

**Translating Music Intelligibly:  
Musical Paraphrase in the Long 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

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## **CHAPTER 0: What is Paraphrase?**

### **0.0: Definitions**

The Oxford English Dictionary provides three definitions of the verb “to paraphrase:”

1. "To express the meaning of (a written or spoken passage, or the words of an author or speaker) using different words, esp. to achieve greater clarity; to render or translate freely."
2. "To make a paraphrase; to comment or enlarge upon a passage so as to bring out the sense."
3. "To adapt, appropriate, or alter the wording of (a saying or quotation) or the words of (an author or speaker) to suit one's own purpose."<sup>1</sup>

These definitions all refer to paraphrase in language, of course. None maps onto music perfectly, though the third seems to be the closest: “to adapt, appropriate or alter” a passage of music, perhaps “to suit [a composer’s] own purpose.” This definition is quite broad, suggesting that musical paraphrase should encompass a wide range of practices. Curiously, however, the *New Grove* online provides only two definitions, the first of which is “[a] compositional technique, popular particularly in the 15th and 16th centuries, whereby a pre-existing melody (usually chant) is used in a polyphonic work.”<sup>2</sup> The other is “a virtuoso work based on well-known tunes, usually taken from popular operas” citing examples from Liszt alone.<sup>3</sup> The *Oxford Companion to Music* offers two similar definitions,<sup>4</sup> as does the *Oxford Dictionary*, though the latter also mentions Scottish Paraphrase, which is

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<sup>1</sup> OED.com (Accessed July 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Grove Music Online (Accessed July 2012)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Oxford Companion to Music (Accessed July 2012)



defined as the use of "metrical versions of scriptural passages sung to psalm tunes in the Church of Scotland."<sup>5</sup>

What the authors of these entries *include* in their definitions is uncontroversial, but what they omit is bound to raise an eyebrow or two, especially to scholars of music since 1900. If paraphrase is merely the "adaptation, appropriation, and alteration" of music, then a list of only three practices is lamentably short. There are certainly other examples from the period between Josquin and Liszt that bear inclusion, and it is even more problematic that no 20<sup>th</sup>-century practice is listed in the definitions proper;<sup>6</sup> it should go without saying that the long 20<sup>th</sup>-century has witnessed burgeoning evidence of musical quotation, paraphrase, and other forms of borrowing.<sup>7</sup>

To avoid the provinciality of an Anglophone bias, it seems appropriate to search for definitions of musical paraphrase in some other languages. In German, Duden provides a perhaps more accurate definition in regards to music than those found in English-language sources: 1) "to re-write or embellish a melody, to make a paraphrase of a known (Opera) melody or a song," or 2) "to compose out [or develop]" (*auskomponieren*).<sup>8</sup> The author of the first definition clearly had Liszt's "opera paraphrases" in mind, which are widely written about in German-language

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<sup>5</sup> Oxford Dictionary of Music (Accessed July 2012)

<sup>6</sup> One of the *OED*'s listed uses of the term "paraphrase" in print is Burkholder's 1987 article "'Quotation' and Paraphrase in Ives' Second Symphony" in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, however. It is unsurprising that one of Burkholder's uses of the term has made it into the *OED*, as he has (as far as I am aware) used it more than anyone else in reference to music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But given all of the recent scholarly work on Ives, it is dubious that he, along with everyone else born since 1850, is excluded from the wording of the definitions themselves.

<sup>7</sup> I define the "long-20th century" as beginning (more or less) two decades preceding the year 1900 and ending with the present.

<sup>8</sup> "eine Melodie frei umspielen, ausschmücken; b) eine bekannte [Opern]melodie, ein Lied zur Paraphrase (2b) auskomponieren (Mus.)." (Accessed July 2012)

scholarship, but the latter reveals a different understanding of the term: the “composing-out” or development of a theme, which is of course also a type of paraphrase. Duden’s definition of cadenza (*Kadenz*) as well includes the term paraphrase: “improvised or written-out (by the composer) soloistic paraphrase (*Paraphrasierung*) of a theme at the close of a concerto, in which the artist is provided the opportunity to show his [or her] virtuosity.”<sup>9</sup> Synthesizing the content of the English and German dictionary entries enables us to draft a working definition: *Musical paraphrase is defined as the adaptation, alteration, or embellishment of musical material, often borrowed from another source.*

There is no need to cavil about this definition further, yet by now it is clear that “musical paraphrase” casts a much wider net than what can possibly be included in a single dissertation. Although “altered quotation” is perhaps too restrictive for a general definition of musical paraphrase, it more or less describes the scope of my project. I limit my study to that which falls at the intersection of musical borrowing and musical paraphrase. Admittedly, this track is but one of at least three directions one might take such a project. One could explore the notion of paraphrase as development (or “composing out”), though this in itself would still be rather broad. One might also focus on practices of paraphrase whose origins lie in improvisatory traditions. This could include everything from the methods of melodic paraphrase endemic to jazz to the (structurally, if not culturally) related practice of virtuoso embellishment in art music. A comparison of the embellishment

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<sup>9</sup> “improvisierte od. [vom Komponisten] ausgeschriebene solistische Paraphrasierung eines Themas am Schluss [einzelner Sätze] eines Konzerts, die dem Künstler die Möglichkeit bietet, sein virtuosos Können zu zeigen.” (Accessed July 2012)

techniques of jazz saxophonists, blues guitarists, and virtuoso composer-performers like Liszt, Corelli, or Paganini could make for a fascinating study.<sup>10</sup> But rather than comparing the many ways that one might apply the term paraphrase to music, my project is built around a single guiding question: *If a composer borrows music from another source and alters it for use in a new context, how is this accomplished, and what are the motivations for doing so?*

## **0.1: Musical Paraphrase Defined Against Similar Terms**

### **0.1.1: Paraphrase of Music vs. Paraphrase of Language**

I take as my starting point for defining paraphrase the *OED*'s third definition (to "adapt, alter, appropriate"), but some philosophers explore an understanding of the term that is closer to the first of the three definitions ("using different words, esp. to achieve greater clarity") to music. V. A. Howard, in his essay, "On Musical Quotation," says the following about musical paraphrase:

"The usual motive of paraphrase [in language] is to enhance communication by removing ambiguity. Since music so rarely *says* anything, semantic paraphrase hardly counts among the ineluctable devices of composition. But neither is it so rare as to deserve no account. Programme music, opera, and oratorio are replete with attempts to employ music to name, describe, or represent things in addition to the more common expressive use of music. Assuming for argument's sake that some denotative uses of music are descriptive (as may happen, for instance, in a system of *leitmotiven*), two musical passages may be rephrasal-

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<sup>10</sup> Zaslaw describes Corelli's practice of ornamentation as "through-composed melodic paraphrase," some types of which, he notes, resemble "some practices in jazz, where almost anything that works with the set chord progressions can be substituted." (1996, p. 95)

pairs if they denote the same thing or event... Clearly, paraphrase is impossible in nondescriptive music.”<sup>11</sup>

Howard is correct that if we use such a definition, then musical paraphrase is quite rare; it becomes unthinkable in “absolute,” or what Howard calls “nondescriptive” music. Ultimately, though, Howard does not insist on such a literal, restrictive definition of musical paraphrase (nor do I), accepting a more metaphorical application of the term. In a footnote, he allows that “[t]he musician’s special use of the term ‘paraphrase’ as a rough synonym for ‘thematic variation,’ like his special uses of the terms ‘phrase’ and ‘statement,’ *refers to auditory rather than grammatical or semantic properties of musical events*” (emphasis mine). Bicknell, in a similar essay, accepts Howard’s extension of the metaphor, and argues that “[a] musical paraphrase is, then, not one that contains the same meaning as the original (as does a paraphrase in language), but a recurrent, deviant theme.”

Katie Wales, in the most recent *Dictionary of Stylistics*, offers contrasting definitions of paraphrase in various disciplines. In translation studies, she, citing Steiner, describes paraphrase as a “faithful but autonomous restatement.”<sup>12</sup> In linguistics and stylistics, paraphrase is defined as a means “to describe such alternatives of expression within one and the same language”— the notion “that the same content can be expressed in different forms.”<sup>13</sup> But in literary studies, she offers a radical understatement in suggesting that “the notion of paraphrase has not gone unchallenged.”<sup>14</sup> Cleanth Brooks argues in his essay “The Heresy of

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<sup>11</sup> Howard (1974), pp. 313-314

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Wales (2011, p. 302)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 302-3

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 303

Paraphrase” that “any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it.... We can very properly use paraphrases as pointers and as short-hand references... [b]ut it is highly important that we know what we are doing and that we see plainly that the paraphrase is not the real core of meaning which constitutes the essence of the poem.”<sup>15</sup>

Few would argue with Brooks on this matter; it is clear that one cannot paraphrase a poem and retain the irony, the rhyme and assonance, and the ambiguity of the language. And arguably, the same is true of music; expressing the “essence” of a piece with different musical material seems a tall order. Therefore, musical paraphrase should only very rarely, if ever be viewed as an endeavor to preserve “the real core of meaning” of a work. The goals of musical paraphrase vary widely, as we shall see in the chapters to come.

### 0.1.2: Paraphrase vs. Quotation

A simple definition of paraphrase, as mentioned above, might be “altered,” “indirect,” or “non-literal” quotation. Indeed, *most* paraphrase is quotation, and *most* quotation is paraphrase, but the two sets do not overlap exhaustively. The definition of paraphrase as “composing-out” is a practice of paraphrase that is not also quotation, though it is one I do not address. Conversely, if a composer quotes another “verbatim,” preserving the notes, rhythms, and general affect of the original material, then this is a type of quotation that is not also paraphrase. Metzger says much the same, suggesting that “the use of *actual* material from a piece separates

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<sup>15</sup> Brooks (1968), p 160

quotation from allusion and paraphrase, which broadly evoke works, styles, or textures” (emphasis mine).<sup>16</sup> The challenge comes in defining “actual.” When Berg borrows the opening bars of *Tristan* in his *Lyric Suite* (discussed at greater length in Chapter 5), can this be called the “actual” material from the piece? Wagner’s theme is scored for a mix of strings and winds, and Berg’s is for strings alone. This change of orchestration is mild enough that I am comfortable calling this quotation.

However, had Berg quoted this passage in a piece for kazoo quartet or percussion ensemble (or, heaven forbid, both together!), even if he had kept the pitches, rhythms and tempo the same, the affect of such an adaptation would differ enough from that of its source that it may more comfortably be called a paraphrase.

Regardless, there remains a fuzzy boundary between “pure,” “verbatim” quotation, and paraphrase. Metzger agrees that “lines between these categories are not fixed.”<sup>17</sup> In some practices of musical borrowing, like arranging a piece for a new ensemble, harmonizing a vernacular tune, or covering a popular song, it is possible to change very little of the source material. One might question whether it is appropriate to apply the term paraphrase in such cases.<sup>18</sup> One might also question the suitability of the term paraphrase for the practices in which such significant changes are made to the borrowed material that the source is no longer recognizable. Is it even a paraphrase if we cannot perceive it as such?

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<sup>16</sup> Metzger (2003), p. 4

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that all arrangements, settings, and covers change very little. While many covers involve no change to instrumentation and virtually no change to musical structure, some do alter a great deal. I will return to this matter in Chapter 3.

To avoid becoming ensnarled in such a debate, most of the examples I choose fall somewhere between these two extremes. I focus on that which falls closer to the conceptual center of the category—the proverbial “baby bear’s porridge” of paraphrase. The pieces I discuss, for the most part, are simply new twists on familiar tunes, and the vast majority of them are recognizable as such. A few of the examples I discuss in later chapters (especially those by Berg) are *Augenmusik*, and in all probability are not aurally perceivable as paraphrase. When I believe a paraphrase is likely to escape notice without a score, I say so. Such claims are based on my own hearing alone, yet I doubt that my judgment is so idiosyncratic that an empirical study would overturn my verdict on whether or not something is recognizable. And this is not a perceptual study, though it is my hope that it will inspire such work in the future to determine how much a composer can change borrowed material without burying the source entirely.

Paraphrase also differs from quotation in another crucial way, despite the significant overlap between the two categories. Bicknell suggests that “containment” is one of the “necessary conditions for direct or indirect quotation.”<sup>19</sup> This is to say, in the case of music, a (fragment of a) quoted piece must be contained within another. While a paraphrase may be contained within another piece, it *need not* be. Composers can include paraphrased fragments of music in their own works, but it is possible to paraphrase a piece without containing it in another. A paraphrase can

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<sup>19</sup> Bicknell (2001), p. 185

The other criterion she lists is “reference.” She explains, “[t]he quotation must contain a syntactic replica of the quoted expression (in the case of direct quotation), or its semantic equivalent (indirect quotation). The quotation must also refer to or denote what is quoted, either by naming it or by predication.” (Ibid)

be a transformation of an entire work; there need not be a frame of “new” musical material to encapsulate a paraphrase, while by and large, as Metzger suggests, “[q]uotation is also set apart by the prominence of the borrowing, which is made to stick out from the surrounding music.”<sup>20</sup>

### 0.1.3: Paraphrase vs. Parody

The terms parody and paraphrase are often used contrastively in music studies, especially in regard to the related (yet distinct) practices of “Renaissance paraphrase” and “Renaissance parody.” While these two specific practices are taxonomically differentiable in compositional procedure and resultant syntax, the terms *parody and paraphrase need not always be used contrastively* to describe music of the (long) 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is my contention that *parody is a subset of paraphrase*, or at least a fuzzy subset.<sup>21</sup> One could argue that parody is distinct from paraphrase because of the intention to satirize the source, and that paraphrase is distinct from parody because of the absence of this objective. However, this argument does not speak to the reality of the situation for a number of reasons:

1. We do not always know if composers intend to satirize the piece from which they have borrowed. Even the composer’s word is not infallible evidence; perhaps at the time of composition, the composer borrowed a theme as an homage, but later in life, she insists that she did so to ridicule it. It is

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<sup>20</sup> Metzger (2003), p. 4

<sup>21</sup> Style parody may not actually involve paraphrasing a specific piece of music, though it does involve paraphrasing of the stylistic conventions and norms of a given musical practice, usually highlighting and exaggerating its most identifiable features—a point to which I will return in Chapter 3.



important to remember that composers' explanations of their motivations are subject to trends of aesthetic fashion.

2. Parody and homage are **not** mutually exclusive. Although some parodies (whether in music or another art) may be inspired purely out of distaste, I imagine that many parodists are fond of the object they satire.<sup>22</sup> A parodist may even view their own work (consciously or unconsciously) as both a satire of, and a salute to, their source.
3. Regardless of a composer's intentions, something that is designed as homage might be perceived as parody, and vice versa. As Dentith explains, "parody has the paradoxical effect of preserving the very text it seeks to destroy... This can have some odd effects, even running counter to the apparent intentions of the parodist."<sup>23</sup> He terms this property "the parodic paradox"—a pithy synopsis.<sup>24</sup>

To synthesize these points, the poietics and aesthetics of parody are difficult to parse, and if author intent is our sole criterion to distinguish parody and paraphrase, then we should have no further cause to suggest that they are mutually exclusive practices. In Chapters 1, 2, and 3, I use the terms almost interchangeably, as both are equally applicable to the majority of the music I analyze in these chapters.

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<sup>22</sup> While I argue that the act of musical parody is almost necessarily homagic, this may not always be so in the world of images. A caricaturist drawing an exaggerated portrait of an important political figure may well lack any fondness for the subject; such a parody of their likeness is not always well intentioned.

<sup>23</sup> Dentith (2000), p. 36

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

## **0.2: Brief Chapter Overview and Goals of the Project**

In my first chapter, I explore the metaphor of musical translation. I argue that the analogy is productive to describe the process of converting a piece of music into a new style, provided that we do not use the linguistic definition of translation uncritically. Generally, the goal of such a style translation is to keep the original piece identifiable while changing its stylistic associations (and therefore connotative meaning) to the extent possible. In Chapter 2, I examine the practice of altering music for use on television, which I will call “copyphrase.” Producers can avoid buying the rights to the copyrighted works that they want to use on their programs by hiring a composer to craft a new piece that sounds similar enough to evoke it, but different enough from the source to avoid legal consequences. Chapter 3 is a study of musical caricature. Just as an artist can exaggerate the facial features of their subject to make a realistic portrait into a satirical cartoon, I demonstrate how a composer can lampoon the work of another by employing the most identifiable characteristics in a more pronounced manner.

The final two chapters are about musical paraphrase as creative stimulus—using pre-existing music as the aesthetic point of departure for crafting something new. In Chapter 4, I focus on the film music of John Williams. Williams’ scores often remind us of works by other concert and film composers, yet the casual assumption one often hears that Williams *paraphrases* (or worse, plagiarizes) familiar works, has never been properly evaluated—a gap in the literature that I seek to remedy. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I examine Alban Berg’s habit of paraphrasing passages of *Tristan und Isolde* throughout his oeuvre, most thoroughly in *Lulu*. After pointing

out a number of altered quotations that have gone unnoticed, I reconsider the reasons why Berg seems to have had a near obsession with borrowing from Wagner, comparing his practice to the methods of paraphrase discussed in the other chapters.

From the descriptions of the chapters to come, it should be clear that these five essays are not catch-all categories in which every practice of paraphrase that fits my definition could find a home. Neither is this text a taxonomic division of all paraphrase practices; the breadth of scope required for such a project would allow for little depth of analysis. Rather, I offer but a few windows into the world of musical paraphrase. A collection of case studies offers a more compelling and satisfying end-result than does a catalogue, and further, these five essays illustrate what I believe is a representative (if not comprehensive) sample of the many practices we might call paraphrase.

### **0.3: Scholarly Antecedents**

A handful of scholars have written about musical quotation and paraphrase in music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many of whom have had a significant impact on my own work. J. Peter Burkholder's 1995 Ives monograph, *All Made of Tunes*, is the most extensive survey of the practice of musical paraphrase to date. Each chapter of his book explores a different practice of borrowing—including modeling, stylistic allusion, melodic paraphrase, collage, and patchwork, among a number of other procedures—an organizational schema that I borrow, along with many of the terms for these practices that he defines so clearly. Like Burkholder, one of my goals is to

classify several types of musical paraphrase, but rather than exploring the methods of a single composer, my objective is to compare the works of several composers whose motivation for paraphrasing the music they borrow varies enormously. In range, therefore, my project is more like Howard Metzger's *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music*, a series of six case studies comparing quotation in an eclectic array of musical styles. Yet there is remarkably little overlap between the music that Metzger studies and that which I do; most of the practices he explores are types of quotation that do not make the best examples of paraphrase. I regret not being to engage with the practices of collage, covers, and sampling more than in passing, as Metzger has demonstrated that these are all fruitful areas of study about which a great deal more should be written.

Much of the scholarship that I have read for this project comes from outside the field of music studies. In fact, if there is a single study closest to my own, it is almost certainly Gérard Genette's 1982 *Palimpseste: Literature in the Second Degree*. Genette does with literature what I endeavor to do with music: identify and distinguish various practices of adaptation, many of which are comic in nature. While Burkholder and Metzger's respective projects were significant influences in determining the shape of my dissertation in the early stages, I learned of Genette's work rather late in the process of writing, and I can only imagine how different the project would be had I read *Palimpseste* at an earlier date. Nonetheless, encountering Genette's work, even so late in the game provided me with a much needed boost, offering the gift of a number of insightful remarks that I could not help but quote.

Genette is not as widely read as his fellow structuralist countrymen Barthes and Levi-Strauss, but some of his terms have come into common use in literary studies. He coined the widely known term *paratext*, and more important to present purposes, the term *hypotext*. A hypotext is a source upon which a *hypertext* is based. He defines the relationship between two such texts as “hypertextuality,” which he explains, “is any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.”<sup>25</sup> Every form of musical paraphrase that is discussed is characterized by this relationship, having a hypotext upon which it is based, “an earlier text that it imitates and transforms.”<sup>26</sup> As such, I adapt these terms for my own use.

Ultimately, however, I use few of Genette’s terms; despite their appeal, few of them map onto music as cleanly as hypotext and hypertext do. At times his project is oversaturated with new terminology, stemming from his zeal to define parody narrowly, obsessively re-classifying a number of literary practices that are called “parody” in casual speech. I fear that borrowing more from Genette would cause my project to suffer from the same unbearable density. (In fairness, I might be accused of drifting in this direction myself in Chapter 3, and I beg the reader’s indulgence here; studying new terrain begets a need for new terminology.)

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<sup>25</sup>Genette (1997/1982), p. 5

Genette contrasts the term “hypertextuality” with Kristeva’s “intertextuality” and other similar terms of his invention. I will return to the distinction between intertextuality and hypertextuality in Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Prince (1997/1982), ix

Another author from outside of the field that I cannot help but acknowledge here is Kenneth T. Rivers. His insightful book, *Transmutations: Understanding Literary and Pictorial Caricature* (1991) was indispensable to getting my third chapter off of the ground. Without both 1) the solid theoretical grounding on the genre of caricature that his book so lucidly provides, and 2) a starting point to help me find some of the best examples of musical caricature, I may well have had to scrap the chapter. And even if I had been able to complete it, it would have lacked sophistication for want of a stronger theoretical framework.

#### **0.4: Choices of Repertory**

##### **0.4.1: Included Repertory**

A majority of the music that I study in this project is not “serious” in any sense of the term; much of it is explicitly designed for comic use. A few years ago, I gave a class presentation on some of the music I analyze in Chapter 1, and a fellow student asked me—without irony—if I was “bored” for having pursued such a project, unable to fathom why I would even bother to ask the questions that I do about such music. Although the tone of my classmate’s query was hardly friendly, this is an experience I am glad to have had in the earliest stages of the project; when I tell colleagues about my research at conferences, I receive (in nearly equal distribution) puzzled, even pained looks, or enthusiastic nods, and I know better now how to respond to those in the former group.

A great deal of the music that forms the focus of Chapters 2 and 3 comes from television cartoons. Music has always played an important role in animation—after all, the term “Mickey Mousing” finds its origins in this medium—though to date,

such music has received relatively little scholarly attention. Julie Hubbert notes that “[w]hile music scholars have been slow to recognize the art of film as a venue for serious musical composition and cultural criticism, they have been even slower to value music in a film genre that has had a long history of not being taken seriously—the cartoon.”<sup>27</sup>

About a decade ago, Daniel Goldmark broke the silence both with *The Cartoon Music Book*, (a volume he edited along with Yuval Taylor),<sup>28</sup> and his 2005 monograph *Tunes for Toons*. In the latter, he laments that cartoons “have typically been viewed as devoid of any intellectual import whatsoever.”<sup>29</sup> I imagine that many authors (perhaps subconsciously) have been timid to pursue scholarship on cartoons for exactly this reason.<sup>30</sup> Yet, as I will explain in Chapter 2, the producers of many of these shows take their music quite seriously, and it’s high time that we do as well. While it is fortunate that many in music studies are warming up to this repertory, the sub-field of music theory has lagged a few paces farther behind. At last, the field is getting past its implicit bias towards the canons of concert and popular music, and many theorists have begun to pursue serious analysis of music for television and film. This trend is not indicative of a turn away from the fascination with the creative “genius” that to this day largely defines the field of

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<sup>27</sup> Hubbert (2003), p. 146

<sup>28</sup> In a review of *The Cartoon Music Book*, Hubbert lauds the “persuasive argument” the authors of the volume provide “for placing legendary [cartoon] composers Carl Stalling, Raymond Scott, and Scott Bradley alongside America’s most iconoclastic and inventive composers.” (2003, p. 147)

<sup>29</sup> Goldmark (2005), p. 2

<sup>30</sup> Some trepidation in taking seriously a virulent satire like *Family Guy* (one of my central objects of study) is understandable. This show, according to the packaging on Volume VI of their DVD collection, has been called “risky [and] rude” by the *Los Angeles Daily News*, “crude, tasteless, [and] insensitive” by the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* and “the most appalling show on network television” by *USA Today*.

music theory, however. Rather, it is testament to the fact that music theorists are willing to include music for filmic media in the museum of *Meisterwerke* deemed worthy of analysis. I just hope that when the new wing is built, room can be made for the craft of music comedy. So far, the scholarly conversation about such music has been so quiet that it could be drowned out by the sound of crickets chirping.<sup>31</sup>

#### 0.4.2: Excluded Repertory

A number of composers who might seem like prime candidates for a study like this must unfortunately be excluded. Ives, perhaps the most obvious candidate of all, evades more than occasional mention—certainly not for lack of interest, but given Burkholder’s tremendous contributions to the practice of paraphrase in Ives’ music, I could do little more than summarize his arguments. The Neoclassical adaptations of earlier music from the likes of Stravinsky, Respighi, Prokofiev, and Busoni might also seem a shoo-in, yet I likewise offer little treatment of this repertory. Although these composers certainly do alter the notes and rhythms of the music they borrow, the primary changes are often to orchestration and accompaniment; the changes to the source material are generally less significant than in most of the examples of paraphrase I do address more thoroughly.

I feel somewhat more comfortable about omitting this repertory knowing that it has been the focus of many astute analyses in the scholarly literature

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<sup>31</sup> The same cannot be said of the music I study in my fifth chapter, however. Though the balance of the music that I approach has been largely neglected, the music of Alban Berg has inspired a great deal of analysis and criticism. The fact that there is such an extensive Berg bibliography is somewhat of an anomaly, as there are very few mature works on which his reputation rests.



(especially Straus' 1990 *Remaking the Past*).<sup>32</sup> The same can be said of the practices of collage, as well Liszt's "free-transcription" and opera paraphrase; each has received a great deal of scholarly attention.<sup>33</sup> But let me be clear: While most of repertory that I engage with *complements* that which has received the fullest attention in the scholarly literature, with the exception of Ives, *I do not neglect any practice of paraphrase because it is already well-studied*. Rather, the work of the composers who evade mention simply does not fit my definition of paraphrase closely enough to bear inclusion in my study. I hope the reader will agree after surveying the chapters to come that what may now seem like glaring omissions would in fact make peculiar additions.

The practices I *do* address—in full disclosure, half by-design, and half fortuitously—ended up forming a coherent bundle whose striking similarities and differences complement one another as a cozy, if eclectic family. I do not study the music that I do for the sake of novelty, nor do I compare low-brow and high-brow music to be provocative. The examples that both fit my definition of paraphrase and pique my interest happen to come from a wide range of sources. When George Gershwin traveled to Vienna in 1928, he was surprised to learn that a "serious" composer like Berg was fond of his music. Berg shrugged it off, and simply said, "Mr. Gershwin, music is music."<sup>34</sup> I ask the reader to adopt Berg's attitude. Sit back, relax, and let your curiosity get the better of you.

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<sup>32</sup> See also Watkins (1994) and Pašić (1997)

<sup>33</sup> Work on collage includes Watkins (1994), Metzger (2003), and Losada (2009). There is a lengthy bibliography on Liszt's paraphrase practice, mostly in German. Notable examples include Döhning (1982), Keller (1993), and Deaville (2006).

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Ross (2007), p. xi

## **Chapter 1: On the Musically Translatable**

### **1.0: Is music translatable?**

It has long been fashionable to describe music as a type of language. This metaphor is appealing, but it only takes us so far. Music is woefully imprecise as a system of communication. It lacks syntactic and semantic discreteness. There are no “native speakers” of music. The list goes on, with some variation, but none is complete without the assertion that *music is untranslatable*.

It is also common lore that music *need not* (as well as *may not*) be translated. Lidov reminds us that Debussy, at the 1898 Paris Exhibition “evidently felt a significance and richness in gamelan music—without translation—that was not available to [him] in untranslated Indonesian poetry.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is often suggested that music is a universally intelligible language, most recently by Higgins, who in a book-length study, argues for music’s ability to cross cultures.<sup>2</sup> Opinions run hot about the extent to which music has an unrestricted passport, so to speak. While many people have *some* “correct” intuitions about music from traditions to which they have not been exposed, this is not to say that we all, as humans, intuitively “understand” *everything* we hear in an unfamiliar musical culture. And we all may agree that translating a “foreign” music into our own “native dialect” to better understand it is both impossible and undesirable.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lidov (2005), p. 2

Lidov cites this anecdote to argue that the meaning of music is not quite universal, though not entirely culture-bound either.

<sup>2</sup> Higgins (2012)

<sup>3</sup> One might argue that music is better likened to a collection of languages rather than to a single one. Of course this analogy (like all others) has its limits. How many musical languages are there? What is the difference between a dialect and a language? Is one type of music “intelligible” to some people and not to others?

Despite the conventional wisdom on music's relationship to translation, I will argue that the metaphor of musical translation is salvageable, provided that we define it appropriately. Since music is not a language, it goes without saying that music is untranslatable in a linguistic sense, yet somehow, most discussion of musical translation is—quite problematically—filtered through a linguistic framework. Lidov cautions us that making any analogy between language and music “wants a bit of method.” He questions both “start[ing] with the categories of linguistics and look[ing] for a musical equivalent,” and the reciprocal act, ultimately suggesting “a more even-handed perspective” when comparing the two domains.<sup>4</sup> Heeding Lidov's advice, instead of imposing a linguistic definition of translation on music (or vice-versa), in this chapter, I will define musical translation *on its own terms* and explore how this metaphor can help us to understand the practice of musical paraphrase.

### 1.0.1: Discourse on Translating Music

The origin of the discourse on music and translation (in its current form) perhaps stems from Eduard Hanslick, who argues that “[i]n music there is both meaning and logical sequence, but in a musical sense; it is a language we speak and understand, but which we are unable to translate.”<sup>5</sup> Levi-Strauss concurs, describing music as “a language with some meaning at least for the immense majority of mankind, although only a tiny minority of people [is] capable of

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<sup>4</sup> Lidov (2005), p. 2

<sup>5</sup> Hanslick (1986), p 50

formulating meaning in it.”<sup>6</sup> He continues with the argument that music “is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable.”<sup>7</sup> These points are well taken, but both Hanslick and Levi-Strauss (more so the latter) might be accused of using the metaphor of music-as-language too literally. Levi-Strauss is correct that music may *evoke* images, ideas, or emotions to most people, but he goes too far in suggesting that “[t]he system of music...constitutes a language, since we understand it, but whose absolute originality and distinguishing feature with regard to articulate speech is its untranslatability.”<sup>8</sup>

In more recent scholarship, there has been little dissent on this matter. Swain simply deems music “incapable of translation”,<sup>9</sup> and most recently, Patel has argued that although “it is possible to translate between any two human languages with reasonably fidelity, it makes little sense to think of translating music into language (e.g., a Mozart symphony into words), or music into music (e.g., a Beethoven chamber music piece into a Javanese gamelan work) and expect that the meaning of the original material would be preserved.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Levi-Strauss (1969), p. 18

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 26

Levi-Strauss’ analogy about “understanding” music is again somewhat too literal. Kivy makes this point quite bluntly: “If I asked you, Do you understand German? it is clear what kind of question I would be asking, and that the evidence directly bearing upon an affirmative answer demonstrated ability to provide paraphrases, in other languages, for German sentences. It is equally clear that scarcely anyone who has thought seriously about music is prepared to take this as a satisfactory model for musical understanding.” (1990, p. 93)

<sup>9</sup> Swain (1997), p. 4

<sup>10</sup> Patel (2008), p. 300

### 1.0.2: New Definitions

Borrowing Patel's example, let us imagine, for argument's sake, arranging a portion of Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 1 for four gamelans. Would it be possible to recognize what the gamelans play as Beethoven's work? Though I am not aware of any such arrangements of a Beethoven quartet for gamelan ensemble, I contend that a composer with adequate skill could accomplish this feat; retaining rhythm, contour, and dynamics may compensate for the mutually incompatible pitch languages of the two styles.

Of course, the point of this pursuit is not to preserve the work's "meaning." Although Hanslick, Levi-Strauss, Swain, and Patel each approach the topic of musical translation with a different agenda, all are united in their agreement that music is untranslatable because of the impossibility of preserving semantic content. Genette as well deems music untranslatable on these grounds, noting that "[s]ince musical works ... have nothing to do with the plurality of languages, the phenomenon of versions unified by semantic identity transcending linguistic differences is unknown in music."<sup>11</sup> Translation, he argues, "is peculiar to literature," while "transcription and transposition" are exclusively musical.<sup>12</sup> Let us therefore abandon this condition as we seek to redefine translation in such a way that it may be applied to music. We know that music is not a language, so we should have no reason to believe that it has the same semantic properties; suggesting that musical translation has anything to do with retaining semantic meaning or intelligibility in a linguistic sense is inherently flawed.

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<sup>11</sup> Genette (1994/1997), p. 178

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 176

Swain takes us remarkably close to a working definition of musical translation, offering what he argues “is perhaps the most decisive and consistent break with the [music/language] analogy: music’s preference for sound over meaning when compared with speech’s preference for meaning over sound.”<sup>13</sup> This is not to say that sound is unimportant to language, nor that “meaning” is unimportant to music. Of course, we can be distracted by an unusual accent, a lisp, or the peculiar register of someone’s voice (to name a few things), but the experience of listening to music clearly involves a *greater* sensitivity to sonic character. Accepting this difference between language and music allows us to (re)define translation accordingly: *A successful linguistic translation changes the meaning of an utterance as little as possible, but necessarily does so with different sounds (the morphemes of a different language). A successful musical translation maximizes the change of affect (and therefore meaning) while changing as little of the musical material as possible to ensure its recognizability.* The purpose of musical style translation is therefore *not* the preservation of meaning, but something closer to the *opposite*.

The use of the term translation to describe the process of changing a piece of music from one style or genre to another is hardly novel.<sup>14</sup> Referring to the style of a given composer as their “idiolect” or “language” is rather common—in fact, this metaphor is used with such frequency that this figure of speech seems wholly

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<sup>13</sup> Swain (1997), p. 15

<sup>14</sup> Another common use of the term translation is to describe ekphrasis, e.g. “translating” music into language, language into music, art into music, etc. In this chapter, I do not address this use of the term as ekphrastic works generally have little to do with musical paraphrase. A notable exception, however, is Respighi’s *Trittico Botticelliano*, which is a collection of three musical “depictions” of Botticelli paintings. The middle of the three pieces, *The Adoration of the Magi* is both a “translation” of painting into music, and a translation of “O come, Emmanuel” presented in a more modern style.

unproblematic in casual conversation. Steinberg, in his program notes on Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* describes "a 1917 translation of what 140 years or so earlier was called a Mannheim skyrocket" that is used as the work's opening gesture.<sup>15</sup> Martha Hyde exploits this metaphor as well in discussing "translations" between tonal and atonal music.<sup>16</sup> And even Swain, who cites music's untranslatability as a factor that distinguishes music from language, uses the term casually himself, referring both to a Wagnerian leitmotif that is "translated into the major mode,"<sup>17</sup> and madrigals "translate[d] to an instrumental form."<sup>18</sup> Like these authors, I use the metaphor of translation in a conventional way.

### 1.0.3: What do we mean by "meaning?"

My definition of musical translation begs a rather significant question: What exactly do we mean by "musical meaning?" The meaning I refer to here has very little to do with semantics. Opinions about the semantic content of music are quite diverse, to say the least; no one can seem to agree. Deryck Cooke's (in)famous account of musical semantics falls at one extreme, taking the position that discrete melodic patterns correspond to remarkably specific emotional expressions.<sup>19</sup> At the opposite ideological pole fall many philosophers of music, Peter Kivy and Roger

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<sup>15</sup> Steinberg (1995), p. 431

<sup>16</sup> Hyde (1980), esp. pp. 132-3

<sup>17</sup> Swain (1997), p. 60. He continues, "[t]his transformation, though great, does not affect the identity of the motive, much as the stress or change of intonation leaves unaffected a word's root meaning while changing its immediate meaning." (Ibid)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 86

<sup>19</sup> Cooke (1959)

Scruton among them, who argue that music has no semantic content at all.<sup>20</sup> Kivy is rightfully suspicious of applying to music “the sense of ‘meaning’ that people get from the semantics of natural language where words can be defined, sentences paraphrased and translated.”<sup>21</sup> Discussing the truth-content of music is generally bland and tautological, and rarely is musical meaning based on predication. Further, musical events, unlike words, do not often correspond to *specific* “real-world” objects, ideas, or actions. Kivy, Scruton and others argue convincingly that the analogy of musical semantics is perhaps *less* convincing than those of syntax and phonology, but denying the presence of any such meaning in music seem a bit extreme, as does (like Cooke) arguing for fixed, specific meanings.

Most (more recently articulated) views of musical semantics tend to fall closer to the ideological center. The enterprise of musical “topics” is dependent on the notion that there are intra-musical signifiers.<sup>22</sup> This is to say that we find signs for many types of music within a single piece, and that by extension these topical signifiers may be associated with different non-musical objects and ideas. Swain provides another, perhaps ideologically compatible stance on musical semantics, arguing that music has a “semantic range,” which is to say that pieces of music do not correspond to specific emotions isomorphically, but that most listeners familiar with a musical tradition would chose the same descriptor if presented with an opposing binary; we are likely to agree about whether a piece is “happy” or “sad,”

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<sup>20</sup> Kivy states unequivocally that “music does, indeed, present itself... as a quasi-syntactical structure: a syntax without semantics.” (1990 p. 101) Scruton likewise argues that “[musical] structures can be assigned no semantic value.” (1997, p. 199)

<sup>21</sup> Kivy (1990), p. 64

<sup>22</sup> Ratner (1980) was the first to explore the theory of these “musical topics.” Other early work in this area includes Allanbrook (1983) and Agawu (1991).



but getting much more specific is tricky.<sup>23</sup> This “semantic range” also accounts, Swain explains, for why a text can be heard as a good match for a piece of music, or if the pairing is incongruous or ironic.<sup>24</sup>

So to summarize the more moderate views on musical semantics, if music in fact has semantic content, it is expressed indirectly and is not very specific.<sup>25</sup> In light of the limitations of musical *semantics*, perhaps a *pragmatics* of music is a more productive approach to understanding music's ever enigmatic meaning, especially in regard to translation (and paraphrase more generally). Applying such a flexible understanding of meaning to music allows us to privilege the connotative over the denotative, the dynamic over the static, and the associative over the absolute.<sup>26</sup> To be clear, I am not the first to propose a pragmatics of music (though I am *one of the first* in music studies).<sup>27</sup> Patel, a cognitive scientist, suggests that “[m]ost

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<sup>23</sup> Swain rejects the argument that music has no semantic content. In his words, “Defining ‘musical language’ as void of semantic content, for example, would immediately render quite irrelevant all the complaints about the missing specificity or propositional content in musical passages, the lack of agreement among listeners, and the inability of music to translate.” (1997, p. 169)

<sup>24</sup> Swain’s discussion of musical semantics merits reading in full. He proposes a broad “concept of musical semantics [that] entails all of the traditional formulations of meaning—reference and sense, connotation and denotation, indexicality, iconic and symbolic traits—as well as the newer idea that an essential part of linguistic meaning is its syntactic function.” (1997 p. 55)

<sup>25</sup>Of note, Bernstein, in his famous Harvard lecture on musical semantics, argues that “music has intrinsic meanings of its own, which are not to be confused with specific feelings or moods, and certainly not with pictorial impressions or stories.” (1976, p. 131) When it comes time to explain what this meaning is (rather than what it is *not*), he offers perhaps the most unsatisfying account of musical semantics in history: That “a metaphorical language is created by transformations, all of which are some kind of a varied repetition.” (Ibid, p. 175) What Bernstein promised to be a revelatory explanation of musical semantics in fact merely betrays the frustrations of such an approach.

<sup>26</sup> Pragmatics is a relatively new subfield of linguistics, concerned with parsing the meaning of utterances that are not adequately explained by studying their truth content in reference to non-linguistic objects. Linguists were inspired by the work of language philosophers J.L. Austin and H.P. Grice. Grice’s 1975 “Logic and Conversation” is considered the fountainhead of linguistic pragmatics.

<sup>27</sup> I suspect that the absence of such scholarship in music studies has in part to do with the fact that pragmatics is a relatively new discipline of linguistics; during the period when music theorists were most eager to make use of tools from linguistics (the “long” 1970s—the late 1960s to the early 1980s), pragmatics was yet to become an established field. Most people (in academia or otherwise) outside of the linguistics community had perhaps not heard the term “pragmatics” as it is currently

comparative discussions of linguistic and musical meaning focus on semantics, though... it may ultimately prove more fruitful to focus on pragmatics.”<sup>28</sup> And Brown, a sociologist, provides the most deliberate support for the cause of musical pragmatics (if for different purposes), asserting that “all communication—be it linguistic, musical, gestural—is guided by pragmatic concerns...[B]ecause music has not traditionally been conceptualized as a communication system but rather as an art form, pragmatics has rarely been considered an essential part of musicological analysis... which is dubious both on psychological and sociological grounds.”<sup>29</sup>

In recent philosophy, we also find (often indirect) support for musical pragmatics, which is perhaps unsurprising; it was philosophers of language who provided the intellectual foundations of pragmatics, and it is the area of linguistics about which many in the humanities are most enthusiastic. Of note, these philosophers all use *music* to make a case for *linguistic* pragmatics—not the other way around—taking it as a given that music has meaning primarily in a pragmatic sense. Deleuze and Guatari came close to suggesting the potential of such an approach to music as early as 1980. One of their major arguments in *A Thousand Plateaus* is that linguistics, since Chomsky (and perhaps even Saussure) has maintained a disingenuous identity as a purely scientific enterprise, and that pragmatic meaning, prosody, and other less-quantifiable features of language are of

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used, let alone had any awareness what the nascent field had to offer. Consequently, discussions of musical semantics seem to proliferate while musical pragmatics lies largely dormant.

