

Gere Zsolt

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Summer 2018 – Pop music and film

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Cory Messenger: Act Naturally: Elvis Presley, the Beatles and “rocksploitation”

The study compares the ways in which Elvis Presley and the Beatles cooperated with the music and film industry, also comparing their cinematic careers in the “rocksploitation” genre. Through the nuanced comparative analysis of *Loving You* and *A Hard Day’s Night* the argument highlights the differences of the two performers and their recordings, especially through their rock and roll movies. It also describes the cultural and industrial systems that produced these differences and profited from them. The article suggests two models, the Elvis model and the Beatles model, to describe the different synergies between film industry and pop music industry, by focusing on various aspects of exchange between these two key industries.

Csaba Berényi: Everything you see is misunderstanding: Self-reflection, authenticity and virtual presence in the Beatles’ films and video clips

It has become commonplace knowledge today that the roots of video clips aesthetics go back to the films of the Beatles. I scrutinize the audiovisual self-representation and the sociocultural persona of the group as related to the intellectual historical context of the sixties. Apart from making movies, they invested into refining formal aspects and self-reflexive practices of promotional clips. By analyzing these examples, the argument highlights representational strategies that shaped, in an aesthetic and perceptual sense, the relationship of the audience and the performer in the context of a newly created definition of authenticity, described through the language of film. The author argues for a newly established medial experience of the musical event, as well as a connection between the fiction of the video clips and the virtual persona of the group, and problematizes the presence of the social, political and sociocultural dilemmas of the

sixties in the Beatles' films and video clips. A tension is revealed between the inner phantasies of the counterculture and its non ideological deconstruction on the one hand, and the contemporaneous political reality and activity on the other.

Attila Benke: A star is born in the era of narcissism. The role of pop music in music-dance and sports films of the Reagan era

Whether made by film music composers or famous singers and bands of the charts, the pop and rock music of the 1980s had great influence on the decade's Hollywood and other mainstream movies. Although it was a sophisticated marketing strategy in many cases, the two of the most influential genre cycles had films in which heroic musical scores were usually inserted at the corresponding parts of the plot. The successors of the classical musical, the music-dance films (*Fame* [1980], *Flashdance* [1983], *Dirty Dancing* [1987]) had nearly full-length music scores in the grand finals on the stage, and the martial arts films and boxing films (*Rocky III* [1982], *Karate Kid* [1984], *Kickboxer* [1989]) had the so called 'motivational sports montage' during the training sequences which were more important than the showdown itself in this genre.

In my paper I am looking for the answers for two main questions. Firstly, why did the music-dance films and sports films of the Reagan era (1981-1989) use the popular music of the 1980s this way? Secondly, to what end were the pop and rock songs of the decade integrated in these movies? I will argue that Ronald Reagan's new right ideology with the purpose of reviving the traditional values of America was adapted and affirmed in the music-dance and sports films, so in the great performances and training sequences the popular music had the function of creating and stabilizing the identity of heroes. In short, the most important part of these so-called 'conformist films' was the symbolic rehabilitation of traditional gender roles. The main areas tackled by my analysis are gender studies (especially the question of masculinity) and the new right ideology, and I analyze the two genre cycles, partly the Rocky movies and John Travolta's Tony Manero-films (*Saturday Night Fever* [1977], *Staying Alive* [1983]).

Zsolt Beke: Medusa's Gaze. Bond theme songs of the Brosnan era

The Bond theme songs are just as crucial elements of the franchise as the cars, the villains or the girls. Therefore, it should be interesting to examine the relationship not just between the theme songs and the respective movies but their interconnectedness as well. When Pierce Brosnan first appeared as Bond after a six-year hiatus, however, he had to find a place for Bond in a world that had been completely turned upside down. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the main dynamism of the franchise was lost, while at the same time pop culture started to heavily embrace feminism and the representation of female sexuality. The aim

of this article is to show how the four theme songs of the Brosnan era reflect these changes and how they can create a unified narrative arc without being removed from their cultural environment.

