

Tracing Experimental Textures and Timbres in Horror Cinema:  
A Closer Look at William Friedkin's *The Exorcist*,  
Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island*

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## ABSTRACT

Many filmmakers have explored the sonic possibilities offered by experimental, avant-garde, and modernist music as it prospered in the mid-twentieth century. Fascinatingly, horror cinema, with all its eerie subject matter, has championed the use of experimental music in its films. Since the silent-film era, horror has stood much to gain by deviating from the normative film scoring standards developed in Hollywood. Filmmakers indebted to horror continually seek new sounds and approaches to showcase the otherworldly and suspenseful themes of their films. Numerous movies that challenged the status quo through transformative scoring practices achieved distinction among rival films. The rise of auteurist films in the 1950s further instigated experimental practices as the studio system declined and created a space for new filmmakers to experiment with aesthetic strategies.

Film music scholarship has paid relatively little attention to the convergences between experimental concert music and horror scoring practices. This topic is crucial, especially horror's employment of existing experimental music, as it has played a critical role in American filmmaking in the second half of the twentieth century. My thesis traces the relationship between horror cinema and experimental music. I survey the use of experimental music throughout the history of horror films and examine the scores for three films: William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island* (2010). With my case studies of these three films, I aim to fill a significant gap in film music scholarship, highlight the powerful use of experimental music textures and timbres and demonstrate this music's significant role in cultivating new scoring practices that succeed in engaging, unnerving and shocking audiences of horror cinema.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandma Ella Railsback who gave me unwavering support in all my endeavors and to my parents, grandfather, and husband who have always supported me.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Horror cinema has championed musical experimentalism and its unique timbres and textures into its films in many ways. As it flourished in the mid-century, experimental music often distinguished itself by unusual textures and timbres which utilize novel instruments and instrumentation, new or unusual performance techniques, indeterminacy, and electroacoustic sounds amongst many other attributes that became fertile ground for horror to enhance its otherworldly themes. Filmmakers went on to borrow existing iconic and highly innovative compositions originally written for the concert hall to create dynamic audiovisual experiences. These creative confluences have played an especially critical role in Hollywood filmmaking in the second half of the twentieth century.

At the center of horror film music is the expectation to experience the strange and unusual in comparison to established “normality.” In *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer*, Timothy Scheurer asserts, “the music that will be used must be of a nature to capture a sense of the extraordinary, the bizarre, the unknown, the abnormal, and the threatening.”<sup>1</sup> This sentiment is echoed in horror as early as the silent film era, for instance, in works like Hans Erdman’s score for *Nosferatu* (1922) which used descriptive titles such as “ghostly” or “strange.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy E. Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 52.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema* (London: Equinox, 2009), 5.



Furthermore, horror has always had an integral relationship with sound. In his book *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre*, Robert Spadoni argues that a link exists between the addition of the sound film and the horror genre as the general strangeness of the synchronized soundtrack corresponded well with 1931 films, Tod Browning's *Dracula* and James Whale's *Frankenstein*.<sup>3</sup> Film critics and promoters, in fact, didn't start referring explicitly to "horror pictures" until these two influential films emerged.<sup>4</sup> Other early contributions such as Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) and Merian Cooper's *King Kong* (1933) furthered new and unusual approaches to musical underscoring.<sup>5</sup> These early horror films helped lay a foundation for further sonic explorations of the genre.

These pathbreaking musical endeavors either blended with or rebelled against the conventional Hollywood film music sound inspired by nineteenth-century European music which was made popular by such composers as Max Steiner, Erich Korngold, and Franz Waxman. This style has persisted since sound film's inception and is present in many films today.<sup>6</sup> Normative Hollywood film music was especially challenged towards

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<sup>3</sup> Neil Lerner, ed., *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 55.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Spadoni, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Romanticism, alongside these explorations, is ingrained in many horror pictures, including *Dracula* (1931) or *The Mummy* (1932) which both utilized Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. Classical or baroque music is also frequently employed. For example, the use of Bach in *The Beast with Five Fingers* (1946) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) for a more recent example.

the mid-century. In their 1947 book *Composing for the Films*, sociologist and philosopher Theodor W. Adorno and composer Hanns Eisler critiqued the standardization of much music written for Hollywood films in the 1930s and 1940s and called for new scoring approaches without falling back on clichés. Although initially ignored, it provides evidence of the desire for new alternatives. From the 1960s onward, an influx of films explored the sonic capabilities experimental and avant-garde music offered as composers and artists in England and the United States, like John Cage, were becoming more anti-establishment and expressed this through their music.<sup>7</sup> Cage’s influence on experimental music was reinforced by various social factors of the 1960s such as the rebellion against the conservative conformity of the 1950s, the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war protests, feminism, and the gay rights and environmental movements. Rob Haskins argues that Cage’s desire to free sounds from the composer’s authority was a sort of revolt for sonic rights.<sup>8</sup> The rise of auteurist filmmakers instigated more experimental film scores as the refusal to adopt normative film conventions became known as “originality.”

Horror films, in particular, have a fascinating history of employing experimental approaches in music and sound effect. Films that challenged the status quo to seek transformative new scoring practices successfully distinguished themselves among rival films. Dependent on the curiosity, open minds, and generosity of the directors, producers,

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<sup>7</sup> John Cage, Cornelius Cardew, Steve Reich, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Here’s a Piano I Prepared Earlier Experimental Music in the 1960’s*, 6:30–6:35.

<sup>8</sup> Haskins, 99.

and studios, filmmakers embraced these new alternatives to evoke severe emotions like shock and paranoia with new sources. The development towards new alternatives in film soundtracks has instigated not only more experimental film scoring practices, but also compiled scores of borrowed experimental and avant-garde music as well.

Compiled scores of experimental music proved to be successful and accessible among moviegoers despite the fact that this music was often considered challenging for concert hall audiences. In his essay “Horror and Science Fiction,” Stan Link argues that this is due to differences in listening modes. The music conceived for the concert hall demands direct attention, while film marries music, imagery, and narrative into a multi-layered context. Link also suggests that the general suspension of belief in these films enables audiences to accept unfamiliar music more easily and that the progressive content of these films can be liberating.

In this thesis, I focus on horror because it is vital to exploring experimental music’s presence in later twentieth-century film.<sup>9</sup> While there is a wealth of iconic experimental horror film scores from around the world, many of which have influenced American cinema, I will be focusing predominantly on films created in the U.S. I will shed light on how experimental music has been used and recontextualized along with novel employment of sound effects and how this practice has made a lasting impact on current cinema. I will analyze three major films, William Friedkin’s *The Exorcist* (1973), Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980), and Martin Scorsese’s *Shutter Island* to illustrate this approach. *The Exorcist*’s use of innovative sound effects and existing

experimental music, most notably from Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, created a new standard for scoring horror. Friedkin's employment of sound and music inspired Kubrick's film *The Shining* in 1980. These two films influenced countless future films including Scorsese's thriller, *Shutter Island* (2010), which expertly incorporates experimental repertoire from composers Penderecki, Ligeti, and Cage. My analysis of these films will cover all acoustic planes of cinematic sound including music, sound effect, and speech.

Sources that focus on experimental music in the concert hall do not consider its presence in film music. I aim to highlight the convergences between horror film music and experimental music. My research will hopefully bring more attention to this area of film music scholarship. While scholarship on horror film music has gained momentum, the horror genre has not always received appreciation in recent years. The neglect of this area of study may be a result of prejudice against horror cinema. Film critic Anne Bilson lamented, "Whenever a horror movie makes a splash ... there is invariably an article calling it "smart" or "elevated" or "art house" horror. They hate it so much they have to frame its hits as something else."<sup>10</sup> Issues such as this show that there is much need for more scholarship on horror film music and I hope that through this research I can help fill a lacuna in film music scholarship.

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Barber, "Is Horror the Most Disrespected Genre?" *BBC*, June 14, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20180614-is-horror-the-most-disrespected-genre>.

## I. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of my research is to discover intersections between musical experimentalism, experimental music written for the concert hall and horror film scoring methods. Fred Karlin's *Listening to Movies: The Film Lover's Guide to Film Music* and Timothy Scheurer's *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer* provided necessary context on film music in general to build on.<sup>11</sup> While these sources cover all genres, Wheeler W. Dixon, David Roche, and Barry Keith Grant have provided historical context of the horror genre itself and what kind of cultural environments helped horror cinema prosper.<sup>12</sup> However, my thesis seeks to consider sound effect as well. To examine all aspects of cinematic sound and how it relates to music, Michel Chion's seminal volumes *The Voice in Cinema* and *Film: A Sound Art* provide terminology, many of which grew out of Pierre Schaeffer's creative work and theory in the field of acoustic music, to describe how sounds can exist within the cinematic framework.<sup>13</sup> Midge Costin's documentary, *Making Waves: The Art of*

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<sup>11</sup> Fred Karlin, *Listening to Movies: The Film Lover's Guide to Film Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994); Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film*; Kathryn Kalinak *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and *Sound: Dialogue, Music, and Effects* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Wheeler W. Dixon, *A History of Horror* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010); David Roche, *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s: Why Don't They Do It Like They Used To?* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2014); and Barry Keith Grant, *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Michel Chion *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: BFI, 2005); Michel Chion *Film: A Sound Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); and James Wierzbicki, *Film Music: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

*Cinematic Sound* has also aided in my examination of cinematic sound with its in-depth commentary on the history of cinematic sound with recent interviews with innovative pioneers in the field such as Walter Murch.<sup>14</sup> William Whittington's *Sound Design and Science Fiction* and "Horror Sound Design," and Jay Beck's article "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* and the Proprietary Nature of Sound," have also been instrumental for considering sound effect in my thesis.<sup>15</sup>

Recent horror film music scholarship such as Phillip Hayward's *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, and Neil Lerner's essay collection *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear* contain insightful essays that provided important details for my case studies of *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*.<sup>16</sup> This thesis is indebted to these studies as well as sources like Alexander O. Phillippe's documentary *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist* which notably contains information on *The Exorcist* with interviews with Friedkin that shed light on the music and experimental sound effect approaches used in the film.<sup>17</sup> While these resources have been beneficial to my thesis,

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<sup>14</sup> Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> William Whittington *Sound Design and Science Fiction* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007) and "Horror Sound Design," in *A Companion to the Horror Film*, ed. by Harry M. Benshoff p. 168–185 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017); and Jay Beck, "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* and the Proprietary Nature of Sound," *Sound on Screen* 6, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>16</sup> Philip Hayward, *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema* (London: John Libbey, 2004) and *Terror Tracks*; Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*; Lerner, *Music in the Horror Film*; Julia Heimerdinger, "Music and Sound in the Horror Film & Why Some Modern and Avant-Garde Music Lends Itself to it so well," *Seiltanz. Beiträge zur Musik der Gegenwart* 4 (2012).

<sup>17</sup> Alexander O. Phillippe, *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist* (Denver, CO: Exhibit A Pictures, 2019).

they do not address experimentalism's role in horror scoring techniques. They also do not make clear distinctions between the concepts of avant-garde and experimentalism.

Navigating distinctions between musical directions can be complex, as there are many grey areas. When examining experimental scoring practices in film music I will consider the contributions and aesthetic sensibilities of experimentalism, avant-gardism and modernism to new music. Michael Nyman's *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* and David Nicholls's *American Experimental Music, 1890–1940* focus on defining experimentalism and how it compares to other musical directions in the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the BBC documentary *Here's a Piano I Prepared Earlier: Experimental Music in the 1960's* focuses on how the experimental movement flourished during the 1960s in the U.S. and U.K. which has been helpful in tracing convergences between experimental music and horror cinema.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Patteson's *Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism* has further aided this thesis with its

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<sup>18</sup> Important information on this topic can be found in: Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York: Schirmer, 1974); Wolfram Schwingler, *Krzysztof Penderecki: His Life and Work: Encounters, Biography and Musical Commentary*, (London: Schott, 1989); David Nicholls, *American Experimental Music, 1890–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Lydia Goehr, *Elective Affinities: Musical Essays on the History of Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Rob Haskins, *John Cage* (London: Reaktion, 2012); Constantin Floros, and Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch, eds., *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-Garde and Postmodernism* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2014); Benjamin Piekut, ed., *Tomorrow Is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Thomas Patteson, *Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016); Jennie Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> John, Cage, Cornelius Cardew, Steve Reich, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Here's a Piano I Prepared Earlier: Experimental Music in the 1960's* (London: BBC, 2004).

history of timbral advancements as well as some experimental approaches in film. While providing in-depth research on experimental music in the concert hall, the aforementioned resources do not consider its presence in film music. By referencing a wide collection of diverse resources, I aim to synthesize information and highlight the convergences between horror film music and experimental music.

## II. TERMINOLOGY

My thesis utilizes several terms and concepts that require explanation as they have a wide range of meanings due to a history of change. One such term is “experimental music.” In this thesis, I will be referring to Cecilia Sun’s definition of experimental music detailed in her entry on this term in *The New Grove of American Music*. She states that experimental music focuses on “a rejection of musical institutions and institutionalized musical values,” and she emphasizes that “experimental composers worked outside the European art music mainstream, finding an alternate path to the then sanctioned choice between neo-classicism and serialism.”<sup>20</sup> I also reference John Rockwell’s definition which explains that experimental composers are fascinated by the phenomena behind music such as creative reexaminations of the laws of acoustics, unusual organization of pitch, rhythm and meter, the hitherto unexplored potential of conventional and newly invented instruments and the communication between composer, performer, and

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<sup>20</sup> Cecilia Sun, “Experimental Music,” *Grove Music Online*, July 10, 2012. <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2224296>.



spectator.<sup>21</sup> Although experimenting with music is nothing new, according to scholars such as H. Wiley Hitchcock, the history of experimentalism in the United States goes back at least as far as Charles Ives who strayed from European tradition that were fashionable at the time. Ives inspired composers such as Henry Cowell, Carl Ruggles, Edgard Varèse and Cage who wanted to create novel musical idioms different from the European examples and from classical appropriations of American folk music. The experimental music movement was, however, very much influenced by European constructivism, Futurism, and Dadaism as well.<sup>22</sup>

In this thesis, I categorize work conceived for the concert hall by composers Krzysztof Penderecki and György Ligeti, frequently labeled avant-garde, as experimentalist. While experimentalist and avant-garde artists share this desire to depart radically from tradition and commit to “progress,” they contradict each other in many other aspects. In *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, Nyman explains that the experimental composer is interested in the uniqueness of moments instead of permanence. Of course, every performance has unique moments no matter what is being performed, but to him, the experimental composer seeks to create processes that produce unknown outcomes. Nyman states that, in contrast, the avant-garde composer is more focused on predictability and permanence in performance.<sup>23</sup> In Penderecki’s concert

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<sup>21</sup> John Rockwell, *The New Grove of American Music*, vol. II, E-K, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1986), 91–92.

<sup>22</sup> Rockwell, 92.

<sup>23</sup> Nyman, *Experimental Music*, 9.

program for the West German Radio Symphony Orchestra performance of *Fluorescences* (1962) he wrote, “In this composition, all I’m interested in is liberating sound beyond all tradition.”<sup>24</sup> Both composers’ work adheres to the idea that music should never be stagnant and be open to experimentation with new sounds and timbres, forms of pitch simultaneity and succession while allowing for indeterminacy and performance freedom.<sup>25</sup> I will explore how Penderecki’s experimental timbres and textures, in particular, have made an impact on horror film scoring.

While there are many understandings of the terms texture and timbre, I define texture as the quality made up of the overall sound of two or more simultaneously occurring voices. Texture may apply to the vertical aspects of musical structure and reflect how individual voices work together.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, I define timbre as the quality of a single tone or voice based on its overtone structure. Of course, the timbre of a single tone changes depending on its context, whether its amplitude is increased, whether further pitches are added to it and whether it gets buried in a dense sound mass that resembles white noise which includes a wide range of frequencies. Murray Campbell

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<sup>24</sup> Mieczslaw Tomaszewski, “Krzysztof Penderecki,” liner notes for Krzysztof Penderecki Orchestral Works No. 1, Symphony No. 3/ *Threnody*, Polish National Radio Symphony, Antoni Wit, Naxos 8.554491, December 6, 1999, compact disc., 4.

<sup>25</sup> Like other experimental composers, Penderecki developed his own new graphic notation system as a result of experiments with new timbres and textures. His innovations earned him disapproval from purist avant-garde critics. In an interview with *Resident Advisor*, the composer stated he moved away from the genre as “the avant-garde didn’t move.” See Andy Battaglia and Krzysztof Penderecki, “The Passion of Krzysztof Penderecki,” *Resident Advisor*, August 11, 2010, <https://ra.co/features/1234>.

<sup>26</sup> “Texture,” *Grove Music Online*, January 20, 2001. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027758?rskkey=eTHpHF&result=1>.

describes timbre as “a more complex attribute than pitch or loudness.” He continues, “the perception of timbre is a synthesis of several factors, and in computer-generated music considerable effort has been devoted to the creation and exploration of multi-dimensional timbral spaces.”<sup>27</sup> In this thesis I explore electroacoustic and acoustic homophonic, polyphonic, and micropolyphonic textures including white noise where all audible frequencies are heard simultaneously. I also make comparisons to textures common in experimental music such as Cage’s music circuses, Ives’ polystylism, environmental sounds and *musique concrète* in my case studies. I discuss Rick Altman’s “mise-en-bande” which describes simultaneous soundtrack elements including sound effects, music, and dialogue.<sup>28</sup> The usual divisions between “noise” and music often became ambiguous in cinema which corresponds with the Cagean idea that all sounds have equal value. “Noise” often has negative connotations and is even considered unmusical by some as it departs from the norms of previous musical conventions. In *Reverberations: The Philosophy, Aesthetics and Politics of Noise*, Paul Hegarty states that the “innovations in musical form ranging from new forms of classical music, jazz, rock, punk, and hip-hop to industrial and electronic musics, from ambient to dance, have often initially been perceived as ugly and rebarbative noise, meaning simply that they departed

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<sup>27</sup> Murray Campbell, “Timbre,” *Grove Music Online*, January 20, 2001. <https://www-oxfordmusiconlinecom.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027973?rskey=NUfSOV&result=1>.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Long, *Beautiful Monsters: Imagining the Classic In Musical Media* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 20.

from the norms of a previous system of sonic organization.”<sup>29</sup> He notes that this aspect highlights the positive dimensions of noise.<sup>30</sup> This thesis explores how horror cinema makes advantageous use of “noise.” To describe certain sonic textures in my case studies, I refer to terms such as Schaeffer’s “complex mass,” where the listener cannot hear a precise or recognizable pitch. I also refer to Dennis Smalley’s “remote surrogacy” wherein the source of a sound and the human action behind it is unknown and “gestural surrogacy,” meaning the process of increasing remoteness.<sup>31</sup> Schaeffer and Smalley’s terms are integral to this thesis as horror often creates suspense and mystery through sonic uncertainty.

### III. METHODOLOGIES

For this thesis I have used such methods as historical research, media and musical analysis as well as close readings of essays covering my case studies to shed new light on the employment of existing experimental music and experimental uses of music and sound effect in horror film soundtracks. My historical analysis will touch on how technological developments, economic factors, and innovations in cinematic sound influenced this genre and created opportunity for directors and composers to employ more experimental approaches. I have dissected scores for three referential films by

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Goddard, Benjamin Halligan and Paul Hegarty eds., *Reverberations: The Philosophy, Aesthetics and Politics of Noise* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2012), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Denis Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” *Organised Sound* 2, no. 2 (1997).

reconstructing the cue sheets for each of them to reveal and interpret their use of silence, sound masses, “noise,” extended techniques, sensory extremes, unusual instrumentation, electroacoustic sounds, and other experimental elements. I have also uncovered several intertextual references in music used with lyrics and discuss how they support the film’s dramaturgy. Finally, I have considered how the moving images have been realized with these elements and how scoring practices evolved and influenced each other in the later twentieth century.

### III. CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into six chapters. In the second chapter I trace the history of unusual scoring practices in American film music and examine motivations for musical experimentation throughout the twentieth century. I will also survey characteristic horror film music tropes and how this genre propelled composers to experiment with timbre, texture, orchestration, and various unusual compositional techniques. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters will each offer a case study on films that utilize experimental music and sound effects: Friedkins’ *The Exorcist* (1972), Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980) and Scorsese’s *Shutter Island* (2010). I will analyze the soundtracks of these films and offer a close reading of my findings. The sixth chapter will summarize and conclude my research on horror film music. It is hoped that my thesis will make a meaningful contribution to film and film music studies and inspire musicians, film audiences and scholars to discover new details in these films and to build on my research in further scholarly investigations of films with experimental music.

## CHAPTER 2: TRACING EXPERIMENTALISM IN FILM MUSIC

Several factors have been especially conducive to experiments in film scoring practices. These include the demand for new sounds to convey feelings like fear and paranoia or the use of unconventional music to stand out among rival films of the same genre. Unusual sounds and music have also often been used to evoke otherworldliness and alienness, making horror paramount opportunity for experimentalism. Furthermore, experimental sounds have been employed diegetically to depict the supernatural in futuristic or fantasy narratives. Such musical choices were bolstered by the development of new instruments, the “New Hollywood” movement, and the growing experimental music movement in the U.S. and abroad. This chapter will trace experimental film scoring practices and briefly survey how music and sound effects have been utilized in horror soundtracks.

### I. Tracing Unusual Early Film Scoring Practices

Film has been a medium that prospered through sonic and visual experimentation since the late nineteenth century when Edison laboratories pushed to create some of the first synchronized audiovisual experiences through film.<sup>32</sup> Since the silent film era (1890s–1920s), filmmakers have often sought to push technical, narrative, musical and other artistic boundaries. Music became vital to silent film productions when it was discovered that the addition of music could elucidate character motivations, foreshadow

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<sup>32</sup> Kathryn Kalinak, *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 33–34.

narrative developments, establish mood and setting, suggest continuity, and unify images for the audience, with the bonus of drowning out the loud projector.<sup>33</sup>

Original scores appeared in the United States around 1910.<sup>34</sup> These did not feature entirely original music, but were musical compilations, pieced together from varying existing music with added newly composed material.<sup>35</sup> The use of existing music in film reinforced old tropes and generated new clichés. In horror, a major factor in what makes sounds “scary” is repeated programming. Sounds and cues became synonymous with certain themes or emotions such as the love theme from Tchaikovsky’s overture–fantasy *Romeo and Juliette* for love scenes in films or the use of the *Dies irae* as exemplified in Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*, to create a sense of foreboding in *The Shining* (1980) and *The Omen* (1976). Musicologist Lawrence Kramer later called classical music “the paradigm of cinematic embodiment.”<sup>36</sup>

Music for silent films needed to fulfill different criteria than concert music. Film music often required the exploration of new sounds and techniques to complement or contradict the moving images. The Wurlitzer organ (1914–43) was crucial to silent film as this instrument could, in addition to conventional musical sounds, produce a wide

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<sup>33</sup> Kalinak, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Max Winkler and Vert Ennis take credit for these notated musical excerpts. Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 35.

<sup>35</sup> In *Film Music*, Kalinak describes “original” music as a “historically specific score commissioned for an individual film.” See Kalinak 46.

<sup>36</sup> David Neumeyer, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 354.

range of sound effects. The instrument can be considered one of the first to champion a greater emphasis on timbre in film music as both music and non-musical sound existed together. The usual divisions between “noise” and music that existed outside the cinema became ambiguous with the Wurlitzer. This is what Rick Altman calls, “mise-en-bande,” meaning the concept of blending soundtrack elements.<sup>37</sup> Altman’s concept applies to many horror films that succeed in creating fear through blending soundtrack elements as will be explored in my case studies. Musical experiments in horror were also supported by new instruments.

The Wurlitzer was among many new instruments that originated in the early twentieth century due to the growing demand for new sonic possibilities in music. Outside the realm of film music, artists like the Italian futurist Luigi Russolo called for new ways of exploring sound in his manifesto *The Art of Noises* (1913). There he stated, “we must break out of this limited circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds.”<sup>38</sup> In 1918, Joseph Schillinger together with Léon Theremin made great contributions to early electronic music.<sup>39</sup> Innovative films like Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy’s *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) with a score by George Antheil or Fritz Lang’s

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<sup>37</sup> Film music performed on a Wurlitzer organ can even be considered to have anticipated the forthcoming electronic music scores which played a significant role in reviving this practice in film as both the electronic score and the Wurlitzer use simulations of orchestra sounds and new sounds intended as non-musical sounds. See Philip Hayward, *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema* (London: John Libbey, 2004), 160.

<sup>38</sup> Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 25.

<sup>39</sup> Schillinger stated that “the development of music will go hand in hand with science.” See Thomas Patteson, *Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 2.



*Metropolis* (1927) with a score by Gottfried Huppertz's wove such unusual sounds in their soundtracks. Early electronic instruments such as the Theremin and the Ondes Martenot were developed in the 1920s and soon thereafter used in film music. Electroacoustic was an important facet of experimental and film music in the twentieth and twenty-first century. In the 1930s, the Theremin and Trautonium had inspired composers like Paul Hindemith who used the instrument in his *Seven Pieces for Three Trautoniums* (1930) and his *Concertino for Trautonium and String Orchestra* in 1931.<sup>40</sup>

#### I. a. The Sound Film

The demand for new sounds led to a time of great technological progress for film music. Instead of borrowing existing music, more and more music was specifically composed for silent films.<sup>41</sup> This approach to scoring film was accelerated by the introduction of the sound film. *The Jazz Singer* (1927) added spoken dialogue, becoming the first “talkie” and consequentially led to the end of the silent film era.<sup>42</sup> A crucial development of sound film, especially for horror, was the addition of “foleying.”<sup>43</sup> With

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>41</sup> Philip Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema* (London: Equinox, 2009), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Box of Broadcasts. 2013. *Sound of Cinema: The Music that Made the Movies Episode 1* (BBC Four, 2013), <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/05AD5AEA?bcast=101235286>, 8:34–9:30.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Foley first implemented foleying or the process of implementing atmospheric sound when Universal Pictures used his work to turn their silent musical *Showboat* (1929) into a sound picture. Diegetic sounds like footsteps and car horns, would be created and added in post-production by the foley artist. See *How Hollywood Does It - Film History & Techniques of Sound*. Films On Demand. 2013. Accessed January 11,

the addition of sound dubbing in 1929, sound could be added in post-production. The standardization of sound films allowed for dialogue, environmental sounds, sound effects, and music to exist simultaneously. Sound and music became more important than ever in film. The following year, an Academy Award was created for sound mixers.<sup>44</sup> Sound provided what Michel Chion calls “added value” where the expressive or informative value sonically enriches an image. He states, “added value is what gives the (eminently correct) impression that sound is unnecessary, that sound merely duplicates a meaning which in reality it brings about, either all on its own or by discrepancies between it and the image.”<sup>45</sup>

The audiovisual possibilities of the sound film interested of many artists. Hungarian painter and photographer László Moholy-Nagy believed sound film to be a vehicle for musical experimentation and rejected conventional sound film realistic sound effects. He felt film music should “go beyond the documentary function of recording and enrich our ears with previously unknown or unexpected sonic properties.”<sup>46</sup> This sentiment was the “Statement on Sound Film” (1928) signed by Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudokin, and Gregori Alexandrov, which emphasized that film music should enhance the image through either parallelism by reflecting the onscreen images or by contrasting them. The statement

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2021. <https://fod-infobase-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=11854&xtid=93760>, 7:00–7:15.

<sup>44</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks Music*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Patteson, 97.

professes that sound and image should share an independent, contrapuntal relationship.<sup>47</sup> Experimental sound film theorist, Robert Beyer additionally felt that the sound film could usher in a new music. His writing from 1928–30 envisioned a music that undermines the distinction between musical and nonmusical sounds. Many horror films that required otherworldly sounds corresponded with Beyer’s idea that all sound film techniques were motivated by the objective to emancipate timbre and to allow composers to work with sound itself unhindered by notes or other entities.<sup>48</sup>

The amount of music in film increased with *King Kong* (1933).<sup>49</sup> *King Kong* presented Max Steiner’s first extensive underscore that carried almost through the entire film in an attempt to generate more empathy from modern audiences.<sup>50</sup> Alongside music, sound effects continued to advance. Some of the biggest innovations in sound effect had their roots in radio during the 1940s. Orson Welles went against the grain to bring techniques in sound from radio programs into film with *Citizen Kane* (1941) where he

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<sup>47</sup> In *Film Music* (29 and 59), Kalinak describes Soviet treatments of the score focusing on montage in the early sound period. Soviet filmmakers practiced implementing music that created friction with the moving image, creating an innovative film aesthetic. She mentions the film *Alone* (1931) scored by Dmitri Shostakovich who created musical and narrative disjunctions such as accompanying men drudging through mud with unsympathetic xylophone, percussion, and Hawaiian guitars. In the Soviet Union, many composers for the concert stage such as Shostakovich and Serge Prokofiev made significant contributions to film music as well while furthering the aims of “The Statement.”

<sup>48</sup> Patteson, 100–102.

<sup>49</sup> Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 87–88; and Wierzbicki, *Film Music*, 130.

<sup>50</sup> Box of Broadcasts. 2013. *Sound of Cinema: The Music that Made the Movies Episode I*, 11:00.

used sound reverberations to tell a story, bucking at the norm in the 1930s which was to emphasize music over sound effect.<sup>51</sup> Emphasizing the sound of music in film was bolstered by Paris-based Pierre Schaeffer's manipulations of tape recordings which contributed new solutions for the need of new sound media in 1948. The availability of tape recording technology in the early 1950s and his discovery that it could be used as a compositional tool led him to introduce *musique concrète* where various types of recorded natural sounds ranging from instrumental, machine-produced sources, to sounds in nature could be manipulated, for instance, via change of playback speed and direction and creation of tape loops. Hugh Le Caine's *Dripsody* (1955) is considered an exemplary piece of *musique concrète* as it utilizes sounds entirely derived from the sound of a single falling drop of water.<sup>52</sup> Pierre Henry and Schaeffer opened their studio to experimental directors. They also developed libraries of sounds and influenced the future of film sound.<sup>53</sup>

Alongside these audio-visual developments, efforts rooted in nineteenth-century European music represented the majority of scoring throughout American film and became a standard for classic Hollywood cinema music which flourished in the 1930s.<sup>54</sup> The typical 1930s Hollywood score covers narrative gaps, emphasizes action, often

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<sup>51</sup> Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet Corp., 2020), 0:15:02–0:17:22.

<sup>52</sup> Gustav Ciamaga, "Le Caine, Hugh," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Laura Anderson, "Musique Concrète, French New Wave Cinema, and Jean Cocteau's *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1960)," *Twentieth-Century Music* 12, no. 2 (September 2015), 204–205.

through “mickey mousing,” and provides music to create atmosphere.<sup>55</sup> What is identified as the American film sound was established by composers such as Steiner, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Alfred Newman, Dimitri Tiomkin, and Franz Waxman. Korngold’s score for *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) is considered an impeccable example of film scoring practice that embodied late nineteenth-century music idioms. Wagnerian ideas, specifically, tonal harmony, the leitmotif, and lush orchestration, were deeply ingrained in Hollywood film scoring.<sup>56</sup>

Early on Hollywood film music’s style encountered criticism. Hanns Eisler and Theodor W. Adorno’s 1947 critique that film music relied on neo-romanticism provides some evidence of the desire for more progressive film-scoring practices.<sup>57</sup> This critique was largely ignored at first but offers some insight into the prevalence of Romantic sensibilities in film music and the desire for new vocabularies from film composers. Conventional Hollywood scoring was also challenged by composers who went on to explore folk and jazz vocabularies, modernism, serialism, and minimalism. For example, in his score for *Of Mice and Men* (1940), Aaron Copland borrowed from folk music and hymnody to suggest a certain “American” sound.<sup>58</sup> Bernard Herrmann’s work was instrumental in bringing modernism to American cinema in suspense and horror films

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<sup>55</sup> Kalinak, 62.

<sup>56</sup> Kalinak, 63–65.

<sup>57</sup> This critique was largely ignored at first but offers some insight into the prevalence of Romantic sensibilities in film music and the desire for new vocabularies from film composers.

<sup>58</sup> Kalinak, 67.

like *Psycho* (1960).<sup>59</sup> However, before Herrmann, Eisler's score for *Hangman Also Die* (1943) and Leonard Rosenman's score for *Cobweb* (1954) had introduced atonality and serialism to Hollywood films.<sup>60</sup> From the 1960s onward film music transformed due to several factors such as the addition of the compilation score and the use of existing music harkened back to silent film in response to younger viewership and the competition of television.<sup>61</sup>

These innovations and new trends in film music coincided with gradual changes in American cinema from the 1950s–60s including the fall of the “old Hollywood.” As production costs escalated, audience taste changed, and the old Hollywood grew increasingly out of touch with the preferences of younger generations. Other factors such as the multitude of actors, writers, and directors who were blacklisted as result of the communist “witch-hunt” in the 1950s and the introduction of color to television in the 1960s contributed to the studio system's detriment. As the traditional studio system floundered, many films from abroad took up American market space. Cinephiles and film students in the U.S. were engrossed by foreign filmmakers like Ingmar Bergman, Akira Kurosawa, and Jean-Luc Godard. Furthermore, an influx of *émigré* filmmakers such as Roman Polanski challenged the old ways of filmmaking. In response, changes in the

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<sup>59</sup> Box of Broadcasts, *Sound of Cinema: The Music That Made the Movies Episode 1. Episode 2*, 4:35.

<sup>60</sup> Roseman introduced substantial amounts of dissonance in his scores for *East of Eden* (1955) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). In *Cobweb*, Rosenman paid tribute to his former teacher Schoenberg through the use of atonal and dodecaphonic techniques. See Sabine Feisst, “Serving Two Masters: Leonard Rosenman's Music for Films and for the Concert Hall,” *The Cue Sheet* 23, nos. ½ (January–April 2008): 32.

<sup>61</sup> Kalinak, 85.

1960–70s led to the permission of more daring content previously impossible in films like Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967).<sup>62</sup> This decline of the studio system of 1930s Hollywood, however, additionally benefitted many new filmmakers with innovative ideas.

#### I. b. The Decline of the Studio System, The “New Hollywood” Movement, and Innovations in Cinematic Sound

The decline of the studio system had a strong influence over experimental endeavors in horror as it created a space for new filmmakers willing to try new aesthetic strategies. The fragmentation of the studio system had destabilized the traditional process of sound production and exhibition which allowed for more experimentation. The decline coincided with a rise in auteurist filmmakers which led to new experiments in film form and style as composers and directors alike would find new ways to incorporate music in their films. The Baby-Boomers, nicknamed the “film generation,” were drawn to films that were thematically challenging and stylistically individualized. Studios gave more control to these auteur filmmakers as this audience was expected to grow after the previous financial crisis of studios.<sup>63</sup> While the importance of authorship, the director’s vision, has been present in cinema since its beginning, auteurism in film was first

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<sup>62</sup> Laurence MacDonald, *The Invisible Art of Film Music: A Comprehensive History* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 135–137.

<sup>63</sup> David Cook, “The Auteur Cinema: Directors and Directions in the ‘Hollywood Renaissance’,” in *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970–1979*, edited by Charles Harpole, *History of the American Cinema* 9, vol. 9 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2000), 68.

officially articulated by François Truffaut in his 1954 essay “Une certaine tendance du Cinéma Français.”<sup>64</sup> Truffaut mentioned a policy of authors in which film should be a means for a director’s distinct personal artistic expression and likewise bear their personal style as opposed to corporate influence. This single-author perspective was the most prominent topic of aesthetic discourse for American film critics.<sup>65</sup> In the late 1960s, Hollywood’s employment of non-traditional filmmakers such as Brian De Palma or Polanski was often popular with young generations. As stated, the refusal to adopt normative film conventions became known as a mark of “originality.”<sup>66</sup> The creative work of new auteurist filmmakers represents what is considered the “New Hollywood” or the “Hollywood Renaissance,” as they often employed experimental techniques, social criticism, and subversion of traditions of conventional Hollywood filmmaking.<sup>67</sup> During this period, experimental music in the United States had reached its height as a reaction to the strictly notated serial compositions which made more and more musicians feel as

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<sup>64</sup> François Truffaut, “Une Certaine Tendance du Cinema Français,” in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Paris: Éditions de l’Étoile, 1954), 15–29.

<sup>65</sup> Auteurism became popular in American critical discourse in the 1960s. Andrew Sarris wrote about “the auteur theory” in *Film Culture*. See David Cook, “The Auteur Cinema, 9, 68.

<sup>66</sup> Kalinak, 63–65.

<sup>67</sup> “New Hollywood” films like *The Graduate* (1967), *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), and *Little Big Man* (1970) served as social criticism and experimental camera techniques or disjunctive editing which blocked passive viewing. Many of these films also mixed genres and broke down conventional narrative patterns. See Steven, Mintz, Randy, Roberts, and David Welky, eds., *Hollywood's America: Understanding History Through Film*, (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 270–271.



though they were “wearing a musical straight jacket” so to speak.<sup>68</sup> Throughout his life Cage and other experimentalists advocated for interdisciplinary collaborations, chance procedures, indeterminacy, and the exploration of new timbres as found in the environment as well as electronic and percussive music.

The arrival of new filmmakers and the rise of experimental music coincided with the emergence of a generation of post WWII audiophiles influenced by radio and television. Their music programs offered lower cost audio components to American consumers, specifically the youth market. Other notable advancements in audio technology included the long-playing record or LP which was issued for the first time in 1948. Stereo records also cultivated new attention to sound and along in the late 1950s when Rock ‘n’ roll came to dominate popular music. The experimental songs of the Beatles and producer George Martin in the mid-1960s like “Sgt. Pepper” (1967) specifically influenced sound design as it featured sound effects like animal sounds, circus organs, and electronic sounds. Another example is The Beach Boys’ “Good Vibrations,” (1967) which incorporated the oscillating, ethereal sounds of the Theremin. The addition of the Dolby two stereo sound system in the mid-1970s which immersed the audience in sound as opposed to the previous mono stereo fitted behind the screen.<sup>69</sup> In his book *Sound Design and Science Fiction*, William Whittington states, “the cinematic sound’s effects and

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<sup>68</sup> John Cage, Cornelius Cardew, Steve Reich, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Here’s a Piano I Prepared Earlier Experimental Music in the 1960’s* (London: BBC, 2004), 3:16–3:32.

<sup>69</sup> *A Star is Born* (1976) brought this technique to American cinema. See Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Ain’t Heard Nothin’ Yet Corp., 2020), 0:28:34–0:31:07.

strategies had pervaded contemporary music, and the exchange of technological innovation and experimentation flowed easily between the media.”<sup>70</sup> This resulted in a heightened awareness of music and sound in young filmgoers from the 1970s onward.

