

"Music appears in myth as an affirmation that society is possible. That is the essential thing. Its order simulates the social order, and its dissonances express marginalities. The code of music simulates the accepted rules of society"

(Jacques Atali, Noise)

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Atali's Noise – an important book about music and its role in society.

Why Music?

A Summary & Speculations:

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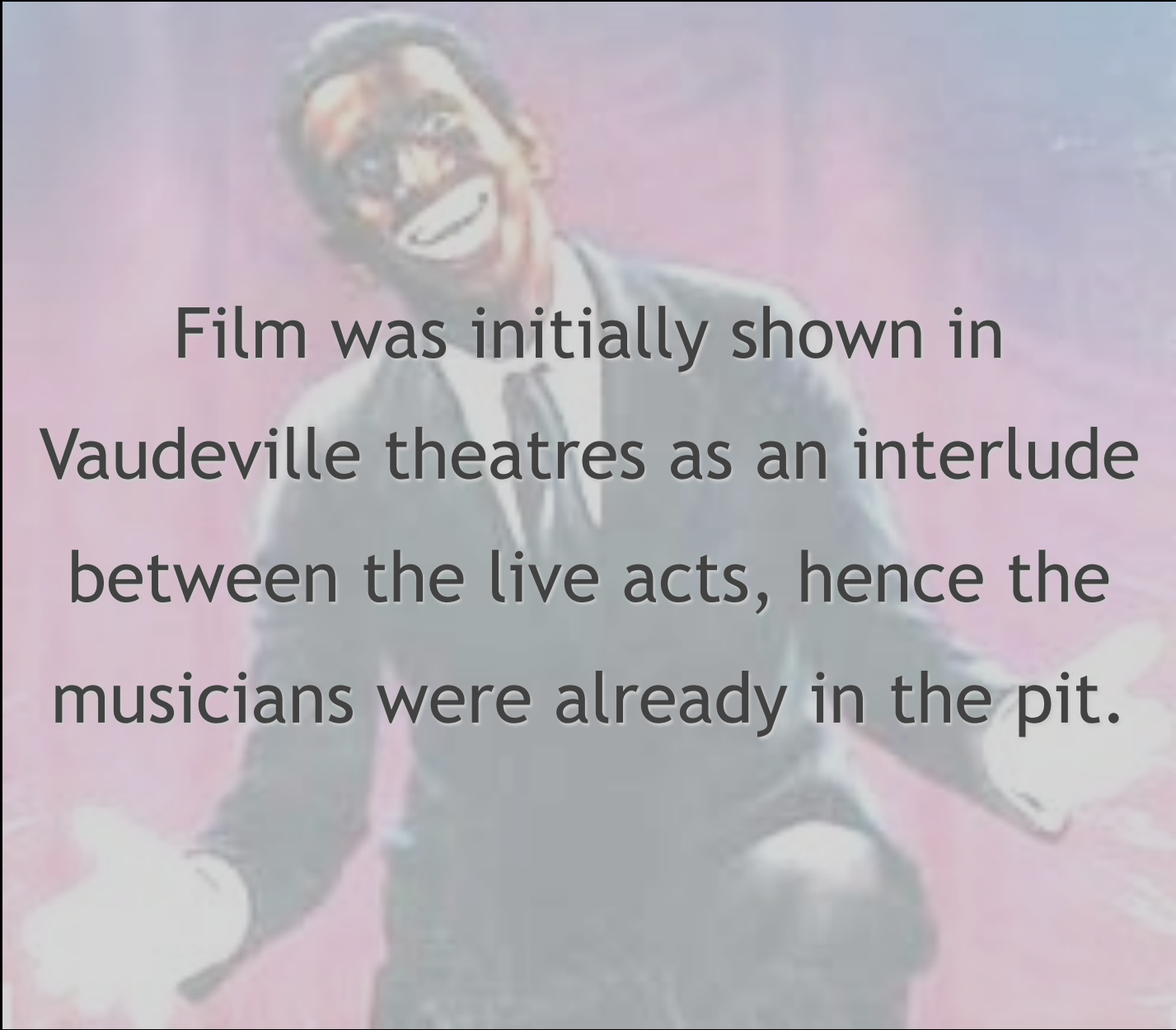
Why music -
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*Reminder: Film was
never silent, it was
always accompanied
by sound*



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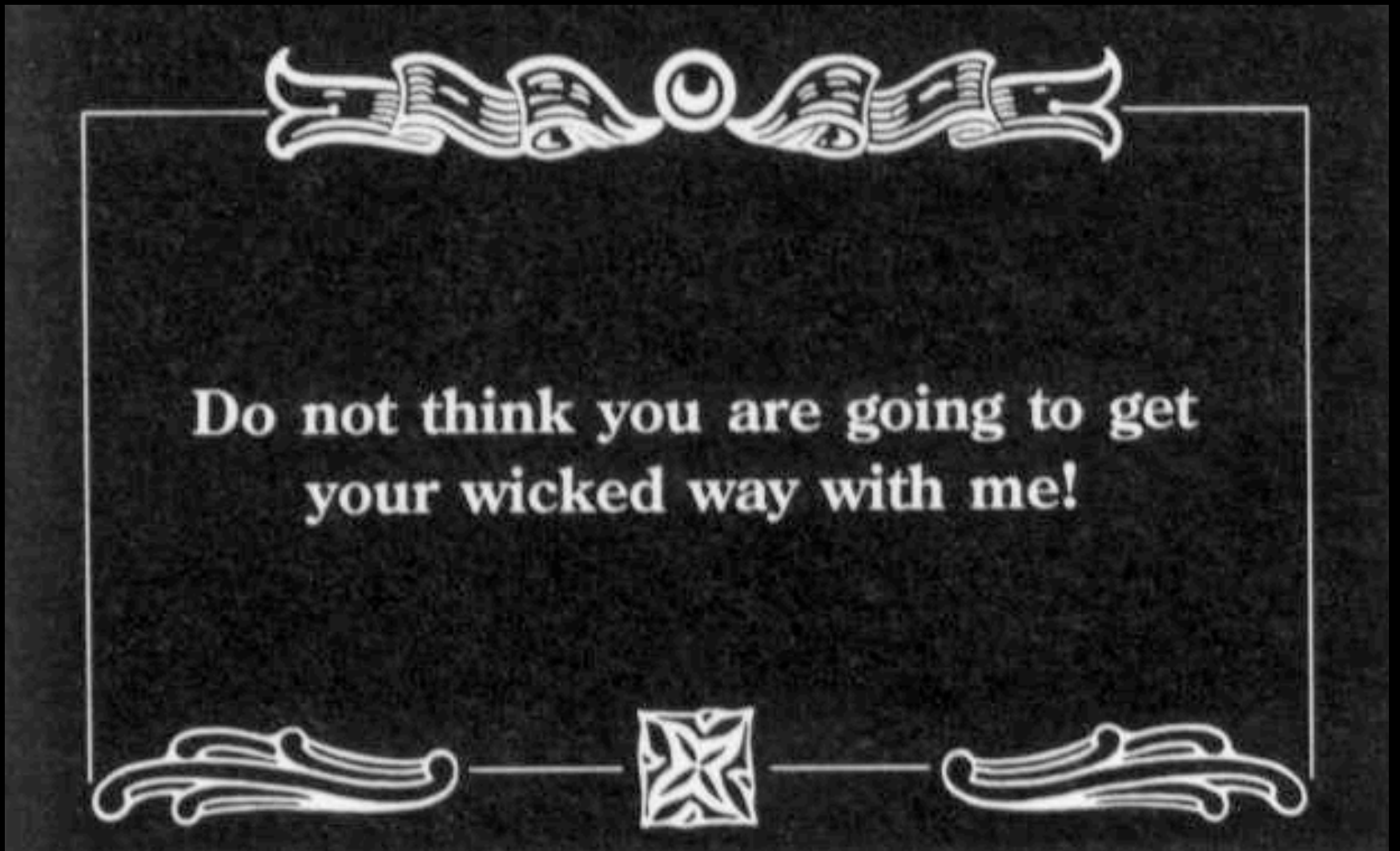
never silent – examples

A photograph of Al Jolson in blackface, wearing a dark suit and tie, smiling broadly with his arms outstretched. The image is semi-transparent, with text overlaid on it.

