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New listenings, new narratives

The scientific publication the Journal of Sound, Silence, Image and Technology (JoSSIT) grew out of the research group of the same name (SSIT), which is linked to the TecnoCampus centre as part of Pompeu Fabra University (UPF). The journal seeks to bring together academic debate and scientific research on the relation of sound as a broad concept with an audiovisual context.

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New listenings, new narratives

Issue 2 of the *Journal of Sound, Silence, Image and Technology* (JoSSIT) focuses on new forms of listening and the new narratives emerging from technological mediation, both in terms of the use and reception of music and new academic approaches to its analysis. From this point of view, the articles collected here offer a perspective bringing sound and music theory from the audiovisual sphere into contact with emerging theories on sound discourse and pop production, whilst also linking ideas about technologically mediated listening with analytical models and theses drawn from ethnomusicology.

In "Symphony of Noises: Revisiting Oskar Sala's 'Geräuschmontage' for Alfred Hitchcock's 'The Birds' (1963)", Julin Lee presents an analysis of this unconventional soundtrack, supported by a theoretical basis in which sound studies and theories on the role of sound and film music are blended with ideas on the organology of the synthesizer and the use of spectrograms.

Silvia Segura presents a reflection on nostalgia and the pop sound of the eighties in an article that encompasses the latest theories on sound discourse in popular music and sound production tools. Titled "Nostalgia ON: Sounds evoking the zeitgeist of the eighties", she develops a theoretical framework beginning with a reflection on the sound composition of pop music, along the way taking in ideas on technological mediation before ending with the construction of the 'retro sound'.

"Jamming Giant Women: Narration through song in Steven Universe", by Andrea Meseguer and Margarita Fernández de Sevilla, analyses the different functions of the songs for narrative development in Steven Universe, an animated television series created by Rebecca Sugar.

Guylaine Gueraud-Pinet's contribution focuses on the integration of pre-existing music in French non-fiction television programmes. His article uses an info-communicational approach and a perspective that spans socio-economics and semiotics to reflect on the relationship between music and television.

In “Musical travelling: Mediated music listening on public transport”, Marc Mariner proposes a fusion of perspectives from ethnomusicology and sound studies to address the issue of the symbolic creation of private space on public transport through the use of individual listening devices.

Finally, Ana Sedeño reflects on a new type of media on the internet: the visual album, which she analyses as a resource that allows performers and bands to create open concepts and loose narratives, in what she defines as paraphonographies, metanarratives and storyworlds, and which they use to present their artistic ideas.

This issue therefore takes a rather multidisciplinary position, which addresses what is currently a prevailing need in the academic world: to solidify the links between the perspectives, focuses and methodologies which, albeit from different spheres, are entirely complementary for these new approaches to music in the vast audiovisual landscape.

We hope you enjoy it,

The Editorial Committee

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A Symphony of Noises: Revisiting Oskar Sala's 'Geräuschmontage' for Alfred Hitchcock's 'The Birds' (1963)

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ABSTRACT

The soundtrack of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) is particularly remarkable, not only because of the absence of a conventional orchestral underscore, but also because the terrifying sounds of the aberrant birds were actually synthesized by Oskar Sala using the *mixturtrautonium*, an electronic musical instrument of his own design. This paper explores the extent to which these electronically synthesized bird sounds go beyond their diegetic placement as sound effects and take on the dramaturgical roles usually ascribed to non-diegetic film music. The more liberal definition of music as "organized sound", in use since the 20th century; Sala's musical background and that of the instrument; and the idiomatic use of electronic musical instruments in films to represent unusual phenomena are all considered. Drawing on the results of a detailed study of the film and referring to material produced by Oskar Sala housed at the Deutsches Museum Archives in Munich, this paper aims to explain how the bird sounds achieved their dramatic effect, and also to shed light on how Sala "composed" this soundtrack consisting of bird sounds. The examination of the film's soundtrack has shown that Sala's organization and use of bird sounds are akin to that of more conventional and tonal sonic material in Hollywood films. Firstly, the montage of bird sounds accompanying the title sequence has a formal structure which resembles a classical Hollywood film overture, and takes on several expositional roles conventionally assigned to a film's opening musical passage. Furthermore, the gull cries adopt the function of a leitmotif, while the stylized bird sounds perform emotive functions usually ascribed to film music. In addition, the hostile birds are characterized by electronically synthesized bird sounds – a representation which can be understood within the broader context of mankind's ambivalence towards machines and technological progress in general. The consideration of the musical provenance and materiality of these bird sounds affords us a moment of reflection on the sound effect-music divide in film as well as on the perceived aesthetic values of sounds in the noise-music continuum.

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Introduction

"We certainly would be doing an injustice to *The Birds* if we failed to mention the soundtrack. There's no music, of course, but the bird sounds are worked out like a real musical score" (Truffaut, 1967, p. 223). In this quote from his interview with Alfred Hitchcock, the film director François Truffaut was referring to the array of bird cries and the flutter of wings which constitute the extraordinary soundtrack of Hitchcock's 1963 film *The Birds*. The film follows the young socialite, Melanie Daniels, who travels to Bodega Bay in pursuit of her love interest: Mitch Brenner. There, she and the locals are mysteriously plagued by a series of unexplained and violent bird attacks, from which Melanie and the Brenner family narrowly escape.

Truffaut touched on two particularly interesting aspects of the film's soundtrack. Firstly, he pointed out that *The Birds* has no film music in the conventional sense of a non-diegetic, orchestral underscore. This omission is perhaps rather surprising considering Hitchcock's highly successful collaboration with Bernard Herrmann, who composed the iconic score for *Psycho* (1960) – his latest film prior to *The Birds* – and *Vertigo* (1958) before that. Secondly, Truffaut suggested that the bird sounds seem to have been employed in place of a musical score. This point is worth investigating in greater detail given the musical provenance of the bird sounds: the screeching of gulls, crows and sparrows along with the sounds of their flapping wings did not come from actual birds but were instead synthesized by the musician Oskar Sala using the *mixturtrautonium*, an electronic musical instrument which he himself developed. Owing to the absence of a conventional orchestral underscore, this paper aims to investigate the relevance of Truffaut's comment, asking: to what extent do the bird sounds go beyond their diegetic placement as sound effects and take on the dramaturgical roles usually ascribed to non-diegetic film music? Besides aiming to explain how the bird sounds achieve their dramatic effect, this paper also tries to shed light on how Oskar Sala "composed" the soundtrack of bird sounds, with reference to two of Sala's extant manuscripts and digitized tapes housed at the Deutsches Museum Archives in Munich.

Bird sounds as film music?

By the start of the 20th century, traditional conceptions of what could be regarded as music began to dissolve. Visionaries such as Ferruccio Busoni stressed the need for new musical instruments, which would free music from the twelve-tone tempered scale and the limiting concepts of consonance and dissonance (1911). In 1913, Luigi Russolo published his radical manifesto *The Art of Noises*, in which he advocated the creation of music using eve-

ryday sounds, including noise. He implored "futurist composers" to "enlarge and enrich the field of sound" including substituting "the limited variety of timbres that the orchestra produces today" with "the infinite variety of timbres in noises, reproduced with appropriate mechanisms" (Russolo, 1986, p. 28). Along these lines, Russolo envisioned a "futurist orchestra" comprised of "6 families of noises" (Russolo, 1986, p. 28) which included mechanically produced animal sounds. The point was not to merely imitate sounds in everyday life, but to combine different timbres and rhythms afforded by such an orchestra in order to achieve "the most complex and novel emotions of sounds" (Russolo, 1986, p. 29).
As early as the 1920s, the composer Edgar Varèse preferred to call his music "organized sound" and referred to himself as "a worker in rhythms, frequencies, and intensities" (Varèse & Chou, 1966, p. 18). Highlighting the relevance of timbre as an essential component of form, he sought to "make music with any sound and all sounds" (Varèse & Chou, 1966, p. 18). In a lecture delivered in 1937, John Cage proclaimed that "the use of noise to make music will continue and increase until we reach a music produced through the aid of electrical instruments", which he believed would "make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard" (Cage, 1961, pp. 3–4). Cage believed that such instruments would enable composers to fully control a sound's physical parameters: its overtone structure, frequency, amplitude and duration, and also give composers unprecedented access to a vast field of sound for both musical and extra-musical purposes, including film (Cage, 1961).
Given the more liberal understanding of music from the 20th century onwards, the bird sounds in *The Birds* would qualify as music. Philip Brophy (1999) has compared the collage-like combination of bird sounds to the treatment of recorded sounds in compositional practices of *musique concrète* as developed by Pierre Schaeffer in Paris in the 1940s. Meanwhile, Richard Allen (2017) has pointed out that since the bird sounds were synthesized electronically, Sala's composition methods were more closely related to that of the electronic music tradition of the 1950s based in Cologne. As "functional music", film music is admittedly always subject to the film narrative. Its compositional principles and goals thus differ from those of avant-garde music. Nevertheless, according to the aesthetic perspectives of the 20th century, the bird sounds synthesized on the *mixturtrautonium* do indeed count as musical material.
Furthermore, Oskar Sala was a classically trained musician. A trained pianist and organist, he studied composition at the Berlin Academy of Music under Paul Hindemith, who introduced him to the inventor Friedrich Trautwein. In the Radio Research Section housed at the Academy, Sala assisted Trautwein in the development of the *trautonium*, which was conceived as a new electronic musical instrument. Following the instrument's successful debut at the Berlin *Festival for New Music* in 1930, Sala toured extensively as a trautonium virtuoso during his career, which spanned the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and post-World War II Germany. He successfully developed the instrument further to create the *mixturtrautonium* in 1952, which he used to produce over 300 soundtracks for film and television in his studio in the Charlottenburg district of Berlin. He found his niche in under-

scoring and providing sound effects for numerous cultural features and industrial films. Particularly noteworthy achievements include his work for the industrial film *Stahl, Thema mit Variationen* (1960) by Hugo Niebeling, which was awarded the Grand Prix at the I*ndustrial Film Festival* in Rouen in 1961; and the short film *A fleur d'eau* (1962) by Alexander Seiler and Rob Gnant which won one of the two Grand Prix awarded to short films in Cannes in 1963. The avian sounds in *The Birds* – which remains Sala's most famous work internationally – therefore have a markedly musical provenance.

Due to their unusual timbre, electronic musical instruments were often employed in Hollywood science fiction films, psychological dramas and horror films in conjunction with unusual phenomena. Before the advent of commercial modular synthesizers, film music composers such as Bernard Herrmann and Miklós Rózsa used early electronic musical instruments such as the theremin to create effects in specific situations: signalling the presence of aliens in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and underscoring the amnesia of the protagonist in *Spellbound* (1945), for example. Considering that *The Birds* deals with birds that behave in an unnatural manner, it is fitting that the bird sounds were electronically synthesized. The first film to feature a fully electronic score was Fred McLeod Wilcox's *Forbidden Planet* (1956). Louis and Bebe Barrons' ground-breaking score was a departure from conventional film scoring traditions not only because it featured novel sounds generated by its creators' own circuits based on cybernetic theory, but also because it blurred the boundaries between diegetic and non-diegetic sound. The Barrons' soundtrack is thus an important precursor to that of *The Birds*: the bird sounds assume the roles commonly taken up by an orchestral underscore, which is conspicuously absent in this film.

At first glance, the bird sounds appear to merely serve as the acoustic complement to the visual action on the screen. However, taking the aforementioned points together – organized sound as music, Oskar Sala's musical background and that of the *mixturtrautonium*, and the idiomatic use of electronically generated sounds in film involving strange phenomena – could the bird sounds have been treated as extra-diegetic musical material? Could the bird sounds serve as a "musical score" of sorts, as suggested by Truffaut? Perhaps rather more provocatively, are the bird sounds film music?

Methods and archival sources

If we consider these points together, and following on from Truffaut's comment about the film's soundtrack, there appears to be a case for studying the musicality of the bird sounds in order to gain a better understanding of how this unconventional soundtrack works. Given the various approaches to designating the general functions of music in film, this paper will utilize David Neumeyer and James Buhler's concise tripartite classification of music's function in film as narrative (or temporal), emotive and referential, bearing in mind that these functions frequently overlap (Neumeyer & Buhler, 2009). Music facilitates the audience's structural understanding of a film's narrative by various means: different musical

styles may be used to distinguish one scene from another and a continuous musical passage may also be used as a transitional link between two scenes. Additionally, a recurring musical motif "invites the viewer/listener to make associations between temporally disparate segments" (Neumeyer & Buhler, 2009, p. 42), which contribute to the film's structural unity and narrative continuity. Furthermore, film music may draw on cultural codes to evoke a particular geographic, historical or socio-cultural context. Likewise, music may be used to characterize a character even before the character's actual appearance or action on screen (Gorbman, 1987). Besides setting the overall mood of the film, music is also capable of instantly evoking or intensifying emotion – a capacity which Neumeyer and Buhler identified as "one of music's most powerful roles" in film (2009, p. 43). While the film score examples Neumeyer and Buhler refer to in their article mainly consist of tonal music, the film music functions they have outlined can be extended to the avian sounds in *The Birds*, which are arguably ontologically no different from musical tones. Instead of relying on culturally established codes based on melody and harmony, the bird sounds can draw on others based on pitch, rhythm and, most significantly, timbre to evoke an emotional response. The following analysis will serve to examine how the distinctly identifiable bird sounds are equally adept in carrying out the narrative, emotive and referential roles usually ascribed to an orchestral underscore.

While Sala also produced several other diegetic sound effects for *The Birds*, this paper will focus primarily on the bird sounds, which form the majority of the electronically synthesized sounds on the soundtrack. Hence, the title sequence will be investigated first, as it contains one of the longest sustained usages of bird sounds in the film and may serve as a preliminary indication of how the bird sounds are treated as musical material. Next, the potential of the gull cries to serve as a leitmotif will be examined. Subsequently, the emotive potential of the stylized bird sounds and the consequent blurring of diegetic boundaries will be addressed. The paper will end with some thoughts on the materiality of the bird sounds and how acknowledging their electronic origins may enrich the understanding of the film's narrative.

With respect to the degree to which the bird sounds are embedded in the film narrative, they will be analysed in light of the film as a whole and not as autonomous musical pieces.[1] Additionally, two of Sala's extant manuscripts, the *Protokollheft* and the *Tonbandaufbau* (both ca. 1962) held at the Deutsches Museum Archives in Munich and which have not been included in any publication on *The Birds* to date, were referred to in an attempt to better understand Sala's approach to composing with these bird sounds. These manuscripts revealed Sala's organization of discrete sonic materials in relation to each other and to the film's visual events, besides providing the key to identifying the diversity of finely differentiated bird sounds employed.[2]

1 The DVD from Universal Pictures serves as the foundation for the forthcoming analysis (Hitchcock, 2005).

2 The naming of the bird sounds in this paper will follow Oskar Sala's manuscripts, albeit translated into English. All translations from the German language into English are by the author of this paper unless otherwise stated.

Analysis. An overture of avian sounds

Instead of the orchestral flourish that often heralds the start of a Hollywood film, the audience is confronted with an overture of a different kind: a medley of bird cries, which anticipate the sonic landscape to come. Although the film "overture" has not been strictly defined, it can be understood as a "distinct, self-contained, introductory musical entity" (Melvin, 2016, p. 404), which adopts formal, stylistic and functional characteristics of the symphonic overtures in opera and musical theatre. The orchestral film overture is closely associated with classical Hollywood cinema, in which it was used to denote a film's genre, set the general mood, introduce musical themes and signal the start of the film story (Gorbman, 1987). According to Neumeyer and Buhler, the main title music of many American drama films is characterized by the following formulaic structure: "(1) dramatic flourish (sometimes with a clear melody but often not) for the main title itself; (2) break to a lyrical theme; (3) return to a dramatic flourish as the titles finish; and (4) a transition – music usually goes out under the first effect or sound of speech" (2009, p. 48).

On the premise that the electronically generated bird sounds can serve as material for music composition, parallels between the formal structure of the opening montage of bird sounds and that of a classical Hollywood film overture can be detected.

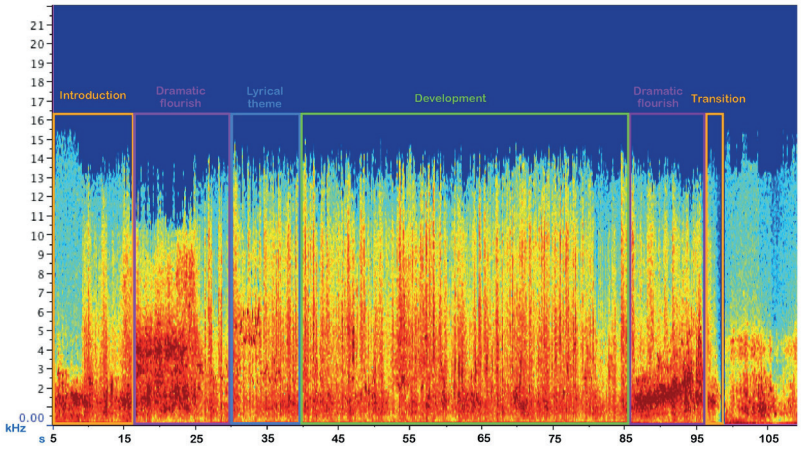

Figure 1: An annotated spectrogram[3] of the title sequence showing the formal breakdown of the montage of bird sounds. The horizontal axis represents time and the vertical axis represents the frequency of the sounds. The relative amplitude is represented by the colours: the intensity of the sound increases from blue to yellow, orange, red and, ultimately, dark red.

In the introduction, the first sounds heard are gull cries followed by the fluttering of wings and cawing of crows. The volume and intensity then increases towards the dramatic flourish as Alfred Hitchcock is given credit on screen. This intense section is followed by a contrasting softer, "lyrical" section, which features the chirping of two lovebirds, visually rep-

3 All spectrograms were generated by the author using the computer software Raven Lite: Interactive Sound Analysis Software (Version 2.0) by the Bioacoustics Research Program, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY (2014). http://www.birds.cornell.edu/raven.

resented in Figure 2 by the undulating frequency, associated with the romantically linked couple in the film: Melanie and Mitch.

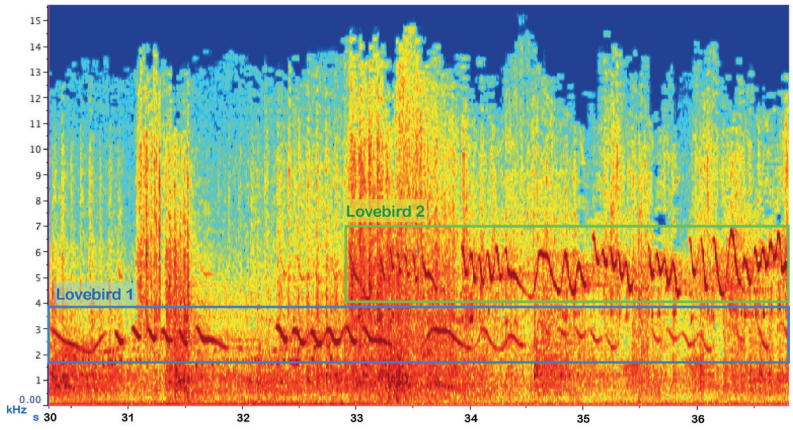

Figure 2: Detailed spectrogram of the lyrical section, in particular featuring the chirping of the two lovebirds.

This lilting bird song is then followed by a mix of bird shrieks which anticipate the attack sequences of the sparrows, crows and gulls. This section, which is comprised of both old and new bird sounds, corresponds to the "development" section of the sonata form typical of overtures in opera (de la Motte-Haber & Emons, 1980). The sonic intensity rises once again at the end of the overture and peaks at the return of the dramatic flourish before the picture fades to black and transitions to the first scene of the film.

Thus, instead of orchestral music presenting musical themes, this montage in the title sequence introduces the cries and wing sounds of all the bird types that feature in this film. The montage of bird sounds, which include persistent gull cries, the solo crow caws, the shrill sounds of the sparrow swarm and the twitter of the lovebirds offers a concise summary of the various bird types and their sounds in the film. Corresponding to the role of overtures as musical summaries of an ensuing opera, this opening montage also functions as an acoustic resume of important narrative events in the film, which are invariably linked to disparate bird species. Therefore, despite its unusual sonic material, the montage of bird sounds can be regarded as an overture of sorts. The title sequence thus provides the first indication that subsequent bird sounds may be organized in a manner close to the tradition of classical Hollywood film music scoring.

Besides establishing the soundscape featuring various bird species, this "overture of bird sounds" is also capable of setting the general mood of the film from the outset, despite not being able to draw on established cultural codes with respect to melody and harmony. Nonetheless, the montage utilizes other musical parameters such as rhythm, pitch, dynamics and especially timbre to evoke an increasingly tense atmosphere, reflecting the escalation in intensity of the bird attacks as the film progresses. At the very beginning, the distant cries of a flock of gulls create a calm atmosphere, reminiscent of a normal situation by the

coast, where gulls are expected. In contrast, the irregular tempo of wing beats accompanying the dark silhouettes of crows flying erratically across the screen adds an element of restlessness and agitation. Although a single crow may not be particularly threatening, being surrounded by a swarm of crows as sonically and visually depicted in the introduction of the overture is by any standards disturbing and unsettling. The loudness and pitch of the bird cries then rise to discomforting levels at the first dramatic flourish. In the development section, the bird cries become increasingly shrill, mirroring the narrative development in the film, in which the birds become increasingly violent.

It can also be argued that the absence of tonal music in the title sequence also influences the establishment of the film's mood. Without recognizable tunes or other musical (tonal) signifiers of emotion, the audience is deprived of established points of reference and orientation. Additionally, fear is not abstracted in a codified tonal system, but instead directly linked to the bird sounds, making its effect more visceral. Hence, the tense atmosphere is evoked not *in spite* of but rather *because* of the absence of conventional film music as well as the use of the dramatically effective bird sounds.

The gull cries as a leitmotif

The gull cries prove to be a significant acoustic signal which reappears again and again throughout the entire film. Notably, they are also the very first and last bird sounds in the entire film. By framing the film in this manner, the gull cries contribute to the symmetry and unity of the film, which are notably structural roles usually taken up by film music. Their distinct sound and frequent recurrence also enable them to take on the function of leitmotif. A leitmotif can generally be understood as a "concise, recurring musical statement associated with a non-musical object or idea" (Link, 2009, p. 180). Although a leitmotif is in itself arbitrary, it gains its meaning and association with a character, place, emotion or event through the context in which it first appears in a film (Green, 2010; Larsen, 2007). Moreover, it is able to acquire additional meanings through the contexts of its subsequent appearances, through its interaction with other musical motifs and other filmic elements as well as through the transformation of specific features of the leitmotif itself (Gorbman, 1987). Leitmotifs are commonplace in classical Hollywood film scores as they are "extremely economical: having absorbed the diegetic associations of its first occurrence, [the motif's] very repetition can subsequently recall that filmic context" (Gorbman, 1987, pp. 26–27).

In the opening scene, the audience learns to associate the gull cries with something amiss: it would seem unusual for gulls to hover over San Francisco city, as they usually hover over water. Because of this exposition, even though no gulls are seen there is a sense of foreboding each time gull cries are heard as Melanie arrives at the docks at Bodega Bay. It is only after she drops the two lovebirds off at the Brenner's house and leaves that the gulls are seen forming a barrier between Melanie in the boat and Mitch on land, the intensity of their

cries visibly greater than before. This culminates in the first bird-attack on Melanie by a single gull shortly before she arrives on shore. As such, the gull cries subsequently serve as an acoustic warning before an attack occurs.[4]

The gull cries reappear when Melanie brazenly convinces Annie, Mitch's ex-lover, to let her stay the night in her spare room. In this sequence, the gull cries are noticeably louder and their timbre is sharper. Next, the gull cries are heard softly in the background as Melanie arrives at the Brenner's for dinner at Mitch's invitation, despite his mother Lydia's subtle disapproval. Although the evening passes uneventfully, Lydia privately makes Mitch aware of Melanie's scandalous reputation. Undeterred, Mitch sees Melanie off and catches the disconcerting sight of a host of birds assembled on the power lines outside the house. Nonetheless, nothing happens until Melanie reaches Annie's house and decides there and then to attend the birthday party for Mitch's sister, Cathy. When Melanie and Annie investigate the cause of the thud against the door, they discover a dead gull. The bird-attack anticipated by the prior gull cries eventually takes place during Cathy's birthday party, at which all three women are present. Given the unusual bird activity coincides with Melanie's interaction with Mitch and the women in Mitch's life, the attack of the birds has often been read as a metaphor for the conflict between the women competing for Mitch's affections (Horwitz, 1986; Allen, 2002). Since musical themes and motifs are conventionally associated with certain characters, events or themes, the gull cries can be said to be an ominous acoustic embodiment of the conflict between the women. This is therefore an instance in which the bird sounds take on another role usually assigned to non-diegetic film music.

Stylized bird sounds and their emotive potential

Regarding the sound in *The Birds*, Hitchcock commented: "We were really experimenting there by taking real sounds and then stylizing them so that we derived more drama from them than we normally would [...] Until now we've worked with natural sounds, but now, thanks to electronic sound, I'm not only going to indicate the sound we want but also the style and nature of each sound" (Truffaut, p. 224). Sala shared Hitchcock's approach to film sound and stated that in his work he did not generally aim to imitate natural sounds but rather to "acoustically illustrate a subject matter" (Sala, 1955, pp. 99–100). According to Sala, a natural sound should be produced electronically according to the desired pitch, rhythm and dynamics, so that it can be "musically overlaid in a scene" (1955, p. 100). Sala revealed that generating non-realistic bird shrieks for the attack on the Brenner's house yielded far more satisfactory dramatic results than imitating real bird sounds and that, to his surprise, they were still identifiable as sounds coming from birds, despite their stylization (1993, p. 88).

The stylization of sound effects has been a common practice in Hollywood sound films

4 The strategy of signalling an attack acoustically is particularly memorable in Jaws (1975), in which John Williams assigned a deceptively simple yet highly effective two-note motif to the shark.

since the 1930s, when the limitations of sound recording and reproduction technologies resulted in the failure to create the desired dramatic effect: "the dull thud of hooves on the ground did not communicate the sense of urgency that [the filmmakers] wanted in their "horse chase" scenes [...] Even if they could have been properly recorded, the actual sounds for galloping, shooting, punching, stabbing, and so on were simply not theatrical enough for the filmmakers' needs" (Wierzbicki, 2016, p. 154). Although the stylized, more dramatic sounds reproduced by Foley artists often sound unnatural, audiences have been conditioned over years of film-watching experience not only to accept these stylized sounds as realistic, but to expect them, as they are perceived as sounding more realistic and convincing than real sounds (Wierzbicki, 2016).

