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Performances in Early Hollywood Sound Films: Source Music, Background Music, and the Integrated Sound Track

David Neumeyer

Writing on film music, whether in the trade-book or academic literatures, has heavily favored symphonic background music over source music. Yet the more fundamental distinction made by industry professionals is between the image track and the sound track. Early in the history of sound film the integrated sound track became an artistic requirement for sound editors; this greater control also facilitated more crossover between musical styles. This essay problematizes the priority of symphonic background music in the early Hollywood cinema. I argue instead that priority should go to the integrated sound track, with all of its stylistic and narrative complexity. I demonstrate this by examining how song performances are placed in the sound track. Examples are drawn from the earliest sound feature films (1927–28), dramatic films and musicals from roughly 1932 to 1936, and *Casablanca* (1943).

KEYWORDS (1–6): film theory, film music, *Casablanca*, diegetic, Max Steiner

Of the many genres in twentieth-century composition, music for cinema has proven to be one of the least amenable to theoretical modeling. To those familiar with the literature on the subject, this statement may seem paradoxical, since few notions in film theory are so widely accepted as the two principal constructs placing film music into a framework for interpretation: music serves a film's narrative system, and, therefore, the primary axis along which film music moves is determined by the implied physical space of the narrative world. Thus, music's "spatial anchoring"

(Metz [1975], 154) is either secure (source music) or undefined (background music or underscoring). Furthermore, since it is assumed in both film and film-music literatures that the primary repertoire of cinema is the narrative feature film (not documentaries, cartoons, or "abstract" films), the goal of film-music criticism or interpretation is to understand/read/analyze narrative functions, or music's role in shaping and furthering narrative processes. This is equally true whether one's orientation is that of a formalist or an ideological critic.

Despite such general agreement, film theory and film-music theory have not advanced at a comparable rate. First among reasons for this discrepancy must be the necessity for interdisciplinary work — that is, one needs to command film theory as well as historical and analytical music scholarship, an uncommon combination of skills. Among other reasons are the nature of cinema as a complex, multi-layered aesthetic object (and cultural artifact), the relative dearth of historical work linking music in cinema to stage practices, and the complexity of musical styles employed. The latter determined the "crossover" character of even early film music in a century when critics and scholars have tended to establish firm boundaries around what is "art music" and what is not, decisions regulated not only by social class and ethnic differences but also by the cultural politics of the absolute/program-music dichotomy, which originated in the mid-nineteenth century and whose arguments have, astonishingly, persisted nearly to the present day.

Difficulties notwithstanding, the politics of canonization for film music have been slowly proceeding in the trade-book literature and, during the past decade, in the academic literature as well. One of the most noticeable features of this process is that writers have continued to privilege symphonic background music strongly over source music. Claudia Gorbman's landmark study, for example, takes as its point of departure "the classical film score [within] the generalized paradigm of classical Hollywood film form of the thirties and forties"; this paradigmatic music is represented primarily by the symphonic scores of Max Steiner (Gorbman 1987, 7, 73). Katherine Kalinak argues more strenuously than does Gorbman for the equation of the visual and the aural as narrative controls in cinema (1992, 20–31), but she nevertheless maintains a sharp distinction between source music and the film score, at one point going so far as to assert that, since a substantial percentage of the earliest sound films were "restricted" to source music, "this meant that, in many films, there was no musical accompaniment at all" (67). She also describes the Hollywood score as "based on musical practices of the nineteenth century," although "other musical idioms, such as jazz and pop, found their way into the classical film score during the forties and fifties" (100, 102). Caryl Flinn, despite an explicit rejection of "rigid distinctions" between source and

background music, and despite the fact that the two films which she reads closely (*Detour* and *Penny Serenade*) rely heavily on source music, nevertheless opens the first chapter of her book with the statement that "during the Hollywood studio era, film music was assigned a remarkably stable set of functions. It was... used to enhance emotional moments in the story line, and to establish moods and maintain continuity between scenes. A similar uniformity was suggested by its style as well, since most scores were composed in a manner deeply influenced by... Wagner and Richard Strauss" (Flinn 1992, 11, 13). Finally, the association between source music and the performances that dominate musicals leads Royal S. Brown to assert matter of factly that the symphonic background score "has become a permanent fixture of commercial cinema," and, therefore, "this type of music... will serve as the principal object of discussion [here]. Song scores for film musicals such as *Singin' in the Rain*, on the other hand, fall outside the scope of this study" (1994, 22).

To a certain extent, the authors cited above are merely following the historical biases of the film industry itself. By 1935, the integrated sound track with effective post-production sound mixing was in place, and the first Academy Award for an original dramatic score was presented to Max Steiner for his music to John Ford's *The Informer*.[1] By this time, also, film credits for music were divided between the composer of the background music ("Music by..."), the composer and lyricist for any songs especially written for the film ("'[Song title]' by [lyricist] & [composer]"), the conductor (if not the background-score composer or music director), and the studio music department head ("music director"), whether or not the latter had an active role in the production. By about 1940, the orchestrator of the background score often received a credit, too. Typically, the background-score composer did not do dance-band or song arrangements; for example, in *Casablanca* (1943), Max Steiner wrote the background score but Frank Perkins did the song arrangements. Of course, the career path followed by Steiner himself — from "arranger" to "orchestrator" to "composer" — did remain available, an industry structure still in place today, decades after the dissolution of the old studio music departments.

The "composer," then, had a privileged status in the Hollywood studio music department. The class differences were expressed succinctly by MGM's music director Herbert Stothart: "The development of new song writers is of relatively small importance. The important thing that the screen is doing to-day is in giving opportunities to composers, who, imbued with fresh vision, are carrying on the work started by men like Stravinsky, and applying its modern impressionistic principles to the drama of the screen" (1938, 139). The most successful composers received an intertitle to themselves in the film's main-title sequence, usually just before the director and producer (this solo billing was part of Steiner's

contract when he moved from RKO to Warners in 1936). Nevertheless, despite a long history of attempts to merge high art and the cinema — starting with Saint-Saëns' score for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908) and the Pathé and Edison Companies' filming of opera scenes after 1910 (Altman 1992c, 116), through similar efforts by Warners with Vitaphone shorts in the mid-1920s, to Warners' importation of Erich Wolfgang Korngold in 1935, Stravinsky and Schoenberg's abortive negotiations with MGM about the same time (Rosar 1989), several "opera-musicals" in the mid-to-late-thirties, and finally Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) — film composers in the United States never achieved the same status as their colleagues who wrote for the concert stage or opera (Palmer 1990, 9). Despite professional education that was the same in most instances, concert composers were able to command respect that film composers who ventured into writing concert works found almost impossible to gain for themselves (especially after 1950), the most notable examples being Franz Waxman and Bernard Herrmann. Others who had been accepted as concert composers, especially Korngold and Miklos Rozsa, sullied their reputations by subsequently working for the film industry (Thomas 1991, 82–83).

