

**OPERA FUNCTIONING AS NARRATIVE IN FILMS:  
Apocalypse Now - Godfather, Part III - Philadelphia**

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IN ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

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May, 2001

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## ABSTRACT

OPERA FUNCTIONING AS NARRATIVE IN FILMS:

Apocalypse Now - Godfather, Part III – Philadelphia

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Ph. D. Program in Art, Design and Architecture

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This thesis examines the opera-film-music relationship from various points of view. With all the technical advances in the film industry, music for the films is still composed in the late nineteenth century, romantic style. We will try to offer some answers related to this subject.

In the three films selected for analysis, music and visuals exist in contrapuntal relationship. Music becomes the third dimension next to words. Francis Ford Coppola is one of the most knowledgeable composers for using music in films. His first film in analysis is *Apocalypse Now*, where music is utilized as part of the drama. In *Godfather, Part III* music moves and develops together with the plot. The third film in analysis is *Philadelphia*, directed by Jonathan Demme. The music is utilized to intensify emotions and the drama of the film. In all three films, music becomes the narrative of the visuals.

KEY WORDS: Major and minor tonalities, The intensifying of orchestration, The meter affecting the flow of the picture, The effect of human voice in film music.

# ÖZET

OPERANIN FİLMLERDEKİ ANLATIM GÜCÜ:

Apocalypse Now - Godfather, Part III – Philadelphia

Benal Tanrısever

Sanat, Tasarım ve Mimarlık Doktora Programı

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Bu çalışmada opera-film-müzik ilişkileri çeşitli açılardan incelenmektedir. Film endüstrisindeki tüm yeni gelişmelere karşın film müzikleri, 19. yüzyıl romantik opera tarzında bestelenmeye devam etmektedir. Bu konuya ilişkin nedenler çalışmada irdelenmektedir.

Seçilen film örneklerinde görüntü ve müzik organik bir beraberlik içerir. Müzik, görüntü ve diyalogun yanında üçüncü boyutu oluşturur. Son derece duyarlı bir rejisör olan Francis Ford Coppola, Apocalypse Now ve Godfather, Part III filmleri ile incelenecektir. Apocalypse Now filminde müzik, anlatımın parçası olarak işlev görmektedir. Godfather, Part III filminde ise müzik filmin hikayesi ve akışı ile birlikte gelişir, değişir. Bir Jonathan Demme filmi olan Philadelphia, bize müziğin duyguları nasıl kuvvetlendirdiğini ve anlatım gücünü artırdığını gösteriyor. Her üç filmde müzik görüntünün anlatım gücünü oluşturur.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Major ve minor tonaliteler, Orkestrasyonda yoğunlaşma, Zaman ölçüsünün görüntüye etkileri, Müzikte insan sesi ve etkileri.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the opera-film-music relationship under various topics. Although artistic, technical and cultural changes have occurred in films within the last century, the same cannot be said about the music in films. Film composers and directors still prefer the nineteenth century romantic styles of Verdi, Puccini, Rossini and Wagner. And why is that? The answer to this question will be examined both from the perspective of the music and from the perspective of the film.

Try to imagine any of your favorite films without the musical score. How would Hitchcock's famous stabbing shower scene in *Psycho* affect you, without the repeated dissonant chords played by the strings? It would take the whole scare out of the scene. Every moviegoer is well aware of the psychological power of music. But what is it about music that has the ability to move the viewer into a specific emotional direction? Picture image combination is so strong that even when one element is missing, we tend to fill in and experience the total concept in our minds. Music may resemble (parallelism) or contradict (counterpoint) the mood or action on the screen.

At the 1986 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and sciences ceremonies, Alex North was the first composer ever to be awarded a lifetime achievement honor. In his acceptance speech, North said [Burt 3], that "he attempts to meet the demands and needs of the story conflict and of the interrelationship of the characters involved and hopefully, to add a personal comment." The musical drama of the film score is a theatrical element where thoughts are processed as melodic line (leitmotif), orchestral texture, musical style and gesture. Music has the ability to express the psychological states of the characters as well as express what they are thinking. Music may also direct the viewer into a specific emotional direction. Furthermore, music can have a huge impact in creating atmosphere, time and place. These already unseen capabilities of music have been used to its utmost limits for centuries in operas. It is relatively a new discovery for the world of cinema.

Film is the medium today as opera was in the nineteenth century, portraying and reflecting our popular culture. With its directors, producers, artists, stage, costume and light designers, it is a form of artistic spectacle, an enterprise.

Entertainment is a major concern both in the world of opera and films. People want to be dazzled, surprised, taken into fantasy world, and swept off their feet after a long and stressful day. And what better to serve all those needs than opera and films?

Film music unfortunately is often regarded as “background” music. This would be the same as saying opera has background music or music at the ballet serves as a background to the action on stage. In the same line of thinking, it would be almost impossible almost for films to function without music. There have been some films where music is deliberately omitted because the director relies on the stress due to the absence of music. Alfred Hitchcock for one, is a director who is very calculative in utilizing the amount of music in his films. He resorts to music only when absolutely vital. He is also a director who prefers to use the “silent sounds” such as his famous “silent scream” sparingly.

There have always been heated arguments as to whether film music should imitate or musically illustrate the visuals in films or whether film music should be a musical expression of the visual impression. In order to shed a bit of light on the problem, let us make a short journey back to the fifteenth century Renaissance. Madrigal composers in the Renaissance were highly devoted to musical representation. Music for them was the imitator of sounds accompanying words. Should there be a word, such as “to fly” or “to disappear” the music would gain instant rapidity to Mickey Mouse the effect without great consideration to musical line or musical concept [Palisca 22].

When we arrive to the tenth century Baroque period, we see a shift away from the bad representation of music. Composer Vincenzo Galileo (father of Galileo) thinks representation in music is not necessarily a bad thing but that it ought to be done without the violation of musical good taste. While the arousing of emotions in listeners is totally appropriate, the actual representation is not acceptable [Grout 307].

When a baroque madrigal composer picked a text from a pastoral play, he almost always chose a monologue, which expressed an inner mood, a state of feeling at a nodal point in the drama rather than a passage of narrative or a dialogue

by which the external action was advanced. We can also give Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony as an example where Beethoven intended not to describe or represent life in the country when he composed the piece, but rather describe or represent the emotions of men by their enjoyment of the country life. Beethoven believed that musical representation is really a matter of musical expression.

In this study, visuals and music exist in contrapuntal relationship. Music becomes the third dimension next to images and words.

There are a great number of films in recent years that have utilized operatic music. These films range from popular Hollywood hit-movies to more intellectual European films. We shall see a sample of these appearing in different categorical groups.

The main analysis of this dissertation will concentrate on three films that have selected opera for special purposes:

1. **Apocalypse Now** – Music is utilized as part of the drama.
2. **Godfather Part III** – Music moves and evolves together with the plot.
3. **Philadelphia** – Music is used to intensify the emotional climax of the film.

In all three films music becomes the narrative of the visuals. Music and film interweave to reach the ultimate sense in a dramatic context.

With these requirements in mind, Francis Ford Coppola proves to be one of the most knowledgeable composers when it comes to using music in films. There is nothing incidental about Coppola's choice of music and that is the reason two of his films *Apocalypse Now* and *The God-Father Part III* will be analyzed in great detail. The third film in analysis, *Philadelphia* is an emotionally packed drama directed by Jonathan Demme. The music comes in at the height of the drama displaying human tragedies.

Coppola chooses to use from Wagner's opera, *The Walküre* in *Apocalypse Now* for one of the most memorable and powerful scenes in film history. Who other than Richard Wagner to provide the much needed electrified musical drama, to act as the counterpart to the human tragedy of the Vietnam War. It would almost be impossible to imagine this particular scene, which takes place relatively at the beginning of the film, without Wagner's music. Music does not have the power to represent something on its own but certainly has associative powers, which are heightened when combined with image and dramatic context.

The second film in analysis is another Coppola film: *The Godfather, Part III*. The music chosen for this film is from Mascagni's opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The way the music functions here is different than that in *Apocalypse Now*. In *Apocalypse Now* the, music expresses the psychological states of characters in view. The leit-motif is frequently used which expresses the musical idea of the situation at present. Whereas in *God Father, Part III*, the music and plot move in parallel motion. The libretto of the opera and the story in the film share many common elements such as power violence, revenge, forbidden love, fear of God, divine justice and punishment. The story and music carry each other in contrapuntal relationship.

The third film Philadelphia, serves to demonstrate yet another function of music in films. The music becomes a major psychological tool for the film. The music chosen for the film is from Giordano's opera, *Andrea Chénier*. The powerful aria, *La Mamma Morta*, makes a great impact to heighten emotions via the dark and luscious voice of Maria Callas. This sequence is a perfect demonstration for the power of music in films replacing dialog which in this particular scene, would have been insufficient.

In all three films, the music enters and the dialogue ceases. In opera, when the music stops, the recitative, which is a form of declamatory singing, takes over. In films, the reverse happens: the dialogue stops, when the music starts. Music becomes the dialogue, the recitative of the film.

Leit-motif, rhythm, color, orchestration, tempo, melodic contour, harmonic influence are all of vital importance in the music and film collaboration.

In the analysis of the above mentioned three films, special attention will be given to the following five categories:

1. The thickening of orchestration in parallel motion with the intensifying of the drama.
2. The use of musical meter, affecting the flow of the picture.
3. The use tonality in music as support to the drama in the film.
4. The use of leitmotif for psychological associations.
5. The effect of music in the absence of words, dialogue.

## 2. MUSIC IN FILMS

### 2.1 MUSIC FOR THE SILENT FILMS

Music was sung or played to highlight emotional moments, dating all the way back to Greek tragedies. Music and drama have since proved to be inseparable. In December 28, 1895 a piano accompaniment was added to the film segments shown by the Lumière Brothers but for reasons other than dramatic support. It was a practical way of hiding the annoying noise of the projector. Another reason was that the shadowy figures on the screen had a frightening effect on the audience, watching in darkness and silence. It was rather shocking to see living people appear on screen who at the same time were non-living, ghost-like. Music proved to have a soothing effect on fears and anxieties and thus providing the life and spirit, missing in silent films. Initially, musical material had little to do with the dramatic flow of the picture. Anything and everything was played from marches to operatic tunes as long as it kept on going, non-stop. There was music for the whole duration of the film. By 1908, the potential future of the film industry was undeniable. Film directors and producers were commissioning composers to write film scores to improve the quality of the music. One of the first commissioned work was composed by Camille Saint-Saëns, for the score of "L'Assassinat du Duke de Guise."

Max Winkler is known to be the first "music-writer" for the silent films. Working as a clerk at Carl Fischer music store in New York, He was very well informed about all the music stored and catalogued in the store. After a sleepless night, he devised a musical cue system that could be utilized in movie theatres by pianists, organists and conductors. This is what he did:

Cue [Prendergast 8].

1. Opening, play Minuet No.2 in G by Beethoven for ninety seconds until title on screen "follow me dear."
2. Play "Dramatic Andante" for two minutes and ten seconds. Play softly during where mother enters.
3. Play love theme for one minute and twenty seconds.

4. Play fast increase or decrease speed of gallop in accordance with action on the screen.

This idea of Winker proved to be successful and he was engaged by the Universal Film Company to write musical cues for all their films. The demand to supply music for silent films was so high that in desperation they began to use bits and pieces of music from the works of Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart and many more as they pleased. Extracts from great symphonies and operas became “Adagio Lamentoso for sad scenes. Finales from famous overtures like “William Tell” and “Orpheus” become galloping themes. It also became a practical matter to speed up or slow down any given music in order better to fit the visual action on the screen.

The popularity of movies grew and a mere piano accompaniment was no longer satisfactory. Orchestras started replacing single instrumental accompaniment. This of course was another problem: while a pianist could watch the screen, improvise adjust the tempo accordingly, the orchestra could not and so the music chosen had to really fit the film. This was not an easy task since little time was allowed for the music director to watch the film before its premiere.

The film was first showed to the composer for general impressions of form and content. In the second showing, he worked with a stopwatch to calculate scenes to be used with music. He would then decide whether the music was to be in the style of old opera, or more in the style of Wagner’s music dramas, using leit-motif. Since using different music in different scenes was difficult to combine and unite as one musical idea, conductors started composing their own music to solve these problems. The musical fragments are actually of great value since they were composed for a special film in mind.

Despite synchronization problems, there were a number of scores composed for pictures. *The Birth of a Nation* 1915 by D.W Griffith’s remains to be a monumental film. Its music is a pastiche of original works of Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Liszt, Beethoven as well as popular American songs. The score for *The Birth of a Nation* was a Joint work of D.W Griffith and a composer named Joseph Carl Briel.

The most significant film score for the silent film is Edmond Meisel's *The Battleship Potemkin* directed by Sergei Eisenstein. (1925) Meisel's score though not of great value as music per say, plays an important role in breaking away from the lyrical type of musical illustration, where music becomes part of the audio-visual image partnership.

