

## MUSIC BEYOND THE CONCERT HALL

UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN BELGRADE  
FACULTY OF MUSIC  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSICOLOGY  
**MUSIC BEYOND THE CONCERT HALL**

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# Music Beyond the Concert Hall

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UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN BELGRADE  
FACULTY OF MUSIC  
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## FOREWORD

The monograph *Music Beyond the Concert Hall* is another valuable addition to contemporary music(ological) studies. This collective monograph includes eleven original academic articles written by twelve contributors – five from the international scholarly scene (USA, Poland, and Croatia) and seven from the Serbian academic community. Exploring and writing from various (inter/multi)disciplinary perspectives (musicology, music theory, composition, media studies), the authors give a vibrant overview of how both traditional and contemporary methods of spreading music and reaching audiences are interacting and transforming in today's rapidly evolving landscape. It was, therefore, a challenging yet rewarding task for the editors of this multi-author book to organize diverse papers into a harmonious volume.

The two most distinctive texts in the book (one auto-poetic and the other specific in its subject matter) are positioned at the very beginning and end, where they function as an inviting opening titled “Into the Polyphonic Future Beyond Modes of Concert Representation” and a closing titled “Back to the Past Long Before the Concert Hall.” The reversed placement, starting from the present and ending in the deep past, helps the discussion flow smoothly. In other words, essays “Intermedia and Audiovisual Composition: Theory and Practice,” by Paulo Chagas, and “Echoes from Arcadia: Chasing the Recurrences of Music in the Myth of Pan,” by Marija Tomić, act as bookends that guide the reader through the diverse topics covered in the book, including but not limited to intermedia composition, the impact of multimedia, social networks, or AI on how we perceive music, the role of music on screens, etc.

Chagas, a renowned composer and musicologist opens the monograph with his auto-poetic essay. “Intermedia and Audiovisual Composition: Theory and Practice” does much more than outline the author’s aesthetics or techniques. Chagas viewed his intermedia compositions – where different media blend – as a vital “critical epistemological space” that challenges and redefines ideas of subjectivity, perception, and creation in the digital age. This inventive approach to composition, which surpasses traditional multimedia, involves skillfully intertwining various media. It emphasizes its ability to broaden the horizons of contemporary music and underscores its significance in the digital era.

The concept of multimedia runs as a unifying thread through two methodologically different essays in Part I of the monograph, titled “Multimedia Intersections.” In her text “Present-Day Neuroscientific, Cognitive, and Musicological Knowledge about Music and Musical Multimedia,” Violetta Kostka contrasts musical multimedia – music that derives meaning through its connection with other media layers – with pure music, using current neuroscientific, cogni-

tive, and musicological analyses. Her main conclusion is that the idea of pure music is now largely outdated. The integration of music with words, visual, and theatrical elements underpins *Programmes*, a six-part series by Andrzej Krzanowski, making it a true example of multimedia. Nonetheless, as Kiwała notes in the essay “Andrzej Krzanowski’s Concept of Metamusic: Multimedia Series *Programmes*,” using Krzanowski’s own terminology, it is also a metamusical work. With this term, Krzanowski described his compositions, which are closely linked to his earlier works through allusions and symbolism.

Radoš Mitrović, Maria Wilczek-Krupa, Irena Paulus, and Ivana Perković shared their insights on music composed exclusively for film or pre-composed music used in film, which Violetta Kostka described simply but accurately as “the most famous multimedia with music” in her aforementioned essay. This extensive Part II of the monograph also includes Marija Karan’s discussion on music in series, a rapidly growing art form emerging from television or, increasingly often, streaming services.

Radoš Mitrović examines music as a fundamental element of film language in his essay “The Music as an Inherent Layer of Alexander Kluge’s Film Language,” illustrating how Kluge, influenced by Brecht and the Frankfurt School, employed music as a storytelling and symbolic device that dialectically interacts with visual elements. Wilczek-Krupa, referencing film theories, explains how music influences meaning in ways viewers might not notice, citing Wojciech Kilar’s award-winning score for Frances Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* as an example. In her essay “Film Music in Croatia Today: Between Marginalization and Revival,” Irena Paulus discusses the current state of Croatian film music. She highlights its vibrancy, driven by a diverse range of creators and projects, but also notes its limited accessibility due to a lack of institutional support and less recognition compared to other musical arts. Focusing on television and streaming content, Marija Karan analyzes how music increasingly separates from its original series context, shifting “from applied music to an independent entity (playlists, popular culture lists, music industry, mass media, music videos).” She explores this process through two Serbian and one American series, using the frameworks of the Uses and Gratification Theory and Cultivation Theory. The part on music on screen features Ivana Perković’s research, which blends expert evaluations – such as formal and contextual analyses of a Haydn quartet excerpt in a scene from Steven Spielberg’s *Minority Report* – with AI tools accessible via three public chat platforms: ChatGPT, GEMINI, and Microsoft Copilot. These AI tools effectively complement human-only close-reading skills, which depend on interpretive abilities unique to people. This integration of technology and music in the research is likely to engage the audience, emphasizing AI’s emerging role in music analysis.

Part III of the monograph includes “TikTok Goes Classical,” co-authored by Biljana Leković and Sanela Nikolić, and “Concert Performance of Music from Video Games: Creating a New Audience” by Katarina Mitić Minić. Leković and

Nikolić explore how TikTok, a platform not traditionally associated with classical music, is playing a significant role in promoting the genre. They shed light on the prominent individuals and groups driving this movement and explain how the music industry leverages TikTok's popularity by compiling clips that showcase various high-quality music styles for users to enjoy. Mitić Minić provides a look at the recent trend of comparing music from popular video games with traditional art forms like symphonies or tone poems, highlighting how music is moving from virtual spaces into concert halls. These performances create an excellent new opportunity for younger and more diverse audiences to connect with familiar music – especially when it is presented without eye-catching videos.

Marija Tomić's contribution, "Echoes from Arcadia," closes the book. It stands apart from all previous essays that focused on modern cultural practices and social phenomena. Tomić delves into earlier times, beyond recorded history and *long before the concert hall*, to examine different versions of the Pan myth and other mythological references to him. Through thorough analysis of available sources, Tomić identifies six distinct contexts in which (flute) music appears, serving as archetypes – still relevant today – of core musical activities such as composing, teaching, performing, and competing.

All essays gathered in this collective monograph are methodologically clear and expertly crafted, demonstrating diverse methods in merging musicology with media theory, anthropology, sociology, psychology, neuroscience, other social and natural sciences, and new technologies like AI. The contributions on the role of technology in music analysis could make the audience feel informed and aware of the latest developments in the field. *The Music Beyond the Concert Hall* offers detailed explanations from various but complementary perspectives on how music functions within inter- and multimedia art forms, including specific music works, movies, and TV series. It shows that even music in some entertainment formats, such as video games and musical content shared via social networks like TikTok, merits scholarly study and analysis.

The book *Music Beyond the Concert Hall* welcomes readers from different music backgrounds. It will appeal to experts in related fields, could serve educational goals, and is accessible to a general audience.

Dragana Jeremić Molnar  
Belgrade, September 2025.



# Opening • Into the Polyphonic Future Beyond Modes of Concert Representation



# INTERMEDIA AND AUDIOVISUAL COMPOSITION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores intermedia composition as an expanded form of polyphony that merges sound, image, gesture, and space into hybrid, immersive environments. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Paulo C. Chagas, Vilém Flusser, Félix Guattari, and N. Katherine Hayles, it investigates the role of technical apparatuses in the production of meaning, the transformation of subjectivity, and the emergence of distributed cognition. Through case studies of audiovisual installations, the paper examines how asynchronous sound-image relationships, spatial granular synthesis, and telematic performance generate polyphonic forms of perception and presence. The concept of *polyphonic subjectivity* is developed to articulate the heterogeneous and machinic nature of posthuman identity, shaped by the interplay between human intention and nonhuman cognitive systems. The analysis concludes by positioning intermedia composition not merely as a contemporary aesthetic practice but as a critical epistemology for understanding cognition, embodiment, and creativity in a techno-mediated world.

**KEY WORDS:** Intermedia composition, audiovisual composition, technical apparatus, posthuman subjectivity, audiovisual immersion, cognitive assemblages.

## **Theoretical Introduction: Intermedia as Expanded Polyphony and the Interplay of Medium and Form**

The evolution of audiovisual and multimedia composition has foregrounded a profound reconfiguration of artistic expression, where boundaries between traditional media are not merely blurred but strategically interwoven. This paper explores the theoretical foundations of *intermedia composition*, drawing upon my seminal writings, particularly *Unsayable Music. Six Reflections on Musical Semiotics, Electroacoustic and Digital Music*<sup>1</sup> and the chapter “Audiovisual and Multimedia Composition: Understanding the Connections between Acoustic and Visual Media.”<sup>2</sup>

I conceptualize *intermedia* not as a mere synthesis of disparate artistic forms but as an expansion of the principle of polyphony – a historically musical concept – into a multidimensional aesthetic framework. Here, polyphony extends

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<sup>1</sup> Paulo C. Chagas, *Unsayable Music: Six Essays on Musical Semiotics, Electroacoustic and Digital Music* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Paulo C. Chagas, “Audiovisual and Multimedia Composition: Understanding the Connections between Acoustic and Visual Media,” in *Music and Technologies 2*, ed. by Darius Kučinskas (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 11–22.

beyond the sonic domain to integrate image, speech, gesture, space, and technological apparatuses. Intermedia thus emerges as an *aesthetic of convergence*, where multiple media interact not through linear layering but through dynamic, recursive entanglements. In this sense, intermedia is *polyphonic* in its very structure: multiple semiotic channels unfold simultaneously, each retaining its integrity while engaging in complex interrelationships.

Central to my theoretical architecture is the appropriation and expansion of Niklas Luhmann's theory of medium and form, which frames artistic processes as self-referential operations within autopoietic systems.<sup>3</sup> According to this view, *media* constitute loosely coupled fields of potentiality, while *forms* represent tightly coupled selections that actualize meaning within these media. In intermedia composition, sound and image are no longer treated as parallel or subordinate channels but as co-constitutive dimensions within a communicative system. Each medium brings its own affordances and constraints, and meaning emerges through their mutual differentiation and synchronization.

The significance of *technical apparatuses* in this context cannot be overstated. As highlighted in my writings, apparatuses are not passive tools but active agents in the creation of intermedia forms. They leave perceptible traces, shaping both the process and the perceptual outcome of the composition. This aligns with Vilém Flusser's notion of the "programmed nature" of apparatuses, which opens new creative possibilities while simultaneously imposing epistemic and aesthetic limits.

I also situate audiovisual composition within the broader sociotechnical discourse of cybernetics and posthumanism, particularly in relation to the interplay of randomness and pattern, body, and code. The recursive distinction between medium and form echoes cybernetic principles of feedback, complexity, and emergence. Intermedia works thus become cognitive assemblages – hybrid constructs that entangle human and nonhuman agencies, enabling a deeper engagement with the distributed nature of perception and meaning.

In other words, this paper considers intermedia composition not merely as a contemporary artistic practice but as a critical site for theorizing the epistemological and aesthetic reconfigurations provoked by digital technologies. It aims

<sup>3</sup> Niklas Luhmann (1927–98) was until recently practically unknown to English readers. The first volume of the translation of his magnum opus *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* was published in 2012 as *Theory of Society. Vol 1*, transl. by Rhodes Barrett (Stanford: Stanford University Press). Luhmann's thinking is complex, and his writing style is difficult to translate. This affects the receptivity of his work. The *Einführung in die Systemtheorie (Introduction to Systems Theory*, ed. by Dirk Baecker, transl. by Peter Gilgen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013) presents the transcription of a series of lectures in which Luhmann explains the theory to a larger public. The oral style makes it more accessible. For a comprehensive and critical reflection on Luhmann's theory, cf. Hans-Georg Moeller, *The Radical Luhmann* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

to demonstrate how intermedia operates as both an expansion of musical polyphony and an instantiation of the recursive logic of medium and form, opening up new modalities of experience, embodiment, and understanding in audiovisual art.

## **Intermedia Composition: Toward a Polyphonic Convergence of Media, Meaning, and Apparatus**

We begin with the concept of *intermedia*, an innovative artistic realm that challenges traditional distinctions between genres and disciplines. Rooted in a broader understanding of polyphony, intermedia shifts the focus from multiple musical voices to a more extensive interplay of perceptual and expressive layers. Here, sound, image, speech, gesture, space, and movement converge to create artwork that is not confined to a single medium but emerges from their dynamic entanglement. This expansion fosters a new type of aesthetic experience: a polyphony of media. With this understanding of intermedia as an expanded polyphony, we now turn to how this principle takes form through intermedia composition, where multiple media are engaged through deliberate technical and conceptual strategies.

Intermedia composition is characterized by a profoundly interdisciplinary approach in which artists engage with various technical apparatuses to explore the interactions among different media forms. These compositions emphasize not layering sound over image or movement, but rather examining how each medium is transformed in relation to the others. Historically, music has always transcended media – whether through the narrative voice in medieval ballads, the synthesis of poetry and piano in the Romantic Lied, or the integration of image and rhythm in popular music videos. Intermedia composition formalizes and amplifies this potential, transforming cross-media expression into a structural principle of artistic creation. As artists began to explore these interactions more intentionally, particularly through digital technologies, intermedia started to evolve beyond traditional media combinations. This leads us to investigate its historical development and the emergence of hybrid forms.

Unlike conventional multimedia, which often combines media in discrete layers, intermedia enables their interpenetration – a concept central to the aesthetics of contemporary hybrid art forms. This transformation is facilitated by technical apparatuses – analog and digital tools, and platforms that allow different media to interface, respond, and co-generate content. These apparatuses dissolve the boundaries between disciplines, creating seamless and dynamic systems where sound might generate images or gestures might trigger sound. As Luhmann suggests and I further expand, the process is recursive: media become forms, forms become media – each transformation feeding into the next. Intermedia thus becomes not just a mode of composition but a mode of emergence. At the core of this emergence lies the technical apparatus itself – not

merely a tool, but a structuring agent that profoundly shapes the aesthetic and conceptual contours of the work.

Technical apparatuses play a dual and paradoxical role. On the one hand, they enable unprecedented modes of artistic expression, allowing for real-time interaction, algorithmic generation, and immersive environments. On the other hand, as thinkers like Flusser warn in his book *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, these tools can impose pre-programmed constraints, potentially leading to uncritical or automated outcomes.<sup>4</sup> The key is critical engagement: recognizing that the apparatus is never neutral – it leaves visible traces in the work, encoding it with its own logic. These traces should not be hidden but embraced as aesthetic material. The apparatus thus becomes both a medium and a co-creator, contributing to the work's form and meaning. With this in mind, it is also possible to reflect on how intermedia compositions reshape our understanding of meaning and point toward the future of artistic creation.

What is at stake is that intermedia offers a new realm of meaning – a rich, polyphonic fabric woven from interdisciplinary choices and interactions. By collapsing the boundaries between media and fostering hybrid forms, intermedia compositions open up expanded cognitive and sensory experiences. They challenge traditional modes of authorship, perception, and engagement. More importantly, the integration of technical apparatuses signals a fundamental shift in how art is conceived, created, and experienced. Intermedia doesn't just merge media – it reshapes the very structure of artistic thought, paving the way for future explorations that are collaborative, systemic, and post-disciplinary.

## Intermedia Composition: Dynamics and Divergence

The evolving landscape of intermedia composition is shaped by two primary and interconnected tendencies: the ongoing process of differentiation within the arts and the increasingly central role of technical apparatuses. These forces not only underpin the structure of intermedia but also actively drive its transformation. Drawing on my application of Luhmann's systems theory, one can observe how intermedia, as a subsystem of art, exhibits autopoietic behavior – continuously generating and reshaping its own communicative codes through the recursive operations of medium and form.<sup>5</sup> As such, intermedia emerges not merely as a stylistic or technological innovation but as a systemic re-articulation of artistic creation within the broader matrix of contemporary culture.

The concept of *differentiation*, as articulated in system theory, refers to the fragmentation and specialization of societal functions, including those of art. In the context of intermedia, this process manifests as the emergence of new artis-

<sup>4</sup> Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, transl. by Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Chagas, *Unsayable Music...*, op. cit., 65–102.

tic forms that blur conventional boundaries and inhabit interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary spaces. These forms arise in response to technological evolution and the shifting demands of perceptual engagement. A notable example of differentiation is found in the domain of sound art – a field that challenges the conventional frameworks of both music and visual art. Sound art often lacks a clear boundary between structured composition and environmental or installation-based aesthetics. This ambiguity reveals a deeper structural logic: as new media emerge and interact, they create *zones of indeterminacy* that resist categorization. Rather than being a deficit, this plurality reflects the enhanced semantic potential of intermedia practices. Such diversification is not merely aesthetic but epistemic, providing new modes of understanding and communication shaped by contemporary media ecologies.

Integral to the development of intermedia composition is the role of the apparatus. In Flusser's terms, the apparatus is not a neutral instrument but a *symbolic operator* – a system with its own logic, possibilities, and constraints. I extend this notion by emphasizing that artistic creativity often emerges not only through the apparatus but also in negotiation with it. The apparatus facilitates access to a wide array of perceptual domains – acoustic, visual, spatial, and gestural – but it also risks enforcing programmatic regularities that limit spontaneity and reflexivity.

Flusser describes this as the dual nature of engaging with and against the apparatus. While apparatuses provide avenues for experimentation – especially in the digital manipulation of sound and image – they can also result in a form of automatic art-making, where the artist becomes a mere functionary of pre-designed systems. This concern is particularly acute in today's networked environment, where software, plugins, and templates frequently dictate creative choices under the guise of efficiency and accessibility.

The ambivalence of the apparatus extends beyond a specific aesthetic domain. In fact, it permeates both popular and high art contexts. In commercial music production, for instance, digital audio workstations (DAWs), autotune, and loop-based composition offer vast creative possibilities yet also risk homogenization through pre-packaged forms. Conversely, in academic or experimental music, artists use highly complex systems – such as algorithmic or generative composition tools – which, despite their sophistication, still raise questions about authorship, control, and critical distance. This contradiction necessitates a balancing act: the artist must embrace the productive capacities of the apparatus while resisting its automatisms. This dialectic is central to the evolution of intermedia. The challenge lies in critically appropriating the apparatus, utilizing its affordances not as constraints but as sites of resistance, exploration, and transformation.

Navigating this dynamic requires what Flusser terms *programming freedom* – the capacity to *subvert* the instrumentality inherent in technical systems and reorient them toward creative and dialogic purposes. This, in turn, compels a

reconsideration of the artist's role – not as a master of tools but as an active participant within a telematic dialogue, where meaning emerges through the interplay of human and non-human agents. Consequently, the intermedia artist embodies multiple, simultaneous roles: composer and programmer, improviser and critic, continuously negotiating and reshaping the very systems they employ.

This perspective situates intermedia not only within the framework of expanded composition but also within a broader philosophical turn toward post-human aesthetics. Here, embodiment, materiality, and presence are continually redefined through networked, algorithmic, and hybrid interactions. Critical engagement with technical apparatuses – through reprogramming, glitching, improvising, or remixing – thus becomes central to artistic innovation. From this standpoint, intermedia composition is not merely a convergence of artistic media, but a laboratory of divergence – a dynamic space where tensions between differentiation and integration, human agency and technological mediation, are actively explored and articulated. It is precisely within this paradox – the simultaneous affirmation and critique of the systems shaping it – that intermedia derives its creative vitality.

### **The Technical Apparatus: Transforming Art and Perception**

The dynamic interplay between differentiation and apparatus, as discussed in the preceding section, not only fosters new artistic forms but also reconfigures the foundations of perception and representation in intermedia composition. As artists increasingly engage with technical systems – not merely as tools but as collaborators or even co-creators – a deeper transformation unfolds. This shift calls for a closer examination of the apparatus itself, not just in terms of its function, but also as a cultural and epistemological force that reshapes the conditions under which art is produced, perceived, and understood.

This transformation was anticipated in the early twentieth century by Walter Benjamin, who identified the technical apparatus as a pivotal force in the rupture between traditional and modern art. In “*Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*” (1936), Benjamin argued that technologies such as photography and cinema severed the artwork from its ritualistic origin – its “aura” – and initiated a new phase where art becomes accessible, reproducible, and politically charged.<sup>6</sup> The apparatus, in this view, is not merely mechanical; it mediates between material reality and aesthetic expression, fundamentally altering the structure of artistic experience. For Benjamin, the camera disclosed an “optical unconscious,” revealing visual phenomena too subtle or fleeting for the

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<sup>6</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, transl. by Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

naked eye. The viewer, therefore, no longer encounters the work as a distant relic imbued with spiritual presence but rather as a fragmented, mediated image experienced through technological filtration. This reconfiguration invites the spectator to adopt a new position: not as a reverent observer but as a critical interpreter, engaging with images that are already constructed. Cinema, in particular, exemplifies this transformation. The apparatus of the camera does not merely document; it performs. Through its operations – framing, tracking, editing – it introduces a new layer of authorship that coexists with, and often supersedes, the actor's performance. As Benjamin noted, the audience must identify not just with the character but with the camera's gaze, which shapes how meaning is constructed. The camera thus becomes a co-performer and co-author, with its own aesthetic logic and temporal rhythms.

This displacement of presence and the multiplication of perspectives resonate strongly with intermedia practice, where digital tools orchestrate a *polyphony of media* – each with its own semiotic weight and operational logic. In such contexts, the apparatus is no longer a passive conduit but an active agent that intervenes in the very fabric of perception.

While the apparatus has the potential for creative expansion, Benjamin warns of a countervailing tendency: the risk of uncritical absorption. In the face of dazzling technical novelty, there is a danger that the apparatus may be fetishized – valued not for its transformative capacity but for its novelty or convenience. The role of the artist, then, is to resist this tendency by engaging critically with the apparatus, using it to challenge habitual perception and open new aesthetic possibilities. In my text “Audiovisual and Multimedia Composition: Understanding the Connections between Acoustic and Visual Media,” I echo this call in my theorization of intermedia composition, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining critical distance and operational reflexivity.<sup>7</sup> The artist must treat the apparatus not as an extension of the self but as a semi-autonomous system – one whose affordances must be negotiated, resisted, and reprogrammed where necessary.

In contemporary critical theory, Byung-Chul Han expands Benjamin's analysis into the digital age, suggesting a shift from optical to *digital consciousness*.<sup>8</sup> While Benjamin's camera revealed unconscious visual structures, digital technologies map and predict behavioral patterns through data collection, resulting in what Han describes as a “digital unconscious.” This shift signifies a movement from depth to surface, from contemplation to acceleration, and from meaning to the flow of information. The digital apparatus no longer merely represents reality – it anticipates and shapes it. Through algorithmic profiling, personalization, and feedback loops, it conditions perception and decision-making, often below

<sup>7</sup> Chagas, “Audiovisual and Multimedia Composition...,” op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Byung-Chul Han, *Vom Verschwinden der Rituale: Eine Topologie der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2019).

the level of awareness. In this context, perception becomes pre-conscious and reactive, while the autonomy of aesthetic judgment is increasingly undermined by automated systems of prediction and control.

This transformation has profound implications for intermedia art. Not only is the artwork mediated by the apparatus, but the audience's perception is also mediated by the apparatus's logic. As digital systems interface with bodies, behaviors, and emotions, they shape the conditions of attention, often privileging immediacy, fragmentation, and interaction over immersion, reflection, or critique. In this regime, intermedia composition must be understood not only as an aesthetic construction but also as a form of epistemological intervention. To create intermedia art today is to compose not just with media but with perception itself – to question how we see, hear, and engage in environments increasingly sculpted by invisible systems.

Against this backdrop, the intermedia artist emerges as a crucial figure – one who operates both within and against the apparatus. Echoing Flusser's vision of *telematic dialogue*, the artist's role is not to dismiss the apparatus but to commandeer its functionality, rewiring its logic in the service of imagination and resistance. In my text, "Creativity with Apparatuses: From Chamber Music to Telematic Dialog," I describe this engagement as a form of creative subversion, in which the artist neither fully controls nor completely surrenders to the machine but maintains a dialogic relationship with it.<sup>9</sup> Through reflexive and interdisciplinary practices, intermedia composition can intervene in the programmed flows of perception, introducing rupture, surprise, and counter temporality. It can generate what Han refers to as non-digital spaces of experience – zones where the aesthetic encounter resists being fully captured, quantified, or monetized.<sup>10</sup> In this context, the technical apparatus represents not only a material condition of intermedia but also a philosophical and political issue. Its critical engagement is vital for the future of art as both an aesthetic form and a cultural consciousness.

### **Polyphonic Subjectivity: The Convergence of Technology and Human Essence**

As intermedia composition reveals the active agency of technical apparatuses in the production of aesthetic experience, it also draws attention to a broader philosophical terrain: the reconfiguration of subjectivity itself. In the context of advanced media technologies and pervasive digital networks, subjectivity is no

<sup>9</sup> Paulo C. Chagas, "Creativity with Apparatuses: From Chamber Music to Telematic Dialog," *Flusser Studies* 17, 2014. [www.flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/paulo-chagas-creativity-with-apparatuses.pdf](http://www.flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/paulo-chagas-creativity-with-apparatuses.pdf). Accessed: April 8, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Byung-Chul Han, *In the Swarm: Digital Prospects*, transl. by Erik Butler (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 12–15.

longer reducible to a unified, autonomous self. Rather, it emerges as a polyphonic, heterogeneous construct, co-constituted by technological, social, and symbolic systems. As Hayles argues, the posthuman condition entails a fundamental redefinition of the human – not as a discrete, autonomous subject, but as an informational node within a network of biological, technological, and cognitive processes. In this framework, subjectivity becomes distributed, co-emergent, and modulated through its entanglements with technical apparatuses, marking a profound shift in how identity and agency are constituted and performed.<sup>11</sup>

The machinery of communication and information does not merely augment human faculties – it integrates with them, shaping the cognitive, affective, and perceptual modalities through which individuals engage with the world. As I observe, technical systems are deeply intertwined with processes such as memory, attention, intelligence, and desire, extending not only the senses but also the very structure of consciousness.<sup>12</sup> The impact is not external but intrinsic; these systems modulate how we feel, remember, and perceive, functioning at both conscious and subconscious levels.

In this environment, the production of meaning is no longer the sole province of the human subject but emerges from interactions between human agents and digital systems. The algorithmic architectures of social media, for example, actively participate in shaping narratives, behaviors, and social norms. Meaning, in the posthuman context, is co-generated by human intention and machine operations, revealing the recursive feedback loops that define contemporary symbolic life.

The French philosopher Félix Guattari offers a foundational lens through which to understand this transformation. In his reworking of subjectivity, Guattari introduces the concept of *desiring machines* – assemblages that include not only technical devices but also institutional, linguistic, and cultural apparatuses.<sup>13</sup> These machines are not merely metaphors; they are operative systems that organize affect, produce desire, and generate new forms of subjectivity. According to Guattari, desire machines do not reflect or express a pre-given subject. Rather, they replace the traditional notion of a centered, coherent subject with a dispersed, machinic, and polyphonic structure. This shift is fundamental to understanding the subjective condition of our time. Subjectivity is no longer grounded in the interiority of a unified self but is distributed across media systems, institutional discourses, social protocols, and technological devices. This theoretical framework resonates with my own insights, which link the apparatus not only to artistic creation but to the constitution of experience itself.<sup>14</sup> In

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Chagas, “Creativity with Apparatuses...,” op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, transl. by Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Chagas, “Creativity with Apparatuses...,” op. cit.

both cases, we encounter a machinic logic that does not oppose the human but reconfigures it through interdependence, repetition, and hybridization.

Guattari's concept of *polyphonic subjectivity* encapsulates the plurality and heterogeneity inherent in this machinic condition. It reflects a reality in which identity is not singular but multiple, not fixed but fluid, not unified but stratified. This multiplicity is not a deficit; rather, it represents the core dynamic of posthuman subject formation. Polyphonic subjectivity emerges when the heterogeneous elements of the desiring machine – social codes, bodily impulses, cultural forms, technical protocols – interact differentially, generating novel modes of experience and expression. Such subjectivity parallels the multiplicity of voices in intermedia composition, where diverse media and sensory channels converge to produce multilayered, non-linear structures. Just as intermedia composition rejects the dominance of any single sensory mode, polyphonic subjectivity resists the centrality of a singular, self-consistent "I." The result is a subjectivity perpetually in motion, articulated through technological interconnections and aesthetic multiplicity.

The interaction between human agents and apparatuses generates not only new aesthetic forms but also new modes of being. As Flusser envisions in his writings on telematic society, this symbiosis gives rise to hybrid forms of life in which agency, creativity, and perception are shared among human and nonhuman actors.<sup>15</sup> In this model, identity is not owned but enacted, not singular but distributed across networks of interaction and feedback. Social media offers a clear example of this dynamic. Here, the boundaries between private and public, individual and collective, are continuously negotiated and blurred. Identity becomes performative, shaped by algorithms and interaction metrics, while presence is mediated by code and data. These platforms exemplify the cybernetic logic of contemporary subjectivity – recursive, responsive, and shaped by the flows of digital capital and symbolic exchange.

In the posthuman condition, existence is no longer defined primarily by being, presence, or interiority. Rather, it is defined by function, flow, and connectivity – the operational characteristics of the desiring machine. As Guattari asserts, technological assemblages become the determinants of what counts as life, structuring everything from labor and communication to emotion and embodiment.<sup>16</sup> Subjectivity, in this context, is better understood as a diagram of forces, a constellation of interlinked components operating within broader technological ecologies. The parameters of life – what we feel, think, remember, and desire – are increasingly configured by the affective and cognitive infrastructures of digital technology. These are not simply extensions of human faculties but sites of transformation where new forms of agency and meaning emerge.

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<sup>15</sup> Flusser, *Into the Universe...*, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis...*, op. cit.

## Overview of My Audiovisual Works: 1984–2024

My work in audiovisual and intermedia composition spans more than four decades and reflects a deep engagement with the intersections of sound, image, performance, and technology. From the beginning of my career, I have approached composition as an open field of exploration, where music interacts with other media to generate new aesthetic forms and modes of experience. Across genres – musical theater, chamber opera, dance, media theater, and audiovisual installation – I have sought to articulate the poetics of polyphony, embodied interaction, and posthuman subjectivity.

My journey into intermedia forms began in the early 1980s during my studies at the Cologne Music Academy. *Eshu* (1984), my first major intermedia composition, emerged from my interest in the ritualistic and transcendental dimensions of Afro-Brazilian *candomblé*. It combines electronic music, baritone saxophone, percussion, vocal performers, and synchronized slide projections. Collaborating with visual artist Heinz Wedewardt, I discovered the powerful expressive potential of synchronizing electronic sound with visual media. This multimedia aesthetic continued in *Peep Show* (1985–7), where I critically examined the sex industry and the technological mediation of eroticism. The piece integrated electronic and pop music, dramatic performance, and visual projections to create a futuristic narrative about digital sexuality and liberation. Looking back, I see *Peep Show* as one of my most prescient works, anticipating the interactive possibilities that would later be realized with digital media and artificial intelligence.

In *Ellipse* (1986), composed for mime and electronic music, I explored the metaphor of the body as a sound-producing organism, using breath and synthesized tones to mirror the arc of human life. This focus on the body and gesture reappeared in *Shango: Kultmusik* (1989), a dance-theater piece inspired by Afro-American religious traditions. Here, I experimented with the spatial and temporal dimensions of electronic sound in dialogue with live percussion and dance, engaging with Paul Virilio's theories on speed, war, and disappearance. Around the same time, I began work on the *Vom Kriege* trilogy (1984–99), a series of chamber operas exploring the themes of war and fascism through a combination of live performance, electronic music, and historical texts by Ernst Jünger, Clausewitz, and Yoruba mythology. The final opera in the trilogy, *RAW* (1999), marked a pivotal moment: moving away from fixed media, I embraced live electronic performance, opening new possibilities for interaction and improvisation.

In the 1990s, I expanded my practice through collaborations with choreographers and dancers, developing an aesthetic that emphasized the physical and gestural qualities of sound. With *Sodoma* (1991), created with Cláudio Bernardo, I composed for vocal ensemble, string orchestra, percussion, and multi-channel electronic music. The choreography drew inspiration from Serra Pelada, the Brazilian gold mine, and linked it to the biblical myth of Sodom. In *Raptus*

(1992), Bernandro reimagined the music of *Shango: Kultmusik* through the language of European dance theater, creating a work in which music and dance existed in tension rather than in synchrony. This interplay between media – sometimes converging, sometimes diverging – became a central concern in my intermedia compositions.

My collaboration with Johann Kresnik and Ismael Ivo on *Francis Bacon* (1993) introduced me to the realm of choreographic theater. The piece, scored for singers, chamber ensemble, and electronics, evoked the tortured inner world of the painter. I used processed recordings of breath, moaning, and whispering to create a visceral sonic landscape that paralleled – and sometimes opposed – the choreography. I followed this with *Der Fluss* (1994), a scenic oratorio inspired by poetry from João Cabral de Melo Neto. In this work, I combined spoken word, plainchant, and electronic sounds to evoke the drought-affected landscapes and existential themes of northeastern Brazil.

From 1992 to 1997, I worked as an artist-in-residence at the Bonner Entwicklungswerkstatt für Computermedien (BEC), composing for media theater projects that integrated sound, image, interactivity, and spatial installation. These years were pivotal in expanding my understanding of sound spatialization and performative environments. In *Rasender Stillstand* (1992), I developed an interactive system where a dancer's movements control sound and light. With *Book of the Air* and *Global Village – Hidden Pathways* (1993), I worked with holography, video, and interactive sound in collaboration with visual artist Doris Vila. In *Observation Suite* (1996), I created a multimedia performance where a dancer interacted with a virtual world of "eyes," controlling both sonic and visual elements through motion capture. This work, along with the installation *Observation Environment*, pushed the boundaries of embodied interaction. I concluded this phase with *Das Choreoskop* (1997), an interactive audiovisual installation conceived as a prototype for children's opera, where movement across a projected map triggered musical fragments from different cultures.

In the mid-1990s, I began producing audiovisual works for the screen, exploring time-space synesthesia and the sensory convergence of sound and image. Collaborating with visual artist Inge Kamps, I created *The Journey* (1995), *Einblick* (1995), and *Zeit-Wände II* (1997) – works that integrated abstract video imagery with layered electronic music. In *Zeit-Wände VII* (2003), a five-screen projection installation set within a bridge's interior, I explored rhythms of repetition, media alienation, and acoustic integration with the urban environment. I was also fortunate to collaborate with Rainer Plum on *Projektion* (1999) and *Streaming* (2001), immersive installations that combined laser projections and electronic sound. *Streaming*, staged in the Schalke Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, utilized fog, light, and spatial sound to transform the stadium into a virtual 3D cathedral of audiovisual sensations.

My works since 2000 reflect a growing emphasis on interactivity and interdisciplinary composition. *Circular Roots* (2004), inspired by Borges's *The Circular*

*Ruins*, was created in collaboration with violinist Izumi Okobo and video artist Luiz Carlos Joels. It involved gesture-tracking sensors attached to the violinist, which controlled the real-time video processing. The piece explores recursion, dreaming, and the generative relationship between body, instrument, and image. In *Canções dos Olhos/Augenlieder* (2005), a collaboration with Johannes Birringer and dancer Veronica Endo, I combined soprano voice, dance, 5.1 electronic music, and digital video to examine the metaphors of vision and blindness. Finally, in *Corpo, Carne e Espírito* (2008), digital oratorio, I revisited musical material from *Francis Bacon* in a new context that explored the musical visuality of the body and the poetics of digital flesh.

Throughout these works, I have pursued a vision of composition as a polyphonic, interdisciplinary process. I am continually drawn to the interplay between acoustic and electronic sounds, embodied performance and technical mediation, between the human and the mechanistic. My aim has always been to create spaces – physical, social, and imaginary – where new forms of subjectivity, interaction, and aesthetic experience can emerge.

In recent years, my audiovisual compositions have further deepened the intermedia explorations that have defined my artistic trajectory since the 1980s. Works created between 2013 and 2024 extend this ongoing inquiry into the relationship between sound, image, gesture, memory, and philosophical reflection. These new pieces further develop themes of existential revolt, technological embodiment, and environmental resonance through collaborations with musicians, choreographers, visual artists, and digital technologies. Particularly significant among them is *The Refrigerator*, a digital oratorio that draws directly from my personal experience of torture during Brazil's military dictatorship.<sup>17</sup>

The first of this recent cycle, *In-Between* (2013), is a meditation on temporal and spatial distances and the possibilities they open for freedom and resonance. Composed for three percussionists, electronic sounds, and digital imagery, the work explores the idea of the “space in-between” as a metaphor for both sonic

<sup>17</sup> The term *digital oratorio* refers to an evolution of the traditional oratorio form, which emerged in the seventeenth century as a large-scale musical composition for voices and orchestra, typically centered on sacred or dramatic themes, but performed without theatrical staging. Unlike opera, the oratorio prioritized narrative and reflection over action, often delivered through a combination of recitative, aria, and choral writing. In the context of contemporary intermedia practices, the *digital oratorio* retains the structural and affective depth of its historical predecessor but transposes it into a postdramatic and multimedia framework. It integrates electroacoustic music, real-time processing, interactive video, spatialized sound, and algorithmic systems, reconfiguring the oratorio's narrative and affective dimensions for the digital age. As such, it becomes a site of philosophical inquiry and experiential confrontation, addressing themes such as trauma, memory, revolt, and posthuman subjectivity. My work *The Refrigerator* exemplifies this form, transforming personal testimony and political history into an immersive and polyphonic audiovisual structure where music, technology, and embodiment converge.

and relational openness. Using impulse-based electronic textures and a visual landscape derived from winter photographs of the Black Forest in Germany, the piece develops a structure that oscillates between synchronization and disjunction, allowing the listener to dwell in the interstices of image and sound.

Composed the following year, *The Refrigerator* (2014) marks a decisive moment in my compositional path. This digital oratorio is based on the torture I endured as a 17-year-old political prisoner in Rio de Janeiro. At the heart of the piece is the memory of being confined for three days in a soundproof, dark, and freezing cell – the so-called “refrigerator” – where I was subjected to relentless noise torture: the screech of radio static, mechanical whirrs, and sonic distortions. The piece draws not only on these sonic memories but also on a philosophical engagement with absurdity, as articulated by Albert Camus. Here, music becomes a site of revolt and transformation. Electroacoustic textures are shaped from the noise of gunshots, time-stretched and degraded to reveal the violence and emptiness at the core of torture. Live electronics and interactive video projections further deepen the experience, with images of prisons, victims, and abstract textures creating a triptych of sensory confrontation. *The Refrigerator* is not simply an autobiographical work but a reflection on torture as a universal reality and an artistic act of illumination, attempting to transcend the darkness of the past through a polyphony of revolt and remembrance.<sup>18</sup>

In *Return* (2015), inspired by hexagram 24 of the I Ching, I returned to the language of solo percussion and multimedia. Created in collaboration with Brazilian percussionist Joaquim Zito Abreu, the piece incorporates two GoPro cameras mounted on the performer’s head and chest, offering a subjective view of bodily movement and musical gesture. Electronic and visual layers, triggered by the performer, accompany digitally processed images from Brazil’s natural landscapes. The piece becomes a multimedia choreography of return and renewal, where the body, nature, and sound flow cyclically.

Other works from this period reflect my ongoing concern with the intersection of environment, memory, and perception. *Cotijuba* (2016), composed for string quartet and interactive visual projection, came after a trip to the Amazonian

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed philosophical and artistic discussion of *The Refrigerator*, see Paulo C. Chagas, “Revolt and Ambivalence: Music, Torture and Absurdity in the Digital Oratorio *The Refrigerator*,” in *Bridging People and Sound. 12th International Symposium, CMMR 2016, São Paulo, Brazil, July 5–8, 2016. Revised selected papers. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, vol. 10525, ed. by M. Aramaki, R. Kronland-Martinet, and S. Ystad (Springer International Publishing, 2017), 331–46. The article situates the work within a broader reflection on torture, revolt, and the absurd, drawing on Camus’ philosophy to frame the digital oratorio as a site of existential resistance and aesthetic transcendence. It argues that the piece transforms traumatic memory into an immersive sonic and visual experience, confronting the listener with the ambivalent nature of violence and seeking a form of illumination through intermedia composition.

Island of Cotijuba. The Tupi word means “golden path,” and the piece evokes the spiritual vibrancy of the island’s landscapes through flowing musical textures and digitally altered video imagery. Similarly, *Sisyphus of the Ear* (2016), another collaboration with Johannes Birringer, revisits Camus’s myth in an audiovisual performance where an elderly man climbs and falls on a quarry hill while percussive rhythms derived from Marinetti’s *Zang Tumb Tumb* and recordings of factory machines articulate the futility and beauty of human effort.

The work *a thousand machines* (2017) [sic], also in collaboration with Birringer, expands this machinic and critical exploration. The piece revisits the aesthetics of Fritz Lang’s seminal movie *Metropolis* (1927), blending spectral piano analysis of Thelonious Monk’s *Round Midnight* with dystopian video scenes of foggy industrial underworlds and confined bodies. Piano performance and visual montage confront each other in an unsynchronized dialogue, evoking the estrangement of the modern subject within techno-capitalist structures.

In recent years, my audiovisual work has increasingly focused on ecological and philosophical themes. *Olhe essas águas...* (2022), composed for chamber orchestra, percussion, and video, reflects on the spiritual and ecological significance of water. Drawing from video footage captured in various regions of Brazil – Goiás, Belém, Marajó Island, and Bahia – the piece explores water as a source of life, purification, and memory. The music evokes fluidity and transformation, while the video processes the original footage with TouchDesigner to create an abstract visual landscape that mirrors emotional and environmental depth.

*Waldscherben* (2022) continues its ecological engagement by addressing the destruction of Germany’s Black Forest. The video, created by Inge Kamps, features layered images of fallen and splintered trees, animated into textures of loss and dissolution. The music, composed of the sounds of breaking glass and processed through granular synthesis, becomes a sonic expression of dystopia and latent energy, suggesting the forest’s shattered yet vibrating soul.

More recently, *Embracing Emptiness* (2018–24) delves into Buddhist concepts of emptiness, interdependence, and transformation. Written for marimba, vibraphone, live electronics, and video, the piece unfolds in three movements and engages in real-time processing of percussion sounds, creating evolving textures of delay, pitch shifts, and feedback. Filmed in California’s Death Valley, the video evokes the vastness and meditative quality of the desert. Here, emptiness becomes not a void but a fullness – an openness to relational becoming.

Finally, *The Skin of the Earth: Fragments* (2024) expands this reflection into a multidisciplinary meditation on the Earth’s surface as a living membrane. Written for soprano, live electronics, and video, the piece is structured in seven interconnected parts, exploring themes of breath, scars, darkness, echoes, and renewal. The soprano’s voice merges with real-time electronics, while AI-generated images processed in TouchDesigner create a constantly shifting visual field. The work affirms the Earth as a dynamic interface – fragile yet resonant – calling us to listen and care.

These recent works affirm my ongoing commitment to intermedia composition as a form of aesthetic, political, and philosophical engagement. Whether exploring historical trauma, technological alienation, or ecological fragility, each piece aims to create a space where sound, image, and presence merge – a space of revolt, remembrance, and renewal.

### Aesthetics of Audiovisual Immersion

Building on the theoretical frameworks of intermedia and polyphonic subjectivity, the aesthetic paradigm of audiovisual immersion emerges as a key strategy for artistic creation and perceptual transformation. It is not merely the sensory richness of sound and image that defines immersive art, but the dynamic interplay between physical presence and virtual simulation, and between bodily resonance and cognitive abstraction. This duality – central to the works of Flusser,<sup>19</sup> Nancy,<sup>20</sup> and my own<sup>21</sup> – enables immersive installations to function as cognitive, cultural, and sensorial interfaces within posthuman environments.

In immersive installations such as *Sound Imaginations* and *Pune Metamorphosis*, the construction of visual space does not rely on static representation but on continuous transformation. Through 3D rotations, perspective modulations, and circular movements, the visual field unfolds as a kinetic landscape – one that constantly reforms itself through algorithmic choreography. These spatial transformations activate a vertiginous visual flow, drawing the viewer into a vortex of movement, disorienting habitual perception, and suspending the logic of fixed perspective.<sup>22</sup> The result is a perceptual terrain in which the body is no longer external to the visual field but immersed within it, participating in its unfolding. This vertigo is not merely optical – it is affective and proprioceptive. The immersive quality of the installation generates a sense of spatial destabilization, which paradoxically intensifies the viewer's engagement. Through spatial fragmentation and recomposition, immersive works simulate a living and breathing architecture, one where perception is always incomplete and always in motion.

Complementing the visuals, the soundscape in immersive works is often realized through ambisonic spatialization, which encodes both the pressure and velocity of sound propagation. Ambisonics allows for the reproduction of a full-sphere sound field, enveloping the listener in an intricate vibrational web. A hallmark of audiovisual immersion is its deliberate exploration of synchrony and

<sup>19</sup> Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *À l'écoute* (Paris: Galilée, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Paulo C. Chagas, “Sound Imaginations: Listening Cultures and Audiovisual Immersion,” *Array*, 2023, 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.25370/array.v2023>. Accessed: April 8, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> Idem.

asynchrony. In contrast to traditional film or concert paradigms – where image and sound are tightly synchronized – the immersive installation revels in delayed or counterpointed relationships. This disjunction invites the observer to navigate between layers of interpretation, where meaning emerges not through alignment but through friction and divergence.

The audiovisual installation *Sound Imaginations* (2020), presented at the Culver Center in Riverside, California, just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, exemplifies this immersive aesthetic. Developed as the artistic outcome of a multi-year interdisciplinary research project, the installation is grounded in the concept of “listening cultures.”<sup>23</sup> It incorporates ambisonic field recordings and 360-degree video footage captured in diverse geographic locations – São Paulo, Riverside (CA), Moscow, Mannheim, and Pune. These recordings reflect culturally embedded practices of listening across urban, spiritual, and natural environments. Utilizing first-person research methodologies and portable 3D recording technologies, the installation treats the recording devices as cognitive extensions of the listening subject.

The final installation consists of a multichannel system: a 7.1 surround sound setup and 13 video monitors distributed throughout the space. A central projection presents a 26-minute audiovisual composition, while peripheral screens display silent looping videos organized thematically. Within this environment, sound and image interact in complex and often asynchronous relationships. For instance, viewers encounter the exuberant vegetation of Trianon Park in São Paulo accompanied by the aggressive noise of urban traffic – an accurate sonic reality of the park that creates an affective counterpoint to the visual calm. In another moment, birdsong from India overlays cityscape images from Moscow. These are not errors of montage but deliberate aesthetic provocations that destabilize causal listening, dislocating the referential bond between sound and source.<sup>24</sup>

Such asynchronous layering invites simultaneous engagement with semantic and reduced modes of listening, allowing perception to oscillate between interpretation and pure sensory awareness. By foregrounding the ambiguity and plurality of audiovisual relations, *Sound Imaginations* opens a space for what I call “sound imaginations” – a cognitive and perceptual field in which sounds imagined by images and images induced by sounds cohabit a shared experiential terrain. The installation becomes an invitation to question the limits of synchronization and to reflect on the cultural, emotional, and philosophical dimensions of listening in a posthuman, techno-cultural world.

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<sup>23</sup> Holger Schultze, “Hörkulturen der Gegenwart. Eine Anthropologie in acht Hörweisen,” *Positionen – Texte zur Aktuellen Musik*, XXVIII/105 (2015), 15–18.

<sup>24</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

## Bridging Physical and Virtual Realms: Telematic Composition and Performance

My recent collaboration with Brazilian flutist Cássia Carrascoza has led to the development of a cycle of telematic compositions that explore the convergence of physical and virtual performance environments. Originating with an experimental recording session in the Mojave Desert in early 2020, this body of work investigates the conditions of presence, resonance, and artistic intimacy across distributed networks.

Our first work, *Mojave* (2020/21), uses ambisonic field recordings and 3D video footage captured in the desert to create a meditative audiovisual landscape. Cássia's flutes interact physically with the terrain, while the electronics – shaped by delay and feedback algorithms – produce a dynamic interplay between latency and synchrony. This contrast between expansive landscape and telematic confinement evokes both the solitude of the pandemic and the promise of virtual immersion.

Subsequent works such as *Virtual Studies* (2020/21) and *I Hear You Breathe* (2022) expand this approach. In *Virtual Studies*, layers of flute and bass flute unfold through non-synchronous polyphony and processed live sounds. The 3D video imagery, featuring desert scenes and subtle motion shifts, explores a temporal multiplicity within digital space. *I Hear You Breathe* delves deeper into embodiment and breath, using vocal fragments, chaotic flows, and extended flute techniques to evoke themes of environmental degradation and existential unrest. The electronics here do not merely accompany but extend the bodily sonic expression, creating a vortex of sound and image where breath becomes both medium and message.