<sup>28</sup> Patel (2008), p. 303

<sup>29</sup> Brown (2006), p. 24

equal importance to syntax, phonology and semantics.<sup>30</sup> (They appeal to music to help them make this point, calling pragmatics a type of “chromatic linguistics.”<sup>31</sup>) In a similar vein, Higgins argues that “greater philosophical attention to the ways that language resembles music... might result in a reconsideration of linguistic communication, particularly regarding the importance of pragmatics in the generation of meaning.”<sup>32</sup>

Regardless of how we toe a party line on pragmatics (or semantics), it is uncontroversial that the precise meaning—defined broadly—of any sonic structure in music (or language) is dependent upon the context of its use. With music, we can discuss the *extra*-musical context of a piece—the situation in which it is used for some communicative purpose (picture Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* playing as the lovers in a movie are about to embrace)—or, the *intra*-musical context, the stylistic, syntactic constraints on a particular piece of music. Swain has called genre the “pragmatic context” of music, suggesting that “[t]he linking of these generic connotations with the syntax of the work makes music pragmatic in the linguistic sense.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> They even go so far as to say that “[l]inguistics is nothing without a pragmatics... to define the effectuation of the *condition of possibility* of language and the *usage* of linguistic elements.” Deleuze and Guatari (1980/2007), p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 97. They elaborate on this claim: “Linguistics in general is still in a kind of major mode, still has a sort of diatonic scale and a strange taste for dominants, constants, and universals. All languages, in the meantime, are in immanent continuous variation: neither synchrony nor diachrony, but asynchrony, chromaticism as a variable and continuous state of language. For a chromatic linguistics according pragmatism its intensities and values.” (sic)

<sup>32</sup> Higgins (2012), p. 9

She continues, “[t]oo often music is modeled on conceptions of language in which syntax and semantics are taken as primary, with the consequence that ‘music’ is understood principally in terms of structures apart from context.”

<sup>33</sup> Swain (1997), p 87

He continues, “[t]he difference in musical pragmatics is that the ‘real-world context’ is the genre, and the link is not usually with the semantics of music, although it can be, but with the syntax.” (Ibid)

So what happens when we take a piece of music, and alter it to fit the normative syntax of another style? *Translation*. Translating music from one style to another should involve a maximal change of pragmatic meaning, but a minimal change to content so that the original “message”—which is to say, the identity of the piece—is not lost in the new stylistic conventions. With language, both semantic and pragmatic meanings are translatable; if I were to note that “the proverbial fecal matter has had an unfortunate run-in with the overhead cooling device,” a speaker of English would likely understand this as a paraphrase, or even *pragmatic translation* of the well-known expression. With music, pragmatic, contextual meaning *is* translatable; semantic meaning is not.

Unfortunately, what I call musical translations are quickly dismissed, even thought to be impossible in the scholarly literature. Swain suggests that the music of “Palestrina *cannot* be transcribed” for a different ensemble (emphasis mine).<sup>34</sup> Clearly, changing the genre (or even instrumentation, at times) of a piece of music changes the affect of the work, but it is *possible* to take Palestrina’s music out of its original context, and sometimes such a task is a composer’s goal. Rarely are such translations created with lofty, “high-art” ambition—often they are parodies of other works—but they nonetheless deserve our attention; the issue of *how* composers translate works into new musical styles is of interest to music theorists, especially when, as we shall see, a tonal piece is paraphrased into a dodecaphonic

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Swain explores certain syntactic ambiguities in a Beethoven piano concerto, explaining how the context of the surrounding measures ultimately clarifies the syntactic function of certain events. His analysis is both convincing and satisfying, but it is unfortunate that he only explores the link between context and syntax in music at the expense of the link between context and semantics. I suspect that he fails to explore this connection because he is unwilling to consider the cases when a given musical passage is placed in a different context, taken for use in a new piece of music in a different genre.

<sup>34</sup> Swain (1997), p. 175

texture or mode with a different cardinality. Swain also asks, “[w]ho wants to hear the ‘Eroica’ played by an organ, by a wind band, by anything but a symphony orchestra?”<sup>35</sup> His presumption that such a process is both preposterous and undesirable is unfortunate, because a lot of people *do* want to hear translations of Beethoven Symphonies! Walter Murphy’s version of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony in a disco style called “A Fifth of Beethoven” was the Billboard number 1 single in the United States during 1976.<sup>36</sup>

Murphy’s disco hit presents some fascinating issues. How are we to understand the process of transferring a piece from one context to another? Is the semantic content of the two pieces the same? We recognize “A Fifth of Beethoven” as a version of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, so in a sense, the “message” is identifiable, but the context is radically different. I explore these basic questions first with a few short examples, followed by examples of some more extensive translations.

### **1.1: A Few Didactic Examples**

“A Fifth of Beethoven” is perhaps a prototypical case of translated music. Murphy keeps the piece recognizable, but changes its associative meaning maximally. Most (if not all) translations alter a given piece on at least one of three axes: ***Brow***, ***Time***, or ***Place***, and “A Fifth of Beethoven” involves a clear change of all three. The *brow* is lowered, converting a “cultivated,” concert symphony to a vulgar, common dance. The symphony is likewise modernized, updated to a then-

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p 84

<sup>36</sup> Wikipedia, “A Fifth of Beethoven” (Accessed December, 2011)

contemporary style, wiping clean the associations of curly wigs and frock coats in favor of bell-bottoms and afros. And, the piece is transported from the (European) concert hall to the (American) night club—a more familiar setting for the target audience. The pragmatic context of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is still present, of course, but it lies under the surface like the previous text on a palimpsest.

While “A Fifth of Beethoven” exhibits clear changes in all three dimensions, other cases target a particular axis. An example of *place translation* appears in an episode of *The Simpsons* in which several characters travel to Scotland.<sup>37</sup> In the closing credits, a fragment of the familiar *Simpsons* theme is translated from Lydian mode into Mixolydian so that it may be played on bagpipes (see below). Of course, playing this material on bagpipes demands that it be played in Mixolydian (unless the fragment is short enough that the mode is ambiguous), but even if it were played on another instrument in this mode, the association with Scottishness may still be viable. An instructive example is the sitar solo in B-flat Mixolydian (the only key in which Bagpipes play) near the end of *The Beatles* “Strawberry Fields,” which *does*—to my ear—evoke bagpipes (and by extension, the northern United Kingdom) despite the association of the sitar with South Asia.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Monty Can’t Buy Me Love,” Season 10, First Aired May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> When playing with Western instruments, Bagpipes will generally tune to the key of Bb, though they may also tune to play in the key of A as well. In Paul McCartney’s “Mull of Kintire,” bagpipes are used in both keys as the song modulates from A-major to Bb-major.

"The Simpsons"  
Theme Music  
in Lydian Mode

Version for  
Bagpipe in  
Mixolydian Mode

### EXAMPLE 1-1: *The Simpsons* Theme

We may also find clear examples of *brow translation*. Claude Debussy, once devoted Wagnerian turned anti-Romantic, composed one of the best known parodies of *Tristan und Isolde*: “Golliwogg’s Cakewalk” from his Piano Suite *Children’s Corner* is an unmistakable lampoon. The intense drama associated with the music of *Tristan* is trivialized by Debussy’s light, playful accompaniment, rendering a “serious” opera decidedly less highbrow. Similarly, Peter Schickele (under the *nom de plume* P.D.Q. Bach) composed a bassoon quartet as a parody of the *Tristan* prelude called *The Last Tango in Bayreuth*. The first phrase of *Tristan* is presented “verbatim” with only the addition of a more strictly metered, rhythmically active bass line to evoke an Argentine tango, demoting *Tristan* from *Gesamtkunstwerk* to *Gebrauchsmusik*. Of course, Schickele’s translation does not only target brow—it alters place and time associations as well—but I would argue that the brow is changed the most; while double reeds are often used for great expressive effect (think of the famous “Alte Weise” English horn solo in Act III of *Tristan*), it is rare that a bassoon quartet is used for anything other than comedy.



**EXAMPLE 1-2:** *Tristan und Isolde*, mm. 1-4



**EXAMPLE 1-3:** “Golliwogg’s Cakewalk,” *Children’s Corner* (excerpt)



**EXAMPLE 1-4:** *Last Tango at Bayreuth* (excerpt)

An example of a *time translation* without significant change to other axes is harder to find. Many composers of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century with antiquarian leanings (Respighi, Busoni, Stravinsky and Prokofiev come to mind) created “updated”



recompositions of works from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-Centuries, but these works change very little of musical material. In most other cases, if time associations are changed, usually brow and place associations follow. Two uniquely successful examples of time translation warrant mention, both paraphrases of *Beatles'* songs. One is the parody band *Beatallica*, who play (mostly) *Beatles'* songs in the style of *Metallica*, translating one style of Anglo-American popular music into a more recent one.<sup>39</sup> The King's Singers do the opposite work with their Renaissance madrigal version of "Can't Buy Me Love," taking *The Beatles* centuries back in time. Time is the primary transformation in this case, but there is also change of location (perhaps we picture a choir in gothic cathedral rather than the "fab four" in Hamburg, Liverpool, or Shea Stadium), as well as a change of brow; in this case, the brow is *raised* rather than *lowered*. Though to be clear, raising a piece of vernacular music into a higher brow style for the sake of parody does not make the piece highbrow. The act of parody seems inescapably middle-brow, at best.

Naturally, the purpose of all of these translations is not to render works of music "intelligible" to different audiences. Debussy certainly did not set out to rewrite *Tristan* for children—though it is hard to imagine most children sitting still for five hours!—and Schickele's version is not designed for the "comprehension" of dancers in Buenos Aires. (Like all of his works, it is intended for those who will appreciate poking fun at well-known classical music.) *The King's Singers* do not help

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<sup>39</sup> *Beatallica's* "All You Need is Blood," a translation of *The Beatles'* "All You Need is Love" is a case in point. Rather than the multi-part harmony *The Beatles* sing on the words "Love, love, love..." *Beatallica* has a mere pair of voices singing the words "Blood, blood blood..." on relentless parallel fourths, a hallmark of *Metallica's* vocal style during the 1990s. Also, instead of beginning with a phrase of the *Marseillaise* played by a brass band, *Beatallica* start their version with the opening of "The Star Spangled Banner" on electric guitar, à la Jimmy Hendrix.

music theorists understand the latent counterpoint in popular music of the sixties, and Walter Murphy does not help disco dancers “get” Beethoven. As I have demonstrated, these translations involve a change of meaning by association with a particular time, place, or genre.

### **1.2: Young-Jo Lee’s *Piano Variations*: Speaking French with a Korean Accent— or—Speaking Korean with a French accent?**

More examples of musical translation *par excellence* can be found in Korean Composer Young-Jo Lee’s *Piano Variations*.<sup>40</sup> The piece begins with a theme, followed by variations in the style of familiar composers. These variations are perhaps unavoidably parodic, whether or not he intended them to be, though Lee claims that their primary purpose was didactic, used in part “to help [Korean] music students understand some of the basic chronological stylistic development in Western music.”<sup>41</sup>

In the variations, Lee primarily develops the theme’s melody—perhaps its best feature— while leaving behind most of the material in the other voices. Not all of the variations are clear translations of the theme; in some cases, imitating the style of the composer seems to have been a priority over preserving the theme’s melody, forgoing paraphrase in favor of pure pastiche. In the “Bach” variation, the

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<sup>40</sup> The complete title of the piece is *Piano Variations on the “Baugoge” in the Compositional Styles of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Bartok, Webern, Messiaen and Y.J. Lee* (himself). The theme’s melody was composed by Lee’s father, though Lee himself provided the harmonic setting.

<sup>41</sup> Gu-Jang, 2006, p. 3

Gu-Jang learned this information from a personal interview with Lee. Reid describes a similar piece by Lee, *Variations 3B* as “a light-hearted educational aid,” though one that “also parodies actual works,” making “fleeting reference” to a wide range of pieces by Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. (Reid, 2000, p. 3) Lee also composed yet another work in a similar vein: *Variations on a Theme of Schubert*.

theme is turned into a fugal subject, and soon becomes unrecognizable. The “Beethoven” variation is likewise a significant expansion of the theme, turning it into a full sonata. And the “Webern” variation is of appropriate scale, but the sparse, pointillistic texture forbids recognition of the original melody despite almost identical pitch material. These are fine examples of stylistic imitation, but poor examples of translation, as most listeners would not recognize them as versions of the theme. Nonetheless, the variations in the respective styles of Chopin, Debussy, and Messiaen are cases in point.

### 1.2.1: “Chopin”

In the “Chopin” variation, the theme is always recognizable. After a two measure “oom-pa-pa” introduction, the remaining sixteen measures of the variation clearly correspond to those of the theme. Both the theme and this variation are in 6/8 meter, and in many measures the melody is identical to that of theme (though transposed down a whole-step to Eb-major). Adding a pattern of accompaniment in the style of a Chopin nocturne throughout is sufficient to translate the theme into the 19<sup>th</sup>-century salon style, but Lee does not stop here; lest there be any doubt what “language” this variation is in, Lee borrows from two *specific* works by Chopin as well: The canonical Nocturne, Op.9 no. 2 in Eb major, and Sonata No. 2.<sup>42</sup> In so doing, Lee makes this translation all the more convincing by combining stylistic allusion and quotation, weaving in patches from Chopin’s music into the theme.

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<sup>42</sup> Kwon elaborates, “Lee imitates the triplet accompaniment style of Nocturne Op. 9-2 in the left hand throughout this variation, using arpeggio embellishment in the right hand ([mm]. 3,6 and 8).” (2000, pp. 28-9) She continues, “The left hand of [mm.] 15-17 illustrates quotations from the left hand rhythmic pattern of the third movement of Chopin’s Piano Sonata, No. 2.” (Ibid, p. 30) Hwang notes the allusion to Op. 9 no. 2 as well. (2005, p. 8)

### 1.2.2: “Debussy”

In both the “Debussy” and “Messiaen” variation, Lee was faced with the problem of recomposing the theme in different scalar collections while keeping the melody recognizable. The point is not for the melody to sound *exactly* the same; a few intervals are supposed to sound “out of place.” Since we can generally recognize tonal transpositions of a motif without difficulty, it is certainly possible to recognize a theme even in modes with different intervallic patterns, especially when the melodies have (near) identical rhythm and contour, but there is still the question of *how* to map the notes of one scale on to another.

To evoke the style of Debussy, Lee changes the meter from 6/8 to 4/4, and translates the theme’s melody into the whole-tone scale with a rich accompaniment of augmented triads. (Again, see the appendix for a score of the movement.) The first three measures are exclusively in the collection WT-0. For the remainder of the variation, however, Lee largely sidesteps the problem of mapping a diatonic melody into a mode with a lower cardinality. At times, instead of making alterations to the melody, he accompanies the diatonic tune with augmented triads, alternating whole-tone collections as necessary to accommodate the notes of the diatonic melody. And in other parts of the variation, he seems to not bother preserving the melody at all, abandoning translation in favor of pure pastiche, as well as, according to Gu-Jang, some borrowing from the prelude of Debussy’s *Danseuses de Delphes*.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Gu-Jang (2006), pp. 48-51.

### 1.2.3: Melody in Lee’s “Messiaen” Variation (Mode 3)

The “Messiaen” variation, more so than the “Chopin,” or the “Debussy,” is a “literal,” note-for-note translation of the theme into a new style; it is the most clearly isomorphic mapping of the theme’s melody onto that of a variation. (The accompanying voices from the theme are not “translated” as faithfully—more on this below.) This variation is twenty measures in length, the first sixteen of which correspond to the theme in its entirety. The final phrase (mm. 17-20, shown below in Example 1-11) is an altered *da capo*, which Kwon notes, may reference the “Noel” of Messiaen’s *Vingt regards sur l’enfant Jesus*,<sup>44</sup> again using both stylistic and piece-specific allusion to make it clear whose idiolect the variation is in.

Perhaps the most straightforward way to translate a diatonic theme into the style of Messiaen is to use one of his well-known “modes of limited transposition.” Lee does exactly this, selecting Mode 3 (set class [01245689T]) for the first sixteen measures, and Mode 6 (set-class [0124678T]), for the *da capo*.<sup>45</sup> Compare the three scalar collections in Example 1-5 below.

The image shows three musical staves illustrating scalar collections. Above the staves, 'Step Class' is labeled with numbers 0 through 8. The first staff, 'C Diatonic', shows a natural scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff, 'Mode 3', shows a mode with a lowered 3rd and 7th degree: C4, D4, Eb4, E4, F#4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5. The third staff, 'Mode 6', shows a mode with a lowered 2nd, 3rd, and 6th degree: C4, Db4, Eb4, E4, F#4, G#4, Ab4, Bb4, C5.

#### EXAMPLE 1-5: Comparison of the diatonic collection to Messiaen’s modes

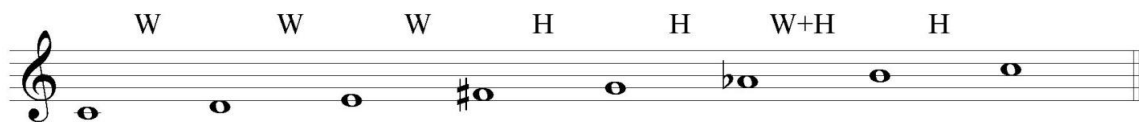
<sup>44</sup> Kwon (2000), p. 43

In her words, “The last *allargando* section hints at the final chordal section of Messiaen’s ‘Noel’ from *Vingt regards sur L’Enfant Jesus*.”

<sup>45</sup> These modes are the respective second and third most common for Messiaen to use. (See Cheong, 2002)

To translate the melody into a Mode 3 texture (at this transposition, the aggregate minus the augmented triad C#, F, A) we can see that preserving “step class” is likely not the most felicitous solution.<sup>46</sup> If each of the seven diatonic scale members mapped onto their corresponding step class in Mode 3, the range of the melody would contract significantly, threatening the recognizability of the theme.

Rather, it seems as though Lee chose to preserve “name-class” over step class. When mapping the diatonic scale into Mode 3, he first had as many pitch classes map onto themselves as possible, accounting for C, D, E, G, and B.<sup>47</sup> This transposition of Mode 3 lacks F and A, so these pitch classes are replaced by F# and Ab respectively; Lee apparently mapped these remaining pitch classes (F and A) onto the only available member of their respective name-classes that appeared in the mode. However, the scale that this produces (C, D, E, F#, G, Ab, B) lacks the exclusively whole-or-half step character of the diatonic scale, having an augmented second between Ab and B, and perhaps leaves the sound world of the original theme too much:



**EXAMPLE 1-6: Hypothetical Mode 3 Scalar Subset**

<sup>46</sup> I borrow the term “step class” from Matthew Santa (1999) to avoid referring to the members of symmetrical modes as “scale degrees.”

<sup>47</sup> For PC E, there is more than one choice of note of the same “name-class” to map onto, though Lee chooses to map E onto itself exclusively; there are no Eb’s in the Mode 3 melody.

I suspect that Lee was not satisfied with the resultant scale, and changed the mapping from B-natural onto itself to onto B $\flat$  (in three out of four cases)<sup>48</sup> to produce the WT+1 scale in its entirety.<sup>49</sup> This scale is “diatonic enough” (having seven pitch classes and only whole or half steps) but not *too* diatonic; the displaced scale degrees make it sound like a whole-tone-esque, vaguely gallicized version of the theme.

**EXAMPLE 1-7: Lee’s “Theme” (top line, transposed to C major) compared to the first sixteen measures of the “Messiaen” variation**

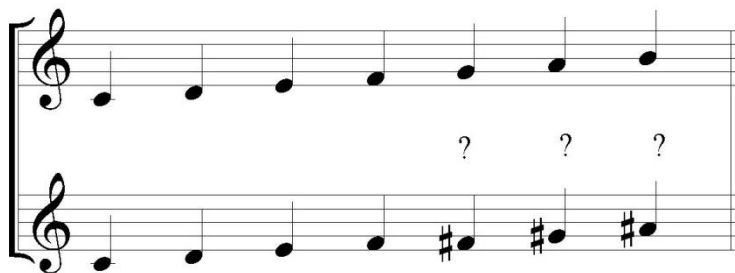
**EXAMPLE 1-8: The resultant WT+1 Scale (with “chromatic” B-natural) when the diatonic collection is mapped onto Mode 3**

<sup>48</sup>I view the one B-natural used in the Mode-3 version of the melody as something analogous to a raised leading tone in minor. That said, in the one case in the “Messiaen” variation where we find B-natural, it does not immediately precede tonic; it is the focal point of the phrase.

<sup>49</sup> The WT+1 scale is one of only three heptatonic scales that contains two class-1 intervals and five class-2 intervals between step classes; The other two are the diatonic and the acoustic (or ascending melodic-minor) scales. The WT+1 is the least “even,” or well-spaced of these scales, as the two semitones between step classes are adjacent to one another, though—I argue—it is nonetheless the most productive heptatonic subset of both Mode 3 (and Mode 6) that can be used as a scale.

#### 1.2.4: Melody in Lee's "Messiaen" Variation (Mode 6)

For the *da capo* in Mode 6, the mapping of the diatonic melody onto this 8-note scale is much more straightforward. Since the melody of this four-measure passage only contains scale degrees  $^1$ - $^4$ , Lee was able to select a transposition of this mode that shares step classes 0-3 (C, D, E, F, F#, G#, A#, B) with the diatonic melody. This permits a "corrected" version of his father's tune, sounding exactly as it appears in the theme, though transposed and recontextualized into Messiaen's modal-harmonic space. Although we never hear the equivalents of scale degrees 5, 6, and 7 in the melody of the Mode 6 portion, Example 9 below displays step classes simply mapping onto one another. If this mapping is correct, that means that the diatonic tune, filtered through both Mode 3 and Mode 6 yields the same 7 note set-class: The WT+1 scale.<sup>50</sup>



**EXAMPLE 1-9: Pitch classes correspondences between the diatonic theme melody and the Mode 6 portion of "Messiaen."**

<sup>50</sup>The fact that a diatonic melody can be mapped onto two different modes—two with different cardinalities, no less—and yield the same collection reveals an interesting property about Modes 3 and 6. Simpson-Litke (2010) has shown that these two modes are unique in that both contain the whole-tone scale as a subset. By definition, therefore, both scales must also contain the WT+1 scale; any set with a cardinality of eight or higher which contains the complete whole-tone scale as a subset *must* also contain the complete WT+1 scale—it is the only set with a cardinality of seven that contains the complete whole-tone scale. The WT+1 scale is the largest common subset of Modes 3 and 6, and it is also the most scalar heptatonic set contained by both of these modes.



### 1.2.5: Harmony in Lee's "Messaien" Variation (Mode 3)

Having displayed how the melody is filtered into the language of Messiaen, there is still the question of how to translate diatonic *harmony* into these symmetrical modes. Does one perform the same process on the other voices, keeping similar voice leading wherever possible? Or should one privilege the verticalities, seeking corresponding set-classes in the new modes? (Or does it matter at all what the other voices are doing if we can recognize the melody?)

The image displays a musical score for piano accompaniment, consisting of four systems of staves. Each system contains two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in 6/8 time and features complex, dissonant chords and intricate melodic lines. The first system starts at measure 1, the second at measure 5, the third at measure 9, and the fourth at measure 13. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and dynamic markings, illustrating the harmonic language of Mode 3.

EXAMPLE 1-10: Mode 3 portion of "Messaien" Variation (mm. 1-16)

In both the Mode 3 and Mode 6 portions, Lee generates the harmonies primarily *from the melody* (rather than from the harmony or voice leading of the theme) though he performs this process in different ways in the respective sections. For the portion of the “Messiaen” variation in Mode 3 (see Example 1-10 above), the harmonies are relentlessly pentachordal; every note in the melody is accompanied by (at least) four other pitch classes. Almost all of these pentachords (with a few exceptions, explained below) *belong to the same Mode 3 set-class*. They are not the same set-class in Mod12, but within a Mod9 system, they form an equivalence class, related by transposition and inversion.<sup>51</sup> A Mod9 set-theory, though less well-explored than its diatonic counterpart is not without precedent; Simpson-Litke has developed a set-theory exactly for this mode in Messiaen’s music, and Neidhöfer has developed a Mod8 set-theory specifically designed for Messiaen’s use of the octatonic scale (or “Mode 2”).<sup>52</sup> Below is a chart displaying the ten classes of pentachords in this nine-note system and how they correspond to Mod12 set-classes.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This is analogous to a diatonic passage—in C major, for simplicity’s sake—comprising exclusively seventh-chords. Seventh-chords contain four pitch classes, which is one more than half of the “aggregate” in a diatonic universe; pentachords have the same property in a nine-note scale. All seventh-chords in diatonic universe are the same set-class, [0135], but they belong to three different set classes in a Mod12 context.

<sup>52</sup> See Simpson-Litke (2010) and Neidhöfer (2005).

<sup>53</sup> The list of Mod9 set-classes could be applied to *any* 9-note scale. However, the correspondences to Mod12 set classes are specific to Messiaen’s Mode 3. Set classes in this symmetrical mode, regardless of their cardinality, can correspond to as many as (but no more than) three Mod 12 PC sets.

Mod 9 PC Set		Corresponding PC Sets In Mod 12				
Designation <sup>54</sup>		012...	013...	014...	02....	Other
5-1	<01234>	(01245)			(02346)	
5-2	<01235>	(01246)	(01347)		(02347)	
5-3	<01245>	(01256)	(01357)	(01457)		
5-4	<01236>	(01248)	(01348)			
5-5	<01246>	(01258)	(01358)		(02368)	
<a href="#">5-6</a>	<a href="#">&lt;01346&gt;</a>			(01458)	(02468)	
5-7	<01256>	(01268)				(01568)
5-8	<01356>			(01468)	(01478)	
<a href="#">5-9</a>	<a href="#">&lt;02346&gt;</a>				(02458)	(03458)
5-10	<01357>			(01469)	(02479)	

**TABLE 1.1: MOD-9 Pentachords (in Prime Form)**

The vast majority of sonorities in the first portion of Lee’s “Messiaen” variation are of Mod9 set-class 5-9. This includes every sonority with C, E, F#, G or Bb in the melody, and some with Ab. While these sonorities are all the same set-class, they are not voiced the same way. There is Mod9 scalar planing only in pitch-class space, not in pitch space; parallel motion prevails, but there is certainly oblique and contrary motion as well. The remaining pentachords (all those with D in the melody and one with Ab) are of Mod9 set class 5-6 (see above).<sup>55</sup> However,

<sup>54</sup> Note that these pentachords are not listed in the order from most densely packed to least. They are listed in the order of how they complement the tetrachords in Mod9.

<sup>55</sup> I omit two sonorities from my analysis. See the latter half of m. 10 in the appendix. While there is a pentachord momentarily—which is, by the way, Mod 9 set-class 5-3—there are a total of seven pitch classes sounding by the end of the measure. This septachord has one extra-modal pitch (C#) and it is not possible to construct this sonority using only the notes of a Mode 3 scale. Therefore, this verticality cannot be labeled with a set-class designed for Messiaen’s Mode 3. Also see the final sonority of m. 11. I am uncertain about which accidentals Lee intended to use here. The editing of cautionary accidentals is sloppy in the latter two systems of the Mode 3 texture, and given this uncertainty, it seems inappropriate to (definitively) label this sonority with a set-class.

changing merely the accidental on one note in all of these class 5-6 chords would make them class 5-9.<sup>56</sup> It is tempting to wonder if Lee misspelled these chords, meaning to have every sonority part of the same class, or if he kept some of the sonorities different for some aesthetic reason (perhaps he liked the whole-tone subset that harmonizes D.). Regardless, the entire passage in Mode 3 comprises exclusively sonorities related by transposition or “fuzzy” transposition—and even the “fuzzy” relations are nearly crisp.<sup>57</sup> In fact, these two set classes (5-6 and 5-9) are closely related in terms of Mod9 interval-class content. As far as I am aware, there is no precedent for an interval-class vector in Mod9, but the principles guiding its use are familiar; the only difference is that in a nine-note scale, there are four interval classes rather than six. Set-class 5-6 has an IC vector of **2242**, while set-class 5-9’s vector is **2332**. These two vectors differ by the minimum amount possible without being Mod9 Z-sets.

While I have argued that the harmonies in the Mod9 portion of the “Messiaen” variation are derived from the melody, and move almost exclusively by (fuzzy) transposition, I believe that Lee nonetheless made a few attempts to incorporate features of the theme’s harmonic character into the sonorities of Mode 3 section. The chromaticism of the theme presents an interesting problem: How does one map the five potential non-diatonic pitches onto the mere three non-enneadic pitch classes? As it turns out, there are few pitches outside of the enneadic scale in the

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<sup>56</sup> Each sonority with D in the soprano contains an E. If one were to change the E to an Eb in this sonority, it would become class 5-9. Likewise, the sonority with Ab in m. 7 (following a suspended G) is class 5-6, but changing the B to Bb yields class 5-9.

<sup>57</sup> As Mod9 set class 5-9 is inversionally symmetrical, all members of the class are related by transposition alone (and trivially by inversion).

Mode 3 portion of the “Messiaen” variation. Two of them, an A-natural in m. 7 and a C# in m.10, may correspond to chromaticism in the theme. The prior may refer to the C# in m. 7 of the theme; both pitches are situated between two and three step classes below their respective tonic. The latter, which appears in the only septachord of the variation, is a salute to the (incomplete) V<sup>9</sup> chord in m. 10 of theme. The two sonorities have the highest cardinality in their respective variation, which strengthens the argument for harmonic analogy.

#### 1.2.6: Harmony in Lee’s “Messiaen” Variation (Mode 6)

The harmony of the latter part of the variation in Mode 6 seems further divorced from that of theme. It is likewise derived from the melody, though quite differently than in the Mode 3 portion. Each hand is exclusively trichordal, but the combination of both hands results in sets of various cardinalities ranging from 3 (both hands identical in PC content) to 6 (each hand sounding three distinct pitch classes from the other). In each hand (examined separately), the trichords are consistently of the same Mod8 set-class, [025].

This passage is entirely symmetrical, though not around a single point; there are six different axes of symmetry at play in this four-measure passage. One interesting feature of all six of these axes is that while they are all symmetrical within a Mod8 system, *none* is symmetrical in Mod12, which is to say that the notes which map onto one another are not always equidistant (in semitones) from the axis point. (And therefore, the inversional partners would not produce identical sum numbers in Mod12.) This symmetry is analogous to how B and D are symmetrical

around C in C major, as opposed to how B and Db are symmetrical around C in chromatic space. Of course, in Mod8, it is possible to have Mod12 symmetries (at this transposition, if the axis is around D and G#, or B and F), but Lee opts not to use any of symmetries of this type.<sup>58</sup>

The image shows a musical score for Example 1-11, titled "Axes of Symmetry in mm.17-20 of 'Messiaen'". The score is arranged in four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. System 1 is labeled "Around D4/E4". System 2 is labeled "Around E4". System 3 has two parts: "Around C4" and "Around F#4". System 4 has two parts: "Around C4/D4" and "Around F#4/G#4". The notation includes various notes, rests, and accidentals, illustrating the symmetrical relationships between notes in each system.

**EXAMPLE 1-11: Axes of Symmetry in mm.17-20 of "Messiaen"**

<sup>58</sup> This is not to say that he *should* have used a neater symmetry; it seems clear why he chose to make the melody and bass symmetrical around E/D: As we can see in Example 1-11, the two lines on the first staff have identical pitch class content with this axis, using only the notes C, D, E and F, which in effect doubles the melody in the next-most prominent voice.

As we can see in Example 1-11 above, there is one axis between the primary melody and bass lines on the first staff, and another on the second staff between the pairs of “inner voices” that complete the [025] trichords accompanying the melody and bass. We also find a different pair of axes between the countermelody and contrabass lines on the third staff, and yet another pair around which the inner voices of the counter-lines on the fourth staff are situated.<sup>59</sup>

### 1.2.7: Speaking Korean with a French accent?

The ironic question asked above (“Speaking Korean with a French Accent...?”) is not meant to be answered, and doing so would veer dangerously close to essentialism. There is nothing essentially Korean about Lee’s theme, nor is there anything essentially French about the modes in the Messiaen variation, though perhaps these scales connote Frenchness by their association with Parisian art music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I consider Lee’s variation in the style of Messiaen a prototypic example of *musical* translation, though not an obvious analog to *linguistic* translation.<sup>60</sup> When we compare the variations in the styles of these French (affiliate) composers to the theme—as I hope to have made clear—it is hardly at all like comparing the same passage of text in two languages; rather, a better metaphor is listening to one’s own language spoken with a foreign accent. Imagine a

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<sup>59</sup> While there are two different axes in *pitch* space for the voices on staves 3 and 4 in Example 11 above, there is in fact only one axis per staff in *pitch class* space.

<sup>60</sup> It may, however, be akin to linguistic translation if the passage of text is a list of loan words. While working as a TESOL instructor, I “translated” countless words for my Korean speaking students that were in fact loans from English. The word “sausage” in Korean is borrowed from English, though pronouncing it as one would in English, [sɔ.sədʒ], was not always intelligible to my students. When I said [so.sa.dʒi], the same word adapted for Korean phonology, I was understood without difficulty.

monolingual native-speaker of Mandarin reading aloud a text in German, a language to which she has no exposure. Whether or not the passage is intelligible to a German speaker, the changes to the vowels, consonants, and stress patterns affects the listening process much in the same way that changing the scale of a melody does.<sup>61</sup>

### **1.3: Slonimsky and the 51 Minitudes**

Nicolas Slonimsky (1894-1995) is perhaps best known for his scholarship (especially his *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*), but he has also composed a great deal of music. His *51 Minitudes for Piano* is a collection of aphoristic parodies in which we find translations of several well-known works, both from the classical and vernacular literatures.

#### **1.3.1: Interval Operations in Slonimsky's Minitudes**

The *Minitudes* open with a cleverly titled piece, " $\sqrt{B^5}$ ," about which Slonimsky says the following: "The square root of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the intervals of which are cut in half. The Fate Motive of a major third becomes a major second; octaves become tritones.... After a while you will like the square root better; it is more salty, and acrid."<sup>62</sup> Despite the radical changes to pitch material from halving the melodic intervals, this piece is still clearly recognizable as Beethoven's Fifth.

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<sup>61</sup>Levi-Strauss likewise analogizes the notes of a musical scale to the phonemic inventory of a language: "[L]ike any phonological system, all modal or tonal (or even polytonal or atonal) systems... selecting some from among the infinite number no doubt available, and exploiting the contrast and combinations of which they are capable in order to evolve a code that serves to distinguish different meanings." (1969, p. 21)

<sup>62</sup> See the preface to the *Minitudes*, p. IV.



This motive is arguably the most iconic in the Classical literature, and preserving contour and rhythm is more than adequate to identify it as a bizarre, modernist presentation of the canonical symphony.



**EXAMPLE 1-12:** *Minitudes*, “ $\sqrt{B^5}$ ” (excerpt)



**EXAMPLE 1-13:** *Minitudes*, “BachX2=Debussy” (complete)

Another piece in this vein is “Bach x2= Debussy,” (Example 1-13 above) in which Slonimsky performs the opposite transformation as he did with Beethoven’s

Fifth. In his words, “the intervals of the Bach c-minor fugue [from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*] are multiplied by 2. Result: all minor seconds become major, and it all begins to sound like something written by Debussy.”<sup>63</sup> Julian Hook aptly describes the result of this transformation as “curiously impressionistic counterpoint.”<sup>64</sup> Doubling the intervals is an effective way of simultaneously gallicizing, modernizing (and perhaps somehow changing the brow) of Bach, but it certainly is not the only way. Recall that in the “Debussy” Variation, Lee dabbles with an impressionist’s palette by different means. Rather than doubling the intervals, for parts of the variation, he simply maps step classes from the diatonic scale onto those of the whole-tone (see Example 1-14). Had Lee performed the same transformation that Slonimsky did, his “Debussy” variation would have appeared as it does in Example 1-15 below.



**EXAMPLE 1-14: Mapping of diatonic step classes onto whole-tone**



**EXAMPLE 1-15: Hypothetical interval doubling performed on the Theme**

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Hook (2007), p. 19-20

Perhaps “Bach x2=Debussy” may more obviously be called a translation than “ $\sqrt{B^5}$ ,” insofar as a piece by Bach is converted into Debussy’s “musical language” (in whose idiolect is Beethoven’s Fifth symphony recomposed?), but “ $\sqrt{B^5}$ ” nonetheless fits the bill; it is recognizable, yet the associative meaning and affect are altered significantly.

### 1.3.2: Slonimsky’s Serial Translations

In Slonimsky’s *Minitudes* we also find versions of “Happy Birthday” and “Ach, du lieber Augustin,” translated into serial music, a practice most readily associated with its pioneer, Arnold Schoenberg.<sup>65</sup> Few would question that Slonimsky’s 12-tone versions are intended to be humorous, but the choice to recompose these two pieces in particular suggests that they are homages to Schoenberg, as well as translations into his style. (As I argue in Chapter 0, homage and parody are *not* mutually exclusive.) It is well known that Schoenberg imagined a future of kindergarteners learning to sing 12-tone rows. We might imagine that Slonimsky, in crafting serial settings of these children’s tunes, is paying tribute to a musical giant twenty years his senior by (in a manner of speaking) resolving Schoenberg’s unfinished business, making a kindergarten songbook for a modernist utopia.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Of course, serial music is hardly a uniform style that can be characterized by shared, audible features; knowing that a piece is serial tells one little about what it will sound like. Comparing the lush, romantic, tonal evocations of Berg’s *Lyric Suite* to the cautious restraint of Webern’s op. 21 betrays contrast enough even between the two most celebrated students of Schoenberg himself, and serial practice only grew more diverse in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, I argue that these serial *Minitudes* are translations into Schoenberg’s style specifically, as they most closely resemble the sound world of his Op. 25 for Piano, arguably the sonic prototype for serial music.

<sup>66</sup> Of note, Milton Babbitt composed a serial piece called *Play on Notes* (1966), which is designed for children to perform. It is an unusually consonant piece for Babbitt, but it is nonetheless composed with the same serial rigor as any of his works designed for professional performers.

Further evidence for homage is the fact that Schoenberg has borrowed “Ach, du lieber” as well, quoting a portion of it in his second string quartet.

Slonimsky’s row treatment, however, is little like Schoenberg’s. His 12-tone parody of “Ach, du lieber Augustin” is derived from four different rows (two in the melody, two in the accompaniment) rather than transpositions and inversions of a single row.<sup>67</sup> This is not the result of a lack of familiarity with “classical” serial method. Both “Happy Birthday” (discussed below) and “Pandiatonic Melodies” prove that he understood canonical serial procedures; in the latter, we find a diatonic melody presented in retrograde, inversion, and retrograde-inversion respectively. In “Ach, du lieber,” I assume that Slonimsky used different rows in order to create a close resemblance to the original tune to ensure that it is recognizable with every sequence of twelve pitch classes.

Slonimsky’s serial “Happy Birthday” is likewise designed to resemble the tune on which it is based, but this time, not at the expense of the abstract unity of using only different versions of a single row. The first half of the melody is a presentation of the single row in prime form, while the second half is same transposition of the row in retrograde.

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<sup>67</sup> That said, we do find invariant segments between all four of the rows; the pitch classes Bb and Eb always appear next to one another, and sometimes a pair of rows share a trichord, but the four rows appear to be otherwise unrelated.

"Ach, du lieber"

12-Tone Version

Row X: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Row Y: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

**EXAMPLE 1-16: Comparison of "Ach, du lieber" and Slonimsky's Parody<sup>68</sup>**

"Happy Birthday"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 (X) 1

$P_0$   $R_0$

**EXAMPLE 1-17: Comparison of "Happy Birthday" and Slonimsky's Parody**

The combined concerns of fidelity to a single row and resemblance to the original melody of "Happy Birthday" are not easily reconciled. Consequently, the first half of the paraphrase resembles "Happy Birthday" more closely. In spite of this, once we are "convinced" that we are hearing a version of the tune we know, the sharp differences in intervallic content towards the end seem not to pose a problem.

<sup>68</sup> On this example, identical pitch between the versions is marked with a \*, identical pitch plus/minus one semitone by a +, identical interval by a -, and identical interval plus/minus one semitone by ~.

#### **1.4: Summary and Conclusions:**

Above, I have defined the process of translation as a change to musical structure significant enough to alter the affect, and therefore connotative meaning of a piece, but not so severe as to render the translated music unrecognizable. My definition of musical translation differs from those of previous authors as it is not assumed to be equivalent to the linguistic process. Comparing musical translation to analogous processes in language can be productive, but assuming equivalence between the two domains generally accomplishes little in helping to understand either language or music. Musical translation is not about, as with a novel or poem, conveying the essence of a literary work to an audience who does not know the language in which it was conceived. On the contrary, music is translated primarily for those who are familiar with the original piece—familiarity is an essential part of the listening process, without which the humor of the intentional misrepresentation is lost.

The goals of a musical translation, then, are quite different from those of a linguistic translation. Music is not a language, and we should not expect music to have all of the semantic properties that language does. Many cite music's untranslatability as one of its primary distinguishing features from language, without stopping to ask exactly what musical translation might entail. When we give the metaphor a second chance, we learn why we should keep this avenue open.

## **Chapter 2—On the Musically Forge(t)able: Television Cartoons and the Paraphrase of Popular Music**

### **2.0: Overview**

Patents, trademarks, and intellectual property laws present a number of challenges to television producers. The names of specific brands and products often must be avoided on television, forcing writers to develop a number of strategies to refer to them indirectly. Getting around the names of products and services is simple enough; if we hear a character mention a social media site called “YouFace” or “FaceConnect,” there is little doubt that *Facebook* is the referent.<sup>1</sup> Taking it a step further, on some programs we find altered versions of product logos; on *The Simpsons*, characters use “Mapple” computer products (like “MyPods”), which come complete with a clever graphic that signifies *Apple* computers: an apple with *two* bites taken out (shown below). And when television producers want to use a familiar musical theme on their program, they face a more abstract problem still: Creating a musical equivalent of the “Mapple” logo.