In the early days of sound film, musical films became popular utilizing music widely. The public soon got tired of musicals and such pictures started to fail at the box office. A large number of musicians were laid off by the studios deciding that they were no longer in need. This attitude lasted not even one year and by 1931, producers and film directors began to use music here and there to intensify love scenes, dramatic moments or support silent sequences. Directors however, felt a need to explain or justify the music being there. For example, whenever there would be music in a street type of setting, a street band or a wandering musician would appear. It was easier for them to use music abundantly in nightclubs, parties or theatre scenes.

In conclusion, we can say that there were two primary ways of utilizing music in the early days of sound film. One was the constant use of music as a background decoration; the other was to use music where real musicians would actually be shown performing.

The film *The Blue Angel* 1930, [Harrell 73] by Joseph von Sternberg attempts to use source music coming from a visible source on the screen, as a new idea of using music in films. The musical score is made up by the song made famous by Marlena Dietrich, "*Falling in Love again.*" The theme from this song is also heard when the film opens accompanying the main titles. The other times we hear music is when the professor, played by Emil Jennings whistles a little melody to the bird in a cage.

The problem of using theme songs and to use them as source music is that it usually holds up the action. Whenever a theme song is played, the concentration usually slides over to the song itself rather than what is happening on stage. Some directors purposefully use a theme song and halt the story, to make room for a

popular song that would enhance the popularity of the film. For example, the music and dance sequence in *I am singing in the rain*, sang and danced by Fred Astaire, has no purpose in the film, other than to provide an opportunity for the song in an effort for it to become a hit. Even people who have not seen the film, have more than likely to have heard this popular tune.

As the need for music in films grew, film studios came up with their own music departments. This was a group of musicians working together in a cut and paste type of style, picking a bit from a Beethoven Symphony and a section from a Strauss waltz and adding a little bit from their own.

Group of musicians coming together to compose a single piece of work was a common practice in the eighteenth century. Used especially in opera, there could be more than one composer responsible for a single opera. This type of composing was called “pasticcio” meaning “pie.” It was not so uncommon to substitute an aria from another opera, in order better to serve the occasion. Obviously, copyright was not a major concern in the eighteenth century. Today, film composer use a simpler style of pasticcio composing; using different styles of music or implementing such as an aria from a well – known opera.

This pasticcio type of composing enabled directors and composers alike to solve dramatic problems where time pressure and quick solutions are of vital importance in the film industry. The relationship between music and drama is nowhere more logical and convincing as in opera.

Opera is a partnership of drama and music where the music intensifies the drama. Film is a partnership of drama and music where music intensifies the drama.

It was also a common practice of using music written for one film and then again for some other films. By the 1950's, music written for films became an industry on its own.

Here is a typical organizational chart for a music department in the 1930's.

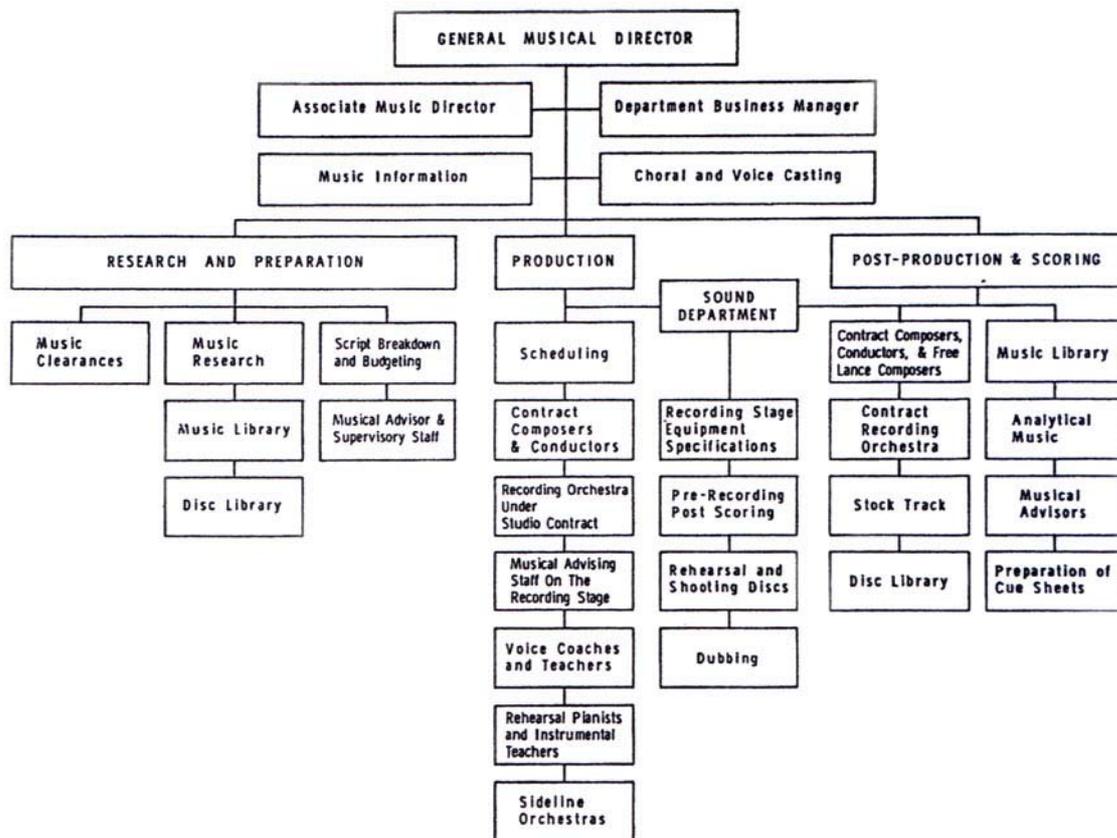


Figure [Prendergast 37]

It was also in that period those film composers come to fame by their distinctive styles and forms. Alfred Newman, Max Steiner, Eric Wolfgang Korngold to name a few who were the trendsetters in film music. It is more than a coincidence that these composers chose the romantic mid to late nineteenth century symphonic style of writing for their compositions. The dramatic stage works of Verdi, Puccini, Wagner and Strauss offered quick answers in resolving dramatic problems in film scoring, where time pressure and quick solutions are vital importance in the film industry. The relationship between music and drama is nowhere more logical and convincing as in opera. Another explanation is that the audience understands and appreciates these musical ideas more readily than others.

The relationship between music and drama is nowhere more logical and convincing as in opera.

Opera is a partnership of drama and music where music intensifies the drama. Film is a partnership of drama and music where music intensifies the narrative drama.

By 1950's the musical score written for the pictures began to contain yet another new perception: the music was used to relate to characters and mental stage rather than the action on the screen. It started to reflect the inner feelings of characters, rather than the situation.

Hollywood was now moving away from romantic unreal plots to more realistic films. This transition also brought a new type of treatment in musical writing, namely using the "not so pleasant" dissonant sounds. Who can ever forget the hair-raising shower scene where Bernard Hermann uses the screeching violins playing dissonant seventh chords with thickening orchestration ending in a glissando and finalizing with strings playing marcato, and still in dissonance as Marion falls down dead. The thickening of the sound is achieved not by instruments getting louder and louder but via a canonic effect that keeps on adding another note on the chord each time it is repeated.

The death of Marion [Prendergast 145] is played out by the rhythmic pattern:

The image shows a musical score for the death of Marion. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves: Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), and Piano. The Violin parts feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamic markings such as *ff*, *simile*, and *rit.*. The Piano part has a similar rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings like *ff* and *rit.*. The second system also has three staves: Violin II (VI. II), Piano, and Cello/Double Bass. The Violin II part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The Piano part has dynamic markings of *Pizz.* and *Arco*. The Cello/Double Bass part has dynamic markings of *ff* and *rit.*. A bracket above the first staff of the second system is labeled "(Marion falls dead.)".

By now harmonic, rhythmic devices and contrapuntal techniques became important to capture the total dramatic demands of the film.

## 2.2 WHAT IS THE RIGHT MUSIC?

One of the most challenging problems in the film–music collaboration is finding the music that fits like a glove. The melodic contour, harmonic progression, rhythmic pattern must all come together so perfectly that music, film and its characters become one entity. Throughout the film industry people always talk about film scores in terms of “it works or it doesn’t work.” A director may find the score moving too slowly or that it needs more dynamics and energy. Audiences may have their own reactions to the same situation. The music has the power to manipulate what we see on the screen in such a way that a dramatic moment onscreen may turn into a comical outburst by sudden rhythmic or harmonic switches. This would all be fine if those were the intentions of the director; the reverse situation would be catastrophic to the credibility of the film [Adolphe 12-20].

In order to really serve a film, the score must reflect the films dramatic themes, its characters, its rhythms and textures and most importantly its dramatic requirements. Some films are more receptive to music than others. Getting inside the film and its texture is crucial in determining what and how much music the film actually needs. It is also important to determine the function of music in the film and the space in which it exists and flourishes.

For example in documentaries, emphasizing a “you are there type of reality,” the films do not need much music and what happens there is that music functions primarily to support the tensions and connect several scenes. In other films such as the James Bond films or Star Trek series a more dramatic and full-blown score is needed to satisfy the specific requirements of the film.

There are times when the score fails to be convincing no matter how much the music may provide great emotions by technically doing all the right things. The music may be the greatest music ever written but if it does not have an organic connection with the film, it just does not work.

Anyone who has visited the silent cinema will remember the tradition of matching the musical mood to scenery or the sequences in dramatic films which used

a series of scenic shots to establish atmosphere. It became a favorite practice particularly in the German “Kultur Film” movement, to illustrate a performance of classical music with landscape shots. This is a concern for directors like Coppola because first of all, it represents the misuse of music in cinema and secondly it bases the performance of fine compositions to the level of accompaniment to sentimental scenic films. This is rather vulgar from the point view great music to become a mere supply for images. Music must be functional at a point where it ceases to be background music and takes its proper place in the whole dramatic structure of the film.

The closest integration between music and action known as, Mickey Mousing is practiced most obviously and consistently in cartoons or comedies. However, in a normal dramatic film, the direct reflection of the action in the music can easily become too obvious and therefore distasteful. Music can however comment on the action without marching in exact step with it; where music can interlock with the action, anticipating what is to come as well as raising the tensions. The interrelation of music and action in a film is the most commonly used form of film music along with music establishing mood.

Historically, composers have disagreed on whether they should try to create a score that can stand alone, away from the context of the film. Some feel that such independence cannot be the most important criteria for evaluating a film score. There are some popular composers like John Williams and Henry Mancini whose film music is just as enjoyable outside the context of the films [Brown 189]. On the other hand, another great composer like Bernard Herrmann would be difficult to listen to away from his films.

Just as certain films are inherently more receptive to music than others, certain films are simply better than others. Better films may inspire better scores. If the characters have more depth and complexity, if there is a deeper level of sincere emotion, the music flows more naturally as it is being composed. However, there are plenty of average scores in excellent films. An outstanding piece of music may absolutely be inappropriate for the film, whereas an ideal musical selection for the film may be totally uninteresting and dull taken away from the film.

Musicologists may assume that the best film scores are those that can be explained in formal or analytical terms. This is simply not the case for film music. A film score can be evaluated only in relation to the motion picture it accompanies. The film composer's job is like that of an opera composer. He must be able to understand moods in music and be able to connect it to a pictorial situation.

Here is what some of the great film composers had to say about film music.

Good music can improve a fine film, but it can never make a bad film good. We composers are not magicians. We write music.

Henry Mancini, composer

No music has ever saved a bad picture, but a lot of good pictures have saved a lot of bad music.

Jerry Goldsmith, composer

I know it is often said that music, no matter how good, cannot save a bad picture, but I think most of those who say it never worked at Universal in my day.

Hans J. Salter, composer

If the picture is good, the score stands a better chance of being good.

Max Steiner, composer

## 2.3 WHY OPERA?

Why did Wagner, Verdi, Puccini's works and their style of writing inspired most Hollywoods film composers? One answer to this question is that audiences would "understand" their styles of writing more readily than others. Most film composers looked into the works of those opera composers who had solved similar dramatic problems in their operas. These composers provided many of the answers and solutions existing between music and drama. Music in opera is of primary importance whereas in films, the music is quite often of secondary importance in the total dramatic framework.

An outstanding composer of German opera and one of the crucial figures in the history of nineteenth century music was Richard Wagner (1813-83). He was to German Romantic Opera what Verdi was to Italian Opera. He created the "music drama" which was then a new concept. As he was also the librettist of his operas, his writings had great influence on literature, drama and moral values. "For Wagner, the function of music was to serve the ends of dramatic expression" [Grout 612].

This statement could easily be adapted to the function of music in a film. In Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen, the action of the drama is conceived via the orchestra while the outer aspect, the sung words are like dialogue in a film. Opera and film have so much in common. The recitatives of opera, like dialogue in a film help move the plot forward.