Whittington asserts that a new kind of filmmaker emerged from this generation of listeners that was more conversant in sound technology and aesthetics. A multitude of these auteurist filmmakers applied their knowledge of audio culture to film.<sup>71</sup> Many filmmakers associated with the “New Hollywood” constitute what Claudia Gorbman terms *mélomane*, meaning a director whose passion for music is an integral aspect of their directorial style. She states, “for such directors, songs or scoring are certainly more than something perforce added to the final cut; music participates forcefully in what used to be called, in the simpler days, the director’s worldview.”<sup>72</sup> Gorbman notes that while films have always used music, the term describes a specific pantheon of filmmakers including Kubrick, Scorsese, Sally Potter, Spike Lee, and Quentin Tarantino. She explains that these filmmakers reject what she calls “unheard music” of conventional Hollywood style by opposing the standard procedures of film scoring. She opines, “for many filmmakers music is a platform for the idiosyncratic expression of taste, and thus it

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<sup>70</sup> William Whittington, *Sound Design and Science Fiction* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 36.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>72</sup> Claudia Gorbman, “Auteur Music,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack*, edited by Daniel Ira Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 151.

conveys not only meaning in terms of plot and theme but meaning as authorial signature itself.”<sup>73</sup>

Not just music, but all aspects of cinematic sound benefited from the so-called “New Hollywood.” The previous Hollywood studio system often had an approach to film sound that was controlled by previous models which restricted experimental possibilities.<sup>74</sup> The loosening labor structure of the film industry and decline of the studio system created a space for sound designers Walter Murch (1943–) or Ben Burtt (1948–) developed new aesthetic strategies and introduce new technologies which has greatly affected horror and science fiction film scoring.<sup>75</sup> Many innovators in cinematic sound such as Murch and Burtt used *musique concrète* techniques to bring films to life as will be explored further in this chapter. At this time, a wealth of new contemporary filmmakers was eager to experiment with sound aesthetics, montage, and design in sound-conscious films such as Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* (1979).<sup>76</sup>

*Apocalypse Now* took the Dolby mono sound further with four speakers after hearing Isao Tomita’s record of *The Planets* (1976) by Gustav Holst spatializing sound through four channels.<sup>77</sup> The film featured six-track surround sound which became the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Ain’t Heard Nothin’ Yet Corp., 2020), 0:18:28–0:21:21.

<sup>75</sup> Kalinak, 108.

<sup>76</sup> Whittington argues that this special attentiveness to film sound drew from cultural influences like rock ‘n’ roll, international art cinema, and the rise of film studies programs at universities as well. See Whittington, *Sound Design and Science Fiction*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Gustav Holst and Isao Tomita, *The Planets* (New York: BMG Music, 1991).

standard approach to mixing sound for film.<sup>78</sup> The term “sound design” was later introduced by sound editor Murch to describe the innovative sound work in the film. Each sound editor was in charge of a specific sound. Murch stated, “to treat each sound editor as the leader of an instrument grouping in an orchestra”<sup>79</sup> According to the documentary *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound*, all components of sound like voice, sound effect, ambience, and music are referred to as the circle of talent and are created by a collaborative group of people in film today.<sup>80</sup> The space for experimentation created by the decline of the studio system was crucial to my three case studies which sought to oppose the status quo through experimental music and sound effects.

#### I. c. Horror and Science Fiction Challenging the Status Quo

Horror cinema has employed experimental approaches in combination with or opposing romantic, conventional Hollywood film scores since the early twentieth century. However, the correlation between unusual sounds and horror narratives has existed long before the invention of film. In his article “Of Gods and Monsters: Signification in Franz Waxman’s Film Score *Bride of Frankenstein*,” Clive McClelland notes that many characteristics of *ombra*, a term coined by Hermann Abert in 1908 to describe ghost scenes in operas, were adapted into horror film music. These characteristics such as tonal ambiguity, unusual and chromatic harmonies, wide-leaping melodic lines, ostinatos, tremolo, syncopated and dotted rhythms, dark timbres, unusual

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<sup>78</sup> Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound*, 0:53:52–0:54:24.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:48:48–0:53:13.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:26:05–1:26:25.

instrumentation, and sharp contrasts in textures and dynamics can be found in supernatural scenes in operas as early as Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787) to evoke horror.<sup>81</sup>

In the nineteenth century, artists had explored a wealth of fantasy and grotesque elements through music and were fascinated with the metaphysical that prevailed in both music and literature. The Wolf's Glen scene from Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821), Vincenzo Bellini's *La Sonnambula* (1831), Heinrich Marschner's *Der Vampyr* (1828), Berlioz's "Dream of a Witch's Sabbath" from his 1830 *Symphonie Fantastique*, Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* (1886) or Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre* (1874) explored melodic distortions, chromatic or dissonant harmonies, and timbral novelty through extended techniques. These features were eventually adapted in films like Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen's *The Golem* (1915), Robert Wiene's *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1921), F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), and Lon Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) to heighten mysterious and frightening scenes with empathetic music.<sup>82</sup>

As stated in Chapter 1, at the center of horror film music is the demand to express the horror and otherworldliness of the other. Horror films are based on a panoply of uncomfortable emotions like shock, fear, disgust, awe, and distress and succeed in distancing themselves from the status quo through unusual scoring practices. The requirement of sonic representations of the supernatural or futuristic themes in early

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<sup>81</sup> Clive McClelland, "Of Gods and Monsters: Signification in Franz Waxman's Film Score *Bride of Frankenstein*," *The Journal of Film Music* 7, no. 1 (2016), 5–6.

<sup>82</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music*, 5.

horror cinema provided an area where composers could distance themselves from conventions of the popular post-romantic idiom to accompany the genre's subject matter. In *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer*, Scheurer explains that horror and science fiction, "has afforded composers an opportunity to flex their musical muscles in ways they were not able to in other genres."<sup>83</sup> With any major film experimentation, of course, depends on the amount of freedom the composers and filmmakers are allowed to have.

In sound film, innovations in these films' music and sound continued to prosper alongside new technologies in sound design, new instruments, and as *mélomane* filmmakers of the "New Hollywood" employed more existing experimental music. As experimental music reached its height in the 1950s–60s, the presence of modernism, avant-garde, and experimentalism in the concert hall acted as a harvesting ground for experimental techniques in film music to convey frightening themes and emotions musically.

## II. A Brief Look at Horror Scoring Tropes and Textural and Timbral Experimentation

An argument can be made that there is no "fixed" aesthetic style to sound in the horror film as the established "rules" are often being challenged. However, there are a multitude of tropes and trends that are deeply ingrained in horror.<sup>84</sup> Experimental music

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<sup>83</sup> Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film*, 48.

<sup>84</sup> Whittington, *Sound Design and Science Fiction*, 131.

has supported several motivations of horror filmmakers such as budgetary concerns, emphasizing the “abnormal” in opposition to “normality,” challenging the status quo to benefit from distinction from rival films, and supporting suspense and fear.

Before examining experimentalism’s influence on horror cinema further, it is important to note that horror films often utilize anempathetic music and pair music from contrasting contexts to the images. Dissonance between the visual subject or onscreen action and music can intensify the scene’s frightening elements and can even give a scene a sense of poignancy. One example of such an approach is the use of music associated with positive contexts to accompany scenes of violence which intensifies the onscreen horror through juxtaposition. Hitchcock’s *Strangers on a Train* (1951), for instance, successfully couples a murder scene with diegetic fairground music.<sup>85</sup> Children’s voices, lullabies, and nursery rhymes, and baroque, classical, or religious music from familiar contexts, but unrelated to horror, perform the same function.<sup>86</sup> This technique can be found in films like *The Omen* (1976) which accompanies the antichrist character with

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<sup>85</sup> Other examples include Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) where the protagonist sings “Singin’ in the Rain” (1952) while torturing a couple in their own home. This approach can also be successful with the use of environmental sound, the running water in the shower during and after the murder of Marion Crane in *Psycho*.

<sup>86</sup> The “harvesting ground” for these techniques derived from European, especially German, music. The use of children’s themes in music to evoke mortality existed far before the horror film genre in works like Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder* (1904). Another significant example is Alban Berg’s opera *Wozzeck* (1925) in which the ending scene depicts Marie and Wozzeck’s child and friends playing and singing after its grim finale. Children themselves are often used as subjects in horror either in danger or even being the danger themselves. Children’s songs are used to incite dread in films like *The Innocents* (1961), *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), *Don’t Look Now* (1973), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and *Insidious* (2010). Folk-tunes are also used in such films as Robin Hardy’s horror movie *The Wicker Man* (1973). See Lerner, 38–40.

choral music associated with sacred text settings. In another example Bach's *Goldberg Variations* are associated with the murderous Hannibal Lector in Jonathan Demme's *Silence of The Lambs* (1991). In his article "Killer Culture: Classical Music and the Art of Killing in *Silence of the Lambs* and *Se7en*," Thomas Fahy states,

In these films, diegetic classical music helps characterize serial killers as aesthete-figures who orchestrate crimes as a composer would music and fashion brutality into an art that ostensibly reflects their intelligence and savvy. Classical music, like an appreciation for literature and fine cuisine, distinguishes them and their crimes from everyday violence, from the common criminal or thug. In the hands of these aesthete-killers, beauty gets redefined in terms of violence.<sup>87</sup>

Minimalist music has also been employed in horror. Phillip Glass's score for Bernard Rose's *Candyman* (1992) is good example. In addition, horror has featured popular music such electronica, rock, and hip-hop. Jordan Peel's *Us* (2019) uses both The Beach Boy's "Good Vibrations" anempathetically and a slowed down version of Luniz's "I Got 5 On It" with orchestral overdubs to accompany the protagonist's climactic fight with her violent doppelgänger. While anempathic music will be referenced in case studies, *The Shining* and *Shutter Island*, this thesis will focus on the novel ways horror has made advantageous use of experimental music to parallel its narrative means through empathetic music.

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<sup>87</sup> Thomas Fahy, "Killer Culture: Classical Music and the Art of Killing in *Silence of the Lambs* and *Se7en*," *Journal of Popular Culture* 37, no. 1 (2003), 28.



## II. a. The Impact of Economic Factors on Horror Film Music

One factor to address is the influence of economics and genre status as it developed throughout the twentieth century. Budgetary factors influenced many of these trends in film scoring in general and especially horror film scoring. On this note, it is important to address an integral category of horror cinema history, the so-called B movie. Whittington points out that many B pictures, referred to in the 1920s as “poverty row,” were predominately horror, science fiction, and westerns. Economic and studio pressures forced these films to be produced inexpensively, quickly, and in a higher volume than most A pictures. While films such as Jacques Tourneur’s *Cat People* (1942) are still appreciated today for their aesthetic ingenuity, a multitude of these pictures were hindered by their lack of production value. However, many of these films today are beloved for their “camp.” Music in these pictures was paramount as they were often marked by character fracture, narrative disjunction and spectacles of excess where music is especially crucial in establishing narrative intent, drive, and unity. Film composer Hans J. Salter stated, “the scenes were disjointed, there was little cohesion, and they were not even scary. You had to create the horror with the music, to create the tension that was otherwise not there on the screen.”<sup>88</sup> Whittington explains that music and sound effects were especially crucial to overcoming budgetary limitations and thus certain musical patterns became established in the genre.<sup>89</sup> This greatly affected the developing narratives

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<sup>88</sup> Whittington, *Sound Design and Science Fiction*, 131.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–133.

and aesthetic styles of horror cinema especially with the influx of B horror films of the 1950s.

## II. b. Timbral Experimentation Representing the Supernatural

While the use of contrasting music, baroque and nineteenth-century music are major components of horror film music, this thesis focuses on films which implement experimental textures and timbres to parallel onscreen images or to enhance it through juxtaposition. Horror needed music to represent “normal” to contrast with the “abnormal” or supernatural. Throughout these films, the more certain sounds are accompanied with supernatural situations onscreen, the more an audience will associate these sounds with the frightening and unusual through repeated programming.

James Wierzbicki notes that musical depictions of an “exotic other” date back to the start of the seventeenth century in operas like Claudio Monteverdi’s *La Favola d’Orfeo* (1607). He further notes that instead of furies, the nineteenth-century opera ushered in “others” that challenged the status-quo more through an unbalanced mental state or morality. Silent films mimicked this operatic approach through unusual timbres, melodic lines, and harmonies to evoke the grotesque or macabre.<sup>90</sup> As an influx of composers for the concert stage worked in Hollywood’s early years, these techniques found their way into silent horror films such as *Nosferatu*, *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The*

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<sup>90</sup> It is important to note that Native American, Asian, Black, and certain European immigrant groups were often paired musically by means of crude stereotypes loosely based on the subject’s perceived ‘traditional music’ in these films. For example, the representation of indigenous people of Kong’s island in *King Kong*.

*Golem*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. This tradition carried on into the 1930s early sound films. Robert Spadoni argues that the general strangeness of the synchronized soundtrack resonated well with such early horror films as Browning's *Dracula* (1931) and Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931). Neil Lerner states that these two films "whose transgressive stories complicated notions of life and death just as the technical advances of the new sound cinema confused reality and artifice for its shocked audiences."<sup>91</sup>

More fantastical characters like King Kong and Frankenstein's monsters are illustrated with musical gestures that contrast with the established "conventional" music.<sup>92</sup> *King Kong* explored the new capabilities of synchronized sound by using continuous music with a large orchestral score inspired by nineteenth-century music juxtaposed with Kong's terrifying roars and his menacing three-note theme. Waxman's score for *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) similarly combined lush orchestral music with unusual harmonies, wide-leaping melodic lines, and timbral and textural contrast. These early sound films played a major role in creating a template for horror film scoring.

One trend in evoking alien and horror themes was through electronic sonorities. Electronic instruments further expanded the timbral palette for frightening and strange situations or characters, for example, the use of the Novachord in Waxman's score for

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<sup>91</sup> Lerner, 55.

<sup>92</sup> Wierzbicki explains that the "other" exists as a defense mechanism of the human psyche. He also points out that a multitude of feminist critics such as Susan McClary have addressed the issue that a majority of these protagonists are women and that their 'dangerousness' is frequently balanced by their overt sex appeal. See James Wierzbicki, "Weird Vibrations: How the Theremin Gave Musical Voice to Hollywood's Extraterrestrial 'Others'," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2002), 125.

*Rebecca* (1940). The Theremin was particularly impactful. Developed in 1919, the Theremin had been used in Soviet films such as *Alone* (1931) scored by Shostakovich and performer Clara Rockmore pioneered the instrument outside of film. Nonetheless many American audiences may not have been aware of the instrument leading up to the 1950s. The instrument notably made an impact on the public consciousness when Hitchcock asked Miklos Rózsa to create “something unusual” for the scene where the protagonist slips into a murderous trance in *Spellbound* (1945).<sup>93</sup> *Spellbound* succeeded in making audiences aware of the sound of the instrument but associated it with the “unbalanced” side of the human psyche.<sup>94</sup>

Timbre and texture in horror expanded even more as result of science fiction films which flourished especially after World War II and reflected Cold War anxieties and politics. Vivian Sobchack states, “on the surface a case can certainly be made that the SF film developed out of the traditional horror film, that it is the horror film sufficiently ‘technologized’ to suit the demands for ‘modern’ horror from an increasingly pragmatic and materialistic audience.”<sup>95</sup> In the 1950s, electronic instruments played a significant role in science fiction establishing a specific futuristic aural identity. Many of the trends in timbral expansion, described above, were gradually considered thanks to the new sonic demands of the science fiction genre which flourished in the mid-century partly due to Cold War anxieties, the creation of NASA, and the beginning of the space race.

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<sup>93</sup> Wierzbicki, “Weird Vibrations, 128.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Vivian Sobchack, *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 29.

Composers frequently experimented with orchestration and unusual techniques to illustrate spaceships, robots, and otherworldly creatures which required complimentary sounds.<sup>96</sup> In *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema*, Hayward states that the 1945–60 period was marked by the “prominence of discordant and/or unusual aspects of orchestration/instrumentation to convey otherworldly/futuristic themes.”<sup>97</sup> Dimitri Tiomkin’s *The Thing from Another World* (1951) put electronic instruments at the forefront, using electronic sounds to aurally depict flying saucers alongside the orchestra.<sup>98</sup> Herrmann’s score for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) similarly combined orchestral sounds with the sounds of employing two Theremins, two Hammond organs, a large studio organ, electric cello, electric violin, electric bass and guitar, and vibraphones. Herrmann also pulled unusual sounds from orchestral instruments through additive layering and experimental techniques such as tam-tams struck with nail files or slightly mistuning the instruments.<sup>99</sup>

A multitude of filmmakers cashed in on the popularity of films that used electronic music, looking to exploit their success by using electronic instruments and thus creating a scoring tradition in the genre. Dennis Smalley explains that through what he

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<sup>96</sup> For the scores of *Invaders from Mars* (1953) and *The Fly* (1958) Leonard Rosenman also created unfamiliar sound effects to accompany futuristic adventures and technology. See Hayward, *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema* (London: John Libbey, 2004), 11.

<sup>97</sup> Hayward, *Off the Planet*, 2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–10.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 32–37.

calls the spectromorphological referral process, “not only do we listen to the music, but we also decode the human activity behind the spectromorphologies through which we automatically gain a wealth of psycho-physical information.”<sup>100</sup> With electronic music, listeners hear both simulations of familiar sounds as well as unfamiliar sounds that are not intended to imitate real musical or non-musical sound sources.<sup>101</sup> Certain electronic sonorities of the time may, at first, have been unfamiliar and discomforting on some level reinforcing their representation of alien themes or characters.

The increasing popularity of electronic music correlated with popular music drawing on electronics and composers like Stockhausen at the WDR studio in Cologne, which championed the generation of electronically produced sounds building on the work of the Columbia Princeton Electronic Music Center in New York founded by Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky in 1959.<sup>102</sup> Electronic sonorities, however, were often interwoven with familiar orchestral sounds in films like *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In a radical departure from the conventional Hollywood scores of the time, Fred Wilcox’s *Forbidden Planet* (1965) used an entirely electronic score created by experimental composers, Louis and Bebe Barron.<sup>103</sup> Prior to *Forbidden Planet*, the

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<sup>100</sup> Denis Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” *Organised Sound* 2, no. 2 (1997), 111.

<sup>101</sup> Hayward, *Off the Planet*, 160.

<sup>102</sup> The Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center was initially a center dedicated to electroacoustic music. See Computer Music Center, “About,” *Columbia University*, <https://cmc.music.columbia.edu/about>.

<sup>103</sup> The Barrons introduced a new category of musical sounds, non-tempered pitches, unfamiliar timbres, and idiosyncratic leitmotifs. See Hayward, *Off the Planet*, 62.

Barrons had created one of the first pieces to use exclusively electronically produced sounds combined with the sound-manipulation capabilities of magnetic tape with *Heavenly Menagerie* (1951) and later created the first fully electronic piece for experimental film, *Bells of Atlantis*, in 1952. The Barrons had worked with Cage, Brown, Feldman and Tudor. They also helped Cage create his *Williams Mix* (1951-53) by providing sounds for the electronic tape piece as well. In *Forbidden Planet*, every sound was created by modular sound circuits they had built. The Barrons described the generating circuits as “electronic nervous systems.”<sup>104</sup> The film completely blurred the lines between diegetic and non-diegetic sound and between music and sound effect, evoking Altman’s “mise-en-bande.” The film supports its alien and robotic characters through Smalley’s concept of “remote surrogacy” where the source of a sound and the human action behind it is unknown. Sonic uncertainty plays a significant role in horror film music as it is an advantageous approach to suspense and startle effects.

## II. c. Experimental Timbre and Texture in Suspense and Startle Effects

While experimental music aided in sonically depicting the “abnormal” and supernatural, it also aided in creating fear on a visceral level through suspense and startle effects. Wheeler Winston Dixon notes that Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960) opened up a new era and influenced future suspense and startle techniques.<sup>105</sup> While many of these scores

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<sup>104</sup> Nicholas Laudadio, “What Dreams Sound Like: *Forbidden Planet* and the Electronic Musical Instrument,” 344.

<sup>105</sup> Dixon, 75.

continued to blend unusual timbres with a large-scale traditional orchestral underscore, Hitchcock proved horror could be more suspenseful with less. Herrmann's score for *Psycho* used only strings and thus significantly collapsed the timbral canvas of the conventional 1930s Hollywood style which was also necessary under the film's limiting budget.<sup>106</sup> Ross J. Fenimore argues that timbral homogeneity shrinks the audience's perception of space and thus creates a sense of tension and claustrophobia. timbral homogeneity is presented in *The Exorcist* as will be explored in chapter 3. Herrmann's score deviated from expectation by focusing on extremes in pitch and rhythmic intensity instead of the previous emphasis on overwrought emotion, vibrato, and glissandi.<sup>107</sup> The piercing repetitive violin figure during the harrowing shower scene cue titled "The Knife" anticipates one of the most widely used horror film scoring tropes, the stinger. While this technique had been used as early as the 1930s, in pictures such as *Dracula* (1931), Hitchcock's employment of the technique during the murder of Marion Crane became deeply ingrained in popular culture today.

The stinger usually disrupts suspense techniques like silence, ostinato, and a sustained high or low drone. *2001: A Space Odyssey*, for instance, employs sustained micropolyphonic textures from Ligeti's *Atmosphères*, *Requiem* and *Aventures*. These pieces were inspired by techniques he learned at the Westdeutscher Rundfunk electronic music studio or WDR during the 1940s in Cologne.<sup>108</sup> Ligeti's sound masses often have

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<sup>106</sup> Jack Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 254.

<sup>107</sup> Lerner, 85.

<sup>108</sup> György Ligeti: *Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, 13.



what Schaeffer and Michel Chion call a “complex mass,” meaning it does not enable the listener to hear precise or recognizable pitches or intervals.<sup>109</sup> This mysterious sound quality is continually used to create unease. Stingers can also follow suspenseful sounds like howling wind or heartbeats. Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1979), and John Carpenter’s *The Thing* (1982) implemented heartbeat sounds and John Williams’ score for Steven Spielberg’s *Jaws* (1975) mimics a heart beating via brass sounds. Sounds like heartbeats or a high drone may create fear by mimicking physiological experiences one might experience in duress. This approach in sound film can be traced back to Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) which exemplifies scoring devices used in horror film scores of today through engagement with the physical body. The transformation scene was coupled with a collage of sounds like amplified heartbeats, gong reverberations played in reverse, bells ringing through an echo-chamber, which Irwin Bazelon called “pre-musique concrète.”<sup>110</sup> The innovative sound design following the shooting of *Hyde* provides a more visceral connection for the audience with heartbeats and high and low tones. Lerner points out the similarity between these sounds and Cage’s description of his 1951 experience in an anechoic chamber where he heard the high and low drone of his own nervous system.<sup>111</sup> K. J. Donnelly further explains that very high or low drones or stingers are not just extremes of pitch but “are also tied to the

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<sup>109</sup> Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 472.

<sup>110</sup> Neil Lerner, ed., *Music in the Horror Film Listening to Fear* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 56.

<sup>111</sup> Lerner, 71.

intrinsic sounds of the human body: the high buzz of the nervous system and the deep throb of the bloodstream and heart.”<sup>112</sup>

In the case of *Psycho*, extremely high register sounds with a strong attack and the anempathetic diegetic sound of the shower running are juxtaposed. Typically, stingers have jarring timbres that borderline on extra-musical sounds in more contemporary horror films. The most popular extra-musical sounds among film composers are based on techniques pioneered by Cowell in his string piano works such as his piece *The Banshee* for piano (1925) which requires the performer to manipulate the strings inside the piano while another performer holds down the damper pedal.<sup>113</sup> For example, Carl Zittler’s soundtrack for Bob Clark’s *Black Christmas* (1974) which creates scares through the rubbing, banging, and scratching of piano strings. Joseph Bishara comparably employed these timbres for his score for James Wan’s *Insidious* (2010) which involved hitting and scraping the strings of an abandoned piano he called “rust piano.”<sup>114</sup> Horror succeeded on subverting traditional expectations of music. Bishara’s “rust piano” distorted the sounds of the conventional piano. The film also utilizes unusual string techniques like ascending trilling glissandi effects and percussive effects culled from such works as Penderecki’s *Polymorphia*.

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<sup>112</sup> Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 105.

<sup>113</sup> Maria Cizmic, “Embodied Experimentalism and Henry Cowell’s *The Banshee*,” *American Music* 28, no. 4 (2010), 442.

<sup>114</sup> Blake Fichera, *Scored to Death: Conversations with Some of Horror’s Greatest Composers* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2016), 90–91, Kindle.

Slightly out of tune or toy pianos have also been recently utilized in horror. Unusual instruments such as the waterphone, created in the 1960s by Richard Waters, are used as well. Composers have even created or repurposed their own instruments to achieve new and shocking sounds similar to those by experimental and futurist artists Russolo, Partch and Cage. One example of this is the Apprehension Engine. Called “The most terrifying musical instrument of all time” by Brian Eno, the instrument was commissioned by Mark Korven who scored such major horror films as *The Witch* (2015) and *The Lighthouse* (2019). The acoustic instrument was created by guitar-maker Tony Duggan-Smith and has rulers and steel strings that can be bowed or hit to create a panoply of drones, creaks, groans, and echoes.<sup>115</sup> The Apprehension Machine bears some resemblance to Russolo’s acoustic noise-making instruments called *intonarumori* which similarly created new sounds.

The Moog synthesizer in the 1960s and later the mini Moog in the 1970s aided in the creation of stingers, music, and ambience for horror filmmakers with limiting budgets.<sup>116</sup> Wendy Carlos brought the synthesizer into the mainstream with her album *Switched on Bach* (1968). She also introduced the use of vocoders for synthesized singing in her score for *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). She championed electronic music in film scores and this approach was later adapted by Herrmann in Brian De Palma’s *Sisters*

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<sup>115</sup> Mark Korven, “The Apprehension Engine,” *Mark Korven Music for Television & Film*, [http://www.markkorven.com/Apprehension\\_Engine.html](http://www.markkorven.com/Apprehension_Engine.html).

<sup>116</sup> In 1964 Robert Moog established the principle of voltage control where all aspects of sound were electronically generated such as frequency, timbre, and amplitude could be controlled by an automatic device and manipulated via dials (later via keyboards). Moog produced portable synthesizers. See Antokoletz, *A History of Twentieth-Century*, 901.

(1973) and Larry Cohen's *It's Alive* (1974).<sup>117</sup> Carlos continued to bring her pioneering work with synthesizers to films like *The Shining* (1980) as will be explored in chapter 4. The sonic capabilities of the Moog synthesizer appeared frequently in horror as it could provide a wide variety of sounds and was more affordable for independent filmmakers. Carpenter's *Halloween* led Dan Wyman and Carpenter to create a synthesizer-based score, inspired by *Forbidden Planet*, that made frequent use of stingers.<sup>118</sup> Horror and science fiction continued to either build on these scoring standards or reject them. Alongside these otherworldly scores, sound effects brought these films to life. Another recurring theme in my research has been the blending of musical score and sound effects.

### III. d. Sound Effect in Horror Cinema

Alongside music, sound effect is a crucial component to horror cinema and remains so today. Whittington defines sound effects in general as “a discrete recording of a particular sound event or a constructed event, produced from any number of various composite sounds or simply captured through innovative recording techniques.”<sup>119</sup> Considering innovative recording techniques for the creation of sound effects is critical to experiencing my three case studies. The primary functions of sound effects are to simulate the “reality” of the film, create spatial dimension, and provide narrative content

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<sup>117</sup> Laurence MacDonald, *The Invisible Art of Film Music: A Comprehensive History* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 255, 266.

<sup>118</sup> Chrissie Dickinson, “Yes, that John Carpenter, Making Music,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 14, 2016.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

as well as help establish mood.<sup>120</sup> Sound gives more than just aural information. It can have emotional and psychological gravity, add tactile feelings, and many other sensations in film. Stan Link explains, “Thus, hearing the red button being pressed can amount to feeling it being pressed.”<sup>121</sup> Those in this area of film need to frequently experiment to see what sounds could be created to bring the otherworldly creatures, ghosts, robots, spaceships, and weapons of these films to life. As mentioned before, the Wurlitzer was one of the first to introduce extra-musical sounds into the soundtrack and Foley artists during the sound era enriched the score with atmospheric and diegetic sounds from the late 1920s onward. Foley artists became aesthetically so crucial, they even inspired their own horror film, Peter Strickland’s *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012), a movie about a *Giallo* Foley artist gone mad.

Whittington explains that there are three components of a film’s sound design: ambiances, sound effects and Foley work.<sup>122</sup> There are frequent overlaps between these layers. Promoting interconnection between the three layers is part of the overall sound design process. As mentioned above, one reason to experiment with sound is to aurally portray unusual characters that do not exist outside the invented world of the film. One of the earliest examples of experimental diegetic sounds in American sound film is sound editor Murray Spivak’s work for *King Kong*. According to the documentary *Making*

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<sup>120</sup> Whittington, 148.

<sup>121</sup> Stan Link, “Horror and Science Fiction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Film Music*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and Fiona Ford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 212–213.

<sup>122</sup> Whittington, 147.

*Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound*, many of the techniques sound editors use were pioneered for the 1933 version of *King Kong*. Spivak had recorded roars from tigers and lions then slowed them down to half speed and played certain sounds backwards.<sup>123</sup> This *musique concrète* approach was championed by sound designer Walter Murch and Ben Burt in the 1970s and was effectively used in my case studies. Murch was able to continue Spivak’s approach which used contrapuntal editing, experimentation with tape-speed modulation and audio filters to sonically realize futuristic ambient sounds and alien sound effects.<sup>124</sup> Electronically produced sounds were also used for this purpose. As discussed, the Theremin thematically represented these characteristics in the score, but in many cases also generated sound effects. Wierzbicki stated, “the instrument was not just a component of the studio orchestra but, in effect, the diegetic ‘voice’ of the alien entities.”<sup>125</sup> While I mentioned *Forbidden Planet* in relation to the musical score, this film used electronic sounds both for musical underscoring and sound effects.<sup>126</sup> The circuits were intentionally pushed under conditions designed to have them malfunction and break down. This technique created a sort of alien language that was unpredictable.<sup>127</sup> In this unorthodox process, they, like Cage, utilized chance and eschewed traditional authorial “control”.

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<sup>123</sup> Midge Costin, *Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* (Ain’t Heard Nothin’ Yet Corp., 2020), 0:12:59–0:13:43.

<sup>124</sup> Whittington, *Sound Design and Science Fiction*, 20.

<sup>125</sup> Wierzbicki, “Weird Vibrations,”125.

<sup>126</sup> Laudadio, 339.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

Sound effects also serve to anthropomorphize settings and inanimate objects as well. Films like Robert Wise's *The Haunting* (1963) use off-screen sounds to anthropomorphize the setting. The latter film evokes the notion that the house is alive and a character in itself. Another example is John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982) where alien blood held in a petri dish shrieks when touched with a cauterized wire.<sup>128</sup>

While sound effects have the power to create bodies like Kong or *Forbidden Planet*'s Id monster, they also hide them. Horror frequently achieves its scares by limiting subjectivity and maintaining invisibility. Uncertainty is a key element in these films, especially in *The Exorcist* and *Shutter Island*. Musically, Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) creates mounting suspense by only allowing the viewer point-of-view shots from the shark's perspective coupled with its two-note theme before the shark is finally revealed. Sound effects play a significant part in creating an aural identity for a creature before it is presented visually to the spectator as well. Such is the case for John McTiernan's *Predator* (1987) where the creature is not visible until the end of the film. Instead, the creature's presence is signaled through peculiar clicking sounds. This creates a space where the viewer is forced to imagine the sound source which is often more terrifying than any visual effect. It also has the added benefit of being cost effective as the elaborate creatures are seen less while also enhancing tension. Whittington states, "the separation from the visual anchor establishes a sound body of its own, autonomous of the image, which challenges and destabilizes the Western epistemology that 'seeing is

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<sup>128</sup> Whittington, "Horror Sound Design," 169.

believing’.”<sup>129</sup> Indeed, not just onscreen but offscreen sounds and sounds from a distance hold psychological weight in the soundtrack.

In a similar vein, off-screen sound effects aid in establishing a foreboding atmosphere. *The Others* (2001) is considered a quintessential example of off-screen haunting through unseen sounds. The viewer is left to imagine what certain sound sources are. Whether a sound is a creak of a door or the moan of a ghost is intentionally unclear. This is an instance of what Whittington describes as mislabeling sound effects. Off-screen sound effects in horror films also illustrate how horror films habitually embrace abstract sound design strategies to promote symbolic and visceral readings. In these films a disembodied voice from the dead can be heard.<sup>130</sup> Chion explains that when the sound source has been shown visually it carries with the audience through mental visual representation, but when the source is never revealed the sound will strike more abstractly and thus become an enigma. Chion similarly defines “acousmaton” as a sound that is imaginary and its cause or author is not seen.<sup>131</sup>

While many horror films like *Bride of Frankenstein* employ continuous music, many substituted wall-to-wall music for silence and sound effect to create tension. Toward the later twentieth century, films with a focus on sound effects instead of music became a trend. Whittington states “In general, horror films use music and sound effects

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<sup>129</sup> Whittington, 144.

<sup>130</sup> Whittington, “Horror Sound Design,” 170.

<sup>131</sup> See Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 465.



to establish emotive intensity and impact far more aggressively and conceptually than any other genre, aside from the musical.”<sup>132</sup> In his book *Beautiful Monsters*, Michael Long argues that James Whale’s *The Old Dark House* (1932) first accomplished this idea, evoking Altman’s “mise-en-bande” with “nonmusical” sound engineered or synthesized.<sup>133</sup> Hitchcock later sought to create a score detached from the Hollywood norm in *The Birds* (1963) which effectively merged electronic sounds via the Trautonium with mimicked and recorded birdsong.<sup>134</sup> But *The Bird’s* innovative soundtrack uses only silence and electronically produced diegetic and non-diegetic sounds instead of the traditional orchestral score.<sup>135</sup>

Leading into the 1970s, many films embraced strategies of *cinéma vérité* and documentary style to provide more realistic, confrontational films.<sup>136</sup> Horror films of the 1970s took a new direction and focused on genuinely shocking viewers with more realism and violence. Independent filmmakers succeeded by offering audiences an outlaw vision that major studios were unwilling to create. Hershell Gordon Lewis who photographed, edited, created special effects and composed music for his films on small budgets noted, “the only film an independent can make and survive with is a film that the

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<sup>132</sup> Whittington, “Horror Sound Design,” 131.

<sup>133</sup> Michael Long, *Beautiful Monsters: Imagining the Classic In Musical Media* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 183.

<sup>134</sup> Sullivan, *Hitchcock’s Music*, 264–264.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 259–260.

<sup>136</sup> Whittington, “Horror Sound Design,” 172.

majors cannot or will not make.”<sup>137</sup> A multitude of filmmakers that pushed the outer edges of their craft succeeded in horror by continually redefining what is perceived as “scary.”<sup>138</sup> Mainstream films like *The Exorcist* echoed this trend, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Whittington notes that this approach anticipated films that used diegetic sounds to perform the same functions as the traditional film score. This overlaps with aims of the experimentalists. For example, Rebecca Coyle and Phillip Hayward argue that Tobe Hooper’s “satire on Texas hospitality” in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1973), like in *The Birds*, eschews orchestral cues to highlight diegetic sounds. The chainsaw is used not only as a weapon but “communicating an unhinged (and forgiving) technologically enhanced menace that triggers and interweaves with a range of extreme human vocalizations and is embedded within a wider sound world of abrasive and unsettling textures and tonalities.”<sup>139</sup> An influx of films that avoided normative scores of the time to focus on ambient sound and silence appeared around the mid-1970s.<sup>140</sup> Acoustic ecologist and composer R. Murray Schafer built on Cage’s perspective that the sonic environment can be a composition in itself and *musique concrète* composers who compose music from the sounds of life. Indeed, many horror films built on this

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<sup>137</sup> Wheeler Winston Dixon, *A History of Horror* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 125.

<sup>138</sup> Dixon, *A History of Horror*, 123–124.

<sup>139</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks*, 133.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

foundation as well. Musician, painter, and filmmaker David Lynch once said, “there are sound effects, there are abstract sound effects; there’s music, and there’s abstract music,” “and somewhere music turns into sounds, and sounds turn into music. It’s kind of a strange area.”<sup>141</sup> Diegetic and non-diegetic music continues to become more indistinguishable in these genres. Lynch shares the Cagean idea that all sounds have equal value and that in film, music can be sound effects and vice versa with no hierarchy between them. His perspective has led to many experimental sound montages in films like *Eraserhead* (1977) which frequently blurs the lines between diegetic and non-diegetic sound.<sup>142</sup> Lynch explained that he and sound designer Alan Splet would “set up sound experiments” to create the industrial soundtrack. Lynch states,

My favorite experiment was when we filled the bathtub with water and then we had a five gallon Sparkletts bottle-glass-and dropped a little microphone inside the bottle and moved it about the bathtub, maybe bang it a little bit on the side and scrape it on the side. A microphone is picking up some kind of combination of everything that was coming in the little top of the bottle. It had very surreal beauty, and that sound went in the film.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Tom Kenny, *Sound for Picture: Film Sound Through the 1990s* (Vallejo, CA: MixBooks. (2000), <https://archive.org/details/soundforpicturef0000kenn>, 133.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Mark Richardson and David Lynch, “David Lynch” *Pitchfork*, August 6, 2012, <https://pitchfork.com/features/interview/8910-david-lynch/>.

The use of the microphone is reminiscent of works like Stockhausen's *Mikrofonie I* (1964) for tam-tam, two microphones, two filters and potentiometers which illustrated how the microphone could be an instrument in itself.<sup>144</sup> The introduction of found footage films in the later 1990s further advanced the use of silence and environmental sounds to suggest heard, but unseen threats in films like Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez's *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and Oren Peli's *Paranormal Activity* (2007). Many of these American films were influenced by the documentary-like style of Friedkin's *The Exorcist*.

As has been shown, experimental musical elements, practices and aesthetics have proved advantageous to the soundtracks of horror cinema. The horror scoring techniques discussed above have been exemplarily adapted in such popular films as *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*. These films solidified many aspects of experimental music and will therefore be closely examined in the following chapters. To further demonstrate how experimental music and sound effects continue to pervade horror, Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island* (2010) will be investigated as it pays homage to horror of the past, while also invigorating the genre with new music and ideas.

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<sup>144</sup> Other works like Steve Reich's *Pendulum Music* (1973) also exemplify this idea. See Antokoletz, *A History of Twentieth-Century Music*, 888.