**Table 2.1: The “Mapple” logo vs. the *Apple Computers* logo**

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<sup>1</sup> The former appeared in several episodes from the fourth season of *30 Rock*, the clips of which can be found here at Gawker.com (Accessed March 2012) The latter appeared on a crime/detective drama, the source of which I cannot recall.

If the network is unable (or unwilling) to obtain the legal rights to a copyrighted piece, creative teams must ask a composer to craft a similar work that evokes the piece they had hoped to use. To distinguish this practice of paraphrase from those I discuss in other chapters, I call this technique *copyphrase*. In this chapter, I explore how composers navigate the delicate process of creating new pieces that unmistakably call to mind a familiar tune without using the piece or infringing on copyright law, providing a detailed overview of the practice of copyphrase on two long-running animated sitcoms: *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*.<sup>2</sup>

I focus on these two programs in particular because 1) they provide a remarkable range of examples, 2) the two shows serve as an effective counterbalance to one another, and 3) the composers in their employ are uniquely skilled at this brand of paraphrase, truly having made an art of it.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes the paraphrased cues on these shows are so canny that they pass as the tune upon which they are based; it often takes a second listening to even realize we are in fact hearing a different piece.

### 2.0.1: Question of identity: How copyphrase differs from translation

On the surface, musical translation and copyphrase seem to be birds of a feather. Both involve the adaptation of familiar music, and depend upon listener

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<sup>2</sup>*The Simpsons* is in fact the longest running scripted show in television history. I do not attempt to write a complete history of copyphrase, though I return to a bird's-eye view of the practice at the very end of the chapter (however briefly), to compare how (and why) some other composers have resorted to this technique.

<sup>3</sup> In an interview with Daniel Goldmark, Clausen noted how "tricky" this process is, calling it "an interesting skill to develop," despite finding it "kind of scary sometimes that they ask [him] to do these things." (Goldmark (2002) p. 246) Clausen is clear in his preference for composing "totally original music" over being asked to emulate something by producers suffering from "temp-itis [his term]," but despite his ambivalence for the practice of copyphrase, he is nonetheless a skilled practitioner. (Ibid, pp. 246-7)



recognition of the source material. Yet the goals of the processes are otherwise antithetical. With translation, as I have argued in Chapter 1, the goal is to change a piece enough to alter its associative meaning, but not so much so that we can no longer identify it. In other words, the notes and rhythms need to be similar enough that one could reasonably argue that the hypotext and hypertext are versions of the same piece, despite the changes to genre, instrumentation, and timbre. It is these expressive factors, however, that are *least* likely to change in the construction of a copyphrase. The instrumentation is, in most cases, not changed at all, or at least not significantly enough so as to alter the affect. The stylistic *feel* of the piece cannot, and must not be changed. So unlike translation, with a copyphrase, *the pragmatic, generic-conventional meanings are necessarily preserved, while the identity of the piece must not be.*

The issue of how to define a piece of music is first and foremost an aesthetic question, though its import extends well beyond the ivory tower as the stakes continue to rise in the legal battles over music as intellectual property. How does one determine whether or not two pieces are “the same,” and thus two versions (or even different performances) of a single work, or if two pieces are “different”? This question has grown more difficult to answer, especially considering, say, works in the fluxus tradition by the likes of John Cage (et al), but even if we speak only of fully notated (or notatable) music, preserved either through a score (or an iconic recording in the case of vernacular musics), the identity of a piece is still not easily defined.

Scruton discusses the issue of musical ontology and identity at great length, suggesting that “[t]he most convenient way of identifying [pieces of music] is as temporally ordered patterns of pitched sound.”<sup>4</sup> He asserts that “[i]t is precisely when a work is arranged so as to disrupt or reorder its rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic organization that we feel inclined to deny its identity with the original—as with Webern’s orchestration of the six-part ‘Ricerca.’”<sup>5</sup> But is an orchestration a “new” work? Webern’s adaptation is not quantifiably “the same” as its source in every respect, but it seems to be going a bit far to argue that this is *a different piece*. Rather, I would say that this is a translation—primarily a *time* translation, and one that involves very little alteration to notes and rhythms at that. Scruton continues, “[w]e could adopt a stricter criterion, and add color and timbre to the specification of the relevant sound pattern,” but he ultimately throws up his arms in concluding that “[i]t is up to us to determine which features of the sound token are features of the same pattern.”<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of where we draw the line on whether or not two pieces are identical, surely most of us will agree that color and timbre alone cannot sufficiently determine the identity of a piece. Yet when listening to a copyphrase, it is precisely these factors that are used to convince us that we are hearing the piece that is meant to be evoked. Crucially, though, the notes of the copyphrase are different enough

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<sup>4</sup> Scruton (1997) p. 441

He adds, “[w]ithin limits, tempos can be varied without destroying the pitch pattern of a work... Pitch relations are also indifferent to instrumentation, so that—again, within limits—the instrumentation of a work may vary from performance to performance without changing its identity,” but he concedes that “there is nothing in the concept of a pitch pattern that determines the timbre that will most perspicuously realize it.” (Ibid, p. 442)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 110

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

from those of the source that we can no longer argue that the two pieces are the same. Or put another way, *with translation, a version of the same piece is made to connote something different; with copyphrase, the goal is denote a certain piece of music by using an entirely different piece.*

Nelson Goodman, who in his 1968 book *Languages of Art* discusses the difference in aesthetic value of a Rembrandt painting and a perfect copy, one indistinguishable from the original with the naked eye, argues that the “slightest perceptual difference... matter[s] most aesthetically,”<sup>7</sup> positing that the original is nonetheless of higher value than the counterfeit. In contrast, he considers music to be an “unfakable” art, suggesting that “in music, unlike painting, there is no such thing as a forgery of a known work.” This is because, he explains, painting is an *autographic* art, which is to say that there may only be one “authentic” version of any given painting. Music, rather, like literature, is an *allographic* art, which may involve infinite, equally viable realizations of the same piece—perhaps “allographs” (my term) of the same “grapheme” (again), or notated score.<sup>8</sup> Genette, whose 1993 *L’Ouvre de l’art: Immanence et Transcendance* is largely a critique of Goodman’s *Languages of Art*, says much the same: “[I]n certain arts such as painting, the production of fakes or forgeries... is really an existing practice... It is likewise the case that in other arts, such as literature and music, forgery is not practiced, because

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<sup>7</sup> Goodman (1968), p. 108

<sup>8</sup> Goodman refers specifically to scores in a consciously presentist sense in which all notes and rhythms are fully specified, explicitly omitting figured-bass practice from his discussion.

a correct copy of a text or score is simply a new copy...neither more nor less valid from a literary or musical point of view, than the original.”<sup>9</sup>

In the case of copyphrase, however, these pieces are constructed through a near painterly logic, treating music as though it were an autographic art. To the uncritical ear, a copyphrase should be a convincing forgery, but to those who own the copyright to the piece upon which it is based (and their rhetorically skilled legal teams), it must be clear that it is a close copy, whose lack of authenticity becomes apparent under scrutiny.

### **2.1: Introducing the Music of *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy***

Music is held in high esteem on both *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*. A typical sitcom includes a theme song played at its episodes' beginning and end, along with brief interludes of music to fill in gaps of dialogue and accompany changes of scene, but these programs add to the mix a great deal of underscoring, musical gags, and diegetic numbers. Even more striking than the quantity of music on these programs is the *quality*, both of which have seasoned professional composers, an array of talented voice actors, and a full studio orchestra at their disposal.

The composers for both shows are some of the best-known in the business. They excel not only at the practice of paraphrasing music, but at composing original numbers as well, gifted at pastiche, creating simulacra of tunes in a remarkable range of musical styles. Alf Clausen has been the sole composer for *The Simpsons* for

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<sup>9</sup> Genette (1993/1997), pp. 15-16.

Of note, Genette translated Goodman's book into French, and was more or less inspired to re-write the whole project decades later. One of Genette's primary arguments is that the autographic-allographic binary is not as clear as Goodman makes it out to be.

over 20 years.<sup>10</sup> He has won two Emmy awards for his original music on the show, and has been nominated an astonishing 21 times besides.<sup>11</sup> Adams calls Clausen *The Simpsons'* “secret weapon,” noting that the composer “has proved beyond a doubt that television scoring is not the vast wasteland it is often purported to be and that an intelligent composer can take even the most demanding shows and elevate them to new heights.”<sup>12</sup> Clausen’s success is enabled in part by an accomplished 35-piece orchestra of Los Angeles studio musicians, and when vocals are needed, a group of versatile voice actors who can make their characters sing as gracefully as they talk.<sup>13</sup>

As for *Family Guy*, Seth MacFarlane, the creator of the show—who suddenly, at the time of writing, has become a household name after having hosted the Academy Awards on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013—writes many of the lyrics and records the voices for the three characters who do most of the singing: Peter (the referent ‘guy’ of the family), Stewie (Peter’s talking, singing toddler with a mild British accent), and Brian (the anthropomorphic family dog with a perfect command of the English language).<sup>14</sup> *New York Times* critic David Izkoff showered praise on the music for *Family Guy* in a 2007 article, describing “orchestrations to make Nelson Riddle jealous and lyrics to make Dorothy Parker blush,” explaining that there are “just two men who deserve [our] praise” for the corpus of music on *Family Guy*: Composers Walter Murphy and Ron Jones. Murphy and MacFarlane were awarded an Emmy for

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<sup>10</sup> He was not, however, involved with the show from the very beginning. The theme song for the show was composed by Danny Elfman. Before Clausen joined *The Simpsons'* team in 1990, he was most known for his work on the television show *Alf*. (IMDB, “Alf Clausen,” accessed February 2013)

<sup>11</sup> Emmys.com (Accessed February 2013)

<sup>12</sup> Adams (1997), *Film Score Monthly* (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> IMDB, “Family Guy” (Accessed February 2013) He also voices Peter’s next-door neighbor, Glen Quagmire, and a number of other recurring characters

Outstanding Music and Lyrics in 2002 for their original song, “You’ve Got a Lot to See.” Murphy has been nominated thrice besides,<sup>15</sup> and Jones has had four Emmy nominations for his work on the show as well.<sup>16</sup> Itzkoff continues, “[a]t a time when most television series employ a single composer each, armed with little more than a computer sequencing program and a synthesizer, *Family Guy* has two composers...whose works are played by a live 40-piece orchestra, in scenes that may call for quick melodic cues or full-scale parodies of scenes from stage and movie musicals gone by.”<sup>17</sup>

The mere mention of a 40-piece orchestra in connection with a low-brow television cartoon is remarkable enough, but this was *Family Guy*’s practice as of 2007. In the recent (2012) 200<sup>th</sup> episode (a navel-gazing retrospective of the show’s history to date), MacFarlane explains how in every episode, they use a 50-to-90(!) piece orchestra.<sup>18</sup> Recording time with a full symphony orchestra, as we all know, requires an outstanding music budget, and the producers of *Family Guy* spare no expense, always both willing and able to foot such a bill. As a matter of course, the orchestras for both *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* record non-diegetic cues at tremendous cost, even if they already have one that is virtually identical that could simply be reused—a testament to the importance of music on these shows.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Emmys.com (Accessed February 2013)

<sup>16</sup> Jones has also been awarded two Emmys for his work on *ER*. (Ibid)

<sup>17</sup> Itzkoff (2007)

<sup>18</sup> This episode was called “200 Episodes Later,” and aired on 11/11/12.

<sup>19</sup> Clausen discusses his reluctance to reuse cues in his interview with Adams. In his words, “Pretty much everything is started from scratch... Once in a while there’ll be a transition cue that seems like it’s repeated. Most of the time it’s not repeated verbatim. It’s restructured for new timings, maybe a new twist of something. Once in a while we’ll use it exactly as is... I say we can pull one from the first season and use it in the seventh season and all of a sudden they appear on back-to-back nights in syndication. [laughs] So, we try not to do that too much.” (Adams, 1997) I learned from a personal

## **2.2: <SUNG> “The Simpsons:” (Proto)typical Examples of Copyphrase**

### **2.2.1: “See My Vest”**

One of the most well-known examples of copyphrase from *The Simpsons* is found in the episode “Two Dozen and One Greyhounds” (1995) from the show’s sixth season. In this episode, we hear local curmudgeon Montgomery Burns sing a song called “See My Vest,” explaining his plans to make a suit from the hides of a litter of greyhound puppies. This tune is clearly derived from Alan Menken’s “Be Our Guest” from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). Goldmark, in an interview with Alf Clausen, mentioned this song in particular, noting that “it comes so close to [its source that] you really need to be paying attention to hear the differences.”<sup>20</sup>

The example below displays the respective first verses of “Be Our Guest” and “See My Vest.” Generally, copyphrases are *summaries* of the songs they signify, reducing their length significantly, and “See My Vest” is no exception. Even a three minute song on a twenty-two minute episode is quite a significant percentage of the available broadcast time, so on *The Simpsons*, songs are rarely much more than a minute long, and never are they more than two minutes. “See My Vest” lasts about a minute and twenty seconds (much longer than the average musical cue on the program), and it’s presumably only as long as it is because it appears in lieu of dialogue to advance the narrative.

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interview with a studio musician who has played in the *Family Guy* orchestra that they follow a similar policy of not reusing cues.

<sup>20</sup> Goldmark (2002), p. 246

Lumiere  
Be ... our ... guest! Be our guest! Put our ser-vice to the test, Tie your nap-kin'round your neck, *che-rie*, and we'll provide the

Burns  
See my vest! See my vest! It is pure go-ril-la chest, see my swea-ter, there's no bet-ter, than au-then-tic I-rish

rest, *Soup du jour*, hot *hors d'oeuvres*, Why, we on-ly live to serve, Try the grey stuff, it's de-li-cious! Don't be - live me? Ask the

set-ter. See my hat, 'twas my cat, my eve'-ning wear: vam-pire bat! My white slip-pers are al - bi - no Af - ri - can en - dangered

dish-es! They can sing, they can dance! Af - ter all, Miss, this is France! And the din-ner here is ne - ver se - cond best!

rhi - no. Grizz - ly bear un - der - wear, tur - tle's necks I've got my share, be - ret of poo - dle on my noo - dle it shall rest! -

Go on un - fold your me - nu, take a glance and then - you'll be our guest, be our guest, be our guest!

- Try my real ro - bin suit, it comes one breast or two - ! See my vest, see my vest, see my vest!

### EXAMPLE 2-1: “Be Our Guest” and “See My Vest”

“Be Our Guest” and “See My Vest” have identical verse structure, with the same number of lines and practically the same number of syllables. The two songs also share a common rhyme, having several lines ending in the “guest-test-rest-best-vest-chest” scheme, though “See My Vest” has a bit more internal rhyme, perhaps the writers thumbing their noses at the hokey rhyme scheme in a song for a children’s movie. The key of “See My Vest” is different, and the contour of the lines are as well, but the near identical rhythms, comparable range, and (reasonably)



accurate imitation of style are more than enough to convince the casual listener that they are in fact hearing “Be Our Guest.”

### 2.2.2: “Under the Sea!”

A similar *Disney* parody is found in the episode “Homer Badman” (1994) from the same season. Here, Clausen provides a parody of “Under the Sea” (also by Alan Menken) from *The Little Mermaid* (1989). The song appears, as Friedwald explains, in “a fantasy sequence in which Homer is shown frolicking with, and speedily consuming, dancing shellfish.”<sup>21</sup>

The image shows a musical score comparing two versions of the song "Under the Sea". The top staff is for Sebastian's original song, and the bottom staff is for Homer's parody. Both are in 4/4 time and one flat. The original lyrics are: "Un-der the sea, Un-der the sea, Dar-ling it's bet-ter, down where it's wet-ter, take it from me, (float-in, un-der the sea!)". The parody lyrics are: "Un-der the sea, Un-der the sea, There'll be no ac-cu-sa-tions, just friend-ly crus-ta-ceans un-der the sea!". The melody for the parody is a rhythmic inversion of the original.

### EXAMPLE 2-2: “Under the Sea” and Clausen’s Parody

The example above presents the complete vocal line of the song, compared to a single line of the chorus of Menken’s song from *The Little Mermaid*. As usual, Clausen’s version is short (well under a minute long); a mere ten measures of singing serves as a signifier for the sixteen measure chorus, and is more than adequate to evoke its hypotext. Note that the rhythms of the two melodies are almost identical, and though the key is the same, the contour of many melodic fragments is inverted. Most critically, the instrumentation and timbre instantly recall the sunny, calypso-flavor of the song from *The Little Mermaid*, despite some differences in vocal style between Homer Simpson and the Caribbean-sounding crab.

<sup>21</sup> Friedwald (2002), p. 258

### 2.2.3: “Dr. Zaius (Dr. Zaius)”

Another clear example of copyphrase appears in an episode from the following season, “A Fish Named Selma” (1996). The recurring character Troy McClure, voiced by the late Phil Hartman, is shown in a musical called *Stop the Planet of The Apes: I Want To Get Off*, with an opening number called “Dr. Zaius.” Goldmark asked Clausen in his interview if there “was a particular composer [he was] trying to emulate” with the music for this scene, Clausen claimed that there was no such model.<sup>22</sup> Yet this is quite clearly not the case—either Clausen has told a lie, or simply did not remember this cue. Friedwald notes (half correctly) that this song “is set to the 1986 disco-y hit ‘Rock Me Amadeus’ by somebody or something named Falco”—his words.<sup>23</sup> Of course, it’s not quite “set to” the same tune, but it’s a careful copy, an obvious signifier for “Rock Me Amadeus.”

The image displays two musical excerpts side-by-side. The top excerpt is for Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus" in 4/4 time, featuring a male chorus line with lyrics "A - ma - de - us A - ma - de - us" and a synth/guitar accompaniment. The bottom excerpt is for "The Simpsons, 'Dr. Zaius'" in 4/4 time, featuring a male chorus line with lyrics "Doc - tor Zai - us Doc - tor Zai - us" and a synth accompaniment. Both excerpts show a clear melodic similarity in the vocal lines, particularly in the final five notes of each phrase.

### EXAMPLE 2-3: “Rock Me Amadeus” and “Dr. Zaius”

The two vocal lines have similar melodies with a minor pentatonic flair, and the last five notes of each are the same, ending with the words “Oh Amadeus/Dr.

<sup>22</sup> Goldmark (2002), p. 247

Clausen’s response to the question was, “No, that was simply Troy McClure at his best.” (Ibid)

<sup>23</sup> Friedwald (2002), p. 255

Friedwald also notes that the title of this musical, *Stop the Planet of the Apes: I Want to Get Off*, is a reference to “the hit British show *Stop the World: I Want to Get Off*, which opened on Broadway in 1962.” (Ibid)

Zaius.”<sup>24</sup> The synth lines as well have much in common; both noodle around in natural minor, each figure reaching its peak early in the measure and subsequently falling. The balance of each song is quite different, though each features some spoke-sung lines of verse between the statements of the refrain. In “Rock Me Amadeus,” the lines are almost rapped, while in “Dr. Zaius” there is a spoken call and response between Troy McClure and the apes. The result: Clausen succeeds in making an already campy song even sillier.

#### 2.2.4: The Good, the Bad, and the Wagon

An episode called “All Singing All Dancing” (1998) from *The Simpsons*’ ninth season served as a vehicle to rebroadcast several of the most popular music numbers from the show’s then almost decade-long tenure on prime time, including “See My Vest.” The episode begins, however, as Friedwald explains, “with Homer about to enjoy what he presumes is a shoot ‘em up Western starring Clint Eastwood and Lee Marvin. What he gets instead is *Paint Your Wagon*, Joshua Logan’s strangely lifeless 1969 film... which features [the aforementioned actors] singing.”<sup>25</sup> To further ridicule this movie, “Clausen contrives a new song with this title that positively revels in its own mediocrity”—perhaps one of Clausen’s best originals.<sup>26</sup> Though before the wild men of the west burst into diegetic song, we hear music based upon the well-known theme from *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*.

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<sup>24</sup> Note that “Rock Me Amadeus” begins in A minor, but modulates to B minor about midway through the song. The refrain shown in my example is identical to the earlier refrains in everything other than the key. I present the B minor version for ease of comparison with Clausen’s version in Bb minor.

<sup>25</sup> Friedwald (2002), p. 261

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

Morricone's iconic theme is notated below, alongside three motives by Clausen designed to remind us of it.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is titled "Morricone, *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*" and is labeled "Whistling and Voices". It features a 4/4 time signature and a melody of eighth and quarter notes with a characteristic rhythmic pattern. The bottom staff is titled "The Simpsons Parody, 'Paint That Wagon'" and is divided into three sections: "Acoustic Guitar" (treble clef), "Whistled (Twice)" (treble clef), and "Electric Guitar" (bass clef). The parody maintains the 4/4 time signature and the rhythmic pattern of the original theme.

**EXAMPLE 2-4: Morricone's Theme and Clausen's Signifier**

Clausen's figures evoke Morricone's, as usual, by keeping the rhythm similar, and even through some inversion, but in a more abstract sense. A majority of the intervals within each gesture of Morricone's theme are perfect fourths. Clausen, however, uses a number of perfect fifths, the pitch-class inversion of Morricone's relentless fourths.<sup>27</sup>

**2.3 <SUNG> "Lucky there's a *Family Guy*"**

**2.3.1: Copyphrase in "Peter, Peter, Caviar Eater (1999)"**

*Family Guy's* second season (1999-2000) has perhaps more examples of copyphrase per episode than any other season on either program. The first episode from this season alone contains three examples, two of which I'll discuss at length. In the first of which, Itzkoff explains, "Jones composed an elaborate parody of 'I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here' from the musical 'Annie' for a scene in which the protagonist Peter Griffin learns that he's inherited a mansion from a dead relative.

The song [called "This House is Freakin' Sweet"] was nominated for an Emmy in

<sup>27</sup> As for the balance of the intervals, both composers use several major seconds, and each uses a single minor second. I wonder to what extent Clausen considered the distribution of interval classes in creating a signifier for Morricone's theme.

2000.”<sup>28</sup> Both this song and its model from *Annie* are sung by a servant chorus, one set in the 1930s without (much) irony, the other in 1999 Rhode Island, highlighting the improbability of a house full of servants, one for each task. Jones’ parody of the well-known tune comprises two cues, together making the song over two minutes long—a greater duration than the typical musical number on *The Simpsons*. “I Think I’m Gonna Like It Here” and “This House is Freakin’ Sweet” have similar structures with verses of identical length (and comparable rhyme scheme), alternating sung lines and spoken dialogue between the servants and new houseguest(s). Jones, in effect, created a line-by-line recomposition of a classic show-tune. A single verse of each (excluding spoken portions) is shown below.

As we can see, the rhythms of the vocal lines are more or less identical. While neither the key nor the contours of the lines are the same, the utterances generally begin and end on the same respective scale degrees; all of the lines of the verse, in both songs, begin on  $\hat{3}$ , and three out of four lines in the two songs end on the same scale degree,  $\hat{5}$  or  $\hat{1}$  respectively.

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<sup>28</sup> Itzkoff (2007)

The image shows a musical score for two songs. The first song, "I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here", is in 4/4 time and features a chorus with lyrics: "Ce - cile will lay out all your clothes;". The second song, "This House Is Freakin' Sweet", is in 4/4 time and features a chorus with lyrics: "We on - ly live to kiss your ass;". The score includes vocal lines for Chorus, Annie, and Peter, with lyrics and musical notation. The lyrics for Annie are: "I think I'm gon - na like it here!". The lyrics for Peter are: "My God this house is freak - in' sweet!". The score includes musical notation, lyrics, and performance markings such as "3" and "2".

**EXAMPLE 2-5: "I Think I'm Gonna Like it Here" and "This House is Freakin' Sweet"**

Shortly after this number, Peter mentions diamonds, which leads to a cut-away gag (one of *Family Guy*'s most tried and true comic devices) poking fun at the shadowy 1990s *De Beers* Diamond commercials, deploying a copyphrase of the music used in said advertisements, Karl Jenkin's *Palladio*.<sup>29</sup> And later in the episode, Brian tries to talk Peter out of pretending to carry on as though he is one of the

<sup>29</sup> One of these commercials can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vXHm8TzLzE> (Accessed February 2013)  
 A graphic example of the two pieces side-by-side here would be unsatisfying. Many of the instrumental copyphrases (*sans* vocals) either in cut-away gags or non-diegetic music do not make for convincing side-by-side score comparison.

Newport “blue-bloods,” using an allegory from *The Empire Strikes Back* to make his point. As Brian pleads his case, we hear copyphrases of two famous themes from the *Star Wars* saga in immediate succession: The “Force Theme” and the “Imperial March.”

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is labeled "Star Wars" and "(Horn)". It contains two musical phrases: the "Force" Theme, which is a melodic line with a triplet, and the "Imperial March", which is a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bottom staff is labeled "Family Guy" and "(Low Brass)". It contains a parody of the "Force" Theme, which is a melodic line with a triplet, and a parody of the "Imperial March", which is a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score is in 4/4 time and features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and brackets.

**EXAMPLE 2-6: “Force” Theme, “Imperial March,” and signifiers for them**

The signified “Force” theme is stated in the french horn (as the most iconic statements in *Star Wars* are), and reproduces the affect of Williams’ theme masterfully. Jones’ paraphrased “Force” theme seamlessly transitions into a fragment representing the “Imperial March,” specifically signifying the version that we hear as Vader informs Luke Skywalker of their familial relationship. We hear this as Brian says to Peter, “I created you [having taught you how to behave like a millionaire]. In a way, I am your father.” (And Peter reacts to this claim with horror, as Luke Skywalker did, tucking his hand in his shirt to pretend it had been cut off.) Jones’ take on the “Imperial March,” though it evokes the motive from *Star Wars* with perfectly clarity, is even more dissonant than Williams’, offering a menacing twist on the familiar theme by outlining an [014] cell rather than a major triad.

### 2.3.2: “U Can’t Touch Me”

In the episode “E. Peterbus Unum” (2000), Peter manages to make a new country, ‘Petoria,’ comprising only his house and lot. The independent nation of ‘Petrوريا’ is not subject to the United States’ code of laws, so when a police officer tries to arrest Peter, he replies, “Ah ah ah, can’t touch me,” and raps an obvious paraphrase of MC Hammer’s “U Can’t Touch This,” the text of which is shown below:<sup>30</sup>

Just like the bad guy from Lethal Weapon 2  
I've got diplomatic immunity, so Hammer you can't sue!  
I can write graffiti, even jaywalk in the street  
I can riot, loot, not give a hoot and touch your sister's teat (Can't touch me)  
Stop! Peter-time!  
I'm a big shot, there's no doubt, Light a fire and pee it out  
Don't like it, kiss my rump, Just for a minute let's all do the Bump  
(Can't touch me)  
Yeah, do the Peter Griffin bump! (Can't touch me)  
I'm Presidential Peter, interns think I'm hot  
Don't care if you're handicapped, I'll still park in your spot  
I've been around the world, from Hartford to Back Bay  
It's Peter, go Peter, I'm sir Peter, Yo Peter, let's see Regis rap this way!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef with a common time signature (C). The top staff is labeled "Synth Bass" and contains the melody for "U Can't Touch This". The bottom staff is labeled "Can't Touch Me" and contains the melody for the parody. Both melodies consist of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with rests, creating a rhythmic pattern that is nearly identical between the two.

#### EXAMPLE 2-7: “U Can’t Touch This” and “Can’t Touch Me”

The instrumental ostinato (notated above) accompanying the vocal, though not identical to MC Hammer’s in pitch content, has exactly the same rhythm. Like

<sup>30</sup> Of note, two parodies of this song also appear on *The Simpsons*, though neither is a copyphrase. In the episode “Bart Gets Famous” (1994) from the show’s fifth season, the instrumental track from Hammer’s song is used unaltered, with Bart saying “I Didn’t Do It” instead of “Can’t Touch This.” The following season, in the episode “A Star is Burns” (1995) a group of “Rapping Rabbis” present two lines of a re-recorded (but generally unaltered) version of Hammer’s song, reminding their community that pork is one of the things they “can’t touch.”



many of the copyphrases on *The Simpsons*, the contour of several melodic fragments is inverted.<sup>31</sup> Seth McFarlane delivers the lyrics of “Can’t Touch Me” with the same rhythms and speech cadences that MC Hammer does in “U Can’t Touch This.” Both sets of lyrics reference dance, specifically the superior dancing ability of the speaker, though the irony in McFarlane’s is hardly hidden. Certain lines are altered as well to ridicule Peter; Hammer brags, “I’ve toured around the world, from London to the Bay.” Peter instead says “Hartford to Back-Bay,” highlighting his narrow view of the ‘world,’ which stretches from Connecticut to Massachusetts, the two states that border his native Rhode Island. Other lines are lifted directly from MC Hammer’s text, replacing the word “Hammer” with “Peter,” including “Stop! Peter Time” and “I’m Peter, go Peter, I’m sir Peter, Yo Peter.”

A final line that cannot go unmentioned is McFarlane’s direct admission of the act of borrowing material (and simultaneous citation of his source) in saying, “Hammer, you can’t sue!” Of course, MC Hammer has not taken legal action, as this parody presumably caused him neither financial nor emotional harm; if anything, it even helped him—*Family Guy* viewers were reminded of Hammer’s hit song, by then ossified by a decade of post-hit obscurity. And further, there is some doubt as to whether or not he would be able to press charges, as Hammer himself was sued over “U Can’t Touch This,” after all, having sampled the beat from Rick James’ “Superfreak.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Note that in “U Can’t Touch This,” the majority of the song uses only the first two measures of the bass pattern with occasional statements of the latter two measures. Rather, “Can’t Touch Me” cycles through the entire four-measure unit throughout the song.

<sup>32</sup> The settlement for which was Rick James being listed as a co-writer. See *Wikipedia*, “U Can’t Touch This,” (Accessed March 2013)

### 2.3.3: “It’s A Tiny Tiny World”

In the episode “The Courtship of Stewie’s Father” from the fourth season of *Family Guy*, in which we find one of the later, and relatively rare cases of copyphrase in a diegetic song on the show from 2005 or later, Peter takes his one-year-old son, Stewie to Disneyworld. While Peter is looking at some merchandise in a souvenir shop, Stewie wanders off, and is caught by security guards who force him to participate in a ride and sing “It’s a Tiny Tiny World,” lampooning “It’s a Small World After All.” Stewie and a number of captured children sing a verse of the song, which is notated alongside its model below.

The image shows two musical staves in G major, 4/4 time. The top staff is for "It's A Small World After All" and the bottom staff is for "It's A Tiny Tiny World". Both songs use the same rhythmic pattern: a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a half note. The lyrics for the top staff are: "It's a small world af - ter all It's a small world aft - er all It's a small world aft - er all it's a small small world". The lyrics for the bottom staff are: "It's a ti - ny ti - ny world It's a ti - ny ti - ny world It's a ti - ny ti - ny world it's a ti - ny ti - ny world". The melody for the top staff starts on G4 and follows a diatonic step-up contour. The melody for the bottom staff starts on E4 and follows a diatonic step-down contour.

#### EXAMPLE 2-8: “It’s A Small World After All” and “It’s A Tiny Tiny World”

The melodies displayed above are sufficiently distinct from one another that they cannot be considered the same song, though there is no doubt that the tune on *Family Guy* evokes the song from the Disneyworld ride. Both involve three utterances of the same line of text in a row, with the same respective contour; in the original, each statement of the motto is sequenced a diatonic step higher, while in the copyphrase, the falling triadic outline moves one step lower each time. Yet despite these differences, the two melodies could be performed simultaneously (in the same key) without many harmonic infelicities, in part enabled by the identical phrase length and rhythm. Although I have argued in Chapter 0 that parody and homage are not mutually exclusive, and that often parody is a type of homage,

regardless of the author's intentions, if ever there was a case of musical parody crafted with malice, this is it. The episode is full of jabs at *Disney*; the dozens of small children (referred to by Disneyworld security as "multi-cultural slave children") held against their will to sing in a ride is only the beginning.<sup>33</sup>

#### 2.3.4: Pushing the Envelope—*Family Guy*'s Lawsuits Over Paraphrased Music

For a show that has been cancelled (though later restored) twice due to provocative material, *Family Guy* seems to carry a large target on its back.<sup>34</sup> As irreverent as many gags on the show are, it seemed only a matter of time before the producers of the show would face a lawsuit. Though *Disney* has not sued over their depiction in "The Courtship of Stewie's Father" episode, in 2007, they took legal action against *Family Guy* for a song called "I Need A Jew" (in the episode "When You Wish Upon a Weinstein" from the show's third season) which is a paraphrase of

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<sup>33</sup>When Peter and Stewie first arrive at the park, a "Disney Stock Slide" is shown in the background, with children riding the sharp descent on a line graph representing the stock values of the *Disney* corporation. Peter later encounters the crows from *Dumbo*, taking a swipe at the appalling racism of the "black birds" whose incoherent utterances are an insensitive (to say the least!) take on African American Vernacular English. And lastly, Peter and Stewie encounter Michael Eisner, acting as the priest from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, who rips out the hearts of sacrificial victims. This is part of a sequence of scenes derived from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. As Peter and Stewie flee the angry guards, they hide in a gift shop, emerge with new outfits, dressed as Indiana Jones and Short Round, and take part in a mine-shaft chase scene. The music here signifies that of the action sequence theme from Williams' score for the film. And, there is yet another copyphrase in the episode, as part of a cutaway gag mocking the late Michael Jackson, in which he is shown dancing to signified "Thriller." In a later episode from season seven, "Tales of a Third Grade Nothing" (2008), there is another Michael Jackson cutaway featuring a signified "Billie Jean." Both of these cutaways can be found on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVQf2Qiks9Q> (Accessed February 2013)

<sup>34</sup> The show was first broadcast in 1999, and is currently airing its eleventh season. Season 2 was completed in August 2000, but Season 3 resumed almost a year later, in July 2001, after a brief cancellation. The show was cancelled again for a longer period of time before Season 3 was complete. (IMDB, "Family Guy," accessed May 2012). In May 2005, *Family Guy* returned to Fox with a new fourth season, becoming the first show to be "resurrected based on DVD sales," each of the first two volumes having sold 1.6 million and 1 million copies respectively. See Levin (2004), *USA TODAY.com* (Accessed March 2013)

“When You Wish Upon a Star” from *Pinocchio*. 20th-Century Fox initially withheld this episode from television, fearing that some of the content might be perceived as anti-Semitic.<sup>35</sup> The text of the song from the episode, “I Need a Jew,” shown in Example 2-9 below, betrays Peter’s ignorance about Jews, revealing that his knowledge is limited to stereotypes.

Like much of the satire on *Family Guy*, this song ruffled a few feathers. The penultimate line of the song, “I don’t think they killed our lord,” was not the original text, by the way; it was changed from the especially cringe-worthy “even though they killed our lord” when Fox first aired the episode in 2004.<sup>36</sup> McFarlane has made clear that no offense was intended towards Jews with the song, or the episode more generally (for which one of the writers was Jewish), where Peter’s family spout more stereotypes, proving that they know little more about Judaism or Jews than Peter does.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The episode was ready to air in 2000 (during the third season of *Family Guy*), but it did not appear on television until 2003 on the Cartoon Network. The following year, *Fox* at last agreed to air the episode. (Wikipedia, “When You Wish Upon a Weinstein,” Accessed March 2013)

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>37</sup> “On the DVD commentary for the episode, Seth MacFarlane mentions that he showed the script of the episode to two rabbis, both of whom approved of it “because Peter learns the right lesson at the end.” MacFarlane also points out that the writer, Ricky Blitt, “is Jewish himself, as is Ben Stein, who plays the Rabbi.” In the opinion of this Jewish author, if a viewer finds most of the content in the episode offensive (perhaps the line about the Jews killing Jesus aside), they have missed the point. The writers don’t ridicule Judaism; they portray, quite cannily, some of the ridiculous notions that some (especially) less-educated Americans have about Jews, often with little exaggeration, ultimately making it clear that knowledge only of stereotype sells one short.

"When You Wish Upon A Star" (*Pinocchio*)

When you wish u - pon a star Makes no diff - rence who you are, A - ny - thing your  
 "I Need A Jew"  
 No - thing else has worked so far, So I'll wish u - pon a star, Won - drous danc - ing  
 heart de - sires will come to you. Fate is kind She bring to those who love  
 spec of light, I need a Jew! Where to find a Baum or Stien or Stein,  
 The sweet ful - fill - ment of a se - cret long - ing. Like a bolt out of the blue  
 to teach me how to whine and do my tax - es! Though by ma - ny their ab - horred,  
 Fate steps in and sees you through When you wish u - pon a star your dreams come true!  
 He - brew peo - ple I've a - dored, I don't think they killed my lord, I need a Jew!

**EXAMPLE 2-9: "When You Wish Upon a Star" and "I Need A Jew"<sup>38</sup>**

Whether or not one finds the song offensive, the fact remains that the music for "I Need a Jew" is, in the words of the copyright owners' legal team, "a thinly veiled copy" of "When You Wish Upon a Star."<sup>39</sup> Music publishers Bourne Co. sued 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Fox in October, 2007, "irate about... an unseemly spoof of the familiar

<sup>38</sup> The text of one verse is missing from the example above: "Lois makes me take the rap, 'Cause our checkbook looks like crap, Since I can't give her a slap, I need a Jew..."

<sup>39</sup> Associated Press (2007)

tune, saying the dreamy classic was twisted into an anti-Semitic ballad and widely distributed” to millions of viewers.<sup>40</sup> It should come as little surprise that Fox won the suit (which was finally resolved in 2009), as the tunes of the two songs are not the same, despite a number of short, identical segments. Even though there is no doubt what song “I Need a Jew” is designed to evoke, as a parody, it is protected by fair use.<sup>41</sup>

Carol Burnett has also sued 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Fox for *Family Guy*’s depiction of her character “Charwoman” as a janitor in a porn shop and for their use of “an ‘altered version’ of Burnett’s theme music”.<sup>42</sup> The official complaint that Burnett issued reads,

Before the episode [“Peterotica”] aired, Fox requested Ms. Burnett’s permission to use “Carol’s Theme” in the episode. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Ms. Burnett’s manager informed Fox that Ms. Burnett licenses her theme music only in connection with *The Carol Burnett Show* and personal appearances of Ms. Burnett. After permission to use Ms. Burnett’s theme music was denied, Plaintiffs are informed and believe that Fox caused the “*Peterotica*” episode to be rewritten to disparage Ms. Burnett using Ms. Burnett’s signature ear tug. As aired on April 23, 2006, the opening scene of the “*Peterotica*” episode of “*Family Guy*” shows Peter entering a porn shop with several other characters, including a character named Quagmire. As they enter the porn shop, Peter comments that he expected the porn shop to be dirty. Quagmire responds that the porn shop is clean because “Carol Burnett works part time as a janitor.” The camera then shifts to show Ms. Burnett’s “Charwoman” character... while a slightly altered version of Carol’s theme is playing. One of the other characters then says, “You know when she tugged her ear at the end of the show, she was really saying goodnight

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Itzkoff (2009)

In his words, “[a]fter wishing upon a star, and then consulting upon a lawyer or two, the producers of the animated comedy *Family Guy* were vindicated Monday when a New York judge dismissed a lawsuit against them which said they had infringed upon a classic song from the Disney movie... In dismissing the suit, U.S. District Judge Deborah Batts wrote that the original song’s wholesomeness makes it fair game for “ridicule by parodists seeking to take the wind out of such lofty, magical, or pure associations,” according to The A.P.”

<sup>42</sup>Associated Press (2007)

to her mom.” Quagmire then makes a vulgar reference to Ms. Burnett and her father, responding: “I wonder what she tugged to say goodnight to her dad.”<sup>43</sup>

The theme from *The Carol Burnett Show* is transcribed below next to Ron Jones’ signifier for it. The timbral resemblance between the two cues is clear, both characterized by the same trumpet-led big-band/jazz orchestra, but the melodies really are quite different. Accordingly, US District Judge Dean Pregerson ruled in favor of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Fox. He expressed some sympathy for Burnett, agreeing that her depiction on the show was in poor taste, but he ruled that “the parody on the controversial episode was protected by the freedom of speech rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.”<sup>44</sup>

*The Carol Burnett Show, Theme*

The image shows two musical staves for trumpet (Tpts.) in 4/4 time. The top staff is titled "The Carol Burnett Show, Theme" and features a melody starting with a sharp key signature (F#) and a treble clef. The bottom staff is titled "Jones' version for Family Guy" and features a melody starting with a flat key signature (Bb) and a treble clef. Both staves have a "Tpts." label to their left. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

**EXAMPLE 2-10: Carol Burnett’s Television Theme and Signifier Used on *Family Guy***

**2.4: Interim Evaluation of Copyphrase on *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy***

The examples of copyphrase from *The Simpsons* discussed above come from a wide range of musical genres, as do those on *Family Guy*, yet the range of genres treated on both shows is almost exactly the same. Both “See My Vest” and “This

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<sup>43</sup>Burnett’s Legal Statement, on *The Smoking Gun* (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>44</sup> Grossberg (2008)

House is Freakin' Sweet" poke fun at musical numbers sung by a servant chorus to welcome a young female guest into their home. "See My Vest," "Under the Sea," "I Need a Jew," and "Tiny Tiny World" all use well-known Disney songs as their source. Both "Dr. Zaius" and "Can't Touch Me" play with cheesy 1980s pop. And lastly, "Paint Your Wagon" and the non-diegetic use of Williams' themes from *Star Wars* paraphrase some of the most well-known musical motives in film history. During the long 1990s, the creative teams of both shows clearly enjoyed parodying many of the same types of music, most of which belongs to what Susan Sontag calls "the canon of camp."<sup>45</sup> And the composers have practiced copyphrase using comparable techniques: preserving rhythm, instrumentation, and affect, while altering the lion's share of the pitches, often by inverting the direction of melodic intervals. Though despite the many similarities between the use of music on both shows, their respective practices would grow apart in the years to come.

