

## Specifics of Musical Genre and Melody in it

### Annotation

The object of the article is melody about the specifics of which we decide invoking different music genres. The goal of the study is to pay attention to the dependence of melody character on the genre. In this case, one speaks about the music of modern Lithuanian composer, Bronius Kutavičius (2009) that was used for the composition of a silent film of the Danish film director, Dreyer, called *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) and, in other case, one has in mind the melody system, which is used in Kutavičius' independent work the *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans* (2014).

In this case, the study content shows a direct dependence of the melody on the genre, distinguished according to the dependence and nature of the performance (e.g., when the melody is applied to the composition of a silent film and performing of an independent music work). The most significant result of the aforementioned comparison should be considered the issue of independence: music, written for a film, is dependent on the film itself (here music here is secondary). In a music work, melody is its exceptional and the most significant element.

**Keywords:** melody, composition, silent film sound, sound excerpts.

### Introduction

The term *melody* in film covers a wide study field, which is composed of the expression of the horizontal music tones. In this case, we speak about the musical elements of the tone pitch, rhythm, tonal colour, etc.

The object of film and its elements in it were investigated by different scholars, especially during last two decades of this century. Anyway, scholar Lucia Corres Sarria has written about the film theories since the 1970s. The melody elements there are treated as a part of structural semiotics.<sup>1</sup>

As Smilen Antonov Savov mentions, he “focuses his attention on some of the cinematic signs present in every film project . . . , and to illustrate how powerful and misleading is the usage of them.”<sup>2</sup>

Scholars Daiva Šidiškytė and Daiva Tamulaitienė also pay attention to different elements of the basis of specific narrative and promotional structures. One of it is musical elements and melody in it.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of the melody usually depends on its characteristic features and its relation with the composition in which it functions. Among the peculiar and exceptional melodies, one can mention the Gregorian Chorale and its intonations or the rhythmic of the waltz, polka, bolero, and others used as compound parts of the melody in the compositions of a bigger form.

We speak separately about the design of various music melodies and sound, used in the compositions of a greater form. Here one has in mind silent film and music melodies accompanying its images and specifying them; the relation of the so-called visual steps, i.e. depicted visual running and its corresponding music. The most characteristic feature of silent film and its accompanying music can be considered the synchronisation of visual and audio levels.

Sound illustrations of silent film were not always used fairly and ingeniously. The usage of the same music melodies and fragments in several films, as was mentioned by semiotician Zofia Lissa, is the greatest shortage.<sup>4</sup>

In a silent film, the role of melody is given to the other elements of the film, as was mentioned by Hamid Reza Shaeiri and Selma Nayebi.<sup>5</sup>

The attention in the article is given to the expression of the melody in the context of the film and separate music composition. The music of the Lithuanian composer, Bronius Kutavičius, created for the film about Joan of Arc, and his the *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans* obviously shows the features, present in the composition told by the music.

<sup>1</sup> Sarria, Lucia Corres (2014). The (unresolved) debate between opposed film theories. Can a cognitive semiotics of film work as the common ground? *The Role of Humanities in Contemporary Society: Semiotics, Culture, Technologies*. 1st International Congress of Humanities (ICoN 2014). Program and Abstracts, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Savov, Smilen Antonov (2015). Cinema Signs: Archetypes and Metaphors. *Creativity. Diversity. Development*. 2nd International Congress of Humanities (ICoN 2015). Abstracts and Program. Kaunas, 25–29 May 2015, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Šidiškytė, Daiva, Tamulaitienė, Daiva (2014). The Analysis of Film Trailers from the Multimodal Perspective. *The Role of Humanities in Contemporary Society: Semiotics, Culture, Technologies*. 1st International Congress of Humanities (ICoN 2014). Program and Abstracts, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> Lissa, Zofia (1964). *Estetyka Muzyki Filmowej*. PWM: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, p. 116–123.

<sup>5</sup> Reza Shaeiri, Hamid, Nayebi, Selma (2015). Silence Representation Analysis in the Kieslowskian Cinema in the Framework of Tensive Function of Discourse. *Creativity. Diversity. Development*. 2nd International Congress of Humanities (ICoN 2015). Program and Abstracts. Kaunas, 25–29 May 2015. Kaunas: International Semiotics Institute, Kaunas University of Technology, p. 131.

### **The peculiarity of the music melody for the film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (2009)**

The peculiarity of the melody in cinema is determined by its dependence on the film itself. A film, according to the composer Antanas Kučinskas, is first of all watched and only then listened<sup>6</sup>. The music for Dreyer's film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is not independent as it is formed with reference to its visual level, i.e. music serves the film.

