Textes et contextes
ISSN : 1961-991X
: Université Bourgogne Europe

19-1 | 2024
L'entre-deux, une recomposition des représentations. Regards transdisciplinaires et transfrontaliers

The relationship between diegetic music and memory in two early Hitchcock films

Le lien entre musique diégétique et mémoire dans deux films de début de carrière de Hitchcock

15 July 2024.

Marie Joséphine Bennett

http://preo.ube.fr/textesetcontextes/index.php?id=4825

The relationship between diegetic music and memory in two early Hitchcock films

Le lien entre musique diégétique et mémoire dans deux films de début de carrière de Hitchcock

Textes et contextes

15 July 2024.

19-1 | 2024
L'entre-deux, une recomposition des représentations. Regards transdisciplinaires et transfrontaliers

Marie Joséphine Bennett

http://preo.ube.fr/textesetcontextes/index.php?id=4825

---

1. Introduction

1 Much has been written about the function of music in the films directed by Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) during his time in Hollywood, particularly in relation to his collaboration with Bernard Herrmann (1911-1975), who composed the music for some of Hitchcock's best-known later movies. These include *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959) *Psycho* (1960) and *Marnie* (1964). Authors including William Darby and Jack Du Bois (1990), Kathryn Kalinak (1992), Royal S. Brown (1994) and David Cooper (2001), for example, have undertaken analyses of the relationship between some

of Herrmann's scores and the action unfolding on screen.[1] However, even in Hitchcock's early British films, it is evident that careful consideration was given to the ways in which music is employed in relation to the narrative. Indeed, Sidney Gottlieb interviewed the director about this very subject as early as 1933. During the discussion, Hitchcock commented on his interest in the music that was used to accompany silent films but added that "I have always believed that the coming of sound opened up a great new opportunity. The accompanying music came at last entirely under the control of the people who made the picture" (Gottlieb 1995: 242).

2 Hitchcock also made known his opinion that silence could be very atmospheric, suggesting that "its effect is heightened by the proper handling of the music before and after" (Gottlieb 1995: 242). Hitchcock's reference to music's relationship with silence is pertinent, as he began his career in film before the advent of talking pictures and the success of *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927). He is credited with being the director of Britain's first talking picture, *Blackmail* (1929); although originally intended to be a silent film, alterations were made to the movie in order to accommodate the use of a soundtrack that included dialogue.

3 Hitchcock was responsible for directing five further films for the production company British International Pictures and one independently for Tom Arnold before moving to Gaumont British, where he directed six films. These movies have become known as "the classic thriller sextet" (Durgnat 1974: 20), starting with his original version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), a film that he remade for Paramount Pictures in Hollywood in 1956.[2] The musical director at Gaumont British was Louis Levy, who "was indisputably one of the most influential figures in British film music in the 1930s and 1940s" (Donnelly 2007: 42). Levy, who worked closely with Hitchcock on a number of the films in the sextet, noted that the director "always insisted that music should take its proper place in the production of the film" (1948: 147).

4 Much of the writing about Hitchcock's interest in music in the films he directed has been on non-diegetic underscore.[3] However, as Elisabeth Weis explains, the director "had an abiding interest in finding ways to incorporate music into the very heart of his plot" (1982:

18), and in this article, I focus on Hitchcock's use of diegetic music, with reference to two of the films from the sextet, *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), as they portray the connection between music and memory as an important theme in their storylines. Both movies are based upon novels. The earlier film is very loosely adapted from John Buchan's story of the same name, published in 1915; indeed, as noted by Charles Barr, the movie has "virtually an original script" (1999: 149). For example, the novel's title literally relates to steps, whereas in the film, the title references an organisation of spies. *The Lady Vanishes* is based on the Ethel Lina White novel first published in 1936 as *The Wheel Spins*. In adapting the storyline of the novel, music becomes significant to the plot, specifically in relation to the lady who (temporarily) "vanishes"; this is not the case in the novel.