## CASE STUDY 1: *THE EXORCIST*

Film critic Lawrence Van Gelder stated, “Movie buffs are going to the devil. No, not the way the doomsayers have been forecasting since the days Hester Prynne won an A rating in *The Scarlet Letter*, but to drown themselves for a couple of hours in the horror and suspense of *The Exorcist*.”<sup>145</sup> William Friedkin’s adaption of William Peter Blatty’s novel *The Exorcist* terrified, infuriated, and excited filmgoers and filmmakers upon its 1973 premiere. Entering the 1970s, Friedkin was at the height of his ability as a director, when achieving critical acclaim with his previous film *The French Connection* (1971). *The Exorcist* pushed many boundaries in its representation of evil and its grotesque imagery and extreme language incited much controversy. This polarizing film was banned on video in the U.K. and at the same time praised for its profound spirituality by *Catholic News*.<sup>146</sup> Its iconic soundtrack is the result of the complicated and often contentious negotiations with composers Bernard Herrmann and Lalo Schifrin which led to the eventual employment of mostly existing music. In his article “The Devil’s Music: The Filming of *The Exorcist*,” George Park described the creation of the soundtrack as a “battleground.” Friedkin remarked, “when you’re putting together something with a desired effect, you do whatever you have to, use whatever is there that gives you the effect.” He also stated, “if you’re gonna have moral qualms about things, you’d never

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<sup>145</sup> Lawrence Van Gelder, “Exorcist casts spell on full houses,” *The New York Times*, 24 January 1974.

<sup>146</sup> Philip Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema* (London: Equinox, 2009), 116.

direct *The Exorcist*.”<sup>147</sup> The film’s final form arguably contains one of the most significant uses of sound effects and music despite this tumultuous process. In this chapter, I will examine the genesis and social and political implications of the film. I will also analyze how *The Exorcist* facilitated standard practices of horror film music through experiments in sound effect and music. Several musical excerpts credited were cut from the film and were not incorporated until the 2000 directors cut, *The Exorcist: The Version You’ve Never Seen*. For the purpose of this thesis, I will only be referring to the film’s theatrical cut from 1973.

#### I. Background: American Film Leading up to *The Exorcist*

Leading up to *The Exorcist*, thanks to the “New Hollywood” movement, many explorations in film were facilitated by the dismantling of the Motion Picture Production Code which was replaced by a rating system.<sup>148</sup> The Motion Picture Association of America or MPAA reconfigured the code of 1966 which prohibited certain behaviors to allow cases to be released with a “suggested for mature audiences” label.<sup>149</sup> The social and artistic developments of the 1960s, however, faced a conservative backlash in the early seventies when the Nixon administration politicized the aims of counterculture,

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<sup>147</sup> George Park, “The Devil’s Music: The Filming of *The Exorcist*,” *Film Score Monthly* 4, no. 2 (February 1999), 24.

<sup>148</sup> David Cook, *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970–1979*, edited by Charles Harpole, *History of the American Cinema* 9 (New York: Scribner, 2000), 4.

<sup>149</sup> David Cook, “The Auteur Cinema: Directors and Directions in the ‘Hollywood Renaissance’,” in *Lost Illusions*, 70.

minorities, and feminists. The 1970s also brought more of a turn towards “personalism,” a focus on individual nuclear families. Ryan and Kellner argue that this was the background for a more cynical and patriarchal discourse in American cinema. Conservative “law-and order” films like Friedkin’s *The French Connection* and Arthur Penn’s *Dirty Harry* (1971) illustrated Nixon’s campaign against crime and drugs in the early 1970s.<sup>150</sup> Further division occurred from the troubled Nixon administration’s Watergate incident in 1972. These cultural contexts and paradigm shifts were the environment for Friedkin’s next venture *The Exorcist*. Before Friedkin agreed to direct the film, this job was offered to Stanley Kubrick, Arthur Penn, and Mike Nichols who had all passed on it. Friedkin stated, “They didn’t know how to make the picture, but I did know how to make the picture and they (Warner Bros.) sensed that.”<sup>151</sup>

## II. A Closer Look at *The Exorcist*

After *Psycho*, horror cinema had moved from the prevailing gothic themes toward more violent and sometimes socially critical topics that questioned U.S. culture and economics. Many of these films embraced strategies of *cinéma vérité* and documentary styles.<sup>152</sup> In line with this trend, Friedkin had begun his career making documentaries and

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<sup>150</sup> Steven Mintz, Randy Roberts and David Welky, *Hollywood’s America: Understanding History Through Film* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 276–77.

<sup>151</sup> Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on *The Exorcist*, directed by Alexander O. Phillippe (Denver, CO: Exhibit A Pictures, 2019), 36:31–36:40.

<sup>152</sup> William Whittington, “Horror Sound Design,” In Harry M Benshoff, ed., *A Companion to the Horror Film* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 172.

brought a similar approach to his films. In the documentary *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist*, Friedkin explains that many moments in *The Exorcist* “look like a documentary, but I had made documentaries and so I knew the approach to that. As you make a documentary ... you don’t know what the subjects gonna say, and so you roll with the flow and it has often rough edges. I like the rough edges.”<sup>153</sup>

These rough edges intensify the dramatic development in *The Exorcist*. The film follows Regan (Linda Blair), the twelve-year-old daughter of famous actress Chris Macneil (Ellen Burstyn) who begins to exhibit increasingly disturbing and strange behavior while mysterious deaths occur around her. The film opens onsite an archeological dig in Hatra, Iraq. Here the viewer is introduced to Catholic priest Lancaster Merrin (Max Von Sydow) as he encounters sculptures resembling an ancient demon (Pazuzu), foreshadowing a future confrontation. Meanwhile, after several arduous tests, Regan’s doctors find nothing physiologically responsible for this behavior. Concerned, Chris desperately seeks out Damien Karras (Jason Miller), a psychiatrist and Jesuit priest struggling with a crisis of faith after the death of his mother for which he blames himself. Karras teams up with Merrin to exorcise the demon. The exorcism reveals that Regan is possessed by the ancient enemy that Merrin had encountered in Iraq. Merrin has to continue the exorcism alone when Karras falls prey to the demon’s psychological attack, imitating his deceased mother. Karras later returns with conviction and purpose to save Regan but discovers that Merrin has died of a heart attack. Karras

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<sup>153</sup> *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist*, Alexander O. Phillippe, 25:16–25:46, 27:22.



wrestles the possessed Regan to the ground and invites the demon to take him instead. As the demon leaves Regan for Karras, Karras in a final moment of strength, sacrifices himself by throwing himself out of her window, tumbling down a flight of concrete stairs to his death and thus defeating the demon. The final scenes show Regan as a healthy person with no memory of her possession.

This narrative illustrates film scholar Robin Wood's argument in *American Nightmare* that all motifs of the modern horror film come together under a unifying figure being the family. The 'monster' subversively challenges patriarchal norms of the American nuclear family.<sup>154</sup> In her chapter "Bringing it All Back Home: Economy and Generic Exchange," Vivian Sobcheck states that,

The exotic, decadent European world of the traditional horror film, the wondrous, alien outer space of the science fiction film, and the familiar, domestic, and traditionally American space of the family melodrama becomes closely associated. Exotic, decadent, and alien space geographically conflates with familiar space. The displaced 'there' has been replaced with 'here,' and 'then' and 'when' have been condensed as 'now.' Thus, the time and place of horror and anxiety, wonder and hope, have been brought back into the American home.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Robin Wood "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," in Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 209.

<sup>155</sup> Other examples in this period include *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *Carrie* (1976), and *The Amityville Horror* (1979). See Barry Keith Grant, *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015), 174.

The film additionally exemplifies the period's changing perceptions of American masculinity. While the film centers around Regan's possession, the true protagonist can be considered Karras. Issues of the sixties such as the Vietnam War, legislation on reproductive and marital politics and critiques of white male privilege led to the disintegration and transfiguration of the traditional American bourgeois family.<sup>156</sup> Throughout the film Karras feels he is failing as both a son and a Father and has lost direction in his life. Claire Sisco King argued that Karras represents a variation of this American "crisis of masculinity."<sup>157</sup> She also opined that the music of *The Exorcist* "reveals traces of historically specific anxieties about the state of American masculinity, which the film constructs as in crisis."<sup>158</sup>

### III. Enter Texturally and Timbrally Based Sounds

Although many filmmakers loved to use popular music and thus borrowed existing materials (a topic that was brought up in chapter two) in the 1970s, experimental music became a widespread interest among classically trained and even popular musicians in the U.S.<sup>159</sup> This trend made an impact on certain filmmakers. According to Rob Haskins "John Cage was poised to become the best-known American composer after

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<sup>156</sup> Barry Keith Grant, *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, 172.

<sup>157</sup> She explains that Father Karras "represents a cinematic variation on this theme, anticipating and giving voice to what was an emerging construction of 'irretrievably damaged' American Masculinity." See "Ramblin' Men and Piano Men: Crises of Music and Masculinity in *The Exorcist*," *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, edited by Neil Lerner (London: Routledge, 2010), 118.

<sup>158</sup> Lerner, 115.

Aaron Copland, and arguably the best-known American composer to the world at large.”<sup>160</sup> By this time, Cage and his affiliates had stretched many boundaries in their music and shocked audiences with their use of unusual sounds and compositional techniques.<sup>161</sup> Artists increasingly incorporated sounds that were commonly considered extra-musical sounds into their pieces since 1940s innovations including *musique concrète* and Cowell and Cage’s all-percussion and prepared piano pieces. These works gained more traction in an increasing number of performances across the country. Works like La Mont Young’s “89 VI 8 C. 1:42-1:52AM Paris Encore” from *Poem for Chairs, Tables, and Benches, Etc.* (1960), Cage’s *Cartridge Music* (1960) and in popular music the Mothers of Invention’s “*The Return of the Son of Monster Magnet*” (1966) and Velvet Underground’s track “Noise” (1967) included environmental sounds commonly classified as noise. While these examples are from the 1960s, they only gradually reached the attention of larger audiences and thus would have entered public awareness in the early 1970s.

Additionally, musicians were also eager to emulate the textures and timbres of sounds they encountered outdoors and in electronic music studios, including white noise, and use them as musical building blocks instead of chords or tone rows during the decade prior to *The Exorcist*. Iannis Xenakis, György Ligeti, and Krzysztof Penderecki came to the fore with texture and timbre-based compositions that were pioneered by Henry Cowell, Charles Ives, and Wallingford Riegger. In mainstream film, Ligeti’s *Lux*

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<sup>160</sup> Rob Haskins, *John Cage* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 73.

<sup>161</sup> Haskins, *John Cage*, 74–76.

*Aeterna*, *Atmosphères*, and *Aventures* had been successfully used in Hollywood before Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

In 1961 Penderecki's provocative *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* with its eerie and gripping timbres and textures premiered with the Kraków Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, which brought the composer world-wide acclaim.<sup>162</sup> Penderecki's next pieces, *Polymorphia* (1961), *Kanon for Orchestra*, and *Fluorescences* (both 1962) explored further the dense clusters, microtones, and glissandi utilized in *Threnody*. This nontraditional musical approach proved advantageous for the soundtrack of *The Exorcist*.

Friedkin is a music lover and frequently spoke of filmmaking through use of musical vocabularies and metaphors.<sup>163</sup> The otherworldly textures created by Penderecki and Ligeti, previously used with great success by Kubrick in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), sparked the interest of Friedkin who stated, "in most of my films but especially *The Exorcist*, I was strongly influenced by music. And I've always ... been consciously and unconsciously influenced by music that builds layer upon layer. Things like Stravinsky's the *Rite of Spring* which is a slow build."<sup>164</sup> Of course, the differences between Penderecki's works and the *Rite of Spring* are vast, but Friedkin shows an appreciation of gradually building layers upon layers and of unusual timbres.

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<sup>162</sup> James M. Keller, "Penderecki, Krzysztof: Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima," San Francisco Symphony, 2017 <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Data/Event-Data/Program-Notes/P/Penderecki-Threnody-for-the-Victims-of-Hiroshima>

<sup>163</sup> For example, in *Leap of Faith* he compares the director to a conductor who needs to speak with actors like members of the orchestra. He also compares little moments in the film like foreshadowing to grace notes. See 40:56–41:11, 1:02:14.

<sup>164</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 17:11–18:11.

It is possible that Friedkin drew musical inspiration from the soundtrack for Kubrick’s *2001*. A film he has referenced in many interviews. Kubrick’s use of Ligeti’s *Lux Aeterna* with its staggered soloistic voice entries and gradual increase in textural density could have influenced his musical choices.<sup>165</sup> Friedkin stated “the kind of music that I thought it needed was not so much music as texture.” He continued,

not musical sounds. Certainly nothing percussive. The music had to be like another actor in the scene. Contributing but not dominating. I wanted the score in *The Exorcist* not (to be) music that was transforming and would lead to the promised land, in a sense, but music that would operate as textures. Just from time to time little textures like a cold on a summer’s day, a cold hand on the back of your neck, almost imperceptible, sometimes not even heard, blended in with sounds of the landscape. Never controlling a scene.<sup>166</sup>

In *The Exorcist*, Friedkin implements both commissioned music as well as existing music from composers George Crumb, Hans Werner Henze, Penderecki, Anton Webern, and Mike Oldfield. Oldfield’s *Tubular Bells* has become synonymous with the film alongside the other composers’ music. Several of these excerpts were removed from the theatrical cut and some were uncredited. This is illustrated in figure 1.

Existing Music	Used in Theatrical Release	Credited/Uncredited
<i>Kanon for Orchestra and Tape</i> (1962) by K. Penderecki	No	Credited

<sup>165</sup> Richard DeLone provides an insightful explanation of this piece’s use of texture. See Richard DeLone and Gary E. Wittlich, *Aspects of Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 72.

<sup>166</sup> George Park, “The Devil’s Music: The Filming of *The Exorcist*,” *Film Score Monthly* 4, no. 2 (February 1999), 26.

Cello Concerto (1972) by K. Penderecki	Yes	Credited
String Quartet (1960) by K. Penderecki	Yes	Credited
<i>Polymorphia</i> (1961) by K. Penderecki	Yes	Credited
<i>The Devils of Loudun</i> (1969) by K. Penderecki	Yes	Credited
<i>Fantasia for Strings</i> (1966) by H. W. Henze	Yes	Credited
“Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” from the string quartet <i>Black Angels (Images I): Thirteen Images from the Dark Land</i> (1971) by G. Crumb	Yes	Credited
“Fliessend, Äusserst Zart” from Five Pieces for Orchestra, op. 10 (1909) by A. Webern	No	
“Beginnings (From the Wind Harp)” by H. Bee	Yes	Uncredited
“Ramblin’ Man” by The Allman Brother Band,	Yes	Uncredited
“Carly and Carole” by E. Deodato	Yes	Uncredited
“Quiet Village” by L. Baxter	No	Credited
<i>Istoria mou, amartia mou</i> by R. Sakellariou	Yes	Uncredited
<i>Paramythaki Mou</i> by G. Kalatzis	Yes	Uncredited
<i>Down on 33<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup></i> by B. Ryan	Yes (Sung diegetically by characters)	Uncredited
“Tubular Bells” by M. Oldfield	Yes	Credited

Figure 1: List of existing music in *The Exorcist’s* theatrical cut.

Friedkin incorporated popular songs including “Ramblin’ Man” by The Allman Brother Band, “Carly and Carole” by Eumir Deodato, and “Quiet Village” by Les Baxter

as well.<sup>167</sup> In addition, Friedkin approached Jack Nitzsche and David Borden to write extra cues. Nitzsche had experience as Phil Spector's arranger and had orchestrated music for Neil Young before providing music for *The Exorcist*.<sup>168</sup> Borden was a minimalist composer and the founder of the Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Company. He contributed the commissioned pieces *Iraq*, "Study No. 1" and "Study No. 2" alongside the existing music used for the film. Borden states the film "elevated itself" with its combination of special effects and "a score culled from experimental music."<sup>169</sup> The employment of existing music was officially decided upon only after many complications in the search for a suitable composer to score the film. It is important to note that some music was used only in the 2000 director's cut. *Quiet Village* by Les Baxter (00:32:08–33:28), (00:33:46–00:33:53), Penderecki's *Kanon for Orchestra and Tape* (00:33:28–00:33:48), although credited, were cut from the 1973 film version.

Initially, Ken Nordine created a soundtrack comprised of solely "demonic sounds."<sup>170</sup> But Friedkin disliked this idea, fired Nordine and approached Bernard Herrmann.<sup>171</sup> Friedkin whose collaboration with Blatty became strained, also struggled

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<sup>167</sup> William Peter Blatty, Ellen Burstyn, Max von Sydow, Linda Blair, William Friedkin, and Lee J. Cobb, *William Peter Blatty's The Exorcist* (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1998).

<sup>168</sup> Nitzsche's score for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and *An Officer and a Gentleman* (1982) were nominated for an Academy Award. See Jon Pareles, "Jack Nitzsche, 63, Musician and Oscar-Winning Songwriter," *The New York Times*, August 31, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/08/31/arts/jack-nitzsche-63-musician-and-oscar-winning-songwriter.html/>.

<sup>169</sup> David Borden cited in Lerner, 114.

<sup>170</sup> Lerner, 115.

with Herrmann. Indeed their relationship was nothing short of contentious.<sup>172</sup> Friedkin recounts Herrmann's reaction after his first viewing of *The Exorcist* and his verdict, "Well, I think I can save this piece of shit if you leave it with me, and I'll mail you a score."<sup>173</sup> This was the first of many creative arguments that ensued. Another point of disagreement was on the matter of instrumentation. Friedkin envisioned a small string-led score while Herrmann insisted on a church organ and refused to travel to Hollywood to write the score. These issues eventually led Friedkin to turn to jazz artist, Lalo Schifrin who had scored many Warner Bros. classics like *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *Enter the Dragon* (1973) at this point.<sup>174</sup> Friedkin's relationship with Schifrin, like with Herrmann, deteriorated.<sup>175</sup> Friedkin stated he gave Schifrin musical examples from Alban Berg, Crumb, Henze, Penderecki, and Xenakis to work with, although Schifrin could not recall these instructions. Allegedly, Friedkin even threw Schifrin's partial score out the studio window which effectively ended the search for a composer.<sup>176</sup> Similar to Kubrick who ignored Alex North's score for *2001: A Spacey Odyssey* and preferred his temporary track, Friedkin relied on his own choices of existing music with a large group of music and sound editors.

*The Exorcist* invites unusual approaches to sound design alongside the use of existing music. Its score features eerie diegetic sounds to highlight the sense of uncanny

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<sup>172</sup> Park, "The Devil's Music," 24.

<sup>173</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 1:05:05–1:05:15.

<sup>174</sup> Park, 24.

<sup>175</sup> Park, 25–26.

<sup>176</sup> Lerner, 115.



and dread through a sense of realism. This is part of Friedkin's desire to give the film a "documentary fashion."<sup>177</sup> The film allows sound effects both diegetic and non-diegetic to operate as music through this lens, focusing on experimentation with texture, timbre, and 'noise,' to create continuity. The film is designed to diminish the boundaries between diegetic and non-diegetic dimensions in many ways through this process. This ambiguity creates apprehension. As discussed previously, through this technique the viewer is left to imagine what certain sound sources are. In his article "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* and the Proprietary Nature of Sound," Jay Beck asserts, "*The Exorcist* was one of the first films of the 1970s that sought to break down the rigid barriers between the industrial definitions of dialogue, music, and sound effect, while also actively engaging questions about the ontological nature of sound in motion pictures."<sup>178</sup> I will address this statement by analyzing three major components of the film's soundtrack; its use of sound effect, the voice effect of the demon, and existing music. While these elements of sounds frequently overlap, I will discuss them separately. To aide in this I will be referring to cue sheets that I created to illustrate how all these elements interact with the moving images and with each other. All recordings referenced including timestamps from the musical works are from the official *The Exorcist* soundtrack. All existing music was performed

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<sup>177</sup> Chris Chase "Everyone's Reading It, Billy's Filming It," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1972.

<sup>178</sup> Jay Beck, "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* and the Proprietary Nature of Sound," *Sound on Screen* 6, no.1 (2010), 6.

and recorded by The National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin for Warner Bros.<sup>179</sup>

#### IV. Sound Effects

Friedkin calls *The Exorcist* “an experimental sound museum.”<sup>180</sup> Jay Beck finds that this is the result of Friedkin’s willingness to experiment and most importantly the fact that none of the artists who created the sound effects were members of the Hollywood sound union, but freelance sound “artists.” Bob Fine, Doc Siegel, Gonzalo Gavira, and Ron Nagle were largely responsible for the sound design in *The Exorcist*.<sup>181</sup> Fine had experience as a sound mixer and sound engineer in previous films and documentaries like *House of Dark Shadows* (1970).<sup>182</sup> Siegel had worked as a sound recordist on the film *33 1/3 Revolutions per Monkey* (1969).<sup>183</sup> Gavira was well established as he had worked on as many as sixty films in Mexico and abroad with filmmakers like Luis Buñuel and Alejandro Jodorowsky. Gavira had become known for his highly improvised methods of producing unusual sounds which lent themselves well for *The Exorcist*. For example, his Foley work on the infamous head turning scene where Regan’s head slowly spins around. Gavira improvised twisting a leather wallet with cards

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<sup>179</sup> “Music Excerpts from William Peter Blatty’s *The Exorcist* Sound Recording” (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Records, 1974).

<sup>180</sup> *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist*, 49:00.

<sup>181</sup> Jay Beck, “William Friedkin’s *The Exorcist*, 5.

<sup>182</sup> “C. Robert Fine,” *Filmography*, IMDB, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0277594/>.

<sup>183</sup> “Doc Siegel,” *Filmography*, IMDB, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0796922/>.

inside to create a disturbing snapping and stretching sound to accompany the scene. The phrase “Doing a Gavira” is used in the Mexican film industry as shorthand for creating a new audio trick.<sup>184</sup> Ron Nagle, in contrast, is known as both an established sculptor and composer who has written songs for Jefferson Airplane and Barbra Streisand.<sup>185</sup> Fine, Siegel, Gavira, and Nagle drew on various sound sources, disguised them, and thus fascinatingly created sounds that serve as leitmotifs.

Friedkin’s acoustical vision for *The Exorcist* was first inspired by radio. He explained that in radio, “everything was in the imagination, everything, and it was through not only the human voice and music, but through sound effects.”<sup>186</sup> Innovative techniques are used to force the spectator to imagine. The film plays with off-screen diegetic and non-diegetic sound and point of audition to foster apprehension and uncertainty by forcing the audience to imagine a sound’s location as explained previously.<sup>187</sup> The film’s use of Chion’s so-called “acousmatons,” sounds whose cause or source are hidden, are similar to James Whale’s invisible man character in *The Invisible Man* (1933) where offscreen sounds from known sources represent the demon character who is never seen.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ken Bensinger, “Gonzalo Gavira,” *Variety*, January 19, 2005.

<sup>185</sup> Anna Furman, “An Artist who Makes Irreverent, Pocket-size Sculptures,” *The New York Times Style Magazine*, April 29, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/t-magazine/ron-nagle.html>.

<sup>186</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 48:48–48:58.

<sup>187</sup> Stan Link, 212–213.

<sup>188</sup> The term “acousmatic” was coined by French *musique concrète* composer Pierre Schaeffer in 1952 and refers to an audio situation in which the sound source is hidden. As discussed in Chapter two, Chion’s “acousmatons” occur without the mental

There are several examples of acousmatons throughout the film that bring the unseen monster to life. One example of this is the use of harsh animal sounds recorded by sound engineer, Nagle. These sounds can occur on and off screen and are drawn from sources like dogs growling, bees buzzing, and pigs screeching. He mixed these sounds together to disguise the sound sources but still retained the emotion of their original contexts.<sup>189</sup> In his article “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound Shapes,” Denis Smalley refers to this phenomenon as “remote surrogacy,” when the source and cause of a sound are hidden and any human action behind the sound is unknown. Smalley refers to the process of increasing remoteness as “gestural surrogacy.”<sup>190</sup>

In his article “Horror Sound Design,” William Whittington calls these sounds “root effects,” meaning they are often drawn from more mundane sound sources. He explains how they can lay the foundation for what he calls “refined” sound effects that are meant to jolt and shock viewers through the editing process. He explains that the separation of a root sound from a sound source can project misdirection by “creating intellectual uncertainty or cognitive dissonance. Filmgoers may recognize fragments of the sound design, but not the entire structure, frame, or context.”<sup>191</sup> The uncertainty of many of these sound sources creates apprehension. Whittington elaborates,

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representation of a sound source so that the sound will strike more abstractly. He defines “acousmaton” as a sound that is imaginary and its cause or author is not seen. See Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 465.

<sup>189</sup> Philip Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema* (London: Equinox, 2009), 119.

<sup>190</sup> Denis Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” *Organised Sound*: 2, no. 2 (1997), 112.

<sup>191</sup> Whittington, “Horror Sound Design,” 169.

In the end, sound designers understand that to reveal the truth about a sound source is to unmask its mystery and allure and consequently compromise its intention of establishing a link to the uncanny. On this point, they must remain silent. Part of the effectiveness of a horror sound effect resides in its naming as well as its evocation of dark emotion. In general, the depth and shocking nature of any hidden horror depends on the conspiracy of silence that surrounds its origin.<sup>192</sup>

These sounds derived from recordings of animals play an integral role in telling a story aurally. Beck argues the film's sound effects can serve as leitmotifs that carry emotional weight alongside these excerpts.<sup>193</sup> While *The Exorcist* is filled with sound effects to emphasize onscreen actions, certain sound effects act as leitmotifs that reoccur in association with thematically significant characters and ideas. In the film one can identify three crucial motifs that exemplify this aspect. They are marked by complex sound masses, meaning they do not allow the viewer to hear precise or recognizable pitches.<sup>194</sup>

The first leitmotif, created by Nitzsche, sustains a soft dynamic and has a smooth sound surface with a sound pattern made up of changing intervals. This leitmotif is an evolving ethereal high-pitched sound created from multitrack recordings of Nitzsche running his fingertip over glass with staggered entries. I will refer to this sound as the "Glass motif." This leitmotif occurs in the first ten seconds of the cue titled "Iraq" for the

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Beck, 6.

<sup>194</sup> Chion, *Film: A Sound Art*, 472.

opening scenes that take place with Merrin in Hatra, Iraq. The opening Iraq scenes introduce Father Merrin who finds signs of the demon at the archeological dig depicted in *Figure 1*. Merrin is visibly shaken by these signs. The opening scene establishes the main plot of the film which is the upcoming confrontation between two characters. The cue occurs three times: in the opening title sequence, while Father Karras walking away from the Macneil house after first suspecting Regan might actually be possessed, and leading up to Merrin's final confrontation with the demon.<sup>195</sup>

A second motif is the recorded sound of pigs screeching. The recorded sound of herded pigs is used most notably in two scenes which foreshadows Father Karras's death. Karras, who struggles with his faith and identity through most of the film, sacrifices himself to save Regan by asking the demon to take him before killing himself. This motif contains varying intervals and combinations of short and long sounds. It has a rough sound surface, begins soft and then increases in intensity. This motif occurs twice. It first appears in the final Iraq scene which depicts Merrin facing down the statue of the demon before the scene cuts to Georgetown in the U.S. where Regan and Karras's story begins. Here, the motif foreshadows the climax of the film by associating the Georgetown location, where Karras takes on the demon, with it. The motif also provides shock and intensity thus creating unease. The second occurrence of this leitmotif is at film's climax when Karras sacrifices himself, taking the demon from Regan's body before hurling himself out the window.<sup>196</sup> The leitmotif here possibly references the New Testament

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<sup>195</sup> The motif is used in Cue 1 (0:00:18–0:00:30), Cue 23 (1:23:44–1:24:18), and Cue 28 (1:33:54–1:34:54).

<sup>196</sup> The motif is used in Cue 9 (0:09:21–0:10:03) and Cue 30 (1:53:10–1:53:30).

story the Exorcism of the Gerasene Demoniac in the Gospel of Mark 5:1–20 where Jesus cast out several demons from a man by transferring them into the bodies of pigs who are drowned. This idea is alluded to through the presence of pigs aurally and visually and through dialogue as well.<sup>197</sup>

A final example of a leitmotivic sound effect in *The Exorcist* is what I will refer to as the “Buzzing motif,” an effect that was achieved by recording a bee trapped in a bottle. Nagel created this effect which is used four times. This motif is always associated with the film’s antagonist and usually coupled with the aforementioned “Pig motif.” The motif occurs three times accompanied visually with the figurine and statues of the demon introduced in the opening Iraq scenes. The fourth time it is used is during the pivotal scene where Karras truly accepts that Regan is possessed. In the scene the words, “Help Me” appear embossed in Regan’s skin. Blatty derived his novel’s demon, Pazuzu, from Mesopotamian mythology and characterized him as “king of the evil wind demons.” The film refers to the same origins visually and auditorily by depicting him as a winged creature that stands like a human with a scorpion’s body.<sup>198</sup> The sound of wind and a buzzing bee are used to foreshadow or bring attention to the demon’s presence.<sup>199</sup> This

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<sup>197</sup> For example, they are present in props like Regan’s artwork and the word ‘pig’ is even written on the stairs on which Karras tumbled down. In one scene the demon even refers to its ‘vessel’ as a pig stating, “the sow is mine.” The chapter is also referenced in an epigraph for Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel *Demons* (1971–72). See William Peter Blatty, *William Peter Blatty’s The Exorcist*, special edition, 25th anniversary (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1998), 0:49:03.

<sup>198</sup> “Highlights from the Collections,” Highlights from the Collection: Mesopotamia The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, <https://oi.uchicago.edu/collections/highlights/highlights-collection-mesopotamia>.

<sup>199</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 48:30–48:36.

motif is first heard in the opening scene in Hatra where Merrin first encounters a small figurine of the ancient enemy at the archeological dig.<sup>200</sup> Visuals of the statue are ominously dramatized by both the “Buzzing motif,” howling wind, and the “Pig motif” as Merrin faces the Pazuzu statue in a classic “stand-off” depicted in *Figure 1*. The motif subtly signals to the audience that the creature from the opening scenes is related to Regan’s experiences. These motifs emphasize the moment in the finale when it is revealed that the entity from Hatra has possessed Regan through the amalgamation of the voice, sound effect, and music to create a truly harrowing experience.



Figure 2: William Friedkin, *The Exorcist*, Father Merrin and the Pazuzu statue at archeological dig site in Hatra, Iraq 0:09:55.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Friedkin explains, “the opening in Iraq sets the tone and the mood for the entire film, the atmosphere of dread and ancient supernatural mystery.” See *Leap of Faith*, 15:25–15:47.

<sup>201</sup> William Peter Blatty, *William Peter Blatty’s The Exorcist*, special edition, 25th anniversary (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1998), 0:09:55.



These motifs' subtle entrances can take the viewer by surprise as they are often overshadowed by a range of diegetic environmental sounds to create suspense and to shock the viewer through dynamic extremes. Cecelia Hall said "*The Exorcist* was one of the first films to understand the importance of affecting the audience psychologically. Friedkin said he wanted it to be too loud because he wanted the audience to be slightly on edge by the middle of the film"<sup>202</sup> While *The Exorcist* was not the first film to use this strategy, as Herrmann's score for Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) among many other examples demonstrates, it fascinatingly achieves this effect primarily with diegetic sounds. An example of this occurs in the scene wherein Regan is subjected to a carotid angiography and other X-ray procedures because the doctors suspect she has a lesion on her brain. Here the medical equipment produces a jarring thumping sound.<sup>203</sup> These shockingly loud moments are juxtaposed by extremely quiet moments. Friedkin elaborates, "the soundtrack is constructed very consciously like a symphony," and

sometimes you'll hear one specific sound only behind a scene in the same way that you sometimes have a solo by one instrument in a symphony. Other times the tracks are full and quite disturbing, with a lot of things mixed together to bombard the senses. Even in dialogue, I made some of the dialogue so quiet that the audience has to lean forward to listen to it, strain to hear it.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Beck, "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist*," 5.

<sup>203</sup> *William Peter Blatty's The Exorcist*, 0:47:20–0:47:33.

<sup>204</sup> Park, 28.

## V. The Voice

An important element to the overall aural landscape of the film is the demonic vocality of Regan. In Mark Kermode's documentary, *The Fear of God: 25 Years of The Exorcist*, Robert "Buzz" Knudson, the dubbing mixer from the Sound Department, recalls that Friedkin wanted the voice to sound like that of a Hieronymous Bosch painting. The Sound Department thus decided to create a sort of 'chorus of voices' to sonically evoke Bosch's bizarre, crowded depictions of Hell.<sup>205</sup> The outcome was an alienating, cacophonous and unnerving vocal sound.

The Sound Department mixed the voice of child actor Linda Blair who plays Regan with the voice of actress Mercedes McCambridge to achieve this effect.<sup>206</sup> McCambridge whom Orson Welles once called "the world's finest radio actress," utilized her radio experience to contribute to the eerie sound of the demon.<sup>207</sup> She reportedly strained her voice by chain-smoking and even swallowing raw eggs between takes to create this inhuman sound. She therefore vocally produced wheezing and creaking effects with her voice. The actress achieved multi-phonics through extended techniques as

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<sup>205</sup> Mark Kermode, *The Fear of God: 25 Years of The Exorcist* (London: BBC, 1998), 41:56-43:33.

<sup>206</sup> McCambridge had acted in film such as *Giant* (1956) and *Touch of Evil* (1958) and is an accomplished radio actress. See Charles Higham, "Will the Real Devil Speak Up? Yes!" *The New York Times*, January 27, 1974.

<sup>207</sup> Roger Hurlburt, "Voice from The Past Actress Mercedes McCambridge has Brought A Special Intensity—and Voice—to Her Roles Since the Days of Live radio and TV," *Sun Sentinel*, January 23, 1992, <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/fl-xpm-1992-01-23-9201040667-story.html>.

well.<sup>208</sup> The two voices were frequently mixed with non-identifiable animal sounds. This mix of both alien and familiar sounds created an unsettling and inhuman vocal timbre and texture through experimental compositional techniques common in *musique concrète*.<sup>209</sup> Chion describes the effect of superimposing the constructed voice to Linda Blair's body as "showing spectators how the cinematic voice is 'stuck on' to the cinematic body, this grafting of heterogenous elements can be seen as *The Exorcist's* very object."<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, the demon's voice although visibly coming from Blair falls into Chion's category of the *acousmètre*, an acoustically conceived invisible character, as the demon within is never seen directly.<sup>211</sup>

A captivating example of this voice sound is found in the scene where Karras analyzes a recording of 'Regan' in the language lab, demonstrating the film's emphasis on the sonic domain.<sup>212</sup> As a child psychologist and priest questioning his faith, Karras wants to find a rational explanation for Regan's condition. He records the possessed Regan to study what he believes are different personalities within her. The demon repeatedly refers to itself as us, we, they, and them. The scene is critical to his narrative arc as here he begins to believe she might actually be possessed. In his essay "Rhythms

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<sup>208</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 53:35–53:40.

<sup>209</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, 120.

<sup>210</sup> Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 164.

<sup>211</sup> Chion's *acousmètre* is "an invisible character created for the audio-viewer by means of an acousmatic voice heard either offscreen or onscreen but hidden." See Chion. *Film: A Sound Art*, 466.

<sup>212</sup> This occurs at Cue 25 (1:29:27–1:30:36).

of Evil: Exorcizing Sound from *The Exorcist*,” Mark Evans remarks on the significance of these recordings as they illustrate Karras’ need to “decipher ... to get to the heart of the vocality.”<sup>213</sup> The tapes feature a disturbing array of strangled and garbled voices overlapping one another. Certain layers of the mix must have been created via dramatic manipulation of playback speed. In the first scene, we hear Blatty’s actual coinage, “nowonmai” articulated repeatedly in the polyphonic vocal textures. Karras is advised by a lab technician to play the tapes backwards revealing that Regan spoke in reverse. The film then cuts to Karras in his apartment listening. Here the audience discovers the phrase “nowonmai” when reversed becomes “I am no one” at 1:29:24–1:30:34. The viewer also hears “fear the priest” and “Merrin” through a range of layered and overlapping vocalisms among this phrase. In the mix, McCambridge is heard creating a collage of juxtaposing vocalism with glottal sounds, half sung, half spoken phrases, growling, and heavy vibrato. Versions of this sound have been created in previous works by Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, for instance, *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul* (1949-1950). Schaeffer described the piece as “an opera for blind people, a performance without argument, a poem made of noises, bursts of text, spoken or musical.”<sup>214</sup> Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956) further utilized recording technology to experiment with phonetics.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Hayward, 120.

<sup>214</sup> The piece was originally composed on turntables as tape machines were not introduced until 1951. Henry created the revised stereo remix version in 1966. See Simon Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 76.

<sup>215</sup> Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music*, 44.

## VI. Use of Existing Music

There are many lengthy sections in *The Exorcist's* score that makes powerful use of silence and sound effect. Much of the existing music enters subtly or as a stinger designed to jolt the viewer out of their seats. Friedkin uses existing music non-diegetically. Excerpts stem from music by Oldfield, Penderecki, Crumb, Webern, Henze, and Bee (*Beginnings (from the wind harp*, uncredited) non-diegetically. Diegetic music includes Nietzsche's "Iraq" cue, and songs; *Istoria mou, amartia mou* by Sakellariou (uncredited) and *Paramythaki Mou* by Kalatzis (uncredited) which play on the radio at Karras's mother's apartment before her death in Cue 11 (0:19:33-0:21:41). The lyrics of both songs describe themes like heartbreak and regret, alluding to Karras inner turmoil and foreshadowing his later regret of not being there for his mother when she died. They are used to help establish more background information for Karras and his mother. Other popular songs include *Ramblin' Man* by the Allman Brothers, and *Carly and Carole* by Deodato (uncredited), and *Down on 33<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>* by Ryan which is sung by drunken party goers. While all the musical excerpts are used in a thematically relevant way, I will here focus on "Tubular Bells," "Ramblin Man," and the music of Nietzsche, Penderecki, and Crumb.

### VI. a. "Tubular Bells" and "Ramblin' Man"

The diegesis of the film focuses on the identity struggles of various male characters and the power of sacrifice, most crucial of these is Karras as stated

previously.<sup>216</sup> Music such as “Ramblin’ Man” from the 1971 album *Brothers and Sisters* and Oldfield’s progressive rock number “Tubular Bells” from his 1973 album by the same title seem to underline Karras’ inner turmoil throughout the film. King states “discomfiture about the vulnerability of masculinity’s master narratives, which the narrative struggles to disavow through reliance on the logic of sacrificial heroism, becomes visible (or, more precisely, audible) in the film’s musical moments.”<sup>217</sup>

Friedkin states “Tubular Bells” was completely unknown before *The Exorcist* and recalls,

It was at the Warner Bros. music room on a demo disc. And I was listening to these demos, and I heard that track for the first time. Warner was not planning to release the album in the United States. It was from a new company called Virgin Records. And in his autobiography, Richard Branson claims that my use of that piece of music made them millionaires and they went on from there.<sup>218</sup>

The piece is used three times throughout the film for no longer than one minute.<sup>219</sup> “Tubular Bells” enhances the film’s tense mood with its repeating irregular

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<sup>216</sup> Lerner, 117.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>218</sup> Ron Hart and William Friedkin, “William Friedkin’s ‘Cruising’: Director Reflects on Cult Classic’s Eccentric Soundtrack,” *Billboard*, September 6, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8529335/william-friedkin-cruising-soundtrack>.