Besides, music for this silent film acts a dual role of the melodies: illustrating and supplementing film. In addition, the most important elements, which, according to Kutavičius, have *connected* the film material with its accompanying music, were the image, tempo and dynamics<sup>7</sup>.

The composer Kutavičius in this film was influenced, according to him, by a dramatic expression of Joan of Arc which is demonstrated in the film. The power of suffering, her emotions are expressed by the actress Maria Falconetti (1892–1946) face in a close-up<sup>8</sup>.

The researcher Santa Lingevičiūtė has described the film as an avant-garde one because of the prevailing image fragmentation, space vacuum and missing time<sup>9</sup>.

One should mention the characteristic features to the film melody design in this work, among which the most characteristic can be considered the marked time, corresponding one or another image episode in the precision of seconds.

The most characteristic feature of the mentioned film is its role of accompanying-supporting the image. There prevails the repetition of the same sound or its long keeping. Separate beat times, which are composed in this way, are often repeated. In the film music, the mentioned repetitions of music formations prevail, while the dynamic scale stays neutral.

The mentioned music illustrating Dreyer's film, according to the conductor and musicologist Donatas Katkus, is real music of Kutavičius<sup>10</sup>.

Besides the specially created music for a silent film by Kutavičius, the quotations of his earlier compositions *Epitaphium temporum pereunti* (Epitaph to the Passing Time, 1998) and the stage diptych *Ignis et fides* (2001–2003) were used and in the finale together with the orchestra the psalm "Blackbirds in a snowfield" (translated by Sigitas Geda) is performed by a choir from the psalm diptych by Hildegard von Bingen.

### **Film Music by Kutavičius**

Music by Kutavičius that sounds at the beginning is instantly recognised. There is a six-bar motif, which is performed by the cantor and a group of instrumentalists. It means that a new group is added to those playing music, repeating the same motifs belonging to them. Thus, eight groups gather playing music in a similar way.

We consider an exceptional episode in which the cantor sings, performing the motif of aleatoric technique (every group of the string instruments is supported here by a separate cantor). It is characteristic of the precise marking of sound volume and the lack of sound length marking.

Another case of the illustration of communication in music is the episode in which we can see the roles of listening and responding can be considered. With the questions of the investigators of Joan of Arc we relate the rising intonations performed by cellos and contrabass with a wide one and a half octave range crotchet notes. In the lower register *staccato* sounds are as if emphatically "hardened", and in the upper register they are prominent with separate sounds, which are performed in half *marcato*. In such musical language culmination, on the same note *fortissimo* and *diminuendo* there are (crotchet and semibreve note long) sounds.

To the silent responses of Joan of Arc (piano) we attribute the parts of violas and violins in which one can hear a famous and very rapid (twenty crotchets long) sound falling as a sigh in second interval and prolonged half-length notes with a point and their termination.

We have an opposition of all the orchestra and the violins there. In such way, i.e. with the help of music, the wish was to emphasize that the church was against the young Joan of Arc who struggled for the independence of her country.

In this case, one can say that as though music sounds speak for the characters.

<sup>6</sup> Kučinskas, Antanas (2011). *Theatre and cinema music. Theoretical material context*. Vilnius: Kronta, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Kutavičius, Bronius. How does *The Passion of Joan of Arc* sound? *Respublika* 2009-10-29. Among the performers of the film music, the composer has mentioned the following ones: vocalist/cantor, bells, organs, I violin, II violins, alts, cellos, contrabass, percussion instruments, record tape (cantor, campanelli, organe, violini I, violini II, viole, violoncelli, contrabassi, percussion, the tape).

<sup>8</sup> Kutavičius, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Lingevičiūtė, Santa (2009). How does *The Passion of Joan of Arc* sound? *Respublika* 2009-10-29.

<sup>10</sup> Katkus, *ibid.*

Among the neologisms of the composer Kutavičius one can mention the correspondence of Morse code in music<sup>11</sup>. Strongly press the forefinger to the cord. You get an uneven small rhythmical drawing, similar to Morse code, as was mentioned by the composer.

In the finale of the film about Joan of Arc, as was mentioned by Kutavičius, there sounds the music from the earlier mentioned works, thus the emotional weight of the film would be transferred into music (from the image level to the audio level).

The so-called image and sound convergence were considered by the composer conditionally. The latter ones gain a public character – as if merging with the mourning universe. The music of this silent film, at the same time, as if imitates an audio design, i.e. noise.