## **2.5: More Recent *Simpsons* Copyphrase**

### **2.5.1: "Ho Hi!"**

On *The Simpsons*, the practice of copyphrase has remained a common musical device. In the episode "Four Great Women and Manicure" from 2009, there is yet another diegetic number using a *Disney* song as its source. When Lisa tells her version of the Snow White story (with herself as the protagonist), a recurring character referred to as the "blue-haired lawyer" warns her that "the story [she is] about to tell is the copyrighted property of the *Disney* corporation." She counters,

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<sup>45</sup> Sontag (2001), p. 54

Sontag explains that "the relation of Camp taste to the past is purely sentimental," asserting that "things are campy not when they become old—but when we become less involved with them." (Ibid)



claiming that the dwarves are her “own original creations,” renaming them to fit the personas of popular *Simpsons* characters. (Moe is “Grumpy,” Barney is “Drunky,” Homer is “Hungry”... you get the picture). Just as *Disney*’s seven dwarves are signified by ones with different names, so too is their song, “Heigh Ho.” With a clever inversion of the title words (and many fragments of the melody), Clausen has a men’s chorus sing “Ho Hi” to a tune that recalls the *Disney* classic quite crisply.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The top staff is for the song "Heigh Ho" and the bottom staff is for "Ho Hi".

**"Heigh Ho"**  
 Heigh Ho! Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's off to work we go! (Whistled portion) Heigh ho, heigh ho heigh ho heigh ho!

**"Ho Hi"**  
 Ho Hi! Ho Hi, ho hi, it's off to work oh why? This song's not like a-ny song you know, ho hi, ho hi ho hi ho hi!

**EXAMPLE 2-11: “Heigh Ho” and “Ho Hi”**

Clausen’s manner of paraphrasing a familiar tune is done in much the same way as it was in the show’s early seasons. Maintaining (more or less) identical rhythm (and in this case, key), just enough notes are changed to prevent *Disney*’s legal team from swooping in. But two key features of the text are quite different from their earlier practice, both of which suggest that by this point, *The Simpsons*’ writers had begun to take some cues from *Family Guy*. There the three more verses of “Ho Hi,” the first of which (listed below) appears soon after the one notated above, and the final two sound during the closing credits of the episode:

Ho hi (2x), it’s time to now get high. We get some ‘shrooms, take them to our rooms...  
 Goodbye (2x), it’s time to say goodbye. If *Disney* sues we’ll claim fair use. Ho hi (3x).  
 Ho hi (2x), there’s nothing we won’t try. We’ll get take out and then make out. We’re bi (3x).

The “admission” of the act of borrowing with the line “this song’s not like any song you know” is nothing new, but the cynical revelation of their legal strategy in singing “if *Disney* sues we’ll claim fair use” is a type of humor rarely found in the

early seasons of *The Simpsons* (recalling the “Hammer, you can’t sue” line on *Family Guy* almost a decade earlier). Also, the tone of the satire is somewhat sharper. This is perhaps a sign of the times, but the fact that this parody is aimed at *Disney* likewise suggests the influence of *Family Guy*.

### 2.5.2: *The Simpsons* and “That 90’s Show”

Occasionally, there is a *Simpsons*’ episode with as many as five short musical numbers of paraphrased songs. In 1997, there was an episode where many of the most memorable songs from *Mary Poppins* are recomposed and sung by a nanny named “Shary Bobbins.<sup>46</sup>” And as recently as 2008, there was episode (“That 90’s Show”) re-telling the love story of Homer and Marge in the early 1990s, in which Homer and his band “Sadgasm” invent the genre of grunge.<sup>47</sup> Homer begins the episode as a member of an R&B quartet with familiar *Simpsons* characters, borrowing the music (and hairstyles) of Boyz 2 Men. When Marge leaves him for a college professor, he transforms his musical group into the first ‘grunge’ band as an outlet for his emotional trauma. Sadgasm play their first show on the campus of Springfield University, on a picture-perfect quad lined with trees that seem to have perpetual fall foliage. The first song that they perform, called “Politically Incorrect” is *not a* copyphrase of any single grunge tune—rather it seems to be a mix of a few Nirvana songs, containing hints of “Lithium,” “Heart-Shaped Box” and “Frances

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<sup>46</sup> The episode is called “Simpsoncalifragilisticexpiala(D’oh!)cious.”

<sup>47</sup> The narrative of this episode contradicts the earlier tales of Homer and Marge’s courtship. Continuity of the plot, character histories, and Springfield’s geography are frequently ignored and revised to suit the needs of individual episodes. *The Simpsons* characters, or at least the children, are perpetually the same age. Any references to birth year are updated to reflect the current date.

Farmer Gets Her Revenge on Seattle.”<sup>48</sup> It’s hard to say which of the three it most clearly resembles, but it is nonetheless an accurate imitation of their style.

If any doubt remained that this song is meant to signify the music of Nirvana, the name of the band’s late frontman is mentioned in connection with it. The scene ends with a man on a payphone saying, “Kurt, Kurt, its Marvin. Your cousin, Marvin Cobain. You know that new sound you’re looking for? Well listen to this!” This of course is a nod to *Back to the Future*, where Michael J. Fox’s character, Marty, sings “Johnny B Goode” at the “Enchantment under the Sea” dance, during which a man named Marvin Berry calls his cousin Chuck.<sup>49</sup>

Sadgasm’s next song is performed at a venue in a “period” version of downtown Springfield, altered to resemble early 1990s Seattle (whence grunge hails), with signified *Starbucks* shops on every block and the Space Needle in the distance. This song, called “Shave Me” is notated below in its entirety, alongside both its source (Nirvana’s “Rape Me”), and “Brain Freeze,” a parody of the copyphrase that appears later in the episode.

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<sup>48</sup> An audio-file of “Politically Incorrect” is found on YouTube (Accessed May, 2008). The comments on this posting include a debate (without clear consensus) of exactly which Nirvana song “Politically Incorrect” is based upon. The complete text of the song is presented below:

“Pain is brown, Hate is white, Love is black, Stab the night!  
Kingdom of numb, Closet of Hurt, Feelings are Dumb, Kisses are dirt!”

<sup>49</sup>In the *Family Guy* episode “Meet the Quagmire’s” (2008), the writers borrow this joke from *Back to the Future* as well. As this episode was produced at the same time as “That 90’s Show,” there was likely no influence of one show on the other—it’s simply a coincidence. In this episode, Peter goes back in time to his first dance with Lois in 1984, at which Brian (their dog) sings “Never Gonna Give You Up” by Rick Astley, and—you guessed it—someone named Marvin places a call to their cousin Rick, and says, “You know that lame, generic sound you’ve been looking for?” Despite the ungenerous review of Astley’s style, MacFarlane’s performance of the 1987 hit is certainly spirited, arguably a stronger rendering than Astley’s.

**EXAMPLE 2-12: “Rape Me,” “Shave Me,” “Brain Freeze”**

The Sadgasm version is of course a summary of Nirvana’s, beginning with the opening verse material and skipping straight to the motto sung an octave higher at the conclusion of the song. “Shave Me” and “Brain Freeze” (the latter of which parodies “Shave Me” with a new text) are essentially identical, with the exception of the loud, declamatory screaming of the songs’ respective title words. Dan Castellaneta (who voices Homer) does not sing a high B, presumably because it is out of his vocal range; the high G# is clearly difficult enough for him to reach. Weird Al is successful in imitating Cobain’s B4 (though his voice cracks), resembling Nirvana’s original more closely in this respect.

The last of the three Sadgasm songs, “Margarine,” is a transparently autobiographical number in which Homer laments his loss of Marge, using Bush’s “Glycerine” as a model. Bush, a British “post-grunge”<sup>50</sup> or “grunge-imitation”<sup>51</sup> acted by Gavin Rossdale (now married to No Doubt’s Gwen Stefani) has a style quite different from Nirvana’s, although both bands belong to the same cultural movement. Like most of the longer copyphrases on *The Simpsons*, the song is used

<sup>50</sup> Allmusic.com, “Post-grunge” (Accessed March 2013)

Bush and the Seattle-based Candlebox are listed as the two primary examples of post-grunge.

<sup>51</sup> Middleton and Beebe (2002), p. 159

to advance the narrative in lieu of dialogue.<sup>52</sup> Marge watches a music video of it, and learns that Homer still loves her, which is the cause of their reunion.<sup>53</sup>

**EXAMPLE 2-13: “Glycerine” and “Margerine”**

<sup>52</sup> There are some instrumental breaks in the song that give Marge an opportunity to react to the song, symbiotically advancing the narrative along with the song.

<sup>53</sup> All three of the Sadgasm songs capture the respective musical idiolects of the most iconic representatives of the grunge and post-grunge movements from both sides of the Atlantic. I would argue, however, that the lyrics to “Margerine” (and parts of “Politically Incorrect”) miss the cultural meaning of grunge. Grunge music is not a collection of tales of love and loss; it is about apathy and angst, a product of Generation X’s coming of age. Sadgasm captures the ennui in “Shave Me” and in the first half of “Politically Incorrect,” but with the lyrics of “Margerine,” they anticipate the emotional rock (or “emo”) that rose to prominence at the close of the nineties after the grunge movement had lost its inertia. “Emo” music, perhaps the music most closely linked to Generation Y’s coming of age, necessarily reacts to and reflects upon the musical movements of the last generation, but the two should not be conflated, despite their undeniable similarities.

## **2.6: Evaluation II—Music on *Family Guy* and *The Simpsons***

“That 90’s Show” illustrates three fundamental differences between how music is used on *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* respectively. First, if a *Simpsons*’ episode has this many diegetic numbers, the songs always play a part in telling the story, as the “Margarine” example demonstrates. Sung text necessarily replaces dialogue when the musical numbers account for several minutes of the episode’s broadcast time. On *Family Guy*, diegetic numbers are subject to no such narrative restriction. In “The Author as Producer,” Benjamin explains that the songs in certain forms of theater “have their chief function in interrupting the action.”<sup>54</sup> But on *Family Guy*, the music is sometimes *more* than a break from the narrative—the story may even be built around the songs in the episode. This is in part because of MacFarlane’s musical inclinations; he is a truly gifted vocalist—arguably the most talented voice actor of our time. We can assume that many of the musical numbers on *Family Guy* are there simply because he wanted to sing them in the voice of a particular character, and an episode is built around them.<sup>55</sup>

The second key difference between the music on *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* is that on the former, musical numbers are kept as short as possible. As I have mentioned above, numbers are never longer than two minutes, and they only ever exceed a minute if the text contributes to the episode’s narrative. Sometimes the

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<sup>54</sup> Benjamin (1978), p. 234

<sup>55</sup> Two such examples come to mind. In “The Cleveland Loretta Quagmire” (2005) the character Cleveland learns that his wife is having an affair, so Peter attempts to comfort him by singing the B-52’s song “Rock Lobster;” surely, this number is only used to give MacFarlane the opportunity to sing a B-52’s song in the voice of Peter Griffin. It’s hilarious, but its use is incongruous in this context. Another is Stewie’s three-minute rendition of Bryan Adams,’ “Everything I Do” (complete with a music video), which contributes to a sub-plot of the episode “Oceans Three and a Half” (2009) only tangentially.

producers will even cut portions of songs in rather unmusical ways. Beats are cropped from the middle of measures in both “Shave Me,” and “Margarine,”<sup>56</sup> giving the impression that isolated measures in the middle of phrases are in different meters—an effect that is ungrammatical to the idiolects of both Nirvana and Bush. On *Family Guy*, such disrespect to the work of the composer and performers would never happen. *Simpsons* composer Alf Clausen has lamented how little the producers know about music, and how unwilling they are to take it seriously, stating that “in many series, including this one, the pecking order is dialogue first, sound effects next, and music third.”<sup>57</sup> Music and dialogue are on a more equal footing on *Family Guy*, however. In a personal interview with a member of the *Family Guy* studio orchestra, my informant called MacFarlane the only producer he had ever worked with who was “both hands on and never in the way” when it came to music.<sup>58</sup>

Lastly, “That 90’s Show” demonstrates *The Simpsons’* continued interest in engaging with more recent musical materials. While both programs are eager to provide timely political commentary, only on *The Simpsons* is there an interest in paraphrasing relatively recent musics. On *The Simpsons’* 1994-1995 season, the copyphrases of “Under the Sea” and “Be Our Guest” both came from *Disney* movies that were then only a few years old (1989 and 1991 respectively). This is not to say

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<sup>56</sup> Specifically, in the second measure of my transcription of “Shave Me” above, the final beat is cropped, making this measure sound as though it is in  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Similarly, in the instrumental introduction to “Margarine” (not transcribed), a beat and a half are trimmed from a measure, producing the disorienting effect that one measure in  $\frac{5}{8}$  appears mid-phrase.

<sup>57</sup>Goldmark (2002), p. 244

<sup>58</sup> To be clear, this is not an argument that one show is superior to the other, but merely an elaboration of the respective priorities of the creative teams. What is gained by privileging the music is lost in narrative development, and vice versa.

that *only* more recent music is used on *The Simpsons*. The “Ho Hi” and Morricone examples speak to this, and there are plenty more from old musicals.<sup>59</sup> On *Family Guy*, however, virtually all of the music, original and borrowed, is from a style not later than that of the 1980s. Most of the music reflects either MacFarlane’s own nostalgia for the pop culture of his own childhood in 1980s (and to a lesser extent, late 1970s), or—somewhat surprisingly—an adopted nostalgia for the music of *his parents’* childhood in the 1950s or before. MacFarlane released an album of big-band and ratpack standards (called *Music is Better than Words*—it’s worth a listen), as a sort of love letter to this repertory. Watching a few episodes of *Family Guy* makes it clear that MacFarlane is unabashedly, unironically enamored of these styles.

### **2.7: Recent Music on *Family Guy***

In more recent years, as the music budget and orchestra size continue to grow on *Family Guy*, the practice of using paraphrased diegetic numbers has been largely eclipsed by other musical devices. Of late there has been a greater interest in lengthy original numbers, higher-brow non-diegetic cues, and a great deal of *unaltered* borrowed music.<sup>60</sup> Many scenes feature a song lifted directly from

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<sup>59</sup> Friedwald (2002) discusses several such examples, including (1) “The Monorail Song,” treating “Trouble” from *The Music Man* in “Marge vs. The Monorail” (1993), (2), “The Garbage Man,” modeled upon “The Candyman” from *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* from “Trash of the Titans” (1998), and (3) the signifiers for several songs from *Mary Poppins*, including “Feed the Birds,” “A Spoonful of Sugar,” and “The Perfect Nanny,” mentioned briefly above.

<sup>60</sup> Of course, a time-honored device that appears on both *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* is the practice of borrowing music, but providing a new text, a practice of textual parody most readily associated with Weird Al. In a recent (2013) episode of *The Simpsons* (“Love is a Many-Splintered thing”) Homer and Bart sing the “Ode to Joy” tune from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony to a new text. As for *Family Guy*, in the episode “Petarded” (2005), there is a performance of the song “Telephone Hour” from *Bye Bye Birdie*, while people around the town (mostly adult men) gossip with one another about the fact Peter is mentally challenged, rather than teenage girls giggling about a new couple “going steady.” Another is a parody of the title song from *Brigadoon* in the episode “It Takes A Village Idiot and I



another source, most commonly a musical (from stage or film), that is performed by one or more of the *Family Guy* characters. Perhaps the most memorable example is in the episode “Patriot Games,” where Peter joins the New England Patriots football team, and after scoring a touchdown leads the fans, players, and cheerleaders in a fully choreographed rendition of “Shipoopie” from *The Music Man*.<sup>61</sup>

Sometimes, both music and video footage are borrowed—a luxury of the animated medium. In “The Courtship of Stewie’s Father” (discussed above, for the “Tiny Tiny World” example), we view a dream sequence of an octogenarian named Herbert, a recurring character and a neighbor of the Griffins, who, imagining himself as Audrey from *Little Shop of Horrors*, sings “Somewhere That’s Green.”<sup>62</sup> But he doesn’t just sing the song as though at a recital—he sings it as part of animated re-creation of video sequence from the movie version of *Little Shop of Horrors*, which is an accurate reproduction down the tiniest details; the magazine covers, the toys, the coloration of the lawn, and the episode of *I Love Lucy* on the “big, enormous 12-inch screen.”

Other cases include the borrowing of both a video sequence and music, but involve no singing from any of the characters on the show. In “Breaking Out Is Hard to Do” (2005), Chris (Peter’s teenage son, voiced by Seth Green) grabs a mysterious

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Married One” (2007). Brian and Stewie go for a walk in the woods, and watch Donny Most (rather than the lost town of Brigadoon) rise from the mist. An “offstage” choir (as in *Brigadoon*) sings this *a capella* choral number to a new text. Of note, the performance of this music from “Brigadoon” on *Family Guy* is perhaps the highest quality recording I have come across of this song. Each voice part is clearly heard, including the unusually low bass line demanding the pitch C2.

<sup>61</sup> Another memorable example is in the episode “Believe it or not, Joe’s walking on air,” Peter’s parapalegic friend Joe undergoes a risky leg transplant surgery, regains the ability to walk, and subsequently forces his friends to participate in a song and dance routine of “Good Morning” from *Singing in the Rain*.

<sup>62</sup> Herbert is voiced by Mike Henry, who speaks and sings entirely in falsetto for Herbert. (Henry records the voice of a Cleveland, a primary character on *Family Guy* until 2009, when he became the star of a *Family Guy* spinoff, *The Cleveland Show*).

white hand while reaching for milk in a grocery store and is dragged into a re-animation of Aha's "Take On Me" music video—a prime example of decadent (if well-composed) 1980s pop that is so often featured on the show. And another such sequence appears in the episode "The Road to Rupert." Stewie and Brian learn that they can rent a helicopter with either a large monetary deposit by or singing a "jaunty tune." The employee supervising the facility allows them to try their luck with a song. Stewie is then animated in the place of Jerry the Mouse (of the MGM *Tom and Jerry* cartoons) into the footage of tap dance routine with Gene Kelley from the movie *Anchors Away*.<sup>63</sup>

Since 2010, though gags using pre-existing music are still quite common, there has been a greater focus on non-diegetic music, using orchestral cues matching the quality of what is found in high-budget Hollywood blockbusters. Season 9 (2010-2011) began with an hour long parody of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* (called "And Then There Were Fewer") which set the tone for how music has been used ever since. An extended orchestral version of the opening theme is used at the start of the episode, showing off both the larger orchestra, and the new, crisper HD quality of the recording.

## **2.8: Conclusion and Summary**

Two important questions remain. Why did copyphrase become a default procedure for the producers of these programs, and what factors have contributed

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<sup>63</sup> A final type of borrowing both the audio and video of a musical number is when a video of Conway Twitty performing a complete song—entirely unaltered, without participation from any of the characters—is simply shown in the middle of an episode, treating the narrative television program as though it were a variety show. This happens first in "Bill [Clinton] and Peter's Bogus Journey" (2007), and such gags were included in several subsequent episodes. A complete list of Conway Twitty footage can be found on the *Family Guy* Wiki. (Accessed March 2013)

to the decline of the practice on *Family Guy*. I believe that three considerations (each of which I'll discuss in turn) are responsible for the establishment of copyphrase during the 1990s: *Time, money, and access to the rights*. Because of the tight schedule television composers often face, there simply may not be enough time to ask for permission to use the desired music. There could hardly have been time to send a formal letter to ask permission to use every cue before all of this was accomplished on the web. In the earlier seasons of both shows, money also must have been a factor, as new shows generally do not have the resources to buy the rights to copyrighted music. And even if they were willing to pay for the rights, and had planned ahead to go through the necessary legal steps, sometimes they may simply have been denied permission. As discussed above, the *Family Guy* producers went through the appropriate channels to ask for permission to use Carol Burnett's theme, but were denied the rights (despite presumably having been willing to pay handsomely for them), and thus paraphrased her theme.

So why is copyphrase still quite common on *The Simpsons* and not on *Family Guy*? The answer is simple: The creative team of *The Simpsons* likes this type of humor. I believe that the continued practice of copyphrase is motivated as much by *aesthetic concerns* as by any other practicality. Both shows are willing and able to keep professional composers on their payroll, and record cues for *every episode* with a large studio orchestra, so it's clear that cost is no longer a factor. The producers of *The Simpsons could* devote more resources to obtain the rights to the music that they wish to use, but they don't. They enjoy poking fun of their own plight as a television show, and have learned to make the best of it. In the early seasons, the

writers presumably avoided the names of real-world products, logos, and even familiar music for legal reasons, but the avoidance strategies came to be a favorite part of the show. After all, they could simply storyboard the images of the computers they use *without* a modified Apple logo, but the inclusion of the “Mapple” decal is a style choice that fits nicely with their program.

Watching *The Simpsons* is the antidote to product placement; almost nothing from our reality makes appearance on the show, which is part of their escapist aesthetic. In a universe of “Krusty-O” and “Krusty-burger” eating, “Duff” beer drinking characters, why should songs from our reality appear in the uncanny simulacrum that is *The Simpsons’* world? The writers even avoid using the names of “real”-world places; the setting for *The Simpsons* is Springfield, USA, the precise geographical location of which is kept ambiguous. (And The capital of their unnamed state is simply called “Capital City,” nicknamed the “Windy Apple.”)<sup>64</sup>

In the early years of *Family Guy*, when much of their humor was modeled on that of *The Simpsons*, the writers clearly relished the irony of using such paraphrased music, routinely including three or more such cues per episode. Recently, as they have sought to distinguish themselves from *The Simpsons*, fewer copyphrases have appeared on *Family Guy*. The turn away from paraphrasing the music they want to use is, I believe, as much symptomatic of their increased budget

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<sup>64</sup> The first time when the Simpson family arrives in Capital City, they hear Tony Bennett singing a copyphrase of Frank Sinatra’s “New York, New York.” The song, called “Capital City” appears in the episode “Dancin’ Homer” (1990). This is one of the first episodes that Clasuen scored, and therefore one of the earliest (if not the earliest) example of copyphrase that he provided for the show. It relates to its model somewhat more distantly than his later copyphrases do. The notes and rhythms of the melodies have little to do with one another, and there is no attempt at mimicking the iconic instrumental lick of “New York, New York.” Rather, the connection between “Capital City” and “New York, New York” relies on the shared association of similar orchestration, phrase length, text, and the fact that both are sung by Ratpack singers of the same generation.

and improved competence in obtaining rights to songs as it is of their desire to cast their own image and not be remembered as a *Simpsons* offshoot. Just as both shows face the anxiety of influence of the animated giant that is *Disney*, the producers of *Family Guy* presumably feel such an anxiety (to a lesser degree) towards *The Simpsons*, their big brother with whom they have a healthy professional rivalry. I believe that this desire to define themselves as a brand unique from that of *The Simpsons* is the primary cause of their waning interest in copyphrase.

### **2.9: Zooming Out—Examples of copyphrase from other cartoons**

In focusing on *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, I may have given the false impression that the practice of copyphrase is unique to these programs. These shows offer some of the highest profile (and highest quality) examples, but copyphrases appear on plenty of other cartoon programs as well.<sup>65</sup> On *The Ren and Stimpy Show* (1991-1996) there are isolated examples. The practice of copyphrase was never the default for the show's creative team, however; Joseph Lanza explains that the majority of the music on the show came from mid-century "'mood music' libraries" full of original compositions designed to help television producers side-step copyright law.<sup>66</sup> Yet in a 1992 episode "Out West," a paraphrased version of the *Jeopardy* theme appears when two especially dim-witted characters try to solve a problem. This copyphrase is presumably the work of Alexander Rannie, who is

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<sup>65</sup> For one, *The Cleveland Show* (2009-)— a *Family Guy* spinoff, and another of MacFarlane's projects—features a great deal of original music, and an occasional copyphrase. In "A General Thanksgiving Episode" (2012), there is a signifier for Lady Gaga's "Poker Face." And two episodes later, in "A Vas Deferens Between Men and Women" (2012) there are copyphrases of two songs from Annie: "It's a Hard Knock Life" and "Tomorrow."

<sup>66</sup> Lanza (2002), p. 270

credited as having composed the original music for the episode, which includes a diegetic number at the episode's end.<sup>67</sup> Rannie, unsurprisingly uses the same techniques as Clausen, Jones, and Murphy: preserving rhythm and inverting many of the melodic intervals. This cue is effective, though one might critique it for being too close to its source. If the producers of *Ren and Stimpy* did not get permission to use the *Jeopardy* theme, the owners of its copyright may very possibly be able to win a lawsuit against them; while a number of pitches are changed, almost all of the *pitch classes* are unaltered. Most of the Cs in the melody are substituted by a C in the opposite octave.



**EXAMPLE 2-14: *Jeopardy* Theme and signifier for it**

There are also a growing number of copyphrases in the web-based animated series *How It Should Have Ended*. Created without a television network to broadcast them, these cartoon shorts offer light-hearted critiques of the well-known films they parody by revising their endings. (Reader, beware: These shorts are addictive—watch with care!) Just as the narratives of these films are re-written, so too are the films' themes. Composer Brian English paraphrases the familiar music from these movies—alas, without the help of a studio orchestra, but the amateurish synthesized sound fits the stiff, quirky, stylized animation aesthetic. One of the best examples appears in the 2011 short "How Harry Potter Should Have Ended," in

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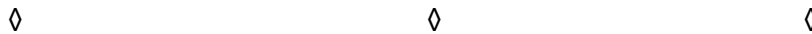
<sup>67</sup> IMBD, "Ren and Stimpy" (Accessed March, 2013)

which we find a clever paraphrase of the most memorable theme from the *Harry Potter* series.



**EXAMPLE 2-15: “How Harry Potter Should Have Ended”**

English’s theme is an effective signifier for Williams.’ The key of the two melodies is different, but through near-identical rhythm, and similar chromaticism (note the analogous  $b^2$  at the end of the third measure in each melody), the wonky, electronic timbre is no obstacle in recognizing this as the primary theme from *Harry Potter*.



Regardless of *why* creative teams use paraphrased music so often in animated media, I remain fascinated by the process of *how* these composers signify a familiar tune by using an entirely different piece. They juggle the legal, financial, and aesthetic demands of the industry, all the while working under significant pressures of time. Yet this work, like that of many of those who practice musical translation, remains underappreciated. Copyphrase is perhaps a low-brow act, but one that nonetheless requires craftsmanship. And as we’ll soon learn, the same is true of musical caricature.

## **Chapter 3: On the Musically Caricaturable**

### **3.0: Defining Caricature**

In the Oxford English Dictionary, caricature is defined as a “grotesque or ludicrous representation of persons or things by exaggeration of their most characteristic and striking features.”<sup>1</sup> Kenneth T. Rivers, the author of the most significant scholarly contribution to the understanding of the genre, defines it similarly as “the artistic use of deformation for satirical purposes.”<sup>2</sup> This definition (by design) applies to both pictorial and literary caricature. Just as one might *draw* a distorted portrait, one might provide a written description of a character in literature with certain exaggerations. So it is possible to create a caricature *through language*, but can one caricature *the use of language itself*, or at another level of remove, music? Rivers argues that the “[c]aricature of sound has always been possible,”<sup>3</sup> and with music, suggests that “[i]f metaphoricalness and distortion, as well as humor, are all possible in music, then it follows that caricature (featuring humorous metaphorical distortion) should be... as well.”<sup>4</sup> He reminds us, however, that this “does not mean that there is any great tradition of serious caricature in music;”<sup>5</sup> it remains “a largely neglected genre.”<sup>6</sup> In this chapter, I explore the concept of sonic caricature, first, briefly, in language, then more extensively in music. My goal is to provide a basic theoretical account musical caricature, answering the

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<sup>1</sup> OED.com, (Accessed December, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Rivers (1991), p. 5

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 74

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 99

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 100



fundamental questions of how it is accomplished, and how it relates to other forms of musical paraphrase.

### **3.1: Preliminaries—Counterfeit vs. Caricature**

Caricature is often defined against portraiture. A portrait is an attempt at an accurate, *realistic* portrayal; the person (or object) depicted in a caricature must still be recognizable, but realism and accuracy of proportions is not expected. Rivers explains, “[t]he main difference between standard portraiture and caricatural portraiture... is that caricature emphasizes features that deviate from the norm to an embarrassing degree. All portrait artists highlight individuality, but the caricaturist delights in going too far. That is to say, the caricatural artist or writer, when depicting a real person... will generally exaggerate some actual traits and de-emphasize others, with the intent of creating a mischievously ‘truer than true’ image of that person.”<sup>7</sup>

So in the visual arts, there is (or at least there should be) a clear-cut difference between portraiture and caricature, but with sonic arts, caricature is somewhat more challenging to define; there is no such thing as linguistic or musical *portraiture* (at least not so far as I am aware), yet there is at least metaphorically, an equivalent to *counterfeit* with both language and music against which to define caricature.<sup>8</sup> In both written and spoken language, there is a clear difference between counterfeit (imitation) and caricature (exaggeration). If a famous author

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<sup>7</sup> Rivers (1991), pp. 20-21

<sup>8</sup> Sonic arts include aestheticized spoken language and music. Visual arts include painting, sculpture (etc). Literature hangs in a precarious position between the two.

dies in the middle of writing a novel, a ghost writer might be asked to produce prose that is a passable substitute—a *counterfeit*—for the work of the original author. Or if one wants to imitate someone’s voice over the phone, an accurate reproduction of lexical choices, syntax, and phonology is essential. The same is true if a voice actor dies, and more movies are to be made featuring the deceased actor’s character. A new actor must be hired to imitate their late predecessor.<sup>9</sup>

The counterfeit/caricature binary applies to music as well. Musical counterfeit may at times be desirable, such as when a composer’s work is left unfinished at the time of their death. Mozart left his *Requiem* incomplete, and Süßmayr was charged with the task of counterfeiting the balance. Puccini succumbed to throat cancer before completing *Turandot*, leaving the final act of the opera to be completed (based only on sketches) by Franco Alfano initially, and years later by the late Luciano Berio. (With counterfeits, there is perhaps room for more than one “authentic” version.) And virtually the same happened with *Lulu* a decade later, which was at last completed by Fredrich Cerha more than 40 years after Berg’s death. This is tricky business, of course, if the goal is to imitate the style of the composer accurately without resorting to caricature. Arguably, caricature is *easier* than passable imitation; there is a thin window of success for musical counterfeit—it fails if it doesn’t sound *enough* like the work of the composer it is designed to emulate, or if it becomes caricature by sounding *too much* like their work. Finding an example of a musical counterfeit that fails for devolving into caricature is difficult to find—after all, in most cases we don’t know if a composer meant to forge the

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<sup>9</sup> The case of Jim Henson comes to mind; since his death in 1990, other actors have been charged with producing the nigh inimitable voice of Kermit and other *Muppets*.

idiolect of another (unless their explicit task is ghost writing), or if caricature was the goal all along. In language, however, evaluating the success of a counterfeit can at times be easier than we might expect.

### 3.1.1: Counterfeit versus (Inadvertent) Caricature

Television series often employ a small army of writers. Even episodes from the same season of a show are routinely written by different people. One of the main challenges of creating multi-authored dialog is making sure that the characters always sound like themselves, *not* caricatures thereof. (Though, arguably, if a program remains on the air for enough time, self caricature is inevitable.) Movie sequels too often have scripts (and, unfortunately, scores) written by a new team. In such cases, how exactly should one evaluate whether a line is appropriate for a *fictional character*? The answers to such questions rarely invite consensus, but in some cases, we can conclude unequivocally that a writer has made an error.

The most straightforward way to caricature spoken language—whether for a “real” speaker or fictional character—is through phonology. Highlighting a noticeable regional accent by exaggerating some combination of unusual vowels, consonants, and intonational patterns can be a relatively gentle way of doing so; targeting a foreign accent can be in somewhat poorer taste, and picking on a speech impediment is perhaps the least generous. But regardless of social acceptability, anything that is marked about a particular speaker’s idiolect is caricaturable. However, there is no risk of unintended phonological caricature (resulting from poor vocal counterfeit) if a character is played by the same person across sequels

(or seasons of a television show). And further, screenwriters have only so much to do with how the actors deliver the lines. Rather, writers decide both the lexical choices and syntax of their characters.

Of course, marked (and therefore mockable) syntax is less common than marked phonology. While those without native competency in a given language may routinely speak with consistent, yet “unusual” syntax (not to mention imperfect phonology), the utterances of a native speaker or sentences of an author writing in their native language are more rarely characterized by syntactic idiosyncrasies. Though occasionally, the idiolect of a fictional character can be characterized by marked syntax.

The character Yoda appears in five out of six of the *Star Wars* films. In addition to his distinctive voice, provided by Frank Oz, his words often appear in an order that is unusual for a speaker of contemporary English. The character first appeared in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), which was written by Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan. These two writers (presumably with some guidance from George Lucas) were charged with the task of creating unusual (yet consistent) speech patterns for a centuries-old swamp dweller of mysterious origins.<sup>10</sup> The syntactic idiosyncrasies of Yoda’s speech, as imagined by Brackett and Kasdan for *The Empire Strikes Back* include the following features:

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<sup>10</sup> It is unclear whether Yoda is meant to be a non-native speaker with some grammatical quirks, or merely a speaker of a non-standard dialect that one finds in this fictional galaxy “far, far away.”

1. **V to T raising (moving the verb to first position instead of inserting “do”):**
  - a. “Hear you ~~hear~~ nothing that I say?”
  - b. “Why wish you ~~wish [to]~~ become Jedi?”
2. **Copular “be” omission:**
  - a. “Much anger ~~is~~ in him... like his father.”
  - b. “Not far. Yoda ~~is~~ not far.”
3. **Auxiliary “do” omission:**
  - a. “Wars ~~do~~ not make one great.”
  - b. “How ~~did~~ you get so big, eating food of this kind?”
4. **Topicalization:**
  - a. “Ready, are you ~~ready?~~”
  - b. “Decide, you must ~~decide~~, how to serve them best.”
  - c. “Judge me by my size, do you ~~judge me by my size?~~”
  - d. “Found someone, you have ~~found someone.~~”

Virtually everything Yoda says in this movie *is or was grammatical in some dialect of English*. Moving a verb to the first position of a sentence (instead of inserting a question word like “do”) was grammatical in Middle English, and still sounds familiar (if vaguely archaic) to English speakers today. Omission of the copula and auxiliary verb “do” are acceptable in African American Vernacular English, and should likewise not sound especially exotic. And topicalization (moving something that normally appears later in the sentence to the subject position) of course *is* grammatical (if marked) in any dialect of English, though it is especially common in Jewish communities in which some members also speak Yiddish. (“*An example of this, you want?*”) So whether or not Yoda’s utterances are to the

standards of a grammar-school prescriptivist with horn-rimmed glasses and angrily crossed arms, none pose any difficulty to comprehension.

*Return of the Jedi* (1983), the immediate sequel to *The Empire Strikes Back*, was written again by Lawrence Kasdan, along with George Lucas himself, and two of the subsequently released prequels were written by Lucas alone. In none of these three films do the writers produce any line that contradicts the established grammaticality of Yoda's idiolect. However, in *Attack of the Clones* (2002), which was co-written by Lucas and Jonathan Hales, there is one line that is entirely ungrammatical in English as well as "Yodish," and is likely to have puzzled viewers: "*Around the survivors a perimeter create.*" (Microsoft word, by the way, also disapproves of this utterance.)

This sentence is an imperative, in fact an *order* in a military setting. As far as I am aware, in no dialect of English is it grammatical to have this kind of structure, where a direct object appears before the verb it complements. Perhaps "around the survivors create a perimeter" is acceptable, if forced, as though answering the hypothetical question, "Where should we create a perimeter?" But with both the direct object and prepositional phrase closer to the head of the sentence, the writers fail to produce a sufficient counterfeit of the earlier writers' work with Yoda. This overextension of Yoda's frequent topicalization is exactly the way one might go about creating a *caricature* of Yoda, and betrays a failure to produce believable counterfeit.

In fact, one of the more successful Yoda parodies *does* contain one such ungrammatical imperative construction. It is found in a 2009 SNL sketch, (called

“Girlfriend Voice”) in which Seth Rogen imitates Yoda’s characteristic syntax and phonology. The dialogue of this segment is presented below:<sup>11</sup>

- a. \*There hi.
- b. ?Having a beer am I, yes.
- c. No, come to your party I cannot.
- d. \*Okay, out peace.”

The sentence “come to your party I cannot” is grammatical for Yoda, perfectly so, yet its syntax is still marked for most speakers of English. “Having a beer am I” is a bit dubious as Yodish, but after all, this is not meant to be a realistic portrayal; it’s meant to be recognizable, but distorted. (Perhaps “having a beer I am” would make a better counterfeit.) But without question, “there hi” and “out peace” are ungrammatical, humorous exactly because they exaggerate Yoda’s idiosyncratic syntax. The imperfections in syntax are intentional, and combined with the irony of hearing such mundane phrases in the voice of the wizened Yoda (or Seth Rogen’s attempt at Frank Oz’s Yoda voice), this makes for is a uniquely strong example of syntactic caricature.

### 3.1.1: Caricaturing Phonology

The example of Yoda is one of the very rare cases of marked syntax where the difference between counterfeit and caricature is so clearly demonstrated.

Phonological caricature is much more common, as more speakers have obviously marked phonology than do they syntax. The voice of President Kennedy, for

instance, is easily identifiable for his rather strong Boston accent (the deletion of Rs

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<sup>11</sup> In generative linguistics, an asterisk preceding a sentence indicates ungrammaticality, and a question mark indicates questionable grammaticality.

following vowels, etc.) and occasional emphatic monotony when making a strong point, as in his (in)famous, “*ICH BIN EIN BERLINER*,” which is also notable for its incorrect German syntax. The definite article is not required here; rather, “Ich bin Berliner” is grammatical, meaning (more or less) “I am of Berlin.”<sup>12</sup>

The phonology of Kennedy’s unmistakable speaking voice has long been the subject of comic treatment. A record called “The First Family” was released in 1962 while he was still in office, poking fun at his idiolect, but not to the point that it could be called caricature.<sup>13</sup> This is phonological counterfeit, and a very skilled imitation of Kennedy at that. But on *The Simpsons*, there is a character named Joe Quimby who serves as mayor of the town. He, like Kennedy, is a womanizer, who (ab)uses his power and fame for his sexual satisfaction. Most importantly for present purposes, Quimby’s idiolect is a clear caricature of Kennedy’s. His Boston accent is at times *more* pronounced than Kennedy’s was—Quimby at least once refers to the character named Lisa as “Lisar”—and the loud, emphatic monotony (a la “Ich bin ein Berliner”) is Quimby’s sole manner of intonation. (“*Simpson, you moron!*”) There was also a short-lived television cartoon called *Clone High*, which featured a teenage clone simply called “JFK,” whose phonology and characteristic womanizing, like Quimby’s, caricature Kennedy’s voice and person.

Although Kennedy’s pronunciation and intonation are low-hanging fruit for parodists, there is little unusual about Kennedy’s syntax in his spontaneous utterances. However, his pre-written speeches are known for a number of

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<sup>12</sup> As is well-known, Kennedy mistakenly referred to himself as a type of pastry known as a “Berliner.”

<sup>13</sup> Portions of this record can be found on YouTube.



syntactically marked forms. Take as an example his famous inaugural speech, written by Ted Sorenson. Two characteristic excerpts are included below.

- A. “Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need, not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle...”
- B. “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.”

The use of the words “ask not” in this order is perhaps the most iconic of all of Kennedy’s public utterances. This style choice is clear—the use of such archaic syntax may remind listeners of texts of Biblical proportion and authority, and thus associate the new president with such power. Of note, Kennedy himself parodied this speech one year later a Democratic-party fundraiser. Compare excerpts of the two below:

1961 Inauguration:

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin...

Remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof....If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

1962 Partisan Fundraiser:

Our deficit will not be paid off in the next one hundred days, nor will it be paid off in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration. Nor perhaps even in our lifetime on this planet, but let us begin—remembering that generosity is not a sign of weakness and that ambassadors are always subject to Senate confirmation, for if the Democratic Party cannot be helped by the many who are poor, it cannot be saved by the few who are rich. So let us begin.

Several of his utterances here have the same structure as those in his inaugural speech, but with more mundane, perhaps cynical content. While this pokes fun at the style of his speech, he does not *caricature* the marked, poetic, “elevated” syntax, which is to say that he does not take irregular word order to a greater extreme. Though I imagine that the use of nonsense lines like (hear this in JFK’s emphatic tone) “NOT ASK YOUR COUNTRY WHAT DO YOU FOR CAN!” would work brilliantly as caricature, if voiced by the right person.

### **3.2 Musical Caricature (vs. Linguistic)**

A few points should be made following the discussion of caricature in language:

1. With sound as well as images, there can be a sharp distinction between realistic reproduction and caricatural use.
2. The line between the counterfeit and caricature is easier to draw with language than it is with music.
3. With language, caricaturing phonology is simple, yet caricaturing syntax requires a special circumstance.
4. With music, however, both “phonology” and “syntax” are equally ripe for caricature.