Film was initially shown in
Vaudeville theatres as an interlude
between the live acts, hence the
musicians were already in the pit.

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(Al Jolson) in “blackface”



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- effects, live or mechanically produced sounds including actors reading in sync, narrators, live music, phonograph discs or cylinders, etc.
- audience reading inter-titles, talking etc.,



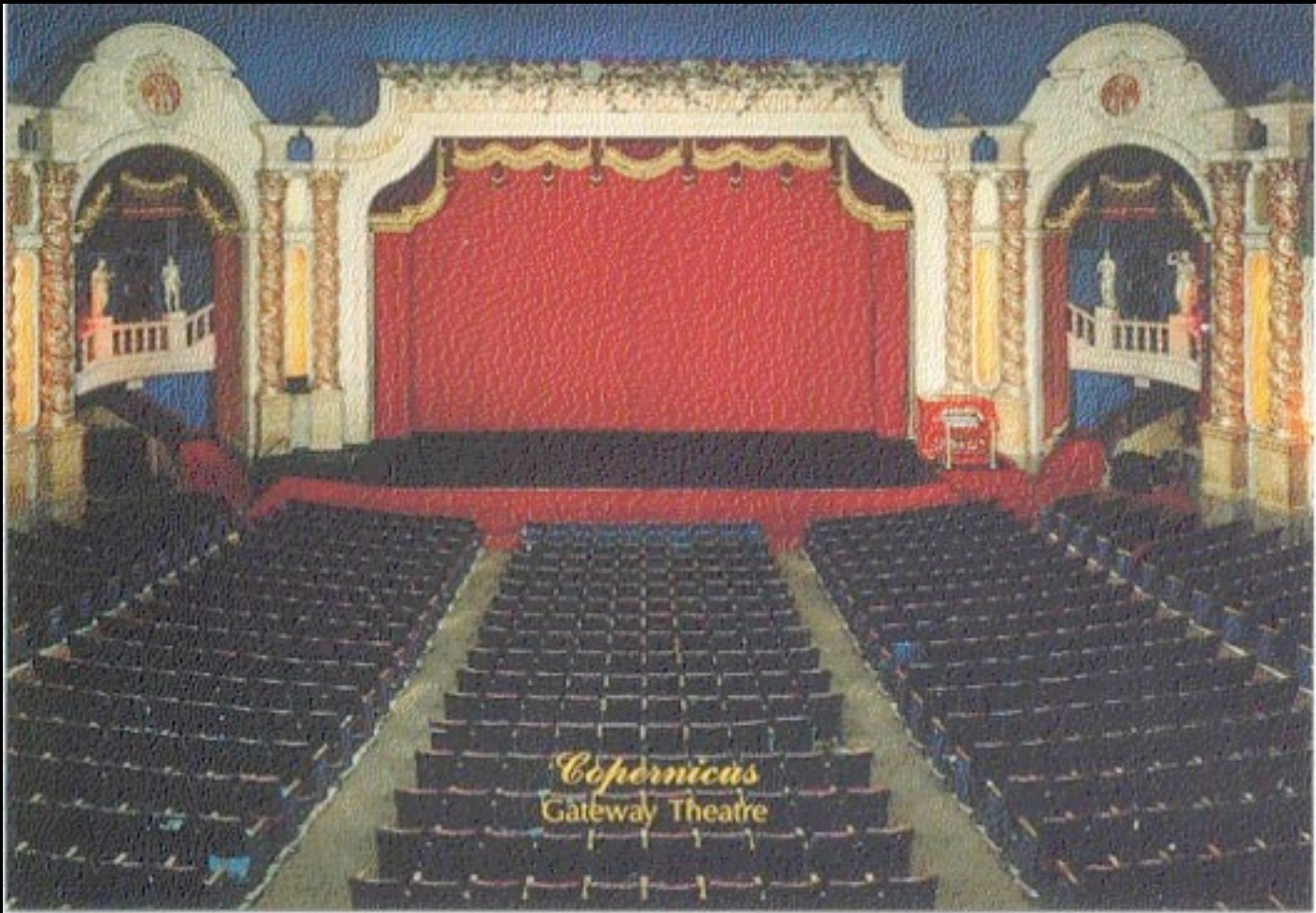
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Max Winkler, after viewing a film in 1912 and witnessing a very poor choice in music by the accompanying pianist, decided to provide a service for film studios and theatres that might alleviate such disasters. He created large books of music cue sheets that were either sent out with the film by the studio or used as reference by the theatre's musical director accompanist.

PROCESSIONAL PULSATING			
PROCESSIONAL See "March Processional"			
PROHIBITION See "Drinking"			
PULSATING			
TENSIVE ALLEGRO	Composer	Publisher	
APPASSIONATO	Aborn	BELWIN	
APPASSIONATO No. 40	Berge	"	
AGITATO APPASSIONATO	Borch	"	
DRAMATIC TENSION	"	"	
PURITY	"	"	
SINFULNESS	"	"	
ANDANTE APPASSIONATO	Del Castillo	"	
MEMORIES	Crespi	"	
BY THE RIVER	Fronniel	"	
BYGONE DAYS	Fintel	"	
DRAMATIC FINALE No. 63	Smith	"	
CLEMATIS	Tanning	"	
HEARTS DESIRE	Varley	"	
STAR FLOWER TREE (No. 3)	Finden	"	
Suite Pagoda Flowers)	"	BOOSEY	
LESS THAN THE DUST (No. 2 of	Heimand	"	
4 Indian Love Lyrics)	Brill	BOSTON MUS. CO.	
DIALOGUE	Coerne	CHAPPELL	
A GENERAL UTILITY THEME	Gruenwald	DITSON	
EXALTATION	Borch	"	
PASSION (No. 2 Suite Hero & Leander)	Ganne	FISCHER, CARL	
EXTASE	Goens	"	
ROMANCE SANS PAROLES	Grieg	"	
CRADLE SONG	"	"	
TO SPRING	G. d'Aquin	"	
FILM THEME No. 36	"	SONNEMANN	
PSYCHE (Caprice)	"	"	

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A number of publishing houses thus began producing collections of relevant sheet music with suggested “applications” noted. These were pieces of descriptive music that were classified according to style and mood, and collected in volumes. Producers, such as the Edison Company, sent their films out with scores or suggestions for specific scenes. The work of the local music director in arranging and improvising material was the genesis of film composition.



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As the inventor, Max Winkler writes in Prendergast's Film Music:
“We began to dismember the great masters. We began to murder the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Grieg, J.S. Bach, Verdi, Bizet, Tchaikovsky and Wagner - everything that wasn't protected by copyright from our pilfering. The immortal chorales of Bach became Adagio Lamentoso for sad scenes, Beethoven excerpts became Sinister Mysterioso, others became Weird Moderato.. Finales (like the William Tell) became gallops; Mendelssohns wedding march was “soured” for fight scenes between husband and wife.”

No.7

Mysterioso.

(Burglars & Creepy Business.)

BY JULIAN RUTT.

• FRANCIS, DAY & HUNTER •
138-140, Charing Cross Road, London.W.C.2.
Copyright 1920 by Francis, Day & Hunter.