The complex set of issues related to the status of Hollywood film composers — and the sharp differences between America and Europe in that respect — could be the subject of an extended socio-cultural study.[2] I am concerned here with just one aspect of the problem: how the bias toward "classical" music, and therefore toward the symphonic background score, has influenced — and in my view distorted — our interpretative practices with respect to music's role in the feature film, and therefore our understandings of the origins and character of the sound cinema in Hollywood. The strategy is to problematize the idea of symphonic music's priority by problematizing the source music/background music dichotomy. I will argue instead that precedence in the historical and critical study of music in cinema should go to the integrated sound track, with all of its stylistic and narrative complexity. This move will permit us to disentangle the components of the binary pair symphonic-background/popular-source and to recognize this particular disposition of terms as only one possibility among several. The section below advances some further historical preliminaries, making reference mainly to films between 1927 and 1935. Thereafter, I develop a theoretical model which reinterprets a simple hierarchy crowned by the source/background pair as a field or network where this pair is one item. Close reading of sequences from *Casablanca* will provide examples of application. The goal of this essay, then, is to articulate a few elements of a critical attitude which specifically accounts for the source-music/background-music dichotomy but at the same time moves past it toward a more complex and more comprehensive set of categories for music in the sound cinema. With such categories in place, we

may eventually be able to integrate music in a completely satisfying way into historical or critical studies of the sound track.

Although source/background continues to be regarded as a basic category for the study of film music, the more fundamental distinction made by industry professionals is between the image track and the sound track. Early on in the history of sound film, the integrated sound track became an artistic requirement for sound editors, and musicians as a result were able to exploit various kinds of ambiguity in "spatial anchoring," Christian Metz's term for the degree to which a recorded sound is "attached" to its object — in effect a measure of its "diegetic-ness" or its "realism." Although film-genre differences were recognized (as components of both production and marketing), the basic techniques of sound design, including music's integration into it, were the same regardless of genre. This fact suggests what I believe the historical record plainly shows: that it was possible for directors and sound designers creatively to confuse the boundaries of genre by, for example, emphasizing performances in dramatic films — as in *Grand Hotel* (1932) or *The Informer* (1935), for instance — or by including extensive background music, as often happens even in early musicals (e.g., *Love Me Tonight* [1932] or *Naughty Marietta* [1935]).

Although the terms "background" (or "underscoring") and "source" are routinely used — and their definitions well understood — in film music composition and criticism today (Handzo 1985, 408), they are *not* coextensive with the categories used in many Hollywood studio cue sheets of the thirties and forties: "visual vocal" or "visual instrumental" and "background vocal" or "background instrumental."[3] In the current definition, "source music" refers to music which seems to emanate from the world of the film's narrative, such as a song performance by an actor, music played at an onscreen concert, or offscreen whistling or humming associated with a character or an assumed physical space, such as a room we can only glimpse through a partly open door. Background music cannot be similarly located in the narrative world but instead hovers in an ambiguous intermediate "space" between film and audience similar to that occupied by voice-over narration. Claudia Gorbman's terms "diegetic" and "non-diegetic," which are now generally accepted by scholars, mean the same as "source" and "background" music, respectively (1987, 3). The cue-sheet terms "visual vocal" and "visual instrumental," on the other hand, refer to *onscreen* source music only, while "background vocal" and "background instrumental" may refer to offscreen source music or to underscoring. The reasons for these distinctions were production-related: onscreen performances generally commanded higher copyright permissions fees than did background uses. For example, when Warners' music director, Leo Forbstein, negotiated for the use of "Old Man Mose" in *Casablanca*, the rates he was quoted by the New York office were $350 for

background instrumental use, $500 for background vocal, $750 for visual instrumental, and $1000 for visual vocal.[4]

The discontinuity between critical definitions and practice is crucial, because it undercuts a linked set of binary oppositions. If non-diegetic music is opposed to diegetic — that is, background to source — then a symphonic sound is opposed to the dance band, "classical" music to popular (jazz, or later, rock), and, therefore, high art and aesthetic values are set against low art and commercial value. (This is a statistical claim: of course, it is possible to have symphonic music as source music, but in American movies of the period it is far more likely that source music will be played by a dance band or theater orchestra.)[5] Symphonic background music can make a case for an educative function, in that it encourages appreciation of the historical monuments of European culture, and it promotes moral training (by refining control of emotions, an important role for music in middle-class society since the early nineteenth century). Popular source music, on the other hand, is at best harmless and superficial entertainment, at worst degenerate, especially in its association with dance halls, private clubs, and bars, and in its emphasis on sexual and illicit behavior.[6]

But if the diegetic/non-diegetic dichotomy breaks down in practice, then it cannot be said unequivocally that classical Hollywood sound film supports the table of oppositions just described above. If the theatrical and cinematic roots of background scoring were stylistically mixed, it cannot be reasonably maintained that symphonic background scoring somehow upholds superior aesthetic values while source music succumbs to the degraded or superficial. And, if so, it cannot also be reasonably maintained that the dramatic feature film (which has relied most heavily on underscoring) should be privileged over the film musical. In other words, even if it is statistically true that in feature films of the thirties and forties symphonic music predominates in the background and popular music prevails onscreen, this does not mean that the distinction between source and background must necessarily be tied to simplistic dichotomies of musical styles, narrative functions, or hierarchies of value.

A brief survey of the antecedents of the classical Hollywood sound film readily reveals a much more complex practice. In the silent era, the musical performances that accompanied films routinely mixed musical styles, sometimes in jarring fashion, even in prestige productions:

> The action [in *The Rose of the World* (Paramount 1918)] is set in British imperial India, and [the prepared score provides] an original love theme and a Hindu motif, ... interwoven with popular melodies and light classics. ... The audience heard Massenet's *Élegie*, "Somewhere a Voice is Calling," "Home, Sweet Home," two different segments of the *William Tell Overture*, Nevin's "The Rosary," and, accompanying scenes of the return to England, "Sailor Beware!" (Koszarski 1990, 47)

Small-town pianists or organists playing matinees and relying on published collections such as Erno Rapée's *Motion Picture Moods* ([1924]) could switch almost instantly from a Chopin prelude to George Root's "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp," or from the last movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata to *Agitato No. 3* by "photoplay" composer Otto Langey. The pragmatic authors of technical manuals for silent-film accompaniment recognized the need for this stylistic diversity: for example, in one manual, aspiring performers are advised to "visit the music shops, whenever you have an opportunity, and look over the novelties in popular music as well as in the better class of publications" (Lang and West, [1920], 62). Having found and purchased a variety of suitable musics, one then must "use wisdom in combining 'lighter stuff' and artistic material, work[ing] gradually towards a happy union of the two, with music of real worth predominating." In another manual, we find that "one or two enterprising firms have gone out of their way to cater for the cinema organist by publishing music of a popular nature that is particularly useful in the cinema" (Tootell 1927, 55). Compositions by "outstanding composers," such as Jan Hurst ('Melodie d'Amour') and J. Stuart Archer ('Intermezzo') "cannot be too highly recommended."