2. Diegetic Music and Memory

5 In Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, the character of Mr. Memory (Wylie Watson) is a filmic invention, not appearing at all in Buchan's original story. However, the diegetic musical theme linked to his stage appearances becomes pivotal in the narrative, allowing the protagonist to prove his innocence when suspected of a crime he did not commit. With regard to the later film, although Miss Froy (May Whitty) and Iris (Margaret Lockwood) are characters in *The Wheel Spins*, the former is described solely as a governess and not also as a music teacher. Nor is she a spy with crucial information coded in a melody. In addition, Gilbert (Michael Redgrave), who is a musicologist, does not feature at all, although his filmic character does seem to be very loosely based on one of the two men in the novel who try to assist Iris. I argue here that, in both movies, the relationship between music and memory is a crucial theme, not just in terms of the way the stories are presented, but also with regard to the dénouements of their narratives.[4] In each case, there is a strong thematic link within the filmic narratives between memory and specific diegetic melodies. Furthermore, both repetition of the tunes, or at least part of the tunes, and related dialogue, means that the filmic audience, as well as the filmic characters, comprehend the importance of the melodies being remembered by the characters concerned. I start by analysing the significance of a melody played in a music hall in the earlier of the two films, *The 39 Steps*.

3. *The 39 Steps*

6 The storyline for Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* is notably bookended by scenes that feature a character called Mr. Memory. At the start of the film, the male protagonist, Richard Hannay (Robert Donat), is introduced entering a music hall where he witnesses the act of Mr. Memory, who each day learns "fifty new facts and remembers every one of them". [5] The lengthy central section follows Hannay on his quest to clear his name as the main suspect in a murder he did not commit, as he tries to track down the leader of a group of spies who were the real culprits. In the movie's final scene, there is a return to an entertainment venue, albeit this time a more up-market one, namely the London Palladium. Here, Mr. Memory is again performing his act and the purpose of the opening scene, which initially seems to be just a convenient way of introducing Hannay to viewers and for him to meet the female agent, Annabella Smith (Lucie Mannheim), who is murdered, becomes clear. This relates to the significance of the melody that introduces Mr. Memory's act.

7 Music is used to open the film proper as the camera pans across the words "Music Hall" letter by letter. The camera then trails Hannay, showing him buying a ticket and entering the already crowded venue. After Hannay takes his seat, the visible orchestra plays a theme that is going to prove crucial in the film's narrative. The melody, composed by the film's musical director Louis Levy (Glancy 2003: 36), introduces Mr. Memory and can thus be termed the "Mr. Memory theme". [6] It is a lively, march-style melody in the key of C major and about 14 seconds of the music is heard at this point. There is a reprise of the tune later in this scene, when Mr. Memory urges the orchestra to "play something" as a way of trying to alleviate the mass panic that occurs among the members of the audience as they rush towards the exit after some gunshots are fired. It is at this point that Hannay and the mysterious agent Annabella bump into one another, as if the "Mr. Memory theme" has somehow brought them together.

8 No further music is heard until over 30 minutes into the film, at which point there are some two minutes of dramatic orchestral non-diegetic underscore that "lends an air of danger to the scene" (Glancy

2003: 59) through accompanying Hannay's attempts to evade the Scottish police as they chase him across the moors.

9 Apart from the opening and closing titles, there is only one other section of non-diegetic music in the film, which is a romantic-style musical interlude that accompanies Pamela (Madeleine Carroll) on her return to the room she and Hannay are sharing at the "Argyle Arms" public house, having overheard a conversation which indicates that Hannay has been telling her the truth about his innocence all along. There are other places in the film where one might expect to hear non-diegetic underscore as a tool to highlight or emphasise a specific mood for the filmic audience – be it one of romance or suspense – yet none is used. It appears, therefore, that silence is being employed deliberately as a device in the manner described by Hitchcock to Gottlieb above. Indeed, the movie's lack of non-diegetic music arguably further foregrounds the importance of the source music, and particularly the "Mr. Memory theme".

10 An early example of an instance where one might expect to hear non-diegetic music occurs at the manor house in which Hannay believes he will find safety in his quest to elude the Scottish police. In conversation with the owner of the house, Professor Jordan (Godfrey Tearle), Hannay states that Annabella told him very little about her assignment before she died, but did disclose that the spy ring was led by a man with part of one of his fingers missing. As Jordan holds up his hand to reveal that he is that very man, there is a close-up of his hand that lasts for two seconds, followed by a lengthy eight-second close-up of Hannay's reaction to this revelation. However, although one might expect a stinger chord [7] at this point in order to accentuate Jordan's disclosure and/or Hannay's shocked expression, Hitchcock chooses to accompany both shots with silence. Jordan reveals that he plans to take stolen military secrets out of the country before callously shooting Hannay in the chest at close range. In a roundabout way, it is music that 'saves' Hannay from certain death, as the bullet lodges in a hymn book inside the pocket of his overcoat, which was generously given to him by the wife of the crofter in whose house he spent the previous night.