In *The Birds*, Sala exerted creative freedom not only in synthesizing the timbre of various bird sounds – giving them a voice that is more shrill and aggressive-sounding than routinely expected from ordinary gulls, crows and sparrows – but also in how they are employed in relation to the spatial setting in which they appear. In certain scenes, the electronically synthesized bird sounds deviate significantly from how they would be expected to sound in the filmic reality.

For example, in the scene in which Melanie and Mitch discover Annie's dead body, the cawing sounds of the crows perched on the fence are deeper in pitch, distorted and have markedly more echo than would be realistically expected in the scene. The discrepancy between the sound heard and the physical dimensions of the setting suggests a change in perspective into the subjective world of the character. This deviation could be a reflection of Melanie's trauma, as she has just experienced the attack of crows on the school children and also the terrifying attack of the gulls in the town centre. Echo and trauma are closely related. The physical phenomenon of an echo – the belated return of an original sound – reflects how trauma following a shocking experience persistently re-emerges in a fragmentary, distorted manner in individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Greenberg, 1998).

In another scene, the sound of wings flapping lures Melanie to the attic, where she is almost killed by the attacking birds. Once again, there is a discrepancy between the sound's characteristics and the physical conditions of the scene. Firstly, the sound is disembodied – no birds are visible. Eventually, dozens of birds are revealed in the attic, waiting to ambush Melanie. However, the clarity and volume of the sound suggests that it is not completely diegetically anchored in the scene. Again, the audience is hearing through Melanie's perspective: due to her ordeal with the birds, her trauma-infused fear makes the flapping sound louder and clearer than expected, or it is plausible that she may be simply imagining the sound. In this respect, this bird sound goes beyond its diegetic placement as a sound effect accompanying a physical bird on screen and instead functions as a manifestation of Melanie's fear. This example shows us that the bird sounds can also play the roles usually ascribed to music to express the internal state of a character and signify emotion.

Sala's electronically synthesized bird sounds occupy the entire spectrum from diegetic sound effects to non-diegetic "sound affects", which Wierzbicki has referred to as a sound which possesses the potential to elicit an emotional response comparable to non-diegetic film music (Wierzbicki, 2016, p. 156). In the absence of an orchestral underscore, Sala's use of bird sounds throughout the film has demonstrated that they are capable of carrying out dramaturgical functions independently of their visual counterparts, and they ultimately blur the line between diegesis and non-diegesis. Recalling the Barrons' fully electronic score for Forbidden Planet, in which there was no clear distinction between non-diegetic electronic music and the diegetic sound effects of the spacecraft and ambient sounds on the planet Altair IV, it becomes evident that the boundaries between diegetic sound effects and non-diegetic film music are fluid. It is then pertinent to pose the question that if the "electronic tonalities" of Forbidden Planet are now considered film music, why not the electronically synthesized bird sounds of *The Birds*?

Materiality of the electronic bird sounds

It can be said that the bird sounds were not made to draw attention to their electronic nature. Allen has argued that "while Hitchcock's use of electronic sound is certainly experimental in the sense that it is pushing the boundaries of how sound is used and conceived in cinema, it is mistaken to think that Hitchcock used the electronic sound in *The Birds* primarily because it was electronic" (Allen, 2017, p. 114). The question that can be asked, however, is what does it mean to have electronically synthesized bird sounds and not recorded sounds of real birds? Could the mechanical origins of the synthesized sounds hold meaning for the film's narrative?

The "material turn" in the humanities has shown that significant insights can be gained when the materials and not only the form of an object is taken into consideration (Lehmann, 2015). In the field of visual arts, Ann-Sophie Lehmann has argued that materials have been institutionally neglected in theory of art discussions due to the dominance of the hylomorphic paradigm despite materials' "decisive role in determining the meanings and effects of visual artefacts" (2015, pp. 21–22). She has highlighted the importance of considering the role of materials and techniques in generating meaning (Lehmann, 2015). In the field of music, the "material turn" is manifested in studies of the relationship between technology and music creation, performance and reception, especially in light of the great changes brought about by electronic musical instruments and audio devices from the 20th century onwards (Weium & Boon, 2013). With respect to *The Birds*, the significance of using the *mixturtrautonium* can be explored not only in terms of sound aesthetics but also considering the discourse surrounding electronic musical instruments.

Following Lehmann's recommendation, the material – that is, electronic sound versus natural sounds – can be more closely examined with the aim of better understanding how the type of sound is linked to characterization. Firstly, it is important to note that all bird

sounds except those in the pet shop were electronically synthesized by Sala. This is evidenced by Hitchcock's written instructions for the scene[5] and supported by Sala's manuscripts, which, despite the scene's length, does not include sketches for the pet shop sequence. The corroboration between these two sources is important in order to understand the dichotomy between natural and electronic sounds and their use in the film. The natural sounds represent order and security: in the pet shop, the birds are caged up and the humans are in control. As the film progresses, the order is reversed: the humans are driven into "cages" – houses, cars and telephone booths – by the birds, who have the upper hand. Since the pet shop is the only scene in which the natural order is upheld (humans over birds), it is thus fitting that all other scenes in which the birds pose a threat to humans are furnished with electronic bird sounds. If the electronic bird sounds were merely regarded as an easy solution to the problem of recording and synchronizing actual bird sounds to the picture, the characterization of the birds as normal/abnormal through the dichotomy between natural and electronic sound would be overlooked.

In fact, the non-organic origins of these bird sounds reflects the mechanicality of the birds as portrayed in the short story *The Birds* by Daphne du Maurier (2004), first published in 1952 and which inspired Hitchcock's film in terms of its basic premise and its war analogy. In the short story, the birds are likened to warplanes, which fly in formation and coordinate themselves before an attack: "[the gulls] were spreading out in formation across the sky (...) it was as though they waited upon some signal. As though some decision had yet to be given" (Du Maurier, 2004, p. 17). Furthermore, the birds attack in a manner analogous to Kamikaze bombers: "the silly, senseless thud of the suicide birds, the death-and-glory boys, who flew into the bedroom, smashing their heads against the walls" (Du Maurier, 2004, p. 31). The parallels between the bird attacks and mechanized warfare can also be evidenced in the attack on the protagonist's house: "Nat listened to the tearing sound of splintering wood, and wondered how many million years of memory were stored in those little brains, behind the stabbing beaks, the piercing eyes, now giving them this instinct to destroy mankind with all the deft precision of machines" (Du Maurier, 2004, p. 38). In Hitchcock's film, the war analogy is most evident in the climactic attack on the Brenner's house, which is highly reminiscent of air strikes during the Second World War: the shrieks of the approaching birds resemble the wail of sirens, the sound of wings flapping resemble the sound of propellers, and the invasion of the first gull, shattering the window, sounds like a bomb explosion. In view of the parallels between the bird attacks and mechanical warfare, it is fitting that the birds, these "killing machines" are given sounds originating from a machine, the mixturtrautonium, and not recorded from real birds.

The representation of the hostile birds as machine-like in the film and even more so in the short story can be understood within the larger context of ambivalence towards techno-

5 Hitchcock's "sound notes" can be found in the Alfred Hitchcock Papers collection at the Margaret Herrick Library. See Sullivan (2006, p. 262).

logical progress, especially with the invention of machines with the potential to replace human labour (Marx, 1994; Sennett, 2008). This ambivalence was also prevalent in the attitudes towards musical automata, especially with the advent of the player piano at the turn of the twentieth century. While certain composers welcomed the possibility of overcoming the limitations of human performers, some musicians felt threatened by the prospect of being totally replaced by machines, as such automata would hypothetically be able to execute music beyond the capabilities of humans. Those who were keen on maintaining the status quo asserted that music is an intrinsically human activity, and that only humans have the sensibilities required to genuinely make music, and not merely copy or reproduce it (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2003).

The reception of electronic musical instruments was also simultaneously characterized by excitement surrounding the possibilities these new instruments afforded in terms of expanding the sonic material for making music on the one hand, and the fear that acoustic instruments may be rendered obsolete due to the timbre-mimicking capabilities of electronic instruments on the other. This ambivalence persisted with the advent of magnetic tapes, which had the potential to replace entire orchestras. Fear that the status quo would be disrupted was noticeable even in the realm of Hollywood film music production. With specific reference to *The Birds*, the mixturtrautonium had indeed replaced film music performed by an orchestra with electronically synthesized sounds. Thus, in *The Birds* the threat of the machines towards humans permeates both the level of the narrative and the meta-level of the soundtrack. This extra reference, which complements the film narrative, would be lost if the electronic, mechanical origin of the bird sounds were not acknowledged.

Concluding remarks

Sala's work for *The Birds* is particularly noteworthy in various respects: the uniqueness of the soundtrack's timbre as well as the masterful synchronization of sound to image were remarkable achievements during the pre-synthesizer era. Equipped with the mixturtrautonium at the heart of his personal studio in Berlin, Sala single-handedly created bird sounds which were not only thoroughly convincing, but also highly effective dramatically, fulfilling structural, emotive and referential roles commonly taken up by film music. Instead of attempting to mimic the sounds of real birds and merely fulfilling the requirement for sound to accompany the visuals on screen, Sala approached the production of the soundtrack as a creative process akin to that of film music composition.

Since the release of *The Birds*, soundtrack production for Hollywood films has changed significantly. With the advent of the Dolby noise-reduction system and the Dolby stereo system, which were invented in the 1960s, how sound is handled in films has changed dramatically. These significant developments enabled sound to be recorded and reproduced more clearly, resulting in more attention being given to a film's sound design, especially

following Walter Murch's landmark achievement for Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979). Inspired by how recorded sound material was handled in *musique concrète*, Murch demonstrated the creative possibilities of approaching sound musically in the film soundtrack. Regarding the close relationship between sound effects and music, Murch has said: "Sometimes a sound effect can be almost pure music. It doesn't declare itself openly as music because it is not melodic, but it can have a musical effect on you anyway" (Murch, 2005, p. 10).

The proliferation of the digital synthesizer in the 1980s facilitated the merging of the roles of sound designer and film music composer, as the same instruments were used to generate both diegetic sound effects and non-diegetic film music. This led to a gradual blurring of boundaries between the two disciplines. Frank Serafine claimed that the new sound production technologies enabled him to work on the soundtrack of *Tron* (1982) as a sound designer, musician and composer simultaneously (Spring, 2016). The creative possibilities afforded by digital sound production transformed the work with film sound from a purely technical exercise to an aesthetic process of creation, which was previously only applicable to film music composition.

Although sound design has become an increasingly musical activity following the prevalence of digital audiovisual media, it is not usually regarded as music. Julio d'Escriván has summarized this paradox as such:

> While much has been written about the use of electronic instruments in film and television music . . . sound design has traditionally not been evaluated as music. This is interesting since one of the fruits of the electronic music genre has been precisely to open our ears to any sound being potentially musical. In the twenty-first century no serious contemporary music aficionado would deny this, yet evaluations of film music always seem to refer exclusively to the work of the music composer. (2007, p. 157)

His remark reveals that academic scholarship and cultural institutions have yet to adequately acknowledge the fluid nature of the boundaries between sound design and music. Albeit no longer as relevant, the division of labour associated with the Hollywood studio era appears to still maintain its stranglehold on the general perception of contemporary film-making. The 91st Academy Awards (Oscars.org, 2019) featured four disparate soundtrack-related categories: "music (original score)", "music (original song)", "sound editing", and "sound mixing".

Nevertheless, recent scholarship has displayed an increasing awareness towards more holistic approaches in the study of sound and music in audiovisual media, especially in film.[6] Contemporary research highlights the interdependence of all elements of the soundtrack and stresses the importance of considering sound effects and film music as

6 See Greene & Kulezic-Wilson, 2016.

part of an "integrated soundtrack" (Greene & Kulezic-Wilson, 2016, pp. 2–3). Such progressive approaches facilitate the dissolution of the artificial division between sound effects and film music in the study of soundtracks, which limits the full understanding of the relationship between the two closely interwoven components. On the role of the sound designer-composer hybrid, Serafine has claimed that "we're a new breed of artist; we combine music and effects. And someday, I don't think you'll be able to tell the difference between the two, it'll be such an abstract kind of art that you'll wonder whether it's music or sound" (Armbruster, 1984, p. 16 cited in Spring, 2016, p. 273). In this respect, Sala was ahead of his time when he created the exceptional soundtrack of bird sounds in 1962. These bird sounds can indeed be regarded as film music, but whether they are considered sound effects or music is only a matter of our aesthetic values towards sounds in the noise-music continuum.

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Nostalgia ON:

Sounds evoking the zeitgeist of the eighties

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ABSTRACT

According to Simon Frith (2001), “good” pop music is authentic because it expresses something, because it means something to a specific group of people within a context in which it represents an idea. Until now, however, little attention has been paid to how its “sound” is constructed, nor to the capacity sounds may have to evoke those thoughts and feelings, those concepts. What does popular music’s ability to transport certain meanings depend on? Starting from the conviction that to answer that question we need to pay attention to the sound structures of pop music, this article suggests we explore the realm of nostalgia, a place from which music is created with the specific intention of evoking the recent past. We will see how becoming aware of the resources used to create this music presents an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the popular music sound and the way in which it creates meaning. This article therefore lays out a theoretical framework starting with a reflection on the sound composition of pop music, taking in considerations on technological mediation and ending with the construction of the retro sound. From there, and after focusing on music designed to evoke the 1980s, a possible starting point is established for contemplating certain questions that have barely been touched on by the discipline of musicology to date. The creative potential of recording studio processes themselves, the importance of technology in the development of human musical creativity and the implications of the arrival of sound recording on ways of thinking about music are some of the issues on which this research invites reflection.

Purpose and justification

Despite years of warnings from numerous authors (Théberge, 1989, 1997; Middleton, 1993; Katz, 2010; Tagg, 2012, 2015; Askerøi, 2013) about the need to study the "sound" of popular music, musicology's ability to provide tools capable of analysing the new uses of sound equipment and processes that continuously appear is still being tested. One of these new challenges is the study of "retro" sound: music created to intentionally evoke a recent past from where *vintage sound material*, as Simon Reynolds (2011) calls it, is extracted. Here I will argue that this material is selected and combined using socially constructed criteria, the examination of which could provide a golden opportunity to rectify the scant attention paid to the processes and technologies used in producing and recording pop music.

In order to delimit and clarify the proposed analysis, this project will centre on music designed to evoke the 1980s – an approach largely justified for two reasons. Firstly, I will argue that the 1980s presented a particular set of circumstances in relation to the appearance and/or use of certain music recording and production technologies and equipment. The techniques and devices that conditioned both how the music was written and the way in which the musical sound was consumed and conceptualized, and which are currently used in relation to nostalgia, can help us to better understand the pop sound discourse. Secondly, the point of departure here is an academic interest in a phenomenon that has clearly been peaking since the start of the millennium: the construction of cultural artefacts evoking the zeitgeist[1] of the 1980s. The 20-year cycle noted by Reynolds in 2010 when he spoke of the *retro twin*[2] concept appears to have been extended in the case of the eighties revival, with the second decade of the 21st century producing products such as *Ping Pong Summer* (2014), *Turbo Kid* (2015), *Stranger Things* (2016) and *Summer of 1984* (2018), among many others. The suggested perspective connects the discipline of musicology with present popular culture whilst also revealing processes related to the conceptualization of pop music. Several authors (Shumway, 1999; Lapedis, 1999; Frith, 2001; Reynolds, 2011; Drake, 2018) have reflected on the nostalgic power of popular music by analysing the use of pre-existing

1 George W. F. Hegel designated a *zeitgeist* as "a denominator that is common to the cultural universe of an era" (Pujó, 2013, p. 4), the spirit of a time, which John S. Mill would later call "the characteristic of an era" (Cited in Pujó, 2013, p. 4). As Pujó explains, the admittedly abstract term alludes to "the principles and values of a society situated in time. . . . a sort of tacit cosmovision which translates . . . into the prevailing lifestyle in a given culture. And which we could approach as the historical consciousness each era has of itself, with the explicit restriction that said consciousness is never fully historical nor entirely conscious" (Pujó, 2013, p. 4). Starting from this basis, and taking into account the use of the term by authors such as Simon Frith (2001) and Ron Moy (2007) in relation to analysing the meaning of popular music, this article suggests that certain musical structures may evoke the dominant sound mood of the 1980s, a spirit described here as determined by the use of certain technologies, as well as by the perception that these technologies have preserved this spirit in the present. This idea will be developed in more depth in the following sections.

2 In his 2010 article for The Guardian entitled The 1980s *Revival That Lasted An Entire Decade*, Reynolds writes: "Every decade seems to have its retro twin. The syndrome started in the 1970s, with the 1950s rock'n'roll revival, and it continued through the 1980s (obsessed with the 1960s) and the 1990s (ditto the 1970s). True to form, and right on cue, the noughties kicked off with a 1980s electropop renaissance". It can therefore be said that Reynolds notices a 20-year cycle between the time a particular style appears and its revival from a retro perspective.

songs in the audiovisual context. They all refer to the existence of a collective memory mediated by music, although they do not mention the specific sound structures that activate this memory. Simon Frith (2001), for example, notes how one of the functions of popular music is "to shape our collective memory, [by organizing] our sense of time"[3] (p. 424) and attributes this functionality to songs' capacity to "intensify our experience of the present" (p. 424), which over time turns them into an exceptional means of evoking our past.[4] In his opinion, all 20th-century popular music has been imbued with a spirit of nostalgia since it was conceived. Reynolds (2011) also refers to pop music's connection to the present and its "unrivalled ability to distil the atmosphere of a historical era" (p. 17). For him, "nothing invokes the vibe of a specific period in the past more effectively than the popular songs of the time" (p. 17).

There therefore appears to be a consensus on the importance of pop music as a mediator of collective memories, and the authors seem to attribute the function songs fulfil to their presence during the era being recalled. So what happens when a new musical artefact is created for the purpose of evoking a specific period in time? Which musical structures have the power to transport a defined time marker in pop music? Before formulating a hypothesis to answer this question and taking into account the element of intentionality present in the sound materials mentioned in this research, certain ideas should be kept in mind. Philip Tagg (2012) notes the possibility of prioritizing the poetic level[5] when examining the semiotic power of sound structures, as when in the hands of those constructing music, "the structural entity materializes an initial idea or intention, and, more importantly, that it's linked to an interpretant"[6] (p. 231). Likewise, he remarks that those sound structures can be of any type: "a turn of melodic phrase, a riff, a sonority, a rhythmic pattern, a harmonic sequence or type of chord, . . . [an] acoustic space" (p. 230).

Considering all of the above, the initial hypothesis for this research is as follows:

3 All translations are the author's own.

4 According to Frith, pop songs' ability to connect us with specific moments makes them an unparalleled means of transporting us back to those times.

5 In his article *Análisis musical: De las metodologías de análisis al análisis de las metodologías* (2005), Ramón Sobrino discusses the three dimensions of the musical object. He notes that these three dimensions were explained by Jean Molino and systematized by Jean-Jaques Nattiez, who concluded that musical analysis should pay attention to three levels: "The poetic level, or set of elements related to the composer and production of the musical work; the neutral level, from the musical work itself; and the aesthetic level, related to the performance and the perception of the musical work by the listener" (Sobrino, 2005, p. 672).

6 According to Philip Tagg (2012), "Semiosis is simply the process by which meaning is produced and understood. It includes the totality of, and the connections between, three elements that Peirce called object, sign and interpretant" (p. 156). As Tagg explains, the *object* corresponds to "an entity of an external world... a physical or imagined object, an emotion or sensory perception, an experience, an observed or imagined relation, a remembered event or situation, and so on" (p. 156). The sign is a representation of the object and the *interpretant* is the interpretation of the sign by an agent – their perception of that sign. Of course, the same sign may give rise to different interpretants, as Tagg also mentions.

- Popular music's ability to evoke a specific period is much more related to the processes and technologies employed during its production in the recording studio than to more traditional parameters such as harmony, melody and rhythm.[7]

In summary, this project proposes to reflect on the way in which sound discourse around popular music is constructed when the aim is to transport a meaning related to marking a specific time. It will therefore be necessary to clarify the concept of "sound" in pop, in order to later see which details of the sonic magma are susceptible to transporting meanings that can potentially evoke the atmosphere of the past in the present, and finally to explore how this process can be specifically applied to the particular case of the 1980s. Taking into account this structure and some of the key concepts to be addressed within it, the objectives of this research can be outlined as follows:

- To state some of the key ideas on the conceptualization of sound in pop music.
- To establish a conceptual basis for reflecting on the impact of recording studio technology on the conceptualization of popular music.
- To examine how the musical codes designed to allude to a particular era work. This means seeing which sound details could potentially evoke a particular time in the case of popular music, taking into account the definition of "retro" proposed by Reynolds.
- To initiate a theoretical approach to the sound zeitgeist of the eighties that could serve as the basis for a future search for the sounds used to evoke the era.

In summary, the aim is to examine the phenomenon of nostalgia and revival as a pretext to consider the impact of technology on the conceptualization of music, at the same time as helping to redress the scant attention musicology has paid to sound itself as a vehicle for meaning in popular music. This is an essential task and may be one of the discipline's great challenges.

Sound and meaning in popular music

In the first phase of this project, it is necessary to explain what "sound" in popular music is in order to understand the elements it comprises: the ingredients that potentially carry meaning. It remains to be seen whether the musical structures generated through recording studio processes themselves constitute the language of pop and may therefore be conceptualized as features of a specific artist, or associated to a specific era, beyond simply being a backdrop for materials considered more appropriate for transporting a particular stylistic fingerprint until now.

7 The evocative capacity of these parameters is not denied here, but the main objective of this project is to show how popular music, whose existence is entirely linked to recording technologies, contains other types of sound structures – analysis of which has been neglected until now – and that they unequivocally condition its conceptualization and, therefore, potential meanings.

Paul Théberge (1997) notes that an idea of "sound" as a conceptual category was already part of popular culture vocabulary during the early 1960s. Furthermore, he remarks that those involved in the creative processes of pop music talk about the "sound" as the songs' fingerprint; in other words, something that enables songs to be identified ahead of any other musical parameter. The following words from Brian Eno (1989) serve as an example:

> One of the interesting things about pop music is that you can quite often identify a record from a fifth of a second of it. You hear the briefest snatch of sound and know, "Oh, that's *Good Vibrations*," or whatever. A fact of almost any successful pop record is that its sound is more of a characteristic than its melody or its chord structure or anything else. The sound is the thing that you recognise. (Eno, cited in Théberge, 1989, p. 99)

Other authors have emphasized that certain sound qualities have had a decisive impact on the way rock stars are perceived by the public since the beginning of rock music. Middleton (cited in Askerøi, 2013) talks about the way in which the echo effect influenced the voice of Elvis Presley on recordings, forever determining the importance of the voice instrument in sound codes and, as noted by Théberge (1989), turning the presence and sensuality of the voice into one of the distinctive characteristics of the genre to date. It is therefore clear that the search for the "correct sound" has been an obsession for producers since the birth of popular music. Such a sound is one which "would capture the ears and the imagination of the consumer" (Théberge, 1989, p. 99), and which over time would end up transporting some of the most important narratives on authenticity for the different popular music genres.

That said, the idea of sound being discussed here is evidently at once both obvious and difficult to describe. Théberge (1989) also acknowledges it is difficult to identify what this "sound material", is made of, whilst clarifying two issues: the first, that the fact that producers, musicians, companies and the audience categorize "sound" as one of music's identifying characteristics indicates a transformation in the way it is constructed and perceived; and the second, "that the concept of 'sound' is not simply a 'technical' phenomenon in the limited sense of the term; recording technology must be understood as a complete '*system*' of production involving the organization of musical, social, and technical means" (Théberge, 1997, p. 193).

At this point, it is necessary to try to explain what this "sound" consists of, and why it is essential to mention the processes that take place in a recording studio in order to understand the way in which popular music is conceptualized. In his book, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, Mark Katz (2010) uses the concept of the *phonograph effect* to refer to "any change in musical behavior – whether listening, performing, or composing – that has arisen in response to sound-recording technology" (p. 2). Here I will argue that one of the great changes recording has brought about is to provide an array of new sound struc-

tures, which are inherent to the acoustic space implied by recording itself. Théberge (1989) says that multi-track recording – seen as both a new sound-recording technology and a production process – was the main reason for the emergence of new materials to consider in the semiotic processes related to popular music. The new environment created by this technology favoured experimentation by producers and engineers, giving rise to a whole new range of effects that so define the pop aesthetic, just as certain chord arrangements or melodic lines had defined other types of music in the past. In his list of parameters to consider when applying his system of *interobjective* comparison, Philip Tagg (2015) includes all effects resulting from the processes carried out in the recording studio, encompassing them within a category he calls *electromusical and mechanical aspects*.

In short, on the one hand it can be said that authors have for years been cautioning about the need to pay heed to the paradigm shift brought about by recording, and on the other they are all looking for a way to systematize the sound structures/processes that have come out of the environment provided by the type of new musical format. Nevertheless, let us return for a moment to the words of Nicholas Cook (2001). In suggesting that we "apply a model drawn from material culture to the analysis of musical meaning" (p. 179), he explains that Nelson Goodman distinguished between two types of cultural practice: material objects – classified as *autographic* as they can be replicated – and musical objects – classified as *allographic*, in other words, "instanced equally by scores, performances, or sound recordings" (p. 179). To this he adds:

> The notational trace represented by the score – or, frequently, by a number of more or less diverging scores – is supplemented or substituted by the multiple acoustic traces of performances and recordings, each of which manifests its own forms of empirical resistance in both the semiotic process and its analysis; what we think of as "a piece" of music should really be conceived as an indefinitely extended series of traces. . . . But this is only part of a larger issue: the extent to which one can usefully draw analogies between the autographic and the performing arts. (Cook, 2001, p. 179)

The question here is to what extent similarities can be found between those acoustic traces and the autographic objects in the case of a recording as described in the context of popular music. However, and to complete this summary of the ideas the article aims to convey, let us look at what Jeremy Orosz (2018) notes in his thoughts about imitation in the linguistic and musical arts:

> Sound is forgeable, even if notation is not. True, one cannot forge a score for one of Haydn's London Symphonies, but it is possible to create a counterfeit version of The Clash's London Calling album. Replicating a recorded sonic document is much akin to creating a copy of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, in that a vocalist mimicking the precise timbre of a famous singer and a painter

> emulating every brushstroke of an iconic painting face analogous challenges. If we acknowledge this to be the case, then according to Goodman's own definitions recorded sound belongs among the autographic arts, in which every feature is constitutive of a work and "no deviation is insignificant".