Let the objection be heard that there are no precise equivalents of syntax and phonology in music—despite Bernstein’s best efforts, alas<sup>14</sup>—though analogical

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<sup>14</sup> The first three of Bernstein’s *The Unanswered Question* lectures (published 1976) are on the topics of musical phonology, syntax, and semantics respectively. These lectures, Swain notes, “were

applications of these terms are certainly of value.<sup>15</sup> The metaphors inevitably reach their limits, of course, as the domains of musical syntax, phonology, and semantics are more closely entwined than are those in language. A scale or tuning system is like the phonemic inventory of a piece, but it is also a part of the *syntax* of the music. There is no (non-texted) musical equivalent of Chomsky's famous "colorless green ideas" that illustrates the partial independence of syntax and semantics in language.<sup>16</sup> And any change to the sonic character of music entails a change of meaning as well, as I have made clear in previous chapters. Nevertheless, I maintain that musical caricature can be classified through the *analogies* of phonology and syntax.

Rivers, despite offering only a laconic account of sonic caricature, suggests two ways that composers have approached the process, noting that "[m]ost of these works involve distortion of known melodies or the use of peculiar sound effects at intentionally inappropriate moments."<sup>17</sup> The former, changing the actual notes and rhythms of a piece is one method, hereafter called *syntactic caricature*. The latter, involving a change to the timbre, instrumentation, sound quality, or register will be called *phonological caricature*. And I argue that there is yet a third type, *contextual caricature*, which itself is a pair of reciprocal processes. Music can be used in a dramatic context (anything from a ballet to a film) to caricature the actors or actions

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scorned so often and so pointedly that their contribution ended up providing only more fodder for the cannons of the opposition." (1997, p. 4)

<sup>15</sup> Swain (1997) and Patel (2008) organize their comparisons of language in music in exactly this way, with chapters about phonology, syntax, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Scruton offers a pithy, if catty quip about such matters. "Much of Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik* sounds like 'fish eat three ideas'—each bar leading smoothly into its successor, yet the whole thing is a kind of nonsense." (1997, p. 179)

<sup>17</sup> Rivers (1991), p. 74

of the narrative; or, it can be presented in connection with images or actions in such a way that the music is cast in a new, ridiculous light. These three methods of caricature (examples to follow!) are not mutually exclusive; in fact, many of the strongest examples of musical caricature employ more than one technique, and in some cases, all three may be used simultaneously.

The concepts of *contextual* and *phonological* caricature are relatively straight-forward. When we hear Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours" used to accompany hippos dancing ballet in Disney's *Fantasia* (1940), the presentation of the music in this context is form of caricature. Nothing about the sound of the music has been altered—only the context of its use. Rather, Spike Jones' version of the same piece in his *Murdering the Classics* collection is a clear example of phonological caricature.<sup>18</sup> The notes and rhythms of this and his other "murdered" tunes are hardly changed, but open season is declared on just about every other parameter. His versions of Bizet's *Carmen*, Liszt's *Liebesträume* No. 3, and Rossini's *William Tell* (et al) are best characterized by their eclectic "orchestrations" making use of any number of household objects as instruments, and their use and abuse of slapstick sound effects.

The concept of *syntactic* caricature requires a bit more unpacking than do the other two methods. Is the syntax of all music caricaturable, or are there, as Genette suggests of literature, "inimitable" styles that "the caricaturist is neither able nor willing to tackle?"<sup>19</sup> And what exactly is it about the music that we change in such a caricature? An artist can play with the shape and size of their subject's features

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<sup>18</sup> Rivers lists the work of Spike Jones as one of his only examples of musical caricature. (Ibid)

<sup>19</sup> Genette (1997/1982), p. 97

much more easily than a musician can, as music has neither size nor shape in any literal sense. Nonetheless, there is a similar logic in the approaches to caricature between art and music. Drawing a person with an impossibly large nose, according to Rivers, is a technique “thoroughly emblematic” of pictorial caricature.<sup>20</sup> But of course, it’s not *always* the nose that is enlarged—it’s whatever feature of a person lends itself to exaggeration. For President Carter, it was his teeth that were consistently drawn too large. For George H.W. Bush, it was his whole head. And for President Obama, large ears are the hallmark feature of his caricatures.<sup>21</sup> The point is that there is no “one size fits all” solution to graphic caricature, and neither is there in music. The first step of musical caricature is to find a trademark feature, either of a particular piece or the idiolect of a composer that can be emphasized.

With pictorial caricature, a prominent feature can be shown as taking up more—or less—space; with music, this can only be accomplished with *time*. If a composer is enamored of a particular type of gesture, a caricaturist can make it appear with either greater *duration* or *frequency*. Changing the duration of a musical figure is an inherently visual approach to caricature; this is like changing the *size* of a feature of the music, but again, in time rather than space. Let us call this procedure *expansion*. Using a musical figure with greater frequency, however, betrays a *literary* logic. Although Rivers discusses a great deal of literary caricature, all of his examples are about imagistic depictions in literature of what we see in life.

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<sup>20</sup> Rivers (1991), p. 14

<sup>21</sup>Caricatures of Obama are perhaps less commonly found than those of other presidents, and when they do appear, they seem rather mild by comparison. The reluctance to draw Obama in such an unfavorable light may stem from reactions to historical caricatures of African Americans, depicted with pitch-black skin and absurdly large, light lips, as though in blackface.

Such caricatures follow a visual logic, but when an author caricatures the style of another, this is a different matter entirely. Genette discusses such literary caricature in *Palimpseste*, and explains that “[e]veryone knows intuitively that comic imitation always exaggerates the characteristic traits of its model. To designate this procedure, the Russian Formalists used a more technical but still somewhat crude and certainly ambiguous term: stylization.”<sup>22</sup> Instead, he suggests that a more “appropriate and accurate term might be saturation.”<sup>23</sup>

To describe the technique of using a musical feature with greater *frequency*, I borrow the term *saturation* from Genette, which he defines as “the recurrence of a stylistic or thematic feature characteristic of an author.”<sup>24</sup> Saturation, again, I will contrast with the more pictorial technique of *expansion*. (See Table 3.1 below for a preliminary taxonomy of musical caricature; this chart will grow as new techniques are revealed.) Rarely, does an artist create a caricature of a person by drawing them with *several* noses—by saturating the picture with redundant images—and even more rarely does an author expand the “size” or “shape” of the literature they caricature. (And how would this be accomplished?) Yet music is capable of adapting techniques from both domains. Although the practice of musical caricature is woefully underexplored in both theory and practice, the fact that both literary and pictorial techniques are available to it suggests that music may truly be the ideal art for caricature.

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<sup>22</sup> Genette (1997/1982), p. 87

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp. 87-88

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 88

SYNTACTIC		PHONOLOGICAL	CONTEXTUAL
<u>Expansion:</u> Exaggerating a characteristic feature by increasing the duration of its appearance	<u>Saturation:</u> Exaggerating a characteristic feature by increasing the frequency of its appearance	Changing the timbre, instrumentation, or range to alter a piece in an unflattering or ridiculous manner.	Presenting music alongside, or in connection with something that makes it seem ridiculous by association.

**TABLE 3.1: Techniques of Caricature (1)**

### **3.3: Caricaturing Music in the *Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra***

The clearest examples of musical caricature that I have found appear in a single animated short: *The Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra*, from a seven-part BBC series called the *Tales of Hoffnung*<sup>25</sup>. A few words are in order on the genesis of these cartoons. They are based primarily on the artwork of Gerard Hoffnung (1925-1959, born Gerhard), a British artist of German-Jewish origins.<sup>26</sup> Hoffnung was also a musician (primarily a tubist), a comedian, and a concert organizer. Wells describes him as “the master of the graphic pun, allying German tradition with English Whimsy.”<sup>27</sup>

Hoffnung’s best known artistic work is his collection of musical books, which comprise drawings of musicians that caricature both the player and the instrument. The *Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra* (hereafter *HSO*) cartoon is based upon a 1955 book of the same title. Some of the simpler caricatures in the book include a double-chinned man using his saxophone as smoking pipe, an obese Valkyrie who has put down her spear and shield to play a “Wagner” tuba (complete with a bust of the

<sup>25</sup> The title of this series is of course a reference to Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffman*.

<sup>26</sup> He, like the other two men I’ll introduce in the following pages, was an émigré from continental Europe.

<sup>27</sup> Wells (2006), p. 173

eponymous conductor on the bell), and a large eared English-horn player who surprises the double reed section when an egg falls from the base of his instrument. Other drawings exemplify Rivers' concept of *transmutation*, which he defines as "any artistic act through which two different things (that would not normally change into each other) are perceived as explicitly becoming one another, or as implicitly exchanging identities or traits."<sup>28</sup> Examples include a man who plays his enormous belly (called a "Tum Drum") with timpani mallets, and a concertmaster who plays his goatee as a violin; both of these caricatures feature a player and their instrument transmutationally conflated. In other cases, an instrument is merged with a real-world object. A cartoonish woman plays the spokes of an old-timey bicycle as a harp, and a player seated like a cellist plays a yo-yo with a bow (called a "yo-bow").

Hoffnung, who died at the tragically young age of 34, never got to see his collections of caricatures brought to life in cartoon form by Halas and Batchelor animation. Said studio, which was the largest of its kind in Britain from 1940 to 1995, was started by a husband and wife team, John Halas (a Hungarian-British cartoonist) and Joy Batchelor, whom Halas met upon moving to England in 1936. Their daughter Vivien recalls, "[t]hey pioneered many of the techniques and genres that laid the foundation of the animation industry we know today, and in making *Animal Farm* [(1954)], the first animated entertainment feature in Britain, they secured themselves a place in British film history."<sup>29</sup> As Wells explains, "Halas and Batchelor undertook the [*Tales of Hoffnung*] series of films with long-time associate Francis Chagrin, who had collaborated with Hoffnung in his interplanetary music

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<sup>28</sup> Rivers (1991), p. 6

<sup>29</sup> Halas (2006), p. 7



festivals described as ‘extravagant evenings of symphonic caricature.’ Chagrin was to write specific scores for the series... each characterized by pieces from a range of composers in a variety of idioms.”<sup>30</sup>

The *HSO* cartoon contains hardly any linguistic content. Music and sound effects fill the sonic space, without any dialogue. With the exception of a single “hello” from the Bassett Horn player (whose instrument doubles as a telephone, which he answers during the concert), no character speaks, and minimal written text is used. Of course, not much language is necessary, as the cartoon is simply an orchestra concert, caricaturing the musicians, the audience, and English symphonic culture as a whole. As Wells explains, while “the orchestra improvise as they await their very late conductor, the music functions as a key determining element of the narrative and, crucially, a major element in redefining the codes and conventions of the cartoon.”<sup>31</sup> At last, the conductor arrives, and we hear a mischievous *mélange* of music by composers from Mozart to Mussorgsky. However, almost all of this borrowed music has undergone some alteration, either to instrumentation, texture, or the notes and rhythms themselves.

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<sup>30</sup>Wells (2006), p. 173

Francis Chagrin (1905-1972), born Alexander Paucker, was a composer of Romanian Jewish origin. He adopted the French name upon moving to Paris in 1928, ultimately settling in England in 1934. (See Scowcroft, 2009)

<sup>31</sup> Wells 2006, p. 173. Holliss describes Chagrin’s musical contributions to the history of British animation: “While the hugely inventive and sometimes complex scores of Carl Stalling and Scott Bradley for Disney, Warner Brothers and MGM cartoons have been highly instrumental in creating a distinctiveness in American cartoon art, the specific relationship between sound and image—known as ‘Mickey Mousing’ in the way it especially ‘narrativised’ chase sequences and comic effects—was inappropriate for the approach Halas and Batchelor wished to take. Seiber [another composer in the studio’s employ] and Chagrin offered a much more specifically ‘musical’ relationship of contrast and counterpoint to the imagery as well as illustrative motifs and themes. Chagrin valued the idea that the creation of music to evoke and suggest a mood or atmosphere was a fundamental part of Halas and Batchelor’s aesthetic intentions, and was intrinsically related to other art forms, most notably ballet.” (2006, p. 132)

In the opening credits to the cartoon, we learn that the music was “composed, arranged, re-composed, dis-arranged, and conducted by Francis Chagrin, with acknowledgment and apologies to Mozart, Liszt, Bizet, Grieg, Delibes, Tchaikovsky, Auber, [Johann] Strauss [II], Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, [and] Schubert”—a remarkably candid confession. Indeed Chagrin’s very “re-composition” and “dis-arrangement” of these familiar tunes makes *The Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra* a veritable instruction manual in how to caricature music.

### 3.3.1: Syntactic Caricatures in *The Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra*:

#### 3.3.1.1: Fun with Figaro: “A monstrous many notes”

When the conductor of the *HSO* arrives, the first piece of the collage that the orchestra plays is *The Marriage of Figaro* overture.<sup>32</sup> Apparently—although this may be, in Gurewitsch’s words “apocryphal piffle”—Emperor Joseph II once said to Mozart that this piece suffered from having “too many notes.”<sup>33</sup> Jan Swafford of *The Guardian* notes that although the Emperor’s complaint “is generally perceived to be a gaffe by a blockhead,” that “[i]n fact, Joseph was echoing what nearly everybody, including his admirers, said about Mozart: he was so imaginative that he couldn't turn it off, and that made his music at times intense, even demonic.”<sup>34</sup> Whether or not Chagrin was aware of this anecdote, he surely believed that this very trait defines Mozart’s idiolect. In his caricature of the *Marriage of Figaro* overture, he exaggerates the familiar theme making it even busier.

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<sup>32</sup> Another fragment of the piece appears in the bombastic conclusion, weaving together patches of *Figaro*, Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* and the Schubert *March militaire* in D major (op. 51, no. 1).

<sup>33</sup> Gurewitsch (2002)

<sup>34</sup> Swafford (2004)

The opening gesture of Mozart’s opera is hardly a laconic utterance—as a seven measure phrase, it already feels extended, uneven, and perhaps too “verbose.” Yet Chagrin adds five additional measures to the phrase, extending both the length and the range of the phrase to a ridiculous degree. This is a clear example of syntactic caricature through *expansion*. In strictly musical terms, we might also call it an expansion, that of the dominant. Mozart rests on a local dominant for an already long four measures, but Chagrin stretches the dominant for an extra five measures making it a deliciously uneven nine. Just as an artist, in Rivers’ words, “uses the weapons of distortion and exaggeration to depict the individual in as un-Apollonian a way as possible,” Chagrin subverts the neoclassical balance and gentle wit that characterizes much of the music of Haydn and Mozart, abandoning it here in favor wild Dionysian expanse.<sup>35</sup>



**EXAMPLE 3-1: Chagrin’s Expansion of *The Marriage of Figaro* (first phrase)**

And there is yet another aspect of caricature in this excerpt, this time of a phonological nature. This rapid-fire passage is most unforgiving to amateur string players, and it is easy enough to imagine a student performance where the performers are not quite in time with one another, riddled with wrong notes besides. Although it is possible that the few imperfections in the performance of the players in the *HSO* are the result of recording on a tight-schedule and tighter budget,

<sup>35</sup> Rivers (1991), pp. 37-38

I am inclined to believe that these minor infelicities are intentional, designed to caricature an amateur orchestra (if not also the passage of music itself).

### 3.3.1.2: “Dance of the Floating Celesta”

The next clear example of caricature appears in a sequence based upon one of Hoffnung’s drawings. In this image, a charmingly aloof celesta player with an absurdly large chin is shown floating above the orchestra, restrained by an anchor to prevent him from drifting out over the Thames. “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” is used to bring this drawing to life, which is an unsurprising choice, as this excerpt is, by far, the most famous celesta solo in the classical literature. Even today this passage is only rivaled in cultural ubiquity by the opening theme from the *Harry Potter* films. Of course, Chagrin does not merely cut and paste this theme directly into the collage; through some clever modifications, he exaggerates Tchaikovsky’s idiolect with comic precision.

In describing the “occidental” perception of Russian music, Taruskin notes that many “are likely to fasten on its suspiciously decorative packaging and what can seem an unacceptably high (but characteristically Slavic) level of ritualized repetition or sequence.”<sup>36</sup> Although Taruskin’s claim specifically refers to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov (as part of a hagiographic—and gratuitous—plea to take his music seriously) it no less applies to Tchaikovsky; these are his stylistic hallmarks as much they are Rimsky’s. And as we might expect, these are exactly the traits that Chagrin chose to exaggerate.

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<sup>36</sup> Taruskin (2009), p. 177

Tchaikovsky, "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, mm. 5-8

Chagrin, Floating Celeste Cue

### EXAMPLE 3-2: "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" and Chagrin's Caricature

As we can see, Chagrin caricatures a composer known for his use of sequences by repeating a model several times. There is a noticeable *Gestalt* of the falling minor second (harmonized by diminished-seventh chords, each with a rhythm of two sixteenths and an eighth) that is repeated here, and as such, we can call this caricature through *saturation*. However, as this phrase is almost double the length of Tchaikovsky's, this is simultaneously an example of *expansion*.<sup>37</sup>

Tchaikovsky uses a mere five successive diminished-seventh chords in the middle two measures of this phrase, but Chagrin increases this number to an outrageous sixteen.

Just as Chagrin extended the range of the *Figaro* excerpt, making it reach a much lower *Tiefpunkt*, Chagrin shifts the range of the "Sugar Plum Fairy" *up* here, Mickey-mousing the celesta player who floats steadily higher in the cartoon while

<sup>37</sup>Saturation is possible *sans* expansion, and I will discuss examples of this below.

he plays this passage; as the register reaches the stratosphere, so does the physical height of the player. This, of course, adds an element of contextual caricature as well. Further, presenting the melody at such a tessitura may also poke fun at the “suspiciously decorative packaging” of this music. An already delicate passage is made all the more twee, rendering the fairy as a peddler of a more saccharine treat than sugar plums.

### 3.3.1.3 “In the Hall of Serpent King”

The “orchestra” in Hoffnung’s book includes some peculiar instruments. Some, like the aforementioned “yo-bow” are figments of his imagination. Others, like the alphorn simply do not belong in a symphony orchestra, and others still are obsolete instruments like the serpent, the ancestral protoform of Hoffnung’s beloved tuba. The serpent drawing is one of the few in the book with a caption—an honor he apparently reserves for tuba-like instruments—which reads, “[f]or security reasons this instrument is no longer in use,” as it appears to have come to life like a literal snake and swallowed its player whole. Rather than chose an arcane serpent excerpt from literature to animate this image, Chagrin adapts a portion of Grieg’s “In the Hall of Mountain King From” from *Peer Gynt* for bassoon. Like the Tchaikovsky example above, this music is part of a contextual caricature; the music increases in intensity as the serpent slowly awakens and consumes the unfortunate player.

The act of caricaturing the musical syntax here presents some challenges, because Grieg’s theme is characterized by an almost comic degree of repetition, and an expressive quality so menacing that it can hardly be taken seriously. It is already

oversaturated with the same motive, and itself grows so overwrought that there is hardly room left to caricature it. Grieg himself described this theme as “something that so reeks of cowpats, ultra-Norwegianism, and 'to-thyself-be-enough-ness' that I can't bear to hear it, though I hope that the irony will make itself felt.”<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, Chagrin manages to provide a caricature of the theme by intensifying its maniacal, frenetic character. His version begins slowly, and like Grieg's, the tempo quickly increases and the texture thickens. Chagrin adds a great deal more chromaticism to the melody, so much so that it undermines the tonal stability of “Mountain King,” and he makes it all the more cacophonous besides by juxtaposing the opening of Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* overture atop the final line of this cue.

Grieg, "In the Hall...", mm. 6-13

Bsn.

Chagrin, Serpent Cue

Bsn.

Str.

Bsn.

Chagrin, Serpent (continued)

Wnd.  
+Str.

### EXAMPLE 3-3: Caricature of “In the Hall of Mountain King”

<sup>38</sup> Watts (1996), p. 17

This is neither an *expansion* of a fragment of its hypotext, nor is it a *saturation* thereof, as Grieg’s theme is based entirely upon variants of a single motive; the only way to further saturate it would be to have competing, overlapping statements. Rather, we might call this technique *amplification*, or a hyperbolic exaggeration of affect. In other words, whatever adjective we might use to describe Grieg’s “Mountain King” theme, we could now modify with *molto*, *très*, *sehr*, or another adverb in the language of our choice. And let us extend our chart of caricature techniques accordingly.

SYNTACTIC			PHONOLOGICAL	CONTEXTUAL
<u>Expansion:</u> Exaggeration of a characteristic feature by increasing the duration of its appearance	<u>Saturation:</u> Exaggeration of a characteristic feature by increasing the frequency of its appearance	<u>Amplification:</u> Hyperbolic exaggeration of the affect of a piece (e.g. If it’s dark, make it <i>darker</i> , etc.).	Changing the timbre, instrumentation, or range to alter a piece in an unflattering or ridiculous manner.	Presenting music alongside, or in connection with something that makes it seem ridiculous by association.

**TABLE 3.2: Techniques of Caricature (2)**

#### 3.3.1.4: The Very Blue Danube

A common device of pictorial caricature that I have not yet addressed is the rendering of a likeness in an “ugly” way. Rivers explains that neo-Classical art “had as its touchstone the concept of harmony” as “the antithesis of everything found in caricature: exaggeration, distortion, excess, and nonconformity.”<sup>39</sup> He likewise calls caricature “the natural enemy of Classicism” arguing that “the perfect standard for

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<sup>39</sup> Rivers (1991), p. 35



caricature to rebel against would be one that insists that measure, balance, and reasonableness are the foundation of good art,"<sup>40</sup> suggesting that "[t]he caricaturist, even today to some extent, largely relies on the prejudice in favor of Classical standards [of beauty] in order to make his point."<sup>41</sup> If this is also true of music, then perhaps a modernist re-composition of music from the common-practice period (especially, but not exclusively music of the Viennese neoclassical variety) can perhaps be considered a form of caricature. Rather than using a value laden term like "uglification," let us call this technique *distortion*; this is perhaps still not value neutral, but less problematic and polemical than one that invokes beauty and its opposite.<sup>42</sup>

Chagrin provides us with a textbook-quality example of musical caricature in the *HSO* through such *distortion*. We hear a tubist (with a barrel in the bell of his instrument, presumably a keg) playing what sounds like the start of a deranged waltz.<sup>43</sup> Surely enough, the "trinkler" (or trumpet with a watering can spout for a bell) enters with the melody of the *Blue Danube*, but instead of playing the iconic major triad that forms the opening gesture of Strauss' waltz, Hoffnung's "trinkler" plays the notes of an augmented triad. The chordal punctuation that follows this gesture likewise comprises augmented triads, further *distorting* Strauss' theme by

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 37

<sup>42</sup> In an earlier draft, I considered the term "deformation" for this phenomenon, but this too is almost as loaded as "uglification." See Rodgers (2006, pp. 236-7) for a summary of how the term "deformation" has been used in recent music theory. He contrasts Hepokoski and Darcy's use of the term in *Elements of Sonata Theory* (2006), with Straus' (2006) discussion in relation to music and disability.

<sup>43</sup> Immediately before this cue, some of the wind and brass players are shown using their instruments as lengthy straws to consume alcohol during the performance. An oboist (based on a Hoffnung drawing) with a devilish look on his face drinks beer through the pipe of his instrument as he plays part of a paraphrased fragment of Beethoven's Second Symphony.

making the chords more dissonant, caricaturing the syntax twice. Yet this is not the only form of caricature here; this example is one of the few cases where the music is caricatured in syntactic, phonological, and contextual means. The phonological element here results from the distorted timbre of these chords; it sounds as though the instruments are playing under water. And it *should* sound this way given the cartoon context; this music is, after all, played on a “trinkler,” and water comes out of the bell in the cartoon as the trumpeter plays.

#### EXAMPLE 3-4: “Blue Danube” Caricature

Chagrin’s dissonant-waltz-as-caricature is hardly novel, of course. This was a favorite tool of early modernist composers. Two examples immediately come to mind: One is Bartók’s *Fourteen Bagatelles* (op. 6), the final piece of which is, in Crawford’s words, “a bitter, demented Waltz.”<sup>44</sup> Another is the brief moment of Schoenberg’s 3<sup>rd</sup> String Quartet (first movement) which Cherlin calls a “waltz parody,” as though “from a world lost as it remembers (or evokes a memory of) the ‘gay Vienna’ of Schoenberg’s youth.”<sup>45</sup> Though neither of these pieces has a specific

<sup>44</sup>Crawford (2002), p. 130

Of interest, Bartók himself may have thought of this gesture as a type of caricature. In a letter from January 1909 (quoted in Crawford), written a mere few months after the *Bagatelles* were composed, he says the following about contemporary music: “It is curious that in music until now only enthusiasm, love, grief, or at most distress figured as motivating causes—that is the so-called exalted ideals. Whereas vengeance, the caricature, sarcasm are only living or are going to live their musical lives in our times...I am unable to imagine products of art otherwise than as manifestations of the creator’s boundless enthusiasm, regret, fury, distorting ridicule or sarcasm.” (Ibid, p. 133)

<sup>45</sup> Cherlin (2007), p. 223

hypotext upon which it is based, the act of satirical pastiche in these two examples serves to caricature the conventions of a style more generally.

To summarize, these “distorted waltzes” present us with our fourth (and final!) type of syntactic caricature, which will now be added to the chart. This type, unlike the other three techniques of syntactic caricature, does not involve exaggerating the traits of a hypotext. Caricature through distortion changes the notes and rhythms of a piece in such a way that the result is most akin to the timbral or registral changes of phonological caricature.

TYPE	SYNTACTIC (Changing notes and rhythms)				PHONOLOGICAL	CONTEXTUAL
METHOD	<u>Expansion</u> Exaggeration of a characteristic feature by increasing the duration of its appearance	<u>Saturation</u> Exaggeration of a characteristic feature by increasing the frequency of its appearance	<u>Amplification</u> Hyperbolic exaggeration of the affect of a piece (e.g. If it's “dark,” make it <i>darker</i> , etc.).	<u>Distortion</u> Alteration that presents the piece in an unfavorable way, but by blurring, not accentuating the stylistic traits.	Changing the timbre, instrumentation, or range to alter a piece in an unflattering or ridiculous manner.	Presenting music alongside, or in connection with something that makes it seem ridiculous by association.
RESULT (Musical)	Exaggeration of a trait <i>in the music</i> ; something that makes the hypotext sound “ <i>more like itself</i> .”			The hypotext is changed, but without exaggerating its characteristic traits.		No change to the music

**TABLE 3.3: Techniques of Caricature (3)**

### 3.3.2: Non-Syntactic Caricature in *The Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra: Play With Range*

The four examples above are an exhaustive list of the syntactic caricatures in the *HSO* cartoon. However, there are at least two excerpts that are caricatured in both phonological and contextual ways that nonetheless invite commentary. Hoffnung’s drawing of a flutist and a (literally!) pocket-sized piccolo player is brought to life in the cartoon with the opening passage of Daniel-Francois Auber’s

*Fra Diavolo* overture. After hearing a two-measure snare cadence (a truncation of Auber's opening gestures), the first melodic utterance is presented by a pair of flutes (one alto, I presume), in the same key and range as Auber's string theme. Changing the instrumentation from strings to flutes alone does not count as caricature, but when the piccolo player emerges from the flutist's pocket for the tag of the phrase, the range of the melody is pushed an octave higher. The second phrase continues in the higher octave, until an even smaller player with a "sopranino piccolino" (or so I suppose we should call it) appears in the piccolo player's pocket to extend the range an octave higher still. The pairing of the melody, whose range steadily goes higher, with images of players, whose size steadily decreases (commensurate with the size of their respective instruments), creates the impression that the melody here is *smaller* than its sonic "likeness" in Auber's original context.

The opposite musical transformation is used to animate another of Hoffnung's concoctions, the "String Tuba". Hoffnung must have been quite fond of this drawing, as it appears on the book's cover, and it is the only other image in the book besides the serpent that is paired with a caption: "This instrument is sometimes referred to as the 'Minstrel Tuba' or the 'Blow-Plucker.' It is interesting to note that the String Tuba is a member of both the string and brass families though it is usually seated with the former."<sup>46</sup> In the cartoon, the string tubist, by his lonesome, plays the "Pizzicato" passage from Delibes' *Sylvia*.<sup>47</sup> In this elephantine

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<sup>46</sup> Hoffnung (1955/1985).

Four out of fifty drawings are devoted solely to variants on the tuba, including the aforementioned serpent and "Wagner Tuba," the "String Tuba" discussed above, and a "Bass Tuba" drawn larger than its player.

<sup>47</sup> The excerpt was recorded by a tubist and harpist presumably, unless a real string tuba was commissioned for the occasion.

rendering of the “Pizzacto,” Delibes’ spritely string melody is sounded two octaves down, almost making it sound “too big.” So both here and in the Auber excerpt, Chagrin seems to play games with the “size” of the music, accomplished both by altering the instrumentation and range of the music that is borrowed, and at least with Auber, presenting the music in connection with images of corresponding size.<sup>48</sup>

### **3.4: An Aphoristic Interjection**

In section 3.2 above, I mentioned that pictorial caricature can involve making a feature of the subject larger *or smaller*. The *Figaro* example demonstrates how a musical gesture can be expanded, but what about the inverse procedure of *contracting* music? This could be a compelling method of caricature if a composer is known for their aphorisms. Webern seems an easy target here, and in fact, Alban Berg and Theodor Adorno *have* caricatured Webern in just this way. In his half-personal, half-scholarly reminiscences of Berg, Adorno writes, “[t]ogether we once concocted a Webern parody, consisting of a single quarter-note rest under a quintuplet bracket and garnished with every conceivable symbol and performance notation, which, to top it off, was then to fade away.”<sup>49</sup> This is perhaps both a contraction and a saturation, but one that is entirely silent.

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<sup>48</sup> The associations of small size/high pitch and large size/low pitch are of course not entirely arbitrary. A piccolo, after all, is smaller in size than, say, a bass flute. Perhaps a consequence of the acoustic correlation between size and frequency, if a cartoon composer wants to “Mickey-Mouse” the actions of a tiny hummingbird, a piccolo is perhaps the obvious choice of instrument. Conversely, underscoring the actions of say, the ballet-dancing hippos in Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940) with high winds is unabashedly ironic as the likely candidate would be tubas, bassoons, and contrabassi.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Ross (2010)

This caricature demonstrates two important points: that expansion and contraction are both viable techniques (though the prior is presumably much more common), and that it is possible to create a caricature with no sound at all. In another of Hoffnung's books, *Acoustics*, there are number of drawing of pianists "playing" works by certain composers. A performer who plays Liszt uses a whip to tame the piano, for Boulez the performer stands atop a smashed piano, and most topically, for Webern a man sits an infant on his lap to indiscriminately hit the keys. Each of these images offers satirical commentary on music without any sound.<sup>50</sup>

### **3.5 Translation plus Caricature**

Although translation and copyphrase are distinct from one another because of their irreconcilable goals and techniques, translation and caricature are more compatible. One may simultaneous translate a piece into a new style, and exaggerate the most recognizable traits of a composer. Some of my examples of translation in Chapter 1 certainly have elements of caricature in them. P.D.Q. Bach's *Last Tango at Bayreuth* is perhaps a phonological caricature of *Tristan* for its comical instrumentation—sorry, bassoonists—as much as it is translation to fit the stylistic norms of tango. Similarly, Some of Lee's *Piano Variations* may present the style of the composers they imitate a little *too* well. The "Webern" variation is maybe a little *too* sparse to be a passable imitation. And the Beethoven variation seems to exaggerate the composer's trademark of long-winded closing rhetoric. It

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<sup>50</sup> In Hoffnung's *Acoustics*, there are also several drawings of people listening to records, including a shadowy figure listening to *Wozzeck*, cowering in the corner while nervously drinking brandy and chain smoking. There is no *sound* in this caricature, but there is both graphic notation and the image of someone listening to music.

so happens that Lee is in good company is caricaturing this feature of Beethoven's syntax; some of the strongest examples of translation-plus-caricature that I am aware of do just this.

### 3.5.1: Beethovenian Endings

Dudley Moore's side-splitting translation of the "Colonel Bogey March," in the style of a middle-period Beethoven sonata is a brilliant example of musical caricature. The performance is itself a lampoon of a piano recital; Moore knows what he is doing is humorous, but never cracks a smile during the entire performance, maintaining an all too serious demeanor. But even if we just hear a recording of this piece without seeing Moore's hilariously feigned earnestness, it is still an effective caricature—perhaps the same cannot be said if Chagrin's caricatures were divorced from their visual accompaniment. Moore singles out two features of Beethoven's idiolect to exaggerate in his performance. First, he incorporates a few extra rapid shifts of dynamics, tempo and expressive genre for which Beethoven is known, saturating the piece with jarring juxtapositions. Next, and most pointedly, he targets Beethoven's terminal strategies, creating an unusually extreme example of caricature through expansion.<sup>51</sup>

The piece is 134 measures long, and from about measure 72 onward, it sounds as though every phrase will be the penultimate one, if not the very last.

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<sup>51</sup> A remarkably astute analysis of Moore's parody can be found in a YouTube comment (Accessed March 2013): "Those who are more academic than I may correct me, but in essence, the Beethoven sound is about long and insistent rhythmic passages, emphasis on passion rather than elegance, juxtapositions of contrasting sections, and false endings. Dudley Moore captured all that very well. Actually this is also an affectionate homage to Beethoven as well, since really you can only parody someone when their sound is absolutely unique and unmistakable." This academic, for one, feels no need to offer any corrections.

There are number of false endings, perhaps the most dramatic of which appears in m. 118, with a brief tonicization of the  $\flat$ II that pulls the rug out from under a seemingly final cadence. After a few more measures of relentless tonic-dominant alteration, Moore pauses on a dominant triad in the penultimate measure, which of course, we have no idea is the penultimate measure at the time. Feigning fatigue, gasping for air, he finishes the piece with a rushed, matter-of-fact, and unsatisfying  $\text{ii}^{\flat 7}-\text{V}^7-\text{I}$ , the reaction to which is, “all that closing rhetoric, for *this!?*”

On the whole, Moore’s performance is more of a caricature of Beethoven than it is a translation of “Colonel Bogey.” By the time he focuses on exaggerating Beethoven’s terminal procedures, we lose sight of the “Colonel Bogey” tune. It is still a translation, as Moore offers a few different Beethovenian takes on “Colonel Bogey” earlier in the piece almost as a theme and variations, but it makes a *better* example of caricature.<sup>52</sup>

### **3.6: Copyphrase plus caricature**

#### **3.6.1: *Simpsons’* Copyphrase Re-Examined**

Just as caricature and translation are not mutually exclusive, neither are caricature and copyphrase. A few examples from the *The Simpsons* that I introduced in the previous chapter bear re-examination to highlight the elements of caricature in them. My first example from Chapter 2, “See My Vest” (Example 2-1) seems to

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<sup>52</sup> The same is true of the work of other such comic virtuoso pianists. Richard Grayson, for one, who can actually *improvise* “X in the style of Y” pieces based on audience suggestions, usually abandons the tune which he is translating for significant lengths, focusing on imitating (and at times exaggerating) the style of the composer instead. Personal favorites are his version of John Williams’ “Imperial March” in the style of Beethoven, which is perhaps more of a counterfeit of Beethoven’s style than a caricature. Again, we lose sight of the fact that it is a version of the “Imperial March,” but it always sounds just like a Beethoven Sonata.



caricature the rhyme scheme of “Be Our Guest,” exaggerating it through saturation with more internal rhyme. In this case, the *text* of the copyphrase caricatures that of its source, though not the music. Clausen’s “Dr. Zaius” (Example 2-2) is perhaps an amplification of “Rock Me Amadeus” as well as a phonological caricature; it exaggerates the campiness of “Rock Me Amadeus,” and depicts it unflatteringly with intentionally amateurish electronic timbres. And lastly, his parodies of Nirvana’s “Rape Me” and Bush’s “Glycerine” each exploit the most readily identifiable aspects of each artist’s style and use them with greater frequency.

A trademark feature of Nirvana’s idiolect is a device that Chris McDonald calls “modal subversion,”<sup>53</sup> which in his words, is a “contradiction of the established [or assumed] modality.”<sup>54</sup> Conveniently, McDonald uses Nirvana’s “Rape Me” as a didactic example of this technique. The chord progression during the verse of this song (G#5, B5, D#5, F#5) contains three diatonic third relations, establishing an assumed modality of G# Aeolian. However, the F-double-sharps in the melody, McDonald explains, call “the modality into question twice,” demonstrating “a salient feature of [Nirvana’s] songwriting style.”<sup>55</sup> This characteristic F double-sharp only appears once every four measures in the verses of “Rape Me,” but in “Shave Me,” it appears twice—a simple, but efficient solution.

The elements of caricature in Clausen’s “Margarine” are not quite as transparent, as the defining traits of Bush’s style are somewhat less marked than Nirvana’s. Modal subversion is rarely, if ever found in their songs. Rather, perhaps

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<sup>53</sup> See McDonald (2000), p. 355

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 358

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

the most identifiable trait of Bush's idiolect is the use of extended melodies with remarkably narrow ranges, usually comprising only the first three scale degrees. We find such economical melodies in at least half of the songs on their first two albums, including (naming only the hits) "Machinehead," "Comedown," "Greedy Fly," "Swallowed," "Cold Contagious," "Mouth," and—of course—"Glycerine," the source for "Margarine." This is bland trademark, perhaps, but one that apparently Clausen has noticed as well. He saturates "Margarine," with more  $^3\text{-}^2\text{-}^1$  figures, but since this is a copyphrase, and thus must be different enough from its source, he *removes* some of the figures from the corresponding measures in which they appear in "Glycerine," but makes up for their absence elsewhere.

Both of these songs from "That 90's Show" are examples of saturation without expansion. In fact, the saturation is made all the more effective because the songs are *contracted*; both are reduced to virtually nothing but the most characteristic features of each artist. Especially in the case of "Shave Me," we might call this process caricature through *simplification*, which according to Rivers, is a common technique in pictorial and literary caricature.<sup>56</sup> One example, Rivers explains, is Hitchcock's self-caricatural drawing, which omits most his facial features, thus bringing those that are included into sharper focus. Another appears in the novels of Balzac, where it is typical to find sparse physical descriptions of characters that only mention their most extreme features.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>In his words, "A portrait (either pictorial or in words) might be composed of nothing more than a few sketchy lines suggesting, let us say, a pair of eyeglasses and a moustache... leaving out all the other features of a subject's face. (1991, p. 47)

<sup>57</sup> On this matter, he notes that "a writer cannot submit the face in toto to the reader all at once the way an artist can," so "[a] certain judicious selectivity thus being standard procedure in any good writing, it follows that a writer must truly carry this technique to the extreme in order for it to

### 3.6.2: The Use of Barbershop on *Family Guy*

*Family Guy*'s creative team is apparently much enamored of the barbershop style. Three such songs appear on the show, each illustrating a different paraphrase technique. One is an entirely original barbershop number (that is to say, "original" insofar as pastiche composition can be) that is faithful to musical characteristics of the genre, neither attempting to caricature the style nor any particular piece. Another is a caricature of barbershop style using an original number, and a third is at once a copyphrase and a caricature, subjecting a standard barbershop tune to hyperbolic expansion and saturation. I will discuss each in turn.

The "N.A.A.F.P. Anthem" ("National Association for the Advancement of Fat People") from the episode "The Fat Guy Strangler" (2005) is an original number in a barbershop-choral style. It is a realistic imitation of the barbershop idiom with two exceptions: First, the highest voice consistently has the melody, while in barbershop the melody is more typically in an inner voice (although voice crossing is not unusual in the genre—the other three parts move out of the way of the melody). Also, the sophomoric humor of the lyrics (describing their vision of the obese divine) is unbecoming of the genre, which makes for an ironic juxtaposition of music and text. Perhaps this offers an element of contextual caricature, but nothing is done to the music itself to exaggerate the barbershop dialect.

Another original barbershop song on *Family Guy* is called "You Have Aids," in which Peter and a barbershop quartet (in traditional dress: hats, canes, and all) inform an unfortunate hospital patient of his condition. This song, though not based

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constitute exaggerated simplification." The examples from Balzac's *Pierre Grassou* that Rivers cites do exactly this. (Ibid, p. 50)

upon any pre-existing barbershop tune (so far as I am aware) is not as faithful to the musical style as is the “NAAFP Anthem.” It is a clear style parody, exaggerating the typical ending rhetoric one finds in barbershop, creating a textbook example of caricature—but caricature only, without copyphrase, as there is no single hypotext upon which it is based. Just as in Dudley Moore’s Beethoven send-up, from about the middle of the song on, it sounds as though every line is the penultimate one, thumbing its nose at two of barbershop’s characteristic terminal devices: the repetition of the final line of text (usually the third try is the charm to end a barbershop song), and the brief cod(ett)as in the form of tags that so frequently appear in the final measures of a song in this genre.

A third *Family Guy* barbershop number, “Say Goodbye to Manhood” (or “The Vasectomy Song”<sup>58</sup>) is an example of both copyphrase and caricature. The source for this song is “Goodbye My Coney Island Baby.” Exactly how many viewers of *Family Guy* are familiar with this barbershop classic is anybody’s guess, so the humor of paraphrasing it was likely lost on most fans. But even without knowing the tune, certainly some viewers appreciated the fact that it pokes fun at the barbershop style. The song appears after Peter and his wife Lois have a pregnancy scare, and Lois suggests that Peter be vasectomized. Peter objects initially, because he is unfamiliar with the term, so a Barbershop quartet is summoned to explain what such a surgery would entail. Four singers appear in Peter and Lois’s bedroom, replete with matching outfits and medical diagrams to explain the procedure in graphic, technical detail. (“You make a small incision in the scrotal skin, isolate the

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<sup>58</sup> The “Vasectomy Song” has developed a cult following among men’s collegiate singing groups. No fewer than six performances by different groups appear on YouTube.com.

was deferens...”) The quartet parody “Goodbye My Coney Island Baby” in its entirety, and in fact their song is *longer* than a typical performance of its source.

