. China’s then-status as the third geopolitical superpower corresponding to earth’s place as the third planet from the sun in the poem), he nonetheless insists that “such meaning floats over the text or behind it.” For Jameson, Perelman’s sentences “fall into a void of silence so great that for a time one wonders whether any new sentence could possibly emerge to take their place.”³⁴ He sees postmodernism’s subjective disconnection of images and moments informing the poem to a considerable extent, even though the work’s “secret” source of inspiration has been fully disclosed elsewhere:

Perelman came across a book of photographs in a stationery store in Chinatown, a book whose captions and characters obviously remained dead letters (or should one say material signifiers?) to him. The sentences of the poem are *his* captions to those pictures.³⁵

By focusing on the fact that “the ‘unity’ of the poem is not *in* the text at all but outside it in the bound unity of an absent book,” Jameson seems to miss the paradigmatic import of Perelman’s work. Attali would no doubt emphasize that the significance of “China” as a postmodern work is precisely that it contains the *poet’s* captions to an unseen book of photographs, a personal take on an item of cultural marginalia, a gesture of self-expression that seems to have been made for its own sake, for the pleasure of the creator and all those who may wish to share in his creation.

This same tendency has been present in Hollywood film music, inasmuch as the changes in scoring practice following the classical period

³³ Bob Perleman, “China” in Primer.

³⁴ Jameson 198, 199.

³⁵ Jameson 199.

have increasingly opened up the musical soundtrack as an area of personal expression for filmmakers. As mentioned, the amount of pre-existing music used in background and source contexts has steadily increased in recent decades, and many filmmakers have assumed more direct control over the soundtracks to their movies as a result. The personally compiled scores of directors like Woody Allen and Stanley Kubrick are well known, and other filmmakers (Tarantino and Robert Altman among them) have consistently been active in shaping the musical content of their pictures.³⁶

So: is the postmodern cup half-empty in these cases, expressing what has been forever lost in the current breaking apart of longstanding aspects of subjectivity? Or is it half-full, indicating the emergent will to create and interpret our own lives on our own terms? Judging by Jameson's closing remark in "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" that the question of whether ways in which to resist the logic of consumer capitalism actually exist (in other words, whether escape routes from the collapsing edifice of reproductive culture can be found) "is one we must leave open," the answer would appear uncertain from his perspective.

A second example of how the postmodern watershed we are now in evokes qualitatively different critical readings and responses can be seen in recent developments around the cult film. Once again, Peter and Will Brooker point to an overwhelming amount of critical opinion that is quick to characterize films like *Pulp Fiction* and the postmodern influence in general as "trivial" and "vacant", part of a societal trend whose goal is "to empty the artwork of all content," or to create a moral vacuum in which

³⁶ Both Tarantino (in *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*) and Altman [in *Nashville* and *Short Cuts* (1993)] have made their musical influence felt in their own films, particularly in the source music area, where selections of numbers played within the dramatic contexts of pictures are now routinely made by directors.

“the jaded appetites of the mass culture market” are cynically catered to.³⁷ Recalling Umberto Eco’s analysis of the cult film classic *Casablanca*, however, Brooker and Brooker insist there is more to the postmodern cult movie than an empty recycling of cinematic stereotypes and stylistic clichés. The idiomatic asymmetries, fragmentation and imperfections Eco generally ascribes to the cult film seem to give rise to a peculiar form of creativity:

A perfect movie remains in our memory as a whole... The cult movie, on the other hand, is imperfect, dislocated and unhinged. It must live on, and because of, its glorious ricketiness. The fan will therefore recall discontinuous, selected images, quoting characters and episodes as if they were aspects of the fan’s private sectarian world, a world about which one can make up quizzes and trivia games so that the adepts of the sect recognize through each other a shared experience.³⁸

Here the cult film is presented as a “half-full” phenomenon, a platform from which small groups of fans may extract material for acts of creative bricolage. These exercises include, but can go well beyond, “quizzes and trivia games,” providing individuals with the kind of participatory, pleasure-for-its-own-sake possibilities characteristic of Attali’s new paradigm.

Soundtrack albums have become a vital component in a film cult’s *combinatoire* of participatory materials, a reality reflected both in the growing frequency of coordinated motion picture and compilation album releases by the industry, and in the changing nature of the albums

³⁷ Peter and Will Brooker, “Pulpmmodernism: Tarantino’s Affirmative Action,” *Pulping Fictions*, Cartmell, Hunter, Kaye and Whelehan, eds. (Chicago: Pluto Press, 1996) 136. Brooker and Brooker cite James Wood and Fintan O’Toole (to whom the above quotes are attributed) as well as others in this regard.

³⁸ Brooker 139-140, quoting Umberto Eco, “Casablanca: cult movies and intertextual collage,” David Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory* (London: Longman, 1988) 446-447.

themselves. For example, it is increasingly common for these records to include not only music from the film, but extended excerpts of dialogue and sound effects as well, a fact Mark Kermode points out in reference to the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack:

Quentin Tarantino doesn't just make films—he makes cult movies designed for repeated viewing and frequent regurgitation by fans who love to quote their favorite scenes. According to Tarantino, long before actor Bruce Willis signed up for *Pulp Fiction*, he and his brothers would spend afternoons at home 'riffing on scenes from [*Reservoir*] *Dogs* like old buddies enjoying a communal singalong. It's hardly surprising, since Tarantino treats his own favorite scenes and speeches like well-loved songs, [and personally oversaw the compilation of] the soundtrack albums for *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*.³⁹

Clearly, then, whatever degree of paradigmatic “subversion” may exist in trends like film cultism does not lie outside of reproductive culture and consumer society: box office tickets and soundtrack albums are sold, videos rented and purchased, fan periodicals picked up at newsstands, all in the normal course of a film cult's activities. And in response to growing cultism, niche audiences are being identified by filmmakers, screenings and cable broadcasts of favorite movies being organized for those groups, and new films being made specifically to attract or build on cult followings. But Jameson and others have made it clear that postmodernist expression does not share in the oppositional qualities of modern art and artists; it exists within postindustrial consumerism and mass culture at the same time as it subverts them in many ways. Weighing in on the “half-full” side of contemporary analysis, Brooker and Brooker point out that postmodern culture puts the “waste products” of the past “to new creative advantage”, a “full and affirmative” activity that contrasts with many critics’

³⁹ Mark Kermode, “Endnotes,” *Sight and Sound* Feb. 1995: 62.

characterizations of that same culture as “empty” and “nihilistic”.

Tarantino himself seems to have identified that a new form of spectatorship is operative in current film audiences: “I like to think that if one million people see my movie, they saw a million different movies,”⁴⁰ he stated in a recent interview, implying that for masses of viewers, motion picture reception has now moved beyond the passive consumption of standardized products to become a far more active and participatory exercise in cinematic reading.

On the musical level, these new tendencies are perhaps most obvious in films like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) or *The Blues Brothers* (1980), whose cult activities have often included group singalongs and solos by audience members during exhibition (an interesting revival, in modified form, of certain participatory aspects of the silent cinema prior to classical spectatorship). But new trends in reception can also be detected in the way certain film texts are constructed. *The Opposite of Sex* and other satirical films seem to fully anticipate a level of audience savvy regarding film musical conventions, relying on an active alertness and competence around film music that is commensurate with what once would have been expected only of movie production personnel or seasoned aficionados.

For example: *The Opposite of Sex*'s story is dominated by the voiceover narration of a central character, Didi Truitt (Christina Ricci). In a series of textual moves early in the film, it is established that her non-diegetic voice not only possesses full knowledge of the story (as is normally the case when voiceovers are used), but also controls the cinematic storytelling apparatus itself. Didi's voice appears to create a split-screen image at one point, for instance, telling the viewers she is going to give

⁴⁰ Interview in *Sight and Sound*, May 1994: 6.

them something else to look at as a partial wipe of the image takes place. This narrative omniscience is also extended to the musical soundtrack, which Didi appears to manipulate in a similar manner. During one scene in which we witness Bill (Martin Donovan) broken-hearted over the loss of his lover, for instance, Didi's voice is superimposed on a cliché minor-key string passage denoting the sadness of the moment. "You can't help yourselves," she says in an indirect reference to the soundtrack as the visuals roll by. "You see someone smell a pillow or an old T-shirt, you're a basket case." Then she adds "Wait! I can really lay it on..." at which point the background cue immediately responds with a shift to dramatic, high register string sounds, giving the impression that the music has been put under the direct control of Didi's thoughts. (This move is confirmed seconds later when Didi chimes in with "It's just music... It doesn't mean he's better than me... I could've showed you the other stuff he did besides mooning around," after which the score abruptly changes again to a comically light, retro-lounge passage as Didi tells us Bill also flossed his teeth, ate like a pig, and cut his toenails while recovering from Matt—another hand-in-glove linking of music and storytelling that implies a type of hard-wiring between the two).

In this we see not only an unconventional extension of narrative power in the voiceover, but also an anticipation of fairly sophisticated, knowing responses from audiences regarding film musical conventions. Spectatorial understanding that "really laying it on" in this case amounts to the application of a particular type of homologous musical material to the content of a scene is key to its satirical effect, indicating that a more actively engaged spectator is not only expected, but required by certain

films.⁴¹ With a differently-constituted audience in mind, mainstream movies influenced by postmodernism have the potential of becoming more open-ended, an invitation to cultish bricolage or irreverent participation rather than self-contained, passive entertainments.