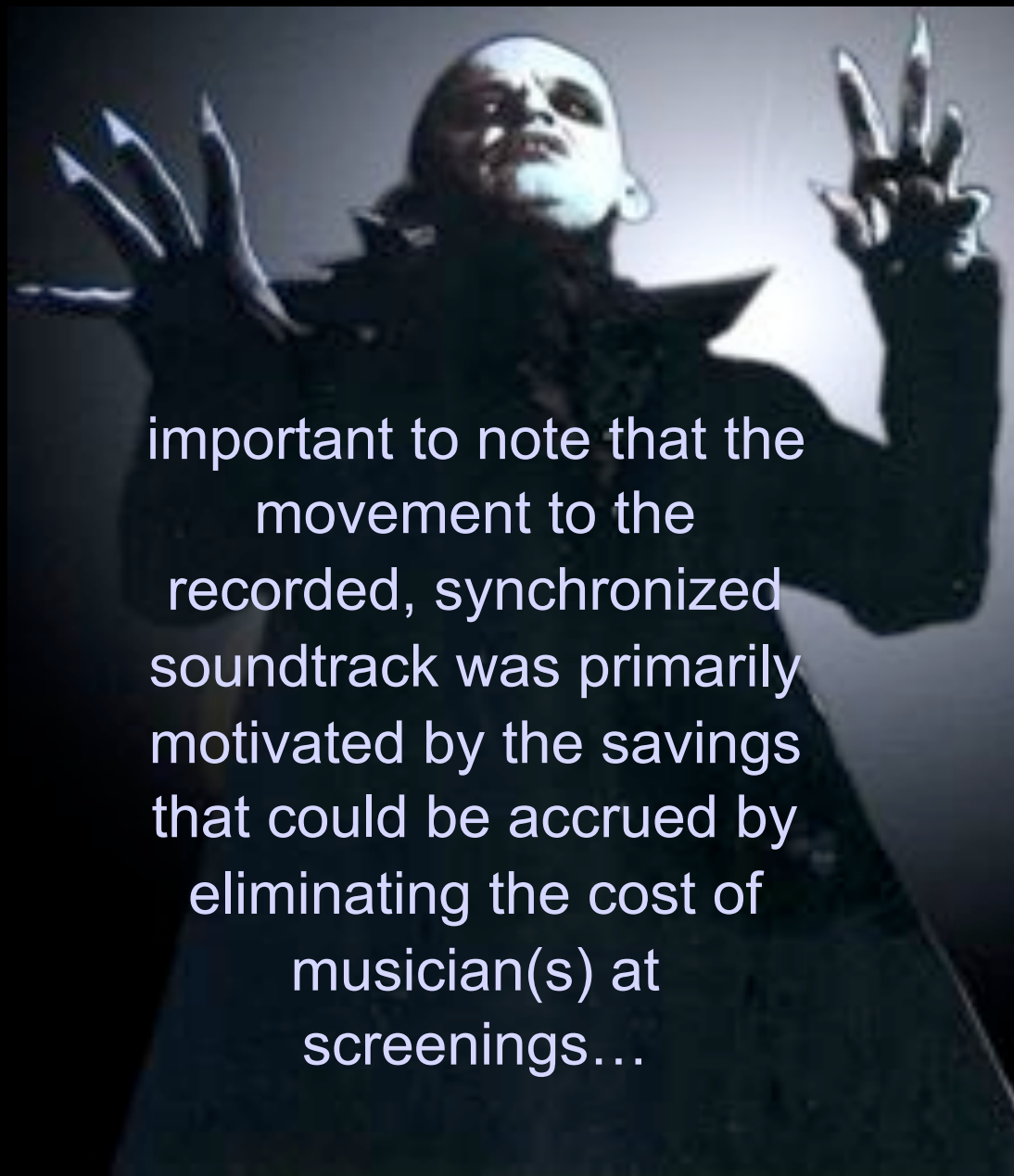


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Complete and original scores were occasionally created but there were a number of difficulties which contributed to their rarity:

- Reluctance of local music directors to give up control.
- Cost of a large orchestra.
- Difficulty of maintaining synch with the film.

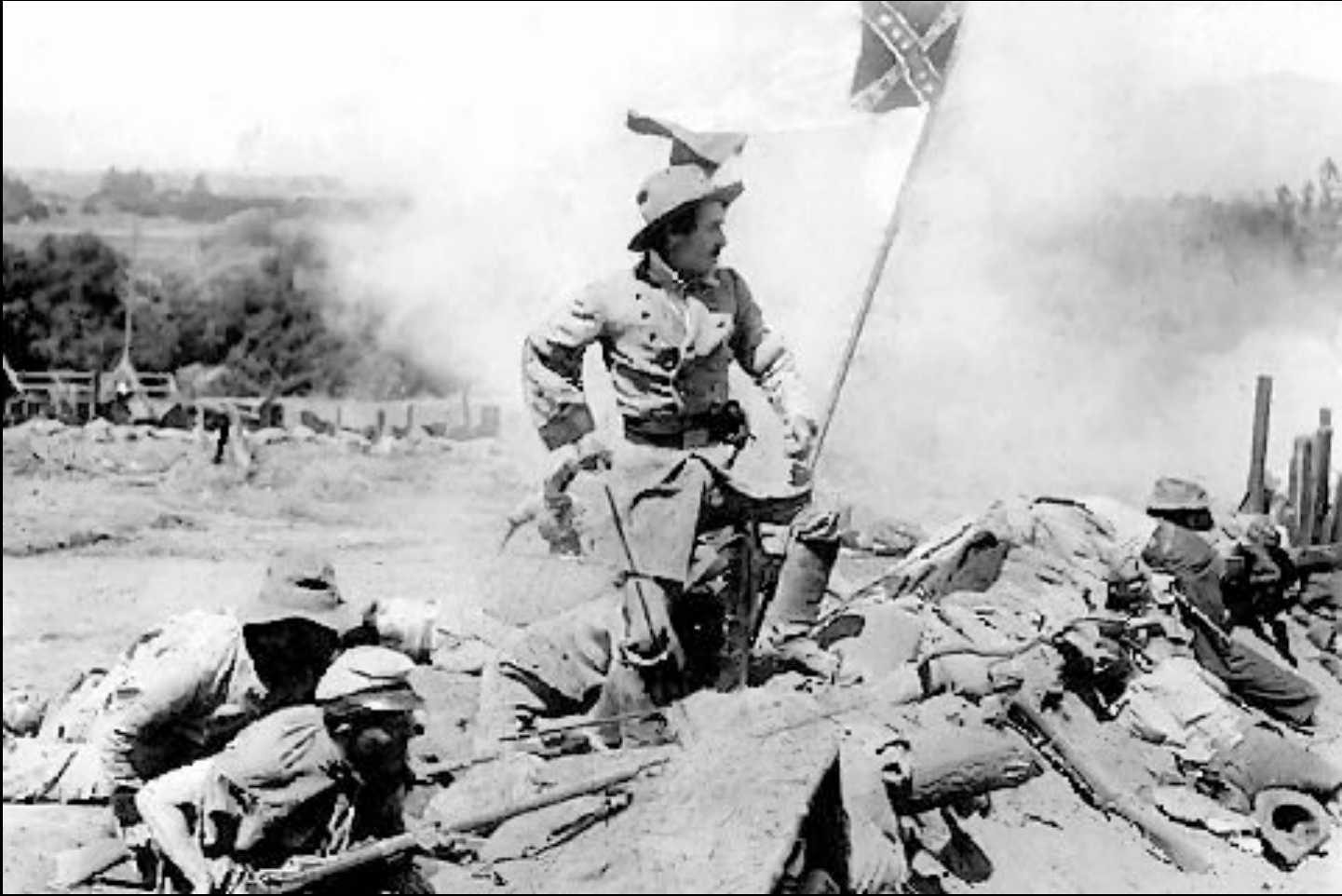
(Some films were released with tiny conductors in the lower part of the image or mechanical metronomes attached to the projector were also tried. These efforts were generally unsuccessful.)



important to note that the
movement to the
recorded, synchronized
soundtrack was primarily
motivated by the savings
that could be accrued by
eliminating the cost of
musician(s) at
screenings...