The verses of “Say Goodbye to Manhood” are oversaturated with tags at the end of lines, making for a long-winded yet spot-on caricature of both the song and the genre. And in an even more extreme gesture, the chain of homophonic dominant-seventh chords that serves as the (re)transition out of the ‘B’ section of the song is replaced by a static dominant seventh chord, simultaneously simplifying and expanding the length of this section *ad absurdum*. Overall, I would argue that for a listener familiar with “Goodbye, My Coney Island Baby” (perhaps a minority of *Family Guy* viewers), the features of copyphrase and caricature are equally salient. The song is mocked without mercy, but never does caricature subsume copyphrase, as the source is always traceable.

### **3.7: Full Circle—The *Opposite* Musical of Caricature**

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that there is no such thing as musical portraiture, and that counterfeit is a better term against which to define caricature. (And I maintain that this is so.) While in the visual arts, we can say with some truth that portraiture is the opposite of caricature, with music, counterfeit is not caricature’s antithesis. If there is an “opposite” of musical caricature, it should be characterized by similar goals to that of portraiture. A portrait, whether on canvas or camera is not a value neutral imitation—the objective is often to depict the subject in the best possible light. Portraits still must be “realistic,” to a degree, but anyone who has the resources to commission an artist to immortalize their likeness

on canvas may expect minor improvements to their appearance in the end product. A painter may gloss over minor “imperfections” (according to culturally specific standards of beauty) and give their subject a more distinguished jaw-line, higher cheekbones, and a nice ruddy complexion. Such enhancements are possible in any visual medium of course, from sculpture to digital photography. Table 3.4 below illustrates the correspondences between these practices in the sonic and visual arts.

DOMAIN: OBJECTIVE:	VISUAL	SONIC
Satire	Caricature	Caricature
Value Neutral Imitation	Candid photography	Counterfeit
Improved Presentation	Painted Portraiture Posed Photography Enhanced/Altered Photography	???

**TABLE 3.4: Caricature and its counterparts**

Let us now fill this empty cell of this chart. If there is an acceptable analog to portraiture in the sonic arts, it should be a form of musical paraphrase that somehow *improves* the source material, a sort of *poietic amelioration*. A wide range of practices belong to this category. One is the Neoclassicist adaptations of Stravinsky, Respighi (et. al) that I mentioned in Chapter 1 as an example of time translation; many of these are better examples of paraphrases for the purpose of making piece a more suited to a composer’s tastes, or the tastes of their culture. And of course, any re-orchestration or arrangement can be symptomatic of this ameliorative impulse, not just those of the Neoclassical composers. (We might include Wagner’s re-orchestrations of Beethoven, Mahler’s re-orchestrations of Schumann, etc.)

Joseph Straus discusses this process of adaptation in *Remaking the Past* in Freudian light, arguing that the changes composers make in arrangements and orchestrations bring their aesthetic priorities into sharp relief. Just as sampling the culturally specific adaptations of Chinese food around the world is often a better window into local culinary values than it is a representation of Chinese taste, sometimes the best way to learn what a composer values most artistically is to see how they adapt, re-orchestrate, or arrange a piece of music rather than by studying their “original” compositions.

While such ameliorative changes are often born of a preconscious, Freudian slip, they need not be. Composers may also be wholly aware of the fact that they view the alterations they make as “improvements.” And perhaps unsurprisingly, these agentic adjustments often manifest themselves in remarkably similar ways. *The most common techniques of ameliorative paraphrase are the opposite of those of caricature.* If a piece is repetitive, a caricaturist might *saturate* a satirical version of the piece with extra repetition of a common figure. But instead of making this “flaw” all the more apparent, a composer who wishes to make a “better” version is likely to *de-saturate* a piece if it has “too much” of any given pattern or gesture. An *amelioration*, whether it is consciously thought of this way or not, is more likely to excise gratuitous repetition or length. To illustrate these *anti-caricatural* techniques, I will explore three paraphrases that improve upon their source so much so that their respective hypotexts are made to look like caricatures.

### 3.7.1: Charles Ives and the Great American Symphony

My first example is Ives's paraphrase of the famous English horn solo from Dvořák's "New World Symphony" in the adagio of his own first symphony.

Burkholder offers the following evaluation: "Taken as a whole, Ives's theme is an elegant condensation of Dvořák's, which is three times as long. Dvořák's melody is a tiny ternary form (ABA'), with repetitions in each phrase; in the Ives, nothing essential is missing, but most repetitions within and between phrases are trimmed."<sup>59</sup> Burkholder further notes that "every measure of the Dvořák is represented in the Ives, and the omissions simply avoid redundancy."<sup>60</sup> If we listen to Dvořák's symphony *after* hearing Ives,' this very redundancy—a "problem" that may have escaped our attention without Ives' critique—becomes all too noticeable.

It is perhaps too simplistic to say that ameliorative paraphrases always reduce the length of the passage of the source that they adapt, while caricatures increase the length of the excerpt they satire. Burkholder notes that in a few passages of Ives's First symphony, the composer "repeats more than he omits" from Dvořák's model, which makes it clear that even in an exceptionally strong case of ameliorative paraphrase, contraction is not the only means of "improvement;" at times, this process may entail developing a motive to further exploit its potential as a germ from which a larger passage may grow.<sup>61</sup> Yet, it seems that shortening, or "tightening" a model and removing repetition to create a more concise version is the default procedure—the two examples that follow attest to this.

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<sup>59</sup> Burkholder (1995), p. 92

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 91



### 3.7.2: Copyphrase as Amelioration of “Feed the Birds”

Most copyphrases on *The Simpsons* present a more compact version of their source. At times, a more concise rendering of a piece is inevitably a critique of its source, whether or not this is the intended effect. The copyphrase of “Feed the Birds” from *Mary Poppins* (mentioned briefly in Chapter 2) is a remarkable amelioration of its hypotext. Julie Andrews sings this song to the children as a sort of lullaby, but it is a wonder they can even manage to stay awake for most of the tune. It’s long winded, repetitive, and nothing terribly interesting happens in the music or text—it’s even boring for a lullaby. Its copyphrase, “A Boozehound Named Barney” is less than a third the length of its source; this alone “fixes” most of the problems, but it is not the only improvement. Clausen’s version floats deftly through a number of expressive genres, providing a depth to the music that was not present in “Feed the Birds,” and expands the range of the vocal utterances to add some much needed melodic interest. Further, the text of this song is enriched by its diversity of poetic styles. While Mary Poppins sings many lines in the “voice” of the poor woman who sells bird-food for “tuppence a bag,” *The Simpsons’* “Shary Bobbins” offers a satisfying narrative frame at the songs beginning an end, allowing Barney (the eponymous boozehound) to enter into first a lyric mode, lamenting his penniless existence, and then a dramatic, dialogic mode, conversing with Moe the barkeep. After hearing this version, I find “Feed the Birds” rather difficult to listen to.

### 3.7.3: The Reeducation of Frankie Valli<sup>62</sup>

Sometimes these ameliorative techniques can be found in covers of popular songs as well. Many artists who cover a song change nothing more than timbre—though this too can cast a song in a more (or less!) favorable light—but occasionally we come across a cover that offers a poignant critique of an earlier version of the song. Lauren Hill’s version of Frankie Valli’s “Can’t Take My Eyes off of You” reveals that verses in the original are deeply problematic. They are harmonically static (a bit of interesting plagal motion notwithstanding), and the text, which is nothing more than a loosely connected sequence of platitudes unfolds at an unbearably slow pace—facts which become all too clear after hearing Hill’s amelioration. She slows down the tempo drastically, which is a remarkably canny maneuver that kills two proverbial birds with one stone; at this tempo, the number of measures in the verses can be cut in half, and we are left with more time to revel in the chorus.

Also incisive is the choice to remove the campy brass interludes that appear between the verse and the chorus in the original. This is hardly a crippling amputation; by pruning the weakest branch, the remaining flowers bloom all the brighter. This cut makes one wonder why these interludes were there in the first place in a crooning song, as they do nothing but delay the onset of the strongest part of piece.<sup>63</sup> But she doesn’t banish this material entirely; she reforms the clunky, plodding interjection as a graceful vocal duet overlain atop the chorus. It fits so

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<sup>62</sup>This subheading is a reference to the Lauryn Hill album on which the cover discussed in this section appears, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. “Can’t Take My Eyes off of You” is a bonus track on the album.

<sup>63</sup> The purpose of these interludes might have been to provide a dance break.

naturally with the melody here that it seems as though the original had been misassembled, and only in its present state is everything in the right place.

### **3.8: Conclusion: Caricature as criticism**

Despite the fact that caricature and ameliorative paraphrase are performed through largely the opposite techniques, the processes in fact have much in common. As Dentith explains, “[o]ne of the typical ways in which parody works is to seize on particular aspects of a manner or style and exaggerate it to ludicrous effect. There is an evident critical function in this, as the act of parody must first involve identifying a characteristic stylistic habit or mannerism and then make it comically visible.”<sup>64</sup> As we have seen, the act of amelioration involves the very same first step of analysis and identification of the infelicities in a piece, but instead of making them “comically visible,” they are rendered wholly or partially *invisible*. Both caricature and amelioration reveal the “flaws” of a composition, though they are attended to with the opposite strategies of exacerbation and extraction. Yet they both have in common the initial process of criticism. In fact, criticism may be a common feature of all types of paraphrase. Translation, copyphrase, caricature, and ameliorative *anti*-caricature alike can all be heard as a critique of their source, as can the types of paraphrase I will discuss in the chapters to come.

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<sup>64</sup> Dentith (2002), p. 32

## **Chapter 4: John Williams: Paraphraser or Plagiarist?**

### **4.0: Framing the Problem**

No music is composed in a vacuum. All music is intertextual; in virtually any piece, there are moments that remind us of another. If this is taken a step further, and one piece is explicitly based upon another, we can say that there is a *hypertextual* relationship between the two. Surely all composers have tried their hand at such a method, but if an artist's works betray such a hypertextual relationship too often, they may be derided as unoriginal, uncreative, or even plagiaristic, especially when their hypotexts are not explicitly acknowledged. Perhaps no composer is accused of such tacit appropriation more than John Williams.

In casual conversation, one often hears that Williams borrows liberally from the works of other composers. Perhaps we have said as much to our students, or maybe we ourselves have been the student who learned the standard repertoire in a survey class and could not help but notice the resemblances to film scores we knew. Regardless, few would question that there is a robust *intertextual* relationship between Williams' scores and many works from both the late Romantic/early Modernist orchestral literature, as well as the film scores of Hollywood's "Golden Age" by the likes of Max Steiner and Erich Korngold. However, the alleged *hypertextual* element of Williams' music has never been properly evaluated. There is only a small body of scholarship on Williams' film scores—surprisingly little, given both the quantity and wide cultural reach of this work—and while some

authors mention resemblances to pre-existing works in passing, the question of musical borrowing has never been the primary focus of a study.

My objective is to determine the degree to, and manner in which John Williams bases his music on works by other composers. After explaining my methodology, I posit which material is borrowed from what sources, and demonstrate *how* John Williams alters and adapts pre-existing music for use in his film scores, comparing his idiosyncratic manner of paraphrase to the practices discussed in the previous chapters. We might expect Williams' procedures to resemble those of copyphrase most closely, as both are forms of borrowing for filmic media—and arguably, because both are subsets of the larger practice of temp tracking—but we will find that Williams' techniques are quite different from those of the most of the composers discussed so far. Occasionally, an example will remind us of translation, copyphrase, or caricature, but the majority reveal an entirely different approach to paraphrase.

#### 4.0.1: Stumbling Blocks and Methodological Quandaries

A project with the lofty goals of “revealing” a composer's unacknowledged practice of paraphrase inevitably faces a few methodological challenges. As Burkholder explains, “[s]tudies of ... musical borrowing hinge on a claim that the composer of one piece of music has used material or ideas from another piece.”<sup>1</sup> Unless we have documentary evidence, he asks, “[h]ow can we be sure that the similarity results from borrowing and is not a coincidence or the result of drawing

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<sup>1</sup> Burkholder (2010), p. 116

on a shared fund of musical ideas?”<sup>2</sup> In the case of John Williams, where the apparent hypertextual relationship is rarely made explicit, one always faces this nagging question.

Burkholder offers three categories of evidence that may be used in determining the likelihood that a composer has borrowed from another:

1. “*analytical evidence* gleaned from examining the pieces themselves, including the extent of similarity, exactness of match, number of shared elements, and distinctiveness;”
2. “*biographical and historical evidence*, including the composer’s knowledge of the alleged source, acknowledgement of the borrowing, sketches, compositional process, and typical practice; and
3. evidence regarding the *purpose* of the borrowing, including structural or thematic functions, use as a model, extramusical associations, and humor.”<sup>3</sup>

These categories provide me with a convenient frame to discuss my methodology. Evidence of a historical or biographical nature is the simplest to address in this case. Williams virtually never acknowledges that he has borrowed a passage from another composer, yet all of the pieces I suggest as possible sources are so well known that Williams is sure to have been familiar with them.<sup>4</sup> And although we know little about his compositional process, we do know that he

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 117

<sup>4</sup> Williams is hardly forthcoming about the sources of inspiration for all of his scores, though he has occasionally compared his work to that of others in interviews. Describing his early work for the British television version of *Jane Eyre*, he explains how he used “the modalities that gave the ambiance of nineteenth century Yorkshire... somewhat in the same way that Vaughan Williams had.” (Anderson, 2009, p. 465)

generally works under a tight schedule, which suggests that his *modus operandi* involves paraphrasing music from other sources as a method of producing large quantities of music rather quickly.<sup>5</sup>

I consider evidence from the third category about the “purpose” for borrowing on a case specific basis. If a passage of Williams’ music resembles a programmatic work, sometimes there is a clear dramatic justification for alluding to or borrowing from such a piece at a given moment in a film. If a program, or more broadly, an extra-musical association of the source material is consonant with what is happening on screen, the evidence for borrowing is all the stronger. (But if there is no such correlation between the program and the film’s narrative, this is not “proof” that Williams did *not* borrow from the potential source).

The vast majority of the evidence that I use necessarily comes through analysis. I distill three basic parameters to examine: *parity*, *duration*, and *markedness*. *Parity* includes a number of factors, including correspondences between the pattern of notes and rhythms, similarity of timbre or instrumentation, and pitch level. Williams does not generally quote from other sources directly, but the more similar that is passage is to a possible source, the more likely it is that he has borrowed from it. The notes and rhythms are never exactly the same, but if a passage has the same key, range, or instrumentation as that of its apparent source, this makes the case for borrowing somewhat stronger.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> If there is evidence that he had to work at an unusually rapid pace, one could argue that is even more likely that he would resort to borrowing in a particular score.

<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that if the key and instrumentation are different, that borrowing is *unlikely*.

As for *duration*, the longer a passage corresponds to an apparent source, the more likely it is the Williams has borrowed; if the excerpt exceeds the length of a single phrase, then the evidence starts to become rather concrete. If an apparent quotation is only a few notes long, then we stand on less solid of ground in arguing that Williams has borrowed unless the figure is *marked* by some distinctive features. The more singular the material is, the more likely it is that it is borrowed, regardless of its length.

After considering the analytical evidence, and when appropriate, evidence from the extra-musical associations from a possible source, at times it is still unclear whether or not Williams has borrowed. A passage in one of his scores may evoke another piece quite clearly, but without conclusive evidence, the proverbial jury might be hung. The answer is rarely a clear “yes” or “no,” but rather it will usually fall somewhere on the spectrum from certainly evocative to almost certain. Yet there are *some* clear cases where Williams appears to paraphrase material for a theme from a single, identifiable source. At times, a passage from one of Williams’ scores is similar enough to its apparent model that, as we shall see, to posit mere coincidence seems to push the limits of plausibility.

#### 4.0.2: Distinguishing the Intertextual from the Hypertextual

In academic scholarship, print journalism, and “vernacular criticism” (Internet commentary) alike, there is generally a lack of precision in describing how Williams uses music from other sources. All too often one reads that a Williams score “sounds like” or “was inspired by” another piece without mention of why or



how this is so. At times this is understandable—if a movie reviewer mentions that moments of a score remind her of a piece from the classical literature, this is probably sufficient. Nevertheless, greater specificity in describing Williams’ apparent use of existing music is necessary to arrive at a verdict on exactly how, and how much, he does in fact borrow. To suggest that a piece was inspired by another is quite another matter from suggesting that a piece has a clear model on which it is based. When asserting that Williams’ music “sounds familiar,” one must attempt to determine whether this a case of 1) stylistic allusion, 2) modeling, 3) paraphrased quotation, or perhaps some combination of the above.

To be clear, it is not my goal to take to task all those who collapse the distinctions between these categories. This taxonomic work is especially challenging because there are *not* clear lines between stylistic allusion, modeling, and melodic quotation and paraphrase. Two listeners might well disagree about which category a resemblance to another piece might fall into, and further, the categories are not mutually exclusive.<sup>7</sup> I will focus primarily on those cases where the evidence for borrowing is the most overwhelming (applying the methodology outlined above), privileging thematic paraphrase over both modeling and allusion, limiting study to the passages of film scores where Williams appears to borrow more than style. A lot of ink could be (and has been) spilled on allusion, but this tells us very little about William’s practice of paraphrase. Further, a study of allusion alone would be of limited utility; music for film is meant to sound “familiar,”

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<sup>7</sup> It is possible to borrow a melody (with or without alterations) without evoking the style of the source piece, though modeling almost always entails stylistic allusion.

and virtually every passage in Williams' film scores can be heard as an allusion to *something*.

#### **4.1 Williams' Style and Suggested Antecedents**

The literature on Williams' music is rife with comparison to the works of familiar composers, both those who are most known for their concert music and those whose fame rests primarily on their film scores. Before narrowing my scope to focus on modeling and paraphrase in John Williams' film music, it is helpful to review which composers Williams has been compared to; unsurprisingly, it is these composers from whom he seems to borrow the most. Holden says that Williams' "big, bustling soundtracks... have established him as the most distinguished successor to the grand symphonic tradition of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Franz Waxman, Max Steiner, and Alfred Newman."<sup>8</sup> And in the concert music world, Williams' music is most often likened to that of Copland, Dvořák, Holst, Strauss, Stravinsky, and Wagner.<sup>9</sup> Moormann discusses both concert and film music in the same gesture, arguing that Williams "alludes to... some compositions by Beethoven, Bruckner, Copland, Mahler, Schubert, Strauss, Tchaikovsky or Wagner, and also some scores of Steiner or Korngold to present a sound-world that is as familiar as

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<sup>8</sup> Holden (1989), p 438. Comparisons to Steiner and Korngold are especially common. Moormann (2010a) also mentions Steiner and Korngold as models for Williams' style, as well as Bernard Herrmann and Miklós Rózsa. Paulus (2000) mentions all of the above, and adds Burt Bacharach, Henri Mancini, Nino Rota, and Ennio Morricone for their use of *leitmotiv* (if not for stylistic similarity).

<sup>9</sup> Or in Holden's words, "instead of creating pastiches of Rachmaninoff, Mahler and Strauss, Mr. Williams has moved a little further ahead to Prokofiev, Bartok and Stravinsky for stylistic inspiration, and even added dollops of electronic pop." (1989, p. 440)

possible,” while using the styles of Ligeti, Lutoslawski, Stravinsky, Penderecki or Schostakovitch for the opposite purpose of alienation or agitation.<sup>10</sup>

## **4.2: Passages Modeled on Pre-Existing Music**

### **4.2.1: John Williams and the “Rite of Strings”**

John Caps offered some of the first scholarly recognition of Williams’ early work, analyzing his music in several films from the 1970s. He compares the score for *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972) to the work of Vaughan Williams, because it “immerses us in an aura of the sea.”<sup>11</sup> In *Earthquake* (1974), he mentions a “city song” that resembles “sunrise from Copland’s *Quiet City*.”<sup>12</sup> And of *Jaws* (1975), he describes an “Idee fixe... punctuated by brass notes and a howling Stravinskian tuba.”<sup>13</sup> Each of these three observations is qualitatively different. The first is a claim of stylistic allusion to the work of a composer more generally. The second is slightly more specific, suggesting allusion to a specific piece—that one piece may have inspired another. The third, about the resemblance of the *Jaws* theme to Stravinsky’s music (though Caps does not say so explicitly) is stronger still; Caps identifies a crystal-clear case of modeling.

Others have said much the same about the relationship between the *Jaws* theme and Stravinsky’s *Rite*; Scheurer argues that “[t]he Great White’s music is a

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<sup>10</sup> Moormann (2010), p. 775. More specifically, Moormann argues that to create “an atmosphere of unease, terror, and shock, the composer uses especially atonal passages, instruments in extreme registers, low men’s voices, marcato accents, [etc.],” mentioning Witold Lutoslawski’s *Concerto for Orchestra*, György Ligeti’s microtonal works, and more generally the sound-worlds of Bartok, Schostakovich and Pendercki as likely models. (2010, p. 762)

<sup>11</sup> Caps (1976), p. 274

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 275

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 278

page ripped right out of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, echoing especially the vigorous polyrhythms of the ballet's opening."<sup>14</sup> The pitch material is not identical, but in terms of affect and evocation, this is true enough. The latter portion of the *Jaws* theme, after it grows in intensity, certainly does sound more than a bit like the "The Augurs of Spring" portion of the *Rite*—the resemblance is unmistakable.<sup>15</sup> To be clear, though, this is a case of modeling rather than melodic paraphrase. The *texture* of throbbing, heavily accented strings is borrowed, but not an altered version of the notes and rhythms of a melody.

Williams seems to include passages modeled on "The Augurs of Spring" in several other films, perhaps a dozen or more. Moormann, who has studied all of the Williams-Spielberg collaborations in great detail, deems this trope common enough to simply call it "Rite of Spring Strings." He mentions the example in *Jaws*,<sup>16</sup> as well as ones in *E.T.*<sup>17</sup>, *Minority Report*<sup>18</sup>, *War of the Worlds*<sup>19</sup>, *The Lost World* (especially!),<sup>20</sup> *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*<sup>21</sup>, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*<sup>22</sup>, and *Hook*.<sup>23</sup> Other examples outside of Williams' work with Spielberg can be found in the first three *Harry Potter* films, and in the *Star Wars* saga. In *A New Hope* (Episode IV), we hear this type of texture as the Storm troopers march in a hanger of the Death Star; this is arguably the clearest example, and has drawn some

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<sup>14</sup> Scheurer 1997, p. 61

<sup>15</sup> A comparison of the two recordings even appears on WhoSampled.com (Accessed October, 2012)

<sup>16</sup> Moormann (2010), pp. 39-40, 76

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 103

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 292

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 304, 315, and 318

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 368

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 484

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 522 and 556

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 575

internet commentary (more on this below).<sup>24</sup> Such music also appears in the opening battle sequence of *Stars Wars* Episode III when Obi-Wan and Anakin approach General Grievous' ship to retrieve that captured Chancellor.

Williams may likewise model parts of his scores on "The Glorification of the Chosen One" section of the *Rite*, generally when a hero is in mortal danger. The clearest example is in *Jurassic Park*, upon Ellie Sattler's discovery of raptors in the shed.<sup>25</sup> In this example, as in *Jaws*, we might imagine that there is programmatic significance to saluting Stravinsky's *Rite*: If the ritual depicted in the ballet, as Taruskin reminds us, involved cannibalizing the sacrificial victim, the action on screen in these films of earthly predators consuming human flesh seems to fit nicely with the music of the *Rite*.<sup>26</sup> Another passage apparently modeled on the "The Glorification of the Chosen One" appears in the iconic opening sequence of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* at eight minutes into the film when Indy jumps across an open pit to escape the perils of the temple.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4.2.2: Wheels a-turning: Hanson's Symphony No. 2

The music of Howard Hanson is one of the most important stylistic antecedents for Williams. Hanson's symphonies, especially his (relatively) well-

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<sup>24</sup> Lieb has a video on YouTube playing recordings of this passage of the *Rite* and of Williams' music for the Storm Troopers side by side. Arguably, this is Williams' most similar passage to "The Augurs of Spring," and it is unsurprising that someone has noticed it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9IV5u9iwuQ> (Accessed November 2012)

<sup>25</sup> Similar music appears throughout *Jurassic Park's* sequel, *The Lost World* (1997) in comparable moments of dinosaur-based danger.

<sup>26</sup> See Taruskin (1995), p. 11

<sup>27</sup> Lieb also suggests (through his YouTube video) that in *Star Wars* Episode III, the General Grievous theme (heard generally when Obi Wan is near said villain) is likewise based upon this portion of *The Rite*. This example is not as convincing as the others I have listed, but it is not without merit. Another such passage appears in *The Empire Strikes Back*, when Han is running to find Leia in the besieged Hoth base. Similar "danger" music can be heard here, though the resemblance to the *Rite* is significantly less striking than the example from *Jurassic Park* discussed above.

known *Romantic Symphony* (No. 2) could well be used as the soundtrack to a blockbuster—and in fact a passage of this piece was used in *Aliens* (1979), without Hanson's permission, it so happens.<sup>28</sup> Hanson's somewhat conservative style, evocative of Strauss, Stravinsky and Wagner makes his music a perfect stand in for Williams.<sup>29</sup>

Karlin calls Hanson's symphony as a "role model" for *E.T.* (in a film music textbook), but does not explain how or why this is so.<sup>30</sup> This information could make for a useful piece of historical/biographical evidence for borrowing, if it is true. Regardless, the scoring of the bicycle chase scene in *E.T.* certainly does have a similar texture to the opening of the third movement of Hanson's symphony.<sup>31</sup> Both begin with a repeated falling pattern in the high winds and strings as background, followed by a lower brass melody. Comparing the notes and rhythms of these brassy melodies does not make for a convincing case of paraphrase, but modeling seems likely enough.

Williams seems also to base a brief portion of the *Jurassic Park* score on this passage. As the main characters arrive on the island and ride in jeeps to view the dinosaurs, there are a few moments that resemble this passage of Hanson's

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<sup>28</sup> Cohen explains, "Hanson was not consulted by his publisher on the granting rights for this use, and when he found out about it after the movie opened, he was extremely angry. Eventually he decided that it was not worth trying to fight." (Cohen 2004, pp. 24-5)

<sup>29</sup>Hanson's music, like Williams,' is full of allusions to Stravinsky's "Russian works" like the *Rite*. And the final movement of his first symphony (The "Nordic Symphony") is unmistakably modeled on the Valkyrie theme from *Die Walküre*.

<sup>30</sup> Karlin 1994, p. 6. There are some internet rumors about music from Hanson's Second Symphony appearing in an early trailer for the film, which can be found here: <http://filmus-l.bernardherrmann.org/?t=e-t-and-howard-hanson-was-re-david-rose> (Accessed January 2013) I have found no evidence to confirm this, but neither have I found evidence to the contrary.

<sup>31</sup> Arguably a few of the themes in *E.T.* bear comparison to other orchestral pieces by Hanson as well. The "Belief theme" (see Moormann 2010) is reminiscent of a theme from Hanson's first symphony that is first stated at rehearsal Q of the first movement.

symphony vaguely, but as the jeeps drive down the hill towards the point where they stop to view the brachiosaurs, high string and wind falls appear again that unmistakably evoke Hanson; the argument for modeling is even more convincing here than the passage in *E.T.*<sup>32</sup>

Note that in both cases, these figures seem to accompany rapid movement, specifically the turning of wheels, either on a bicycle or jeep—not quite so as to “Mickey Mouse” the actions on screen, but to provide subtle, sympathetic support for what we see. A passage from *Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade* provides further support for this “wheel hypothesis;” when Indy struggles with the Nazi soldiers for control of an army tank—when we see the belt-wheels of the tank spinning, no less—we hear a texture that sounds conspicuously like the familiar passage from Hanson.

### **4.3 Melodic Paraphrase: Four potential (yet problematic) examples**

#### **4.3.1: The borrowed *Jaws* motive?**

Perhaps the most iconic musical moment in film history is the ascending semitone of the *Jaws* motive. We know that the shark is coming after hearing only two notes; the theme announces its arrival long before it is seen. Moormann suggests about a dozen possible sources for this motive—both for the ascending semitone alone, and for the *Jaws* theme in its entirety (mentioned above in the discussion of modeling). His thoroughness is admirable, though some of the sources he suggests are less convincing, and he omits what (at least to my ear) is the most

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<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to obtain the score for this portion of *Jurassic Park*, and such a passage is not easily transcribed. A comparison of the recordings is nonetheless convincing.

striking resemblance: The opening of the fourth movement of Dvořák's Symphony No. 9.

The image displays two musical excerpts for comparison. The top excerpt, titled "Symphony No. 9 IV, mm. 1-3", shows the opening of the fourth movement of Dvořák's Symphony No. 9. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in G major and common time (C). The melody in both staves begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter rest. This pattern repeats in the second measure. In the third measure, the melody continues with a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, and a quarter note B4. The bottom excerpt, titled "Jaws, Main Theme", shows the beginning of the main theme from the movie Jaws. It is written on a single bass clef staff in 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and then a quarter note B2. This pattern repeats in the second measure. The notation includes various articulation marks such as slurs and accents.

#### EXAMPLE 4-1: *Jaws* and its potential source


An isolated ascending semitone in the low strings with similar rhythm and articulation begins both pieces. Having heard the *Jaws* theme before having heard Dvořák's Symphony, I cannot help but think of one when I hear the other. (Surely I'm not alone here.) Yet the two are not in the same key, and the respective passages are only similar for a few measures. Because of the length of the resemblance, and the fact that the instrumentation and interval itself are relatively unmarked, it is dubious to posit that Williams borrows this motive from Dvořák (even though, as I will argue below, Williams is not shy to borrow from this very symphony in other scores). If it were, say, a xylophone and English horn playing a minor ninth, a case for borrowing from a mere two notes might be more easily made, as this is more distinctive, both timbrally and structurally. Two notes can be perfectly evocative, but it is not conclusive evidence of borrowing.



#### 4.3.2: Rebel Fanfare from *Star Wars*


Sometimes a slightly longer passage may evoke another piece quite clearly, but arguing that Williams has borrowed is still difficult because the material is too common to pin it down to a single source. A prime example is the “Rebel” theme from the *Star Wars* saga (alternatively called the “Empire” theme), which comprises brassy major triads leaping around by minor third. This motive has much in common with a pair of passages from Hanson’s Second Symphony.

Star Wars, "Rebel Motive"  
(Suite for Orchestra, mm. 168-71)



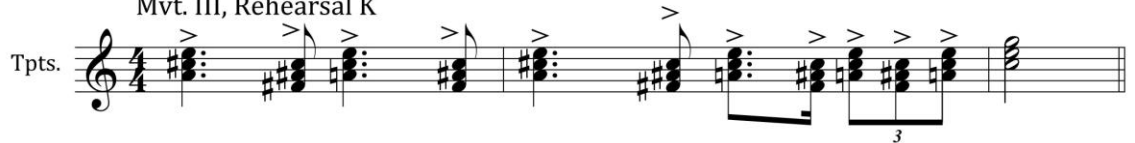
Tpts. This musical notation shows the Rebel Motive for trumpets in 3/4 time. It consists of a sequence of major triads: G4-B4-D5, F4-A4-C5, E4-G4-B4, and D4-F4-A4. The intervals between the roots of these triads are minor thirds.

Hanson, "Romantic" Symphony  
Mvt. I, Rehearsal H



Tpts. This musical notation shows a passage from Hanson's Romantic Symphony, Mvt. I, Rehearsal H. It features a sequence of major triads in 4/4 time, with roots moving in minor third intervals. The triads are: G4-B4-D5, F4-A4-C5, E4-G4-B4, and D4-F4-A4. There are triplets over the first two triads.

Hanson, "Romantic" Symphony  
Mvt. III, Rehearsal K

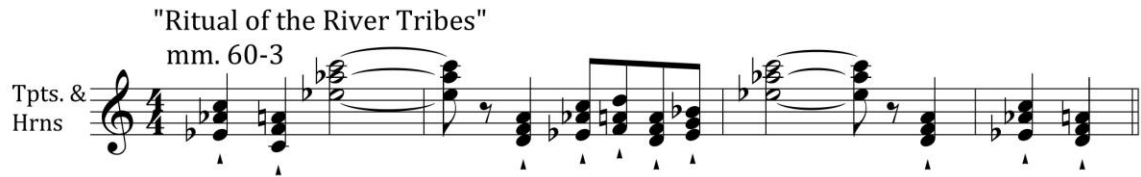


Tpts. This musical notation shows a passage from Hanson's Romantic Symphony, Mvt. III, Rehearsal K. It features a sequence of major triads in 4/4 time, with roots moving in minor third intervals. The triads are: G4-B4-D5, F4-A4-C5, E4-G4-B4, and D4-F4-A4. There are accents over the notes and a triplet over the final triad.

#### EXAMPLE 4-2: *Star Wars* “Rebel Motive” and its potential source

Note that both the Williams motive and the first of the two passages from Hanson’s symphony involve motion within the same octatonic system. The excerpts certainly sound alike, but the argument for borrowing here might be somewhat more convincing if there were only a single source that this “Rebel” theme resembled. Hanson’s *Romantic* symphony is clearly not the only place where we find such planing. Another potential source is found in *The Rite of Spring*, “Ritual of

the River Tribes,” and surely more examples of motives like this can be found in the standard repertoire. Yet no piece, so far as I am aware, sounds so much like this familiar *Star Wars* motive that the evidence for borrowing is overwhelming.



### EXAMPLE 4-3: Octatonic Brass in *The Rite of Spring*

#### 4.3.3: *Hook*: Pan, Tinkerbell, and Classical Precedents

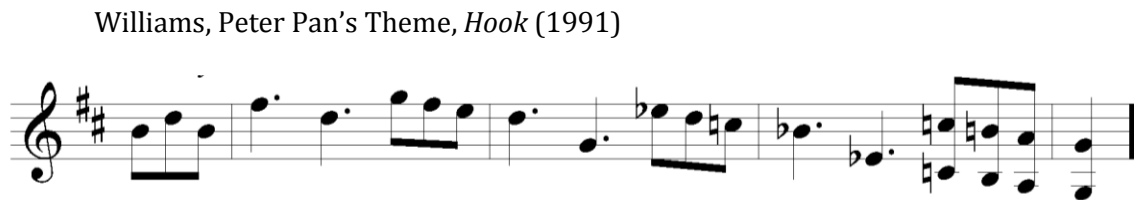
The score to *Hook* (1991) is rife with material that evokes works from the classical literature. One of Williams’ finest scores, it serves as a delightful sonic background to a wild fantasy film, recalling the styles of any number of orchestral composers. Moormann identifies resonances with works by Debussy, Holst, Mahler, Mussorgsky, Ravel, Shostakovich, Strauss, Stravinsky, and Wagner—and these suggestions are accurate, but most are cases of mere allusion. Yet some parts of this score do seem to suggest more than intertextuality with familiar works. Moormann notes that portions of Tinkerbell’s music are modeled on “Mercury” from *The Planets*, while Hickman suggests that “Williams engages in a bit of musical fun by adapting [this] passage from Stravinsky’s *Firebird* ballet, since Peter initially thinks that she is firefly (31:00).”<sup>33</sup> Both of these assertions are sonically convincing, and

<sup>33</sup> Hickman (2006), p. 410

The passage Hickman refers to is presumably from the ballet’s introduction or one of the early parts of the first tableau; he surely does not refer to the iconic “Dance of Kastchei’s Retinue” or the “Disappearance of Kastchei’s Palace”.

they fit with the program quite well; the lighted, mercurial Tinkerbell, in her first appearance on screen, is quite literally serving as a “winged messenger.”<sup>34</sup>

If there is a case of paraphrase in *Hook*, it is found in the heroic theme representing Peter Pan, which has much in common with the famous “Valkyrie Theme” from Wagner’s *Ring*. Both themes 1) comprise four successive statements of a five-note motive, 2) are in 9/8 meter, 3) are at similar tempi, 4) are played by brass instruments over a background of pulsing strings, 5) and feature abrupt chromatic shifts.



#### EXAMPLE 4-4: Peter Pan’s Theme and its potential source

Despite the many similarities between these two themes, however, the resemblance between the two is not so crisp that one can momentarily forget whether they are listening to Wagner or Williams.<sup>35</sup> Once again, there is insufficient evidence to argue that *Williams* has borrowed, in this case because of parity rather than duration or markedness.

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<sup>34</sup> As another example of modeling, Moormann argues that the theme representing Captain Hook and his ship (The “Jolly Roger”), is evocative of *The Flying Dutchman* overture. The shared association with mythical sea farers strengthens the claim. While the precise notes and rhythms have little to do with one another, the textures are similar enough, suggesting that William’s theme could be modeled on Wagner’s.

<sup>35</sup> Further, there isn’t an especially clear programmatic reason for using music from *Die Walküre* in this context. Peter Pan isn’t exactly a Brunnhilde figure, although there are some superficial similarities between their respective abrupt entrances as part of a rescue operation.

#### 4.3.4: Fanfare for a Spielberg Blockbuster

Williams appears to quote Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for a Common Man* in three of his scores for Spielberg films: *Always* (1989), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *Lincoln* (2012). Anyone familiar with Copland's *Fanfare* will likely recognize this. Moormann notes these apparent salutes to the *Fanfare* in the two earlier films, and mentions the potential programmatic significance of borrowing from Copland. *Saving Private Ryan* is, of course, the story of American soldiers in World War II—quite literally, the “common men” to whom Copland referred—and *Always*, though the characters are firefighting pilots in (then) present-day America, is a remake of *A Guy Named Joe* (1943), which is about US military pilots of World War II. Adding *Lincoln* to the mix, it is clear that all three movies depict the trials and sacrifices of American heroes.

Musical score for Tpts and Hrns, (Concert pitch). The score shows a fanfare melody in 4/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time signatures. The Tpts part is in the upper staff and the Hrns part is in the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb).

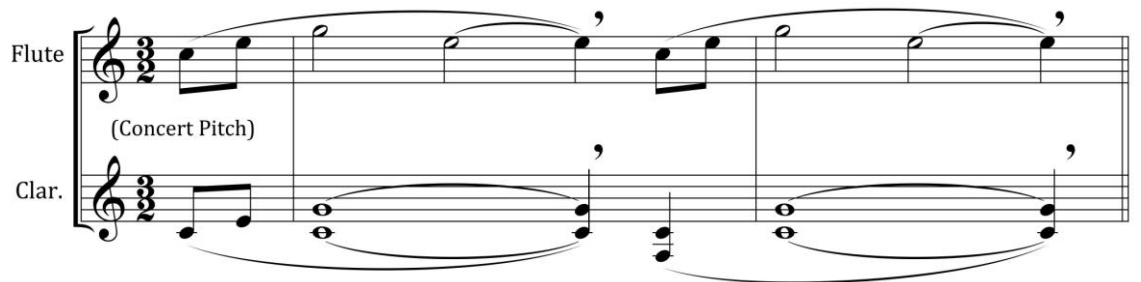
#### EXAMPLE 4-5: Copland, *Fanfare for a Common Man*, mm. 13-18

Musical score for Main Theme (Str, Wnd & Celeste) and Main Theme Variant (Muted Hrns). The score shows a fanfare melody in 3/4 time signature. The Main Theme is in the upper staff and the Main Theme Variant is in the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb).

#### EXAMPLE 4-6: *Always*, Versions of the Main Theme



**EXAMPLE 4-7: *Saving Private Ryan*, “Hymn to the Fallen” (Credits)**



**EXAMPLE 4-8: Suite from *Lincoln***

The themes from *Always* and *Saving Private Ryan* resemble Copland’s *Fanfare* for the opposite reasons; the prior for its melody, and the latter for its texture and instrumentation. And the Suite from *Lincoln* (Williams’ most recent score) falls somewhere between the two. It begins with a solo clarinet melody, followed by a Clarinet-Flute pairing, analogous to *Fanfare*, which begins with a solo trumpet, soon joined by a horn. Monger describes this theme as “a cornucopia of measured yet soul-stirring, Aaron Copland/Randy Newman-imbued Americana”—an apt description indeed.<sup>36</sup>

So the resemblance to Copland’s music is clear in each of these themes, but even still, none makes the most defensible example of paraphrase. The themes all sound plenty like *Fanfare*, but there are a number of other pieces by Copland that they resemble as well. And further, the “Copland sound” is itself derived from the American military band ceremonial music tradition, so it is just as likely that Williams was influenced by the same sources as Copland was as it is that he borrowed directly from Copland.

<sup>36</sup>Monger (2012), *Allmusic.com* (Accessed January 2013)

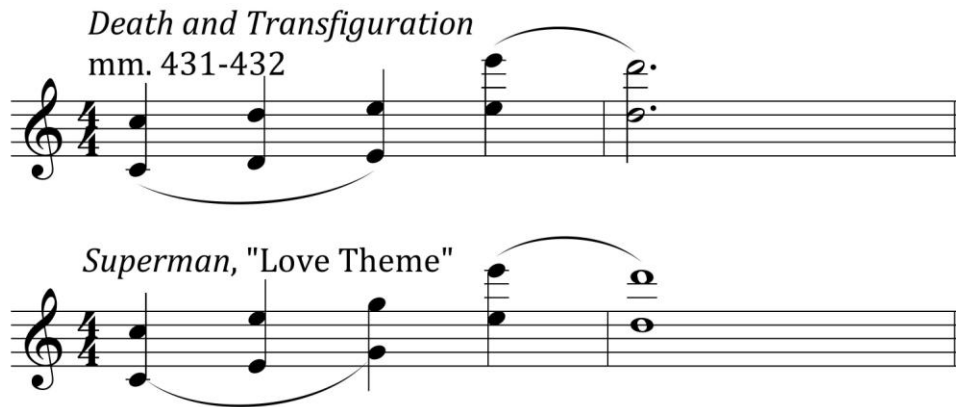
#### **4.4: Melodic Paraphrase—Three Clearer Examples**

The four groups of examples listed above, though perfectly evocative of familiar pieces are all problematic for one reason or another. One is too short, another has too many potential sources, the third, though plenty lengthy, resembles its apparent source too vaguely, and the last group of excerpts might be a case of shared influence rather than borrowing. Williams *may have* paraphrased the sources I have suggested in these cases, but we are on thin ice in making such an argument without qualification. However, there are plenty of examples that leave less room for second guessing.

