**Introduction**

Recently there has been a new phenomenon called “The Netflix-effect”. Which means that an old, and sometimes even ‘forgotten’ song, gets (back) in the top rankings because it was used in a popular TV series. A song of Kate Bush “Running Up That Hill” was featured in the Netflix series called “Stranger Things” and the song started to climb the charts again, with huge number of streams on TikTok and Spotify (57.2 million streams) in a matter of days. This is not the only example of a featured song in a film gaining more music popularity. With upcoming platforms such as Shazam, Spotify, and Snapchat the name of a soundtrack can be generated within seconds (Business Insider, 2020). This can then be used to explore a song and creates a way to discover ‘new’ music. As content of on-demand platforms such as Netflix has grown, and their shows have gotten more audience, fans are tracking down music of their favorite shows via Shazam and Tunefind (The Guardian, 2019). “That is a true game-changer, as it lays down a precedent for other music to do the same if circumstances meet.” (The Guardian, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to study the drivers affecting music popularity and examine the relationship between a song getting featured in a film and music popularity.

The relationship between film and music is worth studying because the music industry is growing annually, mainly thanks to streaming platforms such as Spotify (Friedlander, 2016). Music sales have generated 26 billion dollars in 2021 (IFPI, 2022). Regardless of this success, artists who produce independently from commercial record labels are having a harder time getting online streams and making revenue (Chiftalaryan, 2019). A report of the Intellectual Property Office showed that the top 1% artists account for 80% of all online streams (The Guardian, 2021). Proving that featuring a song in a film has a positive influence on music popularity creates a promotional strategy for smaller music artists to increase their online music streams and revenue (Spilker, 2017).

This research relates to two literature sources, since this research is trying to capture a new phenomenon, literature is rather scarce. Beaster-Jones (2009) studied the relationship between Indian film songs and popular music in India and found a positive relationship. The songs featured in a film serve as a representative for the film. The music sales indicated that both the music and the film were a success. According to Beaster-Jones, songs featured in film are also used as a promotional tool, which shows their importance and generates profits and online streams for the artist/music label (Beaster-Jones, 2009). Another research of Simon Frith (2002) takes a closer look on the relationship between television and music. It discusses the impact of television on music culture and that television can change perceptions about music (Frith, 2002). Simon’s research is not directly in line with this research, but it suggests that film can strengthen perceptions about music and in this matter influence the outcome variable, music popularity.

Current studies mainly focus on the effect music has on films. Research about film music emotion (Juslin & Sloboda, 2011), psychology (Nagari, 2015) and arousal (Ellis & Simons, 2005) indicate that music has a positive influence on film performance. They have not analyzed the reversed effect of a film having influence on music performance (music popularity). This research extends existing research by looking into the reversed effect and taking music popularity as the outcome variable.

This research objective is to identify a causal relationship between a song getting featured in a film and music popularity. One major challenge is that causality is very hard to satisfy without a ‘randomized control trail’. This research will follow a quasi-experimental approach, with aiming to identity exogenous shocks that can approximate random assignment (Goldfarb et al., 2022). By combining an existing dataset of Chartmetric, a platform that provides data for music industry professionals, with a new dataset of Tunefind, an index of music and songs appearing in television shows. This research has a total dataset of more than 1 million tracks on Spotify and all tracks that made an appearance in a TV show, gathered from Tunefind via web scraping. Furthermore, propensity score matching is added to the research design to strengthen causal claims and reduce selection-bias. This model matches each treated unit with a non- treated unit of similar characteristics (Caliendo & Kopeinig, 2005).

In what follows, we first review the extant literature on music popularity and the relationship between film and music. Subsequently, we will elaborate on the methodology of this research. Furthermore, we will present the analysis and findings and at last we will derive conclusions and recommendations based on the previous sections.