According to this way of thinking, what happens in a recording studio is more akin to painting a picture than writing a score, and this evidently entirely conditions the way in which sound recordings should be analysed. The above might lead us to conclude that, just as describing the strokes of a Rembrandt in words cannot be said to be equivalent to analysing the real composition of the colours he used or the processes that enabled him to achieve brushstrokes of the right density or thickness, the notation of harmony, melody and rhythm of a pop song does not constitute the larger part what needs to be analysed. Since its beginnings, popular music has been linked to recording technologies and, if the product of these technologies can be defined as an autographic object, it would seem desirable to be able to analyse the processes involved in this type of sound painting we know as music production.

Technological mediation: from friction to tradition, from tradition to revival

Everything so far seems to point to the need to analyse the way in which recording studio technologies influence the conception of popular music. Nonetheless, the figure of the producer continues to be controversial (Frith, 2012) and we are often unaware of how the "sound" under discussion is constructed. This second section is therefore structured around two main purposes: firstly, to address the circumstances that have tended to invisibilize both the producer and technicians;[8] and secondly, to explain why the sphere of nostalgia emerges as a space that encourages reflection on these processes of invisibilization, at the same time as being a place in which some of these mediation technologies inevitably come to the fore.

Firstly, let us define the concept of "technological mediation". Ragnhild Brøvig-Hanssen (2010) explains that "When discussing the mediating technology involved in music productions, the term is broadly used to signify the process behind conveying sounds from the source to the receiver, or from one place to another" (p. 160). She establishes four stages of the mediation process in the case of recorded sound, the first two of which serve our purposes:

> The initial mediation of aural raw material (the voice/human body, traditional instruments, samplers, software instruments, drum machines, etc.); the mediation used to record and edit or process sounds (microphones, amplifiers, mixing console, editing tools, processing effects, etc.). (p. 160)

8 Reflection by Jordi Roquer at the conference entitled *La producción musical como paradigma de invisibilidad en los procesos de creación y recepción mediados tecnológicamente*, held on 17 May 2019 at the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in Barcelona.

It is clear then that mediation refers to both musical instruments and the processes used by the producer to generate and edit sound before it becomes part of the final result heard by the listener. Brøvig-Hanssen (2010) takes this point further and distinguishes two types of mediation depending on whether there is a desire to expose the technologies' presence or whether the aesthetic paradigm dictates they should be as invisible as possible. As she explains, the first would be an example of *opaque mediation*, and the second, *transparent mediation*. This systematization provides the opportunity to consider the factors that determine the level of opacity or transparency present or appropriate at any time, at the same time as to reflect on the issue of intentionality in relation to these factors.

Brøvig-Hanssen and other authors have researched the reasons behind the transparency of mediating technologies, and in turn their invisibility. Simon Frith (2012) notes the scant attention musical criticism has paid to recording processes used in rock music, despite being a style rooted in sound recording (p. 207). Frith explains that this neglect is clear in how the figure of the producer is treated and explains what he believes to be the main reasons for the technologies' transparency during the genre's early years. Firstly, recordings were evaluated in relation to the aesthetic ideal of the style – in other words, the "authentic" live sound – whose "rough edges" and imperfections were "smoothed out" by producers with commercial ambitions. Secondly, in rock music there is a close link between the concepts of "authenticity" and *creative authority*, which brought about the appearance of what Frith labels "the ideology of the self-effacing producer" (p. 214) who "was not simply on the artist's side . . . but worked in general to realize the artist's vision" (p. 213) and who was therefore able to take a back seat around issues of authorship. According to Frith, the situation was slightly different in the case of pop and music of African American origin, whose critics had been arguing about the role of the producer since the late 1960s and early 1970s (Frith, 2012, pp. 209–210). The ideal pop aesthetic was based on the studio rather than the live sound, turning the producer into the key element for differentiating between the genres of rock and pop and being responsible for "what makes good pop good and bad rock bad" (p. 212) at the same time. Nevertheless, he argues that it was during this same crucial era that the narratives around popular music were being constructed, saying that "all pop records were regarded with suspicion" (p. 218) because the studio processes were seen as "gimmicky" (p.218) and designed to standardize and commercialize the musical sound.

All in all, ideology can be seen to be one of the main causes for the transparency of mediating technologies. Every musical genre is shaped by its own aesthetic ideals, which not only determine how the technology is used but also the degree to which it is exposed to the listener.

Yet these aesthetic ideas are not the only factors that influence to what extent the instruments and production techniques are discerned by listeners. Askerøi (2013) talks about the "initial shock effect" (p. 2) that certain technologies may cause due to their ability to generate innovative sound structures. These new materials contrast with those created using the techniques previously available, which were covered by "the veil of transparency"

(Brøvig-Hanssen, 2010, p. 163). The boom in new technologies drew back this veil, making elements that had been accepted as natural opaque once again and revealing both previously unseen and older processes (Auner, cited in Brøvig-Hanssen, 2010, p. 163). Brøvig-Hanssen also explains how the initial opacity of innovative techniques can turn into transparency over time:

> What is initially perceived as opaque mediation can later be taken for transparent. For instance, when vocalists first started to use the microphone as an instrument, experimenting with different techniques and developing new singing styles (such as the intimate singing style called "crooning"), listeners saw the microphone-staged voice as opaque mediation, whereas today it has become a defining trait of the voice and is thus (more or less) transparent. (p. 163)

In relation to this component of technology's naturalization, it is interesting to review the concept of s*ound hyperrealism*, proposed by Daniel Levitin in 2006, with which he qualifies those "sensory impressions we would never really have in the real world" (p. 2). Such sensations, which are only possible thanks to mediating technologies, become seemingly inherent to the sound, and listeners are "bewitched by all this audio production trickery, ignoring the fact that real and reproduced sound are not the same thing" (Roquer, 2018, p. 18). By way of an example, let us consider all the nuances the microphone is able to capture, as mentioned above – details that were impossible to capture with previous technologies and that determine the qualities of presence and sensuality described by Théberge (1989) as defining rock music. The existence of these sound materials constituting the popular genres, which seem to have always been there, reinforces Roquer's suggestion that we understand the effects of *sound hyperreality* as a sort of "fictional pact" between artists and consumers (2018, p. 19), a tacit agreement that may well help corroborate the presence of that layer of invisibility which hides the production mechanisms beneath.

The weight of tradition in the degree of mediating technologies' visibility is thus noted. The combination of the different ideas explored provides a view of the trajectory taken by the techniques involved in creating popular music. This trajectory, which started with friction caused by contrast and the unknown, progressed to the assimilation of processes and instruments that gradually came to represent the values associated with the different musical genres. Moreover, it can be said that the fictional pact between those involved in popular music production and its consumers is usually only broken if the artist/producer wishes to expose the technologies used or during a crisis period after new sound structures have emerged.

After noting the main reasons for the invisibility of the instruments and production processes in popular music, we can now reflect on how the appearance of nostalgic affection may give rise to new ways of perceiving technology. The previous section stated that recording turns sound artefacts into autographic objects – in other words, works made up of

characteristics that can be reproduced and are meaningful. But this is not the only consequence of sound recording. For Reynolds (2011), recording was behind the birth of a new sensibility, "rigorously interwoven with the consumer-entertainment complex" (p. 27) and based "on the obsessive repeat-play of particular artefacts in a focused listening concentrated on minute stylistic details" (p. 33). This new way of listening offered the chance to rethink sound artefacts of the past from the present. It can therefore be said that recording, for the first time in history, enabled detailed listening of music from the past in order to analyse and select the most representative elements from each era. By selecting materials designed to evoke different periods in our recent history, this technologically mediated revision of the past thus provided nostalgic genres. Drake (2018) notes how, thanks to their portrayal by the mass media, there is a "recognisable narrative of the past as a succession of definable decades (such as 'the sixties' and 'seventies')" (p. 184), which, like nostalgic film genres, give rise to codes designed to evoke affection for these decades as they are remembered from the present. In his opinion, these codes behave *metonymically* by representing the entire decade.

Transferring this argument to the sphere of music raises two important issues. The first being that sound structures designed to evoke a particular period are chosen for their ability to represent it. This capacity is largely determined by the impact the mediating technologies used to create these structures had at the time. Yet in the present, these technologies are stripped of the contemporary value judgements associated with them in favour of their ability to represent the era. For example, the slap-back echo sound used by Elvis Presley has not become representative of "the abandoning of attempts to reproduce live performance in favour of a specifically studio sound" (Middleton, cited in Askerøi, 2013, p. 2), but is instead a musical structure related to the 1950s (Askerøi, 2013, p. 2) capable of marking that time. As Askerøi mentions (2013), nostalgia is able to displace morality, allowing sound materials to be revealed. The second is that reproducing these culturally codified sound structures is only possible by appropriating the mediating technologies involved in their creation. According to Askerøi (2013), "The quality of authenticity, as a product of the changing affective qualities of pop production, therefore helps to shed light on an intricate relationship between 'human and machine', as well as the gradual cultural appropriation of expressive technological devices" (pp. 10–11).

In regard to all the above, we can speak about the sphere of nostalgia as a special space for reflecting on the importance of mediating technologies and on the processes that determine their level of visibility. Likewise, we shall see that retro sound is a place where certain technologies regain their opacity, as mentioned, implying not only the reproduction of culturally distinctive sound structures but also the recovery of the artefacts that made them possible.

'Retro' sound: from *vintage sound material* to *sonic time marker*

Having discussed the relevance of the popular music sound and highlighted the importance of mediating technologies, it is appropriate to explain what is meant by "retro" and, specifically, what retro music is made of. According to Reynolds (2011), this type of cultural product, made possible thanks to the emergence of the nostalgic sensibility described in the previous section, is defined by the following characteristics:

- "Retro" always alludes to a relatively recent past, in other words to things that existed within living memory.
- "Retro" implies an element of accurate remembering: archive documents can be easily obtained (photographs, videos, music recordings, on the Internet) so the style of the past can be precisely reproduced, be it a musical genre, image or fashion of the time.
- In general, "retro" style also includes popular culture artefacts.
- A final characteristic of the "retro" sensibility is that it does not usually idealize or sentimentalize the past, it simply aims to be fun and entertaining. Overall, the focus is ironic and eclectic rather than academic and purist. This playful spirit is related to the fact that in reality the "retro" has much more in common with the present than with the past it seems to revere and resurrect. It uses the past as an archive of materials from which it extracts subcultural capital by recycling and recombining different elements in a sort of DIY cultural mishmash. (pp. 27–28)

If we connect this definition with the ideas presented so far, we can see that composing music able to evoke an era from the past means replicating and recombining sound structures coded as representative of that era by appropriating the mediating technologies used in its creation. However, as emphasized, it is difficult to categorize the sonic content of popular music, and this obstacle has a direct impact on the discipline's ability to analyse "retro" sound. As mentioned at the start of this article, Reynolds (2011) uses the term vintage sonic material to refer to the sounds used in the creation of "retro" music. In this way, the term "assumes a link between a style of musical expression (or 'sound') and a given decade" (Reynolds, cited in Askerøi, 2013, p. 42). In other words, it admits the existence of sound structures able to evoke specific decades. Nonetheless, this does not provide a theoretical framework that would enable analysis of such "sound" and a description of its precise stylistic features. Askerøi (2013) goes further and introduces the term *retronormativity* to refer to the link between sound structures and decades mentioned by Reynolds. Furthermore, she explains how the concept not only refers to the connection between sounds and periods of time but that it also entails a feeling of nostalgia towards the technological equipment involved in the "musical return" to this time.

In her doctoral thesis, *Reading Pop Production. Sonic Markers and Musical Identity* (2013), Askerøi proposes the concept of the sonic marker within "a discursive analytical model based on a textual focus on the audible details of pop production and the contextual implications

of the meanings of these details" (p. 3). The author says that "sonic markers, in short, are musical codes that have been historically grounded through a specific context, and that, through their appropriation, serve a range of narrative purposes in recorded music" (p. 17). As a result, this is a concept that efficiently enables specific and reproducible sonic structures from popular music to be connected with their culturally codified meanings and becomes an analytical category that can be used to study the artefacts within them. Moreover, if we account for the words of Askerøi (2013), who argues that "In pop productions, then, even the subtlest signifiers—the sound of an acoustic guitar, or the virtual space created by digital reverb—connote principal narratives of authenticity and authorship as well as gender, sexuality, space and place" (pp. 2–3), this new category might easily be said to be extremely useful to trace and describe the sounds responsible for conveying those narratives. That being said, it is particularly interesting to note the way in which Askerøi brings together the concepts of *sonic marker* and *retronormativity*. Faced with the challenge of analysing sounds codified as representative of past decades, the author replaces Reynolds' (2011) general concept of vintage sonic material with that of sonic marker of time, thus providing an effective tool for analysing "retro" sound. Specifically, Askerøi (2013) proposes three categories for sonic materials linked to specific eras: vocal peculiarities, such as certain singing styles and accompanying effects; instrument "sounds" or instrumental stylings; and "technological aspects of production" (p. 2).

Continuing with the concept of the "sonic marker", we can reflect on the way in which this allows us to rethink some of the sounds mentioned in this article. One example given was *crooning*, a musical style that enjoyed huge popularity at the start of the 1940s and which, according to Askerøi's system, could be catalogued as a sonic marker in the category of vocal peculiarity related to this period. In the same way, the application of the aforementioned slap-back echo used by Elvis can be reconsidered – which Askerøi (2013) in fact does – as a sonic marker linked to the 1950s and classifiable as a technological aspect of the recording studio. Nonetheless, the classification system proposed by Askerøi could be debated. It is Frith's (1996) opinion that "A voice obviously has a sound; it can be described in musical terms like any other instrument, as something with a certain pitch, a certain register, a certain timbral quality, and so forth" (p. 187) – recalling in this context the "aural raw material" mentioned by Brøvig-Hanssen (2010, p. 160). However, he goes on to note how pop singing styles are entirely determined by the technologies used during recording:

> The microphone made it possible for singers to make musical sounds – soft sounds, closesounds – that had not really been heard before in terms of public performance (just as the film closeup allowed one to see the bodies and faces of strangers in ways one would normally only see loved ones). The microphone allowed us to hear people in ways that normally implied intimacy – the whisper, the caress, the murmur. (Frith, 1996, p. 187)

We can see, then, that reflection around the vocal element reveals the enormous difficulty of drawing a clear line between the different elements that make up recorded music: the raw sound material, the technologies and processes involved in recording it, and the ways in which the musicians might activate it. Such components influence each other in a fundamental way, making it essential to reconsider the tools used to analyse the constituent musical artefacts. That said, once this difficulty has been taken into account the concept of the "sonic marker" is a good starting point for such a study due to its capacity to bring about careful listening focusing on specific audible details and the agents used to activate them, whether instrumental, technological or stylistic. It likewise allows specific sonic structures to be connected to contextual elements that have influenced their culturally constructed meanings. In the case of "sonic markers of time", it will be argued that these sound structures "function not only as sonic imitations of the past but as representatives of the past's socio-cultural values" (Askerøi, 2013, p. 23), implying the construction of a shared musical subjectivity that is linked to a decade and "related to the aesthetic qualities of studio production" (p. 36). If this subjectivity is connected to the concept of zeitgeist mentioned at the start of this article, then it is possible to reflect on the existence of a musical spirit of the 1980s that can be alluded to through sound.

The sonic zeitgeist of the eighties

The eighties were an era that saw many important changes in music production and consumption, transformations that we shall see had a huge impact during the decade itself and a vital influence on the contemporary approach to its representative sounds. Théberge (1997) notes what he considers to be the main triggers for these changes and reflects on the consequences deriving from them. Thus, he sees "the advent of a fully computerized studio recording apparatus" (p. 10), the rise of sampling techniques and the development of keyboard instruments as some of the reasons for viewing the 1980s as the peak of the increasing advances in production technologies.

In relation to the first of these causes, it is worth remembering *The History of Music Production* (2014), in which Richard Burgess writes about the impact of computer technology on recording studios at the end of the seventies. Specifically, he explains how the arrival of new consoles created by solid-state logic entailed a decisive leap forward in the way sound processing was seen:

> The ergonomics of this innovative new console was unparalleled. Using gates, compressors, and surgical EQ became fast and intuitive for engineers and producers. Along with the user-friendly automation, mixes began to be highly processed with any extraneous noise being gated out or muted. The SSL E series console debuted in 1980 with significant upgrades. The addition of "Total Recall" in 1981 enabled all console settings to be stored at any point in a session, saving setup time and allowing faster and easier changes to previously saved mixes. . . . The capabili-

> ties and signal path of the SSL console left its distinct imprint on the sound of the eighties' recordings. (Burgess, 2014, p. 107)

Far from trying to go into technical detail, which could be the subject of future research, Burgess's contribution is relevant here as it is evidence of a shift resulting from raw sonic material undergoing a greater number of processes. This fact, in combination with multitrack technology, which enabled a large number of tracks to be layered on top of each other, had a direct impact on the way in which producers and musicians approached and thought about their work. An example can be seen in the words of Joey Tempest (cited in Yates, 2016), the singer with the band Europe, in which he remembers that "Everything was pushed to the limit in the eighties, . . . a decade of flamboyance and pushing all the faders, a hundred per cent". Chris Tsangarides, who produced bands such as Thin Lizzy and Judas Priest, recalls the shift these new recording studio technologies brought about compared to recording methods from the preceding era:

> In the seventies, you had a tape recorder, . . . a microphone, a guitar with an amplifier, and a drum set. Maybe a few compressors, some reverberation plates, a bit of delay. Back then it centred on how good the band was. Then we hit the eighties and there was all thistechnology thrown at us. It went from tape to digital in about three seconds, and it was a bit of the emperor's new clothes. In the eighties it was all about the production. (Tsangarides, cited in Yates, 2016)

Keith Olsen, who produced Fleetwood Mac, Ozzy Osbourne and Whitesnake remembers: "If you had a drummer that could keep time, life was good, . . . If you had a great guitar player, it was wonderful. If the songs were there, it was even better. Y'know, it was songs, performance and sound, in that order" (Olsen, cited in Yates, 2016). Here, Olsen also mentions the modus operandi of the seventies, in which you had to be ingenious so that your work stood out from what everyone else was doing.

These reminiscences highlight some important issues. Firstly, they reveal the dominant paradigm of authenticity that was present in rock at the end of the seventies and the way in which the new technologies clashed with it. Secondly, they testify to the existence of the aforementioned shared musical subjectivity and its relationship with the techniques and processes that belonged to the recording studio. A sort of collective consciousness which, after reviewing the sonic materials from the present, comes to the fore as if to say, "that's how we made music in our day". In this way, the early eighties appeared to be trying to escape the world of the analogue, shaping up as the decade that Rolling Stone magazine, described by Théberge as a regressive gesture, called "the era of 'push-button rock'" (Rolling Stone, cited in Théberge, 1997, p. 1).

With respect to sampling, Théberge (1997) states that some of the most innovative popular music genres of the time – such as hip-hop, which is significantly self-referential – ob-

tained their sound materials through these techniques. These processes, he says, were entirely related to the appearance of "a particular type of memory and subjectivity . . . that is the result of experiencing technology and everyday life within the matrix of mass media and consumer culture" (p. 205). In an age when digital musical instruments and recording techniques were no longer independent technologies (Théberge, 1997), creators threw themselves into experimenting, creating mixes in which acoustic instruments coexisted with sounds previously considered noise (Burgess, cited in Moy, 2007, p. 78, explains how Kate Bush used the sound of a rifle hammer on one of her tracks) and samples from older records. If we recall some of the ideas explored in previous sections, we can well understand that the friction caused by the boom in these technologies, together with the mass dissemination of their sounds brought about by channels such as MTV, turned some of these materials into sonic markers of the era.

Lastly, it is crucial to acknowledge the development of keyboard instruments. According to Théberge (1997), incorporating microprocessor technologies into the design of electronic keyboards during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the arrival and subsequent implementation of the MIDI Specification between 1983 and 1988, brought about a shift in the evolution of popular music in terms of its creation, production and consumption. Synthesizers with a simpler interface led to an improvement in users' skills, whilst their perception of sonic material was fundamentally altered by using the wide range of ready-made sounds stored in the instrument itself. The new synthesizers blurred the line between the processes/effects which were previously exclusive to the recording studio and the raw musical material to which they were traditionally applied. Effects became embedded within sounds as if they were one and the same, determining the end result of the recording right from the time it was written. In this respect, Théberge (1997) says that:

> The *precise* de-tuning of the oscillators (calculated in hundredths of a semitone) had to be determined in advance, programmed, and stored as part of the synthesizer sound [...]. Equally important, the "chorus-like" effect produced in this manner is no longer seen as a separated operation applied to a sound, rather, the effect becomes an inherent characteristic of the sound itself. This movement has become increasingly prevalent in the design and use of synthesizers throughout the 1980s. "Effects" such as delays, flangers, reverbs, and the like have become thought of as inherent properties of a sound, and virtually all contemporary keyboards now contain sophisticated digital effects units built directly into the instrument. (p. 210)

Not only were sounds subjected to more procedures in the studio, but musicians now had pre-processed sonic structures available to them during composition, which influenced their creations. We can also see how these ready-made mechanisms affected more than just timbre, extending to ordering and pitch and promoting the construction of specific arrangements that also went on to be categorized as sonic markers. For now, let us consider how musicians perceived these new technologies. Joey Tempest explains:

> All these new toys came into play. Europe used to be a guitar-based band, but all of a sudden, in the guitar shop, there was another room full of synths. So it was like, "Whoa, what's this?" *The Final Countdown* had more keyboards because that's what I was writing on. But some bands really did put on a lot of keyboards, and then the guitars sort of disappeared in the mix. I remember John Norum [Europe's lead guitarist] was frustrated with how the guitars were pushed back. (Tempest, cited in Yates, 2016)

The "authentic" sound of the guitarist – the symbol of rock music – was still there, but synthesizers took a noticeable leading role and offered new opportunities for composition which were exploited by musicians and had a critical influence on the sound of the decade. Tsangarides (cited in Yates, 2016) recalls: "You'd have these huge banks of keyboards hooked up together by MIDI – one playing strings, one playing organ, whatever you wanted – and get this absolutely massive sound".

In 2007, Ron Moy wrote that "all these moves were helping to construct the new sonic zeitgeist that moved production away from mythologies of the organic, 'real time and space' and the acoustic" (p. 77). The ideas explored in this article align with his words and emphasize that sonic structures capable of alluding to this spirit can only be created by appropriating the devices and processes born out of the recording studio environment described. To put it another way, it is only by recovering the mediating technologies of the time that we can create sounds evoking the zeitgeist of the eighties.

Conclusions

The beginning of the article argued that it would be possible to define works created in the recording studio as autographic objects. More can be written on the profound implications of this. A pop song is a reproducible object because each of the audible details it comprises is an essential part of its existence. We have also seen that in popular music these sonic structures are constructed using recording studio technologies, and although it may seem obvious to say so, this type of music did not exist before the advent of recording. Sonic characteristics, which may stem from the creative use of any of the processes described – equalization, the use of artificial reverberation, stereo audio distribution, etc. – can define the sonic pop object as well as or better than the parameters traditionally analysed in "classical" music (harmony, melody and rhythm). It is therefore apparent that, in order to understand popular music, new tools have to be found that enable these processes to be analysed, research results to be systematized, and relationships established between the sonic structures deriving from them and the culturally constructed meanings associated with them. In summary, it is impossible to form sound knowledge of popular music without analysing the technologies involved in its creation and the techniques that stem from them. Even more importantly, having the tools to facilitate this analysis without the conceptual basis necessary to interpret the data obtained will continue to lead towards a discourse alienat-

ed from reality. What is being analysed when pop songs are said to have a supposed homogeneity and simplicity? Are all the small audible details mentioned being taken into account? What is the conceptual basis of these arguments? These questions, which it would be highly desirable for the discipline to respond to, cannot be answered without addressing the creative potential of the instruments and techniques used in the recording studio.
We have also reflected on technology's role in the creation and conceptualization of music. We have discussed how mediating technologies, in the form of instruments and processes, have shaped the development of popular music, precipitating a crisis whenever they go against tradition and, over time, becoming new ways of working. The 1980s has been presented as "a decade of extravagance" (Tempest, cited in Yates, 2016) and a time of technological boom in which producers relied on the available resources more than ever before to bring their imagination to life. But were they already thinking in this way before the arrival of the technology? Or did technology free their imaginations? Would Beethoven have composed in the same way if different instruments had been available to him? These questions are extremely difficult to answer. It does, however, seem essential to ask them, as they bring to mind a fundamental idea. Technology has determined the way in which music is created and conceptualized during every period of history. The violin bow is technology, the harp is technology, the mechanism that operates the hammers in a piano is, of course, technology. So what is the difference that makes us perceive a recording studio as a place where technology takes the lead? If we consider some of the processes used to create pop music, we can see that whilst creators of other kinds of music stayed within the realm of what was possible for their instruments, pop music producers started to use recording techniques to mould the sound and discovered a new world of creative possibilities. We have thus seen how the 1980s took a step further on the road that began with the desire to produce recordings of instruments that were as faithful as possible to their live sound – such as the aforementioned authenticity paradigm of rock, in which the concert sound is the aesthetic ideal – and which led to the creation of sounds that are impossible to recreate in the real world. We now know that these changes in the ways of composing and thinking about music cannot be separated from the devices and processes involved in its production.
Lastly, we have discussed the sphere of nostalgia and the "retro", defining it as a space that lends itself to reflecting on technological mediation. The birth of nostalgic sensibility mentioned by Reynolds (2011) can help advance our understanding of what recording implies. Before sound recording, a piece of music was heard once in a lifetime, at most. Hearing it again relied on it being performed, and as no two performances are the same, the same sonic structures were heard only once. Recording has made it possible to hear the same audible characteristics innumerable times. What is more, we know that these details can transport meaning related to past personal experiences, shared cultural constructs and information relating to issues of authenticity, genre and also thinking: the elements that make

up the spirit of an era. Recording itself is the key to faithfully reproducing sounds from the past, whether pop or any other kind of music, as it is by listening to recordings that we have become aware of the importance of recovering the mediating technologies used in each era. Did the desire to perform music from the past using contemporary instruments exist before the advent of recording? This is another controversial question.