##### **4.4.1: Superman and Strauss' *Death and Transfiguration***

One of the clearest cases of paraphrase appears in John Williams' score to *Superman*. The memorable "Love Theme" has a primary motive quite similar to that of Richard Strauss' *Tod und Verklärung*. The notes are not all the same, though the leap up to high  $\hat{3}$  and ensuing stepwise descent to an elongated  $\hat{2}$  makes Williams' motive immediately recall Strauss.' Further, the rhythm, contour, and tempo are virtually identical. These motives even develop similarly, appearing at least a dozen times throughout their respective pieces in a variety of keys (at least five in each), as well as in different registers and instrumentations. With strong evidence from

parity, duration, and markedness, the only way that the resemblance could be a coincidence is if Williams was entirely unfamiliar with Strauss' tone poem.<sup>37</sup>



**EXAMPLE 4-9: *Superman* "Love Theme" and its apparent source**

#### 4.4.2: *E.T.* Main Theme and the *Dumky* Trio

The main theme from *E.T.* is one of Williams' best-known; only a few tunes from *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Jaws*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* can possibly compete in cultural ubiquity.<sup>38</sup> In its thirty-year afterlife, several authors have noted that this theme has much in common with an important motive from the final movement of Dvořák's Fourth Piano Trio ("Dumky"), op. 90. The evidence for borrowing here is convincing enough that Moormann was moved to include a graphic example (one of the very few in his book) to display the two themes side-by-side. He compares only mm. 164-7 of Dvořák's trio to first two measures *E.T.* theme, which is plenty compelling, but when we compare the latter to the opening of the movement as well,

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<sup>37</sup> Some internet authors have noticed this resemblance as well. Recordings of the two clips side by side can be found here: <http://patterico.com/2007/08/15/john-williams-thief-the-proof/> (Accessed February, 2013)

<sup>38</sup> *E.T.* (1982) was shown in theaters for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its release in October of 2012, preceded by a short "making of/reception of" video, during which the narrator rhetorically asks (not quite in these words), "can we see the footage of Elliott flying in front of the moon without hearing Williams' memorable theme?" This produced a visceral nod from many audience members.

we see that the *E.T.* theme, while much closer to the Dvořák's later statement, shares certain features with the earlier one, namely the descent to low  $\wedge 5$ . As a result, the *E.T.* theme, as is, would not sound out of place as the final varied statement of the main theme in the context of Dvořák's trio.

Dumky, VI  
mm. 164-7

Dumky, VI  
mm. 5-6

E.T.  
(Main Theme)

The image shows three musical staves. The first staff is for 'Dumky, VI mm. 164-7' in 4/8 time, showing a melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The second staff is for 'Dumky, VI mm. 5-6' in 4/8 time, showing a similar melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The third staff is for 'E.T. (Main Theme)' in 3/8 time, showing a similar melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern.

**EXAMPLE 4-10: "Dumky" Trio Motives compared with *E.T.* Main Theme**

Cello

The image shows two musical staves for the Cello. The first staff shows a melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The second staff shows a similar melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern.

**EXAMPLE 4-11: "Dumky" Trio, VI, mm. 164-175**

Strings &  
Winds

The image shows two musical staves for Strings & Winds. The first staff shows a melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The second staff shows a similar melodic line with a descending eighth-note pattern.

**EXAMPLE 4-12: *E.T.* Main Theme**



Comparing a longer sample of the *E.T.* theme (Example 4-12) to the end of the “Dumky” trio (Example 4-11) reveals that the melodic similarities do not end with this single motive rising from C to G. The respective second iterations of the primary motive both peak on A, and the respective third statements reach a focal point of C, leaving little room for doubt that Dvořák’s melody serves as the basis for Williams.’ The two are quite close—closer to one another than a source theme and copyphrase generally are. Walter Murphy, Ron Jones, and Alf Clausen would likely change quite a bit more if (hypothetically) one among them were to compose a theme for use on television designed to signify Dvořák’s melody. That said, his characteristic changes to rhythm and meter are quite unlike the techniques of copyphrase, where rhythm is generally preserved.

#### 4.4.3: *E.T.* and Hanson’s “Romantic Symphony”

In the discussion of modeling above, I suggested that certain passages of the *E.T.* score seem to be based upon the third movement of Hanson’s “Romantic” Symphony No. 2. It is also quite clear that another theme from *E.T.* is a paraphrase of a portion from this movement as well. As far as I am aware, this theme has not been named in the scholarship on *E.T.*, but it is one of the many important motives that appear in the concert excerpt “Adventures on Earth.” The source from which the motive is apparently derived is somewhat of an ostinato in Hanson’s symphony. I will present two of the strongest of the resemblances between the two works.

The respective first statements of this motive in each piece correspond closely. Williams’ first iteration features analogous planing over a steady pedal, and

similar orchestration to Hanson's figure, only substituting trombones for bassoons. As is typical of his practice, he changes the meter, although a shift from 4/4 to 2/4 is perhaps not perceivable by ear, the occasional measures of 3/4 notwithstanding.

Hanson, Symphony 2, III mm. 80-81

E.T. "Adventures on Earth" mm. 62-4

**EXAMPLE 4-13: *E.T.* excerpt and its potential source (1)**

Some later statements of this motive in *E.T.* also correspond quite clearly to passages of Hanson's symphony, again featuring almost identical orchestration. What is striking in the latter case (shown below), is that despite the change of notated meter, the rhythms of Williams' paraphrase are identical to those of the source. This is a rare case where Williams uses the same techniques as the cartoon composers: preserving the rhythm, but changing the contour of the melody. And like the previous example of the *E.T.* primary theme, the resemblance here between the apparent hypotext and hypertext is perhaps *too* similar to be used a copyphrase.

Hanson, Symphony 2, III mm. 116-117

E.T. "Adventures on Earth" mm. 110-13

**EXAMPLE 4-14: *E.T.* excerpt and its potential source (2)**

#### **4.5 *Star Wars* and the use of pre-existing music**

In a 1997 interview, Williams explained how the music for *Star Wars* was designed to be “emotionally familiar.” Of this score, he says that “[i]t was not music that might describe *terra incognita* but the opposite of that, music that would put us in touch with very familiar and remembered emotions, which for me as a musician translated into the use of a 19th Century operatic idiom, if you like, Wagner and this sort of thing.”<sup>39</sup> Williams’ self-comparison to Wagner is oft cited (and evaluated);<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Byrd (1997), p. 18

at least three studies compare Wagner's and Williams' respective use of *leitmotiv*, perhaps the most Wagnerian element of Williams' style.<sup>41</sup> However, I argue that the music for *Star Wars* has closer *stylistic* precedents than Wagner's *Ring*, the use of *leitmotiv* notwithstanding. Lerner aptly singles out Stravinsky, Holst and Korngold as the primary influences on the music for *Star Wars*.<sup>42</sup> As we shall see below, the work of these composers serves as far more than inspiration for Williams; many of the themes in the *Star Wars* saga are unmistakable paraphrases of some of their best known pieces.

#### 4.5.1: *Star Wars: A New Hope (Episode IV, 1977)*

Williams' music for the first installment of the *Star Wars* saga is simply saturated with borrowed material, perhaps more so than any other of his scores. At times there appears to have been little effort to hide the fact that the material is borrowed; some of the resemblances are barely paraphrased at all. Two factors may explain the ubiquity of such borrowings. The first is the time restriction Williams faced in composing the music for *A New Hope*. He had a mere six weeks to score about 90 minutes of music, which is a daunting task even with the help of professional orchestrators.<sup>43</sup> Another cause, perhaps of equal importance, is the fact that Williams may not have taken the job quite seriously enough. Paulus suggests that some of the problems with the music for *A New Hope* (when compared with the balance of the trilogy) are "probably the result of the composer's conviction

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<sup>40</sup> Of this claim, Hubbert argues that "[a]lthough Williams refers to ... Richard Wagner as his musical source [for *Star Wars*], his theme-for-every-character approach... suggest more specifically the scoring techniques of Max Steiner." (2011, p 387) She also considers *Star Wars* more "Steineresque" because of Williams' "use of preexisting musical styles." (Ibid)

<sup>41</sup> See Buhler (2000), Paulus (2000), and Bribitzer-Stull (forthcoming).

<sup>42</sup> Lerner (2004), p 98

<sup>43</sup> See Anderson (1998/2009), p. 467

that he was writing music for a light film that would not have too much response from the public and hence did not require so very much effort to compose.”<sup>44</sup>

Williams has said so himself, explaining that he “was thinking of it as a kind of Saturday afternoon movie for kids really, a kind of popcorn, Buck Rodgers Show.”<sup>45</sup>

At the time, it was impossible to know what kind of cultural impact *Star Wars* would have. Williams was blissfully unaware that this movie would be part of a trilogy, let alone that he would score yet three more films in the distant future.<sup>46</sup> It is difficult to say whether or not Williams would have borrowed as much as he did (or would have done so more covertly) had he suspected that the films would have such an enthusiastic reception, but the fact that there are fewer obvious borrowings in the latter films of the original trilogy suggests that this is so. Paulus argues that “when the box office success of *Star Wars* outdid the most sanguine expectations, and when Lucas stated that there would be sequels, the composer got down to work much more seriously.”<sup>47</sup>

#### 4.5.1.1: Main Title Theme and *Kings Row*

The main title theme is the very first music that we hear in all six of the *Star Wars* movies, and along with the “Imperial March” (Darth Vader’s theme, first

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<sup>44</sup> Paulus (2000) p 172

She notes that “in the chronologically first film... his themes on the whole follow each other (and appear in predictable places),” whereas in the later films there is evidence of more advanced techniques of thematic development. (Ibid)

<sup>45</sup> Byrd (1997), p. 18

<sup>46</sup>Williams may yet score *another* trilogy of *Star Wars* films. Episode VII is to be released in 2015, thanks to Disney’s multi-billion dollar purchase of *Lucasfilm*. If Williams (now 81 years old) is alive and well enough to do so, he may well agree to score them, but to my knowledge, no composer has been selected.

<sup>47</sup> Paulus (2000), p. 172

More seriously perhaps, but not with the luxury of a great deal more time to work; Kalinak reminds us that “for *The Empire Strikes Back*, Williams had less than eight weeks, from the initial spotting session... to the recording sessions.” (1992, p. 190)

introduced in *Empire Strikes Back*), it is perhaps one of the best known themes in film history. It is almost certain that this theme is a paraphrase of Erich Korngold's main theme from *Kings Row* (1942); to hear the similarity, there are several videos available on YouTube comparing recordings of both themes side-by-side.<sup>48</sup> The resemblance between the two is well documented in the scholarly literature. Scheurer says of the *Star Wars* main title, "[l]ike Korngold's theme, it begins with a triplet pick-up to more quickly propel the opening melodic leap of a perfect fifth, which is then followed by a stepwise descending three-note figure."<sup>49</sup> As he suggests, "the first five notes are almost exactly the same," and provides the following example<sup>50</sup>:

The image contains two musical staves for brass instruments. The top staff is titled "King's Row, Parris' Theme" and is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It begins with a triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4) followed by a half note (F#4), a quarter note (G#4), and a quarter note (A4). The bottom staff is titled "Star Wars, Main Title/Luke's Theme" and is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4) followed by a half note (F#4), a quarter note (G#4), and a quarter note (A4). Both staves show a clear melodic similarity in their opening phrases.

**EXAMPLE 4-15: *King's Row* vs. *Star Wars* (from Scheurer)**

The similarities between the two melodies speak for themselves, but the texture of the two pieces is quite different. Lerner describes the *Star Wars* main title as "brassy, bold, and masculine." The *King's Row* theme is plenty brassy and, and perhaps "bold," but it lacks some of the martial character of the *Star Wars* theme.

<sup>48</sup> The best of the comparative recordings can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V47enEvsafQ> (Accessed December 2012)

<sup>49</sup> Scheurer (1997), p. 63

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 62

Both themes are anthemic, but Williams' belongs to a different expressive genre. It is a military march, replete with a battery of percussion, while Korngold's is a more like a hymn with its chorale texture. The resemblance between the two melodies certainly could be a coincidence, but it is far easier to believe that a professional film composer—one who likely saw *King's Row* at the cinema, which was released within a week of his tenth birthday—knew quite well what he was doing.<sup>51</sup> Scheurer suggests that through a salute to Korngold, Williams evokes nostalgia for “the golden age of movie-going,” arguing that his music “does indeed recall the great swashbuckling films and epics of decades past, and it does so unabashedly and without irony.”<sup>52</sup>

Another reason for the parallel between the two themes is perhaps, as Lerner notes, that both *Star Wars* and *King's Row* are “coming-of-age narratives about a male protagonist,” Luke and Parris respectively. The main title theme of *Star Wars* is, to an extent, associated with Luke, as the theme most often transforms (at least in *A New Hope*) to match his emotional or physical state. The theme is not *exclusively* Luke's, however. Hickman reminds us that in the prequels, “[p]eriodically, Williams quotes Luke Skywalker's theme during a battle scene, with no reference to his

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<sup>51</sup> So far as I am aware, Williams has not admitted to borrowing from Korngold. However, while recording the music for *The Phantom Menace* (1999), which included re-recording the main title theme, he mentioned that something he was recording was an “homage to old man Korngold,” but it is unclear to which passage of music this referred. (Dyer, 1999)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Scheurer's full explanation merits extended quotation. Of the similarity to the Golden Age films, he recalls that “[i]n those days one sat in the theatre waiting in anticipation for the lights to go down, the curtain to open, and the studio's triumphant fanfare to fill the darkened theatre. Then the main theme would emerge out of the fanfare, signaling that what was to follow would be heroic and romantic, something that would take you out of yourself and your life and transport you to, well, someplace far, far, away—maybe even a galaxy. That is what the great themes of Korngold and Steiner did, and that is what Williams accomplished with his *Star Wars* theme. And heroic it is... In short, from the beginning the heroic note is struck, and it is struck in a very nostalgic fashion as well.”

character.”<sup>53</sup> Bribitzer-Stull calls this the “Heroism theme,” which is perhaps more accurate.<sup>54</sup> That the theme does not correspond isomorphically to his character is most clearly proven by the fact that it is not used to accompany Luke’s birth in Episode III, while the theme for his twin sister Leia does appear, however briefly. But the main title theme is nonetheless associated with Luke to an extent; the one circumstance in which it is sure to appear is when Luke swings into action.

#### 4.5.1.2: Droids on Tatooine

A mere few minutes into *A New Hope*, the droids R2-D2 and C-3PO are sent to the planet Tatooine with a message for Obi-Wan Kenobi. R2 follows his programmed instructions to find Obi-Wan immediately, but C-3PO selects a different path. As the latter wanders off on the barren, desert planet, we hear music (hereafter “desert music”) that is nearly a copy of the introduction of Part II (“The Sacrifice”) from the *Rite of Spring*. This is one of the most obvious borrowings in the entire film, and others have noticed it as well.<sup>55</sup> One YouTube author has a video that plays recordings of the two passages side by side, and then simultaneously(!), deeming this the work of “John Stravinsky.”<sup>56</sup> The oscillating wind patterns in the two pieces are nearly identical, though the orchestration differs slightly; Williams’ version has more brass, as well as some percussion. The two even develop similarly—Williams’ music here grows in intensity as the range expands and the

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<sup>53</sup> Hickman, (2006) p. 439

<sup>54</sup> Bribitzer-Stull (forthcoming), p. 32

<sup>55</sup> Hickman, for one, notes that “a passage derived from Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* appears just after the droids split up on Tatooine (10:25).” (2006, p. 331)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9IV5u9iwuQ> (Accessed December 2012)  
The comparison of these two passages begins at 2:58.



dynamics grow louder just as Stravinsky's does, though Williams' does so more quickly.

Meanwhile, R2D2, who was following the coordinates to Obi Wan's last-known whereabouts, is intercepted by Jawas (dwarflike people native to Tatooine). After the Jawas stun R2D2 and carry the droid to their vehicle, we hear a theme in the high brass (see above) that sounds almost identical to a portion of "Mars, the bringer of war" from Holst's suite, *The Planets*. The combination of the dotted rhythms and chromatically planing triads in the high brass make for an obvious resemblance to Holst's theme. The material at rehearsal II and III of "Mars" is a clear model, especially mm.45-49.

EXAMPLE 4-16:

Mars/Jawa

The image displays two musical staves. The upper staff is for Trombones (Hrns.) and the lower staff is for Trumpets (Tpts.). The upper staff is titled "'Mars,' mm. 45-9" and is in 2/4 time. The lower staff is titled "Jawa Theme" and is in 4/4 time. Both staves feature complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests. The key signature for both is one sharp (F#). The Hrns. staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* at the beginning. The Tpts. staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* at the beginning. There are also dynamic markings of *p* and *mf* later in the piece. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in both staves.

Making the case for borrowing all the more convincing is the fact that the Jawa theme appears three times in total, curiously mirroring the three statements of its apparent source in *The Planets*. The second statement of the source theme in “Mars” begins in the lower strings and winds (starting at m. 96), and when R2 and C-3P0 are re-united on the Jawa’s transport, we hear a theme derivative of this version. The third appearance in “Mars” (starting at m. 143) is again higher in register, much like Williams’ final statement of the Jawa theme. If there were only the single appearance the Jawa’s music, perhaps the evidence for borrowing from Holst would not be quite so strong, but given the three parallel (if not entirely identical) appearances, a coincidence seems almost impossible. Further, the significance of borrowing from a suite named for exotic celestial bodies seems rather transparent. Despite Williams’ claim that the music for *Star Wars* would be warm, romantic, and “emotionally familiar,” this is—quite literally—the music of “terra incognita.” (And why not borrow music from a movement called “Mars” to create a theme for the mysterious dwellers of a fictional red planet?)<sup>57</sup>

#### 4.5.1.3: The Death Star!

When Han, Luke, Chewbacca, and Obi-Wan find themselves on the Death Star as the unlikely rescuers of Princess Leia, there are (at least) two more rather clear instances of borrowing—from *the same two sources* upon which the Tatooine music was modeled. A theme (of sorts) for the storm troopers is unmistakably based upon *The Rite*. It appears at 105:49, 1:27:32, and 1:29:16. As mentioned above, this is

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<sup>57</sup> That said, I doubt that there is a programmatic significance to borrowing from Stravinsky’s *Rite* in the case of the “desert music,” but it certainly fits the stylistic profile of music that sounds a bit “alien.”

perhaps the clearest case of a passage modeled on “The Augurs of Spring.”<sup>58</sup> And while Luke and Han (wearing the uniforms of storm troopers, with Chewbacca posing as their prisoner) wait for an elevator, we hear another brief borrowing from Holst’s “Mars” at 113:14. The portion borrowed here is found between mm. 28 and 33 of “Mars,” only a few bars before the excerpt that was the apparent source for the Jawa music.

Later, in the climactic battle of the film, Hickman notes that the final measures from “Mars” serve as “the obvious model for the music accompanying the destruction of the Death Star (1:56:50).”<sup>59</sup> This assertion is sonically and programmatically convincing. What better music could one use for inspiration to accompany the destruction of an Imperial base that is literally a planet-sized “bringer of war” than Holst’s eerie symphonic premonition of the horrors of modern weaponry?

#### 4.5.2: *The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi*

Far fewer themes are so obviously derived from a classical or filmic precedent in the balance of the original *Star Wars* trilogy. I do *not* believe that Williams, as he is so often accused in Internet discussion boards, borrowed or “ripped-off” Holst’s “Mars” in composing the “Imperial March.” Williams’ march does begin with a drum cadence that is certainly reminiscent of the first measures of “Mars,” but beyond that, the similarities between the two are limited to style, if even

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<sup>58</sup> Again, Lieb’s YouTube video (Accessed January 2013) conveniently plays the two side by side. The comparison of these two pieces begins at 1:55.

<sup>59</sup> Hickman (2006), p. 331

that.<sup>60</sup> I also have significant doubt that “Han and the Princess” (the other new, primary theme introduced in *Empire*) is based upon the first movement of Tchaikovsky’s violin concerto, which is likewise an Internet rumor).<sup>61</sup>

Nonetheless, one moment of *The Empire Strikes Back* stands out as a likely paraphrase of the *King’s Row* main title. Unlike the *Star Wars* main title theme, which has a melody almost identical to Korngold’s, this passage resembles *King’s Row* for the opposite reasons. A brief, brassy chorale appears at 25:35, which recalls the expressive genre of Korngold’s theme quite clearly, but the two melodies are different enough that the Korngold estate is unlikely to pursue legal action. And there may also be one theme right at the beginning of *Return of the Jedi* that is based upon yet another portion of *The Planets*—a case of modeling, if not paraphrase. Lieb suggests (I think correctly) that the “Death Star approaching” music is derived from “Neptune.”<sup>62</sup> It is tempting to wonder if there is some programmatic significance to the fact that Williams apparently quotes “Mars,” the first movement of *The Planets* at the beginning of the trilogy, and “Neptune,” the final movement, at the end—that there is an alpha-to-omega completion of the narrative in the final installment.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Rather, a motive from *A New Hope* (at 113:25) seems to be the most probable source for the opening melody of the march, and Britzter-Stull demonstrates that a version of Wagner’s “Tarnhelm” motive that accompanies Vader’s first appearance in *Star Wars* blossoms into a portion of the theme as well. (See Britzter-Stull 2012, p. 172)

<sup>61</sup> See especially <http://www.jwfan.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=19979> (Accessed February 2013) Below I discuss a theme by another film composer who quite clearly *did* use the Tchaikovsky concerto as a source.

<sup>62</sup> Lieb’s Video on YouTube (Accessed January 2013)

<sup>63</sup> Recall that “Mars” and “Mercury” do not appear in the correct astronomical order. “Mars” makes for a stronger opening movement than would “Mercury,” which fits nicely as the third movement, functioning almost like a scherzo following the much slower “Venus.” The rest of the movements appear in order of increasing distance from the sun, with the exception of the Mars/Mercury swap.

### 4.5.3: The prequel trilogy

*Star Wars* enthusiasts should consider themselves fortunate that John Williams was available to score the prequel trilogy, preserving thematic continuity across all six films. As mentioned above, the main title theme appears in each film, and the “Force theme” (most clearly associated with Obi-Wan Kenobi) is used with great regularity.<sup>64</sup> But the majority of thematic material for the three films was newly composed. Williams introduced at least one significant new theme complete with a name and excerpted concert version for each of the films, to be marketed as a hit-single of sorts.

In Episode I, *The Phantom Menace* (1999), the primary new theme is “The Duel of the Fates,” which is heard as the accompaniment to the light sabre duel pitting Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi against the Sith apprentice, Darth Maul. Dyer calls this theme “a terrifying, primitive pagan rite that makes even Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* sound tame.”<sup>65</sup> Hickman describes it as “Orff-like,” presumably referring to “O Fortuna” from *Carmina Burana*.<sup>66</sup> “The Duel of the Fates” and “O Fortuna” are of similar scale, scored for full orchestra and large chorus, and they draw from a shared darkly-dramatic expressive palate. Though instead of the Latin text that Orff sets, Williams had an old Welsh poem translated into Sanskrit, apparently because he “loved the sound of it.”<sup>67</sup> The choral passages of “Duel of the Fates” seem at least to have been inspired by (if not modeled on) those from *Carmina Burana*, but there is another source from which Williams may borrow here somewhat more directly;

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<sup>64</sup> Note that the “Force theme” is transcribed above in Chapter 2.

<sup>65</sup> Dyer (1999)

<sup>66</sup> Hickman (2006), p. 439

<sup>67</sup> Dyer (1999)

compare the main instrumental motives from “Duel of the Fates” to the primary theme of the third movement of Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony:

Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony, III, Main Motive  
Molto Vivace

*p*

“Duel of the Fates”  
Vivace

*mp*

*pp*

**EXAMPLE 4-17: “Duel of the Fates” and its potential source**

While we cannot be certain that Williams borrowed this motive from Dvořák, as the motive is quite short, listening to the two pieces one after the other makes for a convincing case; they are even in the same key. And more compelling still is the fact that Williams appears to derive *another* important theme for the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy from the very same symphony. We find this apparent borrowing in the primary new theme for *Revenge of the Sith*, “Battle of the Heroes.” This theme, like the “Duel of the Fates,” serves as the accompaniment to a climatic light-sabre duel, this time the long-anticipated battle between Obi-Wan and his former apprentice, the newly dubbed Darth Vader. Some of the music underscoring their battle resembles the Khatchaturian “Sabre dance” (the significance of which seems obvious enough), but as the fight intensifies, we hear a brief melody that sounds plenty like primary theme from the fourth movement of Dvořák’s 9<sup>th</sup> symphony.

Williams changes the meter, and the key, but both themes include a melody of similar shape stated in the brass.<sup>68</sup>

Symphony No. 9  
IV, mm. 18-25

"Battle of the Heroes"

(Later Statement)

**EXAMPLE 4-18: "Battle of the Heroes" and its potential source**

**4.6: Addendum: Overt Borrowing in Williams' film scores**

All of the apparent borrowings that I have introduced above are discussed in an almost forensic mode, using the evidence available to determine the likelihood of whether a particular source serves as the model upon which a passage is based. Yet there is a great deal of borrowed material in Williams' scores that is *meant to be noticed*, requiring no such arm-chair detective work. I call such borrowings "overt." The term fits well enough, though I resist calling all of the possible borrowings discussed above "covert" by default; Williams does not always make a significant

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<sup>68</sup> Williams' theme appears in both C minor and D minor. Dvořák's is stated in E minor first, but some editions of the score are for Trumpet in E.



effort to obscure the fact that he is borrowing (though he does *usually* change enough so that he cannot be accused of “copying”). Or put another way, though the quotations discussed below in Williams’ music *are* certainly meant to be noticed, the others are not necessarily designed to go *unnoticed*.

#### 4.6.1: Quotation and Paraphrase in non-diegetic music

At times, Williams will quote a familiar tune in the non-diegetic score for a film. Williams adapts “When You Wish Upon A Star” from *Pinocchio* (1940) into the music for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).<sup>69</sup> In *E.T.*, he borrows portions of Victor Young’s score to *The Quiet Man* (1952) as the title character watches this movie on television.<sup>70</sup> And the “Wedding March” from Wagner’s *Lohengrin* appears several times in *The Terminal* (2004).<sup>71</sup>

All of these overt quotations are used for programmatic reasons that the audience is likely to catch. Some overt borrowings are less likely to be noticed, however; not all viewers will recognize that Williams uses the “Dies Irae” in several of his scores. Moormann notes its presence (usually paraphrased at the start of a longer melody) in *Close Encounters*, *Minority Report* (2002), *Jurassic Park*, *The Lost World*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, and *Munich* (2005), often used to foreshadow the danger that a character is in.<sup>72</sup> The use of this motive cannot be classed as quotation, however. Rather, “Dies Irae” is shared cultural

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<sup>69</sup> See Moormann (2010), p. 246

<sup>70</sup> See Hickman (2006), p. 346

He notes that “while E.T. watches a romantic scene for *The Quiet Man* Williams borrows a portion of Victor Young’s score for this 1952 classic, but concludes the quotation with the cadence of the E.T. theme.” See also Moormann (2010), p. 131 and 227

<sup>71</sup> See Moormann (2010), p. 727

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

property, borrowed as though from a public library. The “Dies Irae” also makes a cameo in the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy to foreshadow the death of Padme Amidala. A paraphrased version of this motive appears in *Attack of the Clones*, first when a mercenary (who had been apprehended after a failed attempt on Senator Amidala’s life) is shot with a poison dart (24:35), and again when Anakin carries in his mother’s body (123:17) as a sign of his growing anger and path to the dark side that will ultimately lead to Padme’s death. In *Revenge of the Sith*, “Dies Irae” appears again when Padme reveals that she is pregnant with Anakin’s child (26:40), and when Anakin and Chancellor Palpatine discuss Padme’s fate (104:35).

#### 4.6.2: Self-quotation and parody

Other overt quotation comes in the form of *self*-quotation and parody. In at least two film scores, Williams appears to borrow from himself. Of course, many of his themes are quite similar to each other, but Williams’ outright borrowing of another of his scores for a dramatic purpose is another matter entirely.<sup>73</sup> The clearest example of this is in *E.T.* When the children are out trick-or-treating on Halloween, taking E.T. to the woods to “phone home,” they pass by a child in a Yoda costume. As Hickman explains, “Williams underscores this humor by quoting Yoda’s theme, first heard in *The Empire Strikes Back*.”<sup>74</sup> Williams may also at times *parody* his own themes. Moormann suggests that the theme of the overzealous patriots in

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<sup>73</sup> And then there is the separate matter of other film makers borrowing Williams’ music. A prime example is the use of Williams’ brassy *Superman* theme in *Goonies* (1985) when the deformed anti-hero, Sloth, swings into action while wearing a Superman shirt. (Perhaps a decision made by Steven Spielberg, who produced the film.)

<sup>74</sup> Hickman (2006), p. 347

Hickman continues, “This brief tribute to the George Lucas film is reciprocated in *The Phantom Menace* (1999), in which we can see E.T. figures sitting in the Imperial Senate.” (Ibid)

1941 (1979) is a parody of the music from the throne-room ceremony in *Star Wars*, and perhaps also of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* March.<sup>75</sup>

#### **4.7: Evaluation and Summary**

While scholars rarely take a composer to task for a perceived lack of originality, some independent (internet-based) writers call Williams everything from a “fraud,” to a “petty thief,” both for borrowing from others without citing his sources, *and* for the similarities between his themes. Yet most of the supposed borrowings are too vague to determine their source with any certainty. Williams is remarkably canny in how he adapts music from another source (if, and) when he does. If borrowing a melody, Williams is usually quite careful to change a number of notes. But if he keeps a lot of the notes the same, he will often change the meter—perhaps the hallmark of his paraphrase technique—as well as a few of the rhythms. In the rare case where the notes, rhythms and meter are quite similar, he will change the expressive genre (as in the *King's Row/Star Wars* paraphrase). *Never* will he borrow both the melody and its accompaniment (except for homophonic planing), and only rarely can we conclude with reasonable certainty that a passage of one of his scores is adapted from another piece.

In short, Williams is not the best target for accusations of plagiarism. Arguably, no film composer should be criticized for this, as they are often expected to compose something that resembles a temp track quite closely, under significant time constraints no less. A classic example of this is Bill Conti's (Oscar winning!)

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<sup>75</sup> Moormann (2010), p. 689

score for *The Right Stuff* (1983). Conti, reportedly, was pressured by the producers of the film to churn out music at a remarkable pace that resembled the temp tracks as closely as possible.<sup>76</sup> And so Conti did, so much so that he felt obliged to cite his sources in the credits for the film.

Even with this overt acknowledgement of his models, some of Conti's paraphrases for *The Right Stuff* resemble their (cited!) source no more than Williams borrowed themes do. In one passage, Conti borrows the main theme of "Jupiter" from Holst's *Planets*. Despite a few short (near) identical segments (indicated with brackets on the example below), the melodies are not so similar that the Holst estate would have just cause to sue Conti had he failed to explicitly cite "Jupiter" as his template. This cue has the same key signature and meter as its source, but the two melodies have different modal characteristics; both are more or less in Eb major, but Holst's has some folk-like Aeolian and pentatonic leanings, while Conti's has Lydian inflections (perhaps a film music cliché).

The image displays a musical score comparison. The top section, labeled "Holst, 'Jupiter'", shows a string (Str.) part in Eb major, 3/4 time. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes. A dashed bracket highlights a specific melodic segment. The bottom section, labeled "Conti, *The Right Stuff*", shows a concert horn (Cor Ang. (concert)) part in the same key and meter. It features a similar melodic structure, with a dashed bracket highlighting a segment that closely resembles the one in Holst's piece. A horn (Hrn.) part is also shown below, with a solid bracket highlighting a different melodic segment.

**EXAMPLE 4-19: *The Right Stuff* score and Holst's "Jupiter"**

<sup>76</sup> IMDB, "The Right Stuff" (Accessed March 2013)

A second example to compare is Tchaikovsky's violin concerto and Conti's music for the end credits of *The Right Stuff*.<sup>77</sup> The two pieces have similar triumphant melodies (note the brackets), and comparable patterns of accompaniment. The chord progression is not identical, but the manner in which the chords are presented (in combination with the similar melody and bass fragments) makes for a *much* closer resemblance between source and film score than we find in *any* of Williams' scores. Williams rarely borrows a melody without changing the texture, and never does Williams borrow both the melody, and adapt it in the same key and meter, with similar bass motion, chordal articulations, and phrase structure (see below).

To be clear, I do not mean to take Conti to task either, especially since he was gracious enough to cite his sources. Had he not done so, and went on to accept the Academy award for this score, I can see how this might raise an eyebrow. But to return to the big question at hand—is Williams a thief? I'd prefer to think not. At worst, he is what Mezter calls, "a creative thief," and a clever one at that. The fact that so many accuse Williams of having an aesthetically dubious method of composition is presumably a consequence of his fame. Globally, he is perhaps the most well known living composer of orchestral music for any medium; millions of people across the urbanized world can hum his themes, and it follows that the biggest name wears the biggest target. Williams' techniques of paraphrase differ

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<sup>77</sup> There is a spirited discussion on IMBD (Accessed March 2013) about the appropriateness of using Russian music in a movie about an American "space race" triumph over the Soviets. It could be worse, though. In *The King's Speech* (2010), Beethoven's Seventh Symphony is used—not paraphrased—as the dramatic underscore to the English King's radio announcement that war has just been declared on Germany.

greatly from those of the composers I discuss in other chapters, as do his objectives, but such a creative process places him not only in the company of other film composers, but also countless composers of concert music, who as use pre-existing material as their starting point for crafting a new piece.

**EXAMPLE 4-20:**  
*The Right Stuff* score  
and Tchaikovsky's  
Violin Concerto

The image displays two musical scores side-by-side. The top score is titled "The Right Stuff End Credits" and features a complex, multi-measure rhythmic pattern in the bass clef, with a treble clef staff above it. The bottom score is titled "Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, mm. 127-34" and shows a similar rhythmic pattern in the bass clef, with a treble clef staff above it. Both scores include various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf*.

## **Chapter 5: Berg the Wagnerian—*Tristan and Lulu***

### **5.0: Setting the Stage**

It is well known that Berg had a penchant for quotation, both of his own pieces, and of works by other composers. Most of Berg's borrowings are not "direct" or "literal," however. Berg's creative energies were ignited by reworking pieces by other composers. As Khittl suggests, Berg made a habit of recomposing music from other sources with "striking differences and deviations," explaining that when Berg paraphrases another piece, he "transforms [his] model by subjecting it to 'extreme metamorphosis.'"<sup>1</sup> While it is tempting to pursue a project exploring Berg's practice of paraphrase more extensively, I instead chose to focus on Berg's use of a single piece: Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. After surveying Berg's use of material from *Tristan und Isolde* in his earlier works, I demonstrate that frequent, often opaque paraphrases of familiar thematic material from Wagner's opera serve as the keystone to the secondary program of *Lulu*. The allusions to *Tristan* that are most often discussed—say, those that appear in the love duet between Alwa and Lulu—are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. I argue that many of the opera's most iconic themes are in fact elaborate recompositions of passages from *Tristan*. The shadow of *Tristan* lurks beneath Lulu's interactions with the Painter (Lulu's eventual second husband), and most importantly, with Schön, her only admirer whose love she claims to reciprocate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Khittl (1998), p. 140

Khittl describes how Berg performs this "extreme metamorphosis" on Brahms' song, "Wie Melodien zieht es mir" in his own song, "Die Nachtigal," from his *Sieben Frühe Lieder*.

<sup>2</sup> While there is presumably also an autobiographical significance to the uses of material from *Tristan*, as Berg often surrounds these quotations with ciphers for Fuchs' initials and his own, I do not use evidence in the music to advance arguments about Berg's biography.



Although in the previous chapters I have addressed the question of *how* a composer paraphrases music in cases where the goals of the process are explicit, here I provide some new answers for *why* it is that Berg so often turned to Wagner while composing *Lulu*.

#### 5.0.1: Paraphrase in the Context Of (Secret) Programs

Berg's practice of paraphrase is best understood as a critical component of the "secret," extra-musical programs in his music. He relished the act of constructing a hidden narrative, saturating his music with references to people, places, and events.<sup>3</sup> Douglas Jarman explains that "[a]fter *Wozzeck*, the invention of some kind of extra-musical story line became [a] habitual and necessary... part of Berg's working methods." Apparently "the adoption of such secret narratives seems to have satisfied a number of needs in Berg's creative and personal psychology and there are, perhaps, additional reasons why he felt it important that the precise details of autobiographical events should be embodied in the music—irrespective of whether or not anyone else knew what these events were."<sup>4</sup>

The practice of quotation and paraphrase is one of at least three common features that routinely appear in Berg's programs. Another is his practice of incorporating the initials or names of people close to him into his pieces. As shown

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<sup>3</sup> At times he revealed the content of his programs in a public forum—he published an open letter to explain the symbolic code of the *Chamber Concerto*. This letter was first published in *Pult und Takstock 2* (February/March 1925), pp. 23-8. It has been republished by Willi Reich. (1937, pp. 86-91) In other cases, only the dedicatee (if anyone at all) was privy to a work's hidden meanings. He annotated a copy of the *Lyrical Suite* that he gave to Hannah Fuchs (to whom the piece was dedicated in private) to illustrate how the music tells the story of his imagined affair with her. (See Perle (1995), pp. 75-102)

<sup>4</sup> Jarman (1997), p. 177

in Example 5-1 below, we find ciphers for himself, his wife Helene, his colleagues Schoenberg and Webern, and Hannah Fuchs, his partner in an emotional affair.<sup>5</sup> The third is Berg's habit of structuring his pieces around certain numbers, fueled by his quasi-religious zeal for numerology. Berg had a superstitious fascination with the number 23, believing it had a great personal significance—that it was the number of his fate.<sup>6</sup> Allusions to this number are found throughout his late works, as well as to the number 10, which he associated with Hannah Fuchs.<sup>7</sup> We will see that paraphrased quotation, musical initials, and musical numbers interact in fascinating ways, even starting with his earliest works.

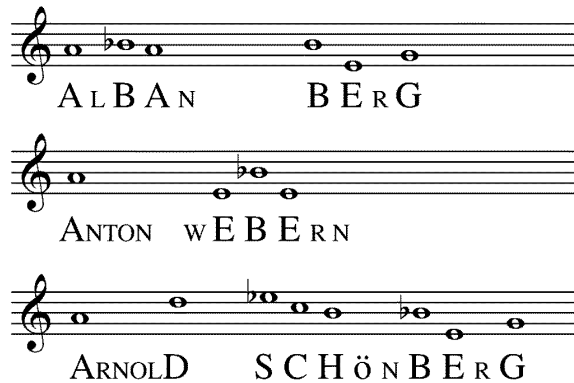
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<sup>5</sup> Berg and Fuchs' presumably unconsummated affair was sustained through private letters from 1925 until his death in 1935. As the letters could not be sent by post without risking discovery by their respective spouses, Berg and Fuchs relied on mutual friends including Theodor Adorno and Alma Mahler (who became Fuchs' sister-in-law upon marrying Franz Werfel) to hand deliver their correspondence. (See Floros 2008, p. 4)

<sup>6</sup>Berg's obsession with the number 23 is in part the result of reading Wilhelm Fliess's *Von Leben und Tod*, as evidenced by a letter from Berg to Schoenberg from June, 1914. Jarman explains, "Berg seems to have become acquainted with Fliess's work in the summer of 1914, by which time he had already noted 'the strange coincidences surrounding the number 23' and had persuaded himself that the number played an important role in his life." (1990, p. 183) These "coincidences" include the death of Berg's father and Berg's first asthma attack, both of which occurred on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month.

<sup>7</sup> In Berg's correspondence with Fuchs, there is ample discussion of the pair's respective numbers. In one such letter, Berg mentions what he believed to be the fateful significance of his train ticket number 1023 from his trip back to Vienna after meeting Hanna initially. In the *Lyric Suite*, both the number of measures in movements and tempo markings are more often than not multiples of 23 or 10.

*Chamber Concerto*  
(for Schönberg's 50th Birthday)

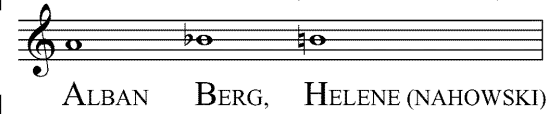


ALBAN BERG

ANTON WEBERN

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

Op. 2, Dedicated to Helene Berg  
(nee Nahowski)



ALBAN BERG, HELENE (NAHOWSKI)

*Lyric Suite, Der Wein, Lulu*



ALBAN BERG, HANNA FUCHS

**EXAMPLE 5-1: Berg's Musical Initials**

**5.1: Berg the Young Wagnerian: A Tour of His Early Works**

Before exploring Berg's use of *Tristan* material in *Lulu*, it is helpful to understand Berg's practice of borrowing from *Tristan* in his earlier pieces. Adorno, Floros, and others have argued that Berg used the music of *Tristan* in his first mature works to symbolize his once disallowed relationship with Helene. Significant biographical evidence supports this claim. Berg first saw Helene at the Opera, and during their courtship, they attended several performances of *Tristan* together.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps they found the opera especially meaningful in the years before their 1911 marriage, which—reminiscent of Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck—

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<sup>8</sup> Esslin (1990), p. 2

Berg presumably did attend the opera with Helene as part of their courtship, though it is uncertain if Berg *saw* or *met* her there. Schroeder suggests that they met through Peter Altenberg, the poet whose text he would later set in his Op. 4 Lieder (see Schroeder, 1999), while Hailey asserts that Berg "had first noticed her at concerts and the Opera. When he discovered she was a neighbor... he began to haunt her street, dipping out of sight as soon as she appeared." (1997, p 10)

was long opposed by Helene's father. Berg once even addressed Helene as "[his] Isolde" in a 1908 letter, which, as Floros notes, suggests some degree of self-identification with the opera's protagonists, fancying themselves as Wagner's ill-fated lovers.<sup>9</sup> Both Berg's Op. 2 song cycle of 1909 (his first work officially dedicated to Helene) and his Op. 3 string quartet (dedicated to her privately) contain glimmers of material from *Tristan und Isolde*, sometimes alongside ciphers for their initials.