11 Following the non-diegetic underscore during the police chase, the next music that is heard, some 45 minutes into the film, is diegetic

music played by a Salvation Army band, who are marching to a song somewhat portentously titled 'I Believe We Shall Win'.[8] Joining the band's followers creates a temporary means of escape for Hannay, who is being pursued not only by the police but also by Jordan's henchmen. However, it is the next segment of diegetic music that makes explicit to both Hannay and the filmic audience how important the "Mr. Memory theme" will be with regard to the unravelling of the narrative, including Hannay being able to prove his innocence and escape the gallows – which at this point in the story seems to be an impossibility.

12 There is a clue to how crucial the "Mr. Memory theme" is going to be in this respect when Hannay nonchalantly whistles about 1¼ bars of the theme just before he escapes with a reluctant Pamela from some bogus policemen, who are actually Jordan's henchmen. Just over three minutes later, as the pair walk along in the darkness, Hannay whistles part of the theme again, this time about 2¼ bars' worth. Pamela's retort, "O do stop whistling!" indicates that, although not audible to the filmic audience, one can assume that Hannay has been whistling the theme continually. Shortly afterwards, Hannay whistles about 3¼ bars of the theme. There is a visual crossfade at this point, indicating that some time has passed before the pair arrive at the "Argyle Arms", yet Hannay's whistling persists, thus not only providing aural continuity, but also suggesting that he has been whistling the theme for quite a while. The regular whistling of the tune suggests that the melody is somehow trapped in his mind, unable to be forgotten. On each occasion that one hears these diegetic segments in this short sequence, slightly more of the "Mr. Memory theme" is revealed, as if to build up the suspense for the filmic audience prior to the point at which the whole tune will be heard once more at the London Palladium. This repetition and gradual disclosure also provides a clue to the fact that the theme will be relevant in the dénouement of the film.

13 There is only one other moment when part of the theme is heard from this point until Mr Memory's reappearance. This is in the room at the "Argyle Arms", where Hannay whistles the theme's first two notes, but then stops abruptly to comment, "There I go again. I wish I could get that damned tune out of my head. I wonder where I heard it?" Here, a signal as to how significant the theme will be is stressed

not through additional bars being added – only two notes are heard this time – but rather through Hannay's meaningful comment. He is recalling some music, but does not remember where he first heard it, or why he can't get the melody out of his head. At this stage, neither the filmic audience nor the filmic character realise how crucial his memory of the tune will be in terms of saving his life through helping him to construct the necessary pieces of the jigsaw that will prove his innocence.

14 In the final section of the film, there is an early indicator as to the importance the "Mr. Memory theme" will play in the narrative's culmination. Pamela visits New Scotland Yard seeking help to thwart Jordan's planned mission, but the police are only interested in finding Hannay, still believing that he murdered Annabella. After Pamela leaves, orders are given to have her followed, and when she arrives at the London Palladium, the police realise that Hannay must be somewhere inside. There is a shot of some policemen getting out of their van and the officer in charge orders, "You two men go in the orchestra pit". To reinforce the relevance of this instruction, a close-up is provided of two brass players in the orchestra pit, immediately followed by a close-up of the two designated policemen. Hannay's future is now in the hands of those in the orchestra pit; the police are poised to capture Hannay, but it is the orchestral musicians' performance of the "Mr. Memory theme" that will save him.