<sup>219</sup> Mike Oldfield’s “Tubular Bells” is heard in Cue 10 (0:15:04–0:15:37), Cue 20 (1:02:58–1:03:19), and Cue 31 (1:58:12–1:58:14).

meter which gives the piece a slightly off-kilter effect. John Carpenter's "Halloween" theme written for *Halloween* (1978) similarly also uses a minimalistic repetitive theme with an irregular meter and an Aeolian melody to create tension. Furthermore the instrumentation, a Farfisa organ, a Lowrey organ, flutes, a flageolet, mandolin, and tubular bells, compliments the film's narrative as its use of organ reminds the viewer of sacred music. Oldfield cites Terry Riley and the electronic music duo Tonto's Expanding Headband as the piece's main influences. He also states that the drug LSD was a significant part of his creative process. He stated, "we wouldn't have Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, and we probably wouldn't have 'Tubular Bells.'"<sup>220</sup> The piece builds on minimalist music pioneered by Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass. "Tubular Bells" bears some resemblance to works like Reich's *Piano Phase* (1967) which exemplifies his phasing technique where two repetitive piano parts gradually shift in and out of unison.

The piece's sense of stasis provides insight into Karras' psyche. The first appearance of "Tubular Bells" in the film is coupled with Karras confessing, "there's not a day in my life that I don't feel like a fraud."<sup>221</sup> King states, "while *Tubular Bells* does eventually change through a gradual additive process, its struggle against the continuity of time recalls the paralysis engendered by traumatic memory and positions its listener

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<sup>220</sup> Paul Lester and Mike Oldfield, "Mike Oldfield: 'We wouldn't have had Tubular Bells without drugs,'" *The Guardian*, March 20, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/mar/20/mike-oldfield-interview-tubular-bells-drugs>.

<sup>221</sup> *William Friedkin's The Exorcist*, 0:15:20.

within a relatively fixed musical moment.”<sup>222</sup> While repetitive music doesn’t always evoke this idea, Oldfield noted that the piece was inspired by troubled times and uncertainty when he was seventeen and was struggling financially. He elaborated on the origins of the piece as follows,

There’s a lot of joy in it and there’s a lot of suffering in it. There’s good and bad, there’s all areas of life: there’s comedy, there’s ugliness, there’s beauty, there’s everything in it, all made by my younger self. I didn’t know anything about the world, just for one reason or another. Mental instability, some hallucinogenic drugs maybe, the circumstances of my childhood. The feeling of being different, being a kind of outsider, it all comes out in that music and maybe it appeals to people going through that stage. As they get into their teens, they think, what is life, what am I supposed to do. It develops and encapsulates all of that.<sup>223</sup>

Another thematically significant musical choice is the Allman Brothers Band’s “Ramblin’ Man.”<sup>224</sup> The song is used once diegetically coming from a jukebox at a bar where Karras discusses his troubles with another priest.<sup>225</sup> Karras laments, “It’s my

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<sup>222</sup> Lerner, 120.

<sup>223</sup> Top 2000 A Gogo, “Mike Oldfield-Tubular Bells| Het Verhaal Achter het Nummer, YouTube Video, April 3, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndRpcV5GVi0>, 0:19-2:07.

<sup>224</sup> Lerner, 123.

<sup>225</sup> “Ramblin’ Man” is used in Cue 12 (0:25:33–0:26:40).



mother, Tom. She's alone. I never should have left her" at 25:56–26:41. The song borrows from rock and country music with its fiddler references on guitar and its blues-rock feeling. The lyrics tell the story of a man who is unable to fulfill patriarchal and heteronormative expectations within established Western family conventions. The *dramatis persona* roams aimlessly with no purpose. King argues that the song positions Karras as a stand in for cultural struggles with “damaged narratives about masculinity and patriarchal authority.”<sup>226</sup> The song's lyrics parallel Karras as he feels lost, unable to fulfill his roles as a son or as a Father.

#### VI. b. The Devil's Music

Other music in the film came from twentieth-century avant-garde and experimental composers, Penderecki, Crumb, and Webern to sonically represent the demon.<sup>227</sup> While all works play a specific role in the film, I will focus on Penderecki's String Quartet, *Polymorphia*, *The Devil's of Loudun*, and Crumb's “Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” from his string quartet *Black Angels*. Wolfram Schwinger describes Penderecki as having “wiped out the boundary between sound and noise.”<sup>228</sup> In this way Penderecki's music lent itself well to *The Exorcist* which prioritizes non-musical sound and often blends music and non-musical sound effects. Friedkin picked works and

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<sup>226</sup> Lerner, 124.

<sup>227</sup> Penderecki and Webern double as transition music as well.

<sup>228</sup> Wolfram Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: His Life and Work: Encounters, Biography and Musical Commentary* (London: Schott, 1989), 124.

excerpts that feature sound masses and focus on complex textures and timbres. An intriguing feature of this music is that its sound sources, traditional concert instruments, are often difficult to identify and thus they complement the carefully constructed sound design. Most notably, the borrowings from Penderecki's works utilize contra-timbral or poly-timbral textures which include non-pitched sounds, indeterminate pitch, electronic or recorded sounds, and percussive sounds.

Penderecki's First String Quartet rejects many of the quartet writing conventions fostered by composers from Haydn to Schoenberg and thus challenges the listening behaviors of concert audiences. This quartet opens with an onslaught of percussive sound with indeterminate pitch achieved via striking the strings either with an open hand or with fingers and tapping the wood of the instruments with fingertips or the frog. Its sonic texture is further complicated with mixed playing instructions wherein definite pitches and chords are added with *col legno* and *pizzicato* and indeterminate pitch at the forty to fifty-five second mark depicted in Figure 2.<sup>229</sup> The piece's tempo is marked by seconds instead of measures. The entire quartet consists of six pages, each page lasting approximately one minute. Schwinger states that the close conglomeration of sounds resembles the canonic structure in *Threnody*. Furthermore, he explains that, as a structural whole, the quartet "proceeds from rapid short repetitions of sound-structures arithmetically ordered, through chordal play to quietly fading sustained notes, enriched by harmonics and glissandos, interrupted by gatecrashing thumps and thuds."<sup>230</sup> This

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<sup>229</sup> Wolfram Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki*, 128–129.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

piece is used only once in the film as Chris Macneil, Regan's mother, is driving home from the hospital with no answers for her daughter's disturbing actions. The cue is loud and is undisturbed by diegetic sounds for the first several seconds of the piece.

Penderecki's music is enhanced by a diegetic police siren and visually by flickering lights.<sup>231</sup> The beginning of the scene is reminiscent of the paranoid Marion Crane anxiously driving in *Psycho*. In both *Psycho* and *The Exorcist*, the audience views the subject through a rain covered front window via a tight frame. Sonically, the timbral homogeneity of using only strings as opposed to a full orchestra shrinks the audience's perception of space and thus creates a sense of tension and claustrophobia as discussed in chapter 2. Additionally, audience members would have found the quartet's unidentifiable sound sources and the lack of rhythmic pulse disorienting. This sonic treatment falls in line with Friedkin's Bosch-inspired sonic vision for the demon.<sup>232</sup>



<sup>231</sup> This occurs at Cue 17 (0:53:01–0:53:56).

<sup>232</sup> Jay Beck, "William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* and the Proprietary Nature of Sound," *Sound on Screen* 6, no.1 (2010), 6.

Figure 3: 25” to 60” of Krzysztof Penderecki, String Quartet, No. 1 (1960).<sup>233</sup>

The film’s remarkable employment of sound required an unconventional score that would enhance the sound effects created without overpowering them. Friedkin liked the slow building of barely audible textures and explained,

There are great quiet sound effects all over the movie, and I didn’t want the score to drown them out, so I didn’t want a loud score or a rhythmic score or a boisterous score. For the most part, I don’t like to cue the audience on how they’re supposed to feel. I like them to find that out for themselves.<sup>234</sup>

This is most notably exemplified in the use of the barely audible opening of *Polymorphia*. Penderecki followed the success of his experimental *Threnody* and *Anaklasis* with a work for strings only: *Polymorphia*, scored for 24 violins and eight violas, cellos, and basses. Schwinger states that it is stylistically and formally most similar to *Threnody*. He said:

The Greek title, *Polymorphia*, ‘many-formedness,’ applies not, contrariwise, to the form of the piece, but to the broadly deployed scale of sound. Penderecki here

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<sup>233</sup> Krzysztof Penderecki, *Quartetto per achi* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawn, Muzyczne, 1963).

<sup>234</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 1:03:42–1:04.

aims, even more accurately than in *Threnody*, at the ... contrast and interflow of soft and hard sounds.<sup>235</sup>

Excerpts from *Polymorphia* appear five times throughout the film.<sup>236</sup> The longest excerpt lasts around eight minutes. The excerpts always feature the beginning of the piece.

*Polymorphia* provides an interesting counterpoint to the voice effects discussed earlier.

The piece's experimental approach to timbre doesn't drown out the carefully created sound effects but enhances them, thanks to its experimental approach to timbre, blending the distinctions between music and sound effect.

What is heard in the film is the soft, low-pitched droning of the piece's opening. Double basses enter one at a time on E and sustain it before sliding up or down in quarter or semitones *nonvibrato*.<sup>237</sup> In the article "Demonic Possession: Horror Music," film theorist K. J. Donnelly states "a common feature is the use of melodic lines of deeply pitched strings, which are often slow and tend not to be particularly memorable or tuneful."<sup>238</sup> The excerpts from *Polymorphia*, alongside his Cello Concerto and *Devils of Loudun* unease the viewer through their use of acutely quiet dynamics, indeterminate pitches and rhythms, wide vibratos, and exaggerated glissandos.

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<sup>235</sup> Schwinger, 131.

<sup>236</sup> Penderecki's *Polymorphia* is used in Cue 9 (0:09:21–0:10:03), Cue 18 (0:53:40–0:57:45), Cue 19 (1:00:22–1:02:52), Cue 26 (1:30:39–1:31:02), and Cue 29 (1:36:30–1:44:17).

<sup>237</sup> Schwinger, 132.

<sup>238</sup> K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 90.

Crumb's "Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects" from his famous string quartet *Black Angels*, serves as an effective startle effect. Crumb described the work with the phrase "in tempore belli," meaning in time of war, referring to the Vietnam War and references the Judeo-Christian tradition of a fallen angel. He underlined this theme in the titles of the thirteen movements divided into three parts. Crumb explains,

*Black Angels* was conceived as a kind of parable on our troubled contemporary world. The numerous quasi-programmatic allusions in the work are therefore symbolic although the essential polarity-God versus Devil-implies more than a purely metaphysical reality. The image of the "black angel" was a conventional device used by early painters to symbolize the fallen angel. The underlying structure of *Black Angels* is a huge arch-like design which is suspended from three "Threnody" pieces. The work portrays a voyage of the soul. The three stages of this voyage are "Departure" (fall from grace), "Absence" (spiritual annihilation), and "Return" (redemption).<sup>239</sup>

The piece creates an unearthly sound thanks to Crumb's string quartet writing. He uses amplification, percussion instruments like water-tuned crystal glasses, tam-tam, and maracas, experimental bowing techniques, and vocalizations such as whispered chants

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<sup>239</sup> George Crumb, "*Black Angels* (Images 1) [for] Electric String Quartet" (New York: C. F. Peters, 1971).

and shouted numbers in different languages.<sup>240</sup> Crumb asserts that with the amplification of string instruments he intended to produce a “highly surreal effect.” In his view, “this surrealism is heightened by the use of certain unusual string effects; e.g., pedal tones (the intensely obscene sounds of the devil-music) bowing on the ‘wrong’ side of the strings (to produce the viol-consort effect); trilling on the strings with thimble-capped fingers.”<sup>241</sup> He also requires the performers to bow crystal glasses to create a glass-harmonica effect which is used in the movement God music, similar to Nietzsche’s “Glass effect.” The score is marked by seconds and lacks traditionally notated metrical structures.<sup>242</sup>

This excerpt is used when Karras is called back to MacNeil’s house by family friend Shannon who leads Karras upstairs to Regan’s darkened room.<sup>243</sup> The room is so cold both character’s breath is visible. Shannon unbuttons Regan’s top to expose her abdomen. Karras looks horrified as the camera zooms in on the words “Help Me” which appear on her skin. This moment is emphasized by the first twenty-one seconds of the piece where we hear a loud high pitched *sul ponticello* string tremolo with emphasized glissandos (See Figure 4). Crumb requested the electric quartet to “make a continuous glissando, without dwelling on given pitches. The tremolo should be extremely rapid” in

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<sup>240</sup> Elizabeth McLain, “In Tempore Belli: Crumb’s *Black Angels* and the Vietnam War,” *The Journal of Musicological Research* 38, no. 1 (2019): 45.

<sup>241</sup> Crumb, *Black Angels (Images 1)*.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Crumb’s “(Tutti) Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” from *Black Angels* occurs at Cue 27 (1:31:29–1:31:36).

this section.<sup>244</sup> The strings decrescendo to pianissimo before returning to fortissimo. The scene mimics these dynamics by zooming in on the shocking imagery of Regan’s stomach, then cutting to Karras while quiet before returning once more to Regan with *fff*. Significantly, this excerpt is accompanied by the “Buzzing motif” used earlier, signaling the presence of Pazuzu.

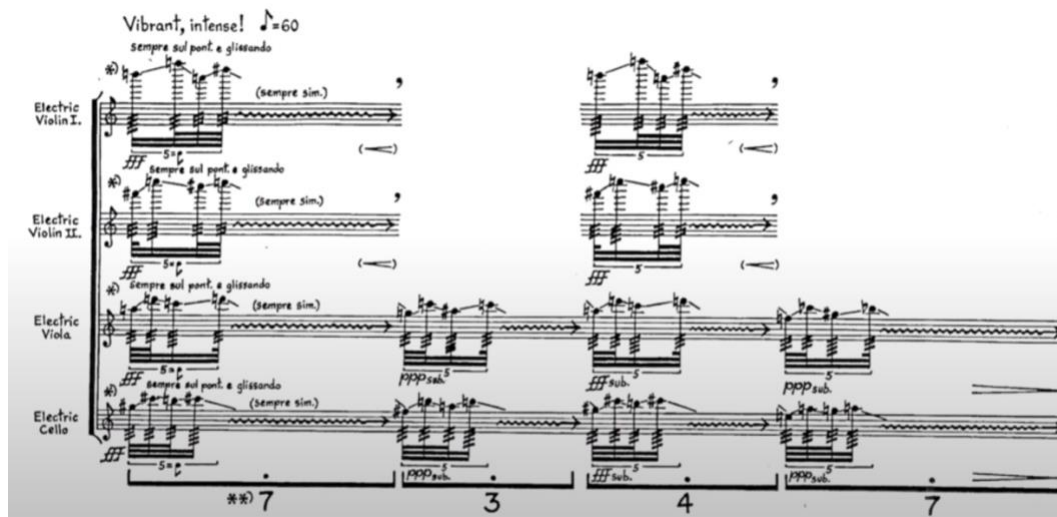


Figure 4: The first seven seconds of George Crumb’s “Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” from *Black Angels*.<sup>245</sup>

### VI. c. Juxtapositions

This borrowed music is often coupled with thematically and musically opposing examples. The music for the opening credits support this observation. The film opens with Nietzsche’s “Glass motif” before transitioning into an excerpt from Penderecki’s opera *The Devils of Loudun*. The opera is based on John Whiting’s adaptation of Aldous

<sup>244</sup> Crumb, *Black Angels (Images 1)*.

<sup>245</sup> Crumb, *Black Angels (Images 1)*.



Huxley's 1952 book of the same name which coincidentally draws its plot from supposed demonic possession.<sup>246</sup> The audience hears long notes interjected by high-register percussive effects produced with irregular bow changes in the violins. These sounds are soon contrasted by a recording of a muezzin's call-to-prayer in Mosul. A single voice utters "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar" meaning "God is good, God is great."<sup>247</sup> Visually the title, *The Exorcist* appears in correspondence with the voice and thus establishes the film's hero. Here existing music is used to represent the battle of wills and 'good' and 'evil' the film explores. The ending title sequence is treated in a similar manner. Initially an excerpt of Oldfield's "Tubular Bells" is heard quietly which is then cut off mid phrase and continued with Henze's lively "Allegro Moderato" from his *Fantasia for Strings*.

## VI. Impact of *The Exorcist*

Upon its release, many film commentators ignored the music and focused on the film's grotesque imagery, violence, and language. The subtle and nuanced soundtrack with its experimental approach to film scoring took a backseat and its dramaturgic importance was not recognized at this point. The film was recorded by *Variety* to have as many as 85 million rentals at box offices and audience members had reported to have waited as long as five hours to see the film. The film is often associated with extreme audience reactions such as fainting and vomiting.<sup>248</sup> Roger Ebert explains, "during the

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<sup>246</sup> Schwinger, 255.

<sup>247</sup> *Leap of Faith*, 11:39–12:06.

<sup>248</sup> A director of operations for Cinema 5 theaters reported blackouts and vomiting and remembers when ammonia capsules were kept as restoratives for filmgoers for "lust for life" scene where Kirk Douglas portraying Vincent Van Gogh cuts off his ear and stated

movie there are no reservations, but only experiences. We feel shock, horror, nausea, fear, and some small measure of dogged hope.” He continues, “this movie doesn’t rest on the screen; it’s a frontal assault.”<sup>249</sup> Many film-goers and clergy members are divided on the film’s message and religious merit. Friedkin stated “it is important to me to have made a film that is controversial and provocative.”<sup>250</sup>

Recently, however, film aficionados have paid much more attention to the film’s experimental use of sound and music which greatly influenced future cinema and film scoring practices. The film also focused mainstream audience’s attention towards Penderecki’s work which has today become a standard and associated with suspenseful and fearful musical film scores since *The Exorcist’s* premiere. Since the premiere of *The Exorcist*, Penderecki’s music influenced film scores such as John Williams’ music for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Kubrick admired Friedkin’s use of existing music repertoire in *The Exorcist* and, seven years later, continued drawing on Penderecki’s music in *The Shining*, fostering the composer’s increasing popularity.<sup>251</sup> Penderecki’s experimental string sounds became a status quo for horror and suspense scoring techniques. Oldfield, whose career was in its early stages, received much

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that in regard to shock factor *The Exorcist* took the top of the class. The operator observed a majority of the film’s audience were young people although the film has attracted all ages. The film’s R rating didn’t deter younger viewers from buying tickets. See Lawrence Van Gelder, “Exorcist casts spell on full houses.” *The New York Times*, 24 January 1974.

<sup>249</sup> Roger Ebert, “The Exorcist,” Roger Ebert.com, December 26, 1973, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-exorcist-1973>.

<sup>250</sup> Gelder, “*Exorcist* casts spell.”

<sup>251</sup> Hayward, 137.

attention as well. His music won a Grammy award for best instrumental composition two years after the film's release. *The Exorcist* broadened filmmakers' and audiences' perceptions about what kind of sounds can exist in the film soundtrack. In many ways the boundaries between sound effects and music became blurred and sound effects were used analogous to the music. Both the recorded and manipulated environmental sounds and the experimental timbres of Crumb and Penderecki could seamlessly exist within one framework.

Table 1: *The Exorcist* Cue Sheet

Cue #	Film Time In/Out	Dramatic Action	Dialogue	Photography	Music	Selected Features	Sound Effect	Diegetic Sound	Experimental Musical Moments
1	0:00:18	Opening credits		Opening Credits	"Iraq" by J. Nitzsche	High ethereal sounds	Glass Motif		Layered entries of sound achieved by rubbing rims of glasses
2	0:00:24-0:00:30	Opening credits		Black screen, "A William Friedkin Film" appears in red	(Fades into) <i>The Devils of Loudun</i> by K. Penderecki	High strings with irregular bow changes, tremolo, <i>stosenuto</i> notes			
3	0:00:31-0:01:34	Opening Credits		Opening title appears in red, dissolves to Iraq dig site	Muezzin call to prayer recording in Arabic from Mosul	Suddenly, 1 voice unaccompanied "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar." Smooth quality, higher register.			Sudden switch of music from vastly differing contexts
4	0:03:36-0:03:54	Merrin Pulls figurine from ground and dusts it off for examination.		Close up of figurine, then close-up of Merrin		Even buzzing, droning sound grows louder than diegetic sounds	Buzzing Motif	Howling wind, clatter of digging tools, voices	<i>Musique concrète</i> approach, sound effect as music
5	0:04:06-0:05:10	Merrin Shakily takes nitroglycerin pills at outdoor market		Medium shot of Merrin				Voices, music, blacksmiths hammer	Environmental sounds as music
6	0:05:11-0:05:35	Merrin sees 3 blacksmiths hammering. One stops, looks at camera revealing one white eye		Shot of hammers, close up of man with white eye, then close-up reaction shot from Merrin		Repetitive percussive metallic triplets		Blacksmiths hammer, voices, wind	Diegetic sounds acting as musical score
7	0:5:36-0:06:11	Transitions from blacksmiths to clock		Close-up of grandfather clock with pendulum swinging		Triplets switch to a duple meter (ticking in time with triplet sounds in previous scene)		Clock ticking	

8	0:06:11	Clock behind Merrin suddenly stops ticking		Medium shot of Merrin, clock behind him suddenly freezes		Sudden silence			
9	0:09:21-0:10:03	Merrin back at dig site		Camera zooms in on statues face then wide shot of Merrin facing off with statue of Pazuzu, transitions to establishing shot of Georgetown	<i>Polymorphia</i> by K. Penderecki	Buzzing and squealing sound. static string clusters join cresc. of diegetic sounds to deafening volume	Buzzing motif, Pig motif (added around 0:09:47)	Foot steps, Dogs fighting, howling wind, pigs screech	<i>Musique concrète</i> tone clusters, blending music and sound effect
10	0:15:04-0:15:37	Chris walks passing 2 nuns, overhearing Father Karras and another priest before a passing airplane overshadows their voices	“There’s not a day in my life where I don’t feel like a fraud.”- Karras	Tracking shot of Chris walking.	“Tubular Bells” by M. Oldfield	Repeating asymmetrical meter on organ, grand piano, glockenspiel, and tubular bells		Airplane flies overhead, other diegetic sounds barely heard over music	Unusual instrumentation,
11	0:19:33-0:21:41	Karras visits his mother in her apartment		Full shot of Karras entering apartment	“Istoria mou, amartia mou (My story, My sin)” by R. Sakellariou and “Paramythaki Mou” by M. Loizos and L. Papadopoulos, performed by G. Kalatzis	Greek language, radio static		“Istoria mou, amartia mou (My story, My sin)” by Rite Sakellariou and “Paramythaki Mou” by Manos Loizos and Lefteris Papadopoulos, performed by Giannis Kalatzis	White noise used to create tension, mystery
12	0:25:33-0:26:40	Karras speaks to Tom at crowded pub about questioning his faith and his mother	“She’s alone. I never should have left her” “I think I’ve lost my faith	Tracking shot of Karras walking from the bar to a table	“Rambli n’ Man” By Allman Brother Band	Lyrics tell story of man unable to fulfill expectations within ‘traditional’ family conventions		“Rambli n’ Man” By Allman Brother Band plays from juke box.	

			Tom.”- Karras						
13	0:34:11- 0:34:34	Karras struggles with his mother in hospital after being put there by his uncle. Scene of Karras angrils boxing	“Why did you put her there?”- Karras	Scene transitions to medium shot of Karras punching a punching bag. Boxers are seen over his shoulder	“Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” by G. Crumb	Quiet high strings		Punching bag sounds	Unusual Tremolo glissando effect, amplified strings
14	0:34:33- 0:35:39	Car pulls up for party at MacNeils house. Intoxicated director of Chris’s film accuses Karl of being a Nazi		Establishing shot of MacNeil house, then of crowded party inside house	“Carly and Carole” by Eumir Deodato			Party ambience, voices, laughter, glasses clinking	
15	0:47:20- 0:47:33	Regan undergoes carotid angiography after doctors suspect she has lesion on her brain		Shot of Regan on table as machine moves around her, close-up of her expression		Loud percussive sounds		X-ray sounds, Regan crying.	Environmental sound serving as music
16	0:49:02	Regan slaps doctor.	“Keep away. The sow is mine.”- Regan	Close-up of Regan		Demon voice effect, Voice quality is strong, raspy and low		Slap sound, demon voice	McCambidge’s voice dubbed over Blairs, extended vocal techniques
17	0:53:01- 0:53:56	Chris driving back to house		Close-up of Chris as she drives, lights flicker inside house	String Quartet (1960) by K. Penderecki	No sense of pulse, tapping sounds, short indefinite pitches. Smooth sounds interrupted by gatecrashing thumps and thuds		Police siren	Extended technique, strings either with open hand or with fingers and tapping wood of instruments with fingertips or frog.
18	0:53:40- 0:57:45	Chris checks on Regan, closes her bedroom window and tucks her in		Medium shot covering dramaturgy	<i>Polymorphia</i> by K. Penderecki	Barely noticeable low strings			tone clusters, non-pitched sounds, indeterminate pitch
19	1:00:22- 1:02:52	Detective and	“Didn’t it happen in	Wide shot, then over-	<i>Polymorphia</i> By				

		Karras talk about death of Burke Dennings	the fall”-Karras	the-shoulder of each subject talking	K. Penderecki				
20	1:02:58-1:03:19	Regan is evaluated at hospital for her extreme behavior	“it looks like a type of disorder that’s rarely ever seen anymore, except in primitive cultures.”-Doctor	Establishing shot of hospital. Cut to Regan struggling tied to bed while supervised by team of doctors	Tubular Bells” by M. Oldfield (subtly fades in and out)			Regan screams and growls	Unusual instrumentation
21	1:05:11-1:06:49	Regan brought home from hospital. Detective examines steps outside her bedroom window. Chris finds crucifix under Regan’s pillow			<i>Cello Concerto</i> by K. Penderecki	Low suspenseful droning, tremolo, pizzicato			Tone clusters
22	1:13:08-1:14:21	Chris closes door on detective		Shot of Chris walking away from camera		Suspenseful ticking then sudden loud thump		Clock ticking, loud thump	
23	1:23:44-1:24:18	Karras walking while being watched by detective		Over-the-shoulder-shot of Karras from Detective POV	“Iraq” by J. Nitzsche	High ethereal sounds	Glass motif		Layered entries of sound achieved by rubbing rims of glasses
24	1:24:48-1:26:54	Karras speaking with Regan	“What an excellent day for an exorcism”-Regan	Karras sits of Regans bedside.	<i>Beginnings (from the wind harp)</i> by H. Bee	Quiet wind sounds, diegetic layered vocalisms		Demon voice	Extended vocal technique
25	1:29:27-1:30:36	Karras listens to tape in language lab.		A white sign above him reads “Tasukete!” translating to “Help me” in Japanese		Strangled, garbled, voices and animalistic sounds at first glance. Certain layers of mixed sound dramatically speed up or down	Recording of Regan backwards speech from previous scene		Dramatic manipulation of playback speed resembling <i>Musique concrète</i> approaches, extended vocal techniques
26	1:30:39-1:31:02	Karras runs back to MacNeil house.		Tracking shot follows him, panning from street to house	<i>Polymorphia</i> By K. Penderecki	Barely audible low droning tone clusters		Hurried footsteps, iron gate creaking	tone clusters, non-pitched sounds,

									indeterminate pitch
27	1:31:29-1:31:36	Karras looks on in horror as the words “help me” appear on Regan’s stomach		Camera zooms fast in on Regan’s stomach.	“Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects” from <i>Black Angels</i> by G. Crumb	High register string buzzing, enhancing buzzing motif	Buzzing motif	Music and buzzing motif overshadow diegetic sound	Experimental glissandi, tremolo technique, amplified strings
28	1:35:54-1:34:54	Merrin dropped off at MacNeils house		Wide shot from behind Merrin. Light from Regan’s bedroom shines spotlight on him	“Iraq” by J. Nitzsche	High ethereal sounds	Glass motif		Layered entries of sound achieved by rubbing rims of glasses
29	1:46:59-1:47:29	Karras and Merrin ascend steps to Regan’s room to begin exorcism		Several close-ups and POV shots of Regan, Karras, and Merrin in Regan’s bedroom, their breath visible	<i>Polymorphia</i> by K. Penderecki	Crashing, snarling, thumping sounds		McCambridge’s voice wailing and snarling, bed thumping on floor, cabinets and doors banging, glass breaking	tone clusters, non-pitched sounds, indeterminate pitch
30	1:53:10-1:53:30	Karras is possessed by demon, then jumps out her bedroom window.		Close up of Karras with green eyes, then POV shot from Karass’s perspective		Pigs squealing grows in intensity, glass breaking, Regan cries	Pig Motif	Window breaks, Regan screams	<i>Musique concrète</i> approach to sound effect
31	1:58:08-1:58:12	Father Dyer looks down staircase		POV then wide shot of Father Dyer looking down stairs that killed Karras and Dennings	“Tubular Bells” by M. Oldfield			No diegetic sound	Unusual instrumentation,
32	1:58:12	Ending credits		Title of movie, ending credits	<i>Fantasia for Strings</i> by Hans W. Henze	Dense, Peasant strings		No diegetic sound	

Music Department:  
Eugene Marks ...  
Jack Nitzsche ...

Music Editor (as Gene Marks)  
Composer of additional music



London Symphony Orchestra ...	Music performers
Ken Nordine ...	Vocal coach for Linda Blair
Lalo Schifrin ...	Composer: unused music
 Sound Department:	
Fred J. Brown ...	Sound effects editor
Jean-Louis Ducarme ...	Sound: Iraq sequence
Robert Fine ...	Special sound effects
Gonzalo Gavira ...	Special sound effects
Robert Knudson ...	Dubbing mixer (as Buzz Knudson)
Hal Landaker ...	Sound consultant
Ron Nagle ...	Special sound effects
Christopher Newman ...	Sound editor
Randy Nite ...	Sound editor
Doc Siegel ...	Special sound effects
Ross Taylor ...	Sound effects editor
Kitty Malone ...	Foley artist (uncredited)
James Nelson ...	Supervising sound editor (uncredited)
Ken Nordin ...	Special sound effect (uncredited)

## CASE STUDY 2: *THE SHINING*

Based on the novel by Stephen King and carrying its title, *The Shining* terrified audiences at its 1980 premiere. Directed by Stanley Kubrick, the film very much owes its scary qualities to the innovative employment of music by György Ligeti, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Béla Bartók as well as newly commissioned music from Wendy Carlos. *The Shining* is considered by many critics to be the pinnacle of Kubrick's success in marrying narrative, moving images and music.<sup>252</sup> In this chapter, I will briefly touch on the film's background before discussing its innovative implementation of existing and commissioned music. I will finally assess its impact on experimental scoring approaches in horror cinema.

### I. The Uncanny Child and The Cultural Crisis of the 1980s

Horror had become exceedingly a culturally significant and marketable genre during the late 1970–80s. Films like Stuart Rosenberg's *The Amityville Horror* (1979) achieved commercial success with its continuation of familial, domestic horror. Robin Wood called the horror film of the 1980s the "most important of all American genres and perhaps the most progressive, even in its overt nihilism-in a period of extreme cultural crisis and disintegration, which alone offers the possibility of radical chance and rebuilding."<sup>253</sup> Stephen King, in particular, had become very popular at this point in his

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<sup>252</sup> Christine Lee Gengaro, *Listening to Stanley Kubrick: The Music in His Films* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 179.

<sup>253</sup> Quoted from Wood's "The American Nightmare." See David Roche, *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s: Why Don't They Do It Like They Used To?* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 21.

career due to several successful novel adaptations such as Brian De Palma's *Carrie* (1976) and Tobe Hooper's television treatment of *Salem's Lot* (1979). This may have motivated Warner Bros. executive John Calley to send a copy of King's *The Shining* to Kubrick, who was searching for material for his next film. Leading up to *The Shining*, Kubrick had achieved critical success with *Barry Lyndon* which had won best picture at the Oscars and Kubrick best director.<sup>254</sup> The film is often praised for its technical achievements like its candlelight photography. However, while the film was financially successful in Europe, it did not generate the same box office returns in the U.S. For his next project, Kubrick intended to create something more commercially viable while also allowing room for audiovisual experimentation. For this, King's *The Shining* captured his attention. Kubrick enlisted novelist Diane Johnson to adapt the novel into a screenplay. The novel fell in line with his previous work where he had portrayed the dark side of the human personality. He stated,

there's something inherently wrong with the human personality. There's an evil side to it. One of the things that horror stories can do is to show us the archetypes of the unconscious: we can see the dark side without having to confront it directly.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Vincent LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (New York: Donald I. Fine Books, 1997), 408.

<sup>255</sup> LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick*, 412.

Like *The Exorcist* and *The Omen*, *The Shining* focused on the conventional American family unit and the threat of the ‘uncanny child.’ In her essay “The Child and Adult Trauma in American Horror of the 1980s,” Jessica Balanzategui argues that the rise of the uncanny child is a product of wavering sociocultural stability, the energy crisis, stagflation and unstable international relationships. U.S. President Jimmy Carter acknowledged such issues in his “Crisis of Confidence” speech in 1979. Balanzategui explains that these conditions fostered more consideration of childhood and what it represents. She notes that the child represented a justification for the family’s continued ideological centrality. But women demanding more economic independence, rising divorce rates, increasing numbers of LGBT parents challenged the previous family dynamic. She argues that the “uncanny child” threatened that ideological centrality during this period. *The Shining* exemplifies this threat. Here, the “uncanny child” unsettles the patriarch’s power and challenges long established ideological structures.<sup>256</sup>

The film portrays a complete disintegration of the family unit as it follows Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson), an aspiring writer and recovering alcoholic, who interviews for a position as off-season caretaker for the remote Overlook Hotel nestled in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains. Jack’s employers reluctantly warn him that the previous caretaker, Delbert Grady, killed his wife and twin daughters with an axe before killing himself as a result of “cabin fever.” Jack accepts the position regardless, hoping to use the isolation to write. Jack’s son Danny (Danny Lloyd) has a premonition about the hotel revealing he has

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<sup>256</sup> Jessica Balanzategui, *The Uncanny Child in Transnational Cinema: Ghosts of Futurity at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 40–41.

psychic powers. He receives visions and messages from what he calls “Tony,” believed by his parents to be an imaginary friend. Jack, Danny, and Jack’s wife, Wendy (Shelley Duval) move with him to the hotel. The family is given a tour where they meet head chef Dick Hallorann (Benjamine Sherman Crothers or Scatman Crothers) who communicates with Danny telepathically, revealing he shares the same psychic capabilities. Hallorann calls this ability “shining” and explains that the hotel itself has a “shine” and warns Danny to never go into room 237.

As months pass, Danny spends his days playing in the hotel’s vast hedge maze with Wendy or riding his tricycle through the hotels seemingly endless hallways. Danny has several run ins with ghostly twin girls. Jack sits at his typewriter while his sanity slowly deteriorates as the weeks pass, becoming gradually more aggressive and belligerent with Wendy. Danny reaches out to Hallorann for help through the shining. Meanwhile, Jack visits the hotel ballroom called the Gold Room to find it hosting a crowded ball, the attendees dressed in 1920s fashion. Here, he meets Delbert Grady (Philip Stone) who tells Jack that Danny has been reaching out to Hallorann through telepathy and that Jack must “correct them.” Danny and Wendy are split up as Jack chases his family through the hotel wielding an axe. Hallorann travels to the hotel to check on the family but is murdered by a deranged Jack. Wendy tries to escape the hotel, encountering ghosts and surreal images like blood gushing from an elevator. Jack chases Danny into the hedge maze where he is able to mislead Jack. Danny and Wendy find each other and escape in Hallorann’s snow-cat while Jack freezes to death in the maze. The ending scene zooms in on a photograph framed on the hotel’s wall depicting Jack standing amid party goers in the Gold Room dated July 4, 1921.

The film represents a milestone for horror cinema and filmmaking in general. Many scene transitions use either a dissolve effect or are separated with a title card to show the passage of time. This effect is always placed in the middle of strange dialogue or dramatic action which effectively builds tension. In her review for *The New York Times*, Janet Maslin states, “*The Shining* may be the first movie that ever made its audience jump with a title that simply says ‘Tuesday’.”<sup>257</sup>

In addition, *The Shining*'s production aligned with the technical innovations such as the Steadicam which developed in the early 1970s. This innovation gave the film fluidity and a sense of spatial vastness as well as a more intimate way of inhabiting scenes. In *The Shining* the Steadicam was also used on a low mode rig or with the rig turned upside down to allow the camera to glide across the floor. This is most notable in scenes where Danny rides his tricycle through the Overlook's hallways. Camera operator and inventor of the Steadicam, Brown developed a “two-hand technique” where one hand manipulates the arm of the Steadicam that controls height and positions while the other hand pans or tilts. The freedom of camera movement creates a ghostly effect which the film uses to its advantage.<sup>258</sup> It is also important to note the contributions from art director Roy Walker and production designer Ken Adam who worked to recreate many

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<sup>257</sup> Janet Maslin, “Screen: Nicholson and Shelley Duvall in Kubrick's *The Shining*,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 1980.

<sup>258</sup> The Steadicam was invented by Garret Brown and allowed the camera to absorb unsteady movement from the operator without the limitations of a dolly track. See Christine Gengaro, *Listening to Stanley Kubrick: the Music in His Films* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 180.

different architectural elements from other hotels to create the Overlook.<sup>259</sup> This effect is strengthened by the use of experimental music.

## II. Foreground Music: Sound Worlds in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*

Throughout his career, Kubrick has established a reputation of recontextualizing existing music to create sophisticated synthesis between visual and auditory elements in his films. Kubrick's music choices seemed to have become more precise and effective by the time he started production on *The Shinning*. In Kubrick's films, existing music is often unobstructed by dialogue or sound effects, making the music the most prominent aspect of the scene.<sup>260</sup> It is customary for music to be subordinate to visuals and dialogue so as to provide "unconscious" information to the viewer. Kubrick in comparison puts music in the foreground so the scene seems to become product of the music itself and guides the protagonist's actions. The mise-en-scène and music enrich one another. For Kubrick's films mise-en-scène originates from the chosen music.<sup>261</sup> He designed his films around the music instead of the industry standard of letting composers fit music to the mostly finished film or the director's cut. Kubrick accomplishes this in *The Shining* by constructing it in the same manner silent films were designed, giving music a central role.<sup>262</sup> In his article *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television*, K. J. Donnelly

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<sup>259</sup> Vincent LoBrutto, 417.

<sup>260</sup> James Naremore. *On Kubrick* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 141.

<sup>261</sup> Elisa Pezzotta. *Stanley Kubrick Adapting the Sublime* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 85.