The symphonic background score for sound film derives principally from the silent-film orchestral performances that were possible in larger theaters in cities and "recorded for posterity" in the earliest sound-synchronized feature films, Warner Brothers' *Don Juan* (1926) and *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Even near the beginning of Louis Singer's partly original, partly compiled background score for *The Jazz Singer*, we hear the love theme from Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" Overture (which Singer uses "to represent Jack Robin's feelings for his parents") followed by "East Side, West Side" for establishing shots of a New York neighborhood (Kalinak 1992, 68). It is true that the symphonic accompaniment is set in sharp relief against Al Jolson's famous song performances (no leitmotifs from the latter invade the background music), but the strongest juxtaposition in the film involves diegetic music: the extended New York synagogue scene, which features cantor Joseph Rosenblatt's performance, and the immediately following Paris café-restaurant scene in which Jolson sings his first numbers: "Dirty Hands, Dirty Face" and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Goodbye." (I am discounting an earlier number supposed to be by the immature Jack Robin [Jakie Rabinowitz]. That performance simply does not have the effect of the later scene, in which Jolson himself first appears as the adult Robin [Geduld 1975, 182].) Because of Jolson's song performances and despite its continuous underscoring, *The Jazz Singer* is generally regarded as a musical, not a dramatic feature. In a final irony, before 1932, when post-production re-recording was first generally used, background music was more likely to be employed in a musical than in a

dramatic feature: "In *The Love Parade* (1929), for instance, diegetic music in the production numbers spills over as nondiegetic music for ensuing scenes" (Kalinak 1992, 68).

Cinema music's tradition of stylistic variety and its fluid movement between the diegetic and non-diegetic tend to break down the status of the latter pair as the principal category for film-music interpretation. The linkage of the non-diegetic to the symphonic, and thus (potentially) to classical high art was culturally imposed, and certainly not intrinsic to any demands of cinematic technology or any generalizable demands of narrative or production style. Nor, as we have seen, was symphonic music stylistically monolithic: classical high art (by which we mean above all Beethoven) or imitations of the style of classical high art were relatively uncommon even in the silent era; the traditional orchestra was used as often for the "light classics" of French and Italian theatrical styles, Viennese operetta, and Broadway shows, as it was for that *lingua franca* of underscoring, the Wagner/Strauss symphonic-operatic style. The popular song style found its way into underscoring, as in the jazz melody Steiner wrote for the female lead in *The Informer* (1935) or the background cues for *Shall We Dance* (1937), based on original songs Gershwin wrote for this Astaire-Rogers vehicle (Mueller 1985, 115). In the forties, the interplay between the symphonic and popular styles increased (as in *Casablanca* or, spectacularly, in *Laura* [1944]). Later still, Alex North built a symphonic score on jazz styles (*A Streetcar Named Desire* [1951]), Duke Ellington wrote an entire background score for a small jazz ensemble (*Anatomy of a Murder* [1959]), rock and roll background scores became fashionable, and finally in the eighties "crossover" scores became the norm.

At this point, some qualification of an earlier comment is in order. The situation in film-music criticism is not quite so stark as I have portrayed it above. Gorbman, for example, does allow music a remarkable range of action even as she maintains the binary opposition diegetic/non-diegetic as a basic theoretical construct:

> the only element of filmic discourse that appears extensively in non-diegetic as well as diegetic contexts, and often freely crosses in between, is music. Once we understand the flexibility that music enjoys with respect to the film's diegesis, we begin to recognize how many different kinds of functions it can have: temporal, spatial, dramatic, structural, denotative, connotative — both within the diachronic flow of a film and at various interpretive levels simultaneously (1987, 22).

It is exactly this flexibility, however, which finally grants priority to non-diegetic music. For, although it might seem that diegetic music would have the advantage (as it is more closely tied to the film's narrative, which music — like all sound-track elements — must serve), it is in

fact that very closeness which inhibits diegetic music's range of functions, its ability to "inflect the narrative with emotive values" (4). Performances delay, and sometimes disrupt, the flow of narrative, as they require that we pay attention to them in order to recognize and appreciate them as artistic events — that is, as musical performances in the usual sense. Special care must be taken to motivate a performance if it is to seem realistic (that is, relevant to the plot); beginnings and endings in particular must be managed in a natural fashion. The lyrics — and the song title itself — are situated uncertainly in the sound track, somewhere between music and dialogue. The title or text may be relevant to the narrative or they may not; to discover which is the case, once again, requires some attention on the part of the film spectator.

Non-diegetic music, on the other hand, may more readily subordinate itself to the image track and act as an almost subliminal influence on the viewer (hence the "unheard melodies" of Gorbman's title). Indeed, specific genres of composition were developed to facilitate this in the early sound-film era by Max Steiner and others (Neumeyer 1995). Their models were drawn from the musical stage, including opera, operetta, and melodrama. By 1935, most of the familiar and characteristic practices of background scoring for cinema were already in place.

Thus, we have not really advanced beyond the critical framework in which background music primarily serves to reinforce the cinematic illusion, and source music primarily entertains with the occasional formal performance. All other attributes are reduced to qualifiers of the source/background or diegetic/non-diegetic pair. As an illustration, I cite the first performance in *Casablanca*: Dooley Wilson singing and playing "It Had to Be You." The music begins offscreen during a shot of the neon sign atop the front door of Rick's *Café americaine*; it continues through a cut inside and a moderately slow pan across the café to a full shot of Wilson (spotlighted) at his piano singing and playing the song's final phrase. The dynamic (or sound) level is constant throughout, and yet we are inclined to regard the cue as diegetic because the performance is continuous before Wilson appears onscreen. Even if we accept Gorbman's flexible boundaries between the diegetic and non-diegetic, it is only possible to read the cue as a journey from the non-diegetic to the diegetic, though there must be lingering doubt about the former because of violation of the convention that non-diegetic music is instrumental. What we cannot do is understand the unrealistic sound level as the deciding agent in hearing the music (even though those levels are problematic both for the establishing shot of the sign and for Wilson's onscreen shot [assuming that the camera represents the position of the viewer/auditor]). At best the discrepancies "muddy" the realism of the performance.

To counter the enforced priorities of such readings as the one I have just constructed, I propose a more elaborate theoretical model which displaces the diegetic/non-diegetic pair as the primary category for film-music analysis and establishes instead a field or network of several interacting binary pairs (see figure 1). The strategy exemplified by this model is to break apart diegetic and non-diegetic from their several qualifiers and then to assume that any of the categories or oppositions thus defined may direct interpretation of music's functions in a sequence or scene.