While there is nothing particularly new in audience participation, film cults, fandom, or the eagerness to share details and trivia concerning particular movies, when considered in conjunction with the various trends in postmodern art and subjectivity just discussed, and when seen alongside the realities of television culture, its particular spectatorship, and other technologically related developments I am about to explore, an argument can certainly be made that the activities around cult films and the general changes in reception over the last few decades indicate a paradigmatic shift currently underway in and around mainstream cinema.

Production Platforms: Technology and Creative Emergence

Some of the technological developments that have allowed growing numbers of people to create and record music using tools previously affordable only to institutions and businesses (e.g. multi-track tape recorders, sequencers, synthesizers, samplers, and other electronic devices) were mentioned in chapter 2. I will now focus on similar developments permitting the combination of music with moving images, in order to assess

⁴¹ Parodies and spoofs often rely on widespread familiarity with film-musical conventions in their satirical texts. *Blazing Saddles* (1974), for example, anticipates spectatorial awareness of the distinction between background and source music, an expectation that is critical to the “punchline” of one humorous scene in particular. While panoramic visuals are shown on the screen and big band jazz with a driving rhythm is heard on the soundtrack (a conventional pairing of “showy” music and spectacular images found in many films), the joke comes when the camera suddenly (and absurdly, given the supposed western generic context of the movie) reveals that the music is not non-diegetic as would normally be the case, but an actual performance by the Count Basie Band (which appears in full view on a stage erected in the middle of the desert).

the possible connections between widening consumer access to audio-visual production platforms over the past few decades and the emergence of a new paradigm of personal creativity during that same period.

In the first place, it should be remembered that large numbers of people with little or no direct connection to the Hollywood industry (avant-garde and student filmmakers, performance artists, dancers, amateurs) have had access to various types of audio-visual recording equipment for some time, and have used it to combine images with sound in various works of personal expression.⁴² The explosion of individual and small group video projects has been particularly remarkable in this regard. Kate Horsfield describes the scope and diversity of such work, which includes experimental and performance videos (“more art-based in terms of their focus on innovative visual substance and non-narrative content”), activist and community-based videos (“usually less concerned with visuals and more concerned with delivering information,”)⁴³ documentaries, and conventional narrative movies made with video technology.⁴⁴ Moreover,

⁴² Eastman Kodak introduced 16mm in 1923, and made the format more accessible to amateurs in 1932 with its “double 8mm” camera. 8mm equipment was mass-marketed to consumers beginning in the post-World War II era, although the ability to record synchronized sound in the format was not added until super-8 technology appeared in the mid-1970s. Beginning in the mid-1960s, the manufacturing of affordably-priced portable video cameras by Sony and other companies gradually captured most of the non-commercial market and more or less completely replaced narrow-gauge film equipment at the consumer level by the 1980s and 90s.

⁴³ A compelling example of activist video is Juanita Mohammed and Alexandra Juhasz’s account of the Women’s AIDS Video Enterprise. Pointing out that many thousands of videos on the subject of AIDS have been produced worldwide “by and for communities as diverse as black men into sadism and masochism, Hispanic teens who are homeless, or Jewish parents of persons with AIDS,” the authors emphasize that this large body of work “produced outside of broadcast television” has been entirely created by ordinary people affected by AIDS, who videotape “marches and protests... funerals, women feeding sick babies—the shapes and sounds of living in a world with AIDS.” [Juanita Mohammed and Alexandra Juhasz, “Knowing Each Other Through AIDS Video,” *Connected*, ed. George E. Marcus (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996) 195.]

⁴⁴ Kate Horsfield, “Video Art: Stay Tuned,” *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos* ed. Morrie Warshawski (N.Y.: Foundation for Independent Video and Film, 1995) 123.

video has been extensively used by amateurs to record personal and family events,⁴⁵ and has also been extremely popular in business and industry, where corporations of all sizes regularly commission or produce videos in-house on topics ranging from employee training and shareholder information to promotional campaigns.

The broadening consumer access to video camcorders is particularly important when considered in light of the parallel evolution of other production platforms permitting the combination of moving images and sound. Multimedia production, once exclusively the domain of professionals, has become more and more accessible to ordinary users as the high-powered computers it requires have steadily fallen in price. Described as “the seamless integration of data, text, images of all kinds (including video, photographic images, computer graphics, and animation), and sound within a single information environment,”⁴⁶ multimedia has inspired a growing number of individuals and groups to use computer technology in a wide range of different creative applications. Just as samplers, sound cards, and hard disc recording systems made the digitizing of sound an affordable option beginning in the 1980s, computer scanners and various analog-to-digital conversion formats for video have done the same for still and moving images in the 1990s. Moreover, a number of authoring programs⁴⁷ have, in conjunction with the establishment of quasi-universal reproduction formats⁴⁸ and the appearance of consumer-marketed optical disc recorders,

⁴⁵ As reflected in the existence of prime time television showcases for personal short productions such as *America's Funniest Home Videos*. Many professional video production enterprises and editing services have also grown up around the demand this particular area creates, specializing in slickly-produced “documentaries” of weddings, bar mitzvahs, and other personal and family events.

⁴⁶ Tony Feldman, *Multimedia*, (London: Blueprint, 1994) 4.

⁴⁷ Including dedicated programs such as Macromedia Director, and flexible multimedia programming languages such as Java.

⁴⁸ CD-ROM and DVD (Digital Video Disc) among them.

put multimedia composition within reach of an expanding portion of the general public.

Because of the interactivity and lateral architecture of its program designs, multimedia caters to the same growing desire for participation among the general public that was referred to earlier in relation to film spectatorship. A variety of command paths (not all anticipated by programmers) and unforeseen manipulations or types of access to basic parameters can be arrived at by users in multimedia environments, and many institutions use multimedia applications for learning and training purposes because of this design flexibility. In the entertainment area, the more participatory nature of multimedia has quickly spawned cult-like formations around certain computer games or CD-ROMs, informal webs of association that resemble film cults but focus instead on the “shared experiences” of navigating through and discovering different aspects of popular programs.

The influence of mainstream film musical practice can be strongly felt in both multimedia and non-commercial moviemaking. When segments of personal videos are accompanied by background music cues, for example, the latter tend to be faithful (if sometimes rough) approximations of what might be heard behind similar scenes in a Hollywood picture. Certain clips shown on *America's Funniest Home Videos* and individual productions available on the internet indicate that stock strategies regarding music are constantly employed in personal productions, including the application of background pop songs to visuals and the use of scoring clichés such as silent era melodrama music or recognizable film music “memes” such as John Williams’ shark theme from *Jaws* (1975) and Bernard Hermann’s shower motif from *Psycho* (1960). Of course more

serious personal productions like activist videos tend to contain subtler musical treatments, but these seldom go beyond the most conservative prescriptions of mainstream film musical practice.

Much the same can be said of multimedia productions featuring moving images and music. CD-ROM exploration games such as *Myst* and *Raven* use ambiguous and peripheral-sounding background cues to establish the ambience of the various virtual environments they present, for example. Computer games such as the Nintendo *Zelda* series link different shades of musical background material to the ascending levels of difficulty attained by the player, and instructional or corporate CD-ROMs usually contain the type of music heard in conventional documentaries. But despite the more or less stock quality of much multimedia music, the mere fact that the scoring decisions behind it are regularly taken not by powerful producers, directors and film composers, but by ordinary individuals, programmers, or lower-profile musical consultants working in the hi-tech sector, illustrates the more decentralized and unpredictable nature of the recently evolved compilation and composition processes.⁴⁹

In my perception, all of the above indicates an appetite among the general public for creating and composing using audio-visual materials—a craving that has clearly been identified and tapped into by the marketers and promoters of multimedia products. The commercial stakes in capitalizing on this trend are extremely high, as the architects of the proposed “information superhighway” plan to bring interactive multimedia into millions of homes worldwide via an extensive fiber-optic infrastructure within the next decade or two. While at the moment the majority of people involved with

⁴⁹ The Montreal-based multimedia firm UB Soft is an example of this growing reality, employing many young programmers who do double duty as musical advisors or even composers when simple original musical material is required.

multimedia still relate to it in a relatively passive way, as consumers buying programs and working with whatever degree of interactivity commercial producers choose to offer them in products, the tide definitely seems to be turning towards greater levels of personal expression in the area. To name only one example, Edward Brown and Mark Chignell point to the development of “free-form multimedia”, an approach “allowing users to customize applications to suit their own purposes”, as a key trend in the industry. The free-form concept takes interactivity a step further, permitting

end user customization so that users can decide for themselves how information should be presented in the applications. Different levels of customization may be used, reflecting different points in the continuum between end user programming and end user customization.⁵⁰

The authors go on to emphasize that “Free-form multimedia blurs distinctions between developers, authors, and readers,” and that “end user development provides a type of participatory design.” Programs of this nature have begun to appear in the musical area: *Secret Worlds* and *Eve*, for example, (CD-ROMs authored by pop composer Peter Gabriel) contain large banks of completely configurable sound, image, and text modules users must manipulate to create various audio-visual environments (and learn certain concepts in the process). From my perspective, the multimedia industry’s pursuit of the free-form approach clearly shows that it has identified in its clientele something resembling the type of emergent creative impulses I have been discussing in this chapter, and is beginning to modify its commercial products in consequence.