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The early composers would often take melodies from folk songs, popular music, etc. and in the style of European composers like Liszt, Dvorak and Chopin, elaborate them with more erudite themes.

For example, Carl Breil used “Dixie” in “Birth of a Nation”, 1915. (Directed by D.W. Griffith) This snippet evoked an entire political mythology. In this way, composers and filmmakers became aware of the power of music to almost instantly telegraph information to an audience.

Why Music?

0. Music fulfills a need to engage in the spectacle.

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Music acts to heighten emotional impact of significant moments of the spectacle – distancing audiences (even further) from their own thoughts and fears (be that fear of silence, ghosts on the screen, etc.) by involving the audience even more deeply in the film.

Why Music?

1. Music has always been an integral part of the spectacle.

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..melodrama in the 1800s, opera, theatre, religious ceremonies, state ceremonies, battle, dance...

From pre-Greek through Middle Ages/Renaissance to late 18th Century French mélodrame to a variety of 19th Century popular forms of entertainment.

In 19th c. re-stagings of Shakespeare and popular theatre of the time had scores written for them (Mendelssohn's score for A Midsummer's Night Dream for example) so by time of the cinema piano and orchestra were firmly established as part of stage spectacular.

Mendelssohn's music for the theatre includes full incidental music for Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, written for the new King of Prussia and first used at Potsdam in 1843, preceded by the Overture written in 1826. The music typically captures the enchanted fairy world of the play. In connection with the King's attempts to revive Greek tragedy Mendelssohn also wrote incidental music for the Antigone and Oedipus at Colonus of Sophocles, as well as for Racine's Athalie.

In pre-cinema days of the mid to late nineteenth century (mélodrama and pop British theatre) there was underscoring: marked exits and entrances, interludes, emotional underscoring, support to action, indications as to character, place, etc. Also at this time the productions would minimize the use of dialogue - emphasizing the dramatic action, the music, the sets, lighting, etc.

This is one explanation why the lack of synchronous dialogue in the early cinema was not as disturbing to contemporary audiences as it appears to us. It has also been suggested that the subject matter of film: melodrama, large spectacle, simple narrative (as opposed to the rationality and moderation of classical theatre) and not the form of film precipitated its immediate use of musical accompaniment.

Why Music?

2. Pragmatic Reasons (& technological antecedents)

Covered “noise”

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*...where “noise” can describe projector sound,
audience reading inter-titles, ambient noise , etc.*

Why Music?

2. Pragmatic Reasons (& technological antecedents)



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To mask other shooting nearby and to provide actors with motivation, concentration etc.

Why Music?

3. Semiotic function



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- historical, geographical, atmospheric settings
- depicting and identifying characters
- qualifying actions and activities
- indicating where the spectator is in work: Opening, ending, transition, conclusion, titles, etc.

Why Music?

4. Rhythmic beat to complement or impel rhythms and music on the screen:



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arts with a fourth dimension (time) traditionally have music as a component of their performance.

Rhythm creates beat of real time - otherwise cinema has difficulty expressing duration. Rhythms of cutting need a background against which they become concrete - that is a ground for the figure to relate to.

This phenomena continues to this day. During the editing process "temp tracks" (music cues from other sources such as classical works or other soundtracks) are used to imbue the rough cut, fine cut, etc., with a sense of movement, of time passing, pacing.

Why Music?

5. Turns flat screen into 3d event.

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The advent of “surround sound” in most theatres and many homes has made this very apparent.

With the current sophistication and spatial attributes of film sound it is easy to forget that the image is completely 2 dimensional.

Why Music?

6. *(Historically)* Antidote to the ghosts represented in the flickering black & white image.

(Hans Eisler)



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Essentially music functions magically: it appeases the ghost images on the screen, it appeases the evil spirits on the screen, it assuages the unpleasantness involved in seeing the effigies of living, acting, and even speaking persons who were silent. Music permits a deeper psychic investment in the gray wordless two dimensional world of film. One of the arguments for this “whistling or singing in the dark” theory is the evidence that film used music almost immediately as opposed to the use of speaking voices like a Punch and Judy show.

Why Music?

7. Bonds spectators together.



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The singing of the national anthem, chanting (prayer), chanting (sports), etc. Music clearly has a bonding effect upon humans.

Why Music?

8. Music gives us pleasure.

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Does anyone know someone who does not like music?

Why Music?

**9. We are highly socialized
to this combination:**

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- Theatre Film Television Life (headphones), websites Game boxes

Why Music?

10. Assists in creating the story.

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The narrative components of music help viewers (readers) of cinema's language create a story.

Naïve viewers (such as very young children) will ask where the pit music (score) is coming from and who is playing it. In a very short time after experiencing moving pictures and music they will use the music to interpret the image to measure “scariness”, “sadness”, etc.

Given the large number of hours we spend listening and watching we are very literate though somewhat inarticulate when it comes to music and moving pictures.

Why Music?

11. Subject not form:

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It has also been suggested that the subject matter of film: melodrama, large spectacle, simple narrative (as opposed to the rationality and moderation of classical theatre) and not the *form* of film precipitated its immediate use of musical accompaniment.

Curiously, the audience can be seen to desire everything but the music to be real.

§

There is a prejudice of the iconic (representation) for cinema and a prejudice for non-iconic or non-representation for music.

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irony of representation...

Film music may be described as *either*:

(a) **diegetic**
or

(b) **non-diegetic**



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Life on a String & The Matrix

i) Diegetic, *screen* or *source* music:



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Music arising from the primary narration.

- Music performed (sung/played) by characters on screen. (*sometimes referred to as “playback”*)
- Music having an on-screen source (radio, Muzak, TV, etc.).
- Music having an off-screen source but processed to appear as coming out of the screen-space or *diegesis*.
- Provides temporal continuity between cuts.
- In narrative film, source music may function primarily as sound.
- Creates irony very effectively.

Music is one of the few elements of the soundtrack which can shift easily between being perceived as either *diegetic* or *non-diegetic*.

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This phenomenon is often used by film makers.

The music might shift from being “score” in the titles to a definite on-screen source in the first scene *or* it might first appear as “Muzak” in the environment of a scene and then begin to react to the action as a score might.

ii)Diegetic, *screen* or source music:

High quality diegetic music can articulate space:

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- Imagine opera in the concert hall, etc. (often a function of reverberation)
- There is a penchant in contemporary cinema for having an aria playing in rich peoples homes as part of the sound design (set-dressing). This leads one to imbue the space or the characters with the qualities we culturally associate with opera music. (Such as wealth, privilege, deep emotions (as in tragedy), intellectual, educated, etc.)*

Non-diegetic, *pit* or *extra*-diegetic music:

No clear source in the story space:



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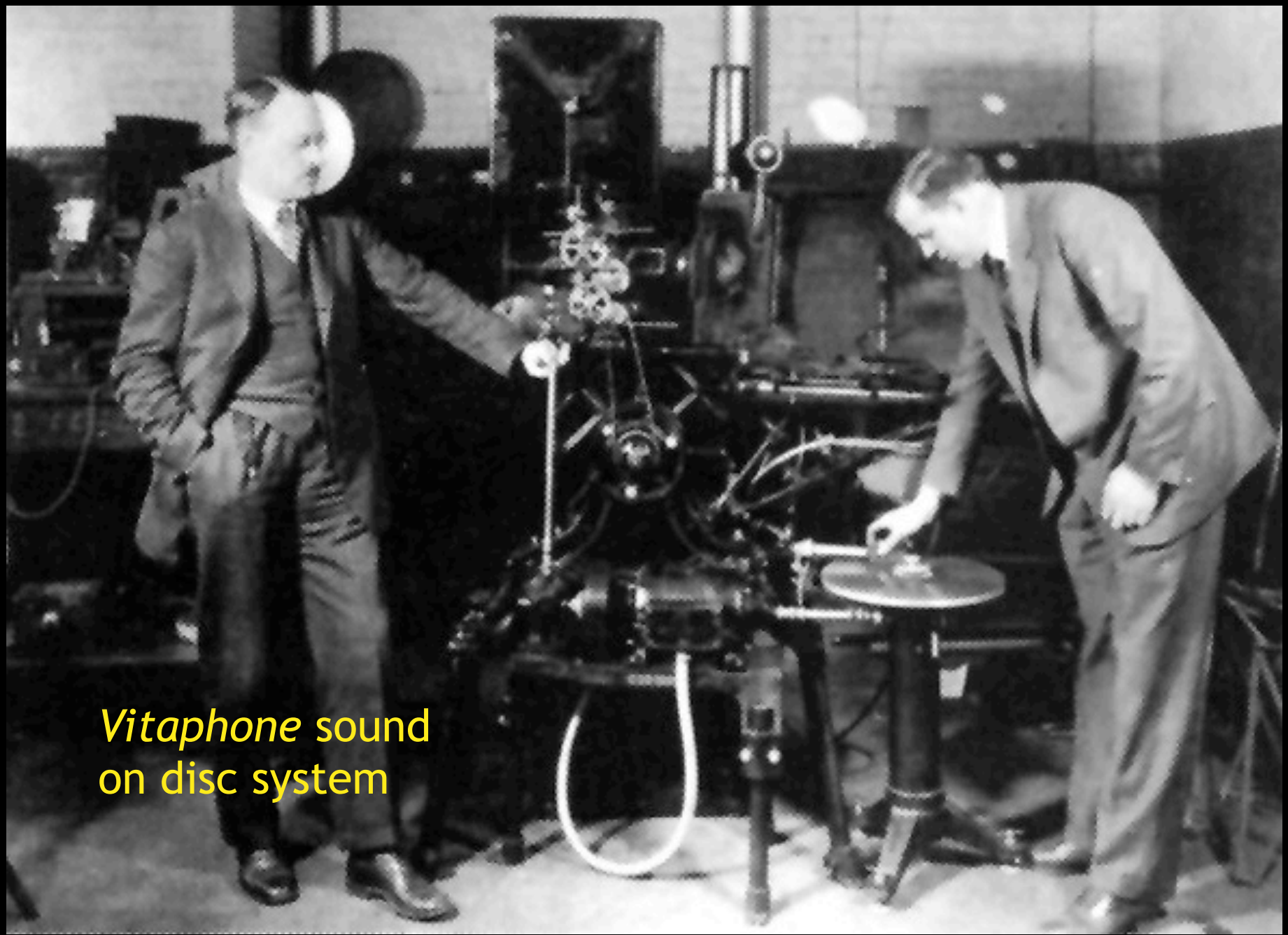
Conventional music scoring or songs.

Interesting to note that until the early 1930s, Hollywood producers assumed that viewers would be puzzled by music which did not have a discernible source on screen. Most films of this era only had source music plus music under the titles, etc. One of the earliest films to challenge this presumption was King Kong (1933).

Examples...

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- > Alamo - Carter Burwell (m) John Lee Hancock (d) (2004) Music creeps in as score/non-diegetic/pit and crossfades with addition of source/screen/diegetic drums
- > Pay it Forward (m) Thomas Newman (d) Mimi Leder (2000)
- > Paths of Glory - Gerald Fried (m) Stanley Kubrick (d) (1957)
- > High Anxiety (m) John Morris (d) Mel Brooks (1977)



Vitaphone sound on disc system

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Aesthetic challenges; the inevitability of synchronous sound?

Before 1927 cinema like all the other arts was unnatural. This was simply the result of the great limitations upon it (flat B&W images, non-synchronous sound of poor quality). Like the Grand Opera compensations were made: stereotypical characters moving with grace in highly melodramatic situations. The arrival of synchronous sound removed the need for these compensations: A natural art emerges (according to Evan Cameron) for the first time in history. The film becomes the means of communication of some naturally occurring event rather than the art object itself. Even theatre was "staged" and formal - we knew that the gun fired on stage was loaded with blanks and that the flat behind the scene was painted. After 1927 the perceptual boundary between created and natural events dissolved. The universe of happenings perceivable as if real had been expanded. Created events could now induce reactions psychologically indistinguishable from those caused by events in the everyday world: cinematic happenings, unlike those of any other art, could induce physical revulsion, epileptic seizures, hysteria, terror, horror, etc.

Most importantly it was a mere three or four years before there was not a single silent film in production in all of North America. This was not an evolution but a revolution of great speed and remarkable smoothness. This is from the point of view of the viewing public and the "Captains of Industry". The human cost was that hundreds of thousands of musicians were immediately put out of work; smaller production houses were put out of business. etc.



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Distinction between "silent" & synch sound movies

Music played during the former was different from the music/sounds of the synch era. It bore a different relationship to the narrative, the spectator, than the synch soundtrack. Music was no longer continuous:

- altered to accommodate sfx, dialogue;

- accurate synchronization & tempo mapping

- live music was of much higher quality: recording, playback of sound is a representation and an interpretation as much as the image is.

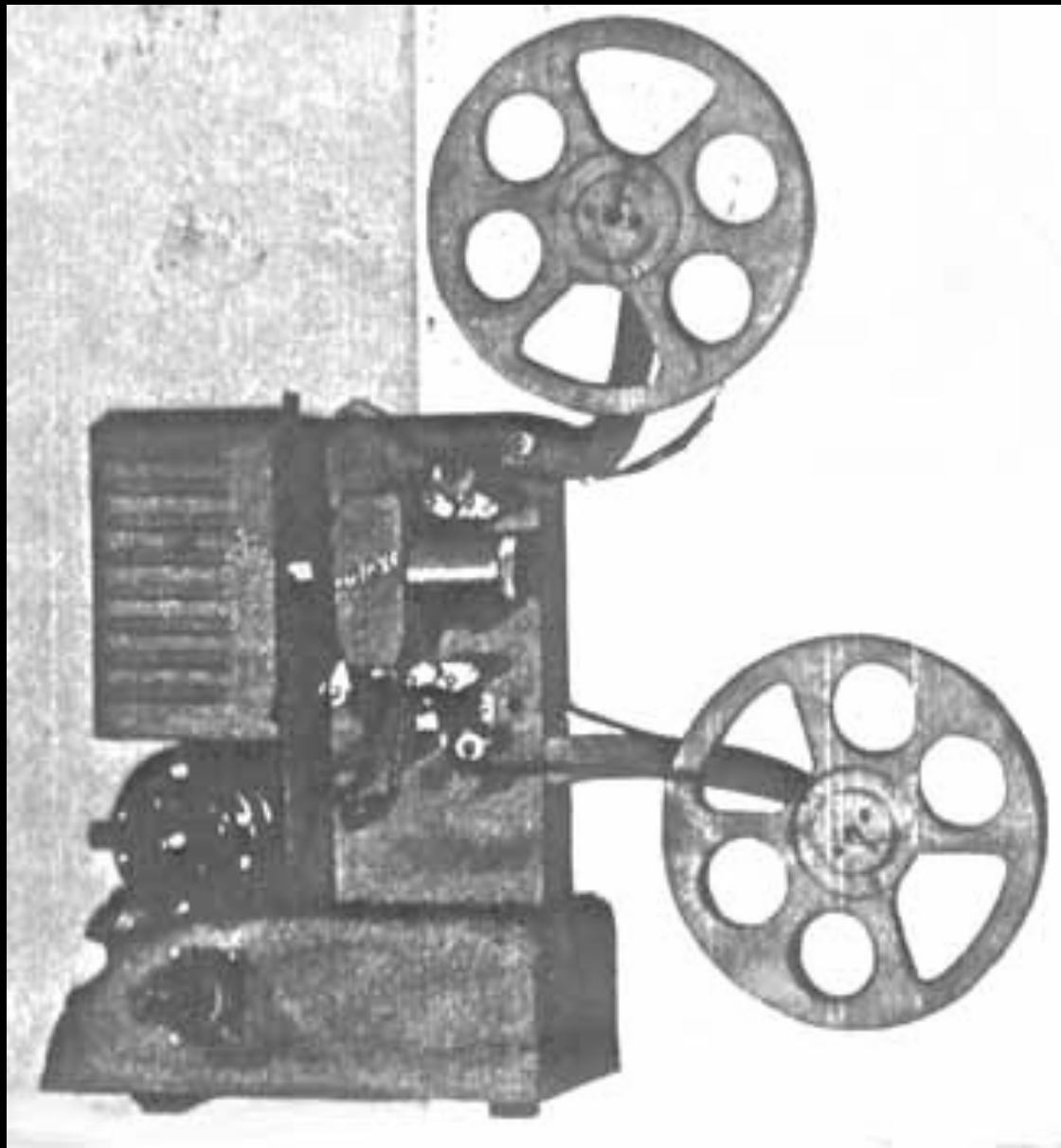
Music in the synch film is not alone on the soundtrack. The biggest revolutionary significance of the coming of sound is the acquisition of the human voice by cinema. The huge technological/social revolution which was involved would not have proceeded so rapidly and without any opposition if the addition of the human voice was not an enormous gain. Thus music and recorded effects become subordinated to the momentous arrival of the voice.