The *Re-soundings* cycle (2021–4) continues this research into listening as relational space. *Re-soundings #1*, written for OSUSSP (University of São Paulo Symphony Orchestra) during the pandemic, pairs solo flute with telematically assembled orchestral recordings. The later works – *Re-soundings #3 Violin* (2021) and *Re-soundings #3 Flute 1* (2021) – use spatial video and real-time processing to explore resonance as both physical vibration and emotional transmission. *Re-soundings #3 Flute 2* (2023), recorded on the terrace of São Paulo's Bretagne Building, exemplifies this approach. The architecture becomes an acoustic partner in dialogue with the flute, captured through 360-degree video. The result is a sensory choreography of breath, gesture, space, and resonance – a meditation on how sound connects bodies across spatial and temporal divides.

Our final work in this cycle, *Sound Imaginations Improvisations* (2022), synthesizes the entirety of our telematic collaboration. Based on the video created for the audiovisual installation *Sound Imaginations*, this version integrates flute, alto flute, and bass flute with a dense, multilayered electronic environment. All sounds were performed live in São Paulo and processed in real time in Riverside, California. The result is a living polyphony where latency, synchronicity, improvisation, and choreography intermingle. The work's aesthetic power lies in its

affirmation of affective proximity through technological distance – a sonic embrace that traverses time zones, data streams, and bodies.

Together, these works articulate a theory and practice of telematic performance grounded in mutual vulnerability, technological intimacy, and poetic resonance. As we compose and perform across continents, we do not simply transmit music – we create spaces of listening and being together. In this sense, telematic art becomes not only an artistic paradigm but a relational infrastructure: an act of care, connection, and shared imagination.

### Affective Assemblages, Cognitive Ecology

In *Pune Metamorphosis*, I draw upon surrealist strategies of automatic writing and drawing to explore the nonconscious dimensions of creativity. Referencing early twentieth-century practices that sought to bypass rational control, the work embraces a noncoherent aesthetic – valuing ambiguity, emergence, and affective resonance over structure or resolution. This compositional approach is guided by an ethos of surrendering authorship to processes of self-organization, allowing for an unfolding of meaning through material and technological interactions. Inspired by Joan Miró's *Métamorphose* and the automatic techniques embedded in his collaged visual language, *Pune Metamorphosis* enacts a form of sonic automatism, drawing the listener into a complex cognitive and sensory field.

The installation becomes a site of nonconscious cognition, where sound assemblages – automatically synthesized and self-modifying – respond to fluctuating data streams and neural-like architectures. These systems produce emergent sonic behavior through spatial granular synthesis, generating swarms of micro-sounds that move according to agent-based models such as Boids. This results in a fluid, multidimensional soundscape where grains cluster, disperse, and recombine in constantly shifting constellations. This process is aligned with N. Katherine Hayles' notion of cognitive assemblages, in which human and non-human agents interact to shape information flows and co-produce thou meaning within adaptive systems.<sup>25</sup>

The immersive sound architecture of *Pune Metamorphosis* was realized using Higher Order Ambisonics [HOA], allowing a full-sphere representation of the sound field. The piece is built upon ambisonic recordings made in various locations across the Indian city of Pune – including urban soundscapes and sacred sites like the Ramdara and Bhuleshwar Shiva Temples – capturing the vibrant polyphony of social, environmental, and architectural resonances. These recordings were processed and spatialized using custom-designed granular synthesis techniques developed in SuperCollider, generating a dual-layered sonic texture where real and synthesized sounds interweave.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> N. Katherine Hayles, *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Chagas and Fontaine, "Integrating Higher Order Ambisonics and Cognitive Assemblages in Immersive Sound Composition." Proceeding at the *49th International*

This approach resonates with contemporary cognitive ecology, in which human and nonhuman intelligence operate within recursive and affective assemblages. The immersive experience generated by *Pune Metamorphosis* exemplifies a relational understanding of space and music, as described by Born<sup>27</sup> and further articulated through the embodied listening frameworks of Jean-Luc Nancy.<sup>28</sup> Listening, in this context, becomes a corporeal act extending beyond the ears – distributed across skin, bones, and viscera – what Nancy would call the “resonant subject.” The listener becomes one node among many in a distributed sonic field, participating in a multisensory assemblage that is both aesthetically and cognitively engaging.

When networked across multiple sites, the immersive installation transforms into a telematic system – a concept first outlined by Flusser and later developed in my theory of telematic chamber music.<sup>29</sup> In these distributed environments, communication unfolds across spatially dislocated nodes, and the performance space is no longer defined by physical proximity but by dialogic and algorithmic exchanges. Unlike traditional chamber music, which emphasizes co-presence and fixed notation, telematic performance thrives on simultaneity, indeterminacy, and shared authorship. Instruments and performers – human, digital, and machinic – become co-agents within an evolving system where the boundaries between composing and performing dissolve.

Ultimately, the aesthetics of audiovisual immersion – as articulated in works like *Sound Imaginations* and *The Skin of the Earth* – moves beyond representation toward a posthuman sensory ecology. Perception here is not a passive mirror of the world but an active construction shaped by technological apparatuses, algorithmic behaviors, and affective entanglements. The immersive artwork becomes a cognitive assemblage, a space of becoming that reflects the intricacies of our hybrid, machinic condition. Vertiginous visuals, enveloping soundscapes, asynchronous flows, and affective vibrations all contribute to an aesthetic that transcends mastery, emphasizing the dissolution of boundaries between disciplines, senses, bodies, and media. In this regard, audiovisual immersion is not merely a technical feat or aesthetic spectacle; it constitutes a philosophical intervention into how we hear, feel, and imagine in the era of posthuman convergence.

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Computer Music Conference (ICMC 2024). *Sound in Motion*, Seoul, South Korea, July 7–13, 2024; [www.proceedings.com/content/078/078241webtoc.pdf](http://www.proceedings.com/content/078/078241webtoc.pdf). Accessed September 26, 2025.

<sup>27</sup> Georgina Born, *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>28</sup> Nancy, *À l'écoute*, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Chagas, “Creativity with Apparatuses...,” op. cit., and Paulo C. Chagas, “Sound, Truth, and Paradigm,” in *Sounds from Within: Phenomenology and Practice*, ed. by Paulo C. Chagas and J. C. Wu (Cham: Springer Nature, 2021), 1–28.

## Conclusion: Toward a Polyphonic Future of Art, Subjectivity, and Perception

The recent works examined in this article – *Sound Imaginations*, *Pune Metamorphosis*, *The Refrigerator*, and *The Skin of the Earth* – outline an artistic trajectory that moves beyond traditional paradigms of representation, narrative, and sensory alignment. These projects do not seek to reproduce the world but to engage with its complexity through open systems of interaction, affect, and resonance. Across installations, telematic performances, and digital oratorios, a new compositional ethos emerges: one rooted in multiplicity, indeterminacy, and distributed agency. In this context, the artist becomes not a sovereign author but an orchestrator of dynamic processes – curating environments in which human, machinic, and environmental elements co-compose meaning.

This shift is not merely aesthetic but epistemological. It challenges entrenched notions of perception as passive reception and subjectivity as internally bounded. Instead, the immersive and telematic artworks described here embody a vision of cognition as distributed across bodies, networks, and environments. Drawing on N. Katherine Hayles' theories of the posthuman<sup>30</sup> and cognitive assemblages,<sup>31</sup> these works illustrate how perception and agency emerge from recursive interactions among heterogeneous agents – biological and technical, conscious and nonconscious. In such assemblages, subjectivity is not singular or stable but polyphonic, unfolding through systems of affective and informational exchange.

The immersive installations and performances presented here articulate a “cognitive ecology” in which perception is shaped by the interaction of auditory, visual, spatial, and proprioceptive stimuli. Technologies such as Higher Order Ambisonics, spatial granular synthesis, and 3D video expand the field of aesthetic experience, enabling forms of listening and seeing that are embodied, relational, and constantly in flux. Listening, in particular, becomes a modality of knowing – one that activates not only the ears but the whole body. As Nancy suggests, the body becomes a resonant subject, absorbing and reflecting vibrations that blur the boundary between internal and external, self and world.<sup>32</sup>

This reconfiguration of perception is also a reconfiguration of the performance environment. In telematic contexts, artistic presence is no longer tied to physical proximity but is distributed across time zones, data flows, and feedback loops. These works do not merely simulate immediacy; they reimagine its very structure. As theorized in my concept of telematic chamber music, presence in these works is constructed through improvisation, latency, and co-authorship. Instruments and systems – flute, percussion, camera, microphone, algorithm, architecture – form polyphonic ensembles in which agency is always shared, contingent, and emergent.

<sup>30</sup> Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Hayles, *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Nancy, *À l'écoute*, op. cit.

What unites these diverse practices is their commitment to affective and perceptual transformation. Rather than imposing coherence, they open spaces for ambiguity, disorientation, and openness. They create conditions in which viewers and listeners must navigate, interpret, and feel their way through shifting layers of audiovisual information. This movement away from mastery and toward resonance is not simply a technical or stylistic shift – it is a philosophical one. It reflects an ethical stance toward the posthuman condition: an acknowledgment that we inhabit a world of entangled intelligences, fluid identities, and fragile ecologies.

In this light, the aesthetics of audiovisual immersion serve not only as an artistic language but as a conceptual tool for rethinking subjectivity, experience, and relation. The works discussed here model a future in which art does not merely represent or reflect but enacts – a future where composition becomes an ecology of sense, and perception becomes a shared construction between humans and machines, images and sounds, histories and futures.

The compositional practice I have developed over the past four decades, in collaboration with musicians, dancers, visual artists, theorists, and programmers, is grounded in this philosophy of interdependence and emergence. From the visionary porn-hallucinations of *Peep Show* to the trauma-transfiguring textures of *The Refrigerator*, the dreamlike resonance of *Pune Metamorphosis*, and the cross-continental intimacy of *Sound Imaginations*, each work is an experiment in how we might listen, think, and feel otherwise. As we confront new forms of technological acceleration, environmental crisis, and social fragmentation, I believe the role of art is not to provide answers but to cultivate awareness, vulnerability, and connection. In this sense, intermedia art – conceived as a cognitive and affective assemblage – offers a powerful and necessary means to imagine, sense, and construct polyphonic futures in a fragmented world.<sup>33</sup>

## SUMMARY

This paper examines the evolution and implications of intermedia composition as a contemporary aesthetic and cognitive practice. Building on the theoretical foundations of Paulo C. Chagas, Vilém Flusser, Félix Guattari, and N. Katherine Hayles, the study proposes intermedia as a form of expanded polyphony, where sound, image, gesture, and space interact dynamically to produce hybrid artistic environments. It considers how technical apparatuses – including audiovisual systems, spatial sound technologies, and algorithmic agents – transform both artistic production and perception by functioning as active co-creators within the compositional process.

<sup>33</sup> Audiovisual and intermedia works discussed in this article can be accessed at: <https://solo.to/paulocchagas>. Accessed: April 8, 2024. (This portfolio includes audio and video recordings, documentation of installations, and performances of the works cited throughout the text.)

The text develops the concept of *polyphonic subjectivity*, inspired by Guattari's *desiring machines*, to describe the distributed, heterogeneous, and mechanically entangled nature of contemporary subjectivity. Drawing on Hayles's notion of the *cognitive nonconscious* and *cognitive assemblages*, it argues that immersive and telematic works reflect and engage forms of cognition that extend beyond conscious thought and individual agency.

Through the analysis of specific audiovisual and telematic installations – such as *Sound Imaginations*, *Pune Metamorphosis*, and *The Skin of the Earth* – the paper illustrates how immersive environments activate multiple sensory modalities and foster recursive relationships between humans and machines. Techniques such as ambisonics, spatial granular synthesis, and asynchronous audiovisual layering are shown to generate rich, affective, and non-linear experiences that embody the aesthetic logic of the posthuman.

Ultimately, the paper frames intermedia composition as more than a genre or technique – it is presented as a critical epistemological space, one that interrogates and redefines subjectivity, perception, and creation in the age of distributed cognition and pervasive digital mediation.



# Part I • Multimedia Intersections



# PRESENT-DAY NEUROSCIENTIFIC, COGNITIVE, AND MUSICOCOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MUSIC AND MUSICAL MULTIMEDIA

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**ABSTRACT:** A close equivalent of a pair of concepts, such as “music in the concert hall” and “music beyond the concert hall,” is another pair of concepts, namely “music alone” and “musical multimedia.” The article is dedicated to this second pair of concepts and tries to answer the question: What do researchers currently think about these concepts? It includes the results of neuroscientists’, cognitivists’, and musicologists’ studies, which show that the phrase music alone in its original meaning is not relevant today; the division into music and musical multimedia is in use only to emphasize the number and types of media; music and music connected with other media are based on similar neuro-cognitive foundations.

**KEY WORDS:** Music alone, musical multimedia, cognitive approach, neuropragmatism, meaning, conceptual blending, multimodality, music-related mental imagery.

A close equivalent of a pair of concepts, such as “music in the concert hall” and “music beyond the concert hall,” indicating different places of performance, is another pair of concepts, namely “music alone” and “musical multimedia,” concerning genres of music and their cognitive functions. Eduard Hanslick’s phrase in Gustav Cohen’s translation – “music alone”<sup>1</sup> – says that music expresses nothing except nuance and has more or less the same meaning as pure or absolute music.<sup>2</sup> The following phrase – “musical multimedia” – popularized by Nicholas Cook,<sup>3</sup> refers to music cooperating with one or more other media and suggests that some meaning emerges from the context. Although the last term is relatively new, it concerns genres that have been present in human culture for centuries. The history of music records the succession of various musical multimedia forms, including songs, operas, programmatic musical pieces, films with music, videos/games/Advertisements with music, and other. My article is dedi-

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Cook, “Theorizing Musical Meaning,” *Music Theory Spectrum. The Journal of the Society for Music Theory*, XXIII/2 (2001), 170–95, 180.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase “absolute music” probably appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century and gained a strong position in the twentieth century because of, among others, Carl Dahlhaus and his book *Die Idee der absoluten Musik* (Kassel, Basel, Tours, London: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

cated to this second pair of concepts and tries to answer the question: What do researchers currently think about these concepts? It will include the results of neuroscientists', cognitivists', and musicologists' research and theories on music and musical multimedia.

There are dozens of neuroscientists worldwide who focus on capturing the brain's reaction to music using the most advanced equipment available. They provide us with a lot of very detailed information. For example, Narayan Sankaran et al. write about the encoding of the three melodic dimensions – pitch, pitch-change, and expectations – in the human auditory cortex.<sup>4</sup> They conducted an experiment in which eight participants listened to 208 short Western musical phrases. At the same time, the scientists recorded electrocorticography activity from high-density arrays placed over the lateral surface of the cortex. The main conclusions of their research are as follows: (1) the superior temporal gyrus contains a spatial map in which pitch, pitch-change, and expectation are not jointly encoded; (2) the encoding of melodic expectation systematically drives music-selective cortical activity; (3) the superior temporal gyrus representations of pitch and pitch-change are shared mainly across music and speech.

In the field of music connected to other media, the number of studies conducted by neuroscientists is smaller than in the field of music itself, but the results are just as interesting. For example, I would like to mention an article by Young-Sung Kwon et al. on the impact of background music on the attentional processes of film audiences.<sup>5</sup> The authors recruited 24 participants and showed them, under special conditions, 45 short excerpts from action films in three versions: with no music, with slow-tempo music, and then with fast-tempo music. The experiment used electroencephalography. The responses were analyzed using the alpha-rhythm suppression and event-related potential P300, a brain-wave indicator of attentional processes. Participants' "responses were analyzed using [...] a brainwave indicator of attentional processes. The results suggest that participants' attention levels increased when background music was present (compared to when background music was absent), but there was no difference in participants' attention levels based on tempo."<sup>6</sup>

The first syntheses of such neurological studies already exist, e.g., Stefan Koelsch's *Brain and Music*;<sup>7</sup> however, it seems to me that the philosopher Mark

<sup>4</sup> Narayan Sankaran, Matthew K. Leonard, Frederic Theunissen, and Edward F. Chang, "Encoding of melody in the human auditory cortex," *Science Advances*, X/7 (2024). [www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adk0010](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adk0010). Accessed: February 12, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Young-Sung Kwon, Jonghyun Lee, and Slgi (Sage) Lee, "The impact of background music on film audience's attentional processes. Electroencephalography alpha-rhythm and event-related potential analyses," *Frontiers in Psychology*, XIII/ November 17 (2022). [www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.933497/full](https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.933497/full). Accessed: February 12, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Stefan Koelsch, *Brain and music* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

Johnson's assessment of this state of affairs is also important here.<sup>8</sup> In *The Aesthetics of Meaning and Thought. The Bodily Roots of Philosophy, Science, Morality, and Art*, he expresses concern that neuroscience itself cannot explain all the phenomena of the mind by the firings of neurons in connected clusters: "Something more is needed beyond the science itself – a broader, more encompassing philosophical reflection on how the many different bodies of research with their many different assumptions and methods, can fit together in a more comprehensive picture."<sup>9</sup> That is why he proposes a philosophy called neuro-pragmatism or the aesthetics of meaning and thought, in which art plays a very important role, and in which the overarching concepts are: experience, embodied meaning, thought, communication, and value. A large part of Johnson's theory is the art he writes about: "Once we realize that works of art do not represent objects, events, meaning, knowledge, or experience, but instead that they *present and enact* possibilities for meaning and value in an exemplary manner, only then will we understand the significance of art, and of experience-of-art."<sup>10</sup>

Johnson's neuropragmatism is not yet known enough in musicology, so directly translating brain responses into the meanings, qualities, and values of our lives is a matter for the future. However, since the inception of neuroscientific research, there have been significant developments in cognitive science, which have had a profound influence on systematic musicology. One of the most influential cognitive theories is Fauconnier and Turner's conceptual blending theory, as published in their book *The Way We Think* (2002).<sup>11</sup> According to it, in the course of thinking and acting, several mental spaces interact in our heads: at least two input spaces and a blended space. In the blended space, a new meaning emerges due to the integration of selected concepts from the input spaces. An example would be a prehistoric ivory figurine representing a lion-man.<sup>12</sup> In order for it to be created, two organizing frames were juxtaposed: lion and man. Only some concepts from each input were used in the blend, such as the head of the animal, its body and four limbs, and an upright human posture. Thus, the blend includes concepts that are not entirely aspects of either lions or humans. Similar principles apply in the creation of the Sphinx, the Mermaid, Batman, Spiderman, the clock, the computer desktop, and many other ideas. The authors add two claims: both adults and children from about the age of three use this

<sup>8</sup> Mark Johnson, *The Aesthetics of Meaning and Thought. The Bodily Roots of Philosophy, Science, Morality, and Art* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>11</sup> Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think. Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Mark Turner, *The Origin of Ideas. Blending, Creativity, and the Human Spark* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 13.

general thought pattern; various types of artefacts have demonstrated the existence of this type of thought mechanism for about 50,000 years.

Musicologists inspired by Fauconnier and Turner's cognitive theory mainly focus on the musical meanings that can be evoked by both music and music in conjunction with other media. The first person to transfer conceptual blending to musicology was Lawrence Zbikowski. He focused not only on musical concepts but also on tone painting, pointing out correlations between musical and non-musical phenomena.<sup>13</sup> Studying this type of issue led Zbikowski to the conclusion that the basis of all associations between music and non-musical phenomena is analogy, and that the most obvious analogies are between dynamically developing music and emotions, gestures, dances, and words. In addition to Zbikowski, a group of Greek musicologists published the results of musical research based on conceptual blending theory, using the division into intramusical meanings and extramusical meanings. Costas Tsougras and Danae Stefanou proposed interpretations of program piano pieces from Mussorgsky's *Картинки с выставки* (*Pictures at an Exhibition*). Using cross-domain mapping, they showed firstly a) that the musical structure is the result of the blending of various musical devices, and then b) that extramusical meaning created by recipients is possible thanks to tangible correspondences between music and imagined things or events.<sup>14</sup> In the course of my investigation, I attempt to establish that both musically educated and naive listeners create meanings of works based on their own life experiences, and that the processes of creating these meanings can be explained in terms of the conceptual blending theory.<sup>15</sup> Composer Anthony Brandt and neuroscientist David Eagleman also make significant contributions to a similar topic.<sup>16</sup> Writing on the creativity of artists and innovators in many

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music. Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Lawrence Zbikowski, *Foundations of Musical Grammar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Costas Tsougras and Danae Stefanou, "Embedded blends and meaning construction in Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*," *Musicae Scientiae*. Special issue "Creative Conceptual Blending in Music," ed. by Emilios Cambouropoulos, Danae Stefanou, and Costas Tsougras, XX/1 (2018), 38–56.

<sup>15</sup> Violetta Kostka, "Second Movement of *Compartment 2, Car 7* for Vibraphone, Violin, Viola, and Cello by Paweł Szymański in the Light of Cognitive Musical Grammar," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology*, 19 (2019), 147–53; Violetta Kostka, "Conceptual Blending Theory and Musicology," in: *Musicology and its Future in Times of Crisis*, ed. by Jelka Vukobratović and Dalibor Davidović (Zagreb: University of Zagreb – Academy of Music, Department of Musicology, 2022), 127–42; Violetta Kostka, "Stylistic Blends which Emerge while Listening to Paweł Szymański's *Singletrack* for Piano," in: *Interpreting of/through/by/in Music*, ed. by Ana Stefanović and Dragana Stojanović-Novović (Belgrade: University of Arts in Belgrade, 2023), 104–15.

<sup>16</sup> David Eagleman and Anthony Brandt, *The Runaway Species. How Human Creativity Remakes the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2017).

different fields, they expanded Fauconnier and Turner's basic idea into three more specific ones: blending, bending, and breaking. Brandt explains that, in relation to music, it is, in succession, about combining different media into something new, as in a collage; developing something existing in a variation; and separating a musical fragment from the whole and working with it.

In addition to the authors mentioned, the problem of music semanticization based on the conceptual blending theory has been studied by Mihailo Antović. He is convinced that the idea of "cross-space mapping" should be combined with the concept of a "grounding box," i.e., an interpretive context for conceptual mapping, such as the knowledge of persons, circumstances, and events necessary to correctly interpret a statement. Therefore, he proposes his own theory called multilevel-grounded semantics.<sup>17</sup> It is primarily based on the results of empirical research conducted on groups of naive and musically educated listeners. The central idea of his theory is that grounding is multilayered, where "lower" and "higher" grounding boxes are allocated along a continuum, providing hierarchical and partially recursive constraints on the generation of musical meaning. The grounding boxes are as follows:

- (1) *perceptual*: in the artefact under reception, this level targets formal structural relations, parsing the stimulus into manageable gestalten [...]; (2) *cross-modal* finds parallels between the internal structure of the formal gestalten so perceived and the recipient's spatial, sensory-motor, haptic and more general bodily experience [...]; (3) the *affective* level ascribes emotional valence to the cross-modal construct so inferred [...]; (4) the *conceptual* tier then uses such a blend of cross-modal inferences and their affective impact on the listener to construct elementary outlines of narratives [...]; (5) the *culturally rich* level checks the narrative outline so constructed against the recipient's cultural knowledge and blends it further with appropriate contextual scenarios [...]; (6) *individual*, further enriches the construct [...] by blending it with the recipient's personal experience.<sup>18</sup>

The authors mentioned so far did not use the term "musical multimedia," but they often interpreted works that belong to such a genre. For example, Young-Sung Kwon interpreted action films with music, Zbikowski songs and film music, and Antović film music and opera. From this, it can be inferred that the information provided here about music also applies to music that interacts with other media. Recently, however, terms such as musical multimedia, multimodality, multimodal mental imagery and music have been appearing more frequently in researchers' vocabulary. Neuroscientist Elkhonon Goldberg writes: "Our knowledge of the outside world is multimedia in nature. We can evoke the visual image of the tree's green crown as well as the sound of the leaves ruffled by the wind, the scent of its flowers in bloom, and the rough feel of the bark under our

<sup>17</sup> Mihailo Antović, *Multilevel Grounding. A Theory of Musical Meaning* (London: Routledge, 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Mihailo Antović, "Multi-Level Grounded Semantics Across Cognitive Modalities: Music, Vision, Poetry," *Language and Literature*, XXX/2 (2021), 147–73, 153.

fingers.”<sup>19</sup> He does not explicitly state that people use their senses simultaneously, but it is pretty obvious. For this reason, there is also an increase in musicological works that focus on studying music received simultaneously with other media.

The first work of this kind is Nicholas Cook’s *Analyzing Musical Multimedia* (1998).<sup>20</sup> In it, the author explains the problem of musical meaning by referring to a television commercial in which shots of a particular model of Citroën, powering its way up twisting country lanes, are connected with fragments from Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* overture. In his view: “The music [...] seeks out the qualities of the car, and conversely the image of the speeding Citroën might be said to interpret the music. And so a composite meaning emerges, one which was immanent in neither the overture nor the car.”<sup>21</sup> The central theme of the book, however, is the three basic models of relations between the constituent media: conformance, contest, and complementation. In the conformance, “it should be possible to invert [...] statements without change of meaning,”<sup>22</sup> e.g. the upper *luce* part in *Prometheus* projects the music, and the music projects the upper *luce* part. The contest model “is intended to emphasize the sense in which different media are [...] vying for the same terrain, each attempting to impose its own characteristics upon the other.”<sup>23</sup> This can be seen in Madonna’s video *Material Girl*, which imposes cinematic shots upon a previously released song. In the complementation, the difference between constituent media is recognized, but “the conflict between them [...] is avoided because each is assigned a separate role.”<sup>24</sup> An example here is a classical Hollywood film.

Further reflections on music and musical multimedia led Cook to develop the theory known as sonic ontology.<sup>25</sup> His main idea was initially “music is never alone,” but later he replaced it with the statement “musical imagination is multimodal.”<sup>26</sup> The author employs both conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending, as well as aspect perception, derived from Wittgenstein, which allows us to perceive different sets of attributes in one thing or event at various times. To the fundamental question Why is musical imagination multimodal? Cook answers “As listeners we are somehow impelled to duplicate the music within ourselves, representing it to ourselves as we hear it and thus not only internal-

<sup>19</sup> Elkhonon Goldberg, *The New Executive Brain. Frontal Lobes in a Complex World* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 53.

<sup>20</sup> Cook, *Analysing ...*, op. cit., 23.

<sup>21</sup> Cook, *Theorizing...*, op. cit., 180.

<sup>22</sup> Cook, *Analysing ...*, op. cit., 100.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>25</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Music as Creative Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 108–10.

izing it but stabilizing our impressions of what, as sound, is wholly evanescent.”<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere, the author discusses this issue as follows: sound as fluid and evanescent “resists shaping in its own terms, and so we shape it through associating it with other sensory modalities or with imaginary sonic objects.”<sup>28</sup> Cook sees the process of creating perfumes as highly similar to the musical process. This is because the perfumer uses “words associated with another sense [... like] hard, soft, cold, hot, velvety, dry [...], heavy, light, harsh.”<sup>29</sup> Numerous examples support his thesis regarding multimodal musical imagination. I will mention only three, referring, in turn, to the composer, the performer, and the interpreting listener. The first example concerns the composer Liza Lim, who said that almost every aspect of her work, *Winding Bodies*, was based on an old Nordic tale of a sailor.<sup>30</sup> When it comes to performance practice, Cook recalls the eight literary interpretations of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp Minor (so-called *Mondscheinsonate*) by the mid-nineteenth-century piano pedagogue Adolph Kullak, “each of which suggests a specific narrative perspective and emotional tone that can be translated into performance.”<sup>31</sup> Finally, the third example is the semanticization of the recapitulation of the first movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Susan McClary interpreted it as the “murderous rage,” and Donald Tovey as “the heavens on fire.”<sup>32</sup>

Rolf Godøy and Harald Jørgensen have independently discussed the concept of multimodal musical imagination in their volume, *Musical Imagery* (2001).<sup>33</sup> Conceived by various music scholars in the late 1990s, their book aimed to (partially) rectify cognitive scientists’ bias toward visual imagery. However, the editors of the volume already then noted that “a narrow focus on auditory mental imagery could not possibly account for the complex mental processes involved in music listening and making.”<sup>34</sup> The editors of the collective work titled *Music and Mental Imagery* (2023) – Mats Küssner, Liila Taruffi, and Georgia Floridou – undertook an in-depth explanation of this problem. They write in the introduction to the book:

When we listen to music, we may conjure up visual images of, for instance, performing musicians or of natural landscapes in our mind’s eye [...]; feel a sense of movement that corresponds to the temporal unfolding of a piece [...]. When mental images in two or more modalities are formed and experienced simultaneously

<sup>27</sup> Cook, *Analysing ...*, op. cit., 267.

<sup>28</sup> Cook, *Music...*, op. cit., 109.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 109–110.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>33</sup> Rolf Godøy and Harald Jørgensen, *Musical Imagery* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Mats B. Küssner, Liila Taruffi, and Georgia A. Floridou, “Introduction and Overview,” in: *Music and Mental Imagery*, ed. by Mats B. Küssner, Liila Taruffi, and Georgia A. Floridou (London: Routledge, 2023), 2.

or in succession, this is what we refer to as *multimodal mental imagery*. [...] What seems clear, though, is that all these mental images [visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile – V. K.] [...] are an integral part of musical experience, highlighting that multimodality is a central feature of music-related mental imagery.<sup>35</sup>

The advantage of this book is not only to raise our awareness of the phenomenon's extent, but also to describe how to measure and analyze music-related mental imagery experience.

The most famous multimedia with music today is, of course, film. Lately, a new film music theory has emerged, which is very consistent with the most recent cognitive achievements. What I have in mind is *Film Music. Cognition to Interpretation* by Juan Chattah.<sup>36</sup> The book explores the dynamic interplay between a film's soundtrack, its visuals and narrative, and the audience's perception and construction of meaning. Adopting a holistic approach that covers, among others, cognitive psychology, musical analysis, behavioral neuroscience, semiotics, linguistics, and other related fields, Chattah examines the perceptual and cognitive processes that elicit musical meaning in film, breathing life into our cinematic experiences. The methodology used here is very specific. The author reframes the object of study away from the "text" itself and toward the intersection between the "text" and the audience's experience. He also constructs a comprehensive framework to explore the various mechanisms that elicit musical meaning within a film. They are shortly called ESMAMAP<sub>A</sub> and include Empathy, Schema, Metaphor, Affordance, Memory, Archetype, and Personal Association. While these mechanisms intersect and interact when we construct interpretations, in the book, they are considered separately. Across ten chapters, extensive appendices, and hundreds of film references, the book invites readers to unlock a deeper understanding of the expressive power of film music.

Finally, I would like to add that the views on music and musical multimedia presented in the aforementioned neuroscientific, cognitive, and musicological works are not only understood by the music community but also already accepted and applied by this community. This is evidenced, for example, by the following fragments of a longer statement by the famous conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen:

(1) [Composing is – V. K.] creating meanings; (2) We have a very German concept of absolute music by E. T. A. Hoffmann and Arthur Schopenhauer, but our brains are constructed in such a way that we still create meanings [...]. Every opera by Verdi spoke of unification [...], the Second Symphony by Sibelius symbolizes the struggle for independence in the minds of the Finns. [...] We listen to music and involuntarily give it content under the influence of the environment, events, and the situation in which we find ourselves; (3) Stravinsky claimed that music could not express anything outside itself. [Lutosławski similarly – V. K.]. However, this is

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>36</sup> Juan Chattah, *Film Music. Cognition to Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2023).

a lie. In [...] the music [of Lutosławski – V. K.], there was undoubtedly a narrative element, which, of course, he himself denied. [...] It was simply the right thing to say at the time.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusions

- 1) Taking into account the results of the latest research, it has to be said that the phrase “music alone/pure/absolute” in its original meaning is not relevant today.
- 2) The division into music and musical multimedia is in use, but mainly to emphasize the number and types of media a work or artistic event is composed of.
- 3) Researchers are convinced that both music and music connected with other media are based on similar neuro-cognitive foundations and that it does not matter whether we examine the thinking of the composer, the performer, or the recipient.
- 4) The results of the research are not yet fully agreed upon or unified, but there is a clear tendency to consider the interaction between man and music in terms of experience, quality, meaning, and value, and to understand the meaning of music as emergent and negotiated.

## SUMMARY

A close equivalent of a pair of concepts, such as “music in the concert hall” and “music beyond the concert hall,” is another pair of concepts, namely “music alone” and “musical multimedia.” The article is dedicated to this second pair of concepts and tries to answer the question: What do researchers currently think about these concepts? It includes the results of neuroscientists’, cognitivists’, and musicologists’ studies. After presenting two exemplary articles by neuroscientists on experiments with music, the author refers to Mark Johnson’s position that neuroscience itself cannot explain all the phenomena of the mind solely by the firings of neurons in connected clusters, and that a broader, more encompassing philosophical reflection, such as neuropragmatism, is needed. The cognitive works section begins with a discussion of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner’s conceptual blending theory, followed by musicological contributions in this field by Lawrence Zbikowski, Costas Tsougras, Danae Stefanou, Violetta Kostka, Anthony Brandt, and Mihailo Antović. The contribution of musicologists consists in explaining the issues of “musical concept” and intra- and extramusical meanings; in proving that creating musical meanings is a natural process for music lovers; and in providing multiple interpretations of musical meanings and interesting, multilevel, grounded semantics. The third group presents works focused on studying music received simultaneously with other media and raising the issue of multimodal mental imagery and music. Here, the publications by Nicholas Cook, the collective work edited by Mats Küssner, Liila Taruffi, and Georgia Floridou, and the latest film music theory by Juan Chattah are discussed.

<sup>37</sup> “Kłamstwo muzyki absolutnej. Z Esa-Pekka Salonenem rozmawia Agata Kwiecińska,” *Ruch Muzyczny*, 2 (2023), 30–8. Transl. by Violetta Kostka.

The article ends with the following conclusions: the phrase “music alone/pure/absolute” in its original meaning is not relevant today; the division into music and musical multimedia is in use but mainly to emphasize the number and types of media; music and musical multimedia are based on similar neuro-cognitive foundations; and there currently is clear tendency to consider the interaction between man and music in terms of experience, quality, meaning and value, and to understand meaning of music as emergent and negotiated.

# ANDRZEJ KRZANOWSKI'S CONCEPT OF METAMUSIC: MULTIMEDIA SERIES PROGRAMMES

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**ABSTRACT:** The cycle of six *Audycje (Programmes)* by Andrzej Krzanowski is analyzed. Krzanowski's theory of metamusic is described. Word-sound relations are interpreted to produce a phenomenological and semantical reading of the series.

**KEY WORDS:** Multimedia work, Polish music, metamusic, extramusical.

The series of six *Audycje (Programmes)* created between 1973 and 1982 by Polish composer and accordionist Andrzej Krzanowski (1951–1990) is the composer's *opus vitae*. In it, Krzanowski synthesizes several fields of art: words, music, and visual and theatrical elements. The title *Programmes* alludes to the radio plays that were particularly popular in Poland during the 1970s and 1980s. The autonomous literary content of *Programmes*, whose interpretation is left to the reciter's creative devices, is treated on equal terms with the music.<sup>1</sup> According to the composer himself, the *Programmes* were a terrain of experiments concerning time, rhythm, and form, which resulted in the creation of original syncretic art, culminating in *Programme V*, constituting a summary of the entire cycle (*Programme VI*, created after a several-year break, constitutes a sort of lyrical postlude to the cycle as a whole). A specific, highly individual sound characterizes the *Programmes*. The composer's wife, Grażyna, recalled: "Andrzej lived between the ambulance station and the refinery, the railway tracks and the church. The sounds of sirens, bells, ambulance signals, whistles – such sounds surrounded him."<sup>2</sup> These sounds reverberate in Krzanowski's *Programmes*, rendered by specific instrumentation – whistles, sirens, and sounds generated from tape – juxtaposed with traditional instrumentation. The instrumental layer is

<sup>1</sup> *Audycja I (Programme I, 1973)*, to words by Jacek Bierezin for reciting voice, flute, tam-tam, siren, whistle, and two tapes; *Audycja II (Programme II, 1973)*, to words by Bierezin for reciting voice, flute, tam-tam, siren, whistle, and two tapes; *Audycja III (Programme III, 1974)*, to words by Bierezin for actor, soprano, two accordions, baritone saxophone, trumpet, electric guitar, percussion, tape, and projectors; *Audycja IV (Programme IV, 1975)*, to words by Zbigniew Dolecki for reciting voice, siren, cymbals, accordion, and two tapes; *Audycja V (Programme V, 1977)*, opera in 20 scenes to words by Bierezin, Dolecki, Mieczysław Stanclik, and Sławomir Mrożek; *Audycja VI (Programme VI, 1982)*, for soprano and string quartet to words by Juliusz Słowacki.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Aleksandra Domańska in "Siedem odsłon Andrzeja Krzanowskiego. Alkagran czyli jedno miejsce na prawym brzegu Wisły," [www.polskamuza.eu/siedemodslon.php?id=163](http://www.polskamuza.eu/siedemodslon.php?id=163). Accessed: September 20, 2017.

shaped individually in the individual links of the cycle, but from a certain moment, the accordion – an instrument of the composer himself – comes to the fore. The cycle of *Programmes* in all its aspects can be interpreted both as a reflection of the composer's surrounding reality, including the concrete one, related to the city (its audiosphere, its multiplicity, diversity and simultaneity of phenomena, and multilayered sound), and as a reflection of the inner reality of man with its most basic existential questions. This music corresponds to the ideas of Charles Ives, who was named the patron of the *Młodzi Muzycy Młodemu Miastu* (*Young Musicians for a Young City*) festival held in Stalowa Wola, eastern Poland, at which Krzanowski made his debut in the mid-1970s.

### Verbatim Texts of *Programmes*

I used the title *Programmes*, I think, in the sense that the text is very important here, that the text does not play the role of inspiring just to show a certain musical phrase or something in harmony, but that I put the text on a par with the music.<sup>3</sup>

What is important in the *Programmes* is the composer's special way of using the verbal text, namely its far-reaching autonomization. The two components – word and sound – create two independent but at the same time counterpointing and complementing layers (at many moments, the text is recited without any sound commentary – in the whole of *Programme I* and particular moments of subsequent works). Apart from *Programme VI*, to words by the Romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki, Krzanowski drew exclusively on the works of contemporary Polish poets (Jacek Bierezin, Zbigniew Dolecki, and, in *Programme V*, additionally Mieczysław Stanclik and Sławomir Mrożek). Two poets were of particular importance to Krzanowski: Bierezin, the author of the texts used in the first three *Programmes*, and Dolecki, who authored the text used in the fourth. The verbal texts of these works, supplemented by other fragments from the poetry of both artists, also recur in the fifth work of the cycle. The composer said:

Like probably all of us, I review a mass of poetry, a mass of literature, which I nevertheless sort according to feeling and my own interest. And it was with these two poets [Bierezin, Dolecki] that I was inspired by their atmosphere, their vision, which, on the one hand, is very rich in imagination, but on the other hand, is very musical, at least for me. When I read the poetry of Bierezin or Dolecki, I find the passages that are most useful to me, that I am immediately inspired by. While reading, I already hear certain specific fragments of music that should harmonize with this poetry, which is why it is the closest to me.<sup>4</sup>

The poets whose works formed the basis of the first five *Programmes* were, on the one hand, not averse to taking up *engaged* themes, strongly marked by the

<sup>3</sup> Andrzej Chłopecki, "Andrzej Krzanowskiego autokomentarz," in: *Muzyczny świat Andrzeja Krzanowskiego*, ed. by Janusz Pater (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2000), 51.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

communist times in which they lived (Bierezin, Mrożek), and, on the other, introduced themes that transcended the current socio-political situation in Poland. Thus, the verbal texts (Table 1) addressed fundamental ethical issues, universal values, and problems inherent to human existence, such as beauty, love, happiness, suffering, and loneliness, as well as – subtly alluded to – the issue of faith and God (Dolecki, Stanclik). The leitmotif of this usually profoundly existential poetry is a man shown in various contexts and relationships. The subject matter, weighty though it is, is often presented in a manner verging on the surreal and always touches to some extent on the issue of the meaning and “pain” of existence.

PROGRAMMES	TEXT SOURCES	KEYWORDS	KONTEX/RELATION
PROGRAMME I	<i>J. Bierezin,</i> “Pociąg” (“Train”)		Human/Society – Journey
PROGRAMME II	<i>J. Bierezin,</i> “Drwal” (“Lumberman”)	Heart	Human/Nature
PROGRAMME III	<i>J. Bierezin,</i> “Emigracja” (“Emigration”)	Emigration/Human/ Beauty/Happiness	Human (Loneliness) Journey/ Emigration – Death
PROGRAMME IV	<i>Z. Dolecki,</i> “Sofrosine”	Heart	Nature/God – Human
PROGRAMME V	<i>M. Stanclik</i> , “De profundis;” <i>Z. Dolecki</i> , “Universum;” “Sofrosine;” <i>S. Mrożek</i> , “Kto jest kto” (“Who is Who”); <i>J. Bierezin</i> , “Pociąg,” “Drwal,” “Emigracja,” “Sezon w Piekle” (“Season in Hell”); <i>Salve regina</i>	Heart/Emigration/ Universum/Happiness/ Love	Human Society/Nature Journey/Emigration God/Mother of God
PROGRAMME VI	<i>J. Słowacki</i> , “Oda do wolno- ści” (“Ode to Freedom”) “Hymn,” “Do matki” (“To My Mother”)		Human – Mother/Mother of God

**Table 1:** Verbal layer in the *Programmes*

The dramatic structure of the cycle is interesting. A particular kind of content counterpointing occurs within it. The theme of an enslaving political system, the attempt to escape from it, and, as a result, the question of freedom as a lost value is the content suggested in the odd *Programmes* (I, III, and V, which, however, sum up the content of the entire cycle; Table 2). The mood of the whole is set by

the disturbing images of a train journey (whose destination is unknown) and, above all, by the keyword of *Programme III*, Emigration. It is in this piece that the tragedy of the individual enslaved by the fetters of the system culminates, caught up in a situation of absence of freedom from which no way out can be found. The word Emigration ultimately becomes here, as the composer suggests through Bierezin's words, a synonym for the choice of death. Only in *Programme V* does the word Freedom appear; the composer admits in the words of the same author:

*In all the railway stations of the world I have not been to....  
I have searched for ways of liberation  
I have tried unsuccessfully to improve my failed resume  
Uncensored due to the word homelessness the word exile the word free....*

Krzysztof Droba, initiator of the Festival in Stalowa Wola and a “discoverer” of Krzanowski, said: “From the perspective of the years, I see the *Programmes* as the strongest expression of the climate and hopelessness of those years.”<sup>5</sup>

PROGRAMMES	DRAMATURGY
PROGRAMME I	<i>At the doors, winged angels were stationed with hands in the pockets of their nylon raincoats. Their pockets were full of chalk and they drew a cross on the back of everyone who approached the exit [...] They smiled sympathetically to people trying to board the train [...] We said nothing to them at the station, though contrarily to hearsay, out mouths were not laced up.</i>
PROGRAMME II	
PROGRAMME III	<i>Yesterday night, by verdict of my conscience, I relinquished my own right to internal EMIGRATION. Not without effort did I shut the heavy door of the only impossible exit.</i>
PROGRAMME IV	<i>On all world's train stations where I have not been... I have sought ways of liberation I am trying in vain to improve my failed CV Indecent because of The world homelessness the world exile the world free And the phraseological expression internal emigration</i>
PROGRAMME V	<i>Let tiredness permeate all our paths [...] (FREEDOM shall still be dangerous)</i>
PROGRAMME VI	<i>Angel (of Freedom), Welcome</i>

**Table 2:** Dramaturgy of the cycle in *Programmes I, III, and V*

<sup>5</sup> Statement by Krzysztof Droba, quoted in <http://polskamuza.eu/siedemodslon.php?id=520>. Accessed: March 20, 2020.

These odd *Programmes* are counterpointed by the even parts of the cycle, in which ethical and universal issues are addressed (Table 3). The keyword is a Heart (the heart of man in *Programme II*; the heart of God in *Programme IV*; the two juxtaposed in *Programme V*). The theme of nature becomes important here. *Programme V* – a great work in twenty scenes – summarises the previous works of the cycle and, at the same time, anticipates the last one. The recurring keywords of the final programme (Heart, Emigration) find their complement in the others – Love, Universe. In the last *Programme*, a kind of oneiric postlude, the composer draws on Słowacki's "Oda do wolności" ("Ode to Freedom"). This work directly raises religious Marian themes, subtly foreshadowed in the previous works of the cycle.

**Table 3:** Dramaturgy of the cycle in *Programmes II, IV, V, and VI*

## Music, Sound, Word-Sound Relationship

The consistently realized, holistic idea of the cycle is revealed in the musical arrangement of the *Programmes*. As in the case of Krzanowski's master, Henryk Mikołajek Górecki, the music, on the one hand, is born out of the specific words used and, on the other, gives new dimensions, elaborates, and specifies meanings. This approach is further developed in Krzanowski's work through the use of an individual technique called metamusical (or rather, "metamusical creation") by the composer. This term, applied for the first time to the second version of String Quartet No. 1, suggests that the genesis of the music (or music-literary) material of a particular work lies in the previously created work of the

composer himself and other composers. In the String Quartet No. 1, version B, in addition to the material of the original version of the work, there is also a tape layer, a verbal layer (recited verses of the *Stabat Mater*), a vocalization by the soprano, and a quotation from Karol Szymanowski's famous *Stabat Mater*.

In this quartet – the B version – I created a kind of 'meta-music' because after writing the original quartet, I noticed that I came up with a completely new idea based on this sound material that was already used in the finished piece. Hence, I sat down again and – using the material of the quartet that had already been written – added a whole additional layer of music recorded on tape.<sup>6</sup>

This can be understood as an individual realization of the idea of "music from music," in which, as Leszek Polony wrote, "earlier music becomes the material from which a new work is built, as if from some ready-made prefabricated elements."<sup>7</sup> Krzanowski's idea of metamusic also implies, as the interpretation of individual works shows, the transfer of meanings and senses accompanying the original material to the subsequent work. This creates an extremely interesting interpretative problem, all the more so as the composer's music – including the *Programmes* – constitutes a whole network of quotations and more-or-less recognizable allusions, which often comprise a kind of "symbolic tonic" of the point of arrival and discharge of previously accumulated, sometimes extreme, tensions.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, the term "metamusic," in Krzanowski's case, refers to art that is multimedia and saturated with various semantic references. The composer called his *Programme V* a "meta-opera," which is a synthesis of the arts.

In the overall dramaturgy of the cycle (Table 4), two moments (towards the end of *Programme III* and *Programme V*) are notable for their function as ideological culminations, involving an explicit or allusive quotation of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's music. Both are also a kind of tension-relieving *transitio* into a different perspective: from music and extremely dramatic, even borderline content to – one would like to say – an epiphanic statement, revealing a new value already "out of this world." After each of these ideological culminations, the next piece in the cycle – i.e., the fourth and final *Programme* – is a confirmation (a kind of *confirmatio*) of this newly revealed value. It is worth taking a closer look at both pieces.

<sup>6</sup> Chłopecki, "Andrzej Krzanowskiego autokomentarz," op. cit., 49.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by Leszek Polony. Cf. Dyskusji końcowej podczas Spotkań Muzycznych w Baranowie Sandomierskim 1977, in: *Muzyka w muzycy. Spotkania muzyczne w Baranowie 1977*, ed. by Teresa Malecka and Leszek Polony (Krakow: PWM, 1980), 300.

<sup>8</sup> Andrzej Chłopecki, "W poszukiwaniu utraconego ładu. Pokolenie Stalowa Woli," in: *Przemiany techniki dźwiękowej, stylu i estetyki w polskiej muzyce lat 70.* ed. by Leszek Polony (Krakow: Akademia Muzyczna 1986), 235.

Programmes I	Programmes II	Programmes III	Programmes IV	Programmes V	Programmes VI
Dramaturgical Crescendo		CLIMAX	CONFIRMATIO	CLIMAX <i>Recapitulation</i>	CONFIRMATIO
		TRANSITIO CLIMAX		TRANSITIO CLIMAX	
Quotations			Allusions		
		Górecki	Bach	Górecki	Szymanowski <i>Bogurodzica</i>
Keywords					
Heart	Emigration Light	Heart (of God)	Emigration Salve Regina	BOGURODZICO	

**Table 4:** Verbal and musical dramaturgy of the *Programmes*

In *Programme III*, this epiphanic moment is constituted by a quotation from Górecki's Symphony No. 2, the "Copernican." It appears after Bierezin's climactic words, in which the eponymous emigration – the tragic search for freedom – becomes synonymous with the choice of death:

*Last night, by a verdict of conscience  
I took away my right to internal emigration.  
It was not without effort that I closed the heavy door behind me  
The only impossible way out  
[...]  
At last, a light burst from the open veins.*

By juxtaposing the extremely pessimistic words of the recited poem with verbal fragments from *The Book of Psalms* in Górecki's Symphony, which express admiration for the beauty of creation *Deus qui fecit luminaria magna, solem in potestatem Diei*, the composer for the first time in the cycle subtly accentuates the transcendent sphere as – implicitly – a path towards hope, finding a link between Bierezin's "world" and the words of the psalmist: the word "light." As Andrzej Tuchowski writes, "the universalism of the finale of the *Copernican Symphony* (its cosmological and metaphysical references) is an antidote to disintegration and desperate loss leading to self-destruction."<sup>9</sup> The quotation from Górecki's Symphony No. 2 was then used to derive the material for *Programme*

<sup>9</sup> Andrzej Tuchowski, "Między wymiarem regionalnym a narodowym – Andrzej Krzanowski w świetle śląskich i ogólnopolskich tradycji muzycznych," in: *Tradycje śląskie*

IV, which was set to words by Zbigniew Dolecki, perhaps the most lyrical of all the works in the cycle, influenced in no small measure by the musicality of Dolecki's poem, especially its rhythm. The role of the lyrical subject is taken over in this *Programme* by the accordion – the composer's instrument – for the first time so legibly in the entire cycle. It is worth recalling here that Krzanowski, sometimes referred to as the 'Chopin of the accordion,' focused in his own work on redefining this, in the popular perception, "not very noble" instrument as versatile in terms of sound, mood, and expression.