Opera, like the film has a tendency to emphasize the separation of the drama and the music at selected places and times. In opera like the film, the action on stage is presented like the most important element where the orchestra hidden in the pit disassociates itself from the action and becomes a commentary upon it.

Wagner's use of leitmotif is a popular tool widely utilized by many Hollywood composers. Leitmotif may refer to a person, place or a thought; it may vary, develop or modulate along with plot development. Repetition of leitmotifs increases the effectiveness of musical unity.

Film composers still look back to the great works of Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini to find solutions to dramatic problems. In an industry where time pressure equals financial pressure, it is of utmost importance to find quick solutions that work every time and opera certainly supplies the most required 100% satisfaction guarantee.

The functional elements of music in operas and films are fundamental and indicate a direct link between the two:

- Music fills in the blank spots in the dialogue (called recitative in opera).
- Music increases the action's emotional impact.
- Music can create a more convincing atmosphere of time and place, (color).
- Music is not intended to mimic the score but rather show what is going on inside the character's minds.
- Music has the ability to direct the viewer into a specific emotional direction.
- Music has the power of expressing psychological states that photography and dialogue are incapable of portraying.
- The recitative in opera is like dialogue in a film that serves to move the plot toward.
- The use of leit-motif is a common use, frequently utilized in both opera and cinema.
- Music serves the ends of dramatic expression.
- Music mirrors the spirit of the film and of the opera.
- Visuals and music exist in contrapuntal relationship.
- Color and the rhythm have associative powers

Opera and film seem like two artistic formats far away from each other but they have certainly more common elements that one might imagine. Even though music is a sonoric experience, it also has a bodily practice, via the artist. Music is performance oriented and thus visual, an audio-visual connection of sound and sight. People go to

symphony concerts to “hear” music. There is however a picture to look as well: the way the musicians use their instruments, conductor’s use of baton, the gown of the soloist, gestures, musicians’ interaction amongst themselves, even watching the audience watch the musicians become a visual trap. I call it a trap because we cannot escape from visual images even if we force ourselves to close our eyes. Related or unrelated images will rush into our imagination to accompany the music we hear. Opera is the most effective medium produced by the constant collaboration of sound and sight. Being an audio-visual spectacle is one of the reasons in the rise of opera’s popularity in recent years.

Opera has always been associated with high culture, the elitist. Going to an opera is not only a musical but a social activity as well. It is the cultural participation of something otherwise beyond reach. With limited access to opera houses and the ticket prices so high, only the privileged minority consumes opera. Films in turn, provide the much-needed easy access, popularity and last but not least, the commercial success to opera. Considering that the film tracks are released the same time as the movie premieres, millions of dollars are paid to the singers, conductors, orchestras and the record companies, as part of royalty.

The biggest profit for opera from collaborating with films is that it has become part of everyday life. The bridge between opera and the public is established via the magical world of the cinema. The three “missionaries” of opera Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and José Carreras have taken opera outdoors to the Olympic games, World Cup Football, to the parks. It no longer is under the possession of the elite minority; it is for everyone [Norman 125].

The waltz had similar effect on the monarchic rule in Europe. Up until the nineteenth century, dance was something for the aristocrats only. The Baroque dances of Minuet, Bourrée, Gigue, Sarabande, etc. were to be danced with man and woman standing next to each other, touching only with one hand or rather the point of contact was only the fifth finger, the pinky [Grout 68]. These dances were usually of slow tempi and not very exhilarating. The nineteenth century brings romanticism along with the waltz. The waltz brought man and woman facing each other, for the first time. If that was not enough, man gripped woman from the waist and started

turning her around faster and faster until she became dizzy and faint. This dance took Europe by storm and everybody started dancing, the aristocrats as well as the rest of the public. The class barrier was lifted off for the first time, thanks to the waltz. The waltz is said to have morally contributed to the breakdown of the monarchy and the aristocracy in Europe. What the waltz achieved in the nineteenth century, opera achieved in the twentieth century. Films made opera easy to understand and enjoy. Opera in turn provided the story, dramatic solutions, artistic spectacle and passionate music guaranteed to work every time.

The drama and music in opera coexist in equal importance. Film directors or composers, usually resort to arias or duets that are of high emotional impact and have proved to be show stoppers in operas. It is not necessary to understand the lyrics in opera; the listeners easily grasp the emotional message of the music.

Here are some of the hit films that have frequently borrowed from the opera:

<b>The film</b>	<b>The opera</b>
Pretty Woman	<i>Verdi:</i> La Traviata Che fai? Nulle
The Witches of Eastwick	<i>Puccini:</i> Turandot Nessun Dorma
Fatal Attraction	<i>Puccini:</i> Madame Butterfly Un bel di
Wall Street	<i>Verdi:</i> Rigoletto Questa o quella
Hudsucker Proxy	<i>Bizet:</i> Carmen Habanera
The Bridges of Madison Country	<i>Bellini:</i> Norma Costa Diva  <i>Saint-Saëns:</i> Samson et Dalila Mon cœur s'ouvre a ta voix
The American President	<i>Delibes:</i>

Lakmé  
Viens Mallika

Apocalypse Now

*Wagner:*  
Die Walküre  
Ride of the Valkyries

Hannah and Her Sisters

*Puccini:*  
Manon Lescaut  
Sole, perduta abbandonata

Dark Eyes

*Rossini:*  
Barber of Seville  
Une voce poco fe

Moonstruck

*Puccini:*  
La Bohème  
Q uando m'en vo  
Donde lieta usci  
O soave fanciulla

Philadelphia

*Giordano:*  
Andrea Chénier  
La Mamma morta

*Catalani:*  
La Wally  
Ebben? Ne andro luntana

*Cilea:*  
Adriana Lecouvreur  
Ecco, respiro appena

In this section, the opera-film collaboration will be categorized under five groups.

1. Films that have borrowed not only music but subject matter from operas as well.

**The film**

**The opera**

Fatal Attraction

*Puccini:*  
Madame Butterfly

Pretty Woman

*Verdi:*  
La Traviata

Fatal Attraction

*Puccini:*  
Madame Butterfly

Godfather Part III

*Mascagni:*  
Cavalleria Rusticana

2. Films have gone actually from time to time to the opera. This gives a chance for the audience not only to hear but also experience the splendor of opera at a closer range.

**The film**

**The opera**

Moonstruck

*Puccini:*  
La Boheme

Pretty Woman

*Verdi:*  
La Traviata

Meeting Venus

*Verdi:*  
La Traviata

Godfather Part III

*Mascagni:*  
Cavalleria Rusticana

3. Films have used well-known, powerful arias either as background or source music that is music coming from “sources” such as radios, televisions, or live performers.

**The film**

**The opera, aria**

The Bridges of Madison Country

*Saint-Saëns :*  
Mon cœur s'ouvre a ta voix,  
Samson et Dalila,

Philadelphia

*Giordano:*  
La mamma morta  
Andrea Chénier ,  
Ebben? Ne andro luntana

*Catalarii:*  
La Wally

*Cilea:*  
Adriana Lecouvreur,  
No son l'umile ancilla

A Room with a View

*Puccini:*  
Gianni Schiccihi  
Firerize è come un albero fiurito  
La Rondine  
A mio babbino caro  
Chi ci hel sogno di Doretta

The Witches of Eastwick

*Puccini:*  
Nessun Dorma  
Turandot

4. Opera and movies have many common themes foremost among them sex and violence. Film makers make use of operatic melodies to heighten the emotions of their work.

**The film**

**The opera**

Apocalypse Now

*Wagner:*

Die Valküre

Ride of the Valkyries

Godfather III

*Mascagni:*

Cavallerio Rusticano

Intermezzo

Pirizzi's Honor

*Rossini:*

The Barber of Seville

Overture

Fatal Attraction

*Puccini:*

Un Bel di

Madame Butterfly

The American President

*Delibes:*

Viens Mallika

Lakmé

### 3. CASE STUDIES

#### 3.1 FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA (1939)

Like many other young filmmakers [Siegel and Siegel 190], Coppola sought work while still a student at UCLA's graduate film program. Finally, he got an opportunity to work with Roger Corman [Born 1926] who became an important figure for B-movies, turning out low-budget horror and science fiction. Even though he received very little money for his work, the experience was priceless.

While writing screenplays, Coppola constantly looked for the opportunity to direct and finally got his break with one of his own works, *You're a Big Boy Now* (1966). The film received moderate success and this led to the opportunity to write more screenplays of which some were never made.

In 1970, he was offered to write the screenplay for a movie, directed by Franklin Schaffner and won an Academy Award for the story and screenplay. He founded a production company *American Zoetrope*, named after the pre-cinema moving-image device.

In 1972, Paramount took a risk and asked him to co-write and direct Mario Puzzo's best-selling novel about an Italian organized crime family, *The Godfather*. It was a time when big budget extravagant films were no longer made. The studios were looking for low-budget films bringing in big commercial success. For the *Godfather*, Coppola had one big star, Marlon Brando, and a cast of many unknowns.

The director became major force in Hollywood having won an Academy Award for Best Picture. This grand success allowed him to work on more personal projects, such as *The Conversation* (1974), which is a character study of a wire tapper who hears too much. Played by Gene Hackman, this film is considered by many to be his best.

Coppola's next film was *The Godfather, Part II* which also enjoyed a great commercial success and put Coppola on top of the industry and to the height of his power.

Coppola was a director who was willing to help out a new generation of directors, including George Lucas, John Milius, Martin Scorsese, Brian de Palma and Steven Spielberg [Sklar 79].

His other big-hit movie was *Apocalypse Now* (1979), starring Marlon Brando and Martin Sheen. Coppola was known to go to financial limits for his creative needs. His 30 million dollar musical extravaganza, *The Cotton Club* (1984), turned out to be a big flop even though visually it was a stunning film. After a period of seclusion, he made a 3-D film for Disney World, starring Michael Jackson. He then made less memorable films like the *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988). *The God Father, III* (1990) propelled Coppola back into the mainstream once again. The film received good reviews and did well again at the box-office.

### 3.2 DIE WALKÜRE (1852) RICHARD WAGNER

#### Synopsis:

Music drama in three acts; the first day of the *Ring des Nibelungen*. Text and music by Richard Wagner. First produced, June 26, 1870 in Munich.

Wotan, king of the Valkyrie's and Alberich the dwarf, compete for becoming the master of the world. Wotan steals the magic cap and a ring from Alberich but is forced to turn it over to the giants because he acquired them wrongfully. Alberich puts a curse on the ring and Fafner, who had stolen the ring, turns into a dragon and now lives in a cage watching over the ring.

In an effort to regain his power against Alberich, Wotan wants the ring. A mortal woman, Erda has borne Wotan a pair of twins, Sigmund and Sieglinde who were separated from each other after birth. Wotan has plans for Sigmund to acquire the Ring. Plans however get complicated when Sigmund falls in love with Sieglinde unaware that she is his twin sister.

The scene we are going to analyze from this opera is the beginning of Act III. The Ring began in the late 1840's as an allegorical comment on the social unrest. It soon turned into a parable of riddles and emotional conflict in which politics dissolve into philosophical poetry. The heroes die and the society is destroyed. Had Wagner been alive he, personally may have written the musical score for the *Apocalypse Now*.

This "musical drama" evokes the opposite worlds of sin and blessedness with great emotional outburst accompanied with lush harmonies and color [Simon 354]. The music flows continuously with rich orchestration, well written choruses, solo singing, all which connect with the course of the drama. Music and drama are organically connected. Wagner was the master of polyphonic orchestration and leitmotifs and lush harmonies.

The Valkyrie's assemble on the summit of a rocky mountain, rocky and barren, with a dark cavern beneath its highest peak and a somber forest below. In the vast space beyond the edge of the mountaintop, clouds are gathered before a storm. On top of the mountain the Valkyries stand, waiting for their sister Brunhilde, the favorite daughter of Wotan. They signal each other with their savage war cry "Ho-jo-to-ho!"

One of Wagner's most famous and descriptive passage happens to be the "Ride of the Valkyrie's" which takes place at the beginning of this act with an incredible realism as the rapid galloping Valkyries dash to and from on stage in a war-like exhilaration, each with a dead warrior thrown over the saddle of her horse.

### 3.3 APOCALYPSE NOW (1979)

#### Synopsis:

A landmark movie about the Vietnam war based on Joseph Conrad's book, the *Heart of Darkness*.

Captain Benjamin Willard (Martin Sheen) is instructed by his superiors to locate and terminate Colonel Walter Kurtz (Marlon) who is waging his own war with an army of native tribesman against the Vietcong. The captain is escorted to the Nung River by the helicopters of the Ninth Air Cavalry under Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall). The neo-fascist Kilgore declares, " I love the smell of napalm in the morning, it smells like... victory" [Lloyd 89].