<sup>262</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks*, 141.

argues that “film music is commonly thought of as ‘background music’ but in Stanley Kubrick’s adaption of Stephen King’s novel *The Shining*, the music would undoubtedly be better described as ‘foreground music’.”<sup>263</sup>

Such films as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and *The Shining* seem to make some of the chosen music a character in itself.<sup>264</sup> Donnelly stated that music is one of the stars of the film as the use of concert music makes it “too strong and obtrusive to be simply urbane background music.” He explains that,

The music manifests a dimension in its own right, making for a general ambience of unease ... at times it is almost as if the images are emanating from the music. This is most evident in sequences containing musical excerpts of substantial duration, where the dynamics of the action (dialogue, movement, editings) appear to match the dynamic development of the music (rhythm, tempo, intensity, sound quality).<sup>265</sup>

*The Shining* achieve this with its mainly two contrasting sound worlds. The first can be described as non-diegetic music that represents Jack’s descent into madness. This music includes movement III from Béla Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and*

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<sup>263</sup> K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: BFI, 2005), 37.

<sup>264</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks*, 142.

<sup>265</sup> Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 45–46.



*Celesta* (1936), György Ligeti's *Lontano* (1967), and Krzysztof Penderecki's *Polymorphia* (1962), *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* (1966), *De Natura Sonoris No. 2* (1971), "Ewangelia" and "Kanon Paschy" from his liturgical composition *Utrenja* (1971), and *The Awakening of Jacob* (1974). Kubrick also commissioned music created by electronic music composer Wendy Carlos and produced by Rachel Elkind. Their sound world focuses on timbral experimentation. In circa 1940, Cage wrote, "whereas in the past, the point of disagreement has been between dissonance and consonance, it will be, in the immediate future, between noise and so-called musical sounds."<sup>266</sup> This point has been explored in different contexts before and during this period.<sup>267</sup> Since *The Exorcist*, which Kubrick was initially asked to direct, many mainstream films concentrated on implementing "noise" and unusual sounds non-diegetically to score disturbing or shocking scenes. Films like David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), a favorite of Kubrick's, created a score made up of sounds drawn from various experiments with recording equipment and recorded industrial sounds.<sup>268</sup> Like *The Exorcist* and *Eraserhead*, Kubrick's repertoire of modernist and experimental music deploys unusual timbres and

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<sup>266</sup> John Cage, "The Future of Music: Credo," *Music Journal* 20, no. 1 (1940), 45.

<sup>267</sup> One can argue that mainstream audiences were being gradually more exposed to a larger range of timbres. 'Noise' music genres like noise rock and industrial music started to become more mainstream. Artists like Merzbow who was inspired by Dada, and popular American artists like Lou Reed experimented with noise. See the latter's *Metal Machine Music* from 1975. In the concert hall, composers experimented with timbre through acoustic instruments. Frances-Marie Uitti, for instance, opened string instruments up to new sounds with her two-bow technique. Another example is the harmonic glissando effects used by Crumb in such works as *Vox Balaenae* (1971). See Frances-Marie Uitti, "Two Bows," <http://uitti.org/Two%20Bows.html>.

<sup>268</sup> See Mark Richardson and David Lynch "David Lynch," *Pitchfork*, August 6, 2012, <https://pitchfork.com/features/interview/8910-david-lynch/>.

textures in such a way that they blend the boundaries between music and sound effect which will be explored throughout this chapter.<sup>269</sup>

For the second sound world, Kubrick drew on light, dance music from popular songs such as Henry Hall and the Glenagles Hotel Band's "Home" (1932), Jack Hylton and his Orchestra's "Masquerade" (1932), and Harry M. Woods, Jimmy Campbell, and Reg Connelly's 1930's tunes "It's All Forgotten Now" (1934), and "Midnight, the Stars and You" (1934) performed by Ray Noble and his Orchestra.

Kubrick collaborated with music editors Ray Lovejoy, who had worked on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and Gordon Stainforth to select excerpts and incorporate them into the film. Stainforth had no prior experience in film editing and was initially Lovejoy's assistant editor when working on *The Shining* but took over after Lovejoy became ill. Despite his little experience, Stainforth was treated by Kubrick as if he were an established film editor and he had known him for years.<sup>270</sup>

### III. "Midnight, the Stars and You"

For the light and pleasant music of the second sound world—which functions as an empathetic music—of the second sound world, Jan Harlon asked Warner Bros. executive Rudi Fehr for a list of popular songs from 1920–35 during the pre-production phase.<sup>271</sup> The song "Midnight the Stars and You" underscores Jack's visits to the Gold

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<sup>269</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks*, 137.

<sup>270</sup> "Secrets of *The Shining*," BBC Radio 4 Film Program at 16:00 on Thu 11 Apr 2019, 13:19–39:36.

<sup>271</sup> Gengaro, 185.

Room where a 1920s party is in full swing. The song first, establishes a historical feel. Additionally, Donnelly argues that, “these songs appear as an embodiment of memory—not necessarily our personal memory but more a collective memory of some sort.”<sup>272</sup> Indeed, this song acts as a character in itself and embodies the ghosts of the past. Donnelly further states that this popular dance music is used as the direct representation of the hotel’s evil.<sup>273</sup> The song appears in the final shot of the film which depicts Jack in a black and white photograph in the hotel hallway with Jack waving amid the party in the Gold Room at cue 33.<sup>274</sup> These photographs, in association with these songs, are seen in the background throughout the film’s more sublime moments, reminding the viewer that the family is surrounded by these ghosts. The singer of this recording, Al Bowlly is considered to be one of the pioneers of ‘crooning,’ a smooth style of singing with a greater dynamic range. The song’s lyrics describe a night of dancing under the stars that the protagonist will always remember. The song was chosen at the last moment of dubbing and its inclusion was not planned initially. Stainforth stated, “it also had the feeling of someone finally coming home to his destiny.”<sup>275</sup> It is also noteworthy that the songs “It’s All Forgotten Now” and “Home” are used while Jack and Delbert speak in the

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<sup>272</sup> Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 50.

<sup>273</sup> Donnelly, 52.

<sup>274</sup> “Midnight the Stars and You” occurs in Cue 17 (1:22:22–1:31:37) and Cue 33 (2:19:46–2:23:14).

<sup>275</sup> “Midnight the Stars, and You” actually dates from the decade after the actual ballroom event, but Kubrick decided to overlook this contingency error and Stainforth noted that nothing else seemed to fit as well. See Gordon Stainforth, s.v. “*The Shining* Music-Introductory Note” <https://www.gordonstainforth.co.uk/shining-music-intro>.

bathroom. They are muffled as it is implied they are coming from another room. The song seems to function as off-screen psycho-diegetic music and reflects Jack and Grady's dialogue. For example, Grady states that he has no memory of killing his family while "It's All Forgotten Now" begins. "Masquerade" by Jack Hylton and His Orchestra is used once when Jack hears muffled music, turns the corner and sees streamers and balloons strewn across the hallway leading to the Gold Room as if a party is dwindling down.<sup>276</sup> The surprisingly light swing era tunes offers a stark contrast to the prior eerie and terrifying sonic landscape that Kubrick and Stainforth created. As discussed in chapter 2, this music enhances the frightening dramaturgy through contrast.

#### IV. Experimental Cues by Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind

In contrast to the crooning early twentieth century music, the music and sound effect provided by Carlos and Elkind enhance the film through electro-acoustic means. Prior to *The Shining*, Carlos had hit platinum sales status for her LP with her own Moog synthesizer arrangements of selected works by Bach, *Switched on Bach* (1968), which won three Grammy Awards and brought the synthesizer into the mainstream and her subsequent album *Sonic Seasonings* (1972) anticipated environmental ambient forms of new age music.<sup>277</sup> Carlos describes Elkind as her "silent" partner from 1967–80. Elkind

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<sup>276</sup> "Masquerade" by Jack Hylton and His Orchestra occurs at Cue 16 (1:21:00–1:21:27), "It's All Forgotten Now" by Ray Noble and his Orchestra occurs at Cue 18 (1:29:10–1:31:34) and "Home" by Henry Hall and the Gleneagles Hotel Band occurs at Cue 19 (1:29:10–1:31:34).

<sup>277</sup> Wendy Carlos, "Biographical Notes," *Wendy Carlos*, <http://www.wendycarlos.com/biog.html>.

had worked for Goddard Lieberson of Columbia Records and been an active performing artist and jazz singer with some classical background before working with Carlos.<sup>278</sup>

Kubrick had asked Carlos and Elkind to come up with musical ideas based on King's novel before shooting the film. Many of these cues did not make it into the film as Carlos stated, "we were working with the material that was in the book and trying to make music that fit the mood of a sort of updated gothic novel, in any case. And of course, the stylization that came out from the filming was not present in the book. and so, we failed in our attempt. Which is why there is a great deal of other music in the film."<sup>279</sup> The cues Carlos and Elkind output illustrates an experimental approach to timbre. Many of these cues harken back to The Barrons *Heavenly Menagerie* and Stockhausen's piece *Gesang der Jünglinge* with their use of sounds derived from both acoustic and electronic sources. Some of these cues feature vocal effects created by Elkind. These cues are titled "small high shrieks," "vocal glissandi," and "whisperings," the latter of which is comprised of unintelligible voices and vocalizations that are mixed so that they are experienced out of phase from both left and right speakers. Other cues revisit Cowell's string piano pieces such as *Aeolian Harp* (1923) and *The Banshee* (1925) by rubbing on piano strings.<sup>280</sup> Carlos's cue entitled "The Rocky Mountains" features a solo on the Circon, a homemade instrument invented by Carlos that she states is "sort of a precise

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<sup>278</sup> Wendy Carlos, "Rachel Elkind-Tourre," *Wendy Carlos*, <http://www.wendycarlos.com/rachel.html>.

<sup>279</sup> Gengaro, 187.

<sup>280</sup> Gengaro, 189.

Theremin, something you can play in exact tuning, although it requires a lot of practice.”<sup>281</sup> However, only three cues made it into the theatrical cut of the film. These include: “The Shining (featuring the “Dies Irae” melody),” “Rocky Mountains,” and “Shining/Heartbeats.” These cues are all non-diegetic and are effectively used to establish mood.

The most culturally significant contribution is the opening “Dies Irae” theme in “The Shining” cue. The “Dies Irae,” meaning “day of wrath,” is a plainchant melody on the opening words of the Latin hymn on the Last judgment. The cue appears only at the start of the film and establishes a sense of foreboding.<sup>282</sup> In his chapter “Rehearing *The Shining*: Musical Undercurrent in the Overlook Hotel,” David Code states, “it is easy to see the “Dies Irae” as a particularly apt musical “overture for a film whose structure, as delineated by title cards, focuses on a single “Day of Wrath (“WEDNESDAY”) during which the axe-wielding Jack-like the judging God in the chant- murderously tries to “correct” his wife and son.”<sup>283</sup> Carlos had introduced Kubrick to the most famous use of the “Dies Irae” in Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) which strongly affected him. Carlos remembered that he must have listened to the piece more than a hundred times. The cue begins with the first two phrases of the chant on the Polymoog synthesizer, holding the last note of the second phrase before repeating. At the end of the

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<sup>281</sup> Wendy Carlos, “Rediscovering Lost Scores volume one,” *Wendy Carlos*, <http://www.wendycarlos.com/+rls1.html>.

<sup>282</sup> “The Shining (featuring the “Dies Irae” melody)” is used at Cue 1 (0:00:14–0:03:04).

<sup>283</sup> David Code, “Rehearing the Shining: Musical Undercurrent in the Overlook Hotel,” in *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, edited by Neil Lerner (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 135.

phrase Elkind adds embellishments with autoharp strings and ghostly vocalizations. Visually, the film opens with a helicopter shot gilding over water between two mountains. The camera approaches a yellow car winding up the mountains and follows it to the Overlook Hotel. The camera work here complements the Steadicam while illustrating the remoteness of the location. Carlos' realization of the "Dies Irae" emphasizes the camera work with its smooth synth sound quality but still surprises audiences with its strange echoing vocal flourishes and the twangy autoharp sounds. Donnelly calls the opening music "at heart medieval filtered through hi-tech modern."<sup>284</sup>

The "Rocky Mountains" cue also emphasizes the strangeness of the scene as the Torrance family drive up to the Overlook shown via a helicopter shot.<sup>285</sup> The mood is tense as the family casually mentions dark subjects such as The Donner party and cannibalism. Jack's tone and body language is already visibly more passive aggressive. The cue emphasizes this with a low note on synthesizer that moves down by fifths. Carlos added more voices forming a cluster of sounds towards the end of the cue.

The most frequently used cue is "Shining/Heartbeats" which occurs a total of three times.<sup>286</sup> The cue almost functions as sound effect and is meant to illustrate what 'shining' sounds like. On these three occasions the cue is highlighting either Danny or Hallorann using the shining. It features a high-pitched drone accompanied by heartbeats

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<sup>284</sup> Donnelly, 41.

<sup>285</sup> Carlos's "Rocky Mountain" cue occurs in Cue 3 (0:17:43–0:19:52).

<sup>286</sup> Carlos "Shining/Heartbeats" cue occurs at Cue 13 (1:10:59–1:16:15), Cue 14 (1:11:53–1:16:15), Cue 15 (1:19:14–1:20:36), and Cue 20 (1:31:37–1:38:44).

and intermittent vocal effects recalling the opening of the “Dies Irae” cue.<sup>287</sup> Heartbeat sound effects and certain drone sounds have been used in horror films as early as Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) and create suspense by imitating a physiological response to anxiety or fear as stated in Chapter 2. The sustained high-pitched effect, evoking “shining,” is also reminiscent in Ligeti’s *Lontano*. The additional music by Carlos and Elkind effectively blends with many unusual timbres culled from experimental and avant-garde existing music.

#### V. Otherworldly Sounds in Works by Bartók, Ligeti, and Penderecki

In contrast to the popular tunes “Midnight the Stars and You” and “Masquerade,” Kubrick employs music by Bartók, Ligeti, and Penderecki, alongside Carlos’s sounds to evoke the uncanny and to underline the terrifying scenes of *The Shining*. As mentioned before, Kubrick worked with music editors Lovejoy and Stainforth to marry borrowed music and imagery. It is important to note that Kubrick did not consider the history of the repertoire or any critical analysis of these pieces. He wanted options so he allowed Stainforth to score different versions of the scenes without his immediate supervision and then choose from these versions the materials he felt were the most appropriate as cue.<sup>288</sup> Here, I will discuss several major borrowings before examining how Kubrick and Stainforth’s sound collage interacts with the film’s climax.

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<sup>287</sup> Gengaro, 196.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.



V. a. Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*

One of the most frequently used pieces in *The Shining* is Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936). Commissioned by the Swiss new music patron Paul Sacher, it is comprised of four movements and distinguished by neoclassical elements, dissonant harmony, and innovative string and percussion sounds. Excerpts from its third movement, "Adagio," are used three times.<sup>289</sup> The movement exemplifies what Bartók scholars refer to as his "night music" style. While Bartók never defined this specifically, it is generally a slow-movement sonic continuity that evokes eerie sounds of imaginary nature at night. David Cooper describes it as "textural music which recalls Debussy's subtle imagery."<sup>290</sup> This effect is created with celesta, harp, violin, and timpani glissandi as well as percussive xylophone accents and reiterations of the fugue theme introduced in the first movement of the piece. The movement's form is palindromic and comprised of six sections, ABCCBA. These eerie, dream-like sounds effectively enhance certain surreal and dark qualities of the film. Take, for instance, its second appearance at cue 7. The cue begins here with a xylophone solo playing one note repeatedly while getting faster before slowing back down again. This opening is heard as the Steadicam follows Danny on his tricycle. Diegetic sustained sounds are heard as Danny's tricycle rides over different surfaces like carpet and hardwood. The piece then interweaves the fugue subject. Rhythmically accelerating ascending and descending violin glissandi recall

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<sup>289</sup> Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* occurs in Cue 6 (0:38:14–0:40:31), Cue 7 (0:41:21–0:43:54), Cue 10 (0:52:45–0:59:18).

<sup>290</sup> David Cooper, *Bartók, Concerto for Orchestra* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13.

the use of the Theremin in mid-century science fiction and horror. Trilling violins and high-pitched violin lines underscores the moment when Danny stops to try to open room 237. Almost subliminal shots of the Grady twins are seen as unusual, timpani glissando enters. The scene dissolves to a wide shot of Jack at the typewriter with the reiteration of the fugue theme as if it is declaring the end of one scene and the start of another. On the walls bookending Jack, black and white photos from the past are displayed. Ascending and descending arpeggios with harp, piano, and celesta are heard alongside typing sound before a shocking cymbal crash is synchronized with Jack loudly tearing out paper. The cue always ends with the cymbal crash which is often synchronized with a title card showing the passage of time and establishing the day of the following scene. This creates apprehension as the audience can only guess how the drama has escalated between this scene and the following. It is enhanced by the fact that the audience is also often denied a musical or dramatic resolution.<sup>291</sup> This scene exemplifies Donnelly's statement that the action, dialogue, movement, editing appears to match the development of the music's rhythm, tempo, intensity, and sound quality.<sup>292</sup>

The piece is also used to create suspense and tension in seemingly innocent scenes, distorting the "ideal" family dynamic of the time.<sup>293</sup> In the first occurrence it accompanies Wendy and Danny as they explore the hedge maze and the scene cuts to

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<sup>291</sup> Some viewers may remember this excerpt from its use in *The Vampira Show* (1954–55). The repeated programming of the work may have conditioned audiences to associate it with the bizarre and alien aspects of film.

<sup>292</sup> K.J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television*, 45–46.

<sup>293</sup> Gordon Stainforth, s.v. "The Shining Music-Introductory Note," <https://www.gordonstainforth.co.uk/shining-music-intro>.

Jack throwing a rubber ball around inside the hotel and looming over the model of maze which dissolves to an overhead shot of Wendy and Danny in the maze as if Jack is watching them. The ball hitting the wall is synchronized with the xylophone. Stainforth states that Kubrick originally did not want to add music to the scene where Jack looms over the model of the maze. Stainforth pitched the idea of adding Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* and Kubrick liked it. Code points out that there is a parallel between the imagery of the maze and musical syntax with the piece's symmetrical and palindromic form here.<sup>294</sup> Dissonant chords in the muted strings sustained with tremolo add a sinister tone to Jack's gaze before it is disrupted by a 'TUESDAY' title card. Another example is the music's final use during dialogue between Danny and Jack. Bartók's descending and ascending violin glissandi, violin tremolo and meandering solo violin line gives Jack's dialogue a menacing tone in Cue 10.<sup>295</sup> The audience also hears piano punctuation, xylophone rattle, timpani glissando, and the fugue subject from movement one during this dialogue:

“Would you ever hurt mom and me?” Danny asks.

“Did your mother say that?” Jack says.

“No” Danny responds.

“I love you Danny ... I would never do anything to hurt you.” Jack promises.

Again, descending and ascending harp and celesta arpeggios are joined by tremolo strings and gradually move upwards chromatically while increasing in intensity toward the

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<sup>294</sup> David Code, “Rehearing *The Shining*,” 137–139.

<sup>295</sup> Cue 10 (0:52:45–0:59:18).

startling cymbal crash. This crash is visually accompanied by the “WEDNESDAY” title card. This, again, effectively gives the audience the sense of escalating dread.

#### V. b. Ligeti: *Lontano*

As stated previously, Kubrick had used Ligeti’s music already in *2001*. Ligeti had become a highly celebrated composer by the premiere of *The Shining*.<sup>296</sup> Ligeti’s *Lontano* (1967) is employed three times throughout *The Shining*.<sup>297</sup> Written for a large orchestra, the piece itself is around ten to ten minutes and forty seconds long. The cue deployed, always begins in the middle of the movement, around m. 43 and fades out around m. 60.

*Lontano*, meaning from far away, musically suggests both spatial and temporal distance. Ligeti wrote to Ove Nordwall that he associated musical sounds with crystals and the stained-glass windows of the Sainte-Chapelle. He also wrote that he had associated the work with Albrecht Altdorfer’s painting *Die Alexanderschlacht* after embarking on the piece.<sup>298</sup> The painting depicts the gradual brightening of the sun rising. The piece seems to capture this effect through its subtle crescendo and opalescent quality.

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<sup>296</sup> Ligeti was the recipient of the Great Austrian State prize and the *Praemium Imperiale* of Tokyo. He had been named an honorary senator of the Hamburg Music Academy and was an authoritative member of many other professional institutions like the League of Austrian Composers. See Constantin Floros and Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch, *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-Garde and Postmodernism* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2014), 14.

<sup>297</sup> Ligeti’s *Lontano* occurs at Cue 4 (0:21:25–0:22:22) Danny plays darts in the games room and sees the Grady twins, Cue 5 (0:27:22–0:28:08); Hallorann shows Danny and Wendy the freezer and communicates with Danny telepathically, and Cue 8 (0:46:15–0:48:16) where Jack is typing and Wendy tries to use the phone.

<sup>298</sup> Floros, and Bernhardt-Kabisch, *György Ligeti*, 30.

Ligeti suggested distance through high and low registers. What is heard in this excerpt is a high sustained harmonic that stems from muted violins and then a very low growling sustained pitch from contrabassoon and contrabass clarinet. Both instruments enter with an imperceptible attack which crescendos to *mf* before *diminuendoing*. The cue here, alludes to Carlos' "Heartbeats" cue which serves as a sonic signal for "shining." For instance, at Cue 4 Danny has a vision of the Grady twins accompanied by this sustained high tone and low drone. As explored previously, high or low-pitched drones are frequently used in horror film music to achieve suspense as these sustained pitches commonly lead to a stinger designed to shock the audience as stated previously.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, many viewers expect the sustained pitches to progress into a melody. Here, this is denied along with a conventional harmonic resolution. The texture, then, grows denser as it is extended by sounds from the tubas, trombones, double basses and three more imperceptible and successive violin entries. The instrumental attacks are barely registered as entrances and bow retakes are staggered and collectively evoke Schaeffer's "complex mass." The piece uses conventional meters and bar-lines. However, Ligeti notes in the score, "the bar-lines serve only as a means of synchronization; bar-lines and beats never mean an accentuation; the music must flow smoothly, and accents (with a very few, precisely indicated exceptions) are foreign to the piece."<sup>300</sup> The piece's

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<sup>299</sup> Julia Heimerdinger, "Music and Sound in the Horror Film & Why Some Modern and Avant-Garde Music Lends Itself to it so well," *Seiltanz. Beiträge zur Musik der Gegenwart* 4 (2012), 3.

<sup>300</sup> György Ligeti, *Lontano für grosses Orchester*" (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1969).

morphing textures also sonically complement the use of the Steadicam with its subtle and smooth sound quality.

*Lontano* exemplifies Ligeti's concept of micropolyphony, which he developed from his experience working with white noise and simple sound wave forms in subtractive and additive synthesis during his time at the Westdeutsche Rundfunk electronic music studio in Cologne during the 1950s. After World War II, many composers felt that Western compositional techniques developed in the nineteenth century did not provide enough creative potential with respect to timbre. Electronic music in contrast had a larger range of sonic possibilities. Here, Ligeti encountered Stockhausen and Gottfried Michael König who helped him realize his musical ideas for electronic composition. The composers at WDR felt that timbre could shape the form and structure of a piece instead of just complementing it.<sup>301</sup> Ligeti applied these ideas first in the second movement of his *Apparitions* (1959) which deviates from the conventional canonic technique of voices entering successively. Here they enter simultaneously. In this type of compositional procedure, the individual lines are less important than the overall effect of a gradually changing texture. Ligeti's morphing micropolyphonic textures feature an immense number of voices that create dense blocks of sound and changing timbres. Ligeti created the term "micropolyphony" to hint at the inability to hear conventional aspects of texture. Ligeti explained,

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<sup>301</sup> Jennifer Iverson, "The Emergence of Timbre: Ligeti's Synthesis of Electronic and Acoustic Music in *Atmosphères*," *Twentieth-Century Music* 7, no. 1 (2010), 66–67.

I called this type of composition micropolyphony because individual rhythmic processes in the polyphonic network dip below the line where they become blurred. The texture is so dense that the individual voices are no longer perceptible as such and only the fabric as a whole is apprehensible as a superordinate form.<sup>302</sup>

Tone clusters had been used before. Charles Ives's *Majority* (1921) and Cowell's *The Tides of Manaunaun* (1911) are good examples. In his article "The Genesis of the Technique of Canonic Sound Mass in Ligeti's *Lontano*," Robert Rollin states that Ligeti's sound mass techniques differ greatly from Cowell. In his view, Ligeti's canonic sound masses "themselves become evolving textural formation by means of an ever-changing polyphonic web."<sup>303</sup> *Lontano* can also be compared to works such as Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzon per Sonar Septimi et Octavi Toni* (1557) written for three separate, four-part choruses or Thomas Tallis's *Spem in Allium* composed for forty separate voices divided into eight choirs of five parts each.<sup>304</sup> *The Shining* furthers the employment of these textures instigated in horror by *The Exorcist* which has fascinatingly helped establish a new scoring standard for horror.

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<sup>302</sup> Floros and Bernhardt-Kabisch, *György Ligeti*, 89.

<sup>303</sup> Robert Rollin, "The Genesis of the Technique of Canonic Sound Mass in Ligeti's 'Lontano'," *Indiana Theory Review* 2, no. 2 (1979), 23.

<sup>304</sup> Bach's *Passion According to St. Mathew* also creates a similar sound mass effect with two four-part choruses with performers moving at different speeds.

V. c. *The Shining* and the Textures and Timbres of Penderecki

While Kubrick had moved Ligeti's music in the foreground of *2001*, he also borrowed excerpts from Penderecki's music. In the *The Shining* he used Penderecki's sounds to score sublime moments. One can assume that Kubrick was interested in Penderecki's unique sound resources as they could form a sort of middle ground between musical score and sound effect in the film. Kubrick had gone so far as to initially ask Penderecki to score the film. The composer explained in an interview that he didn't have the time to score the film, but suggested what pieces of his Kubrick should use. Penderecki stated that Kubrick used many of his recommendations.<sup>305</sup>

The works Kubrick used span from 1961–74 which marks the period of Penderecki's emerging personal style, following his most experimental phase from 1956–62. Ray Robinson explains that the composer had gone as far as he could go during that phase and was at a crossroads. In his words, the solution was, “not to go forward and perhaps destroy the whole spirit of music as a result, but to gain inspiration from the past and to look back on my heritage.”<sup>306</sup> Here Penderecki used on the one hand traditional elements of form and some Gregorian chant influences and blended them with innovative layers of sounds and new sonic surfaces.<sup>307</sup> The borrowings help create fear through their

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<sup>305</sup> Louisiana Channel, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, “Krzysztof Penderecki Interview: Turning History Into Avant-Garde,” February 20, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atz2MODHe5Q>, 7:27–7:51.

<sup>306</sup> Ray Robinson, *Krzysztof Penderecki: A Guide to His Works* (Princeton, NJ: Prestige Publications, 1983), 6.

<sup>307</sup> Robinson, *Krzysztof Penderecki*, 6.



unusual textures and timbres, barely audible or loud dynamics, stingers, tone clusters, drones, and extended string techniques often associated with horror like tremolo and exaggerated glissandi as well as layered pizzicato and *col legno* sounds.

Kubrick first borrowed from Penderecki's *The Awakening of Jakob* also called *The Dream of Jakob*. Borrowings from this piece appear three times throughout the film for approximately two minutes.<sup>308</sup> Penderecki composed this short orchestral work in the summer of 1947 and it barely spans nine minutes. He was inspired by the Old Testament book of Genesis chapter 28, verse 16, which reads “and Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” In his sleep, Jacob dreams of a ladder, connecting earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending it. The work opens *lento* with low brass cluster chords which are joined by twelve ocarinas and a low F in the double-basses. The ocarinas provide a chirping background. A faint horn call is heard as if from a distance, *quasi da lontano*. The music crescendos adding tremolo and harmonic violin upward and downward glissandos before the excerpt *decrescendos* and ends *grave*.<sup>309</sup>

Its first appearance underscores our introduction to Danny and Tony. Tony shows Danny a vision, foreshadowing either the upcoming bloodshed or the hotel's violent past. Low dissonant chords that crescendo are heard alongside a low rumbling sound effect as blood is seen gushing out of a hotel elevator via a wide shot. The second occurrence of

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<sup>308</sup> *The Awakening of Jakob* occurs in Cue 2 (0:10:34–0:12:25), Cue 11 (0:59:19–1:01:12), and Cue 14 (1:11:53–1:16:15).

<sup>309</sup> Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki*, 155–56.

the excerpt accompanies an overhead shot of Danny playing in the hallway. A ball rolls into view from an offscreen source, leading Danny into room 237 and out of view. Meanwhile, Jack wakes up screaming. In a sinister reinvention of the work's context, he tells Wendy he dreamt he killed her and Danny. Jack's screaming is almost mimicked by the high glissandos on the violins which switch to low dissonant chords. Tremolo and accented tone clusters serve as stingers which are heard when he explains the dream to Wendy. The final excerpt of the work is heard when Jack finally enters room 237. The Steadicam shoots from Jack's point of view as it slowly enters the room. Here, Carlos' "Shining/Heartbeats" cue is layered on top of *The Awakening of Jakob's* opening low dissonant chords in strings and woodwinds as a woman emerges from the bathtub and kisses Jack who opens his eyes and the woman is revealed to be much older and showing grievous wounds (apparently stemming from an axe). She laughs manically and follows the viewer from Jack's perspective as he, disturbed, backs out of the room interspersed with rapid cut-aways of Danny (assumedly aware of the situation via the shining) in the family apartment. The music is empathetic and matches the tone of the scene with its dissonant chords, downward glissandos in the high strings and upward glissandos in the low strings.

Next Kubrick uses excerpts from *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* and *No. 2*. (1966), both smaller orchestral works used and under ten minutes. Their title "on the nature of sound" was inspired by the Roman Lucretius' *De rerum natura* meaning "on the nature of things."<sup>310</sup> The audience hears strings and woodwinds sustain high-pitched notes, brass

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<sup>310</sup> The treatise examines the world of Epicurus.

accents in high registers, and unexpected percussive crashes with instrumental surges upward from *De Natura Sonoris No1*. Borrowings from *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* appear twice, first when Danny encounters the Grady twins while riding his tricycle and again when Wendy runs outside to discover Jack had tampered with the snow-cat after locking him in the freezer.<sup>311</sup>

The most notable use of this borrowing is the first appearance. The cue begins around 40 seconds into the music as the viewer, via Steadicam, follows Danny riding through the hotel's hallways. The sounds of the tricycle moving over different textures is heard again. These sounds are always following a supernatural experience. At this point in the film, the viewer may have been conditioned to make this association and feel fearful. The piece's opening wind and string clusters are disrupted by short accents from the brass. The string tremolo and oscillations distort the sound, giving it a rough sound surface which complements the off-putting dramaturgy. Danny turns a corner and sees the Grady twins at the end of the hallway. This moment is synchronized with a gong at 0:49:40. The twins say, "hello, Danny" over low woodwind (bass clarinet, bassoon and contrabassoon) drones at 0:49:48. Their next line, "come and play with us," is marked by another gong stroke. The scene cuts for only a second to show the twins laying covered in blood in the hallway (it is implied this was from an axe) which is synchronized with percussion sounds. The scene cuts back and forth between this violent image and the twins asking Danny to "come and play with us forever and ever." The percussion hits are joined by sixteenth notes that crescendo upwards and create an 'uproar' effect with

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<sup>311</sup> *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* occurs at Cue 9 (0:49:19–0:51:17) and Cue 22 (1:53:31–1:54:45).

woodwind and brass. Then quasi-static bands of sound and quiet clusters juxtapose these sonorities before all string clusters crescendo while a flexatone wails (its sounds are notated as oscillograms). There are also intricate rhythmic patterns for bongos, tom-toms, woodblocks, claves, and directions to beat the piano strings with a drumstick.<sup>312</sup> The music, again, compliments the action with its synchronized musical stingers and by matching the changing textural aspects of the piece through rapid cut-aways of violent imagery.<sup>313</sup> It also enhances the strange imagery with its unusual instrumentation.

This timbral diversity is furthered in the borrowing of *De Natura Sonoris No. 2*.<sup>314</sup> While *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* calls for a large orchestra, *No. 2* is for a smaller ensemble with no woodwinds or trumpets. The piece arguably utilizes more experimental sound sources such as percussive glissandos from a cymbal rubbed with a chain, glissando tam-tam struck with a triangle beater, a thundersheet, and from crotales resonated by the ricochet of a metal beater. *De Natura Sonoris No. 2* is first used, as Danny appears injured after venturing into room 237 and Jack is woken up from his nightmare. Unusually high sustained tones and a downward sliding whistle sound which, reminiscent of science fiction's use of the Theremin, creates an otherworldly mood. This moment is depicted in Figure 5 which shows the opening texture performed by panpipes or *flauto a culisse* and flexatone playing the highest pitch possible before 14" and a twenty-five-

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<sup>312</sup> Wolfram Schwinger, 145–146.

<sup>313</sup> Hayward, 150.

<sup>314</sup> *De Natura Sonoris No. 2* appears at Cue 2 (1:01:12–1:04:16) and Cue 23 (1:57:49–2:01:06), and Cue 32 (2:18:49–2:19:46).

second-long glissando in *ppp*.<sup>315</sup> These high sustained textures and a downward sliding whistle sound occur again as Hallorann drives the snow-cat to the Overlook.

Figure 5: Krzysztof Penderecki, *De Natura Sonoris No. 2*, 11''–20''.<sup>316</sup>

Finally, Kubrick availed himself of excerpts from *Polymorphia* for 48 strings after it was first introduced to the genre of horror in *The Exorcist*. He draws from this work twice.<sup>317</sup> Sounds from *Polymorphia* are first heard when Wendy finally reads what Jack has been typing which leads to a confrontation with Jack where Wendy hits him with a bat and he tumbles down the stairs. The music repeats from the start in the following

<sup>315</sup> Schwinger, 148.

<sup>316</sup> Krzysztof Penderecki, *De Natura Sonoris No. 2, for Orchestra* (Kraków, Poland: PWM Edition, 1972).

<sup>317</sup> *Polymorphia* appears at Cue 20 (1:41:24–1:53:31) and Cue 21 (1:49:35–1:53:33).

scene in Cue 21 as she drags him half-unconscious to the freezer. While in *The Exorcist* Friedkin primarily uses the work's quiet opening textures, in *The Shining* Kubrick employs the entire twelve-minute piece during Jack and Wendy's altercation. *Polymorphia*, meaning many forms, refers to the many different sound effects created via string orchestra. Penderecki created a notation derived from oscillograms and electrocardiograms to illustrate the horizontal course of each voice depicted in Figure 6. The audience hears sliding sounds of glissandos at each performer's discretion, percussive sounds from knocking fingers on the back of the bridge, basses gliding upwards or downwards on the E-string, and ticking sounds created by twenty-four violins that are instructed to tug rapidly on their highest note repeatedly as Wendy makes the shocking discovery.<sup>318</sup> Around seven minutes into the cue, the piece reaches its most dense texture with tapping, plucking sounds, and high oscillating violins occurring simultaneously. As Wendy hits Jack, the moment is synchronized with a plucked C-major chord. The conventional chord highlights the unusual textures before and after it. This synchronized stinger is one of many that correspond with Kubrick's vision to give *The Shining* a silent film feel. The piece rebels against previous conventions of string music, with its unusual techniques and sounds, making it advantageous for horror film music which often thrived on breaking the established "rules."

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<sup>318</sup> Schwinger, 132–133.

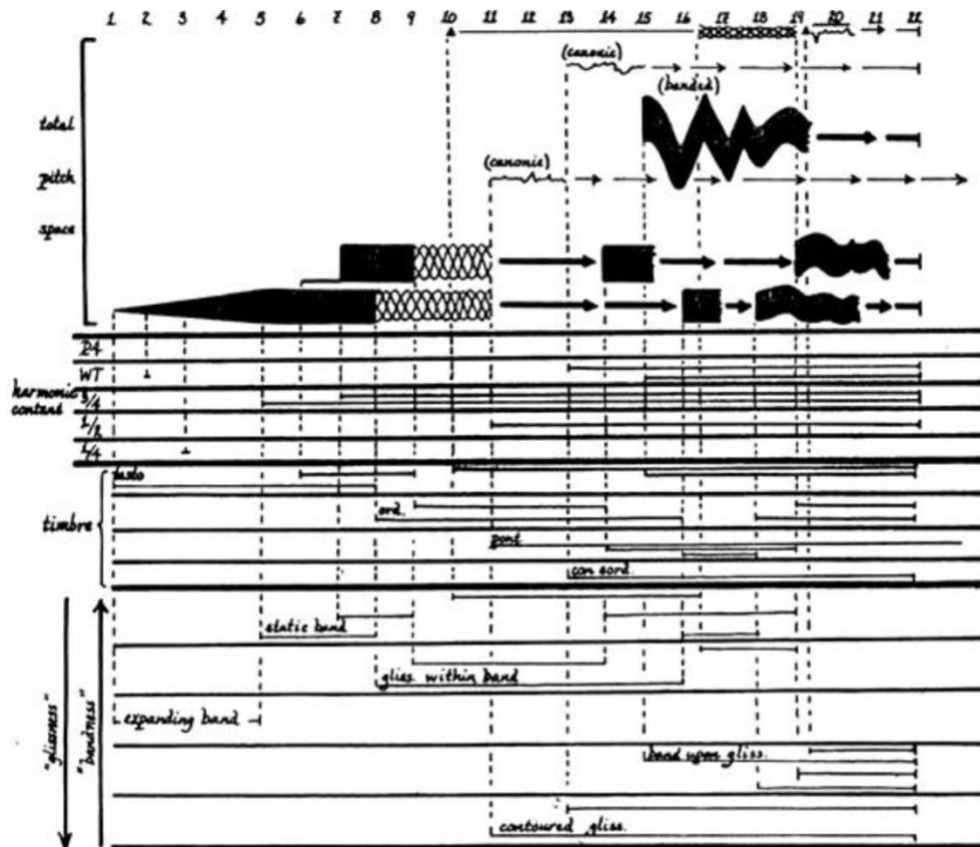


Figure 6: Krzysztof Penderecki, *Polymorphia*, opening.<sup>319</sup>

## VI. Layering Experimental Music

The most adventurous and experimental use of Penderecki's music occurs within the final thirty minutes of the film. During the climax wherein a deranged Jack chops down the family's apartment door, kills Hallorann, and pursues Danny through the hedge maze. Meanwhile, Wendy tries to escape the hotel, encountering ghosts and surreal imagery. Visually, the hotel transforms into a nightmarish, surreal locale. The color scheme switches between a bright red aesthetic from Wendy's perspective to an eerie

<sup>319</sup> Krzysztof Penderecki, *Polymorphia for 48 Stringed Instruments* (Kraków, Poland: Polskie Wydawn. Muzyczne, 1963).

blue from Danny's. As Danny and Wendy traverse this hellish environment, they are accompanied by Stainforth's robust synthesis of excerpts from pieces by Penderecki, diegetic sounds, and sound effects.<sup>320</sup>

In the climax of the film, Stainforth layers and overlaps multiple works by Penderecki on top of one another following Kubrick's initial suggestion. Kubrick wanted to have "over the top" music in order to evoke his vision of madness unfolding. After Stainforth proposed that he "used all the most dramatic stuff" in Penderecki's works, Kubrick said, "You've got to beef it up, Gordon!"<sup>321</sup> Stainforth first questioned Kubrick's idea saying, "But we can't do that-what will the musicologists say?" to which Kubrick responded, "Oh, they'll never notice!"<sup>322</sup> To satisfy Kubrick, Stainforth utilized the *Kanon for 52 Strings and Tape*, *Polymorphia*, *Utrenja II*, and *De Natura Sonoris No. 2* in this order. He also mixed loud sounds, Jack vocalizing, and wind sounds to accompany the music. Similar to such experimental works as Ives' *Central Park in the Dark* which pairs ambient strings that clash against ragtime pianos and a brass street band, Stainforth layered pieces from different contexts and thus almost created a new piece of music in itself. We will now look at three different examples from this sequence to illustrate this technique in more detail.