The climax of *Programme IV* resounds with the pure quotation of the Fugue in G minor from Bach's *Kleine Präludien und Fugen* (BWV 558) – here, the accordion imitates the organ. This pure climax provides a lyrical climax to the piece.

**Scena 18**  
**Salve Regina**

(Z tych scen głosów umieszczone są konajmniej 3 rzuinki obejmujące całość ekranu i scenografię.  
Obraże powinny być zatyskowane tekstem [przeniknia i pulsacje].  
Taniec - cały zespół.)

**163** 15" **163a** \*\*) **163b**

**Mim** **sempre ad lib. ->** **Larghetto**  
**4** **6** **58-63**

**Reflektory** **sempre ad lib. ->** **6** **4** **6**

**Rzutniki** **sempre ad lib. ->** **6** **4** **6**

**Nastro 1** **p** **mf** **p** **mf** **sim.** **6** **4** **6**

**S 1** **mf** **Ad te cla-ma-**  
**S 2** **mf** **Ad te cla-ma-**  
**Coro** **mf** **Ad te cla-ma-**  
**A 1** **mf** **Ad te cla-ma-**  
**A 2** **mf** **Ad te cla-ma-**

**GR. II** **Nastro 3**

**Org.** **mp** **Ad te cla-ma-**  
**4** **mp** **2<sup>2</sup>-5<sup>5</sup>** **p** **Nie bez wysiłku**

**Zespół baletowy** **sempre ad lib. ->** **6** **4** **6**

**Tam-tam profondo** **arco** **Y Y sim.** **mp** **mf** **mp** **mf** **sim.** **6** **4** **6**

**GR. III** **Bo. T. II**

**\*) Długość fermaty ustala wykonawca.**  
**\*\*) Obserwuj partie Tamty 4.**

PMM 11 268

**Example 1.** A. Krzanowski, *Programme V*, Scene no. 18, *Salve Regina*, Beginning.\*

An analogous, though even more clearly defined climax can be found in *Programme V*. In the eighteenth scene (i.e., the third from the end) of this great meta-opera about man, the above-quoted fragment of Bierezin's "Emigration" is juxtaposed with a supplication prayer from the antiphon *Salve Regina* ("Ad te

*kultury muzycznej*, vol. 14 part 2, ed. by Anna Granat-Janki et al. (Wrocław: Akademia Muzyczna, 2017), 49.

\* Extracts are used by kind permission of Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków, Poland.

clamamus exsules, filii Evaе, ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes"), developed in a simple choral texture, evoking associations with the idiom of church music (Example 1). The beginning of this prayer phrase allusively alludes to the beginning of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's choral *Amen* (Example 2). Significantly, the last words in this scene remain those addressed to Mary – "Virgo Maria" (Example 3). Could it be that the composer is suggesting that only *homo religiosus* can hope to save his freedom? Following in the footsteps of Krzanowski's metamusic, it is worth noting that the aforementioned Marian prayer, after being expanded with an introductory part, evolved into an independent piece, *Salve Regina* – Krzanowski's only unambiguously religious composition. In this added part, the composer developed the chorale melody of the antiphon.

AMEN *H. Biechli op. 31*  
(1975.)

Lento e Tranquillo (1552)

S. A. T. B.

Larghetto ( $\text{♩} = 58 - 63$ )

più f

più f

più f

più f

I. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, 5 ad te cla-ma-mus 3 ex - su - les fi -  
S. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, ad te cla-ma-mus ex - su - les fi -  
II. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, ad te cla-ma-mus ex - su - les fi -  
I. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, 5 ad te cla-ma-mus 3 ex - su - les fi -  
A. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, ad te cla-ma-mus ex - su - les fi -  
II. -ve - Ad te cla-ma - mu -s, ad te cla-ma-mus ex - su - les fi -

Example 2. a) H. M. Górecki, *Amen* (quoted in A. Krzanowski, *Programme V*);  
b) A. Krzanowski, *Salve Regina*, 24-9.

Example 3. A. Krzanowski, *Programme V*, Scene no. 18, Ending section

In the last *Programme*, VI, composed five years after the previous (and a year after the *Salve Regina* antiphon), Krzanowski already directly evokes a religious, Marian atmosphere (Table 5). This is done through his choice of texts, echoing the motifs of *Bogurodzica*, also known as Mother of God (the oldest Polish Marian song, which once served as the Polish anthem), allusions to the music of Karol Szymanowski (creator of the famous *Stabat Mater*), and, once again, of Górecki.

According to Krzysztof Mroziak, the author of a master's thesis on *Programmes*, this work, created in 1982 – i.e., during martial law – can even be interpreted as a prayer for freedom, a kind of committed piece.<sup>10</sup> However, this clue, although perhaps one of the most significant, does not exhaust all the richness of content in Krzanowski's cycle. Ultimately, the *Programmes* are – both in their verbal and sonic layers – an expression of the holistic worldview of the composer, not only artistic and aesthetic. Equally important is his attempt to convey universal humanistic, ethical, and interpersonal values, in which one should seek the salvation of inner freedom. Krzanowski's *Programmes* can be read primarily as a verbal and musical treatise on the human condition in the twentieth century.

<sup>10</sup> Krzysztof Mroziak, *Twórczość Andrzeja Krzanowskiego jako przejawencji stylistycznych tendencji "pokolenia stalowowolskiego" na przykładzie Audycji* (unpublished MA thesis, Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, Krakow 2004), 115.

SOURCES OF VERBAL TEXT	CONSTRUCTION OF VERBAL TEXT
<p>[...] <i>I am sad, Saviour!</i> (Słowacki, "Hymn")</p> <p><i>Welcome [...] Angel</i></p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>Vocalise <i>I am sad, Saviour!</i> (2x)</p> <p><i>Welcome</i> (3x) <i>Angel</i> Vocalise</p> <p><i>Welcome</i> (2x) vocalise <i>Welcome</i> Vocalise</p> <p><i>I am sad, Saviour!</i> Vocalise (2)</p>
<p><i>Virgin, Mother of God!</i></p> <p><i>Hear us, Mother of God</i></p> <p>(J. Słowacki, "Ode to Freedom")</p>	<p><i>Virgin, Mother of God!</i></p> <p><i>Hear us, Mother of God</i></p> <p><i>Mother of God</i> (2x) <i>Virgin!</i></p> <p><i>Hear us</i> (2x), <i>Mother of God</i></p> <p>Vocalise <i>I am sad, Saviour!</i></p>
<p><i>In the darkness, a motherly figure stands before me,</i></p> <p><i>As if walking towards the rainbow gate –</i></p> <p><i>Her upturned face looks over my shoulder [...]</i></p> <p>(J. Słowacki, "To My Mother")</p>	<p><i>In the darkness, a motherly figure stands before me,</i></p> <p><i>As if walking towards the rainbow gate –</i></p> <p><i>Her upturned face looks over my shoulder [...]</i></p> <p>Vocalise <i>Hear us, Mother of God.</i></p>

Table 5: Verbal layer in *Programme VI*

## SUMMARY

The series of six *Audycje* (*Programmes*) created between 1973 and 1982 by Polish composer Andrzej Krzanowski (1951–1990) is the composer's most widely recognized work, his *opus vitae* of sorts. In it, the composer synthesizes several fields of art – words, music, visual, and theatrical elements – and its title alludes to the radio plays that were particularly popular in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s. According to the composer himself, the *Programmes* were a terrain of experiments concerning time, rhythm, and form, which resulted in the creation of original syncretic art, culminating in *Programme V*, named meta-opera in 20 scenes. The autonomous literary content of the *Programmes*, whose interpretation is left to the reciter's creative devices, consists mainly of excerpts from the poetry of the composer's favorite 20th-century Polish poets – Jacek Bierezin and Zbigniew Dolecki – and is treated on equal terms with the music. The music, on the other hand, is largely a reflection of the city's audiosphere, hence the characteristic sounds: whistles, sirens, and tape-recorded effects. A parallel can be found here with the concept of music as a reflection of a specific reality, typical, for example, of Charles Ives. What stands out in *Programmes* is the accordion part (Krzanowski was also an active accordionist), which, in addition to its purely timbral qualities, acquires the function of a lyrical subject. Thus, the two components of *Audycje* – word and sound – form two independent yet counterpointing and complementary layers. The central "theme" of this multi-textured work is a Man, seen at all levels of his existence. This theme acquires a deeply symbolic musical interpretation, expressed, among others, through a mesh of

quotations and allusions (including auto-allusions), which allows – to use the composer's own expression – to perceive *Audycje* as a kind of metamusical creation. The article examines the metamusical strategies in the cycle, understood as an individual realization of the idea of "music from music" (Leszek Polony), in which earlier music becomes the material from which a new work is built.

## Part II • Music for/in the Film and Series



# THE MUSIC AS AN INHERENT LAYER OF ALEXANDER KLUGE'S FILM LANGUAGE

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**ABSTRACT:** Alexander Kluge stands as a pivotal figure in postwar German cinema, both as a filmmaker and theorist. As one of the founding members of the Oberhausen Group, Kluge helped usher in the era of New German Cinema, calling for a break from the narrative and aesthetic conventions of the past. His work is deeply informed by critical theory, the Frankfurt School, and Brechtian aesthetics, and is characterized by a radical commitment to cinematic experimentation. Central to Kluge's approach is his challenge to traditional notions of realism in film. Rather than offering a seamless illusion of reality, Kluge constructs films that foreground discontinuity, fragmentation, and complexity – techniques designed to provoke critical engagement rather than passive consumption. One of the aspects of Kluge's cinematic language is his distinctive use of music. Music in Kluge's films is never merely ornamental; it serves both as a narrative tool and as a symbolic layer that interacts dialectically with the visual material. This article will examine the function of music in three representative works: *Brutalität in Stein*, *Vermischte Nachrichten*, and *Die Patriotin*. These films exemplify how Kluge uses music to expand the interpretative possibilities of cinema, constructing a kind of “film in the mind of the spectator.”

**KEY WORDS:** Alexander Kluge, *Brutalität in Stein*, *Vermischte Nachrichten*, *Die Patriotin*, “Ode to Joy.”

Driven by a desire for radical changes in the functioning, financing, and aesthetics of German cinema, a group of twenty-six young film directors led by Haro Senft, Edgar Reitz, and Alexander Kluge published a manifesto in 1962. It became known as the Oberhausen Manifesto because it was written in Oberhausen, during the *VIII. Westdeutsche Kurzfilmtage* (since 1991 the *International Short Film Festival Oberhausen*).

The manifesto proclaims the “death of the old film” and calls for the “creation of a new German feature film,” which needs “new freedoms. Freedom from the conventions of the established industry. Freedom from the outside influence of commercial partners. Freedom from the control of special interest groups.”<sup>1</sup> The group behind the manifesto became known as the Oberhausen group, and they would contribute significantly to the development of the New German Cinema (Neuer Deutscher Film) up until its end in the mid-1980s.

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<sup>1</sup> *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures. A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Scott MacKenzi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 153.

The motto “Papas Kino ist tot” can be found in the literature about the group. It is related to the rejection of established film conventions of the past and the search for new possibilities for cinematic expression. However, it should be noted that the degree to which these conventions were overcome and the general attitude towards film language varied from one author to another. Each director worked within their own autonomous creative framework, yielding different outcomes.

Alexander Kluge managed to develop a distinctive auctorial language and stand out as a prominent filmmaker. The specificity of his language is notable on two levels – thematic and formal. In an interview with Kluge, Jan Dawson acknowledges that Kluge, in his films, deals with the idea of “demolishing” and “rebuilding.”<sup>2</sup> Eric Rentschler notes that:

Kluge’s feature films challenge customary patterns of recognition. German history provides a point of departure and a constant site of return for his endeavors; complex and conflicted, this history, maintains Kluge, does not readily lend itself to easy identification or transparent presentation. The bombing of his hometown, Halberstadt (80 percent of which was leveled by American and British planes on April 8, 1945), and the demise of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad in February 1943 remain defining experiences in his films (and throughout his work), which must be thought of first and foremost as attempts to reflect truthfully the impossibly complicated and contested “reality” of postwar Germany—a task that could not be achieved, Kluge argued, by conventional means.<sup>3</sup>

This brings us to the next aspect of his cinematography, which concerns the formal approach. “[Kluge] eschewed the spurious sutures of continuity editing and the seamlessly neat, easily accessible narrative packages that they produce,” says Eric Rentschler.<sup>4</sup> He further emphasizes that the central concepts of Kluge’s aesthetics are related to the differentiation of *reality* and *realism*. Namely, the presentation of reality through event documentation does not represent realism, because reality rests on personal experience and feelings, which cannot be reproduced.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dawson asks Kluge the following question: “It seems to me that the idea of demolishing and rebuilding runs through all your film.” Jan Dawson, “Interview: Alexander Kluge,” *Film Comment*, November–December 1974. [www.filmcomment.com/article/a-blast-from-the-past-alexander-kluge-interview/](http://www.filmcomment.com/article/a-blast-from-the-past-alexander-kluge-interview/). Accessed: April 10, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Rentschler, “A Cinema of Citation: the Films of Alexander Kluge,” *Artforum*, September (2008), 419. [www.artforum.com/features/a-cinema-of-citation-the-films-of-alexander-kluge-188907/](http://www.artforum.com/features/a-cinema-of-citation-the-films-of-alexander-kluge-188907/). Accessed: April 10, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> A full quotation is the following: “*Reality* and *realism* are central terms in Kluge’s aesthetic conception and important for any understanding of his films. Neither a state of nature nor the way things are, reality is produced and not given; for that reason, it can be comprehended only in its constructedness and its connectedness, its *Zusammenhang*. Simply to document something, Kluge submits, is not realistic; reality does not exist

Cinema represents a new kind of realism, which enables a qualitatively different “living” of the event, where the director grants viewers enough freedom for an authentic experience of what is presented to them. As noted by Tara Forrest:

Each of the works can be described as ‘realistic’, not because they accurately reflect a particular political or social reality, but because they encourage viewers to become active participants in the meaning-making process; to draw on their own capacity for experience in an attempt to make sense of the material in question. For Kluge, “this capacity to make an effort, to strain something in oneself, to strain something in the senses” is part and parcel of what it means to lead a vital and productive existence.<sup>6</sup>

Reality is subjective, and any idea of its objectification through film is impossible, so this should not be the goal of art. As Kluge himself says, and Forrest quotes: “If [...] I levy a protest against the reality principle, against that which this reality does to me, I am realistic [...] the realism of the human brain with its reshaping reaction to reality [...] is the fundamental condition of realism.”<sup>7</sup> In this sense, film is an art form that should provoke thought and initiate a critical perception of reality. The film should not offer a universal reading, but instead guide the audience’s thought processes in specific directions, aiming to develop critical thinking.<sup>8</sup> In order to open up these different possibilities of perception, the director must carefully approach the editing process. According to Kluge, editing is the key to the creation and juxtaposition of planes of meaning within a film. Keeping in mind that the sound film contains several elements (image, sound, and music) which together form a work of art, the director must pay equal attention to each of these elements separately. So Kluge approaches the

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without actions, fantasies, and wishes, which is to say, unless human senses and feelings are in motion. Feelings, to be sure, are anarchic and often unreliable; for that reason one tries to harness them, often with success (sometimes, as in the case of National Socialism, with too much success), and enjoys all the more indulging their power in the form of films, operas, plays, and novels. Inclusiveness and generosity figure seminally in Kluge’s suggestive and elusive choreographies of sights and sounds. They generate networks of meaning linked by interrelation rather than by flow or continuity, bringing together things that do not seem to belong together at all. This higher realism aims to encourage responses that go beyond directorial design and authorial volition. Viewers should be free to pick and choose from a wealth of offerings so that films might arise ‘in the head of the spectator’ – without question Kluge’s key concept and best-known catchphrase.” Idem.

<sup>6</sup> Tara Forrest, *Realism as Protest. Kluge, Schlingensief, Haneke* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

<sup>8</sup> “Understanding a film is, Kluge writes, conceptual imperialism which colonizes its objects. If I have understood everything then something has been emptied out. We must make films that thoroughly oppose such imperialism of consciousness.” Idem., 18–19.

film from the perspective of a critically oriented artist of, we can say, leftist provenance.<sup>9</sup>

Following this line of thought, intending to achieve these ideas in practice, Kluge adheres to the Brechtian tradition, which strived to implement emancipatory ideas within the theater, or in his case, the film medium. However, as noted by Jan Bruck, “In Kluge’s theoretical work – and he is one of the very few theorists among today’s film-makers – Brecht’s ideas are given a more solid, but at times more obscure, Marxist foundation along the lines of the Frankfurt School.”<sup>10</sup> Film editing is a counterpart to the theatrical indications employed by Brecht to create the so-called A Effect, or the effect of alienation, in which the traditional theatrical illusion (supposed to evoke a sentimental reaction and offer an all-encompassing effect) is destroyed. The epic theater, on the other hand, as Brecht says, writing about the opera *Mahagonny* and the way “the epic theatre’s method begins to penetrate the opera,” was based on the “separation of elements,” that is, on the dialectic of “words, music and production.”<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Brecht himself employs a cinematic term to describe the theatrical juxtaposition of elements, referring to this procedure as editing. It is editing in Kluge’s work that enables the aforementioned separation of elements within the film medium. In his case, it was also stimulated by the concrete poetics of his great role model, Jean-Luc Godard, who introduced the montage principle within the French Nouvelle Vague, which relied on the audience’s activity in creating their own conclusions.

And while Godard primarily deals with the relationship between sound/sounds and image, Kluge manipulates the other important element – music. He uses music as an element that contributes to the creation of a complex, multi-layered work with its own level of meaning.

Music has neither the function of increasing the emotional intensity of the dramatic action nor is it exclusively used to evoke primary feelings. It is a part of the cinematic dialectic. For this reason, Kluge frequently exploits the meaning

<sup>9</sup> His friendship with Adorno and his connection with the Frankfurt School are well known, and they undoubtedly shaped his attitude towards art as a means of social change. The alternative perception of realism in the film, i.e., the rejection of classical aesthetic realism, is also related to Adorno, who articulated his position in the text “Transparencies on Film.”

<sup>10</sup> Jan Bruck, “Brecht’s and Kluge’s Aesthetics of Realism,” *Poetics*, XVII/1–2 (1988), 57–68, 61.

<sup>11</sup> A full quotation is: “When the epic theatre’s method begins to penetrate the opera the first result is a radical separation of the elements. The great struggle for supremacy between words, music and production – which always brings up the question ‘which is the pretext for what?’: is the music the pretext for the events on the stage, or are these pretext for the music? etc. – can simply be bypassed by radically separating the elements.” Bertolt Brecht, “The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre (Notes to the Opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*),” in: *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. by John Wille (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), 37.

potential of the past works. He relies on the communicativeness of preexisting music, which can evoke associations in viewers and create new meanings through its correlation with the visual element. We can recognize different approaches to the use of music in Kluge's cinematography, whereby it consistently plays a significant role in creating networks of meaning.

*Brutalität in Stein*, which was filmed in 1961 (just before the writing of the manifesto) in collaboration with Peter Schamoni, is a rare example in Kluge's oeuvre, as it features an original expressionist score by Hans Posegga. However, only three short sequences, one of which contains just a single chord, do not have the meaning potential that can be registered in the use of previously existing music. Namely, this work is a video essay that directly refers to the 1939 propaganda film *Das Wort aus Stein*, as indicated by the closeness in the title itself. While *Das Wort aus Stein* is about presenting a reconstructed Berlin based on Albert Speer's plans, with monumental buildings that embody the power of the Reich and the status of the capital of all Germans (which was to be called Germania), Kluge's *Brutalität in Stein* presents grandiose ruins that testify to the downfall of an ideology. Kluge depicts the ruins of the Nuremberg compound using still and motion footage and combining them with archival footage from older films. On the auditory level, we can hear speeches by Alfred Rosenberg and Adolf Hitler, as well as quotes from Rudolf Hess's diary, a conversation with Hitler, and his orders concerning Germany's urban development. Also, the narrator reads "Beggar's Song" from the songbook *Wir Mädel Singen* by the Bund Deutscher Mädel (the League of German Girls), which is full of patriotic charge and interrupted by a sudden decrescendo. The film opens with a march, "Vorwärts! Vorwärts! Schmettern die hellen Fanfaren!" ("Forward! Blaring the Bright Fanfares"), a propaganda song of the Hitler-Jugend (the Hitler Youth).

The text was written in 1933 by Baldur von Schirach, and the melody by Hans Otto Borgmann. It was first used in the film *Hitlerjunge Quex* (subtitle: *Ein Film vom Opfergeist der Deutschen Jugend*) by Hans Steinhoff.<sup>12</sup> This is how the author introduces us to the context of the emergence of Nuremberg architecture. Of course, the use of Hitler Youth songs, i.e., the League of German Girls songs, indicate the dialectic of the relationship between ruins on one hand (which, according to Speer's Theory Of Ruin Value /Die Ruinenwerttheorie/ should, at the moment of possible demolition, represent a symbol of a civilization, such as Rome),<sup>13</sup> and the young generations (who actually experienced

<sup>12</sup> See [https://jugend1918-1945.de/portal/archiv/\\_album.aspx?root=6380&id=6380&redir=%2fportal%2fJugend%2fthema.aspx%3fbereich%3darchiv%26root%3d26636%26id%3d4927](https://jugend1918-1945.de/portal/archiv/_album.aspx?root=6380&id=6380&redir=%2fportal%2fJugend%2fthema.aspx%3fbereich%3darchiv%26root%3d26636%26id%3d4927). Accessed: April 10, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> In the article "The Value of Ruins: Allegories of Destruction in Benjamin and Speer," Naomi Stead writes: "Much of the party's authority was built upon a mythological genealogy stretching back to Imperial Rome, and its architectural aspirations centered around perpetuating this 'tradition' well into the future. Speer's ruin was thus conceived as

those same ruins losing their lofty meaning and becoming a symbol of defeat) on the other hand.<sup>14</sup>

Kluge also includes recordings of contemporary radio reports, such as the Reich Symphony Orchestra's (as the radio speaker suggests) performance of the finale of Brahms's First Symphony in C Minor following one of Hitler's speeches. However, instead of the recording of the entire performance, the director uses only the orchestra preparations, alluding to disintegration and incoherence and juxtaposing the sonic cacophony with visual representations of the complex's stairs that don't really lead anywhere, with Alfred Rosenberg's voice greeting the crowd with "Sieg" (crowd responds with "Heil") dubbed *above* the recording, and followed by excerpts from Hess's diary which concern Auschwitz. After this, we hear the final fanfare from Liszt's *Les Préludes*, which was regularly used in the Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft news when talking about German victories in the war. The first time we hear this theme is briefly before the presenter begins an abruptly interrupted speech "about the goddess of victory;" the second time, we hear the fanfare at the very end. They do not end with the original final chord but with an audio recording of a bomb explosion, which symbolically indicates the tragic consequences of National Socialist policies. After that, instead of the footage of abandoned buildings, we see shots of ruins for the first time in the film. Therefore, the fragments of music that have been used form a totality of a higher order and have a more "storytelling" function.<sup>15</sup>

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the point of origin for the regeneration of a monumentality in which the thread of continuity supposedly reaching from classical antiquity to the Third Reich would be preserved." Naomi Stead, "The Value of Ruins: Allegories of Destruction in Benjamin and Speer," *Form/Work: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Built Environment*, 6 (2003), 51–64, 58.

<sup>14</sup> For more analysis of the relationship of architecture and Kluge's aesthetics in this film, see Marija Ratković, "Testimony in Stone: Architecture of War From Kluge to Herscher and Weizman," *Philosophy and Society*, 33/3 (2022), 535–50.

<sup>15</sup> In his analysis of these symbols in the film, Frances Guerin gives a conclusion that: "In *Brutality in Stone*, film and architecture, as well as the idea and materiality of the built environment, come together not just to expose, but also to invent, as well as to connect varied histories, the relationship between which must be remembered within public discourse. The documentary moving image brings together multiple memories and histories, secreted in places and spaces that may have been built in the past for an invented future, but have become the challenge of the present moment. Kluge and Schamoni do more than use the medium for the simultaneous creation and representation of invisible histories in decaying architectural structures. They let the viewer loose inside the space of the film, and by turns, inside the space of the Nuremberg complex, leaving her with no option but to be reminded of the power, manipulation and destruction that led to this ruinous landscape." Frances Guerin, "Re-presenting Histories: Documentary Film and Architectural Ruins in Brutality in Stone," *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, 21 (2021), 28. [www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue21/HTML/Article-Guerin.html](http://www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue21/HTML/Article-Guerin.html). Accessed: April 10, 2025.

The use of music in Kluge's *Vermischte Nachrichten* is particularly interesting because it deals with various everyday stories of ordinary people before the Second World War, using (quasi)archival material. For example, we first hear the theme from the "Questa o quella" ballata from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, followed by the story of a man who was suspicious of his daughter's fiancé, finding out, after research, that he was actually an impostor. In this sense, the music, in the most genuine meaning of the word, anticipates the narrative itself by drawing parallels between the narrative and character relations in the opera and the characters from the film. This type of anticipation is present, for example, in the report on Lenin's death, which is announced by an excerpt from Grieg's *Peer-Gynt Suite* – specifically, a musical depiction of the death of the main character's mother. Therefore, there is also the establishment of programmatic connections between music and drama, which complicate the dramatic structure of the film.

Within the complex dramaturgy of the film *Die Patriotin*, which follows a history teacher who searches the hidden history of Germany, several compositions are featured, the most notable being the tone poem *Tuonelan joutsen* (*The Swan of Tuonela*) by Jean Sibelius (a work that is part of the *Lemminkäinen Suite*, Op. 22). Kluge uses the programmatic basis of this composition, which concerns the myth of the swan of the island of the dead and the death of one of the *Kalevala* heroes, Lemminkäinen. Lemminkäinen is resurrected through his mother's care and the struggle, with the help of a bee. There is a symbolic meaning to the use of this music in the context of the film's narrative: the main character learns about the numerous crimes of the National Socialists, which, ultimately, lead her to *purgatory* and *spiritual rebirth*. Thus, the music serves to establish deeper levels of meaning, the deciphering of which largely depends on the viewer's own knowledge, which Kluge often relies on. The music has the function of a programmatic association, which represents the symbolic level of the film narration itself.

Also, the incorporation of the "Ode to Joy" theme from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is particularly striking, and its lucid usage stands out. The final part of the film is entitled "New Year's Eve/Ode to Joy." Beethoven's music is heard at the appearance of the main character with her friends. The "Joy" theme is first presented in a diegetic way, probably as a radio broadcast; after that, it becomes non-diegetic music depicting the New Year celebration, with a sudden visual quotation from Karl Kraus: "Je näher man ein Wort ansieht, desto ferner sieht es zurück." By adding the word *Deutschland* below those famous thoughts, Kluge shifts the focus to Germany. This is a paraphrase of Nietzsche's: "Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you,"<sup>16</sup> where Germany, with its problematic past, begins to haunt

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69.

those who become interested in it. “Ode to Joy” theme, therefore, acquires a much more ironic dimension by making its appearance and is stressed by an interesting detail. After humming the “Joy” theme in a conversation scene with her friends, the main character quotes a part of Friedrich Schiller’s poem “An die Freude” that Beethoven had omitted from his musical setting.<sup>17</sup> Kluge returns to the *pure* instrumental theme at the very end of the film, after the narrator has spoken the words: “Every year on New Year’s Eve, Gabi Teichert sees 365 days ahead of her. So that there is hope to improve the introductory material in the history curriculum for the high schools in the coming year.” Kluge leaves the “Ode to Joy” theme alone, without cadence, after the sounds of the storm that are heard during the scene in which the protagonist observes the snow falling. The inclusion of the sounds of the unseen storm, followed by the presentation of the “Joy” theme, indicates the storm that remains in the soul of the protagonist. As Robert Ryde marks: “This is not simply some lightly falling snow that adds a ‘note of quiet hope’ but an uncanny winter thunderstorm blowing in from Paradise.”<sup>18</sup> The film ends with a theme from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and words, “Tausend Jahre fiel der Tau/morgen bleibt er aus./Sterne treten ungenau/ in ein neues Haus” (“For a thousand years the dew fell./Tomorrow there will be none./The stars enter inexplicitly/into a new house,”) which further evokes different associations. Therefore, this example also testifies to the inventive and multi-layered use of music in Kluge’s work, which, in this case, served to provoke different ideas in the minds of the viewers. Even unwillingly, they enter a space of a complex game of meaning, hearing well-known Beethoven’s theme – a theme that, like an *empty container*, can be filled with different ideological content depending on the needs, as Slavoj Žižek put it in an attempt to explain how ideology functions.<sup>19</sup>

As we can see from these few short examples, music in Kluge’s films plays a vital and often equal role in the communication relations between the creator

<sup>17</sup> See the analysis of this element of Kluge’s film in Robert Ryder, *The Acoustical Unconscious from Walter Benjamin to Alexander Kluge* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 231. The role of the “Ode to Joy” theme in this film has been addressed by Robert Ryder, who presents two interpretations of the director’s procedure. The first one is advocated by Roger Hillman: “In Benjaminian terms, Kluge tries to reinvest the aura of music that was subsequently ideologized. He does this not through a total depoliticization but through a return to a pre-Nazi era. [...] Politically, [Kluge] salvages Beethoven’s Ninth from the bourgeois concert hall and the false socialism of the Nazis, regaining it for the proletarian public sphere.” Ibid, 232. The second interpretation (which we are closer to) is given by Caryll Flynn: Kluge does not give a “pure,” “reconciling” version of the “Joy” theme, thereby rounding off the narrative in a dramatic and symbolic sense, but leaves the ending open to interpretation. Idem.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>19</sup> Slavoj Žižek, “The Impasses of Today’s Radical Politics,” *Crisis and Critique. Democracy and Revolution*, I/1 (2014), 8–44, 16.

and the recipient. The creation of a “film in the mind of the spectator,” which Kluge spoke about,<sup>20</sup> also implies attempts to decipher the traces of meaning that are found in the programmatic content of the music. In this way, Kluge creates layered works in which the visual and auditory elements function as two equal bearers of meaning. Together, they encourage viewers to think critically and reflect on reality, which is Kluge’s basic poetic idea.

## SUMMARY

This article explores the aesthetic underpinnings of Alexander Kluge’s cinema, focusing on his innovative use of music as a narrative and symbolic tool. As one of the founders of the Oberhausen Group and a central figure in the New German Cinema movement, Kluge advocated for a radical transformation of German filmmaking. The 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto called for artistic and institutional freedom from traditional conventions, commercial interests, and outdated forms of realism. Kluge’s films reject seamless narrative realism in favor of a dialectical approach that foregrounds fragmentation, critical engagement, and subjective interpretation. He challenges the notion of objectivity in cinema, arguing instead for a realism rooted in individual perception and emotional response. Kluge employs editing as the key to constructing multi-layered audiovisual experiences. Music plays a vital role in this process, not merely as an emotional enhancement but as a carrier of historical, cultural, and ideological meaning. Rather than using original scores, Kluge often incorporates pre-existing music that invites intertextual associations, thereby enriching the film’s interpretive depth. For example, in *Brutalität in Stein*, music from National Socialist propaganda films and classical works, like Liszt’s *Les Préludes*, are strategically juxtaposed with imagery of the Nuremberg ruins and archival sound, creating a powerful critique of fascist aesthetics and ideology. In *Vermischte Nachrichten*, opera excerpts from Verdi’s *Rigoletto* align thematically with the unfolding narratives, guiding viewers toward deeper, often ironic interpretations.

In *Die Patriotin*, the mythic tone poem *Tuonelan joutsen* (*The Swan of Tuonela*) by Sibelius underscores the protagonist’s confrontation with suppressed histories and spiritual rebirth, while Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” theme is recontextualized to highlight the contradictions and ideological ambiguities of postwar German identity. Kluge manipulates the musical layer to provoke critical reflection, drawing attention to the ways music can both reinforce and undermine dominant narratives. Ultimately, Kluge’s films demand active spectatorship. His use of music is integral to his project of creating a “film in the mind of the viewer” – a cinema that stimulates critical thought and challenges passive consumption. By integrating music as an autonomous yet interdependent element, Kluge constructs complex audiovisual texts that reflect his broader political and artistic goals.

<sup>20</sup> See Angelos Koutsourakis, “Brecht Today: Interview with Alexander Kluge,” *Film-Philosophy*, XV/1 (2011), 220–8. Kluge points out: “The ‘fiction’ has already been told by history or the reality. We are only giving you comments when we make a film or write a piece of literature. We do not guide you to a counter-reality. We only give you hints. We are like scouts [...] The author does not take any decisions. The author analyses or counter-analyses, or repeats, or makes comments. The spectator is asked to make her/his own associations.” *Ibid.*, 223.

# THE HERMENEUTICAL ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE FILM BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA BY WOJCIECH KILAR

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**ABSTRACT:** The catalog of roles played by soundtrack in the post-war film (based on the state-of-the-art research) includes the following: illustration and commentary on the plot (Kracauer), support for the film narrative (Gorbman), consonance with the image according to the principle of symbiosis of two orders (Chion), as well as focusing the viewer's attention on specific elements of the action (Bullerjahn) and "musicalization" of film narrative outside the field of sound study (Kulezic-Wilson). The arguments supporting the claim that a set thus construed should also be expanded by purely hermeneutic functions are found in the lavish film music oeuvre of the Polish composer, Wojciech Kilar. The catalog of over 170 soundtracks he composed includes ones that play a role in creating meaning in a film, for example by valuating the events (understood as weakening or increasing the importance of the illustrated scene: *Illumination*, K. Zanussi, 1972), running an alternative narrative (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, F. F. Coppola, 1992), and symbolising characters who cannot be seen on the screen (*The Ninth Gate*, R. Polański, 1999).

The claim about the key role of music in the development of film drama is, in a way, contradictory to Kilar's beliefs, who treated the scores written for the cinema lightly, saying that their functionality means nothing to him. It is hard not to perceive a certain dualism in the reasoning of an artist whose achievements (including, in particular, the soundtrack of Coppola's *Dracula*) are paradoxically one of the most transparent proofs for the error of the views he preached.

**KEY WORDS:** Film music, hermeneutics of film music, Wojciech Kilar, F. F. Coppola, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

## **Structural, Aesthetic, and Poetic Qualities of Film Music: Introduction**

Film music is a young discipline. Consequently, the theoretical reflection, which reveals its ontology, structure, and aesthetic and poetic qualities, is also a novelty. The extant concepts primarily explore the physiological, structural, analytical, cultural, historical, and semiotic contexts, glossing over the important hermeneutic role that it can play in a multimedia work of art, which a film certainly is.

Studies of the structural and aesthetic qualities of film music provide ample justification for investigating the film as a multidimensional composition comprising three layers: visual, verbal, and aural (encompassing both sound and silence). The combination of these creates a multimedia synthetic work. A question arises about the role of the aural layer in the development of the dramaturgy of the whole. Is it, as Poststructuralist philosophy would suggest, only a sign referring the recipient to other signs, or perhaps, following the assumptions

of hermeneutical phenomenology, a symbol that serves to reach the most profound meanings of an integral work of art? Is its main role to illustrate or comment upon the events, or can it also perhaps change their expression and, in this way, control the viewer's perception?

## Theories and Concepts of Film Music: A Selection

In one of the first publications on the function of music in film, Kurt London furthered the claim that the musical accompaniment in silent cinema played a technical and physiological role. He explained that the sound primarily served the need to eliminate ambient noises or, conversely, to drown out the disagreeable silence.<sup>1</sup> This view gained many supporters, including composers who were connected to the cinema. (Copeland, for instance, believed that film music should fill the empty spaces and gaps in the dialogue.)

Leonid Sabaneev, a Soviet musical critic and author of the first musicological concept of film, held the opposing view. He considered the soundtrack a work of pure music, subjected to the same laws as other music pieces. He believed that film music should retain the properties characteristic of the language of music (distinctive melody, harmony, and phrase) and also have a specific form, closely subjected to the rhythm of events in the film and not disturbed by the image. Moreover, it should be the ideal illustration of the developments in the plot, at the same time rendering the spirit without excessively absorbing the attention of the audience in that role. Sabaneev wrote quite straightforwardly that "the composer's will always be fulfilled, if his accompaniment follows the principle that it is to be next to inaudible." On the other hand, the Soviet theoretician supported the claim that treating music as an element imitating reality is pointless, as, being a work of art related to photography, the cinema has at its disposal so many means of imitating nature that entrusting this task to music must seem at least mistaken if not naïve.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1940s, two German authors, the sociologist and philosopher (of music) Theodor W. Adorno and the composer Hans Eisler, investigated the question of music's functions in film. Their *Composing for the Films* asserts that music written for the cinema should not avoid innovative solutions used in independent music. Adorno and Eisler criticized the excessive use of the late Romantic symphonic style in the cinema, at the same time suggesting that filmmakers draw more courageously from the musical tastes of the twentieth century. In their understanding, a film score cannot be equal to Wagner's dramas, which is why drawing leitmotifs from it can only cause detriment to a film.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kurt London, *Film Music* (London: Faber, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> Leonid Sabaneev, *Music for the Films: A Handbook for Composers and Conductors*, transl. by S. W. Pring (London: Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd., 1935), 40.

<sup>3</sup> Theodor Adorno and Hans Eisler, *Komposition für den Film* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969).

The breakthrough came with *Estetyka muzyki filmowej* (*Aesthetics of Film Music*), a 1964 publication by the Polish researcher Zofia Lissa. A witness to the revolutionary introduction of sound to cinema, she lived in Lvov in the 1930s, i.e., when it was one of Europe's most densely "cinematized" cities, with 24 screens to choose from. One of them operated in the backyard of the townhouse in which the Pole lived. In the days of the silent film, the echoes of the performing accompanists reached her through the windows. Lissa meticulously took down her observations and began her first work on the relationships between music, film, and motion, treating the soundtrack in the categories of what is broadly construed as program music, published in 1937. In the array of tasks performed by the film sonosphere, she distinguished the roles of music, speech, murmurs, and silence. In a catalog of the functions of the musical layer, she placed special emphasis on music that reveals psychological experiences. Her conclusions read: "It must be emphasized in advance that music in a film can be the sign of any psychological phenomenon pertaining to the human. It can inform the audience about these when the visual means are insufficient, incomplete, and unclear."<sup>4</sup>

In the 1960s, Siegfried Kracauer, a German film theorist, also explored the role of music in cinema in his *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality*. The author believed that film music stems from human nature and is connected to everyday life, rather than to a specific film. It is so, as vision and hearing are symbiotic, and there is no life without sound; therefore, there is no space for film, being a reflection of life, that would be entirely silent. Kracauer opposed the view that music in silent films was intended to drown out the noise of the projector. He considered it instead a part of the film show, physiologically priming the audience to take in the stream of images on the screen.<sup>5</sup>

Claudia Gorbman, an American researcher, undertook the search for a semiotic chart that defines the functions of music in film. Her field of interest extended to Hollywood sound films of the Golden Era. She used the film narrative and the role of the audio layer in film development as her starting point. Within that layer, and also within the division into the source (in the frame) and accompanying (off the frame) music, well established in the theory of the cinema, the American distinguished three types of codes that explain the role of music in a work of film: purely musical, with cultural features, and of cinematic character. Gorbman believes that the narrative quality, construed in both referential (music defining the character of the protagonists and pointing to the formal frames of the film by appearing in the opening and end credits) and connotational (music reinforcing the realm of meanings in the picture, creating the

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<sup>4</sup> Zofia Lissa, *Estetyka muzyki filmowej* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1964), 202.

<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

mood, illustrating the content of the dialogue, etc.) categories, plays an especially significant role in the semiotic of film.<sup>6</sup>

Although reinforced over time, the division into audio and visual layers in the film was challenged by the French cinema theorist Michel Chion. The starting point for his concept, formulated at the threshold of the century, was the sound itself: Chion construed its relationship to the image as a symbiosis of two orders using different languages and playing different roles. The author explained: "Films and television, and generally all the audio-visual media, make an impact on more than just the eyes. It is surprising that you still say that you 'watch' a film, as if no one has ever realized the change that occurred with the introduction of the soundtrack." Chion developed his proprietary model of analyzing a film, which aimed to make a viewer aware of how much of what they see they actually hear and vice versa: what they can see from what they hear. It is undoubtedly an original and innovative insight from a film theorist into the relationship between the image and sound in cinema.<sup>7</sup>

At the threshold of the 21st century, the issue of the drama-building role of music in the construction of the film narrative was, to a certain extent, touched on by a German researcher, Claudia Bullerjahn, who not only referred to the coexistence of the image and sound but also to the relationship between the recipient and the work. Her concept defines four workshop strategies: the descriptive technique (illustrating movements with music, musical quotations, Mickey-mousing, etc.), the mood technique (emphasizing the mood, expressing affections in music), the leitmotifs technique (using themes associated with a specific concept), and the modular technique (in other words the assembly or ornamentation technique that embraces musical motifs of several bars that are independent compositions). Bullerjahn believes that the reduction of composing options to just four techniques results from the need for rational and efficient composing at a rapid pace, as well as from the fact that one usually begins composing music once editing is complete.<sup>8</sup>

The selection of concepts of what film music is, quoted above, is complemented with the works that classify its styles and film genres (of key importance here are the works of James Wierzbicki,<sup>9</sup> Roy M. Prendergast,<sup>10</sup> and Kathryn

<sup>6</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, transl. by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Claudia Bullerjahn, *Grundlagen der Wirkung von Filmmusik* (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> James Wierzbicki, *Film Music: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Roy M. Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art. Critical Study of Music in Films* (London: Norton & Company, Inc., 1992).

Kalinak<sup>11</sup>) and also moving the “musical quality” of the film narrative beyond its sonosphere (a pioneering work by Danijela Kulezic-Wilson<sup>12</sup>). Some film music composers also participate in this discussion, although only a few choose to share their views publicly. Those who have expressed their theories about music in cinema include Kazimierz Serocki, Krzysztof Komeda, Trevor Morris, and Alexandre Desplat.

Nearly a hundred years into the history of sound film, there is no doubt that the extant catalog of tasks of film music should also include its role in creating meaning, and covering the whole spectrum of functions referring to the revelation or shaping of meanings that are not visible in the frame. The perfect research material, thus defined, can be found in Wojciech Kilar’s works for the cinema, as they present a broad range of dramatic options in the film.

### **The Film Music of Wojciech Kilar**

The body of films Kilar worked on over five decades consists of 176 scores that have received more than 20 prestigious awards. The composer’s activity in the cinema can be broken down into four stages: the period of creative searches (1958–68), reinforcement of the late Romantic film symphony music (1969–76), definition of the Classical Polish Film Score (1977–90), and the global cinema period (1991–2013).

In the first decade of working in the cinema, the Polish composer contributed to the creation of full-length feature films, most of which are representative of the Polish School of Film. The composer was seeking not only to establish his place in this new field of art but also to make aesthetic choices and a style that would serve both the individual film and his vision of cinema. To achieve that, he moved to surprisingly distant areas of music, encompassing punctualism, blues, rock, atonality, song, and sonorism. In the first stage of his work, Kilar characteristically hardly ever used the idiom of the late Romantic symphony music. In the earliest soundtracks from his second period, his style leaned toward American minimalism. Yet, at the same time, the composer made his first attempts to work within the Classical Hollywood Film Score style. Beginning with Bohdan Poręba’s *Hubal* and Janusz Majewski’s *Zazdrość i medycyna* (*Jealousy and Medicine*) from 1973, grand symphonic sound with a Romantic undertone was characteristic of most of his film scores. His works from the second period include such masterpieces as the waltzes from Andrzej Wajda’s *Ziemia Obiecana* (*The Promised Land*) and Jerzy Hoffman’s *Trędowata* (*The Leper*).

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<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Kalinak, *Film Music. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, *The Musicality of Narrative Film* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

In the third stage of his career, Kilar began working for the German and French cinema, adding documentaries to his film portfolio and making a foray into animation. That was also the time when he reinforced his position as a film music giant in Europe. His film music with its late Romantic idiom acquired an original, Slavic character. The composer eagerly incorporated dances into the film (besides such standards as the waltz and the tango, also the polonaise, and such Polish regional dances as the krakowiak and the oberek), as well as quotations from Polish solemn songs, hymns, and anthems. (These include the incipit of *Bogurodzica* in Krzysztof Zanussi's *Z dalekiego kraju /From a Far Country/* and excerpts from the *Dąbrowski Mazurka* – the Polish national anthem – in Andrzej Wajda's *Kronika wypadków miłosnych /Chronicle of Amorous Accidents/*.) With such an approach to the style of the Classical Hollywood Film Score, it seems justified to paraphrase the term for the use in Polish reality as the Classical Polish Film Score.

The last period in Kilar's film music encompasses his best-known scores, notably Jane Campion's *The Portrait of a Lady*, Andrzej Wajda's *Pan Tadeusz*, and Roman Polański's *The Pianist* and *The Ninth Gate*. Indeed, the breakthrough came with *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola's Gothic horror from 1992, being the thirty-ninth adaptation of Stoker's novel to the silver screen, which made the Polish composer a champion of global film music, and which furthermore provides one of the best proofs for the hermeneutic role of music in the cinema.

### ***Bram Stoker's Dracula* as an Example of the Hermeneutic Role of Film Music**

Kilar wrote a cantata for Coppola.<sup>13</sup> Lasting for over an hour, it opens with a quasi-overture (containing excerpts of the main themes, which are played out in the first sequences of the film, when the narrator speaks of the Turkish invasion of Europe in 1462 and the tragic love of Vlad Dracula to Elizabeth), which he entrusted with the task of the off-stage sonic commentary of the developments. That was an unprecedented concept, as music here performs the role of an actor, interpreting the story's developments through abstract sound. An end the composer achieved with four leading leitmotifs:

1. Dracula the human (a funeral march alluding to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and portraying the personality of a human bound in a vampire's body – his suffering and the destructiveness of love):

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<sup>13</sup> Wojciech Kilar, *Suite From the Film 'Dracula'* ( Kraków: PWM, 1999).

Violins 1

Vlns. 1

**Example 1:** W. Kilar: The Melody of the Theme “The Bridges/The Castle” from *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, m. 2–9.\*

2. Dracula the vampire (two marches, the demonic “Vampire Hunters” and “The Storm,” based on Kilar’s *Victoria* and including a choral piece with the Latin motto of the film */Sanguis vita est/*, depicting the diabolical nature of the count):

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

C Tuba

Timpani

Violoncellos

Contrabasses

Bsn.

Cbsn.

C Tu.

Timp.

Vlcs.

Cbs.

**Example 2a:** W. Kilar: “Vampire Hunters” from *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, m. 1–8.

\* Extracts are used by kind permission of Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków, Poland.

Bass  
Violoncellos  
Contrabasses  
Piano  
Timpani

Sa - nguis vi - ta est  
Sa - nguis vi - ta est

**Example 2b:** W. Kilar: "The Storm" from *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, m. 7-10.

3. Lucy the frivolous (a subtle little waltz named "The Party" based on a telephone "tune" Kilar heard in Paris and wrote down "on location" in Colombia Pictures Studio, with the use of the celesta, harp, and glockenspiel emphasizing the perverse and coy nature of the heroine):

Celesta  
Cel.