15 Throughout the scene so far, a comedy act is shown intermittently performing on the Palladium stage, interspersed with the police getting into position to ensure that nobody leaves the venue, and Pamela desperately trying to find where Hannay is sitting. From his position in the stalls, Hannay spots Jordan seated in one of the boxes, his identity again revealed by the missing finger joint. The camera focuses on Hannay as the orchestra starts to play the "Mr. Memory theme", in its original key, and Hannay automatically starts to whistle along to it. Hearing the music triggers his memory of when he had heard the melody originally and he tells Pamela, "Hear that tune? It's that damned thing I couldn't get out of my head! Now I know where I heard it before. Of course – that music hall…" The words he uses at this point echo and respond to his earlier comments in the bedroom at the "Argyle Arms", the last time he was heard whistling part of the theme. This revelation is combined with Hannay's realisation of the

method the spies are going to use to take the secrets out of the country. Pamela plays the role of the movie viewer at this point, for Hannay's explanation to her is also clarification for the filmic audience; the secrets have been learnt by heart by Mr Memory, at Jordan's command.

16 When Jordan, in desperation, shoots Mr. Memory and tries in vain to escape by jumping onto the stage, there is once again panic among the theatre audience, just as there had been when Annabella fired the gun shots in the opening scene. However, this time the curtains are closed and the "Mr. Memory theme" is not reprised. Instead, the stage manager shouts, "Get the girls on straight away!" The difference between the opening and closing sequences is reinforced via a close-up of a stagehand on the telephone, repeating his boss's order to bring the female dancers on stage.[9] This time, there is no need for the orchestra to play the "Mr. Memory theme" again – its purpose has been served.

17 The irony of the fact that Hannay is unable to remember where he heard a melody linked to a performer called "Mr. Memory" is heightened through his moment of enlightenment at the end of the film concurring with the explanation to the audience. Having struggled earlier on to remember where he had heard the tune, it is the re-hearing of the theme that not only prevents the secrets from leaving the country, but also saves Hannay from the gallows. The potential significance of the melody becomes clear to the filmic audience not only through its repetition, as parts are regularly whistled by Hannay, but also because he accentuates verbally that he wishes he could remember where he originally heard the tune. The importance of music and memory in the storyline is affirmed at the film's conclusion, therefore, with the "Mr. Memory theme" allowing Hannay to clear his name and alert the police to the spy ring.

4. *The Lady Vanishes*

18 The next film that I analyse in relation to the link between diegetic music and memory again features a spy, but this time it is a spy who needs to be saved. Speaking in 1936, Hitchcock stated that it was "purely a coincidence" that the first three films of what have become known as the sextet "should all have a background of spying" (Got-

tlieb 1995: 23). Yet, despite the fact that the Miss Froy who disappears in *The Wheel Spins* is not a spy, she becomes one in the storyline of the film adaptation Hitchcock directed, namely, *The Lady Vanishes*, the final film of the sextet, released in 1938. She also becomes not just a governess, but a music teacher, and a musical melody – and its remembrance – is once again highlighted as critical within the storyline.

19 The melody that is to play a key role in the relationship between music and memory in the *The Lady Vanishes* is initially included as part of the orchestral title music that opens the movie. It is a melancholy waltz in D minor, and hearing the music at this early stage connotes that there may be tension within the storyline of a film that begins in comedic fashion. An avalanche in the fictional country of Bandrika has delayed a train's departure, forcing passengers to spend the night at the Gasthof Petrus. While at dinner, the elderly Miss Froy tells some English guests, Charters (Basil Radford) and Caldicott (Naunton Wayne), that she is sad to be leaving the country in which she had been employed as a governess and music teacher. This conversation establishes an early link between Miss Froy and music, a theme that is to become significant as the narrative progresses. Indeed, as she chats, an unseen vocalist can be heard in the background strumming a guitar, initially engaging in "warm up" exercises before singing along to a melody as a vocalise. Miss Froy excuses herself from the dinner table and returns to her room. Given her earlier conversation with Charters and Caldicott, one assumes that it is her love of music that leads her to open the windows to listen more closely to the serenader, tapping her fingers to the tune as she does so. However, as noted also by Raymond Durgnat, there is a secret code in the music that is she is hearing, but it is not until much later in the film that the significance of this becomes clear (1974: 143).

