CALL FOR PAPERS

punctum.

Music in Movies: Resemantization, Resignification, Sense-making

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GUEST EDITORS: **Costantino Maeder, Mark Reybrouck & Lucio Spaziante**

TIMELINE:

Deadline for Abstracts: **December 31, 2026**

Notice of acceptance of the Abstract: **January 15, 2027**

Deadline for submission of full papers: **May 15, 2027**

Peer Review Due: **June 30, 2027**

Final Revised Papers Due: **July 31, 2027**

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When we watch a film, music influences us profoundly – even when we are unaware of its presence – as an organic, fundamental element of sense-making. It cannot and should not be ignored in film analysis: altering or removing the music changes a film's meaning. What we see, hear, and experience is not defined by the written dramatic text alone (De Marinis, 1993). This holds true for film as well. Reducing film music to a mere "comment," "connotation," or "illustration" ignores the collaborative, all-encompassing character of how a film signifies and is received; in linguistic terms, it would be like ignoring pronunciation, speech acts, and the pragmatic dimension of communication. Most semiotic approaches to film, music and literature remain largely logocentric.

Music within a film is a complex semiotic compound that evolves over time and participates in sense-making in different ways, both intradiegetically and extradiegetically. It shapes the rhythm, affective tone, and interpretive orientation of the images; at the same time, its use within a particular sequence can endow it with new meanings, modifying the cultural associations and memories that accompany listening, and actively triggering knowledge. Music actively structures, comments on, and creates meaning; it can contradict or shift meaning; it can participate as a supplementary addresser – as an organic part of the message – or function as a meta-addresser. In audiovisual texts, music can fulfil disparate functions at one and the same moment, enhancing the complexity of the resulting artistic object: it "resemantizes" the other semiotic components of an audiovisual work, "resignifies" the whole message, and "creates sense." Because music structures a film, it is also an effigy of the addresser.

There are various examples of pieces from famous film soundtracks that have been reused in other films with new sense effects, partly linked to the mechanism of intertextual reference (a common practice in Q. Tarantino's films). Another set of examples concerns famous pieces, already imbued with historical significance, which are used in film sequences precisely to convey a rich density of meaning. Consider The Doors' "The End" and Richard Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), or "Für Elise" and the first movement of the "Moonlight" Sonata, which play a fundamental role in Gus Van Sant's *Elephant* (2003).

We invite contributions exploring resignification, resemantization, and sense-making in film music, including but not limited to:

- Quotations of classical music as leitmotifs in movies, as clues to the addresser's self-disclosure
- Music and sense-making in movies, tv series or commercials
- Music as embodiment of the addressee in movies
- Music as effigy of the addresser in movies
- Music as ironic emotive trigger: expectation and surprise in the use of music in movies
- Music and soundscape: how, why, and when do sounds and everyday noise get musical in movies?

Prospective authors should submit an abstract of 250-300 words to the guest editors, Costantino Maeder (costantino.maeder@uclouvain.be), Mark Reybrouck (mark.reybrouck@kuleuven.be) and Lucio Spaziante (lucio.spaziante@unibo.it), including their institutional affiliation and contact information. Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be invited to submit full papers of 6.000–8.000 words (including references). Manuscripts should be written in English and prepared according to the journal's style guidelines. Acceptance of the abstract does not guarantee publication, given that all research articles will be subjected to peer review.

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