In the end, perhaps this way of thinking was born out of repeated listening, which led to the desire to reconstruct popular music from past decades, allowing us to experience some of the feelings we had at the time and which imbued the sonic structures that we heard. Nowadays we can reproduce these sonic markers using the mediating technologies used to create them, we can incorporate them into new songs and for a moment believe that human beings in fact invented the time machine years ago, we just did not know it.

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Jamming Giant Women:

Narration through Song in Steven Universe

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the different functions that the songs perform as constituent tools in the narrative development of the storyline in *Steven Universe*, a cartoon TV series created by Rebecca Sugar. The narrative is driven by the disclosure of Steven's origin and by his development from childhood to adolescence. The soundtrack (and especially the songs) works as an integrated and fundamental element of the text. Attaching different musical styles (pop, rap, theatrical musical) consistently to the characters helps build their fictional personas. Purely musical procedures (integration of certain melodic themes, harmonies and specific instrumental colour) correlate to events in the narrative to provide information about the characters' backstories and the rules that apply to the convoluted fictional universe developed in the series. Songs also help characters find an emotional response to conflicting emotional states. Complicated feelings, such as toxic relationships, identity, sexuality, loyalty, sacrifice, parenting, gender stereotypes and many more are developed through songs. The integration of songs in the narrative always moves it forward, although they sometimes challenge the diegetic/non-diegetic dichotomy.

Jamming Giant Women: narration through song in *Steven Universe*

Steven Universe is an animated television series designed, written and produced by author Rebecca Sugar for Cartoon Network between 2013 and 2019. The series follows the adventures of a boy and three female alien characters in their mission to protect the Earth. At the same time as the adventures take place, a convoluted and overarching story of war and rebellion is revealed. In its 160 ten-minute episodes, along with the adventures, the show tackles many serious topics: the transition from childhood to adolescence, the quest for identity and independence from parents, the impact of the past on the present, how negative emotions such as guilt or jealousy are at the heart of conflict, and more. The imaginative approaches to personal development and family and social relationships in this series makes it stand out from other animated series for children, as does the music. The fact that its creator Rebecca Sugar herself composed the songs for the show, and the high quality of both the lyrics and the music in this cartoon series persuaded us it was worth looking deeper into the role of songs in the main narrative.[1] The purpose of this paper is to analyse the different functions that songs perform as constituent tools in the narrative development of the storyline, and to discuss the particular status of musical narration as an integrated part of the series[2] in the wake of studies showing time and again that music does indeed convey meaning in modern audiovisual texts. In *Steven Universe* the musical styles and the place songs occupy in the narrative both have a key role in developing the story.

Firstly, we will explain how the different styles help build the characters and give them background.[3] Furthermore, we will show how intrinsically musical procedures are used to develop storylines or create relationships between characters.

Secondly, we will trace the relationship of the songs in the series to the musical genre, to see whether they match or differ from conventional uses. We feel entitled to do this given the unusual amount of songs that appear throughout the five seasons. The 160 episodes feature 47 different songs – considerably more than would be expected in such a production, although not enough to consider the series as primarily musical. On examining the use of songs compared to standard musical narratives, we extracted some interesting conclusions with regard to the specific status of musical narration.

The third part of our work will be devoted to the analysis of the narrative function of the songs. Unlike songs in musicals which usually stop the course of the action, songs in this series are often crucial in the transmission of narrative information which would otherwise need different procedures to be delivered comprehensively. Initially, we narrowed the

1 A full reference list for the songs follows the bibliography.

2 That songs play a key role in this series is largely acknowledged by both critics and author Rebecca Sugar. See Serrao (2017) and Mallikarjuna (2016).

3 The intentional use of songs to construct characters is made explicit by the author herself: "The melody, the rhythm, and just the fact that something has to be sung instead of spoken — especially if I can write something that has that effect on me as I write it — can tell you worlds about a character and how they're feeling". See Mallikarjuna (2016).

songs' function down to four categories according to their relationship with the diegesis, but further exploration of the status of these songs and their degree of integration with the narrative led us to pay attention to aspects of the musical genre that seem to need a closer look, such as how productive some interactions between the two levels (diegetic/non-diegetic) may be in musical narration and how even title sequences and end credits can have a narrative function.

Part One: Music styles and characters in *Steven Universe*

A brief account of the series' plot is necessary at this point. Steven Universe is a fourteen-year-old boy being raised by the Crystal Gems: Pearl, Garnet and Amethyst, although he used to live with his father, Greg Universe, a former rock musician. Steven has a gem instead of a navel, which indicates that he is half human, half Gem. The Crystal Gems train Steven to use his potential powers, which he inherited from his mother, Rose Quartz. She was the leader in a rebellion against the Diamonds, rulers of the Gem society who govern Homeworld with an iron fist. The consequences of the war between the Diamonds and Rebel Gems persist to the present day, leaving Steven not only with the task of discovering who he really is but also dealing with the fallout of his mother's actions.
There are three main narrative arcs throughout the series:

1. The uncovering of the Gems' nature and their history
2. Steven's evolution from childhood to adolescence and his struggle to become himself and not another version of Rose Quartz (Pink Diamond)
3. The eventual solution of the ancient conflict between Diamonds and Rebel Gems

Some secondary arcs are related to humans and some to Gems.

As previously mentioned, we will now discuss how the use of specific musical styles contributes significantly to round out each of the main characters' personalities. It is generally accepted that attaching a specific musical style to a character can help define them. Philip Tagg (Tagg, 2012) – among many others – is very specific about how a certain style can activate previous knowledge for an audience, both in terms of their familiarity with the musical genre and the position it occupies in the culture in which it is found. When we talk about musical styles, we assume that certain inherent traits (rhythm, harmonies, texture, instruments) convey meaning because they exist in the Western listener's experience and prompt associations based on our experience of such styles. That is why, for example, rock music carries connotations of "strength", "independence", "freedom", etc., which are automatically attributed to a character that sings and plays rock songs.
Let us start with the protagonist, Steven, whose songs are usually acoustic with ukulele accompaniment at the beginning of the series. Vocally, Steven sings with the natural voice of a child, with a slightly airy out-breath (but perfectly in-tune). Steven's songs in the first part

of the story are apparently simple, but they are never trite or simplistic and the harmonies are enticing and quite sophisticated (perhaps with the exception of *Cookie Cat*, Steven's first song, which is more a chant than a proper song). The best example of his first style is provided by *Be Wherever You Are*, from the episode "Island Adventure".[4] Though formally simple, (simply a repetition of the same melody with different lyrics three times), the harmonic progressions which give glimpses of distant tonalities provide quite an interesting musical setting for the main idea at this point: the "mindfulness" of living in the moment and eventually allowing oneself to be "whoever you are".

As Steven grows up, he starts to sing in a very professional vocal solo style with piano accompaniment that shifts into orchestral, as usually found in conventional musical narration. In the completely musical episode "Mr Greg",[5] Steven reveals himself as a proficient solo singer in a short but interesting song, *Both of You*, which is melodically and harmonically complex. See Figure 1 to illustrate this point.

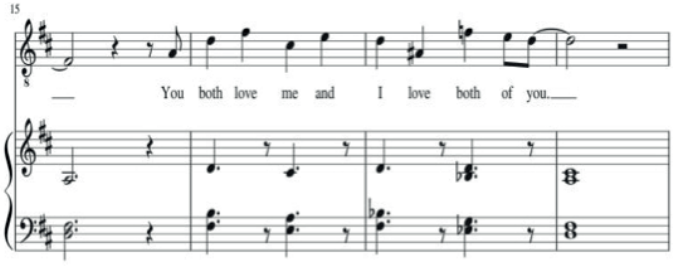

Figure 1: *Both of you*. Fragment of the score. Notice the harmonic shift from B minor to a distant tonality (B flat major) in the "I love" lyrics and the difficult leaps of this vocal line.

Although Steven's voice and style evolve throughout the series, paralleling his growing up, the songs never become a showcase for his vocal powers, despite not being easy to sing. In a way, songs act as the catalyst for a certain situation to develop, becoming more or less complex as the situation demands. Both harmonies and lyrics are chosen for reasons other than just sounding good: they have their own meaning and are perfectly contextualized within the whole narrative.

As we have already said, throughout the series there is a specific style of music for each character's personality. Greg Universe, Steven's father, sings and plays classic rock, with either an acoustic (*Destiny, Wailing Stone*)[6] or an electric (*Just a Comet*[7]), guitar, depending on the "singing situation". In other words, he can give another character a private acoustic performance or recreate the concerts of his youth with fully amplified effects. Powerful rock music characterizes Rose Quartz too, although we could say she is musically associated with Greg (see *What Can I Do for You?*). As regards the three Crystal Gems, who are

4 Season 1, episode 30. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIREK5ZL1jA

5 Season 3, episode 8. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mle_1cIWYL0

6 Season 1, episode 49. "The Message" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9CTRAtbwT0

7 Season 1, episode 47. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3M47LlGAWU

Steven's guardians and mentors, Pearl and Garnet are more "adult" characters, whereas Amethyst is less concerned about being responsible and usually takes more risks. These contrasting personalities, Amethyst's immature or childish traits in comparison to Garnet or Pearl, have a musical correlation in the way her only solo song is styled. *Tower of Mistakes*[8] is undefined and unsophisticated. Amethyst is a "laid back" Gem, born outside their Homeworld and not as perfect as the others, and this is reflected in her soft, repetitive and careless style. The lyrics of her song are addressed to Steven, to whom she wants to explain her attitude and say sorry at the same time.

As to Pearl, right from the beginning she has the manner of a lead character in a conventional musical theatre style,[9] usually accompanied by the piano. She has a pleasant, smooth, educated voice, which allows her to perform intense and complex themes such as *It's Over, Isn't It?*,[10] which could easily become a standard for solo singers outside the series. Her vocal characterization helps to highlight her differences with Greg and reinforces her diffidence when the other Gems sing and play in a rock band in "We Need to Talk", an episode which will be discussed later.

Garnet's mysterious and interesting personality is characterized with a very metric rap style. Electronic music accompanies her numbers and interesting beats and high-range vocals show up in *Here Comes a Thought*[11] and *Stronger Than You*.[12]

To sum up, we can affirm that the characters in this series present a consistent relationship to the musical styles attached to them, and that this helps construct their personas in the narrative.[13]

Part Two: Is Steven Universe a musical? Narration and emotion in songs

As can be inferred from the previous section, singing songs is something that happens regularly in the fictional world of *Steven Universe*, and within the series itself it is fully accepted just like the Gems' special powers. The very musical lifestyle of the main characters is diegetically justified mainly because of Greg's past as an unsuccessful rock musician. He has created a bond with Steven through teaching him how to make music and by encouraging him to compose and use music to express his feelings. To a certain extent, Steven's vision of music as a powerful instrument for communication permeates the whole series and motivates the appearance of many of the songs.

Nevertheless, the narration of *Steven Universe* is not entirely musical: of 160 episodes, only 42 have songs and their occurrence is far from evenly distributed. In this table we can see

8 Season 2, episode 11, "Cry for Help". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUeWv1OecoE

9 Listen to her in *Strong in the Real Way*, episode 20, season 1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFctQMCs3k4

10 Season 3, episode 8. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T5rCSmduaY

11 "Mindful Education", season 4, episode 4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHg50mdODFM

12 "Jailbreak", season 1, episode 52. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OWq38TikzU

13 Aivi Tran and Steven Velema, responsible for the background music and sound effects, confirm our point. See Thurm (2016).

an overall account of the appearance of songs in the series. Some episodes have more than one song.

SEASON	NUMBER OF EPISODES	NUMBER OF EPISODES WITH SONGS
1	52	18
2	26	7
3	25	3
4	25	6
5	32 (29+3)	8

Table 1. Number of episodes per season and number of episodes with songs.

As previously mentioned, in many musicals, if a character has a profession related to music, the musical numbers are more "natural", so to speak. When Greg sings and plays we feel this is perfectly plausible. This resource, creating a diegetic motivation for introducing the musical number, is typical of musical cinema.[14] When Pearl starts singing *Strong in the Real Way*[15] as she picks up and folds Steven's T-shirts, the whole number follows the convention of the musical genre, in which these kinds of "introspective" songs have a function similar to a soliloquy in the theatre, and so we accept that Pearl starts singing all of a sudden without the need for a diegetic motivation, in this case to show how worried she is about Steven's obsession with physical training. Although as a general rule musical numbers are carefully justified in the narrative in *Steven Universe* (much more often than even in mainstream musicals), sometimes they just take advantage of the convention.[16]

The point to make here is that although many musical film (or even theatrical musical) resources are put to use in Steven Universe, the musical numbers that include a song are so embedded in the narrative fabric that they become completely integrated (Penner, 2017).[17] Rather than being catchy tunes to market the series, the songs, when they occur, are firmly anchored in the scenes. Making music is part of Steven's world. Even his "enemies", the Diamonds, have songs that serve the narrative.[18] Especially illustrative of the need to integrate the songs is the scene in which a new Gem, Peridot, appears. This grumpy Gem, newly arrived on Earth, needs to vent her frustration and Steven shows her how she can make a song out of anything, even the sound of an electric drill. She starts composing, helped by Steven, who also explains what makes a good song in terms of musical notes by singing. At

14 See Penner (2017).

15 Season 1, episode 20. See note 11 for link.

16 See later the discussion of "Mr Greg".

17 See her discussion of the integrated musical, a term coined by John Mueller in his article "Fred Astaire and the Integrated Musical" (Mueller, 1984).

18 *What's the Use of Feeling Blue?*, season 4, episode 15 (see Appendix).

the end of the day Peridot has written her own song (*Peace and Love on Planet Earth*[19]) and, most importantly, shares it with Steven and the Crystal Gems. The passage of time, from morning to night, is shown in a montage sequence in which the image cuts from one place to another but the song is continuous. Continuity provided by music to underscore fragmented space is widely used in films and many of the songs in Steven Universe have this function in addition to specifically delivering information, as we will see later.[20]

Narrative songs

By analysing the type of narrative content the songs carry in the episodes in which they appear[21] we can observe how they deliver information that is crucial for the development of the plot. Songs move the narrative forward in two ways:

1. They prompt memories and provide information about the past which explains relevant facts in the present.
2. They provide continuity in scenes which jump from the present to the past (montage scenes) and also that jump from place to place, using cross-cutting editing.

Some songs and musical numbers accomplish both things at the same time. In the Appendix we have included a list of all the songs and a brief description of how they contribute to the plot.

We will now discuss two episodes to illustrate what we mean with narrative songs, first "Mr Greg"[22] and then "We Need to Talk".[23]

The first, "Mr Greg", despite its apparent playfulness, is crucial to the development of the plot. To better understand how the songs work, we are going to describe their occurrence and their function. "Mr Greg" is an episode that is entirely sung (and danced!). It starts with Greg earning a lot of money by selling his song *Just a Comet* as a jingle for Pepe's Burger. After having stated that many nice things *Don't Cost Nothing*[24] in an acoustic duet with guitar accompaniment, a frenetic guitar beat initiates the new song, Empire City, in Greg's classic rock style. Greg, Steven and Pearl set off to *Empire City*[25] to celebrate. They start their trip with glimpses of the hectic metropolis while singing this dynamic song before arriving at the hotel. There the staff perform a song and dance number (*Mr Greg*) to welcome the "bazzillionaire", in the Reinhardt/Grappelli (guitar and violin) style. Greg, Pearl and Steven are treated like royalty and shown to their penthouse on the top floor of the skyscrap-

19 "It Could've Been Great", season 4, episode 3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rdlc4b5NL5g

20 See Appendix for songs signalled with the word "montage", ten in total.

21 See Appendix.

22 Season 3, episode 8.

23 Season 2, episode 9.

24 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gF0qxt9fx6A

25 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HM_NIOwnfzs

er. The number is interrupted because Pearl refuses to continue the dance. The next scene shows Pearl entering the suite and looking at Greg and Steven asleep. There is a bouquet of roses, a reference to Rose Quartz, which prompts the appearance of non-diegetic piano music in the background and the cue for Pearl's most professional song in the series, It's Over, Isn't It?. It begins as a soliloquy, recalling her relationship with Rose and how she preferred Greg over her. But this moment is not wasted in useless contemplation; while she sings and dances on the balcony, Pearl makes the clouds change shape and performs a scene which describes her former attachment to Rose, and Greg's interference in their relationship. By looking at the sky, Steven, who is eavesdropping, gleans crucial information about the origin of Pearl and Greg's feud over Rose Quartz. At the same time, the song provides an outlet for Pearl's unresolved conflict with Greg, which has never before been verbalized. The fact that Pearl and Greg do not appear to get along was precisely the reason Steven wanted Pearl to come and celebrate with them in the first place, so that the two adults would have an opportunity to talk. The three of them return to the dance hall in the hotel, where a pianist is playing. Steven gives him some money and takes his place. Deftly playing and singing *Both of You*, he tells Pearl and Greg how important they are to him and why they have to resolve the conflict. This scene shifts from reality to fantasy during the song: Greg and Pearl appear in blue and yellow in a dream-like scene outside diegetic space. In the middle of the song they talk about their differences, they dance together and eventually they overcome their jealousy over Rose. Magically, they return to the hall and a realistic setting, where they receive a round of applause. The episode elegantly ends when they come to a realization about some of the things they have used (hotels, service, meals) during *Those Cost Something*, in a reprise of *Don't Cost Nothing*. That Steven has overheard Pearl singing about Rose is made clear when he twice sings the words "It's Over, Isn't It?" before he falls asleep in the back seat of the car. These words and music have now acquired a completely new meaning.

We can say that even when the series admittedly embraces the convention of musical film, it is more than a mere tribute to the genre. From the perspective of narrative development, this episode seals an alliance between Greg and Pearl and provides information about Rose Quartz in the past that is now known to Steven. A little indulgence in musical numbers does not mean the plot cannot be moved along.

Now let us discuss how the music works in "We Need to Talk".[26] In this episode Greg shows Steven and Connie a recorded performance on an old VHS. In what resembles a rehearsal, we see Greg singing and playing the electric guitar, Garnet the synth bass and Amethyst the drums. Rose is the other vocalist. The song is *What Can I Do for You?*.[27] Pearl, who resents Rose's attraction to Greg, is not singing with them. She is looking on jealously from the side of the stage and after Rose and Greg sing the song together (clearly the lyrics refer

26 "We Need to Talk", season 2, episode 9, part 1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGohbPsu-7s

27 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cblLkkZeM1g

to their relationship), she steps in to dance with Rose. When two Gems dance together, "fusion" occurs, and Pearl wants to show Greg how well they "fuse". Fusion will be explained in detail later but suffice to say here that Gems do this to become a new, bigger and stronger Gem. We see how Pearl fuses with Rose while Greg plays a skilful electric guitar riff, which ascends as his wonder increases at the event he is witnessing: the appearance of a giant woman, Rainbow Quartz. The musical commentary – carefully presented as diegetic – clearly helps the narration to evolve in the entire episode. The song *What Can I Do for You?* unites Greg and Rose and provokes Pearl's jealousy, the guitar solo correlates with Greg's emotions and the ascending riff reaches its peak when he witnesses the appearance of Rainbow Quartz.

"Fusion" and music

To understand "fusion", we first need to explain what exactly Gems are. Technically speaking, their actual gem (worn visibly on any part of their body) is the only material part of them. The rest is a light projection of their own perception of themselves. Different types of Gem have common general characteristics: Sapphires have one eye, Pearls are slender and refined, Quartzes are big and strong, etc. But the hairstyle, outfits and small details are chosen by each Gem. Now we understand this quality of being a projection, we can address fusion. Two (or more!) Gems have the ability to fuse into a new, bigger body that holds both of their physical gemstones. This body will have traits combining the original two Gems' bodies. Not only that, but their newly created personality will also be a fusion of the parts involved. In this way, an entirely new person is created through the process of fusion. Fusion can result in a body with multiple legs, arms, faces or eyes, and the greater the difference between the Gems involved, the more unusual the number of body parts their fusion will have. This is something Steven and the audience can see for the first time in the episode "Giant Woman".[28] Steven learns that they have the ability to create a new Gem when Amethyst and Pearl mention a certain "Opal" character, who is a combination of the two of them. When starting to go up the mountain, Steven insists that they fuse, his insistence becoming a song in which he strongly asserts this request. The song has several functions: firstly, it consolidates Steven's vocal persona in the choice of musical style; secondly, it starts to develop the concept of fusion; and thirdly, it gives continuity to the montage scene that shows how they climb the mountain to accomplish the mission. When Opal finally appears, Steven knows that she is a friend when she sings a small section of this song, which clearly implies that Amethyst and Pearl – who heard Steven's song previously – are contained in this powerful Giant Woman, who saves him.

The lyrics hint at the fact that fusion combines you and someone else to create an entirely new person, and also that the parts can just un-fuse and go back to be separate entities if they so desire. Later in the episode, we see the fused Gems separate as soon as there is con-

28 Season one, episode 12, *Giant Woman*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XT13ijUfSts

flict between them. As to the musical accompaniment for this song (mainly ukulele and some discrete bell chimes and synthesizer pads in the bridge), it perfectly corresponds to the first style attached to Steven.

It is also important to note that fusion for its own sake and not for fighting purposes is in itself an act of rebellion against Homeworld and is not accepted. Fusion between different Gems creates beautiful unique results that cannot be achieved any other way. Among the rebels – the Crystal Gems who live on Earth – it is celebrated, but development and change are not well regarded in Homeworld. Why is this relevant to explain the use of songs?

The idea of fusion and how it works is not a simple one and may not have been easy to grasp without the songs and dances. In time, the viewer gains a clear understanding of the process and all the rules that apply to fusion without anyone actually explaining them. We have to infer from the narrative that the act of fusion itself is subversive in Homeworld. Gems are originally created for a certain purpose. Rubies or topazes can and must fuse for battle, but anything else is outside the norm and considered "improper". However, diversity proves to be a strength since fusions represent the best of their parts. The Crystal Gems ability to fuse acts as an elegant motif to celebrate and vindicate diversity as a productive and positive aspect of living together. Consequently, to describe the mixture of different song and music styles in *Steven Universe* as simply eclectic would not be completely correct. The approach the series employs is an unconventional way of making diversity productive. And it is precisely that mixture of musical genres that correlates with the process of fusion: the combination of diverse elements is transformed into something much better.

Apart from this general idea, some musical "mixing" between the Songs *Stronger Than You, Something Entirely New and Sapphire's Song* illustrates to what extent music can help to reinforce the idea of fusion.

We first realize Garnet is a fusion in the last episode of season 1, "Jailbreak".[29] In this episode we meet the two Gems who make up Garnet – Ruby and Sapphire – before we know who they are. At this point in the series we still know very little about fusion and the song in this episode, *Stronger Than You*, deepens the meaning of this concept and how it works. As Garnet fights an enemy who does not understand why they would want to stay fused, Garnet sings this song, which emphasizes the importance of love when it comes to fusion. Let us take a look at some of the lyrics:

> Well I am even more than the two of them!
> Everything they care about is what I am!
> I am their fury, I am their patience
> I am a conversation!
> I am made o-o-o-o-of
> lo-o-o-o-ove

29 See Appendix for context.

Narratively, the song's lyrics explain that fusion is much more than it might seem at first sight and the song thus delivers relevant narrative content. Nevertheless, it uses a much more subtle element than simply the lyrics to convey the idea of fusion: the melody itself. Earlier in the episode we hear Sapphire (one of the Gems who form Garnet) singing a short melody so she can find Ruby (the other half of the fusion) while she is incarcerated. Sapphire's Song can be seen in figure 2.[30]

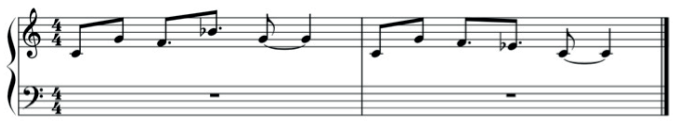

Figure 2: *Sapphire's Song*. Fragment of the score

It is a nice short *a capella* "vocalise", simple and melodic. Now let's take a look at the chorus of *Stronger Than You*[31] and the melody for the words "made of love". See figure 3.

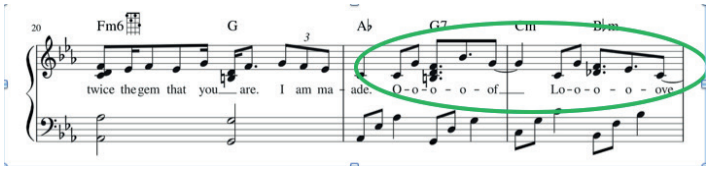

Figure 3: *Stronger than You*. Fragment of the score

Clearly, *Sapphire's Song* has been integrated into Garnet's song. This resource is so useful it is used again in the next season, in the episode "The Answer".[32] Garnet tells Steven how Ruby and Sapphire met, how it was a huge scandal and how they had to run away and join the rebellion in order to be together. In the story they sing the song *Something Entirely New*,[33] in which we again learn more details about what being fused means for the Gems. Right at the end of the song they dance and fuse together shortly after humming the melody in figure 4.