Once music is part of the soundtrack (and not merely present in the room) its relationship to the diegesis seems to change dramatically and this caused confusion to the producers and one supposes as well for the audience.

Advent of synchronous sound:

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Continuous music of the non-synchronous era was replaced by discontinuous, shorter cues. Because of the difficulties of dubbing or copying sound in the period prior to 1933, it was necessary to record the music during the filming. This was fine for musicals, etc. but for dramatic films, this meant that an orchestra was required nearby the set for the entire day of shooting. This was, of course, prohibitively expensive. This contributed to the reluctance of producers to have their films scored. Most films of the period had music for the opening and closing titles and the occasional source music cue.



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3. Reality/Novelty

From 1923 to 1927 Lee de Forest's Photophone process produced a thousand short films with synchronized sound: especially newsreels/speeches, etc. The first full-length production which is described as having revolutionized the cinema (The Jazz Singer) was like most of its contemporaries, a silent film with intertitles and didactic music scoring. Its magic comes from 4 sync sound sequences (mostly improvised by Jolson who was a great ham) especially since synchronous speech meant "real" because of the association formed previously by newsreels etc. More to the point the spontaneous chat that he has with his mother is not so much hearing Jolson speak but overhearing an intimate conversation between mother and doting son. This is also in strong contrast to the conventions of the silent film or the Movietone sound short

Consequences...

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1.The presence of diegetic sound places music all the more clearly outside the story space. Suddenly producers are reluctant to use any music except for source (define this term) or title sequences.

2.Because of dialogue, music had to learn to stop and start, to accomodate the speeches and other important sfx

3.The narrative sonic space required new consolidation: continuity, auditory realism, pacing, spatial and temporal coherency, etc. Nancy Wood (cited in Gorbman)

"Compared to its silent counterpart, the talking cinema was considered an "inflexible institution", above all because certain latitudes in spatial and temporal construction available to the late silent narratives were not permitted in the early sound film. It was as if the introduction of sound caused an immediate "densening" of the more permeable spatio-temporal field of the silent film, thereby requiring more concrete and exacting definitions of the spatial and temporal dimensions."

Technology...

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- 4.The need for less noisy directional mics spawned the development of ribbon mics which were very sensitive to wind noise - hence all the shooting moved indoors to the newly created sound stages. (This lead to the rapid development and refinement of rear projection techniques)
- 5.Until the early thirties there were no re-recording capabilities because of the noise involved in copying and mixing. This was another reason for the alck of non-diegetic music. In order to mix music with the dialogue a disc needed to be created of the music for playback during the filming - this is mostly because the reverb or ambiance required by music is different to that required by dialogue.
- 6.Noisy arc lights (bright & cool) were changed to lower intensity and much hotter incandescants were used - at much lower heights.
- 7.Cameras placed in sound proofed booths - severly limiting their movement
 - a. No lenses smaller than 25 mm
 - b. Very little panning (windows were small to keep noise down)
 - c. Blimping occurs by 1938 (ie the silencing of the camera without putting it in a box
- 8.Microphone boom - severly limited lighting and set design, cameras; mic placement became one of the foremost factors in blocking
- 9.Camera speed increased to improve sound quality
- 10.Actors & Directors displaced by the soundman and the cameraman.
- 11.What was once a universal medium (simply translate the intertitles live or cut in new ones) is now more limited in its distribution. It was very difficult to "dub" or subtitle films in the early days - not uncommon for several different language versions to be done simultaneously. Also an art form of images is now one overly concerned with text.

From dream to drama...

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-Art form was very dream-like - it was not theatre on the screen - synchronous dialogue could and did grind this development to a halt however

Rudolf Arnheim argues that in all composite forms one medium must dominate the others. In theatre, which combines visual spectacle with speech, speech dominates; If cinema is to differ from theatre then the image must dominate. Since the image is always "speaking", there is a conflict with the speech on the soundtrack - it is redundant or at odds with the image. It adds nothing to the images and reduces their power because speech is privileged over that of objects which in the silent film had a voice.

Film Music Function: Claudia Gorbman's Rules of Narrative Film Music. VII Principles of Composition.

From Claudia Gorbman's book: Unheard Melodies

I. Invisibility

- The technical apparatus of non-diegetic music must not be visible.

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When the musical apparatus is made visible then the music becomes diegetic. When visible it acts as source music and as such may function very differently

--> High Anxiety or Blazing Saddles...

II. Inaudibility

- Music is not meant to be heard consciously. As such it should subordinate itself to dialogue, to visuals - i.e.. the primary vehicles of the narrative.

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- Music constructed with pauses, short phrases and sustained notes to allow for lengthening or shortening, ease of cutting:

Bernard Herrmann: Psycho, Vertigo, The Day the Earth Stood Still,

Max Steiner, Mildred Pierce

- Sequences modulating up for tension etc.
- Orchestration: for example: woodwinds less preferable to strings because of conflicts with vocal range and they are not as effective in providing a slow smooth attack

II. Inaudibility

As music has its own inertia, there are better times for it to stop and start in order that it remain inaudible.

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- music enters or exits on action
- or on sound events
- sneaks in or out under dialogue or at
- a moment of decisive rhythmic or emotional change in the scene
- entrances are more conspicuous than exits
- mood is usually appropriate to the scene

--> Mildred Pierce - music stopped by action on the bridge

III. Signifier of Emotion

Soundtrack music may set specific moods and emphasize particular emotions suggested in the narrative (IV) but first and foremost it is a signifier of emotion itself.

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Augments the soundtrack with the inner truth of the story-
represents depth, emotion, the irrational.