### *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans (2014)*

In the score of the music by Kutavičius created for Dreyer's film *The Passion of Joan of the Arc*, one can see how much it differs from his *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans*.

In the case of the film, one should mention the music's independence (also of the melody in it as well) on the film itself to which it was written. Music here is secondary, i.e. dependent on the continuous image development which is measured in seconds. In the independent music work, a final music form prevails (its main measurement unit is written in beating times).

The *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans*, according to the composer, is pure music<sup>12</sup>. Kutavičius has used this term for the so-called academic music work. It can be treated as an independent instrumental play for symphony orchestra. According to the changing tempo and predominant instruments or topics, we can determine the features of the work form and structure. The mentioned changes of the tempo tell about the separate scales of the form composition. In the beginning, when there dominate the topics of the work, a constant tempo prevails, in the culmination, it reaches the maximum, and in the end of the composition, it gets calmer and moves to a very slow tempo.

From the beginning it can be seen how musical material is divided into the blocks of 1–6 bar motifs, which are repeated for many times. It is a powerful and periodical “growth” of dynamics during which one gradually goes from a *ppp* chosen episode in the beginning towards a *fff* episode in the end of it. In every of the aforementioned groups, the cantors prevail, accompanying different groups of the stringed instruments. Besides, thus gradually one increases the group of wooden wind instruments (flutes, hautboy, clarinets, fagots), accompanied by contrabasses. The composer's style is characteristic of the same motif repetition, during which the number of its performers and dynamics are increased gradually<sup>13</sup>.

In the middle scale of the *Epitaph*, the orchestra is strengthened by supportive percussion instruments in solo by turns. Among those instruments, the percussive *piatto* solo, tambour solo, triangolo solo and Temple blocs. One should mention the prevailing topic<sup>14</sup>.



B. Kutavičius. *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans*

In the aforementioned middle part of the mentioned *Epitaph*, the scene of investigation is as if recovered from the film *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, in which we see Joan of Arc and her torturers as well as the representatives of the church. Then, in turns, the emphasized opposition between the stringed (a) and percussive (b) instruments sounds (the episode is given the musical form *ababa1*). In the part of the stringed instruments, the intonations of the seconds reminding of Joan's sighs sound. In the parties of the percussive instruments (often of the whole orchestra as well) the intonations of the question which can be related to the representatives of the church who tortured Joan of Arc prevail. The inquiry is symbolically ended in a pause of the eighth note and general pause of the whole orchestra.

<sup>11</sup> Kutavičius, Music for the film *Joan of Arc*, the score, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Kutavičius, “Festival from a close look: from whispers to rages”, *Kauno diena*, 08.11.2014.

<sup>13</sup> Gradual increasing and gradual decreasing of loudness, the number of instruments, and the same motif repetition are typical features of Kutavičius' music.

<sup>14</sup> Kutavičius, *Epitaph*, p. 13 in the score: ob. 1: mi-re-fa-sol-mi, etc., 3 beat times.

The final part of this episode can be related to the point of the organs entrenched in the part of the contrabasses and its accompanying gradual decreasing of loudness (from *ff* to *pp*). In its background, the cantor sings the melody of the Gregorian choral *Ex audi, Domine, justitiam meam...* via the text (a phonogram record is used).

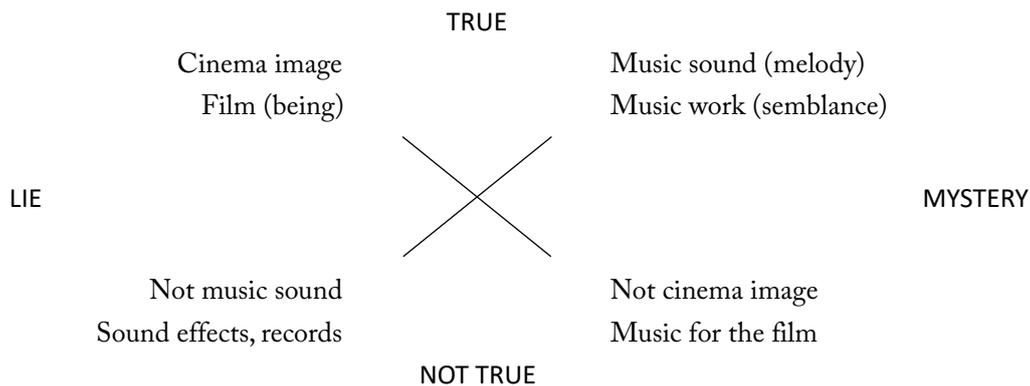
The author's comment of this investigation scene – the voice, as if going away and melting in the space – should be considered a further episode performed by the orchestra, during which it slowly moves in semitones higher until loudness gradually decreases.