As the boat proceeds up the river in search of colonel Kurtz, some surrealistic scenery is shown: Playboy Playmates entertaining at a base at Hau Phat, water-skiing to the Rolling Stones "I can get no satisfaction," passing a bridge in Du Lung which is lit up like a carnival, mutilated bodies hanging from trees.

Willard is taken hostage by the Montagnard tribesmen and presented to Kurtz. Among this madness is an American photographer, who is constantly taking pictures, and who explains Kurtz's cause to Willard. Kurtz is also aware of Willard's mission and asks Willard to go ahead and kill him. Kurtz is actually willing to get killed as if wanting to put an end to his own misery. Willard is offered the chance to become the new god but he refuses and begins his journey back.

Coppola has stated that his intention was to create a film experience that would give its audience a sense of the horror, the madness, the sensuousness and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam War. Coppola even goes further to say that "Apocalypse Now is not a film about the Vietnam war, it is the Vietnam War."

The scene we are going to analyze takes place relatively at the beginning of the film. The Ninth Air Cavalry is going to perform an attack on the beachhead. In this electrifying sequence an armada of hideously lit choppers glides silently through the

break of dawn like phantoms. The village unsuspecting the attack, is carrying out a regular day. Kilgore's helicopter carries the music set and speakers.

"DEATH FROM ABOVE" is written across his helicopter. The rockets fire as Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries" blast off from the speakers played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

### 3.4 THE FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM, APOCALYPSE NOW

The scene to be analyzed: The attack of the helicopters.

In the opening scene we see is the helicopters moving up at the dawn of day in the key of D major, which happens to be the same tonality as the main theme we are going to hear little later on.



The trumpet prepares the tonal mood of the piece by playing the military attack tune in b minor, second inversion. The rhythmic content connotes the essence of power and the inevitability of war.



36:51\*

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\* The picture number indicates the actual time the scene takes place in the film.

In the next scene, we see the choppers appearing from behind the trees. The day is breaking and the sun is starting to come out a little bit.



37:25



37:28

The music in this scene is played out by a synthesizer, which relaxes the mood and takes us into a dream like state. The deadly seductive quality of chromaticism, moving up and down is a style very much Wagnerian, which he utilizes most in his opera, *Tristan*. This particular place becomes the Wagnerian leit-motif of worry and fear of death. It reflects the worried thoughts and feelings of going off to war. B minor is perfect selection in portraying the dark and gloomy side of the war. In other words, music emphasizes a deeper level of feeling not seen on the screen.

The profile of the lieutenant appears rather pensive and also worried. A women's chorus sings a sing / song type of melodic lines that sound like the winds blowing. They are the "deadly form of female sexuality" [Clement Forward XIII]. The same leit-motif re-appears in the music as we see the disturbed face of the lieutenant. The troubled look on his face is associated with the chromatic sweep in the music.



37:41

The sun is rising like the rising of the curtain in an opera and everything will soon be revealed. The helicopters, like the marching soldiers are flaying in orderly choreograph. First in groups of three, then six, then eight until they all line up properly just before the attack.



37:22

In the meantime, there is a casual and relaxed atmosphere in the helicopter. The soldiers are joking with each other and actually seem like having fun, as if they are not going in to war but rather into war practice.



38:39

The commander in chief casually discusses the type of surfing boards with another soldier, probably a beach boy from California. Up until this point in the scene, we the audience do not feel alarmed or agitated.



37:45

The commander in chief then orders his men to put the music on, especially the Wagner because it scares the villagers. Utilizing music in a war-like situation has always been a common use. It is a psychological intimidation tool to let the enemy know that you are nearby. The closer the music gets the nearer they know you are. It was for this very same reason that the Ottomans used the Janissary Band marching up front. It was a “we are coming to get you” type of message. Some good has however emerged from this tradition. It was not until the siege of Vienna that Mozart was introduced to the sounds of bells and oriental rhythms.

The surfer-boy announces to the other soldiers that music is going to be played unaware of what type of music Wagner writes. He is naively excited at the thought of music being played, like at a party.

The tape is turned on and the music starts to blast off.



38:55

With the entrance of music in to the scene, what we see on the screen takes on a different meaning. The mood of the soldiers changes from being sarcastic and joking to being serious and worried. The music not only intimidates the enemy but also those attacking: it is time to kill or get killed. The whole idea of going off to war becomes very real.



39:18



39:43

The strings play the opening theme in music; it is not really a melody but more like strings producing a tremolo, a drum roll type of an effect. This tremolo, everybody knows is a tension builder before an important and most often, scary event. So, the music tells us by repeating the concept 8 times that we are about to witness some unusual and frightening disasters.

The meter chosen for this musical segment is in 3/8, which is not a very commonly utilized meter-form. The more popular meter for this particular place would have been 3/4. Both the 9/8 and 3/4 are actually very related meters: 9 divided by 3 is 3 and 8 divided by 2 is 4.

The only difference between the two is not a technical matter, but rather an illusional one. The 9/8-meter gives the feeling of moving forward at a faster tempo. The same music with a 3/4-meter would most definitely make sound heavy and clumsy. So the right meter is very important element for making sure that the picture functions as desired. In this case the agile 9/8-meter fits perfectly to the helicopters “marching” forward. It is neither rushed nor impatient but steadily gets closer and closer to the battlefield with the help of 9/8 swinging the music and rhythm along side. The key of b minor initially introduced to us by the trumpet at the beginning of the scene, now reappears and is here to stay throughout the duration of this sequence. The key b minor is an excellent tonality to reflect the dark side of the war, as well as support the drama of the film.



The strings playing the agitato tremolo.



Each time the strings play the tremolo, a new camera shot accompanies the picture and each new shot portrays the intensifying mood of the soldiers.



39:09

The contour of the musical line is in direct correspondence with the movement of the camera.

The absurdity of military helicopters, carrying tape recorders to play Die Walküre to the local Vietnamese, can only happen in an opera other than cinema where the eye and the ear must have more satisfaction than the logical mind. Opera is a land of fantasy where logic is not the main expectation; it is a story of people telling each other what they feel. Opera is irrational, so is the Vietnam War.



The preparation for the main theme: same rhythmic pattern, same tonality (b minor), and thickening of orchestration increase in dynamic level. There is a mathematical pattern of strings tremolo: 8 measures rhythmic interlude (preparation for the main there) 8 measures.

main theme:	4 measures	The actual marching, which also happens in groups of four in the military parade.
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rhythmic interlude:	3 measures
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main theme:	4 measures
-------------	------------

rhythmic interlude:	3 measures	It continues singing at this point with no rational words.
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Sequences bound together, to share a common point of view.

6 helicopters in the front, 6 in the rear position in a dance like choreography



Neapolitan

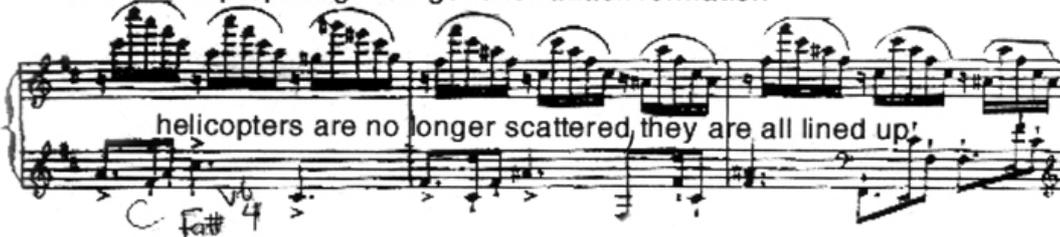
IV<sup>6</sup>

V<sup>7</sup>

d minor



The soldiers preparing their guns for attack formation



Orchestration thickens as the drama intensifies. A bare minimum melodic line is now fully orchestrated with instruments doubling and the dynamic line moving upwards, from forte to fortissimo topped with marcato [Jeppesen 120].



Horns in the bass doubles. The first leitmotif played by the trumpet at the opening of this sequence is now quoted in the key of b minor, this time by the horns. The militaristic character is intensified by the dotted rhythm.



The attack gets closer and closer to the village, the dynamics in music increase in parallel intensity.



Changes from minor to major tonality.

When the orchestration increases, the camera no longer zooms on to the soldiers showing their psychological states. What we now see are the fighting machines- helicopters, machine guns and artillery. The rapid camera movement corresponds to the alteration in musical sequence.



39:05



39:26

When the B sequence arrives with the initial theme, this time it is doubled as octaves in the bass, the sequence we noticed in the earlier introduction of the theme, 4+3+4+3 etc... changes to 4+4+4+4 etc...What happens here is that the rhythmic interlude of 3 measures is omitted in order to fortify the effect of the main, marching theme.

There is no more conversation to be heard in the picture but rather the intensive “march” of the helicopters. Francis Ford Coppola has integrated into the music, his idea of marching helicopters into war, as one organically unified, connected element.



39:40



39:57

The music is cut abruptly and we see an ordinary, peaceful day at a Vietnamese village. A dog is barking, birds are chirping and some school children are coming, out of their school building chanting some children's song.



40:14



40:37

The chopper sound is barely audible and suddenly appear a woman soldier appear commanding the schoolteacher to take the children immediately into safety. Something that sounds like a church bell ringing alarms the whole village about the enemy attack.

We now return to the helicopter scene: we see the choppers advancing along the shoreline. The music now employs the famous Ho-jo-to-ho exclamation of Gerhilde

This is an interesting way incorporating voice especially female voice into the musical score. Her singing, musically speaking is of no real importance. It is neither melodic nor can we say dramatic but rather theatrical. The introduction of the female voice makes the whole episode very real. Up until that moment, the music is a powerful partner to the visuals but the events we see seem distant from us. The moment we hear Gerhilde's war cry, we are shaken by how involved we are in what we witness. The war is no longer so faraway; we are there in the war. Most of this segment is with orchestra music and we are very much occupied with the visuals as well as the music [Abbate 157].

However, upon hearing Gerhilde's voice, our attention shifts away on to the path of the voice and the destination it leads us into.



40:45

Her voice transforms into a kind of musical instrument. Pure voice, especially a female voice commands instant attention. There is no rational singing at this point nor are there rational words. She reflects the psychological state of her aggressor; moreover she is the aggressor and the ugly face of the war. The build up of anxiety is visually achieved by the choppers advancing, and everybody running frantically for shelter.



40:53

The music at this point also gives a great hand for this climactic build up. The dissonance in the female voice becomes even more irritating as the voice claims higher in register accompanied by a grand crescendo. The orchestra supports unconventional leaps and intervals.

The helicopters are by now a few hundred feet away from the village. In the first Ho-jo-to-ho, it starts from p (piano) and moves up to mf (mezzo forte) as the high point and then it drops back down (decrescendo). The second ho-jo-to-ho starts again G - D # - G – B repeated twice but now it modulates to B major, Neapolitan chord first inversion G – E – G – C – C, then goes into B major, Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord (V) with a molto crescendo build up and the long awaited B major finally arrives.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Ho-jo-to-ho!". It consists of two systems of staves. The top system contains three vocal lines, each with two parts of lyrics: "Ho-jo-to-ho!" and "Ho-ya-to-ho!". The bottom system contains piano accompaniment for two staves. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. There are dynamic markings including *p* and *cresc.* (crescendo). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

Ho-jo-to-bo, Hei  
Ho-yo-to-ho, Hei

*molto cresc.* *ff*

G – E – C – C

G – E            minor 3<sup>rd</sup>

E – C            major 3<sup>rd</sup>

C – C            octave

G

E                    Chord IV Neapolitan of B major tonality

C

C



41:09

The moment the first shot is fired corresponds to the moment that the whole musical segment switches from b minor to B major totality.



41: 11



41:27

This is not a mere coincidence. Francis Ford Coppola deliberately has chosen the moment of the first shot to correspond to the moment where the piece modulates to a major tonality. The shift from a minor to a major tone also carries a lot of mood changes. The minor mode is dark, gloomy and unsure about the things that are to happen. The major mode on the other hand, is bright, everything is clear; it is in fact a happier mode. With the firing of the first shot, everything becomes clear: they are attacking to kill and to destroy. This very spot also corresponds in the opera to the time when a flash of lightning breaks through the clouds and a Valkyrie is visible in it; she is clad in battle array and stands on a cliff over a rock-strewn mountain pass. Wotan, the king of gods also fully armed comes up the pass and, addressing her, orders her to defend Sigmund in the coming struggle. The Valkyrie dashes up the rocky height, singing the battle cry of the Valkyrie's: Ho-jo-to-ho.

The female characters, usually sopranos are destined to die due to their fragile personalities in most of the romantic works of Verdi and Puccini. Wagner is one of the very few composers, where a soprano becomes of all things, a war heroine in an opera. However, as the one who disobeys her father, revolts against the rules she is once again condemned to die. In other words, women as long as they stay within their given limits may even rise up to become battle warriors but crossing the authority will still cost them their lives.