The first example occurs at the beginning of the sequence when Wendy reacts to the word "Murder" which Danny wrote on the door. At this exact moment, when Jack

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<sup>320</sup> Heimerdinger, 12.

<sup>321</sup> Gordon Stainforth, s.v. "The Shining Music-Introductory Note," <https://www.gordonstainforth.co.uk/shining-music-intro>.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.



starts to break the door down with an axe (2:01:04–2:04:32) an excerpt of the *Kanon for String Orchestra and Tape* is heard. The Steadicam follows the movement of the axe breaking down first the family apartment’s door and then the bathroom door as Wendy and Danny attempt to escape through the bathroom window.<sup>323</sup> The sound of Jack’s axe hacking into the wood of the door is just slightly louder than the music here. During a pause in the music where strings transition to a quiet *col legno* texture, Jack says, “Wendy, I’m Home.” The *Kanon for String Orchestra and Tape* requires, besides 52 strings, a microphone and amplifiers for its performance. The live string orchestra sounds are then simultaneously recorded and played back over two speakers placed behind the audience thus creating a canon as voices enter at regular intervals through both tape and live performance. These are techniques found in *Threnody*, tone clusters, dramatic glissando, and percussive effects, and what Schwinger describes “patterns of sound and noise.”<sup>324</sup> This approach suggests a sort of loss of instrumental identity. In his article “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” Dennis Smalley explains that “source bonding” is “the natural tendency to relate sounds to supposed sources and causes, and to relate sounds to each other because they appear to have shared or associated origins.”<sup>325</sup> Like the use of music and sound effects in *The Exorcist*, many excerpts from Penderecki’s music, especially when they are layered on top of each other, also illustrate

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<sup>323</sup> Penderecki’s *Kanon for String Orchestra and Tape* occurs at Cue 25 (2:02:32–2:04:32), Cue 27 (2:10:38–2:12:02), Cue 29 (2:13:37 –2:15:56), Cue 30 (2:16:25–2:18:19).

<sup>324</sup> Schwinger, 134–135.

<sup>325</sup> Denis Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” 2, no. 2 (1997), 110.

Smalley's concept of "remote surrogacy" where the sound source and cause become unknown and unknowable.<sup>326</sup> Kubrick may have chosen this piece because the inability to relate its sounds to exact sources can cause unease amongst mainstream audiences. This effect is furthered by Stainforth's layering.

A percussive rattle 'sting' from "Kanon Paschy" from *Utrenja II* is layered to punctuate certain actions of this sequence.<sup>327</sup> *Utrenja II* for two mixed choirs and orchestra is, according to Penderecki, like a Russian Easter oratorio. He visited old monasteries in south-east Poland, Bulgaria, and southern Russia to study original Byzantine hymn-singing. The piece itself is named after the morning devotions or early service. The first half of the piece deals with the entombment of Christ and the second half with Christ's resurrection. The second half including "Kanon Paschy" contains lively chanted, spoken, and even shouted words. Liturgical music had been highly effective in previous horror films like *The Omen* in 1976 with Jerry Goldsmith's subversive "Ave Satani." Stainforth and Kubrick take full advantage of the chants of *Utrenja* which sound more like ghostly diegetic voices of the hotel than musical in this sequence. Here Donnelly describes Penderecki's music as serving as "off-world sounds." He states,

At the point where he pushes his head through the hole he has made in the door and shouts, 'Here's Johnny!', the music, which has been a succession of screeches becomes a hail of blasts ... the music adds up to more than simply film music,

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>327</sup> Penderecki's "Kanon Paschy" from *Utrenja II* occurs at Cue 22 (1:41:24–1:53:31), Cue 25 (2:04:20–2:04:32), and Cue 29 (2:14:46–2:15:56).

manifesting what might be called ‘non-diegetic sound effects.’ It can be interpreted as sounds that express the supernatural world of the film yet emanate from outside the diegetic world the film has created. Sound effects without diegetic origin are not unheard of in the cinema for example, the ridiculous noises that accompany comic pratfalls, such as tightened timpani moving upwards in pitch or swanee whistles. Indeed, such things are usually integrated within musical scores, but in the case of the supernatural, such music can take on the quality of being ‘off-world sounds.’<sup>328</sup>

The second major scene under consideration here utilizes “Ewangelia,” the first movement of *Utrenja II*.<sup>329</sup> In the scene, Jack kills Hallorann who had sensed Danny was in trouble through the shining and visited the hotel to check on the family at Cue 26 (2:06:40–2:08:56). Hallorann wanders the lobby calling out to see if anyone is there. Only diegetic howling wind and footsteps are heard leading up to the hit. Suddenly, Jack jumps from behind a pillar and hurls his axe into Hallorann’s chest. The strike of the axe is synchronized with the rattle, a whispering and hissing choir, and the sound of Danny screaming from another location onscreen. Here, Donnelly’s “off-world” sounds are heard including shaking castanets and A chorus whispering in ecclesiastical Slavonic text from St. Mathew 28:1–6 as Jack rises from the bottom of the frame. Then a wooden slit-drum and other percussion such as bells and *hyoshigi*, a Japanese wooden clapper

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<sup>328</sup> Donnelly, 45.

<sup>329</sup> Penderecki’s utilizes “Ewangelia” also from *Utrenja II* occurs at Cue 24 (2:01:04–2:01:12), Cue 26 (2:08:40–2:10:33), and Cue 28 (2:12:34–2:13:37).

instrument commonly used in Kabuki theater, join in. The chorus crescendos and evolves in rhythmic shouting.<sup>330</sup> The synthesis of unidentifiable sound sources, whispering and shouting sounds from the choir, and diegetic sounds such as the howling wind and Danny's scream reinforce the shock of the violent on-screen imagery.

The final aspect of this sequence that deserves a closer look is the harrowing maze chase, wherein Jack chases Danny into the hedge maze while Wendy runs through the hotel encountering ghosts and other surreal imagery such as the blood elevator scene Danny envisioned at the film's beginning (2:10:47–2:18:18). This environment is complemented sonically through diverse and unusual timbres and sound effects which almost overload the senses. Figure 7 depicts Stainforth's plan to score the scene starting from when Wendy enters the corridor leading to the blood elevator and the end where Jack freezes to death.

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<sup>330</sup> Penderecki wanted to emulate the Easter morning processions at which he had watched all participants singing, shouting, and making noises with boards or clappers. See Schwinger, 221–23.



layered on top of one another. The buzzing strings are heard under the low booming chords of *Utrenja*. In Figure 8, Stainforth noted what he felt are the more sonically striking aspects of each excerpt such as “Boom-Boom,” “Whine,” and “Whistle.” At the densest portion of the sequence *De Natura Sonoris No. 2* returns layered with *Kanon* and *Utrenja*. For a second, the audience is bombarded with the unusual opening textures of *De Natura Sonoris No. 2*, the percussive sounds of *Kanon* and the rhythmic chanting of *Utrenja*. In addition to these musical sounds, the audience hears such diegetic sounds as footsteps, heavy breathing, and Jack screaming almost unintelligibly. This is used at the most frantic moment of the scene as Jack limps through the maze warning Danny, “I’m right behind you.” Stainforth’s experimental layering approach greatly enhances the otherworldly sequence. The experimental combination of layered music and diegetic sounds indeed lead to an entirely new piece. Stainforth’s work here exemplifies the requirement of using texture as a major musical component in horror.

J TO SNOWY DOOR; D RUNS INTO MAZE			KANON		15
J STARTS TO RUN		KANON			
W REACTS TO H'S CORPSE	UTRENJA RATTLE			Utrenja	
W REACTS TO SPLIT SKULL MAN		UTRENJA RATTLE			
DANNY CHASED BY JACK			KANON		
WENDY SEES SKELETONS		KANON			
JACK REAR; DANNY HIDES			KANON		
WENDY SEES BLOOD ELEVATOR	UTRENJA BOOM-BOOM			Kanon	
DANNY HIDING/ JACK APPEARS		BASE KANON			
JACK CU	UTRENJA BOOM-BOOM			DE NAT SON NO 2	
DANNY PEEPS OUT			twittering		
DANNY RUNS	KANON	BASE KANON			
JACK SEARCHES		Twittering			
WENDY RUNS OUT/ REUNITED WITH D	whine	+ base			
JACK WEAKENING	whistle		BASE KANON		
JACK SITS DOWN					
JACK FROZEN		DE NAT SON NO 1			

Figure 8: Simplified music chart created by Gordon Stainforth.<sup>332</sup>

## VII. Impact of *The Shining*

*The Shining* was initially greeted with mixed reviews. In her *New York Times* review of the film Janet Maslin stated, “The domestic half of the tale is by far the more effective, partly because the supernatural story knows frustratingly little rhyme or reason, even by supernatural standards.”<sup>333</sup> Nonetheless Maslin praises the film for its

<sup>332</sup> Gordon Stainforth, s.v. “The Shining Music-Introductory Note” <https://www.gordonstainforth.co.uk/shining-music-intro>.

<sup>333</sup> Janet Maslin, “Screen: Nicholson and Shelley Duvall in Kubrick’s *The Shining*,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 1980.

“stunningly effective score.”<sup>334</sup> Stephen King also disliked the movie as it deviated from his novel. He stated “He’s kind of a dyspeptic filmmaker, a Type A filmmaker, worrying and wanting to edit right up to the end. He’s very painstaking, obviously. You know what? I think he wants to hurt people with this movie. I think that he really wants to make a movie that will hurt people.”<sup>335</sup> The film was reevaluated in recent years with more positive reviews and has a significant presence in popular culture.<sup>336</sup> Director, Martin Scorsese puts it in his list of scariest horror films of all time stating, “Kubrick made a majestically terrifying movie, where what you don’t see or comprehend shadows every move the characters make.”<sup>337</sup>

Musically, *The Shining* left a monumental influence on future films with its unique soundtrack. The film introduced many filmgoers to the music of Bartók, Ligeti, and Penderecki. Filmmakers went on to utilize Penderecki’s music since *The Shining*. Examples include David Lynch in *Wild at Heart* (1990) and *Inland Empire* (2006) or Alfonso Cuarón in *Children of Men* (2006). The composer’s work also inspired composer Jonny Greenwood whilst writing his score for Paul Thomas Anderson’s film, *There Will Be Blood* (2007).<sup>338</sup> In his chapter *Incorporating Monsters: Music as Context, Character*

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Vincent LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (New York: Donald I. Fine Books, 1997), 409.

<sup>337</sup> Martin Scorsese, “11 Scariest Horror Movies of All Time,” *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/nov/12/martin-scorsese-scariest-films-the-haunting-shining>.

<sup>338</sup> “Nonesuch Journal Exclusive: An Interview with Jonny Greenwood,” *Nonesuch Journal*, December 6, 2007, <https://www.nonesuch.com/journal/nonesuch-journal-exclusive-an-interview-with-jonny-greenwood>.



*and Construction in Kubrick's The Shining*, Jeremy Barham states that *The Shining* is a point of departure for post-war avant-garde musical repertoire and style as a standard form of scoring horror in future practices. Barham also notes that the film is a point of closure where music has lost the opportunity of gaining wider signifying potential within the public.<sup>339</sup> Indeed, Kubrick's and Friedkin's employment of the experimental aspects of the borrowed and commissioned music has conditioned the public to perceive this as quintessential "scary music." *The Shining* consolidated and paved the way for a new sonic vocabulary for the horror genre.

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<sup>339</sup> Hayward, *Terror Tracks*, 139.

Table 2: *The Shining* (1980) Cue Sheet

Cue #	Film In/Out	Dramatic Action	Dialogue	Photography	Music	Selected Features	Sound Effect	Diegetic Sound	Experimental Musical Moments
1	0:00:14 - 0:03:04	Opening Credits		Helicopter shot glides over lake between two mountains. It follows a yellow car towards the Overlook hotel as the opening credits roll over action	"Deus Irae" by Carlos	Twangy sounds, synth sounds			"Deus Irae" on synthesizer, vocal effects, autoharp strings
2	0:10:34 - 0:12:25	Danny talks to Tony who shows Danny images of blood gushing out of an elevator	"She's a confirmed ghost story and horror film addict"- Jack	Dissolve effect from Jack interview to full shot of Danny talking to Tony in bathroom mirror	<i>The Awakening of Jakob</i> by Penderecki	Low brass clusters swell, low sustained rumbling sounds		Water splash	Tone clusters, static quality
3	0:17:43 - 0:19:52	Family travels to Overlook hotel		Helicopter footage of yellow car winding through the mountains. Footage inside car of Jack, Wendy, and Danny which dissolves to establishing shot of Overlook	"Rocky Mountain" by Carlos	low synth notes move down by fifths, more voices forming cluster of sound			Experimental vocal sounds, use of Moog synth
4	0:21:25 - 0:22:22	Danny plays darts in the game room, encounters Grady twins		Wide shot of girls, the girls look at each other and smile before exiting.	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	High pitched and low-pitched drone			Micropolyphony, Electronic influence
5	0:27:22 - 0:28:08	Hallorann communicates with Danny telepathically while showing Wendy the freezer	"In here Mrs. Torrance is where we keep all the dried goods and the canned goods."- Hallorann	Full shot of Hallorann, Wendy, and Danny entering the freezer, cans of food on each side of the frame.	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	Wavering High pitched and low-pitched drone. Then growling low sound.			Micropolyphony, Electronic influence
6	0:38:14 - 0:40:31	Wendy and Danny explore hedge maze. Cuts	"Look Out"- Wendy	Jack looks down at model of maze which dissolves to an overhead shot	<i>Music for String, Percussion, and Celestra</i>	Emphasized rhythmic upwards and		Ball hits wall	Unusual percussion and string sounds

		to Jack throw a rubber ball around the hotel		of Wendy and Danny in the maze. Zooms in on them as if Jack is watching them from inside the hotel. The scene is disrupted by a "TUESDAY" title card	mov. III by Bartók	downward s string glissandos , punctuating piano, xylophone , timpani gliss. Return of fugue subject from movement 1. Then violin tremolo, celesta, harp, and piano. with cymbal crash (synchronized with title card)			
7	9:41:21 - 0:43:54	He stops and tries to open room 237. Wendy enters and says "hi hon" jack tears out paper (synchronized with cymbal crash)		Steadicam follows Danny riding his tricycle around the hotel. Dissolves to wide shot from behind Jack typing.	<i>Music for String, Percussion, and Celesta</i> mov. III by Bartók	Emphasized rhythmic upwards and downward s string glissandos , punctuating piano, xylophone , timpani gliss. Return of fugue subject. Then violin tremolo, celesta, harp, and piano, cymbal crash		Tricycle pedaling, Typing echoes in large room, paper rip (synchronized)	Unusual percussion and string sounds
8	0:46:15 - 0:48:16	Wendy and Danny play outside in the snow. Wendy tries to reconnect phone lines		Wide tracking shot of Wendy and Danny playing outside	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	High-pitched drone		Typing, footsteps	Micropolyphony, Electronic influence
9	0:49:19 - 0:51:17	Danny sees Grady twins, has vision of twins as murdered, Danny talks to Tony		Steadicam follows Danny riding tricycle closely. Shot over Danny's head of Grady twins in the hallway. Cuts back and forth	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 1</i> by Penderecki	Wind and string clusters crescendo. Percussion and brass create stinger		Tricycle peddling	Unusual instrumentation, tone clusters, graphic notation allows for

				between twins holding hands alive and twins as bloody corpses next to an axe.		effect with bells, gong, and tam-tam. 16 <sup>th</sup> notes crescendo upwards creating an uproar effect			extended timbral techniques
10	0:52:45 - 0:59:18	Talks to Jack		Danny enters family apartment and sit with Jack. "WEDNESDAY" title (synchronized with cymbal crash)	<i>Music for String, Percussion, and Celesta</i> mov. III by Bartók	Xylophone punctuating, timpani glissando and roll			Unusual percussion and string sounds
11	0:59:19 - 1:01:12	Danny enters room 237. Wendy finds Jack screaming. Jack tells Wendy he dreamt he killer her and Danny		Overhead shot of Danny plays with his tops on in the hallway. A tennis ball rolls into view. The door to room 237 is open. Danny walks inside out of view.	<i>The Awakening of Jakob</i> by Penderecki	Low brass clusters swell, low sustained rumbling sounds, string glissandi and tremolo		Jack screams first off then on-screen	Tone clusters, static quality
12	1:01:12 - 1:04:16	Wendy accuses Jack of hurting Danny, Jack sits at the bar in the gold room	"Go play in your room for a while." -Wendy	Danny, visibly traumatized, followed by Steadicam, comes into view	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 2</i> by Penderecki	Sustained whistling ethereal sounds, some rough sound surfaces			Unusual instrumentation, unusual techniques, some indeterminacy, graphic notation allows for timbral expansion
13	1:10:59 - 1:16:15	Hallorann senses something is terribly wrong via shining		Camera zooms in on Hallorann, cuts to the open door to room 237, then cuts to Danny seizing.	"Shining/Heartbeats" by Carlos	Barely audible High-pitched drone, rhythmic thumping heartbeat sounds	Heart beats	News on television	<i>Musique concrète</i> approach
14	1:11:53 - 1:16:15	Jack looks into Room 237 and finds a ghostly woman emerge from the bathtub. She kisses Jack and is revealed to be much older and		Steadicam enters room 237, glides into the bathroom. A wide of woman emerging from bathtub. POV of Jack's perspective opens his eyes and the woman is	"Shining/Heartbeats" by Carlos  <i>The Awakening of Jakob</i> by Penderecki	Barely audible High-pitched drone, rhythmic thumping heartbeat sounds	Heart beats, high drone	Woman laughs (diegetic-non-diegetic)	<i>Musique concrète</i> approach layered over tone clusters

		covered in axe wounds. She laughs manically as Jack backs out of the room and Danny watched through the shining from the family apartment		revealed to be much older and covered in grievous wounds. Steadicam backs out of room. Cuts to imagery of the women laying in the bath/ Danny seizing in his room/ Jack backing out of the room					
15	1:19:14 - 1:20:36	Danny lies awake. Cuts to Jack and Wendy. Jack becomes aggressive when Wendy suggest they leave for Danny's health		Over-the-shoulder shot of Wendy, the scene cuts to imagery of short images of Danny, blood rushing out of an elevator, and the words "Redrum" written on in red a yellow door	"The Shining/Heartbeats" by Carlos	Barely audible High-pitched drone, rhythmic thumping heartbeat sounds	Heart beats		<i>Musique concrète</i> approach
16	1:21:00 - 1:21:27	Jack is lured into Gold Room		Steadicam closes in on the hallway leading to the gold room. The hallway is filled with balloons and streamers.	"Masquerade" by J. Hylton and his Orchestra	Muffled light dancing music echoes from another room.		"Masquerade"-J. Hylton and his Orchestra	Diegetic ambiguity
17	1:22:22 - 1:31:37	Jack enters the gold room to find a crowded party. Attendees are dressed in 1920s fashion. Jack visits Lloyd at the bar again. He bumps into Grady, who takes him into the bathroom to help cleanup		Slow tracking shot of Jack walking through the party, close up of Lloyd then over-the-shoulder- shot of Jack.	"Midnight , the Stars, and You" by R. Noble and his Orchestra	Crooning style singing, romantic dancing tune		"Midnight , the Stars, and You"-R. Noble and his Orchestra is seen being played by a live orchestra	
18	1:25:47 - 1:29:01	Jack learns Grady's name and tells him he killed his family and himself. Grady says	"Won't keep you a moment, sir"- Grady	Full shot of Jack and Grady in a brightly lit, red and white modern bathroom.	"It's All Forgotten Now" by Ray Noble and His Orchestra	Muffled dancing tune.		"it's All Forgotten Now"- Ray Noble and His orchestra	

		he has no memory of this							
19	1:29:10 - 1:31:34	Grady convinces Jack to “correct” his family (still bathroom)	“No”-Jack	Back-to-back close-ups of Jack and Grady talking	“Home” by Henry Hall and the Gleneagles Hotel Band	muffled		“Home” by Henry Hall and the Gleneagles Hotel Band (possibly psycho-diegetic)	
20	1:31:37 - 1:38:44	Wendy plans how to leave. Danny shouts the phrase Redrum. Tony takes over Danny, Jack destroys their only means of communication, meanwhile Hallorann travels to the overlook		Steadicam follows Wendy pacing around family apartment	“The Shining/Heartbeats” by Carlos	High-pitched drone, heartbeats		Footsteps	<i>Musique concrète</i> approach
21	1:39:31 - 1:41:08	Danny watches tv in an almost catatonic state		Medium shot of Danny and Wendy sitting on bed on the right side of the frame, the vacant apartment on the right.	Theme song to <i>The Road Runner Show</i>	“Roadrunner, the coyote’s after you” and “Roadrunner, if he catches you, you’re through”		Road runner playing on television	
22	1:41:24 - 1:53:31	Wendy checks on Jack wielding a baseball bat. Wendy reads Jacks manuscript and discovers he has been writing only “all work and no play makes Jack and dull boy” repeatedly. Jack catches her. Cuts to image of “redrum”		Steadicam follows behind Wendy as she walks into the large dimly lit room.	<i>Polymorphia</i> by Penderecki (entire piece) <i>Utrenja Il-Kanon Paschy</i> by Penderecki (1:49:10-1:49:25)	Sliding sounds from staggered glissandos, percussive sounds, low grumbling sounds, high ticking sounds		Thumping sounds of Jack tumbling down the staircase	Tone clusters, tapping wood of instrument, indeterminately, experimentation with noise

		written on door, and blood gushing out of an elevator, Wendy hit Jack with bat (synchronized with <i>Kanon Paschy</i> )							
21	1:49:33 - 1:53:31	Wendy drags Jack and locks him in freezer		Dissolves from previous scene Steadicam follows Jack by gliding across the floor as he is dragged by Wendy	<i>Polymorphia</i> by Penderecki (fades into <i>De Natura Sonoris</i> )	Sliding sounds from staggered glissandos, percussive sounds, low grumbling sounds,		Dragging sounds	Tone clusters, tapping wood of instrument, indeterminately, experimentation with noise
22	1:53:31 - 1:54:45	Wendy runs outside to check snow-cat, only to discover Jack and tampered with it.		Wendy runs away from the camera, then tracking shot of Wendy running through the snow. Saturated blue color palette	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 1</i> by Penderecki	No sense of pulse, pizzicato sounds			Unusual sound resources
23	1:57:52 1-	Hallorann drives snow-cat up to hotel. Danny writes "Redrum" on the door with Wendy's lipstick while brandishing a knife. Wendy sees "Murder" in reflection of door		Establishing shot of snow-cat, close-up of Hallorann with blue color palette, Steadicam follows Danny in hotel with warm color pallet	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 2</i> by Penderecki	Downward gliss., low rumbling, high-pitched dissonant drone		Danny repeating "Redrum" with raspy voice quiet at first then loud.	Tone clusters, unusual instrumentation
24	2:01:04 - 2:01:12	Wendy sees "Murder" in the reflection of the door		Medium shot of the word "Murder" in red through the mirror.	<i>Utrenja II-Ewangeli a</i> by Penderecki	Startling rattle sound		Axe hitting door,	Layering moments from music from different contexts
25	2:02:32 - 2:04:32	Jack brings down apartment door with an axe, Danny escapes through the		The Steadicam following the axe back and forth.	<i>Kanon for Orchestra and Tape</i> by Penderecki	High and low, Buzzing string sounds, Loud layered string		Axe hitting door, Wendy screaming	live string sounds are simultaneously recorded and played back over

		bathroom window. Wendy is unable to fit. Jack hits the door with the axe			<i>Utrenja II-Kanon Paschy</i> by Penderecki (2:04:20)	accents, scratches and plucks. Then 3 low short notes.			two speakers placed behind thus creating a canon effect through both tape and live performance. Tone clusters, dramatic glissando, percussive effects
26	2:08:40 - 2:10:33	Jack hurls axe into Hallorann's chest (synchronized with rattle sound), then chases Danny		Close up of axe strike, interspersed with closeups of Jack, Hallorann, and Danny (in hiding). Jack rises into frame in close-up	<i>Utrenja II-Ewangelia</i> by Penderecki  <i>Polymorphia</i> by Penderecki (enters 2:10:00)	Rattle sound, layered whispering, layered strings sounds with "complex mass"		Danny and Hallorann screaming	Layering music from different contexts, Tone clusters, tapping wood of instrument, indeterminately, experimentation with noise
27	2:10:38 - 2:12:02	Jack chases Danny into the maze		Steadicam follows Danny running away from the camera, then closeup of Jack running towards the camera with blue color palette	<i>Kanon for Orchestra and Tape</i> by Penderecki	High and low, Buzzing string sounds, Loud layered string accents, "complex mass"			string sounds are simultaneously recorded and played back over two speakers placed behind thus creating a canon effect through both tape and live performance. Tone clusters, dramatic glissando, percussive effects
28	2:12:34 - 2:13:37	Wendy finds Hallorann dead then runs into a tuxedoed man with blood		POV from Wendy's perspective zooms in on Hallorann's body	<i>Utrenja II-Ewangelia</i> by Penderecki	Rattle sound, layered whisperings			



		running down his face. Meanwhile Jack pursues Danny in the maze							
29	2:13:37	Wendy encounters the lobby full of cobwebs and skeletons. Danny misleads Jack		Wide shot then close ups of skeletons in dimly lit room with blue color palette	<i>Kanon for Orchestra and Tape</i> by Penderecki  <i>Utrenja II-Kanon Paschy</i> by Penderecki (2:14:46)	Percussive tapping sounds, string scratching sounds, 3 low thumps, high choir sounds			Layering music from different contexts, string sounds are simultaneously recorded and played back over two speakers placed behind thus creating a canon effect through both tape and live performance. Tone clusters, dramatic glissando, percussive effects
30	2:15:56 - 2:18:19	Danny peeks out and runs from Jack.		Steadicam follows Danny through the narrow walls of the maze.	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 2</i> by Penderecki (fades in)  <i>Kanon for Orchestra and Tape</i> by Penderecki (2:16:25)			Howling wind, heavy breathing, Jack groaning, snow-cat starting	
31	2:18:19 - 2:18:31	Jack sings and stumbles in the maze while Wendy and Danny escape in snow-cat	“San-Francisco here I come”- Jack (singing)		“California Here I Come” by B. DeSylva and J. Meyer. (diegetic)	Slurred almost shouting singing		Jack singing, snow-cat engine	
32	2:18:53 - 2:19:46	Jack stumbles around the maze and is later seen	“no”- Jack	Wide shot, snow-cat disappears from view	<i>De Natura Sonoris No. 2</i> by Penderecki			Jack screams after Wendy	

		frozen in the morning							
33	2:19:46	Camera zooms in on a photo on the wall. In the photo Jack is seen at a party dated 1921		Steadicam glides across lobby toward a wall filled with framed photos, zooms in on a black and white photo of Jack in a tuxedo, arms outstretched. Fades to credits	“Midnight , the Stars, and You” by R. Noble and his Orchestra	crooning style singing. Lyrics describe an unforgettable evening		No diegetic sound	

Sound Department:

Michael Charman ... Boom operator  
Richard Daniel ... Sound recordist  
Dino Di Campo ... Sound editor  
Jack Knight ... Sound editor  
Ray Merrin ... Dubbing mixer  
Bill Rowe ... Dubbing mixer  
Winston Ryder ... Sound editor  
Ivan Sharrock ... Sound recordist  
Ken Weston ... Boom operator  
Rodney Glenn ... Assistant sound editor (Uncredited)  
Robert Gravenor ... Adr mixer (Uncredited)  
Lionel Strutt ... Foley Mixer (uncredited)

Music Department:

Wendy Carlos ... Composer  
Rachel Elkind ... Composer  
Brian Rust ... Music advisor: 20’s Music  
John Wadley ... Music advisor: 20’s Music

Editing Department:

Ray Lovejoy ... Film editing  
Gordon Stainforth ... Assistant Editor

## CASE STUDY 3: SHUTTER ISLAND

Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island* (2010), based on Dennis Lehane's graphic novel of the same name, carried on the tradition of employing experimental music that *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* had explored successfully. This gothic, neo-noir thriller emphasizes mood and atmosphere, thus making the music in the soundtrack critical. Scorsese's longtime friend and collaborator, the Canadian song writer and composer Robbie Robertson worked with Scorsese to create a modern symphonic repertoire using existing music from panoply of experimental composers including György Ligeti, Krzysztof Penderecki, Nam June Paik, John Cage, Morton Feldman and more. In this chapter, I will examine how the previously established experimental scoring techniques in horror movies influenced *Shutter Island*, how existing music is employed in innovative ways, and what impact the film has had on subsequent horror cinema.

### I. Blending Fantasy and Reality in *Shutter Island*

“New Hollywood” filmmaker Martin Scorsese is strongly associated with violent crime dramas such as *Raging Bull* (1980), *Good Fellas* (1990) and *The Departed* (2006). In a departure from these films for his next project, Scorsese combined different elements of genre. He stated, “to make it (*Shutter Island*) was to touch upon different aspects of genre and different aspects of the visual elements of those genres. Whether those genres are thrillers, horror, noir, psychological terror, humor.”<sup>340</sup> While numerous horror films of the early 2000s focused on realism and horror of the present or future, *Shutter Island*

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<sup>340</sup> “Shutter Island’ Interview with Martin Scorsese,” *gofobo*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmHpXaFjugk>, 2:20–2:46.

drew on Otto Preminger and Alfred Hitchcock's films of the past and classic horror themes such as gothic asylum, film noir, as well as some pulp fiction.

Set in 1954, the film follows U.S. Marshal Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his new partner Chuck Aule (Mark Ruffalo) as they investigate the disappearance of patient Rachel Solando (Emily Mortimer) from the Ashecliffe Hospital for the Criminally Insane on Shutter Island in Boston Harbor. The investigation is aided by lead psychiatrist John Cawley (Ben Kingsley). During the investigation, Teddy has visions of his experiences as a U.S. soldier during the liberation of Dachau, a ghostly little girl, and his late wife, Dolores Chanal (Michelle Williams). He admits to Chuck that he took this case solely to find his wife's killer Andrew Laeddis who he believes is a patient on Shutter Island. Convinced that Chuck was taken to be experimented on at the lighthouse, Teddy breaks in to discover Cawley waiting for him. Cawley explains that Rachel Solando doesn't exist and Teddy is, in fact, Andrew Laeddis and he killed his manic-depressive wife after she drowned their three children. The entire investigation was a last-ditch effort designed to help break his insanity and thus save him from being lobotomized. The entire hospital was part of the experiment including Chuck who turns out to be Teddy's primary doctor. Sometime later it is inferred that Andrew has regressed. This is challenged however, when Andrew asks Chuck if it would be better "to live as a monster, or die as a good man?" He then leaves assumedly to be lobotomized. While Teddy and Andrew Laeddis are the same person, I will be referring to this character as "Teddy" for the remainder of this research.

It could be argued *Shutter Island* constitutes what James Twitchell categorizes as “horror of the neurotic man.”<sup>341</sup> While such a view is deeply problematic and demonizes those who struggle with mental health, this theme has appeared in countless horror films such as Mamoulian’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) and Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960). *Shutter Island*, however, challenges the narrative instigated by such films as *Psycho* by first addressing the humanity of its protagonist, Teddy Daniels. The previously examined films, *The Shining* and *The Exorcist*, focused on the creation of fear of the unpredictable characters Jack Torrance and Regan MacNeil. In contrast, *Shutter Island* forces the spectator to see through Teddy’s eyes, generating empathy, instead of fear. The film is a part of Scorsese’s long fascination with mental illness which he has depicted in previous films such as *The Aviator* (2004) or the aforementioned *Taxi Driver* (1976). Esther B. Fein stated, “Mr. Scorsese has been an observer of life on the margin, and the movies he has directed since then ... have studied that idea from different angles, and through different lives, ensconcing him in the role of the outsider.”<sup>342</sup> While this is Scorsese’s first attempt at horror, many of his films have featured outsiders, people on the fringes of society, and the moral dilemmas they experience. Scorsese underlined that he was especially drawn to the line describing Teddy’s dilemma, “is it better to live as a monster or die a good man.”<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Timothy Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 178.

<sup>342</sup> Esther B. Fein, “Martin Scorsese: The Film Director as a Local Alien,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 1985.

<sup>343</sup> “Martin Scorsese on Directing *Shutter Island*,” *ABC News*, February 19, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXoiOukZhlA>, 3:37–4:56.

Unlike his previous films, *Shutter Island* completely immersed its audience in Teddy's fragmented version of reality. In his article "Now a Major Soundtrack! - Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*," Jørgen Bruhn states that Scorsese's previous films featuring 'mad' characters only depict the madness from the outside while *Shutter Island* completely blurs the boundaries between reality and Teddy's delusions.<sup>344</sup> Aside from the fact that *Shutter Island* is an unconventional character study, the limitation to the view of a character is a frequently used device in horror to create fear and vulnerability as discussed in chapter 2. Rebekah McKendry explained, "anything you can do to limit the character, and through that, the audience's frame of vision will always increase the anxiety."<sup>345</sup> Indeed, Teddy's role as an unreliable narrator creates unease and forces the audience to constantly question what is real as reality and fantasies become increasingly ambiguous throughout the film. This form of cinematic storytelling is innovatively enhanced through audiovisual experimentation.

### III. Music in Scorsese's Films

As mentioned previously, Scorsese seems to be what Claudia Gorbman calls *mélomane*, meaning directors whose passion for music is an integral aspect of their directorial style.<sup>346</sup> For Scorsese, like for Kubrick, music was an important creative

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<sup>344</sup> Jørgen Bruhn, "Now a Major Soundtrack! - Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*," *Adaptation: The Journal of Literature on Screen Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013), 330.

<sup>345</sup> Rebekah McKendry, "How Great Jump Scares Are Made in Horror Movies (Vs. Bad Jump Scares)," *Insider*, October 31, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llpsjbNQIns>, 6:32–6:44.

<sup>346</sup> Claudia Gorbman, "Auteur Music," in *Beyond the Soundtrack* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 151.

instigator. He said, “so it really begins with the music for me. And once I hear the music, I mean, I really start to feel the story.”<sup>347</sup> Much of his musical education was from listening to records and radio. Thus, the music for his films often deviate from traditional film scoring because they feature existing popular music. Most characteristically, genres including rock, doo-wop, and Motown. Instead of reverting to old Hollywood conventions, Scorsese wanted to explore new directions musically. He stated:

When I finally started making feature film, I knew that my movies would not have a proper score. They weren't meant to have that. In a way, they weren't deserving of that because those films, or the pictures that were made up to that time around the world are- they were something that were unattainable. They were the guides. They were the something we aspired to and couldn't really do something like the, even though you try.<sup>348</sup>

However, there are slight exceptions to his use of existing music as several Scorsese films have utilized innovative commissioned music as well. For example, *Taxi Driver* scored by Bernard Herrmann or his controversial film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) with a score composed by Peter Gabriel, which included performance by Youssou

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<sup>347</sup> Martin Scorsese, “The Power of Music,” *Masterclass*, <https://www.masterclass.com/classes/martin-scorsese-teaches-filmmaking/chapters/the-power-of-music>.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

N'Dour, Ali Khan, and Nusrat Fateh, Senegalese griot Baaba Maal, jazz drummer Bill Cobham, and experimental trumpeter Jon Hassell among others.<sup>349</sup>

Further evidence for Scorsese's fascination with music is illustrated in his music documentaries such as *The Last Waltz* (1976), following the life of Bob Dylan, *Shine A Light* (2008) on the Rolling Stones, and *George Harrison: Living in the Material World* (2011). It was while making *The Last Waltz* that Scorsese met Robbie Robertson who went on to play a significant role in Scorsese's oeuvre. Canada-based guitarist and composer Robertson's first experiences with music was at his mother's home at the Six Nations Reservation and country music of rural America. He then joined the group The Hawks, later renamed as The Band, who became affiliated with Bob Dylan. The group achieved international fame and disbanded in 1976 after a concert with Dylan released in *The Last Waltz*.<sup>350</sup> Robertson and Scorsese continued to work together for *Raging Bull* (1980), *The King of Comedy* (1983), *Casino* (1995), and *The Departed* where Robertson both wrote and chose existing music. While many of these fruitful collaborations have utilized popular music from artists like B.B. King, Nat King Cole, The Animals, and The Velvetones, Scorsese and Robertson went in another direction for *Shutter Island* with an unusual score comprised of experimental, popular, and nineteenth-century European music.

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<sup>349</sup> The film music combined middle eastern and north African rhythms with ambience synth sounds. See "Passion," *Peter Gabriel.com*, <https://petergabriel.com/release/passion/>.

<sup>350</sup> Jason Ankeny, "Robbie Robertson," *The Band*, [http://theband.hiof.no/band\\_members/robbie.html](http://theband.hiof.no/band_members/robbie.html).



Dennis Lehane's novel was fertile ground for this musical eclecticism as it incorporates a significant amount of attention to sounds. The novel often has sounds even taking precedence over image. For example, when Teddy tries to imagine Dolores he feels, "even as he couldn't picture her, he could hear her in his brain."<sup>351</sup> The book also brings special attention to music by mentioning specific composers such as Mahler. Scorsese's adaption, with Lehane and established screenwriter and producer Laeta Kalogridis on board, greatly intensifies the aural detail of the source material. While thematically significant works like Mahler's little-known Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor (1876) carry over from the novel, Robertson narrowed the desired sonic palette to experimental music written after that of Ives. They wanted to deviate from mainstream film scores to a point where Robertson recounts Scorsese stating, "no, that sounds too much like movie music."<sup>352</sup> The final product is a colorful collection of music stemming from differing contexts that work to support a dark and surreal aesthetic. Robertson found that, "this may be the most outrageous and beautiful soundtrack I've ever heard."<sup>353</sup>

The borrowings from existing experimental music were meant to underscore Teddy's mental instability and to instill distrust in the viewer. In her book, *Understanding Soundtracks Through Film Theory*, Elsie Walker points out that while

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<sup>351</sup> Dennis Lehane, *Shutter Island* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2003), 315 *Kindle*.