Naudé observes that Op. 2 begins with three motives from the opening measures of *Tristan und Isolde*: The "Desire" motive (in a slightly altered sequence), a "*Tristan* chord," and the set-class equivalent of the "Grief" motive.<sup>10</sup> We should also note that this version of the "Grief" motive is spelled to include the notes A, Bb and B (H), which is likely a cipher for the initials of their names, "**A**lban **B**erg; **H**elene." And Berg might quote Wagner here for another reason, not exclusive of the prior: As Kett explains, both works involve "a psychological exploration of, and journey to, a distant world of 'sleep-death.'"<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Berg (1971), p. 33

See also Floros (2008 p. x)

<sup>10</sup> Naudé (1997), p. 52

Naudé notes the presence of the "*Tristan* chord" and the desire motive, but does not posit the inversion of the "Grief" motive to include the notes A, Bb, B as a cipher for Alban and Helene.

<sup>11</sup> Kett (1990), p.69

Adorno similarly notes that, "the state of the subconscious into which the songs enter... fills Tristan's night with floating mists." (1991, p. 47)

Tristan und Isolde, mm. 1-4

a. "Grief" Motive

b. "Desire" Motive

"Tristan" Chord- F B D#G#

**EXAMPLE 5-2a: Opening Motives from *Tristan und Isolde***

"Grief" Motive Fragment in Retrograde  
(Original pitch level)

"Grief" Motive inverted, beginning on F  
(Original in *Tristan*: A F E Eb Here: F A Bb B)

Voice

Schla - fen A (Alban) schla - fen B (Berg) nicht als H (Helene)

Piano

"Desire" Motive

"Tristan" Chord  
(Half-Diminished 7th)

**EXAMPLE 5-2b: Berg, Op. 2, No. 1, mm. 1-3.**

Further suggesting that Berg associated the music of *Tristan* with his own love interest is the fact that the key of Op. 2/1 may also refer to Helene; in a letter from 1907 he called her his “most glorious symphony in D minor,”<sup>12</sup> and he describes “the most glorious D minor chords of [her] soul sound[ing] forth in their full magnificence” in a letter from 1909, the year Op. 2 was composed.<sup>13</sup> A D-minor chord appears in Op. 2/3 in precisely the place where, according to Adorno, Berg uses the pitches A, Bb and B as a cipher for Alban’s own initials and Helene’s given

<sup>12</sup> Berg (ed. and trans. Bernard Grun), *Letters to his Wife*, p. 19  
For discussion of this letter, see Reiman (1998), p. 230

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62

name.<sup>14</sup> Although there is no evidence that Berg told Adorno about the cipher, in this case, I am willing to take him at his word. Not only do two apparent symbols for Helene appear simultaneously, but the text here, *einer weißen Märchenhand* (“of a white fairy’s hand”) appears in a letter Berg wrote to her in 1910.<sup>15</sup> And, the A-B-H of their initials appears as a part of an ascending chromatic line of four pitches, perhaps alluding to the “Desire” motive from *Tristan* (transposed up by one semitone) *as well as* their names.

The image shows a musical score for Berg, Op. 2, No. 3. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in 3/4 time and contains the text "wei - ßen Mär - chen hand". Above the first three notes of the vocal line, there is a bracket labeled "'Desire' motive" with the letters "A B H" underneath it, indicating the initials of the couple. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, with the right hand playing a melody and the left hand playing chords. The overall style is characteristic of Berg's early work, with a focus on chromaticism and leitmotifs.

**EXAMPLE 5-3: Berg, Op. 2, No. 3**

Berg’s next work, String Quartet No. 1 (Op. 3) was also composed during his courtship of Helene, and may likewise contain passages modeled after music from *Tristan und Isolde*. Floros lists a number of excerpts in which Berg seems to paraphrase familiar passages from Wagner’s opera, many of which are convincing, if not quite as clear as those in Op. 2.<sup>16</sup> There is little mention in the scholarly

<sup>14</sup> Adorno (1991), p. 49

<sup>15</sup> Berg (1971), p. 120

<sup>16</sup> That said, the apparent *Tristan* motives in Op. 2 are not easily heard, while those in Op. 3 might be more audible despite the often vague relationship between the model and hypertext. Floros discusses these borrowings in the context of the testimony of a neighbor of the Bergs. Said neighbor claimed that Helene had told her that the inspiration for Op. 3 came after Berg had been banished from Helene’s household in 1908, and that “[l]ove speaks in [the quartet], and jealousy and indignation over the injustice that was done to us and our love.” (1992, p. 155) Pople explains that although there is “no documentary support for [the] account, this oral history cannot simply be

literature of borrowing from *Tristan und Isolde* in Berg's Op. 4 (the *Altenberg Lieder*, 1912), Op. 5 (Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, 1913), Op. 6 (Three Orchestral Pieces, 1913-15), and Op. 7 (*Wozzeck*, 1914-1922). In his later years, however, the music of *Tristan* returned to the forefront of his imagination. It is generally assumed that the catalyst of this creative shift was the start of his platonic affair with Hanna Fuchs.

Just as Helene's "musical initials" were at times embedded in *Tristan* motives in Berg's earlier works, the *Tristan* material in Berg's late works often appears in conjunction with apparent symbols for Berg and Fuchs, either through ciphers of their initials (AB and HF respectively) or through the numbers he associated with each (23 and 10). Such autobiographical symbols begin to appear in the very first piece he wrote after meeting Fuchs: A serial setting of Strom's *Schliesse mir die Augen beide*. Perle explains of this song that "[t]he number of bars [20] is twice Hanna's number," and that the row form always begins and ends on F or H (B) respectively.<sup>17</sup> What is perhaps most significant about this song is that Berg had set this text once before in 1907, which was presumably inspired by his early encounters with Helene.<sup>18</sup> Re-setting this song for Hanna, therefore, can be understood as a symbolic affirmation that she had supplanted Helene as Berg's primary muse.

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dismissed." (1997, p. 77) Pople also identifies what he believes to be a passage modeled upon Act III scene 1 of *Tristan*. In this scene Tristan is "separated from Isolde by the jealous King Marke," which Pople suggests provides a "striking" correlation with "[Berg's] separation from Helene... if one wishes to think of music in these terms." (Ibid, p. 81)

<sup>17</sup> Perle (1995), p. 94

Of note, Floros reminds us that this song was (supposedly) finished on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1925; Berg relished being able to put the number 23 in the date of a manuscript. Floros also points out another pair of ciphers: "the dyad A/Bb in mm. 14 -15 and H/F(B) in m. 16." (1992, p. 234)

<sup>18</sup> As far as I am aware, the 1907 setting does not contain a reference to Alban or Helene's initials, nor to any motive from *Tristan*. However, Berg included the text of this poem in one of the earliest letters

In a 1925 letter, composed October 23 (**10/23**) no less, Berg declared to Fuchs his “passion comparable only to that of Tristan and Isolde,”<sup>19</sup> and divulged— with more than a little enthusiasm— his observation that the opening material from *Tristan* contains their initials (see below in Example 5-4).<sup>20</sup> Interpreting this fortuitous connection as fate, he came to associate the first phrase of *Tristan* with Fuchs for the balance of his life, using it as a symbol for her in his music.<sup>21</sup>



**EXAMPLE 5-4: From Berg’s Letter to Fuchs (1925)**

The most well-known example of this is the unmistakable presentation of the Opera’s four opening bars in Berg’s *Lyric Suite*,<sup>22</sup> a work dedicated to her in secret.<sup>23</sup> This is quite an unusual moment, as it is one of the very few unparaphrased, unobscured borrowings (from any work) in his entire output. This quotation is by far the most explicit in the *Lyric Suite*, but it is not the only one; the

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he sent to Helene in 1907. (See Berg, 1971, p. 19) The fact that Berg sent Helene this poem in the same year that he set it to music suggests her influence. See also Perle (1995, pp. 93-4) for a discussion of the disputed date of composition of the first Strom setting. Perle avers— correctly, no doubt—that the song was composed in 1907, rather than in 1900 as Redlich suggests in the 1960 edition of the score. Such graceful treatment of chromaticism is not found in Berg’s earliest songs from 1900-02.) The possibility remains that Berg *revised* the song in 1907, but regardless, there is little doubt that he could not have composed it *en total* in 1900.

<sup>19</sup> Floros (2008), p. 25

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 37

<sup>22</sup> The inclusion of this material from *Tristan* represents, as Straus explains, Berg’s “unfulfilled love for Hanna Fuchs-Robettin”, as his “personal version of the myth of Tristan und Isolde.” (1990 p.144)

<sup>23</sup> See Perle (1995)



others, more characteristically, are not as easily spotted. Floros lists several motives from *Tristan* that may appear in Berg's quartet, some of which are more convincing than others,<sup>24</sup> and DeVoto has noted "a more subtle appearance of the *Tristan* chord" which appears at the conclusion of the second movement.<sup>25</sup>

## **5.2: *Tristan and Lulu***

As we have seen, fragments of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* appear consistently in the music of Alban Berg, but nowhere is this more so the case than in his late life masterpiece, *Lulu*. I am certainly not the first to make connections between *Tristan* and *Lulu*;<sup>26</sup> the two works are often compared to one another in both scholarly and journalistic literature. Reviewers have been eager to compare *Lulu* to *Tristan* throughout the work's performance history. Thomas Mann noted "*Tristan*-like effects" after viewing the two-act premiere of *Lulu* in 1937, and journalists have followed suit ever since.<sup>27</sup> Yet there remains no satisfactory treatment of the ubiquitous Wagner quotations in *Lulu*. My objective is to (re)interpret this aspect of *Lulu*, exploring how the borrowed material interacts

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<sup>24</sup> Floros (1992), pp. 280-5

<sup>25</sup> In DeVoto's words, it is "sustained after the pizzicato C's in the cello [representing Fuch's youngest child, Dorothea or "Do-do"]... have died away. He continues, "the signification is plain: Hanna's children had run off to play somewhere else, while Alban and Hanna are left to contemplate their love for each other." (1995, p. 151)

<sup>26</sup> One interesting parallel is that both *Lulu* and *Tristan* are believed to be the creative result of an emotional affair. Bailey explains, Wagner's "relationship with Mathilde Wesendonk quickly reached a level of great intensity, and both came to look upon *Tristan* as a collaboration—the symbolic 'child,' as it were, of their spiritual and platonic union." (1985, p. 7) Deathridge and Dahlhaus explain that this affair was "celebrated and idealized in *Tristan und Isolde*," and agree that said affair (like Berg's) was "probably never consummated." (1984, p. 936)

<sup>27</sup> Mann (1984), p. 278

Jarman (1991, p. 401) and Naudé (1997, p. 45) both cite this quotation. Holloway's review-essay of the 1979 three-act premiere is rife with comparisons to *Tristan* (1979/2003). In a review of the 2002 London production of *Lulu*, Conrad (2002) criticizes the production for being too graphic and sexualized, reminding us that, "*Lulu*, like Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is about desire, not sex."

with the ciphers and numerological features endemic to Berg's music in the creation of programmatic meaning.

Few *Tristan* quotations in *Lulu* are as overt as the one in the *Lyric Suite* discussed above, with the exception of the lone Tristan chord that appears when Alwa declares his love for Lulu, shown below in Example 5-5.

Lulu, Act II, mm. 335-6

Alwa

non? Mig - non ich lie - be Dich...

#### EXAMPLE 5-5: Tristan Chord in Alwa and Lulu's duet

In DeVoto's words, this Tristan chord "refers to Alban Berg himself, in the person of the composer Alwa, declaring his love for Hanna Fuchs-Robettin, his secret love and his muse in composing the opera."<sup>28</sup> Presumably, many of the borrowings from *Tristan* in *Lulu* have gone unnoticed because they are not as clear as this, but also because of the established personal significance of these allusions, scholars have been most eager to look for *Tristan* material in scenes involving the character Alwa, at the expense of "discovering" more in other parts of the opera. Of course, this is a logical place to start; it is well known that Alwa is an autobiographical character—he is a composer, like Berg himself. In the moments

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<sup>28</sup>DeVoto (1995) p. 152

He continues, "Berg wrote to Hanna that he was writing *Lulu* inspired by her, though of course not about her." (Ibid)

before Alwa's ballet is supposed to premiere (Act I, Scene 3), the character comments as an aside that "one could write an interesting Opera" about the events that have transpired while the orchestra plays the opening music of *Wozzeck*. And Patricia Hall has suggested that "Berg associated...Alwa with Tristan," as well as with himself, noting source material where Berg calls Alwa a "Heroic, Tristan Tenor."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Berg reinforces the similarities between Alwa and himself by linking him to Tristan, in whom Berg had already found a kindred spirit.

Silvio Dos Santos offers perhaps the most detailed reading of Alwa and Lulu's Act II love duet,<sup>30</sup> demonstrating convincingly that *Tristan* quotations permeate the scene.<sup>31</sup> Yet he allows that "if *Tristan* provides the background from which Berg models the love relationship between Alwa and Lulu, it fails [at the conclusion of the duet] because of Lulu's lack of reciprocity." The eventual failure of this parallel opens a space for the issues that I address. *Lulu* is not merely the love story between Alwa and the opera's title character, and the use of *Tristan* material is not limited to these scenes. We find *Tristan* material in Lulu's own themes, and above all, in the music representing the reciprocal attraction between Schön and Lulu.

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<sup>29</sup> Patricia Hall explains the association between the two characters at length: "[M]any sketches for the Rondo suggest that on some level Berg associated the character Alwa with Tristan in Wagner's opera... In his sketches, Berg specifies that Alwa, like Tristan, is to be a Heldentenor, to which he adds "Tristan." And there are numerous sketches of the Tristan chord which occurs in the climax of the Rondo (mm. 335-36) as Alwa sings, "Mignon, I love you." (1996, p. 149)

<sup>30</sup>His primary argument is that the interactions between Alwa and Lulu appear to trace the progression of "sensual," "spiritual" and "metaphysical" love outlined in Emil Lucka's *Drei Stufen der Erotik (The Three Stages of Love)*, which Berg had first read decades earlier. (See Dos Santos, 2003)

<sup>31</sup> Dos Santos (Ibid) suggests that "Berg perhaps intended Alwa's theme to resemble... the desire music of Tristan" (165), noting both the "permutation of the initial four pitches of the chromatic ascending melody of the *Tristan* desire music" (170) at the beginning of the subordinate theme, and the fact that "Alwa's chromatic row paraphrases the desire motive" (175-6).

### 5.3 Lulu and the Painter

Let us first examine the Act I duet between Lulu and the Painter. In this scene, the Painter, lusting after Lulu, chases her around his studio until he catches and embraces her. We might imagine that Berg's secret wish to consummate his affair with Fuchs—his desire to pursue Fuchs in the way the Painter pursues Lulu—is represented here by his inclusion of material from *Tristan*, the story of another forbidden love, *or* we might simply take this as Berg's *excuse* to quote *Tristan*, evidence only of Berg's fascination with hidden meanings. Regardless, in this passage, we find a slightly altered "Grief" motive, sounded twice in succession at the same pitch-class level at which it is stated in *Tristan*. Concurrently, the pitch-class A (that begins this motive) is followed by a Bb in the same register and voice, which may represent Berg's initials. Symbols for Fuchs' initials follow immediately thereafter; the H of her name supports a transposed *Tristan chord*, while the F is the bass-note of an F-minor chord whose top voice initiates the "Desire motive" at the original pitch level in the opening phrase of *Tristan*.<sup>32</sup>

Tristan und Isolde, mm. 1-4

a. "Grief" Motive

b. "Desire" Motive

"Tristan" Chord- F B D#G#

#### **EXAMPLE 5-6a: Motives from *Tristan* (presented again for ease of comparison)**

<sup>32</sup> I am indebted to Peter Mowrey for discovering the "Desire" motive in this location.

**EXAMPLE 5-6b: Berg's adaptation of these motives in *Lulu*, mm. 160-66**

In addition to serving as one of Fuchs's initials, this F-minor chord may be part of a *tonal* reference to *Tristan*. Berg salutes the key of A here, which is the implied tonic of the first phrase of Wagner's opera. Each of the three pitches in this chord (F, Ab and C) move by semitone to E, A, and C# (which often has a dominant function in A), much in the way that the voices of the Tristan chord move to the E7 chord at the conclusion of the phrase through chromatic voice leading.<sup>33</sup> And the next two chords that Berg uses imply C major analogously, which may be a nod to the second phrase of *Tristan*.

We also find references to Berg and Fuchs' respective numbers, 23 and 10 alongside the ciphers and *Tristan* quotations. This complete duet is 30 measures long, which is a multiple of Fuchs' number, 10.<sup>34</sup> The precise midpoint of the excerpt notated above (m. 163, beat 2) is the 23<sup>rd</sup> beat of the section, which means that Fuchs' initials appear directly between Berg's initials and beat 23; Berg

<sup>33</sup>The notes that the Painter sings in m. 163 over these chords may also imply A with a quasi-cadential figure containing B, G# (spelled Ab) and A.

<sup>34</sup>The number 3 (the quotient of 30 and 10) was treated as a determinant of the work's structure in the *Chamber Concerto* in much the way that 23 and 10 are in *Lulu*, as Berg explained in his published "open letter" about the former piece.

therefore surrounds her name with two symbols for himself, perhaps literally encircling her as the Painter does to Lulu in this scene. Those less familiar with Berg's numerological habits may question the self-referentiality of this 23<sup>rd</sup> beat, but we must consider that the frequency at which Berg alludes to the number 23 in *Lulu*, in Hall's words, "bordered on the obsessive." She continues, "[n]othing seemed to delight [Berg] more, for instance, than incorporating his number of fate, 23, into the music of *Lulu*, and the sketches are filled with exuberant annotations."<sup>35</sup>

Of note, Berg treats Fuch's initials analogously in his concert aria, *Der Wein*, which was composed not long after Berg had completed this passage of *Lulu*.<sup>36</sup> A B/F polychord sounds at the climax of the aria, which appears at the center of a musical palindrome.<sup>37</sup> We know that this chord (by design) contains the pitch classes H and F for Fuchs' initials—Berg said so himself in a letter;<sup>38</sup> it also (perhaps coincidentally) includes A, the initial for Berg's given name, though the note Bb for his surname is absent from this sonority. However, as part of the palindrome around m. 141, Bb is both the final note to appear (in m. 139) before all voices sound a member of B/F chord, and the first note to enter outside of this collection in m. 143. I do believe that these two appearances of Bb are self-

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<sup>35</sup>Hall (1990), p.247

<sup>36</sup>See Pople (1997), pp. 213-217

Berg suspended work on *Lulu*, because of (in Pople's words) "a financially attractive commission" of 5,000 schillings to compose the aria. (Ibid, 213)

<sup>37</sup>The noteheads of this polychord were placed in the center of m. 141 at Berg's request. As Dalen explains, "Berg took great pains to ensure that the turning points of his palindromes were aurally and visually conspicuous... [He] instructed the printer to place the central points of the palindromes in the *Lulu Suite* and *Der Wein* in the middle of the page and to arrange the bars on either side symmetrically around the point." (1990, p. 150)

<sup>38</sup> Berg explains in a 1929 letter to Fuchs, "[W]hom else does it concern but you, Hanna, when I say (in "The Wine of Lovers"): "Come, sister, laid breast to breast, Let us flee without rest or stand, To my dreams' Elysian land," and these words die away in the softest accord of H [B] and F major!" (Floros (2008), p. 56)

referential, not only because they flank the sonority for Fuchs' initials, but also because they appear 10 beats apart, guiding the appearance of his own name with Fuchs' number.<sup>39</sup> So it appears that in both Lulu's duet with the Painter, and in *Der Wein*, Berg "surrounds" Fuchs' initials with symbols for himself.

Der Wein, mm. 139-143

Soprano Voice, Bb Clarinet

(Soprano Voice)

(Clarinet)

Land

Land

Orchestra

B A A B

Combination of B major and F major Triads (H F)

**EXAMPLE 5-7: Palindrome with Berg and Fuchs' initials, *Der Wein***

We learn as well from Lulu's scene with the Painter that the music of *Tristan* supports not only Lulu's love duet with Alwa, but even her interactions with less significant characters—the painter doesn't even have a name.<sup>40</sup> More crucial and more compelling still is the fact that themes most important to Lulu and Schön are filled to the brim with paraphrased material from *Tristan*.

<sup>39</sup> Although this passage of *Der Wein* contains no *Tristan* quotations (so far as I can tell), some can be found elsewhere in the aria, perhaps unsurprisingly in mm. 23 and 46 (the latter twice Berg's number). Sinuous, chromatic lines in contrary motion begin at m. 23 of *Der Wein*, evocative of the counterpoint of the "Grief" and "Desire" motives. Similarly, in m. 46 and the surrounding bars, several "*Tristan* chords" appear both harmonically and arpeggiated melodically. Naudé notes the presence of these chords, though not the potential significance of the fact that they appear in m. 46. (1997, p. 48)

<sup>40</sup> The Painter ends up marrying Lulu, but the relationship is short lived—he commits suicide in the following scene when he learns of her sordid past and present.

## **5.4 Lulu's Music**

Lulu's most important theme first appears in the Opera's prologue.<sup>41</sup> A narrator of sorts introduces the character of Lulu in a recurring section that Perle calls "Lulu's Entrance Music" (mm. 44-62).<sup>42</sup> (Perle calls such segments *Leitsektionen*, or passages of music "with the referential function of *Leitmotiv*," subject to varied reprisal later in the opera.<sup>43</sup>) This theme is so thoroughly saturated with *Tristan* material, that it may fairly be called a recomposition of mm. 17-24 of *Tristan und Isolde*. Note the following similarities between the two passages:

1. The tempo of the two excerpts is similar. Berg's indication (quarter=50) at the beginning of this passage ensures that—if the passage is played according to his wishes—the tempo of "Lulu's Entrance Music" will resemble that of the *Tristan* prelude.
2. The figure in m. 44 of *Lulu* contains the pitch classes F, A and B, which may allude to Wagner's "Destiny Motive" from m. 17 of *Tristan*. Given the similarity of pitch content, tempo, and timbre (resulting from similar orchestration)

Berg's figure has an obvious aural resemblance to Wagner's.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> In typical Bergian fashion, this theme appears at the precise midpoint of the prologue. Berg's fascination with palindromes and symmetrical forms is well documented. Hall (1996) suggests that on some level, *Lulu* is a palindrome in its entirety.

<sup>42</sup> Perle (1985), p. 69

Lochhead, refers to this as "Lulu's Freedom Music." (See Lochhead 1997 and 1999)

<sup>43</sup> Ibid (Perle)

Through Berg's use of these *Leitsektionen*, Perle explains that "*Lulu* represents a revolutionary elaboration of Wagner's famous device, in *Tristan und Isolde*, of returning at the conclusion of the work to an extended musical episode of the preceding act." (Ibid)

<sup>44</sup>Adorno has argued that "the simultaneous merging of instruments to achieve a balanced timbre...



a. "Destiny" motive

b. *Lulu*, m. 44

**EXAMPLE 5-8: *Tristan*, m. 17 (a), compared to *Lulu*, m. 44 (b)**

3. At the very moment in *Tristan* when the appoggiatura of the "Destiny" motive resolves to a consonant F-major triad, the cellos begin to play the "Glance" motive (*Tristan*, mm. 17-21). Berg delays the entry of his version of the "Glance" motive, but employs an F major triad (the same connective tissue that Wagner uses) to link the "Destiny" to the "Glance."<sup>45</sup>
4. The statement of Lulu's tone row in mm. 48-52 paraphrases the cello gestures from mm. 17-20 of *Tristan*. In mm. 48-9 of *Lulu*, we see that all of the intervals of this melody are identical to those in a portion of Wagner's "Glance" motive, though Berg's version is two semitones (plus an octave) lower. Also note that the rhythms Berg uses with his version of the "Glance" could fit quite well in 6/8 meter, whence they are derived in *Tristan*, though the meter of the *Lulu* prologue is  $\frac{3}{4}$  throughout.

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is not only intensified to the heights of virtuosity in *Tristan*, but also remains the rule in Schoenberg and, above all, Alban Berg." (2005, p. 75) This passage of *Lulu* supports Adorno's claim.

<sup>45</sup> See the score to the *Lulu* prologue, mm. 45-49. Berg adds a Cb to this F-major chord. An F-major triad with an added Cb (=B) perhaps functions as a second homage to the "Destiny" motive (an F-major triad with a B-natural added).

a. *Tristan*, mm 18-19 b. *Lulu*, mm. 48-9

**EXAMPLE 5-9: Respective versions of Wagner's "Glance" Motive**

- In mm. 56-59, we find four half-diminished seventh-chords, which likely allude to *Tristan* despite the fact that they are spelled as tertian sonorities (which is to say, not as Wagner's inventive dyads of fourths).

**EXAMPLE 5-10: Four Tristan Chords, *Lulu*, mm. 56-9**

- The figure in mm. 60-1 of *Lulu* is quite similar to mm. 20-1 of *Tristan*. The two melodies are essentially the same, though they appear at different pitch levels.

a. *Tristan*, mm. 20-1, Cello b. *Lulu*, mm. 60-1, Animal Tamer

**EXAMPLE 5-11: Comparable figures in *Tristan* and *Lulu***

- The remaining voices in m. 60 of *Lulu* are a transposition of mm. 44, which means that they also correspond to m. 17 of *Tristan*. The only other difference between the two measures (44 and 60) is the change of bass sonority in m. 60. Note that these two harmonies are rooted on B (H) and F. Perle suggests, quite correctly,

that this is a cipher for Hanna Fuchs.<sup>46</sup> In placing this cipher in a measure with the text, “die Urgestalt des Weibes,” Berg is effectively likening Fuchs to Lulu, calling both “the primal form of woman,” and analogizing both to Isolde by including two *Tristan* figures as well.<sup>47</sup> To Berg’s great delight, in a single measure he found a way to at once symbolize Tristan’s love for Isolde, Schön’s love for Lulu, and perhaps even his own idealized love for Fuchs.<sup>48</sup>

a. Lulu, m. 44

b. Lulu, m. 60

**EXAMPLE 5-12: *Tristan* Material and Initials in *Lulu*, m. 60**

### **5.5: Schön’s “Coda Music”**

The Coda of the Act I Sonata (hereafter “Coda Music”)—the thematic material most explicitly linked to Schön’s identity—is perhaps even more evocative of *Tristan* than is “Lulu’s Entrance Music.” The first appearance of this

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<sup>46</sup>Perle (1985) p. 139

<sup>47</sup> Berg placed this text at the bottom of the first page in his original libretto with the words typed with extra space between each of the letters, suggesting the emphasis he envisioned for this text. This page is reprinted in Perle (1985).

<sup>48</sup> Perle (Ibid, p. 62) argues that although the narrator (an Animal tamer) sings this passage, it is really the autobiographical Alwa who “speaks” here for the following reasons: 1) the Animal Tamer’s first sung utterance employs Alwa’s thematic material; 2) the Animal Tamer introduces all of the primary characters except for Alwa, and that curious absence of this introduction is readily understandable if it is truly Alwa who is “speaking;” and 3) Alwa’s first utterance in the Opera (the first line of Act I, Scene 1) is asking permission to enter (“Darf ich eintreten”), which perhaps is a metaphor for Alwa ending his role as narrator in the prologue, and entering the drama as one of its characters.

theme represents, in Perle’s words, “Lulu’s love for Schön and his inability to free himself from it.”<sup>49</sup> Most authors mention the remarkable tonal evocation, recalling a distinctly Mahlerian sound—for good reason—though few mention the *strikingly* audible correspondences to the opening bars of *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>50</sup>

**EXAMPLE 5-13: *Tristan* Motives in Schön’s Coda Music**

At the start of the passage, we hear Berg’s version of the “Grief” motive, which contains a prominent upward-leap of a sixth, creating an immediate resemblance to Wagner’s iconic motive. The notation of the words that Lulu speaks may also reference the chromatic descent of the “Grief” motive (see

<sup>49</sup> Perle (1985), p. 79

Before this theme appears, Schön tells Lulu of his wish to end his illicit sexual relationship with her once he is married to another woman. Lulu pleads with Schön not to end their affair, and speaks the words, “If I belong to anyone in this world, I belong to you—without you, I would be... I don’t want to say where.” This text does *not* appear in Wedekind’s *Erdgeist* (on which the first half of *Lulu* is based), but was added by Berg. Perle notes here that this intensification of the text is “entirely consistent with Lulu’s special relationship to Dr. Schön.” (Ibid)

<sup>50</sup> Lochhead in particular notes this connection. In her words, “[a]s *Lulu* articulates the nature of the bonds that link her with Schön, the music alludes to the melodic and harmonic profile of the Prelude from *Tristan und Isolde* and insinuates the sense of romantic longing that attaches to the work.” (1999, p. 236)

above).<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, the “Desire” motive appears in an inner voice (at the original pitch-level). As in the first phrase of *Tristan*, these two melodic figures terminate with an E7 chord.<sup>52</sup> The E7 chord implies an A tonic in the first phrase of *Tristan*, as does Berg’s E7 sonority, in some ways more so than Wagner’s, as it is followed by an A-major triad in the subsequent measure. Though Berg’s paraphrased “Grief” and “Desire” motives do not align to create a Tristan chord *en route* to the E7 sonority in m. 616, a half-diminished seventh chord appears two measures later. This possible Tristan chord reference is agogically accented—it is the only simultaneity in the section to sound for longer than a single beat.

An important reprise of the Coda music appears at the conclusion of Act I (m. 1327). Schön closes the act with the words, “Jetzt kommt die Hinrichtung,”<sup>53</sup> sardonically predicting his own demise.<sup>54</sup> This statement, like the prior, includes transformed versions of the “Grief” and “Desire” motives (see below), as well as what Baragwanath calls “[o]ne of the most obvious ‘quotations’ from Wagner in *Lulu*.” A chord that “consists of precisely the same collection of notes as that which thwarted the culmination of Tristan and Isolde’s passion (in m. 1631) at the very end of their act II love duet.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Because this text is spoken, and therefore not pitched precisely, the reference is purely *Augenmusik*; the line does not evoke the corresponding motive in *Tristan* aurally.

<sup>52</sup> Note that Berg imitates Wagner’s approach to the E7 chord; his paraphrased “Grief” motive ends on the seventh of the chord (D) and his “Desire” motive floats up to the fifth of the chord (B), just as these respective motives do in *Tristan*.

<sup>53</sup> “Now comes the execution.”

<sup>54</sup> At this point in the opera, Schön has just broken his engagement with another woman and has agreed to marry Lulu.

<sup>55</sup> Baragwanath (1999) p. 81

He explains how this chord “arises throughout *Lulu*, invariably to suggest an ‘interruption’ of some

♩ = 46 (23 x 2)

Lulu, mm. 1360-1361

Dr. Schön

Jetzt - kommt - die Hin - - - rich - tung...

"Grief" Motive Contour

"Grief" Motive Opening

"Grief" Motive Contour (Ascending 6th, Descending 2nd)

"Grief" Fragment

"Desire" Motive

"Grief" Fragment

"Grief" Fragment

"Interruption Chords" (B D F Ab Db)

A Major Triad (with added F)

The image shows a musical score for the character Dr. Schön in Act I of the opera Lulu. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line for Dr. Schön and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "Jetzt - kommt - die Hin - - - rich - tung...". The piano accompaniment features several motifs and chords, including the "Grief" Motive Contour, "Grief" Motive Opening, "Grief" Motive Contour (Ascending 6th, Descending 2nd), "Grief" Fragment, and "Desire" Motive. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with "Grief" Fragment and "Interruption Chords" (B D F Ab Db). The third system shows the piano accompaniment with "Grief" Fragment and "A Major Triad (with added F)".

**EXAMPLE 5-14: Berg's use of *Tristan* motives at the close of *Lulu*, Act I**

Also note that the final sonority of the act might allude to the series of chords we hear in Act III of Wagner's opera when Kurwenal attends to the wounded Tristan ("*Bist du nun tod? Lebst du noch?*"). Although the two sonorities only have one pitch class in common (see below), there is, to my ear, an audible similarity between the

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kind. (Ibid, p. 83) Perle too has noted the importance of this recurring figure, referring to it as Basic Cell V. A subset of this sonority (Ab and Db), which Perle (1985, p. 91) calls the "Signal" motive, or Basic Cell IV, is sounded to indicate various entrances or exits of the characters. Perle catalogues the "Signal" motive's appearances, explaining the significance of each, but makes no mention of this as a potential *Tristan* quotation. This motive is usually sounded by the vibraphone in a manner resembling a doorbell.

two passages, and further, they have similar dramatic functions as harbingers of death.

a. Tristan, Act III Scene I (Dover p. 547, mm. 1-2) b. Lulu, m. 1360-1

**EXAMPLE 5-15: Rhythmic Figures in *Tristan* and *Lulu***

Berg employs the rhythm of this figure (called the *Monoritmica*) throughout the opera as a leitmotive, both with and without these low, dissonant sonorities. This motive is sounded most prominently in Act I Scene II in the moments leading up to and following the death of the Painter.

**EXAMPLE 5-16: *Lulu*, Monoritmica**

### **5.6: The Synthesis of Lulu and Schön's Themes**

Perhaps the most significant statement of the Coda music appears in the final scene of the opera, this time representing both Schön and his doppelganger, Jack the Ripper. Lulu murdered Schön in the previous act, but the actor who played him returns as Jack the Ripper, who in turn will murder Lulu. The reprise of Schön's music flows directly—or in Lochhead's words, "imperceptibly transforms"—into Lulu's thematic material a few measures later.<sup>56</sup> Naudé explains how the melody Lulu sings in this passage (as she lures Jack to bed) is derived from the pitches of two successive Tristan chords, followed by a

<sup>56</sup> Lochhead, (1997) p. 243

dominant seventh chord (C7), which is the pitch-class inversion of a half-diminished 7th chord. This “mirror image” of the Tristan chord may symbolize the uncanny similarities in appearance between the characters Jack and Schön.<sup>57</sup>

• = 58       $d\# \text{ } \emptyset 7$  ("Tristan")       $f\# \text{ } \emptyset 7$

Ich ha - be Sie so gern! - - - Las - - - sen Sie mich nicht

$C\# \text{ } \emptyset 7$        $f\# \text{ } \emptyset 7$

laen - - - ger bet - - - teln.

$e \text{ } \emptyset 7$

Compare to Prologue, mm. 60-61  
(Paraphrase of "Destiny" motive, etc.)

### EXAMPLE 5-17: The synthesis of Lulu and Schön's Themes

The themes of the two lovers are synthesized, as their love narrative comes to its inevitable close. The example above shows the passage that links Lulu and Schön's respective themes. This material is rich with allusions to *Tristan*, while connecting two themes which *themselves* paraphrase material from Wagner's opera.

<sup>57</sup>Naudé, (1997) p. 57



## **5.7: Conclusions**

Having demonstrated that many of the most memorable themes in *Lulu* are based upon familiar motives from Wagner's opera, it is clear that the music of *Tristan und Isolde* played a crucial role in shaping Berg's vision for *Lulu*. At the very least, it was a source of creative stimulus, but what other significance we can ascribe to these quotations remains an open question.

The autobiographical symbols that routinely appear alongside material from *Tristan* cannot be ignored. They suggest that Berg equated the love narratives in *Lulu* with those of his own life, but even if much of the material from *Tristan* does refer to Hanna Fuchs, this is not conclusive proof that Berg loved her to his dying day—a point of contention among Berg scholars. Floros argues that Berg's affair with Fuchs had "an enormous impact on his work," to the extent that "[c]ompositions like the *Lyric Suite* and the concert aria *Der Wein*—probably also *Lulu*—would not have come about without [her]."<sup>58</sup> Perle agrees, making a case quite passionately that Berg's adoration for Hanna never dwindled.<sup>59</sup> Adorno, on the other hand, in a letter to Berg's widow suggests that her late husband "didn't write the *Lyric Suite* because he fell in love with Hanna Fuchs, but fell in love with [her] in order to write the *Lyric Suite*"<sup>60</sup>—that she was nothing more than "a necessary muse for Berg."<sup>61</sup> To be clear, I seek neither to affirm nor deny any arguments about Berg's romantic life—anyone may draw their own conclusion by reading his correspondence, keeping in mind what David Schroeder calls Berg's

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<sup>58</sup> Floros (2008), p. 1

<sup>59</sup> See Perle (1985)

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Douglas Jarman (1997), p. 177

<sup>61</sup> Schroeder (1999), p. 234

“exceptionally skillful epistolary masks.”<sup>62</sup>

Mark DeVoto points out one final Tristan chord in *Lulu* which may help us to understand Berg’s motivation more clearly. This quotation appears when Lulu begs Jack to spare her life. DeVoto notes the “bitter irony” in referencing Wagnerian *love-death* as Lulu is brutally murdered—no less by a character who reminds the audience of Schön, the only man she ever loved.<sup>63</sup> This quotation, I hope, has little to do with Fuchs. DeVoto calls it “a muted backwards glance” to “the legacy of Wagner’s revolution in operatic structure”—an homage to a composer Berg admired deeply.<sup>64</sup>

Lulu

Nein, nein, nein, nein...

Tristan Chord (Transposed): G# B D F

#### EXAMPLE 5-18: The final Tristan Chord in *Lulu*

Indeed, Berg’s idolatry of Wagner’s music is almost legendary. Countless anecdotes attest to this. His early letters to Helene are filled with words of cultish praise for Wagner. Berg’s nephew suggests that Alban developed this admiration growing up in a household in which his elder brother would sing through entire

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 187

<sup>63</sup> DeVoto (1995), p. 152

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 153

Wagner operas “from beginning to end” while accompanying himself at the piano.<sup>65</sup> And Adorno has claimed that Berg would rush towards a piano whenever he laid eyes on one to play the famous “Tristan-chord”—no doubt an exaggeration, but a telling story nonetheless.<sup>66</sup> Despite this evidence, I am not comfortable concluding that all of the references to *Tristan* in *Lulu* are simply homages either.

It seems more likely that *Lulu—en total—*is a modernist retelling, or more precisely, *un-telling* of *Tristan*. *Lulu* is not an idyllic tale of two lovers denied earthly happiness; it’s the antidote to such a fantasy—an eloquent critique of *Tristan*, arguing for the irrelevance of *Liebestod* to the realities of the present. Suffering from more than a Bloomian “anxiety of influence,” Berg reportedly once said that he “wished to burn the *Lulu* score whenever he heard *Tristan und Isolde*.”<sup>67</sup> But rather than burn *Lulu* in frustration, he sought to shatter the legacy of *Tristan* instead. Berg never set out to recreate *Tristan*—he aimed to top it. Employing the Tristan-chord as Jack fatally stabs Lulu signifies Berg’s desire to rip the shadow of Wagner from his back—to silence Wagner’s heavy footsteps behind him, once and for all, and make *himself* the giant who would cast his shadow over Opera.

One cannot help but wonder if this desire grew in Berg’s later years. He was not only anxious about *influence*, but also about the fate of his own music.<sup>68</sup> Berg said as much to Webern in a 1933 letter—part of a rich correspondence desperately in need of publication: “I can’t get rid of the fear that the Nazis will take over here

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<sup>65</sup> Erich Alban Berg (1985), p. 14

<sup>66</sup> Both Baragwanath (1999, p 62) and Naudé (1997, p. 19) remind us of this, citing Jarman’s reading of Adorno’s unpublished reminiscences.

<sup>67</sup> Baier (1989), p. 599

<sup>68</sup> And perhaps he also feared for his life as well as livelihood. He cynically referred to his Wörthersee estate as his “Concentration camp” (*Konzentrationslager*). See Adorno (1991, p. 5)

too, that is, our government *won't* be strong enough to stop it.”<sup>69</sup> (How right he was!) It is well known that after the Nazis rose to power in 1933, Berg’s music came under attack as “degenerate art.” Performances of *Wozzeck* were banned in Germany and its orbit, causing Berg much financial and emotional trauma. The piece that had made him literally rich and famous was gradually making him an enemy of the state. Meanwhile, the music of Wagner was lionized as one of the crowning achievements of German civilization. I suspect that these circumstances caused Berg to resent the music he once revered.

When Berg started composing *Lulu* in the late 1920s, the music of *Tristan* was clearly a significant source of inspiration for him. And his affair with Fuchs *might* also have been. While it is difficult to believe that Berg spent ten years obsessing over a woman he virtually never saw, and it’s even harder to fathom that Berg could still have worshiped Wagner’s music when the political tides threatened his very existence. What started as an inspiration became an albatross, and Berg’s passion turned to pathos in his vain struggle to finish *Lulu*. The final *Tristan* chord in *Lulu* is not, as DeVoto suggests, a “muted, backward glance,” but a promise to never—ever—look back again.

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Hall (1996), p. 55



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