⁵⁰ Edward Brown and Mark Chignell, “End User as Developer: Free-Form Multimedia” *Contextual Media*, eds. Edward Barrett and Marie Redmond (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995) 190.

Taken together, the rapid evolution over the last few decades of audio-visual production tools and platforms, ranging from narrow-gauge film and video to multimedia and the computer networking technology about to be discussed, can be seen as a sign that Attali's hope for an emerging paradigm of localized creativity may be in the beginning stages of realizing itself in the area of music and moving images. But while the prices of sound and visual recording or editing equipment continue to fall even as their quality improves, increasing the accessibility of such devices to the mainstream public, a crucial question remains how the explosion of individually-created artifacts being churned out through the use of affordable technology (self-produced CD recordings and videos, multimedia presentations, etc.) can reach the niche or general audiences potentially interested in the work.

Developments in Distribution and Exhibition

Because the connection of products to large numbers of consumers is the linchpin of the reproductive economy, any significant changes in that area can be seen as leading indicators of an ongoing paradigmatic shift in the social code. In the specific case of movie music, I believe certain recent developments in distribution and exhibition point to such a shift, and I will focus on these trends in this section. Among the changes I discuss are the fragmentation and diversification of commercial and non-commercial film and video distribution, and emerging technological networks connecting the audio-visual productions of individuals and localized groups to audiences worldwide.

The defining features of commercial film and video distribution have been described by Paul Lazarous in the following terms:

Distribution is the process that takes a motion picture after it has been produced and arranges for its exhibition in a theater. It refers to the machinery that is geared to take a finished film, research its market potential, prepare the marketing aids (such as publicity and advertising), negotiate the terms under which each theater may show the picture, arrange for the delivery of the prints to the theater at the proper time, collect the money from the theater and with luck forward to the producer that portion of the receipts that is due him as his share of the profits.⁵¹

An often extensive network of branch offices and sales representatives handle these tasks regionally, nationally or internationally, depending on the size of the distribution company. More than any other single factor, it is the development and control of widespread and efficient networks of product distribution that allows large corporations to remain at the center of the reproductive economy. Hollywood has of course been no exception in this regard: during the silent and early sound years, the MPPC monopoly and the studio oligopoly that succeeded it retained the lion's share of the North American entertainment market largely through their tight control over distribution.⁵² Even after the Paramount ruling forced the studios into divestiture of their theater chains (which were essential to distributional hegemony because ownership of venues allowed for block booking, run-zone clearance, and other anti-competitive practices), many of the studios were able to remain major players in the industry only by keeping their distribution operations firmly in place.

⁵¹ Paul N. Lazarous, "Distribution: A Disorderly Dissertation," The Movie Business Book, ed. Jason Squire (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983) 302.

⁵² Of motion picture equipment in the former case, and of movies themselves in the latter.

Outside of the Hollywood scene, 8mm and 16mm filmmakers and videomakers have for decades found audiences for their projects through a variety of means. Most prominent among these have been independent distributors handling both theatrical and non-theatrical films and videos. These enterprises deal with a wide range of markets, including educational institutions, libraries, government agencies, medical institutions, churches, business and industry, home video, and cable or local television stations. Those film and videomakers able to convince a distributor of the commercial value and quality of their productions have tended to avail themselves of such services. On the other hand, those who find distributors unreceptive to their work have often turned to alternatives, including film cooperatives (which generally provide listings in catalogs and some distributional services for producers, while offering non-judgmental criteria for the selection of films or videos and allowing full creative control over productions), and self-distribution (in which film and videomakers themselves set up a small distribution operation, usually dedicated to handling their own titles).⁵³

The rapid growth of distribution operations and markets for independently-made productions is therefore one key signal that a widening cultural sector is engaged in the making of motion pictures. But the real cutting-edge trends in distribution, at least in terms of the Attalian emergence I have been discussing, can be seen in what is happening outside of the money economy altogether.⁵⁴ What might be called “emergent

⁵³ Described in *16mm Distribution*, eds. Nadine Covert and Justin Trojan (N.Y.: Educational Film Library Association, 1977) and in *The Next Step*, ed. Morrie Warshawski.

⁵⁴ It will be recalled that Attali's views on both reproduction and the culture of live spectacle that preceded it firmly connect both paradigms to money, and the subversive qualities of the emergent realities he detects in late-twentieth century society are largely

distribution” manifests at the most basic levels as informal connections forged between small-scale producer-creators and audiences. For example, Kate Horsfield describes the various “video communities” that grew up in large U.S. cities during the 1970s, as well as the informal system of distribution that evolved within and between them:

News of new work spread from one community to another. Everyone was very interested in screening everyone else’s video. So the first distribution consisted of ‘bicycling’ tapes—usually through the mail or under the arm of a friend and fellow videomaker—from one group to another. This small-scale distribution was important because screening tapes helped videomakers see themselves and each other as part of a very active community with links across the country... The goal of distribution was not necessarily to make money from screening work but rather to see work, have yours seen by peers, and become aware of developments in other parts of the newly emerging video field.⁵⁵

Video activist networks such as the AIDS project mentioned earlier tend to function in a similar way, relying for the most part on word of mouth and person-to-person contacts for distribution. Similarly, inter- or intra-organizational distribution of motion pictures (e.g. between government agencies, within corporations, etc.) tends to be relatively autonomous in nature as well.

Although the above trends indicate a significant shift towards a more decentralized, locally-based paradigm in traditional distribution, far more dramatic changes in the area can be seen in developments within the computer networking field. The much-touted internet is now capable of providing its millions of users virtually universal, affordable access to

based in their rejection of the notion that personal creativity is inextricably tied to the exchange economy.

⁵⁵ Horsfield 125.

individuals, groups and organizations around the planet.⁵⁶ One of the main effects of the rapid evolution of the net and World Wide Web has been the creation of a global distribution network capable of connecting cultural artifacts of all types with interested recipients everywhere. Most of the exchanges taking place in this system (a great deal of them involving personally-generated creative material) are from individual to individual, or small group to small group, making the network a truly emergent phenomenon in Attali's sense of the term. Audio-visual and multimedia works combining moving images with sound have of course been among the many messages communicated via the internet, increasingly so now that computer and modem speeds have increased and real-time "streaming" transmissions or rapid downloading of high-memory items have become feasible.

A net search for film or video clips alone turns up literally tens of millions of sites, many containing downloadable or streaming audio-visual excerpts or entire productions. This multitude of locations on the World Wide Web includes the home pages of individuals as well as commercial and non-commercial sites showcasing the works of various artists and groups (culturejam.com, headspace.com, and shockrave.com being three frequently visited examples of the latter, each offering online trailers, original film and animation festivals, resource magazines advertising conventional exhibition venues, contests, quizzes, and other distribution and exhibition-related fare to interested internet browsers).

⁵⁶ As editor Mark Dery points out in *Escape Velocity* (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1996), a collection of essays on cyberculture, the internet is actually part of an even larger communications complex commonly referred to as the matrix, which includes a multitude of newsgroup discussion forums, bulletin board services, and other networks.

Above and beyond the distributional role the internet plays is the plethora of individual and small group-oriented subcultural activities (collectively referred to as “cyberculture”) it has spawned. A bellwether of both the progressive fragmentation of reproductive culture and the simultaneous emergence of a new socio-economic code, computer culture “relocates our cultural conversation... from the there and then to the here and now, wiring it into the power relations and social currents of our historical moment.”⁵⁷ This “hard-wiring” of a fully diversified form of global culture to the currents of contemporary power further indicates a paradigmatic shift in progress, and once again it is in the area of money—the salient feature of and omnipresent force behind the reproductive economy—that the subversive potential of the internet is most marked. By allowing circumvention of the large capital investments normally required to establish national, global, or even local distributional infrastructures, the net allows creatively-inclined individuals and groups (many of whom already appear to be functioning largely outside of the money economy in their cultural activities) to avail themselves of a distributional alternative. While I do not wish to overemphasize the utopian possibilities of the internet in this regard (which in my view have been much exaggerated and hyped by interested commercial players), neither do I feel its significance as a phenomenon pointing to emergent socio-economic realities should be overlooked.

Douglas Gomery has emphasized that the groundwork for a major transformation of motion picture exhibition was laid with the advent of television in the post-World War II era:

⁵⁷ Dery 16.

By the mid-1950s it had become clear that Hollywood would not directly own and operate television stations (or networks) but rather supply programs. With the coming of “The Late Show” in the mid-1950s and “Saturday Night at the Movies” in the early 1960s, feature film showings became one of television’s dominant forms.⁵⁸

Although the Hollywood studios were reluctant at first to lease their films to a competing medium, it soon became obvious that doing so was in their best financial interests. In a matter of years, home viewing of films via broadcast television became widespread, and the stockpile of the former studio system’s theatrical features quickly dwindled through extensive televised screenings. Made for television films then became more prevalent as producers sought to generate unique movie programming for TV, and many subsidiary shows on the subject of film such as on-air reviews of Hollywood pictures also came into being. Further changes occurred when a number of specialty cable stations offering film screenings without commercial interruptions appeared, and when the commercial availability of video cassette recorders and the development of a home video market for films allowed individuals and families a degree of control over exhibition that was not possible with broadcast TV screenings. The marketing and affordability of video tape recorders and VCRs have of course also been important to the different “video communities” described earlier, in that they established a virtually universal exhibition medium—the television screen with VCR—for showing individual and group video productions (a possibility that was never really available to 8mm and 16mm filmmakers).