20 Miss Froy's ability to listen intently to the melody is interrupted, however, by the sound of a clarinet and some foot-stomping emanating from one of the other hotel rooms. The culprit is Gilbert, who is shown to be transcribing some traditional music and folk dancing of Bandrika. The manner in which the character is introduced is important, for Gilbert is thereby revealed to be both a musician and an ethnomusicologist. Durgnat argues that the music played by Gilbert in this early scene is merely "part of the musical scenery which is used

to hide from us the fact that a completely different character's music has a code in it" (1974: 143). However, there are actually a number of very significant elements present in the scene to which he is referring, most importantly the fact that Gilbert's playing acts as a potential barrier to Miss Froy's attempts to commit the coded melody to memory. The "authentic" folk tune (it is unclear how Gilbert has obtained the music) played on the clarinet is "mixed" with the melody to which Miss Froy is listening; she is purposefully trying to remember the melody, but Gilbert is unwittingly almost preventing her from doing so.

21 Hitchcock deliberately changes the focus of what one is able to hear so that the source music acts as an accompaniment to the narrative. Although initially just the guitarist's serenade is heard, members of the filmic audiences are then put into a position where both tunes are battling for their attention. However, at the point at which Iris and Miss Froy discuss the noisy folk music, the serenade is no longer audible, even though the indications are that the guitarist is still singing and playing; it is, after all, some 7 minutes later that Miss Froy is shown at her window again, listening to the tune. In the closing sections of the film, the connection between music and memory alluded to at this point, with one tune 'interfering' with another, is again to have an important function, as it will impact on a character's ability to recall an important melody at a crucial moment.

22 This scene notably links the three characters that are shown in the film's closing shot, namely, Gilbert, Iris and Miss Froy; despite the fact that the filmic audience is informed in the opening scene that the small hotel is full to bursting, the very loud music and dancing emanating from Gilbert's room appears to be disturbing nobody but the two main female characters. This is also the first time that Iris comes to Miss Froy's "rescue", as it is she who makes arrangements for Gilbert's activities to be curtailed, thus allowing Miss Froy to listen in peace to the serenader and thereby memorise the musically coded message. It is in this scene also that it becomes evident that there may be something sinister afoot as, outside in the shadows, a disembodied pair of hands is shown preparing to strangle the serenader, but waiting until the end of the musical phrase to do so, to ensure that the murder of the musician goes unnoticed.

23 The next time Iris comes to Miss Froy's rescue is again unsuspectingly when, in returning Miss Froy's glasses to her at the railway station next morning, Iris is hit on the head by a flowerpot that is dropped deliberately in an attempt to strike (and presumably severely injure) the older woman. The final time that Iris saves Miss Froy is through her insistence that, despite the denial of other passengers, the older woman was with her on the train, but has disappeared. The slight concussion that Iris suffers as a result of being hit by the flowerpot leads her to doubt whether she has remembered facts correctly. However, she eventually enlists the help of Gilbert, whom she again encounters via his love of music, as he is watching and listening to some folk musicians and dancers in the third-class carriage of the train. Although initially sceptical, he believes Iris's story regarding the missing Miss Froy and comes to her aid.

24 Once Iris and Gilbert finally manage to rescue Miss Froy she is able, despite her dreadful ordeal, to remember the coded tune perfectly. Before making her escape from the hijacked train carriages, however, she decides to relay the message to Gilbert in case she does not make it back to England safely; it is important that it reaches a Mr Callendar at the Foreign Office. Miss Froy tells Gilbert that the message is a tune and states, "I want you to memorise it". Weis argues that Gilbert's "profession is not much worked into the thematic material of the film" (1982: 95). However, although Miss Froy offers to write the tune down, Gilbert reassures her that he will have no problem remembering it, stating "I was brought up on music. I can memorise anything", indicating that his profession is, in fact, of importance in the narrative. Miss Froy hums the start of the melody to him, but in Ab minor this time instead of the original D minor, suggesting that the key of the melody is not pertinent with regard to the message it carries, but the tune's repetition assists the filmic audience to understand its importance. There is then a visual cut to some of the other English passengers in the stranded carriages who are desperately trying to keep the enemy at bay. Not long after Miss Froy has left the train, the passengers manage to escape by switching the track points. Gilbert drives the train alongside Caldicott and whistles the important tune in order to keep it fresh in his memory. When Caldicott inadvertently pulls the train whistle, Gilbert berates him, saying "Take

your hand off that thing! I've got to remember a tune", reinforcing its significance for the filmic audience.