1. Diegetic/non-diegetic (or source/background).
2. Onscreen/offscreen.
3. Vocal/instrumental: performance forces.
4. Rerecording: synchronized/not-synchronized.
5. Sound Levels: "Realistic"/unrealistic (for diegetic music); loud/soft (for non-diegetic music).
6. Musically continuous/discontinuous.
7. Musically closed/open.
8. Formal interaction of cutting and music: yes/no.
9. Motivation, or narrative plausibility: yes/no.
10. "Pure"/culturally or cinematically coded.

Figure 1 Binary Pairs for film-music analysis

The first pair in figure 1, diegetic/non-diegetic (or source/background), refers narrowly to spatial anchoring, or plausibility in the physical world represented in the image track. "Non-diegetic" may or may not include point-of-view music associated with a character's subjectivity, since such music can only be located indirectly at best, that is, "in the mind." Bordwell and Thompson label point-of-view sound "internal diegetic" (1990, 254).

The second opposition is onscreen/offscreen, which refers narrowly to what the camera frames at the time the music sounds. Although the notion may be difficult to grasp, it is possible to have onscreen non-diegetic music if a song is not a "public" performance but an expression of the singer's subjectivity; under such circumstances it is plausible that the singer does not know that he or she is performing. Abbate (1991, xii) argues that this is the typical state of nineteenth-century opera (see also Buhler and Neumeyer 1994, 377–381).

The next pair is straightforward: performance forces, vocal or instrumental. Unless further refinement is needed for a specific reading, the term "vocal" will also enclose voice with instrumental accompaniment.

Rerecording is characterized as synchronized or not-synchronized. This refers narrowly to the degree to which synchronization or, more likely, the lack of such coordination, becomes a noticeable feature of a shot

or sequence. "Non-sychronized" non-diegetic cues are included under "Formal interaction of cutting and music" below.

The next category is sound levels, which encloses terms such as "dynamic levels," "mixing levels", or "loudness." For diegetic music, sound levels may be called realistic/unrealistic; for non-diegetic music, the basic opposition is loud/soft, with extremes considered to be "excessively loud" (music that forces itself strongly on the spectator's attention, such as a sudden swell under end credits) or "excessively soft" (music dubbed so quietly that its affect is indistinct or its leitmotivic references inaudible). These continua function within limits established by technology, namely, microphones and theater sound systems (Handzo 1985, 393–404, 417–418) and by studio sound design practices (Altman 1992b). Sound levels are perhaps the most likely sound-track elements to undermine the diegetic/non-diegetic, for they continually raise the question of sound/image scale-matching or auditory perspective (Altman 1992b, 56, 49): Are sounds "appropriate" to the depicted physical space and distance from the camera? The mismatch between image scale and sound scale is a defining feature of sound design after the mid-thirties (Altman 1992b, 54).

The next two pairs are concerned closely with musical phenomena. Musically continuous/discontinuous refers to traditional musical continuity of phrase, harmonic and melodic development, etc. Musically closed/open refers to the "cadence" and related devices of musical closure, including those created by completing conventional musical-form schemata.

Formal interaction of cutting and music can be characterized as either being present or absent: yes/no. Such design parallelisms between shot sequences and musical phrasing or expressive articulations may apply at a local level (for example, repeated mickey-mousing or phrases matched to shots) or at a larger level, as when a single shot used for an entire performance, with cutting matched to phrasing throughout, or when a cue covers a specific sequence or scene. Melodramatic cues always interact locally with the image track; "non-sychronized," "contrapuntal," or "mood" cues do not interact at a local level, and may or may not interact at a larger level.[7]

Motivation for music, or its narrative plausibility, may be supplied by a number of means. A character may be a musician (such as Leslie Howard in *Intermezzo* or Dooley Wilson in *Casablanca*), or may experience a sudden shock (as in Rick's response to seeing Ilsa in *Casablanca*). Dialogue readily supplies motivation ("Hear the music"; "Do you remember that song we used to sing?"; "Play some of the old songs"), as does the image track (an orchestra, dance band, radio, or phonograph in the background of a shot). Whether mickey-mousing is motivated by the image track is open to question.

The final category might be regarded as a contextual scale. Its terms (after Gorbman 1987, 12–13) are "pure" and either "culturally or cinematically coded." The pure performance is autonomous, as close to a concert

as possible, in the sense that listening to the design, structure, and affect of the music itself is of primary importance (this is possible only in a filmed concert performance, preferably without any film editing, but the pure performance may be approached in main title cues, in the extended end credit cues of contemporary films, or even in unmotivated song performances). Music that is coded is necessarily contextual, whether the cultural musical code of "Scottish music" or the cinematic musical code of a leitmotif used for a particular character. Genre conventions may also be included here (e.g., a montage sequence will have background music, a chase scene needs a "hurry" cue, etc.).

As the description of the last pair suggests, it is often useful to think of the binary terms in figure 1 not as absolute categories but as endpoints on a continuum. For example, point-of-view music may be regarded as midway between diegetic and non-diegetic, combining properties of both. The same is true of music that is apparently diegetic but placed in an unstable or uncertain physical environment (as in a dream). The "off/on" alternatives for musical closure might be construed, instead, as a series of levels extending from the conventional final cadence of a clearly defined musical form, to clear cadential closure but on an intermediate phrase, to a fade-out managed by the sound editor, to an abrupt mid-phrase cutoff. And so on for other pairs in the list.

To demonstrate how this model might be applied, I have chosen an extended example from *Casablanca*, a fifteen-minute segment which covers the second half of the thirty-minute café scene near the beginning of the picture. Figure 2 provides a time-line summary of this segment, which covers the period from Major Strasser's first entrance into the café to Ilsa and Laszlo's exit some time later the same evening. Each of the five sequences is organized around a musical performance. In sequence 1, Sam and the band play offscreen a version of "I'm Just Wild About Harry." In the second sequence, they perform mostly offscreen "Heaven Can Wait." The third sequence parallels the second in that the performance begins onscreen then moves off; Sam plays a medley consisting of "Speak to Me of Love" and "Love for Sale." Sequence 4 introduces a featured performer, Corinna Mura, playing and singing *Tango delle Rose*. The final sequence begins with Ilsa's requests of Sam and passes into one of the most famous symphonic cues in cinema, Steiner's development of "As Time Goes By."