Computers are also opening up audio-visual exhibition possibilities for a sizable segment of the population. The fact that computer screens

⁵⁸ Douglas Gomery, Shared Pleasures (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1992) 247.

display digital rather than analog information is significant in this regard, for a number of reasons. For one thing, various data display devices now permit high quality, large-screen projections of digital signals, effectively expanding the exhibition potential of multimedia. Furthermore, the recent arrival on the consumer market of digital television and “home entertainment theaters” featuring large screens and multi-speaker “surround sound” promises, in conjunction with the ongoing push towards an information superhighway infrastructure, to establish an extensive network of small, home- and business-based “venues” capable of exhibiting the audio-visual creations of individuals and small groups on a far more impressive scale than previously.

Finally, on a third (and for the most part still marginal) track in the exhibition area, virtual reality appears, in a curious way, to be reenacting in three dimensions the early history of the two-dimensional cinema. Edison’s initial vision for the motion picture was as an individualized experience, the kinoscope being a type of primitive equivalent of early virtual reality head gear. And just as Edison’s peep-show design was quickly eclipsed and replaced by the collectively-experienced cinema, so virtual reality’s main commercial applications to date have been in theme and amusement park group attractions and other audience-oriented exhibition situations. On the whole, however, recent developments in virtual reality and motion picture exhibition in general point to increasing levels of individualization in spectatorship and reception. When considered alongside the changes in production and distribution discussed above, they can be seen as key elements in the emergence of strengthened localization in the cultural fabric of societies worldwide.

A New Paradigm for Motion Picture Music?

All of the trends and developments discussed in this chapter have affected those film music makers still working within the structures of dominant Hollywood practice. As previously mentioned, postmodern processes of disintegration and mutation have had the ironically enriching effect of bringing a vast array of new musical materials, styles, and techniques into the background scoring area. One of the collateral benefits to the composer of the ongoing crisis of breakdown and renewal in reproductive culture has been the wide availability of mass-marketed recordings of every conceivable type of music from around the world. The compact discs and cassettes sold by transnational conglomerates and smaller labels offer quality recordings of both stylistically defined music—e.g. reconstructions of various historical styles, the music of different national and ethnic groups, sub-styles or sub-genres associated with particular times and places (New Orleans jazz of the 1920s, 1960s British Invasion pop, etc.)—as well as a host of hybrid and variant musical styles developed by composers as a result of their wide access to musical models over the past decades. This situation has inevitably led to greater diversity and (many have argued) greater fragmentation in the approaches motion picture makers and musicians have taken to the construction of soundtracks. It has also resulted in increasingly pastiche-like content in movie scores, with instances of stylistic imitation or parody and the mimicry or satire of stock conventions now a fairly common feature of background accompaniments.

The technological changes described in chapters 2 and 6 have also resulted in an appreciable transformation of the movie music *métier* itself. Digitized sound sources now often comprise the bulk of what is heard in

background scores, for example, and the ability to synchronize moving images and sound using affordable home equipment has allowed composers to experiment and record in a low-budget setting, widening the range of projects they can become involved in. Moreover, the existence of extensive production music libraries⁵⁹ and internet sites offering public domain MIDI files⁶⁰ or sound clips⁶¹ now permits the rapid creation of compiled scores from vast banks of pre-recorded material.

But as important as these stylistic, technological and practical changes have been in facilitating greater individual control and a wider latitude of personal expression in movie music making, the changing nature of musicians' collaborations with film and videomakers is perhaps even more revealing of emergent trends in the field. Although many film and video projects are put together on shoestring budgets that do not permit the addition of a background score in post-production, by and large moviemakers consider music an effective complement to filmed images and include it whenever possible. As just mentioned, this has resulted in a broadening range of smaller-scale projects for movie musicians, some of which are professionally-oriented (e.g. creating scores for "personal event" documentaries, for art or performance productions, activist films and videos, etc.), others of which are unremunerated or non-professional, or

⁵⁹ CD collections offering stylistically varied short selections in standard timings for uses in advertising, radio, and audio-visual productions. Descriptions and keywords attached to different selections aid compilers in making accompaniment choices, in a manner resembling silent era film music libraries.

⁶⁰ Sequences recorded in a cross-platform format permitting universal playback by standard MIDI instruments and sound cards.

⁶¹ Real-time recordings in digitized formats, playable by many widely marketed computer sound cards.

involve only an advisory role to film and videomakers essentially putting together their own background scoring and source music concepts.⁶²

Given that all of the above is taking place in the overall context of a deteriorating employment situation for all but a tiny élite of commercial film composers, these recent changes in movie music are highly significant. One can well ask the question: are we looking at a scenario in which the market is more or less removing most opportunities for paid work in the movie music field at the very moment when the technological tools to make the métier a more creative, flexible and exciting one for a wide range of individuals are becoming widely accessible? If the majority of people interested in this particular mode of expression do in fact find themselves in such a situation, then Attali's notion of a "for-it's-own-sake," approach to cultural production—acts of personal creativity and collaboration taking place outside of money and the reproductive economy—may well be the movie musician's only real option in the future. I am not suggesting that mainstream careers and credits in motion picture music or the Hollywood film composition scene in general will entirely fade away. But if, as my observations have led me to believe, the remunerated movie composer working in a traditional post-production capacity on commercial projects is becoming the exception rather than the rule among audio-visually oriented musicians, then we may see mainstream film scoring recede in overall

⁶² A number of Canadian filmmakers whose work I am familiar with provide examples of the variety of approaches to music film auteurs have adopted in recent years. While in certain productions such as George Unger's *The Wanderer* (1988) and *The Champagne Safari* (1995), filmmakers take a more or less traditional approach, hiring a composer during post-production and approving or disapproving what the musician comes up with on his or her own, others have become far more directly involved in the creation of soundtracks. In the case of Harriet Wichin's *Silent Witness* (1996), for example, the director actively collaborated on the musical score with composer Chris Crilly. Jocelyne Clarke arranged the music for her *Graven Images* (1991), and director Martin Lavut compiles his own scores from existing materials, often in consultation with musical archivists.

importance as new forms of compilation and composition for moving images become dominant.

In any event, the crisis situation in motion picture music also presents certain opportunities as far as I am concerned: opportunities for new types of “symbolic interaction” between movie makers and musicians, for example, new collaborative rapports that the structures of dominant practice have seldom permitted; and for a general reexamination of the music-picture relationship. Some of these new possibilities have in fact been experimented with much earlier in film history, as in the collaboration between director John Ford and composer Max Steiner on *The Informer* (1935). Ford flaunted what at that point had already been established as normal Hollywood practice by having Steiner compose much of the background music for the film before shooting began. Ford felt the production would be helped by a foreknowledge of the actual musical score, rather than relying on “temp tracks” as would normally have been the case. Having a solid sense of what the dramatic effect of the musical accompaniment would be during, instead of after, filming, Ford actually shot a number of scenes in direct synchronization with Steiner’s pre-composed cues, and encouraged the composer to be present on the set for as much of the shooting schedule as possible. According to Kathryn Kalinak, this “accorded Steiner a determining influence” in several important aspects of the film, most notably the development of the film’s main protagonist, Gypo Nolan (Victor McLaglen). But despite the fact that the Hollywood industry recognized the results of this particular process in the highest terms, awarding Steiner its second Academy Award for best score, and even though comparable composer-director collaborations at other times [e.g. Bernard Hermann and Orson Welles on *Citizen Kane* (1941)]

yielded equally impressive soundtracks, these instances proved to be exceptions rather than the rule in dominant practice. Ever concerned with efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the production process, both the Hollywood studios and the independent producers who succeeded them have consistently relegated music to the end stages of the postproduction process, usually introducing the project to composers only when a fully edited version of the film has been completed rather than involving them earlier.

In a similar vein, Roy Prendergast relates that the German Film Institute conducted extensive experiments in “sound montage” during the 1930s. The basic idea of sound montage was to construct segments of a film in such a way that they fit pre-composed musical cues, instead of vice-versa as per standard practice. The researchers tried matching editing patterns, camera movements, light intensities, and other cinematic factors with rhythmic, formal, and instrumental changes in the musical accompaniment, often with highly interesting results.⁶³ Once again, however, Hollywood shunned innovative approaches such as these in favor of the more rationally-organized, specialized procedure of adding music after a film’s visual and story aspects have been fully constructed. (Nonetheless, many animated film and videomakers—including some working in the mainstream—have regularly used the sound montage concept in their productions from the early sound era until the present.)

It seems logical to me that the motion picture medium should include a much more intimate rapport between movie and music makers, one that spans the entire length of a production and beyond rather than being limited to a minor phase of postproduction. The same is true of music’s general

⁶³ Prendergast 26-27.

relationships with visuals and narrative in the motion picture context. While music has not often been accorded a determining influence in how films and videos are constructed, there is no good reason, given its powerful dramatic effect, why it cannot figure as prominently in creative decision-making processes as image and story factors routinely do. In fact, as smaller-scale movie productions become more common and instances of producer-directors handling their own music increase, and as multimedia—whose authoring environments are designed in a way that treats music, images, text and dialogue as equally important elements of a whole—grows in importance, music's status in audio-visual productions seems destined to be upgraded to some degree in coming years.

