

Film Music in Concert: Introduction

Sebastian Stoppe

In September 2013, one could read in *The New York Times* about a new initiative of the New York Philharmonic called “The Art of the Score: Film Week at the Philharmonic.” The idea behind this initiative is to have the orchestra play a film score live in the concert hall while screening the film simultaneously. You could experience *2001: A Space Odyssey* by STANLEY KUBRICK with ALAN GILBERT conducting (TOMMASINI 2013). So, film music has arrived at the concert hall, hasn’t it?

Well, it depends. *2001* is one of the best examples for a motion picture without a genuine film score. In the end, you were able to listen to some of the finest works of classical music by such composers like LIGETI, KHACHATURIAN, RICHARD STRAUSS, and JOHANN STRAUSS. KUBRICK loved his temp tracks (which are pieces of music that are used for editing but usually not intended to be included in the final film); and kept the temp music instead of an original score. Nowadays, it became clear that KUBRICK never intended to use an original score. He only commissioned a score by veteran film composer ALEX NORTH because the studio wanted it. But, however, NORTH’S score was never used and *2001* was released with music taken from existing recordings (TOWNSON 1993).

But nonetheless, the NY Phil has played original film scores as well—such as “music from Alfred Hitchcock movies” (TOMMASINI 2013). So, film music is not entirely banned from the concert hall anymore but, however, far from being recognized as a truly own style of music which is to be performed regularly in a concert hall. There are still strong prejudices about film music—too nice, too industrial, full of clichés, and unworthy to be performed live by an orchestra. We want to explore the nature of film music and its relation to classical

music in this volume—and we want to discover why film music is still underrated by music critics.

I myself, SEBASTIAN STOPPE, will start this book with an essay about film composers and their balancing between being an artist and a craftsman as well; while EMILIO AUDISSINO tells us more about the various forms of film scores in concert as well as why film music is still regarded as second-rate music in our first chapter. He also explores the renaissance of the symphonic film score by looking at JOHN WILLIAMS'S scores for *Jaws* and *Star Wars*.

BERNARD HERRMANN was an accomplished and well-educated film composer who is best known because of his long-lasting relationship with ALFRED HITCHCOCK. Unbeknownst to many, HERRMANN'S scoring technique shares certain similarities with RICHARD WAGNER—a topic that will be explained by JAUME RADIGALES. We will have a closer look at RICHARD WAGNER with IRENA PAULUS who compares WAGNER and especially *The Ring* cycle with the extensive opus of the *Star Wars* scores by JOHN WILLIAMS.

GENE PRITSKER is a New York-based classically trained composer who frequently works as an orchestrator in the film music industry. In 2012, he orchestrated the score for *Cloud Atlas* by TOM TYKWER and THE WACHOWSKI SIBLINGS and also wrote a symphony based on the film score. In his essay, we will learn more about why PRITSKER thinks that the majority of film scores are merely “music by numbers” and not do bear the complexity of concert hall music. Alas, he will also introduce us in the composing and orchestration process of the *Cloud Atlas* score and its symphonic pendant. KRISTJAN JÄRVI was very involved as a conductor in the original score recording as well as the world première. I was able to talk with him about conducting film scores and how film music derived from opera and concert hall.

LORENZO SORBO did a comparison of the film music of Italian composers ENNIO MORRICONE and FRANCESCO DE MASI. Both composers were strongly involved in the Italian western movie genre and MORRICONE was also a frequent conductor of live concerts of his own

scores. We will conclude the volume with two in-depth looks on films and an empirical study: MARCO COSCI analyzes the score of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* by FRANCES SEYRIG. The film is a very complex one, using a non-linear, quite surrealistic narrative which is constantly reflected and emphasized in the music score. PASCAL VANDELANOITTE will have a closer look on VISCONTI's *Ludwig*. VISCONTI—perhaps best known for his extensive use of MAHLER'S *Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 in Death in Venice*—relies heavily on WAGNER'S music for the film's soundtrack.

I feel very grateful that the idea of editing a volume about film music and its relation to concert hall music resulted in such a book. Of course, I have to thank all of my fellow contributors who kindly shared their ideas with me. Thanks to my publisher WERNER HÜLSBUSCH for giving me much leeway in conceiving this volume and for his openness to include my book in his program. Last but not least I like to thank KATARINA WERNEBURG for letting me do this project even when our spare time had to fall apart sometimes. Without all these people, this book would not have been made.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my dearest friend MATTHIAS WENGLER. MATTHIAS is a professional church musician and a terrific aficionado of classical music who—with his enthusiasm—has once introduced me into the world of classical music.

References

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