The first sequence begins shortly before Major Strasser's appearance in the café and ends with the arrest of Ugarte. The band's performance of "I'm Just Wild About Harry" is entirely offscreen, but we readily accept it as diegetic because of previous highlighted performances (including "Knock on Wood" and "Shine"). Nevertheless, the diegetic status is undercut by an unmotivated drop-out in the middle of the scene: the music

Sequence 1:

0:00 Music in as Major Strasser enters the café . ("I'm Just Wild About Harry")
2:30 (approx.) Music out under gun shots

Sequence 2:

3:05 Music in after Rick directs Sam to start playing again
(We see the orchestra and Sam briefly.) ("Heaven Can Wait")

Sequence 3:

5:37 Laszlo and Ilsa enter the café
(They pass by Sam on their way to a table. A subsequent medium shot of Sam at his piano shows him looking over his shoulder towards them.)
("Speak to Me of Love"; then "Love for Sale")
7:20 Music out as Strasser comes to their table

Sequence 4:

8:17 *Tango delle Rose* performance
(Singer with guitar, begins onscreen, goes offscreen twice, then finishes onscreen.)
10:05 Performance finished

Sequence 5:

10:10 Ilsa asks the waiter to send Sam to her table
10:34 Sam appears with his piano
10:53 He plays, ("Avalon")
11:25 stops
11:49 She hums "As Time Goes By"
11:56 He plays,
12:04 sings,
12:48 stops
12:51 Cue 4,7 begins with the stinger chord.
15:26 Cue 4,7 out

Figure 2 A segment from *Casablanca* (beginning at approximately 20:30)

simply disappears for several moments while Ugarte is talking in the casino room. If the diegetic must be "realistic" — and how can we be convinced that the actors can hear it otherwise? — then any weaknesses in the cinematic illusion of a musical reality, so to speak, undercut the notion of the "diegetic." Unless we are simply talking about an editing error, which seems unlikely, it would seem that our standards for "realism" in dialogue (or diegetic speech) are higher than they are for diegetic music.

The performance, then, is uncertainly diegetic, offscreen, instrumental, with a generally realistic sound level (Captain Renault and Rick are talking in the latter's office; the music comes in as the office door is opened from the outside; sound comes up plausibly with the cut to the café, although it then goes under dialogue noticeably). The performance is musically discontinuous because of the unmotivated drop-out, and it is also musically open (it is unclear if we hear the ending of the song as the music goes out under gun shots). Both characteristics are unusual but by no means unknown in diegetic performances.

Film editing and musical design interact: the pianist plays the verse, then the orchestra plays the chorus, the articulation happening as Renault greets Strasser. Nor is there any ambiguity about motivation: the café performance starts when the musicians are ready; it goes out with the disturbance of Ugarte's arrest (as if the musicians are disconcerted, too, by the gunfire). Whether the performance leans more toward the pure or coded is unclear, but this is a typical problem with non-featured performances, which combine the cultural musical code — café dance band playing popular music — with the role of "disengaged" background music, that is, music that interacts so little with the image track that it could be listened to separately and autonomously.

The association of the song "I'm Just Wild About Harry" with Major Strasser is obviously ironic (and thus less believable as diegetic), since this rather enthusiastic love song is hardly appropriate for the unloved, unloving, and unloveable villain. Such links between song titles and action in the environment of the performance ought to occur at random, and certainly with nothing like the persistent regularity that it happens in the movies (particularly this one). One might best place such associations under a larger level of editing and musical design: the song performance is placed "by design" at this point rather than some other, equally good spot because of the association, its only motivation. (The motivation is not so strong as it might be, of course, because the film makers cannot be sure how many in the audience will know the song and therefore catch the allusion.)

One might readily argue, then, that the diegetic status of the music is a secondary factor in this sequence, because the performance is partly treated as it would be were it "properly" nondiegetic. More important are the linking of the song title with Strasser, the formal interaction of cutting and musical form, and even the lack of musical continuity and closure.

The second sequence follows Ugarte's arrest, beginning as the band's set resumes; the song is "Heaven Can Wait," which continues through the brief interrogation of Rick by Strasser as they sit at a table with Renault. The performance is plainly diegetic; the performers are onscreen to begin, then move offscreen for the remainder. Yet the diegetic is undercut by a lack of synchronization (Sam's hands) and a jump cut that affects the

music at the beginning, slicing off some notes and inserting an audible pop as we jump from Sam to the orchestra (this clumsy transition is apparently due to last-minute editing that deleted a performance of "Dat's What Noah Done" [Lebo 1992, 181]). The title association undercuts the diegetic, as well: Heaven (escape from Casablanca) can wait after Ugarte is arrested and Rick is interviewed by Strasser. (It should also be pointed out that the piano heard on the sound track, here and elsewhere in the film, is obviously not an instrument like the white-painted upright we see onscreen.)

As in sequence 1, the dynamic level is generally realistic but goes under dialogue noticeably. The initial diegetic status is presented in an exaggerated way; motivated by Rick's direction that the band resume playing, the performance begins in an unnaturally short amount of time at a sound level that is noticeably loud. Synchronization with Sam's hands and voice is poor. The performance is musically continuous, but open (only because the ending fades out under dialogue). The balance between the pure and the coded is, likewise, similar to sequence 1.

Thus, "Heaven Can Wait" begins — awkwardly — as diegetic music but then wanders into the same quasi-background "limbo" as "I'm Just Wild About Harry," a condition in which the song-title association is probably more important than spatial anchoring.

The third sequence is very much like the second. The music begins simultaneously with the entrance of Ilsa and Laszlo into the café; it goes out as Strasser approaches their table. Note the inappropriate sound levels at the beginning; based on what we have heard previously, Sam should be a considerable distance away, at the back of the building, not a mere fifteen feet, as we discover when Ilsa and Laszlo advance into the café and walk by him.

The performance is thus (awkwardly) diegetic, briefly onscreen, then off, with a generally realistic sound level (except for the opening, although the level throughout lacks sufficient change to match character movement about the café or differing shot distances). The music is designed in the recognizable form of a medley but the ending is open and unmotivated: the music simply goes out when Strasser appears. Editing and musical design interact to the extent that the performance begins almost simultaneously with the entrance of Ilsa and Laszlo.

The performance of these songs is once again motivated by title associations ("Speak to Me of Love" on Ilsa's entrance; "Love for Sale" as Laszlo and Berger talk about the ring). In preparation for the next sequence, Ilsa mentions Sam to the waiter. The same balance between pure and coded performance is maintained as in previous sequences, but the use of romantic ballads presages the strong cinematic coding connecting "As Time Goes By" with Ilsa and Rick's affair in Paris.

In the fourth sequence, Corinna Mura's performance of *Tango delle Rose* is plausibly motivated; she is a featured soloist in the café performing a music that is set apart stylistically from anything heard heretofore (traditional Spanish, although the text is sung in French). Her performance is framed by audience applause, which we have not heard since the "Knock on Wood"/"Shine" set early in the café segment. The performance also stands out from the preceding three sequences because it is vocal with instrumental accompaniment. The music is diegetic, of course, with a fairly regular patterning of on/off/on/off/onscreen, which contributes to undercutting the diegetic status because the dynamics are unrealistic; the singing voice goes under dialogue unnaturally during each offscreen sequence. The cue is musically continuous and closed, and editing and musical design interact — after the short verse onscreen, the chorus goes offscreen — but since this happens twice the effect is too obviously patterned. In addition, the performance is unrealistically telescoped; it is supposed to be a complete featured number, experienced in clock time, but it actually lasts less then two minutes.