15  
11

**Example 3:** W. Kilar: "The Party" from *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, m. 6-20.

4. The love of Dracula and Elizabeth (the grand love theme, coming as a broad cantilena with the characteristic initial leap of an octave, portraying the passions of Dracula and Mina, but also the timelessness of the feeling binding Elizabeth and the Count):

11

Vlas. | BASSOON  
Vlcs. | VIOLONCELLO  
Cbs. | CONTRABASSO

15

Vlas. | BASSOON  
Vlcs. | VIOLONCELLO  
Cbs. | CONTRABASSO

18

Vlas. | BASSOON  
Vlcs. | VIOLONCELLO  
Cbs. | CONTRABASSO

**Example 4:** W. Kilar: “The Love Theme” from *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, m. 1-21.

Coppola confronted the four main themes composed by Kilar, rearranging their motifs and merging them within a single sequence and even within a single scene. These were precisely the fusions developed in that way that played the function of the commentary to the plot mentioned above, taking over the role of the narrator, using sound to add messages that cannot be seen in the picture. That already took place in the overture, when, a moment before renouncing God and uttering the words “The blood is the life, and it shall be mine!” Count

Dracula stands over the body of his beloved, reading her farewell letter. In the musical layer, the initial motif of the ominous melody of the bassoon, contrabassoon, and tuba from "Vampire Hunters" clashes with the tender melody of the love theme sung by the soprano. A significant message for the audience is that the hero will now be guided by two forces: love and vengeance. The director uses a similar strategy when the Count notices a photograph of Mina in Jonathan Harker's personal belongings. At this moment, the theme of Dracula-the vampire is accompanied by the cantilena of the love theme in the part of the violin and, later, the soprano.

That love theme is one of the most spectacular examples of the meaning-building role that the music layer plays in Coppola's film. This is especially evident in the love scene between Dracula and Mina, which is interrupted by shots showing the destruction of the boxes with soil, where the vampire goes into hiding during the day. Here, Coppola presented two leading motifs ("The Storm" and the love theme), used in a way *à rebours*: the passionate reunion of the lovers resounds with the augmented *Sanguis vita est* incipit in the instrumental version, while Dracula's confession of the truth about his vampire tormenting him, with the cantilena of the love theme. The narrative polyphony composed in that manner (two apparently opposite themes, two musical themes that are poles apart) was intended for the portrayal of the contradictory natures of the main protagonist: the vampirical (of the ruthless murderer of Lucy) and the actual human (the remorse resulting from sentencing his beloved to eternal darkness). Thus, the film version of Stoker's *Dracula* portrays the struggle for primacy between two feelings driving the titular hero: the lust for blood and the desire for love. The music layer plays a double role: that of a narrator commenting on the developments from off the frame (the picture presents the meeting lovers' tryst, and yet the music played off the screen hints that the tender lover is a ruthless vampire rather than a human; and once the hero has disclosed his evil nature, the music reminds the audience that the fundamental reason for everything he goes through is not hatred but love), and a tool for organizing space and time (the love theme brings together the shots describing the meeting of Mina and Dracula with the ones presenting the destruction of the Count's home in London). Thus, Coppola controls the audience's perception: in music, the two clashing natures of the protagonist (vampirical and human) visible in the picture gain a common denominator (the love theme) that ultimately proves the superiority of love over blood lust.

### The Hermeneutics of Film Music: *Resumé*

The score for *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is one of the many examples of the meaning-building role that music can play in the cinema. Arguments that prove the hermeneutic properties of film music can also be found in the works of other composers working for the film, notably Nino Rota, John Williams, and Jan A. P.

Kaczmarek (with Agnieszka Holland's phenomenal *Trzeci cud /The Third Miracle/* from 1999). Although distanced in his views from the film music construed as art (as he believed it played only an ancillary role in the picture), Kilar proved with his works that music could be a key tool in the construction of cinematic drama. The 176 film scores he wrote include ones that reveal the films' main ideas, add values to the events, bring together the narrative, anticipate the mood and control the perception of the audience, play the role of the hero that cannot be seen on the screen (the devil in Polański's *The Ninth Gate*), fill in the content glossed over in film adaptations, and describe the personalities of the protagonists.

In every example quoted above, music serves as a symbol that requires analysis in both semiotic and hermeneutic contexts. The understanding of a symbol as a phenomenon built on direct meaning (semiotics) can touch the simplest aesthetic functions that music plays, notably illustrative and iconic (sounds of the hunt, canter rendered by music), as well as cultural associations that contemporary music semiotics calls indexical. In this case, the symbol is situated within the domain of conventional signs that are already in circulation. In turn, the hermeneutic definition applies wherever music references content that is difficult to grasp through language, extending, among others, to vague existential experiences and metaphysical and axiological-religious associations. The metaphor plays a vast role in the attempt to grasp these meanings: it is the language of the symbol, a poetic take of its idea, as well as the hinting at and interpretation thereof.

## SUMMARY

Film music is a young discipline. Consequently, studies of its ontology, structure, aesthetic and poetic qualities, and its function as well, are also novel. According to the theoreticians, music had different roles in the post-war movies: illustration and commentary on the plot (Kracauer), support for the film narrative (Gorbman), consonance with the image according to the principle of symbiosis of two orders (Chion); it could also focus the viewer's attention on specific elements of the action (Bullerjahn) and "musicalize" the film narrative outside the field of sound study (Kulezic-Wilson). This list should include the music's roles in creating meaning and encompassing the full spectrum of functions related to revealing or shaping invisible meanings. The perfect examples can be found in Wojciech Kilar's lavish oeuvre of film music, among more than 170 scores he composed.

One of the best proofs for the hermeneutic role of film music is Kilar's score for *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola's Gothic horror from 1992. The director confronted the four main themes from Kilar's cantata, rearranging their motifs and merging them within a single sequence and even within a single scene. The love theme is an excellent example of the music's meaning-building role, which is especially evident in the love scene between Count Dracula and Mina. Coppola used two leading motifs ("The Storm" and the love theme) in a way *à rebours*: the passionate reunion of the lovers is underscored by the augmented instrumental *Sanguis vita est*, while Dracula's confes-

sion of the truth about his vampire tormenting him is accompanied by the cantilena of the love theme. This kind of narrative polyphony was intended to portray the contradictory natures of the main protagonist: the vampirical (the ruthless murderer of Lucy) and the human (the remorse stemming from sentencing his beloved to eternal darkness). Coppola's version of Stoker's *Dracula* portrays the struggle between two feelings driving the titular hero: the lust for blood and the desire for love. The music plays a double role: that of a narrator commenting on the developments from off the frame (the picture presents the meeting lovers' tryst, and yet the music played off the screen hints that the tender lover is a ruthless vampire rather than a human; and once the hero has disclosed his evil nature, the music reminds the audience that the fundamental reason for everything he goes through is not hatred but love) and a tool for organizing space and time. The two clashing natures of the protagonist, visible on the screen, find a common denominator in music, which ultimately proves the superiority of love over bloodlust.

# FILM MUSIC IN CROATIA TODAY: BETWEEN MARGINALIZATION AND REVIVAL

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the current state of film music in Croatia, focusing on the diversity of compositional approaches, challenges in music education, institutional neglect, and recent developments that point to a renewed interest. Despite an increased presence of film music in concert halls and its rising popularity, the field remains underappreciated academically and professionally. Through an overview of prominent composers and educational frameworks, this study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of film music production in Croatia today.

**KEYWORDS:** Film music, Croatia, applied music, composers, education, festivals, archiving.

## **Introduction**

Film music in Croatia occupies a paradoxical position. While more visible and celebrated in public performances than ever, it is still seen as “applied music” and, therefore, less worthy of scholarly attention. This paper aims to explore the current landscape of Croatian film music, spotlighting the artistic diversity among composers, issues of education and institutional support, and ongoing efforts to promote and preserve the country’s cinematic musical heritage. My research is based on qualitative analysis of composer case studies, interviews, awards, festival documentation, and personal involvement in concert organization. Theoretical frameworks include applied musicology, ethnomusicology, and music analysis, with significant references to the author’s previous work and other critical sources on Croatian film music.

## **Mate Matišić: Improvisation, Folklore, and Instrumental Experimentation**

One of the most distinctive figures in contemporary Croatian film music is Mate Matišić, whose unconventional pathway into composition diverges sharply from the standard academic trajectory. Though publicly known as a dramatist and playwright, Matišić never completed formal music education, having abandoned music school early on. Nonetheless, he has established himself as an imaginative and idiosyncratic composer whose work is deeply rooted in improvisation and characterized by an eclectic instrumental palette. Drawing on his background in jazz, Matišić composes through performative experimentation rather than tradi-

tional notation – a practice that recalls methods common among avant-garde and contemporary classical composers.

Matišić's instrumentation is notably diverse. A multi-instrumentalist, he plays guitar, ukulele, banjo, and numerous folk string instruments, including šargija, ljerica, and various members of the tambura family, such as the tambura samica. He also incorporates simple wind instruments, such as the ocarina, and even uses his own body as a sound source. In the film *Ta divna splitska noć* (A Wonderful Night in Split, directed by Arsen Anton Ostojić in 2004), Matišić used rapid one-string plucking on an electric guitar to mimic the tremolo effect of a *tambura*,<sup>1</sup> generating a sense of nervous energy. In collaboration with Croatian pop icon Dino Dvornik, he imitated percussive sounds with his voice, effectively blurring the line between music and sound design. Notably, in *Nije kraj* (Will Not End Here, directed by Vinko Brešan in 2008), he even employed nasal resonance as a performative gesture, exemplifying the physicality of his compositional approach.

His experimental use of the guitar – bowing it to simulate the sound of orchestral strings or modifying it through EQ processing to render it unrecognizable – reflects a broader postmodern sensibility, where timbral innovation and genre hybridity are paramount. Such techniques were notably deployed in the Serbian crime series *Klan* (The Clan, directed by Boban Skerlić in 2020–2), where Matišić's score underscores both psychological tension and cultural specificity.<sup>2</sup>

Matišić's work exemplifies a kind of *compositional pragmatism* born from institutional gaps and cultural hybridity. His creative strategies resonate with those of contemporary classical composers such as Helmut Lachenmann or George Crumb, albeit in a more populist cinematic idiom. By fusing improvisation, jazz, folk, and sound art, he has carved out a singular voice in Croatian film music.

### **Alen and Nenad Sinkauz: Experimental Siblings at the Forefront of Contemporary Scoring**

If Matišić represents the improvisational folk-jazz tradition in Croatian film scoring, Alen and Nenad Sinkauz symbolize a newer generation of composers more steeped in electroacoustic experimentation, intermedia collaboration, and avant-garde aesthetics. Their music operates on the border of sound design and traditional scoring, often embracing improvisation as both a creative tool and compositional method.

<sup>1</sup> The tambura is a traditional plucked string instrument typical of Southeast Europe, particularly the Balkan region, where it was introduced during the Turkish conquests in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Matišić's film music and his compositional approach, see Irena Paulus, "Nedokučiva tajna filmske glazbe – razgovor s Matom Matišićem", *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis*, XXVI/102–103 (2020), 22–33.

The Sinkauz brothers are today among the most sought-after composers by visual artists and filmmakers in Croatia. Their critically acclaimed work on *Dnevnik Diane Budisavljević* (*The Diary of Diana Budisavljević*, directed by Dana Budisavljević in 2019) earned them widespread recognition. During their career, they were awarded numerous awards, including five Golden Arenas from the Pulski filmski festival (the Pula Film Festival) – more than any other Croatian film composers, surpassing figures such as Matišić, Davor Rocco, Alfi Kabiljo, and Bojan Adamič.

Their technique of bowing electric bass guitars, employed in *The Diary of Diana Budisavljević* score, parallels Matišić's own experimental methods, yet emerges from a more overtly conceptual framework. The Sinkauz brothers frequently aim to blur the boundary between “tone” and “noise,” often manipulating electronic sources in real-time and embedding found sounds or field recordings into their soundtracks.

While their work incorporates elements of traditional music, the compositional approach of the Sinkauz brothers diverges significantly from that of Mate Matišić. Rather than employing overt references or leitmotifs, their scores emphasize timbral atmospheres and abstract, non-verbal textures to evoke emotional depth and narrative resonance. For Alen and Nenad Sinkauz, improvisation serves as a central compositional strategy, enabling spontaneous responses to the film's emotional and narrative currents. They have expressed a degree of skepticism toward traditional leitmotif-based scoring, positing that improvisation allows for a more fluid, adaptive, and context-sensitive form of musical narration.

Yet, at the request of director Dana Budisavljević, their score for *The Diary of Diana Budisavljević* includes a delicate, emotionally charged theme associated with the character of Diana. Performed on the cello, this motif is rendered with a fragile sonority, as if “walking on glass,”<sup>3</sup> exemplifying their capacity to balance abstraction with emotional specificity when required by the cinematic narrative.

In addition to this work, the Sinkauz brothers have composed scores for several films by director Dalibor Matanić, including *Zvizdan* (*The High Sun*, 2015) and *Zora* (*Dawn*, 2021), both of which form part of Matanić's forthcoming *Sun Trilogy* (with the third installment, *Suton /Dusk/*, yet to be produced). Their filmography further includes the scores for Nevio Marasović's *Goran* (2016) and *Šlager* (*This is Not a Love Song*, 2024), Ivan Salaj's *Osmi povjerenik* (*The Eighth Commissioner*, 2018), and animated short films by Danijel Žeželj, such as *Motivi* (*Motifs*, 2019) and *Sakupljač* (*The Collector*, 2022). They have also composed music for numerous experimental theatre productions, including *Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose* (2008) and *Prizori s jabukom* (*Scenes with an Apple*, 2009), directed by Ivana Sajko.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Irena Paulus, *Audivizija hrvatskoga filma* (Zagreb: Hrvatski filmski savez, 2024), 44–5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 32–3.

Across these varied projects, the Sinkauz brothers consistently blur the lines between sound design and composition, merging real-time interaction with cinematic imagery. Their work challenges conventional paradigms of film scoring, situating them within the broader context of European experimental music, while also reflecting the dynamic evolution of Croatia's contemporary audiovisual culture.

### Dalibor Grubačević: Symphonic Traditions and Leitmotivic Development

In stark contrast to the experimental and improvisatory methods of composers like Matišić or the Sinkauz brothers, Dalibor Grubačević represents a more traditional, symphonic approach to film music. His scores are characterized by lush orchestration, strong melodic content, and a structural alignment with classical Hollywood aesthetics. From his debut feature score for *Duh u močvari* (*The Ghost in the Swamp*, 2006), directed by Branko Išvančić, to his recent work on *The Conversation* (2022), directed by Dominik Sedlar, Grubačević consistently employs leitmotif techniques and orchestral idioms that echo mid-twentieth-century American film music, particularly the works of composers such as Max Steiner or Erich Wolfgang Korngold.<sup>5</sup>

Grubačević's use of leitmotifs, however, deviates from strict repetition or thematic tagging. Instead, he engages in a process akin to *developing variation* – a compositional technique popularized by Arnold Schoenberg – where themes are continuously transformed and disguised throughout the score.<sup>6</sup> Despite the theoretical similarity, Grubačević's sound world diverges entirely from that of the Second Viennese School. His musical language remains harmonically accessible and rooted in the Romantic tradition, with clear formal delineations and expressive melodic lines, making it appealing to both lay audiences and cinephiles.

Grubačević is a self-taught composer, educated in music outside official institutions. Like many Croatian film composers, he started as a guitarist in a local band and later pursued private study in music theory. His teachers included organist Natalija Imbrišak and renowned Croatian composers Marko Ruždjak and Miljenko Prohaska, who provided a foundational understanding of compositional techniques.

<sup>5</sup> For more on Max Steiner's classical Hollywood practice, see Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies. Narrative Film Music* (London: Indiana University Press, 1987), 70–99. For an analytical overview of the work of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, see Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones. Reading Film Music* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994). On both composers and other composers of Hollywood's Golden Age Era, see also Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Ethan Haimo, *Schoenberg's Serial Odyssey. The Evolution of his Twelve-Tone Method, 1914–1928*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Grubačević's work has received both national and international recognition. Among the Awards he won are: the Best Music Award at the 7th *Festival hrvatskog katoličkog filma Trsat* (*Festival of Croatian Religious Film Trsat*) for the documentary *Sve je bio dobar san* (*It Was All a Good Dream*, directed by Branko Ištvanić in 2016), the Best Music in a Documentary at the 19th *Dani hrvatskog filma* (*Days of Croatian Film*) for *Zajedno* (*Together*, directed by Nenad Puhovski in 2010), the Porin Award for Best Original Music Album for Theatre, Film, and Television for *U potrazi za Markom Polom* (*In Search of Marco Polo*, directed by Miro Branković in 2013), and the Silver Medal for Excellence in the Film Soundtrack category at the *Global Music Awards* for *The Match* (directed by Dominik and Jakov Sedlar in 2021). His score for *The Conversation* won multiple awards, including the Crystal Pine Award at the *International Sound and Film Music Festival* (ISFMF), the Best Score in Historical Drama by *The Movie Music International. (MMI). Recognition Awards*, and the Best Original Score for Film Drama by *Reel Music. Music Reviews*.

Grubačević's score for *The Conversation* has drawn the attention of prominent film music critics and reviewers – not only domestic but also international – who have recently begun to openly appreciate “older” approaches to film scoring based on musical knowledge rather than technological proficiency. Reviewers such as Jonathan Broxton, John Mansell, and Alan Rogers have highlighted the orchestral nature of the film music as one of its key values, especially in an era dominated by synthesized soundtracks, emphasizing that orchestral sound remains a welcome auditory experience.<sup>7</sup> Grubačević's soundtrack has been consistently praised as “extraordinary,” “opulent,”<sup>8</sup> and “rich in color and texture, with which the composer paints the film as a painter would a blank canvas.”<sup>9</sup>

International critics were initially intrigued by the film's serious engagement with politics, religion, and philosophy, describing it as being staged “almost like a theatrical play.”<sup>10</sup> Despite the film's “limited scope and theatricality,” the orchestral score was unanimously recognized as “filled with excellent thematic ideas and powerful emotional and dramatic moments.”<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Broxton, in par-

<sup>7</sup> John Mansell, “A conversation on The Conversation score. Talking to composer Dalibor Grubacevic,” *Movie Music International. (MMI)*., September 15 (2022). <https://jonman492000.wordpress.com/2022/09/15/a-conversation-on-the-conversation-score-talking-to-composer-dalibor-grubacevic>. Accessed: April 2, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Broxton, “Under the Radar Round Up 2022, Part 4A. THE CONVERSATION – Dalibor Grubačević,” *Movie Music UK. Film Score Reviews by Jonathan Broxton Since 1997*, January 6 (2023). <https://moviemusicuk.us/2023/01/06/under-the-radar-round-up-2022-part-4a>. Accessed: April 2, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> John Mansell, “The Conversation,” *Movie Music International. (MMI)*, September 8 (2022). <https://jonman492000.wordpress.com/2022/09/08/the-conversation>. Accessed: April 2, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Broxton, “Under the Radar Round Up 2022...,” op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

ticular, noted that the score for *The Conversation* – the first of many in Dalibor Grubačević's oeuvre – finally drew the world's attention to its composer. He expressed hope that this work would further establish Grubačević in the global mainstream film music scene, emphasizing that the composer is a truly gifted artist whose international career is only beginning to emerge.<sup>12</sup>

### **Institutionally Trained Composers: The Academic Pathway and Its Limits**

While many Croatian film composers are autodidacts, there are a few exceptions who followed academic pathways. These composers, however, often occupy a more peripheral space in the Croatian film industry due to their stylistic rigor and limited flexibility in adapting to commercial media demands.

Igor Paro, for example, is a classically trained lutenist whose deep expertise in Renaissance music informed his score for *Ribanje i ribarsko prigovaranje* (*Fishing and Fishermen's Talk*, directed by Milan Trenc in 2020). The film is based on the eponymous sixteenth-century literary work by Petar Hektorović, and Paro's score – composed for authentic period instruments – won several accolades. Yet, it remains his only foray into film composition, suggesting a disconnect between historical authenticity and the mainstream film industry's needs.<sup>13</sup>

Daniel Legin, another academically trained composer, initially showed a strong interest in film music during his studies at the Muzička akademija Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Zagreb Academy of Music, University of Zagreb). Although he did not pursue a full-time career as a film composer, he has remained closely connected to the field through various support roles. Based in Vienna, Legin works as a teaching assistant in Composition and Music Theory, and also as a freelance music copyist and editor. His contributions to film music include orchestration and score preparation for Dalibor Grubačević, collaboration with the Hollywood in Vienna festival, and archival work for the Hrvatski filmski institut (Croatian Film Institute). His involvement in preserving Croatian film music heritage highlights the growing need for infrastructural support in this field.

Bianca Ban is among the few composers in Croatia who have explicitly pursued a specialization in applied music. Having earned her master's degree from the Zagreb Academy of Music with a focus on applied composition, she represents a new wave of academically trained composers who bridge institutional learning and commercial application. Ban began her career by composing music for commercials, animated shorts, and video games, showcasing an ability to adopt multiple musical styles with agility. She later relocated to London, where she primarily composed music for trailers of international film releases.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> For more on Igor Paro's music for the film *Fishing and Fishermen's Talk*, see Paulus, *Audiovizija hrvatskoga filma*, op. cit., 161–206.

Ban holds a pioneering role in Croatian music education. She was the first student enrolled in the applied music composition program at the Zagreb Academy of Music, a track introduced during the implementation of the Bologna Process in the early 2000s. This reform created three specializations within the Composition and Music Theory Department: classical composition, applied composition, and electronic composition. While designed as equal options, students often perceived classical composition as the superior route for technical development, even when their long-term goals aligned more with media scoring. As a result, many who aspired to work in film opted against the applied track, reflecting enduring hierarchies within the music education field.

### **The Academic Marginalization of Applied Music and Interdisciplinary Disconnects**

The persistent academic marginalization of applied music, particularly film music, continues to shape both institutional attitudes and student choices within Croatia's higher education system. Despite growing public appreciation for audiovisual music, its status within academic contexts remains tenuous, often perceived as artistically inferior to "pure" or autonomous music traditions.

This hierarchy becomes especially apparent in the case of Bianca Ban, who studied under Zlatko Tanodi – a prolific composer whose oeuvre spans musical theatre, popular music, jazz, electronic, and classical idioms. Tanodi's broad expertise in non-classical genres positioned him uniquely within the pedagogical landscape; however, this same versatility may have contributed to a certain academic ambivalence toward applied composition. The implication is clear: within institutional culture, breadth across popular and commercial genres may be seen as lacking the depth associated with high art traditions, thereby influencing students to pursue more "respectable" specializations.

Indeed, this tension is reflected in the educational trajectory of Daniel Legin, who opted to study classical composition, reasoning that it would provide a more rigorous foundation for later work in film music, primarily in the capacity of orchestration rather than original composition. Such decisions underscore the broader perception that applied music is best approached after mastering classical norms rather than as a legitimate compositional path in its own right.

A striking example of interdisciplinary disconnection can be found just across the street from the Zagreb Academy of Music, where the Akademija dramske umetnosti (ADU) Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb) resides. This institution, central to the education of filmmakers, editors, and sound designers, offers little to no formal integration with music education or composition. While the MA-level curriculum in the Editing Department allows students to specialize in either picture editing or sound design, the latter remains narrowly focused on technical aspects – recording, editing, and practical sound manipulation – without meaningful collaboration with composers or musicians from the Zagreb Academy of Music.

As a result, when music is required, students often rely on ad hoc methods such as sourcing tracks from the internet, drawing from personal libraries, or composing their own music if they possess the necessary skills. This fragmented approach persists even though one of Croatia's most esteemed film composers, Mate Matišić, is a faculty member at the ADU. Ironically, Matišić does not teach film scoring but instead focuses on screenwriting for stage and screen, areas in which he is also celebrated. His presence in the institution, therefore, does not translate into a formal curricular engagement with film music composition.

A recent curricular innovation, the Video Game Development Study Program, offered a promising interdisciplinary opportunity. Initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic as a collaborative pilot between two academies and three faculties,<sup>14</sup> the program aims to prepare students for careers in the gaming industry. According to public announcements, the program is designed to integrate "artistic and scientific praxis and research."<sup>15</sup>

Yet, despite this ambition for interdisciplinarity, the absence of a dedicated component for music composition for video games reveals a missed opportunity. In neglecting the sonic dimension of interactive media – a field that relies heavily on adaptive and immersive music design – the program reproduces the systemic marginalization of applied music within Croatian academia. This oversight not only diminishes the creative potential of the program but also signals a persistent disconnection between music education and evolving media industries.

### **The Case of Video Game Composers and the Challenge of Informal Training**

In the absence of formal educational pathways for composing music for video games, Croatian composers in this emerging field often remain self-taught, navigating their careers through intuition, experimentation, and informal mentorship. One particularly illustrative case is that of Damjan Mravunac, a prominent video game composer known for his emotionally powerful and cinematically grand scores, frequently characterized by monumental orchestral arrangements and choral textures combined with elements of rock (among his best-known works is the score for the *Serious Sam* franchise, a series of first-person shooter games developed by the Croatian game studio Croteam).

<sup>14</sup> The Academy of Dramatic Art, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Faculty of Architecture's Design Department, the Faculty of Organization and Informatics, and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing.

<sup>15</sup> V[id] Ba[rić], "Hrvatska dobiva studij za razvoj videoigara, a prvi studenti mogli bi biti upisani već iduće godine. Donosimo sve detalje o projektu," *tportal.hr*, March 23 (2022). [www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/hrvatska-dobiva-studij-za-razvoj-videoigara-a-prvi-studenti-mogli-bi-bitu-upisani-vec-2023-godine-donosimo-sve-detajle-o-projektu-foto-20220322?meta\\_refresh=1](http://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/hrvatska-dobiva-studij-za-razvoj-videoigara-a-prvi-studenti-mogli-bi-bitu-upisani-vec-2023-godine-donosimo-sve-detajle-o-projektu-foto-20220322?meta_refresh=1). Accessed: April 23, 2025.

Despite his considerable artistic achievements, Mravunac lacks formal training in music theory, orchestration, or choral writing – indeed, even standard music notation is outside his professional toolkit. This has not impeded the impact or popularity of his music, but it has revealed significant practical challenges, particularly when his compositions are to be adapted for live performance. Such a situation arose in 2021, when Hrvatska radiotelevizija (HRT) (Croatian Radio Television) organized a concert dedicated to Croatian film music. Although Mravunac's music was selected for performance, turning his digital audio compositions into fully orchestrated sheet music proved complex due to the lack of original scores.

Nevertheless, the HRT Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Aleksandar Marković, successfully performed Mravunac's music alongside works by other Croatian film composers, resulting in a compelling and well-received concert. The author of this study was invited as a film music consultant and co-author of the project, collaborating with Ivana Kocelj (head of HRT ensembles) and Dean Šoša (film critic and television editor at HRT), with specific responsibility for locating and preparing music scores for performance.

This process highlighted broader structural issues: few composers had preserved or made their sheet music accessible. While artists such as Arsen Dedić, Alfi Kabiljo, and Bojan Adamić had archived scores, others, including Andelko Klobučar (whose score for the 1967 film *Breza /The Birch Tree/* was only partially intact), presented more fragmented documentation. In some cases, the original sheet music was entirely lost – for example, Tomislav Simović's score for the Oscar-winning animated short *Surogat (The Substitute, 1961)* no longer exists in any known archive.

During the 1970s and 1980s, composers of film music in Croatia often came from the popular music scene, with figures such as Arsen Dedić and Alfi Kabiljo achieving a balance between songwriting and orchestral writing. Orchestrators like Alan Bjelinski, son of the classical music composer Bruno Bjelinski, also played a vital role in bridging the gap between popular and classical idioms, contributing to the realization of complex scores.<sup>16</sup>

### **Independent Archival Initiatives and the Rediscovery of Lost Soundtracks**

Efforts to preserve, rediscover, and promote Croatian film music have largely fallen to individuals and independent collectives operating outside of official academic or governmental frameworks. A notable example is the work of Željko Luketić, a film critic, and Leri Ahel, a DJ and radio producer, who co-founded the independent record label “Fox & His Friends.” This label specializes in the reissue and reinterpretation of forgotten or inaccessible soundtracks, with a par-

<sup>16</sup> For more on Croatian film music from the 1940s to 1990s, see Irena Paulus, *Glazba s ekrana* (Zagreb: Hrvatski filmski savez, Hrvatsko muzikološko društvo, 2002).

ticular focus on electronic, disco, pop, and experimental music from the Yugoslav era.

Their first release in 2017, featuring music by Tomislav Simović for the science-fiction cult classic *Gosti iz galaksije* (*Visitors from the Galaxy*, directed by Dušan Vukotić in 1981), marked a significant moment in the reevaluation of Croatian audiovisual heritage. Considered a lost soundtrack, the release exemplified the label's mission of cultural salvage. This was followed by a reinterpreta-tive companion album, *Visitors from the Galaxy Revisited*, in which contemporary international musicians created new works inspired by Simović's themes.

Subsequent releases included a wide array of genre-defying content, such as *Sex, Crime and Politics – Disco, Jazz and Electronica from Yugoslavia 1974–1984*, and the surprise reissue *Yu Aerobic*, a collection of fitness music composed by Alfi Kabiljo, which had long been forgotten even by its creator. The label also curated compilations of Simović's music for animated television series *Profesor Baltazar* (*Professor Balthazar*) and other animated shorts produced by the Zagreb School of Animation, thereby contributing to the global appreciation of Croatia's animation music heritage.

Most recently, the label released *All and Nothing at All*, an anthology of Mirko Krstićević's film and theatre scores. Through these activities, Ahel and Luketić have positioned themselves as key figures in the grassroots preservation of Croatian audiovisual culture, often operating in areas neglected by formal institutions.<sup>17</sup>

### **Professionalization and Institutionalization of Film Music: Challenges and Initiatives**

During the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, a new generation of film music composers emerged in Croatia. Many of them could be described as "one-hit wonders" – individuals who became part of film production teams primarily due to personal connections with directors or producers, and who often lacked formal musical education. Their contribution was typically based on their ability to play one or two instruments "by ear." However, their involvement was usually short-lived, and they have since been replaced by more skilled composers, many of whom remain self-taught.

Among those who have made a lasting commitment to film music, one of the most prominent is Ozren K. Glaser, a composer and devoted film music enthusiast known for his communicative and open personality. These traits have enabled him to connect with numerous significant international figures in the film and film music world, including director Stephen Daldry. Glaser was invited to compose the score for *The Reader* (2008), and although the director was

<sup>17</sup> For more about "Fox & His Friends Records" releases, see their official website <https://foxandhisfriends.org/>. Accessed: April 3, 2025.

pleased with his proposal, the producers insisted on hiring a well-established name. Consequently, the final score was composed by Nico Muhly, while Glaser was officially credited as a music consultant.

Glaser has made a particularly valuable contribution as the artistic director of the ISFMF, which he founded in 2013 in Samobor, alongside his father, Željko Glaser, and sister, Tena Glaser, with the production support of business expert Marijana Knezoci. The festival takes place during the third week of October and also includes events in Pula, Rovinj, Split, Varaždin, and Paris. It is a competitive festival that awards the Crystal Pine in twelve categories for outstanding film scores, songs, and sound design each year.

Notable recipients of the Crystal Pine for Lifetime Achievement include Ryuichi Sakamoto, Alfi Kabiljo, Michael Minkler, Eddy Joseph, Scott Millan, Howard Shore, Chris Munro, and Bruno Coulais. The festival regularly features film music concerts, including performances by Jean-Michel Bernard and Golden Globe nominee Kyle Eastwood. In 2023, the festival hosted renowned figures such as Steven Price, Christopher Benstead, Stephen Rennicks, Mark Ulano, Patrushkha Mierzwa, and Robert Townson.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to concerts and award ceremonies, *ISFMF* organizes master-classes and panel discussions, often attracting full audiences. For example, Serbian composer Ana Krstajić led a panel titled “How to Prepare for Recording Sessions?” At the same time, Spanish film music journalist Gorka Oteiza, founder of the SoundtrackFest portal, moderated a discussion titled “Working with Legends: Alfonso Cuarón, Quentin Tarantino, Guy Ritchie,” with guests including Steven Price (Cuarón), Mark Ulano (Tarantino), and Christopher Benstead (Ritchie).

Thanks to Glaser’s initiative, the festival established a partnership with the European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA). In 2014, ECSA launched the Camille Award, named after Camille Saint-Saëns, the first known film composer. The award was initially presented at the Berlinale, but four years later, following Glaser’s suggestion, the ceremony was relocated to the Croatian city of Pula. In 2020, the award for Lifetime Achievement was presented to Ennio Morricone in Brussels, while the 2022 ceremony was held in Split and organized by the Hrvatsko društvo skladatelja (HDS) (Croatian Composers’ Society), a founding member of ECSA.

The Camille Award ceremony in Split became a key platform for the consolidation of Croatian film music efforts. At a roundtable organized by HDS, several issues were identified, with the marginalization of film music being the most pressing concern. *ISFMF* was recognized as an internationally significant event that remains largely underrepresented in Croatian media. At the same time, composer Dalibor Grubačević expressed dissatisfaction with the Pula Film

<sup>18</sup> For more about the International Sound and Film Music Festival, see their official website <https://isfmf.com/>. Accessed: April 3, 2025.

Festival's decision to remove the award for film music that year. Several measures were proposed to advance film music in Croatia, and the HDS Department for Communication offered its support.

Despite the lack of a coherent institutional framework, certain organizations – such as the Hrvatski filmski savez (Croatian Film Association), the HDS, and HRT – continue to demonstrate consistent interest in this field. During the 2023 ECSA General Assembly in Split, the Camille Awards for outstanding European film music achievements were presented once again.<sup>19</sup>

In November 2023, HDS President Mladen Tarbuk and Secretary General Antun Tomislav Šaban organized a plenary session for members focused on applied music. The response was substantial, and plans are underway to establish a Department for Applied Music, which would represent a significant step toward the recognition and institutional integration of film music in Croatia. Although the decision has yet to be formally implemented, there is an increasingly clear awareness of the importance of film music in Croatian cultural policy.

## Conclusion

An examination of the development and positioning of film music within the Croatian cultural and institutional framework reveals a complex interplay of educational, artistic, and industry-specific dynamics. Despite a rich tradition and the presence of talented composers, film music in Croatia remains largely marginalized – both within formal education systems and in broader artistic discourse.

Initiatives such as the *International Sound and Film Music Festival*, international collaborations with organizations like the European Composer and Songwriter Alliance, and the efforts of individuals such as Ozren K. Glaser, Željko Luketić, and Leri Ahel, indicate a growing awareness of the need to affirm film music as a legitimate and valuable artistic practice. At the same time, the lack of systematic education in film and video game scoring, along with weak collaboration between key institutions – most notably the Zagreb Academy of Music and the Academy of Dramatic Art – continues to hamper professional development in the field.

Positive developments, such as film music concerts, initiatives for the recovery and publication of lost scores, and the recognition of excellence through awards like the Camille, demonstrate the artistic, cultural, and even archival value of Croatian film music. The recent efforts by the Croatian Composers' Society to gather authors of applied music and discuss the formation of a dedicated department show promise for long-term structural support.

<sup>19</sup> Irena Paulus, "Filmska glazba u fokusu ECSA-e. Split kao mjesto susreta europskih filmskih skladatelja i dodjele nagrada Camille," *glazba.hr*, October 6 (2022). <https://glazba.hr/citaj/izvjestaj/ecs-a-split-nagrade-camille/>. Accessed: April 20, 2025.

In conclusion, film music in Croatia stands at a crossroads between individual enthusiasm and institutional neglect. This moment presents a critical opportunity to articulate strategic initiatives that include:

- the introduction of systematic education in film and media music composition,
- interdisciplinary collaboration among music, film, and media institutions,
- preservation and public access to film music scores,
- and the public and cultural valorization of this creative practice.

The potential of Croatian film music lies not merely in its function as a supplement to image but in its capacity to serve as an authentic and essential form of artistic expression, deserving of scholarly attention, critical recognition, and institutional support.

## SUMMARY

Croatian film music today represents a dynamic and evolving field shaped by improvisation, experimentation, and a deep-rooted love for cinema. Croatian film composers employ a wide range of styles and methodologies. For example, Mate Matišić, a self-taught jazz musician and multi-instrumentalist, uses improvisation and unconventional sound sources, including his voice and even his nose, to create unique textures; Alen and Nenad Sinkauz, recognized for their experimental sound design and improvisation, often blur the lines between sound and music; Dalibor Grubačević, who takes a more traditional orchestral approach, favors leitmotifs and developmental variation techniques, reminiscent of classical Hollywood scores. On the other hand, formal education in film music is scarce in Croatia. Many composers are self-taught or learned through informal mentorships and band experiences.

Regardless of formal or informal education, the field of Croatian film music is marked by passion and creativity, often overcoming institutional shortcomings through individual initiative. The divide between classically trained composers and self-taught artists reflects broader trends in global music production, where adaptability and genre fluidity are increasingly valued. Educational limitations hinder the systematic development of new talent – the lack of integration between film and music education points to missed opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, the historical neglect of film music preservation highlights the need for institutional support in archiving and documentation. Nevertheless, the recent surge in public performances, academic interest, and international partnerships indicates a growing recognition of film music's cultural and artistic value.

While structural challenges persist, particularly in education and preservation, new institutional efforts and dedicated individuals are paving the way for a more integrated and respected role of film music within the cultural landscape. Greater academic and institutional engagement will be crucial to sustaining this momentum and ensuring future growth.

# CROSS-MEDIA RESHAPING OF MUSIC DISCOURSE: FROM TV/INTERNET SERIES TO RADIO/STREAMING PLAYLISTS

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**ABSTRACT:** Music is one of the key elements that complements, enhances, and highlights the narrative of television drama series. Whether it is originally composed or stock/library music, in TV or streaming drama series, music is often so striking that, due to the reception and reaction of an active audience, it gains the power of cross-media transition and existence. On the other hand, radio and internet streaming playlists are a key determinant of the music preferences of an active audience in the meta-mass media sphere. From the positions of the Uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Giles) as well as the Cultivation theory (Gerbner), this paper studies and examines the cross-media (one story – multiple channels/media) reshaping of the musical discourse of popular television series, from applied music to an independent entity (playlist, charts, music videos) within popular culture, mass media, and music industry. The case studies were genre-diverse series whose musical matrix encompassed a divergent mass media cultural space: *Nemanjići – radanje kraljevine* (Original music, PGP RTS, 2018, Serbia), *Jutro će promeniti sve* (Compilation, PGP RTS, 2018, Serbia), and *Stranger Things: Music from the Netflix Original Series, Season 4, Vol 1.* (Compilation, Legacy Recordings, 2022, USA).

**KEY WORDS:** Music, serialized drama, TV, streaming, playlists, Uses and gratifications theory, Cultivation theory, active audience, cross-media.

The complex and evolving relationship between mass media and their audiences has remained a focal point of scholarly inquiry across various academic disciplines for centuries. Over time, audiences have developed a heightened awareness of the persuasive and formative potential of mass media content, which is supported by numerous theoretical interpretations of the effects of mass media on the audience. In particular, with regard to the screen audience (film, TV, internet) relevant to this study, individuals who consume mass media content via traditional media (television) and/or through metamedia platforms (computers, mobile devices, and internet-based content) have undergone a substantial evolution in interpreting the reciprocal influences and modes of interaction between media and audience. A multitude of analytical approaches have been developed to decode and critically assess the shifting dynamics of power and influence within the relationship between visual mass media and its audiences from early conceptualizations of mass media content as direct, short-term, and highly effective in its impact, with the audience seen as a passive recipient of media messages, to theories suggesting that the degree of media influence depends on the audience, which, as a conscious and active consumer, takes on an engaged role

in interpreting and integrating media content into their own lives, to theories that propose the formation of attitudes and behaviors as a result of long-term exposure to mass media content, culminating in more recent concepts such as *viewers* a term describing the interactive audience in the metamedia internet era.

In the context of analyzing the development and transformation of mass media and audiences, one of the more intriguing phenomena to examine is the format of television and internet series, that is, traditional and metamedia visual forms.<sup>1</sup> Through their narratives, television series are both a mass media and a social phenomenon, often shaping the cultural, social, and historical identity of the audience through their genre and content. The success of scripted series on a communicative level frequently leads to trans/cross-media transformations. All of the aforementioned can be viewed from the standpoint of modern theories of mass media, such as the Uses and Gratifications Theory, Active Audience Theory, and Cultivation Theory.

According to Elihu Katz, the foundational premise of the uses and gratifications theory is that mass media cannot affect the responses of audience members unless there is a perceived benefit derived from the media in a social or psychological context. In this context, Katz stated:

The direction I have in mind has been variously called the functional approach to the media, or the “uses and gratifications” approach. It is the program that asks the question, not “What do the media do to people?” but “What do people do with the media?” The “uses” approach, as I shall call it, begins with the assumption that the message of even the most potent of the media cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has no “use” for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. The “uses” approach assumes that people’s values, their interests, their associations, their social roles, are pre-potent and that people selectively “fashion” what they see and hear to these interests.<sup>2</sup>

Sociologists and communication scholars Mark Levy and Sven Windahl emphasize that audience activity refers to a voluntaristic (willful) and selective orienta-

<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of television programming and the production of television series in the 1940s, music has been an essential part of this visual mass medium, just as it was with radio. Television emerged as a visual extension of the existing auditory medium, compensating for its main drawback – the lack of a visual experience. While it provided the audience with an audio-visual experience, unlike radio, it remained static, confined to a screen that couldn’t be used anywhere and at any time, like the radio transistor. It was only in the new millennium, with the expansion of the global network and the advent of digital technologies, along with the convergence of traditional mass media, that television gained a form of mobility.

<sup>2</sup> Elihu Katz, “Mass communication research and the study of popular culture: an editorial note on a possible future for this journal,” *Studies in Public Communication*, II (1959), 2–3. [www.academia.edu/50973693/Mass\\_Communications\\_Research\\_and\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Popular\\_Culture\\_An\\_Editorial\\_Note\\_on\\_a\\_Possible\\_Future\\_for\\_This\\_Journal](http://www.academia.edu/50973693/Mass_Communications_Research_and_the_Study_of_Popular_Culture_An_Editorial_Note_on_a_Possible_Future_for_This_Journal). Accessed: April 14, 2025.

tion towards the offered mass media content.<sup>3</sup> Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch argued that the Uses and Gratifications Theory emphasizes the goal-directed nature of mass media use, where audiences actively evaluate and assign value to the content they consume. Namely, mass media use is goal-directed, and audiences actively evaluate and assign value to the content they consume.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, one of the widely accepted theories in the study of media-audience interaction is the Cultivation Theory, established by communication scholar George Gerbner. The assumption is that gradually, over time (drop by drop), the audience exposed to certain television content develops certain attitudes and values. Gerbner was engaged in the analysis of television content and essentially placed the audience in a passive position. He did it because the screen audience is under the long-term influence of visual media, which plays a key role in forming predispositions that later intertwine with or resist other influences.<sup>5</sup>

With the expansion of the global network, psychologists, sociologists, communication theorists, and media scholars increasingly perceive the audience as an (inter)active participant in the reception of mass media content. As Denis McQuail noted, viewers utilize (screen-based) mass media in various ways to fulfill their individual needs, including obtaining information, gaining and expanding knowledge, identifying with characters and situations presented in media content, seeking entertainment, engaging in social interaction, and experiencing escapism.<sup>6</sup>

When we talk about the theoretical approach of the pragmatic influence of mass media content – in this case TV (or Internet) series – it is important to point out that the decoding of a mass media message directly depends on socio-logical heritage (family, environment and surroundings), beliefs, (un)developed values and criteria, cultural level of development, personal interests, educational level, life experience of the members of the audience.<sup>7</sup> As contemporary theorists

<sup>3</sup> Marija Karan, *Muzička koncepcija radijskog diskursa versus auditorijum – vidovi transformacija međusobnih relacija sagledanih u interdisciplinarnom polju teorije medija* (doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, 2019), 82; See also Mark R. Levy and Sven Windahl, “Audience activity and gratifications. A conceptual Clarification and Exploration,” *Communication research*, XI/1 (1984), 51–78, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/009365084011001003>. Accessed: December 28, 2018 and March 15, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Cf. Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, “Uses and Gratifications Research,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXXVII/4 (1973–4), 509–23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 83. See also George Gerbner, “Cultivation Analysis: An Overview,” *Mass Communication and Society*, I/3–4 (1998), 175–94, <http://web.asc.upenn.edu/gerbner/Asset.aspx?assetID=459>. Accessed: May 15, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Cf. also Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory: an Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 420–30.

<sup>7</sup> Karan, *Muzička koncepcija radijskog diskursa versus auditorijum...*, op. cit., 83.

and aestheticians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries emphasize, “viewers are strongly and intimately connected to television series. They become part of their private lives.”<sup>8</sup> In addition to an intriguing storyline, convincing acting, skillful directing, expert filming, special effects, and other elements, a key factor in the successful interaction between mass media and the audience is the musical discourse.

Whether it is originally composed, adapted, or as soundtracks with royalty approvals, diegetic or non-diegetic, the music in feature television series is often so memorable that, through its connection with the audience, it can gain the power of the aforementioned cross-media and trans-media existence.

The cross-media reshaping of the musical discourse of popular TV series (one story/music → multiple channels/media) from original music written specifically for a television show to tracks within (meta) media playlists on streaming services and digital platforms for broadcasting music and portable storages such as CDs, records, or USB flash drives, falls within the domain of media theory interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

Music editing/supervision is authentic sound storytelling that supports the dramatic action. A contemporary, active, and interactive audience is the key validator of the cross-media reshaping of musical discourse, from the originally composed or licensed music of TV series of different genres to the context of other traditional and meta-mass media (such as radio stations, streaming platforms and services, and internet/online audio-video channels). The case study in this paper is composed of genre-diverse TV series whose musical matrix encompasses a divergent mass media and cultural space: *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine* (*Nemanjić Dynasty: The Birth of the Kingdom*, original music from the series, PGP RTS, 2018, Serbia), *Jutro će promeniti sve – Muzika iz serije* (*Morning Changes Everything – Original Television Soundtrack*, PGP RTS, 2018, Serbia), and *Stranger Things: Music from the Netflix Original Series*, Season 4, Vol. 1 (compilation of hits, Legacy Recordings, 2022, USA).

### ***Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine (2018)***

One of the most ambitious television endeavors undertaken in Serbia in recent decades, the historical TV series *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine*, was conceptual-

<sup>8</sup> Žan-Pjer Eksenazi, *Televizijske serije* (Beograd: Clio, 2010), 30.

<sup>9</sup> Music and television have been inseparable from the very beginning. Over time, with the development of television, the function of music within this mass medium has also evolved. Formats in which music plays a dominant or significant supporting role have gradually been divided into the following categories: television music spectacle (*Eurovision Song Contest*, *X Factor*, *The Voice*); television music show (*3 Boje Zvuka/3 Colours of Sound*, *Bunt/Rebellion*, *Zvezde Granda/Stars of the Grand*, *Volim Klasiku/I love classics*); classical music as a television format (*The Vienna New Year's Concert*, *Studio 6*, *TV Opera and Ballet*); music in television drama (music in period series, music in so-called “soap operas”, music in contemporary sitcoms and series).

ized in the tradition of globally renowned productions such as *Game of Thrones*, *The Tudors*, *Vikings*, and *The Crown*. Produced by Radio-televizija Srbije (RTS) (Radio Television of Serbia) between 2017 and 2018, the series aimed to dramatize the formative period of the medieval Serbian state and the rise of the Nemanjić dynasty through a visually rich and narratively structured historical reconstruction. The production of this thirteen-episode television series was initiated to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the coronation of Stefan the First-Crowned as the first King of Serbia in the year 1217. With a budget of 2.87 million euros,<sup>10</sup> the production involved an impressive ensemble of over 200 actors and nearly 3,000 extras. Scenes were filmed at more than 200 locations, featuring striking set designs and lavish costumes. All key participants in the production process consulted with respected historians, theologians, linguists, archaeologists, ethnologists, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists. In this way, considerable efforts were made to convincingly recreate the medieval period in Serbia (Raška) during the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty. This television series was intended to serve as a logical and technologically updated continuation of earlier historical film and television works, such as *Banović Strahinja* (1983, directed by Vatroslav Mimica), *Vuk Karadžić* (1987, Đorđe Kadijević), *Seobe (Migrations*, 1989, Aleksandar Petrović), and *Boj na Kosovu (Battle of Kosovo*, 1989, Zdravko Šotra). All creators,<sup>11</sup> along with a cast of the most talented actors, were expected to ensure the unquestionable success of the series *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine*. However, both the experts and the audience gave negative assessments of the final product. Numerous criticisms were raised, including a lack of inventive plot, historical inaccuracies, the use of slang in dialogue, inconsistencies, errors in various details concerning the set design, modern elements within the frames, unconvincing acting, unimpressive and lackluster crowd scenes, and trivial humor. Thus, most of the constructive elements of *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine* failed to meet the core expectations of the audience. However, one component stood out as an exception: the music.

An experienced composer, author of applied music, creator and performer of both popular and artistic music, highly educated and skilled in the field of music, Dragoljub Ilić approached the creation of the musical score for the *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine* with meticulous care and responsibility. By conveying the history of music from the period in which the series's events took place, he made a skillful distinction between folk/traditional and church spiritual music. In addition to his own knowledge, the composer relied on expert

<sup>10</sup> Funding for the realization of the series was provided by sponsors and supporters of the project, as well as from the commercial revenue of the public broadcasting service.