Going back to the film: after the initial shot, the music starts to lose its power in the picture. We are now more concerned with buildings and people blown off than the music playing. Now that our ears have picked out the rhythm and are familiar with the melody, we no longer need to concentrate on the music intensively. Like observing soldiers in a parade, one no longer becomes aware of each leg movement of the march after a while, but rather retains the memory and rhythm of the march itself. In the film, we are absorbed with the rather disturbing images of war and yet somewhere in our brain the melody keeps on playing.

The music assumes functional importance once again in this sequence, when the Vietnamese shoot down one American helicopter, the music is the ho-jo-to-ho part, and the next helicopter blasts off the bunker where the initial shot came from.



42:17

The moment of this scene again corresponds to the change from the minor to the major tonality. This change we can call the leitmotif of death and destruction. The music again becomes noticeable important in the scene where the helicopters land on the beach and soldiers now assume attack position. The heavily orchestrated version of the first leitmotif is heard. This time we see the American soldiers getting killed and the terrifying fear of one soldier who clings on to the helicopter not wanting to get off. The ho-jo-to-ho motif is heard and more soldiers are killed off and the irony of it is that the commander in chief regards the killing of the American soldiers as an act of savagery.

The rest of this scene consists of more attacks and more music but nothing of substantial importance.

### 3.5 THE GODFATHER, PART III (1990)

Francis Ford Coppola is one of those directors who get involved in every aspect of his filmmaking. He co-writes, produces, and directs most of his film. He collaborates intensively with his father, the composer Carmine Coppola in most of his films.

In the epic trilogy of The Godfather Part III, he involves many of his family members:

Talia Shire	– his sister, plays the sister of Don Corleone, Connie
Sophia Coppola	– his daughter, plays Mary Corleone
Nicholas Cage	– his nephew, is the executive producer
Carmine Coppola	– his father, writes the original music for the film.

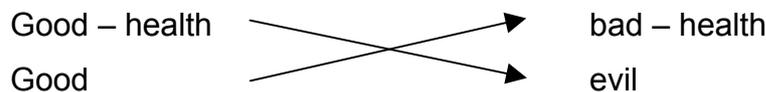
An admirer of classical music and an amateur composer himself, Coppola chooses Mascagni's opera Cavalleria Rusticana which has a story parallel to the film. The music is incorporated into the story in every sense. The highly important elements both for the opera and the film are:

Church  
Fear of God  
Confession  
Power  
Tradition  
Family ties  
Deceit  
Revenge  
Forbidden Love  
Punishment  
Justice

There is also an interesting set of circumstances that surface up during the film. One of the more striking is that the more Michael Corleone tries to be legitimate and crimefree, the more people around him become violent and corrupt. We can also see how things twist and turn between Michael Corleone and the Vatican church.

<u>Corleone</u>	<u>Church</u>
legitimate	corrupt
honest	deceitful
values family-life	immoral
good intentions	ill intentions
trustable	untrustable
pro-life	pro-murder

It is also rather interesting to see that the more Michael tries to lead a decent life the more his health fails him.



This good versus evil and the consequences of being “good” is an important issue in the film. The striking statement: “The pope is cleaning the house (of people with illegal dealings). He should be careful, it is dangerous to be an honest man, clearly gives us the message that we are better off being the “bad” guy.

We also see in the film that the higher status you gain in society, the more you encounter illegal doings and crooked people. The church plays an important role in people’s lives and in the story both in the film and the opera. The fear of God and asking for forgiveness is of major importance.

Turiddu in the opera and Micheal Corleone in the film, pay for the immoral doings by their lives.

Al Pacino in this film reprises the role of the powerful Mafia leader, Michael Corleone. The story intertwines around power, tradition, deceit, revenge and justice. The church and Christianity maintain utmost power and holiness. Michael Corleone after having murdered many men, including his own brother is not able to suppress his burning desire for confession. He desperately wants to be forgiven. His daughter whom he so dearly loves is murdered at the end, in an assassination attempt that was actually directed towards him. He ends up spending the rest of his life burning in his own inferno which at the end does become the ultimate punishment for him.

### 3.6 CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA (1870) by PIETRO MASCAGNI

Music by Pietro Mascagni, Libretto in Italian by Giovanni Tarioni Tozzetti and Guido Menasci based on a short story by Giovanni Verga.

Written out as a one-act opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana* literally means the rustic cavalry.

Mascagni was an impoverished music teacher until one day the music publisher Sonzogno offered a prize for a one-act opera. He quickly went to work and composed the opera. He was totally dissatisfied with his work and he held back sending the score. His wife luckily found the opera and mailed it to the publisher. It won first prize as well as fame and fortune for Mascagni. The opera acquired its place in the repertoires of the world with rich lation melody, dramatic impact and pulsating passion. *Cavalleria Rusticana* is also is a trendsetter in the world of opera as being a masterpiece example toward realism known as “verismo” in nineteenth century Italy [Swift and Musser 102]. The movement impelled operatic composers to draw their subjects from the life of the common people instead of concentrating on the affairs of kings and duchesses’ common people common were treated with swift action and powerful emotion.

The story takes place in an Italian village. Turiddu is in love with Lalo, his friend Alfio’s wife. Santuzza, a village girl however is in love with Turiddu and is seeking for him. There are rumors that Turiddu has left town even though some people have seen him the night before.

Santuzza is now surprised to see Turiddu in front of the church. She threatens to tell Alfio about his visits to Lola, if he does not stop seeing her. Lola enters and the two women exchange sarcastic words.

Alfio comes to church and sees Santuzza sobbing on the ground. He asks what the matter is and she tells him how Turiddu has secretly been seeing his wife Lola and everything about their affair. Alfio walks off furiously, vowing for "Vendetta".

Everybody come out of church in good spirits and Turiddu invites his friends to drink from his mother's wine. Alfio comes around challenging Turiddu for a duello. Turiddu accepts the challenge and bites Alfio's ear to show his acceptance.

Turiddu bids farewell to his mother and asks to look after Santuzza, the girl he promised to marry. Shortly after he walks away Santuzza rushes in completely distraught. Shouting is heard at a distance and women rush in with the news that Turiddu has been killed.

### 3.7 THE MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM, GODFATHER, PART III

Scene in analysis: Gathering at the opera house in Sicily.

I would like to analyze what we are about to see and hear in the framework of psychological associations. The theory of psychological associations is the basis for synchronization of the rhythm melody, harmony and orchestral texture as applied to the text and title of musical composition. The writing of popular songs, radio scripts, background music and film score are all by – products of this theory

The film starts with the prelude to the opera. The gentle sound of the music corresponds to the picture. We can say that the camera movement accompanies the animated musical score. There is a great deal to see and to hear in a rather short time period. The shots we see are like quick glances at a photograph album just looking through pretty pictures without much consideration. We are not allowed to think or comment on anything for it moves too quickly.

In the orchestral prelude our attention is more concentrated on the music than the visuals. We are eager to follow the direction; the music is leading us on to. We are excited with rich harmonies and a full orchestra playing great crescendos. During this musical episode, the camera makes short cuts from one scene to the next.



19:45  
Sicily



19:48  
Opera house



19:59  
Michael and Kay arriving at  
the opera



20:13

Once inside the opera, there is a lot going on:



20:28

The assassin dressed up as a priest arrives



20:20

The guards making a last minute check.



20:47

The meeting between Vincenzo and Don Altabello takes place. “E tu Vincenzo, I know how you feel about Michael but you can’t see him, he’s lost. What’s your answer?”



21:52

Michael is informed by his lawyer that the “Pope is cleaning the house.”  
“He should be careful, it is dangerous to be an honest man”. It is ironic that such a statement should come from Michael Corleone.



22:48



23:23

Constanza offers the Don Altabello pastries for his birthday which we will later find out that they were poisonous.



22:48



23:35



23:41

Vincent confronts Mary.

Vincent “There are things I’m going to part of that you can’t be around. You’ve got to understand”. Mary broken hearted does little to protest this decision. She reaches out only to say.

“I will always love you.” Vincent snaps back, “Love somebody else.”

The entire Corleone family is now gathered at the balcony to watch the operatic debut of Michael’s son.

The tempo of this prelude starts with a 4/4 andante, with  $d = 50$  as the suggested speed. As the music gets animated, the tempo moves to a faster 2/4 tempo meter. The sound of the orchestra thickens with lush harmonies and the doubling of instruments. A grand crescendo thrusts the piece forward to an accumulated suspense in 3/4, expecting to resolve to the logical F major tonality. However, *Mascagni* does something that is quite unexpected as well as dramatic, by cutting the musical line off like a knife and starting a whole new musical idea as if nothing before had happened. He also makes the sharp switch from a thick

orchestral texture to the lean and gentle sound of the harps. This light, lyrical type of playing by the harps is the Italian style, Bel Canto.

**Prelude.**

**Andante sostenuto.** (♩ = 50.)



Begins with C meaning 4/4.

**L'istesso tempo.**



Tempo changing to 3/4.



Grand crescendo intensifying emotions.



### Sudden cut to the harps

The tempo suggestion is once again andante, like the beginning but this time, it is in 6/8,  $d = 144$ . It is also interesting to note that 3/4 and 6/8 are actually related tempos. The change from 3/4 to 6/8 does not necessarily make the music faster but it is more of a feeling or an illusion that makes us perceive it as being faster. The change in the flow of music accommodates very naturally the action on stage and thus the action in the film. Tempo changes can work wonderfully as musical tricks to enhance the harmonious partnership of visuals and music.

This busy sequence is abruptly cut when Michael's son starts singing the musical serenade at the opera. The action on the screen and in the music becomes tranquil and calm. As the singing begins, our attention is drawn towards the serenade. We can say that the human voice serves as stoppage of energy as far as musical and visual action is concerned.



26:00

This musical episode consists of 49 measures and of the 49 measures, 40 measures contain the same rhythmic pattern in the bass line. The rhythmic pattern in the bass line corresponds to the rhythmic pattern used in the voice line and both are

utilized as a perfect 4 th: C – F, F – B flat. Bass line starts on the same note that the melody leaves off. The stress or the accent in this pattern is an the second note which is a suggestion that something unusual might happen.

The melodic phrasing is utilized as follows:

The phrasing is grouped in measures of mostly four, except when he openly declares his lust for her, the pattern breaks down not only in the melodic phrasing but in the rhythmic pattern in the bass as well. His sexual remarks about forbidden love disrupts the pattern.

4	+ 4 +	4 + <u>5</u> +	4 + 4+ <u>3</u> + 4 +	<u>3</u> + 4 + <u>2</u> +	<u>2</u> + <u>1</u> + <u>1</u>				
Bring me pleasures of		Yet I would seek your		Though I were	Ahhh	Ahh	Ahh	Ahh	
heaven when I caress		love though it destroys		doomed to die	Die away				
them		me		for my Lola					

At the very beginning of this aria, the tonality is in a major tone F major, which quite abruptly changes to a darker, gloomier f minor as Turiddu, the troublesome main character begins his serenade. This sudden switch in harmonies gives us a pretty good hint that we should expect some unpleasant events.

There is also another element that contributes to the feeling of uneasiness, that is the syncopation which happens right at the very beginning of the phrase.

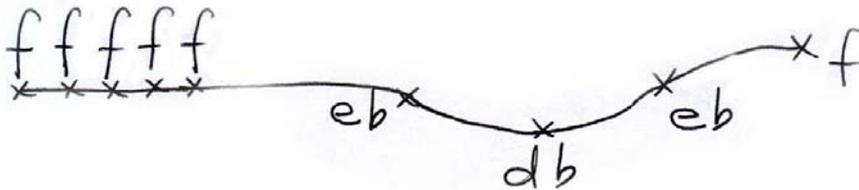
The break of continuity by syncopation is intensified with the dotted eighth rest. The rest, serves as stoppage of energy.

The syncopated start caused by the dotted eighth note followed by twist in the harmonic progression, is more than sufficient to prepare us for what is the come.



The two instances when couples glance at each other at the balcony are rather significant [Jeppesen 123].

1. The first glancing is between Michael Corleone and his ex-wife. In spite of their major differences in the past, there seems some affection and a possibility of a future for them to be back together. The music at this point is quiet, tranquil and full of optimism. The melody carries a lyrical line and a beautiful tone. The melodic contour has little movement around its axis; the lines are smooth and non-agitated.



The melodic minor returns as the leit-motif for nostalgia, the good days gone by.

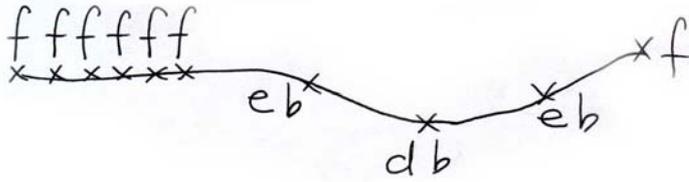


25:19



25:20

2. The second glancing between couples in this sequence takes place between Vincent and Mary, whose love affair had to come to an end by the orders of Michael Corleone. This glance, unlike the first one, is full of pessimism and drama. There is no hope for them to be together in the future. In the music, the same notes are utilized but the difference is that the first note f is repeated in a different rhythmic pattern, which intensifies the music and the mood and thus creating a totally different meaning.