The *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans* ends with recorded church bells. Their quartet is comprised of the repeated crotchets, eights, triplets and the “pawnshop” (one eighth and two sixteenths) rhythmic bells. They are supported by the string instruments slowly playing *ppp*.

### Final part

Two different compositions of the composer Bronius Kutavičius in the sense of genre, used for comparison, allow speaking about a different level of their melodies. Here one speaks about the music created by the aforementioned composer for the silent Dreyer's film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and his composition the *Epitaph to the Maid of Orleans* (2014). In this case, the music composed to illustrate the film and individually created music composition are compared.

In the first case, music in cinema is given the secondary role as in films the image prevails. On the contrary, in a music work, the music sound prevails, which can be described as melody in a wide sense. Among the aforementioned music expression in these compositions the oppositional relations emerge, which are rendered using the semiotic square of A. J. Greimas (*Carré sémiotique*):



With the help of articulation of the semiotic square, we render the so-called Greimas's *véridiction* topics of emerging here and his “delineated category of being and semblance”. One can obviously see the established oppositional relations between image (film) and sound (music–melody). This expression can be related to the modalities, evaluated with categories REAL vs NOT REAL and the pair of the opposition IMAGE vs SOUND. Modality category of NOT REAL matches the expression of the opposition Not music sound vs Not image. Not music sound category is its sound records and sound effects close to music, for instance, in the *Epitaph* the insertions of the Gregorian chorales or bells supplementing the work from the records. Analogous to the latter ones can be the music for a silent film, which is respectively (theoretically) considered the opposition Not film image (it is equal to the expression Music (melody) film).

Thanks to the semiotic square of Algirdas J. Greimas, it was possible to reveal the peculiarities and differences of the expression of the aforementioned compositions.

### Conclusions

- The nature of music (melody) is directly dependent on the composition genre to which it belongs.
- Music (melody) serving for the silent film is a secondary and dependent product.
- Music work is the formation of independent structure and unique content.

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## Muzikos žanro specifika ir melodijos vaidmuo

### Santrauka

Kalbėdami apie melodijos fenomeną muzikoje, nukrypstame į šiais laikais aktualią žanro temą. Nuo žanro priklauso jo įtakos zonoje esančių melodijų pobūdis. Šiuos žodžius patvirtina straipsnio objektas – du skirtingų žanrų kompozitoriaus Broniaus Kutavičiaus kūriniai, pagrįsti ta pačia istorija apie kovingą prancūzų didvyrę Žaną d’Ark. Vienu atveju kalbame apie minėto kompozitoriaus parašytą muziką nebylijam danų režisieriaus Carlo Theodoro Dreyerio filmui *Žanos d’Ark aistra* ir Kutavičiaus sukurtą muzikos kompoziciją *Epitafija Orleano Mergelei*.

Kino filmui *Žanos d’Ark aistra* sukurta muzika yra antrinis darinys, nes ši muzika yra priklausoma nuo kino filmo, kuriam ji buvo parašyta. Muzika seka paskui vaizdą ekrane ir jį palaiko, nes begarsiam kino filme panaudota melodija yra vienas iš garsinio vaizdo fono elementų. Čia funkcionuojantys melodijai būdingi garsų pasikartojimai arba jų tęsimas, vienodoka dinamika ir pan. Svarbiausiu jos bruožu laikomas tarnavimas vaizdui.

*Epitafija Orleano Mergelei* kompozitoriaus vadinama grynąja muzika, t. y. charakteringa akademinės muzikos kompozicija, kurios melodija yra viena iš svarbiausių jos funkcionavimo priemonių. Šį kūrinį galima traktuoti kaip savarankišką instrumentinę pjesę simfoniniam orkestrui. Šioje kompozicijoje jos melodijos atlieka daug funkcijų: skiriamąją, plėtotės, formos konstravimo. Pagal šiuos bruožus buvo sudaryta vienadalė *Epitafijos Orleano Mergelei* formos struktūra.

Opoziciniams laikytini objektai – muzika kino filmui *Žanos d’Ark aistra* ir *Epitafija Orleano Mergelei* – straipsnyje nagrinėjami taikant A. J. Greimo semiotinį kvadratą (*carré sémiotique*).