<sup>352</sup> Jake Coyle, The San Diego Union-Tribune, s.v. "Scorsese, Robertson Keep Waltzing with *Shutter Island*," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, February 17, 2010 <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-scorsese-robertson-keep-waltzing-with-shutter-2010feb17-story.html>.

<sup>353</sup> "The Music of Menace from *Shutter Island*," *Paramount*, January 13, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100130032920/http://www.paramount.com/node/9522>.

mise-en-scène, camerawork, and editing reinforce our alignment with Teddy, Robertson's musical choices complicate this alignment by undermining the visual messages.<sup>354</sup>

In conjunction with the undermining of the visual and dialogue, the film employs 46 musical cues that complement the overall eerie atmosphere with dark timbres, melancholic melodies and harmonies, sound masses, drones, dynamic extremes, amongst other sonic qualities that will be explored in this chapter. The borrowings range from quiet prepared piano works including Cage's *Root of an Unfocus* (1944) and *Music for Marcel Duchamp* (1947) to electroacoustic music such as Brian Eno's *Lizard Point* (1982), Nam June Paik's *Hommage à John Cage* (1959), Ingram Marshall's *Fog Topes* (1982) and his *Prelude-The Bay* (1990), Tim Hodgkinson's *Fragor* (2003) as well as music that incorporates tape recorded sounds like Robert Erickson's *Pacific Sirens* (1969), John Adam's *Christian Zeal and Activity* (1973), and Ingram Marshall's *Fog Topes* (1982). Also included are string chamber works like Mahler's *Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor* (1876), Alfred Schnittke's *Four Hymns: II for Cello and Double Bass* (1974), Lou Harrison's *Suite for Symphonic Strings: Nocturne* (1960) and Max Richter's *On the Nature of Daylight* (2004) and large orchestral works such as Giacinto Scelsi's *Quattro Pezzi* (1959) and *Uaxuctum: The Legend of the Mayan City Which They Themselves Destroyed for Religious Reasons* (1966), György Ligeti's *Lontano* (1967), Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel 2* (1978), Penderecki's *Fluorescences* (1961-62) and "Passacaglia" *Allegro moderato* from *Symphonie No. 3* (1988), are additionally used for these dramatic functions.

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<sup>354</sup> Elsie Walker, *Understanding Soundtracks Through Film Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 301,

Popular songs with text are used as well and include; Churchill Kohlman’s “Cry” (1951) performed by Johnnie Ray, Sam Coslow and Will Grosz’s “Tomorrow Night” (1939) performed by Lonnie Johnson and Bennie Benjamin and George David Weiss’s “Wheel of Fortune” (1952) performed by Kay Starr. They further the film’s dramatic functions, especially through their lyrics. Moreover, these popular songs aide in establishing the historical setting and, similar to *The Shining*’s use of “Midnight, the Stars, and You,” create an uncomfortable contrast with the film’s dark dramaturgy.

In comparison to *The Exorcist*, which frequently utilize silence, *Shutter Island* has music that carries on almost perpetually, except for the revelatory scene at the lighthouse before the final flashback. *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* create unique audiovisual experiences through experimental sound effects and existing music namely from Penderecki, with which the filmmakers sought to condition audiences so that they would associate certain experimental textures with quintessential scary situations. *Shutter Island* builds on this foundation with a large collection of experimental music borrowings to further its narrative means.

Piece	Experimental Techniques	Dramatic Purpose
Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor (1876) by Gustav Mahler		Portrays emotions, extra-musical aspects
“Tomorrow Night” (1939) by Sam Coslow and Will Grosz		Information through text, establishes historical setting, anempathetic
<i>Root of an Unfocus</i> (1944) by John Cage	Prepared piano	Atmosphere, reflects protagonist’s repression through repetitive figures, highlights strangeness with unusual timbres

<i>Music for Marcel Duchamp</i> (1947) by John Cage	Prepared piano	Atmosphere, reflects protagonist's repression through repetitive figures. Highlights strangeness with unusual timbres
"Cry" (1951) by Churchill Kohlman		Information through text, establishes historical setting, anempathetic
"Wheel of Fortune" (1952) by Bennie Benjamin and George David Weiss		Information through text, establishes historical setting, anempathetic
<i>Hommage à John Cage</i> (1959) by Nam June Paik	<i>Musique concrète</i>	Creates surreal, dream-like effect, reflects protagonist's inner state through experimental texture and repetitive figures
<i>Quattro Pezzi</i> (1959) by Giacinto Scelsi	Unusual timbres, experimental techniques to expand timbre	Supports atmosphere, oscillating strings represent repetition and water motifs
<i>Suite for Symphonic Strings: Nocturne</i> (1960) by Lou Harrison		Empathetic, repetitive feel
<i>Uaxuctum: The Legend of the Mayan City Which They Themselves Destroyed for Religious Reasons</i> (1966) by Giacinto Scelsi	Experimental vocal and instrumental techniques	Creates sense of space, supports atmosphere with unusual timbres
<i>Fluorescences</i> (1961-62) by Krzysztof Penderecki	Extended techniques, unusual instrumentation	Suspense, atmosphere
<i>Lontano</i> (1967) by György Ligeti	Micropolyphony, tone clusters	Physiological effect, creates sense of space, atmosphere
<i>Pacific Sirens</i> (1969) by Robert Erickson	Recorded and processed ocean sounds, white noise, indeterminacy	Emphasizing theme of water, atmosphere
<i>Christian Zeal and Activity</i> (1973) by John Adam	polystylistic layering	Creates surreal effect, reflects protagonist's inner state through repetitive figures

<i>Four Hymns: II for Cello and Double Bass</i> (1974) by Alfred Schnittke	Some unusual techniques/ timbres	empathetic, repetitive figures
<i>Rothko Chapel 2</i> (1978) by Morton Feldman	static quality of harmony, lots of musical silence, dark timbres, subtlety, importance of tone color	atmosphere, repetitive figures
<i>Fog Topes</i> (1982) by Ingram Marshall	Live experiments with tape and electronic processing, recorded tape sounds of nature	Undermine the reality of the narrative at the beginning of scene; leads audience to believe that sounds are diegetic but gradually it is revealed that is it non-diegetic
<i>Lizard Point</i> (1982) by Brian Eno	<i>Musique concrète</i> , includes chance by using unheard tape recordings	Atmosphere, diegetically ambiguous
<i>The Lost Day</i> (1982) by Brian Eno	<i>Musique concrète</i> , includes chance by using unheard tape recordings	Atmosphere, diegetically ambiguous
“Passacaglia” <i>Allegro moderato</i> from <i>Symphonie No. 3</i> (1988) by K. Penderecki	Tone clusters	Reiteration of notes reinforces theme of repetition, atmosphere
<i>Prelude-The Bay</i> (1990) by Ingram Marshall	tape collages, voice, flute, synth, and photographic images during performance	Lends surreal effect, repetitive figures
<i>Fragor</i> (2003) by Tim Hodgkinson	Experimental techniques with computer-modified cello and electric guitar	Atmosphere, lends surreal effect with unpredictable/unusual sounds
<i>On the Nature of Daylight</i> (2004) by Max Richter		Empathetic, is employed in association with Dolores, repetitive figures
<i>My Father Knew Charles Ives: The Lake</i> (2006)		Diegetically ambiguous, interacts with characters, possible extra-musical layer

Figure 9: List of pieces used, experimental techniques, and cinematic function in *Shutter Island*.

These borrowings can be placed into three categories; extra-musical, music that supports tone and central themes of the film, and finally music that illustrates Teddy's perspective through experimental textures and repetition. Of course, there are overlaps between these categories as several borrowings serve multiple dramatic purposes. The first category focuses on the intentional extra-musical inconsistencies that create distrust in Teddy's memories through the diegetic employment of Mahler's Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor. The second category examines how compositional aspects of the music bolster themes like truth and nature. This category will also touch on how borrowings are used to deceive the viewer by subverting expectations through diegetic ambiguity. Thirdly, experimental textures and repetitive themes are examined to illustrate how they parallel Teddy's inner state. While several of the borrowings are not experimental per se, they are germane to the total aural experience of *Shutter Island* and thus their treatment in the film in relation to other facets of cinematic sound will be studied as they challenge convention on some level.

#### IV. Extra-Musical Layers: Gustav Mahler's Quartet for Piano and Strings in A Minor

One of the most fascinating achievements of *Shutter Island* is how music is used to provide intuitive foreshadowing and to cue the audience into the strange inconsistencies of Teddy's perspective. Mahler's Quartet, a rather obscure and youthful single-movement chamber work in Mahler's music catalog, plays an integral role here. Not known as a composer of chamber music, Mahler wrote it when he was a student at the Vienna Conservatory of Music in 1876. It features an exceedingly conventional

nineteenth-century music style.<sup>355</sup> The opening of the piece is used three times throughout the film; when Teddy and Chuck visit Cawley's residence at Cue 8, when Teddy dreams of Laeddis at Cue 23, and during the ending credits at Cue 46. Robertson and Scorsese specifically make use of the Quartet's beginning to around m. 69, two and a half minutes into the work. Here, the audience first hears low repeating piano chords and the entrance of the main theme in a moderate tempo, then expressive strings passages enter and the tempo speeds up. The first Cue introduces the piece diegetically. Here, the film draws special attention to the composer and title of the piece by naming it in dialogue.<sup>356</sup> The music is heard over Cawley's gramophone but carries over into Teddy's memories as a soldier at Dachau. This audiovisual experience is especially compelling due to the fact that Mahler's and all music by Jewish composers was banned under Hitler. Mahler died in 1911, before the Nazis took power in 1933. The concentration camp in Dachau opened on 22 March 1933 and was liberated by U.S. troops May 2, 1945 where the memory takes place. The flashback begins with a tracking shot of pale hands grabbing a wire fence before cutting to a wide shot of an office, snow is seen falling outside the windows, and pieces of paper fall from the top of the frame inside. On the wall is a framed portrait of Adolf Hitler. The viewer looks down at a dying Nazi officer via an overhead shot, laying in a pool of blood next to a gun (implying that it is a botched suicide). American soldiers look through hundreds of documents throwing them into the

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<sup>355</sup> Gustav Mahler's Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor is heard at Cue 8 (0:15:29–0:17:03), Cue 23 (0:58:58–1:00:34), and Cue 46 (2:11:00–end).

<sup>356</sup> Teddy states, "It's Mahler." Dr. Naehring (Max von Sydow) confirms "Quartet for Piano and Strings in A Minor." This dialogue takes place from 0:21:04–0:21:28.

air behind them carelessly. Teddy walks into the frame via a low angle, assumedly from the Nazi officer's perspective. He reaches for the gun and Teddy, who looks out the window to see skeletal frozen bodies piled up, slides the gun away. The music grows considerably and nondiegetically louder here, covering any diegetic environmental sounds.

Elsie Walker asserts that Mahler along with Richter's music, the two more melodically driven and conventional works, tie the spectator emotionally to Teddy and tell us not who he is but, who he believes he is. She states, "those moments when Teddy seems most ironically assured of who he is are also those in which he is most ensconced in the realm of the Imaginary-or at least enmeshed within his efforts to re-create an *ideal-I* and to live a fantasy associated with his specular image."<sup>357</sup> This vengeful fantasy image of Teddy might have felt hallow with-out other context of Mahler's music.

It is not clear if the music in Teddy's memory is nondiegetic, but a record player is seen in operation and a closeup shows its needle moving in the record's groove. Of course, it should be remembered that there were music performances in Dachau, Jewish musicians played music by Jewish composers.<sup>358</sup> However, it would be very unlikely that the Dachau camp general would play any music by Mahler in his private office during his final hours, especially little-known piece and, most significantly, a piece which was rediscovered by Alma Mahler in the 1960s and premiered in the U.S. in 1964 by the Galimir Quartet and Peter Serkin, all Jewish musicians. A majority of audiences not

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<sup>357</sup> Walker, *Understanding Soundtracks Through Film Theory*, 306.

<sup>358</sup> "Dachau," *Music and The Holocaust*,  
<https://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/music-early-camps/dachau/>.



familiar with Mahler would have overlooked this, but by adding this contingency, the film instills distrust in this memory on a semantic layer designed for music lovers, Mahler scholars, and those willing to dig deeper into the film’s details. This peculiarity is aided visually as papers float across the room giving the memory a dream-like effect. The onscreen action here is bolstered musically by descending chromatic runs in the violin and viola depicted in Figure 10 which additionally give the viewer a sense of falling or “going down a rabbit hole.” This becomes especially true as the protagonist becomes increasingly untrustworthy.



Figure 10: Violin, Viola, and Cello at mm. 46–47 in Gustav Mahler’s Quartet for Piano and Strings in A Minor.<sup>359</sup>

In his article “Now a Major Soundtrack! - Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*,” Bruhn argues that it is also possible that Mahler’s music in this scene is a conscious musical choice to achieve a sort of musical revenge from the Jewish composer’s music who in the scene defies and outlives the Nazi officer metaphorically. Bruhn states, “it also has the function of showing that the memories are only *fata*

<sup>359</sup> Gustav Mahler, *Klavierquartett a-moll* (München, Germany: G. Henle Verlag, 2015).

*morgana*, and that there are deeper historical and ideological reasons behind the protagonists' destroyed perception of reality."<sup>360</sup>

The second occurrence of the piece harkens back to the first use of the borrowing in Cawley's residence. In a dream, Teddy walks into Cawley's room and finds Laeddis sitting by the fireplace instead of Dr. Naehring. Teddy's duplicity is visually represented by Laeddis's face which has a long scar running across it, dividing it in two. The final use of the Quartet during the ending credits forces the viewer to reflect on the previous two moments after Teddy is revealed to be Andrew Laeddis and his experiences in Dachau were merely well constructed fantasies. It could also be argued that the excerpt from Adams "The Lake" from *My Father Knew Charles Ives* can be placed in this category as its title, "The Lake" holds thematic significance in itself when it is revealed that Teddy's children were drowned in the lake behind their house.

#### V. Underscoring the Gothic Atmosphere of *Shutter Island*: Major Themes, Emphasizing Duplicity through Diegetic Ambiguity, and Supporting Tone

Aside from Mahler's work and the more 'conventional' music that inspires empathy for Teddy, several experimental works are used to enhance the dark and eerie setting while emphasizing the film's central themes. As stated, a prominent theme of the film is truth. The audience spends the entirety of the film guessing which truth to believe. The truth and many of the characters' motivations, in fact, feel fluid. This fluidity is presented in the boundaries between fantasy and reality and elements of the plot such as Solando's physicality as she seems to appear and reappear in different forms throughout

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<sup>360</sup> Bruhn, "Now a Major Soundtrack!", 328–334.

the film. Another significant theme is nature with a major motif being water. Water is referenced visually, through dialogue, and through music and diegetic sound to denote Teddy's past. Ashecliffe, being on an island, is surrounded by it. The theme of truth being fluid is intrinsically connected to water as both correspond literally and metaphorically with the concept of fluidity. The water motif also serves as a metaphor for Teddy's regression. For example, the film immediately establishes Teddy's aversion to water. Teddy's journey is accompanied by rain that escalates to a hurricane and before he can heal and accept his past, he needs to swim through water to reach the lighthouse. He becomes gradually more and more immersed in water until he finally acknowledges the trauma of Dolores drowning their children, which he repressed. It is not until the last scene of the film where the rain and clouds dissipate, that Teddy or at least the audience finally assumes clarity.

Repetition, also related to water, is another theme that will reoccur throughout this analysis. This alludes to Teddy's compulsion to relive his fantasy as a way of avoiding reliving his family tragedy through several dimensions. Dr. Cawley explains that Teddy has "reset" himself and states, "like a tape playing over and over on an endless loop."<sup>361</sup> This is reinforced through visual motifs and dialogue. For example, there are several shots of spinning turntables, film recording, and phrases such as the line that Teddy says to Dolores before finding their drowned children, "why are you all wet, baby?" which is

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<sup>361</sup> Scorsese, Robbie Robertson, Paramount Pictures Corporation, Phoenix Pictures, Sikelia Productions, Appian Way, and Paramount Home Entertainment. *Shutter Island*, Widescreen. ed. (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2010), 2:06:26–2:06:29.

repeated throughout the film. Like the reiteration of notes with different timbral effects in Scelsi's *Quattro Pezzi* discussed below, repetitive phrases and figures can be found in many of the film's cues to support Teddy's repeating fantasy. Repetition is an especially relevant feature in the borrowings associated with Teddy's fragmented reality in the following category. The film uses these materials themes in a porous way and thus creates a recognizable continuum among sound effect, image, dialogue, and music.<sup>362</sup>

Several pieces have more literal connections to water such as Erickson's *Pacific Sirens* with its recorded and processed ocean sounds or Marshall's *Fog Tropes* which has sounds indicative of fog-horns. The borrowing from *Pacific Sirens* for instrumental ensemble and two-channel tape begins at the piece's start and runs till two minutes in. It is used only once when Teddy and Chuck run through the woods to escape a looming storm.<sup>363</sup> Faint ocean sounds that resemble white noise and other related sound textures are heard in tandem with loud diegetic sounds such as wind, falling branches, rain, and thunder. Alongside ocean sounds, Erickson uses limited improvisation.<sup>364</sup> He had experimented with acoustic timbres and sound structure through the confrontation of live instrumental sound resources and their "reflection" either on tape or echoed by similar

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<sup>362</sup> Chion, 487.

<sup>363</sup> Robert Erickson's *Pacific Sirens* occurs at Cue 15 (0:40:20–0:42:10).

<sup>364</sup> Erickson's idea was furthered by his students including Pauline Oliveros. He experimented with taped sound-collages, natural sounds including speech-sounds and limited improvisation from 1968 to 1978. See Charles Shere, "Erickson, Robert," *Grove Music Online*, October 16, 2013.

instruments.<sup>365</sup> Erickson felt composers should compose their environments, meaning the source tape for the work should hold as much significance for its representation of sonic environments as its acoustic richness.<sup>366</sup> Similarly, *Fog Tropes*, written for two trumpets, two horns, two trombones amplified and tape, is used only once in the opening of the film lasting 48 seconds.<sup>367</sup> In the late 1970s, Marshall began experimenting with live instrumental performances and tape and or electronic processing. Like Wendy Carlos, Marshall studied with Vladimir Ussachevsky at Columbia University. He had also studied Indonesian gamelan music, the influence of which may be heard in the slowed-down sense of time and use of melodic repetitions used in many of his works. Marshall developed a series of “live electronic” pieces such as *Gradual Requiem* (1980) where he blended tape collages, extended vocal techniques, Indonesian flutes, and keyboards. He often implemented taped sounds from what he defines as “the real world.” *Fog Tropes* was premiered by the San Francisco New Music ensemble directed by John Adams in Adams’ “new and unusual” series.<sup>368</sup> It was an unusual piece indeed as the audience hears echoing horn calls which conjure imagery of fog horns and boats in the distance. In addition to bolstering themes of water, both pieces are designed to be diegetically ambiguous in a thematically significant way. For example, in the case of *Fog Tropes* the

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<sup>365</sup> He first embarked on this with his *Piece for Bells and Toy Pianos* for toy piano and tape. See John MacKay, “On Robert Erickson: On the Music of Robert Erickson: A Survey and Some Selected Analyses,” *Perspectives of New Music* 26, no. 2 (1988), 66.

<sup>366</sup> MacKay, “On Robert Erickson,” 66.

<sup>367</sup> Ingram Marshall’s *Fog Tropes* occurs at Cue 2 (0:00:50–0:02:57).

<sup>368</sup> See “Ingram Marshall,” *Ingram Marshall*, <http://www.ingrammarshall.net/long>.

audience may assume this is music, then a boat appears from the mist via a wide shot, immediately declaring there are two realities or perspectives to this film and things are not always as they seem. This is furthered by our introduction to Teddy in the following scene. The audience first views Teddy via an over-the-shoulder shot staring at this reflection in the mirror, suggesting his duplicity. Furthermore, he states, “Pull yourself together Teddy.” This suggests there are multiple opposing sides to Teddy. The opposite occurs with *Pacific Sirens* as the music can be mistaken for diegetic environmental sounds. The audience connects these sounds and images to perceive what Chion called “added value,” being a sensory, informational, semantic, or expressive value in which a sound forces the spectator to project onto an image.<sup>369</sup> This deception through diegetic ambiguity and misleading sound sources suggests to the audience not to trust the hero or information given to us.

Another example of this technique is achieved through the ambient textures, low-pitched rumbles, and unidentifiable sounds of Eno’s “Lizard Point” from his 1974 album *Ambient 4: on Land* which occurs once while Teddy and Chuck are dropped off at Ashecliffe after getting trapped in the storm.<sup>370</sup> Eno describes ambient music in his words,

Over the past three years, I have become interested in the use of music as  
ambience and have come to believe that it is possible to produce material that can

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<sup>369</sup> Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 466.

<sup>370</sup> Brian Eno’s “Lizard Point” occurs at Cue 18 (0:48:48–49:00).

be used thus without being in any way compromised. To create a distinction between my own experiments in this area and the products of the various purveyors of canned music. I have begun using the term ambient music. An ambience is defined as an atmosphere, or surrounding influence: a tint. My intention is to produce original pieces ostensibly (but not exclusively) for particular items and situation with a view to building up a small but versatile catalogue of environmental music suited to a wide variety of moods and atmospheres.<sup>371</sup>

In this period, Eno's creative process involved in his words, "feeding unheard tape recordings into the mix, constant feeding and remixing, subtracting, and "composting."<sup>372</sup> He incorporated more elements of *musique concrète* with environmental sound sources like distant cicadas and pebbles rubbed against wood.<sup>373</sup> This "catalogue of environmental music" proved advantageous for the objectives of this film where the audience is left guessing what is music and what is sound effect analogous with what is real and what is delusion. The treatment of these cues can be compared to R. Murray Schafer and Cage's perspectives. Both believed that the sonic environment can be a part

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<sup>371</sup> Eno's 1978 album *Ambient I: Music for Airports* represented Eno's ideas on environmental music. In his book *On Some Faraway Beach: The Life and Times of Brian Eno*, David Shepard states with this album, 'ambient' music had arrived. See David Sheppard, *On Some Faraway Beach: The Life and Times of Brian Eno* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009), 278.

<sup>372</sup> David Sheppard, 356.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

of a composition in itself. This technique of blending sound effect and music reappears throughout the film and will be traced in this chapter.

Other borrowings allude to water through repetition of notes, string oscillations, ghostly textures, repetitive figures, and fluidity suggested by simultaneously moving lines, rhythms, and timbres. Such is the case of Scelsi's works *Quattro Pezzi per Orchestra* and *Uaxuctum: The Legend of the Mayan City Which They Themselves Destroyed for Religious Reasons*. An excerpt of *Quattro Pezzi* is heard once in *Shutter Island*. It spans from the opening to around m. 20, one minute and a half into the piece.<sup>374</sup> Repeated brass swells reiterated on the same note accompany Teddy questioning Cawley on Solando's disappearance. Scelsi's compositional style leading up to *Quattro Pezzi* is marked by the concept of depth, getting inside a sound, or what he called the sonic third dimension. He sought to expand tonality by focusing on one or two pitches that he treated like focal points. He repeated these pitches while subjecting them to subtle modifications in intensity, timbres, dynamics and pitch. *Quattro Pezzi*, in particular, focuses on gradual expansion of a sound, its movement, and pulsation. They are devoid of abrupt changes or modifications.<sup>375</sup> The music's repetitions are used to provide quasi-stinger effects that influence the audience on a visceral level. Its microtonal oscillations and sustained tremolos have also long been employed in scoring methods for horror. Furthermore, these sonic oscillations additionally correspond with the film's water motif by unintentionally mimicking the ebb and flow of water.

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<sup>374</sup> Scelsi's *Quattro Pezzi* occurs at Cue 7 (0:14:55–0:15:12).

<sup>375</sup> Franco Sciannameo and Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini, eds., *Music as Dream: Essays on Giacinto Scelsi* (Blue Ridge Summit: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 67.



Like Penderecki's *Fluorescences*, Scelsi's *Uaxuctum*, complements the film's stormy atmosphere with what Chion and Schaeffer call a "complex mass," meaning the audience cannot hear a precise or recognizable pitch in the excerpt used.<sup>376</sup> The borrowing from *Uaxuctum* is used twice and begins at the opening of the piece to around m. 15, one minute into the piece. Its first appearance is heard when Teddy climbs down the cliffside at the end of the island to rescue Chuck, who he had believed to have fallen off the edge. The audience hears quiet brass swells. A high drone and whispering sound akin to gusts of wind are coupled visually with hundreds of rats crawling over jagged rocks. These unusual vocal timbres, like breathing guttural and nasal sounds, are some of several techniques Scelsi conceived for four vocal soloists. These ghostly vocal effects are reminiscent of the chanting and whispering heard in Penderecki's *Utrenja* in *The Shining*. Diegetic squealing sounds from the rats and crashing wave sounds contribute to the dark visual atmosphere. The second appearance of *Uaxuctum* occurs while Teddy searches for Chuck back at the hospital after he suspects he is being experimented on at the lighthouse. Low brass swells grow in intensity and dissonant intervals grow and then die away.<sup>377</sup> These textures, removed from their original context evoke the white noise associated with the ocean while amplifying the film's dark tone.

The textures taken from *Uaxuctum* can be compared to those of Penderecki's *Fluorescences*, and Ligeti's *Lontano* which further enhance the film narrative's tone through their subtly changing textures and experimental timbres. These pieces support the

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<sup>376</sup> Chion, *Film: A Sound Art*, 472.

<sup>377</sup> There are also moments where the music synchronizes with the images. For example, the camera pans to the lighthouse and is coupled with a brass stinger.

themes mentioned with diegetic ambiguity and fluid textures with sections that exemplify the concept of “complex mass” or Smalley’s “remote surrogacy” where the sound source and cause become unknown and unknowable.<sup>378</sup> *Fluorescences* and *Lontano*’s textures, like the oscillations, tremolo and other timbral effects of Scelis’s music, additionally generate suspense alongside thematic support. Chapter 2 discussed how low and high-pitched drones have been used to create suspense since *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Scholars such as Neil Lerner and K.J. Donnelly have theorized this is due to their connection to intrinsic sounds of the human body. Lerner expressed, “It’s the sound of dread ... and that’s something that I think triggers fear in all kinds of creatures.”<sup>379</sup> In contrast to “Lizard Point’s” low ambient textures, the borrowings from Penderecki’s *Fluorescences* and Ligeti’s *Lontano* consist of high-pitched sustained string sounds. *Fluorescences* is heard during a surreal dream sequence at Cue 25 wherein Teddy speaks to Solando.<sup>380</sup> This piece uses extensive and unusual orchestration.<sup>381</sup> Schwinger argues that it was

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<sup>378</sup> Denis Smalley, “Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes,” *Organised Sound: An International Journal of Music Technology* 2, no. 2 (1997), 112.

<sup>379</sup> Neil Lerner and Adam Epstein, “‘The Drone of Dread’: The Sound that Makes You Nervous Whenever it Pops up in a Movie,” *Quartz*, May 9, 2019, <https://qz.com/quartz/1613673/the-drone-of-dread-that-movie-sound-you-hear-every-time-something-bad-is-about-to-happen/>.

<sup>380</sup> Penderecki’s *Fluorescences* occurs at Cue 25 (1:00:50–1:01:20). The excerpt is used once from one minute into the piece to one minute and forty seconds.

<sup>381</sup> *Fluorescences* is written for quadrupled woodwinds, six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, and two tubas, piano, 24 violins, eight of each violas and cellos, and six double-basses, saws, an alarm siren, a *guiro* (a south American instrument made of a hollowed gourd), electric bells, penny whistles, a thunder sheet, typewriter, and Javanese gong.

Penderecki's farthest point in inventing new sounds and distorting traditional instrumental sounds. He explains that the work transitions from soft to hard timbres, and from translucent to opaque textures through contrast and overlapping.<sup>382</sup> Furthermore, Schwinger states that this piece pays homage to Luigi Russolo and the Italian futurists with its instrumentation.<sup>383</sup> In an interview with Richard Dufallo, Penderecki explained that in *Fluorescences* he "tried to avoid the 'normal' sound of an orchestra by only using 'noise' instead of 'normal' sound. There is no form, it's very open. It's really written against everything. It's a very rebellious piece."<sup>384</sup> Robertson only treats the viewer to a subtle wavering texture in high strings, despite this textural diversity. The short cue's uneven sound surface, except for its *piano* dynamic, sounds similar to the opening of *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* where different string instruments enter, each with their highest note possible.

The four uses of Ligeti's *Lontano* additionally provide this high-pitched drone effect.<sup>385</sup> As discussed in relation to *The Shining*, *Lontano* exemplifies Ligeti's concept of micropolyphony, which he developed working with white noise in subtractive and additive sound synthesis during his time at the electronic music studio in Cologne. The

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<sup>382</sup> He stated, "from soft to hard timbres, from translucent to opaque noises ... reinvestigated through fields of contrast, adjacent and overlapping, in such a way as to achieve formal correspondence to passages resumed and audibly reversed." Schwinger, 141.

<sup>383</sup> Schwinger, 140–142.

<sup>384</sup> Richard Dufallo, *Trackings: Composers Speak with Richard Dufallo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 346.

<sup>385</sup> Ligeti's *Lontano* occurs at Cue 1 (0:00:00–0:00:48), Cue 8 (0:15:29–0:17:03), Cue 11 (0:26:20–0:27:34), and Cue 40 (1:44:34–1:45:25).

use of *Lontano* proved to be highly effective in *The Shining*, one of Scorsese's favorite horror films. Being the first musical excerpt in *Shutter Island*, from the opening credits to the end, the piece sets the tone for the entirety of the film. The first cue, which begins in the middle of the movement, around m. 43 and fades out around m. 60. is notably the same excerpt famously used in *The Shining*. A high sustained harmonic in muted violins are joined by the low growling sustained pitch from the contrabassoon and contrabass clarinet with imperceptible attacks before fading out so the audience only hears the diegetic lapping of waves while the screen transitions from black to grey. Here, the two sustained pitches could be interpreted as representing the film's duality. In its second occurrence at cue 8, the excerpt begins at the opening of the work. A single note is heard on flute which is gradually joined by other woodwind voices, forming a dense block of sound while Teddy searches the grounds for any leads on Solando.<sup>386</sup>

The third and fourth cue wherein Teddys begins to dream after leaving Cawley's residence with Chuck provides such suspenseful effects as oscillating high strings and sustained high notes. Here, the excerpt begins around letter D almost two minutes into the piece and lasts two minutes before it overlaps with "Cry" and fades out around F. It immediately transitions into Richter's *On the Nature of Daylight*. The high string textures quietly undermine Johnnie Ray's "Cry" before taking dynamic precedence. These mid-

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<sup>386</sup> The cue here starts with the opening of the piece and fades away at letter H, three and a half minutes into the piece. Teddy asks if the police had checked the caves by the water and the brass swells to a loud volume as the camera pans to the caves on the side of a jagged cliff by crashing waves. The high harmonic on violins and low growling pitches are heard again while the camera pans from Teddy, Chuck and the police to the lighthouse, highlighting its mysterious nature.

century popular songs are more in line with Scorsese's previous films which deployed this genre of music. "Cry" is a 1950s Rock 'N' roll song with a slow melancholic vocal line accompanied by a bluesy ensemble. The lyrics describe a heartbreak and uncertainty of what is real and what is a dream. This is evident in the lyrics: "If your sweetheart sends a letter of goodbye, it's no secret you'll feel better if you cry, when waking from a bad dream, don't you sometime think it's real? But its only false emotions that you feel."<sup>387</sup> The use of this song creates a discordance where the diegetic and non-diegetic music clash.<sup>388</sup> *Lontano*'s suspenseful oscillating high strings are also present at the final cue which begins around S, around six and a half minutes into *Lontano*. The piece fades in with a diverse range of textures using indiscernible sound sources, tone clusters, and wavering string glissandi as Daniels runs up a tall spiral staircase after finally breaking into the lighthouse at cue 40. These textures are heard alongside suspenseful diegetic sounds such as rushed footsteps, clanging on metal stairs, and howling wind. The cue ends suddenly, synchronized with Teddy whipping open a door to reveal the facility's lead psychiatrist who he believes to be guilty of kidnapping his partner, Chuck. Ligeti's slowly morphing micropolyphonic textures amid these cues additionally correspond with the film's theme of fluidity while corresponding with previously established horror scoring standards. The textures from Ligeti, Penderecki, Scelsi, and Eno's music do not provide conventional melody or harmony and have

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<sup>387</sup> Kohlman's "Cry" is heard at Cue 12 (0:27:34–0:27:59) and Cue 19 (0:48:38–0:49:00) when Teddy and Chuck receive patient uniforms while their suits are being cleaned. Whether the cue is diegetic or non-diegetic is unclear, as both is possible. The music is played from an off-screen radio or is part of Teddy's visions.

<sup>388</sup> Chion, 474.

sounds that are difficult to decipher compared to such popular tunes as “Cry.”<sup>389</sup> Indeed, the experimental textures of these excerpts enhance atmosphere through *musique concrète*, micropolyphonic textures, extended techniques, and unusual orchestration. The music implemented to correspond with Teddy’s unpredictable inner state explores this further.

## VI. The Music of Dreams: Paralleling Teddy’s Inner State Through Experimental Textures and Repetitive Elements

While Mahler’s music nurtured audience distrust in Teddy’s memory through an extra-musical semantic layer and *Fog Tropes* through tricking the audience’s perception of the sound source’s origin, Robertson and Scorsese reinforce this distrust through experimental textures that parallel Teddy’s repression. Again, aside from furthering the plot, these textures serve another purpose standardized by horror films of the past like *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* which is to create a sense of disequilibrium on an instinctive level. While the previously mentioned pieces achieve this as well, this category focuses on excerpts that occur in dream sequences and are more directly associated with Teddy’s unsteady perception of reality. This includes borrowings from experimental works such as Adams’s *Christian Zeal and Activity*, Paik’s *Hommage à John Cage*, and Hodgkinson’s *Fragor* which demonstrate Teddy’s mental state through their fragmented and unpredictable sounds. As explored in chapter 2, certain non-linear phenomena contribute to this tension as the listener is taken by surprise. Most listeners are anticipating music that proceeds in a more normative temporal way with harmonies

and melodies that have familiar shapes and harmonic resolutions. As discussed previously, nonlinear phenomena such as unusual frequency ranges, abrupt frequency changes, up or down leaps, and white noise has long been used in horror cinematic sound to subvert audience expectations. In *The Exorcist* rough sound surfaces, unexpectedly varying intervals, and combinations of short and long sounds proved to be highly effective in this respect. Listeners are used to finding patterns and when their behaviors are challenged it can affect the viewers on an instinctive level. *Shutter Island* made advantageous use of this effect. The use of experimental music is an aural manifestation of Teddy's overloaded sense of reality.

Such is the case for *Hommage à John Cage*, which occurs twice throughout the film and provides an assortment of distorted voices and unidentifiable sounds.<sup>390</sup> Lasting less than one minute, the excerpt is first heard during a jump cut to a closeup shot of frozen bodies including children at cue 5 from Teddy's 'memories' of Dachau.<sup>391</sup> At cue 24, it briefly occurs when Teddy dreams. Visually, the excerpt is coupled again with a shot of frozen bodies toppling out of train cars only through a high angle shot with Teddy in the frame instead of a closeup. Paik, was an experimental multimedia artist who worked with Merce Cunningham and Cage in pieces like *Variation V* (1965). Paik even cut off Cage's tie in his performance of *Etude for Pianoforte* in 1960. Prior to that performance, Paik created a homage to the composer by using audiotape to attack

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<sup>390</sup> Paik's *Hommage à John Cage* occurs at Cue 5 (0:11:56–0:12:00) and Cue 24 (0:58:59–1:01:20).

<sup>391</sup> The spectator hears fragments childlike voices which could either be emanating from Teddy's consciousness or be nondiegetic music.

traditional musical instrumentation and compositional practices and by splicing together piano, screaming, and other sound effects.<sup>392</sup> The warped and disconnected sounds suggest the absence of pattern or predictability. The sounds pass by so quickly the listener has no time to consider the origin of the sound sources or what sounds might come next. This is similar to seeing through Teddy's eyes where the past and the present, are presented as intermingled and disjointed.

A similar effect is felt in the film's use of Hodgkinson's experimental work *Fragor*, which is used once in one of the film's more violent scenes. The 21-second excerpt fades in as Teddy suddenly chases and attacks a fellow inmate. Teddy's sudden and inexplicable burst of violence is startling. A rough sound surface with irregular intervals is heard as Teddy struggles with the inmate.<sup>393</sup> One of Hodgkinson's many independent compositions that utilize electroacoustic sounds, *Fragor* is written for computer-modified cello and electric guitar.<sup>394</sup> Hodgkinson states,

I was working around the sound you get on a fiddle when you do flageolet glissandi: I was drawn not so much to the shower of harmonics itself as to the resultant mysterious phrasing effect. I looked for a way to extrapolate from this

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<sup>392</sup> "Nam June Paik," *Guggenheim Collection Online*, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/nam-june-paik>.

<sup>393</sup> Tim Hodgkinson's *Fragor* occurs at Cue 30 (1:09:05–1:09:26).

<sup>394</sup> Robertson may have known Hodgkinson as the co-founder of the experimental musical group Henry Cow. See "Tim Hodgkinson-Composer," *Tim Hodgkinson*, <http://www.timhodgkinson.co.uk/information.html>.



sound using a computer. So, this is a reverse-direction movement to the idea of making an acoustic instrument sound more like an electronic one.<sup>395</sup>

In comparison, Adams's *Christian Zeal and Activity*, used twice, has some repetitive, unpredictable elements but is juxtaposed by continuous music. Again, Teddy's inability to break out of his loop is evoked musically through repetitive elements here. *Christian Zeal and Activity* was originally conceived as a single movement from his larger work *American Standard*.<sup>396</sup> The Arthur Sullivan hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is combined with a recording of a radio broadcast covering religious fundamentalism. The excerpt's first appearance covers 19 seconds, starting around the four-minute mark of the piece when the tape recording enters. Quiet strings under a recording of a man's voice repeating, "what's wrong with a withered hand" is heard as Teddy, who is suffering from a medication withdrawal, is placed on a bed by hospital staff. While the music is non-diegetic, one might assume the recorded radio broadcast aspect of the work is diegetic and emanating from some offscreen radio or television. The music appears to be unempathetic in relation to the chaotic scene of staff securing patients to their beds as thunder flashes from the windows. Perhaps the most fascinating use of this cue is heard during the revelatory scene at the lighthouse. It takes place at cue 41 when Teddy remembers returning to his home to find that Dolores had drowned their

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<sup>395</sup> Tim Hodgkinson, "Album Notes," *Tim Hodgkinson*, <http://www.timhodgkinson.co.uk/album.pdf>.