25:30

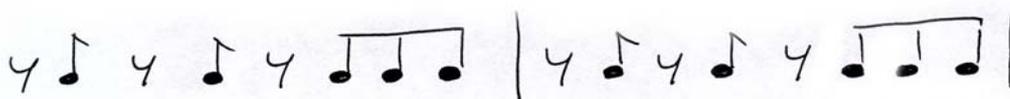


25:32

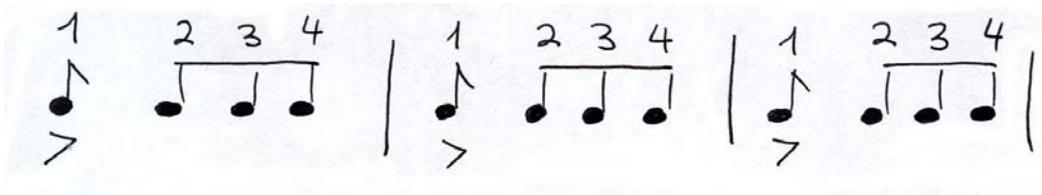
The film now takes us out of the opera house; to the action happening in other places. While the Corleone family is watching the opera, there is a lot of meditated murder taking place.

The first thing we see outside the opera house is one of Michael Corleone's men travelling on the train. The gun we see gives us a clue that he is out there for a bloody mission.

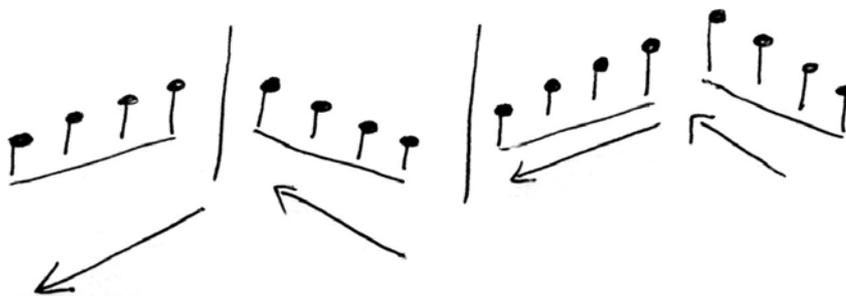
The rhythmic pattern in the music remains constant, like the travelling of the train.



The accents in the music, remind us of the train running.



At the same time, dynamic level of the music rise from very soft to very loud as the line of the music moves upwards.



The camera follows him sitting alone in the train. There is no dialogue just his nervous finger movements. The rhythmic pulse or the beat of his fingers matches the agitated sound of music, with accents caused via the eighth rests. The doubling of instruments playing staccato, increase both in volume and intensity to create the ultimate tension. The rhythmic frame for the sequence is drawn; both from the music and from the jerky movements of the man on the train, which in turn help, emphasize the dramatic line.



26:39

(Dall' interno schiocchi di frusta e tintinnio di sonagli)  
(Behind the scenes cracking of whips and jingling of bells)

ppp staccatissimo sempre. poco cresc.

The first system of the musical score is for piano. It consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower in bass clef. The music is written in a 2/4 time signature. The first staff begins with the dynamic marking 'ppp staccatissimo sempre.' and the second staff with 'poco cresc.'. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with a staccato articulation.

The second system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs. The music maintains the rhythmic pattern established in the first system, with a gradual increase in volume as indicated by the 'poco cresc.' marking.

(Entrano in scena i coristi.....  
(The Chorus enters -

The third system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs. The music maintains the rhythmic pattern established in the first system, with a gradual increase in volume as indicated by the 'poco cresc.' marking.

cresc. molto. f p

indi.....Alfio)  
afterward. Alfio)

The fourth system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs. The music maintains the rhythmic pattern established in the first system, with a gradual increase in volume as indicated by the 'cresc. molto.' marking. The system ends with a dynamic marking of 'p'.

f p ff

The fifth system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs. The music maintains the rhythmic pattern established in the first system, with a gradual increase in volume as indicated by the 'cresc. molto.' marking. The system ends with a dynamic marking of 'ff'.

The music, which has been rather lyrical and pleasant, starts to turn dissonant and tension is increased. The uneasiness is played out by the string section getting louder and louder until it climaxes at full orchestra playing harsh and determined

chords which stay unresolved for an extended period which increases the already present tension further more.

After seeing a very short train episode, Coppola takes us back to the opera. The music we hear is so powerful in an illustrative sense that even though we see peasants on stage we are still under the influence of the running train. The music traps our attention back on to the previous scene; the continuity in music overpowers the visuality in the film.



The village square back at the opera

27:08

At the opera, Alfio challenges Turiddu to a duel. Turiddu shows his acceptance by biting off Alfio's ear. This scene amuses Vincent, for he had done the same earlier in the film biting Joe Zaza's ear.



31:35



31:37

In the meantime, killings are happening inside and outside the opera house. The guards at the opera are both dead.



36:09

Back to the opera Connie is watching Don Altabello with her binoculars waiting for him to eat the poisonous part of the pastry.



27:22



The music in the is scene makes an agitated statement in a minor.

The repeated A flat notes emphasize and create tension. The very unusual jump from A flat to the high A natural definitely gives us enough reasons to expect extra ordinary events.

Vincent as the new Don, has given orders to settle the Corleone accounts. First on the list is Keiseg, the Swiss banker who has been swindling money from the family.



34:31



35:50

Second is, Luchese, “My friend pay a visit at his home.”



34:36



41:10

When Vincent says, “Light a candle for the archbishop.” to the man traveling on the train” we now know what his mission is.

Back at the Vatican, the archbishop is nervous and shaking even when drinking tea. He is the mastermind for planning to kill the pope.



34:59

While all the assassinations are happening, the scene at the opera corresponds to the Easter parade. The carrying of the cross and suffering of Jesus Christ is being shown. The music naturally fits the occasion by supplying a chorale.

**Coro esterno. (EXTERNAL CHORUS.)**

Listesso tempo. (♩ = 60)

*Largo maestoso.*

SOP. I.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so la -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

SOP. II.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so l'a -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

CONT.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so l'a -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

TEN. I.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so l'a -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

TEN. II.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so l'a -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

BASSI.  
gia - mojl Si - gnor non è mor - to! Ei ful - gen - teha di - schiu - so l'a -  
sing to our Fa - ther in heav - en, Praise the Lord in his splen - dor and

Listesso tempo. (♩ = 60)

*Largo maestoso.*

It is rather interesting that Coppola picks the chorale part of the opera to display all the murders rather than a more agitated or excited musical sequent. The chorale serves two purposes: One, it draws parallel lines to Jesus Christ. When you die for your sins, you will go to heaven. Secondly, the Chorale proves to have a soothing effect on all the bloody murder we witness, concentrated in a short time period. This is a good example where music and visuals move as contrary ideas, totally unrelated to each other and yet achieve a most desired end result. Had the music walked in exact footsteps with the pictures in this section, the outcome would have been quite different. We would be agitated and disturbed but would not feel the tranquility the chorale brings us. In other words, the chorale makes us feel all right that all the bad guys are killed even though violently.

sceso al-la glo - - ria - del ciel! - -  
cends in - to glo - - ry - and light! - -

sce - so al - la glo - ria del ciel! - -  
cends in - to glo - ry and light! - -

sceso al-la glo - - ria - del ciel! - -  
cends in - to glo - - ry - and light! - -

sce - so al - la glo - ria del ciel! - -  
cends in - to glo - ry and light! - -

(Organo.)

The chorale section ends in G major. This is rather interesting that whenever God and going to heaven is the subject, the music modulates to the key of G major. This particular example will also be seen in the next film analysis, Philadelphia.



39:48

While the chorale is going on we see Don Altabello die.



41:56



41:59



42:22

The archbishop is shot and thrown over the banister.

The opera ends in an agitated accelerando with constant chromatic descend. This is quite unusual ending for an operatic end for it gives us the impression that it is not all over. The opera had started in the more peaceful F major tonality and now ends, with the three times repeated f minor chords. This pessimistic ending leaves us rather disturbed.

In the last repeated chords of f minor we see quick pictures of Luchese stabbed with his own sunglasses and Keiseg, the Swiss banker hanging from a bridge.



42:44 Luchese



42: 36 Keiseg

The opera is over, the whole Corleone family and the entourage is going down the steps in a happy mood, except Mary. She runs after her father and asks “Dad,

why are you doing this to me?” At the very second, guns go off pointing Michael and we hear everybody screaming.

After the shooting is over, we see that it is Mary and not Michael who has been shot.



45:31 The assassin



45: 34 Michael looks on  
bewildered



45:55

The first time everybody realizes that Mary has been shot.



46:09

Michael bends over the body of his dead daughter.



47:18

Kay lets out a horrendous scream



45:45

They catch the assassin



46:16

Vincent in shock over Mary's death



46:43

Mary's mother, brother and aunt all try to hug her.

All the screaming and crying fades away upon realizing the silent cry of Michael Corleone.

The silent cry, which lasts exactly for a long 23 seconds, is one of the most nerve-wrecking scenes in the picture. This is for us and all the people around him more devastating, than all the killings we witnessed during the course of the film. It is even more tragic than Mary's death. Close-ups of Michael Corleone's face, for what is considered to be a long time for any film gets us, the audience very involved in the scene. We cannot help but empathize with his situation drawing on our own experiences of sorrow and grief. The whole 23 seconds is like a photograph of a man in tragic pain that we have to see over and over again [Barthes 18-19].

The lyrical intermezzo is once again heard at the peak of the drama in the film. The assassination plan to kill Michael Corleone fails once again. He is slightly wounded but his beloved daughter is caught in the crossfire and is killed. After the initial schock Michael opens his mouth to let out a scream but no sound comes out, as if in a nightmare.



47:01



47:02



47:03



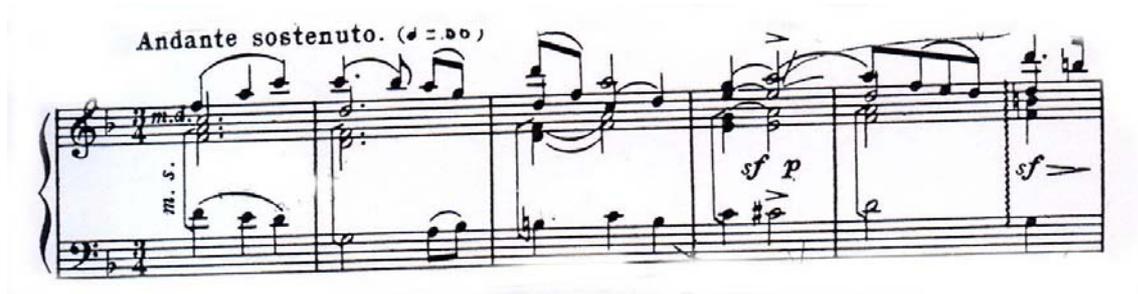
47:24



47:34



47:38



V Dominant chord starts the silent scream and holds it for more than six measures in a slow andante tempo which actually makes it a long time.



breaks into a shout  
also V, dominant  
chord

resolves to  
tonic chord

The music in this sequence is taken over by the string playing lyrical melodies. The entire struggle, chaos, murders, revenge has finished by and it is now time for repent and wrap the wounds. The music is like going to church and confessing all sins and in turn being forgiven.

The music in the opera and in the film, where they start going into the opera, starts in the key of F major. It then makes a sudden switch to f minor, which is the darker mysterious, uneasy tonality of the two. The f minor goes on to modulate to many other keys but makes its return finally at the very end after Mary has been shot. The music too has done away with restless leaps of tonality and has settled back to the peaceful, F major.

The music in this segment carries a powerful mission. Like the silent scream, which Hitchcock utilizes frequently to increase tension, Coppola here resorts to the same idea but stretches it to an almost quarter of a minute. No scream of this long would hold without the support of music. The effect would just fizzle off losing its power of persuasion. His pain is so great that even Mary's mother stops her cries of anguish.



47:18



47:04

Kay and Vincent put their own anguish aside and are more concerned for Michael for he looks like on the verge of going mad. The music, in this case, serves the desired effect to the maximum. Another important function for music at this point is, that it supplies the spirit or the life, the photograph-like Michael Corleone has taken away from. The music in this scene does what dialogue wouldn't have been able. He is in worse shape than being dead. Vincent and Costanza also both take a pause in their grief over Mary's death and watch Michael's great anguish. The all-mighty Michael Corleone who has killed ruthlessly and commanded over everyone, including the Vatican is now destroyed beyond recover.

Back at F major, the camera can now flash back to the happy days gone by. Michael dancing with his beloved daughter Mary, dancing at his first wedding, dancing at his second wedding.