In sum, this chapter has expressed my view that the future of music for moving images is tied not only to the ongoing globalization of cultures and economies currently taking place throughout the world, but also to the simultaneous evolution of an interconnected web of locally-based individuals and groups producing a widely diverse range of cultural artifacts. The trends toward greater emphasis on localized aspects of the global-local dialectic can be seen in a variety of areas within mainstream film and film music, including the fragmentation of classical textuality and spectatorship in postmodern culture, the rapid development of new technological production platforms, and the decentralization and diversification of the distribution and exhibition of audio-visual productions. These sweeping changes have created opportunities for more flexible and interactive relationships between musicians, film and videomakers, and multimedia designers, but a critical question remains whether the glut of works being created amidst the deep political-economic

and cultural sea change currently underway will exist within or largely outside of the realm of money.

The idea that much of film, video, music and multimedia production could one day exist outside of the reproductive exchange economy might strike some as either hopelessly utopian or highly impractical. Work without pay, even when it is creative work, is widely considered an invalid type of activity in most Western cultures, a more or less meaningless, amateurish sort of hobbyism that could never be paradigmatically central in our societies. Yet one does not have to look far to realize that such a notion is anything but far-fetched in terms of the realities we are now living with. Many compelling analyses of current directions in the global economy point to precisely the sort of trends I have been discussing in this chapter. For example, Jeremy Rifkin, in his influential 1995 exposé on the future of employment, *The End of Work*, states that

We are being swept up into a powerful new technology revolution that offers the promise of a great social transformation, unlike any in history. The new high-technology revolution could mean fewer hours of work and greater benefits for millions. For the first time in modern history, large numbers of human beings could be liberated from long hours of labor in the formal marketplace, to be free to pursue leisure-time activities. The same technological forces could, however, as easily lead to growing unemployment and a global depression. Whether a utopian or dystopian future awaits us depends, to a great measure, on how the productivity gains of the Information Age are distributed. A fair and equitable distribution of the productivity gains would require a shortening of the workweek around the world and a concerted effort by central governments to provide alternative employment in the third sector—the social economy—for those whose labor is no longer required in the marketplace. If, however, the dramatic productivity gains of the high-tech revolution are not shared, but rather used primarily to enhance corporate profit, to the exclusive benefit of stockholders, top corporate managers, and the emerging elite of high-tech knowledge workers, chances are that the growing gap between

the haves and the have-nots will lead to social upheaval on a global scale.⁶⁴

Furthermore along these same lines, William Greider's study of postindustrial capitalism indicates that on top of jobs disappearing due to the corporate restructuring, government cutbacks, and technological changes Rifkin refers to, those who do manage to remain employed are now far less secure in their positions than ever before, and work for increasingly lower real wages.⁶⁵ A sophisticated game of wage arbitrage is currently being played out among transnational employers, wherein manufacturing facilities, film productions, album recording projects, and any number of other economic and cultural activities are being moved to lower-wage parts of the world offering cheap labor, tax advantages, and other incentives to attract international investors. This process has put pressure on the middle classes of many countries around the world by diminishing job security and economic confidence among the employed, and threatens to undermine the consumer base on which producers of the goods and services in the global economy presently depend. Moreover, the far less dramatic and fragile rises in living standards in the developing world (which proponents of the present system routinely point to as one of its benefits) are unlikely to be able to compensate for the much larger losses taking place in the North, and the growing surpluses of consumer goods—particularly bigger-ticket items—will no doubt continue to accumulate in warehouses and showrooms around the globe as a result.

These and other macro-level analyses confirm, in my view, Attali's statements that the West is on the razor's edge between crisis and

⁶⁴ Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work* (N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995) 13.

⁶⁵ William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: the Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (N.Y.: Touchstone, 1997). "Real" wages refer to the pay workers receive after accounting for inflation.

opportunity as the millennium approaches. Whether we are to live in a world of degenerating reproductive culture and increasing violence, or in interconnected but highly localized societies encouraging increased levels of personal expression, is largely up to policymakers in countries around the globe. It is also up to the members of the world bureaucracy that controls international flows of trade, finance, debt, development and aid money, and the top executives of transnational corporations, as well as the masses of citizens on whom all of these power-wielders ultimately depend. The future of music and moving images (and of all forms of cultural expression) is inextricably linked to the choices that will be made in this regard and the outcomes that will issue from them over the next decade or so. We can only hope, for the sake of people everywhere, that those outcomes will see a marked enhancement of localism at the expense of globalism's current savage extremes.

Conclusion

In this study, I have argued that various dialectical processes underlying our collective and subjective realities affect the work and activities of film accompanists and composers in as direct and pertinent a fashion as those of other participants in twentieth-century culture and society. The mediating social influences examined over the preceding chapters have been presented as both emanating from and acting upon the relationships between film musicians and the institutions or formations within which they function, and as reflecting the economic and political preoccupations of those collective bodies. These same factors have also been observed to produce effects in the realm of social subjectivity, shaping in various ways the internal attitudes of film accompanists and composers toward their *métier* and towards the individuals and groups they interact with in the course of making music for motion pictures. The diverse social dimensions informing the area have further been seen as mediating the processes in which film musicians produce the actual notes, timbres and styles heard in live accompaniments and on soundtracks, affecting the structures, idioms, instrumental media, and conventions that have evolved in mainstream film music over its century-long history. And finally, the presence of various residual and emergent elements within dominant film musical practice has been considered. These diachronic influences originate, in the former case, in the literal juxtaposition of live performance and the reproduced film during the silent era, and in the residual echoes of live musical reception present at moments of filmed spectacle and when attention-grabbing background music or commercial tunes are heard on soundtracks. The latter emergent trends have been linked to shifts in

postmodern society towards more actively engaged forms of spectatorship and musical reception, and to a related desire for greater personal expression and participation among a critical mass of people (tendencies further supported by the increasing accessibility and diversity of creative raw materials and technological tools over the past few decades).

If one examines from a musical perspective the evolution of any given genre or type of film over the course of Hollywood history, one is likely to encounter most of the structures, conventions, and general issues surrounding movie music discussed in this work. Take the horror picture, for example. At the origins of the genre, one notices films such as the first movie treatment of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1910), an Edison one-reeler whose live accompaniment may or may not have been based on suggestions published in the company's *Kinetoscope* magazine (depending on the venue and the musicians involved). Mid-silent era horror features such as *Life Without Soul* ((1916), the first full-length filmed version of Shelley's novel, would have been similarly affected by the unevenness and instability of film-musical practice at the time. But only a few years later, one comes across horror productions such as John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), whose through-composed theatrical organ score by Lee Irwin evidences a clear center-periphery organization linking music and narrative (light, major materials being assigned to the "good" Jeckyl, and dissonant or minor elements to the "evil" Hyde). Moreover, Irwin and his contemporaries were already employing many of the leitmotivic and illustrative techniques that were soon to become hallmarks of late-silent and classical era film composition, foreshadowing the stabilization and standardization of film-musical practice in the late silent and sound eras.

A decade later, in early talking pictures like *Dracula* (1931), one notes the strange absence of background music during the transition to sound technology. Long scenes designed to horrify and disturb audiences unfold without the crucial discursive support of peripheral cues on the musical soundtrack, and the exclusive reliance on sound effects (creaking coffins, whistling wind, wolf howls, et al.) to create chilling ambiances seems strained and largely ineffective in retrospective viewings. But after the industry rectified its misjudgment of the importance of non-diegetic music in the mid-1930s, one hears the full panoply of dominant film-musical techniques being used in classical horror pictures such as *The Return of the Vampire* (1943). Frank Skinner's symphonic score is idiomatically and conventionally typical of the period in this instance, abounding in peripheral materials that work to reinforce the film's negative characterizations of a two hundred year-old vampire, Armand Tessler (Bela Lugosi), and his werewolf assistant (Matt Willis). Moreover, discursive-musical attempts at a "correct" ideological framing for the story (to ensure its resonance with the key "master narratives" of the time) are also clearly made in the picture (the Nazi air force being responsible for the revival of Tessler when a stray projectile opens his grave during the blitzkrieg of London). But Skinner's score also comes uncomfortably close to encouraging contradictory readings of the text at certain points, e.g. when centripetal major materials are assigned to the lovers Nicki (Nina Foch) and John (Roland Narno) *after* they have been demonically possessed by Tessler (the type of musical-discursive conflict that was itself not uncommon in classical films).¹

¹ Furthermore, as Dana Polan points out in another connection, the "too-fascinating" quality of 1940s villains such as those played by Lugosi creates textual conflicts in and of itself, a reality that may have influenced the Hays Office's decision to cut the film's final

One then notices the horror film's increasingly pronounced mixtures of residual, emergent and dominant elements in the decades following the classical period. In *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1958), for example, the insertion of a narratively unrelated rock n' roll song (Jerry Blaine's version of "Eeny-Meeny-Miney-Mo") completely suspends the storyline in the interests of showcasing a commercially attractive theme and promoting the movie's soundtrack album. But despite such narratively-jarring inclusions of musical spectacle² being fairly common in 1950s and 60s independent productions, one also observes more effective assimilations of residual effects in post-classical horror movies. In *The Hunger* (1983), for example, the featured pop tune occurs during the opening credit sequence, before the dramatic action has fully begun, and its performance is narratively connected to the ensuing story by its taking place in a disco where several deadly seductions by the central vampire protagonists take place. [The macabre makeup and stage act of the musical group (Bauhaus), and the lyrical content of the song itself ("Bela Lugosi is Dead") also help in this regard.] Moreover, later diegetic performances such as the chamber pieces John (David Bowie) plays with young Alice Cavender (Beth Ehlers) prior to killing her during a music lesson, and Miriam's (Catherine Deneuve's) piano soloing as she seduces Sarah Roberts (Susan Sarandon), are even more thoroughly integrated because of their strong narrative grounding.³ And while the casting of recording star Bowie in a lead role potentially

scene (in which Tessler's face is seen to melt away to a skull when he is finally killed) in its domestic American version. [See Nash and Ross, *The Motion Picture Guide*, vol. VI]

² The tangential singing and dancing—whose only link to the story is the fact that the high school social where it takes place is attended by soon-to-be-werewolf Tony (Michael Landon)—halts the forward momentum in the narrative for over three minutes in this case.