Zsolt Győri: „Our brain – wrong number”: New wave meets new sensibility

This article discusses the Hungarian cinema of a new sensibility, comprising of films with loose narratives and featuring seminal performers and bands of the Budapest underground music scene from the 1980s. It explores the poetics and politics of these films adopting Jacques Rancière’s notion of the ‘distribution of the sensible’, claiming that the music-cinema synergy brought into view neo-avant-garde tendencies in culture and an alternative public sphere. Focusing on a number of the films from the 1980s, by directors such as Gábor Bódy, András Szirtes, János Xantus and Béla Tarr, the article describes the novelty and meanings of the sensibility understood as an agency to express but also resist the moral nihilism of the 1980s. The agency brought into being through this avant-garde musical cinema and with the aim to destabilize established distributions of the sensible is analysed in scenes featuring live and recorded music.

Hajnal Király: Pop music as the figure of nostalgia and melancholy: *Dollybirds* and *Liza, the Fox Fairy*

The article compares two emblematic Hungarian musical films made 17 years apart, *Dollybirds* (Péter Tímár, 1997) and *Liza, the Fox Fairy* (Károly Ujj-Mészáros, 2014) in order to detect generational differences in terms of collective sensitivity, belonging and individual coping, greatly figured by the recorded musical score. While *Dollybirds* is set in a well circumscribed communist past, with retro-style costumes and Hungarian music triggering collective memories, *Liza, the Fox Fairy* characterizes by a refreshing ‘bubble effect’, disconnected from all references to a communist past. I argue that recorded music in *Dollybirds* both thematizes and triggers a nostalgia affecting three generations of spectators, thus becomes an ingredient of community cohesion. In turn, the protagonists’ paradoxical musical nostalgia in *Liza* (they are yearning for an elsewhere), is symptomatic of individual isolation, connecting this film to other recent Hungarian films that thematize the melancholic helplessness of a generation stuck between political and economic regimes.

Orsolya Milián: “Here she comes, surreal in her crown”. The siege of Sarajevo and the music video versions of Miss Sarajevo

My essay aims at examining two music video versions produced during the MTV-era that

accompany the Passengers' song entitled Miss Sarajevo (1995) within the contexts of popular music (especially the so-called protest songs) and music videos. Based on popular music studies discourse surrounding protest songs, I attempt to outline and define the type of the protest music video. Following this, I conduct a comparative analysis of the two protest music video versions (directed by Bill Carter and Maurice Linnane) and Bill Carter's documentary film which serves as the basis of them, concentrating on the question whether the music video remediations of the documentary film carry on the meaning of the Sarajevan beauty contest as a form of female resistance. Finally, I tangentially examine the "fate" and change of function of these music video versions due to their "migration" to digital media.

Student's Workshop

Eszter Mihálffy: Narrative film from a tracklist

My paper examines the relations between sound and image that play a crucial part in Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver* (2017). Firstly, I outline the historical, formal and conceptual changes of music videos. Secondly, I draw conclusions with regard to the narrative of *Baby Driver*: Two strategies – namely the tracklist-like seriality and the logic of narrative junctions – seem to clash in it. I examine these two strategies by highlighting some of the film's scenes and analyzing them in detail, pointing out that the film's narrative strategies are tightly interconnected by the diegetic and non-diegetic use of music. The film's subject matters are also affected by music. Songs used as background music are merged into the film's plot, but they are also placed among the themes of the film, since the story documents changes in music listening habits and shows some of the music consumption practices of our contemporary consumer society. The latter can be examined from two perspectives: On the one hand, we may analyze it within the context of prosumer society and participatory media, on the other hand, we may look into it through a critical filter that comprises Adorno's, Miklós Erdély's and Hanns Eisler's views on consumer society and music listening.

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