25 However, although he is true to his word, in that he does his best to try to remember the melody, a change of circumstances means that he does not do so. Iris and Gilbert do manage to return to England safely and it is clear that Gilbert has been constantly humming and whistling the tune as, when their connecting train pulls in to London's Victoria Station, Iris pleads, in a moment reminiscent of Pamela's appeal to Hannay, "Can't you stop humming that awful tune? You must know it backwards!" Gilbert replies, "I'm not taking any risks". But shortly afterwards, he is to forget the tune "completely". Iris spots her fiancé at the station and ducks into a taxi to avoid him, realising that she has fallen in love with Gilbert. Gilbert, seizing his opportunity, follows her. The couple kiss, and Gilbert asks the taxi driver to take them to the Foreign Office. The pair sit in the waiting area discussing their plans for the future and are then invited in to see Mr. Callendar. It is at this point that Gilbert realises that he has forgotten the important tune. In desperation, he tries to concentrate and starts humming something, but Iris tells him, "That's the Wedding March!" Despite going over and over the tune in his head in order to remember it after Miss Froy left the train, declaring his love for Iris has led him to forget the melody completely, such that the only tune he can think of is one in connection with marrying Iris.

26 This moment of tension is broken, however, by the sound of a piano being played from within the room they are about to enter. Hearing the coded tune, the couple realise that Miss Froy has managed to reach England safely after all. Iris and Gilbert do not need to say anything in this regard and just look knowingly at one another. This revelation is also clear to the filmic audience as they, too, hear the tune being played and understand the implication. The music at this point fulfils a function of denotative signification, for it reveals that Miss Froy is alive prior to her being seen. Indeed, Hitchcock allows the audience to "follow" Gilbert and Iris, as the couple is shown in a point of view shot going through the doors to see Miss Froy sitting at the piano. She plays the tune in the key in which it was originally heard (D minor). Fortunately, the fact that Gilbert did not remember the melody is not as important as it could have been; Miss Froy, the tune's original recipient, has remembered it perfectly. Gilbert had been en-

trusted with a message "of vital importance" for the country, but allowed his romance with Iris to interfere with his quest to remember the tune. This links back to the scene at the hotel when he unwittingly impeded Miss Froy's ability to listen to and thereby memorise the tune herself.

27 Although only short segments of the coded melody are audible in the run-up to the climax of the narrative, the main part of the tune is composed in such a way as to make its reprise instantly recognisable to the filmic audience.[10] It has a slow waltz rhythm and the main melody is based around a recurring minor triad. A number of the intervals between notes are a small distance apart and the tune's compass is generally kept within an octave. Indeed, the coded tune is arguably more straightforward than the folk melody that is played by Gilbert on the clarinet, as the latter is in three distinct sections and transposes into a different key before a return to the original tune. The two melodies begin on the same note (D) and, while both are in 3/4 time, the folk tune's tempo is roughly twice as fast as the one sung by the guitarist. Therefore, although both tunes are structurally simple, there is enough contrast between the two pieces for the melodies to impact one upon the other and cause a musician such as Miss Froy to become confused in her efforts to memorise the coded tune.

28 As with the earlier of these two films, Hitchcock makes very little use of non-diegetic music in *The Lady Vanishes*. It is used just after the opening credits as the camera leads viewers to the hotel in which the initial action takes place. Lasting less than 1½ minutes, its style is imitative of the music represented within the film as native to Bandrika. All the music heard after this opening sequence is diegetic, until the closing credits. There are many moments of tension in the film's narrative when, as with *The 39 Steps*, one might have expected the employment of accompanying underscore, but Hitchcock prefers to use silence. Such minimal use of non-diegetic music once again helps to emphasise to the filmic audience the importance and significance of the source music heard throughout the film.

5. Conclusion

29 Jerrold Levinson considers the meaning of music in film and its purpose as part of the film's narrative. He questions the use of non-diegetic music "in relation either to the film's internal narrative, the viewer's experience of that narrative, or the film as an aesthetic whole" (1996: 248). Levinson remarks upon the importance of understanding that there is someone responsible for presenting the actions to an audience, and debates whether non-diegetic music can be considered "an element in the narrative process" (1996: 251) or whether it remains unconnected. However, this is not just a question that relates only to non-diegetic music and it is arguable that, in both of the films analysed, there are instances of diegetic music being used for a deeper purpose in the narratives than immediately seems obvious.