As it turns out, then, this sequence has more in common with the previous three than might have been expected. The balance should have shifted strongly in favor of a pure performance: unlike the situation created by previous cues, the viewer is alerted by the spotlighted entrance and the audience applause to regard this as a featured performance, the performer has had no previous character role in the film, and neither the song's title nor its style has any obvious association with the narrative. Nevertheless, the effect of a pure performance is sabotaged by the intercutting and dialogue. One can readily imagine that Corinna Mura, who was under contract to Warners, was not pleased with the studio's treatment of her only number in this film, but the rapid pace of cutting and plot is consistent with the Warner Bros. studio style (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 62; Harmetz 1992, 259, 261; Miller 1992, 58).[8]

Sequence five contains some of the film's most famous moments. The music includes an aborted instrumental performance of "Avalon," followed by "As Time Goes By" (piano, then voice), and a symphonic background cue that continues to the end of the scene (the first symphonic music heard since the main titles and opening scene). This sequence includes the most realistic diegetic music so far (even Sam's hands are better synchronized with the sound track). After Sam pushes the piano over to Ilsa's table, his "private performance" of "As Time Goes By" is interrupted by Rick. A stinger chord catches Rick's surprise, and "As Time Goes By" promptly moves into the underscoring. The level of motivation for this background cue is very high: the chord itself is as much sound effect — a sharply drawn-in breath — as it is music: we "hear" the air vibrating with the shock of this reunion. The oboe's subsequent, languid

rendering of the tune over this mildly dissonant chord is a musical equivalent of the characters' slowly evolving subjective state, and thus it is questionable whether this music is really background music at all (that is to say, it has the characteristic problem of point-of-view music, which is readily understood as a musical "translation" of what the actors are feeling, a window on their subjectivity). From that point on, the music is a typical Steiner melodramatic cue, so closely tied to the screen action that the result is very close to voice-over narration: "As Time Goes By" is converted to a waltz affect (but with tonally vague half-diminished seventh chords) when Paris is mentioned; another stinger and "Deutschland über alles" (in the trombones, minor key) intervene when the Germans are mentioned; neutral music[9] accompanies the table dispersing; "As Time Goes By" is quoted when mentioned again by Ilsa; and a series of minor ninth chords droop with Rick as he sits down, dismayed. The strong cadence that finishes the cue is motivated formally: this scene ends the first of the film's three main divisions.

The sequence is complex. In terms of spatial anchoring, it moves from the diegetic to point-of-view to non-diegetic. The diegetic music switches irregularly onscreen and off, and the sound level is realistic. The symphonic music has an appropriate dynamic level for its degree of narrative intrusion. "Avalon" is musically discontinuous and open (only a fragment is performed), "As Time Goes By" is continuous and open (most of one chorus is performed but Sam is cut off before he is finished), and Steiner's cue is discontinuous and closed (a melodramatic cue with a strong closing cadence). Editing and musical design interact only in cue 4, 7.

The music is clearly motivated throughout: Ilsa asks Sam to play; he begins "Avalon" and then she specifically asks him to play (and sing) "As Time Goes By"; cue 4, 7 is initially motivated by the stinger chord itself (by convention, music follows on this specialized sound effect). To the question of whether the music is strongly coded: "Avalon" is similar to the earlier song performances, but "As Time Goes By" is immediately turned into a cinematic code for the Paris romance of Rick and Ilsa. Among the cultural musical codes embedded in cue 4, 7 are the dissonant stinger, the minor key at the opening (and descending stepwise bass from tonic to dominant), the waltz affect (as code for Paris, elegance, or pleasurable social environment), the minor key and trombones for "Deutschland," the tritone placement of the "Time" quote against "Deutschland," the neutral affect, the final three-chord cadence, and the color shift in the final chord from minor to major (anticipating the next morning's interview in Renault's office).

The performances in sequences 1–3 are all café background music; as such they establish a neutral midpoint from which the later ones diverge. Corinna Mura's performance is strongly public, foregrounded (even

though narrative advancement is not deferred during the performance), but Dooley Wilson's subsequent performances are very private; indeed, it is uncertain whether other café patrons can hear them. Mura first appears in a high angle shot (with the spotlight, as it were), but the camera cuts away from her to conversation between Laszlo and Ilsa, so that her performance becomes backgrounded in the same way (and at the same sound level) as the band's previous numbers. The temporary foregrounding, however, presages the next sequence, as Sam performs for Ilsa, framed by her requests and interruptions. His performance of "Avalon" is undermined by dialogue, but "As Time Goes By" is not; instead the camera settles on an extended close-up of Ilsa as she internalizes his performance. Cuts to long shots and the return of café noise signal her return to awareness of her surroundings as Rick approaches. When the music dives back into point-of-view after the stinger chord, the symphonic music functions as the source music did a moment earlier.

As the preceding, brief account suggests, music's characteristics and narrative functions may perhaps be described more effectively if we separate the diegetic/non-diegetic from narrational foregrounding/backgrounding. To avoid confusion caused by double usage (background music is not necessarily backgrounded), the semiotic terms "marked" and "unmarked" will be employed as these have been adapted to music by Robert Hatten (1994). Briefly, the unmarked term provides the conventional framework of the "expected" against which the marked term stands out as uncommon and therefore capable of being endowed with specific expressive meaning; for example, in eighteenth-century music, the expressive nature of the uncommon minor key is set against the backdrop of the conventional major, or chromatic progressions against the conventional diatonic.[10]

The terms are combined and depicted as a set of logical oppositions in figure 3.[11] The initial term appears at the upper left: the "marked diegetic" is a performance that is highlighted, brought out as the primary activity, such as a production number in a musical. To the right of the marked diegetic is an opposing term, "non-diegetic; marked," which refers to underscoring brought to the attention of the spectator by means of unusually loud sound levels, abrupt entrance, close synchronization with the image track (mickey-mousing), or associations of leitmotive or affect. Under this definition, much of the underscoring in classical Hollywood feature films is marked non-diegetic; as Max Steiner put it, "There is a tired old bromide in this business to the effect that a good film score is one you don't hear. What good is it if you don't notice it?" (Thomas 1991, 71–72). What this term measures is a basic feature of sound cinema: the tension between image track and sound track, and within the sound track between music and dialogue. In fact even Steiner's scores do not draw

attention to themselves constantly. Perhaps a better description of the marked non-diegetic is underscoring that is foregrounded. Thus, mickey-mousing, motivic quotes, or affect cues are not automatically marked: they become so only when their level of intrusion into the narrative is high. For example, the stinger chord that begins cue 4, 7 is certainly marked non-diegetic: the sound level is high, the entrance is very abrupt (after a long absence of underscoring), the chord is both synchronized and affective (it catches the look of surprise on Rick's face and it measures the shock). The neutral music that accompanies the party breaking up lies at the opposite extreme: low dynamic level, no obvious motivic quotes, neutral affect. Where underscoring is clearly subordinate to the image track, then the former's normal condition should be the logical contrary of the initial term: not-diegetic, unmarked (as shown at the lower right of figure 3). The diagram is completed with the logical contrary of the marked non-diegetic, or the unmarked diegetic, a term which aptly describes the performances in sequences 1–3: non-highlighted set performances by the café's dance band.