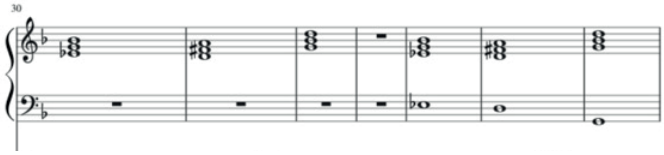

Figure 4: *Something Entirely New*. Fragment of the score

30 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvE2CgTEXco

31 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OWq38TikzU

32 Season 2, episode 23.

33 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEJvCQ7QZEo

It is once again the same melody from Sapphire's Song, which is now present to imply that fusion is about to happen. To sum up, through these songs (*Giant Woman, Stronger Than You and Something Entirely New*), we gain a better understanding of the concept of fusion. Now that we have seen how purely musical procedures reinforce the narrative content in the story, we can discuss what music does in terms of emotion. This has definitely been consciously considered in this series. If we compare it to other animation series, we have to conclude that *Steven Universe* confers much importance on the characters' inner feelings and interpersonal relationships in the development of the narrative. In this aspect, songs undeniably contribute to the transmission of mood (hence changes in harmonies, different instrumental settings, vocal styles, etc.). Songs explain conflict and allow the development and understanding of emotionally complex situations through the lyrics and their musical setting. As we said earlier, songs in *Steven Universe* are a natural response to conflict.[34] But at the same time songs always provide valuable information to understand the plot. If we consider *Let's Only Think About Love*,[35] we can observe both functions. At the beginning of this song, in the introduction, we encounter a very mature Steven grooming himself (shaving!) for the wedding in front of a mirror in the purest style of the introspective song. He is coming to terms with the fact that Rose Quartz shattered Pink Diamond but also simultaneously providing a recap of the parts of the story we need to remember. Once he decides to put the problems to one side to celebrate Ruby and Sapphire's wedding, the song suddenly goes from gloomy to optimistic, bells ring and everything is fine. Later on during the episode, when talking to Peridot, however, Steven makes reference to a big danger, which we are more aware of thanks to the information in the introduction.

Part 3: Diegesis and songs

If we want to conform to the classical distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic, the songs in *Steven Universe* fall into four categories.

1. Diegetic singing

All the songs the characters sing at concerts or to each other – *Wailing Stone, Destiny, Just a Comet, What Can I Do for You?*, etc. (see Appendix) – belong to this category. The instruments we hear correspond to those we see because the characters are playing them and the song is motivated or justified; that is, the characters are fully conscious of singing and not speaking. The song is a form of social exchange, for example *The Jam Song*.[36] This is a duet

34 The creator herself is perfectly aware of this. "When [the show] is tackling heavier topics, I hope it's clear that I'm trying to tackle these topics gently and respectfully. *Steven Universe* is not a tragedy or a dark comedy, it will always be warm and sweet. So if a heavy topic throws that into question, I find music can keep it clear that it's meant to be a sweet and healing thing" Mallikarjuna, (2016).

35 "Reunited", season 5, episodes 23 and 24. *Let's Only Think About Love* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYYMgRothFA

36 "Sworn to the Sword", season 2, episode 6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiHavtKvBCg

with Connie, Steven's best friend, in which the violin is visually present because they are "jamming"; in other words, playing together. It is worth mentioning that Connie does not have her own songs or a definite style to represent her, but the violin is associated with her character. Formally, it is slightly more complex than *Be Wherever You Are*[37] but very similar in style. *The Jam Song* parallels the reestablishment of equality and harmony between the two friends after a difficult time, when Steven did not want to involve Connie in his endeavour to protect the world because she might get hurt and refused to speak to her.
Other songs such as *Be Wherever You Are, Peace and Love on Planet Earth*, and even *Giant Woman* also belong to this category in a way, because although the characters are self-consciously singing, the source of the instrumental music is not visible. But, since they usually lead to a montage sequence, the acousmatic sound of the instruments is softened. Besides, maintaining a certain musical style to represent the characters makes it natural to have their sounds around them.

2. 'Diegetic' in the convention of the musical genre

Lately, there has been a lot of discussion among specialists about the pertinence of applying the diegetic or non-diegetic dichotomy to musical narratives. It is well known that in opera, the theatrical musical and musicals, our suspension of disbelief has a very low threshold and we accept singing and dancing in situations that clearly depart from a realistic representation of life.[38] Taking this into consideration, some of the songs in *Steven Universe* could be considered "almost" diegetic inasmuch as they function as a substitute for dialogue. *Dear Old Dad,*[39] *Do It For Her,*[40] *What's the Use in Feeling Blue?*[41] and many other songs could be naturalized; that is, we could easily ignore that they are songs because they provide an entirely satisfactory setting for plot development (with the added value of including nice tunes). Once again, we have to stress that in this series songs never stop the course of the action: musical numbers always provide some kind of insight for the different motivations or former actions of the characters.

3. Crossing the boundaries between diegetic and non-diegetic

Much has been discussed about background music as opposed to source music and, more often than not, the boundaries are not as clear for composers as they are for narratologists. What we mean by this is that composers sometimes take realistic elements from the diegesis and integrate them in the score, so the boundaries between what belongs to the fictional world and what does not are somewhat fuzzy. One always wonders: is it possible that the

37 In *The Jam Song* we see more variation in the structure: verse, bridge and verse, ABA.

38 See Penner (2017) and Heldt (2013).

39 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UViYKBlpFbc

40 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yG8caPPY1Y

41 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtA-juh3rf4

characters "can hear" non-diegetic music at times? In Steven Universe we have an interesting example of this phenomenon, the song *Full Disclosure*.[42]

This episode acts as a recap of the previous season, but this song is also important in terms of giving a full account of the development of Steven's feelings towards Connie and the management of trauma. During the episode, Connie repeatedly phones Steven to find out if he is alright after the events in "Jailbreak", and Steven becomes anxious about telling her the truth because he does not want to worry her. Both Steven and the audience hear the phone ring several times. Without any apparent connection, Steven bursts into song to get his feelings off his chest. As he reaches the chorus, we recognize it as the melody in his ringtone. Not only that, but the instrument that plays this main melody is the actual phone. What does this mean?

The song takes a sound from reality, Steven's phone, and integrates it into the musical setting, only this time Steven is not aware of it as he was with Peridot's song (the drill in *Peace and Love on Planet Earth*). Here music directly connects the anxiety he is expressing through the lyrics with the ringtone, which in turn connects the situation to Connie on the other side of the line and in Steven's mind.

4. Non-diegetic

Within the non-diegetic category of songs, we find two particular cases worth mentioning. From a strictly narratological point of view it is important that the song is sung by a voice that does not belong to the diegesis. The first time this happens is in the last episode of season 3, "Bubbled", when we hear *Love Like You*.[43] As Steven is rescued from drifting in space by the Crystal Gems, he faints at the idea that his mother, Rose, killed one of the Diamonds in order to win the war. While he is unconscious, an unknown voice, which does not belong to any character, sings *Love Like You*[44] over a montage scene. The song ends when he regains consciousness. This happens for the second time much later, in the season 5 episode "Escapism".[45] In it, while the real Steven is in prison in the Gems' Homeworld, his astral projection manages to reach Earth to ask his dad and the rest of his friends for backup. In the scene in which he finally makes contact with them, an unknown voice (as in "Bubbled") sings the song *Escapism*[46] over the muted action. The scene ends with Steven fainting and regaining consciousness back at the prison.

The parallelism between the two situations lies in Steven's lack of consciousness. It is visually supported by the image, with a blurred frame of Steven's legs to enhance the effect.

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42 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rkez0Bi8fs

43 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfaGjOFj_pc

44 Throughout seasons 2 and 3, the song Love Like You was slowly built up as end credits music, a new verse being added every few episodes. With the conclusion of season 3, the song was complete. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWhjh9BpIrc

45 Episode 28.

46 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n7FFCPWDmo

In both situations, Steven himself is unable to sing, so the voice steps in to fill in for him. These are the only times Steven faints in the entire series, making it a consistent procedure to replace his voice.

Another apparently non-diegetic song in Steven Universe is the opening sequence. The main theme, *We Are the Crystal Gems*, is one of the most well-known tunes in the show, and three versions are used in the series (an official extended fourth version exists but is part of an extra video that does not belong to an episode, so it is not integrated in the timeline). This theme song reveals changes in Steven as he matures, since the transition between the first version and the second has a direct relationship with his development and growth. In the first version of the opening (which covers season 1 and season 2 up to the episode "Sworn to the Sword"), Steven is finding his place among the Gems and only sings the line "and if we think we can't" in the whole song. The other Gems sing all the other lines and he manages to squeeze in at the end with "and Steven!". When the second version appears, Steven has gained better control over his powers. The song is the same, but it is sung in a different style, with more instrumental accompaniment. Steven gets to sing many more lines in the new version. Visually, Steven is also presented as a much more mature and collected person and many other characters also show signs of development.

See the lines sung by Steven in the second version in blue:

> We are the Crystal Gems!
> We'll always save the day
> And if you think we can't
> We'll always find a way
> That's why the people of this world
> Believe in.
> Garnet, Amethyst, and Pearl and Steven![47]

His importance in the group has grown and this makes the theme song adapt to the situation. In the last episode in the series, the theme song is sung within the narrative for the first time. Now Steven finally gets to sing the whole song by himself and the music becomes integrated in the montage scene at the conclusion of the series with all the creatures having the damage they suffered during the Gem war erased. Up to this point the theme song has only existed in the extradiegetic[48] space, but now it belongs to the diegesis. It has ceased to be non-diegetic, crossing over from that space outside the diegesis that is not even part of the episode. In this third version, the lyrics change to bring closure to the series and have an optimistic undertone: it is a celebration of life and the end of conflict.

47 *We Are the Crystal Gems* (Season 2). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-O13uTtwZM

48 In texts from television or radio, the space for the channel or radio station and their corporative messages and sounds is known as extradiegetic space. Opening and closing credits belong to this space (Rodman, 2010).

'Cause we believe in peace and love
We are here for fun!
If you're not then let's not fight 'cause
We've already won![49]

Conclusions

Steven Universe presents a level of narrative complexity that places it above mainstream cartoon series. Different musical styles (pop, rap, hip-hop, rock, theatrical musical, etc.) instrumentation (acoustic, electronic) and harmonic treatments are used in a productive and creative way to serve the plot. In *Steven Universe* the musical numbers are integrated in the storytelling process and can cross the boundaries that theoretically separate diegetic from non-diegetic music, either akin to some musical films or in more unconventional ways, to the extent of integrating extra-fictional music (the songs from the opening and closing credits) into a part of the diegesis. To sum up, we wish to point out that in *Steven Universe*, beneath an apparent plot of fighting and adventure, difficult and important issues concerning the problems of understanding the world of adults and the complexity of feelings and attraction are treated in a healthy and natural way, and the use of music is crucial in accomplishing this aim.

49 *We Are the Crystal Gems* (Montage last episode). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecrVOZ3z_Dk

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APPENDIX: NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF SONGS

SEASON ONE

1. *Cookie Cat* - Presents Steven as a child.
2. *Let me Drive my Van into Your Heart* - Presents Greg's career as an unsuccessful rock star.
3. *Serious Steven* - Steven sings about how "serious" he is, showing his playful side.
4. *Giant Woman* - Steven wants to understand the concept of fusion (MONTAGE).
5. *Birthday Song* - Steven deals with the fact that Gems do not age and do not know their birthday. Important information about the Gems' bodies is discovered.
6. *Strong in the Real Way* - Pearl explains how dangerous and destructive fusion can be.
7. *Steven and the Stevens* - Steven plays around with time and space. He is learning about complicated concepts and about his powers.
8. *Steven and the Crystal Gems* - Steven learns the consequences of time travel.
9. *Dear Old Dad* - Steven shows compassion for injured Greg and looks after him.
10. *Be Wherever You Are* - The lives of Steven, Sadie and Lars on the island adventure (MONTAGE).
11. *On the Run* - Steven and Amethyst run away from home to find the kindergarten where she spent her childhood (MONTAGE).
12. *Just a Comet* - Greg tells Steven how he met Rose Quartz, Steven's mother.
13. Destiny - Greg goes to find Rose and gives her a t-shirt. Rose is attracted to Greg.
14. *Lapis Lazuli* - Steven explains Lapis' motivations to his dad.
15. *Wailing Stone* - With the same melody as Lapis Lazuli, the song talks about translating the wailing stone.
16. *Sapphire's Song* - Sapphire sings so Ruby can find her in prison.
17. *Stronger Than You* - While Garnet is fighting, she explains the complexity of fusion. Cross-cut editing while the song is being sung shows how Steven, Pearl and Amethyst manage to escape from the interstellar prison.

SEASON TWO

18. *Full Disclosure* - Steven worries about Connie's wellbeing after dangerous events with the Homeworld Gems.
19. *The Jam Song* - Steven and Connie have solved their conflict and there is harmony between them again.
20. *Do it for Her* - Pearl teaches Connie how to fight with the sword (MONTAGE).
21. *What Can I Do for You?* - On an old VHS recording we see Rose singing with Greg and how she fuses with Pearl. This gives Steven more information about fusion.
22. *Tower of Mistakes* - Amethyst regrets what she did to Garnet.
23. *Haven't You Noticed* - Sadie is caught by Steven singing a popular pop song.
24. *Haven't You Noticed* - Steven performs Sadie's song at the Beachapalooza festival.
25. *Something Entirely New* - Ruby and Sapphire talk about how fusion felt to them (first time).

26. *Peace and Love on Planet Earth* - Steven teaches Peridot the importance of making music

SEASON THREE

27. *Like a Burger* - Commercial jingle that makes Greg rich (10 million dollars) Same music as Just a Comet (No. 12).
28. *Don't Cost Nothing* - Greg sings about the important things in life not costing money. Duet with Steven. They decide to travel to Empire City.
29. *Empire City* - Greg and Steven sing about going on vacation to Empire City while they are packing (MONTAGE).
30. *Mr Greg* - The hotel staff sings along with Greg and Pearl about how much money they have and how they are spending it. Pearl leaves, interrupting the scene.
31. *It's Over, Isn't It?* - Pearl sings a soliloquy about her relationship with Rose and Greg. Steven discovers the origin of Pearl and Greg's feud.
32. *Both of You* - Steven sings to Greg and Pearl to convince them to talk about their feelings because he loves them both. And they do (MONTAGE).
33. *Don't Cost Nothing/Those Cost Something* (reprise) - Greg and Pearl recount how much they spent on the trip and conclude unregretfully they could have just stayed at home.
34. *I think I Need a Little Change* - Greg sings about his life being Rose's partner.
35. *Love Like You* - This song appears when Steven is rescued from space and his reaction when he discovers that Rose Quartz destroyed Pink Diamond (MONTAGE).

SEASON FOUR

36. *Here Comes a Thought* - Garnet explains to Stevonnie how to handle the anxiety provoked by fusion.
37. *Still Not Giving Up* - Steven films a tutorial for YouTube on how to play guitar and encourages viewers to write songs to cope with complicated feelings. This is a video clip and does not belong to the series narrative.
38. *I Could Never Be Ready* - Greg finds enters fatherhood (MONTAGE).
39. *What's the Use of Feeling Blue?* - Yellow Diamond sings to Blue about Pink's death.

SEASON FIVE

40. *Working Dead* - Sadie improvises a dark song about hating her job.
41. *Ghost Song* - Sadie Killer and the Suspects perform live.
42. *That Distant Shore* - Lapis sings about conflicting feelings.
43. *Ruby Rider* - Ruby experiences life on her own.
44. *Let's Only Think About Love* - After recapping who Rose was and how the Earth is in danger, Steven recalls all the troubles surrounding their lives and the dangers that loom, but decides he would rather focus on the wedding.
45. *Familiar* - Steven sings about how similar feelings among the Diamonds and the Crystal Gems can be.
46. *Escapism* - The lyrics talk about someone who is trapped and wants to be free. The images show Steven's astral projection, which allows him to leave the Homeworld jail to ask his dad and the other Gems still on Earth for help (MONTAGE).
47. *We are the Crystal Gems* - Steven sings the theme song while he provides a conclusion to the series (MONTAGE).
48. *Change Your Mind* - Steven closes the episode and the series with this piece of advice.

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The relationship between music and images in French non-fiction TV programs.

From a media-inherited practice to an autonomous one (1949-2015)

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SUMMARY

The use of pre-existing music during television news and magazine or reality shows produced in France has increased steadily since the industry began. Although music in TV fiction has been a matter of academic interest since the late 1970s (Tagg, 2000; Frith, 2002; Coates, 2007), non-fiction programs have enjoyed little attention from the academic world. In a context of socio-cultural and socio-economic change in music and television spanning 60 years, this article discusses the following questions: How has the relationship between images and music on TV evolved since 1949? Was it built upon media-inherited techniques or did television media devise their own practices? A statistical analysis has been performed on 140 TV programs broadcast between 1949 and 2015, and a music/image classification has been used to test close to 2000 extracts from pre-existing music tracks. Building on Roger Bowman (1949) and Ron Rodman's (2010) proposals on music in fiction TV programs, this classification allows us to adopt a perspective drawing from socio-economic and semiotic approaches. Three time periods have been identified: 1950-1980: inherited music integration; 1980-2000: editorial music integration; 2000-2015: hyper-contextualized music integration. At first, music was thus used much as it had been in other media (space-time contextualization, leitmotiv, etc.). Then, from the 1980s onwards, it started to reflect channels' editorial policy, especially in the case of French music channel, *M6*. Finally, since the 2000s, even though these aspects are still valid, we have observed the emergence of "hypercontextualization" processes, in which verbatim use of lyrics has become common practice.

Summary

The use of pre-existing music[1] during television news and magazine or reality shows produced in France has increased steadily since the industry began. It is therefore quite commonplace to hear a song by the Rolling Stones playing in the background of a TV newscast, or to hear the original soundtrack of *Pirates of the Caribbean* on a reality cooking show. The socio-economic and socio-technical context within which this music editing practice is set has gone through tremendous changes since the 2000s (Bouquillion & Combès, 2007). Such changes can be accounted for by the use of new production and post-production techniques, but also by the crisis that hit the French music industry in 2003 and the renewal of television programming after streaming platforms came into use. Therefore, music editing plays a key role in analyzing the relationship between music and images.

From a theoretical standpoint, there is a lack of research dealing with the "image-music" arrangement in information and communication sciences. Academic research in the field seems to emphasize images when it comes to television (Lochard & Soulages, 1998; Hanot, 2002; Soulages, 2007). Similarly, it is fairly unusual to come across research associating music with non-fiction TV programs, even in musicology or film studies. One reason for this is that music in fiction TV shows seems to generate more interest than music in reality shows (Coates, 2007). Broadly speaking, research analyzing the relationship between music and images tends to focus on cinema. Studies dealing with television are rather recent and scarce in number (Jost, 2004; Hilmes, 2008; Rodman, 2010; Deaville, 2011). They all agree on the idea that broadly applying the findings of film music analysis to television is impossible for two main reasons: firstly, because television is broadcast in a continuous flow; and secondly, television has been met with increased rationalization since the 1980s, which means its content now has a commercial value. Thus, radio, as well as other musicalized media formats, could be regarded as a key part of the legacy television has inherited, just like cinema.

Our article is at the intersection of these perspectives. It focuses on the integration of pre-existing music tracks in non-fiction TV programs since 1949, adopting an info-communicational approach and a perspective that spans socioeconomics and semiotics. The main goal of this work is first to question how the relationship between images and music on TV has evolved since 1949. Next, it is to ask whether it has been built upon media-inherited techniques or whether televised media devised their own practices. In other words, this research consists of identifying the pre-existing functions of the "image/music" pairing in films or on the radio in order to find out whether they are present in television. Do TV shows use music as a leitmotiv or a spatio-temporal contextualization tool? And finally, are there any particularities in the way music is used on French TV? These questions bring forth a broader issue on how to approach this relationship and on whether or not to question the function of music, since this has already

1 Music edited or produced by record labels unspecialized in "music for the media".

been done for radio and film. Our twofold theoretical approach allows us to document the evolution of the relationship between music and images since the 1980s toward a more autonomous practice, but also how its content has been gradually infused with industrial markers testifying to the growing industrialization of cultural products.

In order to offer a first typology of the way pre-existing musical extracts are used in French TV programs, we have chosen to use the results of a content analysis to compare the different functions that can be assigned to music in films or on television. First of all, we built a categorical system using works addressing the function of illustrative music in musicology and film studies. We will discuss and comment on the way this system was built in the second part of this article. This categorical system was then put to the test with TV content by performing a statistical analysis of 140 TV programs broadcast between 1949 and 2015, focusing on three corpora of programs broadcast in 2003, 2009 and 2015 (97 programs in total). In order to carry out this analysis, we compiled musical extracts drawn from TV programs in a systematic way, whether they were pre-existing tracks or not, and noted the length of the extracts. Then, each pre-existing track was labeled with its title, performer and the year it was released. To finish, close to 2000 extracts from pre-existing music tracks were assigned a function in the relationship between images and music with the help of our categorical system. Nine interviews with TV editors or sound designers were then conducted in order to check whether the results obtained matched the professionals' reality.

This article is organized in three parts. We will start with a review of the theoretical stakes of the analysis of the relationship between music and images on TV, questioning the relevance of adapting findings from film studies to television. Next, we will discuss the traditional functions of music in films as well as TV. This will lead us to explain how our typology of existing music editing practices on television was constructed. Finally, we will try and highlight three time periods representative of the evolution of pre-existing tracks and music editing on television from 1949 up to today. We will also present one of the most remarkable changes of the last few years: "hypercontextualization".

Analysis of the relationship between music and images on television: towards a global adaptation of the findings of film studies?

The analysis of illustrative music draws a great deal from the results of musicology and film studies and, in order to study music and television together, research has had to rely heavily upon film music. However, the format, commercial characteristics and narrative approach of TV programs is somewhat different from films. In that regard, the legacy from film music studies can be questioned. As a consequence, we have based our analysis on the work of Rodman (2010, pp. 107–112) and the results of our corpus analysis in order to highlight the actual differences between TV programs and films. We will deal with what brings them together later in this article.

Differences between two types of audiovisual productions: the TV show and the film

The differences between TV shows and films lie within four main elements, which all have an impact on music editing practices:

- Production length
- Directing techniques
- Differentiated commercial goals
- Music sourcing

a) Production length

The difference between the length of TV programs and films is quite noticeable; TV programs usually being shorter. When comparable to the length of a film, TV programs are often interrupted by commercial breaks or announcements from the network, which is similar to the way programming works in the radio sector (Hilmes, 2008). In addition, the sequencing of TV programs is often built upon an accumulation of reports, thus reducing the overall length of the program. As a result, attention-grabbing devices are always a priority for production companies during the creation phase and it is therefore quite customary to refer to conventions or elements that will be familiar to viewers. Music, especially pre-existing music, seems to be one of them.

b) Directing techniques

Rodman explains that directing techniques differ from one medium to another. TV production is much faster than other media thanks to the use of lighter material. As a consequence, cuts are more visible, and the succession of sequences is faster. This leads us to notice three elements resulting in redundancies:

- the repetition of common images
- the inclusion of a written commentary or dialog describing the image
- the use of a musical extract as a commentary for on-screen action

Chion's l'*Audio-vision* was the inspiration for the work by Rodman, who adapted Chion's comparative analysis of films and music video clips to television. (Chion, 2013, pp. 142–143[2]). The fast pace and frequent cuts characteristic of television were also observed by Prendergast (1992, p. 276), who explained that the use of music is a form of adaptation to these features. In our corpus analyses, we have observed the increased sequencing of music extracts and their shortening (Figure 1).

2 Similar elements can be found in non-fiction TV programs (split screen, the use of a voiceover and the use of music to comment on an image). However, we prefer to focus on the idea that in music video clips, the image is commenting on the music and not the other way around. Therefore R. Rodman's proposal can be seen as a bit of a shortcut.

	AVERAGE DURATION OF MUSIC IN GENERAL	AVERAGE DURATION OF PREEXISTING MUSIC	MEDIAN DURATION OF MUSIC IN GENERAL	MEDIAN DURATION OF PREEXISTING MUSIC
2003#	00:00:32	**00:00:33**	00:00:27	**00:00:30**
2009	00:00:27	**00:00:28**	00:00:22	00:00:24
2015	00:00:30	**00:00:26**	00:00:23	**00:00:24**

Figure 1. Average and median length in seconds of the musical extracts in our corpus in 2003, 2009 and 2015.

Music extracts used in TV programs are much shorter than those used in films. It is rather unusual to hear pre-existing musical extracts lasting no longer than a few seconds in full-length features. In a nutshell, the frequent commercial breaks, the sequencing of the programs and their short format, as well as the faster pace and easy manipulation which characterize televised images all account for the differences in music editing practices between TV and cinema (Rodman, 2010, p. 171).

c) Differentiated commercial goals

The third distinction criterion is inspired by the work of Prendergast (1992, p. 274). The composer and film music theorist draws a line between television and cinema thanks to their industry goals. According to him, television is meant to sell products and to bring in profits. As a consequence, it might be suffering from the dichotomy between striving for artistic value and commercial success. These two values come into conflict despite being closely linked. According to the author, the hierarchical distinction between "good TV" and "commercial TV" can serve the latter in the way they interact. According to Prendergast, cinema is not as commercially driven as television. The difference lies in the way marketing strategies are implemented and the impact they have on content creation. TV programs require sponsors, while the success of a film depends on how it has been marketed to the public. In other words, the author explains that TV tends to resort to internal strategies that have an impact on the content of the program – the use of music for example – while the success of a film depends on external marketing strategies that have little to do with directing. Even though it is not our goal to regard TV as a mere commercial product devoid of artistic value, we agree with the author that the highly commercial dimension of TV programs and the impact this can have on their production should be considered. In the third part of this article we will show that this is one of the most characteristic aspects of the relationship between images and music on television. One example of this is product placement in films, which became a professional sector as early as the 1980s (Bressoud & Lehu, 2008). Similarly, the use of pre-existing music tracks, which is increasingly prevalent, is at times the result of a direct order from some record companies (Smith, 1998, p. 33).

d) Music sourcing

Rodman talks about one last element which can help differentiate cinema from television. According to him, music on television comes from three main sources. Musical extracts may be taken from previous episodes of the same show, from music libraries or from other films. In our corpus, we have noticed that the music tracks used existed before the creation of the programs featuring them and that they could be put into four categories: musical extracts drawn from music libraries, commercial music tracks not intended for audiovisual sonorization, film music and, finally, video game music. Yet, even in films, music is not always composed specially for the film and many tracks are borrowed from different sources (Chion, 1995).

In order to progress to our analysis, we will mainly focus on two aspects:

1. The key role played by television sequencing and therefore music sequencing
2. The impact of television marketization on content

We would like to reassert the idea that the repetitive aspects of TV programs as a whole are designed to keep the viewer's attention and to set channels apart from their competitors. Rodman (2010, p. 109) insists on repetitiveness as one of the most meaningful devices used in music editing. The music chosen has to tie the program together with musical conventions that are meaningful to the viewer. Later on, we will show that pre-existing music tracks used in TV programs seem to echo the author's words, especially in our corpus of non-fiction programs. According to our findings, this repetitive dimension seems to be one of the most representative features of music editing for television since the 2010s.