<sup>11</sup> Esteemed screenwriter Gordan Mihić, experienced director Marko Marinković, assistant director Bojana Šutić, executive producers Ivan Pribićević and Igor Vranjković, renowned set designer Kiril Spaseski, costume designer Stefan Savković, and composer Dragoljub Ilić.

consultations with theologians and ethnomusicologists and collaborated with top musical performers who brought his vision and ideas to life.<sup>12</sup> As an admirer of epic fantasy, the composer combined elements of traditional, spiritual choral, and modern electronic music to support the dramatic narrative and characters. As noted by Marija Ćirić, diegetic music corresponds to in-frame music, while non-diegetic music represents the background score.<sup>13</sup> In this context, diegetic music makes up about 7%, and non-diegetic music accounts for around 93%, as stated in Nikoleta Dojčinović's study.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the sound identity of any series is determined by the opening theme, and in the case of *Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine*, it is a blend of all the aforementioned elements: secular folk instruments, the spiritual voice of soloist Divna Ljubojević and the *Melodi* choir, alongside psalm texts, arranged in a contemporary style, with harmonies predominantly featuring the natural minor scale and occasional play with altered tones, giving it a modal touch and significant dynamic crescendo. The narrative role of the opening theme, as noted by Nikoleta Dojčinović:

[...] sonically portraying the growth of Serbia from a small principality to a kingdom, to an autocephalous church [...] the formation, definition, and rise of the Serbian nation is achieved through crescendo and the expansion of the performing apparatus, from an a cappella solo voice to a (grand) male choir and instrumental ensemble. The opening theme ends a cappella, which can be interpreted as a sign of peaceful days ahead for the Serbian state and church. The female voice symbolizes the state, as well as the primary emotional line followed throughout the series [...] The text can be interpreted as a prayer to God [...] The song is written in the spirit of medieval literature.<sup>15</sup>

When interpreted within the context of the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Active Audience Theory, the fulfillment of the presumed needs of the audience is confirmed by the fact that, according to Vladimir Grajić, director of the PGP RTS publishing house, which released the original music from the series

<sup>12</sup> Deacon Nenad Ilić, along with the distinguished Byzantine chanter Nikola Popmihajlov, the Serbian choir Mojsije Petrović, and singer Divna Ljubojević, played a key role in the successful realization of the spiritual music. The Renaissance Ensemble and Ljubomir Dimitrijević brought to life the authenticity of wandering artists – singers and musicians who traveled across Europe, as well as court musicians and entertainers. Traditional folk music was brilliantly performed by young ethnomusicologists from the vocal group Serbia Global Art. As a fan of epic fantasy, the composer also formed the thirty-member orchestra Nemanjići, which, together with the inventive arrangements of the composer and the top production by Oliver Jovanović, was crucial in creating the monumental atmosphere of the series in all its narrative forms – from lyricism to drama.

<sup>13</sup> Marija Ćirić, "Naracija i filmska muzika dijegetička i nedijegetička muzika u filmu," *Kultura. Časopis za teoriju i sociologiju kulture i kulturnu politiku*, 134 (2012), 129.

<sup>14</sup> Nikoleta Dojčinović, *Narativna uloga muzike u televizijskim serijama: Srbija 2000–2020*, (doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, 2023), 33.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 60.

*Nemanjići – rađanje kraljevine*, the first print run sold out in just 22 days (04.04.2018–26.04.2018), followed by two more sold-out print runs. The cross-media reshaping of music discourse, in this case, ranges from applied music to sound carriers on which the original music from the series is presented as independent entities within the media industry.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Jutro će promeniti sve (2018)***

As Aleksandar Ristić notes in his study, “music (counterpoint and non-diegetic) can follow various paths and have an innovative, suggestive, and inspiring impact on the reception of the film.”<sup>17</sup> The meta/trans/multimedia series *Jutro će promeniti sve*<sup>18</sup> focuses on young people, members of Generation Y or Millennials, living in an urban environment and still searching for their place in the world. The dramatic narrative follows the life stories of four individuals, all thirty years old, over the course of a year. Through a period of maturation from youth to middle age, the characters of the series redefine their friendships and emotional relationships.<sup>19</sup>

The series *Jutro će promeniti sve* was inspired by the legendary Belgrade School of Humor, particularly the series *Grlom u jagode* (*The Unpicked Strawberries*, 1976) by Srđan Karanović and Rajko Grlić. This cult series depicted an era with a humorous and nostalgic approach to the dramatic narrative. However, as inspiration for the characters and plot in *Jutro će promeniti sve*, the authors also cite the dramatic series *Zaboravljeni* (*Forgotten*, 1990) by Darko Bajić, which focused on the relationships of young people in the former SFRY during the late 1980s, a time when social differences in the country became increasingly evident. The director of the series *Jutro će promeniti sve*, Goran Stanković, noted that through 40 episodes, they strived to offer the viewers something “raw and as honest as possible, hoping that others feel the same sense of confusion, loneliness, and disorientation that this time brings.” Although the series shares its name with a song by the popular ex-Yugoslav band Indexi, the authors consider the title more significant for its dramatic framework than as a

<sup>16</sup> The significance is even greater because it occurred at a time when the CD was already largely out of use.

<sup>17</sup> Aleksandar Ristić, *Filmska muzika i kulturni identitet: Jugoslovenski film 1980–1991* (doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, 2021), 125.

<sup>18</sup> The first episode was broadcast on the YouTube channel of This and That Productions, which produced the series. In addition to regular television broadcasting on RTS channels, the series was also available on the RTS Planet multimedia internet platform’s homepage, accessible via computers, tablets, and the mobile app for iOS and Android phones.

<sup>19</sup> The screenplay was written by Maja Pelević, Dimitrije Kokanović, Milan Marković Matis, Boris Grurović, and Filip Vujošević. Directors were Goran Stanković, Vladimir Tagić, and Milica Tomović.

direct musical inspiration. Each episode begins in the morning and follows the protagonists throughout the day and evening.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the dramatic narrative, which ideally resonates with young people within a single generation, urban culture, and socio-economic conditions, the series *Jutro će promeniti sve* was further popularized by its dual musical matrix. It is dual because one musical level consists of the original music composed by Janja Lončar, and the other level is a compilation of songs (soundtrack) by alternative and well-known artists, which also plays an important role in the dramatic narrative.

As Aleksandar Ristić states, “The choice of different popular music genres is often closely tied to cultural codes, with the folk genre being associated with rural environments and the characters representing such settings, while rock, with its inevitable electric guitar, can represent an urban environment.”<sup>21</sup> The authors of *Jutro će promeniti sve* did not initially plan to release a soundtrack. However, the audience responded enthusiastically to the music in the series, and by the end of 2018, the PGP RTS publishing house had released a compilation of twenty music tracks.

The skillfully selected music made the series recognizable in the mainstream context. In addition to the existing songs, Janja Lončar composed several pieces specifically for the series. Lončar was the link that connected all the performers who contributed their songs, flawlessly emphasizing the dramatic situations and characters. What is crucial is that the urban culture, within which the series plot unfolds, is highlighted by music from the alternative domestic and regional scene. The range of musical numbers spans from the 1980s to the new millennium, bringing together experienced performers and lesser-known artists. Thus, the music compilation became a sort of window to a broader public and the world, or, as Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman defines it, as “placed in the world shop front” that is of particular importance for contemporary creation in the field of music where “creativity is thus affirmed, propagated, made accessible, even exposed to public scrutiny.”<sup>22</sup> By releasing a music compilation that, within conventional frameworks, stands on the opposite side of the mainstream (as underground, alternative, non-mainstream) for one of the largest record labels in the region, PGP RTS, the established hierarchy of relations between the center<sup>23</sup> and

<sup>20</sup> Maksimović Jelena, “*Jutro će promeniti sve*: O generaciji bez iluzija,” *BBC NEWS na srpskom*, December 7 (2018). [www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-46480050](http://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-46480050). Accessed: December 28, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Ristić, *Filmska muzika i kulturni identitet...*, op. cit., 130.

<sup>22</sup> Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, “Music as the periphery under conditions of degraded hierarchy between the centre and the margins in the space of the internet,” *New Sound. International Journal of Music*, 38/II (2011), 36.

<sup>23</sup> As Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman emphasizes, in Europe and beyond, the music culture of Western European countries has imposed itself as the center of the musical

the periphery<sup>24</sup> in the music world has been deconstructed.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between the musical center and periphery represents the interaction between two different positions. Peripheral music is created at a distance from the center, separated by differences in ideas, content, ideology, aesthetics, and market context. Through both public broadcasting services and various commercial media that popularized the series *Jutro će promeniti sve*, a musical framework characterized by minimalist, rhythmic, and melodic songs – often emotionally atmospheric and even interpretatively imprecise – moved from the periphery to the center. In this way, underground or marginal songs became part of the mainstream. Basic harmonies, simple chord structures, and transparent arrangements with a strong focus on lyrics and storytelling define these compositions.

As in the *Nemanjić – rađanje kraljevine*, the opening music theme serves as a key element of the TV show's identity. In this case, it is the hit song “Daleki svet” by the alternative rock band Straight Mickey and the Boyz. The lyrics of the song support the core of the series' dramatic narrative, while simultaneously creating a contrast with the series title through the chorus line: “The morning WON'T change everything.”

In the series *Jutro će promeniti sve*, the music operates in both diegetic and non-diegetic relationships. Whether it's scenes where characters hear and react to the songs and lyrics, or music influencing the audience's overall reception, its

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world. The dominance of the universally accepted Western Major/Minor tonal system compositional approaches and techniques, forms, and orchestration has led to the widespread recognition of the West as the ultimate musical authority and as the center from which musical culture has developed. Anything that deviates from these established standards (geographically, ideologically, or creatively) has, over time, come to be regarded as peripheral or marginal. Cf. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, “Music as the periphery under conditions of degraded hierarchy between the centre and the margins in the space of the internet,” in: *Identities: The World of Music in Relation to Itself*, ed. By Tilman Seebass, Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, and Tijana Popović Mladenović (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2012), 25.

<sup>24</sup> Peripheral music refers to musical expressions that originate outside the Western cultural and musical system. It includes music whose artistic value may be questioned, as well as music that exists on the margins of dominant musical trends. It can be seen as an aesthetic fringe within a given musical culture, music that does not belong to the mainstream. In some cases, the term carries a negative connotation, referring to works that do not meet professional or technical standards and are not perceived as being of high quality. The concept of the periphery is thus positioned outside the center or secondary, but at the same time essential. Without the periphery, the idea of a center could not exist, as its meaning is defined in relation to what lies beyond it. Ibid., 23–4.

<sup>25</sup> The concepts of center and periphery here are, in fact, a paraphrase of what Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman defined as, on the one hand, the musical culture of Western European countries and, on the other, music that originates from cultures outside the Western framework and world. Ibid.

functionality within the dramatic narrative and context has made the selected tracks a cohesive whole. Otherwise, it would have simply been a typical alternative pop-electro-rock playlist. This is yet another example of how cross-media reshapes the musical discourse of popular TV series. It moves from an existing musical context, such as the underground music scene along with its audience and media, through applied music, to its repopularization in the mainstream context of the mass media music industry (ABA).

### ***Stranger Things* (2016–2025)**

Lastly, it is essential to highlight an interesting example of cross-media transformation of musical discourse, which focuses on a single musical track. The reconstruction of the iconography of the 1980s through the American multi-genre series (fantasy, horror, action, drama) *Stranger Things* resulted in a new global screen phenomenon. The creators of the series, the Duffer brothers (Matt & Ross Duffer), produced four seasons of the show for Netflix's meta media format from 2016 to 2022. The final season is expected to be released in 2025. The series centers on the residents of the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana (USA), who face a hostile alternate dimension (the so-called Upside Down) after a nearby experimental project accidentally opens a portal between Earth and another dimension. The complex, dramatic plot, developed by the Duffer Brothers, blends investigative drama with supernatural elements, portrayed through the lens of a child's sensitivity, while also incorporating numerous references to 1980s pop culture. The creators were inspired by the cult works of Steven Spielberg, John Carpenter, David Lynch, Stephen King, and Wes Craven, as well as reports about experiments conducted during the Cold War and conspiracy theories about secret government programs. The series garnered record viewership on the streaming platform due to its characterization, atmosphere, acting, music, direction, screenplay, editing, effects, as well as its homage to the 1980s, earning numerous nominations and awards. In the context of transmedia storytelling (the construction and enhancement of meaning in a story through various media channels), Netflix continues to expand the *Stranger Things* franchise with an animated spin-off series and a stage play, *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, in London's West End, written by Kate Trefry and directed by Stephen Daldry.<sup>26</sup>

What particularly contributed to the popularity of *Stranger Things* is its music. The theme song and original score were composed by Michael Stein and

<sup>26</sup> Spin-off is any narrative work derived from an existing piece that focuses on different aspects of the original work, thus expanding the story universe and exploring new characters, events, or perspectives. Joe Otterson, "Stranger Things. Animated Series Ordered at Netflix," *Variety*, April 10 (2023). <https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/stranger-things-animated-series-netflix-1235577171/>. Accessed: December 28, 2023.

Kyle Dixon, members of the electronic band Survive, as a tribute to the great film composers of the 1980s, such as Jean-Michel Jarre, John Carpenter, Giorgio Moroder, and Vangelis. According to music supervisor Nora Felder, the composers catapulted the synthwave genre into a new dimension. As with the series *Jutro će promeniti sve*, in *Stranger Things*, alongside the original music, there is also an impressive number of songs from musicians who defined the decade in focus, such as Joy Division, Toto, New Order, The Bangles, Foreigner, Echo and the Bunnymen, Peter Gabriel, Corey Hart, and many others. Throughout the four seasons, several internationally recognized tracks from the history of popular music stand out as striking diegetic narrative elements: "Should I Stay or Should I Go" by The Clash (season 1), "The Never Ending Story" by Limahl (season 3), "Master of Puppets" by Metallica (season 4), and "Running Up That Hill" by Kate Bush (season 4).

Nevertheless, one particular music track has undergone a remarkable revival, emerging as a symbol of cross-media reshaping and transformation within the context of screen and popular music culture. The song "Running Up That Hill (A Deal with God)" by British singer-songwriter Kate Bush was released in 1985 on her fifth studio album, *Hounds of Love*, under EMI Records. The song received moderate acclaim from both critics and the public at the time of its release. It underwent a subsequent revival in 2012, prompted by a remix produced for the closing ceremony of the London Summer Olympic Games. No one could have anticipated that a third wave of cross-media popularization would bring renewed success to the song's author 37 years after its original release. Being the sole holder of all associated copyrights, Kate Bush rarely grants permission for the use of her music. However, as a devoted fan of the series *Stranger Things*, she agreed to the use of "Running Up That Hill" in one of the show's key narrative scenes. The result was that this single became her first No. 1 hit since 1978, when she released *Wuthering Heights*. This achievement also made her the first solo artist with the longest interval between two No. 1 singles on the official chart of popular songs. Furthermore, Kate Bush became the oldest artist to reach No. 1 on the UK charts at the age of 63.<sup>27</sup> Following the broadcast of the scene in which the song is featured, the music streaming platform Spotify disclosed a 9,900% increase in streams. By June 2023, the track had reached one billion streams on the Spotify platform. In September 2022, "Running Up That Hill" was also released on audio CD, selling over a million copies in the United Kingdom alone. The extraordinary revival of this song is also attributed to the experienced music supervisor, Nora Felder.<sup>28</sup> According to Felder, the exceptional lyricism and

<sup>27</sup> George Griffiths, "The oldest artists to score a Number 1 single in the UK," *Official Charts*, June 17 (2022). [www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/the-oldest-artists-to-score-a-number-1-single-in-the-uk\\_29564/](http://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/the-oldest-artists-to-score-a-number-1-single-in-the-uk_29564/). Accessed: December 28, 2023.

<sup>28</sup> Nora Felder began her career in the music industry, collaborating on the production of albums by legendary musicians such as Paul Simon, Sinead O'Connor, Cyndi

atmosphere of the song “Running Up That Hill” perfectly aligned with the emotional and physical struggle of Max, the protagonist of the series for whom this track was intended: “In Max’s situation, the need for a ‘deal with God’ can perhaps be metaphorically understood as a desperate cry for love, to manifest the extraordinary understanding and support Max needed while feeling so painfully alone.”<sup>29</sup>

According to Nora Felder, while Max battles the evil embodied by the manifestation of Vecna, she hears music at a pivotal moment that moves her towards connection and a spiritual outpouring of love from her friends, who heroically strive to understand her needs. By playing the song “Running Up That Hill,” which she hears in the scene, they save her from eternal isolation. Felder emphasizes that “in some ways, this scene can be understood as alluding more broadly to the inner struggles with private demons that many teens wrestle with during troubled times, especially when feeling alone and estranged from others.”<sup>30</sup> In discussing the truly timeless nature of Kate Bush’s musical creation, Felder’s interpretation aligns closely with the notion that a single song can have a long-term impact, much like George Gerbner explains the enduring influence of media content.

It is indisputable that *Stranger Things* represents a twenty-first century phenomenon on screen and in popular music culture. The score, composed by Michael Stein and Kyle Dixon, brought about a revival of the synthwave genre. The carefully curated soundtrack resonated with older generations of viewers familiar with the pop culture of the 1980s while also captivating a new, younger audience. As Nora Felder notes: “This show truly demonstrates the power of music, and showcases its important role in the telling of stories in moving picture.”<sup>31</sup>

Suppose we recall the principles of constructing an active audience, as outlined in Denis McQuail’s theory, which focuses on media use for acquiring infor-

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Lauper, Joan Jett, Malcolm McLaren, and Iggy Pop. Her breakthrough in the field of music supervision for television projects came as the music editor for the series *Californication*. Felder has collaborated with numerous film companies, including Disney Touchstone Pictures and Overture Films and was a member of the prestigious advisory board for the Billboard magazine’s Film and TV Music Conference. Nora Felder has been a guest at numerous music conferences and festivals worldwide and received numerous accolades, among which stands out the prestigious Emmy Award for Music Supervision for the series *Stranger Things*. Cf. [www.imdb.com/name/nm0270959/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0270959/). Accessed: December 28, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Jazz Tangcay, “How *Stranger Things* Landed Kate Bush’s *Running up that Hill*,” *Variety*, Jun 1 (2022). <https://variety.com/2022/music/news/stranger-things-kate-bush-running-up-hill-1235282576/>. Accessed: December 28, 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Doreen Alexander Child, “Q&A with Nora Felder, Music Supervisor for *Stranger Thing*,” *Below the Line*, June 18 (2017). [www.btlnews.com/crafts/norafelder/](http://www.btlnews.com/crafts/norafelder/). Accessed: December 28, 2023.

mation, gaining new knowledge, identifying with characters, entertainment, social interaction or affiliation, and escapism. In that case, all three examples discussed in this paper fulfill the majority of these criteria. The selection was not random: *Nemanjići – radanje kraljevine* exemplifies an authorially original and contextually applied musical score that, beyond its screen function, possesses the qualities of artistic program music; *Jutro će promeniti sve* contributed to the revitalization and popularization of a segment of the domestic and regional music scene; *Stranger Things* represents an indisputable global phenomenon at the intersection of culture, entertainment, generational identity, and music. All three series, with their respective strengths and weaknesses, engage in two-way communication with both traditional and metamedia audiences through the cross-media reshaping of their musical discourse.

When we return to the beginning, considering all that has been discussed, it becomes evident, though it represents only a “drop in the ocean” of examples, how music supervision serves as a form of storytelling that can elevate the dramatic narrative and engage the audience. When the audience becomes an active consumer of mass media, taking an engaged role in interpreting and integrating traditional or metamedia content, cross-media reshaping of musical discourse occurs, extending from screen culture to streaming playlists.

## SUMMARY

This paper presents various forms of transmedia and cross-media reshaping of music discourse on three examples of television and internet series formats within popular and mass media culture. From the perspectives of contemporary mass media theories, such as Uses and Gratifications Theory, Active Audience Theory, and Cultivation Theory, different types of cross-media reshaping of the musical discourse in popular TV series are explored (one story/music – multiple channels/media). These transformations range from originally composed, applied, and functional music to tracks featured in (meta) mass media playlists on radio and streaming services/digital platforms for music broadcasting.

When referring to the series *Nemanjići – radanje kraljevine* in the context of the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Active Audience Theory, the fulfillment of the audience's assumed needs is confirmed by the fact that the original music from the series was released and sold out in several editions on audio CD. In this case, cross-media reshaping ranges from the originally composed applied music, which aims to enhance the dramatic narrative, to sound carriers featuring the original music from the series, whose function is much broader within the media and music industries and popular culture. Furthermore, the series *Jutro će promeniti sve* serves as another example of a cross-media transformation of the musical discourse in popular TV series, ranging from the popularization of the underground music scene through the selection of appropriate musical tracks to the originally composed applied music and extending to the popularization of previously underrepresented music within the mainstream context of mass media and the music industry (charts, sound carriers, music video broadcasting, etc.). Lastly, the final example chosen as pertinent to the topic of this paper, the TV series

*Stranger Things*, focuses on a single musical track (“Running Up That Hill” by Kate Bush), which, through its use in one of the pivotal narrative scenes and through cross-media reshaping, was revitalized and repopularized within the context of screen and popular music culture 37 years after its release.

The aforementioned series are, in their own ways, examples of originally composed applied music (which, beyond the screen context, holds value as artistic program music), the revitalization and popularization of the underground domestic and regional music scene, and an undeniable global phenomenon of popular culture. All three series successfully established a two-way communication with the audience precisely through cross-media reshaping of the musical discourse.

# HAYDN'S STRING QUARTETS ON THE SILVER SCREEN: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY COMBINING CLOSE AND AI-ASSISTED DISTANT READING.

CASE STUDY: MINUET FROM OP. 64 NO. 1 IN C MAJOR (JOSEPH HAYDN) IN *MINORITY REPORT* (STEVEN SPIELBERG)

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**ABSTRACT:** In this exploratory study, traditional musicological analysis and AI-assisted distant reading are combined to examine the presence and interpretation of Joseph Haydn's string quartets in film. The paper first addresses the underpinnings of distant versus close reading in musical analysis and epistemology. It then presents a quantitative, AI-driven analysis of the appearance of Haydn's works in movies, using data from an IMDb film dataset, and highlights broad patterns of Haydn's representation on the silver screen. In the third section, a detailed close reading of the Minuet from Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in C Major (1790) is conducted, focusing on its use in a pivotal scene from Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* (2002). Finally, the study compares and evaluates how three AI chatbots (ChatGPT, Google's GEMINI, and Copilot) interpret the same film scene and musical excerpt, discussing the strengths and limitations of AI-generated analysis. Together, these four approaches illustrate how integrating distant and close reading methods can enrich our understanding of music's role in film, while also highlighting the potential and challenges of AI assistance in musicological research.

**KEY WORDS:** Music and film, Haydn's minuet Op. 64 No. 1 in C major, artificial intelligence, musicology, interpretive methodology, close reading, distant reading.

## Introduction

Being part of the current global hype, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into musicology marks a significant shift, enhancing the traditional approach with computational methods that promise both increased efficiency and a broader scope of analytical capabilities.<sup>1</sup> However, this development brings with it a complex debate: does the advent of AI truly enrich musicological inquiry, or does it merely add a layer of technological complexity? Freedman and Russo-Batterham note that large language models bring uncanny new capabilities yet display an

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<sup>1</sup> The journey of AI in musicology has been long and evolving, beginning as early as the late 1960s when researchers first explored the potential of AI to analyze and compose music, setting the stage for today's sophisticated applications. Cf. Curtis Roads, "Artificial Intelligence and Music," *Computer Music Journal* IV/2 (1980), 13–25.

“alarming tendency to hallucinate uncanny falsehoods,”<sup>2</sup> demanding vigilant human oversight. AI’s ability to parse extensive datasets introduces precision in identifying intricate musical patterns, aiding improved classification and structural insights. Liu and Dai note that sophisticated algorithms enable AI to reveal “complex melodic motifs, chord progressions, and rhythmic patterns” that were previously obscured by the limitations of traditional analysis.<sup>3</sup> In the context of IMS musicological conferences, Kate van Orden highlighted the potential of AI-based translation tools to promote multilingualism in musicology.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, can technological advancement fully compensate for the depth of traditional musicological analysis? The concept of close reading remains central, and critics argue that despite its computational strength, AI lacks the nuanced approach necessary to grasp the full cultural and historical contexts that are integral to musicology.<sup>5</sup> Milan Milojković’s experiment with ChatGPT, involving the creation of a fictitious historical figure and his musical works, illustrates this point vividly. Milojković’s study, as far as I know, is the only text in musicological research by Serbian researchers that addresses the question of AI’s role in

<sup>2</sup> Richard Freedman and Daniel Russo-Batterham, “Musicology in a Time of Technological Transformation,” *Musicological Brainfood* VIII/2 (2024). <https://brainfood.musicology.org/vol-8-no-2-2024/musicology-in-a-time-of-technological-transformation/>. Accessed: April 20, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Xiya Liu and Yu Dai, “Virtual Computer Systems in AI-Powered Music Analysis: A Comparative Study for Genre Classification and Musicological Investigations,” *Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management*, VIII/4 (2023), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kate van Orden, “AI and Multilingual Conferencing – Musicological Brainfood,” *Musicological Brainfood* VIII/2 (2024). <https://brainfood.musicology.org/vol-8-no-2-2024/ai-and-multilingual-conferencing/>. Accessed: April 20, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Franco Moretti’s concept of *distant reading* introduces a methodological shift in the humanities, proposing a move away from *close reading* of individual canonical works toward the large-scale analysis of extensive textual corpora. Rather than focusing on interpretative depth, this approach privileges breadth, allowing scholars to identify overarching patterns, temporal trends, and structural transformations across a wide body of material. Through quantitative techniques, *distant reading* seeks to reveal systemic features of cultural production that remain inaccessible through traditional, text-centered methodologies. See Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013). In musicology, this paradigm has been adapted to the analysis of large-scale musical datasets, particularly bibliographic and archival records. Rather than interpreting individual scores or performances, scholars working with big music data examine long-term developments such as shifts in music publishing, geographic distribution of composers and works, or the evolution of genre categories. This mode of inquiry does not aim to replace conventional methods but to complement them by expanding the evidentiary base of musicological research and opening new avenues for hypothesis formation and historical interpretation. See Stephen Rose et al., “Writing a Big Data History of Music,” *Early Music* XLIII/4 (2015), 649–57.

musicology.<sup>6</sup> This raises critical questions about the authenticity and scholarly integrity of AI-generated narratives in musicology, challenging us to consider whether such synthetic constructs can ever truly embody the rich complexities of music history.

Furthermore, does AI possess the ability to appreciate the unquantifiable aspects of musical expression that human scholars value so highly? As highlighted in “A Systematic Literature Review on Computational Musicology,” while AI excels at quantitative analysis, it often neglects the qualitative, emotive aspects of musical expression that are crucial for a full appreciation of music’s cultural significance.<sup>7</sup>

In this paper, I undertake an exploratory study to assess the efficacy of traditional close reading techniques in tandem with an experimental AI-assisted distant reading approach in my analysis of Joseph Haydn’s chamber music within the film *Minority Report*. My objective is to reflect upon the distinct insights each method offers into the intersection of classical music and cinema. By juxtaposing my analytical techniques with AI-driven analysis, I aim to explore the potential contributions and limitations of chatbots in musicological research. This comparison seeks not only to discern what understandings can be derived from each approach but also to identify how AI might complement or challenge traditional musicological perspectives.

As mentioned, my primary goal is to compare the effectiveness of traditional human close reading methods with AI-assisted distant reading, using chatbot technology, in the analysis of Joseph Haydn’s music in film soundtracks. This study will focus on analyzing data about Haydn’s music from soundtracks, as listed in IMDb,<sup>8</sup> spanning from circa 1930 to 2023, including but not limited to the String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in C Major (second movement, Minuet) featured in the film *Minority Report*. By employing ChatGPT-4 to analyze this broad dataset, I aim to explore whether combining insights from AI analysis with traditional musicological analysis can lead to more scientifically valid conclusions about the patterns and roles of Haydn’s music across various cinematic contexts. Specifically, I plan to address:

- How might an AI analysis of a broad dataset (such as IMDb’s soundtrack listings) reveal patterns in the use of Haydn’s music in films, and how could a focused close reading of Haydn’s Minuet in *Minority Report* validate or refine those patterns?

<sup>6</sup> Milan Milojković, “Opera Third Bullet by Vojislav Vučković, or How Would ChatGPT Do on the Musicology Exam?,” *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, 10 (2023), 53–70.

<sup>7</sup> Bhavya Mor, Sunita Garhwal, and Ajay Kumar, “A Systematic Literature Review on Computational Musicology,” *Archives of Computational Methods in Engineering*, 27/3 (2020), 923–37.

<sup>8</sup> The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) is an online database of information related to film, television series, video games, podcasts, etc. Cf. [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com).

- What specific insights can freely available large language models (ChatGPT 3.5, GEMINI, Copilot) offer about the use of Haydn's Minuet (Op. 64 No. 1 in C major) in *Minority Report*, and how do these insights complement or potentially conflict with the observations from a traditional close reading of the same scene?
- To what extent do the AI-generated findings align with or challenge those from the traditional analysis, and how might integrating these perspectives contribute to the depth and validity of musicological conclusions?

## Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The integration of classical music into film narratives is a complex process that evokes varied scholarly interpretations. Dean Duncan and Royal S. Brown both emphasize how classical music enriches the narrative layers of a film, yet they examine its influence from distinct perspectives.<sup>9</sup>

Duncan sees classical music as a direct narrative agent that “deepens narrative complexity and enriches the emotional landscape,”<sup>10</sup> emphasizing its active role in shaping the film’s storytelling and audience alignment. In contrast, Brown focuses more on the psychological underpinnings, suggesting that music, particularly non-diegetic scores – just like Haydn’s Minuet in *Minority Report* – manipulates the emotional contours of a scene, creating a “psychological atmosphere” that guides viewers’ interpretations subconsciously.<sup>11</sup>

Claudia Gorbman and Anahid Kassabian have both explored how film music functions not merely as an aesthetic complement but as a persuasive and emotionally directive tool. Gorbman emphasizes that discussions of film music must move beyond aestheticism to account for its *rhetorical* function – its power to shape meaning, guide viewer perception, and align emotional response through sonic cues.<sup>12</sup> Kassabian complements this by introducing the concept of “affiliating identifications,”<sup>13</sup> where music cues help align audience sympathies with onscreen characters or situations, thus reinforcing or sometimes contradicting visual narratives.

Michel Chion introduces a slightly different perspective through his concepts of *synchresis* and audiovisual contrapuntalism. He emphasizes the technical interplay between sound and image, where *synchresis* – the fusion of sound and

<sup>9</sup> Dean Duncan, *Charms That Soothe: Classical Music and the Narrative Film* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003); Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Duncan, *Charms...*, op. cit., 112.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, *Overtones and Undertones...*, op. cit., 95.

<sup>12</sup> Claudia Gorbman, “Aesthetics and Rhetoric,” *American Music*, XXII/1 (2004), 14–26.

<sup>13</sup> Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

visual that seems inherently synchronized – enhances narrative cohesion, while contrapuntalism uses music to contrast with visual elements, often highlighting thematic contradictions or underlying tensions in the film.<sup>14</sup>

Together, these scholars – among others – present a layered understanding of how classical music, such as Haydn's Minuet, not only complements but also challenges and deepens the cinematic narrative, suggesting that its role is both fundamental and subtly manipulative, enhancing viewer engagement and thematic complexity.

This overview sets the stage for integrating advanced computational tools into the analysis. However, rather than a traditional corpus-based distant reading, the study adopts a hybrid method: it leverages a pre-existing dataset (IMDb soundtrack listings) and employs an AI chatbot as an experimental analytical aid. This exploratory approach is inspired by recent attempts to use AI to bridge technical gaps in music research,<sup>15</sup> while remaining critically aware of AI's limitations. As we delve into the quantitative aspects of Haydn's music presence in film soundtracks, the transition from a qualitative to a quantitative focus becomes crucial. This shift is where the potential of AI to further enrich musicological study is most vividly illustrated. By utilizing computational methodologies to analyze the Excel data file from IMDb, we transition from traditional humanities-based analysis to a data-driven research approach. Such use of an existing online data source resonates with initiatives to link music databases via AI; for example, Fujinaga demonstrates how connecting disparate music datasets through linked data can open new avenues for analysis.<sup>16</sup>

The use of computational tools in this context enables a broader aggregation and analysis of data than previously possible, providing a panoramic view of Haydn's musical legacy across different eras and cinematic genres. For instance, AI can analyze the frequency and context of Haydn's music in film, correlating it with changes in movie themes, directorial styles, or historical periods. This approach not only enhances our understanding of the aesthetic and emotional impacts discussed earlier but also grounds these observations in statistically significant data.

In the following section, I will present some details of the quantitative analysis that employs AI tools to present some trends and patterns in the deployment of Haydn's compositions within the film industry.

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<sup>14</sup> Michel Chion, *Music in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

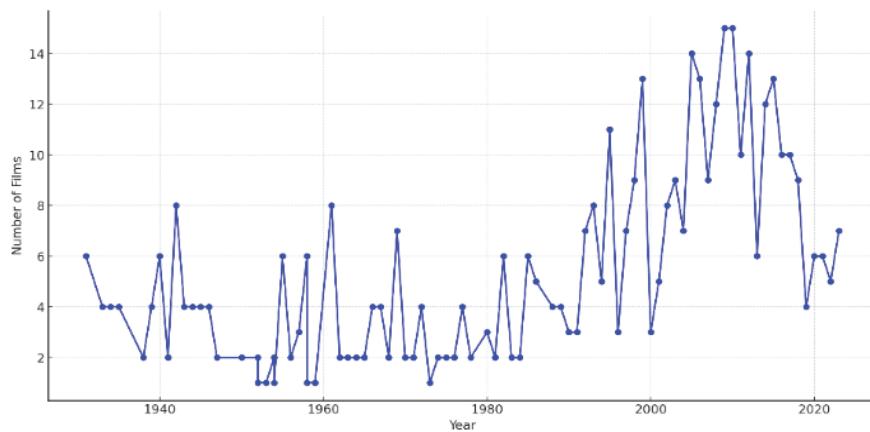
<sup>15</sup> Tim Daly, "Playing with AI: Approximating Expertise at Coding," *Musicological Brainfood*, IX/1 (2025). <https://brainfood.musicology.org/vol-9-no-1-2025/playing-with-ai/>. Accessed: April 20, 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Ichiro Fujinaga, "Integrating Online Music Databases: The LinkedMusic Project," *Musicological Brainfood*, IX/1 (2025). <https://brainfood.musicology.org/vol-9-no-1-2025/integrating-online-music-databases/>. Accessed: April 20, 2025.

## A Distant Reading Perspective

The dataset used in this study was generated by a manual and computational approach, through AI-assisted extraction of metadata from the IMDb soundtrack database, comprising over 450 film entries in which Haydn's music is featured. Each entry includes information such as the film title, musical work used, and year. This dataset allowed for the identification of frequently recurring works (e.g., the *Emperor Quartet*), patterns of usage across genres and historical periods, and notable outliers. While not exhaustive in terms of musicological depth, it provided a structured foundation for analyzing broader cinematic trends in Haydn's reception. A short extract from this dataset is presented as Table 1.<sup>17</sup>

The examination of Joseph Haydn's music in films from the IMDb soundtrack database reveals varied patterns of usage, which reflect the changing musical preferences and cinematic needs across decades. The analysis shows fluctuations in usage, with significant interest particularly in the mid-twentieth century and the early twenty-first century.



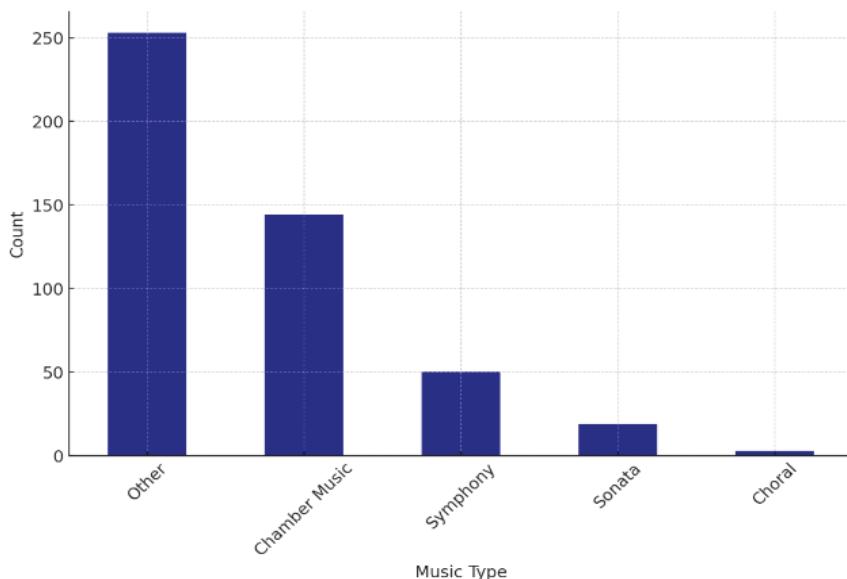
**Figure 1:** Frequency of Haydn's music usage in films (1930–2023)

The analysis identified recurrent selections such as “Das Lied der Deutschen” (String Quartet in C Major Op. 76 No. 3, also known as the *Emperor Quartet*) and various forms of the “Deutschlandlied,” highlighting a strong preference for these compositions in films involving historical or national themes, especially those related to German history.

The data show that Haydn's music spans a range of genres, including sacred music (such as *Stabat Mater*) and the orchestral version of *The Seven Last Words*

<sup>17</sup> A full version of the IMDb-based dataset is available upon request from the author. Titles of Haydn's works are retained in their original form, as listed in the database.

of *Christ*, among others, with more frequent usage of his chamber music, symphonies,<sup>18</sup> and sonatas in films.



**Figure 2:** Distribution of Haydn's music types in films

The diversity in Haydn's musical opus used in films indicates that while certain pieces are favored repeatedly, there is also an exploration of a wider range of lesser-known works. For example, we even find a use of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 1 No. 1 in B-flat Major in Timur Bekmambetov's horror film *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* (2012), demonstrating the unexpected places Haydn's music can appear.

### Case Study: Haydn's Minuet in *Minority Report*

Now, let's turn to the use of Haydn's chamber piece within the narrative fabric of Steven Spielberg's 2002 film *Minority Report*. Set in a dystopian future where a specialized police unit, PreCrime, arrests criminals based on foreknowledge provided by gifted individuals known as "precogs," the film intricately weaves themes of free will, ethics, and the potentially problematic reliance on technology for justice.

<sup>18</sup> An insightful case study on the reuse and transformation of music materials from Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* in film scoring is offered in Jeff Lyon and Brent Yorgason, "New Surprises for Haydn's Surprise Symphony: Max Steiner's Score for *We Are Not Alone* (1939)," *Journal of Film Music* X/2 (2022), 113–41.

In *Minority Report*, the soundtrack blends classical pieces with original compositions created specifically for the film. Works such as Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8 and Petr Iljič Čajkovskij's Symphony No. 6 juxtapose the film's advanced technological setting with their rich historical undertones, deepening the emotional landscape. The inclusion of Joseph Haydn's String Quartet in C Major offers a refined classical counterpoint to the film's tension-filled moments. Additionally, John Williams's original scoring, alongside Paul Haslinger's electronic compositions, dynamically supports the film's action sequences, bridging the thematic exploration of ethical dilemmas and predestined fate.

One of the characters in *Minority Report* is Dr. Iris Hineman, portrayed by Lois Smith. As the ingenious mind behind the PreCrime technology, Dr. Hineman embodies a complex blend of scientific brilliance shadowed by ethical dilemmas. Her character unfolds significantly in a defining scene set in her greenhouse – a private oasis that starkly contrasts with the film's predominant ambiance of cold technological dominance.

The greenhouse scene serves as a narrative pivot, where the lush, isolated environment (complete with futuristic biomechanical plants that move in response to the presence of characters) not only reflects Dr. Hineman's withdrawal from the world but also symbolizes the moral isolation stemming from her involvement in PreCrime. During this scene, Haydn's Minuet from String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 subtly permeates the background as the music heard from a radio or similar device. I believe that the choice of this piece strategically underscores the scene's tension and thematic depth — the classical idiom of the music poignantly juxtaposes the profound ethical questions discussed between Dr. Hineman and John Anderton, the protagonist.

As the Minuet unfolds, its major–minor contrast between the Minuet and Trio sections (C Major vs. C Minor) and the motivic connections between those sections (for instance, a prominent tonic arpeggiation leading upward) mirror the dualities within the film's narrative – between the idealistic vision of a crime-free society and the moral ambiguities of achieving such a vision. The use of secondary dominants, secondary diminished chords, an enharmonic German augmented sixth, and “interrupted” (false) cadences V–VI, particularly at the end of the Minuet, introduces a sense of unpredictability and tension. The reprise of the Minuet's opening section (A) in the three-part ABA' form is extended through motivic development and harmonic prolongation, demonstrating Haydn's skill in developing musical ideas beyond conventional expectations. Significant dynamic contrasts from forte to piano in measures 37–44, together with the aforementioned secondary diminished chords and their irregular resolutions, are important expressive elements of this movement, deviating from the usual treatment of the courtly minuet form. These elements are reflective of the scene's dramatic revelations, where the expected resolution is continuously deferred – much like the deceptive cadences in the music.

This nuanced integration of Haydn's Minuet aligns closely with Dean Duncan's observation that classical music serves as a "direct narrative agent" in films.<sup>19</sup> Beyond its formal and expressive features, the use of this movement also resonates with broader cultural and historical associations. As a dance genre, the Menuet evokes the refined courtly ethos of the Enlightenment, a period marked by faith in reason, order, and progress. In the late eighteenth century, the minuet had already undergone a transformation – from a courtly dance to a necessary movement in instrumental cycles, particularly in string quartets, which were themselves becoming symbols of bourgeois intellectual culture. Haydn, often seen as the "father" of the string quartet, shaped the genre into a medium of intimate discourse.

Within the context of *Minority Report*, this minuet thus functions not merely as ambient music but as a cultural counterpoint to the dystopian future it inhabits. The scene in the greenhouse acts as both a sanctuary and an ethical fault line. The character of Haydn's music, rooted in Enlightenment ideals, contrasts sharply with the ethical erosion surrounding the PreCrime project.

Michel Chion's concepts of synchresis and audiovisual contrapuntalism also apply here; the combination of synchronous and contrapuntal uses of the same music in a single scene effectively deepens the narrative layers and emotional complexity. At the beginning of the scene, the music is used synchronously, aligning with the orderly visuals of the greenhouse and the measured pace of the Minuet. Then the context shifts: it becomes evident that this tranquil, *false pastoral* setting – underscored by Haydn's music – is in deliberate contrast to the film's overarching themes of surveillance and predetermination. Despite the continued play of Haydn's gentle Minuet while Anderton and Dr. Hineman converse, the function of the music subtly shifts into a contrapuntal role,<sup>20</sup> adding an undercurrent of tension and paradox beneath their dialogue.

In this way, Haydn's Minuet not only complements but also complicates the visual and thematic elements of *Minority Report*. Its structural aspect and the use of sophisticated musical techniques, such as false cadences, may enrich the viewer's experience, making the score an integral part of the film's narrative effectiveness. This interplay of Haydn's music with cinematic elements underscores the layered narrative construction and the emotional complexities of the characters, affirming the role classical music can play in enhancing film storytelling and thematic exploration.

## Tensions, Gaps, and Potentials

To better understand the capabilities and limitations of current AI tools in musicalological interpretation, I posed the same question regarding Haydn's Minuet in

<sup>19</sup> Duncan, *Charms...*, op. cit., 112.

<sup>20</sup> Chion, *Music in Cinema*, op. cit.

*Minority Report* to three publicly available chatbots: ChatGPT 3.5, GEMINI, and Microsoft Copilot. The prompt (written in early April 2024) was: *Analyze the use of the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in the greenhouse scene of Minority Report. What does the choice of this particular movement suggest about the scene's mood and themes?* Their responses varied in insight, terminology, and interpretative depth, offering a revealing comparison of their respective strengths and blind spots, as shown in the Table 2.

Notably, the three chatbot responses diverged and occasionally introduced factual errors. For instance, one AI described Haydn's Minuet as a *Presto* movement in a minor key, an incorrect detail that illustrates how generative AI can confidently “hallucinate” information.<sup>21</sup> Such inconsistencies reinforce the need for critical human interpretation when using AI-generated analyses. ChatGPT 3.5 provided a fluent and contextually appropriate reading, recognizing the scene's tonal juxtaposition and the elegance of Haydn's music. It suggested that the Minuet functioned as a “contrastive element” that evoked “nostalgia and refinement,” contributing to the audience's trust in Dr. Hineman. However, it failed to specify whether the music was diegetic or non-diegetic and made no mention of the piece's form or harmonic features.

GEMINI offered a more analytical response, identifying that the music served a dual function – atmospheric and symbolic. Interestingly, GEMINI inferred that the Minuet represented “order and classical rationality” amidst the chaos of futuristic surveillance. Yet, it incorrectly described the piece as being in a “minor key,” an error that demonstrates the model's limited musical “knowledge” and tendency to extrapolate based on textual cues alone – a concern echoed by Freedman and Russo-Batterham in their analysis of AI “hallucinations.”<sup>22</sup>

Microsoft Copilot generated the most general response, stating that “classical music is often used in film to add sophistication and emotional contrast,” but it failed to identify the specific work or its relevance to the characters or setting. This underlines the challenge of AI models not trained on musicological corpora – they can replicate generic film-music tropes but often miss culturally or contextually significant details.

Taken together, these responses illustrate both the potential and the limitations of using AI in musicological research. While ChatGPT offered relatively consistent surface-level interpretations, GEMINI attempted symbolic reasoning but stumbled on basic musical facts, and Copilot remained superficial. This confirms observations made in *IMS Brainfood* by Daly,<sup>23</sup> who emphasized that AI tools must be tested not only for fluency but for factual reliability when applied in the humanities. Human close reading remains essential for correcting and

<sup>21</sup> Freedman and Russo-Batterham, “Musicology in a Time of Technological Transformation,” op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Daly, “Playing with AI: Approximating Expertise at Coding,” op. cit.

contextualizing these outputs, suggesting that a productive workflow lies in hybrid usage: AI for initial pattern recognition and hypothesis generation, and human scholarship for interpretive depth and correction.

## Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the potential of integrating traditional close reading with AI-assisted distant reading in musicological research, using the cinematic reception of Joseph Haydn's string quartet as a case study. The theoretical discussion foregrounded the epistemological tensions and complementarity between close and distant reading approaches, arguing for a hybrid methodology that combines interpretive depth with large-scale pattern recognition.

The distant reading segment, based on a dataset extracted from IMDb, provided a panoramic view of Haydn's musical presence in film. This dataset, spanning from the 1930s to the present, revealed recurring works, historical trends, and genre-based patterns, forming a foundation for deeper interpretive analysis. In particular, the combination of AI-assisted parsing and human filtering proved effective in identifying both prominent and unexpected uses of Haydn's music across film contexts.

This led to a close reading of the Minuet from the String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in C Major in *Minority Report*, where musical features of the piece were analyzed comparatively with the scene's narrative tension and ethical themes. The integration of diegetic classical music into a dystopian film setting allowed for a multilayered interpretive approach, demonstrating how human analytical insight can reveal complex interactions between music and cinematic structure.

Additionally, the paper evaluated how three AI chatbots – ChatGPT, GEMINI, and Copilot – responded to analytical prompts about the same film scene and musical excerpt. While the responses offered varying degrees of contextual and emotional insight, they also exhibited factual inaccuracies and interpretive vagueness. This comparison revealed the current limitations of AI tools in handling nuanced musical meaning.

Taken together, the four segments of this study affirm the value of a hybrid research model. Distant reading, when supported by AI and grounded in curated datasets, provides a scalable view of musical reception. Experimental chatbot analysis, meanwhile, serves both as a diagnostic of AI capability and as a reflective tool for evaluating the human-machine interface in scholarly practice. This combination opens new pathways for understanding how classical music functions in film and invites a reassessment of the evolving role of AI in musicological research – not as a replacement for human analysis but as a provocation to ask broader, bolder, and more critically grounded questions.