The nexus of four terms just described is sufficient to begin breaking down the authority of the diegetic/non-diegetic. If music can be marked by intrinsic properties such as dynamic levels or instrumentation, then those properties may achieve a status equal to or greater than that of the diegetic/non-diegetic. In other words, music may be foregrounded or backgrounded — marked or unmarked — independently of its spatial anchoring. In the *Casablanca* examples, the diegetic/non-diegetic was undermined in three principal ways. First, both terms serve the same narrative functions. The dance-band music served as background music for the majority of the sequences, and sound levels were adjusted accordingly; the latter did not follow some "realistic" aesthetic that would have aimed to replicate the sound characteristics of a physical space. Both diegetic and non-diegetic music was used effectively for point-of-view purposes and for title associations: "Deutschland über alles" (cue 4, 7) in

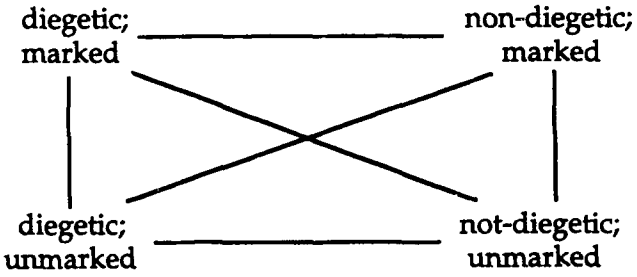

Figure 3 Semiotic square depicting logical relations based on diegetic/non-diegetic and markedness

this sense acts in exactly the same way as "Heaven Can Wait"; the menace in the former's quotation comes from its setting, not from anything intrinsic to the tune. Second, the diegetic/non-diegetic pair is undermined because it is not the only — or even the most important — aspect of music in most of these sequences. The performances here were all complex: none was simply, unequivocally, and entirely diegetic or non-diegetic. The diegetic music was not often marked, and the diegetic/non-diegetic status itself seemed to be controlled less often by simple spatial anchoring (performers onscreen) than by manipulation of sound levels. In sequences 1–3, furthermore, the song-title associations made more of a contribution to narrative than did the diegetic status of the music. Third, the indifference to musical style in the diegetic/non-diegetic pair suggests that style is not a trait closely associated with them. Granted, musical styles can certainly be constrained by narrative requirements (it is unlikely — though not impossible — that Rick's Café would have a band of strings and woodwinds) or by genre conventions (it is unlikely in films of this period that the dance band would play the melodramatic cue 4, 7, with its stinger chords and leitmotivic development). But there is nothing to prevent the dance-band music from acting as non-diegetic (a state it closely approaches at many points during sequences 1–3, as we have seen) nor the symphonic music from functioning diegetically (as it very nearly does in the "internal diegetic" or point-of-view passages).

It would seem apparent, then, that the integrated sound track is more complex than a simple alternation between the terms of the pair "realistic"/"unrealistic." Just as the directors and film editors of the twenties exploited and perfected the art of intercutting, which compromised the "realism" of a stationary camera shot (as if the camera represented the viewer standing in place), the sound designers of the later thirties were not interested in merely duplicating the sound characteristics of depicted physical spaces (Altman 1992b, 54–56); they were concerned with sound as narrational strategy. We may, therefore, challenge the notion of a diegetic film theory itself. An ancient Greek word appropriated to film theory as a synonym for "story," diegesis "has come to be the accepted term for the fictional world of the story" (Bordwell 1985, 16). This model is built on a language analogy, in that it assumes the story and its presentation (as plot) are "spoken" (enunciated) and ultimately controlled by a narrator, whether or not the latter can be identified as some specific individual. A fundamental problem with this model is its assumption of listener/spectator passivity, a notion which is endemic to Gorbman's account of film music. Her insistence on the priority of non-diegetic music and on its synchronization with the image track posits a passive spectator being acted upon by the film: non-diegetic music works in the background, "unheard," to lull the viewer into accepting the filmic illusion of reality

(Gorbman 1987, 5–6, 69). Although such theories of spectatorship were popular in the eighties, they are mostly discredited now (Bordwell 1989, 165–168, 255; Littlefield 1990, 166–167). Though Gorbman herself says at one point that "music... is constantly engaged in an existential and aesthetic struggle with narrative representation" (1987, 13), she downplays music's ability to contradict the image track and dialogue, and she ignores a viewer/listener's ability to construct a range of interpretations, a capability which would, of course, undercut both the notion of a passive spectator and the assumption of a wholly unified filmic discourse.

Bordwell proposes that we "consider film viewing a complicated, even skilled activity" (1985, 33). The theory he constructs is in a number of ways analogous to the music theory of Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983). A particular advantage of Bordwell's approach is that it separates the active cognitive processes of the spectator (which are centered on constructing the story [1985, 48]) from judgments of value or other ideological assessments which are properly the task of critical interpretation. He replaces the diegetic model of film with one based on "formal systems [of narration] which both cue and constrain the viewer's construction of a story" (1985, 48). These include stylistic and genre conventions or schemata as well as narrational strategies that cover, among other things, range and depth of knowledge, degree of self-consciousness, and ideal rate of flow of story information. Thus, instead of emphasizing the move from diegetic to non-diegetic in the "As Time Goes By" cues, we might point to changes in range and depth of knowledge. In this scene, the range of knowledge is at first restricted (the viewer derives information from dialogue, facial expressions, and physical movements) and the depth of knowledge is shallow (consider the indifferent, aborted performance of "Avalon"). Knowledge is both less restricted and deeper when "As Time Goes By" becomes point-of-view music: the viewer has access to Ilsa's feelings, "hears" what she is thinking. The subsequent dialogue adds still more information (because of the larger number of characters involved), and the underscoring does also, since by convention it acts somewhat in the fashion of a voice-over narrator.