Similarities between two types of audiovisual productions: the film and the TV show

Rodman (2010, pp. 100–112) talks quite briefly about the similarities between film and television with regard to the use of film studies as a tool for the analysis of television music. First, Rodman explains that both are built upon multisensory principles, combining visual images, sounds, words (written or spoken) and music. In addition, he tells the reader that the construction of narrative for television programs emulates that of films. Thus, in order to tell stories, television has made the old narrative structures its own. Rodman also concludes by implying that the use of the leitmotiv is undeniably the most significant feature television has borrowed from cinema. In the third part, we will see how the leitmotiv is used on television and how it was adapted for the medium. However, before moving on, it is important to stress the idea that, generally speaking, television and film display common "functions" of music beside the leitmotiv. Even though the difference in format sets the two media apart in many ways, the use of music "functions" in our analysis feeds our hypothesis on television's musical heritage. After reviewing different theoretical works on music and images, we have decided to focus on a set of helpful pointers to identify some of

the forms the relationship can take, in order to build a first typology of music tracks used in non-fiction TV programs.

Music "functions": from cinema to television

Film music: from function-building to function-homogenizing

As in the case of television, it was some time before the study of film music became systematized. A few early works were published in the 1930s and 1940s, but it was not until the 1980s that researchers started to take an interest in the subject more widely. In the past, film studies theorists focused on images alone (Stilwell & Powrie, 2006) and addressed the issue of music from an aesthetic perspective, which did not further an understanding of how it worked.
In France, Maurice Jaubert (1936) is considered a pioneer of film music theory. He proposes that music can "serve" a film, either by filling gaps or as on-screen action commentary; as a result being merely decorative, with no expressive function. Jaubert was a composer himself, who set out to rid music of the characteristics inherited from melodrama and to make it "realistic". In other words, music was supposed to grow apart from the image and to exist autonomously. The music used in films at the time was mainly pre-existing. Jaubert's writings tended to support this idea and to defend music's self-affirmation. The historian and film theorist Jean Mitry used these elements again thirty years later:

> Music is not useless, but it has a very different role. Its goal is not to comment on the image or to paraphrase visual information, or to match its rhythm – except in a few exceptional cases. Nor does it have to have a value or an intrinsic meaning...Film music does not explain or accompany; it is a meaningful element and nothing more. (Mitry, 1965, p. 118)

Mitry's opinion on film music betrays the superiority of images. Music has to serve the film in an aesthetic manner, and any composition must take the film's images into account. To support this idea, it is worth mentioning that composition takes place after the film is made, and so the search for a function based upon stereotypes or conventions would only alter the nature of music and turn it into a mere tool. Christian Metz, drawing inspiration from both the authors quoted above, argues that "bad film music" illustrates content using a sort of "musical and cinematic language" based upon a "system of pleonastic equivalences" that mimic on-screen emotions (Metz, 1981, p. 55).
The first studies to use empirical data in musicology appeared just a few years later. In France, Julien created the first categorization of film music in films from the 1980s. In an article entitled "Methodology elements for a typology of film music", he came up with "discovery procedures" meant to classify the main redundancies between the use of music in cinema and on television. He gathered them by theme, arguing that:

> It is high-time to study the description of music interventions with a scientific approach in order to be able to serialize, analyze and compare the different functions of film music and the power it has in a specific role, that of facilitator of narrative credibility. (Julien, 1980, p. 198)

His opinions come into conflict with the three authors quoted earlier in the sense that he does not try to say what film music should be but suggests that it is composed in subservience to the image. His first proposal is twofold: mechanical music – the source of which is visible on-screen (a radio or a performer) – and background music. The latter can be divided into five categories: illustration of a journey (a trip), psychological state (emotions or feelings); accidents (death, murder, fires, etc.), hobbies or fun activities (indoors and outdoors – grab a coffee, mow the lawn), the illustration of looks and music for the closing credits.

> **- Decorative function:** music represents the sonic landscape of the image, either directly – a harpist is playing on screen and the viewer can hear harp music – or indirectly, for historically or geographically set sequences;
> **- Symbolic function:** a character is given a "musical identity". Julien does not use the word leitmotiv but rather talks about a Wagnerian use of music;
> **- Conjunctive function:** music ties together the different sequences of a film.

According to the author, these functions rather invalidate the theories defended by Jaubert, Mitry and Metz. Indeed, thanks to his analysis, he is able to show that film music is not just a raw and stereotypical adaptation of the visual content. The author's conclusion leads us to regard music as a "meaning system that is metaphorical, analogical and coded", tailored to "the emotional needs of international cinema" (Julien, 1987).
In between these two articles, Chion (1985), in France, and Gorbman (1987), in the US, started building their reputations and are now considered the founding fathers of the discipline. Later on, further studies were produced in the field of musicology as well as in film studies and researchers came up with a common definition of the functions of film music:

> Whether inspired by structuralist or pragmatist semiology, Freudian or Lacanian psychoanalysis, Gestalt psychology or cognitive sciences, film music studies always come up with a similar set of expressive, narrative and aesthetic functions – it does not matter whether the researcher is in musicology or film studies, deaf or blind, they will generally give film music a set of eight functions. (Cardinal, 2012, p. 38)

In the provocatively entitled article "Where are we (now) with (the study of) film music (in cinema)?", Cardinal remarks that researchers have been studying the question since the mid-1980s, irrespective of the research field or discipline, and have regularly come up with the same set of eight functions:

a)	Music situates the story or the narrative in a specific space-time setting
b)	Music "colors" the action or the narrative with a specific mood, and sets it in an atmosphere that is shared with the viewers
c)	Music draws the viewers' attention to a set of elements visible on screen, lets them know about their presence off-screen and highlights the dramatic elements of a scene or a sequence's narrative progress
d)	Music reinforces some of the narrative developments, it plays upon the intensity of the scene and leads the action
e)	Music reveals the characters' inner thinking, their secret motives, or their hidden sentimental state
f)	Music generates emotions
g)	Music binds sequences together, it connects movements, visual and sonic fragments, it sets a rhythm
h)	Music is one of the reasons viewers get absorbed in a film

Figure 2. The eight functions of film music by Cardinal (2012)

Though he criticizes them, Cardinal admits that these functions help us to understand part of the viewers' narrative experience with regard to the relationship between music and images, or at least, from our point of view, they help explain the influence production companies have on the editing process. Yet, we strongly agree with him that these functions do not account for the viewers' true experiences. On the contrary, they appear to signal that music is not much more than a tool which serves image and narration. It is reduced to a choice made by directors or composers and later modeled by theorists.

As a consequence, working with a set of pre-established musical functions seems to suggest that "the choice of music is a conscious choice made in full awareness of what it entails or obeying a set of 'natural' laws" (Chion, 1995, p. 188). We tend to agree with Chion that some uses result from a conscious choice and can be easily identified through a product analysis, even more so when they are acknowledged by the people in charge of selecting or composing the music. Yet, the author disagrees with the idea that music "accompanies" the film, because music is part and parcel of the product. It is not always a commentary for the image alone, sometimes it is used for a dialog, a gesture or an editing feature. The question that needs to be asked, he argues, is not "what is the use of that music in the film?", to which the answer is "nothing", but rather "in what way does the music serve the film?". "Bring together or take apart, put a limit or blur boundaries, move forward or hold back, set the mood, hide disgraceful sound or image-editing features, music does them all." (Chion, 1995, p. 191). This rejection of "musical functionalism" in films, as he calls it, is a recurring idea in Chion's work. It does not stop him from offering a wider set of musical functions in film, though he does not always call them as such, using terms such as emotional support, character or action identification with a leitmotiv, "mickeymousing" or "time and space processing machine". They all, however, relate to the set of eight functions set forth by Cardinal.

Though they endow music with a specific role, these different functions act as a heuristic way of shedding light on the way music is used in TV programs, in order to describe and to better understand the comparison. We need to bear in mind, however, the criticism ex-

pressed earlier and the difficulty of bringing together television and cinema in a meaningful way. Once again, we come back to the idea that our goal is to better understand how the relationship between music and images is built on television. First, we will focus on the message transmitted by the program maker. To do so, we will compare our hypotheses with the results from our interviews with sound editors later in this article. It should also be noted that a set of studies on television music has been conducted previously and that the typology of musical integration in non-fiction television programs we have created is based on their descriptions and was born out of a discussion of their findings.

Musical functions on television

In 1949, Roger Bowman, an American TV critic, came up with a list of eleven musical functions observed in TV programs in the journal entitled Film Music Notes. The list (Figure 3) was based upon the first fictional TV programs:

1	The theme: identifying the program as a whole.
2	The Wagnerian leitmotifs, or "character themes", heralding or accentuating the approach or presence of a character by the use of a theme identified with him.
3	Recalling past events by suggestive themes.
4	Predicting future events by suggestive themes.
5	Imitating sounds, actions, or characteristics in musical caricature.
6	Building action, or indicating time, place, or unseen action.
7	Providing a transition from scene, place to place, thought to thought, period to period.
8	Suggesting a blackout or a slow fade-out.
9	Showing subjectively the inner thoughts, feelings, and meanings of a character or a scene.
10	Achieving montage effects with two or more themes or types of music played contrapuntally for special effects or distortions, as in Prokofieff's Lieutenant Kije music.
11	Use of music to annotate dialogue. Parallel annotation may weaken dialogue unless skillfully used as stylized sound effect.

Figure 3. Bowman's (1949) eleven musical functions on television in Rodman (2010, p. 112)

Thanks to a comparison with the functions of film music established years later, we were able to notice a few similarities. Music is thus used as a time and place marker, it is able to set a specific mood, to express the intimacy of a character, to arouse emotions, to connect different sequences and finally to grab the attention of the viewer during a narrative sequence. The eighth function in Cardinal's list, seducing the viewer, is the only one not found here. We propose that function could be regarded as a direct result of the other seven functions combined.

Bowman's additional functions could be considered specific to television. According to Rodman, who led us to the 1949 categorization, the list was an anticipation of future studies on television music.

Rodman suggests creating three "generic areas" with Bowman's functions. According to him, the first, eighth and tenth functions would help navigate the flow of television (intro-

duction, transition, closing). They contribute to the creation of extradiegetic space in the medium. The other eight functions (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11), which can be found in cinema as well, use music as an agent that influences the narration. As a result, they belong to the intradiegetic space.

These different "areas" are built upon common distinctions in the field of music and image analysis.[3] Rodman's spaces (Figure 4) were based upon Genette's definition of diegesis. Diegesis is defined as "a universe rather than a sequence of actions (story): diegesis is not the story, but the universe it is set in" (Genette, 1984, p. 13). If we draw a parallel with film music, diegetic music would pertain to the universe in which the story is set, and non-diegetic music would not. In other words, resorting to these notions allows us to show that music takes on the role of narrator in TV programs (non-diegetic).

Diegetic music is directly inserted into the story told by the program; it is "music that both the characters and the audience can hear" (Rodman, 2010, p. 58). For television, it can be music played on set or heard by the characters on the radio or at a party.

According to Rodman, non-diegetic music is divided into two parts: extradiegetic and intradiegetic.

Figure 4. The Three Discursive Spaces of Television (Rodman, 2010, p. 54)

The objective of extradiegetic music is to establish a link between the viewer and the channel or program. According to the author, extradiegetic music can be the musical motif of a channel or production studio, or even bumpers. Music can thus bridge two spaces: the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic. Rodman explains that this double function is quite characteristic of television music, in which it is much more prominent than in film music. We will come back to this idea a little later.

Finally, intradiegetic music often plays the part of musical narrator for a particular story. Its role is to highlight or to invent the program's background following the narrative weave, although not exclusively. It can also act as the lead narrator of the story by mimicking its narrative path. When used as a transition tool, it can be put into two categories. It will bind the narration together but also play an extradiegetic role: "Like bumpers, they [transitions]

3 "Screen music" / "pit music" for Chion; "mechanical music" / "side music" for Julien.

are amalgams of extradiegetic and intradiegetic music that function in a traditional way to move from the narrative to a commercial break and vice versa" (Rodman, 2010, p. 57). Yet, when the transition is cast as a bridge between two sequences, it remains purely diegetic. We would now like to focus on a few elements drawn from the previous discussion, and especially the idea that film music and television musical functions are somewhat repetitious. Bowman's, and later on Rodman's, contributions center on television's specific take on musical integration. It is fairly unusual to see pieces of music used both in the intradiegetic and extradiegetic spaces in cinema. As a result, we have chosen to study this aspect in more depth without exclusively focusing on transitions and bumpers. Rodman leaves his categorization open to other suggestions. He explains that the "power" of television lies solely in music's ability to play upon a variety of spaces. We prefer to use the term "power" over "specificity", as it allows for the musical functions we have identified to change over time, just as new codes can be re-negotiated between viewers and producers (Rodman, 2010, p. 58).

First typology of musical integrations on television and temporal evolution (1949-2015)

Description of the typology of musical integrations

The typology of musical integrations on television we have developed features nine categories. It was based on observations from our corpus analyses and from our interviews with sound editors, as well as the theoretical perspectives mentioned earlier. The chart below summarizes them:

1	Locate information or television narrative in a particular place and time period
2	Characterize individuals on the screen, using the leitmotiv
3	Contextualize the subject of a story (additional information)
4	Annotate, comment or highlight images, comments and individuals present on an ad hoc basis
5	Bring or accentuate emotions
6	Continue the diegetic story in the intra-diegetic space
7	Unify or articulate the rhythm of the sequences of a report or a program both with regard to the narrative and the program
8	Promote the music of a performer while contextualizing the sequence
9	Musically color the program as a whole

Figure 5. First typology on the use of pre-existing music on French television

The levels of gray in figure 5 correspond to the different areas of televisual space, whether they belong to the diegesis or not, as according to Rodman. Let's concentrate on the idea that these categories are not always exclusive. A music extract can simultaneously belong to the first and to the fourth category. In order to illustrate this idea, we can look at the example of the song "New York Avec Toi" (1984, Virgin) performed by the band Téléphone in a TV re-

port about the French dancer and choreographer Kamel Ouali's trip to New York (Tellement People, 2009). The contextualization of the place is achieved by the reference to the title of the song and the lyrics, but it is only played once the name of the city has been uttered. This extract can therefore be classified in the fourth category. Similarly, some extracts used to contextualize a sequence can also fulfill the last function or contribute to the time setting of the program.

a) Intradiegetic music

Pre-existing music tracks played during television programs contribute to the time and place setting of the narrative of the program (1). They contribute to the identification of the characters of a program and to their self-affirmation by conforming to stereotypes on a regular basis; stereotypes that bind together musical and socio-cultural elements through the use of leitmotivs or the combination of a set of similar music extracts (2). Music is used to contextualize the subject, not exclusively with regards to its space-time setting, but because it relates to the subject of the program. It can focus on an activity or a special topic – a story about a village lottery, a story about the Titanic; or on one or several people: the life of Beyoncé and Jay-Z, "green celebrities". In that case, while music can simply illustrate the topic, it can also give additional information (3). Music annotates, comments and highlights images, dialogs or comments (and often all three at once). This type of use is not systematic and usually lasts no more than ten seconds (4). Finally, music can enhance emotions, as it does in films. (5). We will not address this function in the article because we have performed content analyses which do not allow us to talk about it in a relevant way, and it was never our intention to talk about music analysis in this article.

b) Building a bridge between diegetic and intradiegetic music

The sixth category (6) corresponds to the intradiegetic use of pre-existing music within the program's diegetic space. We have identified two types of situations:

- Whenever a character is singing or humming a pre-existing song on screen, the track is used by the sound editor. In the program *Tous Ensemble* for example, comedian Willy Rovelli, who is a guest on the show, sings the theme song of the TV series *Charlie's Angels* (Elliott & Ferguson, 1976);
- Whenever diegetic music is played on a broadcasting device (radio, television), the song is also used by the sound editor. For example, during a wedding celebration taking place in *4 Mariages Pour une Lune de Miel*, the DJ plays the song "Summer Jam" (The Underdog Project, 2000) and it is later re-used by the sound editor.

c) Extradiegetic music

Through the use of transitions, a program's musical setting builds a bridge between the narrative realm and the television realm (7), as suggested by Rodman (2010). Pre-existing mu-

sic used as an illustration can be considered a direct or additional way of promoting a performer releasing a new album, for example (8). However, there is a difference between this category and cases in which the program focuses on a person from the music industry. In both cases, songs by performers shown on screen can be used. Yet in the "promotion" category, selected musical extracts are featured on the album the program focuses on. Finally, music can "color" a program, a TV genre or even a television channel as a whole in a specific way (9). This is the case for the French channel *M6*, whose editorial line has centered on music since it was created in 1987. We will come back to this idea a little later.

According to our first typology and the process of its creation, we can say that the music used in non-fiction TV shows is a combination of an inherited practice and an autonomous one. Indeed, intradiegetic music stems from the legacy of film music, but also from the legacy of radio with regards to the sequencing of programming and shows. This move towards greater autonomy is characteristic of the extradiegetic functions of music. By definition, they go beyond the narrative frame of the content to epitomize the editorial logic of the channels or programs. This becomes all the more obvious if we extend the time period of our analysis (1949-2015). Before concluding this article, we would like to present three time periods of musical integration on French TV.

Three time periods for musical integration on French TV: towards greater hypercontextualization

Thanks to the content analysis of 140 TV shows broadcast between 1949 and 2015, we have been able to identify three time periods:

- 1950 to 1980 corresponds to an inherited musical integration practice;
- 1980 to 2000 corresponds to an editorial musical integration practice;
- 2000 to 2015 corresponds to a hyper-contextualized musical integration practice.

Between 1950 and 1980, it was customary to hear music mainly during the news or magazine shows. Pre-existing music was used sparingly and similarly to the way it was used in other media such as radio and cinema. If, for example, a television report took place in Ireland, then an Irish song would be played.

During the 1980s, French television was privatized. Channels were now in competition with each other and new channels with specific programming appeared. This was the case of *M6*, which started out as a music channel and used a lot of pre-existing music in its magazine programs, even those related to other topics such as sport. At that time, music was used as a reflection of the editorial line of the channel.

Finally, since 2000, music has infused many TV programs, particularly reality shows. Music has become an essential component of the programs' background. Everything mentioned before – contextualization, editorialization, and so on – still exists, but we now see

music being used in a way we can call "hyper-contextualized". "Hyper-contextualized" musical integration means that music is often used to accentuate a word, a scene, or the presence of a character on screen - a practice we used to call "word for word" (Gueraud-Pinet, 2018). In other words, if people talk about the paparazzi on a magazine show, Lady Gaga's "Paparazzi" (2008) will play in the background. When voice-over comments can be heard such as "A money-making image has to be looked after", with reference to Adriana Karembeu and her husband's image (*Tellement People*, 2009) or hinting at "three million dollars" or two-hundred-seventy-euro nights for a deluxe hotel suite in Dubai (*Tellement Vrai*, 2009), the song "Money" (1973) by Pink Floyd will play. Finally, to illustrate Leonardo DiCaprio's presence in the report, a short extract will play from the *Titanic* (Cameron, 1997) soundtrack by Céline Dion entitled "My Heart Will Go On" (1997). These types of hyper-contextualized musical integrations usually last from two to ten seconds. They take on the role of musical pauses that strengthen the image or commentary of the program.
This sound editing practice originated in early animated cartoons and is often known as "mickeymousing". As one of the sound editors explained in one of our interviews, this "sonorization" practice is commonly used on television, mainly for sound effects:

> Adrien G.: [...] *Take Les Reines du Shopping* for example, you have "fixated effects" like "clang" or "boing" which go along well with jokes, or the sound of a slap or a whiplash, that's what you call "*mickeymousing*".

The term "mickeymousing" or "underscoring" consists of "punctuating or accompanying actions and gestures taking place in the film with figures and extremely well-synchronized musical actions, which can take place at the same time as the sound effect and get turned into musical notes" (Chion, 1985). Chion adds that the sound of a slap or a whiplash is thus created by a sound-effect engineer or a sound illustrator or can be replaced by a few notes of music. The term is a reference to the Disney cartoon *Mickey Mouse* but can be observed in films such as *The Informer* by John Ford (1935), the soundtrack for which was composed by Max Steiner (Chion, 1985, p. 106). This "mickeymousing" process is reminiscent of the way pre-existing music is sometimes used to highlight the image or commentary. Indeed, one common feature shared by John Ford's movie, or the animated cartoon *Mickey Mouse*, and our television programs is that they are almost exclusively musical. Besides, if the objective is to punctuate a gesture or an image, the role that sounds play can be linked to that of music.
Finally, "hypercontextualization" is also representative of the 2000s as it relates to commercial concerns. Indeed, musical integration as background music is a direct way of promoting an artist. As a result, the song is not used to punctuate the presence of the artist on screen so much as to play music from the album that is being promoted in the program. In 2015, the program *50 Minutes Inside* (TF1) featured a report entitled "Into Johnny Hallyday's

Secret Life" set in the singer's Los Angeles home and broadcast only a few months after his album *Rester Vivant* was released. The program talks about the celebrity's life in the US but mainly focuses on the promotion of his latest album. The musical illustration of the program is thus made up of several songs from the album which are played as they are being mentioned, such as the single "Seul", which is played five times.

Conclusion

Thanks to the typology of television music that we have built and used, we have been able to observe the evolution of musical integration practices on French television. From the late 1940s until now, music has been serving images or commentaries by strengthening the space-time context, the rhythm of the programs or the identity of the characters. As a consequence, we can say that this practice was inherited from pre-existing media but that it has been autonomous since the 1980s. Music is used to strengthen the editorial line of a channel or to help a program stand out. If these aspects remain relevant over time, they take on a new meaning for music-image analysis purposes. Music escapes the intradiegetic frame of the program, it gets shortened and becomes hyper-contextualizing, i.e. redundant with the image or with the commentary of the program. These specifics are part of a general context marked by the industrialization of the media. Indeed, even within TV content, traces of industrialization or technical developments are found, such as the use of music promotion or the editorial use of music.

Nevertheless, this work has several limitations. The quantitative analysis does not allow us to work on symbolic forms of music or audiovisual editing. However, these issues can be avoided by a thematic analysis of the images linked to the musical extracts. In order to find emotions or references within the image, we would like to question the notion of "musicalized images" (Gueraud-Pinet, 2018) and their circulation in other audiovisual productions.

In spite of these difficulties, this research offers insights into how the seldom analyzed topic of musical integration on television can be approached from an info-communicational perspective as well as from a social science and humanities perspective.

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Musical travelling:

Mediated music listening on public transport

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ABSTRACT

Listening to music through technological mediation has become part of everyday life in our modern societies. It is a highly accessible type of listening as it only requires a pair of headphones and the smartphone we all carry in our pocket. This article focuses on this widespread phenomenon in the context of public transport, in which listening to music produces a unique musical event, mediated by the space in which it occurs as well as the time over which it takes place. To understand how this happens, we use a model of analysis that brings together Marc Augé's concept of *non-lieu (non-place)*, Alan Merriam's triangle and Georgina Born's approach to music analysis in relation to sound and space. Additionally, we followed Michael Bull's numerous studies on *mediated listening* to conduct the fieldwork. This was based on interviews with university students who, while perhaps not a representative sample, allow us to reflect on and pose certain counterpoints to Bull's ideas. The purpose of the analysis was to find out whether there is an awareness of the acoustic and social isolation produced when listening to music on public transport.

I try to imagine the cacophony that would invade the train if dozens of music-loving young people put aside their headphones for an instant to share with us their musical emotions. With a gaze that is lost and yet alert, watching the parade of stations, they are otherness itself. (Augé, 2010)

The politics of music listening

Music listening is one of the most talked-about phenomena of our time, as well as being widely discussed within sound studies. This article addresses the issue of listening via technological mediation using a device – usually a smartphone, although iPods or MP3 players can still be found – and headphones that allow private *soundscapes* (Bull, 2010, p. 56) to be created. As shown by Michael Bull's work, this musical event, as Josep Martí terms it (2000, p. 57), has had a significant impact on daily life in Western societies. For this reason, we believe that this phenomenon is a very powerful prism through which to identify the current social and power relationships of our spaces. The aim is therefore to help shatter what has been a visually based epistemological obsession in the West for the past few years. In 2003, Michael Bull and Les Back argued that "in short, we claim that a visually based epistemology is both insufficient and often erroneous in its description, analysis and thus understanding of the social world" (p. 3). We therefore firmly believe that a broad in-depth study of technologically mediated listening, as well as an analysis of how we live with sound day-to-day, can provide a crucial window into contemporary society.

This field of study is vast, so for the purposes of this article we have confined analysis to this musical event on public transport. We will therefore address the possibility of creating private *soundscapes* in a space such as this. Could this space, which appears to be – and is – completely ordinary and banal, be a situation in which social and political dynamics play a vital role? Our assertion that studying technologically mediated music listening has huge critical potential is not without precedent. Reflecting on the notion of art 14 years ago, Jacques Rancière said that, "in both cases ['relational' art and the aesthetic of the sublime], art consists of exercising a new distribution of material and symbolic space. This is where art is related to politics"[1] (Rancière, 2005, p. 17). If there is any everyday activity that allows material and symbolic space to be distributed in a new way, it is technologically mediated listening. The ability of this type of listening to do this, as with art, is consequently entirely political.

Understanding the politics of music listening on public transport

Technologically mediated listening on public transport takes place in spaces within our modern-day cities that are *shared* in two senses: *shared* as a routine and often-visited place for many, and shared as a place of social co-presence. The question is how can we study the interwoven social and individual experiences that emerge from music listening in these contexts? As this is clearly a complex issue, we have chosen to work from a specific conceptual structure to carry out the analysis in a more consistent way. Moreover, we will construct this model taking into account that the fieldwork uses a qualitative methodology based on interviews.[2]

1 All translations are the author's own.

2 To avoid providing a long justification of this methodological decision, we can say we adhere to the approach used by the leading scholar on technologically mediated listening, Michael Bull, in his work on the subject: interviews and their qualitative analysis.

This structure, which is presented below, is of an interdisciplinary nature and was conceived specifically for this study. On the one hand, we use basic anthropological concepts on what the space studied is and entails in contemporary society, and on the other, our theoretical basis is taken from classical ethnomusicology. These two viewpoints are combined to create an analytical model that allows us to study music listening on public transport. Finally, the third element could fall under sound or media studies and is essentially based on Michael Bull's work on technologically mediated listening.