YEAR	FILM	HAYDN'S WORK
1931	<i>A Woman of Experience</i>	Kaiserlied (Austrian National Anthem 1795–1918) (uncredited)
1934	<i>Musik im Blut</i>	Cellokonzert Nr. 2 in D-dur
1935	<i>The Land of Promise</i>	Die Schöpfung – Oratorio, HobXXI/
1939	<i>We Are Not Alone</i>	Symphony no. 94 ( <i>Surprise</i> ): Andante (uncredited)
1943	<i>Mission to Moscow</i>	Das Lied der Deutschen (1797) (uncredited)
1952–3	<i>Omnibus</i>	<i>Toy Symphony</i>
1955	<i>3rd Ave. El</i>	Concerto in D for Harpsichord
1955	<i>Sissi</i>	Kaiserlied
1968	<i>The Diary of an Innocent Boy</i>	Symphony No. 88, Finale. Allegro con spirit (title uncredited) (as Haydn)
1969	<i>Tora-San's Cherished Mother</i>	String quartet No.67, Hob. III-63, mov.1
1969	<i>Monty Python's Flying Circus</i>	Das Lied der Deutschen
1969	<i>Civilisation</i>	String Quartet in G Major, Op. 77 No. 1, I. Allegro moderato
1970	<i>Doomwatch</i>	String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5 ( <i>The Lark</i> ) (uncredited)
1977	<i>Otoko wa tsurai yo: Torajiro gambare!</i>	String quartet No.67, Hob. III-63, mov.1
1977	<i>Cross Now</i>	Symphonie 101 <i>The Clock/Die Uhr/L'Horloge</i>
1977	<i>Bang!</i>	Divertimento Hob II:60, D-dur
1978	<i>The South Bank Show</i>	Symphonie No. 23, Symphonie No. 24, Symphonie No. 28, Symphonie No. 29
1980	<i>Children's Island</i>	Symfoni, nr 101, Hob. I:101, D-dur
1980	<i>The Last Married Couple in America</i>	Piano Sonata F Major (as Haydn)
1985	<i>Goya</i>	Cuarteto, Serenata para cuarteto de cuerda – Op.3 N°5 (as Haydn)
1985	<i>Prime Risk</i>	Haydn String Quartet, Op. 50, No. 2 in C Major
1986	<i>Big Trouble</i>	Trio No. 15
1990	<i>Reversal of Fortune</i>	Quartet, Opus 64, No. 5, Minuet
1992	<i>The Flowers of Robert Mapplethorpe</i>	London Trio No. 1 in C major I. Allegro moderato
1992	<i>Wayne's World</i>	String Quartet In G, Opus 54, No.1 – Third Movement
1993	<i>The Judge Is a Woman</i>	Symphony n°100 G Major <i>Military</i> – Allegretto
1993	<i>Suture</i>	String Quartet No. 82 Op. 77 I. Allegro moderato
1994	<i>Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles</i>	Sonata in E Flat Adagio E Cantabile
1995	<i>Vater wider Willen</i>	Die Schöpfung

YEAR	FILM	HAYDN'S WORK
1995	<i>God's Comedy</i>	Extracto da 'Misa Santa Caecilia' (Agnus Dei), Extracto do 'Quarteto op. 76 no. 4 en SI bemol maior', Missa brevis sancti Joannis de Deo 'Kleine Orgelmesse', „Extracto da 'Sinfonia no. 49 em Fá menor' ('La Passion'), As sete últimas palavras de Cristo na Cruz 'Il Terremoto'
1996	<i>The Evening Star</i>	Symphony #94 in G Major
1997	<i>The Relic</i>	Sunrise String Quartet in B Flat Major
1998	<i>Star Trek: Insurrection</i>	String Quartet No. 53 in D Major, Opus 64 No. 5 'The Lark' IV. Finale Vivace
1998	<i>Begging for Love</i>	Trumpet concerto Hob.VIIe-1
1999	<i>Wanted</i>	Erdödy-Quartett Op.76 Nr.3
1999	<i>Simpatico</i>	Opus 1 No 1 Adagio
2000	<i>The House of Mirth</i>	String Quartet in D Major, op. 64, no.5: 3rd Movement (The Lark)
2000	<i>Mambo Café</i>	Scherzo from String Quartet No. 3 in E Flat Major
2000	<i>Restless</i>	Duo für Violine und Violoncello D-Dur Hob. VI/D1
2002	<i>The Perfect You</i>	Quartet; String Quartet No 77 in C Major, Emperor 1 – Allegro (as Haydn)
2002	<i>Minority Report</i>	String Quartet in C major, Op. 64/1 II. Menuet. Allegro ma non troppo
2003	<i>Peter Pan</i>	String Quartet Op. 76, No. 5
2004	<i>Icons</i>	String Quartet No. 3 In C Major, Op.76 – Movement 3 (uncredited)
2005	<i>Ugór</i>	Kwartet smyczkowy op. 76 nr 4 in B-Flat major 'Wschód slonca'
2005	<i>Lovisa och Carl Michael</i>	Kvartett, stråkar, Hob. III: 25-30, op. 17. Nr 2, F-dur, Andante cantabile; Symfoni, nr 101, Hob. I: 101, D-dur. Andante
2005	<i>Six Feet Under</i>	Hunt Quartet –Adagio
2005	<i>The Young Schiller</i>	Symphonie Nr. 29 in E-Dur
2006	<i>Letters from Iwo Jima</i>	String Quartet No.6, Op. 1-6, Hob. III-6, Mov.2
2006	<i>The Pink Panther</i>	String Quartet E Flat Major Op. 64 No. 6 Hob. III 64, Menuetto: Allegretto
2007	<i>The Air I Breathe</i>	Quartet for Strings in D major „Lark” Op. 76/3 Allegro Moderato
2007	<i>Suburban Girl</i>	Quartet for Strings 'Lark' Allegro Moderato
2008	<i>Come Together</i>	Sonata in G Major H.xvi:27:II. Menuet
2008	<i>The Duchess</i>	Adagio from String Quartet Opus 1 No. 3 in D Major
2008	<i>Nuit de chien</i>	Lés Sept Dernières Paroles De Notre Rédempteur sur la Croix
2008	<i>Home</i>	Paukenmesse
2008	<i>Catalogue of Ships</i>	Die Schöpfung
2009	<i>Sherlock Holmes</i>	Adagio from String Quartet Opus 1 No. 3 In D Major

YEAR	FILM	HAYDN'S WORK
2010	<i>Morning Glory</i>	Finale From String Quartet in B-Flat Major (Op.64 No.3, Nob.III:67) (as Franz Joseph Haydn)
2010	<i>La grande magie</i>	Concerto pour orchestre et trompette (andante)
2010	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	String Quartet Op. 1, No. 2 in E-Flat, 2nd movement: Minuet, String Quartet Op. 2, No. 6 In C, 4th movement: Finale. Allegro spiritoso (uncredited)
2010	<i>Ice Castles</i>	Violin Concerto No. 1 in C Majore (as Franz Joseph Haydn)
2010	<i>From Paris with Love</i>	Symphonie N° 94, Finale
2011	<i>Teen Wolf</i>	String Quartet No. 62 in C major (Emperor), Op. 76/3, H. 3/77 (as Franz Joseph Haydn, uncredited)
2012	<i>To the Wonder</i>	Die Jahreszeiten (The Seasons), H0B.XXI;3
2012	<i>Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter</i>	Quartet for Strings in B Flat Major 'La Chasse' Op. 1/1– Minuet
2012	<i>Our Children</i>	Stabat Mater
2014	<i>Gotham</i>	String Quartet No. 64 In D Major, Op. 76, No. 5, Hob.III:79: IV. Finale: Presto
2014	<i>Silent Heart</i>	Piano Concerto in F Major: Largo Cantabile (as Haydn)
2015	<i>12 Monkeys</i>	String Quartet No. 3 – The Emperor: Poco Adagio Cantabile
2015	<i>Bleeding Hearts</i>	Cello Concerto no. 1, in Major
2016	<i>Ghostbusters</i>	String Quartet in Eb Major, Op. 1, No. 2 – Menuetto (as Franz Joseph Haydn)
2017	<i>The Greatest Showman</i>	String Quartet No. 6 in C Major, Op. 1, No. 6, Hob.III:6, II. Menuet
2017	<i>The Power of Silence</i>	Cello Concerto No. 1 Hob. VIIb/1
2021	<i>Squid Game</i>	Trumpet Concerto in E-Flat Major, III. Finale (uncredited)
2021	<i>The Pursuit of Love</i>	String Quartet In A Maj Op 20 No 6 iii Mennet
2023	<i>Napoleon</i>	Symphony No. 93 in D Major, HOB. I:93: III. Menuetto – Trio

**Table 1:** The IMBb-based dataset of frequently recurring Haydn's works in films

ANALYSIS

CHATBOT		
Chat GPT 3.5	GEMINI	Copilot
<p>Contextual Interpretive Analytical MISTAKES: Overgeneralization Misalignment</p> <p>The use of the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in the greenhouse scene of <i>Minority Report</i> serves to evoke a sense of nostalgia, tranquility, and reflection amidst the tension and anticipation of the film's narrative. Haydn's second movement, marked "Andante," typically exhibits a slower tempo and lyrical melodies, often characterized by a gentle, flowing rhythm and rich harmonies. In the context of the greenhouse scene, this choice of music suggests a contrast to the fast-paced, futuristic setting of the film. The mood created by the movement's serene melody and elegant phrasing can evoke feelings of introspection and contemplation. This mood may be fitting for a scene that involves significant character development or emotional depth, where characters may be reflecting on their past choices, contemplating their futures, or engaging in intimate conversations. Moreover, the use of classical music, particularly a piece by Haydn, can connote a sense of timelessness and sophistication. In <i>Minority Report</i>, this choice may underscore the contrast between the advanced technology and the timeless aspects of human nature, such as love, regret, and longing. Furthermore, the choice of Haydn's music in this scene may also serve to underscore themes of beauty and harmony amidst a world filled with chaos and uncertainty. The delicate interplay of instruments in the quartet can symbolize the delicate balance of forces in the characters' lives and the fragile nature of their relationships. Overall, the selection of Haydn's second movement from Op. 64 No. 1 in the greenhouse scene of <i>Minority Report</i> suggests a deliberate choice to evoke a mood of introspection, beauty, and timelessness while providing a poignant backdrop to the unfolding narrative.</p>	<p>Divergent Speculative Erroneous MISTAKES: Inaccuracy Misinterpretation</p> <p>The second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 is a surprising choice for the greenhouse scene in <i>Minority Report</i>. Here is how it contributes to the scene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tension and Unease:</b> The movement is marked by a <i>Presto</i> tempo, which means "very fast," and is known for creating a feeling of urgency and agitation. This fast pace aligns with the suspenseful atmosphere of the greenhouse scene, where John Anderton (Tom Cruise) is on edge, unsure of who to trust and how to avoid his pre-cogged murder.</li> <li><b>Darkness and Ambiguity:</b> The second movement is also in a minor key, which is traditionally associated with darkness, sadness, or unease. This choice by the filmmakers reinforces the morally ambiguous nature of pre-crim in the film's world. Even though the system is designed to prevent murders, it raises questions about free will and the possibility of arresting someone for a crime they haven't even committed.</li> <li><b>Playful Juxtaposition:</b> Haydn's String Quartet is known for its wit and playfulness, and the second movement is no exception. This characteristic creates an interesting contrast with the dark and serious themes of the film. This incongruity could be seen as a reflection of the film's exploration of free will and determinism within a society obsessed with control. Perhaps the whimsical nature of the music is meant to remind us of humanity, which persists even in a future dominated by technology.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the use of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in the greenhouse scene is a deliberate choice that adds to the film's suspense and complexity. The music's fast pace and minor key create a sense of tension and unease, while its playfulness adds an unexpected layer that reflects the film's larger themes.</p>	<p>Explanatory Thorough Elaborate MISTAKES: Oversimplification Surface-level Analysis</p> <p>The second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 is characterized by its <b>buoyant and breezy</b> nature, with echoes of Italian opera. This movement is part of a set of six string quartets composed in 1790, known as the Tost quartets. The quartet's movements include Allegro moderato, Menuetto: Allegretto ma non troppo, Allegretto scherzando. In the greenhouse scene of <i>Minority Report</i>, the use of this particular movement could suggest a few things about the scene's mood and themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contrast:</b> The lush and vibrant nature of the greenhouse is a stark contrast to the film's otherwise denatured vision of the future. The breezy and buoyant nature of Haydn's second movement mirrors this contrast, providing a sense of relief and tranquility amidst the tension and high stakes of the narrative.</li> <li><b>Complexity and Depth:</b> Haydn's quartets are known for their intricate instrumental conversations and sudden harmonic surprises. This could parallel the complex themes and moral ambiguities explored in the scene and the film at large.</li> <li><b>Temporal Displacement:</b> The use of a classical piece like Haydn's quartet in a futuristic setting might suggest a sense of temporal displacement, a theme prevalent throughout <i>Minority Report</i>. It serves as a reminder of the past in a world that is overwhelmingly oriented toward the future.</li> <li><b>Emotional Resonance:</b> The music could be used to underscore the emotional resonance of the scene, enhancing the audience's emotional engagement with the narrative. Remember, music in film is often used to enhance the narrative, evoke specific emotions, and underscore thematic elements. In this case, the choice of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 seems to do just that. It's a fascinating choice that adds depth and complexity to the scene.</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Chatbots' responses to the following task: "Analyze the use of the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 64 No. 1 in the greenhouse scene of *Minority Report*. What does the choice of this particular movement suggest about the scene's mood and themes?"

## SUMMARY

This article explores the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into musicological research by combining traditional close reading with experimental AI-assisted distant reading. Using Joseph Haydn's Minuet from Op. 64 No. 1 in C Major, featured in Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* as a case study, the author investigates how AI tools can be applied to both broad data analysis and scene-specific interpretation in film music studies.

The research begins with a large-scale overview of Haydn's presence in film, based on an AI-annotated dataset extracted from the IMDb soundtrack database. This dataset comprises over 400 entries and highlights patterns in the cinematic use of Haydn's music across time, genres, and cultural contexts. Frequently recurring works, such as the *Emperor Quartet* (Op. 76 No. 3 in C Major), emerge as central to narratives with historical or national overtones, while lesser-known pieces appear in more experimental settings. This distant reading approach provides a foundation for identifying trends and potential interpretive directions.

The study then turns to a close reading of the greenhouse scene in *Minority Report*, where Haydn's Minuet plays diegetically. Through a formal and contextual analysis of the music, the article explores how the composition contributes to character development, narrative pacing, and thematic depth. Particular attention is given to the Minuet's form, harmonic features, and stylistic implications in relation to the film's dystopian setting.

To evaluate the interpretive potential of AI, the author poses the same analytical prompt to three public chatbots (ChatGPT, GEMINI, and Microsoft Copilot). Their responses are compared and critically assessed. While AI tools demonstrate some capacity to recognize mood and thematic contrast, they frequently misidentify musical features and fail to contextualize their interpretations within broader musicological frameworks. These findings align with current discussions in digital humanities about the limitations of large language models in handling specialized cultural knowledge.

The article argues that while AI may serve as a useful exploratory tool for identifying patterns or generating hypotheses, it cannot substitute for the depth of insight produced by human scholars. The study ultimately positions itself as a call for a hybrid methodology: using AI as an augmentative resource while maintaining the interpretive rigor of traditional scholarship. It contributes to the emerging discourse on the ethical and epistemological integration of digital tools in musicology, advocating for a critical and reflective engagement with technological innovation.

## PART III • From the Concert Hall to Virtual Spaces and Vice Versa



# TIKTOK GOES CLASSICAL

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**ABSTRACT:** This research examines how classical music is represented and functions within a predominantly participatory-oriented TikTok system, and how the platform enhances the accessibility and engagement of classical music. Two primary modes of classical music content on TikTok are identified: professional musicians and institutions promoting their work, and platform-based creators producing music content. The study explores platform features that foster creativity and collaboration, including Duet and Use This Sound, as well as the emergence of classical music trends and memes. The findings indicate that TikTok holds significant potential to broaden the appeal of classical music to a wider and more diverse audience.

**KEY WORDS:** TikTok, classical music, platform-based cultural production, platformization, content creator, classical music crossovers, *new classical music*.

## Introduction

TikTok is a social media platform that was launched in 2016 by the Chinese company ByteDance. To date, this app has gained enormous popularity worldwide, as confirmed by more than one billion monthly active users in 160 countries, who spend an average of 95 minutes per day on the platform, surpassing all other social networks in terms of numbers.<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of TikTok users are between 18 and 34 years old (36.7%), positioning this demographic as the platform's main target group.<sup>2</sup>

On the official TikTok website, this platform is described as “the leading destination for short-form mobile video with a mission to inspire creativity and bring joy.”<sup>3</sup> TikTok’s vision focuses on providing users with a window to discover new things, a canvas to access new creativity, and a bridge to connect with

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica Bursztynsky, “TikTok says 1 billion people use the app each month,” CNBC, September 27 (2021). [www.cnbc.com/2021/09/27/tiktok-reaches-1-billion-monthly-users.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/27/tiktok-reaches-1-billion-monthly-users.html). Accessed: May 13, 2025. “TikTok Statistics – Updated Jan 2024,” Wallaroo, January 5 (2024). <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> “TikTok Age Demographics (2024),” Oberlo. [www.oberlo.com/statistics/tiktok-age-demographics](http://www.oberlo.com/statistics/tiktok-age-demographics). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> “About TikTok,” [www.tiktok.com/about?lang=en](http://www.tiktok.com/about?lang=en). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

other people.<sup>4</sup> Today, however, TikTok stands for more than just entertainment, bringing significant economic growth in the pursuit of new and elusive consumers, opening up advertising opportunities, and consequently generating revenue.<sup>5</sup> As the platform continues to evolve rapidly, both user trends and needs are constantly changing. While users in 2023 focused on the search for community, pleasure, and surprise, the trend in the last year was towards “curiosity, imagination, vulnerability, and courage.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the TikTok platform serves as a foundation for discovering new information, while also acting as a tool for social engagement and connection.

Regardless of trends, what has set TikTok apart since its inception is its music content and the significant role that music plays in its distribution. As the company explains, “music and sound are TikTok’s universal language,” which “play an integral role in the community’s creativity, liveliness, and cultural impact.”<sup>7</sup> The platform is based on an extensive audio library featuring music and sound bites that users can use to create video content. Although it is a video-centric platform, “from a music standpoint, TikTok differs from other social media as sound lies at the center of its user experience.”<sup>8</sup> It functions as a vast digital archive of sound samples and patterns intended for creative reuse and distribution. As a result, the role of sound and music on this platform is, therefore, highly significant. However, these influences go beyond the platform and leave a considerable impact and mark on the music industry as a “driving force.”<sup>9</sup> This is confirmed by the words of Ole Oberman, Global Head of Music Business Development at ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok: “TikTok has become an integral part of music discovery, connecting artists to their fans and introduc-

<sup>4</sup> “TikTok CEO Shou Chew on Its Future — and What Makes Its Algorithm Different | Live at TED2023,” posted April 21 (2023), by TED, YouTube, 39:18. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zC8-06198g&t=410s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zC8-06198g&t=410s). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> “Oxford Economics Reports: SMB’s use of TikTok Contributed \$24.2 Billion to U.S. Economy in 2023,” *TikTok Newsroom*, May 13 (2024). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktok-economic-impact-report-2024-smb>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> “TikTok What’s Next 2024 Trend Report,” *TikTok Newsroom*, December 6 (2023). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktok-whats-next-2024-trend-report>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> “New studies quantify TikTok’s growing impact on culture and music,” *TikTok Newsroom*, July 21 (2021). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/new-studies-quantify-tiktoks-growing-impact-on-culture-and-music>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Andi Coulter, “Marketing Agile Artists: How Music Labels Can Leverage TikTok’s Virality,” *MEIEA Journal*, XXII/1 (2022), 125. <https://doi.org/10.25101/22.5>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Claire Donnelly and Meghna Chakrabarti, “The man helping TikTok disrupt the music industry,” June 27 (2023). [www.wbur.org/onpoint/2023/06/27/an-interview-with-tiktoks-global-head-of-music-on-the-industrys-future](https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2023/06/27/an-interview-with-tiktoks-global-head-of-music-on-the-industrys-future). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

ing brands to every corner of the community [...] TikTok is the home for music trends that permeate the industry, charts, and culture.”<sup>10</sup>

Although the term music industry primarily refers to popular music practices, the discussion about classical music on the market has intensified in recent years.<sup>11</sup> As music ascribes universal and timeless qualities, classical music is usually considered a phenomenon that “transcends the fluctuations of cultural fashion.”<sup>12</sup> It is certain, however, that classical music, like any other, is not a closed system resistant to cultural, social, and technological change. On the contrary, as Nicholas Cook claims, technological and media innovations have led to a reconsideration of the basic concepts of classical music established in the nineteenth century. However, paradoxically, technology has simultaneously strengthened its autonomy.<sup>13</sup> Our research is based on this statement and the question derived from it: What are the functional mechanisms of classical music in the context of contemporary platform-based cultural production and the specific TikTok music ecosystem?

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Platformisation of Culture

The production of academic studies on TikTok has accelerated since 2019, and the platform has become a constant subject of scholarly interest from various disciplinary perspectives. Analysis of 402 journal articles published between 2019 and 2022 reveals several predominant research clusters on TikTok, organized around the themes of “body consciousness, social behavior, consumer behavior, and news media.”<sup>14</sup> The results of increased and ongoing academic interest in TikTok include the special journal issue on TikTok and social movements<sup>15</sup> and an online research community that “prioritizes six research themes on platform: digital production and economies, the subaltern and subcultures,

<sup>10</sup> “New studies quantify TikTok’s growing impact...,” op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Cris Dromey and Julia Haferkorn, *The Classical Music Industry* (New York: Routledge, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315471099>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 91.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), 40.

<sup>14</sup> Abderahman Rejeb, Karim Rejeb, Andrea Appolloni, Horst Treiblmaier, and Mohammad Iranmanesh, “Mapping the scholarly landscape of TikTok (Douyin): A bibliometric exploration of research topics and trends,” *Digital Business*, IV/1 (2024), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2024.100075>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Jin Lee Jin and Crystal Abidin, “Introduction to the Special Issue of ‘TikTok and Social Movements,’” *Social Media + Society*, IX/1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231157452>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, governance and politics, methodologies and pedagogies.”<sup>16</sup> Most studies focus on particular issues of TikTok culture<sup>17</sup> or question the user engagement-oriented algorithm based on the “organic traction of users’ videos”<sup>18</sup> as “the most frustrating aspect of TikTok.”<sup>19</sup> Other, less numerous academic approaches broadly aim to create specific terminology and conceptual definitions “to develop a common language for scholars from different disciplines to compare and connect their research on specific instances of platform-based cultural production.”<sup>20</sup> From this theoretical perspective, TikTok is seen as an example of the ubiquitous phenomenon of platform-based cultural production.<sup>21</sup> The concepts of “platform” and “platformisation,” as new paradigms of a contemporary world characterized by digitalization and globalization, are of particular importance for our research, and we will briefly explain them here.

Platforms could be defined as “(re-)programmable digital infrastructures that facilitate and shape personalized interactions among end-users and complementors, organized through the systematic collection, algorithmic processing, monetization, and circulation of data.”<sup>22</sup> In the field of culture, the development of the technical possibilities of platforms has led to “the rise of life-changing tools such as downloading, music streaming platforms and social media.”<sup>23</sup> Following on from this, platformisation is described as a “transformative process constitutive of a wide variety of shifts shaped by the interactions between particular platforms and specific cultural producers.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, platforms are new data infrastructures that function as digital institutional entities, forming a

<sup>16</sup> TikTok Cultures Research Network, Research Themes, <https://tiktokcultures.com/research-themes/>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Crystal Abidin, “Mapping Internet Celebrity on TikTok: Exploring Attention Economies and Visibility Labours,” *Cultural Science Journal*, XII/1 (2020), 78. <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.140>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> Coulter, “Marketing Agile Artists...,” op. cit., 138.

<sup>19</sup> Tatiana Krisztina Morales, “Music Meets Algorithm: How TikTok is changing the music industry for independent artists,” *CUNY Academic Works*, December 13 (2022). [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gj\\_etds/636](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gj_etds/636). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Poell, David Nieborg, and Brooke Erin Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), 4.

<sup>21</sup> Idem.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Poell, David Nieborg, and José van Dijck, “Platformisation,” *Internet Policy Review*, VIII/4, (2019), 3. <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1425>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Matilde Borelli, “The Changes in the Cultural and Social Meaning of Music: The Case of TikTok” (Master’s Thesis, Copenhagen Business School, 2022), 9. <https://research.cbs.dk/en/studentProjects/the-changes-in-the-cultural-and-social-meaning-of-music-the-case>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production*, op. cit., 4.

network built on the relationships between users/audiences, markets, technology providers, and governance frameworks.<sup>25</sup> This phenomenon is characterized by “frictionless entry” or the “ability of users to quickly and easily join” and participate in forming *multisided markets* for monetization “by connecting consumers [...], a wide variety of businesses, governments, and nonprofits.”<sup>26</sup> Against this background, the following questions arise: How do all these characteristics affect artistic content and the world of art? How do they affect the phenomenon of creativity, which is at the heart of artistic creation?

The transformation of creativity has been recognized as one of the most important changes in cultural production organized around a platform-based environment. The problem of creativity in platform-based cultural production could be examined as the tension between enabling and constraining creative expression within platforms through “mass versus niche audiences, qualification versus quantification, editorial versus advertising, and authenticity versus self-promotion” concluding that “platform companies tend to peddle a model of creativity that differs from that of legacy media industries [...] emphasizing grassroots or bottom-up forms of creativity and [...] possibilities of self-expression.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, platform-specific creativity is described as *distributed creativity*,<sup>28</sup> such as in the case of TikTok: “Videos become a launchpad of creative activities as people re-interpret other peoples’ content and create unique experiences for the entire community.”<sup>29</sup> It is said that the specific creative practices that characterize platform-based cultural production “are developed through particular normative dimensions that guide content and expression and are generated from the interaction between cultural producers and platforms.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, when we talk about the manifestation of creativity in platform-based cultural production, there is a terminological shift from *creator* to *content creator*, with the former “hitched to romantic ideas of creator autonomy” and the latter

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>26</sup> Idem.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 20, 134.

<sup>28</sup> R. K. Sawyer and S. DeZutter, “Distributed creativity: How collective creations emerge from collaboration. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, III/2 (2009), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013282>. Accessed: May 13, 2025. D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, “Please Duet This: Collaborative Music Making in Lockdown on TikTok,” *Networking Knowledge*, XV/1, YouTube and Online Video in Lockdown Special Issue (Feb. 2022), 59–76. <https://ojs.meccsa.org.uk/index.php/net-know/article/view/654>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>29</sup> TikTokUk, “DIY: Duets & Reactions on TikTok,” *Medium*, March 22 (2019). <https://medium.com/@TikTokUK/diy-duets-reactions-on-tiktok-62b4ba9f824c>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>30</sup> Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production*, op. cit., 20, 139.

“related to cultural diversity, marked by a plurality of voices and/or products.”<sup>31</sup> It is unnecessary to emphasize that the concept of creative autonomy refers to the idea of artistic creation. In the context of *digital plenitude* and platformisation, this concept is subject to numerous changes, so one could say that “art and media are the same thing.”<sup>32</sup> On this topic, Jay David Bolter explains:

To say someone is an artist has become simply another way of saying that he or she works creatively in any recognized media form, old or new. Digital media today gives participants in thousands of media communities the opportunity to call themselves artists if they choose. The loss of the center means that there is no single standard of quality that transcends the various communities of practice. However much some may still long for ‘quality’, the word does not have a global meaning.<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, TikTok’s creative practices are framed by the “platform features that promote interactions and modes of production unique to the short video format”<sup>34</sup> and “enable users to emulate, imitate, replicate, and reuse popular trending videos.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, “dances, lipsyncs, challenges and memes”<sup>36</sup> are identified as the four main generative forms of TikTok that users can use to express their platform-based creativity. These forms are dependent on Duet, Use This Sound, Stitch, and Video Replies Comments as socially creative features of the platform that “encourage viewers to create and share content by incorporating elements from the video they were just watching.”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the research perspective developed in the field of digital ethnography enabled the description of “six overarching communicative forms or TikTok distinct languages for expression that mark this platform communicative environment: comedic, doc-

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 20, 137. D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, Aleesha Rodriguez, Katrin Langton, and Patrik Wikstrom, “You Made This? I Made This: Practices of Authorship and (Mis) Attribution on TikTok,” *International Journal of Communication*, 15 (2021), 3199. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/14544/3496>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>32</sup> David Jay Bolter, *The Digital Plenitude. The Decline of Elite Culture and the Rise of New Media* (Cambridge, MA. and London: The MIT Press, 2019), 15.

<sup>33</sup> Idem.

<sup>34</sup> Kaye, “Please Duet This...,” op. cit., 60.

<sup>35</sup> Kaye, Rodriguez, Langton, and Wikstrom, “You Made This...,” op. cit., 3196.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Toscher, “Resource Integration, Value Co-Creation, and Service-dominant Logic in Music Marketing: The Case of the TikTok Platform,” *International Journal of Music Business Research*, 20 (2021), 6. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ijmbr-2021-0002>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>37</sup> Kaye, “JazzTok: Creativity, Community, and Improvisation on TikTok,” *Jazz and Culture*, VI/2 (2023), 93. <https://doi.org/10.5406/25784773.6.2.05>. Accessed: May 13, 2025. For more on the TikTok content creation tools and the changing process of music-making, listening, and promotion, see Bojana Radovanović, “TikTok and Sound: Changing the ways of Creating, Promoting, Distributing and Listening to Music,” *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, 9 (2022), 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.51191/issn.2637-1898.2022.5.9.51>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

umentary, communal, interactive, explanatory, and meta.”<sup>38</sup> If creative practices on platforms are characterized by specific normative platform features and different languages, the key stages of the cultural production process – creation, distribution, marketing, and monetization – are reconfigured when they take place as platform-based production processes.<sup>39</sup>

When talking about music, musical content, and processes, it can be said that TikTok primarily focuses on three key aspects: discovering, listening to, and creating music.<sup>40</sup> These are further complicated by the different roles of music creators interacting with the platform and pursuing conflicting interests. How can individual musicians preserve their creative autonomy, how can music institutions maintain their cultural heritage, and how can industry players keep up with their role as music intermediaries? These are all open questions that deserve research attention as different music actors organize their forms of expression within the cultural production of TikTok.

## A Platform for Music Discovery and Promotion

Within the platform self-representation narratives, some descriptions are prevalent: a) TikTok is a “platform for discovering creativity and people with talent,”<sup>41</sup> b) TikTok is a “creative home of all music genres,” and c) TikTok is a platform for music discovery.<sup>42</sup> This platform serves as a testing ground for the success of newly created music and a venue for discovering new musicians, rather than promoting existing ones (as on streaming platforms).<sup>43</sup> However, the promotional possibilities of this platform for presenting diverse music are immense. TikTok is seen as “a unique environment for music promotion,” enabling artists “to reach a wider audience and gain new fans.”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, “TikTok becomes

<sup>38</sup> Andreas Schellewald, “Communicative Forms on TikTok: Perspectives from Digital Ethnography,” *International Journal of Communication*, 15 (2021), 1443.

<sup>39</sup> Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production*, op. cit., 4.

<sup>40</sup> Borelli, “The Changes in the Cultural and Social Meaning of Music...,” op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> “TikTok CEO Shou Chew on Its Future...,” op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> TikTok, “TikTok Classics – memes & viral hits: Orchestral versions of 18 of the biggest sounds in a world-first TikTok album with Warner Classics,” *TikTok Newsroom*, January 24 (2022). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-gb/tiktok-classics-memes-and-viral-hits>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>43</sup> Lalageh Khosravian, “What has Changed in the Music Industry: From Traditional to Digitalization of Music and Platform Capitalisation Spotify vs. Tiktok,” (Bachelor Thesis, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia, 2021), 25. <https://baec.aua.am/files/2021/10/Lalageh-Khosravian-What-Has-Changes-in-the-Music-Industry-from-Traditional-to-Digitalization-of-Music-and-Platform-Capitalisation-Spotify-vs.-Tiktok.pdf>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>44</sup> Irfan Okanovic and Agnès Trouchaud, “Tiktok: a modern spotlight on emerging artists: Understanding why and how TikTok users take part in viral behaviors towards

responsible for the bulk of discovery, from breaking new artists to resurrecting older ones.”<sup>45</sup> Although traditional mass media, such as radio, have long served as platforms for discovering and promoting new artists, contemporary technologies and media like TikTok introduce innovations through rapid content dissemination and a highly responsive recommendation algorithm that delivers uniquely personalized content to each user.

According to a global report on how artists went viral on TikTok in 2022, TikTok music spans 21 genres. However, “Hip-Hop/Rap, Latin and Pop were the most represented genres in the TikTok Top 200 country charts across 20 countries, dominating Europe and North America.”<sup>46</sup> Considering the widespread use of the platform, a special quality that distinguishes it is the possibility to discover and promote music that does not come from the leading and dominant markets. In this sense, TikTok can also be seen as the platform that “empowers the decolonization of the music industry.”<sup>47</sup>

The rise of TikTok has significantly transformed the music distribution and marketing processes. It is stated that TikTok is “a catalyst for the rebirth of music marketing as we know it,”<sup>48</sup> both for music artists and record labels in terms of the correlation between a song’s TikTok success and its overall rankings within the Billboard 100 and Spotify Viral 50 charts.<sup>49</sup> Some promotional trends and marketing tactics have been spotted that brought up the conclusion about the existence of strategic business moves of the in-house music team that count on the fact that over half of the users will seek out songs on music-streaming services after hearing them on TikTok.<sup>50</sup> What makes music content on TikTok especially suitable for promotional and marketing purposes is its ability to be distributed alongside thematically diverse video content, thereby expanding its spreadable and viral potential.<sup>51</sup>

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musical artists on the platform” (Independent Thesis Advanced level, Jönköping University, Jönköping International Business School, 2023), 8–9. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1768840&dswid=-5803>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>45</sup> Coulter, “Marketing Agile Artists...,” op. cit., 135.

<sup>46</sup> Contraband, “How artists are going viral on TikTok in 2022. Global report,” p. 27. <https://www.contrabrand.agency/tiktokglobalreport2022>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>47</sup> Arantxa Vizcaíno-Verdú, “Decolonising the music on TikTok: ‘Let’s duet!’” *Mediterranean Journal of Communication*, VX/1 (2024), 341–55. <https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM.24949>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>48</sup> Lexie Jorgenson, “The influence of TikTok: Promotion trends in mainstream pop music” (A Thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2022), 1. <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/concern/projects/2n49t7424>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>49</sup> Idem.

<sup>50</sup> Idem.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

The examples of major record labels leveraging TikTok are of growing research interest<sup>52</sup> since they are the music industry key players that possess “the economic capital necessary to fund the production, distribution, and marketing of recorded music.”<sup>53</sup> Record labels have diversified their marketing strategies by leveraging TikTok’s short-form video format, which not only drives music discovery and enables users to create content with tracks from the label’s catalog but also encourages labels – guided by TikTok’s music team – to focus promotion on the songs that receive the most favorable user engagement.<sup>54</sup> In this context, the question of economic profitability, monetization, and copyright arises. Initially, the use of music was not subject to legal regulation, and approximately 50% of music was used without a license or permission.<sup>55</sup> As TikTok became an important player in the music market, this topic gained relevance, leading to licensing deals with major record labels, including Sony (in 2020), Warner Music Group, and Universal Music Group (in 2021).<sup>56</sup> However, it is noteworthy that in early 2024, Universal Music Group, following the expiration of its licensing agreement with TikTok, requested the removal of all music under its rights from the platform due to unresolved copyright disputes – indicating the continued existence of regulatory and economic ambiguities within this domain.<sup>57</sup>

The Music Impact Report, commissioned by TikTok in 2023, confirms that this platform has a profound impact on the music industry, particularly in terms of music discovery, consumption, and its contribution to industry revenues. The unique role that TikTok and its users play in the music ecosystem has been represented through categories such as TikTok fuels music discovery, TikTok users generate value via streaming, TikTok users generate value off-platform, and TikTok connects local artists with global audiences.<sup>58</sup> Although the Music Impact Report is based on popular music as a case study, the exact mechanisms may be applied to any other music, including classical, since “people increasingly prefer

<sup>52</sup> Khosravian, “What has Changed in the Music Industry...,” op. cit.; Coulter, “Marketing Agile Artists...,” op. cit.; Morales, “Music Meets Algorithm...,” op. cit.; Jorgenson, “The influence of TikTok...,” op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> Nancy Baym, *Playing to the Crowd: Musicians, Audiences, and the Intimate Work of Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 63.

<sup>54</sup> Jorgenson, “The influence of TikTok...,” op. cit., 25.

<sup>55</sup> Borelli, “The Changes in the Cultural and Social Meaning of Music...,” op. cit., 27.

<sup>56</sup> Jorgenson, “The influence of TikTok...,” op. cit., 22.

<sup>57</sup> Universal Music, “An Open Letter to the Artist and Songwriter Community Why We Must Call Time Out on TikTok,” January 30 (2024). <https://www.universalmusic.com/an-open-letter-to-the-artist-and-songwriter-community-why-we-must-call-time-out-on-tiktok/>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>58</sup> TikTok, “Music Impact Report,” *Newsroom TikTok*, November 21 (2023). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/music-impact-report-confirms-tiktok-fuels-music-discovery>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

to recognize the meaning and impact of classical music through different modes of new media.”<sup>59</sup>

The up-to-date research on classical music platform distribution has been limited only to two studies: YouTube<sup>60</sup> and Instagram.<sup>61</sup> Here, the “parasocial relationship” is described as a platform-specific interactive mode between the audience and artists, established through the creation and distribution of platform content organized around the artist’s unique personality and everyday activities. The “individualization” and “sociability” as possibilities for audiences to maintain a close connection with artists as individuals are recognized as key factors for artist recognition on social media platforms.<sup>62</sup> From studying the diverse classical music practices in the virtual space of Instagram among 214 professional users, four profile strategies have been identified: “career-oriented; everyday-oriented; service-oriented; and lifestyle-oriented,” depending on whether professional or everyday activities are emphasized, or whether a peer learner or self-celebrity focus is presented on the platform, showcasing the musician’s self.

Along with these, the common characteristic of “new ways of presenting music specifically tailored for the platform”<sup>63</sup> has been seen in its functioning as a “virtual ‘side-stage’” or “extended practice” for classical musicians that belong to the context of “post-professionalism” where “diversity of communicators operates in parallel to the institutional professionals”<sup>64</sup> alongside primary classical music gatekeepers. The possibility of mediating music “in a microformat – in extracts rather than entire musical pieces” has been seen as the most important aspect of post-professional classical music contexts and platform-based communication forms.

## Aims and Method

The total number of TikTok hashtags containing the words “classical” and “music” is over a hundred. However, most of them generated little activity, and only three of them reached more than 15,000 posted videos:

<sup>59</sup> Shija Lian, “Discussing the Impact of New Media Communication on Classical Music,” *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 673 (2022), 599.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Maarit Jaakkola, “Digital performance at the side stage: the communicative practices of classical musicians and music hobbyists on Instagram,” *Continuum*, XXXVII/2 (2023), 296–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2023.2234109>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>62</sup> Lian, “Discussing the Impact of New Media...,” op. cit., 599–600.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 296, 297.

TikTok Hashtag	Number of posts <sup>65</sup>
#ClassicalMusic	724,800
#classicmusic	74,200
#classicalmusictiktok	16,800

The large gap between user activity around the first and the other two hashtags suggests that most classical music content is created under the hashtag #ClassicalMusic, and this content categorization is described as “Share with us how you play your instruments, compose your music, or just how much you love the magic of #ClassicalMusic!” To find out how classical music circulates within the platform, we conducted a qualitative analysis and critical systematization of the analyzed TikTok content under the hashtag #ClassicalMusic from the perspective of the application user. Our initial research sample comprises classical music videos on TikTok that have garnered over 3 million likes (Table 1) and 40 of the most popular accounts featuring classical music content (Table 2). We also continuously look beyond static data sets, as classical music on TikTok constitutes a vibrant and diverse community that evolves daily, leading to variability in research data. The primary objective of our analysis is to identify the modes of communication through which classical music is expressed on TikTok, along with the most prominent categories and trends in its representation, using content differentiation as our principal research method.

## DISCUSSION

The hashtag #ClassicalMusic was created as part of carefully planned strategies and collaborations between the platform, record labels, streaming services, and music artists “to shine a spotlight on the talented artists and musicians shaping the genre and creating incredible classical music on TikTok.”<sup>66</sup> Although classical music was already present and visible on the platform before the introduction of this hashtag, this tool opened up opportunities for greater exposure, as well as new business and strategic connections in the music market.

The gradual realization of this idea included the following stages. In October 2020, Warner Music Group streamed the first of three TikTok Classical Music compilations, featuring 25 tracks. The other two compilations were released in January 2022, featuring 59 tracks (*Classical Music on TikTok*), and in March 2023, with 25 tracks (*Classical Music on TikTok*), comprising a total of 109 com-

<sup>65</sup> All data that indicate the number of posts, likes, and followers were retrieved from the platform on May 14, 2025.

<sup>66</sup> TikTok, “Classical Music reaches a crescendo on TikTok with Hans Zimmer,” *TikTok Newsroom*, November 4 (2022). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-gb/classical-music-reaches-a-crescendo-on-tiktok-with-hans-zimmer>. Accessed: May 13, 2025.

positions by 46 composers. These compilations include composers from various eras, spanning from the Baroque to the contemporaneity. As expected, those authors who form the core of the canon of classical music stand out among them, including Mozart (with twelve pieces), Bach (with ten), Tchaikovsky (with nine), and Beethoven (with seven).

In addition, the same record label released a world-first TikTok album in the summer of 2022, combining pop and classical music through classically arranged orchestral versions of the 18 biggest TikTok hits, titled *TikTok Classics – memme & viral hits*. The album was performed by the Babelsberg Film Orchestra of Germany, conducted by Christian Köhler. This campaign, promoted under the hashtag #TikTokClassics, aims to “showcase the possibilities, range and epic sound of a symphony orchestra in a new context, encourage closer listening and share our passion for orchestral sound with the TikTok community.”<sup>67</sup> Unexpectedly for traditional classical albums, but in accordance with platform requirements, the album includes 30-second versions of these tracks, intended for further use in video creations. The full-length singles were later released on music streaming services, along with the entire album, available for both streaming and retail. This type of remediation can bring various benefits, especially economic ones, as indicated by Bolter and Grusin:

Each new medium has to find its economic place by replacing or supplementing what is already available, and popular acceptance, and therefore economic success, can come only by convincing consumers that the new medium improves on the experience of older ones. [...] The goal is not to replace the earlier forms, to which the company may own the rights, but to spread the content over as many markets as possible.<sup>68</sup>

The #ClassicalMusic campaign was officially launched in November 2022, in collaboration with composer Hans Zimmer, who served as a special guest. The artist created a special playlist and promoted his #DuneMovieDuet challenge by asking users to duet his performance of “Paul’s Dream.”<sup>69</sup> This and other campaigns, such as #Roke, are described as a continuation of the evolution of TikTok music genres “to bring musical diversity to the equally diverse community,”<sup>70</sup> and generally to discover classical music via TikTok. Attracting an audience primarily interested in less formal formats is also one of the most important features of digital platforms<sup>71</sup>, and one of the current narratives associated with the contemporary classical music scene: “Musicians are dedicated to live performance, as

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 89.

<sup>69</sup> TikTok, “Classical Music reaches a crescendo on TikTok with Hans Zimmer,” op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> TikTok, “TikTok Classics – memes & viral Hits...,” op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Dromey and Haferkorn, *The Classical Music Industry*, op. cit., 149.

they should be, but if you are in the business that we are in, you must be focused on the audience. New audiences have moved to technology, so to ignore that or to fight it is at your peril.”<sup>72</sup> It is known that the largest community at classical music concerts is composed of older listeners, “although it has been suggested that young people do engage with classical music but predominantly through recorded music consumption.”<sup>73</sup> So, speaking about a new audience, the younger population is first targeted. Considering the prevailing population on TikTok, this platform appears to be an ideal digital space with the potential to interest and attract new listeners.

### TikTok Classical Music Content Creators

These examples of collaboration between TikTok, record labels, and artists show the platform’s goal to be integrated into the music industry. In examining the content on the platform itself, we have concluded that classical music operates and fluctuates in two main modes. The first mode involves the distribution of content created by professional musicians, music experts, and music institutions to promote their works as well as the music they perform, and “interact with fans and share exclusive behind-the-scenes content with the community within the campaign.”<sup>74</sup> The second mode presents TikTok as a hub for platform-based creation gathering talented music creators – both amateurs and professionals – who produce music content that can be further developed and distributed within the ecosystem of the classical music industry. In both cases, the specific forms of communication and presentation emerge, conditioned by platform-based cultural production and the TikTok-specific characteristics. It is important to note that these two forms often overlap. Therefore, it is not always possible to distinguish clear categories based on the platform’s characteristics, such as the richness of content and the high level of user engagement.

Concerning the first mode, classical music content creators include music institutions (ensembles, media, publishers, record companies, etc.), composers, professional performers, music educators, and individuals who play music. The most popular can be categorized into two groups: the already established professionals or rising stars of classical music (such as: André Rieu, 3.3M followers; Sami Yusuf, 1.9M; Andrea Bocelli, 1.8M; Anna Lapwood, 1.2M; Hans Zimmer, 1.2M; Joe Hisaishi, 710.4K; Ludovico Einaudi, 721.6K; Esther Abrami, 448.9K; Andrew Lloyd Webber, 405.3K; Lang Lang, 319.3K; Alexis Ffrench, 261.5K; Sir

<sup>72</sup> Brian Kavanagh, *Reimagining Classical Music Performing Organisations for the Digital Age* (London: Routledge, 2018), 130.

<sup>73</sup> Melissa C. Dobson, “New Audiences for Classical Music: The Experiences of Non-attenders at Live Orchestral Concerts,” *Journal of New Music Research*, XXXIX(2) (2010), 111.

<sup>74</sup> TikTok, “Classical Music reaches a crescendo on TikTok with Hans Zimmer,” op. cit.

Karl Jenkins, 108K; David Garrett, 96.2K; Ibrahim Maalouf, 59.8K; Robert Balanas, 51.2K; Max Richter, 43.2K; Hilary Hahn, 40.1K; Fazil Say, 31.4K; Mariam Batsashvili, 26.5K; Sheku Kanneh-Mason, 20.8K; Jonas Kaufmann, 13.3K; Vikingur Olafsson, 12.3K), and the emerging professionals or self-taught musicians who are trending online thanks to the platform itself (such as: Emilio Piano, 12.5M; Marcin, 4.5M; Tony Ann, 2.6M; PovViolinist, 2.5M; Babatunde Akinboboye, 1M; Joshua Kyan Aalampour, self-taught classical composer, 1.3M; Kevin Olusola, cellist, 831.9K; Andrea Chiarini, guitarist, 759.3K; Karim Kamar, piano, 484.7K; Miguel plays recorder, 430K; Matt Kent, Turning Classical Music to Pop Songs, 298K; Jasmine Choi, flute, 209.4K; Gabriele Bagnati, 207K; Jamie Duffy, piano, 198.7K; Dante SG, conductor, 117K; Kabil Demir, 103.1K; Claudio Constantini, bandoneonista, 39.5K; Cinci, flute, 36.2K; Hakan Caroline Scruggss, thereminist, 31.6K; Maron Khoury, flute, 23.5K; Mickle Freed, violin, 14K).

In the first group, the musicians with the most followers are the mainstream stars of classical music, whose popularity aligns with their presence in digital media. However, the list does not include many well-known composers and performers, as TikTok is still a relatively new platform, and many artists have yet to establish accounts. Moreover, TikTok is still not recognized as a medium for presenting 'elite' culture, which is why some anonymous artists have more followers and likes than renowned artists (see Table 2). In that sense, it could be said that what dictates the flow of content is primarily its viral potential rather than its artistic value. The content presented by these musicians is diverse and relates to various situations in their professional (and personal) lives. In addition to videos of public performances, which are the most numerous, some contents show the musician off-stage and in everyday professional activities (e.g., signing cards for fan editions, unboxing new releases, giving lessons to students, and so on). This type of content serves a dual purpose: it is both entertaining and educational. Violinist Hilary Hahn, for example, has launched the #100daysofpractice project to show practice principles to followers and motivate herself and the audience to focus on the work process during this period ("It is a way to acknowledge the realities of practicing and be supportive of each other in the working process"). In this way, she establishes a special connection with the followers and enables them to connect and identify with her, representing herself as an artist who faces challenges like everyone else. Although interaction with the audience is an important feature of this platform, it is especially characteristic for artists of the younger generation, who can be characterized as "TikTok natives."<sup>75</sup> For example, the young violinist Esther Abrami interacts with the audience by asking musical quiz questions or answering questions written in the comments, in an attempt to demystify classical music as uninteresting and old-fashioned. She also

<sup>75</sup> Steve Baltin, "Q&A: TikTok Global Head Of Music Ole Obermann On All Things Music," (2023). <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevebaltin/2023/12/21/qa-tiktok-global-head-of-music-ole-obermann-on-all-things-music/>. Accessed: May 15, 2025.

continuously posts about her daily activities, such as a violin practice diary, a routine before a concert, or the process of her photo shoot for the media. The visual aesthetics of her profile can be compared to those of popular performers (in terms of clothing style and presentation manner), which is another indication that classical music and musicians on TikTok are contributing to the rebranding of the concept of classical music itself.