³ In fact, source music performances by vampires also function on another level in the horror genre, as stock *combinatoire* elements used as a type of intertextual marker (a point I return to shortly).

raises awareness of his live concert-based “aura” in a reproductive-cinematic context, these risks are minimized by the complementarity of Bowie’s theatrical, often outlandish, star image and his ghoulish role in the picture.

These and other post-classical horror films also evidence the expansion in background music idioms and instrumental media that challenged the dominance of romantic-symphonic scoring beginning in the 1950s. In *I was a Teenage Werewolf*, for example, one detects a marked jazz influence in many of Paul Dunlap’s non-diegetic cues, as well as a degree of harmonic and orchestrational modernity that was rare prior to the innovations of Hermann, North and Rosenman. Composers Michel Rubini and Denny Jaeger employ electronic timbres and avant-garde electro-acoustic techniques to generate a surrealistic atmosphere during *The Hunger*’s most intensely disturbing scenes, and *Interview With the Vampire* (1994) makes typical use of a background pop song (Mick Jagger and Keith Richards’ “Sympathy for the Devil”), placing it behind panoramic visuals as the evil Lestat (Tom Cruise) drives the magazine reporter Malloy (Christian Slater) across the Golden Gate bridge to an unpromising future at the end of the film.

But one is equally aware of various emergent strains within the post-classical era horror genre, indications that the nature of spectatorship and the general culture underlying mainstream film have been undergoing significant transformations. Certainly the spiraling violence in postmodern film is abundantly evident in horror pictures such as *Blood Feast* (1963), *Rabid* (1977), *The Evil Dead* (1982), and *Nightbreed* (1990), whose musically-accompanied spectacles of mutilation and torture are fundamental, rather than incidental, elements of the stories they present.

One also encounters, in horror parodies like *Love at First Bite* (1979), pastiche-like musical soundtracks—disjointed collections of well-trodden clichés (e.g. candlelit keyboard performances by vampires, gypsy violins, pipe organs and tubular bells in the background orchestration), as well as established musical conventions from classical era horror pictures and newer stylistic elements (the source disco number and non-diegetic rock cues in *Love at First Bite* being typical examples). Furthermore, the expectation seemingly imbedded in these pictures—i.e. that spectators are well-versed enough in the standard elements of film-musical discourse used in horror films to appreciate the humor in their exaggerated statement and incongruous mixture with contemporary idioms—provides further testimony to the sweeping changes in postmodern cultural production and reception. Extensive cult activities around the horror film, its stars and its music, further confirm these same tendencies: magazines such as *Cult Movies* pore over the minute details of re-issued soundtrack recordings from films like *Godzilla*, *King of the Monsters* (1956) and *The Wolf Man* (1941), or obscure tracks such as Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff’s 1932 radio duet “We’re Horrible, Horrible Men” and other trivia.⁴ And the existence of thousands of internet sites dedicated to horror movies—offering genre-related fare ranging from personal reviews, trivia quizzes, and chat room gossip to showcases and streaming excerpts of commercial and independently-made horror films and videos—show that the type of grassroots participation and personal creativity discussed in chapter 6 are as prevalent in this area as elsewhere in postindustrial society.

⁴ See Buddy Barnett, “Cult Movies Underground,” *Cult Movies* 27 (1998): 88.

In this way, one sees in microcosm the full breadth and depth of movie music's socially-informed nature within any number of mainstream film areas. Mediating the institutional, formational, and technological processes through which film scores and accompaniments are created, and equally affecting the musical sounds that are the end result of economically- and politically-driven chains of events, these diverse social dimensions are in my view a vital consideration in any analysis related to Hollywood film music, and must be taken into consideration along with formal and evaluative criteria if meaningful and pertinent criticism is to continue in the field.

As I stated in the introduction to this work, while I believe that the analytical framework laid out in this work can address a wide range of socially-related issues around the content and general characteristics of mainstream movie music, and hope it can make some meaningful contribution to the literature on film music in that respect, there is a deeper motivation behind my having undertaken this particular project. Because the musical-dramatic techniques developed in the Hollywood cinema have become integral elements of what Benjamin Barber calls "American monoculture"—that strain of dominant "videology" propagated throughout the world by the capitalistic forces driving economic, political and cultural globalization—I am convinced that understanding the nature and scope of those techniques is an essential part of working towards some sort of social alternative. For as Barber himself emphatically states, Hollywood's influence within globalism ensures that its role in contemporary society goes well beyond providing entertainment to the world's billions:

More than anything else this has been the Movie Century... Sound and pictures are how what passes as 'knowledge' gets 'communicated' to most people around the globe... Images,

reinforced by recorded sound, take the place of words, numbers, and other ciphers with which humans have traditionally communicated...⁵

In the midst of this transformed social environment,

American films are everywhere—on global television even more overwhelmingly than on the world's movie screens. They have the status of amusements but they are also likely to inspire a vision of life and to affect habits and attitudes. Hollywood...inculcates secularism, passivity, consumerism, vicariousness, impulse buying, and an accelerated pace of life..., [converting global culture into] an entertainment shopping experience that brings together malls, multiplex movie theaters, theme parks, spectator sports arenas, fast-food chains (with their endless movie tie-ins), and television (with its burgeoning shopping networks) into a single vast enterprise that, on the way to maximizing its profits, transforms human beings.⁶

But if Hollywood's dominant synergies of image, music and sound are contributing so heavily to the current crises in global culture, and if most postmodern initiatives to establish paradigmatically distinct niches within the mainstream nonetheless assume and rely on wide familiarity with American movies, television, and their related spin-offs, precisely how can musical-dramatic alternatives be envisioned in such a climate? Modernist-oppositional programs such as Hanns Eisler's proposals for a revolutionary film musical practice⁷ have produced questionable results in this regard in the past, and cannot in my opinion be looked to as a serious source of inspiration for new ideas. As Kathryn Kalinak remarks, Eisler's Hollywood film music "often sound[ed] just like the classical scores he was trying to avoid,"⁸ and Claudia Gorbman muses that even if some of the Marxist composer's more radical suggestions were successfully put into practice,

⁵ Barber 88, 89.

⁶ Barber 96, 97.

⁷ See Eisler and Adorno 114-133..

⁸ Kalinak 34.

“An Eisler score, designed to unmask contradictions throughout [a mainstream film], would surely just sound wrong to an audience thoroughly steeped in... identification of the kind Adorno and Eisler rail against.”⁹ Nevertheless, it is my conviction that if the emphasis and orientation of alternatively-minded critical analysis and practice in the movie music area shifts from an attempted transformation of content to a possible restructuring of the socio-cultural paradigm within which that content is produced, some potential for change may be realized. Encouraging Attali’s “emergence of the free act”¹⁰—the self-motivated processes of personal expression that already seem to be quietly spreading throughout global culture without any real ideological agenda or program to promote them—seems to me the surest way to accomplish this. But needless to say, any alternative cultural strain which by its very nature must circumvent the constraints and imperatives of money is a necessarily fragile construct, one which could or could not survive into the first decades of the new millennium depending on the present and future course of geopolitical events.

⁹ Gorbman 109.

¹⁰ Attali 134.