48:21  
Dancing with Marry

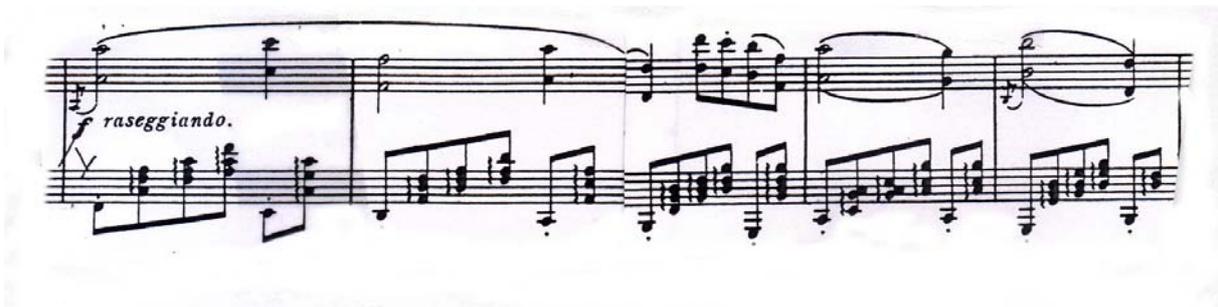


48:32  
Dancing at his first wedding



48:38  
Dancing at his second wedding

The strings are playing long stretches of legato, which create the feeling of continuity. In order words, the music holds the scenes in the film together under the same conceptual frame. We should also note now that the music in this section is in 3/4, as we mentioned earlier in the analysis, makes the whole sound less dynamic and energetic but on the other more stable and peaceful.



Dancing with Mary



Dancing at his first wedding



Dancing at his second wedding

The camera now moves directly from time past, to many years later. Michael Corleone is now an old, lonely, pitiful and an unforgiven man. As a result of a merciless life, once crowded with many people around him, he now has only a dog for company. The only thing that is still remains the same from his powerful days, is perhaps his sunglasses. His eyes are hollow, empty, and lifeless. He puts on his glasses to hide all that as if as a last attempt, to save his dignity.

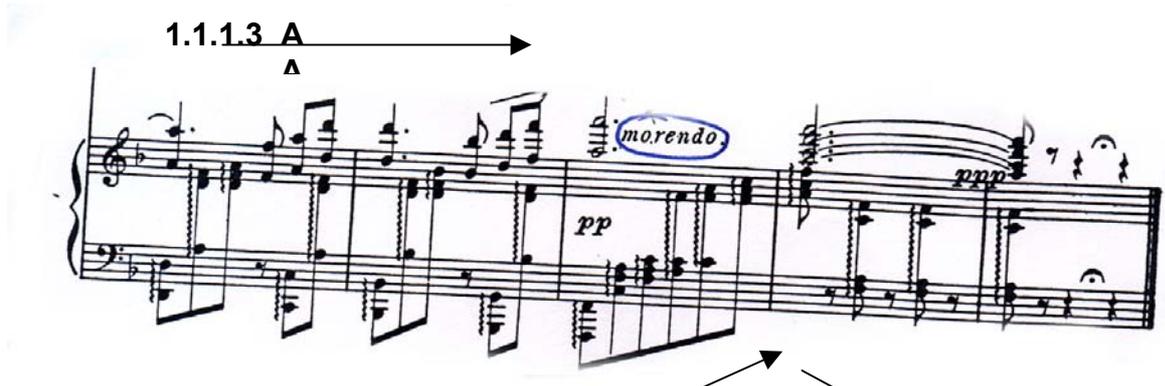


48:50



49:07

As he is putting on his glasses, the music makes a last attempt to break away from the on going pattern and climbs up the scale from the lower A, to the higher A with great energy but succumbs to its faith and drops back down. The music then thins out, slows down and gets softer. The moment Corleone dies and falls off the chair, corresponds to the moment the music arrives to the last F major chord, the marking on the music is "morendo", meaning die away.



1.1.1.2 music  
climbs up  
to high A.

1.1.1.1 Then falls  
back down  
to F.



43:30



43:31

### 3.8 PHILADELPHIA (1994)

Since the aria to be analyzed refers to a short segment in the film, a detailed synopsis of the neither will be given.

The Oscar winning Tom Hanks portrays the prestigious lawyer, fired from his law firm due to the aids discrimination. In search for a lawyer to represent him he runs into Denzel Washington. Their unlikely cooperation turns into friendship as they join forces suing their powerful adversaries. The film is directed by Jonathan Demme and is released by Columbia Tristar Pictures.

### 3.9 ANDREA CHÉNIER (1896)

Opera in four acts by Umberto Giordano. It is about Andrea Chénier a gifted poet of French-Greek descent who combined classic and romantic fervor, was executed in the years of terror following the French revolution. He wrote a last poem in prison full of drama and romance, before going to his death. Dramatic arias, fervid declamation and unusual setting of revolutionary upheaval have combined to make it a popular opera.

### 3.10 THE MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM, PHILADELPHIA

The scene in analysis takes place towards the end of the film.

The high drama of this particular scene consists of a few important elements:

- a) It is the first time the two lawyers share not only a common goal but also emotions. Denzel Washington (Joe), wants to help Tom Hanks not only as his lawyer but wants to offer his friendship as well.
- b) The first time in the film, Tom Hanks feels emotionally desperate about his own situation.
- c) The concept of God and seeking salvation is a major concern for anyone nearing death.
- d) The director chooses an operatic aria and its libretto as a tool to transfer emotions and ideas. Dialogue alone would have not been enough to carry the high emotional impacted drama of the scene.

They are sitting in Tom Hank's apartment rehearsing for the trial the next day. There is a faint sound of opera playing in the background. Tom Hanks makes a sudden switch from the conversation and asks, "Do you like opera?" Joe replies "I am not too familiar with opera."

As the aria becomes more dominant, Tom Hanks gets up from his chair starts moving around in the room. The camera from that moment on until the end of the aria follows him from an above angle. Joe, on the other hand, whenever shown has always a face close-up. We see Tom Hanks face on again only after the aria ends.



1:20:27

Joe is actually uninterested in all this talk and is rather bored.



1:20:55

Tom Hanks empathizes with the female character in the opera, Maddalena. He feels the aria tells his true feelings about his pain and salvation. The aria is such a powerful one that it would have been very difficult to find any dialogue to match its impact.

This segment of music, like the Godfather Part III, is written in the key of a minor. The key selection fits perfectly to the dark, gloomy, desperate mood of the picture.

In the first part, Maddalena tells about the tragic events that happened to her family and how she was left all alone, all in the key of a minor.

The image shows a musical score for the first part of Maddalena's aria. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a tempo marking of quarter note = 50. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, also marked with quarter note = 50. The piano part begins with a dynamic of *p* and a tempo marking of *con espress.*. The first measure of the piano part is marked *sf appena*. The second measure is marked *p*. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor).

The key of A minor

The music then modulates to f minor, then to another key, f # minor, as he says, “can you hear the heartache in her voice?” actually meaning his own heartache. In this f # minor segment, Maddalena talks about her own misfortunes and how she brings misery to those who love her.

The image shows a musical score for the second part of Maddalena's aria. It consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with the name 'MADDALENA' above it. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a dynamic of *pp* and a tempo marking of *I: Tempo*. The first measure of the piano part is marked *sf appena*. The key signature is two sharps (F# major/D# minor).

The key of f # minor



1:21:36

Can you hear the heartache in her voice



1:21:41

Joe stops his fidgety movements and now starts to listen

The strings come in and the music changes to a major, E major, tonality. The strings are the leit-motif for hope and every time they are back, the music modulates to the major tonality.



E major

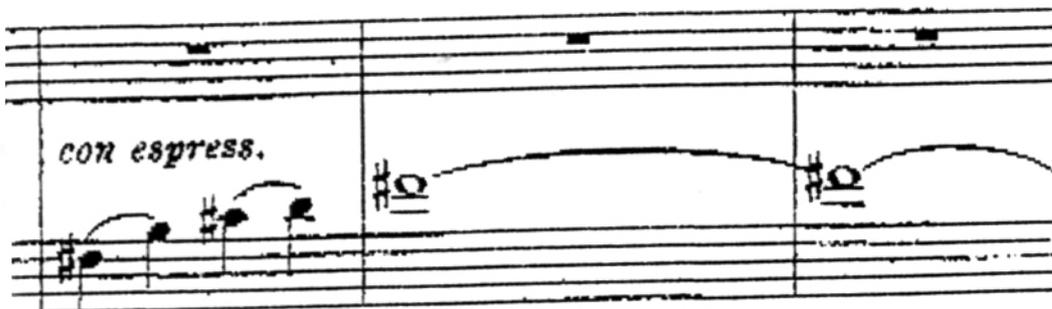
Tom Hanks keeps his eyes closed to better concentrate and feel the music. He lives through the music.



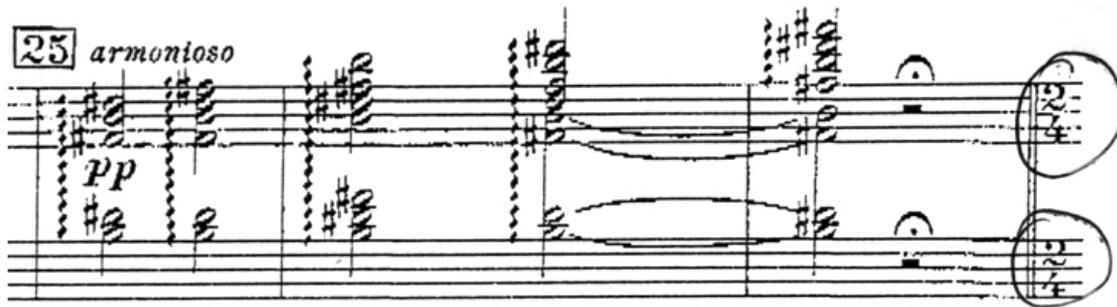
1:22:54

I bring sorrow to those who love me.

The entrance of the single cello acts as the announcement for the leit-motif of hope “through this sadness that a vision of love came to me”. At this very moment the music for the first time modulates to the optimistic B major tonality. The harps take over the strings, playing an angel-like broken chords of B major, getting higher and higher in register. There is throughout the sequence, the longing for reaching upwards, possibly towards god. The camera’s point of view is like someone watching from above. The musical line supports the visual choreography by stretching the melodic contour upwards.



Single cello plays the hope leit-motif



The harps playing the B major chords, moving upwards

The music so far has been in a rather slow 4/4 tempo. When it reaches the section of love, hope and courage, it not only modulates to a very happy G major tonality but also picks up almost twice as much a speed and continues in 2/4. It would have been a very different result had the meter remained in the original 4/4.



It is rather ironic for someone who has previously defied all the conventional values and traditions, now feels God as his only salvation. He in a way is seeking some sort of comfort for he knows that death is very near. The need to go to heaven is irrepressible.



1:23:13



1:23:17

“You must find courage to live; heaven is in your eyes.”

The music slows down, as if giving the ears a chance to savor the high note; it is like going to heaven.

un poco allargando

The music lingers on the note, A

At this point, music takes over the picture completely and no more dialogue is heard for a long 42 seconds. The camera moves back and forth between Joe and Tom Hanks. Something rather interesting happens during this photographic sequence. Even though the music captures our ears, our mind begins to analyze what little we see in the picture in greater detail. Joe is sitting in his chair, motionless. Not long ago was he looking at his watch eager to finish his work and go home. For the first time in the picture, he is emotionally touched and deeply saddened by the great pain and despair he sees before him even though it is for someone from an “alternative life-style”. He no longer looks at Tom Hanks from a professional point of view but rather like someone witnessing human tragedy.



1:23:32

Joe looks sentimental

Tom Hanks is too tired and heart-broken to keep on interpreting the aria. He can no longer maintain his physical or mental state and is on the verge of break down. What little moves he makes are staggered and barely under control. He has fully surrendered to God and even more, he feels unified with God.



1:23:39

The first theme of G major comes back but this time faster and with more instrumentation. The intensifying of orchestration is building up our expectancies towards the climax.



The same theme played piu mosso with the addition of the sixteenth notes in the bass.

When he says, "I am the God of creation. I have descended to make the earth a paradise. I bring you heaven on earth!" He is now talking about himself.



1:25:04 I am the God of creation

There is a chromatic rise of harmonic progression taking place in the music, increasing the tension and yet at the same time, pushing towards a resolution.

The image shows a musical score with two staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with notes G, G#, A, and A# in sequence, each marked with a fermata. The bottom staff contains a bass line with chords corresponding to G, G#, A, and A#. A 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking is placed above the G# chord. Below the staves, four chord diagrams are shown, with arrows pointing from the labels G, G#, A, and A# to their respective diagrams. The diagrams show the fingerings for each chord on a guitar-like instrument.