Space and public transport

The idea of space running throughout this work is that proposed by the sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre, known for the phrase "l'espace perçu, conçu, vécu" (Born, 2013, p. 23) Space, then, is a place that is perceived, conceived and lived. This might seem to tell us little but the consequences that emerge are very interesting, as noted by Stuart Elden when he says that "just as the social is historically shaped, so too is it spatially shaped. Equally the spatial is historically and socially configured" (Elden cited in Born, 2013, p. 23). We believe this short explanation of Lefebvre's three-dimensional conception of space is very useful, as it enables us to define what space and time entail in relation to music and sound by changing a single word. If we accept that music can only be as a result of social interactions (Merriam, 1964, p. 27), then it would be possible to substitute Elden's concept of social for *musical* or *sound*. In this way, we can reformulate the idea above by saying that sound or music is spatially mediated in addition to being historically mediated, in the same way that space is mediated historically and also through sound/music.

Continuing with an anthropological view of space, French anthropologist Marc Augé's concept of *non-lieu* is essential to understand a place such as public transport. *Non-places* are "The installations needed for the accelerated circulation of passengers and goods (high-speed roads and railways, interchanges, airports) are just as much non-places as the means of transport themselves, or the great commercial centres, or the extended transit camps where the planet's refugees are parked" (Augé, 1995, p. 34). Knowing that *non-places* can be found in all these spots, we need to know how they are characterized. A *non-place* is essentially the opposite of a place. While a place is a space of *relational and historical identity* – as shown by the words of Elden and Lefebvre – *a non-place* is a space in which these mediations are erased (Augé, 2000, p. 83). However, as we will see here, the historic does intervene to some degree in music listening on public transport.

The question now turns to the object of our study: if we assume that the space of public transport is not a place *per se* if relational and social mediation has been damaged – to say it had disappeared would be a bold statement – then what is the role of technologically mediated listening? Does music help to create *non-places* or is it completely unrelated? Does it play a role in the eradication of social relationships, causing individuals to be isolated in spaces such as public transport?

Music, sound and space: three interdependent variables

Having presented these anthropological ideas on space, it is essential to consider an idea proposed by Georgina Born in *Music, Sound and Space* (2013) which is simple and yet illuminating and useful. Born brings to our attention the need to cultivate the relationship between music, sound and space, considering and interrelating six concepts in a multidirectional way: music and sound, space and time, subjectivity and sociality (Born, 2013, p. 19).

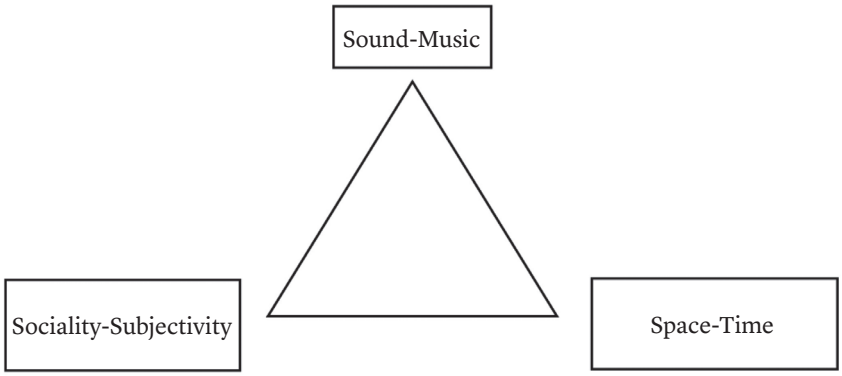

Figure 1. Triangle based on the six parameters proposed by Georgina Born for studying the relationship between music, sound and space (2013, p. 19).

We therefore consider that these parameters are essential to include in our model of analysis, because transcendental factors that affect a complex musical situation such as this would otherwise be ignored. As these six interrelated factors themselves do not provide a specific model of analysis, we have chosen to use Alan Merriam's[3] analytic model as a complementary way to filter the information obtained during the fieldwork:

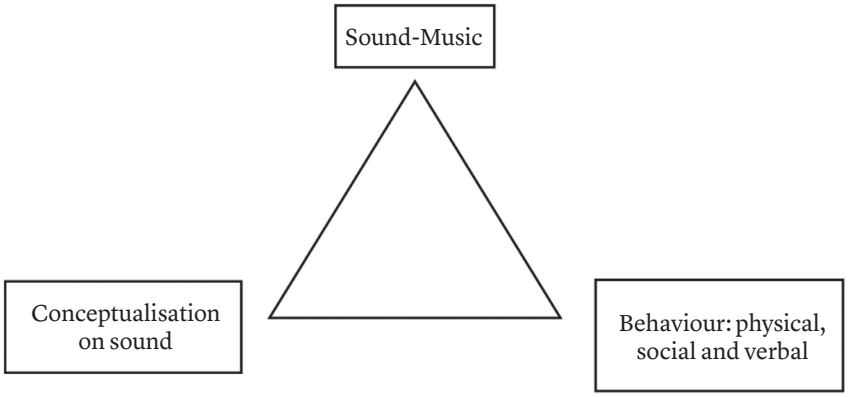

Figure 2. Merriam's well-known triangle, proposed as an analytic model in *The Anthropology of Music* (1964, pp. 17–35).

3 This analytic model, usually presented as a triangle, is explained by Merriam in *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), Chapter 2 entitled "Toward a theory for Ethnomusicology" (pp. 17–35).

After decades of academic tradition within musicology, this model has been adjusted and revised many times.[4] For a re-reading of this model of analysis, we have followed Timothy Rice's thesis in *Toward the Remodeling of Ethnomusicology* (2008), in which he states that Merriam's triangle is incomplete by itself and always requires secondary tools to function. We therefore propose to combine Born's six parameters with the triangle to achieve a more comprehensive model of analysis. In this way, we can see that music, together with sociality and subjectivity – which can be compressed within Merriam's notion of *behaviour* – are contemplated in both cases. But what happens with space and time? And conceptualization?

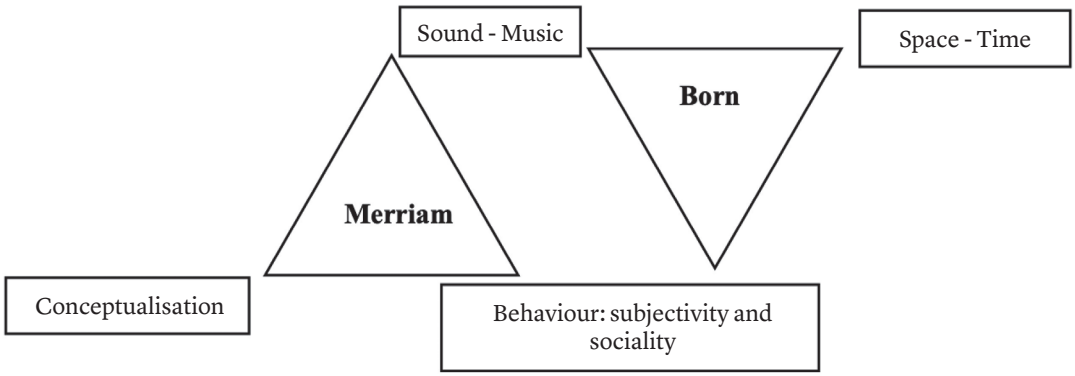

Figure 3. Combination of Merriam's triangle and the triangle using Born's parameters.

Remarking on the absence of a diachronic aspect in Merriam's model is nothing new. It was also noted by Rice, who proposes the triangle include a diachronic conception of music. To do so, Rice makes use of the reflections of anthropologist Clifford Geertz[5] and suggests working with Merriam's triangle within three different parameters: historical construction, social maintenance and individual experience.

4 *Remixing Merriam, rethinking the prism. Alan Merriam's analytical model for the potential study of new technologically-mediated ways of listening* (Roquer, Rey, & Sola, pending publication) contains a review of some of the revisions of and reflections on Merriam's analytic model carried out to date. These include: Timothy Rice's proposal, also included in this article; the work by Anthony Seeger criticising Merriam's model as an obsolete paradigm; Ellen Koskoff's work restating the model's potential; and works by Dane Harwood and Jeff Titon, who both criticize Rice's re-reading (pp. 5–8).

5 Every symbolic system is "historically constructed, socially maintained, and individually applied" (Geertz, 1973, pp. 363–364).

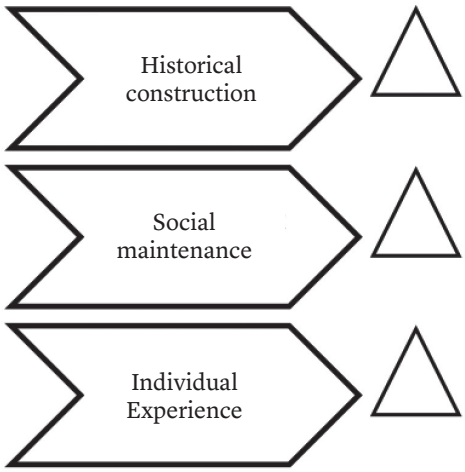

Figure 4. Rice's three levels of musical system interpretation.

The remodelled Merriam's triangle proposed by Rice is not sufficient on its own to study mediated sound with the parameters proposed by Born (individual-social, sound-music, space-time) as space is still not taken into account. Rice's contribution of adding diachrony to the triangle gives it more meaning and depth, and we propose to do the same for space, understanding it as any place (or non-place) where a music event takes place. Time will be treated as an historic construction that conditions the event and the time for which it lasts. This separation into two types of time is important, as the duration of the listening event is time that is experienced and perceived in an individual way. On the other hand, the time we refer to as historic is those inherited social, historical and cultural relationships that result in conditioning around the conceptualization and experience of music listening. We wish to make it clear that this is only a proposal for a specific case study and in no way a definitive model. It could be represented as follows:

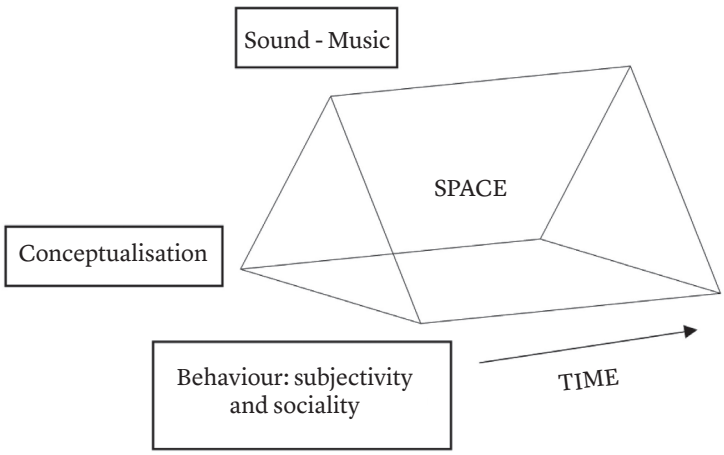

Figure 5. Proposed model of analysis for technologically mediated listening.

Michael Bull, mediated listening and private soundscapes

According to work by Michael Bull, mediated listening creates a barrier between the subject and the external world, with three important consequences: minimizing the social and the sociable, the production of *non-places* in public spaces, and a narcissistic attitude towards others (Born, 2013, p. 34). These are broadly the main points that emerge from the concept of mediated listening, but Bull's work contains many others that are pertinent to this study: solipsism, the recreation of space according to mood, denial of otherness, creation of the auditory field as synonymous with personal space, the privatization of *soundscape*, the filmic conception of these types of experience, and isolation, among others.

Since the beginning, the research has therefore been guided by the issue of the consequences that emerge from mediated music listening on public transport and the degree to which users are aware of them. With this as a guide and main purpose of the study, others were also considered. Of course, this contribution is simply an attempt to analyse one of the many potential music listening habits in the urban space, as well as an evaluation of music's ability to organize our time and social spaces. We also see this research as a proposal for re-reading the work of Bull, as this has not been undertaken for several years. Thus, based on our readings of this author and daily and non-scientific observations of (and participation in) mediated technology on public transport, we can propose a starting hypothesis: that isolation in terms of space and sociality is real but not completely conscious. Consciousness is certainly present for acoustic isolation, but it is not clear to us that social isolation is consciously sought by listeners.

Ethnographic methodology will be used as mentioned, meaning the usual difficulties found for that type of methodology presented themselves. The main issue was with the social group studied, as it was very difficult to select a specific group of people who listen to music on public transport. The widespread use of smartphones means that anyone in an urban community could potentially listen to music on public transport. This means that we are trying to study a huge and nebulous social group. As we do not have the tools to conduct a study on how many and which people listen to music on public transport, we decided to focus on the profile closest to home: university students. Although not representative of the population, this sector provides sufficient data of interest to be able to compare our results with those obtained by Bull.

The use of interviews was chosen for two reasons: to obtain qualitative information and to follow the same methodology used by Bull in his studies (Bull, 2000, 2002, 2010). In-depth interviews were conducted with nine different young people. These voices obviously cannot be presented as the reality of the music event being addressed; rather they exemplify and reflect questions already posed by Bull, as well as providing a window for enquiry into the level of consciousness discussed. This will be carried out by filtering all the information gained from the interviews through the triangle prism configured as our model of analysis. The concepts to be analysed as regards mediated music listening on public transport

are therefore as follows:

- Behaviours deriving from mediated music listening on public transport.
- Conceptualizations deriving from mediated music listening on public transport.
- The need for mediated music listening on public transport.
- Mediated music listening on public transport: the creation of private, personal spaces.
- Denying otherness through mediated music listening.
- Isolation caused by mediated music listening.

Data analysis

Behaviours deriving from mediated music listening on public transport

To begin analysing the data we will first focus on the relationship between music and behaviour for the interviewees. Activities performed in parallel to listening tend to involve certain mobile applications (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). In general, however, music listening is seen as an almost exclusive activity, with listeners only paying attention to what they are feeling and their inner world, as expressed by this interview:

> Suddenly you're listening to a slow song by Txarango, but then you get a loud one by Raíz and you think: 'yeah, yeah'. [...] It's what I was saying before: La Raíz is more about social issues, Smoking Souls is more about "love" and Txarango is a mixture of "love" and social issues. So it's perfect because it makes me feel active and think too when I hear the lyrics. (Interviewee 1)

It is interesting to observe that this music associated with what is clearly a situation or context with a party mood (in the case of the three groups mentioned[6]) is being listened to on public transport. The interviewee says this type of music makes them feel more "active", but no increased level of activity is expressed in their physical or verbal behaviour. Technological mediation avoids the social participation implied by upbeat music as it involves isolation in terms of sound. We have to consider, however, that this is a result of the space. While the music is conceptualized as participative and convivial, a *non-place* such as public transport in a city almost directly obliterates social relations. Mediated music listening on public transport can therefore be seen as accompanying a disconnect from the behaviour usually fostered by the music itself and what the individual does when listening to it. The resulting experience is completely internal, as social expression is nullified through the mediation of both the technology and the space.

6 Below are links to the websites and music of the bands mentioned in order to verify this "party mood": Txarango website: https://www.txarango.com/; Spotify page: https://open.spotify.com/artist/6XYRpcgPIK9OejoVzA7PbC?si=OEqrnxkaT6SCTUvdMBPnQg, La Raíz website: http://www.laraiz.es/ca/inici-2; Spotify page: https://open.spotify.com/artist/036IY6CphXdsPiqIXdqvCP?si=iUg9orASRnG5quEoQsvWIg, Smoking Souls website: http://www.smokingsouls.net/ca; Spotify page: https://open.spotify.com/artist/6EHWCnoYjPLhtr7Grw3804?si=I2OXfGciQL2887qBS-aAFg.

The same interviewee also says the following:

> If I listen to Txarango or La Raíz I feel like I'm at one of their concerts, but because I have been. So it's like it's 'great to go back there'. (I1)

In this case, the interviewee is on their usual route to university, but listening to music allows them to "travel" in their mind to somewhere they have been in the past or would like to be. Bull explains this based on Theodor W. Adorno's concept of we-ness, saying: "Walkman users experience the world as a form of we-ness" (Bull, 2002, p. 93). This means that this type of state can "refer to the substitution of direct experience by technologically mediated forms of experience" (Bull, 2002, p. 99). The interviewee therefore enters this state thanks to technological mediation, which enables them to "experience" the social phenomenon of participating in a party atmosphere via technology.

Conceptualizations deriving from mediated music listening on public transport

The interviewee's verbal expression reveals a dichotomy in *listening to music* that runs through all the interviews:

> When I start listening to music on the train, like, *listening to music* [emphatic gestures], a song comes into my head and I find it and come out of the others... (I5)

This verbal behaviour explains very little about what the listener conceives as listening to music and *listening to music*. What is clear, however, is that the interviewee is referring to an active and a non-active type of listening. This shows there are different ways of listening to music on public transport – or anywhere else in fact.

> On some days I play music and don't listen to it, I just know it's there and have it in the background. So I think my own thoughts [...] It depends on the day, it's like I tune in and switch off. (I9)

It is interesting to dwell on the expression "have it in the background". Listening to music with headphones does not imply distant "background" sounds, as the music is practically inside the body on a physical and acoustic level. This way of listening to music, which contrasts with the active listening previously referred to, leads us to think that it is often not the music itself that is the object of interest. The type of music being played is not of crucial importance, it just needs to provide a "background" that is more pleasant than that of public transport. In this way, a shared *soundscape* is substituted by a private one . The same interviewee, however, suggests that this type of space makes it easier and more comfortable for them to listen actively:

> If I'm putting on make-up to go to work I put music on in the background, but because I know the songs, I get into them and start to move about and sing but I'm not really enjoying the music as such. When I'm on the bus I do because I can concentrate on it and I don't have anything else to do – I mean, looking at people or not doesn't require any effort – so I take in what they are saying and concentrate more. I connect more with the music and then I imagine what the song is describing or what made them write these songs. (I9)

Once again, we return to the idea of musical behaviour being conditioned and mediated by a *non-place* such as public transport. The interviewee's statement that active listening is easier when travelling than at home even appears to be contradictory, but other interviewees said the same. Being on public transport does not allow the individual to do much other than wait for their stop. This aside, social relationships are nullified to the extent that they find themselves in a situation that favours private and active listening.
How, then, is this active listening possible? The answer can be found in the conceptualization of music itself. The idea that music allows greater reflection and clarity of thought emerges from one of the interviews:

> But I think that music is more about personal reflection, I mean, I like it because it is an easy way to switch off, to think and reflect on whatever you like. Reading, on the other hand, is not as reflective and personal as it takes me to another world that isn't mine. (I2)

In this case, guided by the interview questions, the listener compares the difference between the experience of reading and listening to music on public transport. Their words clearly indicate this: "music is more about personal reflection". This is directly associated with the music listening model that began with Romanticism, in which importance is given to how music affects the internal world of the listener and how they handle their emotions.[7] Here we can see that these experiences – which are so individual and sensory – are not only mediated by the journey time spent on public transport but also by historic time, through inherited models of listening to and conceptualizing music.
The absence of a relationship between music and behaviour is an interesting contradiction. None of the interviewees who mentioned this specified any type of music as more or less helpful for getting into this state of reflection. As it is unclear whether listeners prefer one musical style over another in this respect, we can deduce that no music in particular is thought of as "music for thinking". For the listener, what matters is being able to take their music – that they have chosen – with them. Therefore, we find that what allows reflection on public transport is not specific music, but rather the perceived privatization of that mu-

7 For an in-depth look at the roots of the Romantic conception of listening, it is worth consulting a work by the philosopher and musicologist Peter Szendy: *Listen. A history of our ears* (2008). Chapter 4 in particular, "Listening (to listening): the making of the modern ear" (pp. 125–156), is very clear in this respect.

sic – any music – through technologically mediated listening.

> In that sense I would say listening to music is deeper. In the end, with reading, you are going into a story you don't control and you know you won't influence, so it might be something you do more calmly or in the end it doesn't influence you as much. [...] I'm not completely in control [when listening to music], I don't feel like I'm controlling where I'm going; but yes, more than when I read. (I2)

Despite having to now encountered a high degree of listener awareness of what listening to music on public transport entails, in this fragment from the same interviewee we can see this is not the case. They say their experience is more intense and subjective when listening to music than reading, and thus they has a certain feeling of power over the situation (Bull, 2002, 2010). In the end, this power is an illusion as the listener can only control their own thoughts and internal world, as their interpersonal relationships with others on public transport are completely nullified.

The need for mediated music listening on public transport

At this point, the question needs to be asked as to whether there is a relationship between need and music listening on the part of the listeners.

> Yes, I need it. Because depending on the day I think 'today I need to listen to that music because I've got more energy, I need...'. I don't know, I don't know how to explain it. [...] If I put music on, the lyrics define my feelings. So because I don't know how to express them music helps me. And if I don't have it with me I get bored. (I4)

From explanations such as this, we deduce that public transport is understood as a space for a private and personal experience. This space being a *non-place* can be taken as a decisive factor, but music is shown to be a key element that facilitates and intensifies this intimacy. The interviewee "gets bored" if they do not have music with them but, in reality, the boredom stems from not being able to create this private, personal space. Even though the journey is one they take often, and therefore of short duration, this is not a hindrance to dealing with their emotions. Music has always helped us process our feelings and emotions (Frith, 2008, pp. 420–421), but it is nonetheless curious that this is possible in such a public space. This capacity to intervene in material and symbolic space in an incisive and decisive way is where we find the politics of mediated music listening. This could even call into question the assertion that music is always the result of a social interaction.[8] Despite being more hidden, social relationships are ultimately still there in mobile phones and applications.

8 In the *Anthropology of Music* (1964), Merriam refers to this social need for music: "There are other social characteristics of music as well. Music is a uniquely human phenomenon which exists only in terms of social interaction." (p. 27)

The need to listen to music on public transport is explained very well by the following interviewee:

> There are days you go and you don't end up listening to music and it's okay, it really doesn't bother you. But the day you forget your headphones is a nightmare. It's like when you get on the train with the option of listening to music and you don't listen to music, you think 'okay, today I didn't...I wasn't in the mood to listen to music'. But if you don't have the option to listen to music it's like "I need it". (I5)

There is a conscious explanation of the tension between the listener and having the option to listen to music. There is no desire to listen to any particular music: the interviewee does not mention a group, style or specific sound; what they want is the assurance of knowing they have the ability to play music whenever they wish. The dependency created is therefore not on any musical sound, as they do not need music with any specific sound markers, but control over the sounds themselves for their ability to create a private sound environment.

The creation of private, personal spaces on public transport

So what does listening in this way mean for individuals? All the interviews revealed an idea of travelling on public transport as a time of privacy and calm. When asked if they would be bothered by a friend using headphones when travelling together, Interviewee 4 said no, because:

> [...] car, train and bus journeys are for listening to music; to be by yourself. When you get off the bus everything goes back to normal, but travelling is for music. I don't feel bad. It's always like that. [...] I don't get stressed or anything: you listen to your music and I listen to mine and that's it. (I4)

The interviewee's view is clear: travelling on public transport is the time *for* music. The central role music plays in travel time for this listener cannot be generalized to everyone who listens to music, but it marks an interesting direction to continue to work on. Thus, the experience of travelling with music in a central role puts listeners into a "state of reflection":

> Normally everyday things. What I'm going to do or what I did at the weekend, if something happened with someone; thinking about my life, to be honest, my everyday life. (I3)

Despite being in a *non-place*, which makes solid, comfortable social interaction impossible, listeners are transported to a plane of comfort and familiarity. This is a result of the sound isola-

tion that mediated music listening facilitates and which removes the individual's awareness of being in a public space. The few minutes spent on public transport are defined as a space in which to say "okay, I'll do nothing and just think", as the interviewee says:

> It's a bit of a cliché, but you don't get time to think, or at least I don't find it. During the day, when I'm at home there's always something to do, or when I have to spend hours working at university. For whatever reason I never say 'okay, I'm going to do nothing and think'. It's not like that. Using public transport is a good excuse to do that. Maybe it's because [thinking] seems like a waste of time, I don't know. [...] I find it really difficult without music, I don't know why. I think it's much more natural. If I don't listen to music it's all silent, it's very unnatural. With music, though, a song might take me back to a time with my friends and it's much more fluid. (I2)

While it is interesting – and in some ways positive – that music can turn an uncomfortable space into one in which someone can feel at ease, it is worrying to think that in our urban societies, travelling on public transport is one of the few opportunities we have to enter our own personal, private space. As the interviewee says, this non-place is one of the last refuges where we can "do nothing". Music is therefore seen as an element that enables us to privately process our emotions, even in a space such as public transport. That said, a type of disconnect is seen between the sound-music and the behaviour and conceptualization that it entails. In reality, the type of music is not important and the private, personal space is created regardless. According to the interview data, it appears important that the music is chosen by the user themselves and not for its particular sound characteristics.

Denying otherness through mediated music listening

One of the points Michael Bull most often addresses in his studies is the denial of the *other* through mediated music listening. Now, we can move on to analysing social behaviour (Merriam, 1964) and its sociality (Born, 2012) through the verbal behaviour extracted from the interviews in order to see if this denial occurs. Bull is very clear when addressing the issue: "[the] iPod [or any device able to play music through headphones] permits users to saturate periods of 'non-communication' with their own, familiar and comforting sounds" (Ekman, 2012, p. 58). In this fragment, Interviewee 7 argues there is a need to generate periods of "non-communication":

> I think I could travel without music. But I often get the train at rush hour; there are lots of people, I can't sit down, I can't look out the window and you're really stressed out. Then I do need music, otherwise I feel awful and get anxious, so... (I7)

In this case, music is used to regulate stress and social anxiety. In addition to being an isolating element, sound functions as a tool to distract attention. This inhibiting, or even an-

xiolytic, capacity of technologically mediated listening should be proven. Although it is music in this case, the individual is seeking anything that helps eradicate the stress and anguish caused by this physical contact with other people. Nevertheless, music mediated listening should be noted as surely one of the few tools that can help people feel calmer in these kinds of situations. After this short description, they clearly and briefly say: "I think it's because you're a bit more isolated". There is obvious evidence of an awareness of social isolation in this case as they seek it out to reduce the feelings of anxiety and stress caused by the *other* on public transport.