Some artists use the platform to showcase a particular instrument and respond to specific social issues. This is the case with organist and conductor Anna Lapwood, an Associate Artist of the Royal Albert Hall. She has been described as the one who “opened the gateways for fans to discover classical music on TikTok, particularly with her midnight organ sessions that have brought fans into the Royal Albert Hall to witness exclusive rehearsal sessions up close and personal.”<sup>76</sup> In the summer of 2023, this artist became TikTok’s Official Featured Artist in partnership with BBC Proms, enabling followers to enjoy the best content from the eight-week summer orchestra festival. This event transformed the #ClassicalMusic hub, providing fans with exclusive content and a specially curated playlist of classical music.<sup>77</sup> She then remediated this content by releasing a five-track EP earlier this year titled *Midnight Sessions at The Royal Albert Hall*. Through all these projects, this artist used her popularity to raise important social issues, such as the status of women organists and the “gender disparities in the discipline.” Encouraging “women across the world to try the organ, Anna helped popularize the #PlayLikeAGirl TikTok trend, which has taken a life of its own with over 93M views spanning different instruments and sports.”<sup>78</sup>

The presentation of professional musicians on TikTok also includes the pages of various music institutions, such as: Royal Ballet and Opera (1.1M), Classic FM (716.6K), Sony Classical (554.2K), Medici TV (519.2K), London Philharmonic Orchestra (257.2K), Deutsche Gramophone (151.3K), Met Opera (128.5K), Tonhalle Orchester Zurich (100.7K), BBC Radio 3 (21.3K), and Philharmonia Orchestra (14.4K). The content on these pages presents specific audio releases, artists, compositions, and events. They often refer to current performances, but also to significant events from the musical past (like rare footage and documentary recordings), and have a promotional and educational character. However, given the mechanisms and leading population on the platform, these contents are often imbued with curiosity and fun facts from the world of classical music. This approach is particularly characteristic of the account of the radio station Classic FM, which has over 700,000 followers. There, you can see

<sup>76</sup> TikTok, “TikTok partners with Anna Lapwood and BBC Proms to relaunch #ClassicalMusic,” *TikTok Newsroom*, July 25 (2023). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-gb/tiktok-partners-with-anna-lapwood-and-bbc-proms-to-relaunch-classicalmusic>. Accessed: May 15, 2025.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

content organized into the following categories: Interviews, Quizzes, Stunning Performances, Musical Bucketlist, Classic FM Live, and Melodic Memes. On this page, the most-viewed videos feature young musical talents who are especially important to the TikTok community. Considering the number of followers on these pages, these accounts complement other promotion mechanisms of these institutions, with a focus on the younger population. Comparing the accounts of the mentioned institutions on other social networks, we conclude that the content is distributed according to the principle of transmedia storytelling, as different segments of the narrative are highlighted on each platform to create a complete narrative that guides the audience through various digital destinations.

In the group of emerging and trending music stars, immediate and informal access is even more pronounced. Here, classical music is presented truly as an everyday, spontaneous activity, often practiced outside (beyond) the concert hall, outdoors, or in private spaces. A representative example is the page titled “Emilio Piano,” which has over 12 million followers. This page is run by a young pianist, Emil Reinert, who was educated at prestigious institutions where he worked with eminent pianists. However, he became a sensation not because of any specific performance in a concert hall but for simulating spontaneous performances in public places (restaurants, stations, airports, outdoor places), which he recorded and then published on social networks. These performances imply a moment of surprise for the audience, since they are performed by spontaneous passers-by, as well as a moment of interaction with them. The audience approaches and assigns a playing task to the artist and, in certain moments, joins in the performance. The repertoire he performs on such occasions includes popular classical compositions arranged for piano (e.g., arias from operas such as *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, and *Turandot*), as well as compositions from other musical genres. The simulated effect of surprise, spontaneity, and the possibility of interaction with the artist are the moments that make his content viral. These examples present classical music as a universal cultural value for everyone and everywhere, accentuating the way music bonds social relationships and builds community. The users at the top of the list of most liked TikTok #ClassicalMusic accounts (Table 2) attract followers predominantly through entertaining posts that showcase the participatory performance of classical music pieces within public, everyday spaces. Some of the most trending creators of this content are Van, Emilio Piano, Aurelien Froissart, Julien Cohen, and thibault\_piano.

### TikTok Trends with Classical Music

With the development of social media, “a set of more communal, supportive, mentoring and collaborative labor practices” has been introduced.<sup>79</sup> When asked about being the face of #ClassicalMusic, Anna Lapwood said:

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<sup>79</sup> Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production*, op. cit., 120.

One of my favorite things about TikTok is how it helps smash down perceived barriers between different genres – since I started using TikTok I've worked with so many people from all sorts of musical backgrounds and realized what a glorious tool collaboration can be to bring classical music to a new audience. TikTok has blown open my whole musical world and I can't wait to see what collaboration the world throws at me next!<sup>80</sup>

Some TikTok classical music trends are emerging from the Duet and Use this Sound features, which are platform-specific and stimulate collaboration and co-creation, resulting in vibrant trends that continuously evolve and grow. Musicians can challenge others to play a well-known melody or a complex piece, and users often respond by putting their twist on them. Activating the Duet function allows the creation of duets with famous classical music performances or responding to challenges. The famous are those initiated by TwoSetViolin, a duo popular for their comedic and educational videos on classical music, which have garnered over a million followers. They challenge users to play along with them or recreate their funny skits. Different variants of challenges with classical music include dance challenges, where choreographies are set to classical music (Abrilly); artistic challenges, such as creating visual art or animation inspired by classical music pieces; and collaborative challenges, which involve creating group performances and showcasing the power of music to bring people together. JazzTok, an online community of musicians who create and share jazz arrangements remotely on TikTok using the Duet feature, can be seen as an exemplary case of improvisation as a specific co-creative communicative form that is enabled by the Duet feature.<sup>81</sup> The challenges are also related to celebrating anniversaries of classical music. To celebrate World Piano Day, TikTok “invited piano lovers, young and old, amateur and professional, to come together to showcase their musical talent on TikTok.”<sup>82</sup> Beyond these performance challenges, there are also educational ones, such as the #ClassicalMusicChallenge, which poses the question, “Can you guess which classical music piece is playing in this video?” or quizzes that share interesting facts about classical music, composers, or specific pieces. Many TikTok users – various classical music lovers, connoisseurs, and experts – provide lessons on classical music theory, history, and notable composers through engaging and informative videos, often entertaining, demonstrating their classical music expertise to teach and make classical music more accessible (Noreen, KiaraSound, Music Man, Classical Music, bastianosis, Theory Notes, Classical music aesthetics, Halidon Music, Top Classical Music, Orchestra101, Magic of Piano, Classical Music Gallery, Sebastian, Classic

<sup>80</sup> TikTok, “TikTok partners with Anna Lapwood...,” op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Kaye, “JazzTok: Creativity, Community...,” op. cit.

<sup>82</sup> TikTok, “TikTok celebrates World Piano Day!,” *TikTok Newsroom*, August 8 (2022). <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-gb/tiktok-celebrates-world-piano-day>. Accessed: May 15, 2025.

Divinity, The Art of Classical Music, Your Classical Feed; Strings and Things Official).

A variety of videos showcase the creativity of users while simultaneously celebrating classical music in a fun and engaging manner. These videos can be categorized within the trend of classical music memes, often emerging through TikTok's Use This Sound feature. In such cases, classical music compositions are appropriated as familiar cultural content that users adapt and reinterpret for purposes of self-expression. These cultural units feature humorous takes on well-known classical pieces, composers, or other aspects of classical music culture, ranging from musical jokes to creative reinterpretations of classical music in a contemporary context (Mike Chen, #violinmeme). Some typical examples are expectation vs. reality memes (Esther Abrami), juxtaposing classical music moments with real-life situations and highlighting the contrast between the two; classical vs. pop singing (Opera: Trashified), comparing stereotypical behaviors and personalities of classical and pop musicians; and beginner vs. pro or one month vs. ten years in playing instruments. The trends in classical music-related memes are fluctuating and elusive, reflecting the creativity that is a platform-dominant aspect and the fast-paced nature of memes as a cultural unit.

TikTok is a hub for a diverse range of classical music, encompassing both the core of the Western European canon and the so-called "new classical music."<sup>83</sup> This new music includes the works of contemporary authors, among whom the most popular are those associated with film music, video game music, musicals, and ambient music, including Ludovico Einaudi, Hans Zimmer, and Andrew Lloyd Webber. However, some compositions are continuously popular: Pachelbel's Canon in D, Bach's Prélude from Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, Vivaldi's *Le quattro stagioni*, Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, Beethoven's "Für Elise" and the Ninth Symphony, Strauss's *Radetsky March*, Chopin's Nocturne op. 9 No. 2, Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite* No. 1 op. 46, and Debussy's *Clair de Lune*. While contemporary classical music may not be as prevalent on TikTok as canonical classical music, its presence is growing as users seek out new and innovative ways of musical expression. Thus, thanks to a viral TikTok trend, Ludovico Einaudi's 2013 track "Experience" has enjoyed a major resurgence, hitting the global charts. The track has seen a surge in interest, with almost 7 million video creations on TikTok using "Experience" as their musical accompaniment. These videos have clocked up more than 15 billion views.<sup>84</sup> This kind of success was undoubtedly driven by the music itself and the composer's creative approach, which drew on various influences, including his mentor, Lucian Berio, as well as popular songs. In this regard, he points out: "I was studying how to find a lan-

<sup>83</sup> Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music...*, op. cit., 93.

<sup>84</sup> Freya Paar, "Einaudi becomes TikTok's biggest classical composer," *BBC Music Magazine*, January 28 (2022). [www.classical-music.com/news/einaudi-becomes-tiktoks-biggest-classical-composer](http://www.classical-music.com/news/einaudi-becomes-tiktoks-biggest-classical-composer). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

guage that could have the same approach that you have with the popular music that is very immediate.”<sup>85</sup>

Moreover, as previously noted, the concept of contemporary classical music often embraces a decolonial perspective and reflects today’s multicultural world. As a result, artists presenting themselves on the platform come from a highly diverse range of cultural and geographic backgrounds. In this context, classical music is understood as a broad, inclusive category, frequently incorporating references to popular music and contemporary culture. It is, therefore, unsurprising that some of the most popular videos portray classical music as an accessible, everyday practice rather than an elite or exclusive tradition. If we have in mind the statement that classical music “has often been surrounded by unnecessary formality and an academic pedantry that is apt to strike noninitiates as hollow elitism,”<sup>86</sup> it could be said that its pedestal position has become a subject of questioning, due to digital media mechanisms and regulations. This view is the result of the hybridization of content on the network and the impossibility, in this case, of preserving clear genre categories. Because “our current media culture creates hybrids easily and eagerly,”<sup>87</sup> the process of *remixing* different samples survives as a constant of new media culture that reconsidered the concept of originality and authenticity.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the specific and broad category of TikTok classical music is related to numerous videos that fuse classical music with other musical genres, such as pop, rock, and hip-hop, thereby framing the category of TikTok classical music crossover.<sup>89</sup> One notable example of this is Hip Hopera, a crossover genre created by Nigerian-American opera singer Babatunde Akinboboye. Numerous examples of classical crossovers exist. Classical music covers or performing popular songs from other genres using classical instruments or classical music arrangements are the most common. With 2.6M followers and 40.7M likes, Tonny Ann is one of the most popular classical crossover pianists on the platform. A TikTok trending musician, Wallerstedt (@cwallerstedt), has reached 1.1M followers and 30.9M likes with his piano arrangements of popular and film music hits and released an original album of five calming piano music pieces called Coalescence, announcing shorts on TikTok and streaming full-length numbers on Spotify. There are also examples of music mashups that combine classical music compositions with unconventional instruments. Canadian drum-

<sup>85</sup> Ludovico Einaudi, “In Conversation, Sydney Opera House,” posted December 2 (2013), by Sydney Opera House, YouTube, 3:15.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4SUJrOl3Mw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4SUJrOl3Mw). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

<sup>86</sup> Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music...*, op. cit., 95.

<sup>87</sup> Bolter, *The Digital Plenitude...* op. cit., 119.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 122–36.

<sup>89</sup> Keryn E. Garvin, “The Crossover Conflict: Creating a Framework for Combining Classical and Popular Music in the 21st Century” (Master Thesis, American University, 2012). [https://aura.american.edu/articles/thesis/The\\_Crossover\\_Conflict\\_Creating\\_a\\_Framework\\_for\\_Combining\\_Classical\\_and\\_Popular\\_Music\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_Century/23866002?file=41861493](https://aura.american.edu/articles/thesis/The_Crossover_Conflict_Creating_a_Framework_for_Combining_Classical_and_Popular_Music_in_the_21st_Century/23866002?file=41861493). Accessed: May 13, 2025.

mer Patrick Santos (@rat.trick patrick) adds a complete drum kit to classical music pieces, creating a new musical fusion and a playlist of 34 pieces called “If classical had drums,” which has garnered 4.3 million likes in popularity. Miguel Lawrence (@miguelplaysrecorder), a musician specializing in playing the recorder, has garnered 4.1 million likes by playing the *William Tell* Overture in the front seat of his car. If you cannot imagine what a fusion of Beethoven and Brazilian music sounds like, try the Use This Sound feature for Pisadinha Beethoven by @ MC Nou, which is one of the most unexpected crossbreedings of “Für Elise” with traditional Brazilian music, used in over 810,200 videos. The opposite direction is also explored in the previously mentioned compilation, *TikTok Classics – Memes & Viral Hits*. This compilation demonstrates that classical music can be utilized as an element for the valorization of TikTok-native music and as a mechanism for its further distribution.

These mashups resonate with a diverse range of TikTok audiences worldwide, including those who may not typically listen to classical music and identify with other musical genres. The overwhelming presence of TikTok classical music crossovers is a consequence of platform-based production and the global framework of cultural distribution, which raises new, wide, and participatory-oriented audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds. These audiences appropriate globally available classical music pieces, intersecting them with already existing popular music and/or non-European musical folklore that is part of their identities and brought to the platform. As a case study, TikTok demonstrates that within platform-based cultural production, classical music is no longer just a matter of high culture and the Western world. It becomes transformed and reconfigured in its appearance, intersected and blended with moments of everyday life and different forms of musical expressions, thus confirming the thesis about “the breakdown of any broadly shared conviction in hierarchy”<sup>90</sup> in our contemporary media culture.

## Conclusion

On the TikTok platform, classical music is presented as *new classical music*, an extended genre that involves the creation of content specifically tailored to the platform and dependent on the video format's and sound library's unique characteristics. This is not only content that contains elements of other music genres or arts, but also different behaviors and life situations, spontaneity, and informality that overlap with classical music. The worlds of the high and the popular, the artistic and the everyday, and the local and the global exist together. Once classical music is introduced on the platform as material for content creation, it is exposed to the hyperproduction of individual creative patterns by a large number of users who differ from one another in terms of their cultural background and the goals they pursue while using the platform. Through the mediation or

<sup>90</sup> Bolter, *The Digital Plenitude...*, op. cit., viii.

relocation from the concert hall as an autonomous space of existence, classical music on the platform finds itself in an altered and overlapping state of existence, as a fluctuating flow of many available pieces and fragments alongside thematically diverse video content. It exists defragmented as a variable set of units in the shared space of the platform, parallel to many other units of expression – music, texts, images, behaviors – free from hierarchical positioning in a generative mode of video content creation, challenge, and collaboration that intersect with different cultural worlds, under the idea of everyday creativity and communication by anyone, anywhere.

The TikTok platform can benefit from the appropriation of classical music and become a major player in the classical music industry by expanding its target audience. Classical music can also benefit from platformisation. Suppose platforms are the main hubs for global business exchange and communication. In that case, it is only a matter of time before participating in the ongoing transformation processes of adapting cultural heritage to the new digital and institutionalized structures. It is up to the professional gatekeepers who look after classical music in physical spaces to take steps that align with their artistic values and make classical music accessible to a new generation of aficionados.

But the story has an open end. The hierarchies in art, language, and learning have broken down but not completely disappeared.<sup>91</sup> We are witnessing that within the paradigm of platform-based cultural production, “a piece of music over a century old has the potential to provoke an experience of radical newness.”<sup>92</sup> Does this mean that the value of the heritage of classical music is indeed timeless, regardless of the forms and formats of its (re)mediation? On the other hand, there is a tendency to assess the value of the platform’s own musical content through its orchestral arrangement and symphonic sound as characteristics of artistic music, thus branding new musical creations as classical. “Classical music thus finds itself in an ironic position. Despite its old appearance, classical music makes sophisticated and involved propositions about modern sensibility and thought that remain profoundly significant for our modern lives.”<sup>93</sup> Paradoxically, despite its “old appearance,” does classical music possess a high degree of adaptability to the contemporary context? Regardless of the processes of deconstruction and decolonization, classical music as a traditional cultural form does indeed have a universal appeal around the world today. The case of ‘TikTok goes classical’ shows that the legacy of classical music is timeless and universal, regardless of changing cultural and technological paradigms, and that it has the potential to transfer its value to any new media of cultural production. Overall, classical music is present on the TikTok platform in a ubiquitous flow of daily recycling and reuse of its fragments, which are often difficult to differentiate and capture.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>92</sup> Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music...*, op. cit., 109.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 103.

	TIKTOK ACCOUNT	TIKTOK TITLE	LIKE COUNT
1.	@emiliopiano	I met 2 SINGERS in a CAFÉ!! 😊 @Dritan Alsela Song: Libiamo ne' lieti calici Opera: La Traviata	17.2M
2.	@aurelien.froissart	This girl's request turned into the best duet I ever had EVERYONE was SHOCKED 😱 Today I was playing piano at a supermarket in Paris when suddenly a guy asks me to play violin with him. Turns out he is one of the most famous violinist in the world Check out his new app @ Tonic if you want to learn all his secrets to become an amazing musician!	16.6M
3.	@emiliopiano	Carol of the Bells ✨babyyyy	8.9M
4.	@poviolinist	When a guitarist joins and opera...	6.5M
5.	@marcin.music	I didn't expect that to happen 🎵😊	5.8M
6.	@raphaelfroissart	Just practicing 40 hours.	5.3M
7.	@twosetviolin	SHE DIDN'T EXPECT THAT 😱🎸	5.2M
8.	@emiliopiano	Sorry Vivaldi ~	5.1M
9.	@lvna.violina	Hit this real quick before leaving for class ✨ thnx for all the love and support, cannot believe this silly little dance got so much love 😍	5M
10.	@thisisnotaprilatall	Someone literally shush her after she screamed 😊	4.9M
11.	@orchestra101	I surprised a guy who PROPOSED to his girlfriend at the AIRPORT!! ❤️💍	4.6M
12.	@emiliopiano	<a href="https://www.tiktok.com/@miguelplaysrecorder/video/7302833005167480097?is_from_webapp=1&amp;sender_device=pc&amp;web_id=7255714261783119365">https://www.tiktok.com/@miguelplaysrecorder/video/7302833005167480097?is_from_webapp=1&amp;sender_device=pc&amp;web_id=7255714261783119365</a>	4.1M
13.	@andrerieu	Unbelievable! Voilà reached 10 million streams on Spotify, and 40 million on YouTube and TikTok. Can you believe it? Add it to your playlists, or catch the magin in person at the Christmas concerts and the 2024 tour. Secure your tickets	4M
14.	@goldenlily1894	<a href="https://www.tiktok.com/@goldenlily1894/photo/7293659312294087942?is_from_webapp=1&amp;sender_device=pc&amp;web_id=7255714261783119365">https://www.tiktok.com/@goldenlily1894/photo/7293659312294087942?is_from_webapp=1&amp;sender_device=pc&amp;web_id=7255714261783119365</a>	3.9M
15.	@goldenlily1894	Classical music is so underrated	3.8M
16.	@andrerieu	Double the screens, double the fun! Check out this split-screen video of Emma singing Voilà for twice the excitement! 😊	3.7M
17.	@tonyann	what should I call this one??	3.4M
18.	@cwallerstedt	Hotline bling	3M
19.	@thisisnotaprilatall	I think my last one is better in terms of dance moves but I personally like how energetic this one is 😊	3M

Table 1: Classical music videos on TikTok that have garnered more than 3 million likes<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Data on like counts were collected from the platform on May 14, 2025.

	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FOLLOWERS	LIKES
1.	<u>@vantoan</u> Van	Piano ❤	20.1M	408.7M
2.	<u>@emiliopiano</u> Emilio Piano	✉: contact@emiliopiano.com ♪ NEW SONG “Maison” out now! ↗ lnk.to/emiliopiano-maison	12.5M	253.9M
3.	<u>@juliencothen_piano</u> Julien Cohen	Sharing with you music that I love ✉: management@juliencothen-pianist.com	8M	166.4M
4.	<u>@poviolinist</u> Poviolinist	I do what no one else can do ELYSIAN ♪ IS OUT NOW ✉: poviolinist@gmail.com	2.5M	101.3M
5.	<u>@aurelien.froissart</u> Aurelien Froissart	I play piano everywhere because classical music is for everyone. linktr.ee/aurelienfroissart	4M	95.3M
6.	<u>@jodokcello</u> Jodok Cello	Instagram: 5+ Mio Follower 😊 open.spotify.com/artist/69Nj6p	5.1M	59.4M
7.	<u>@marcin.music</u> Marcin	World tour tickets: marcin.tix.to/tour	4.5M	54.1M
8.	<u>@andrerieu</u> André Rieu	Official account of André Rieu and his Johann Strauss Orchestra linktr.ee/andrerieu	3.3M	53.9M
9.	<u>@izzyiztrash</u> Opera: Trashified	Opera, but make it ♪ trash♪ hireizzyiztrash@gmail.com Linktr.ee/izzyiztrash	1.1M	51.9M
10.	<u>@thisisnotaprilatall</u> Abrilly	23 Your upstairs neighbor Heel clicking connoisseur linktr.ee/abrilly	930.7K	50.6M
11.	<u>@twosetviolin</u> twosetviolin	Go Practice. LingLing40hrs. World Tour Tickets Out!	1.2M	47.2M
12.	<u>@tonyannn</u> tony ann	2025 WORLD TOUR! 🌎 ↗ www.tix.to/tonyanntour	2.6M	40.7M
13.	<u>@annalapwoodorgan</u> Anna Lapwood Organist	Welcome to #OrganTok 😊 This is my only account! #PlayLikeAGirl annalapwood.co.uk/concerts	1.2M	40.5M
14.	<u>@goldenlily1894</u> GoldenLily	Just a guy who likes classical music DM me for collaborations	434.5K	38M
15.	<u>@raphaelfroissart</u> Raphaël Froissart	Clarinet player ♪ Classical musician 🎵	1.9M	34.1M

	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FOLLOWERS	LIKES
16.	<a href="#">@joshuaalampour</a> Joshua Kyan Aalampour	Self-taught classical composer 23 years old Spotify: Joshua Kyan Aalampour www.joshuakyan.com	1.3K	33.5M
17.	<a href="#">@cwallerstedt</a> Wallerstedt	I play the guitar "Wallerstedt" on Spotify SPOTIFY - PATREON - SHEETS ↗ linktr.ee/cwallerstedt	1.1M	30.9M
18.	<a href="#">@classicalmusicart</a> Classical Music	/	761.8K	26.7M
19.	<a href="#">@babatunde_hiphopera</a> Babatunde Akinboboye	Opera singer 📍 LA 🇺🇸	1M	25.8M
20.	<a href="#">@thibaultpiano</a> thibault_piano	📍 London ✉️ contact@thibaultpiano.com	1.3M	20.8M
21.	<a href="#">@miguelplaysrecorder</a> miguelplaysrecorder	Miguel plays recorder	430K	20.4M
22.	<a href="#">@classicfm</a> Classicfm	The UK's favourite classical music station 🎵 Listen now on Global Player 🎧 classicfm.com/tiktok	716.6K	17.3M
23.	<a href="#">@eliastaglang</a> Elias	🎹 Organ & Violin 🎵 Musica lætitiae comes, medicina dolorum. pianist	200.9K	17M
24.	<a href="#">@noreensuyudy</a> Noreen   🎹	@Noreen "Soaring Through Time" out on Spotify (+ sheet music) linktr.ee/NoreenSuyudy	426.1K	16.5M
25.	<a href="#">@alyviolon</a> Alicia 🎻	🎸	372.5K	13.8M
26.	<a href="#">@tysmusicc</a> Ty's Music	Thank you for 300k, you're all appreciated	314.8K	11.4M
27.	<a href="#">@estherabrami</a> Esther Abrami	I play the violin 🎻 Get my album and come to my concert	448.9K	11.2M
28.	<a href="#">@orchestra101</a> orchestra101	Fun   Orchestra   Insights   Inspire Best orchestra music	164.9K	10.2M
29.	<a href="#">@sonyclassical</a> Sony Classical	Working with the greatest artists ever since 1887.	554.3K	8.8M
30.	<a href="#">@sebastiancabj3</a> Sebastián	/	305.7K	6M
31.	<a href="#">@ludovicoeinaudimusic</a> Ludovico Einaudi	The official account of musician Ludovico Einaudi	721.6K	5.8M

	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FOLLOWERS	LIKES
32.	<u>@hanszimmer</u> Hans Zimmer	My official TikTok page!	1.2M	5.1M
33.	<u>@dpicheviolin</u> David Piché	MY ONLY ACCOUNT♪ Violin ♫ Anime, video game, pop rock! Also check my IG and YT 🔥 linktr.ee/dpicheviolin	294.2K	4.9M
34.	<u>@rat.trick</u> patrick	Canadian Drummer 🥁 patrickssantosdrum@gmail.com Classical w/ drums album info ➡	157.9K	4.3M
35.	<u>@classical_music_news</u> Classical Music	No bio yet.	321.8K	4.2M
36.	<u>@raychenviolin</u> raychenviolin	Have fun, make friends, and earn XP while you practice ♪ Download Tonic♫ downloadtonic.com/join-in	619.8K	4.1M
37.	<u>@classicalmusicloved</u> Classical Music	Love classical music. Favorite Composer Dvorak	173.7K	4M
38.	<u>@lporchestra</u> London Philharmonic Orchestra	Your favourite orchestra's favourite orchestra x beacons.ai/lporchestra	257.2K	3.9M
39.	<u>@officialalw</u> Andrew Lloyd Webber	Official account. Managed by #TeamALW. Personal posts signed 'ALW' 🎭	405.3K	3.6M
40.	<u>@classicalmusicdaily</u> Classical Music Daily	Join the greatest classical music community! +1M followers in all platforms! www.classicalmusicdaily.net	152.7K	3.4M

Table 2: The top 40 most liked accounts with classical music content<sup>95</sup>

## SUMMARY

This research highlights TikTok as a prime example of platform-based cultural production, examining the functional mechanisms through which classical music operates within the platform. The study identifies the primary forms of communication associated with classical music on TikTok, as well as the most recognizable categories and trends, with content differentiation serving as the main methodological approach. Much of the classical music content on TikTok is organized under the hashtag #ClassicalMusic. While classical music was present on the platform before the introduction of this hashtag, its formalization has expanded visibility and created new opportunities for strategic and commercial engagement within the music industry. The realization of this initiative unfolded over several stages. In October 2020, Warner Music Group released the first of three TikTok Classical Music compilations featuring 25 tracks. Two additional compilations followed – in January 2022, with 59 tracks, and in March 2023, with 25 tracks – totalling 109 compositions by 46 composers. These compilations span a broad historical

<sup>95</sup> The data that indicate the number of followers and likes and account descriptions have been retrieved from the platform on May 14, 2025.

range, from the Baroque era to the contemporary period, with notable figures such as Mozart, Bach, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven prominently featured. In the summer of 2022, the same record label released the world's first TikTok album, blending pop and classical elements by orchestrating classical arrangements of the 18 most popular TikTok hits. Promoted under the hashtag #TikTokClassics, the campaign sought to highlight the expressive potential and grandeur of symphonic music in a modern context, inviting audiences to engage more deeply with orchestral sound. The album included 30-second excerpts tailored for video creation, with full-length versions later made available on music streaming platforms. TikTok classical music content is produced by a diverse group of creators, including professional musicians, music institutions, and platform-native creators. The presentation styles and communicative forms are shaped by the dynamics of platform-based cultural production and TikTok's specific affordances. Classical music is frequently depicted as an accessible, informal, and everyday practice, often taking place outside the context of traditional concert halls. Trends in classical music on TikTok are largely driven by platform features that promote user creativity and collaboration, such as the Duet and Use This Sound tools. These trends encompass dance challenges, artistic reinterpretations, collaborative performances, and educational content. Additionally, a significant portion of classical music content involves genre fusion, particularly with pop, rock, and hip-hop, contributing to the emergence of the TikTok classical music crossover category. Ultimately, classical music on TikTok exists within a continuous cycle of remixing, recycling, and recontextualization, blending seamlessly with everyday experiences and diverse musical expressions.

# CONCERT PERFORMANCE FEATURING MUSIC FROM VIDEO GAMES: CREATING A NEW AUDIENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the phenomenon of concert performances featuring music from video games and their role in cultivating a new audience. The performance of video game music in symphonic arrangements first emerged in Japan in the 1980s, and since then, it has gained increasing global popularity. Renowned symphony orchestras worldwide incorporate video game music into their regular repertoires, and the growing audience at these concerts indicates significant interest in such projects.

Inspired by Theodor Adorno, who in the early 1960s identified eight distinct types of music listeners, the author attempts to determine whether the emergence of concert performances featuring video game music creates space for defining a new audience. By analyzing the combination of the relatively new concert practice and the interactivity provided by the experience of listening to music from video games in a concert setting, the author seeks to highlight the potential inherent in this type of music. In an era when video game music is still not artistically valued as much as other genres of applied music, there is room for further exploration of whether the artistic potential of such concerts can contribute to their improved status within the art world.

**KEY WORDS:** Video games, music, concert performance, audience, symphonic music.

The tradition of releasing video game soundtracks as standalone albums follows the footsteps of the film industry, where music has held a significant place since its earliest days of incorporation. Unsurprisingly, shortly after the initial application of sound effects and later music in video games, music began to transcend into concert halls. According to the definition by Daragh O'Reilly, Gretchen Larsen, and Krzysztof Kubacki, live music represents a multisensory, immersive, aesthetic, musical, and social experience.<sup>1</sup> The authors add that live music is a “unique form of musical experience spontaneously created by musicians and their audience.”<sup>2</sup> This type of experience is obtained through the interaction between musicians, audience, and environment, and “the experience itself cannot be separated from the music.”<sup>3</sup> Live music is “ephemeral and variable in terms of quality,” implying that two concerts by the same artist can never be entirely identical.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daragh O'Reilly, Gretchen Larsen, and Krzysztof Kubacki, “Marketing live music,” in: *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience*, ed. by Karen Burland and Stephanie Pitt (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 10.

The popularity of music for video games can be viewed through the theory of prototypes, as the popularity of a game's soundtrack often results from the success of the video game itself. In his book, *The Language of New Media*, Lev Manovich highlights variability as an important characteristic of new media.<sup>5</sup> According to him, new media allow us to create various versions of the same thing that differ more substantially from one another. In the media industry, these "data," which can be well-known narratives, icons, characters, or famous pop stars, are known as "property."<sup>6</sup> For example, all of Madonna's cultural projects will automatically be unified under her name. Using prototype theory, Manovich emphasizes that "property" acts as a prototype and that different versions are derived from this prototype.<sup>7</sup> In this context, video games whose music is performed in concerts can be considered as both a "base" and a familiar context that consumers, or the audience, can become acquainted with before attending the concert. Music from video games, extracted from its original environment of application, continues to "live" in new forms and becomes a "representative" of a specific content or story (world) of the video game from which it "originated."

One example of music from video games being adapted for a new consumer environment is the concert performance of music inspired by the game "Final Fantasy." The project "Final Symphony" premiered in 2013 in Wuppertal, Germany, and stemmed from the music of the video games "Final Fantasy VI," "Final Fantasy VII," and "Final Fantasy X."<sup>8</sup> The concert was produced by Thomas Böcker, a concert producer specialized in orchestral concerts of this type. At this concert, music from video games was performed in the form of a symphonic poem, a piano concerto, and a complete symphony. This was a novelty because all three compositions, although inspired by video game music, were written in classical forms. The symphony lasted forty-five minutes, and as Böcker emphasizes, the structure and "musical processes" applied in it were directly modeled on classical symphonies.<sup>9</sup> This approach to concerts and "imitating traditional Western musical genres" allowed orchestras like the London Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra to begin performing music from video games. According to Thomas Böcker, specially tailored arrangements for orchestral performance require a transformation of the original to function naturally in a new environment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lev Manović, *Jezik novih medija* (Beograd: CLIO, 2015), 81–2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Böcker, Melanie Fritsch, and Tim Summers, "Producing Game Music Concerts," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Video Game Music* ed. by Melanie Fritsch and Tim Summers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 427.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 428.

<sup>10</sup> Idem.

Deviating from the original may result in the new musical version not being close to every fan of the video game from which the music is derived. However, according to Böcker, such arrangements “offer the best results” and do not compel orchestras to perform music that would be a literal “copy” of the music from video games.<sup>11</sup>

Another characteristic of concerts featuring music inspired by video games, produced by Thomas Böcker, is the absence of video projections during the orchestral performance. This distinction sets these concerts apart from many others that feature music from video games and movies. Böcker wanted the focus to be exclusively on the music and musicians.<sup>12</sup> In this way, the audience (including individuals attending a concert hall for the first time) sees how sound is produced, and they are not distracted by video recordings. His idea was for people to attend such concerts solely for the music, which would captivate them, allowing them to return for other classical music concerts due to that unique experience. Böcker saw his concerts as an opportunity to offer video game players an experience of listening to symphonic music, potentially sparking their interest in attending similar classical music concerts in the future.<sup>13</sup>

When we discuss the narrative potential of music from certain video games, it not only gets displaced from its original context (the video game) but also acquires a new musical identity (new arrangements for concert performance) and a space where the listener has the opportunity to hear it in a new edition (the concert hall). In this new space, music loses its interactive element because its interaction with the video is no longer the focus, and the player becomes the listener. By losing one function, the music from certain video games, when performed in a concert setting, gains another – the ability to reference and evoke the story and original world in which it was first created, drawing potential for envisioning new fantasy worlds.

### “Video Games Live” Project

The “Video Games Live” project was created in 2002 by video game music composers Tommy Tallarico and Jack Wall. In contrast to concerts produced by Thomas Böcker, which focused exclusively on music in new arrangements inspired by classical musical forms, “Video Games Live” presents an interactive concert event featuring music from the most popular video games of all time. Prominent world orchestras and choirs perform specially arranged but well-known music from video games for a symphony orchestra, accompanied by video projections on screens and many other lighting and sound effects. The preparations for this project lasted over three years. Tallarico and Wall gradually

<sup>11</sup> Idem.

<sup>12</sup> Idem.

<sup>13</sup> Idem.

developed the technology needed to synchronize lights, video projections, effects, and the concert performance. Special technology was also designed for communication between the main concert organizer, conductor, and all other performers. Interactivity is one of the most important elements of this event. On several occasions, Tallarico or Wall invited someone from the audience to try playing a game accompanied by a live symphony orchestra.

Author Karen Collins described her experience at this concert in her book:

San Jose, California, March 2006: I am in line to a sold-out concert, standing in front of Mario and Samus. Mario is a short Italian man, with sparkling eyes and a thick wide moustache, wearing blue overalls and a floppy red cap, while his female companion, Samus, is part Chozo, part human, and wears a sleek blue suit and large space helmet. They get their picture taken with Link, a young elflike Hylian boy in green felt, and we are slowly pushed into the Civic Auditorium. In the darkness that follows our entrance from the California sunshine, the murmur of the crowd is building. It is the first time I have seen so many people turn up for an orchestra; every seat is filled as the show begins. This was, however, no ordinary performance: the orchestra would be playing classics, but these were classics of an entirely new variety — the songs from ‘classic’ video games, including “Pong,” “Super Mario Bros.,” and “Halo.”<sup>14</sup>

Orchestras worldwide are increasingly presenting concerts that incorporate visual effects and video materials. According to Meghan Stevens, this kind of transformation of the “traditional concert format” is necessary to attract a broader audience, especially younger generations, who, as she notes, should eventually take the place of the aging concertgoers.<sup>15</sup> When placed in a new context and specially arranged for concert performance, music originally composed for video games gains new aesthetic value and undergoes a process of remediation. According to Vesna Mikić: “Introducing music into the discussion on remediation – or even better, introducing remediation into the interpretation of music – is based as much on the assumption that, for most of us, it is difficult to imagine/construct/experience of a (completely) soundless, and therefore musicless, reality, as it is on the necessity of examining how music as a medium constitutes reality.”<sup>16</sup> It is, in fact, music that places these symphonic arrangements into a familiar framework, helping the audience to interpret and better understand the interactive performance taking place on stage.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Collins, *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Meghan Stevens, *Music and Image in Concert, Using Images in the Instrumental Music Concert* (Sydney: Music and Media, 2009), 7.

<sup>16</sup> Vesna Mikić, “Old/New Music Media: Some Thoughts on Remediation in/of Music,” in: *Music identities on paper and screen*, ed. by Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, Vesna Mikić, Tijana Popović Mlađenović, and Ivana Perković (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2014), 28–33, 30.

## New Audience in Concert Halls

Joshua Fineberg, in his book *Classical Music, Why Bother? – Hearing the World of Contemporary Culture through a Composer’s Ears* writes about how, in the past few decades, even the most esteemed cultural institutions have been “affected by marketing thinking,” and how this is neither unusual nor new.<sup>17</sup> According to O'Reilly, Larsen, and Kubacki, live music performance is one of the most important forms of “music consumption.”<sup>18</sup> The question raised by analyzing concerts of music from video games is: what type (or types) of audience attends such concerts? Theodor Adorno, in his book *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, defines eight different types of music listeners:

**1. The expert:** A person who strives not to miss anything during music listening and carefully listens and informs themselves about everything related to the piece being performed; according to Adorno, in the contemporary context, this type of listener has been reduced to a circle of professional musicians who can approach music in this way.

**2. The good listener:** This type of listener understands music on its “basic level,” similar to how people understand language.

**3. Culture consumer:** A type of listener who is always well informed; record collectors; they respect music as a cultural good; according to Adorno, this type of listener can be characterized as a “music evaluator.”

**4. Emotional listener:** Music is often a source of irrationality for this type of listener; listening to music can produce an emotional reaction in such individuals, and they can even cry.

**5. Resentment listener:** This type constantly holds the opinion that past times were better and that higher-quality music was a reflection of those times.

**6. The jazz listener:** This type of listener has an aversion to the classical-romantic ideal of music.

**7. The listener to whom music is entertainment:** For this type of listener, music represents only entertainment and nothing more; according to Adorno, a cultural industry has been created for them. Adorno argues that discussions about this type of listener can occur within the context of mass media, including radio, film, and television.

**8. The musically indifferent (the unmusical) listener:** Adorno equates this type of listener with a non-musical or anti-musical person; the author hypoth-

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<sup>17</sup> As an example of this, he cites the exhibition *The Art of the Motorcycle* at the Guggenheim Museum, which the institution organized in 1998 in collaboration with BMW in order to attract a wider audience.

For more, cf. Joshua Fineberg, *Classical Music, Why Bother? Hearing the World of Contemporary Culture through a Composer’s Ears* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7.

<sup>18</sup> O'Reilly, Larsen, and Kubacki, “Marketing live music,” op. cit., 13.

esizes that this type of listener, in most cases, had strict and authoritative parents who forced them to engage in music, despite their resistance.<sup>19</sup>

Adorno's selection offers a vast "palette" of different types of music listeners at concerts, indicating the diversities and nuances among such audiences. Considering that Adorno did not experience the development and popularity of video games, and therefore neither the concert performance of music from this medium, one might ask whether the audience attending concerts of music from video games could be classified into any of the aforementioned Adorno listener types. Although Adorno's seventh type of listener, for whom music represents entertainment and who is closely connected to mass media, could most closely be associated with the type of audience attending concert performances of music from video games, we believe there is space to discuss a modified and new type of audience that, because of these performances, visits concert halls. Herbert Lindenberger, in his work *Opera in History*, also deals with different types of audiences. We particularly highlight the Avid type, which, according to the author, can often be found among listeners of non-vocal music.<sup>20</sup> Lindenberger argues this type of audience is most commonly found in the fields of film, rock music, and sports.<sup>21</sup> In this regard, it is possible to draw a certain parallel between Adorno's and Lindenberger's types of listeners and compare them with the audience attending concerts of music from video games. In a 2015 video, recorded at a concert where the London Symphony Orchestra performed music from the video game "Final Fantasy II," specially arranged for this occasion, we can hear and see impressions from both the audience and the musicians who participated in this project.<sup>22</sup> Dozens of interviewees, mainly from the younger generation, shared their experiences attending a concert by a world-class orchestra held at the Barbican Centre in London, a multifunctional venue.<sup>23</sup> In that video, one of the interviewees is a musician who mentions how the "Final Fantasy II" concert cannot be compared to any other experience and how he could not have imagined that everything would sound like that in the end, least of all that the audience would react with applause after each piece.

<sup>19</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1962), 4–20.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to the Avid type of listener, Lindenberger identifies four more types: the Passive, the Conscientious, the Faultfinding, and the Uncompromised. For more on this, see Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera in History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 270.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>22</sup> *Game Concerts – Final Symphony II behind the scenes footage*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD0p7EfMa9U&ab\\_channel=MerregnonStudios](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD0p7EfMa9U&ab_channel=MerregnonStudios).

<sup>23</sup> The orchestra was conducted by the international conductor Eckehard Stier.



**Picture 1.** The audience at the “Final Symphony II” concert at the Barbican Centre (London, 2015)

Several interviewees stated that they visited the Barbican Centre for the first time. Some expressed a desire to revisit this center and attend other concerts unrelated to video games because, based on their experience at the concert featuring video game music, they “shattered the prejudice” that the music performed in that space would be uninteresting. Additionally, it is worth noting that some audience members attended a symphony orchestra concert for the first time. Particularly interesting was an audience member who revealed that they started playing the piano because of the “Final Fantasy VIII Piano Collections” and that over time they came to love classical music, which they still engage with today.

From all these examples, we can conclude that the audience attending concerts of video game music is indeed different from the types of audiences categorized by Adorno and Lindenberger, and it even differs from the audience attending concerts featuring music from other audio-visual media. The audience attending concerts of video game music is comprised of different age groups, but predominantly younger, with most of them having never attended a symphony orchestra concert or visited concert halls where classical music performances take place. By attending such concerts, the audience experiences an entirely different kind of experience, which they cannot compare with any other – the audience is educated, and the individuals potentially become new listeners of artistic music. Getting acquainted with the space (concert hall), symphony orchestra, and its sound, as well as the opportunity to experience a live concert, are just some of the aspects that live performances of video game music can offer. Additionally, the type of audience attending concerts of video game music is unique in that it consists of people who have prior interactive experience with gaming, so they are both players and listeners – they come with a certain pre-knowledge and familiarity with the music they will hear, so even a new arrangement or a completely new piece performed at the concert can be a special and different experience for them. This type of audience can be described as an

audience with a potential interest in *listening to other music genres* or an *audience ready for change and education*. We believe that working with such an audience is crucial when it comes to classical music concerts, and that there is vast potential for developing, educating, and expanding the interests of this audience. The medium of video games is a space that can create music that will attract new audiences to concert venues. Perhaps it is precisely this type of audience that is needed for concerts of artistic music to become more visited and attractive to younger generations growing up in an era of interactivity, virtual worlds, and spaces.

Considering that over 50% of the audience attending classical music concerts consists of an older population (aged 65 and above),<sup>24</sup> the fact that a certain part of the audience in concert halls is predominantly younger can be truly encouraging. One of the following steps could be for ensembles to include compositions of video game music in their regular repertoire, which are arranged or originally written for orchestral (concert) performances. Making video game music a regular part of the annual repertoire of symphony orchestras worldwide, with the editorial staff of concert institutions working thoughtfully to maintain quality while also improving the approach to creating concert repertoires, could be a potential strategy. A 2002 study analyzing the audiences of 15 different orchestras in the United States found that nearly half of the audience members were aged 65 or older, with 17% being 75 or older.<sup>25</sup> The goal of this study was to provide a demographic overview of the audience attending classical music concerts and to offer solutions and examples to improve the marketing strategies of these institutions in order to attract new, predominantly younger audiences to concerts of orchestral ensembles participating in the study.

According to the renowned music critic Anthony Tommasini, the situation has not changed much two decades after the implementation of this study. For example, in the 2019/2020 season, the most significant number of tickets sold at the Metropolitan Opera was by an audience with an average age of 65.<sup>26</sup> Although, according to Tommasini, the structure of the audience attending classical music concerts, predominantly older people (aged 65 and older), does not necessarily have to be bad, the author advocates the opinion that classical music should do everything possible to cultivate new listeners and be accessible to all who wish to participate in it. Although there is no “guaranteed” formula for marketing strategies for symphony orchestras and music ensembles performing

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<sup>24</sup> Audience Insight LLC, *Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study: How Americans Relate to Classical Music and Their Local Orchestra* (Miami: Knight Foundation), 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Tommasini, “Classical Music Attracts Older Audiences. Good,” *The New York Times*, August 6 (2020), [www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/arts/music/classical-music-opera-older-audiences.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/arts/music/classical-music-opera-older-audiences.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap).

classical music worldwide, the innovations brought about by concert performances of video game music may perhaps bring about a change when it comes to attracting potential new audiences. Since games are an audio-visual medium accessible to everyone, video game music can serve as a “bridge” between the familiar experience of playing video games and attending concert halls where music from this medium is performed. The audience attending concerts of video game music may not have prior knowledge of classical music, but they have previous experience listening to music from familiar audio-visual works. Music from audio-visual works in today’s interactive era has much greater potential for “communication” with the audience, precisely because of the existing context of the medium from which it comes. We can consider that a certain type of “communication” with the audience has already been initiated before the performance itself; this time, the music undergoes remediation and is presented in a new concept – separated from the visual, it “opens up new worlds” and communicates solely through its language – the orchestral apparatus or through other instrumental, vocal, or instrumental-vocal ensembles. Perhaps indeed, the video game “Legend of Zelda” and Mozart’s opera *Die Zauberflöte* have more similarities than we might assume. In both stories, the central premise revolves around a brave protagonist who seeks to rescue their partner from the clutches of villains.<sup>27</sup> Although they originated in two different contexts and at two different times, these stories converge in the same space – the concert hall. This meeting place accommodates diverse performances and experiences, as well as varied interpretations by the audience.

One of the things that distinguishes concerts featuring music from those featuring video games is the audience’s attitude toward the event and the performance itself. At these concerts, the audience sometimes even comes in costumes, generally dressed much more casually, which can be a more appealing factor for younger members of the population.<sup>28</sup> Often, at concerts of video game music, the audience participates and interacts with the visual content provided, which means they are directly involved in the program’s realization. This is something that can indeed be appealing to younger generations accustomed to the interactive nature of media usage. Additionally, the interactive nature of these concerts makes them more open and accessible for introducing into the concert space and acquainting with a new audience that may not have had the opportunity or desire to listen to symphonic music before. As concert halls where classical music is performed are considered spaces of “seriousness,” attracting only a minority, concerts of video game music break down such prejudices

<sup>27</sup> Sarah E. Needleman, “How Videogames Are Saving the Symphony Orchestra,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 12 (2015). [www.wsj.com/articles/how-videogames-are-saving-the-symphony-orchestra-1444696737](http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-videogames-are-saving-the-symphony-orchestra-1444696737).

<sup>28</sup> Alyssa Aska, *Introduction to the study of Video Game Music* (Alyssa: Aska copyright, 2017), 43.

and offer the possibility of expanding the audience, which may potentially begin to listen to symphonic music and then other artistic genres after attending video game music concerts.

Unlike music performed exclusively in the concert hall, in the case of video game music, we simultaneously become performers, listeners, and music analysts.<sup>29</sup> Tim Summers believes that “music necessarily demands human interaction; otherwise, its meanings remain unread, music unsounded, and sounds unheard.”<sup>30</sup> Although there is no “guaranteed” formula for the greater popularity of symphony orchestras and music ensembles performing classical music worldwide, perhaps we should seriously consider the innovations brought about by concert performances of video game music. Audience research is a process that is well underway to explore some of the central intellectual puzzles in musicology and cultural studies, namely the place of music in contemporary society, and the intellectual and emotional reception of musical works during live music listening.<sup>31</sup> The continuous growth of research projects in this area suggests that it is an opportune time to conduct research from multiple, interdisciplinary perspectives, benefiting listeners, performers, and researchers across a wide range of musical settings.

## SUMMARY

In this text, the author examines the formation of a new type of listener emerging at concerts dedicated to video game music. Drawing on Theodor Adorno’s and Herbert Lindenberger’s categorization of listener types, the analysis sets out to contextualize and compare this evolving audience within the broader framework of music sociology. The piece suggests that video game concerts are not only drawing in younger and more diverse audiences but also redefining traditional modes of listening and engagement with music in concert settings.

By analyzing the audience of the “Final Fantasy II” concert held at the Barbican Centre and their reflections, it becomes evident how unique and meaningful the experience of listening to video game music in a new arrangement and concert setting was for them. This, in turn, implies that such projects hold significant potential for expanding concert audiences and engaging new listener communities.