IV. Narrative Cueing

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- referential / narrative: music gives referential and narrative cues, e.g.. indicating p.o.v., supplying formal demarcations, and establishing setting and characters.
 - beginnings: usually the opening title credit music will fully describes the movie that is about to come and the ending offers the summary.
 - endings often complete the closure of the narrative
- time, place and stock characterizations: (geography through ethnic styling)

IV. Narrative Cueing



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harmonies, melodic patterns, rhythms, orchestration accent the first beat of a 4/4 bar or play a melody in fifths in a minor pentatonic and you have Native Indians,

- play a *rumba* with trumpet or marimba and you have Latin America,
- xylophones or wood blocks in pentatonic or minor modal melody is Japan or China,
- the end blown pan pipe is South America,
- Strauss - like waltzes in strings and it's Vienna at the turn of the century,
- accordions are Paris or Rome,
- mandolins can be Italy or the Ozarks,
- sitar is India (South Asia) or a drug trip in a 70s movie,
- “urban” is saxophone, and/or brass in a jazz mode with discords and car horn imitations,
- a clarinet playing wrong notes is comedy, etc..

A very well known code with continual additions.

IV. Narrative Cueing

- **Connotative:** music interprets and illustrates narrative events - based on the huge lexicon hinted at previously; it is clear that the studio music department will exploit this:

V. Continuity

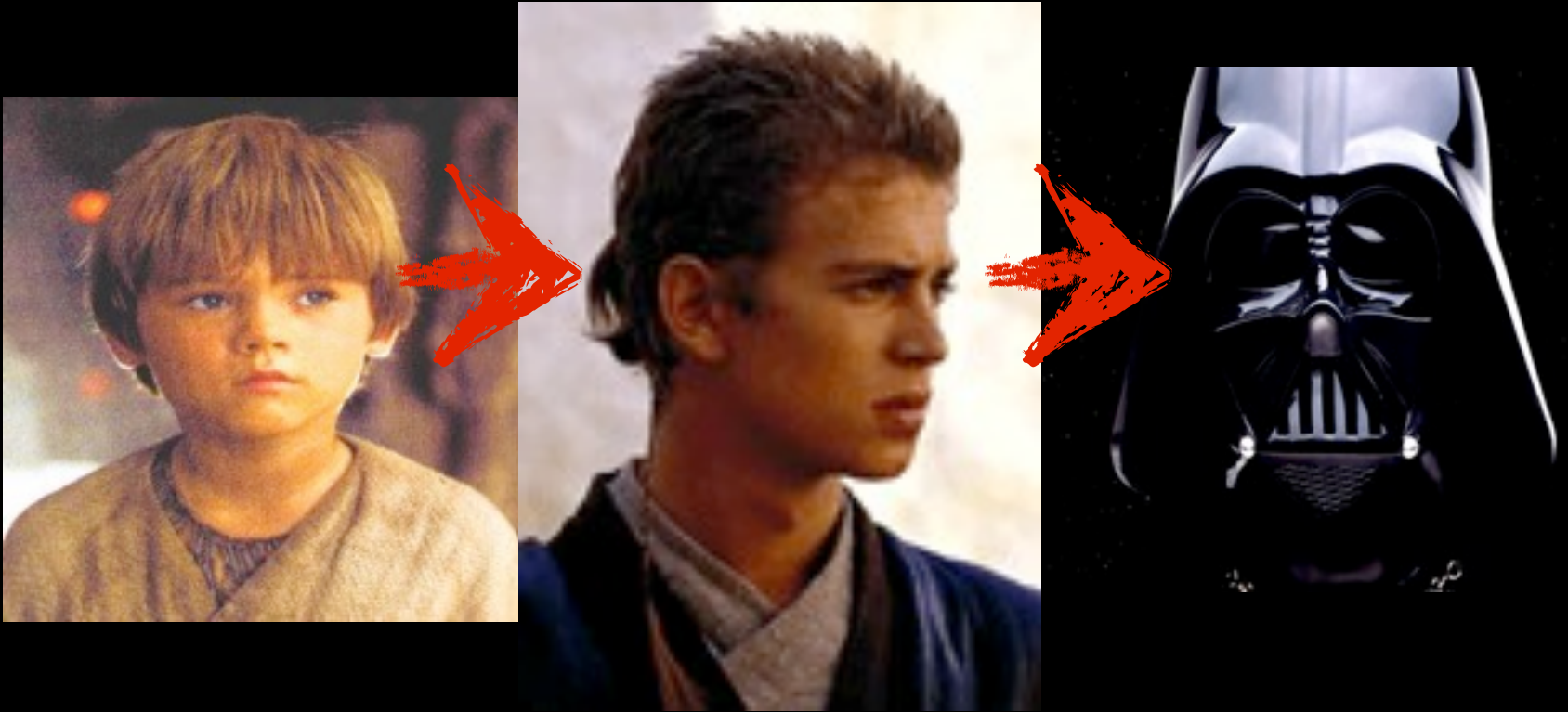
Music provides formal and rhythmic continuity - between shots, in transition between scenes by filling the gaps.

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The cohesion of continuous music in the background will soften a hard cut

Assists in transitions by beginning at the end of one scene and ending after the next scene has begun

VI. Unity



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Via repetition and variation of musical material -and instrumentation, music aids in the construction of formal and narrative unity. This can be done through thematic development or leitmotifs.

On a very prosaic level, Spielberg/Williams have had great fun with the Star Wars series by using well established themes and leitmotifs to give additional cues to the viewer. For example, as Annakin moves to the "dark side" in the end of Episode II, we hear Darth Vader's theme. When his actions further his relationship with Padme, we hear Luke's (their son to be) melody. All these themes were introduced almost 30 years ago.

Star Wars II example

VII. A Given Film May Violate Any of the Above Principles, Providing the Violation is at the Service of the Other Principles.

Film Music Function (Royal Brown)

a) as a wallpaper soporific

b) as an aesthetic counterbalance

c) as a co-generator of narrative affect

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In summary, then, it can be seen that nondiegetic film music functions on at least three levels: a) as a wallpaper soporific to allay fears of darkness and silence, in the silent era, it also helped mask the sound of the projector; b) as an aesthetic counterbalance to the iconic/representational nature of the cinematic signs which, although they do not require music to validate the language they create as artistic, get that way anyway; c) as a co-generator of narrative affect that skews the viewer / listener towards a culturally determined reading of characters and situations.



Music as Feeling

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Susanne Langer writes in 1957:

“..what music can actually reflect is only the morphology of feeling; and it is quite plausible that some sad and happy conditions may have a very similar morphology. That insight has led some philosophical musicologists to suppose that music conveys *general forms of feeling*, related to specific ones as algebraic expressions are related to arithmetic.

Music is not self-expression, but formulation and representation of emotions, moods, mental tensions and resolutions - a logical picture of sentient, responsive life, a source of insight, not a plea for sympathy. Feelings revealed in music are not the “passion, love or longing” of such and such an individual, inviting us to put ourselves in that individual’s place, but are presented directly to our understanding, that we may grasp, realize, comprehend these feelings, without pretending to have them or inputting them to someone else.”

Music is thus more *mythic*, then symbolic.

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“A myth coded in sounds instead of words, the musical work furnishes a grid of signification, a matrix of relationships which filters and organizes lived experience; it substitutes for experience and produces the pleasurable illusion that contradictions can be overcome, and difficulties resolved”

Claude Lévi-Strauss cited in Gorbman

“ ..the flexibility of connotation is a virtue. For it enables music to express what might be called the disembodied essence of myth, the essence of experiences which are central to and vital in human experience.”

Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, 1956, p. 256

Music as the ideal image

(from R. Brown)

Music is the least representational
of the arts, non-experimental
cinema is the most
representational.

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Music is the least representational of the arts, non-experimental cinema is the most representational.

Their relationship is based on the image's connection to everyday life and music's freedom from it.

By way of illustration of music's freedom for everyday life: It uses its own notation, its sounds are used almost primarily for musical purposes and its instruments are used almost exclusively for music making. Even the voice is used very differently in most styles of music.