Nonetheless, denials of *otherness* are not only found in situations of stress and anxiety. As Interviewee 4 says:

> People talking does bother me. Sometimes when I've got headphones on I think 'I wish they'd talk a bit more quietly'. But just people, the engine and things don't [bother me]. (I4)

Although the interviewees complain about an *otherness* bothering them on public transport, they do not mention the sound generated by the method of transport itself to the same degree. They therefore accept this sound, but not that produced by people in the same space as them. Sometimes music is not enough to erase this *otherness*, even though, as the interviewee infers, that would be desirable. The most radical statement from the interviews in this regard is as follows: "[If I'm travelling without music] other people's conversations annoy me, as they aren't usually very nice" (I3). The interviewee does not want to hear any of what the *other* might say, as they directly categorize it as "not nice". With this we find a dual use for mediated music listening: a more-or-less radical nullification of the *other* – which in this case is reduced to the sounds made when talking – and consequently an improved experience.

This aside, it must be said that this was not a point unilaterally shared by the other interviewees, as not all expressed the same feelings. For example, Interviewee 1 says that "if I'm with other people, I'll have one headphone in and one out so I can hear if they say something to me" (I1).[9] We might say that they do this because they are with people they know, but a statement from Interviewee 5 goes further:

> Sometimes I just use one earphone and I start to listen to an interesting conversation. I mean, it's a bit strange to take out your earphones and start to listen. But I stop the music, take out one earphone and now and then pretend I'm listening to music. But it's total nosiness. (I5)

Despite the fact that the interviewee themselves admits there is an element of personal nosiness, their words indicate that not everyone uses music to deny the other. In fact, in

9 The use of only one earphone is studied in more detail by Bull in *Sounding Out the City* (2000).

this case the interviewee is "pretending" to listen to music in order to overhear what the other is saying. This tells us the listening to music with headphones sends a message to others: that the listener is not paying attention to what is happening around them, that they are being ignored. This shows how the relationship with otherness is not always to deny it, as proposed by Bull. Some individuals who have music with them may be interested in their fellow travellers, even if the music is a way to eavesdrop.

Isolation caused by mediated music listening

Finally, we will address how mediated music listening produces isolation of the sound environment as well as the social environment. To understand what exactly that entails, we can look at the following explanation by Interviewee 1:

> Travelling with music is much more fun because **you're isolated...** I mean, you're in **a place** [the bus in this case] **with lots of people, but at the same time you're alone with your thoughts**, you know? **And the people around you don't bother you** and that's great. And also because **you're enjoying the music**, it's like **time goes faster**. You **look at the scenery,** you entertain yourself. **You look at someone who's fallen asleep,** someone else who, I don't know. (I1)

These words show a clear awareness of sound isolation brought about by mediated listening and also what this entails at a social level. The interviewee provides a perfect definition of what listening to music on public transport entails: "a place with a lot of people, but at the same time you're alone with your thoughts, you know? And the people around you don't bother you and that's great." Isolating oneself, therefore, is voluntary and desirable, not only conscious. According to this interviewee, music ultimately facilitates many issues (in bold): denying the other, an altered perception of the passage of time, aesthetic recreation of the experience and, of course, the possibility of feeling alone and isolated. This sound isolation brings about a different understanding of an individual's own personal space:

> If you have your headphones on [...] respect people's personal space! It's very important, really! You might be at the key part in the song and they make you pause it, I'm sorry but that's a huge lack of respect, huge. Wait for them to take off their headphones and then you can talk. (I1)

The interviewee's high level of awareness of the creation of a "personal space" through mediated listening is surprising. What is more, stopping someone from listening to music is considered a lack of respect. This implies that those not listening to music should also be aware of this space – according to the interviewees – and that wearing headphones and listening to music entails a voluntary isolation which must be respected. Even those, such as Interviewee 8, who do not listen to music on public transport are fully aware of this isolation:

> I8: When I meet someone with headphones on and they take them out to talk to me: no, no; carry on. Because I don't want to talk either and I'm not giving them anything that music isn't.
> I5: Maybe they think "they want to talk because they're not wearing headphones".
> I7: Sometimes I wear headphones without music playing because I don't want people to talk to me.
> Interviewer: Do you use headphones to avoid social contact?
> I7: Yes, a lot!

As the interviewee says, they feel they are bothering the person listening to music, so they prioritize the *other's* enjoyment of private listening over social interaction. In this final interview, the same interviewee shows a high level of awareness overall:

> [I8] I'd like to add something else. I never listen to music but it's also because I don't want to be isolated. I mean, I think it does isolate you and you think 'okay, I'm away from everything and everyone'. [Interviewer] *Why don't you want to isolate yourself?* [I8] Why don't I want to? Because...I don't talk to anyone or anything, but I look at people and that's all. I think, well, here I am. Otherwise I feel like society is crap. I don't know why.

Conclusions

The initial question has been addressed and answered based on a dual methodology model: on the one hand, the methodology proposed by Michael Bull – interviews and analysis of the phenomenon based on them – and on the other, the combination of this perspective with our own proposed model of analysis. In this way, we have been able to study the concepts that Bull outlines throughout his research, focusing them on a *non-place* that is characteristic of our urban lives: public transport. Far from attempting to prove anything, this work is a first approach enabling us to open up specific areas for future research. The results obtained have shown the relevance of two fundamental actions for future research: on the one hand, a quantitative study that could provide objective percentages of people who do or do not listen to music on public transport, and on the other, broadening the model's framework for action in terms of structured reflection. In this way, we would obtain results from a quantitative model which would allow us to talk more objectively about what is right now an intuition resulting from a first approach to the subject.

This study therefore provides some questions to be used as starting points for future research. It has been stated that mediated music listening on public transport causes concept and behaviour to separate. In other words, the way in which music is conceptualized does not imply it will produce the expected behaviour. As we have seen, this is due both to the privatization of listening and the particular implications of the public transport environment. Due to the very public nature of this space, the number of references interviewees made to processing their emotions and internal, private reflection is surprising. At first, public space may not appear to be the ideal place for this, but the sound and social isolation music listening confers and the quality of a *non-place* make it possible.

Although in many cases there is clear evidence of denial of the *other*, isolation could not create a denial as conclusive as that posed by Bull. As the interviews seem to indicate, the relationship with this *other* varies depending on the moment and the individual listening to music on public transport. However, what has been comprehensively shown is that sound isolation, and as a result social isolation, is not only conscious but also wanted and desired. All this may show that our modernity has damaged the social aspect of public spaces, such as transport, because of, or at least aided by, music. We do not know whether or not this will come to be seen as a tragedy, but it does reveal that we are facing an important contradiction: music, the mechanism and conduit for socialization *par excellence* throughout history, is – or may become – an element that aids, incentivizes and fosters our growing individualism – if indeed it can further increase. As this article suggests, the specific aesthetic of music listening gives rise to a specific type of listening that relates to itself through time. It therefore comes with a political aspect that affects our subjectivity and sociality, the spaces and time we inhabit and the music and sounds we make and listen to.

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The visual album as transmedia project: the music video and the transmedia experience in popular music[1]

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ABSTRACT

The most-watched audiovisual genre on YouTube, the music video, is a special place for interconnecting content in the context of transmedia multimedia strategies, thus adopting various formats with the aim of yielding to industrial production (by multiplying and extending them) and users' creativity. As a recently established type of media, the visual album allows performers and bands to create open concepts, loose narratives – paraphonographies, metanarratives and *storyworlds*, as they will be described – around their musical or artistic ideas.

Rooted in the tradition of criticism and rebellion of 1970s rock, which devised formulas such as the concept album, the visual album uses the objectives and content presentation structure of transmedia communication in the media constructs designed to transmit the performer's messages in order to plan the imaginary world they present to audiences. The format must also allow varying degrees of participation by viewers, consumers and fans. *The works Lemonade* (2016, Beyoncé), *Dirty Computer* (2018, Janelle Monáe) and *El Mal Querer* (2018, Rosalía) are examples of this new audiovisual format produced by the music industry.

The context of the music video's transformation in the music industry

Like any sector, the music industry needs mechanisms for publicizing its products, which in this case are recordings in the form of songs or albums. In the new era of the single, in which a significant part of the commercial life of an album depends on strategically releasing hit songs, the preferred means of circulation is as music videos on the viewing platform recognized as the most important in contemporary culture: YouTube. The music video fulfils almost all the conditions of an advertising narrative format listed by Isidro Moreno (2003, p. 97): short duration, fleeting permanence, multiple human and material media, shared authorship that is also subsumed in favour of the advertiser, brand over authorial stylemes, multiple constrictions, conscious subordination to fashions, submission to the audience, persuasive purpose, predominance of seduction over information and applied discourse, and being extraordinarily elliptical. There can be little doubt as to its commercial nature.

As a cultural industry, however, it also constructs values and seeks to create a narrative revolving around the performer, the star-text – a generic differentiating concept that blends fiction, narrative and identity (Goodwin, 1992). The music video fits neatly within the dominant concept of shows and merchandising in contemporary society. Music videos convey messages and values that go beyond literal content and lead to the creation of symbolic meaning, along with elements such as the album cover, concert staging, interviews, etc., in a continuous feedback loop over careers which span decades. Other factors also define the star-text, such as those specific to musical genres and everything around their staging: rap, rock, heavy metal, and all the fundamental musical genres choose basic staging and tend to consolidate it through different "texts" to present it to their fans.

There should already be many studies on how the conditions for the production and reception of promotional music texts such as the music video have changed since the move from television to the Internet, as it is rooted in a wide range of contexts of contemporary culture transformation. Albeit not systematic, Vernallis (2013) has conducted the broadest comparative analysis of music videos from the eighties and today in an attempt to compare the music video during its first decade and the present in its intermedia context. She describes changes in features such as colour, materiality and musical microrhythms, filming and editing, the narrative and structure of the video, the type of performance, intertextuality and the possibilities offered by remediated material.

Korsgaard (2012) also accepts that the music video has transformed. Peverini (2010) agrees that today the video aesthetic is a more open debate than ever, and that "implies not only technological innovation and the digital landscape but also deeper dynamics, where the performer's body collides with the viewer's / reader's gaze"[2] (Peverini, 2010, p. 150). As

2 Lluny de voler donar una gran justificació a aquesta decisió metodològica, ens adscrivim a allò que Michael Bull, el principal estudiós de la música mediada tecnològicament, ha estat fent en els seus treballs que tracten el tema: entrevistes i una anàlisi qualitativa d'aquestes.

mentioned, being inserted into the logic of the web in this way marked the beginning of a post-television period for the music video (Sedeño-Valdellós, Rodríguez-López, & Roger-Acuña, 2016).

With the arrival of new links between media came new contexts for interaction between content and reception modes. In the case of music, this broader reception enabled a more intense relationship with the performer and for content to be generated linking participation at different moments of the live performance or on social networks (interaction with fans, publishing parodic texts, etc.).
Fans' ability to gain specialized technical knowledge, adapt technologies and use them to re-edit audiovisual productions or to promote communities has facilitated this collaborative social production around the music video format. Fan videos, UMVs (user music videos), AMVs (anime music videos), ship vids, lyric videos, mashups and memes form a long list of spin-offs, which intensify the relationship with the performer or group. They are a way of participating in the performance (understood in an overarching sense) and become a way of appropriating and mediating the extraordinary live event. Sharing content on social networks can also provide social recognition, and it can be commented on and re-edited by other users. As a final step, having ascertained that the music video is currently without a doubt the most effective format for product placement, some performers are adding other elements to this alchemy by merging the mobile phone, content creation and advertising for other products.

Transmedia communication

However, the processes through which the music video transforms and inserts itself into the wider logic do not end there. Transmedia strategies are a growing area for research and creation in the field of contemporary communication. Their purpose is to serve emerging innovative cultural projects, which are specifically designed and construct a multi-platform narrative world that is continuously expanding or with the potential to be developed using different media. This enables a uniquely constructed context to be established by using formulas to generate engagement and by creatively layering content to seduce the viewer and draw them towards a unique cultural, communicative or artistic idea. In general, it is about projecting storyworlds, whose logic is more than just the sum of different media or their multiplication, and is "the result of converting a discretionary restricted access mediation system into a potentially universal continuous access system" (Carrera, Limón, Herrero, & Sáinz de Baranda, 2013, p. 544).
In general, transmedia has one main piece of content or macrohistory comprising the overall narrative (which is always immense due to its scope) and independent messages (in the form of its chapters, stories or units), which are connected through different media. The transmedia project consists of planning this process in an ordered way distrib-

uted over time, and it is developed via expanded context, which is perhaps secondary. This content is not found at the heart of the story; it is secondary and is either produced by the project creators themselves or is UGC (user-generated content) created via video platforms, video games, social networks, etc., which at the same time becomes part of the dialogue and contributes to the construction of the complete story.
In other words, a transmedia project is institutionalized as one that engineers these formulas relating to the interrelationship between story and content in the medium and long term. In this context of transmedia globality and continuing a tradition of answering a "visual lack", which according to Simon Frith (1988) characterizes popular music, the visual album can be seen as an intermedial cultural artefact and transmedia strategy: a relatively new way of mediating a performer's persona and how they are staged/their media life.

The visual album: definition and transmedia context

The visual album has been configuring itself as an iconic alternative way for performers to present themselves alongside their music for several years, but its roots go back as far as the conceptual rock album. With a legacy from video and television, it emerged in parallel with video art practices, action art, the happening, and avant-garde art, and is made up of music videos without a plan or structured storyline as found in the classic narrative model. The visual compositions are associative in nature as descriptive music videos, which fall between the conceptual and the performative: "they rest on a poetic form, a metaphor above all. They do not tell a story in a linear way, what they do is create a certain abstract or surrealist atmosphere or aesthetic. It may be a sequence of images with a common concept in colours or forms which, shaped by the music, form a semiotic tableaux that expresses the feeling of the music, not necessarily the lyrics of the song" (Sedeño-Valdellós, 2007).
There are many examples of this. *Sgt Pepper´s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) and *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972) are two legendary works of major significance in the modern musical imagination that contributed to the mythicization of the performers: The Beatles and David Bowie. The film for Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (1979) became a benchmark of rock iconography, an iconic work of contemporary visual resistance. The specificity of *Year Zero* (2011), by Nine Inch Nails, lies in its activist approach to denouncing the antidemocratic drift in North American politics during the previous decade, characterized by post-truth and the manipulation facilitated by big data techniques being applied to social networks. In the case of *Mylo Xyloto*, the concept is inspired by the colour and shapes of graffiti art to develop a comic based on the songs and encompassed in the music video format: a specific way to broaden the storytelling together with the artwork and other graphic elements on the album (Shute, 2013; Burns, 2016).
Harrison provides an express definition of the visual album: "a visual album is an audio-

visual product that has a direct relationship with the music from a corresponding audio album by the same performer(s). Its album length is more than the standard music video length of 3-5 minutes, and strong visual and textual relations are present to form continuity throughout the whole album" (Harrison, 2014, pp. 16–17). There are different types of visual album. Sometimes a structure of specific videos is created of each song (for individual consumption/distribution on social networks, due to their short lifespan) and in other cases a more extensive audiovisual discourse is put together as a film. These options include different hybrid formats, as has been discussed with the examples *Let England shake* (PJ Harvey, 2011), *ODDSAC* (Animal Collective, 2010) and *Valtari Mystery film Experiment* (Sigur Ros, 2012) (Sedeño-Valdellós, 2016).

Nevertheless, to move towards identifying the key contribution made by the visual album it is necessary to address the characterization of the type of narrative and whether a specific type of relationship that generates a closed meaning from the multi-modal relationship between videos (and other texts) and songs (and their lyrics) can be identified. Serge Lacasse (2000) transfers Genette's concept of *paratext* (1997) to the production of popular music, coining the term *paraphonography* as a combination of materials that mediate the musical narrative, including graphics, texts, the album cover artwork, comics and graphic novels, as well as concerts, performances and their advertising images (Burns, 2016).
This idea allows us to move away from the linear teleological concept of narrative towards one that is looser and with a broader objective, and to move towards a connection with creating situations, which all together creates a type of *storyworld*:

> Storyworlds are global mental representations enabling interpreters to frame inferences about the situations, characters, and occurrences either explicitly mentioned in or implied by a narrative text or discourse. As such, storyworlds are mental models of the situations and events being recounted – of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner. Reciprocally, narrative artifacts (texts, films, etc.) provide blueprints for the creation and modification of such mentally configured storyworlds. (Herman, 2009, pp. 106–107)

Viñuela, stressing a lack of definition constructed from a series of motives and formulas, which diachronically connects music videos during a performer's career and, synchronically, those belonging to an entire album with a visual discourse, speaks of metanarrative as a "discourse that strengthens the performer's identity and in consequence secures their links with the fanbase" (Viñuela, 2019, p. 77).
A tension that shifts between unity and variety, "the visual album creates continuity through the use of visual leitmotifs, which allude to earlier fictional and personal narratives" (Harrison, 2014, p. 3). The mechanisms that unify the different videos that make up the visual album may be repetitive motifs (themes, iconography, staging, location, types of charac-

ters, etc.) such as leitmotivs, which "do not refer to a classic cause-and-effect narrative but to another narrativity similar to how painting creates scenes 'impregnated with time', as *tableaux vivants*" (Sedeño-Valdellós, 2016, p. 118). The director chooses similar structures, visual resources, photographic colorimetry and textures, as well as visual effects (VFX), although this continuity must be balanced with innovative elements that stand out: "the logic of these strategies lies in the intertextuality, but always seeking to reinforce the guiding narrative structure... The performer moves in the tension between innovating in each new creation... to not defraud their followers and even gain them new audiences" (Viñuela, 2019, pp. 78–79).

Ultimately, the visual album is a change in emphasis from the narrative to the visual, with stories constructed using fragments of scenes, characters, anecdotes or visual gags and visually uncomplicated scenes in which musicians or groups craft their relationship with the viewer openly and in the long term.

The visual album and its variants

Whether paraphonography, storyworld or metanarrative, there are already active examples of the possibilities and capabilities of the visual album realized in transmedial projects.

The performer Beyoncé has released two visual albums: *Beyoncé* (2013) and *Lemonade* (2016). The second, with a more intentional media strategy, uses specific storytelling "based on each woman's journey towards self-knowledge and healing" (Dubboff, 2016). There is an activist element in the choice of a narrative with references to African American history and feminism in the chapter titles (*Intuition, Denial, Anger, Apathy, Emptiness, Accountability, Reformation, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Hope and Redemption*) and the choice of social networks and platforms on which the videos were released, individually or as films. *Lemonade* owes much to certain counter-cultural positions. The feminist discourse, for example, is particularly developed in the videos, although *Lemonade* constructs its own version of the imagined – a narrative about celebrity or stardom, which combines images filmed for the purpose with previous documentary footage of varying visual quality and definition. In her video for *Formation*, a key track on the album, she reasserts "the absence of an organized direction of black political discourse" where "the logic of style manifest[s] across cultural surfaces in everyday life [to] reinforce the terms of shared experience" (Ball, 2016).

It is in this context that the many different presentations of characters depicting historical situations featuring the black community in the rest of the videos are understood. Portrayals of the plantation, open landscapes of the Southern United States and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans are blended with tableaux in which the individual female is empowered or directs actions and events. All this is packed together with multiple tableaux of group choreography to create conceptual-performance music videos with a visual impact.

Figure 1. Tableaux from several music videos belonging to Lemonade (2016).

The visual jigsaw of the personal and the political in *Lemonade* expands the possibilities for narration, moving it away from the linear and offering a new (activist? alternative?) proposal for how African American women are represented. Its origins in a commercial project caused controversy among critics and fans but I believe that they are the continuation of a tradition within popular music:

> *Lemonade* was seismic in terms of the representation of black feminism in the mainstream. For all of this, she has the right to be celebrated. Beyoncé has indeed facilitated a discourse that explores the place of famous women as agents of both political and monetary prowess. Yet Beyoncé's political message is also squarely a capitalist one. Her videos are meticulously constructed in order to cater to an eager fan base. In this context, the merchandising, the songs, the videos, the performances must always be considered first and foremost as an advertisement for Beyoncé's commercialized materiality. The fans are essentially buying into Beyoncé. (Fairclough, 2018, p. 127)

Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer* (2018) (*an emotion picture*,[3] as its creators describe it and as advertised) is a different format from those previously mentioned. This longer narrative film is set in what appears to be a huge biotechnology company, where the identities and memories of queer people of colour are controlled and erased. The performer leads the storyline, in which she tries to hold on to and remember her past experiences. These mini episodes make up nine videos included as musical numbers – or breaks – in the storyline, titled *Crazy, Classic, Life, Take a byte, Screwed, Django Jane, Pink, Make me feel* and *I like that*, in that order.

With *Dirty Computer*, Monáe has created a fresco on sexual liberation, her motivation being that she defines herself as queer, gay and pansexual. The videos are characterized as conceptual-performance: they present a situation in interior and exterior scenes mainly using groups of performers in an upbeat and relaxed atmosphere with Monáe as the central character. People of all races and classes interact affectionately and perform duet and group choreography on different sets.

3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdH2Sy-BlNE

Screenshots of each performance scene from the *Dirty Computer clips*.

Figure 2. Tableaux from *Dirty Computer* (2018).

Lastly we can discuss Rosalía, the dazzling performer with two LPs: *Los Angeles* (2017) and *El Mal Querer* (EMQ) (2018). The first is notable for its collaborations and cover versions of classic material. The second marks a specific transition towards urban music genres blended with flamenco, which she studied at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya. *EMQ* is still under construction as a visual album as videos are only available for episodes 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8: *Malamente* (Chapter 1. Augurio); *Que no salga la luna* (Chapter 2. Boda); *Pienso en tu mirá* (Chapter 3. Celos); *De aquí no sales* (Chapter 4. Disputa); *Reniego* (Chapter 5: Lamento); *Preso* (Chapter 6. Clausura); *Bagdad* (Chapter 7. Liturgia); *Di mi nombre* (Chapter 8. Éxtasis); *Nana* (Chapter 9. Concepción); *Maldición* (Chapter 10. Cordura); *A ningún hombre* (Chapter 11. Poder). It is easy to identify the connection between these titles and those on *Lemonade* and the intention to abstract general concepts around feelings and emotions.

This album by Rosalía is musical storytelling inspired by the anonymous thirteenth-century novella *Flamenca*, a tale of violence and a woman's struggle to achieve her freedom. The songs are one element alongside the live performances (where she presents her songs. Some are large and free to enter and others are exclusive, such as her performance at Sonar thanks to her work and contacts) and content uploaded to social networks, mainly Instagram, commenting on her work and responding to fans and *YouTubers*. From the perspective of a pop star, her command and use of transmedia elements should also not be understated. She hybridizes media and strategies from separate elements, and her videos with Instagram language have diverse consumer appeal, their entertaining content leading fans from one type of media to another.

The features prompting the description of the EMQ project as a visual album, which are related to iconography and the appropriation of symbols inspired by Spain, lead the analysis to review its ability to generate visual unity and thematic coherence. The hybridization of musical, literary and visual traditions on the album blends influences from flamenco (music), the medieval (literary inspiration) and the urban (choreography elements and rap and trap references).

The settings for the videos recreate places typified in the collective imagination of the flamenco music genre. Visual motifs are used as atomized actions or *tableaux vivants* in which the events do not become the narrative but instead unfurl as representative scenes or rec-

ognizable situations in the Iberian imagination: the scooter, the bull, domestic interiors, suburban exteriors and empty neighbourhoods. They are repeated in videos such as *Malamente*[4] and *Pienso en tu mirá*,[5] in particular. Slow motion works as a visual poetic device. It is a classic technique in the contemporary conceptual music video, in which production company CANADA is well-versed.

Video spin-offs produced by fans imitating scenes or sections of the dancing are posted on YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, and inspire professional[6] and amateur[7] choreography from around the world, tutorials,[8] parodies[9] and reactions by hundreds of performers.[10]

Rosalía responds on her Instagram stories by talking about dance moves, uploading all her performances and analysing and re-analysing videos by the many *YouTuber* fans who study her visuals and music. The video analysis by *YouTuber* Jaime Altozano is one of the most-watched videos related to Rosalía on YouTube.[11] In reply, Rosalía recorded another video as a conversation with Altozano about the writing decisions on her album. The video can be found on her official profile.

4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rht7rBHuXW8

5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_4coiRG_BI

6 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_4coiRG_BI

7 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ_0_qDMuAs
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U90DhfGkoOg

8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7V1JEaQdxE

9 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I03Z-hqMb64

10 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBV9CeuxmQ0
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9L3dwNAsbxw

11 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgHXFTgaVT0

Conclusions

The changes in how culture is produced following the digital revolution have created new links between media and the ways in which they create content, while also introducing a significant element of fun. Transmedia is a type of communication and cultural content creation that is mediated and managed through different channels and formats. It brings together all media, laying it out before the consumer/viewer and enabling them to personalize the experience of consuming culture. The purpose of *transmedia* music experiences is to create authenticity, an essential feature of popular music and a function of its promotional formats such as the music video.

Combining opportunities to add value, the visual album continues in its search for a narrative of authenticity for popular music: all tracks have their own video and they interact with each other to create a broader, more complex and open conceptual message, a metanarrative for the performer and the musical genre, constructed using recurring leitmotivs with the same emotional or symbolic resonance.

On the other hand, the visual album is a construct for the viewer to immerse themselves in the world of the performer in a way that is coherent with their live shows and performances. In it, the viewer's experiences around a band or group converge or are created by maximizing the opportunities for them to take place. The totality of this experience around the performer and its relationship with the concert experience is linked to a central function for social networks, which allow musicians to complement their message by uploading content in dialogue. The videos of the visual albums by Beyoncé (*Lemonade*), Rosalía (*EMQ*) and Janelle Monáe (*Dirty Computer*) are all presentations of personal storyworlds. They try to consolidate atmospheres, tableaux and visual motifs in response to lyrics, videos or previous covers and, in general, to everything that comes from the performer's imaginary world. Whether their work creates a tension between personal biography and the history of groups that have suffered discrimination (Beyoncé), problematizes sexual diversity (Monáe) or is an album in progress inspired by narrative (Rosalía), all the variants of the modern-day visual album are composed in synchrony with or continue the tradition of the story of popular music, in which performers invest in their physical presence (concerts) and their visual and virtual presence (social networks) for the long term and with all the available media. The construction of their imaginary world and its promotional – in other words, commercial – exploitation in a context of saturation and competition demands it.

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