It is not possible to work out in this space the details of a merger of my field or network model described with the constructs in Bordwell's theory of narrative systems, but the discussion above should have been sufficient to suggest that it is desirable to unseat the diegetic/non-diegetic pair, because only by that means will song performances in the cinema be allowed a chance to receive their due. The schematic hierarchy that links the diegetic to popular music and non-diegetic to symphonic or classical music must be broken down. This is not to say that these pairings do not happen or even that they are uncommon, but they are plot elements or specific narrational tactics. Using them exclusively to build historical

accounts and theoretical models produces a distorted view of the history of sound cinema and an inadequate basis for theoretical modeling and the close readings that depend on those models for their logic.

Compromising the symphonic/underscoring/classical/artistically-valued linkages will not be an easy task, however, for criticism seems bound to this schema, no matter how serious its weaknesses. To illustrate, I cite the passage with which Christopher Palmer concludes his evaluation of Erich Korngold:

> Popular music of whatever genre has always had its place in films; of course it has, for film is entertainment and has to be popular. But unless it ever reaches . . . a complete nadir of non-quality and eccentricity, there will, equally, always be a place for music of a more serious intent. . . . That is one of the most marvellous things about film — its all-embracingness and diversity. It can feed on all things and, therefore, give something back to all people in return to establish its own traditions and criteria and continually refashion them. Only what is bad gets totally discarded; what is good may go out of fashion, . . . but the principle, . . . the core of quality — star quality — remains as a vital regenerative force. Of nothing is this more true than of music. (Palmer 1990, 66)

If we attempt to untangle the twists of logic in this muddled homily, we find first of all that the word "popular" is seemingly detached from its usual connotation, as in the pair classical music/popular music; at least this seems to be what Palmer means by the phrase "of whatever genre." Thus, "popular" might apply just as well to John Williams' Wagner-Korngold pastiches in *Star Wars* as to Jerome and Scholl's "Knock on Wood." However, in the second sentence, "popular" and lack of quality have once again been linked and opposed to "serious," which of course suggests higher quality but is also a synonym for "classical" (in the form "serious music"). In other words, the question of style, supposedly rooted out by a generous move in the first sentence, returns with a vengeance to separate the cultures. The two subsequent sentences find the author undaunted by the contradiction; they stress the inclusiveness of the cinema, its ability to appeal to all persons and all tastes, an ability that is elevated to the driving force in the historical processes of film evolution. Yet, if cinema is thereby allowed "to establish its own traditions and criteria and continually refashion them," the final two sentences show that cinematic history with respect to music is, nevertheless, constrained by forces external to itself. Palmer reifies those forces as the inevitable historical process by which critics and scholars "discover" the music that is intrinsically "good," the music of quality that will endure. In point of fact, of course, Palmer is simply appealing to the familiar tactic of canonization, by means of which an interpretative community establishes and enforces a hierarchy among artists and their works and thus also controls the writing of historical narratives. By contriving both to include and to exclude music other than the "serious" and

symphonic, Palmer hopes to gain authority over all of cinema music at the same time he confines the possibility of quality to traditional European concert music.

Even apart from its internal contradictions, Palmer's argument cannot stand. First of all, it is based on the notion that a final judgment of quality is made independently of the film: a score is good if it can be played in the concert hall. Not only is this is a badly misplaced critical tool which ignores the point laboriously made above with respect to *Casablanca* — that music is one component of an integrated sound track — but it is useless as a way to establish the priority of symphonic music, for songs are far more readily — and far more frequently — detached from the film and performed independently than are symphonic cues. Second, one cannot simultaneously assign the highest critical status to symphonic film music (because it is like concert music) but then try to isolate it in its own category separate from contemporaneous concert music, in comparison to which it must inevitably be found wanting as stylistically conservative, elliptical, and lacking in sufficient development. Third, modernism, which is the aesthetic underpinning of the notion of autonomous (concert) music, has always dealt poorly with the theater and with stylistic eclecticism, and the invocation of some of its criteria — a clear line of historical evolution, a set of canonical works, the priority of autonomous music — must necessarily be unconvincing.

It would seem then that there is something fundamentally flawed about a model for film-music interpretation based on style differences and on modes of valuation derived from the concert hall. As James Buhler and I have written with respect to one specific stylistic dichotomy that has been fundamental to intellectual debates on European music in this century:

> In refusing to take an unambiguous stand on [modernism's historiographic agenda] — the Stravinsky/Schoenberg debate [and] the closely related one on atonality — film music frees itself to offer a completely different account of late romantic style, one that is not bound up with atonality as its terminus. Unfortunately, this tale has so far been told only at the movies. (1994, 385)

I would argue, further, that the story is told not in the symphonic background music, but in the whole of the sound track.

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Notes

1. For accounts of the period leading from the earliest sound feature films (1926) to the integrated sound track, see Geduld 1975, 103–268; Prendergast 1977, 19–34; Gorbman 1987, 31–52; Steiner 1989; Kalinak 1992, 66–110; and Neumeyer 1995. Kahn 1983, 28–50, focuses on source music specifically.
2. The issues involved include not only the distinction between film and concert music, but also Europe and America, New York and Los Angeles, conservatory composers versus "commercial boys" (Rozsa 1982, 111), and pre-World-War-II and post-World-War-II generations. For an example of the errors and misrepresentations that can easily result from taking too hard a position about these issues, see Palmer 1990, 19–27.

3. My information comes primarily from cue sheets for productions by United Artists and Selznick Productions, plus a few each from Republic Pictures, MGM, and Warner Bros. I do not have information about the practices of Paramount, Columbia, or other companies.
4. This information comes from business records housed in the Warner Bros. Collection, University of Southern California. The prices involved are rather high (which probably influenced Forbstein's decision not to use the song) — Warner's paid only $500 for visual vocal use of "Shine," which took the spot intended for "Old Man Mose," and $1000 for unlimited use of "As Time Goes By" (a sum which was paid to Harms, Inc., a music publishing company owned by Warners).
5. By "theater orchestra" I mean the hybrid group that is basically a dance band augmented with a relatively small number of string instruments.
6. On some of the historical sources for the harsh distinction between the classical and the popular in American musical culture, see Broyles 1991. For a chronological account of the ways in which critics and scholars of film music have tried to address its special cultural and genre problems, see Marks 1990, 12–44.
7. On the issue of synchronization versus counterpoint, see Buhler and Neumeyer 1994, 372–377.
8. Amazingly, the performance of "Knock on Wood" is similarly broken up by intercutting — but not dialogue — despite the fact that the studio hoped to exploit this newly written song as a possible hit-parade moneymaker (Miller 1992, 159).
9. The term "neutral" is a specific term derived from silent-film affect categories (Rapée [1924], iii).
10. Hatten develops this notion much further (1994, 29–66) but the descriptions given here are sufficient for the present purpose.
11. The opposing terms (across the top of Figure 2) are called "contraries" in logic; the diagonally related terms are called "contradictories" (Salmon 1963 101; Greimas and Rastier 1968, 87–88).