While there is no universally applicable strategy for boosting the popularity of symphony orchestras and classical music ensembles globally, the growing success of video game music performances may point to an innovative and relevant path forward. These concerts blend popular culture, high production value, and interactive narratives, offering an experience that resonates with contemporary audiences. As such, the phenomenon merits deeper exploration for its potential to revitalize interest in orchestral performance and expand the boundaries of what is considered concert music today.

<sup>29</sup> Tim Summers, *Understanding video game music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 32.

<sup>30</sup> Idem.

<sup>31</sup> *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience*, ed. by Karen Burland & Stephanie Pitts (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 33.

# Closing • Back to the Past Long Before the Concert Hall



# ECHOES FROM ARCADIA: CHASING THE RECURRENCES OF MUSIC IN THE MYTH OF PAN\*

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**ABSTRACT:** The myth of Pan underlines music's existence *beyond* the concert hall by verbally recounting the Greek god's creation of the flute and flute music occurring in "primordial time" (Mircea Eliade). Aiming to explore the instances, character, and role of music, the research delved into various versions of this myth and related narratives, considering Northrop Frye's perspective on interconnectedness within mythology. Six distinct contexts of flute music addressed by the episodes "Pan and Syrinx," "Pan," "Pan and nymphs," "Pan and Apollo," "Pan and Echo," and "Pan and Daphnis" highlight music as central to the narrative. This is reflected in the myth's significance for flute music itself, exemplified by the works of Debussy, Logar, Mouquet, and others. Drawing upon Eliade's notion of myth as "paradigmatic model," the analyzed episodes revealed an abundance of primordial musical deeds of mythical figures (such as Pan's composing, playing, and teaching or the listening, evaluating, and judging involved in the competition between Pan and Apollo), which can be understood as foundational for core musical practices *within* the contemporary music scene (creation, performance, reception, criticism, and education), ultimately emphasizing the perennial importance of the myth of Pan for (flute) music history.

**KEY WORDS:** Myth of Pan, Syrinx, Apollo, Echo, Arcadia, flute music, myth as "paradigmatic model", musical practices.

If [...] we were to regard the mythology of Greece as a colossal and wonderful piece of music [...] through it all we should have an ever-recurring *motif* – the clear, magical fluting of the pipes of Pan.<sup>1</sup>

One of the modes of music's existence *beyond* the concert hall can be seen in the myth of Pan, where flute music is referred to through verbal means. This myth, like myths *en général* from Mircea Eliade's point of view, is "the recital of a

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Lang, *A Book of Myths* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons and T. C. & E. C. Jack, [1915]), 210.

creation”<sup>2</sup> – in this particular case, of the ancient Greek god’s creation of the flute and flute music,<sup>3</sup> encompassing its various manifestations. Occurring “at the beginning of time”<sup>4</sup> – “*in illo tempore*”<sup>5</sup> – this creation is *beyond* the “historical time”<sup>6</sup> and, therefore, *beyond* the temporal framework of the concert hall. One might deduce that music, as a phenomenon, becomes the central theme and life-giving force that directs the plot about Pan (and Syrinx/syrinx), analogous to the fundamental importance of this myth for the history of flute music, as it recounts the origin of the flute and flute music.<sup>7</sup>

To explore the different dimensions of music’s significance, we approached various versions of the myth found in numerous anthologies, collections of myths, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other references, based on so-called primary, literary sources,<sup>8</sup> such as *Homeric Hymns* (c. seventh century BCE – c. fifth century CE) attributed in antiquity to Homer, *Idylls* (third century BCE) by Theocritus, *Elegies* (42–39 BCE) by Virgil, *Metamorphoses* (8 CE) by Ovid, *Daphnis and Chloe* (second/third century CE) by Longus, and *Dionysiaca* (fifth century CE) by Nonnus. Furthermore, given Northrop Frye’s perspective on mythology as “an interconnected series of myths” that “tended to link together

<sup>2</sup> Mircea Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths,” in: *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, transl. by Willard R. Trask (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), 68–113, 95.

<sup>3</sup> See Marija Tomić, “*Sounding Through the Hollow Reeds: The Aeolian Flute Sound as a Reference to the Myth of Pan and Syrinx*,” in: *Interpreting of/through/by/in Music*, ed. by Ana Stefanović and Dragana Stojanović-Novičić (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2023), 186–99, 186–8.

<sup>4</sup> Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 95.

<sup>5</sup> Idem. See also Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History – The Myth of the Eternal Return*, transl. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 72. For a consideration of the sacred/mythical/primordial and the profane/historical time, see Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit.; Mircea Eliade, “Sacred Time and the Myth of Eternal Renewal,” in: *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, transl. by Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 388–409; Mircea Eliade, “The Myths of the Modern World,” in: *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*, transl. by Philip Maret (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967), 23–38.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Tomić, “*Sounding Through the Hollow Reeds...*,” op. cit., 187; Миодраг Азањац, *Српска уметност флауте (фрула – флаута од искона)*, прир. Зоран Рајичић (Чачак: Туристичка организација Чачка и Савет Сабора фрулаша Србије „Ој Мораво”, 2018), 19–20.

<sup>8</sup> See Stephen M. Trzaskoma, R. Scott Smith, and Stephen Brunet (eds. and transl.), *Anthology of Classical Myth (Primary Sources in Translation)* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), xix–xx, xxiv.

and to form a mythology,”<sup>9</sup> we considered it relevant to examine other myths featuring Pan and his music (for instance, the myths of Apollo, King Midas, and Echo). By compiling all available mythological references to Pan, we gain a comprehensive insight into the full scope of the myth of Pan.

Although it comprises, for example, the parts concerning the god’s birth or his departure from Olympus, this paper aims to engage with the instances, character, and role of music within the context of this myth and, remarkably, *vice versa* – how the myth itself has shaped and continues to inform (our understanding of) the very (flute) music and its associated practices *within* the contemporary music scene. The undertaken consideration of the mentioned texts yielded the finding that the myth of the Greek god addresses six distinct contexts in which flute music manifests. These constituted one of the primary criteria for segmenting the myth into individual episodes,<sup>10</sup> which are also profiled by narrative coherence and its relation to the particular character(s) and specific setting within the realm of Arcadia. The analysis will thus focus on the following episodes, each bearing considerable dramaturgical weight, beginning with the predominantly familiar account of the god Pan and the nymph Syrinx: “Pan and Syrinx” (creation of the syrinx/Pan’s pipe[s]/Pan’s flute/flute following the nymph’s metamorphosis), “Pan” (Pan’s playing in solitude), “Pan and nymphs” (Pan’s playing along the dancing nymphs), “Pan and Apollo” (public musical contest between Pan and Apollo), “Pan and Echo” (interaction of Pan’s music and Echo/echo), and “Pan and Daphnis” (Pan’s teaching Daphnis to play the syrinx).<sup>11</sup>

It is important to emphasize that this list does not encompass Pan’s playing the syrinx as generally addressed in existing versions of the myth. As a deity

<sup>9</sup> Quoted according to Imre Salusinszky, “Criticism in Society” [interview with Northrop Frye], reprinted in: Jean O’Grady (ed.), *Interviews with Northrop Frye. Collected Works of Northrop Frye, Volume 24* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 752–65, 753, originally published in: Imre Salusinszky, *Criticism in Society* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 27–42.

<sup>10</sup> The term “episode” is employed to denote a distinctive segment within the myth of Pan, in line with Frye’s view that “the true myth” functions as “an episode in a mythology.” Northrop Frye, “Literature and Myth,” in: Jean O’Grady and Eva Kushner (eds.), *‘The Critical Path’ and Other Writings on Critical Theory, 1963–1975. Collected Works of Northrop Frye, Volume 27* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 238–55, 244.

<sup>11</sup> Additional points of reference for the proposed segmentation came from certain thematic groupings in existing sources, such as Budžak’s “Pan,” “Pan and Syrinx,” and “Pan’s Competition with Apollo” units (English translation of the titles) – see Goran Budžak (prir.), *Antologija grčkih mitova* (Beograd: Dom i škola, 2006), 77–80 – and from recurring themes in specific artworks, including Jan de Bisschop’s canvas *The Contest Between Apollo and Pan* (s.a.) and orchestral pieces *Pan och Echo* (*Pan and Echo*), Op. 53a (1906) by Jean Sibelius and *Pan og Syrinx* (*Pan and Syrinx*), Op. 49 (1918) by Carl Nielsen, among others.

associated with pastoral life (shepherds, flocks, pastures) and the natural landscape (forests, meadows, fields), Pan tends “to wander in uncontrolled freedom over rocks and mountains”<sup>12</sup> and through “the hills and woods,”<sup>13</sup> finding the “grottoes” as his preferred “haunts.”<sup>14</sup> All these areas, along with other parts of “his homeland, Arcadia,”<sup>15</sup> are potential *scenes* for his musicianship, as the flute is his faithful companion and playing is a *habitus* of this god who is “fond of music.”<sup>16</sup> His audiences are forests, mountains, valleys, herds, birds, nymphs, shepherds, in brief, all the world of nature. Pan’s syrinx and his playing are often portrayed as an inherent characteristic of his being and presence in Arcadia. This establishes a fruitful context for comprehending the identity of Pan, the flute, and his music.<sup>17</sup> It also illuminates the identity of Arcadia and the pastoral atmosphere, which are inseparable from his piping as a continual soundscape. Ultimately, his fundamental connection to music and the Arcadian setting provides a backdrop for the chosen episodes, distinguished by apprehending details on a range of aspects of music.

The episode of the lustful Pan chasing the beautiful nymph Syrinx marks a defining occurrence in the myth, culminating in the creation of Pan’s flute and the birth of his distinctive music. Syrinx’s metamorphosis into a bed of reeds before Pan could seize her sets the stage for the god’s pivotal musical experience. According to Ernst Bloch’s understanding of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, while Pan was “lamenting the lost beloved, the wind produced notes in the reed-bank, and the god was gripped by their beauty.”<sup>18</sup> Then, he “broke the rushes, saw reeds of varying lengths, bound a suitable selection together with wax<sup>19</sup> and played the first notes just like the wind, but with human breath and as a lament.”<sup>20</sup> The accounts that preserve the specific qualities of the sound produced in the reed-

<sup>12</sup> E. M. Berens, *A Hand-Book of Mythology. Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, & Co., 1894), 172.

<sup>13</sup> Meyer Reinhold, *Past and Present: The Continuity of Classical Myths* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972), 142.

<sup>14</sup> Berens, *A Hand-Book of Mythology...*, op. cit., 172.

<sup>15</sup> Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 297.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable or Beauties of Mythology*, ed. by Rev. J. Loughran Scott (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1898), 211.

<sup>17</sup> See Marija Tomić, “Transposition of the Myth of Pan’s Flute in *Satirova svirala* [La flûte de Pan] by Petar Konjović: Fantasy and Ballad Aspects,” *New Sound*, 57 (I/2021), 19–38, 22–3.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph,” in: *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, transl. by Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 196–7.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the available sources assert that Pan fastened seven reeds in total.

<sup>20</sup> Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph...,” op. cit., 197.

bank, characterized as “a sad and beautiful,”<sup>21</sup> “sweet, plaintive,”<sup>22</sup> “desolate”<sup>23</sup> or “a murmuring sound as of one complaining”<sup>24</sup> are highly important, for it was this very sound, “the proto-flute sound,”<sup>25</sup> which “encouraged Pan to make his own instrument”<sup>26</sup> from the reeds. Its nature, due to the mimesis implied by Bloch, is reflected in the first notes, as well as in the ensuing music that Pan will play on his instrument, which he called the syrinx, “in memory of the nymph.”<sup>27</sup>

Given that Pan crafted the flute from the reeds where Syrinx had undergone her metamorphosis, a shift into another form of being within the fluidity of the natural world, the inquiry extends beyond the mere genesis of the musical instrument. It delves into the essence of the music played on the syrinx, raising questions such as: *What* does this music represent? *Whom* does it represent? *What constitutes its being?* Who is its true *composer*? As Bloch states, the nymph “had vanished and yet not vanished” because she is “present in the sound”<sup>28</sup> of the instrument – her presence, her voice persists within the very timbre of the flute. The quality of the flute sound and the quality of Syrinx’s voice are also interrelated. The nymph’s “sweet voice,”<sup>29</sup> discerned by Longus as “a lovely singing voice,”<sup>30</sup> resonates through the “songfulness in the sound of the flute,”<sup>31</sup> echoes in the “sweet-voiced pipe.”<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the role of Pan’s breath and his playing is crucial for “constitut[ing] the presence of a vanished entity [the nymph].”<sup>33</sup> In this manner, “the voice of Syrinx floats in melancholy music, the music of regret and longing,”<sup>34</sup> which we perceive as *Pan’s music* – an admission of the *voice* of

<sup>21</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 297.

<sup>22</sup> Jessie M. Tatlock, *Greek and Roman Mythology* (New York: The Century Co., 1923), 178.

<sup>23</sup> Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 216.

<sup>24</sup> Berens, *A Hand-Book of Mythology...*, op. cit., 172.

<sup>25</sup> See Tomic, “Sounding Through the Hollow Reeds...,” op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>27</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>28</sup> Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph...,” op. cit., 197.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Biderman, *Rečnik simbola*, prev. Mihailo Živanović, Hana Čopić i Meral Tarar-Tutuš (Beograd: Plato, 2004), 282.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted after Trzaskoma, Smith, and Brunet, *Anthology...*, op. cit., 277.

<sup>31</sup> Енрико Јосиф, „Поднебље флаутско”, у: Азањац, *Српска уметност флауте...*, op. cit., 156–62, 161. See Марија Томић, „Запис о сарадњи композитора Енрика Јосифа и флаутисте Миодрага Азањца”, *Мокрањац*, XXV/26 (2024), 104–11, 108.

<sup>32</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>33</sup> Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph...,” op. cit., 197.

<sup>34</sup> Fiona Macleod [William Sharp], *Where the Forest Murmurs. Nature Essays* (London and New York: “Country life,” Ltd., George Newnes, Ltd., and Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 136.

his creative endeavor in shaping the musical flow into an entity imbued with his expression about the *lost* beloved.

“Ever since” he made the instrument, “the great Pan loves to play his syrinx in lonely forests, thus filling the surrounding mountains and valleys with gentle sounds.”<sup>35</sup> The episode of Pan’s playing in solitude and loneliness (reflected in the personification of the *lonely forests*) focuses on the protagonist and his actions in the absence of direct interaction with other characters, apart from Syrinx/syrinx. Hence, this episode, in contrast to the dynamic and action-filled previous sequence, functions as Pan’s *monologue*, his *solo*, evoking potent imagery of the solitary figure immersed in nature as an ambiance where creation takes its form. His act of creating and playing music is personal, introspective, contemplative, and detached, as reflected in *Landscape with Pan Playing a Flute* (1795) by Johann Christian Reinhart.

Drawing upon Bloch’s perspective, the flutist Miodrag Azanjac considers the syrinx “an instrument bearing the primordial being of longing as a mythical legacy to the entire flute-playing universe.”<sup>36</sup> Since Pan proved fruitless to capture the nymph in her primeval form, she will remain the object of his longing,<sup>37</sup> inscribed in his melancholy music – which *sorrowfully spreads through the vale*<sup>38</sup> – and the instrument itself, played by the deity “at times of loneliness, dependency, and love lost.”<sup>39</sup> God’s music is a medium for the expression of his inner landscape, a means for preserving the mournful remembrance of the Syrinx, but also for transcending this state through playing, which “gave him the consolation of a union with the nymph,”<sup>40</sup> as forging a kind of communication with her.<sup>41</sup>

Pan’s isolation from the main currents of the vivid Arcadian world underscores the image of his music – generally characterized as “strange and plaintive,”<sup>42</sup> the qualities which, in our view, find particular congruence with his solitary

<sup>35</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>36</sup> Азањац, *Српска уметност флауте...*, op. cit., 9. See *Ibid.*, 19–21. Cf. Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph...,” op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Tomić, “Transposition of the Myth of Pan’s Flute...,” op. cit., 25.

<sup>38</sup> We refer to the opening verses of Momčilo Nastasijević’s poem “Frula” (“Flute”): *Frulo, što dah moj radosni/žalno u dolji razleže? (O flute, why do you spread my joyful breath/through the vale so sorrowfully?)*. Cf. Momčilo Nastasijević, *Seven Lyrical Cycles (Collected poems)*, transl. by Novica Petrović (Belgrade: Treći Trg and Srebrno drvo, 2022), 8–9.

<sup>39</sup> Dale A. Olsen, *World Flutelore – Folktales, Myths, and Other Stories of Magical Flute Power* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 17.

<sup>40</sup> Bloch, “Syrinx the nymph...,” op. cit., 197.

<sup>41</sup> See Tomić, “Transposition of the Myth of Pan’s Flute...,” op. cit., 33. Cf. Paul Robichaud, *Pan: The Great God’s Modern Return* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 26.

<sup>42</sup> Robichaud, *Pan...*, op. cit., 26. Robichaud refers to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The term “strange” can be understood as signifying the idiosyncratic aspect of Pan’s music.

moments – emanating from a space apart, as if from behind the scenes, setting an acousmatic effect. *Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer...*<sup>43</sup> – these very words were spoken before the well-known melody of Claude Debussy's piece *Syrinx* for solo flute<sup>44</sup> (originally *La flûte de Pan*), “initially conceived and premiered in 1913 as music for the first scene of the third act of the dramatic poem *Psyché* by Gabriel Mourey.”<sup>45</sup> Influenced by Mourey's idea that while playing “Pan remains in his grotto, invisible to the nymphs,” listening to music of the god, Louis Fleury's “first performance” and later “flute recitals” saw him interpret the *solo* by “always [...] remaining invisible to the audience behind a folding screen.”<sup>46</sup> This behind-the-scenes staging, together with the sound of the flute and the musical language of *Syrinx*, mediates “entering the mythical *illud tempus*”<sup>47</sup> – the eternal, mythical presence of Pan's secluded production and performance of music.<sup>48</sup>

The repetition of playing, signaled by the words introducing Debussy's music,<sup>49</sup> is reflective of the “*iterative narrative*” – to use Gérard Genette's term – of the “Pan” episode, which ensures the “recurrence of the same event,”<sup>50</sup> in this case the manifold reiteration of Pan's playing by oneself “ever since,”<sup>51</sup> mak-

<sup>43</sup> *But now, Pan commences to play his flute again...* Cf. Claude Debussy, *Syrinx (La Flûte de Pan)* für Flöte solo [score], hrsg. von Michael Stegemann und Anders Ljungar-Chapelon (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition und Schott/Universal Edition, 1996), UT 50173, 10. Translated by the author.

<sup>44</sup> See Марија Томић, “*Écoutant la musique de Pan*: о онтологијском потенцијалу ‘паузе’ у Дебисијевом делу *Сиринкс*”, *Музикологија*, 31 (II/2021), 213–29, 222–3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 214. See Ernst-Günter Heinemann, [notes on Claude Debussy's *Syrinx*], in: Claude Debussy, *Syrinx* [für] Flöte solo/*Syrinx* for Flute Solo [score], hrsg. von/ed. by Ernst-Günter Heinemann (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1994), HN 496, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Heinemann, [notes on Claude Debussy's *Syrinx*], op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*..., op. cit., 378.

<sup>48</sup> See Томић, “*Écoutant la musique de Pan...*”, op. cit. Cf. Marcel Cobussen, “In(-) formations: The Meaning of Paratextual Elements in Debussy's *Syrinx*,” *Muzikološki zbornik/Musicological Annual*, 41/2 (2005), 55–70, 61.

<sup>49</sup> The motif of Pan's recurring music-making is also present in the epigraph for Johannès Donjon's pastoral *Pan!* for flute and piano accompaniment (1892): *Au fond des bois/Quand tout s'endort!! Plus d'une fois/Il [Pan] souffle encore/Un air sonore!* (*Deep in the woods/When all are sleeping!! More than once/He [Pan] plays again/A sonorous air!*!). J[ohannès] Donjon, *Pan!* – *pastorale pour flûte avec accompagnement de piano* No. 1 [score] ([Paris]: Evette & Schaeffer, s. a.), E. S. 275, 1. Translated by Leonard Garrison – Leonard Garrison, “Performance Guide to Johannes Donjon's *Pastorale* No. 1: *Pan!*,” Leonard Garrison Flute Studio, 2014, <https://leonardgarrisonflute.blogspot.com/2014/03/performance-guide-to-johannesdonjons.html>. Accessed: April 10, 2024.

<sup>50</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, transl. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 116, 113.

<sup>51</sup> Budžak, *Antologija*..., op. cit., 79.

ing it a persistence tendency of the god after the invention of the flute. That points to the significance of music as a theme within the myth and highlights “the Great God”<sup>52</sup> as a musician, the flutist. The recurrence of the act of playing finds a parallel in the principle of (varied) repetition of the thematic material in Debussy’s *Syrinx*,<sup>53</sup> suggesting, in its underlying implications, an interaction of musical time and mythical time,<sup>54</sup> i.e., the “sacred time” defined by Eliade as “indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable.”<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the concept of the repetition/return figures in the whole history of flute music, which we perceive as, in Eliade’s words, “the eternal return”<sup>56</sup> to the myth of Pan.<sup>57</sup>

Jules Mouquet’s sonata *La flûte de Pan*, Op. 15, for flute and piano (1904), testifies to this phenomenon. Each of its movements, titled “Pan et les bergers,” “Pan et les oiseaux,” and “Pan et les nymphes,” is introduced by a short poetic inscription, and the lines preceding the last movement read: *Silence, grotte ombragée de chênes! Silence, fontaines qui jaillissez du rocher! Silence, brebis qui bêlez près de vos petits! Pan lui-même sur sa flûte harmonieuse chante, ayant mis ses lèvres humides sur ses pipeaux assemblés. Autour de lui d’un pied léger, dansent en chœur les Nymphes des eaux et les Nymphes des bois.*<sup>58</sup> The proclamation of complete silence while Pan *himself* plays/sings underlines his music as the primary *voice* of/in nature, rendering other natural sounds redundant for focused listening. The final words illustrate the nymphs’ responsive dance and their entering into the space of musical performance as an active engagement of the audience with the satisfying music of Pan’s *harmonious pipe*.

As a main feature of the “Pan et les nymphes” movement (*Allegro molto vivace*), its *risoluto*, *brillante*, and *scherzando* character prompt us to envision the following scene as conveyed in one version of the mythological depictions of

<sup>52</sup> This phrase is adopted from Robichaud, *Pan...*, op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> On this principle, see Томић, “*Écoutant la musique de Pan...*,” op. cit., 217–25. See also Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s paradigmatic analysis, “*Syrinx de Claude Debussy*,” in Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Fondements d’une sémiologie de la musique* (Paris: Union générale d’éditions, 1975), 330–56.

<sup>54</sup> See Томић, “*Écoutant la musique de Pan...*,” op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 69.

<sup>56</sup> Eliade, *Cosmos and History...*, op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> See Tomić, “*Sounding Through the Hollow Reeds...*,” op. cit., 198. The examples of this *returning* appear in Tomić, “*Transposition of the Myth of Pan’s Flute...*,” op. cit., 20–1; Tomić, “*Sounding Through the Hollow Reeds...*,” op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> *Silence, shady oaken glades! Silence, fountains sprouting from the rocks! Silence, sheep bleating near your young! Pan himself sings with his harmonious pipe, he has placed his moist lips on the set of reeds. Lightly treading around him, the water Nymphs and wood Nymphs dance together.* Cf. Jules Mouquet, *La flûte de Pan* [score] (Paris et Bruxelles: Henry Lemoine & Cie, s. a.), 19743. HL., 13. Translated by Maureen Buja – Maureen Buja, “Ancient Evocations: Mouquet’s *La Flûte de Pan*,” 2021, <https://interlude.hk/ancient-evocations-jules-mouquets-la-flute-de-pan/>. Accessed April 21, 2024.

Pan's interactions with nymphs in moments of joy: "as soon as the nymphs hear the wonderful sounds of Pan's flute, they rush to him in crowds, surround him, and soon – the carousel dances in the green lonely valley, to the sounds of Pan's music,"<sup>59</sup> a scene that stands in sharp contrast to the solitary atmosphere of the "Pan" episode. We further find that satyrs used to dance to the god's flute playing.<sup>60</sup> More importantly, "Pan himself also enjoys participating in the dances of the nymphs" – once "he becomes joyful, then a cheerful murmur rises through the forests on the mountain slopes. Nymphs and satyrs play merrily along with the noisy goat-legged Pan."<sup>61</sup>

The animal aspect of Pan's nature is seen primarily through his dance music and his dance with the nymphs, when he is "able to cavort for hours on his tough legs, hooves stomping out the rhythm."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, although affective states such as longing and melancholy are associated with him, this mythological character can also be seen through the prism of the animal/dancing/Dionysian principle, apparent in dynamic and agile movement, characteristic as well for the *Danse* section (*Vif*) of Arthur Honegger's *Danse de la chèvre* for solo flute (1921).

It is considered that the god "leads" nymphs "in dance on the flowery or wooded meadows."<sup>63</sup> The *leading* can be primarily interpreted as the leadership of flute music itself, acting as a primal call to dance and the powerful impetus and guiding force for the dance's pace, spirit, and progression, which, in a cyclical dynamic, finds its continuation propelled by the unfolding of the very dance. The dance is in the form of "the carousel,"<sup>64</sup> namely, the circle, which universally represents "undivided wholeness," "homogeneity, absence of distinction or division."<sup>65</sup> In the myth episode, the wholeness and unity are evident in the shared experience of freedom, vitality, and joy among Pan and the chorus of nymphs (and satyrs) within the pastoral ambiance, mediated by the harmony between Pan's music and the rustic dance.

The principle of circularity is discernible in Mihovil Logar's *Pastorala* (*Pastorale*) for solo flute (s.a.), particularly within its middle, *Allegro* section, characterized by dance-like quality, realized through, *inter alia*, syncopation, interval leaps, and *staccato* articulation. In addition to being enclosed by repeti-

<sup>59</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 78.

<sup>60</sup> See Michael Grant and John Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 395; Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 78.

<sup>61</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 78.

<sup>62</sup> Richard P. Martin, *Myths of the Ancient Greeks* (New York: New American Library, 2003), 61.

<sup>63</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, *Greek and Egyptian Mythologies*, transl. by Wendy Doniger (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 205.

<sup>64</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 78.

<sup>65</sup> Žan Ševalije i Alen Gerbran, *Rečnik simbola – mitovi, snovi, običaji, postupci, oblici, likovi, boje, brojevi*, prev. i adapt. Pavle Sekeruš, Kristina Koprivšek i Isidora Gordić (Novi Sad: Stylos art i Kiša, 2009), 444.

tion signs, the *Allegro* section features the *repet. ad lib.* mark written at its beginning,<sup>66</sup> which suggests a performer's freedom in repeating the section, allowing *any number* of repetitions at a flutist's discretion, ultimately revealing the inherent potential for *infinite (ad infinitum)* repetition. This potential is immanently present in the musical flow itself, especially at the *beginning* and *end* of section, composed for seamless chaining upon repetition, thus poised to create a sense of perpetual circular motion. This characteristic corresponds to the possibility of endless turning of the carousel and resonates with the cyclical nature of non-linear, repeatable mythical time, "a circular time, reversible and recoverable."<sup>67</sup>

The Dionysian principle, deeply rooted in Pan's being and musical expression, gains particular significance in his dynamic with Apollo. Often found in the company of Dionysus, the god embodying enjoyment, sensuality, and irrationality, Pan aligns, as seen through the lens of Friedrich Nietzsche's thought, against the antithetical figure of Apollo and the Apollonian principle, which encompasses attained harmony, order, reason, and beauty. Consequently, the musical contest initiated by Pan's self-confident daring, in response to Apollo's challenge, is symbolically understood as a conflict between these principles – a dichotomy paralleling the nature *versus* culture binary opposition prevalent in myths, thoroughly analyzed by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

The competition took place on Mount Tmolus, with the eponymous god serving as the judge. Pan, who "prided himself on his flute playing,"<sup>68</sup> played "his rustic melody," largely pleasing "himself and his faithful follower, Midas,"<sup>69</sup> with "the simple sounds [which] arose from his pastoral pipe, softly echo[ing] along the slopes of the mountain."<sup>70</sup> When "his pipe fell silent,"<sup>71</sup> Tmolus "turned around to face Phoebus [Apollo]," initiating the playing of the Olympian god, whose "very stance was the stance of an artist."<sup>72</sup> Then, "with knowing hand," Apollo played his lyre, "inlaid with precious stones and Indian ivory,"<sup>73</sup> spreading out "the glorious sounds of divine music."<sup>74</sup> As noted, "those in attendance listened as if enchanted by Apollo's music," while "the golden strings" of the god's lyre "thundered victoriously."<sup>75</sup> "Ravished with the harmony,"<sup>76</sup> Tmolus awarded

<sup>66</sup> See Mihovil Logar, *Pastorala za flautu solo [score]* (s.l., s.a.), 1. The score was provided from the holdings of Board for the Protection of the Serbian Musical Heritage of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

<sup>67</sup> Eliade, "Sacred Time and Myths...," op. cit., 70.

<sup>68</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>69</sup> Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable...*, op. cit., 61.

<sup>70</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>71</sup> Idem.

<sup>72</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 243.

<sup>73</sup> Idem.

<sup>74</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>75</sup> Idem.

<sup>76</sup> Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable...*, op. cit., 61.

Apollo the victory, “order[ing] Pan to concede that his pipes were inferior to the lyre.”<sup>77</sup> While “everyone was celebrating the great lyre-playing god,”<sup>78</sup> Midas, preferring “the simple playing of Pan,”<sup>79</sup> “challenged the verdict and called it unjust,”<sup>80</sup> thus incurring punishment from Apollo.

Accounts of the competition evince that contrasting forces and values are enacted through several domains of music – instruments (“pastoral pipe,”<sup>81</sup> “rustic pipes,”<sup>82</sup> “pipes made of reeds and wax,”<sup>83</sup> “reeds from the river,”<sup>84</sup> “fragile reeds”<sup>85</sup> *versus* lyre “inlaid with precious stones and Indian ivory,”<sup>86</sup> “golden lyre,”<sup>87</sup> “world-renowned lyre”<sup>88</sup>), performance (“the simple playing”<sup>89</sup> *versus* playing “with knowing hand”<sup>90</sup>), expression (sounding “like the wind in the reeds,”<sup>91</sup> “rustic melody,”<sup>92</sup> speaking “through the hearts of reeds to the hearts of men”<sup>93</sup> *versus* “glorious sounds,”<sup>94</sup> “melody of sublime beauty,”<sup>95</sup> “divine music,”<sup>96</sup> “music of the spheres” leading the “soul[s]” of the listeners “straight to Olympus”<sup>97</sup>), reception (Pan and Midas were pleased with Pan’s music *versus* everybody else was captivated by Apollo’s performance), and judgment (Midas cherished Pan *versus* Tmolus favored and awarded Apollo). Regarded as its *other*, Apollo’s music serves as the *différence* (in Jacques Derrida’s sense) that further profiles Pan’s music, underscoring its distinct character deeply embedded in his immediate connection to the unrestrained, untamed, and primal expression of the natural/rural/wild/Arcadian/pastoral realm he inhabits.

Musical contesting is central in Johann Sebastian Bach’s secular cantata *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*, BWV 201, to Picander’s libretto, “possibly per-

<sup>77</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 243.

<sup>78</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 79–80.

<sup>80</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 244.

<sup>81</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>82</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 243.

<sup>83</sup> Idem.

<sup>84</sup> Lang, *A Book of Myths...*, op. cit., 139.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>86</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 243.

<sup>87</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>88</sup> Berens, *A Hand-Book of Mythology...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>89</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79–80.

<sup>90</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology...*, op. cit., 243.

<sup>91</sup> Lang, *A Book of Myths...*, op. cit., 139.

<sup>92</sup> Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable...*, op. cit., 61.

<sup>93</sup> Lang, *A Book of Myths...*, op. cit., 140.

<sup>94</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 79.

<sup>95</sup> Idem.

<sup>96</sup> Idem.

<sup>97</sup> Lang, *A Book of Myths...*, op. cit., 139, 140.

formed as early as 1729.<sup>98</sup> It is featured through arias, with the gods' performances in reverse order. Phoebus's/Apollo's (Bass I) aria "Mit Verlangen drück ich deine zarten Wangen" is distinguished by profound expression of longing for Hyacinth in minor key, "the grave, serious, and elaborate style,"<sup>99</sup> as well as by "rich[ness] [...] not only in texture and instrumentation [...] but also in theme, motive, and embellishment."<sup>100</sup> In contrast, Pan's (Bass II) aria "Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge, so wackelt das Herz," with its major key, interval leaps, and non-legato articulation, calls for dance and joy, comprising also a "plain, simple texture and scoring"<sup>101</sup> and a comic element through syllable repetition.<sup>102</sup> Tmolus affirmed his preference for Apollo's *so schön Klang (such a lovely sound)* over music of Pan, who *singet vor dem Wald,/Die Nymphen kann er wohl ergötzen (Sings for the forest,/The nymphs he might well delight)*. Midas complimented Pan's *leicht und ungezwungen (easily and unforced)* singing and his song, which is plain to learn and transmit.<sup>103</sup>

The differing articulations of both musical tastes and the nature of musical expression contribute to the interplay between Dionysian and Apollonian principles. This perpetual tension persists because Pan continues to play the flute, not on the competition *scene*, but in "the forest thicket" – where "often resound the tender and sorrowful sounds of his flute, which the young nymphs listen to with love"<sup>104</sup> – thereby repeating the pattern of his withdrawal into contemplation and musicianship in the depths of nature.

Among the nymphs associated with Pan, Echo holds a noteworthy place, though she is widely known for tragic consequences of Hera's punishment, condemning her to "only repeat the last words spoken by others,"<sup>105</sup> which defined Echo's unrequited love for Narcissus, for whom the nymph "pined away [...] until

<sup>98</sup> Karl Geiringer, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Culmination of an Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 186.

<sup>99</sup> Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach. His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685–1750. Volume II*, transl. by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller Maitland (London and New York: Novello and Company and The H. W. Gray Co., 1899), 645.

<sup>100</sup> Richard D. P. Jones, *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach. Volume II: 1717–1750. 'Music to Delight the Spirit'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 272.

<sup>101</sup> Idem.

<sup>102</sup> The middle section of his aria functions as a comment (both in terms of text and music) on the *too laboured* and *restrained* music of Apollo. See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach (with Their Librettos in German–English Parallel Text)*, rev. and transl. by Richard D. P. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 910; Jones, *The Creative Development...*, op. cit., 272.

<sup>103</sup> Libretto and translation quoted after Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach...*, op. cit., 910, 911.

<sup>104</sup> Budžak, *Antologija...*, op. cit., 80.

<sup>105</sup> Jenny March, *Cassell's Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell & Co, 2001), 277.

nothing was left of her but her voice.”<sup>106</sup> Another version of the myth of Echo concerns her interaction with Pan. A prominent literary interpretation of this theme is found in Longus’s *Daphnis and Chloe*. Following Longus, the beautiful and talented nymph, who sang and played different musical instruments, “taught by the Muses” in “everything musical,”<sup>107</sup> was not receptive to Pan’s attention, as a result of which he “was angry” with the nymph, both “because he was jealous of her music and because he had failed to obtain her beauty.”<sup>108</sup> For that reason, the god “sent madness into the shepherds and goatherds,” who “ripped her apart.” Gaia hid “her still-singing limbs,” thus “preserv[ing] her music,” wherefore “she sends forth sound” and, “just like the girl once did,” “she imitates everything: gods, humans, instruments, beasts.”<sup>109</sup> Importantly, “she even imitates Pan himself when he plays his pipe.”<sup>110</sup> Hearing it, “he leaps up and chases through the hills, not to seduce her, but just to find out who his hidden student is.”<sup>111</sup>

The image of Pan’s music being “imitate[d]”<sup>112</sup> suggests a particular mode of response where self-expression is impeded. The transformation of Echo’s agency bears a certain analogy with Syrinx’s metamorphosis, raising a question about the possible relations between the *voices* of Pan’s music, syrinx/Syrinx, and echo/Echo. “His hidden student” notion bears witness to the god’s recognition of the “sen[t] forth sound[s]”<sup>113</sup> as the content of his own music, causing his desire to discover its source, since he doesn’t perceive it as echo/imitation/reflection/repetition of his previous playing. The dynamic of musical interaction between the characters invites us to consider Eliade’s assertion that, within the modern world, “the exemplary pattern” and “the repetition” of it are among the “essential[s] in mythical behaviour,”<sup>114</sup> which proves to be a prism for understanding how the very *model-repetition* principle is revealed in the myth episode itself if we conceive Echo’s/echo’s specific manner of responding as a *repetition* modeled on Pan’s sound production as an *exemplary*. Echo also embodies a metaphor for the repetitive nature of conveying and enduring the myths, which are sustained through continuous recurrence and recounting. Based on these thoughts, we argue that the observed *repetition* of Pan’s music, when considered alongside the reiterated act of Pan himself playing the flute throughout the examined episodes, further amplifies the deep resonance and lasting significance of his music within

<sup>106</sup> Isaac Asimov, *Words from the Myths* (Boston and Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company and The Riverside Press, 1961), 137.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted after: Trzaskoma, Smith, and Brunet, *Anthology...*, op. cit., 277.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted after: *Ibid.*, 277–8.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted after: *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted after: *Idem*.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted after: *Idem*.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted after: *Idem*.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted after: *Idem*.

<sup>114</sup> Eliade, “The Myths of the Modern World...,” op. cit., 31.

the mythical landscape of Arcadia, a counterpart of which is the status of music as a core recurring thematic element in the myth of Pan.

Lines of inquiry concerning the relationship between the primary identity and its reflection are prompted by Sibelius's *Pan and Echo*, an orchestral *dance intermezzo* composed as music "to accompany a tableau in which 'Pan and Echo are seen on a hill, looking at the nymphs dancing in the valley'"<sup>115</sup> The *tableau vivant* performance "featured two solo dancers," representing Pan and Echo, along with "nine female dancers,"<sup>116</sup> and, according to available information, "the scenery [...] was planned by painter Albert Gebhard."<sup>117</sup> In the first, *Andante* section of Sibelius's piece, "a reflective portrayal of Pan and Echo on the hill"<sup>118</sup> is achieved through an interchange between (groups of) instruments in terms of the distribution of musical material (intervals, chords, melody), evoking the *presence* of Echo/echo and the distance between the involved mythical figures and their sounds, both of which are reinforced by changes in registers and dynamics, as well as by general pauses. These elements might further suggest the inherent characteristics of sound and music to spread, reflect, and persist in spatial contexts, such as *the hill*. Besides the internal *echoing* within the musical *voices* themselves, the score was potentially strongly interconnected with the visual compositions presented on stage, creating a conceivably parallel *echo* effect between the different media, contributing to the unified nature of the intermedial performance.

Another important role in which we encounter Pan is that of the tutor, as attested by his teaching the skill of flute playing to Daphnis, a shepherd "who was said to have been the inventor of pastoral"<sup>119</sup> or "bucolic poetry."<sup>120</sup> What we find in available sources regarding this aspect of the myth is predominantly a brief mention, exemplified by the phrase "Pan taught Daphnis to play the pipes,"<sup>121</sup> with no elaboration provided. The elements of a music lesson are rec-

<sup>115</sup> Andrew Barnett, *Sibelius* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 175.

<sup>116</sup> Timo Virtanen, "Introduction," in: Jean Sibelius, *Orchestral Works/Orchesterwerke* (*Die Dryade Op. 45 No. 1, Musik zu einer Szene* [Op. 45 No. 2/1904], *Tanz-Intermezzo Op. 45 No. 2, Pohjolas Tochter* Op. 49, *Pan und Echo* Op. 53a). *Complete Works. Series I. Volume 13/Sämtliche Werke. Serie I. Band 13* [score], ed. by/hrsg. von Timo Virtanen (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2022), VIII–XV, XII.

<sup>117</sup> Idem.

<sup>118</sup> Barnett, *Sibelius...*, op. cit., 175.

<sup>119</sup> March, *Cassell's Dictionary...*, op. cit., 246.

<sup>120</sup> Gertrude Jobes, *Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols. Part 1* (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1962), 414.

<sup>121</sup> Kathleen N. Daly, *Greek and Roman Mythology – A to Z*, rev. by Marian Rengel (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), 42. Cf. Harry Thurston Peck (ed.), *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1898), 469.

ognizable in the marble sculpture from Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, which depicts Pan teaching Daphnis, a Roman copy made after a Greek original (c. 150–100 BCE). Pan is engaged in the instructional process by supporting and guiding Daphnis's hand. Daphnis is focused on the instrument he is holding, as if he is concentrating and preparing to blow into the holes, following Pan's instructions.

This episode symbolizes the mentorship, that is, the transmission and reception of (musical) knowledge and skill, as well as the passing of (musical) tradition across generations, from master to apprentice, within the teacher–student relationship. For our paper, it is of great importance that the flute becomes a tool for teaching, a medium for preserving musical knowledge, and, on a larger scale, that musical education serves as a means of communicating knowledge as such. Pan's musical competencies empower him to function as an intermediary of authority, for the god is considered to be “an accomplished musician”<sup>122</sup> by virtue of playing the flute “in a masterly manner.”<sup>123</sup> This paradigm of the performer, interpreter, flutist, a true connoisseur of his own instrument and music which he plays spontaneously, effortlessly, and intrinsically, is engraved in our Being as a goal that we truly endeavor to achieve, which is why it is a special honor for a flute player to obtain the epithet “plays like Pan himself.”<sup>124</sup>

Pan's playing, as understood through Eliade's framework, thereupon becomes “the exemplary act”<sup>125</sup> for the flutists who strive to attain the sonority<sup>126</sup> of his flute. Approaching the myth from the same author's viewpoint as a phenomenon whose “supreme function” is “to ‘fix’ the paradigmatic models for [...] all significant human activities,”<sup>127</sup> we identify through the different contexts of music featured across the analyzed episodes an abundance of primordial deeds of mythical figures concerning music “which had been made manifest *in illo tempore*”<sup>128</sup> – such as inventing, making, and naming of the syrinx, initially producing the sound on the new instrument with expression (“Pan and Syrinx”), composing flute music (creating music while playing), iteratively playing the flute *in private, solo*, improvising or exercising in a sense, expressing affects

<sup>122</sup> Jennifer Stock and Kim Hunt (eds.), *UXL Encyclopedia of World Mythology* (Detroit: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 807.

<sup>123</sup> Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable...*, op. cit., 211.

<sup>124</sup> One of Georges Barrère's performances of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894) was praised with the following words: “Pan himself seemed to be blowing through George[s] Barrère's flute.” Quoted after Nancy Toff, *Monarch of the Flute: The Life of Georges Barrère* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 196–226, 207.

<sup>125</sup> Eliade, “The Myths of the Modern World...,” op. cit., 23.

<sup>126</sup> In addition to the epigraph for Donjon's composition *Pan!* we also allude to Marcel Moyse's cornerstone method for the flute titled *De la Sonorité – Art et Technique* (1934).

<sup>127</sup> Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 98.

<sup>128</sup> Eliade, “The Myths of the Modern World...,” op. cit., 32.

through music (“Pan”), creating dance-like flute music, playing alongside dance, playing and dancing *in unison*, physically responding to music (“Pan and nymphs”), musical contesting (flute playing *versus* lyre playing), performing in public (on the *scene*), audience listening, perceiving, expressing contrasting tastes/preferences, evaluating, judging (“Pan and Apollo”), playing flute music which is imitated, recognizing own music in imitation, imitating flute music (“Pan and Echo”), and teaching the flute, teacher–student interacting, demonstrating and acquiring the flute skill (“Pan and Daphnis”) – acts apprehended as the very “paradigmatic models for [...] activities”<sup>129</sup> regarding flute music in “the historical present,”<sup>130</sup> including inventing, composing, playing, contesting, listening, evaluating, teaching, and learning, all of which find their realization in the context of the concert hall.

Thus, the actions of playing and listening to the discussed music by, for example, Debussy, Logar, and Mouquet *within* the concert hall, interpreted as “repeat[ing] [...] or imitat[ing] [of] the gestures of the mythic personages”<sup>131</sup> originating in the realm *beyond* the confines of the concert hall, turn it into the space where “the break with profane duration and integration into primordial time,”<sup>132</sup> that is, a reactualization of the myth (of Pan) *per se*<sup>133</sup> – of that *beyond* – unfolds. In broader terms and with wider implications, the aforementioned *coming from beyond* deeds can be understood as foundational for core musical practices, namely creation, performance, reception, criticism, and education, ultimately emphasizing the perennial importance and relevance of the myth of Pan *within* (flute) music history, which provides grounds for this myth to be considered as the myth of (flute) music itself.

## SUMMARY

One of the modes of music’s existence *beyond* the concert hall can be seen in the myth of Pan, where flute music is referred to through verbal means. This myth recounts the ancient Greek god’s creation of the flute and flute music (encompassing its various manifestations) occurring “*in illo tempore*,” in “primordial time” (Mircea Eliade), therefore, *beyond* the temporal framework of the concert hall. Aiming to engage with the instances, character, and role of music, the research delved into various versions of the myth of Pan and, given Northrop Frye’s perspective on mythology as “an interconnected series of myths,” the paper also examined other available mythological references featuring Pan and his music in order to gain a comprehensive insight into the full scope of the myth. The undertaken consideration yielded the finding that myth addresses six distinct contexts in which flute music manifests. These constituted one of the primary criteria for

<sup>129</sup> Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 98.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>131</sup> Eliade, “The Myths of the Modern World...,” op. cit., 30.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>133</sup> See Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths...,” op. cit., 99–104.

segmenting the myth into individual episodes representing the analytical corpus of this paper: “Pan and Syrinx” (creation of the syrinx/Pan’s flute/flute following the nymph’s metamorphosis), “Pan” (Pan’s playing in solitude), “Pan and nymphs” (Pan’s playing along the dancing nymphs), “Pan and Apollo” (public musical contest between Pan and Apollo), “Pan and Echo” (interaction of Pan’s music and Echo/echo), and “Pan and Daphnis” (Pan’s teaching Daphnis to play the syrinx).

Music, understood as the central theme and life-giving force that directs the plot about Pan (and Syrinx/syrinx) – which finds its reflection in the fundamental importance of this myth for flute music, exemplified by the works of Debussy, Logar, Mouquet, and others – was also regarded through other aspects of the myth, namely, the ambiance (the Arcadian atmosphere), time (“indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable” mythical time [Eliade]), and characteristics of the main personages. Drawing upon Mircea Eliade’s notion of myth as “paradigmatic model,” the inquiry into how the myth itself has shaped and continues to inform (our understanding of) the very (flute) music and its associated practices *within* the contemporary music scene unfolded. An abundance of primordial deeds of mythical figures concerning music were identified across the analyzed episodes, such as Pan’s composing, playing, and teaching, as well as the listening, evaluating, and judging involved in the competition between Pan and Apollo. These can be understood as foundational for core musical practices, namely creation, performance, reception, criticism, and education, ultimately emphasizing the perennial importance and relevance of the myth of Pan *within* (flute) music history.



## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

*Paulo C. Chagas* • He is a distinguished international composer and a professor of composition at the University of California, Riverside. Chagas is the founder of the Experimental Acoustics Research Studio (EARS), a pioneering space dedicated to exploring intersections of music and technology. With a prolific output of over 200 works that span orchestra, chamber music, electroacoustic, audiovisual, multimedia, and telematic music, the artist has made a significant impact. Chagas' innovative approach integrates advanced technology in music production and composition, creating immersive experiences that have garnered global acclaim.

Chagas' works, such as the telematic music projects and audiovisual compositions, reflect his deep engagement with technological advancements and their expressive potential in music. His compositions, including recent commissions like *Re-soundings* for the Symphony Orchestra of the University of São Paulo and *Olhe essas águas...* for the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, as well as a concerto for percussion and orchestra for the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra titled *Outros quadros*, showcase his ability to fuse traditional musical elements with electronic and digital innovations, pushing the boundaries of musical expression. Furthermore, his concerto for timpani and orchestra for the Symphony Orchestra of the State of São Paulo (OSESP), *A Hora das Coisas* in 2023, demonstrates his continued influence and innovation in the field.

As an esteemed researcher, Chagas has significantly contributed to the fields of music semiotics and philosophy. His scholarly work includes editing *Sounds from Within: Phenomenology and Practice*, published by Springer in 2021, and authoring *Zwischen Klängen und Apparaten: zur Theorie und Praxis der elektronischen Musik*, released by Rediroma in the same year. These contributions emphasize his engagement with the theoretical and philosophical aspects of music, particularly in relation to electronic and technological advancements. His research has enriched his compositional practice and advanced the broader discourse on music and technology, leading to international recognition, including the prestigious Fulbright Research Scholar Award for a residency in Berlin. This award, along with several other international accolades, affirms his influence and contribution to the global music community, bridging innovative composition with academic research.

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**MUSIC BEYOND THE CONCERT HALL**  
Scientific Monograph

*Editors*

Prof. Dr. Dragana Jeremić Molnar

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Assist. Prof. Dr. Radoš Mitrović

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