Bibliography

- Adorno, T.W. Introduction to the Sociology of Music. N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1976.
- Allen, Jeanne Thomas. "The Decay of the Motion Picture Patents Company." The American Film Industry. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1976.
- Atkins, Irene. Source Music in Motion Pictures. East Brunswick, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985.
- Attali, Jacques. Noise: The Political Economy of Music. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1985.
- Balio, Tino, ed. The Hollywood Film Industry. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1976.
- Barber, Benjamin. Jihad vs. McWorld. N.Y.: Ballantine, 1995.
- Barnett, Buddy. "Cult Movies Underground." Cult Movies 27 (1998).
- Barthes, Roland. Image-Music-Text. N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- _____. "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative." Communications 8 (1966).
- _____. Mythologies N.Y.: Noonday Press, 1972.
- _____. Camera Lucida. N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1981.
- Bazelon, Irwin. Knowing the Score. N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975.
- Becker, Howard S. Art Worlds. Berkeley: California UP, 1982.
- Belton, John. "The Production Code." Movies and Mass Culture. John Belton, ed. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1996

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production." Illuminations. N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.
- Berg, Charles Merell. "An Investigation of the Motives for and Realization of Music to Accompany the American Silent Film, 1896-1927." Diss., U. of Iowa, 1973.
- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. Film Art. N.Y.: Knopf, 1986.
- Bremond, C. "Le Message Narratif." Communications 4 (1964).
- Brooker, Peter, and Will Brooker. "Pulpmodernism: Tarantino's Affirmative Action." Pulping Fictions. Deborah Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye and Imelda Whelehan, eds. Chicago: Pluto Press, 1996
- Brown, Edward, and Mark Chignell. "End User as Developer: Free-Form Multimedia." Contextual Media. Edward Barrett and Marie Redmond, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995.
- Bruce, Graham. Bernard Hermann: Film Music and Narrative. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985.
- Bruno, Giuiliana. "Rumble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner." Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film. Ed. Christopher Sharrett. Washington. D.C.: Maisonneuve Press, 1993..
- Bustard, Bruce J. A New Deal for the Arts. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1997.
- Cook, David A. "Post-War Genres: Film Noir." A History of Narrative Film. N.Y.: Norton, 1987.
- Cooper, Mark. "Christopher Young." Music From the Movies. Spring, 1998.

- Covert, Nadine and Justin Trojan, eds. 16mm Distribution. N.Y.: Educational Film Library Association, 1977.
- Crowther, Bosley. "The Letter." N.Y. Times 23 June, 1940, 12:6.
- _____. "Double Indemnity." N.Y. Times 7 September, 1944, 21:1
- _____. "The Postman Always Rings Twice, with Lana Turner in a Star Role, Opens at the Capitol." N.Y. Times 3 May, 1946, 15:3
- Dawkins, Richard. The Selfish Gene. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- de Landa, Manuel. "Markets, Antimarkets, and Network Economics." Lecture, Concordia University, September 1997.
- Dery, Mark, ed. Escape Velocity. N.Y.: Grove Press, 1996,
- Eco, Umberto. "Casablanca: cult movies and intertextual collage." Modern Criticism and Theory. Ed. David Lodge..London: Longman, 1988.
- Ehrenstein, David and Bill Reed. Rock on Film. N.Y.: Delilah Books, 1982.
- Eisler, Hanns, and Theodor Adorno. Composing for the Films. London: Dennis Dobson, 1947.
- Ellis, John. "Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon." Star Texts. Ed. Jeremy G. Butler. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1993.
- Evans, Mark. Soundtrack: The Music of the Movies. N.Y.: Da Capo, 1975
- Faulkner, Robert. Music on Demand. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1983.
- Feldman, Tony. Multimedia. London: Blueprint, 1994.
- Feuer, Jane. The Hollywood Musical. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.

- Flinn, Caryl. Strains of Utopia. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.
- Foucault, Michel. Le Souci de Soi. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.
- Frye, Northrop. "Theory of Modes." Sound and Poetry. Ed. Frye, N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1957.
- Gilbert, Paul. "Nations, Cultures and Markets: An Introduction." Nations, Cultures, and Markets. Ed. Paul Gilbert and Paul Gregory. Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 1994.
- Gomery, Douglas. Shared Pleasures. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1992).
_____, The Hollywood Studio System. London: MacMillan, 1986.
- Gorbman, Claudia. Unheard Melodies. London: BFI, 1987.
- Greider, William. One World, Ready or Not. N.Y.: Touchstone, 1997.
- Hagen, Earl. Scoring for Films. N.Y.: E.D.J. Music, 1971.
- Hansen, Miriam. Babel and Babylon. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1981.
- Harding, Henry J. "Music and the Pictures." Cadenza. February, 1915.
- Heath, Steven. "Film, System, Narrative." Questions of Cinema. London: MacMillan, 1981.
- Horsfield, Kate. "Video Art: Stay Tuned." The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos. Ed. Morrie Warshawski. N.Y.: Foundation for Independent Video and Film, 1995.
- Hull, David. "Central Subjects and Historical Narratives." History and Theory. 14 no. 3 (1975).
- Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." Movies and Mass Culture. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1996.

- Jankélévitch, Vladimir, La musique et l'ineffable. Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1983.
- Kalinak, Kathryn. Settling the Score. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1992.
- Karlin, Fred, and Rayburn Wright. On the Track. N.Y.: Schirmer, 1990.
- Kermode, Mark. "Endnotes." Sight and Sound. Feb. 1995.
- Kristeva, Julia. Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection. N.Y. Columbia UP, 1982.
- Lang, Edith, and George West. Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures. Boston: Boston Music, 1920.
- Langer, Suzanne. Feeling and Form. N.Y.: Scribner's, 1953.
- Larson, R.D., Musique Fantastique. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985
- Lazarous, Paul N. "Distribution: A Disorderly Dissertation." The Movie Business Book. Ed. Jason Squire. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. Structural Anthropology. N.Y.: Basic Books, 1963.
- Limbacher, James, ed. Film Music: From Violins to Video. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974.
- London, Kurt. Film Music. London: Faber & Faber, 1936.
- Manvell, Roger and John Huntley. The Technique of Film Music. N.Y.: Hastings House, 1975.
- Marks, Martin. "Film Music of the Silent Period." Diss., Harvard U., 1989.

- Marx, Carl, and Friedrich Engels. On Literature and Art. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978.
- Meeker, David. Jazz in the Movies. London: BFI, 1972.
- Mohammed, Juanita and Alexandra Juhasz. "Knowing Each Other Through AIDS Video." Connected. Ed. George E. Marcus. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996.
- Mosco, Vincent. The Political Economy of Communication. London: Sage, 1996.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Screen 16,3. Autumn, 1975.
- Muscio, Giuliana. Hollywood's New Deal. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997.
- Nash, Jay Robert, and Stanley Ralph Ross. The Motion Picture Guide. 12 vols. Chicago: Cinebooks, 1985-1987.
- Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. Music and Discourse. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990.
- Navasky, Victor. Naming Names. N.Y.: Viking, 1980.
- Polan, Dana. Power and Paranoia. N.Y.: Columbia UP, 1986.
- Postman, Neil. Technopoly. N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1993.
- Powers, Stephen, David J. Rothman, and Stanley Rothman. Hollywood's America. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1996.
- Prendergast, Roy. Film Music: A Neglected Art. N.Y.: New York. UP, 1977
- Rapee, Erno. Encyclopedia of Music for Films. N.Y.: 1924, repr. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1970.

_____. Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists: A Rapid Reference Collection of Selected Pieces Adapted to Fifty-Two Moods and Situations. N.Y.: 1924, repr. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1970.

Renov, Michel. "The State, Ideology, and *Priorities on Parade*."

Film Reader 5 (1982).

Rifkin, Jeremy. The End of Work. N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Rosolato, Guy. "La voix: entre corps et langage." Revue française de psychanalyse 38, 1. Jan., 1974.

Ross, Steven J. "Cinema and Class Conflict." Resisting Images.

Robert Sklar and Charles Musser, eds. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990.

Russell, Catherine. "Decadence, Violence and the Decay of History: Notes on the Spectacular Representation of Death in Narrative Film, 1965 to 1990." Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film. Ed. Christopher Sharrett. Washington. D.C.: Maisonneuve Press, 1993..

Saul, John Ralston. Voltaire's Bastards. N.Y.: Penguin, 1992.

Sharrett, Christopher. "Introduction: Crisis Cinema." Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film. Ed. Christopher Sharrett. Washington. D.C.: Maisonneuve Press, 1993.

Shepherd, John. "The 'Meaning' of Music," and "The Musical Coding of Ideologies." Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages. London: Latimer, 1977.

Sklar, Robert. Movie-Made America. N.Y.: Vintage, 1994.

Smith, Adam. The Wealth of Nations. 2 vols. Everyman's Library, nos. 412, 413.

- Taylor, Stanley. Conceptions of Institutions and the Theory of Knowledge. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1989.
- Thomas, Tony. Film Score. Cranbury, N.J.: A.S Barnes and Company, 1979.
- Unerburger, Amy, ed. International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers. 3 vols. Detroit: St. James Press, 1997.
- Waters, Malcom. Globalization. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Williams, Raymond. Marxism and Literature. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.
- _____. Culture. London: Fontana, 1981.
- Wolff, Janet. The Social Production of Art. London: MacMillan, 1981.
- Wood, Robin. "The Return of the Repressed." The American Nightmare. Toronto: Festival of Festivals, 1977.
- Zuck, Barbara. A History of Musical Americanism. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Research Press, 1980.
- Zuckerandl, Victor. The Sense of Music. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959.