30 In the case of *The 39 Steps*, the theme used early in the film to introduce Mr. Memory plays a more important part in the storyline than one might initially expect. Rather than merely being an entertaining way of allowing the audience to be introduced to Richard Hannay and the character whose murder sets the whole story in motion, the scene in the music hall is pivotal in allowing Hannay to be party to Mr. Memory and his theme. In the case of *The Lady Vanishes*, it is not evident at first that the tune being strummed and sung by the serenader beneath Miss Froy's window contains a vital message. One assumes that she is tapping along to the melody simply because she has a love of music and is enjoying listening to the vocalist and the melody. However, her memorisation of the tune being played at that point and the implications behind this will not only put her own life at risk, but also those of some of the innocent passengers who just happen to be travelling on the same train.

31 In both *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*, the link between music and memory is highlighted as an important theme that plays a central role in the narratives. In the earlier film, the male protagonist is initially unaware of the significance of the music he keeps whistling, while in *The Lady Vanishes*, Gilbert knows that the melody he has been taught contains vital information. Although Hannay wants to get the "Mr. Memory theme" out of his head but is unable to do so, Gilbert does his best to remember the tune he has been taught, only to

forget the melody at the vital moment. Music plays an important part in the way that the events taking place are presented within the narratives of both of these films, with the diegetic music discussed above being an essential part of the *mise-en-bande* in each case. This is particularly noteworthy when one takes account of the fact that music is not employed as a theme in either of the original novels on which the films are based. The important connection established between music and memory in both of these early Hitchcock films is therefore crucial, not only in the way that the stories unfold, but also in terms of the dénouements of each of the narratives.

Bibliography

Barr, Charles (1999). *English Hitchcock: A Movie Book* Moffat: Cameron & Hollis.

Brown, Royal S (1994). *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Buchan, John (1971). *The Thirty-Nine Steps* London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.

Cooper, David (2001). *Bernard Herrmann's Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Darby, William & Du Bois, Jack (1990) *American Film Music: Major Composers, Techniques, Trends, 1915-1990* Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co.

Donnelly, K. J (2007) *British Film Music and Film Musicals* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Durgnat, Raymond (1974) *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Glancy, Mark (2003) *The 39 Steps: A British Film Guide* London and New York: I. B Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Gottlieb, Sidney (ed.) (1995) *Hitchcock on Hitchcock* California: University of California Press.

Kalinak, Kathryn (1992) *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Levinson, Jerrold (1996) 'Film Music and Narrative Agency' in Bordwell, David and Carroll, Noel (eds.), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Levy, Louis (1948) *Music for the Movies* London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co.

Neumeyer, David P. (2015) *Meaning and Interpretation of Music in Cinema* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Pomerance, Murray (2000) 'Finding Release; "Storm Clouds" and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*' in Buhler, James, Flinn, Caryl and Neumeyer, David (eds.),

Music and Cinema Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Pomerance, Murray (2001) '"The Future's Not Ours to See": Song, Singer, Labyrinth in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*' in Wojcik, Pamela Robertson and Knight, Arthur (eds.) *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Rawle, Steven and Donnelly, K. J. (eds.) (2017) *Partners in Suspense: Critical Essays on Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Ryall, Tom (1996) *Alfred Hitchcock and the British Cinema* London & Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Athlone Press Ltd.

Weis, Elisabeth (1982) *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track* East Brunswick, N.J., Associated University Presses, Inc.

White, Ethel Lina (1997) *The Lady Vanishes* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. First published in 1936 as *The Wheel Spins* New York and London: Harper & Brothers.

DVDs

The 39 Steps (Hitchcock,1935). Carlton Visual Entertainment. 3711501363

The Lady Vanishes (Hitchcock,1938). Carlton Visual Entertainment. 3711504223

---

1 See also the edited collection by Steven Rawle and K. J. Donnelly (2017) *Partners in Suspense: Critical Essays on Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

2 Murray Pomerance has examined the way music is used in this later version, focusing in one essay on the 'Storm Clouds' cantata that plays a central role in the climax of the narrative, and in another on the significance of the use of the song 'Que Sera, Sera (What Will Be, Will Be)', both of which are used diegetically within the film. See 'Finding Release; "Storm Clouds" and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*' in Buhler, James, Flinn, Caryl and Neumeyer, David (eds.) (2002) *Music and Cinema* Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 207-246, and '"The Future's Not Ours to See": Song, Singer, Labyrinth in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*' in Robertson Wojcik, Pamela and Knight, Arthur (eds.) (2001) *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music* Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 53-73. The script for the remake is significantly different from the original.