The harmonic climb symbolizing the restlessness of the situation finalizes in the highest note of the whole aria, which is a high B. It also coincides to the moment that the B major chord once again appears.

The Ah! in the singing is not a sign of pain but rather a great relief that we have been waiting for both musically and pictorially, throughout the whole segment.

The high B is held for more than two measures, which is a long time for a soprano to hold on to. It is a last attempt to break away from it all but an attempt that nevertheless fails and falls back down.

earth! Ah! rit. affrett.

col canto

MADD. rit. Sosten

sf

Resolves its final resting place in G major tonality. Going to heaven and reaching God once again as in Godfather Part III, brings the G major tonality in music.



1.25:24

I am love



1.25:19

The aria ends. Joe still can't make a move out of the chair. He is emotionally over powered



1.25:35

Tom Hanks is exhausted both physically and emotionally and is actually panting for breath.



1.25:40

The aria has ended and we are back to the realities of life. The camera returns to its regular position and shows Tom Hanks face front. The camera no longer carries the responsibility of being “the one above,” it once again assumes the view of the human perspective.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

Three films and their music have been analyzed from different views of point. Even though they seem to have distinctive differences, they all refer to operatic music as the narrational force in films. The drama of the film and the drama of the opera share a common existence in films. We can also say the same for the director and the composer. They depend on each other to achieve the common goal of having both the film and the music flourish in a contrapuntal relationship.

We can draw some conclusions of the use of music in the three films analyzed:

- 1. In order to fortify the dramatic situation, musical themes are played repeatedly either in different key tones or in variations.**

In *Apocalypse Now*, the opening theme of the strings playing tremolo is repeated eight times as a tension builder [p.41]. We see simultaneously the changing mood of the soldiers from being relaxed and almost humorous to being worried and scared.

The main theme, in b minor [p.44], is repeated in the key of F # major [p.46], back to b minor [p.47]. While all the musical repetitions are going on, Coppola's visual drama is intensified by first allowing us to see the military helicopters, then the rockets and the artillery and finally the helicopters resuming attack formation and hitting the Vietnamese village.

In *Godfather*, part III, the line sang by Turiddu [p.68], is in f minor with a melodic minor return (fffff, e flat, d flat). The repetition of the line is once again heard in a more intensified version (ffffff, e flat, d flat). The music at this particular moment helps

display the troublesome relationships between Michael and Kay and Vincent and Mary.

In Philadelphia, Maddalena sings about the tragedy that happened to her family [p.91], in the key of a minor. The same musical line is repeated in a different key tone, f # minor as she speaks about her own misery [p.91].

The drama in this segment of the film begins to show the desperate state of mind Tom Hanks actually is in. Both Denzel Washington in the film and we, the audience start to feel the real emotional tragedy of the situation.

The first theme of G major comes back with the addition of the sixteenth notes increasing tension [p.97]. Tom Hanks reaches out to God and feels united with him.

## **2. Using the leit-motif technique, the director is able to focus the music to an exact situation or a person.**

As Wagner was the master of utilizing the leit-motif, it is quite natural that we find plenty of it in Apocalypse Now. Coppola uses the technique to amplify emotions or ideas since no dialogue is present at this particular scene. The first leit-motif of worry and fear of death, is heard when the helicopters lift off and the synthesizer starts to play the chromatic descend [p.38]. The second leit-motif appears as the pensive look of the lieutenant [p.39]. The strings playing the tremolo, becomes the leit-motif of fear and worry for the soldiers [p.43]. Gerhilde's voice becomes the leit-motif, for the ugly face of the war [p.50].

In Godfather, Part III, the use of the leit-motif technique is not at great demand since the dialogue supplies the much-needed information and the ideas inside the characters' minds.

The use of the leit-motif resumes to be an important element in the film, Philadelphia. The musical statement, expressing tragedy and misery becomes the leit-motif [p.91]. The strings, later on play the leit-motif of hope always in a major key [p.92]. The single cello takes over the hope leit-motif in the key of b minor [p.93]. The key of G major acts as the leit-motif, as far as tonality is concerned, for peaceful heaven [p.99].

### **3. The rhythmic pattern or the accents draw a close coordination between the music and the visuals.**

Since Apocalypse Now is a film about war, militaristic music, which holds a lot of dotted rhythm, is utilized. At the very beginning of the sequence, the dotted eighth notes played by the trumpet establish the mood of the film [p.37]. The main theme entering [p.43] carries nothing but the very same dotted eighth notes marching onwards [p.43]. The doubling of instruments helps intensify the rhythmic pattern [p.47]. As the particular rhythm is carrying the musical line in a militaristic manner, the helicopters in the film also march on in a militaristic choreograph.

The rhythmic pattern assumes important function in Godfather, Part III when we see the man traveling on a train. The rhythmic pattern in music portrays the running rhythm of the train, [p.70]. The nervous finger movements match the agitated sound of music getting faster and louder. The eighth rests also contribute to the uneasy feeling caused by the rhythmic pattern [p.71].

The function of rhythm in Philadelphia is utilized more discreetly. The stretch at the high notes [p.92], [p.93], [p.94], [p.95], are used as devices to magnify the emotional outburst of Tom Hanks, as well as give us, the audience a chance to look into our own feelings.

#### **4. Voice, especially a female voice singing, produces a piercing effect in our hearts which pushes away all the action on screen to secondary importance.**

In *Apocalypse Now*, the voice of Gerhilde is not heard until the time of the attack. The famous exclamation of Ho-jo-to-ho [p.49], takes us to another dimension in watching the film. Her voice makes the war very real for us. The dissonance and the unusual leaps in her singing commands our attention. The moment she reaches the high note in her singing, corresponds to the moment the first shot is fired in the film. She is the aggressor, disguised in a female voice. Shortly before this scene, we are shown helicopters flying side by side but her voice is so overpowering that we find ourselves trapped in her voice and not so much in the action on the screen [p.52].

The female voice does not appear in *Godfather, Part III*, since the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the plot of the film is very masculine. It takes a great drama master as Wagner, to use the female voice the way he did as a war heroine who is unafraid and aggressive.

In *Philadelphia*, the female voice is used in a more conventional manner. The female characters in operas are usually fragile and are destined to die at the end. [Citron 47] The aria used in *Philadelphia* portrays the misfortunes and the misery of Maddalena [p.921]. The lyrical and emotionally packed aria is chosen to intensify the psychological impact of the scene. So far, everything looks rather usual. What is unusual underneath is that the male character, played by Tom Hanks identifies himself with the female character of the opera, Maddalena. Another interesting fact to note is that, it is not any soprano but Maria Callas singing with her dark and luscious voice. Maria Callas is known to be a cult figure among the homosexual male population in the United States. Apparently, it is also known for her to take special interest in gay men.

## **5. Choosing the correct meter marking is crucial to the success of the music throughout the film.**

The meter proves to be an important element both for the music and the film. The meter chosen for the music in *Apocalypse Now* is the rather uncommonly used 9/8 [p.42]. The more conventional 3/4 would have made the sound more heavy and immobile. This would have a direct effect on the visuals. The energetic march of the helicopters would feel dragging onwards, under an incorrect meter. The 9/8 fits the mood and the function of the film more properly than would 3/4.

Since the plot moves in parallel motion with the music, the meter changes in *Godfather, Part III* is of major importance. The musical prelude starts with a 4/4 andante. The music gets animated as well as what we see on screen. The meter at that point changes to 2/4, which is a faster tempo marking [p.63]. The music then changes to a waltz like 3/4, leading to a great crescendo. The music then makes a sharp switch to 6/8 [p.65]. Even though the 3/4 and the 6/8 are related tempos, the usage of 3/4 would have slowed down the music as well as the visuals. The accents in 6/8 are 1 2 3, 4 5 6 falling on the first of every three beats. The accents in 3/4 are however different, in that the accent falls only on the first beat 1 2 3. The 3/4-meter usually is associated with the dance, waltz which in turn would have suggested different images for the picture. The 3/4-meter is most effectively used towards the end of the film, after Mary has been shot, Michael flashes back to the happy days gone by. The images we see are Michael dancing with Mary, dancing with his first wife and dancing with his second wife. The meter 3/4, fits the dancing images like a glove.

In the musical episode of *Philadelphia*, the tempo marking starts with a slow 4/4 [p.91]. The section of hope and courage brings along a meter change, 2/4 [p.94]. The section where miseries were told was in the slow moving 4/4, and andante. The accents for the 4/4 are, 1 2 3 4 where the first and the third beat are accented. The accents in a way hold back the flow of the music and thus the picture. In the

faster 2/4, the only accent is on the first beat, 1 2 which in turn creates a more dynamic and an energetic flow.

After the music has been recorded and given its final mix, the composer's job is finished. Most composers are still surprised to see as to what happens to their composition in a theater with live audience. Copland put it well when he said, "It is only in the motion picture theater that the composer for the first time gets the full impact of what he has accomplished, tests the dramatic punch of his favorite musical spot, appreciates the curious importance and unimportance of detail, wishes he had done certain things differently and is surprised that others came off better than he had hoped. For when all is said and done, the art of combining moving pictures with musical tones is still a mysterious art. Not the least mysterious element is the theatergoers' reaction" [Brow 343].

It is rather difficult to predict the status of music in films for the future. The directors are preferring to use more romantic, classical style of composition as well as recorded popular music, each accompanied by a musical clip. We can say that the film industry today, is very much dependent on the music industry to boost its popularity. Films on the other hand, turn auditory information into visual images. The visual memory lasts longer than auditory perception. The moment we hear something it is already gone by, which can only be traced back via memory. That is also the reason we remember faces, much easier than names. Music videos take footage from the feature film and come up with a short cut of the film, including the music.

All the films suggested and analyzed in this dissertation, are from the 1970's onwards. After MTV went on the air, we needed to have every piece of music whether classical or popular, to have visual images. On the same token mere visuals without the musical accompaniment, simply did not suffice. Opera which was once considered to be the more musically difficult to absorb art form, became part of pop culture. Pavarotti's singing Nessun Dorma, even made it to the top of the charts. It is interesting to note that the "Three Tenors" sang everywhere except in an opera together.

The merging of film studios with record companies put many talents of cross section together under one roof. Producers always looking to create new ideas, even mixed operatic excerpt and rap songs together in recent years

There is no doubt that opera reached its popular status today via films and the entertainment industry. What about the loss of integrity of opera, as a whole, performed in an opera house? Well, being popular does come with a price tag.

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## APPENDIX : MUSICAL WORDS\*\*

Since musical terminology will be utilized in this presentation, I would like to offer a syllabus for terms frequently to be used:

Accelerando	Increase in speed, growing faster.
Allargando	Growing slower.
Canon	The strictest form of musical imitation, in which two or more parts take up in succession the given subject note for note.
Choral	Relating or pertaining to a chorus, a hymn tune of the church.
Chord	A harmony of two or more tones.
Code	A tail, hence a passage ending a movement.
Consonance	A combination of two or more tones, harmonious and pleasing itself and requiring no further progression to make it satisfactory.
Contrapuntal	1. The art of polyphonic composition. 2. Composition of two or more simultaneous melodies in such a way that the upper part can become the part and vice versa.

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\*\* All the musical terminology is provided by Theodore Baker Schirmer Books, ed. 1995. Schirmer's Pocket Manuals of Musical Terms. New York: A division of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Dissonance	A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution.
Forte	Loud, strong.
Fortissimo	Extremely loud.
Harmony	Inner musical structure.
Intermezzo	A short movement connecting the main divisions of the symphony.
Inversion	The transposition of the notes of an interval or chord.
Leit motif	Leading motif; any striking musical motive (theme, phrase) characterizing or accompanying one of the actors in a drama or some particular idea, emotion or situation.
Marcato	With distinctness and emphasis.
Melodic contour	The rise or fall of a melodic line with respect to an axis point.
Modulation	Passage from one key or mode to another.
Morendo	Fade, die away.
Octave	A series of eight consecutive tones; the interval between the first and eighth tones of such a series.
Overture	A small musical introduction to opera.
Orchestration	Instrumentation of the pieces.

Piu mosso	Getting faster.
Recapitulation	Return of the initial section of a movement in sonata form.
Recitative	Declamatory singing, free in tempo and rhythm.
Rhythm	Element of time duration in music.
Ritardando	Growing slower.
Scale	The series of tones.
Scherzo	A vivacious movement in the symphony, with strongly marked rhythm and sharp and unexpected contrasts in rhythm and harmony.
Smorzando	Die, fade away.
Sonata	An instrumental composition in 3 or 4 extended movements, contrasted in theme, tempo and mood.
Source music	Music coming from a source such as radio or record player
Scales	Is a series of tones heard in relation to one or more tone centers.
Syncopation	The shifting of accents from strong beat to weak beat, or to between beats.
Unison	A tone of the same pitch as a given tone; also a higher or lower octave of a given tone

Tonality

The series of tones forming any given major or minor scale, considered with reference to their harmonic relations, particularly of the other tones to the keynote