List of Films Cited

- Adventures of Robin Hood, The. Mus. Erich Wolfgang Korngold.
Warner/First National, 1938.
- American Graffiti. Mus. by diverse pop artists. Universal, 1973.
- Apocalypse Now. Mus. Carmine and Francis Ford Coppola.
United Artists, 1979.
- Babes on Broadway. Mus. dir. George Stoll. MGM, 1941.
- Back to the Future. Mus. Danny Elfman. Paper Clip, 1985.
- Band Wagon, The. Mus. dir. Adolph Deutsch. MGM, 1951.
- Barton Fink. Mus. Carter Burwell. Circle Films, 1991.
- Big Sleep, The. Mus. Max Steiner. Warner, 1946.
- Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure. Mus. David Newman.
Nelson/Interscope, 1989.
- Bird of Paradise. Mus. Max Steiner. RKO, 1932.
- Birth of A Nation, The. Mus. Joseph Carl Breil and D.W. Griffith.
Epoch, 1915.
- Blackboard Jungle, The. Mus. Charles Wolcott. MGM, 1955.
- Blade Runner. Mus. Vangelis. Warner, 1982.
- Blazing Saddles. Mus. John Morris. Warner, 1974.
- Blood Feast. Mus. Herschell Lewis. Box Office Spectaculars, 1963.
- Blue Velvet. Mus. Angelo Badalamenti. DiLaurentis Entertainment
Group, 1986.
- Blues Brothers, The. Mus. Ira Newborn. Universal, 1980.
- Bodyguard, The. Mus. Alan Silvestri. Warner, 1992.
- Bonnie and Clyde. Mus. Charles Strouse. Warner, 1967.
- Buddy Holly Story, The. Mus. dir. Joe Renzetti. Columbia, 1978.

Caine Mutiny, The. Mus. Max Steiner. Columbia, 1954.

Captain Blood. Mus. Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Warner/First National, 1935.

Casablanca. Mus. Max Steiner. Warner, 1943.

Champagne Safari, The. Mus. Normand Roger.

Field Seven Films, inc., 1995.

Cimarron. Mus. Max Steiner. RKO, 1931.

Citizen Kane. Mus. Bernard Hermann. Mercury/RKO, 1941.

Clockwork Orange, A. Mus. Walter Carlos. Warner, 1971.

Crying Game, The. Mus. Anne Dudley. Miramax, 1992.

D.O.A. Mus. Dimitri Tiomkin. United Artists, 1949.

Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde. Mus. Lee Irwin. Paramount, 1920.

Double Indemnity. Mus. Miklos Rosza. Paramount, 1944.

Dracula. Universal, 1931.

Easy Rider. Mus. by diverse pop artists. Columbia, 1969.

Edward Scissorhands. Mus. Danny Elfman. 20th Century Fox, 1990.

Evil Dead, The. Mus. Joe de Luca. Renaissance/New Line, 1982.

Fall of a Nation, The. Mus. Victor Herbert. 1916.

Frankenstein. Edison, 1910.

Gilda. Mus. dir. Morris Stoloff. Columbia, 1946.

Girl Can't Help It, The. Mus. dir. Lionel Newman.

20th Century Fox, 1956.

Git Along, Little Dogies. Mus. by diverse songwriters. Republic, 1937.

Godzilla, King of the Monsters. Mus. Akira Ifukube.

Toho Productions, 1956.

Gone With the Wind. Mus. Max Steiner. MGM, 1939.

Graduate, The. Mus. Paul Simon. Embassy Pictures, 1967.

Graven Images. Mus. dir. Jocelyne Clarke. Independent, 1991.

Hard Day's Night, A. Mus. dir. George Martin. United Artists, 1964.

High and the Mighty, The. Mus. Dimitri Tiomkin. Warner, 1954.

High Noon. Mus. Dimitri Tiomkin. United Artists, 1952.

Hunger, The. Mus. Michel Rubini and Denny Jaeger.

MGM/United Artists, 1983.

I Was a Teenage Werewolf. Mus. Paul Dunlap.

American International, 1958.

Informer, The. Mus. Max Steiner. RKO, 1935.

Interview With the Vampire. Mus. Elliot Goldenthal.

Geffen Pictures, 1994.

In the Name of the Father. Mus. Trevor Jones. Universal, 1993.

Invaders from Mars. Mus. Christopher Young.

Golan-Globus/Canon, 1986.

It's A Wonderful Life. Mus. Dimitri Tiomkin.

Liberty Films/RKO, 1946.

Jaws. Mus. John Williams. Universal, 1975.

Julius Caesar. Mus. Miklos Rosza. MGM, 1953.

Killing, The. Mus. Gerald Fried. United Artists, 1953.

King Kong. Mus. Max Steiner. RKO, 1933.

Lady Dances, The. Mus. dir. Franz Lehar. MGM, 1934.

Last Picture Show, The. Mus. by diverse country artists.

Columbia, 1971.

Laura. Mus. David Raksin. 20th Century Fox, 1944.

Letter, The. Mus. Max Steiner. Warner, 1940.

Life Without Soul. Ocean, 1916.

Love at First Bite. Mus. Charles Bernstein.

Melvin Simon/American International, 1979.

Love Parade, The. Mus. by diverse songwriters. Paramount, 1929.

Magnificent Ambersons, The. Mus. Bernard Hermann and Roy Webb.

Mercury/RKO, 1942.

Man Who Came to Dinner, The. Mus. dir. Leo Forbstein.

Warner, 1941.

Man Who Knew Too Much, The. Mus. Bernard Hermann.

Paramount, 1956.

Man Who Shot Liberty Valence, The. Mus. Cecil Mockridge and

Alfred Newman. Ford/Paraount, 1962.

Man With the Golden Arm, The. Mus. Ron Goodwyn.

Carlyle/United Artists, 1955.

Marathon Man. Mus. Michael Small. Paramount, 1976.

Miracle, The. Mus. Renzo Rosselini. Joseph Burstyn, 1948.

Natural Born Killers. Mus. Budd Carr. Warner, 1994.

Nashville. Mus. Richard Baskin. Paramount, 1975.

Nightbreed. Mus. Danny Elfman. 20th Century Fox, 1990.

Omen, The. Mus. Jerry Goldsmith. 20th Century Fox, 1976.

Opposite of Sex, The. Mus. Mason Daring. Sony Pictures, 1998.

Orphans of the Storm. United Artists, 1922.

Patton. Mus. Jerry Goldsmith. 20th Century Fox, 1970.

Pirate, The. Mus. dir. Lennie Hayton. MGM, 1948.

Postman Always Rings Twice, The. Mus. George Bassman.

MGM, 1946.

Pretty Woman. Mus. James Newton Howard.

Silver Screen Pictures/Touchstone, 1990.

- Prince and the Showgirl, The. Mus. Richard Addinsell.
Marilyn Monroe L.O.P./Warner, 1957.
- Psycho. Mus. Bernard Hermann. Paramount, 1960.
- Pulp Fiction. Mus. Karen Rechtman and Kathy Nelson.
Miramax, 1994.
- Rabid. Mus. (Uncredited). Cinepix Dibar/New World, 1977.
- Rear Window. Mus. Franz Waxman. Paramount, 1954.
- Rebecca. Mus. Franz Waxman. Selznick/United Artists, 1940.
- Reivers, The. Mus. Johnny Williams.
Duo Solar/National General, 1969.
- Reservoir Dogs. Mus. Karen Rechtman. Miramax, 1992.
- Return of the Vampire, The. Mus. Frank Skinner. Columbia, 1943.
- Rock, Pretty Baby. Mus. by diverse songwriters. Universal, 1956.
- Rocky Horror Picture Show, The. Mus. dir. Richard Hartley.
Alder-White/20th Century Fox, 1975.
- Rope. Mus. Leo Forbstein. Transatlantic/Warner, 1948.
- Samson. Universal, 1914.
- Saturday Night Fever. Mus. Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb, David
Shire. Paramount, 1977.
- Save the Tiger. Mus. Marvin Hamlisch. Paramount, 1973.
- Scarlet Street. Mus. Hans J. Salter. Diana/Universal, 1945.
- Seven Year Itch, The. Mus. Alfred Newman. 20th Century Fox, 1955.
- Short Cuts. Mus. Mark Isham. Fineline Features, 1993.
- Silent Witness. Mus. Harriet Wichin and Chris Crilly.
Wichin-York Films, 1996.
- Stagecoach. Mus. by diverse composers. United Artists, 1939.
- Stand By Me. Mus. Jack Nitzsche. Columbia, 1986.

Summer Stock. Mus. dirs. Johnny Green and Saul Chaplin.

MGM, 1950.

Suspicion. Mus. Franz Waxman. RKO, 1941.

Taxi Driver. Mus. Bernard Hermann. Columbia, 1976.

Thelma and Louise. Mus. Hans Zimmer. MGM/United Artists, 1991.

Thin Man, The. Mus. dir. William Axt. MGM, 1935.

Third Man, The. Mus. Anton Karas.

London Films/Kurda Selznick, 1949.

Top Hat. Mus. dir. Max Steiner. RKO, 1935.

Tom Curtain. Mus. John Addison. Universal, 1966.

Trouble With Girls, The. Mus. Billy Strange and Scott Davis.

MGM, 1969.

2001: A Space Oddessey. Hawk/MGM, 1968.

Vertigo. Mus. Bernard Hermann. Paramount, 1958.

Wanderer, The. Mus. Normand Roger.

National Film Board of Canada, 1988.

Wild At Heart. Mus. Angelo Badalamenti.

Polygram-Propaganda, 1990.

Wild Bunch, The. Mus. Jerry Fielding. Warner, 1969.

Wolf Man, The. Mus. Charles Previn. Universal, 1941.

Yellow Rose of Texas, The. Mus. dir. Morton Scott. Republic, 1944.