3 Non-diegetic music is not part of the world of the movie's world. It is therefore not heard by the characters, only the filmic audience.

4 The question of how music is memorised is beyond the boundaries of this essay, but readers wishing to explore this topic further may wish to refer to literature such as Critchley, Macdonald and Henson, R. A (eds.) (1977) *Music and the Brain: Studies in the Neurology of Music* London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd, Sloboda, John A (1994) *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* Oxford: Clarendon Press and Snyder, Bob (2000) *Music and Memory: An Introduction* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press.

5 As noted by Mark Glancy, Mr. Memory "was based upon a real music-hall performer named Datas, who was still known (or at least remembered) when the film was made" (2003: 26).

6 Please see Appendix A for a transcription of the theme.

7 As described by David P. Neumeyer, this is 'a sudden chordal accent'. See *Meaning and Interpretation of Music in Cinema*, p. 118.

8 The words (although not heard) of this hymn are by William Hodgson and the music was composed by Joseph P. Webster.

9 The diegetic music that accompanies the dancers is 'Tinkle Tinkle Tinkle' by Harry M Woods, which had featured in the film *Evergreen* (dir. Victor Saville), also produced by Gaumont British, the previous year.

10 See Appendix B.

English

The function of music in a number of the films directed by Alfred Hitchcock during his time in Hollywood has been widely explored, especially with regard to his collaboration with composer Bernard Herrmann, who wrote the music for such films as *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959) *and Psycho* (1960). However, even in Hitchcock's early British movies, it is clear that care was given to the ways in which music was employed within the filmic narratives. This article focuses on the use of diegetic music, i.e., the music that can be heard by the characters in a movie, in two of Hitchcock's British films, namely *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). Both of the storylines are based upon novels, yet neither book features music as one of its themes. The function and impact of certain diegetic melodies in the filmed versions of both stories is therefore of particular interest. I argue that the relationship between music and memory in the two films is crucial within the narratives, not only in the way the stories are presented and linked to main characters, but also with regard to how the strands of the plots are drawn together at the end of each movie. As I exemplify, in each

case, the connection between the diegetic melodies I discuss, and the remembrance of this music by a main character, proves to be an important and elucidating theme within the films.

Français

La fonction de la musique dans nombre de films réalisés par Alfred Hitchcock au cours de sa période hollywoodienne a été étudiée en détail, surtout en ce qui concerne sa collaboration avec le compositeur Bernard Hermann, qui a écrit la musique de films comme *Sueurs froides* (1958), *La Mort aux Trousses* (1959) et *Psychose* (1960). Cependant, il est clair que déjà, dans ses films britanniques, Hitchcock était très attentif à la façon dont la musique pouvait être intégrée au récit filmique. Le présent article s'intéresse à la musique diégétique, c'est-à-dire la musique entendue par les personnages, dans deux des films britanniques d'Hitchcock, à savoir *Les 39 marches* (1935) et *Une femme disparaît* (1938). Les deux intrigues sont tirées de romans, mais aucun de ces deux romans ne parle de musique. La fonction et l'effet de certaines mélodies diégétiques présentent donc un intérêt particulier. J'avance que l'articulation entre musique et mémoire, pour ces deux films, joue un rôle crucial dans l'agencement du récit, non seulement parce qu'elle permet d'introduire les événements et de les mettre en relation avec les personnages, mais aussi parce qu'elle permet de rassembler les différents fils de l'intrigue à la fin de chaque film. Comme je le montrerai, le lien entre une mélodie diégétique et sa remémoration émerge comme un thème central, grâce au pouvoir d'élucidation que lui confèrent ces deux intrigues.

Mots-clés

Hitchcock (Alfred), film, musique, mémoire, récit

Keywords

Hitchcock (Alfred), film, music, memory, narrative

Marie Joséphine Bennett

Visiting Lecturer, Faculty of Arts at the University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester, Hampshire, UK, SO22 4NR

IDREF : https://www.idref.fr/256573506