<sup>396</sup> Adam's *Christian Zeal and Activity* occurs Cue 21 (0:56:33–0:56:52), Cue 41 interspersed by "Tomorrow Night" (01:57:27–1:58:24).

children. Leading up to the cue, quiet harmonic chords of Schnittke's *Four Hymns: II for Cello and Double Bass* are disrupted by the bluesy tune "Tomorrow Night." Like "Cry" the music establishes time and place with its American 1950s rock n' roll sound at Cue 42 (1:57:49–1:58:04). The lyrics heard are foreboding and describe uncertainty about the future, providing commentary on Teddy's inner turmoil. The song is overtaken via audio-dissolve by Sullivan's hymn with the repeated phrase "and he said, "'take up your bed and walk but God?'" as Dolores is seen sitting in front of the lake.

The text in itself is especially relevant here. The repeated phrase refers to The Pool of Bethesda from John 5:8 where Jesus sees a man laying by the pool who has been invalid for thirty-eight years. The man says he cannot enter the pool when the water is stirred as someone else goes before him when he tries. Jesus tells him to "get up, pick up your bed, and walk." The text here corresponds with going into the pool to heal. Similarly, Teddy must go back into the lake and accept this trauma to heal. The piece is suddenly disrupted by a melancholic cello melody emphasized by strummed chords on double bass from *Four Hymns*. Whether *Christian Zeal and Activity* is diegetic or nondiegetic, is, again unclear. The repeated phrase is reminiscent of a record skipping and assumedly serves two functions. First, to create tension through the nature of the sounds themselves and second, to emphasize Teddy's mental stasis as he is unable to accept the past and move forward. Adams experimented with notation and aesthetic possibilities of involving political messages in music in *American Standard*. He was aware of Ives's experimentation with polystylistic layering of American vernacular material. He may have also been drawn to Christian Wolff's interest in deconstructing

and rearranging vernacular music in the 1970s.<sup>397</sup> It is possible that the greatest influence on this piece was Gavin Bryars who Adams had close contact with at this time.<sup>398</sup>

Here, the subtle harmonic textures and repeated *pesante* pizzicato on double-bass of Schnittke's *Four Hymns*. They greatly amplify the desolation of Teddy's plight as he is forced to relieve this trauma again. Often associated with polystylism, Schnittke was a part of the 'unofficial' music world in the U.S.S.R., along with composers like Arvo Pärt, and Valentin Silvestrov. Peter Schmelz notes that, from 1964 to the early 1970s, these composers distanced themselves from serialism to experiment with references to tonal works from the past to indeterminacy and other methods of applying spontaneity into their music.<sup>399</sup> Schnittke's turn toward polystylism relied on juxtapositions of different genres, especially the Baroque period, and idioms culled from nonclassical genres like jazz and tango.<sup>400</sup> *Four Hymns* stands out in comparison to polystylistic works around the same time such as *Quasi una Sonata* and *Serenade* in 1968, but still retains unusual timbres and juxtapositions of sound that are used twice at moments where Teddy finds himself closer to the truth. Aside from this employment of the work during the revelatory

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<sup>397</sup> Michael Palmese, "A Portrait of John Adams as a Young Man: The 1970s Juvenilia," *American Music* 37, no. 2 (2019), 245–255.

<sup>398</sup> Bryars' experimental work *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971) similarly pairs an unobtrusive string texture with 'found sound' in the shape of a tape recording based on religious content. A crucial difference between these two works is that Adams paired the tape recording with another person's music while Bryars composed around the found sound. See *Ibid.*, 256–257.

<sup>399</sup> Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 216–217.

<sup>400</sup> Peter Schmelz, "Alfred Schnittke." *Music Oxford Bibliographies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

scene at the lighthouse, it is used as Teddy and Chuck contemplate what Ashecliffe could be hiding inside the lighthouse.<sup>401</sup> Perhaps this was intended as a small leitmotif. Here, the cue begins at the start of the piece with quiet low sustained notes on cello and double bass as Chuck hypothesizes what could be hidden in the lighthouse. As their conversation continues, more animated, cello and bass strum chords grow faster and louder. Diegetic sounds of howling wind and rain gain in intensity.

*The quiet harmonics and forte reiterations on double-bass from *Four Hymns* can be compared to the slow continuous timpani and ethereal textures of Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*, the most frequently used musical excerpt with five cues.<sup>402</sup> Inspired by and written to be performed in Houston's Rothko Chapel, the piece is considered one of Feldman's best known works.<sup>403</sup> It has five sections, scored for soprano, alto, mixed chorus, percussion, celesta, and viola. Inspired by paintings, it achieves an atmospheric quality through textless singing, frequent change of meter, static quality of harmony, lots of silence, dark timbres, subtlety, and importance of tone color. Feldman focused on quiet*

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<sup>401</sup> Alfred Schnittke's *Four Hymns: II for Cello and Double Bass* occurs at 17 (0:40:20–0:42:10) and Cue 42 (1:57:30–1:59:00).

<sup>402</sup> Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* occurs at Cue 9 as Teddy questions the hospital staff (0:17:18–0:20:12), Cue 14 where Teddy tells Chuck that Laeddis lit a fire, killing his wife. The piece is barely audible over diegetic rain sounds. (0:38:48–0:40:20), Cue 29 The excerpts third appearance is heard while Teddy and Chuck go to investigate ward C where he believes Laeddis is. (1:05:09–1:05:51), Cue 32 (1:12:42–1:14:46), Cue 34 (1:21:06–1:21:56).

<sup>403</sup> Rothko applied color in large areas or 'fields', soft rectangles floating on a stained field suggesting the impression of constant motion. The octagonal chapel showcases his paintings, 14 purple/black toned paintings with each painting varying in appearance according to the light.

dynamic levels, fluid meter, and sparse vertical textures.<sup>404</sup> The cue, like in the case of *Four Hymns*, occurs at moments when Teddy gets increasingly closer to the truth. Evidence for this can be found in the second appearance of the borrowing wherein Teddy tells Chuck that Laeddis killed his wife. The piece is barely audible as it competes with the sound of pouring rain. The visual and auditory presence of rain here is again foreshadowing for the viewer. These ethereal textures provide a mysterious mood as the slow timpani rhythms bring to mind a ticking clock and reinforces Teddy's, and thus the viewer's, anticipation of finding the truth.

The repetitive elements included in Cage's prepared piano works, Penderecki's Symphony No. 3, Harrison's Nocturne and Richter's *On the Nature of Daylight* can be seen as an aural corollary to this theme as well. Cage's music for prepared piano, Cage's *Root of an Unfocus* and *Music for Marcel Duchamp*, highlight the general strangeness of the film's dramaturgy thanks to the pieces' unusual and quiet half piano and half percussive plucking sounds. During the 1940s, Cage composed many pieces for prepared piano. He wrote one of his first prepared piano pieces, *Bacchanale* (1940), for a dance by Syvilla Fort while teaching at the Cornish School in Seattle. Dissatisfied with the limited range of piano sounds and remembering Cowell's string piano pieces, Cage placed small bolts, screws, and a fibrous weather stripping between the strings to make the piano sound like a small percussion ensemble. Cage created with these preparations a "gamut"

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<sup>404</sup> Feldman stated, "freedom is best understood by someone like Rothko, who was free to do only one thing-to make a Rothko- and did so over and over again." See Steven Johnson, "Rothko Chapel and Rothko's Chapel," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 2 (1994), 9.

of timbres. The piece contained repetitions and its sections are differentiated by changes in timbre and different rhythmic patterns. After *Bacchanale*, Cage added different sizes and types of screws, bolts, washers and other materials like bamboo, plastic, rubber, cloth, and wood between the strings at certain distances from the damper which broadened the timbres available. He wrote *Root of an Unfocus*, based on an eight-note gamut using screws and bolts, to accompany a dance choreographed by Cunningham. Cunningham's dance was supposed to evoke a consternation with fear. The music seems to embody this emotion through its repetitions, accented tritones, and the shudder sounds created by playing notes that were prepared with long bolts touching the sounding board.<sup>405</sup> *Root of an Unfocus* is first deployed while Teddy dreams of the frozen bodies piled up, falling out of train cars from his memories of Dachau.<sup>406</sup> Among the bodies are Solando and a little girl. The half percussive tritone is synchronized with the girl opening her eyes and continues as Solando and a little girl rise from the pile here at cue 22. The next appearance of the piece at cue 44 accompanies the final, revelatory flashback where Teddy mourns his daughters after he found them drowned by Dolores. The music continues anempathetically as Teddy kills Dolores. Walker points out that the first cue where Teddy's daughter's eyes bears much weight in this flashback. She states, "see this with open eyes, the music 'says' to us, just as Andrew himself must re-see everything."<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> David Nicholls ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 78–79.

<sup>406</sup> John Cage's *Root of an Unfocus* occurs at Cue 22 (0:57:29–0:58:58) and Cue 44 (2:02:00–2:03:55).

<sup>407</sup> Walker, 322.

*Music for Marcel Duchamp*, similarly provides an uncanny quality through its repetitions of unusual timbres.<sup>408</sup> At cue 4 muted tones from the first several seconds of the piece are heard as Teddy and Chuck first enter Ashecliffe. The cue also appears while Teddy examines Solando's room where he finds a cryptic note under her bed that reads the "law of 4, who is 67?"<sup>409</sup> As explored previously, the sonic possibilities of prepared piano have made a splash in horror with films like Bob Clark's *Black Christmas* and the same year as *Shutter Island*, James Wan's *Insidious*. Audiences may have been conditioned to equate these unusual timbres with "scary" music.

While repetition can be seen as representing Teddy's looping reality, Walker asserts that works like Penderecki's *Symphony No. 3* bolsters alignment and trust with Teddy by reaffirming distrust in the island instead of Teddy himself. This is in contrast to Marshall's *Fog Tropes* which undermines his constructed reality.<sup>410</sup> The "Allegro moderato" section of the fourth movement, "Passacaglia," used five times, serves as the central theme for the Island and from Teddy's perspective establishes the island as the true malevolent force.<sup>411</sup> Scorsese explained that the use of the "Passacaglia" is 'the

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<sup>408</sup> Cage's *Music for Marcel Duchamp* occurs three times at Cue 4 (0:09:12–0:09:42), again at Cue 4 from (0:11:02–0:11:56), and at Cue 6 (0:13:06–0:14:37).

<sup>409</sup> This was assumedly planted to help Andrew cope with his trauma and address his past. The law of 4 refers to the fact that the names Edward (Teddy) Daniels and Solando are anagrams for Laeddis and Chanal. Andrew is the 67<sup>th</sup> patient.

<sup>410</sup> Walker, *Understanding Soundtracks*, 303.

<sup>411</sup> Krzysztof Penderecki's "Passacaglia" from *Symphony No. 3* occurs at Cue 3 (0:03:46–0:06:32), Cue 16 (09:42:10–0:44:00), Cue 26 (1:01:21–1:02:00), Cue 39 (1:42:21–1:44:22), and Cue 45 (2:10:01–2:11:00). Penderecki's *Symphony No. 3* was also used in most of the trailers before the film's premiere.

boldest' selection.<sup>412</sup> Prior to *Shutter Island*, Robertson had been inspired by Penderecki for decades. He was so moved by *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* that he began correspondence with the composer.<sup>413</sup> The section builds over a forceful ostinato beginning on a repeated low D *forte* on the cellos and basses an octave apart. It is repeated three times with space in between before it is joined by sustained low E flat from bass clarinet, bassoon, and contrabassoon. At Cue 39, Teddy runs toward the lighthouse to save Chuck. The music here paints Teddy as the classic 'hero.' Some spectators may root for him. But upon closer inspection, the music is merely a representation of the island's danger as Teddy perceives it. Walker argues that the music represents Teddy's anticipation of the end to his regressive fantasy which occurs at the lighthouse where all is revealed.<sup>414</sup>



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<sup>412</sup> Jake Coyle, "Scorsese, Robertson Keep Waltzing with Shutter Island," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, February 17, 2010

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-scorsese-robertson-keep-waltzing-with-shutter-2010feb17-story.html>.

<sup>413</sup> Mark Swed, "Critic's Notebook: 'Shutter Island' as a New-Music Haven," *The Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 2010.

<sup>414</sup> Walker, *Understanding Soundtracks*, 306.



Figure 11: *Shutter Island*, 2010 1:42:56.<sup>415</sup>

This reading can be applied to the first appearance of the movement is when Teddy and Chuck first see the island appear out of the mist. Chuck jokes that they wouldn't be needed if the patients were just "folks running around hearing voices and chasing after butterflies."<sup>416</sup> As the music grows more complex, Teddy and Chuck are escorted past heavy gates, barbed wire, and heavily armed guards. The low strings and brass are accented by the violins playing the same repeated D. Brass enhances the musical moment with staggered entries forming a dense harmonic cluster. The music crescendos to an almost unbearable volume in this opening scene before it is suddenly cut off as we finally arrive at Ashecliffe. One may feel the drama of this excerpt, as it is almost excessive. Walker stated, "The note repetition in itself suggest that the threat is overstated, almost to the point of parody, especially as it is the musical follow-up to Chuck's strange jocularly."<sup>417</sup> Walker further notes that the employment of the excerpt invites critical distance as the music seems to exceed the danger implied visually. One can additionally argue that the repeated octave here could hold thematic meaning in itself as two versions of the same note continue together. Walker makes the comparison that this repeated note can be compared to Morse code and "a sonic representation of Teddy's

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<sup>415</sup> Scorsese, Robbie Robertson, Paramount Pictures Corporation, Phoenix Pictures, Sikelia Productions, Appian Way, and Paramount Home Entertainment. *Shutter Island*. Widescreen.. ed. (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2010), 1:42:56.

<sup>416</sup> Chuck says this at 0:03:40–0:03:44.

<sup>417</sup> Walker, *Understanding Soundtracks*, 305.

struggle to understand his own place in Shutter Island as well as aurally suggesting that he must be repeatedly hit with the truth after his many efforts to escape it.”<sup>418</sup>

Some final pieces in relation to this theme are perhaps the film’s most poignant musical choices, Richter’s “on the Nature of Daylight” and Harrison’s “Nocturne” from his Suite for Symphonic Strings. Walker states that this excerpt, like Mahler’s Quartet and Penderecki’s “Passacaglia,” are associated with Teddy’s Lacanian Ideal-I. Similar to the popular songs “Cry” or “Tomorrow Night,” Richter’s *On the Nature of Daylight* is used during dream-like sequences. The piece is employed a total of three times, each time underscoring an interaction with Dolores.<sup>419</sup> The most notable example occurs at cue 13 wherein a slow string ostinato enters as Dolores tells Teddy that Solando is still here. This, of course, foreshadows the fact that she herself is Solando. Further foreshadowing occurs as blood inexplicably appears on her yellow dress and ash falls from the ceiling. Here, a repetitive violin melody is heard over the ostinato depicted in Figure 12. Water falls through Teddy’s hands as the room around him erupts in flames. The music stops mid-phrase as Teddy wakes from his dream.<sup>420</sup> Richter’s work here creates a compelling counterpoint to what would otherwise be a tableau macabre. Walker notes, “the music

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<sup>418</sup> Walker, 306.

<sup>419</sup> Max Richter’s *On the Nature of Daylight* occurs at Cue 13 (0:27:58–0:30:17), Cue 28 (1:03:54–1:04:03), and Cue 33 (1:14:46–1:16:30).

<sup>420</sup> The piece is from Richter’s album *The Blue Notebooks* written in 2003 and released in 2018. The album is described as a peaceful protest against political, social, and personal brutality. It includes narrated texts from Franz Kafka’s *Blue Octavo Notebooks*. See “The Blue Notebooks,” *Max Richter*, [https://www.maxrichtermusic.com/albums/the-blue-notebooks-15th-anniversary-reissue/?utm\\_campaign=products&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=maxrichtermusic.com](https://www.maxrichtermusic.com/albums/the-blue-notebooks-15th-anniversary-reissue/?utm_campaign=products&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=maxrichtermusic.com).

communicates the impression of a painstaking, patient but longing wait for the ‘answer’ of a melody that will give the ostinato meaning. The music thus reinforces our understanding of Teddy’s perpetual sense of loss.”<sup>421</sup> The minimalistic beauty of the piece sticks with viewers and amplifies the tragedy of Teddy’s situation while further stressing empathy for this unconventional protagonist.



Figure 12: Piano Reduction of Max Richter’s *On the Nature of Daylight*.<sup>422</sup>

A connection can be made between *On the Nature of Daylight* and Harrison’s “Nocturne” with its similarly somber harmonies and repetitive elements. *Suite for Symphonic Strings* is an unusual assemblage of Asian-sounding musical elements and traditional Western forms such as the “Estampe” from Southern France. In the film only the last movement, “Nocturne” is utilized. The excerpt is used only once when Teddy questions Solando, who had mysteriously returned. Melancholic strings enter with descending parallel fifths. A melody and countermelody develop slowly over a drone as

<sup>421</sup> Walker, 309-310.

<sup>422</sup> XxEthan70xX, “On the Nature of Daylight-Max Richter,” *Musescore*, <https://musescore.com/user/11019696/scores/4162051>.

Solando grows upset and yells at Teddy, “who are you?”<sup>423</sup> Here, she speaks for the audience. While the previously mentioned dream sequence with Dolores and Richter’s music established that Laeddis and Solando are still on the island, this scene forces Teddy to come closer to this conclusion himself. As all the characters are presented to the viewer with contrasting motivations and backgrounds, the question “who are you” takes over the viewer’s imagination throughout the film. The search for the answer to this question is innovatively answered through the film’s assemblage of Mahler, mid-century rock, and a wealth of experimental music.

#### VIII. Impact of *Shutter Island*

*Shutter Island* was met with mixed reviews upon its release. In his *New York Times* review “All at Sea, Surrounded by Red Herrings,” A.O. Scott states, “the movie’s central dramatic problem, the unstable boundary between the reality of *Shutter Island* and Teddy’s perception of it becomes less interesting as the story lurches along.”<sup>424</sup> Despite this, the film’s experimental musical choices were praised. In his article “Critic’s Notebook: *Shutter Island* as a New-Music Haven,” Mark Swed stated the film’s “music, sound effects, and cinematography joined to evoke a sense of place and mood as only

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<sup>423</sup> Harrison is known for his borrowing from non-Western music. He contributed to the American gamelan repertoire by composing almost fifty works for this ensemble. He was exposed to gamelan music as early as the 1930s and began to reference its sound in the 1950s after becoming increasingly disillusioned with serial music which he had studied before. See Leta Miller and Fredric Lieberman, “Lou Harrison and the American Gamelan,” *American Music* 17, no. 2 (1999), 148-150.

<sup>424</sup> A.O. Scott, “All at Sea, Surrounded by Red Herrings,” *The New York Times*, February 18, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/19/movies/19shutter.html>.

they can in great cinema and only, these days, when Hollywood looks the other way.”<sup>425</sup> Scorsese’s *Shutter Island* illustrates how experimental music can enhance horror narratives. The use of experimental music highlights the unusual nature of the plot and the setting while also evoking tension, shock, and mystery. Scorsese said, “I wish I could create music, but I can’t. What I can do is put images and music together.”<sup>426</sup> The unusual treatment of experimental and popular songs used are almost manifestations of Teddy’s reality. Robertson’s clever use of diegetic and non-diegetic music keeps the audience guessing. *Shutter Island* illustrates how horror continues to use experimental textures like environmental sounds, *musique concrète*, prepared piano, micropolyphony, indeterminacy, polystylistic layering and extended techniques to enhance their films.

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<sup>425</sup> Mark Swed, “Critic’s Notebook: *Shutter Island*.”

<sup>426</sup> Peter Travers, “Martin Scorsese ‘The Stones Freed my Mind’,” *Rolling Stone*, April 17, 2008, 47.

Table 3: *Shutter Island* Cue Sheet

Cue #	Film Time In/Out	Dramatic Action	Dialogue	Photography	Music	Selected Features	Sound Effect	Diegetic Sound	Experimental Musical Moments
1	0:00:00 - 0:00:48	Opening credits		Opening credits	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	High pitched drone and low growling drone, tritone		Water lapping	Micro polyphony, tone clusters
2	0:00:50 - 0:02:57	Boat coming out of the mist, Teddy is sea-sick. He looks in mirror; says: "pull yourself together"		Boat appears out of white mist via wide shot	<i>Fog Tropes</i> by Marshall	Fog-horn, boat sounds, nondiegetic-diegetic ambiguity		Water lapping, chains	Diegetic ambiguity tricks viewer, live instrumental with tape and or electric processing.
3	0:03:46 - 0:06:32	Teddy and his partner ride up to the facility		Wide, Establishing shot of island, camera glides over water towards dock	" <i>Passacaglia</i> " from Symphony No. 3 by Penderecki	Reiteration of notes an octave apart on low D, accented brass stingers		Footsteps	Tone clusters
4	0:09:14 - 0:09:42	Teddy and partner head to speak with main doctor		High angel shot of inside Ashecliffe	<i>Music for Marcel Duchamp</i> p by Cage (again @ 11:02)	Half pitched-half percussive sounds, muted piano sounds		Buzzing of door	Prepared piano
5	0:11:56 - 0:12:00	Teddy after looking at a picture of Rachel has fragmented visions of previous traumatic situations		Fast almost subliminal shots of frozen bodies	<i>Hommage a John Cage</i> by Paik	Distorted voices with high registers			<i>Musique concrète</i>
6	0:13:06 - 0:14:37	Teddy Examines Rachel's room		Low angel wide shot of room, characters enter from right side	<i>Music for Marcel Duchamp</i> p by J. Cage	Half pitched-half percussive sounds, muted piano sounds		Door closing, foot steps	Prepared piano
7	0:14:55 - 0:15:12 -	Teddy talks to Cawley	"Of course"-Cawley	Wide shot of recreation room. Blue and yellow color scheme	<i>Quattro Pezzi</i> by Scelsi	Quiet horns and low strings		Footsteps, patient yells "why"	Notes, repeated with techniques to change timbre
8	0:15:32 - 0:16:58	Teddy and Chuck search	"If you have any further	Crane shot moves from ocean up to	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	single note on flute is		Waves crashing	Layering pieces, micropolyph

		ground with police for signs of Rachel	question, feel free to join the deputy warden in the search” - Cawley	higher ground where Teddy and Chuck are. Police down below appear bored	<i>Quattro Pezzi</i> by Scelsi (0:15:58 )	gradually joined by woodwind voices, forming sound mass, <i>Quattro Pezzi</i> serves as stinger with accented brass and oscillating strings, low rumbling drone and high-pitched drone			ony, unusual timbral techniques
9	0:17:18 - 0:20:12	Teddy questions staff	“Okay, Rachel Solando, who else does she have to pass to get down here?”- Chuck	Wide, Low angel shot of Teddy and Chuck surrounded by staff wearing white	<i>Rothko Chapel</i> by Feldman	Ghostly textures, low brass accents, rhythmic timpani			static quality, sparse vertical textures, unusual techniques
10	0:19:38 - 0:20:14	Teddy, Chuck, and Cawley attempt to call Dr. Sheehan	“Hello? Hello?”- Phone operator	Extreme close-up of phone operator, out-of-focus	<i>Quattro Pezzi</i> by Scelsi (fades into Mahler)	Accented brass and low strings tremolo, oscillating strings and brass sounds		Rain	Extended techniques to achieve different timbres on the same note
11	0:20:14 - 0:26:20	Teddy and Chuck visit Cawley’s home. Mahler’s music triggers a ‘memory’ with Teddy	“We have been talking Marshall”- Cawley	Scene transitions to high angel crane shot of doctor’s residence	<i>Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor</i> by Mahler (diegetic )	low repeating piano chords and main theme in a moderate tempo, late-romantic style strings, then tempo speeds up		<i>Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor</i> by Mahler on Gramophone	Diegetic ambiguity and extra-musical semantic layer communicates several themes and layers of meaning
12	0:26:20 - 0:27:34	Teddy and Chuck leave the doctors residence		High angle shot of Teddy leaving Cawley’s residence, rain pours. Lights seen through windows illuminating upper half of	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	Loud high oscillating and tremolo strings		Rain, howling wind	Micropolyphony, tone cluster

				frame while lower remains dark					
13	0:27:34 - 0:27:59 -	Teddy dreams of Dolores		Steadicam slowly glides towards sunny window through green hallway	“Cry” sung by Johnnie Ray  <i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti (continues)	Melancholic 1950’s ‘bluesey’ song. Voice moves back and forth between two tones with echo effect. High sustained oscillating strings continues under song			Micropolyphony, tone cluster, layering music of different contexts
14	0:27:58 - 0:30:17	Teddy continues to dream of Dolores. She tells him Rachel and Andrew are still here	“Rachel?” -Teddy	Camera zooms in on extreme Close-up of Teddy in green hallway, ash falls from the top of the frame in fore and background	<i>On the Nature of Daylight</i> by M. Richter	poignant string ostinato		Loon calls, cricket, fire burning	
15	0:38:48 - 0:40:20	Teddy and Chuck discuss Laeddis outside	“When this case came over the wires, I requested it specifically, do you understand?”- Teddy	Close up of Teddy from behind a wire fence, rain falls in the foreground	<i>Rothko Chapel</i> by Feldman	Ghostly textures, low brass accents, rhythmic timpani		Rain	static quality, sparse vertical textures, unusual techniques
16	0:40:20 - 0:42:10	Teddy and Chuck escape storm		Medium shot of Chuck and Teddy standing amidst graveyard, branches blowing behind them in storm, dark skies	<i>Pacific Sirens</i> by Erickson	ocean sounds that resemble white noise and other remote textures are heard in tandem with loud diegetic sounds		wind, falling branches, rain, and thunder	Environmental sounds, found sounds performed on tape, orchestra imitates environmental sounds
17	0:42:10 - 0:44:00	Teddy explains his motives for taking case, stating he		Wide shot, dark tress and snow on each side of the frame, soldiers appear from	“Passacaglia” from Symphony No. 3 by	Reiteration of 3 low <i>pesante</i> , D an octave apart on double-		Screaming, gunshots	Tone clusters



		doesn't want to kill Laeddis but tells him his conspiracy theories about hospital, Flashback infiltrating Dachau		white mist in distance	Penderecki	bass cello, accented brass stingers			
18	0:47:18 - 0:48:34	Chuck tells Teddy hospital must be hiding something sinister at lighthouse	"No, no, no boss. Luck doesn't work that way" - Chuck	Over-the-shoulder shot of Chuck circling Teddy	<i>Four Hymns II: for Cello and Double Bass</i> by Schnittke	cello and bass pizz. Get faster and louder in tandem with diegetic sounds.		Rain and thunder grow in intensity	
19	0:48:48 - 0:49:00	Teddy and Chuck change into patient uniforms		Teddy and Chuck walk toward camera steam hangs in upper third of frame	<i>Lizard Point</i> by Eno  (Fades into "Cry" sung by Ray)	Low ambient drone		Water drips	Indeterminacy, environmental sounds
20	0:48:38 - 0:49:00	Teddy and Chuck change into patient uniforms		Medium shot of Chuck and Teddy walking to left side of frame	"Cry" sung by Ray	Melancholic 1950's "bluesey" song. Voice moves back and forth between two tones with echo effect. Gradually fades away			Extreme reverb effect, diegetic ambiguity
21	0:55:04 - 0:56:33	Teddy questions Rachel who mysteriously returns. Teddy then has migraine in Cawley's office	"Who the fuck are you" -Solando 1	Over-the-shoulder shot of Rachel screaming at Teddy	<i>Suite for Symphonic Strings: Nocturne</i> by Harrison	Melancholic strings with vibrato, descending parallel fifths		Wind, thunder	
22	0:56:33 - 0:57:04	As a hurricane approaches, Teddy is helped to a cot by staff		Tracking shot following Teddy being helped across the basement, lightning	<i>Christian Zeal and Activity</i> by Adams	Repeated phrase "what's wrong with a withered hand" over slow strings		Frantic background voices	Use of found sound, diegetic ambiguity

				flashes from window					
23	0:57:29 - 0:58:58	Teddy Dreams of the frozen bodies. Rachel and girl rise from dead		Close up of Teddy surrounded by blinding, flashing light	<i>Root of an Unfocus</i> by Cage	Tritone, half percussive sound, repetitive sounds	Radio static, woman speaking,		Prepared piano
24	0:58:58 - 1:00:34	Teddy Dreams of Andrew in Cawley's home		Tracking shot of Teddy in Cawley's residence, rain pouring outside windows, vibrant red and yellow color scheme	<i>Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor</i> by Mahler  <i>Hommage à John Cage</i> by Paik (0:59:00 – 0:59:02)	Distorted voices, repeating piano chords, late-romantic strings, ticking	Clock ticking		Layering music from different contexts, <i>Musique concrète</i>
25	1:00:50 - 1:01:20	Rachel asks Teddy for help with her dead children		Close up of Rachel smiling, wearing a red dress with blood splattered on face.	<i>Fluorences</i> by Penderecki	Barely audible, High sustained drone			Micropolyphony, unusual instrumentation
26	1:01:21 - 1:02:00	Teddy carries bloodied girl in his dreams		Camera follows Teddy as he bends down to pick up girl	"Passacaglia" from Symphony No. 3 by Penderecki	Reiteration of 3 low <i>pesante</i> , D an octave apart on double-bass cello, accented brass stingers			
27	1:03:20 - 1:04:03	Dolores tells Teddy Andrew is still here and he needs to find and kill him		Over-the-shoulder shot of Dolores	<i>My Father Knew Charles Ives: The Lake</i> by Adams	Quiet piano chords			
28	1:03:54 - 1:04:03	Dolores comforts Teddy		Over-the-shoulder shot of Dolores	<i>On the Nature of Daylight</i> by Richter	Somber string ostinato		Dolores 'shushes' Teddy	
29	1:05:09 - 1:05:51	Teddy and Chuck go to ward C to find Andrew	"Maybe we'll run into Andrew Laeddis" -Chuck	Wide shot of Teddy and Chuck walking down a path away from camera,	<i>Rothko Chapel</i> by Feldman	Ghostly textures, low brass accents, rhythmic timpani		Background voices, branches snapping, water dripping	static quality, sparse vertical textures, unusual techniques

				debris on either side of them					
30	1:09:05 - 1:09:26	Teddy chases and fights patient		Close up of Teddy and patient from behind an iron fence	<i>Fragor</i> by Hodgkinson	rough sound surface with irregular intervals, "complex mass"		Teddy and Patient hit metal stairs and metal platform	reverse-direction movement by making an acoustic instrument sound like an electronic one, flageolet glissandi phasing effect
31	1:09:46 - 1:10:46	Teddy explores halls of ward		Wide shot of Teddy behind a fence on the left side of frame, darkness on right	Prelude-The Bay by Marshall	Mysterious synth tones		Water dripping, whispers "Laeddis," Match striking	tape collages with voice, flute, synth
32	1:12:42 - 1:14:46	Teddy finds George Noyce	"No. It's not possible. You can't be here."- Teddy	Close up of Teddy from behind bars holding match out to the camera	<i>Rothko Chapel</i> by Feldman	Quiet sustained tones		Match burning	static quality, sparse vertical textures, unusual techniques
33	1:14:46 - 1:16:30	Dolores appears while talking to George	"She... let her go"- George Noyce	Over-the-shoulder shot of Noyce	<i>On the Nature of Daylight</i> by Richter	Somber string ostinato		Match burning	
34	1:21:06 - 1:21:56	Teddy climbs down cliffside to rescue Chuck who he believes has fall of edge		High angle shot of Teddy climbing downside of cliff	<i>Rothko Chapel</i> by Feldman	Ghostly textures, low brass accents, rhythmic timpani		Waves crashing	static quality, sparse vertical textures, unusual techniques
35	1:22:00 - 1:23:00	Hundreds of rats appear on rocks	"Chuck!"- Teddy	Closeup of Teddy, waves crashing behind him	<i>Uaxuctum</i> by Scelsi	Vocal glissandi, high drone, "complex mass"		Rats squealing, waves crashing to deafening volume	Extended vocal techniques
36	1:31:36 - 1:31:50	Teddy climbs up cliff side		Crane shot looking down at Teddy climbing back over cliffside, sun peaks through the clouds	"Prelude" by Marshall	High, quick, repetitive sounds			Tape collages, voice, flute, synth
37	1:37:39 - 1:38:15	Teddy steals his clothes		Steadicam enters room via Teddy's	"Wheel of Fortune"	Upbeat voice slowed			Reverb effect,

		back with plans to find Chuck and escape island		POV. Yellow and green color scheme with light coming from pinball machine (Gottlieb 1959 "Seven Seas")	sung by Starr	down with extreme reverb effect (fades into foundational sound)			diegetic ambiguity
38	1:40:03 - 1:42:00	Teddy runs toward main doctor's residence to create a diversion		Wide shot, Teddy runs toward the camera dressed in white patient uniform	<i>Uaxutum</i> by Scelsi	Ghostly voices descending glissandi, brass stingers, low sustained brass			Extended techniques to achieve unusual timbres
39	1:42:21 - 1:44:22	Cawley's car explodes. Teddy runs towards lighthouse		Wide shot of Dolores and girl from Teddy's dreams standing holding hands in front of red car before it explodes.	"Passacaglia" from Symphony No. 3 by Penderecki	Reiteration of 3 low <i>pesante</i> , D an octave apart on double-bass cello, accented brass stingers, sustained low tones, and brass stingers	Explosion sound, shattering glass, flames burning		Tone clusters
40	1:44:34 - 1:45:25	Teddy runs up the stairs of lighthouse to rescue Chuck who he believes is being experimented on by Nazis		Low-angle of Teddy running up spiral staircase	<i>Lontano</i> by Ligeti	String tremolo, high-pitched cluster of sound		Footsteps on metal stairs, heavy breathing, howling wind, gun rattling	Micropolyphony
41	1:57:27 - 1:57:49	Teddy sees girl and Dolores at lighthouse before cutting to final flashback where Teddy enters lake house		Close up of girl's hand reaching out	<i>Four Hymns II: for Cello and Double Bass</i> by Schnittke	Quiet harmonic chords, major to minor			
42	1:57:49 - 1:58:04	Teddy, in final flashback, comes home from long	"I could sleep for a week"- Teddy	Camera follows Teddy closely, sun shines through windows	"Tomorrow Night" performed by Johnson (fades	1950s blues sound			Diegetic ambiguity, layered with music from different contexts

		trip as marshal			out with <i>Four Hymns</i> )				
43	1:58:04 - 1:59:16	Teddy searches for Dolores and finds her sitting in front of lake	"Dolores?"- Teddy		<i>Four Hymns II: for Cello and Double Bass</i> by Schnittke  <i>Christian Zeal and Activity</i> by Adams (1:58:08 - 1:58:15)	Quiet harmonic textures under repeated phrase" and he said take up your bed and walk but God?" then loud, melancholic melody on cello emphasized by <i>pesante</i> strummed chords on Double Bass		Teddy calls out for Dolores, door creaking, Loon calls	Diegetic ambiguity, layered with music from different contexts, use of looped recorded sound
44	2:02:00 - 2:03:55	Teddy rubs feet of his daughter (girl from dreams) after pulling them from lake		Wide shot of children laid out in front of lake, Teddy beside them.	<i>Root of an Unfocus</i> by Cage	Half percussive sounds, accented tritone		Gunshot, bird song	Prepared piano
45	2:10:01 - 2:11:00	Teddy peacefully walks aside doctors to the lighthouse (assumedly to be lobotomized)		Wide shot of Teddy and doctors walking away from camera. Here, Teddy wears grey	"Passacaglia" from Symphony No. 3 by Penderecki	Reiteration of 3 low <i>pesante</i> , D an octave apart on double-bass cello, accented brass stingers, sustained low tones, and brass stingers		Seagulls	
46	2:11:00	Ending credits			Quartet for Piano and Strings in A minor by Mahler	repeating piano chords, late-romantic strings			

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Bret Johnson ...	Sound Re-Recordist
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## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Horror cinema has had a compelling history of implementing scoring techniques culled from experimental music as it flourished in the mid-twentieth century to convey fear and paranoia, underscore monsters, enhance futuristic or supernatural themes, and stand out amongst rival films of the same genre. As demonstrated in previous chapters, horror has thrived on challenging the status quo and provided an area where composers and filmmakers could distance themselves from the conventions of standard Hollywood film scoring since the early days of film. In this research, I explored how popular films of the genre, *The Shining*, *The Exorcist*, and *Shutter Island* benefited from the textures and timbres pioneered by experimental composers and the rise of auteurist directors. This led to many new experiments in film form and style as composers and directors alike would find new ways to incorporate music in their films.

The acousmatons and *acousmètre* in *The Exorcist* were brought to life via experimental sound effects created by *musique concrète* approaches which also manipulated sounds to function as leitmotifs. In addition, *The Exorcist's* introduction of Penderecki and Crumb's music to mainstream American cinema acted as the impetus for a new standard of scoring horror. The borrowings from Penderecki and Crumb complement the film's carefully constructed sound design with their unusual contra-timbral or poly-timbral textures. In contrast to *The Exorcist* which used music to support the dramaturgy, *The Shining* put music in the foreground, as if the drama emits from the music. *The Shining* continued this use of experimental and avant-garde music, going so far as to layer works from different contexts to amplify the effect of these textures. *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* created unique audiovisual experiences through experimental

sound effects and existing music namely from Penderecki, with which the filmmakers sought to condition audiences so that they would associate certain experimental textures with quintessential “scary” situations. *Shutter Island* notably builds on this foundation to sonically represent its unreliable protagonist while furthering the idea that both musical and “non-musical” sounds can exist together and interact with each other. Unlike Scorsese’s previous films, *Shutter Island* completely immersed its audience in Teddy’s fragmented point of view. While *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* employed certain sounds to create fear of the “abnormal” character, *Shutter Island* uses them to create distrust in its protagonist through experimental features or treatments.

While much of film music scholarship focuses on music alone, this thesis touched on all levels of cinematic sound as well as dialogue, acting and photography. The roles of sound editor, foley artist, and sound mixer are, as I have shown, another important aspect in film music analysis and should be recognized as such. Fortunately, scholars in fields such as sound studies have begun to research this area of film scholarship. It is hoped that there can be more research on the convergences between cinematic sound effect and music, particularly between experimental concert music and horror films. The mysterious and unique sounds of modernism and experimentalism have found a home in horror. My thesis explored how the complex textures and timbres of this music eschews or re-imagines the previous order of literacy and nineteenth century musical conventions and thus support unease amongst mainstream audiences through subversion of expectations. It is also hoped that my case studies illustrating experimentalism in horror film music will inspire audiences to listen more closely to *The Exorcist*, *The Shining*, and *Shutter Island* from this perspective as well as to horror cinema at large. Ideally my thesis will become a



foundation for music and film scholars to build on and to make further contributions to this fascinating topic.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lea Ale completed the Bachelor of Music (2018) and the Master of Music (2020) in Double Bass Performance at Arizona State University. Her undergraduate studies were supported by a *Special Talent Award* scholarship. For her graduate studies she was awarded a scholarship to continue her Master of Arts in historical musicology at Arizona State University. She has dedicated herself to research on twentieth and twenty-first century music, specifically film and experimental music.