Music may be used as

- metaphor,
- symbol,
- rhythm/editorial pacer,
- atmosphere,
- reinforcer of “staged” realities,
- spatial definer,
- or for inflecting the narrative with emotive values via cultural music codes

Mimesis: Music substitutes for natural environmental sounds as emulator and simulator of fictional or non-fictional notions of realism.

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Musical phrases can replace speech or atmospheric dialogue and are used to define space, movement, point of view or emphasis in the shot

Music is used to pace and mask action, events, editorial transitions, and dramatic points.

Any music will do
something

(Michel Chion's *added value*)



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Summary of some musical functions(1):

- formal (defining mood, pace and place)
- realistic (source music)
- ironic
- abstract
- emotional
- fused with action
- spatial (gives objects movement, weight, etc.)

summary of some musical functions(1):symbolic

- intellectual
- descriptive
- decorative
- evocative
- provocative
- metaphorical
- continuity

Empathetic music

(Michel Chion)

Contains cultural
codes for emotions
or movement, etc.

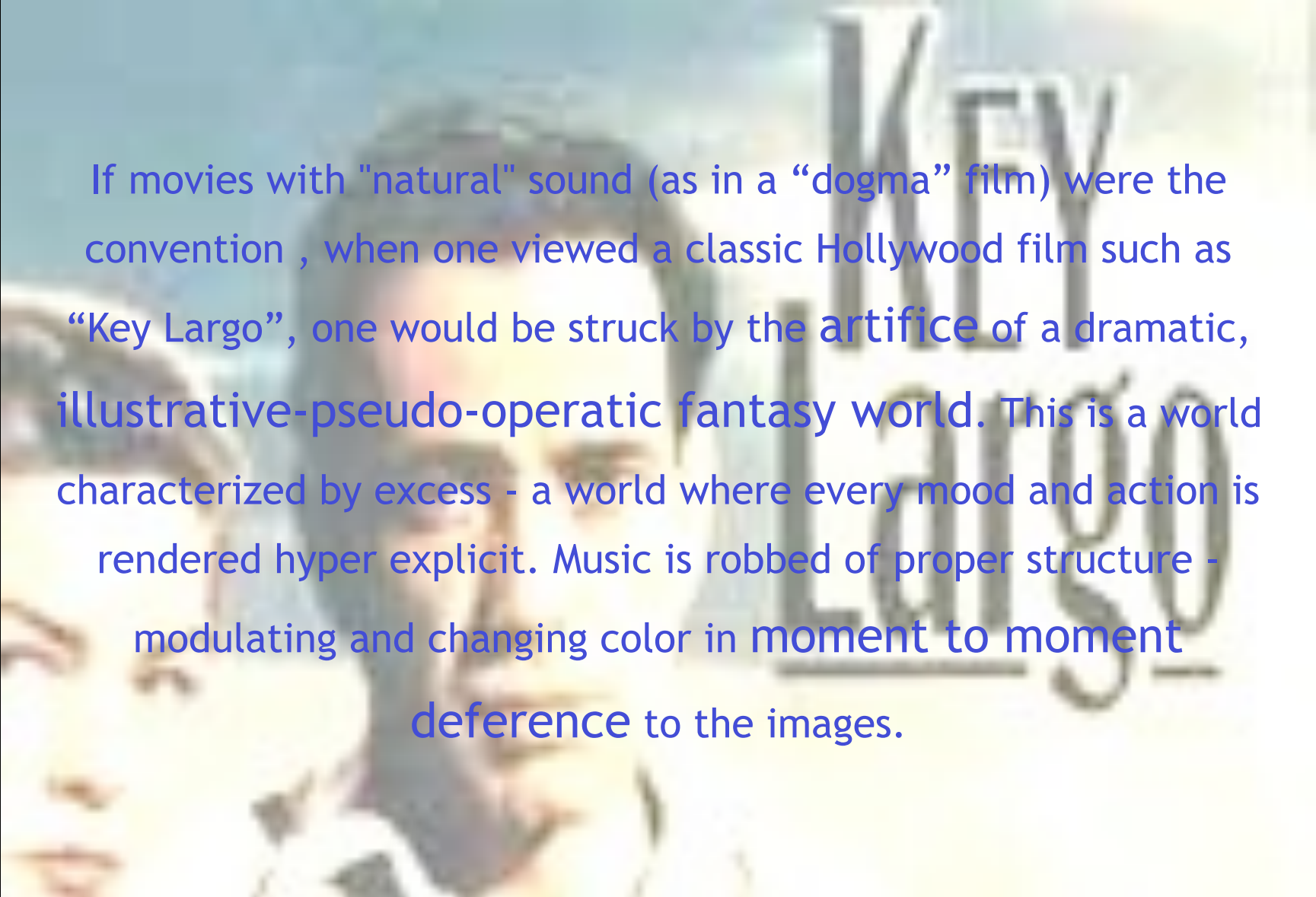
An-empathetic music

(Michel Chion)

Music which ignores the image or scene in some ways represents the machine constantly running (can be noise as well).

Reveals the reality of the cinema.

Music which is neither can be viewed as a signpost, a presence with no emotional resonance.



If movies with "natural" sound (as in a “dogma” film) were the convention , when one viewed a classic Hollywood film such as “Key Largo”, one would be struck by the artifice of a dramatic, illustrative-pseudo-operatic fantasy world. This is a world characterized by excess - a world where every mood and action is rendered hyper explicit. Music is robbed of proper structure - modulating and changing color in moment to moment deference to the images.

related music terms...

Themes & Variation

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- A theme is defined as any music - melody, melody-fragment, or distinctive harmonic progression - heard more than once during the course of a film. (Gorbman)
- Through repetition, the music (non-representational) can through association, recall the filmic context of previous occurrences of the theme.
- Themes accumulate meaning to various degrees - it can always signify the same thing (character, locale, or situation) or it can vary and play a part in the film's dynamic evolution.
- Variation of the theme - transforming its orchestration, tempo, scale, harmonization, etc. can alter its original meaning or convey new information to the listener.

Leit motifs



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...There often occur moments when the immediate expression is influenced by the thought of something lying in the past that continues to have an emotional effect on the speaker. The presence and consequently the influence of this reminiscence can be communicated by the repetition of the characteristic musical line which was part of the original musical expression...

(From Wagner, "Opera and Drama", 1851)

Leit motifs



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A motif is a theme whose occurrences remain specifically directed and unchanged in their diegetic associations i.e.:
Often the use of leit motifs to denote a specific meaning is blurred (even in Wagner's use of them) so that the meaning or occurrence may float.

Examples of Leit Motif include several Serge Leone/Morricone collaborations, Hugo Friedhofer's "The Best years of Our Lives"

Once Upon a Time in the West. (+ example of steal in Pirates...)

Mickey mousing



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Term is derived from the tightly choreographed literal association of screen action and music that was often found in cartoons. (As Mickey walks across the screen, each step is animated by synchronous pizzicato from the string section.)

Used in live action film to reinforce action and to motivate and/or “soften” music entries and exits. Max Steiner used this technique extensively in most of his film scores.

>>>> King Kong video...

Some other notions to consider:

- ▶ Film music rarely deceives (except for horror films)
- ▶ References evolve and change over time
- ▶ Film music exploits timbre as a critical component of its communication
- ▶ Common references are generally culturally specific and/or learned

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Not true in horror films.

Changing references – sitar in the 60's meant drug trip, now reference in Western films is more complex.

Western music tends towards "program" elements in its classical roots – music depicting battles in the Renaissance, Beethoven's "Pastoral", Debussy's "La Mer", etc. portraying nature, etc. Rasa and the complex associations of various Ragas and their variations may be similar but I am not aware of the general audience being aware of this being used widely. Edvard Grieg's "Morning" can summon the notion of morning or a pastoral setting in a very cliché manner – there are many other examples.

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